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# New A&W Restaurant set to open in Merrill on Monday



BY TINA L. SCOTT  
 EDITOR

The building on the corner of E. Third St. and N. Center Ave. in Merrill that was formerly a Hardee's Restaurant has been refurbished into a new A&W Restaurant. Deanne "Dee" and Jerry Wells of Withee purchased the property in 2024 and completely renovated the property, making it their sixth A&W location in the state. [A more in-depth story will be included

The new A&W Restaurant in Merrill will be ready to open for business on Monday, Jan. 13, 2025.  
 Tina L. Scott photo.

See A&W page 10



Children play one of the games with the help of a volunteer, at the 2024 January Jamboree.  
 Submitted photo.

# Ultimate Ice Racing



Some scenes from the Ultimate Ice Racing event held at the Merrill Fairgrounds this past Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025.  
 Joseph Frederick photos.

More photos online  
[merrillfotonews.com](http://merrillfotonews.com)

# January Jamboree to celebrate softball, old-fashioned winter fun

BY TINA L. SCOTT  
 EDITOR

Merrill Fastpitch is holding its second annual January Jamboree on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Normal Park (by the Gazebo) in Merrill. It's a chance to celebrate softball, raise funds for the organization, and have some good old-fashioned winter fun, with softball themed (sort-of) outdoor carnival games to test your skills and show off your abilities. And its not just for kids or teens. Everyone can participate!

Games include a softball toss, softball swoosh, bike throwing (you read that right), ice bowling, toilet tee toss, softball shuffle board, softball putt putt (think mini golf), and others.

"As we seek unique ways to raise funds for our program,

See JAMBOREE page 2



What kinds of skills are involved in tossing a bike?  
 Submitted photo.

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**The Merrill Area Dining Guide will now be in the Profile Magazine and inserted into the paper. The Foto News is mailed to all addresses in the Merrill area. That's over 14,200 papers!**

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**Contact the Merrill Foto News office to be a part of the Business Profile.**

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More photos online  
merrillfotonews.com

Volunteers from last year's First Annual January Jamboree event gather for a photo.

Submitted photo.

### JAMBOREE

from page 1

we consider ways that it can also benefit our community," said Chad Krueger, President of the Merrill Fastpitch Board. "The January Jamboree is a way that we can bring a unique opportunity to bring people to our area to enjoy a family-friendly winter day."

"Each game costs \$2 to play, with instant cash prizes available," he said. "Take a break between games, warm up inside our heated tent, and get some lunch at the concession stand where we will have Geiss hotdogs, soups,

hot chocolate, and other delicious snacks." Beer will also be available for the adults.

"All proceeds from this event benefit the Merrill Fastpitch program," Krueger said.

"We don't usually talk about softball in January, but Merrill Fastpitch is hoping to change that this year with hosting the second annual January Jamboree," he said. Brandon Steinagel, Vice President of the Merrill Fastpitch Board, and his wife, Lindsey, had the idea for the January Jamboree and helped make it become a reality last year.

"Merrill Fastpitch's mission is to provide girls

from 6 years old through 18 with the opportunity to play competitive softball, emphasizing proper training, discipline, sportsmanship, self-esteem, teamwork, winning through hard work, effort, and community stewardship," Krueger said.

Merrill Fastpitch is a non-profit organization that relies on quality volunteer coaches and provides teams with an opportunity to play in between four and seven tournaments each year, he said. During the offseason, they focus on indoor development opportunities, and the organization tries to keep costs to area families very affordable so more girls can participate. "The Board recognizes the impact that these opportunities can mean in the development of young women, but also that we have a unique opportunity to impact our community as well," he said.

"We host a tournament the fourth weekend of July at the Merrill Area Recreation Complex for up to 50 teams traveling from as far as the Milwaukee area to Upper Michigan," Krueger said. "We partner with the Chamber to provide each of the teams with the Merrill Visitors Guide, as well as program sponsors' information."

"Additionally, the program provides swim discounts, paid for by the program, for teams to use at the Bierman Family Aquatic Complex," he said. "The last few years, the Merrill families have participated in food drives for our local pantries. The program also contributes to the ongoing maintenance of the fields and recently purchased a new storage shed."

For more information (player registration, tournament, fundraisers, etc.), go to: MerrillFastpitch.com.

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## PUBLISHER'S LETTER

### Finding The Perfect Someone

Dear Reader,

Life's treasures aren't measured in material possessions like a sleek car or a spacious mansion. You could have all of these things, but without someone to share them with, what do they really mean? Isn't life truly about finding that perfect someone—a person who turns the ordinary into extraordinary?



We long for someone who is more than just a partner; someone who is witty, who lights up the room with a smile, and who can turn even the dulllest moments into something unforgettable. This is the person who finishes your sentences, who has your back without question, who loves you with a fierce loyalty that never wavers.

Together, you become more than just individuals; you are a team, a unit that others see as one. Friends and family expect to see you together, and even children instinctively ask for the other when only one is present.

But what happens when that magical connection is suddenly severed? How do you navigate life without the person who brought joy to your every day, who was your constant in a world full of change? How do you move forward knowing that no one will ever quite match what they brought to your life?

Finding the perfect person means everything. It's a rare and beautiful gift that, once lost, leaves a void nothing else can fill.

**PATRICK J. WOOD**  
Publisher

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"Although our process is primarily remote, in-person appointments are also available intermittently throughout the year. Please call or email us for more details!"



**Merrill Native**  
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**Pet of the Week**



Meet **Lincoln!** He came to us along with some other pets from a rough situation. But despite everything **Lincoln** has been through he is such a sweet and playful boy! He will need someone who is ready to work with him on some training but he is such a smart boy that he will learn fast! **Lincoln** has been around other dogs but we are not sure about cats yet.

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❖ PART 1 OF A SERIES ❖

# City of Merrill residents: Property Taxes Explained

BY TINA L. SCOTT  
EDITOR

City of Merrill residents received their 2024 Real Estate Tax Bills just before Christmas in December, and some residents have contacted the *Merrill Foto News* in an effort to understand the increase on those tax bills. Understandably, no one likes to see their bill increase, and many residents did see an increase of varying amounts on their 2024 bill. This series will help explain how real estate property taxes are calculated, why some homeowners saw their real estate tax bill increase, and why some homeowners' tax increases were more or less than others.

## Property tax laws

Article VIII of the Wisconsin State Constitution requires the uniform taxation of property and also provides property taxation standards, including those related to forest property and that taxation of agricultural land and undeveloped land does not need to be uniform with the taxation of other real property.

The State Legislature enacts all property tax and assessment laws. Property tax assessment laws are covered in Ch. 70, Wis. Stats. As a rule, State and municipal property, public and private school property, cemeteries, property owned by churches and religious organizations, property owned by certain non-profit entities, and a few other properties for specific uses are exempt from taxes and are listed in that statute.

## Real estate property values for property taxes

Property values are the first thing shown in the large set of boxes on each homeowner's 2024 Real Estate Tax Bill. An assessed value is set for the value of the land plus an assessed value for the improvements (buildings or structures on that property), with a total assessed value being the combination of the two. Below that an estimated fair market value is shown for the value of the land plus an estimated fair market value for the improvements on that property, with a total estimated fair market value being the combination of those two numbers.

An assessment is the value an assessor places on your property. This value is used to calculate how much tax (what portion of the local property tax levy) is due for this particular property. Under State law, all non-agricultural assessments must be based on the property's market value as of January 1; however, that law recognizes every municipality cannot be assessed at market value each year. It would be burdensome and costly to undergo a reassessment every year. So the law requires each municipality to be within 10% of market value of the property, either above or below, so somewhere between 90% and 110% of market value.

Assessors must be certified to ensure they are applying the same rules and guidelines to their valuation of properties as required by State law. They classify real estate in one of eight statutory classifications: residential (which includes

vacant lots in residential neighborhoods), commercial, manufacturing, agricultural, undeveloped, agricultural forest, productive forest land, and other.

The assessed value on a Real Estate Tax Bill is set for January 1 of each year and may change from year to year based on known improvements to the property, such as those indicated when a homeowner is issued a building permit. The reason for the building permit indicates the types of improvements being made and the assessed value may be adjusted accordingly for the following January 1. Likewise, if real estate is sold, the assessed value may be adjusted accordingly for the following January 1 based on the price the purchaser pays for the property. How much someone is willing to pay for a property is indicative of its fair market value at that time.

## City of Merrill citywide reassessment

For properties within the city of Merrill that have made improvements and had building permits issued or for properties that sold within the last couple of years, the assessed value has been adjusted accordingly. However, for other properties within the city, assessed values have not changed since the last reassessment was completed, which City of Merrill officials indicate was in 2016.

Real estate values have increased significantly in that time. Anyone who has been looking at the price of real estate in recent years—looking to buy a new home or even to sell their current home—knows that real estate values have increased significantly. In fact, less than a year ago properties locally, statewide, and beyond were selling so quickly and real estate was in such demand that sellers were getting offers on their properties within days of putting them on the market and for thousands of dollars more than their asking price, as buyers were competing heavily to purchase properties. Of course,

certain properties were more desirable than others, and the most desirable properties or the kinds of properties in most demand were commanding the best prices. With the inflation of home and real estate prices, the 2016 assessed values of properties within the city of Merrill quickly became out of date and no longer accurately reflected the properties' fair market value in the current market.

