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Firefighter killed in car crash in Indiana

Oshkosh Herald

An Oshkosh firefighter died in a car crash last week in northern Indiana.

Firefighter and paramedic Tom Diener, who had worked for the Oshkosh Fire Department since 2021, was killed in the crash that injured two of his colleagues. In addition to working with Oshkosh Fire, Diener served as a lieutenant with the Town of Sheboygan Fire Department.

Town of Sheboygan Fire Department (TSFD) firefighter Carter Haen and former firefighter Robbie Betts were also injured in the crash and were transported to a trauma center in South Bend, Ind.

The TSFD posted a statement online following the crash.

"These three gentlemen have spent their adult lives serving the public and keeping multiple communities safe," the TSFD said. "Please join us in keeping them, their families, their friends, and their coworkers in your thoughts and prayers as they navigate this difficult time."

An online fundraiser has raised thou-

sands of dollars. It will provide support to the Diener Family, assist Haen and Betts with medical and recovery-related costs and to honor the lives and service of the three men.

The trio were traveling at the time of the crash for work related to public safety and emergency warning systems.

Diener and Haen were reported to be co-owners of Sheboygan Warning Systems, a company dedicated to installing and maintaining emergency warning sirens that help protect communities



Diener

SEE **Firefighter dies** ON PAGE 8

INSIDE



Girls hoops

Knights down Warriors in Trailways tussle

Page 16

Appeal made

Lindemann challenging felony convictions

Page 5



Photo by Michael Cooney

Joyful holiday party

The Reindeer on the Square celebration Saturday moved indoors at the Gibson Social Club due to cold weather. With reindeer greeting visitors outside, musician Randy Peterson led a children's band inside to help spread holiday cheer and warm hearts. In addition to Santa visiting with guests during the event, various organizations handed out treats including cookies and hot cocoa.

Community voices concerns over eliminating positions

Students, teachers oppose proposed cuts

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

Oshkosh Area School District officials last week heard from teachers, students and community members on a proposal to cut \$6 million from the district's budget.

Many expressed concerns about the effect the cuts would have on the teachers and students in and out of the classroom.

Earlier this month district officials pre-

sented a proposal to cut 70 positions across the district. The proposed cuts include eliminating the driver's education program and 23 elective teachers.

Administrators first learned about the impending budget shortfall in September but did not share the information with the OASD Board of Education until recently, and since then, there has been a flurry of stories, with varying details, and a multitude of online reactions as well.

Superintendent Bryan Davis said an executive team has known about this issue for

months and has been working with other administrators and teachers coming up with the solution presented to the board and community.

The \$6 million deficit the district is facing is due to reductions in state funding and that funding not keeping up with inflation. Local legislators have made note of the issue as special education funding approved by state lawmakers has not been fully funded.

State Rep. Lori Palmeri introduced legislation that would ensure school districts are

reimbursed the amount that was approved in the 2025-27 state budget. The state budget outlines that for the school year 2025-26 district should be reimbursed 42% of special education costs with state aid and 45% the following school year.

"However, when the Department of Public Instruction released the School Finance Bulletin 1058, it showed this rate would be closer to 35%," Palmeri said. "Many constituents have asked me how the estimates could be so off. With the Oshkosh Area

SEE **OASD cuts** ON PAGE 9

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Advertising deadline is noon Wednesday for the following Wednesday.

The classified line ads deadline is 4pm Friday for Wednesday.

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Corrections

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Submitted photo

The Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh helped to provide food and gifts to local families this holiday season through two initiatives: the Thanksgiving Meals Program and Adopt a Family program.

Holiday donation programs support local families

Oshkosh Herald

The Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh has helped make the holiday season brighter for local youth and families through two initiatives, the Thanksgiving Meals Program and the Adopt a Family gift program.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, community partners and supporters, the club said hundreds of families experienced comfort, joy and connection during what can be a challenging season.

Thanksgiving Meals Program

For many families in the community, enjoying a traditional Thanksgiving meal is not always possible.

Financial barriers, limited access to resources and unexpected hardships can make the holiday season stressful rather than celebratory. To ensure that all Club families could gather around a warm meal,

the Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh partnered with donors to purchase and distribute more than 70 fully prepared Thanksgiving dinners from Festival Foods.

In addition to purchased meals, the donations of several community partners helped expand the program's reach. Those include The Roxy Supper Club, which donated 60 individual meals; TJ's Harbor Restaurant provided 20 family-sized Thanksgiving dinners and Truffle Pig contributed pumpkin desserts.

Adopt a Family Program

The Adopt a Family Program connects local donors with club families to provide gifts, essentials and a sense of celebration for children during the winter season.

Each participating family shared a personalized wish list for their child or children, and donors shopped to ensure every

child felt special and cared for.

In addition to gifts, families received hygiene baskets to help support basic needs at home, another important part of this program. During the holiday season, many families face added financial pressure, making it difficult to budget for everyday essentials like soap, shampoo, toothpaste and other personal care items.

Providing hygiene baskets ensures families can focus on enjoying time together without worrying about these basic necessities. It also promotes health, confidence and stability at a time of year when children and parents alike deserve to feel cared for and supported.

After weeks of coordination, gift drop-off took place on Dec. 8 followed by gift pick-up the next day. Individuals, businesses and organizations throughout Oshkosh contributed to provide holiday gifts to 109 families, supporting 257 children.



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Back in the Day



Oshkosh
history by the
Winnebago
County Historical
Society

Dec. 12, 2000

Ice Conditions Unsafe: The Winnebago County Sheriff's Department has reported several cars and snowmobiles breaking through the ice and are warning folks that ice conditions are not yet safe. Oshkosh resident Don Herman, who operates a vehicle recovery service, pulled two vehicles out of Lake Winnebago and a snowmobile from Lake Winneconne. "The general ice thickness is about 3 to 4 inches" Herman said, "But some areas could have only an inch. According to the Otter Street Fishing Club, the following are general guidelines to follow regarding travel on ice covered lakes." 2-4 inches safe for walking; 4-10 inches will support snowmobiles and ATV's; 10-24 inches needed for cars and trucks. Note: Ice thickness will vary and should never be considered completely safe.

Source: Oshkosh Northwestern,
Dec. 12, 2000



HOLIDAY EARLY AD DEADLINES

Oshkosh Herald Dec. 24 issue	Oshkosh Herald Dec. 31 issue
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Rescue crews teach students about ice fishing safety

By Anya Kelley
OSHKOSH HERALD

Rescue teams across Winnebago County gathered Dec. 6 at Hexco Motorsports in Oshkosh for the second annual high school ice fishing safety training presentation.

Students cycled through 12 stations led by 10 rescue crews to watch live demonstrations of search and rescue equipment. Each presentation lasted 15 minutes and gave the students an opportunity to ask the professionals questions and share personal ice fishing stories.

The event started two years ago when founder and co-coach of the Neenah High School fishing team, Chris Jones, decided he wanted to expand their mandatory safety training session into something bigger.

"I think one of the important things about being a coach of the fishing team is recognizing the opportunity to share your love of the outdoors with other people," Jones said. "Part of that is fish catching and spending time outside but making sure that everyone is safe when they're out there."

By bringing together multiple municipalities, students got to see a wide range of unique rescue devices in action. The Town of Algoma's fire department showed off their search and rescue drone that uses thermal imaging to help locate bodies. The drone can carry up to 20 pounds of gear and has a speaker the operator can communicate through while over 400 feet in the air and up to nine miles away.

The Boom Bay Fire Department brought out its Sherp – an all-terrain vehicle that's nearly impossible to trap in any condition. During the live demonstra-

tion, the operator broke through the ice to show how the vehicle can float as well as exit the water. The Winneconne-Poygan Fire Department demonstrated a shoreland rescue using a special sled that allows better leverage to pull someone out from the water. Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue demonstrated different types of dive suits and the Omro-Rushford Fire Department gave students a ride on its air boat.

Freshman Braxton Theissen and junior Skye Sarnowski were in attendance with the Winneconne High School Fishing Team. Both started fishing with their dads at a young age and grew to love ice fishing.

"I would always go fishing with my dad all the time," Sarnowski said. "He was always around and I had a blast doing it and I just always had a joy for it."

During Winneconne-Poygan's presentation, Theissen shared he's fallen through the ice while out fishing and had to apply safety techniques to save himself.

"It's quick," he said. "It gets cold really fast. It's not fun at all. I mean, even if it's shallow, your heart drops for that split second. You just got to focus on getting out."

He saved himself using ice picks, something that all students on the Winneconne fishing team are required to wear. Ice picks are a two-handled device that is worn around the neck. They create something to grip on when the ice is slick. Theissen and Sarnowski were also wearing full float suits.

"I feel like they're warmer and you know you're going to be able to float and take your time," Theissen said.

Besides the importance of safety training, Jones said the other focus of the day was getting students from across the Fox



Oshkosh Herald

Above: Rescue crews demonstrated how ice rescues are performed during a safety training session Dec. 6 at Hexco Motorsports in Oshkosh.

At right: Students learned about gear that is used during cold weather search and rescue operations that keeps rescuers warm and dry.



Valley to connect with one another outside of a competitive setting.

"Kids are in groups with some other students from other schools, so they're meeting kids that have the same passions and interests as they do," Jones said. "They're

forging some friendships and building bonds of camaraderie, which we don't normally get to do."

sweet holiday traditions

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Photo from Winnebago County Historical Society

Holiday traditions

Students from Oshkosh West High School shared holiday traditions from around the globe Saturday at the Morgan House. During the Christmas Around the World event, the students shared demonstrations of how holidays are celebrated in different countries and cultures as part of a way to learn, connect and enjoy the season.

Kaemmerer receives We Heart You Community Award of Excellence

Oshkosh Herald

Matthew Kaemmerer is being recognized for his work to provide support for children in Winnebago County to heal and thrive.

Kaemmerer received the 2025 We Heart You Community Award of Excellence from the Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) team.

Voted on by his peers within the Winnebago County OFR team, Kaemmerer was chosen for his visionary leadership, commitment to prevention and compassion for youth and families across the Oshkosh community.

For the past 11 years, Kaemmerer has served as Director of Pupil Services for the Oshkosh Area School District. In this role he has led numerous initiatives aimed at improving the lives of students and families. His leadership extends far beyond the district, influencing community-wide efforts to reduce trauma, substance use and overdose deaths through innovation, collaboration and care.

Kaemmerer's contributions include launching and expanding the Handle with Care program, which connects law enforcement and schools to ensure children who experience trauma receive immediate support. Under his leadership, the initiative expanded to five additional districts across Winnebago County, resulting in over 2,000 trauma-related referrals since its inception.

He also championed the installation of Overdose Aid Kits (OAKs) in all Oshkosh middle and high schools, partnering with the Clinton Global Initiative, Start Heal-

ing Now, Song for Charlie, and Winnebago County Public Health. This first-of-its-kind effort became the largest school district OAK installation in the country, providing life-saving tools to students, staff and community members.

Kaemmerer's involvement in the OFR team for over seven years has also been invaluable. As one of 49 partners representing 35 agencies, he has helped identify systems-level improvements to prevent overdose deaths and build stronger pathways to recovery.

"Matt represents what the We Heart You award is all about," said Jennifer Skolaski, project manager for the Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review. "He leads with heart, humility and vision. His dedication to addressing childhood trauma, mental health and substance use has transformed how our community supports its most vulnerable members."

The We Heart You Community Award of Excellence was established to recognize individuals and organizations making exceptional contributions to substance use prevention, recovery, and mental health support. Kaemmerer is the fourth recipient of this honor, joining past awardees who have demonstrated unwavering dedication to saving lives and strengthening community connections.

"Because of Matt's leadership, thousands of children in Winnebago County are receiving the support they need to heal and thrive," Skolaski added. "His compassion and innovation are saving lives and shaping a stronger, healthier future for our community."

