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\$2.00

**Section A**

# VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW



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## Oneida data shows speeding, crash injuries on the rise

BY MICHELLE DREW  
CORRESPONDENT

With more people rediscovering the North Woods as a tourist destination, residents have voiced concerns about an increase in people speeding and driving recklessly on area roads and highways.

Data provided by local law enforcement backs those concerns up. Speeding citations in Oneida County have increased by 160% in the last five years according to reports provided by Patrol Captain Tyler Young.

In 2020, Oneida County Sheriff's Department logged 204 citations for speeding. In 2021, that number increased to 359, then again in 2022 to 391. The department issued 356 citations in 2023, then a staggering 530 citations in 2024.

Young attributes the increase in citations to more people visiting the North Woods.

"More tourism dollars means more people on the roads. There has been an increase in traffic since

Covid here in Oneida County, and Vilas County is no different," he said.

Young indicated the miles per hour over the speed limit is also increasing. While he used to see a lot more citations for people driving 10-plus miles per hour over the speed limit, the higher speeds that people are driving at can cause dangerous situations for everyone on the road.

"Now it's 20-plus miles per hour over the speed limit — we see people cruising at 80 to 100 mph to pass long lines of cars on Highway 51."

Although the data is not specifically tracked, Young said he thought the majority of these speeding citations were issued to people not from the area. He speculated that it is a mix of impatience to get places, or people heading out of town that are anxious to get back home, as part of the reason for the higher travel speeds.

With increased speeds comes a bigger likelihood

To INJURIES Pg. 2

## Holiday church services scheduled in North Woods



Churches throughout the North Woods will be hosting Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. If a church doesn't have a time or date listed, contact them for more information.

—Photo By Michelle Drew

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

With Christmas and the new year just around the corner, local churches have posted their service times for the holidays.

The following holiday services celebrating Christmas and New Year's have been announced by area churches.

For organizations not listed, or for more information on these services, call the church's office.

### Eagle River

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church will hold Christmas Eve services on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 and 6 p.m., and a Christmas Day service on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 9 a.m.

First Congregational United Church of Christ will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.

Our Savior Lutheran Church will have candlelight services on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 3 and 5 p.m. A Christmas Day worship will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10 a.m.

St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Church will hold a Christmas Eve service at 4 p.m. and a midnight mass at 11 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 24. A Christmas Day service will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 25. A New Year's Eve mass will be held at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 31.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5:30 p.m.

St. Mary of the Snows Anglican Church will hold Christmas Eve services Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m., with lessons and carols and a Christmas Day service on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 11 a.m.

### Three Lakes

Faith Lutheran Church will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.

St. Theresa Catholic Church will hold Christmas Eve services Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. A Christmas Day service will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 8:30 a.m.

Three Lakes Evangelical Free Church will hold a

To SERVICES Pg. 2



HAPPY HOLIDAYS — Three Lakes Elementary School 2nd graders performed "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" at their annual holiday concert last week featuring Addalynn Kliss as Rudolph. —Photo By Jennifer West

## Outdoor rec adds record-breaking \$11.2 billion to state economy

Vilas tourism sees 4.2% revenue increase

BY JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The outdoor tourism industry witnessed a record-breaking boom across the state in 2023, raking in \$11.2 billion into the state economy, and a similar influx was witnessed closer to home in Vilas County.

The announcement was made last Tuesday by Gov. Tony Evers, Wisconsin Department of Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers, and Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation Director Cassie Mordini, marking the second consecutive record-breaking year, as announced by Gov. Evers back in June.

According to the latest release of data from the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), outdoor recreation contributed \$11.2 billion to the state's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023, growing 9.4% over the previous record set in 2022.

The tourism industry is one of the most vital for the economy of Vilas



The outdoor tourism industry is hitting its second record-breaking year in a row, with similar trends being seen in Vilas County. —Staff Photo By KURT KRUEGER

County, supporting 2,138 jobs and businesses benefitting from total sales just shy of \$380 million, up 4.2% from 2022, in 2023 according to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Tourism Economics, and Longwoods International.

"I have attended events all over Vilas County and they have had great turnouts," said Collette Sorgel with the Vilas County Department of Tourism and Publicity. "In talking to business owners, when visiting the

towns in Vilas County, they shared that they had a great summer/fall season. When my husband and I go hiking around the county, the trails are being utilized and we see a lot of foot traffic, bikes, and ATV's. People everywhere are enjoying the beauty of the North Woods."

"From our vast and valuable forests, and pristine lakes and rivers, to driftless bluffs, vibrant prairies, and urban green spaces, our outdoor recreation spaces are the

gems of our state, and no matter where you go in Wisconsin, you're never very far from a park or trail," said Gov. Evers. "Not only is outdoor recreation good for our mental and physical health, it's also a powerful economic engine that supports thousands of jobs and families across Wisconsin, bolsters local economies, and attracts visitors, businesses, and new residents alike."

Added Tourism Secretary Sayers, "The increase in outdoor recreation travel is a testament to Wisconsin's remarkable natural assets, our passionate guides, and dedicated tourism professionals that leverage our beautiful state and our outdoor recreation offerings to attract visitors from near and far to discover the unexpected. With the Office of Outdoor Recreation supporting this important sector, we can be confident the outdoors remain a top reason people choose to visit Wisconsin."

When using updated 2022 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data, all topline metrics for the outdoor recreation industry in Wisconsin were record-breaking:

- \$11.2 billion contributed to Wisconsin's GDP—up 9.4 %
- 2.6 % share of Wisconsin's GDP

To ECONOMY Pg. 2



SLEIGH RIDES — Some Sugar Camp Elementary School students enjoy a horse-drawn sleigh ride at the annual Santa Workshop and Sleigh Ride, sponsored by the Sugar Camp SCO, to kick off the Christmas holiday week. —Photo By Jennifer West



# WEATHER CORNER

Note: Precipitation amounts are recorded at 8 a.m. for the previous 24 hours.

LAST SEVEN DAYS			ONE YEAR AGO				
	Hi	Lo	Prec.		Hi	Lo	Prec.
Tues., Dec. 10	31	19	N/A	Sun., Dec. 10	30	21	1.2" S
Wed., Dec. 11	19	-9	N/A	Mon., Dec. 11	26	18	Tr. S
Thurs., Dec. 12	0	-11	N/A	Tues., Dec. 12	26	13	Tr. S
Fri., Dec. 13	18	-14	N/A	Wed., Dec. 13	31	12	Tr. S
Sat., Dec. 14	28	6	N/A	Thurs., Dec. 14	47	23	none
Sun., Dec. 15	36	28	N/A	Fri., Dec. 15	42	31	Tr. R
Mon., Dec. 16	16	5	N/A	Sat., Dec. 16	42	35	0.11" R

**LAST YEAR**  
The average daily high at this time last year for the next seven days was 35, while the average overnight low was 22. The average precipitation amounts were 0.5" of snow.

**SNOW DEPTH**  
Snow throughout the area has been melting as temperatures increased last weekend. Snow measured at around 0.5" in depth at around noon on Monday, Dec. 16.

**ICE CONDITIONS**  
Increased temps may have decreased ice thickness on some local lakes, but some lakes — notably Watersmeet Lake in Eagle River — may have ice as thick as 8 inches.

**5-DAY OUTLOOK**

Wednesday: Mostly cloudy.	Hi:20	Lo:8
Thursday: Snow likely.	Hi:19	Lo:7
Friday: Partly cloudy.	Hi:20	Lo:3
Saturday: Times of sun and clouds.	Hi:16	Lo:2
Sunday: Times of sun and clouds.	Hi:21	Lo:11

PORTIONS OF THE WEATHER CORNER ARE THROUGH THE COURTESY OF DARYL RUTKOWSKI, EAGLE RIVER, WISBURN, WVIC AND NEWSWATCH 12 WEATHER.

# NEWS

## Services

FROM PAGE 1

Christmas Eve candlelight service Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 6 p.m.

### Conover

Conover Evangelical Free Church will hold a Christmas Eve service Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m.

Pioneer Lake Lutheran Church will be offering a Blue Christmas Worship and Meditation on Saturday, Dec. 21 at 11 a.m., alongside a Christmas Eve worship service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m.

### Land O' Lakes

St. Albert Catholic Church will hold a Christmas Day service, Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 9:15 a.m. and a New Year's Day service Tuesday, Dec. 31 at 6 p.m.

Ely Memorial Church UCC will hold a Christmas Eve family candlelight service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m.

### Phelps

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 6 p.m. and a Christmas Day



service on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 9 a.m.

St. Mary Catholic Church will hold a Christmas Day service on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 7:30 a.m. and a New Year's Day mass on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, at 7:30 a.m.

### St. Germain

St. Germain Community United Church of Christ will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24

at 6:30 p.m.

Northlife Church will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 3 p.m.

### Sugar Camp

St. Kunegunda Catholic Church will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m. and a Christmas Day service on Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10:30 a.m. A New Year's Eve service will be

held on Tuesday, Dec. 31 at 4 p.m.

### Sayner

Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church will hold a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m.

### Boulder Junction

The Community Church of Boulder Junction will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m.

## MMC announces holiday break for printed editions

MMC will not publish a printed edition of this paper between Thursday, Dec. 26, through Wednesday, Jan. 1.

This will allow employees to enjoy quality time with their families during the holiday season. This publication will resume publishing on its regular day after the new year begins.

## St. Germain house fire deemed 40% loss

A St. Germain house was deemed a 40% loss after a fire that started in its kitchen last Monday, according to the Vilas County Sheriff's Department.

The Vilas County dispatch center received a report of a house fire located at 1410 State Highway 155 in the Town of St. Germain last Monday, Dec. 9, a little after 6:30 p.m.

Upon the arrival of emergency personnel, heavy smoke could be seen coming from the home and there were visible flames inside the structure.

The homeowner was home at the time of the fire and was able to evacuate the structure prior to calling 911.

Based on the initial investigation, it was determined that the fire may have started in the kitchen before spreading throughout the house into the attic. The cause is still under investigation.

Crews that responded to the fire included the fire departments from St. Germain, Plum Lake and Arbor Vitae, the St. Germain Ambulance Service, Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) and the Vilas County Sheriff's Department.

## Injuries

FROM PAGE 1

that accidents will result in injuries.

The number of accidents reported in Oneida County has remained steady over the last five years with an average of 255 accidents per year. On the rise though is the number of injuries; in 2020 there were 59 injuries, which then jumped to 74 in 2021, 84 in 2023, 94 in 2023, and 81 so far in 2024.

Young expects to see that number of injuries rise this month as winter weather and bad road conditions set in, paired with an increase in holiday travel.

### Rise in dangerous driving

Although visitors are responsible for more of the speeding tickets, Young attributed the rise in operating while intoxicated (OWI) citations more to local drivers, noting that he has noticed an increase in individuals being charged with multiple offenses.

He added there has also been an increase in OWIs unrelated to drinking — i.e. operating while under the influence of marijuana, methamphetamines, heroin and other drugs.

"These aren't just happening at Friday night fish fry; you see these at all times of day — it can be

a Tuesday afternoon at 1 p.m.," Young said.

Incidents of high speed chases also have intensified and become much more dangerous.

While Young said there have always been these types of chases, this year has been "very scary" with "aggressive people driving like they're playing Grand Theft Auto." He noted, over the summer, they had three high-speed chases in one week, calling the number of these incidents "crazy."

"Sure, we've always had these chases, but it used to be like a mile or two and then it would be over. Now you see people driving on rims with no tires, hitting other vehicles, and traveling at high rates of speed across county lines.

"There is definitely more defiance toward local law enforcement than there was 30 years ago when I started," Young said, adding the incidents are becoming "more extreme."

Young also noted distracted driving has become a big problem.

"In some cases you can see the accident on private video, and distracted driving is huge," Young said. "It's not just people being on their phones, but the cars themselves — with all the touchscreens, connecting to devices, streaming devices — these can all be really distracting for people who are behind the wheel."

Along with speeding, OWIs and distracted

driving, reckless driving citations are also escalating.

In 2020, the department issued 341 tickets for reckless driving; then in 2022, 431; 2023, 405; 2023, 362; and 465 reckless driving citations so far in 2024. That is a 30% increase in the last five years. In 2020, there were seven citations for incidents of road rage. That reached a high of 19 citations in 2022. So far in 2024, there have been 15.

On the decline are cases of hit-and-run, which data shows had a high in 2021 of 23 and a low of eight in 2023. So far in 2024, there have been 10 hit-and-run citations given in Oneida County. Meanwhile, car vs. deer accidents have remained mostly steady at around 350 reported each year.

The Oneida County Sheriff's Department is operating with a full staff, but Sheriff Grady Hartman has secured a grant that will bring extra patrol to the area next year, which will help local law enforcement not only patrol more effectively, but also respond more quickly to accidents. Young noted that currently there is one state trooper that covers all of Vilas, Oneida, Forest and Florence counties.

### High-powered sleds

Snowmobile fatalities and citations are also on the rise, which Young credits to faster machines on the market.

"I don't like to say it, but I

predict we're going to see a lot more accidents, fatalities and citations. Sleds are just too fast, and too powerful. There's no need for it."

He did acknowledge that the machines have made improvements in other safety-related areas and handling, but people's reaction times at these higher speeds are a problem. "You get some liquid courage in you, and bad decisions are made."

Law enforcement works closely with the many area snowmobile clubs to help keep riders safe.

"We have a great working relationship with local snowmobile clubs," Young said. "Club officials call us when they have events coming up so we can be sure to have a presence there. We come down for events in Vilas and Oneida to patrol these big events."

He noted much of the patrol is targeted toward the northern part of the county where more lake-effect snow falls.

Oneida County currently has five patrol sleds: two for use by Oneida County Sheriff's Office, and one for each of the three police departments in Three Lakes, Minocqua and Woodruff. They have a request into the Oneida County Board for funds to expand the number of patrol sleds.

Vilas County Sheriff's Department did not respond to requests to provide data.

## Economy

FROM PAGE 1

• 96,867 jobs supported — up 3.4%

• 3.2% of state employment

• \$5.4 billion in employee compensation — up 8.9%

The report showed that Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry grew across the board, with all but one category increasing

year over year.

Top contributing sectors by activity in Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry included:

- Multi-use apparel and accessories: \$1.3 billion
- Motorcycling/ATVing: \$1.1 billion
- Boating/fishing: \$928 million
- RVing: \$464 million
- Games Areas: \$499 million
- Guided Tours/Outfitted Travel: \$450 million

• Hunting/Shooting: \$320 million

• Bicycling: \$157 million

Nationally, the outdoor recreation industry grew to \$1.2 trillion in gross output and, for the second year in a row, contributed more than \$1 trillion in gross output to the U.S. economy. The industry employed nearly 5 million people nationwide.

When compared with national statistics,

To ECONOMY Pg. 8

**FREE ENTRY**  
Pre-registration Required



**-WINTER ECOLOGY & WILDLIFE TRACKING-  
SNOWSHOE**

**1-4 PM** **18**  
SATURDAY JANUARY

Join Trees For Tomorrow (TFT) staff on a snowshoe hike at Tara Lila in Eagle River. We'll look for animal signs and tracks while enjoying the peace and beauty of a Northwoods winter.

Thanks to a generous sponsorship from the Aylward Family, this program is FREE. However, space is limited and pre-registration is required.

Participants will meet at TFT before caravanning to Tara Lila. Wooden snowshoes will be provided free of charge. Participants are welcome to bring their own.

Recommended for ages 10+ (those <18 must be accompanied by an adult). The hike will last 60-90 minutes through 1-2 miles of occasionally unlevel terrain.

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# NEWS

## Limited walleye harvest continues thru season on Minocqua Chain

Same rules apply for next season

BY MICHELLE DREW  
CORRESPONDENT

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (NRB) allowed the continuation of limited harvest of walleyes on the Minocqua Chain of Lakes in Oneida County for the remainder of the 2024-24 season at its Dec. 11 meeting.

According to Kari Lee-Zimmerman, Fisheries Regulations and Policy specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), tribal harvest of walleyes using high efficiency gear occurred on the Minocqua Chain of Lakes this year, and continuing to allow harvest by state licensed anglers allows them to “more fully participate in this shared walleye fishery.”

The emergency rule was put into place last spring after the Lac du Flambeau Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe indicated its intent to spear the Minocqua Chain, despite limits that were put into place in

2015 in an effort to restore adult walleye population densities.

While the reproductive goals were achieved in 2021, Lee-Zimmerman said a partner group consisting of local fishing and conservation organizations, the DNR, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the Lac du Flambeau Band recommended extending the catch-and-release period for additional time to allow the walleye population to grow further. However, in 2024 the tribe declared its intent to permit members to harvest walleyes on the Minocqua Chain and followed through with harvest, taking 992 walleyes.

“Under current rules, state licensed anglers are limited to catch-and-release fishing for walleye on the Minocqua Chain of Lakes until April 1, 2025, at which point the season would open to limited harvest,” Lee-Zimmerman explained.

But considering the harvest made by the tribe, the department proposed emergency rules to allow limited harvest by state-licensed anglers, as well as to “promote fair and equitable use of the walleye



Zimmerman

resource during the 2024-2025 fishing season,” she explained.

The emergency rule was set to expire Jan. 31, 2025, but this extension will now run until April. Had the extension failed to pass the NRB Board, state fishers would have been limited to catch-and-release walleye fishing throughout the remainder of the 2024-25 season.

The rule — which repealed a provision in administrative code that prohibited harvest of walleyes until the 2025 season — established a daily bag limit of one fish with an 18-inch minimum length limit, while walleye from 22 to 28 inches are not allowed to be kept. That 22 to 28-inch limitation aims

to preserve walleye that can make the biggest impact on spawning success and population growth.

“This is the same regulation that is already established for the permanent rule that will go into effect April 1, 2025, for the 2025 fishing season,” Lee-Zimmerman noted. “This rule proposes a standard regulation that the department applies when the goal is to rehabilitate a walleye population, but where some harvest is sustainable.”

The board approved a similar statement of scope in 2023 after the Lac du Flambeau Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe declared its intent to permit members to harvest walleyes on the Minocqua Chain of Lakes in 2023. Tribal harvest of walleyes did not occur on the chain in 2023 and no rules were adopted at that time.

The Minocqua Chain of Lakes, located in Oneida County, includes Jerome, Kawaguesaga, Little Tomahawk, Mid, Minocqua, Mud and Tomahawk lakes, the Minocqua and Tomahawk thoroughfares and connecting waters.

## Forward Bank temporarily closes St. Germain office due to water damage

Forward Bank announced the temporary closure of its St. Germain location following a burst pipe in the ceiling. The office will remain closed while necessary repairs are completed.

During this time, the following services will not be available at the St. Germain location:

- In-person banking
- ATM access
- Business Boxes
- Night Deposit services

To ensure continuity of service, Forward Bank encourages customers to utilize the following alternatives:

- Digital Banking: Access accounts, transfer funds and manage banking needs via Forward Bank’s online banking platform or mobile app.

• Alternate Branch Location: Visit the nearby Three Lakes branch located at 6990 W. School St. for in-person assistance.

“We understand the inconvenience this may cause and are committed

to providing exceptional service through our digital platforms and the Three Lakes location,” said Jake Weinand, Northwoods Market President for Forward Bank. “Our team is working diligently to resolve this issue and reopen the St. Germain location as soon as possible.”

Forward Bank will provide updates regarding the reopening of the St. Germain location through their website at [www.forward.bank](http://www.forward.bank) and social media channels.

Forward Bank is a customer-owned, independent community bank that operates to benefit its depositors while offering no-fee deposit options, lower lending fees and rates.

Forward Bank currently has offices in Athens, Colby, Dorchester, Greenwood, Marshfield, Medford, Park Falls, Phillips, Rib Lake, St. Germain, Stanley, Thorp, Three Lakes and Withee in Wisconsin and Lake City in Minnesota.

## Jan Harris awarded 2024 Crimson FORK

Jan Harris of Three Lakes has been awarded the 2024 Crimson FORK by Feed OurRural Kids (FORK).

Harris has been co-director of the Three Lakes Christian Food Pantry for over 10 years.

“But this service to the community was not solely the basis for her receiving this recognition,” explained Crimson FORK Chairman Scott Foster.

Harris is also a member of the Faith Lutheran Churches Outreach Committee, which has presented the Weekend Backpack program every year since 2017 to the Three Lakes School District elementary counselor. At that time, her efforts to start the program were met with resistance and lack of interest by the district school.

Foster continued, “Each year they were turned down. But that never stopped them, as each succeeding year they tried again, though unsuccessfully.”

Until February of 2022, in partnership with FORK, their proposal was heard and accepted by current Three Lakes School District Administrator Teri Maney.

“The Three Lakes school district is grateful to have this kind of support for our area’s children from food insecure homes,” offered Maney.

Today, under Harris’ direction and with the full

support of Faith Lutheran Church in Three Lakes and the Three Lakes community, their Weekend Backpack program provides nutritional support to 38 kids in the Three Lakes School District.

“Jan stands out because she is smart, committed and not afraid to have her voice heard,” concluded Foster. “She stands as an example of what it is to put her community first, especially the children.”

Currently, the Three Lakes Christian Food Pantry supports families with 34 children each month, a number that continues to grow.

Individuals wishing to support the Three Lakes Christian Food Pantry can send their donations to P.O. Box 124 Three Lakes, WI 54562.

Individuals wishing to support the Three Lakes Weekend Backpack Program can send their donations directly to Faith Lutheran Church Weekend Backpack Program at P.O. Box 436 Three Lakes, WI 54562.

Above right: Co-director of the Three Lakes Christian Food Pantry for 10 years and founder of the Weekend Backpack program that provides nutritional support to 38 kids in the Three Lakes School District, Jan Harris has been named the recipient of the 2024 Crimson FORK.

—Contributed Photo



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# OBITUARIES

## Brandon Boone

Brandon J. Boone, of Land O Lakes died Monday, Dec. 9, 2024, in Oklahoma. He was 37.

He was born Jan. 18, 1987, in Rhinelander to Joseph and Donna Boone. Brandon lived in Land O Lakes and attended Northland Pines. Until he moved to Oklahoma with his mother where he graduated from Choctaw High School.

Mr. Boone worked as an aircraft mechanic at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City. When not working he enjoyed fishing and hunting.

Mr. Boone is preceded in death by his mother, Donna Boone.

He is survived by one son, Aiden; father, Joseph; stepmother, Christine Hagen Boone; two stepbrothers, James and Jason Hagen, Aunts, Uncles and cousins.

