

Hay River

REVIEW

Since 1987

Community News



(Above) The Ridgeland/Dallas Elementary always brings the holidays to life! (Right) John Mark Miller boils sap collected from over 300 trees. *Photos submitted by DM MICK*



Ridgeland Civic Club

What a Year!

By Betty Glaser

The year ended with a flurry of activity for our members as we kicked off December by hosting Santa at the Ridgeland Community Center. A heartfelt thank-you goes to Elf Blaine for picking up Santa and Mrs. Claus in the fire truck. No matter how cold it is, the children are always outside waiting, absolutely in awe as Santa arrives.

This event is one of my favorites because it feels like time stands still. Parents and grandparents are completely focused on the children—watches stop, schedules disappear, and there is no rushing from place to place. The moment is entirely about the kids, and it is

truly priceless to witness. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this event so special for their children.

We would also like to thank the Ridgeland Royalty Court for assisting with activities. The children were mesmerized by the queen and her court, especially their beautiful tiaras.

New this year, the Ridgeland Area Library offered a free book to every child. Thank you to board member Elf Donnette and Elf Jodie Sorenson Prine for running this table. In addition to the free books, the library kicked off a coloring contest, with the winning artwork to be turned into a quilt block as part of the WILS grant

awarded to the Library. Another new addition was an ornament-painting table, where children painted wooden ornaments to take home. Thank you to Elves Michael and Mary Kolstad of Barn Quilts M & M for supplying the ornaments and paint pens. The children had a wonderful time creating their designs—Santa even received a beautifully painted ornament from one of the children.

Elves Lilly and Alec stayed busy as well, providing 200 homemade cutout cookies for decorating with frosting and homemade colored sugars and sprinkles. Even the adults joined in on this delicious

“Year” cont’d. on page 13...

January dawned with a solemn yet uplifting tribute to our veterans, as the Willard L. Hinzman American Legion Auxiliary Unit 511 laid 89 wreaths at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. It was a poignant start, funded by community donations that spoke to our collective memory and respect for those who’ve served. Civic clubs also kicked off the giving season with donations to food pantries and schools. We reflected on the local history of Vance Creek School. At Prairie Farm Schools, young athletes shone, setting a tone of youthful promise that echoed throughout the year.

February brought a creative

spark with Ridgeland native Lyndsey Mickelson launching her online art studio, her prints and originals a testament to how local talent can flourish even in quiet corners. We anticipated the Traditional & Green Skills Event, a gathering that would soon blend old wisdom with new sustainability ideas. Fundraisers like the Alfalfa Fest’s chili cook-off and axe-throwing contests rallied us for the Prairie Farm Veterans Memorial, raising spirits as much as funds.

In March, the Traditional & Green Skills Event drew over 200 attendees to Prairie Farm High School for workshops

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The Ridgeland/Dallas elementary students enjoyed a day out on the new ice rink! *Photos submitted by DM MICK*



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Cookies pg. 10



Woodland pg. 11



Pioneer Park pg. 16

“A year from now you may wish you had started today.”
— Karen Lamb



By Barbara Petersen

Mitten Tree

Thank you to all who donated to our Mitten Tree. The tree ended up overflowing with hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, slippers—in wonderful colors. The warmth they will provide to some future user is a great gift. The tree will come down in the new year, and the warm items will be gathered and taken to those in need. We also received some jackets, which are a great addition to the mitten tree. Thank you again.

Food Box

Our food box finally got a few donations. These will be taken to the food shelf at the Dallas Post Office. Thank you to those who donated.

Christmas Cards Out

The cards will be put away next week. Again, we are thankful that we could provide some cards for you to use.

Children’s Activities

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



All Aboard with the Ridgeland Library Review

By Donnette Mickelson

Barn quilt classes kick off in January and are filling up quickly. This is a great opportunity for our community to add art for everyone to see and enjoy. Applications can be picked up at Security Bank or the library.

In January, the library will be hosting a fun and creative coloring contest for children. The coloring sheets can be picked up at the library. The winning designs will be showcased in a unique way by being featured on a community quilt.

Adults are invited to join the fun as well, with a coloring contest for adults featuring more challenging and intricate designs. Of course, both designs feature farm animals, barns, machinery,

The Book Report Dallas Public Library

January 3, we will have a Library Scavenger Hunt with prizes!

January 3, 8, and 10, we will do a birdseed craft and learn some animal facts.

January 13, 15, 17 Perler Beads will be used to make a variety of items, including snowflakes.

January 20, 21, and 24, we will do some “snow” crafts.

January 27, 29, and 31 will be days to work on board games, picture puzzles, etc.

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.

Adults are encouraged to join and make the crafts they would like. Personally, a birdseed craft would make the birds at my house happy!

