

Read more on page 4

A look back at 2025



Clockwise from top left: The Mount Horeb High School Band in the Homecoming Parade; Wednesday Night Live; a summer pig roast at Good News Lutheran Church; firefighters battle a blaze in Mount Vernon; a development proposal downtown sparks backlash; U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin visits Mount Horeb to talk health-care. File photos.

Revisit the local stories that made headlines

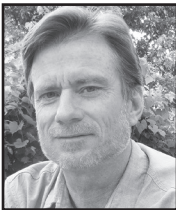


A Bird in the Bush

By William Robichaud
A Bird in the Bush

A Year of Gifts

As I look back on 2025, among the main things I'm grateful



(in addition to health) are relationships with loved ones and the abundance of food the Earth provided me. A recent special gathering combined both, and was a rich, fitting way to begin drawing the year to a close.

My daughter, Alonda, and her boyfriend, Mike, came out from New York City to spend the week of Thanks-

giving with me here at the Wisconsin farmhouse. We had a fine time, including a lot of good eating. Their visit coincided with Wisconsin's main deer hunting season, and a few days before they arrived I shot and killed a fat doe in the woods behind the house.

Now, Mike is a city kid from Long Island, and Alonda grew up in the city of Vientiane, Laos and is pesca-vegan – that is, she eats fish and seafood but no dairy or other animal products. To my surprise and bemused, grateful delight they both absolutely got into helping me butcher the deer in the cool of the basement. I felt like Tom Sawyer at the whitewashed fence as they dove into what is usually a solitary chore for me.

With that as a starting point, we assembled a sublime dinner, all from the Driftless land and streams. Alonda loves mushrooms, and so after some foraging last spring, I froze for her next visit some morels sautéed in olive oil (oil produced by my nephew Keegan in Italy – more connection through food). Morels appetizer, check. For the main course, 'Driftless surf & turf' (of which Alonda could enjoy the surf): trout and venison.

From the freezer I pulled a large brown trout I'd caught in October, and as the trout thawed, I worked into medallions of venison backstrap a rub assembled from various seasonings and birch syrup I make each spring. Then out to the herb

garden I went in the dark, and managed to dig from the snow and the stiff, cold ground a clump of last-stand lemongrass; dead and brown above, but the lower stems and root shafts still replete with flavor. The fragrance of lemongrass is sublime anytime, and there's something even better about taking it in while standing in snow.

After filling the trout with lemongrass, I laid it on parchment paper with a bit of my nephew's olive oil, put some lemon slices across the top, crimped it all closed, and trusted it to the oven. What a fine feast followed, with the morels and the venison. And with everything provided from the Earth through us, or someone we know and love, it was a feast for both body

and soul. Food as connection and relationship.

A few nights later, for the last meal of their visit, I went back to the freezer for three brook trout. Edible art. A bit of salt and pepper inside, a dusting of flour outside, and laid in a pan of hot, nearly smoking olive oil (for a crispy crunchy skin). With some leftover Thanksgiving mashed potatoes and steamed beans from the summer garden (via the freezer), we sat down to another wonderful meal.

With these gifts of the land I fed my daughter and her loved one, and being able to do so was yet another gift of the morels, the gardens, the deer and the trout to me. I look forward to more of the same in 2026. Each day in the coming year the Sun

will bring gifts of light and warmth, and from both our capacity to feed ourselves and those we love. For this stay in gratitude every day, as surely as the dawn.

Bill ("Bird") Robichaud is a writer and an award-winning conservation biologist who lives on a farm north of Barneveld, on ancestral Ho-Chunk territory. He doesn't spend much time in grocery stores, and chronicles the experience of living from and with the Driftless land at www.birdinthebush.net. You can also follow his experiences with conservation of one of the world's rarest animals, on Substack at "Saola Stories."

Rec Notes

Happy New Year from all of us at the Recreation Department—wishing you a happy and healthy year!

Starting January 5th, CivicRec facility reservations for 2026 open. The new software change will provide a more user-friendly experience, improve mobile access, and allow our customers to register for programs and events while also renting a Facility or Park Shelter within the same transaction.

Does your child enjoy LEGOS? Sign them up for Bricktopia Catapults! Students will build a catapult, a dragster, and a scale with LEGO bricks and challenge themselves to problem-solve and innovate. This class runs Thursdays from 5 pm to 6 pm, January 15th through February 29th. The registration deadline is January 3rd. \$94 for residents and \$104 for nonresidents.

Chess Class is starting soon! Open to beginners and casual players, this class teaches chess basics, strategy, and sportsmanship in a fun, relaxed setting. Grandmasters of Chess keeps chess students progressing through 60+ chess lessons and thousands of puzzles as well as guided games and in-class tournaments. This class is for K-5th graders every Wednesday from 4 to 5 pm beginning January 21st. The cost is \$105 for residents and \$115 for nonresidents and the deadline is January 14th.

Looking for some family fun this January? Sign your family and friends up for Puzzle Palooza! Teams of up to four people will

race to complete a 500-piece puzzle while competing for prizes! Puzzles and snacks will be provided. This event takes place at 6 pm on January 16th. The cost is \$15 per team for residents and \$25 per team for non-residents. The registration deadline is January 2nd.

HOW TO REGISTER:
There are multiple ways to register for programs and activities.

Online (go to <https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/mhrd>)

In-person at 105 N. Grove Street

Place completed registration form (found on Rec Dept website) and payment in 24-hour drop box

Email completed registration form (found on Rec Dept website) and payment to mhrec@mounthorebwi.info

UPCOMING REGISTRATION DEADLINES

- 1/2, Puzzle Palooza
- 1/3, YEL Bricktopia Catapults
- 1/8, YEL Video Game Design
- 1/13, After School Art Class Sess. 1
- 1/14, YEL Grandmasters of Chess Sess. 1
- 1/15, YEL Robotics - Muscle 'Bots

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Library announces a new collection

By Hannah Klapperich-Mueller

Your library staff is excited to unveil a new collection of youth audio we were

able to purchase thanks to an end of year donation: Yoto players! Yoto players are screen free audio devices that play audiobooks, music, podcasts and other educational content by inserting plastic cards (about the size of a credit card) into the player. These portable

audio players are great for children ages three and up to independently manage their listening for bedtime or playtime.

The library has three Yoto mini players available for checkout and each comes with a case and charging cable. Be sure to browse the

Yoto cards and select a story or music or nursery rhymes to check out for listening. No wifi? No problem. As long as you have the physical card, you can access the content. This collection will be available for checkout early 2026.

Kim Van Weipz will be PFLAG guest on January 5

Kim Van Wiepz is a self-employed behavior consultant and educational coach here in Dane County. She is a daughter, sister, wife, and mom to two six year olds. She is going to share her

story of coming out, finding your people, continuous self discovery, and the power of spreading awareness by staying true to yourself.

Kim will join PFLAG live at the library from 6-7

PM. The remaining time is reserved for sharing and support. There's no need to RSVP if you'd like to join us in person at the library. If you prefer to attend via zoom, RSVP at PFLAG-

moho@gmail.com. This event is free and open to the public and is not a library sponsored event. It is made possible by a grant from the Mt. Horeb Community Foundation.

\$7.3 billion for water

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) highlighted the importance of the State Revolving Fund programs at the Natural Resources Board meeting on October 22nd. Financial assistance is available to municipalities throughout Wisconsin for drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects that protect and

improve public health and water quality.

The State Revolving Fund includes the Clean Water Fund and Safe Drinking Water Loan programs. Since 1991, those programs have provided over \$7.3 billion in financial assistance.

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2025

continued from page 4

are facing four foundational harms: sleep deprivation, social deprivation, attention fragmentation, and addiction. He shows that social media use does not just correlate with mental illness; it causes it.

“With tenacity and candor, Haidt lays out the consequences that have come with allowing kids to drift further into the virtual world,” wrote TIME’s Shannon Carlin, naming it one of 100 Must-Read Books of the year.

Not everyone is convinced. Just a few weeks ago, the *New Yorker*, always a bastion of working-class common sense, argued that people are probably only afraid that social media is robbing an entire generation of their mental health simply because people are overly wary of new technology. The magazine argued that having a debilitatingly short attention span is probably fine, and perhaps novelists, artists and journalists are the real problem because they are too “boring.” Take that, Tolstoy!

But the harm done by social media is not anecdotal. It’s heavily documented in a sprawling library of scientific research. According to a study published by the National Institutes of Health, evidence from a variety of cross-sectional, longitudinal and empirical studies “implicate smartphone and social media use in the increase in mental distress, self-injurious behavior and suicidality among youth.” The more time young people spend perusing social media on their phones, the worse the effects are. The impact appears to be greatest among girls, the same paper shows.

Social media addiction can make it more difficult for people to learn, and it detaches them from the real-life relationships that can save a person’s life when they are experiencing depression or a mental health crisis. Just one of a litany of disturbing findings in one study was that “social media can negatively affect adolescents’ self-view and interpersonal relationships through social comparison and negative interactions, including cyberbullying; moreover, social media content often involves normalization and even promotion of self-harm and suicidality among youth.”

In addition, “high proportions of youth engage in heavy smartphone use and media multitasking, with resultant chronic sleep deprivation, and negative effects on cognitive control, academic performance and socioemotional functioning.”

The harm caused by social media hasn’t only been chronicled by critics. It’s

even been detailed by the big tech companies that make billions of dollars peddling it. According to an internal TikTok report that became a matter of public record in a filing with the District Court of Lancaster County, Nebraska, “compulsive usage correlates with a slew of negative mental health effects like loss of analytical skills, memory formation, contextual thinking, conversational depth, empathy, and increased anxiety,” in addition to “interfer[ing] with essential personal responsibilities like sufficient sleep, work/school responsibilities, and connecting with loved ones.”

School district picks Bray for \$34 million referendum project

The Mount Horeb Area School District has announced the selection of Bray Architects as their architect and engineering firm to begin planning and designing facility projects for the district’s kindergarten through second-grade students. A statement issued by the district’s resource development and public relations coordinator, Aubree Hanks, said Bray Architects “played a critical role in the 2018 high school expansion, successfully renovating and modernizing much of the existing building under budget and on time to accommodate the 21st-century learner.”

The selection comes as a result of the community’s passage of the district’s 2024 referendum, which allows the district to collect an additional \$34 million on top of its standard revenue.

“The community’s support of the referendum was an important step in supporting our youngest learners,” said Dr. Steve Salerno, superintendent of Mount Horeb Area School District. “The feedback from families, community members, staff, and the dedicated Facility Steering Committee has been invaluable in shaping a plan that truly reflects the needs of our students and our community. This plan tackles our three pillars of needs: inadequate educational and support spaces, aging building systems and infrastructure, and safety and accessibility. With the selection of our architect and engineering team, we are excited to move forward with the next steps in bringing this vision to life.”

The facility improvements will include connecting the kindergarten facilities to the Primary Center, repurposing existing Primary Center spaces to accommodate educational support needs, expanding the library to serve three grade levels, improving safety features throughout the buildings,

and updating the playground to ensure it is both safe and engaging for all students.

“We are grateful to everyone who took part in the community engagement sessions and participated in the referendum process,” said Board of Education president Jessica Arrigoni. “This project is a true reflection of the values and priorities of the Mount Horeb community, and we’re thrilled to see it move forward.”

The next phase of the project will include design work and planning, with construction set to begin in the coming months.

With the fire-damaged Karakahl auctioned off to the bank, village leaders mull land’s fate

The 2024 Presidential Election was taking place. While people across the nation waved signs, yelled at one another on social media, and headed to the poll to cast their ballots, an era was quietly ending in the Village of Mount Horeb. The Karakahl Country Inn was sold at a Dane County Sheriff’s Office foreclosure auction, and the East Coast-based Home Loan Investment Bank, which previously held the mortgage, became the property’s owner.

