

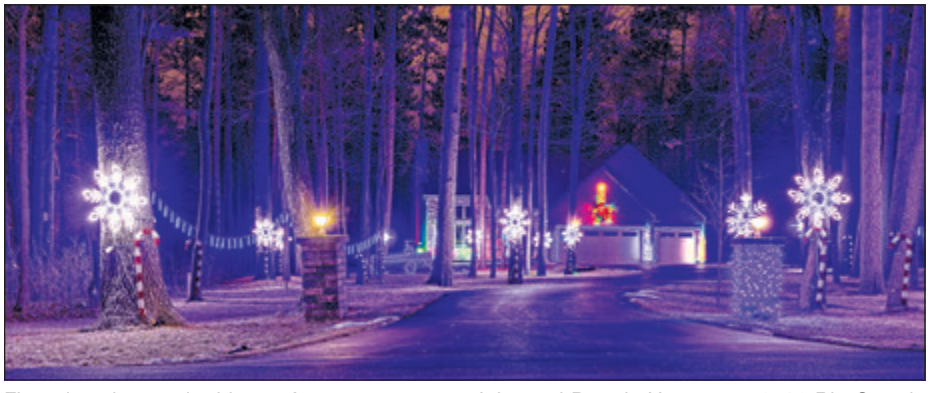
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First place honors in this year's contest went to John and Brenda Henson, at 2506 Rio Grande Drive, Merrill. **Joseph Frederick photos.**

4th annual Tour of Lights Decorating Contest winners

BY TINA L. SCOTT EDITOR

The City of Merrill held their 4th annual Tour of Lights Decorating Contest in December, with riders on

the City's annual Tour of Lights Bus Ride(s) voting to select the winners.

The winners of the 2024 holiday contest, located within the city of Merrill, are:

First place: John and Brenda Henson, 2506 Rio Grande Drive

Second place: Rachel Georgandas, 204 E 1st Street

Third place: Renee L Smith, 1204 E. 6th Street



The home of Rachel Georgandas, 204 E. 1st Street in Merrill, took second place in the decorating contest.



The home of Renee L Smith, 1204 E. 6th Street in Merrill, took third place in the lighting contest.

Merry Merrill Market attracts shoppers

BY TINA L. SCOTT EDITOR

Merrill's first annual Merry Merrill Market and last-minute late-night shopping experience was held Saturday, Dec. 21, 2024, from 5-10 p.m. in downtown Merrill, and it drew quite a few shoppers who were out for the last-minute bargains and the excitement of the evening. With Merrill Ace Hardware, Ana Blair's Boutique, and The Humble all participating until 10 p.m.; other businesses including Sunset Hollow Wine Bistro & Gifts, Auntie Ray's Coffee

House, Polka-Dotted Pie, and others extending their normal hours; and outside vendors at both Auntie Ray's and Ana Blair's, there were lots of opportunities to pick up gifts and enter giveaways.

Wags of Wisconsin was at Ana Blair's with puppies looking for new homes for the holidays and holding a fundraiser for their organization.

The Grinch was seen skulking around the area and may have begrudgingly posed for a few photos.

And Merget's Mouthwatering Mayhem provided opportunities for a hot evening

meal or refreshments for shoppers as they made their way from store to store, with proceeds going to benefit the

See **MERRY MERRILL MARKET** page 11

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The Grinch, sporting his usual Christmas attitude, was spotted at Ana Blair's.



Auntie Ray's Coffee House was busy with shoppers looking for a hot cup of their favorite brew to keep them warm.



A line of shoppers at Merrill Ace Hardware stop to sign up for some of their Merry Merrill Market in-store giveaways. **Joseph Frederick photos.**

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Frozen road law now in effect for northern half of Wisconsin Law increases weight limits for log haulers, transport of road salt/sand in Zone 1 and 2

Wisconsin's frozen road law took effect Saturday, Dec. 21, 2024, for the northern half of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) designates the region as Zone 1 and 2 which includes US 10 near Stevens Point along with numbered state and federal highways north of US 10. The frozen road determination for other areas of the state will be made when

conditions warrant. The frozen road law allows vehicles hauling abrasives or salt for highway winter maintenance and certain forest products to carry more weight. The seasonal weight restriction program is one way to protect Wisconsin's investments in roads. The department maintains an interactive map for seasonal weight restrictions, which shows the frozen

roads boundaries, Class II roads, and posted roads.

Behind the declaration
 WisDOT and county highway personnel monitor temperature forecasts, along with frost tubes—liquid-filled devices under pavement—to help determine when

See **FROZEN ROAD LAW** page 5

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

A Shower A Day

Dear Reader,

Today I took a shower, as I do almost every day. It's something so routine, we rarely give it a second thought. But there's a certain comfort in that simple act—feeling clean, refreshed, and ready to face whatever the day or night may bring. Yet, we often take these small, everyday luxuries for granted.

There are millions around the world who don't have this privilege. The people of Ukraine, for instance, have been robbed of such normalcy as they endure brutal and unjust attacks—simply for not being Russian. This tragedy, is a nightmare that has destroyed lives and shattered peace.

A daily shower won't solve this crisis, but it reminds us of the life we hope the people of Ukraine—and all oppressed people—might one day return to. A life where peace prevails, and where, after all the chaos, they can enjoy something as simple as...a quiet shower in the morning.



PATRICK J. WOOD
Publisher

Author of "Reflections" a new book now available on Amazon.

www.merrillfotonews.com

Pet of the Week



This very dapper dude is **Oscar!** And these eyes!! This sweet older man is waiting for someone to come along and scoop him up! **Oscar** is just over 12 years old and is front declawed. **Oscar** is also a honey of a boy who just wants someone to spend their days petting and cuddling with him!

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Merrill, WI

Visit all the adoptable pets at the Lincoln County Humane Society, 310 N. Memorial Dr., in Merrill. Hours: MON.-SAT. 12-4 PM & SUN. 12-2 PM. Call the shelter at 715-536-3459, or visit us at www.furrypets.com.

Artspirations on display at T.B. Scott Free Library

BY **TINA L. SCOTT**
EDITOR

The Beyond Books: Community ArtShare exhibit for January and February is entitled Artspirations.

Located on the second floor of the T.B. Scott Free Library in Merrill, the exhibit includes a collection of Merrill resident **Debbi Zimmerman's** innovative artwork and handcrafted creations.

Zimmerman, who graduated from Prentice High School but moved to Merrill in 1981 while attending cosmetology school, said she has always loved art. She credits her mom with helping inspire her love of crafting, because years ago she enrolled her in a "Fad of the Month" club that sent her a monthly craft project to complete.

Zimmerman went on to complete her cosmetology education and continues to do hair, but her love of art and crafting has expanded to a business of her own. Now married with three children, one granddaughter, and another grandchild on the way, two years ago she started her art business, called Artspirations, and she said the name describes what her art is: Art inspired by God.

"He [God] has truly opened some doors for me, and I feel blessed to be doing this in my later years," Zimmerman said.

While Zimmerman's talents are varied and she creates many beautiful things using different mediums—from porch and deck signs and light-up glass blocks to saw-blade art, paintings on canvas, and crocheted items—

her current favorite form of artistic expression is shattered glass art. She credits her friend Betty with inspiring this new multi-media artform.

First Zimmerman paints a picture. Then she adds shattered glass (either purchased or glass she crushes) to the image. She then coats the entire image in resin. It is very tedious, she said, as she needs to make sure no dust or debris gets into the resin and that she doesn't miss any spots. The resin takes three days to dry, she said, but it really makes the image pop.

In addition to the library exhibit, Zimmerman's art is also displayed and available for purchase at Organique Clinic and Spa in Tomahawk. Zimmerman can be reached via email at artspirations7@gmail.com.



A collection of Zimmerman's glass art designs, depicting Christmas trees in a variety of colors. Submitted photos.



One of Zimmerman's snowman paintings on a glass block.

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• Pasteurized
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2025 GARBAGE & RECYCLING CALENDAR
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Streets@ci.merrill.wi.us

Month	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
JANUARY				1	2	3	4
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Legend:
 A WEEK Recycling Collection ----Monday & Wednesday Route
 B WEEK Recycling Collection ----Tuesday & Thursday Route
 Holiday: No Garbage or Recycling Collection
 All collections following a holiday are delayed by one day

Garbage is collected weekly.
Recycling is collected every other week on the same day as your garbage collection.
A WEEK for Recycling collection is Mondays and Wednesdays.
B WEEK for Recycling collection is Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Christmas tree pickup: Jan 6 – Jan 9
Large item pickup: April 15 – Nov 1
Spring brush pickup: April 21 – April 24
Fall brush pickup: Nov 3 – Nov 6
Brush pickup weeks may vary depending on weather. Check website for updates.