Weather Closings

Please remember that when the weather is bad, we will be closed or close early. The other night, our librarians were told that the roads were getting slippery because of the winter rain. Therefore, they closed and carefully headed home. When we are

aware of a storm, we will try to remind you that we may be closed via Facebook. However, sometimes we are caught unprepared. If you wonder about the weather, maybe you can call.

(715-837-1186) to see if our librarians are there. That way, you won’t make a special trip. Remember, if it is unsafe for our librarians, it probably isn’t safe for you either.

New to Us

When I lived near Luck, I would tutor students at the Luck Library. Well, we now have a lady who comes when we are open and tutors a student. This is a good use of our facility. They can be in the large meeting room and work on assignments or projects to help the student. Also, we want to remind those who homeschool that if you need books for assignments or “free” reading for your children, feel free to make use of what we have in our children’s room. If we don’t have what you need, we will happily order it for you.

Friends of the Library

Some of these groups have regular meeting dates. Some only get together when there is a need. Some people in these groups are active

Sugar Sack, Grain and Feed Bag Prints and Designs” by Tricia Maloney. This book features over 1,000 examples of vintage feed sacks that were originally utilitarian packaging but became popular through the creativity of rural women, who repurposed the fabric to sew clothing for their families during the hard times of the 1920s.

“Threads of the Past: Stories of Pioneer Women and Their Quilts” by Lanie Tiffenbach
Read about seven immigrant women and the challenges they faced living in a harsh new land. This book is a heartbreaking yet heartwarming look at the hardships of families and what our immigrant foremothers went through.

There is always something new at the library. Be sure to stop in to check it out!

volunteers, while others just like to help out once in a while. We are currently in the process of getting a list of people who will be the Friends of the Dallas Library. So far, everyone we have asked has willingly agreed.

If you would like to be on our list for Friends of the Dallas Library, just call or tell us when you are looking for a book.

Stay Connected

Library hours
Tuesday and Thursday- 2 to 6 p.m.
Saturday- 9 a.m. to noon.

Like us on Facebook!
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Hay River
REVIEW

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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.

The staff and members of the board thank the advertisers who support the publication of the Review and encourage everyone to patronize local businesses whenever possible. The Review is printed by Publisher's Printing of Amery. The paper is mailed free to all Prairie Farm, Ridgeland and Dallas addresses as well as residents of the Prairie Farm School District.

Hay River Review

Publishing Corporation

Exciting Updates

By Betty Glaser & David Williams

The month of December has been busy for the Hay River Review Publishing Corporation Board of Directors! We are excited to share some great news—Ms. Maranda Peltier has joined the board.

Many of you may already know Maranda. She grew up in the Ridgeland area and currently resides in Prairie Farm. Maranda is a full-time substitute teacher for the Barron Area School District and is actively involved with the Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club. We are pleased to welcome her experience, enthusiasm, and community involvement to the board.

In other actions, the board elected Douglas Owens-Pike as the new president of the

Cooperative. Douglas built his passive solar home in the Hay River area 15 years ago. Along with writing the column “Sustainably You” in the paper, Douglas has been involved with the Hay River Transition Initiative as a teacher and organizer for the Green and Traditional Skills Day. Douglas boasts a strong sense of community in everything he does, and we greatly look forward to his leadership.

Editor Danny McLennan has expanded his responsibilities with the Hay River Review. As many of you know, Danny has served as our editor for a little over a year. In addition to his editorial role, he has also been handling digital advertising sales.

Following the recent opening of our sales position, a



Douglas Owens-Pike was named the new president of the Hay River Review. Photo submitted by Douglas Owens-Pike

proposal was presented to and approved by the Board of Directors. Moving forward, Danny will be wearing multiple hats, serving as Editor, Print Advertising Sales Representative, and Digital Advertising Representative. For advertising information, Danny can be contacted at: ads.hayriverreview@gmail.com

The Board of Directors would also like to extend a sincere thank-you to Shelley Lee, who stepped in during the month of December to temporarily fill the Sales

Representative role. Shelley rose to the needs of the Hay River Review, quickly learning ad sales and making December advertising possible. Thank you, Shelley, for your dedication and support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Hay River Review, we would like to thank our community for your continued support of our local newspaper. We wish everyone a very Happy New Year and look forward to all that 2026 has in store!



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Issue	Ad Due	Copy Due	Distribution
February	Jan. 23rd	Jan. 22nd	January 30th
March	Feb. 20th	Feb. 19th	February 27th
April	Mar. 20th	Mar. 19th	March 27th

Hay River Review is printed by Publishers Printing Services, 215 Power St, Amery, WI

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

Thank you!

Support us with a subscription, or deliver local news and history to family and friends outside of the Prairie Farm- Ridgeland area for just \$25/yr (WI) and \$30/yr (out-of-state). Email your name and address to Office.HayRiverReview@gmail.com. Please include “HRR Subscribe” in the subject line. OR SUBSCRIBE ONLINE at HayRiver-Review.com

Ridgeland Civic Club

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Dunn County 4-H Happenings

By Ann Lee

There is a lot happening with Dunn County 4-H!

