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## Panthers 'just found a way to get it done'

### Juda-Albany coach reflects on run to state

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Juda-Albany Panthers made the most out of their opportunity to get back on the softball diamond in 2021. After going 12-14 and falling to Lancaster in regional play in 2019, the Panthers were a new and improved team this season. Despite nearly two years away from the field, a jam-packed, alternate sports schedule and many new faces, the Panthers were able to catch fire in 2021.

Juda-Albany head coach Bill Davis was more than pleased with their results. After going 14-6 through the regular season, the Panthers found themselves in a good position with the fourth seed.

The regular season tested the limits for the Panthers.

"During the regular season, we showed times of greatness, but finished with three tough losses," Davis said, adding that the team finished third in conference play.

The three tough losses Davis referenced each came in one-run conference matchups in which the Panthers found themselves on the wrong side. With 1-0 losses to Pecatonica, Argyle and Barneveld, Juda-Albany knew that if they would have executed better in those moments, their record and playoff seeding could have been much different.

Although those close losses hurt their conference standings and did not help their playoff seeding, the lessons learned appeared to pay off in the long run for the Panthers.

As the four seed, the Panthers knew they had an uphill climb to make if they wanted to make a run at the state trophy.

"Looking at the teams, it looked like it would be a tough route to get to state," David said.

Unlike those tough losses in the regular season, the Panthers put all their knowledge and experience together in the postseason, avoiding another heartbreaking defeat. Davis reflected last week on not only how well the Panthers played, but the impressive teams they managed to play well against.

"Along the way, we beat Kenosha St. Joseph, who had a similar record to us," he said.

KSJ was 9-6 following their regional loss to Juda-Albany.

"Then, we went on to beat Racine Lutheran, a three-loss team and the No. 1 seed, who featured one of the best pitchers in our division," Davis said.

The Panthers seemed to thrive in high-pressure situations this postseason. They put that ability on display against Racine Lutheran, as two runs in the top of the seventh inning managed to be just enough to win the regional championship, propelling them into sectionals.

"Then we beat a very good Johnson Creek team, who was the No. 2 seed," Davis said.

It was the Panthers' offensive firepower that had gotten them through the postseason, at that point.

"In both of these games, we really hit well and had timely hits," the coach said.

Juda-Albany was not always able to rely on an electric offense, however. When forced to, the Panthers had a stellar defense that they could lean on to get them through the pitching duels.

"In the finals, we found another way to win with great

defense in a 1-0 win over Iowa Grant," he said.

Too often, the Panthers had found themselves on the short end of the stick in those close battles. However, when it mattered most, they managed to come out on top, earning the sectional championship and punching their ticket to the WIAA 2021 Girls' state softball tournament.

Through their first four postseason games, the Panthers found themselves as the favorites in just one of those matchups. That matchup was their opening game of regionals, where they faced off with the five seed in KSJ.

The story would remain the same following their sectional championship, as Juda-Albany was the lowest seeded team to reach the state tournament in Division 4.

On June 29 they found themselves in another tough position as they were set to face off with another one seed in an undefeated Blair Taylor squad. The Panthers would need to play their best game of the year in order to be the first team to beat Blair Taylor, who held a record of 28-0.

Nerves appeared to be in the air as both teams took a while to settle in. The game went scoreless through the first three innings. A big fourth inning proved to be the difference, as four runs in the top half wound up being the difference in this one.

The Panthers held onto their lead for the remainder of the game as they went on to win by a score of 7-5. Avari Briggs led the way offensively, as she was 3-4 at the plate with two RBIs and a run scored. Briggs also was the starting pitcher for Juda-Albany, throwing six and

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PHOTO COURTESY JULIE DAVIS Brodhead Independent-Register  
Juda-Albany's Myah Johnson slides into home at the state tournament late last month in Green Bay. The girls brought home the silver trophy as the runner-up in Division 4.



PHOTO COURTESY JULIE DAVIS Brodhead Independent-Register

Anna Skoumal of Juda-Albany races to the base during state tournament softball.

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# Alliant Energy gets ready for solar projects

With approval from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin on its first filing for 675 megawatts of solar, officials at Alliant Energy are beginning construction on solar projects in Rock, Richland and Wood counties. "We are extremely pleased

to receive the PSCW's final approval," David de Leon, president of Alliant Energy's Wisconsin energy company, said in a news release. "It's a historic day as we move from planning and preparing to constructing our large-scale solar projects.

"It's a smart investment and creates a long-term, sustainable path for cleaner energy that supports our purpose-driven strategy of supporting customers and building strong communities."

The 50-megawatt North Rock project in Rock County

will start this summer and is expected to be completed in summer 2023.

In total, Alliant Energy has proposed 12 solar projects, spanning dozens of communities across nine Wisconsin counties. Collectively, they will add nearly 1,100 mega-

watts of solar energy generation to the state's energy grid — enough to power nearly 300,000 homes.

The projects are included in the company's Clean Energy Blueprint, a plan for cost-effectively accelerating its transition to renewable energy while reducing carbon emissions.

Alliant Energy is contracting with Burns & McDonnell to construct the six projects, which will be built using union craft labor. All six projects were announced by Alliant Energy in May 2020.

The company is awaiting a decision from the PSCW on its second set of six projects, which were announced in March 2021. Once all 12 projects are approved and operational, Alliant Energy will become the largest owner and operator of solar energy in the state of Wisconsin.

