

East Troy in 2025: All Your Questions Answered

Our fifth annual Q&A issue combines two vital things: the real-life concerns of our readers and the knowledge and expertise of our community members.

We asked for all your burning questions about East Troy ... What new businesses are in East Troy? Is Alpine Valley Music Theatre coming back with a full line up?

We did our best to get the bottom of it for you.

Q: When is East Troy's Fourth of July Festival?

The East Troy Lions Club will hold its annual Fourth of July Celebration Thursday, July 3 through Sunday, July 6 at Rossmiller Sports Complex and Skate Park (fka Amusement Park), 3090 Graydon Ave., East Troy.

The East Troy Music Festival features the famous East Troy Beer Tent (ETBT), carnival rides, games, fair food and live entertainment.

The parade, with the theme "Salute to First Responders" will start at noon on Sunday, July 6.



Fireworks are scheduled for Saturday, July 5 at dark. For more information, visit easttroylions.org.

Q: What artists will grace the stage of Alpine Valley Music Theatre this summer?

Boasting one of the largest outdoor amphitheatres in the country, Alpine has already announced several shows for summer of 2025.

The "Summer of '99 and Beyond Festival," scheduled for July 18-19, will feature 13 prominent bands from the late 1990s and early 2000s, including headliners Creed, and Nickelback. On July 18, the lineup includes Nickelback, +LIVE+, Daughtry, Tonic, Our Lady Peace, and Lit. The

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Q&A: First Fridays

East Troy's Fav Festival Celebrates 10th Season

How do you measure the impact and influence of doing anything one Friday a month, every summer for 10 years?

If you are a community lover, you will most certainly feel the impact of East Troy's First Fridays when visiting East Troy Village Square Park and surrounding businesses.

East Troy's First Friday series has brought significant positive economic impact to town by not only driving traffic but also creating connections and conversations that go beyond a single day of the week.

The East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce will celebrate a decade of First Fridays this May through September with a full lineup of events and brand-new VIP events centered around the First Friday footprint.

As First Fridays enters its milestone 10th season, Vanessa Lenz, Executive Director of the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce, and Josie Henningfeld, longtime member of the East Troy First Fridays Committee and co-owner of Hill Valley Dairy, discuss the magic behind this event series, its impact, and how it's so loved by both locals and visitors alike.

Q: This is the 10th season of East Troy's First Fridays — what do you think has made this event such a lasting and beloved tradition?

Josie: East Troy has always carried a "tight knit, small town" persona and First Fridays give us the opportunity to share our community values with surrounding cities and towns.

It is the perfect blend of being social, enjoying great local food and music, and supporting small business.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Making Magical Memories: A Q&A with East Troy Lights

Uncovering the Stories & Secrets Behind Your Favorite Holiday Tradition

This winter, downtown East Troy transformed into a holiday wonderland for the fifth year in a row and delivered big results with the much-anticipated return of East Troy Lights.

The interactive and imaginative light display experience transported visitors to a dazzling display of lights utilizing the backdrop of the historic East Troy Village Square.

For the entire month of December, people flocked to the square to walk through the lights and create their own holiday magic with the Candy Cane Adventure and return of East Troy Lights Live!

Several area businesses and organizations, along with volunteers and donors, work together to create this unique event to draw visitors to the area, including presenting partners Sauced Pizzeria, Allan Integrated Control Systems, East Troy Brewery and East Troy Community School District.

Vanessa Lenz, East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director (which presents East Troy Lights) and Jamie Rohrer, East Troy Lights Show Creator, give us an inside look at East Troy Lights 2025 and why they keep coming back for more.

Q: East Troy Lights has received nationwide media attention alongside cities like Chicago & St. Louis (wow!) Can you talk about what makes your light show so special?

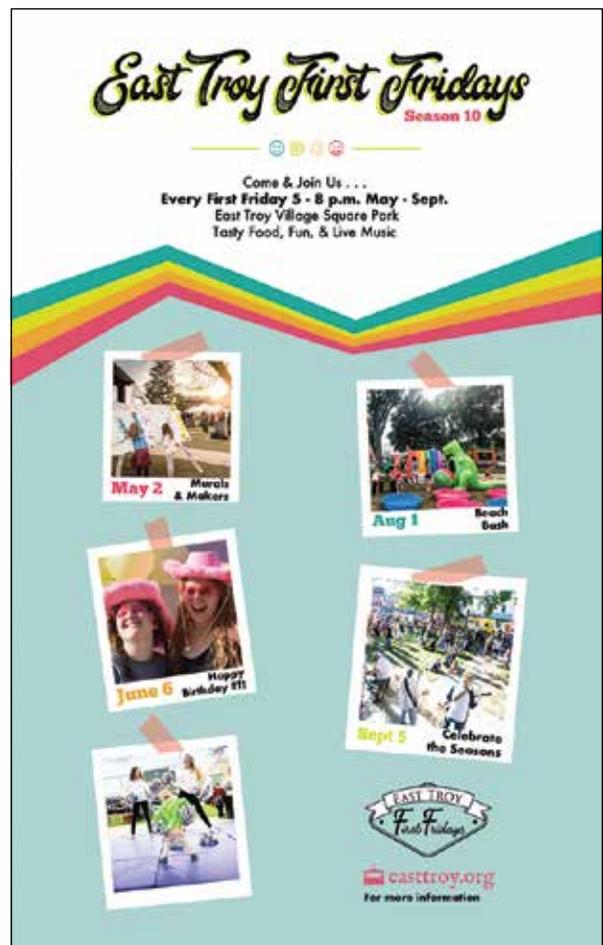
Jamie: Mmm. Well, first off, unlike most light shows, you're inside this one. That is to say, instead of just watching the lights (for example on a house), with East Troy Lights you're in center of the lights, in the



Love shines brightest at East Troy Lights! Congratulations to Morgan Bartlett and Riley Bauer who made magical memories with a holiday engagement under the sparkling lights of the popular East Troy Lights Tunnel on Dec. 20.

