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December 2024-February 2025

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MARINETTE, WI UPCOMING

DEC - JAN - FEB



FEB 15

Country Snowdown

Saturday Feb, 15th

6pm - 10pm

Marinette REC Center 2501 Piece Ave. Marinette, WI 54143

Join Cat Country 95.1 FM for the StateLine Apparel Country Snow Down at the Marinette Recreation Department! Enjoy top country cover bands, food, drinks, merch, meet-and-greets, prizes, and more. Don't miss this night of country music and fun!



FEB 28 - MAR 2

Family Fishing, Boating & Outdoor Show

Friday Feb, 28th - Sunday, Mar 2nd

varying times

Marinette REC Center 2501 Piece Ave. Marinette, WI 54143

Join us for a family-friendly celebration of fishing, boating, and the outdoors! Explore gear, boats, RVs, wildlife art, and displays from charters, resorts, and attractions. Enjoy kids' casting, seminars, and great food. Don't miss this outdoor adventure!



DEC 7

Christmas in Marinette

Saturday Dec, 7th

Varying times

Marinette REC Center 2501 Piece Ave. Marinette, WI 54143

Celebrate the season at the Marinette Rec Center! Enjoy kids' crafts, games, holiday entertainment, and the "It's a Zany Zoo Christmas 2024" Parade. Festivities include:

- Cookie Decorating with Mrs. Claus
- Christmas Craft Show
- Photos with Mr. & Mrs. Claus
- Light Show and Live Christmas Music
- FREE Christmas Movie at the Mariner Theatre



DEC 20

STEEM: For Kids from 1-92

Saturday Dec, 20th

7pm - 10pm

Marinette REC Center 2501 Piece Ave. Marinette, WI 54143

Join us at the Community REC Center for 'Kids From 1 to 92', a holiday concert featuring the 13-piece band STEEM performing Christmas classics. Kids 11 and under are FREE with an adult! Doors open at 6 pm. Get tickets online or call (715) 732-2006. Don't miss this festive evening!



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GREEN BAY MAYOR ERIC GENRICH, SANTA, BRIAN JOHNSON (ON BROADWAY) AND JEFF MIRKES (DOWNTOWN GREEN BAY) POSE AT THE SITE OF CHRISTKINDLMARKET ON BROADWAY, OFFICIALLY KICKING OFF WINTER PROGRAMMING IN GREEN BAY'S DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS. IN ADDITION TO THE CHRISTKINDLMARKET EVENT SERIES, WHICH WILL RUN ON FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS THROUGH DEC. 21, THIS WINTER WILL ALSO BRING THE WINTER WINE AND BEER WALK IN THE BROADWAY DISTRICT ON DEC. 6, 13 AND 21; THE DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY MARKET ON DEC. 14; WINTERFEST ON BROADWAY ON JAN. 18; AND THE CAFE CRAWL ON FEB. 22. VISIT DOWNTOWNGREENBAY.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE EVENTS AND MORE.

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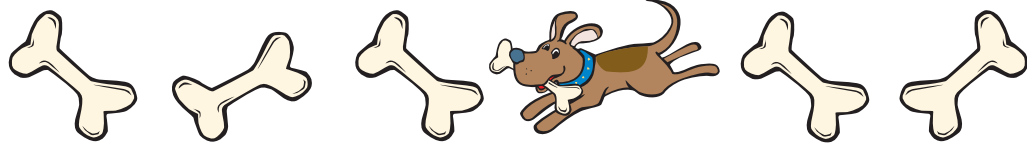
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THE BUZZ

The dogs on the bus



Oconto's K9 Konvoy goes viral

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

If you had asked Hope Mehlberg ten years ago where she thought she would be today, she never would have guessed she'd be the owner of K9 Konvoy, an Oconto-based dog-walking/doggy daycare service with a large social media following.

"I have zero background in dogs, actually," Mehlberg said. "I really wasn't an animal person. Growing up, we had a dog... But I just never really had an interest."

That all changed, though, when she began looking for an activity to take up after work.

"I worked a full-time job and I went through a lot of things personally," she said. "I was coming home from work — I was working 4 a.m.-noon shifts — and I was doing less in the afternoon. So I just started walking my own two dogs. Then I started picking up my in-laws' dog, and then I started with my parents' dogs. And then Zeppelin, a big German shepherd. He's the first dog and the reason this whole thing started."

Zeppelin was the dog that tipped Mehlberg's hobby towards a career, although their story got off to a harrowing start.

"It was a sad story where he ended up getting hit by a vehicle in front of my house," she said. "I saw it happen and I saw him run away, so I spent 15-20 minutes trying to find this dog. Long story short, we took him to the vet and they didn't know if he was going to make it. He ended up having collapsed lungs and he had a lot of issues... I connected with his mom when we were on our way down to the emergency vet and said, 'If he pulls through this, he can join my walk.' At the time, I only had seven dogs. It took about two or three months for him to heal and she reached out."

With Zeppelin officially joining the walk, Mehlberg said she knew it was time for her business to expand.

"I was in my own personal vehicle, so I didn't have much room at the time," she said. "When Zeppelin came aboard, I started looking for utility vans. I bought my first



utility van and it was nothing special. It was just to haul dogs around... I used that for about a year and I [walked dogs] part-time while still working my full-time job. I was pulling long days and long hours. In May of 2023, I quit my full-time job, bought the bus and that's where we are now."

The difference for Mehlberg since committing to K9 Konvoy full-time has been drastic.

"With my previous job, I was in management so I managed a lot of people and customers and all that kind of stuff," she said. "I was just sick of dealing with the ins and outs of that. The biggest thing for me is that I get to work by myself and I get to spend all day with these dogs and I get to send them home back to their families just tired right out... I'm living my life and enjoying work every day. I love waking up. I love going to work. I love picking up the dogs."

Once the day's dogs have boarded the bus, usually a group of 22-26 dogs, Mehlberg takes them to her own private three-acre dog park where they have the opportunity to explore and play for a couple of hours — a much different experience than one might find at other doggy daycares.

"It's not like your typical doggy daycare where they just kind of lay around or

▲ Each day (weather permitting) dogs load onto the K9 Konvoy bus for a few hours of play and exploration in a private, three-acre park. Submitted photos

sometimes they go in a kennel for a bit," she said. "We're out here for two hours and it's a full two hours of exercise. When they go home, they are exhausted. Having two dogs of my own, I know how much energy puppies have, so it is very rewarding for me to give my pet parents a little break and let the dogs calm down a little bit."

Mehlberg said she's even seen dogs who didn't thrive in a traditional daycare setting flourish in her walking groups.

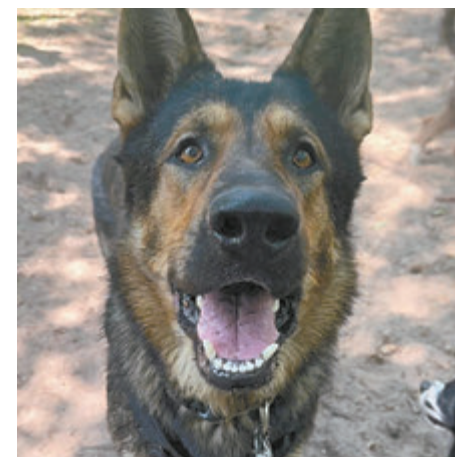
"I do a screening process prior to entering any dogs into my pack," she said. "Dogs are organized by size, temperament and how they play... I have a couple of dogs that were kicked out of doggy daycares for how they play and I have a couple of reactive dogs that couldn't be near other dogs when they started with me... So I have worked with a couple of those dogs and it is a night-and-day difference. The pack kind of trains itself. Dogs are pack animals, so they kind of just see and learn from each other."

Not only do the dogs learn from each other, but they form bonds with each other as well.

"They're just like kids, in my opinion," Mehlberg said. "They each have like a best friend and they figure out who they play well with and who they don't. And it kind of created a little community in our little community. A lot of the pet parents become friends because their dogs are friends or they get together on the weekends because their dogs play really well together."

While building a community within her own community, Mehlberg has also built up a rather large community of followers on social media with more than 700,000 followers on TikTok liking and commenting on her videos of the dogs eagerly boarding the bus each day and playing together in the wooded park.

"I was on TikTok prior to starting my business and I saw a couple other dog businesses with buses and stuff," Mehlberg



▲ Zeppelin, the German shepherd who prompted Mehlberg to expand her dog walking services.

said. "I'd seen those videos and then it kind of came to me and I was like, 'Hey, I'm going to give it a shot and if it works, it works and if it doesn't, it doesn't.' I just kept posting everyday... We just keep getting more and more followers and more and more love for the dogs."