Located at 101 Perimeter Road, the Karakahl has a complicated history. It is inarguably one of the region’s most architecturally significant buildings, and it was once a swanky destination for travelers from far and wide, offering the weird and wonderful vibe of a Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired building housing a motel, a pool, and a restaurant enjoyed by locals and out-of-towners alike.

But by any definition, it has seen better days, and its remaining days are numbered.

Following years of decline accentuated by a fire that broke out in 2023 and subsequent water damage, the Village of Mount Horeb issued a raze order on the building last year. The owners of the Karakahl attempted to fight the order in court, but with the sale of the building in the fall, the building’s fate was essentially sealed.

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by the bank, but the village raze order still stands,” said village president Ryan Czyzewski. “The board does not intend to take action on it, though. Since we anticipate a private entity purchasing the property for redevelopment, we can avoid that unnecessary expense to the village.”

While the exact fate of the land isn’t known, village leaders are currently working with potential buyers and developers to encourage a form of redevelopment in line with their goals.

“Since the bank took possession of the property, we have been in contact with a broker they have hired,” said economic development consultant Kristen Fish-Peterson.

“I’ve been asked to start drafting a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) project plan for that property and the vacant land across the street,” she added.

“Administrator Nic Owen and ... [Kristen] have been in communication with the bank and connecting them with potential buyers [and] developers,” said Czyzewski. “Though the village can’t dictate who the bank sells to, we have given information as to what types of uses the village is interested in and fits in our comprehensive plan.”

He went on to say there are several types of development that could end up on the land.

“Most, if not all, of the developers that have contacted the village about it are interested in a primarily residential component due to its location near so many supporting businesses and services,” he said. “Some of the things we’ve recommended are senior housing, a group home for individuals with disabilities, mixed-use (commercial and residential mix), and workforce housing that helps with the ‘middle housing’ gap we’ve been discussing at [Community Development Authority, Planning Commission and Village Board].”

Village leaders could consider creating a Tax Incremental District (TID 6) for the property and nearby properties to help pay for the redevelopment.

“That will also help with incentivizing the type of redevelopment [that] is done with the property,” he added.

The official listed name of the new owner of the Karakahl is Wickenden St LLC.

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Hotel first opened its doors in 1964, it was lauded as an architectural landmark and a boon to the local economy. Designed by architect John Steinmann, who also crafted the Wisconsin Pavilion for the New York World’s Fair, the building featured a dramatic, swooping saw-tooth roofline, a swanky restaurant that looked like it had popped out of a Raymond Chandler novel, a sunken rock garden, a large pool, and walls covered in audacious colors. It was designed “with the Norse culture of the community” in mind, according to an article in the Capital Times that said it would “aid [the] Mt. Horeb economy.” Behind the project was C.S. Gonstead, the famous chiropractor who worked out of the similarly Frank Lloyd-Wright-inspired clinic located just behind the hotel. The newspaper in 1964 said it was the only motel in the area to offer dining accommodations.

When Gonstead’s widow, Elvira, died in a local house-fire in 1991, her obituary noted that she had been the hostess at the Karakahl Inn, where she opened and managed her own dress shop. Several people claimed the word “Karakahl” was inspired by the Bible and meant, “Leave your cares.” A Kara Kahl is also a variety of Alpine goat.

The hotel that stands today – at least for now - is actually only a portion of the original structure, part of which was torn down and replaced by the Walgreen’s currently located at 1401 Springdale Street.

County records show the land, totally roughly two acres, and building are currently valued at around \$620,000.

Village leaders eye the 10-year, \$11.9M Grundahl Park Master Plan

The Village of Mount Horeb is eyeing a decade-long, \$11.9 million, multi-phase plan that would make extensive changes to the community’s most popular park. Grundahl Park has long been home to Wednesday Night Live, the Summer

Frolic, National Night Out, Relay for Life events, and much, much more. With an array of proposed projects, it could become more of a hub for even more activity, according to proponents of the plan.

Grundahl Park began several generations ago as a “thank you” to the village, and to America, from a Norwegian immigrant who came to the United States with 20 cents in his pocket in 1899. Today, it is one of Mount Horeb’s most valued gathering places. It’s exact future isn’t set in stone, but a document formulated at the village hall gives a glimpse of what it could look like.

The village’s Grundahl Park’s Master Plan includes four key phases, with work beginning this year and continuing into 2035. Some of the individual projects will certainly happen, but others might not, because each component still needs to be reviewed by the Mount Horeb Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission (PRF) and approved by the village board as part of the annual budget process before moving forward.

The master plan was selected by the PRF last year after reviewing several visions.

“Basically, we brought in some consultants to tell us about the opportunities, needs, potential weaknesses there,” said Brett Halverson, village trustee and chair of the PRF. “To tell us some things the community wants and needs there in the future.”

In the short term, the village will upgrade the park’s playground and ball fields, among other things. Other, more ambitious work will be considered later on.

“I think it’s good to look at [the Master Plan] as more of a general outline than a blueprint,” Halverson explained. “We’re moving forward with the short-term stuff now, and in the future we can see if it works to move forward with some of the other things.”

Village president Ryan Czyzewski said the master plan provides “enhanced facilities for existing uses ... with the capability to add more uses.” Czyzewski

continued on page 6

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continued from page 5

said that he, too, expects the village to pursue changes at Grundahl at a measured pace, particularly because Mount Horeb is also moving forward with other major projects, including on the other side of town.

“With so many needs and opportunities, and the need to develop the Lukken parkland, it’s designed to be a phased approach to spread out the cost and adjust if needed,” Czyzewski said. “The commission has already started with approving some of the Phase 1 improvements at Grundahl Park and working on others to determine for [the] next budget(s).”

According to Czyzewski, new lights for the baseball diamond are being ordered, the final design for new playground equipment is being honed at the next meeting with a representative from Gerber Leisure Products answering questions, and PRF “is discussing storage options with the Summer Frolic Committee, with potential to expand an existing shelter or usage.”

“It’s a priority of the commission to continue to work on the Grundahl improvements in conjunction with other park improvements,” Czyzewski said.

If fully approved, phase one costs around \$929,000 and includes improvements to existing concessions, benches, trash cans, lighting, earthwork and more.

Phase two would cost an estimated \$1.3 million and

include more lighting, path work, bike racks, a drinking fountain, improvements to the baseball field and more.

Phase three would include similar enhancements, plus a new restroom, kitchen and shelter facility. It would cost an estimated \$1.3 million.

The fourth and final phase would cost roughly \$6 million in today’s money, or close to \$8 million with inflation factored in. It would include native grass seeding, a \$4.5 million, 20,000-square-foot multi-use event building, and more.

Totaling 13 acres, Grundahl Park is located on the southwest side of the village on Blue Mound Road. According to the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, it was formerly the site of the village’s sewage treatment plant.

In the late 1950s, Henry Grundahl gave five acres of land to the village on which to build a playground in the future. After the sewage plant was moved in 1978, the first phase of work on Grundahl Park was completed in 1981 with a ball field and hockey rink. In 1985, the village built a shelter on the site. Improvements to the park since then have been largely the result of work by the Summer Frolic Committee.

Halverson said the development of public parkland at the Lukken property could impact changes at Grundahl Park, and vice versa, as village leaders attempt to strike a balance with their long-term goals across the village. “They’re interconnected,” he said.

Life on the edge

There is an ancient Persian proverb often attributed to King Solomon. In the story, someone asks the king to say something that will always be true, in good times and bad, now and forever. Solomon replies: “This too shall pass.” The only rock-solid fact a person can utter is that nothing is forever, and all things will pass. All places are in-between places. All times are in-between times. As the Greek Philosopher Heraclitus put it, you can never step in the same river twice, because it is not the same river, and you are not the same you.

S.K. Kruse, who is a member of the Guild for Engaged Liminality, knows this, and her stories teach the lesson again and again. In her writing, nothing is ever quite what it seems, and each person stands on one threshold after another. Just like in real life.

She has been busy of late. The Mount Horeb-based writer made her debut more than a quarter century ago in *The Onion*. She subsequently spent much of her life doing all sorts of interesting and meaningful things except being an author, including raising 11 children. Then, in 2021, Deuxmers published her “Tales from the Liminal,” a debut collection of 15 delightfully mesmeric stories featuring the philosophical depth of Dostoyevsky and the glint-in-the-eye humor of Borges.

The world is a strange and baffling place, and living in it requires strange and baffling stories. Life brims with suffering and overflows with beauty, and out of these twin truths rise countless necessary works of poetry, prose, theology and literature, including Kruse’s work. Influenced by everyone from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich to Victor Hugo, she delights in *almost* seeing and *almost* knowing profound truths.

The title of her debut book was not accidental or insignificant. Liminality is something of a mantra for Kruse. Growing out of the Latin word for threshold, “liminal” is a term for in-between places and states. Merriam-Webster defines it

as “of, relating to, or situated at a sensory threshold: barely perceptible or capable of eliciting a response” or “of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition.”

Liminality is the state of limbo experienced by every reader as their eyes pass from one word to another, from one sentence to the next, their fingers turning the page, the sheer joy of seeing or sensing things not yet fully known or fully understood, the thrill of existing on the precipice of everything not yet calcified into the immutable past. To live a liminal life is to feel the swelling of a heart in the chest as you pass through these portals, to know that every moment is tied to the last, and everything that ever happens is a beguiling mystery right up until the moment it passes into history and therefore ceases to exist. All of creation is an eternal mist that floats and hovers, then briefly passed through us, and then is set in stone as the granite, unchanging past. Each step forward in life and in art is a plunge into the fog, and each thinking person takes every step with a mixture of horror, humor and courage. Each of Kruse’s stories is another step into the fog, and somehow each one helps the reader see and feel the world a little clearer.

On top of everything else, Kruse is also the founder of the Liminal Essay Scholarship.

We recently caught up with her to learn more about her writing, her life, and her essay contest, which is currently open for submissions.

‘What keeps you up at night?’

When Janis Strutt’s daughter died unexpectedly, it was the end of something special. A smart, funny, spirited young woman was gone from the world. She had loved Harry Potter, going to church, Taylor Swift, and most of all her family, and now they were left to grieve without her. But in her wake, Morgan, who went to sleep at the age of 25 and never woke up, left behind an enduring legacy of love that will impact countless special needs people and the

family members who work tirelessly to give them the support they need.

Morgan’s Caring Connection recently celebrated its first anniversary, and already it is helping people find answers to some of life’s most difficult questions.

The non-profit organization exists purely to help families figure out how to best take care of their children, and themselves, both now and in the future. It connects them with vital resources and helps maneuver over and around a litany of barriers. For the families of special needs dependents, Morgan’s legacy is one that casts a light of hope in the darkness.

For Strutt and her wife Kelly, who is Morgan’s biological mother, and siblings Mackenzie and Mason, the story is both universal and intensely personal.

“We started thinking about the challenges we faced,” explained Janis.

For any parent, life is full of questions. Some are goofy or comical. Others are daunting and dark. But for parents with special needs children, the questions persist, and intensify, rather than going away as the family ages. One of the biggest questions these parents face is: “Who will care for my adult child after I die or when I no longer can?” Estate planning is never as important as when human lives hang in the balance.

It’s a simple reality that for parents whose children will not ever be fully able to care for themselves, the story can only end in one of two ways: The first is that the child dies, leaving their parents to mourn. The other is that the parents die, or reach an age where they can no longer care for their adult children, and the family is let loose from its moorings to drift on a sea of uncertainty. These are not particularly cheerful things to think about, but for people who love their special needs children, they are profoundly important issues.

