

Village of Mount Horeb holds special meeting to talk about zoning code re-write

By CATHY SCOTT
Mount Horeb Mail

The Village Board held a special meeting on Monday, January 26 to continue to discuss the zoning code re-write provisions for the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) district. The DMU district will replace the current Central Business (CB) district in the Village's zoning code ordinance. All board members were present as well as Ben Rohr, the Village Planner.

Previously, both the Plan Commission (PC) and the Community Development Authority (CDA) members discussed items, such as building height, step-back, parking ratios for downtown mixed-use buildings, and density in the DMU, each making recommendations to the Village Board.

In simple terms, the PC is charged with zoning code compliance of a project, concerning building specs, such as size, location, exterior appearance, and park-

ing. The focus of the CDA is the economic impact a development may bring to the Village, by potential increased revenue for shop proprietors, building owners, and the Village's property tax coffers countered by the zoning codes that allow financial viability for the developer.

Because of the different focus, the PC and CDA have slightly different opinions on the zoning codes relating to height, density, and parking.

Nic Owen, Village Administrator, included a copy of a four-page memo in the Village Board packet, with the original memo sent to the Plan Commission explaining the two concerns of the CDA stemming from its January 14 meeting. The memo included recommendations for the DMU zoning to lessen the requests for Planned Developments or large Tax Increment Financing (TIF) incentives for the developer. The CDA's main concern with the PC

recommendation to the Village Board is the economic feasibility of in-fill or redevelopment with its proposed limitations.

The two concerns with the PC recommendations to the Village Board are to require: 1) a 50 ft. lot line from the street for any residential land uses on the ground floor, and 2) a building height of 40 feet, and three stories with a front step back above the second story on Main Street, and a height of 50 ft, and four stories off Main Street with a step back on the third story.

The CDA believes the 50 ft distance from the street to the lot line is too stringent, especially when lot depths are varied within the DMU district. They prefer having a minimum dimension or a percentage of the overall depth, whichever is less. In addition to lot depth variances, commercial space allocations are dependent on the project(s) using the space.

Referring to building

height, the Comprehensive Plan suggests 50-60 ft on Main Street and 72-85 ft. off Main Street. The CDA does not think a step back is needed for the third story on Main Street since there are currently no step backs on three story buildings on the Main Street corridor. With existing five story buildings south of Main Street, the CDA believes the building height should be remain at 60 ft and five stories, realizing a step back for the fifth story may be the ultimate decision made by the Village Board.

Since parking is always a hot topic, the existing CB district has no minimum parking limit although a minimum may be recommended by the PC to the Village Board for consideration. With recent developments, the PC has required 1.2 parking spaces per residential unit. The CDA recommends using the 1 space per unit, stating parking does not generate revenue, yet has hard costs as well

as ongoing maintenance expenses.

President Czyzewski suggested a straw vote to see how Village Board members felt about the recommendations received from the CDA versus those received from the PC. Although one was not taken, Trustee Tim White suggested a parking formula for apartments, suggesting 1 space for a studio, 1.2 for a one-bedroom, etc. versus a flat number approach. Czyzewski said the PC would push back on that concept as it would encourage certain types of apartments, e.g., all studios, etc. Both Trustees Jason Fendrick and Ben Jones like the recommendation of five stories, 60 ft height limit off Main Street. Fendrick said, as did the CDA, there will be more TIF requests allowing only three stores, 40 ft limit on Main Street and that is why Tax Increment District 5 exists in the downtown area.

Without coming to any conclusion, some board

members suggested returning the DMU zoning code rewrite provisions discussed be returned to the PC for evaluation whereas others suggested there is no need to do that as the Village Board has the ultimate decision in making the final decisions on the zoning code rewrite provisions. Secondly, the memo was also addressed to the PC.

Before ending the meeting, Czyzewski reminded everyone the Public Hearing for the zoning code rewrite is slated for Wednesday, February 25 at the Plan Commission meeting. If all goes well, the final consideration for approval of the zoning code will be at the March 4 Village Board meeting.

Following the special board meeting, the board members traveled to the high school to attend the annual strategic planning meeting with the MHASD and the Chamber.

Town of Springdale looks to obtain land

By STEVE MATYAS
Mount Horeb Mail

Springdale Board Chair John Rosenbaum urged quick approval of a plan to obtain three small parcels of land at the current dollar amounts offered by the town. Purchase of the parcels is required for bridge improvements on the Town Hall Road bridge. Eminent domain could be used on April 6, and owners would have the right to appeal the amounts received.

The land, owned by three

separate entities, is largely useless, according to the town, and the town's offer exceeds the value at which it is appraised, with one being \$7,150 for a \$4,700 appraised value. To this point, one owner has accepted the town's offer, one is negotiating for a different amount, and one has been non-responsive.

Rosenbaum cited the needs to "keep moving" and to "maintain good relations" with residents.

In response, board mem-

ber Richard Schwenn called the proposed offers "ridiculous" and stated that the landowners should be "embarrassed to take that much money from the town" for land he would give away if he owned it. Schwenn further described the land as something indigenous peoples "wouldn't even want back." Board member Kelly Altschul questioned whether withdrawing the current offers would "open new wounds" and joined with Rosenbaum in recommending that the current plan stay in effect. She said she wanted to keep the process moving and was not concerned with keeping good relationships with the residents.

Issues with snow removal on Paulson Road were examined due to placement

of an electric gate in a driveway used as a turnaround point for plows from Springdale and the adjoining town of Verona. Options discussed were having plows go beyond the turnaround point to reverse direction, to allocate \$3,000 for a culvert and gravel at the turnaround point, and rotating extension of each town's removal area to allow more convenient reversal. Rosenbaum expressed concern that this may be "the wrong time of year" to discuss this issue, and it was tabled until next month when Patrolman Devin Dahlk, unavailable this month, can provide input.

The switch from Republic to Pellitteri for garbage and recycling pick-up was looked into, with Town Clerk Jackie Arthur saying

Pellitteri would begin operations on January 23 under a new 10-year contract. Republic is requesting new negotiations. The town has been withholding payments to Republic based on past complaints of non-service and damage to bins.

The ongoing search for code recodification and revision necessary to comply with state statutes was brought up. Arthur presented figures from two companies, Municode and General Code, willing to take on the project. Municode's quote was for approximately \$15,500 thousand dollars, with a yearly fee of \$2,450 for supplementation and online hosting. The General Code quote was for \$15,000 plus \$1,295 for supplementation and would provide an

interactive feature to allow making changes without the need for mailed documents.

Altschul expressed concerns over the need for all three board members to read every page of a proposed new code book and Rosenbaum warned of the need to be aware of the "amount of work" required moving forward. Arthur responded by saying she was confident either company would be willing to "summarize and explain changes" and that she would enquire whether they could provide the board with a copy of a standard contract per Altschul's request.

February's board meeting was re-scheduled to the 23 and the March meeting to the 16.

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GEIGER

Counter

by Matt Geiger, Editor

Cancer, and Wolf

Causes of death in 1632 London included fever, age, and the somewhat cryptic “Teeth,” which claimed a staggering 470 lives that year. Six people were found dead in the streets and starved. One person died after being bitten by a mad dog. Another died, somewhat understandably, from being “Affrighted.” Another passed away from vomiting. Twenty-seven died from “Worms” and 11 whole people died of “Grief.” Thousands upon thousands of infants died, likely from shock when they were born, took a quick glance around and saw that a horrifying 46 people were “Kil’d by several accidents” and nine people had “Burst.” Ten people died of “Cancer, and Wolf.”

I like to think about this when I’m feeling sorry for myself. Sure, we live in a time when you have to subscribe to 37 different streaming services to regularly watch NFL football, but on the upside barely any of my friends are currently dying of Swine Pox or French Pox, or really any pox at all.

I’ll wager that people who lived in 1632 thought they were living in the End Times. But of course, if they read their Bible carefully – most people couldn’t read, so it was quite similar to 2026 - they would have rested easy, because the Book of Revelation says that during the Apocalypse, suffering will run roughshod over the Earth but actual *death* will be absent: “In those days humans will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.”

Death wasn’t exactly fleeing from anyone 400 years ago. If anything, it was springing directly toward them. If people are dropping dead that frequently you can be pretty sure you are not

exactly in the End of Days as prophesied in the Bible, at least.

I almost died once, when I was a teenager. I came down with Encephalitis (an infection of the brain) and Meningitis (an infection of the spinal cord). I stayed in Floating Hospital in Boston, mostly unconscious, and wasted away to almost nothing. I missed nearly an entire year of school.

A friend from that strange time recently stopped by our house. She was moving from the West Coast back to Massachusetts, and she and her husband and son dropped in to say “Hello” while on their journey. I hadn’t seen her in nearly 30 years. In casual conversation, she remembered how scared she and many other people had been during my time in the hospital.

“Huh,” I said. “I had no idea everyone was so affrighted about it.”

For me, it was basically a very large headache and a very long nap. I do remember someone visiting from a church in my hometown and informing me that everyone there had been praying for me, which a wise person would probably take as an ominous omen.

When I did leave the hospital, I was routinely carted to various specialists who

poked and prodded me, hooking me up to electrodes and monitors and trying to ascertain how many of my physical, intellectual and emotional shortcomings were pre-existing conditions, and how many of them were direct results of my recent illness.

One of my myriad problems was that my hands were always cold. Another was that I was now deaf in my right ear. Another was that my IQ, which had previously been quite high, had fallen like an overbaked souffle and was now squarely in the “Average” range. (I apologize if that simile doesn’t make sense; I’m not that bright and actually don’t know how to properly make a souffle.)

In any case, the doctors came up with a treatment plan for my very cold hands, and it was more medieval than I was expecting. “We’re going to see if you can use your mind to magically control the temperature of your body,” they said.

They might actually not have used the word “magically,” I’m part deaf after all, but the rest is true. They called it “Biofeedback.”

Apparently, it’s a type of mind-body technique insane people use to control some of their body’s functions, such as heart rate, breath-

ing patterns and muscle responses. During biofeedback, patients are connected to electrical pads that help the medical community get information about their bodies.

Day after day, session after session, I sat in a room, with little cords attached to my fingers, while someone who may or may not have studied medicine gave me instructions like: “Imagine your hands are warmer” and, well, “Imagine your hands are warmer really hard!”

It was right around this time that I first read Jack London’s “To Build a Fire,” so the ability to use special brain powers to keep myself from freezing to death seemed like something that might come in handy someday.

The results were mixed. The experts found that I could actually raise my temperature by imagining I was on fire, but it took about an hour of solid concentration and it only went up about a quarter of a degree, so the utility of this special power was somewhat questionable.

What does actually work, and I know this from many years of personal experience, is spending as much time outdoors as possible. It’s been well below zero for most of the last few weeks, and they even cancelled

school when the wind chill plummeted below -30 the other day.

But I went out in all of it. I hiked, and hunted, and just sat in the woods, marveling at the vast biotic community that lives just beyond the reaches of our strange civilization. The more consecutive days you spend in subzero temperatures, the better your body gets at handling them. I don’t know for sure, but it probably has to do with your system figuring out how to properly distribute warmth and energy, and to simple fortitude, which isn’t nothing.

Perhaps all the demons that hunt us are a little less likely to devour us if we take a good look at them from time to time. Perhaps it’s best to lift up our gaze from our phones and look straight ahead at the many forms of death dashing toward us; at fever, at old age, at teeth and worms and cancer and wolf, and the very real possibility that we will someday burst. It’s a good way to get Affrighted, but perhaps there is also solace in the horde of deaths that pursue us. Perhaps as they bear down upon us it’s enough to make us give thanks that we live in these times and not those in which it is they that flee in terror from us.

Gleanings

By **BARR JOHNSON**

Mount Horeb Mail

140 Years Ago-
Feb. 10, 1886

A new era in winter sports has begun. During this winter snowshoe clubs have been organized in large numbers and toboggan clubs wherever it is practicable to have a slide. The roller rinks are deserted (long may they remain so) and sports for more healthful and refining in their influences have superseded them.

The postponed oyster supper of the congregation at East Mt. Horeb was held in the church on Wednesday evening last and all things considered, there was a fair attendance. The frigidity of the weather prevented many from venturing out.

The Literary and Debating society is meeting with a success greater than was anticipated by its founders; at the meeting held on Thursday evening, of last week, over 100 people were present. The question selected for Thursday evening of this week is “Resolved: that the Colonies had just cause to rebel.” Together with some other literary exercises.

130 Years Ago-
Feb. 6, 1896

Andrew Oberg has purchased the woodwork establishment of Belgum & Wolf and rented that part of the shop. He will take possession forthwith and is ready for

business.

Henry Lohff and Mr. Hoff were the first to unload ice this year; they have been filling the former Bergh Brothers’ ice house, which happens to be located on the lot on which the new butcher shop will be built in the spring.

Lewis Elwin visited at this place over Sunday. He reports that the sanitary condition of the inmates at the county farm was unusually good for this time of the year.

The Masquerade Ball to be held in the Opera Hall on Feb. 14, promises to be one of the events of the season. Everyone is invited. Tickets 75 cents, ladies free. Spectator’s admission 10 cents. All parties wishing to procure masks can do so by calling on J.P. Moe at his music store.

Cards are out announcing the marriage of Miss Metie Preston, of Mazomanie to Bennie Grinder, of Perry. The date set for the occasion is next Wednesday, at the bride’s home.

120 Years Ago-
Feb. 8, 1906

Gilbert Mickelson, the jeweler, is learning the barber trade from Sam Gesme, believing that the two trades will go well together.

Henry Arnold sold a two-year old colt to John Handly last week for \$170. Horseflesh is getting more and more valuable every year, regardless of the automobile and the team and gasoline power.

L.J. Bergh has been sporting a

cane the past two weeks as the result of a fall in the barn, the rungs in a ladder breaking.

Miss Lena Quisler will soon leave with her “dog and her gun” to take up her residence on her homestead claim in N. Dakota which she filed on last summer, and spent some time there at that time.

Clarence Barsness has gained for himself the reputation of being a very efficient telephone operator, and has especially proved himself to be a number one man on emergency calls.

The price of good cordwood has been \$5.00 per cord, but the fine winter weather has reduced the price a trifle.

A bouncing girl arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. P.E. Mabel last Sunday, and all is reported well. This is child number 13, twelve of whom are living. One died in infancy.

Lee & Harmon, our electric light firm, have decided to make great improvements in the plan the coming season, and have secured the machinery building of Gust Benson facing Park avenue which they will remodel and place there on a 106 H.P. Steam ending next a 150 H.P. Boiler. They have also bought a new and much larger Dynamo, as the present one is too small. Work will commence at once.

110 Years Ago-
Feb. 11, 1916

It will be a fitting thing to cel-

ebrate Lincoln’s birthday by taking in the big ski tournament here tomorrow.

Henry Birrenkott will soon start an up-to-date grocery store in the store building in the National Hotel.

The Kosher Club has changed quarters and has secured the second floor of the Variety store building, which is spacious and pleasant. The membership is mostly composed of young, active men who aim to carry themselves in gentlemanly manner and only such are welcome to their rooms.

Sunday services at the U.L. Church was largely attended, additional chairs were placed in the isles to set the many the pews could not hold and this indicates that it is but a question of time when the church must be enlarged.

Mike Birenkott was a pleasant caller at our sanctum Monday; Mike is interested in purebred poultry and sold several firebirds lately.

100 Years Ago-
Feb. 5, 1926

The stork is storking: born to Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Field, Blue Mounds, Feb. 4, a daughter; Mr. and Mrs. William O’Connor, Mt. Vernon, a daughter on Feb. 3; and to Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Shower, Mt. Vernon, a daughter on Jan. 30.

