

Evansville Examiner

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EVANSVILLE, WIS.

THURSDAY, DEC. 5, 2024

VOL. 02 • NO. 04

Grove Society wins in the 21st Century

The caretakers of the town's vibrant past seek to make it more relevant and accessible

By Bill Lathrop
CONTRIBUTOR
Evansville has a rich and colorful history.

As a new mural at the downtown corner of Main and Madison Streets depicts, it was once home to a traveling circus (complete with leopard escape and elephant's grave). In the 1920s, Evansville was host to the Rock County Fair.

Many fascinating businesses were spawned here, including Baker Manufacturing and Pruden Products (now Blue-scope), both of which exhibited at world's fairs (though in different centuries). The neglected railroad was once pivotal with trains visiting hourly. During the depression, a Civilian Con-

servation Corps work camp occupied the edge of town. And the only entry for Rock County in the census of 1830 was not along the Rock River, but just outside of Evansville.

One organization, The Evansville Grove Society, has been – and remains – dedicated to preserving and sharing Evansville's vibrant past. The Society's first meeting took place on Oct. 5, 1978. Founding members included Janet Sperry, Sally Eager, Lois Waller, Margaret Brigham, and Betty Dunphy. Evansville's preeminent historian, Ruth Ann Montgomery, was the first speaker. She recalls discussing early life in the community.

With its first project in 1979,

the Grove Society joined forces with the local Jaycees and the Evansville Historic Preservation Commission to host a walking tour of five notable historic homes. The house tours were popular and continued into the early 2000s – in later years sponsored solely by the Grove Society.

One of the Grove Society's enduring accomplishments was moving and restoring the Baker Office Building from its original home on East Church Street to its present location at the lower entrance to Leonard-Leota Park. That building now serves as the Society's museum and home to a trove of historical artifacts.

Like many all-volunteer or-

ganizations, the Grove Society has experienced waning interest in recent years. Membership that once peaked at over 200, is now well below 100 – though a small group remains dedicated to the mission and is working to restructure the organization and breathe new life into preserving Evansville's colorful history.

Earlier this year the Society's executive board chose a new President, Kris Thome. Ms. Thome is an Evansville native, graduating from EHS in 1983. She left town to pursue a career that landed her in California but returned in 2023

to be closer to family.

The Evansville Grove Society recently held its annual meeting at Creekside Place. The assembled members heard of the Society's work over the last year, much of which revolved around maintaining the Baker building. Necessary upkeep included restoring rotted windows and storms, fresh paint on building trim, and landscaping updates.

During the annual meeting the Society also recognized those who have contributed to its mission. 2024 honorees included:

- Ruth Ann Montgomery,

for her newly published book, Evansville Firefighters – 150 Years of Service 1874-2024,

- Annie Larson, artist of the Hall Circus mural,
- Dan Stephens, for his tireless work restoring the historic Baker Office building,
- Donna Pyper, for her years of service on the Grove Society's Board of Directors.

Those recognized also included two high school students, Zach Jones and Kennedy Sendelbach. Mr. Jones dedicated his Senior project to support and raise funds for the

See GROVE SOCIETY, Page 7

Thoughts from Scotch Hill

Will welcome silence to civil war talk keep U.S. from brutal lessons?

I saw him out our non-government agency's land rover window.

I was sitting with key national food project staff and my driver, stuck in Brazzaville's dense traffic on a fall day in 2014.

The sad fellow who caught my eye, was draped in dusty rags, sitting in a mound of rubble beside a bombed military tank from the Congo's 1997-99 civil war.

Tragically, mechanically, over and over, he was raising imaginary tools and non-existent parts to "repair" the tank.

None of the Congolese with me seemed to heed the sorry scene, which I've never forgotten from that moment in their capital of 2 million



By TONY ENDS
Correspondent

people.

The battle-wrecked tank and its mentally disturbed "repairman" were sitting in a crush of pedestrians and vehicles on the clogged highway corridor where a civil war explosion disabled the tank 15 years previous.

Now the memory and its lessons are troubling me, another 10 years from that moment. They are lessons I don't want my nation to learn the way I've seen the Congo

and other nations learn them.

Few people in the United States seem to have considered how long a civil war's destructive force and tragic human toll persist beyond such a conflict's end.

Our own direct experience with a civil war 159 years ago is consigned mostly to history books. Yet we just came through 4 years of hearing angry people noise civil war threats in the wake of the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection.

I confess feeling a burden lift from my 70-year-old heart after the Nov. 5 election ended.

It had nothing to do with favoring either party – nothing to do with any candidate.

See LESSONS, Back Page



EVANSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FACEBOOK PHOTO Evansville Examiner

A feast for Thanksgiving

Ms. Kindstrom's and Mrs. Gribble's classes celebrated the holidays with a Charlie Brown Thanksgiving feast. The meal consisted of popcorn, pretzels, jellybeans, and buttered toast. The sweetest lesson of the day? It's not about the food but the people the food is shared with.

Evansville AWARE receives foods grant

AWARE in Evansville, a program of Community Action, Inc. of Rock and Walworth Counties, announced that it has received a grant from the Evansville Funds Fall 2024 Grant Cycle of the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. to support their Snackpackers program.

The Snackpackers program provides free and nutritious foods each weekend throughout the school year to students within the Evansville Community School District who qualify for free and reduced lunch, whether they use it or not. For more information about this program, please contact Amy Floan, AWARE program manager, at 608-882-9900.

This grant is made available from the Community Foundation's Meals on Wheels Fund of the Evansville Fund, Paul and Barbara George Family Fund of the Evansville Fund, and Robert J.

and Janet L. Petterson Family Fund of the Evansville Fund.

The Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin is a resource for area nonprofit organizations whose program and services are working for the betterment of the communities.

Grants from the Meals on Wheels Fund of the Evansville Fund, Paul and Barbara George Family Fund of the Evansville Fund, Evansville Fund, and Robert J. and Janet L. Petterson Family Fund of the Evansville Fund have supported the arts, education, environment, health and human services and historic preservation.

For more information on how to support this community through the Community Foundation, contact Deedra Williams at 608-758-0883, ext. 7005, email at Deedra@cfsw.org or visit the website at www.cfsw.org. The Community Foundation of Southern

Wisconsin serves nine Wisconsin counties: Crawford, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, and Walworth.

Community Action, Inc. (CAI) is a not-for-profit organization offering programs to fight poverty in Rock and Walworth Counties. Community Action develops and implements a broad range of services across the two-county area including: childcare, pre-school and school age programs, affordable housing, at-risk youth programs, weatherization, community organizing and development, a homeless shelter, health education, and the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). They are a funded partner of United Way Blackhawk Region and United Way Walworth County. Details at www.community-action.org or www.facebook.com/communityactionrockwalworth.



TONY ENDS Evansville Examiner

Tony Ends pauses for a photo with Congolese administrative staff in a USDA Foreign Agricultural Service project in 2014-15, which helped set up a national school lunch program for 156,000 primary school students. The project kept hungry students in school – studying and learning – with a hot meal four days a week.

