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March 5, 2025 | OSHKOSHHERALD.COM

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 10



# Middle school site passes inspection

# No methane detected in area of former landfills

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

The Oshkosh Area School District plans to build a new middle school on the Jacob Shapiro site as part of a proposed \$197.8 million referendum and will not have to worry about dangerous methane gases on the site after a firm conducted testing there.

This is the second proposed location for the new middle school after an initial proposal to build at South Park Middle School was nixed due to zoning restrictions linked to the airport.

Assistant superintendent of operations Julie Conrad-Peters said a 36-page report confirmed there is no risk of hazardous methane gases or other volatile com-

pounds on the Shapiro STEM Academy school site. There are systems in place to mitigate the gases in the surrounding area from the former landfills.

"The proposed site for the new middle school, which includes the current site for Jacob Shapiro, is safe for expansion and development," Conrad-Peters said.

The district says no further methane

SEE **School location** ON PAGE 9

# INSIDE



### Special section

Local guide to arts, dining, entertaiment Inside

### **Transit options**

Paratransit service expands to Sundays
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Photo by Michael Cooney

## **Making music**

The Oshkosh Public Library held its first Community Jam under its historic dome, bringing music enthusiasts together for a Saturday morning of song and camaraderie. Library director Darryl Eschete (back right), an accomplished singer and guitarist, led the gathering while community engagement librarian Sandy Toland provided lyrics and chords on a large-screen monitor. The library plans to host the open event on the first Saturday of each month at 11 a.m.

# Local Ukrainian family faces uncertain future in U.S.

# Immigration program pause causes job losses

By Bethanie Gengler OSHKOSH HERALD

When 25-year-old Tetiana Chukhniai came to the Fox Valley two years ago with her husband and son under the Uniting for Ukraine program, she thought she had found a safe haven for her family to rebuild their life.

But now the family's dreams have been crushed after certain immigration programs were suspended in late February. Unable to get their work visas renewed, she and her husband, Ivan, lost their jobs.

The couple face uncertainty in how they will stay afloat in a foreign country and support their 6-year-old son without employment, and whether their temporary

parole status, which allows them to stay in the U.S., could be revoked.

In Ukraine, the family owned a condominium in Kyiv. Tetiana has a master's degree in international law and represented clients in court. Ivan, who is 32, has a bachelor's degree and owned a business as a clothing designer.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Kyiv became a focus of the conflict. The family left the country with only \$200 and drove to Germany where they stayed for a year before arriving in the U.S. in 2023 under Uniting for Ukraine, an immigration initiative implemented by the previous administration that provided a lawful, streamlined way for Ukrainian citizens to temporarily stay in the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons.

The program required Ukrainians to find a U.S. sponsor to provide support

while in the country. Tetiana commented in a Facebook group to find a sponsor family and connected with a Wisconsin couple in their 60s.

A few months later, the family flew to Chicago to meet their sponsors, Shirley and John Jauquet of Green Bay. They lived with the Jauquet family for about 16 months until they were able to move into a place of their own.

Shirley Jauquet said the Chukhniai family was welcomed by the community and quickly adjusted to the new environment.

"I mean, they're doing everything the right way, and they're the kind of people you want in America; you want them as new citizens," she said.

Their son, Makarii, has flourished, becoming fluent in English and adjusting

See **Ukraine family** on Page 10



Submitted photo

Ivan and Tetiana Chukhniai with son Makarii visited Lambeau Field during the holidays.



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### **Publisher**

Karen Schneider, 920-858-6407 karen@oshkoshherald.com

### **Editor**

Dan Roherty, 920-508-0027 editor@oshkoshherald.com

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# Counties work on campus transfer

### Discussions on future of UW space continue

Oshkosh Herald

Winnebago and Outagamie counties are moving forward on taking over the University of Wisconsin-Fox Cities campus facilities and then turning it over to other entities by the end of June after college classes end for the final time.

The UW Oshkosh-Fox Cities Campus board of trustees heard a general update Feb. 24 from Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson, who said the counties will first end UW's involvement with the campus on Midway Road in Menasha that began in 1960.

"We're looking at three different contracts to complete the sale of the UW. The first one is going to be a discharge, if you will, of responsibilities with the Univer-

"We are looking at potentially executing that before June 30, which would relieve them of responsibilities ahead of the Dec. 31 deadline."

Supervisor Thomas Swan provided additional information at a Winnebago County Board meeting Feb. 25, noting that the second contract completed will be to transfer the Weiss Earth Science Museum to the History Museum in Appleton. The third is to transfer the remaining property to the Menasha Public School District.

"We're talking to Menasha School District about taking over this property, purchasing it from us," Swan said.

The need for new tenants to maintain the campus has been stressed by Winnebago County supervisors who noted the potential annual costs of \$750,000 just for heating.

Adding to concerns is the need for up

replace the sound, lighting and HVAC

In 2022, both county boards approved funds for a feasibility study on upgrading equipment. The results of the study were sent to UW Oshkosh for bids, but to date the university has taken no action.

Some supervisors had asked that the study should wait until the counties have a better idea of whether a new tenant will be taking over.

In past meetings, dozens of community members advocated for the continued operation of the Barlow Planetarium, Communication Arts Center, University Children's Center and Weis Earth Science Museum.

Winnebago County supervisor Steve Binder said it would be important for completion of the UW transfer by the end of June to ensure continuation of day care services there.

Nelson said more details on the status of the contracts were expected next month.

### **Give Education Day** underway online

Oshkosh Herald

The community is coming together today (Wednesday) for 24 hours of giving to support the work of teachers and students in the Oshkosh Area School District through the annual Give Education

The OASD Education Foundation is matching a gift of \$1,000 from Aquire Restoration, which allows supporters the opportunity to double their donations in the campaign to reach \$5,000 in the online fundraising event.

Funds will be used to make these projects a reality in the next school year:

Expand student learning experiences: Opportunities such as guest speakers and hands-on projects that enrich learning beyond the classroom.

Fund innovative classroom grants: Encouraging creative, hands-on learning experiences by supporting teachers' ideas for engaging students.

Support student needs: Supply basic needs items such as clothing, hygiene items and school supplies for the most vulnerable students.

To donate visit give-education.com/ organization/Oasd-Education-Foundation. Safe and secure donations can be made at any time through midnight March 5.

Additional updates will continue to be on the OASD Education Foundation's Facebook page.

### Wisconsin alumni lead sports apparel drive

Oshkosh Herald

With team apparel being popular with those visiting the Menasha-based Community Clothes Closet, the Fox Valley Chapter of the Wisconsin Alumni Association is holding a clothing drive to benefit the nonprofit organization.

Starting Thursday through March 20, the association is sponsoring Team Clothing Madness, a collection of professional and collegiate team apparel that can be dropped off at the Community Clothes Closet or in Oshkosh at Gunderson Cleaners locations on Westowne Avenue and on Main Street or at 360U Softball and Baseball Training, 2060 Omro Road.

More information is at: uwalumni.com under Events or on social media.



OASD photo

# Tech education update

The Oshkosh Area School District and Regal Rexnord Corp., a global industrial manufacturer with an Oshkosh location, celebrated an enhancement to the district's career and technical education (CTE) program at the high schools with two new laser drill presses, funded by a \$10,000 donation from Regal Rexnord to the OASD Education Foundation. The new equipment replaces 50-year-old drill presses and will serve about 435 students in construction, manufacturing and automotive courses. Oshkosh North senior Anthony Nguyen is shown demonstrating the new equipment with school and company officials. "Having access to this new technology is exciting," Nguyen said. "It really helps prepare us for what we'll be using in the real world after graduation."

### Back in the Day



Oshkosh history by the Winnebago County Historical

### March 2, 1936

Oshkosh Pioneer, Franklin Bowen, Passes Away: Lifelong resident Franklin Bowen died this morning at his home at 459 Washington Blvd. He was 78 years of age. Bowen was born here on March 12, 1858, only five years after the incorporation of the

city. He was the son of A.B. Bowen and was born in the Bowen homestead at 213 Lake Drive. Educated locally, Bowen later attended the Columbia law school, but did not take up the practice of law, instead he entered the newspaper business here. He began as a reporter for The Oshkosh Times, later becoming editor. He worked many years for the Internal Revenue Service and was appointed to the Oshkosh Public Library board in July 1926. He married Molly Linde, whose family were also pioneers here, in 1886.

> Source: Oshkosh Northwestern, March 2, 1936



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# Boundary change petitions denied by school board

# Winneconne, Omro area transfers were sought

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

The Oshkosh Area School District Board of Education denied boundary requests that would have seen land lost to a bordering district and also would have added some land.

The different boundary alterations were brought to the board for approval as part of a process that must be approved by both districts involved. One of the petitions was to detach from OASD to the Winneconne Community School District. A second was to detach from OASD and attach to the School District of Omro, while a third petition was to attach to OASD and detach from Omro.

The Winneconne board had already approved the boundary alteration and the petitioners were waiting for OASD's school board to vote. For the alterations with the Omro district, no vote had taken place at the time of the OASD meeting.

Assistant superintendent of operations Julie Conrad-Peters said altering boundaries rarely occurs within the district. The OASD administration recommended denying all three petitions, as the two detachments would decrease the district's tax base. The administration also recommended denying the attachment because it would make the district's territory noncontiguous and create an island.

The board was split on the boundary changes that would detach the area from OASD. Members Stephanie Carlin, Barbara Herzog and Chris Wright opposed detaching the boundaries to the Winneconne and Omro school districts, while members Kelly DeWitt, Tim Hess and Molly Smiltneek favored approving the Winneconne changes. Hess opposed the second petition to detach some land to Omro.

The petitioner can put in a request to the state to reconsider the detachment. The School District Boundary Appeal Board with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction would handle an appeal process. Herzog has served on that committee since 2017 but is not involved with any appeals within CESA 6.

Herzog explained the criteria set in state statute for adjusting district boundaries, which include geographical issues or how a different district would better serve the children. She said the appeals board will take the criteria seriously and base their decision on those elements.

"We didn't hear anything about Winneconne better serving the educational needs of these children," she said. "I strongly recommend we follow the law and we follow the recommendation of the administration to deny this request."

Petitioners Tim and Lynsey Scottberg requested their small neighborhood community, bordering County T and Gibs Road, be detached from OASD and added to Winneconne. There are about 36 houses in the area, and the majority of the families already open enroll in Winneconne.

The petitioners for both of the detachments said transportation is difficult for these families who live in more rural areas. The Omro petitioner, Katina Mahlke, said her child spends up to an hour on the school bus every day.

Conrad-Peters said there have been

issues with transportation and said the board is aware of these concerns. For that reason, DeWitt said she was supporting the detachments from OASD.

Smiltneek called this an eye-opening moment for the district if it is not meeting the needs of students.

Hess was split on the detachments, stating that he supported the group of families wanting to detach and join Winneconne but did not support petition for the single parcel to detach from Omro.

"I'm struggling with this case – a single parcel," Hess said. "I don't feel we should be entertaining every single parcel that technically is on the border coming to us – asking us to come off."

Board vice president Chris Wright said that giving the land to the Winneconne

school district is not in the best interest of OASD. He believes the area will continue to grow, and new developers may build homes there in the future.

Wright added that he doesn't think it's ever a good idea for a municipality or district to secede land to another body and said he would probably never support the district transferring land out of the district.

The three petitions for detaching and attaching land to the district failed. Hess, DeWitt and Smiltneek supported the detachment to Winneconne, but due to board president Beth Wyman not being in attendance, it was a 3-3 tie and therefore failed. Smiltneek and DeWitt were the only supporting votes for the land detachment to Omro. There were no supporting votes for attaching land from Omro.

# Candidates forums set by county LWV

Oshkosh Herald

The League of Women Voters of Winnebago County has scheduled forums with candidates running in contested local government positions in the nonpartisan April 1 election.

A forum co-sponsored by the city of Neenah will be held at Neenah City Hall beginning at 6:15 p.m. Thursday with Common Council candidates Jeffrey S. Linski and Frank Cuthbert, who are running to represent District 3. They will be followed by candidates for Neenah Joint School District Board of Education, incumbents Lauri Asbury and Tara Brzezinski, along with Eric Fredrickson, Tom Hanby and Kenneth McNeil, running for three open seats.

A forum co-sponsored by Oshkosh Media is set for March 13 at Oshkosh City Hall

and will be simulcast on its website. Starting at 6 p.m. will be candidates for Common Council, incumbents Karl Buelow, Paul Esslinger and Joe Stephenson, and Brad Spanbauer, who are vying for three open seats. It will be followed by Oshkosh Area School District Board of Education candidates Molly Smiltneek, who is an incumbent, along with Michael Ford and Jacob Wolf, vying for two open seats.

Those two forums will be followed at 8 p.m. with candidates for Winnebago County executive, incumbent Jon Doemel and Gordon Hintz.

All forums will be recorded and links will be posted at lwvwinnebago.org and on Facebook. At each event the public is invited to submit questions, which may also be submitted up to two days before a forum at wcLWVinfo@gmail.com.



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# Paratransit service update adds Sunday ride option

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

Paratransit service hours will shift starting April 1 after a compromise was struck when city officials proposed changing them to match city bus hours.

Oshkosh is currently the only Wisconsin city that offers 24/7 paratransit services. The city has had issues recruiting and retaining drivers and finding a company that can provide the level of service needed for paratransit riders.

The paratransit service will run from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday starting in April. The council approved the changes with no opposing votes.

A proposal last year called for either the

fixed service routes or the buses to match the paratransit service, which is what most cities across the state do, as required by

Paratransit riders often cannot take the bus, call a cab or request a ride-sharing service such as Uber or Lyft. They often need a specific type of vehicle to get a ride to work, buy groceries, visit friends and family, or go to church.

Deputy Mayor Karl Buelow said it's easy for him to call a cab but is not the same for everyone. The topic came up at last week's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee meeting.

"This is DEI at its very best – thinking about accessibility and equity for all of our citizens and making sure they can get around," he said.

Buelow said he has a friend who uses a power wheelchair, and without the paratransit service extending to Sunday she would not be able to get to church.

"She literally would not be able to go to church services on Sunday. She's not somebody that I can give a ride to; it just doesn't work that way," he said. "You have to have a specialized vehicle."

There was an overwhelming backlash when the city proposed changing the paratransit service to mirror the fixed transit service hours such as for Go Transit buses, which operate between 6:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. Monday through Saturday with no service on major holidays.

The biggest concern the city received

from residents was that the change would prevent them from going to church on Sunday.

Last year, members of the community who are wheelchair-bound came to a Transportation Committee meeting to voice opposition to the proposed changes. Oshkosh transportation director Jim Collins stated it is becoming more challenging to find drivers and a company that will continue that level of service.

"As time has went on, it has become difficult to recruit and retain both drivers and contractors to provide that service," Collins said. "We reached a reasonable compromise that should help (the city) a bit and help our citizens as well."



City of Oshkosh drawing

Changes will be coming to Mill Street on Oshkosh's east side as it becomes a dead end and no longer connects to Bowen Street as part of a planned construction project in 2027.

# Mill Street connection to Bowen will end with safety update

By Jonathan Richie OSHKOSH HERALD

The city plans to turn Mill Street into a dead on its north end to simplify the intersection in two years.

According to plans recommended by the Transportation Committee and approved by the Common Council, Mill Street north of Waugoo will become a dead end and no longer connect to Bowen Street because of a history of crashes and poor sight lines.

The city contracted AECOM, an infrastructure consulting firm, to study the area and develop design alternatives for the intersection. Between 2017 and 2023, AECOM identified 14 vehicle crashes and one pedestrian accident in the vicinity of the Mill and Bowen intersection.

Bowen Street has an average daily traffic of about 5,000 with an average of 186 vehicles using the small section of Mill Street off Bowen.

Bowen Street from Otter Street to East Parkway Avenue is scheduled for complete reconstruction in 2027.

AECOM proposed several improvements to the intersection such as bumpouts to shorten the pedestrian crossing across Bowen.

The bump-outs are intended to improve sight distance in the area of the intersection and calm the traffic by forcing motorists to slow down and look for pedestrians.

There is also the potential for adding green space in the area once Mill Street becomes a dead end.

### 

Rebecca Grill has started her work as Oshkosh's new city manager.

She was sworn in at last week's Common Council meeting on her second day on the job. The former West Allis city administrator was selected by the council after an extensive search to replace longtime administrator Mark Rohloff.

"This is something we haven't done in over 15 years," Mayor Matt Mugerauer said before Grill took the oath of office.

Oshkosh operates a city manager-council government under Chapter 64 of Wisconsin statute, where the city manager role is similar to the chief executive of a company that oversees day-to-day operations while the council acts as the board of supervisors, responsible for policies and ultimately the annual budget.