NOTICE OF CITY OF OSHKOSH SNOW SHOVELING REQUIREMENTS

Residents are reminded of the following snow removal regulations:

PER SECTION 25-68 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE:

Property owners are required to clear sidewalks abutting their property of snow and/or ice within 24 hours after the end of precipitation or accumulation. These requirements include all handicap ramps/crosswalk accesses which are adjacent to their property.

When ice cannot be removed, the sidewalk and handicap ramps/crosswalk accesses shall be kept sprinkled with material(s) to accelerate melting and prevent slipping. The ice must be removed as soon as possible.

Depositing snow from private property onto any public right-of-way, public property, or fire hydrant is also prohibited.

PER SECTION 25-69 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE:

Failure to clear the sidewalk or handicap ramps/crosswalk accesses will result in the City completing the work and invoicing the property owner for the snow or ice removal.

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Lindemann appeals felony conviction in boat crash case

Oshkosh Herald

An Oshkosh man is appealing a pair of felony convictions linked to a boat crash on the Fox River in 2022. Court documents allege mistakes were made by the judge and prosecutors in the case.

On July 9, 2022, Jason Lindemann crashed his speed boat into the On The Loos Cruises paddleboat. At the trial testimony outlined his movements following the crash. Lindemann went back to the paddleboat, but did not provide his information following the crash and instead spent the night in the middle of Lake Winnebago.

The case received a lot of media attention in the region and resulted in a jury trial in 2024 where Lindemann was found guilty of two felony counts of second-degree recklessly endangering safety along with 11 misdemeanor counts of failing to render aid after a boat accident.

The case took two years to get to trial and then another eight days for the jury trial.

On June 19, 2024, 12 jurors found Lindemann guilty. He was sentenced to five months in jail and ordered to do 50 hours of community service each year he is on probation, which is set to end in 2027.

During his time in custody, he was granted Huber work privileges. This means he slept in jail but was able to leave and go to work before reporting back to jail at night.

Lindemann's appeals attorney, Joseph A. Bugni, wrote the 10,945-word brief and filed it with the Wisconsin Court of Appeals last week.

"Lindemann has served his sentence; there is no getting that time back," Bugni wrote in the brief. "This appeal is about whether he should be branded a felon."

Bugni relies heavily on something that was said to police the night of the boat crash.

The captain of the On The Loos said Lindemann brought his boat slowly under one of the Fox River bridges and then brought the boat up to optimal speed "because that's what every boater does when they come through the bridge."



Lindemann

Boaters typically slow down around bridges as that is considered a no wake area.

Everyone does it – that's the main argument laid out in the 42-page filing. If everyone does it, then Bugni said

Lindemann should not be singled out and punished for his role in the "accident."

The appeal will be heard from a three-judge panel. Bugni is requesting an oral argument to be held as the case is "fact-intensive."

Bugni wrote, "Oral argument will ensure that this Court has an opportunity to ask both sides about the extensive record."

Online records show assistant Attorney General John Bliming will handle the appeal for the state.

Winnebago County Branch 4 Judge Michael Gibbs presided over the case. Bugni notes in his filing that the defense and the state agreed that due to the media attention the case should have been moved to another county.

"I believe that Winnebago County is able to produce an impartial jury, so the Court will deny the defendant's motion to change the venue," Gibbs said.

The court filing does not mention other actions made by Gibbs during the hearings leading up to the trial such as Gibbs not allowing some of Lindemann's text messages into evidence shortly after the crash.

The prosecution, at the time, said that the text messages could show guilt or that he was attempting to cover something up. Gibbs ruled those texts, which showed Lindemann reaching out to an Oshkosh attorney for help, were under attorney-client privilege and could not be used in the trial.

Bugni uses strong language to describe Lindemann's relationship with the city.

"Lindemann was known and despised in Winnebago County and the media coverage of his case was so filled with misinformation that the entire District Attorney's office felt the need to recuse," Bugni said.

District Attorney Eric Sparr requested a special prosecutor for the case on Aug. 10, 2022.

"My office has no conflict regarding any of the passengers that were actually on Mr. Lindemann's boat," Sparr said. "However, the false information propagated on social media

helped create the appearance of a conflict, even in the absence of an actual conflict."

Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul then appointed assistant attorney generals Tara Jenswold and Emily Thompson to prosecute the case.

Bugni included responses from juror questionnaires to show the reaction the public was having and citing them in official court documents.

One response from the juror questionnaire stated, "Yes, in my honest opinion, he is pathetic, worthless also simple without care for another human's life or his own especially at his age he should've known to take better responsibility for his actions. Also he deserves whatever consequences that may come his way."

Bugni included other examples from these questionnaires – "Known as a drunk, can't run his own business" and "You see him in the news and you can tell he feels that laws don't pertain to him and he is looking for a loophole to get off."

There are no scheduled hearings in the case.

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Book shows Wisconsin's art environments

Oshkosh Herald

A new book by Oshkosh author and photographer Michael Cooney is shining a spotlight on some of Wisconsin's most unusual and imaginative art environments — many hidden in backyards, farm fields and small-town side streets across the state.

"Wisconsin Man Art: Big, Bold, and Visionary Art Environments" features the work of 42 men and two women partners who transform scrap metal, discarded machinery, concrete and found objects into towering sculptures, whimsical figures and sprawling outdoor installations.

Cooney spent years traveling Wisconsin to find the artists — sometimes following clear directions, other times discovering a site by chance in what he describes as "my statewide scavenger hunt." His 70-pound Standard Poodle, Simba, accompanied him on much of the journey and appears throughout the book as a visual size reference and occasional model.

Cooney said the book offers a rare and intimate look inside the imaginations of people who didn't wait for permission or

gallery invitations. These artists saw a pile of junk and thought: *What if? Why not? What else is possible?* They work without blueprints, credentials or expectations — just a vision, a welder, maybe a cement mixer and a whole lot of stubborn joy. Their creations are playful, profound, wildly inventive and sometimes flat-out bizarre. But each one is deeply human, he said.



With more than 200 color photographs and detailed artist profiles, *Wisconsin Man Art* captures creative expression at its most personal. Cooney describes the collection as "part road trip, part art history and part

love letter to the unfiltered, unapologetic spirit of self-taught creativity."

While a few of the featured artists have exhibited in traditional galleries, most create simply because, as Cooney notes, "It just got to be in you," echoing the famous line from Fred Smith, builder of the Wisconsin Concrete Park.

Wisconsin Man Art is now available for purchase at Caramel Crisp Book Store in downtown Oshkosh and for checkout at the Oshkosh Public Library.



Submitted photo

The Greater Fox Cities Chapter of Credit Unions came together to provide 3,000 holiday breakfast meals to local food pantries, including Oshkosh Area Community Pantry. Volunteers helped to pack the meal kits earlier this month for distribution starting this week.

Credit unions donate holiday meals to local food pantries

Oshkosh Herald

In the spirit of giving this holiday season, the Greater Fox Cities Chapter of Credit Unions, which includes 14 of the area's credit unions, has teamed up to supply 3,000 breakfast meals to food pantries serving families in Oshkosh, Green Bay and Appleton.

This large-scale donation aims to support community members facing food insecurity during the holidays, ensuring that more families will enjoy a traditional holiday meal together.

The 3,000 breakfast meals will be distributed among three regional pantries, including Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, St. Joseph Food Program (Appleton) and Paul's Pantry (Green Bay).

Each pantry will receive 1,000 breakfast meal kits, which include wholesome staples and festive note of encouragement. The collective effort is part of the credit unions' ongoing commitment to supporting local communities and making a positive impact during a time when many families need it most.

The donation was made possible thanks to proceeds from the Chapter's annual charity golf outing held in August, along with the efforts of credit union members, staff and local partners who collected, packed and delivered the meal kits.

Meal distribution began this week. Families in need are encouraged to visit their local pantry for more information on how to receive a meal kit.

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New campaign provides funds to help care for police K9s

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

The holiday season is a time of giving and one campaign has the community and dogs in mind.

Shaheda Govani has been giving back to the community through Govani Dental Gives with annual campaigns for years. This holiday season Govani is giving back to the community through a new fund to support the Oshkosh Police Department K9 units.

OPD has four apprehension K9 units that are the typical K9 units that are used with patrol officers. K9s Odin, Brocca, Fritz and Kyo are trained in narcotic detections, building and area searches and for tracking and protection. The K9 units are also out in the community doing demonstrations at community events and at Oshkosh schools.

The newest K9 unit is Gema, a two-year-old golden retriever, working with the behavioral health team. She is a therapy dog that provides support to people during highly sensitive and emotional calls for service as well as support for OPD employees.

K9 Gema has been working with behavioral health officer Scott Sopata for the last year. All five K9s have regular veterinary needs and other costs associated with the dogs, so the fund will give OPD access to

those necessary funds through the Govani Dental Gives campaign.

The department commented that the new fund will help support events with K9 Gema like Cocoa With a Cop. The initiative pairs K9 Gema with officers as they go to middle and high schools to share a cup of cocoa or coffee with educators and students.

These events are designed to fortify the "know us before you need us" slogan OPD has gotten behind in recent years.

Govani donated the initial \$10,000 seed money through a fund within the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation. OPD is the only entity that can take money out of the account. It is never to dip below the initial starting amount of \$10,000.

The fund will continue to generate interest and Govani hopes others also contribute to the fund to support OPD K9 units.

"If people can give \$10 or \$50, then that could mean \$1,000 a year for the dogs," Govani said.

Govani said this fundraiser checks the boxes of the three things she cares most about – community engagement, animals and mental health awareness and support.

"Let's do something good," Govani said. "The holidays can make or break some people's attitudes. At the end of it all we



Submitted photo

Shaheda Govani presents the seed money for a new fund to help the Oshkosh Police K9s get the care and services they need. K9 Gema, who specializes as a therapy dog, and behavioral health officer Scott Sopata were thrilled to have this new fund for the department.

want to look back and know we've done something good."

Anyone interested in donating to the

fund can go to oacf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate and search Oshkosh Police Department K9 Fund.

Ambulance service nears start date

By Anya Kelley
OSHKOSH HERALD

The Southern Winnebago Emergency Medical Services (SWEMS) district is almost ready to enter its first month of service starting Jan. 5 after a year of planning and development.

"As many wars as we fought over this, it's amazing," Leonard (Len) Schmick said during the SWEMS board meeting on Dec. 11. Schmick is the board commissioner representing the Town of Utica. "We're actually here, and it's all going to work out."

Everything is in place and contracts have been signed for mutual aid agreements with five of the surrounding municipalities. The official mutual aid partners are Oshkosh Fire Department, North Fond du Lac EMS, Berlin EMS, Gold Cross and Waushara County EMS.

Mike Krueger, EMS operations consultant for LifeStar EMS, said both stations that are part of the district's plan should be operational by Jan. 6. His goal is to avoid using up temporary space for the ambulances. The station located in the City of Omro will likely only be the garage to start out with. The crew will stay in an apartment nearby until the living quarters renovations are complete.

The station located in the Barr Inc. plaza on the edge of the City of Oshkosh will service the Town of Black Wolf, the Town of Nekimi and the Town of Utica. The station in the City of Omro will service the

Town and City of Omro, Town and Village of Winneconne, Town of Poygan and the Town of Rushford.

Heather Krueger, the acting interim supervisor for SWEMS, began onboarding the first group of employees on Dec. 12 and will begin training and proficiency tests in the coming weeks.

"I think she's been doing a great job with that and has a good group of people that'll be ready to respond on the morning of the fifth," Mike Krueger said.

One of the ambulances has been delivered decked out with an American flag graphic and the brand new SWEMS logo. Mike Krueger said the ambulance inspections are underway and things have been going over smoothly.

"From our standpoint, everything's going well," he said. "I've got no concerns about the (Jan. 5) takeover."

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Photo from Oshkosh Area United Way

A group gathered Dec. 6 to participate in the Race for the Light to run or walk through a frigid EAA Grounds, including the Oshkosh Celebration of Lights.