"At a time when much

is changing, these projects demonstrate our commitment to advancing clean energy and strengthening the communities we serve," de Leon said. "Most importantly, this investment in solar will provide our customers with reliable, environmentally-friendly energy for decades to come."

"Along with the rest of the Clean Energy Blueprint, these projects will help customers avoid more than \$2 billion in long-term costs," the news release said. "They will also provide steady revenue through new construction opportunities, create an estimated 2,000 construction jobs and provide approximately \$300 million in revenues to local communities and landowners over an estimated project lifespan of 30 years."

For more information, go online to Alliant Energy's solar page at [alliantenergy.com](http://alliantenergy.com).

## Monroe raffle benefits downtown efforts

Tickets are on sale now for Main Street Monroe's first summer raffle. The raffle is being held in support of the non-profit's community development efforts in the downtown district. Those efforts include small business assistance, an annual pop-up shop program, seasonal flowerpots, Christmas decorations, benches and Facebook Live Shopping Nights.

Tickets are \$20 each. A limited number of tickets are being sold. Drawings will be held daily in September on the courthouse lawn with some days having two winners. Winners do not need to be present to win.

Winners will be announced on Main Street's Facebook page and will be mailed checks. Every ticket will be eligible for all drawings, meaning that

those with tickets will be eligible to win multiple times.

The grand prizewinner of \$1,000 will be picked on Thursday, Sept. 30. Additional winners will include \$100, \$200 and \$500.

Tickets are available at Bartel's & Co. Tap, Burlington Shoes, Baumgartner's, House to Home Designs, Chocolate Temptation, Rainbow Confectionery, Suisse Haus, Edelweiss Gifts & More, 213 Mercantile, JoAnne's Dress Shop, Heartland Graphics, Toy Haus and Orange Kitten Yarns. Tickets also will be sold at Main Street Monroe's summer concerts as long as tickets are still available.

For more information, go online to [mainstreetmonroe.org](http://mainstreetmonroe.org) or call 608-328-4023.

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## Obituary

### JANICE SCHIMMEL

Janice Schimmel, age 92, died on July 5, 2021, at Pleasant View Nursing Home after a brief illness. She was born Dec. 29, 1928, on the farm in Sumpter, Wisconsin, the daughter of Harry and Mabel Cramblett. Janice graduated from Blue River High School. She started her career in Milwaukee, where she met her husband, John. They were married in 1951. In 1959, they purchased a home in Malvern, Pennsylvania, where Janice resided for 61 years before moving to Brodhead in 2020 to be near her family. Leaving her Pennsylvania extended wonderful family was a difficult decision. Janice was a devoted member of the First Church of Christ Scientist in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, and was a Sunday school teacher for many years. She also worked in the local school library and was a township poll worker. Her interests were reading, painting



and adopting any stray cat that would appear at her doorstep.

She is survived by her sister, Darlene

(Ron) Schwartzlow; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harry and Mabel Cramblett; her husband, John Schimmel, in 2005; sister, Josephine (Russel) Pinnow; and brother, James (Patricia) Cramblett.

A memorial service will be held at noon on Saturday, July 31, at the DL Newcomer Funeral Home in Brodhead. A visitation will be held from 11 a.m. until the time of service.

For more information, go online to [www.dlnewcomerfuneralhome.com](http://www.dlnewcomerfuneralhome.com) or call 608-897-2484.

## •Panthers (Continued from front page)

two-thirds innings with three strikeouts and three earned runs.

A home run by Anna Skoumal and a pair of doubles by Brianna Dahl and Gracie Freitag supplied the rest of the Panthers' offense as they were headed for the state championship.

Blair Taylor was the second No. 1 seed that Juda-Albany had defeated in the 2021 playoffs. The Panthers would have to do that for a third time if they wanted to bring home the gold ball.

The Mishicot Indians held the one seed with a record of 23-3, and were the last team standing between the Panthers and the state championship.

This time, the Panthers got off to a quick start, scoring two runs in the top of the first inning. The Indians would respond, however, scoring two runs in the bottom of the second and another in the bottom of the third, giving Mishicot their first lead of the game.

The Panthers managed to tie the game with a single run in the top of the fourth, setting the championship game up for an exciting finish.

Unfortunately for Juda-Albany, the Indians held the offensive advantage, outhitting the Panthers 10 to four. With three runs in the bottom of the sixth, the Indians sealed their 6-3 victory over Juda-Albany. Myah Johnson supplied a

majority of the Panthers' offense, going 1-2 with one RBI and one run scored. Alana Durtschi was 1-3 with an RBI and one run scored, as the Panthers took second place at state.

Although it was not the gold ball ending the Panthers had hoped for, they still had plenty to celebrate. The odds were against them from the start, and yet somehow, the Panthers managed to be one of the last two teams playing in Division 4 softball.

"It was quite an accomplishment, and I could not be more proud of these young ladies," Davis said on his squad's historic playoff run. "This group just found ways to get it done."

It will be a challenge for the Panthers to repeat their run, but it is one that Davis respectfully accepts.

"It will be a very competitive conference, but we will be in the mix," Davis said. "If we can stay healthy, I hope to make a run in the playoffs. 'Sometimes, people do not understand how hard it is to get to state. You have to play perfect. It is a single-elimination tournament with about 75 teams. Just one bad inning and it is over. Not easy.'"

The Panthers were nearly perfect in 2021, and it is safe to say that this was a season those girls will always remember.