Properties within the city that had their assessed values adjusted over time due to building permits being issued or were adjusted according to the amount paid for them if they were sold/purchased within the last couple of years, were in closer alignment to the fair market value in the current market, but that wasn't true for the majority of properties. Most were assessed at far less than 90% of their fair market value, so those properties deviated by more than 10% of the market values, and this has been the case for approximately the last four years.

In this case, the State mandates that municipalities go through a reassessment process to be sure all property owners are paying their fair share of the taxes across an even playing field. Thus, all properties in the city of Merrill were reassessed for 2024 and assigned current values in keeping with the current real estate market.

Prior to the reassessment, those properties whose assessed values had been adjusted due to permits being issued or according to the price they sold for (if they had been recently sold) were likely paying a higher proportion of taxes, due to their increased assessed value, while those homeowners whose assessed value had not changed much—or at all—since 2016 were paying less than their proportionate share.

This is why, if Merrill residents compare the values in these boxes on their 2024 Real Estate Tax Bill with the values in these same boxes on prior years' tax bills,

See TAXES page 10



### December Youth Optimist

**Haley Rindt**, a Senior at Merrill High School, is the December Youth Optimist of the Month. "As Track and Field Coach, as well as Link Crew coordinator, I have had the privilege of witnessing Haley display the qualities of an outstanding youth optimist," said Mrs. Bethany Martinovici in her nomination. "Haley is a quiet leader, who demonstrates a positive attitude and commitment to achieving her goals," she said. "She has shown remarkable resilience in the face of challenges and has inspired her peers when they needed her the most. Haley doesn't require you to lead for her or ask her to take the lead. She may not be the loudest leader in the class, but her efforts and dedication don't go unnoticed by staff and students." "Haley does what she knows is right and will work hard, always determined to meet her goal," said Mrs. Martinovici. "She can uplift others when needed and will motivate others to be their best in the classroom and with participation in athletics. Haley's positive influence and dedication to personal growth make her an excellent model. I believe that Haley embodies the spirit of optimism and is deserving of the award."

Haley Rindt

At school, Haley is actively involved in Basketball (Varsity letter), Track and Field (Varsity letter), Volleyball, Marching Band, Symphonic Band (Varsity letter), Wind Ensemble, Tri-M Music Honor Society (Secretary), Junior Optimist Club, Link Crew (Leader), and National Honor Society. Outside of school, she volunteers with Learn to Skate (Coach), Sixth Grade State Basketball Tournaments, Children's Fest, Little Lakes Memories Banquet, Special Olympics Region 2 Track and Field Meet, and is a Merrill Ice Reflections Figure Skating Club member. The daughter of Michael and Becky Rindt, after high school graduation, Haley plans to obtain a bachelor's degree from one of the UW schools and to pursue a career in the medical field.

**Abigail Parks**, an eighth grader at Prairie River Middle School (PRMS), is the December Youth Optimist of the Month. "It is with great pride that I nominate Abbie for the December Youth Optimist award for her outstanding character and contributions to our school," Mrs. Marcie Hanson said in her nomination. "Abbie is a student who makes teaching truly enjoyable! She approaches every day with a positive attitude and a bright smile, creating a warm and welcoming environment for both peers and teachers."

"Her easygoing nature makes her very approachable and fosters strong relationships within our school community," she said. "Throughout her time at Prairie River Middle School, Abbie has maintained an impressive 4.0 GPA, showcasing her dedication to her education. Additionally, she has been a key member of our school's swimming team, demonstrating her commitment to teamwork and sportsmanship. As of her eighth-grade year, she has also taken on the role of a school WEB leader, further exemplifying her leadership skills and initiative."

At school, Abigail is also on the honor roll, having maintained her 4.0 GPA since the sixth grade, and she won a Mindsetter of the Month award. She helps with the Merrill Aqua Jays Swim Team and helps foster dogs from Wags of Wisconsin. In her free time, she enjoys swimming and arts and crafts. Abigail is the daughter of Stacie VanWey and Nathan Parks of Merrill.



Abigail Parks

**Optimist Clubs: "Bringing Out the Best in Kids"**  
Merrill Noon Optimists - Wednesdays at 12:00 noon at the Eagles Club, 1205 Lake St., Merrill  
Adult volunteers join Optimist Clubs to conduct positive service projects in their communities aimed at providing a helping hand to youth. Their upbeat attitudes empower youth to be the best they can be. Optimists International, with 3,000+ clubs, conducts 65,000 service projects, serving more than six million youth annually. Locally, Merrill Noon Optimists serve 3,000+ area youth, contributing or organizing events and service projects in our Merrill community.



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# OPENING

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# OBITUARIES

## Crystal L. Lambrecht



February 8, 1982 - December 21, 2024  
Crystal L. Lambrecht, age 42, of Merrill, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, December 21, 2024, at Aspirus Wausau Hospital, while surrounded by her loving family. She was born on February 8, 1982, in Monroe, WI, and was the daughter of Mark Lambrecht and Dena Drye. Crystal attended and graduated from high school and went on to earn her associate's degree, an accomplishment she was

very proud of.

Crystal was a spirited woman who was a life-long learner, incredibly bright, and fiercely determined. She was an artist who enjoyed painting and writing. Despite the challenges she faced as a quadriplegic, Crystal was unbelievably independent and an advocate for living life on her own terms. She took great pride in her appearance, always dressing beautifully and carrying herself with confidence and grace. Crystal refused to let her wheelchair define her, inspiring everyone around her with her strength, style, and determination to live life fully.

Crystal had a remarkable ability to adapt and innovate, constantly finding creative ways to make things work for her that typically wouldn't, enabling her to maintain and expand her independence. Her resourcefulness and determination to overcome obstacles left a lasting impression on all who knew her.

Crystal was a digital educator, creating content to help others on the same journey as her. She often spoke to driver's education classes and delivered victim impact statements at Lincoln Hills. She also dedicated her time to helping kids at Ott's Garage and making her "Crystal The Quad" content. Crystal had a deep love for her pets, especially her cat, Izzy, and cherished the beauty and peace of the outdoors whenever she had the chance. Her family takes comfort in knowing that she is now free from pain and will be deeply missed.

Crystal is survived by her father: Mark (Linda) Lambrecht; mother: Dena Drye; siblings: Kathy Stewart, Kimberli Smith, Chris (Amber) Lambrecht, Rainy (Devyn) Van Camp, Daneeca (TJ) Jones, and Annie (Josh) Steidinger; numerous nieces and nephews; one great nephew; good friend: Fuzz; along with many other good friends and caregivers who have supported Crystal over the years. She is preceded in death by her Grandma Lambercht and her friends: Buck, Ken Meyers and LeAnna Wells.

A Celebration of Life for Crystal will be held at S&S Bar in Merrill on February 8th (her 43rd birthday) from 1-5PM.

## Janis M. Warner



Janis M. Warner, age 87, of Antigo, passed away on December 22, 2024 at Rosalia Gardens under the care of LeRoy Hospice.

Jan was born on March 11, 1937 in Merrill, WI to the late Emery and Lorraine (Genrich) Harder.

She was a graduate of Merrill High School, attended UW Eau Claire and then Lincoln County Rural Normal School obtaining her teaching certificate.

On May 28, 1960, Jan was united in marriage to John D. Warner at St. Robert's Bellarmine in Merrill. John preceded her in death on May 29, 2023.

Jan was a member of St. John Catholic Church in Antigo, where she was a member of the choir and enjoyed volunteering in many ways. Jan's kindness and love towards others will be remembered by many and she will be dearly missed.

She is survived by her son Douglas Warner of Pelican Lake, a sister-in-law Dawn Ofsthun, and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband and parents, Jan was preceded in death by her son Dominic Warner.

A memorial Mass will be held on Saturday, January 25 at 11:00 AM at St. John Catholic Church in Antigo with visitation from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM prior to mass in Hoffmann Hall at St. John.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial will be established in Jan's name.

Strasser-Roller Funeral Home is assisting the family. Friends may visit online at [strasserrollerfuneralhome.com](http://strasserrollerfuneralhome.com).

## Kathleen A. 'Kathy' Krueger



Kathleen A. 'Kathy' Krueger, 70, of Merrill, passed away Thursday, December 26, 2024, at Aspirus Wausau Hospital.

Kathy was born May 17, 1954, in Merrill, daughter of Walter and Dorothy (Zemke) Woller. She married Roger Krueger on August 26, 1978, at Faith Lutheran Church. He survives. Kathy worked at Lincoln Windows and as a bartender for most of her life. She enjoyed shooting pool, bowling, gardening, and baking. Kathy loved her granddaughters and spending time with them.

Kathy is survived by her husband, Roger Krueger of Merrill; daughter, Sheena Krueger (Marcus Miller) of Merrill; mother, Dorothy Woller of Merrill; grandchildren, Evony Miller and Arabel Miller; and siblings, Janice Mauney, Vicki Lambrecht, Michael Woller, and Rodney Woller. Kathy was preceded in death by her father, Walter Woller.

## Mary Kay Van Der Geest



Mary Kay Van Der Geest, 76 of Merrill, WI passed away peacefully at Aspirus Hospice House in Wausau late in the afternoon on Wednesday, January 1, 2025, after a courageous battle from inter-nasal metastatic melanoma.

