



Hay River

REVIEW

Holiday Magic Returns to Pioneer Park

By DM MICK

Pioneer Park is set to glow once again as the village prepares for its annual Light Up the Park celebration—a monthlong holiday tradition that will run from Dec. 6 through Jan. 3. The event has become a highlight of the winter season in Prairie Farm, drawing residents, families and visitors from surrounding communities to enjoy festive lights, Christmas decorations and a cheerful small-town atmosphere.

Each year, the park transforms into a walkthrough holiday attraction filled with creative displays built by local

businesses and community members. Business displays can include anything related to the holidays or to the business itself, and organizers encourage participants to get imaginative with lights, props, and themes. The variety of displays has become one of

the most anticipated features of the event, with each participant adding their own style to the overall winter experience.

Another major feature of Light Up the Park is Santa’s Workshop, which will take place on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 5 to 8 p.m. Families can

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Winter in Ridgeland Powered by Community Spirit

By Betty Glaser

I’ve often said it takes a village—and I truly mean that. With many open hands and generous hearts, our Village Park and our community are being transformed. Many organizations have come together with one shared goal: to bring the Christmas spirit to Ridgeland!

The Community Improvement Committee purchased new village

flags for the winter season, and they were installed by Adam Berg and Jim Siebert. Swapping out the seasonal flags is a two-person job, and we thank you both for taking it on.

This year, approximately 17 people helped decorate the Village Park. We welcomed a few new volunteers, and we also celebrated with David Knutson from Clear Lake, who spent his birthday helping decorate. David shared that this will be his final year participating. He and his wife have been steadfast volunteers for many

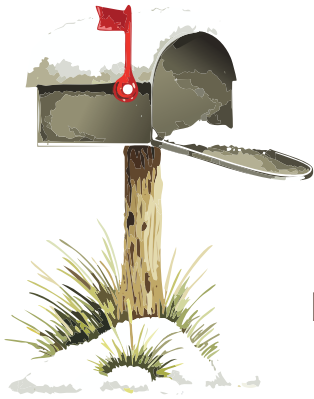


years, but due to health concerns, they can no longer continue. We are deeply grateful for their dedication. Members of the Community Improvement Committee, the Civic Club, and the wider community worked side by

“Spirit” cont’d. on page 3...

(Left) The new ice rink walls are assembled, and now we wait for the colder temperatures! (Below) Thank you to all in the village who helped decorate the park, install the new ice rink, and for bringing joy to our community!

Photos by Betty Glaser



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By Barbara Petersen

Mitten Tree

Our Mitten Tree is up, but it has not seen many donations. In fact, nothing has been added to it all month. We are taking donations of mittens, gloves, hats, slippers, etc., for those in need. Please consider donating generously. If you can't bring items in during our open hours, please place them in a bag and drop them in the book drop box.

Food Box

We have also set out a box to collect food donations, but it is completely empty. We are collecting non-perishable items for those who need a helping hand. We will take what has been collected to the Food Shelf in Barron before Thanksgiving and then again before Christmas. There are local people who rely on your kindness, so please give generously. Items may also be deposited into the book drop box.



All Aboard with the Ridgeland Library Review

By Donnette Mickelson

The Ridgeland Civic Club elves have been busy! They have been in contact with the North Pole and the library to plan festive activities for Santa's visit to Ridgeland. As part of the "Read, Paint, Quilt" grant programming, children are invited to paint a wooden quilt ornament and make a poinsettia ornament at the community center on Saturday, December 6. These projects are perfect for adding a handmade charm and special memories to your Christmas tree.

There will also be a coloring contest for children. Kids can choose a Wisconsin farming coloring sheet from the selection and must use the specialty soy crayons provided. These crayons make it possible to use the finished artwork to be printed on fabric for the quilt blocks. Winning entries will be featured on a community quilt!

The library will be sharing literacy activity guides for all children. These activities help build early reading skills such as learning to hear and play

The Book Report Dallas Public Library

Christmas Cards Out

We have all kinds of cards available throughout the year, but now that Christmas is drawing near, we have added Christmas cards. Please select what you need and leave a donation in the plastic container near the display.

Children's Activities

We will be continuing with our children's activities during our regular days and hours.

December 2, 4, 6, we will be doing Rock Painting. Please bring your own rocks!

December 9, 11, 13, Making ornament crafts with beads, pipe cleaners, pom poms, and popsicle sticks will be completed

December 16, 18, 20 Perler Beads will be used to make a variety of items.

December 23, 27, 30, and Jan. 3 will be craft of choice

Here is an opportunity for the children to get off the bus and work on a craft before heading home. Those who homeschool are also welcome. Also, this may become a family activity during vacation.

Holiday Closings

The Library will be closed on Thursday, December 25, and Thursday, January 1, so our staff may enjoy the holidays with their families.

Changing Our Closing Time

Our Librarians have noticed that since we switched to Standard Time, we no longer have patrons coming in after dark. We therefore plan to close at 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays until March, when the skies will grow lighter. If someone comes in close to our new closing time, our Librarians will certainly wait and help with any selections.

to the library in memory of loved ones: "Biscuit Goes Camping" and "If You Give a Cat a Cupcake" in memory of Todd Miller. "How to Start a Business" in memory of Nick Rassbach and "Barn in Spring" in memory of Doris Drinkman.

In addition, the library has added many new DVDs for all ages. For children, we now have Pixar animated shorts, "The Fantastic Mr. Fox", and the "Disney science series". Movie buffs can enjoy: Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times", "Georges Méliès: First Wizard of Cinema", and Turner Classic Movies, including Them!, The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms and The Dirty Dozen. New adult titles include "Life of Pi", "Saving Mr. Banks", "War Horse", documentaries "21 Days to Baghdad", "Ken Burns Baseball PBS series", "Modern Marvels", "Vanishing of the Bees", and "Wisconsin War Stories."

The library has a lot of upcoming activities, so be sure and follow our Facebook page for the latest updates.

Library hours Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

New to Us

Well, we have adopted a Dallas Library Card Policy. This makes the rules clear for holding a library card.

A few of the main points include that a card is free, and children are included on the card that their parents obtain. We are also stating that cards will expire after five years of non-use.

Overdue materials should be returned promptly. If an item isn't returned after being overdue for two weeks, the account will be blocked from further use.

If an item is lost or damaged, a replacement cost may be assessed. Until this is paid, checkouts may be blocked.

We will have our new policy available for those who wish for a copy.

New Telephone

When we had our last book sale, we raised enough money to buy a portable phone set.

Now, when our Librarians enter for their shifts, they may pick up a headset from the desk and carry it around to answer when calls come in. This will save the "mad dash" to the desk, arriving one ring too late. Thank you to all who made purchases at our book sale, enabling us to get our new phones.

Stay Connected

Library hours

Tuesday and Thursday- 2 to 5 p.m.

Saturday- 9 a.m. to noon.

Like us on Facebook! Dallas Library - WI.

Email: dplibrary2018@gmail.com.

Mailing address: Dallas Public Library, P.O. Box 84, Dallas, WI 54733.

Physical address: 100 Dallas Street W., Dallas, WI.

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Newspaper Policy

The Hay River Review is published monthly by the Hay River Publishing Cooperative. The Review reports community news and promotes the exchange of ideas in order to enhance the quality of life and to encourage community participation.

The Review is always looking for stories of community interest. If you have a story idea, tip, or article, please email Danny McLennan at editor.hayriverreview@gmail.com. Letters, articles, and photos can also be submitted online at HayRiver-Review.com, or by mail to: HRR, N12638 County Rd Q Downing, WI 54734. Articles may be edited and are published at the discretion of the REVIEW.

The Review welcomes readers’ viewpoints. Letters must be signed and include a telephone number for verification purposes. Unsigned letters will not be printed. The REVIEW reserves the right to edit letters or delete parts of letters with defamatory or unsuitable content. Letters are published at the discretion of the Review.

Opinions expressed by the editor, correspondents, columnists, and contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Hay River Publishing Co-op.

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Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club Season’s Greetings!

By Cindy Miller

The Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club is gearing up for the holiday season with several community events and activities.

The village will host its annual Lighting the Hometown Spirit celebration on Saturday, December 6, featuring the community tree at the center of town.

Residents are also invited to enter the Village of Prairie Farm’s holiday light decorating contest. Judging

will be conducted this year through the village’s Facebook page. The grand prize — \$100 in cash — will be awarded on Christmas Day. Those wishing to participate should contact Cindy Miller at 715-296-7869 by December 1.

Village officials encourage residents and visitors to enjoy the seasonal decorations throughout Prairie Farm. The Civic Club extends holiday greetings, wishing the community joy and happiness this season.



Prairie Farm is full of anticipation for the holiday season! *Photos submitted by Cindy Miller*

...“Spirit” cont’d. from front

side to bring the park to life once again.

You’ll notice several new additions this year: an iridescent snowman, reindeer, and a sleigh. These pieces were purchased by Kathy Wirth’s family as part of her memorial. Kathy was always eager to help decorate the park—like a kid in a candy store. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and her presence is deeply missed. These new decorations, full of sparkle and joy even in daylight, are a perfect tribute. I believe she would absolutely approve. We

can’t wait to turn the lights on! The lighting ceremony will be held on Saturday, November 25, at 5 p.m.