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Record-high school referendums hit ballot

On Nov. 5, Wisconsin voters approved nearly 78% of 138 school district referendums

By Hallie Clafin
WISCONSIN WATCH

This story was produced and originally published by Wisconsin Watch, a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom. It was made possible by donors like you.

On Nov. 5, Wisconsin voters approved nearly 78% of the 138 school district referendums across the state.

That's higher than the 60% passage rate this past spring, but the percentage of K-12 referendums approved statewide has been declining since 2018, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

The 70% approval rate of all school referendums this year was a 10 percentage-point decrease from 2022 and was the lowest passage rate in a mid-term or presidential election year in the last decade.

But more and more districts are going to referendum as state aid has fallen far behind inflation over the last 15 years. A total of 241 questions were posed in 2024, the most ever held in a single year, according to the Policy Forum.

Almost half of Wisconsin's 421 school districts went to referendum this year, asking for a record total of nearly \$6 billion from taxpayers – up from a previous record of \$3.3 billion in 2022. Voters ultimately approved \$4.4 billion in additional taxes.

School districts are increasingly holding operational referendums, asking residents to take on a recurring tax hike just to cover everyday costs like utilities, routine maintenance and staff salaries. Capital referendums are one-time asks for big projects like a new school.

This year, 66% of operational referendums passed statewide, while 76% of capital referendums passed. There were 148 operating referendums held, the most on record, according to the Policy Forum.



A voter casts a ballot at the General Election Nov. 5 at Madison East High School in Madison. A record high number of school referendums were held this year, but approval rates are declining.

JOE TIMMERMAN WISCONSIN WATCH *Evansville Examiner*

The reliance on school referendums comes amid a heavy debate over state-imposed revenue limits and funding for public education.

Revenue limits were created in the early 1990s to keep in check school property tax increases. In 2009, the state Legislature decoupled per-pupil revenue limits from inflation, and districts have had to manage tighter budgets ever since, especially as inflation in recent years has exceeded revenue limit increases.

Wisconsin's per-pupil K-12 spending increased at a lower rate than every other state in the nation besides Indiana and Idaho between 2002 and 2020, according to the Policy Forum.

School districts across the state are also grappling with declining enrollment, mainly caused by a drop in birth rates.

"Schools are funded based on the number of students we have, so as we have fewer students,

our budget shrinks," Kenosha Unified School District Superintendent Jeffrey Weiss told Wisconsin Watch.

When costs exceed the per-pupil revenue available to the district, state law allows them to go to referendum to ask their voters to authorize their district to exceed their revenue caps at the expense of property taxpayers.

State revenue limits have fallen more than \$2,300 behind inflation – even in smaller school districts like Hudson, generating millions in lost revenue.

The 2023-25 state budget included a yearly increase of \$325 per student to the state-imposed revenue limits. But that increase still lags behind inflation, Wauwatosa School District Superintendent Demond Means told Wisconsin Watch.

"Are they providing more money to schools? Yes, but they're still behind. They've

dug a hole for themselves," Means said. "They have to come to grips with the fact that they have created an obstacle and a gap that they have to fill."

Schools are still reeling from a freeze in revenue caps in the 2021-2023 budget, Means said, in which the Legislature provided zero increases to public school funding immediately following the pandemic. Wisconsin ended its 2024 fiscal year with a \$4.6 billion budget surplus.

Republican lawmakers tout the \$1 billion they added to the budget for public schools last year, emphasizing that education is the largest portion of the state budget. The increase was part of a deal struck between the GOP-controlled Legislature and Democratic Gov. Tony Evers to simultaneously increase funding for private school vouchers.

Democrats argue the state as fallen so far behind, \$1 billion isn't nearly enough.

"Those are just red herrings," state Superintendent of Public Instruction Jill Underly told Wisconsin Watch. "They're trying to distract because public education has always been one of the most expensive components of our state budget. It just is. It's a labor-intensive operation, and labor costs money."

Underly recently called for a \$4 billion increase in public school funding in the Department of Public Instruction's state budget request. It includes a proposal to tie revenue limits to inflation again.

"The fact that we've gone to referendum now three different times in the last six years is a sign that state funding is really becoming a challenge," Means said. "A community like Wauwatosa does not take going to a referendum lightly."

The district just passed operational and capital referendums totaling \$124.4 million. That translates to a \$630 annual tax increase on a \$300,000 home, according to district calculations.

While passage rates are typically higher in a presidential or midterm election year due to voter turnout, some referendums still failed. School districts like Hudson, serving many rural, conservative townships, are now faced with a choice: cut programs and staff or push to referendum again in April. Its \$5 million operational referendum was voted down on Nov. 5.

The referendum would have increased property taxes annually by \$5 on a \$500,000 home, according to district calculations.

"These are recurring expenses. This is literally to make ends meet," Hudson School District Superintendent Nick Ouellette told Wisconsin Watch.

State lawmakers like Rep. Shannon Zimmerman, a Republican who represents the

city of Hudson, have suggested that schools need to close and consolidate in light of declining enrollment. Ouellette said it's not that simple.

The district is receiving less per-pupil funding from the state due to a steady drop in students. But enrollment is not declining at a fast enough rate to immediately close and consolidate schools and classrooms, Ouellette said.

"You lose the revenue, but you don't lose the expense," Ouellette said. "You have to allow things to drop enough before you can cut."

Ouellette said blame is often directed at the school districts with claims that they are mismanaging their budgets or not "living within their means."

"State lawmakers are well aware that if they continue to not fund schools, it will force local school districts to ask their property tax payers to pay more," Ouellette said. "So they understand they are raising taxes."

In Hudson, 54% of the school district's budget is paid by local taxes, 39% is covered by state aid and 3% comes from federal aid, according to the Policy Forum. A decade ago more than half of the district's operating revenue came from state aid.

"They're placing school systems in a very precarious position," Means said. "Local communities are, in essence, bailing out the Legislature, and that has to stop."

The nonprofit Wisconsin Watch (WisconsinWatch.org) collaborates with WPR, PBS Wisconsin, other news media and the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication. All works created, published, posted or disseminated by Wisconsin Watch do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Rock Valley Publishing or any of its affiliates.

Fiscal facts

Job recovery in Wisconsin robust but unequal

Wisconsin's job market made a strong recovery from the pandemic, with total employment hitting record levels in 2023. Our state also boasts an unemployment rate below the nation's, and saw an increase in average worker wages that outpaced inflation

since 2019.

But Wisconsin's economic recovery has been highly uneven, with employment in a majority of Wisconsin counties still below 2019 levels. Some key industry sectors, including manufacturing, also continued

to lag pre-pandemic employment levels.

These are key takeaways from the Forum's analysis of newly released data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages – the most accurate employment data available.