Race for the Light benefits United Way

Oshkosh Herald

More than 400 runners, walkers and volunteers came together Dec. 6 for the 23rd Annual Race for the Light to support the Oshkosh Area United Way.

Participants could run or walk through the EAA Grounds, brightened by the Oshkosh Celebration of Lights, during the family-friendly event. Participants were bundled up for cold while finding ways to show off their Grinch costumes, holiday sweaters and glowing accessories.

The donations from the Race for the Light helps fuel Oshkosh Area United Way's work across southern Winnebago County. The organization collected donations of waterproof gloves and mittens, which are on their way to local agencies supporting individuals and families.

Nearly 20 volunteers helped with registration, glove donation collection, course guidance, setup and post-race support.

Next year's race is scheduled for Dec. 5, 2026.

Firefighter dies

FROM PAGE 1

throughout the Midwest. Betts worked closely alongside them and was part of their professional team.

The crash happened after 9:30 p.m. Thursday on US Highway 30 just west of US Highway 31 near the town of Plymouth, Ind., which is about 26 miles south of South Bend. According to news reports, Diener was in a pickup truck parked on the shoulder behind a disabled truck and a tow truck.

A semi slammed into the back of both

of those trucks, throwing Diener from his vehicle. He was pronounced dead at the scene. OFD posted online, "In the days to come, we will honor Tom's legacy by continuing our unwavering commitment to public safety and the work he believed in."

The OFD posted Monday that funeral arrangements for Diener had not been finalized.

"We appreciate the outpouring of support for Firefighter Diener," the OFD said. "We'll post an update when we have more details. Thank you for your compassion and patience as we support the family and our department."

Grants available for outdoor classrooms, natural landscaping

Oshkosh Herald

The Fox Valley Area Chapter of the native landscaping group Wild Ones is accepting applications until Feb. 1 for grants of up to \$500 to support the creation of outdoor classrooms or other projects that use and develop an appreciation for native landscaping.

Schools, churches and other public and nonprofit groups may apply for the Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow grants ranging from \$100 to \$500 for projects located within 15 miles of the Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet or Fond du Lac County lines. Eligible projects include a native plant community such as prairie,

woodland or wetland for educational use; an interpretive trail using native plantings; or a rain garden used to teach about water quality improvement.

Eligible costs include native flowers, grasses, forbs, shrubs, rain gardens, trees and seed for native plants. Winning entries will be selected based on creativity, impact on the community, thoughtful planning and wise budgeting.

Application forms are available at foxvalleyarea.wildones.org/resources/. Grant applications must be postmarked by Feb. 1. Recipients selected will be notified in early March. For any questions, contact wildonefoxvalley@gmail.com.



Oshkosh Herald

Special delivery

Volunteer Clem Clemons lifts a box of toys into the back of a truck Friday in downtown Oshkosh as part of a collection for the Toys for Tots campaign. Volunteers from groups including Oshkosh Corporation, Winneconne Honor Society and Neenah Fusion Club helped the Salvation Army Oshkosh prepare for Toys for Tots. Collection sites were set up throughout the area to offer assistance to those who need gifts for their children this holiday season.

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OASD cuts

FROM PAGE 1

School District facing a \$6 million shortfall, and countless other school districts trying to bridge the same funding gaps, we need to uphold our promise of the 42% and 45% reimbursement rates. We also need to start being proactive when it comes to school financing and realize few investments matter if we do not first invest in our children.”

That shortfall is estimated to be costing OASD \$1.9 million this year.

Throughout the four and a half hour meeting held Dec. 10 inside the Oshkosh North High School Auditorium, Davis continually noted the drop in enrollment as a major factor in the proposed budget cuts.

OASD is following a trend that was pointed out to district officials in 2014 following a study released by the Applied Population Lab at UW-Madison. The study showed a consistent drop in enrollment. If the district continues on this trend OASD would have less than 8,000 students by 2033-34.

After the meeting Davis said the feedback from the community was great as the administration heard from students and staff about the proposal.

“That’s really what tonight was about, is the ability to be able to get feedback,” Davis said.

He and the board did receive feedback with as many as 150 people attending the meeting and over 20 people speaking. Board members also received a plethora of written feedback including emails from community members.

Davis reiterated that the goal of the administration is to find \$6 million of cuts to handle the upcoming structural deficit.

Davis said the proposed reduction will force the entire district to operate differently.

Community engagement

A number of students attended the meeting to voice their objection to the proposed cuts. Two students spoke on the importance of having a director of community engagement within the district’s administration and what it could mean for students if the position is cut.

Two students, Amaiya Thomas and Michah Troedel, spoke about the importance of having the director of community engagement. Thomas laid out a number of instances when she felt alone after years of passive aggressive comments, being called the n-word in fifth grade and being told by staff she was being “too sensitive.”

She felt hope when in 2023 the district hired two black administrators and things began to change for her. It’s an example of how representation matters in the classroom and the district office.

“This position has changed the lives of many black and brown students and the school district and even the community,” Thomas said. “They’ve shown us that we can achieve anything. That our voices matter and our experiences are real.”

Troedel brought up the ties between academic achievement and community engagement position.

“Your black and brown students are some of the lowest-scoring students in the district and our state overall,” he said. “Why are we choosing to cut the one position whose job is to focus on that. To me that sounds like it’s no longer a priority and that we’re shifting our focus back to other things.”

The position was initially called director of diversity, equity and inclusion but was changed to director of community engagement earlier this year. A large part of the position continues to be equity and that includes equitable instruction for math and literacy.

The district has consistently reported that minority students and those from economically disadvantaged homes struggle the most with attaining proficiency in math and reading. Those who commented were concerned that these students will once again become an afterthought if the community engagement position is eliminated.

“The proposed reduction of curriculum coordinators (STEM, Social Studies, ArtsCore), as well as roles in operations, human resources, technology, finance and pupil services, specifically, will result in responsibilities shifting to Executive Team members,” Davis said.

If the director of community engagement position is cut, that position’s responsibilities will be shifted across the executive team.

Delaney Smith said the proposal would “gut the arts” and punish students and teachers who did not cause the problem.

Another student mentioned the much-appreciated escape that comes with being able to be creative in an elective class compared to the rigor of course classes.

Issac Considine-Buelow spoke about what he has learned in journalism and drama classes. The proposal calls for reducing 1.4 full-time positions from Journalism, yearbook and drama classes.

The district is not planning on cutting these classes, at this point, but will be shifting the instructor from a full-time employee to a stipend employee. Teachers also spoke during the meeting.

Ted Williams is the choir director for Carl Traeger and South Park middle schools as well as the musical director for both schools. He serves as the director for Traeger’s competitive show choir – Act 1 and the coach for Traeger’s boys and girls basketball teams.

“This proposal is asking for the impossi-

ble,” Williams said.

He said the proposal would take away his full-time teacher status resulting in the loss of district health benefits. He said it would not be fiscally responsible to continue working at the district under the circumstances laid out in the proposal.

Williams was concerned about what candidate would take the position with so much responsibility without full-time status.

“My situation is not unique – I am one of many amazing teachers who are being dealt the same conundrum,” he said.

Michelle Jones has taught Spanish at OASD for 24 years. She said she felt pride in the district – as a student, a parent and as a teacher.

“But in the last few years and especially with your most recent decisions that pride has been replaced with disappointment and disbelief,” she said. “Eliminating teaching positions and raising class sizes while insisting ‘we are all in this together’ and ‘students first’ is not just contradictory it’s insulting. It is a slap in the face to every teacher who shows up every day to do the work that no administrator has to do – manage a room full of students, meet their academic and emotional needs, juggle changing expectations, and absorb every new initiative.”

Jones and Williams both pointed out that the proposal appears to be asking the teachers to make financial and workload sacrifices while nothing additional is being asked of administrators.

Fifth grade teacher James Warren spoke on behalf of the Oshkosh Education Association (OEA) and suggested short-term solutions like selling land the district owns. He also urged lawmakers to fund the special education costs and use that money to save the 23 elective positions.

Warren said the OEA is most concerned about losing several items from the budget, including driver’s education, elementary reading teachers, media specialists and elective teachers.

“We worry that the proposal for elective teachers to teach six out of seven periods could divide staffs and would not be what’s best for students,” Warren said.

Board discussion

Following the over 20 speakers during the meeting, the board discussed the issue with Davis and assistant superintendents of operation and instruction, Brian Yerkey and Sam Coleman.

Yerkey and Coleman were two of the few people who knew the district was facing this structural deficit back in September.

There was a lengthy discussion on the proposed cuts with board members concerned about overloading elective teachers as the proposal called for elective teachers to teach six of the seven class periods.

Board member Barbara Herzog asked if there was a legal issue with asking only a certain group of teachers to teach an additional class and not making that same ask for all teachers.

Herzog also questioned why the peer coach program was being eliminated. The program helps teachers early in their careers navigate things that aren’t primarily instruction, like finding procedural documents.

There are no proposed cuts to athletics and board members noted that. Board member Molly Smiltneek asked why sports weren’t touched in the cuts. Yerkey responded athletics costs are minimal, but he did not say whether the executive team looked at cutting any athletics or if it was just the arts that were facing cuts.

Davis said the executive team looked at athletics with school principals, but no reductions were identified.

The district is expecting expenses to increase from \$144 million in 2025-26 to \$152 million in 2026-27, a roughly 6% increase.

In the proposal, the anticipated expense increases includes:

- \$2.3 will go towards a 3% increase in staff salaries
- \$1 million in additional health benefits and taxes
- \$2.1 million in capital improvement/infrastructure projects
- \$1.5 million back into the general fund
- \$950,000 in non-staffing inflation increases
- \$500,000 for voucher program allocation
- \$450,000 in open enrollment out increase
- \$600,000 for administration raises

The Board of Education did not discuss eliminating any of these points, except for the \$600,000 in administration raises. Board member Mike Ford said that proposal was likely “dead on arrival.”

Operational referendum

Davis said other districts are facing similar challenges, and it’s leading to more districts doing operational referendums. That is not an option for the OASD as it is already utilizing an operational referendum of \$7.95 million that will run out in a few years.

There appears to be a strong chance the district could seek an operational referendum in 2028.

The school board is expected to make a decision on the cuts on Jan. 14, but it has asked for more information and data from the work the executive team did over the last three months.

A full workshop is planned for Jan. 7 for the school board to go over the proposed cuts and talk about other options for finding that \$6 million.

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Planning underway to extend north side road

By Jonathan Richie
OSHKOSH HERALD

Officials are set to extend a road that will provide access to a new high school and traffic to an industrial park on the city's north side.

Valley Christian School is planning on building a new high school in Oshkosh near its main campus on Vinland Street. The school has already bought the land, had it annexed into the City of Oshkosh and is now awaiting a road to be built.

The Plan Commission recently voted to recommend the city acquire land from Valley Christian to build a detention pond in the area and to annex more land from the Town of Oshkosh to extend West Fernau Avenue from Vinland Street to Jackson Street.

Valley Christian, under the corporation Wisconsin Independent Christian Schools, owns the lots north and south of the proposed extension of West Fernau in the city that butts up against Town of Oshkosh. The city plans on building the extended road next year to connect West Fernau.

Oshkosh Town Chair Jim Erdman said the town will not oppose the annexation primarily because of annexation laws. Since the city already owns the land it is planning to annex and no residents live in the annexed area, there is no one to petition against the annexation.

Erdman added the road will be good for the area by enabling more traffic to move around the northern industrial park and

could divert traffic off of Snell and Murdock roads.

Valley Christian informed the city of a plan to build a new high school in 2024. An initial annexation of two lots was done last year. Now, to get the right of way for the extended West Fernau Avenue and the actual roadway, the city is poised to annex another portion of land from the Town of Oshkosh.