And it’s more than just estate planning. It’s hard to find an area in which Morgan’s Caring Connection doesn’t help families. The organization works to find answers, locate resources, and simplify the constellation of complicated issues many people face. It works to connect people with existing services, which can come in the form of anything from money to specialists.

They hold what they call “empowerment sessions” to share information that families need in a relatable, accessible way.

“We try to make it conversational, short, to make it palatable,” said Strutt.

“I always try to ask the question: ‘What keeps you up at night?’” she continued. “A lot of things keep parents up at night, and they don’t know where to turn or who to trust.”

Morgan’s Caring Connection offers a directory of places people can turn for answers about healthcare, guardianship, estate planning, home-related services, education, recreation, independence and much, much more.

Morgan was born with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. As someone with both physical and cognitive disabilities, she would never be fully independent, which meant the entire family had to find ways to support her and help her grow for the entirety of her life.

“I always wanted her to be as independent as she could possibly be in her life,” Strutt said. “I looked at it as *her* quality of life, and also *our* quality of life.”

Part of their philosophy was to eschew arbitrary barriers.

“My wife and I never had any boundaries,” she said. “We were never like: ‘Oh, we can’t do that because Morgan’s in a wheelchair.’”

Instead, they met their challenges head on. But even for them, it was complicated and difficult. They know the struggle as well as any family.

\$1.4 million line to Tyrol OK’d

The Public Service Commission last week approved construction of an underground powerline to the Tyrol Basin Ski Resort to replace an aging line that is prone to outages and difficult to maintain.

According to the PSC’s Feb. 24 decision:

The Mount Horeb Electric Utility line that extends north from the village crosses hilly terrain, private woodlands, and straddles Elver’s Creek several times before dead-ending at the ski/snowboard resort.

The line has experienced 25 outages in the past 10 years, most attributed to acts of nature including fallen tree limbs, and that’s despite the utility trimming trees along the line every four years at a cost of \$24,000.

The line serves approximately 120 customers, of which Tyrol Basin is the biggest.

The hilly, wooded and wet terrain can make access

continued on page 7

CHURCH NOTES

Good News Lutheran Church - WELS
NEW LOCATION:
9975 Pepper Dr
Pastor Jonathan Bauer
Sunday Worship: 9:00 am
(in person and online)
Sunday School and Bible Study 10:15 am
608-437-4646 visit
GoodNewsLC.org/location for details & directions

Mt. Horeb Evangelical Lutheran Church – ELCA
315 E. Main St. 608-437-5012
www.elcmthoreb.org
5 pm Saturday Worship
9 am Sunday Worship

Mt. Horeb United Methodist
Corner of Hwy. S & Hwy. 78
Sunday Worship: 9am online and in person
umcmh.org
Celebrating God's Inclusive Love

Mt Vernon United Church of Christ
1693 Washington St. Verona
608-832-6677
Sunday Worship, in-person and on Facebook Live, 10:15 am
Bible Study 9am-10am
We are an Open and Affirming Congregation

St. Michael The Archangel Parish
~St. Ignatius Catholic Church
109 S. Sixth St., Mount Horeb
608-437-5348
Mass: Sunday 10:30 am
Tuesday, 5:30 pm,
Thurs-Friday, 8:00 am;
Sat. 5:00 pm
~Holy Redeemer Catholic Church
10070 Spring Valley Dr., Mount Horeb
Mass: Sunday 8:00 am

New Hope Evangelical Free Church
639 S. Eighth St., Mt. Horeb
Phone: 608-437-3273
www.newhopeefc.org
Sunday 10:00 a.m. Worship Service

Perry Lutheran Church ELCA
1057 Hwy 78 S, Mt. Horeb
608-437-5294
Sunday Worship 9:00 am
www.perrylutheranchurchelca.org

Springdale Lutheran Church
2752 Town Hall Rd. 608-437-3493
Vicar: James Ranney
Worship: 1st, 3rd & 5th
Sundays of the month at 10am
twosteeple.org

Mt Vernon United Church of Christ
1693 Washington St. Verona
608-832-6677
Sunday Worship, in-person and on Facebook Live, 10:15 am
Bible Study 9am-10am
We are an Open and Affirming Congregation

Vermont Lutheran Church-ELCA
9886 Vermont Church Road
Black Earth, WI 53515
www.vermontlutheran.org
608-767-3312 (office)
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

West Blue Mounds Lutheran Church
2962 Church St., Blue Mounds
608-437-3493
Vicar: James Ranney
Worship: Every 2nd & 4th
Sunday of the month, 10:00 am

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2025

continued from page 6

to some line segments challenging, increasing the time to complete the repair and lengthening the time of the outage.

While many repairs can be made from a bucket truck, some areas aren’t truck accessible requiring crews to climb poles or even hand carry in poles to some area, according to Forster Electrical Engineering, the project’s manager.

Tyrol Basin has experienced 30 outages/surges in the past six years, which have damaged equipment and stranded skiers on lift chairs, Nathan McGree, the resort’s owner, wrote the PSC in July.

A December 2023 outage/surge damaged motors that required repairs costing \$74,000. That event also cost the ski hill a night of snowmaking during a winter when snowmaking was feasible on only 22 nights, McGree wrote.

Skiers had to be extracted from the lifts during a March 2023 outage and prompted the resort to make refunds totaling \$2,300. The ski hill was without power due to an outage on an extremely cold day in January 2021 requiring refunding fees to 60 customers. And a surge blew out the resort’s main server during the summer of 2021 which cost \$4,500 to replace.

“Tyrol has paid an enormous amount of money in peak on demand charges over the years, and it is my understanding that part of what peak on demand charge is for is to facilitate having good infrastructure to supply the demand for power we have. The current infrastructure supplying us power is antiquated at best and complete junk in some situations,” McGree wrote.

McGree declined to comment Feb. 27 on the PSC’s decision.

In Electric Superintendent Jordan Schmitz’s opinion, Tyrol’s troubles weren’t the main reason he wanted to underground the line that serves the resort. Instead, it was adding the Military Ridge Substation near US 18/151 west of the village last year. By connecting that substation to one downtown, it allowed the village electric distribution grid to be looped. In a dead end line, power flows from one point, but in a looped system power can be sent from two directions. When a repair needs to be made, less of a looped line needs to be shut-down which inconveniences fewer customers, Schmitz said.

The new underground line tap into a line at CTH ID and North Road, then extend up North Road to where it will split in two. One leg continues to the ski resort, and the

other leg connects to a line along CTH JG, looping the line and the village’s distribution system.\

The existing line was installed in the 1970s and probably could be prone to increasing outages as the equipment continues to age.

Schmitz anticipates that the estimated \$1.467 million project will be bid in few weeks and digging can begin by late May and construction completed by late summer. Hopefully, long before the snow flies again.

Forster estimated that the cost of the powerline project will add about \$2.30 to monthly electric bills of average residential customers, bumping them from \$94.54 to \$96.84.

Village board votes down ATV proposal

The Village Board of Mount Horeb denied ATV use on public streets in the village. They also approved some financing decisions for upcoming projects and an extension with new lots on Brookview Trail.

The board did not approve ATV use in the village, with only trustee Cathy Scott voting in favor.

The Plan Commission had previously recommended approval but one member recommended denial.

Mount Horeb Police Chief Doug Vierck explained that ATVs and UTVs cannot be given traffic citations, they could only get municipal ordinance tickets. The violations are not reported to insurance or brought against the violator’s driver license.

“Knowing the different nuances there on which applies where and how that goes, that’s where the training is going to have to come in making sure our officers are up to speed on what these different things are,” Vierck said, “so that will be time consuming at the start.”

Village administrator Nic Owen explained that the proposed ordinance was designed to allow ATVs on every street that the village is able to. This is to simplify enforcement and allow residents to drive ATVs straight from their homes.

The ordinance included language that bans intoxicants, sets speed limits and times of use and requires insurance.

Public input provided directly to the village across this issue was nearly evenly split with 20 in favor and 22 against.

Routes to the east of the village are already severely limited by the town of Springdale while southern routes have not yet been applied for due to the lack of approval in Mount Horeb. West and north sides of the village have a few established routes and other communities which connect.

Much of the opposition centered around safety. The manufacturers of ATVS and UTVS include a label that says they are not designed for use on public roads. However, Badger ATV representative Robert Sagmoen clarified that the label on new ATVs now adds “unless designated for off highway vehicle access.”

Those in favor clarified that data on emissions were done with much older ATV models that are no longer made. Noise concerns were also contested, with arguments that most ride on mowers and an idling semi trucks were much louder.

State safety rules require those under 18 to wear a helmet, have a licensed adult with them and take a safety course.

Village trustee Cathy Scott voted in favor of the ordinance and expressed frustration with the board’s ruling.

Scott cited the many surrounding communities and counties that have allowed ATV use as a reason to support it in the village.

“I just don’t think it’s logical that the leaders of all of these communities that I’m talking about would be wrong with allowing them to be used,” Scott said, “if there were significant problems in the last 20 years we’d hear about it, and yes there’s going to be deaths yes there’s going to be accidents there’s motorcycle accidents and car accidents... all these sort of things happen but I think that’s part of life.”

Trustee Ben Jones voted no on the ordinance, saying although he’s had positive experiences with ATVs and those who ride them, the businesses that may benefit have not pushed to support it.

“We have to think of both the costs and the benefits and I think the benefits here are pretty, with all due respect to the people who want use their ATVs and the positive economic benefits here, are pretty modest.”

Another issue for Jones was safety, although he acknowledged that when compared to motorcycles ATVs are similarly dangerous. “These vehicles don’t have the same safety features we’re seeing in automobiles.”

Jones also brought up the way state statute makes it impossible to prosecute ATV drivers in the same way as car drivers, especially when driving under the influence. Although there are laws against drunk ATV riding and other violations, the separate enforcement measures from automobiles caused him concern.

“It’s not that I think ATV [riders] are more likely to drink than car drivers... but our legal system isn’t set up to handle it in the same

way and I think it’s going to lead to some marginal problems,” he said.

Trustee Brett halverson and Nate Gauger also voted against for the same reasons that others had stated.

Trustee Mark Schellfefer also voted against and took issue with the differences in enforcement standards that others mentioned. However, he didn’t agree with everything said by the rest of the opposition.

“Whether they’re in a UTV or a car, they’re going to create a safety issue if they want to make a safety issue,” Schekffefer said. “I don’t think it’s the vehicle that’s the issue in my mind.”

Bomb threat at Walgreen’s

Thu, 03/27/2025 - 2:51pm
The Mount Horeb Police Department issued the following statement:

On March 27, 2025 at approximately 9:42am, Officers from the Mount Horeb Police Department were dispatched to Walgreen’s, 1401 Springdale Street for a report of a bomb threat. The reporting person stated they received a phone call with vague information about a possible bomb left in the store.

Officers arrived on scene and ensured the safety of everyone. Interviews were completed and the investigation is ongoing. Dane County Sherriff’s Office assisted with an explosive detecting K9. The building was searched and nothing was located. We will continue to investigate, but there is no threat at this time.

It is believed that this incident is related to several other similar incidents across Dane County. Thanks to everyone for their patience as we work through this. If you or anyone you know has information regarding this incident, please contact the Mount Horeb Police Department

Rise of the machines

Around 12,000 years

ago in what is now Turkey, people began milking cows. It was the Neolithic Revolution, and it completely changed the course of human history. Milk, cheese, yogurt and butter fueled empires and exploration, feeding everything from squalling infants to powerful warriors. The first writer, the first painter, the first accountant, the first architect, the first engineer: most of them would not have lived to adulthood without dairy products.

The Neolithic period has long since faded into prehistory. The year is 2025. But a new revolution is changing the world yet again.

