

608-820-VIVA

Downing vs. Pings in Dist. 30

Jeremy Pings is challenging incumbent Pat Downing for the District 30 seat on the Dane County Board of Supervisors

What are your top three priorities if elected to the county board?

Pat Downing (incumbent): Maintaining and improving the quality of ground and surface waters while promoting the viability of farming. Initiatives to help farmers reduce livestock operation runoff, along with stream buffer strips, cover crops and no-till incentives can reduce soil, phosphorous, and nitrogen flowing into our lakes and streams, and at the same time improve farm productivity. I want us to continue providing mental health and substance abuse services to address opioid addiction, suicide, and crime. I will continue to advocate for local road repairs, EMS operations and better broadband.

Jeremy Pings: More open and transparent government. Public safety—our firefighters and sheriff’s deputies are the real heroes here. Promoting affordability in every county policy decision. In short: Transparency so we know where our money goes, safety so our families thrive, and affordability so we don’t get priced out of our own backyards.

Do you believe the county is on the right track in terms of economic development? What benchmarks should county leaders use to gauge its progress in this area?

Downing: Maintaining



Downing

and improving the quality of ground and surface waters while promoting the viability of farming. Initiatives to help farmers reduce livestock operation runoff, along with stream buffer strips, cover crops and no-till incentives can reduce soil, phosphorous, and nitrogen flowing into our lakes and streams, and at the same time improve farm productivity.

I want us to continue providing mental health and substance abuse services to address opioid addiction, suicide, and crime. I will continue to advocate for local road repairs, EMS operations and better broadband.

Dane County is on the right track in many ways. Over the past several years, the county has made important investments in housing, clean energy, and regional partnerships that recognize economic development must be about more than simply attracting large employers. Efforts to expand affordable housing, support climate-forward industries, and work collaboratively across municipalities show a growing understanding that long-term prosperity requires planning, coordination, and public investment.

Moving forward, our focus should be on ensuring that economic develop-



Pings

ment strategies intentionally include workforce development, support for small and local businesses, and policies that help people stay in the communities where they work. That means continuing to invest in housing, strengthening career pathways through apprenticeships and training, and making sure our public investments create good-paying jobs that allow families to build stability here. Economic development should ultimately be measured not just by growth metrics, but by whether the people who live and work in Dane County can afford to stay here, raise their families here, and share in the prosperity our community is creating.

Pings: My focus is representing the towns and villages of District 30—not feeding more resources into the City of Madison black hole. The county should tread carefully with big developments. We need balance: preserve our stunning natural landscapes while allowing smart, sustainable growth. Too often, county attention and dollars tilt toward Madison, leaving local voices drowned out. True progress is measured by how loudly local residents get heard in these decisions—not by another ribbon-cutting photo op in the city.

Are you well versed in open government laws and

Robert’s Rules of Order? What other steps would you take to ensure transparency in county government?

Downing: In my time as a Town Chair and the Chair of several County Committees I became very familiar with Robert’s Rules. As a Committee Chair I’ve made sure to post agendas in a timely manner and then follow them.

Pings: My opponent has been warming a county board seat for decades (and other boards before that), so yes—he’s probably got Robert’s Rules memorized better than his own phone number. But real transparency isn’t reciting rules—it’s showing up. I’m the guy knocking on doors, making calls, hosting events, and actually talking to folks year-round. My opponent? He pops up like a groundhog every election cycle, then vanishes—except for those regular pilgrimages to vote with his Madison buddies. I’d push for regular audits of taxpayer-funded programs (especially those mostly serving city residents) to ensure every dollar delivers affordability and real, measurable results. No more smoke and mirrors.

Growth is always a thorny issue for any county. Infill development is demonstrably better for the environment and can bolster the tax base and create walkable communities. But it can also detract from a community’s “small town” charm and create aesthetic, traffic and parking issues. The alternative is often urban sprawl, which protects the downtown but destroys the agrarian beauty of the region, harms the environment, eliminates vital habitat for myriad spe-

cies, and promotes “car culture” and “bedroom communities.” Sprawl also usurps the valuable farmland that is at the very core of our area’s identity (and economy). But growth, no matter where it occurs, can create jobs and housing, can add to the tax base, and is seen by many Americans as the most palatable evidence of progress. How would you grapple with the complex issue of growth?

Downing: I have a clear record of promoting the slow, planned, smart growth of Dane County so that it may continue to be the great place it is.

Pings: Well said—it’s a tightrope walk, and we can’t pretend it’s simple. We need the right balance: protect our beautiful natural landscape and precious farmland while allowing thoughtful growth that doesn’t turn our towns into congested mini-Madisons. Farmers should have the freedom to sell their land when they need or want to—it’s their livelihood and legacy—but we should explore policies like giving neighboring farmers or residents a right of first refusal. That way, local folks who know and care about the land get the first shot at keeping it agricultural or in compatible use, instead of it automatically going to the highest outside bidder. Too much county focus and funding flows to the city anyway, thanks to my opponent and his endorsers. Local residents deserve the loudest voice in shaping smart growth—not distant bureaucrats or developers chasing quick profits. Let’s grow wisely, not wildly, and keep farmland working for the people who live here.

What is county government currently doing

right?

Downing: Dane County has done important work protecting farmland and supporting agriculture, which remains a key part of our local economy. Investments in infrastructure, conservation, and partnerships with towns help ensure rural communities remain strong places to live and work.

Pings: The Dane County Sheriff and his team deserve a standing ovation. Just recently, they calmly negotiated with an armed, barricaded man in crisis on Town Hall Road in Springdale—textbook professionalism under pressure. That’s the gold standard of public service. Sadly, my opponent voted for a budget that slashed sheriff positions. That’s not “right”—that’s playing fast and loose with our safety.

What could it do better?

Downing: Where the county can improve is making sure rural communities share fully in economic growth. That means continuing to support farmers and small businesses while also addressing challenges like housing availability, childcare, workforce development, and broadband access. Strong rural communities are essential to the health of the entire county, and our economic development strategies should continue to reflect that.

Pings: Stop the irresponsible budgeting that cuts sheriff positions while the budget balloons out of control. Public safety must be priority one—especially in rural District 30 communities that rely on the sheriff’s deputies. Beyond that, keep investing in core infrastruc-

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FORUM

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keep its distinct charm and character rather than becoming a soulless suburb like many of its nearby counterparts. The devil is in the details, of course, and the candidates dug into some of the minutia during the middle of the debate, while they used their opening and closing statements to express their broader governing philosophies.

Questions from the community hit on a variety of issues, but there were dominant themes. Development, surging tax bills, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the fear of data centers that present extreme environmental, economic and cultural hazards were all recurring topics.

Brager said repeatedly that current village leadership's hunger for growth, expansion and development needs to be tempered. Brager offered a "different vision" in which Mount Horeb "remains a small, charming" community that focuses on its "needs" rather than its "wants."

He stressed the need to listen closely to the concerns of residents. Brager said the village board would hone better policies if there were a few more "no" votes. He said people should push back against "the constant drumbeat of unanimous consent."

"I think it's overwhelming a lot of people," said Brager of hundreds of units of new housing recently approved by the village board. "I think we need to slow down," he continued. He said he favors more affordable options, but believes single-family homes are the best solution.

Brager said that "most of the time" TIF should not be used to incentivize developers. Brager said the village has become too interested in micromanaging development, particularly when it comes to subsidizing projects using TIF. However, he added, "I'm not against growth or economic development."

Clary said the current village board is too focused on fulfilling the needs of land developers and not focused enough on the will of ordinary citizens. "Unfortunately, I just don't feel the village is listening to the people," Clary stated. She went on to say she began following local government



From left, candidates James Brager, Tamiko Clary, Ben Jones and Michelle Kelley during Saturday's forum. Photo by Matt Geiger.

last year and feels the village needs to communicate better with residents. Clary said "the lack of following a topic" makes it difficult for citizens to keep informed about specific issues as they move from committee to committee and board to board.

Clary said her background in accounting and auditing has given her the skills to help improve local policy-making and communication. She also advocated for changing the zoning code to more heavily restrict some forms of development.

Clary also advocated for promoting architecture that promotes Mount Horeb's Norwegian roots, to the benefit of people from all backgrounds. "People adopt that type of heritage when they move to a community," she said.

"You need to ask the tough questions," she added.

Clary said many people were "very upset" about recent tax increases.

Clary, who in 2025 filed a formal ethics complaint against village board supervisor Marc Schellpfeffer, an architect, alleging he had a conflict of interest due to prior work with a local developer, was asked if she would be able to work with Schellpfeffer if elected to the board. The village attorney reviewed the complaint and opined that Schellpfeffer did not have a conflict of interest, according to state law, and Clary said she would be willing to work with Schellpfeffer if elected to the board.

Clary also reminded voters that she goes by both "Tammy" and "Tamiko" to avoid any confusion in the voting booth.

Jones, the sole incumbent on the ballot, said he cares deeply about the village and touted the economic development and public safety progress local leadership has pursued in recent years. Jones addressed a groundswell in public engagement that grew out of opposition to a proposed mixed-use proposal (Langhús on Main) in the heart of the downtown. He called the upswing in public involvement "fantastic" and said it's important for people to "speak up about what they want and what they don't want." Jones, who voted against Langhús, said he hopes citizens stay engaged regarding other issues and help the village board forge a path that "preserves what makes Mount Horeb special" despite the inevitability of growth and change. "I think I have shown I will listen," he stated.

Jones said the village's recently approved zoning code provides both limitations to prevent problematic development and the freedom to allow new housing and businesses. Jones said increased business development, including a possible business park, would help reduce the current strain on existing taxpayers. He also pointed out that he has worked to find other ways to reduce taxes, including raising the hotel room rate, which is paid by visitors rather than residents.

Jones said Mount Horeb can grow "a couple percent" per year while preserving its small-town character. "We can chart a middle path," he said. He said that whoever is elected to the board, Mount Horeb will attract new residents in the future, and many

of them will call the village home for years to come.

Jones said one area where he is happy to invest is public safety. As fire and EMS departments across the country struggle with staffing issues, Jones said Mount Horeb needs to continue prioritizing public safety. "That's a price I'm willing to pay," he said, adding that he is "all for creative solutions."

He added that he is in favor of some development but is unwilling to use TIF to subsidize projects residents "don't want."

Jones said the particularly sharp increase in taxes this year was due in part to the village's purchase of the Lukken property. Mount Horeb plans to turn some of the land into parks while selling off the rest for development. Jones said he expects the village to sell about 65 percent of the land "for market value" in the near future.

Jones also stressed that, despite sharing the same name – and despite being an attorney – he is not the same Ben Jones currently on the ballot in the circuit court judicial race.

Kelley said her campaign is focused on "honoring our community" and "staying true to our community's identity." Kelley pledged to protect the downtown from rampant development while "working for the citizens of the community I love so much."

Kelley said she wants to keep "a heritage-driven downtown" and wants to "flip" the board's thinking about what makes Mount Horeb special. She said she wants to promote it as "a destination" for tourists.

She contended that the village's quaint downtown is one of its greatest cultural and economic strengths, and that the village should work to preserve, rather than replace, existing structures downtown.

Kelley said Langhús on Main was what initially piqued her interest in municipal politics but she is enthusiastic about getting involved with all facets of local government. "I love learning," she stated. Kelley said the village board should also increase transparency and communication efforts.

When asked about easing the tax burden, Kelley said new businesses could help. "Why are we not bringing in more businesses?" she asked.

"We have to be holistic and we have to look at people's needs," she said.

Kelley said she is skeptical of claims that TIF – a practice in which the property taxes of land are frozen for a period of time to benefit land developers – does not negatively impact residential taxpayers.

As she has been since launching her campaign, Kelley was honest about the fact that she, like anyone else, does not have every answer to every question about municipal government. But she said her professional experience has given her the skills to learn and apply critical thinking skills to a variety of issues.

Many questions asked the candidates about how the village should spend taxpayer dollars. Kelley was asked, for example, if she supports building a new sports complex with the school district. "I would need to see what it would cost to the taxpayers," she replied.

All four candidates expressed some level of concern about the threat a data center would pose, but Jones and Brager said it's highly unlikely one will be proposed within village limits. Clary said they would pollute water and raise energy prices. On the related question of Artificial Intelligence, Brager said he does not use it for a variety of reasons, pointing to documented harm A.I. causes to people's critical thinking skills.

All four candidates were asked if the village should go to referendum prior to making major purchases. Brager, Clary and Kelley all voiced some support for the idea. Jones said he is open to it as well but reminded the audience that state laws provide a legal framework for when and how the village can take a referendum to voters.

