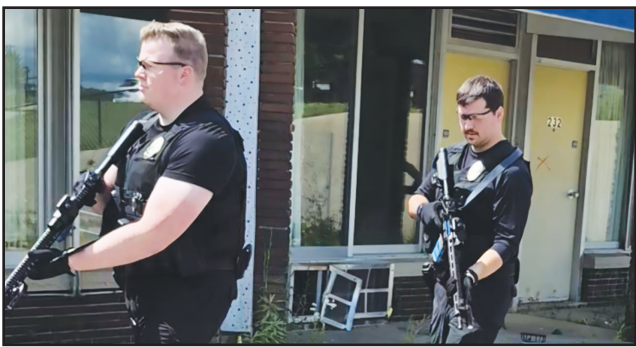


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MOUNT HOREB MAIL

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TRUTH
THROUGH JOURNALISM

Checking in with
Lacasse-Ford

Former Mount Horeb Chamber of Commerce director says Madison position still keeps her connected to local community



Rachel LaCasse-Ford

By MATT GEIGER
Mount Horeb Mail

Last year, the Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors announced that

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Lucas Henson, of Blue Mounds, ran in the world famous Western States Endurance Run in California. Photo by Facchino photography.

Local man conquers grueling endurance race

By MATT GEIGER
Mount Horeb Mail

On June 27, Blue Mounds resident Lucas Henson took part in – and completed

– the world famous Western States Endurance Run in California. It is an extremely difficult race to get into and had the world’s top

ultra endurance runners attending.

“I have wanted to run this race since I started doing ultramarathons due to its

history, toughness of the course, and knowing that I would be able to toe the start line with some of the world’s best ultra runners,”

said Henson. “Every year that I didn’t get into the race it made me a little more determined to do it.”

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Blue Mounds OK’s policy to charge businesses for special meetings

By ABIGAIL KARBISICKY
Mount Horeb Mail

The Blue Mounds Village Board approved a policy that would charge an individual or business for the cost of a special board meeting that benefits just that person or business.

This comes after the village needed to hold a special board meeting last month to approve a liquor license for a business that didn’t get its fees or materials to the village in time.

Village president Paul Baum said he spoke with

a municipal attorney who didn’t see any problem with the ordinance.

Police chief Joey Hoops said the resolution should give a particular rate that will be reimbursed for the board members’ time.

The board also changed

the grease trap ordinance compliance procedure for its new regulations on grease and oils.

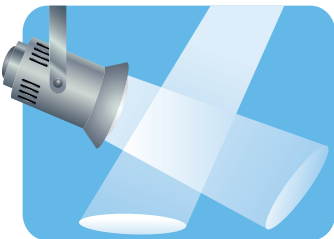
Baum talked to the Department of Health and said the procedures for managing grease at businesses take time, so the 90 days required

by the village might be unattainable.

The board decided to still have a deadline of 180 days to check in. But the board didn’t make an official decision, and Baum said they should check in with the inspector.

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PERSPECTIVE



GEIGER Counter

by Matt Geiger, Editor



The Rooster

On the glass door was a large, hand-written sign: "PLEASE DO NOT LET THE ROOSTER IN! THANK YOU!"

The message, posted at a shop selling tourist trinkets, didn't say not to let *chickens* in the door. It didn't say not to let *roosters* in, either. The wording suggested they were being terrorized by a single rogue bird. What did he do to gain such notoriety? Had he been stealing? Fighting? Committing larceny or identify theft?

It was like when a bar posts a sign on the wall that says, "Don't accept checks from Matt Geiger!"

I strongly suspected he was one of the most interesting chickens around, and I wished they had included an image of him, maybe a security photo or police sketch, so I could know when I saw him. Maybe a security image of him waving an Uzi in the air.

But of course, they probably didn't need to provide a picture.

"People will know him when they see him," the shopkeeper probably thought while taping the sign to the door.

For the rest of our trip, I nudged my daughter every time we saw a rooster walking down the street, or across the floor of a restaurant.

"Hey, Hadley," I said. "Maybe that's *the* rooster."

The tiny island of Key

West is home to countless feral chickens. Settlers on the island, coming from Cuba and elsewhere, brought them for food and cockfighting. In time they became one with the island's ecosystem. Like the Dingo in Australia, these birds, which descend from ornate jungle fowl, reverted back to their primal ways. They now strut in and out of bars, streets, hotels and beaches like they own the place. Leave a creature somewhere long enough, and it will eventually walk to the rhythm of that particular place.

I've always thought of chickens as mobile flowers; colorful, dazzling in color, full of primal bravado and dinosaur DNA. When you are enjoying a Papa Doble in Sloppy Joe's, a bar made famous by the fact that Ernest Hemingway used to drink there, and a little, peeping chick skitters beneath your stool, you know you are in some place interesting. This would never happen in a Midwestern strip mall packed with cookie cutter chain restaurants and shops.

It's so comforting to be surrounded by such strangeness, such wildness, you think with a smile as a hen grabs a tiny bug from the earth and gulps it into her crop.

The chickens are fully self-sufficient, and the locals beg tourists to leave them be and not feed them. They are a totem of this little, low lying, sandy island, covered in palm trees, lurid tourist shops and genuine historical gems (Hemingway, President Truman and Tennessee Williams all once called Key West home).

One of the best juxtapositions is when the roosters, so baroque and showy and comfortable in their skin, strut into the various bars that host drag shows, providing a neon atmosphere of stylish fun, as humans and non-humans alike shake their respective tailfeathers, so bright in their respective skins.

For the most part, the foul are beloved and tolerated everywhere they go. Which is why the sign on the door of a shop down a sizzling hot side street stopped me in my tracks.

As is always the case, it took a couple days to settle in on our trip. It was the most beautiful weather in the world, bright and sunny and 86 degrees, day and night. The kind of weather that makes you feel alive, the warm blood coursing through your veins, the sweat running down your skin; the kind of heat that reminds you that our human bodies really are more than half water. Some people like to say they are "melting" when it gets hot like this, but I like to think we are just thawing out.

It's the kind of weather most people love, and the kind of weather Midwesterners love to complain about, although those same people also love to complain about the spring rain and the winter cold. It was once said of Shakespeare that if you write a sonnet for someone, you love them, but if you write 300 sonnets for someone, you love sonnets. So it is with Midwesterners and the weather. They don't hate the weather. They just love complaining about it.

To me, Key West was perfect. We saw pods of dolphins. My daughter and I swam with sharks and rays, floating through one of the world's largest coral reefs. We fished and ate a rainbow of ocean creatures. We swam out past the ripe,

rank smell of the sargassum (a type of seaweed that is essential to ocean health and also frightens away the softer tourists) to a place where the ocean dashed up against slick rocks jutting out, the last figments of land before Cuba.

Back on land, coated in salt, I read aloud Hemingway's "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," a story that gives me chills every time I read it. It is about you, and me, and everyone else, and our universal battle with loneliness. As is often the case, what seems depressing is ultimately inspiring and beautiful.

"What did he fear? It was not a fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was a nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. He smiled and stood before a bar with a shining steam pressure coffee machine."

In the end, Hemingway reminds us, life is a constant search for a clean, well-lighted place. There, for a moment at least, we are, at the very least, nothing together, basking in nothingness, doomed but a little less lonely for a time.

Was that why the rooster kept trying to get into the store? Was he in search of a clean, well-lighted place, too?

Our favorite café in Key West is owned and run by a woman who moved there

from Nicaragua. The menu, scrawled across the walls on all sides, is vast and features food from Cuba, Central America and beyond.

She seems to be the only employee, making coffee, popping the tops off bottles of beer, bringing fried plantains and cow tongue tacos to the counter and a smattering of small tables.

"Three seconds, sweetie!" she sings while she cooks someone else's order. "Just three seconds and I will help you!"

On the day we left, we had lunch there. I asked for a coffee. There are myriad variations available. Black. With steamed milk. With sugar. Shots of staggeringly strong espresso.

Instead of asking which one on the menu I wanted, she looked at me, hands on her hips, and asked me the most beautiful question: "Tell me about your coffee, sweetie."

Like she wanted me to tell her about my favorite sunrise.

"Tell me about your coffee..."

Tell me about your rooster...

Tell me about your life...

Tell me about the things you love.

Leave a creature somewhere long enough, and it will eventually walk to the rhythm of that particular place. On a tropical, sweltering island where you are never more than five minutes from the sea, and almost always walking the same ground as Ernest Hemingway, a former President, a miserable playwright and a rogue rooster, you evolve back to your primal ways. You gradually stop buttoning your shirt. You forget to wear shoes. You remember that you are a strange, liquid creature who briefly takes shape and roams the earth, searching out clean, well-lighted places. Drawn to them like safe harbors in

a raging squall.

You go home a different person. But gradually, home changes you back. You suddenly remember to button your shirt to avoid offending the delicate sensibilities of Midwesterners. You put on shoes. People complain to you about the weather.

We have chickens in Wisconsin, too. When I returned home, my father and I spent several days constructing a new coop for ours. Giving them a good place to go before they inevitably die; a clean, well-lighted place. Giving us something to do before we inevitably die. Giving the sun something to shine down on before it inevitably burns out.

And somehow, it feels extraordinary. It feels so good to walk toward these beacons of light. To be together. To strike a match or flick a light switch.

In time, vacation Matt fades away. The normal, Midwestern me returns. But I sometimes think of a sign at the Hemingway rum distillery in Key West, covered with photos of the person who wrote "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." They are of grand adventures. Plane crashes. Great Spanish bulls and huge Marlins wrestled from the ocean. Across them is another sign: "NEVER A SPECTATOR."

And of course, I think of that rooster. *The* rooster. What a world. Brimming with lonely beings. All alone. All together.

"A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is about nothingness, and what a daunting, worthy foe it is. But we are worthy adversaries, too, and with each breath we take, we defeat the nothingness for a round or two. With each stroke as we swim in the sea. With each step as we walk toward a shining café. With each sip of coffee and every hammering of a nail on a chicken coop. With every key struck on a keyboard. We are not mere spectators, and our very existence defies the nothingness. Vexing it. Vanquishing it in an eternal boxing match.

I'll bet that when the nothingness sees us, sees a rooster so wild he is banned from a store, or sees a person so amazed at the eternal beauty of heat and cold, of air and water and words, the nothingness much feel exhausted, and overmatched. I'd wager that at least for a moment, the nothingness feels like nothing at all.

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Gleanings

By **BARR JOHNSON**
Mount Horeb Mail

140 Years Ago- July 28, 1886

J.P. Moe returned to the melancholy quietude of Horebite life Friday last after painting some portions of Madison red. R. Martin shipped a carload of young stock last Monday. Farmers are compelled to dispose of some of their stock for want of feed.