TRULY LIVING PHOTOGRAPHY Good Neighbors

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Author Q&A: Christina Clancy on 'Snowbirds,' East Troy ties & book tour



East Troy's own Christina Clancy has been making waves in the literary world, but still shows the love for her local friends. Known for her vivid storytelling and strong Midwest roots, Clancy captured hearts with her second novel, "Shoulder Season," which was inspired by a young woman from East Troy. Now, she's back with her latest success, "The Snowbirds" — a USA Today Best-Selling Book and one of People's Best New Books of February 2025. This compelling story follows a fictional couple from Madison as they swap

below: Christina Clancy was joined by New York Times bestselling author Chloe Benjamin for an evening in East Troy during InkLink Books & 2894 on Main's latest Read & Feed book dinner inspired by Clancy's third novel "Snowbirds." The page-turning book was a USA Today Best-Selling Book and one of People's Best New Books of February 2025. **at left:** The Read & Feed menu featured multi courses with special themes relating to the book, including a three layer cake topped with striped beach chairs.

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Wisconsin's snowy winters for the sunny charm of Palm Springs, California, exploring themes of escape, transformation, and self-discovery. As Clancy continues to bring Wisconsin's unique character to life on the national stage, she shares more about her creative process, her inspirations, and what's next for this talented author.

Q: Your second novel "Shoulder Season" was based on a young woman from East Troy! In "The Snowbirds," a fictional couple from Madison heads to Palm Springs for the winter, trading the Wisconsin snow for the California sun. Why was it important for you to have your characters come from Wisconsin?

A: I've tried to start out with characters from different places, but the minute I decide to make them Milwaukeeans, Madisonians or East Troy residents, they snap to life for me. Place informs so much of who we are. My characters need to know what the soil smells like after the rain, what makes them insiders or outsiders, and they need to have a sense of the social, economic and political dynamics that shape their personalities. Because I've lived in all these places in Wisconsin, I feel more emboldened to see how my characters respond to the situations they find themselves in both at home and in cities and towns that are very different from what they know. It's fun to write about what feels like home, and also what's not home. In "Shoulder Season" Sherri needed to leave East Troy in order to appreciate it.

Q: Can you discuss your East Troy connection? What do you love about our town?

A: I told my late father-in-law that his love for East Troy made me love the town even



more. Larry grew up on Main Street, and his father and grandfather ran the Lacey Clancy hardware store where InkLink now stands. My husband's grandfather and great-grandfather were mayors (one changed the spelling of his name to Clancey because he thought

it made the name sound more "rich." It was changed back the next generation). I've even heard there's a bay on Lake Beulah called Clancy Cove, and a very old map has a section of land off Highway J labeled as "Clancyland." When I married into the family, I began to spend time with them at their home on Booth Lake, where I loved to swim and go into town to have ice cream at J Lauber's and custard at Gus's. Larry loved to tell stories about his childhood, and his stories made the town come alive for me. In 2001, my husband and I had an opportunity to get an old 1920's cottage on Lake Beulah. It wasn't until Kayleen Rohrer opened InkLink that I really began to feel like a resident. Through the bookstore and the Read and Feed events, I met Sue Enright, Barb Jones, Linda Dodge, Lisa TeLindert and their circles of wonderful family and friends. I interviewed them when I worked on "Shoulder Season" and I always left feeling jealous of the fun they had growing up with the lakes and farms, and also their shared sense of history and community. East Troy is a naturally gorgeous place, and I care about preserving what makes it beautiful and unique.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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Coach Q&A: Female-led basketball team secures place in history books

For the first time since the 2013 season, there's a new No. 1 atop the East Troy High School girls basketball rankings.



Staci Butalla
East Troy High School
Head Basketball Coach

With a season record of 22 wins and two losses, the East Troy girls basketball team earned an undefeated 14-0 Rock Valley Conference championship on Feb. 21 with a 76-33 victory at home against Delavan-Darien.

The last time East Troy High School won the girls basketball conference was in 2013.

Senior Amya Pluess has led the way for the Trojans this season, reaching the 1000-point milestone during the team's playoff run and becoming just the fifth player to do so in school history.

The Trojans went on to become regional champions after defeating Columbus 56-39 on March 1 and were headed to the sectional final as of press time.

Head coach Staci Butalla shares what has sparked the team's success as they head into the homestretch of the season.



With a season record of 22 wins, two losses, the East Troy High School Girls Basketball team earned an undefeated (14-0) Rock Valley Conference championship and went on to win the Regional Championship.

JULIA KOSTOPOULOS *Good Neighbors*

Q: This is East Troy's first conference title since 2013. What makes this year's team so special?

A: This year's team is led by experienced players.

We have four All-Conference players back in our starting line-up from last year and our other girls have really stepped into some key roles for us.