That love for the dogs is coming in the form of more than just online interactions, though, as people from around the world have begun sending treats for the pack to enjoy.

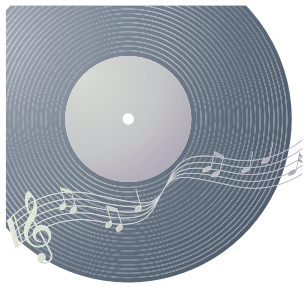
"We've received so much love and so many treats and packages that I'm kind of running out of space in my house right now to store them all," she said. "Just about every day, I'm picking up five to eight more packages that are coming in. It's insane... I started this pretty much just to get out of the house and get some exercise and it just kind of snowballed from there... We recently did a fundraiser for our local shelter because our dogs get so much love that we're starting to give back to dogs in need."

With more than 60 dogs currently enrolled with K9 Konvoy, Mehlberg is not accepting any new dogs at this time, but those interested in seeing what the pack is up to can follow along on the K9 Konvoy Facebook page or @k9konvoy on TikTok. **CP**



▲ Within their groups, the dogs of K9 Konvoy form close bonds, creating a community within a community.

THE BEAT



An exchange of energy

Green Bay's Luma Knotty delivers a unique sound

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

Hailing from Green Bay, Luma Knotty is delivering a sound so unique that even band members themselves struggle to describe it.

"It's kind of always been a thing that we don't really know how to describe ourselves," said Luma Knotty Founder, Guitarist and Vocalist Ryan Patrick. "We have a foundation in reggae music and that's always going to be our comfort zone — our home base — but we're definitely not a reggae band. If you're coming to a Luma show expecting Roots reggae, it's going to be different. It's a more modern approach. I like to bring in all sorts of genres to fill that void and I think we have a lot of heavy funk influences and a lot of rock influences as well. We're kind of like a hybrid of reggae, funk and rock... It's hard to really pinpoint our genre, but it's a very unique sound and there's really nobody else that sounds like us."

Creating a unique sound, though, is exactly the reason Patrick started Luma Knotty in the first place.

"We formed back in 2017, so we're getting a little long in the tooth now," he said. "I was playing in another band called Focus at the time and that was my main group, but I wanted something where I had a little bit more personal freedom about what type of music we can do. I really didn't want to have any boundaries as far as creativity and things like that. So I started Luma as kind of a side project and you know how that goes — once things started picking up steam, it just seemed like the natural choice to move and make that my full-time project."

And a full-time project it has become, as Patrick not only performs in the band, but also records, mixes and masters the band's albums at Luma Lab Recording Studio in Green Bay.

"We spent a lot of time building up the lab and being able to have our own recording studio and a space where we can just keep writing and adding to our collection of songs..." Patrick said. "It's been a growing



▲ Green Bay band Luma Knotty produces a unique reggae/funk/rock sound. Photos courtesy of Shutter Sheeps Photography

process because a lot of the stuff that we're taking on, it's not that we didn't have any experience in it, but it's been a learning process. We're learning how to do all this stuff without seeking outside help and still put out quality products. That's been really huge for us — still being able to continuously put out quality content, whether it be visual or audio."

Although the process has been demanding, Patrick said it has allowed him and fellow band members Luis on Keys, Steve Scott, Nick Rodello and Neji Khang to produce exactly the type of experience they want their audience to have.

"We wanted to create a space where we were able to write, record and do art," Patrick said. "That is part of what we try to present as Luma Knotty. With Luma, it's a lot of the visual side of things. When we play live, we like things to glow and pop and we use lots of bright colors and things that kind of illuminate our audience... When we really break down our name, that's at the heart of what we try to do. Luma, we try to bring people light through music. And Knotty, because we're rocking the dreadlocks and the reggae lifestyle, if you will."

When Luma Knotty plays live, Patrick said it's about much more than simply sharing music.

"Performing live, to me, is about the exchange of energy from the performers on stage to the people in the audience," he said. "When they start reacting to what we do, it brings a different level of focus to what we're playing... It's an energy you don't get from playing in the studio... In the studio, you're being more meticulous. You're trying not to make mistakes. You're trying to create the best possible polished product. Playing live is more reactionary. You're just interacting with the musicians on the stage and interacting with people in the audience and that's one of the main reasons that I keep going and I keep wanting to perform."

For Luma Knotty, Patrick said it hasn't always been easy to find an audience willing to take a chance and take part in that interaction, but that hasn't deterred the group from continuing to perform.

"Especially being an original band, we don't necessarily fall into the mold of what all the other successful bands in the area are," he said. "I'm not knocking on cover bands, but that's what controls the scene over here... People just really get into listening to music that they already know.



The challenge is presenting them with stuff they don't know while still maintaining their attention... Just being an original and in Wisconsin is going uphill right off the bat. But that's who we are and we don't want to succumb to the cover band archetype just to be successful. To me, it's more important to be able to play what makes my heart happy."

And members of Luma Knotty have much to be happy about, as their latest album, *Favorite Dream*, launched at the end of September.

"I'm really proud of the title track, 'Favorite Dream,' because it has a lot to do with family and staying true to those close to you," he said. "'The Shore' is another really good one that I like how it turned out... I had our friend Cujo write a verse for us and he came in and did a guest performance, so that was a really good one. 'Today is a Gift' is another good one because it's about being present and enjoying the time that we have... They all turned out really nice, and they all have a very special meaning so it's hard to pick a favorite."

"They're like your kids, you know? They're all your babies," Patrick said. "You definitely have some that speak to you a little bit more than others, but they're all kind of written out of personal experiences. Everything I write is either related to some part of my life in one way or another or how I'm feeling or certain experiences I've had. Those are all the things that made me the person I am today and shaped who I am as a musician."

As the group prepares for a tour of the West Coast coming up this spring, Patrick said the support shown at the recent *Favorite Dream* release show illustrated that Luma Knotty and other original bands could find their audience in Northeast Wisconsin.

"We were kind of made for music festivals," Patrick said. "That's the type of vibe that we're trying to bring to people when we play smaller club shows, too. That's kind of what was so nice about the album release show that we just did. Because it was an all-original lineup, everybody that was there we've played festivals together before. It felt really nice having an all-original show. It felt like a real event and it wasn't just people showing up to get wasted and drink beer. Don't get me wrong, people were doing that too, but it just makes a difference when people are really there for the music versus just going out to party at some random place and you're just an afterthought. It lets you kind of appreciate everything a bit more and lets you know that you can put on those types of shows in this area and it can be successful."

To learn more about Luma Knotty, stream their music and stay up to date on upcoming shows, visit lumaknotty.com. **CP**



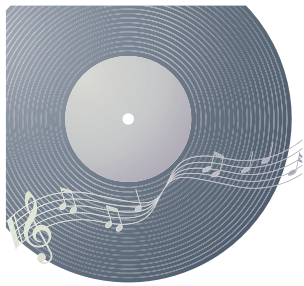
▲ Vocalist and Guitarist Ryan Patrick also records, mixes and masters Luma Knotty's albums.



▲ Luma Knotty shows are about an exchange of energy between the performers and the audience.



▲ "The Shore" features a guest performance by Cujo the Poet.



In the driver's seat

Kansas continues past 'The Point of Know Return'

By Kris Leonhardt
Editor-in-chief

Since the “garage band from Topeka” released their debut album in 1974, Kansas has sold more than 30 million albums worldwide, with 16 studio albums and five live LPs.

The band appeared on Billboard charts for over 200 weeks throughout the 1970s and 1980s and played in sold-out arenas and stadiums throughout North America, Europe and Japan, with songs like “Carry On Wayward Son,” “Point of Know Return” and “Dust In the Wind.”

But the band’s roots run a little deeper.

The original six

“There was a Kansas previous that was a band called ‘White Clover’ with Dave Hope and Phil Ehart, who were also in the very first incarnation of Kansas, and another local band called ‘Saratoga’ that Kerry Livgren was in,” explained original guitarist Richard “Rich” Williams.

“Well, White Clover and Saratoga kind of merged and formed what is referred to as Kansas 1.

“And then, White Clover got back together. I was in college but, I had one foot out the door all the time. I was playing in different bands, etc. And I got back together with Phil and Dave Hope.

“And then, the other version of Kansas

had kind of petered out, and we got Kerry to join. That’s when we got Steve Walsh to join and Robby Steinhardt and that is what is known to Kansas today as the original six.”

Those original six members were discovered by Wally Gold and signed a recording contract with Don Kirshner.

