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Among the many events sponsored and run by the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce is the annual SNOLF event, which combines snow and golf at Evergreen Golf Club.

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ELKHORN AREA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
Elkhorn Our Town



Elkhorn continues to be a place to live, work and enjoy in harmony

Celebrating the City of Elkhorn is easy when at the heart of our city you'll find FUN!

The community's event calendar continues to grow, and the excitement is mounting! 2024 kicks off with the fifth Annual Spring Food Truck Festival

on May 18. The festival features 20-plus food trucks, live music, kid's activities, a vendor and craft fair and specials at businesses located downtown.

Saturdays on the Square makes its way back to downtown Elkhorn for the sixth year. This weekend market features a fresh market with seasonal items, crafters, wellness workouts and local food stands gathering on the square, Saturdays starting May 25 and running until Aug. 31.

Antique enthusiasts from all over the Midwest will find treasures abound at the largest Antique Flea Market, with more than 500 vendors filling the fairgrounds four times throughout the summer.

Elkhorn Ribfest will celebrate its sixth year of good food, good music and good times for five full days, which will run July 10-14. Admission and parking are free and this year more than 100,000 visitors are expected to attend and taste the best BBQ in the nation.

For more information, visit wisconsinribfest.com.

Elkhorn Truck & Shuck to be held on July 27, with the Elkhorn Chamber providing locally sourced roasted sweet corn, food trucks, craft and commercial vendors, music and entertainment for the entire community to enjoy.

New to the Walworth County Fairgrounds is Neon Nights. A two-day country festival hosted Aug. 2



By **CHRIS CLAPPER**

*Executive Director
Elkhorn Area Chamber
of Commerce &
Tourism Center*

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2024 Elkhorn, Wisconsin **our town**

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on the cover: Scenes from the annual Walworth County Fair are always worth a gander, especially as people flood the grounds each year.

DAVE DRESHOW AND JENNIFER EISENBART *Elkhorn Our Town*

'So happy to be back'

Annie's Burgertown in Elkhorn reopens eight months after devastating fire

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

For owners Jeff and Maria Halpin, Feb. 5 was an emotional experience eight months in the making.

After a fire at Annie's Burgertown shut down the business May 18, the couple had hoped to reopen in the fall. But delays on engineering and construction continued to push back the reopening of the popular drive-in restaurant.

The Monday of Feb. 5, though, marked the day customers came back to the drive-in, with the full menu of burgers, hot dogs, sandwiches, fries, cheese curds, ice cream and homemade root beer all available for the buying.

"Good news, we've been very busy," Maria said. "The bad news, I don't have time to comment."

Their daughter, Lia Sardo, piped in, "We're not going to complain about it. We're too happy to be back!"

Over the weekend before the reopening, Maria talked about the lengthy process that followed the fire. Originally, she and Jeff had hoped to potentially reopen the business in October or November and hold a grand celebration.

But after first waiting for insurance adjustors to evaluate the fire, Maria said other delays were added to the mix.

"It seems much longer than we thought



repainting a portion of the building and the overhang that covers the drive-up parking spots. Everything else is back, including the carhops that the business is famous for.

"It's been long for all of us," Maria said.

She went on to say that they were grateful for the response from the Elkhorn community. She and Jeff had insurance on the business, but employees, residents of Elkhorn and others rallied to raise close to \$11,000 in a GoFundMe

it would be originally," she said. "And really, we're still not 100% finished."

Now, though, just one repair remains – the replacement of the large front window that was broken out when firefighters extinguished the blaze. A piece of wood remains to enclose the structure, and the window is on order.

"We didn't want to wait any longer," Maria explained. "At some point, you just have to pick a day."

From there, it's just a matter of

effort and even more from donations and t-shirt sales through Hansen's Screen Printing in Elkhorn.

There was a silver lining, though, to being closed. Maria and Jeff's oldest, Lia, was married this fall. The couple's oldest son, Nick, was also married during the closure.

"We've had some real highs and some real lows this year," Maria said. "We're just so happy to be back. We'll get back in the swing of things."



Annie's Burgertown, located at 645 N. Lincoln St., Elkhorn, reopened for the first time Feb. 5 since a fire closed the drive-in restaurant May 18.

inset: Lia Sardo, the daughter of owners Jeff and Maria Halpin, carhops for the restaurant during the reopening.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Elkhorn Our Town*

World champion



Elkhorn's Jessica Haggerty brings home powerlifting title

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

Back in June of 2023, Elkhorn senior-to-be Jessica Haggerty announced her goals clearly.

When she went to Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in August, she wanted to come home a world champion.

Haggerty has reached her goal.

Competing this past summer, Haggerty topped the 11-person, 52-kilogram (114 pounds) division of the International Powerlifting Federation World Classic and Equipped Sub-Junior and Junior Powerlifting Championships.

Haggerty finished with 90.37 points to win the sub-junior division. She squatted 130 kilograms (286.6 pounds), bench pressed 82.5 kilograms (181.88 pounds) and deadlifted 140 kilograms (308.6 pounds).

She finished second in terms of weight lifted in the squat, won the bench press and finished second in the deadlift.

That placed her ahead of Elisa Misiano of Italy, who took second, and Cassandre Olivier of France, who was third.

"I'm very happy," she said. "From all my



above: Elkhorn resident Jessica Haggerty celebrates after getting a personal best of 140 kilograms in the deadlift at the International Powerlifting Federation World Classic and Equipped Sub-Junior and Junior Powerlifting Championships in August of 2023. **top:** Haggerty stands on top of the podium after winning the 52-kilogram weight class at the August 2023 event.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

SEAN HAGGERTY *Elkhorn Our Town*

More bargains at more locations

Best Bargains to open Elkhorn location soon

BY **Jennifer Eisenbart** • EDITOR

For Doug Helnore, owner of Best Bargains, there is a simple philosophy about the food he sells.

“We’re a master redistributor of wholesale goods cross country,” said Helnore, who purchased full ownership of Best Bargains in 2019 after being a partner since 2003.

In November of 2022, Helnore’s Best Bargains opened a new store at 210 S. Pine St., Burlington, in addition to its main store at 6515 352nd Ave., Burlington – technically,

though most refer to the store as being in New Munster.

Now, the company will have a store in Elkhorn, which Helnore hopes to have open this spring.

The new store will be located at 3 E. Geneva St., Elkhorn – where the former Pharmacy Station was for years.

Helnore said the site features about double the square feet of the newer Burlington store, and appealed to him on many levels.

“One, it had its own parking. Two, it had its own sign,” Helnore said. “Three, it had a huge basement. Four, it’s about double the size of Burlington.

“We’re going to have both restaurant and retail items, more like our New Munster location,” he added.

Helnore explained that Best

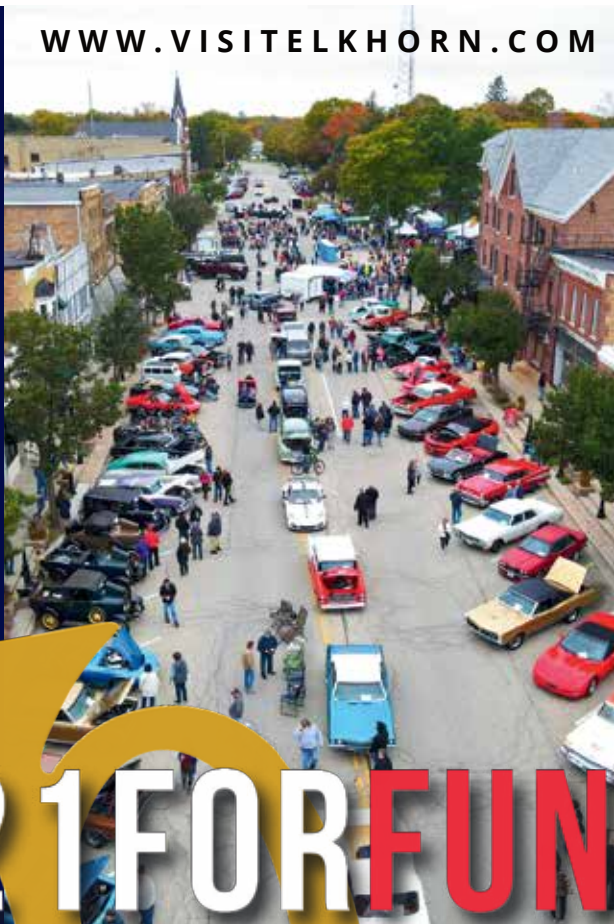


SUBMITTED PHOTO *Elkhorn Our Town*

2024 EVENTS

- ANTIQUE FLEA MARKETS
May 19, June 30, Aug 11, Sept 29
- FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL
May 18, 2024
- SATURDAYS ON THE SQUARE
May 25 - Aug 31, 2024
- ELKHORN RIBFEST
July 10 - 14, 2024
- ELKHORN TRUCK & SHUCK
July 27, 2024
- NEON NIGHTS
August 2nd - 3rd, 2024
- WALWORTH COUNTY FAIR
Aug 28 - Sept 2, 2024
- ELKHORN OKTOBERFEST
October 19, 2024
- LET IT GLOW
Dec 6-8, 2024
- AND MORE...

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#53121 FOR FUN



above: The former Pharmacy Station in Elkhorn will be the site of the newest Best Bargains store. **opposite:** Best Bargains owner Doug Helnore stands in front of the Burlington outlet store. He hopes to open the new location in Elkhorn this spring.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Elkhorn Our Town*

Bargains operates and offers its deals because they can buy and sell in bulk.

“We will sell to larger distributors by the truckload,” he said. “Along with that, I sell to prison distributors and grocery distributors.

“We have access to so many deals that a lot of retail chains don’t,” he explained, adding that the store also re-boxes and repacks restaurant-quality food.

Best Bargains receives oversupplies, then puts them out under its own private labels, selling them to the consumers in smaller, home-sized packages. The same goes for food service oversupply.

The result is lower prices on a larger variety of items – rather like a warehouse club store but without any membership fees and that is open to the public.

Helnore pointed out there’s a difference between restaurant-quality foods and retail foods.

“What we give people is better quality at a much lower price,” he explained. “It’s not all items, but generally all the items they sell in the grocery store ... will be all

the mis-sized stuff.”

“Restaurant quality, the bottom line is it’s more of a uniform consistency and size,” Helnore added.

The Burlington outlet store on South Pine Street stocks mostly retail items, but the main Burlington (New Munster) and Elkhorn sites will have both retail and restaurant foods.

That gives people a chance to purchase items like restaurant-quality French fries, choice cuts of meat, unique desserts and various types of seafood as well as offering a deli with a large amount of variety.

“Our main goal is buying in quantity at the right time of year and partnerships – close, honest partnerships – with our vendors and customers,” he said.

Helnore explained that the new store has been in the works for more than a year, but it was a matter of finding the right location.

When a business associate purchased the former Pharmacy Station, Helnore said it seemed like a match made in heaven.

“We got a favorable lease,” he said. “Things just came together in the right

way.”

Helnore hopes to maintain the same quality of employee service as well, which he said is an important part of the equation.