Amya Pluess has been a four-year starter and Aubrie Cherek has been a three-year starter.

This has been instrumental in our success this season.

Q: Can you talk about how it has been putting this varsity team together and how your past coaching and basketball experience has helped shape this squad?

A: We really only have one senior that has played in our program throughout her youth and high school career: Amya Pluess.

Our junior class has four key players that have come through the youth program and have always been the group of girls since fifth grade that have put the time and work in.

We have two freshman that have stepped into key roles this season coming in off the bench and helping keep the energy alive on the court.

I started working with the youth program when our current freshman were in 5K and just really worked to build a solid program with families and players striving to come together and build the program back up.

I grew up in a basketball family. My dad was a head basketball coach and I always went with him to the gym and practices. He coached me in youth basketball so I've always just been around the game.

Q: The women's basketball game is more popular than ever. What's it like to see it getting so much love?

A: Yes, it has been great to watch it grow! I am just really happy for the girls.

They deserve it with all the time they have put in. It's great to see them getting the recognition they deserve.

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The East Troy High School Girls Basketball team celebrates its Rock Valley Conference Championship, including (front, from front) Addi Butalla, Valencia Burgos, Amya Pluess, Aubrie Cherek, Flor Ortega Moreno; (middle) Head Coach Staci Butalla, Teagan Kniep, Makenzie Feucht, Irelly Loomis, Rachel Kuehn, Addison Hudson, Savannah Puzach; (back) Assistant Coach Paul Kielas, Assistant Coach Rodney Spangler and Assistant Coach Natalie Andersen.

JULIA KOSTOPOULOS *Good Neighbors*



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VANESSA LENZ *Good Neighbors*



DITHER STUDIO *Good Neighbors*



Clockwise from top photo: East Troy Lights creator Jamie Rohrer & East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Vanessa Lenz play key roles in bringing the vibrant holiday attraction to life throughout the East Troy Lights season. Hill Valley Dairy's Josie Henningfeld & her daughters Rayla and Leni, were among volunteers always willing to lend a hand, no matter what the temperature or time. Getting a visit from his grandson Jack, John Vilanj, who owns his own construction company, has been a critical part of making the volunteer run project a reality since its start in 2020. Rachel Tanis of Spotlight Real Estate was among only a few volunteers who braved the cold to help nearly 700 local school children decorate the trees on the square with ornaments on Dec. 5 in preparation of Santa's arrival.

VANESSA LENZ *Good Neighbors*

middle of the tunnels. You're right in the action.
 But perhaps more importantly, is East Troy Light's interactivity. Play a light show whenever you want with the East Troy Lights Jukebox. Grab a wand and a comic book and go on the Candy Cane Adventure, hunting for "Glowstones" and baby candy canes, while facing off in "pong-like" competitions with the light show tunnels.
 We definitely try to make sure we keep it interesting!

Vanessa: East Troy Lights is 100-percent community built and you can feel that the second you step onto the square in December.

This isn't just a store-bought display set up on the square. Our show uses cutting-edge technology to create a one-of-a-kind interactive holiday experience, turning the historic East Troy Village Square into a dazzling display of lights. The entire East Troy Community School District — from 4K to 12th grade — along with local businesses, attractions, and residents, come together to make this event happen year after year.

We've seen incredible growth over the past five years, despite working with limited resources. None of this would be possible without our community partners and the countless volunteers who dedicate endless hours to bring this vision to life. A special thanks goes to Jamie, whose creativity and leadership continue to fuel this project's success.

We've gotten this far by working cohesively as a community and that type of magic is truly special.

Q: Were there any challenges in bringing your vision to life this year?

Jamie: Well, of course! Every year we create a new set of problems for ourselves. This year we wanted to focus on building out the Candy Cane Adventure — which

we did by adding about three times more interactive items to visit around the square (glowing "Glowstones," Baby Canes, etc.) — and by amping up launch night with a live broadcast, waaaaay more volume, infographics, etc.

Of course, none of it worked as planned though: one of our broadcast volunteers fell ill hours before we needed them, and the entire speaker system, we use broke a few days before New Years!

Vanessa: Running an event like East Troy Lights involves countless moving parts that all have to work together seamlessly — and Mother Nature doesn't always get the memo.

This year, we faced rain, strong winds, or freezing temperatures on nearly every special event night, with the exception of our first and final evenings.

When the weather doesn't cooperate, there's always something that needs adjusting in real time — whether it's fixing broken tunnels, troubleshooting Wi-Fi issues, or rescheduling entertainment.

We have a tiny budget and produce big results, which means we have to work extra hard and be creative when challenges arise.

Q: Have you seen any unexpected ways people engage with the lights?

Jamie: Other than the kid who kept sabotaging things (I'm looking at you!) we've gotten a pretty good handle on what to expect. I will say though, I thought the 8 p.m. New Year's Eve Ball Drop turnout was fantastic.

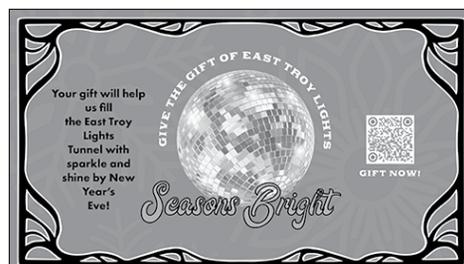
Vanessa: I say this every year, but the way our community shows up for the debut of East Troy Lights with Santa on the Square never fails to bring me happy tears.

