

Brodhead Independent Register

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SHOPPING NEWS

917 W. EXCHANGE STREET, BRODHEAD, WI 53520

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 1, 2021

FREE TAKE ONE

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JV Cardinals off to a good start.....3

Football frenzy.....6

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Adventures in agriculture

Wisconsin fairs serve up food, fun, education



SUBMITTED PHOTO Brodhead Independent-Register

Julia Nunes (far right), the 73th Alice in Dairyland, gets ready to enjoy an ear of sweet corn at the Wisconsin State Fair. Although food is a major attraction at Wisconsin fairs, the events also are an important way to learn about the importance of agriculture in Wisconsin, Nunes said.

Fair season in Wisconsin is starting to wrap up, but there are still a few more that you can add to your calendar! After attending some of Wisconsin's county and district fairs and the Wisconsin State Fair this summer, I have come to realize what Wisconsin fairs mean to our communities.

Food is a staple of fairs in our state and there are plenty of tasty and unique food options to enjoy at each one. From the classic fried cheese curds to more exotic options like deep fried pink squirrel, gator claw on a stick, or a glazer doughnut pork sandwich, you can eat to your heart's desire at Wisconsin fairs.

Another highlight for many



By **JULIA NUNES**
Contributor

Wisconsin's fair-goers is the entertainment. One thing is certain about Wisconsinites; we like to have a good time. The fair is an amazing place to fill your stomach, have a good laugh, take a ride on the tilt-a-whirl, or jam out to your favorite music. The attractions are often the reason many fair goers stay late into the evening, enjoying the fair atmosphere and each other's company. Whether your fair is having a live comedian, featuring a local band, or a big name artist, there are entertainment options for the whole family.

One of the most important parts of Wisconsin's fairs is agriculture. Growing up on a dairy farm, the county fair was an event that I looked forward to every summer as it allowed me to showcase my dairy cattle and the hard work that I had put into preparing them. It was also a place where I learned about other areas of agriculture that I was not familiar with.

While attending the Wisconsin State Fair, I realized just how important Wisconsin fairs are to agriculture. Wisconsin's agriculture industry is diverse, vibrant and vital to our communities, providing jobs and contributing more than \$104.8 billion to our

state's economy every year.

Wisconsin farmers are working every day of the year to produce safe, nutritious food products for you and for people around the world. The fair is the perfect place to learn about Wisconsin agriculture, including where food comes from and the farmers who produce it.

The next time you visit a Wisconsin fair, I challenge you to think about how agriculture is connected to the fair, from the animal exhibits to the deep-fried cheese curds. This summer you have the opportunity to take part in a tradition that is a staple of summers in Wisconsin and support the diverse industry that provides our communities with food, fuel and fiber.

Learn more about fairs around Wisconsin and add one more to your calendar at www.wifairs.com.

Julia Nunes is serving as the 73rd Alice in Dairyland. As Wisconsin's agriculture ambassador, her goal is to educate audiences across Wisconsin about the economic impact and importance of the state's diverse agriculture industry.

During her term, Alice in Dairyland provides educational programming, in conjunction with the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, to thousands of Wisconsin grade-school children.

Nunes' term as Alice in Dairyland was extended to two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Blackhawk Tech offers GED prep classes

Blackhawk Technical College has added an evening GED/HSED test prep class option at its Monroe Campus.

The classes are offered from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. The schedule is flexible, and students can attend at their convenience.

The campus also offers classes from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Thursday.

The General Educational Development and High School Equivalency Diploma are computer-based high school equivalency tests that measure skills expected of high school graduates. Most employers, technical colleges and community colleges accept the GED

certificate. However, some employers, universities and branches of the military require a HSED.