“It’s a close-knit bunch of people who stay here a long time,” he said, adding that he has about 55-60 employees. “They understand the main goal – take care of the customer and move as many boxes and bags as possible.”

As far as a next potential step, Helnore said he hopes to open a new location, perhaps in Janesville or Whitewater.

The goal, of course, is a satisfied customer, who are presented an option to stretch their food budget.

“I think they get a better quality at a cheaper price,” Helnore explained.

“And I’m hoping to offer the restaurants and bars in the area the opportunity to buy at a cheaper price, in lower volumes.”

Best Bargains is online at www.bestbargainsinc.com.

To reach Best Bargain’s main office, call 262-537-2639, or the store at 262-537-4407.

CHAMPION • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

successes, obviously this one meant the most. I really had to fight for it.”

It was a busy year for Haggerty, who also won a state title in her weight class and went on to win a national title in the same weight class to qualify for the international meet.

This is all from a powerlifter who really only started the sport during the COVID-19 pandemic in support of her brother, who was training for the Special Olympics.

“I started with them, and the coach saw I had potential,” said Haggerty back in June.

That potential has paid off in three titles this year – and hopefully a future in the fledgling sport. Powerlifting differs from weightlifting, which is an Olympic sport.

In weightlifting, there are two different kinds of lifts – the snatch and the clean and

jerk. Those two lifts involve pushing the barbell and its accompanying weight over one’s head.

In powerlifting, there are three lifts – the squat, the bench press and the deadlift. In competition, the athlete must register a competitive lift in each of the three disciplines or be disqualified. Athletes get three attempts at each category, deciding what weight to start lifting at and hoping to improve in each subsequent lift.

In Romania, Haggerty started off with her squat lift – and promptly missed her first two attempts. Faced with a disqualification if she didn’t get a weight, Haggerty did register a left in her third lift.

“I knew that it was there. I wasn’t expecting to start off the session like that, but I’m happy it happened,” she said. “I

learned a lot from it. Take my time, don’t rush. Take my time with my steps. It’s a huge takeaway. It’s not something I’ve ever struggled with before, so now it’s something I’ll be more intentional with.”

She followed up with a 3-for-3 performance in the bench press, again saying she made sure to take her time and focus on technique.

She was also pleased with her deadlift, again going 3-for-3 and lifting a personal best.

Haggerty stressed that missing her first two lifts in the squats actually worked to her advantage.

“This is the best meet I’ve ever had,” she said. “I feel like I grew, a lot. To finish it off with the deadlift, I was just super satisfied.”

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Left: Braelyn Fletcher, now an eighth grader at Elkhorn Middle School, is a new youth ambassador for the American Heart Association. Above: a younger Fletcher is shown with her mother.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS *Elkhorn Our Town*

Getting at the heart of it all

LOCAL MIDDLE SCHOOLER SERVES AS YOUTH HEART AMBASSADOR

BY **Dan Truttschel** • AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

A devastating diagnosis at birth hasn't slowed down Elkhorn's Braelyn Fletcher one bit.

In fact, she's not only surviving, she's thriving.

Fletcher, who is now in eighth grade at Elkhorn Area Middle School, was selected by the American Heart Association, a global force for healthier lives for all, to serve as a volunteer Community Youth Heart Ambassador for the 2023-24 school year.

She will work closely with the American Heart Association's in-school programs, Kids Heart Challenge and American Heart Challenge to actively and passionately champion other children to establish healthy habits to better mental and physical well-being.

The American Heart Association accepted nominations from young people who have been affected by heart disease or stroke either through a personal diagnosis, diagnosis of a loved one, or has made a personal lifestyle change, to serve in the Youth Heart Ambassador role.

Braelyn was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome – in laymen's terms, she had half a heart. She underwent three different open-heart surgeries before she was even three years old.

According to Braelyn's mother, Tricia Fletcher, there would have been little that could have been done for her daughter until recent medical advancements.

Before her diagnosis, Tricia noticed something wrong with her newborn, which eventually led doctors to send her to Children's Hospital in Madison.

"Braelyn has shown through her heart journey what a strong, brave, courageous person she is," Tricia Fletcher said. "She will never be the fastest runner or be able to participate in most sports, but she is determined to do the best in everything she does."

Through the efforts of many, Braelyn is doing very well, her mother said.

"The doctors would always say she was a 'textbook' (hypoplastic left heart syndrome) baby, as she was hitting all the milestones they wanted to see," Tricia Fletcher said. "We have been very fortunate that she has done so well. Children's Hospital of Wisconsin has been a true blessing to us."

Braelyn first became involved with the Kids Heart Challenge in kindergarten, and continued in the program through fifth grade – she credited her gym teacher, Chris Behrens, with sparking her interest in helping others.

"(He) really took me under his wing my kindergarten year and wanted to show the rest of the school who we were raising money for," she said. "It made me feel a little like a celebrity in the school, and I was happy that kids could see that I was just a normal kid, even though I had a special heart."

The journey certainly hasn't been an easy one for Braelyn, she said in a video

that was made prior to the 2020-21 school year.

"Sometimes it's hard to have a heart condition, because I just want to be like everyone else and be able to do what everyone else does," she said. "It is hard to be different, but it has also taught me to love myself for who I am, that everyone is different, and that's OK."

The Youth Heart Ambassadors serve a one-year commitment as a volunteer of the American Heart Association, assisting the organization to be a relentless force for healthier lives for all. The position gives youth a voice to encourage, advocate and underscore the need to raise critical funding as they share the impact cardiovascular disease has had on their life.

"It's exciting to see one of our local youths share their voice and experience to help others live heart healthy" said Lisa Schweitzer, American Heart Association Senior Development Director. "Braelyn has an incredible story to share and we are excited to see the impact she will make in our local schools and in schools across the country."

Rooted in physical activity, Kids Heart Challenge and American Heart Challenge are service-learning programs that teach students how to improve their overall health while doing good for the health of others. Through interactive curriculums and various online challenges, participating students get active and have

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Early diagnosis key for Elkhorn youngster

Finley Moore second of two new Community Youth Heart Ambassadors

By **Dan Truttschel**

MILWAUKEE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Just three days into her young life, doctors realized there was something seriously amiss with Finley Moore's heart.

What started first looked like a heart murmur, eventually led to an ambulance ride to Children's Hospital, followed by a few days in the neonatal intensive care unit before Finley, now 6, was diagnosed with heterotaxy, which meant that most of her internal organs were located on the opposite side of her body – and that diagnosis led to multiple critical heart defects as an infant.

Just two months later, Finley had a nine-hour open-heart surgery to repair those defects.

Fast forward to today, and Finley has grown into a feisty, fun-loving girl who enjoys school, friends, giving "hug attacks" and dancing competitively at The Dance Factory in Delavan.

And when it comes to the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge, Finley, who just began her first-grade year, already is at the head of her class at Jackson Elementary School as the top fundraiser in her first year with the program.

Finley, the daughter of Joshua and Rita Moore, recently was selected by the American Heart Association, a global force for healthier lives for all, to serve as a volunteer Community Youth Heart Ambassador for the 2023-24 school year. She will work closely with the American Heart Association's in-school programs, Kids Heart Challenge™ and American Heart Challenge™ to actively and passionately champion other children to establish healthy habits to better mental and physical well-being.

"Finley is very excited about this opportunity to be a Youth Heart Ambassador," Rita Moore said. "She's excited to share her story and show kids and adults alike that heart health is important, and that people with differences are amazing. Joshua and I are incredibly excited as well. We had no idea what it meant to be a parent of a child with complex heart defects. It was terrifying to be thrust into this world of medical appointments, fear for her future and uncertainty.

"We didn't even know that the Herma Heart Institute existed, and we never considered that babies could be born needing cardiac and heart surgery. We are really excited to have this opportunity to share our story and teach others about this world. If we can help bring awareness to even one family, that's everything to us."

The American Heart Association accepted



Elkhorn native Finley Moore, shown here smiling and enjoying life, was diagnosed with heterotaxy at a very young age, meaning most internal organs are on the opposite side of the body. That led to open-heart surgery at two months old. Now, Moore, 6, is a Community Youth Heart Ambassador for the American Heart Association.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS *Elkhorn Our Town*



nominations from young people who have been affected by heart disease or stroke either through a personal diagnosis, diagnosis of a loved one, or has made a personal lifestyle change, to serve in the Youth Heart Ambassador role.

The Youth Heart Ambassador position gives youth a voice to encourage, advocate and underscore the need to raise critical funding as they share the impact cardiovascular disease has had on their life.

"The American Heart Association has been so wonderful to our family and Finley," Rita Moore said. "Just a few months after her surgery, her older brother, Renly, was able to participate in the 'Kids Heart Challenge' and feel excitement about heart health and 'heart things' weren't all scary and terrible."

Video spurs interest

Rita Moore credited Jackson Elementary's Heart Challenge Coordinator, Ciara Stilling, with encouraging Finley to jump into the Kids Heart Challenge last year. A short video was made to explain Finley's condition, which was shown to the school and encouraged her classmates to join in.

And that video was a huge hit, Rita said.

"The day it was shown, Finley came home thrilled," she said. "So many of her

classmates, kids on her bus and kids she didn't even know came up to her and told her how cool and tough she was. Many of her classmates had no idea about her heart condition and were even more excited to do the challenge after learning about it."