Each year, the crowd grows bigger, and the shared excitement and anticipation are truly magical.

This event wouldn't be possible

without the incredible support of so many community partners. Catching a glimpse of the East Troy Electric Railroad's Santa Parade Train is a one-of-a-kind experience, and groups like the East Troy High School Band Drumline and the East Troy Volunteer Fire Department always add special touches that make the night even more memorable. Watching Santa light the Bob Barutha Memorial Christmas Tree and kick off our first show is one of those movie moments we all get to share together.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Seasons Bright

Disco ball display supports East Troy Lights

This holiday season, supporters were able to give the gift of East Troy Lights — choosing between a dazzling disco ball or ornament customized with their recipient's name to be displayed in the East Troy Lights Tunnel all season long.

Each gift helped the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce fill the East Troy Lights Tunnel with sparkle and shine by New Year's Eve.

Each purchase supported the 100-percent community built magical light display and will help keep East Troy Lights twinkling for decades to come.

East Troy Lights Disco Ball Designees

- Arlene Jarvis
- Captain Sharp
- Claudia Felske
- In memory of Kyle Zagorski
- In memory of Ronnie Siemers
- Jane Tanis
- Javi McCormack
- Julie, Michael & Thomas Cotter
- Lincoln Braun
- Love you Jeffica
- Love you Nina
- Marlene Hanson
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EAST TROY LIGHTS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Q: Can you talk about the economic & community impact this event has had on East Troy?

Vanessa: East Troy Lights shows how a community can creatively attract new visitors during the off/winter season.



Vanessa Lenz, Executive Director, East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce

We launched this event during the height of the pandemic (in December of 2020) when we should have closed our doors.



Jamie Rohrer, Light Show Creator, Dither Studio

Since then, East Troy Lights has attracted tens of thousands to the downtown square (during a previous non-peak season), providing a massive audience to enjoy and interact with the lights while giving new life to East Troy and its businesses for the holiday season.

Today, East Troy Lights draws more than 15,000 local, day trip and overnight visitors and upwards of \$700,000 in spending in our community.

Jamie: Based on the numbers the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce has gathered, the light show has quite a significant impact both monetarily and from a community standpoint.

Don't quote me but I believe even the very first year we did the light show we essentially doubled the sales of the downtown businesses in December – and it's only risen ever since. And that doesn't even touch on the magic it brings to the area, and the amount of East Troy pride it helps build.

Q: Do you have plans to expand or introduce new elements in the future? (Spoilers welcome)

Jamie: Probably...lol.

We've started moving a lot more into manufacturing efficiencies – which, sounds boring – but actually proves critical to our ability to deploy the light show at increasingly larger scales. More than ever, our components and light show boxes “just click together.”

In a nutshell, this means more lights, more interactivity, and more focus on the storytelling and “magical” elements of the event.

As for something specific...we have lots of crazy ideas, but the vast majority never make it past the prototype stage.

For example, last year we had an interactive talking pizza box just sitting in the office; but making a production ready product that gets used by thousands of people and doesn't break requires a significant amount more effort, so only a



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Show Some Love to East Troy Lights

If you like what you saw, please donate to help us continue to build East Troy Lights for next year's show –\$1, \$5, \$20, \$100 – any amount will help us continue to build East Troy Lights and make next year's show even better.

Visit EastTroyLights.com to donate or mail donations to East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 312, East Troy, WI 53120.



VANESSA LENZ Good Neighbors

tiny fraction of the weird things we make get seen.

Vanessa: We are always looking to go bigger and better with both the light installations and the accompanying events. At this point, if we can fund it, we can do it!

Do you have something you want to see or are you looking to help?

This is your opportunity to get involved. For more information visit easttroylights.com or email vanessa@easttroy.org.

clockwise from top left: Charlotte (left) and Vivian Reitz join Santa and his helper, Freckles the Elf, to usher in East Troy's most wonderful time of year during an East Troy Lights Live! Show. Freckles the Elf introduces East Troy Lights Live! Show attendees to an epic Candy Cane Adventure to help restore power to the lights along with Gargantua (towering at 6-feet tall). A record crowd gathers at East Troy Village Square Park to help Santa, Mrs. Claus and their entourage light the Bob Barutha Community Christmas Tree and debut year 5 of East Troy Lights. Students from East Troy High School, under the direction of John Vilanj and ETHS tech ed teacher Mike Hoff (not pictured), were instrumental in lights set up and construction at East Troy Village Square Park. The East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce is grateful for the many, many volunteers who gave their time and talents to make the magical return of East Troy Lights happen!

See more Behind the Scenes footage at EastTroyLights.com!

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2894 on Main
- Al Smith's Saloon
- James R. Taylor & Sons
- East Troy Brewery
- East Troy Area Historical Society
- East Troy House
- East Troy Lions Lodge
- ECP
- Edward Jones-Jim Jakscht
- The Global Glass
- Home on the Square
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- James R. Taylor & Sons
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FIRST FRIDAYS • CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

First Fridays is the perfect place for a social gathering!

Friends can meet up for a drink, families can enjoy free activities for the kids, you can shop small business and indulge in an amazing variety of food – there truly is something for everyone, which I believe is why it has grown so much over the years!

Q: How have First Fridays evolved over the past decade, and what's stayed true to its original vision?