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Keep blastomycosis on your radar

Know the risks and symptoms

Lincoln County Health Department would like to remind community members of the risk of blastomycosis (or "blasto"). Although the risk of getting this fungal infection is low, every year there are individuals in Lincoln County who get blastomycosis. Lincoln County is in the top five counties for the highest incidence rate of blastomycosis in Wisconsin. Furthermore, from 2013-2022, 40 individuals in Lincoln County tested positive for blastomycosis, 21 of which ended up hospitalized.

The fungus that causes blastomycosis lives in moist soil with decaying wood and leaves. Wooded areas that are close to water are prime settings for the fungus to live. Only under exact conditions of humidity, temperature, and nutrition, can the fungus grow and produce spores that can be inhaled when soil is disturbed. With a warmer than usual late fall and early winter 2024,

residents should be aware of the potential risk of conditions being favorable. People likely also spent more time outdoors due to the milder temperatures.

It is important to know that blastomycosis symptoms typically do not occur until 2-15 weeks after exposure. Symptoms can mimic other respiratory illnesses like the flu or acute bacterial pneumonia,

making it difficult to diagnose. Usually, blastomycosis symptoms resemble those of a lung infection, but it can affect other body systems including skin and bones.

Blastomycosis symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest or back pain
- Feeling very tired

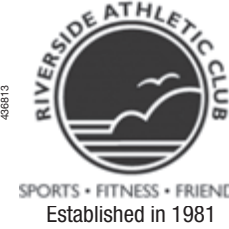
• Skin sores that may look crusted and growing in size

About half of people infected will not have any symptoms. People with a weakened immune system or a chronic illness are more likely to show symptoms. Risk increases for those who participate in outdoor activities like farming, clearing brush, construction, riding all terrain vehicles, gardening, hiking, hunting, and camping.

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NOTICE
CITY OF MERRILL
CHRISTMAS TREE PICKUP

January 6-9, 2025

During this week place your Christmas tree curbside on your garbage collection day.

Remove all ornaments, lights, stands and plastic bags from your tree before placing it curbside.

Do not place trees curbside prior to 4pm the day preceding your Christmas tree pickup day.

Trees that are buried in snow or frozen down will not be collected.

Dustin Bonack, Street Superintendent

Come join us for lunch!

The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin serves lunch at:

Jenny Towers in Merrill
Mondays-Fridays at 11:30 AM

Gleason Lions Club
Monthly on the 3rd Wednesday at 12:00 noon

Eligibility: Age 60+
Suggested contribution is \$6.00 a meal

Reservations Required
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Your contribution makes a significant difference to our program!

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Bratwurst Original Fully Cooked - Frozen 19 oz. ONLY \$1.99	Shredded Cheese 3 Cheese Blend 5 lbs. ONLY \$8.99	Pork Chops Uncooked - Bone In Frozen 32 oz. ONLY \$3.29
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OBITUARIES

Theodore "Teddy" Fayette Case III

Theodore "Teddy" Fayette Case III passed away on December 26, 2024 at Aspirus Merrill Hospital. He was born on October 14, 1946 to the late Theodore and Aurelia (Massart) Case. Full obituary to follow.

Maurice "Rudy" P. Tewes



Maurice "Rudy" P. Tewes, age 77, of Merrill, passed away on Friday, December 20, 2024 at the Mount View - North Central Health Care in Schofield while under the care of St. Croix Hospice. Rudy was born on July 31, 1947 to the late Rudolph and Sarah (Allorie) Tewes in Merrill. He attended and graduated from Merrill High School. Rudy went on to bravely serve his country in the United States Marine Corp during the Vietnam War as a helicopter mechanic. He married Alice Krause on November 29, 1988. Sadly, she passed away on April 19, 2014.

Rudy worked in construction and fabrication for many years, a job that he truly loved. He also worked for Consolidated Building Service in Wausau and Agra in Merrill. Rudy was truly a "jack of all trades" - he could always be found out in his garage tinkering, fixing or welding something. Rudy enjoyed learning and would take apart and rebuild just about anything he found. He had looked forward to the annual steam engine show in Edgar. He enjoyed family vacations and the many trips he and his wife Alice had made to the Bayfield Apple Festival over the years. Rudy had a lifetime interest in almost all things aviation, from building and flying model aircraft, to pursuing a private pilot's license when he was younger, as well as having been a member of the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association). Rudy had a love for motorcycles and could often be found riding around town or giving his grandchildren rides in the yard. His fondness for Harleys, Hondas and V.W. Bugs were well known. He was a very patient, good natured and generous man. He was often the first person friends and family would ask for help if something was not working or broken. His easy-going nature and curiosity with all things mechanical were well known and respected among those that knew him. Rudy enjoyed tuning in his radio and listening to his favorite polkas on the weekends. Rudy was a member at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Merrill. He will be sadly missed but has left many good memories behind.

Rudy is survived by: his daughters: Michele (Tim) Seiwert and Rhonda (Todd) Knoblock; his son: James Tewes, all of Merrill; his grandchildren: Steven (Jane), Dakota, Dustin, Ashley, Jake (Chelsi), Danyssa, Alyssa, Dallas (Jessica), Eli (Lindsay) and Kyle (Jasmine); his 12 great grandchildren; his nephews: Michael Tewes and George (Connie) Knospe; his nieces: Linda, Sharon, Mary, Rita, Barbara Tewes and Teresa (Peter) Daleske; and his sisters-in-law: Lois Wold and Judy Schmidt. He was preceded in death by: his parents; his wife: Alice; his son: Henry Puphal; one granddaughter; his brothers: Victor Tewes and Rudolph Jr. Tewes; his sister: Vivian Knospe; his brothers-in-law: Donald Wold, Albert Krause, Roger Krause, Jerry Schmidt, and Bill Knospe; and his sisters-in-laws: Rosemary Tewes, Doris Tewes, Carol Krause, and Joan Krause.

The Mass of Christian Burial for Rudy will be held on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Merrill. Father Maria Vallabhaneni will officiate. Visitation will be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Taylor-Stine Funeral Home in Merrill. Burial will take place at St. Francis Catholic Cemetery immediately following Mass. The Merrill V.F.W. Post 1638 will conduct military honors at the cemetery.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, please plant a tree in memory of Rudy. They would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the wonderful and caring staff at Mount View - North Central Health Care in Schofield, and to the St. Croix Hospice Services.

Taylor-Stine Funeral and Cremation of Merrill is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences are encouraged and may be made at www.taylorstine.com.

Jendeane Norma (Hegg) Olson



Jendeane Norma (Hegg) Olson, 79, of Sturgeon Bay, passed away on December 23, 2024, at Door County Medical Center. She was born to John O. and Norma (Sersland) Hegg in Decorah, Iowa.

Jendeane attended a one-room school for her first eight grades and then continued in Decorah graduating in 1963. She then entered Luther College completing a degree in music education. While at Luther, Jendeane was a member of the Luther College Nordic Choir.

It was at Luther College that Jendeane met her future husband, Dan, to whom she was married in August of 1967. In the fall of 1967, Jendeane and Dan moved to St. Paul, Minnesota where she began her teaching career in Elementary Music Education in the Columbia Heights Public Schools. In time, she taught music in New Richmond, Merrill, Sturgeon Bay and Algoma Public Schools. While Dan served in three congregations, Jendeane was heavily involved with the music programs both as organist and choir director, retiring from active service from Ephraim Moravian Church.

Together Jendeane and Dan have three children, Andrew, Angela (Chad) Olson-Luberger and Aaron (Sarah). They have six grandchildren, Anika, Audrey, Aria, Anders, Elsa and Stanley. Jendeane is also survived by a sister Ilene (Ray) Pavelko, West Salem, WI and brother John (Mary) Hegg, Decorah, IA; nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Visitation for family and friends was scheduled for 4:00 to 7:00 pm Friday, Dec. 27, 2024, at the Forbes Funeral Home in Sturgeon Bay. A memorial service was conducted Saturday, Dec. 28, at the Ephraim Moravian Church. Friends called at the church on Saturday from 10:00 am until the time of service. Burial will be at Bayside Cemetery.

Ellen Rusch Kobs



In the morning of December 2nd, Ellen Kobs decided she had endured enough Wisconsin winters and passed away while holding the hand of her son Erik Kobs, who was honored to be by her side. Her parents, Arthur and Ruth (Boettcher) Rusch, and sister, Martha Rusch preceded her in death.