Places that added jobs the fastest between 2019 and 2023 were a mix of counties including some on the outskirts of the Twin Cities, Madison, and Chicago metros. In raw totals, fast-growing Dane County added the most jobs during this time, while Milwaukee County shed the

most. Several rural counties lost jobs at the fastest rates during this period. In some counties such as Milwaukee, a declining working-age population during the pandemic years may be contributing to a lack of job recovery, but that is not a consistent statewide trend.

The sectors that added the most jobs between 2019 and 2023 also were growing the fastest pre-pandemic: construction; professional, scientific, and technical services.

The manufacturing sector stands out for having lost the

most jobs in Wisconsin during this period. This is particularly concerning given the sector's outsized importance to Wisconsin's economy. Our state's recent trend in this sector contrasts with previous growth in the manufacturing sector and modest growth that has occurred nationally.

At a statewide level, worker wages have risen in Wisconsin. Average wages per employee increased 21.1% between 2019 and 2023, slightly outpacing the inflation rate of 19.2%.

Considering the severity of the disruption the pandemic inflicted on society and the

economy, Wisconsin's jobs picture is relatively bright overall. Yet a closer look reveals an uneven return of jobs across the state and across industry sectors. Wisconsin has plenty of economic news to celebrate, but its long-standing challenges stemming from an aging population and shrinking labor pool remain.

This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state's leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.

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The Bank of New Glarus reveals leadership changes

The Bank of New Glarus, a leading financial institution in Green, Dane, and Lafayette Counties, along with Bancorp of New Glarus, Inc., announced on Nov. 25 some significant changes to both The Bank of New Glarus's Board of Directors and Bancorp of New Glarus, Inc.'s Board. The following individuals reserve seats on both boards.

Gregg Erickson, a long-time board member for The Bank of New Glarus and Chairman of the Board since 2012, announced his retirement this October. Erickson has served as a member of the Bank's boards for 32 years. Throughout his tenure, Erickson has been forefront in the bank's growth, overseeing key initiatives of the Bank's strategic plans and aiding in the expansion into new markets. Reflecting on his time with the bank, Erickson stated, "It has been an honor to lead The Bank of New Glarus and work alongside a devoted team. I am proud of all we have accomplished, and I am confident that the bank will continue to thrive under new leadership."

John Ott, who has been an active board member since 2000, has also announced his retirement from his board seats effective Dec. 31. Over the years, Ott has been an integral part of the Boards, significantly shaping their direction and policies. His influence, particularly in the realm of loan and audit committee has been profound.

Russ Davis, board member since 2020, succeeded Erickson as Chairman, effective Oct.

1. Commenting on his new role, Davis said, "I am honored to step into the role of Chairman of the Board at The Bank of New Glarus. I look forward to building on the strong foundation laid by my predecessor and working closely with our talented Board members and dedicated staff. Collectively, we will continue to drive advancements and uphold our commitment to our customers."

In the wake of Erickson and Ott's retirement, the Board was faced with two vacancies. After an extensive search process, the Board appointed Matt Streiff, President and CFO, New Glarus Home Retirement Campus, and Ben Thompson, Owner and CEO of Big Radio, Janesville. Both begin their terms before the year's end.

Ron Schaaf, President of The Bank of New Glarus, expressed confidence in the new appointments: "We have selected two, capable and experienced professionals to join our Boards. I am excited about the future and confident we've got the right people in place to navigate the growing financial landscape."

The Bank of New Glarus is headquartered in New Glarus, Wis. and has branch offices located in Belleville, Brodhead, Darlington, Gratiot, Juda and Monroe with a loan production office located in Madison. As the largest deposit bank in Green County, it offers a full range of financial products and services including personal banking, business banking and wealth management.



EVANSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FACEBOOK PHOTOS *Evansville Examiner*

Serenading the crowd with holiday songs

The Evansville High School Vocal Jazz Choir serenaded the crowd waiting for Santa's arrival in late November. They will be at the Middle School Craft Fair, the Rotary Garden's Light Show, and the Evansville Manor this December.

Area news and events in brief

Evansville native cited for traffic offense

At 7:06 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 25, Green County Sheriff's deputies stopped a vehicle due to the registered owner not holding a valid driver's license, in the 700 block of Vine St. in the Village of Albany. Bane Tlehuacte Calihua, 28, of Evansville, was cited for Operating without Valid License and Operating without Insurance. Bane was released pending a non-mandatory court appearance.

Christmas craft fair coming to town

Christmas is coming to town in the form of Evansville's 40th Holiday Craft Fair, Dec. 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at J.C. McKenna Mid-

dle School Gym, 307 S. First Street.

Please enter at Door 1. Many types of crafts as well as gifts will be available for locals to purchase including sewn items, handmade jewelry, quilting, knitting, woodcrafts, homemade jams and jellies, and paper crafts as well as a host of many other kinds of items that will be for sale. More than 30 booths with items for sale will be available this year.

Santa will also be making a stop at the Holiday Fair from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. Gifts will be available for each child and photo opportunities will be certain so parents should not forget their cameras.

Lunch will be available courtesy of the Evansville

4-H. A cookie walk will also be included and will be sponsored by the families of Evansville 4-H. Goodies will be sold on a per pound basis. Come check out the homemade cookies and candies available for attendees on a per pound basis.

Admission is \$1 for school age and up.

Magnolia AC Church plans advent events

Magnolia Advent Christian Church, just off the corner of County A and State Highway 213 south of Evansville, plans for a Celebration of Advent on Saturday nights running through the end of December. The Saturday night services will be themed:

- Dec. 7: 4:30 p.m. Carol-

ing; 6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas – Service of Remembering

- Dec. 14: 6:30 p.m. Christmas Singing and Stories with Refreshments

- Dec. 21: 6:30 p.m. Christmas Candlelight Service

- Dec. 28: 6:30 p.m. New Year time of Reflection and Hope

Evansville Lions Club announces week three calendar raffle winners

The week three winners for the Evansville Lions Calendar Raffle: \$200 winner is Ila Tregoning and \$100 winners are John Soehnlein, Lexie Firgens, Susie Tregoning and Isabel Winter.

See BRIEFS, Page 7

Activities at Creekside Place

Join Creekside Place for fun, exercise and friendship at 102 Maple St. in Evansville. Creekside is now serving congregate – in-house – dining Monday to Friday. Call at 608-882-0407 for details or visit the website at www.creeksideplace.org.

Friday, Dec. 6

- 9 a.m. – Creekside Coffee Hour
- 9 a.m. – StrongBodies
- 11:30 a.m. – Senior Dining

Monday, Dec. 9

- 9 a.m. – Creekside Coffee Hour
- 9 a.m. – Strong Women
- 11:30 a.m. – Senior Dining
- Noon – Knitting Group

Tuesday, Dec. 10

- 9 a.m. – Creekside Coffee Hour
- 9 a.m. – Yoga
- 10:30 a.m. – Gentle Fit
- 11:30 a.m. – Senior Dining
- 12:30 p.m. – Bingo

Wednesday, Dec. 11

- 11:30 a.m. – Senior Dining
- 12:30 p.m. – Bunco

Thursday, Dec. 12

- 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Foot Care Clinic
- 9 a.m. – Yoga
- 10:30 a.m. – Gentle Fit
- 11:30 a.m. – Senior Dining

Friday, Dec. 13

- 9 a.m. – Creekside Coffee Hour
- 9 a.m. – StrongBodies
- 11:30 a.m. – Senior Dining



ROCK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FACEBOOK PHOTO *Evansville Examiner*

Lessons in making good choices

Two RECAP (Rock County Education and Addictions Program) participants shared their stories with high school students at Evansville High School recently. They enjoyed talking with youth about the lessons they have learned and encouraged them to make good choices.