Vanessa: Over the years, First Fridays has grown from a small community event to a signature celebration that draws visitors from near and far.

I remember texting everyone in my phone, begging them to attend our first ever First Friday Kite Flight event. (If you were there, let our beer tent bartenders know and your next drink is on us!)

While we've definitely grown (more food trucks, bigger bands and expanded programming), the heart of it has always been about bringing people together in a way that's fun, welcoming, and uniquely local.

Josie: First Fridays has always centered around the idea of embracing the heart of East Troy. From its location, to the small businesses we have as vendors and the school groups we help promote, everything about First Fridays has always been about showcasing the best East Troy has to offer. It is an event that was created by our

community, for our community. It's just a bonus that now other people want to join in on the fun. :)

Q: What special plans do you have in store for this milestone season? Are there any standout themes or surprises we should look forward to?

Vanessa: We're going all out for the 10th season! Expect bigger entertainment, more interactive experiences, and some exciting surprises — including special anniversary-themed events and collaborations. We're also working on unique giveaways and commemorative merchandise to mark the occasion.

Q: The VIP experiences you've been adding sound amazing — what can guests expect from those this season?

Vanessa: Our VIP experiences take First Fridays to the next level! This season, we're curating exclusive perks like VIP tents, gourmet food and drink offerings and behind-the-scenes access.

Our June First Friday event will tie in with the Village of East Troy's 125th Anniversary and we will host a Black Tie After Party with a fun spin (think 90s prom meets formal gala). Our August First Friday event will feature a VIP Cabana Lounge. Attendees can upgrade their beach bash experience with exclusive seating, tropical treats, and cool



Averaging 2,000 attendees, East Troy's First Fridays transform the heart of downtown into an exciting fusion of all the community has to offer – a one-of-a-kind, free, outdoor event featuring live music, various food, market and artisan vendors and activities for all ages. The series returns on the First Friday of the month, from 5 to 8 p.m., May 2, June 6, Aug. 1 and Sept. 5 at East Troy Village Square Park.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors

drinks in our private, shaded oasis.

It's all about making our guests feel like part of something extra special.

Q: How does First Fridays contribute to the East Troy community and local businesses?

Vanessa: First Fridays have become a powerful driver of East Troy's economy and a meaningful way to build community spirit

Today, this popular event series draws an average of 2,000 attendees, many of whom travel from within a few hours' radius. This steady influx of day-trippers provides valuable exposure for our participating partners and businesses.

By drawing crowds to East Troy Village Square Park and beyond, we're creating opportunities for local shops, restaurants, and artists to thrive.

In addition to our vibrant food trucks and marketplace vendors, we collaborate with numerous local businesses and organizations to ensure the event continues to showcase the best of East Troy.

Our finale event in September of 2024 featured more than 20 community partners, including the East Troy Elementary PTO Dunk Tank, East Troy Fire Department, Troy Center Fire Department, Pack 17, East Troy Area Historical Society, East Troy

Community School District's Elementary School Reading Team, Youth Vendor Spotlight, St. Peter's Home & School Association, American Legion, Loomis-Martin Post 188, 2024 Scavenger Games and more.

It's a celebration that keeps our local culture vibrant and our businesses supported.

Q. Do you have any favorite memories or standout moments from past seasons?

Josie: I really loved the community talent show we had a handful of years ago, it was so neat to see all the different acts!

I also really loved decorating for each theme last year, it was a neat way to dress up the square and make it feel like a party! I look forward to seeing what we come up with this year!

Vanessa: There are so many amazing memories tied to First Fridays.

Our inaugural First Friday Committee became super close and we had so much fun working together to transform our town.

One standout was hosting the Milwaukee Ballet in 2016 — the energy, music, and community engagement was unlike anything

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Attendees at East Troy's very first First Fridays event were encouraged to meet on the south side of East Troy Village Square Park to decorate a beautiful kite and join in on a grand launch of kites & bubbles to kick off the inaugural series.

JAMIE ROHRER Good Neighbors



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I had ever seen. Moments like that, where you see people (from babies to seniors) dancing, laughing, and connecting, reminds me why these events are so important.

I also love seeing the kids who have grown alongside the event. My sons were just 5 and 1 ½ when we started this series, and now they're 14 and 10. For them, First Fridays have become their monthly meet-up with friends — they visit every vendor and activity, help out with ideas and setup, and have really made it their own.

I recognize lots of other children who have been coming First Fridays since they were babies and I just love it.

Q: How can local businesses, artists, and performers get involved in First Fridays?

Vanessa: We love involving the community and are actively looking for partners for 2025!

Businesses and local organizations are encouraged to get involved by setting up pop-up activities or sponsoring music and entertainment.

Artists, marketplace vendors, and performers are also welcome to apply to be part of the marketplace and entertainment lineup, adding to the vibrant atmosphere of

First Fridays.

Our May 2 event theme is Murals & Makers and we are transforming our downtown square into an open-air gallery and makers' market.

We are looking for makers & artists who want to display and sell their custom creations. We are also looking for interactive exhibits and helpers to make large art installations.

We're always looking for fresh ideas, new collaborations and volunteers, so anyone interested should reach out by visiting easttroy.org or emailing vanessa@easttroy.org.

Q: As you look back on 10 seasons, what are you most proud of accomplishing with First Fridays?

Vanessa: I'm incredibly proud of how First Fridays have fostered a sense of community and showcased East Troy's unique character.