A beloved mother and grandmother, Ellen is survived by her only child Erik, his wife Kasey Kobs, and twin grandchildren Zoe and Max Kobs - sources of much joy and pride

in her life. She is also survived by her three sisters: Mary Rusch, Carol (David) Wiskow, and Laura Rusch, who each held a special place in her heart.

Ellen, a graduate of Merrill High School (Class of 1964), married her high-school sweetheart, Paul Kobs. Together they travelled the country in support Paul's service in the U.S. Navy while raising their son, Erik. Though they later divorced, they shared a great adventure, building a beautiful family and a lifetime of memories.

It was Ellen's wish not to have a funeral or formal memorial. Instead, the family recommends we remember her at her best: smart, funny, kind, with deep empathy for others.

If you would like to make an 'in lieu of flowers' donation in Ellen's name, please consider one of the charities listed below, all aligned with causes she believed in:

- Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (www.weareplannedparenthood.org); select "Donate", "Specific Giving" and "Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin"
- Wisconsin Rapids Family Center (www.familyctr.org); select "Support Us" and "Donate"
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (www.nami.org)
- Malala Fund (www.malala.org); select "Donate"

Ellen's family extends their heartfelt gratitude to all who loved her and invites you to honor her memory in any way that feels meaningful to you.

Randall Scott Robl



Randall Scott Robl, age 71, of Rhinelander, died on December 23, 2024, at the Aspirus Rhinelander Hospital. He was born on October 15, 1953, in Merrill, the son of Frank Jr. and Marjorie (Nutter) Robl.

Randall grew up in Merrill and attended schools there through high school. After graduation, he enlisted in the Air Force and was career until the age of 37. He then went on to work at the Harley Davidson

in Tomahawk for 24 years until his retirement. He loved playing pool and cribbage, going ice fishing, and the Green Bay Packers. He enjoyed going to the Town Pump, where every day was his birthday.

Randall is survived by his wife Judith, his daughter Heather (Eric) Allen, his son Quenton Robl, his mother Marjorie, his grandchild Olivia, his sisters Verjean (Ken) Vandezande and Rebecca (Bill) Cavallino, his brother Joseph (Vicki) Robl, other family and friends. He was preceded in death by his father.

There was a visitation for Randall on Saturday, December 28, 2024, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon, at the Carlson Funeral Home. You may leave your private condolences for the Robl family at www.carlsonfh.com. The Carlson Funeral Home (715-369-1414) is serving the family.

Judith R. Lange



Judith R. Lange, 73 of Merrill passed away Saturday December 21st at home surrounded by Family.

Judith was born December 26, 1950 in Merrill, WI, daughter of Leslie and Harriet (Meyer) Lange. Judith graduated from Merrill High School. She worked for Holy Cross Hospital and Pine Crest Nursing Home and also worked as a waitress at a couple restaurants in the Merrill area.

She enjoyed time outdoors and especially fishing, and spending time with family and friends. She also loved volunteering at Trinity Church in Merrill, learning and sharing her knowledge of the Bible and helping wherever she could. Her favorite pastimes were watching westerns, playing cards and a Friday night fish fry with friends.

Survivors include her sons, Richard (Kristine) Shorey of Merrill, WI, and Timothy (Angela) Shorey of Merrill, WI, daughter Renee Shorey of Rothchild, WI, Grandchildren, Mike Shorey of Trempealeau County, WI, Kristina (Jason) Konerza of Silver Lake, MN, Nicole (Brennon) O'Connell of Wausau, WI, Ashlyn Shorey of Merrill, WI and Taylor Shorey of Rothchild, WI. Great grandchildren, Alice, Braylynn, Dallas, Bryce, Colt and Owen.

Judith was preceded in death by Leslie and Harriet Lange; parents; siblings, Wayne Lange and Leslie Lange Jr. The funeral service for Judith will be held at 11:00 A.M., Monday, January 6, 2025, at Trinity Church, Merrill. Rev. Scott Gustafson will officiate. The family will receive friends beginning at 9:00 A.M. Monday at church.

Russell G. Wendt



Russell G. Wendt, 60, of the Town of Corning, Lincoln County, passed away Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at his home.

Russell was born October 9, 1964, in Merrill, son of Robert A. and Luella (Weide) Wendt. Russell graduated from Merrill High School with the class of 1983. He worked on the family dairy farm in the Town of Corning. He loved farming and looked forward to harvesting the crops. Russell also enjoyed working in the woods making

firewood. In his younger years, he enjoyed deer hunting. He enjoyed spending time with his family and always made sure to ask how his nieces and nephews were. Russell was a very faithful member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Corning. He served as Lieutenant of the Town of Corning Volunteer Fire Department. Russell also enjoyed watching ice drags and going for walks. Russell recently started attending the Merrill Enrichment Center and enjoyed trips around Merrill socializing with everyone.

Survivors include his brother and sister-in-law, Stanley and Patti Wendt of Merrill; nieces and nephews, Robert M. Wendt, McKinze (Connor) Kolehouse, and Caeden Wendt (Sarah Buenning); and great nieces, Emmalyn and Hanna Wendt. Russell was preceded in death by his parents, Robert A. and Luella Wendt; and infant brother, Timothy Alan Wendt.

The funeral service for Russell was held at 11:00 A.M. Monday, December 23, 2024, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Town of Corning. Rev. Joel Danner officiated. Burial took place in the church cemetery. Visitation was held from 2:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M. Sunday, December 22, 2024, at the Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill, and after 10:00 A.M. Monday at the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials be directed to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Town of Corning.

The family would like to thank Pastor Joel Danner, Town of Corning Volunteer Fire Department, Lincoln County Sheriff Office, Merrill Fire Department EMS, Inclusa, and Northcentral Health Care.

Taylor-Stine Funeral & Cremation, Merrill, is assisting the family. Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstine.com

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Please send announcements, news briefs, photo submissions and letters to the editor to:

tscott@mmclocal.com

Rep. Callahan re-appointed Chair of Committee on Consumer Protection Assembly Republicans receive committee assignments for the upcoming Legislative Session

State Representative Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk), representative for the 35th Assembly District [which includes all of Langlade and Lincoln Counties and parts of Marathon, Oconto, Oneida, and Shawano Counties], was re-appointed Chair of the Committee on Consumer Protection as a part of the 2025-2026 State Assembly committee assignments from Republican leadership in mid-December 2024.

"I am looking forward to, once again, serving as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection in the new

legislative session," said Callahan. "I oversaw a lot of important legislation as it passed through this committee last session, and I am looking forward to ensuring that Wisconsinites are protected from fraud, unsafe products, and unfair business practices. I will continue to advocate for legislation that promotes transparency, fairness, and accountability, while keeping the best interests of my constituents at the forefront."

During the 2025-2026 Legislative Session, Rep. Callahan will also serve on the following committees in the following capacities:

- Assembly Committee on Insurance – Vice-Chair
- Assembly Committee on Energy & Utilities – Member
- Assembly Committee on Forestry, Parks, & Outdoor Recreation – Member

For updates on Rep. Callahan's work throughout the session, he invites constituents to sign up for his email newsletters at RepCalvinCallahan.com or follow him on Facebook.

FROZEN ROAD LAW

from page 1

roads are adequately frozen to accommodate heavier loads.

The declaration is issued once the ground under highway pavement is frozen to a depth of at least 18 inches, allowing the maximum gross weight for trucks hauling logs or salt and sand for maintaining roads in winter to go up to 98,000 pounds on vehicles with a minimum of five axles (from the normal 80,000 pounds). Special permits for hauling the increased weights are not required in Zone 1 and 2; however, vehicles must be legally licensed at 80,000 pounds to handle the increased weights. The higher weight limits do not apply to county or local roads unless authorized by the local agency having maintenance authority. Also, higher weights may not be transported on any highways or bridges specifically posted for lower weight limits.

More information on overweight permits can be found on the WisDOT website by searching for oversize/overweight permits. Haulers with specific questions can contact WisDOT's Oversize/Overweight Permits Unit at 608.266.7320. A recorded message with general information on road restrictions is available by calling 608.266.8417.

OBITUARIES

Thomas K. "Tom" Ziebell



Thomas K. "Tom" Ziebell, age 73 of Skanee, MI passed away at his home on Thursday, December 19, 2024. Tom was born in Wausau, WI on September 30, 1951.