Now, for the biggest addition to the park—one that has everyone guessing. What could that rectangular, walled structure be? It’s an ice rink purchased by the Pioneer Days Project. Phase 1 of its installation—the wall setup—was completed by Civic Club members Bill and Karen Groepper, John Rudie, and Jeff and Mary Beth Wachsmuth. We’re now waiting for temperatures to drop into the teens so the

liner and bumper rails can be installed, and then the rink can be flooded. The anticipation is high. Patience, Jeff, patience! A grand opening will be held during Pioneer Days, with the Civic Club providing hot cocoa and popcorn.

And of course, what goes up must eventually come down. Once the holiday season has passed, we will need many helping hands to take down the decorations and

pack things away for next year. We expect to begin this work in early January, and we’ll share more details as the date approaches. Your time and support make all the difference—thank you for helping keep Ridgeland shining bright.

PUBLISHING DATES

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February	Jan. 23rd	Jan. 22nd	January 30th
March	Feb. 20th	Feb. 19th	February 27th

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This community paper has been in operation since 1987, largely due to the support of advertisers and subscribers!

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HayRiver

REVIEW

Job Opportunity

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Holiday Memories

We asked the Hay River Review Board of Officers if they would be willing to share some of their favorite holiday memories. We often smile because of years past, but easily forget we have opportunities to create new memories every day. We truly hope you have a great holiday season, creating more memories with those who mean the most to you.

Donnette Mickelson

My German relatives immigrated from northeast Germany in the 1800s and brought their lebkuchen cookie recipe with them. Lebkuchen is a traditional type of gingerbread cookie that dates back to the 14th century. Although there are many variations of the cookie, my family has a preferred version. It is a cookie that requires patience and planning. My husband has to be available to help stir the dough—it must rest for three days and can only be baked and frosted when completely cooled. We roll the dough into a rough circle and slice it with horizontal and vertical cuts. Cookies end up three to four inches in size, but often with crazy, odd edges because of the cutting method. That is the fun part, seeing all the crazy shapes of cookies.

As a child, one of the sure signs of the upcoming Christmas holiday was seeing my grandmother’s kitchen table filled with the frosted lebkuchen. She would send us home with a metal coffee can filled with cookies. She never taught anyone how to make the cookies, and all I had was the list of ingredients. It took me several years to perfect the process because ingredients need to be added to the dough at different stages of preparation.

Next was mastering the frosting. It is a basic powdered sugar recipe, but it needs the addition of corn syrup to form a thicker frosting that will crack perfectly when bitten into. My brother appointed himself as the family food critic, letting me know when I had perfected the recipe. He still insists that I need to keep working on it because he wants to make sure that I bake them every year.

One of the secrets of making good lebkuchen is storing the dough in a cool place for three days. This resting time allows

the dough to rest and develop flavor, producing a softer cookie. The storage container needs to be perfect as well. Although my grandmother used metal coffee cans, they are nearly impossible to find now. I discovered that the Schwans Christmas ice cream tins work just as well. Plastic containers trap too much moisture and can affect the taste. When I share the cookies, my family knows to return the tin because now the Schwans containers are becoming scarce. Today, when I bite into a lebkuchen cookie, it tastes like heaven and brings a flood of childhood memories. It is more than a Christmas cookie treat. It is a connection to family, tradition, and all the holidays and memories that came before.

Betty Glaser

I grew up in the country just east of Wilton, Wisconsin, where the hills, dug roads, and sandstone formations are as much a part of life as family itself. I’m the middle child between two brothers, and for us, Christmas Eve wasn’t a quiet day of waiting—it was the highlight of the whole season. My father made sure of it. He had us outside from morning to evening, and he joined in every bit of the fun. We grew up snowmobiling, skiing, ice skating, and doing anything that kept us moving. Looking back, I’m convinced my father planned our Christmas Eve “adventure day” weeks ahead.

The dug road was always packed down with snowmobile tracks, which mattered for one key reason: wooden sleds fly on packed, crusty snow. And with a little wax on the metal runners, they fly even faster. My dad grew up on that same farm, so he knew every trick in the book to make a ride fast, wild, and unforgettable. Our dug road was steep, winding, and full of sharp turns and two waterways. The first run always started at the lower waterway. We didn’t dare sit upright—lying down gave us a fighting chance to stay on the sled. As we flew past the milk house, we had to slide partway off the sled and drag our toes to steer, or we’d crash straight into the granary. Then came an immediate turn in the opposite direction, demanding the same maneuver to avoid the wooden machine shed. Our

goal was simple—see how far down the hill we could make it. If you were lucky, you’d slide to a stop just before the driveway met State Hwy 71—a sight I’m sure terrified passing drivers as children came barreling toward them. We started with one rider, then two—more weight meant more speed, and it took some real acrobatics to keep the top rider from flying off on the curves. Once we felt brave, we moved up to the next higher waterway. I never once tried starting from the very top. That was a guaranteed suicide ride. My father followed behind on the snowmobile, hauling us back up the dug road for run after run. After three or four hours, when we were tired of sledding, we moved on to skiing.

I rarely made it past the second waterway—that was my comfort zone. But one year, my brother swapped out my wooden skis for fiberglass ones. That run was so fast I’m sure my hard-of-hearing grandmother (watching from her big bay window across the creek) could hear me scream the whole way down. I went right back to my wooden skis after that. Eventually, we discovered a new thrill: being pulled along the ridge behind the snowmobile, jumping snowbanks, and “whipping” my older brother down the dug road on skis—with no poles—trying to line up just right so we’d miss the fence. My dad was in his glory on Christmas Eve. With my mother at work, he had all three kids to himself, and he made the most of it.

We never told Mom the details—just that we’d been outside all day. In the evening, we’d get cleaned up for the Simonson Christmas Eve gathering. We’d walk through the dooryard, cross the creek over the wooden bridge, and join my grandparents and cousins. And every single year, as the night wound down, my dad would look at me and ask, “Did you have a good birthday today?” And every year I answered, “It was the best.”

Shelley A. Lee

My favorite memory from my childhood has changed since I am much wiser today, and yes, I do still believe in Santa. One year, I was given an Easy-Bake oven that I cherished. I



Sometimes it’s the most harrowing experiences that make the best memories. *Adobe Stock Photo submitted by Jess Fischer*

made many, many wonderful baked goods in that oven. My dad was the official taste tester, and he would always say they were yummy! (I am certain he was just trying to make me feel good.) That oven moved with us to our home on Main Street, which had a life-size dollhouse outside. Of course, my Easy-Bake oven was given a place of honor in that dollhouse (I am certain my dad was happy there was no electricity in the dollhouse because he would no longer need to taste my culinary masterpieces!). My mother had stored the Easy-Bake oven cookbook in one of her recipe books. I found it recently and plan to keep it forever. I doubt I will

be baking something from it because I no longer have my Easy-Bake equipment. Would I have said my Easy-Bake was my most cherished childhood memory, not at the time! But now I do. Christmas was always a time of joy in our home because my family was together. There were presents under the tree, but that was not important— it was the joy of being together. Our home was a place for friends and family to gather. There was always food out for people who visited to enjoy! We always watched White Christmas on Christmas Eve, and then we went to midnight Mass together. We left Mass knowing that the joy would last all year round.

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Ridgeland Civic Club

Gearing Up for Santa’s Grand Arrival!

By Betty Glaser

The Ridgeland Civic Club members will be hosting Santa’s visit on Saturday, December 6, at 10 a.m. at the Ridgeland Community Center. This tradition turns all of us into Santa’s elves—we find a little extra skip in our step, and our hearts soften as we watch the joy between Santa and the children, and the families who share the moment with them. For a little while, the world seems to slow down. The focus shifts entirely to the children, just as it should, and for that moment... we all believe.

This year, we were informed that Santa has been on a diet, and Mrs. Claus has agreed that we may have a cookie-decorating station—and Santa is officially allowed to be a cookie judge and enjoy a few treats! The Community Center will be filled with activities, including a Post Office, North



The Ridgeland Civic Club is excited to make preparations for Santa’s arrival. Photos submitted by Betty Glaser

Pole Toy Shop, personalized ornament station, clear bulb decorating, wooden ornament painting, and the cookie station. We will also have several photo-op areas for the whole family.

With the warmer weather, we’ve been joking that Santa might arrive in Ridgeland on a motorcycle this year. Mrs. Claus quickly put an end to that idea—there will be no motorcycle rides for Santa in

December! Snow or no snow outside, we will have a festive snowfall at the entrance of the Community Center.

So, remember to mark your calendar for December 6 at 10 a.m. Bring your cameras to capture the magic. Feel free to wear your Christmas outfits, bring your holiday cheer, and join us for a morning filled with joy and community spirit.

Read, Paint, Quilt

By Donnette Mickelson

The Ridgeland Area Library is excited to announce upcoming Barn Quilt Painting Classes, inviting community members to celebrate local heritage through art and storytelling. This is a very unique opportunity available through a WILS Ideas to Action grant awarded to the Ridgeland Area Library. All of the details and dates for the Ridgeland Barn Quilt classes have been determined.

Class details:

Quilt sizes 2’x2’ (\$70) and 4’x4’ (\$110)

Custom sizes available upon request.

Commissions (if you prefer not to paint): an additional \$50–\$75

50% down payment is due three weeks before class

Class sessions limited to 12 participants

M&M Kolstad, LLC class instructors, bring their creativity and experience to help you choose a meaningful design and color palette. Registration forms can be picked up at Security Bank in Ridgeland or the Ridgeland Area Library. Scholarship options are available to ensure equal access. All supplies and lunch are provided for the class. Classes begin at 8 a.m. and finish around 5 p.m., depending on the complexity of the design.

