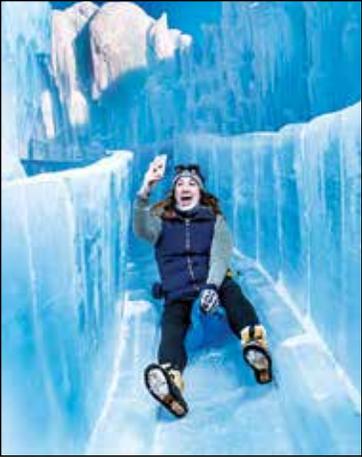


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A place to gather, eat, shop — and more

Friends on the Square in Elkhorn has a little bit of everything

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

For Kelly Odling, calling her shop something like a scene out of “Little House on the Prairie” rather tickles her fancy.

After all, it was her friends calling her Laura Ingalls that inspired her business, Friends on the Square, located at 41 N. Wisconsin St. in Elkhorn.

With Odling now running a combination café and gift shop — plus a pair of food trucks and an event space — she’s still focused on her mission from when the business opened nearly 14 years ago.

“I basically wanted something to offer to the community that was pretty much open for making friends,” Odling said. “Making memories was my big thing. I wanted kids to remember this place as they grew up.”

Odling’s store — on the corner of North Wisconsin and Court Street, kitty corner to Veterans Park — has a feel similar to an old-time general store. Various displays throughout offer a large variety of gifts, but in the center of the store is the coffee bar and ice cream cooler that were at the heart of the business when it first opened.

While ice cream availability varies based on the season (predictably, there are less flavors as the weather grows colder), the drink menu offers the traditional coffee, hot cocoa, and flavored drinks one would expect from a coffee shop.

There is the coffee of the day, but also espresso shots, macchiatos, cappuccinos, lattes, and more.

Odling recently made the switch from Monin syrups to 1883 for her flavored drinks, which she said is a flavor upgrade for customers.

Now, in addition to coffee and ice cream, there is also a menu featuring soup, sandwiches and pastries — everything made fresh on site.

“That was not in the plan,” Odling joked, but the food has given customers another option in downtown Elkhorn.

“We don’t bring anything in,” Odling said, adding that they make fudge fresh on site as well.



Kelly Odling’s shop, Friends on the Square, has been a successful café, gathering space and gift shop since opening nearly 14 years ago. Located downtown at 41 N. Wisconsin St. in Elkhorn, Friends also offers a private event space. *right:* Friends on the Square has a wide variety of gift items available, from candy and clothing to seasonal decorations and more. *below:* The space at Friends on the Square can be used for gatherings both large and small, as evidenced by the Elkhorn Area High School Class of 1958 reunion held in the fall in the café space.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*



Gifts

The wide variety of gifts that Friends offers was also a part of the original plan — though not in its current incarnation.

Originally, Odling was selling mostly Elkhorn-related items from Overwear. Now, her inventory has shifted as Overwear is in its new incarnation.

While clothes are still available, it is more of a boutique offering — food-themed socks from “Eat My Socks” that feature everything from burgers to pizza and more, a selection of women’s clothing, and an assortment of handbags.

But there are also body care items, bath

bombs, and baby clothes; kitchen items like microfiber hand towels, coffee mugs, and drink tumblers; candy; seasonal decorations; and more.

The idea, Odling said, is to be as unique as possible with other gift shops cropping up in the downtown Elkhorn area.

“I felt like I needed to dabble into a little bit, or a lot, of everything,” she said.

Event space — and more

While Friends can (and does) host small gatherings on the main floor, there is a private event space upstairs as well.

It is not handicapped accessible, however, so it is available for booking only. That space has held baby and wedding showers, weddings, birthday parties, and more — and can hold up to 100 people.

There is Backyard at Friends — a bar

space with a number of cocktails available on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday. The outdoor space offers live music, including the Glenn Davis Blues Band every Monday.

And the business has two different trucks available for various events — Friends on the Fly, which offers everything ice cream like sundaes, shakes, and more, and the Friends Bev Bar, which is a mobile coffee shop.

The Bev Bar was at the Walworth County Fair this year, while Friends on the Fly is a regular at the Elkhorn Food Truck Festival.