The lot south of the proposed road is 8.2 acres. The lot on the corner of Vinland Street and the extended West Fernau, which will be owned by the school, is about 1.9 acres. The lot the city will own east of that corner is 6.3 acres; that lot will be converted into a detention pond on West Fernau Avenue.

Oshkosh City Engineer Justin Gierach explained the city will install water mains and storm sewer during the construction of the road. The road will be paved after utilities are installed and will not need to be a gravel road for three years.

Gierach stated that installation of the road and municipal utilities will follow Oshkosh's policy for special assessments, meaning property owners on the street will pay for the installation of the utilities.

The school operates the main campus in Oshkosh at 3450 Vinland St., an early education campus in Oshkosh and a campus in Neenah.

The Plan Commission's recommendations will now move to the Oshkosh Common Council for final approval.



Photo by Michael Cooney

As the caravan for the Oshkosh Fire Department's Food and Toy Drive rolled through neighborhoods, it was led by Engine 19, followed by a vintage fire engine carrying Santa Claus on a special front platform. Behind them came the Salvation Army truck and a donation pickup crew made up of off-duty firefighters and their families.

Fire department marks 27th year of giving

By Michael J. Cooney
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

The familiar sound of sirens and the flash of emergency lights once again signaled the arrival of the Oshkosh Fire Department's annual Food and Toy Drive, drawing families out into the cold December evenings with bags of food, wrapped toys and envelopes of cash donations.

All six Oshkosh Fire Department stations participated in this year's drive, which has become a long-standing holiday tradition across the city. The final night of collection Dec. 11 was conducted by Station 19, which covered the south side of Oshkosh.

For Tyler Downs, an Oshkosh Fire Department firefighter-paramedic, the event carries both professional and personal meaning.

"I've been doing the toy drive ever since I was a little kid," Downs said. "My dad, Craig Downs, was actually the one who started all of this when he worked for the Oshkosh Fire Department."

Downs has helped run the drive for the

past two years and said this year marked the department's 27th annual Food and Toy Drive. The response from the community has remained strong.

"So far, we're on track with our normal amount when it comes to cash donations, gift donations and supply donations," he said.

Since the department began formally tracking totals in 2010, the drive has raised about \$50,000 cumulatively, with yearly totals fluctuating based on weather and scheduling.

"Last year was a really hard weather year, so we had to cancel a few nights," Downs said. "This year, we've been doing really well, so we'll probably be a little higher than last year."

In addition to cash donations, firefighters collect toys and non-perishable food items. The Salvation Army Oshkosh, the drive's partner agency, handles the final tally.

"They actually count all the toys for us and let us know how many toys and how many pounds of food we've received," Downs said.

Nearly all of the firefighters participating in the drive do so while off duty.

"The only ones on duty are the firefighters in the fire truck at the very front of the parade," Downs said. "So if they get called, they answer the call."

For Downs, the long nights and cold temperatures are a small price to pay.

"The best part is that it's another way to give back to our community," he said. "Every day we show up to work and help the community medically, with fire responses and whatnot, but this is truly another way we can give back so families who need a little help can have a really good holiday season."

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Calendar of events

Ongoing

Celebration of Lights, through Dec. 31, EAA Grounds

Nutcracker in the Castle, through Jan. 5, The Paine Art Center and Gardens

Wednesday, Dec. 17

Holiday Harmony, 6 p.m., Morgan House, 234 Church Ave.

Thursday, Dec. 18

Oshkosh West Madrigals Public Performance, 7 p.m., All Saints Lutheran Church, 1072 Honey Creek Road

Friday, Dec. 19

Nutcracker the Ballet presented by Valley Academy for the Arts, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Holiday Cheer with Sundae and Mr. Goessl, 8 p.m., Becket's, 2 Jackson St.

Saturday, Dec. 20

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

Ruby's Pantry, 9:30 a.m., St. John's Lutheran Church of Nekimi, 491 Old Oregon Road

Nutcracker the Ballet presented by Valley Academy for the Arts, 2 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Oshkosh Chamber Singers presents A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, 2 and 5 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church

Sunday, Dec. 21

Nutcracker the Ballet presented by Valley Academy for the Arts, 2 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Monday, Dec. 22

Water City Jazz Orchestra: Big Band Christmas, 8 p.m., Fletch's Local Tap House, 566 N. Main St.

Thursday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day Dinner, noon, Father Carr's Place 2B, 1062 N. Koeller St.

Saturday, Dec. 27

Nutcracker the Ballet presented by Valley Academy for the Arts, 2 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Sunday, Dec. 28

UW-Oshkosh BSN Winter Classic, 1 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

Nutcracker the Ballet presented by Valley Academy for the Arts, 2 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Monday, Dec. 29

Live Animal Presentation with J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue, 10 a.m., Oshkosh Public Library

UW-Oshkosh BSN Winter Classic, 1 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

Nutcracker the Ballet presented by Valley Academy for the Arts, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

Wednesday, Dec. 31

Happy Noon Year, 11 a.m., Oshkosh Public Library

Harlem Globetrotters, 2 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

New Year's Eve Community Night at the YMCA, 5:30 p.m., 20th Avenue YMCA

Tickets on sale for EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2026

Oshkosh Herald

Advance tickets are now on sale for the EAA AirVenture Oshkosh fly-in convention, which will be held July 20-26.

The 73rd edition of "The World's Greatest Aviation Celebration" hosted by the Experimental Aircraft Association takes place at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh.

"As the excitement builds for the world of flight returning to Oshkosh in 2026, we wanted to ensure that advance tickets are available for those who enjoy giving AirVenture tickets as holiday gifts," said Rick Larsen, EAA's vice president of communities and member programs.

EAA AirVenture 2026 programming plans are already underway, with more details on specific aircraft, events and personalities will be announced as they are

confirmed. EAA officials were also present at this month's International Council of Air Shows convention to solidify the air show lineup for 2026.

Along with AirVenture admissions, other items available for advance purchase include camping credentials, auto parking passes and Aviator Club tickets (both North and South locations), as well as B-25 and Ford Tri-Motor flights. A special "Oshkosh Bound" T-shirt is also available for those already planning their journeys to AirVenture, as well as a unique way to gift wrap those holiday AirVenture passes. All advance purchase items are available at EAA.org/Tickets.

In 2025, EAA AirVenture Oshkosh saw a record attendance of 704,000 from 94 nations.

Music festival announces 2026 lineup

Oshkosh Herald

XRoads41 music festival has announced 13 of the Main Stage artists that will perform at the third annual event from Aug. 6-8, 2026 in Oshkosh.

Two additions to the Main Stage lineup, including the Thursday headliner, will be announced at a later date.

Artists at next year's event are scheduled to include: Jason Aldean, Lainey Wilson, Treaty Oak Revival, Wiz Khalifa, Jackson Dean, Wyatt Flores, Braxton Keith, Tracy Byrd, Josh Ross, David Lee Murphy, Preston Cooper, Lauren Watkins and Lanie Gardner.

"This will be the strongest lineup XRoads41 has had yet," XRoads41 Marketing Director Mindy Klein said. "It's already stacked with artists that sell out arenas and dominate the charts, and we've got two more major artist announcements still coming. The lineup is stacked with some of the most talented and talked about up and comers in the industry."

Three-day and one-day festival tickets are on sale now, along with camping. General Admission, VIP and Ultra VIP ticket types are available.

For tickets and all event details, visit xroads41.com.

Tickets available for indoor rodeo shows

Oshkosh Herald

The rodeo is coming to town next year as the Oshkosh Arena plans to host a two-night event.

The Battle for the Lake rodeo show-down is scheduled to take place Feb. 27 and Feb. 28 as Wildhorse Productions and Sandburr Rodeo Productions bring

high-energy rodeo action indoors.

Feb. 28 is Kids Night and will feature free pony rides.

Tickets are available online through the Oshkosh Arena Ticketmaster page or in person at the box office (Gate A), 1212 S. Main St., beginning at 10 a.m. with the exception of Sundays and Mondays.



Oshkosh Herald

Enchanted forest

An enchanted forest of Christmas trees was created to welcome the associates of Remarkable, Inc. to its holiday party held Friday at the Oshkosh Convention Center. Santa, Mrs. Claus, Buddy the Elf and a special appearance by Miss Wisconsin 2025 Willow Newell created memories for all in attendance. The party was supported by nearly 50 volunteers from Jewelers Mutual, which also generously supported the party. Remarkable, Inc. is a nonprofit that elevates the lives of people with diverse abilities with locations in Oshkosh and Neenah.

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Oshkosh Community CREDIT UNION

Welcome to the Family

Knights outduel Warriors to capture Trailways victory

By Steve Clark
OSHKOSH HERALD

Lourdes Academy freshman Naomi Liabwill looked like she was feeling pretty good playing against Valley Christian on Friday night.

Looks can sometimes be deceiving. "I felt tired," Liabwill said. "I was out of breath a lot."

That's just what happens when racking up points and rebounds like she was.

Seven games into her varsity career, Liabwill notched her third double-double, with a season-high 18 points and 16 rebounds to help fuel the Knights 62-56 win over the Warriors at The Castle.



Photo by Andy Ratchman

The Warriors' Mya Moran (3) puts up a shot over Ellie Koch on Friday.

"That kid just loves life," Lourdes Academy head coach Ali Starr said. "She is always bringing such great positive energy to wherever she is and the basketball court is no different. It doesn't surprise me she performs so well as far as numbers because her attitude reflects a lot of that."

Liabwill is part of a freshman trio – along with Avianna Wihlm and Grace Martin – who combined for 30 of the Knights 62 points against the Warriors and have each played key roles off the bench this season.

For Liabwill, just because it is her first year in high school, doesn't mean she has to feel like a freshman on the court – an attitude instilled in all of the first-year players by Starr.

"Coach Ali tells all of the freshmen that we play like we deserve to be at the varsity level and we play like seniors," Liabwill said. "So, I don't have that freshman mentality. I feel like I belong out there."

And Starr is pleased with the way the newcomers have hit the court running for the Knights.

"Our freshmen have come right in and have been massive impact players," Starr said. "Those three, they love to compete. They have loved to play basketball since they were little and have just been waiting for this opportunity to play on the high school floor and they are making the most of it."

Even with Naomi Liabwill's output to go along with 13 points from her older sister Adhieu Liabwill, the Knights had to fend off a pesky Warrior squad.

Valley Christian never led in the second half – the game was tied at 40 with 10:28

SEE **Girls hoops** ON PAGE 21



Photo by Andy Ratchman

Lourdes Academy's Naomi Liabwill puts up a shot in the first half against Valley Christian on Friday. Liabwill finished with 18 points and 16 rebounds in leading the Knights to the win.

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Balanced attack leads Lourdes Academy to triumph

By Steve Clark
OSHKOSH HERALD

Lourdes Academy's defense was clicking right from the start against rival Valley Christian on Friday night.

The Knights forced the Warriors into seven turnovers to start the game and built a 9-0 lead in the span en route to topping Valley Christian 64-24 in a Trailways East boys basketball game at The Castle.

"I think it was very pivotal with how we were able to come out ready to play basketball," Lourdes Academy head coach Brett Baehman said. "They checked every box I had for them. I'm very proud of how they held themselves, how they played together. Just everything we asked of them they did tonight."

Five different players scored in the game-opening run as each Knights starter scored before the Warriors tallied a point.

"A big thing for us is always those first four minutes," said junior Jackson Buttke. "Come out with a lot of energy and try to get as big of a lead as we can."

A Xander Osinga 3-pointer got the Warriors on the board and Valley Christian was able to get the deficit to seven points following a Titus Weyenberg free throw five minutes into the game.

But the Knights' Parker Slusarski book-ended a 15-0 run with 3-pointers that broke the game open and Lourdes was in control the rest of the way.

One of the keys for Lourdes Academy was the defensive pressure it put on the Warriors, forcing 14 first-half turnovers while Valley Christian finished with 23 turnovers in the game.