## Ronald Keller



Ronald Keller, age 65, of Land O Lakes, WI, passed away peacefully at his home on December 10, 2024.

He was born on July 23, 1959, in Sheboygan, WI, a son of Eunice (Thayer) Keller and the late Ronald Keller.

Ron attended Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah Grade School and High School, graduating in 1977. He

then went on to attend and graduate from Lakeshore Technical College. He worked for WE Energies for 40 years, retiring in 2020.

He enjoyed golfing, playing cards, bowling, and collecting lawn tractors. He was a member of the Boulder Junction Lions Club and loved lending a hand to anyone who needed it.

Survivors include his son, Keith (Lisa) Keller of Wisconsin Rapids; two grandchildren, Maya and Nolan; mother, Eunice Keller of Glenbeulah; brother, Randy Keller of Glenbeulah; sister, Renee Keller of Sheboygan Falls; Nephews, Adam Schmitz and Eric (Mariah) Schmitz; great-nieces, Mallory and Marley; and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his son, Phillip Keller and father, Ronald Keller.

A memorial service was held Tuesday Dec. 17, 2024, at the Suchon Funeral Home in Plymouth with Rev. Don Johnson, Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, who officiated. Burial will be at Greenbush Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund is being established in Ron's name for Zion Lutheran Church in Glenbeulah.

The Suchon Funeral Home is assisting the family. For online condolences, please visit [www.suchonfh.com](http://www.suchonfh.com).

PAID OBITUARY

## Gaffney-Busha Funeral Home & Alpha Crematory

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## NOTICE: Obituary policy

Death notices that appear in this space weekly are written and/or edited for content and consistency by assistant editors of the Vilas County News-Review and The Three Lakes News. Obituaries written in the paper's standard format are printed at no charge. Unedited obituaries written by the family may be printed for a fee, either in the obituary column or in smaller type with a border. For more information, call (715) 479-4421.



Please join us for

## Christmas Eve Services

Tuesday, Dec. 24  
at 6:30 PM

Candlelight service with traditional carols, celebrating Holy Communion. All are welcome!

## St. Germain Community Church



1315 Hwy 155 St. Germain, WI  
[www.STGCommunityChurch.org](http://www.STGCommunityChurch.org)  
[STGCommunityChurch@gmail.com](mailto:STGCommunityChurch@gmail.com)  
715-542-3114

## Benji Grubel



Benji E. Grubel of Fitchburg passed away after fighting a long illness with complications due to Diabetes Wednesday December 4, 2024.

Born on August 8, 1956, to the late Arnold Grubel and Dorothy (Boomer) Grubel. He attended Eagle River High School (WI) and the University of Wisconsin - Stout. He started his

career as a manager of Foot Locker, which gave him the opportunity to open a store in Leominster, Massachusetts.

He would later work for Radio Shack and Air Compressor Builders before landing at The Hope Group where he worked as a Fluid Connector Specialist for the past 27 years.

Growing up in Land O' Lakes Wisconsin, he was an avid sportsman with his father, volunteering his time as a youth baseball coach. He also played football but had three older and much bigger brothers that he used to laugh about trying to keep up with, but always claimed he was the fastest. He was closest in age to his youngest sibling, his sister Barbara, the dancer of the family.

Outside of sports, Benji and his brothers developed a love of the outdoors between hunting, fishing, and hiking. His family owned a restaurant and pub in the small town he grew up in. Following strong traditions, every year on the fourth of July his family would dress up as clowns in the annual fourth of July parade.

Benji was best known for his unwavering support and caring nature to family and friends. Whenever Grampy Thompson called him for something, from cutting the lawn to removing snow, he would always be there.

He was a lover of all things sports - a participant, as well as an enthusiastic spectator. He played softball and sports well into his forties and met his best friends during that time in his life. He loved his hometown sports teams - the Green Bay Packers were his favorite, but he developed a soft spot for the New England Patriots after spending his adult life in Massachusetts.

Having strong roots in outdoor activities from his childhood, Benji knew he needed a hunting companion. This led him to meet his true best friend, an English Setter he named Micky.

This competitive nature led him to openly challenge anyone daring enough to his favorite board game - cribbage. Benji will be remembered for being the family cook at most family cookouts - no one could match his marinated chicken. He took tremendous pride in his preparation and cooking techniques.

Like his father before him, Benji took up coaching baseball, Basketball, and especially youth football, where he coached his son and eventually, they coached pop warner together. Later in life, he was a cheerleader at his children and grandchildren's sporting events. Benji's greatest loves were his children and grandchildren. He couldn't help himself from praising his children to anyone that would listen. Lastly, he had what some might say the largest hat collection of anyone they knew.

His love will live on inside of us for eternity.

He was preceded by his brother, Keith Grubel.

Benji is survived by his two children, Christopher Grubel, (Bea Lee), and Jennifer Thompson. His four grandchildren, Kayla Yang, Kiana Yang, Kayden Yang and his newest grandson, Kallum Grubel. He is also survived by his two brothers, Arnold (Patricia) Grubel, Jerry (Margret "Peggy") Grubel, and his sister, Barbara Grubel.

He was married to Carol Grubel for 25 years. He also has many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends. He was blessed with a large circle of family and friends and loved them all deeply.

Benji's Funeral was held Saturday, December 14, 2024, at Richardson Funeral Home in Leominster. He will be laid to rest at Oak Hill Cemetery in Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin. Online condolences can be made at [richardsonfuneralhome.net](http://richardsonfuneralhome.net)

## Read local news online at

[www.vcnewsreview.com](http://www.vcnewsreview.com)

## Lakeland Monuments

306 Hwy 70 E.  
St. Germain, WI  
Bob & Peggy Ausloos  
Mobile 920-420-4520 - Home Office 715-542-3548  
[www.lakelandmonumentsllc.com](http://www.lakelandmonumentsllc.com)  
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## Come Worship With Us

Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Worship  
3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship  
with Holy Communion  
10 a.m.

223 Silver Lake Rd., Eagle River  
715-479-6226

## Fred Boldt



Fred Boldt, 78, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on December 10, 2024.

He has never been more alive than at this moment and rejoicing in the presence of Jesus our Savior. Fred loved nothing more than to be up at "Perchanor," their second home in Three Lakes, WI. Fred cherished moments there with countless family and friends. Visitation will take place on Tuesday, December 17 at Pagenkopf Funeral Home from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Visitation will take place on Wednesday, December 18 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church from 8:30 a.m. until the time of service at 10:00 a.m.

Please see [pagenkopf.com](http://pagenkopf.com) for full obituary.

PAID OBITUARY

## John G. Ashton, Sr



John G. Ashton, Sr. age 65 of Eagle River, WI passed away on Sunday, December 1, 2024.

He died unexpectedly due to a sudden medical emergency and his family is profoundly saddened.

John was appropriately born on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1959, in Michigan City, IN to

Robert and Joyce (Liston) Ashton, the second youngest of four children. During his childhood and his early adulthood, he lived in Lake Geneva and Elkhorn, WI.

He later moved to Three Lakes where he met his wife, Marianne. They were married in 2007 and had a big, beautiful, blended family or as one relative phrased it a "patchwork family."

John attended Badger High School in Lake Geneva, WI and Waukesha County Technical College where he completed his schooling while working and earned his Electrical Contractor and Master Electrician licenses as well as Electrical Inspector and Commercial Electrical Inspector certifications.

He worked several different jobs as a young adult but most of his working career was as an electrician, which he retired from in 2019. Being the helpful and friendly person he was, he befriended many of his customers, some of which became his dearest friends. With his keen eye for detail and experience in home construction, he later had a part-time job as a construction inspector for an area title company.

Even as a child he was described as sweet and thoughtful. He was known to sit on the floor and work on things. When asked what he was doing he would reply that he was "sixing" (fixing) them and became known as Johnny the "sixer." This passion carried into his adult life as he had an amazing aptitude for fixing things and had great patience to carry it through until it was fixed.

John was a caring and thoughtful husband, devoted to his wife as well as a loving father who set a wonderful example to his sons about work ethic and caring for his children. He was especially proud of his grandchildren and enjoyed teasing them every chance he got. He truly enjoyed helping others.

He loved the outdoors but disliked anything over 80 degrees. John enjoyed campfires, snowshoeing, going to plays and music. He attended many concerts of various music genres but his favorite place to be was on his pontoon boat on the Eagle River chain, oftentimes with friends or family.

John was preceded in death by his parents; sons, Justin and John, Jr.; and granddaughter Maggie.

He is survived by his loving wife, Marianne; sons, Jordan (Ashley) Ashton, Brian (Melissa) Wilhelm and Chris (Michelle) Wilhelm; brother, Robert Ashton; sisters, Cindi Ashton and Julie Ashton Elvin; as well as grandchildren, Ava, Logan, Landon, Brady, Lilah, Grace, Maxine, David and Alex; and many other relatives and friends.

A private celebration of John's life will be planned for a later date.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

PAID OBITUARY

## HILDEBRAND

## Funeral Home

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Cremation

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in our

classifieds!



VILAS COUNTY

NEWS-REVIEW

715-479-4421

## To open this gift... you must first open your heart.

"...For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

God's Gathering Place  
A Bible Believing Church

Everyone is welcome!  
Sundays 9:30 am  
1695 Hwy 45N, Eagle River  
[www.gods-gathering-place.net](http://www.gods-gathering-place.net)



Vilas County court report

# Primich placed on Probation for felony hit-and-run

A 49-year-old Phelps woman received a withheld sentence for four years of probation at a sentencing hearing on one felony count of a hit and run involving great bodily harm.

Jennifer Primich received probation with conditions of 60 days in Vilas County Jail, maintaining absolute sobriety, not being in an establishment with a class B liquor license except for work purposes, having no contact with the victim and court costs payable to the Clerk of Courts office within 30 days. Huber privileges were granted at the hearing and a felony bail-jumping charge was dismissed but read into the record for sentencing.

Primich is to report to Vilas Jail by Feb. 7, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Joshua Brown, 43, of Woodruff, was found guilty and sentenced to seven years in the Wisconsin Prison System on one felony charge of operating with PAC and a misdemeanor. It includes three years of initial confinement and four of extended supervision. It also included 36 months of license revocation and 36 months IID. Conditions of extended supervision included maintaining absolute sobriety and other programming deemed necessary by the agent.

Abdirashid M Abdi, 32,

of Green Bay, was found guilty of one felony count of methamphetamine possession. The court ordered one year of initial incarceration and one of extended supervision. Conditions include absolute sobriety, any programming deemed necessary by the agent, and not to be on the premises of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation. There were 127 days of presentence credit and the sentence will be concurrent with any other sentences being served.

Sean Christensen, 33, of Lac du Flambeau, failed to appear for an adjourned initial appearance on one felony count of taking a

vehicle without consent and one misdemeanor.

Branch 1 Judge Martha Milanowski authorized a \$500 bench warrant for the nonappearance.

Jonelle Allen, 33, of Lac du Flambeau, did not appear for a motion hearing on one felony charge of methamphetamine possession. Judge Milanowski issued a body-only bench warrant for the nonappearance. A voluntary appearance is not allowed and the state continues to seek a revocation of the deferred entry of judgment from being found guilty in November of 2023.

# POLICE REPORT

## Vilas County Sheriff

The Vilas County Sheriff's Department reported a total of 164 incidents last week, which includes 15 911 hang-ups, four car versus deer accidents, two personal injuries, three nonreportable accidents, five property damages, one agency assist, eight burglary alarms, three animal problems, three attempts to locate, one violation of bond conditions, two conditions of bond, nine citizen assists, one carbon monoxide poisoning alarm, one communications problem, two death investigations, one message delivery, one disorderly conduct, one deer in roadway, eight disturbances, two domestic violence complaints, two drug problems, one emergency detention, six sick leaves, one structure fire, three frauds, one internet fraud, two harassments, seven warrant confirmation, 12 information reports, one nonsufficient funds check, one jail medical incident, seven juvenile problems, one lifeline alarm, one lost property, one parking problem, one protection order, one vacation check, one repossession, one search warrant, one smoke reported in area, one subject removal, one suicide attempt, one suspicious circumstances, one property theft, two identity

thefts, six hazards, three traffic violations, one court transport, three transport warrants, one property trespass, four utility problems and 10 welfare checks.

A total of 16 people were taken into custody and booked into the Vilas County Jail.

## Eagle River Police

The Eagle River Police Department reported a total of 30 incidents last week, which includes one alarm, three ambulance assists, one animal problem, two citizen disputes, one citizen assist, two dead bodies, three disorderly conducts, one fire, one information report, two juvenile problems, two parking problems, one property damage,

two suspicious persons, one search warrant, one nonreportable traffic accident, one hazard, one traffic offense, one property theft, one auto theft, one utility problem and one welfare check.

## Three Lakes Police

The Three Lakes Police Department reported a total of 71 incidents last week, which includes two new calls, one abandoned

vehicle, four ambulance requests, one animal incident, two citizen assists, 40 business checks, one child custody, one civil matter, one death investigation, one disturbance, six extra patrols, one welfare check, one information report, one narcotics violation, one reckless driving, one sexual assault, four suspicious persons, one traffic stop and one vehicle in ditch.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Dogs 7272

**MILLERS PRECIOUS PUPS** Has Absolutely Adorable Westies, Beautiful Petite Yorkies And Cross/Bred Black Scotties. All Are Smart, Gentle And Loving. Shots-Vet Exam-Manner Training Begun. \$995-\$1,500 Cash. 715-850-2535



**Purebred Jack Russell Terrier** puppies. First shots and dewormed. \$350 each. 715-921-2989



**MILD START** — Deer that survived the archery, nine-day gun, muzzleloader and four-day statewide antlerless hunt are starting winter in good shape, the mild conditions of November and December giving them a break before cold and deep snow impact their movement and food sources. —STAFF PHOTO

## HELP WANTED

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# OBITUARIES

## Robert "Bob" Leo Sambs



Robert "The Clock Doctor" Leo Sambs, born July 18, 1937, in Milwaukee, WI to Leo and Irma Sambs (Petrich), passed away with dignity and surrounded with love on December 10, 2024.

He is preceded in death by his loving wife, Remie; his adoring parents, Leo and Irma Sambs; and younger sister, Mary Sambs.

Bob is survived by his three children, Maria (Dave) Botelho, Leonard (Kristen) Sambs and Megan (fiancé Ben Stecker) Sambs; siblings, Tom Sambs, Peggy Nelles, Annie Murphy and Kathy (Sam) Olsen. Bob was blessed with five grandchildren, Mandy (Joseph) Blackmon, Charis (Brandt) Brooks, Benjamin (Kelli) Botelho, Brecken (fiancé Maddie) Sambs and Crew Sambs. Bob was even more blessed with 12 great-grandchildren, Caroline, Georgia, Booker, Shep, Beau, Lillian, Magnolia, Eleanor, Oliver, Jane, Solomon and Marigold.

Bob very much enjoyed coming up to Eagle River through his childhood and formative years thus Eagle River becoming his forever home.

After graduating from Pius XI High School in Milwaukee, Bob joined the Air Force National Guard for 5 years. During this time, Bob tested the waters joining the Brotherhood ministry and through the guidance of his family unsure what road to take next, Bob decided to join the Air Force in 1961, a career he deeply enjoyed. After dedicating his life to the Air Force for 20 years, he retired as Senior Master Sergeant in 1981. Bob met his beloved wife during his travels in the military, Remie, while stationed in the Philippines-and they faithfully walked thru life's adventures hand in hand.

Once he retired, Bob and Remie moved back to Eagle River, WI. With newfound time on his hands, Bob tried various local jobs-working at our local grocer, was a mail carrier, bus driver and met so many wonderful friends along the way. A few years into his retirement, Bob decided to continue his education traveling to Milwaukee from Eagle River attending college at MATC to become a Master Horologist, in laymen's terms the study and repair of mechanical clocks. He was known to many as the "Clock Doctor" even up until the day God called him back home.

Bob was meticulous in everything he did and was very well respected in his work and as a person within the community. Bob was quoted in an article by our local newspaper back in March of 2020 regarding his clock repair services that he provided saying: "The people I meet are the best part of being a Clockmaker". Bob often referred to the words, "Tempus Fugit" Latin for "Time Flies" as some antique clocks he so lovingly repaired have this written on the clock itself, hence, why he made a point to many to make the most of our limited time here on earth. "If you enjoy what you do, you never work a day in your life", yet another rule of thumb Bob practiced and preached. Bob was surrounded by so much love during his golden years and his wisdom will be so greatly missed.

Bob was a strong believer in his faith and volunteered his time ushering weekly at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish. Years back, he was active with the St. Peters Annex/thrift store, and he gave back to many in need.

Bob also loved the outdoors and kept in shape by daily walks/bicycle rides, clearing snow, chopping wood, enjoying the companionship of his rescued dogs that brought him so much comfort along with keeping with his timely routine living in the Northwoods.

Most of all, Bob was the best husband, dad, grandpa, brother and friend to many—a true blessing to all. His kindness was constant and true.

A funeral service to celebrate Bobs life will be held Friday December 20, 2024, at St. Peter the Fisherman Parish, Eagle River WI. Visitation begins at 9:30 a.m., Mass at 11 a.m. and lunch to follow.

Arrangements by Gaffney-Busha Funeral Home, Eagle River. Online condolences are welcomed, please visit [gaffney-busha.com](http://gaffney-busha.com) to share your memories of The Clock Doctor/Bob Sambs.

PAID OBITUARY

## Michelle Mehlenbacher



Michelle "Shelley" Lee Mehlenbacher, age 56, of Watersmeet peacefully passed away on Nov. 28, 2024, in Milwaukee with her sister Lisa and niece Zari by her side.

She was born on Jan. 8, 1968, in Chicago, IL, known for her free spirit, beautiful soul, and generous heart. Her love for life was infectious. She loved to laugh, and her gorgeous smile could light up any room.

She graduated from Watersmeet in 1986. After graduation she traveled and lived in many states with her lifelong friend, Robert Mahaffey. Because she loved the sunshine, ocean, and the beach she found Florida to be her spot in life.

Shelley was a server at the Red Man in Land o' Lakes. She had great memories of the "Red Man Crew" and the times they shared.

Shelley is survived by her parents, Paul (Terry) Morse; sister, Lisa Kania; brother, Paul; niece, Alizari Gray, nephew, Reggie Kania; aunt, Anita Anys; cousins, Michael and Erica Parker, and Brandi Poggeman.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Harold (Joyce) Parker; uncle, Michael Parker; great-grandmother, Mathilda Storms; other family and several cherished friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held the summer of 2025, Shelley will be laid to rest at Watersmeet Cemetery. We will miss you! PAID OBITUARY

## WE ARE HIRING A MARKETING AND SALES CONSULTANT

**Vilas County News-Review & Three Lakes News**

**We are looking for an outgoing and friendly individual to be a Sales and Marketing Consultant in the Eagle River & Three Lakes area.**

**This person will help local business owners market themselves through many different media channels including digital advertising, web ads and print media. The right candidate will use our statewide reach to help promote local events and businesses to drive traffic to the North Woods and their business.**

**Outside sales experience is a plus but we will train the right individual and reward them with a competitive base salary, the ability to earn extra commission, solid benefits, no nights or weekends along with expense and mileage reimbursement.**

**If interested, please email [kkruieger@mmclocal.com](mailto:kkruieger@mmclocal.com)**

**Subject line: Sales**

422361



# PUBLIC NOTICES

# REAL ESTATE

## Legals 7700

**VILAS COUNTY**  
(One week 12/18/24)  
**NOTICE OF SALE**  
Notice of abandoned property Cassandra Bellon at Orange Door Storage unit 58 located at 5196 State Hwy 70 W, Eagle River, WI 54521. Contents include grill, motorcycle helmet, vintage bench, twin bed frame and more.  
Rent must be paid by January 1, 2025.  
Online sale will be held at [storage-treasures.com](http://storage-treasures.com)  
2689 **WNAXLP**

## Bids and Request for Proposals 7705

**STATE SEALED BID TIMBER SALE**  
7271 Main Street  
Lake Tomahawk, WI 54539  
**STATE SEALED BID TIMBER SALE**  
Friday, January 10, 2025 at 10:01AM  
The State of Wisconsin, Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), is offering for sale timber marked or designated for cutting on the following lands:  
LANGLADE County, WI (80 acres) Timber Sale # 202510 Sheperds Lane Shelterwood  
T33N-R09E, Section 22 NENE SENW Estimate: 60 MBF Maple, Red\_L-2V 18 MBF Ash, White\_L-2V 7 MBF Ash, Black\_L-2V 5 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-1,750 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 180 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd  
ONEIDA County, WI (98 acres) Timber Sale # 202511 Eagle River Hardwoods  
T37N-R11E, Section 01 NENE  
T38N-R11E, Section 36 SWNE SENE SENW NESW SWSW SESE NESE NWSE  
Estimate: 22 MBF Birch, Yellow\_L-17 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-11 MBF Hardwood\_L-2V 220 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd 2,900 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 30 TONS Softwood\_P-Tn 30 TONS Aspen\_P-Tn  
ONEIDA County, WI (29 acres) Timber Sale # 202512 Meister Stockley Hardwoods  
T35N-R11E, Section 01 NWSW SWSW  
T35N-R11E, Section 02 SWSE  
Estimate: 45 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-11 MBF Hardwood\_L-WR 80 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd 674 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 50 TONS Softwood\_P-Tn 90 CORD Pine, White\_P-C 44 TONS Pine, Red\_P-Tn 30 TONS Aspen\_P-Tn  
ONEIDA County, WI (62 acres) Timber Sale # 202513 SC Hardwood Release  
T38N-R10E, Section 04 SESE  
T38N-R10E, Section 09 NENE NWNE SWNE SENE SENW NESW NWSW NWSE  
Estimate: 1,600 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 17 MBF Hardwood\_L-WR 45 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd 30 TONS Softwood\_P-Tn  
FOREST County, WI (84 acres) Timber Sale # 202516 Trial Run Hardwoods  
T37N-R14E, Section 08 SWSE SESE  
T37N-R14E, Section 17 NENE NWNE SWNE SENE SENW SENW  
Estimate: 50 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-28 MBF Maple, Red\_L-WR 22 MBF Basswood\_L-WR 5 MBF Hardwood\_L-WR 1,490 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 80 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd 330 TONS Hemlock\_P-Tn  
VILAS County, WI (187 acres) Timber Sale # 202518 Try Again Hardwoods  
T43N-R08E, Section 16 Gov Lot 5 Gov Lot 6 Gov Lot 7 Gov Lot 5 Gov Lot 6 Gov Lot 7  
T43N-R08E, Section 17 Gov Lot 2 Gov Lot 3 Gov Lot 19 Gov Lot 4 SWSE SESE Gov Lot 2 Gov Lot 3 Gov Lot 4 Gov Lot 17 Gov Lot 19  
T43N-R08E, Section 20 NENE  
T43N-R08E, Section 21 Gov Lot 1  
Estimate: 239 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-35 MBF Birch, Yellow\_L-11 MBF Hardwood\_L-WR 2,600 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 130 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd  
ONEIDA County, WI (68 acres) Timber Sale # 202519 100 Year Aspen  
T38N-R04E, Section 30 SENW NESW NWSE SWSE SESE  
T38N-R04E, Section 31 NENE NWNE  
T38N-R04E, Section 32 NNWN