To take the GED/HSED in Wisconsin, students must:

- Be at least 18½ years old
- Be a Wisconsin resident, have lived in Wisconsin for at least 10 days, or be a migrant worker or child of a migrant worker
- Not be currently enrolled in a high school
- Not have a high school diploma

The adult education courses prepare students to take the GED test to receive their high school equivalency diploma. GED/HSED prep classes are also suitable

See CLASSES, Page 5

FREELANCE WRITERS

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Fishing contest challenges anglers to catch carp

The Lake Winnetka/Sugar River Improvement Association Inc. will hold its annual Carp Fishing Contest on Labor Day weekend in Albany.

Contest participants may start fishing anytime Friday, Sept. 3, and the contest ends at 1 p.m. on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 6.

Qualifying carp must be caught from the Sugar River in Albany or on the millpond (Lake Winnetka) upstream of the Albany Dam. Carp are often found in the shallow, muddy areas of the lake, according to a news release.

"The goal of the contest is to provide a fun way to help game fish proliferate more abundantly by removing as many carp as possible," the release said.

The contest will be held rain or shine.

There will be two categories of prizes for the most carp caught regardless of size. The first category is for bow fishermen only. The second is for all other types of fishing, including hook and line, spear and hand fishing. Seine netting is not allowed.

Cash prizes will be awarded



SUBMITTED FILE PHOTO *Brodhead Independent-Register*

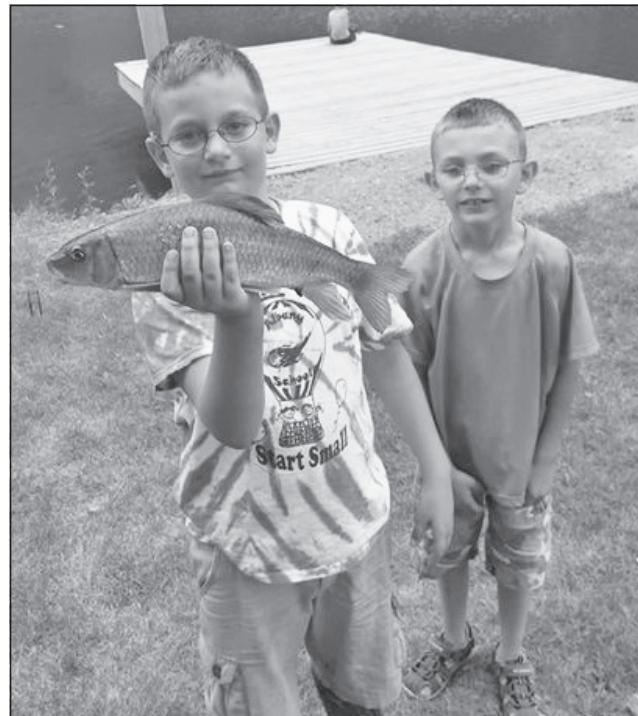
The winning fisherman shows his winning haul for the most carp caught in the 2020 Carp Fishing Contest hosted by the Lake Winnetka/Sugar River Improvement Association Inc.

in both categories, in addition to a bonus \$50 prize for the largest carp caught in any manner (determined by weight.) In addition, there will be two fishing gear prizes for contestants 10 and younger.

Prizes will be awarded in the park near the Albany boat ramp. No registration is required to compete in the contest, but participants must have a valid Wisconsin fishing license.

For more information, call

608-862-1698 or 773-418-7123, send an email to lwsria@aol.com or find the group on Facebook at facebook.com/pages/Lake-WinnetkaSugar-River-Improvement-Association-Inc/374367135943433.



SUBMITTED FILE PHOTO *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Grayson and Griffen Everson won in the children's category at last year's Carp Fishing Contest hosted by the Lake Winnetka/Sugar River Improvement Association Inc. The contest will be held Labor Day Weekend in Albany.

JV Cardinals get off to a good start

Right: Quarterback Gabe Bockhop (#5) scurries from defenders for a big gain against Edgerton.