Participants agree to install their completed barn quilts by September 1, 2026, in a location visible from a road or accessible by permission. This ensures each artwork can be featured on the Ridgeland Area Barn Quilt Map within ten miles of Ridgeland.

We will also be gathering historical stories of the locations that the barn quilts will be placed in, as well as barn quilts that currently exist. We will be asking for details such as: What is the history of the barn or home? Who were the original owners of the land? What is their heritage and family story? How has the land been used over the years—farming, livestock, crops, or other purposes? What type of barn is it, and what makes it unique? Has the barn or farm changed hands, been renovated, or seen important events in your family’s history? Are there special memories or traditions tied to this place?

We are looking to preserve the history and spirit of the land, barns, and families that make our community special. Together, these quilts and stories will create a colorful collection of art and history that celebrates the people and places that make our community unique.

Contact Betty Glaser (715-529-145)1 or Donnette Mickelson (715-702-2039) for any questions.

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O Tannenbaum

By David K. Williams

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum, wie treu sind deine Blätter!

So begins one of our treasured Christmas carols, which we all may know better as “O Christmas Tree.” An organist, teacher, and composer in Leipzig, Germany, named Ernst Anschütz is credited with writing this standard of the holiday season.

Anschütz actually wrote the song to honor the fir tree as a symbol of constancy and faithfulness, not as a holiday carol. He borrowed elements of a 16th-century folk song “Ach Tannenbaum” by

Melchior Franck, but because of added verses by Anschütz, the song became associated with the Yuletide. (This history is from Wikipedia’s “O Tannenbaum”)

We owe much of our love of and use of Christmas trees to Germany, though there are records as early as 1510 from Riga, Latvia, of a merchant’s guild decorating a tree with artificial roses, dancing around it, and setting it on fire. Records from Alsace, France, from 1530 (Alsace was part of Germany at that time) note that trees were sold in the marketplace and taken into homes to decorate. By the 1700s, evergreen tree tips were common in German and

Austrian homes, where they were decorated with apples, nuts, and red paper strips. The first candles on trees were lit in France in the 18th century.

Dr. Charles Follen, a professor of German at Harvard University and a German emigre, introduced the first Christmas tree with decorations in the United States in 1832, though there are other origin stories for the practice. By 1851, Christmas trees were on sale commercially along the East Coast, and in 1853, President Franklin Pierce brought the first tree into the White House. In 1883, Sears Roebuck and Company

“Tree” cont’d. on page 7...



The author’s son cuts a Charlie Brown Christmas tree for display this year. Photo by David K. Williams.



Shiny Brite ornaments are a collector’s hope!



Personal touches are created through handmade crafts. Photos by Donnette Mickelson

The Making of Christmas Ornaments

By Donnette Mickelson

The glittering ornaments that decorate Christmas trees have an interesting historical significance. Christmas ornament decor trends represent changing technology, as well as world economies and even social attitudes. Before ornaments were produced in factories, natural decorations adorned trees. Fruits depicted abundance and the promise of spring, nuts good fortune, and candles provided light in the dark days of winter.

In the middle of the 19th century, hand-blown glass ornaments were being produced in Germany. These intricate glass balls were coated on the inside with silver nitrate to add sparkle to trees. Woolworth department stores began importing these ornaments to the United States, where they became incredibly popular. By the late 1800s, stores were selling more than \$25 million worth of ornaments each year.

At the beginning of the 20th century, factories in Germany, Japan, and the

United States began mass-producing ornaments. While the glass ball could be made by machine, the hand-painting, trimming, capping, and glittering required additional employees to add the details and finishing touches.

During the 1940s, supply chain interruptions caused by World War II, companies like Shiny Brite in Pennsylvania and New Jersey began manufacturing more affordable, simply designed glass ornaments stateside rather than importing from Germany. The “American-made” aspect was highlighted in the marketing of these

“Making” cont’d. on page 16...



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Sunrise Rotary Honors Boyceville High School Student

William Engel

By John Wilkerson

The Sunrise Rotary Club is pleased to recognize William Engel, a distinguished member of Boyceville High School’s Class of 2026, as the September Youth of the Month.

William Engel exemplifies the values of leadership, service, and academic dedication that define the Youth of the Month program. Known throughout Boyceville High School for his initiative and kindness, William has built an impressive record of volunteerism and engagement that sets him apart from his peers. His counselor describes him as a true asset to the school community, with a remarkable commitment to giving back.

A natural leader, William has embraced a variety of roles across campus life. He is an active member of the National Honor Society, Student Council,

and Science Olympiad, and he participates in drama productions and numerous community organizations. His leadership extends beyond titles; he recently created a student council handbook and organized the school’s unity-themed week, both projects designed to strengthen communication and inclusion among students.

Beyond school walls, William volunteers at Tuesday’s Table at St. Joseph’s in Menomonie, where he serves meals and shares conversation with community members in need of companionship and support. He credits his civics, communications, and engineering classes for shaping his understanding of leadership, confidence, and problem-solving skills that will serve him well as he pursues his goal of becoming a packaging engineer.

After graduation, William plans to attend the University



William Engel named the November Youth of The Month by the Sunrise Rotary Club. Photos submitted by ???

of Wisconsin–Stout, then hopes to work for Lego in Denmark, continuing his passion for creativity, innovation, and global connection.

Rotary International is a global network of neighbors, friends, and leaders committed to creating lasting change in our communities and around the world. menomoniesunriserotary.org

...“Tree” cont’d. from page 6

offered the first artificial tree through its catalog.

(This history comes from www.realchristmastrees.org)

The website realchristmastreeboard.com advocates for real, not artificial, trees, citing the allure of the tree’s scent, the greater environmental value of real trees, and that one of the top childhood memories for many people is the family excursion to go cut or pick up a real Christmas tree. Real trees, the website notes, produce oxygen while growing, provide valuable green space and habitat for wildlife, and are 100 % biodegradable and recyclable.

According to the website worldpopulationreview.com, Wisconsin ranks sixth in total production of Christmas trees each year, selling just over 600,000 trees commercially. At 4.8 million trees, the state of Oregon is the top producer, followed by North Carolina (3.2 million), Michigan, Washington, and Pennsylvania. In total, Americans buy between 25 to 30 million trees each holiday season. Since over 100 million American households decorate a tree each December, clearly,

there are many families who choose artificial trees. On Scientific American’s website, I found that 26% of Americans buy a real Christmas tree each year, 46% choose or have an artificial tree, and 20% do not have a tree. They don’t disclose what the remaining eight percent of Americans do. Close to 90% of artificial trees are manufactured in China.

The website carboncredits.com publishes a detailed look at the ecological aspect of real versus artificial (the site calls them “fake”) trees. Real trees lock carbon in their trunks, so if, after their decorative use, they can be chipped, they contribute no carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. However, tossing it in a landfill will lead to decomposition and yield 16 kilograms of carbon dioxide. Burning the tree will contribute 4 kilograms to the atmosphere.

While fake trees yield no methane from decomposition, and thus no carbon dioxide, they are made from plastic and metal. In the manufacturing process, and because they need to be shipped halfway around the world, the average artificial tree contributes 40 kilograms of carbon dioxide—significantly more than a

real tree’s 4-16 kilograms. However, if an artificial tree is used 4 to 10 times over its lifespan, the carbon dioxide yield is about equal to that of a real tree. But artificial trees aren’t biodegradable.

My family values real trees, but we don’t buy them off a lot. In December, when our families arrive for the holidays, we head out into the woods on our land southwest of Prairie Farm, looking for a tree. But our trees aren’t perfectly shaped trees like those on the tree lots. We often call our trees “Charlie Brown trees,” since they may have wide stretches between branches, or may be more fully formed on one side and bare on the other. We often select a tree that is growing too close to another tree to free up the better tree.

Our tree still exudes that wonderful smell, there’s ample room for our ornaments collected over many years, and the grandkids’ presents fit under it just fine. And we’ve shared the joy of stomping through the woods to find “our” tree.

May your search for a tree this holiday season be joyous, whether in the woods, at the tree lot, or with an artificial tree. And feel free to join in a chorus of “O Tannenbaum.”



School District of Prairie Farm

December 2025

Corey Berghammer, Superintendent • John Casey Fossum, Principal

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*Paid for by the Prairie Farm School District.
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may be discriminated against in any program or activity as required
by s.116.13 Wis. Stats.*

From the Superintendent

On November 11th, we had our Veteran’s Day program at the Prairie Farm School District. I would like to thank all of those who have served and to those who are currently serving. Thank you for your sacrifices, for protecting us, and for defending our rights. Having an opportunity to recognize these heroes in our building is one of the highlights of the school year. A special thank you to Mr. Ron Crosby for being our guest speaker at this event. Mr. Crosby is a great source of information and shared a wonderful message with the community and student body. Thank you to our students and staff who participated in this special program.