## Bids and Request for Proposals 7705

Estimate: 2,065 TONS Aspen\_P-Tn 2,000 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 500 TONS Spruce\_P-Tn 350 TONS Pine, Red\_P-Tn 300 TONS Balsam Fir\_P-Tn 15 MBF Hardwood\_L-WR  
FOREST County, WI (97 acres) Timber Sale # 202520 Midas Touch Hardwoods  
T38N-R13E, Section 04 SWNE SWNW SENW NESW NWSW NWSE  
T38N-R13E, Section 05 NESE  
Estimate: 46 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-15 MBF Birch, Yellow\_L-14 MBF Basswood\_L-2V 7 MBF Hardwood\_L-2V 550 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 44 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd 56 TONS Hemlock\_P-Tn  
FOREST County, WI (123 acres) Timber Sale # 202521 Polish Hardwoods  
T36N-R16E, Section 05 NENE NNWN SWNW SENW  
Estimate: 125 MBF Maple, Sugar\_L-105 MBF Basswood\_L-WR 40 MBF Hardwood\_L-WR 200 CORD Hardwood\_B-Cd 2,400 TONS Hardwood\_P-Tn 450 TONS Basswood\_P-Tn 40 CORD Aspen\_B-Cd 130 TONS Aspen\_P-Tn 30 TONS Softwood\_P-Tn  
SEALED BIDS must be submitted on BCPL "timber sale bid forms" and will be accepted until 10:00AM, Friday, January 10, 2025.  
Bids must be submitted prior to the 10:01AM, January 10, bid opening in the Lake Tomahawk Ranger Station. Contractors wanting to bid on more than one timber sale must submit separate bids for each sale. Please specify the timber sale number on the outside of the envelope. BCPL reserves the right to reject any or all bids.  
Download maps, cutting requirements, additional information and required bid form at [bcpl.wisconsin.gov/Pages/UpcomingTimberSales.aspx](http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/Pages/UpcomingTimberSales.aspx) or call the District Office at (715) 277-3366  
2686 **WNAXLP**

## Meetings and Public Hearings 7720

282.  
An on-site may be conducted at the Committee's discretion, at which time the Committee would recess and travel to the inspection, with the Public Hearing to follow at the Vilas County Courthouse.  
A copy of the Conditional Use Permit application is on file in the Vilas County Zoning Office.  
David Sadenwasser, Zoning Administrator  
For: Zoning and Planning Committee  
If you have special needs, or require special accommodations, please call (715) 479-3620 or write: Vilas County Zoning, Vilas County Courthouse, 330 Court St, Eagle River, WI 54521  
2684 **WNAXLP**

## VILAS COUNTY

(Two weeks 12/18-12/25/24)  
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE VILAS COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT STATE OF WISCONSIN**  
COUNTY OF VILAS  
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN  
Pursuant to Chapter 59.694 and 19.84 of the Wisconsin State Statutes and Article X, Section 10.3 of the Vilas County General Zoning Ordinance:  
Public Notice is hereby given to all persons that a public hearing will be held at the Lac Du Flambeau Town Hall, 109 Old Abe Rd, Lac Du Flambeau, WI 54538 on Thursday January 9, 2024 at 11:00 A.M.  
Relative to Board of Adjustment Variance Application B2-24, submitted by Ray Frigo, Agent for Mary Lou Fisher. On the following real estate to wit: Part of Government Lot 1, Section 36, Town 41 North, Range 5 East, Town of Lac Du Flambeau, Vilas County, Wisconsin; identified by Vilas County Computer Parcel Number 10-3116.  
Requesting a variance to Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance Article, Section 5.1B which states:  
A seventy-five (75) foot setback from OHWM is required for all new structures unless specifically exempted by 5.1C  
Driveways and boat landings are specifically considered to be accessory structures as defined by the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance Section 3.2(2). Defines an accessory structure as:  
Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires permanent or temporary location on the ground, or attached to something having a permanent or temporary location on the ground, including but not limited to any structure, driveways, fences, or other improvements or any part of such structure.  
The applicant is requesting a Variance to erect a boat landing on the property.  
The Board of Adjustment may conduct an on-site inspection of the above-described property prior to the public hearing. The Board will meet at the Vilas County Courthouse at 10:30 AM to proceed to the property with a hearing to follow.  
A copy of the application is on file at the Vilas County Zoning Office.  
All persons interested are invited to attend and be heard at the Lac Du Flambeau Town Hall.  
Vilas County Board of Adjustment  
Bridgette Nutter, Secretary  
Dated at Eagle River this 13th day of December, 2024  
2685 **WNAXLP**

## VILAS COUNTY

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Pursuant to Chapter 59.694 and 19.84 of the Wisconsin State Statutes and Article X, Section 10.3 of the Vilas County General Zoning Ordinance:  
Public Notice is hereby given to all persons that a public hearing will be held at the Lac Du Flambeau Town Hall, 109 Old Abe Rd, Lac Du Flambeau, WI 54538 on Thursday January 9, 2024 at 11:00 A.M.  
Relative to Board of Adjustment Variance Application B2-24, submitted by Ray Frigo, Agent for Mary Lou Fisher. On the following real estate to wit: Part of Government Lot 1, Section 36, Town 41 North, Range 5 East, Town of Lac Du Flambeau, Vilas County, Wisconsin; identified by Vilas County Computer Parcel Number 10-3116.  
Requesting a variance to Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance Article, Section 5.1B which states:  
A seventy-five (75) foot setback from OHWM is required for all new structures unless specifically exempted by 5.1C  
Driveways and boat landings are specifically considered to be accessory structures as defined by the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance Section 3.2(2). Defines an accessory structure as:  
Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires permanent or temporary location on the ground, or attached to something having a permanent or temporary location on the ground, including but not limited to any structure, driveways, fences, or other improvements or any part of such structure.  
The applicant is requesting a Variance to erect a boat landing on the property.  
The Board of Adjustment may conduct an on-site inspection of the above-described property prior to the public hearing. The Board will meet at the Vilas County Courthouse at 10:30 AM to proceed to the property with a hearing to follow.  
A copy of the application is on file at the Vilas County Zoning Office.  
All persons interested are invited to attend and be heard at the Lac Du Flambeau Town Hall.  
Vilas County Board of Adjustment  
Bridgette Nutter, Secretary  
Dated at Eagle River this 13th day of December, 2024  
2685 **WNAXLP**

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Probate Registrar  
December 10, 2024  
JOHN C. HOULLIHAN  
HOULLIHAN LAW FIRM, S.C.  
P.O. BOX 630  
MINOCQUA, WI 54548  
715-356-1422  
Bar Number  
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# NEWS



MR. AND MRS. CLAUS — With the temperatures a little warmer last weekend, Santa and Mrs. Claus, braved the cool wind to greet everyone outside the Country Store of Eagle River. Kids were able to visit the jolly old man in the red suit and Mrs. Claus where they had the opportunity to share Christmas wishes with him. The Mathisen family, owners of the Country Store of Eagle River, sponsored the event again this year. Cookies and candy canes were available to those who chatted with Satna. Pictured here are the Mathisen family and the staff of the Country store with the Clauses. —Photo By Bob Hughes

## Northern Waters Casino Resort announces New Year's performance and promo lineup

BY JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN ASSISTANT EDITOR

To ring in the new year, Northern Waters Casino Resort in Watersmeet, Mich., announced its lineup of upcoming musical performances and gaming promo that gives players a chance to win big cash prizes.

This weekend on Friday, Dec. 20, and Saturday, Dec. 21, Jenna Jane will be performing in the NW Sports Bar with her full band. Jane was awarded Female Rising Star of the Year for the Josie Music Awards, hosted at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn. In 2024, Jane was a four-time nominee at the Josie Music Awards.

The following weekend on Friday, Dec. 27, and Saturday, Dec. 28, the casino will host Old Pine Road Band, with their blend of soulful funk, bluegrass, twang and jam-band tunes.

The live entertainment grand finale of the year



Award-winning musician Jenna Jane will be performing at Northern Waters Casino Resort on Friday, Dec. 20 and Saturday, Dec. 21.

—Contributed Photo

will be on New Year's Eve, when Boogie Wonderland will be performing popular 70s to today's hits at the casino. The band will be performing from 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 31, as Watersmeet welcomes the

New Year.

### Big winnings

The casino will be hosting a variety of drawings and giveaways, as well as a poker tournament on New Year's Eve.

Military Wednesdays will be moving to Military Mondays in 2025. Veterans and active-duty military can earn \$20 in Free Play after just 10 same-day points. This offer is available to Superior Club Members, which is a free-to-join rewards program. Veterans who sign up as Superior Club Members will also become members of the casino's Freedom Rewards program, which offers discounts at all food venues, Dancing Eagles Hotel, and Lac Vieux Desert Golf Course. Both programs are designed to honor those who serve and have served.

In 2025, the casino's Senior's Days will become 'Club 55' on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Free Play rewards increase to \$20 after earning just 10 points.

The Birthday Month program will be increasing its rewards as well in 2025. Patrons just show their valid ID to guest services, and they will receive \$15 of Free Play during their birthday month. Friday hot seats will start at noon.

Other upcoming promotions and events can be found on the casino's website at northernwaterscasino.com, as well as on their Facebook and Instagram pages.

### Gaming floor

The newest additions to the casino's gaming floor include Jackpot Blitz, electronic, dealer-less poker tables. The casino is currently hosting a Texas Hold'em Tournament every Sunday at 4 p.m.

High Hand is available before and after the tournament and Live Action Poker is available anytime with a 2-person minimum.

For more information or to sign up, call guest services at 1-800-583-3599.

## Aspirus Health shares how to avoid slips, fall injuries in winter

As winter sets in, snow and ice can turn sidewalks, driveways and parking lots into hazardous zones.

Slip and fall injuries are among the most common winter-related accidents, according to Aspirus Health, often leading to serious consequences such as fractures, sprains and head injuries.

Kaitlin Eichman, a physical therapist with Aspirus Health, says with a little foresight and some practical measures, these incidents can be significantly reduced.

"You want to make sure you have some quality footwear with good traction so that when you're making contact with the ground, starting from your feet down, you've got good tread, non-slip soles, something that's stable and secure on your feet," says Eichman.

The first line of defense against slips and falls is keeping pathways clear of snow and ice. Shovel walkways promptly after snowfall to prevent buildup and ice formation. For added safety, apply ice-melting products such as rock salt or sand to improve traction. Homeowners and businesses should routinely inspect their property for hidden patches of ice, especially in shaded or low-traffic areas.

Eichman encourages a cautious approach when walking on potentially slippery surfaces and to think "walk like a penguin."

"We encourage people to make your base of support a little wider, turn your feet outward a little bit, and take short steps," says Eichman. "You don't necessarily need to slide your feet when you're walking, but take shorter, smaller steps and slow down your speed so that you have that wider base of support you can keep yourself upright a lot easier."

Slopes and stairs can be particularly dangerous for individuals with limited mobility.

"Older adults and individuals with disabilities are particularly concerned about falls due to slippery surfaces like ice and snow," adds Jennifer Clark, Community Health Educator with the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Central Wisconsin. "It's important to take your time and not be in a rush; use handrails and keep your hands free as much as possible," said Clark.

Winter hazards don't stop at the doorstep. Melted snow and water tracked indoors can create slippery floors.

To ASPIRUS Pg. 8



TURKEY DINNER — DeLeers Construction Inc. of Eagle River donated all the fixings for a Thanksgiving dinner to Sunshine for Humanity, Vilas County's only homeless shelter. Said DeLeers, "We hoped to bring warmth and comfort to those facing challenges, Deleers supporting and uplifting our community is at the heart of what we do." Sunshine for Humanity's free-will store supplies a variety of household items, and a food pantry available to anyone, free of charge. Financial donations aren't required but are greatly appreciated.

—Contributed Photo



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To allow our employees time to celebrate Christmas & New Years with their families, we will be closed Tuesday, Dec. 24, Wednesday, Dec. 25, and Wednesday, Jan. 1



# NEWS

## City council okays -2% levy decrease

BY JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Eagle River City Council unanimously adopted its 2025 city budget, which included an approximately -2% levy decrease.

With a budget of \$2,976,184, the 2025 levy sits at \$1,692,732, a decrease of \$37,663 from 2024's levy of \$1,730,395.

City Clerk Becky Bolte explained state legislation — namely Wisconsin Act 12, a 2023 tax law that made several changes to the state's revenue, property tax, and local government systems — had a hand in bringing the cost down.

"The State Personal Property repeal, which was part of WI Act 12,

decreased the City of Eagle River levy limit by \$48,782.89," she said. "The City will receive personal property aid from the State of Wisconsin as reflected in the 2025 budget."

Bolte added that, "All combined, taxing jurisdictions apportioned levies decreased, which contributed to a decrease in the Tax Increment portion of the total amount levied. This portion of the total levy is reflected in the Tax Increment District (TID) fund."

A detailed summary of the 2025 city budget can be viewed by visiting the City of Eagle River's website at <https://eagleriverwi.gov/city-government/city-budget/> or by contacting City Hall at 715-479-8682.

## Education, safety is top priority ahead of snowmobile season

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officials warn snowmobilers who are ready to hit the trails to put safety at the top of their list ahead of the season before venturing out.

One of the main concerns is the ever-changing ice conditions that riders face in the early and late stages of the snowmobile season. The other is making sure specified riders have the correct certification to be able to ride.

"The biggest thing we want folks to remember is that no ice is completely safe," said Lt. Jacob Holsclaw, DNR off-highway vehicle administrator. "On a sunny day, ice that may have been thick enough to drive on in the morning may be unsafe by the afternoon, especially during the early part of the season."

Riders are encouraged to check in with local fishing



Snowmobilers ready to hit the trails need to keep safety in mind before venturing out.

—STAFF PHOTO

clubs, outfitters and bait shops for the most up-to-date ice conditions.

Officials also warn that, per Wisconsin law, all snowmobilers over the age of 12 and born

after Jan. 1, 1985, must have a snowmobile safety certificate to operate a snowmobile.

Interested riders can visit the DNR's ice safety webpage for more

information on ice safety, and can also look at the Wisconsin snowmobile regulations for laws about restrictions, safety tips, and more.

## Economy

FROM PAGE 2

Wisconsin's 9.4% growth in the outdoor recreation industry outpaced the national average, which is 9%, and outpaced the overall state economy which grew by 6.9% in 2023.

"This marks another year of growth for the outdoor recreation economy, underscoring its resilience and importance across the nation," said Outdoor Recreation Roundtable President Jessica Turner. "The new BEA data highlights outdoor recreation as a cornerstone of our economy, generating

jobs, supporting small businesses, and providing essential opportunities for Americans to engage with the outdoors for health, connection, and quality of life."

Additional information on Wisconsin's outdoor industry can be found on the Office of Outdoor Recreation website at <https://outdoorrecreation.wi.gov/Pages/Resources/Report.aspx>.

For the national report and state-level data and tables, visit the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account section of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis website at <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>.



WOUNDED WARRIORS — The Stataline VFW Post 8400 in Land O' Lakes made a \$1,000 donation to Wounded Warriors In Action for the 11th annual Wounded Warriors in Action Eagle River Muskie Chal-Lunge in September 2025. Pictured from left to right are Darren Doss, Scott Samuels and Kirsten Boem. —Contributed Photo

**THANK YOU!**  
 To all of you who helped organize, donate, and support the benefit for us. We appreciate each and every one of you.  
**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**  
 From the families of  
**Rob Govek and Steve Beckett**

## Drive

FROM PAGE 6

others," Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent Tim Carnahan said. "Law enforcement officers will be out with a greater presence this holiday season to keep the roads safe for everyone, but drivers need to take the first step and make responsible choices."

The Wisconsin State Patrol works to assist local law enforcement agencies with obtaining

specialty training to detect impairment and get dangerous drivers off the road. Over 7,500 officers in Wisconsin are trained in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) and the state has among the most Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) in the nation, with nearly 400 officers who have completed DRE training.

Among the consequences that face impaired driving, one of the biggest ones are OWI convictions, which can cost around \$10,000, including fines, court

costs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, and vehicle services. A driver can also lose their license and vehicle because of an OWI conviction.

### Safe driving

The State Patrol encourages drivers to put safety first during the holidays by doing the following:

- Always drive sober.
- Identify a sober designated driver. If someone feels the effects of alcohol or another substance, they likely are

over the 0.08 BAC limit and should not drive.

·Take the bus, call a taxi, or use a rideshare service instead of getting behind the wheel. Use the Safe Ride program to find a ride home.

·If someone has a friend who is about to drink and drive, they need to step in. Take the keys away and help them get home safely.

·If someone suspects that a driver is impaired, they should safely gather as much info as they can about the vehicle, driver and location before calling 911.

## Aspirus

FROM PAGE 7

Place absorbent mats at entrances and encourage the use of boot trays to catch excess water.

Regularly mop up wet areas and use "wet floor" signs to warn others of potential hazards.

Even with precautions, accidents can happen. Carry a cellphone or alert others if venturing into areas with known hazards.

Learning basic fall prevention techniques and maintaining good physical health, such as improving balance and flexibility, can also reduce the risk of serious injuries.

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# Sports

## Roy remains undefeated as Rebel Jays continue winning ways

BY WILLIAM ZUELKE  
CORRESPONDENT

Reegan Roy led the Wabeno-Laona-Three Lakes varsity wrestling team by winning each of his four matches at the long-standing annual Rebel Invitational. He also reached a team-best 16-0 match record for the season.

Six of Roy's teammates picked up 17 additional victories, and seven total members reached podium finishes in championship bouts.

Roy was the only Rebel Jay to win a championship match at 113 pounds but had an unusual situation in the final match as Max Clark, his teammate, was his opponent. Clark earned a second-place finish, matched by Brody Hoffman (175 lbs.) who also placed second with three wins Saturday. Hoffman shares a season record of 13-3 with Clark and the three grapplers having a collective 42-6 match record through four events.

"These three kids are really good," said head coach Seth Senter after the competition ended. "They are all very athletic with what seems like an endless supply of energy. This is what happens when you have kids who focus their off-season on strength training and summer camps to build their wrestling skills."

Senter said wrestling is difficult and takes not only commitment during the season, but throughout the whole calendar year.

"This is a difficult sport," added Senter,



Reegan Roy, left, of the Rebel Jays wrestling team, attempts to establish position against Jordan Ostrom of Two Rivers on his way to placing first at the Rebel Invite Dec. 14.

—Photo By William Zuelke

"that requires not only a time commitment, but a conditioning commitment to reach top levels. These guys are more focused and dedicated than ever, and coach (Colin) Schubert and I have been impressed with their success on the mat so far this season."

Other Rebel Jays who earned championship placement at their respective weight levels were Levi Newman and Levi Shepard, who each wrestled at 215 pounds and who, along with Jayse Demerath (126 lbs.) and Ryker Schingeck (120 lbs.), combined for a collective match record of 11-7 and top-six finishes. Newman led the group, placing second while competing in his first major event of the year, while Demerath continues to rack up victories and is now at a solid 14-4 level.

"Jayse is really starting to understand the sport," Senter commented. "He started the year off with some impressive victories and has cooled off just a bit, but nothing that Colin and I cannot help him overcome. It was also great to see Levi (Newman) back on the mat and helping with team point contributions."

While most of the individual wrestlers performed, the coaches were equally satisfied with the total team effort as the Rebel Jays put 114.5 points on the board, good for sixth place out of 16 different schools. This was a 43.5-point improvement compared to the same event last year when the team finished in 11th place. Wittenberg-Birnamwood led the field on Saturday with 207 total team points. Three Lakes High School

wrestler Noah Kincaid (175 lbs.) had another solid effort with a pin victory against Grayson Niswander of Wittenberg-Birnamwood in the second period of his opening match and finished his day with a 2-2 record. This equaled the 2-2 match records of Nolan Milham (285 lbs.) and Naaman Stanley (138 lbs.), who also had opening round pin victories for the Rebel Jays.

The team returns to the mat this Saturday, December 21, for the Shawano High School Holiday Classic with competitors from more than 20 schools. They will then participate in a major tournament in Oshkosh on December 27, followed by events in Lena and New London early in the new year.

## Windigo score seven in Steel opener, fall in finale in Chippewa Falls

BY JACOB HEID  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Wisconsin Windigo were back on the road last weekend and split two contests with the Chippewa Steel after getting swept at home by the Anchorage Wolverines a weekend prior.

Wisconsin left no doubt in game one Friday with a 7-2 win before the Steel rebounded and held the Windigo to two goals Saturday in a 4-2 win.

### Windigo 7, Steel 2

Chippewa opened the game with an early goal at 1:51 of the first period. Ben Aucoin answered for the Windigo by scoring at 4:38 for the 1-1 tie. The two sides would skate to that score

for the remainder of the period before Wisconsin's offense exploded with four second-period goals.

Four different skaters tallied a goal in the period, including Samuel Misak opening the period with a goal 46 seconds in. Beau Kralovec followed that up to give the Windigo a two-score cushion, 3-1, and then Ronnie Hill and Mario DiMaggio scored 13 seconds apart, at 11:32 and 11:45, to open the game up to 5-1.

The defense was pretty busy in the second as Chippewa fired 10 shots on goaltender Lucas Szyszka, who saved all 10 in the frame.

Declan Burns got in the scoring action in the third, making it a 6-1 on a new

goalkeeper, before the Steel finally beat Szyszka again about midway through the period.

Burns tallied his second of the frame later to close out the scoring.