Dunn County 4-H has much to be grateful for. They have seen a continued growth of their program in two ways: climbing membership numbers and the expansion of their programming for local youth. Through 4-H, new learning opportunities are regularly being explored and offered to its members. For example, right now, Zachary Rozmiarek, the Dunn County 4-H Educator, has partnered

with the Knapp Elementary School, Courtney Budden, the school's 5th-grade teacher, and Trout Unlimited to provide a program called Trout in the Classroom. This program provides an opportunity for students to care for trout eggs and fingerlings in their own classroom.

The 4-H Project Discovery Day on November 8th was a great success. During this public event, seven different 4-H project areas: Dog Training, Canning, Photography, Cats, Fire Art, Legos, and Circuits

were presented to kids in kindergarten through 5th grade. Not only did these kids learn about 4-H and these different projects, but they had a lot of fun doing it.

Upcoming 4-H Activities

A 4-H, Tri-County (Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire) Speaking and Demonstration Festival is being planned for Saturday, January 31st at the Elk Mound High School starting at 9 a.m. At it, 4-H youth will give presentations either alone or in pairs, giving them the opportunity to practice their communication skills while developing self-confidence.

Any youth in grades K-12th Grade are invited to participate in Art U. Even if you are not a 4-H member. Art U is a collaboration between 4-H and the UW-Stout, at which art lessons will be given by the UW-Stout Art Education students. Youth in grades K-6th will have virtual instruction, while youth in grades 7-12th will attend classes at UW-Stout. These sessions will be held on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. from February 12 to March 12. There will be a nominal fee of \$5 for enrolled 4-H members and \$10 for those not enrolled in 4-H for the five classes. Registration closes January 13. To register or for more information, call 715-232-1636.



(Top) Circuits Demonstration during the 4-H Project Discovery Days. (Bottom) Little Elk Creek 4-H Club collecting food for the Food Drive in 2024. Photos submitted by Ann Lee

Holiday Greetings



We would like to extend a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all from your Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club! Photos submitted by Cindy Miller.

Featured Dunn County 4-H Club – Little Elk Creek

Little Elk Creek is one of the larger 4-H clubs in Dunn County. They meet on the first Sunday of the month at the Little Elk Creek Church at 6:30 p.m. The Little Elk Creek members are active in dairy judging, dairy, swine, beef, sheep, goat,

and softball. Each summer, they also help out with the 4-H food stand at the Dunn County Fair. Moreover, Little Elk Creek focuses on community service outreach projects, such as Military Care Packages and food drives. For more information about the Little Elk Creek 4-H Club, contact Trisha Holmstadt at 715-556-4857 or DeAnna Heckendorf at 715-308-0676.

To learn more about Dunn County 4-H activities or if you live in Dunn County and don't want to miss out on future 4-H activities, contact the Dunn County 4-H Educator, Zachary Rozmiarek, at 715-232-1636. To see more of our activities, visit our Facebook page.

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Barn Quilt Classes

By Donnette Mickelson

The Ridgeland library received a grant to have barn quilts painted in our area, and we have received a lot of questions about barn quilts.

What is a barn quilt?

It is a painted quilt block on a piece of wood that is displayed on a barn.

What is the purpose of it?

It is a piece of folk art meant to decorate and celebrate our rural area.

Why are we doing this? It will beautify our community with art and encourage tourism in our area.

What if I do not have a barn?

It can be put on a shed, any building, yard sign, business, or mailbox. It does need to be able to be seen from the road. Yes, there are people who will make it a road trip to look at barn quilts.

What if I am not a good painter? Our expert instructors will help you paint in an easy-to-follow method that anyone can do.

Do I have to do it myself?

Bring a friend or family member to help.

What if I do not know any quilt patterns?

No problem! Our instructor can help you pick a design and colors that will match your location.

How long does it take?

Each class begins at 8 a.m. Take as long as you need to finish the barn quilt, but you can leave when you are done. Classes are usually done by 5 p.m.

When are the classes?

We have six classes scheduled at the Ridgeland-Dallas Elementary School. January 17, February 28, March 28, April 25, May 9, and June 13.

Do I need to bring anything?
No, we even provide lunch.

Can I keep the barn quilt?
Absolutely! It is yours to keep. It does need to be brought to the community art show on June 30 and can be installed at your house after that.

Are there any restrictions?
Barn quilts painted from January to March will be brought to the library to be on display for the April art show. All of the completed barn quilts will be at the Ridgeland Park on Tuesday, June 30, for the community art show.

What if I want a barn quilt, but I do not want to paint it?
We have extra people willing to paint it for you. There might be a commission fee depending on whether there is someone extra who can paint.

