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of the Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise

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MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT

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ONE SECTION | 10 PAGES

Santa Claus is coming to Wonewoc December 14

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

The nights are getting longer as we make our way to this year's Winter Solstice. Darkness setting in so early can make it easy to feel a bit depressed this holiday season, so it's a good thing we here in the Hillsboro-Wonewoc-Elroy area have a fun way of beating the winter blues: the annual Wonewoc Lighted Christmas Parade.

The parade has become an annual staple for the local communities, with dozens of floats done up in lights joining in the fun each year. The entire Wonewoc community gets involved, with multiple storefronts along downtown Wonewoc offering special deals or hosting holiday-related events to entice shoppers to stop in and warm up from the cold before the parade starts.

The Wonewoc American Legion will be hosting a holiday craft fair during the

day, beginning at 10:00A.M. on December 14. Vendors will fill the legion hall to sell their handmade goods to those looking for the perfect gift for that hard-to-shop-for person on their list. The fair will continue until 5:00P.M., at which time vendors will begin to pack up so they can catch the parade at 6:00P.M.

Down the street, 17 Again Salon will be hosting a Christmas Craft Workshop in the lead up to the parade. Kids will be able to make their own personalized Christmas ornaments. Ornaments will be sold for \$4.00 each, and paint will be available at the workshop.

The parade itself begins at 6:00P.M., and the streets of Wonewoc will go dark so the lighted floats can really dazzle those in attendance. And, of course, the parade will end with a special appearance from Santa, riding through Wonewoc atop a Wonewoc Fire Department truck.

Once the parade is over,

families are welcome over to the Wonewoc Public Library to enjoy some holiday treats and have a meet-and-greet with the Jolly Old Elf himself. The Wonewoc Area Lions will be providing treat bags to children who stop in to visit Santa and tell him what they want for Christmas. Not to mention holiday musical accompaniment by Simply Sax, a crowd favorite local musical group.

The Lions will also be hosting a special event over by the 400 Trail to celebrate the improvements they've been making to the area. Stop by to check out the mural, painted by local artists, and enjoy the festive holiday atmosphere. Beginning at 7:00P.M., the Wonewoc Area Lions invite you to enjoy a selection of outdoor Christmas movies next to the campfire at the 400 Trail Park, with plenty of snacks and hot cocoa to ward off the chill.



The Wonewoc Lighted Christmas Parade features a variety of floats decked out in strings upon strings of twinkling lights, perfect for beating back the winter darkness. After the parade, meet Santa at the Wonewoc Library and head over to the 400 Trail for hot cocoa and Christmas movies! Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

Royall Safety Patrol fundraises for spring trip



Members of the Royall Safety Patrol spent their Saturday on November 30 selling concessions both to those attending the Elroy Craft Fair and those who had signed on as vendors. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

Back in 1920, the American Automobile Association

(best known today as AAA), launched its School Safety Patrol program, aimed at providing an additional sense of security to students as they

make their way to and from school while also providing young children with opportunities to learn more about how to keep themselves

and their communities safe.

Since 1920, the program has expanded across the United States and throughout the world. As many as thirty other countries, from New Zealand to France, have taken the idea and brought it to their own schools. The program has shown a noticeable impact on the rate of student pedestrian deaths, marking a 24% decline just in the past 14 years.

While the focus is always on safety, particularly when it comes to streets and roads, students who participate in Safety Patrol have developed a bit of a tradition over the years: an annual trip to Washington, D.C. each spring.

The trip begins with a tour of Gettysburg before they head down to D.C., where they'll spend several days touring the various monuments, museums, and other landmarks. The trip aims to not only reward the students for their hard work over the year, but also to help foster a stronger sense of civic

engagement.

Over at Royall, students participating in the Safety Patrol program are already hard at work to raise the money needed for their trip this coming spring. This year, there are 18 students participating in the program, and they've been working a variety of community events to help raise funds.

The group has been hosting brat sales, managing the concessions stand at school football games, selling raffle tickets, and even partnered with Culvers in Mauston for a fundraising event back in November. They worked the concessions stand at the recent Elroy Craft Fair, and hosted a bake sale at the recent wrestling invitational on Saturday, December 7.

Moving forward, the fundraising efforts will continue with another bake sale scheduled for the youth wrestling invitational on January 4, and with Bingo

Night at the American Legion on February 2. There will be a silent auction at the Bingo Night event, which begins at 1:00P.M., so community members interested in supporting the Royall Safety Patrol are invited to come out for the afternoon.

Stephany Schroeder, a teacher at Royall Elementary, is the program's supervisor at Royall. She had previously been involved with the program when her children were participating, and she volunteered to serve as the staff supervisor for the group, though much of the leadership this year has been headed by Elroy local Kari Preuss.

Additional updates on the Royall Safety Patrol and their fundraising efforts will often be shared on the school's Facebook page, with fundraising efforts expected to continue throughout the winter season.

Magical Christmas Giveaway returns for its fifth year

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

The winter holiday season is often called "the most wonderful time of the year," but honestly? It can be one of the most stressful. Those who celebrate the Christmas season always want to make each Christmas perfect, and that oftentimes means spending money. Gifts for family and friends, decorations for the house, food and ingredients for the Christmas dinner, travel to visit relatives, and other miscellaneous expenses that typify the holiday season.