Grill will have longtime city employee John Fitzpatrick serving as her assistant



Oshkosh Hera

Oshkosh City Clerk Diane Bartlett (right) swears in new City Manager Rebecca Grill at the Common Council meeting Feb. 25.

city manager. Fitzpatrick has worked with the city since 1999 and served as interim city manager after Rohloff retired in December. He was assistant city manager during Rohloff's tenure.

### Oshkosh-to-FDL roadwork to resume on I41

Oshkosh Herald

A 14-mile construction project on Interstate 41 between Oshkosh and Fond du Lac resumes Monday and will impact traffic at different times of day and during different phases of the work that is expected to finish in October.

The state Department of Transportation's Northeast Region said the work from County D (Military Road) in Fond du Lac County to State 26 in Winnebago County includes asphalt milling and pav-

ing, structure maintenance on 10 bridges, culvert work, guard replacement and related work.

The highway will remain open to traffic with lane and shoulder closures mostly at night or during off-peak hours.

A detailed listing of project scope, schedule and traffic impacts with maps, exhibits and displays is available on the DOT's project 511 construction website. The \$25.9 million project's prime contractor is Northeast Asphalt of Greenville.

## **Basic Needs Giving seeks grant submissions**

Oshkosh Herald

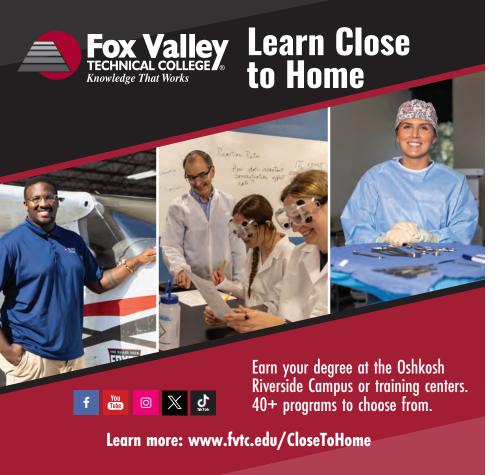
The Basic Needs Giving Partnership serving northeast Wisconsin communities has opened its 2025 grant cycle with a focus on early care and education, housing access, mental health and substance use.

This cycle will invest \$3 million in flexible multiyear funding for current and emerging efforts that are collaborating to change policies, practices and systems that hold poverty in place.

Award amounts are up to \$300,000 for

three-year grants for eligible organizations who are asked to submit an Intent to Apply form by April 11. Details for single-year grant opportunities will be announced later this spring that will invest about \$1.5 million in grants to organizations providing direct services or leading systems change efforts.

The Basic Needs Giving Partnership's grantmaking is made possible by the contributions through the U.S. Venture Open. For more information, visit bngpwi.org or contact stephanie@bngpwi.org with questions.







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# Oshkosh police officer won't face charges in shooting

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

The Winnebago County District Attorney's office has ruled that an Oshkosh police officer who shot and killed a man in December will not face criminal charges linked to the incident as his actions and the use of deadly force were deemed justified.

On Dec. 10, several OPD officers responded to a home in the 400 block of West 10th Avenue after a 911 call stated someone had been stabbed inside the home. Officers arrived and one officer shot a man twice in the chest before police entered the home.

Assistant District Attorney Tracy Paider wrote the legal opinion on the shooting that resulted in the death of 20-year-old Delveon W. Fairman of Oshkosh. The investigation of the shooting was done by the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation. After the investigation was completed, the DA's office compiled its legal opinion that no criminal charges will be filed.

The 911 call was made at 11:10 p.m. Dec. 10 and body cam footage shows that nine minutes later Fairman was shot twice by an OPD officer. The offi-

Shamrock lunch, bingo event set at La Sure's

The Oshkosh Area Women's Association will host a Shamrock Lunch & Luck of the Irish Bingo on March 16 featuring a corned beef and cabbage dinner, bingo games and prizes at La Sure's Banquet Hall at 3125 S. Washburn St.

The event starts with a cash bar at 11 a.m. and lunch at 12:30 p.m.

cer is identified as V3 in the document released by the DA's office.

"Officer V3 was forced by Fairman's actions to make a quick decision and he used the force necessary to stop the threat. Officer V3 had an objectively reasonable fear for his safety, the safety of other officers, and V2 who still remained in the house. His decision to use deadly force was justified," Paider wrote.

Fairman had allegedly ingested psychedelic mushrooms earlier in the evening and was saying that people in the house were evil and wanted to kill him. That night Fairman stabbed two women – one was able to escape the house and was found by officers on the steps of an enclosed front porch and the other was located bleeding in a bathtub in the basement.

Fairman was transported to Theda Care Regional Medical Center in Neenah but pronounced dead. The autopsy was performed by Dr. Brian L. Peterson of the Walworth County Medical Examiner's office. The cause of death was two gunshot wounds to the chest. A sample of Fairman's blood was sent to a lab in Pennsylvania and was confirmed positive for Psilocin, a psychedelic drug found in certain types of mushrooms.

All proceeds will benefit the OAWA High School Scholarship Fund for local high school students. Tickets are \$40 and include dinner and four bingo cards. Tickets can be purchased at Festival Foods or West Pointe Bank. Tables reservations for up to eight can be made by calling 920-215-0057.

Officer V3 and at least three other officers were part of the entry team attempting to enter the home's back entrance. The team had been shouting "police" and "come out with your hands up."

One officer heard a female voice screaming for help as the back door of the home was opened. As the entry team reached the threshold of the back door Fairman was seen with a large machete coming up a set of stairs from the home's basement. Officers ordered Fairman to drop the knife repeatedly.

V3 was at the front of the entry team with his ballistic shield held out in front of him and his firearm drawn. Fairman was walking up a set of stairs from the basement when he allegedly "stormed" at V3.

The officer then fired one shot at Fairman that struck Fairman in the chest and knocked him back. Fairman then allegedly continued back up the stairs and Officer V3 fired a second shot about

one second later, according to the body camera footage released by the DOJ.

Officers entered the home after they confirmed Fairman was no longer holding the weapon. Fairman was given aid and authorities began to search the home while V3 left the residence per police protocol for officer shootings.

Paider lays out the legal analysis for justifying the shooting in the report, which is based on the severity of the crime, whether the suspect posed an immediate threat to the safety of the officers and if the suspect resisted arrest or attempted to evade or flea from arrest.

Fairman was found to be extremely dangerous and his conduct was serious due to stabbing the victims multiple times inside the home.

"Every indication was that Fairman would have continued his assaultive behavior if force was not used to stop it, especially considering the fact that V2 remained in the residence," the report states.

# Clover Street house fire claims two dogs

Oshkosh Herald

The Oshkosh Fire Department responded to a house fire last week that resulted in the death of two pet dogs inside the home.

The Thursday fire was in the 2700 block of Clover Street when the 911 call was made. No one was home at the time of the fire.

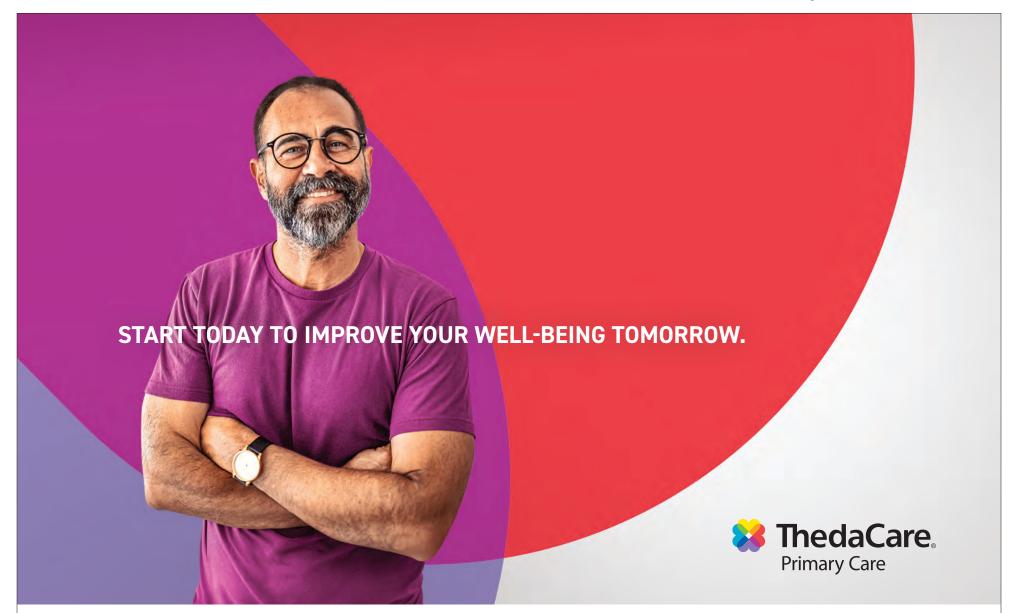
OFD public information officer John Holland said the initial call inaccurately stated there was an explosion inside the house

"What is was, was a fire in the home that snuffed itself out," he said. "That is not common."

This happens when the fire is contained to an enclosed area and burns out or uses up all the oxygen in that area. The fire likely started in the kitchen and none of the windows in the home broke or blew out, which usually occurs.

"There was extensive damage to the home and it was uninhabitable for the residents," Holland said. "Unfortunately, two dogs were killed in the fire."

Holland said the cause remains under investigation.



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# Facilitator brings personal perspective to brain injuries

By Dan Roherty OSHKOSH HERALD

Mike Gephart's ongoing journey to reinvent his cognitive life while gaining new perspectives on his personal identity after a traumatic brain injury is something he now shares as facilitator of a local support group.

"There's an eternal struggle between my old me and new me," Gephart said as he described his recovery path that's unique to him yet similar to those of others in Oshkosh's Brain Injury Support Group. "The people closest to me, to the old me, can either join me in my struggle or be part of it."

Intended for survivors of brain injuries – acquired or traumatic – the monthly group invites individuals and their families every third Thursday at 3 p.m. to NAMI Oshkosh

offices at 525 N. Main St.

The group previously met at Aurora Medical Center but NAMI now hosts the space and helps promote the discussions.

"The support group's goal is to help everyone involved see a good way down their new paths to eternity," said Gephart, who recently took over the group's facilitator

Michael Anastheiou led the group previously and along with Victoria Foston have kept the therapeutic discussions going for the past 25 years.

Gephart was in a fatal three-vehicle accident in March 2014 caused by an inattentive driver hitting another vehicle from behind at 61 mph and pushing it head-on into Gephart's. Pronounced dead at the scene, he was revived twice on the way to the hospital where he was put on life support.

A ThedaCare neurological triage team treated him for nine days as his brain reinvented enough neuropathways for his autonomic nervous system to make his lungs take a second "first breath of life" and regain



Gephart

consciousness. Becoming cognizant again was Gephart's next chal-

"Cognizance is an entirely different thing and is the next step of existence in this reality. Just like when a baby uncontrollably and gets wrapped up

with a diaper and given a bottle until they can hold it themselves," he said. "A 40-yearold man wakes up with a feeding tube to be removed and gets strapped down to his bed and sedated until he realizes where he is, how he got there and what he is."

Nurses had a three-question test for Gephart every time they visited: Are you married? Do you have kids? Can pigs fly? Saying yes to the first two questions was accurate but when he said yes to the third it indicated he wasn't in touch with reality.

"It took 14 days for me to reply no," he recalled. "I often joke about that and say, 'If they'd known what a Pink Floyd fan I was, a different third question might have proven my cognizance sooner."

Anastheiou eventually persuaded Gephart to take a psycho-neurological assessment after initially resisting that path and stopped joining the support group, something Gephart came to regret when his recovery slowed and his long-term disability

coverage was canceled.

"I've found that this support group to be full of people that get my stories," Gephart said. "And likewise, there are stories that actually interest me because they're second perspectives of the reality we all still share

"The post-cognizance journey is the one I'm still on today."

Acquired brain injuries (ABI) are those caused since birth such as a fall, accident, tumor or stroke. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) result from trauma to the head. Everyone else involved in a person's brain injury recovery journey - family, friends and caretakers – are welcome to meetings regardless of whether the survivor is in attendance.

Bob Poeschl, NAMI's new executive director after Mary Jannes led the organization for the last eight years, said they recently offered the group its space as a meeting venue.

"NAMI believes that peer support groups like Oshkosh Brain Injury Support Group are vital to helping individuals build support networks and foundations that can improve their lives," Poeschl said. "This is a good fit for our entities, as sometimes but not always, brain injury and mental health issues can overlap. This allows us to work collaboratively to raise awareness about brain injuries and mental health issues."

Oshkosh NAMI also welcomes a Family Support Group and Peer Support Group that meet twice a month.

Gephart said the group is there for people after taking all the necessary medical steps to get the help needed. "Our goal is to help others find and take the next step down their new path."

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March 5, 2025 OSHKOSHHERALD.COM | Page 7

# Innovative program supports trauma-impacted students

# Police notify schools of incidents involving kids

By Bethanie Gengler OSHKOSH HERALD

In an effort to better support students who have gone through a traumatic experience, a national "Handle With Care" (HWC) initiative has been connecting area law enforcement agencies with school districts.

The program aims to support children by facilitating communication between law enforcement and school social workers and ensure children receive the resources and care they need after difficult situations.

HWC works by having law enforcement proactively notify school social workers whenever they encounter a child who may have experienced or witnessed trauma. Only limited details are communicated to the schools without breaching confidentiality.

Winnebago County HWC facilitator Jennifer Skolaski said the referral allows social workers to discreetly assess the student's needs and provide support; whether that's connecting the family to housing and food assistance, or ensuring the child has a safe space to rest and process their emotions at school.

"If law enforcement feel that the child may have experienced some sort of trauma, they make a referral to the school social worker to tell that school social worker, 'Handle this child with care, they may have experienced a traumatic event,' and then that information allows the school social worker to assess the child for trauma and provide resources that they may need," she said.

The program was implemented at the recommendation of the county's Overdose Fatality Review team, which reviews cases of residents who've lost their life to an overdose.

Skolaski said the team noticed that children were often at the scene of an overdose or lost a parent due to an overdose. The team also found that many of the people who fatally overdosed were victims of childhood trauma themselves.

"We know people are isolated and we know that they're struggling, and here's a way that our community can really rise to the occasion to help," she said.

Any incident involving law enforcement with a child present at the scene triggers the program. That includes domestic violence, situations involving drugs and alcohol, death of a family member, arrests and emergency medical issues.

Fox Crossing Police Detective Mere-

dith Birmingham said before HWC was implemented in the county, if an officer responded to a domestic violence situation and a child was at the home but unharmed, law enforcement would provide services to the adult victims, but children may not be assessed or receive services.

"It definitely has helped the schools be more aware of issues that the students



Skolaski

are having, that it's not just the students that are acting out that are having issues, it can still be your straight-A student who's in three sports year round, but it's allowing the school district to then offer, does that family or that individual need some

services and how can we provide that for them," she said.

Traumatic events that occur in child-hood (0-17 years) are considered adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which reports that about 64% of adults in the United States had experienced at least one type of ACE before age 18.

Neenah police captain of operations Amy Wagner said ACEs have been shown to significantly impact youth and increase the need for mental health services.

"Our goal is to provide information to school social workers and counselors to intervene early to help lessen the longterm impact on our vulnerable youth," she said

As an example of the program's effectiveness, Wagner shared a story of a school social worker who checked in with a child after receiving a HWC notification.

"The student used the opportunity to share issues that were occurring at home and the student seemed relieved to have a safe space to share at just the right time," she said. "If this program was not active, this teacher may have never known the child's situation and the wellness mechanisms would not have been achieved."

Matthew Kaemmerer, Oshkosh Area School District director of pupil services, said the HWC initiative has benefited students and staff as part of the district's trauma-informed care policy.

"It's about awareness," Kaemmerer said.
"When a traumatic event occurs, we don't know how it affects a child."

He said the program has helped district staff tremendously by alerting them to students who could be experiencing trauma.

These programs ultimately support students trying to excel in the classroom, according to Kaemmerer. Educators know

external factors affect students, and the more teachers and staff know, the more they can help them succeed.

"We know that when students come to school experiencing difficulties – if we ignore these external pieces – it could lead to us making assumptions about the student's behavior," he said "That is not going to be helpful."

HWC was initially piloted in Winnebago County with the Oshkosh school district in November 2020 and social workers received 70 referrals by June 2021.

"What was so interesting is when we asked the school social workers if any of those kids were on their radar, they said no," Skolaski said, highlighting a gap the initiative aims to fill.