"We knew they had turned the ball over a lot already and we wanted to put the pressure on," Buttke said. "At the end of the day, it's always really nice to beat them."

It was the kind of defensive effort Baehman believes the Knights are capable of on a regular basis.

"We need to suffocate teams. We have the athleticism to do it and it's time that they start buying into that on the defensive end," Baehman said. "Our defense allowed us to get out and run the floor and do everything we want to do."

Baehman was also pleased with the way his team maintained its focus despite building the big lead.

The Knights led 40-12 at halftime and then opened the second half with a 15-2 run that eliminated any chance of the Warriors clawing their way back into the game.

"It's tough to get yourself up again after you played so well but that's what we have to do," Baehman said. "We are doing a lot of things that good teams do but we want to do what great teams do. We see them

again on Friday night, so we said let's not leave a doubt tonight."

It was a tough loss for the Warriors, who had been averaging nearly 56 points per game entering the contest.

But head coach Isaiah Gumness believes the program is trending upward and will continue to build despite the rough outing.

"We are continuing to grow. We haven't had (success) in our program and we are 2-2 right now, which is growth," Gumness said. "Our guys did not play like they can and that was just part of the growing pains. We're trying to become something better and every day we are going to grow and we are going to learn."

Osinga led the Warriors with eight points – all in the first half – while Weyenberg added six points and Matthias Behling chipped in five.

The Knights had three players finish in double figures led by Harlan Kuehn's 15-point, eight-rebound performance. Buttke added 12 points and Slusarski finished with 11 as eleven different players scored in the game for the Knights.

"We know we just don't have one guy who can score the ball, we do have five or six guys that can score," Buttke said. "Anytime we need a bucket we know we have a guy who can get it."

"We really tried to grow over the summer because we knew we have a special group. I think we have big things ahead for us."



Photo by Andy Ratchman

Lourdes Academy Harlan Kuehn and Valley Christian's Xander Osinga battle for a rebound on Friday night.



Photo by Andy Ratchman

Valley Christian's Titus Weyenberg puts up a shot in the second half on Friday.

flash sale

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West's upset bid falls just short against Lightning

By Zach Bellin
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

Third-ranked Appleton North nearly walked off of Steven L. Randall Court with its first loss of the season.

Oshkosh West certainly made the Lightning sweat a little bit.

The Wildcats led by three at halftime but couldn't hold on for the upset win, falling 65-61 in a Fox Valley Association game last Friday night.

"Things got a little dicey after North got a little bit of a lead, but I love how our guys battled through the end and gave ourselves a chance to win the game," Wildcats head coach Dan Weisse said.

The loss snapped the Wildcats three-game winning streak as they slipped to 3-2 overall this season.

Malakai Herlihy scored a game high 29 points in the loss for the Wildcats. The senior finished 6-of-9 from 3-point range and hit all five of his free-throw attempts in the win.

Weisse said he's been looking for Herlihy to be more aggressive this season and that's exactly what he delivered Friday night.

"A lot of guys were making plays and swinging the ball out," Herlihy said. "That

gave me a lot of opportunities to score, and just overall I thought the whole team played a good game."

No other Wildcat reached double digit points in the contest, with guard/forward Kole Stauffacher finishing as the team's second highest scorer with nine points. Drew Abitz followed with eight points, which he had scored within the first nine minutes of the game, and Brayden Kufel added seven.

Joey Ware led West with nine rebounds. Appleton North's leading scorers were the trio of guards Will Sweeney, Matthew Rosplochowski and Nathan Rasmus. Sweeney finished with 20 points. Rasmus followed with 19 and Rosplochowski had 17 points.

The trio combined to go 17-of-21 from the free-throw line to help boost the Lightning to the win. West was 9-of-11 as a team from the line.

"I told them (the team) we're not going to play a perfect game, but we're going to practice to play a perfect game, knowing we're not going to," Weisse said. "If you make mistakes and have that kind of attitude and effort, you're going to keep yourself in a lot of games against very good teams."

Prep sports roundup

SWIMMING

Bergin, Crowe propel Wildcats past Spartans

Caleb Bergin and Carter Crowe were each a part of four wins for Oshkosh West as the Wildcats downed Oshkosh North/Lourdes Academy, 115-58, in a Fox Valley Association dual meet last week.

Bergin finished first in both 200-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle, while Crowe posted wins in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard breaststroke. Bergin and Crowe then joined Evan Booms and Sam Roblee to win both the 200-yard medley relay and 200-yard freestyle relay.

Booms in the 100-yard butterfly and Dominic Moore in the 500-yard freestyle also added wins for the Wildcats, while Moore in the 200-yard individual medley, Booms in the 50-yard freestyle, Roblee in the 100-yard backstroke, Alex Fanshaw in the 100-yard butterfly, Gabe Balcom in the 500-yard freestyle and Reid Potter in the 100-yard breaststroke were each second.

The Wildcats were also second in all three relays.

North/Lourdes posted three individual wins at the meet.

Drake Lauritch placed first in the 200-yard individual medley, while Blake Ludwig was first in the 100-yard backstroke. Everix Blessent took first place in the diving competition as the only entrant.

Ludwig also added a second place in the 100-yard freestyle for the Spartans.

North/Lourdes also added a win in the 400-yard freestyle relay with a team of Lauritch, Ludwig, Sully Snow and Zayden Yenter.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Spartans' offense erupts in win over Polar Bears

Bryce Ott posted a double-double and five players finished in double figures as Oshkosh North rolled to a 101-65 win over Hortonville last Friday night.

Ott led the way with 20 points and 10

rebounds, while also chipping in five assists in the win.

Owen Weber went 4-of-4 from 3-point range and tallied 18 points. Jackson Anderson and Tylan Lister each finished with 16 points and Brady Anderson tallied 15 points for the Spartans, who topped the 100-point mark for the first time since the final game of the 2023-24 season.

North finished 13-of-23 from 3-point range in the game, while also going 16-of-21 from the free-throw line.

Wildcats dominate Trojans in easy win

Oshkosh West held Green Bay Southwest to just 12 points in the first half and rolled to a 56-30 win over the Trojans in a nonconference game last week.

Malakai Herlihy hit three 3-points and finished with 16 points, while Joey Ware added 10 points and 11 rebounds in the win. Brayden Kufel chipped in nine points for the Wildcats.

It was the third straight win for West marking the first time the Wildcats had won three straight games since the 2020-21 season.

Wallace sparks

Warriors to victory

Derek Wallace drained six 3-pointers and finished with a season-high 24 points to lead Valley Christian to a 60-52 win over Cambria-Friesland last week.

Wallace was 6-of-8 from behind the arc as Valley Christian finished 11-of-22 from 3-point range as a team.

Matthias Behling added 13 points and Mason Everts chipped in 10 in the win for Warriors.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Spartans notch first win of the season

Awut Alic poured in 19 points and added six steals as Oshkosh North jumped

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 19



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Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 18

out to a 17-point halftime lead in a 56-28 win over Plymouth in a nonconference game last week.

Brinna Paulson knocked down four 3-pointers and finished with 14 points for the Spartans, who led 29-12 at halftime.

North made 10 3-pointers in the game.

The Spartans fell to Hortonville in a Fox Valley Association game on Friday as the Polar Bears' pressure defense took its toll.

North played a strong first 10 minutes of the game but couldn't maintain it against Hortonville. The Spartans finished shooting just 25 percent from the floor while committing 29 turnovers.

Alic totaled 17 points and eight rebounds with Navi Lao-Facundo adding seven points.

Wildcats fall on road to Lightning

Oshkosh West shot 31 percent from the field and were held under 40 points for the second time this season in a 63-39 loss at Appleton North last Friday.

Kinslee Nelson finished with nine points and nine rebounds to pace West.

Ava Strasser added eight points and Mya Johnson chipped in seven points off the bench for West.

Knights come up short against Horicon

Lourdes Academy outscored Horicon in the second half but couldn't rally from a halftime deficit in a 57-54 loss to Marshmen last week.

Naomi Liabwill had a double-double with 14 points and 16 rebounds, while fellow freshman Grace Martin finished with 12 points.

Aubrey Schettle posted 13 points and four steals for the Knights in the loss.

Lourdes Academy shot just 25 percent from the field and went 4-of-28 from 3-point range in the loss.

HOCKEY

Rough third period stings Ice Hawks

Oshkosh trailed just 4-3 entering the third period but Stoughton rallied for four goals to pull away for an 8-3 win in a non-conference game last Friday.

All four of the Vikings goals in the third period came in the final five minutes as Stoughton was able to widen the final margin.

Zach Zimpel, Frank Ulrich and Brennon Kraft each tallied a goal in the game for the Ice Hawks.

The Ice Hawks had a rough outing the



Oshkosh North

Oshkosh North's Carter Zick has control over Appleton East's Trace Van Asten in the 138-pound bout last Thursday. Zick won the match by an 11-2 major decision.

game before in falling at home to Marshfield, 14-0.

Chase Magadanz made a whopping 44 saves in the game for the Ice Hawks, who were outshot 58-10.

WRESTLING

Spartans split pair of home dual meets

Oshkosh North topped Appleton East, 49-19, but fell to Neenah, 83-0, in a Fox Valley Association triangular at the Frank Schade Fieldhouse last Tuesday.

The Spartans registered four pins in the win over the Patriots, with Anthony Berger leading the way with a 54-second victory at 144 pounds. Dominic Wyrwicki (157), Jamond Thompson-Schreck (165) and Everix Blessent (190) also won by pin in the match for North.

Carter Zick picked up a major decision win at 138 pounds, while Liam Torres (132), Andrew Brockman (175) and Dayvion Neal (285) each won by decision. Patrick Guerrero (113) and Mason Selner (120) added forfeit wins.

Brockman was the only wrestler who wasn't pinned for North in the loss to Neenah.

The Spartans also competed in the Duals in the Dells event on Saturday and finished 1-3 on the day.

North's lone win came against Edgar in the final match of the day. The Spartans won 48-32.

Wyrwicki, Brockman and Neal earned pins in the win, while Christian Johnson (126), Liam Torres (132) and Thompson-Schreck won by forfeit.

Thompson-Schreck posted a 3-1 record on the day to lead the Spartans, while

Johnson, Torres, Berger, Callen Brockman (150), Andrew Brockman and Neal each finished with two wins.

The Spartans dropped dual meets to Marshfield, Boyceville and Freedom.

Schneider leads Wildcats at Battle on the Bay

Preston Schneider finished fourth at 138 pounds to lead Oshkosh West at the Battle on the Bay hosted by Bay Port High School on Saturday.

Schneider won his first match of pool play by technical fall and then earned a pin to advance to the championship bracket. He lost a close 4-2 decision to the eventual bracket champion in the semifinals and then dropped the third-place match.

Xavier Vang (120) and Eskander Koko

(165) each finished 10th for the Wildcats.

GYMNASTICS

Oshkosh co-op team takes second at invite

Neva Schlies had a strong day as the Oshkosh co-op gymnastics team took second at the Holiday Invitational in Manitowoc on Saturday.

Schlies finished second in the all-around to lead the squad, while also placing second on both the vault and uneven bars, while taking fourth on the balance beam.

Adding sixth-place finishes for Oshkosh were Kendall Irwin on the uneven bars and Mia Drexler on the balance beam with Parker Asen and Joy Wheel tying for sixth on the vault.



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Fink makes impact in multiple sports for Warriors

By Tim Froberg
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

Bounce a basketball a few times.

That's how fast a senior season of prep athletics goes by for many teens.

Lizzie Fink is determined to enjoy every second.

The three-sport Valley Christian athlete has launched her final season of high school basketball following an all-conference season in volleyball. She is also an accomplished hurdler in track and field who will complete her sports trifecta in the spring.

Fink knows her high school sports days will soon be in her rear-view mirror, so she channels her energy into every basketball practice and game. But she also makes sure she is enjoying the ride.