### Windigo 2, Steel 4

It was a much different story for the Windigo offense in game two. A fast start on both sides made it a 2-2 game in the middle stages of the first period. The Steel capitalized on a power play chance with less than 50 seconds left before the first-period horn and the game turned into a defensive battle the rest of the way.

The Windigo outshot the Steel 17-11 in the final two periods, but none got past

the Steel's Carter Wishart.

Nine penalties also put the Windigo in tight spots as they were forced to play shorthanded throughout the night, including three 10-minute unsportsmanlike penalties.

Next up for the Windigo is another home series, this time a two-game tilt with the Fairbanks Ice Dogs Friday and Saturday, Dec. 20-21. Both games are set for 7 p.m.

With an early deadline of next Friday for the holiday, there will not be a Windigo story in the Dec. 25 edition. The team will not play again until after the new year, where they will face the Kenai River Brown Bears in Eagle River, Jan. 3-4.

## Eagles win two in three-game road trip

BY CHRIS OATMAN  
CORRESPONDENT

The Northland Pines boys hockey team proved to play tough as it won two of three road games last week with wins against Stevens Point Pacelli and Waupaca.

Pines took a loss at Waupun last Saturday in a 5-3 game.

The Eagles opened with a Tuesday game at Pacelli and had to battle to carve out a 4-3 overtime win that ended with Michael Schmidt netting the game-winner.

Pines co-captains Josh Graves, who scored the Eagles' first goal, and Morgan DePuydt, left the game in the first period with injuries.

Their teammates picked up the slack and much more, firing an amazing 67 shots on goal. Everett Leslie stopped 39 of 42 Pacelli shots for Pines.

"Everett played great for us in the net," stated Eagles' coach Zach Otto. "We put

enough pucks on the net to win; now we have to work on finding the back of the net a few more times."

Each side tallied two goals in the first period before skating to a scoreless second.

Pines freshman Cooper Saari scored his second of the night early in the third before Pacelli forced the overtime period with a tally at 12:43.

From there, Schmidt found the puck on his stick during a powerplay and finished the game off.

After a few days off, the team went into Great Northern Conference (GNC) action Friday at Waupaca.

Pines wrapped up a 4-2 victory when Schmidt scored an empty net goal with three seconds left, assisted by goalie Everett Leslie who also stopped 35 of 37 Waupaca shots on goal.

Waupaca scored at 2:19 of the first period for a quick 1-0 lead, but an unassisted goal by Julian Merschorf

at 4:08 sent the game to the second period tied at one.

Pines got the lead back at 4:55 of period two as Sam Shrock scored an unassisted shorthanded goal. Waupaca tied the game seven minutes later.

The third period was a tough defensive battle before Nicholas Hahn set up Merschorf at the 10:32 mark with the eventual game-winner before the empty net goal sealed the deal.

"Great to go on the road and get a big conference win at Waupaca with some players out," noted Otto. "We had some boys step up and play a larger role, and four different players scored."

The Eagles went looking for a sweep of their three-game road trip Saturday when they visited Waupun, which was off to a 0-2 start in the traditionally powerful Badgerland Conference.

Freshman Jazek Jantzen scored from Hahn and Saari late in the first period to

give the Eagle a 1-0 lead, but Waupun would go on to win 5-3.

Pines held the 1-0 until Waupun finally got on the board at 8:33 of the third period. Sam Shrock put the Eagles back on top 2-1 at the 9:18 mark.

Waupun then lit the lamp three times in just over three minutes for a 4-2 lead.

Pines got one more goal from Hunter Tameling, but Waupun sealed the game with an empty net goal.

"Another game where we needed some kids to step in and log quite a few minutes on the ice. It's been great to see our team's competition level, no matter who we decide to put out there," said Otto.

Northland Pines is 4-3 overall and 1-1 in the GNC. The Eagles were scheduled to play Tuesday at Marshfield before hosting GNC rival Lakeland on Thursday, Dec. 19, in Eagle River. The Lakeland game is scheduled for a 7 p.m. puck drop.



## Sideline Scoop

BY JACOB HEID

### It's time to win a championship

As the National Football League schedule hit week 15 last week, it was also the start of the fantasy football playoffs for many make-believe GMs out there, including me. I have three shots at claiming a championship this season.

As players work through the regular season fighting for playoff position against their friends, family, and co-workers, many involved in some sort of paid league, the money is only made once you make the playoffs.

I made the playoffs in all three leagues I participated in, sitting with the No. 2 seed and a bye in my 12-man keeper league, and the No. 3 seed in another. I just snuck into the postseason in my third.

With most of the season without my two top draft picks in one of the leagues (Christian McCaffrey and Puka Nacua), I can finally say I escaped what most teams experienced (a rough season) since neither player saw the field much in the first 10 weeks of the season.

As I sat in anticipation of a first-round bye as the two seed, my focus shifted to a two-week playoff in my other league. In my opinion, I like the two-week-per-round format as it not only allows for a team to bounce back after a sluggish first week or vice versa, but it ensures that no lead is ever safe.

Since I started this league back in high school, I'd like to say that I've had my moments in good and bad ways. One year, I started 0-7 but finished that year 6-8 and also held two third-place finishes in the last two years and a championship back in 2019. The time has come for me to collect another gold medal.

I hope everyone enjoys the final weeks of the NFL regular season and the fantasy playoffs for anyone who participates.

## Falcons snag second win on home ice

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

Coming off of a 23-goal performance in the season and home opener Nov. 30, the Eagle River Falcons snuck away with its second win after a 4-3 win over the Fond du Lac Bears on Dec. 14.

It was a 2-1 lead for Eagle River after one period and the Falcons kept the lead through the middle frame and took a 3-2 lead into the intermission.

Alex Racino and

Todd Koritzinsky each had multi-point games for Eagle River, with Koritzinsky tallying his 10th point of the season in just two games.

Lucas Otto and Jacob Robinson picked up the other two goals in the win.

The Falcons sit at 2-0 on the year with a busy weekend coming up on the road, with a game Friday, Dec. 20, at the De Pere Deacons and another tilt with the Bears in Fond du Lac Saturday, Dec. 21. Both games start at 8 p.m.

## Pines learns about itself after Rhinelander loss

BY JACOB HEID  
SPORTS EDITOR

With just one game on the schedule for the Northland Pines girls basketball team last week, the Eagles learned a lot about themselves after traveling to Rhinelander Dec. 13 and falling 70-22 to the Hodags.

Rhineland used its defense on its home court to shut down Pines' offense for most of the night.

"It was rough for us. However, we pushed forward and learned a lot about coming together as a team and getting through hard days," said Pines coach Jaclyn Halsey.

The Eagles had some key contributors return to the court late in the week due to the sickness bug.

Pines trailed 47-16 at halftime and scored only six points in the second half.

Senior Ellie Smith led Pines offensively with eight of the 22 points. Halsey said she and a few other players stepped up into bigger roles in the loss.

"Ellie Smith had eight points and brought a lot of energy to the game. She never let the circumstances get to her, and went out there and played like it," Halsey said. "Freshman Tatum Meier stepped up and got her first varsity start. She had to fill big roles and rise to the occasion."

The Eagles, currently 2-3 overall and 0-2 inside the Great Northern Conference, looked to bounce back this past Tuesday with a home tilt with Florence and then will play another GNC game against Lakeland Friday, Dec. 20, starting at 7:15 p.m.

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# SPORTS

## Eagles lose to Hodags after big Merrill victory



Pines junior Mylo Albrecht backs down a Rhinelander defender during the Eagles' 65-48 GNC loss Dec. 13. —Photos by Gary Ridderbusch

**BY GARY RIDDERBUSCH  
CORRESPONDENT**

The Northland Pines boys basketball team lost its first Great Northern Conference (GNC) game to rival Rhinelander 65-48 in the fieldhouse last Friday night.

The Hodags jumped out to an early 12-2 advantage and built a 22 lead late in the half, up 26-4 with six minutes remaining. Pines struggled shooting the ball throughout the half until making a late push to cut the Hodags lead down to 36-18 at the half.

"We struggled to make a shot and that can't happen against a really good team," said Pines coach Terry Klemett. "And then factor in the fact we were turning the ball over every other possession. Rhinelander is good, and they made us uncomfortable on offense, and then we had defensive breakdowns to top it off."

The second half saw the Eagles make a push twice to cut the Hodags lead down to 12, 48-36, with eight minutes remaining. Every time the Eagles would make a push, the Hodags stopped the runs with baskets of their own. The Eagles never cut the lead under 12 points as the Hodags closed the game out with a 65-48 win.

"We weren't very good tonight, on either side of the ball. We played better in the second half and played hard despite digging a big hole," said Klemett. "I am proud of the effort, but disappointed with the fact that we didn't play Pines basketball."

Mylo Albrecht led the Eagles with 16 points and nine rebounds.

### Merrill victory

The Eagles took on Wisconsin Valley Conference member Merrill last Tuesday night and came away with a convincing 61-45 nonconference win at the fieldhouse. Pines made

some early baskets and got some defensive stops to take an early 14-4 lead. After a Merrill timeout, the Eagles continued to control the game and went into the break, up 30-18.

"We played fantastic basketball in that first half. We took good shots, moved the ball well, and played great defensive. We really played like a veteran team," said Klemett.

The second half was much of the same as the Eagles continued their fine play, going up by as much as 20 points to 44-24 with seven minutes remaining. The Eagles defense and offense kept the Bluejays at bay to pull out a fine nonconference win.

"We played well for about 34 minutes tonight and then we got a little sloppy with the ball at the end," said Klemett. "All in all, I was proud of our play. Our seniors did another great job tonight of leading and making plays. We played

a short bench and all the guys that played made great contributions."

A.J. Muench led the Eagles with 17 points. Jonathan Miller had another nice game with 12 points and eight rebounds.

"A.J. was really good tonight and he's capable of playing that way all the time," said Klemett. "Jon has had a great start to the season and is playing very well."

Cody Vojta did a little bit of everything for Pines with 10 points, five rebounds, and four assists.

Pines, 1-1 in the GNC and 5-2 overall, will play at Lakeland in a big conference game this Friday, Dec. 20, at 7:15 p.m. The Eagles will also play in a holiday tournament at Adams-Friendship High School Friday and Saturday, Dec. 27-28. The other teams will be Hillsboro and Sparta, with games starting at 1 p.m. both days.



Nolan Huelskamp battles for a rebound against the Hogag's Hayden Schowmer.

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PRESENTS

## Senior Spotlight

### Emalee Detienne, Northland Pines girls hockey co-op

The Senior Spotlight series will highlight the senior athletes in the area around the communities of Eagle River, Three Lakes, and Phelps. This week, senior Emalee Detienne is in the spotlight.

She is one of two seniors on the Pines girls co-op team, with both senior players being from Rhinelander High School.

Here is more on the Rhinelander senior:

#### Do you have a nickname that your friends or family call you?

"My friends and family call me 'Emmy' because it's short and sweet compared to Emalee, but some of my team will call me 'Tissues' because I always have my tissue box on the bench during practice."

#### You are one of two seniors on the Pines co-op team. How do you enjoy that type of leadership role?

"I really enjoy being in a higher leadership role, as well as being a senior and a captain. Being a senior and captain gives me the opportunity to have myself and my team prepared for things prior to it happening, as well as being able to be a leader or someone the underclassmen can take notes on and look up to, being like when they are a senior."

#### What or who got you into hockey?

"Growing up, my dad always took my brother and me to open skate at the RIA or to the lake by our house to skate, but my brother was the big push to want to play hockey. I always looked up to him and thought everything he did was cool, so I quit gymnastics and joined hockey when I was nine years old."

#### What is your favorite season to experience in Wisconsin?

"I really enjoy fall in Wisconsin because of the multiple colors of nature and the temperature changes, and it gets



cooler and more comfortable."

#### What is your personal goal for the season?

"My personal goal for this season is to hopefully get everyone on the ice and an opportunity to get a goal or an assist, and help the newer players have a fun season. I want to come to practice and work hard every day to continue getting better."

#### Do you play any sports besides hockey?

"Besides hockey, I play soccer through Rhinelander High School. I play goalie for soccer and have played off and on since I was six."

#### Do you have plans for after high school?

"My plans after high school are to go to UW-Stevens Point to further my education in early childhood education, and hopefully continue being a referee and a role model for younger girls who play hockey."

## Eagles drop two tough contests in Medford

**BY CHRIS OATMAN  
CORRESPONDENT**

The Northland Pines girls co-op hockey team faced two tough challenges, with losses against the Arrowhead Warhawks and the Brookfield Glacier at a quadrangular meet in Medford Dec. 13-14.

Arrowhead is a co-op with five different schools including Arrowhead, Hamilton, Kettle Moraine, Oconomowoc and Waterford, while Brookfield is a larger co-op.

The Eagles opened up Friday evening against Arrowhead, who brought a 7-2 record into the game. Pines had a rough start, giving up the first goal a minute and a half into the game. Arrowhead scored two more goals in the first period for a 3-0 lead which they held to the end of the game.

The Eagles offense fired just two shots on goal in the first period and a total of ten in the game.

"We played hard against a strong team, and after giving up those three goals in the first, we shut them down the rest of the way," noted Pines coach Jeff Stebbeds. "We are just struggling to find the net offensively right now, but once we figure that out, we will be just fine."

After that three-goal period, Pines goalie Lucy Nowak stopped all 33 Arrowhead shots the rest of the way.

The Eagles closed out their weekend Dec. 14 against the Brookfield Glacier who also had a 7-2 record. Finding the net was a problem again as the Eagles dropped a 5-0 decision.

Pines faced a 41-13 shot discrepancy, with the

Eagles tallying six shots through two periods.

The game was scoreless through one period before Brookfield scored two goals in the second on 18 shots and three goals in the third.

"The girls have a great work ethic and are working extremely hard as a team," said Stebbeds. "We have three more games this week and the schedule is really ramping up."

The Northland Pines girls hockey team sits at 1-4 overall.

The Eagles were scheduled to play at Medford in a game Tuesday before they meet the Fox Cities Stars at the Rhinelander Ice Arena Thursday, Dec. 19, at 6 p.m.

They will finish their week on Friday, Dec. 20, by hosting Black River Falls in Eagle River with a puck drop slated at 4:30 p.m.

<b>Upcoming</b>		<b>WINTER 2024-'25</b>	
<b>High School Varsity Hoops Schedules</b>			
Dec. 19 - Dec. 25, 2024			
<p><b>Northland Pines Eagles</b></p> <p><b>Boys Basketball</b></p> <p>Fri., Dec. 20 @ Lakeland Union H.S. - 7:15pm</p> <p><b>Girls Basketball</b></p> <p>Fri., Dec. 20 vs Lakeland Union H.S. - 7:15pm</p>	<p><b>Three Lakes Blue Jays</b></p> <p><b>Boys Basketball</b></p> <p>Thurs., Dec. 19 vs Wakefield-Marenisco School District - 7:15pm</p> <p><b>Girls Basketball</b></p> <p>No Games</p>	<p>Subject to change please check team websites</p> <p><b>BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE FOLLOWING AREA BUSINESSES</b></p>	
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The Northland Pines student section dressed up in Christmas attire to cheer on their fellow classmates.



# SPORTS

## Three Lakes competes against Lakeland; Jays end the week with win at Tomahawk

BY JACOB HEID  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Three Lakes boys' basketball team (2-3,1-0) continued its nonconference schedule last week, with Lakeland coming away with a 53-47 win in Three Lakes last Tuesday after the Jays took a slight lead in the second half. The Jays dominantly ended the week with a 69-29 win in Tomahawk.

With two Great Northern Conference teams on the docket last week, Lakeland came to town Tuesday in what was a competitive and complete game for

Three Lakes, according to coach George Lurvey.

"I was very happy with the way we played against Lakeland. It is our best, most complete game to date, and the kids competed the entire game," he said.

Freshman guard Easton Lurvey led Three Lakes offensively with 20 points. He also had six rebounds.

Senior Eli Erickson followed with 15 points and seven boards, along with a six-point, eight-rebound performance from Peyton Pitlik.

The Jays shot 35% from the floor and were outrebounded 43-30.

Lurvey got things rolling with an early 3-pointer before Lakeland's defense tightened up and the T-Birds led 16-7 just over halfway through the half. The Jays slowed the game down and worked through their half-court offensive sets.

Defensive stands that led to a trio of steals by Lurvey and one each by Erickson and Charlie Liebscher led to Three Lakes climbing back into the game, 23-17, with about three minutes before the half.

Lakeland pushed that up to a 30-19 halftime lead, as Lurvey opened the second half with a triple.

He continued his scoring tear late in the second half with a small handful of 3-pointers as Three Lakes tried to chip away at the lead. Lurvey's triples brought Three Lakes within nine and six points at different stages of the second half.

"We were able to take a slight lead in the second half after being down 11 at halftime, which showed me that the kids were willing to work hard and compete throughout the game," explained Lurvey. "We had a chance to win the game, but we allowed Lakeland to go on a 10-0 run, which we had to chip away at and recover from."

Turnovers were also a bright spot as the team cut down on the critical mistakes that changed the complexion of prior games.

"We did a great job of improving on turnovers



Three Lakes sophomore Owen Liebscher attempts to make a move around a Lakeland defender near the free throw line in a 53-47 loss for Three Lakes Dec. 10 at Three Lakes High School.

— Staff Photos By JACOB HEID



Three Lakes senior Peyton Pitlik drives around a defender towards the hoop.

that have been plaguing us in past games, but there is still room for improvement," stated Lurvey. "We are greatly improving every week and we are very excited for what is ahead of us."

Three Lakes closed the week in Tomahawk, and didn't have much of a problem with the Hatchets, as the Jays won the game by 40.

The Jays were back home for a Northern Lakes

Conference game versus Crandon Monday before another nonconference game versus Wakefield-Marenisco this Thursday, Dec. 19, at 7:15 p.m.

## STANDINGS

W	L	W	L
<b>EAGLE RIVER POOL LEAGUE</b>		<b>EAGLE RIVER DARTBALL</b>	
Results of 12/5/24		Results of 12/4/24	
Results: Eagle Lanes 9, Club 45 III 7; Log Cabin 12, Uncle Kent's II 4; Brew's Pub 12, Lumpy's 4; Denoyer's I 9, Northern Exposure 7; Denoyer's II 8, Uncle Kent's I 8; Club 45 I 11, Club 45 II 5		Team results: Shotskis 3, Club 45 0; Sweetwater I 3, Mud Creek I 0; Veterans Center 2, Club Denoyer 1; Mud Creek II 2, Sweetwater II 1; Thunderbird 2, Eagle Lanes 1	
Eight Ball Runs: Jay Krull		Top female shooters:	
Results of 12/11/24		Jane Klug 5/19; Teresa Ternig 4/17; Mabel Ernest 4/19; Donna adams 3/19; Gail Newitt 1/12	
Results: Eagle Lanes 14, Club 45 II 2; Uncle Kent's I, 8 Lumpy's 8; Brew's Pub 10, Denoyer's I 6; Club 45 I 8, Northern Exposure 8; Denoyer's II 9, Log Cabin 7; Uncle Kent's II 9, Club 45 III 7		Top men shooters:	
Eight Ball Runs: Josh Dishno, Steve Schuettner, Cal Wick		Joe Romdenne 9/27; Warner russell 8/27; Pete Aiello 7/18; Joe Struck II 7/19; John Gabriel 7/25; Doug Talbott 6/14; Dave Kampii 6/17; Rob Govek 5/16	
<b>STANDINGS</b>		<b>Home runs:</b>	
Eagle Lanes 116	44	Results of 12/11/24	
Club 45 Iii 105	55	Team results: Club 45 2, tie 1, Veterans 2, tie 1; Club Denoyer 2, Mud Creek I 1; Mud Creek II 2, Eagle Lanes 1; Sweetwater I 2, Thunderbird 1; Sweetwater II 2, Shotskis 1	
Brew's Pub 101	51		
Northern Exposure 86	74		
Uncle Kents I 81	79		
Denoyer's I 77	83		
Club 45 I 76	84		
Uncle Kents II 69	91		
		<b>Top female shooters:</b>	
		Beth Radowicz 5/22, Jane Klug 4/14, Pam Talbot 4/17, Sarah Winter 4/18, Tina Aiello 4/18, Taylor Healy 4/18, Jenni Hanson 3/18, Madonna Kamppi 3/22	
		<b>Top men shooters:</b>	
		Dave Kamppi 9/23, Mark Krupa 7/18, Dan Newitt 6/17, Tim Winter 6/18, Joe Struck Jr 6/19, Rick Ferritie 6/22, Dan Sosnoski 5/19, Rocky Meyer 5/22, Scott Eschenbach 3/16	
		<b>Home runs:</b>	
		Edith Huybrecht, Beth Radowicz, Jean Rhyner, Frank Merkle, Daniel Sosnoski	
		<b>Standings</b>	
		Eagle Lanes 14	7
		Club 45 13	7
			(one tie)
		Shotskis 13	8
		Sweetwater II 13	8
		Sweetwater I 11	10
		Veterans Center 10	10
			(one tie)
		Club Denoyer 10	11
		Thunderbird 10	11
		Mud Creek II 7	14
		Mud Creek I 3	18



SENIOR OLYMPICS — Northland Pines High School hosted the 2024 senior olympics this past Friday morning. Seen here are the participants playing eclipse ball, which is a racquet sport that incorporates aspects of volleyball, tennis, soccer and badminton.

— Staff Photo By JACOB HEID

www.vcnewsreview.com

## Lady Jays sweep week of noncon play

BY JACOB HEID  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Three Lakes-Phelps girls basketball team swept the week of nonconference competition with its first complete game in a 57-48 win at Crivitz last Tuesday before knocking off previously undefeated Tomahawk 57-50 in overtime Friday.

Before the two-game win streak and improving to 3-4 (0-1), the Lady Jays previously lost their previous four games.

The team kicked off the week on a high note last week with an all-around great effort in the nine-point victory.

"The first complete game. All around, it was our best game of the year," said Three Lakes-Phelps coach Rich Javenkoski.

TLP took the lead in the first half and took a 23-19 lead at halftime behind the offensive performances of junior Haylee Barnekow and Paige Bradford.

Barnekow had nine of her 11 points in the opening 18 minutes, while Bradford had five of her 16 points in the first as well.

Junior Kailyn Fogerty factored into pulling away in the second half where she had 12 of her 15 points.

"She was hitting her shots and rebounding," said Javenkoski about Bradford stepping up in the win. "Kailyn Fogerty put together her best game of the year offensively and defensively and ran the offense for us."