What is the price?
A 2' x 2' size is \$70, and a 4' x 4' size is \$110. If you live within a ten-mile radius of Ridgeland, you can get \$40 off the price. So a 2' x 2' would be



A view of the 10-mile radius of Ridgeland. Photo submitted by Donnette Mickelson.

only \$30, and a 4' x 4' would be \$70 for anyone who lives within this ten-mile distance.

What if I do not live in this area?

The idea is to have spots available to our community first. If there are extra spots available in the class, then it will be open to anyone to register.

What do I have to do if I want to paint a barn quilt?

Pick up an application at the Ridgeland library or Security Bank, fill it out, and turn it in to reserve your spot.

This is a great opportunity for our area, and our goal is to have sixty quilts painted and displayed. If you still have questions, please reach out to Betty Glaser or Donnette Mickelson, and we can help you.

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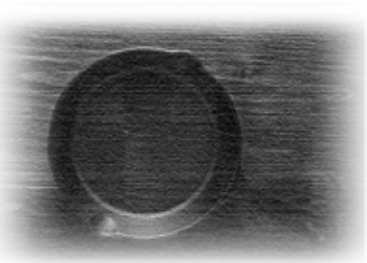
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Aging and Disability Resource Center of Barron and Rusk Counties



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IRON SKILLET

By DM McLennan

The temps have plummeted, and the winter winds are blowing. This is the perfect time of year for a hearty warm-up in the kitchen. This recipe is a time-tested staple that lives in many homes, but now, with a rustic twist.

- Ingredients:**
- 3 tbsp butter
 - 3 leeks (halved and thinly sliced)
 - 3 cups chicken broth
 - 1 tbsp chopped thyme
 - 1 large potato (cut into ½ inch cubes)
 - 1 frozen deep-dish pie crust, thawed
 - 3 cups of frozen peas and carrots
 - ¼ cup flour

- 1 pound of chicken thighs (cut into chunks)
- Pepper to taste
- Salt to taste

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F

In a 9-inch frying pan, melt the butter over medium heat, then add the leeks and thyme. Cook until softened.

Stir in flour, cook for one minute.

Gradually add in chicken broth.

Add potato, chicken, salt, and pepper.

Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a medium simmer for 10 minutes.

Roll the pie crust to about an 11-inch circle, cut 3-4 slits near the center for steam vents.

Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate.

Add vegetables to the pan and continue to cook until the chicken is no longer pink and the potatoes start to soften.

Place crust over filling and bake in oven until golden brown, 12-16 minutes.



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‘Full Court for a Cure’ Fundraising Campaign

Regional High Schools and Communities Unite

Submitted by Mary McDaniels

Miracles For Grady & Jace and Loving Loic Launch Statewide Effort to Fight Rare Disease

A coalition of local organizations has launched a 31-day fundraising campaign that aims to turn the excitement of Wisconsin high school basketball into a lifeline for children battling a rare disease.

The “Miracles For Grady & Jace” organization has partnered with the Loving Loic Foundation to launch “Full Court for a Cure.” While the campaign is anchored by events at Barron High School, the initiative serves as a regional call to action. The goal is to accelerate gene therapy research for Pantothenate Kinase-Associated Neurodegeneration (PKAN), a rare and devastating pediatric brain disorder.

The campaign runs from December 14th through January 14th, utilizing the platform of high school sports to raise awareness and crucial funds.

Playing for Hope: The Story of Grady and Jace

The campaign centers on the story of Grady and Jace

Binder, 14-year-old twins who are bravely battling PKAN. The boys, who reside in Eau Claire and have deep family roots in Barron County, serve as the inspiration for the movement. PKAN is a progressive disorder that slowly robs children of their motor skills while leaving their minds fully aware.

“Full Court for a Cure” was specifically timed to run from the 14th to the 14th, recognizing the 14-year-old twins who serve as the “bookends” of this vital fundraising effort.

“We are so grateful to have the support from the school district and the wider community,” said Erin (Lindberg) Binder, mother of the twins. “Their willingness to help us raise funds for a gene therapy treatment for our boys and all with PKAN is incredible. They have gone above and beyond, and we are so excited for this event!”

Calling All Schools: A Regional Challenge

While the main event is hosted in Barron, organizers are issuing an open invitation to other high schools across the region to join the team.

The campaign encourages student councils, athletic directors, and coaches from neighboring districts to participate during the

31-day window. Schools can get involved by hosting a “Miracle Minute” (passing a collection bucket for 60 seconds) at their own home games or organizing student-led fundraisers.

Fundraising for Your Own Program

To encourage widespread participation, the campaign offers a financial give-back program. Participating schools receive a unique link to track their efforts. By selling campaign merchandise or collecting donations through this link, schools earn a percentage of the funds back directly for their own athletic programs or student clubs. It is designed as a win-win: supporting a cure while boosting school spirit and student activity funds.