Mike Dineen killed a rattlesnake in his place on the 14th and a second one on the 20th within a short distance of John Murphy’s residence, each of the individuals were the owner of 14 rattles and seemed to be in a healthy condition and prepared for business. It might be advisable for parents to chair up their offerings a couple of years and turn the porkers forth in quest of the snakes.

A reader propounds the following: “What is the difference between the moon and some men?” We should say that whereas the moon has two quarters between every time she is full, some men get full with every quarter. Next!

130 Years Ago- July 30, 1896

The name adopted for Sater’s wheel is “The Rosebud.” In place of a week’s recreation at the Lakeside Assembly we was treated to a severe attack of toothache. The long drought was broken last Saturday night, and on Sunday night copious rain again enlivened vegetation. Two bars of Maple City Soap will do as much washing

as three of any rosin filled soap, and do it easier, and will not injure the clothes as does so much rubbing. From the hundreds of bushels of apples now going to waste in this vicinity, splendid cider could be made. S. Belgum is now preparing a press and on next Monday expects to be in readiness. First come first served. Lewis Martin, manager of Dahlen’s harness shop, has put in a shoe repairing department in connection with the harness work shop, where half soling is done for 50 cents, and other work proportionately cheap.

120 Years Ago- July. 26, 1906

Many of the farmers’ horses about here are now becoming automobilized. Our little city is unusually lively, made so by the unusual number of teachers attending the summer Institute. The Lutheran church building is now taking on the form of an up-to-date city edifice, and when completed will be an imposing and handsome structure. The steeple was successfully moved to its new foundation without a hitch. A large force of men are at work and soon will have the roof on. Olaf Hagene has written relatives here that he is about to leave his mother country again and set sail for America, not being satisfied with conditions in Norway. It’s the same story repeated over again, when once Americanized no foreign country will suit. A young man of Cross Plains found out what it costs to talk

over the Bell line. While in Madison he called up his best girl and had a social chat. It cost him \$3.20.

110 years Ago- July 28, 1916

Miss Mable Jacobson of this place and Mr. Wm. F. Price of Cameron were united in marriage at the Lutheran church here yesterday. The couple left in the afternoon for an extended trip to Minneapolis and points out west. A bunch of former high school girls had a feast at Boeck’s park, last Monday, several in number are getting scattered pretty well over the State but manage to bunch up at about this time of the year. Andrew Anderson (Dakken) of this place died suddenly yesterday forenoon. He fell over near the pump and before helping hands arrived life was extinct. He was about 80 years old and quite feeble. The funeral will most likely be held on Saturday with burial at Primrose. Obituary next week. Ole A. Sale of Springdale was a brief but pleasant caller at our office Tuesday and admired the work of our new typesetting machine. We have been notified of a heavy rain in prices of the newspapers patents on which this newspaper is printed. The raise to go into effect August 1st. This will necessitate a raise in subscription price to \$1.25 per year when paid in advance or \$1.50 when two months over due. The new rates go into effect August 1, 1916. The big job of disposing of the cows killed by lightening

for Albert Baker was accomplished in a short time as so many of his neighbors turned out to help for which Mr. Baker is very thankful.

100 Years Ago- July 23, 1926

The 18-month-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Keller was attacked by a bull last Saturday and was quite badly injured. The boy was knocked to the ground, but as long as he was laying down, the bull stood still. Mr. Keller came to the rescue and called Dr. Thompson, who informs us the little boy is getting along well. Miss Mary Murphy has been engaged to teach third grade in our public schools for the coming year. Mrs. Gilman Mickelson, town of Vermont, slid off of a load of hay one day last week and broke one of her legs. She is under the care of Dr. Thompson. Frank Stewart, the crack shot of Verona, went to LaCrosse Sunday and attended the clay bird shoot at that place and carried home the first prize. Miss Selma Fjelstad, daughter of former County Clerk, George Fjelstad, deceased, will be a candidate for clerk of Dane County. 90 Years Ago- July 23, 1936 Tim Casey of Pine Buff was in town, Tuesday, with his open-air flivver. Tim said, “you can see more country from this car than any other car made,” and we believe him. Dr. Sutcliffe informs us that

he was called to the John Holder farm, Perry, Monday where he found 13 cows had died from eating Sudan grass. He also reports a few other places where cattle had died from the same cause. Dr. Sutcliffe says the long drought forms a poison in this particular grass and that farmers should not let their cattle have access to it. Mrs. Emma Finke, 87, formerly of Mount Horeb died Monday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Herman Ohs, at Battle Creek, Minn. The remains were brought here for burial. Myrland Bros., distributors of Valvoline products, have bought the former A.G. Docken property adjoining their filling station, where they will erect a modern super service station.

70 Years Ago- July 26, 1956

Lewis Bang, who died July 8, left an estimated \$53,000 estate and he willed \$500 each to the Mount Horeb Evangelical Lutheran Church and Springdale Lutheran Church. Steven Hopkins, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hopkins, Mount Horeb, claimed Miss Frances Zopki, Madison, as his bride at a 7:30 p.m ceremony Friday, July 20, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. 60 years Ago- July 21, 1966 A 20-hour manhunt, the largest ever conducted in Dane County, resulted in the quiet capture of 21-year-old Ronald Brinkman, Illinois, an AWOL Marine who kidnapped a rural

Monticello girl while fleeing from authorities in northern Illinois. He was captured on a heavily wooded farm north of Mount Horeb after releasing the girl. Secretary of State Robert Zimmerman was an early morning visitor today. August Becker, 81, lifelong Mt. Horeb area resident, passed away Saturday (July 16, 1966) in a Madison hospital after a brief illness. He farmed in the German Valley until he retired in 1932 and moved to the village of Mount Horeb.

40 Years Ago- July 24, 1986

Vocational Coordinator / Maintenance Supervisor Bill Urben, and Music Instructor George Zoske turned in their resignations, both to take positions in other school districts. LeRoy S. Johnson, Mount Horeb, died unexpectedly on Friday, July 18, 1986, in a Madison hospital. He was 59 years old. It was almost more than emergency personnel could handle Sunday evening. At 5:30 p.m. a swimmer was reported missing and presumed drowned while swimming at Stewart Lake. About 7:00 while the search was still underway, a call for assistance on a fire call came from Barneveld Fire Department. As two vehicles were dispatched for that call and got near the edge of town by the A & W, they were flagged down by a motorist, who had a passenger suffering from cardiac arrest.

Letter to the Editor

What I Learned After Sitting Down With Every Democratic Candidate for Governor

It’s easy to stereotype a political candidate. The establishment one. The democratic socialist. The moderate. The long shot. We can convince ourselves we know a candidate after a single headline or social media post. I had a unique opportunity during this gubernatorial primary to sit down with each of the Democratic candidates individually for hour-long conversations. We spoke as real people with unscripted conversations and honest questions, right here in Mount Horeb at Brix Cider. We also took unscripted audience questions to broaden the conversations. I began the series as a genuinely undecided voter. My hope was to become a better-informed voter my-

self and to invite the community to come along for the journey. By making it a “Community Conversation” with a live audience and videos available online, I hoped others could learn along with me. I remember going into the first conversation, with Kelda Roys, thinking that this would just be an easy warmup since she was a lesser-known candidate. I ended up being impressed by just how sharp, knowledgeable, experienced, and well-spoken she was. I realized I had mistaken lower name recognition for a lack of substance. Next came Sara Rodriguez (who has since suspended her campaign). I went into that one thinking of her as “the establishment candidate,” assuming she might be a little stiff and canned. Instead, I found someone I could genuinely connect with. We’re both former Peace Corps volunteers who care deeply about public service, and with my own mom having been a nurse, I couldn’t help but

feel a warmth toward her. The label I had given her had hidden the person. The third interview was with Joel Brennan. He’s another candidate I had mostly written off because he hadn’t polled well. Instead, I thoroughly enjoyed the conversation. I appreciated his “low drama, get things done” message, his practical approach, and his experience. Polling numbers had caused me to overlook someone who had a lot to offer. The next interview was with Francesca Hong. I was honestly a little nervous about this one since she has a fervent crowd of supporters and an equally fervent crowd of detractors. I wanted to have a deeper, more nuanced conversation without coming across as either a cheerleader or a critic, and I wasn’t sure how it would go. In reality, she was grounded, thoughtful, easy to talk to, and another person I could really connect with. The version of Francesca who sat across from me was a lot more nuanced than

caricatures online. Last came Mandela Barnes. I had seen him as a familiar face who was cool and likeable but who couldn’t quite win his last statewide race. I was at least right about the cool and likeable part. What I hadn’t appreciated was just how much of a fighter he is and how determined he remains. His previous loss had caused me to underestimate him. Looking back, a common theme emerges. I went into each conversation with a simplified picture of the candidate. After spending an hour together, those simple pictures rarely held up. I came in with stereotypes. I came out genuinely liking the people I had met. I didn’t come out of the conversations with a clear verdict as to who the best candidate is the way I thought I might. Instead, I came away with a new perspective on how limiting and potentially harmful our stereotypes can be. When you spend an hour talking with someone, it becomes much harder to dislike them.

It’s also much easier to appreciate just how hard they are working for something they believe in. Most of us will never have the chance to spend an hour with every candidate we vote for. But we can choose to remember that behind every campaign, every attack ad, and every viral clip is an actual human being. In an era when politics increasingly rewards outrage

and over-simplification, perhaps democracy is a little healthier when we resist the temptation to reduce people to labels. I know I’ll cast my vote with a little more humility than I would have a few weeks ago.

-Matt Raboin

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Local Government

Blue Mounds land use committee is up and running

By JILL JONAS
Mount Horeb Mail

The Town of Blue Mounds Board of Supervisors (board) held their monthly meeting July 14.

The previous month’s June 9 meeting minutes were approved unanimously, with Supervisors Richard VanDomelen and Mary Ann Bellazzini noting a couple minor edits, previously submitted to Clerk Amanda Burghy, to be included prior to posting.

With no public comments, the board moved directly to zoning matters. Given that the Land Use Committee (LUC) is now up and running and advising supervisors, board discussion was noticeably more efficient. Prior to the meeting, LUC Chair, Chris Smith, made the committee’s meeting minutes available to supervisors. The document summarized the committee’s discussions and recommendations specific to the board’s published zoning items. For each applicable item, Supervisor and LUC board liaison, Kevin Depies, provided succinct overviews. Both Depies and Smith addressed questions.