The interior of the town hall looks very good after having been painted and decorated.

Orin Baker and Sidney Wallen

bought the large barn, the former Thomas Ayen barn, from L.E. Murphy, yesterday through Brown & Weltzin. Baker and Wallen will operate a sale stable and we wish them success.

Walter Gruenfelder, who has been employed as cheesemaker in the Sand Hill factory, Forward, has moved to the Tasher factory, Primrose.

C.J. Lunde & Son are filling their large icehouse with ice shipped here from Madison.

90 Years Ago-
Feb. 6, 1936

We are informed that Bill Murphy of the Pennco Service Station, has been somewhat of a Good Samaritan during the cold weather. Bill has kept his station open throughout the night as an accommodation to truck drivers and others on the road at night, and though as a rule very little gasoline is purchased by the drivers whose trucks are loaded with fuel at the start of their run, they have had the opportunity to stop in and warm up before going on their way.

Mrs. Albert Lukken was severely burned in an oil blaze at her home three miles south of here Friday evening, when she was heating motor oil for their automobile on the kitchen range. Some of the oil boiled over on the stove and she attempted to carry the blazing pail from the house, but was forced

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Obituary

Ronald Joseph Cushman

November 20, 1941 - January 25, 2026



MOUNT HOREB - Ronald Joseph Cushman, age 84, of Mount Horeb, Wis., passed away peacefully and surrounded by family on Sunday, January 25, 2026. He was born on November 20,

1941, in Dodgeville, Wis., the son of Vurl and Ruth (Ryan) Cushman.

Ron graduated from Barneveld High School in 1959. He was united in marriage to his high school sweetheart, Sandra May Swenson, on May 14, 1960.

Ron served on the Mount Horeb Volunteer Fire Department & EMS for 13 years. He was on the first Mount Horeb EMS call in 1976. Ron later became the Assistant Fire Chief and enjoyed weekends filled with “water fights.” In 1983, Ron started his own business, RC Builders Inc., which he ran for over 25 years.

Ron was a lifelong sports enthusiast, playing Ridge-

way Home Talent and fast-pitch softball for many years. His favorite teams were the ones his children and grandchildren played on. Ron loved the outdoors and filled his years fishing on the Mississippi River and on trips to Canada, hunting at his cabin in Ridgeway, and traveling out west for elk hunts. He was a lifetime member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Ron also cherished the weeks spent in Hayward with his family. Ron and Sandra enjoyed traveling together and spent their winters at their home in Arizona.

While Ron may not have liked being the center of attention, he deserves to have

his long years of love honored. He was a man of such integrity and generosity, and he left a lasting impact on everyone who knew him. One of Ron’s greatest joys was spending time with his family. He was our rock, which perfectly complimented his wife, Sandra, who is our glue.

Dad/Grandpa/Great-Grandpa, you will be missed immensely. You were our comfort when we needed clarity and our sanity in this crazy world. It is because of you we have our work ethic, competitive nature, and knowledge of what it feels like to be loved unconditionally.

Ronald is survived by

his wife, Sandra; children, Sheryl (Kym) Kalscheur, Kristi Cushman and Douglas Cushman; grandchildren, Nick (Nicole) Esser, Whitney (Brian) Johnson, Courtney (Rich Hunt) Kalscheur, Kurt Kalscheur, Ashley (Brett Garst) Cushman, Brandon (Alli) Cushman and Taylor (Mitch) Flora; and great-grandchildren, Connor Esser, Sophie Esser, Madalynn Hunt, Cason Cushman, Jennings Cushman, Grady Garst and Baby Girl Flora (June). He was preceded in death by his son, Jeffrey Cushman; parents, Vurl and Ruth Cushman; sister, Marion Cushman; and brothers, Donald Cushman, Harold Cushman and Eldon

Cushman.

A visitation was held at GUNDERSON CAMACHO MOUNT HOREB FUNERAL AND CREMATION CARE, 500 N. Eighth St., Mount Horeb, from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026.

In lieu of flowers, memorials will be donated by the family to the Mount Horeb Fire Department, Agrace HospiceCare and Parkinson’s Research, in memory of Ron Cushman. Online condolences may be made at www.gundersonfh.com.

Gunderson Camacho Mount Horeb Funeral & Cremation Care 500 N. Eighth St. (608) 437-5077



Bird City

By Kerry Beheler

At a time when the world feels fractured, we can and will come together for the birds! Mount Horeb is now part of the Wisconsin Bird City Network! With work done by the Mount Horeb Sustainability and Natural Resources Committee (SNR), with assistance from the Public Works Department and unanimous support from the Village Board, we achieved Bird City designation for Mount Horeb in January 2026!

Bird City Network is a global initiative that recognizes and supports communities that are committed to bird conservation and environmental stewardship. Through local actions to protect habitat, reduce threats to birds, engage residents, and support environmental sustainability, the Bird City program helps communities become healthier, more resilient places for both birds and people. You can read more about Bird City on their webpage at <https://birdcity.org/>

Why did Mount Horeb want to join the Bird City Network? According to Bird City, the importance of protecting birds and creating healthy habitats include these top reasons:

1. Boost Community Pride: Earning Bird City designation shows that Mount Horeb cares about our environment, wildlife, and quality of life.

2. Build a Green Reputation: Mount Horeb will be recognized for our leadership and commitment to sustainability and conservation. This reputation will attract environmentally conscious residents, businesses, and visitors.

3. Tap into Birding Tourism Dollars: Bird-watching is a billion-dollar industry! Birders travel, stay in hotels, eat at local restaurants, and shop. As a designated Bird City, Mount Horeb will attract eco-tourists looking for bird friendly places.

4. Support a Healthy Ecosystem: Birds play a vital role in pollination, seed dispersal, and insect control. Protecting birds helps our entire local ecosystem.

5. Get Outdoors and Strengthen Community Bonds: We will host Mount Horeb Bird City programs that encourage outdoor activities for all ages and community groups with bird walks, festivals, and habitat projects. Contact us if you have any ideas for activities!

6. Connect with Nature: Regular contact with nature is proven to boost mental health and overall well-being. Creating and maintaining Mount Horeb bird friendly spaces will help us unplug, slow down, and enjoy our community’s beauty.

7. Create Green Spaces: We can plant native trees, restore habitats, and manage our Mount Horeb public green spaces to benefit ourselves and birds, making our parks and neighborhoods healthier.

8. Protect Our Birds: With many bird species in decline, local action matters. Mount Horeb

will make a real difference by helping protect critical habitats and raise awareness about threats to birds. Habitat provided by native plants and trees helps pollinators and birds adapt and survive amid a changing climate. More than half of North American bird species are threatened by climate change, and native plants can help increase their resilience by giving them food, and places to rest and nest. The National Audubon Society has abundant information on birds and native plants here <https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>

What did we do to become a Bird City? Kerry Beheler, a citizen member of the Mount Horeb SNR, completed a customized action list which was sent to the Bird City Wisconsin Program Director for scoring and approval. A minimum of nine points were required to be designated a Bird City. Please see the Bird City Wisconsin webpage for specific Mount Horeb details that will be added soon! <https://birdcity.org/wisconsin>

Specific Mount Horeb community actions were entered into four categories of habitat, threats to birds, education and engagement, and sustainability. We created an ongoing, living community interaction list. Using this list, we can determine what is already being done, what actions can be done and chart a future course for bird friendly actions over time that fit our broader conservation goals. Please contact the Mount Horeb SNR, and the Mount Horeb Green Team, for more information and to share your ideas!

The Mount Horeb Green Team is a citizen-led group partnered with the Mount Horeb Rotary Club. The Green Team follows the core principles of Rotary’s Environmental and Sus-

tainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG). A few of the Green Team’s initiatives include Village wide native species pollinator planting project (Yard in Every Yard); collecting data to facilitate bicycle friendly designation; home energy efficiency education; waste stream management through composting and Village wide recycling programs; and organizing outreach for Village wide Travel Green designation.

Mount Horeb officially enacted a resolution recognizing World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), or Welcome Back Bird Day, publicly celebrating bird migration. Save the date for our Mount Horeb WMBD celebration on 9 May 2026! This date will also be the Mound Vue Garden Club Plant Sale! Join our WMBD celebration and increase bird habitat by planting beneficial native plants!

WMBD’s mission is to connect people to the phenomenon of bird migrations through events, programs, and festivals. The 2026 theme of WMBD is citizen science, or how community science contributes to migratory bird conservation. We will be sharing ideas on how you, as an individual, can contribute your observations to support bird research locally, nationally, and globally. For more in-

formation see <https://www.migratorybirdday.org/>

An upcoming winter bird activity is the Great Backyard Bird Count, February 13-16 2026. Each February for four days, the world comes together for the love of birds. Over these four days people spend time in their favorite places watching and counting as many birds as they can find, and reporting the results. These observations help scientists better understand global bird populations before their annual spring migration. For more information, see <https://www.birdcount.org/>

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was the first online participatory citizen science project. Data collected on wild birds is displayed in near real time. The 2025 worldwide GBBC results were unbelievable! Collectively, 8,078 species of the world’s known species of birds were found! Hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world were birding during the GBBC in February 2025.

Participating in the GBBC is easy, fun to do alone or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds! Step 1: Decide where you will watch birds. Step 2: Watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the

four days, February 13–16 2026. Step 3: Identify all the birds you see or hear within your planned time/location and share the data. If you are a beginning birder, try using the Merlin Bird ID app to report what birds you are seeing or hearing. If you have participated in the GBBC before and want to record numbers of birds, try the eBird Mobile app or enter your bird list on the eBird website (desktop/laptop).

Mount Horeb is now for the love of birds! We rejoice in spending time outdoors with you and the birds! There are many great resources and local opportunities for you to learn more about birds, how to best protect them, and provide habitat for them. Please contact the Mount Horeb Sustainability and Natural Resources Committee, and the Mount Horeb Green Team, for more information and to share your ideas. The Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance is also a great organization for information on native plants, field trips, and general birding information. <https://swibirds.org/>

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How to Save a Life from a Student Who Did It

After a life-or-death incident, biology student Anthony Lange set out to pursue a career in emergency medicine

By Abby Anderson

The sirens echoed from miles away. But through the hills, it sounded like they would arrive at any second. “Any second now,” Anthony Lange kept thinking.

The thud had come from behind about five minutes earlier. Anthony and his dad’s usual lineup of basketball buddies were all facing the hoop, as one of the Wednesday-night regulars went in for a layup. No one saw if the shot dropped, just that Colin Olson collapsed on the court floor.

Anthony, the youngest of most the bystanders by a good 20 years, was the first to respond — rolling Olson onto his back, rubbing clenched knuckles on the sternum to see if he would respond to pain, checking if there was a pulse: Nothing.

“I panicked for the first 10 seconds of realizing that his heart stopped beating,” Anthony says. He’s almost certain he put his hands in the air and swore in disbelief. “But then, I don’t know, something kicked in. I stopped thinking and I just kind of did it.”

Today, Anthony is a senior at UW–Madison double majoring in biology and pharmtox (pharmacology and toxicology). But this life-changing event happened in the summer of 2023, when

he was in the wake of his freshman year and had just become a certified nursing assistant (CNA). Nineteen-year-old Anthony knew what to do and immediately started emergency cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

“He knew what he needed to do, and he really didn’t miss a beat,” says Anthony’s mom, Deborah Lange. “I didn’t get down there right away, I was in the house, and they were all down at the shed. If Anthony hadn’t been there and he hadn’t done what he did right away, Colin could not have been getting oxygen to his vital organs and would have certainly died.”

Deborah came sprinting out of the house about five minutes post-thud, spotting Anthony before she could even get through the open door of their handmade basketball “shed.” He was hunched over Olson, rhythmically thumping his chest and dripping in sweat. As Deborah scrambled to the glossy floor, she caught a wave of her son’s composure.

“I saw that he was calm,” she says. “I think his ability to control that situation kept everyone else calm, because you would expect at least somebody would have lost it, but nobody lost focus on what needed to be done.”



Anthony Lange stands in front of a Cross Plains Ambulance. Photo contributed by Anthony Lange.

Both CPR certified, the two began working together — Deborah doing chest compressions and counting out loud so that Anthony could give rescue breaths every 10 compressions — as Olson slowly grew colder, and his skin turned a deeper purple.

The sound of sirens began to rise in the distance. It was another 10 minutes of *seconds*.

“I remember thinking we’re not going to fail. We aren’t going to fail at this. We couldn’t ...” choked Deborah.

Paramedics arrived with a swarm of emergency vehicles, sweeping Olson down the drive and into the darkness with one fell swoop and a lingering echo.

“The doctors say he cheated death,” Deborah says. “They say there’s no way he beat the odds. The

fact that he survived and we live outside of town, so far from a hospital, it’s really amazing. It’s a miracle that he made it.”

The Lange family lives on the outskirts of Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, 30 miles from the nearest hospital. What they did was against all odds, though at the time, they didn’t know just how much. There were 400 cardiac calls to 911 in the Dane County Area that year, and a total of 40 survived.

“It felt like I was in the right spot at the right time. It was an unfortunate situation, but having that responsibility just felt right,” Anthony says. “I had never even thought about going into emergency medicine, until I witnessed someone almost die. I took a couple weeks to reflect on everything, and it felt like my life was being steered toward

this career path.”

Anthony is set to graduate this spring and on track to become an emergency room (ER) physician. He works as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and volunteers at Our Lady of Hope Clinic — one of only two clinics in the United States that is entirely run off donations and member patients, making accessible healthcare a reality for the uninsured.

“It feels so great to be helping people in their worst times. Every time I work in a clinical sense, it just affirms why I’m doing it in the first place,” Anthony says. “It makes me feel super useful in a sense, and the impact that it has, I can’t describe how awesome it feels.”

The months spent studying for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) in a cubicle-sized, shared bedroom were not nearly as invigorating. But it paid off, and it was Olson that pulled him through.

“I try and get dinner with him once a month,” Anthony says. “We chat about things going on in our lives, what’s new, and things we’re excited for. We don’t really ever dwell on that day, because it gets pretty emotional if we start talking about it again.”

Meeting Olson’s family, about a year after the inci-

dent in the summer of 2024, was more than emotional. It was more than words could express.

It was a cascade of hugs that met Anthony the moment he arrived at the Madison Mallards ballpark. It was the event itself — Dane County’s annual Survivor Celebration — that had everybody sobbing. It was an extra-long squeeze from Olson’s son and his sisters’ instinctive, heartfelt reach for Anthony throughout the day.

“That’s the most emotional I’ve ever felt in my life, I was crying my eyes out,” Anthony says. “Each one of them said how thankful they were for me, and it felt like ... I don’t know, it’s hard to describe that feeling. But it definitely didn’t feel like I deserved any of it, I just happened to be there that night.”

Olson, who has done everything in his power to express his gratitude, would disagree with Anthony on that last part. They don’t dwell on it, but that Wednesday night changed both of their lives. It echoes in Olson’s family, in Anthony’s vocational impact, in the lifelong bond the two of them share. Any day now, as their monthly tradition continues, they’ll be chatting about medical school over dinner.