# DNR officials monitor bird illnesses

## Citizens encouraged to share information

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is actively following incidents of bird mortalities first reported in the eastern United States in late May. At that time, wildlife managers in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky began receiving reports of sick and dying birds with eye swelling and crusty discharge, as well as neurological signs.

The illness affecting birds in the eastern U.S. has not yet been identified, and it has not been linked to bird mortalities in Wisconsin, according to a DNR news release.

“Out of precaution, the DNR asks the public to report sick or dead birds with clinical signs and to follow best practices for bird feeder and bird-bath hygiene,” the release said.

The department continually monitors reports of sick and dead wildlife and has received a few scattered reports of birds

in Wisconsin with swollen, crusty eyes. These reports may be associated with several causes and may not be associated with the illness reported in eastern states. Symptoms of concern include crusty or swollen eyes as well as seizures and lack of coordination.

If you observe a songbird with any of these symptoms, officials ask that you report your observation to your local conservation biologist or wildlife biologist via [dnr.wisconsin.gov](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov).



PHOTO COURTESY WISCONSIN DNR *Brodhead Independent-Register*

**A healthy blue jay perches on a branch. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is actively following incidents of bird mortalities first reported in the eastern U.S. in late May.**

[dnr.wisconsin.gov](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov).

“Several wildlife laboratories, including the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, are working to identify the cause or causes of these cases,” DNR Wildlife Veterinarian Lindsey Long said in the release. “These symptoms can be from multiple causes,

so these groups have been conducting expansive testing. As part of our continued monitoring of wildlife health, we ask Wisconsinites to report birds with swollen or scabbing eyes

so that we may investigate further. Sometimes, we may ask to collect these birds for testing.”

Cases have been identified in Washington, D. C., Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Juvenile or fledgling blue jays, common grackles, European starlings and American robins have predominately been associated with the eastern U.S. event.

Anyone who observes sick

or dead birds at their bird feeders or birdbaths should remove their feeders, the DNR advised.

“If you have not seen sick or dead birds at your feeders or baths, take care to clean and disinfect them regularly with soap and water, followed by a rinse in 10% bleach solution,” the release said. “It is always good practice to wear gloves while working with and around bird feeders. Pets should be kept away from the area below the feeders and away from any sick or dead birds.”

# State assistance program will expand to include internet costs

Gov. Tony Evers recently announced that the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which provides rental and utility assistance to households affected by the pandemic, will begin to include coverage of internet costs for qualifying households. To date, the state program has provided more than \$38 million to nearly 11,000 households and is working to distribute available funds to eligible households and individuals.

“The past year and a half has underscored the fact that access to affordable high-speed internet is a necessity to how we live, learn, and work,” Evers said in a news release. “This additional resource, coupled with our recent announcement of broadband access funding across the state, should go a long way toward helping folks remain connected, make ends meet and bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Eligible applicants include Wisconsin residents who meet the following criteria:

- One or more individuals within the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability
- A household income at or below 80 percent of county median income.



STOCK PHOTO *Brodhead Independent-Register*

**A state program that provides emergency rent assistance is expanding to include coverage of internet costs. As illustrated by the pandemic, reliable internet access is vital for education, employment and more.**

hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 pandemic

- One or more individuals within the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability
- A household income at or below 80 percent of county median income.

“Internet connectivity is

a vital service that allows renters to engage in distance learning, telework, telemedicine and obtain essential government services,” Public Service Commission Chairperson Rebecca Valcq said in the release. “These funds will ensure Wisconsinites are able to receive essential services.”

“We are approaching the end of the federal moratori-

um on rental evictions on July 31, and it is more critical than ever that households in need are aware of this assistance,” Wisconsin Department of Administration Secretary Joel Brennan said in the release. “We are determined to get assistance out to eligible households as quickly as possible through our network of partners across the state.”

## In brief

### Sheriff's office IDs July 3 ATV crash victim

Patrick J. Heim, 65, of Shullsburg, has been identified as the victim in a July 3 ATV crash in the town of Cadiz, Green County Sheriff's officials said in a news release.

Heim struck a deer on the Cheese Country Trail, which caused the ATV to leave the trail, enter an embankment

and collide with trees, a release said. Heim was wearing safety equipment at the time of the crash, the release said.

### Concert series features guitarist on July 21

Madison-based French expatriate guitar player and singer Ced Ba'etch' will be featured at the July 21 Monroe Arts Center Sounds of Summer concert.

The free outdoor concerts are held rain or shine at 6:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of the month through Sept. 1. Attendees are encouraged to bring a blanket and a picnic.

Ba'etch' plays fingerstyle guitar with a repertoire that includes 1920s country blues, movie soundtracks and French pop music.

For more information, go

online to [monroeartscenter.com](http://monroeartscenter.com).

### Albany student earns ag business degree

Travis Oliver of Albany was among 854 students to receive degrees from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in May.

Oliver earned a bachelor of science degree in agricultural business.

# Signup period open for Brodhead fall flag football

The Brodhead Parks & Recreation Department will be sponsoring a six-week youth NFL flag football program for boys and girls in second through sixth grades. The games will be played on the Brodhead High School practice field on Saturday mornings beginning Sept. 11 and ending Oct. 16.

Registration forms are available at the Brodhead Parks & Recreation Department or on the city of Brodhead website by going online to [www.cityofbrodheadwi.us](http://www.cityofbrodheadwi.us). The cost is \$60, which includes a NFL team-identified reversible jersey and flag set.