With that, driveway construction and/or extension applications were unanimously approved for prop-

erties at 9736 Blue Valley Road, Aavang Road, Rowley Road, and two separate Topper Road locations.

VanDomelen provided background information on the Rowley Road extension. He referred supervisors to two communications received, one from Dan Kaiser, developer, and the other, an inspection report from project engineer Nick Bubolz, Town & Country Engineering, INC. Bubolz’s letter noted outstanding construction items. He recommended reducing the original \$65,000 surety to \$25,000, “granting substantial approval of the development, with the understanding that the outstanding items...be completed or otherwise resolved” and a “final warranty walkthrough” be completed the summer of 2027. The board unanimously approved reducing the surety to \$25,000 until a 2027 approval inspection occurs.

With no public comments on their first scheduled public hearing, the board unanimously passed a 1726 County Hwy JG property rezone ordinance. A second North Road public hearing brought brief comments from landowner, Deanna Opsal. She spoke on the town’s rezone process. Op-

sal emphasized she was not complaining or criticizing, yet felt the need to make the board aware of process issues. Opsal was complimentary of working with Burghy and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Curt Winter. Additionally, she noted the process was “laborious, it was very confusing” and is something that “might be addressed in the future” to make it easier and more simple. She suggested explanations on Winter’s rezone checklist might help. Depies thanked Opsal for the comments and stated “we are always trying to continually get the process better.” VanDomelen stated it was “the first time I’m kinda hearing this feedback from a resident.” The board thanked Opsal for sharing her comments and VanDomelen stated “we’ll look further into that.” Next, the board unanimously passed the North Road rezone.

After zoning issues, LUC’s Smith reported that their next meeting is July 30th, with two possible site visits. Additional work is focused on process efficiencies, the town’s comprehensive plan, and driveway requirements. Regarding an engineered plan, Smith emphasized the need to clearly communicate to residents, that there are presently two

set requirements. One is a County erosion plan, and the other is the Town’s culvert requirements of at least eighteen inches.

Although listed as agenda items, there were no Legislative, Public Works or Fire District reports submitted. Bellazzini noted she will attend the Fire District’s budget open house. She will provide any open house supporting documentation, should it be available.

Winter provided correspondence received from Mark B. Hazelbaker, Attorney. The communication provides, the six Dane County opt-out towns, draft language on a data center moratorium ordinance. The board will hold discussion at a future meeting. VanDomelen noted he had briefly talked with Smith about including data center language in the town’s comprehensive plan. Smith suggested the need for additional research and possibly creating leading language that includes other projects affecting property resources.

Open Book and Board of Review Scheduled

According to Wisconsin law, each Wisconsin municipality must hold an Open Book and Board of Review

(BOR) session. The Town’s BOR members consists of all three supervisors.

According to Wisconsin’s Department Of Revenue’s (DOR) website, Open Book takes place before the BOR. “During this session, the... assessment roll (which lists all...properties) is open for examination. The property owner can informally discuss the property value with the local assessor. If the property value is changed at Open Book, the assessor corrects the assessment roll.”

During the follow-up BOR, if “not satisfied with the assessment after attending Open Book, the property owner can bring his/her appeal.” During the appeal process, property owners are required “to provide evidence proving the assessment is incorrect.” If the BOR “agrees with the property owner’s evidence, it can change the assessment.”

DOR’s website states, “Open Book and Board of Review sessions generally take place late May to mid-June; however, some may occur later.”

The Town’s “In Person Open Book” will be held Tuesday, August 4th from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The “In Person Board of Review” is scheduled for Tuesday, Au-

gust 25th, 6:00 -8:00 p.m. Both sessions are open to the public.

The Board approved \$64,344.35 in monthly payments as of June 30. Prior to the meeting, Winter communicated that the “elephant in the room...is the \$48,206.33 in chargeback payments that the Town had to make to cover Assessor mistakes. Statutes call for the municipality to make good on Assessor mistakes and not allow it to fall on the resident.” He added that the Town will “get the money” returned from all “taxing jurisdictions,” but they have until February of 2027 to make those payments.

Although there were no motions, supervisors appeared to agree that future agenda items will include a ballot drop box, moratorium ordinance, new town process involving nomination papers, and a general road discussion.

Finally, next month’s supervisor’s meeting is changed to Monday, August 10 at 7:00 p.m. because of the Partisan Primary Election being held on their typical monthly Tuesday date.

Pellitteri named Family Business of the Year by In Business Madison Magazine

Pellitteri Waste Systems, Inc., the waste and recycling service provider for the Village of Mount Horeb, was named the 2025 Family Business of the Year by *In Business Madison Magazine*.

“We want to thank our customers and vendors for this award, but ultimately, we want to thank our employees. We have a great team of employees striving to grow this company and

serve our customers,” said Company President David Pellitteri, when accepting the award at the Monona Terrace.

In Business Madison Magazine judges rated finalists based on experience, services/products, accomplishments and charitable initiatives. The judges said the company’s timeless set of values and customer-tailored solutions were among the reasons judges chose

Pellitteri out of 14 finalists nominated for the award.

The company’s impressive growth was another selling point for judges. Pellitteri Waste Systems currently serves 46 communities, more than 85,000 households, and thousands of commercial accounts.

“Running a family business is a blessing. Our family and team of 200 employees believe that success isn’t only defined by the

bottom line but by making a real, positive impact on the people and communities we serve every day,” said Vice President Danielle Pellitteri.

Pellitteri Waste Systems was founded in 1979 by Tom and Michele Pellitteri, but its tradition of service began more than 85 years ago, when Tom’s father, Tony, and his uncles used a borrowed truck to deliver coal and haul away garbage for merchants on Madison’s

Capitol Square. Today, Tom and Michele own and operate the business with their three children.

This award follows on the heels of numerous others Pellitteri has won for its ongoing efforts to recycle more and be good stewards of the environment:

-Recycling Excellence Award from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources,

-Outstanding Achieve-

ment in Education Award from the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin, and the

-Business Friend of the Environment Award from Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, the statewide chamber of commerce.

In 2025, Pellitteri collected and processed 205 million pounds of recyclable materials at its facilities. Learn more at www.pellitteri.com/news.

Recreation Notes

New session just announced! Body Wise Yoga for ages 55+ beginning August 3! This six-week yoga-based functional fitness program is designed for active older adults or anyone seeking slower, more intentional movement. Each class blends gentle motion, balance practice, functional strength, and mindful breathing to help you feel stronger, more stable, and mobile! Chair support and modifications are always available. Classes are

Mondays, 12:30 to 1:30 pm, August 3 to September 7, in the Senior Center. The class fee is \$60 for residents and \$70 for non-residents. Sign up by 7/27!

Register for NFL Flag Football, the premier youth flag football league. This program provides young players a fun and exciting opportunity to engage in non-contact, continuous action while learning lessons in teamwork and sportsmanship. Each participant will receive an NFL replica

jersey. For youth entering kindergarten through 8th grade. All teams are co-ed. The season begins the week of August 10th and runs through September for K-3rd and October for 4-8th. See the activity guide or our website for each grade level’s specific dates and times. The registration deadline is 7/27.

Learn to Line Dance! No experience needed, a complete beginner class! Just bring a bottle of water, yourself, and friends for a

fun night of country line dancing! Participants will learn the popular classics to the very latest favorites, and discover why people everywhere love line dancing! This program is designed for those 18 years and older. Each Session will teach new dances. Session 3 runs Tuesdays, August 4 to August 25. The program takes place in the Senior Center from 6 to 7 PM; and the session fee is \$36 for residents and \$46 for non-residents. Register for session 3 by 7/28.

UPCOMING REGISTRATION DEADLINES:

- 7/27: NFL Flag Football
- 7/27: Clay Camp: Out of this World
- 7/27: Body Wise Yoga August
- 7/27: Lacrosse Camp
- 7/28: Line Dancing Session 3
- 8/3: Babysitting

HOW TO REGISTER:

There are multiple ways to register for summer pro-

grams and activities. Online (go to <https://secure.rec1.com/WI/mount-horeb-wi/catalog>). In-person at 105 N. Grove Street. Place completed registration form (found on Rec Dept website) and payment in 24-hour drop box. Email completed registration form (found on Rec Dept website) and payment to mhrec@mounthorebwi.info.

Police Report

APRIL
911 Disconnect – 20
911 Open Line Count – 1
Accidents – 5
- **Accident – 2**
- **Hit & Run - 2**
- **Accident w/Injuries - 1**
Alarm – 3
Animal Complaint Disturbance - 1
Animal Complaint Stray – 6
Assist Citizen – 17
Assist Citizen – Vehicle Unlock - 5
Assist DCSO – 30
Assist Fire/Police – 6
Assist Other Agency - 1
Check Person - 17
Check Property – 72
Civil Dispute – 1
- A resident called stating that he needed to return a company truck, but was uncomfortable with that due to him no longer being employed with the company. An officer stood by while the business owner went and picked up the vehicle. No issues were observed.
Damage Property Complaint – 1
- A report of a street sign that was possibly struck and leaning in to an intersection was called in to the police department. Upon checking, there were no obvious signs of the pole being struck. Public Works was contacted.
Disabled Vehicle - 4
Disturbance Call – 1
- Officers were dispatched to the report of a disturbance between and boyfriend and girlfriend. After investigating, it was determined that the arrest criteria for a domestic was not met. Both parties agreed to separate for the night. A charge of Criminal Damage to Property was referred to the Dane County District Attorney’s Office for their review
Domestic/Family Trouble - 2
- Police were dis-

patch to a local restaurant for a past disturbance. Upon contact with the victim, the officer noted multiple scratches/cut marks on the victims face. Contact was made with the suspect, who reported that during the incident he was intoxicated and did not remember parts of the incident. The suspect was arrested for Simple Battery and Disorderly Conduct and booked in to the Dane County Jail.
- Police were dispatched to a residence for the report of a domestic disturbance involving a gun. The suspect in this case voluntarily came outside for officers. The firearm was seized along with other firearms in the home. The suspect was arrested on numerous related charges and booked into the Dane County Jail.
Drug Incident – 2
- A traffic stop was conducted on a vehicle for equipment violations. Upon contact, the officer noted the strong odor of marijuana emitting from the vehicle. A probable cause search was conducted which resulted in finding THC and paraphernalia. The driver was issued warnings for all violations.
- Officers were dispatched to a residence for the report of the homeowner finding drugs and paraphernalia in a family members room. The family member was currently attending rehab for drug addiction. The reporting party had noticed a change in the behavior of the family member, and searched their room finding multiple drugs and paraphernalia. All items were taken and destroyed per the request of the reporting party.
EMS Assist – 46
Follow Up - 3
Foot Patrol/Check Property -39
Found Property – 1
Fraud – 4

- A report of a fraud was called in to the police department where the reporting party sent money over Apple Pay. The reporting party became suspicious and immediately contacted her bank. The reporting party is currently working with the banks fraud department to work on reimbursement.
- A citizen called to report an identity theft. While in contact with the reporting party, it was found that he lived outside of the police department’s jurisdiction. This case was passed on to the Dane County Sheriff’s Office.
- A resident called to report that there were 3 charges on her credit card that she did not make. The reporting party was able to contact her banks fraud department, who is working with her regarding the charges. This case is inactive, as the reporting party is working on getting her money back.
- Officers took a report of a credit card fraud. At the time of this report, the victim is waiting for confirmation that the money will be returned based on their fraud protection.
Information – 29
Juvenile Complaint – 3
- Two juveniles approached a police officer to report an incident at McDonald’s with a manager. The juveniles gave their side of the story as to what took place while at the restaurant. Contact was made with the manager, whose story differed. The manager explained that the juveniles could come back, but only if they were customers and behaved.
- Officers were dispatched to a residence for a juvenile that was out of control. The juvenile was ultimately taken to the Juvenile Retention Center
- Contact was made with two young juveniles that were playing around a storage area. Both juveniles knew the owner of the property and were educated on respecting private property.