After the successful launch in Oshkosh, the program expanded throughout Winnebago County. If officers from any jurisdiction have contact with students in Winneconne, Omro, Oshkosh, Neenah or Menasha school districts, that triggers a HWC notification. Though the program is currently only at public schools, plans are in the works to expand to private schools.

This school year marks the first of implementation in the Neenah area after the launch of the pilot program and Skolaski said police are doing an excellent job with referrals.

"I think it's got to be hard as an officer to see these situations over and over and feel like they can't do anything about it, right? And this program is a way of doing something about it," she said.

Because the program is new in Neenah, Skolaski was unable to share data on its effect, but noted early indications suggest it's having a meaningful impact for students dealing with substance abuse and domestic violence at home.

"It's a program that identifies kids that were falling through the cracks and gives them those resources needed," she said.

Kolb said feedback from the Neenah school district's principals has been overwhelmingly positive and they appreciate receiving a heads-up about challenging situations, as it helps mobilize resources and support systems.

"Most importantly, Handle With Care reflects our commitment to seeing and supporting the whole child," she said. "We understand that our students' lives extend beyond our classroom walls, and by acknowledging their experiences with compassion, we create a more supportive and effective learning environment."

### Yoga with Bunnies promotes adoption options

Oshkosh Herald

The Oshkosh Area Humane Society has launched a new community activity, Yoga with Bunnies, that offers visitors a relaxing yoga session while interacting with adoptable rabbits.

Each session is about 45 minutes long with trained volunteers monitoring the bunnies, who are free roaming in the room. The cost to attend is \$10 for adults and \$5

for children. Children must be at least 12 years old accompanied by an adult. Guests are asked to bring their yoga mats.

Tickets for the next sessions March 16 at 1925 Shelter Court can be found at givebutter.com/yoga-with-bunnies. There will be sessions at 11 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

The Humane Society has rabbits available for adoption year-round and last year adopted out 56 bunnies.

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Students from Lourdes Academy show their winning posters. From left are art teacher Jill Thurk, Jeordie Warwick, Avianna Wihlm and Aoife Mains.

### Conservation poster contest winners named

Oshkosh Herald

The Winnebago County Land & Water Conservation Department recently announced student winners of its annual conservation poster contest with top awards moving on to state competition this week.

Lourdes Academy, Vel Phillips Middle School and the Oshkosh E-Academy all had students that placed in the top 3 in their age divisions.

With this year's theme "Home is Where the Habitat is," the hand-created posters compete at the county and regional level with the opportunity to advance to state and NACD national contests. Sixteen posters from students in five age categories representing seven schools were entered and judged by five natural resource and conservation departments at the James P Coughlin Center in Oshkosh.

Top awards:

### 10th to 12th grade

1st place: Ava Hoger, grade 11, St. Mary Catholic High School

2nd place: Norah Boehm, grade 11, St. Mary Catholic

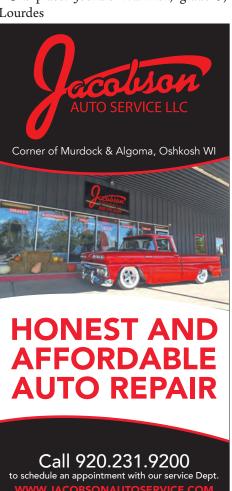
3rd place: Aoife Mains, grade 11, Lourdes Academy

### Seventh to ninth grade

1st place: Maeli Habersetzer, grade 9, Winneconne High School

2nd place: Avianna Wihlm, grade 8, Lourdes

3rd place: Jeordie Warwick, grade 9, Lourdes





Celia Vang of Vel Phillips Middle School shows her winning poster in front of other poster winners at the James P Coughlin Center.

#### Fourth to sixth grade

1st place: Ella Stewart, grade 6, Winneconne Middle School

2nd place: Celia Vang, grade 6, Vel Phillips Middle School

3rd place: Annabelle Maier, grade 4, Oshkosh E-Academy

### Second and third grade

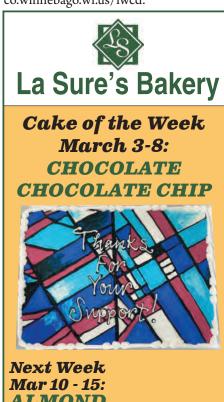
1st place: Will Stewart, grade 2, Winneconne Elementary School

2nd place: Laura Rehberg, grade 3, Winneconne Elementary School

### K5 and first grade

1st place: Clara Rehberg, grade 1, Winneconne Elementary School

Contest information and photos of winning posters can also be found at www. co.winnebago.wi.us/lwcd.



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## **Public library calendar**

Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15 a.m. LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

AniManga Club, 4 p.m., teens Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages

This Month in Library History, 9 a.m.,

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-5 p.m.

Preteen Book Club, 4:30 p.m. Teen Book Club, 4:30 p.m.

### March 8

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9

Beginning Traditional Beadwork: Peyote Stitch, 1-3 p.m.

#### March 9

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4 p.m.

#### March 10

Preschool Storytime, 9:30 a.m. LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Read to a Dog, 4-5 p.m., ages 5-12

Tunes & Tots, 10 a.m., babies and tod-

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Adult DIY, 6-7 p.m.

Stitch Together, 6:30 p.m., adults

#### March 12

Baby/Toddler Storytime, 9:30-10:15 a.m., 10:15-11 a.m.

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Career Ready, 12:30-1:30 p.m., adults & teens -more-

### March 13

Baby/Toddler Storytime 10:15-11 a.m. LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.

Second Thursday Book Group, Music of the Bees by Eileen Garvin, 1-3 p.m.,

AniManga Club, 4-5 p.m., teens

Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages

How to Date Old Photos, 6-7:30 p.m., adults

### March 14

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Elementary Book Club, 4:30 p.m. Young Adult Book Club, 4:30 p.m.

### March 15

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9-1

Read to a Dog, 10-11 a.m., ages 5-12 Nibbles & Giggles, noon-1:30 p.m., babies to preschoolers

Hack Club, 1-3 p.m., teens

### March 16

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4

### March 17

Preschool Storytime, 9:30 a.m.



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LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.

Read to a Dog, 4-5 p.m., ages 5-12

### March 18

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.

ic, 4:30-6:30 p.m., adults

Banned Book Club, 6:30 p.m., adults

Winnebago Free Legal Assistance Clin-

#### March 19

Baby/Toddler Storytime, 9:30-10:15 a.m., 10:15-11 a.m.

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Book Club: Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer, 6:15 p.m., adults

#### March 20

Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.

AniManga Club, 4-5 p.m., teens

Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages

Not Your Classic Book Club, 6 p.m., adults

#### March 21

Librarian Learns: Beautiful Bars of Brand & Sons, 9 a.m., YouTube

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Preteen STEAM, 4:30 p.m.

#### March 22

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9-4

Beginning Traditional Beadwork: Peyote Stitch, 1-4 p.m., adults

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4 p.m.

### March 24

Drop In and Create: Mini Canvas Paining, noon-3 p.m., kids and teens

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.

### March 25

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

History, Geography, and the Maps of Middle Earth, 6-7:30 p.m., all ages

### March 26

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Job Search Assistance, 1-4 p.m., teens

Spring Cleaning Crafternoon, 4:30-7:30 p.m., all ages

### March 27

Spring Cleaning Crafternoon, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., all ages

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages

### March 28

LEGOmania: View submissions & winners announced at noon, 9-1 p.m.

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-5 p.m.

### March 29

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Read to a Dog, 10-11 a.m., ages 5-12

### March 30

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4 p.m.

### March 31

Preschool Storytime, 9:30 a.m.

LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-

Read to a Dog, 4-5 p.m., ages 5-12

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Photo from Community Church

## Community kids step up

Children's ministry directors Wendy Lenz-Schwersenska and Bobbi Gumness challenged Community Kids from Community Church in Oshkosh to love their neighbors during February. Children shown here brought in nonpersishable food items to fill Little Free Pantries throughout the Oshkosh area. Seven pantries were filled multiple times with a total number of donated items tipping the scales at 2,138 pounds.

### **School location**

FROM PAGE 1

mitigation will be needed. The city continues monitoring methane levels in the area.

Conrad-Peters said the community was concerned, asking if the sites were safe and why there were "No Trespassing" signs in the area. The signs were to deter pet owners from using the site as a bathroom and leaving pet waste on the site.

The 36-page geotechnical engineering report, compiled by ECS Midwest, is available at oshkosh.k12.wi.us/referen-

dum-2025 under the FAQ section.

The district did air quality testing inside the building and underground tests within the area of the building.

"I'm glad that there's no methane there. I think that the public will be happy to hear that and it's good that we found that out," said board vice president Chris Wright.

The new middle school is one piece of the April 1 referendum that also includes installing air conditioning at elementary schools, renovating elementary schools to fit more students to accommodate for closing schools, and building an auditorium at North High School.



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## Ukraine family

FROM PAGE 1

well to his new school.

"He's a remarkable child, and I understand that because he's got two very smart parents," Jauquet said. "They would just be the perfect immigrants to come to America and you know, start their own business. They're just number one with us. We love them and we don't want them to leave."

Tetiana found part time employment as a paralegal at firms in Green Bay and Appleton, and last September moved on to a full-time position at Brehmer Law in

Ivan cared for their son and started a limited liability company for his clothing business, shipping his products worldwide, and recently began working as a delivery driver for Amazon.

They filled a need in the workforce, with 8 million open jobs nationwide last month, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that over the next eight years, there will be an estimated 37,300 job openings for paralegals and legal assistants, and 96,300 openings for light truck delivery drivers nationally each year.

The Chukhniai family doesn't fit the negative stereotypes portrayed by anti-immigration sentiments. They arrived in the U.S. legally, are not drug users, have no criminal record and don't rely on government assistance.

"We rent a home here and have always tried to contribute positively to our community," Tetiana said. "In 2024, we successfully paid our taxes and intend to do so again this year."

They've enjoyed celebrating American holidays, visiting the Green Bay Packers' Lambeau Field and spending time at Lake Michigan in Manitowoc and Sheboygan. During a visit to the lake last summer, Ivan is credited with saving a child from

Tetiana keeps a copy of the Sheboygan police report on hand in the event it could help sway any support in their efforts to stay in this country.

Migrants who arrive in the U.S. on humanitarian parole can apply for temporary protected status (TPS), which allows them to avoid deportation for a designated time and apply for extensions if their country is unsafe to return to. The couple applied for TPS a year ago and are awaiting approval.

In December, Tetiana and Ivan applied for re-parole and work authorization renewals, following the proper steps and timelines, but approval was delayed. Then last month, the Department of Homeland Security issued an internal memo that has not been made public, indefinitely freezing the issuance of new immigration benefits for several programs.

CBS News reported receiving a statement Feb. 19 from the Department of Homeland Security confirming that immigration program applications would be on hold indefinitely "pending the completion of additional vetting to identify any fraud, public safety, or national security

This impacted Uniting for Ukraine, the CHNV process for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to remain in the country on a temporary basis, and the Family Reunification Process for nationals from Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti and Cuba, enabling them to stay in the U.S. while awaiting family-sponsored green cards.

With immigration programs paused, Tetiana and Ivan's work authorizations expired and their employers were required to terminate them.

Matt Brehmer of Brehmer Law said he would "absolutely" rehire Tetiana if she were able to obtain a valid work permit.

"The integrity that she has in doing right by herself and her family is very admirable," he said. "Although she has been through an unimaginable experience, she fights every day to show up for her family and does what she can to provide the best life for them."

Jennie Murray, president and chief executive of the National Immigration Forum, said the immigration program freeze will remove 3 million authorized workers

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Tetiana Chukhniai stands outside Brehmer Law in Neenah where she had been working as a paralegal.

from the workforce.

"To take any authorized worker from the system hurts American businesses and hurts individual Americans, because it will only impact our supply-chain issues and our inflation," Murray said.

She pointed to polling that indicates voters want the administration to only prioritize removing violent criminals and not individuals who are contributing to society, "and they certainly don't want to see families separated," she said.

The Chukhniai and Jauquet families have contacted their local representatives and congressmen about the matter.

"I'm embarrassed that our government puts them through these hoops because they are such good people," Jauquet said.

The situation has taken a heavy emotional and financial toll on the Chukhniai family, who are now facing the prospect of having to move back in with their sponsor family or potentially leave the U.S. alto-

"I don't know if I would have enough patience to keep going here and trying to survive, or in the end, we have to, again, pack all of our life into three suitcases and leave; we don't know," Tetiana said.

Without the ability to work, the family won't be able to afford basic necessities like food, let alone rent and other bills.

"We need to tell people what's going on and it's worse than you can imagine," she said. "It's not happening on television somewhere, it's right here, and it's closer than they can even imagine."



But she doesn't place blame on the current administration. As a non-citizen who can't vote, Tetiana said it would be wrong to choose a side. With the country so divisive, she instead asked for unity.

"If we could let people know what's going on and even one person would change their mind, or would think more about that, or would pray, that's worth it," she

The family's situation is not unique. Immigration attorney Molly Smiltneek of Oshkosh said she's heard from other Ukrainians living in Wisconsin who entered the U.S. legally under the previous administration and are now facing similar challenges.

"Looking at it from their perspective, they're trying to figure out ways that they could stay and continue rebuilding their lives in the United States, or return to war in Ukraine, or a war-torn country that, you know, their homes may or may not exist anymore, that might not be safe for them in any way," she said.

President Trump signed an executive order in January targeting immigration programs, promising to "terminate all categorical parole programs that are contrary to the policies of the United States," implemented under the Biden administration.

Smiltneek said if that happens, humanitarian parolees like the Chukhniai family would be considered "out of status" and could be targeted for deportation and removal from the U.S. under an expedited process.

Currently, the only pathway for migrants who came to the U.S. temporarily under the programs to obtain a green card and be granted permanent residency is to apply for asylum, a process that is also being significantly restricted under the new executive orders, making it inaccessible for many.

"I think the administration at the time assumed that Congress would take action for both Ukrainians and Afghans to give them a path to stay once they were here, to support our allies, and that never happened," Smiltneek said.

She added that the people who came to the U.S. under the programs, and the host families who supported them, feel betrayed.

"We made promises to them, and we said that you would be safe here, and we aren't keeping those promises, and I think it is a terrible example of our broken immigration system," Smiltneek said. "I'm saddened that so many people who thought they at least had some security are now incredibly and rightfully fearful of deportation and removal, and that doesn't serve us, or serve our country, or serve humanity well."

She warned that the country is entering a dark time for immigration and asked that people provide direct support to immigrants, donate to or volunteer for organizations who work with immigrants, and advocate and stand up for them.

"Those of us who have the privilege to, need to hold our elected representatives responsible, and tell them what this means to you and why it's important that we treat human beings with dignity and respect," Smiltneek said.

Up until they lost their jobs, Tetiana and Ivan were making plans to purchase a house. That - like many things - is now on hold.

Tetiana had always heard the U.S. was founded on principles of independence, justice and fairness, and would like her family to have a chance at the American dream.

"I used to represent clients' rights in the court in front of the justice," she said, "and now I try to find this justice here."







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# Calendar of events

#### Wednesday, March 5

Aesop Bops, 12:30 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

### Thursday, March 6

Jazzmeia Horn, 6 and 8 p.m., The Howard

History Buffs Book Club, 6:30 p.m., Morgan House, 234 Church Ave.

#### Friday, March 7

Veterans Prohibition Ball with comedian James B. Connolly, 6 p.m., Venue 404 Rhythm of the Dance, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Morgan House evening tours, 6 p.m., Morgan House, 234 Church Ave.

### Saturday, March 8

Family Discovery Days, 11 a.m., Oshkosh Public Museum

Fox Cities Roller Derby, 5 and 7 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

Mom Prom, 7 p.m., Gibson Social Club, 537 N. Main St.

Puzzle Fundraiser for Love the Mess, 4 p.m., Hooper Community Center, 36 Broad St.

"Ferris Bueller's Day Off," 7 p.m., Time Community Theater, 445 N. Main St.

#### Sunday, March 9

Cabin Fever Reliever Blowout Sale, 11 a.m., Westhaven Golf Course, 1400 S. Westhaven Drive

#### Thursday, March 13

Candidates forum, 6 p.m., Oshkosh

Author G. Anthony, 5:30 p.m., Caramel Crisp Bookstore, 200 City Center

### Friday, March 14

Wisconsin HER Day, 11 a.m., Oshkosh Arena

Lourdes Academy's "Seussical the Musical," 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh Wisconsin Herd vs. Cleveland Charge, 7 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

### Saturday, March 15

Weaving a Legacy: Ho-Chunk Black

Ash Basketry exhibit opening, Paine Art Center (through June 29)

Oshkosh Farmers Market, 9 a.m., Oshkosh Arena

AmazSpring Shopping & Craft Show, 9 a.m., Sunnyview Expo Center

Ruby's Pop-up Pantry, 9:30 a.m., 491 Old Oregon Road

Oshkosh Symphony Orchestra, 7 p.m., UW Oshkosh Arts & Communication Building

Lourdes Academy's "Seussical the Musical," 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

"Tangled," 7 p.m., Time Community Theater, 445 N. Main St.