THANKS

FROM

The Friends of the Eager Free Public Library thank everyone who supported our annual Thanksgiving Pie Sale fundraiser this year!

Friends EFPL

To our bakers – we appreciate the time and talent which you volunteered during this busy season to support our fundraiser. We simply could not do this without you.

To our customers – we are honored that you chose our fundraiser to grace your Thanksgiving table with one of our pies. We value your loyalty.

To our library staff – we are thankful not only for your help with the pie sale, but also for the amazing variety of services and programs which you provide to our community. We are committed to supporting EFPL with our fundraisers.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO CALL EVANSVILLE OUR HOME!

Library corner



1,000 Books Before Kindergarten
All year, every year

It's never too early to start reading to your child. Sign up for the 1,000 books challenge in-person at the library. Pick up a reading log with early literacy tips at the library today.

Teen Cookie Decorating
Friday, Dec. 6, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Teens in grades 6 to 12 are invited to stop in and decorate a cookie! You're welcome to eat it or give it away as a gift.

First Friday Spanish English Conversation Group
Friday, Dec. 6, 6 to 7 p.m.

Need some language practice? Whether you'd like to brush up on your Spanish or practice your English, stop by El Vallarta to grab some food or just say hello! Look for the sign at our table. All levels welcome! This event is intended for teens and adults.

Tech Time with Jenn
Monday, Dec. 9, 4 to 6 p.m.

Need help with computers, phones, tablets or more? Schedule Tech Time with Jenn where you'll have an hour to go over your technical issues.

Storytime
Wednesday, Dec. 11, 10 to 10:30 a.m.

Stories, songs, and other early literacy activities that help develop pre-reading skills for children ages 2 to 5 with caregivers.

Tech Time with Jenn
Thursday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m. to noon

Need help with computers, phones, tablets or more? Schedule Tech Time with Jenn where you'll have an hour to go over your technical issues.

Baby/Toddler Storytime
Friday, Dec. 13, 10 a.m.

Lapsit stories, songs, and fingerplays that help develop pre-reading skills. For babies 0 to 2 with a caregiver.

Teen Advisory Board
Friday, Dec. 13, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Catch up, hang out, and plan new teen library programs! TAB counts as volunteer hours and gives you the opportunity to suggest purchases and plan events that you'd like to see. All teens welcome.

About the library

The Eager Free Public Library is at 39 W. Main St. in Evansville.

For more information, visit the website at www.als.lib.wi.us/EFPL, or follow them on Facebook at @eagerfreepubliclibrary.

To reach Library Director Bronna Lehmann or other library staff, please call 608-882-2260.

Library hours are Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and closed on Sundays. Hours around holidays may vary.

NEW MATERIALS

Adult Fiction

The Triplets' Holiday Miracle by Tanya Agler
A Match for the Sheriff by Lisa Childs
The Cowboy's Rodeo Redemption by Susan Breeden
A Hawaiian Christmas Romance by Anna J. Stewart

Graphic Novels

The Bad Guys in One Last Thing by Aaron Blabey
Hot Mess: Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney

Middle Grade Fiction

The Witching Wind by Natalie Lloyd
We Do Not Welcome Our Ten-Year-Old Overlord by Garth Nix
Tig by Heather Smith
The Shape of Lost Things by Sarah Everett
Tiffany's Griffon by Maddi Gonzalez and Magnolia Porter Siddell

Children's Nonfiction

12 Biggest Breakthroughs in Computer Technology by Marne Ventura
12 Incredible Facts about the D-Day Invasion by Lois Sepahban
Awesome, Disgusting, Unusual Facts about Mummies by Stephanie

Bearce

My Awesome Guide to Freshwater Fishing: Essential Techniques and Tools for Kids by John Paxton

Eyewitness Train: Discover the Story of the Railroads Oak Trees by Lori Dittmer

Corn by Joe Tischler
Hawk by Laura Purdie Salas
Lemur by Julie and David Lavender
Wolf by Laura Purdie Salas

Children's Picture Books

The Most Beautiful Winter by Cristina Sitja Rubio
Winter Solstice Wish by Kate Allen Fox, author, and Elisa Paganelli, illustrator
Sigamos subiendo! (Spanish Edition) by Baptiste Paul, author, and Jacqueline Alcantara, illustrator
This Land by Ashley Fairbanks, author, and Bridget George, illustrator
Steve, A Pretty Exceptional Horse by Kelly Collier

Movies

Twisters
It Ends With Us
Kinds of Kindness
Trap by M. Night Shyamalan



EVANSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FACEBOOK PHOTO *Evansville Examiner*

Learning about oral health care

Evansville High School students Kenslee, Faith, and Olivia attended the Future Oral Health Workforce Day sponsored by HealthNet/Rock County YMCA on Friday, Nov. 15. They were able to participate in active dental learning stations, learn about dental training programs available at Blackhawk Technical College, and hear from professional oral health care workers about all the different dental health professions.

DNR: Embark on a 12-month adventure

Unlock a year of exploration at Wisconsin state parks and trails with the new 12-month admission pass.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s state park system is moving to a 12-month vehicle admission pass model. This year's winning pass design will also reflect and celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Wisconsin State Park System.

The new pass is now available for purchase. Save time by buying passes online.

How does the 12-month vehicle admission pass work? The admission pass will be valid for 12 months from the time of purchase and will be marked to indicate the month/year it will expire. The pass remains valid until the final day of the 12th month following the month in which it is issued. For example, a pass that is marked to expire in March 2026 will be valid through March 31, 2026.

As a bonus for those still needing vehicle admission passes this year, 12-month vehicle admission passes purchased in December 2024 will be valid through January 2026.

Celebrate hunting success

Hunting is a tradition that has



PHOTO COURTESY DNR *Evansville Examiner*

Unlock a year of exploration at the state parks and trails with the new 12-month admission pass.

been passed down generation after generation in Wisconsin.

For those who have harvested their first deer this year, commemorate this induction into the annals of successful Wisconsin deer hunters with a first harvest certificate.

Certificates are free and easy to get. Just check out the online form, fill in all the necessary in-

formation and upload a photo. That's it! The DNR will take care of the rest and send the finished certificate to you to mark the occasion.

Check for sneaky snails

Invasives can hide in some of the most unsuspected places. Do a double-check this late waterfowl season to prevent in-

vasive species from hitching a ride to the next hunting spot.