Laurel Aquino and Khaya Kasubaski are Student Rotarians

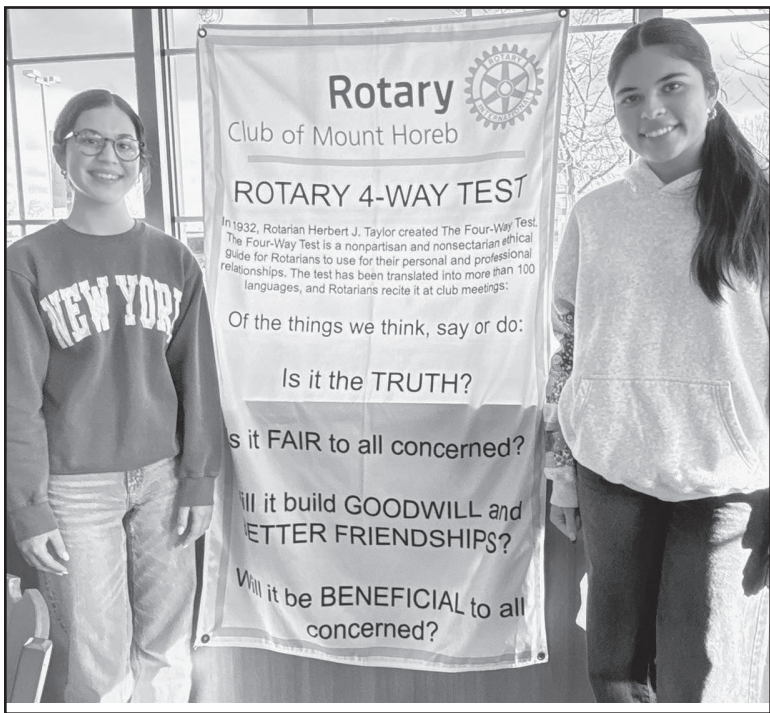
The Mount Horeb Student Rotarians for the month of January were Laurel Aquino and Khaya Kasubaski.

Laurel Aquino is very active in DECA, where she is currently the chapter president and placed 4th in the world in a DECA international competition last spring. She’s been on the musical crew for four years, serving as stage manager for the last two. She played soccer, and is a member of the high school band, jazz band and choir. She’s also active in National Honor Society, Ecology Club, Club Interact, Student Council, Link Crew and Letters of Love.

Outside of school, she volunteers at Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Camp Invention and is a summer school mentor.

Laurel is the daughter of Mark and Kellie Aquino and the sister of Rachel Aquino, also a student Rotarian a few years back. She plans to attend a four-year university to major in environmental studies and business.

Khaya Kasubaski helped found VALT (Vikings Athletics/Activities Leadership Team) and served as its president. Her sports activities include four years on the soccer team and one year of cross country. She



Pictured above, Laurel Aquino and Khaya Kasubaski were honored at the Rotary Club’s January meeting. Photo contributed.

serves as Senior Class Vice President and is a member of National Honor Society, Link Crew, Letters of Love, Student Council, and has played the flute in the band for six years.

She’s a member of DECA, winning third place at DECA District level. She’s also had a youth ap-

prenticeship, and been active in HOSA and Club Interact.

Khaya is the daughter of Phillip and Indri Kasubaski and a sister to Kyle. She plans to UW-La Crosse, majoring in biology with hopes of attending dental school.

COACH

continued from page 1

can be no acceptance of behaviors like those alleged. The District’s threshold for taking employment action is different than that required of legal measures.”

A press release from Chief of Police Doug Vierck and Salerno on Monday said “the Mount Horeb Police Department was made aware of concerns regarding inappropriate communications between ... Chancellor, and juvenile students.” The release added that “preventive measures have been put in place to ensure this person is not on or around any school district property.”

Chancellor, a 2002 graduate of Mount Horeb High, was hired as the Vikings’ cross country coach in July of 2023. He later became the head track and field coach as well. Chancellor does not teach at the school.

Chancellor was a standout cross country runner and track and field athlete at Mount Horeb who ran collegiately at UW-Platteville. He continued running competitively after graduation and began coaching at Mount Horeb Middle School in 2022.

Mount Horeb’s girls cross country team won the WIAA Division 2 state championship in Nov., 2025, the school’s first state title since 1995. The Vikings also finished in third place at the WIAA Division 2 state meet in 2024.

Shortly after Chancellor returned to his alma mater, the *Mount Horeb Mail* asked him about his coaching style. One of the first words Chancellor used was “care.”

“I think showing the athletes you care about them as individuals can take you a long way in this work,” Chancellor said. “I try to talk to every runner each day at practice and make sure they have regular opportunities to let me know how things are going. Running really isn’t that complicated, but our puzzle is to have our athletes running fast at the right time of the year while staying healthy and happy.”

“It is too early in this investigation to provide any further details as to the context or depth of this reported communication,” said the joint statement issued by police and the district.

“If you and/or your student are aware of any first-hand allegations of this nature, you are encouraged to do as other brave students have already done: please immediately contact the Mount Horeb Police Department at 608-437-5522,” Salerno said.

MOUNDS

continued from page 1

through a caucus meeting in January where individuals nominate candidates at the meeting and village electors vote on the candidates. The village held its annual caucus on Jan. 14, followed by a board meeting where these changes were considered. Village President Paul Baum said the board is

considering switching to holding a primary to narrow down candidates who appear on the ballot. Baum said this is due to the influx of candidates in recent years, and said this may be a smoother method to decide who's on the ballot. Many neighboring communities, including Mount Horeb, do not use a caucus system. Resident Sue Kiry claimed during public comments this was bad timing on the

board's part to address this topic the same night they held a caucus ahead of the board meeting. "I can't believe you guys have it at the meeting the night of the caucus," Kiry said. Kiry also pushed for the board to host events where residents can get to know the candidates. She said otherwise residents don't always know much about who is running. (As always, all

the candidates will be profiled in depth in the *Mount Horeb Mail*.) "If we really want what's best for the village, I believe the board should encourage that," Kiry said. Village Clerk/Treasurer Mary Jo Michek said, in order to make this change, the village board would need to change a statute. So Baum said no final decision would be made at that meeting. Instead, the board agreed to

move forward with looking into the option. In the caucus meeting ahead of the regular board meeting, the caucus selected Bob Messinger, Curt Winter, Jason Dorgan and Shanna Amble to appear on the April ballot. Residents will also see a small sewer rate increase, which Baum said at the January board meeting was so the wastewater plant can stay in good repair.

"Our auditors strongly indicated that we needed to increase to meet the wastewater rates to meet the revenue requirements necessary to operate the wastewater system," Baum said. The regular charge will go up less than a dollar a month from \$12.87 to \$13.51. And the usage rate will go up from \$4.98 to \$5.23, which Michek totals a five percent increase.

GLEANINGS

continued from page 3

to drop it when her clothes caught fire. She rolled in the snow to extinguish the fire, but her entire body with the exception of her face was burned. Neighbors plowed the snow-blocked roads so that a physician could reach the injured woman.

80 Years Ago- Feb. 7, 1946
George Slaney, Mount Horeb, is beginning to believe that for him Thursdays are unlucky. Thursday, Dec. 16, 1945, he had an operation for ruptured appendix; On Thursday, Jan. 20, a team of colts ran over him and cut his head open; and

Thursday, Jan. 27, a tree fell on him and broke his right leg. Mr. and Mrs. Phillip E. DeBernard, DeLand, Fla., announce the marriage of their daughter, Jeanne, to James K. Bakken, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bakken, Friday, Jan. 25. At 8 p.m. in St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Wilmette, Ill.

40 Years Ago- Feb. 6, 1986
The Mount Horeb Village Board gave the 125th anniversary committee official status at its Monday night meeting. The celebration June 18-22 will now be covered under the village insurance. Dr. Sandra K. Chilson, chiropractic, recently an-

nounced she will be opening a new office at 9746 Kahl Road in Black Earth, on March 3. A surprise party was held February 2, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Neshiem in celebration of Mr. Neshiem's 40th birthday.

20 Years Ago- Feb. 9, 2006
David and Joyce Williams of Mount Horeb will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 11 with a private dinner. Clifford George Emerson, 86, passed away peacefully on Friday, Feb. 3, 2006 at Ingleside Nursing Home in Mount Horeb.

COMEDY

continued from page 1

event at the Grumpy Troll Brew Pub with a sampling of traditional, hilarious, and often off-color Ole and Lena jokes. Expect friend Sven to make a few appearances. Quam, who owns Quamedy Productions and produces local comedy shows, is Norwegian; her maiden name is even Fjeld—like the sweeping fjords of Norway. She grew up on lefse, krumkake, and other Scandinavian treats. She also grew up listening to Grandpa Fjeld and his best friend Art share Ole and Lena jokes over coffee, and she has delighted ever since re-telling these classic comedic chestnuts. "When grandpa and Art came over you knew you knew it was going to be a good time," Quam said. "He had these blue eyes that would just sparkle, and these rosy cheeks, and he would tear up from laughing so hard. He and Art would sit there and tell one Ole and Lena joke after another."

"I do tend to look fairly buttoned up," she said with a chuckle. "But when I get on stage and open my dirty mouth, people are surprised." When Destinee Udelhoven, director of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, reached out to her about doing an Ole and Lena show as part of the community's Scandihoovian celebration, she jumped at the chance. "I had to say yes because I think of my grandpa and how, if he were sitting in the audience, he would have tears running down his cheeks from laughter," she said. "Of course, he would also be coaching me and telling me if I was telling them wrong." She is doing ample research to prepare the show, digging through an array of old Ole and Lena jokes and updating them for her own show. "None of them are really original, but I put my own spin on them," she explained.

tradition of these jokes has been mostly sustained by Scandinavians, it's been enjoyed by everyone if they have a sense of humor." In other words, all are welcome to come and experience a joke-telling tradition that is both unique and universal. "Ole and Lena" are part of a rich history that thrives when different ethnic and cultural groups wind up together in the United States. Essentially, a common male and female name will come to represent all people from that corner of the world, and their bond, along with their ribbing, chiding, and laughing, become both a glimpse into the unique traditions of the place from which they came and proof that human foibles are truly universal. Leary is the author of "So Ole Says to Lena: Folk Humor of the Upper Midwest." He is a folklorist whose ethnographic and historical research concerns the cultural traditions of diverse peoples in America's Upper Midwest, with a particular emphasis on Germanic, Nordic, and Slavic folklore in the region and in relation to respective Old Country cultural hearths. His own personal lore is

mixed up with the foundations of the types of storytelling and humor that created Ole, Lena, and their many counterparts from other parts of the world. He grew up in old farming and logging town in Rice Lake, surrounded by people of Ojibwe, Irish, French Canadian, German, Slavic and Scandinavian descent. There, people were always quick to pick up on the linguistic and cultural habits of newcomers to North America. Their differences – many of them spoke English as a second language - became the source of jokes, which in turn proved they all shared something in common: a sense of humor. "It's very cool," explained Leary. "There are always goofy things that happen, there are always characters, funny stories were always a thing, whether true or not. Mimicking the dialect of people of other groups. I grew up hearing that, and I wasn't the only one. I remember as early as first grade, hearing stories about Lena." "As early as the 1880s, there started to be comic portrayals featuring Ole as a character that you can find evidence of in newspapers and reminiscences, newspapers and touring," he

continued. "That was something that happened with a lot of immigrant groups, whether they were German or Chinese or Norwegian; there would be a stereotype based on aggregate characteristics but also exaggeration, but then an actual name that would stem from that specific group; Pat was the Irishman, Fritz was the German, Ike was the Jew, and Ole was the Norwegian." Again and again, for every ethnic group that came to the United States, the jokes made the same point: that people are silly, and strange, and all, somehow, quite similar. "It's about incongruities, bringing two things together that don't quite fit," Leary said. The fact that tragedy, stupidity, word play and more all make for great jokes provides "constant opportunities for humor," he said. "When you have immigrants coming over, usually language, customs, other people, there are all sorts of things you don't know, and they are all opportunities for humor, even just in language," he said. Of course, there are rules – both spoken and unspoken – about jokes. "There is this etiquette. It's very important, if you

are from a particular group, to joke about yourself, to joke about your group *first*, and to have permission to joke about the other group and to have some back-and-forth," said Leary. If those rules are adhered too, people are free to laugh at themselves and everyone else. The best jokes are usually offensive and always hilarious. "I've heard great stories about local Norwegian champion - as in, the unofficial leader of the movement to make Mt. Horeb a Norwegian destination - Oljanna Cunneen and her racy, offensive Ole and Lena comedic performances, and wanted to sort of replicate that," said Destinee Udelhoven, executive director of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society. "Oljanna really does pop up everywhere in Mount Horeb's ethnic evolution story!" Leary called Cunneen, who died in 1988 "a brilliant joke-teller." It's widely believed that Mount Horeb simply would not be Mount Horeb today without her influence. So it's only fitting that this year's Scandihoovian Winter Festival will kick off with an Ole and Lena performance.

The doors to the Grumpy Troll upstairs bar will open at 7 p.m.

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CANDIDATES

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two candidates in the Primary. Village Trustees serve three-years terms.

Who voters choose when they fill out their ballots will have a significant impact on Mount Horeb’s future.

Here is an in depth look at where the candidates stand on everything from transparency and development to Tax Increment Financing and civility in government.

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

Brager: The board needs to slow down and be more thoughtful about growth. We should not be in the business of facilitating economic development, it should be market driven; Find ways to keep our property taxes in check. As an HVAC business owner, I am in multiple homes every day, and property tax is the number one thing villagers have talked about with me; We should try and limit, to the best of our ability, the building of large multi-family apartment complexes. Most of them are an eyesore and bring population density that most villagers don’t want or see the need for. I would like to see Mt. Horeb remain a small, charming community.

Jones: Encourage and guide economic development that supports growth while protecting Mount Horeb’s strengths and unique character; Place village finances on a solid long-term footing through effective prioritization, community outreach, and thoughtful long-term planning; Strengthening cross-organization and community collaboration. We have a lot of shared interests with our neighboring communities, and the Mount Horeb Area School District and local organizations. There are gains to be had in increased collaboration, including ensuring top-of-the-line public safety services and promoting regional development and tourism.

Fendrick: Ensure that the Village continues to smartly use tax dollars collected from property owners, fa-

cilitate smart, reasoned and targeted economic growth to diversify the tax base and reduce the burden on homeowners while keeping the high quality of desired services and amenities, and complete the development of the Mount Horeb Recreation Complex.

Kelley: Protecting our downtown – keeping it historic and “small town”; Increasing transparency of the village government; Promoting affordability – housing and other.

Sopcak: Initiate focus groups with Mount Horeb residents and businesses so the information collected can be used to make informative decisions for Mount Horeb future; Improve administration transparency by collecting and publishing information about all the departments, services and functions related to our Mount Horeb community, which includes a process to answers people’s questions during meetings and other communications to the village; Improve the process during meetings, where both sides of an issue have adequate time to express and provide information so the best decision can be implemented.

Clary: If I am honored to be elected to the board, my foremost responsibility will be to ensure that the Village of Mt. Horeb manages its spending wisely and transparently. It’s important to me that every dollar spent truly serves the needs of our community and isn’t simply money going to wants or conveniences that may not be necessary. One measure I strongly believe in is reinstating the requirement that any purchase above \$1.5 million must be put before the residents as a referendum. This kind of direct involvement allows people to have a voice in important decisions that affect their property taxes and the future of the village.

The purchase of the Lukken Property was a real eye-opener for many residents. It demonstrated how decisions with significant financial impact can be made without direct voter input, which understandably caused frustra-

tion since it contributed to rising property taxes. As a community member myself, I understand how alarming it can be to learn that decisions of this scale may have been made without the collective voice of those most affected. Bringing back referenda for big purchases is about respecting and empowering residents to be active participants in shaping their hometown.