Registration forms must be returned to the parks and recreation department at City Hall or mailed to Brodhead Parks & Recreation Department, 1111 W. Second Ave., Brodhead, WI 53520 by Friday, Aug. 13.

After the Aug. 13 deadline, parents must call to check on any available spots in the program. If spots are available, a \$20 late fee will apply.

For more information about the league, contact Wade at 608-897-2159, extension 9.

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-Albertson Memorial Library open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JULY 18**  
-Albertson Memorial Library closed  
-Albany American Legion breakfast, 8 a.m. to noon (every third Sunday)

**MONDAY, JULY 19**  
-Albertson Memorial Library open 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JULY 20**  
-Albertson Memorial Library open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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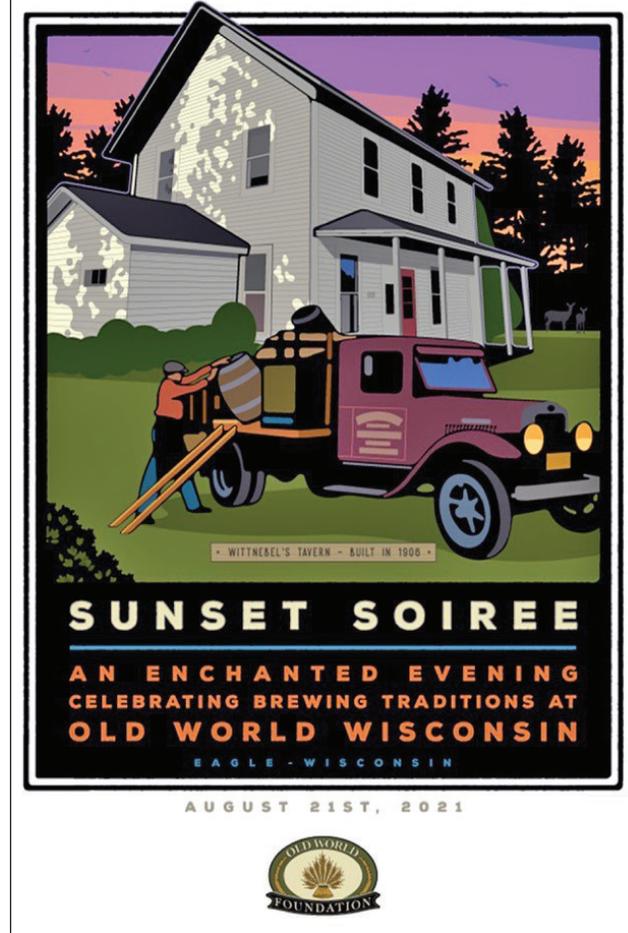
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MARY HOOKHAM *Brodhead Independent-Register*

## Brodhead swimmers keep it cool

Madisyn Kail, back center, coaches the students of the Brodhead Local Area Swim Team as they practice laps in the municipal pool on a recent hot July afternoon. The team is open to young people in second through sixth grades.



SUBMITTED IMAGE *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Artist Neal Aspinall created this poster depicting a beer delivery truck making its way to the Wittnebel's Tavern at Old World Wisconsin. The tavern is part of a new experience taking shape at the museum of Wisconsin history.

# Old World Foundation issues challenge

Group aims to raise \$30,000 for new brewing experience

A historic transformation is underway at Old World Wisconsin near Eagle. The multiyear Brewing Experience project is broken down into multiple phases that will move forward as funds are raised.

The Old World Foundation board chair has issued a challenge to raise \$30,000 by Aug. 2 to fund immediate needs related to the brewing experience and/or Wittnebel's Tavern relocation/restoration. By funding items such as furnishings, cameras, monitors, and/or exhibit panels now, the public will be able to enjoy programming in this new brewhouse as early as next season.

Construction on the new brewhouse began last November and the building project has progressed quickly. In May, the historic Wittnebel's Tavern, built in 1906, was carefully disassembled and moved to Old World Wisconsin from Old Ashippun in southern Dodge County. The process of restoring the building to its 1930s appearance is getting underway.

"The Brewing Experience and historic tavern will immerse guests to Old World Wisconsin in Wisconsin's brewing traditions, and the role beer has played as part of Wisconsin history and

See CHALLENGE, Page 5

## In brief

### Community vaccination clinic sets final day

The Department of Health Services community-based COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Blackhawk Technical College in Janesville will be open for a final day on Thursday, July 15. Vaccines will be offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To schedule a free vaccine, go online to [vaccinate.wi.gov](http://vaccinate.wi.gov) or call 844-684-1064. Walk-ins also are accepted.

### Student plans work at Northrup Cemetery

Members of the Avon Town Board in Rock Coun-

ty recently approved a senior project organized by Brodhead High School student Dakota Schwartzlow to clean up Northrup Cemetery.

Schwartzlow's plan includes trimming trees, cleaning headstones and repairing broken headstones. Citizens who do not want to have their family member's headstone repaired or who have questions or concerns are advised to contact Town Supervisor 1 Allen Peters at [avonsupervisor1@gmail.com](mailto:avonsupervisor1@gmail.com).

Schwartzlow plans to begin work at the cemetery around July 24.

# Tight labor market 'a struggle'

Child care, housing remain barriers to many, state official says

By Tracy Ouellette  
STAFF WRITER

Tom Walsh, the Southeastern Wisconsin labor market economist for the Department of Workforce Development, said the area's labor market is "tight" just like it is across the state and country.