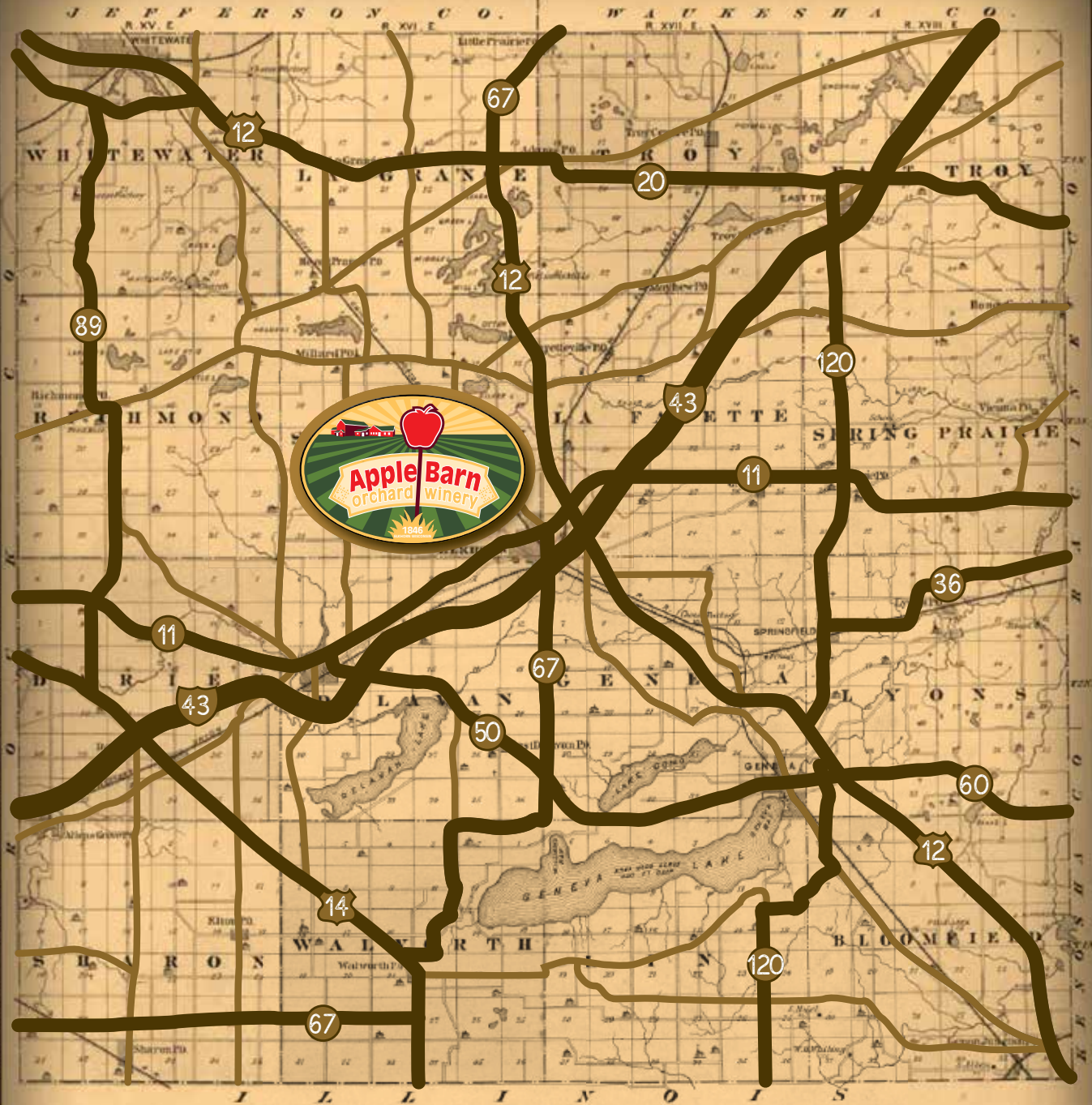
Rita Moore said her daughter has an outgoing personality, but that doesn't mean there haven't been some struggles along the way knowing that she is "different" than other children. But her involvement in the Kids Heart Challenge has helped build that confidence, her mother said.

"It's not always easy being different, having a visible scar on her chest or feeling tired when being active," Rita said. "Being involved with the AHA and Kids Heart Challenge has empowered her so much to see her strength and continue to be her amazing self."

Finley will always require regular cardiac checkups, her mother said, and more surgeries are coming to address her defective valves, but those aren't going to slow her down.

"She's really excited to share her story again this year and get her friends and community involved," Rita said. "She wants everyone to know that kids with 'special hearts' exist and are incredible people."

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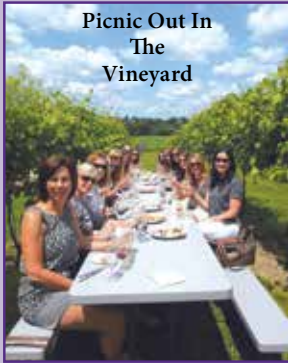
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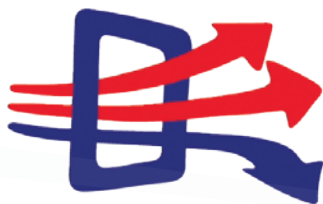


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The City of Elkhorn Common Council meets the first and third Mondays of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 9 S. Broad St.

The Plan Commission meets the first and third Thursday of the month as needed.

The Financial & Judicial Committee generally meets the second and fourth Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

The Municipal Services & Utilities Committee generally meets the second and fourth Mondays at 5:30 p.m.

Other committees meet on an as-needed basis. The meetings are open to the public.

For more information, visit cityofelkhorn.org.

CITY HALL

9 S. Broad St., Elkhorn
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www.cityofelkhorn.org
Hours: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

ELECTED OFFICIALS

MAYOR*

This position is up for election this spring, with current aldermen Karel Young and Tim Shiroda on the ballot.

ALDERMEN

District 1*
Tim Shiroda
(262) 723-7557
tshiroda@cityofelkhorn.org

District 2
Gary Payson Jr.
(262) 215-1989
gpayson@cityofelkhorn.org

District 3*
Ronald Dunwiddie
(262) 723-3107
rdunwiddie@cityofelkhorn.org

District 4*
Scott McClory
(262) 903-9811
smccclory@cityofelkhorn.org

District 5
Ken Meinel
(262) 723-4425
kmeinel@cityofelkhorn.org

District 6*

Kurt Harkness is running unopposed for this seat, to fill the position of Karel Young.

* Indicates position on the ballot this April. Tim Shiroda's seat will have to be filled if he is elected mayor, while Dunwiddie and McClory are running unopposed.

CITY STAFF

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MUNICIPAL COURT

Up for election this spring
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elkmunicourt@cityofelkhorn.org

FIRE CHIEF

Interim – Trent Eichmann
(262) 723-2277
rsmith@cityofelkhorn.org

AMBULANCE CLERK

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Hagenow earns 76th Alice in Dairyland title

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

With Walworth County playing host – in person this time versus a virtual event in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic – the 76th Alice in Dairyland was selected in May of 2023 at the Grand Geneva.

Ashley Hagenow of Poynette was picked from the field of six finalists. She is a senior at the University of Minnesota and will graduate this month with a bachelor's degree in agricultural community and marketing and minors in animal science, and agricultural and food business management.

"To serve in the role of Alice in Dairyland is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, as the official ambassador of Wisconsin's abundant and diverse agriculture industry," Hagenow said. "I have always loved connecting with others about agriculture, and Alice has the ability to connect with a wide variety of consumers to share more about this dynamic industry and the hard-working individuals who make it possible."

The full-time communications position will start for Hagenow July 5. She will work with the media, youth organizations, civic groups and a wide array of local events to help people better understand the state's agricultural industries.

The other five finalists were: Shannon Lamb, Dane; Lydia Luebke, Kiel; Jackie Rosenbush, Sarona; Charitee Seebecker, Mauston; and Jodie Weyland, Neenah.

The six finalists made a tour around Walworth County May 11 and 12, visiting Pinn-Oak Farms in Delavan, DeBuck's Sod Farm in Delavan, Staller Estate Winery in Delavan and Sunshine Genetics in Whitewater, among



ASHLEY HAGENOW

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

and 3, it will feature a classic country line-up you don't want to miss.

Natives and guests from all over will celebrate local agriculture, classic fair fare and grandstand entertainment at the 175th Walworth County Fair, which will be held Aug. 28 through Sept. 2 with a theme of "Stars, Stripes and Fair Delights."

Elkhorn Oktoberfest continues to be a local favorite and will be celebrating its 19th year on Oct. 19. Visit the Oktoberfest Tent for a variety of German brews. Stroll through Veterans Park and shop over 100 crafters and vendors.

Walk the streets to find a variety of food, listen to live music, a classic car show, kids' activities, and entertainment by community groups and local music talent. Grab your walking map, which details downtown business specials, and explore Elkhorn.

The Christmas Card Town and its Christmas parade will mark the 43rd year with families and friends lining the streets to see the floats, music, novelty acts and, of course, Santa and Mrs. Claus, on the first Saturday in December. You can also visit the Clauses the night before the parade at the Town Tree Lighting in the Square, Dec. 6, and at Let It Glow at the Uncle Hunk's Junk Building following the tree lighting. Let It Glow will celebrate Santa Dec. 6-8. Businesses and community groups celebrate with lit displays and festive attire to usher in

the holiday spirit.

In the best effort to support one another, the Elkhorn Chamber will host the annual Community Christmas Meal on Christmas Day, Dec. 25, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Elkhorn is fun and lively. We are also very serious about a strong business sector offering unique shops and quality restaurants for those who live here and for those who visit. Elkhorn not only supports services you'd expect in the county seat but also a thriving business and industrial park with company names many will be sure to recognize.

Visitors to the area quickly discover why our residents would not choose to live anywhere else. Elkhorn has outstanding livability coupled with a vibrant business community, excellent public and faith-based learning environments, and a post-secondary educational system for students of all ages.

HAGENOW • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

other places.

Interviews were done at the Grand Geneva, with the banquet and finale program the next night, also at the Grand Geneva.

"It was fabulous," said Sue Earle, the chairperson of the Walworth County steering committee. "We had such a fabulous time Saturday evening.

"The companies around our area that we

Residents have access to quality health care, a variety of housing options and numerous places to worship together.

For our outdoor enthusiasts, Elkhorn has hiking and biking trails, area lakes for fishing and boating, two golf courses and a nearby ski hill. Stop by Sunset Park and visit the local pool, band shell and numerous playgrounds ready for exploring.

Our growing "small-town" community truly is a place to live, work and enjoy in harmony.

For more information about the community and its events, please call the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Center at 262-723-5788, visit us online at www.elkhornchamber.com, on Facebook or drop by our office at 203 E. Walworth St.

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visited were phenomenal," Earle added. "They provided an atmosphere of learning, but they focused on the candidates."

Earle offered thanks to the committee, which includes Katy Katzman (Whitewater), Chris Clapper (Elkhorn), Kim Flitcroft (Elkhorn), Derrick Papcke (Elkhorn) and Susan Smolarek (Lake Geneva).

"I cannot thank my committee enough, for everything we did together," she added.

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Their little corner of paradise

Young couple returns to area and opens successful business

BY **Jennifer Eisenbart** • EDITOR

For Kyle Hoskins and Emily Remington Hoskins, it's a partnership that started at Elkhorn Area High School – and has brought them full circle back to their hometown.

A couple in high school – and while at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls – the two both graduated in 2017 with a clear idea of what the future would hold.

"I think we always wanted to work for ourselves," Emily explained. "We had no idea what it was going to be, and then it just kind of happened."

Kyle and Emily are owners of CaribBean, a small drive-through/in-house coffee shop located at N6419 Highway 12, Elkhorn – very near the crossroads of highways 12 and ES.

The small store not only offers coffee – of the cold and hot variety – and tea, but Cedar Crest ice cream, a variety of baked goods and a breakfast sandwich featuring sausage from Jones Dairy Farm in Fort Atkinson.

Kyle admits that he never really thought about owning a coffee shop.

"We weren't in love with coffee," Kyle explained. "We wanted to work for



Emily Remington Hoskins (left) and husband Kyle Hoskins own CaribBean, a small coffee shop near the intersection of highways 12 and ES. Both are Elkhorn Area High School and UW-River Falls graduates.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS *Elkhorn Our Town*

ourselves. It was just a good opportunity."

CaribBean is an obvious play on the Caribbean – an area full of islands and reefs, and an area known for unique coffee.

But when Kyle and Emily took over the small building they currently occupy, it really didn't have much of an identity at all. Formerly a drive-through liquor store, the building had sat empty for a number of years before it was purchased.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



CaribBean, N6419 Highway 12, Elkhorn, is a small coffee shop that does most of its business through its drive-through, but also offers a comfortable interior. In addition to seating inside, there is also CaribBean merchandise for sale as well as jams and CBD products.