Crivitz took a slight one-point lead, 36-25, before TLP "took it home," according to Javenkoski.

Along with Barnekow's offensive production, she also had the task of guarding Crivitz's best guard, Kiya Brand. Despite her 26-point performance, Javenkoski explained that his junior played physically defensively, ultimately forcing her out of the game with five fouls.

He believed the team did

a decent job at containing her when needed.

The momentum continued Friday as TLP battled the Hatchets, who sat at 4-0 before the game.

Javenkoski said the Lady Jays would need to continue good offense and stay disciplined in man-to-man defense to get the win. Also containing five-foot-11 Tomahawk junior forward Freya Alberg, who averages just over 20 points per game, was another key for TLP. They did just that and a game that was forced into overtime led to a seven-point victory for the road Jays to finish the week at 2-0.

TLP recently played another home game this past Monday at Prentice, and a long break for the holidays won't have the team back to game action until after the new year. The next scheduled game is a Northern Lakes Conference road game at Florence Friday, Jan. 3, at 7:15 p.m.

## Hockey Schedules 2024-'25

Dec. 19 - Dec. 25, 2024

**Eagle River Falcons**  
Fri., Dec. 20 @ Depere - 8:00pm  
Sat., Dec. 21 @ Fond du Lac - 8:00pm

**Northland Pines Eagles**  
**BOYS**  
Thurs., Dec. 19 vs Lakeland Union H.S. - 7:00pm  
**GIRLS**  
Thurs., Dec. 19 Xavier H.S. - 6:00pm  
Fri., Dec. 20 @ Rhinelander vs Black River Falls - 4:30pm

Subject to change, please check team websites

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<p><b>715-479-8732</b> xlcleaningpros.com</p>	<p><b>ROGERS CONTROL</b> Electrical • Refrigeration • Heating Ventilation • Air Conditioning 715-479-6919 www.rogerscontrol.com</p>
<p><b>AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE</b> 322 East Wall St. Eagle River, WI 1202 Lincoln St. Rhinelander, WI</p>	<p><b>EAGLE RIVER CABINETS, INC.</b> Two locations to serve you 5234 Hwy. 70 West, Eagle River, WI 54521 Phone: (715) 479-7479 1419 Lincoln St., Rhinelander, WI 54501 Phone: (715) 362-3400</p>
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All 18 weekly winners, plus all other players during the season (with valid entries) who have perfect scores (16 out of 16) will be entered into a Playoff Contest. This will be a one-time Bowl Game/Playoff Game Contest after the regular season concludes. The winner of the Playoff will win \$200 cash thanks to the businesses that sponsor the annual contest.

**Put your football predictions to the test throughout the season! Pick this week's winners for your chance to win \$100!**

The Vilas County News-Review's Football Contest is easy and fun! Simply circle the winner of each game listed. Game 1 has added importance. See Game of the Week notes. Each game represents one point. A perfect score is 16 points. Be sure to fill in the Tiebreaker section. For any game ending in a tie, or if a game is delayed, postponed or rescheduled for any reason, the point will be thrown out. See official rules below. You must be at least 8 years old to enter. To enter, clip along the dotted line, then place game entry in the drop box at any of our sponsor's retail outlet. Entrants must list name, address and phone number clearly ... information must be legible. Illegible entries will be disqualified. Decisions of the Contest Judge (News-Review) are final. Drop off your entry forms at the participating businesses listed below, or at the Vilas County News-Review office. Deadline is noon Friday unless otherwise stated.

**WEEK 16 DEADLINE: NOON, FRIDAY, DEC. 20**

PLEASE CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

**NEWS-REVIEW FOOTBALL CONTEST**  
WEEK 16 DEC. 21 & DEC. 22

CIRCLE THE WINNING TEAMS FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN \$100!

**GAME OF THE WEEK**

- Jacksonville at Las Vegas
- Pittsburgh at Baltimore
- N.Y. Giants at Atlanta
- Arizona at Carolina
- Philadelphia at Washington
- Tennessee at Indianapolis
- Tampa Bay at Dallas
- Houston at Kansas City
- New England at Buffalo
- Detroit at Chicago
- L.A. Rams at N.Y. Jets
- Cleveland at Cincinnati
- Minnesota at Seattle
- San Francisco at Miami
- Tennessee at Ohio State (NCAA)
- Ohio at Jacksonville State (NCAA)

**How to Play**  
For each of the 16 games listed above, circle the team you are picking to win. **One entry per person.**

**Game of the Week**  
You must correctly pick the winner of Game 1 to advance in the contest. If you pick Game 1 incorrectly, you cannot win the weekly contest, unless all entrants pick Game 1 incorrectly.

**Tiebreaker 1**  
Total combined points scored (both teams) in Game of the Week.

**Tiebreaker 2**  
Total combined offensive yards (both teams) in Game of the Week.

WEEK 15 WINNER  
**TOM MURPHY**  
Eagle River, WI

**DEADLINE - NOON - FRIDAY DEC. 20**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Drop off your entry at these sponsors:**

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WEEK 15 — Tom Murphy of Eagle River, the guy who won back-to-back weeks a year ago, went an amazing 15-1 last week to win Week 15 of the News-Review Football Contest. Here, Melanie Bastian of the sponsoring Wisconsin Building Supply of Eagle River presents the \$100 cash prize to Murphy. —STAFF PHOTO

**OFFICIAL RULES**

- The object is to pick the winner of 16 games. Games will include professional and college games played Friday, Saturday or Sunday. The weekly winner will be the entrant with the most points ... 16 being the most possible. The weekly winner must have the Game of the Week correct. If there is a tie, it goes to Tiebreaker 1, the total points scored by both teams in the week's designated game. If that fails to determine a winner, the judges will go to Tiebreaker 2, total offensive yardage from scrimmage in the designated game. If there is still a tie, a drawing at the News-Review, Eagle River, will be used.
- No points are awarded on tie games, or in case any game is not played for any reason during the scheduled week. Should the News-Review make an error listing a game/games, those games will be thrown out, not counted.
- Entering the Football Contest constitutes permission by the entrant for his or her name and photograph to be used for news and reasonable promotion purposes at no charge.
- Employees of this newspaper and their immediate families are ineligible to participate. No entries will be accepted after the posted deadline.
- Any inquiry about a protest of weekly results must be made by noon on the Friday following the announcement of the winner. The decision of the Contest Administrator is final.
- No purchase is necessary. Entries MAY NOT be faxed. Emailed entries will be accepted if received by 12 p.m. Friday or the specified date of entry week-by-week. Email entries to newsreview@mmlocal.com
- Weekly deadline for entry will be noon Friday, except when noted otherwise on the weekly entry form.
- Neither this newspaper nor any co-sponsor will be responsible for illegible entry forms or those lost, stolen or damaged in any way.
- Limit: one entry per person per week.** Each entry must represent the original work of one entrant; group entries, systems or other attempts to enter multiple entries will be disqualified. Filing out extra forms and putting your friends' or relatives' names on them violates this rule. Any such entries are destroyed prior to grading.





# Lifestyle

## Warm The Children short \$5,000 of fundraising goal

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

Donations to Warm The Children (WTC), a program sponsored by the Vilas County News-Review under the auspices of the Eagle River Rotary Foundation to provide winter clothing for children in need, is still \$5,000 short of its 2024 fundraising goal according to program coordinator Nancy Brandner.

The program has successfully met its fundraising goal each year since increasing the amount from \$70,000 to \$80,000 in 2018. The increase in fundraising goals has allowed WTC to provide warmth for more area children, as well as raise the spending amount per child.

News-Review Publisher Kurt Krueger said that although the program has ended for the 2024 season, donations are still coming in to help clothe children.

"This enables us to start the 2025 winter season with money already in reserve. Because we start the shopping season so soon after we start receiving donations, it is important that we have funds so that children can be shopped for as the winter season begins," he said.

He stressed that every penny raised goes to clothe children in need in the area, as the News-Review funds all of the administrative, marketing and other costs associated with the program.

"I think it's important that the money being donated is used exclusively to help the kids and families that need it most," said Krueger. "We can fund all the program costs because we have a strong community newspaper with fantastic support from readers and area businesses, our advertisers."

The spending limit was also raised for shoppers this year.

"We also want to let supporters of this program know that because of their generosity, we were able to

To WARM, Pg. 12

## St. Mary of the Snows to host free Christmas dinner

St. Mary of the Snows Anglican Church in Eagle River is extending an invitation to the public to celebrate the birth of Christ with a Eucharist Mass on Christmas Day — Wednesday, Dec. 25 — at 11 a.m., followed by a free community dinner in the fellowship hall at noon.

"On a day when many are opening gifts, we want to share the greatest gift ever given...the gift of a Savior to a world covered in darkness," stated a member of the congregation.

St. Mary of the Snows is a spirit-filled church that follows a liturgy with ancient roots that are traditional and Biblical in nature. The Church seeks to worship together as the early church did, to study Scriptures together, pray together, and minister to the needs of others together. The mission of St. Mary of the Snows is to help others find eternal life, hope, forgiveness, and purpose through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"This is a season of celebration...a time when the Light of the World clothed Himself in flesh to reveal and interpret God the Father to us. Together, we desire to be a source of light and life to the people around us. This Christmas Mass and community dinner is one way that together we plan to do this," said Father Glenn, interim rector.

St. Mary of the Snows is located at 1019 Wall St. in Eagle River, next to Trig's Grocery.

For more information, contact the church at 715-479-8921.



JAZZ IT UP — The Northwoods Jazz Group, under the direction of Larry Chamberlain, performed some smooth Christmas Classics at its "A Twist of Christmas Jazz" performance at Union Congregational Church in Three Lakes on Thursday, Dec. 12, warming the air with festive music on a night when temperatures were well in the negatives. Those in attendance were welcome to groove along to familiar favorites like "Rocking Around the Christmas Tree" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." This performance highlighted the church's Psalm 150 Project. More information about the band and upcoming performances can be found by visiting their Facebook page. —Staff Photo By JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN

## Avian rescues, Kentuck Lake residents unite to save trapped trumpeter swan

BY MICHELLE DREW CORRESPONDENT

A close call for a young trumpeter swan had a happy ending earlier this month thanks to assistance from a group of dedicated animal rehabilitators and residents on Kentuck Lake in Vilas County.

The cygnet — that was trapped on the icy lake with falling temperatures and hungry bald eagles on the prowl — is now being treated by avian experts at Raptor Education Group, Inc. (REGI) in Antigo for a right wing injury and lead poisoning.

Linda and Kevin Grenzer, who operate the nonprofit organization Loon Rescue based in Tomahawk, received a call Sunday, Dec. 1, from concerned property owner Tim Bonk regarding a young swan, or cygnet, that was unable to migrate with its family ahead of

the incoming cold winter weather.

On Thanksgiving Day, Bonk said he noticed the family of swans would take off calling, but then return in an attempt to coax the cygnet to come with them. With cold temperatures on the way, and open water shrinking due to ice cover, the family had to start its migration south.

By Sunday, as Bonk was leaving his property, he realized there was a solo swan sitting on thin ice at the edge of open water. Understanding the gravity of the situation, he called Loon Rescue for aid.

Sunday night's temperatures dropped into the single digits, and Kentuck Lake was completely frozen over by Monday morning. The Grenzers checked with two lake residents — Maribeth Park and Kathy



"Superhero" Tim Bonk is all smiles after capturing the stranded young trumpeter swan. —Contributed Photo

To SWAN, Pg. 5

## Eagle River Chamber of Commerce names 2024 award recipients

BY JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Eagle River Chamber of Commerce announced the recipients of its 2024 Business, Man, Woman and Volunteer of the Year awards at an annual banquet on Thursday, Dec. 12.

Nominees of the award can be of any age but must live and be active in the Eagle River area and must have contributed outstanding service to the

community within the past five years. Nominees are only to be selected once.

To nominate a business, a business must have been standing for at least three years and be involved in the community.

Nominees/winners were selected by a 350-member Chamber board.

For more information about these awards, contact the Eagle River Chamber of Commerce at info@eagleriver.org or

715-479-6400, or by visiting their website at https://eagleriver.org/.

### Business of the Year

The Northwoods Children's Museum was selected as the recipient of the 2024 Business of the Year award.

The museum was recognized by the chamber for being one of the smallest children's museums continuing to operate in a low-populated area for almost 26 years, providing

a family-friendly community space and introducing new programming despite small staff, a 33% increase in total revenue in January and February during the area's turbulent 2024 winter season, the museum's 26 hands-on interactive educational exhibits, a year-round hosting of educational programming and community events, building partnerships with area businesses, accomplishments of

To AWARD, Pg. 3



## Not that you asked, but ...

BY ERIC JOHNSON

### Christmas presents presence

*"There is surely nothing other than the single purpose of the present moment. A man's whole life is a succession of moment after moment. If one fully understands the present moment, there will be nothing else to do, and nothing else to pursue. Live being true to the single purpose of the moment." — Japanese soldier Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659-1719)*

Between the ubiquitous retail Christmas shopping ads on every communication medium known to mankind — I'm sure there's a blimp over a football somewhere hawking last minute holiday sales on fragrances for the missus at Macy's — to the familiar old Christmas carols singing cheerily about five-and-tens "glistening once again with candy canes and silver lanes aglow" as "the shoppers rush home with their treasures," presents and gift-giving are central to the modern Christmas experience — or the generic "holidays" in the current cultural vernacular.

As Lucy Van Pelt noted in the "A Charlie Brown Christmas" TV movie way back in 1965, "Look, Charlie, let's face it. We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket. It's run by a big eastern syndicate, you know."

And even in 2024, it still seems to be run by the ad execs on Madison Avenue.

Strolling through the gift-giving section at one of

To JOHNSON, Pg. 12



The Northwoods Children's Museum was named the 2024 Business of the Year by the Eagle River Chamber of Commerce. Pictured from left to right are Kim Emerson, Executive Director Eagle River Chamber of Commerce; Jackie Weight, President Northwoods Children's Museum; Danielle Larson, Executive Director Northwoods Children's Museum and Sue Herfindahl, President Eagle River Chamber of Commerce. —Contributed Photo



# LIFESTYLE



**SANTA WORKSHOP** — The students of Sugar Camp Elementary were busy last week with the annual Santa Workshop and Sleigh Rides, where volunteers were able to help wrap presents, helping students shop and spreading the Christmas Spirit.  
—Photos By Jennifer West



## Trees offering hands-on learning for local students

Trees For Tomorrow (TFT) is offering programs for students of all ages, intending to encourage them to connect with nature and explore the natural environment around them. Through these programs, students will be introduced to subjects such as marine biology, limnology (the study of lakes), and careers in Wisconsin's natural environment.

Recently, a high school group explored the concept of how carbon sequestration (carbon dioxide storage within trees) varies between forest types. Using clinometers — a tool commonly used in forestry, sailing and architecture — students measured tree heights to estimate carbon storage. TFT says that this simple tool, combined with hands-on activity, showcases how

their programming demonstrates practical learning with outdoor discovery, sparking curiosity and new insights among students. TFT offers two specific programs for high school students to explore career pathways in natural resources:

To TREES, Pg. 7

## Make Music Day set in Land O' Lakes this weekend

To celebrate the winter solstice — the shortest day of the year — LOLA Arts will be joining cities worldwide in celebrating Make Music Winter on Saturday, Dec. 21, with the first-ever Caroling Hand Bells Band. This family-friendly event is open to all ages, and no prior experience is necessary.



Jennifer Anderson, Executive Director with a Bell Player.  
—Contributed Photo

Starting at 10 a.m. attendees are to meet at the LOLA Building in Land O' Lakes for a "band practice" session where participants will learn to play "Jingle Bells" using handbells and boomwhackers. After the practice there will be a parade to nearby local businesses. After the event, participants will have the

chance to win their musical instruments, which are donated by Rhythm Band Instruments, in a raffle. Winners will also receive color-coded holiday sheet music to continue their musical journeys at home. Make Music Day is presented by the NAMM Foundation and  
To MUSIC, Pg. 5

**HAPPY NEW YEAR AND BEST WISHES FOR 2025!**

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# LIFESTYLE



MERRY MELODIES — Christmas cheer was being spread at some festive concerts at the Northland Pines Middle and High School auditorium last week. Along with kindergarten, elementary and middle school performances was also the middle and high school winter band concert. Before schools head off for holiday break, there will be the Land O' Lakes Elementary School concert on Thursday, Dec. 19 at 2 p.m. —Photos By Ashley Heid

## Award

FROM PAGE 1

securing significant grant funding to maintain the museum building, active support of the community, and assisting in providing programming needs to local organizations such as Feed Our Rural Kids (FORK) and Foster Families, as well as other organizations.

"To be the Business of the Year was such a heartwarming honor," said museum Executive Director Danielle Larsen. "We want to grow, encourage and teach play to all the children in our surrounding community. What greater reward than to receive this award, reassuring us that we are working for the greater good of our community."

### Man of the Year

Lou Deditz was named the 2024 Man of the Year, being recognized as a "compassionate, community-oriented individual, truly devoted to uplifting those around him" by the Chamber.

Deditz was born, raised and lives in Eagle River. He has a daughter, Nicole, and supportive friend Heather Kangas.

Deditz has eight years of experience in custom painting and business management. He started his own property and caretaking company, specializing in custom painting and staining in 2023, and currently staffs three full-time and one part-time employee.

Deditz's friends describe him as being "100% dependable, loyal, humble and a quiet leader. He is passionate for his community and those with special needs, as well as having a passion for our servicemen and women and veterans alike."

He is also very giving of his time and talents, shared Kangas, and he is always busy helping someone with something.

"I take care of the house and Lou takes care of the community," she said.

For 15 years Deditz has been an active volunteer with Northern Access Special Olympics — bringing management support and the program to the community for those with special needs.

He has also been an assistant with many Chamber events such as The National Championship Musky Open, Cranberry Fest, and putting up and taking down Christmas lights. He has also assisted with small building repairs and now sits on the Building Committee at the Chamber to look at remodeling efforts.

Along with being named 2024 Man of the Year, Deditz was awarded the 2024 Volunteer of the Year award by the Chamber.

### Woman of the Year

Described by the Chamber as "passionate, devoted, hardworking and remarkably giving of her time," Janlee Goska was announced as the 2024 Woman of the Year.

Born and raised in Eagle River, Goska has been married to her husband Gary for 42 years. Together, they have raised four sons and have three grandchildren, with one more on the way in April.

During Goska's professional career, she was a substitute teacher and cleaned cottages in the area. In her free time, she enjoys stamping.

Goska has been active with the Vilas County Food Pantry for over 13 years as Food Director. In her role, she ensures that the pantry shelves are well-stocked, ordering needed items, picking those items up, and inventorying stock for shelves as needed.

"Janlee Goska is a true inspiration — a person who continues to give and expects nothing in return," said Eagle River Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kim Emerson. "Her selfless dedication to enhancing the well-being of our community is nothing short of remarkable."

## Badger Bridge details results

Winners of North/South: First: Ed Stover and Bob Busakowski. Second: Joel DeAngelo and Jackie Walker.

Winners of East/West: First: Bob Dow and Jerry Baerenwald. Second: LaNora Kleerup and Joy Vanden Heuvel.

If interested in Badger Bridge, contact Club Director Bob Dow at 414-785-6411.

## Read, Reuse, Recycle

### Community news online.

VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW [vcnewsreview.com](http://vcnewsreview.com)  
[facebook.com/vcnews](https://facebook.com/vcnews)

## Here's something!

DOZENS of stocking stuffers for under \$5!

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### Grandma's Toy Box - Eagle Craft & Hobby

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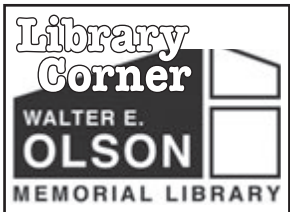
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# LIFESTYLE



The Library is open for in-person visits and curbside service. As always, Wi-Fi access and digital services are available 24/7. Have questions? Find answers at [olsonlibrary.org](http://olsonlibrary.org) or contact the Library at 715-479-8070 or [olsonlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:olsonlibrary@gmail.com).

Here's what else you need to know about current Library happenings:

- Friday, Dec. 20, 3 - 5 p.m.: Winter Hygge Hangout. In honor of the season, join us for a cozy, all-ages hangout where you can enjoy cozy crafts, treats, and music. Find some coziness amidst the busyness of the holiday season!

- The Library will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and Wednesday, Dec. 25, for Christmas, but our digital library never closes! Browse our digital books, audiobooks and popular magazines at [wplc.overdrive.com](http://wplc.overdrive.com) or by using the Libby app. You can also find streaming video, crafting tutorials, language classes and more at [olsonlibrary.org/digital\\_resources](http://olsonlibrary.org/digital_resources).

- Looking for the perfect holiday gift? Consider

the OML "Tree of Love" program. For a goodwill donation, we will create an ornament personalized with the name of a loved one and a short message to display on our tree from now through the end of the holiday season...after that, take the ornament home to hang on your own tree in years to come. We are also selling "Libraries Take You Places" tote bags — great as either a stocking stuffer OR a stocking!

- Our December Take & Make Craft is a paper tube nutcracker. Transform sample paint chips into colorful holiday works of art to share! Kits are available while supplies last.

- Pick up a free Healthy Holiday kit, courtesy of the Vilas County Department of Public Health. Each kit contains COVID tests, hand sanitizer, tissues and seasonal health information.

- Did you know you can check out a day pass for Wisconsin State Parks? OML cardholders with Wisconsin vehicle plates can check out a one-day pass good for any state park, forest or recreation area where admission is required.

- Calling cookie bakers of all ages! Mark your calendar for OML's upcoming Cookie Bake-Off contest, scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 18. Stay tuned for more info!

## Weekly offerings

- Mondays, 2 - 3:30 p.m. – Hone your skills at Ukulele Practice. Don't play? Bring another instrument — or your voice — and join us!

- Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – Story Time with Ms. Tori. Bring your grown-up for stories, songs and fun!

- Thursdays, 9 - 11 a.m. – Aunt Gracie's Sewing Circle

- Fridays, 10 - 11 a.m. – Wiggle, Giggle & Shake music and movement program for children ages 0-5.