“We want to show that while we may be rivals on the court, we are all on the same team when it comes to saving kids’ lives,” said organizers.

“Unite” cont’d. on page 7...



Grady and Jace Binder, 14-year-old twins who are bravely battling PKAN. Photos submitted by Mary McDaniels

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Harold W 21st
Rose C 24th
Evie F 28th
Sylvia O 28th
Vivian W 6th

Employees

Dawn N 5th
Ashley S 8th
Cassandra G 20th
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Happy NEW YEAR

January Birthdays

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Prairie Farm

2026 Traditional Green Skills

By DKO Pike

Mark your calendars for one of the best networking and learning opportunities in our region.

The Traditional and Green Skills Event, which celebrates the end of winter, will be Saturday, March 14, 2026. \$20 registration includes lunch and childcare at no additional cost.

Prairie Farm High School has again generously donated facilities for a full day of talks and roundtable discussions of timely topics to help us learn from one another. The idea is that if we know who knows what, we will all be healthier, safer, and thus happier. Surely this qualifies as community prosperity.

- Categories of topics include:
- Home skills for gardening, preserving, and cooking
 - Construction skills, including how to build a sauna and tool sharpening
 - Land management—controlling invasive species and planning our future
 - Learning to improve critical thinking skills for adults
 - Fun activities for younger students

Speakers

We are currently gathering suggestions for speakers. If you are interested or want to recommend someone, please contact Douglas Owens-Pike at 612-220-191.

There will be no entry fee for speakers, plus the option of a table to display their products and services.

Sponsors

Sponsors help keep registration fees low. We would like to recognize you, your business, or your organization for helping fund this event, so please call Nancy Frank at 715-651-7840. February 20 is the deadline to confirm your level of commitment (ranging from \$50-200+), which ensures your best visibility in our advertising campaign.



The Navajo Drop Spindle Techniques workshop led by Jill Smith was well attended in the 2025 Traditional and Green Skills Event. Photo by Cody Mastel

Volunteers

Your willingness to help with a variety of tasks (setup, tear down, and other tasks for everyone) waives the entrance fee. Contact Emily (phone/email) for how to best apply your time and skills.

If you have questions or would like to be involved with planning, contact one of our co-chairs:

Jess Fischer 612-810-6855 or

Joan Feldman Plumb TGSE2025 @gmail.com

...“Unite” cont’d. from page 6

Key Event Night: December 22

The centerpiece of the effort is a basketball showcase on Monday, December 22, 2025, hosted at Barron High School. The public from across the region is invited to attend a full night of basketball and giving.

The Matchups: The event features a doubleheader. The Barron Girls’ Team will face Amery, followed by the Barron Boys’ Team taking on Chetek-Weyerhaeuser.

The Experience: Starting at 4:00 p.m., attendees can enjoy a community meal served by volunteers, participate in

raffles and contests, browse merchandise, and access donation stations. There will be activities for kids, a holiday bake sale, and much more.

The Goal: Gene Therapy Research

All funds raised will directly support the Loving Loic PKAN Gene Therapy Research Fund. This 501(c)(3) nonprofit is working to develop a gene therapy treatment that could stop the disease at its source. The Foundation’s goal is to raise \$5 million for this specialized research, and the campaign is currently about halfway to that mark.

How to Get Involved

Organizers emphasize that you do not need to live in one of the participating towns to make a difference. The campaign invites residents, businesses, and schools from across the area to support the cause.

Online Donations: Those unable to attend the games can make contributions directly through the campaign portal.

School Registration: Schools and teams looking to join the challenge and start selling merchandise can find toolkits online.

Details: Visit fullcourtforacure.com.

For anyone with questions or businesses interested in sponsorship opportunities, please email fullcourtforacure@gmail.com or call/text Erin at 715-316-8203.

A Community United

The Loving Loic Foundation emphasizes that this campaign is about more than just funding; it is about giving families a chance to hope again. By showing up, giving their “full court” support, and sharing the story of Grady, Jace, and Loic, the region is joining a team that plays for something far bigger than the game itself: hope, healing, and miracles.

As teams take the court this December, the organizers invite everyone to help turn one night of basketball into a lifetime of hope for children everywhere fighting PKAN.

Happy New Year!

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Wednesday 11-6

Thursday 12-7

Friday 9-2

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School District of Prairie Farm

January 2026

Corey Berghammer, Superintendent • John Casey Fossum, Principal

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*Paid for by the Prairie Farm School District.
It is the policy of the School District of Prairie Farm that no person
may be discriminated against in any program or activity as required
by s.116.13 Wis. Stats.*

From the Superintendent

We are hopeful everyone had a great holiday season, and we wish everyone nothing but the best as we begin this new year. As we change our calendar from 2025 to 2026 the district will start digging into our facility updates for next summer, our staffing as it relates to student numbers and student needs, and evaluate the overall day to day operations of the district. It is one of our goals to continue to provide the best facility we can in order to continue to support student learning and growth.