BECKY MALKOW

Brodhead Independent-Register



BECKY MALKOW *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Clayton Elliott (#30) runs over an Edgerton defender in the Brodhead-Juda Cardinals' 28-0 victory over Edgerton on Aug. 23.



BECKY MALKOW *The Independent-Register*

Nicholas Lobeck (#11) locks up with an Edgerton receiver in the JV Cardinals' 28-0 victory over Edgerton last week.



BECKY MALKOW *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Cardinals sophomore wide receiver Joey Brown elevates for a catch that results in a touchdown during the Aug. 23 game against Edgerton.

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Albany Comet News

THURSDAY, SEPT. 2
 -Albertson Memorial Library open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 3
 -Albertson Memorial Library open 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
 *Parkview-Albany varsity football versus Lancaster (at Parkview High School), 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 4
 *Albany cross-country at Darlington, 8:45 a.m.
 -Albertson Memorial Library open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 5
 -Albertson Memorial Library closed

MONDAY, SEPT. 6
 -Albertson Memorial Library closed
 *No school, Albany School District

TUESDAY, SEPT. 7
 -Albertson Memorial Library open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 *Albany volleyball versus Monticello, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8
 -Albertson Memorial Library open 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.
 *Albany schools early release, 2:37 p.m.

- Denotes a community event.
 * Denotes Albany School event. For more information, please call 608-862-3225.

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DAN POWERS/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN/ VIA WISCONSIN WATCH

Wisconsin Watch found that Outagamie County Circuit Judge Vincent Biskupic over the past seven years paused the sentences of 16 defendants so they could attend drug or alcohol treatment. At least 11 returned to jail after participating in treatment, whether they remained in lock-up or were allowed to leave jail for work. Biskupic's unstructured supervision of defendants contrasted with the county's formal drug and alcohol court.

Defendants faced shifting demands in judge's one-man drug court

By Mario Koran, Phoebe Petrovic, Madeline Fuerstenberg and Jack Kelly
WISCONSIN WATCH

In September 2015, Charles Joe Reuter IV knew two things: He needed help to beat an opioid addiction that landed him behind bars and separated him from his two children, and jail would not provide the treatment he needed.

The then-29-year-old Appleton man faced jail time for a domestic battery conviction, one of several drug-fueled crimes he had committed after 16 years of drug use morphed into heroin addiction.

Had Reuter served his sentence in jail, he would have been free in less than five months. But when Outagamie County Circuit Court Judge Vincent Biskupic agreed to

pause his jail time so he could attend treatment, it sounded appealing.

"I've never gone to jail and then gotten out and been better for it," Reuter told Wisconsin Watch.

Biskupic's offer sounded straightforward: Attend treatment, remain sober and update the court. Reuter's progress would determine whether he would serve the remaining jail sentence, Biskupic indicated.

But as addiction recovery often goes, Reuter made progress, then slid backwards. He attended multiple treatment centers. Court proceedings followed each relapse.

In some ways, Biskupic's approach resembles a drug court, a model that typically offers offenders a way to minimize legal

See COURT, Back Page

Classes (Continued from page 2)

for those who have been out of school for a long while and wish to refresh their skills, particularly in writing and math, for better job placement, according to a news release.

"We have outstanding instructors who care about each student's success and can offer one-on-one instruc-

tion in the areas of math, science, social studies and language arts," Brandi Harris, program coordinator at the Monroe Campus, said in the release.

For more information, contact the Monroe Campus at 608-329-8200 or visit blackhawk.edu/Programs-Classes/GED-HSED.