Another top priority is protecting and enhancing our downtown area, which is the heart and soul of Mt Horeb. Our unique small-town culture — from the charming architecture to the iconic troll carvings — is a major reason tourists visit us and why local businesses thrive. I’ve talked with visitors who tell me they love that Mt Horeb feels like a place where small-town values and character are lovingly preserved. They want to experience something real and unhurried, something their own cities may have lost. At the same time, I fully respect the residents whose homes border the downtown district; growth and development should never come at the expense of their peace or privacy. Our challenge is to support our downtown’s appeal by encouraging quirky, interesting buildings and attractions without overwhelming or changing the character of residential neighborhoods. It’s a delicate balance but one we must thoughtfully maintain.

Finally, the village is experiencing multiple development projects and growth initiatives happening simultaneously, and I believe these need to be viewed in the aggregate rather than in isolation. Each project’s impact compounds and can affect residents’ quality of life in ways that aren’t always obvious when examined separately. We need a clear, comprehensive growth plan that outlines how we measure success and ensures projects benefit the entire community. Good intentions aren’t enough; we must have clarity on what we want our future to look like and how we get there.

Are you well versed in open government laws and Robert’s Rules of Order? What other steps would you take to ensure transparency in local government?

Brager: I worked for the Wisconsin State Senate for 2 years, so I am experienced with both open government and the rules of order. Requiring a 2nd or perhaps even 3rd reading of legislation would help slow down local government and allow for more public input. While multiple readings of proposals could be dispensed for very popular issues, it would

make an issue be heard by the board multiple times before it could be enacted.

Jones: Yes. I am well versed in open government laws and parliamentary procedure through my service on the Village Board and my professional experience as a lawyer for government agencies. I am committed to transparency, which is why I authored the Board’s current public comment policy. I believe it is among the most open in the region and reflects my belief that residents should have meaningful access to their local government and a government that is responsive to their concerns. The Village can improve at being more proactive than reactive in its communication with residents, and this is something I am committed to working on.

Fendrick: I have reviewed the Attorney General’s guidance on Open Meetings many times over the past few months. I have studied and followed guidance on meeting conduct from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities while chairing and participating in Village meetings. All Village meetings are available for viewing on the Village’s website either live or are published for on-demand viewing. Residents are encouraged to sign up for email notifications of agendas for upcoming meetings. The Village of Mount Horeb is transparent in how business is conducted. All decisions are made at meetings as required by the Open Meetings law.

Kelley: I am familiar with open government laws and Robert’s Rules of Order. I took numerous US Government courses and learned about Robert’s Rules of Order as an undergrad, when I was studying International Relations. We would use Robert’s Rules of Order during governmental and diplomatic scenario-based exercises. As a registrar in higher education, Robert’s Rules of Order was used regularly in decision-making forums, such as Faculty Senate meetings and Annual Business meetings for the Wisconsin Professional Organization of College & University Registrars.

Our current village leadership has proven that it is possible to meet the minimum of what the laws require in terms of open government laws and still not function as a transparent government. We deserve better.

I would work towards ensuring enhanced transparency of our local government by changing the obstructionist practices of the current village leadership, as it has shown itself to be anti-community involve-

ment and pro-big development. A few of the ideas that I have to ensure greater transparency are:

Implement an online account managed by local government that would allow people to sign up for push notifications on certain topics, and then when something is happening with that topic, the constituent would get an email notifying them of the development. The receiver of the message can ignore or act, but they would have been informed.

Find an online tool where local government officials and constituents could have a Q&A forum. There would of course need to be strict rules on how such a site would function, but it could be possible. And I would argue beneficial, as it would build trust. I use such tools in my professional career regularly; they can be powerful and make you feel like a member of a community.

Expand the flexibility of the Public Comments agenda item at public meetings. For example, allow people to sign up for their “three minutes of public comments” for an upcoming meeting ahead of time; if more than x number of sign ups, add a separate meeting where a back-and-forth conversation could occur.

Change the practices of when and how projects are introduced to the public. Proposers currently have much of the power in determining what to share and when to share it with the public. These practices are endorsed by government leadership. Waiting until the 11th hour and bringing proposals that obviously have hundreds of hours put into them (and one can only imagine how many dollars) is a disservice to the constituents and the proposers. There should be a set number of days from the village’s first notification of a potential proposal to have that proposal be introduced to the public. And proposers should be required to conduct community Q & A’s for their proposals.

Sopcak: I have a working knowledge of Roberts Rules of Order, and I am currently reading the newest version of Roberts Rules of Order, the Mount Horeb ordinances & codes, and reviewing past department & board meetings.

Clary: I respect the importance of open government laws and Robert’s Rules of Order, and I am confident that with commitment and diligence, anyone can learn and apply these frameworks effectively while serving on the board. But beyond simply following rules, my focus will be on enhancing transparency through

consistent and meaningful communication with residents.

Encouraging residents to be involved is something I feel strongly about because Mount Horeb is more than just a collection of policies or projects — it’s a community of people who care deeply about where they live. I want to help create even more opportunities for residents to stay informed and voice their ideas, concerns, and feedback, whether that’s through monthly meetings, newsletters, or other communication tools. When people feel connected and heard, trust in local government grows and decisions better reflect what the community wants and needs.

What is village government currently doing right?

Brager: The Village is doing a great job by having all meetings available to watch online, as well as posting meeting agendas on their website. This allows for villagers to be well informed on issues important to them.

Jones: Fundamentally, Mount Horeb is a well-run community. Mount Horeb is a safe community with strong public safety services, some high-quality amenities such as an excellent library, and the government is a strong partner with our many vibrant local businesses.

Fendrick: The current Village Board works well together. Our members work in many different occupations and have experience working with Village government prior to serving as Trustees. We all bring our personal experiences and ideas to the meetings, and calmly and rationally discuss items as mundane as hiring a new appraiser or as potentially contentious as the recent Langhus development proposal with its vocal opposition.

The Village Board is fortunate that village staff are exceptionally good at the work they do. Village Administrator Nic Owen has a dedicated, stable staff to work with as he manages the day-to-day business of the village. He and his staff are receptive to citizen inquiries and concerns. He informs the board weekly about the events of the past week and upcoming items. Our village departments provide an exceptional level of service. Without its exceptional staff, the Village would not be able to provide its high level of service to residents.

Kelley: I’m sure the village government is doing many things very well. Be-

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CANDIDATES

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yond knowing that the staff has always been responsive to any question I may have, I have not had the opportunity to learn the specifics of the great work they’re doing.

Sopcak: The village police and fire departments has contributed to a low crime rate and a safe place to live. Also other village infrastructure departments has resulted in clean water, air and reliable energy and maintained the streets throughout the village. The support of our school system has resulted in providing students with an education that allows them to be successful in life, which has resulted in a high rate of student extracurricular activity participation, and in community involvement. Mount Horeb has consistently earned “Tree city USA” status since 1997.

Clary: Mount Horeb is fortunate to offer a broad range of valued services that enrich the lives of families, seniors, and all residents. Services such as brush and leaf pickup help keep the village clean and pleasant year-round, while activities for children and seniors support community engagement and quality of life. These programs show a strong commitment to meeting the diverse needs of residents and maintaining a welcoming environment.

Additionally, the current efforts to rewrite zoning codes and develop a comprehensive plan for our future are strong steps forward. These initiatives provide a “road map” that can guide the village’s growth in a way that encourages creativity, especially in housing. This could open doors for new homebuyers and help more people find a place within Mount Horeb—something we certainly want to see happen.

What could it do better?

Brager: The board should rehaul how public comments are done at all board and committee meetings. The comments should come after an issue is presented, so the public can hear what the proposal is before making comments. It would also be better if meeting agendas are posted much earlier than they currently are. The public needs more time to know what items will be coming up at a meeting.

Village staff should not be offering opinions at village board meetings. They should only offer comments on how legislation enacted by the board will be implemented by them.

The Village also needs to

have a referendum triggered for any land purchased or annexed by the village, over a certain size. For example, buying the Lukken farm for \$5.5 million (not to mention the costs to develop it), without the explicit permission from the villagers is not good government, and it isn’t helping our property tax bills. We shouldn’t be in the real estate business.

Jones: Mount Horeb can do better by being more proactive and disciplined in long-term planning, particularly around growth, infrastructure, housing, and village finances. As the community grows, clear priorities, stronger coordination across services, and earlier public engagement will be essential. Improving how the Village communicates trade-offs and long-term impacts can help ensure growth remains affordable, sustainable, and aligned with community values.

Fendrick: The Village Board has become a bit more insular on how it conducts some business. This is partly due to the nature of the matters before it. The Langhus project required that we not decide or discuss it openly prior to it being presented to the Board for consideration, due to its nature as a quasi-judicial rather than political proceeding. I would have liked to have seen something said publicly to that effect but understand that it could have created more questions than answers.

The public comment discussions also created confusion. Wisconsin municipal meetings are not intended to be New England-style town hall meetings with wide-open debate and discussion. Rather, citizens elect the Village Board members to represent them in making inquiries, fact-finding, and deciding matters. The public comment policy we adopted has a good balance and formally adopts our prior stance on public comments during meetings. We allow the public the chance to comment on every item on the agenda.

There will be times when residents find they need more time to discuss their thoughts with the board. I explored holding an informational meeting after joining the Village Board to receive input from the public on the matters which were important. However, due to all the contention surrounding the Langhus project and its associated legal concerns, I was advised against holding it. I’d love to hold meetings like that with the residents, *if* we can all agree to be civil and respectful, and understand that even if we don’t agree fully on every idea, we are there to discuss what we believe is in the best interests of the

Village.

Kelley: Move away from their belief that “big development” is best and needed in our downtown. There is an entire village beyond the downtown for those appropriate goals.

Respect the constituents of this community. Stop devaluing us, considering us a nuisance. It’s offensive – and unacceptable.

Stop approaching development proposals from a “let’s do everything we can to make this happen” to a “let’s look at this objectively about how this will affect the people of the community”.

Start adhering to the pieces of the Comprehensive Plan that focus on our village character and aesthetic look and feel. For example, the Vision Statement of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan reads in part: *“A vibrant downtown featuring the community’s historic past and bright future acts as the community’s center piece for cultural, recreational, business, shopping, and tourism activities.”*

And the Comprehensive Plan continues to explain that *“While difficult to define, the character of a community has much to do with why people move to, stay in, and value the place they call home. Below are terms residents of the Village use to describe their “community character”:* *Attractive and aesthetically unique, not a suburban feel; Small-town feel with cultural connection and sense of place; Walkable; Historic and active downtown.”*

Sopcak: Increase the housing variety to increase the diversity of housing types that would accommodate a wider demographic of residents that could have the potential to support Mount Horeb businesses so they wouldn’t have to fully rely on high school students. Increase investments in infrastructure to manage traffic and parking around the main street corridor and other traffic bottleneck. This should include the removal of 90 percent of assigned parking from the downtown area because all parking spaces should be available on a first come basis. Also, improve the balance of commercial & housing development in the various districts that revitalize the area, encouraging sustainable development growth that coincides with the village values, architecture, proportions of existing structures, heritage, etc.

The charming walkable downtown area is a major asset which is key to the small town Mount Horeb Scandinavian theme cultural identity which needs to be expanded and maintain along with the entire village (for example we should have a 25 foot trolls located one

on the corner of Highway S and 78 and one on top of the Trollhøvel (or Troll Mountain) near Highway 18/151).

Currently residents are only allowed to speak for three minutes, whereas presenters have far greater time which doesn’t allow a true discussion of issues and facts between those who have concerns or questions about what someone is presenting during the meeting.

Clary: Amid these positive steps, I do hear a growing concern among residents that Mount Horeb’s core identity—the values and character that make it unique—are becoming less clear in the midst of planning and zoning changes. The comprehensive plan and zoning updates are important tools, but they must be developed and implemented in a way that reflects what residents truly want.

Right now, there seems to be a feeling that decisions are sometimes made without enough input or alignment with the community’s vision. It’s important to recognize that while it may not be possible to satisfy everyone, the village must make a stronger effort to engage residents and build a sense that the majority agrees with the direction we’re headed. I want to work toward healing any divide so that we move forward united, with shared understanding and goals.

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

Brager: No. I think the village board has a thirst for economic development that doesn’t match the size of our town. Business growth needs to be organic and market driven, whereby businesses open in our village because there is a market for the business they have, not because the village offers incentives or helps cultivate opportunities. For example, we should not have an Economic Development Consultant in our employ, who is trying to start a ‘business improvement district.’

Jones: Yes. Mount Horeb is on the right track with economic development and has attracted new investment in recent years. That development has been positive for the Village, and when done thoughtfully, I expect it will continue to strengthen our tax base while supporting community needs.

I would caution against setting rigid numeric targets or thresholds for economic development. When governments chase specific metrics, there is a risk of prioritizing numbers over the merits of individual projects

or long-term impacts.

That said, data should guide decision-making. The Village should closely track population trends, housing unit growth, assessed property values, Tax Increment District performance, and service demands to evaluate whether development is contributing to the Village’s long-term financial and community health. This is a all data that I follow and consider.

Fendrick: Mount Horeb is heading in the right direction on economic development, but there are more opportunities and areas for growth. Village staff have been working on the development of a business park so that the Village can have a shovel-ready location in the Village for new or expanding businesses and/or industry.

We are currently lagging in residential opportunities. The Village’s recent housing assessment shows that the Village has pent-up demand for 215 residential units today and should construct 435 to 935 housing units to meet that and the expected demand over the next few years. Rental units at reasonable prices are in short supply, and houses commonly sell shortly after hitting the market. We need more housing of many types – affordable and market-rate, a variety of apartments and townhomes, and single-family owner-occupied homes throughout the community – to fill that gap and allow for measured, reasonable growth. The development of a portion of the Lukken Farm property into residential housing will help close this gap, and the revised zoning code will aid in addressing housing affordability concerns.

The best benchmark to use for economic development is the taxable value of the village, adjusted for inflation, over time. That value is the basis of our tax levy.

Kelley: I believe the current village government leadership is misguided with its goal to suburbanize our historic, small-town Main Street with generic big-block apartment buildings. They believe that for Mount Horeb to survive and thrive economically, we need to bring apartments downtown; that this has been proven by other local communities. I vehemently disagree. I believe that bringing large, suburban type mixed-use apartment buildings with retail on the first floor and apartments above would KILL our small town feel and DESTROY our heritage tourism economy downtown.

There are those who argue that housing is such a critical need in our community

that these totally out-of-place apartments need to be built on Main Street. I do not agree. We need many types of housing in Mount Horeb, and I’m pretty sure that these market-rate apartments with studios, one-bedroom, and a few two-bedroom units on Main Street aren’t the answer to bring people to our community who want to make it their long-term home.

Mount Horeb has long been a destination for tourists because of our historic downtown, our unique shops, and our restaurants and bars for dining. I would put us with the likes of New Glarus, Stoughton, and Galena as “someplace unique to go check out” (and these places do not have suburbanized big-box apartments in the Main Street business districts). We are at a tipping point where we need to decide whether we capitalize on our history and culture and further expand our heritage tourism, or if we throw it away. The prevailing argument I hear is that financially speaking, the only way we can go is with adding suburbanized big-box apartments downtown. I cannot concede to that. There has to be ways to bring economic development to our downtown that stays true to the vision of our history, culture, and our Comprehensive Plan.

I do agree that there’s a place for these suburbanized big-box apartments outside the downtown area. Some examples include: The Landsby (west side of town), the apartments going up by Miller’s, and almost 90 units in the process of approval at the old Karakahl site. These are positive examples of growth and much needed housing, and I generally support more like them (outside the downtown area). Affordability is a concern though; we need a varied approach in terms of cost for the renters when it comes to approving projects.