No longer residing merely in the prefecture of science fiction, robots are here in the real world, and they are milking cows. Across Wisconsin, a surprising number of small family farms are turning to these machines to care for their herds. They believe this innovation will keep their farms in business, and their clans together, helping them care for the land, the community and their animals, far into the future.

It’s a Thursday morning on the Haag family farm, located on Britt Valley Road in the Town of Primrose between Mount Horeb and New Glarus. A Holstein saunters into a milking stall. Once inside, a red and silver robot reads a computer chip in her collar, gives her the appropriate ration of food, and starts milking her. It gleans an array of information about her, including when she last calved and when she will go into heat again. It measures how much milk she is producing, down to the last drop. All this information is immediately available on an app the farmers have on their phones, no matter where they are. The machine can even sperate high-colostrum milk, sending it to its own tank so the farmers can feed it to the young calves that need it most.

The Haag family currently has four of these robots, which milk their 280-cow

herd. They allow the cattle to be milked whenever they need it, anytime of day or night, and they provide a litany of vital health information. They wash and sterilize, and they offer a real-time glimpse into each cow’s production.

The farm has been in the family of Virgil Haag since the 1950s. It’s where he grew up, and it’s where he, along with wife Dawn and adult children, Kody Haag and Karsen Bentley, works. The fact that a fleet of robots milk their cows means they have far more time to focus on the health of their land, their crops, their animals, and their own families.

According to Dawn, this innovation ensures that another generation, and possibly many more beyond that, will care for the land at the Haag family farm.

“The reason we did this, was we made a deal with our kids that they would get a secondary education, that they would go out and see the world, work off the farm, and then they could come back and work the farm if they wanted to,” she said.

But Dawn and Virgil knew just how hard farming life is, and they understood the toll it can take on those who spend their lives doing it. So they wanted to find a way to run a successful farm without grinding their children to dust in the process.

“You want your kids to be happy,” said Dawn.

Dawn and Virgil wanted to be happy, too, which meant they wanted their kids, and their grandkids, around. For all of them, the solution was simple: they needed to innovate.

They built a new barn and on August 10, 2023, a robot milked a cow there for the first time.

It’s been less than two years, but the family says they are confident it was the right decision.

“I don’t think any of us would ever go back,” said Dawn.

The four “Astronaut” robots at the Haag farm come

continued on page 8



Commercial ■ Residential ■ Agricultural
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2025

continued from page 7

from Lely Industries, a Dutch company with an office in nearby Monroe.

It was 1948 when brothers Cornelis and Arij van der Lely introduced the finger wheel rake to the market, one of the company’s first major inventions. Today, they sell and maintain a variety of dairy technology, including their robots

The Haag farm’s Astronauts are hooked up to backup generators, so even if there is a power outage, they will keep on milking.

They aren’t cheap. It took a hefty investment – millions of dollars - in the technology, and they received no subsidies to help fund the switch.

“It was a big sticker shock up front,” Dawn said. “We put our farm up as collateral.”

The investment immediately started paying off.

A single robot can handle about 60 cows. That means a few machines can do what was, previously, a full-time job for multiple people. That frees up the farmers to focus on other aspects of the operation, and it helps prevent staffing shortages that can halt milk production (and halt revenue).

“There’s lots of ways to milk cows,” Dawn explained. “This is what works for us.”

“When I’m not milking seven or eight hours a day, I can focus on crop health, I can focus on cow health,” Kody said. He added that less grunt work means more details get the attention they need, which improves a variety of outcomes.

He believes the cows are happier now, too.

“It’s all on their terms now,” he explained.

In fact, some of them try to get milked many more times than they should be. The machine can recognize when a cow was milked too recently, and it happens quite often.

“We’ve got cows with 10 refusals a day,” Kody said with a laugh.

Karsen said the machines have given the cows and the humans the same gift: “freedom.”

“Don’t work harder,” she said. “Work smarter.”

Her life is farming, and she was married in the same barn she manages. She said that seeing the cows happy makes her happy.

“Cows are always your best friends, even when they are your worst nightmare,” Karsen joked.

Virgil is standing just 100 yards from the home where he grew up with his nine siblings. (They slept in two rooms; the boys in one, the girls in the other.) He’s glad his family still works this soil, but he admits he never would have guessed, when he was helping in the barnyard as a child, that he would someday be working alongside robots.

“Oh, God no,” he laughs. “No, I wouldn’t have guessed it.”

When Virgil and Dawn decided they wanted to be farmers, they knew it would take a lot of hard work, and a willingness to evolve. But they knew the investment would pay off in myriad intangible ways.

“Agriculture has been all our lives for a long, long time,” said Dawn. “Our goal was to raise our kids here and have a rural life.”

The fact that their children are still working with them as adults means they succeeded in more ways than one.

“I’m fortunate,” said Dawn. “I get to see my grandchildren a lot.”

“This is still really, truly family farming,” she added.

Road project will improve drainage near lake

A road project tentatively scheduled for the spring and summer of this year will upgrade a portion of County Highway JG and improve drainage near Stewart Lake.

Work will focus on a 0.84 mile section extending from Mt. Horeb village limits to the Stewart Lake Park Limits. The proposed improvement includes: Hot Mixed Asphalt overlay of the existing pavement; Adding new curb & gutter to help control the water flowing down towards Stewart Lake State Park Entrance; Reinforcing the side slopes off the roadway to help reduce the erosion of material onto the roadway facility; Upgrading the beamguard to meet current standards; Replacing select culverts; Constructing a storm sewer system to help control the water as it flows towards the Stewart Lake Park Entrance; Installing new pavement markings.

Due to the tight conditions of the existing roadway, CTH JG will be closed

to through traffic during this project. Message boards will be used to give advance notice of closures. Drivers are advised to identify alternate routes so the closures will be less disruptive and avoid the active construction zone during the work day if possible.

Compost stations aim to address food waste

According to the USDA, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply in the United States. This figure, based on estimates from USDA’s Economic Research Service of 31 percent food loss at the retail and consumer levels, corresponded to approximately 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food in 2010.

This amount of waste has far-reaching impacts on society and the environment. Healthy food that could have helped feed families in need is sent to landfills. Land, water, labor, energy and other inputs are used in producing, processing, transporting, preparing, storing, and disposing of discarded food.

So, to borrow a phrase from Leo Tolstoy, what is to be done?

In 2015, the USDA joined with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to set a goal to cut our nation’s food waste by 50 percent by the year 2030. But much of the real work is being done at the local level.

That’s why carpenter Dan Ganch has been busy building five community composting stations on South Second Street in downtown Mount Horeb. Delaney Gobster, business development and outreach coordinator for Dane County Department of Waste & Renewables (W&R), recently spoke to the Village of Mount Horeb’s Sustainability and Natural Resources Committee about the countywide initiative, which will place community drop-off locations in Madison, Middleton, McFarland, and Verona in June of 2025.

In partnership with host municipalities, W&R will collect food scraps from free residential drop-off locations across Dane County for composting at Purple Cow Organics. Food scrap collections at the Dane County landfill will launch April 1, 2025. Residents

may use the Clean Sweep facility entrance at 7020 Maahic Way to avoid large hauler traffic. Community drop-off locations in Madison, Middleton, McFarland, and Verona will launch in June. Tim White, a member of the Mount Horeb Village Board and the Sustainability Committee, said he hopes the community will eventually have its own local site as well.

“Composting is our department’s newest recycling program,” said Gobster. “We operate the County landfill that accepts over 300,000 tons of materials every year. Over 34 percent of all land-filled items in Dane County are organic materials (food, yard waste, etc.). It is our largest single waste stream and the majority of that is wasted food. These materials are a community resource that instead of being landfilled, can be turned into compost, and ultimately food for our community.”

“Aside from consuming landfill space, there’s an environmental impact from the methane generated from organics decomposing in the landfill,” she continued. “We’re always innovating and have invested in a Renewable Natural Gas plant that can recycle the methane produced from the landfill, but we can go further. If we can prevent organic waste from being landfilled by composting it instead, we will extend the life of our landfill and reduce emissions, but we can’t do it without community support and participation.”

“We have a lot of great local composters, but Dane County is growing rapidly, and our department is committed to expanding the local organics recycling infrastructure,” Gobster said. “We have partnered with Purple Cow Organics and are investing in their ability to accept food scraps. Launching our Food Scrap Stop program for free residential drop-offs is our next step towards expanding our community’s access to food scrap composting.”

Local schools grow their own greens

Ever since she became the Mount Horeb Area School District’s food services director in 2009, Michelle Denk has worked to get more fresh, healthy, local, sustainable food on stu-

dents’ plates. In the past, that meant purchasing produce from local farmers and building up a more robust farm-to-cafeteria network.

But now, the school district is actually growing many of its own greens on site, thanks to hydroponic technology. And the partnership support representative for Fork Farms, the Green Bay-based company that designed the hydroponic “flex farms,” is Nina Loomis, a 2017 graduate of Mount Horeb High School.

“Michelle actually was my food service director,” said Loomis. “She fed me when I was in school.”

Loomis went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in science and a master’s in environmental studies. Her parents still live in Blue Mounds. She said she finds her work incredibly rewarding and that Fork Farms’ technology is used in all 50 states and around 15 countries, but it was especially gratifying to see it growing food in the school district she attended during her formative years.

Loomis said ensuring that more people have access to healthy local food is flush with purpose and meaningful community impact.

For Denk, it was the next step in an ongoing process.

“We applied for and received a Healthy Meals Incentives Grant,” explained Denk. “The grant has allowed us to purchase some large and small equipment and hire a chef for recipe development. Additionally, we have been able to purchase more locally grown products for use in our cafeterias. It also funded a back-to-school food show in the fall where we were able to invite all parents and students for taste testing.”

“This grant allowed us to purchase two indoor vertical hydroponic systems/farms from Fork Farms,” she continued. “We loved Fork Farms because they are local and they are extremely easy to use. Our staff were very excited about them and the labor is minimal.”

As a result, the school district can now grow 25 pounds of lettuce per month per farm.

“We currently purchase about 150 pounds of lettuce per month so that helps out quite a bit for only the cost of seeds,” she said. “Once we harvest the lettuce, we send it out to all of the schools for their salad bars. The lettuce might last three-

to-four weeks as compared to the lettuce we buy commercially that might only last a week. Additionally, it tastes better!”

“We are on our second planting and are growing cilantro, basil, cucumbers, and snack peppers along with our lettuce,” she added.

The technology itself is simple in theory – growing plants in nutrient-rich water – and complex in implementation.

“We are an impact technology company in the hydroponics world with our patented version of the flex farm, which is a vertical growing tower that we use to increase food access all over the world,” explained Loomis.

Dane County to Crown Gwen Mahoney as Fairest of the Fair at Breakfast on the Farm

Congratulations to the 2025 Dane County Fairest of the Fair, Gwendolyn (Gwen) Mahoney of Mount Horeb. Mahoney will be crowned at the Dane County Breakfast on the Farm to be held Saturday, June 14 at Hinchley’s Dairy Farm, 2844 State Road 73, Cambridge, WI. The public is invited to attend the presentation of Mahoney who was selected for this role at the April selection event.

Mahoney is the daughter of Lisa and John Mahoney. She is a graduate of Mount Horeb Area High School and is currently a sophomore at Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI double majoring in Neuroscience and Biochemistry. Post undergraduate education, she would like to attend medical school in hopes of becoming a psychiatrist in the prison system.

Mahoney was a long-time exhibitor of the Dane County Fair for 11 years showing swine and projects in several non-animal departments. She has served as a Superintendent in the Flowers & House Plants and Knitting & Crocheting departments and is currently the Co-Chair of the Cultural Arts Department. Mahoney has also been a member of the Fair’s Youth Committee and assisted the Fair in a variety of duties during Fair week each year.