I'm in awe of the dedication, creativity, and tireless enthusiasm of our First Fridays Committee volunteers,

Seeing the growth of these events — both in attendance and in impact — makes me so grateful for everyone who's helped make



For the past decade, East Troy First Fridays has been volunteer-run, thanks to the dedication and passion of the East Troy First Fridays Committee. Current First Friday Committee Members include (from left): (front, from left): Josie Henningfeld of Hill Valley Dairy, Vivian Reitz, John Lightfield, Charlotte Reitz, (back) Tommy McCormack, Vanessa Lenz, East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Jon Lenz of Sauced Pizzeria, Sarah Manke and Bailey Kaiser of Citizens Bank.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors



Original First Friday Committee Members include (from left) Autumn Kniseley of ECP, Ayla Guild of The Hive Taproom, Vanessa Lenz, East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, JoAnn McCormack of Spotlight Real Estate, Sarah Manke, Bailey Kaiser, Rachel Zweck, Jessica Fuchs and (not pictured) Sarah Smith.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors



above: Milwaukee Ballet dancers engage the crowd during its showcase in 2016 at East Troy Village Square Park. below: Muddy Boots has been a regular Marketplace vendor, part of East Troy's First Fridays event series, sponsored by the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce.

VANESSA LENZ Good Neighbors

them happen.

Q: How can the community and visitors help support and keep this tradition thriving for years to come?

Vanessa: The best way to support First Fridays is to show up, spread the word, and shop local. Every beverage purchased (from the East Troy First Fridays beer tent), every meal enjoyed, and every artisan supported helps us keep this tradition alive and growing.

You can also volunteer your time or donate by visiting easttroy.org. All proceeds help us make this event bigger & better.

Q: What would you say to someone who's never been to a First Fridays event — why should they make this season their first?

Josie: First Fridays embodies everything that is great about a Wisconsin summer night! Live music, great food and amazing people make it the perfect way to kick off your weekend.

It's an amazing opportunity to learn more about members of our community and the small businesses and non-profit groups they run. We would love to have you join us!



Downtown merchant Dan Moody, owner of Home on the Square, shows off some East Troy merch to support East Troy First Fridays—celebrating community spirit, local charm, and downtown fun.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors



First Fridays Square Fest, a local music festival where businesses become stages and venues for area bands, highlights artists like Sophia Webber, who performed at 2894 on Main.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors



Della Keating and Corin Rohrer enjoy a sweet treat during the First Fridays event series, which features a family friendly atmosphere, including live music, food and free fun. The series returns on the First Friday of the month, May-Sept. at East Troy Village Square Park. For details visit, easttroy.org.

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The mission of the Walworth County Historical Society is to collect, preserve and share the rich history of Walworth County, the State of Wisconsin and the United States. The Walworth County Historical Society is an affiliate of the Wisconsin State Historical Society and has been in existence since 1904. The society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Currently the WCHS operates the Webster House Museum, Reinke Resource Center, The Boyd Carriage Barn, Sharon Town Hall



and Blooming Prairie School House on the County Fairgrounds. For more information, email walcohistory@tds.net.

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especially the people that are a part of our store team," said Rebecca Geraci, store manager. For more information visit apply.starbucks.com.

GIRLS BASKETBALL • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Q: What would you say to people who haven't watched you all play yet?

A: Get to a game! This group of girls works incredibly hard on the defensive end of the floor creating turnovers and easy baskets. We like to get out and run the floor and we have multiple different players that can score.

Q: With the conference title secured, what's next for the Trojans?

A: We are looking forward to starting our playoff run tomorrow night at home with a game against North Fond du Lac. Take one game at a time. Keep playing together and with the energy we have all season, and anything is possible!



Player of the year: East Troy High School senior Amya Pluess had a standout 2024-25 season, celebrating her 1,000th career point (becoming just the fifth player in school history to reach the milestone) and First Team All-Rock Valley Conference and Conference Player of the Year honors.

JULIA KOSTOPOULOS *Good Neighbors*

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Q. What is there to do this spring?

MARCH

28 - LOCAL CHARM SIMPLE THINGS POP UP DINNER

Local Charm Pop-Up will host a Simple Things dinner on Friday, March 28 at The Social Affair, 2919 Main St., East Troy. Local Charm makes its food from scratch featuring locally sourced products. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for cocktails and dinner is served at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$80 per person. Purchase at localcharmpopup.com.

29 - MOM AND POP BUSINESS OWNERS DAY

Join the Elegant Farmer, 1545 Main St., before Easter for a selection of delicious foods, including its CiderBaked Ham (\$3 off half or whole). For more information, visit elegantfarmer.com.

29 - VEGAS NIGHT

The East Troy Gridiron Club will host Vegas Night beginning at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 29 at East Troy House, 2093 Division St. The event will feature dinner, Vegas games, live music by Brady Lee, raffles, live auction, and 50/50 raffle. Dress to impress in Vegas attire. Tickets are \$60 each or four for \$200 in advance and \$75 at the door.

Proceeds benefit East Troy youth and East Troy High School football programs. Register at easttroygridiron.com.