#### Sunday, March 16

Shamrock Lunch & Luck of the Irish Bingo, 11 a.m., La Sure's Banquet Hall at 3125 S. Washburn St.

Valley Fox, 12:34 p.m. (potluck at 11:30 a.m.), Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church, 1174 Algoma Blvd.

Lourdes Academy's "Seussical the Musical," 2 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

### Tuesday, March 18

Wisconsin Herd vs. Long Island Nets, 6 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

#### Wednesday, March 19

Oshkosh Chamber Business Expo, 11 a.m., Oshkosh Convention Center

#### Thursday, March 20

Wisconsin Herd vs. Long Island Nets, 6 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

EAA Speaker Series: The C-130 in Combat, 7 p.m., EAA Aviation Museum

### Friday, March 21

Ladies of Country, 7:30 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

#### Saturday, March 22

Plant the Seed, 10 a.m., Oshkosh Food

Journey Together Service Dog Bowling Fundraiser, 1 p.m., Revs Bowl Bar & Grill, 275 N. Washburn St.

Oshkosh Area Community Band spring concert, 7 p.m., Alberta Kimball Auditorium

"Point Break" (1991), 7 p.m., Time Community Theater, 445 N. Main St. Supertramp Tribute Show, 7 p.m., The

Grand Oshkosh

### Sunday, March 23

The Big Thaw Craft & Vendor Event, 9 a.m., Poplar Creek Barn

Volunteer needs

Aurora at Home Hospice is looking for a Memory Bear crafting volunteer, providing heartfelt support to families with loved ones in hospice care. This role involves creating personalized and comforting memory bears from cherished fabrics. Contact Jayne at Jayne.Syrjamaki@aah. or 920-252-5146 to learn more.

Aurora Health Care - Oshkosh seeks surgery center volunteers to support patients and families. Duties include providing comfort, answering phones, giving updates, escorting families, and maintaining the waiting area. Contact Jane at Jane. Barber@aah.org to learn more.

Feeding America Eastern Wiscon**sin** is looking for warehouse food sorters. Volunteers quality check, package, label or sort food depending on what is needed. Shifts are on weekdays and run from 9-11:30 a.m. or 1-3:30 p.m. Contact Andrew at aramsey@feedingamericawi.org or 920-202-3698.

Oshkosh Salvation Army is seeking a donation pickup driver/assistant for morning donations. This is an ongoing opportunity with one regular shift: 7:45-10:30 a.m. Contact Patricia to learn more at patricia.zastrow@usc.salvationarmy.org or 920-232-7660 Ext. 1013.



### Oshkosh Violet Society annual show, sale set

Oshkosh Herald

The Oshkosh Violet Society's annual show and sale is set for May 3 and 4 at St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall at 531 Knapp St.

Society members from the greater Oshkosh area as well as Appleton, Fond du Lac, Madison, Milwaukee and other communities will be on hand to share experiences and assist with problems when growing African violets. There will be a large selection of the violets and related

plants available for purchase as well as on

The event will be open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. May 3 and 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 4. Admission and parking is free.

Club membership is open to all ages and meetings include educational topics from various sources.

The Oshkosh Violet Society is affiliated with the Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs and the African Violet Society of America.

## Lakeside presents brunch, boutiques, bingo

Oshkosh Herald

Lakeside Packaging Plus is presenting its inaugural Hats Off to Moms event from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. April 27 at the Gibson Social Club in Oshkosh to honor mothers and caregivers while raising funds to support Lakeside's day programs for adults with diverse abilities.

Hats Off to Moms will feature a Bingo Bonanza with prizes, brunch, three fashion shows showcasing associates from Lakeside with their moms or caregivers modeling the latest styles from Brinkey's Boutique, Elements Unleashed, Perrywinkly Poppy, Revival and Sugar Rushlow, a Doll Your Best Hat competition and Mother's Day card-making kits to create personalized greetings.

Live music will be provided by Franki Moscato.

Lakeside Packaging Plus, with locations in Neenah and Oshkosh, is a nonprofit that elevates the lives of people with diverse abilities.

"We are incredibly excited to launch Hats Off to Moms," said Jennifer Ven Rooy, Lakeside's chief operating officer. "This event is a wonderful way to celebrate mothers and caregivers while supporting the vital programs that empower the individuals we serve. It's sure to be a fun-filled afternoon for the entire community."

Tickets can be purchased at lakesidepackagingplus.com.

### Watershed cleanup effort registration begins

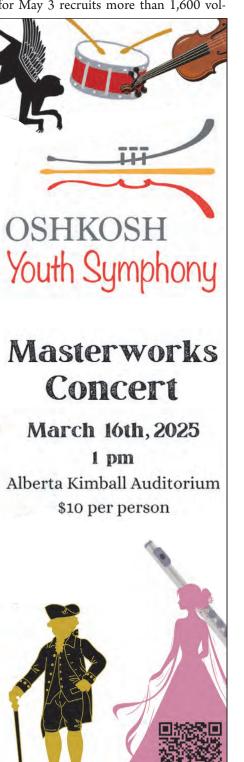
Oshkosh Herald

Registration is open for northeast Wisconsin's largest annual volunteer cleanup effort led by the Fox-Wolf Watershed Al-

The Fox-Wolf Watershed Cleanup set for May 3 recruits more than 1,600 volunteers of all skill levels tackling trash and debris.

Supplies will be provided, including gloves, trash bags and safety gear.

After the cleanup effort at multiple locations there will be a family-friendly picnic. Register at fox-wolf.org/cleanup.





Valid thru 3/21/25

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March 5, 2025

# Schroeder takes second at state to lead Wildcats

By Steve Clark
OSHKOSH HERALD

Oshkosh West senior Eddy Schroeder walked off a high school wrestling mat for the final time in the Kohl Center on Saturday night and climbed up the awards podium to accept another hard-earned medal.

It just wasn't the medal or the podium step he hoped to finish on.

Schroeder put together an impressive tournament to cap a stellar career with the Wildcats that ended with a runner-up finish at the WIAA State Wrestling Tournament in Madison.

"It's a great finish to the season and my career. I definitely wanted to get higher, but it is what it is," Schroeder said. "You have to keep growing and keep getting better and that's what I've done the last two years."

Schroeder lost to Milton's Devin Bobzien, 2-0, in the Division 1 138-pound title match, as Bobzien scored both points in the third period. He was able to escape Schroeder from the bottom position to break a scoreless tie, while Schroeder also got dinged with a second stalling call for another point.

Bobzien, who was seeded second in the 138-pound bracket, was able to keep Schroeder shackled as the two locked up and moved around the mat together for the first two periods.

"He was defensive most of the time, but he scored when it mattered so give him props," Schroeder said. "I was just staying with my offense, get to my attacks and keep wearing him out. My plan was to keep doing my stuff and not worry about what he was good at."

After a scoreless first period, Schroeder had the choice of starting positions in the second and chose neutral as opposed to picking the bottom position like Bobzien did in the third period.

Oshkosh West head coach Matt Cuadra said that was strategic because of the way Bobzien wrestled in the top position.

"He's a really good rider and can get a leg in and stall us out and we would waste a lot of energy there," Cuadra said. "We wanted to avoid that scenario."

Schroeder, who finished his season with a 49-5 record, did not have an easy road to make it to the title match.

After scoring a 12-3 major decision over Pulaski's Broc Ambrosius in his first match, Schroeder drew Wisconsin Rapids' Carter Freeman. Freeman beat Schroeder, 9-2, in the sectional final match the week before and won the state title at 126 pounds last year but this time Schroeder scored a first-period takedown on Free-



Photos by Doug Sasse

Above: Eddy Schroeder works for control against Pulaski's Broc Ambrosius in a 138-pound first-round match at the state wrestling tournament.

At right: Ryland Schneider eyes up Menomonie's Jacob Anderson in a 175-pound match at the state wrestling meet.

man and held on for a 3-2 win.

Schroeder, who was seeded fifth in the bracket, then faced top-seeded Caleb Aaberg of Oregon in the semifinals and Schroeder scored a takedown with 33 seconds left in the sudden victory period for a 3-0 win and a spot in the finals.

"Eddy wrestled great all tournament," Cuadra said. "I told him (after the match) that this loss doesn't define you or what you have done. He's done a lot of great things in his career."

Schroeder was not the only West wrestler to earn a state medal as fellow senior Ryland Schneider picked up a fourth place in the Division 1 175-pound division.

Schneider, who ended his season with a 45-7 mark, lost to University of Wisconsin recruit Caleb Dennee of Marshfield, 4-1, in the sudden victory period in the third-place match.

"I knew it was going to be a tough match going in but I almost pulled it out. It was a close one," said Schneider, who plans to wrestle at UW-La Crosse next season. "I wish I could have gotten it done but it was a good tournament."

Schneider opened the tournament with



a 15-0 technical fall win over Jacob Anderson of Menomonie and then downed Elijah Terrell of Slinger, 6-2, in the quarterfinals.

That led him to a semifinal showdown with Kaukauna's Liam Crook. Crook, the eventual 175-pound state champion, handed Schneider five of his seven losses this season and beat him 8-1 to land the West wrestler in the third-place match.

"It wasn't a great draw for me to make it to the finals but if I would have beat him, I would have been a champ," Schneider said. "Me and Crook have grown up together so it's always fun to wrestle him.

"It was a good season. Thanks to all of the coaches and teammates who have helped me get this good."

All seven of Schneider's losses this season have come against wrestlers who will be competing at the NCAA Division I lev-

el next season.

"Ryland wrestled a great tournament and he's wrestled great all season," Cuadra said. "That last match that kid was ranked very high in the nation and it came down to overtime. Ryland wrestled a smart, intelligent match but it was one where we just couldn't get that one thing that we needed."

Rounding out the Oshkosh West state qualifiers was Nelson Fournier, who finished 1-2 in the 215-pound bracket in his first trip to state tournament.

Fournier lost to Gatlin Empey of Stoughton in the first round but bounced back to pin Ben Helminski of Menomonie in 4:03. He then dropped a major decision to Waunakee's McCoy Smith.

"He came out wrestled some good

SEE **State wrestling** ON PAGE 19





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# Oshkosh gymnastics team earns trip to state meet

Oshkosh Herald

For the first time in more than a decade, an Oshkosh co-op gymnastics team advanced to the WIAA state meet.

Oshkosh finished second in Saturday's Division 1 sectional meet at Manitowoc Lincoln to claim one of the 10 team spots for this weekend's state meet in Wisconsin Rapids. Oshkosh posted a team score of 136.025 to finish six-tenths of a point behind sectional champion Stevens Point. Homestead finished third with 133.150 points.

It is the fourth trip to state overall for an Oshkosh co-op team. The program qualified for state as a West/North co-op in 2010 and as a West/North/Lourdes Academy co-op in 2011 and 2012. The team placed fourth in 2011.

Neva Schlies and Mia Drexler also qualified for the individual portion of the state meet.

The strong finish was highlighted by the team's performance on the balance beam, where Oshkosh totaled a school record 35.475 points - the highest total among the eight teams at the sectional. The total was almost a full point higher than any other team.

Oshkosh had four gymnasts finish in the top nine on the beam, with Neva Schlies posting the top score in the sectional with a 9.4, with Drexler placing fifth with an 8.8. Both gymnasts will compete in the individual portion of the state meet on the beam.

Ahna Schlies with an 8.7 tied for seventh and Lydia Barr tied for ninth with an 8.575 to round out Oshkosh's scores on

The team also had a good day on the uneven bars where Oshkosh tallied a score of 32.9, which was second among the eight



Mia Drexler (left) and Neva Schlies will participate in the individual competition of the WIAA State Meet.



The Oshkosh co-op gymnastics team qualified for the WIAA state meet by placing a close second to Stevens Point at the Manitowoc Lincoln sectional Saturday.

teams.

Barr led Oshkosh with an 8.425 in the event to place seventh, .025 points short of qualifying for state on the event. Neva Schlies tied for ninth with an 8.275, while Drexler scored an 8.150 and Kendall Irwin posted an 8.050.

Neva Schlies had the team's highest score on the vault as her mark of 8.55 placed her fourth, while Barr added a score of 8.35 to tie for 12th.

Neva Schlies also tied for fourth on the floor exercises with a score of 9.15, while Ja'niyah Ford was the next highest performer for Oshkosh with an 8.55 to take



In the all-around competition, Neva Schlies was the individual sectional champion with a score of 35.375, eight-tenths of a point ahead of runner-up Macy Diemer of Homestead.

Neva Schlies, who made it to state last season on the floor exercises, will compete on the beam, vault and floor as well as in the all-around. It's the second straight year Oshkosh will have a competitor in the all-around as Barr qualified last season.

The team competition will take place on Friday night at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School, while the individual portion of the state meet will take place Saturday.













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March 5, 2025

### **Prep sports roundup**

### **GIRLS BASKETBALL**

# Lourdes Academy claims regional title

Hailee Bauer poured in 25 points and Lourdes Academy topped Oakfield for the third time this season, scoring a 61-44 victory at home Saturday night to claim a WIAA Division 5 regional title.

The Knights will face top-seeded Sheboygan Lutheran in a sectional semifinal Thursday at Hilbert High School. The winner will play for a sectional crown and trip to state Saturday in Beaver Dam.

It is the third straight year the Knights have advanced to sectionals. Lourdes Academy lost in the sectional semifinals in each of the last two years, losing to Assumption last year and Oakfield in 2023.

Bauer knocked down five 3-pointers and added four assists and four steals in the game as Lourdes rallied in the second half for the win. Oakfield led 25-19 at half-time but the Knights outscored the Oaks 42-19 in the second half for the win.

Delany Ruedinger added 15 points, while Hannah McDowell chipped in 10 points.

The Knights finished with 18 assists on 22 field goals in the win, with Ruedinger leading the way with five and McDowell joining Bauer with four.

On Friday, the Knights topped visiting Randolph 51-41, taking an 11-point lead at halftime before holding on for the win in the second half.

Bauer scored 16 points in the win, while Sabur Machiros finished with 12 points and nine rebounds. McDowell chipped in nine points and eight boards.

# Lent, Holy Week and Easter Services

Ash Wednesday Worship 11:00 AM and 6:30 PM

Soup Supper 5:00 PM

Palm Sunday

9:00 AM - Traditional Worship 10:30 AM - Spirit of Hope Contemporary Worship

### Maundy Thursday with First Communion 6:30 PM

### Good Friday

9:30 AM - Family Worship Noon - Seven Last Words Worship 6:30 PM - Traditional Worship

### **Easter Sunday**

6:30 AM - Sunrise Worship 7:00 AM - Easter Breakfast 9:00 AM - Traditional Worship with Choir 10:30 AM - Spirit of Hope Contemporary Worship



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Photo by Andy Ratchman

Hailee Bauer scored 25 points in Lourdes Academy's win over Oakfield in a WIAA Division 5 regional final Saturday night.

Lourdes Academy opened the tournament with a convincing 86-30 win over Hilbert as the Knights put up 59 points in the first half.

Three players finished in double figures with Bauer leading the way with 24 points, followed by Ruedinger with 18 points and Machiros with 17 points and a team-high seven rebounds.

# Spartans ousted by top-seeded Old Abes

A tough first half left Oshkosh North trailing 59-17 and the Spartans couldn't recover in an 84-35 loss to top-seeded Eau Claire Memorial in a WIAA Division 1 regional semifinal Friday.

Brinna Paulson knocked down four 3-pointers and finished with 17 points to lead the Spartans. Awut Alic was the next highest scorer for North with six points, while leading the team with eight rebounds.

The Spartans advanced to the game by beating Chippewa Falls, 64-48, earlier in the week.

Alic had a huge night in the win, finishing with 34 points, 11 rebounds, five assists and four steals. She finished 4-of-5

from 3-point range in the win.

Morgan Kolodzik knocked down three 3-pointers to finish with nine points, while Paulson and Naviana Lao-Facundo each added seven.

# Wildcats suffer tourney loss to Patriots

Oshkosh West trailed by just two points at halftime but Appleton East was able to pull away in the second half to hand the Wildcats a 57-44 loss in a WIAA Division 1 regional semifinal Friday.

Ava Strasser led the Wildcats with 16 points but was the lone player in double figures for West. Maddie Rasmussen chipped in seven points.