Local Ordinance Violation - 1
Missing Adult – 1
- A residential facility called in to report a resident was not on premise. Staff believed the missing person snuck out to buy cigarettes. An officer observed a person matching the description of the missing adult. The facility was called, who came and picked up the missing adult.
Monitoring /Extra Patrol – 2
Neighbor Trouble – 1
- Police were dispatched to a residence for the report of neighbor issues. Contact was made with all parties involved who were counseled on how to handle issues like this in the future.
Noise Complaint – 1
OMVWI Arrest / Intoxicated Driver – 6
- While on routine patrol, an officer observed a vehicle commit multiple traffic violations. Contact was made at the vehicle where the officer observed opened bottles of beer on the passenger floorboard. Standardized Field Sobriety Tests were conducted. The driver was arrested for Operating While Under the Influence (1st), Operating with a PAC (1st) and cited for Deviation from Designated Lane, Operating w/o a Valid License and Failure to Maintain High Mounted Stop Lamps. After processing, the driver was released to a responsible party.
- Dispatch aired a traffic complaint of a semi all over the road and at varying speeds. The semi was located and showed very erratic driving behaviors. The driver was arrested for OWI and processed at the Iowa County Jail.
- An officer was flagged down by a citizen who reported seeing a female passed out and slumped over the steering wheel. Upon arrival, the female attempted to drive way. A traffic stop was conducted and standardized field sobriety test were completed. The driver was arrested for

Operating While Under the Influence (3rd offense) After the booking process, the driver was released to a responsible party.
- An officer observed vehicle all over the road and unable to maintain the lane of travel. A traffic stop was conducted where the driver showed signs of impairment. The driver refused to conduct field sobriety test. A search warrant for a blood draw was obtained. The driver was arrested for Operating While Under the Influence, and cited for Deviation from Designated Lane, and Operate a Motor Vehicle W/O Proof of Insurance.
- A traffic stop was conducted for failure to stop a stop sign, which led to an arrest for an OWI. Upon contact with the driver and sole occupant of the vehicle, the officer noted the moderate odor of intoxicants emitting from the subject. The driver admitted to be coming from a bar, and stated he had been drinking. The driver refused to conduct Standardized Field Sobriety Test. A search warrant for a legal blood draw was obtained. The driver was transported to a local hospital for a legal blood draw and then booked in to the Dane County Jail for Operating While Under the Influence.
- An officer was dispatched to the report of a person sleeping in the driver’s seat of a running vehicle with the door open and with its lights on. Contact was made with the driver and sole occupant of the vehicle who stated he had been at a local bar and had been drinking. Due to the admission of drinking, and the driver’s blood shot and glossy eyes, standardized field sobriety tests were conducted. The driver was arrested for Operating While Under the Influence (1st) and Operating with a PAC (1st). The driver was eventually released to a responsible party.
On Street Parking Complaint – 1
Parking Tickets – 33
Phone Call – 7

Preserve the Peace –3
- Police were requested to standby while a male gets some personal items from his ex- partners residence. Upon arrival, the male had already gotten his items that were sitting outside on the porch and did not need any other assistance.
- Police stood by for a preserve the peace while a male gathered personal items from his residence. No issues were observed.
- Police stood by while an individual gathered items from his home. No issues were observed.
Repossession - 1
Safety Hazard – 13
School Related Incidents - 7
Check Person - 1
Event - 1
Juvenile Complaint – 1
Juvenile Information - 1
Meetings – 1
Tour of MHPD - 2
Suspicious Person - 4
Suspicious Vehicle – 1
Theft – 1
- An officer responded to a local business for the report of a theft by an employee. Contact was made with Loss Prevention who had already terminated the employee. Video footage was obtained which showed the employee stealing, and the employee did admit to the theft. A citation was issued for theft of moveable property.
Threats Complaint – 1
- A resident called the police department to report receiving what they thought were harassing test messages. After observing the text messages, nothing threatening was stated. The reporting party was advised to block the phone number and not have contact. This report is informational.
Traffic Arrests – 11
Traffic Complaint - 5
Traffic Incident – 4
Traffic Incident / Road Rage - 1
Traffic Warning – 100

Library Corner

Have your muscles atrophied?
By Jessica Gretziner
In her article, “The End of Reading,” Rose Horowitz reminds us that “literacy became a mass phenomenon relatively recently, after Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1440” (*The Atlantic*, July 2026). She goes on to make the case that we may be making a U-turn from modern times and returning to the Dark Ages. For example, Horowitz writes, “If we fill our time with short form videos instead of books, our

reading skills atrophy Reading books is a workout for the attention span. The more you read, the easier it is to read The less you read, the more difficult it is to read.”
My key take-aways from this article were (1) I should not take reading for granted. It was once considered a privilege afforded only to the wealthy, elite, and educated. (2) Reading is like a muscle. The less you read, the worse you get at reading! Even if you were once a voracious reader, the more time away from reading – the harder it will be to

get back into it. Conversely, the more you use your reading muscle, the easier it becomes. You improve your ability to comprehend, analyze, and pay attention.
I will leave you with my

final favorite quote from the article as food for thought: “Gambling has become a more common leisure activity

than reading a book: Last year, 57 percent of Ameri-

cans placed a bet” (Horowitz, *The Atlantic*, July 2026).

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lions Club will Stuff the Bus for students

The Mt. Horeb Lions Club would like to invite the community to help them “Stuff the Bus” with school supplies on Saturday, July 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Miller and Sons Supermarket.

Donations of new school items as well as monetary donations are welcome.

All donated supplies remain in the Mt. Horeb Area School District. Monetary donations are used to buy additional supplies or given to the district to purchase items for students throughout the year.

These donations help to make a difference in the lives of our local children and will give them the jump-start they need to be successful in school. The goal is to see that children in need have the tools necessary for them to be ready and confident on their first day of school.

All net proceeds collected from the sale of Brats in the Lot, as well as any cash donations, go towards the Stuff the Bus service project.

Mark Saturday, July 25th on your calendars, bring your school supply donations to Miller and Sons parking lot, buy some brats, and help the Mt. Horeb Lions Stuff the Bus with school supplies.

County board presses pause on data centers

On Thursday, June 4, 2026, the Dane County Board of Supervisors voted to approve a temporary halt on permits for hyperscale data centers in unincorporated areas of the county. The measure, Sub 1 to 2026 RES-039, prevents the receipt of applications for, and the granting of, any zoning permits related to the placement or construction of hyperscale data centers for the next 18 months.

The pause is intended “to give the county adequate time to study a category of development that is expanding rapidly across the country and to determine how it fits within Dane County’s existing land use framework. The resolution directs that time be used to examine the environmental, economic, health, and safety implications of data centers and to develop zoning regulations aligned with the Dane County Comprehensive Plan.”

Following review by the

Zoning and Land Regulation Committee, the resolution was narrowed to apply only to hyperscale data centers, defined as facilities that use at least 5,000 servers and occupy at least 10,000 square feet of floor space. Smaller data center infrastructure is not affected.

The moratorium applies to towns subject to county zoning. It does not apply to cities, villages, or towns that have adopted their own zoning codes.

“Communities across Dane County are watching this issue closely, and there is real concern that proposals could move forward before we have the information needed to properly evaluate them,” said County Board Chair Patrick Miles. “Pressing pause is the responsible step. It protects our communities while we do the work to understand what hyperscale data center development would mean for our land, our infrastructure, and our residents.”

The county board’s Advisory Committee on Data Centers, established to study these questions and recommend policy responses, is currently engaged in this research. The moratorium is intended to align with the timeline of the committee’s work.

Miles also encouraged neighboring jurisdictions outside the moratorium’s reach to consider parallel action. “This is a regional question as much as a local one,” he said. “I hope our partners in cities, villages, and towns with their own zoning will look at taking similar steps so that no community in Dane County is left without the benefit of this research.”

Budget engagement sessions announced

The Dane County Board of Supervisors will host a series of four public community engagement sessions on how the county budget is built, reviewed, and adopted, and on how and when residents can take part in the process. Each session includes a short presentation, a question-and-answer period, and an open listening session for residents to share their priorities. Sessions run about 90 minutes.

WHO: Dane County Board Chair Patrick Miles and members of the county board.

WHEN AND WHERE:

Tuesday, July 28, 6 p.m., Goodman Community Cen-

ter, 149 Waubesa St, Madison, WI 53704

Thursday, July 30, 5:30 p.m., HYBRID SESSION: CENTRO (Madison Office), 2403 Cypress Way, Madison, WI 53713; (online access via Zoom)

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 5:30 p.m., The Grove, 314 Anne St, Mazomanie, WI 53560

Friday, Aug. 7, 12:30 p.m., Windsor Community Center, 4428 Windsor Rd, Windsor, WI 53598

Police to host National Night Out

On August 5 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. the Mount Horeb Police Department is hosting its annual National Night Out event. The event will be at Grundahl Park, across from the Mount Horeb Public Safety building. This is a great opportunity for members of the community to meet with various public safety resources within the Dane county area. All are welcome to attend to enjoy some free food, K9 and UW Med Flight helicopter demonstrations, bouncy house, petting zoo, and dunk tank.