There's no shortage of charity programs and local organizations focused on helping those who are struggling provide their families with an enjoyable Christmas—but when you're already struggling to make ends meet, being unable to afford the Hallmark-perfect Christmas can feel a lot like a personal failure.

While we may not be able to provide that picture-perfect Christmas you see in the

movies, the Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise and Dana Foods have decided to partner once more to help alleviate some of the financial burden of the season.

The Magical Christmas Giveaway began after Greg Evans purchased the Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise. Evans wanted to see what he could do to help make the holiday season a little bit bright for those in need, and he spoke with local business owner Dave Prechel about it. Together, they came up with an annual holiday giveaway, providing two \$250 checks to a pair of lucky winners.

Sheryl Gerhi and Mary Frong were the lucky winners in 2019, the first of many. The Magical Christmas Giveaway is now entering its fifth year, and in just a few weeks a new slate of winners will be announced.

This year, the Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise and Dana Foods will be giving away four \$250 cash prizes. The giveaway is designed to help bolster foot traffic into local

businesses over the promotion period, which both Evans and Prechel hope will help further local support for our small businesses.

Those looking to enter this year's giveaway will want to stop in and visit one of the participating businesses. Participating businesses encompass Hillsboro, Wonewoc, Elroy, and other neighboring communities. Each participating business will have entry forms for those looking to enter their names; be sure to write down your name and phone number clearly so you can be notified if you win!

Participating businesses for the 2024 Magical Christmas Giveaway include: The Bliss Factory (Elroy), Heritage Market (Wonewoc), Hidden Inn (Kendall), HWY 71 Tap House and Eatery (Kendall), The Village Gunsmith (Kendall), Elroy Auto Supply (Elroy), Let's Shine Coffee (Hillsboro), Peterson Pharmacy (Hillsboro), Shabby to Chic (Hillsboro), Biermeier Insurance (Hillsboro),

Clara Blank (center) was one of the winners for last year's Magical Christmas Giveaway, posing alongside Dave Prechel (left) and Greg Evans (right) when she came in to collect her prize. Who will this year's winners be? Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



Blossoms and Bouquets (Wonewoc), Gardner Family Pet Supply (Wonewoc), Chapparral Restaurant (Wonewoc), Community Antenna (Hillsboro), The Cheese Store and More (Hillsboro), Farmers State Bank (Hillsboro), and County Market (Hillsboro).

Entry forms can also be found at the Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise and at Dana Foods, both businesses being located along Water Avenue in Hillsboro.

The Magical Christmas Giveaway begins this week and is set to run until Tuesday, December

17, when the entry forms will be collected from the participating businesses and four winners will be drawn. No purchase is necessary to enter the giveaway, but please consider supporting your local businesses this holiday season!

Breakfast with robots introduces community to Da Vinci

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

Back in October, Gundersen St. Joseph's was thrilled to announce that they would be adding in a new robotic-assisted surgery system to their offerings. In particular, the hospital welcomed the acquisition of a Da Vinci XI robotic surgery system, which will be used in both general and gynecological surgeries at St. Joe's.

"We are so excited to have this type of high-precision, state-of-the-art surgical technology available in our community," says Kristie McCoic, administrator at Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics. "Our system is committed to keeping care close to home and this exciting

addition brings the same technology used in our La Crosse hospital to Hillsboro."

To celebrate both the arrival of the new equipment and National Rural Health Day, the hospital hosted a 'Breakfast with Robots' event on Thursday, November 21. Community members were treated to a free breakfast and given the opportunity to get a close-up look at the new equipment—and even test it out themselves!

Not for surgery, of course, as the event took place in the hospital community room and main lobby (which does not qualify as a sterile environment), but they were able to hop into the surgeon's seat and take a shot at operating the robotic equipment to better understand how

the apparatus works. Deciding to host the event to combine the Da Vinci XI's arrival and the celebration of rural health made sense, as having access to such a precise piece of surgical equipment means rural residents living in and around Hillsboro, Wonewoc, and Elroy will have greater access to high-quality care. Rural America not only has a unique set of healthcare needs compared to their more urban counterparts, but they too often find themselves struggling to access quality care close to home.

With the Da Vinci XI set-up, area patients requiring surgeries that can be done in-house at St. Joe's will now have access to an increased quality of care—which means recovery

times may be reduced and invasive procedures will be made a little less invasive.

"The system allows for even greater control and precision when performing surgery," explains Layne Hammer, RN, manager of specialty and surgery at Gundersen St. Joseph's. "We describe this new service as robotic-assisted because the surgeon is still controlling the robot from within the operating room."

There are two primary components to the Da Vinci XI system: the 'patient cart' and the 'surgeon console.' The patient cart sits over the patient and comes with four mechanical 'arms' that wield a variety of tools necessary for the surgery in question. Tools can

be changed out for different surgeries, making in a highly versatile tool.

The surgeon console is where the surgeon sits and operates the robot. The surgeon is able to control the patient cart from the console thanks to the magnified and carefully calibrated 3DHD vision technology. This gives the surgeon a clearer and enhanced view of the surgical site while also providing them with greater control over the tools they're using—all of which translates into better surgical outcomes for patients!