Their 1974 self-titled debut album introduced the band’s signature sound — a blend of hard rock, southern rock and progressive rock — instituting Steinhardt’s violin.

Taking control

In the 1980s the band members began moving in different directions.

“There was a period of time back in the later 80s, I guess, or early 90s, where we weren’t officially not a band, but it was basically me and Phil. We still had a record deal with CBS Records, but we didn’t have a team to put on the field, and so we had kind of a couple of years off.

“We hadn’t quit, but I went fishing and played a lot of golf for a couple of years, and Steve Walsh had his own band now called ‘Streets.’ Well, that kind of folded up, and me and Phil were wanting to get something going again, and the ‘Dixie Dregs’ had broken up, and so Steve Morse was living in our area,” Williams recalled.

“So we reformed, and we started Kansas back up again. And we were told

at one point by the record company ‘Guys, nobody cares. We know we owe you some records, but we’re not going to do them and you guys just need to find something else to do,’ which was coming from the top of CBS, which was a very hurtful meeting. (They said) management doesn’t care; booking agents don’t care; the people don’t care. Give it up.’

“Well, me and Phil were pretty tenacious, and I think if anything, it probably encouraged us.

“We got invited to go to Germany by a promoter. He said, ‘If you guys want to come over here, put the band back together for a couple of weeks. You know, I’ll tour you all through here. And so we did and it was very successful. We had a really good time.

“We go back to set up one show, which we did in Atlanta. It sold out right away. And so we were thinking, ‘Well, well, we don’t really have a career, but what if every summer we got together and, you know, out for two, three weeks.’

“So, we booked a couple weeks, and then we booked a couple weeks, and then we never stopped. And so, ever since we were told to give it up, I’ve been busier than I’ve ever been, and from management to the record companies, etc., the obvious thing was they grossly underestimated us, and more importantly they underestimated our fan base.



▲ Richard “Rich” Williams is one of the “original” six band members. Original drummer Phil Ehart is currently recovering from a heart attack. Mark Schierholz photo

“And so, that was when we started managing ourselves and doing everything the way we wanted to do — taking control of our lives and our career.

“And we haven’t stopped since.

“These last 10 years, Steve Walsh retired, and we were going to continue on. Ronnie Platt joined the band and that really was very helpful, because Steve was getting limited in what he could sing because he was losing his voice, like so many rock singers do. And once Ronnie joined, all of a sudden the whole catalog was wide open, with longer shows a lot more material, etc., and it was being presented at a much higher quality. And our career has just taken off in the last 10 years.

“So now, I mean, we work as much as we want, because we’re ones in the driver’s seat, and we’re working a lot. We generally do 80, sometimes up to 200 shows in a year. Which when you combine a travel day to get to a place and a travel day to get home, that’s a lot of time gone. So we’re very busy.

“Again, our fan base was grossly underestimated and will never be underestimated again by us.”

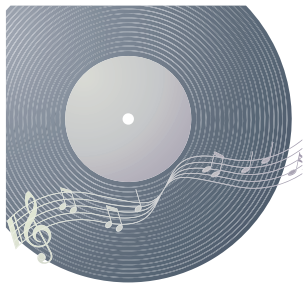
Kansas made a stop at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in Appleton on Nov. 2, which Williams said was a two hour and 15 minute show featuring the entire history of Kansas in a “very well produced” show by a dedicated group that is held to a high standard.

For more information on the current tour, visit kansasband.com/tour-dates. **CP**



◀ Since the “garage band from Topeka” released their debut album in 1974, Kansas has sold more than 30 million albums worldwide, with 16 studio albums and five live LPs. Todd Jolicoeur photo

THE BEAT



BAMMY Awards returns for second year

Awards show looks to recognize Northeast Wisconsin's music industry leaders

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

Last March, the Tarlton Theatre was filled with the best and brightest of Northeast Wisconsin's musical talent as finalists waited anxiously to see who would be heading home with some hardware from the inaugural Bay Area Music Awards (the BAMMY Awards).

The BAMMY Awards, hosted by the Tarlton Theatre, aim to recognize and celebrate local leaders in the music industry and showcase the bands, musicians, performers and other music industry professionals making great accomplishments across 25 award categories.



"We held a benefit and recognition show for a great friend of mine and a lot of folks in the community — Bob Balsley," said Tarl Knight, owner of The Tarlton Theatre. "That project was called *In My Life* and it was an album created in tribute to him with artists from the area who recorded a version of one of Bob's original songs. We put that all together with the show and we recognized Bob while he's still here with us. And that philosophy kind of sat with me for the next couple of months — the importance of community and coming together to recognize folks in our area while we're all still here. People didn't know the legend of Bob Balsley and his story and I think that there's a lot of unrecognized talent and sacrifice and livelihoods in the greater Green Bay area."

While it may often go unrecognized, Knight said there is no mistaking the value brought to the community by its music professionals.

"The importance of music and art in all of our lives, it can't be overstated," he said. "Those are some of the things that make life worth living, in my opinion and obviously many others. So to be able to recognize the folks who bring magic into our lives with music and to celebrate them and what they bring to our economy, to our lives and our industry, that's a big opportunity. The BAMMY's came out of a need for us to recognize the folks in our community that kept going unrecognized and making music and creating magic in our lives through it."

To provide those folks with some recognition, awards were given out in 25



categories last year, covering a range of involvement in the music industry.

"We came up with 25 different award categories, which is only the bare minimum the committee and our team could produce in order to recognize all of the most basic foundational genres and aspects of the music industry," he said. "And it's not just about the folks who are making music, but also community players who are supporting it, promoting it, producing it and creating different spaces where music can be celebrated."

For this year's awards, additional categories have been added to recognize an even broader range of music professionals.

Being selected as the winner of a BAMMY award, Knight said, is a celebration and recognition of that hard work and dedication that so often goes unnoticed.

"We have a lot of really dedicated,

talented individuals..." he said. "It's important that we bring that part of the community out and we shine a spotlight on it. It's about more than having one individual on the mic. It's about amplifying the voices of all the music industry folks in our community. This is the opportunity for someone to walk away with an award knowing that they were a leader in their industry, and hopefully we'll be bringing more folks to the table to continue to create that music economy and industry."

Nominations for this year's BAMMY awards will be open Dec. 1-Jan. 1.

A public voting period will be held Jan. 1-Feb. 1.

This year's BAMMY Awards Show will span two dates this year: Wednesday, March 19, and Thursday, March 20.

Learn more about the BAMMY Awards and how to submit a nomination or vote at thetarlton.com. CP

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Northeast Wisconsin's Hidden Gems

The first Pulaski Grade and High School was located on the property which is now the Glenbrook School. The high school arch, which was the original entrance to the building, is situated on the north side of the present school. The high school was built in 1909, with additions in 1924, 1939, 1942, 1951 and 1955. In 1975, the building became Glenbrook Elementary and the high school was relocated to the property Pulaski Community Middle School now calls home. In 1999, a new community high school was constructed. Kris Leonhardt photos



Cherney Maribel Caves County Park is a geological area that was formed by glacial activity which wore down the land and exposed a rock mass called Niagara Dolomite and formed a rocky cliff. Glacial ice melt, the climate and springs have created an environment which includes caves, rare ferns, wildflowers and woods, making it a rare beauty in the state. The park was acquired by Manitowoc County in November of 1963. Right next door sits the ruins of the Maribel Caves hotel, on private property but visible from the park. The hotel was built by Austrian immigrant Charles Steinbrecker in 1900. The structure is reminiscent of medieval castles with a rounded tower and imposing limestone walls of stone harvested from Steinbrecker's lime kilns. The hotel functioned as a therapeutic spa due to a natural spring and changed ownership over the years. The historic building was abandoned in 1985, following a fire. The park is located at 15401 County Rd R, Maribel. For more information, visit www.maribelcaves.com.



The 1912 William Edward Minahan Mausoleum is located at 1542 S. Webster Ave., Green Bay. The tomb, overlooking the Fox River, was built in the Neoclassical Revival style — a revival of Greek and Roman classical styles — which was popular in Wisconsin, 1895 – 1935, after the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago in 1893 and featured similar structures. Minahan was a physician in the Fox Valley area. Several of his siblings also worked in the medical field. Minahan boarded the Titanic at Queenstown on April 10, 1912, as a first-class passenger with his wife Lillian and sister Daisy. William perished in the sinking and his body was forwarded to a family member in Green Bay on May 2, 1912. He was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Green Bay.