Legal Notices

NOTICE ELECTRONIC WASTE COLLECTION TOWN OF DECATUR RESIDENTS ONLY

Electronic waste collection will be on Saturday, September 11, 2021 from 7:00am-11:30am at the Town of Decatur Town Hall, which is located at 1408 14th St. Brodhead, WI 53520. Items such as: televisions; computers (desktop, laptop, notebook and tablet computers); printers (including those that scan, fax, and/or copy); computer monitors; other computer accessories (including keyboards, mice, speakers, external hard drives and flash drives); e-readers; DVD players, VCRs and other video players (i.e., DVRs); fax machines; and cell phones will be accepted. **Please bring a valid driver's license or other sufficient proof of residency in the Town to the event.**

Sandra K. McManus, Clerk/Treasurer
The Independent Register, 9/1/2021
WNAXLP 402907

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT ROCK COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME CHANGE OF Elizabeth Camille Rittenhouse

NOTICE AND ORDER FOR NAME CHANGE HEARING
Case No. 2021 CV 521

NOTICE IS GIVEN:
A Petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above from Elizabeth Camille Rittenhouse to Eli Carroll Rittenhouse. Birth Certificate: Elizabeth Camille Lee

IT IS ORDERED:
This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Rock County, State of Wisconsin, HONORABLE JEFFREY S. KUGLITSCH

This hearing will take place via video and/or telephone conferencing. If you wish to appear at the hearing, please contact Judge Kuglitsch's Judicial Assistant at 608-743-2249 at least 48 hours before the hearing. September 28, 2021, 8:45 a.m.

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 608-743-2210 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation. Date Signed: August 12, 2021 Electronically signed by Jeffrey S. Kuglitsch
Circuit Court Judge

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:
Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three (3) weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the Brodhead Register, a newspaper published in Rock County, State of Wisconsin, The Independent Register 8/25, 9/1 & 9/8/2021
WNAXLP 402104

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT GREEN COUNTY

Nationstar Mortgage LLC d/b/a Mr. Cooper, Plaintiff, vs. George Pope; Donna L. Pope; United States of America; United States Attorney, Western District of Wisconsin, Defendants.

Case No. 2019CV000085
NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE
By virtue of a judgment of foreclosure made in the above-entitled action on September 24, 2019, in the amount of \$143,343.02, I will sell at public auction in the ground floor in the conference room of the Green County Justice Center located at 2841 6th St., Monroe, WI 53566, on **September 23, 2021, at 09:00 AM**, all of the following described premises, to wit:
Lot 6 of Certified Survey Map No. 2179, recorded in Volume 7 of Certified Survey Maps of Green County on Page 145 as Document No. 370311 in Section 9, Township 2 North, Range 9 East, Town of Decatur, Green County, Wisconsin
Tax Key No. 23012 01920600
Address: N4124 Oak Hill Circle, Brodhead, WI 53520

THE PROPERTY WILL BE SOLD SUBJECT TO ALL LEGAL ENCUMBRANCES.

TERMS OF SALE:
1. At the time of sale: a downpayment (CASH or CERTIFIED FUNDS only) in an amount not less than 10% of the successful bid; and
2. No later than ten (10) days after the Court confirms the sale:
a. The balance due on the sale;
b. The amount of the transfer fee due under Section 77.22, Wis. Stats., if any; and
c. The amount of the fee due under Section 59.43(2), Wis. Stats., to record the deed and any other document required for such recordation.

DATED at Brodhead, Wisconsin on August 5, 2021.
/s/ Jeffrey Skatrud
Sheriff of Green County, Wisconsin
Bass & Moglowsky, S.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
The Independent Register
9/1, 9/8 & 9/15, 2021
WNAXLP 401493

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT GREEN COUNTY

PRESTIGE FINANCIAL SERVICES INC c/o Messerli & Kramer PA 3033 Campus Drive Suite 250 Plymouth, MN 55441
Plaintiff, vs. Randal L. Hawks 1006 21ST ST TRLR 62 BRODHEAD, WI 53520
Defendant(s)

SUMMONS
Case Code: 30301
Case No. 21CV115

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN
To each person named above as a Defendant(s):
You are hereby notified that the Plaintiff named above has filed a lawsuit or other legal action against you. The Complaint, which is attached, states the nature and basis of the legal action.