Mary Kay Jacobson was born on March 14, 1948, in Merrill, WI to the late Norman (Jake) and Phyllis Jacobson of Irma. She graduated from Merrill High School in 1966, attended UW-Stevens Point and married the late Gary Van Der Geest on October 18, 1969. Gary was her true soulmate, and they enjoyed 31 years of marriage until his death on November 1, 2000.

Mary Kay's first job was a paper route in Irma, followed by the Dairy Queen in Merrill, where Gary used to frequent for ice cream. After attending UW-Stevens Point she worked at Wausau Insurance and held her WI Real Estate Brokers license for several years. However, her true passion was working in the dairy business alongside Gary. In 1969, Gary and Mary Kay, along with Gary's parents, Gerrit "Chub" and Eleanor Van Der Geest, purchased their first farm consisting of 120 acres and 17 cows which was the start of Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle and today, 55 years and four generations later, it is has grown to over 3000 cows and 6000 acres. After Gary's passing, Mary Kay was the sole owner and president of Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle Inc. until she sold it to her son, Lee Van Der Geest, and business partner Jason Mell in 2017.

Mary Kay was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandma/nana first, but like her husband, Gary was very enthusiastic about agricultural and promoting the importance of our agricultural industry. Aside from the Dairy, she served as a director on the board of United FCS and later Ag Country Farm Credit Services for over 14 years, was a founding member of the WI River Pro Rodeo for over 35 years as a member and secretary, Merrill Rider's Club secretary for several years, a member of the Northcentral Technical College (NTC) Foundation Board. She also served as a board member of the Dairyland State Academy which fundraised and formed what later became known as NTC's Agriculture Center of Excellence. In addition, for 35 years she served on the board and was a member of the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture (PPA) in which time she participated on sub-committees such as the education & promotion committee which is instrumental in promoting agricultural. She was a lifetime member, elder and Sunday school teacher for First Presbyterian Church of Merrill, and after it disbanded, joined St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wausau.

Mary also enjoyed bowling, snowmobiling, downhill skiing, card club and being a horse show and rodeo mom and grandma.

Mary Kay is survived by her children, daughter Amy (Jeff) Butler of Cosby, MO, son Lee (Katie) Van Der Geest of Merrill and daughter Beth (Gabe) Gwaltney of Willow Springs, MO. Brother David (Sandy) Jacobson of West Bend, WI, four adorable grandsons Koy and Kyan Van Der Geest of Merrill and Gunner and Gatlin Gwaltney of Willow Springs, MO. In addition, she is survived by her sister and brother in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins, and special friends. She is preceded in death her parents, Jake and Phyllis Jacobson, her father and mother-in-law, Gerrit "Chub" and Eleanor Van Der Geest and husband, Gary.

Visitation was held at Taylor-Stine-Waid Funeral Home (formerly Waid Funeral Home) at the 301 Eagle Drive location, from 4-8 p.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025, in Merrill. Funeral services were held on Tuesday, January 7th, 2025, at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wausau at 11:00 a.m. with visitation starting at 10:00 a.m. Reverend Maggie Westaby officiated. Burial was held at the Maple Grove Cemetery in the village of Maine with a luncheon that follow at Willow Springs Garden in Wausau.

The family would like to thank the wonderful care team of the Aspirus Hospice House, Wausau, as well as Rennes Health & Rehab, Weston and her special caregivers Marlin Kalafice, Monica and Carissa Howe. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting memorials to: Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services Fund which has a non-profit foundation for the care of hospice patients. Checks payable to: Aspirus CCHS Fund or St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wausau or the Merrill Rider's Club of Merrill. Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting: [www.stevensonandsons.com](http://www.stevensonandsons.com) or [www.taylorstinewaid.com](http://www.taylorstinewaid.com).

## Donald Dale "Don" Morrell



Our beloved father, Donald Dale "Don" Morrell passed away peacefully on December 30, 2024, at the age of 94.

He was born on July 13, 1930, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Kenneth and Iva Morrell. His childhood in Milwaukee instilled a lifelong passion for sports and fitness, which led to his earning a letter in gymnastics from West Division High School. He loved the Badgers, Brewers, Bucks, Golden Eagles, and Packers, and was always happy to talk

sports with anyone.

He was known for his quick wit, intellect and kindness, and in his day, for his athleticism and strength. He was a good man and well loved by all who knew him.

Don leaves behind his six children; Shannon Morrell of Wabeno, WI, Jessica Morrell of Clackamas, OR, Monica Morrell of Milwaukee, WI, Kylee Morrell of Berlin, WI, Mitchell Morrell of Oswego, IL, and Colin Morrell (Karen) of Burbank, WA; along with eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He also leaves behind his best friend and brother-in-law, John Cotter; sisters-in-law, Lois Hamlin, Fern Bacher, and Shelley Neuman; as well as sixteen nieces and nephews.

Don met his wife, Patricia June Zoellner, in 1950, at their place of employment in Milwaukee. They were married later that same year. The following year they moved to Merrill, Wisconsin, Patricia's hometown. Even though he was born in Milwaukee, Don found that he preferred the small town life and quiet of the Northwoods.

Don worked for Marathon Electric in Wausau as a machinist and as his family grew looked for other opportunities. He eventually took a job with Louis Allis Corporation in Milwaukee, making the four hour commute to Merrill on the weekends, until moving his family to Grafton, WI. He eventually switched jobs again and worked for the USPS in Grafton until his retirement in 1985.

After retirement, Don and Patricia moved to Lake Van Zile in Forest County, Wisconsin. He took a position working part time for the Wisconsin DNR as a creel clerk, which he enjoyed, because it gave him a chance to talk fishing, another of his passions, with other anglers.

Don is preceded in death by his wife, Patricia; his brother, Robert; his sister, Linda; his grand-daughter, Naomi Ransom; along with several beloved brothers and sisters-in-law.

Another of Don's passions was playing sheephead with his in-laws. Maybe now they can all get together and resume where they left off. Before his passing, Don defined heaven as the "great sheephead game in the sky."

Despite his failing health and imminent death, Don continued to be witty until the very end. He sang and listened to many of his favourite old tunes remembering the oldest and most obscure of lyrics. He looked forward every day to competing with his kids in Wordle and Spelling Bee from the NYT games website, having learned the basics of a computer at 92. He will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him; in particular, his children.

Per Don's request, a memorial service will be held sometime in the spring at St. John's Church in Laona, WI, followed by a celebration of his life.

Our family owes a debt of gratitude to the staff at Ovation House in Milwaukee who cared for our father in his final weeks, as well as the nurses and care providers from Horizon Hospice. Thank you.

## Douglas Arthur Alderton



March 7, 1945 - December 26, 2024  
Merrill, WI

Douglas A. Alderton, age 79, died peacefully on December 26, 2024, while in palliative care with Aspirus Wausau Hospital. He was born on March 7, 1945, in Baraboo, WI to George and Winifred (Butler) Alderton. Doug attended schools in Rhinelander and graduated from RHS in 1963.

On April 2, 1964, Doug enlisted in the United States Air Force and served his country during the Vietnam War. He was honorably discharged on October 13, 1967. On October 25, 1969, he married Katherine Moore. They were married until 1993 and raised three children together in Rhinelander.

Doug attended technical school provided by the Air Force and held positions with Rhinelander Airport and Frito Lay. He then worked for the Rhinelander Paper Company for more than 20 years, retired and moved to Merrill, WI.

On August 9, 1996, Doug married Cheryl Hass-Runge in Merrill, WI and they enjoyed 26 years of marriage before Cheryl passed away in September of 2022.

Doug, or "Bypass" to some, was a life-long learner and enjoyed many hobbies including HAM radios, old tractors, motorcycles, target shooting and playing the banjo. Doug looked for ways to give to his community and was passionate about supporting and fundraising for veterans. Additionally, in his 43 years of sobriety, he provided counsel and support to many individuals on their journeys to recovery.

In recent years, Doug enjoyed bragging about his grandchildren and solving world problems with his "McDonalds Crew." He treasured this coffee klatch who provided endless enjoyment and support before and during his cancer treatment.

Doug is survived by his three children, Donna Alderton of Seattle, Tara (Darrin Gremban) Alderton of Rhinelander with their children Greyson and Grant Gremban, and Douglas Alderton Jr. of Rhinelander with his children Alexis and Vallyn Alderton; stepdaughter, Sarah (Jeremy) Lee and their children Sasha, Anton and Ivan; as well as many other family and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents; his stepfather, George 'Pat' Petranek; his sister, Janet Milbrath; his brother, Jim Alderton; and his wife, Cheryl Alderton.

In accordance with Doug's wishes, the family will hold private burial services at a later date. Mar-Lin VFW Post 10203 will provide graveside military rites.

The family wishes to share their heartfelt thanks to the Aspirus Wausau cancer and palliative care teams and to Pastor Joel Danner of Immanuel Lutheran Church, and the "Sunshine Crew" (especially Sue and Paul Puhl) for all their care and support.

Taylor-Stine-Waid Funeral & Cremation, Merrill, is assisting the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.taylorstinewaid.com](http://www.taylorstinewaid.com)

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# OBITUARIES

## Kenneth C. Schelk



Kenneth C. Schelk, 89, of Kiel, passed away at home, surrounded by his family on Thursday, January 2, 2025. He was born October 11, 1935, in Sheboygan County, to the late Walter and Helene (Koeser) Schelk. Kenneth attended Plymouth High School until he left to serve his country in the United States Army. He served from 1955 until 1957 and then served with the Army Reserves until 1962. On October 26,

1967, he married Faye Widder.