"It's a struggle we're seeing all over the place," Walsh said. "We're hearing all over the state there is a struggle to fill positions."

He said there were two main reasons for the shortage of available workers now.

"First, we're coming through the pandemic and having things reopening when there is still some lag with some people being ready to

rejoin the workforce," Walsh said. "We're seeing people being more comfortable re-entering the workforce, but not quite at the point where they are ready to go back to work the next day."

The second issue, which Walsh said was a potentially bigger problem, was that the labor market was suffering from a continuation of issues that were ongoing before COVID-19.

"I'm talking about the long-term issues we had before the pandemic, which was causing a tightening of the labor market before we shut down. We were having difficulty filling positions back then," he said.

Part of the problem is the

aging population, Walsh said. Workers are retiring and the pool to fill many of those positions is smaller. That, combined with the challenges of getting people ready to go back to the workplace, are creating "the perfect storm."

Critics of Gov. Tony Evers and President Joe Biden, both Democrats, have also said emergency federal unemployment insurance benefits – paid on top of the amounts already distributed by the state – have in some cases removed a financial incentive for people to return to work.

However, Walsh said the barriers go beyond that issue to more long-lasting challenges. Many people who are looking to re-enter the workplace are stymied by lack of child care, housing and transportation, he said.

"These are the three big reasons for many people," he continued. "There are more out there, but I try to highlight these when talking about today's struggles with staffing."

### Long-term issues

Walsh said the pandemic shined a light onto just how difficult it can be for people to just find child care.

"It was really an eye opener on how important it is to have children taken care of before you go back to work," he said. "It's something that often gets overlooked and for families it's a major challenge."

Housing and transportation, which often go hand in hand, present more hurdles for people re-entering the workforce.

"Whatever area you're in, if your workers can't afford

to live there, then their transportation becomes an issue," Walsh explained.

With the shortage of housing across the state driving home prices up, many people have been priced out of buying a home. Rental prices have also been climbing, again because of the housing shortage, so workers who might be interested in a job, may not be able to take it because of the location, Walsh said.

So, what's the answer?

While some of this will work its way out over the next several months to a year, Walsh said some of the issues with the labor shortages will need to be addressed in the long-term.

"One of the things people can expect is that they will need to be able to adapt," Walsh said. "The way things are changing, with the different technology and changing businesses processes, will impact the workplace on a more permanent basis."

"I think a common theme coming out of the pandemic and the way we changed out of pure necessity have already impacted the way we will operate going forward."

Walsh said internet connectivity is going to be an even bigger issue as many workers are going to have to be able to take advantage of virtual options. And if they can't they may get left behind.

"We have people in rural areas who have no connectivity and people in urban areas like the inner city who also are not connected. It's the same prob-

See STRUGGLE, Back Page



**News from  
Parkview in Orfordville:  
Viking Times**

<p><b>THURSDAY, JULY 15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library open, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; book club at 6 p.m.</li> <li>• Music in the Park by Bill and Bonnie Stevens, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Purdy Park</li> </ul> <p><b>FRIDAY, JULY 16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library open, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; storytime at 11 a.m.</li> <li>• Lunch with the Librarian at Purdy Park, 11 a.m. to noon</li> </ul> <p><b>SATURDAY, JULY 17</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library open, 9 a.m. to noon</li> </ul>	<p><b>SUNDAY, JULY 18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library closed</li> </ul> <p><b>MONDAY, JULY 19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.</li> <li>• Parkview School Board meeting, 6 p.m.</li> </ul> <p><b>TUESDAY, JULY 20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library open, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Teen/Tween Tuesday, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.</li> </ul> <p><b>WEDNESDAY, JULY 21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orfordville library open, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.</li> <li>• Library in the Park at Purdy Park, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.</li> </ul>
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# For the love of barbecue

## Ribfest celebrates great food, summer fun

By Sandra Landen Machaj  
CORRESPONDENT

This weekend the Walworth County Fairgrounds in Elkhorn will be alive with the sounds of music, the aroma of barbecue and the happy sounds of visitors winding their way through the fairgrounds.

Ribfest, which grew to 80,000 participants during the four-day event in 2019, before being put on hold in 2020 because of the pandemic, was the largest barbecue event held in Wisconsin, according to Larry Gaffey, general manager at the Walworth County Fairgrounds.

As they plan the 2021 Ribfest, set for Thursday, July 15, through Sunday, July 18, there is hope that the number of visitors will again be as large as the 2019 fest or will surpass it. Parking and entry to the event is free.

Ribfest will be open from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. July 15, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 16 and July 17 and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. July 18.

"In addition to being a fun festival for the community, Ribfest is also a barbecue competition, which brings in some of the best barbecue from around the country," Gaffey said. "There is a rib competition under the direc-

tion of the Kansas City Barbecue Society, which is responsible for judging to exact standards."

The Kansas City Barbecue Society is the sanctioning body of many barbecue events and its judges are trained to rate barbecue according to the highest standards. Their judges receive training through a special school, assuring fairness in standards for all competitors.

In addition to the professional competition there are also People's Choice Awards and on Sunday the community division heats up its grills and smokers at 9 a.m. Judging will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. with awards given at 5 p.m. on the Main Stage. The community division will include local grillers putting forth their best efforts. They must be registered in advance and each year the registration fills up early.