Friends on the Square is currently open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, call the store at 262-723-2909, check out the Facebook page by searching Friends on the Square, or visit the website at friendsonthesquare.com.



Wonders of Walworth County

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EDITOR IN CHIEF: Heather Ruenz
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Heidi Schulz
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On the cover: Walworth County’s Community Thanksgiving Dinner was held at Waters Edge on Delavan Lake. Thanks to an amazing number of sponsors and volunteers, 1,226 meals were shared, with 301 being enjoyed in house or carryout and 925 more delivered.

DAVE DRESHOW *Wonders of Walworth County*

Teacher earns Harbor Freight \$50,000 prize

By Jennifer Eisenbart

STAFF WRITER

Walking into the gymnasium at Elkhorn Area High School in early October, teacher Austin Thorson was at a loss for words.

Tears streaming down his face, with various media outlets recording his reaction, Thorson was treated to a pep rally in honor of earning a prestigious prize.

Named a finalist for the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence, Thorson found out at the pep rally he was one of 20 winners of a \$50,000 prize.

With Harbor Freight Tools for Schools – a philanthropic arm of The Smidt Foundation, started by Harbor Freight owner Eric Smidt – awarding \$1.5 million to high school teachers across the country, Wisconsin fared well. Three finalists were named from the state, with Anthony Christian of Arrowhead High School also earning a \$50,000.

A toolbox with a plaque stating Thorson's name was also donated, and Thorson received an oversized check at the assembly.

There were five grand prize winners of \$100,000 also named. A full list of winners can be found at hftforschools.org/prize-for-teaching-excellence/2024-prize/#winners.

For Thorson, he had high hopes heading into the final round. He had been named a finalist before but had yet to earn one of the prizes.

When he finally stepped to the microphone to talk to the assembled student body, he said simply, "I have nothing prepared for this."

Thorson's brother and parents, as well as his wife Haleigh – a teacher in the district at Jackson Elementary – were all in attendance at the event.

"I was very surprised. My wife is apparently better at keeping a secret," said Thorson, who added that his wife probably



Elkhorn Area High School automotive teacher Austin Thorson shows off the \$50,000 check, as well as the toolbox with his name now at the school, he was awarded from Harbor Freight Tools for Schools.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*

knew for a month.

He said when he first walked into the gymnasium, he was confused because it was Homecoming week. However, the pep assembly for that is normally at the end of the week.

"Then I saw the Harbor Freight people and went, 'Here we go,'" Thorson said. "At first, I was pretty shocked.

"I felt really accomplished," he said. "I felt we finally reached the level where our program is being acknowledged for the great things we're doing.

"I'm super proud of what we're doing here," he added.

Ashley Bennett, Harbor Freight Senior District Manager, and Mike Levin, Harbor Freight Regional Manager, were also in

attendance.

"This is our favorite day of the year," they said.

Elkhorn's technical education program has grown more robust over the years, with Thorson running the automotive department. Courses range from car ownership basics to three different levels of auto classes. In the final level, students lead a service center, where they work on staff and student vehicles.

Having gone through the process four times now, Thorson said this year was special – in large part because of the students he is working with at EAHS.

"Their motivation to me has pushed me to put together a really great application this year," he explained.

Thorson has shared a story many times about his middle school shop teacher in Appleton, who "took all my energy and found an outlet for it."

That inspiration led Thorson to teaching trades, where he is constantly inspired by his students at Elkhorn.

Elkhorn Area School District Superintendent Jason Tadlock praised Thorson.

"Austin is a great example of the hard-working and caring staff at EAHS," Tadlock said. "He goes above and beyond to make his program the best it can be, and he regularly brings added value and resources to the district.

"We are all about creating opportunities and possibilities for our students, and Austin does that daily," he added. "I cannot think of an automotive teacher more deserving of such an honor! We're grateful and proud to have him as a member of our team."

Thorson said he will go through the department's equipment and update what is needed. He would also love to get a new lift or scan tool for the shop.

One of the things Thorson also would like to do is set up a mobile shop trailer where students can go to local elementary schools and Elkhorn Area Middle School and speak as well as demonstrate trade education.

He also wants to expand the small engine classes.