When Mahoney is not at-

continued on page 9

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2025

continued from page 8

tending school or assisting with the Fair, she spends her time volunteering within the community and at school and is a member of a variety of committees and boards. Mahoney has a passion for being a leader. She has held a variety of leadership positions throughout her life. In High School, Mahoney was the captain of the Varsity Girls Golf team, Class Vice President and Treasurer, Drama Club President, Student Director of Middle School Musical, Choir Board President, and Band Board President. Outside of High School, she held club officer positions and Dane County Youth Ambassador and Board Youth Representative in her 4-H Club (Springdale 4-H) and the Treasurer position in FFA. In college, Mahoney is active as a member of the STEM Club executive board, honors program leadership board, Student Government Association College of Letters, Engineering and Science, Mission Integration Committee, and the Fiber Arts Club Vice President.

“I believe that being Dane County Fairest of the Fair will give me the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with people of all different ages and backgrounds. In being Fairest of the Fair, I plan to network within the industry and meet people who have worked hard in their community to make a difference. I plan to highlight causes that I am passionate about, such as ability inclusive agricultural practices, and make them more noticed. I will also encourage youth to become involved in 4-H or another youth organization and the variety of programs they have to offer to enhance their knowledge and relationships that have benefited me throughout the years,” Mahoney stated.

In this role, Mahoney will attend community events promoting the upcoming Dane County Fair, July 17–20 as well as additional events across the state. She will make daily appearances at the Fair meeting fairgoers, presenting awards to youth exhibitors, and

participating in various activities. Community members can keep up with her year as Dane County Fairest of the Fair by liking the Dane County Fairest of the Fair Facebook page.

In the heart of Madison, the Dane County Fair is home to free concerts, stunt shows, animals, carnival rides, and all the best fair foods. Celebrating 175 years, the Dane County Fair will once again be held at the Alliant Energy Center, July 17–20, 2025.

Front Street mural will pay homage to the community’s rural beauty

It was an early June day just northwest of Ridgeway, and the scene that unfolded before photographer Terry McNeill was verdant, pastoral and powerfully emblematic of the things that make this region special. It was more than just a passing moment in time and place; it was a glimpse into the area’s resplendent past.

“It could be anywhere in the Driftless area,” mused McNeill. “It was early evening with gentle breezes, happy cows’ tails and grasses swaying. The windy road and wispy clouds made for a flowing scene. The only sounds were of birds singing and cows munching.”

McNeill captured the moment in a photograph and later offered it to the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society and Driftless Historium. Today, that image is serving as the inspiration for a stunning 15- by 30-foot mural that will be officially unveiled at a party celebrating the Historical Society’s 50th anniversary on Saturday, May 10. The mural, which will adorn the building on Front Street and pay homage to Mount Horeb’s past, present and future, combines the photo with other iconic local elements in a painting intended to brighten and beautify the village’s downtown, all while drawing people

together.

“For 50 years, the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society has preserved our community’s stories, supporting researchers and welcoming visitors eager to connect with our past,” said Rachel LaCasse-Ford president and CEO of the Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce. “Their commitment led to the Driftless Historium—an invaluable resource, a source of pride for residents, and a draw for tourists. This new mural beautifully honors their dedication and lasting impact. We are proud to celebrate this milestone and deeply grateful for all they do to keep our history alive.”

The mural is being handcrafted by a team of artists at Sign Art Studio, located on West Front Street just a stone’s throw from the Driftless Historium. It draws inspiration from McNeill’s image and other meaningful local elements in a style of visual storytelling that is both timeless and timely.

Luke Severson, senior account executive at Sign Art Studio, is heading up the project and said it strives to capture the “natural beauty” of the area.

“It’s just the coolest project to work on because we’ll get to see the impact it has on the scenery in town,” he said. “And the Historium is such a cool place, the way it works with local history.”

While the mural could, in theory, be digitally printed, Sign Art opted for a more soulful, human approach, combining cutting edge design technology with good, old-fashioned hand painting. What they designed is a vast “paint-by-numbers” palette on which they are currently creating the lush green grasses and deep red barn, along with black and white cows and deep blue mounds that gently push into the summer sky.

“It’s a lot of work, but it’s the right way to do something like this,” Severson said.

He added that the studio is combining “creativity on the design side with precision

on the fabrication side of things.” The result will soon be on display for all to see.

Severson hopes the mural will “increase public engagement around the museum and in the community.”

“Here in the Mount Horeb area, that unique and beautiful part of Wisconsin that we have served for 50 years, the Driftless landscape is the stage setting for a million small stories that make up our collective history,” said Destinee Udelhoven, executive director of the Driftless Historium History Center and Mount Horeb Area Historical Society. “The mural represents this shared connection of place. No matter if you are as local as they come, with family roots that stretch back to an immigrant ship, or you just moved in down the street—you’re now a part of this story. Our story.”

After a decade leading the department, Mount Horeb’s athletic director is leaving for a new position

Kolleen Nesheim wasn’t looking to leave.

Mount Horeb’s athletic director had thoroughly enjoyed her 10 years in that role. And at one point, Nesheim thought she might retire in that position.

But a casual conversation turned into a job offer — one that Nesheim decided to take.

On Wednesday, Nesheim told the staff at Mount Horeb she’ll be resigning as the school’s A.D. Nesheim’s last day will May 20.

Nesheim accepted a job with M3 Insurance where she’ll be a workplace experience manager.

“I know a couple of people that work there and we started talking and things just moved really quickly,” said Nesheim, who’s also an associate principal at MHHS. “Sometimes you wonder about all the nights and the weekends and the

60-hour weeks that the (A.D.) job requires. I loved my job, but it’s a lot. So, the whole thing moved quickly and here we are.”

Nesheim, a 1990 Mount Horeb graduate, became the Vikings’ A.D. in the summer of 2015 after the position had sat vacant for two months.

In the past decade, Nesheim has poured herself into the job, helping the Vikings’ athletic programs become a force — both locally and across the state.

The girls gymnastics program has been to state 13 straight years and had nine finishes in the top-3 during Nesheim’s tenure. The Mount Horeb-Barneveld football program has won four straight Badger Small Conference titles and become an annual state title contender.

The girls cross country program has been to state four times since 2018. And the Vikings’ boys basketball program has been one of the most successful and consistent in Wisconsin.

In addition, programs like softball, boys and girls soccer, wrestling and baseball have enjoyed tremendous success.

Nesheim also helped Mount Horeb’s boys and girls swimmers start their own teams when their co-op with Verona ended in 2022.

Through it all, Nesheim’s passion and deep roots in the community helped her excel at her job and earn a reputation as one of the state’s elite athletic directors.

“What I cherish most is the way she has been there through every season,” MH-B football coach Bret St. Arnould said. “She has been there for the very

highs, and for the very lows. She believed in the process and celebrated our successes with such passion and joy. In our moments of doubt or failure, she offered perspective and reassurance that helped us find our footing again.

“Kolleen’s belief in us has been a steady anchor, and her example has been a roadmap for all staff and students alike at Mount Horeb. I realize that so much of the way I coach bears the imprint of her influence.

“She has not only shaped the path of her coaches, but of the student-athletes, as well. She has shown how to light the way for others. For that, I think I can speak for all of the coaches in Mount Horeb, we will forever be grateful. What a pillar, what a leader. She will be missed.”

Several other coaches shared similar sentiments.

“Success starts at the top and that is 100% accurate with Kolleen’s tenure in Mount Horeb,” Vikings’ baseball manager Ryan Finley said. “The athletic programs have had a ton of success and a huge part of that starts with Kolleen’s leadership skills, communication skills, and her dedication and vision for all the programs.

“I consider Kolleen a dear friend and she’s going to be missed in the building. At the same time, I’m excited for her and her new adventure. She gave Mount Horeb activities everything she had.”

Mount Horeb girls swimming coach Jalen Butteris agreed.

“As a first-time coach, I was especially grateful

continued on page 10

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continued from page 9

for her incredible support with the administrative side of things,” Butteris said. “Whether it was coordinating pool time at local facilities or offering thoughtful advice on how to communicate with parents, she was always there to help.

“Kolleen is the kind of leader who is the first one to ask, ‘What can I do to help?’ That level of commitment and hands-on support is rare and deeply appreciated. She is incredibly well-loved by the coaching staff, and her presence will be truly missed.”

Girls basketball coach Bart Leibfried marveled at the fact Nesheim would often close the school following a game, and be one of the first people back the following morning.

Mt. Horeb native sings at NFL Draft

Millions of people tuned in to watch the NFL Draft in Green Bay on April 14, and when they did, many of them saw, or more importantly heard, a Mount Horeb native and her beautiful voice.

Erica Edquist sang “National Hymn,” by composer James Weldon Johnson, which is known by many people as “Lift Every Voice and Sing” or “The Black National Anthem.” The song has special significance for a wide range of people and it marked the latest chapter in a life filled with melody for Edquist.

She grew up just outside Mount Horeb with her parents, David and Jean Reed.

“I loved music and sports,” she said. “I was part of the choir, orchestra and band programs during middle school and high school, as well as being part of the state honors ensemble.”

“In addition, I took private piano and singing lessons. I also played on the soccer and basketball teams in high school,” she continued.

She was even in a band that won the “Battle of the Bands” two years in a row.

Her journey to draft day began in her childhood, when a crimson-haired mermaid took a whole generation of people under the sea in Disney’s “The Little Mermaid.”

“It all started with Ariel,” she said. “I would sing along with the movie [“The Little Mermaid”]. I sang along with the radio, particularly enjoying the ‘80s rock my dad always listened to.”

After high school, she

went on to earn a degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Minnesota. When she moved to Milwaukee, she joined the Milwaukee Symphony Choir and other ensembles.

“Currently, I sing with the amazing Chant Claire and sing regularly in my church choir,” she said. “In addition, I am learning (slowly) how to byzantine chant.”

Edquist, who currently lives in Milwaukee with her husband, John and three children: Aurora (9), David (7) and Micah (3), ended up at the Draft with Chant Claire.

“Rufus Jones of the James Weldon Johnson Foundation, which has organized the singing of this hymn, reached out to the Conductor of Chant Claire, Ben Bedroske for this performance,” she explained. “Ben reached out to Chant Claire and other performers he knew.”

The group performed a powerful song that brims with meaning for Americans from all walks of life.

“The song was intended to be a hymn for everyone,” Edquist explained. “The poem talks about universal struggle and ability to overcome adversities.”

As one might expect, the performance was both daunting and exhilarating.

“The experience was absolutely surreal,” she said. “They had us pre-set for about 15 minutes before we started singing. We stood there, looking out at the 200,000-plus people starting at us, wondering what we were doing there. For me that was the most nerve-racking part. Then the music started!”

“All I could do was watch the director and keep on singing,” Edquist said. “As soon as we finished the song, we ran off stage and screamed for joy. There were high-fives and hugs! It was so fun and exciting.”

MoHo Board shows support for library expansion

The Village Board met May 7 for their monthly meeting and earmarked funds for a proposed library expansion. The Board approved consent agenda items, a proclamation recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Mount Horeb Historical Society, a proclamation recognizing May 11 through May 17, 2025, as Public Service Week, a resolution designating funds for the proposed future library expansion and a resolution regulating the location of retailers selling electronic smoking devices. The Board

also considered their annual ethics policy, reviewed the Village Strategic Plan and discussed revisiting the plan in 2026. Additionally, they held a closed session regarding a contract for building inspection services.

Village Administrator Nic Owen presented Resolution 2025-05 to the Village Board, which centers around a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the library on its capital funding project.

“They’re going to begin the process of fundraising for an expanded library,” Owen said. “They’re kind of tapped out for their existing space needs. They provide a lot of services, and they want to do more, but they need more room to do it.”