West Nile Virus confirmed in Wisconsin

Wisconsinites encouraged to protect against mosquito bites to avoid illness

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announces the first confirmed West Nile virus (WNV) activity in the state this year. Mosquitoes collected from Milwaukee County have tested positive for WNV and a wild bird from Bayfield County tested positive for the virus. This is a sign that there are mosquitoes in the state that have the virus and can transmit it to animals and people. Currently, no human cases of WNV have been reported in 2026.

“Monitoring mosquitoes and birds for West Nile virus helps public health experts understand when and where the virus is active, so that we can give timely information to communities across the state,” said Paula Tran, state health officer and administrator of the Division of Public Health. “These first detections of West Nile virus this year serve as a reminder to take simple steps that can protect you and your family against possible illness.”

WNV is spread to humans, birds, and other animals through the bite of an

infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire WNV by feeding on infected birds. The virus is not spread directly from person to person, animal to animal, or animal to person.

Most people infected with WNV do not have symptoms. Those who become ill may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, rash, and fatigue. Some people will develop severe illness with symptoms that include high fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, mental confusion, tremors, paralysis, seizure, and coma. Older adults and those with compromised immune systems are at greater risk of developing severe illness that can be fatal. It is important that people contact a health care provider if they suspect they have WNV illness.

DHS has monitored the spread of WNV since 2001, tracking infections in mosquitoes, animals, and humans across the state to alert health care providers and Wisconsinites about risk. An average of 19 cases of WNV illness are reported among Wisconsin residents each year. WNV cases in humans have been reported from June through November; however, most people with WNV report becoming ill in August and September.

The best way to avoid illnesses spread by mosquitoes is to reduce exposure to mosquitoes and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. Mosquito activity and the risk of WNV will continue through the rest of the summer and fall until there is a hard frost (temperatures below 28 degrees Fahrenheit for at least four straight hours).

DHS offers these tips to protect against mosquito bites:

Avoid mosquito bites

Apply an insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to exposed skin and clothing.

Prior to heading outdoors, treat clothing with permethrin; do not apply permethrin directly to skin.

Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning hours, when mosquitoes that spread WNV are most active.

Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-proof your home

Prevent mosquitoes from breeding around homes by removing stagnant water from items around the property. For example:

Empty standing water that has collected in tin cans, plastic containers, flower pots, discarded tires, roof gutters, and downspouts.

Turn over wheelbarrows, kiddie pools, buckets, and small boats such as canoes and kayaks when not in use.

Change the water in bird baths and pet dishes at least every three days.

Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.

Make sure window and door screens are intact and tightly fitted to prevent mosquitoes from getting inside.

Trim or mow tall grass, weeds, and vines since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.

Find more information on prevention and symptoms of West Nile virus and additional ways to Fight The Bite on the DHS website.

Dane County Board Recognizes BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month

On Thursday, July 16 the Dane County Board of Supervisors officially recognized July 2026 as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Mental Health Awareness Month. The board passed 2026 RES-079 to mark this observance and affirm its commitment to the mental health and well-being of BIPOC communities across the county.

The resolution acknowledges that BIPOC communities “continue to face barriers to accessing behavioral health services as a result of longstanding inequities, stigma, and gaps in culturally responsive care. The impact of these barriers is evident locally.” The 2024 Dane County Human Services Youth Assessment found that 50.1 percent of white students experiencing depression received mental health services, compared to only 28 percent of students of color.

“When people feel seen, they begin to heal. When communities feel valued, they become stronger,” said Supervisor Goodwill Obieze (District 16), who read the resolution. “Today, Dane County reaffirmed that mental health is a human right, and that every resident de-

serves dignity, belonging, and access to compassionate care.”

The 2026 BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month theme, “More Good Days, Together,” reflects the understanding that mental well-being is strengthened through community, trusted relationships, culturally responsive care, and environments where individuals feel seen, supported, and connected.

The board recognized the work of organizations and partnerships across Dane County that are advancing community-centered approaches to mental health care, including The African Center for Community Development, The Hmong Institute, Centro Hispano of Dane County, Urban Triage, The Progress Center for Black Women, The RCC Sexual Resource Center, and Reach Dane. It also recognized the Dane County BIPOC Mental Health Coalition, which partners with community-based organizations to create affinity spaces, advise agencies, and advocate for system-level change to address mental health disparities.

“We are grateful to the County for their support in the creation of the BIPOC Mental Health Coalition,” said Fernando Cano Ospina, director of administration and inclusion at RISE Wisconsin. “As we shed light on the unique challenges faced by BIPOC communities, we would also like to recognize the advocates, allies, partners, and community members whose continued work moves equitable mental health care from intention to practice, during BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month and every month.”

The Dane County Board of Supervisors reaffirms its commitment to fostering conditions that create more good days together through awareness, connection, culturally responsive care, and continued investment in the health and well-being of BIPOC communities.



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COMMUNITY

Village Vignettes

Music Man: Jim Kirchstein

By Laurence Kruckman

Truly, a son of the Driftless, Jim Kirchstein (1931-2025) grew up in Sauk City in the 1930's. He loved the magical hidden valleys and sandstone cliffs and, especially, the Wisconsin River environment. Many kids who grow up alongside major rivers call themselves "river rats" and he was one. Often, as he reported to Jim Leary in an interview in March of 1992, he ran away from school just to sit or play by the river.

There must be something special in the Driftless habitat around Sauk City because, in less than 30 miles distance, other native sons and daughters, also had a great respect for the environment. John Muir in Portage, Frank Lloyd Wright in Spring Green, and the painter Georgia O'Keeffe in Sun Prairie.

And then there was another Sauk City native son, August Derleth, who some call the "Father of Science Fiction." He was a writer, publisher, and anthologist who discovered individuals like H.P. Lovecraft, and Ray Bradbury, author of Fahrenheit 451 and other books. Derleth, like Kirchstein, loved the local environment and considered himself a regional naturalist and conservationist as revealed in his books Walden West and The Wisconsin: River of a Thousand Isles, both deep meditations on local wildlife and landscapes.

Kirchstein entered the Navy as a jet fighter pilot during the Korean conflict, and returned home in 1954, and attended University of Wisconsin under the G.I. Bill. To make extra income, he worked in his parents' grocery store in Sauk City. There he set up a record store in the basement. Soon after, he became interested in producing recordings in his tiny studio, with a 1950s glass tube, Voice of Music, reel-to-reel, 700 Tape-o-Matic.

Don Chamber's well-known local polka band from Lodi was his inaugural recording. "I Overlooked an Orchid," by Chambers was his very first record, J-1001 (the final tapes were sent to RCA in Chicago for press-

ing). His third recording was an area rock group, The Fendermen, which included Jim Sundquist from Madison and Phil Humphrey from Stoughton. They had a wild, wacky version of the old, traditional song, Mule Skinner Blues. The tune's roots go back to the 1930 song, "Blue Yodel #8," by Jimmie Rodgers. Amazingly, their Telecaster and Stratocaster Fender guitars were the only instruments on the recording. The resulting sound received the "Kirchstein reverb treatment," and the record hit #5 on the Billboard's Hot 100. It sold over 4 million copies and is still popular on the Internet today.

Eventually he received a degree in electronics from the UW which, no doubt, guided his studio design with a three-tiered ceiling that had the capacity to absorb bass frequencies. His technical expertise became widely known. On a lighter note, in a flurry of quirky inspiration, he tried to create the "dance hall sound" on his recordings by running microphones into the cistern at his parent's place to get a reverb effect. He shared with Leary that "every once in a while, on a few recordings, you could hear water dripping."

The unique sound he sought found its resonance when, in 1957, a German company, Elektro-Mess-Technik (EMT), introduced the EMT 140, which became the first commercially successful reverberation unit. This was probably the high-end German equipment he purchased to help his Cuca Records achieve the professional, and unmistakable, reverberant sound.

In the 1960s, he began recording all kinds of music from rock to blues to old time, plus specialty things

like circus music and railroad sounds. He continued to do so for the next 16 years. Many people know his label through the albums he recorded of Madison's beloved Doc DeHaven, while in Milwaukee, others knew him due to his recordings of early Black rock groups such as Harvey Scales & The Seven Sounds. Kirchstein and his unique studio sound attracted such early rock stars as Bobby Vee, country and western singer Bobby Bare, and Chicago blues artist Earl Hooker. Vee apparently recorded "Rubber Ball," and "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes," in Sauk City, both released by Hollywood's Liberty Records. Later Steve Miller, Cheap Trick and Boz Skaggs cut their first recordings with Jim.

Larry first met Kirchstein in 1968 when the Mount Horeb garage band, Icarus and the Elements, recorded at Cuca Records on a few occasions. He remembers Jim as gentle force, providing guidance, always encouraging, and most importantly for young musicians, not simply recording songs, but offering musical and technical advice. The Elements recording, "The Eyes Always Tell the Truth," was somewhat popular regionally but, a second, "Batskinner" (a wild and crazy takeoff of Muleskinner Blues with a tongue-in-cheek satire of the hit TV show Batman performed in full batman suits), was very successful, helping promote them in the Midwest with clubs serving Bat Beer and Bat Sandwiches. Jim enjoyed their funky success. "This silly Batman gimmick, while embarrassing to some parents, paid for college tuition for the band," says Larry. He remembers Kirchstein as "wanting to make it possible

for anyone to make music, to make a record."

Kirchstein loved old-time music since high school days in the 1940s and, later, recorded Uncle Julius live at Fish Lake. Uncle Julius worked at WKOW as an announcer, spinning polka records in the morning for Doughboy Feeds. He was a wild character with a mustache and a story in his own right. Jim had missed old time music in the service, and once dedicated to the music industry, worked hard to record Bohemian, German/Dutchman, Slovenian, Polish and Swiss old-time music, probably understanding the intrinsic, historic value of establishing this specialty genre. He recorded scores of albums and over 2000 45's, focused on Wisconsin bands.

It must have been quite a joy for this self-described "river-rat" to play a role promoting many of these groups at the old Riverview Ballroom in Sauk City, located directly on the shores of the Wisconsin River, where the 1994 Wisconsin Public Television documentary *Polka from Cuca* was filmed.

Polka bands and rock groups would come into his studio to record, and Kirchstein would do the rest, including album graphics usually in color, and record printing. Eventually, in 1964, he set up a pressing plant that could do several

thousand albums a day. He employed a crew of about 40 at its peak, some in packaging, some operating the press. This was a low-key operation, and was all done with local people, a formidable hurdle in itself.

Kirchstein also got interested in local radio, and created station WVLR (very live radio). The FM station operates today in Madison as WMIL. In 1968, when UW extension campus was completed at Baraboo, a dean hired him to work for the university. Consequently, in 1972, he phased out his record operations in 1972 and turned over the station to its stockholders.