Regarding the second part of the question, I need to learn more to identify benchmarks of success in terms of economic development for the village.

Sopcak: I don’t know
continued on page 12

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SCANDI HOOVIAN

WINTER FESTIVAL

February 6, 7 & 8
in Mount Horeb

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Mount Horeb Rotary SuperBrunch Returns on February 8

Get hungry, it's coming. Mount Horeb Rotary will be flipping pancakes and scrambling eggs as one of its signature fundraising events, the SuperBrunch breakfast returns to the Mount Horeb High School commons. The event is set for 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday Feb. 8.

In addition to food and drinks, the brunch includes the Mount Horeb Optimist Club silent auction and live music from middle school musicians. Tickets are \$10 for adults and available at the door or from Rotarians. The event is underwritten by dozens of Mount Horeb businesses; their ads

can be found on breakfast placemats and on a video screen in the Commons. Funds raised pay for scholarships and leadership opportunities for Mount Horeb teens, as well as projects such as the Neighbors Helping Neighbors cooler and support for the local EMS.

Driftless Historium to Offer Free Monthly Hands-on History Afterschool Workshops

Mount Horeb's downtown Driftless Historium (100 S 2nd St) invites students in grades K to 4 to their new "Hands-on History" after school workshops. Each session will be held on the second Tuesday, February through May, and feature season-themed crafts with a historical twist! The sessions will run from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. and are absolutely free, due to a generous grant from the Mount Horeb Community Foundation. Capacity is limited to just twenty students per month and registration is required. Hands-on History will launch on Tuesday, February 10 with "There's Snow One Like You!" - a celebration of Mount Horeb's pioneers, community leaders and innovators.

SCANDIHOOVIAN

WINTER FESTIVAL

February 6, 7 & 8 in Mount Horeb

Schedule of Events

ALL DAY EVENTS

Friday-Sunday: Driftless Historium's Downtown Troll Town Scavenger Hunt, at Driftless Historium

Friday-Sunday: Annual Free Hot Tea and Coloring Event, at Telsaan Tea

FRIDAY EVENTS

8-9pm: Ole and Lena Comedy Block, at Grumpy Troll. Hosted by Driftless Historium

SATURDAY EVENTS

7am: National Ice Cream for Breakfast, at Icki Sticki

10-10:30am: Scandihoovian Story Time, at the Mount Horeb Public Library, following Kids' Craft Activity: Make Your Own Viking Helmet*

10am: Start Scandi-Fatty Fat Tire Bike Race*, at Tyrol Basin

10-12pm: Barnespill Kids' Games*, at the Mount Horeb Welcome Center

10-12pm/2-4pm: Scandinavian Baking Demonstrations*, at the Driftless Historium

11-3pm: Gnome at Home Portable Paint Kits: Make and Take Pottery Kits, at Brix Cider. Hosted by: Center Ground Studios

12-3pm: Craft Activity: Danish Hearts, by Folklore Village, at Mount Horeb Public Library

SUNDAY EVENTS

12-5pm: Pop-Up Book Store: Ink Capped Books, at The Sugar Troll

12-5pm: Botham Vineyards' Snowshoeing, Cross-Country Skiing, Hiking with Wine by the Fire

1-3pm: Scandihoovian Adult Spelling Bee*, at Martinson Hall at Buck & Honey's

3-4pm: Brix Cider's Partner Sled Pull

4-6pm: Frozen Turkey Bowling*, at Garfield Park Ice Rink

4:30-5:30pm: Cave of the Mounds' Guided Black Light Tour

*Events are hosted by the Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce. Other events are hosted by area businesses and organizations.

Please note, all outdoor events are weather-dependent. Check the Chamber website for the most up-to-date information: trollway.com

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CANDIDATES

continued from page 9

if Mount Horeb economic development is on the right track at this time because we are lacking Mount Horeb residence goals, objectives, business growth, etc. for the Mount Horeb village various business districts. We need to use a mix of economic, social, quality of life, and government benchmarks, focusing on employment rates, business growth, resident surveys & focus groups, health metrics, infrastructure quality, and public safety, etc.. All of this information needs to be correlated, analyzed, and presented to Mount Horeb residents and business owners to determine if we are on the right economic development track. Note some of this information has been collected by the village.

Clary: Mount Horeb is experiencing exciting economic growth, which brings new opportunities for jobs, housing, and business vitality. However, growth is never without challenges. We must carefully balance progress with preserving the unique character and environment that make our village special.

Thoughtful infill development—building within our existing footprint—can help strengthen our tax base and encourage walkable, connected neighborhoods. It also helps protect the beautiful rural lands and natural habitats surrounding us. At the same time, we need to be mindful of potential downsides like increased traffic, parking strains, and the risk of losing the small-town charm that attracts both residents and visitors.

Given our proximity to Madison and limited available land, Mt Horeb faces constraints in attracting large employers and expanding business zones. Additionally, many local jobs don’t currently offer livable wages unless one is a business owner. This economic reality means growth must be strategic, focusing on sustainable development that respects the community’s values and quality of life.

Ultimately, my goal is to support smart, steady growth that creates opportunities without overwhelming residents or compromising the village’s identity. By engaging residents in honest

conversations about what kind of growth we want, and measuring success by both economic and community well-being, we can chart a path forward that benefits everyone.

Growth is always a thorny issue for any community. Any type of growth can cause problems. Infill development is demonstrably better for the environment and can bolster the tax base and create walkable communities. But it can also detract from a community’s “small town” charm and create aesthetic, traffic and parking issues. The alternative is often urban sprawl, which protects the downtown but destroys the agrarian beauty of the Drifless region, harms the environment, eliminates vital habitat for myriad species, and promotes “car culture” and “bedroom communities.” But growth, no matter where it occurs, can create jobs and housing, can add to the tax base and is seen by many Americans as the most palpable evidence of progress. How would you grapple with the complex issue of growth in Mount Horeb?

Brager: Growth in Mt. Horeb should not be a priority for the board, and any growth should come organically, without government incentives. Mt. Horeb is not able to solve the housing crisis, so that shouldn’t be one of our objectives. Housing should come naturally, as market demand makes it feasible. Business growth should also come naturally, much as it should with housing. Infill growth should not be denied outright but should absolutely conform to existing zoning codes.

Jones: I support responsible development that strengthens Mount Horeb’s economy and provides housing options for families and individuals. All of the factors you mention are ones the Board and Village must carefully weigh. I have consistently supported both infill and suburban developments, especially when they provide opportunities for families to live and grow in our community. That doesn’t mean I support every project. I ended up opposing the recent downtown rezoning request because I believed the proposed project did not strike the right strategic bal-

ance across the factors we consider, which were largely reflected in the relevant zoning criteria.

My approach to growth is to build a solid framework in the Village which appropriately weighs the long-term community impacts and involve residents in the discussion. There are pros and cons to growth of every type. I am committed to encouraging growth which is family friendly and which promotes affordability, without abandoning our current character and preserving enough of our natural beauty. Within this framework, I will examine every proposal on its own merits.

Fendrick: Mount Horeb has grown from approximately 5,860 residents in the 2000 census to approximately 8,000 today. Dane County grew from 426,000 residents in 2000 to 611,000 residents in 2025 and is expected to see a population of 887,000 by 2050, according to projections from the Regional Housing Survey.

Mount Horeb doesn’t need to double or triple in size over the next 25 years to stay vibrant. A growth to 11,000 residents over the course of the next 25 years is a good, measured, sustainable population growth rate that won’t stretch village services faster than we can increase the scale at which we provide those services, and correlates with growth in accordance with these projections.

Infill and redevelopment in the downtown and Main Street areas, at a high density, can help provide housing for those new residents, create a more walkable downtown and provide ready customers for downtown businesses while limiting long-term expensive sprawl over the undeveloped agricultural areas outside current Village boundaries. Infill and redevelopment can be done in a way that is sustainable and does not detract from the current historic downtown aesthetic. Additional retail space can attract more visitors to both our downtown area, as well as our newer business districts on the east side of the Village.

Kelley: With our location near Madison and such wonderful natural resources all around us, I think growth is unavoidable, whether one agrees with it or not. So then it’s a question of how much, how fast, and how to approach it. I have a lot to learn in this area, but it seems to me that a combination of infill development and building new beyond what already exists is most logical. There is nothing that says infill developments have to ruin a small-town feel; if such developments

are done with care and an appreciation for the location within which they will reside, such developments could have the benefits of increasing heritage tourism downtown and making the village more walkable. Expanding outward for growth definitely has its downsides, and every effort must be taken to minimize environmental harms at every step of the process. I would argue for mixed housing types in amongst each other to minimize the physical separation based on one’s income.

Sopcak: I would, as previously said initiate focus groups with residents and business owners to understand their requirements, goals, limitations, issues, etc. and during these meetings the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite (2025), the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), and other Mount Horeb information will be provided to ensure everyone’s has a working knowledge of the village process and answers to their questions. We then need to publish all of the information gathered with conclusions so the people of Mount Horeb know this information will be used for future discussions and decisions going forward.

Clary: Mount Horeb is primarily a bedroom community, with many people commuting to Madison or elsewhere for work. Although we have a healthy local economy, many jobs here don’t pay enough to cover a comfortable living unless you own a business. This reality limits how much new business relocation we might expect, especially given our land constraints and regional competition.

Growth should happen at a pace residents can live with. Recently, some of the rapid development has felt overwhelming, with projects moving forward before full community impact studies or consensus. I advocate taking a step back to ensure that each phase of growth is supported by appropriate infrastructure and respects the wellbeing of current residents, especially those living near new developments.

Members of the village board don’t always see eye-to-eye, but their debates are (usually) respectful and fairly good-natured, at least compared with many other government bodies. (The recent Langhús on Main development proposal certainly led to some of the most tense meetings in recent years.) Explain how you would bring different ideas to the table, and even disagree, in a way that is productive, helpful, and does not detract from civil discourse:

Brager: Civil discourse has always been one of my ‘things’, and I’ve always been a bit of a contrarian. I love good natured debate, where people with opposing views come together to argue their positions. Opposing views help enlighten everyone to different ways of thinking. I will certainly have different ideas than fellow trustees but will always be respectful and have an open mind.

Jones: This is an underappreciated part of the job. The Village Board is a collective institution, and to govern effectively they must both have diverse opinions and perspectives but also work together as a unit. Honestly this is an area where I bring a lot to the Board. In my day job as an administrative law judge who constantly holds hearings with adverse parties, I am used to encouraging an environment where people can bring forward their cases effectively before making an informed decision. On the Board I am not afraid to raise difficult issues or disagree (I was on the short side of a 6-1 vote recently), but I always do it in a respectful and helpful manner.

Fendrick: During my times on the Village Board, our discussions at the board level have always been civil, even during the recent consideration of the Langhus project. I’ve engaged with fellow Trustees over the years in areas where we vehemently disagreed, but it was always respectful and we generally understood and appreciated the viewpoints brought to the discussion. I analyze the legal, economic, and/or social impacts of my position, prepare my remarks in advance, and bring facts with me to support my assertions. Other Trustees do the same. Preparation is the key to civility when discussing issues where there isn’t agreement.

Kelley: People of course see things differently – we are varied and passionate beings, after all! As long as there is respect for each other on all sides, all is fine. If respect is set aside by one or more parties, to me that personally means that I cannot let met myself behave in the same manner. I would bring different ideas to the table by asking questions, because I would truly have a lot of them, I know it. As I’ve written numerous times in these answers, I have a lot to learn. But I also have my personal beliefs about which I feel strongly sometimes, and I want the opportunity to share those respectfully and see where they fall with the topics that are under discussion.

Sopcak: I would make motions that would allow both sides to have enough time to present their point of view during meetings (not limited to three minutes) when the topic requires more in-depth analysis, so the meeting members can then make informed decisions. I would suggest the following during these meetings; “using “I” statements to avoid blame”, “ask clarifying questions to understand perspective”, “take breaks if conversation becomes too heated”, etc... I agree with Roberts Rules of Order which outlines how productive discussions can be implemented whether your for or against a topic being discussed.

Clary: I believe that bringing different ideas to the table in a productive and respectful manner starts with active listening and genuine openness. Even when I disagree, I would first seek to fully understand the perspectives and concerns of others before sharing my own views. When presenting my ideas, I would focus on facts and the overall benefit to the community, rather than personal opinions or emotions. It’s important to separate the issue from the individual and avoid language that could be perceived as confrontational or dismissive.

During debates, I would aim to ask clarifying questions to foster understanding and encourage collaborative problem-solving. If disagreements arise, I would acknowledge valid points made by others and look for common ground or compromises that advance the community’s interests. Maintaining a calm and respectful tone helps keep discussions constructive and ensures that all voices are heard.

Ultimately, I believe that productive disagreement is essential for good governance.

Some of the village board’s most interesting debates in recent years have not revolved merely around specific local issues, but also the very nature of policy governance itself. Some trustees feel that county, state and federal issues (like gun control, gerrymandering etc.) are outside the purview of municipal government, and the local board should keep its focus on things happening here. Others feel local elected officials have an obligation to take a stand on these topics because larger issues could impact local citizens. Where do you draw the line between “local” and “non-local”?

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CANDIDATES

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Brager: The Villagers of Mt. Horeb are not a monolith. The Village board should not be trying to speak for them on state and national issues. Local issues are issues the Village Board has direct control over; non-local issues are where the board is simply stating their collective opinion, with no consequence. It is a tremendous waste of time for the board to weigh in on non-local issues. I will vote NO on any of these issues, whether I agree with them or not.

Jones: I believe strongly that our village board should be non-partisan “in-spirit,” as well as by letter. I think part of being truly non-partisan requires us to keep to our lane. State and Federal policy is vitally important, and I strongly encourage citizens to speak out and vote in State and Federal elections, but it simply is not something the Village Board has control over. Having local elected officials argue and have the Village take official positions on these issues not only distracts the board from the issues that they can influence but fosters divisiveness for no clear purpose. Of course sometimes, the actual local issues will still have a State and Federal salience which we can and should tackle. But even in those cases, we should strive to act non-partisanly and to lower rather than raise temperatures.

Fendrick: I engaged in a spirited discussion on gerrymandering’s impacts on local Wisconsin government bodies with a former Trustee in the fall of 2021. We spent a lot of time discussing the issue, but the Village Board did nothing more than approve a resolution at the conclusion.

After that discussion, I confirmed that the business of the Village Board is best conducted when focusing on local matters. The Village Board isn’t “red” or “blue,” and I’ve never thought of fellow Trustees with such generic labels. We’re elected to make sure our residents have reliable municipal services and the Village is a safe, welcoming place to live, visit, and/or grow. Each resident of Mount Horeb is also represented by multiple other elected officials in state and federal positions. We can reach out to those elected officials with our concerns in the areas that they represent us.

As an example, it’s reasonable for the Village to send a letter to the leaders of the state Assembly and Senate and our elected officials asking for a reconsideration of a state law that impacts the Village. The Village

Board should not be taking policy positions or issuing resolutions on state or federal matters, however.

Kelley: This question surprised me, frankly. I had not been aware of the debate. Our village cannot stay separated from the county, state and federal issues that are going on around us. On that point I am certain. But determining the degree to which our village government should become involved in “non-local” issues is something I cannot answer broadly; it would depend on the topic and the context of when and why it’s arising for me make such a determination.

Sopcak: The local government can take a stand on issues beyond the local ones, but only if the board is sure it is totally representative of the majority of the residents.