According to Harvard University, an MOU is an agreement between two or more parties or institutions. While MOUs are not legally binding, they do serve to document each collaborator’s expectations or intentions. Concerning the library, the MOU relates to the expressed need for a physical expansion and the designation of necessary funds to complete the project.

“One concern they have is when they start fundraising, they don’t want those dollars to try and be taken and used somewhere else,” Owen said. “This MOU basically states that the money they raise to expand the library will be used for that sole purpose. They can invest those funds and that money stays in that account to be used for the expansion.”

Library Director Jessica Gretzinger explained to the Board that the need for designated funds came to the library board’s attention following an estate donation at the end of 2024.

“What we’re trying to do is get this MOU established and clarify for future library and village staff,” Gretzinger said. “It’s really just asking for an account and acknowledging that it would be earmarked for a future building. Perhaps if we have the expansion on our donor form, people can donate to it, and then we can get some soft fundraising and momentum.”

The Library Board and the Village Board both ultimately approved the resolution, with the caveat that the library would repurpose the funds towards other initiatives if the Village Board were ever not supportive of future expansion projects.

Woman accused of killing mother pleads not guilty

A Blue Mounds woman accused of fatally stabbing her mother last month pleaded not guilty by reason of mental defect Monday to first degree intentional ho-

micide charges.

Sierra Schoonover, 31, was found competent to stand trial in a report by a psychologist to which neither Schoonover’s attorney, Jessa Nicholson, nor Assistant District Attorney Sam Smith objected.

Court Commissioner Scott McAndrew accepted the competency finding and bound Schoonover over for trial before Circuit Judge Ellen Berz, whose seven-day suspension for violating state Supreme Court rules on judicial conduct in 2019 and 2021 ends Friday, June 6.

After court, Nicholson explained that a mental evaluation for Schoonover was required because she was committed under a state mental health statute after being taken into custody on April 14, the day the homicide was committed.

Due to plea entered Monday, Schoonover competency to stand trial will be evaluated by an expert selected by the defense, one chosen by the prosecution and Berz may also appoint an expert to evaluate the defendant, Nicholson said.

The attorneys and Berz will conference about a further mental evaluation of Schoonover at a date to be set. A trial date also was not set on Monday.

Schoonover remains in custody on a \$1 million bond set April 30 at her initial court appearance.

If convicted on the homicide charge with domestic abuse and use of a dangerous weapon enhancers, Schoonover faces maximum penalties of life in prison without parole eligibility.

Schoonover appeared before McAndrew Monday with her wrists restrained by a waist belt. She answered his questions about giving up her right to a preliminary hearing.

The attorneys have 20 days to file motions in the case.

According to the criminal complaint:

A neighbor of Schoonover’s called 911 on April 14 to report Schoonover and her mother, Heather, 54, fighting in the driveway of her home on Blue Mountain Trail.

Mother and daughter went inside the house and Sierra Schoonover left the house before Dane County Sheriff’s deputies arrived. Inside, they found Heather Schoonover had been stabbed multiple times.

Heather Schoonover was pronounced dead at the scene. A medical examiner later concluded that she died of multiple stab wounds. A knife was found at the scene.

Mount Horeb police and deputies found Sierra Schoonover had crashed a vehicle on Blue Rock Road near SH 78. She was appre-

hended after a brief chase on foot.

She was found naked, frothy at the mouth and had dried blood on her left hand.

Transported to UW Hospital, she was treated for a cut on her thumb and a rash on her upper chest.

She had a history of anxiety and depression but had stopped taken her medication.

Nicholson said her client had resumed taking her medication in jail.

She allegedly told authorities that her mother may be hurt and needed an ambulance. Asked why, Schoonover allegedly said that she had stabbed her mother.

She also told a deputy that she believed that she was in a simulation or a Matrix, and that part of the situation was real.

Residents voice frustration with Sienna Hills developer

Mount Horeb resident Dyane Schwartz was among several residents who spoke to plan commission members last week about their concerns with the Sienna Hills developer, arguing the second phase of the plan should not move forward.

The plan commission had scheduled to hear a Phase II Sienna Hills Condo development at its May 28 meeting. Schwartz and other residents told the commission about issues in their condos from the first phase, including bad quality windows, half-installed microwaves, erosion and lack of proper landscaping. She said residents have repeat-edly contacted the developer, with no help.

“My dream of a retirement home has not changed,” Schwartz said. “Now my hope is that no future buyer has to endure what the owners of Sienna Hills Condominium Association phase 1 have faced. I am speaking tonight in the interest of protecting future residents. We urge you, please help us finish our community properly, and prevent this hardship from affecting others.”

Developer Rich Eberle did not address the resident’s concerns in his initial presentation, but plan commission member Destinee Udelhoven pushed back on his plan.

“After hearing the comments from the public tonight, many of those people are my friends and I’ve heard these stories before: can you make a case for why we should work with you? I see no reason to trust anything you’re say-ing about follow through,” Udelhoven said.

“There’s always two sides to that story,” Eberle responded.

“That’s a lot of stories,”

Udelhoven pushed back again.

“You won’t keep these people happy no matter what you do,” Eberle said, arguing he had put in high quality windows and residents just weren’t satisfied.

“You wouldn’t change the way you do business going forward, you would just blame the residents again? How are you going to go forward and rectify those things?” Udelhoven said, adding she’s not comfortable moving forward with Eberle with the current concerns raised.

Village President Ryan Czyzewski, however, focused on design elements of the project.

Czyzewski said he’d like to see safe road access to ensure emergency vehicles can get to the condos, and he’s happy with the market rate approach. No other commission members raised objections based on resident concerns, but indicated there will be more discussion because of some potential environmental impacts and zoning changes.

The plan commission also heard a presentation for Surplus Suds; a laundromat on the first floor with apartments on the second floor.

Commission members asked questions about lighting, parking and signage. Peggy Zalucha said she was concerned people using the services of the laundromat might accidentally park in the residential area.

Keller representative Chad Ferguson said this could be solved with proper signage.

The commission approved the design review so developers could move forward.

Resident Kelly Tichnor also presented to the plan commission about her land on Meadow View Rd. She said it’s been her goal for the past couple years to create a duplex, and village officials have told her she would need to make a rezoning request.

Tichnor said she’ reached out to her neighbors and a few have been concerned about the impact on property value, but she hasn’t received significant negative feedback.

Czyzewski said he is “intrigued” by the proposal, but there’s a lot of details Tichnor will still need to work out and the commission suggested Tichnor have further conversations with neighbors about what they’d object to.

Village Planner Ben Rohr supported the idea, arguing it could help address the need for housing in the community.

“I personally think this might be a step in the right direction,” Rohr said.

See the top stories from the second half of 2025 next week



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Vikings split
a pair against
D1 schools

Mount Horeb tops Menomonee Falls, upended by Muskego

by ROB REISCHEL
Sports Editor

No pain, no gain.
That’s the strategy used by Mount Horeb girls basketball coach Bart Leibfried when it comes to scheduling.
Leibfried makes sure cupcakes aren’t part of the Vikings’ diet. Instead, he schedules as many beefy foes as possible, knowing that facing heavy hitters could pay dividends in March.
Leibfried and the Vi-

kings took on a pair of Division 1 schools last week and came out of it just fine.
Mount Horeb defeated Menomonee Falls, 42-37, on Dec. 22 at the New Berlin West holiday tournament. The Vikings then dropped a 63-35 decision to Muskego, last year’s Division 1 state runners-up, on Dec. 23 in New Berlin.
Mount Horeb is now 5-4 overall this season.
“The program motto is to go 1-0,” Leibfried said. “I thought we went 1-0 for
continued on page 15



Courtney Monroe and Mount Horeb’s girls basketball team fared well at the New Berlin West Tournament last week. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

Mount Horeb’s best of 2025

Vikings enjoyed a memorable 12 months



Conference championships.
State tournament appearances — and titles.
And memories to last the rest of their lives.
Mount Horeb athletics had it all in the past year. And that meant one highlight after another.
We looked at No. 9-12 last week, and this week we’ll reveal No. 5-8. The top four will then run next week.
5. Gymnasts shine in Division 1
These were uncharted waters.
Challenges Mount Horeb’s girls gymnastics program had never encountered. Competition unlike any other year.
Knowing the Vikings’
continued on page 13



Athena Ouradnik (left), Harper Hendrickson (above) and Mount Horeb’s girls gymnastics team finished sixth at state in Division 1. File photos



Signing day!

Clockwise from top left, Mount Horeb-Barneveld football standouts Jack Wilson, Brooks Hendrickson and Hayden Anderson recently signed their letters of intent.

Wilson, a standout linebacker/running back with the Vikings, will play for North Dakota State, a Division I Football Championship Subdivision program.

Wilson was named the Badger Small Conference's Defensive Player of the Year in 2025 and was a first-team all-conference running back. Wilson was also named all-Region at linebacker.

Hendrickson, a star quarterback, will play for the University of North Dakota, a Division I Football Championship Subdivision program.

Hendrickson was named the conference's Offensive Player of the Year and was an all-Region selection, as well.

Anderson, a standout tight end, committed to Division 1 St. Thomas (Minn.).

Anderson led MH-B with 51 receptions last season for 681 yards and 11 touchdowns, with a long of 75 yards. In addition to being named first-team all-conference, he was also an all-Region tight end.



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MOUNT HOREB’S BEST OF 2025: NO. 5-8

2025

continued from page 11

history, though, it’s no surprise Mount Horeb passed perhaps its greatest test ever with flying colors.

Mount Horeb went to the WIAA Division 1 — yes, Division 1 — state tournament in Wisconsin Rapids March 7 and shined. The Vikings, who were bumped up from Division 2 due to the WIAA’s new ‘competitive balance formula’, finished sixth out of 10 teams.

Had the Vikings stayed in Division 2 like past years, they would have finished second.

One day later, senior Athena Ouradnik capped her brilliant career with an 11th-place finish in the all-around competition.

“I wish I could put into words how proud I am of our Viking gymnasts,” Mount Horeb coach Martha Koller Faust said. “Friday’s team competition was another example of a true team effort.

“Based on all of the sectional scores, Mount Horeb was ranked seventh, so placing sixth was a great achievement. Our girls reached their season goal of qualifying to team state, so this weekend we reminded them to enjoy every moment.”

The Vikings jumped to Division 1 because they’ve excelled in Division 2. Mount Horeb has been to the state gymnastics meet more than any program in history (38). And in the last three years — the time period used in the ‘competitive balance formula’ — the Vikings were second, third and fourth at state.

That sent Mount Horeb up a division, where it proved once again that no challenge is too great for the dynasty Koller Faust has established.

“Competing in Division 1 for the first time was a big adjustment, but I think we rose to the challenge and represented our team well,” Ouradnik said. “The level of competition was intense, but we gave it our all and supported each other every step of the way. We proved that we belong among the strongest teams in Wisconsin, and I couldn’t be more proud of this team.”

Koller Faust agreed. “Each of our girls gave 110% in each of their performances,” Koller Faust said. “And as a coach, I couldn’t have asked for more of them.”

Mount Horeb started on the balance beam, where its score of 35.20 was sixth overall. Ouradnik led the way with a 9.083, while Sylvia Seeliger (8.883),

Harper Hendrickson (8.717) and Reece Olinger (8.517) had strong showings, as well.

“Great start,” Koller Faust said.

Mount Horeb then moved to the floor exercise, where its total of 35.773 was the second-highest in Division 1. Ouradnik again led the Vikings with a 9.167, while Averil Kalscheur (9.150), Seeliger (8.933) and Carmen Oglesby (8.483) had big performances, as well.

Mount Horeb then competed on the vault and totaled a 33.583.