A celebration of life will be held at the Merrill Town Hall, W4594 Progress Ave, Merrill, WI 54452 on Saturday, January 4, 2025 with food and fellowship starting at 11:00 a.m. Beginning at 1:00 p.m. there will be a time to honor Tom and share stories and memories.

Tom's complete obituary may be viewed and condolences sent to the family at www.reidfuneralservicechapel.com. The Reid Funeral Service and Chapel, L'Anse has been entrusted with the funeral arrangements.

Greg Kautza



Greg Kautza, former Tech Ed. Teacher and Business Manager at MAPS, took his "Journey to Heaven" in the early hours on Saturday, December 28, 2024.

Greg was married to Lin English Kautza, was the proud parent of Mollie Kautza Elsmark (Erik) and Andy Kautza (Jessica), and brother to Mike (Susan), Nick (deceased) Rita Kautza Benz (Ron), Andy (Julie), Mary Kautza McKown (Dan) and Paul (Lana), and son of Maude and Leonard Kautza.

The last 10+ years were spent loving his 4 wonderful grandsons: Mads (10), Jackson (9), Luka (8) and Cameron (6). He spent hours playing with them, quizzing them, watching them, and smiling about all their successes and fun, unique personalities. They were his pride and joy.

One of his proudest affiliations was the UW-Stout TKE Fraternity. He was proud to be a member with a scroll Number of 8.

Greg was a quiet and nice person and had a very adventurous spirit. He liked a good challenge and never quit. His love of the open air and Nature took him on many hiking and camping trips to the mountains out West. He built the family shack on K6, and spent many days and nights there, hunting, or just enjoying the woods he so loved, and the quiet peacefulness he found there.

Greg was very smart, talented, and skilled in many areas. Just give him a problem or situation, and he would figure it out. This is what he loved about teaching... with his students, and at home with Mollie and Andy.

Greg had high standards and values and was an exemplary role model. He had a life, well lived!

On Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025, we will gather from 9:00- 11:00 to say good-bye to Greg, at Taylor Stine Funeral Home. At 11:00 will be a short service. From 12:00 to 3:00, there will be a Celebration of Greg's exemplary life at the Sawmill Brewing Co, a favorite hangout of his and mine. Please join us.

There will be no Graveside Service.

Memorials can be sent to LIN Kautza 701 Bramble Way, Merrill WI. 54452

Check can be made out to:

"Senior Center of Langlade County".

Memo: "Rock Steady Boxing Program".

(This is a program specifically for Parkinson's patients.)



LEGAL NOTICES

Legals 7700

**Merrill Area Public Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
November 20, 2024 - Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by Blake at 5:30 PM in the Board Room. Board members present: De Rizzo, Hornischer, Gremler, Liberty, Ashbeck, Woller and Blake. Board members absent: Proulx and Smith. Others present: Superintendent Murray, MAPS Administrators, Student Board Reps Black and Wagenaar, eight people from the staff and public, and Recorder Woller. MOTION by Liberty, second by Hornischer to approve the easement request by Wisconsin Public Service as outlined in Easement Agreement 3325273. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Woller, second by De Rizzo to approve the addition of a middle school baseball team, with funds allocated as specified to cover the necessary expenses for pupil travel, coaching salary, Social Security, and officials to be paid for out of Fund 80. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Gremler, second by Liberty to approve the addition of Internship position(s) at MAPS to provide quality experiences for future teachers and leadership opportunities for qualified staff. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Liberty, second by Woller to approve the 2024-2025 Organizational Chart. Motion carried. MOTION by Ashbeck, second by Woller to approve the updated Pine River School for Young Learners Organizational Chart. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Ashbeck, second by Gremler to approve the annual Self-Assessment plan, process and timeline as presented. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Liberty, second by Hornischer to approve a three-year contract with Visitor Aware Visitor Management Systems. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Hornischer, second by Liberty to approve the Strategic Planning initiative proposal with Joe Schroeder Consulting for \$14,900. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Liberty, second by Hornischer to approve the donation of two touchpads from the Merrill Aqua Jays Swim Team valued at \$2,525.00 for the Merrill Swim Program. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Ashbeck, second by De Rizzo to approve the donation of funds from Larry and Jan Krystkowiak valued at \$5,000 in honor of their friend Joe Wolf for helping to support the girls and boys basketball programs at MAPS. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Gremler, second by Liberty to approve the donation of funds from Levon Van Der Geest valued at \$4,405 for helping to support the Kate Goodrich, Washington, PRMS and MHS Nest programs. Motion carried unanimously. MOTION by Woller, second by Liberty to approve consent agenda items a through e, which includes minutes of the October 23, 2024, and November 14, 2024, meetings; second readings and approval of Policy 5610 Suspension and Expulsions; Policy 9140 Citizens' Advisory Committees; Policies 3440/4440 Job-Related Expenses; Policy 6110 Grant Funds; Policy 6111 Internal Controls; Policy 6112 Cash Management of Grants; Policy 6114 Cost Principles - Spending Federal Funds; Policy 6325 Procurement - Federal Grants/Funds; Policy 7310 Disposition of Personal Property; and, Policy 7450 Property Inventory - with noted technical corrections to be made by the superintendent; claims, vouchers and receipts totaling \$3,659,856.53; donations totaling \$24,671.30; and, the attached personnel report, contingent upon release of contract for hirings and upon the satisfaction of the appropriate liquidated damages for resignations, if applicable. Motion carried unanimously. Blake called for a MOTION to adjourn into executive session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes under Section 19.85(1) (f) except where par. (b) applies. The purpose of the closed session is to update the Board of Education on two student issues. Motion by Woller, second by Hornischer to adjourn into closed session carried unanimously on a roll call vote. MOTION by Hornischer, second by Ashbeck to adjourn at 6:43 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. Respectfully submitted, Ron Liberty Board Clerk RL/tlw

(The official minutes in their entirety are available by calling (715) 536-4581, by visiting www.mapsedu.org, or by visiting the MAPS District Office at 1111 N. Sales Street, Merrill, Wisconsin.)
Published January 2, 2025 WNAAXLP

Legals 7700

The December 10th, 2024 Council Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next scheduled meeting. The minutes are available for viewing on the bulletin board outside the City Clerk's Office and on the City of Merrill website. Complete Ordinances are available on the City of Merrill website: <https://www.ci.merrill.wi.us/>
Published January 2, 2025 WNAAXLP

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT LINCOLN COUNTY
Summons**

**Case No. 2024CV000128
Judge Robert R. Russell
Foreclosure of Mortgage: 30404**
AmeriSave Mortgage Corporation
Attn: Mortgage Disposition
1 Corporate Drive, Suite 360
Lake Zurich, IL 60047
Plaintiff,

v.
Brian E. Cooke
402 North Prospect Street
Merrill, WI 54452
Brian E. Cooke
112 S. Main Avenue
Dickinson, ND 58601
Defendant.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN,
To each person named above as a defendant:

You are hereby notified that the Plaintiff named above has filed a lawsuit or other legal action against you. The complaint, which is also served upon you, states the nature and basis of the legal action. Within 40 days after December 12, 2024 you must respond with a written answer, as that term is used in chapter 802 of the Wisconsin Statutes, to the complaint. The court may reject or disregard an answer that does not follow the requirements of the statutes. The answer must be sent or delivered to the court, whose address is Lincoln County Courthouse 1110 E. Main St., Merrill, WI 54452-2579, and to Codilis, Moody & Circelli, P.C., plaintiffs attorneys, whose address is 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 200, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. You may have an attorney help or represent you.