Within forty (40) days of September 1, 2021, you must respond with a written answer, as that term is used in Chapter 802 of the Wisconsin Statutes, to the Complaint. The court may reject or disregard an answer that does not follow the requirements of the statutes. The answer must be sent or delivered to the court, whose address is Green County Circuit Court, 2841 6th St., Monroe, WI 53566-1503 and to Messerli & Kramer PA, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is 3033 Campus Drive, Ste. 250 Plymouth, MN 55441. You may have an attorney help or represent you.

If you do not provide a proper answer within forty (40) days, the court may grant judgment against you for the award of money or other legal action requested in the Complaint, and you may lose your right to object to anything that is or may be incorrect in the Complaint. A judgment may be enforced as provided by law. A judgment awarding money may become a lien against any real estate you own now or in the future, and may also be enforced by garnishment or seizure of property.

MESSERLI & KRAMER PA
Samuel J. Olson, #1104219 WI eSigned on 8/24/2021 in Milwaukee County, WI
3033 Campus Drive, Ste. 250 Plymouth, MN 55441
cc-litigatino@messerlikramer.com
Ph#: (763) 548-7900
Fax#: (763) 548-7922

The Independent Register
9/1, 9/8, 9/15/2021
WNAXLP 402756

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT GREEN COUNTY

DANE COUNTY CREDIT UNION, Plaintiff, vs. DEREK J. HOLDEN, Defendant, and GREEN CO. CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT, and STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, Added Defendants.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
Case No: 20-CV-000040
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that by virtue of a judgment of foreclosure entered on December 9, 2020, in the amount of \$105,202.25, the Sheriff will sell the described premises at public auction as follows:
DATE: **September 23, 2021**
TIME: **9:00 a.m.**
PLACE: **Ground Floor Conference Room - Green Co. Justice Center 2841 6th St., Monroe, Wisconsin**

TERMS: Pursuant to said judgment, 10% of the successful bid must be paid to the sheriff at the sale in cash, cashier's check or certified funds, payable to Green Co. Clerk of Courts (personal checks cannot and will not be accepted). The balance of the successful bid must be paid to the Clerk of Courts in cash, cashier's check or certified funds no later than ten (10) days after the court's confirmation of the sale or else the 10% down payment is forfeited to the plaintiff. The property is sold "as is" and subject to all real estate taxes, liens and encumbrances.

NOTICE TO THIRD-PARTY BIDDERS: Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute § 846.155, third-party bidders must meet certain qualifications in order to submit a bid at sale. Included in these qualifications, a third-party bidder may not bid if the third party is more than 120 days delinquent on property taxes or has an unsatisfied court judgment related to a violation of a state or local building code. The prohibition extends to businesses and

parties with which the third-party bidder is connected. Bids may not be later assigned to a person who did not qualify as a third-party bidder at the time of the sale.

If a third-party is the successful bidder at sheriff's sale, the buyer will need to submit an affidavit to the court prior to confirmation that conforms with Wis. Stat. § 846.155(6). Please consult Wis. Stat. § 846.155 for further information on the requirements imposed on third-party bidders.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: Lot One (1), Certified Survey Map No. 1908, recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Green County, Wisconsin, in Volume 6 of Certified Survey Maps, page 195 as Document No. 360503, located in the Town of Exeter, Green County, Wisconsin.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: N8946 Madison St., Belleville, WI 53508
Dated: August 17, 2021.

Jeffrey S. Skatrud, Sheriff
Green County, Wisconsin

Michael A. Sosnay
Attorney for Plaintiff
Darnieder & Sosnay
735 N. Water St., Suite 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202
The Independent Register
8/25, 9/1 & 9/8/2021
WNAXLP 402156

TOWN OF AVON
Zoning and Planning Board Meeting
Avon Town Hall
September 7th, 2021
@ 7:00 p.m.
16513 W Beloit Newark Rd,
Brodhead, WI 53520

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Tuesday, September 7th, 2021 the Zoning and Planning Board of the Town of Avon will be meeting to discuss the amendment of the town's Zoning and Planning Ordinance with the inclusion of Solar Regulations.