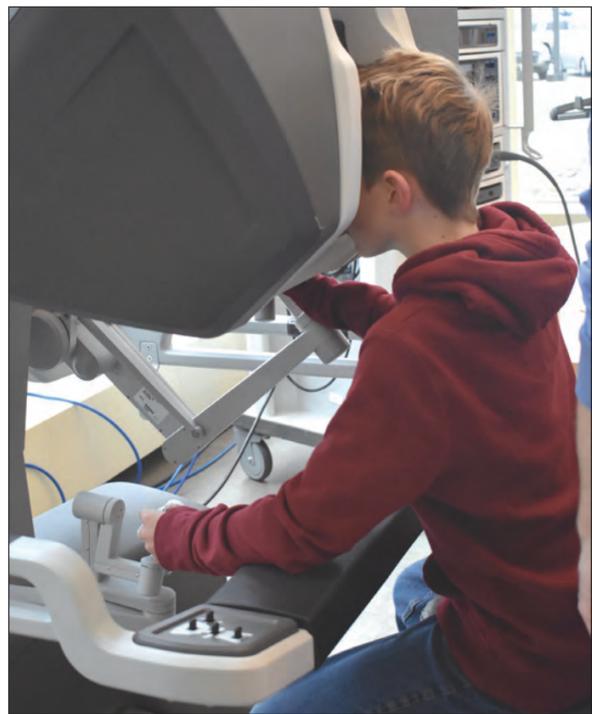
The Da Vinci XI system has been set up at Gundersen St. Joseph's and is currently serving patients—with a little help from the surgeon, of course.



Tommy George (far left), a representative from Intuitive – the parent company for the Da Vinci XI robotic surgery system, was present at last week's Breakfast with Robots event to give curious community members a more in-depth look at the new surgery apparatus. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



Layne Hammer (right), a Registered Nurse with Gundersen St. Joseph's and the manager for surgery and specialty care at the hospital, takes community member Joe Havlik (left) through how to operate the surgeon's console. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



It's a common exaggeration: "So easy a child could do it!" Well, 11-year-old Mason Howard may not be your surgeon in the next few months, but he did manage to get a good handle on the controls, likening it a little to the video games he enjoys playing. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

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To help community members get a feel for how the machine works, a shaped wire was set up in the patient cart with a series of colored rubber bands on it. Those who tested out the machine were tasked with use the robotic arms to move the rubber bands up and down the wire, giving them a better understanding of the precision allowed for by the robot. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

UNLOCK THE BEST DEALS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



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KUDICK PRICE



NEW
Stock #24268
2025 Chevrolet Blazer RS
\$51,565
KUDICK PRICE



NEW
Stock #24253
2025 Chevrolet Blazer RS
\$51,760
KUDICK PRICE



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It's okay to eat the food this holiday season

The holidays are upon us, and with them come all the extra sweets and treats that make the season bright. For many, this is a welcomed reason to indulge in eating habits that wouldn't happen at any other time of year. But for others, seeing all the extra food at the ready can be a challenge, especially when dealing with the headwinds of body image issues.

Alyssa Sherwood, a family therapist at Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics, says this time of year can be challenging on several fronts — especially for women. You're seeing family you've maybe not seen in a while, and you might look a little different. Then there's a comment from an aunt about your appearance, and the cycle of self-consciousness kicks off.

"There's always those comments, so there's a fear of that and the anxiety surrounding what this person's going to say," Sherwood

says. "Even if you have been working to lose weight over the year, oftentimes, that's the first thing people are going to comment on."

Therein lies the problem with body image.

"It's, 'Oh, you look so good,' but we can also look good at any size," Sherwood says. "I don't need the added attention just because I look good now because you're equating that with skinny."

But that perception isn't unusual in our society, and it's one that doesn't do those with body image issues any favors. Consider what kind of body type typically shows up on a social media thread or ad campaign. Thin, in many minds, equals attractive and healthy — meaning anything else isn't worthy of those descriptors. That should not be the case, Sherwood says.

"When I go to the TV shows, am I seeing bunch of skinny bodies or am I seeing healthy bodies at all sizes?" she says.

"I think we have to be more intentional in finding healthy bodies in all sizes than we are at just finding skinny bodies."

She adds that a generation of women, especially in the 90s, grew up seeing advertisements that shamed those with bigger bodies, and that led many to think and feel a certain way about their looks.

"I think a lot of women are still unlearning a lot of those really gross tropes that we heard about," Sherwood says. "We're doing a lot of unlearning to then learn that what size I am does not contribute to my health. Those two things are not synonymous."

Sherwood says there are aspects of health that have nothing to do with weight, such as bone health, brain health, heart health, immune health and mental health.

So, what does all this have to do with the holiday season? In short, don't worry. Eat the food.

Sherwood stresses she's not a dietician and she doesn't specialize in eating disorders. But when it comes to the mental struggles this time of year for people who are sensitive about their physical appearance, she says it's okay to take part in the holiday eating.

"This time of year is very focused on being with your people, but often, being with your people involves food," she says. "If you want to eat carbs, eat the carbs. If you want to drink the wine, drink the wine, unless you have issues with alcohol."



Alyssa Sherwood, family therapist, Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics. Contributed photo.

"I don't think restrictive dieting is a way to be healthy."

She says people should still be mindful of what they put on their plate, including healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. And when the body says it's full, it's a good practice to stop eating.

But it's a special time of year, and it's okay to eat the meal and have dessert. It's not going to ruin anything.

"We cannot change our health overnight, and so one day of eating junk and cookies and carbs is not going to (change it)," Sherwood says. "We cannot think of health and well-being as an all-of-nothing system."

So, the challenge is there. "Get out of your own head and start accepting your body for what it is and not focusing on how health equals what I look like. Health is not about your size."