Last month we had our Annual Meeting/ Budget Hearing. The school board adopted the local tax levy at the regular meeting on October 20th. The levy amount was set at \$2,048,923. The new levy amount represents an increase over the previous year. Of the 421 districts in Wisconsin, just over 25% received more aid from the state in 2025-26 than in 2024-25. Unfortunately, the Prairie Farm School District was included in the over 70% of schools that received less aid this year. In 2024-25 the Prairie Farm School District received \$2,546,236 in aid, for 2025-26 we will be receiving only \$2,292,402; which is over \$250,000 less in aid in one year. We have kept our expenditures in check as compared to other years and we have made cuts where we can. However, we must continue to keep our facilities safe and functioning for our students and staff. This past year we purchased a bus, which we have been doing each odd year for a number of years. We skipped this purchasing cycle in 2023 as we felt our fleet was in good shape, but in 2025 we needed to make a purchase. This past year we completed the bleacher updates, updated our ELA high school classroom, and purchased a plow truck to replace our older

one. Other than those items the only increase to our expenditures has been tied to staff wage increases, health insurance increase, and overall increases to our operating costs. Our revenue limit worksheet will show an increase to our property value, a decrease to state aid, and enrollment that is declining. All of these factors have contributed to the need for us to increase our tax levy for the 2025-26 school year. The past two years as a district we have been able to under levy to help decrease the tax burden on our community. Unfortunately, with the decrease in aid this year, under levying was not an option for us while still trying to balance our budget.

Finally, the Prairie Farm School District and CubCare are excited to be participating in the community Light Up the Park event again this year. This event will be held at Pioneer Park from December 6th-January 3rd. It was exciting to see how great this event turned out last year and we are all looking forward to being a part of it again this year. A special thank you to all of our wonderful community members who work so hard to organize this event and provide another event for the Prairie Farm community to be proud of.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns about the Prairie Farm School District.

Corey Berghammer
cberghammer@prairiefarm.k12.wi.us
Superintendent
715-455-4219

Principal’s Report

The 2025-2026 school year is flying by as we have completed quarter one and switched from our fall activity schedule to our winter schedule. November and December will move quickly with the various holiday breaks and a busy extracurricular season. We will also reach the end of the elementary trimester on November 21st with report cards coming home during the first week of December.

The state accountability report cards have been released and Prairie Farm School District received a rating of “**Exceeds Expectations**”. I am very proud of the hard work our staff puts in to provide opportunities for our students and this continued to show in our rating. The state report card is a complex document and provides much more than just a rating for our district. If you have specific questions regarding these report cards, please feel free to contact me in the district office.

Each month teachers at each level select students who have shown improvement or gone above and beyond in some area of academics or extra-curricular activity. This month the high school has selected Spencer Roemhild and Lariah Ellsworth as their Panthers of the Month. Staff recognized these students by writing, “Spencer has shown exceptional leadership both in the classroom and in her extra-curricular activities. Spencer demonstrates exemplary character and is a positive role model for others no matter what she participates in. Currently, Spencer is serving as the WI State FCCLA First Vice President. In this role, Spencer is responsible for developing and presenting conference sessions for the four Fall Leadership Conferences held throughout the state and will help plan and present sessions for the State Leadership Conference in the spring. Spencer was also part of the inaugural PFC Girls Golf team this past fall where she earned All-Conference Honorable Mention. Even with all her extra curricular activities, Spencer has stayed on top of her studies and continues to have successes in the classroom. Spencer carries a positive and respectful attitude that is reflected in her interactions with both staff and peers. Spencer is a great example of what it means to be a Panther.” “Lariah Ellsworth is a talented art student who dedicates her time to creating unique pieces out of clay and drawing materials. She focuses on every assignment she is given and applies her own style to that project with the subjects she loves. She is an enthusiastic cheerleader and puts forth all her effort to learn new cheers. She is also a great teammate to the girls on the team. She loved being a part of the Fall PFC cheerleading team and has chosen to continue this path by joining the Winter PFC cheerleading team. She is a great classmate who offers insight into how to complete assignments in the art

room and inspires others with her skills. Overall Lariah is a great student and exemplifies what it means to be a Prairie Farm Panther!”

This month the middle school has selected Kaci Dunn and Erika Lyste as their Panthers of the Month. Staff recognized these students by writing, “Kaci has done an excellent job this year being a leader in her class. For Homecoming, she helped organize her class to decorate the float. With her work, she always leads the way with her effort and attitude, finishing ahead of schedule and with a high level of competence. She is willing to help classmates that need help studying or are struggling in an area, and outside of classes, she helped set the pace for middle school cross country. Kaci has had an excellent start to the year and encapsulates what it means to be a Prairie Farm Panther.” “Erika has had a phenomenal start to her 7th grade year. She has shown exceptional growth in staying on top of her responsibilities and being organized and ready for each class. She is consistently putting forth outstanding effort on her assignments and is a positive example to her classmates. It is exciting to watch Erika take in all of the lessons taught in class and apply them in her writing. Erika exemplifies what it means to be a Prairie Farm Panther. Keep up the great work!”

The elementary school nominates one student from each class and the following students were recognized at our monthly Panther Paws Celebration. Congratulations to Takoda Jeske, Brooks Buckley, Aria Harris, Daniel Anderson, Zoey Davis, Ionne Seeger, Collin Cuppini, Emmett Talmage, and Jackson Moenon being selected for this award.

The district held its annual Veteran’s Day Program on Tuesday, November 11th at 9:30 am in the large gym. We once again had a great turnout of community members, students, and parents. I want to thank all of the Veterans and their families who took time out of their schedules to attend and celebrate with us. This year’s program had students of all ages participating through singing pieces, poems, speeches, and special tributes. A special thanks to Ron Crosby, McKenna Ellsworth, and Amelia Miller who delivered great speeches to our audience.

Sincerely,
Casey Fossum
Pre K-12 Principal
School District of Prairie Farm
715-455-1861 ext. 258

**For the most up to date sporting events,
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Veterans Day

Our #PrairieFarmPanthers were proud to share their vocal talents to honor our Veterans and their service during our annual Veterans Day Program!



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PRAIRIE FARM
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Notice of School Board Joint Meeting/Clayton School Board
Monday, November 3rd, 2025
Prairie Farm School
5:30 p.m. IMC
MINUTES

- Members present: Hansen, Cadman, Miller, Roemhild, Olson, Mumm, Young, Fall, Grosskreutz
Members absent:
- A) Call to order (subject to Section 19.83 Wisconsin Statutes) by President Roemhild at 5:30 p.m.
 - B) Pledge of Allegiance
 - C) Adopt Agenda
 - D) Business
 - 1) All Sports Co-op with Clayton information
 - a) fall season recap
 - b) winter sports season
 - c) spring season
 - d) mascot update
 - e) other shared servicesNo action taken.
 - E) Public comment/residents/parents
 - A community member asked about adding the lettering procedure for cheer to the PFC handbook.
 - F) Adjournment
 - Motion by Young to adjourn at 7:36 p.m., seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PRAIRIE FARM
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
November 17, 2025—6:00 p.m.—IMC
Unapproved

- Members present: Nelson, Hansen, Roemhild, Bates, Miller, Cadman, Richards
Members absent:
- A) Call to order (subject to Section 19.83 Wisconsin Statutes) by President Roemhild at 6:00 p.m.
 - Mission Statement: The Prairie Farm School District in partnership with family and community provides educational experiences which foster academic excellence, lifelong learning and citizenship.
 - B) Pledge of Allegiance
 - C) Adopt Agenda
 - Motion by Cadman to adopt the agenda, seconded by Nelson. Motion carried.
 - D) Minutes of November 3rd, 2025 Joint Board Meeting with Clayton School Board and October 20th, 2025 Regular Board Meeting
 - Motion by Miller to make the correction of the donation of \$1,500 from Lions Club for FFA Convention, seconded by Hansen. Motion carried.
 - E) Reports
 - 1) Principal’s good news report-Mr. Fossum
 - 2) Student board members
 - Spencer Roemhild and Sophie Bergmann