Kenneth was the owner of multiple small businesses including a furniture store in Howards Grove, a carpet and paint store in Merrill and a grocery store in Edwards, before retiring as a car salesman at Rodewald Buick in 1996. He loved his time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His interests included fishing, hunting, card playing, cutting his own firewood until he was 82, gambling and camping trips with his family. His family wishes they had a dollar for every fish he caught.

In addition to his wife of 57 years, Faye, he is survived by his daughters, Tammy (Todd) Matzdorf and Tracy (Casey) Litz; Tanya (Dean) Gosse; his son-in-law Jon Thome; his grandchildren, Cassandra Thiessen, Stephanie (Jordan) Adams, Jessica Kimme (Matthew Parmley), Amber Kimme (Joshua Schneider), Amy (Josh) Diedrich, Jonathan Thome (Gabby Tuck), Grant Thome, Hannah Gosse and Chase Gosse; his six great-grandchildren; his siblings, Roger (Diane) Schelk, Beatrice Grunewald, Walter (Verna) Schelk Jr, Carol (Dennis) Roethel; his sisters-in-law, Dede Schelk and Bernice (Ken) Justinger; many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his daughter, Trudy Thome, his mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, Reuben (Jean) Widder and Dorothy (Robert) Ehlenbeck; his brothers, Roy and Donald, his infant sister and two infant brothers, his sisters-in-law, Patricia Grunewald, Julie Schelk and Doris Widder; his brothers-in-law Richard Widder, James Waterman Jr, Carl Grunewald Jr.

A funeral service for Kenneth will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. at Meiselwitz-Vollstedt-DeTroye Funeral Home (815 6th Street, Kiel). Visitation will be on Wednesday, January 8, at the funeral home, from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Visitation will continue Thursday, at the funeral home, from 10:00 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. when brief family rites will be held.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Sharon S. Richardson Community Hospice for their amazing care and support, especially his nurses Michelle and Christine and to Debbie Knoener for her comfort during Daddy's last moments.

## Penny Jo Wenzlick



Penny Jo Wenzlick, age 72, of Merrill, passed away on Monday, December 30, 2024, at the Rennes Health & Rehab in Weston, WI and while under the care of Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services. She was born on August 16, 1952, to the late James Richard and Dorothy (Derwae) Gunderson in Kenosha, WI. Penny was placed in a foster home during her middle teen years, between Merrill and Wausau on HWY K. She and her foster sisters would go up the road to the beer bar and that is where she met Kenneth "Kenny" Wenzlick, in the summer of 1971. They exchanged marriage vows on November 11, 1972 and were married for over 46 years, until he passed away on August 7, 2019. They have two children together.

Penny worked a few different places, such as Weinbrenner Shoe Factory, Pamida and the Foto News as a flyer insert person. She then did in-home daycare for over 25 years, then she worked at the Merrill Courier as the receptionist for almost the entire time it was in business. She and her best friend, Patsy Woller, had a Christmas wreath making business, called "PW Wreathes", that made them each some extra Christmas money.

Penny loved spending time with her grandkids and watching them play in their sporting events, and going to the casino (North Star, Bowler), as well as watching and listening to the band "Lovin' Country". Penny loved watching the couples dance, she considered all of them extended family. She also loved the 4th of July with the Handlin family, who over the years, have become FAMILY.

Penny is survived by her daughter: Jamie (Wenzlick) Amelse, with granddaughter: Emily Ann Mae Amelse, both of Merrill, son: Kevin (Becky) Wenzlick, with grandsons: Austin Lee Wenzlick of Camp Pendleton, CA, Zachary Robert Scott Strasser of Merrill and Nicholas James Wenzlick of Wausau, stepfather: Duane (Ginny) O'Brien of Merrill, stepbrother: Glen O'Brien of Racine, stepsister: Susan O'Brein of Florida, brothers-in-law: Tim (Amy) Wenzlick of Tomahawk, Rick (Mary) Laabs of Merrill and Jerry Leopold of Merrill, sisters-in-law: Tammy (RJ) McCaulley of Georgia, Jean Seehafer of Wausau and Mary Jo Laabs, cousins: Sheila (Tim) Margetson, Peggyanne (Gary) Grissom, Andrea (Gary) Behr, Richard (Rose) Bowker and Robert Bowker, goddaughter: Raena Mary (Grenfell) Grisa and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband: Kenneth "Kenny" Wenzlick, grandson: Robert John Wenzlick, brothers-in-law: LeRoy Seehafer, Duane Laabs and Myron Laabs, sister-in-law: Nancy Laabs, step brother: Perry O'Brein, aunts: Margaret "Peggy" Eucalano and Betty Bowker, uncles: Andrew Eucalano and Roy Bowker, father-in-law: Lavern Wenzlick and step mother-in-law: Marie Wenzlick.

A Celebration of Life for Penny will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at the Agra Pavilion in Merrill, from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Rennes Health & Rehab and the staff at Aspirus Merrill Hospital for their care and compassion they had shown to Penny.

Taylor-Stine-Waid Funeral and Cremation of Merrill is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences are encouraged and may be made at [www.taylorstinewaid.com](http://www.taylorstinewaid.com).

## Robert Opsahl



Robert Opsahl, age 92, passed away peacefully on December 30th with his family by his side. In heaven, he is probably encouraging people to shape up whether that be in wrestling or choice of appropriate attire—i.e., belt and tie.

He was born July 8, 1932 and graduated from Cameron High School in Wisconsin, where he played football and was on the boxing team. Bob married Jo Ann Jones on September 3, 1955 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Their union was blessed for 69 years with 4 children: Lee, Craig, Ann and Peggy. He had been under hospice care for over a year but still managed to meet his guys' group for coffee twice a week.

Bob served his country in the Army 85th Regimental, 10th Mountain Division as a Drill Sergeant training troops for Korea. After his duty, he attended UW-Eau Claire on the GI Bill with a degree in Education. He and Jo Ann hold fond memories of their time in "Silver City"—Quonset hut student Veteran Housing units in Eau Claire. He received his Master's Degree in School Administration from UW-Superior.

Bob began his career at Merrill High School as a history teacher, football and wrestling coach. He started the wrestling program in Merrill and took the team to win State Finals in 1970. He was a Golden M'er for his coaching and in the Merrill Wresters Hall of Fame for his wrestling contributions. Bob worked as the Merrill High School Assistant Principal before going on to serve as Assistant Superintendent and finally as Interim Superintendent at both the Merrill and Wausau School districts before his retirement from education. In his retirement, he obtained his Series 7 Security license and sold bonds to school districts to help fund their operating costs.

Gas engines, tractors and private flying were some of his interests in his free time. Bob and Jo Ann hosted 2 foreign exchange students (Kim McDonald-Australia and Karoline Sollenfell-Sweden) and a foreign exchange student teacher (Kenji Yoshi-Japan) over the years. Bob was active in the Merrill Lions and received the Birch-Sturm Fellowship from the Wisconsin Lions in 2001. He and Jo Ann made over 19 trips to St. Lucia volunteering with the Good News Project where Bob helped build houses for the residents. Bob was also active in service to the City of Merrill by his time on the Zoning Board of Appeals, Airport Commission as well as being instrumental in the saving of Old City Hall and founding the Merrill Historical Society. Bob and Jo Ann received a Hall of Fame Award for Lifetime Community Service to Merrill from the Merrill Chamber of Commerce. Travel to Europe and Asia, including many river cruises, was a favorite activity for them. Proud of his Norwegian heritage, Bob's visit to Norway was a notable trip.

Bob and Jo Ann were proud members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church since their move to Merrill in 1958. Over the years, Bob served as the President of the Church Council and Principal of the Sunday School.

He is survived by his wife Jo Ann, three children: Lee Opsahl (Stacy Stevens), Ann Kuehn (Jim) and Peggy Riley (Devell); 6 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents Joe and Mae (Thomas), brother Ron (MaryAnn), sister Jo Ann Larsen (Bob) and beloved son Craig.

The memorial service for Bob will be held at 12:00 P.M., Noon, Friday, January 10, 2025, at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Merrill. Rev. Justin Smoot will officiate. The family will receive friends beginning at 9:00 A.M. Friday at the church. Taylor-Stine-Waid Funeral & Cremation, Merrill, is assisting the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.taylorstinewaid.com](http://www.taylorstinewaid.com)

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Lincoln County Humane Society or charity of choice.

## Terry C. Willet



Terry C. Willet, age 65, of Irma, WI, passed away on Tuesday, December 24, 2024, at her home under the care of her family and Compassus Hospice. Terry was born in Beaver Dam, WI, on December 31, 1958, to the late Ralph and Nancy (Taylor) Frank. She was married to Claude Willet on July 12, 1986; he survives.

Terry was a 1977 graduate of Waupun High School. She was later employed at Lincoln Hills as a youth counselor. Terry enjoyed traveling and weekend get-togethers with friends and was a member of the Red Hatters Group. She spoke highly of her friends and truly appreciated all of them.

Survivors include her husband of over 38 years, Claude Willet; her brothers, Rick (Jean) Wagner, Tim (Dee) Frank, Russel (Gerald) Frank, Russ (Tami) Nampel, David (Jennifer) Nampel, and Harold Nampel; and her sisters, Mary Jo Frank and Kristina (Bob) Wagner. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ralph and Nancy and Donny and Mary Nampel.