When it was put up for rent – and Kyle and Emily chose to return from a sojourn to California – the match just seemed to fit.

They wanted to come back because of “family, friends, community, Elkhorn,” Kyle said.

Since starting the business roughly four years ago, the building has seen several changes. The interior features a polished wood floor, comfortable seating and a small but cozy atmosphere.

A large chalkboard lists all the drinks for sale, which cover the usual gamut of a coffee shop, with lattes, Americanos, mochas, Café au Lait and the like. Kyle and Emily use Anodyne Coffee out of Milwaukee, a popular local brand.

In order to handle the variety of flavored drinks, the couple uses the ever-popular Monin syrup, but locally sources both its chocolate and caramel syrups out of Hollander (Fox Point, Wisconsin).

“We try to use local whenever we can,” Emily explained.

What CaribBean does differently is the theme. Caribbean-inspired décor and music inside are just the start. The featured Montego Bay specialty latte has coconut as one of its ingredients, and a specialty “Rasta” smoothie includes all three available smoothie flavors – mango,

strawberry-banana and frozen lemonade – combined into one.

Gone are the television and Plug and Play games. Kyle and Emily said the majority of the business – they estimate close to 90% – comes through the drive-through now, an after-effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“They just got into that mode,” Kyle said of the business’s customers. “The drive-through saved us.”

The bustling business doesn’t preclude people from coming inside to see some of the other unusual offerings, though. CBD products – gummies, balms and sleep tinctures – are available for sale, as are jams from J&J Jams.

The Cedar Crest ice cream variety changes somewhat with the season – in the fall, pumpkin pie was popular – but there are also the basics like chocolate and vanilla.

Like other coffee shops, seasonal flavors do vary. Kyle and Emily explain they prefer pumpkin pie flavoring to pumpkin spice, hence the difference in their fall menu.

Hours at CaribBean are Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, search for CaribBean on Facebook.

fun while raising funds and awareness for congenital heart defects, nutrition security, CPR training, mental well-being and more.

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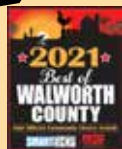
Both Braelyn and her mother are excited for what’s ahead, as Braelyn embarks on this role with the American Heart Association.

“We have come so far, but there is still so much more that needs to be done,” Tricia Fletcher said.

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Kullberg Jewelers spent 78 years in Elkhorn

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

More than 78 years ago, a young man came to Elkhorn with the dream of opening his own jewelry store.

Since then, Kullberg Jewelers was a fixture in downtown Elkhorn, currently residing at 15 S. Wisconsin St.

World War II had just ended when Walter Kullberg came to Elkhorn, but now, 24 years into a new century, Kullberg Jewelers has shut its doors.

The family run business held its going-out-of-business sale in December.

“It was just time,” said Cheryl, who pointed out that Chuck retired four years ago.

“The things you want to do as a retired couple, you can’t do because I’m still working. It was just time,” she added.

Cheryl explained that they didn’t want to sell the name.

“After 78 years of building up the reputation and the integrity and respect the family name had, I didn’t want to sell that,” Cheryl added. “Having someone else run a family business when we’re not in it.”

“This will be our last Christmas,” she



Cheryl (left) and Chuck Kullberg have taken Kullberg Jewelers through more than 40 years of business, which ended in December of 2023 when the couple retired.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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said prior to the business' long tenure coming to an end.

World War II boom

Following the end of the second World War, Walter Kullberg was a watchmaker who had graduated from the Elgin Watchmaker's College.

During the war, he worked for Borg Instruments making timers for the U.S. military.

When the war was over, a jewelry store – Graf Jeweler – was available for sale.

“And Walter was able to purchase that business,” Cheryl said.

Since then, Kullberg Jewelers has remained the only constant downtown jewelry store through those 78 years, though another store operated for many years in Elkhorn.

On the Kullberg website, Walter Kullberg is described as “a gentle, soft-spoken man with a simple formula for success: Offer your customer quality, value, integrity and service beyond expectation.”

Cheryl explained that, back in the day, jewelers did everything from fitting glasses to ordering china and flatware.

“We even repaired electric razors at one point,” she explained. “Now it’s jewelry, in-house jewelry repair and custom



This picture shows Walter Kullberg, a watchmaker, as he prepared to take over a jewelry story in Elkhorn in 1945. That business became Kullberg Jewelers.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Elkhorn Our Town*

design.”

Cheryl was the artist behind the custom design. She explained that people would come in with family heirloom jewelry, and work with her to put the stones and other pieces into a “reimagined” piece.

Cheryl said she’s done hundreds of pieces over the years, though that part of the business is shut down now.

One last sale

While in the final days of being open, Cheryl said it was fun to watch customers come in and get excited over a bargain, but also was a trip down memory lane.

“I’m just so grateful that our family got to do what we love for so many years,” Cheryl said. “Our customers have let us be a part of their stories, their heirlooms and their traditions.

“They’re telling me stories and what a part we were to their life,” she added. “It’s very heartwarming to hear.”

Cheryl said there were fifth generations of families coming to the store.

She and Chuck penned a “thank you” letter to their customers that she planned to post it online for all to see.

But she also wanted to extend a thank you to the numerous employees over the years who remained dedicated to the Kullberg tradition and name.

“Those employees allowed us to be able to serve our customers,” Cheryl said. “All the hard work and dedication they helped us show our customers.

“We couldn’t have done that without them.”

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OUR SCHOOLS

The Elkhorn Area School District Board of Education meets the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 6 p.m. in the Susan Tully Leibsle Board Room at the 1887 Building.

For more information about the district, visit elkhorn.k12.wi.us.

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* Ingersoll, Gatton and Kostock have terms expiring in April. Challenging them are Kyle Gorden and Bridget Leahy Vaughn.

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By **JASON TADLOCK**
Elkhorn Area School District Administrator

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SYNERGY Home Care of Southeast Wisconsin operates an office out of Elkhorn, helping provide individualized care for everyone from seniors to the disabled. **at left:** Jemima and Joanne – SYNERGY likes to call its home helpers “Elder Elves.” **far left:** Ruth Busalacchi (right) is shown with her mother, Donna. Busalacchi opened a SYNERGY franchise in response to dealing with her parents’ own home health needs.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS
Elkhorn Our Town

Providing home care with dignity – and SYNERGY

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

What brought Ruth Busalacchi to her own home health care practice was her father.

Decades of working as a caregiver changed when Busalacchi found herself where the patient was a parent – a parent suffering from Parkinson’s disease.

“Having the experience ... I saw things that were subtle in his condition,” she explained. “I’d sit down with my dad, I’d sit down with my mom. I helped my parents with his condition.”

She also found herself asking the question, “What do you want to do?” because she was capable of seeing the hints before issues became a crisis.

That attitude brought Busalacchi to her own SYNERGY franchise, which she expanded last year to 850 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn.

The owner and operator of SYNERGY of Southeast Wisconsin, Busalacchi is also a certified senior advisor. She graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of the Arts in Business Management and Human Resources, and opened her first office in the state in 2010.

Before that, she was the Director of Special Needs for Lutheran Social Services, helping individuals find residential services that met different and

unique needs.

Her attitude toward home care is as simple.

“We work to make sure everyone is given unique and dignified care,” Busalacchi explained.

That, she said, is accomplished by approaching each patient with a team that includes caregivers, management and, most importantly, the patient and the family.

“Together, we work as a team,” Busalacchi said.

In her 20s, Busalacchi explained that she was a caregiver first. Then she started working with Lutheran Social Services, eventually moving up to the position of director of special needs in the southeast region.

“I helped people live in their own apartments, I help people live in group homes,” she explained.

A few years before she left LSS, her father’s journey with Parkinson’s made her realize that her own talents could help others in the home care field.

“I learned why don’t I start a home care business?” she explained. “Everybody’s journey is unique.”

The decision to open SYNERGY came from her own unique experience with her father and mother.

In addition to understanding what her father needed and wanted, she was

also concerned about respite care for her mother.

Busalacchi explained that the home care business is incredibly diverse, though ultimately with the same goal – to allow a person to remain living at home as long as possible.

That can mean everything from someone coming in to cook meals to help with personal care to needing someone to clean and keep a home. By being in the home and working together as a team, she said the caregivers can catch small, subtle changes before they become a crisis.

Another key, she said, is to make people feel like the king – or queen – of their own castle.

“If we come to your home, we are always, always guests in your home,” Busalacchi explained, saying the opposite is true when a senior finds themselves in assisting living or full-time care situation.

“It’s a place of business first, that’s made home-like,” she said of those facilities, adding quickly that it is also a needed part of care.

But, she added, “if we can try at home first ... why not try it?” Close to 90% of seniors, Busalacchi cited from a study, prefer to remain at home. And with home care now expanding to provide nursing and

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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A Christmas card parade

Visions are always aplenty the first Saturday of December, as the City of Elkhorn plays host to its annual Christmas Card Parade. **above:** Santa and Mrs. Claus make an appearance while riding in style. **at right:** the Grinch snuck in, maybe looking for some Christmas cheer. **top:** the Elkhorn Lions' trick car entertains spectators.

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Duesterbeck's sees growth in distribution

14 counties among those now getting deliveries of local brews

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

It's the business that just keeps on giving for Ben and Laura Johnson and the Duesterbeck family.

After using the family farm that had been around since the 1800s to start Duesterbeck's Brewing Company in 2019, the Johnsons have continued to expand the product and the buildings on the land.

The latest move, which started in May of 2023, when the business signed with CJW – a local beer distributor for Walworth, Racine and Kenosha counties – was to start selling the beer to a wider audience.

In September of last year, the Johnsons finished work with Frank Beverage Group out of the Madison area, which will put the beer into 14 counties in and around the state's capital.

"We're super excited about this," said Laura Johnson, co-owner along with her husband, Ben. "We're both UW graduates and so we're just so excited to have our beer on the campus."

CJW is distributing seven different brands from Duesterbeck's – Nutty Bill's (a peanut butter porter), Bentist Candy (IPA) and Duesterbeck's Oktoberfest brew (a seasonal beer), along with Crop Duester (a cream ale), Pig Farmer (pale ale), Roosterbeck (amber ale) and Dairy Air (an IPA).

Frank Distribution is also selling Crop Duester, Pig Farmer, Roosterbeck and Dairy Air.

It's just one of several exciting changes for the business, as the Duesterbeck brand continues to expand across the state.

DISTRIBUTION GROWTH

Both Laura and Ben said that while Duesterbeck's was distributing beer locally almost right away, they were limited to the two vehicles they had on site.

"We look like we're very big, but we're not," Laura explained.

Both Ben and Laura sing the praises of Dan Duesterbeck, Laura's second cousin.

"He's a great brand advocate for us," Laura said. "I don't know if anyone else could have done what Dan's

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

top: Laura (left) and Ben Johnson are the co-owners of Duesterbeck's Brewing Company, which has begun expanding its distribution throughout the state. **at right:** The brewery operations at Duesterbeck's have expanded to what Laura Johnson refers to as the "production shed" – the location of the old machine shed on the family farm.