If you do not provide a proper answer within 40 days, the court may grant judgment against you for the award of money or other legal action requested in the complaint, and you may lose your right to object to anything that is or may be incorrect in the complaint. A judgment may be enforced as provided by law. A judgment awarding money may become a lien against any real estate you own now or in the future, and may also be enforced by garnishment or seizure of property.
Dated: December 9, 2024.
Codilis, Moody & Circelli, P.C.
15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 200
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
(414) 775-7700
pleadings@il.cslegal.com
50-24-01034

NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector.
Codilis, Moody & Circelli, P.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
Electronically signed by
Shawn R. Hillmann
WI State Bar No. 1037005
Emily Thoms
WI State Bar No. 1075844
Published 12/12/24, 12/19/24 & 1/2/25
WNAAXLP

Legals 7700

**DATE SIGNED: December 27, 2024
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
Probate Registrar**

**STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
GLEN M. SIMONIS**

Amended
**Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)**
Case No. 24IN51

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:

1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 11/6/1945 and date of death 10/30/2024, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of 1705 E. 3rd Street, Merrill, WI 54452.
3. All interested persons waved notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is 04/18/2025.
5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, 1110 E. Main Street, Merrill, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.
Attorney William A. Grunewald
Jensen, Scott, Grunewald & Shiffler S.C.
128 W. Division Street, P.O. Box 426
Medford WI 54451
715-748-2211 Bar Number: 1008196
Published January 2, 9 & 16, 2024
WNAAXLP

**BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: 12/13/2024
/S/HON. GALEN BAYNE-ALLISON
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, BR I
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for
Name Change Hearing
Case No. 24-CV-174
IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME
CHANGE OF**

Caitlyn Robyn Bernhard
By (Petitioner) Caitlyn Robyn Bernhard

NOTICE IS GIVEN:

A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
From: Caitlyn Robyn Bernhard
To: Caiden Robyn Bernhard
Birth Certificate: Caitlyn Robyn Bernhard
IT IS ORDERED:
This petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin.
Judge's Name: Honorable Galen Bayne-Allison
Place: Lincoln County Courthouse-Br 1
1110 E Main St, Merrill, WI 54452
Date: 01/29/2025
Time: 10:15 AM

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 715-536-0319 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:
Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three (3) weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the Foto News a newspaper published in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin.
Published: 1/2/25, 1/9/25 & 1/16/25
WNAAXLP



Town of Corning Notice of Town Caucus

To be held Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 7:00 pm
at the Corning Town Hall, N1569 Hwy 64 & 107, Merrill, WI

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A CAUCUS FOR THE TOWN OF CORNING WILL BE HELD AT THE CORNING TOWN HALL, N1569 HWY 64 & 107, MERRILL, WI, ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025 AT 7:00 P.M. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IS TO PLACE IN NOMINATION CANDIDATES FOR THE FOLLOWING TOWN OFFICES, TO BE VOTED ON AT THE SPRING ELECTION, WHICH WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY APRIL 1, 2025. OFFICES ARE FOR THE TERM OF TWO YEARS TO SUCCEED THE PRESENT INCUMBENTS LISTED, WHOSE TERM OF OFFICE WILL EXPIRE APRIL 15, 2025.

Office

Town Board Chairperson
Town Board Supervisor
Town Board Supervisor
Town Board Clerk
Town Board Treasurer

Incumbent

Chad Kottke
Greg Kleinschmidt
Brian Literski
Rickey Hass
Katie Giese

Rickey C. Hass, Clerk

Please Recycle
Published January 2, 2025

Please Recycle
WNAAXLP

NOTICE OF CAUCUS FOR THE TOWN OF ROCK FALLS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a caucus for the Town of Rock Falls will be held at the Rock Falls Town Hall on Tuesday January 7, 2024 at 6:30pm. The purpose of the meeting is to place in nomination candidates for the following town offices to be voted on for the Spring Election which will be held April 1, 2025

Offices are as follows:

Town Board Chairperson
Town Board Supervisor (2)
Town Clerk
Town Treasurer

Town Board Chairperson Mike VanDeWeerd
Incumbent
Town Board Supervisor George Alery Incumbent
Town Board Supervisor Kurt Niersel Incumbent
Town Treasurer Cindy Frisch Incumbent
Town Clerk Diane Chambers Incumbent

Diane Chambers, Clerk
Town of Rock Falls
Lincoln County
Published December 25, 2024

WNAAXLP



TOWN OF MERRILL NOTICE OF TOWN CAUCUS

A Town Caucus will be held immediately following completion of the Town of Merrill monthly Board Meeting, **Monday, January 13, 2025, at 5:30 PM.** For the purpose of placing in nomination, candidates for the following offices, to be voted for at the Spring election to be held Tuesday April 1, 2025.

OFFICE

ONE (1) CHAIRMAN

NO INCUMBENT

OFFICE

TWO (2) TOWN SUPERVISORS

INCUMBENT
DARREL DENGEL
MATT LEDER

TERM OF OFFICE IS FOR TWO (2) YEARS
BEGINNING ON TUESDAY APRIL 15th, 2025

Published 12/19/24, 1/2/25 & 1/9/25

WNAAXLP



Area Events & Entertainment Community Calendar

Jan. 4 - Ultimate Ice Racing at Merrill Fairgrounds	Lessons at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church	Jan. 18 - 4-H Winterfest Celebration at Northwoods Veterans Post
Jan. 4 - Risk Tournament at Nor Comm Games	Jan. 11 - Second Annual January Jamboree at Normal Park	Jan. 19 - Bingo at VFW
Jan. 4 - Bingo at Ballyhoos	Jan. 11 - Gleason Ice Oval Races	For more information, go to: merrillchamber.org/events or contact the event sponsor.
Jan. 5 - Bingo at VFW	Jan. 11 - Bar Bingo at Bubba's Pub	
Jan. 10 - Free Swing Dance Basic	Jan. 18 - Merrill Ice Drags	

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SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:30, 7:00 & 9:15PM
SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:30 & 7:00PM
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE WAR OF THE ROHIRRIM
"PG13" (2HR 14MIN)
FRIDAY: 7:00 & 9:15PM
SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:30, 7:00 & 9:15PM
SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:30 & 7:00PM
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM

MOANA 2
"PG" (1HR 40MIN)
FRIDAY: 7:00 & 9:15PM
SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:15, 7:00 & 9:15PM
SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:15 & 7:00PM
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM

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One child, \$463,000 per year: Ballooning costs of troubled Lincoln Hills youth prison

Surging costs of Lincoln Hills, troubled Wisconsin youth prison

A budget request would nearly double incarceration costs in Wisconsin's juvenile justice system.

Many say the funds would be better used to prevent crime.

A Department of Corrections request would nearly double costs to incarcerate Wisconsin youth.

BY MARIO KORAN
WISCONSIN WATCH

and DEVIN BLAKE
MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS SERVICE

by Wisconsin Watch and Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service. It was made possible by donors like you.

Wisconsin budgets nearly \$463,000 a year to incarcerate each child at the state's beleaguered juvenile prison complex in the North Woods, a figure that has ballooned over a decade as enrollment has plummeted.

A new Department of Corrections budget request would nearly double that figure to about \$862,000 a year — 58 times what taxpayers spend on the average K-12 public school student.

It comes as efforts to close the Lincoln County complex — home to Lincoln Hills School for boys and Copper Lake School for girls — and build a new youth prison in Milwaukee have slowed to a crawl.

Six years after the Legislature approved the closure plan, Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Tony Evers are blaming each other during funding and policy disagreements that have delayed the closure.

A 2018 legal settlement restricted how guards could discipline youth. That followed a series of scandals involving allegations of inhumane conditions, such as frequent use of pepper spray, strip searches and mechanical restraints and solitary confinement.

Republicans earlier this year pushed to lift pepper spray restrictions after a 16-year-old incarcerated at Lincoln Hills struck a counselor in the face, resulting in his death. A judge denied requests to alter the settlement in a dispute that has added to closure delays, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported.

Meanwhile, the facility's population is dwindling. As of late November, it served just 41 boys and 18 girls on a campus designed for more than 500 youth.

Wisconsin Watch and Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service spoke to judges, lawmakers, former prison staff and researchers about the eye-popping price tag to incarcerate fewer young people. They attributed the trends to



The main entrance of Lincoln Hills School and Copper Lake School is shown on Nov. 1, 2024, in Irma, Wis. Six years after the Wisconsin Legislature approved a plan to close the embattled youth prison, Republicans and Democrats are blaming each other for delays that have kept the complex open. (Drake White-Bergey for Wisconsin Watch)

Drake White-Bergey for Wisconsin Watch

demographic changes, a paradigm shift from large youth prisons to smaller regional facilities and scandals on the campus that made judges hesitant to send teens to Lincoln Hills.

"No judge wants to send a kid to Lincoln Hills," said Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Laura Crivello, who has presided over juvenile cases. "You feel like you're damning a kid."

Here's a closer look at the numbers.

Who sets budgets for youth prisons?

Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake schools are the state's only youth prisons, but they are among four main state facilities for young people convicted of serious juvenile offenses. The others are Mendota Mental Health Institute, a psychiatric hospital in Madison that treats youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and Grow Academy, a residential incarceration-alternative program outside of Madison.

The Legislature sets uniform daily rates that counties pay to send youth to any of the locations — spreading costs across all facilities.

In 2015, lawmakers approved a daily rate of \$284 per juvenile across all four facilities, or nearly \$104,000 a year. This year's

rate is \$1,268 a day, or nearly \$463,000 annually.