A celebration of life gathering will be held on Saturday, April 5, 2025, at Inshalla Country Club, at 1:00 PM. Generations Funeral Home & Crematory is assisting the family. You may view Terry's obituary and leave online condolences at [generationsfuneral.com](http://generationsfuneral.com).

## Philip Paul Schotz



Philip Paul Schotz, 79, of Menasha passed away on December 30, 2024, at Oak Ridge Garden in Menasha. Phil was born on May 17, 1945, in Merrill to Charles and Gertrude (Allen) Schotz. On August 3, 1990 he married Mary (Ruff). They recently celebrated 34 years together.

Phil enjoyed spending time in his garden, hunting and fishing with family and friends. Bird watching was a great past time for him.

Phil is survived by his wife Mary, daughters, Judit (Richard) Ryan, Linda (Louie) Van Groll; Sons, Paul (Pam) Schotz, Peter (Heather) Schotz; Grandchildren; Rebecca, Matthew, Jason, Paige, Shane, Julie, Kayla, Carlee, Mitchell, Konrad & Katrina; 13 Great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews. He is also survived by a brother John (Kathy) Schotz, Merrill, and a sister Jean Schotz, Wisconsin; besides his parents, Phil is preceded in death by two sisters; and seven brothers.

Kessler's Fahrenkrug Funeral home is taking care of funeral arrangements.

## Phyllis L. Monka



Phyllis L. Monka, 89, of Merrill, WI, passed away Friday, December 27, 2024, at Bell Tower Residence, Merrill.

Phyllis was born January 21, 1935, in Two Rivers, WI, daughter of Fred and Ida (Block) Gregor. She married Richard F. "Dick" Monka on February 15, 1958, in Two Rivers. He preceded her in death on April 3, 2012. Phyllis was a homemaker and after her children were grown, she worked as a nurse's aide at the former Holy Cross Hospital in Merrill. One of Phyllis' favorites things to do was talk about her grandson, Ian: she adored him. Phyllis appreciated the arts was talented in wood carving, caning chairs, and painting. Phyllis enjoyed travelling to Massachusetts to visit her son, Greg, and spend time at Martha's Vineyard.

Survivors include two children, Greg Monka, of Edgartown, MA, and Stephanie (David) Springborn, of Merrill; one grandson, Ian Springborn, of Chanhassen, MN; and one brother, Don (Joanne) Gregor of Ripon, WI. Phyllis was preceded in death by her husband, Richard "Dick" Monka; parents, Fred and Ida Gregor; and sister, MaryAnn Emond

The funeral service will be at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, January 11, 2025, at the Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill. Burial will take place at Merrill Memorial Park. Visitation will begin at 9:00 a.m. Saturday at the funeral home.

The family would like to thank the many professionals who helped Phyllis.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the American Cancer Society.

Online condolences may be made at [www.taylorstine.com](http://www.taylorstine.com)

## MERRILL AREA BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**DECEMBER 23, 2024**  
**Boy, Archer Allen,**  
 born to Ashley Dunlop and Neil Nehrbass of Merrill.

**DECEMBER 27, 2024**  
**Girl, Nikayla Mae,**  
 born to Tara Grundman and Andrew Grundman of Kronenwetter.



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# Sanford Health and Marshfield Clinic Health System complete merger

## Combined nonprofit integrated health system will transform care delivery in rural Midwest

On Jan. 2, 2025, a press release announced that Sanford Health, the largest rural health system in the U.S., headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Marshfield Clinic Health System, had completed their merger and are now one nonprofit integrated health system operating as Sanford Health, "marking the beginning of a new chapter for the future of rural health care."

"Today's historic milestone paves the way for us to advance world-class care across the rural Midwest and accelerate vital investments in the communities we have the privilege of serving," said Bill Gassen, President and CEO of Sanford Health. "Together, we will reimagine the future of local, patient-centered nonprofit health care by expanding services, enhancing access, and harnessing innovative technologies to improve the health of our communities. We are thrilled to welcome 13,000 new employees from Marshfield Clinic Health System to our Sanford family and look forward to embracing all of the new possibilities that lie ahead."

Here in Merrill, the Marshfield Clinic Merrill Center will continue to operate as it has been. "At this time there

are no changes at all, including the name, services offered, etc.," said Jeff Starck, Senior Media Relations Specialist for Marshfield Clinic Health System. "Patients will continue to receive care from the same trusted providers at the same locations, with no immediate changes to their care experience."

"The Marshfield Clinic Region is a new health services delivery region of Sanford Health that will continue to serve communities in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula," the media release said. "Additionally, each organization's respective health plans, Sanford Health Plan and Security Health Plan, will continue current operations under a common management reporting and governance structure."

"Our partnership brings together two organizations deeply committed to advancing health care for the people and communities we serve in rural America," said Brian Hoerneman, M.D., who previously served as interim CEO of Marshfield Clinic Health System and has now transitioned to the role of President and CEO of the Marshfield Clinic Region of Sanford Health. "I am excited about the opportunities ahead as our teams learn from each other and combine our complementary strengths, cultures, and missions. Together, we will build on our shared legacy, creating a future where every person, regardless of zip code, has access to the best possible care."

The combined system will serve patients and communities across the upper Midwest, including South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, Iowa, Wisconsin, and the upper peninsula of Michigan. The organization includes nearly 56,000 employees, 56 hospitals, 4,500 providers, two fully integrated health plans, specialty pharmacies, and nationally recognized research institutions. Sanford Health Plan and Security Health Plan will

serve more than 425,000 members.

Additionally, the press release said:

- Dr. Brian Hoerneman will continue to lead the newly established region in his new role as Regional President and CEO. He is a native of Marshfield and a practicing emergency medicine physician.

- Sanford Health Plan and Security Health Plan will continue current operations under common management reporting and governance structures. The health plans will be led by Dr. Tommy Ibrahim, Executive Vice President and President and CEO of Sanford Health Plan. Krista Høglund serves as Regional President and CEO of Security Health Plan and reports to Dr. Ibrahim.

- Physicians will continue to have a critical voice in the direction of the combined organization through Sanford Health's robust physician governance structure. Like all of Sanford Health's regions, the new Marshfield Clinic Region has a Physician Executive Council, which will feature Marshfield Clinic physician leaders. Three members of the Physician Executive Council will serve on the system's Council of Governors (COG). These physicians are Jay Vedre, M.D., MPH; Kent Ray, DO, MSc; and Matt Thomas, M.D.

- Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS) will become a Region of Sanford Health. The Marshfield brand will continue to be predominant within the Marshfield Clinic Region.

- Three Marshfield Clinic Health System Board members have now joined the Sanford Health Board of Trustees. These new Trustees are Dr. George Brown, Thomas Wenzel, and Dr. Maureen McCausland.

- A regional board of community leaders is being established to govern the operations and strategy of the Marshfield Clinic Region.

An integration process is underway to create a unified organization. Patients will continue to receive care from the same trusted providers at the same locations, with no immediate changes. Moving forward together under

the Sanford Health parent organization will bring more resources, expertise, and innovation to patient care in communities across the rural Midwest.

Marshfield Clinic Health System, now Marshfield Clinic Region of Sanford Health, is an integrated health system whose mission is to enrich lives through accessible, affordable compassionate health care. The health system serves Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula with more than 1,400 providers comprising 170 specialties, and research and education programs. Primary operations include more than 60 Marshfield Clinic locations, 11 hospitals, Marshfield Children's Hospital, Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, Security Health Plan, and Marshfield Clinic Health System Foundation.

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## Celebration of Life

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MERRILL FOTO NEWS

## Student of the Week



This Week's Featured Student is

**Mason Klug**  
Son of  
**Brett & Carmen Klug**

Mason is in the 5th Grade at St. John Lutheran School. He was nominated by Mrs. Koch.

What is your favorite subject in school? Why?

Phy. Ed, because I like running a lot and playing games.

What is your favorite part of school? Why?

All the special things we do like Holiday Mall and the Christmas program.


What would you like to do/become someday? Why?

I love sports so something with sports if I can't play them anymore.

Mason Klug is an enthusiastic and conscientious student. He volunteers answers and works hard to complete assignments on time. He is cooperative and works well with others in various situations.