### Where the eating is good

A visit to Ribfest is a day of non-stop eating. While ribs may be the most sought-after of the barbecue items, there is also chicken, beef – including brisket – pulled pork sandwiches and a variety of other tasty foods.

The professional barbecue



A hungry crowd gathers at Ribfest in Elkhorn each July. The event has continued to grow each year and is now a four-day event that draws competitors from a wide area along with people of all ages for live music, an artisan village and of course, plenty of food and drink options.

competition brings in prominent names in smoking and grilling from throughout the Midwest to compete for the title of the best barbecue. Popular participants include 2019 first-place winner Aussie, of Pittsburgh, and second-place winner, Desperados BBQ, from Hinkley, Ohio.

Other participants come from Virginia, Texas and Minnesota along with local participants from Oak Creek, Woodstock, Illinois, and Chicago offering a variety of barbecue styles.

For Donna Rice, owner of Desperados, summertime is barbecue competition time as her team travels to festivals throughout the country. Their slogan is "Lick My Ribs," and their ribs are a favorite among competition attendees.

The Desperados team brings two smokers to cook their ribs. One holds 1,400 pounds while the smaller one holds 700 pounds of meat.

"We keep them smoking all day," Rice said.

The traditional fair foods – hamburgers, hot dogs, corn dogs, roasted corn on the cob, popcorn, and ice cream – are also found on site.

murals and they are auctioned in September at the Walworth County Fair.

His subjects fit in well with the theme of Ribfest. He has created murals relative to the theme of the event. These in-

clude cows, pigs and sheep – and the occasional human.

The fairgrounds is a great place to enjoy any time but it is especially so during Ribfest.

**See RIBFEST, Back Page**

## • Challenge

(Continued from page 4)

culture," according to a news release. "In addition to these buildings, a festive outdoor beer garden will tie the Brewing Experience building and Wittnebel's Tavern together and be a comfortable space for guests to relax and enjoy drinks and food."

Those who donate \$250 or more to help reach the goal of raising \$30,000 for

immediate needs related to the project will be invited to attend the Sunset Soiree, an evening celebrating brewing traditions at Old World Wisconsin. Thanks to two of the OWF's generous trustees, all donations up to \$10,500 will be matched.

Area artist Neal Aspinall created the artwork for this fundraiser. It depicts a beer

delivery truck making a delivery to the Wittnebel's Tavern at Old World Wisconsin.

For more information, go online to the Old World Foundation website at oldworldfoundation.org or call 262-594-2922.

To learn more about the 2021 season at Old World Wisconsin, go online to oldworldwisconsin.org.

### Vendors on display

Ribfest is not just about food. Take a walk down the Artisan Vendor Alley and view the homemade products on display. All the items up for sale must be created by the vendor selling them to participate in the vendor alley. The lineup features a variety of art and practical objects.

Arcy, a mural artist who attends Ribfest each year, paints his 8 foot-by-12 foot



Savory ribs bathed in tangy barbecue sauce are a winning combination at Ribfest.



PHOTOS COURTESY DAVE DRESHOW Brodhead Independent-Register

Guests mingle with other guests as well as staff and horses at the 2019 Sunset Soiree event at Old World Wisconsin. Those who donate \$250 or more toward a \$30,000 brewing experience fundraiser will be invited to attend this year's Sunset Soiree.

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# Bouncing back from a lost season

## Students reclaim some balance after COVID-19

By Jason Arndt  
STAFF WRITER

High school student-athletes, both locally and state-wide, didn't just lose a physical activity in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic caused school closures and a canceled spring sports season.

The lost season also had a negative mental health impact on student-athletes who spent weeks preparing for the 2020 campaign.

According to study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which surveyed more than 5,000 Wisconsin student-athletes, physical activity among these adolescents dropped by 50% during the pandemic and depression symptoms increased.

Before the pandemic, less than 10% of Wisconsin athletes reported moderate to severe symptoms of depression, but the study released last fall revealed the number rose to 33%.

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, using directives from the state, decided to nix the season. Locally, some students reported frustration with the lost season in 2020, including Wilmot Union High School senior Jack Vozel.

Vozel, a pitcher, remembered the time he spent physically and mentally preparing for the Wilmot baseball season as a junior.

"I found last year's cancellation to be mentally draining," he said. "I dedicated every single day of the off-season to getting my body right in the weight room and I fine-tuned my mechanics only to be shut down at the last minute."

Junior Morgan Klein, of Burlington High School, serves as the Demons' ace pitcher.

Klein acknowledged a lost season took more a mental toll and said she had been forced to work out on her own, rather than with the team, since there were limited team practice options.

"I took my time and I practiced on my own to be as prepared as I could for when we had the opportunity to play on the field," Klein said. "We didn't get as many or as much of our team together as we could with COVID-19."

Additionally, Klein missed team traditions such as pregame

breakfasts, bus rides and other bonding activities.

Track athlete Courtnee Bader, a senior from Westosha Central High School, said the most challenging aspect of losing a season was missing out on coaching guidance from coaches and using her spring sport as a springboard for cheerleading.

Bader, who participates in cheer in the fall and winter, said she lost some physical strength.

"It was so hard for me to come to the realization that I wouldn't have my junior season, I'd miss out on a whole year of coaching and a whole year of memories with my teammates," she said. "I stayed in decent shape over quarantine but I lost so much muscle, which was hard for me, I loved having my leg muscles built up from track just in time for my cheer season."