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Freezin' for a reason

Polar Plunge participants raise money for Special Olympics

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

This winter, people across the state will commit to taking an icy dip to raise support and funds for Special Olympics Wisconsin during this year's Polar Plunge.

"As a Polar Plunger, you register to participate in one of our Polar Plunges across the state, create your own fundraising page and start fundraising for Special Olympics Athletes across the state," said Addie Teeter, vice president of marketing communications for Special Olympics Wisconsin. "Get creative and have fun!"

By getting in on the action, Polar Plungers are participating in a decades-long tradition.

"The first Polar Plunge took place more than 26 years ago by Law Enforcement Torch Run officers (law enforcement teams who raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics)," Teeter said.

When planning to take the plunge, participants are invited to form a team to take the dip with and show up to their event with costumes and lots of team spirit.

Plunge depths will vary by location and temperatures are expected to be chilly, but law enforcement and fire department volunteers will be in the water to ensure everyone stays safe during their plunge.

This year's events will take place in Wisconsin Rapids on Feb. 1, Oshkosh on Feb. 8, Madison on Feb. 15, Green Bay on Feb. 22, La Crosse and Milwaukee on



March 1, Chippewa Falls on March 8 and Whitewater on March 15.

For those who are looking for a way to participate and show their support without taking the plunge, Teeter said there are several other ways to get involved.

"If you would like to support Special Olympics Wisconsin but do not want to take the icy dip, donate to a friend or family member who may be plunging, or you can make a donation to our Alternative Plunge at <https://plungealternative.funraise.org>," she said. "If you are interested in volunteering at one of our Polar Plunge events or at a Special Olympics Wisconsin athletic event, visit

<https://specialolympicswisconsin.org/get-involved/volunteer/>

And if you're interested in taking the plunge but can't make it to one of the eight scheduled events, the Alternative Plunge option might be right for you.

"There are several ways people can do their own Alternative Plunge, from jumping with friends in a school pool, to taking a true cold plunge," Teeter said. "Just make sure you are safe and have fun!"

Each participant is required to raise \$100 between their time of registration and the day of their plunge, and fundraising through friends, family and social media is encouraged.

▲ This winter, people across the state will take an icy dip in support of Special Olympics Wisconsin.

All funds raised through the events will support the services offered by Special Olympics Wisconsin.

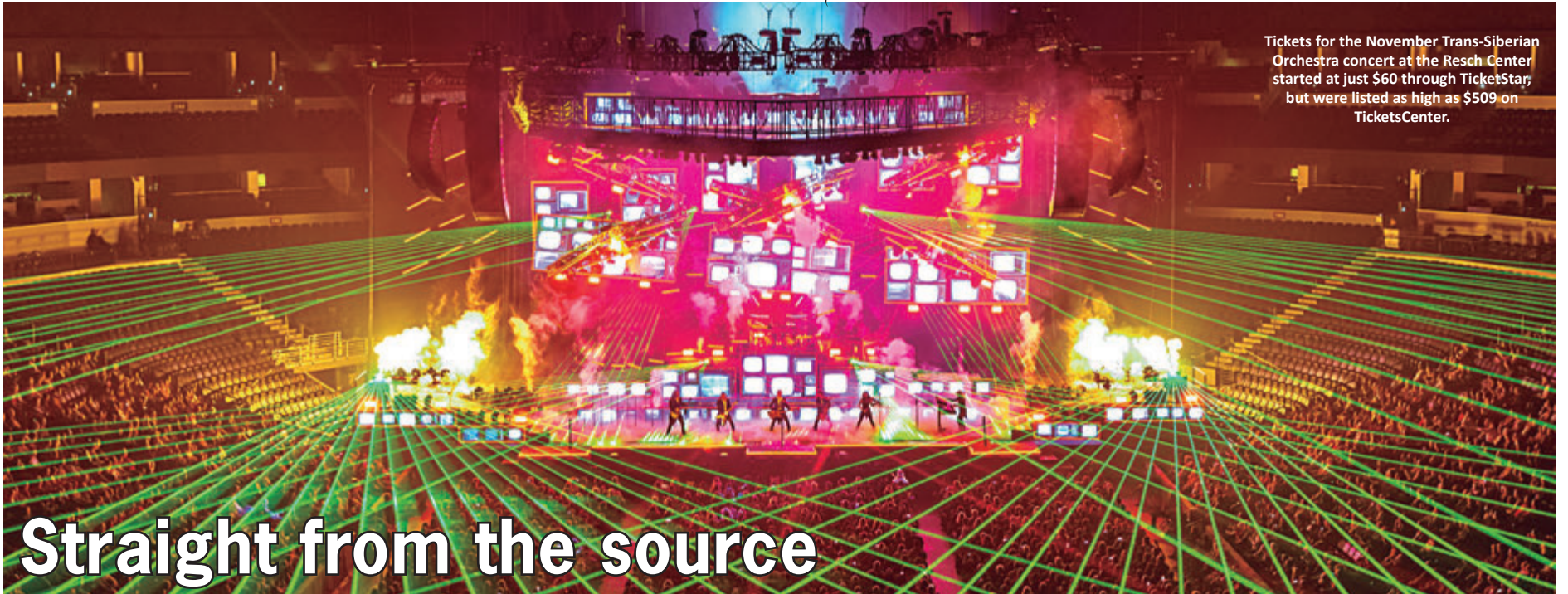
"Be sure to visit plungewi.org to get tips on some great ways to fundraise, and also have your questions answered about how you can prepare for your big plunge day," Teeter said. "100% of funds raised stay right here in Wisconsin supporting Special Olympics athletes in programming, competition, health and wellness activities and continuing education." **CP**



▲ For those looking to take the plunge but unable to attend an event, an Alternative Plunge option offers the opportunity to plunge wherever, whenever.



▲ Polar Plungers are encouraged to form a team, dress up in costumes and take the plunge together. Submitted photos



Tickets for the November Trans-Siberian Orchestra concert at the Resch Center started at just \$60 through TicketStar, but were listed as high as \$509 on TicketsCenter.

Straight from the source

Local venues warn customers to steer clear of secondary ticket sales

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

Exaggerated ticket prices from secondary sites is not just a problem plaguing major sporting events and concerts anymore — it's causing audience members at local venues to pay top dollar for events which regular price tickets are still available for.

Last week, local venue leaders joined forces to warn customers to avoid overpaying for tickets by making sure they're purchasing tickets straight from the source.

"The secondary ticket market is not something that's only occurring in larger communities or in international sporting and concert events that most people think of when they think of exaggerated prices on tickets," said Kate Williams, executive director at the Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center. "This is happening here at home, and that's why all of us are here together and united on this topic. Even at a venue that's the size of the Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center, which is 700 seats... We get calls frequently."

"It's almost getting out of hand how many people are buying tickets from secondary sites to our venues for events that are not sold out," said Terry Charles, senior manager, corporate communications at PMI Entertainment Group. "It's one thing if somebody chooses to use a secondary site to buy a ticket to something that they can't get a ticket to from the venue, but for us, we have tickets to events that are not sold out and they are mistakenly going to other sites that look like our sites and are paying tremendously more money, paying more fees, and getting little customer service because they technically aren't our customers."

For a showing of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra at the Resch Center in November, TicketStar, the official source of tickets for Resch Center events, lists ticketed starting

at \$60 with prices topping out at \$110.

TicketsCenter (tickets-center.com) — a third-party ticket sale service which appeared as the 'sponsored' link in a Google search for Trans-Siberian Orchestra tickets in Green Bay — showed available tickets for that evening's concert starting at \$159 and going as high as \$509.

Getting overpriced tickets, though, is actually one of the more positive outcomes of purchasing tickets through a secondhand site. The alternative? Paying top dollar for tickets that won't work.

"It's safe to say that for every major event we have, whether it's Alabama or the Trans-Siberian Orchestra or maybe even Disney on Ice, there's probably at least one to two to a handful for every show that it's a scam," Charles said. "They have a ticket that looks real, but that ticket has already been scanned in. And the first one that scans it is the one who gets in."

"We had the Styx concert recently, and we had a gentleman that bought eight tickets and resold them not only once, but twice to individuals from two different parties..." said Charles Edinger, director of TicketStar. "We take it very seriously when it comes to the box office because the patron is the one that's actually getting short changed here."

So how do people find themselves on secondary ticket sale sites? It's easier than you might expect.

"What will come up is going to be a number of choices and maybe the TicketStar of the Resch Center site is maybe going to be third or fourth down on the list and there's going to be other sites above that..." Charles said. "They're essentially paying to get the higher spots in the Google search. And we've done things to optimize where we can land up there, but we don't have unlimited dollars to make sure we're the first choice."