"I've been treating every game this season like it's my last and loving every moment of it," Fink said. "I did that during the volleyball season and I've maintained that mentality in basketball."

That mentality has helped Fink put up impressive numbers on the court. The 5-foot-6 guard is a consistent double-digit scoring threat and a do-it-all player who averaged 13.2 points, 5.9 rebounds, 3.2 steals and 1.9 assists as a junior.

"Lizzie is super athletic as evidenced by her being a three-sport athlete," said Valley Christian coach Tim Dinkelman. "She's high energy on the court and gets to the basket. She has a good perimeter shot so she can also stretch a defense and she's our best free-throw shooter."

Fink displayed her perimeter skills by drilling 22 3-pointers last season, but her strength is making plays off the dribble and attacking the rim.

"I only played one year of club basketball - back in eighth grade with the (Wisconsin) Blizzard and Louie Giannopoulos was my coach," said Fink. "A big thing he taught us was the impact of driving to the lane."

"That was his biggest focus all season. That whole season, all I did was learn how to drive, drive, drive. Ever since then if I see an open lane, I try to take advantage of that."

The Warriors rely on Fink for more than just points. She's a team captain who provides solid, steady leadership. One of the ways she provides that is with her sharp sense of humor.

"Lizzie is a super human being," said Dinkelman. "She's focused, fun to be around and has developed leadership skills through these last three varsity years. She has a way of keeping our younger players



Photo by Andy Ratchman

Valley Christian senior Lizzie Fink is a three-sport athlete and is currently one of the top scorers for the Warriors basketball team.

focused by keeping things light-hearted."

That means cracking a joke or a smile when the going gets rough.

"That's just my personality," Fink said. "I'm always making jokes and having fun, so I like to incorporate that onto the court. I feel a lot of tense situations can be made lighter with a little sense of humor. You can always tell which teams are having fun and you have a much better chance of success when you're having fun."

"I really like being a leader. I love the girls so much. I love to be able to help and encourage people."

Fink's confidence in herself has soared in her four years with the Valley Christian program.

"I was definitely a very shy athlete my freshman year and even my sophomore year," Fink said. "I've really grown into being confident in my sports."

Fink appreciates the opportunity to play

sports at the standard varsity level for Wisconsin high school athletes. Valley Christian was categorized as a junior varsity program during Fink's freshman year before it gained varsity status her sophomore season.

"There is just something totally different about getting the chance to compete in the playoffs," she said. "We had an amazing team my freshman year, an amazing group of girls, and had so much fun. But we didn't have an opportunity to do something in the tournament or win conference. It just drives you differently when you have those things. You really can't replicate them."

Basketball isn't the only sport that Fink crushes. She was a top-notch middle hitter in volleyball who landed first-team honors on the all-Trailways East team. Fink finished the 2025 season with a team-high 306 kills, 151 digs, 39 service aces and 37 blocks.

Senior Spotlight

Nicolet
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"I love everything about volleyball," she said. "I love the concept of having six girls that you are very close with and this little piece of court to defend. I love being in the front row and being able to just wait on the ball. And one of the aspects I enjoy the most is that you get to celebrate and talk to your teammates after every play."

Fink puts her exceptional athleticism to good use in the spring, competing in both the 100 and 300-meter hurdles. She was a sectional qualifier in both events as a junior.

Fink had a late start as a hurdler and didn't start competing in the two events until her sophomore year.

"Hurdling kind of came out of nowhere," she said. "To be honest, I started doing it because my boyfriend (Jonah Menet, a Valley Christian student) did it. I gave it a try and it turned out to be one of my most favorite things ever."

"It was so much fun. I wish I would have done it my whole life. I've always loved to jump and hurdling combines running and jumping."

Fink is also a top performer in the classroom, carrying a 3.85 grade-point average. She plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh next year and major in education. Her goal is to eventually become a teacher, possibly at the elementary level.

"I've always loved kids and babysitting and I'd really like to be a teacher at the younger levels, Fink said. "The third grade would be ideal. I'm an elementary art aide this year and get to work with all the classes. There is just something about the third graders. They're the sweetest kids, so talkative and genuine. I love that grade."

Fink isn't currently planning on competing in college sports at UW-Oshkosh, but she's open to the possibility if an opportunity arises.

In the meantime, Fink is focused on helping Valley Christian put together a solid year after finishing 9-16 last season and 4-8 in the Trailways East.

"This is one of my most favorite teams ever," she said. "There's something special about it - not only the girls but the coaches. I know all these girls want success and have it in them to play well."

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Girls hoops

FROM PAGE 16

left – but every time Lourdes Academy built a comfortable lead, the Warriors would reel them back in and make it close.

“We talked about being in one possession at a time. If they stretch (the lead) don’t look at the scoreboard, look at the next possession,” Valley Christian head coach Tim Dinkelman said. “That’s what they did. They dug in and played a good ballgame.”

The Warriors were playing down one starter because of illness and had suffered a close loss to Wayland Academy

the night before when they played a bit sluggish.

Dinkleman was pleased to see his group turn it around against the Knights.

“We played (Thursday) night against Wayland and there just wasn’t a lot of energy. We challenged them to come with energy (against the Knights),” Dinkelman said. “I couldn’t be more proud of the way that they fought, They put it out there the whole game.”

The Knights broke the 40-40 tie with a 10-0 run started by an Adhieu Liabwill basket and a layup from Aubrey Schettle.

After two Ellie Koch free throws, Naomi Liabwill notched back-to-back baskets to give Lourdes Academy a 50-40 lead

with 7:55 remaining.

“After the first half, I felt very energetic and I knew I didn’t want to lose - especially a conference game,” Naomi Liabwill said. “Yes, 100 percent it feels good (to beat Valley Christian). They beat us in volleyball so we had to show up.”

The Knights took their biggest lead of the game at 60-48 with 2:19 left but the Warriors weren’t done yet.

Back-to-back baskets from Mya Moran and a steal and layup by Paige Boevers sliced the Knights’ lead in half with just more than a minute to play but that was as close as Valley Christian would get.

Each team would notch a basket in the last 27 seconds for the final margin.

“It was a big win for our young team. I’m just super proud that we kept battling and put ourselves in a position to get a win,” Starr said. “It was a great opportunity for our young team to be able to experience what it was like to be able to finish a game, especially when its tight like that.”

Dinkelman, whose team got 21 points from Lizzie Fink and 20 from Moran, was just as proud of his group and the way it competed.

“(Lizzie and Mya) are definitely the scorers on our team and leaders as well and they played well tonight,” Dinkelman said. “A couple of things went a little south at the end but what a game by our girls.”

Obituaries

Larry V. Bourne

Larry V. Bourne, age 84, passed peacefully on December 11, 2025, at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in Waupaca.



He was born on October 12, 1941, in Tremonton, Utah, to Don and Vernetta (Adams) Bourne, who instilled in him the values of faith, hard work, service, and responsibility that guided him throughout his life.

On July 8, 1960, Larry married the love of his life, Margaret Bright, in Logan, Utah. Together they built a marriage grounded in loyalty, perseverance, and deep mutual respect—forming the foundation of a close and loving family that spanned generations.

Larry was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and his faith shaped how he lived and led. He proudly served in the United States Army for

nearly 25 years, retiring as a Sergeant Major—representing the highest one percent of the entire enlisted force. He was widely respected by his soldiers and consistently selected for key leadership roles as a First Sergeant and Sergeant Major years ahead of his peers, a testament to his character, competence, and the trust placed in him by those he served alongside. Larry concluded his military career as a ROTC instructor at the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh, mentoring young men and women at the start of their own paths of service. It was during this time that he fell in love with all that Wisconsin had to offer, and in 1984, he and Margaret chose to retire in Oshkosh, which became their home.

Following his military service, Larry continued to lead in civilian life, serving in multiple senior management and executive leadership roles, where he excelled and left a positive, lasting mark on every organization he worked with. Yet where Larry truly surprised and delighted people—was on the stage. A crowd-favorite karaoke performer, no one ever expected a

retired Sergeant Major to bring the house down with “It Wasn’t Me” by Shaggy, “Suspicious Minds” by Elvis, or “The Hillbilly Rap” by Neal McCoy—but that he did. Time and again, crowds erupted in laughter and applause, begging for encores. Larry won multiple karaoke contests and traveled to competitions across the country, with a trip to New York City—the Big Apple—standing out as one of his most cherished memories. Through music and joy, he connected with people wherever he went.

Above all else, Larry was a devoted husband, a loving and steady father, a proud grandfather and great-grandfather, a loyal brother, and a trusted friend. He believed deeply in leaving the world better than he found it—a value he lived by and instilled in all of his children. There may be no more encores for Larry, but his impact will continue to be felt. He touched the lives of thousands around the world and leaves behind a legacy of service, leadership, faith, laughter, and love.

Larry is survived by his beloved wife,

Margaret Bourne; his children, Kevin (Christine) Bourne, Joel (Jacqueline) Bourne, Kristina Smick, and Kylene (Brian) Dieck; his grandchildren, Faith, Amber, Julian, Vivace, Joel Jr., Jonas, Jriver, Jacxs, Brittany, Caleb, Cameo, Gabrielle, and Alexandra; and his great-grandchildren, Wesley and Melody. He is also survived by his siblings, Sherry (Kennard) Sorensen; Steven (Peter) Bourne; Jane Benson; Jill (Larry) Reda; Neil (Sheila), Charlie and Linda Bourne; Flossie (Brent) Madsen; Kirk (Ruth) Bourne; Tricia (Clayton) Grover; Tonia (Michael) Mundy; Terri and Samantha Bourne.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Don and Vernetta Bourne, his brother Don Bourne Jr., and his son, Michael Lawrence Bourne.

Larry was truly loved and will be deeply missed.

Per Larry’s wishes, cremation will take place.

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Bruce Everett Van Gysel

Bruce Everett Van Gysel, affectionately known by “Papa” and “Uncle Skip,” passed away at age 80, with his family by his side, on December 11, 2025.



He was born on July 24, 1945, in WI, to parents, Gertrude (Demuris) and Allen Van Gysel Sr. He grew up in Milwaukee and attended Custard

High School.

Later on, he met the love of his life, Patricia K. Bolle, at a local pool hall. The words love at first sight held true. They married on August 28, 1976, also in Milwaukee. Selling his blue Thunderbird

muscle car, he proudly started a family.

He worked for Evinrude Motors and Johnson controls. He would help out family on the weekends at Uncle Al’s restaurant, in Berlin. He excelled in the restaurant industry and in 1984, he moved his family to Omro, WI, to be the head chef, then later manager at the Main Street Restaurant. Bruce loved cooking omelets, BBQ chicken and his famous “Bruce California Burger.” Some may say he was also a walking recipe encyclopedia.

In his free time, Bruce enjoyed bowling, watching golf, going to Church, playing slots at Oneida, passing down his love of music—especially Pink Floyd to his kids and grandchildren. He was always spending as much time with the grandchildren, from attending their sporting events to

being a friend when they needed support. He had a heart of gold, was very funny, a friend to all and a true one of a kind. He built lasting memories with a family trip to the House on the Rock and the Cave of the Mounds. He will be truly missed.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Patricia Van Gysel; children, Rebecca “Becky” McNamara and her children, Samuel and Jack, Janis (Brendan M.) Van Gysel and her children, Krista (Todd R.) and Michael (August J.), Jennifer Van Gysel and her children, Deion and Tatayana and Nicholas “Nick” (Victoria) Van Gysel; three great-grandchildren, Evelyn “Peanut”, Cloud and Deion’s son; sister, Sheila Sill; brother, Allen Jr. (Purita) Van Gysel; sister-in-law, Pamela Healy; brother-in-law, Rodney (Emel) Bolle; bonus

daughters, Diane Schneider and Jenny Perleberg and grandson, Ethan Van Gysel; several cousins, nieces, nephews, best friend, Jack Van Patten; his friends, including the Villard Street Group; and kitty, Audi.