Jim Kirchstein was a pioneering Wisconsin sound engineer, entrepreneur, and music preservationist. Using his UW-Madison electrical engineering degree, he built a custom recording studio and launched independent record labels. His technical philosophy favored raw, spontaneous live sound over sterile studio isolation.

Through his Cuca Records label, Kirchstein captured a vibrant, unfiltered

sonic snapshot of midcentury regional music. Under the slogan "World's Largest Line of Old Time Music," the label produced legendary polka and ethnic artists, including: Alvin Styczynski, Verne Meisner, Syl Liebl, The Edelweiss Stars, Roger Bright, and The Goose Island Ramblers.

His massive audio archive is permanently preserved for future generations. The historic recordings are housed within the Cuca Records Collection at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Mills Music Library. A son of the Driftless indeed.

Laurence Kruckman, a retired anthropologist who did research on birth and the postpartum in South America and the Pacific, returned to his roots in Mount Horeb to live in the house his father built in the early 1950s. Upon arriving back, he reconnected to many old friends, and recalled others long gone - the ink started flowing.

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Traffic Grants Provide Extra Enforcement

Throughout the Summer The Dane County Sheriff's Office (DCSO), in partnership with the City of Madison Police (MPD), is continuing to deploy additional traffic enforcement thanks to grants from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Three separate grants are primarily focused on speed, seatbelts, and OWI enforcement; however, all traffic laws will be enforced.

The Sheriff's Office conducted 11 deployments in June, with another 11 deployments scheduled in July. June's OWI deployments resulted in 118 citations issued by DCSO and MPD, three OWI arrests, and 30 warnings. The deployments also resulted in one Felony arrest, one warrant arrest, and two misdemeanor arrests.

Three seatbelt grant deployments resulted in 204 citations. On Monday, June 22nd, a 63-year-old Madison man was arrested for his 6th OWI during the overtime enforcement.

Finally, speed grant deployments in June resulted in 203 citations, 22 warnings, and a Felony OWI (4th) offense.

The Dane County Sheriff's Office wants to remind everyone that impaired driving is 100% preventable. If your plans include alcohol or other impairing substances, arrange a sober ride. "The decision to drive impaired puts lives at risk and can lead to devastating consequences," said Sheriff Calvin Barrett. "Together, we can keep our roads safe by making responsible choices and never getting behind the wheel while impaired."



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-  MHB Gridiron Club — delicious burgers & brats
-  Mount Horeb Youth Baseball — refreshing Kona Ice cones
-  Mount Horeb Girls Golf Team — chuck a ball raffle
-  Mount Horeb Girls Golf Team — for supervising the bouncy house
-  Mount Horeb Optimist Club — for providing the Kids Zone

A big shout out to our fantastic live music lineup — Soul Food and Mark Croft Duo
To our hardworking Norsk Golf Club staff — thank you for going above and beyond to make the event run smoothly and for the early morning cleanup to get the course back open for play.

And of course, thank you to Wolverine Fireworks for another amazing fireworks show!
A very special thank you to Jared Nelson Rural Mutual Insurance for sponsoring the fireworks — your support makes this celebration possible.



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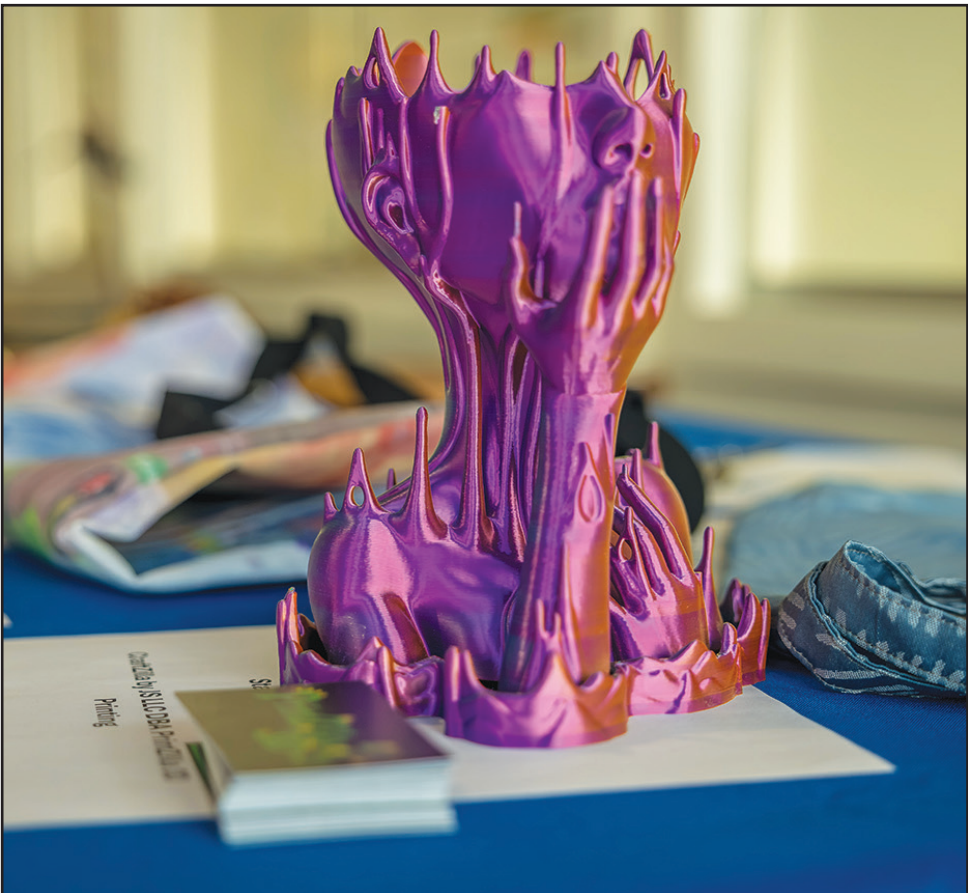
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One of southern Wisconsin’s favorite summer traditions returned to downtown Mount Horeb on Saturday, July 18, and Sunday, July 19, as the Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce welcomed thousands of visitors to the 2026 Mount Horeb Art Fair, now in its 55th year. Photos by Casey McCoy.

Local police use doomed motel for training



On Thursday, June 25, the Mount Horeb Police Department was able to put the Karakahl County Inn to use in its final days before it is no longer part of the Mount Horeb landscape. The building which once was a premier stop in the hospitality world, is set for destruction in the coming weeks which made it a very unique opportunity for law enforcement officers to utilize it for training with little in the way of limitations. The new owners of the site were gracious enough to allow law enforcement to utilize the now vacant and heavily damaged building for training. On June 18, the Dane County Tactical Response Team (TRT) utilized the building for training on room clearing, team tactics and even explosive breaching.

FORD

continued from page 1

President/CEO Rachel LaCasse-Ford would be stepping down from her role effective October 31, 2025. Her replacement, Allison Plumer, took over at the organization's President & Chief Executive Officer on December 3.

But while she left the Mount Horeb Chamber of Commerce, LaCasse-Ford didn't go far. She took over as Senior Manager of Member Development for the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. She recently took the time to talk with us about her time in Mount Horeb, her new role in Madison, and the ways she remains connected to the local community.

First of all, how are you doing? Have you settled in at your new job?

LaCasse-Ford: I'm doing great! I absolutely love my team and really believe in the work we do at the Greater Madison Chamber. Moving to a larger organization has brought a lot of new opportunities for learning and growth, and I've genuinely enjoyed the challenge of stepping into a broader regional role.

At the same time, one of the things that has made the transition feel very natural is that I've been able to stay connected to so many people and communities I worked alongside during my time in Mount Horeb. Over the years, I built re-

lationships with chambers, business leaders, and community partners across Dane County and beyond, so it has been rewarding to continue strengthening those connections in this new role.

What exactly does the senior manager of member development do?

LaCasse-Ford: As Senior Manager of Member Development, my primary responsibility is helping bring new members into the Greater Madison Chamber and making sure they feel connected and supported once they join. A big part of that work involves responding to referrals and leads, but also proactively getting out into the community, meeting new people, building relationships, and helping people understand the Chamber's role in the region's broader story.

I'm also heavily involved in helping new members during their first year of membership. I coordinate a program that pairs new members with volunteer ambassadors who help introduce them to other members, encourage engagement, and help them get the most value out of their membership experience.

And I'm still hosting many ribbon cuttings, which I love!

Do you still get to interact with Mount Horeb's community, and business community, at all?

LaCasse-Ford: I do! I

keep in regular contact with the Chamber team, and I attend Good Morning Mount Horeb as often as I can. One of the exciting things about my new role is that our work spans far beyond Madison itself. We serve members in six counties throughout south central Wisconsin. This year, we took on expanded economic development responsibilities and are already providing talent and business attraction assistance across the broader region.

The Greater Madison region is growing rapidly, and that growth will inevitably impact surrounding communities like Mount Horeb. Communities like Mount Horeb are an essential part of the region's identity and future, and I hope to continue building connections and helping foster conversations about how communities want to grow while still preserving what makes them special.

And beyond the professional side, Mount Horeb still feels very personal to me. My mom moved to Mount Horeb just as I was leaving, and my son takes guitar lessons in town every week, so we're back in Mount Horeb regularly for fun and family too.

You headed up the Mount Horeb Chamber of Commerce at an interesting time for the community. There were certainly plenty of curveballs, thanks to an array of external factors, and some growing pains too. But there were also

a lot of highlights. A lot of local people pursuing their dreams, and succeeding. What are your favorite memories of your time here?

LaCasse-Ford: I have so many fond memories to draw from. I moved to Mount Horeb in 2015 to open the GrandStay Hotel, and almost immediately began serving on the Chamber's Board of Directors. Looking back, that really started a decade-long journey of learning, growing, and building relationships alongside some genuinely wonderful people.

One of my favorite memories was taking part in the strategic visioning process for the Chamber while serving on the board. It was such a meaningful exercise because it brought people together to ask important questions about who we were as an organization, what challenges we were facing, and where we wanted to go next. When I later joined the Chamber staff in 2021, I had the privilege of helping carry that vision forward by implementing new programming, restructuring the organization, strengthening member engagement, and creating a clearer strategic direction for the future.

Like communities themselves, chambers go through growing pains. Many chambers begin as tourism or downtown-focused organizations, but as communities grow, the needs of businesses evolve too. One

of our biggest goals was to grow alongside those changing needs while still staying true to Mount Horeb's identity and values. That meant expanding programming, building a more diverse board, creating a stronger advocacy voice, and finding new ways to support businesses of all sizes.