Of particular concern to hunters is the Faucet snail. These snails carry parasites that can kill ducks if they eat them. Learn more about how hunters can help prevent the spread of invasive species and minimize

See ADVENTURE, Page 7

Rock County ADRC – Aging Unit Nutrition Program

The Rock County ADRC – Aging Unit Nutrition Program, dining centers and home delivered meals has laid out their regular menu.

Reservations are required and must be made by noon of the prior business day. To make a reservation or for more information, call 608-757-5474 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dining centers are open. There is no longer curbside pickup.

Meals are served at 11:30 a.m. at all locations.

Friday, Dec. 6

Roast beef with au jus, ranch pinto beans, zucchini tomato bake, whole grain bread, banana

Monday, Dec. 9

Oven baked cod, tartar sauce, roasted garlic potatoes, beets, rye bread, gelatin with pears

Tuesday, Dec. 10

Chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, green beans, romaine with French dressing, whole grain bread, pumpkin bar

Wednesday, Dec. 11

Beef pot roast with gravy, noodles, butternut squash, cucumber salad, whole grain roll, chocolate chip brownie, pineapple

Thursday, Dec. 12

Chicken and wild rice, broccoli, peas, whole grain roll, peaches and pears

Friday, Dec. 13

Sloppy Joe, whole grain bun, baked beans, hot German potato salad, banana, chocolate chip cookie

Dining center locations

• Evansville: Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street, Mon-

day through Friday.

• Beloit: Chews and News Grinnell Hall Senior Center, 631 Bluff Street, Monday through Friday.

• Clinton: Senior Center, 508 Front Street, Monday through Friday.

• Janesville: Riverview Café – Riverview Heights, 930 N. Washington St. (park in back, special parking available on request), Monday through Friday.

• Milton: The Gathering Place, 715 Campus Street, Monday through Friday.

About the program

Eligibility: Any person age 60 or older, regardless of income, and a spouse of any age.

Dining centers: Reservations are required and must be made no later than noon of the prior business day. Suggested donation of \$5. All donations

are appreciated.

Home delivered: Must also be homebound. Suggested donation of \$5.

Call 608-757-5474 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., for meal reservations, cancellations and home delivered meal information.

Funding is provided by Title III (Older Americans Act) and donations. Rock County COA is an equal opportunity provider. No eligible person will be denied a meal because of inability to make a donation.

Rock County Nutrition Program cannot assume any liability for adverse reactions to food consumed. Nutrition Program food should not be consumed by persons with severe allergies or dietary restrictions.

Due to supply chain issues, the program reserves the right to make substitutions when needed.

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Learning about careers at Future Quest



EVANSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FACEBOOK PHOTOS *Evansville Examiner*

J.C. McKenna Middle School eighth graders learned about careers at Future Quest in mid-November. They talked to professionals and tried hands-on activities to learn more about potential occupations in the sixteen career clusters. What a great opportunity to think about their plans for the future.

Cover crop rebate available to Wisconsin soybean producers

Without fertile land, Wisconsin soybean growers wouldn't be able to sustain a bountiful harvest year in and year out. Thankfully, with crop insurance premium rebates for planting cover crops available through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), Wisconsin producers have another tool in their toolbox to encourage the adoption of sound practices. This program is supported by numerous Wisconsin farm advocacy groups, including the Wisconsin Soybean Association (WSA). "Wisconsin soybean growers know that to keep their land productive, it's vital to adopt sustainable practices that work on their operation," WSA Executive Director Adam Kask said. "DATCP programs like the crop insurance premium rebate for planting cover crops present excellent opportunities for farmers to implement sound agricultural practices."

In partnership with the USDA's Risk Management Agency, there is \$800,000 or 160,000 acres of coverage available to be rewarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Recipients will receive a \$5 per-acre rebate on their summer 2025 crop insurance

premium for acres planted with cover crops in 2024, then planted to an insurable crop the following year. The application period opened on Dec. 2.

Producers who received state or federal cost-sharing to plant cover crops in 2024 are not eligible for this year's program. Applicants will need to use their FSA-578 form to complete the application, and there isn't a limit on acres a producer can apply for. Applicants should keep seed receipts and planting records as DATCP will conduct audits to ensure cover crops were planted.

"With this rebate available, now is the perfect time to plant cover crops – whether you've been doing it for years or if this will be your first time experimenting with them," Kask said.

The web-based rebate application, information about eligibility, and FAQs will be made available on the DATCP website.

The application will remain open until noon on Jan. 31, 2025, or until program funding is exhausted. A copy of the application questions and instructions is available for reference on DATCP's website. Questions should be directed to DATCPCC@wisconsin.gov.



PHOTO COURTESY DATCP *Evansville Examiner*

Crop insurance premium rebates for planting cover crops are available through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

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OPINION

On the garden path

Consider fall leaves a gift from Mother Nature

Put fall leaves to work in your landscape. This valuable resource makes a great mulch in planting beds, adds organic matter and nutrients to the soil, provides habitat for many beneficial insects, and is insulation for ground-dwelling queen bumblebees, toads, and more.

Leave any disease-free leaves in garden beds but pull them away from the trunks of trees and stems of shrubs. Mulch piles against shrubs or stems create a moist environment that is more subject to rot and disease. It also provides a hiding place next to these plants for voles that feed on bark over winter.

Avoid thick layers of leaves, six or more inches deep, in garden beds. They can block sunlight and smother the plants below. Pull leaves off the crowns of perennials and move the excess leaves to gardens with little or no mulch.



By **MELINDA MYERS**
Columnist

Use your mower to recycle fall leaves that land on the lawn. As you mow the grass you'll shred the leaves into smaller pieces. If they are the size of a quarter or smaller your lawn will be fine. As these leaf pieces decompose, they add organic matter and nutrients to the soil.

When the lawn is overwhelmed with leaves burn a few extra calories and rake them into nearby planting beds. Whole leaves provide the best habitat for overwintering insects. Spread the leaves over the soil surface to help insulate the roots, conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and improve the soil as it breaks down.

If your garden beds are already filled with leaves or this is not practical, attach the bagger to the mower to shred and collect the excess leaves on the lawn. Only use grass clippings collected from lawns and leaves not treated with a weed killer this fall.

Dig extra shredded leaves into vacant annual flower and vegetable gardens or incorporate them into the soil as you prepare new planting beds. They will break down over winter, improving the drainage in heavy clay soils and increasing the water-holding ability in fast-draining soils.

Bag shredded leaves you want to save for next season. Tuck them out of sight for winter under trees or around the foundation of your house for added insulation.

Create compost with fall leaves, plant-based kitchen scraps, and other landscape trimmings. Do not use meat, bones or dairy that

can attract rodents, charcoal ash, and human, pet or bird droppings that may contain disease organisms. Avoid diseased and insect-infested plant debris, perennial weeds, and weeds gone to seed. These can survive in compost piles that don't produce sufficient heat to kill them and end up back in the garden in the compost.