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1/18/2025 ~ Derek Olson
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December 14th is Wonewoc's Parade of Lights

We will have live music in the upper level after the parade

CLOSED DATES:
12/23-12/25, 12/30 & 1/1/2025

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HILLSBORO Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 12	Hillsboro Public Library Teen GAME NIGHT 4-6 p.m. Hillsboro HS Girls Basketball @Royall 5:45/7 p.m.
DECEMBER 13	Hillsboro Public Library Stories for Sprouts 10:30 a.m. Hillsboro HS Girls Basketball @Wonewoc JV 5:45/Var. 7 p.m.
DECEMBER 13 & 14	HILLSBORO GUN, AMMO & ASSESSORY SHOW Hillsboro Fireman's Community Center Fri. 3 p.m.-8 p.m. Sat 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$5 adm.
DECEMBER 14	HILLSBORO FREE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER AT Hillsboro High School Cafeteria, 777 School Rd., Hillsboro 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For delivery call 608-489-2497 BURR WESLEYAN CHURCH PRESENTS 'JOURNEY TO BETHLEHAM'; S1728 County Hwy V, Hillsboro from 5 p.m. To 7 p.m. HILLSBORO HS WRESTLING @Tomah Invitational Time 8 a.m. Hillsboro Public Library 'NEEDLE FELT CLASS' \$10 for Materials 9 a.m. Hillsboro Public Library will sponsor "Paint & Sip" at THE ROADHOUSE from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. \$30 for instructions and materials WONEWOC CHRISTMAS LIGHTED PARADE 6 PM. Wonewoc American Legion CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
DECEMBER 16	ROYALL WINTER CONCERT Elem. 4K & K. 6 p.m. 1st & 2nd 6:30 p.m., 3rd & 4th 7 p.m. MAGICAL CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY -Shop local And sign up until December 16 For Cash Drawings! HILLSBORO Woman's Civic Club Christmas Celebration Potluc at Hills Manor 6 p.m. HILLSBORO Girls Basketball @Highland JV 6 p.m., Var 7:30 p.m. HILLSBORO JH Boys Basketball @Hillsboro 5:30 p.m. New Lisbon- 7:10 Brookwood
DECEMBER 17	W-C 7TH & 8TH Grade Field Trip Hillsboro Girls JV Basketball VS Kickapoo 5 p.m. Hillsboro Girls VAR Basketball VS Wonewoc 7 p.m.
DECEMBER 18	W-C MIDDLE SCHOOL HS CONCERT, Choir 6 p.m., Band 6:30 p.m.
DECEMBER 19 & 20	2 Day Blood drive at Mile Bluff Medical Center In Mauston by Blood Center of Wisconsin 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Appointments recommended but walk-ins welcome.
DECEMBER 19	HILLSBORO HS Wrestling Cashton & Viroqua @Hillsboro 6 p.m. Hillsboro HS Boys Basketball @Bangor JVR 4:30 p.m.
DECEMBER 20	W-C IN SERVICE -NO SCHOOL Hillsboro HS Girls Basketball JVR 4:30/JV 5:45/VAR 7 p.m.
DECEMBER 21	HILLSBORO HS WRESTLING @Richland Center Invitational 9 a.m.
DECEMBER 23-JANUARY 3	HILLSBORO SCHOOLS WINTER BREAK
DECEMBER 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 27-DECEMBER 28	HOLIDAY HILLSBORO HS BOYS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT @Adams Friendship VARSITY ONLY
JANUARY 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR
JANUARY 3	HILLSBORO HS BOYS Basketball Westby @Hillsboro JVR 5:45 p.m.
JANUARY 7	HILLSBORO HS WRESTLING @BELMONT HILLSBORO HS BOYS Basketball @Viroqua JVR 5:45 p.m.
JANUARY 9	HILLSBORO HS BOYS Basketball Cashton @Hillsboro JVR 5:45 p.m.
JANUARY 11	HILLSBORO HS Wrestling @Kickapoo Invitational 9:30 a.m.
JANUARY 13	HILLSBORO JRHI Girls Basketball @New Lisbon -Cashton 6:20, New Lisbon 7:10 p.m. HILLSBORO JRHI Wrestling @Cashton 5 p.m.
JANUARY 14	HILLSBORO HS BOYS Basketball @Necedah 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 16	HILLSBORO JRHI Girls Basketball @Necedah -Bangor 6:20, Necedah 7:10 p.m. HILLSBORO HS Wrestling @Brookwood 6 p.m.
JANUARY 17	HILLSBORO HS Boys Basketball Brookwood @ Hillsboro 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 18	HILLSBORO WRESTLING "TIGER INVITATIONAL" AT HILLSBORO 9:30 a.m.

Holiday Toy Tips: consider safety and avoid scams this holiday season

Shopping for gifts this holiday season? There are many factors to consider when searching for the perfect present, especially when the recipient is a child. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) encourages shoppers to keep safety in mind while searching for the best holiday deals.

When buying for a young child either in-person or online, always check for potential hazards. Look on the packaging or for information posted online about product warnings and age grading. Taking a few moments to review labels might reveal: a suggested minimum age or age range for using the product; small parts, sharp edges, magnets, and other choking or suffocation hazards; flame resistance (especially important for toys with fabrics); safety verification from ASTM International, including: art materials with ASTM D4236 labeling and toys that meet ASTM F963 safety standards

Don't rely on labeling alone. Examine products before purchasing to identify any potential unlabeled hazards such as projectiles, small batteries, and the risk of breaking/splintering. Toys can sometimes present unexpected danger. Even if your gift will be given to an older child, ask yourself whether a younger child who also lives in the household might access it. Lastly, consider including safety gear with your gift, like a helmet with a bike or scooter.