Ticket buyers aren't the only ones losing when they purchase from a secondary site — the practice harms venues, too.

"We don't know how many people are



seeing those inflated prices and saying, 'I'm not going to pay \$250 for a nosebleed seat...'" Charles said. "We don't really know how many people are making this decision not to buy tickets because it's so high. We see it on Facebook if we announce an event... We see in the comments, 'Wow, tickets are \$300...' And that's when we have to be on our mark and chime in and say, 'They're not that expensive, you're on a secondary site.'"

"There is a financial loss here that comes in the form of the trust from our patrons," said Kelli Stickland, executive and artistic director at the Weidner Center. "As a venue, we frequently get people standing in front of us as they're learning that they've been taken advantage of or misled, and often these are folks who've been very engaged with us and supported us for a long time. And they will ask, 'Can you refund the difference?' Well, we don't actually hold those dollars... Maybe intellectually people understand that, but it still has an impact on our relationship because the venue — the folks who are there with boots on the

▲ In November, tickets for the Feb. 28 Rascal Flatts concert at the Resch Center started at just \$50 on TicketStar's official site, while unofficial sales sites such as TicketsCenter listed tickets for a starting price of over \$300. Todd Owuoung photo

ground the night of the show — that's who absorbs the feelings that our patrons have about the experience that they have with us... There is a financial jeopardy here for us in the trust that our patrons have with us."

While TicketStar has implemented some safety measures to help alleviate the problem, little other action can be taken.

"I don't know that anybody's doing anything illegal here," said Edinger. "If you look at the site, they're telling you how they do business — that they're not associated with a venue, this is a ticket reselling site, that you bought tickets from a third party. Ultimately, what they're doing is they're selling you a promise... Many times they're promising tickets even before tickets are on sale to the public... You're simply buying a promise, and if you read all the fine print,

continues on 12 ►

We require theater

By Janelle Fisher
City Page Editor

Broadway Producer Oskar Eustis made a stop at Green Bay's Weidner Center at the end of October to discuss the essential nature of theater in an increasingly online society.



▲ Broadway Producer Oskar Eustis spoke at the Weidner Center this fall on the importance of theater in an increasingly online society. Janelle Fisher photos

"The internet is killing us and we require theater..." he told the audience. "What drama really does is force a character to directly experience the consequences of what they've done. And that's what happened in great drama — it reveals not only who the character is, but also the cause and effect of what we do... We are living in a world that is incredibly skillful at allowing people to evade the consequences of their actions. What better medium is there than social media to avoid the consequences of what you say and do? The way social media is structured right now, you live in a bubble where all you're going to hear is the positive feedback for the most hateful things that you can throw out into the world because you lob them over the net into some unseen other side, but whatever human damage happens over there is invisible to you."

In the theater, though, the consequences of each characters' actions — characters which audience members are often able to relate to — are not only visible, but showcased, demanding that those in attendance see and process them, regardless of their opinion of them.

Eustis questioned, "What else is left in this society where you get a group of



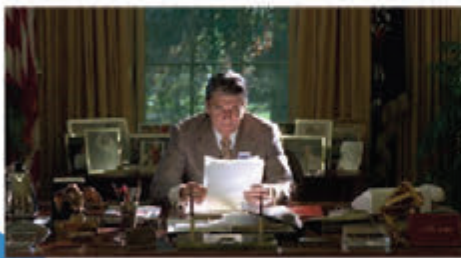
people together to go through experiences that can be emotional, deep, intellectual or controversial, where everybody doesn't have to agree before they come in?"

"I think of the theater as the study of human behavior — as kind of an experimental lab where we are exploring human behavior and human relationships," UW-Green Bay Theater Professor Alan Kopischke said. "We're studying how people work and then trying to replicate that believable and compellingly on stage. Those of us studying

▲ Eustis was joined on stage for a panel of local leaders in theater industry to discuss the importance of theater as a connecting force and as an educational tool.

it benefit tremendously from the insights we're able to glean from that work. And ideally our audiences have learned by going through these stories and having it play out right in front of them in the same room with other human beings. It's this

continues on 18 ►



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Submissions open for second annual Green Bay Fringe Festival

For City Pages

After the success of last year's inaugural event, the board of Green Bay Fringe Inc. has announced the second annual Green Bay Fringe Festival will take place July 17-20 at various locations throughout Green Bay's downtown districts.

The four-day event will host a variety of non-mainstream performances and educational events to celebrate and foster conversation around unique art.

The original Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, began in 1947 as an alternative to the Edinburgh International Festival.

The International Festival was conceived with the goal of bringing curated high-culture to the city in the form of musical acts and the performing arts.

Fringe developed as an alternative fest for those acts that showed up uninvited and wanted somewhere to perform anyway in whatever venues were available — theaters, galleries, bars, shops and more.

"Northeastern Wisconsin has spent the last 20 years growing a vibrant music, art, and theatre scene. We're excited to help bring the Fringe Festival setting to Green Bay and build on that groundwork," said Matt Worzala, a festival organizer and vice president of Green Bay Fringe Inc.

The Green Bay Fringe Festival will be "a confluence of diverse and vibrant artists and audiences," the organization's mission statement reads. "Our mission is to create a radical platform that celebrates art on



the periphery and fosters collaboration, dialogue, and innovation between performers and audiences alike. Through an eclectic mix of performances, exhibitions, and educational programs, we aim to make the arts accessible, inclusive, and equitable for all. We strive to not just entertain but to provoke thought, inspire change, and weave the ethos of 'fringe' into the cultural tapestry of our community."

Those interested in having an act in this summer's festival can submit an application Dec. 19-Jan. 30.

Submissions for the 2025 Green Bay

Fringe are open to acts encompassing a wide array of disciplines, including theater, dance, music, comedy, visual arts and more.

Artists from all backgrounds are eligible and encouraged to submit proposals detailing their envisioned performance for the Green Bay Fringe Festival.

Acts should be between 30-60 minutes long, including any curtain speeches or audience discussions.

Technical elements should be simple and able to be loaded in and set up/taken down in 15 minutes.

▲ Last year's Green Bay Fringe Festival brought a variety of acts to downtown Green Bay. Submitted photo

The festival is non-juried and acts will be selected on a first-come-first-served basis. A \$20 submission fee is required for all acts.

Further details about submissions and the Green Bay Fringe Festival can be found at gbfringe.com/submissions, on the Green Bay Fringe Facebook page or by reaching out to gbfringeboard@gbfringe.com. **CP**

◀ from 10

which rarely anybody does, you see that information. I don't know that there's any legal thing that can be done... Yeah, they're posing as venues or they're posing as ticket sellers that make it look like the venue, but they don't ever say they're the venue. That's where it gets tricky."

The burden of making sure tickets come from a legitimate source, then, falls to the consumer.

When looking for tickets to an event, the first step should be seeking out the venue's official website.

"Most venues are going to use their venue name in their web address," said Charles. "It's meyertheatre.org. It's weidnercenter.com. It's reschcenter.com. That's the simplest way to make sure you're on the right site... And then once you're there, venue sites are pretty obvious in how they're laid out. These other sites, even though they have pictures of our venues, they just don't have the same feel. It really goes back to the old 'buyer beware.'"

If you're ready to check out, double check that the information being provided to you is consistent with what you would expect from an official site.

"When you're checking out, if they haven't been able to provide you with an exact seat location, that's a red flag," said Kate Williams. "What happens to customers that I've spoken with in our venue that have this happen to them, they call me after they've made their purchase saying, 'I'm curious and I'm wondering if I can find out where my seats are.' And the reason they don't have seat assignments is because, again, they're buying a promise from another party. That other party doesn't have the tickets yet. They're just offering the service of 'If you pay us x amount of dollars, we'll go find those tickets for you and then you'll get what you get.' If it just doesn't feel right, go with your gut. If the price seems way too high for something that you think you have a pretty good sense of what those tickets are going for, double check your source."

And if you're still unsure or something just doesn't feel right, don't hesitate to contact the venue via social media or a phone call.

"If you're having trouble finding the venue's website because of various circumstances — like if you're using a search engine and type in Weidner



Center, you might see a couple look-alike sites... Use social media as a tool to your advantage," said Troy Williams, marketing manager at the Weidner Center. "The Weidner does have a Facebook account — we have all the social media accounts. We will send you from our social media accounts to where you need to go to directly buy tickets... Or go to the artist's website, Instagram or Facebook. There will be direct links there to get you where you

▲ Leaders of local venues gathered last week to warn customers against purchasing tickets from secondary sites. Janelle Fisher photo

need to go. The artist never wants to steer you wrong... And listen to your gut. If it feels wrong or if it feels too expensive, it probably is."