Preceding him in death was his parents, Gertrude (Demuris) and Allen Van Gysel Sr.; brother, Mark Van Gysel; parents-in-law, Walter and Evelyn Bolle; sister-in-law, Mary Ruppert; brother-in-law, Ray Sill; and beloved Yorkie, Leo.

Per his wishes, no formal service will be held. In lieu of flowers, please feel free to donate to the Oshkosh Humane Society in his honor.

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Obituaries

Joanne Mae Krueger

Joanne Mae Krueger (Novak) was born March 22, 1933, in Antigo, WI; raised in Deerbrook, WI and passed away peacefully Saturday, December 13, 2025.



Joanne was a kind, loving, patient and dedicated wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother and great-great grandmother. She met and married the love of her life James (Jim) Krueger in 1952 after meeting at a dance hall in Polar, WI. After being stationed with Jim on bases in both Louisiana and Oklahoma, they established a family farm in Antigo, WI. Joanne received her initial teaching training through the Normal School in Antigo, where she went on to teach at a one-room schoolhouse. She continued her education, receiving her teaching certificate through Wisconsin State College - Stevens Point. After selling the farm in 1963, Joanne and Jim, along with their 2 children, relocated to Winneconne, WI where she dedicated over 30 years to the Winneconne Elementary School. During those years, she was recognized in the 1990 inaugural year of "Who's Who Among America's Teachers". Outside of her passion towards teaching, Joanne

loved road trips out west, spending time with family, a walk or bike ride around the community and she always enjoyed a good book.

She will be deeply missed by son Jeffrey Krueger; daughter Jaymie Wilde; granddaughter Sarah Blashe (Brandon), great-grandson Wyatt Blashe with great-great grandchildren Caiden, Bryer and Sage, great-granddaughter Sydney Blashe (Gene); granddaughter Meghan Longworth (Chad) with great-granddaughters Mya Thuerman (Alex), Elyse and Emery Brehmer; granddaughter Jeana Meyer (Jesse) with great-grandsons Brayden and Kamden Meyer.

She was preceded in death by her husband Jim, mother Vera Novak and maternal aunts and uncles.

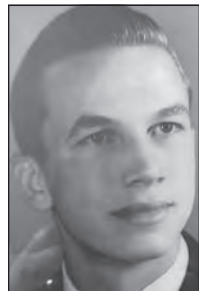
The family would like to thank the staff at Compassus Hospice for their wonderful care. A special thank you to both Pastor Kevin for visiting during her final days at home and Mueller Funeral Home for their assistance during this difficult time.

The memorial service will be held at 12:00pm on Friday, December 19, 2025 at Lord of the Lakes, 6090 Harbour South, Winneconne, WI 54986 with Pastor Kevin Heffernan officiating. A visitation will be held from 10am - 12pm.



Elmer F. Hielsberg

Elmer F. Hielsberg, age 91, passed away on December 7, 2025, at Waterford Memory Care, in Waterford, Wisconsin.



Elmer was born on January 26, 1934, in Oshkosh, WI, son of Elmer and Alma Hielsberg. He was a dedicated employee at Kimberly-Clark for more than 30 years. Elmer served his country in the Army. He married Judith L. Mugeraurer, on May 3, 1958, in Oshkosh.

Elmer enjoyed watching sporting events of his children and grandkids and was an avid Packers Fan. He enjoyed taking week-long bus trips visiting sites across the United States and playing the slot machines. He was a lifelong member of Peace Lutheran Church in Oshkosh.

Elmer is survived by his son, Mark (Dana) Hielsberg and daughter, Beth Dahlke (Jeff); sister, Lucille Koch; grandchildren, Adam, Taylor (Kevin) Forman and Brandon.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Elmer (Alma) Hielsberg; his wife, Judith Hielsberg; his son, Steven Hielsberg; brothers, Arnold Hielsberg, Robert Hielsberg and Gordon Hielsberg; and sister, Ruth Gerth.

Graveside services will be held on Saturday, December 20, 2025 at Riverside City Cemetery in Oshkosh, WI at 12 pm.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be

made out to Waterford Community Food Pantry 455 S. Jefferson St. Waterford, WI 53185.

The family would like to thank the staff at Waterford Memory Care and Amedisys Hospice for their wonderful and loving care of Elmer. And Pastor Bill Busch at Waterford Community Church for all his kindness and prayers.



Dianna Gibson

Dianna Gibson, 80, moved on to her heavenly home November 16, 2025, surrounded by loving family. Dianna was born on September 19, 1945 to Lyle and Esther (Fox) Hansen.



She graduated from Oshkosh High School in 1964, and earned a Mechanical Engineering degree from Moraine Park Technical College. Dianna worked at Kimberly Clark in the 1980's-90's.

She was an active member of Calvary Lutheran Church in Oshkosh, WI through the early 2000's, helping with prayer chain, new church planning, organ updating, council, and activities.

For a more detailed obituary: <https://www.walkersfuneralservice.com/obituaries/dianna-gibson>

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Obituaries

George S. Schroeder

In Loving Memory of George S. Schroeder



November 23, 1953-December 3, 2025

George S. Schroeder, of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, passed away on December 3, 2025, at the age of 72. George was born at home on November 23, 1953 to Lawrence and MaeLou Schroeder. He graduated from Oshkosh North High School in 1972 and started his career by serving in the US Navy. He subsequently worked at T & J Manufacturing, Oshkosh Truck Corporation and Costco before retiring several years ago.

George will be remembered fondly by all who knew him, cherished for his warmth, generosity, and gentle spirit. George brought light and laughter to every room he entered, and his presence was a source of comfort to his family and friends. He was always quick to help who ever needed help. George loved to take long walks with his special friend Diane and his beloved dog Barney, finding joy in their company. George was a passionate Green Bay Packers fan, a connoisseur of craft beers, an avid reader of great novels, of which he was a particular fan of Stephen King. He cherished sipping a cold one with friends and family. His memory will live on in the stories and hearts of those who loved him.

George is survived by his son Adam (Josie) and grandchildren Mackenzie,

Gabe, and Colton; his son George; his brothers Kenneth (Cindy), Terry (Darlene) and Keith (Berdi); his special friend and caregiver Diane Thompson, his dog Barney, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

George's family and friends appreciate the support and condolences during this difficult time. His family and friends would like to give a special thank you to the Vince Lombardi Cancer Center, the

staff at Aurora Hospital in Oshkosh, Dr. Jafri and his staff, and the Aurora Hospice team including Erin, Monica, and Billy Jo, and all others who cared for George during this difficult time. In honor of George's wishes, there will not be any formal services. George loved dogs, so in lieu of flowers or cards, the family would like anyone who is interested to make a donation to the Oshkosh Humane Society. <https://www.oahs.org/donate/>

Keith R. Schmiedel

Keith R. Schmiedel age 64, passed away on Dec. 10, 2025 at St. Lukes in Milwaukee.



Keith was born in Oshkosh to the late Ronald and Arlene (King) Schmiedel. He is survived by his beloved wife Catherine, of 37 years, son Benjamin and daughter-in-law Rachael,

four sisters Karen, Reque (Don Garman), Kathy (Ron) Paulick, Kay Yanke, Kim (Greg) Anderson and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

Keith was preceded in death by one son Dylan and a brother-in-law Mark Yanke.

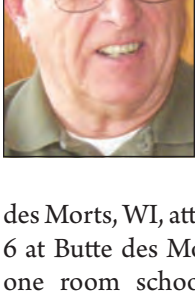
Keith spent much of his life growing up at the family cottage. He enjoyed fishing and hunting with his dad and uncles and later on shared his love of the outdoors with his son Ben, creating so many fond memories.

Keith graduated from Oshkosh West High School. After High School he joined the United State Air Force where he served with the Honor Guards. While he was stationed in Germany, he enjoyed seeing many places in Europe including the Lamans Race in France. He was also an avid NASCAR and football fan. He enjoyed many happy times with friends and family going out to eat and the casino. His good sense of humor will be greatly missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

James William Dellemann

James "Jim" William Dellemann Oshkosh, Wisconsin, age 86, died at Aurora Medical Center surrounded by his family and RN Bethany on December 11, 2025.



James "Jim" was born to the late Herman and Emma (Reuteler) Dellemann on September 15, 1939.

He grew up in Butte des Morts, WI, attending grades 1 through 6 at Butte des Mort School, which was a one room school and graduated from Winneconne High School in 1958. Jim's mother died during childbirth bringing Jim into the world. It will be a joyous reunion when they meet each other for the first time.

He served his country in the USA Navy from 1959 to 1963. He was stationed at Naval Air Stations in Sanford, FL and for two years at Keflavik, Iceland.

He was employed by TWA at O'Hare Field Chicago in Illinois for 2 years after being honorably discharged from the US Navy. He then transferred to TWA at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, CA for 40 years. He moved back to Wisconsin in 2002. He was a tour guide for Rosendale Dairy during his retirement years.

He enjoyed watching football games, car races and attending the Indy 500. He spent many years motorcycle dirt bike racing while in California. He was able to travel to many countries as a TWA employee. He loved learning about the many farms in Wisconsin, going to cheese factories, Dairy Expos and Farm Progress Days. He enjoyed visiting his cousin Karen and her farm near Casco.

On March 1, 1978, Jim was recognized for his heroic actions. Rescuing over 200 passengers from the burning Continental

flight 603, heading to Honolulu when it ran off the runway and burst into flames. There were 73 people injured, two died and 143 unharmed. Jim and a coworker were the first two at the scene to start getting the passengers off the plane. Eight TWA employees were involved in this rescue. Continental Airlines presented each with two free plane tickets to anywhere in the world that Continental Airlines flew. Jim chose to go to Africa and go on an African Safari.

Jim is survived by his sister Kathleen Hartzheim, Winneconne, WI; Two nieces; Michelle "Missy" Hartzheim, Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in Madison, WI and Debra "Debbie" with her husband Andrew "Andy" Gross of Auroraville, WI; Two nephews; Michael "Mike" and his wife Mary Hartzheim of Midlothian IL, and Richard "Rick" Hartzheim of Appleton, WI. Great nieces; Megan Kennedy and her husband Ben Axt of Seattle WA, Amanda Kennedy of Hutchinson Island, SC, Katherine "Katie" Hartzheim of Midlothian IL; Sophie Hartzheim, of Champagne IL and Nora Hartzheim of St Augustine, FL. As well as many cousins, friends and very special friends Mike and Dan Hinz and their mastiff farm dogs Ruby and Hooch.

He is preceded in death by his Grandparents, parents, his stepmother Monica (O'Keefe) Dellemann, Brother-in-law Eugene "Mike" Hartzheim. Along with many aunts, uncles and cousins

A very special thanks to the cardiac staff at Aurora Hospital's 2 west.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial will be established with the Oshkosh Area Humane Society in Jim's name.

At Jim's request no services will be held. Burial will take place in the spring.



Classifieds

Private party ads deadline is 4 p.m. Friday. \$15 for first 20 words

Call 920.385.4512 to place your ad

For Sale

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For Sale: French Bulldog puppy. He is AKC registered. His coloring is tan/lavender. He has a wonderful personality and loves playing. He has all his shots and is chipped. He'll bring along his crate, 2 beds, 3 blankets, his toys and his food and treats. I am asking \$1500 for the little guy. 920-379-8849

For Sale-Aussie-doodle Pups, Shots, Wormed, Dewes Removed, Vet-Checked, Can Deliver. \$400-\$600 each. License #269146 Also have Golden Retriever pups call for info. 715-255-2661

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Legan Notices

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
WINNEBAGO COUNTY

ESTATE OF SHARON L.