// We're both UW graduates and so we're just so excited to have our beer on the campus. //

- LAURA JOHNSON



done for us.”

That being said, the couple knew that, to expand further, they needed to find a distributor.

That started with CJW in the spring, which almost doubled the numbers on the distribution side. Dan Duesterbeck is still involved, but, as Laura explained, now “he doesn’t have to be the sole person.”

With Frank’s starting distribution last week, the beers will be in several new markets.

Locally, the company’s beer is available at a number of local grocers, restaurants and bars, including numerous places in Delavan, Elkhorn and Lake Geneva, plus Palmyra, Eagle, Mukwonago and more.

For a full listing, go to dbcbrewery.com/findourbeer.

NEW ON SITE

In addition to the taproom, store and stages for music on site, Duesterbeck’s has expanded its brewing area this year.

The new brew house is located on the footprint of the former machine shed on the farm, and opened in March of 2023.

“I always call it our production shed,” said Laura.

“That’s where our canning line is. All of our brewery operations are in that building now,” Ben added.

In addition, to bring the property into full compliance, a pollinator habitat is located near the highway, and the hops yard was started. There, the Johnsons grow four of their five varieties of hops used on the farm. One is called the Comet hops, promoting the Delavan-Darien School District, which both of them attended and which the farm is a part of.

While it’s just the first year of hops growing in that eighth of an acre, the couple hopes to continue to see yield increase there; as they explained, it takes three years for the hops plants to fully mature.

ABOUT DUESTERBECK'S

Duesterbeck’s is a fifth-generation family farm that produces its brews on site.

“In February (of this year), we’re 163 years old,” Laura explained.

With Ben serving as brewmaster, he hopes to continue to provide the message that beer is the result of agriculture.

“We want people to know that beer is an agricultural product,” he said.

Duesterbeck’s is at N5543 County Rd. O, Elkhorn. Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, noon to 10 a.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday.

For more information, call 262-729-9771, or visit www.dbcbrewery.com.

medical options, it gives seniors a chance.

Busalacchi also realizes that each person in the 90% is unique – and in need of having someone with experience work with them.

She said SYNERGY takes pride in hiring managers that have been caregivers themselves.

“We can truly understand the needs of our clients and the support for our caregivers,” she said. “Every family is met with a unique care plan.”

Busalacchi also added that SYNERGY has worked hard to provide important education for seniors on everything from avoiding consumer scams to better sleep and less stress.

She said that the business offers discounted services through the Walworth County Aging and Disability Resource Center, and is working with non-profit groups like Cycling Without Age.

SYNERGY of Southeast Wisconsin sites serves about 150 families, and has about 100 employees.

SYNERGY can be reached by calling 262-235-0640. The office is at 850 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn, with hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Busalacchi and caregivers, however, can be reached by phone 24-7.



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OUR SERVICE CLUBS & OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

At the hub of any great city are the service clubs and organizations that host fun events and worthy fundraisers, or offer support to those in need, positively impacting the people of the greater community. Here are some of those located in the area:

AMERICAN LEGION POST 45

Meetings are held the second Monday of every month at the Walworth County Veterans Museum. Commander Mark Gajewski, (719) 238-6653

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

1545 Hobbs Dr., Delavan. Info: (262) 728-8865 or visit bbb4kids.org

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE

Cycling Without Age aims to bring joy and vitality to non-driving, older adults and those with differing abilities via a trishaw, a three-wheel, pedal-assist cargo bike.

The Dementia Friendly Community Initiative of Walworth County (see below) has brought the program to the area. Bikes have already been purchased but there are ongoing fundraising efforts for additional bikes and maintenance, as well as training sessions for volunteers to pilot the bikes.

For more information about or to help with the Cycling Without Age program, visit dfcwalworth.org, send an email to dfcwalworth@gmail.com or call 262-320-7325.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

The Dementia Friendly Community Initiative of Walworth County is a non-profit group of volunteers that aims to insure all county businesses, faith communities, organizations and service providers are equipped to serve individuals affected by Alzheimer's/dementia.

The group meets at 8:30 a.m., the second Thursday of the even months (Feb., April, June, etc.) at Health & Human Services, 1910 County Rd NN, Elkhorn in the Kettle Moraine Trail Room on the first floor.

For more information call 262-320-7325, follow the group on Facebook, email dfcwalworth@gmail.com or visit dfcwalworth.org.

ELKHORN AREA WOMEN'S CLUB

A fellowship-oriented club since 1926 with a main goal of raising money for

local charities and college scholarships. Info: Elkhorn Area Women's Club on Facebook or call Donna Felland at (262) 312-0838

ELKHORN ARTS FOUNDATION

Mission to support, develop and promote all arts as an essential and integral part of the revitalization and growth for Elkhorn and surrounding communities. Info: elkhornartsfoundation.com

ELKHORN FOOD PANTRY

14 W. Geneva St., Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9 to 11 a.m. Info: (262) 723-6359

ELKHORN FUND

The Elkhorn Fund is a group of volunteers working together for Elkhorn's present and future by raising money and investing it in an endowment fund. Each year, they award grants to nonprofits in the community. Info: (608) 758-0883 or cfsw.org

ELKHORN KIWANIS

The Elkhorn Kiwanis Club meets the second and fourth Monday of each month at noon at Associated Bank, 10 N. Lincoln St., Elkhorn. Information: P.O. Box 553, Elkhorn, WI. Call (262) 728-3711 or visit elkhornkiwanis.org

ELKHORN LIONS

The Elkhorn Lions Club meets the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at different locations in Elkhorn (see the calendar online for meeting locations.) Info: e-clubhouse.org, click on "Other clubhouses" on the left and then select Elkhorn Lions Club, Wisconsin, email toelkhornlions@gmail.com or like and follow Elkhorn Lions Club, Elkhorn, WI on Facebook

ELKHORN PENGUINS SWIM TEAM

A youth recreational swim team. Info: visit elkhornpenguins.com, email elkhornpenguins@gmail.com or like and follow Elkhorn Penguins on Facebook

ELKHORN ROTARY

P.O. Box 915, Elkhorn. The Rotary Club of Elkhorn meets Wednesdays at noon in the Community Room in the Matheson Memorial Library, 101 N. Wisconsin St. Info: (414) 333-1261, Elkhorn Rotary Club on Facebook or elkhornrotary.org

ELKHORN SNO DRIFTERS INC.

A non-profit club that promotes the

sport of snowmobiling for the general public and installs and maintains a section of the Walworth County snowmobile trail. Info: (262) 215-0926 or email elkhornsnodrifters@gmail.com.

ELKHORN VFW MEMORIAL POST 6375

16 S. Broad St. Meetings are the second and fourth Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Info: (262) 723-4979

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY IN WALWORTH COUNTY

P.O. Box 174, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Info: (262) 949-0542 (please leave a message), visit habitatwalworth.org or like and follow Habitat for Humanity in Walworth County on Facebook.

HOPE NOW, INC.

107 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn. A nonprofit organization that raises charitable funds to help local families in need. Info: call (262) 723-4711 or like and follow HOPE NOW, Inc. on Facebook.

KETTLE MORAIN LAND TRUST

Contact Rory Klick, managing director at rory@kmlandtrust.org or Liza Fischel, administrative coordinator at liza@kmlandtrust.org, by calling 262-379-4283 or by visiting kmlandtrust.org

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

St. Patrick's, 107 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn. Info: (262) 723-4998, stpatrickselkhorn.org.

LAKELAND ANIMAL SHELTER

3615 Highway 67, Delavan, P.O. Box 1000, Elkhorn. Open Monday-Friday from noon-6 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Info: (262) 723-1000, lakelandanimalshelter.org

LAKELAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Meets September through March (excluding December) at 7 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Lions Fieldhouse, Highway 67 and Stark St., Williams Bay. Info: (262) 248-4535 or lakelandaudubon.com.

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CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

5578 or visit lakeland-players.org

NEW BEGINNINGS APFV

20 N. Church St., Elkhorn. Support and advocacy for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual abuse. Key goals include awareness, education, support groups and prevention. Info: 24-hour helpline at (262) 723-4653, or email newbeginningswalworth@gmail.com or visit newbeginningswalworth.com

OPEN ARMS FREE CLINIC

205 E. Commerce Ct. (Dental Clinic, 209 E. Commerce Ct.), Elkhorn. One hundred percent supported by grants and donations, Open Arms is the only free medical and supportive care clinic in Walworth County serving low-income and uninsured residents with primary medical, dental, vision, behavioral health, lab and pharmaceutical assistance. Hours vary with volunteer providers availability but are generally 9 a.m. to 4 or 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Info: (262) 379-1401, openarmsfreeclinic.org

PREGNANCY HELPLINE WALWORTH COUNTY

28 S. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn. Open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Wednesdays from 3 to 5:30 p.m. 24-hour helpline at (800) 712-4357. Info: (262) 723-2020, phlwalworthco.org

S.M.I.L.E.S.

N2666 Highway K, Darien. Helping to improve the lives of those living with disabilities through a partnership with horses. Info: (262) 882-3470, smiletherapeuticriding.org

TREE HOUSE CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

W4063 Highway NN, Elkhorn. The nonprofit organization advocates for children and their families who are the

victims of abuse and neglect through community outreach. The alliance's Tree House provides a safe place for abused children and their families to turn to for help. Info: (262) 755-8733 or visit treehouseforkids.net.

UW-EXTENSION

The University of Wisconsin-Extension teaches, learns, leads and serves while connecting people with the university and engaging them in transforming lives. A variety of programs and resources are available from horticulture to health, families and finance to nutrition education. Info: (262) 741-4961, walworth.extension.wisc.edu.

SOUTHERN WAKES UNITED WATER SKI SHOW TEAM

P.O. Box 434, Whitewater. The team is a merger of the Lauderdale Aqua Skiers and Whitewater Lake Sports Club (Minneiska.) A non-profit water skiing organization that performs on lakes in the area in addition to tournaments. Info: southernwakesunited.com

UNITED WAY OF WALWORTH COUNTY

203 E. Walworth St., Elkhorn. Info: (262) 374-4474, uw-wc.org

VIP SERVICES, INC.

811 E. Geneva St., Elkhorn. Info: (262) 723-4043, vipservices-inc.org

WALWORTH COUNTY CIVIL AIR PATROL

401 E. Fair Ave., Elkhorn. Info: (414) 588-2053, gocivilairpatrol.com

WALWORTH COUNTY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

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President: Terry Papcke. 119 S. Broad St. Info: (262) 723-2613, www.wfbf.com

WALWORTH COUNTY FOOD PANTRY & DIAPER BANK

205 E. Commerce Ct., Elkhorn. Hours are Fridays, 1 to 4 p.m. and Saturdays, 9 to 11 a.m. Info: (262) 723-4488 or walworthcountyfoodpantry.org

WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

President, Karen Weston. P.O. Box 159, Delavan 53115. Meets the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the community center at Matheson Memorial Library. The society's library in the Mary Bray Room at Matheson Memorial Library, 101 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn, is open and staffed from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesdays (until 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday) of each month. Info: walworthcgs.com or (262) 723-9150

WALWORTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

9 S. Broad St. P.O. Box 273, Elkhorn. Facilities include the Doris M. Reinke Resource Center and Heritage Hall, which features the Walworth County Veterans museum. Open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m. and by appointment. The Webster House Museum is at 9 E. Rockwell. For information call (262) 723-7848, visit walcohistory.org, email walcohistory@tds.net or follow the Society on Facebook.