TicketStar's official website can be found at ticketstaronline.com. **CP**

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Painted in the stars

Oconto artist fulfills lifelong passion

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

For Oconto Artist McKenna Kornowski art is more than just a hobby — it's a lifetime hobby and a career.

"My mom is a retired middle school art teacher, so I was brought up with art all around me," Kornowski said. "I think she said she put a crayon in my hand at the age of two and I started drawing at the kitchen table, so I've been an artist my whole life, much like many artists have."

Kornowski has since graduated from crayons and now works with a wide variety of mediums to create a style all her own.

"I call myself a mixed-media acrylic painter," she said. "Mixed media entails fabrics, papers, pages of books, sometimes even dead bugs — anything that I can use to add texture and depth to my work. It's the paint, but when you look closer, it's not only the paint. It's lots of stuff that I've found whether it's at a resale shop or at a garage sale."

Her experimentation with alternative mediums, Kornowski said, actually began on a trip to the thrift store.

"When it comes to the mixed-media elements in my work, that happened maybe nine or ten years ago," she said. "I was donating a bag of clothes to St. Vinnie's and I looked down at the bag of clothes and it was just so beautiful. The textiles had all of these bright patterns and textures to them and I thought, 'I spent good money on these clothes, why not make use of them some other way?' That's how my mixed media came about."

Growing up around Wisconsin, it took a few years spent living in Washington to really launch Kornowski's art career.

"I'm originally from Eau Claire, but I



▲ **Left:** Selling at various art markets, Kornowski said she has learned to take criticism in stride and focus on her passion. **Right:** Artist McKenna Kornowski draws inspiration from the wildlife around her Oconto home. Submitted photos

spent the majority of my life in Suamico," Kornowski said. "Recently, my husband and I moved to Washington state around 2016 and that's where my art career really took off. We took part in an outdoor art market in the middle of Washington state, in a little town called Leavenworth. It's a big tourist town and every weekend we would set up our art booth and sell to thousands of people throughout the state and lots of tourists."

While selling to the masses in Washington, Kornowski said she learned to take criticism in stride and focus on her passion for creating art.

"I've definitely learned to grow a much thicker skin as a painter," she said. "As artists, you're really putting your heart out there on your sleeve and I remember starting off, I'd hear a comment by a customer or someone just walking by. They

didn't mean anything by it, but I'd go home and think, 'Oh man, I've got to change this.' Or, 'I should do more of this.' I no longer take comments like that to heart... I don't want 100% of the people out there loving my work. I want to be kind of controversial in a way. I want people to ask questions. I know I'm an artist, I know I'm growing and that's what I'm here for. That's what I'm put on this Earth to do — to paint."

Since moving back to Wisconsin, Kornowski has made art her full-time job — something she never dreamed would be possible.

"The time that I spent in Washington, I was saving money and I was paying

off debt," she said. "Recently, I built a house and I did that all with my art sales — something I never thought could be possible. Ten years ago, if you told me that I'd be a painter, building a house and paying off my student debt with the things that I make with my hands, I'd laugh at you."

Her Northeast Wisconsin home and the wildlife that surrounds it serve as the subject for much of Kornowski's work these days.

"I tend to paint a lot of animals — sometimes trees and plants, but mostly animals," she said. "Coming back to Wisconsin really honed my interest in the animals around me. We just built a house on 14 acres of land, so I see a lot of birds and signs of animals that inspire me — foxes are a big one, raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks. Wisconsin and its environment has definitely inspired me in that way."

For other artists looking for inspiration for their own work or to introduce a new medium, Kornowski suggests taking a trip to your closet and seeing where it leads you.

"If you're just looking to branch out and don't know where to start, I always suggest that people look in their own closets at a blouse or a pair of pants that they haven't worn in a while and just be brave, cut it up and start laying fabric down," she said. "On a broader brush stroke — pun intended — just don't be afraid to make mistakes. That's part of it. You'd be surprised at how many bad paintings I make. You only showcase the good ones on Instagram or on your website, but don't be afraid to make a bad painting. It's completely part of the process."

To view more of Kornowski's work and find out about upcoming shows and exhibits, visit mckennakornowskiart.com. **CP**



Creating space for creatives

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

Decidedly not a gallery, Fishline Studios and Artist Collective in Algoma is a space for artists to showcase their creativity and share it with the community

“I have a hard time with the word ‘gallery,’” said Alicia Lerch, owner of Fishline Studios. “As an artist, I’m a messy person. I think of the word gallery as this carefully curated collection and we aren’t that. We want to give all creatives a space and, while not everything fits here, we have a really, really good mix of a lot of things. We have hand-beaded ornaments. We have watercolor paintings. We’ve gotten to be known as kind of Algoma’s rock shop, which is funny to me, but it works. We have Lake Michigan rock jewelry and crafted gifts. It’s a really good mix of things, where an art gallery might just be white walls and some oil paintings that are thousands of dollars. We love that, it’s just not what we currently are.”

What Fishline Studios and Artist Collective currently is, Lerch said, is an art consignment space.

“We try to maximize our artists as much as we can,” she said. “We wouldn’t be anything without them. We don’t charge a rental space fee or a wall space fee. We’re a consignment art gallery, so we will often put out an open art call. We want people to apply and then we set up appointments for them to bring in their work and we discuss our terms, which is a consignment rate. We

try to give back what we can to the artists, so we’re one of the lowest consignments in the area. We give 70% to our artists and we’re trying to keep our operations costs really low.”

To help make sure artists can continue to receive as much as possible, a new business has been established within the space.

“We opened an espresso bar in-house, so we have Origins Espresso and Boba Bar,” she said. “And that actually fuels the overall expenses for our space, which allows me to continue to give back to our artists the most for their work.”

For Lerch, opening Fishline Studios and Artist Collective helped not only to bring a bit of art back into Algoma, but also to make her dream of being a professional artist.

“I’ve always been interested in the arts, but it’s really hard as an individual artist to turn your dream into a fully funded job,” Lerch said. “It’s hard to be a professional artist... This space used to be the James May Art Gallery here in Algoma and they moved to Milwaukee... When I took over the space, I just knew that it was going to somehow be brought back to the arts. I just didn’t know how I was going to go about it because I didn’t make enough art to fill a whole space and really be a professional artist. But this space has given me the opportunity to do that. I absolutely love it and I love that we have all of these creatives together in one space.”

With so many creative minds represented under one roof, Lerch said the atmosphere is



always changing and always welcoming of new ideas.

“It’s always a different energy that comes in,” she said. “I’ll have work that goes one direction on the walls and I’ll put out an artist call in the other room and I never know what’s going to walk through the door, which is great because it keeps things fresh and amazing. I miss being a college student because you’re around all of that young, fresh, vibrant energy. I think that’s something that as we grow as adults, we


▲ Different artists have work on display at Fishline Studios all that time, meaning the atmosphere is constantly changing.

should be able to continue to embrace — that playful energy and that creativity that a lot of us don’t have time for as we get older. Something I’ve tried to embrace is having a space for other people to be able to come in and do those things.”

“We have this very niche market and we’re very walkable, so it’s easy for people to get around and check out everybody’s galleries and studio spaces and stores,” she said. “In the winter, we’re kind of like that Hallmark community. There’s always Christmas lights up and walkable winter markets happening. It’s nice to be outside the hustle and bustle of the bigger cities like Door County. Door County has a great gallery scene and a great art scene, but it’s nice to have something just a little bit different.”

Even within Algoma, Fishline Studios offers a different experience than other establishments, serving as not just a place for creatives, but for the whole community.

“I think my favorite thing is the community involvement — hosting classes and getting people in and doing different elements they’re not used to,” she said. “We host business meetings, which are an opportunity for small businesses to come together and troubleshoot problems that they’re all experiencing... It’s a great way to embrace being in the community and talk with your neighbors, but not at the bar. It’s a different way of going about things... It is very much a space for artists and to showcase creativity. I know not everybody thinks that they’re creative, but you don’t have to be to come hang out and just enjoy a different environment.”

To learn more about Fishline Studios and Artist Collective and stay up-to-date with upcoming events, follow Fishline Studios’ Facebook page. 



▲ Origins Espresso and Boba Bar recently set up shop at Fishline Studios to help fund the establishment’s operating costs.



▲ Fishline Studios and Artist Collective is a place where local artists can consign their work at one of the lowest rates in the area. Submitted photos

Artisan Residency Recap

For City Pages

At the end of the summer, the NWTC Artisan and Business Center welcomed six local artists into the fifth cohort of its Artisan Residency Program.