The full forum can be viewed at: <https://trollway.tv/internetchannel/show/2740?site=1>



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Letters to the Editor

Whites support Pat Downing

Dear Editor,

We will once again be supporting and endorsing Pat Downing for Dane County Board this April. Pat’s extensive experience, including multiple terms as Chairman of the Town of Perry and his distinguished tenure on the Dane County Board, speaks volumes about his commitment to fostering collaboration and shared values among constituents. His unwavering integrity and deep understanding of the vital relationship between government and the people have earned him the trust and respect of those he serves, as evidenced by their continued support.

His constituents have continually reelected him because they know that he understands the relationship between government and the people and is guided by the idea that both can work together to achieve common goals and maintain common values. We are proud to support him as he seeks our seat on the County Board. Please join us and help to reelect Pat Downing to the County Board on Tuesday, April 7.

Sincerely,
Tim and Karen White
Mount Horeb

Get informed and vote!

Thank you to the Mt. Horeb Mail, Rotary, and Cathy Scott for sponsoring the opportunity for all of us to gain more insight into the four candidates vying for two trustee positions in the upcoming Village election. Thanks to Steve Salerno and the MHASD for hosting this very important forum where Village citizens could learn more about the candidates. Hats off to the four candidates willing to give their time and talents to represent us in the upcoming April election, and good luck to the two who will eventually fill two Village Trustee seats. The only downside of the forum was that many citizens missed this important opportunity.

Our Village is at a critical point for many reasons. A recent project was denied, and another is currently underway, both of which have sparked discussions and actions that, unfortunately, have caused simultaneous polarization and unification, as well as alienating and coalescing factions among our community’s citizens. The Village leadership has spent millions on farmland, with plans to use more of

the acreage as Village parkland rather than as land that can be viably developed to increase our tax base. Taxes have risen dramatically, while other very important projects that would boost development go unaddressed. It is time to come together to move our Village forward in a positive, proactive manner. Please find out as much as you can about the candidates and vote on April 7th!

Respectfully,
Brian Durtschi

Flag protest is justified expression of patriotism

I received a letter in the mail a few weeks back addressed to “Resident.” The letter let me know that its sender thought I needed a lesson in flag display, and that if I didn’t like our country I could leave, that I wouldn’t be missed, and that I was likely a democratic liberal from Madison. Whew! That’s a lot of rage. As the sender was emboldened only through their anonymity, they did not include a return address or even a name. I had a couple of things I wanted to discuss about this person’s point of view, and I would have loved the opportunity to do it in person.

I wish that they would have been brave enough to knock on my door to have an actual conversation about this. I would have told them that I DO love this country very, very much. My display of my nation’s flag with the union down is actually a signal of distress and a legally accepted form of free speech. As far as “lesson on proper display of the flag:” Section 8a of the “US Flag Code” found at American-Legion.org states:(a) The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property. As it turns out, the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America includes “symbolic speech” as a protected right. Just as their nameless letter sent by mail was protected speech, so is my display of the flag. It’s sad to me that people are so intolerant and fragile when their viewpoints are challenged.

I would argue that as a nation we are in a state of extreme danger and distress at this time. We are at war. A war started unilaterally without the approval of Congress or the backing of the people of the nation. Again, refer to

the Constitution - Article I, Section 8. We have a politically-driven police force (ICE) killing US citizens in our streets, and sending thousands of other people to modern day concentration camps. I find this distressful.

I believe in the US Constitution, and the rights it provides to all people who are on American soil - whether they are citizens or just visiting. It’s ironic that they likely think they are somehow more patriotic than I, since they suggested I leave our country. I would argue that if you say you love freedom, but don’t fight for everyone’s right to it - what you actually love is privilege.

Marni Kittleson

Laura Isaacson defends Chancellor

Dear Mount Horeb Mail,

You have likely seen the emails from Dr. Salerno and the media coverage containing accusations towards a local coach that, to date, have not been supported by evidence. I would like to share another perspective; one based on my personal experience with Dave Chancellor.

I have known Dave for nearly three years as both a booster and as the parent of a student-athlete on the cross country and track and field teams. While I could list his many accomplishments, such as leading the girls cross country team to a State Championship in 2025 and being named Coach of the Year multiple times, those accolades alone do not capture who Dave truly is.

What I can say without hesitation is that Dave has had a positive impact on every student he has worked with. Under his leadership, participation in cross country and track grew by nearly 80 percent in just a few years, likely a reflection of his infectious enthusiasm and dedication to his athletes. Dave didn’t just help students become better runners; he helped them become better people.

The culture he fostered emphasized inclusion, teamwork, and support. No athlete finished a race alone. After meets, team bonfires hosted by different families became a tradition that strengthened friendships and built community. Several parents have shared with me that their children struggled to find their place at school, but through cross country and track they found immediate belonging and lasting friendships. Dave played a

central role in building that culture, and I remain grateful for the positive influence he had on my child throughout high school.

For that reason, Dr. Salerno’s inflammatory email to the district was both shocking and deeply unsettling to those of us who know Dave personally. As I later learned, the email was sent the day after an accusation was brought forward; before any investigation had been completed and before evidence had been established. It is difficult to imagine a more irresponsible action from a district leader.

Unfortunately, the situation was further intensified when our local newspaper published a front-page article repeating inflammatory language that portrayed Dave in a deeply negative light. The result was the public shaming of a person many of us know to be compassionate, dedicated, and honorable.

My father-in-law spent his life as a public defender, working until the age of 80. From him I learned two important lessons: approach others without judgment, and remember that every person is innocent until proven guilty and deserves due process. Sadly, in this case, those principles were not upheld by Dr. Salerno or the media.

Did anyone stop to consider how these actions might permanently damage Dave’s reputation and career? Did they think about the impact on his family, including his four children who attend school in this district?

The damage to Dave’s reputation may never be fully repaired. But I stand with Dave and his family, and I hope our community will recognize the injustice that has occurred and extend compassion and support to the Chancellor family during this difficult time.

Laura Isaacson

Chet Isaacson defends Chancellor

We live in a society in which it has become acceptable to say whatever we want about someone publicly, without fear of any meaningful repercussions, even if those accusations are unsupported. We see it every day – whether it’s a shocking social media post, a salacious newspaper article or a reckless, premature public message made by a school superintendent.

Too many people have become comfortable with the notion that we can make whatever outrageous claims we want about someone, and share those comments publicly, without any real knowledge of the accuracy

of the allegations. We argue that it is our First Amendment right to do so. However, we must balance our First Amendment right to free speech against what is morally correct.

As many of you know, allegations of misconduct were made against our former Mount Horeb High School cross-country and track coach, David Chancellor. However, after a thorough investigation into those allegations, the District Attorney’s Office recently made the decision to charge Mr. Chancellor with nothing. Not a felony, not a misdemeanor, not an ordinance violation - nothing.

The decision to not charge someone after an investigation is fundamentally different from a decision to “drop” charges. If charges are dropped – this suggests that the District Attorney has filed charges following an investigation and has begun prosecuting the accused, only to later “drop” the charges (often due to problems with witness participation or weak evidence). In Mr. Chancellor’s case, the investigation was completed, the case was reviewed, and no charges were filed.

Superintendent Steve Salerno issued a statement on February 2, 2026, in which he announced to the public that, “On the morning of Friday, January 30, I become aware of allegations involving our High School head cross country coach track and field coach, Mr. David Chancellor.” Not stopping there, Salerno continued in the next sentence of his release to state that “the allegations were purported to involve grooming-like behavior.”

Unfortunately, this statement was issued just days after the allegations were made. Accordingly, it is difficult to imagine that any meaningful investigation could have taken place by that time. Further, the comment that there was “purported grooming-like behavior” was, at best, totally unnecessary and, at worst, dangerously irresponsible editorializing.

Shortly thereafter on February 5, 2026, the Mount Horeb Mail published a front-page article repeating the Superintendent’s statement. Mr. Chancellor’s picture was pasted front and center and, as has be-

come common these days, the article carried the scandalous title “District says coach being investigated for allegations of grooming-like behavior.” The second paragraph of the article goes on to define the provocative term “grooming.”

Without question, allegations of wrongdoing by our educators and coaches must be taken seriously. However, we can take such allegations seriously and thoroughly investigate them - while also making sure that any public comments are thoughtfully measured and respectful to the accused and their family members.

A simple statement that allegations had been made and that the individual had been placed on administrative leave pending the completion of the investigation would have been sufficient. On that note, a follow-up statement explaining that no charges had been filed following the conclusion of the investigation would also be appropriate – though I would be surprised to see the School District issue any such message in this case.

Why should we choose our words carefully? Because of what actually happened here. What happened here is serious allegations were made against an individual who was ultimately not prosecuted after the allegations were actually investigated. Salerno’s premature public statement and the newspaper article that followed caused real harm to real people. Someone lost their job. Someone was publicly embarrassed. Someone’s family was significantly impacted.

So what do we do now? To be sure, this could have happened to anyone. Imagine if one of your family members was publicly tarred and feathered before an investigation into the claims against them had actually concluded.

How do we correct this wrong? I really don’t know – but I think it begins with us going out of our way to make sure that the Chancellor family feels welcome in our community in the wake of this mess. Lastly, I believe it is also fair to consider the question of whether we should hold our public institutions accountable when the actions of those institutions cause this level of harm to a family.

Chester A. Isaacson

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*EMS Open House
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More than 140 residents showed up to the fire station in April of 1975 to hear a significant proposal: raise \$30,000 to purchase an ambulance. The firemen had three requests of the audience that night: 1) Volunteer your time to become trained “ambulance attendants”; 2) Promote the idea throughout the fire district; and 3) Contribute and raise funds for the new service.

When Mount Horeb’s first ambulance went into service on Thursday, March 4, 1976, it was still short of the needed start-up funds. Chief Himsel had to sign a note for \$12,000 to cover the shortfall, eventually paid off through donations. It was a doozy of a first day in service: a historic ice storm rolled through Mount Horeb that morning. By noon, power was out across the region, taking days to restore. Fifty years is a long time for advancements in any field, with EMS services undergoing a total transformation. From police station

wagons hauling patients into Madison, to retro EMS vans with privacy glass, to our current state of the art rigs with paramedic-level providers and Med Flight on standby, the EMTs of our first days put down a foundation that would forever change pre-hospital care capabilities. Several of FDMH’s EMS charter members attended the station’s annual February banquet this year where they were honored for their efforts and legacy. Charter EMS member Mary Jo Brinkmann had the following to say when reflecting on

her first responder origins. “Looking back as a charter member, I realize how much support our entire surrounding community put forth to help us succeed in creating the EMS side of FDMH,” began Brinkmann. “It truly was a ‘team effort’ and we as a group became a second family. Our motto ‘Share in the Pride’ was truly an outcome of everyone’s efforts. I’m very proud to have been a contributing member and very proud of all who continue to serve.” Current FDMH Fire Chief Jenny Minter added, “As we celebrate 50 years of EMS

service, we’re reminded that this all began with neighbors stepping up for neighbors. From that first rig rolling out during an ice storm to today’s paramedic-level care and advanced equipment, our growth reflects the continued support of this community. We are proud to carry forward the foundation those charter members built, and we remain committed to serving the district with the same dedication and heart that started it all.” The Mount Horeb Area Joint Fire Department’s territory covers 137 square miles, the largest in Dane

County, offering EMS and fire protection services to the Villages of Mount Horeb and Blue Mounds, and the Townships of Blue Mounds, Cross Plains, Perry, Primrose, Springdale, and Vermont. In 2025, FDMH EMS responded to 1,501 calls.

FDMH warmly invites the public to stop by the station on Saturday, March 21 from 9AM - 11AM to take a tour, enjoy coffee and donuts, share your stories, and look at artifacts from the past.

Historic Preservation held public info session

By ERIN HERNDON
Mount Horeb Mail

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a public information session for the 2026 *Village of Mount Horeb Intensive Survey of Historic Resources* on March 12. At its meeting two weeks ago, HPC discussed logistics of the session and reviewed downtown zoning district literature. They also approved both their January 2026 meeting minutes and a motion on the preferred plaque design for historic

designation. They also continued their discussion surrounding the zoning code rewrite. According to citizen member Destinee Udelhoven, the HPC welcomes the public to their 2026 Historic Property Survey Launch. Those in attendance will meet commission members and learn further details about the upcoming community-wide intensive survey from both the HPC and the project’s contractor, Urbana Preservation and Planning.

“First, we’ll start with a staff person introducing the project and our contractor, and they’ll also give a brief overview of the HPC and the municipal register as it exists,” citizen member Udelhoven said. “Urbana will then come in and discuss their methodology and timeline and take questions. Then we’ll open the floor for public input.” Attendees will additionally have the opportunity to share their own thoughts on the potential cultural signifi-

cance of Village properties and sites. The informational session takes place March 12 at 6 p.m. in the Board Room of the Municipal Building, (2nd floor, 108 E Main St). In their February meeting, Commission members also shared their final thoughts on the downtown zoning district and local register sections of the zoning code rewrite. Village Administrator Nic Owen provided a conclusive summarization of the discussion.