VELIE
2347 Bird Lane
Batavia, IL 60510

Plaintiff,
vs

PATRICK LIEBERT
1040 Grand Street

Oshkosh, WI 54901

APRIL LIEBERT
1040 Grand Street

Oshkosh, WI 54901

SALANDER ENTERPRISES,
LLC

225 S. Executive Drive

Brookfield, WI 53005

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

415 Jackson Street

Oshkosh, WI 54901

Defendants.

Case No. 2025CV001078

Case Code: 30404 & 30301

Case Types: Foreclosure/Lane

Contract & Money Judgement

The amount in controversy is in

excess of \$10,000

AMENDED SUMMONS

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

To each person named above

as a Defendant.

You are hereby notified that

the Plaintiffs named above

has filed a lawsuit or other

legal action against you. The

Complaint, which is attached,

states the nature and basis of

the legal action.

Within 40 days of receiving

this Summons (45 days if

the Defendant is the State of

Wisconsin), you must respond

with a written Answer, as that

term is used in chapter 802

of the Wisconsin Statutes,

to the Complaint. The Court

may reject or disregard an

Answer that does not follow the

requirements of the statutes.

The Answer must be sent or

delivered to the court, whose

address is:

Clerk of Circuit Court

Winnebago County Courthouse

415 Jackson Street

Oshkosh, WI 54901

and to Nathan P. Olson of

Olson Legal Group LLC, Plain-

tiff's attorney, whose address

is: 21 W. New York

/s/ Nathan P. Olson

Nathan P. Olson, WSB#105934

21 W. New York Avenue

Oshkosh, WI 54901

Telephone: 920-230-7020

Facsimile: 920-230-7021

www.olsonlegalgroup.com

This document is an attempt to

collect a debt. Any information

obtained will be used for that

purpose.

Runs: December 3, 2025,

December 10, 2025 and De-

cember 17, 2025

WNAXLP

STATE OF WISCONSIN,

CIRCUIT COURT

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE

NAME CHANGE OF:

Julie Ann Sonnenschein

By (Petitioner) Julie Ann

Sonnenschein

Notice of Name Change

Hearing

Case No. 2025CV001158

NOTICE IS GIVEN:

A Petition was filed asking to

change the name of the person

listed above:

From:

First - Julie

Middle - Ann

Last - Sonnenschein

To:

First - Julie

Middle - Ann

Last - Faust

Birth Certificate:

First - Julie

Middle - Ann

Last - Faust

This Petition will be heard in

the Circuit Court of Winnebago

County, State of Wisconsin:

Judge's Name: Hon. Michael

D. Rust

Place: Winnebago County

Courthouse, Room 410, 415

Jackson Street, Oshkosh, WI

54901

Date: January 14, 2026

Time: 2:30 p.m.

If you require reasonable

accommodations due to a

disability to participate in the

court process, please call 920-

236-4811 prior to the sched-

uled court date. Please note

that the court does not provide

transportation.

NOTICE TO NEWSPAPER

AND PETITIONER:

Notice of this hearing shall

be given by publication as a

Class 3 notice for three weeks

in a row prior to the date of the

hearing in the following news-

paper Herald.

BY THE COURT:

DATE SIGNED: December 4,

2025

/s/ Hon. Michael D. Rust

Winnebago County Circuit

Court Judge, Branch 1

Runs: December 17, 2025,

December 24, 2025 and De-

cember 31, 2025.

WNAXLP

Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE
 RENNING LEWIS & LACY

The Mice Before Christmas

The holiday poem *The Night Before Christmas* begins:

'Twas the night before Christmas,
 When all through the house
 Not a creature was stirring,
 Not even a mouse...

WAIT!
 WHAT?



The fact that **house** and **mouse** rhyme makes this Christmas poem fun to read and listen to. But it seems that the author didn't know something important about mice.

Do you know what that is?

MICE ARE NOCTURNAL!

WE LOVE THE NIGHT LIFE!



Nocturnal means mice sleep during the day and are up finding food and doing mousy things at night.



So, they most certainly would have been "stirring" on the night before Christmas!

WORDS TO KNOW

'Twas: Short for "it was."
 Nocturnal: Happening at night.
 Stirring: Moving around.

The Whole Tooth

Mice teeth never stop growing. That's why mice keep gnawing and chewing. That helps wear down their teeth so they don't get too long.

Uh oh! This mouse gnawed some of the words out of this paragraph. Can you replace them?

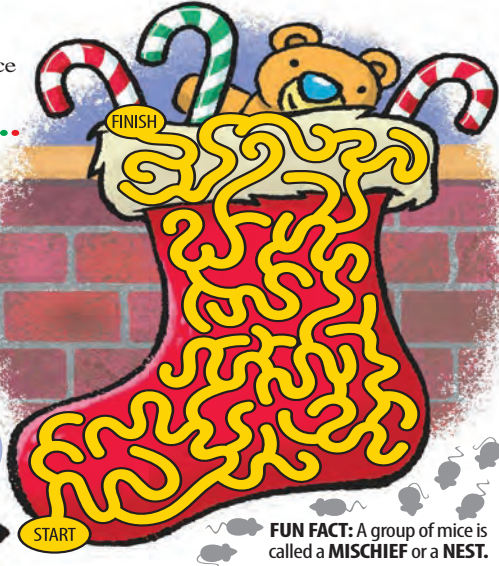
Three Blind Mice

Another _____ that mentions mice is called *Three Blind Mice*. There is some _____ to this poem, as mice don't see very well. Their other senses are very _____. They use their sense of smell, their hearing, and the sensitive _____ of their whiskers to move about _____ find food, and _____ from danger.



SAFELY
 TRUTH
 TOUCH
 STRONG
 HIDE
 POEM

CANDY CANES!
 Yum! Help me climb up this stocking to get one!



FUN FACT: A group of mice is called a MISCHIEF or a NEST.

How does a mouse become mice?

A single mouse is, well, a **mouse**. But when there's more than one mouse, they're **mice**.

Circle every other letter to discover what you call a papa, mama, and baby mouse.

GBYULCTK

A papa mouse is called a

B

ADHOVE

A mama mouse is called a

D

IPCIANXKSY

A baby mouse is called a

P

(or a PUP)

A Very Merry Mouse Party

Maddie and Misty are headed to the party. How many differences do you see?



Standards Link: Observation: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

Extra! Extra!

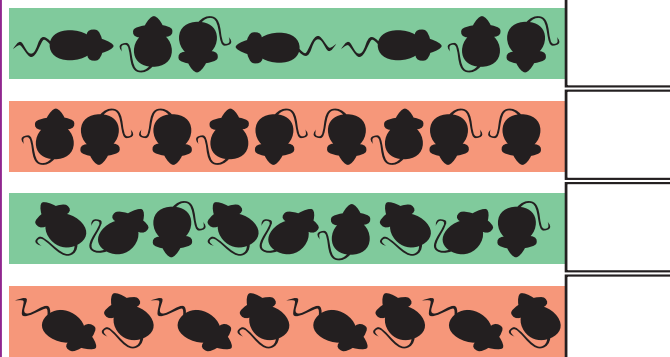
Plural Fun

Look through the newspaper for examples of words that describe more than one of something. How many can you find where the word changes, like mouse changes to mice?

Standards Link: Language Arts: Follow simple written instructions.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Continue the mouse pattern in each row by drawing the mouse shape that should come next.



Standards Link: Math: Recognize and continue patterns.

Double Double Word Search

BABY
 CANDY
 CANE
 CHRISTMAS
 FOOD
 HIDE
 MAMA
 MICE
 NIGHT
 PAPA
 POEM
 SEE
 SENSE
 STOCKING
 TEETH
 WHISKERS

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

L B S T O C K I N G
 W A Q V A M A M K B
 H B Z Y C F E N A C
 I Y M N S T O I D R
 S E D I H M E O P Y
 K P W G C S V E D S
 E A L H N E C J T T
 R P J T S E N S E H
 S A M T S I R H C N

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

Kid Scoop Together

Mice vs. Rats

Are mice and rats the same? Mice and rats are the same in that both are rodents. But there are many differences between them.

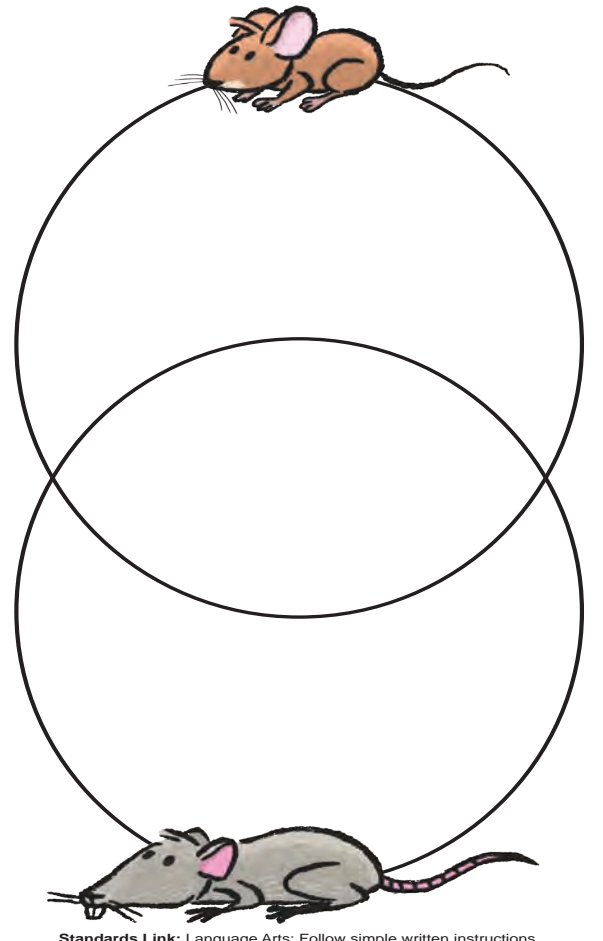
Look at the picture of the mouse and the rat. In the Venn diagram, write the ways they are the same in the center. Put what is only true about mice in the upper circle. Put what is only true about rats in the lower circle.

A mouse:

- Has hair on its tail.
- Is about 8 inches long, including its tail.
- Has small, delicate feet.
- Is a rodent.
- Has whiskers.
- Has fur.
- Is nocturnal.

A rat:

- Has large feet with sharp claws.
- Has a hairless tail.
- Is about 15 inches long, including the tail.
- Is a rodent.
- Has whiskers.
- Has fur.
- Is nocturnal.



Standards Link: Language Arts: Follow simple written instructions.

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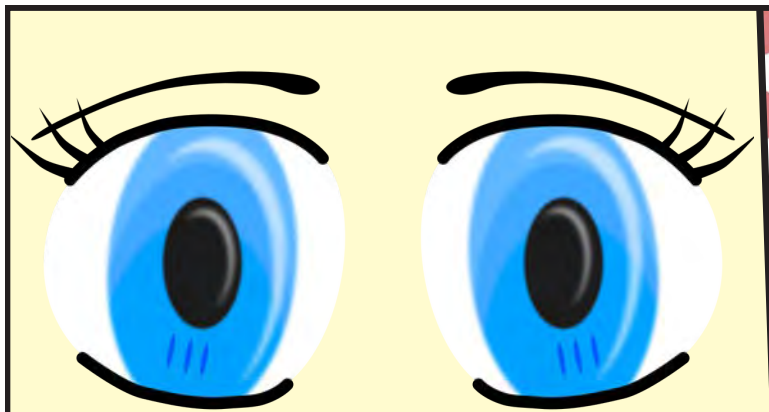
kidscoop.com/activity-pages/

Write On!

Night Shift

Some jobs require working during the overnight hours. Write about what you think this would be like.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Write descriptively using supporting details.



ARE YOU READING THIS?



So Are 77.2% of your neighbors in Oshkosh

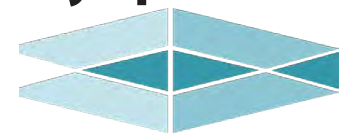
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*Oshkosh Herald 2025 Circulation Verification Council audit

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