29 - MAPLE SYRUP FAMILY FUN DAY

Camp Edwards YMCA Camp and Retreat Center, N8901 Army Lake Road, will host its annual Maple Syrup Family Fun Day, featuring a pancake breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon and activities from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., on Saturday, March 29. The Family Fun Day is open to the community with free activities for the whole family, including maple syrup demonstrations, archery range, crafts, climbing wall, tube slides, and live music. Breakfast is \$8 for adults and \$5 for children (4-12). For more information, call (262) 642-7466 or visit campedwards.org.

APRIL

5 - THE PICTURE LADY

The East Troy Area Historical Society's Kubicki Museum and Heritage Center, 2106 Church St., will host its Picture Lady series, with Eileen Altenburg presenting a famous artist's work and style at 1 p.m. on the first Saturday of the month. Upcoming program dates are April 5 (Winslow Homer), May 3 (M.C. Escher June 7 (Salvador Dali), and more. The museum, located on the village square, provides a showcase of local history including



Celebrate Easter in East Troy with Skydive Milwaukee's one-of-a-kind Annual Easter Bunny Jump on Sunday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at W1341 County Road L (adjacent to East Troy Airport). See the Bunny jump at 1 p.m.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors

changing exhibits, artifacts, books, maps, documents, photographs and other materials. Museum hours are Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or by appointment. For more information, call (262) 642-2642 or visit easttroyhistory.org.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

BUNNY TRAINS RETURN

The East Troy Electric Railroad will host its Bunny Trains on Saturday, April 12, Sunday, April 13, Friday, April 18, and Sunday, April 19. Departures from the East Troy Depot, 2002 Church St., are at 9 and 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:30 and 3 p.m.

The event will feature a scavenger hunt under your windows and photos with the Easter Bunny at The Elegant Farmer. All child ticket holders will receive a gift.

Ticket prices are \$26 for adults (ages 15+), \$21 for children (ages 3-14) and \$12 for infant/toddler (ages 0-2) on Friday and Sunday and \$31 for adults, \$26 for children and \$12 for infant/toddler on Saturday. For more information, visit easttroyrr.org.

BURNING QUESTIONS • CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

excitement continues on July 19, with Creed closing out the night after performances by 3 Doors Down, Sevendust, Mammoth WVH, Hinder, Vertical Horizon, and Fuel.

On July 26, Tyler Childers will bring his "On The Road" tour to Alpine Valley, promising an unforgettable night of country and folk music.

Country star Thomas Rhett is set to perform on Aug. 9, bringing his energetic show to the Alpine Valley stage.

The Outlaw Music Festival tour celebrates its 10th anniversary in East Troy on Friday, Sept. 19, featuring an incredible lineup with iconic artists Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, and Sheryl Crow, alongside rising Americana stars Waxahatchee and Madeline Edwards.

Alpine Valley Music Theatre is tuning up for the season and seeking enthusiastic candidates to join their team.

Details and tickets for Alpine shows can be purchased at livenation.com.

Q: What restaurant is opening at the former location of Chinuk Sushi in East Troy?

A: The space at 2919 Main St., formerly home to Chinuk Sushi, will soon welcome a new dining experience, "Eggcellent Café."

While details are still emerging, the new restaurant owner promises to bring fresh flavors and exciting offerings to the East Troy community, including reinvented breakfast and lunch classics like apple chicken salad, chilaquiles, fajitas, healthy scrambled roll up, quinoa skillet and more.

"From fresh food to our homemade salsas, each item on the menu can achieve that can't-get-enough-of-it flavor," the owner said.

Stay tuned for official announcements as plans unfold.

Q: How can I nominate someone for the East Troy High School Athletic Hall of Fame?

A: Nominating someone is easy. The deadline for nominations is April 1, and you have two ways to submit.

Pick up and drop off paper copies of the nomination form at East Troy High School's main office or fitness center, 3128 Graydon Ave. To submit online, visit the Hall of Fame page on the East Troy Community School District's website: www.easttroy.k12.wi.us.

The Hall of Fame honors outstanding athletes, teams, coaches, and community members who've shown excellence, honor, and dedication — it's a wonderful way to celebrate those who've made a lasting impact on East Troy High School's athletic legacy.

Q: Are there any significant development projects underway in East Troy?

A: Yes, East Troy is experiencing several development initiatives.

Notably, High Format, a building materials manufacturer based in Charlevoix, Michigan, is constructing a 30,000-square-foot facility in East Troy, marking its expansion into Wisconsin. The site, located at 2616 S. Executive Drive, will include office space and a 23,000-square-foot manufacturing area, according to plan commission documents.

Additionally, Hot Carts of WI, LLC has submitted a site plan for a nearly 5,000-square-foot commercial building dedicated to golf cart sales and service on west Main Street.

CLANCY • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Q: You released your debut novel, "The Second Home" in the height of the pandemic, followed by "Shoulder Season" in 2021 when many public gathering restrictions were still in place. Can you discuss what it's been like getting to do a real book tour this time around?

A: Lots of authors are introverts, but not me! I spend enough time alone working on my books, and the reward is getting out and talking to librarians, booksellers and readers. I've had a real tour this time with events in Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, Kalamazoo, St. Louis, San Diego, Los Angeles, New York and Massachusetts.

A true highlight is the Read and Feed. It's been my dream to see how Kayleen

will decorate 2894 on Main and to eat a delicious dinner creatively prepared by a skilled chef with a menu inspired by the book. Bestselling author Chloe Benjamin will be my conversation partner. We met when I was her conversation partner at a Read and Feed and now we are dear friends—just another example of the power of a bookstore to create friendship and community.