“We covered design review input and recommendations on buildings or designs for buildings adjacent to historical districts or structures, as well as CSM review in a recommendation on lots adjacent to or in historic districts or structures,” Village Administrator Owen said. “For downtown buildings, we are eliminating the Benjamin Moore palette option and changing it to just the Sherwin-Williams exterior historical palette and removing vinyl siding from

siding options. We also included the articulation of 40-foot facades and some options on what that articulation would mean. Finally, we’re sticking with the 50-foot commercial space on the front of buildings in the DMU.”

The Historic Preservation Commission next meets March 25, 2026, at 6 p.m.

Grundahl elected to Mound City board

The Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of Mound City Financial Services, Inc., the holding company of Mound City Bank was held on March 10. President Michael Phillips reported record net income of \$6.51 million representing a \$25.43 per weighted share return for the 434 Shareholders of the holding company as of 12/31/2025. Directors Barry Brodbeck, Daniel Jansen and Bradley Reitzner were elected to serve a three-year term. Michael Phillips was elected to serve a two-year term to fill the unexpired term of retiring Brian Durtschi. Jeff Grundahl was elected to serve a one-year

term to fill the unexpired term of retiring Dean Keyes. Other board members include Steve Brogley, Dennis Cooley, Donna Hoppenjan, Bruce Kroll. Barry Brodbeck serves as the Chairman of the Board. Retiring Directors Brian Durtschi and Dean Keyes were recognized for their six years and five years of service respectively, to the banking industry as Board of Directors. “We are deeply grateful for Brian and Dean’s expertise, guidance and support they have both given our Board, Senior Management and entire Bank Team.” Incoming Director Grundahl is a lifelong member of the Mount Horeb community.

He is the founder of JG Development, a design-build general contracting firm he launched in 1990 at the age of 19. Under Jeff’s leadership and strategic acquisitions, he and his wife Mary expanded their enterprise into two divisions, residential and commercial. In addition, Grundahl is a co-owner of TRI Holdings which is a development company. “Our Bank looks forward to Grundahl’s business and development expertise on our Board,” stated Phillips. Mound City Bank has assets of \$514 million.

5th Annual Seed Swap Connects Community Growers

The Driftless Historium (100 S 2nd St, downtown Mount Horeb) will host the 5th Annual Seed Swap on Saturday, March 21, 2026. Drop by anytime between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to swap seeds and seed stories. Meet fellow gardeners and take home exciting seed varieties donated by gardeners and generous businesses, including local growers A.P. Whaley and Back Home Farm and Blue Mounds-based Jada’s Garden and Greenhouse, as well



Pictured above, Historium Director Destinee Udelhoven poses with just some of the generously donated seed varieties that will be available at the 5th Annual Seed Swap. This free event will take place on Saturday, March 21, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Mount Horeb’s downtown Driftless Historium.

as national distributor Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. This event is free and all are welcome. Attendance is encouraged whether you are a beginning seed saver, first-time gardener or a seasoned expert in both. Bring small, well-marked packets of vegetable, herb, and native seeds -and/or your seed stories! We want to hear all about it. No seeds to contribute to the exchange? No problem! Just bring yourself; there will be plenty of seed to get you started. All leftover seed stock

will be deposited into the Driftless Seed Library, a free community resource available at the Driftless Historium museum and accessible year-round during their open hours. This program is presented by the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society and the Driftless Seed Project, a group of preservation-minded folks that seeks to identify and share locally cultivated and heritage seeds and their stories. For more information, email mthoreb@bhs@gmail.com or call 608-437-6486.

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Garden Club to host Dr. Amy Trowbridge

On Tuesday, April 14th, Dr. Amy Trowbridge from the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology will present on Maintaining Tree Health: Tree Diseases, Stresses and Natural Defenses. Trees around our

homes that current or former owners have planted add significant value to our properties in providing beauty, shade, an increase in property value. We want to keep them healthy for their lifetime. Dr. Trowbridge

will help us learn how to do that and what we can do to assist the tree’s natural defenses to maintain their health.

Please note that the club will be meeting the second Tuesday, April 14 at

6:45 p.m., in the Driftless Historium and Mount Horeb Area Historical Society building at 100 S Second Street, Mount Horeb. Refreshments at 6:45, presentation starts at 7, and the club business meeting

begins at 8.

Members of the general public are welcome to attend the program free of charge. The program will be followed by a business meeting of the Mound Vue

Garden Club. If you are interested in gardening and local community service and outreach, contact Gloria Davies at jrdgrdquilt@mhtc.net about club membership.

Kathy La Plante to lead local PFLAG book talk

PFLAG Mount Horeb invites you to a book talk by Kathy La Plante from Verona.

The book entitled *The Summons* is a sweeping historical novel set during World War II about resili-

ence, redemption, and the ties that bind us across generations. Perfect for fans of queer historical fic-

tion, women’s war stories, and emotionally rich family sagas, this novel invites you to journey through time,

across borders, and into the heart of what it means to belong. The event will take place Wednesday, March 26

at 6:30 pm at The Garden Wall Bookshop at 101 Main St. in Verona.

DIST. 30

continued from page 2

ture: roads that don’t resemble moonscapes, clean water, and parks we actually use. No more trading deputy slots for pet projects.

Explain how you would bring different ideas to the table, and even disagree, in a way that is productive, helpful, and does not detract from civil discourse:

Downing: I view helping my constituents get their questions and concerns addressed by County Departments, and helping them solve problems they might have, as an integral part of my job. Most recently I arranged a meeting of Montrose representatives and County Highway Commissioner Clement Abongwa and his team at the Town Hall to resolve the danger to pedestrians on Cty PB through Paoli as events there have greatly increased traffic.

Pings: My opponent has decades on the board—plenty of time, zero new ideas, and apparently zero new energy. I’m bringing a fresh perspective: firefighter grit, small-business hustle, community advocacy, and the daily reality of juggling family, work, kids’ activi-

ties, and skyrocketing bills. Affordability isn’t abstract to me—it’s breakfast-table talk. After decades in office, has my opponent ever lost sleep over a property tax bill? Doubtful. It’s time for generational change: new voice, new energy, and civil disagreements that actually move the needle for our towns and villages.

What is the biggest threat to current residents’ high quality of life?

Downing: Rampant unplanned development that does not respect area values.

Pings: Safety first—full stop. Our District 30 communities thrive because we can count on sheriff deputies and first responders to keep us secure. We want kids biking to Lake Belle View or Stewart Lake County Park without worry and families enjoying our other beautiful parks without fear. Layered on top of that, is the crushing affordability squeeze. Over the past two decades, has my opponent ever voted “no” on spending to keep taxes in check? If so, I missed the memo.

What are the county’s greatest opportunities moving forward?

Downing: Dane County’s greatest opportunities moving forward lie in building on the strengths we already have. We have a strong agricultural base, a growing innovation economy, and communities that are deeply invested in the region’s future. By continuing to invest in housing, infrastructure, and workforce development, the county can ensure that growth benefits residents across both urban and rural areas. There is also a major opportunity to strengthen support for small businesses and family farms, which are critical to the local economy, particularly in rural communities. Expanding access to broadband, childcare, and workforce training can help ensure that people across the county are able to participate in and benefit from economic growth.

Pings: New leadership—starting at the top with our fresh county executive (I’m eager to partner there). And yes, generational turnover on the board itself. My opponent brings decades of the same-old thinking and zero vision for tomorrow’s opportunities. Time to turn the page and unlock real progress for rural Dane County.

Local property taxes

across much of Southern Wisconsin have skyrocketed in recent years. Many homeowners are currently paying double what they paid in local taxes just a decade ago. The increases are driven primarily by school districts and other sources, but the county levy plays a role, too. How can county government balance the need to pay its bills and provide vital services with the need to keep this area an affordable place to live?

Downing: Follow the Sheriff’s example of finding \$90,000 in savings by reviewing contracts to find better deals and discounts for field and jail radio components. Support the County Executive’s creation of a work group to examine county-owned land and facilities and make recommendations for consolidation, renovation or divestment, and improve efficiency. Initiate independent, third-party audits of government nonprofit contractors.

Pings: This is the million-dollar question (or rather, the multi-million-tax-bill question). My opponent has presided over decades of property tax hikes because spending grows faster

than inflation—or common sense. The fix? Prioritize ruthlessly: fund public safety and the sheriff first (unlike the budget he supported that cut deputies). Say “no” to non-essential spending. Demand transparency and accountability from every non-profit and program getting county cash—especially those mostly benefiting Madison. Something’s got to give, and it won’t be our wallets if I’m on the board.

What’s an important issue that doesn’t get talked about enough?

Downing: Data centers. I support our EANR Committee Legislative Agenda proposal that: Requires formal approval by affected municipalities prior to state authorization of large-scale

energy generation facilities, utility-scale solar installations, transmission corridors, battery storage facilities, data centers, or other high-impact infrastructure projects. Rejects state preemption that overrides locally adopted land use protections or permits the expansion of such projects without municipal consent.

Pings: They cut the Sheriff’s department—and rural communities paid the price. My opponent and his longtime board buddies dug us into a fiscal hole, then “solved” it by slashing deputy positions in places like ours. It’s shameful, it’s dangerous, and it deserves way more spotlight. Voters need to send a loud message: Not again. No more.

CHURCH NOTES

Good News Lutheran Church - WELS

9975 Pepper Dr, Mt Horeb
Pastor Jonathan Bauer
Thursday Worship: 6:30 pm
Sunday Worship: 9:00 am
Sunday School and Bible Study: 10:15 am
608-437-4646
GoodNewsLC.org

Immanuel Lutheran - ELCA

310 W. Main St. Mount Horeb
608-437-8733
10am Sunday Worship
www.immanuelmh.org/
1st Steps Childcare
608-218-4425

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

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
Pastor Jim Ranney
Worship: 1st, 3rd & 5th
Sundays of the month at 10am
twosteeple.org

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

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
Pastor Jim Ranney
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Sunday of the month, 10 am
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‘A much bigger story than anything I’ve written before’

Nick Petrie is the author of nine novels in the Peter Ash series, most recently *The Dark Time*. His debut, *The Drifter*, won both the ITW Thriller award and the Barry Award for Best First Novel, and was a finalist for the Edgar and the Hammett Awards. A husband and father, he lives in the Milwaukee area. Petrie visit Botham Vineyard at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 28 for wine, conversation and a book signing. The event is free and open to the public.

By MATT GEIGER
Mount Horeb Mail

Q: Okay, before I ask about your new book, tell us a little about yourself. We know your official bio, but why did you become a writer? Every author seems to have a totally unique reason, in addition to the universal one (that they love reading). What’s yours?

A: Every writer absolutely starts out as a big reader – for long stretches of my teenage years, I was reading a book a day. At a certain point, I began to wonder if I could entertain myself with my own stories. All this came to a head my senior year in high school when, as the editor of my high school newspaper, I was somehow allowed to write an eight-part soap opera in which I got to make fun of my friends. People would stop me in the hall and tell me how much they liked what I’d written.

Which is a long way of saying that, for me, being a writer is only partly about telling stories. It’s also about having that conversation with readers.

Q: “*The Dark Time*” is the ninth book in your Peter Ash series. How has Ash grown, changed or evolved since “*The Drifter*”?

A: In “*The Drifter*”, Peter is struggling with his



Petrie

return to civilian life. Peter would never think of himself as damaged, but because of multiple combat deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, he’s got a form of post-traumatic stress that shows up as severe claustrophobia. When the book begins, he’s living out of his pickup – yet he still shows up to help the widow of one of the men in his platoon.

During my research for that book, I talked with many veterans about their experiences. Because of that, it became really important to me to show Peter’s evolution in working through his post-traumatic stress. Combat never leaves you – PTSD is essentially a traumatic experience that rewires the brain – but there are ways to learn to live with PTSD – and more than that, to thrive. And that’s what I wanted to show through this series – book by book, Peter learns how to come to terms with who he has become,

along the way finding love, purpose, and meaning.

Q: Can you talk a bit about how you handle writing about military service, veterans and trauma through Ash and his experiences?

A: I’m not a veteran myself, and I never set out to write about veterans’ lives. But during the course of my work as a home inspector, it was my privilege to meet a great many vets coming home from war. Honestly, I kind of fell in love with these young men and women who signed up for the military after 9/11 – their idealism, their work ethic, and their profound sense of right and wrong. Like all young people who sign up to go to war, they also had no idea how that might change them. Because of our many conversations about the aftermath of war, it became very important to me to get the details of this experience right, on an emotional level. The fact that vets continue to reach out to me to share their stories is the great unexpected gift of writing this series.