Oak and large maple leaves make great mulches and additions to the compost pile but break down slowly. Shred them with your mower

or leaf shredder first for quicker results.

You can compost black walnut, laurel, and eucalyptus leaves that contain chemicals toxic to other plants. Shred them first to speed decomposition and when they are fully decomposed the compost is safe to use in the garden.

As you begin putting the fall leaves to work in your landscape you will start considering them a gift, not a curse, from nature.

Melinda Myers has written

more than 20 gardening books, including the Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening.

She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV and radio program.

Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. For more information, visit www.MelindaMyers.com.



MELINDA MYERS PHOTO *Evansville Examiner*

Mowing fallen leaves on lawns to shred them into smaller pieces adds organic matter and nutrients to the soil as the leaf pieces decompose.

Slices of life

Contemplating the topic of hate

"When hate feels easy, be very wary, lest your hate becomes greater than the one who is hated. Because it is at that point you turn the corner toward evil."

Today, I've been contemplating hate.

It's a definitely switch for me. I prefer to focus on love, because love is so much more important and impactful and life-changing. When you truly embrace love, there is no room for hate.

But the recent political activities have brought up strong feelings in many people and some of those involve hate. I've listened to the news. I've heard people vent in real time. I've read posts on social media. And, sadly, there is much hate circulating the airwaves.

It's made me wonder and ponder the topic.

I don't purport to have all the answers. In this column, as in many others, I'm only answering for myself and from my perspective. I hope to encourage thought, discussion and awareness, but I certainly don't have any of the answers, much less all of them. What I do have are questions.

My first: Is hate ever justified?

I think not. Stay with me here.

But what about serial killers? What about parents who horribly abuse their children? What about sadists and sociopaths? What about elder abuse? What about schoolyard bullies? What about leaders who use their power in inhumane ways? Isn't that worth our hate?

I think not.

We can have many negative emotions about the actions taken by very bad people, but those emotions do not need to lead to hate.

Hate is a very strong word when it comes to describe



By **JILL PERTLER**
Columnist

feelings toward other people.

We can hate Brussels sprouts. We can hate a rainy Saturday when we had plans to go to the beach. We can hate cancer. We can hate the death of a loved one.

But hating another person – even if they do unquestionably bad things? I think not.

Here's the thing: we can hate the actions – the bad things – without hating the person. I know I may be splitting hairs, but I don't think it's in our capacity to hate others. It goes against our DNA. Hate is counterintuitive to what we are meant to be. We are meant to be inclusive. To be brothers and sisters. To be family. To love.

Hate is contrary to love. The two cannot co-exist. And we simply cannot live without love.

I remember the Broadway musical, "Wicked." It is the backstory to "The Wizard of Oz" and tells of the origins of the Wicked Witch of the West. As a child I feared her. She was mean and vengeful. She was threatening and combative. She was scary.

She demonstrated no meaningful attributes, because that is what the 1939 movie showed us. But upon seeing the history in "Wicked," the viewer came to understand the witch who was labeled wicked. Her story illustrated why she became who she was and in knowing that it was much more difficult to see her in the light of all the negative adjectives listed above. It became more difficult to

hate her.

I think that might be the case with most people we deem hate-worthy. We don't know them or their history.

I'm not making excuses for inexcusable behavior, but I am saying that people – each of us – live out our own history, and while behaviors might be inexcusable and hateful, people themselves are not.

We may have to put them in prison for the rest of their life. We may have to relegate them to whatever justice suits their actions. We may renounce their actions and mourn with the people they hurt. We may never get over the impact they made on our lives.

But we need not hate.

Hate brings about such negativity to the person experiencing it. Hate hurts the person doing the hating, much more than it hurts the hated.

Hate does not heal. It does not inspire. It does not illicit compassion. It does not foster kindness. It does no good.

Instead it eats one from the inside out. Hate is black and bleak where there could be light and love.

So, go ahead, hate broccoli or the smell of mothballs, but reject hate against other humans. It does them no good. But more importantly, it does you no good. Compassion, on the other hand goes a long way to accomplishing something.

Something beautiful. And loving and lovely.

And that, my friends, is my wish for you. Today and every day.

Jill Pertler is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published playwright and author. Don't miss a slice; follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.

Writers and writing

Novel set in state's Driftless region predicts possible future

The late David Rhodes returns to his beloved Driftless region of southwestern Wisconsin in his futuristic novel *Painting Beyond Walls*, a story of a man of humble beginnings who goes on to achieve great things. The novel was published in September 2022, two months before Rhodes' death.

Born in Des Moines, Iowa, Rhodes was a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and author of several other novels set in the Driftless region, most notably *Driftless* and *Jewelweed*. Following his earlier success with *The Last Fair Deal Going Down*, *The Easter House* and *Rock Island Line*, Rhodes' publishing career halted after a motorcycle accident left him paralyzed.

Chicago of 2027 sets the stage for Rhodes' final novel. While the time isn't far in the future, Rhodes' depiction of events is a clear warning of how climate change could impact not just the landscape, but human behavior:

"Due to a steady trickle of people and businesses from the East Coast, where retreating shorelines seemed increasingly inhospitable, and an even steadier stream of immigration from the



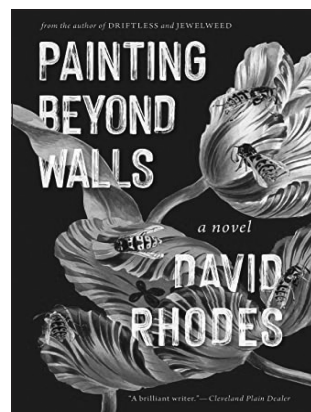
By **MICHAEL TIDEMANN**
Contributor

drought-plagued Southwest, the costs of living in Chicago had risen."

Thirty-year-old August Helm, brilliant biochemical researcher at the University of Chicago, is working on a cure for cancer. However, his career is put on hold after he accidentally discovers an illicit liaison between his senior fellow researcher, Dr. Grafton, and a female graduate student.

Dr. Grafton tries to weasel his way out of August's discovery, saying men in superior positions have acquired an innate right to as many females as they want. While Grafton does not directly threaten him, the message is clear. Don't mess with your superiors.

After he loses his position due to funding cuts, and with salt in the wound from a breakup with his out-of-his-league girlfriend Amanda Clark, August returns to his beloved Driftless region to heal. Through his mother, August meets April, a



devastatingly beautiful woman living in a gated community who seems totally out of reach until . . .

Rhodes has a devilishly clever knack for putting hapless individuals into seemingly hopeless situations then entertaining us as they struggle to emerge from them. Rhodes' description of the Driftless region is spot-on, and totally heartwarming.

This is a great book to curl up with, and it's hard to set down. It's also a wonderful final tribute to a great writer.

The novel, *Painting Beyond Walls*, is written by David Rhodes and published by Milkweed Editions.

Michael Tidemann writes from Estherville, Iowa. His Facebook page is Author Michael Tidemann.