I'm especially proud of the work we did to bring workforce development, housing, childcare, and economic development into the local conversation. I'm particularly proud of my contribution in founding the Community Coalition, which is a formal group that brings the Chamber, the School District, and the Village together on a regular basis. The goal and success of that group lies in creating a space for candid conversations about the challenges we face as a community and the unique pressures each organization navigates internally and externally. By working together more intentionally, we were able to create greater clarity and accountability and foster a spirit of collaboration.

Most importantly, my fondest memories include the incredible people who live and work in Mount Horeb. I had the sincere privilege to work alongside an incredible staff, dedicated volunteers, engaged board members, and community leaders who cared deeply about the community and were willing to put in the work to make it better. Those relationships and experiences shaped me both

personally and professionally, and I'll carry them with me for the rest of my career.

Anything else you want to add?

LaCasse-Ford: I really appreciate the opportunity to stay connected to the community. Mount Horeb just has a way of hooking you and never quite letting you go. It will always hold a very special place in my heart.

When I left the Chamber, I was given such a thoughtful and heartfelt send-off. So many people reached out to share kind words, memories, and stories about how the work we did together made a difference for them and for the community. That meant more to me than I can express. Chamber work can sometimes feel challenging and messy because you are balancing so many different perspectives and priorities, so hearing that the work truly made an impact was incredibly meaningful.

More than anything, it reinforced why I care so deeply about this work. It added even more fuel to the fire burning inside me to continue helping communities across our region thrive. The people who trusted me, supported me, challenged me, and worked alongside me over the years left a distinct imprint on me. It is a chapter of my life that continues to shape me, and for that I am so very grateful.

Students and parents team up



Boston Zimmerman



Devyn and Jason Uptegraw



Devyn Uptegraw



Jared Zimmerman

The Youth Apprenticeship Program at Mount Horeb High School is proud to recognize two students whose apprenticeship experiences are creating something especially meaningful — the opportunity to work alongside their fathers while learning trades that directly serve the community.

Devyn Uptegraw works with his father, Jason Uptegraw, at Uptegraw Flooring, and Boston Zimmerman apprentices with his father, Jared Zimmerman, at Zimmerman Building Company. Both students begin their mornings on construction jobsites in Dane County before returning to school to balance academics, athletics, and student life.

Through their work, Devyn and Boston are gaining far more than technical skills. They are learning responsibility, craftsmanship, problem-solving, and the value of hard work from

the people who know them best. At the same time, they are helping carry important trades into the next generation — ensuring skilled local professionals continue building and maintaining homes and businesses in our communities for years to come.

Devyn assists with flooring preparation and installation, including removing old flooring, leveling concrete, and completing detailed trim work with care and precision. Boston works in residential framing, hauling lumber, measuring and cutting materials, and helping prepare homes for each next stage of construction.

Boston especially enjoys working outdoors and seeing roof trusses installed, marking the completion of his portion of the framing process. Devyn takes pride in seeing projects come together through hard work and attention to detail.

Both students are preparing for bright futures. Devyn plans to attend the University of Wisconsin–Platteville as a track athlete while pursuing his bachelor’s degree. Boston plans to join Zimmerman Building Company full-time after graduating from Mount Horeb High School.

The connection these students share with their fathers makes their apprenticeship experiences especially unique. Learning side-by-side each day strengthens family relationships while passing down skills, pride, and dedication that will benefit both the students and the broader community for generations to come. Want to learn more about how you or your organization can get involved with the Youth Apprenticeship Program at Mount Horeb High School? Reach out to Craig Smith at smithcraig@mounthoreb-schools.org.



Devyn Uptegraw



Community comes together for vets

The Mount Horeb American Legion Auxiliary Unit #113 recently got a helping hand from Mount Horeb Family Pharmacy, Holy Redeemer Church, Mount Horeb Public Library, ELC Church and St. Ignatius Catholic Church, all of whom supported the Auxiliary’s recent 250th Anniversary veterans donation drive. Each location welcomed donation bins, placing them in accessible areas and helping gather essential items for veterans. Their willingness to provide space made a meaningful difference in the success of this effort, according to Connie York. “Our community is stronger because of local partners like you who step forward to support those who have sacrificed so much,” she said. “We are truly grateful and thank you for standing with our veterans and with our community!”

Wisconsin DMV continues helping residents obtain REAL ID

One year after the federal REAL ID deadline, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) notes that nearly 72% of Wisconsinites are REAL ID compliant, with more than 3.5 million REAL ID driver licenses or ID cards in residents’ wallets.

“Wisconsin remains REAL ID ready,” DMV Administrator Tommy Winkler said. “Wisconsin DMV has been offering the option to have a REAL ID compliant card since January 2013. Our team continues to work to improve the DMV customer experience by providing several online, self-service options and offering counter service appointments that provide a quick and convenient visit. These efforts have helped keep wait times low in DMV customer service centers as REAL ID enforcement has taken effect.”

For travelers without a REAL ID, the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA) began charging a \$45 fee on Feb. 1, 2026, to cover costs associated with additional identification screening measures.

For those who don’t already have a REAL ID and want to upgrade, Wisconsin DMV has simplified the process with recently enhanced online appointment capabilities for driver licenses or IDs. By using DMV’s new appointment scheduler, customers complete and submit documents online, select the appointment time and get priority service. For the in-person visit, bring the required documentation (wisconsin.gov/REALID) and check in at the appointment desk. Most walk-in customers are served in less than 20 minutes.

There is no additional fee for a REAL ID compliant driver license or ID. To upgrade to a REAL ID at the time of renewing the driver license, customers pay the renewal fee (typically \$34). To upgrade outside of the driver license renewal timeframe, customers pay the \$14 duplicate or replacement card fee.

In most cases, customers receive their driver license or ID card within 7-10 business days.



Lucas Henson ran in the world famous Western States Endurance Run in California. Photos by Facchino photography.

RACE

continued from page 1

The race started in Olympic Valley, CA with a three-mile 3000-foot climb. The race has a total ascent of +/- 19,000 feet and descent of +/- 23,000 feet and Henson said he was “very fortunate this year as this was the third coolest weather they have had in the 53 years of

the race.”

“I was expecting to have temps in the 90s and 100s during the middle to end of the race and was met with only high 70s,” he said.

“Western States is the oldest 100-mile race,” explained Henson. “Running 100 miles always has its ups and downs during the race. It has taken me eight years of running eight different 100 milers to get into Western States. Western States has a lottery system that you must run one of their qualifying races each year to get a ticket. Every year that you don’t get in your

ticket quantity doubles until you are picked. This year 11,328 runners applied for the race, and I was one of the lucky 369 runners that were picked to run.”

Henson pushed through adversity during the race,

with a little help from Mount Horeb’s Greg Wiegand and the papaya fruit.

“I was at mile 70 of the race and I felt like I hit a wall. Out of nowhere I started to get double vision and super nauseous,” he

said. “I sat down at the aid station and told my pacer Greg Wiegand at the time that I needed to take a couple minute nap. After about eight minutes I woke up and still felt off. We talked to one of the great aid station workers at the race and they gave me two tums and two papaya enzyme pills. After a few minutes of taking those, I felt great! Around mile 78 Greg and I made our way to a famous river crossing of the race. We crossed the American River, and it was cold! The river crossing was roughly 50 yards long with a strong current and the water varied from waist deep to shoulder deep.”

“At mile 80 I picked up my second pacer Tom Hawes,” Henson continued. “Since the water crossing was like

an ice bath for my body my legs felt rejuvenated, and I was able to move a lot better. Tom has helped pace me in a lot of my other 100s, so he knew how to push me when I need it and when I needed to slow down for a bit. For the last two miles of the race all your pacers and crew can finish the race with you. Since I got into the race I kept on picturing finishing with my wife and two boys. That also helped me mentally to finish the race as well when times go tough.”

“I have to give a huge shout out to my wife Sarah, my two boys Colin and Simon, Tom, Greg, Mary, Erica, and Jennie for helping me out throughout the entire race!” he concluded.

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SPORTS

WIAA DIVISION 3 RANKINGS

MH-B ranked No. 5 in early poll

Vikings' offensive line, run game should be strengths

Editor's Note: This preview of the of the top teams in Division 3 was compiled by Boundwisconsin.net. Check out previews from across the state at their website.

1. Catholic Memorial

The Crusaders dropped a competitive game to Franklin to open the season, then rattled off 11 straight wins to claim a Parkland Conference title and advance to the state semifinals for a fifth consecutive season. The Crusaders then fell in a close game to eventual state champion Grafton to end the season short of the ultimate prize.

There is a load of talent returning as CMH tries to get to the top of the hill. On offense, quarterback Dalton Steinke had an excellent sophomore season and brings back the entirety of his pass-catchers from a year ago, highlighted by explosive University of Wisconsin commit Dustin Roach, who doubles as an All-State caliber safety. Devon Williams, Jr. was a 1,000-yard rusher, along

with second-leading rusher Camden Shumpert.

The defense may have even more talent, including Badger commit Isaac Miller at defensive end, talented linebackers Naverion Flowers and Will Schmitzer, and defensive backs Roach and Zy'aire Smith.

A big move this year finds Catholic Memorial moving from the Parkland to the Greater Metro Conference, which will certainly introduce a higher level of competition week-to-week, as they'll also play Arrowhead and Muskego in crossover games.

They have the talent to compete with those teams, but could take a few lumps during the year. They figure to be a favorite come playoff time, however.

2. Whitefish Bay

It was quite the roller-coaster season for the Blue Dukes.

Bay opened the 2025 campaign with a 27-22 win over Madison Memorial, but won just two more games against a very tough

continued on page 14



MH-B's Eli Maier was a first-team all-conference linebacker and a second-team all-conference running back last season. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

Weier shines on track, in classroom

Former Mount Horeb standout caps tremendous career at UW-Whitewater

Lexie Weier, a 2022 Mount Horeb High School graduate, recently completed an outstanding collegiate track and field career at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Weier was also named Academic All-District by the College Sports Communicators (CSC) for the 2026 spring season.

The CSC Academic All-District teams recognize the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances in competition and in the classroom.

During Weier's four

years on the Warhawks women's track and field team, she earned a place among the top-10 triple jumpers in school history in both indoor and outdoor track. Weier qualified for conference competition all four years and earned conference medals three times in a highly competitive field.

Academically, she has been a member of UW-W's Honors Program throughout her four years at the university and has earned Dean's List honors every semester. Her dedication to

both academics and athletics helped her receive the UW-Whitewater Chancellor Scholar-Athlete Award in May.