FRIENDS OF THE WHITE RIVER STATE TRAIL

White River State Trail bicycle club; note that there is a trailhead in Elkhorn. Info: follow Friends of The White River State Trail on Facebook.

CHURCHES • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

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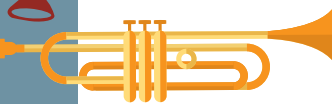
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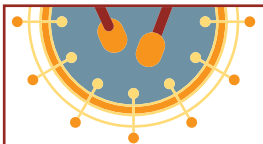
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Representatives from Wilson Farm Meats, Elkhorn, are shown at the 2023 Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction at the Wisconsin State Fair, where Wilson's was named Grand Champion in Best of Show for their Super Bacon and bone-in ham while earning Reserve Champion for their jerky.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Elkhorn Our Town*

Wilson Farm Meats named State Fair Champion

Local producer recognized for their Super Bacon, jerky and bone-in ham

Wilson Farm Meats, of Elkhorn, won Best in Show and Grand Champion at the 2023 Wisconsin State Fair for their Super Bacon in the specialty cured meat products division, Reserve Champion for their jerky, and Grand Champion for their bone-in ham.

Their items were auctioned off at the Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction benefiting the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation.

Wilson's Super Bacon sold for \$3,750, the jerky sold for \$2,500, and their bone-in ham sold for \$6,500. Their Best in Show product was sold for \$11,300.

Wilson Farm Meats is a local butcher and meat market that has fed Elkhorn families since the 1870s. Scott, a fifth-generation Wilson, established Wilson Farm Meats in 2004 to have a local retail and processing facility available to serve the local clientele.

Many of their fine meats, particularly

their award-winning pork products, are raised locally at Scott Wilson's farm, Wilson Prairie View Farms, located in Walworth County.

The Wilson family and staff pride themselves on providing their customers with only the finest quality farm-to-table meat products.

Wilson Farm Meats' items were auctioned off at The Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction at the Wisconsin State Fair and helped the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation raise over \$105,000.

Proceeds from the auction benefit the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, which supports Wisconsin 4-H activities including 4-H conferences, teaching materials and workshops, and overall development of 4-H youth.

"We're so proud of Wilson's accomplishments," said Wisconsin 4-H

Foundation Executive Director Brenda Scheider.

"And we're grateful that Wisconsin State Fair champion processors, like Wilson Farm Meats, help us be able to continue our support of Wisconsin 4-H youth," she added.

The Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, based in Madison, provides essential funding for 4-H programs throughout Wisconsin.

By partnering with individuals, corporations and foundations, the Foundation supports more than 150,000 youth who take part in various 4-H leadership, developments, and community-building activities throughout the state.

Find out more about Wilson Farm Meats at wilsonfarmmeats.com.

For a full report of the auction, visit Wis4HFoundation.org/gbrmpa.

Learn more about the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation at Wis4HFoundation.org.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

WALWORTH COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

100 W. Walworth St.
Elkhorn

County Administrator
Mark Luberda
(262) 741-4357
mluberda@co.walworth.wi.us

County Clerk
Susi Pike
(262) 741-4241

Deputy County Clerk
Susi Pike

County Treasurer
Valerie Etzel
(262) 741-4251
treasurer@co.walworth.wi.us

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Supervisor
Robyn Schuchardt
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Finance Department
Director
Jessica Conley
(262) 741-4242
walcofn@co.walworth.wi.us

Human Resources
Kate Bishop
Director
(262) 741-7950
walcohr@co.walworth.wi.us

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COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Walworth County Board of Supervisors meets the second Tuesday of the month at 3:30 p.m. in the County Board Room of the Walworth County Government Center, 100 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn.

Meeting dates and times may vary; therefore, it's advised to contact the County Clerk's Office at (262) 741-4241 to confirm meetings.

For more information about county government, visit co.walworth.wi.us

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Long-time Elkhorn bakery sold to new owners

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

For more than 65 years, the Elkhorn Pastry Shop Bakery was a fixture on the square in downtown Elkhorn.

With Greg and Brenda Kaplan decided to retire in 2023, though, the pastry shop got new owners – and a new name.

Elkhorn Pastry Shop, 29 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn, became Pastries by Chad shortly before the Labor Day Weekend in 2023.

“It’s a good time to retire,” said Greg Kaplan, who has been a part of the business since his father purchased the bakery in the 1950s.

Since taking over the business in 1988, he described waking up at 1 a.m. most days of the week, working through Saturday and then taking Sundays off for the occasional Green Bay Packers’ game.

“I’ve spent a lot of time here in the bakery,” Greg said. “It’s time to start a different chapter in my life.”

The bakery was started in 1955 by Edwin and Carol Kaplan. Edwin attended the William Hood Dunwothy Institute in Minneapolis after being drafted into the Korean War, then came home and married Carol.

The couple purchased Bodot Bakery at 24 S. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn, in 1955, and moved to the business’s current location in 1960.

All four of the Kaplan children grew up in the bakery, Greg explained, and he became a partner in the business in 1985.

“All four of us were born and raised in the bakery,” Greg said.

He married Brenda in 1988 and the two took over the bakery the same year.

The couple announced in May of 2023 that they were retiring, just to “set



above: Sam Siewrok and Chad Visger, long-time friends and now married, run Pastries by Chad, which initially operated out of Turtle Lake Bar and Grill. However, just before Labor Day weekend in 2023, the couple found a new home for their business in a bakery shop in Elkhorn. **at left:** Greg and Brenda Kaplan retired in 2023 after being at the helm of the Elkhorn Pastry Shop for 35 years.

JENNIFER EISENBART / SUBMITTED PHOTO *Elkhorn Our Town*



the record straight,” they explained on Facebook. Once the news was out that the business was for sale, things began to move quickly.

“We put it on Facebook and we had eight people come in,” Greg explained. “Chad was the last one to come in. Chad was the best fit.”

Visger and his wife Sam Siewrok run Pastries by Chad, which was working out of Turtle Lake Tap and Grill in Delavan before buying the shop in Elkhorn.

The couple had been doing wholesale business and providing private catering orders of everything from cakes to French pastries to Petit Fours prior to making the move to their new bakery shop.

Visger explained he came and spent time at the bakery shadowing Greg to learn

how to make the bread and donuts the pastry shop is known for.

“It’s really cool that we can carry on their legacy of their donuts and their bread, but still throw in our stuff,” Chad explained. “He’s just been so good about showing me everything.”

Visger said that he plans to continue his current pastry work, plus “ramp up” the retail selection at the 29. N. Wisconsin St. location. Renovations are also planned for the future.

“We’ll have almost everything,” Chad said at the time regarding what the shop offers compared to the online menu. He’s also working to add “old world” breads like Ciabatta, Batards and sourdough.

For more information, stop by the shop or visit pastriesbychad.com.



DAVE DRESDOW *Elkhorn Our Town*

Something for everyone

The 174th Walworth County Fair hosted huge crowds amidst a warm but dry Labor Day weekend. Walworth County Fairgrounds General Manager and CEO Larry Gaffey said, "I would say the Walworth County Fair beat the heat and was a massive success."

More than 15,000 exhibitor and 400 vendor applications were received, and the grounds were packed over the weekend. **at left:** Veterans march the colors in front of the grandstand before an event. **below:** 2023 Walworth County Fairest of the Fair Lillie Cauffman gives a thumbs up to the event with her 2024 successor, crowned earlier, Josie Vance.



JENNIFER EISENBART *Elkhorn Our Town*


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Executives from Precision Plus, Elkhorn, accept the Special Award for Investment in the Next Generation at the Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Awards Feb. 16 of 2023.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Elkhorn Our Town

Precision Plus awarded Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year for investment in the next generation

Precision Plus in Elkhorn received the Special Award for Investment in the Next Generation at the 34th annual Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Awards.

Twenty-eight manufacturing companies in Wisconsin were named among finalists for the annual honors. Nine companies, who represent the state's robust and diverse manufacturing industry, were declared winners for outstanding achievements in manufacturing in 2023, at a black-tie banquet at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee.

Recipients are recognized as "the state's top manufacturers of all sectors and sizes for their commitment to quality careers, good business practices, financial growth, innovative processes and reinvestment into local communities," says the Wisconsin Manufacturing and Commerce.

"Our entire team was blown away when presented with the Wisconsin MOTY Special Award for Investment in the Next Generation. The award recognizes our team's commitment to raising awareness of the rewarding careers in manufacturing, showing today's young adults a path forward; a pathway often overlooked by our current education system, who we continuously work with to develop upon." President and owner Michael J. Reader stated in a news release. "While heading into the banquet, we were all hopeful for a Grand Prize win in the 'Small Category,' but to be selected for this particular award amongst all Wisconsin companies, regardless of size, makes this recognition even more special."

This award adds to Precision Plus' record of business and workforce development efforts and company culture recognitions after being named among Top Workplaces 2022 by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

"Receiving this award is a true testament to the efforts the Reader family and the entire team at Precision Plus have made over the course of the last decade," said Amanda Groiffoul, Precision Plus human resources manager. "Through exhaustive and comprehensive efforts, we make it our mission to make students, families, and educators within our community aware of the rewarding career opportunities available within precision machining and manufacturing right here in their very own backyard. Precision Plus continues to be a champion of technical education, focusing on every student's return on investment."

According to the release, Precision Plus employs nearly 100 people and the business focuses on four core principles: innovation, respect, empowerment and integrity. These four pillars ensure Precision Plus and its employees continue their mission to be the number one solution provider of machined components for its current and future partners.

To learn more about Precision Plus, and its Youth Apprenticeship and Intern program, visit us at preplus.com/explore.

Precision Plus provides precision machined solutions for small parts across aerospace, dental, medical and more industries. For more information, visit www.preplus.com.

Spelling bee leads to literacy support

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

It was inevitable that the sheriff would have to concentrate to avoid curiosity over odious words as apprentice spellers took on peculiar situations, causing a commotion during the second annual Walworth County Literacy Council Bee for Literacy, which was forced to adjourn in jubilation this past fall.

Well, OK, the Walworth County Sheriff wasn't at the bee, but the word sheriff – along with several other words above – were in the first round of the second annual bee.

In the end, the title from the event was shared by two teams – the teams from the Williams Bay Lions and Holiday Home Camp – after the word denouement proved to be too much for both squads at Lake Lawn Resort.

"And with that, we have reached the ... denouement of this spelling bee," said pronouncer Erin Creed, an English teacher in the Williams Bay School District and a former "Jeopardy!" contest.

The adult spelling bee isn't exactly like the ones you've read about. Ten teams, all sponsored at various levels by a variety of area businesses and organizations, compete in teams of two, with each having to spell a word each round.