• Briefs (Continued from page 3)

Evansville Manor hosts adopt a resident

Every year at Christmas the residents at Evansville Manor are blessed by generous people in the community who sign up to "adopt a resident." These caring individuals and families donate a Christmas present for Santa to deliver to their resident.

Interested in adopting a resident? Here's the details:

- Suggested price of gift is \$30.
- Gifts are due by Dec. 16 to allow time to inventory and obtain any additional gifts that are needed.
- Please contact Taylor via phone or email to sign up at tjones@evansvillemanor.com or 608-882-9015.
- Those who sign up will be given a number which correlates to a resident. They will also receive some gift ideas or at least some likes and dislikes.
- Gifts should be delivered to the manor. Pick up may be arranged if absolutely necessary.

Live music

Hop Garden Brewing and Tap, 18 E. Main St., Evansville, will host the following live music events: Friday, Dec. 6, 5 p.m. - Nelly, acoustic originals; Saturday, Dec. 7, 5 p.m. - Britton and Sarah Music, classic rock; Friday, Dec. 13, 5 p.m. - Old Oaks, indie, folk; Saturday, Dec. 14, 5 p.m. - Tony John and the Flatland Stringband, country, folk, bluegrass; Sunday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m. - Dry River Goats, country, folk, Americana; Friday, Dec. 20, 5 p.m. - SunDance, rock, folk, oldies; Saturday, Dec. 21, 5 p.m. - KT Johnson, acoustic duo, classic and recent hits; Friday, Dec. 27, 5 p.m. - Phillip Smithburg,

Americana, country; Saturday, Dec. 28, 5 p.m. - Leah Brooke Conway, blues, jazzy pop, rock.

School sports events

- Friday, Dec. 6 - Basketball: Boys JV2 game at 5:40 p.m. at Evansville High School; Basketball: Boys JV1 game at 5:40 p.m. at Evansville High School; Basketball: Boys Varsity game at 7 p.m. at Evansville High School; Hockey: Boys Varsity game at 7:30 p.m. at Hartmeyer Ice Arena in Madison
- Saturday, Dec. 7 - Wrestling: JV1 JV Invitational at 9 a.m. at Janesville Parker High School; Wrestling: Varsity Invitational at 9 a.m. at Janesville Parker High School
- Monday, Dec. 9 - Bowling: JV1 match at 4:30 p.m. at Delavan Lanes; Bowling: JV2 match at 4:30 p.m. at Delavan Lanes; 6-8 Chorus Concert at 6:30 p.m. at Evansville High School
- Tuesday, Dec. 10 - Basketball: Boys 7th game at 4 p.m. at J.C. McKenna Middle School; Boys 8th game at 4 p.m. at J.C. McKenna Middle School; Bowling: Boys Varsity match at 4:30 p.m. at El-Ra Bowling Alley; Swimming: Boys Varsity meet at 5:30 p.m. at Whitewater High School; Swimming Boys JV1 meet at 5:30 p.m. at Whitewater High School; Basketball: Girls JV1 game at 5:40 p.m. at Evansville High School; Hockey: Boys Varsity game at 7 p.m. at Pierce Park Hockey Rink in Baraboo; Basketball: Girls Varsity game at 7 p.m. at Evansville High School
- Wednesday, Dec. 11 - Winter MS band dress rehearsal from 7:45 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 3 p.m. at Evansville High School PAC
- Thursday, Dec. 12 - Winter MS band dress rehearsal from 7:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Evansville High School PAC; Basketball: Boys 7th game at 4 p.m. at J.C. McKenna Middle School; Basketball: Boys 8th game at 4 p.m. at Edgerton Middle School; Basketball JV2 game at 5:40 p.m. at Turner High School; Basketball JV1 game at 5:40 p.m. at Turner High School; Winter MS band concert at 6:30 p.m. at Evansville High School PAC; Basketball: Boys Varsity game at 7 p.m. at Turner High School
- Friday, Dec. 13 - Basketball: Girls JV1 game at 5:40 p.m. at Clinton High School; Hockey: Boys Varsity game at 7 p.m. at McFarland Community Ice Arena; Basketball: Girls Varsity game at 7 p.m. at Clinton High School
- Saturday, Dec. 14 - Wrestling: JV1 JV Invitational at 9 a.m. at Evansville High School; Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at 9 a.m. at Evansville High School

City meetings, events

- Tuesday, Dec. 10 - 6 p.m., Common Council meeting
- Thursday, Dec. 12 - 6:30 p.m., Tourism Commission meeting
- Saturday, Dec. 14 - 1 p.m., Municipal Court Relations meeting
- Monday, Dec. 16 - 6 p.m., Economic Development meeting
- Tuesday, Dec. 17 - 5 p.m., Library Board meeting; 6 p.m., Park Board meeting
- Wednesday, Dec. 18 - 6 p.m., Historic Preservation meeting
- Monday, Dec. 23 - 5:30 p.m., Evansville Youth Center Board meeting
- Tuesday, Dec. 31 - 5 p.m., Municipal Services meeting

• Grove Society (Continued from front page)

Evansville Grove Society. Ms. Sendelbach created artwork and posters promoting the Society's work and events.

Society members also learned that the Evansville Grove Society enters the next year on a solid financial footing and that recent maintenance to the Baker building has restored it to good working condition.

Thome and fellow board members are energized with plans to make the organization more visible and create partnerships with other community groups. Says Kris, "This town's history is worth preserving; there are so many cool things here." Plans include creating new programming, exploring ways to engage the community's students, and finding better ways to share the Society's collection.

Says Kris, "I'm committed

to preserving the town's history." Hoping to expand programming beyond the annual History in the Park, she sees the Grove Society's historical collection as an underappreciated asset. "We don't even know what we have," referencing the breadth of the artifacts in the collection. Helping document those antiques offers one of the more interesting opportunities for volunteers.

With respect to History in the Park, each year on the last Sunday in August, after a picnic lunch prepared on the CCC-era fireplace in Leonard-Leota Park, the Grove Society hosts notable historians to discuss topics of local interest. In 2024, it was the history of Baker Manufacturing. Previous years' topics included the Archeology and Geology of Ice Age Wisconsin (2023), a histo-

ry of Leonard-Leota Park itself (2022), and the Soundtrack of the Vietnam War (2019).

The Society also hosts open hours at the Baker Office Building Museum on Saturday afternoons throughout the summer. Visitors can browse the Society's collection of historical artifacts, learn more about Evansville's colorful history and check out the Antes Tourist Cabin adjacent to the museum. That cabin was one of the tourist vacation rentals that once overlooked Lake Leota.

To learn more about the Grove Society and Evansville's vibrant history, to explore ways you could play a role in this organization, or to provide financial support and become a member, please visit the Society's website online at www.grovesociety.org.

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• Adventure (Continued from page 4)

these risks on the DNR's Invasive Species Prevention webpage or by visiting the "Hunter Resources" tab on the Waterfowl Hunting webpage.