"We're really seeing a huge need," Thorson said, adding that, right now, small engine work is included as part of a class, but not all of it.

"We're just out of space," he explained, saying that the funds would help grow the class for younger students.

He's hopeful to reach out further into the community as well.

"I'm hoping to accomplish some of that with the funds that we won," he said, adding that he'd like to do an extended Community Night. "I'm super stoked."

Opening doors (and eyes) to the future

Local company treats students on trip to manufacturing tech show

By Jennifer Eisenbart

STAFF WRITER

This isn't your grandfather's career exploration gig.

Gone are the days where students take career tests in a classroom, hoping for a match and maybe getting some hands-on experience. For one local company, an investment in today's youth involves recruiting the next generation of talent.

In September, Reader Precision Solutions – formerly Precision Plus out of Elkhorn – sponsored a trip with a record-breaking 220 high school students and educators to the International Manufacturing Technology Show in Chicago.

Those students represented Delavan-Darien and Elkhorn Area high schools, and they were treated to a special outing.

Now in its 10th year, Reader Precision's Operation Exploration gives the students a chance to look into manufacturing technologies and what the future might hold.

The daylong event included a coach bus trip to Chicago, breakfast, lunch, and full



In September, Reader Precision Solutions – formerly Precision Plus out of Elkhorn – sponsored a trip with a record-breaking 220 high school students and educators from Walworth County to the International Manufacturing Technology Show in Chicago.

READER PRECISION SOLUTIONS PHOTO *Wonders of Walworth County*

Weaving together a successful business

Brick Street Yarn carries a variety of supplies needed

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

There's an old saying among knitters and crocheters – one can never have too much yarn.

"I do my best," said Debbie Raye, owner of Brick Street Yarn in Delavan. "I don't know if I necessarily agree with it, because my customer base seems to be split.

"Half of them have a stash at home that is equal to my shop," she added. "Others will buy yarn for a specific project at a time."

Any way you look at it, Brick Street Yarn – now located at 725 E. Wisconsin St., Delavan – has plenty of yarn, knitting needles, crochet hooks, and other notions for any crafter out there.

"I try to stock a good variety of fibers and in several price ranges," explained Raye, who owns the store with her husband, Glenn.

She opened the store in 2012, and laughs when asked why she decided to open it.

"I had retired," she explained. "After about five years of retirement, I was frankly a little bored."

Raye has been knitting most of her life. When she and Glenn moved to Wisconsin



Debbie Raye owns Brick Street Yarn, 725 E. Wisconsin St., Delavan. The current location of the store, which got its start at an old schoolhouse, is the third incarnation.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*

from the Chicago area, she "accidentally" found a knitting community.

"I guess that's how it started," she said.

She first had a small store near the Duck Inn on Highway A, in a former

schoolhouse. Staller Winery eventually bought that building, and Raye moved to downtown Delavan in 2019.

It was on East Walworth Street until this spring, when she moved to her current

location.

In both cases, the space she was renting was sold.

"It's more modern," Raye said about her current space, adding that parking is easier for customers.

The space is about the same as her former store, but any fiber artists who walk in are immediately greeted with a lot of color and variety.

Raye stocks yarn from the smallest of sizes – known as lace weight to knitters and crocheters – to bulky and super bulky, all of which can lead to projects from lace to socks to scarves to blankets.

"Don't forget sweaters," she added.

Colors range the entire scope, with bright fluorescent pinks to deep heathery greys.

Raye also stocks yarn in the green and gold of the Green Bay Packers, and has been known to stock blue and orange for the Chicago Bears and red and white for the Badgers – for anyone interested in wearing their favorite team's colors.

Yarns vary in material. She will stock synthetics on the lower end of the price point, but also alpaca yarn, which is at the higher end.

Additionally, there are hand-dyed skeins, which lend themselves to specialty projects that need to have all the yarn bought at once.

"Some people want natural fibers, some people want easy care," Raye said. "You have to walk that fine line. What is the intended project? Is it a gift? Is it an

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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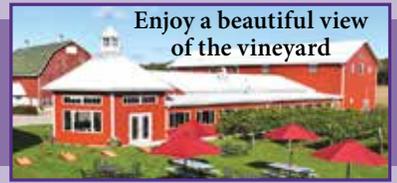
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Home on the Square offers hometown feel

By Jennifer Eisenbart

STAFF WRITER

If the gift store Home on the Square in East Troy is a play on “Home on the Range,” then it’s only fair to quote the lyrics.

“Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word, and the skies are not cloudy all day.”

With a row of windows facing Village Square and light pouring in through them, the unique gift shop has survived five years of global pandemic to establish itself as a destination.

“That is the word we get a lot, that we go after,” Dan Moody – a co-owner with JoAnn McCormack – said of the word unique. “Our intent is to get stuff you can’t normally find in this area.”

The shop, located at 2888 Main St., East Troy, offers a little bit of everything for everyone. Moody admitted the name can be a little misleading, since many people think it’s a home décor or design store.

“We’ve sold some chairs. We’ve sold a few lamps,” he explained. But rather than aim to furnish a home, he said the point can be just as easily made that they sell housewarming gifts.

Home on the Square comes with a little bit of history. The store started in its current location as Sincerely Yours, run by McCormack.

The shop then moved to a location near Piggly Wiggly, but after the Main Street space had sat open for a while, “the owners asked if she wanted to do a Part 2,” Moody said of the store.

The current location opened in May of 2019, with McCormack joining forces with her son-in-law, Moody. He said he has been in retail his entire adult career, and getting a chance to work with McCormack has ensured a local legacy.

“JoAnn still has people coming up to her, going, ‘oh, I have the thing I got at your store,’” Moody said. “We wanted to have things that stood the test of time.”

With the small-store atmosphere, Home on the Square does try to be informal as well. Moody said he’s compiled a playlist of 500 songs for store hours and wants people to browse as they wish.

“I want people to feel comfortable, like they can take their time,” he said.

Variety is key

Moody explained that the store tries to have not only a wide variety of products but also a wide variety of product lines.

He said the store goes out of its way to stock eco-friendly items – a focus from the start of the store – but also to bring in gift items from women-owned or Black-owned businesses.

“We did a gift shop to be unspecific,” Moody said. “Whether it’s a child’s birthday or a housewarming gift. Even if the person doesn’t buy it, we like to have a solution for everything.”

Bestsellers change from day to day, but jewelry is one of them. Moody said the store tries to buy “one of one” or “one of three,” meaning they only have a limited number of each available.

“So someone has a unique piece,” he said. “Accessible but special.”

Candles and skin care – what Moody calls the apothecary line – are also popular. The skin care products feature a brand that has been at the store from the start, The Cottage Greenhouse, which allows people to find both a good price point and a large selection of scents in everything from hand lotion to soaps to foot cream.

But there are also handbags and semi-precious stones, drink ware and decorations, hand towels and hand games.

While shopping in person is always a possibility, the COVID-19 pandemic-driven website also remains an option.

Located at homeonthesquare.org, the website was started in 2020 as a way to allow customers the opportunity to continue shopping for gifts.

“It’s nice to see our reach has extended beyond the area,” said Moody.

While only about a quarter of what is available in store is available on the website, the variety is still there for those looking for home goods, jewelry, candles, and the “apothecary” goods.

The same variety that the store promotes is available online and features a wide variety of sellers. There is also an option called “Let Us Shop For You,” where customers can share what they are looking for and Moody and McCormack can narrow down the selection.

What strikes Moody now is that while the store has been around for five years, it has not only served East Troy, but a wider community as well. Moody said he and McCormack are “consistently humbled” by people who come in from larger areas like Madison and Milwaukee, but also that they get to participate in local events like East Troy’s wine walks, First Fridays, and the like – and to know people stop in just to see the gift shop.

“It means a lot for a business run by two people to get all of this positive feedback,” he said.

Home on the Square is available online at homeonthesquare.org, by calling 262-642-5400, or by emailing homeonthesquare@icloud.com.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The store is closed Sunday and Monday.



Dan Moody is co-owner of Home on the Square store in East Troy. The shop’s name is a play on “Home on the Range” with its location on the Village Square. A wide variety is available, often in limited quantities so people can purchase unique items. **Below:** Home on the Square gift shop offers everything from skin care products to children’s toys and jewelry. The main goal of the shop is to offer items that can’t normally be found in the area.

JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Walworth County





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Bakery owner reflects on past year

Pastries by Chad appreciates neighboring businesses, enjoys continued growth

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

It's been a year of growing and learning for Chad Visger.

What started off as a small wholesale bakery out of Turtle Lake Tap and Grill has turned into a downtown Elkhorn retail staple, as Visger and his business, Pastries by Chad, have now occupied the former Elkhorn Pastry Shop since August of 2023.

The space of time that has passed has given Visger all sorts of insight.

"Figuring out just the flow of everything," he said. "Normal business problems for a bakery in the first year. Just figuring out what the right decision is next.

"What the right thing is to do, at the right time," he added.

Visger and his wife, Sam Siewrok, officially opened around the time of the 2023 Walworth County Fair.

Since then, the retail space has continued to grow, while Visger continues his wholesale and catering work.

"Wholesale is kind of our bread and butter," Visger said, no pun intended.

He has about 30 accounts that range from restaurants to coffee shops to resorts, keeping them stocked in bread, pastries, buns,

and a variety of other items.

Pastries by Chad also provides desserts – cakes, cupcakes, petit fours, and more – through the catering side of the business.

The retail store, located at 29 N. Wisconsin St. in Elkhorn, crosses over somewhat with the wholesale, in that it offers bread and pastries. But the retail side offers different kinds of bread – like buttercrust and sourdough – as well as a wide variety of donuts, muffins, cinnamon rolls, and cookies.

"Retail is definitely a shot in the dark, in the sense that most days we sell out," Visger explained. "We're busy, but you have those random days ... no one comes in."

During the recent holiday season, Pastries by Chad offered a new twist for customers – a specialized holiday menu. For Thanksgiving, that included a variety of pies and a cranberry orange rosemary compote, and for the Christmas holiday season, there were a half dozen pie options available, as well as breakfast boxes of cinnamon rolls and pastries.

Cream pies available included French Silk, Banana Cream, and Peanut Butter while fruit pie options were cherry, caramel apple

walnut, and blueberry lattice.

The bakery also offered packages of dinner rolls and coffee cake in a couple of different flavors.

Visger was quick to note his neighbors on North Wisconsin Street, including Perkup Coffee Shop, Los Tres Hermanos, Spark Studio, Friends on the Square, and Someplace Else restaurant.

He said the family aspect of owning a business among these other owners is a great help.

"I would be remiss if I didn't talk about how great our neighbors are," he said. "To be honest, it's just everyone. Everyone on this block is just one big family.

"We're very close knit," he added.

After the holidays, Visger said he and Sam were going to take some time off, then circle back in January to re-examine – again – what should stay, what should go, and what needs to be rethought.

"It's a lot of planning," he said of that time. "January's always naturally slower."

For more information, call 262-379-1187, visit pastriesbychad.com or follow the business' Facebook page. The retail store is open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and closed Sunday and Monday.



Chad Visger, owner of Pastries by Chad with his wife, Sam Siewrok, shows off some seasonal work prior to the holidays at his downtown Elkhorn retail location. While the Santa cake wasn't for sale, the bakery offers bread, donuts, specialty cakes, and more.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*

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Local FFA alum elected to national office

Mary Schrieber is the National FFA Central Region Vice President

By Gracy Fox
CONTRIBUTOR

At the conclusion of the 97th National FFA Convention & Expo, which was held in the fall, a new group of six student leaders were elected to serve over one million FFA members nationwide. Among them was East Troy's very own Mary Schrieber, who was elected to serve for the upcoming year as the National FFA Central Region Vice President.

Schrieber is just one of nine Wisconsin FFA members to ever be elected to National FFA Office and the first member from East Troy FFA to do so.

The National FFA Organization is the largest youth-led organization in the country and consists of 1,027,273 members in 9,235 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In her role as a National FFA Officer, Schrieber will travel the country meeting with student members, alumni and supporters, government officials, and agriculture industry leaders to promote the mission of FFA to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.

Schrieber will deliver speeches, host workshops, attend state FFA conventions, and meet with sponsors of the FFA. She will also work closely with the National FFA Board of Directors to make changes to ensure a bright future for the National FFA Organization.