# Warriors post regional win over Resorters

Mya Moran fell just short of a triple-double as Valley Christian scored a 67-59 win over Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah in a WIAA Division 5 regional game last week.

Moran finished with 31 points, 10 rebounds and six steals to pace Valley Christian's victory. It was Moran's third double-double of the season and the third

time she scored at least 30 points in a game this season.

Lizzie Fink added 21 points, while Paige Boevers added eight points and nine rebounds. Lisa Koller was the only other Valley Christian player to score with seven points.

Valley Christian's season would end in the regional semifinal Friday as the Warriors fell to top-seeded Sheboygan Lutheran, 83-40.

### **BOYS BASKETBALL**

### Ware's big night not enough to lift West

Joey Ware matched his career-high with 21 points to go along with 12 rebounds but Oshkosh West fell short against Hortonville, 67-59, in the Wildcats' regular-season finale last Thursday.

Ware had previously scored 21 points against Oshkosh North earlier this season.

Noah Gelhar added 11 points and seven rebounds for the Wildcats, while Malakai Herlihy finished with nine points and Brayden Kufel chipped in eight points.

# Knights fall to Oakfield in regular-season finale

Brady Bauer and Parker Slusarski each scored in double figures but Lourdes Academy fell to Oakfield, 62-48, in the regular-season finale last Thursday night.

Bauer finished with 11 points and Slusarski added 10 as it was the first time in double figures for both players this season.

Braden Studinski chipped in nine points for Lourdes Academy, which trailed 30-24 at halftime.

The Knights also fell to powerhouse Laconia, 89-48, earlier in the week. Lourdes Academy was held to just 15 points in the first half in the loss.

Harlan Kuehn paced the Knights with 11 points and eight rebounds, while Jackson Buttke followed with 10 points. Studinski added seven points for Lourdes Academy.

# Valley Christian edged by Hustisford

Brady Patterson knocked down four 3-pointers and finished with 16 points for Valley Christian, but the Warriors came up just short in falling to Hustisford 53-50 last Thursday.

Valley Christian outscored the Falcons in the second half but couldn't overcome a six-point halftime deficit.

Cade Krause added nine points and Xander Osinga finished with seven.

Earlier in the week, the Warriors topped Marion 76-36, jumping to a 40-12 half-time lead en route to the win.

Mathias Behling poured in 21 points to lead the Warriors, while Patterson finished with 12 points and team-high six rebounds. Krause and Kaleb Richardson each chipped in eight points for the Warriors.





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# Mitchell sparks Spartans to easy win over Appleton West

By Joe Matzek HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

What may be lost among Xzavion Mitchell's climb up the state's all-time scoring list and Oshkosh North's highest-scoring game of the season is the Spartans' play on defense in the past month.

Although North was impressive in scoring 57 points in the first half against Appleton West last Thursday, coach Brad Weber looked for his team to tighten up defensively, and the Spartans delivered by holding the Terrors to only 15 points after halftime in a 95-47 victory on Senior Night.

That continued a trend. In their last nine games, the Spartans have allowed just 56 points a game. In the previous 15 games, ending with a 103-94 loss to Kaukauna on Jan. 24, North gave up an average of 69 points.

It's no coincidence that the Spartans (15-9 overall, 11-7 Fox Valley Association) won eight of those nine games, avenging previous losses to Neenah, Hortonville and Fond du Lac in the process.

Mitchell points to the return of junior forward Bryce Ott as the springboard to the Spartans' improvement on defense. Ott missed the first 17 games of the season

as he recovered from ankle surgery following football season.

"For sure, our improvement has been on the defensive end," Mitchell said. "And obviously, our key guy back is Bryce



Mitchell

Ott. We're grateful to have him back. He's a game-changer. He's a winner."

Weber said the Spartans struggled early in the season as they tried to figure out their roles without Ott, and it didn't help that several players were sick or

injured.

"Then we started to hit our groove and he came back, which is a great shot in the arm, and this is who this group's been in the offseason," Weber said. "I think it was a hit to our identity when we lost one of our key guys. It took us a while to figure it out, we did, he came back, and now everyone's stronger because of the time he was away."

Defense aside, Thursday's game was entertaining from a fan's perspective by seeing two offenses that rarely took more than 10 seconds to shoot.

North's offense was far more efficient than Appleton West's. The Spartans made 8-of-11 three-point attempts in the first half and used a 29-14 run to end the first half with a 57-32 lead.

For the game, North made 37-of-66 from the field for 56 percent, including 13-of-23 from three-point range, while holding Appleton West (2-22, 0-18) to 15-of-49 shooting (31 percent).

Mitchell scored 26 of his 37 points in the opening half. In the process, he passed Cody Schmitz of Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau for fourth place on the state's all-time scoring list and now has 2,670 in his Spartans career.

The Iowa State commit is now just 15 points behind Mike Koehler of Elkhart Lake for third place and 54 points behind Mickey Crowe of St. Nazianz JFK Prep for second. Anthony Pieper of Wausaukee is far ahead in first place with 3,391 points.

But Mitchell said he doesn't pay attention to his place in the record books.

"I hear about it, but my main focus right now is a state championship and a ring on my finger," said Mitchell, whose night was done with 11 minutes remaining when North led 71-39. "That's really all I focus on. I see some of those things, and it's an amazing accomplishment, an amazing feeling to have, but I'm focused on a state championship."

Mitchell was one of six North seniors honored Thursday, along with Devin Garland, Jon Coleman, Jaykwon Jones, Fred Ware and Stefan Stojilovic. All of the seniors scored in the game, along with seven other Spartans.

"It means so much to me because I've played four years on varsity," Mitchell

said. "I've been coached by Coach Weber since my fourth-grade year. Growing up through the program and all the memories, it's an emotional day, but I wouldn't spend it with another group of guys on another team. I'm just grateful to be growing up through this program and the four years I've gotten at Oshkosh North."

Weber said he will remember Mitchell's Spartans career for his work ethic and his unassuming, quiet demeanor.

"He's in the gym every single day, oftentimes multiple times a day," Weber said. "We always joke it's a quiet 40 or a quiet 50 (points), because he just goes about his job, and I appreciate that so much about him because in today's world, people all over the place are just looking for attention and for him, he just wants to go about and play with his teammates and help impact winning."

Ott was the only other player in double figures for North with 16 points. Dalton Clark led North with eight rebounds. Lucas Downs paced Appleton West with 14 points.

North, seeded seventh, will host 10th-seeded Bay Port in a WIAA Division 1 regional semifinal at 7 p.m. Friday. The Pirates are 14-10 and have won 11 of their last 13 games.

"Our defensive focus is going to have to be there for two halves if we're going to get a win against them," Weber said. "They're a team that's started to figure themselves out. They have good height, strong guard play, they're a deep team. This sectional is stacked, so it's going to be good basketball all the way along. We're playing our best right now and we've got to keep to the blueprint and keep chipping away at getting a little bit better."

# North, West gear up for state bowling tournament

OSHKOSH HERALD

The Oshkosh West and Oshkosh North bowling teams will be well represented at the state high school bowling championships that begins Friday at Rolling Thunder in Neenah and Revs Bowl in Oshkosh.

West qualified both its boys and girls teams for competition while also sending five individuals onto the state competition. North's boys team qualified for state along with three individuals.

West and North will each have three boys in the individual competition, which will take place on Friday at Rolling Thunder in Neenah.

Logan Egnoski, Nathan McWilliams and Jonathan Redman advanced for Oshkosh West, while Jacob Seager, Keegan Kinzfogl and Griffin Resop will compete for Oshkosh North.

For the West girls, Mackenzie Anderson and Cheyanne Hanford will participate in the individual competition, which will be held at Rev's Bowl in Oshkosh on Friday.

The individual competition will have each participant bowl a series of three games with the top 25 percent of scores advancing to Saturday's semifinals. The bowlers will then roll another series of games with the top five scores advancing to Sunday's stepladder finals at Rolling Thunder in Neenah.

Both Egnoski and Anderson competed as individuals at last year's state tournament in Ashwaubenon, but neither advanced to the semifinals. Anderson fell

seven pins short of advancing, while Egnoski was 15 pins away from qualifying for the semifinals.

Egnoski led all of District 8A boys bowlers with 159 strikes this season and had just 18 open frames out of 238 over the course of the district competition. Seager and Kinzfogl rounded out the top five bowlers in the district.

Anderson topped the District 8A girls with 117 strikes in 228 frames with just 45 open frames on the season. Hanford finished sixth in the district.

Both the Oshkosh West boys and girls teams competed at last year's state tournament but did not advance out of qualifying.

All teams will bowl 15 games with the Baker style – five bowlers rotate bowling one frame each so each bowler bowls two frames per game – with the top five teams advancing to Saturday night's finals.

The teams will then bowl in stepladder finals until two teams remain and those squads will square off Sunday for the state

The Oshkosh North boys finished second in District 8A this season with a 13-1 record, behind only unbeaten Kaukauna. Oshkosh West finished 12-2 to advance to

In the girls standings, Oshkosh West finished 13-1 overall to grab the top spot, while Neenah was the runner-up squad with a 12-2 record.

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# State wrestling

FROM PAGE 16

matches," Cuadra said. "Just getting him here was amazing but I wish we could have gotten him on that podium."

The three state qualifiers – along with senior Jaiden Fronczak - have been a strong nucleus for the Wildcats' program for the past four years and Cuadra got emotional when asked about the departure of this senior group.

"They are my first class, so it was spe-

cial," said Cuadra, who died his hair blond because the team produced three state qualifiers. "It's a very talented group, a very hard-working group and just first class all around. Knowing they are going is not something I prepared for."

Schroeder also said it was a special weekend for the group, getting to wrestle one final tournament together.

"It's been a great weekend. It's more than wrestling with these guys. It's life," Schroeder said. "We have been there through everything together. We've all been a team and it's been amazing."



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March 5, 2025

# Seckar siblings chasing dreams on Titans' basketball teams

By Grace Lim UW-OSHKOSH TODAY

Basketball is more than a sport for University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh student-athletes and siblings Paige and Reed Seckar – it's woven into the fabric of their family.

Growing up in Oshkosh, with a hoop in the driveway and countless hours spent at the YMCA, the siblings honed their skills under the watchful eye of their father, Frank Seckar, a former Division I star guard at Vanderbilt University. Now, Paige and Reed carry on the family tradition, both playing for UW-Oshkosh's basketball teams and supporting each other every step of the way.

The Seckar siblings are the first brother-sister duo to play for UW-Oshkosh's basketball teams at the same time in more than four decades, making their shared journey a special chapter in Titan basketball history. The last UWO brother/sister basketball-playing duo was Rod and Jodi Eissens from 1978-81.

"Reed and Paige represent the incredible talent we have right here in our own backyard, coming from Oshkosh West and Oshkosh North," said Darryl Sims, assistant chancellor of athletics at UW-Oshkosh. "Their journey is a testament to the strength of our local athletic programs and our commitment to recruiting and developing homegrown talent. We take great pride in providing an opportunity for local student-athletes to excel at the collegiate level while representing their hometown on a national stage."

Parents Frank and Jodi Seckar introduced their children to basketball at a young age. Jodi (Buege) Seckar, 1997 and 2003 UWO graduate, said, "Reed loved shooting at a Little Tykes hoop, and they both would put jerseys on and play basketball in the basement."

Reed remembers those early days.

"I was probably two or three, dribbling around and shooting on that little hoop," he said. "I couldn't wait for Paige to get big enough to play with me."

Paige quickly followed in her big brother's footsteps.

"I wanted to be just like him," she said, remembering how she tagged along to Reed's practices and games, and sometimes even jumping in during practice if his team needed an extra player.

When the family moved into their current house, complete with a hoop in the driveway, basketball became a central part of their after-school routine. Reed and Paige played countless one-on-one games, sharpening their skills and testing each other. Sometimes the parents will join in the fun and games.

Jodi Seckar played point guard for Oshkosh West High School and was assistant coach for Paige's travel team, and Frank Seckar coached Reed's travel team from fourth through eighth grade.

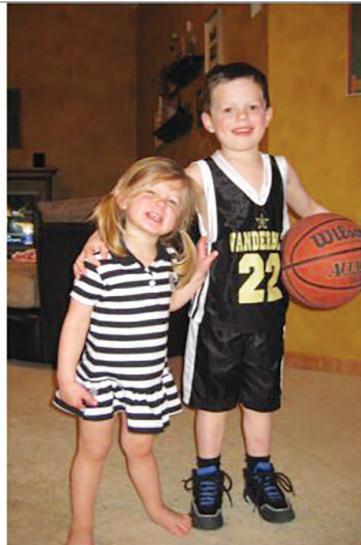
"Our family is known as the Basketball Family of Oshkosh," Paige said.

Now both Titans, Reed is a junior studying physical education while Paige, a freshman majoring in secondary education with a natural science emphasis, is already making a name for herself on the women's team, which ranked as high as fifth in the nation this season.

Reed's scrappy defense and consistent shooting have earned him significant minutes, and he became a starter Jan. 15 in a game against UW-Whitewater. He marked that milestone with a career-high 13 points. Paige had her own breakout moment just three days later, scoring a career-high 19 points against UW-La Crosse.

"Seeing Paige have such an impact as a freshman is really cool," Reed said. "I've watched her grow up and work so hard, so





Photos from UW Oshkosh

Now both Titans, the Seckar siblings re-create a photo of them from 2008, when Reed was 4 and Paige was just 2.

### Titans tabbed for another NCAA tournament run

The UW Oshkosh women's basketball team will be at home for the opening weekend of the NCAA Division III tournament after the field was announced on Monday afternoon.

The Titans (23-4), who are ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation, will host Calvin College (18-10) in a first-round game at the Kolf Sports Center. The time of the game has yet to be announced. The winner of that game will stay in Oshkosh and face the winner of Bethel University and DePauw on Saturday night.

UW Oshkosh was one of five WIAC schools selected to be in the field of 64 teams. UW-Whitewater earned the automatic bid after winning the conference tournament title and will be in the same region as UW-La Crosse and UW-Stout. UW-Stevens Point was also selected for the tournament.

The Titans have qualified for the past six NCAA Tournaments and 10 of the last 11, although there was no NCAA Tournament held following the 2020-21 season because of the COVID pandemic.

it's exciting to see it paying off."

For Paige, having Reed on campus was a big reason she chose UW-Oshkosh.

"I'm a homebody and family-oriented, so being close to home and playing with my brother just felt right."

Sundays are sacred for the Seckars – not for rest, but for more basketball. Frank Seckar joins his children at Kolf Sports Center to run drills, offer tips, and, of course, play a little one-on-one. These sessions have been a family tradition since Reed's freshman year at UWO, with the trio focusing on improving their games while keeping things

"We've been doing this for as long as I can remember," Reed said. "It's a good time to work on our skills, but it's also just a great way to be together."

These sessions typically end with freethrow contests and a healthy dose of friendly competition. "Sometimes it's me and Reed against my dad," Paige said. "He still beats us sometimes."

But not always. Reed remembers the first time he finally beat his dad one-on-one.

"It was during COVID, we were playing outside in the driveway," Reed said. "I finally got him, and after that, I don't think we've kept score since."

Frank Seckar laughed as he confirmed the story: "Yeah, that's true. He got me that day. I guess it was bound to happen eventually."

The Seckar family lives and breathes basketball.

Their dad's involvement in these Sunday workouts isn't just about basketball – it's about passing down life lessons.

"Basketball has taught us discipline and teamwork," Paige said. "My dad always reminds us that the same lessons apply to life off the court."

Basketball doesn't stop when the final buzzer sounds. Every week or so, the Seckars gather to review game films as a family. They dissect each play, offering praise and constructive criticism in equal measure. Frank Seckar, with his years of top-flight college basketball experience, often leads the breakdowns, but Reed and Paige aren't shy about giving each other advice.

"It's an important way we push each other," Paige said. "Sometimes you don't see certain things in the game, but when we watch film together, we can point them out and improve."

Mom, Jodi Seckar, an eighth-grade science teacher at Tipler Middle School, takes a more encouraging approach.

"She's the one who says, 'Great job, honey!' while my dad and grandpa focus on the technical stuff," Paige said.

Reed laughed, adding, "Our mom is the calm in the chaos. She keeps us grounded when things get intense."

Though their competitive spirit is unde-

niable, Reed and Paige are each other's biggest fans. When their schedules allow, they attend each other's games, cheering loudly from the stands. Reed can often be seen in the stands at Paige's games, while Paige returns the favor during Reed's contests.

"I want to put on a good show when he's watching," Paige said. "Having him there pushes me to do my best."