Additionally, since fall sports had been pushed back, Bader wasn't where she wanted to be at the start of the cheerleading season.

Bader recognized hundreds of other student-athletes faced the same issue.

"It took lots of hard work and determination to get myself where I wanted to be. At times it was frustrating but I know most everyone was in the same boat and in the end I guess it all played out decent, because now I'm back on the track," she said earlier this spring.

For Vozel, not only did he see the 2019 graduating class leave, but the Class of 2020 as well with the canceled season.

"After having a blast my sophomore year with the 2019 class, it was difficult to lose time that would have been spent with a great class of 2020 graduates," Vozel said.

### Filling the void

Vozel, like Klein, used his time to work out alone and prepare for the summer club circuit.

"I coped with the situation by working out and continuing to prepare for summer season," said Vozel, noting he played a full travel ball schedule with Puma Baseball Academy.

Bader found sitting idly a difficult task and opted for recreational opportunities with a small circle of friends and tak-



JASON ARNDT *Brodhead Independent-Register*

**Jack Vozel of Wilmot High School pitches to a Westosha Central hitter in a game this spring. Many high school athletes had a new appreciation of being able to practice and compete together this spring after pandemic cancellations.**

ing on new activities.

Bader, who acknowledged the activities did not compare to a rigorous track season, began playing basketball in her free time.

"That was the main way I stayed active. I would go to (the) playground and shoot for hours," she said. "I even took on skateboarding ... Even though I missed my regular sports, it was fun to try to new things."

### Bouncing back

The three student-athletes

all expressed excitement when the WIAA announced plans to hold a spring sports season.

Klein, whose team ended up at the state tournament, states the return came with some challenges, including some sore arms during pre-season practices.

"I was beyond excited. You only have four seasons in high school, so losing one season is like a quarter of that," she said. "That was the downfall, but it is good to be back ..."

Best of all, Klein said, was the team reuniting as a cohe-

sive unit.

To form a cohesive unit, players must socialize on and off field, according to Klein.

"We talk during practice. We have a lot of good camaraderie and we are just really happy with each other."

While Klein has more season of eligibility, the decision allowed Vozel and Bader to finish their high school careers strong, since both recently graduated.

"I wanted more than anything to play one more season with my Wilmot teammates,"

he said.

Bader said she and her teammates clicked as soon as the season began, even after a lost season, while welcoming new athletes to the Westosha Central track program.

A participant on multiple relay teams, Bader said she is fortunate for the quick bounce back, since there was essentially a two-year competition gap.

"I know in some cases it is tough to take that big of a change," she said. "I think we just handled it pretty well and became a family very quickly."

# State officials share specifics on vaccination by location

Officials at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services recently released maps and downloadable data tables that break down COVID-19 vaccinations by new geographic boundaries. The new maps, available at [dhs.wisconsin.gov](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov), allow Wisconsinites to view existing COVID-19 vaccination data by municipalities (cities, towns and villages), ZIP code tabulation areas, school district boundaries and census tracts.

"Breaking down existing vaccination data by these additional geographies offers new ways for people to understand COVID-19 activity within their communities and will allow us to determine where we need to focus our ongoing vaccination outreach efforts," DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake said in a news release. "Providing timely, transparent COVID-19 information to local and tribal health officials and the public has been a top pri-

ority throughout the pandemic, and these updates continue that commitment."

DHS also recently released an additional filter option for the COVID-19 Vaccines for Wisconsin Residents dashboard. Users can now select to view vaccination data for just the adult population ages 18 and older.

The new geographic boundaries use location data from the Wisconsin Immunization Registry to populate the maps with

COVID-19 vaccination information, based on the address a person has on file in WIR. No personally identifiable information is shared.

Data represent all COVID-19 vaccinations entered into WIR for those who reside in that geographic area.

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin's COVID-19 response, go online to [dhs.wisconsin.gov](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov) and follow @DHSWI on Facebook, Twitter or on Instagram.

## Legal Notices

**TOWN OF DECATUR  
REGULAR MONTHLY  
MEETING**  
Monday, July 19, 2021 -  
6:00PM  
Town Hall - 1408 14th Street,  
Brodhead, WI

- AGENDA:
1. Call to Order
  2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
  3. Additions/Corrections to Agenda
  4. Approval of Minutes
  5. Treasurer's Report
  6. Payment of Bills
  7. Citizen Concerns
  8. ATV/UTV Enforcement
  9. Town of Decatur Garage Insurance
  10. Roadwork
  11. Hein Road: Build-up of Brush & Tree Growth
  12. Township Truck
  13. Property Violations
  14. Insight FS Contract for Propane for Garage
  15. Brodhead Area EMS Presentation
  16. Sharing of Information/Correspondence
  17. Future Agenda Items
  18. Set dates for future meetings
  19. Adjournment
- Sandra K. McManus  
Clerk/Treasurer  
The Independent Register  
7/14/2021  
WNAXLP 399867

**MEETING NOTICE**  
The Town of Spring Grove Monthly Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. at the Town Hall, N2475 Hwy GG, Brodhead, WI.