Q: A key figure in your new book is Katelyn Thorsen (KT), an investigative journalist in peril. Your Peter Ash series hasn’t only focused on crime, but also on injustice, and the two don’t always run in tandem. So, talk a bit about

your decision to put a journalist – a truth seeker; someone who shines a light on injustice – at the center of this story.

A: I’m a big fan of journalism done well. The public needs journalists to tell true stories about the state of the world we live in. But journalism is under threat. In this country, we’ve lost tens of thousands of newspapers to consolidation and outdated business models – many were put out of business by various incarnations of the internet. And the internet, via social media and blogs and many other avenues, has allowed many to bypass the information gatekeepers and spread all manner of untruths that can be actively harmful to people as individuals and to our country as a whole. So, yeah, I’m happy to showcase the value of professional journalists wherever I can.

Q: A “playwright” is someone who builds plays, just as a “shipwright” is someone who builds ships. I’ve always loved that blue collar etymology and think it extends to all writers and storytellers. I bring this up because I believe you have worked as a carpenter. Do you build worlds, characters and stories in the same way you would build things with your hands? Does the one type of work inform the other?

A: I love this idea, too. Although I know many writers who consider themselves to be artists, I’ve always thought of myself as a craftsman. That probably comes from my years as a carpenter and remodeling contractor, but it’s also how I approach writing itself, as a kind of blue-collar job. Just as a house gets built board by board, a book gets created one sentence at a time.

Q: Does “*The Dark Time*” do anything differently than the books that came before it?

A: This is a much bigger story than anything I’ve written before, with much bigger stakes. I was taking a pretty big swing with this book, and I’m really grateful that, so far, the reception has been overwhelmingly positive.

Q: You are stranded on a deserted island, and you can either have a Raymond Chandler book or one by Dashiell Hammett. Which are you picking?

A: Raymond Chandler, hands down. More than anyone, Chandler is the father of the modern detective novel. And that voice! World-weary, beaten down, but also full of passion and indignation at the horrors people inflict on each other.

Q: When talking about his new podcast (*The Book Club*) Dominic Sandbrook recently pointed out that reading fiction is an “act of empathy” – that it’s one of the few ways humans can set aside their own experience of the world and experience the lives of other people. What about writing? Is creating stories also an act of empathy, too?

A: I’ve been talking about reading and writing as an act of empathy for many years. With both reading and writing, you’re really putting yourself in another person’s shoes, trying to imagine yourself living a very different life than your own. I think this is a crucial part of being human, of finding common ground, a common and shared humanity. Personally, I think we could use a bit more of that in the world right now.

Q: You are coming to Botham Vineyards soon, right? Can you tell us a bit about that?

A: Sarah Botham, one of the forces behind the Botham Vineyard and Winery, is a fan of my work and has been trying to get me to come talk and sign books for three or four years. Finally, with “*The Dark Time*,” I was able to make room my tour schedule – and I’m really looking forward to it! I’ll talk about the new book and where the Peter Ash series came from, then take questions from the audience. I know Sarah is particularly interested in my writing about veterans and post-traumatic stress, so I imagine that will come up as well.



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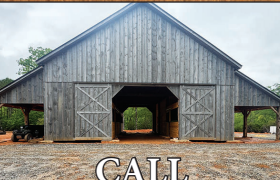
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Steffi the Pet Nanny Cares for Animals Big and Small

By Joe Block
Finger Publishing

Steffi Weasner—known to her human fans as Steffi the Pet Nanny—has always loved animals, ever since she was a small child in her native Germany living in an apartment building where no pets were allowed. “Every time I saw a dog, cat, or any animal,” explained Steffi, “I asked if I could pet it and never stopped asking [my parents] to have one of my own.”

“I watched every movie, documentary, and series with animals that my parents allowed me to watch,” said Steffi. That childlike enthusiasm is still present today when she’s caring for her clients’ animals: doting, caring, enthusiastic—even talking with your pet in the same way you would.

Steffi is the Pet Nanny, providing a service much needed and like no other: she cares for your pets. From the quite common, like dogs, cats, gerbils, hamsters, fish, guinea pigs, and rabbits, to the a little more offbeat chickens and goats, even including nature’s mischievous imp, the donkey, Steffi will care for them all.

Following in the path of many before her, she wished to become a veterinarian or technician so she could help animals. However, since everyone else was trying to become a veterinarian too, Steffi soon realized opportunities were limited. She became a Dental Assistant and Hygienist and, in her words,



Dogs and cats are among the many animals cared for by Steffi Weasner.

“helped people instead.”

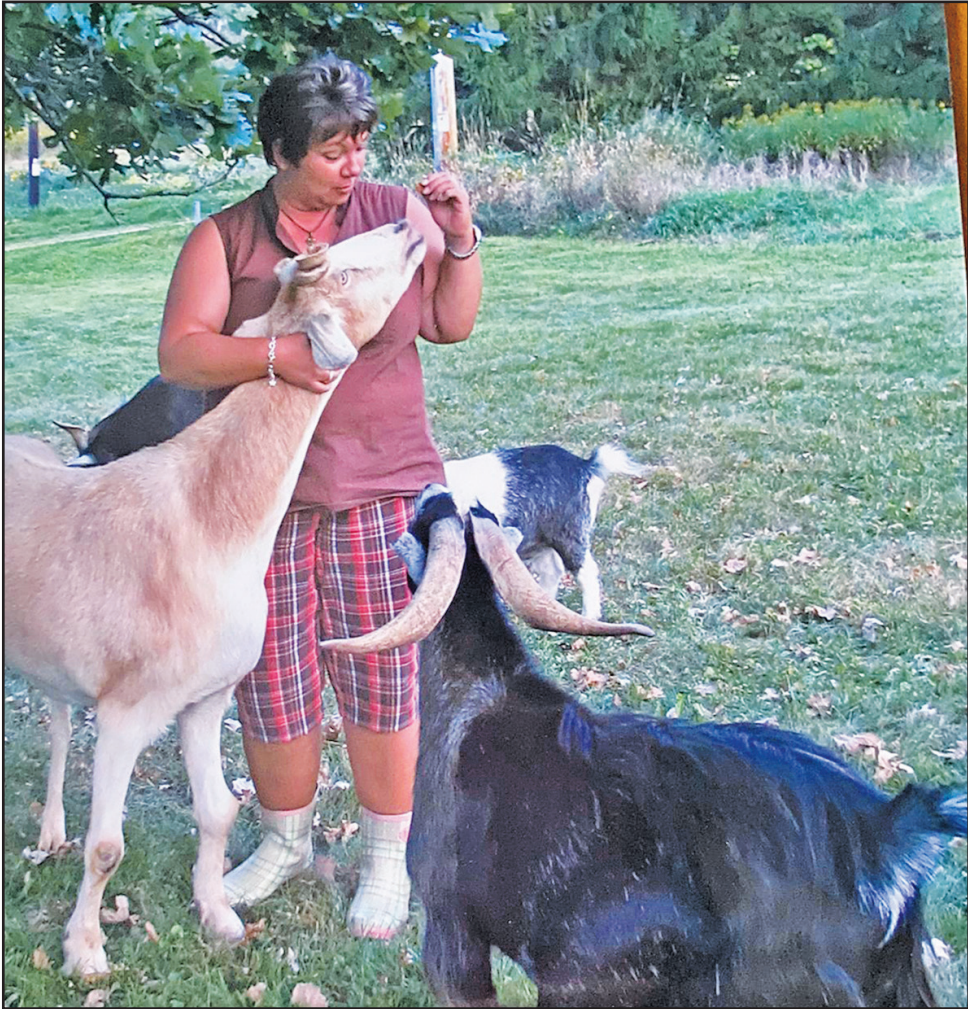
Upon coming to the United States, her “dream to work with animals became possible.” That’s where she came up with the idea for the Pet Nanny.

Steffi relays a story from some years ago where a new customer called and asked if she could help pet-sit cats and kittens. Steffi got to the house and was introduced to two adult cats. Feeding, routines, and such were explained, and then Steffi was led to the basement—and

was awestruck to see about five adult cats and roughly 15 kittens.

“Pure joy overcame me,” explained Steffi, “until I was faced with the fact that I would have to not only feed them but also play with them and clean up after them.” She also learned to deworm kittens—a note she added with a smiley-face emoticon in our communication.

“It was very challenging to keep up with who I administered the medication to already,” explained Steffi, because the kittens looked so similar. “Seeing those little furballs playing, run-



Steffi Weasner, known as Steffi the Pet Nanny, cares for goats. Photo contributed.

ning around, being happy and healthy will always be a feeling hard to describe.”

But the story doesn’t end there. That same house, filled at one point with a basement full of kittens and owned by a person who volunteered for Angels Wish, a foundation that helps foster cats, eventually sold to a buyer who claimed he “could smell any animal in any house at any time.”

“Well... needless to say,” said Steffi, “he bought the house where hundreds of foster cats had been living, and he lived there happily ever after.”

For about two decades,

Steffi has offered her services: feeding, walking, cleaning up after, playing with, as well as medicating and simply “spending time” with pet animals. She’s a seasoned veteran with some solid knowledge of her own. She explained her process for entering a new pet’s space.

“When there is a dog or multiple dogs,” explained Steffi, “I come in the house and let them greet me, sniff me, and hear my voice. I’m always being calm around them and giving them a lot of attention. With cats, I’m usually a little quieter, so they aren’t so afraid of me,

being a stranger. Usually, I also let them come to me first so they get to know me. Once a connection is established, I sometimes call out their names to let them know, now it’s time to get spoiled...”

“My advice,” she said, “would be to never act in any threatening way or be overly loud, as animals can easily misunderstand or feel threatened with sudden noises or movements.”

“My best advice to approach an animal would be to let them approach you first,” said Steffi.

What about talking to the animals?

Steffi said, “Similar to my slogan, ‘No animal too big or small, I take care of them all!’ I also talk to them all!” She continued, “My own and all the ones I take care of... I definitely love talking to them all. Sometimes they even answer me back and share their ‘secrets’.”

She explains, “After a while knowing a specific animal, there is some body language that is very fun to watch and figure out.”

You can find more information about Steffi the Pet Nanny on her webpage at: <https://steffithetpetnanny.com/#home>, or at 608-513-1542.

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PAWSOME PETS

Lifestyle Farming on the Rise: Middleton Farmers Cooperative Adapts to Serve Backyard Animal Owners

By Alec Finger
Finger Publishing

As urban development continues to reshape Dane County, the Middleton Farmers Cooperative is evolving alongside it—serving a new generation of animal owners interested in backyard chickens, hobby farming and farm-to-table living.

For nearly a century, the cooperative has been a cornerstone of agriculture in the Middleton area. Now, as traditional production farming becomes less common near growing communities, the co-op is shifting its focus to what General Manager Ladd Pettit calls “lifestyle farming.”

“Urban sprawl has squeezed out a lot of the traditional farms in Dane County,” Pettit said. “We still want to stay connected to our agricultural roots, but we also want to serve the people who are living here now and want animals on a smaller scale.”

In the past, the co-op’s mill produced feed for large-scale farms across the region. But as farms consolidated and began mixing



Co-op customers have access to rentals and resources for all levels of farming and animal care. Photos by Alec Finger.

feed themselves, demand for local production declined. The co-op closed its mill earlier this year and began expanding its feed store offerings instead.

The shift reflects a broader trend Pettit says has accelerated over the past decade.

“People still want to be connected to where their food comes from,” he said. “Maybe they don’t own a big farm, but they might have a backyard with chickens or a few goats.”

That interest surged during the COVID-19 pandemic. With people spending more time at home, backyard

chickens in particular became increasingly popular. Communities throughout Dane County expanded ordinances allowing residents to keep more hens—though roosters remain prohibited in many areas.

Chickens remain the most common starter animal for residents interested in raising their own food.

“If you live in town and have neighbors nearby, chickens are really the only livestock I’d recommend,” Pettit said. “Everything else usually needs a little more space.”

Unlike large chain stores, the co-op’s feed inventory is largely driven by customer requests. Pettit said the store regularly carries feed for animals such as chickens,



Customers can find a variety of animal feed at Middleton Farmers Cooperative, including options for chickens, goats, and other backyard livestock.

goats and hogs, but it can quickly source specialized products as well.

“If someone needs pot-bellied pig feed, we have it because somebody asked for it,” Pettit said. “If someone needs llama feed, we can usually get it within a day.”

The store’s range of supplies goes well beyond feed. Customers can find everything from chick starter kits and bedding to fencing materials and coop supplies. Staff also help answer questions about nutrition, housing and care for animals.

“We try to make sure people have what they need to succeed,” Pettit said. “That means not just selling feed, but explaining things like water requirements, minerals or what ingredients to avoid for certain animals.”

For example, some feed additives that are safe for livestock can be dangerous—or even fatal—for horses.

“It’s important that people know what they’re feeding,” Pettit said.

For newcomers interested in keeping animals, Pettit recommends starting small and doing plenty of research.