The annual per-student rate would jump to about \$841,000 in 2025 and nearly \$862,000 in 2026 if the Legislature approves the latest Department of Corrections funding request.

By contrast, Wisconsin spent an annual average of \$14,882 per student in K-12 public schools in 2023, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

Why have costs ballooned?

A campus built for more than 500 is mostly underused as enrollment declines, but taxpayers must still pay to maintain the same large space. It affects county budgets since they pay for youth they send to state juvenile correctional facilities.

Fixed infrastructure and staffing costs account for the largest share of expenses, said department spokesperson Beth Hardtke. Spreading the costs among fewer juveniles inflates the per capita price tag.

But taxpayers haven't seen overall savings from the steep drop in enrollment either. The state in 2015 budgeted about \$25.9 million for the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake complex. That number climbed to about \$31.3 million by 2023 with the addition of staff — a cost increase nearly in

See LINCOLN HILLS page 9

This story was produced

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THE GLEASON CORNER

Gleason Community Club Winter Ice Oval Races

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Gleason Community Club has been sponsoring the Winter Ice Oval Races in Gleason since 1977, and they're poised for another successful season in 2025.

Season race dates are subject to weather, but as of Dec. 27, 2024, "We have enough ice to race, and we're sitting pretty well," said Gleason Community Club President Garrett Lapsenberg. Rink preparation typically begins around Dec. 1, he said, "as soon as soon as it starts freezing," and this year has been seasonably cold, making for good ice.

Race attendees can expect "some exciting head-to-head racing, excellent food, and cold drinks," Lapsenberg said. "It's very, very family oriented—kid-friendly." Admission is \$10 for adults and kids 11 and older; children 10 and under are free.

[Note: Pets and smoking are not permitted. Carry-ins of all types are not allowed, and there is no ATM or Wifi available on-site.]

With approximately 50 classes, racers compete on snowmobiles, go karts, ATVs, lawn mowers, and outlaw go-karts with classes for kids, too. Racers compete for cash, points, and trophies for the kids, and a typical event runs about five plus hours, he said. Each race date typically includes 100 racers with 200-300 entries, as some racers compete in multiple classes. There is a season sanction fee of \$25 per driver, \$15 per race class entered.

"Many world champion ice oval racers started racing in Gleason," Lapsenberg said, "including Nick Vanstrydonk, Gunner Stern, and many more."

Typical race day registration is 7-9 a.m. with races starting at 10 a.m., and night race day registration is 11 a.m.-1 p.m. with races starting at 2 p.m.

"Stand outside to watch the races, and in between when

we sweep [the ice], there's a nice spot inside to warm up with food and hot chocolate," Lapsenberg said. "We have a nice heated building with food and drinks inside, indoor bathrooms, and a stocked bar."

The Gleason Community Club, currently comprised of approximately 20 members, handles the entire event. "Everything is run by 100% volunteers," he said. "Plus many volunteers that come and help that aren't members." "We're always looking for new volunteers, people to come and help, and new members," Lapsenberg said. People can help as little or as much as they want, in a specific area, or for as long as they would like, he said. Whether with parking; bar tending; helping with the races—lining up, flagging, or announcing; making the ice; food prep and sales; cleaning up; or mowing lawn in the summer, there is always something volunteers can help with, he said.

For more information about the Gleason Community Club and/or the Winter Ice Oval Races, go to www.gleasoncc.org.



All photos: Joseph Frederick photos.

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For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.
Matthew 18:20

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This aerial view shows the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake schools, the state's youth prison in Irma in northern Wisconsin. (Google Earth)

LINCOLN HILLS from page 6

line with inflation during that period.

Driving requests to further hike rates: The Department of Corrections seeks \$19.4 million in 2026 and \$19.8 million in 2027 to expand Mendota Mental Health Institute's capacity from 29 beds for boys to 93 beds serving girls or boys — an expansion required by state law.

The expansion requires adding 123 positions at the facility. Such additions affect calculations for the rates of all state facilities for incarcerated juveniles, including Lincoln Hills.

Why are there fewer incarcerated students?

The trends driving high costs at Lincoln Hills started more than 20 years ago, said Jason Stein, president of the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

First, Wisconsin is home to increasingly fewer young people.

The state's population of youth under 18 has been shrinking. The state saw a 3.2% dip between 2012 and 2021 — from 1,317,004 juveniles to 1,274,605 juveniles, according to a Legislative Fiscal Bureau report.

Juvenile arrests in Wisconsin dropped by 66% during the same period.

Meanwhile, judges became reluctant to sentence juveniles to Lincoln Hills — even before abuse allegations escalated and prompted authorities to raid the campus in 2015.

"I was the presiding judge at Children's Court, when we blew open the fact that kids weren't getting an education and they were having their arms broken," said Mary Triggiano,

an adjunct professor at Marquette University Law School and former District 1 Circuit Court chief judge.

"But we knew before that there were problems with Lincoln Hills because we watched the recidivism rates. We would bring in DOC and say: 'Tell me what kind of services you're going to give. Tell me why they're not in school. Tell me why you're keeping them in segregation for hours and hours and hours' — when we know that's awful for kids who experience trauma."

Enrollment dropped and costs increased, but outcomes didn't improve.

More than 61% of the 131 boys who left Lincoln Hills in 2018 committed a new offense within three years, while about 47% of the 15 girls who left Copper Lake reoffended. The recidivism rate for boys during that period was roughly the same as it was for those released in 2014. The rate for girls was worse than the nearly 42% it was four years earlier.

Stein compared Lincoln Hills to a restaurant that tries to compensate for lost customers by raising meal prices. If prices keep rising, customers will look for a different restaurant, he said.

"That, in a nutshell, is how you get into this spiral where you're seeing fewer residents, higher rates, and greater costs for counties," Stein said. "Then it's just rinse and repeat."

How much do other states spend to incarcerate youth?

Wisconsin is not the only state spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per juvenile it incarcerates.

A 2020 Justice Policy Institute report showed Wisconsin spent less than

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the national average in 2020. But Wisconsin's per-juvenile costs have since more than tripled as Lincoln Hills remains open and incarcerates fewer young people.

Incarcerating juveniles is generally more expensive than it is for adults, said Ryan King, director of research and policy at Justice Policy Institute. Rehabilitation plays a bigger role in juvenile corrections, and those programs cost more. Incarcerated children typically access more counseling, education and case management programs.

States nationwide are

rethinking their approach to youth incarceration as crime rates fall and more research shows how prison damages children, King said.

"There was an acknowledgement that locking kids up was not only failing to make communities safer, but it was making kids worse, and really just putting them in a position where they were more likely to end up in the adult system," he said.

How is Wisconsin trying to reshape juvenile justice?

In 2018, then-Gov. Scott Walker signed Act 185, designed to restructure the state's juvenile justice

system. The law kicked off plans for a new state youth prison in Milwaukee and authorized counties to build their own secure, residential care centers.

Milwaukee and Racine counties are moving forward on such plans to build these centers. The centers function similarly to county jails: County officials operate them under Department of Corrections oversight. Officials hope keeping youth closer to home will help them maintain family connections.

"We have always pushed smaller is better. You can't warehouse young people like you do adults,"

said Sharlen Moore, a Milwaukee alderwoman and co-founder of Youth Justice Milwaukee. "Their brain just doesn't comprehend things in that way."

The law aimed to close troubled Lincoln Hills and give judges more options at sentencing while balancing the needs of juvenile offenders and the public. But those options have yet to fully develop.

Today's alternative programs typically have limited space and extensive waitlists. That won't be fixed until more regional facilities go online.

How else could Wisconsin spend on troubled youth?

Triggiano, now director of the Marquette Law School's Andrew Center for Restorative Justice, was astounded to learn youth incarceration costs could nearly double next year.

"You just want to drop to your knees because if I had that money, we had that money, what could we do differently?" she said.

She quickly offered ideas: programs that recognize how traumatic experiences shape behavior, violence prevention outreach in schools, community



"The cost of sending one young person to Lincoln Hills would be enough to pay several young people working jobs over summer or the span of the school year," said Rep. Darrin Madison, D-Milwaukee. He is shown here speaking during a press conference on Sept. 10, 2024, at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, Wis. Joe Timmerman photo.



A memorial to Corey Proulx, a Lincoln Hills School counselor who died in June 2024 following an assault by a 16-year-old prisoner, is shown on Nov. 1, 2024, in Irma, Wis. Proulx's death prompted calls from Republican lawmakers to lift restrictions on pepper spray use at the youth prison. Drake White-Bergey for Wisconsin Watch.