Mary Schrieber



The 2024-2025 National FFA Officer Team consists of: President Thaddeus Bergschneider (Illinois), Secretary Luke Jennings (Ohio), Central Region Vice President Mary Schrieber (East Troy, Wisconsin), Eastern Region Vice President Caroline Groth (Kentucky), Western Region Vice President Abigale Jacobsen (California), and Southern Region Vice President Jack Lingenfelter (Georgia).

SUBMITTED PHOTO Wonders of Walworth County

She began her FFA career seven years ago as a middle school FFA member competing in Leadership Development Events.

Schrieber then found her passion for agriculture through beekeeping in the

East Troy FFA chapter apiary, managing up to seven beehives at a time at East Troy High School.

During her time in high school, Schrieber served as the East Troy FFA chapter reporter, vice president, and

president, where she spent countless hours giving back to the community through various agricultural literacy and service events.

The impact the East Troy High School agricultural education program and East Troy FFA chapter had on Schrieber led her to pursue the next level of leadership through FFA, as she was elected to serve as the 2022-2023 Wisconsin FFA Sentinel and 2023-2024 Wisconsin FFA President.

During those stints, she traveled throughout the state for two years to meet with FFA members, host leadership workshops, network with FFA alumni and supporters, advocate for FFA and agricultural education, and run the State FFA Convention.

In her new role as a National FFA Officer, Schrieber hopes to bring her belief in others and a sense of belonging to each FFA member, alumni, supporter, sponsor, and FFA staff member she meets this year in order to "practice brotherhood."

In FFA, this is a part of the opening ceremonies that FFA members use to answer the question "Why are we here?" during meetings and events.

Bringing belief and belonging to members in order to practice brotherhood was a key reason why Schrieber decided to run for National FFA Office and is what she is most looking forward to as she embarks on her endeavors as National FFA Central Region Vice President.

Gracy Fox is the current president of the East Troy FFA chapter.

Special display

For the second year, the East Troy Lions Public Library brought in a traveling exhibit for Veterans Day from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The 2024 exhibit, I Am Not Invisible, focused on the more than 2,000,000 women veterans. The museum interviewed 100 women, and each banner created shares information from those interviews. For more, visit www.va.gov/womenvet/iani.

SUBMITTED PHOTO
Wonders of Walworth County





The Young celebrates its legacy with new chapter

Whitewater venue continues to offer variety of shows

After three decades of enriching the community with outstanding performances and artistic experiences, Young Auditorium is unveiling a vibrant new chapter in its storied history. Going forward, Young Auditorium will be known as The Young, accompanied by a refreshed logo and a modernized visual identity that celebrates its legacy while embracing its dynamic future.

Since its founding in 1993, Young Auditorium has been a cornerstone of Whitewater and south-central Wisconsin's cultural landscape, hosting a diverse array of performances that range from classical to contemporary and from local talent to international stars.

Rebranding to The Young represents a significant evolution in the performing art center's mission to continue providing exceptional arts experiences while reflecting the growth and energy of the community.

The transition signifies more than just a new name; it represents a commitment to innovation and inclusivity in the arts. The new identity is designed to better reflect the evolving tastes and expectations of the audience, while maintaining the high standards of excellence that have defined the auditorium for 30 years.

While the name and branding may be changing, The Young will continue to offer a diverse range of performances, educational programs, and community events that inspire, entertain, and connect. Its mission to support and celebrate the arts is as strong as ever.

The Young is presenting shows in its 2024-25 season showcasing a diverse range of productions. They invite theater enthusiasts, avid concertgoers, and families alike to join in this season of programming. Prepare to be captivated, moved, and inspired as The Young continues to deliver unforgettable memories in the hearts of audiences for years to come.

Here is a rundown on this season's remaining performances.

**Missoula Children's Theatre
production of The Wizard of Oz
Feb. 8 at 3 p.m.**

The story is as familiar as it is beloved. That nasty tornado carries Dorothy and her

canine pal Toto from the friendly confines of her Kansas home to a fabled fantasy of mystery in the land of Oz. Our story begins with the Illusionists, who set the scene for the tale you are about to witness.