The Vikings finished on the uneven bars, where they posted a 33.567 after all five gymnasts hit their routines. Ouradnik had Mount Horeb’s top score with an 8.633, and the Vikings also counted scores from Macie Finley (8.467), Seeliger (8.417) and Kalscheur (8.050).

“Even though we didn’t achieve a season-high event total, it was a fantastic finish to the state team competition,” Koller Faust said.

Chippewa Falls’ co-op team finished first overall with a 143.550, while Oak Creek’s co-op team (142.60) and the Verona co-op (142.433) rounded out the top three.

“Our Vikings held their heads high as the team standings were announced — and they had every right to be proud,” Koller Faust said.

One day later, the Vikings were just as proud of Ouradnik, who competed as an individual.

Ouradnik earned a spot on the podium with a fourth place finish on the balance beam with her 9.133 score. She also secured a podium berth with her sixth place finish on the floor exercise (9.20).

Ouradnik’s overall score of 35.633 was 11th overall.

“I am very pleased with how I did,” Ouradnik said. “Being the first Mount Horeb gymnast to place at state in Division 1 is so exciting.

“My favorite moment was seeing my team cheering for me as I got called up to the podium. Their excitement for my accomplishments made state a truly unforgettable experience.”

Koller Faust found it rather unforgettable, too.

“Athena had an amazing two days, hitting all eight of her events with no falls,” Koller Faust said. “Seeing her on the podium receiving medals in two events was a terrific end to her high school gymnastics career.”

Overall, the Vikings were thrilled with their performance, where they were the



Mount Horeb’s girls gymnastics team (top) finished sixth at state in Division 1, while the Vikings’ boys basketball team won the Badger Small Conference championship. File photos

smallest team in Division 1.

“This season our motto was ‘Together We Rise,’ and that’s exactly what we did,” Koller Faust said. “Through every challenge and triumph, this team stuck together, lifted each other up and achieved incredible things.

“Our success wasn’t just about individual talent. It was about team unity, perseverance, believing in each other and the heart they showed every step of the way.”

6. Boys basketball team wins Badger Small title

Thread by thread, the net in front of the home team’s bench came down.

But the first pair of scissors didn’t cut it. They were

too dull.

The second pair did the job.

And that’s pretty much how it went for Mount Horeb’s boys basketball team Feb. 18 against visiting McFarland. The first half left a lot to be desired, but the second half did the trick.

The Vikings got hot after the break, remained stingy on defense and surged to a 56-39 victory over the visiting Spartans, thus clinching the outright Badger Small Conference championship and the opportunity to climb the ladder and cut down the net.

Mount Horeb improved to 19-2 overall and 12-0 in the Badger Small Conference, while second-place McFarland fell to 14-7, 9-3. The Vikings went on to go a perfect 14-0 in the conference.

Vikings’ junior star Josh Manchester, who was uncharacteristically cold from 3-point range (2-of-9) but led the way with 27 points nonetheless, never had a doubt.

Not early. Not losing by six at halftime. Not ever.

“I knew we weren’t going to lose that game,” he said. “We couldn’t make a shot. But I knew, being only down six at (half) that we would pick it up.”

Did they ever.

The Vikings — ranked third in Division 2 in the WisSports.net coaches poll — wasted no time, either, opening the second half on a 15-2 run to take a 33-26 lead with 12 minutes, 55 seconds remaining in the game.

“You’ve got to win the first three minutes in a game like that,” Mount Horeb

coach Todd Nesheim said. “If you’re up big, it kind of sets the tone. If you’re down, if it’s close — no matter what the situation is — those first three minutes are going to maybe determine how the rest of the half goes. It was important. Good start.”

Mount Horeb’s second half surge was also sparked by the unlikely of players.

Chris Kiel, a 6-foot senior with a football player’s build who’s headed to college football powerhouse North Dakota State, scored six of the first eight points in the run.

In that stretch alone he produced triple his season-scoring average of just under 2 points a game.

continued on page 14

MOUNT HOREB’S BEST OF 2025: NO. 5-8

2025

continued from page 13

But Manchester wasn’t at all surprised Kiel came through.

“He’s a stud. He lives for those moments,” Manchester said of Kiel. “I knew he was going to step up. It was awesome to see.”

Kiel’s first three points of the night cut Mount Horeb’s deficit to 24-21 and came via a line-drive 3-pointer from the right wing that barely cleared the front of the rim.

“I think a little bit too much weight lifting and not enough shooting kind of led to my line drive shot,” Kiel said. “But I’ve had that since I was young. It went in and got the momentum rolling a little bit. Not a ton of ‘em fall for me, so it’s nice to have.”

Kiel was wide open, so no fault there in terms of the attempt.

But don’t count Nesheim among those who expected to see it go in.

“That’s the way he shoots it. That’s why he’s only got six attempts on the year. He knows he’s not a great shooter,” Nesheim said. “He spins it really well. It just barely gets over the rim, though.”

Griffin Hannah, a 6-3 senior who also rarely scores, scored his only two points of the night for Mount Horeb’s next points, making it 26-23.

Then Kiel tied the game at 26-all in more conventional

fashion for him, attacking Spartans’ 6-8 sophomore Eli Krueger at the rim, getting him out of position and then getting a lay-up to fall while getting fouled for an and-one.

“In the locker room at halftime we were talking about how they were all looking for blocks. I knew that, so I pump faked and got him to jump. And then I just went into him physical and trusted my strength,” Kiel said. “That’s all coaching.”

Manchester followed with an acrobatic lay-up to make it 28-26, the Vikings’ first lead since the early going, and he scored the final three points of the run sandwiched around an equally acrobatic lay-up by 6-6 junior Hayden Anderson cutting to the basket.

Mount Horeb then stiff-armed McFarland the rest of the way, allowing the Spartans to get within five on one occasion (at 33-28), six on another (43-37) and eight with 4:27 left (47-39) before slamming the door shut for the program’s first league championship since the 2018-19 season.

“Winning is hard. We told our guys that the other night,” said Nesheim, who now has four conference titles in 17 years at the helm for the Vikings. “We put a lot of time in, in season and out. It’s very rewarding.”

The dagger came with 2:12 left when sophomore Alex Chapman drained an ill-advised — albeit wide open — 3-pointer from the left wing at a time when the

Vikings were trying harder to burn time off the clock than they were to score.

“No, no no ... yes, yes yes. That’s exactly what I said,” Nesheim said. “That was probably the dagger.”

“It was good to get to that position (to be able to ice the game). It didn’t look like it was going to go that way early, that’s for sure.”

Chapman had a big hand in helping the Vikings stay within striking range in the first half, scoring six of his nine in the game before the break.

His three made field goals in the first 18 minutes buoyed the Vikings’ shooting percentage from woeful to bad as they were 8-of-29 en route to the 24-18 half-time deficit.

“He’s been great for us all year. He certainly doesn’t play like a sophomore,” Manchester said of Chapman. “We’re going to keep needing him to do that and come up big for us.”

The Vikings missed their first six attempts of the night, then they closed the first half by missing their final six tries spanning a scoreless stretch of 4:35.

But they defended well enough to be down only six, a more-than-manageable deficit considering they were confident their shooting woes wouldn’t continue.

“You’re going to have halves where you struggle to shoot a little bit, but we’ve put enough work in, and enough time in, where it’s going to catch back up to us and they start going in,” Chapman said. “Once



Josh Manchester and Mount Horeb’s boys basketball team won the Badger Small Conference title. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

one went in, the confidence started rolling in and they started going in more.”

It happened fast after halftime. And the defense didn’t subside, allowing for the big run that gave Mount Horeb firm control of the game.

“The message to my program since I started is, ‘We hang our hat on our defense.’ We’ve got to be able to win 42-40 games,” Nesheim said. “(Big) games are going to be grinders. Teams generally don’t shoot great in those environments, so you better be able to play ‘D.’ ”

Added Manchester: “At points it feels like offense wins, but this is a testament to what (defense) really does. It did win us the game today.”

In addition to being ter-

rific on defense all night, the Vikings were efficient, too. Mount Horeb fouled just 10 times and put McFarland on the free throw line just once -- for a second-half and-one that the Spartans failed to convert.

A big reason the Vikings were able to get going offensively after halftime was the fact they attacked the rim better — challenging the 6-8 Krueger and 6-9 senior Ben Forbes more.

“Their size I thought affected our mindset a little bit, so we just challenged (our guys) to be aggressive,” Nesheim said.

Manchester was aggressive in the first half, but he turned it up a notch in the second, settling for less from the perimeter and more from the paint.

Manchester, the state’s seventh-leading scorer (31.0 points per game), had just seven before halftime. He scored 20 after that, with only three coming from beyond the arc.

“It got to a point in the second half where he just kinda had his way,” Nesheim said.

“He wasn’t getting that in the first half. He’d get to the lane and there’d be a wall there.

“In the second half he was able to get to the basket. So what changed? I don’t know. Whether it was a wear-down effect or whatever, but he did a really good job tonight.”

Mount Horeb certainly made McFarland work harder on defense in the second half, effectively winning time of possession by controlling the glass.

The Spartans were mostly limited to one chance after halftime, scoring just 15 points.

Meantime, the opposite was true for the Vikings thanks to their offensive rebounding proficiency -- never more obvious than when Manchester canned a 3-pointer from the right wing on his team’s third field goal try of the possession, making it 39-28 with 11:07 to go.

The junior did the lion’s share of the scoring in lead

continued on page 16

TOWN OF PERRY

LAND USE

COMMITTEE

MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Perry Town Hall, 10084

County Highway A

7:00 PM

Teleconference: 425-585-6272

access: 394-722-206 #

Agenda

1. Call to Order.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – December 3, 2025.

3. William Erickson, 1076 STH 78 – review CSM to combine existing parcels.

4. John Willborn Jr, 10833 CTH A – zoning changes for 3 acres to RR-2, 5 acres to FP-1, 0.7 acres to HAM-R, site plan for residence, and driveway.

5. Town Comprehensive Plan – review and edit Elements 1-4, “Issues & Opportunities,” “Housing,” “Transportation,” and “Utilities & Community Facilities.”

6. Pending applications – review and discussion.

7. Schedule meetings.

8. Adjourn.

Stephanie Zwettler

Deputy Clerk

www.perry-wi.gov

Posted: Town Hall, Town Garage, Daleyville signpost, Town website–January 1, 2026

A quorum of the Town Board may be present at this meeting.

* A site view will be conducted at the Willborn site on Saturday, January 3, 2026, beginning at 8:30 AM.

Publish: 1/1/26

WNAXLP

New

LEGAL NOTICE

DEADLINES

EFFECTIVE ON ALL LEGAL NOTICES

PUBLISHED IN THESE PUBLICATIONS:

ADAMS FRIENDSHIP TIMES-REPORTER:

Noon Wednesday, the week prior to publication

POST MESSENGER RECORDER:

11 am Thursday, the week prior to publication

INDEPENDENT STAR NEWS:

Formerly Reedsburg Independent, Star News, Home News

Noon Thursday, the week prior to publication

MOUNT HOREB MAIL:

1 pm Thursday, the week prior to publication

TIMES-TRIBUNE:

Now covering Middleton, Cross Plains, Black Earth & Mazomanie

2 pm Thursday, the week prior to publication

MARQUETTE COUNTY TRIBUNE:

10 am Friday, the week prior to publication

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scheduled for the next available publication date.

EARLY DEADLINES will apply for postal holiday weeks.

Watch for updates.

TOWN OF PRIMROSE

NOTICE

The Town of Primrose Board of Supervisors meeting for January 2026 will be held on Monday, January 5th, 2026, at 8468 County Road A, Verona, WI beginning at 7:30pm. The agenda for this meeting will be posted at the Town Hall, Mount Vernon Auto, Primrose Church, and on the Town website. A summary of the agenda will be available on the voice message system at 608-832-6660.