Their connection is evident on and off the court. During family shootarounds, Reed challenges Paige to use her left hand more often, while Paige's post moves keep Reed on his toes.

"She can score on me now," Reed said, smiling. "That's good."

Paige is quick to acknowledge that Reed is the better player overall.

"He's quicker, more consistent, and can shoot from anywhere," she said. "But that just motivates me to keep improving. Every time we play, I want to get a little better."

Even Reed admits that Paige can block his shots at times. "She's got great timing in the post," he said.

Jodi Seckar is thrilled that her children still love the game and easily recount her favorite memory of their playing.

"For Paige, it was in sixth grade when she hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to win the game against Homestead at the state tournament," she said. "For Reed, it was the day he first got into the starting lineup at UWO. Hearing his name announced and seeing him on the video board made me so proud. He worked so hard, and it was amazing to see it pay off."

The Seckar siblings' love for basketball isn't just a family tradition; it's a legacy they continue to build together at UW-Oshkosh.

As the season unfolds, Paige and Reed remain focused on their goals—improving their game, supporting their teammates, and continuing to make their family proud. And every Sunday, you'll find them back on campus at Kolf, pushing each other to get better, one shot at a time.

"The day they each committed to UWO was such a proud moment," Frank said. "Seeing them both choose to stay close to home and continue the sport we love – it doesn't get better than that.

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# Exhibition showcases Ho-Chunk basket makers

The Paine Art Center and Gardens introduces audiences to the tradition of Native basketmaking in Wisconsin with a groundbreaking exhibition showcasing more than 100 works by Ho-Chunk mak-

Opening March 15, Weaving a Legacy: Ho-Chunk Black Ash Basketry features a wide variety of basket styles created by Ho-Chunk makers from the early 1900s to the present.

The exhibition is curated by Tom Jones, a Ho-Chunk artist and University of Wisconsin-Madison professor of photography. In an act of cultural preservation, Jones has collected and studied thousands of Ho-Chunk baskets for more than a decade. The exhibition will be on view at the Paine through June 29.

By the 1820s, Ho-Chunk black ash basket-making had fully emerged in Wisconsin. Design inspiration was borrowed from the indigenous traditions of hand-woven twill and wool mats, rugs and panel bags,



A miniature picnic, swing handle market, swing handle kettle and sewing baskets made from black ash splints and dyed are from the collection of Kenneth G. Karol and Gregory A. French.

as well as the later practice of ribbon-work applique, which incorporated European trade goods into Ho-Chunk designs.

The growth of the tourist industry, especially along Highway 12 - one of the earliest east-west routes through the country - helped fuel the demand and proliferation of the baskets. Designs evolved to reflect the specialization of the makers and include more than 50 different functions and shapes including sewing, picnic, hamper, shopper, market, purse, egg, barrel, feather and funerary urn baskets.

Modern and contemporary works establish Ho-Chunk basketry as an enduring and evolving art rooted in uniqueness and individual expression. This exhibition highlights artists whose works are collected by major American museums like the National Museum of the American Indian

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and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Recently, the continuation of the Ho-Chunk basketry tradition has come under threat by the invasive emerald ash borer insect, which is rapidly destroying black ash trees across the Upper Midwest. As the only exhibition to be devoted to this topic, Weaving a Legacy stands as the voice connecting the past, present and future.

The exhibition is organized by the Museum of Wisconsin Art in West Bend.



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Photo from H.H. Bennett Studio

Mary (Stacy) Yellow Thunder weaves a basket in this photo from about 1920.





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### **Obituaries**

### **Linda (Wambold) Smith**

There is sadness among us here as on Earth, but on February 11, 2025, Heaven



gained another angel as Linda (Wambold) Smith passed away peacefully at the Eden Meadows Nursing Home due to complications from Multiple Sclerosis that she lived with for 50+ years.

Born in Oshkosh on March 31, 1952, to Floyd (Speed) and Barb Wambold, Linda attended Merrill School and graduated from Oshkosh High in 1970. She briefly worked at Metropolitan Insurance Company before her MS set in. She married Bill Smith in 1972 at Peace Lutheran Church and had their son Brian in 1983, whom she was very proud of.

Everyone who had the pleasure of meet-

ing Linda always remarked to us what a sweet friendly lady she was, especially the nurses who cared for her recently. In her later years, her body's weakness often limited her abilities, but before that you could often find doing things like golfing with her parents, working in the garden, doing DYI projects, decorating the house, or going to craft shows. Linda had a deep love for animals, especially her pets: her childhood cat Snoopy, and the 4 dogs she and Bill had: Brandy, Casey, Toby, and now our friendly Cooper. She also enjoyed feed the birds and squirrels in our yard.

She also enjoyed many tv shows, watching and listening to the Packers and Brewers, but her biggest entertainment passion was the Beatles. She loved them from the moment her teacher made her watch them for homework on the Ed Sullivan Show. She definitely passed on that love to her son and they shared many "Beatle experiences" together as a family, including seeing Paul McCartney several times, attending Beatlefests in Chicago every August, and even going to England in 1998 on a week and a half Beatles pilgrimage.

Linda is now reunited with her parents, who she missed greatly these last few years, and her cousin Peggy Suchorski.

Along with Bill and Brian, and best friend Vickie Last, Linda is survived by her cousins: Sue Meyers, Diane Diehl, Dennis Diehl, Judie Smits, Patty Smits, Ken Diehl, Joe Diehl, Steve Adams, and Sue Fisher, and their spouses. Linda is also survived by her in-laws, Maureen Donovan (Thomas) Donna Gumz (Wayne), Jim Smith (Nancy), Romelle Witkins (Ken Rineer), and many nieces and nephews.

Our family wants to give our heartfelt thanks to all the staff who took care of her these last couple months at Mercy/St. E's, Eden Meadows Nursing Home, and Compasus Hospice Care. And thank you to everyone else who has supported us during this time of very difficult circumstances.

A memorial service will be held on March 22 at Lakeview Memorial Park Mausoleum at 11:00 with visitation starting at 9:30.

#### **Faith Mandeik**

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ welcomed home His dear child Faith



Mandeik on Thursday, February 27th after a brief battle with cancer. Faith, 83, was a baptized and confirmed child of God. She attended Milwaukee Lutheran High School and was

a longtime member of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Dale of 56 years. Ten children, fifteen grandchildren, and numerous family and friends will always remember her generous heart, willingness to help anyone in need, homemade goodies, and love of mysteries.

A Christian Service of Victory will be

celebrated on Friday, March 7th at 1:30 PM at Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, 913 Nebraska St., Oshkosh, with Pastor Colin Rieke officiant. A visitation will precede the service from 11:30-1:30. Any gifts or memorials are asked to be donated to the Grace Lutheran Building Fund or to Winnebago Lutheran Academy.

Faith is survived by her children Tim, Kay (Axel) Peikert, Tad (Kelly), Gay (Ron) Long, Joy, Meg Matschnig, Emy (Ken) Zettler, Ivy (John) Mitchell, Jed (Heather), and Ned.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want...Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23 KJV).



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### **Obituaries**

### **Diane Westphal-Blechl**

Diane Westphal-Blechl, 68, peacefully joined her Lord and Savior on Saturday,



February 22, 2025. Born on June 25, 1956, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to Beverly and Robert Westphal, Diane was a devoted woman of faith, a loving mother, and a cherished grand-

mother.

Growing up in Oshkosh, Diane graduated from Oshkosh North High School in 1974. She pursued higher education at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, earning a degree in Social Work with a minor in Criminal Justice in 1979. Her passion for learning and politics led her to actively participate in the Democratic Party, where

### Katherine A. O'Krueg

Katherine "Kathy" A. O'Krueg, age 70, of Oshkosh, WI passed away at her home

on Wednesday, February 26, 2025.



Kathy was born on January 23, 1955, in Milwaukee, WI, daughter of Lester and Josephine (Zennie) Hoth. She graduated from Kewaskum High School and started her

healthcare career as a CNA. She continued on to receive her LPN License and Associate Nursing Degree, and then finally her Bachelor's in Nursing. She was employed at Ascension/Mercy for 38 years.

Kathy met Don in 1983 at the hospital where they were both nurses. They were she worked on Jimmy Carter's campaign and proudly ran for Winnebago County Clerk in 1980.

In 1984, Diane married and briefly lived in El Paso, Texas, before moving to New Mexico in 1986. During her years in Albuquerque, she served as a Head Start teacher for special needs children, demonstrating her deep commitment to helping others.

In 1989, she returned to Wisconsin, where she continued her life of service. Diane worked as a cashier at Kwik Trip in Omro from 2001 to 2008. She also found fulfillment volunteering at the Menasha Goodwill, where she enjoyed keeping the clothing sections sorted and tidy.

Despite facing significant health challenges, Diane remained steadfast in her faith. She found solace in reading devotional books and writing scripture, often sharing her spiritual journey with loved

later married May 11, 1985 at St. Peters Catholic Church in Oshkosh.

Family was incredibly important to Kathy. She cherished spending time with her grandchildren. Kathy was blessed to meet her great-grandson, Henry, shortly after he was born. She enjoyed reading in her spare time and occasional trips to the casino with her husband.

Kathy is survived by her husband, Don; daughter, Melissa; grandchildren, Anthony (Megan), Evan, Benjamin, Josslyn; and great-grandson, Henry. She is preceded in death by her parents; Lester and Josephine; her in-laws, Roy and Donna.

Per Kathy's wishes a private family inurnment will take place at a later date.

# KONRAD-BEHLMAN

ones. Her unwavering belief was an inspiration to all who knew her.

Diane cherished every moment spent with her children and grandchildren. She found immense joy in celebrating holidays, birthdays, and family gatherings, always embracing each occasion with warmth, laughter, and love. Whether it was the excitement of a family gathering or the simple pleasure of shared moments, her heart was always full when surrounded by those she loved. As her family's biggest cheerleader, she offered constant encouragement, support, and unwavering pride in their lives. Her legacy of love and faith will forever live on through her children and grandchildren.

Diane was preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Beverly Westphal of Oshkosh. She is survived by her son, Shanehan Westphal, daughter-in-law Paula, and grandson Leland of Brandon, Mississippi; daughter, Natasha Dorsey, son-in-law David, and granddaughters Leah and Aubrey of Neenah; and daughter, Ashlea Kope, son-in-law Paul, and grandchildren Kjrstin, Josselyn, Ryker, and Oaklyn of Berlin; brother, Dan Westphal of Oshkosh; niece, Lindsey Westphal of Madison; nephew, Luke Westphal of Oshkosh.

A memorial service to honor Diane's life will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2025, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Konrad-Behlman Funeral Home, located at 402 Waugoo Ave, Oshkosh, WI 54901. For more information, please contact the funeral home at 920-231-1510.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Diane's memory to a charity of your choice, reflecting her lifelong dedication to helping others. Two organizations close to her heart are: Wisconsin Parkinson Association and Father Carr's Place 2B.

The family would like to thank all those who have offered love, prayers, and support during this difficult time. Diane's kindness, faith, and unwavering love will be deeply missed but forever cherished.

### ONRAD-BEHLMAN FUNERAL HOMES

### Kathleen R. Robl

Kathleen R. Robl, age 97, of Oshkosh, passed away peacefully on February 24,



2025. She was born on June 19, 1927 in Oshkosh a daughter of the late Frank J. and Mary R. (Green) Binder. She married Alvin Walter Robl on November 28, 1946 in St. Vincent Catholic Church. Alvin pre-

ceded her in death on March 25, 1990.

She had worked for the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh in the Speech and Hearing Clinic. Kathleen greatly enjoyed traveling especially to State Parks. Most importantly she will be fondly remembered for making bread every Saturday right up until health issues prevented her from doing so recently. She will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved her.

She is survived by and her memory will be cherished by four sons, Jerry (Roxy), Tom (Kathy) both of Oshkosh, Mike (Cheryl) of Fort Atkinson, and Dan (Daphne) Robl of Oshkosh; four grandchildren, Nicki

(Jim) Berger, Melissa Robl, Jana Robl and Kristi Robl; two great-grandchildren, Jackson and Talia Berger; other relatives and many dear friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband; brothers, Robert, Stan and John; sisters, Frances, Del and Marcella.

Funeral services for Kathleen will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 11 am in the Poklasny Funeral Home, 870 W. South Park Ave. There will be a time of visitation from 10 am until the time of service. Burial will follow in Riverside Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of floral expressions a number of memorials will be set up in her name.

### FISS & BILLS - POKLASNY FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATORY

### **Donald W. Snowhook**

Donald W. Snowhook, 86, of Omro, WI, passed away February 20, 2024. He leaves behind his wife, Jeanne (Batzner) 2 children, Janelle and Deven and 4 stepchildren, Katy (Tim), Patrick, James, Joseph (Misti) Reedy. Don will be sadly missed.

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March 5, 2025



of grass as a tool.

The chimp put the grass into a termite\_ termites to eat.

She also saw chimps \_ leaves from twigs to make a tool. And \_ chimpanzees use rocks to crack

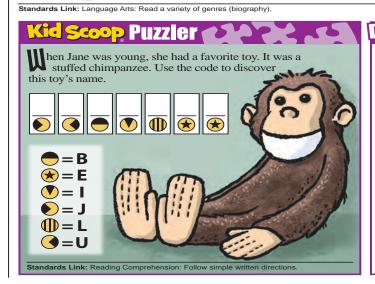
open nuts.

Scavenger Hunt

newspaper to find a

- Of a tree or plant found in your
- community

  That describes the
- weather today Of a place where you can find nature in
- your community Of an animal you can find in your community



Double Word Search

**CHILD CHIMPS DREAM EAT** FIRST **GREY** NEW NUMBER **ROCKS** SEE TOOL TRAVEL TREE **TRUE** 

WILD

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally.

ERTAEMQMIV LDOZTRAVEL ILCCWOYETA INIKLODRY GHXEVSWLED RCIJWEEIBE EKPMBEUWME YZLNPKRTUR WOFIRSTHNT

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize ident words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

### Kid Scoop Together hat Do You Know?

Do you know the answers to these questions? If not, find them on today's **Kid Scoop**® page!

1. Where did Jane dream of going when she was a child? 2. What is the name of Jane's favorite toy? 3. What did Jane see chimpanzees use? 4. What did chimpanzees use rocks for? 5. Name one of the books Jane love to read as a child.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Recall answers in text.



Dr. Jane Goodall has spent much of her later years protecting chimpanzees and preserving the habitats of animals throughout the world

She believes that everybody has the power to build a better world. The Jane Goodall Institute's Roots & Shoots program helps young people care for others and the planet. With a parent, visit **rootsandshoots.org.** Standards Link: Science: Understand different life forms thrive in differen

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# ATLAS



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Fashion Revival in Neenah - 6
Calendar of Events - 8,9

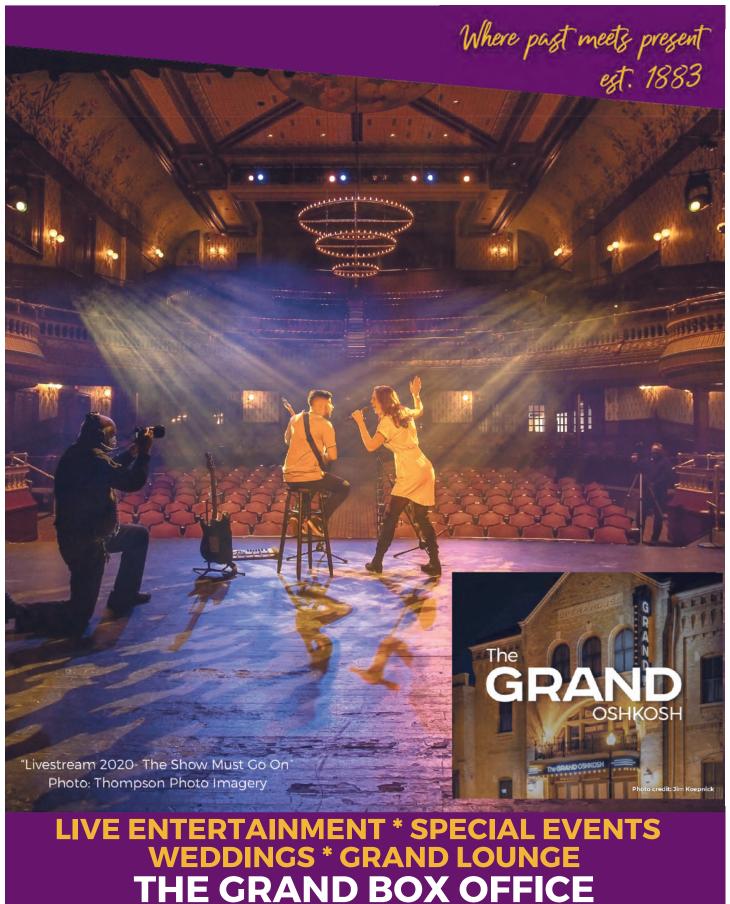












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# Have a grand time at the Grand Opera House

By Cassidy Johnson

The oldest opera house in the state, The Grand Oshkosh is an esteemed and historic downtown theater that has been dedicated to the Fox Valley for almost 150 years.