In a continued effort to be transparent with costs and to share timely information with our families and our Prairie Farm community, I would like to share some cost information concerning the PFC athletic/ activities co-op. In the area of transportation, during the 2024 fall season the Prairie Farm School District spent almost \$7,600.00 on practices and events. At that time, we only had a PFC co-op for middle school football. In 2025 during the fall season the district spent almost \$9,000.00. However, we received a portion of that back from Clayton through our shared costs agreement. This is because Prairie Farm is handling the majority of the transportation as we have our own fleet and dedicated drivers. The final transportation costs from the fall of 2025 are showing a decrease in athletic transportation costs as compared to the same time last year. Fall coaching costs are also showing the same trends. As a district we are down in fall coaching expenses this year as compared to where we were last year. All PFC coaching costs are split between the two districts.

Another item to make everyone aware of concerns the upcoming PFC middle school girls’ basketball season. Due to low numbers of PFC 7/8th grade girls who have shown interest in playing middle school basketball, we are opening up this opportunity to all interested PFC 6th grade girls to join

the program this year. This decision was based on the needs for this season and for this program and are only being offered to our 6th grade girls because of the combined low numbers of participants.

Next, we would like to again congratulate the community of Prairie Farm on the Light Up the Park event at Pioneer Park. The Prairie Farm School District and Cub Care consider it an honor to participate in this community event. Each year this event continues to grow with new participants and brilliant ideas. Thank you to everyone that has a hand in this event. This event has a feeling of community and celebration from the moment you enter the park. A great place to spend time with family and friends.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank our maintenance staff, kitchen staff, and bus drivers for all that they do each day for the district. These folks do an amazing job of taking care of our students and staff each day. Without their efforts and the daily contributions to the district, our successes would not be possible. A special thank you to each and every one of you for the work you do!

If you have any questions concerning the Prairie Farm School District, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you for your continued support,

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

Principal’s Report

The holidays are approaching and the School District of Prairie Farm would like to wish each of our families a Happy Holiday Season. It has been a busy month of concerts, ballgames, and special events. The district will hold its annual winter break from December 24th through January 2nd with students returning on Monday, January 5th.

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 Krystlin Jacobson and Noah Nagel as their Panthers of the Month. Staff recognized these two individuals by writing: “Krystilyn Jacobson is always willing to lend a helping hand and can be counted on to do the right thing even when no one is watching. Krystilyn is a leader in our school and shows this not only in the classroom but in her extra-curricular activities as well. Krystilyn is always striving to do her best and treats every opportunity presented to her as a learning opportunity. Krystilyn is a great example of what it means to be a Panther.”

“Noah Nagel has been a leader both in the classroom and in his co-curricular activities. Noah demonstrates exemplary character and is a positive role model for others no matter what he is participating in. Noah carries a positive and respectful attitude and this is reflected in the interactions with both staff and peers. For these reasons and many others Noah is our Panther of the Month.”

The middle school has selected Maci Mattson and Oakley Jeske for their Panthers of the Month. Staff wrote: “Maci Mattson embodies the true Prairie Farm Panther spirit. She is an individual unaffected by any outside influences which might cause her to stray from her personal and creative goals. Not only is she an artist who is passionate about writing and singing, but she is showing great interest in basketball for the first time. As an 8th grader, she is not afraid to join the team and just go for it. Maci is motivated to do her absolute best to meet, and even exceed, her teachers’ academic expectations. What makes Maci successful now - and is sure to make her successful in her future - is her willingness to take calculated educational risks. All in all, she is not afraid to dream big and to live every moment to its fullest. She is a great example for all of our other students to follow!”

“Oakley Jeske is a great example of a hard working student who strives to achieve his best in every assignment that he completes. He used those hard-working skills in Exploratory Art by completing assignments on time, pushing his ability to express himself through multiple mediums and dedicating his time outside of class to work on projects when needed. He has

shown great growth in his ability to focus on his assignments and work through any obstacles that he encounters in Art. He is a great classmate and always has a positive attitude in class. Great job Oakley, you truly exemplify what it means to be a Prairie Farm Panther.”

The elementary school nominates one student from each class and the following students were recognized at our monthly Panther Paws Celebration. Congratulations to Brock Bruder, Ellie Ellsworth, Gunner Borgen, Lane Young, Elena Beyer, Karson Moen, Emersyn Moen, and Bo Lipke on being selected for this award.

I want to give a special thanks to all the students, families, and staff members that have attended and participated in our various winter programs. The students have done a great job and these events continue to be one of the highlights of the month. Great job to all!