- 3) State report card
 - Mr. Fossum reported that we exceeded expectations for the whole district.
- 4) Athletic director’s report-Alethea Seeger
- F) Business
 - 1) Public comment residents/parents
 - 2) Prairie Farm School Safety Drill
 - Motion by Richards to approve the Prairie Farm School Safety Drill, seconded by Bates. Motion carried.
 - 3) School District of Prairie Farm-School Safety Plan
 - Motion by Cadman to approve the School District of Prairie Farm-School Safety Plan, seconded by Hansen. Motion carried.
 - 4) Policies
 - a) 0100-Definitions
 - b) 0144.5-Board Member Behavior, Communications
 - c) 1461-Unrequested Leaves of Absence/Fitness for Duty
 - d) 2522-Instructional Media Centers
 - e) 4213-Student Supervision and Welfare
 - f) 5112-Entrance Age
 - Technical Changes
 - g) 0164-Meetings
 - h) 1421-Criminal History Record Check and Employee Self-Reporting Requirements
 - i) 2271-Early College Credit Program
 - j) 2460-Programs for Students with Disabilities
 - k) 3121-Criminal History Record Check and Employee Self-Reporting Requirements
 - l) 4121-Criminal History Record Check and Employee Self-Reporting Requirements
 - m) 4132-Vacancies
 - n) 5340-Student Accidents/Illness/Concussion & Sudden Cardiac Arrest
 - o) 5420-Reporting Student Progress
 - p) 5511-Dress and Appearance
 - q) 5540-Investigations Involving Law Enforcement and Other Governmental Agencies
 - r) 5610-Suspension and Expulsion
 - s) 5610.02-In-School Discipline
 - t) 6230-Budget Hearing
 - u) 6320-Purchasing
 - v) 7540.05-Assistive Technology and Services
 - w) 8310-Public Records
 - x) 8700-Lactating Employees
 - Motion by Richards to approve the policies a-x, seconded by Nelson. Motion carried.
 - 5) Donations
 - a) \$3,000 for tractor restoration from the Prairie Farm Lion’s Club
 - b) \$1,000 for lunch accounts (students in need fund) from an anonymous donor
 - Motion by Bates to approve the donations as presented, seconded by Miller. Motion carried.
 - 6) Volunteer
 - a) Corey Berghammer, PFC Girls Basketball Coach
 - Motion by Nelson to approve the volunteer as presented, seconded by Hansen. Motion carried.
 - 7) Payroll check deposit in the amount of \$221,805.88
 - Motion by Nelson to approve the payroll check deposit, seconded by Cadman. Motion carried. Roemhild abstained.
 - 8) Financial report: AP in the amount of \$147,362.11, direct withdrawals in the amount of \$125,298.77 and PCard withdrawals in the amount of \$17,502.45
 - Motion by Nelson to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Bates. Motion carried.
 - 9) Committee and other reports, information or comments
 - a) Update from the PFC joint school board meeting on November 3, 2025
 - b) Board scholarship form
 - c) Review of board committees-board discussion on expectations
 - d) School board election information
 - Mr. Berghammer reported that the election is April 7, 2026 and there will be three, three-year terms open. Bonnie Roemhild, Bryce Hansen and Justin Nelson are up for re-election.
 - 10) Future meetings, Monday, December 15th, 2025, Regular Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
 - 11) Motion and roll call to go into closed session pursuant to Section 19.85 (1) (c) of the Wisconsin Statutes, to consider the employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of support staff, supervisors and teaching staff employees under which the Board has jurisdiction.
 - No closed session.
 - 12) Roll call and return to open session
 - 13) Resignations
 - a) Tyler Glaser, Head Baseball Coach, effective October 28, 2025
 - b) Peggi Siewert, food service employee, effective November 14, 2025
 - c) Harlie Braun, CubCare employee, effective October 30, 2025
 - d) Scott Law, bus driver, effective November 12, 2025
 - Motion by Miller to approve the resignations as presented, seconded by Hansen. Motion carried.
 - 14) Contracts
 - a) Spencer Roemhild, CubCare employee, effective November 17, 2025
 - b) Ava Hundley, CubCare employee, effective November 17, 2025
 - c) Richard Croes, PFC Head Football Coach, school year 2026-2027
 - Motion by Richards to approve the contracts as presented, seconded by Cadman. Motion carried. Roemhild abstained.
 - 15) Possible action from items in closed session

G) Adjournment
 - Motion by Hansen to adjourn at 7:19 p.m., seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

What’s Happening

December 9

December 24-January 2

Mid 2nd Quarter (MS/HS)

NO SCHOOL

Winter Break

Emergency Closing Information

The District will utilize our automated calling system to alert families of school cancellations and delays. If you are not receiving the automated calls, emails, or text messages, please contact the school office. We will be also notifying the radio and television outlets.



FIELD & WOODLAND WANDERINGS

By Martha Wright

“Look-up there–a porcupine!” my passenger exclaims while pointing to the trees along the road. I glance up from my driving just in time to see a porcupine clinging to a tree branch. In the back of my mind, I have an unwritten list of things I hope to see someday, and I make a mental check mark beside “live porcupine.”

With the year winding to a close, I have been seeing articles about the importance of a year-end reflection. Just as the beginning of a new year prompts the making of resolutions, so the end of the old year can be a time for reflecting on what has passed. Ben Beresh, who writes at MossyBrain.com, admonishes us to reflect because, when we are always looking ahead at the next thing we want to be or see or do, we fail to realize how far we have come and how much we have already experienced.

As I look back on my year, I decide it would be a good idea to record some of the experiences I had, places I went, and things I saw, because I know there are more than just my first sighting of a live porcupine. But as long as my inventory is unwritten, it is easy to forget what it contains, so I review the photos on my phone to look for items that might fit on a list of “Nature Finds from 2025.”

I do not have a picture of the porcupine, since there was no good place on the highway for stopping to take pictures. There is no picture of my first flying squirrel either, as it swooped in front of my car in the night, from the trees on one side of the road to the other, and disappeared. There are plenty of other photos, though, including many things I had already forgotten.

I have seen blue bead lilies (Clintonia borealis) before, but only in the spring when

Martha Wright lives in the Hay River area where she spends as much time in the woods as possible. She enjoys long nature walks, looking for new plants to identify, and foraging for wild edibles. Her favorite wild edible is red clover blossoms made into fritters.

Reflecting on Nature

their yellow, spidery flowers bloom in clusters of three or more on stalks that are often 12 inches long. This summer, it seemed they were everywhere, blooming, and then loaded with green berries. When they finally presented the striking, blue bead-like berries that give them their name, I counted them as a first.

Orchids are typically thought of as an exotic flower from tropical regions, but there are 53 varieties of orchid native to our north woods. I saw one of them, a downy rattlesnake plantain (Goodyera pubescens), in two different locations. The flowers are small and white, with 50 or more on the central spike, but the evergreen basal leaves are the true show with a striking network of white veins traced against the dark green background. Kim and Cindy Risen, in their field guide, Orchids of the North Woods, explain that the common name comes from the “rattle” made by the dry seed capsules that follow the flowers.

It was a good year for edible fungi. I finally located enough morels (Morchella) to make a meal, and several chicken of the woods (Laetiporus



(Top) Downy rattlesnake plantain.
(Middle) Hedgehog mushroom.
(Right) Ruby meadowhawk dragonfly.
Photos by Martha Wright

sulphureus) at the perfect stage for eating. I added a new variety to my foraging when I discovered a patch of hedgehog mushrooms (Hydnum repandum) with salmon-colored caps. Known as “tooth fungi,” they do not have gills or pores underneath, but spiky-looking spines instead. They have been dubbed the “safer Chanterelle,” because they are so easy to identify, and being in the same family, they taste similar.

When I discovered what looked like brown, rubbery



toothbrush bristles on a dead birch tree, I went in search of a name for this unique organism, and eventually identified it as a chocolate tube slime (Stemonitis splendens). Slime molds are not considered fungi, although their growth is similar and they reproduce by spores like fungi. They are instead classified in the Kingdom Protista, along with single-celled amoebas and algae.

My list has grown to include a bright red ruby meadowhawk dragonfly (Sempetrum rubicundulum), a black jelly fungus (Exidia nigricans) that looked like tar on a stick, a tiny blue glassy mushroom I have yet to identify, a caddis fly larva (order Trichoptera) that turned up in a river seining net, and many more. In the end, I am pleased that I took the time to reflect on 2025 and move the list of my favorite nature finds out of my head and onto paper.

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LESS IS PLENTY

By Darlene Ramos

The more things change, the more they stay the same — but always with variations. I remember being a young mom in the late 70s, preparing for Christmas. We lived in rural Colorado, some distance from the more popular grocery stores and services. I liked the isolation, but “going to the store” at the drop of a hat was the life I knew.

Darlene Ramos is a retired cafe-owner and decades-long resident of the Hay River township. Born and raised in California she eventually migrated to Wisconsin for life in a “little (farm) house in a big woods”, with her family, wherefrom many articles and columns were written for local publications.

Everything Old Becomes New Again

I really embraced this new challenge. I studied the “Hilltop Market” flyer that was mailed to our home and planned our meals based on their weekly specials. We made our grocery run, “family night out,” and went to the Village Inn Pancake House ahead of the shopping. We always bought the kiddos a small toy, and I stocked up on staples to help us through the winter. We never knew when we might get snowed in the following week. Montgomery Ward and Sears catalogues were still a thing. Even if we’d been raised on malls in California, I got a hold of these and spent hours

and days poring through them. Almost all of our home decor, clothing, gifts, and other needs would arrive to us from those sources, and waiting for them only increased our pleasure when we finally had them in hand. Christmas then and there felt distinctly “old-fashioned,” and I loved it. When our son was still a babe in arms, we once drove to the tiny village of Kiowa, where the stillness of a snow-covered Main Street was soon broken by the sound of jingling sleigh bells and Santa Claus bearing gifts for all. Santa invited everyone into an old board-floored store building, where he



A mix of old and new is fun for display.
Photo submitted by Darlene Ramos

passed out presents and his helpers served hot cocoa. When we came to Wisconsin a few years later, we expected more snow and more isolation. which we did get. But we also got closer to plenty of goods and services. I never picked up a Ward’s or Sears catalogue again. We shopped at physical stores

and malls again, and once my husband had been on the crew for the building of the Mall of America, we even shopped there. Earlier this year, my friend told me she had been shopping online when she realized she

“New” cont’d. on page 15...



Ridgeland Dallas Elementary

Celebrating Community Support This Fall

By Mackenzie Anderson

As we move through the heart of the school year, the students and staff of Ridgeland-Dallas Elementary would like to express our sincere appreciation to the many individuals and organizations who support our small but vibrant school community. Our three classrooms 4K/Kindergarten, 1st/2nd Grade, and 3rd/4th Grade, appreciate the strong partnerships that make Ridgeland and Dallas such wonderful places for children to learn and grow.

Thank You to the Ridgeland Fire Department

During Fire Safety Week in

October, our students enjoyed a hands-on, engaging visit from the Ridgeland-Wilson Fire Department. We are grateful to the firefighters who took time out of their day to educate our students about fire safety, demonstrate equipment, and answer questions with patience, care, and humor. Their commitment to keeping our families safe is deeply appreciated.