Over their year as residents, these artists will meet with Operations Coordinator Carrie Dorski and various mentors to learn all about what it takes to run an art-based business, including marketing, website design, branding and more, individualized to meet the needs of each resident while fostering a sense of community among them.

In addition to learning from mentors about how to take the next steps in growing their businesses, residents in the program will also benefit from the Artisan and Business Center's resources throughout the year with free classes and unlimited studio access.

This year's residents were introduced in the fall issue of City Pages.

Read on to learn more about how they are enjoying the program and what they've been learning, and check back in each quarterly issue of City Pages to keep up with them as they continue through the Artisan Residency Program.



Lynn R. Peters

What has been your favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

I've really enjoyed the individual coaching I've received. It's SO helpful to have someone help me think things through, and remind me that I've made genuine progress.

What has been the most helpful thing you've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

We spent some time on how to inventory our artwork. I started small, but have been astonished by the value I've gained out of the simple inventory system I created. Over time, I'll expand its capability, but for now my little inventory is saving me time and making it easier to respond to calls for art.



Sam Rowe

Samsconsin Art

What has been your favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

My favorite experience so far has been getting to know Carrie and my fellow artisans. It is a joy to have a community of folks who are cheering you on in your art journey and want to see you succeed.

What has been the most helpful thing you've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

The most helpful thing I've learned so far is how to inventory my art efficiently and track my business using Airtable. I have been able to organize so much better and missed fewer application deadlines thanks to Carrie's awesome template she shared with us.



Ben Thibodeau

Ben Thibothrow

What has been your favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

My favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program has been being given ample resources to run an effective art business. Having the ability to talk to experienced local artists and get their feedback and answers to questions I have has been amazing. The information at our cohort meetings we are provided with is very helpful and insightful such as how to set and achieve realistic goals or how to write a quality artist CV. I have also enjoyed having the privilege to use the Artisan Center Studio outside of regular operating hours. It's allowed me to work on my art on my own time and not have to worry about the Center's schedule.

What has been the most helpful thing you've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

The most helpful thing I've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far has been learning about correctly pricing items. We were given an outline of how to price our art based off of cost of materials, time it takes to produce the items, overhead, and other factors. Some things came out to more than I originally thought but that enforced an important idea that I should be pricing items based on my target market's budget and not my own.



Laura Schley

What has been your favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

I've really been enjoying the group conversations with my fellow residents and collecting the random but useful nuggets of information, tips, and thoughts from the cohort. Knowing that we are all on this journey together allows for all sorts of questions to pop up that we can explore together.

What has been the most helpful thing you've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

The most helpful thing I've learned is that I am my own brand and that I am reflected in my work. I can lean more into who I am and not be so concerned about following set rules when it comes to social media or whatnot. I carry my brand with me in the clothes I wear and how I interact with people. I am me. And that is more than enough, and I can share it in a way that feels true and authentic to me.



Jill Steen

Deadbeats Pottery

What has been your favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

I always look forward to our cohort meetings. The art world is brand new to me and the meetings have been a wealth of information and resources. Hearing how my fellow artists go about their art practices has been super inspiring. The meetings feel to me a little like artist therapy!

What has been the most helpful thing you've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

Being constantly reminded that I am in charge of both my art practice and business has been so valuable to me. Being encouraged to set goals that are unique to me, rather than following a set model, has given me so much freedom. I'm able to focus on making work that is fun and fulfilling for me, rather than getting bogged down worrying about outside expectations.



An author of many names

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

Although Wisconsin-based author Beth Amos always dreamed of having her work published, her journey to becoming a published author wasn't always an easy one.

"I sent my first short story out when I was 17 years old to a magazine and it was rejected," she said. "I spent most of my early adult years trying to write short fiction and trying to get it published in women's magazines... I never had any success with that and I was also a single parent for a lot of that time and also working full-time as a nurse. It didn't leave me with a whole lot of time for writing, but I had to go back to school to get my bachelor's degree in health management and had a lot of elective courses to take, so I used all of those electives to take writing courses — journalism, technical writing, memoir writing, newspaper article writing, every kind of writing class they had. And of course I took some creative fiction writing classes as well."

It was there that Amos transitioned from short stories to full-length works and began refining her writing process.

"In one of those classes, I decided to try to write novel-length stuff instead of short fiction," Amos said. "I ended up hiring one of the instructors after the class was over — he was a grad student — to edit my work, go through it and show me the things I was doing right or doing wrong and show me how I could strengthen my writing. I was pretty frustrated after literally decades of trying to get something published. So I had a novel I had written and I met with him every week at a coffee shop on campus and he would edit the chapter that I'd given him that week before he'd hand it back to me and we'd go over it. Then I'd hand off a new chapter and we just kept doing that until we got to the end of that novel, which was a really bad novel and I ended up just kind of throwing it in the closet and starting over."

Beth Amos

Under her own name, Beth Amos was finally able to have her work published.

"I started over with a different type of novella — a standalone novel about a paranormal thriller kind of thing," she said. "It was more in the line of Dean Koontz, which was the stuff I was reading back then. I ended up finding an agent with that book. It took me like 29 query letters to actually find an agent, and then she was able to sell it to Harper Collins as part of a two-book contract."

Those two initial books did well enough to earn Amos a contract for a third book, but rapid change to the publishing industry brought on by the rising popularity of ebooks meant that Amos was dropped by Harper Collins just before the book launched and sales were much poorer



than her first two books due to a lack of promotion.

But that didn't deter Amos from continuing to pursue her passion.

Annelise Ryan

Moving on from her stand-alone novels, Amos turned to a different style and subject.

"I had started trying to write another book — something fictional that would help me portray some of the humor that I'd encountered in my life in the medical field," she said. "Medical people are some of the funniest people on the planet and there were just so many funny things and funny situations that I wanted to be able to share and write about. So I started trying to write a different type of a mystery where a nurse is the main character and I decided to have her go work in a medical examiner's office."

But something just wasn't quite right about the new novel — a problem which was quickly solved by a change of scenery.

"I originally tried to set it in Virginia, which is where I lived at the time, and it just wasn't working..." Amos said. "Then I moved to Wisconsin and decided to change the setting of the book to Wisconsin and suddenly it all just worked. Wisconsin is just strange enough and unique enough in so many ways that everything about it just worked. So I rewrote the book with the Wisconsin setting and eventually found an agent for that as well, and that agent was able to sell the book as part of a multi-book contract to Kensington."

The Mattie Winston mystery series continued with Kensington for 12 books, but not under the name Beth Amos.

"When Kensington wanted to do the Mattie Winston mysteries, they looked back and said that since my last book with Harper Collins hadn't sold very well, they were afraid book sellers would look at Beth Amos and see that the name didn't sell very well and if they put it on a new series, it

might taint it. So they

wanted me to come up with a pseudonym.

Amos settled on Annelise Ryan for the series and two spin-off books — Annelise for her middle name, Ann, and Ryan for her son.

Allyson K. Abbott

Annelise Ryan wasn't the only pseudonym Amos adopted while working with Kensington, though.

"One of the editors that I worked with [at Kensington] said, 'I've always wanted to see a mystery set in a Cheers kind of environment with a bar,'" Amos said. "I said, 'You know, I live in Wisconsin, so a bar kind of goes hand-in-hand.' I created a bar owner in Milwaukee who has a neurological disorder called synesthesia that helps her to solve these mysteries... But when this editor approached me about the Cheers setting for mysteries, they told me they wanted me to come up with a different pseudonym. The Mattie Winston mysteries, at this point, were around book four and they weren't sure how the sales were going to do. They didn't want the new series to tank the Annelise Ryan series if the new series didn't take off and then vice versa — if for some reason the Annelise Ryan series started to tank, they didn't want that to taint the new series."

And thus, Allyson K. Abbott was born — Abbott because Amos wanted a last name that would put her at top shelves in bookstores and Allyson K. for the initials, A.K.A.

As Allyson K. Abbott, Amos put out a six-book series featuring crime-solving, drink-mixing bar owner Mack Dalton.

But as uncertainty again hit the publishing market, Amos found herself being dropped once more and again turning to Wisconsin for inspiration.

Annelise Ryan, again

"Being in Wisconsin has actually been a big bonus for me because Wisconsin really is just such a unique and kind of quirky place," Amos said. "It's got its own personality and that personality has really helped me in writing my books. It's a character all of its own and that's really given me a lot of ideas and helped move things along."