Clary: I appreciate that village board members bring diverse perspectives and that thoughtful, respectful debate is a sign of healthy democracy. On some issues, especially those beyond strictly local matters—like gun control or state-wide policies—opinions differ about whether the village board should take a stance. My view is that the village government’s primary responsibility is to remain non-partisan and focused on issues we can directly influence within Mount Horeb.

By keeping our attention on local needs and concerns, we can better serve all residents and avoid divisiveness over larger political debates that may not be appropriate at the municipal level.

Mount Horeb has had some success using Tax Increment Financing in the past. It has also had some failures. How should village leaders use TIF in the future?

Brager: The Village should use TIF very sparingly or never. Development should be organic and market based; it should not be derived from government run programs creating a false market. TIF is also risky for the Village if the development fails to deliver on expectations, and also incentivizes over-development. I would like to see Mt. Horeb remain a small community, and refraining from using TIF will help achieve that objective.

Kelley: It seems that TIFs have been provided quite freely with several recent projects where it is unclear to me as to why the developers would not have had the resources themselves to complete the projects with-

out the TIFs being granted. It’s hard to know the answer to this because the decisions are made behind closed doors. It seems these developers argue that there needs to be high density and volume to make their projects ‘economically feasible’, yet that very density and volume would lead to more revenue for them over the decades.

I need to learn more about TIFs to have a confident answer as to how village leaders should make use of them in the future.

Jones: TIF financing is an important tool in our policy toolbox. We have used it effectively in the past to enable development with broad community benefits, and I expect we will do so again. However, TIF can be overused, and many communities have made that mistake.

I have two basic guidelines for its future use. First, the Village should use TIF only for projects that are strategically beneficial. Most developments should pay their own way, and there must be careful consideration of broader benefits beyond growth for growth’s sake.

Second, the Board must be assertive and proactive in handling proposals. Municipal staff work hard to recruit developers and shepherd projects forward. But to some extent, this makes it difficult for them to be appropriately zealous about protecting the Villages interests when it comes to taxpayer incentives. That is why it is so crucial our elected officials serve that role effectively, and I will do continue to do so.

Fendrick: TIF allows the Village to financially assist beneficial projects without using taxpayer money. TIF funds, including developer incentives – the money that developers receive when building projects in a TIF district (“TID”) – do not come from *your* property tax money. This is a common misconception. When a TID is formed, the taxing entities (the School District, the county, and MATC) agree to freeze the revenue they receive from the district to the then-current revenue

for the duration of the TID; any increased taxes raised from the district (the “increment”) go into a separate fund. The increment doesn’t only benefit new development, however. The Village has been able to fund façade renovation grants for Main Street businesses and has also provided grants to homeowners to fund home renovations from the increased tax money generated by development in the TID.

The Village did run into issues with large upfront expenditures in TID 3 by borrowing money to pay for infrastructure. That debt was barely covered by the increment created through improvements in the TID. Consequently, the pay-as-you-go (“PAYGO”) TIF model has worked well for the village in its current TIDs; the only way a developer gets an incentive in such a case is if the project results in increased taxes for the TID. This is the model

that the Village used for the redevelopment of the Karakahl property, for example, and is how the Village should use TIF in the future when possible.

The downside to using TIF is that even though the property has been improved, the Village and the other taxing entities won’t receive the increased tax money for general use until the TID has expired. That can be over 20 years in some cases. The TID covering the east side of Mount Horeb, TID 3, will soon be closed, and the taxing entities will begin to receive the tax money generated by development in that area. Future generations will also reap the benefit of the added tax base in the Village – it’s a good gift for us to leave for them.

Kelley: It seems that TIF’s have been provided quite freely with several recent projects where it is unclear to me as to why the developers would not have

had the resources themselves to complete the projects without the TIF’s being granted. It’s hard to know the answer to this because the decisions are made behind closed doors. It seems these developers argue that there needs to be high density and volume to make their projects ‘economically feasible’, yet that very density and volume would lead to more revenue for them over the decades.

I need to learn more about TIF’s to have a confident answer as to how village leaders should make use of them in the future.

Sopcak: TIFs should be used for raising investments into areas that will be dramatically improved by the implementation of the TIF. The TIF isn’t meant to give a break to developers who could well have done this development effort without

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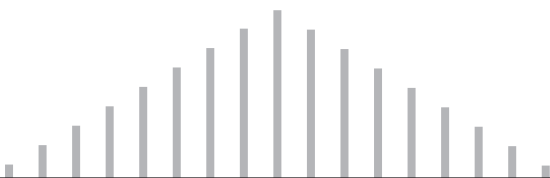
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CANDIDATES

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the TIF and we want the TIF to have the least amount of risk possible to the village.

Clary: TIF has been a tool used in Mount Horeb’s past with mixed results. I believe it can be very helpful when applied to specific cases like infrastructure improvements or encouraging development in blighted or underused areas. However, it shouldn’t be treated as a routine expectation for developers, who sometimes assume TIF is automatically granted. This can distort market dynamics and community priorities.

Village leaders should use TIF carefully and only when it clearly benefits the public and helps overcome barriers to development rather than as a standard incentive.

Another interesting debate recently among some in village government has been who, exactly, the village board is supposed to represent. Much of the past few years has been spent pushing for more housing development to bring more residents to the village. A higher population bolsters the tax base (which in theory spreads out the tax burden), but it also comes with costs (roads, law enforcement, fire and EMS, schools etc.) So, should Mount Horeb keep focusing on attracting new residents, or is there a point at which the village must stop growing or risk losing many of the things that make it such a good place to live?

Brager: I do not believe Village government should keep focusing on attracting new residents. I think that whomever wants to move here should be more than welcome, but we don’t need to worry about getting large scale developments in order to grow our population. Growth for growth’s sake is not a plan. We are at a turning point right now. We can continue to be a small community with lots of personality, or grow into a larger, uninteresting exurb like some neighboring municipalities. Now is the time to choose.

Jones: Fundamentally, I am in favor of growth in Mount Horeb. Mount Horeb is a great community, and there is a lot of demand for people to live here. In addition to allowing more people to enjoy this wonderful community, growth brings both workers and commercial spending. As a practical matter, it is also much easier and more efficient to provide good government services with a growing than a flat or falling population. That said, I believe most of these benefits can be had with a moderate level growth I believe most residents want, which will be naturally absorbed allow us to preserve the strengths of our community. I do not wish to see breakneck growth in the community, nor do I expect it to occur.

Fendrick: Mount Horeb, or any municipality, cannot afford to stop growing altogether. Growth is not just about attracting new residents. It’s about creating new opportunities and affordability for current, returning, and new residents that want to live in our community and provide our businesses a local workforce. New residents and businesses bring a vibrancy and diversity to our community. Without growth, we risk losing the things that we value in our community. We will likely be forced to choose between higher property tax rates on our homes, or cut services provided to residents.

Kelley: Given our location in Dane County, we need to grow. There’s no way around that. This is a wonderful community to raise a family; I would truly appreciate the opportunity to be involved in projects that create an environment that brings people here to share the joy (truly).

That doesn’t mean we need to lose our identity as a community in doing so though. As I’ve stated clearly, I am adamant that such growth and expansion needs to happen outside of the current Main Street downtown district.

Sopcak: To answer this question, we need to first

obtain information from residents, business owners, the existing Mount Horeb Comprehensive Plan & other information sources, determine the services (utilities, parking, traffic, staffing, etc.) and department capacity and limitations, etc. So that we can determine what type of growth is needed in the various Mount Horeb districts. I think an increase of a diverse demographic of residents could have the potential to support the various businesses and village departments in Mount Horeb. We need to balancing between all of these factors and one solution isn’t the fix for all of the various districts in Mount Horeb.

Clary: Balancing growth with preserving Mount Horeb’s unique character is one of the most important and delicate challenges we face. Growth can bring needed vitality—new residents help support schools, local businesses, and community services. However, unchecked or rapid expansion risks altering the very qualities that make Mt Horeb special: our sense of community, the charm of our neighborhoods, and the peaceful atmosphere residents cherish daily.

Rather than asking whether we should stop growing altogether, I believe our focus should be on managing growth deliberately and thoughtfully. That means setting clear limits on the scale and pace of new developments so they integrate well with existing neighborhoods and infrastructure. It means prioritizing developments that respect the village’s architectural style and natural surroundings. And it requires meaningful conversations with neighbors who will be directly affected, ensuring their concerns shape the planning process from the start—not as an afterthought.

Growth should be an opportunity for us to reinforce what makes Mount Horeb a wonderful home, not a cause of frustration or division. Controlled growth allows us to maintain open spaces, reduce traffic congestion, and support public services that keep pace with population increases. This approach calls for patience, strategic planning, and a shared commitment to sustainability and quality of life.

In short, Mount Horeb does not have to choose be-

tween growth and its character—we can and must have both, but only if we approach development with care, transparency, and a strong focus on preserving the community fabric that residents value so deeply.

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

Brager: The biggest threat to quality of life in the Village is creating more crowding of our downtown and Main Street. There are times when it is not pleasant to drive through town or stop at downtown businesses, because there is just too much traffic and not enough parking. Our current zoning code helps keep density down, as long as the Plan Commission and the Village Board follow it.

I also think our village needs to proactively protect ourselves from any kind of data center that may set its sights on our village.

Jones: The biggest threat to Mount Horeb’s, like in many other communities, quality of life is the combination of rising costs and the gradual weakening of the social bonds that make our community strong. As housing, property taxes, and everyday expenses increase, it becomes harder for families, seniors, and long-time residents to remain in the community and fully participate in village life.

At the same time, more of our daily lives are happening online rather than in shared civic spaces. As informal gathering places decline and people spend less time connecting face-to-face, it becomes harder to build the relationships that turn a town into a community. It’s vital that the Village do what it can to preserve and expand community amenities and support our small businesses, which are crucial to community life, while also working to bring down costs.

Fendrick: The biggest threat is that economic development will grow stagnant, causing residents’ property taxes to skyrocket. If you want to preserve the quality of life we currently enjoy in Mount Horeb, measured, sustainable growth isn’t just a reality, it’s a necessity.

Kelley: Rising costs of

everything. And for the residents who live on the north side of the village, misplaced large mixed-use apartment buildings going up in a geographic area that makes no sense.

Sopcak: We need to find a method to communicate to our residents so they can have a say in how growth versus services affects them in our village which would help determine “high quality of life” of the village.

Clary: From my conversations with neighbors, the biggest concern affecting quality of life is rapid population growth through new housing and apartments that may not fit well with existing neighborhoods. Mount Horeb’s unique street layouts and village design mean that adding too much too fast can strain resources, increase traffic, and change the character residents treasure.

It’s essential to consider the voices of those living adjacent to new projects early in the planning process, rather than after decisions are made. Respecting neighbors helps maintain the trust and cohesion that our village depends on.

What are the village’s greatest opportunities moving forward?

Brager: Our greatest opportunity is striving to keep the small-town charm and character we have. If we can manage to save and savor our charm, we will be a wonderful and happy place to live going forward. A place that other villages and towns envy.

Jones: Mount Horeb has several significant opportunities moving forward. Thoughtful economic development can continue to strengthen the Village’s tax base, attract businesses, and provide housing options that meet the needs of families and individuals. Expanding mixed-use and commercial spaces, both in our downtown and at greenfield sites, offers a chance to bolster the local economy while maintaining our small-town character.

Another major opportunity lies in cross-community collaboration. Working with neighboring municipalities on shared priorities, like tourism promotion and regional public safety, can increase efficiency, reduce costs, and make Mount Horeb a stronger part of the broader region.

Finally, the Village can continue to invest in public spaces, amenities, and infrastructure that improve quality of life for residents of all ages. By combining proactive planning, thoughtful de-

velopment, and community engagement, Mount Horeb can grow responsibly while preserving the character that makes it special.

Fendrick: The business park will provide shovel-ready locations for new and/or expanding businesses. The Village has lost economic growth opportunities in the past because of the lack of ready land. We also need to complete the development of the Mount Horeb Recreation Complex to give our residents additional recreational opportunities.

Kelley: Capitalizing on our heritage by expanding heritage tourism in the downtown. Instead of suburbanized mixed-use big-box buildings, let’s come up with ways to make our downtown an even greater destination than it is, like New Glarus, Stoughton, and Galena. This way we would have the benefits of a tourism economy while growing responsibly (outside the heritage zone) in one of the best counties in one of the most beautiful states in the United States.

Sopcak: Strengthening the Scandinavian heritage and troll themed attractions that can be found in Mount Horeb, by adding trolls at the village main entry points (for cars and bicycles). Leveraging local cultures, art, music, festivals, museum, etc... to continue our tourism growth. The Lukken farm development project which has the potential to provide additional land for residential housing and providing park and recreation space.

Clary: We stand at a critical crossroads. Mount Horeb hasn’t lost control of its growth or economy, but we must act wisely now. By taking a step back, listening, and working collaboratively, we can guide our village toward a future that balances progress and preservation. Success will depend on a shared commitment from leaders, residents, and businesses alike to put Mount Horeb’s well-being first.

Local property taxes in Mount Horeb have risen significantly in recent years. Many homeowners are currently paying double what they paid in local taxes just a decade ago. The increases are driven primarily by the school district and other sources, but the village levy is rising too (and increased property assessments allow the tax levy to rise substantially without the tax rate appearing much higher). How can municipal government balance the need to pay its bills and provide vital services with the need to keep the village an affordable place to live for ev-

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DHS Confirms Case of Measles in Dane County: Health officials investigating

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and Public Health Madison Dane County have confirmed a case of measles in a resident of Dane County, representing the second confirmed case of measles in Wisconsin this year.

The case was exposed to measles during international travel and is not related to the case confirmed in Waukesha County last week. Due to privacy concerns, no additional personal identifying or health information will be released by DHS. DHS and Public Health Madison Dane County are working to identify and notify people who may have been exposed to the measles virus, including working closely with UW-Madison regarding on-campus exposure locations. Locations of possible public exposure will be updated on the DHS Outbreaks and Investigations webpage.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that can be spread from person to person through the air and can stay in the air for two hours after a sick person coughs or sneezes. It is so contagious that if one person gets it, up to 90% of the people around them may also become infected if they are not vaccinated.

Symptoms of measles typically appear approximately 10 to 21 days after an exposure, and include: Runny nose; High fever (may be greater than 104°F); Tiredness; Cough; Red, watery eyes, or conjunctivitis (“pink eye”); A red rash with raised bumps that starts at the hairline and moves to the arms and legs three to five days after symptoms begin.

Measles can cause serious health complications, including pneumonia, brain damage, and deafness, and can sometimes be deadly. One in four people who get measles in the United States will be hospitalized.

Anyone developing symptoms of measles should stay home (do not go to work, school, shopping, or use public transportation) and call their doctor’s office or clinic before visiting so they can take precautions to ensure other patients are not exposed to the virus.

Measles can be prevented with the measles, mumps, rubella vaccine (MMR). Two doses of the measles vaccine are 97% effective at preventing the disease. DHS encourages all Wisconsin-ites to check their vaccination status to make sure they and their family are protected from measles.

In general, people born before 1957 are considered immune and do not need a vaccine. All other adults without laboratory evidence of immunity should have at least one dose of measles-containing vaccine, and children should have two doses. Find more on the DHS measles webpage.

CANDIDATES

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everyone who calls it home?

Brager: We need to address property taxes. This is the #1 issue people discuss with me about the village. The last thing we want to do is price people out of their homes by continuing to have property taxes rise in the manner they have been. We need to continue to provide the vital services that the village enjoys, but we should not be buying farms for development. We need to be looking for ways to cut budgets where there is waste, and use the existing assets we have more efficiently.