~ Mrs. Koch

Student of the Week Sponsored by:



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<b>Bacon</b> Sliced Maple, Frozen 16 oz. <b>ONLY \$2.99</b>	<b>Butter</b> Quarters Salted 16 oz. <b>ONLY \$2.99</b>	<b>Snack Crackers</b> Original 13.7 oz. <b>ONLY \$1.29</b>
<b>Cheddarwurst</b> Fully Cooked - Frozen 13.5 oz. <b>ONLY \$1.99</b>	<b>Butter</b> Quarters Unsalted 16 oz. <b>ONLY \$2.39</b>	<b>Hamburger Helper</b> Spaghetti 6.6 oz. <b>ONLY 99¢</b>
<b>Bratwurst</b> Original Fully Cooked - Frozen 19 oz. <b>ONLY \$1.99</b>	<b>Cheddar Cheese</b> Mild 5 lbs. <b>ONLY \$2.49</b> a lb	<b>Rolo Candy</b> 17.8 oz. <b>ONLY \$2.59</b>
<b>Pork Sausage</b> Original - Frozen 32 oz. <b>ONLY \$3.99</b>	<b>Muenster Cheese</b> 6 lbs. <b>ONLY \$2.49</b> a lb	<b>Sausage Links</b> Fully Cooked - Frozen 10 lbs. <b>ONLY \$1.29</b> a lb
<b>Pulled Pork</b> Fully Cooked-Smoked-Seasoned Frozen 5 lbs. <b>ONLY \$1.49</b> a lb	<b>Provolone Cheese</b> Smoked 6 lbs. <b>ONLY \$2.49</b> a lb	<b>Pork Crumbles</b> Fully Cooked - Frozen 5 lbs. <b>ONLY 99¢</b> a lb
<b>Hashbrowns</b> Oval Patties - Frozen 45 oz. <b>ONLY \$2.99</b>	<b>Onion Rings</b> Breaded - Frozen 32 oz. <b>ONLY \$2.99</b>	<b>Bacon</b> Cherrywood Smoked, Sliced, Frozen 7.5 lbs. <b>ONLY \$2.99</b> a lb
<b>Ribs</b> Fully Cooked w/sauce St Louis Style Frozen 36 oz. <b>ONLY \$8.99</b>	<b>Turkey Breast</b> Fully Cooked, Sliced Frozen 32 oz. <b>ONLY \$3.49</b>	<b>Cod Fillets</b> IQF - Frozen 10 lbs. <b>ONLY \$4.99</b> a lb
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# LEGAL NOTICES

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 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  
 WNAXLP

**BY THE COURT**  
**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  
 Russell G. Wendt  
 Notice to Creditors  
 (Informal Administration)  
 Case No. 2024 IN 55

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:**  
 1. An application for informal administration was filed.  
 2. The decedent, with date of birth 10-9-1964 and date of death 12-17-2024, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of W8428 Cty Rd. M, Merrill, WI 54452.  
 3. All interested persons waived 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, Merrill, Wisconsin, Probate Office.  
 Stanley R. Wendt  
 W7750 Cty Rd. Z  
 Merrill, WI 54452  
 715-218-1081  
 Published January 9, 16 & 23, 2025  
 WNAXLP

**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 waived 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 & Shiffer 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  
 WNAXLP

**Notice of Pending Application for Proposed Dam Transfer of Ownership**  
 Kjellrun Olson, 1101 Mayfair Rd, CHAMPAIGN IL, 61821-4432, has applied to the Department of Natural Resources for a permit to transfer ownership of the Carl Dam located on the Wolf Creek.

The project is located in the NE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 09, Township 32N, Range 05E, Lincoln County. Kjellrun Olson intend(s) to sell the property on which the Carl Dam is located to Glen Horton 2018 Family Trust. The Department must approve the transfer of dam ownership when a specific piece of land on which a dam is physically located is transferred (ss. 710.11 and 31.14(4), Wisconsin Statutes). The Department will determine whether the proposal complies with 1.11 and 31.185(1), 31.12, 31.14, Wisconsin Statutes, and NR 150, Wisconsin Administrative Code.

The Department has made a tentative determination that it will issue the permit for the proposed transfer.  
 If you would like to know more about this project or would like to see the application and plans, please visit the Department's permit tracking website at: <https://permits.dnr.wi.gov/water/SitePage> or you may contact Forrest A. Van Asten, P. E., Wisconsin DNR, 107 Sutliff Avenue, Rhinelander, WI 54501, phone number 715-493-0371, [forresta.vanasten@wisconsin.gov](mailto:forresta.vanasten@wisconsin.gov).  
 If you object to this application and would like to request a contested case hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, your objection shall specify:  
 1) Why the proposed project violates the legal standards found under Chapter 31 Wisconsin Statutes; and  
 2) That you or your representative will appear at the hearing and present information supporting your objection.  
 A request for a contested case hearing must be received within 30 days of

Legals 7700

publication on the Department's website which was on 12/31/2024.  
 If no objections are received which request a hearing, the Department may issue its decision without a hearing.  
**Docket Number 04161**  
**Date 12/30/2024**  
 STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
 For the Secretary  
 /s/Forrest A. Van Asten  
 Water Management Engineer  
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Rhinelander office  
 Published January 9, 2025 WNAXLP



**Get results finding the right person for the job!**  
**715-536-7121**

## TOWN OF PINE RIVER NOTICE OF CAUCUS

Notice is hereby given that a town caucus will be held in the Town of Pine River on Tuesday, **January 14, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the Pine River Town Hall.** Candidates will be nominated and then appear on the April 1, 2025 ballot. The following are incumbents whose terms will expire on April 15, 2025.

<u>Office</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>
Town Board Chairperson	David Breunig
Town Board Supervisors (2)	Steve Uttech Raymond Zastrow
Town Clerk	Amanda Herdt
Town Treasurer	Donna Oppen
Constable	Marilyn Zastrow
Please recycle.	Amanda Herdt, Clerk
Published January 9, 2025	WNAXLP

## 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.

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>NO INCUMBENT</u>
ONE (1) CHAIRMAN	
<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>INCUMBENT</u>
TWO (2) TOWN SUPERVISORS	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	WNAXLP

## NOTICE OF SPRING ELECTION TOWN OF SCHLEY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that at the Spring Election to be held in the Town of Schley on Tuesday April 1, 2025, the following officers are to be elected to succeed the present incumbents listed. All terms are for two years beginning April 15, 2025.

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>INCUMBENT</u>
Town Board Chairperson	Timothy Klimek
Town Board Supervisor	Craig Brown
Town Board Supervisor	Mark Leopold
Town Clerk	Becky Dallman
Town Treasurer	Susan Podeweltz

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN, that a Town Caucus will be held January 15, 2025 at 6 p.m. at the Schley Town Hall for the purpose of nominating candidates for the said election.

Becky Dallman, Town of Schley-Clerk Remember to recycle  
 Published January 9, 2025 WNAXLP



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



715-536-7121

## MERRILL AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE OF EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN WHO RESIDE IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Merrill Area Public School District offers students a variety of educational options to children who reside in the District. We are focused on student achievement, community partnership and future success for all students. Merrill Area Public Schools is focused on meeting the individual needs of students and preparing them for life after graduation.

The District's primary educational pathway and instructional program for students involves a progression from 4-year-old kindergarten through 12th grade, leading to a high school diploma.

The District's schools, and each school's most recent state-assigned performance category (if available), are listed below:

Elementary Schools (grades Headstart, 4K* - 4):	Middle Schools (grades 5 - 8):	High Schools (grades 9 - 12):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pine River School for Young Learners*</li> <li>Kate Goodrich Elementary School (Gr. K-2)</li> <li>Washington Elementary School (Gr. 3-4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prairie River Middle School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merrill High School</li> </ul>
District-affiliated (instrumentality) charter schools:	District-affiliated (instrumentality) virtual charter schools:	District Alternative Schools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridges Virtual Academy (Gr. 4K-12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridges Virtual Academy (Gr. 4K-12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merrill Adult Diploma Academy</li> <li>GEDO2</li> <li>Northern Achievement Center</li> </ul>

\* Note: The District offers its 4K program at one or more community-based locations other than the elementary school(s) that are listed above.

Some of the specific education programs offered to eligible students who are enrolled in and attending the District's schools include the following:

- Early childhood special education (for students who are at least 3 years old but not yet school-age), ie Headstart.
- Special education for students with disabilities (ages 3-21)
- English language learner/bilingual-bi-cultural education
- Gifted and talented education
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs
- Work Based Learning Options - Certified Co-ops, Employability Skills, and Youth Apprenticeship
- Individualized program and curriculum modifications
- Alternative education program(s)
- At-risk education (e.g., for students identified as being at-risk of not graduating from high school)
- Summer school programming

The full version of the District's most recent school and school district accountability report, as issued by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction under section 115.385 of the state statutes, can be accessed at: <https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/>.

**Educational options for students who are enrolled in the Merrill Area Public School District that involve part-time attendance at an educational institution other than a school of the Merrill Area Public School District include the following:**

1. The **Start College Now** and **Early College Credit Programs**, which:
  - a. provide opportunities to apply for approval to take courses at certain institutions of higher education; and,
  - b. is available only to students who are enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade.

**Additional educational options for children who reside in the District that involve full-time enrollment/attendance at a school, program, or other educational institution that is not a school or instrumentality of the Merrill Area Public School District include the following:**

1. High school students meeting certain age and other eligibility requirements may be permitted to attend a technical college or certain other programs for the purpose of completing a program leading to the student's high school graduation or to a high school equivalency diploma.
2. Full-time Open Enrollment involving physical attendance in a public school of a nonresident school district or attendance through a virtual charter school that is associated with a nonresident school district.
3. Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, a child with a disability who meets the program's specific eligibility requirements may apply to attend an eligible, participating private school under a scholarship awarded through the state's "Special Needs Scholarship Program," as established under section 115.7915 of the state statutes.
4. Enrollment in a non-instrumentality public charter school that was authorized by the School Board of the Merrill Area Public School District. The following charter schools are located within the District's boundaries and each school's most recent state-assigned performance category is provided, if available:
  - o No non-instrumentality public charter schools have been approved by the School Board of the Merrill Area Public School District as of the 2024-25 school year.
5. Enrollment in an independent public charter school (i.e., a school with no District authorization or affiliation) that is open to students who are District residents. The following independent charter schools are located within the District's boundaries and each school's most recent state-assigned performance category is provided, if available:
  - o No independent public charter schools are operating within the Merrill Area Public School District's boundaries as of the 2024-25 school year.
6. Enrollment in a private school participating in the Wisconsin parental choice program. The following participating private schools are located within the District's boundaries and each school's most recent state-assigned performance category is provided, if available:
  - o Saint John Lutheran School
  - o Trinity Lutheran School
7. Enrollment in a private school of the family's choosing (at the family's own cost, as applicable).
8. Enrollment in a home-based private educational program as provided under state law.