With the help of the Munchkins and Glinda herself, the young Miss Gale and her loyal pooch join forces with the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and, of course, the Cowardly Lion.

Off they go down the Yellow Brick Road – side-stepping a Wicked Witch and her ferocious Kalidahs, sprouts that are far nicer-looking than they act, and the loyal Green Guard – on their perilous journey to find the Wizard and ask for his help.

For they are sure his Wizness will grant their wishes and send Dorothy and Toto back to their home – or will he? We'll never tell. Come see for yourself.

Frog and Toad - Feb. 22 at 2 p.m.

Based on Arnold Lobel's well-loved books and featuring a hummable score by Robert and Willie Reale, this whimsical show follows two great friends – the cheerful, popular Frog and the rather grumpy Toad – through four fun-filled seasons.

Waking from hibernation in the Spring, Frog and Toad plant gardens, swim, rake leaves, go sledding, and learn life lessons along the way. The two best friends celebrate and rejoice in the differences that make them unique and special. Part vaudeville, part make believe, and all charm, A Year with Frog and Toad tells the story of a friendship that endures throughout the seasons.

The jazzy, upbeat score of A Year with Frog and Toad bubbles with melody and wit, making it an inventive, exuberant, and enchanting musical for the whole family. It is a perfect show to be performed by an ensemble group of actors and can be produced with either simple or extravagant staging and sets.

Jim Brickman - Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.

With a career spanning over three decades, Brickman has become a household name in the world of

contemporary music. His signature style, blending pop and classical influences, has garnered him numerous accolades and a dedicated fan base. Now, fans will have the opportunity to experience his iconic hits in a whole new way.

Brickman's "Hits Live" tour promises an unforgettable show, filled with timeless melodies and heartfelt lyrics. Audiences can expect to be serenaded with beloved classics such as "Valentine," "The Gift," and "Love of My Life," among many others. Each performance will showcase Brickman's exceptional talent and his ability to connect with listeners on a deeply emotional level.

"I believe that if you're lucky enough to have hits, you should play them," says Brickman. "I am thrilled to bring these songs to life on stage and share this incredible experience with my fans."

Leahy - March 1 at 7 p.m.

Leahy has cemented its status as a pioneering force in Canada's music landscape. Their journey began in the late 1990s with the instrumental hit "Call to Dance," introducing a fresh take on Canadian folk music. The distinct "Leahy sound" blended elements like stride piano, rhythmic guitar, unique bass lines, and contemporary drumming with mesmerizing fiddle-led instrumentals and vocals.

Over the years, they earned three Juno awards and widespread acclaim for their dynamic performances. Raised on a musical legacy tracing back to 1825, the Leahy siblings learned fiddling from their father and other skills from their mother.

Their career took off in the mid-1990s with an album on Virgin Records, achieving double platinum in Canada and international success. They've since sold over half a million albums worldwide, starred in PBS specials, and even inspired an Academy Award-winning documentary.

In recent years, Grammy-winning producer David Bottrill joined forces with Leahy to create their most ambitious project yet, "Good Water," blending a range of musical influences and pushing their traditional roots in exciting new directions.

Second City - April 11 at 7 p.m.

Come see why The Second City has been the first name in laughter for over 60 years! From the place that launched the careers of Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell, and more comes the next generation of comedy superstars.

**Our Planet Live
April 27 at 3 p.m.**

From the Emmy Award-winning team behind Netflix's Our Planet series, comes a new natural history speaker series: Our Planet Live. Brought to you by Silverback Films and Producer esk in association with Netflix, Our Planet Live is a new and immersive live show featuring behind-the-scenes stories from the explorers, filmmakers, scientists, and adventurers that created some of the most eye-catching footage of the planet.

Join them live on stage as they bring to life these stories from the natural world. With a focus on climate fragility and climate migration, Our Planet Live tells an unprecedented story about overcoming obstacles on a global scale and explores the messages at the heart of these action-packed, emotional, and unforgettable sequences.

For more information about the 2024-25 season and to purchase tickets, contact the box office at 262-472-2222 or visit the new website TheYoungWhitewater.com.

Tickets can also be purchased in person. Ticket Services is in the atrium of Greenhill Center of the Arts, 950 W. Main St., Whitewater, and is open Monday-Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Young is at 930 W. Main St., Whitewater and parking is always free during an event.