Jones: I am firmly committed to keeping property taxes as low as possible in Mount Horeb. I see one of my primary roles as a Board member is to question costs whenever new ideas or projects are proposed and to ensure the Village is using resources efficiently. I am also interested in maximizing non-property tax sources of revenue, and while we’ve made some progress, I will continue to explore additional opportunities to help fund vital services without placing undue burden on homeowners.

Fendrick: The Village’s share of property taxes did rise this past year due to the Lukken farm purchase and debt used to finance many upcoming road projects. Our tax rate remains competitive in Dane County and roughly tracks with the rate of inflation over the past 20 years.

The Village needs measured, sustainable economic growth to reduce the property tax burden on homeowners. This includes multiple options for new housing, new retail and commercial establishments to serve the needs of residents and visitors, and industrial / manufacturing opportunities to provide additional jobs. Otherwise, Village residents will either face rising property taxes as the cost of receiving desired services increases, or they will need to accept that those services may be cut to keep tax rates

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reasonable.

Kelley: I do not have an answer to this question. I will learn from others and come to my own conclusions for possible relief.

Sopcak: Everyone has to understand per state statutes Chapter 61 (Villages) and Chapter 74 (Property Tax Collection) which allow village boards to manage finances, levy taxes, and impose fees to cover services, which the state strictly controls. Also remember your property tax bill also includes levies for school districts, county and technical college. Also, state funding for schools has decreased, which has led to referendums to cover the short falls. We need to engage the residents to discuss both village and school budgets to ensure understanding and oversight.

Clary: Property taxes have risen sharply in recent years, driven by schools and other factors, but the village levy has also increased. To keep Mt Horeb affordable, I believe we must carefully review all services and ask ourselves: which ones are essential, which are nice but optional? Growing up, I learned the difference between needs and wants, and I think that lesson applies here.

For example, street sweeping is a great service, but is it necessary on a routine basis? Our roads and infrastructure are generally in good shape, so are we optimizing how we design and maintain them? It’s frustrating and costly to build roads only to dig them up shortly after for repairs. We should ask tough questions and focus on efficiency without

sacrificing quality.

What is your favorite thing about Mount Horeb?

Brager: I love that Mt. Horeb feels like, and is, as small town with character. We are not cookie-cutter like some of the larger municipalities around us. The villagers are ready to fight to protect that character. Our public is engaged and informed, (now more than ever) and that makes the idea of reforming our village board so exciting!

Jones: I love the many ways our village fosters community. This includes our active churches, a very engaged Chamber of Commerce, our terrific annual festivals, and the omnipresent trolls (which my kids and I love!) displayed at so many businesses and non-profits. Mount Horeb truly stands out in the area for its clear identity and strong community engagement.

Fendrick: Everyone in my family has made good friends during our time here – the kind of friends you keep for a lifetime. That comes from living in a friendly, open community.

Kelley: The historic downtown, the friendly people, and the safety of our community.

Sopcak: The friendliness of the people of Mount Horeb, the small village charm and the driftless geology of this area.

Clary: What I love most about living here is the genuine small-town feel and our wonderfully unique downtown. It’s heartwarming to see tourists stopping to take

DMV offers information on obtaining an ID for voting

Ahead of the Wisconsin Spring Primary Election on February 17, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) reminds citizens how to obtain identification, free of charge, that is valid for voting.

Valid identification for voting purposes includes a driver license, identification card, military or student ID card, etc. There is no separate “voter ID.” A federally compliant REAL ID card is not required for voting purposes. Anyone unsure if their identification meets the requirements should visit the Wisconsin Elections Commission website to check.

Begin online to see a list of the required documents that are needed to present at a DMV Customer Service Center in order to obtain identification to show at the polls: wisconsindmv.gov/idcards. A process is available to U.S. citizens, free of charge, to obtain a receipt valid to take to the polls for voting if the ID card is not available in time.

Anyone with questions related to obtaining an ID that can be used to vote should call DMV’s toll-free hotline at (844) 588-1069. Questions regarding voter eligibility, poll locations, voter registration information or other election information can be directed to the Wisconsin Elections Commission at elections.wi.gov.

Start the application now at wisconsindmv.gov or at a local DMV Customer Service Center. To find a DMV, check hours, services and wait times, visit wisconsindmv.gov/centers.

pictures of the trolls, chatting with shop owners, and experiencing what makes Mount Horeb special. The friendliness of our people and the shared sense of community remind me that we don’t have to be big to be meaningful. Mount Horeb’s character is one of its greatest assets, and I’m committed to helping keep it that way.

Anything else?

Brager: Our village board needs reform. We need trustees who represent the villagers, rather than blind service to developers and extreme economic development. Mount Horeb needs to slow down. We need to protect our small-town life, charming downtown, and continue to be a place where families can live and enjoy

the type of life that brought them to Mount Horeb in the first place. I am running to protect the way of life we all love about Mount Horeb!

Jones: I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Mount Horeb and would be honored to continue that service. I take the responsibility seriously and am committed to thoughtful decision-making, open government, and keeping Mount Horeb a great place to live for current and future residents.

Fendrick: Please visit my website, jasonfendrick.com for more information on my campaign and insights on my vision for Mount Horeb!

Kelley: The impetus for me to run for village trustee is to protect our downtown. But I love our whole village!

I want to collaborate and be a part of solving solutions. The current village leadership is not, in my opinion, representing the wants and needs of our citizens because they don’t want to hear what those wants and needs are. And they are doing everything they can to push through what they think is best without citizen participation. I cannot change that from the outside, so I want to be elected to see what I can do from the inside. Thank you.

Sopcak: Also, I have lived in Mount Horeb since 1990s.

Clary: If elected, I look forward to serving with empathy, openness, and dedication to the values that make Mt. Horeb a wonderful place to call home.



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Some good, some bad for Vikings

Sauk Prairie uses big run to sneak by Mount Horeb

by DAN LARSON
Sports Reporter

There were seven lead changes and seven ties during the first 26-plus minutes of a boys basketball game between Mount Horeb and Sauk Prairie on Jan. 28.

The Badger Small Conference rivals traded blows like they’ve done so often during the history of the series. And the two sides went back and forth over the final 6 minutes of the game, as well.

The 4 minutes in between, though, were as one-sided as it gets. The Eagles scored all 12 points in that stretch, which was key in their 71-65 win over the Vikings.

“That was the difference,” Mount Horeb coach Todd Nesheim said. “That was the swing that got them over the top.”

Indeed it was. The Vikings regrouped and clawed back, but the damage was done.

Sauk Prairie improved to 12-4 overall and 7-1 in the league, which has the Eagles just ½-game behind league-leading McFarland (8-1, 15-2).

Mount Horeb fell to 13-5

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Alex Chapman and Mount Horeb’s boys basketball team split a pair of games last week. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

Mount Horeb rolls past Stoughton

by ROB REISCHEL
Sports Editor

No Josh Manchester?
A limited Hayden Anderson?
No worries.

Mount Horeb’s boys basketball team continued to shine despite injuries and illnesses, defeating Stoughton, 51-39, on Jan. 27.

Manchester, a standout senior guard, missed his fifth straight game due to a shoulder injury. Anderson, a brawny senior center, was limited due to illness.

In their stead, junior guard Alex Chapman poured in 19 points, senior guard Kam Nesheim had a career-high 15 points, and Mount Horeb’s defense was stellar most of the night.

Mount Horeb improved to 13-4 overall and 6-2 in the Badger Small Conference, while Stoughton fell to 8-7, 5-3.

“A really good win for us,” Mount Horeb coach Todd Nesheim said. “Without Josh and a healthy Hayden, we played really well for a good portion of the game.”

While Mount Horeb was shorthanded, Stoughton also suffered a blow when

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Mount Horeb’s girls split a pair of games Vikings projected to be No. 4 seed in playoffs

by ROB REISCHEL
Sports Editor

In the interest of greater transparency, the WIAA is releasing mid-season seeding results this year for boys and girls basketball.

Last week, Mount Horeb’s girls were projected to be a No. 4 seed in their sectional, which would all right with coach Bart Leibfried.

“I like our preliminary No. 4 seed for the fact we get a bye and a home game,” Leibfried said. “But I don’t like the fact

that if you win that means playing (No. 1 seed) Edgewood at their place in a regional final.”

It’s easy to see why. Mount Horeb went to Edgewood on Jan. 27 and fell to the Crusaders, 65-39. The Vikings rebounded, though, with a 48-37 win over Stoughton on Jan. 30.

Edgewood, which has won a state title and been runner-up the last two seasons, is a powerhouse again. And the Crusaders showed just that, outscor-

ing the Vikings, 42-24 in the second half.

Mount Horeb trailed, 24-15, at halftime, but Leibfried knew his team should have been closer. The Vikings shot just 18% in the first half and couldn’t take advantage of the fact Edgewood star Anna Miller — a University of Wisconsin recruit — was in foul trouble and held to just two points.

“You’re not going to beat a team like Edgewood when you shoot 18% from

continued on page 17



Julia Straka and Mount Horeb’s girls basketball team defeated Stoughton and lost to Madison Edgewood last week. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

MoHo gymnasts roll past MG

by **ROB REISCHEL**
Sports Editor

Mount Horeb’s gymnastics team closed out the home potion of its schedule in style on Jan. 27.

The Vikings defeated Monona Grove, 138.55-124.25, in their final home meet of the year.

Mount Horeb’s JV also defeated the Silver Eagles, 122.80-31.55

“The varsity posted its second-highest team total of the season, highlighted by a no-fall beam rotation and a season-best score of 35.775 on the event,” Mount Horeb coach Martha Koller Faust said. “The junior varsity also posted a solid team performance despite missing several gymnasts from the lineup.”

Mount Horeb’s Harper Hendrickson won the all-around title with a 35.025, while Sylvia Seeliger was second with a 34.65.

The Vikings had a terrific performance on the balance beam with a 35.775 score. Hendrickson was first with a 9.25, while Carmen Oglesby was second (8.975), Seeliger was third (8.875) and Avena Kalschur was fifth (8.675).

Mount Horeb also scored a scintillating 36.075 on the floor exercise. Hendrickson was first with a 9.125, while Kalschur was second (9.05), Seeliger was third (9.0) and Oglesby was fourth (8.90).



Harper Hendrickson and Mount Horeb’s girls gymnastics team defeated Monona Grove on Jan. 27. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

Seeliger was second on the vault with an 8.80, while Hendrickson was third (8.55), Elise Hooks was fourth (8.125) and Avena Meyers was fifth (8.075).

And on the bars, Macie Finley was first with an 8.80, while Kalschur was second (8.275), Hendrickson was third (8.10) and Seeliger was fourth (7.975).

“Monona Grove is a strong team that was not at full strength, competing

without a top varsity all-around gymnast and another varsity event specialist,” Koller Faust said. “We certainly are not overlooking them, as they will remain tough competition at the Badger Conference Invite (on Feb. 21) and again at the WIAA Sectional (Feb. 28).”

According to the latest Wisconsin High School Gymnastics Association updates, Marshfield is the only WIAA Division 2 team to

reach 140.0 points. Mount Horeb has the second-highest total at 139.05, leading Koller Faust and her Vikings to believe anything and everything is possible this postseason.

“We have a very talented team that is capable of reaching the 140-point mark,” Koller Faust said. “Achieving that goal will take continued confidence, hard work, and belief in ourselves. When those pieces

come together, this team has the potential to make something truly special happen.”

• **On deck:** Mount Horeb’s final dual meet of the season is Feb. 10 at Sauk Prairie’s Grand Avenue Elementary School beginning at 6 p.m.

Mt. Horeb 138.55, Monona Grove 124.25

Vault (33.55)

2nd place — Sylvia Seeliger, 8.80

3rd — Harper Hendrickson, 8.55

4th — Elise Hooks, 8.125

5th — Avena Meyers, 8.075

Bars (33.15)

1st place — Macie Finley, 8.80

2nd — Averi Kalschur, 8.275

3rd — Harper Hendrickson, 8.10

4th — Sylvia Seeliger, 7.975

Beam (35.775)

1st place — Harper Hendrickson, 9.25

2nd — Carmen Oglesby, 8.975

3rd — Sylvia Seeliger, 8.875

5th — Averi Kalschur, 8.675

Floor (36.075)

1st place — Harper Hendrickson, 9.125

2nd — Averi Kalschur, 9.05

3rd — Sylvia Seeliger, 9.0

4th — Carmen Oglesby, 8.90

All-Around

1st place — Harper Hendrickson, 35.025

2nd — Sylvia Seeliger, 34.65

JUNIOR VARSITY

Mt. Horeb 122.80, Monona Grove 31.55

Vault (30.8)

1st place — Kate Van Gorden, 7.80

2nd — Evie Wyse, 7.75

3rd — Marie Hutchins, 7.65

4th — Jacey Morin, 7.60

Bars (28.6)

1st place — Carmen Oglesby, 7.90

2nd — Marie Hutchins, 7.0

3rd — Kate Van Gorden, 6.90

4th — Elise Hooks and Evie Wyse, 6.80

Beam (31.7)

1st place — Macie Finley, 8.55

2nd — Tessa Soppe, 8.10

3rd — Elise Hooks, 7.55

4th — Kate Van Gorden, 7.50

5th — Evie Wyse, 7.0

Floor (31.7)

1st place — Tessa Soppe, 8.40

2nd — Elise Hooks, 8.05

3rd — Kate Van Gorden, 7.80

4th — Evie Wyse, 7.45

5th — Jacey Morin, 7.35

All-Around

1st place — Kate Van Gorden, 30.0

2nd — Evie Wyse, 29.0

3rd — Ava Bilse, 25.45

GIRLS BB

continued from page 16

the field in the first half,” Leibfried said. “Anna Miller got into foul trouble early in the game, but we did not take advantage of it.

“We had lots of opportunities, but missed too many shots in the lane and too many wide open 3-pointers. You have to take advantage of every opportunity when playing someone as good as Edgewood.”

In the second half, the Crusaders pulled away as Macey Faust drilled four 3-pointers to help Edgewood roll. In the Vikings’ two losses to the Crusaders this year, Edgewood made 15-of-18 3-pointers to gain separation.

Jami Chapman led Mount Horeb with nine points, while Aubrey Rockow and Courtney Monroe both added eight.

Mount Horeb’s Magali Forlines also suffered an ankle injury in the game and will miss 2-4 weeks.

“Hopefully we can get her back in the last week or two to finish strong,”

Leibfried said.

Mount Horeb bounced back with a solid win against Stoughton.

Courtney Monroe led Mount Horeb with 13 points and nine rebounds, while Lauren Mester had all nine of her points in the second half. Sammy Johnson added six points and six steals.

“Stoughton is so physical and doesn’t beat themselves, so we had to grind out a tough win,” Leibfried said.

The Vikings shot just 28% from the field, but did make 13-of-15 free throws. Johnson was terrific, going 4-for-4 in the final 1:30.

“Courtney Monroe and Sammy Johnson’s defensive pressure really wore on their guards, caused turnovers and allowed us to get some easier scores on the offensive end,” Leibfried said. “The coaches challenged Courtney to take open 3s and not drive all the time and she responded by making 3-of-5 threes.

“Sammy is a tough kid playing with a face mask from a broken nose she suffered two weeks ago but

she continues to play great defense and make good decisions.”

Mount Horeb has been plagued the past week with illnesses. Julia Straka is also battling through a shoulder injury and Forlines suffered her ankle injury against Edgewood.