Weier also earned a four-year varsity letter in track and field, recognizing her commitment and participation with the Warhawks program throughout her collegiate career.

Weier is currently completing her student teaching internship in third grade in New Glarus and will graduate from UW-Whitewater in December.



Former Mount Horeb standout Lexie Weier recently concluded a tremendous track and field career at UW-Whitewater. Photo courtesy of Olivia Zinanni/UW-Whitewater

MH-B

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schedule the rest of the regular season.

Sitting at 3-6 overall and 2-5 in league play, Bay would have been eliminated from the playoffs in previous years, but the new Matrix system put the Blue Dukes in as a No. 8 seed.

Bay then went on quite a run, beating top seeded New Berlin West in its opening playoff game and advancing all the way to the state semifinals, before falling to Reedsburg.

Five starters are back on both sides of the ball for the Blue Dukes, including the bulk of the skill positions. That includes quarterback Chase Wolter, leading rushers Lateef Love and Kaden Kelly, and explosive receiver Mace Miskel. While most of the big guys up front need to be replaced, Kaben Ziegler returns as one of the best two-way linemen in the state.

3. Pewaukee

Like Whitefish Bay, Pewaukee would not have qualified for the playoffs in past years at 2-5 in the ultra-tough Classic Eight Conference, but did qualify thanks in large part to a pair of non-league wins over Port Washington and Greendale. The Pirates then defeated third-seeded Sauk Prairie and

second-seeded Onalaska in a thriller before exiting against Reedsburg.

Properly moved out of the Classic Eight and into the Parkland Conference, the Pirates figure to be one of the better teams in the state.

“We are a team that has a lot of returning players from a state quarterfinalist finish in 2025,” head coach Justin Friske said. “Our offensive and defensive lines should be a strong point of our team, and the experience we have gained playing in the Classic Eight the past two seasons should pay dividends as we transition back to the Parkland Conference in 2026.”

Pewaukee can rely on a pair of Big Ten linemen, Cade Reikowski (Northwestern) and Jack Tabbert (Wisconsin), along with the returning quarterback duo of Brooks Dobberstein and Benji Weis. Colton Wall is an outstanding athlete who will play on both sides as well.

There are a total of seven starters back on offense and seven on defense.

4. Waterford

The Wolverines dropped three in a row late in the season, which sent what had been a promising campaign off the rails a bit.

Head coach Brent Thoen relied on a strong junior class last year, and with those players entering their

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MH-B’s Django Christian was a second-team all-conference wide receiver as a sophomore in 2025. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

senior campaign, the Wolverines are ready to make some noise.

Four of five linemen return, including Wake Forest recruit Peyton Schuster. They’ll block for 1000-yard rusher Jax Pesch, who is receiving scholarship attention, and quarterback Hunter Schneiker, who got plenty of time as a sophomore last season.

The defense features some big time players including D1 prospect John Cramer plus Mason and Carter Thoen.

5. Mount Horeb/Barneveld

The Vikings were part of a three-way tie for the Badger Small Conference title last year, as they beat Sauk Prairie but fell to Edgewood late in the year. The Vikings had a familiar end to their season, losing to Catholic Memorial in Level 3 of the playoffs and finishing 9-3 overall.

A talented senior class moves on, especially at the skill positions, but head

coach Bret St. Arnauld does return six starters on offense and five on defense.

“The strength of our team will be on the offensive line,” St. Arnauld said. “We bring back four starters on the offensive line from last season and they have all gotten bigger, faster, and stronger.”

One of those is Evan Leibfried, who recently committed to Northern Illinois. Eli Maier is an experienced running back returning (and doubles as an outstanding linebacker), while Django Christian got plenty of playing time at receiver a year ago.

6. Plymouth

The Panthers rolled through the regular season undefeated, capturing the East Central Conference title. They notched a couple nice playoff wins, but fell to eventual state champion Grafton in the sectional finals.

Plymouth moves to the Glacier Trails Conference

this year, though it is many of the same teams they faced previously.

Second year coach Mark Vollbrecht returns six starters on offense, including three-year starting quarterback Augie Eigenberger, as well as four of the five offensive linemen.

Over on defense, Cole Kuhn was the East Central Conference’s Defensive Player of the Year in 2025.

7. Port Washington

Port Washington continued its strong recent play, not only qualifying for the playoffs for a fifth straight season, but winning a post-season game for the fifth consecutive year.

The Pirates were second in the East Central Conference and fell to old rival Whitefish Bay in a close Level 2 game. They’ll move to the newly formed Glacier Trails Conference this year, though with quite a few familiar opponents.

Jack Bunyan, the son of head coach John Bunyan, returns for his junior year

after a solid sophomore season. Leading receiver Kade Kintop is also among the returning standouts on offense.

Kiya Sullivan and Thilar Goodman are back as standouts on the defensive side of the ball.

8. New Berlin West

The Vikings won seven of their first eight games last year, but dropped the regular season finale to rival New Berlin Eisenhower. Then despite receiving a No. 1 seed in the playoffs, West was shocked by eighth-seed Whitefish Bay, 31-7, in its playoff opener.

“The strength of the team will be experience with key returners at every position,” said head coach Ben Chossek. “Building depth and having the size to match up with big physical teams will be keys to success for 2026.”

There are nine starters returning on the offensive side of the ball, including leading rusher Aidan Devine, as well as second-leading rusher Evan Trudell, quarterback Logan Zylka, and top receiving option Zachary Hewitt. Seven starters are back on the defensive side of the ball.

9. Winneconne

What a season it was for the Wolves, who opened with a win over Little Chute, which proved to be

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just a preview of what was coming in the Division 4 state championship game. Trailing late, Winneconne rallied for a 28-22 win and the school's second state title.

It was a senior-laden team led by Brody Schaffer, a two-way star who accounted for more than 3,000 yards of offense and 43 offensive touchdowns. With his move to the University of Iowa, there's definitely some big holes to fill in such a key production spot.

Junior Broderick Stille figures to slide into that spot. He'll be welcomed by three returning starters on offense, including all-conference receiver Ryan Quigley, second-leading rusher Mason Mathe, and talented offensive lineman Baylor VanBommel.

There are three starters back on defense, as well. The JV team also went undefeated a year ago, and those players will be asked to fill holes and step into bigger roles.

10. Fox Valley Lutheran

The Foxes were third in the Bay Conference a year ago, and while they qualified for the playoffs, they fell to Luxemburg-Casco in a tight Level 1 game.

"We have some good pieces returning this year in key positions and a lot of our younger guys that stepped up and received some varsity experience later in the season," said head coach Seth Jaeger.

That includes five starters back on offense, where the conference's leading receiver Jacoby Dobberstein returns. Another Heiges is set to take over at quarterback, as Braden makes the move from receiver, replacing older brother Gabe, who graduated.

Braden is also described as the heart and soul of the defense by Jaeger and one of five starters returning there.

11. La Crosse Logan

The Rangers put together a solid 2025 season, finishing fourth in the very competitive Mississippi Valley Conference, with all of their defeats in close games. Logan then beat Wisconsin Lutheran, 42-19, in its first playoff game before losing a half-time lead in a 31-22 loss to Catholic Memorial.

Maxim Roberts, a 1,500-yard rusher, graduates, but

the Rangers to return junior quarterback Thomas Check, who threw for nearly 800 yards and added 1,018 yards on the ground.

Jesse Lycke is a standout two-way lineman that is also back for veteran coach Casey Knoble, who always has the Rangers in a very competitive spot.

12. Wisconsin Lutheran

The Vikings were a little off the pace in the Woodland Conference last year, finishing third behind Grafton and Whitnall. Lutheran fell to La Crosse Logan in a Level 1 playoff game, but head coach Joel Radue brings back six starters on both sides of the ball and 23 letterwinners.

The headliner is Jamail Sewell, a towering offensive lineman who recently gave a commitment to Minnesota. Quarterback Jonah Sadler, who threw for 10 touchdowns and ran for 10 more, is also returning.

Things do get tougher for the Vikings this season as they'll move to the more challenging North Shore Conference.

13. Baldwin-Woodville

The Blackhawks reached the state semifinals for a third straight year, where they fell to Winneconne after defeating the Foxes there in 2024. That success has bumped Baldwin-Woodville up to Division 3 this season via the WIAA's Tournament Performance Factor.

They'll definitely be a factor in the Middle Border Conference race again, with 29 letterwinners back. "We hope to have a larger number of one-way players this year," said head coach Dan Keefer. "Our kids have had one of the best off-seasons I have seen, which gives us a shot at having a great year."

Five starters return on offense, led by standout quarterback Joe Jensen. Luke Janke is just a sophomore but ran for more than 500 yards and had more than 250 receiving yards last season. Landon Peavey is an outstanding two-way lineman.

14. Luxemburg-Casco

After winning their first seven games of 2025, the Spartans hit a wall late in the year, dropping three of the final four, including a Level 2 playoff defeat against Plymouth. They have some nice pieces returning this season, notably quarterback Eli Derenne, who threw for 1,598 yards



MH-B's Evan Leibfried was a second-team all-conference linebacker and a second-team all-conference right tackle last season and recently committed to play collegiately at Northern Illinois. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

and 17 touchdowns as a junior.

Second-leading receiver Katem Klaubauf is also back on the perimeter.

15. Onalaska

The Hilltoppers qualified for the playoffs for a 16th straight season, finishing third in the Mississippi Valley Conference. They defeated Menomonie in level 1, but dropped a heartbreaker to Pewaukee the following week.

Head coach Tom Yashinsky will have a young group, with just 11 seniors and only five starters back, but there's definitely reason to think the playoff streak will continue.



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"We have a lot of depth at skill positions, but our lines will be tested early," Yashinsky said. "Numbers are well over 100 in the program, so the long term outlook is good, but it's going to take the summer to see how guys fit into positions."

There are some excellent athletes ready to step in, including Kaeson Stettler, who missed time last season, but still showed flashes at running back. Brendan Chenault is one

of the area's top all-around athletes and will be an impact player at receiver and defensive back.

Wyler Burch was the backup quarterback last season and is another strong run-and-jump athlete will make an impact somewhere. Keep an eye on Adam Kuhn as a breakout player.

Others to Watch

- Greendale
- Kettle Moraine Lutheran

- Lakeland
- Martin Luther
- McFarland
- Medford
- Milwaukee Bay View
- New Berlin Eisenhower
- Milwaukee Pius
- Portage
- Reedsburg
- Sauk Prairie
- Sparta
- Wauwatosa West
- Whitnall

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