- MEETING AGENDA:**
1. Call to Order
  2. Pledge of Allegiance
  3. Approval of Agenda and /or Changes
  4. Reading of June Meeting Minutes
  5. Treasurers Report
  6. Public Input
  7. Land Survey Request from Todd Hasse (Allen Richardson Property)
  8. Discuss Payments for New Plow Truck
  9. Driveway Permits
  10. Building Permits
  11. Shop Tools Purchases
  12. Sonic Broadband Update
  13. Discuss Property Issues on Bellanca Lane & Hartman Road
  14. Road Projects
  15. Review of Monthly Bills
  16. Adjournment
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- ▼ **Please do NOT crop your photos.**
- ▼ Tell us who took the photo and we will give them a photo credit.

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2501 W. 5th Avenue, Brodhead, WI 53520  
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# 'Illegal and deadly'

## Teens who drink and drive face higher consequences

Wisconsin teens and alcohol is a mixed news topic. The good news: The percent of high schoolers who drink alcohol has dropped over the last decade.

The bad news: According to information available on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website, Wisconsin ranks in the top 10 states for the percent of high schoolers who drank alcohol recently and fourth for percent of high schoolers who ever drank alcohol.

"When you combine teens, alcohol and driving, it becomes a deadly and costly problem," Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent Anthony Burrell said. "This summer we're asking parents to remind their teens that it is illegal to drink under the age of 21 and it is illegal and deadly to drink and drive."

Just like any driver, a driver under age 21 can be charged with drunken driving if they're above the legal limit or show signs of alcohol impairment. In addition, with Wisconsin's Absolute Sobriety "Not a Drop" Law, drivers younger than 21 face fines and other penalties for any blood alcohol level below 0.08.

Data shows that drinking any amount of alcohol before

driving increases crash risk among teen drivers as compared with older drivers. Teen drivers have a much higher risk for being involved in a crash than older drivers at the same blood alcohol concentration, even at BAC levels below the legal limit for adults.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, teens are more likely than anyone else to be killed in an alcohol-related crash. Even though the minimum legal drinking age in every state is 21, data shows 16% of 15- to 18-year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2018 had been drinking.

Teens who escape physical harm for themselves or others may face additional costs, including the loss of their driver's license, and dozens of other expenses including attorney fees, court costs, other fines, and insurance rate increases. Unique consequences to teens include loss of academic eligibility, college acceptance, and scholarship awards.

"In Wisconsin, our goal is zero," Burrell said. "Zero teens drinking and driving, and zero preventable deaths on Wisconsin roads. Let's make this a safe and sober summer."



MATT MCGUINNESS/FINE IDEA STUDIO *Brodhead Independent-Register*

This aerial view of Ribfest offers an expansive view of the event at the Walworth County Fairgrounds. With ample free parking and free admission, it is the perfect way to spend a day or an evening enjoying food and music.

## • Ribfest (Continued from page 5)

"We use the whole fairgrounds to allow everyone to spread out and enjoy the beauty of the grounds," Gaffey said. "Camping is also allowed on the grounds but a reservation is needed and space for campers is limited."

### A carnival and music

Ribfest is a family event with something to appeal to everyone. The children and those who are children at heart will enjoy time on the carnival rides.

While eating, shopping, the artisan colony, the carnival rides, and possibly eating again, are the activities of the

day, it is the sound of music heard throughout the grounds that adds to the festive spirit, according to Gaffey.

From the start of Ribfest until the closing on Sunday, a full schedule of live music will be heard from two stages.

Each day has a new lineup of musical groups popular in the area. The lineup changes daily and this year includes

groups such as 7th Heaven, House of Music, Dueling Pianos, Cherry Pie and others. Nashville recording artist Kelly Daniels is scheduled to perform on Thursday. Check the Ribfest website for the full music lineup.

"Bring a chair if you can as seating is limited," said Gaffey. "However, if you don't bring a chair, we do

provide some unique seating for you and your family to sit and eat and enjoy the music. These seats are large bales of hay which can be moved to wherever one wishes to sit."

For additional information, including updated entertainment schedules, visit [wisconsinribfest.com](http://wisconsinribfest.com). The Walworth County Fairgrounds is at 411 E. Court St., Elkhorn.



FILE PHOTO *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Matthew Davis of the Aussom Aussie barbecue team puts the finishing touches on a rack of ribs. The Aussom Aussie team is scheduled to return in 2021 to defend the title it won at the last Ribfest competition in 2019.

## • Struggle (Continued from page 4)

the same problem for totally different reasons, but it's still the same problem. We need to fix that," Walsh said.

### Labor statistics

The Department of Workforce Development recently released the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics preliminary

employment estimates for the month of May 2021. The data shows that Wisconsin added 3,600 total non-farm and 3,400 private-sector jobs in the month of May.

Wisconsin's unemployment rate in May was 3.9%, equaling April's rate. The national unemployment rate was 5.8% in

the same month

Wisconsin's labor force participation rate in May was 66.1, 4.5% higher than the national rate of 61.6%.

"The number of people counted as employed grew by 9,300 individuals over the month, a nice gain that demonstrates that the efforts to connect job seekers to jobs in Wisconsin are working," DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek stated in a press release.

"With that being said, the structural issues preventing individuals from getting into well-paying jobs that have existed not only in Wisconsin but the nation as a whole — lack of child care and transportation barriers for example — need to be addressed if our state is going to meet the demand for workers that we have faced for decades.

"DWD stands ready to assist any worker who wants help finding a job, and our regional business service teams look forward to meeting with local employers to help them find good candidates to fill their open positions," Pechacek continued.

Locally, the May unemployment rate was 3.0 in Green County and 4.7 in Rock County.

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