## Monthly offerings

- Compassus Grief Support Group (1st Thursdays, 1 - 2 p.m.) – Jan. 2 (Feb. 6)

- Free Mending Day (1st Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.) – Jan. 4 (Feb. 1)

- Eagle River Genealogical Society (1st Mondays, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.) – Jan. 6 (Feb. 3)

- Growing Together Family Support Group (2nd Thursdays, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.) – Jan. 9 (Feb. 13)

- Memory Café (3rd Mondays, 10 - 11:30 a.m.) – Jan. 20 (Feb. 17)

Find books, puzzles, movies and more! A reminder that the Walter Olson Library Friends (W.O.L.F.) has ongoing book sales in the Library lobby. For information or to join W.O.L.F., contact the Library.

## Senior Citizen Menus

December 23-27  
Sponsored by ADRC of Vilas & Oneida Counties

### Eagle River

**More Than a Meal Café at the Rock Mission Center**  
Serving at noon.

Lighter substitute available in place of main entrée: Grilled chicken salad. Reservations or cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance. Call Jennie Johnson (715) 891-1221 to reserve or cancel a meal.

**Monday, December 23**  
Split pea soup, crackers, chicken salad with raisins on a croissant with lettuce leaf, mandarin oranges, peach upside down cake.

**Tuesday, December 24**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Thursday, December 26**  
Lemon and pepper fish, tartar sauce, baked potato, sour cream, dill carrots, rye bread, applesauce.

**Friday, December 27**  
Kielbasa with sauerkraut, twice baked mashed potato, peas, rye bread, fresh grapes.

### St. Germain

**St. Germain Community Center**  
Serving at 10:30 a.m.

Home-delivered meals only. Home-delivered meals are available based on eligibility. For reservations or cancellations, please call Pam Cirra at (715) 891-5453 (must call 24 hours in advance). Lighter substitute available in place of main entrée: Grilled chicken salad (or healthy salad).

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Thursday, December 26**  
Lemon and pepper fish, tartar sauce, baked potato, sour cream, dill carrots, rye bread, applesauce.

**Friday, December 27**  
Kielbasa with sauerkraut, twice baked mashed potato, peas, rye bread, and fresh grapes.

### Phelps

**Northern Exposure Restaurant**  
Serving at noon

Lighter substitute available in place of main entrée: Healthy salad. All meals are served with fat-free milk, whole grain rolls/bread with margarine. Meals are served Monday, Wednesday and Friday at noon. Reservations or cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance. Call Judi Heikkinen at 715-545-3697 to reserve or cancel a meal.

**Monday, December 23**  
Chicken and ribs, mashed potatoes and gravy, mixed vegetables, whole wheat bread, ice cream with berries.

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Friday, December 27**  
Pepperoni and cheese pizza, mixed dark greens salad with tomato, pudding with fruit.

### Land O' Lakes

**Love of Life Café,**  
Gateway Lodge

Serving at 11:30 a.m.  
Butter and margarine offered. Coffee and fat-free milk served with each meal. Lighter substitute in place of main entrée: Grilled chicken salad. Place reservations and

choice with Anna Moore (715) 547-6076 at least 24 hours in advance.

**Tuesday, December 24**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

### North Lakeland Elementary School (NLES)

**Manners Café**  
Serving at 11:15 a.m.  
Butter and margarine offered. Coffee and fat-free milk served with each meal. For reservations, contact Mary Ellen Duranso at (715) 904-0065 at least 24 hours in advance.

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Thursday, December 26**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

### Three Lakes

**The Reiter Center**  
Serving at 11:30 a.m.  
Contact 715-499-3738 at least one day in advance to make or cancel a reservation.

**Monday, December 23**  
Split pea soup, chicken salad with raisins on a croissant with lettuce; mandarin oranges, peach upside down cake.

**Tuesday, December 24**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Closed for Christmas Holiday.

**Thursday, December 26**  
Lemon and pepper fish, tartar sauce, baked potato, sour cream, dill carrots, rye bread, applesauce.



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# LIFESTYLE

## Swan

FROM PAGE 1

Brah — whom they had worked with in the past for a loon rescue, and the two confirmed there was in fact a lone swan on the ice.

“Kentuck is a large, 1,000-acre lake, but that did not stop them from checking on this swan, which they located,” Linda Grenzer said. “The only problem was this cygnet, who was trying to fly but could not, was out in the center of extremely thin ice.”

Although lake residents were playing swan calls from the shoreline and putting out food in the hopes the cygnet would come off the thin ice on its own, the bird refused to budge.

“The next three days were windy and cold with bone-chilling nights,” Grenzer said. “The cygnet would not come to the shoreline and would only move a short distance, but stayed smack-dab in the center of the lake.”

In addition to the cold temps and water freezing to ice, the situation got even more dire for the cygnet when bald eagles located the injured bird, circling and harassing it.

Grenzer noted that ice thickness near the shoreline was only around 1.5 to 3 inches thick, so there was not enough ice for a rescue attempt to safely be made in the middle of the lake. To make matters more difficult, birds like swans, pelicans and geese are able to run away from rescuers, whereas loons cannot.

### Drones to the rescue

With rescue options running thin, Bonk made the drive back to his property here Friday, Dec. 6, to attempt to use his drone to push the cygnet closer to shore.

“The drone measured that the swan was about

2,000 feet from the shoreline. It was bitter cold, and Tim had two batteries with about 15 minutes of flying time each,” Grenzer said. “He got the swan to move a couple hundred feet, but then had to recharge the batteries.”

On his second attempt, Bonk was able to move the swan another 550 feet closer to shore, but on his final attempt the cygnet had become used to the drone and only moved about 10 more feet, leaving the bird about 1,450 feet from shore.

Bonk again tried to play swan calls from the shoreline using a bluetooth speaker in the hopes the cygnet would be able to hear it and be lured closer still. To his surprise, it worked!

Once the cygnet made it to Bonk’s shoreline, he called the Grenzers to make the drive up from their home base in Tomahawk.

It had come closer to shore, but the cygnet had not made it to safety yet. While Bonk and Grenzer were on the phone, an eagle “dropped like a missile over the swan.”

Armed with a muskie net, Bonk said he made “a 50-yard sprint” and was able to safely net the cygnet, with the eagle sitting about 10 feet away from the exhausted bird.

When the Grenzers arrived, Bonk and the bird were safely on his porch.

They drove the injured cygnet 1.5 hours to Antigo where REGI director Marge Gibson met them afterwards to perform X-rays and blood work.

Grenzer said without



The young trumpeter swan is being treated for a wing injury and lead poisoning in Antigo after a harrowing experience. It is expected to be reunited with its family next spring when they migrate back to Kentuck Lake.

these rescue efforts, she expects the cygnet would have met a sad end in a matter of days, either from predation by eagles, freezing or starvation.

“This sweet cygnet has been through a lot these past days, but hopefully much better days are ahead thanks to Tim’s valiant rescue and REGI’s amazing care,” Grenzer said. “Tim was a super hero with what he did.”

### REGI steps in

Now safely housed at REGI, healing has begun. It was discovered that a swollen right wing, feather damage and lead poisoning affected the cygnet, making it unable to migrate with its family, according to Gibson.

“Before capture, the swan had a rough time on the frozen lake. She was there alone for the first time since she hatched after her parents had to leave on migration,” she said.

But she expects the young cygnet will be reunited with



Kevin and Linda Grenzer of Loon Rescue, shown here once the cygnet was delivered to REGI in Antigo for treatment, facilitated the transport of the injured bird. — Contributed Photos

its family next spring after it receives treatment for lead poisoning and resolution of its wing and feather issues.

“Birds are amazing in their ability to migrate and return to the same site each year. They do return to the same site and will be able to locate her family,” Gibson said.

The swan rescue likely also served the eagle, as eagles are prone to getting poisoned by lead by eating infected meats or fish.

### Public help necessary

Gibson has worked

closely with the Grenzers in the past to help avians suffering from injury, lead poisoning and other afflictions. She expressed her gratitude to them, as well as to the residents who sounded the alarm on the injured cygnet.

“This rescue was a race against time, a true test of the skills and determination of both Loon Rescue and Tim Bonk,” Gibson said. “Loon Rescue puts so much into planning and executing captures, which are literally on ‘thin ice’ this time of year.

“We are so grateful to

members of the public and residents for their crucial role in reporting birds in trouble and for helping with capture. Without the public alerting Loon Rescue and REGI to a bird in trouble, we would never know and, therefore, be unable to help.”

Anyone who needs assistance with injured birds can contact Loon Rescue at 715-966-5415 or 715-453-4916; or REGI at 715-623-4015 or rap-toreducationgroup@gmail.com. More information also can be found online at rap-toreducationgroup.org.

## Music

FROM PAGE 2

coordinated by the nonprofit Make Music Alliance. Make Music Winter brings merriment to the winter solstice,

celebrating with free live music performances, and turning audience members into music makers. Over 35 cities celebrated last year, each in their own different way.

For more information, contact Jennifer Anderson,

Executive Director of LOLA Arts, at lolaartswi.com@gmail.com or (715) 547-3950. Additional details can be found on LOLA’s website at lolaartswi.com/annual-events/make-music-day-winter/.

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# Everyone has something to give. Please help us warm our children.

Many children are wishing for things much more basic than toys: a warm winter coat, boots to keep their feet warm and dry mittens to warm chilly fingers. Through the Vilas County News-

Review’s WARM THE CHILDREN FUND, needy area children will get the winter clothing they so badly want and need.

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So what is the Vilas County News-Review’s WARM THE CHILDREN FUND?

It’s neighbors helping neighbors. The Vilas County News-Review is asking readers to donate to the fund, and proceeds will be used to buy warm winter clothing for needy area children. There are no administrative fees; all the money will be used for the children.

How will needy children be identified?

The staff at Social Services and area officials will help us identify needy children and work with the Vilas County News-Review’s WARM THE CHILDREN coordinators.

How will the children’s clothing be purchased?

The coordinators of the Vilas County News-Review’s WARM THE CHILDREN program have made arrangements with Glik’s in Eagle River and Northland Clothing Co. in Three Lakes and will assign volunteer shoppers to take the children shopping for their winter clothing. Shoppers will be volunteers who want to help by donating a little of their time for this worthwhile cause.

How can I help?

Simply complete the coupon on this page and send it with your donation to the address on the coupon. All donations are tax deductible, as they go through the Eagle River Rotary Club Foundation Inc. (ERRCF).

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## Chili Cook-Off and Meat Raffle Fundraiser to support the Three Lakes-Brule River Trails

The Three Lakes-Brule River Trails invites people to spice up their life at their Chili Cook-Off and Meat Raffle on Saturday, Dec. 28, at Pine Isle Lodge in Three Lakes.

For \$8 participants can try any or all home-made chilis from local businesses, and they can be the judge by placing their votes for the best chef.

There will also be many meat raffles throughout this event.

All proceeds support the Three Lakes-Brule River Trails for grooming and trail maintenance.

Follow the Three Lakes Trails Facebook page for up-to-date event details at <https://www.facebook.com/Threelakestrails/>.

**FESTIVE CONCERTS** —Three Lakes Elementary School students helped kick off the holiday season with some holiday performances last week.

**Top:** 5th grader Gwen Ellis as the class performed "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas."

**Top right:** The 5th grade band performed their first concert, led by Mr. Justin Lindgren.

**Right:** 4K students playing their little jingle bells for ... you guessed it ... "Jingle Bells."

—Photos By Jennifer West



**SLEIGH RIDE** — The Three Lakes Lions Club hosted its Christmas Party Dec. 7 at SpiritView Lakeside in Three Lakes. Volunteers for the event posed for a photo on the sleigh ride wagon. —Contributed Photo

## Three Lakes Genealogical Society to start free beginners classes Jan. 13

A free Beginning Genealogy class sponsored by Three Lakes Genealogical Society will be offered in eight sessions, January through April, on the second and fourth Mondays from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Three Lakes Demmer Library in the Maple Room, as well as through Zoom.

All levels of experience are welcome to attend.

This 8-session course will explain, demonstrate, and provide practice in doing basic genealogy research. It will begin with the basics of sound research practices, discuss where to look for genealogical evidence, and take participants to different types of genealogical websites.

Research charts, documentation, and organization will be covered.

Genealogical software, online subscription options, and numerous free websites will be discussed.

Guided support for researching and building a family tree will be provided. Breaks and practice time are built into each meeting.

It is recommended to bring a laptop from home.

Contact Dottie Winger at 608-234-7788 or [dwinger67@yahoo.com](mailto:dwinger67@yahoo.com) with questions or to reserve a seat.



**CITIZENS OF THE MONTH** — Along with the elementary school, the Three Lakes Junior High/High School announced their November Citizens of the Month. Pictured from left to right are High School Principal Justin Szews; Kami Boehm (9th grade); Macy Lester (12th); Kassidy Williams (11th); Zoey Kral (8th); Bella Gensler (7th); and Junior High Principal Phil Updike. Not pictured is Angelica Zirbes (10th). —Photo By Jennifer West

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December 27<sup>th</sup> & December 28<sup>th</sup> 2024 -  
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**LITTLE CITIZENS** — The Three Lakes Elementary School recognized its November Citizens of the Month. In the back is TLE Principal Steve Gruszynski. Back row, left to right are Colton Bock (4th grade); Gwen Ellis (5th grade); Zeck Demith-Wood (6th); and Remie Rickling (3rd grade). Front row, left to right, are Morgan Cantrall (kindergarten); Brielle Bisnette (2nd grade); Elliott Connor (1st grade); and Philip Hougas (1st grade). Gwen Ellis is actually an October COTM, but is shown here as she was not present for the program last month. —Photo By Jennifer West



SHARON GIFFORD

# PHELPS

715-617-0308  
gifford.se3@gmail.com



**HOLIDAY PERFORMANCES** — Over 200 children and adults enjoyed the Phelps Pre-K - 12 holiday concert, "Letters to Santa," last week. The elementary classes, the hand bells, 6/7 band, 7-12 band and choir performed under the direction of Lisa Duquaine. At the end of the program, the audience was asked to sing "Silent Night" with lit candles and lights turned down. The Student Council sold baked goods before and after the program.  
**Top left:** Jason Pertile reads his list to Santa.  
**Top right:** The choir getting down in "Holiday Road."  
**Bottom left:** Hand bells playing "Sing We Now of Christmas."  
**Bottom:** 3rd - 5th grades singing "Ugly Sweater."  
— Photos By Sharon Gifford



## CONOVER

JACKI HILDEBRANDT | conoverjacki@gmail.com

### Holiday worship scheduled for Pioneer Lake Lutheran Church

In addition to the regular Sunday Advent Worship Services, Pioneer Lake Lutheran Church located at 3697 Pioneer Church Road in Conover will offer Blue Christmas Worship and Meditation on Saturday, Dec. 21, at 11 a.m. The Blue Christmas service may provide a time and place of solace during the often-frenetic

days surrounding the celebration of Christmas. Attendees can come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas

time. Christmas Eve Worship will be held Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m. and will include carols, a candlelight service, and communion. Sunday, Dec. 29, will offer a First Sunday of Christmas service of carols and reading at 9 a.m. For more information call PLLC at 715-479-4966.

### Sledding and skating slated for Dec. 30

The Town of Conover invites residents and visitors to join for an evening of skating and sledding under the lights. The Park Committee will host the party on Monday, Dec. 30, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Conover Town Park located at 4697 Park Circle in Conover. Hot dogs, chili, nachos, lemonade and hot cocoa will be served inside the Recreation

Center, while s'mores will be toasted on the outdoor bonfires. The popular sledding hill and skating rink will both be lit, along with music playing for evening fun. Heated restrooms are on site, as well as a warming shack near the skating rink. Bring a sled and skates from home, or borrow from the loaner sleds and skates available for use.

Donations are appreciated for park improvements. Per Conover Town ordinance, pets are not permitted in the park during events for the safety of both participants and animals. For more information, contact Amanda Martinson at 715-617-9500.

## Trees

FROM PAGE 2

### NRCEW

Each June for over 59 years, TFT's Natural Resource Career Exploration Week (NRCEW) offers high school sophomores through recent graduates the chance to explore careers hands-on like forestry, fisheries, and wildlife management, and work directly with industry professionals like the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). One parent of a past NRCEW participant shared, "Trees For Tomorrow was a real eye-opener, giving (the student) options, possibilities, and confidence to pursue a natural resources career." This program leaves a lasting impact on students by providing them with tools, connections and

inspiration for their future. The 2025 NRCEW runs June 8 - 13 at TFT's campus in Eagle River. Applications are due May 12, 2025, and can be done online at <https://treesfortomorrow.com/Careers-Exploration-Wk/>. Additional information and downloadable applications are also available on the webpage or by calling (715) 479-6456. The cost of this week-long program is \$210 per student and includes instruction, materials, 15 meals and lodging. Scholarships are available for those in need. **High school programs** Multi-high school programs allow students from different schools across the Great Lakes states to collaborate and dive deep into specialized topics, such as renewable energy. There are rotating themes each school year to ensure a fresh and

engaging experience for returning students and to avoid duplication of content. TFT says that they will take care of all the planning and logistics — teachers simply need to show up with their students. These programs are offered 4 times per school year. Additional information is available at <https://treesfortomorrow.com/HS-Opps/>. Program Coordinator Casey Sprotte explains, "If a student has an interest in outdoor careers, our high school programs provide that next step by offering exploration and networking opportunities. It's rewarding to see students discover their passion through our classes and presentations."



ELEANOR ELLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY  
PHELPS, WI 54554

Stop in and sign up for the Library's Christmas Giveaway! The drawing will be held on Friday, Dec. 20. Prizes include: What do you meme? A game for the whole family!; a nine-herb window garden; a LEGO set; "Christmas by the Book" by Anne Marie Ryan, and much more! January's Writer's Workshop is Wednesday, Jan. 15, at 12:30 p.m. This free group meets monthly and is open to adults at any stage of writing. The meetings offer structured support, encouragement, feedback and responses, as well as help with goal setting and more. Call the library for more information.

Next Chapter Book Club will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at 10 a.m. The book choice this month is "West with Giraffes" by Lynda Rutledge. Book copies for meetings are available for pick up at the library or call to reserve. For more information about the current book, upcoming book choices, and meeting dates and times, visit the Library's website under the Adult Programming tab at <https://phelpspubliclibrary.org/adult-programs/>. Call the library for more information on how to join this group.

New Releases in Adult Fiction: "Daughter of Mine" by Megan Miranda, "All the Broken Places" by John Boyne (bestselling author of "The Boy in

the Striped Pajamas") and "Bellevue" by Robin Cook. Don't have time to stop by during operating hours? Call and ask about the Library's outside lockers so you can pick up books and other items at your convenience! Free puzzle and magazine exchange is in the Library entryway. New materials are added often. The Phelps-Land O' Lakes Lions Club's used glasses receptacle is located in the entryway as well. Donations of used glasses and hearing aids are greatly

appreciated. Library hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Wednesday 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. WiFi and digital services are available 24/7 and can be accessed either inside during business hours or anywhere in the parking lot. Find the Library online at [phelpspubliclibrary.org](http://phelpspubliclibrary.org) or on Facebook at Eleanor Ellis Public Library. Contact them by phone at 715-545-2887 or email [director@phelps.wislib.org](mailto:director@phelps.wislib.org)

**Phelps Room Tax Implementation**  
The Town of Phelps will begin implementing a 2.5% room tax on short-term single-family rentals, tourist rooming houses, Airbnb's, lodging facilities, etc. beginning January 2025. Please visit our website for the application, quarterly/annual reporting documents and to view the full Room Tax Ordinance 2023-01 at [www.townofphelps.com](http://www.townofphelps.com).  
432524 **WNAXLP**

The Town of Phelps has two elected office vacancies due to non-candidacy filing by current incumbents:  
The Office of Town Constable, which is a two-year term beginning April 15, 2025, and  
The Office of Phelps Sanitary District Secretary, which is a six-year term beginning April 15, 2025.  
Please contact the Town Clerk, at 715-545-2270 for additional information and/or nomination papers.

**Wisconsin Wayfinder**  
Children's Resource Network  
Find health care resources for kids with special needs  
Connect today!  
[dhs.wi.gov/wiscway](https://dhs.wi.gov/wiscway)  
(877) WiscWay

**DEADLINES FOR SECTIONS**  
**TOWN PAGES**  
THURSDAY 4 PM  
**LIFESTYLE**  
FRIDAY 10 AM  
**OBITUARIES**  
MONDAY 10 AM



BOB HUGHES

# LAND O' LAKES

715-547-3343  
bob.cheri59@yahoo.com



**OPEN HOUSE** — A Packed Artistree Gallery was the venue on Saturday, Dec. 7 as residents and friends alike filled the gallery for their annual Holiday Open House and Art Bazaar. There were creative works of art offered for everyone's taste and budget. Cookies and hot drinks were available, with many voicing how wonderful they were. Violet Wall from Eagle River said, "I always look forward for this day, an opportunity for purchasing some additional Holiday gifts" A visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus was a welcome sight for many. —Photos By Bob Hughes

## Seniors for Kids sponsors Tree Lighting with Santa

Despite the rainy, snowy weather, the Christmas Tree Lighting with Santa, sponsored by Seniors for Kids, was deemed "another huge success."

The horse-drawn wagon rides (sponsored by

Headwaters State Bank of Land O' Lakes) were again very popular from the start, with this year's route going west of town before turning around at the Adam La Friske Offices. It was not too long before

Santa's knee began to fill with children of all ages, including a few grown-up kids.

Many residents had donated cookies which were washed down with tasty hot chocolate (donated by Sunrise Lodge again this year).

Debbie and Ed Hintz set up a "North Pole Candy 'Shop'" for kids to fill their own bags with candy.

Sam Otterpohl, the fire chief, did as his title says, except this time it was to keep the fire pits well stoked and burning so people could keep warm.

Alyssa Imse, who had donated some Christmas cookies, led the singing of carols while the snow fell heavily.

At 5 p.m., after saying goodbye to the horse-drawn wagon, it was time for Wes Geib to count down to the lighting of the Christmas tree, which was followed by John Voss setting off fireworks to Christmas music.

Adam La Friske Construction, and La Friske Property Management & Cleaning, decorated the tree and town hall with lights.



Alyssa Imse led the Carol singing.



Lots of families were able to come enjoy the event, and snag a picture with Santa Claus.



Debbie Hintz with the North Pole Candy Store.

—Photos By Bob Hughes



Land O' Lakes Public Library  
P.O. Box 450 715-547-6006

Friends of Land O' Lakes Library is having a Quilt Raffle. The vibrant quilt was made by local textile artist Sherrie McFarland and is on display at the library. McFarland created the quilt with African wax fabrics. These wax prints are a non-verbal form of communication among African women. Each print means something different and is used in many of their cultural celebrations, carrying their message out into the world. This fabric is sold to benefit the Rwanda Ubushobozzi Collective, a women's cooperative that teaches young girls the skills they need to be successful and provide income for their families. Tickets for the Quilt Raffle are available at the library and are \$5 each or 5/\$20.