**Educational options for children who reside in the Merrill Area Public School District but who are enrolled in and attending a private school or home-based private educational program include the following:**

1. Such students have the opportunity to attend summer school classes/programs offered in the District.
2. Private school students in the high school grades have the opportunity to apply for approval to take up two courses per semester in a District school, pursuant to section 118.145(4) of the state statutes.
3. Students who are enrolled in a home-based private educational program have the opportunity to:
  - o Apply for approval to take up two courses per semester in public schools as provided under section 118.53.
  - o Participate in District interscholastic athletics and other District extracurricular activities as provided under section 118.133.

For more information about any of the educational options listed in this notice, please contact the District's main administrative office at 715-536-4581 or the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Published January 9, 2025

WNAXLP

# Aspirus Health announces the top baby names of 2024

Aspirus Health announced the top baby names of 2024 as chosen by families across their health system (excluding Aspirus St. Luke's). This year, the names Henry and Evelyn topped the list for boys and girls.

Out of a total of 2,911 live births at Aspirus facilities during the 2024 calendar year, 1,427 were baby girls.

### Top Boys' Names of 2024:

- Henry - 47
- Oliver - 29
- Liam - 28

### Top Girls' Names of 2024:

- Evelyn - 23
- Charlotte - 21
- Violet - 19

"Aspirus Health continues to be a part of this joyous moment for families by supporting safe, healthy deliveries across our system," a press release from the company said. "The names reflect not only a love for classic and meaningful names but also the diversity and creativity of families throughout our region."

Last year's most popular

names included Levi, Oliver, and Hudson for boys and Amelia, Harper, and Emma for girls.

"Aspirus Health is proud to be a trusted partner in delivering exceptional care to mothers and their newborns. With comprehensive maternity services, Aspirus ensures a safe and personalized birthing experience for all families."

For more information about Aspirus birthing services, go to: [aspirus.org/birthing-services](http://aspirus.org/birthing-services).



Council Grounds State Park held a First Day Hike on New Year's Day, Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, to get people out enjoying the Parks on the 125th Anniversary year of the Wisconsin State Park System. The Friends of Council Grounds State Park decided to use the occasion to request food donations to restock the Merrill Community Food Pantry and collected 84 pounds of donations from the hikers and Friends group members. Shown delivering the donations is Friends of Council Grounds State Park member Laurie Nikolai-Svetlik. Submitted photo.



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**Saturday & Sunday**  
Breakfast 7am-11am  
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\$5 Burger & Home Fries  
Dine-in only & additional toppings are extra.

**Sunday & Tuesday**  
Broasted Chicken  
12 Noon-8pm

**Friday**  
Fish Fry 12 Noon-8:45pm

Red Granite Bar & Grill  
Order Online - Check wait times or just stop in!  
Find us on

## Area Events & Entertainment Community Calendar

- Jan. 10** - Free Swing Dance Basic Lessons at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Jan. 11** - Second Annual January Jamboree at Normal Park
- Jan. 11** - Gleason Ice Oval Races
- Jan. 11** - Bar Bingo at Bubba's Pub
- Jan. 18** - Merrill Ice Drags
- Jan. 18** - 4-H Winterfest Celebration at Northwoods Veterans Post
- Jan. 18-19** - Statewide Free Fishing Weekend
- Jan. 19** - Bingo at VFW
- Jan. 25** - Annual Merrill School Forest Family Fun Day
- Jan. 25** - Merrill Ice Drags

For more information, go to: [merrillchamber.org/events](http://merrillchamber.org/events) or contact the event sponsor.

**Plautz's Pub LLC.**  
310 E. 2nd St., Merrill  
715-536-4611  
**SERVING FOOD DAILY TILL 8PM**

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MONDAY • Noon - 6pm  
TUE. - FRI. • Noon - Close  
SATURDAY • 11am - Close  
SUNDAY • 11am - 6pm

**SAT. JAN. 18TH BINGO**  
Open 11am, Start 1pm  
**100% CASH PAYOUT**

**SAT. JAN. 25TH MEAT RAFFLE**  
Open 11am, Start 1pm  
**BASEBALL BOOSTER FUNDRAISER**

**WEEKLY BRIEFING - JANUARY 9TH - 13TH**

THUR-Broasted Pork Chops & Scalped Potatoes  
FRI-Fish Fry • SAT-Bone-In Wings  
SUN-Chicken Noodle Soup  
MON-Spaghetti

\*No Bingo for January\*

**Conference Room & Hall Rental Available**  
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**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MERRILL ICE DRAGS**  
2025 Dates  
60TH ANNIVERSARY

Test & Tune Day Sat., Jan. 18th  
Race Day - "Merrill WinterFest" Sat., Jan. 25th  
Race Day - "People's Choice Award" Sat., Feb. 1st  
Race Day - "Memorial" Sat., Feb. 8th  
Race Day - Championship Sat., Feb. 15th  
Super Saturday Sat., Feb. 22nd  
Banquet & Raffle Sat., Mar. 1st

(Races Start at 11:30 am - Weather Permitting)

Our Track Records: 5.431 ET and 141.6 MPH in 660 Ft.  
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1/10/25 TO 1/16/25  
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**DEN OF THIEVES 2: PANTERA**  
"R" (2HR 24MIN)  
FRIDAY: 7:00 & 9:30PM  
SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:45, 7:00 & 9:30PM  
SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:45 & 7:00PM  
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM

**A COMPLETE UNKNOWN**  
"R" (2HR 21MIN)  
FRIDAY: 7:00 & 9:30PM  
SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:45, 7:00 & 9:30PM  
SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:45 & 7:00PM  
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM

**MUFASA**  
"PG" (2HR 0MIN)  
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

[www.cosmomovies.com](http://www.cosmomovies.com)  
**715-536-4473**

# Staying warm: Winter safety tips

Bitter cold has arrived. Keep your family safe and warm.

Wisconsin Public Service in Green Bay provides the following winter tips to keep area residents and their families safe and warm during winter's cold temperatures.

**Let the sun in:** Open curtains or blinds when the sun is out to help warm your home. Close them at night to help retain heat and cut down on drafts.

**Prevent carbon monoxide dangers:** Make sure carbon monoxide detectors are working properly and learn the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Oven safety:** Never use a stove or oven to heat your home. Not only

is it inefficient, it could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Keep your meters clear:** Safely brush away snow and ice from your home's natural gas meter and vents. The extra weight can stress or crack meter piping, causing a natural gas leak. It also can clog appliance vents, trapping carbon monoxide indoors.

**Space heater safety:** Only use newer models with safety features like automatic shut-off. Keep space heaters at least six feet away from flammable materials like drapes or blankets. Plug heaters directly into the wall, not into extension cords or power strips. Place the heater on a flat surface away from children and

pets.

**Safe sleeping:** Turn off electric blankets when they are not being used. Keep pets away from electric blankets, as their teeth and claws can puncture wire insulation and cause damage.

**Heat your home efficiently:** A few simple steps—such as sealing gaps around windows and doors, adjusting your thermostat, and changing furnace filters—can keep homes cozy and energy bills down. Check out tips to manage your costs.

**Energy assistance:** Wisconsin Public Service offers numerous resources for customers—including budget billing, payment plans, and heating assistance.

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# FIRST BABY

# of 2025



## Congratulations!



**Noah Ezra Roberts is the Lincoln County First Baby of 2025.**

Noah was born on Friday, January 3, 2025 at 2:19 p.m. at Marshfield Clinic at the Weston Center. He weighs 7 lbs, 14 oz and is 20 inches long.

Noah's proud mom and dad are **Bethany Williams and Corey Roberts.** His big sisters are **Emma Cater, Addilyn Roberts, and Charlie Roberts.**

The Foto News and Tomahawk Leader, along with the following Lincoln County merchants, will present the following prizes to the parents of the first baby born in the year 2025.

**CHIPS**  
**HAMBURGERS/ICE-CREAM**  
 1203 E. 3rd Street, Merrill  
 715-536-6532  
**A Certificate for One FREE Value Pack, Also a 10% Discount Card Good For 1 Year.**



**MERRILL Foto News**

**TOMAHAWK LEADER**



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 715-722-0304

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 Mon.-Fri. 7-6  
 Sat. 7-4 • Sun. 8-12  
**Tomahawk Store**  
 1513 N. 4th St. Tomahawk, WI 54487  
 715-453-5534  
 Hours: M-F 7:30-5:30  
 Sat. 8:00-3:00 • Sun. Closed

**Treat Yourself!**  
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 Lashes • Facials • Body Waxing  
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 715-539-1131

**\$25.00 GIFT CARD**  
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 (715) 536-1900  
**SALES • SERVICE DETAILING**  
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**1 Free Oil & Filter Change**  
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**Brickners Park City, Inc.**  
 3000 E. Main Street, Merrill  
 715-536-2833  
 www.bricknersparkcity.net

**\$25 Gift Certificate**  
  
**Merrill Area Chamber**  
 of Commerce & Information Center  
 www.merrillchamber.org  
 705 N Center Ave.  
 Merrill, WI 54452-1275  
 (715) 536-9474

**\$2500 Gift Certificate**  
 Good for **SUBWAY**  
 Merrill & Tomahawk  
 or **PIZZA**  
 Merrill

**\$25 Gift Card**  
  
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 Open 10am-10pm  
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 Hwy 51/1 39 & Hwy 64 Interchange, Merrill, WI

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 Tomahawk WI 54487  
 www.scentability.net | scentability@tds.net  
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 715-218-3772  
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**TOWN OF MERRILL**  
 IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR  
**RECYCLING ATTENDANT**

Position will oversee the recycling bins during the recycling collection times, which are twice a month, every other week, for 4 hour shifts.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN GLASS BULLETIN BOARD AT W4594 PROGRESS AVENUE AND AT--[www.townofmerrillwi.gov](http://www.townofmerrillwi.gov)  
 Call with questions at 715-536-4383

**A&W from page 1**

in our upcoming Merrill Profile Book.] In recent months, activity outside the building has been increasing, as contractors replaced the roof, worked on landscaping, painted, and did interior work.