Every year, many consumers face the common struggle of finding the year's most popular toys still in stock. If your search takes you online, be aware that scammers may take advantage of your gift-giving spirit. Be cautious of unfamiliar websites and sellers, and verify familiar websites are really the platform they appear to be — especially if they advertise popular products at uncommonly low prices. Fake and imposter websites use these tactics to trick you into "buying" an out-of-stock product, but chances are you won't receive anything and will just send money and your payment information to a scammer. If you do receive something, it will likely be of

questionable quality compared to the original item you were seeking to purchase.

Never enter your payment information before confirming a website is legitimate and be skeptical of third-party sellers of otherwise out-of-stock items. For unfamiliar sites: Check third-party reviews and search the website name along with the words "scam" or "fraud." For popular sites: Verify there are no spelling errors or unusual phrasing in the web address that could indicate a website is being impersonated. It is best to use your credit card to protect your purchase. If you are tricked, you can dispute the charges with your credit card company.

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP's Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov or contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

Community Events for the Elroy Area ...



Please come & visit the Rittenhouse Winter Wonderland

at N2015 Snyder Rd, Elroy, WI 53929 during the month of December

Drive through Schultz Park to see additional Winter Lights from the Elroy Community

Taste of the Season Sale

- 85% Lean Ground Beef family pack \$3.99 lb**
- Boneless Sirloin Tip Roast \$5.49 lb**
- Navel Oranges 3 lb bag \$3.99**
- Essential Everyday Shredded or Chunk Cheese 6-8 oz 3 for \$4.98**
- Culinary Circle Pizza 14-33 oz \$4.99**
- Fresh Express Chopped Salad Kits 9-11.7 oz \$2 for \$6.00**

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Magical Christmas GIVEAWAY

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Free Entry - Need Not Be Present To Win

Shop local and stop in to register at these participating businesses for a chance to win **4 - \$250 CASH PRIZES**
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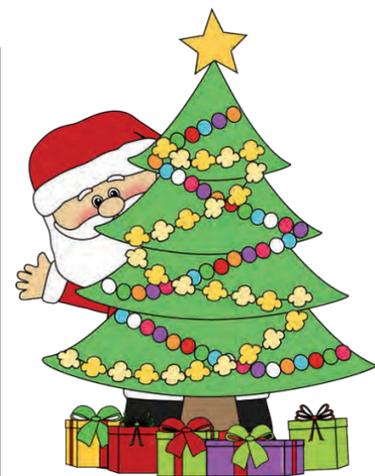
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Ensure a safe holiday season: tips for purchasing safe toys

As the holiday season approaches, parents and caregivers are gearing up for the annual tradition of gift-giving. While the excitement of unwrapping presents brings joy to children, it is crucial to prioritize safety when selecting toys.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), an estimated 240,000 toy-related injuries were treated in emergency rooms across the United States in 2021 alone. This statistic underscores the importance of making informed choices when it comes to toys.

“Strongly consider the appropriateness of a child’s toy,” says Benjamin Orozco, MD, Emergency Medicine, Gunderson Health System. “A toy

that works for a 12-year-old might be a choking hazard for the little brother or sister in the same house.”

To help parents navigate the toy aisle this holiday season, Dr. Orozco offers essential safety tips to ensure gifts are not only fun, but also safe for children.

Toy safety tips include:

Check age recommendations: Always look for the age recommendations on toy packaging. Toys designed for older children may contain small parts that pose choking hazards for younger kids. Selecting age-appropriate toys can significantly reduce the risk of injury.

Inspect for safety features: When purchasing toys, examine them for safety fea-

tures. Look for toys that are made from non-toxic materials, have no sharp edges and are free from small parts that could be swallowed. Additionally, consider toys that meet safety standards set by organizations such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

Encourage active play: Choose toys that promote physical activity and creativity. Active play not only helps children develop motor skills but also encourages social interaction. Opt for items like balls, jump ropes or building sets that inspire imaginative play while keeping kids engaged and moving.

As parents prepare for the holiday season, it is essential to remember that safety should



Benjamin Orozco, MD, Emergency Medicine at Gunderson Health System.

always come first. By following these tips, caregivers can help ensure their children enjoy a joyful and injury-free holiday.

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Badgerland Girl Scouts unveils \$5 membership drive

This December and January, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Badgerland is making it easier than ever for girls and families to join the Girl Scout Movement. For a limited time, families can sign up youth in grades kindergarten through 12th grade for Girl Scouts at a special rate of just \$5—unlocking a world of opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive.

Girl Scouts offers unmatched experiences for girls to discover their passions, build life skills, and make new friends. From outdoor adventures to STEM activities, community service projects, and creative expression, Girl Scouts equips girls with the tools they need to lead with courage, confidence, and character.

“There’s no better time to

join Girl Scouts,” said Lisa Smith, CEO of Badgerland Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts builds confident, resilient leaders who shape the future. Through unmatched opportunities in STEM, the outdoors, entrepreneurship, and life skills, Girl Scouts empowers girls to break barriers, embrace challenges, and create lasting change in their communities and beyond. It’s not just a program – it’s an experience that transforms lives and equips them to lead with courage, confidence, and character. This \$5 membership is a wonderful way to start their journey!”