Appreciation for Local Businesses

Halloween is always a favorite event for our students, and this year’s trick-or-treating was especially memorable thanks to the generosity of our local businesses. Your willingness to welcome our

children, provide treats, and share warm smiles helped create a joyful experience they will remember. We are thankful for your continued kindness and support of our school.

Honoring Our Veterans

This month, we were proud to host our annual Veterans Day program. We extend heartfelt thanks to the veterans, families, and community members who attended. Your presence made the event truly meaningful for our students, who were honored to sing, present, and pay tribute to the men and women who have served our country. Your sacrifices help our children understand the importance of service, gratitude, and community.

At Ridgeland-Dallas Elementary, we know it takes a village to help children thrive. We are grateful for the ongoing support that strengthens our school and enriches our students’ lives.

(Top) Students helped host the annual Veterans Day program with songs and presentations. (Middle) The Ridgeland-Wilson Fire Department engaged students with hands-on learning experiences during Fire Safety Week. (Bottom) Thank you to our local businesses that allowed our students to trick-or-treat this year! Photos by Mackenzie Anderson.





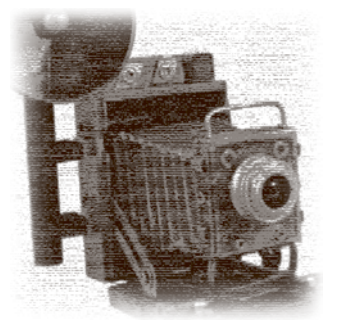
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PHOTOS FROM OUR PAST

By Lon Christopherson

Did you ever wonder who named the streets of Ridgeland, and what or who some of these streets were named after? Surveyor Sidney Jones platted out the village of Ridgeland in 1900 for the Ridgeland Land Company, and he laid out and named the streets of the village pretty much as they remain today, as well as including a village square in the middle of town. While the origins of some of the street names are fairly obvious, others remain somewhat of a mystery. It will probably come as no surprise that many of the street names can be linked to the railroad.

Railroad Street took its name from the train tracks and the depot that were located along its Northwest side. Wilson Street was named after the town of Wilson, or the man Wilson Township was named for, Thomas Blair Wilson Sr., a surveyor and one of the original members of the Dunn County Board. At the time of the plat, Wilson Township was only fourteen years old. Wisconsin Street no longer exists, but is, of course, named after the great state of Wisconsin. Menomonie Street was named after the county seat of Dunn County, Menomonie.

When the rail line was first built in Ridgeland, the plans were to eventually connect to Menomonie, but that never happened. Tonnar Street was named after either the small community of fifty-some residents just south of Ridgeland that was later abandoned, or the man that Hamlet was named after, Menomonie druggist George Tonnar. Center Street lies just north of the Village Square, and as it is more or less in the middle of town, its name is appropriate.

Main Street runs east and west south of the Village Square. The Cliff House, the Ridgeland Supply Company Store, the Bank, and the Osborne and Clark Lumber yard were all located on this

If you have an interesting photo from our community's past that you'd you like to share, email it to me at lonchristopherson1@gmail.com or stop by the Ridgeland Library Thursdays, 3-5.

Shaping Ridgeland

street. Coe Street was likely named after Former Barron County District Attorney and Judge Clarence Clinton Coe. He also served as an attorney for the railroad. He was later, in 1918, elected to the Wisconsin Assembly. Grover Street was named for Woodbury S. Grover, who moved to a farm in Dallas Township in 1868 and to Ridgeland in 1902. He sold the land Ridgeland was soon to be located on in 1899 to J.F. Henrich, who then sold it to the Ridgeland Land Company. Grover was also a member of the Wisconsin Assembly at one time and has been credited as the man who moved the Barron County seat to Barron from Rice Lake. His son, Warren, was one of Ridgeland's first Postmasters.

Historically, Diamond Street was often a street name for one that ran along a village's center square, as in the case here. Horsman Street was named after J.E. Horsman, who was the secretary and treasurer for the Rice Lake, Dallas, and Menomonie Railway. Fuller Street was named after the President of The Rice Lake, Dallas, and Menomonie Railway, George Fuller. Scranton Street was most likely named in honor of Ella Scranton, who was the wife of the Vice President of the Rice Lake, Dallas, and Menomonie Railway, George Morehouse Huss.

A few of the more mysterious names are next, but maybe by looking at Sidney Street, a short street which was platted on the original map of Ridgeland and is located in the Southeast corner of the map, located just North of Tonnar Street, we can make a guess at some of the street names' origins. Sydney Street no longer exists, and my guess is the man who drew the first map of Ridgeland, Sidney Jones, thought it would be nice to use his first name and have this short street named after him. Using that logic, I wonder if Caroline Street might be named after his wife or daughter, and Elliot Street after his son? Durand Street also no longer exists. Possibly named for the Wisconsin town of Durand, but I can find no connection to the village of Ridgeland, railroads, or Wisconsin for that matter. The

only explanation I can come up with is that the surveyor maybe mistakenly spelled Durant as Durand. Thomas C. Durant was at one time the Vice President of the Union Pacific Railroad. The explanation of the names of Elliot, Caroline, and Durand Streets is pure speculation by me, so if anyone knows the true origin of these street names, please let us know!

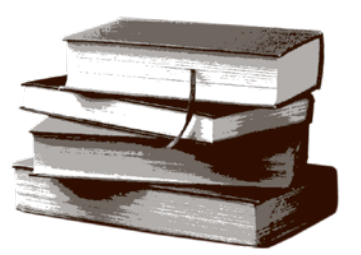
The original map of Ridgeland, Wisconsin.



Thomas Blair Wilson Sr was a surveyor and one of the original members of the Dunn County Board.



Vice President of the Rice Lake, Dallas, and Menomonie Railway, George Morehouse Huss. Photos submitted by Lon Christopherson



MICKELSON'S BOOK BINGE

By Donnette Mickelson

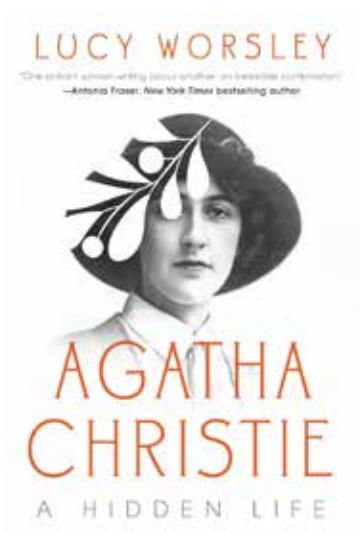
Agatha Christie's books have sold over two billion copies, making her the best-selling novelist of all time. Her stories have been adapted into plays, television series, video games, board games, comics, and movies. Nearly everyone is familiar with "The Murder on the Orient Express" novel, in which detective Hercule Poirot is delayed on a return trip to London from the Middle East when a murder is discovered on the elegant train he is traveling on. Considering that this book was written in 1934, it certainly has withstood the test of time.

Agatha Christie: an Elusive Woman

By Lucy Worsley

Christie molded her public persona to portray a public image of a simple, slightly dotty elderly woman, which was far from reality. Worsley dives into the extensive Christie archives to reveal the truth of her life. Worsley is an educated researcher, historical curator, professor, author, podcaster, and television presenter of British history. It is fascinating how Worsley skillfully connects Christie's eighty-five-year-old life to her themes and plots of her writing.

This book offers a candid look into Christie as a person and her relationships with two husbands and her daughter, as well as how her upper-class upbringing influenced her travel, outlook on life, and storylines of her novels. I do have to clarify that, as a fan of Lucy Worsley, I expected this book to be interesting and



well researched, and I was not disappointed. Worsley has a way of presenting historical subjects in an interesting modern context. Christie had a way of offering a twisted, surprise ending to her novels, and Worsley's research helps us to define how she was able to skillfully do this in all her novels, making them timeless classics.



HOMESTEAD HACKS

By Sam Dodge

Well, my friends, it seems the dark times are upon us again. The sun raises its sleepy head well after the smell of coffee has permeated our little house, and is setting before the work day ends. Seems like it's barely light long enough to brush my teeth and shake the night's fog out of my brain.

We ate the last garden tomato over a week ago, and it was counter-ripened... not at the peak of flavor, but it came from the same dirt I intend to

I'm a mostly self-educated putterer/maker/doer who has a hard time stopping his brain from thinking, his body from moving, and his hands from twisting and fixing bits of this and that into semi-useable gewgaws. Sometimes I get actual ideas, and sometimes I even make actual, useful things.

Miracles in the Darkness

inhabit when my seasons are done. I don't imagine I'll be at my "peak of flavor" at that point, either.

There's still some sweet, green kale hanging on out there in the semi-frozen tundra, and a few frosty Brussels sprouts hiding under their browning leaves. In the house, the squash are slowly sweetening up in their cool, dry corners, and the braids of onions hang in semi-stasis on hooks in the pantry. The rows of canning jars are neatly arrayed by color; bright culinary soldiers in formation on cellar shelves. The hustle of Autumn is behind

us now, and the doldrums of Winter hang on the northern horizon... just waiting to descend.