If you approve or have an objection to this amendment, please express your actions by letter, telephone, or in person. If we do not hear from you, we will infer that you have no objections. Letters can be mailed to 15444 W Skinner Rd, Brodhead, WI 53520. For a telephone number of one of the Zoning and Planning Board, please contact Stephanie Schwartzlow at 608-921-3656.

Stephanie Schwarzlow
Avon Town Clerk
The Independent Register
9/1/2021
WNAXLP 402685

VILLAGE OF ORFORDVILLE
Notice of Public Hearing
The Planning Commission of the Village of Orfordville will meet on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss a variance to build on a Nonconforming lot. Applicant Job McMahon of MIC-Man Properties LLC, is requesting a variance to be able to build a home on a vacant lot legally described as PT SW1/4 Sater's Addition, Lot 3, located on the East side of Sater Street. The lot is 66 feet wide, current ordinance requires a buildable lot to have a minimum of 75 feet in width. The Village Board will then hear the Planning Commission's recommendation at the Regular Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 27, 2021.

Adjoining landowners and landowners within 100 feet of the above mentioned property will be notified separately by mail.

Sherri Waeger
Village Clerk
The Independent Register
9/1, 9/8/2021
WNAXLP 402771

AGENDA BROADHEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT Finance Committee Meeting Wednesday, September 8, 2021 HIGH SCHOOL L.M.C. 5:00 P.M.

AGENDA
I. REVIEW BILLS
II. REVIEW BUDGET UPDATE
III. ADJOURN
The Independent Register
9/1/2021
WNAXLP 402879

AGENDA BROADHEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING Wednesday, September 8, 2021 DISTRICT OFFICE BOARD ROOM 7:00 P.M. ** BUILDING TOURS WILL TAKE PLACE AT 5:30 P.M., FOLLOWED BY THE REGULAR MEETING ** JOIN WITH GOOGLE MEET: <https://meet.google.com/oiv-jiji-thn> JOIN BY TELEPHONE: +1 727-325-2066 (PIN: 996403637)

I. CALL TO ORDER
II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
III. ROLL CALL
IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS
VII. INFORMATION REPORTS
VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
AGENDA
IX. ADOPTION OF OCTOBER 2021 ANNUAL BOARD MEETING AGENDA
X. APPROVAL OF STUDENT FUNDRAISERS FOR 2021-22
XI. BOARD MEMBER SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT SCHEDULE
XII. APPROVAL OF 2020-21 BUDGET REVISIONS
XIII. REFERENDUM TIMELINE
XIV. COVID-19 UPDATE
XV. ACCEPT DONATION(S)
XVI. RESIGNATION(S)
XVII. EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATION(S)
XVIII. VOLUNTEER RECOMMENDATION(S)
XIX. FUTURE AGENDA
XX. ROLL CALL VOTE TO CONVENE IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO WI. STS. 19.85 (1) (c)
a. Staffing
XXI. ACTION ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS
XXII. ADJOURNMENT
The Independent Register
9/1/2021
WNAXLP 402880

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FIRST WEEK FOOTBALL FRENZY WINNERS

There were 7 entries from two area communities in the first week of The Independent-Register's Football Frenzy Contest. The first place winner of \$20 was Doug Rezner of Brodhead with 6 correct answers and 47 as the most points scored. The second place winner of \$10 was Lynette Von Allman of Albany with 6 correct answers. The most points scored by one team was Johnson Creek vs. Palmyra Eagle with a score of 67-6. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Football Frenzy Contest this week and a special thanks to all our sponsors who make this contest possible.