This special membership promotion runs December through January 31 and is open to all new youth members. With troop opportunities throughout the community, Girl Scouts

is ready to welcome new members and help them kick off their year with confidence, friendship, and adventure.

By joining Girl Scouts now, new Scouts will be able to participate in the famous Cookie Program starting this February and build skills like confidence and goal-setting. They’ll also be able to gain early registration access to amazing summer camps packed with unforgettable outdoor experiences; explore passions

and develop skills through STEM activities, creative projects, and community service opportunities; build true friendships in a welcoming and supportive environment; and be accepted for who they are and discover their strengths in a space that celebrates individuality.

To learn more or to sign up for joining Girl Scouts: www.gsbadgerland.org or call (800) 236-2710.

Mile Bluff to host health fair December 12

In order to lead a healthy lifestyle, it’s important to take control of your health. Knowing your specific risks for developing heart disease and diabetes can help you be proactive in making healthier life choices.

Attend the health fair at Mile Bluff Medical Center, Thursday, December 12 from 7 to 11 am. Free blood pressure and blood sugar screenings will be available. Lipid profile tests will also be available for only \$20. This test measures your good cholesterol, bad cholesterol, and triglycerides. Fasting is optional.

Once your tests are completed, Mile Bluff’s healthcare professionals will review your results with you,

and tell you what they mean. You may also be given tips and resources to help reduce your risk for developing diabetes and heart disease. Results will be sent to your primary care provider.

The information you receive from these tests, along with the educational tools you will be given, are important steps in positively impacting your health.

Appointments are required for all services, so call 608-847-1845 to reserve your spot today!

Mile Bluff Medical Center is located at 1050 Division Street in Mauston.

To see more events like this, check out the upcoming events page at milebluff.com.

ELROY Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 14, 2024	Royall Varsity Wrestling Invite at Tomah HS 9:30 a.m. Multiple Schools 9:30 a.m. WONEWOC CHRISTMAS LIGHTED PARADE 6 P.M. Wonevoc American Legion CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
DECEMBER 16	Royall Winter Concert Elem. 4K & K 6 p.m. 1st & 2nd 6:30 p.m., 3rd & 4th 7 p.m. MAGICAL CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY-Shop Local and sign up until December 16 for Cash Drawings!
DECEMBER 17	Royall MS Boys Basketball @Viroqua 5:30 p.m. Royall Girls HS Basketball Bangor @Royall 5:45/7 p.m.
DECEMBER 19 & 20	2 Day Blood Drive at Mile Bluff Medical Center In Mauston by Blood Center of Wisconsin 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Appointments recommended but Walk-ins welcome. Royall Boys Basketball at Necedah JV 5:45/Var 7 p.m. Royall Varsity Wrestling Bye
DECEMBER 19	Royall Boys Basketball at Pittsville HS, JV 5:45/Var 7 p.m.
DECEMBER 20	Royall Girls Basketball at Necedah JV 5:45/Var 7 p.m.
DECEMBER 21	Royall Wrestling Varsity Tournament at Auburndale HS Multiple Schools 10 a.m.
DECEMBER 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 27 & 28	Royall Varsity Wrestling Bi-state Invitational with Multiple schools At La Crosse Civic Center 9 a.m.
DECEMBER 30	Royall Girls Varsity Basketball at Westby HS 5:30/7 p.m.
JANUARY 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR
JANUARY 3	Royall Boys JV/HS Basketball Kickapoo at ROYALL HS 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 6	Royall MS Wrestling at Royall 5:30 p.m.
JANUARY 7	Royall Girls JV/VAR Basketball Brookwood @ Royall HS 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 9	Royall Varsity Wrestling -multiple schools-at Royall 6 p.m. Royall Boys JV/Var Basketball at WC 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 10	Royall Boys JV/VAR Basketball Riverdale @Royall 5:45/7 p.m. Royall Girls JV/VAR Basketball at New Lisbon 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 13	Royall MS Girls Basketball @Brookwood 6:20 p.m. Royall Girls JV/VAR at Ithaca 6 p.m./7:15 p.m. Royall MS Wrestling at Cashton 5 p.m.
JANUARY 14	Royall Boys Basketball JV/VAR Brookwood @ Royall 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 16	Royall Girls MS Basketball @Cashton 6:20 p.m. Royall Girls Basketball JV/VAR Cashton at Royall 5:45/ 7 p.m. Royall Wrestling Triangular multiple schools at New Lisbon 6 p.m.
JANUARY 17	Royall MS Wrestling at Viroqua 5 p.m. Royall HS Boys Basketball at Bangor 5:45/7 p.m.
JANUARY 18	Royall Varsity Wrestling Invite -Multiple Schools at Weston HS 9 a.m.
JANUARY 20	Royall MS Wrestling at Hillsboro 5 p.m. Royall HS Boys Basketball at Westby Area HS 5:45, 7 p.m.