Chickens are often the easiest entry point for beginners. Hens typically produce about one egg every 25 hours during peak laying seasons, though production slows during winter.

“They’re a good way to get started,” Pettit said. “You can have a few birds and get fresh eggs right from your backyard.”

Goats, sheep and other livestock may require more space and preparation, but Pettit says many people enjoy the opportunity to raise animals themselves.

“It’s about understanding where your food comes from,” he said. “The grocery store didn’t produce it. Someone else did.”

That awareness has helped drive renewed interest in farm-to-table living

and youth agricultural programs like 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

The cooperative frequently supports local fairs and agricultural events, including the Midwest Horse Fair, and has hosted educational workshops on raising different animals.

Founded nearly a century ago, the Middleton Farmers Cooperative operates under a structure that returns profits to members who purchase from the store.

Unlike retail membership clubs, customers do not pay to join. Instead, those who regularly buy supplies may receive patronage refunds when the co-op performs well financially.

“If we succeed, our patrons succeed,” Pettit said. “That’s the whole point of a cooperative.”

But Pettit says the real focus goes beyond business.

“Our goal is to build relationships,” he said. “If people trust us to help them take care of their animals and succeed in what they’re doing, then we’ve done our job.”

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PAWSOME PETS

Starlight Remains an Independent Country Vet

By Matt Geiger
Finger Publishing

Last year, *The Nation* published an article titled: “The Billionaire Oligarchs are Coming For your Pets... and they want to make bigger profits.” One year earlier, a *State-line* headline proclaimed: “Vets fret as private equity snaps up clinics, pet care companies: Some veterinarians and advocates worry about higher prices, lower quality.” A pair of U.S. senators issued the following statement: “(P)ivate equity firms ... have spent billions on buying up veterinary practices and profiteering while reducing quality of care, increasing prices for pet owners, and making working conditions even harder for veterinarians.” Mars, Inc., the company best known for chocolate candy, which can be lethal to dogs and cats, owns around 3,000 vet clinics across the globe.

But for the past 15 years, Jean Elmer, a former dairy farmer who became a veterinarian in middle age, has run Starlight Veterinary Clinic, a small, rural, independent practice at 10902 Eckel Rd. in Blue

Mounds. It is the very opposite of the corporate animal hospitals that have proliferated the country in recent years.

“Some of the clinics that have been bought out don’t even list their vets anymore,” Elmer said. “Here, I know pretty much everybody who walks through the door. I know the pet or the person. I see a dog and know to go get their incontinence or seizure meds. I know what they need.”

Elmer was approaching her 40th birthday when she initially decided to go to veterinary school. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine in 2003. Nearly a quarter century later she has seen many changes.

“I used to do 90 percent horses and 10 percent small animals,” she said. “Now it’s 10 percent horses and 90 percent small animals.”

“When it’s really, really cold out and the horses are misbehaving, I don’t really mind that,” chuckled Elmer, who owns and loves horses but can appreciate operating on a dog or cat in a warm clinic rather than working on a horse in a freezing, wind- and rain-



Veterinarian Jean Elmer of Starlight Veterinary Clinic in Blue Mounds with one of her canine patients. Photos by Matt Geiger.

swept field.

Elmer said she remains happy with her chosen field despite the various challenges facing the industry.

“I still love what I do,” she said. “I still love when I get to make a difference. I like to take out bladder stones or do C-Sections. I do tons of cat spays for farmers at a discount, to help with overpopulation. I like to feel like I’m making a difference.”

Over the years, Elmer

has been bitten by Mustangs, clawed by cats and stepped on by cattle. She has tranquilized an escaped llama, taken in and treated countless strays, and spent long, sleepless nights working to save family dogs experiencing every imaginable variety of distress.

“It’s always interesting and usually never the same,” she once observed. That sentiment remains true today.

Just a few decades ago,



Veterinary care is provided to dogs, cats, and other animals at Starlight Veterinary Clinic.

many people pushed young women away from nursing, deeming it to be a “male profession.” These days, the vast majority of veterinary school students are female, and people like Elmer represent the final holdouts that are keeping the long, storied tradition of independent country vets alive.

Elmer still lives on a 200-acre farm near Daleyville with her assortment of horses, dogs, cats, and sometimes cows. She usually has about a

30-minute break after each lengthy workday, before she is back there with her animals.

Unfortunately, a widespread staffing shortage means it’s currently difficult to find and hire vets, vet techs, and any other type of help for the clinic, so Elmer finds herself desperately scouring the area for people to work at Starlight. She urged anyone who might want to work in veterinary medicine to contact her.

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PAWSOME PETS

Do Research Before Adopting Exotic Pets

By Heather Stanek
Finger Publishing

It might sound fun to get a pet that's not a cat or a dog. It's certainly a tempting idea when you see plenty of videos on the Internet showing the delights of having an uncommon companion.

Prospective owners should take caution though; exotic pets come with a unique set of challenges and demands, ones that can supersede felines and canines in the scope of care and cost.

It's still early in the year, but 2026 is already turning out to be a rough year for surrenders of exotic pets. On March 12, J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue in Neenah, one of the top exotic rescues in the state, announced that it had noticed a large spike in surrenders in only the first portion of the year. The numbers prompted founder John Moyles to issue a statement imploring the public to do its homework before deciding to adopt an exotic pet.

So far this year, the rescue has taken in 33 ball pythons, 32 parakeets, 27 bearded dragons, 26 leopard geckos, and 16 cockatiels, he said. Many were from breeders or collectors who could no longer care for the animals.

Like cats or dogs, exotic animals can bring in big bucks for breeders and the more specialized, the more expensive. People may be drawn to the mystique or distinctness of such creatures, especially in a state like Wisconsin. This can lead to people purchasing the wrong pet for them, or into buy more animals than they can afford or handle.

"People see how many incredible colors and patterns these animals come in and suddenly they want



Tater with hay: Exotic pets have specific diets. Certain ones like fresh hay or grass. This guinea pig is checking out some freshly picked grass from a field that didn't use pesticides. Photos by Heather Stanek.

to collect them all. Before long, they have 10, 20, or even 50 animals. When life changes — a move, a job change, or financial stress — those collections can become overwhelming. In many cases it starts to look a lot like a puppy mill for snakes," Moyles said in his statement.

It's difficult to adopt out exotics, too, because of their uniqueness...and related expenses and care. As such, the rescue often has to turn to zoos, educators, and animal shelters to get them placed, he noted.

Of course, there are prospective owners out there who can be a good fit. Determining if you can handle an exotic requires doing a lot of researching, asking yourself tough questions, evaluating your space and schedule, and creating a budget.

The following is a primer on how people can get started in deciding if they might want to adopt an exotic pet.

What is an exotic pet?

When you hear the word "exotic," you might picture tigers, chimpanzees, or lions. While those certainly do count, this defi-

nition typically describes more common small pets, such as reptiles, amphibians, arachnids, rodents, and birds. Rabbits, which are not rodents, are also exotic, even though they are not an unusual pet, even in this region.

It's important to note that farm animals, such as horses, cows, and pigs, are not considered exotic pets.

One way to tell if your pet is exotic is if it had to be domesticated through breeding in more recent history. Cats and dogs have been friends of humans for countless years, but it wasn't until much later that people start capturing wild versions of animals and breeding them to be more domesticated. Rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs are some examples. However, animals such as snakes and lizards are still wild, with wild tendencies...but humans have taken to breeding them to create new colors, sizes, and varieties.

You can also tell an exotic by its required level of medical care. Cats and dogs, as well as farm livestock, are relatively easy to care for because there's an abundance

of medicine, practices, and providers. Exotic pets, however, require special training and experience that the typical veterinarian doesn't possess, which means you'll need to pay higher prices for care, and possibly travel longer distances.

Consider your household

Before getting any pet, you need to determine if you have the space. Exotics, like cats and dogs, need their own room.

If you own your home, you first need to determine if it's conducive to have such an animal. If you rent, you not only need to ensure space but also make sure it's okay with your landlord.

Certain animals take up more real estate than others. A sleepy hamster may be fine in a mid-size cage with tunnels, hideys, and two levels, but ferrets and chinchillas require far more room to burn off all their energy.

It's the same for reptiles and amphibians. Certain ones require large aquariums with heat lamps and plentiful vegetation, water, and hiding places.

You also need to consider your current household size. If it's just you, it might be easier to squeeze in an aquarium or pen. That might not be true if you have a family.

Look at your other pets, too. It can be a bad idea to bring exotic prey animals, such as fancy mice, into a home with dogs and cats that like to chase and hunt.

Look up the costs

Once you evaluate your space, sit down and figure out how much the whole thing is going to cost you. Don't just take into account the habitat, dry food and animal itself. If you have an

aquarium, you'll be using more electricity, so keep that in mind when making your budget. Also be sure to research what each animal eats and where you plan to purchase those foods. Tortoises and guinea pigs will love that lettuce from your green, leafy lettuce from your local grocery store, but snakes have a far pickier diet. Where do you plan to go to buy those foods, how much are you willing to spend, and are you willing to handle and store what those snakes eat?

While you're at it, do some research on veterinary care. Calculate what it will cost to take your pet to the vet if it suddenly stops eating, shows signs of distress, or develops a sudden lump. Even a basic exotics visit can cost far more than the same basic exam for a cat or dog, depending on your pet and the provider.

Figure out if you can find a veterinarian in your area

One of the most important parts of having any pet is having a qualified caregiver. It's a good idea for pets to have regular check-ups, especially if you've just adopted them. According to the Waunakee Veterinary Clinic's website, wellness visits benefit both owners and animals. Exams not only ensure pets are healthy but also allow owners to learn more about the best ways to care for their furry, scaled, or feathered companion. Exotics vets can go over everything from nail, beak, and dental care to the proper foods to feed according to the animal's age.

It's also wise to get established with a vet so you have someone you can trust...and someone you can turn to in the future if you get another exotic animal.

There is also the possibility that there won't be any exotic vets in your immediate area. In that case, you'll need to find the closest one and determine if they are accepting new patients. If you'll have to drive an hour or more one way just to see a vet, you might reconsider getting an exotic pet.

Ask if you have the time

Contrary to popular belief, you can't just throw food in a cage or aquarium and call it a day with exotics. They

are pets, just like cats and dogs, and they require your attention. At the very least, pets should be checked over every day to ensure they aren't showing signs of illness or injury. While it's true that some animals prefer solitude and quiet, with minimal human interaction, others require lap or floor time with you. Like cats and dogs, they look forward to cuddling, playing, exploring, and just interacting with you. Some might even enjoy going outside with you, as long as they are within your control at all times, comfortable in the current weather, and not exposed to dangers, such as predators or poisons.

Pen, cage, and aquarium clean up is a real chore that you (or your kids) may not want in the long run. It's dirty, smelly, and mandatory. Ask yourself (and anyone else in the household) if you all truly have the time and initiative to keep everything clean.

Rely on resources

There's a wealth of information out there on exotics. Websites, including those for rescues and veterinary clinics, can help you learn more about different pets.

On social media, there are group pages dedicated to sharing information with current and prospective owners. Experienced members of these groups can provide insight on everything from enclosure setups to finding a vet.

Don't forget about your local humane society or regional rescue. There's nothing wrong with reaching out and asking for advice as a prospective owners. These locations might also help you meet some animals and perhaps even go forward with the adoption process if you decide it will all work for you.

Finally, don't feel sad or disappointed if an exotic pet doesn't seem like the right fit for you. There are many rescue and shelter animals out there, ranging from exotics to cats and dogs, and it's wonderful whenever someone responsible and capable can give them a home. Pet owners will tell you that you'll know when the time is right, and when the right one comes along. Be willing to be patient.

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BREAK-IN

continued from page 1

The Dane County Sheriff's Office issued a statement regarding the incident the following day.

"On Sunday, March 15, at about 8:30 a.m., Dane County Sheriff's deputies, along with officers from Mt. Horeb, Verona, City of Madison, and UW Police, responded to Ridglan Farms in the town of Blue Mounds when 50-60 protestors entered the property without permission," said Elise Schaffer, public information officer for the DCSO. "Some activists broke into the facility and began removing numerous dogs."

According to the DCSO, approximately 20 people were arrested, including Wayne Hsiung, 44, from New York, Aditya V. Aswani, 29, from Brooklyn, NY, and Dean F. Wyrzykowski, 29, from San Francisco, CA. Aswani was booked into Dane County Jail on a tentative burglary charge, while Hsiung and Wyrzykowski were booked on tentative criminal trespass charges.

"Everyone involved has been cooperative and respectful," said Schaffer.