CONTEST RULES

1. Pick the teams listed in each advertisement on this page. Indicate the winner by writing in the name of the team opposite the advertiser's name in the entry blank. No scores. Just pick winners.
2. Pick a number which you think will be the highest number of points scored by any one team on this page and place this number in the space provided near the bottom of entry blank. This will be used to break ties and if a tie remains, one winner will be chosen via random drawing from all correct entries.
3. One entry only from each contestant. Entries must be brought to The Independent-Register office by 4:30 p.m. Friday or postmarked no later than Friday of each week and mailed to The Independent-Register, 917 W. Exchange St., Brodhead, WI, 53520.
4. Must be ten years of age or older to qualify.

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•Court (Continued from page 5)

consequences if they remain sober, crime-free and participate in a structured program. Outagamie County has offered a drug and alcohol treatment court since 2009.

Instead, Reuter found himself in an ad hoc drug court run by Biskupic — one without a clear timeline and with changing expectations.

Biskupic declined to be interviewed for this story. But in a statement emailed by his attorney, Biskupic said that Outagamie County judges, attorneys and social workers have sought sentencing options that allow defendants to seek treatment for drugs and alcohol in response to a 10-year rise in crimes related to substance abuse. Biskupic said none of the cases have been appealed or reversed by higher courts — suggesting the approach was appropriate.

Between September 2015 and January 2018, Reuter was scheduled to meet with Biskupic at least 13 times for “review hearings” to update the judge on his life and treatment progress. On one occasion, after Reuter missed a court appearance, Biskupic issued an arrest warrant. The judge set no date for when the supervision would end.

In 2018, after Reuter walked away from treatment, Biskupic ordered him back to jail to sit the remainder of his sentence, awarding no credit for his time in treatment.

For Reuter, a sentence that would have meant less than five months in jail stretched on for more than two years. His was not an isolated case.

In 2016, Biskupic temporarily released from jail another defendant, Christopher Kartsounes, so he could attend drug and alcohol treatment. Kartsounes did so, but Biskupic then refused to close his case until he found stable housing. Eventually, Kartsounes relapsed, prompting Biskupic to order him back to jail to complete his sentence.

Had Kartsounes simply sat his jail term from the beginning, he’d have been free more than six months earlier.

Kartsounes struggled to find permanent housing while his case with Biskupic remained open and said the open-ended sentence accelerated a downward spiral that led to prison.

Reuter said he holds no animosity toward Biskupic, whom he described as a “caring judge,” and accepts responsibility for relapsing. But he also said the small degree of freedom Biskupic gave him ultimately hurt him.

“Give someone enough rope, they’ll hang themselves,” Reuter said.

Stayed sentences, vague promises

In some cases, Biskupic has embraced open-ended sentencing since then-Gov. Scott Walker appointed him to the bench in 2014. Only a handful of Wisconsin judges handle cases similarly — and Biskupic is by far the biggest practitioner, a Wisconsin Watch analysis found.

Over the past seven years, Biskupic has also used the tactic as an incentive for defendants to obtain their GEDs or pay fines, restitution and court costs. In court, he used vague language to explain the arrangements, setting no end-date.

Within that time, Biskupic called at least 46 defendants involved in 52 cases back to court for repeated review hearings and issued arrest warrants for failures to appear, court documents show.

The sentences Biskupic issued typically depended on defendants’ sobriety. All had been on probation — a sentence that allows someone to remain in the community so long as they stay crime-free, report to a probation agent and follow a list of rules — but had their probation revoked for violating rules before Biskupic began supervising



DAN POWERS/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN/VIA WISCONSIN WATCH
Brodhead Independent-Register

In 2016, Outagamie County Circuit Judge Vincent Biskupic temporarily released Christopher Kartsounes from jail, so he could attend drug and alcohol treatment. Kartsounes completed the program, but Biskupic then refused to close his case until he found stable housing. Eventually, Kartsounes relapsed. After he did, Biskupic ordered him back to jail to complete his sentence. Kartsounes says his case with Biskupic only accelerated a downward spiral that resulted in more alcohol-related charges and landed him in prison.

them.