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HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES



Top Left: Members of the Hillsboro Fire Department helped with food prep and service during Saturday's Breakfast with Santa at the Hillsboro Community Center. Pictured: Brandon Nickey (left) dishes out some pancakes to hungry kids before heading back to get some more for the breakfast line. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



Bottom Left: Kids were able to stop by and say hello to Santa, as well as tell him what they would like for Christmas this year. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



Right: Families were able to get some special holiday photos of the kids with Santa and Mrs. Claus at last Saturday's Breakfast With Santa, hosted by the Hillsboro Lions Club. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



Second grade students over at Hillsboro Elementary School took some time out of their lessons last week to make some gingerbread houses. The kids were able to show off their creativity after they came back from lunch and recess by decorating their houses with all sorts of candies. Photos taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



For every enthusiastic child who can't wait to tell Santa all about their holiday wish list, there are children who are a little more cautious about the whole encounter. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



After visiting with Santa, kids attending Sunday's Breakfast with Santa, hosted by the Elroy Chamber of Commerce, were invited to pick out a new book to take home with them. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



For some kids attending Sunday's Breakfast with Santa over at the Elroy Legion Hall, Santa wasn't quite as interesting as the bells he had with them! Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



Gundersen St. Joseph's hosted their annual holiday bake sale on Friday, December 6. Community members were invited to stop by and pick out some tasty holiday treats to get them through the day. Photos taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.



St. John's over in Kendall hosted their annual Cookie Walk, along with the return of the Nativity Walk. Those who attended were able to pick up some tasty treats for a donation to the church, and take in the selection of unique nativity scenes collected by a Kendall local. Photo taken by Nicolette Nauman, HSE Editor.

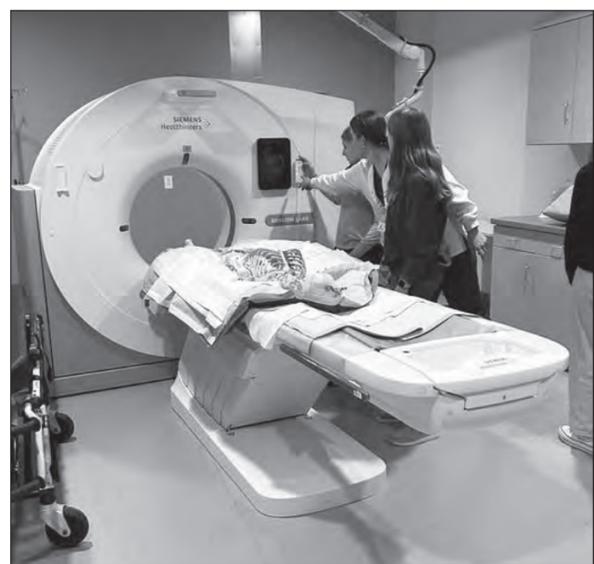


Gundersen St. Joseph's Health Science Academy

High school students from all over the area were invited to Gundersen St. Joseph's last week to participate in the Health Science Academy, one of three youth-centered initiatives the hospital uses to help generate interest in healthcare in the rising generations. As part of their time at the hospital, these students were introduced to a variety of different departments that operate at Gundersen St. Joe's, hearing about

each department from a St. Joe's staff member who works there. Students were also able to get a closer look at the new Da Vinci robot, which recently arrived at the hospital to assist with surgeries. Along with lectures, students also have the ability to get some hands-on experience, learning the basics of emergency medicine and basic medical procedures—skills that they then must put to the test during a

specially designed emergency scenario put on by the hospital staff and local EMS. The hope is that this experience will help encourage high school students to consider pursuing a medical career as they plan for their future. Photos contributed by Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics.



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A group of eleven individuals, businesses, and organizations were recognized at the second-annual Vernon County Awards Night in November. One of the award winners was the City of Hillsboro, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Area. Contributed photo.

Hillsboro – Habitat partnership recognized at Vernon County Awards Night

By NICOLETTE NAUMAN
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

On Wednesday, November 13, the Vernon County Awards Committee hosted their second-annual awards ceremony, recognizing and celebrating individuals, groups, businesses, and municipalities that have been doing tremendous work in Vernon County.

Multiple awards were given out, ranging from Small Business of the Year and Non-Profit of the Year to the Community Impact Award and the Youth Leadership Award. This year, eleven award winners were selected by the committee. Among them was the City of Hillsboro and Habitat for Humanity of

the Greater La Crosse Region. The Partnership for Progress award aims to recognize the efforts put forward by partnerships between municipalities and organizations. In particular, the award focuses on partnerships with stated goals that aim to facilitate progress within the local community by working to enhance the overall quality of life.

The City of Hillsboro and Habitat for Humanity have recently partnered on a housing development project, with the goal of building ten new homes in the city and expanding housing opportunities for both local residents and those looking to relocate to Hillsboro.

Three of the homes will be sold to Habitat-vetted

homeowners, while the remaining seven will be sold on the market with some considerations based on income. With access to affordable housing a consistent issue cited by both residents and those looking to relocate into the area, the partnership between Hillsboro and Habitat for Humanity demonstrates a commitment to addressing the issue.

“We are thankful to receive this award, which highlights the collective effort and shared vision that make projects like ours successful,” says Greg Kubarski, mayor for the City of Hillsboro. “It reflects the dedication of everyone involved in building a stronger, more connected Hillsboro.”

“Partnerships like this are the foundation for positive change,” says Kahya Fox, executive director for Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Area. “It’s truly inspiring to see what we can accomplish when we come together for a common goal.”

Applications for prospective homeowners interested in applying for one of the Habitat homes are expected to open in January. A series of homeowner expos, where prospective homeowners can learn more about the properties and the process involved in applying for one of the homes, has been planned for the first half of next year. Exact dates are still being determined, and more information is expected to be released in the coming months.