The Prairie Farm Elementary School has once again partnered with the local Lions Club in conducting a toy drive. Thanks to all who have donated to this event, your generosity is appreciated.

We wish everyone a happy holiday season and will look forward to welcoming students back in the new year on Monday, January 5th.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to stop by the district office, or contact me at fossum@prairiefarm.k12.wi.us or 715-455-1861.

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

What’s Happening

- | | |
|------------|--|
| January 5 | School resumes |
| January 16 | End 2nd Quarter/1st Semester for MS/HS |
| January 19 | No School-Inservice |

For the most up to date sporting events,
please visit www.prairiefarm.k12.wi.us

Warmest Gratitude

Thank you to WESTconsin for their donation of handmade hats and mittens.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PRAIRIE FARM
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
December 15, 2025—6:00 p.m.—IMC
MINUTES UNAPPROVED

- Members present: Nelson, Hansen, Bates, Cadman, Miller, Richards, Roemhild
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 Hansen to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Bates. Motion carried.
- D) Minutes of November 17th, 2025 Regular Board Meeting
Motion by Hansen to approve the minutes from the November 17th 2025, Regular Board Meeting, seconded by Bates. Motion carried.
- E) Reports
1) Principal’s good news report-Mr. Fossum
2) Student board members
Spencer Roemhild and Sophie Bergmann
3) Athletic director’s report-Alethea Seeger
- F) Business
1) Public comment residents/parents
2) Audit for 2024-25 (FY 2025)-Brandon Willger, Two Rivers Accounting
No action taken.
3) Policies
a) 5411-Third Grade Promotion and Retention
b) 5460-Graduation Requirements
c) 5530-Student Use or Possession of Intoxicants, Drugs or Paraphernalia
d) 7440.03-Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems
e) 7455-Accounting Systems for Capital Assets
f) 7460-Conservation of Natural and Material Resources
g) 7530.02-Staff and School Officials Use of Personal Communication Devices
h) 8420-School Safety and Reporting of Crime Statistics
i) 8500-Food Services
j) 8510-Wellness
k) 8540-Vending Machines
l) 8550-Competitive Food Sales
m) 9151-Use of Cameras and Other Recording Devices in Locker Rooms
Motion by Bates to approve the policies a-m, seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

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 schoool office. We will be also notifying the radio and television outlets.

The Sounds of Holidays

Grades K-3rd put on a holiday concert on December 12, 2025.



- 4) Course proposals for 2026-27 school year
Motion by Nelson to approve the course proposals for 2026-27, seconded by Hansen. Motion carried.
- 5) Reunification Plan and Recovery/Resumption of Activities Plan-part of the School District of Prairie Farm Safety Plan
Motion by Richards to approve the Reunification Plan and Recovery/Resumption of Activities Plan, seconded by Bates. Motion carried.
- 6) Spring coaches Prairie Farm and PFC for 2025-26
Motion by Miller to approve the spring coaches, seconded by Cadman
- 7) WIAA co-op renewal with Chetek-Weyerhaeuser and Prairie Farm boys and girls wrestling for 2026-2027 and 2027-2028
Motion by Richards to approve the WIAA co-op renewal with Chetek-Weyerhaeuser and Prairie Farm boys and girls wrestling for 2026-27 and 2027-28, seconded by Miller. Motion carried.
- 8) Donations
\$150 for CubCare toys from the Prairie Farm Ladies’ Civic Club
\$187.52 for mitten tree from WESTconsin Credit Union
\$100 for CubCare from the First Lutheran Church of Arland
Motion by Cadman to approve the donations as presented, seconded by Nelson. Motion carried.
- 9) Payroll check deposit in the amount of \$217,526.50
Motion by Bates to approve the payroll check deposit, seconded by Hansen. Motion carried. Roemhild abstained.
- 10) Financial report: AP in the amount of \$139,968.69, direct withdrawals in the amount of \$134,229.65 and PCard withdrawals in the amount of \$14,869.39
Motion by Richards to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Cadman. Motion carried.
- 11) Committee and other reports, information or comments
a) PFC coop update
b) Other
c) Schedule a January business operations meeting
- 12) Future meetings, Monday, January 19, 2026, Regular Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 13) 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.
- 14) Roll call and return to open session
- 15) Resignations
- 16) Contracts
a) Nick McCarthy, Band Director, remainder of 2025-26 school year
b) Steve Schaaf, Bus Driver, effective for the 2025-26 school year
c) Jess King, PFC Head Volleyball Coach for the 2026-27 school year
Motion by Richards to approve the contracts as presented, seconded by Miller. Motion carried.
- 17) Possible action from items in closed session
- G) Adjournment
Motion by Hansen to adjourn at 7:20 p.m., seconded by Miller. Motion carried.