"My agents and I put our heads together and came up with an idea for a cryptozoologist to be the main character and I was able to convince Berkeley that I could set several books in Wisconsin, because Wisconsin has a bunch of cryptids," Amos said. "It's got Bigfoot lore and a Loch Ness-type lore and the Hodag, Beast of Bray Road and the Thunderbird — I could go on and on. We pitched that to Berkeley and they were all excited about it, so we ended up getting a two-book contract for that."

The new Monster Hunter Mysteries continues on 18 ▶



Annie Stenseth

Annie Stenseth Art

What has been your favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

My favorite experience in the Artisan Residency Program so far has been the opportunity to work and learn alongside other artists. It's been a period of focused creativity, where I've been able to make progress in ways I hadn't anticipated. The chance to share ideas, receive constructive feedback, and collaborate on projects has really expanded my creative perspective. Engaging with others who bring different skills and approaches to the table has not only pushed me to think outside of my usual process but has also opened up new possibilities in my own work. The exchange of insights and the support from fellow artists has made this experience enriching.

What has been the most helpful thing you've learned in the Artisan Residency Program so far?

The most helpful thing I've learned is the value of experimentation and allowing the process to guide the outcome. I've become more comfortable with taking risks and embracing uncertainty in my work. Whether it's trying out new methods or revisiting past ideas with a fresh perspective, the residency has shown me how important it is to trust the journey of creating, rather than focusing solely on the end result. I plan to integrate these insights by incorporating more experimentation into my practice, particularly with materials like glass and metal. I'm excited to explore new techniques, push my creative limits, and allow the process itself to lead to unexpected and meaningful results.

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Soda Bar sees new owners, expanded menu

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

Soda Bar, the area's first “dirty soda” establishment, changed hands in August, but fans of the establishment can rest assured knowing the new owners are passionate about the business and its growth.

Sisters Nichola Roberts and Stefanie Denklefsen purchased the business, which consists of two locations in Appleton, in August after planning to open their own establishment near Milwaukee.

“I’m originally from Green Bay, but I’ve been living in Idaho for the last 19 years,” Roberts said. “They’re very, very popular out here. I don’t want to say one on every



▲ One of Soda Bar’s most popular drinks is The Dr. McDreamy, featuring Dr. Pepper with strawberry, coconut, vanilla, and half and half.

corner, but it’s close to it... I moved back here in February to the Hartland area and I was going to open one with my sister, who was living in Appleton at the time. She was going to move down to Hartland and we were going to start one. We were looking in the Pewaukee area to open our first one and we had been looking at locations.”

Before they could pull the trigger on anything in Pewaukee, though, an opportunity to purchase Soda Bar arose.

“One of the original owners of Soda Bar, Ryan Allred, knew we were doing that and when he got a new job in Chicago, he asked us if we wanted to buy him out,” Roberts said. “There were multiple business owners with Soda Bar originally and we did not want to get into business with a bunch of people we didn’t know, so we told him we either wanted all of it or nothing and we would just start our own. They ended up selling us all of it.”

With the purchase of Soda Bar came its dedicated fan base, including some who have replaced their morning coffee with Soda Bar’s customizable sodas.

“We’ve had multiple customers come in and tell us they’re replacing Starbucks with us, so that’s always great to hear,” Roberts said. “We have a lot of new people that come in who are just curious, and then we’re getting regulars which is great for this kind of business.”

Roberts said there are several crowd favorites on the menu with a variety of base sodas.

“We have a Dr. Pepper drink called The McDreamy that is by far our best seller,” she said. “When people come in for the first time and ask what’s our most popular, that’s what we always recommend... There’s one called Caramel Apple that has a Mountain Dew base that even I was like, ‘That can’t be



▲ Soda Bar has two locations in Appleton: one at 134 E Northland Ave and another at 734 N Casaloma Drive. Soda Bar photos

good,’ and now that’s probably my favorite. The energy drinks have surprised me. I’m shocked at how many people like their mixed energy drinks. Those are crowd-pleasers.”

Since purchasing Soda Bar, Roberts said she and her sister have worked to expand the menu, making sure there is something for everyone — even those who aren’t looking for soda.

“We do offer things other than soda, because there are a lot of non-soda drinkers out there,” she said. “There’s also a lot of non-energy drinkers out there. Since taking over, my sister and I have added Crystal Lite mixes to it with water, so it’s a sugar-free, non-soda option, but it also still gives you the caffeine. We also do custom soda waters and we have a lot of sugar-free syrup options. I think there’s a misconception that if you go here, soda is what you’re getting. That definitely will sometimes persuade certain people not

to come, but we are trying to expand the menu so we are tailoring to everybody’s needs a little bit better.”

And moving forward, Roberts said she hopes to see the business expand even more, both on and off the menu.

“We’re still in the process of trying to expand the menu,” she said. “We really want to get pretzels or something like that on the menu. We’re always trying to find ways to grow. And not just in our menu. We’ve also been looking at different locations. We’re just excited about the future of Soda Bar.”

Find more information about Soda Bar and its selection of drinks at mysodabar.com. **CP**

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exciting laboratory of human behavior and relationships that is tremendously beneficial for everyone involved.”

Kopischke, who is also heavily involved in the community theater scene throughout Northeast Wisconsin, said he views theater as a sort of educational laboratory under which human behavior can be studied without personal inputs skewing results.

“Political tensions have made it really hard for people to talk to each other and for people to empathize with other points of view, but theater is a place where we can bring people together,” he said. “We can throw some ideas and some characters into a room and watch stuff happen and maybe walk out of there understanding people who are different from us. Maybe we see the way that these kinds of interactions could play out and can incorporate those things into our own lives.”

With theater standing as such a powerful educational tool, the art of

theater often struggles to garner support for its continuation, including at UW-Green Bay, where just last year the future of the theater major was uncertain.

“We were asked to suspend admissions to our major,” Kopischke said. “We think it’s essential that we continue to have a major on the campus — it is the core of what we’re able to do with the theater department on campus... We’re retooling and coming up with some pretty exciting ideas about how to make this a really unique program that will draw plenty of people and be financially viable, meeting those concerns. But we’re an all-access institution and we are really the only affordable theater program for miles around in any direction. And in order to really be an all-access institution, we have to be able to get the opportunity of studying theater as a major to this enormous Northeast Wisconsin population at a lower price than the private universities are able to offer. Otherwise, we’re not really being all-access. A robust

theater experience is an essential part of the university experience.”

While the benefits of attending and participating in theatrical experiences are abundant, whether on the stage or in the audience, Kopischke said Northeast Wisconsin still does not have as robust of a theater-going population as places like Milwaukee and Chicago.

“The Green Bay area does not have a history of regular theater-going as a practice,” he said. “I think the local theaters are doing a really good job of building that, but there’s no infrastructure there, and so we’re having to build the infrastructure... It’s a lot of work... The awareness and the habit of looking for what’s playing in the theaters this weekend, that’s just not there. When you’re in Milwaukee or in Chicago, there’s a whole cohort of folks who are looking for what’s on each weekend. That’s not a tradition so much in our community, but I think it would really enrich the community to reach that point.” **CP**

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series would be published under the Annelise Ryan pseudonym.

The first book, *A Death in Door County*, was released in September of 2022, following book store owner and cryptozoologist Morgan Carter as she investigates a potential homicidal monster in Lake Michigan.

The second book in the series, *Death in the Dark Woods*, hit the shelves in December 2023, this time centered around a potential Bigfoot sighting and its link to a vicious murder.

Book three in the series, *Beast of the North Woods*, is slated for release at the end of January 2025 and takes place in Rhinelander, Wisc., where Morgan Carter finds herself investigating the death of a fisherman who locals claim was attacked by a hodag.

A book launch for *Beast of the North Woods* will be held at Lion’s Mouth Bookstore in Green Bay on Jan. 28.

Learn more about Beth Amos and her writing at bethamos.com. **CP**

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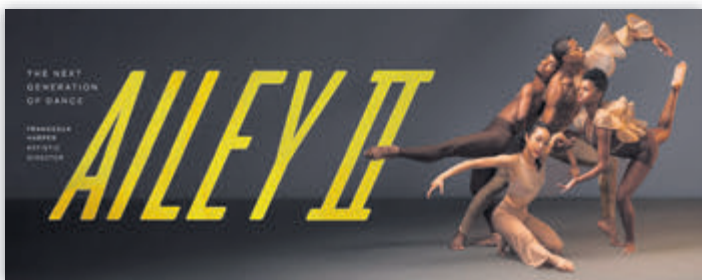
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