It would be a depressing time of year were it not for Nature's little jibes and pokes: Fluttering of jaunty birds, flights of owls, bounds of deer, flashes of laughing color... electric nights lit up in frigid dreamscapes of prismatic spray. The dusks and dawns flare with magnificently fiery hues this time of year, when the clouds allow. And this year in particular, the overexcitable sun has been sending out great sprays of radiation to make late-night fires bright enough to blot out the stars, in every color of the rainbow. The wild Aurorae of November were mind-blowing this year! We're witnessing a peak of solar flare activity that tends to roll around every 11 years or so, but I don't think I remember seeing such vivid Northern Lights in this latitude before. Jennifer got some great images, which we're sharing with you this month. This is the first time the actual display that I saw matched up with what her smartie-phone showed us. I can only hope the depths of this Winter will bring more such awesome celebrations to us. In any case, I can carry the energy of those heavenly



The colors of the aurora dance across the black canvas sky.
Photo by Sam Dodge

displays through the shadow realms of December, January, February... carry the visions like a candle in the long night. Those celestial lights will hold my spirit up until the Spring awakening, sure as those gathered crops will sustain my body.

I make a point of stepping out into that darkness at bedtime and on awakening, whatever the weather. There may be clouds, or moon and stars, or comet tails, or Aurora Borealis... there might be snow to tickle my nose or hoar frost to blaze my cheeks cherry-red. If there's snow on the ground, I'll scribe a defiant yellow signature, morning and night. And I'll bear witness to the ever-amazing grandeur of Nature, from ground level

all the way to as far as I can see into the Universe. To be standing, or sitting, or rolling in the snow in the midst of all Creation is both humbling and enlivening, and I appreciate every moment those skies, and those birds, and that bracing cold, and those electric phantasms... even the dripping nose and the jarring sneeze are cause for celebration as long as all that Life that pours down from the sky keeps filling me.

And now that all the garden-fresh tomatoes are so very last-year, I'll go crack a jar of sunshine for my repast... the delicious stewed tomatoes that were harvested months ago and still taste fresh as a Summer morning. Miracles abound! Goodnight, my Friends.



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St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Worship at 8am
Sunday School,
Bible Study at 9am



Christmas Eve

Dec. 24th Service 7pm

4 11th St., Ridgeland
Pastor Roger Quandt (715) 949-1650



United Lutheran Church

Prairie Farm, WI

Children's Christmas Program

"The Christmas Story"

Practice will be
10:00-11:00 a.m.
on the following days:

Sunday, Nov 23rd
Sunday, Nov 30th
Sunday, Dec 7th
Sunday, Dec 14th



**"The Christmas Story" will take place
on Sunday, Dec 21st, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m.**

...**"Magic"** cont'd. from front

visit Santa and Mrs. Claus inside the park shelter, where children can share holiday wishes and take photos. The workshop also offers fresh cookies, cocoa, and several activities aimed at creating a warm and memorable experience for kids. Wagon rides, campfires, a gift basket drawing, and new attractions planned for this year help make the workshop a festive and interactive stop within the event.

One of the more meaningful traditions returning this year is the Memory Tree project. Community members have the opportunity to wrap a tree in lights and hang a banner in honor of a loved one. Memory Trees have become a sentimental sight in Pioneer Park, serving as a way for residents to remember family members, friends, and local community figures during the holiday season.

Organizers for Light Up the Park say the goal is to bring joy to Prairie Farm while continuing to build a sense of community during the winter months. The event provides an opportunity for people of all ages to gather, celebrate, and enjoy a festive tradition that has grown each year. With colorful lights, themed displays, family activities, and meaningful tributes, this year's celebration is expected to be one of the brightest yet.

Residents are encouraged to follow the event's Facebook page for updates and announcements. For more information, contacts include Tasha Singerhouse at 715-418-1600, Maranda Peltier at 715-642-3007, and Justina Allram at 715-418-0162.



Agent Tyler Holten

tholten@ruralins.com

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COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

December 1	Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club Monthly Meeting – 6 p.m. at Prairie Farm Community Center
December 1	Start of Village of Prairie Farm Christmas Light Contest – Winner announced Christmas Day. For more info contact Cindy Miller at 715-296-7869 to participate
December 1	Ridgeland Senior Citizens 500 Card Party – 12:30 p.m. at Ridgeland Community Center with potluck lunch
December 2,4,6	Dallas Library Rock Painting Activity - 2-5 p.m. at Dallas Library
December 4	Ridgeland Area Library Board Meeting - 6 p.m. at Ridgeland Library
December 5,12, 19, 26	AA Meeting – 6-7 p.m. at Fire Hall in Clayton. For more info, call Dave C. at 715-948-4235
December 6	Ridgeland Civic Club Welcomes Santa - 10 a.m. at Ridgeland Community Center
December 6	Lighting Hometown Spirit - 5 p.m. at the Prairie Farm Village Tree. Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club invites you to enjoy the tree in the center of the village.
December 9,11,23	Ornament Crafts (beads, pipe cleaner, pom pons, popsicle sticks, etc) 2-5 p.m. at Dallas Library
December 11	Dallas Library Board Meeting – 6 p.m. at Dallas Library
December 15	Ridgeland Senior Citizens 500 Card Party – 12:30 p.m. at Ridgeland Community Center with potluck lunch
December 16,18, 20	Perler Beads Activity - 2-5 p.m. at Dallas Library
December 18	Ridgeland Civic Club Meeting – 6 p.m. at Ridgeland Library
December 23, 27, 30	Craft of Choice Activity - 2 -5 p.m. at Dallas Library
December 25	Dallas Library Closed
December 25	Ridgeland Area Library Closed
January 1	Dallas Library Closed
January 1	Ridgeland Area Library Closed
January 3	Craft of Choice Activity - 2 -6 p.m. at Dallas Library

Put your event on the Community Bulletin Board by contacting Betty Glaser at bls5524@yahoo.com or (715)529-1451.

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TOWNSHIP & VILLAGE MEETINGS	
Contact Town Clerks for details	
Township/Village	Clerk/contact info.
Town of Arland	Pam Fall 715-455-1074 pamela.fall@thrivent.com
Town of Dallas	Karolyn Bartlett 715-837-1039 townshipofdallas@yahoo.com
Town of New Haven	Katie Bovee 715-643-3703 clerk@townofnewhavenwi.com
Town of Prairie Farm	Vicki Buck 715-495-2798 buckdv@chibardun.net
Town of Sand Creek	Pam Meinen 715-205-3511 sctown@chibardun.net
Town of Sheridan	Joe Boesl 715-205-6193 clerkofsheridan@gmail.com
Town of Vance Creek	Kara Norberg 651-491-3067 vcclerk04@gmail.com
Town of Wilson	Denise Schlough 715-949-1938 ddtsschlough@mosaictelecom.net
Village of Dallas	Lynn Anderson 715-837-1186 vdallas@chibardun.net
Village of Prairie Farm	Sherrie Siebert 715-455-1714 clerk@villageofprairiefarm.gov
Village of Ridgeland	Kristin Huset 715-949-2265 bkhuset@chibardun.net

Todd Wilbur Miller

August 1, 1957 – November 6, 2025

Todd Wilbur Miller, 68, died peacefully at home on November 6, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Todd was born on August 1, 1957, in Barron. He was raised on the family farm and graduated from Prairie Farm High School in 1975. He was well known as a heavyweight wrestler in high school and was one win away from competing in the state tournament his senior year. Todd married his first love, Debbie Keller, on December 30, 1978. They had three amazing children: Trever Charles in 1979, Benjamin Wilbur in 1982, and Michelle Renee in 1983. Debbie was tragically killed in a car accident in 1984, leaving Todd a widower with three small children. He then met his second love, Margrethe (Peggy) Larson, in 1991. They were married on March 4, 1997. As a young man, Todd had a milk route and also delivered bulk fuel for Ridgeland Coop. Todd and Peggy then owned and ran Dutchman's Bar in Ridgeland for 25 years. Todd was an amazing bar owner with a smile and conversation for everyone. Memories of his years at the bar are filled with Friday night fish fries, Yellow River dances, Super Bowl parties, Packer vs. Viking rivalries (as Todd was an avid Vikings fan), along with many other good times with friends and family.

Todd had many pastimes that kept him active away from the bar. He

loved riding side by side with family and friends, camping at Chetek River Campground, and spending evenings in his recliner with his beloved cats, especially this summer as his disease progressed. Todd was a member of the Ridgeland Fire Department, Dallas Area Ambulance as a first responder, the Ridgeland Fair Board, Ridgeland Lutheran Church Council, and the Ridgeland Village Board. Todd is survived by his wife Peggy, children Trever (Dawn) of Turtle Lake, Ben (Ciara) of Menomonie, and Michelle (Richard) of Prairie Farm.

He is also survived by brothers Terry (Carolyn), Steve (Toots), Brad (Jodi), Andy (Candice), Pat (Jill), and a sister, Tammy (Dan). He has six beautiful grandchildren: Bryce Miller, Brayden Miller, Caitlyn Miller, Kroy Miller, Mason Johnson, and Mya Johnson. He is further survived by a sister-in-law, Leslie (Dean) Frisle, Lori (Rick) Warner, brother-in-law Dave Keller, and in-laws Chuck and Ethel Keller, and special niece Marissa Marie. He has numerous aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, and so many loving friends. He was preceded in death by his first wife Debbie, parents Wilbur and Donna, in-laws Everett and Rose Larson, sisters-in-law Sheri Miller and Kathy Larson, niece Angela Miller, and foster sister Lorraine Stokes. Visitation was held on Wednesday, Nov 12, from 4-7 p.m. at United Lutheran Church in Prairie Farm. Visitation continued from 10-11 a.m. on Thursday, Nov 13, followed by services at 11 a.m. at the church with Pastor Sara Feld officiating.