"The Dane County Sheriff's Office understands how deeply people feel for the

beagles at Ridglan Farms, and we respect their right to express that passion through peaceful protests," said Sheriff Calvin Barrett. "Our role is to keep everyone safe and to respond when unlawful activity takes place. We encourage anyone with concerns about animal welfare or research practices to engage through lawful and constructive avenues. The Sheriff's Office remains committed to maintaining public safety, promoting peaceful dialogue, and ensuring that all parties can exercise their rights within the bounds of the law."

Two vehicles, along with burglary tools and other evidence, were seized at the scene. Some of the beagles taken were recovered and returned to Ridglan Farms, but several beagles remain unaccounted for, said Schaffer.

"This is an ongoing investigation, and more details may become available as it progresses," she continued. "We truly appreciate the assistance from local police agencies and our partners at the Dane County Communications Center, especially given the treacherous weather conditions. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), along with the U.S. Department

of Agriculture, is responsible for the oversight of the Ridglan Farms facility. Following an animal welfare investigation, Ridglan Farms agreed to surrender its DATC breeding license by July 1, 2026."

A statement issued by Amy Van Aartsen and Paul Picklesimer late Sunday morning took responsibility for the raid, calling it an "open rescue" that was "organized by members of the Coalition to Save the Ridglan Dogs."

"During the rescue effort, multiple activists were arrested after refusing to leave the property while attempting to remove dogs from the facility," their statement said. "Among those arrested were prominent activists including Wayne Hsiung, who was previously charged for a prior open rescue at Ridglan Farms before having those charges dropped on the eve of trial, and Alexandra Paul, the Baywatch actress who was acquitted in 2023 after rescuing chickens from a slaughter truck."

A statement issued by Jim Newman on behalf of Ridglan Farms said "dozens of individuals" will likely face charges stemming from the incident.

"Thanks to a rapid, multi-agency response by local law enforcement, an at-

tempted mass theft of research animals this morning by animal rights extremists targeting Ridglan Farms was significantly limited," Ridglan's statement continued. "Dozens of individuals appear to be involved in the alleged crime, resulting in numerous arrests and likely charges. Just before 9 am this morning, the group broke into the Blue Mounds-based research facility by cutting a chain link fence and also a locked gate. The activists then attempted to enter several buildings using a combination of sledgehammers, electric saws and crowbars. In most cases, the activists were unsuccessful. They were, however, able to remove some animals from one building."

Ridglan Farms is currently assessing how many dogs in total were taken, and the facility is also estimating total damages, they said.

"Many of the activists involved in today's alleged crime appear to have traveled across the country to take part. The break-ins were associated with an animal rights conference hosted at the Masonic Center in Madison," the statement continued.

"Ridglan Farms would like to thank local authorities for their rapid response which resulted in multiple

arrests and the protection of countless animals," said Eric McLeod, an attorney representing Ridglan Farms. "We plan to press charges and hope those involved are punished [to] the full extent of the law. It's critically important that they are held to account in order to discourage similar actions also proposed by these same activists, targeting farms and health research facilities."

The activists alleged that "a likely Ridglan employee" tried to stop them from raiding the property, ramming a pickup truck into a "rescue van," which the activists described as "using lethal force in an attempt to stop dogs from going to forever homes."

"These dogs are caged, poisoned, and even mutilated at Ridglan Farms," Hsiung, who organized the rescue effort, said. "If any individual had been implicated in these crimes, the dogs would have been seized and protected."

District Attorney Ismael Ozanne in 2024 brought criminal charges against three activists, including Hsiung, for an earlier break-

in. Ridglan elected not to press charges at the time.

"An even larger rally is being planned to pressure the government to take immediate action to assist the thousands of dogs remaining at Ridglan Farms," Van Aartsen and Picklesimer said in this week's statement. "The activists say they are acting within what they believe are their legal rights, and they are supported by significant legal advocacy, including a brief filed by one of the nation's leading experts in animal law, Professor Kristen Stilt of Harvard Law School."

"If the government won't rescue these dogs from abuse, we will," Hsiung said. "Our message is quite simple: enforce the law and protect the dogs."

Established in 1966, Ridglan Farms is a biomedical and veterinary medicine business that has been at the center of debate ever since a referendum opposing the business went before voters, and failed to pass, in Mount Horeb in 2018.

DEATH

continued from page 1

The subject exited the vehicle with a weapon and an altercation ensued. One officer with the Verona Police Department discharged their firearm striking the subject.

EMS was contacted and life saving measures were

attempted. The subject was transported to a local hospital where they were later pronounced deceased.

No members of law enforcement or other members of the public were injured during this incident.

The incident was captured via the on-scene officers' body worn cameras.

The involved officer will be placed on administrative leave, per the agency's policies.

DCI is leading this investigation and is assisted by the Dane County Sheriff's Office, Wisconsin State Patrol, the Dane County Medical Examiner and a DCI Crime Response Specialist.

All involved law enforcement are fully cooperating with DCI during this investigation. DCI is continuing to review evidence and determine the facts of this incident and will turn over the investigative reports to the Dane County District Attorney's Office when the investigation concludes.

DNR Publishes Wisconsin Food Waste Evaluation

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has released a Wisconsin Food Waste Evaluation report that provides key details about Wisconsin's existing food waste generation and management.

The report includes recommendations for individuals, businesses and government agencies to reduce food waste going to landfills as part of a state-

wide goal to reduce per-capita food waste disposal in landfills by 50% by 2030, compared to 2020 levels.

Key findings of the study include:

The vast majority (88%) of the food waste going to Wisconsin landfills is from residential and food service sources, with residential contributing the largest share at 47%.

Infrastructure for hauling

food waste to destinations other than landfills (such as composting and anaerobic digestion facilities) will have to expand significantly to achieve the statewide food waste reduction goal.

Of the 286 facilities li-

censed for composting in Wisconsin, just 30 (10%) are approved to accept food waste. Of the 122 anaerobic digestion facilities currently operating in Wisconsin, just 37 (30%) currently accept food waste.

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Sugar River Euchre

By Stan Hook
There were 45 euchre players that blew (literally) into the Red Mouse on March 12th for the League’s Spring Tournament. In all, there were 11 tables. plus, one extra player. The individual player format was a huge success that allowed everyone to play, with one

player sitting out each game. A bump kitty was added to this tournament, where it cost the players twenty-five cents for each bump with the kitty going to the player(s) making the most loan-hands at the end of the night. The top three tournament scores all came from team Uff-da: Jim Day with a 90,

Mary Humphrey with an 89, and Tom Magnuson, with an 87. One would think that with the three top scorers in the tournament, team Uff-da would have done better than tying for last place in the second half of the season. Other top place finishers are Chris Hook and Jolene Klarer tied for fourth place

with an 84, and Larry Losenegger and Tiny Zander took sixth and seventh place with an 81. Two players, Roger Truttmann and Jeff Goebler, brought up the rear with scores of 59 and 53 respectively. After all the score cards were turned in, everyone enjoyed the fresh pizzas,

17 in all, made by the Red Mouse staff. Then league President Jerome Krantz announced the winners of the tournament and acknowledged the first-half winners and that the Norsk Cowboys and Kleeman’s Hay Shakers will have a playoff match to determine the second-half winners. He also com-

mented that no one had been skunked this entire season, and that there were 6 perfect scores this season. The league officers hope all enjoyed the new tournament format, and we look forward to seeing everyone on October first for the start of the league’s ninety-fifth season.

DHS Releases Statewide Vaccination Data, Childhood Rates Continue Decline

Health officials sound alarm as number of children unprotected against preventable diseases increases
The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has released its annual vaccination rates among children, adolescents, and adults for 2025. The data show Wisconsin’s childhood vaccination rates continued to decrease last year. While nearly 7 of every 10 children (66.9%) had the recommended vaccinations at age 24 months, nearly 3 of every 10 did not. This is

a decline of almost 2% from 2024. “In public health, we use data like this as an alert system. Today that alert system is sending a clear signal that the health and well-being of Wisconsin kids and communities are at risk,” said Paula Tran, state health officer and Division of Public Health administrator. “Vaccination rates aren’t just numbers on a chart, they represent real people—children, families, and neighbors. Even small declines in vaccination rates increase the risk of prevent-

able diseases spreading and outbreaks occurring.” Alongside the decline in childhood vaccination rates, the 2025 data also show very minor decreases in adolescent vaccines such as the human papillomavirus (HPV) and tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccines. At the same time, the vaccination rates to protect against meningococcal disease (meningitis) for adolescents increased, and rates across all adult vaccinations stayed steady. “Vaccines prepare our im-

mune systems to recognize and respond to serious diseases, and they also protect entire communities,” said Dr. Ryan Westergaard, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases. “When everyone can access the recommended vaccinations on time, it can stop vaccine preventable diseases from spreading.” As part of a statewide network of partners, including health systems, clinics, pharmacies, and public health agencies, DHS is working

to expand partnerships and support local needs. “Families have told us that they are concerned about access to health care, busy schedules, and the many other pressures they face that make it feel difficult to get their kids to checkups,” said Stephanie Schauer, manager of the DHS’ Wisconsin Immunization Program. “Public health and health care providers across the state are here to help families break down these barriers to keep families safe from vaccine pre-

ventable diseases.” Wisconsinites are encouraged to use the Wisconsin Immunization Registry to check their and their child’s vaccine status and to talk to a trusted health care provider about recommended vaccines. Families can access free or low-cost vaccines through programs like Vaccines for Children and Vaccines for Adults. Learn more about vaccines on the DHS Get the Facts About Vaccines webpage.

Wisconsin Women’s Council Releases 20-Year Report on Women’s Representation in Government

New data show measurable progress since 2005, but women remain underrepresented across most levels of elected office
The Wisconsin Women’s Council today released a comprehensive new report, *Women’s Representation in Wisconsin Government: Twenty Years of Progress and Persistent Gaps (2005–2025)*, documenting two decades of trends in women’s political leadership across federal, statewide, legislative, judicial, county, and local offices. The report finds that while Wisconsin has made meaningful gains in some areas, particularly in the judiciary, women remain underrepresented in most elected roles. In 2025, women held just 27% of elected offices statewide, despite comprising half of Wisconsin’s population.

“For purposes of this analysis, parity is defined as women holding 50% of seats, reflecting their share of the population,” said Denise Gaumer Hutchison, Chair of the Wisconsin Women’s Council. “By that measure, Wisconsin has not yet achieved equal representation at any level of elected office.” The Council also emphasizes the importance of examining leadership attrition, noting that understanding why women leave leadership positions at higher rates than men will be essential to sustaining gains and achieving long-term equity. “Representation shapes policy priorities, public trust, and the legitimacy of democratic institutions,” said Jeanne Duffy, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Women’s Council. “This report is both a record of progress and a call to action. Achieving gender parity will

require sustained commitment and systemic change.” **Key Findings from the Report**
State Legislature
In 2025, women hold 45 of 132 legislative seats (34%)—the highest number in state history. Wisconsin now exceeds the national average of 32.8% women state legislators, according to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). Progress has been steady but incremental over the past 20 years.
Tribal Leadership
In 2025, women hold 44% of Tribal leadership positions across Wisconsin’s 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations, reflecting sustained progress toward gender balance in sovereign governance.
Judiciary
The judiciary shows the most substantial gains toward parity.

The number of women judges increased from 39 in 2005 to 106 in 2025. Women now comprise 37% of Wisconsin judges. Wisconsin has the highest percentage of female state Supreme Court justices in the nation, with six of the seven justices, 86%, currently women.
County Government
Women hold 25% of county board seats statewide. Just two counties, Menominee and Milwaukee, have met or exceeded parity on their county boards. Women remain significantly underrepresented in county board leadership roles.
District Attorneys
Women hold 34% of District Attorney positions, up from 8 officeholders in 2015 to 25 in 2025. While progress has accelerated in recent years, most counties have never elected

a woman district attorney.
Sheriffs
6 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties (8%) have a woman serving as sheriff. For much of the past two decades, one or two women held sheriff positions statewide.
Local Government (Cities, Villages & Towns)
Women’s representation in local government has increased from 13% 2005 to 20% in 2025, but remains gradual. The percentage of women mayors has remained largely flat over the past 20 years, 10% in 2005 to 15% in 2025.
School Boards
School boards represent the clearest example of sustained progress. In 2005, women held 37% board seats statewide; by 2025, women are nearing parity at 47%. The report concludes that

structural reforms, not simply encouraging women to “run,” are necessary to accelerate progress towards gender parity in Wisconsin. Policy and practical strategies are available to address parity challenges in the state, which could include:
Ranked-choice voting
Provide childcare
Gender-balanced appointments
Intentional recruitment and funding pipelines
The full report, charts, and additional data are available on the Wisconsin Women’s Council website at: <https://womenscouncil.wi.gov>
About the Wisconsin Women’s Council
The Wisconsin Women’s Council is Wisconsin’s statutory commission on the status of women and girls, working to advance women’s economic security, leadership, and well-being.