But there's more: teams can have a "stinger" bought for them – for \$100 – or can get a "buyback" (for \$200) back into the competition after a misspelled word.

Seven different teams got buybacks into this year's bee, and the stingers proved useful in the second round when no one felt confident enough to spell *dachshund*.

The team that finally tried it misspelled it, but promptly got bought back into the competition.

With fun names like "BarBee and Ken" (representing the Service Club of Delavan-Darien) and "Spells Like Team Spirit" (the Holiday Home Camp team), the event drew enthusiastic spellers, a large audience that got a full dinner and dessert, plus plenty of laughter.

While Barrett didn't have an exact total as of Monday, the various incentives at the event plus the mission appeal, silent auction (which raised \$3,000) and sponsorships likely pushed the total above \$30,000 – the pre-event goal.

"I think we can say we most likely met our goal," said Lily Barrett, executive director of WCLC.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

Making all those years count

COUNTY FAIR HONORS AREA OUTSTANDING SENIORS

BY Tom Ganser • CORRESPONDENT

It's not surprising that the 174th Walworth County Fair shared many traditions that have emerged since a cattle show organized by the Walworth County Agricultural Society was held in the Village of East Troy on Oct. 16, 1850.

A total of 35 first premiums, 17 second premiums, and three third premiums were awarded, and the first county fair was held in Elkhorn in 1851.

One of these proud traditions continued last year at the fair with the recognition of four Outstanding Senior Citizens presented with a citation from the Wisconsin State Legislature by Wisconsin State Senator Steve Nass and Wisconsin State Representative Ellen Schutt.

Receiving the citations were Mike Flick from Williams Bay, Jo Dewart from Delavan, and Dan and Cheryl Mirkes from Lake Geneva.

"It's probably easy to go out and make a buck," Nass told the audience of family and friends of the recipients gathered at the Park Stage. "But it's not as easy to make a difference. We are recognizing people today that were born with the special opportunity to make a difference."

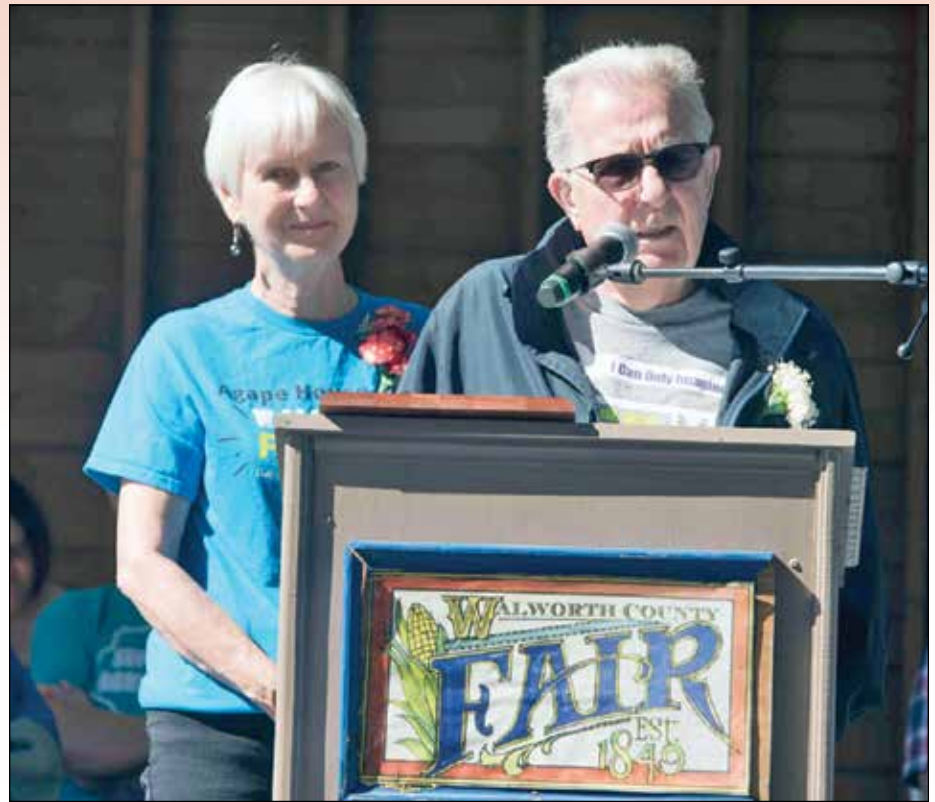
Nass described Flick as, "An outstanding senior citizen whose presence radiates warmth and kindness to all who are fortunate enough to know him" and someone who leaves "an indelible mark of hope and encouragement wherever he goes."

Nass cited Flick's work with the Lakeland Community Church and especially its Celebrate Recovery Program, his service as a chaplain for the Kunes Auto Group, and his dedication to visiting and supporting inmates in the Walworth County Jail.

Noting that "Walworth County is a wonderful place to live, and with great people with hearts that are wide open to helping other people," Flick said he accepted the recognition on behalf of people in the county who help those in great need.

In an interview before the ceremony, Flick shared that learning of the recognition was "kind of amazing. I never expected it. It was a pleasant surprise."

Having supported the Lakeland Community Church's Celebrate Recovery Program for more than 10 years, Flick shared that the program, in fact, exists in more than 40,000 locations worldwide.



The 174th Walworth County Fair honored its outstanding seniors Aug. 31, 2023 at the park stage. **above:** Cheryl and Dan Mirkes accept their award.

TOM GANSER *Elkhorn Our Town*

As one of 12 chaplains for 45 Kunes Auto Group dealerships, Flick said, "Sometimes people hold things in the inside that they want to talk about but don't feel safe in talking. Everything is confidential. People go through all sorts of things. We can be standing under a car where the oil's being changed and praying with somebody."

Moving to Wisconsin in 1999 after closing an advertising agency in Columbus, Ohio, Flick noted, "I've always believed that I would be doing something long after retirement."

Schutt told the audience Dewart is someone "who's always thinking of others and how she can help."

As examples, Schutt described Dewart's pitching in as president of the Delavan American Legion Post 95 Auxiliary with bingo and fish fries, including cleanup duties.

Other targets for Dewart's generous service include volunteering for the Music by the Lakes series, supporting projects of the Williams Bay United Church of Christ,

being an election official for the Town of Delavan, and helping out at the Walworth County Fair Barnyard Adventure.

In short, Schutt stated, Dewart is "the one person everyone looks to for help as she is constantly doing things for others."

Learning of her nomination for the recognition, Dewart confessed, "I thought somebody was playing a joke on me," adding, "it's nice honor but I do things because I like to, I like to keep busy, and I like to help people."

She shared spending time with her "favorite Marine" veteran with dementia so that his wife can go somewhere.

With a gentle laugh, she described her drive for helping others: "It keeps me busy, out of trouble, and I don't spend money."

When it came to Dan and Cheryl Mirkes, Nass highlighted their notable commitment to the Agape House and how they are "consistently there to mentor, teach, and welcome students, providing

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

Fair royalty follows fairest into crown

Elkhorn's Josie Vance named 2024 Fairest of the Fair

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

For Elkhorn native Josie Vance, a year's experience did a world of good.

Vance participated for the first time in the Walworth County Fairest of the Fair competition last year, finishing as fair royalty, the equivalent of the first runner-up position.

This year, admittedly feeling more confident, Vance topped the field of five competitors to become the 2024 Walworth County Fairest of the Fair.

Walworth County runs their competition a year ahead, crowning a winner that will compete in the Wisconsin Fairest of the Fair competition before serving as the county's fairest the following year.

As fair royalty, Vance was on the grounds throughout this year's fair anyhow, working alongside 2023 winner Lillie Kauffman.

"This year helped me become more confident with my public speaking," said Vance, a graduate of Elkhorn Area High School.

She plans to attend school to become a dental hygienist.

Growing up, she was active in FFA and 4-H, showing beef cattle, goats, art projects and cooking entries at the fair.

"I also got to learn from Lillie," she explained. "How to represent myself if I was to win fairest. I was still nervous for the competition, but being royalty helped me know becoming fairest was something I truly wanted."

Vance said she's already excited about the chances ahead of her in the coming year.

"I can't wait to be that smiling face a first-year exhibitor sees in the show ring, excitedly shows me their art work that they have been working on for weeks, and to be able to share my experience being in 4-H and FFA," Vance said. "It's truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with memories that last a lifetime."

Leslie Reinke, a senior at Blackhawk Technical College, was named fair royalty.

The Fairest of the Fair serves as the official ambassador for the Walworth County Fair, representing and promoting the fair at events throughout Walworth County and beyond, while also participating in the Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs competition.

The Wisconsin Fairest of the Fair competition is held annually every January.



The Walworth County Fairest of the Fair for 2024 was crowned Aug. 30 at the start of the 174th fair. The county crowns the fairest a year ahead, so she can compete statewide first and then participate in the role at the fair the next year. **top:** 2023 Fairest of the Fair Lillie Kauffman (from left) stands with newly crowned 2024 Fairest Josie Vance and 2024 Fair Royalty (first runner-up) Leslie Reinke. **above:** Vance accepts the crown from Kauffman.

DAVE DRESLOW Elkhorn Our Town

Record-breaking sale pays off for exhibitors

BY Tom Ganser • CORRESPONDENT

It was a big day for youth exhibitors at the Walworth County Fair Sept. 1, 2023. Nearly 400 beef, sheep and swine were auctioned off at the Wiswell Center during the 174th annual fair, followed by the sale of the grand champions.

Walworth County Fairgrounds General Manager and CEO Larry Gaffey said Tuesday that more than \$1 million was raised at the auction, a new record.

While the animals were important to the event, to be sure, much more important were the hundreds of high school FFA and 4-H club members who worked so hard to show their livestock at the fair.

The auction sale of grand champion steer included Kyle Ellsworth (Grand Champion), Mason Smith (Reserve Grand Champion), Jaclyn Kollwelter (Grand Champion Carcass) and Marcella Brummel (Reserve Champion Carcass).

Ellsworth, a graduate of Elkhorn Area High School, has been a member of the Spring Prairie 4-H club for 10 years.

He described winning grand champion as a “pay off for the hard work that I had put in over the years.”

For Ellsworth, the challenge of the project was the hours of work required every day in raising steers. In terms of showing his steers, the tasks included washing them, giving them haircuts and blow drying them.

He shared his experiences in “learning all the skills about clipping, getting steer ready for the show,

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 43



One of the largest draws at the Walworth County Fair is the annual meat sale auction, which allows junior exhibitors to earn money from the animals they spend time raising.
above: Kyle Ellsworth of Spring Prairie 4-H earned grand champion for his steer.
below: Justin Johnson was the grand champion in the wether (lamb) category.

TOM GANSER Elkhorn Our Town





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and putting in the best effort that I can to work on them,” along with what he learned about showing steer at four pre-shows for the Wisconsin State Fair and at the state fair itself.

As a piece of advice for others aspiring to raise championship steer, Ellsworth said, “Don’t be afraid to ask questions and get other people to help you succeed further. Take time to ask questions and learn more about the project.”