Book events are the best. I'm so grateful to InkLink for all the hard work they put into making these evenings special, and to the readers who participate.

Q: What's up next for you?

A: I can't wait to dig into the new book I just started. Most of my writing is done in the sunporch of our cottage. I hope to spend lots of time there this summer when I'm not paddleboarding.



Christina Clancy and InkLink Books owner Kayleen Rohrer greet Read & Feed attendees. For details on upcoming events visit InkLink Books, 2890 Main St. on the East Troy Village Square.

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12 - SPRING FLING

The East Troy Lions Club is hosting its Spring Fling from 6 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, April 12 at East Troy House, 2093 Division St., East Troy.

The event will feature a night of craft beer, seltzer and small bites, as well as live music by Poppin Bennies. Tickets are \$50 per person and are available at easttroylions.org, The Global Glass and East Troy House.

12 - FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER EGG HUNT

The East Troy Family Community & Resource Center will host its 18th Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 12 at Little Prairie Primary School, 2109 Townline Road. Doors open at 10 a.m. and the hunt begins at 10:15 a.m. Any children birth through fifth grade are welcome to participate.

The event, sponsored by the East Troy Lions Club, will feature a bag of candy and prize per participant and photos with the Easter Bunny. RSVP with the number of children attending on the resource center's Facebook page or by calling (262) 642-4900 or easttrofamily@gmail.com.

In the event of inclement weather, the event will be moved indoors to the Little Prairie Primary School gym.

19 - FFA CONSIGNMENT AUCTION

The East Troy FFA Alumni will host its 31st annual alumni consignment auction from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 19, at East Troy High School, 3128 Graydon Ave. For more information, call (262) 642-7892 or visit easttroffaalumni.com.

19 - EASTER BUNNY BRUNCH

Celebrate Easter at Alpine Valley Resort, W2501 County Road D, with an Easter Bunny Brunch on Saturday, April 19, all day.

The event will feature family-friendly activities, including an Easter Egg Hunt. Register at alpinevalleyresort.com.

20 - BRUNCH WITH BUNNY

The Venue, 2645 Main St., East Troy, will host an Easter Bunny Brunch on Sunday, April 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will feature pictures with the Easter Bunny and an egg hunt.

The menu will feature starters, a large variety of main courses, and dessert. Walk-ins welcomed.

Call for reservations at (262) 378-8888 or email thevenueeastroy@gmail.com.

20 - BUNNY JUMP

Celebrate with Skydive Milwaukee's one-of-a-kind Annual Easter Bunny Jump

LIVE AT THE HIVE

This spring, sit back and enjoy live music events from a variety of talented musicians on Saturday nights from 7 to 10 p.m. at The Hive Taproom, W2463 Country Road ES., East Troy.

Music Line-Up

- March 29 - Discount Vinyl Chicago
- April 5 - Red Moon
- April 12 - Spare Animals
- April 19 - Smith & Binder Jazz
- April 26 - Grey & Greyer
- May 3 - Honey Fingers
- May 10 - Pete Henry
- May 17 - Lost in a Name
- May 24 - Indigo Canyon -Duo

The Hive features its own surprisingly dry session meads, made from 100 percent raw honey. It currently has 13 distinct session meads on tap, along with a honey kombucha, a zero proof cocktail and a tea-based soda elixir. For more information, visit thehivetaproom.com.

on Sunday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at W1341 County Road L (adjacent to East Troy Airport.) The event includes an Easter egg hunt complete with a separate toddler hunt, refreshments, free pictures with the Easter Bunny starting at noon and the Easter bunny making a thrilling helicopter jump at 1 p.m. (weather permitting). For more information, call (800) ET-CHUTE or visit skydivemilwaukee.com

MAY

2 - EAST TROY'S FIRST FRIDAYS KICK-OFF

Get ready for a night bursting with creativity and community spirit at East Troy's First Friday Kick-Off: Murals & Makers on Friday, May 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. at East Troy Village Square Park, 2881 Main St., Watch the square transform into an open-air art studio and makers' market

Mark your calendars for an assortment of special events to take place at East Troy Village Square Park on the first Friday of the month, May-September.

Each First Friday will feature a showcase event at East Troy Village Square Park with surrounding local businesses collaborating to bring an afternoon and evening of fun. For more information, visit easttroy.org.



East Troy
WISCONSIN
2025

EAST TROY FIRST FRIDAYS
5 - 8 p.m. every first Friday May - September
(May 2, June 6, Aug. 1 and Sept. 5)

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
Memorial Day Corn & Brat Roast: May 23-26
Community-wide Rummage Sale: May 23-26
East Troy Brewfest: May 25
Memorial Day Observance: May 26

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION
East Troy Music Festival Presented By East Troy Lions July 3, 4, 5, and 6

SPOOKTACULAR SCAVENGER GAMES
Saturday, Oct. 18, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

HARVEST WINE WALK
Saturday, October 11

EAST TROY'S PUMPKIN POP UP
Oct. 24-31

EAST TROY LIGHTS
Santa on the Square & Santa Parade Train: Dec. 6
East Troy Winter Wine Walk: Dec. 12
East Troy Lights Live!: Dec. 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27
The Candy Cane Adventure: Dec. 8-31
East Troy Community Night & Santa Tours: Dec. 20
East Troy NYE Ball Drop, presented by Allan ICS: Dec. 31

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