Trinity shows students what it was like to learn in a one-room school

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

It's one thing to teach children about things through reading about it, talking about it, looking at drawings or even photographs, or even watching a movie, and it's another thing entirely to learn about something by being totally immersed in the experience. Students in Mrs. Laura Marnholtz's first grade class at Trinity Merrill Lutheran School learned what it was like to attend school at a little one-room schoolhouse, like many generations of students learned in our area prior to the 1960's.

Mrs. Marnholtz said she tries to make the experience as authentic as possible. Students were invited to dress in simple attire as similar to what students wore in those early years as possible, so most of the girls wore dresses, with some also donning aprons and bonnets, while many other students wore overalls and button up shirts. Students got to spend their day at the Brickyard School located at the Merrill Fairgrounds. To



start with, students were transported to the white clapboard one-room school building that morning by horse-drawn wagon. "We've been using the horse-drawn wagon of Steve Lee for a number of years now," Mrs. Marnholtz said. "It has really added to the authenticity of the field trip."

"The students dress as students of yesteryear, pack lunches in lard pails or baskets, and try hard not to pack modern lunch

foods," she said. "Instead they pack juice in a jar, hard boiled eggs, whole fruit, homemade cookies, and sandwiches wrapped in wax paper or cloth napkins."

Once at the school, "They learn about student life in a one-room school from the retired volunteer teachers," Mrs. Marnholtz said. That experience includes "writing on slates, using

buttons for math, reading from Dick and Jane books, playing London Bridges for recess, and washing their hands with water from a dipper," she said. They sat in attached old-school desks, and learned about ink wells and keeping the school warm in the winter, helping the teacher, ringing the bells, and the ins and outs of attending a one-room school that were quite

different from what it's like to attend school in 2024.

"It's a great comparison and contrast of different eras of learning in America's schools," Mrs. Marnholtz said.

And it's a safe bet judging by the looks on the children's faces that Trinity's first graders enjoyed the experience.

MERRILL FOTO NEWS Student of the Week

This Week's Featured Student is

Charlotte LaBarge

Daughter of

Craig and Danielle LaBarge

Charlotte is in Kindergarten at Trinity Lutheran School. She was nominated by Mrs. Lisa Johnson.



What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
I like coloring because I like making pictures for my mom and dad.

What is your favorite part of school? Why?
I like gym because we get to run around.

What would you like to do/become someday? Why?
I want to be a doctor to help people.

I would like to nominate Charlotte for student of the week. Her kind spirit, helpful nature and cheerful attitude is always present each day. Her willingness to help others when they are struggling is a wonderful attribute to be recognized as a Christian leader at Trinity.
~ Mrs. Lisa Johnson

Student of the Week Sponsored by:



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LINCOLN HILLS from page 9

mentorship programs — evidence-based practices shown to help children and teens. Milwaukee County had worked to create some of those programs before funding was pulled, Triggiano said.

"It all got blown up in a variety of ways at every juncture," she said. "Now there's going to be an attachment to the secure detention facility because that's all people could muster up after being slammed down every time we tried to do something that we thought was going to work."

State Rep. Darrin Madison, D-Milwaukee, echoed Triggiano and offered additional spending suggestions, such as housing resources, mental health support and summer jobs programs.

"The cost of sending one young person to Lincoln Hills would be enough to pay several young people working jobs over summer or the span of the school year," Madison said.

Wisconsin's disproportionate spending on incarcerating its young people runs counter to the Wisconsin Idea, its historical commitment to education, he added.

"We're so committed to

incarcerating people that we're willing to eat the cost of doing so, as opposed to making investments in deterrence and getting at the root cause of the problems."

Share your Lincoln Hills story

If you or someone you know has spent time in Lincoln Hills or Copper Lake schools — whether as an incarcerated juvenile or a staff member — we want to hear from you. Your perspectives could inform our follow-up coverage of these issues. Email reporter Mario Koran at mkoran@wisconsinwatch.org to get in touch.

Merrill Varsity Boys take fourth in Hodag Wrestling tournament

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Merrill Boys Varsity Wrestling Team traveled to Rhinelander on Friday, Dec. 20, 2024, to compete against 24 other teams in the Hodag Scramble Wrestling Tournament, and the Merrill Boys performed well, with the Bluejays' team taking fourth place. "As a team, we were well balanced, and every wrestler on the team had at least two wins," said Merrill Boys Varsity Wrestling Team Head Coach Brian Suchocki. "We had eight wrestlers in the top five and nine in the top seven. We are improving every week."

"Noah led the way for us," he said. "Noah is really wrestling well right now. He is more consistent and does a nice job in all phases of wrestling. Noah dominated his way to the final and then finished it off with a big win against 18-0 Jordan Perkins of Wautoma. It was a tight match, but Noah pulled it out. We are very excited to see him continue to compete every week."

"Dusty and Remington also made the finals," Suchocki said. "Both have been wrestling well all season."

"Dusty was aggressive throughout the day," he said. "In the finals, he had a tough time getting anything going but still had a very good tournament."

"Remington had a tough match early that he pulled out in the quarter final," Suchocki said. "Then in the semis, he took control before dropping his finals match. Remington is doing a good job with his set-ups, and he will continue to refine his overall wrestling."

"Carson and Callum both finished fourth on the day," he said. "Carson had a lot of

close matches that he turned into pins. It was good to see him get some mat time."

"Carson lost a lot of mat time the past season due to injury," Suchocki said, "so getting these matches is definitely helping his progress. Finding a way to get to his offense will be important."

"Callum had one of the toughest brackets in the tournament," he said. "He dominated his way to the top four before dropping two matches. As he continues to get in these big matches, the more he will develop this season."

"Austin, Brett, and Broc all took fifth," Suchocki said. "Austin continues to battle this season. Austin had many great matches throughout the day. He capitalized on some positions we had been working on."

"Brett came back after being out for a few matches and had a good day wrestling," he said. "Brett was very aggressive and did a nice job battling back to get a pin in his final match."

"Broc is continuing his development. He is getting more takedowns and controlling his opponents well."

"Josh came up with a nice pin to take seventh place," Suchocki said. "Josh is starting to put some things together."

"Will, Ryan, and Preston each won two matches," he said. "You can see the progress with all three. All three practice hard."

"Overall, we had a solid performance."

"Our next competition is at Whitewater for Mid-States," Suchocki said. "That is a huge Christmas tournament that will provide some tough competition. It will be a good

test for us and let us know where we stand going into the second half of the season."

Hodag Scramble 2024 individual results for Merrill:

113 - Dustin Schmirler (10-2) placed 2nd and scored 25.0 team points.

120 - Broc Suchocki (9-3) placed 5th and scored 14.0 team points.

132 - Brett Suchocki (4-2) placed 5th and scored 16.5 team points.

138 - Remington Skic (11-1) placed 2nd and scored 25.0 team points.

144 - Callum Wheeler (8-4) placed 4th and scored 18.0 team points.

150 - Ryan Coates (2-4) placed 19th and scored 3.5 team points.

157 - Will Miemietz (4-8) placed 12th and scored 4.0 team points.

175 - Austin Depies (9-3) placed 5th and scored 16.0 team points.

190 - Carson Brooks (3-3) placed 4th and scored 16.0 team points.

190 - Preston Schuelke (4-7) placed 15th.

215 - Noah Klug (11-1) placed 1st and scored 31.0 team points.

285 - Josh Gustum (7-5) placed 7th and scored 9.0 team points.

Team Scores:

1. Marathon 207.52
2. DC Everest 200.53

3. Hayward 192.04
4. Merrill 178.05
5. Wittenberg-Birnamwood 172.56
6. Crandon 134.07
7. Lena 130.58
8. Northwestern 129.09
9. Eau Claire North 107.010
10. Kingsford HS 95.011
11. Rhinelander 80.012
12. Wautoma 77.013
13. Spencer/Columbus Cath. 70.514
14. Phillips 69.015
15. North Central 64.016
16. Tomahawk 63.017
17. Ashland 60.018
18. Amherst 59.019
19. Gladstone HS 53.020
20. Florence 51.021
21. Crivitz/Wausaukee 38.522
22. Rosholt 37.023
23. Iron Mountain HS 23.524
24. Chequamegon 22.025
25. Elcho 4.0



Callum Wheeler wrestles his opponent in the 144 class.

Submitted photos.



Carson Brooks gets ready to take on an opponent at the Hodag tournament.



Dustin Schmirler competes in a wrestling match in the 113 class.