Publish: 1/1/26

WNAXLP

VILLAGE OF MT. HOREB

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE

LICENSE APPLICATION

The following applications for a new alcohol beverage license will be considered at a Village Board meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 7, 2026:

Class “B” Beer & “Class C” Liquor (wine only) License:

Rokit, LLC

Agent: Taddeus Rokitowski

D/B/A: Sunn Cafe

201 E Main Street

Mount Horeb, WI 53572

Publish: 1/1/26

WNAXLP

GIRLS BB

continued from page 11
the two days.

“We got better by playing two D1 programs, one double our size and one 1,000 students bigger. We had a great time at the hotel, hanging out, playing card games, swimming and shopping.”

Here’s a recap of the Vikings’ week:

• **Mount Horeb 42, Menomonee Falls 37** — Courtney Monroe scored 10 points and Lauren Mester added eight as the Vikings defeated the Phoenix.

Magali Forlines Jami Chapman both added seven points.

“Going into the game I thought they were very similar to us skills-wise from watching film, but we were much faster and athletic and were really able to pressure them and gave them few open looks,” Leibfried said.

Mount Horeb shot just 23% from the field and 53% from the free throw line. In the second half, the Vikings went 12-of-24 from the line.

But Mount Horeb’s defense won the day and helped the Vikings leave

victorious.
“I told the girls after the game that no matter how poorly you shoot, there is no excuse to not play hard or play great defense,” Leibfried said. “And that we did and that is why we won.”

• **Muskego 63, Mount Horeb 35** — The powerful Warriors were within one win of a state championship in March and have remained an upper echelon program.

Mount Horeb dug itself an 18-1 hole to start the game, closed within 32-22 by halftime, but couldn’t keep up after intermission.

“They play a three-quarters court 1-3-1 and then drop back to a 1-3-1 in the half court with size, strength and speed,” Leibfried said. “We knew it was coming and talked about how we wanted to attack it, but we really struggled against it.

“I believe it was two things: first we weren’t entirely ready to play and may still have been thinking about the mall and the hotel from the night before. And secondly they are just really good and we weren’t ready for that aggressiveness and speed.”

Lauren Mester led the



Jami Chapman and Mount Horeb’s girls basketball team split a pair of games at the New Berlin West Holiday Tournament last week. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

Vikings with 14 points, including four 3-pointers. Magali Forlines and Jami Chapman both added six points for the Vikings.

Muskego shot 12-of-21 from 3-point range (57.1%).

“At halftime, I felt really good about where we were at considering the start and we figured out how to attack their 1-3-1 zone,” Leibfried said. “The second half they came out in a trapping 2-3 zone and it

took us a while to adjust again and they couldn’t miss.”

• **On deck:** Mount Horeb is at Wisconsin Dells on Jan. 6 and at Sauk Prairie on Jan. 8.

“We will take six days

off and let them spend some time with family and get healthy before we tackle a tough stretch of our schedule,” Leibfried said.

DEADLINE FOR CLASSIFIED ADS:
NOON WEDNESDAY
the week prior to publication.

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- Assisting the Town Road Patrolman

Please contact the Town of Perry Chairman
Roger Kittleson at 608-438-7249 or kittlesonroger@gmail.com by January 12, 2026

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Tax Season: Early Jan – mid April 2026 Part-Time in Mt Horeb

Experienced customer service – front office person needed. Duties would include greeting customers, answering the phones, making appointments, making phone calls, filing, standard office skills. Computer skills, internet skills and basic software experience/ knowledge required.

Send resume to H&R Block,
1406 Springdale St, Mt Horeb WI 53572
or email to todd.haglund@hrblock.com

H&R BLOCK

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We are looking for a candidate with good computer and communication skills to coordinate subscriptions for our company-owned newspapers. This position would include assisting with renewals and payments, and handling phone calls from subscribers with questions and complaints. This job would also require filing postal reports, and researching and resolving delivery issues with the USPS. Other duties may be included as assigned.

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity to learn and grow in the newspaper business, please email a resumé and letter of interest to: tfinger@fingerpub.com.

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MOUNT HOREB’S BEST OF 2025: NO. 5-8

2025

continued from page 16

ing Mount Horeb to its first league title in six years. “The last time I remember them winning, I was in sixth grade,” he said. “So it puts it in perspective.

“It’s awesome to finally get one in my high school career. But we’re not done — we’ve got a lot more goals we want to accomplish.”

7. Football ties for fifth straight conference title

Bret St. Arnauld isn’t a big fan of sharing.

But Mount Horeb-Barneveld’s football coach was awfully happy his Vikings picked up a share of their fifth straight Badger Conference championship in 2025.

MH-B headed to the final week of the season one game behind Madison Edgewood. The Vikings drilled Portage, 47-20, and when Sauk Prairie upset the Crusaders, those three teams all tied for the conference title.

The Vikings, Sauk Prairie and Edgewood all finished the year 6-1 in the league, and MH-B has now won or shared five straight conference titles.

“I don’t like having to rely on someone else for something that was in our control,” St. Arnauld said. “We let a game get away from us because we didn’t do what we were supposed to do. All that credit goes to Edgewood, but as I have stated, you can’t play bad against good teams and expect to win.

“With that being said, you should never apologize for winning, because winning is hard. So to have a share of the conference crown for a fifth straight year, it’s pretty cool.”

MH-B put itself in position to share the crown with a dominant win over Portage.

The Vikings raced to a 16-0 lead after the first quarter, led 32-0 by halftime and coasted home.

“I really liked our composure,” St. Arnauld said. “Portage came out playing hard, and our guys responded the right way — with discipline and execution. The physicality up front stood out too — both our offensive and defensive lines really controlled the line of scrimmage, and that set the tone for the whole game.”

Quarterback Brooks Hendrickson completed 13-of-17 passes for 128 yards and threw a pair of touchdown passes. Hendrickson also caught an 18-yard TD from

running back Jack Wilson.

Wilson also ran for 81 yards on just seven carries and had a TD run. In addition, Wilson — who doubles at linebacker — had eight tackles and two tackles for loss.

“Jack’s definitely special,” St. Arnauld said. “He’s one of those kids who just loves the game — never takes a play off, whether he’s carrying the ball, catching passes, or making tackles on defense. He leads by example every day in practice.

“I have never heard an excuse come out of his mouth, so on top of talent, he is extremely coachable. I’ve coached a lot of great players, but what separates Jack is his motor and his consistency. He’s absolutely one of the best I’ve had the privilege to coach.”

Junior running back Eli Maier added 60 rushing yards and two TDs. Senior tight end Hayden Anderson had five receptions for 61 yards and a TD, and junior receiver Henry DeRosier had six catches for 51 yards and a touchdown.

Senior Colton Bell led MH-B with 11 tackles, while DeRosier added 10 and Maier had nine.

The Vikings then rolled past Wausau East, 31-7 and cruised past Burlington, 42-14, in their first two playoff games. MH-B then fell to Catholic Memorial, 28-7, in Level 3 of the playoffs capping another terrific season.

“I hope the younger levels see this and they work hard and can get redemption for what we haven’t been able to do,” said Hendrickson, a two-year starter at quarterback.

“The foundation has been set,” added St. Arnauld. “The kids know what the expectations are. I’m looking forward to what we have coming down the pipe. Our youth program is strong. Programs aren’t built overnight. We don’t get to recruit that, so we have to build it.

“I was having a conversation with my dad today, and I said, ‘One day. Maybe it’s not this year, maybe it’s not next year. But one day it’s going to happen.’ And I’m really looking forward to that day when it does happen.”

While the Vikings’ season ended sooner than they wanted, they were still one of the last eight teams remaining in Division 3.

And by all accounts, this group left an indelible mark in program history.

“I’m just so proud of these guys,” Wilson said. “There were so many people doubting us after having a 9-0 season. Nobody really believed in us, but we didn’t let that get to us.

“We just put our head down and kept playing for each other, believing in what we could do, believing in our coaches. We knew that we had us, and that’s all that matters.”

St. Arnauld agreed.

“Coming into the season, a lot of people weren’t sure what we would be because we graduated a lot of seniors — and it was a very talented senior class,” he said. “We lost Week 1, we didn’t play well, but then the growth was monumental. After Week 1, we had a lot of things to fix — a lot of things that we needed to figure out.

“So for me, it’s the growth. I appreciate their heart and all the things they have given to this program.”

8. Vikings hire a new A.D.

Chris Carr turned 26 this spring.

The real celebration, though, came just days later when Carr was approved as Mount Horeb’s new athletic director during a Board of Education meeting.

Carr, who spent the last two years as the athletic director at Mineral Point, emerged from a group of 30 applicants. Carr replaced Kolleen Nesheim — who resigned in May — and began his new role on July 1.

“I couldn’t be more excited,” Carr said. “Not to be too cliché, but I definitely see Mount Horeb as a dream job.

“I have a great passion for sports administration and building relationships, and when I saw Kolleen had stepped away, it really peaked my interest. I’m just honored to get the job and I hope to be here a long, long time.”

Mount Horeb Superintendent Steve Salerno was excited to have Carr leading the athletic department.

“His strong background in education and athletics, along with his passion for student success, makes him a great fit for our Viking community,” Salerno said of Carr.

Carr, a 2017 Darlington High School graduate, played baseball, basketball and football growing up. He received Physical Education and Health degrees at UW-Platteville, was a student teacher back in Darlington, then spent a year teaching at Monroe High School.

Carr’s first love has always been sports administration, though. So when the athletic director job at Mineral Point — a school of about 240 students — became available, he pursued that.

“Sports administration



Jack Wilson (top) and Mount Horeb-Barneveld’s football team won a fifth straight conference title, while Chris Carr was named the Vikings’ new athletic director. Photos courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

was always my long-term passion,” he said. “I do love teaching, and the relationships I built with the high school kids were great. But I knew I didn’t want to teach forever, and lo and behold, the Mineral Point job opened up.”

The Pointers enjoyed some memorable moments during Carr’s time as A.D.

The boys basketball team won the WIAA Division 4 state championship in 2024 and reached the state tournament again in 2025. Mineral Point played at the state softball tournament in 2025.

And the football team qualified for the playoffs both of Carr’s years and won a post-season game in 2023.

Carr — who lives in Monroe with his wife, Sara — was also being asked to teach five classes a day at Mineral Point. And that grind became a lot.

“I loved my time in Mineral Point,” Carr said. “We had tremendous success and I’m really grateful for that opportunity.

“But one thing that really excited me about Mount Horeb is it’s a larger job. I’ll have more time in the (A.D.) position. I can’t wait.”

Carr interviewed for the position on June 2 with principal Cody Lundquist, A.D. assistant Kelly Richardson and H.R. Director Erin Esslinger. Carr was offered the job on June 3, quickly accepted and was officially approved as the new A.D.

Nesheim announced her resignation after a memorable 10-year run as the Vikings’ A.D. She accepted a job with M3 Insurance where she’s now a workplace experience manager.

Nesheim helped lead Mount Horeb to new heights in several sports such as

football, gymnastics, boys basketball, softball and wrestling. And Carr said he’s certainly not going to try fixing what isn’t broke.

“I think from my experience, it’s not wise in Year 1 to come in with the wrecking ball and try re-inventing the wheel,” said Carr, who will also oversee all clubs and activities at the school. “This is a well-oiled machine. I’ll work hard, make some observations and see what small things we can do to make improvements.”

Those that know Carr best rave about his passion and work ethic, and he was anxious to display those qualities at Mount Horeb.

“I have a lot of energy,” Carr said. “And I’ve heard wonderful things about the Mount Horeb district, nothing but great things. I can’t wait to get started.”