Typically, judges send defendants to jail or prison when their probation is revoked. But Biskupic “stayed” their sentences, pausing their jail terms while they attended treatment. He could either stay that sentence permanently or, if defendants floundered, he could lift the stay, sending defendants back to jail.

The arrangement gives defendants the chance to avoid additional jail time or close their cases early. But Kartsounes and Reuter’s months in treatment only lengthened their supervision.

Of the 16 defendants whose sentences Biskupic paused so they could attend drug or alcohol treatment, at least 11 re-

turned to jail after participating in treatment, whether they remained in lock-up or were allowed to leave jail for work.

“Positive reinforcement works much better as a behavioral modification tool than negative reinforcement,” said Bernie Vetrone, Outagamie County’s director of criminal justice treatment services.

Success in treatment earns new freedoms or fewer check-ins, and could potentially close a case early. But those who fail can pay a heavy price, serving the time behind bars they aimed to avoid.

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Unstructured program

Unlike in official drug or alcohol courts, Biskupic alone called the shots in his model. Review hearings stood in for the weekly court appearances required by the drug court program. He offered no treatment team or structured program.

It often fell on defendants to contact a county-contracted coordinator to secure treatment, court records indicate — no easy task for inmates lacking free access to phone and internet.

Vetrone, whose department helps coordinate several programs for offenders in the county, said he was not immediately familiar with Biskupic’s approach.

Vetrone called Biskupic a diligent judge and said his approach, as described, could mean more accountability for low-level offenders who may fall through the cracks of traditional probation.

“Is it normal? Not really. But is it inappropriate? No, not, in my opinion,” Vetrone said of Biskupic’s approach.

Drug court criticism

Nationally, about 3,700 drug courts exist today. But as the treatment model proliferated, some experts have raised concerns about exaggerated benefits and minimized risks.

About half of all drug court

participants nationally ultimately fail. That’s an understated concern about such programs, said Kerwin Kaye, an associate professor of sociology at Wesleyan University and author of a book about drug courts.

Between 2014 and 2020, Outagamie County’s official drug and alcohol court saw 57 graduations and 57 terminations or withdrawals — in line with the national average.

In his research, Kaye found that drug court coordinators often fail to properly underscore the consequences of failing to complete a program before participants agree to it.

Kartsounes mistakenly believed that completing treatment would waive his jail time. Even with guidance from a public defender, he said, he only understood the deal in its broadest terms. In the end, Kartsounes said his prolonged case with Biskupic prompted further legal trouble that ultimately landed him in state prison.

In the nearly two years Reuter’s case with Biskupic remained open, he attended four separate treatment programs. During periods of sobriety, Biskupic praised Reuter and encouraged him to keep pursuing his education at Fox Valley Technical College.

But in 2018, after he walked away from a local treatment program before completing it — a “bonehead decision” driven by a compulsion to get high, Reuter said in court — Biskupic finally ordered him back to jail.

“This file has to wind down. You have done more than most people,” Biskupic told Reuter, adding later: “We’re to the point where, you know, at least from my situation, I can’t do much more.”

Reuter was not credited for his time in treatment. To Kaye, that represents one of the biggest concerns, for Biskupic’s model and for treatment courts writ large.

“Don’t penalize people for trying to do treatment. You should, under no circumstances, end up with a longer prison sentence after having gone through a drug court than you would have gotten otherwise,” Kaye said.

Phoebe Petrovic is a Reporter for America corps member. This piece was produced for the NEW News Lab, a local news collaboration in Northeast Wisconsin. The nonprofit Wisconsin Watch (www.wisconsinwatch.org) collaborates with WPR, Wisconsin PBS, other news media and the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication. All works created, published, posted or disseminated by Wisconsin Watch do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of UW-Madison or any of its affiliates.

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