Just a few minutes of preventative action can protect the hunting tradition for generations to come. Before launching into and leaving a water body, hunters should:

- Inspect waders, boats, trailers, motors and hunting equipment, including boots, blinds and dogs, before leaving a boat launch or access point.
- Remove all plants, animals and mud to the best of one's ability.
- Drain all water from decoys, boats, motors and other

hunting equipment.

- Never move plants or live fish away from a water body.

The story of Wisconsin's wild turkeys

Thanksgiving was last week, and for a lot of us, turkeys are still on our minds as we figure out what to do with all our leftovers. As far as wild turkeys go, did you know there was a time when they had disappeared completely from Wisconsin? It took many years and much hard work to bring them back to the state.

The fall issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine tells the tale of how wild turkeys, once extirpated from the state, are now back and going strong. "Wild ride for

Wisconsin turkeys" outlines the gamebird's roller-coaster journey from demise to conservation success story.

Gift-giving made easy

Give the gift of Wisconsin's outdoors this holiday season with a subscription to Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. Get five issues for just \$5 with this limited-time offer, valid on all new subscriptions, renewals and gift subscriptions now through Dec. 31.

Subscribe now to start a subscription with the winter issue, which includes a beautiful 2025 Wisconsin state parks calendar. Go to wnrmag.com or call 1-800-678-9472 to give a gift or subscribe.

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Lessons (Continued from front page)

My relief was from the abrupt end to civil war talk against "one nation, under God, indivisible."

The latter phrase, of course, is from the American pledge of allegiance, derived from a Civil War veteran's verse in the 1880s.

I recited the modern version of this pledge, standing with Robert Frost Elementary and Alan B. Shepard Junior High school classmates in the 1960s.

Growing up together, middle class village and surrounding country children of hard-working Midwestern families, we recited that pledge together. And we believed in it together, whether talk at home favored Republicans or Democrats.

As an aging man now, I can tell you I quietly welcomed alone in our farmhouse outside Brodhead the end to violent forecasts against the United States.

From years of disturbing interviews with angry citizens and candidates, to Council on Foreign Relations and Department of Homeland Security reports, I heard and read predictions of election unrest for the United States.

These threats persisted and escalated after the 2021 riot and mob attack on the U.S. Capitol. One outcome, however, went broadly unreported.

According to Federal Emergency Management Agency data cited in a Nov. 11 issue of the New Yorker, 20 million Americans have been preparing for cataclysm — a doubling since 2017 — with political violence including civil war given among motivations.

They've been subscribing to encampments stocked and fortified against civil war, or they have been having their own retreats civil war-proofed in remote regions.

I don't want to diminish harm done in loss of life and injury to an estimated 140 police who were trying to protect the U.S. House and Senate on Jan. 6, 2021.

I don't want to minimize seriousness of the \$2.9 million in destruction to public buildings police defended against the violent attempt to stop Congress from count-



TONY ENDS PHOTOS Evansville Examiner

Above: A teenage blacksmith takes measurements from commercial-grade vegetable crop tools Tony Ends took to him in Guinea for a pilot school market garden project with the United Nations and the Peace Corps in 2017. Right: A family of blacksmiths was making and repairing guns before Tony Ends brought them contracted work for a pilot project to grow local food for school lunch programs with the United Nations World Food Programme. Ends served there for 6 months as a UN Field Officer. The nation has since experienced a military coup.



ing the presidential electoral vote.

Through 4 years since, though, hearing threats of expanding insurrection to civil war made me think from my experiences abroad about what civil war will mean in the United States.

Four times, I volunteered or worked in nations that had been — and in some instances were about again to be — ripped apart by civil wars, mob violence, or military coups.

• For Anglican mission workers and priests, I translated medical, agricultural, and school needs for a Milwaukee diocese sister project in Haiti, during a peaceful interlude from decades of political, gang, and mob violence that persist to this day.

• For the aforementioned U.S. Food for Education project, I helped catch up a national school feeding program in the Congo-Brazzaville, 15 years after a civil war killed more than 10,000 people.

• As a United Nations Field Officer in a Peace Corps partnership, I initiated a pilot vegetable-growing project with seven school and market gardens in Guinea in 2017. I was there 11 years following a stadium massacre and rapes, in an attack on 10s of thousands of peace-

fully assembled protesters. A military coup took over control of Guinea in 2021, the third since independence in the 1950s.

• For a non-government organization, I tried to write an ill-fated peace project proposal in the Central African Republic in April 2015. Four armies were occupying the nation's capital as I walked and drove about the city unarmed, trying to cobble the project together. Every moment I was there for eight days, I felt a powerful, overwhelming sense that I was about to be shot, abducted, or struck with an improvised weapon.

Each of those assignments landed me in places where civil war and strife had left masses dead, property destroyed, and life disrupted for decades thereafter.

It was 10 years ago last month that I went to work for 6 months in the Congo where remnants of the tragic 1997 two-year civil war were still everywhere obvious.

Whenever I think of that experience, I recall just how long psychological and physical damage from civil war can grip a people. A dark worry, a post-traumatic stress, clouded the faces and eyes of people old enough to recall the civil war. It sounded eerily, hollowly, in their



TONY ENDS Evansville Examiner

A wheel hoe Tony Ends of Brodhead took to blacksmiths at a forge in the streets of a regional capital of Guinea sits beside a perfect copy the blacksmiths made. It was then replicated for 14 market gardens, increasing local vegetable crop production for schools and villages in 2018.

voices with despondency and shattered ambitions.

Adults told me whatever grade they had been attending as students when prolonged conflict closed their schools, marked the end of their learning and advancement.

Doctors Without Borders had to add special treatment for women who suffered during widespread rape as many from teenagers to 60-year-olds were assaulted trying to flee along narrow

corridors out of residential areas being bombed and overrun around Brazzaville.

Structural evidence, too, of the close combat and shelling that had raged across neighborhoods and along streets and roadways of cities and countryside was still apparent.

What I saw on long walks about Brazzaville and in arduous trips by two narrow highways leading out of the Congo's capital to the interior seared my memory.

Bombed houses still unoccupied, shelled buildings never repaired, factories never reopened.

I had contracted to help with a national school lunch program funded through USDA Foreign Agriculture Service fulfillment of the Food for Education Act, a bipartisan program that former Sens. George McGovern and Bob Dole sponsored.

The program helped keep 156,000 primary school children in school with a hot meal four days a week. The program especially kept young girls in households where there was insufficient income for food, from being married off early to save their daughters from being malnourished or even starving.

The U.S. assistance set up and phased in operation of a national school lunch program with the host country to take ownership and responsibility for keeping it going at the end of our 5-year project.

This assistance does not pay for vast mineral wealth extracted from all over Africa, which makes possible many modern technological and consumer conveniences to our nation and the world.

If the present silence about civil war should ever resume again and escalate into conflict, we would do well to ask ourselves what powerful nation will try to help us recover and just how long all of us will pay the heavy price of civil war.

Tony Ends has at times edited and periodically contributed writing and reporting to *The Independent-Register* since 2006. He presently writes and edits full time for a federal agency.

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