The Young, 930 W. Main St., Whitewater, has been presenting a variety of performances and artistic experiences for 30 years. Theater enthusiasts, avid concertgoers, and families alike are invited to join in our productions now into the spring.

TECH SHOW • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

access to all the exhibits at IMTS.

“Seeing students’ eyes light up as they explore innovative technology, connect with professionals and the stories students and educators return with at IMTS reaffirms our dedication to this initiative,” said Michael J Reader, CEO and Owner of Reader Precision Solutions. Reader said they are proud to continue supporting Operation Exploration and inspiring the next generation of manufacturing talent.

“We are grateful to the Elkhorn Area and Delavan-Darien school districts who allow us to bring their students and educators to this event and get hands-on experience with the advanced manufacturing industry,” he added.

Students participated in interactive educational sessions, explored state-of-the-art manufacturing technology, and connected with industry professionals, gaining invaluable knowledge and insight into various career paths in STEM and business-related fields. The experience left students motivated and eager to explore opportunities in manufacturing, aligning with Reader Precision Solutions’ mission to invest in workforce development and community outreach.

Reader Precision Solutions is an industry leader in precision machining, combining work at Precision Plus in Elkhorn and Iseli Precision in Walworth. The company provides job opportunities in both CNC and Swiss Cam machine operating.

The work the company does in precision machining flows into everything from military and defense machine parts to health care.

David Redford, the marketing coordinator with Reader Precision Solutions, said the IMTS show – one of the world’s largest trade shows for innovations in manufacturing – gives students a chance to see everything from AI (artificial intelligence) to advanced robotics and automation up close.

“It’s a chance for them to explore a wide range of career paths in STEM and

manufacturing – many of which they may not have been aware of before attending,” Redford said.

Students said their eyes were opened during the trip, with one commenting that it was “incredibly inspiring.”

“I saw cutting-edge technologies I didn’t even know existed and learned how they’re shaping the future of manufacturing,” the student said.

Another added, “It was an amazing opportunity to connect with industry professionals and see advanced equipment in action. It really opened my eyes to career possibilities I hadn’t considered before.”

With both Delavan-Darien and Elkhorn now offering youth apprenticeship and career academy possibilities, the trip also gives Reader Precision a chance to pull in students for their next level of education.

Gateway Technical College has a partnership with several area schools, including Badger, Big Foot, Burlington, Delavan-Darien, and Elkhorn. During National Youth Apprenticeship Week this spring, the work Reader Precision is doing in youth apprenticeships was highlighted at both the local and state level, as Wisconsin Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development Jennifer Sereno toured the Elkhorn facility.

The work of the DWD, youth apprenticeships and companies like Reader Precision are all working to show students that the next steps after high school don’t necessarily need to involve a four-year college for success.

“By sparking an interest in manufacturing and STEM, we aim to address the skilled labor gap while building relationships with future professionals who may join our workforce,” Redford said. “It’s a long-term investment in both the students and the future of American manufacturing.”

For a recap video of the trip, visit www.youtube.com, type “Reader Precision IMTS 2024” in the search bar and select “Operation Exploration 2024” from the results.

BRICK STREET YARN • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

intended heirloom? Or is it utilitarian?”

There’s much more than yarn. Raye also stocks knitting needles and crochet hooks, plus other items like stitch markers, suede slipper bottoms and notion holders.

In addition, Raye hosts two open knits – free time for crafters to come in with their projects – twice a week: Tuesdays from about 1 to 4 p.m. and Thursdays in the early evening, starting around 5 p.m.

“It’s very social,” Raye said. “We share skills, we share project ideas, we help each other with knitting terms and patterns and a lot of hand holding.”

Brick Street Yarn is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. It’s closed on Wednesdays.

For more information, call the store at 262-725-7779.

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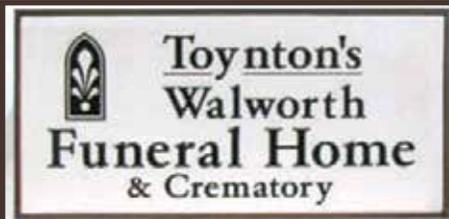
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