In the 215 class, Noah Klug (11-1) placed first at the Hodag tournament. Here he wrestles one of his opponents in a match-up.

Senate President Felzkowski appointed to State Building Commission

Senate President Mary Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) was appointed to the Wisconsin State Building Commission the week prior to Christmas.

"I am honored to have the privilege of serving on the Commission," Felzkowski said. "It is vitally important to have fiscally conservative voices in the room whenever decisions about taxpayer dollars are being made."

Felzkowski was appointed to succeed outgoing Senator Joan

Ballweg on the Commission by Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu. She will serve on the Commission for the upcoming legislative session.

"Moving forward, I anticipate working closely with the other members of the Commission, including the Governor, to make decisions that are in the best interest of all Wisconsinites," Felzkowski said. "I see my role on the Commission as ensuring appropriate stewardship of state-owned facilities on

behalf of my constituents, the taxpayers."

The State Building Commission is an eight-member body made up of the Governor, three senators, three representatives, and one citizen member that oversees planning, improvement, major maintenance, and renovation of state facilities. Felzkowski joins Senator Jacque and Representatives Wittke and Swearingen as the staunch conservative voices on the Committee.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOVEMBER 18, 2024
Girl, Nakaia Barbara Ann, born to Nicole Bessert and Rupert Welch Jr. of Mattoon.

NOVEMBER 20, 2024
Boy, George Wayne, born

to Stacey Fuller and Greg Olson of Wausau.

NOVEMBER 22, 2024
Boy, Braxton Keizer, born to Jessalyn Holub and Isaiah Scheffler of Merrill.

DECEMBER 3, 2024
Girl, Violet Ruth, born to Anne Verhasselt and Tyler Verhasselt of Wausau.

DECEMBER 6, 2024
Girl, Bristol Dee, born to Megan Bailey of Gleason.

MERRY MERRILL MARKET from page 1

Lincoln County Humane Society. "The Merry Merrill Market was a huge success! We could truly feel the joy and excitement along with the nostalgic Christmas Spirit in everyone who came to shop," said Johanna Doyle, owner of The

Humble and one of the event's organizers. "Each business has reported they were also very successful, and we look forward to planning and expanding the Market for 2025! Plans to get it underway will begin at the end of January!"

"The joy our customers expressed about the Market have us already planning for a summer Market, as well," she said.



2025 Merrill High School Winter Sports Schedule

Boys Basketball (Varsity, JV & JV2)			
Tues, Jan. 7	Stevens Point (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Tues, Jan. 7	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm
Girls Basketball (Varsity, JV & JV2)			
Fri, Jan. 3	Tomahawk (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Fri, Jan. 3	Tomahawk (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm
Tues, Jan. 7	Stevens Point (JV & JV2)	Away	5:45 pm
Tues, Jan. 7	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm
Boys Wrestling (Varsity & JV)			
Mon, Jan. 6	Elcho-Quad (Varsity)	Away	5:30 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV)	Away	6:30 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Girls Wrestling (Varsity)			
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Away	6:30 pm
Boys Hockey (Varsity & JV)			
Tues, Jan. 7	Marshfield (JV)	Away	5:00 pm
Tues, Jan. 7	Marshfield (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	D. C. Everest (JV & JV2)	Away	5:00 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Girls Hockey (Varsity & JV)			
Fri, Jan. 3	Somerset (JV)	Away	5:00 pm
Fri, Jan. 3	Somerset (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Sat, Jan. 4	Gentry Academy (JV)	Away	12:00 pm
Sat, Jan. 4	Gentry Academy (Varsity)	Away	2:00 pm
Tues, Jan. 7	Northland Pines (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm

The Sports Calendar of events is sponsored by:

Merrill Bluejays pull off exciting victory over the Shawano Hawks

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Merrill Varsity Boys Basketball Team played host to the Shawano Boys on Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024.

Despite a “closely contested and challenging match,” as described by one spectator, the Merrill Bluejays pulled out a narrow win over the Shawano Hawks in the exciting closing seconds of the non-conference game.

The home-game victory gave the Merrill Boys a much-needed victory with a score of 54-53.

Box Score
Shawano 53 @ Merrill 54



More photos online
merrillfotonews.com



Joseph Frederick photos.



Merrill Varsity Girls take first at Hodag Wrestling tournament

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

On Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024, the Merrill Girls Varsity

Wrestling Team invited their counterparts from both Wausau East and DC Everest high schools to a practice scrimmage. “It

was the first chance the majority of the girls were able to unofficially compete against other girls,” said Scott Arneson, Merrill Girls Wrestling Team Head Coach. “The scrimmage was just what the girls needed to get prepared for their first and last competition of 2024.”

The Merrill Girls Varsity Wrestling Team then traveled to Rhinelander on Friday, Dec. 20, 2024, for their first competition, competing against 16 other teams in the Hodag Scramble Wrestling Tournament, and the Lady Jays walked away with a phenomenal first place.

Of note since the



The Merrill Girls Varsity Wrestling Team celebrating their first place win at the Hodag Scramble Wrestling Tournament. Submitted photos.



Merrill’s Madlyn Hunter took first place and Natalia Woller took third in the 107 class.



Adison Clark wrestles as her teammates look on.

ladies were competing in Rhinelander, Head Coach Scott Arneson offered up a couple pieces of trivia, confiding that he was formerly a Hodag himself, having graduated from Rhinelander High School, and then noted that his son, Scottie, is the current Head Wrestling Coach for Rhinelander High School. “Merrill took 14 girls to the individual Hodag Holiday Wrestling Tournament,” Arneson said. “Their efforts were

extraordinary, their attitudes awesome, and their performances were ‘above’ par.”

Both Coach Ali Natzke and Coach Arneson said they were very proud of the girls’ performances.

“The girls will practice several times over the Christmas break and get ready for a very busy January full of competition,” Arneson said.

“It is never too late to join our high school girls wrestling team,” he said. “We still have plenty of room for girls looking to get in better shape, who want to work hard while trying something new, and who want to become the best version of themselves.”

“Middle school and elementary age girls, we also have practices for you starting in January,” Arneson said. “Merrill Girls Wrestling is working to be one of the best programs in the state. Join us and be part of the excitement.”

Hodag Scramble 2024 individual results for Merrill:

100 - Natalia Woller took first.

107 - Madlyn Hunter took first and Natalia Woller took third.

114 - Katelynn Grawien took fifth and Gracie Vanvuren took sixth.

126 - Kendell Klug took third.

132 - Adison Clark took first, and Kaylynn Allen took second.

138 - Caroline Durban took third.

152 - Bryanna Doerr took sixth.

165 - Marissa Miles took third, and Liberty Fuchs took sixth.

185 - Merin Yates took third, and Kylee Hoffman took fifth.

235 - Shelby Yates took third.

Team results:

Merrill took first place over the teams from Ashland, Spencer, Chequamegon, Tomahawk, DC Everest, Hayward Community Schools, Kingsford, Amherst, Athens, Crivitz, Elcho, Florence, Lena, Marathon, Phillips, Rosholt, Laona-Wabeno, Wautoma, Wittenberg-Birnamwood, Crandon, Gladstone, Iron Mountain, Northwestern, Menominee (Mich.), and Eau Claire North.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Remington Skic, a Sophomore at Merrill High School (MHS), has been named Athlete of the Week for the week of Jan. 2, 2025. Remington started wrestling at age four (his dad coached) and has been wrestling ever since. He progressed through the Junior Jays and Prairie River Middle School (PRMS) and now wrestles on the MHS Varsity Wrestling Team, competing at 138 pounds, and year round [club wrestling] for Askren Wrestling Academy [since 2020] and also attends wrestling camps year round.

He played football in seventh and eighth grades at PRMS, last year for MHS on JV2 as a defensive back, and this fall for MHS on JV as a defensive back and wide receiver. Remington also plays baseball, coming up through Little League, then Babe Ruth baseball in seventh and eighth grades, to the MHS Baseball Team last season; and he said he plans to play again this spring.

At school, Remington belongs to the Junior Optimist Club and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In the summer, he works for his dad at Green Lawn Underground Sprinklers installing irrigation systems. In his free time, he likes to hunt (deer, bear, turkey, goose), ice fish with family, and hang out with friends or go out to eat.

The son of Brenda and Wally Skic of Merrill, Remington has a 4.0 GPA and is undecided about his career plans after high school graduation.



Remington Skic

Congratulations from these sponsors:



Athletes highlighted in this feature are selected by the Foto News editorial staff, not by the sponsors.

Please direct comments or suggestions to fotonews@mmclocal.com

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