The Grand serves the community by fostering an appreciation for the arts through creative and artistic expression. This is achieved through performing arts initiatives, including public and educational performances, youth events, free events and community theater. Continuing on that promise, The Grand has a variety of events and entertainment planned for spring.

The Rhythm of the Dance, which has been rated one of the most popular Irish dance productions in the world, is celebrating its 26th anniversary of worldwide touring with a two-hour celebration of Irish culture that takes the stage at 7 p.m. March 7.

Next up, The Grand will host Ladies of Country, a high-profile tribute to country music queens Dolly Parton, Shania Twain, Reba McEntire and Martina McBride. The show opens at 7:30 p.m. March 21.

Parton is played by Karen Hester, 2021 winner of Jimmy Fallon's TV Show "Clash of the Cover Bands" and Reba by Corrie Sachs, five-time winner of the Las Vegas Singer of the Year award. Starring on ABC's "The Next Best Thing," Stacey Whittion Summers will be performing as both Twain and McBride.

If you're having a ruff day, sometimes all you need is some animal therapy. However, "Mutts Gone Nuts! Unleashed" does things a little differently. Instead of cuddles, these pups perform stunts as impressive as they are hilarious.

Regarded as a must-see by the Washington Post, the two April 5 shows are at 2 and 7 p.m.

Early in the summer, The Grand will host a theater production of "Alice in Wonderland" presented by Lexington Children's Theatre. Bring friends, family or just come yourself to support these young children in this enchanting production May 6 with one showing at 9:30 a.m. and the other at 12:30 p.m.

Last but not least, Midwest Dueling Pianos, considered one of the nation's top dueling piano production companies in America, comes to The Grand for a 7 p.m. May 10 performance. The interactive musical production will go through the musical ages via piano playing, singing, dancing, comedy and audience participation to create an unforgettable experience for any age.

The AfterGlow party following the performance will feature area singer and musician Franki Moscato, who was part of the 2019 season of "American Idol" and has sang the national anthem for Packers and Bucks games, NASCAR races and even for the president of the United States.

Tickets for all Grand events can be purchased at the grandoshkosh.org or at its downtown box office.







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Who we are in the March 2025 ATLAS:
Publisher: Karen Schneider | karen@oshkoshherald.com

Editor: Dan Roherty | editor@oshkoshherald.com

Design: Mae Kosciuk | maekosciuk@winneconnenews.com

Freelance Writer: Cassidy Johnson

Photography: Cassidy Johnson and Jim Koepnick

Advertising:

Andrew Beulen | andrew@oshkoshherald.com

Jolene Heuchert | jolene@oshkoshherald.com

Missy Vandermolen | missy@winneconnenews.com

Production: Steve Clark | steve@oshkoshherald.com

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## Club owner fashions special creations downtown

# Flights Wine & Cocktail Club goes for fun experiences

By Cassidy Johnson

Some of the best creations are made when somebody sees something missing in their world and, instead of complaining about it, decides to create it themselves.

Andrea Reichenberger, owner of Flights Wine & Cocktail Bar, created a special club that revolves around the recent trend of beverage flights, one of the first of its kind in Winnebago County.

Located at 607 S. Main St. in downtown Oshkosh where The Brooklyn Grill used to reside, this fun and unique wine and cocktail bar was designed to be the perfect place to hang out with friends, try out new wines and "unWINEd" after a long day.

"I just wanted (a place for) the businesswoman to have a space to talk and hang out with friends over a good glass of wine," Reichenberger said. "That's really how it all started."

She loves a dive bar as much as the next, but wanted to create a place that put conversation on the forefront instead of the back burner.

"They (dive bars) can just be so loud, it's hard to have conversations," she said. "I think in the world we're in today with all the technology and people very isolated on their phones, bringing back the art of having conversation is important."

Reichenberger's vision only grew from there. Something else that was missing from her life was a place to try really good wine.

"I'm always looking to try something new, and that's kind of where the concept of flights started," she said. "We wanted to be able to provide an opportunity to try different things and develop people's palates."

While this idea was born from Reichenberger's passion for wine, she has expanded the concept of drink flights to beers and cocktails, including their popular old fashioned flight that features orange, cherry, peach and plum drinks based on the traditional Wisconsin cocktail.

Reichenberger offers preset drink flights perfect for those who don't know where to start, as well as a build-your-own option perfect for those looking to experiment.

Her goal was to provide customers with the opportunity to try new drinks and wines without all the pressure of sometimes snobbish wine connoisseurs, the commitment to a whole bottle and the often steep pricetag attached.

Beyond beverage flights, the spot also offers other specialty cocktails such as Espresso Martinis and Lemon Drops, along with some twists on the classics such as the Oshkosh Manhattan and the Bloody Gin-a.

Flights also has a revolving door of specialty cocktails for each season. For winter, they're offering a tangy Key Lime Pie Whiskey Martini, a sprinkle-rimmed Sugar Cookie Cocktail and a Lovely Ol' Fashioned.

Made with cranberry and orange bitters, and burnt sugar whiskey, the Lovely has become a favorite among staff and guests alike, and was soon to be renamed Flight's Ol' Fashioned and moved to the main menu.

For the summer, they're looking to add sipping rums and a Kentucky Derby-inspired Moonshine flight.

There's also a variety of non-alcoholic options, including wines and beers, and cocktails such as an NA Mai Tai, Margarita and Limoncello.

If you get hungry, build your own charcuterie board in a way that makes ordering feel like a fun game. Instead of a traditional





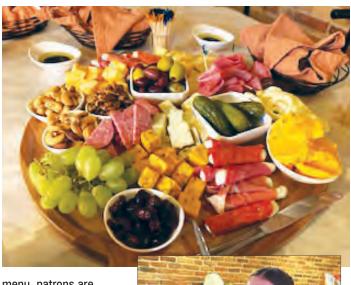
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menu, patrons are handed a sheet with 30 locally sourced options to choose from.

All charcuterie boards come with bread from Thunderbird Bakery and olive oil and balsamic vinegar from Olive Cellar, but you can also choose a variety of Renard's cheeses from Sturgeon Bay, candied nuts from Sweet P's Pantry in Oconomowoc and Oak's Candy

chocolate meltaways from here in Oshkosh.

Besides special food and drink options, Flights works to maintain a fun, chic and intimate environment with rustic-chic decor and an outdoor patio complete with string lights, a fire pit and curtains to bring a sense of intimacy outside.

This atmosphere is also maintained by the variety of events offered - trivia nights, live music almost every month and pop-up shops featuring local businesses such as Periwinkle Poppy Boutique and Uptown Links, a permanent jewelry bar.

Flights will host its third Uptown Links pop-up May 15, an event Reichenberger says is "always a big hit."

Sooner than that, they will be hosting a Sex in the City Trivia night on Thursday, April 17, and a live performance two days later by Safe Sax, performed by Green Bay saxophonist and vocalist Michael Prusinski – A Sax in the City weekend, if you will.

They will be continuing with trivia nights in May with a "Friends" theme May 20 and a "Bridgerton" theme May 22.

All the events mentioned are free and open to the public, but Reichenberger also offers some more exclusive parties.

One she is particularly excited about is a Kentucky Derby theme night and watch party in which people can come dressed for the derby, "bet" on their favorite horses and win prizes.

Reichenberger is working on more events and collaborations for the upcoming year, including something she calls "Boujee Bingo" in which players pay for a card for the chance to win a luxury prize such as a facial or nice piece of jewelry.



No matter your level of wine expertise, price point, gender or goal for the night, this joint is the perfect spot for a night out with the guys or galpals, a date night, birthdays, book clubs, post-dinner drinks and all of life's moments in-between.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

### WEEKDAYS



THURSDAYS | 5-9PM Cribbage & Catan Club + Lobby Bar Open



FRIDAYS | 5-9PM Lobby Bar Open

### CATLIDDAVC

SATURDAYS		
1 MAR	BAGS TOURNAMENT	1 PM
15 MAR	MUSICAL SING-A-LONG & DANCE PARTY	6 PM
22 MAR	THE OFFICE TRIVIA	7 PM
29 MAR	HARRY POTTER TRIVIA	7 PM
12 APR	OSHKOSH ART COLLECTIVE ART SHOW	7 PM
26	STAR WARS TRIVIA	7 PM

TO RSVP, VIEW EVENT CALENDAR, OR FOR MORE INFO, VISIT GIBSONSOCIALCLUB.COM

# The Revival revives area fashion options

By Cassidy Johnson

With at least 30 and counting, Winnebago County is home to many boutiques. With so much competition, it can be hard for these smaller shops to set themselves apart.

The Revival is a boutique on this exact mission.

Owned and founded by Brooke Bebout, The Revival has two locations. The first opened in 2012 at 111 W Fulton St. Waupaca and its second location opened in 2018 at 123 W Wisconsin Ave, Neenah.

The Revival fulfills its motto of "chic, unique, and affordable" through its clothes, community events and personable customer service.

"We're just really on this mission to set ourselves apart,"
Bebout said. "There's so many boutiques out there, and I want us to
have stuff that no one else has. I want things to be unique to us."



"By staying true to our Midwest work ethic and always letting our creative flag fly, we believe that we can make great beer that every thirsty patron can look forward to. Reward yourself to a Fifth Ward beer. You deserve it."

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FIFTHWARDBREWING

One of the major ways Bebout sets herself apart is through her clothes and accessories for most ages, including jewelry, sunglasses, handbags and hair accessories.

As for clothes, they have elevated basics such as the Cosmic Cardigan, the Tweed Season Blazer and the Braid Cropped Cardigan, as well as statement pieces such as the Paisley Cowl Tank, Satin Bomber Vest and Luminous Maxi Dress.

Part of what Bebout is calling her "send-it season," The Revival released a new collection Feb 13 as a collaboration among Bebout, her right-hand-girl Emily Simon and Mike Kosakowski, owner of the "Wait, what?" print shop in Oshkosh.

The collection combines Simon's photography with Kosakowski's "incredibly unique printing process" to create pieces as special and as individualistic as the people wearing them.

Besides having a unique design, every shirt is as one-of-a-kind as its owner because of Kosakowski's specialized printing process – a sentiment you can't find at a department store.

A fashionista herself, Bebout views fashion as a form of art. Although the collaboration is unnamed, Bebout said the inspiration was the idea of having "wearable art."

Another way The Revival sets itself apart is through personable customer service. Although the boutique doesn't have the same number of customers as someplace like Zara or H&M, they have a loyal customer base.

"When I first opened over in Waupaca, there were girls that were in high school shopping there," Bebout said.

"Then, they'd come back on their college break, come back a couple years later because they're getting married, and then they'd come a couple of years later bringing a baby in with them." Bebout said this was something she never expected from owning a boutique.

"To watch women go through life since I opened has been really cool," she said. "That's just like this priceless, priceless moment to watch."

Another way Bebout offers outstanding service is through thoughtful gestures.

Reminiscing on how department stores used to wrap gifts for customers around Christmastime when she was a kid, Bebout said she had a desire to bring back some of that old charm by wrapping and donning each gift with a bow.

"That's why we wrap gifts here," Bebout said. "I just feel like it's a nice touch and it's not something that a lot of places offer anymore."

While her clothing, accessories and customer service make the boutique successful, it's what Bebout calls her "recklessness" and "impulsivity" that allowed her to quit her job and start this business in the first place.

"That's the thing about jumping in with both feet, you either do it or you don't," she said. "If you don't dip in far enough that you have to fight to survive, then how much effort are you really going to put into it? Just jump in and figure it out."

A recovering alcoholic and smoker, Bebout said that she's always been a little impulsive. After getting sober, she decided to use this to her advantage and finally start her own shop.

"It's like a double-edged sword; the thing that tried to kill me is also the thing that made me who I am today," she said. "It's like my superpower now."

Bebout had been working at a finance company for six years but said she has wanted to do what she is now doing since she was a kid.

"Before I even went to kindergarten, I had this little shop that I set up in the breezeway of our old house and I was trying to sell, just like random things," she said. "(I remember saying) like, come buy my broken crayons and pictures that I colored!"

few decades

later and a little more space, although not by much. Only 400 square feet, she had room for a small inventory of clothes and jewelry. Within two days, she had sold out everything.

The next

shop she

had was a

"The Revival has spiritual significance for me. I was spiritually transformed when I got sober, and I believe the way we view fashion needed a transformation too," Bebout said.

"Fashion is art and we are the canvas. It should be a form of expression, not an act of conformity."

It's this sentiment that Bebout hopes to convey through her clothes and collections to come.





### **Art Activity Days** April 5 • May 3 • June 7

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# CALENDAR of EVENTS



#### **UNIQUE EVENTS**

Now through April 6

New Art on the Block:

**Selections from the Permanent Collection Exhibit** 

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

165 N Park Ave, Neenah

Now through April 18

**Teen Voices in Glass:** 

2025 Area High School Glass Exhibition

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

165 N Park Ave, Neenah

Now through June 7

The Beauty of Marquetry and Parquetry Collection of highlights in the Sawyer Parlor

Oshkosh Public Museum, 1331 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh

Now through July 27

**Primer by Leo Tecosky Exhibit** 

Blue Gallery, Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

165 N Park Ave, Neenah

Now through October 26

Victorian Art Glass Baskets Exhibit

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

165 N Park Ave, Neenah

Now through January 18, 2026

Nature as Muse

Tiffany treasures from Richard H. Driehaus Collection

Oshkosh Public Museum, 1331 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh

**MARCH** 

March 6

March 5 Lent Fish Features

Batley's Grill & Bar

1010 Cameron Way, Neenah

March 5 Fox Cities Roller Derby • 5pm

Oshkosh Arena

1212 S Main St, Oshkosh

March 6-May6 Cribbage And Catan

Thursdays 5pm-9pm The Gibson Social Club

537 N Main St, Oshkosh

**Jazzmeia Horn •** 6pm The Howard

405 Washington Ave, Oshkosh

March 7-April 25 Cocktail's at The Lobby Bar

Fridays beginning at 5pm The Gibson Social Club

537 N Main St, Oshkosh

March 7 Rhythm of the Dance • 7pm

The Grand Opera House 100 High Ave, Oshkosh

March 11-16 Some Like It Hot

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center

400 W College Ave, Appleton

+00 VV College Ave, Appleton

March 8 International Women's Day Celebration Luncheon

11am

Fin 'n Feather, 22 W Main St, Winneconne

March 8 Roadtrip • 8pm

Woodeye's Bar & Grill

700 W Main St, Winneconne

March 15-17 O'Batley St. Paddy's Day Party

Batley's Grill & Bar

1010 Cameron Way, Neenah

March 15 Musical Night at The Gibson Social Hall • 6pm

The Gibson Social Hall 537 N Main St, Oshkosh

March 15 St. Patrick's Tent Party

Dublin's Irish Pub

2070 W 9th Ave, Oshkosh

March 15 Oshkosh Symphony Orchestra: Lavendar Chai • 7pm

**UW0 Music Hall** 

1001 Elmwood Ave, Oshkosh

March 15-June 29 Weaving a Legacy: Ho-Chunk Black Ash Basketry

The Paine

1410 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh

March 16 Shamrock Lunch & Luck of the Irish Bingo • 11am

LaSure's Banquet Hall

3125 S Washburn St, Oshkosh

March 20 Art After Dark- The Event of the Season • 5:30-8:30pm

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

165 N Park Ave, Neenah

March 21 Menasha Comedy Night • 7:30pm

226 Main St, Menasha

Bare Bones Brewery, Menasha

# UPCOMING EVENTS





THURSDAYS | 5-9PM

Cribbage & Catan Club + Lobby Bar Open



FRIDAYS | 5-9PM

Lobby Bar Open



SATURDAYS | 7PM

Trivia Night: 3/22, 3/29, 4/26 (Doors open at 6pm)

537 N MAIN ST, OSHKOSH | SEE THE FULL EVENTS CALENDAR AT GIBSONSOCIALCLUB.COM

March 22 The Office themed Trivia Night • Doors open at 6pm The Gibson Social Hall 537 N Main St, Oshkosh Oshkosh Area Community Band Spring Concert • 7pm March 22 Alberta Kimball Auditorium 375 N Eagle St, Oshkosh Neenah Community Band Spring Concert • 3pm March 23 Neenah High School PAC 500 Rocket Way, Neenah Spring Break Camp • 12:30-4:30pm March 28 Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass 165 N Park Ave, Neenah March 29 Harry Potter themed Trivia Night • Doors open at 6pm The Gibson Social Club 537 N Main St, Oshkosh