The winning ticket will be drawn on Saturday, Feb. 1, at the Winter Mini Used Book Sale. You need not be present to win.

New fiction on the shelves: "Bellevue" by Robin Cook, "Sharpe's Storm" by Bernard Cornwell, "Lawbreaker" by Diana Palmer, "The House of Cross" by James Patterson, "Stuart Woods' Golden Hour" by Brett Battles, "Summit's Edge" by Sara Driscoll, "Christmas in Bethel" by Richard Paul Evans, and "The Author's Guide to Murder" by Beatriz Williams.

Lego Club is held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. However, January's meetings will be held on the 2nd (Jan. 8) and 4th (Jan. 22) Wednesdays so that they don't conflict with New Year's Day. Participants may be dropped off or take the school bus to the library. Call the library with any questions.

Qigong and Balance classes, taught by Dottie



**FESTIVE COOKIES** — Friday, Dec. 6 saw nine ladies attending Dottie Reeder's Cookie Decorating Class at the Land O' Lakes Library, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. Even those who thought they were not very artistic had some artistic results. Dottie is an expert when it comes to the art of cookie decorating. Attendees can now practice their newfound skills at cookie decorating for the festive season. Pictured here are the ladies with their finished results, including Dottie Reeder in the middle of the back row. —Photo By Bob Hughes

Reeder, are offered on Fridays from 9 - 10 a.m. through January. There is no charge for Qigong and all are welcome.

Mahjong games are held Tuesdays at 1 p.m. in the downstairs community room. Beginning and

experienced players are all welcome. If interested, contact the library or stop in.

Storytime Read n' Play is held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 10:30 a.m. All children and their caregivers are welcome.

Library hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Wednesdays from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; and Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

In honor of Christmas, the library will close at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 24,

and reopen on Thursday, Dec. 26, at 10 a.m.

For more information, call the library at 715-547-6006, visit landolakeslibrary.org, or find the library on Facebook and Instagram.



**CHRISTMAS PARTY** — About 75 members and friends attended the annual Christmas Party at the Veteran's Center in Land O' Lakes, which was made possible by the work of numerous volunteers. Mr. and Mrs. Claus were also able to pay a visit. At the party, silence was observed for all those who lost their lives during the attack on Pearl Harbor on Nov. 7, 1941. —Photos By Bob Hughes





# Outdoors

## Some late-season magic in the grouse woods

REGARDLESS of whether it was too late in the season with snow on the ground, a frozen mix falling and little chance for success, the scribbler and his Lab hit the woods on a recent Sunday afternoon to try our luck.

We missed the peak of the grouse hunting season from mid-October to early November as Maddie healed from an elbow surgery, but with her getting stronger every day, that longing to walk the trails with a dog out front became insurmountable.

It was misting when we started the five-mile walk on industrial forest land and despite a clear forecast for the afternoon, it soon turned to flurries and then to large white flakes — and we were a long way from the truck.

The active radar app on my phone showed nothing for clouds of the kind that could bring precipitation, but obviously the technology isn't foolproof.

We heard a distant flush at one point, far up an open ridge where hardwoods were selectively cut a couple of years back. A scattering of small balsams and some berry brush didn't seem like much cover for a grouse, and maybe that's why it flushed out of sight and out of range.

Moments later I came across the fresh tracks of that grouse and saw where it came out of balsams on one side, crossed the two-track, and scurried up the hill as we approached.

We covered some darn good cover along a swamp edge, a stand of mixed aspen where it met a clearcut and scattered patches of heavy balsam left by loggers. We cut some tracks in the snow, but couldn't get another flush.

My guess was that the low pressure and precipitation had pushed them into swamps and heavy balsam cover, which is par for the course with grouse.

And we really didn't care because it just felt good to stretch the legs, visit old haunts that carry great memories of past hunts, and renew the bond of a hunter and his dog covering ground.

**Maddie drives wife Alice crazy during the days, whining softly as she lays by a door or looks out a window, waiting for the moment I might arrive to quickly change clothes, throw on some boots and put her in the truck — shell vest and gun in tow.**

The chase and every little thing that goes with it is what hunting dogs live for, even when conditions are questionable and birds are hard to find. They love smelling scent, flushing birds and retrieving them, but it appears the anticipation is just as exciting.

We walked for a couple of hours without firing a shot, checking out all sorts of tracks in the snow. There were good deer trails with some big buck tracks in them, signs of snowshoe hare in the aspen/balsam mix, and squirrel tracks everywhere.

For a short time we followed the tracks of a red fox, amazed by the single line of tracks and the way their back feet step exactly into the footprint of the front, in a straight line.

On the last mile of this trek we had to backtrack on the same two-track toward the truck, so expectations of some surprising flush weren't great.

The anticipation really waned when we rounded the last corner, the truck in sight about 200 yards ahead. We had mature aspen on our right and young aspen from a three-year-old clearcut on our left, with short balsams and some berry brush mixed in.

There were no tracks and no scent anywhere on that road. We paused for a moment, for whatever reason I don't recall. But 20 seconds into that pause, the thunder of grouse wings filled the air.

A bird got up out in the clearcut, angling left and then turning straight away. It was like a gift from God after miles of walking, soaked to the skin without rain gear.

One shot from the 20 gauge over/under put that bird on the ground, and one happy dog was flying through cover to make the retrieve — the tail wagging the dog with excitement.

Maddie got that bird halfway back and a second bird thundered out of the balsams, not very far from my truck, and tried to cross the two-track I was standing on. Big mistake. It folded right above the aspen treetops and plunged into the snow-covered woods.

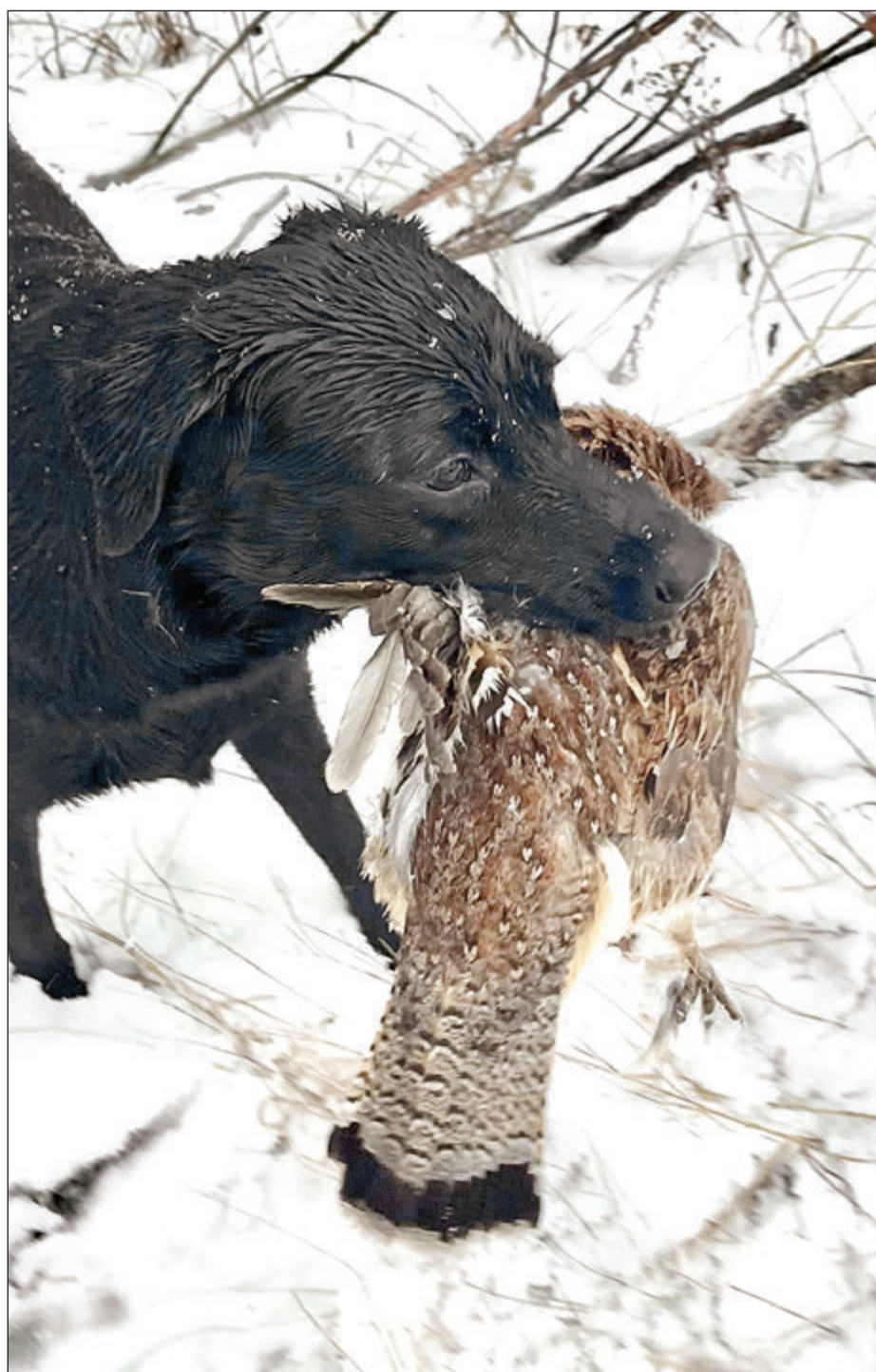
Two other birds got out of that same group of young balsams, in the middle of nowhere, but I missed on my third chance as they glided over the clearcut toward a nearby swamp and creek bottom.

So basically these birds were sitting there in the balsams, hiding and laughing



### In the Outdoors

BY KURT KRUEGER



Maddie delivers a ruffed grouse that flushed from short but thick balsams in a three-year-old clearcut and was headed for mature trees when a load of 7 1/2-shot caught up to it.

—Photo By The Author

as we drove up, and we put on miles looking for them elsewhere. And that's the nature of grouse hunting.

What began as just an outing to keep the legs in shape, and to make up for missed time in the woods for Maddie, turned out a lot more productive than ever imagined.

She got a couple of birds in her mouth, on the retrieve, and I got a couple of fat partridge for the dinner table. It doesn't get any better than that.

**The Krueger duo is back, gunner and bird dog, and we'll be waiting for next fall with great anticipation.**

## DNR releases 2024 air quality trends report

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released its annual air quality trends report.

This year's report covers 20 years of state air monitoring data for air pollutants regulated under the Clean Air Act, including ground-level ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, particle pollution and lead. The report presents data from the 2023 calendar year, including the historic 2023 Canadian wildfire smoke events.

According to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center, 15 million hectares (about two million acres larger than the state of Wisconsin) burned in 2023 — more than six times the annual average in Canada.

"Five percent of the entire Canadian forest burned last year," said Gail Good, DNR Air Management program director. "During the

multi-day air quality advisory in late June of last year, the air monitoring network measured some of the highest PM2.5 concentrations ever recorded in the state."

Wildfire smoke events in 2023 resulted in the DNR issuing 15 PM2.5 air quality advisories — almost five times higher than the average over the previous 12 years. PM2.5 advisories are issued when air quality has reached or is expected to reach the orange "unhealthy for sensitive groups" level on the Air Quality Index (AQI).

The design values used to assess PM2.5 concentrations are calculated over a three-year period. This year's Trends Report shows an increase in PM2.5 concentrations for the most recent period (2021-2023).

Despite the jump caused by 2023's wildfire smoke, overall, PM2.5 concentrations have decreased 25% in the last 20 years, and all

monitors measured concentrations below the 2012 federal air quality standards.

The report shows that over the last 20 years, state-wide ozone concentrations have decreased by 15%. For decades, ozone concentrations have been dropping across the state. However, that trend has slowed. Last year's wildfire smoke contained ozone-forming pollutants, which, combined with recent warmer-than-usual summers, contributed to increased ozone concentrations.

As a result, the Lake Michigan shoreline area, including the Milwaukee area and parts of Sheboygan and Kenosha counties, continues to fall short of meeting the 2015 ozone standard. Wisconsin has implemented many programs that have reduced emissions of ozone-causing pollutants from power plants, industry and transportation in the state. However, these

emission reductions have not resulted in the attainment of the 2015 ozone standard because most ozone-causing emissions are transported across state boundaries and are outside Wisconsin's control.

To better illustrate the latest trends, the DNR updated its Air Quality Trends Report Interactive StoryMap, which shows Wisconsin's air quality trends for each pollutant over the last 20 years. This tool provides an interactive visual to help convey the complex air quality data.

The 2024 Air Quality Trends Report, StoryMap and other historical reports are available on the DNR's Air Quality Trends webpage at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/AirQuality/Trends.html>.

Current Wisconsin air quality conditions can be found on the Wisconsin Air Quality Monitoring Data webpage at <https://airquality.wi.gov/home/map>.



### Fishing with the guides

BY GEORGE LANGLEY

## Early walleye bite has been good; use caution on ice

Ice conditions have continued to improve despite the bit of warm weather we've had. We're hearing reports of up to eight inches on some lakes, with others still sporting very thin spots, so caution is in order.

The Chain, as typical, is on the lower side of that spectrum; however, there is still good ice out there.

It would still be great to get some really cold days and nights before a big dump of snow, but regardless we're all ready for it now. Heck, if it's going to be winter it might as well be a couple feet deep!

Walleye fishing has been good. We're hearing about good numbers, but not great size — and actually this is true across all species. The evening bite has been pretty consistent throughout the area.

Plan on getting out and being set up by 3 p.m. or so. Medium shiners or sucker minnows under tip-ups are best for walleye.

Best setups are in about 10 to 15' of water right off any structure. These fish are coming out of deeper water to feed in the evenings, and you will intercept the fish as they come in.

Northern action continues to be good, with fish being caught all day long in the weeds using large shiners. If you're fishing on weed edges for walleye, you may find that the northerns are interested in your offerings, too!

Panfish action is also good, and perch are being caught on most lakes on the deeper edge of weeds through either jiggling or using crappie minnows under tip-ups.

We are still seeing some panfish in water of 10' or less, but if you're not finding them in the shallows, move deeper where you can, and check the 12-25' range at the edges of weed beds or structure. Jiggling is often a great way to rattle some of these fish into hitting and is an easy way to search horizontally through the water column.

Try tipping a 1/16 oz jig or spoon with a minnow head and jiggling high in the column for crappie or dead sticking about 6" from the bottom for bluegill and perch.

Get out there and enjoy some time on the ice as an antidote to Christmas — it's still quiet out there and we can all use a bit of that sometimes.

Good Luck and Good Fishin'!



WINTER WILDERNESS — Winter seems to be settling in comfortably in the North Woods, with falling temperatures and snow accumulation making things feel festive as we move into the holiday season. Shown here is a small piece of snow-dappled waterway along Loon Lake Rd. just outside of Eagle River.

—Staff Photo By JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN



## Our View

### Christmas spirit all about the gift of Jesus Christ

The Christmas spirit is alive and well in the North Woods, evidenced by busy churches, nativity scenes that include a live nativity, and generous giving to those in need — the latter of which follows an example started by God, who gave the world the gift of a special child.

For those who don't celebrate Christmas or who would be offended by a simple, heartwarming greeting such as "Merry Christmas," you might want to stop here. This is much more direct than the vague words of the average greeting card.

The holiday we are about to celebrate is not really about Santa, shopping sprees and presents under a tree, though intense commercialism has helped bury the true meaning of an extremely significant event.

The Holy Bible tells us that more than 2,000 years ago, a very special child was born in Bethlehem. The good news spread quickly that a savior was born in the city of David. It was the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace, the Son of God. Why should people be offended? This is the Christmas story.

No event in the history of the world has been more celebrated or more well-documented. Christ went on to teach the world about peace and goodwill toward all humans. His disciples carried his message to the corners of the Earth, as they still do today, baptizing those who believe.

Certainly the spirit of Christmas is a miracle all its own, a time when people help others more than any other time. We tip our hats to those who have given of themselves and their possessions during this remarkable season, making the world a better place for everyone.

We are reminded by Christian pastors that even more significant than the spirit of giving is understanding the most treasured gift that could ever be given — Jesus Christ on Earth. We are told that how we receive that gift, and what we do with that knowledge and grace the year around, is central to Christmas.

People can deny most anything and they can certainly believe in what they choose, but there is no doubt that Jesus Christ is the reason for the season.

#### Behind the editorial 'we'

Members of the Vilas County News-Review editorial board include Publisher Kurt Krueger, Assistant Editors Josephine Hinderman and Audrey Lehman, Sports Editor Jacob Heid.

## Climate change is accelerating

To the Editor:

The Earth's hottest 10 years since reliable measured records began in the 1800s have all been since 2014! Climate change is accelerating, and it is critical to slow the rate to give humans, plants, and animals more time to adapt.

Despite the efforts of some politicians and companies to hide the truth, the science of human-induced climate change has been well-understood since the 1980s. Primarily from the burning of coal, oil and gas, the levels of carbon dioxide since 1750 in the atmosphere have risen by about 50%. Carbon-based gases prevent some of the infrared heat emitted from Earth's surface from reaching space. The planet has already warmed by about 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels from this process.

You've heard about impacts like sea level rise, coastal flooding, hurricanes intensifying at record rates, and more intense droughts and heat waves. For example, Phoenix had an absurd record of 113 days in a row this past summer with high temperatures of 100 degrees F or higher. Their longest stretch before that was only 76 days. Things that were once unthinkable are becoming common.

At the current rate of change, Wisconsin could have a climate similar to current day St. Louis by the end of the century. This will mean longer, much hotter summers, which will raise our air conditioning costs and make it harder on outdoor workers, as well as our livestock herds. Some of the animals we currently hunt and fish may not thrive here anymore. The economic loss to recreation and tourism from warmer winters, with less reliable snow and ice, has been felt for many years already and will get even more drastic.

As predicted well by climate models 20 years ago already, rainfall is becoming more extreme. For instance, in October, parts of Spain had 19 inches of rain (a whole year's worth for them) in eight hours. Imagine the catastrophic damage to the farmland, buildings, roads, and bridges if our state was hit with 20 plus inches of rain in a day. How many people and animals would perish? It is more likely to happen with every tenth of a degree our planet warms.

As disasters pile up around the region, insurance costs will skyrocket. In between the wet bursts, prolonged intense droughts will increase wildfires, destroying valuable timber and property. New insects and diseases will move in, further threatening our crops and forests. There will be more days of poor air quality, which will take a toll on our health. The list could go on and on.

Contact your officials locally, and all the way up to the president, and press them to work urgently on sound climate policy. Even if that means fossil fuels can't be completely phased out, our leaders can still provide funding and a good framework for carbon capture techniques, research, and adaptation strategies here and abroad to grow. We can change the trajectory of this crisis.

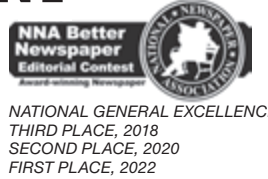
Tony Schumacher, Owner and Chief Meteorologist Great Lakes Weather Service, LLC Stetsonville, Wis.

# EDITORIAL

## OPINION/COMMENTARY



JUDGED WISCONSIN'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



### I'm thinking of her now

Christmas may still be about a week and a half away, but at my house almost all is ready.

My yard, outside house and deck lights are on, and a fresh cut wild balsam fir tree is up and decorated in the house.

There is no doubt in my mind where I get my love of Christmas, and especially preparations for Christmas, come from. My mother implanted that love in me at an early age.

She was born in the pre-Depression days of the early 1920s. For decades she made do, and she made do very well, with not all that much to work with, money-wise that is.

She was married at the age of 17 and had three sons by 1946. She had a fourth — yours truly — in 1949 just months after her second-born died in a drowning accident.

In the year I was born she realized divorce was a better alternative than a terrible marriage, so like always, she made do. She bought her own land and a trailer home in Arbor Vitae, gave birth to me in that trailer home and for over a year there made

do better than anyone could have dreamed of.

Fortunately for me and herself, she got a second chance at marriage, and I got a chance to get the man who would be the only father in my life, a matter legally fulfilled when he and I exited the Vilas County Courthouse one day as father and adopted son.

My parents, like so many Vilas County parents of the 50s, made do. Money was tight, but it was also wisely spent. Neither I nor my siblings ever felt like we were shorted for anything when it came to food, clothing, or Christmas presents.

When it came to Christmas my dad was a bit of a Grinch, at least when it came to going out into the woods to cut a Christmas tree, something he was always willing to put off until Christmas Eve if he could.

My mother, on the other

hand, loved her Christmas trees and with a scant string or two of lights, a box of both homemade and long-used store-bought ornaments, along with tinsel used, reused, and reused again for years, she brightened our home every Christmas season.

She also passed on that love of finding and cutting and decorating a perfect Christmas tree — always a balsam, never a spruce or pine — to me, and by the time I was a teenager the job of finding and bringing home the family Christmas tree was happily mine.

Last week I found this year's Griswold-worthy tree on land owned by a good friend of mine, and it is now set up and fully decorated in our living room; a balsam fir as it always has been and always will be.

I know that there are several species that make for fine Christmas trees in homes all over, but for me

the sweet scent of balsam, the deep green needles that hold tight to gently placed ornaments and clipped-on lights — especially my old-fashioned bubble lights — guarantees that a wild balsam — never farm-raised — will grace my living room every Christmas season.

When I finished putting all the ornaments on this week, I sat back the first evening the tree was up and looked at it just as I have sat looking at every year's Christmas tree for hours, joy in my heart that a tree such as a balsam should give me such unlimited pleasure.

I looked it over several times, noticing that hung from its branches were several ornaments from the late 40s into the 50s that were handed down to me by my mother. A colorful metal bell, a Chinese lantern-shaped metal ornament of varied colors, and a handful of glass balls, the latter the only survivors of several my mother gave to me.

Along with those really old ornaments, a number of wooden ornaments created by my lovely wife over 50 years ago are hanging on this year's tree as well. They were marked as paint-by-number ornaments in a kit, and as a 19-year-old brand-new mother, my wife hand-painted each one; carolers, angels, a rocking horse and others, all long-used but still treasured ornaments to admire each Christmas season.