Todd Wilbur Miller, 68, died peacefully at home on November 6, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Burial took place at Hay River Lutheran Cemetery in the township of Hay River, Dunn County. Olson Funeral Home in Menomonie is serving the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorials to the family are suggested, which will be distributed throughout the Ridgeland Community. The family wants to thank the many family members and friends who visited Todd and sent cards and words of encouragement. We would also like to thank St Croix Hospice for their care and direction the last days of Todd's life.

To share a memory, please visit obituaries at www.olsonfuneral.com



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Letters to Santa

Submitted by Ms. Beebout – Teacher, Ridgeland-Dallas Elementary School

Kindergarten

Dear Santa,

I love this time of year mostly because of the snow. I enjoy sledding, eating the snow and laying in the snow under the hot sun.

I really like helping my family decorate our tree with a lot of lights. We even have a huge train around it!

I have 3 questions for you!

Why do you live so far away?

Why don’t you come to our house first?

Where do the reindeer sleep?

See you soon,

Jack

Dear Santa,

Hope you are doing well getting ready for Christmas. I am really hoping for an American Girl Doll. Are you sending an elf here? I can’t wait to make you cookies! Can we put cream on them? Hope you are having fun helping the elves make toys.

Love, Evelynnn

Dear Santa,

Where did you find your elves that help you with the toys? Where are they from? My Grandpa likes cookies and milk too! Last year I woke up and went downstairs to look for you. There were no presents. When I woke up again in the morning there were lots of presents! Santa

could you bring me a teacup pug puppy with blue eyes? I promise to take care of it.

Or a mini fridge for drinks and snacks in my room so I don’t have to go downstairs. I will leave you lots of cookies and milk! I can’t wait until Christmas! Ho! Ho! Ho!

Love, Waaseyaa

Dear Santa,

I was wondering if I can ride your reindeers. That would be so fun! Could I have a pony for Christmas?

Love Harriett

Dear Santa,

Do you know that I wish Barbie doll doctor stuff, some cribs, a dollhouse, diapers and wipes, ad the mama who is probably the doctor? I’m going to share it with my sister. I wish you to have a good Christmas. Thank you for my Barbie doll set.

Love, Addison <3

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas and I wish you to have a good day. Thank you for giving kids all around the world presents. How do you get presents in the back of the sleigh? I want a phone or a pony toy for Christmas. Merry Christmas!

Love, Carlin

Dear Santa,

Thank you for the presents. How do your reindeer fly? This year I want a mermaid

doll that could swim and maybe float.

From, Veda

4-Year-Old Kindergarten

Dear Santa,

I love you and flamingos. I would like a stuffed animal flamingo and a sticker book for Christmas. My favorite thing about Christmas is the lights and Christmas trees. I also like the movie Nightmare Before Christmas. Jack is my favorite.

Love, Inga

Dear Santa,

I want a phone, a Santa phone case with a Christmas tree on it, and snow in my yard to play with my dog.

Love, Elivia

Dear Santa,

I like your reindeer. I want to ride the sleigh with the reindeers. I like that because they can fly all the way up to the North Pole. I really want a tablet to watch shows on, like Creepy Carrots. You would really like that show.

I want to give you a hug and you would say Ho, Ho, Ho and give me a hug. I love getting presents from you.

Love, Demetrius

Dear Santa,

Thank you for the candy in my stocking. I like pizza



Adobe Stock Photo submitted by Jess Fischer

candy! I want monster trucks for Christmas.

From, Drake

Dear Santa,

Thank you for the toys. I want to hug you and talk to you. Can you bring a doctor set? Can Baby Cooper get a baby toy?

Love, Kayleigh

Dear Santa,

I love you! I want Barbie dolls for Christmas. I make chocolate chip cookies for you.

Love, Maddix

Dear Santa,

Happy Christmas! I love your reindeer. I want dinosaurs for Christmas. I also want sea animals.

Love Attia



United Lutheran Church

Prairie Farm, WI

8:30 a.m. Sunday School
9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

December 21st
Sunday School Christmas Program 9am
Christmas Eve Service 4pm and 9pm

Virtual Worship Options
Phone-in: 534-444-4222
Facebook Live:
Facebook.com/ULCPrairieFarm
also uploaded after worship in finished

Pastor Sara Feld (715) 455-1454
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We hope you enjoy it!

...“New” cont’d. from page 11

could have a whole grocery order brought to her rural doorstep. Not just shelf-stable things, fresh and frozen things, too. She tested the offer and soon convinced me to try it also.

Strangely, online grocery ordering feels like the “good old days” to me! I usually take a couple of days poring through the choices. I once

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again pick and choose carefully, and someone soon drives into our lonely lane to deliver them. Only this time, almost anything in more categories is an option. I’m back to considering what my loved ones will love for Christmas, from the comfort of my home.

All my life, I’ve liked plenty of choices, but also all my life, I can hardly abide so many of them. When in a store, I have often been swept up in the tide of trends; I buy things but don’t finish (or use) them. I give things away or shamefully throw them in the trash. So many times I’ve sworn off this wasteful pattern, so many times I cave in and do it again.

In “A Place in the Woods,” Helen Hoover tells of her and her husband’s relinquishment of their urban careers to live remotely in Minnesota, pre-Internet. The two ordered all of their food by mail. This meant a careful orchestration of how to receive them at

their isolated location, in elements like snow and mud, wind and rain, if things should turn out that way. It involved many cases of (repeat) cans and boxes of shelf-stable foods, with heavy shipping weights worked into their budget.

I can’t imagine eating food only by mail and living where fresh things can’t be had except by the seasonal garden. Year-round variety is a coveted luxury that few would say is a bad thing. After all, it is good to have variety, so that a variety of people can choose what they like!

I love when what was workable and helpful once is again.

It’s like a hug from the old-timers with a sweet bit of smugness thrown in! A smug hug, if you will.

Spirits of the Night



Spirits of the Night attendees sampled a variety of regional wines and craft beers while bidding on donated items and gift baskets. This tasteful night out was not only a great success, but a sign of true local support for our library!
Photos by Betty Glaser.

THANK YOU

For Believing In Our Library
and Supporting the Spirits in
the Night Fundraiser

YOUR GENEROSITY IS CHANGING OUR COMMUNITY
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION!
RIDGELAND AREA LIBRARY

...“Making” cont’d. from page 6

ornaments as a patriotic purchase. The cardboard ornament box even depicted Santa Claus shaking hands with Uncle Sam. The Corning Glass Company used the same technology in the making of light bulbs to make ornaments. During the active war years, the metal tops were replaced with a cardboard tab for hanging since most metals were being used for military production.

Since 2001, some of the most popular Shiny Brite ornaments have been reproduced under the Christopher Radko brand, selling for significant amounts. Shiny Brite ornaments carry the nostalgia of Christmases past, with collectors paying hundreds of dollars for vintage boxed sets. Collectors today are interested in factory-made ornaments such as Shiny Brite, Hallmark, and those featuring pop culture themes.

Despite the availability of store-bought ornaments, handmade ornaments have been continuously used from the 1800s to today, with popularity tied to economic hardships, nostalgia, and the rise of cottage crafts. During the Great Depression, families used tinfoil, paper, and popcorn to decorate trees. During World War II, spun cotton, crepe paper, and fabric were fashioned into ornaments. The 1970s saw a resurgence of the craft movement, with families making felt, homemade dough, and needlepoint ornaments. Today’s modern trees use ornaments that show off sustainability and personalized designs. Individual decorating styles are apparent in tree decor.

Decorating the Christmas tree is not only for the



Vintage trees still add nostalgia during the holiday season.
Photo by Donnette Mickelson

holiday tradition but also a time to connect with family memories as they reminisce about the ornaments adorning the tree. Our own tree has ornaments made by family members, travel destinations, and yearly interests. We laugh together as we share these memories about the purple gingerbread man that I made as a Girl Scout in the 1970s, our children’s art projects, and other unique ornaments.

Since the isolation during COVID, people have had a renewed interest in homemade ornaments. Basically, what is old is new again. The felt and sequin ornaments have a huge resurgence, with vintage kits selling for hundreds of dollars on sites like eBay and Etsy. If you want to join this trend, new design kits can be purchased online from Herrschners, located in Stephen Point, Wisconsin.

Nature-inspired ornaments made from pinecones, wood slices, and leaves are popular with minimalist decor, and inspiration can be found on Pinterest.

Fiber arts are in a revival period, with needlepoint, embroidery, crochet, knitting, and quilted ornaments trending. There is an upsurge in consumer interest in sustainability, personalization, and the emotional value connected to handmade ornaments. Crafting and creating is a way to practice mindfulness and be a therapeutic outlet for creators. The essence of being human is to create art and crafts as a lasting legacy and unification. Handmade ornaments remind us to slow down and create with purpose. So as you decorate your tree this year, consider what story your creations and collections will tell for years to come.

Residents

Melvin S. 4th
Kenneth T. 16th
John S. 24th
Wesley 10th

Staff

Mary C.12-01
Mariah H.12-02
Ameilia V.12-06
Kayla B.12-07
Isabella C.12-07
MaraJade S.12-22
Amber B.12-28
Kendall G.12-07
Kaydee N.12-13
Amy H.12-21

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