#### **APRIL**

April 3–13 **Oshkosh Craft Beer Week** Various citywide locations

1393 Washington Ave, Oshkosh

April 19 Easter Market & Spring Bazaar • 9am

Oshkosh Convention Center 1 N Main St, Oshkosh

April 20 Easter Sunday Brunch Buffet
Bridgewood Resort Hotel
1000 Cameron Way, Neenah

April 24-26 2025 NFL Draft

Lambeau Field

1265 Lombardi Ave, Green Bay

April 24 Star Wars themed Trivia Night • Doors open at 6pm The Gibson Social Hall

537 N Main St, Oshkosh

April 24 NFL Draft Watch Party
Batley's Grill & Bar
1010 Cameron Way, Neenah

April 25 – Oct 5 **Through a Window Darkly by Jen Blazina Exhibit**Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass
165 N Park Ave, Neenah

May 2

2025 OASD Education Foundation Gala • 6pm
The Waters, 1393 Washington Ave, Oshkosh

May 3

NAMI Oshkosh 5K for Mental Health & Suicide Awareness
9am
Oshkosh North High School
1100 W Smith Ave, Oshkosh

May 5

Cinco de Mayo Event
Batley's Grill & Bar
1010 Cameron Way, Neenah

May 10

Midwest Dueling Pianos • 7pm

May 11 **Mother's Day Specials** Batley's Grill & Bar 1010 Cameron Way, Neenah May 11 Mother's Day - Free Admission The Paine 1410 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh May 17 Festival of Spring Plant Sale, Arts & Crafts Sale • 8am The Paine 1410 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh May 21 Glenn Miller Orchestra • 7pm The Grand Opera House 100 High Ave, Oshkosh **Green Bay Charity Softball Game** May 23 Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium

May 24 Oshkosh Comic & Toy Show • 10am-5pm

2400 N Casaloma Dr, Oshkosh

Oshkosh Arena

1212 S Main St, Oshkosh



# **DAILY**SPECIALS



#### MONDAY

Kids Eats Free

### **TUESDAY**

\$9 Batley Butter Burgers

#### **WEDNESDAY**

\$2 off Flatbread Pizzas

### **THURSDAY**

\$2 off Quesadillas

#### **FRIDAY**

-\$10 2pc Beer Battered Haddock

-Fish Fry

### SATURDAY

Prime Rib

#### SUNDAY

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The Grand Opera House

100 High Ave, Oshkosh

# The Gibson Social Club

By Cassidy Johnson

Located in the heart of downtown Oshkosh, the Gibson Social Club is located inside a historic building that has been renovated with a modern and rustic design to make it the perfect event venue.

While the Gibson is mostly an event venue, it is also committed to serving the community by hosting free public events this spring.

First up, the Gibson will be hosting a Musical Night from 6 to 10:30 p.m. Saturday, March 15. Packed with music, fun and drinks, visitors can dance and sing along to popular Broadway hits including songs from "Wicked," "Rent," "Annie" and more at this age 21-plus event.

Whether or not you'd like to hit the dance floor with friends, use this as an opportunity to meet other musical nerds or get the chance to belt out a "Defying Gravity" solo at the top of your lungs. The night will have something for every type of musical fan.

Next up, the Gibson will be hosting trivia nights throughout March and April, starting with "The Office" Trivia Night on Saturday, March 22.

Allowing time for patrons to get a seat, a drink and socialize, doors for all trivia nights will open at 6 p.m. before trivia goes from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Reminisce on your favorite Jim Halpert pranks and Michael Scott fails, and prove your knowledge of the infamous Dunder Mifflin crew at this fun event.

Calling all muggles! The following Saturday, the Gibson will host a Harry Potter Trivia night, perfect for testing your knowledge on this iconic book series and for meeting fellow Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs, Ravenclaws and Slytherins.

Coming to a galaxy not so far away, the Gibson is hosting a Star Wars Trivia night Saturday, April 26. Travel through the galaxy of intense battles and iconic plot twists, and show off knowledge of this beloved franchise.

The Gibson is also hosting its fourth annual Oshkosh Art Collective show Saturday, April 12, from 6 to 10 p.m. Presenting more than 35 local artists, the show provides artists an opportunity to sell and show their art, and provide live art demonstrations.

Moreover, it allows people the opportunity to support local artists while getting handmade and unique pieces.

There are new vendors each year, but years past have had photography, painting, jewelry, pottery, coin purses, pot holders and clothing.

Whether looking for a night of singing and dancing, a night of victory or a way to support local artists and get unique pieces, the Gibson has an event for every possible mood.





## Psridging past and present with indigenious cultural heritage

# Oshkosh Public Museum

By Cassidy Johnson

Home to 11 federally recognized tribes, Wisconsin has been enriched by indigenous culture and people for eons.

In an effort to keep this rich culture alive, the Oshkosh Public Museum will host a series of workshops, book clubs and other events to celebrate and showcase indigenous traditions this spring.

First up, the museum will be hosting a book club on "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants," led by Sandra Toland, community engagement librarian for the Oshkosh Public Library.

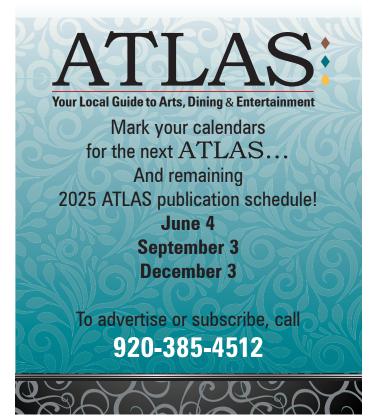
This book club will have two sets of sessions. The first is at 6:15 p.m. March 19 and April 16 at the library, and the second at 2 p.m. April 2 and 17 at the Oshkosh Seniors Center.

The library has physical and electronic copies of the book available if needed.

Next up, the museum will present an Indian Story Stick workshop with Debra Morningstar, a storyteller, educator and member of the Oneida Nation. The workshop will be about the storyteller, the story stick being a traditional tool used in many indigenous cultures to aid in the storytelling process.

It will also allow participants to create their own story stick and help carry on the age-old tradition.

This event will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. April 2 at the Lakeshore Park Four Seasons Building and will cost \$20 per person to cover the cost of materials.



Next in the series will be "Tightrope: Cultural Appropriation versus Appreciation" with Karen Ann Hoffman, a raised beadwork artist, native arts advocate and member of the Oneida Nation. The free discussion and educational opportunity will take place at 7 p.m. April 10 at The Lakeshore Park Four Seasons Building.

The museum will host a Hand Building Pottery workshop with Jennifer Ann Stevens, an Oneida/Lakota native citizen and creator of Haudensaunee-style pottery, set for April 19 at a location and time to be determined.

Another craft workshop with Morningstar from 1 to 3:30 p.m. April 24 at the Oshkosh Seniors Center will show participants how to create a pendant or pin with long-leaf pine needles, a prominent symbol in indigenous cultures. The workshop costs \$25 per person.

A Porcupine Quill and Glass Bead Earring Workshop with Melanie Tallmadge Sainz is set for 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 26 at the Oshkosh Seniors Center. For \$25/person, participants will learn the indigenous history behind these crafts before making them.

More information can be found at oshkoshmuseum.org.



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# Marcus brings The Met to Wisconsin

By Cassidy Johnson

Starting March 15, Marcus Theatres across Wisconsin will be bringing The Metropolitan Opera live from New York City to Oshkosh in high definition for a fraction of the cost of a live ticket.

Hosted by specialty cinema distributor Fathom Entertainment, the series is called "The Met: Live in HD" and will include noon showings of "Fidelio," "Le Nozze Di Figaro," "Salome" and "Il Barbiere Di Siviglia" across all Wisconsin locations.

As part of its Fathom features, each show will include interviews with the designated cast and crew and go behind the scenes with Met stars.

You can get all of this for a little more than a typical movie ticket, and more than 90% off a normal Metropolitan Opera ticket. And don't worry, you don't have to learn Italian or German beforehand: English subtitles are included.

Kicking off the series will be "Fidelio," a drama to the tune of Beethoven with showings March 15 and 19.

This is a story starring soprano Lise Davidsen, a devoted wife who risks her life to rescue her husband, played by tenor David Butt Philip, from political imprisonment.

Composed and written by Mozart, the comedy "Le Nozze Di Figaro" will be featured next in the series on April 26 and 30.

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Conductor Joana Mallwitz makes her Met debut alongside bass-baritone Michael Sumuel as servant Figaro and soprano Olga Kulchynska as his fiancee, Susanna.

The "Marriage of Figaro" follows the couple in a series of equally hilarious and dramatic events as they attempt to get married despite his master's efforts to seduce his wife-to-be.

Next in the series is the one-act drama "Salome," based on the biblical story of the daughter of King Herod II who falls in love with one of her father's captives Jochanaan, also known as John the Baptist in the Bible.

Composed by Strauss, this is an intense German opera with Soprano Elza van den Heever as the anti-hero Salome, and baritone Peter Mattei plays Jochanaan in this dramatic retelling of the familiar Bible story that will be shown May 17 and 21.

Lastly, Marcus and Fathom will be presenting "Il Barbier di Siviglia," an esteemed comic opera written by Rossini and based on the 1816 play "Le Barbier de Seville" by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais.

With showings May 31 and June 4, the story revolves around a barber named Figaro as he tries to help young nobleman Count Almaviva win the love of Rosina, a beautiful and wealthy girl captured by an evil Dr. Bartolo in an attempt to marry her for her inheritance.



Visiting The Met is a bucket list item for many, but few can afford the \$800 ticket and plane ride to New York.

For a little more than a normal movie ticket, you can cross this off that bucket list and immerse into this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

# Woodeye's Bar & Grill: Much More than a Diner

By Cassidy Johnson

Woodeye's Bar and Grill on 700 W. Main St. has been serving the Winneconne community and surrounding area as a family-owned restaurant for more than a decade.

Serving classic American cuisine such as burgers, sandwiches and pizza, some of its specialties include the Bomber, a juicy tenderloin sandwich topped with sauteed mushrooms and onions, the Beep Beep Peterman, a bacon cheeseburger topped

withpeanut butter, and the Wacky Mac burger.

"The Wacky Mac is probably my favorite," said customer Jacob Kremer. "I'm pleasantly surprised by how the mac and cheese complemented the burger."

The S.O.B. burger is another classic, topped with pepper jack cheese, bacon and jalapenos. "I like how many jalapenos they add,



and how fresh the buns taste," said another customer, Dylan Ruebl.

They also have daily food and beverage specials every day except Saturday. Check their website to learn more.

But Woodeye's is more than a restaurant. Patrons come for the food but stay for the vibes, events and activities.

Woodeye's will be hosting live music March 8 starting at 8 p.m. with cover band Roadtrip. Featuring award-winning vocalist Amy Jo Doty and co-singer Shawn Connelly, the band covers classic rock, country and pop songs from throughout the music millennia, including selections from KISS, Keith Urban and Maroon 5.

Woodeye's will host its annual Woodeye's Walleye Tournament on Sunday, May 11. Rules can be found at woodeyesbarandgrill.com.

The bar's annual Serves for Suicide fundraiser is dedicated to raising money for veterans struggling with suicide. All proceeds go to the HOOAH (Helping Out Our American Heroes) of Wisconsin.

Woodeye's also has indoor & outdoor activities to help pass the time.

Home to the largest 3-D archery range in the state, this indoor space is more than 17,000 square feet and 30 yards, along with an outdoor range that's more than 40 yards. Woodeye's encourages all to try it out and consider joining the league, regardless of age or skill level.

Also part of the outdoor amenities are sand volleyball, horseshoe pits, bags and a food plot where patrons can see deer and other wildlife.

There are leagues for all of the above sports: horseshoes on Mondays, volleyball - Tuesdays, and bags & horseshoes - Wednesdays.

Critter's Wolf River Sports is the pro shop that is part of the Woodeye's complex offering fishing and hunting gear.

If you're looking to do something a little more relaxing, you can also hang out on their outdoor patio.

Whether looking for a fish hook, archery range, some live music, a night out with friends or family, or just looking for a quick bite to eat, Woodeye's has all of that covered.





# Sweet Jules Bakes has sweets for all

By Cassidy Johnson

Baking is a labor of love, and Jules Kupsky is a baker who knows and embodies this sentiment well in her goods and in the bakery itself.

Two years ago on March 2, Kupsky opened the first Sweet Jules Bakes at 9 Church Ave. in Oshkosh, serving baked goods for those with and without allergies.

This is one of the first bakeries in Winnebago County where absolutely everything is gluten-free-friendly and where anyone with one of the "Big 9" food allergies can have something to enjoy. "I would like everyone to be able to enjoy fresh, delicious baked goods no matter their allergies," Kupsky said.

Sweet Jules also does custom orders in which they try to cater to customers' allergens as much as possible, as well as offering goods for those without any allergies or dietary restrictions.

"The girls who work at the shop say their favorite thing is when celiac customers' eyes light up when they find out they can have anything in the store," Kupsky said.



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Welcome spring and come stroll and shop along 70 vendors featuring handmade crafts, metal and wood works, unique gifts, home goods, services and one-of-a-kind items from talented local crafters and small business owners. The kitchen will also be open with tasty food so feel free to come hungry.

She originally started baking gluten-free goods for her sister, and that's where she got the inspiration for an allergen-dedicated bakery. "I use the same recipes, just a different flour. Same with our vegan and other allergen sensitive items — same recipes just with substitutes. And no one could tell the difference."

Sweet Jules sells everything from cheesecake flights to cookie sandwiches to chocolate chia brownies, and she's constantly changing and adding to the menu. She also sells bakery classics like custom cakes and cupcakes, adding a twist on some with flavors like chai, black velvet and lavender lemon with raspberry.

The bakery also has a variety of savory treats such as soups, savory scones, hot duck egg breakfast sandwiches and soon, waffles.

A true labor of love, everything she bakes is her own recipe and made from scratch down to the caramel and toffee she uses on her signature Chocolate Decadence cake.

As Kupsky puts it, "There is not one box mix or bucket of frosting in the building."

On top of that, almost every ingredient is locally sourced, including the eggs, butter and fresh whipped cream. Even the carrots for the carrot cake are fresh from Olden Organics in Ripon, and the cranberry orange scones have "fresh, hand-squeezed orange juice" in them.

Another way Kupsky sets herself apart is by baking her goods in small batches, "a dozen scones at a time," as she says.

"The amount of time, love, and attention to detail we put into everything...I don't think can be matched," Kupsky said. "We truly love what we do and I think you can taste the difference."

Kupsky also adds her personal touch throughout her store. As she puts it, "The entire bakery was a do-it-yourself."

"From the flooring to the paint, I did it all," she said. "My sister, Audifax, is an artist and helped me with overall vision, color choices, and even the wall stencil I used."





Some of her favorite DIYs are the hand-painted blue and gold walls, the tables made out of cutting boards and the shelves made out of old door jambs from her garage.

Perhaps the most meaningful, however, is a framed newspaper clipping depicting Kupsky's mother holding her as a 3-year-old next to a counter full of her mother's fresh baked bread.

The clipping was recovered and retouched by her sister from her parent's house fire and now sits in the center of the shop, exactly where her sister promised it would go before concepts of the bakery even existed.

With the amount of passion she has for baking and her bakery, some would guess this has been a lifelong dream for her. That wasn't exactly the case for Kupsky.

Kupsky has always loved baking but hasn't always been a baker. She started as a cook, graduating from culinary school and trying almost every position in the culinary industry.

She eventually got burnt out and tried her hand at a different job, but that got derailed by a foot fracture. During recovery, she started baking to pass the time and rediscovered her love for it.

"When I went back to my day job, (I realized) it wasn't everything. I was reborn," she said. "I went back to work but kept baking."

With her new passion alight, Kupsky would work her day job and then cook all night at a shared kitchen in Appleton, the first location of Sweet Jules.

"(I would) literally just have enough time to change my shirt

between and give myself a "you can do this" in the mirror sometimes," she said.

Eventually, it got to the point where she didn't even have time to sleep amid her schedule. It was then that she made the jump and chose the thing that she loved.

"I don't think there is any risk in following your dreams," Kupsky said. "I have never heard of anyone being on their deathbed saying, 'Man, I am so glad I did not follow my passion. I am so glad I did not try something I loved.'"

Kupsky's passion and hard work continues to shine through her bakery and decadent baked goods.











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