There are a few hand-sewn and knitted ornaments as well, along with

To MAINES, Pg. 11



## School levies rise more rapidly; county levies slow down

Gross K-12 property taxes in Wisconsin are expected to rise by the largest amount since 2009, spurred both by per-pupil revenue limit increases and a historic number of approved school district referenda.

County property taxes, meanwhile, will rise by the lowest amount in the last decade. The overall picture is likely to cause Wisconsinites to see overall increases to their property tax bills that are in line with those of recent years — and possibly less than last year.

Property tax levies for K-12 schools will rise \$327.2 million on bills mailed out this month to taxpayers, according to preliminary data from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR). The increase of 5.7% over last December's gross property tax bills is the highest since 2009, though not far above last year's 5.4% increase.

One key driver of the large K-12 property tax increase is property tax referenda. Last month, we found that 2024 set records for both the number of school district referenda held (241) and passed (169), and voters in nearly two-thirds of public school districts have approved at least one referendum since the beginning of 2021. Since then, a total of 390 referenda have been approved to increase district property

taxes beyond state limits.

Another possible factor is that in the 2023-25 state budget, lawmakers agreed to increase the state per pupil revenue limit by \$325 in both the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years after freezing them for the previous two years amid high inflation.

The limit governs how much revenue schools can raise from state general school aids and property taxes combined — the two largest sources of K-12 revenue. In general, the larger the revenue limit increase, the larger the property tax increase — unless state lawmakers also significantly raise general school aids. General school aids rose by \$224.9 million from 2023-24 to 2024-25, not enough to stave off levy increases.

County property taxes, meanwhile, will rise just 1.3% on the latest bills — the smallest increase in the last decade. Levies for the state's 16 technical colleges will rise by 3.3% to \$516.0 million, and special district property taxes will grow by 4.0% to \$136.4 million.

Both increases are slightly smaller than those that took place in 2023. Data are not yet available for municipal or tax increment financing (TIF) districts, which make up the remainder of local property tax levies.

These DOR data

represent gross property tax levies, meaning they do not account for state credits that reduce net tax bills for Wisconsin residents. These data reflect the outsized impact of school referenda on property tax levels, as they account for just under half of all local property tax levies in Wisconsin in any given year.

Readers also should note that this year's property tax increases come amidst a longstanding trend of a falling state and local tax burden for Wisconsin residents. The declining tax burden has been accompanied by a longstanding decline in state spending on K-12 education, both as a share of residents' incomes and relative to other states.

Local referenda have allowed some districts to resist these trends, but the rise of ballot measures has led to higher property taxes and may also be exacerbating differences between districts that succeed in passing them and those that do not.

This information is provided to Wisconsin Newspaper Association members as a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state's leading resource for non-partisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.



Mary Sanchez

### Will Trump spit in the face of police officers by pardoning January 6 rioters?

If boasts are to be believed, "Day One" of the second coming of Donald J. Trump promises an apocalyptic unraveling of the federal government.

The Department of Education will crumble, and career civil servants will resign in droves. Legions of immigrant parents will line up to board awaiting buses and planes or simply self-deport, bidding their U.S.-born children and employers goodbye.

Most likely, none of this will happen. Not on day one, if ever.

Legal, financial, economic, practical, and constitutional limits will temper or halt the most grandiose plans of President-elect Donald Trump.

There is one exception, however.

The presidential power to issue pardons and commute sentences is relatively unchecked.

And Trump could make good on his consistent promise to pardon those convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.

To SANCHEZ, Pg. 11



# OPINION/COMMENTARY



COMMONLY SEEN — While all owls are mostly nocturnal and best seen or heard at dusk, barred owls like this one are seen more during daylight hours than the larger great horned owl. The large eyes of owls are fixed in their sockets, so the entire head moves as owls shift their gaze.  
—Staff Photo By KURT KRUEGER

## ATV study fails to consider economic impacts

Vilas County ATV Alliance (VCAA) claims that opening county highways (CTHs) in Boulder Junction (BJ), Manitowish Waters (MW), and Winchester (Win) to ATVs:

1. “Will have significant impact to all of Vilas County.”

2. “The Wisconsin ATV/UTV Economic Impact Study of 2023 (“Study”) underscores the considerable positive impact that the ATV/UTV industry has on local economies.”

The “Study” was paid for by the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association (WATVA). Not only did WATVA pay for the “Study,” but the results are based on interviews where the interviewees were selected and questioned by members of WATVA (or WATVA’s management organization).

The fact that ATV riding is incompatible with all other land-based recreation other than snowmobiling, and the effect of that incompatibility on non-ATV tourism economics, is completely ignored.

While the “Study” fails to consider any negative economic impacts, or to balance such negative

effects against the positives, it does recognize that manufacturing, purchase, maintenance and other positive economic effects are of benefit wholly or partially outside the visited community and provide little or no benefit to tourist destinations like Vilas County.

In contrast to the WATVA “Study,” a paper by Penn State University researchers and published in 2024 says:

• The findings indicate that existing studies have assessed the economic impact of ATVs solely based on gross expenditures, lacking comprehensive inclusion of the costs associated with ATV damages to the environment, society, and human health.

• ATV expenditures from residents do not contribute to the change of the economy.

• The increased use of ATVs is associated with a range of adverse impacts on the environment, society, and human health. Environmental impacts include damage to soil and vegetation on the landscape, air pollution from vehicle emissions, harm to water quality, trail surfaces and wildlife, as well as noise pollution.

• ATVs can create conflicts with other recreational activities such as hiking and cross-country skiing.

3. “Another aspect of this data is the uptick in the number of ATV/UTV registrations for Wisconsin which clearly shows a growing trend toward out of state residents.”

It is well recognized that ATV riders prefer riding off-road. Since the VCAA request is to open roads, and there are roads open to ATVs almost everywhere, what attraction is there to travel here to do what is readily available near home, especially for out of state tourists?

During the times (late fall, winter and early spring) when our businesses might benefit, are out-of-state tourists going to come to Vilas County to ride their ATVs on roads?

The bottom line is that the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Economic Impact Study of 2023 is fatally flawed and none of the arguments presented in VCAA’s letter to the county is convincing to an unbiased observer (If only one could be found!). While no one can predict the future accurately, my best guess is that the optimal overall impact to Vilas County would be allowing ATVs in some towns and not doing so where serenity is valued above ATVs.

Steve Halverson  
Boulder Junction

## Board ignores public hearing outcome

To the Editor,  
At a St. Germain Town Board meeting held November 11, 2024, three of the five supervisors voted to increase the town’s room tax from 4.5% to 8%, in opposition to the strong message against the increase received during a public hearing held October 28.

And the message from the lodging businesses during the public hearing was a deafening “no”.

I applaud Supervisors Jim Swenson and Kalisa Mortag who listened to the comments and respected the message of the lodging business owners by voting “No” to the increase.

I am very disappointed in Supervisors Brian Cooper, Patric Niggemeier and Chairman Tom Christensen for ignoring/dismissing what they heard and voting “Yes” to the room tax increase. Supervisors should act on behalf of the

people they serve — not in opposition to them.

Room tax records published on the town’s website reflect that total room tax revenues of \$530,437 were collected during 2023 at the 4.5% rate (numbers aren’t available for 2024). Increasing the tax to 8% will likely generate more than a million dollars annually (factoring in lodging room rate increases). The Chamber’s annual portion will exceed \$700,000. (It should be noted that the Chamber did not seek the proposed room tax increase and may have difficulty spending the increased revenue in ways stipulated by State statute without being wasteful).

Every person, except one, who spoke at the public hearing represented the lodging business community and spoke against the increase. Every email received by the town board was opposed to the

increase. Some of those who spoke represented lodging condominiums with multiple owners and stated that their comments represented the other owners as well.

The person who spoke in favor of the increase was not a lodging owner, but believed it would lower her property tax. The result of the October 14, 2024, elector meeting resulted in a property tax levy increase of 35%. The room tax increase will not lower property taxes.

When asked why this significant increase was needed, the board’s answer was vague and no compelling reason for the rate increase was given.

Lodging owners also shared concerns that higher lodging costs for tourists would have a damaging effect on other businesses, especially restaurants and retail shops, and that it would fuel inflation.

As the public hearing ended, the message was clear to supervisors that local lodging businesses do not want a room tax rate increase, and certainly not by this significant amount with no justifiable reason. The vote to implement it, despite the strong opposition, shows disregard for the purpose of a public hearing.

With five of the seven elected officials not seeking re-election next April, I encourage all St. Germain voters to pay close attention to the upcoming election cycle and to choose wisely who they wish to represent them. The ideal candidates will respect and listen to the public they represent, and will act with integrity and transparency as they serve the Town of St. Germain.

Carolyn Ritter  
St. Germain

## PUBLISHER’S LETTER

### A New Year With New Beginnings

Dear Reader,

As the calendar turns to another New Year, we find ourselves at a familiar crossroads, a time for renewal and reflection. It’s a time when we take stock of our lives, weighing the good against the bad, and consider the impact we’ve had on the world around us. The New Year offers a chance to set new goals and make resolutions in the hopes of becoming the best versions of ourselves.



Yet, as many of us know, the resolve we feel on January 1st can be fleeting. How often do we revisit our resolutions a year later, only to find they’ve been forgotten, buried under the weight of daily routines and unexpected challenges? Despite our best intentions, life has a way of diverting our focus, and those grand plans can slip away unnoticed.

But perhaps that’s okay. The beauty of the New Year lies not just in our ambitions but in the grace we grant ourselves when we fall short. It’s a time to acknowledge our humanity, to understand that growth is not always linear, and that the journey itself—full of missteps and lessons—is what truly matters.

So as we step into this New Year, let’s embrace the opportunity to dream, to set intentions, and to strive for better. But let’s also be kind to ourselves when we stumble, and remember that each new day brings with it the possibility of renewal.

Wishing you a joyous New Year, full of hope, reflection, and the endless potential of new beginnings.

PATRICK J. WOOD  
Publisher

Author of “Reflections” a new book now available on Amazon.

## Sanchez

FROM PAGE 10

The prospect should make law enforcement, as well as anyone who backs the blue, go queasy.

Trump may reward hundreds of January 6 rioters for assaulting U.S. Capitol police.

He’d do this by making good on the pledge to issue sweeping pardons, apparently even to the violent offenders.

Organizations like the National Fraternal Order of Police endorsed Trump during his campaign.

The group did so with an eye toward other measures, like protecting qualified immunity, which can shield law enforcement from being held to account for fatal shootings and sustained federal funding that flows to municipal policing nationwide.

The Trump administration is also expected to undercut the use of consent decrees overseen by the U.S. Department of Justice. These are assessments setting out reform measures, often after a police department has been found to be violating citizens’ rights.

Pardoning the rioters is also not why people voted for Trump. There is no mandate, perceived or real, for the anticipated pardons.

Trump voters, polling shows, wanted cheaper groceries, affordable housing, not forgiveness for people who attacked the law enforcement at the U.S. Capitol with bear spray, hitting them with ripped up scaffolding. In doing so, rioters caused members of Congress to shelter in place before they could escape, along with then-Vice President Mike Pence.

Several of Trump’s “Stop the Steal” wannabe patriots died that day – two by heart attack and another by an overdose. Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt died after being shot by police.

PTSD still affects many officers who were present that day. One officer died of a stroke the next day, and four others committed suicide, cases that many want classified as line-of-duty deaths due to the impact of the riots.

Yet Trump has sympathy for the attackers, often saying that those in prison are the ones suffering.

Trump might become more eager to pardon given President Joe Biden’s recent record number of pardons on December 12.

There is a huge difference, however.

Biden pardoned 39 nonviolent offenders. For many, their convictions were for theft and drug offenses

during their youth.

Biden’s list reads like a testament to second chances. Their life summaries (after serving sentences) detail military service, volunteering, and gaining further education. He also commuted the sentences of nearly 1,500 people who’d been released to home arrest during COVID.

Trump has begun to hedge his words.

In his “Person of the Year” interview with Time, Trump indicated that he’d focus on those convicted of nonviolent offenses. But when asked to be specific, he wavered.

“We’re going to look at each individual case, and we’re going to do it very quickly, and it’s going to start in the first hour that I get into office,” said Trump, in a transcript of the interview. “And a vast majority of them should not be in jail.”

There are about 1,500 people charged in the January 6 attack on the

Capitol. More than 600 have been sentenced to prison, for only days in some cases, decades in others.

A pardon is a gesture of forgiveness. It’s not an exoneration, nor does it erase a conviction.

Pardons are often an acknowledgement of time served or, as an act of humanity, say if an inmate is near death with a fatal illness.

Trump, in his first role as the Commander in Chief, appears intent on providing pardons to at least some of his most unhinged followers, some of whom are avowed white supremacists, people who have no affinity for the rule of law, or law enforcement.

Time will tell; day one will be here soon.

Readers can reach Mary Sanchez at [msanchezcolumn@gmail.com](mailto:msanchezcolumn@gmail.com) and follow her on Twitter @msanchezcolumn.

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# Backward Glances

Compiled by Josephine Hinderman

## One Year Ago - 2023

A structure fire completely destroyed the Off the Chain bar and restaurant on Highway 70 early Monday morning ... The restaurant was known as the popular Czecho Club in the 1950s, and Captain Nemo's and Catch 22 more recently.

## 10 Years Ago - 2014

After being reported missing last Friday evening, Hertha Broecker, 71, was found dead on the edge of the Eagle River near Riverview Park at approximately 2:30 a.m. the next morning according to the Eagle River Police Department... Authorities said Broecker had apparently entered the Eagle River at an undetermined point and pulled herself ashore, where it is believed she succumbed to the elements ... She left her residence without any personal belongings, according to authorities.

## 20 Years Ago - 2004

For the first time in four years, snowmobile and cross-country ski trails should be in excellent condition during the holidays, according to trail officials in Vilas and Oneida counties...Each of the past three years, both snow and cold were needed to boost winter recreation during the holidays — a peak time for winter tourism in the North Woods...There are high expectations this year, however, as a winter storm dropped another 5 inches of snow across the North Woods Monday and cold weather is predicted this week.

## 30 Years Ago - 1994

While North Woods business owners make the best of losing tens of thousands of dollars in tourism business because of poor snow conditions this holiday season, they are optimistic and hopeful that snow and rideable trails are coming soon... After three days of thawing daytime temperatures, including Christmas Day, the three to four inches of snow that was on the



**POOR RUDOLPH, 1984** — Poor Rudolph, right, tries in vain to get another reindeer to play with him, but is shunned because of his flowing nose. Shown here is Rudolph, portrayed by Dr. Pete Schindelholz, pleading with another reindeer to play with him. —Staff Photo By STACEY FLANNIGAN

ground is no longer there. It has either melted completely in exposed areas or melted and turned to ice in shaded areas.

## 40 Years Ago - 1984

Snow that was just enough to accommodate snowmobilers and cross-country skiers for the busy holiday period fell in the nick of time Friday, dumping from three to five inches of new snow across the area...The snow saved what could have been a disaster for businesses here during the four-day Christmas weekend. If the trails would have remained bare in open areas, cancellations could have been widespread.

## 50 Years Ago - 1974

A drinking male snowmobiler using a county trail during the daytime, who hits humps or nears other snowmobilers, is the most accident prone, according to a survey of local accidents. And if he does end up in an accident, he will likely injure his leg... (Len Belinski, administrator for Eagle River's hospital) reported that of the 32 snowmobile accident victims they treated last season, Marshfield compiled that 24 were males, 5 females and 3 were not recorded as to sex.

## 60 Years Ago - 1964

Plans are nearly complete for the tri-county Sabin oral polio vaccine

program which will begin Sunday, January 10, reported Vilas County Nurse, Mrs. Ethel Cook ... The first of a series of two vaccines will be given in Vilas County on that date in Lac du Flambeau, Eagle River, Phelps and Boulder Junction.

## 70 Years Ago - 1954

Frederick Harold Frederickson, one of the oldest residents of Star Lake, died Saturday evening. He was born in Hamar, Norway, on July 25, 1825, and was 90 years and six months old to the day when he died.

## 80 Years Ago - 1944

With a blanket of pine boughs on his casket, Jay Cook, a prominent Eagle River business man, took with him into eternity a bit of the North Woods which he loved so well...Mr. Cook died at the age of 70 Friday morning, December 22, at 10:30 o'clock just as he was being taken into St. Mary's hospital at Rhinelander. He had been ill for about a week, suffering from pleurisy, but death was due to a heart ailment...He had lived in the community 60 years, being the second white child to arrive in 1883.

*Due to the poor condition of the bound volumes of old newspapers used to compile Backward Glances, we will only include 90 and 100 years ago if the quality of the books allows.*

# Johnson

FROM PAGE 1

the many big box stories along the local commercial sprawl strip that paved paradise and put up a parking lot, I found I couldn't imagine giving the gifts that were being hawked, much less wanting to be gifted one myself, save perhaps for the eye-catching yet infinitely practical \$4.49 "Snack 'n Glass" gift set pairing a PBR logo-embellished drinking glass with a longneck-shaped bag of Beer Nuts.

I helped Santa cut to the chase for his stocking stuffer and this year ponied up the \$4.49 plus tax. This year, with the rising price of cocoa, it's a cheaper option than the usual favored chocolates, which are now collectively priced more than a 12-pack of twist-cap longnecks to fill the glass a dozen or more times over. But I digress.

I don't think anyone in my gift-giving circle needs, much less probably wants, a dedicated double-handled sock monkey hot chocolate mug cluttering the cupboard, much less a gift box array of hot sauces, root beer float or S'mores kits, or a special holiday megapack of men's cologne that will last several inter-generational lifetimes.

In my family, at least, gift-giving boils down to where we all are in our many states of life right now.

My parents and in-laws, all married more than 60 years, have everything they need and are now downsizing.

My in-laws got a head start on my folks several

years ago when they sold their longtime ranch home and moved into a small no fuss condo. I get them a practical Christmas gift — kingle from Bendtsen's in Racine, which they both enjoy. It makes my sweet-toothed father-in-law intensely happy. It disappears quickly and they never fail to offer their heartfelt thanks for the "round coffeecake"

My folks, meanwhile, while still in the home they built in 1978, are downsizing of sorts, jamming my Ford Escape, one visit home at a time, with three generations of accumulated stuff — their stuff, my Nana's stuff, and my great-grandparents stuff. Every visit is Christmas for them — presents galore for me. I know it's only a matter of time before I come home with Great-Grandma Aschauer's carved, marble-pedastaled "Beulah the Bust," still holding her hand-chisled lyre after three generations.

Carrying out more often than home-cooking in their 80s, I give them practical gift cards for Jersey Mike's, Charcoal Grill, Culver's, George Webb's and Cousin's Subs.

At 28, my daughter, once the poster child of the "he who dies with the most toys wins" movement, at least in the areas of clothing and everything kitchen, has recently become a student of Japanese minimalist guru Marie Kondo and is now downsizing her life. If I'm reading my daughter's Christmas list right, this year only Christmas ornaments are evidently sparking joy.

As for my college student son, living in a tiny

apartment and longtime a minimalist, his practical Christmas list included a mop and bucket.

As for my wife and I, 38 years married and empty nesters, we downsized into a condo. She offered up what she called a "lame list," modest on things and heavy on gifts of "presence" — treat her to a special dinner date out, take her out for coffee and conversation, play a game with her some night or maybe work a puzzle together.

This year, for all those on my gift-giving list, I'm going heavier on presence than presents — the gift of truly being present, paying attention, being there. Paying attention.

Dropping by to help my mother-in-law with the garbage and recycling. Listening to my father-in-law tell his oft-told stories again as if anew. Helping my folks proactively make the downsizing jump they truly need, before necessity thrusts them into it reactively. Being there for my kids as they negotiate the joys and challenges of young adulthood. And checking off some of those presence presents for my wife, for which she truly yearns, as we continue to negotiate that delicate balance between her retirement and my continuing career.

Christmas gift-giving should be about presence over presents. And, of course, it should first and foremost be about THE ultimate gift this holiday season — the real reason for the Christ-mas season.

*Eric Johnson can be reached at eric@fynorthwoods.com.*

# Warm

FROM PAGE 1

increase the spending limit from \$220 to \$260 for children ages 2 to 17, and \$110 to \$130 for those younger than 2 years old this year. When the community is generous with their donations, we are able to better serve those in the program," said Brandner.

"For low-income families to be able to purchase needed clothes for their children, especially new,

high-quality clothing, is such a much-appreciated gift," she added.

Krueger said while there are many programs that seek financial help during the holidays, the WTC program continues to be well accepted.

Although the program is ending for the year, donations have still been trickling in as people wrap up their year-end giving.

"How inspiring it is to live and work in communities that harbor such generous and thoughtful people — both residents and seasonal visitors," said Krueger.

WTC operates under the auspices of the Eagle River Rotary Club Foundation as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group.

Tax-deductible donations may be made year-round and are applied toward the next year's program, allowing volunteers to send children shopping when the cold weather begins in fall.

Checks can be made out to "Warm The Children" and mailed to the Vilas County News-Review, P.O. Box 1929, Eagle River, WI 54521 or dropped off at the News-Review office. Online donations can be made at [vnewsreview.com](http://vnewsreview.com) on the home page.

## Shopping completed

The final families completed their shopping just ahead of the Christmas holiday, Brandner added.

This brings about the end of another successful season which clothed a total of 462 children.

"We couldn't put on this amazing program without the volunteers and the donors. Their time and monetary efforts given each year are truly a blessing," she added.

For more information, call Brandner at 715-479-4421.

## Community donations

In addition to many anonymous donors, donations were received as of Dec. 13 from residents in the following communities:

**Conover:** Joanie Green; and Marilyn Preisler.

**Three Lakes:** Diane Sorge; St. Theresa Catholic Church Thrift Store.

**Sugar Camp:** Carol Dart.

**Land O' Lakes:** Tim and Christine Pattermann; and Stephen Simpson.

**St. Germain:**Carolynn Brink.

**Other Wisconsin cities:** Mark and Cory Borchardt, Brookfield; Pat and Mary Hietpas, in memory of Mom and Dad, Kaukauna; Peter Victoria and Leslie Gulliford, Muscoda; Scott Legwold, Chippewa Falls; Tony and Kathy Mattson, Mount Pleasant; Fred and Bea Jay Panke, Belleville, in memory of late brothers Jeff Panke and Hal Young; and Tom Steinback, Germantown.

**Out of state:** Joey and Jake Mattson, Maple Grove, Minn.; Daryle Wraqqe and Joan Anderson, Wenona, Ill.



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