Charge Up Dane County Seeking More EV Site Hosts

Dane County Announces Final Opportunity to Apply
Dane County Executive Melissa Agard has announced Dane County has issued a third and final Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify sites for the Charge Up Dane County program. Applications are due on Thursday, April 2 at 2 pm. “Charge Up Dane County is a great example of how the County partners with public and private entities to make clean energy solutions

affordable for everyone,” said County Executive Melissa Agard. “Dane County is already a leader in EV adoption and this program will help expand access by making EV charging infrastructure more affordable.” With about 10 percent of Wisconsin’s population, Dane County is home to about 25 percent of EVs registered in the state. In Fall 2024, the Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change and its part-

ners received a \$13.2 million federal grant for Charge Up Dane County, an effort to ensure access to electric vehicle charging across the county by filling gaps associated with multi-family neighborhoods, rural areas, and multi-modal transportation hubs. To date, the program has received applications from dozens of public and private entities interested in hosting EV charging stations. More than 50 locations are

moving through the design process right now and the program has room for up to 20 more locations. “Our aim is to install affordable EV charging in up to 70 locations across Dane County,” said Kathy Kuntz, Director of OECC. “Entities can use the interactive map on our website to determine if their site is a good location for charging infrastructure.” The grant is focused on slower-speed charging, similar to what homeowners can

access in their private garages. That charging (termed Level 2 in the industry) is typically the most affordable charging with a cost of about \$0.06/mile of fuel, compared to \$0.10 to \$0.15/mile for a gas-powered vehicle. The Charge Up Dane County grant covers the cost of the EV charging station design and construction, including both hardware and software, as well as five years of maintenance on

the site. The grant makes it easier for entities to consider hosting affordable public EV charging in their parking lots. Expanded affordable charging will make EVs, especially used EVs, more viable for renters across the region. Entities can learn more at <https://daneclimateaction.org/initiatives/Charge-Up-Dane-Co>. The website includes a link to the RFP and other resources including webinar recordings.

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SPORTS

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Spartans end Vikings' season

Mount Horeb stumbles in sectional semifinals

by DAN LARSON
Sports Reporter

EVANSVILLE — Defending McFarland means trying to slow down 6-foot-9 junior Eli Krueger, one of Wisconsin's top NCAA Division I prospects in the Class of 2027.

His main sidekicks are 6-4 junior guard Garrett Crull and sharpshooters Ben Bosold and Kam Meinholdt.

Sophomore Braydon Fischer is no slouch, but he's not someone opponents fear.

So when Fischer canned a 3-pointer from the right corner in the opening minutes of a WIAA Division 2 boys basketball sectional semifinal on March 12, Mount Horeb coach Todd Nesheim took notice.

"I didn't think that was a good sign," Nesheim said.

Turns out, he was right.

Not only did Fischer score 11 first half points,



Mount Horeb seniors (clockwise from top) Josh Manchester, Hayden Anderson and Kam Nesheim enjoyed memorable runs with the program. Photos courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

he also set the tone for the Spartans, who made eight 3-pointers before the break en route to a 16-point half-time lead.

The second-seeded Vikings rallied, but the hole

was too deep to climb out of and the top-seeded Spartans prevailed, 64-54, at Evansville High School and advanced to the sectional finals.

Mount Horeb finished

its season 21-6, while McFarland (23-5) defeated New Berlin West, 86-60, in the sectional finals two days later and advanced to state for the first time since 1974.

"They shot the ball, which is what they've done all year," Nesheim said. "And we're not a good shooting team."

"You've got to be able to make some 3s when you

get 'em. We couldn't and they did. They deserved to win, that's for sure."

Mount Horeb very nearly erased the Spartans' big lead, however.

Trailing, 35-19, to start the second half, the Vikings (21-6) went to work.

Josh Manchester's steal on the opening possession turned into a fastbreak lay-up for Manchester, sparking an 11-2 run that he capped with another steal and fastbreak lay-up followed by a deep 3-pointer to make it 37-30 with 13:06 remaining.

Senior big man Hayden Anderson scored the other four points in that burst, on a baby hook and then a short jumper.

"We got (the deficit) to 10 there right away," Nesheim said. "Our goal was to cut it to single digits by the 9-minute mark and we had it to 10 by the 16-minute mark, so I felt good — after falling into that hole — about where we were."

The tables had turned.

For the final 10 minutes of the first half, McFarland couldn't miss and Mount Horeb couldn't buy a basket.

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MOUNT HOREB SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULES

Boys varsity baseball

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
March 31	vs. Bolles	Jacksonville, FL	7 p.m.
April 2	vs. TBD	Jacksonville, FL	5 p.m.
April 7	at Sauk Prairie	Jaycee Baseball Park	5 p.m.
April 9	vs. Sauk Prairie	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 10	vs. Monroe	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 14	vs. Reedsburg	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 16	at Reedsburg	Nishan Park	5 p.m.
April 17	vs. Platteville	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 18	vs. Antigo (DH)	Mount Horeb High School	Noon
April 21	vs. Fort Atkinson	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 23	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	5 p.m.
April 24	vs. Brodhead/Juda	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 27	vs. DeForest	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 28	vs. McFarland	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 30	at McFarland	McFarland Baseball Fields	5 p.m.
May 4	at Baraboo High School	Evans Athletic Field	5 p.m.
May 5	at Edgewood	Ziggy Park	TBD
May 8	vs. Edgewood	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 11	vs. River Valley	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 12	vs. Portage	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 15	at Portage	Portage High School	5 p.m.
May 18	at Wisconsin Heights	Black Earth Elementary School	5 p.m.
May 19	at Stoughton	Stoughton High School	5 p.m.
May 21	vs. Stoughton	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 22	at Evansville	Evansville High School	4:45 p.m.

Boys JV baseball

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 7	at Sauk Prairie	Jaycee Baseball Park	5 p.m.
April 9	vs. Sauk Prairie	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 10	vs. Monroe	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 14	vs. Reedsburg	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 16	at Reedsburg	Nishan Park	5 p.m.
April 17	vs. Platteville	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 21	vs. Fort Atkinson	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 23	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	5 p.m.
April 24	vs. Brodhead/Juda	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 27	vs. DeForest	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 28	vs. McFarland	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 30	at McFarland	McFarland Baseball Fields	5 p.m.
May 4	at Baraboo High School	Evans Athletic Field	5 p.m.
May 5	at Edgewood	Bishop O'Connor Center	5 p.m.
May 8	vs. Edgewood	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 11	vs. River Valley	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 12	vs. Portage	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 15	at Portage	Portage High School	5 p.m.
May 18	at Wisconsin Heights	Black Earth Elementary School	6:45 p.m.
May 19	at Stoughton	Stoughton High School	5 p.m.
May 21	vs. Stoughton	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 22	at Evansville	Evansville High School	4:45 p.m.

Boys JV2 baseball

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 6	vs. Sauk Prairie	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 10	at Portage	Portage High School	5 p.m.
April 13	vs. Fort Atkinson	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 17	vs. Reedsburg	Sunrise Park	5 p.m.
April 20	vs. Lodi	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 23	at Barneveld	Barneveld High School	5 p.m.
April 27	vs. McFarland	Sunrise Park	5 p.m.
May 1	vs. Sauk Prairie	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 4	vs. Portage	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 8	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	5 p.m.
May 11	at Reedsburg	Webb Park (Reedsburg)	5 p.m.
May 19	vs. Middleton	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 20	at McFarland	McFarland Baseball Fields	5 p.m.
May 22	at Middleton White	Sorenson Field	5 p.m.

Girls varsity soccer

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 7	at McFarland	McFarland High School	7 p.m.
April 11	at Belleville Quad	Belleville High School	9 a.m.
April 14	vs. Stoughton	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.
April 17	at River Valley	River Valley High School	5 p.m.
April 21	at Portage/Poynette	Poynette High School	7 p.m.
April 23	vs. Belleville	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.
April 24	at Cambridge	Cambridge High School	6:45 p.m.
April 28	vs. Madison Edgewood	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.
May 1	at Evansville	Evansville High School	6 p.m.
May 5	vs. Reedsburg	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.
May 8	vs. Delavan Darien	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.
May 11	at Dodgeville	Dodgeville High School	5 p.m.
May 12	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	7 p.m.
May 19	at Sauk Prairie	Sauk Prairie High School	7 p.m.
May 21	vs. Big Foot	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.
May 23	vs. Platteville	Mount Horeb High School	Noon
May 26	vs. Monona Grove	Mount Horeb High School	7 p.m.

Girls JV soccer

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 7	at McFarland	McFarland High School	5 p.m.
April 14	vs. Stoughton	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 21	at Portage/Poynette	Poynette High School	5 p.m.
April 23	vs. Belleville	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 24	at Cambridge	Cambridge High School	5 p.m.
April 25	at Middleton Invite	Penni Klein Park	9 a.m.
April 28	vs. Madison Edgewood	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 5	vs. Reedsburg	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 8	vs. Delavan Darien	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 11	at Dodgeville	Dodgeville High School	6:45 p.m.
May 12	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	5 p.m.
May 19	at Sauk Prairie	Sauk Prairie High School	5 p.m.
May 21	vs. Big Foot	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 23	vs. Platteville	Mount Horeb High School	10 a.m.
May 26	vs. Monona Grove	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 28	at Oregon	Oregon High School	5 p.m.



MOUNT HOREB SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULES

Varsity softball

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
March 26	vs. Highland	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
March 27	vs. Pecatonica	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
March 31	vs. McFarland	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 2	vs. Fort Atkinson	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 4	at Jefferson Triangular	Jefferson High School	10 a.m.
April 7	at Portage	Portage High School	5 p.m.
April 9	at Reedsburg	Nishan Park	5 p.m.
April 10	vs. Iowa-Grant	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 14	vs. Edgewood	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 16	vs. Stoughton	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 17	at Brodhead	Brodhead Middle School	5 p.m.
April 20	at River Valley	River Valley High School	5 p.m.
April 21	at Sauk Prairie	Sauk Prairie High School	5 p.m.
April 23	vs. Portage	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 27	at Dodgeville	Dodgeville High School	5 p.m.
April 28	vs. Reedsburg	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 30	at McFarland	Waubesa Intermediate School	5 p.m.
May 4	at Edgewood	Warner Park	5 p.m.
May 8	vs. Sauk Prairie	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 9	at Mineral Point Quad	Soldiers Memorial Park	9 a.m.
May 12	at Stoughton	Stoughton High School	5 p.m.
May 14	at Platteville	Legion Park Field	5 p.m.
May 15	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	5 p.m.

JV softball

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
March 31	vs. McFarland	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 2	vs. Fort Atkinson	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 4	at Jefferson Triangular	Jefferson High School	10 a.m.
April 7	at Portage	Portage High School	5 p.m.
April 9	at Reedsburg	Nishan Park	5 p.m.
April 10	vs. Iowa-Grant	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 14	vs. Edgewood	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 16	vs. Stoughton	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 17	at Brodhead	Brodhead Middle School	5 p.m.
April 20	at River Valley	River Valley High School	5 p.m.
April 21	at Sauk Prairie	Sauk Prairie High School	5 p.m.
April 23	vs. Portage	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 27	at Dodgeville	Dodgeville High School	5 p.m.
April 28	vs. Reedsburg	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
April 30	at McFarland	Waubesa Intermediate School	5 p.m.
May 4	at Edgewood	Warner Park	5 p.m.
May 8	vs. Sauk Prairie	Mount Horeb High School	5 p.m.
May 12	at Stoughton	Stoughton High School	5 p.m.
May 14	at Platteville	Legion Park Field	5 p.m.
May 15	at Fort Atkinson	Fort Atkinson High School	5 p.m.

Boys varsity golf

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 4	at Mineral Point Invite	Dodge-Point Country Club	9:30 a.m.
April 7	at Sauk Prairie Invite	Lake Wisconsin Country Club	9 a.m.
April 8	Mount Horeb Invite	Norsk Golf Club	12:30p.m.
April 13	at Randolph Invite	Trappers Turn Golf Club	8 a.m.
April 14	at Randolph Invite	Trappers Turn Golf Club	8 a.m.
April 17	at Reedsburg Invite	Reedsburg Country Club	9 a.m.
April 18	at Milton Invite	Oak Ridge Golf Course	8:30 a.m.
April 23	at Badger Conf. Small Meet	Yahara Hills	1 p.m.
April 28	at Edgewood Invite	University Ridge Golf Course	12:30p.m.
April 29	at Holmen Invite	Cedar Creek	11 a.m.
May 1	at Portage Invitational	Portage Country Club	9 a.m.
May 2	at River Valley Invitational	House On The Rock Golf Course	9 a.m.
May 5	at Badger Conf. Small Meet	Reedsburg Country Club	1 p.m.
May 1 1	at Wisconsin Dells Invite	Wilderness Golf Course	9 a.m.
May 13	at Badger Conf. Small Meet	Lake Wisconsin Country Club	2 p.m.
May 18	at Monroe Invitational	Monroe Golf Club	9 a.m.
May 19	Badger Small Conf. Meet	Wild Rock Golf Course	10 a.m.