“Our biggest struggle right now is shooting,” Leibfried said. “If you watch film a lot of our shots are short and our staff feels a lot of that comes from all the sickness we have had, so if we get everyone healthy and strong we should have a nice finish to the season.”

• **On deck:** The Vikings were at Sun Prairie West Monday and host Reedsburg Thursday at 7:15 p.m.



Mount Horeb’s Magali Forlines suffered an ankle injury last week and is expected to miss between two and four weeks. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

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SAUK

continued from page 16

overall and 6-3 in the Badger Small. The Vikings played their sixth straight game without Josh Manchester (shoulder), the third-leading scorer in the state this season at 35.6 points per game.

Mount Horeb won its first five games without Manchester, but couldn't overcome the Eagles' key run.

"When we told the team, 'Hey, Josh isn't playing tonight, I told them, 'Get it out of your mind right now if you think this is going to be an easy win,' " Sauk Prairie coach Sean McGann said. "Winning here is tough. All these guys have been winning their entire lives, and you know that they're going to compete. Nothing's going to come easy."

It certainly wasn't easy, just as McGann predicted.

But thanks to that 12-0 run, the Eagles prevailed.

Senior guard Kam Nesheim spun to the hoop to give Mount Horeb a 47-45 lead with 9 minutes, 42 seconds remaining in the game, but Sauk Prairie's Sam Patterson answered with a drive to the basket of his own, knotting the score at 47-47 — the eighth and final tie of the night.

Then Eagles' senior Boden Breunig got hot.

His 3-pointer from the left wing made it 50-47. Breunig also drove to the basket for two and hit another triple from the left wing to cap the surge, giving the Eagles a 57-47 lead with 5:58 to go.

"Guys were just getting me open, driving and kicking. I was getting good shots," said Breunig, who finished with 11 points, all in the second half after being held to just one field goal attempt before halftime.

Getting Breunig more involved in the second half was a point of emphasis for Sauk Prairie.

"Mount Horeb is such a good team on ball-screen defense," McGann said of Breunig's first-half struggles. "So we tried to put him in some situations where we had to make the defense communicate (more).

"But our best offense is when we get out in transition. That run that we went on, it was stops. We got stops, and then we could run in transition, and they lost Boden a few times."

Mount Horeb defended Breunig extremely well most of the night, just not in that 4-minute stretch.

"A little bit of a lack of communication. We left him open and he knocked down a couple 3s, and we couldn't get anything going on offense," Mount Horeb's Evan Leibfried said of how the 12-0 run against his team transpired.

The Vikings answered, however, going on an 8-3 spurt of their own to pull within 60-55 with 2:03 left. Senior forward Hayden Anderson spearheaded the run with four of his 16 points in that stretch.

Mount Horeb had a chance to pull even closer, but the Vikings turned it over and Sauk Prairie's Lincoln Ganser went the other way for a fastbreak lay-up to make it 62-55 with 1:14 to go.

Mount Horeb scored on its next two possessions to stay within five points both times after the Eagles converted at the free throw line.

And when junior wing Alex Chapman scored in transition with 23 seconds to go to make it 66-63, the Vikings still had life.

But Mount Horeb couldn't get the break it needed — like the Eagles committing a turnover or missing at the free throw line — and couldn't get any closer.

"We did a lot of great things tonight. The kids are playing really well," Nesheim said of his team's resilience. "(Sauk's) a really good team."

Neither team led by more than five points in the first half, and that happened just twice, when Sauk Prairie opened with a 5-0 advantage before Mount Horeb scored the next 10 points.

The Vikings had momentum at halftime, though, thanks to Chapman's fadeaway jumper with 5 seconds remaining for two of his team-high 22 points and a 30-29 lead.

But the momentum lasted only as long as the break itself, as Sauk Prairie's Otis Andres opened the second half on fire, sandwiching a reverse lay-up between a pair of 3-pointers for a personal 8-0 run that gave Sauk Prairie a 37-30 lead.

"They ended the first half with a little bit of a run, so they got the momentum to start the second half, and we took that right back," said Andres, who had a team-high 19 points, including 13 in the second half. "I think that was a big turning point right there."

It was, but it wasn't the final turning point thanks to a Mount Horeb rally.

Leibfried, the Vikings' 6-foot-7 versatile junior, hit a 3-pointer from the



Evan Leibfried and Mount Horeb's boys basketball team fell to Sauk Prairie, 71-65, on Jan. 30. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

right wing, then scored in the paint, pulling the Vikings within 37-35.

Then it was Kyle Freitag's turn to shine. The Mount Horeb sophomore scored inside to tie the game, 37-37, made a 3-pointer to even things at 40, then made another triple to tie it at 45-45.

Those were Freitag's only eight points in the game, while Leibfried had 12.

Without Manchester, the Vikings had to find a different way to win.

They came up short, but the recipe kept them close all night.

"On offense, just trying to move the ball and trying to get the best shot we can get — not worry about using one or two minutes, just move the ball around," Leibfried said.

Sauk Prairie was just as balanced on offense, getting double-digit scoring contributions from four players — Andres, Breunig, Ganser (13 each) and Jake Buckles (12) — as well as nine points from Easton Meyer.

And just like in the first meeting between the two teams, the Eagles came out on top.

Manchester scored 58 points in an overtime thriller won by Sauk Prairie, 82-80, on Dec. 12, setting the stage for this pivotal rematch.

"Our coach said that's the first time we've beaten Mount Horeb both times in 20 years. That's just great for our culture and our

program," Andres said of sweeping the Vikings, who over the last decade-plus have been one of the premier teams in the league.

Mount Horeb expects to get Manchester back soon.

The challenge for the Vikings when he does return is to be as balanced offensively and as good defensively with him as they've been without him.

Mount Horeb's shortcoming before he was injured was not getting enough complementary scoring.

"Now with him coming back, the next piece is adjusting back again," Nesheim said. "Can we combine what we had before with what we have now? This (adversity) will help us down the stretch."

Meantime for the Eagles, they'll try to avoid stubbing their toe against Fort Atkinson and Madison Edgewood before a showdown at first place McFarland (15-2, 8-1) on Feb. 12.

McFarland won the first meeting, 72-55, at Sauk Prairie.

For now, the Eagles are enjoying a hard-fought win over a rival that was desperate to stay in the con-

versation for the league title.

"Fun race. Realistically we're probably out of it, but there's still a whole month of basketball left," Nesheim said. "Winning tonight would have made a fun February — not that it won't be fun. But Sauk and McFarland are certainly in the driver's seat."

For the Eagles, they kept their spot in that seat thanks to poise under pressure.

"We were relentless," McGann said of how his team stiff-armed the Vikings. "We made enough plays down the stretch to win."

SAUK PRAIRIE 71, MOUNT HOREB 65
Sauk Prairie 29 42 — 71
Mount Horeb 30 35 — 65
SAUK PRAIRIE — (fgm ftn-fta pts) — Lincoln Ganser 6 0-0 14, Jake Buckles 3 4-4 12, Otis Andres 5 5-6 19, Sam Patterson 1 3-4 5, Easton Meyer 3 1-2 9, Boden Breunig 4 0-1 11, Jameson Paukner

TOWN OF PERRY PUBLIC TEST OF VOTING EQUIPMENT
Town Hall, 10084 CTH A
Monday, February 9, 2026
10:00 AM
The Town of Perry Chief Election Inspector and the Town Clerk will conduct tests of the DS200 and the Express Vote voting equipment on Monday, February 9, 2026 at 10:00AM at the Town Hall, 10084 CTH A, in accordance with Wisconsin Statute §5.84(1).
Mary L. Price
Town Clerk
Published and Posted: February 5, 2026 - Mt. Horeb Mail, Town Hall, Town Garage, Daleyville sign post, Town website.
Publish: 2/5/26 **WNAXLP**

1 0-0 2. TOTALS: 23 13-17 71.

MOUNT HOREB — Kam Nesheim 1 0-0 2, Kyle Freitag 3 0-0 8, Hayden Anderson 6 4-8, Evan Leibfried 5 0-2 12, Nick Ibinger 1 0-0 3, Alex Chapman 9 2-2 22. Totals: 25 6-12 65.

3-pointers: SP 11 (Ganser 1, Buckles 2, Andres 4, Meyer 2, Breunig 3), MH 7 (Freitag 2, Leibfried 2, Ibinger 1, Chapman 2).
Total fouls: SP 12, MH 18.

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Owen Schultz (left), Nick Ibinger (above) and Mount Horeb’s boys basketball team downed Stoughton on Jan. 27. Photo courtesy of Mary Langenfeld

VIKINGS

continued from page 16

junior guard Jacob Hibner — a Minnesota-Duluth recruit — suffered a high-ankle sprain just 7 minutes into the game and didn’t return.

Stoughton led, 6-5, when Hibner went down. By halftime, Mount Horeb had surged to a 30-12 lead.

“Hibner is the heart of their team and drives most of what they do offensively,” Todd Nesheim said. “For a change, they aren’t very big and don’t go very deep.”

Without Hibner, Stoughton went 11 ½ minutes without scoring. Meanwhile, Chapman had 10 first half points and Kam Nesheim was terrific with eight points.

“Kam Nesheim had a career night and seemed like he was everywhere,” Todd

Nesheim said. “He had a couple floor burn plays, knocked down a three, and had two field goals.”

Todd Nesheim’s message at halftime was simple: Stoughton would play inspired basketball in the second half.

And that’s just what happened.

“That message unfortunately came true,” Todd Nesheim said. “We know what it’s like to lose your best player and we didn’t respond very well in that moment. We have since however. We needed to keep the pedal to the metal and make this a convincing victory.”

Instead, Stoughton scored on nine of its first 17 possessions of the second half and closed within 39-29.

“We apparently thought defense was optional,” Todd Nesheim said. “It

was the ease at which they scored buckets too. Open guys at the basket, dribble penetration without resistance, etc. Ugly.

“Fortunately, we were decent on our offensive end of the floor. Nesheim, Chapman, and (Cal) Odgers all did some nice things to keep us out front by around 10 points. Anderson had the flu (Jan. 26), and I chose not to play him a ton in the second half.”

Mount Horeb’s defense picked up, though, and it held Stoughton scoreless

for more than 5 minutes from the 10- and 5-minute marks. That helped Mount Horeb stretch its lead back to 18, and it cruised down the stretch.

“As it has been, we had a couple different guys step up tonight to help Chapman out,” Todd Nesheim said. “Kam was sensational and Cal (Odgers) had an excellent second half after some foul trouble in the first.”

That helped Mount Horeb post an important victory over a team its

battled with for league supremacy most of this decade.

“This has been “the game” on our schedule for the last five years, or so,” Todd Nesheim said. “This year, neither of us are in the driver’s seat in terms of conference champion-

ship implications, but that didn’t make it a game that has no meaning.”

No, the game meant plenty.

And short-handed Mount Horeb found a way to prevail once again.

VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB
PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 25, 2026

The Plan Commission of the Village of Mount Horeb will hold a public hearing on the above date at 7:00pm in the Board Room of the Municipal Building, 138 E Main Street, Mount Horeb, WI. The purpose of the hearing is to consider a Conditional Use Permit Application from Nicolas Kamas to allow cultivation of fruit trees in R-1 Single-Family Residential zoning on Parcel 0606-131-2000-4.

The Plan Commission will hear all persons concerning all matters and/or objections written or oral pertaining thereto at that time.

Publish: 2/5/26, 2/12/26 **WNAXLP**

VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB, WISCONSIN
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Village of Mount Horeb Plan Commission will be holding a Public Hearing on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held at Village Hall (138 E. Main Street Mount Horeb, WI) to hear public comment regarding the Final Draft Zoning Map and Final Draft Zoning Ordinance. This is the culmination of an 18-month process the Village has undertaken to rewrite the Zoning Ordinance and complete a new Zoning Map. The new Ordinance is an implementation component of the Village’s Comprehensive Plan that reflects modernized standards, increases user-friendliness, improves ordinance administration and application, brings the ordinance into compliance with state and federal law, advances community housing, economic development, and sustainability objectives, and provides opportunities for reinvestment, redevelopment, and new development. The new Zoning Map provides consistency with the new Zoning Ordinance and most closely aligns to the Village’s existing and desired future land use pattern.

Complete copies of the Final Draft Zoning Ordinance and Map are available at Village Hall or on the Village’s website: www.mounthorebwi.info/280/Zoning-Code-Re-Write-Update-Nov-12-2025

All Village of Mount Horeb residents and property owners are invited to attend this hearing. Individuals wishing to submit comments to the Plan Commission may do so up to the day of the public hearing. Any individual wishing to address the Plan Commission will be asked to register with the Chairman at the start of the hearing. Please note that, upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information, to submit a comment, or to request this service, contact Nic Owen, Village Administrator at (608) 437-9409 or Nic.owen@mounthorebwi.info.

Publish: 2/5/26, 2/12/26 **WNAXLP**

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Immanuel Lutheran- ELCA
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608-437-8733
10am Sunday Worship
www.immanuelmh.org/
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Mt. Horeb Evangelical Lutheran Church – ELCA
315 E. Main St. 608-437-5012
www.elcmthoreb.org
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9 am Sunday Worship

Mt. Horeb United Methodist
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~St. Ignatius Catholic Church
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Tuesday, 5:30 pm,
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Wisconsin Surplus is opening **Surplus Suds**, a brand-new laundromat, pet-wash, and apartment facility in downtown Mount Horeb — and we're building a small, reliable team to keep it running smoothly starting in March 2026.

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Qualifications: Organized, detail-oriented, and dependable with a friendly, positive attitude; valid driver's license and good driving record; able to be on your feet most of the day; basic cleaning, maintenance, and handyman skills; ideally live in or near Mount Horeb

Pay & Benefits: \$20.50/hr starting pay (60-day probationary period); pay increase based on performance; 401(k) with 4% match; PTO and paid holidays; yearly raises and end-of-year bonus; health insurance available (30+ hrs/week)

Hours: 20–40 hours/week | Weekdays, weekends & some on-call

Apply Today: Email your resumé, desired hours, and a short paragraph about yourself to Makenna@WisconsinSurplus.com



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Dane - Iowa Wastewater Commission

Entry Level Wastewater Operator

Full Time / 7:00am-3:30pm M-F
Location: Mazomanie, Wisconsin

Job Summary: We are seeking a skilled and motivated individual to join our team as an entry level wastewater operator. As a member of the team, you will work under the guidance of the Superintendent and Lab Manager to learn how to operate all aspects of the treatment facility in a safe and efficient manner.

Responsibilities:

- Assist with the day-to-day operations.
- Conduct regular checks and inspections to monitor equipment and process performance and identify potential issues.
- Perform equipment maintenance.
- Accurately record data, and maintenance activity in logs and computer systems.
- Stay current with industry advancements, best practices, and regulatory changes related to wastewater treatment.
- Learn to operate the sludge removal process and learn laboratory practices.

Required Qualifications:

- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Strong work ethic and willingness to learn.
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment.
- Basic mechanical aptitude.
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.
- Reside within 30 minutes of the facility for on-call emergencies.

Ideal Qualifications:

- Basic or advanced wastewater operator's license in the State of Wisconsin with any of the following subgrades: A1, B, C, P, D, L, and SS.
- Experience in wastewater treatment plant operations.
- Wastewater lab experience.

Compensation: Competitive wage with excellent benefits, Wisconsin Retirement System, paid vacation, sick leave and clothing allowance.

Application Process: To apply for this position, please submit your resumé, cover letter, and any relevant certifications or licenses to Jeff Moyer, Wastewater Superintendent, at daneiwawwtf@gmail.com. Interviews will be scheduled beginning the week of March 16.

EOE