Then the restaurant's new General Manager, Dawn Wolfe, was busy conducting interviews to hire a full staff and conduct training to prepare for the opening.

In Nov. 2024, the A&W Restaurant franchise announced it was expanding its brand in Wisconsin and would be adding two to four new locations in Madison, three to five locations in Milwaukee, and this location in Merrill.

The Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce will hold a ribbon cutting welcoming the new restaurant to Merrill on Monday, Jan. 13, 2025, just prior to the restaurant's first day opening for business.

Merrill's new A&W Restaurant on N. Center Ave. is set to open to the public at 10 a.m. this Monday, Jan. 13.

**ADVERTISE** Call 715-536-7121 TODAY!

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**TAXES**  
from page 3

they will see a different number. Those property owners who have been issued building permits to do work on their property or who recently purchased

their property will see that their assessed and estimated fair market values changed somewhat, but those property owners whose assessed and estimated fair market values have not changed much—or at all—since 2016 will see a significant difference in value which

reflects the current real estate market and more closely aligns with the price that property would command on the market if sold today. For some residents—including City of Merrill Mayor Steve Hass—the assessed value of their property is now almost

double what it was on their 2023 Real Estate Tax Bills. His modest single-family home, sitting on a normal-sized lot in Merrill, went from a total assessed value of \$59,400 in 2023 to a total assessed value of \$116,800 in 2024. Real Estate Tax Bills are a matter of public record.

To review a copy of the Real Estate Tax Bills for your property address from 2024 back to and including 2018 and the total tax amount due for your property address back to and including 2012, go to: [tiny.cc/Merrill](http://tiny.cc/Merrill). You can also see the Real Estate Tax Bills for your neighbors or

any other property within Lincoln County at this same site, so feel free to look at how your property values compare to other properties. Next week's Merrill Foto News will continue with Part 2 of this series on Property Taxes Explained.

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# Lady Jays claim home game victory over Tomahawk

The Merrill Girls Varsity Basketball Team played Tomahawk and took the win on their home court last Friday, Jan. 3, 2025. The Lady Jays beat the Hatchets in an exciting home game. Leading scorers for the Bluejays: Kaela Clerveaux 15, Mackenzie Ellenbecker 12, and Farije Kiskoski 8.  
**Box Score**  
**Tomahawk 38 @ Merrill 45**



Joseph Frederick photos.

More photos online  
[merrillfotonews.com](http://merrillfotonews.com)

## Merrill Varsity Girls compete at Mauston Invitational

BY TINA L. SCOTT  
 EDITOR

On Friday, Jan. 3, 2025, the Merrill Girls Varsity Wrestling Team attended their second major event of the season and first of the new year, traveling to Mauston High School for the Mauston Golden Eagle Girls Wrestling Invitational, where the Lady Jays wrestled along with 32 other girls teams.

“There were no team scores kept, so we can’t say how they fared as a team,” Merrill Girls Varsity Wrestling Head Coach Scott Arneson said, “but the 13 girls all competed with high intensity levels, executed awesome effort, and had great grit.”

“The girls all wrestled 4-5 matches [each] which was exhausting in itself,” he said. “What made it even more special was it was a Friday-evening tournament and their matches were completed over the duration of the five and a half hours of the tournament. So they were wrestling every 45 minutes or so—grueling.”

“There is a quote out there that there is no rest for the weary—or our female wrestlers—Haha!” Arneson said.

“The coaching staff was very busy, too,” he said. “There weren’t 10 minutes that passed where Assistant Coach Ali Natzke, Volunteer Coach Ed Fuchs, and/or I were not coaching from the corner—sometimes two corners.”

“The coaches would like to commend the girls on their effort and TEAM camaraderie,” Arneson said. “They represented their community, school, team, and parents with class, great intensity, and awesome efforts.”

“The girls are getting recognized by other teams who are realizing that if you are going to compete against a girl from Merrill, you better be ready, because they will be in shape, have good technique, and they will battle the entire match,” he said.

“We had two weight classes that Merrill did not have a competitor in, which were the 120- and 145-pound weight classes. We always have room for more girls wanting to join the excitement of Merrill Wrestling. We are working hard to be a successful program. Not everyone can be a State Champ, but everyone can work to be a State Champion—as we are!” Arneson said.

**Girls individual results:**

- 100 - Natalia Woller took fifth place
- 100 - Madlyn Hunter took third place
- 114 - Katelyn Grawien took second place
- 114 - Gracie Vanvuren took third place
- 126 - Kendall Klug took fifth place
- 132 - Kaylynn Allen took fifth place
- 132 - Adi Clark took third place
- 138 - Caroline Durbin

took seventh place  
 152 - Liberty Fuchs took ninth place  
 152 - Bryanna Doerr took 11th place  
 165 - Marissa Miles took seventh place  
 185 - Merin Yates took second place  
 235 - Shelby Yates took seventh place  
 The team will compete this Saturday, Jan. 11, at home for the Bluejay Challenge, Coach Arneson said. “It will start at 9:30 a.m. and finish around 8 p.m.”

“Neat note is the Varsity and JV Boys and the Girls teams will all be competing at the same time—under the same roof. Come get your dose of MERRILL WRESTLING at the high school Saturday.”

## 2025 Merrill High School Winter Sports Schedule

Date	Event	Location	Time
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm
Tues, Jan. 14	D. C. Everest (JV2)	Away	4:00 pm
Tues, Jan. 14	D. C. Everest (JV)	Away	5:45 pm
Tues, Jan. 14	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm
<b>Girls Basketball (Varsity, JV &amp; JV2)</b>			
Fri, Jan. 10	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV & JV2)	Away	5:45 pm
Fri, Jan. 10	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm
Tues, Jan. 14	D. C. Everest (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Tues, Jan. 14	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm
<b>Boys Wrestling (Varsity &amp; JV)</b>			
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV)	Away	6:30 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Sat, Jan. 11	Multiple Schools (Varsity)	Home	8:00 am
Thurs, Jan. 16	D. C. Everest (JV)	Home	6:30 pm
Thurs, Jan. 16	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Home	7:00 pm
<b>Girls Wrestling (Varsity)</b>			
Thurs, Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Away	6:30 pm
Sat, Jan. 11	Multiple Schools (Varsity)	Home	8:00 am
Thurs, Jan. 16	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Home	6:30 pm
<b>Boys Hockey (Varsity &amp; JV)</b>			
Thurs, Jan. 9	D. C. Everest (JV & JV2)	Away	5:00 pm
Thurs, Jan. 9	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Fri, Jan. 10	Multiple Schools (Varsity)	Home	6:00 pm
Sat, Jan. 11	Multiple Schools (Varsity)	Home	11:00 am
Thurs, Jan. 16	Stevens Point (JV & JV2)	Away	5:00 pm
Thurs, Jan. 16	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
<b>Girls Hockey (Varsity &amp; JV)</b>			
Fri, Jan. 10	ECA Stars (JV)	Away	5:00 pm
Fri, Jan. 10	ECA Stars (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm
Sat, Jan. 11	Hudson (JV)	Away	12:00 pm
Sat, Jan. 11	Hudson (Varsity)	Away	2:00 pm



The Sports Calendar of events is sponsored by:



## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

**Madlyn Hunter**, a Freshman at Merrill High School (MHS), has been named Athlete of the Week for the week of Jan. 9, 2025. Madlyn started wrestling in the second grade and has been wrestling ever since, even going to the Olympic Training Center when she was nine years old and wrestling on the Girls Wisconsin Team for a time when she was in the seventh grade, and this year she joined the first ever Merrill Varsity Girls Wrestling Team at MHS, recently taking first place in her weight class in the team’s first tournament in Rhinelander. Scott Arneson is an “amazing coach,” Madlyn said. “I’m happy we finally have a Girls Wrestling Team.” Madlyn is also on the MHS Varsity Cross Country Team and participates in Track—in pole vault and 4x400—and Softball as an outfielder. Having grown up on a farm, Madlyn belongs to the Prairie River Eagles 4-H Club and FFA, and shows pigs at the fair. She also works part-time at Z’s Fork Horners in Gleason. In her free time, she likes to work with her animals and to hang out with friends and family, watch movies, and to go fishing or four wheeling. The daughter of Becky Hunter and Brandon Hunter of Merrill, Madlyn has a 3.4 GPA and is still undecided about her career plans after high school.



Madlyn Hunter

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