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Local family to open storefront on the farm

By Logan Everson
 Contributing Writer

Derrek and Jenna Jacobson have a clear mission for their first generation farm: quality comes first.

The family of five have been vendors at the Viroqua Farmers Market since 2022, selling meat, eggs, and more from their small family farm east of Newry. But soon their wares will be available for in-person browsing year-round.

The Jacobsons have been cutting and hammering away at their new future storefront that was once their attached garage. They built a wall to split the garage in half and then closed up the hole where the garage door once was. The exterior is trimmed with wood sourced from their own land. Chest freezers fill two of four walls. As expected, they're full of meat – beef, pork, and lamb. Jars of tallow whip, which is a moisturizing cream made of animal fat, will soon line shelves on the wall. There will also be branded sweatshirts and knit hats for sale, emblazoned with a classic ranch-inspired 'JF' logo and the name 'Jacobson Farms'.

The tentative opening date for their storefront is currently set for Saturday, Dec. 7. Their online store, jacobsonfarmswi.com, has been up and running and is open 24/7. Having a physical storefront is the next step for the small family farm.

Their goal has always been to produce quality meat for their family. And then demand grew, along with their family and farm, and soon they were processing enough animals to feed others.

"We had a lot of people saying 'well we just want to get, you know, like 20 pounds of ground beef or some steaks,'" said Jenna. "They didn't want the whole animal, so we may as well try doing the cuts by the pound."

Their cattle and sheep are grass-fed and grass-finished. The poultry and pigs are pastured, but they require

supplemental feed to get all the nutrients they need. Everything is unofficially organic.

"We're not certified but we definitely practice organic," said Jenna. "We feed all organic feed. We're kind of still at that smaller, smaller end of the scale that it wasn't cost effective for us to do the certification."

Derrek and Jenna are first generation farmers, which means that they didn't grow up in a family that needed to grow or sell crops and meat. Jenna grew up on a horse farm but they didn't raise or produce anything for selling. So they're both learning as they go.

Off the farm, Derrek is a service manager at Titan Machinery in St. Joseph's Ridge. On the farm, he prefers using tried and true traditional techniques to keep the farm as sustainable – such as rotational grazing, which keeps the pastures, and animals, healthy. Derrek is considered the head of herd operations and is focused on maintaining the pasture rotation schedule, amongst many other duties. Despite his experience with heavy machinery, the sustainable way that they farm leaves little that needs to be done with a tractor, since the ever-moving cattle and grazing pattern maintains the soil and prevents the needs for pasture maintenance.

"It's just better for the soil," said Derrek.

Jenna, who has a college degree in business agriculture, works on the farm full-time taking care of business and all the odds and ends of running a small farm such as scheduling, accounting, website maintenance, order filling, marketing, and much more.

The heads of the household have been married for 14 years, together for 17 years, and are high school sweethearts after meeting as teenagers while working together at the same place, despite being



Parents and farm operators Jenna and Derrek, along with children June (12), Will (7) and Maisy (9) make up the staff of Jacobson Farms. Their new farm storefront opens on Dec. 7. Jacobson Farms is located west of Newry at E8240 Rognstad Rd., Cashton. Record photo by Logan Everson.

from different towns – Derrek is from Westby while Jenna, maiden name McMaster, grew up living in the country near Hillsboro. They bought their first cows in 2017, purchased their current farm in 2020, and have been working hard to supply high quality food for their family ever since.

When they moved to the farm outside of Newry, all of the land was corn. To fulfill their meat-raising vision, the Jacobsons had to seed it with grass and fence it all in.

"Every fence post you see, every wire you see, I put up," said Derrek.

The Jacobsons currently raise a little bit of everything. Right now, around 100 head of cattle and 50 sheep are bulking up to provide meat for the family and

their customers. There's also a gaggle of turkey, chickens, and ducks. And, of course, some cats and kittens. In the summer, they raise a handful of pigs.

On top of caring for over 150 animals, Derrek and Jenna are also busy raising three young humans: June (12), Maisy (9), and Will (7). The kids are a major part of the business and why it's been successful.

"They are all very much involved," said Jenna. "They have been since day one. They're a big help and a huge part of everything."

June is in FFA, while the younger two kids, Maisy and Will, are a part of the Cashton-based Jolly Joiners 4-H club. They like to show

pigs, and the occasional sheep, at the Monroe County Fair. The pigs and sheep are fun for the kids because they're easier to handle than the cows.

"With calving, they can't really be out in the field helping with the cows and all that, but with the sheep they're all up in the shed and we get to be right out there with them so they really enjoy that side of it," said Jenna. "And the pigs too."

"Will's definitely the pig farmer," said Derrek.

"The pigs are really fun," said Jenna.

As a family, the Jacobsons use horses to drive the hereford/angus mix breed herd to graze in different areas. Riding and using the horses is

one of the kids' favorite parts of farming. They also help out with the farmer's market duties.

If the storefront works out well, they may not have to pack up the ice and head for Viroqua during the market season. It's bittersweet, considering the amount of connections and friends they've made along the way during their retail journey. But they won't miss lugging the heavy meat-filled coolers.

Jacobson Farms is located at E8240 Rognstad Ridge Rd., Cashton, just west of Newry. They have an online store at jacobsonfarmswi.com. For more information on their grand opening, check them out on facebook page

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