Ellsworth’s grand champion steer, weighing 1,380 pounds, was purchased by Kunes Auto Group and Lake Lawn Resort for \$10 per pound. He intends to use the proceeds for his college education where he plans on majoring in animal science.

Kollwelter, a fourth grader at Washington Elementary School in Whitewater, left the fair with the lasting memory of achieving Grand Champion Carcass for her steer.

She has been a member of the LaGrange 4-H club for a year. Before that she was a member of Clover Buds as an 8-year-old.

Kollwelter described winning as “a lot of celebration, which was really cool.”

For her, mastering how to walk steer was much more challenging than walking heifers. Asked why the difference, she simply said, “Steers are 10 times bigger, and when they step on your feet, it really hurts!”

She confessed the importance of being patient in walking steers.

“When I first started walking my steers, I learned that I had to tap their nose and when I put my hand in front of their faces, they

stopped,” Kollwelter explained.

She also pointed to forming a relationship with steer, and the importance of “talking to the steer, petting it and going up to it slowly.”

For Kollwelter, the joy in raising steer includes “getting a bond and connection with animals. When you really get to know an animal, it’s actually happy. You start to grow closer to it and you trust it more.”

With a little laugh, she admitted that as a result, the animal trusts her more as well.

AG Agronomy placed a successful bid of \$4 a pound for the 863-pound carcass. Kollwelter’s father said that the proceeds will go into Jaelyn’s future college funds savings.

The auction sale of grand champion lambs (listed as “Wethers”) included Justin Johnson (Grand Champion), Wyatt Nixon (Reserve Grand Champion), Tori Tellrichard (Grand Champion Carcass), and Alaina Yates (Reserve Champion Carcass).

Nixon will be a senior at Whitewater High School and has been a member of the Richmond 4-H for two years after moving to Wisconsin from Indiana.

In a response that is common among the champion winners, he said that a fundamental challenge of his project was “getting to the barn every day, and the long hours.

“I learned how to be persistent in working with them every day, not skipping any days, and being dedicated to one for the entire summer,” Nixon said.

He shared an unfortunate surprise during the year.

“I had some lambs that I had gotten in the

earlier part of the year that unexpectedly died, so I had to switch to different animals to be able to work with and to show,” he explained.

For Nixon, it is essential to go on, no matter what “good or tragedies happen with your animals.”

Sharing his experience, Nixon also pointed to the importance of finding “a mentor to follow and guide you to the places you need to be.” He credited his parents for serving in this role.

Nixon’s lamb, at 146 pounds, was purchased by JJJ Brennan Farms at \$17 a pound.

The auction sale of grand champion pigs (listed as Barrows) included Ann Marie Odling-Cates (Grand Champion), Lainey Popp (Reserve Grand Champion), Addison Roeh (Grand Champion Carcass), and Trent Peterson (Reserve Champion Carcass).

Odling-Cates starts the year as a senior at Williams Bay High School and has been a long-time member of Ridge Prairie 4-H since she was 8 years old.

She shared, “At first, I was just struck by the fact that I had just won. It meant everything to me. I worked so hard to get to that spot and winning it made it just that much better.”

For her, the most challenging part of her project was “knowing what to feed, because you can mess up in a heartbeat. I think that’s the hardest thing when it comes to raising pigs.”

Going to different shows and discussing with people what they feed their pigs, pointed her in the right direction, even though she admitted it was still a little “trial and error based.”

What did she learn? “Responsibility is the biggest one for me, because you have to go out every single day and walk with them, wash them, feed them, and get to know the pigs so they’re not so scared of you when you show them.”

For Odling-Cates, mastering how to show pigs was a bit of a surprise, given that “pigs have different types of face shapes” and have all different ways they want to be touched to get them to walk.

Regarding showing her grand champion, she said, “I had to hit in a certain spot to keep his head up. He has a crinkled ear, so it doesn’t stick up like most pigs. If you hit him in a certain spot, he’d jerk his head down.”

Offering her advice to others raising pigs, she said, “Spend time with them. Get to know your pig. Try to go to as many pre-view shows in the spring as you can. Really bonding with them helps a lot and makes a difference.”

Odling Construction, JJJ Brennan Farms, and Complete Feed Service won the bid for Odling-Cates’ pig weighing in at 289 pounds at \$40 per pound. She will use the proceeds to help fund her college expenses on a path she hopes will lead to being a pediatrician.

OUTSTANDING SENIORS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

stability, love, prayer, and support to those who require assistance.”

Before the presentation, Dan described the Agape House, affiliated with the Calvary Church in Williams Bay, as a ministry aimed at steering boys and girls from 12 to 18 years old back on track despite the trauma in their lives.

“We not only house them, but we also school them, and then we counsel them

with certified counselors. We also try to zero in on their families,” he said.

Cheryl, a registered nurse who later learned how to turn medical and patient information into an electronic format, taught computer skills to Agape House children.

Following his career in the hotel food and beverage industry, Dan taught Personal Finance at Agape House.

SPELLING BEE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

WCLC also took time to honor those who use its services during the bee. Among the attendees were two former students – Josefina Sanchez and Alla Tieriekhova.

Sanchez, a first-generation immigrant, is now a member of the board of directors and shared some of her writing in the event’s program book.

“The first time I wrote something was because it was part of an assignment,” Sanchez’s piece, titled “Something Good,” stated. “I didn’t know how to start. There was a turmoil in my mind over the many ideas that I had. I sat down, grabbed the pencil and started to scribble on a piece of paper.”

Tieriekhova, meanwhile, attended with her

tutor, Mary Atkinson, and daughter Tatyana Miller. A former resident of the Ukraine, Tieriekhova just became a U.S. citizen in the last month.

Her son is still living in the Ukraine in the middle of a warzone, and both she and her daughter were exceptionally thankful for the opportunities WCLC offered Alla.

Those two, plus Ryoko Ono – who came to the U.S. for a job with Kikkoman Foods – all were featured in a video shown during the event, talking about their experiences with the WCLC.

“The following day, I received many emails and texts from people, saying how much fun that they had,” said Barrett.

All things BARBECUE



Ribfest returns to tempt taste buds

BY Jennifer Eisenbart • EDITOR

When Ribfest was first started in Elkhorn back in 2015, Walworth County Fairgrounds Executive Director Larry Gaffney was hoping for 2,500 people his first year.

“We had 25,000,” said Gaffney.

The eighth annual event is scheduled for July 10-14, with hours varying by day. For a full schedule, go to wisconsinribfest.com

Admission to the event is free, as is parking, with a wide variety of vendors on hand to sell top-notch barbecued ribs and a large variety of sides.

Soda, water and alcohol will be on sale in the main tent, and there will also be entertainment in the form of music, a carnival and the artisan vendor alley. New to the event last year was supposed to be flat-track racing, but that was cancelled due to the weather.

The Walworth County Fairgrounds are at 411 E. Court St., Elkhorn.

NEW THIS YEAR

In addition to the flat-track racing, which Gaffney said is “a very thrilling thing to see,” there are new vendors, new bands and additions to the rest of the entertainment.

One of the most important changes,



above: A grill at RibFest shows plenty of meat ready for the about 100,000 visitors expected. **top:** A hungry crowd gathers at Ribfest in Elkhorn each July. The event has continued to grow each year and now runs four days, drawing 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.

FILE PHOTOS Elkhorn Our Town

though, involves how to pay for food and drinks. While vendors on the grounds will be set up to take cash and cards, the beer and wine for sale in the main tent will be card only – a change from past years.

“It’s gotten to the point where it’s not fair to ask volunteers to handle that much cash,” Gaffney said, pointing out the change from past years, when it was cash only.

HOW IT WORKS – AND PRO TIPS

The festival will host numerous different vendors – barbecue and non-food alike – as well as professional barbecue champions cooking their ribs.

Past winners include last year’s grand champion MM&E BBQ, which will be back, as will the 2021 Grand Champion

Mr. Green's and 2019 Grand Champion Aussum Aussie BBQ.

People's Choice winner, Just North of Memphis BBQ, has been a favorite as well.

There are two judged divisions – the pro division, which sells to the public, and the community division, which does not. The community division will be a contest between 25 area “backyard” BBQ entries.

Judging takes place Sunday, with prizes to the winners and a grand champion crowned.

If people are just coming for the food, Gaffney said Saturday is the busiest day of the festival and he recommended coming on one of the other four days.

“Every day is great,” Gaffney added.

A few other pro tips from Gaffney:

- Many of the vendors, including beer, wine and soda are cash only. There is an ATM on site, but they can be unreliable at busy times.

- If people want a guaranteed place to sit, bring a lawn chair. Seating is limited and large crowds are expected.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

In addition to the food, there will be bands playing throughout the event.

While the lineup for 2024 has yet to be announced, headliners in the past have included 7th Heaven, Bella Cain, Snake Oil and The Hype.

The carnival was expanded this past year – a Ferris Wheel is one of the new rides offered by Lake Enterprises – and camping is available on site.

RIBFEST BIKE SHOW

The annual Ribrun has returned. The run is a free-to-enter, open bike show where participants ride and park in the festival grounds until full. Arrive any time between 3 to 6 p.m. for judging.

Awards will be given in the following categories: Best Bagger, Best Bobber, Best Chopper, Best Cruiser, Best Freestyle and Best Vintage. All winners are chosen by those attending the festival.

Category winners receive \$200 and a trophy, while the grand champion will receive \$350 and a trophy.

For more information and details on entertainment, go to wisconsinRibfest.com.

HONORING THE SPONSORS

Gaffney took a few minutes to thank the sponsors that help keep the event going, especially Frank and Stephanie Lueptow, now former owners of Frank's Piggly Wiggly (sold earlier this year).

“The only way that Ribfest got going was because of the help from Frank and Stephanie Lueptow,” Gaffney said. “Ribfest would not have happened without their support.”

The Lueptows were the first Hall of Fame recipients last year. The two decided to remain title sponsors this year personally, after the sale of their store.

“They're just great people. Elkhorn Ribfest and the fairgrounds will forever be in their debt,” Gaffney said.

Kunes and Edge Broadband are



COURTESY OF DONNA RICE *Elkhorn Our Town*

other big sponsors at the event, which is expected to draw 100,000 visitors or more.

“It's a massive deal,” said Gaffney, who said the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater did an economic impact study for the event last year.

“They're estimating Ribfest alone has an \$11 million impact on the Elkhorn area,” Gaffney said. “There are dozens of charitable organizations and civic organizations that benefit from Elkhorn Ribfest.”



above: The carnival and midway is a popular part of Ribfest each year. **top:** Slabs of ribs are placed on the grill for a final browning at the Desperados stand at a previous Ribfest. Their special sauce is added to enhance the flavor of the ribs.



Scenes on stage

The Lakeland Players, which has provided live theater to Walworth County for more than 50 years, celebrated its 50th season in 2023 and early 2024. The community theatre group has produced numerous classics over the years, including "Steel Magnolias," "Spamalot" and "Reefer Madness: The Musical." The 50th season will wrap up April 5-14 with the performance of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang." For more on the group, go to Lakeland-players.org.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Elkhorn Our Town*



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