Boys JV golf

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 9	at Reedsburg Invite	Reedsburg Country Club	9 a.m.
April 11	at Milton Invite	Oak Ridge Golf Course	8:30 a.m.
April 13	at Sauk Prairie Invite	Lake Wisconsin Country Club	9 a.m.
April 15	at New Glarus	Edelweiss Country Club	3:30 p.m.
April 16	vs. Sauk Prairie	Norsk Golf Club	3:30 p.m.
April 21	at Badger Conf. Small Meet	Yahara Hills	2 p.m.
April 22	at New Glarus	Edelweiss Country Club	3:30 p.m.
April 24	at Badger Conf. Small Meet	Coachman’s Golf Resort	3 p.m.
April 25	at Platteville Invite	Platteville Country Club	9 a.m.
April 27	vs. Monroe	Norsk Golf Club	3:30 p.m.
April 28	at Fort Atkinson Invite	Koshkonong Mounds Country Club	4 p.m.
May 1	at Baraboo Invitational	Baraboo Country Club	9 a.m.
May 8	at Badger Conf. Small Meet	Portage Country Club	3:30 p.m.
May 9	at Columbus Invite	Columbus Country Club	8 a.m.
May 14	Badger Small Conf. Meet	Norsk Golf Club	9 a.m.

Boys varsity track

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 4	at Stevens Point Invite	UWSP Multi-Activity Center	5 p.m.
April 21	at Oregon Invitational	Oregon High School	4 p.m.
April 24	at Monona Grove Invite	Monona Grove High School	4 p.m.
April 28	at Reedsburg Quad	Reedsburg High School	4 p.m.
May 1	at Sun Prairie East Invite	Sun Prairie East High School	4:30 p.m.
May 5	Mount Horeb Quad	Mount Horeb High School	4 p.m.
May 15	at Oregon Invitational	Oregon High School	4 p.m.
May 19	Badger Conf. Championship	Reedsburg High School	4 p.m.

MOUNT HOREB SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULES

Boys JV track

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 21	at Oregon Invitational	Oregon High School	4 p.m.
April 23	at Sun Prairie East Invite	Sun Prairie East High School	4:30 p.m.
April 28	at Reedsburg Quad	Reedsburg High School	4 p.m.
May 5	Mount Horeb Quad	Mount Horeb High School	4 p.m.
May 11	at DeForest Invitational	DeForest High School	4 p.m.
May 21	Badger Conf. Championship	Fort Atkinson High School	4 p.m.

Girls varsity track

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 4	at Stevens Point Invite	UWSP Multi-Activity Center	5 p.m.
April 21	at Oregon Quad	Oregon High School	4 p.m.
April 24	at Monona Grove Invite	Monona Grove High School	4 p.m.
April 28	at Reedsburg Quad	Reedsburg High School	4 p.m.
May 1	at Sun Prairie East Invite	Sun Prairie East High School	4:30 p.m.
May 5	Mount Horeb Quad	Mount Horeb High School	4 p.m.
May 15	at Oregon Invitational	Oregon High School	4 p.m.
May 19	Badger Conf. Championship	Reedsburg High School	4 p.m.

Girls JV track

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
April 21	at Oregon Invitational	Oregon High School	4 p.m.
April 23	at Sun Prairie East Invite	Sun Prairie East High School	4:30 p.m.
April 28	at Reedsburg Quad	Reedsburg High School	4 p.m.
May 5	Mount Horeb Quad	Mount Horeb High School	4 p.m.
May 11	at DeForest Invitational	DeForest High School	4 p.m.
May 21	Badger Conf. Championship	Fort Atkinson High School	4 p.m.

Boys varsity lacrosse (co-op with Verona)

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
March 30	at La Crosse Central	La Crosse Central High School	7 p.m.
April 2	at Sun Prairie East/West	Bank of Sun Prairie Stadium	7 p.m.
April 7	vs. Edgewood	Verona High School	7:15 p.m.
April 11	vs. Hudson	Verona High School	11 a.m.
April 13	at Janesville Craig/Parker	Janesville Craig High School	7 p.m.
April 16	vs. Oregon	Verona High School	7:15 p.m.
April 21	at Homestead	Homestead High School	7:15 p.m.
April 23	at Middleton	Middleton High School	7 p.m.
April 27	at Sauk Prairie	Sauk Prairie High School	7 p.m.
April 29	vs. Mukwonago	Verona High School	7 p.m.
May 2	TBD	Woodside Sports Comple, Wis. Dells	8 a.m.
May 6	at DeForest	De Forest High School	7 p.m.
May 11	vs. Waunakee	Verona High School	7:15 p.m.
May 14	Wayland Academy	Verona High School	6:30 p.m.
May 19	vs. Madison La Follette	Verona High School	6 p.m.

Boys JV lacrosse

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
March 30	at La Crosse Central	La Crosse Central High School	5 p.m.
April 2	at Sun Prairie East/West	Bank of Sun Prairie Stadium	5 p.m.
April 7	vs. Edgewood	Verona High School	5:30 p.m.
April 11	vs. Hudson	Verona High School	1 p.m.
April 13	at Janesville Craig/Parker	Janesville Craig High School	5 p.m.
April 16	vs. Oregon	Verona High School	5:30 p.m.
April 21	at Homestead	Homestead High School	5:30 p.m.
April 23	at Middleton	Middleton High School	5 p.m.
April 27	at Sauk Prairie	Sauk Prairie High School	5 p.m.
April 29	vs. Mukwonago	Verona High School	5 p.m.
May 2	TBD	Woodside Sports Comple, Wis. Dells	9 a.m.
May 6	at DeForest	De Forest High School	5 p.m.
May 11	vs. Waunakee	Verona High School	5:30 p.m.
May 16	at Arrowhead	Arrowhead High School	3 p.m.



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Notice to All Mount Horeb Water Utility Customers
The Mount Horeb Water Utility will begin its spring Hydrant Flushing, beginning March 30th through April 30th. Should your water become discolored, let your tap run for approximately 5 to 10 minutes and it should clear up. Try to do your laundry in the evening hours if possible. Please be sure to keep your garbage and recycling carts on the terrace area or the apron of your driveway, off the gutter/street. Rushing water could wash your carts away or damage them, and the water utility is not responsible for collecting the carts. The water utility thanks you for your cooperation in this matter.

Brian Schult, Water Superintendent

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BOYS BB

continued from page 15

But in the first two-plus minutes of the second half, the Vikings were doing everything right.

“We played solid defense and had some guys hit tough shots,” said Anderson, who had seven points in the first half and finished second on the team in scoring with 15 in the game.

Mount Horeb’s rally didn’t end there.

McFarland answered and went back up by double-digits when Krueger — who had 21 points — made a pair of free throws with 10:41 left to make it 46-34. The Vikings responded with an 8-0 run, though, and suddenly trailed just 46-42.

Manchester spun to the hoop for lay-up and converted the and-one, then he drained a deep 3-pointer in transition.

And with 8:32 to go, junior center Evan Leibfried muscled a basket in to pull the Vikings within 46-42.

“We pushed out in transition really well — made our defense lead to offense, and got easy ones at the rim,” said Manchester, who had 19 points on the night, 15 of those coming in the second half. “You’ve just got to chip away, grind and grind until you (claw back) and have a chance to win it.”

Mount Horeb’s momentum ended there, though.

Moments before Leibfried’s basket, Manchester had to leave the floor with a recurring right shoulder injury — his shooting shoulder — and wasn’t able to return until a little more than 5 minutes remained.

When he did come back, he was far from 100 percent.

“He came back out, but he said he couldn’t shoot,” Nesheim said. “He was just a decoy at that point.”

Manchester said he was returning to the floor no matter what.

He wasn’t going to end his storied career — one in which he finished 10th on the state’s all-time scoring list with 2,532 career points — by watching.

“I wasn’t going to go out like that,” Manchester said. “I was willing to do whatever to help the team win.”

Krueger made a put-back to give the Spartans a 48-42 lead, then Mount Horeb junior wing Alex Chapman answered with a floater to pull the Vikings within 48-44.

After that, though, the Spartans took off.

Bosold, who had five 3-pointers and 16 points, canned back-to-back triples — one from the left corner and one from the left wing — to give McFarland a 54-44 lead with 5:15 to go.

Mason Williams made a pair of free throws to pull Mount Horeb within 54-46, but Krueger answered with a basket at the rim and the Spartans never led by less than 10 the rest of the way.

Manchester having to leave the floor clutching his shoulder took the wind out of Mount Horeb’s sails.

If he didn’t get hurt, things might have been different.

“We’ll never know,” Nesheim said. “But we felt good about the position we were in.

“They looked a little tight and I thought we looked like we were ready to overcome. Certainly we would have put the ball in Josh’s hands, and I have full confidence he would have got the job done.

“But we’ll never know that, and credit to them, they answered once we cut it to four. They deserved it. They played a good game.”

The Vikings wouldn’t have needed such a big comeback if things didn’t slip away from them early on.

Mount Horeb led, 13-12, with 10:08 left in the first half following Chapman’s right-baseline jumper and it was tied at 15-15 after Chapman scored a nifty



Alex Chapman (24) and Mount Horeb’s boys basketball team fell to McFarland in a WIAA Division 2 sectional semifinal on March 12. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

basket from the right block.

The Spartans then went on a 20-4 run and surged to a 35-19 lead.

Kreuger made a trio of 3-pointers during that run, two from the top of the key and one from the right corner.

But Crull added a triple, Bosold added another 3-ball and Fischer had a traditional three-point play.

In total, 18 of the 20 points in that run came in chunks of three, with Krueger’s basket from the left block accounting for the other two.

“They were all feeling good for a while there in the first half,” Nesheim said.

Added Anderson: “Credit to McFarland. They had guys spraying from all over.”

They did, and it proved to be a decisive run.

Mount Horeb came close to clawing back, but came up just short.

As a result, the Vikings’ memorable season came to

an end.

Mount Horeb advanced to sectionals for a third straight year for the first time in school history. The Vikings also won a share of the Badger Small Conference championship, their second straight league title.

They did all that despite losing Manchester for seven games (shoulder) and Chapman for five (broken wrist) due to injury.

“The adversity that we faced, the kids never gave up. They battled,” Nesheim said. “We won games in multiple ways. We were able to come back (from the adversity) and find a way to get to this game. There were only 16 teams (in Division 2) playing tonight.”

And for all but one of those teams, the season will end — or has ended — the same way as it did for Mount Horeb.

In heartbreak.

That’s why the journey is the reward.

“I grew up with all these

guys and coach Nesheim and (assistant) coach (Paul) Manchester coaching us since third grade,” Anderson said. “I’ll remember all the practices with the guys, and all the hotel rooms with the guys when we’d go to camps. It was a great season, and I’m glad to be a part of it.”

Not just this season, either.

It’s been a great run for the senior class, which includes Manchester, Anderson, Ethan Morrisard, Kam Nesheim, Max Grundahl, Cal Odgers, Henry Jennings and Nick Ibinger.

For most of them, it’s a run that started at this very same gym, at Evansville High School for a 3-on-3 tournament in third grade.

There will be more time to reflect as the sting of this loss fades, but Josh Manchester knows even in defeat that it’s about more than just the outcome.

It’s about more than just wins and losses.

“Those are my best friends,” he said. “It’s hard to go out like that with them.

“All the bus rides and everything off the court — that’s what I’ll remember the most. Having fun and playing basketball with your best friends, that’s what it’s all about.”

March 12
WIAA sectional semifinal
McFARLAND 64,
MOUNT HOREB 54
Mount Horeb 19 35 — 54
McFarland 35 29 — 64
MOUNT HOREB — (fgm ftm- fta pts) — Kam Nesheim 1 0-0 2, Josh Manchester 8 1-1 19, Hayden Anderson 7 0-0 15, Jack White 1 0-0 3, Mason Williams 0 2-2 2, Evan Leibfried 1 0-0 2, Alex Chapman 4 1-2 9, Earl Strauss 1 0-0 2. Totals: 23 4-5 54.

McFARLAND — Joe Fortune 0 1-2 1, Braydon Fischer 5 1-1 13, Garrett Crull 5 11, Eli Krueger 8 2-3 21, Kam Meinholdt 0 2-2 2, Ben Bosold 5 1-2 16. Totals: 23 7-10 64.

3-pointers: MH 4 (Manchester 2, Anderson 1, White 1), McF 11 (Fischer 2, Crull 1, Krueger 3, Bosold 5). **Total fouls:** MH 14, McF 10. **Fouled out:** None.

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