Ridgeland Dallas
Elementary

By Faith Dixon

Over the month of December, our Ridgeland-Dallas students have been excited for the Holidays. They have enjoyed many days of winter crafts and playing out in the fresh snow! One of the highlights for the month was being able to decorate Christmas cookies at Coates Corner! Students enjoyed being creative and designing their own cookies that they got to bring back and enjoy at school. There was lots of Christmas cheer and big smiles as they sang carols while decorating. Thank you so much, Coates Corner, for allowing our students to come spend the morning with you. It brought lots of Holiday cheer to our wonderful school! Our Ridgeland-Dallas School family hopes everyone has a wonderful holiday season!



Mrs. Anderson's 1st/2nd Grade Class



4K and Kindergarten are having fun decorating



1st and 2nd grade enjoying decorating cookies



A smile on everyone's face today! Photos submitted by Faith Dixon

Happy Holiday from your Prairie Farm Area Lion
and Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club members



Fruit, meat, and cheese boxes were made to distribute locally.
Photos submitted by Cindy Miller

(Below) Every year, we bring holiday cheer to many families in the area. It is our way of saying we are thinking of you. This year, we distributed over 30 food boxes, toys, games, and over 50 fruit, cheese, and meat boxes. Thank you to all volunteers and donations we receive to make this such a special time of year. Amellia, Abbey, Aunie, and McKenna are all members of the PF Junior Class who assisted us again this year. The rest of the group are members of the Lions Club and the Ladies Civic Club.



Hay River Review
Foundation

By David K. Williams

The Hay River Review newspaper in your hands is produced each month through the work of a part-time professional editor, a designer, and an office manager. Overseeing their work is a volunteer board of directors, responsible for the direction of the entire process.

In ongoing efforts to be good stewards of the newspaper's financial health, the board has worked hard over past months to trim expenses, and recently took the step of creating the Hay River Review Foundation.

The Foundation is a separate nonprofit corporation, recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c) (3) organization, and thus eligible to offer donors tax-deductible status for any gifts to the Foundation. The prime

purpose of the Foundation is to serve as a conduit for such gifts from individual donors, corporations, and foundations, who all want to assure the future of this community-building newspaper, which has served the Hay River valley for 38 years.

All gifts to the Hay River Review Foundation will be used to support the publication of the paper each month. Anyone interested in supporting the Foundation can send a check to the Hay River Review Foundation, N12638 County Road Q, Downing, WI. 54734. All board members of the Hay River Publishing Cooperative have pledged their support to the Foundation, signaling their belief in the importance of the newspaper to our community.

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FIELD & WOODLAND WANDERINGS

By Martha Wright

I brace myself against the wind as it rips away my body heat and flings it to the sky. This was not so bad when I had the wind at my back, but now that I am facing into it on the return trip, the stiff breeze and frigid temperatures sting my face. I am glad I started the coffee pot before leaving the house, so there will be something to warm me from the inside out.

To distract myself from the cold, I focus on identifying the trees along the path. I have spent the last year learning about the trees around me, using the booklet Forest Trees of Wisconsin: How to Know Them, from our state Department of Natural Resources, and other books like Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast, by Michael Wojtech. Every walk in the woods is a chance to hone my growing knowledge.

As I begin to pay attention and look closely at the trees, I notice how many of them have retained their dead leaves. I have known for years that oak trees do that, but these are not all oaks. Back at

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.

Leaf Me Hanging On

the house, hot coffee in hand, I sit down with a blanket, a stack of books, and my computer to warm up and do some research.

I remember from biology class that there is a layer of cells at the base of the leaf stem called the abscission layer. These cells are responsible for shutting off water and nutrients to the leaf at the end of the growing season, which causes the leaf to drop from the tree. In some species, the abscission layer does not develop, which means the leaves take longer to drop. This leaf retention is called marcescence.

Douglas Tallamy, in his book The Nature of Oaks, talks about some of the possible reasons for marcescence and the benefits the tree receives from keeping its leaves longer. The leaves may provide some protection from the elements, and the taste of the dry leaves may prevent deer from browsing on the tender twigs. Both of these reasons would protect the buds that will open in the spring. Also, the leaf drop at the end of winter may provide nutrients to the roots at a crucial point in time.

Most of the information I find online lists oak (Quercus sp.) and American beech (Fagus grandifolia) as the trees most likely to keep their

leaves, but what I noticed in the woods today was neither of those. Finally, an article by Joey Williamson, PhD, HGIC Horticulture Extension Agent, written for Clemson University in South Carolina and titled “Winter Leaf Marcescence,” gives me an answer. He says oak and beech are the most common, but marcescence is also seen on American hornbeam (Carpinus caroliniana), Eastern hophornbeam (Ostrya virginiana), and witchhazels (Hamamelis sp.).

This is the information I wanted because there are two trees that I grew up knowing as “ironwood.” Although they look different, I only recently learned that they are two separate species with the same common name, both of them in the birch family. American hornbeam (C. caroliniana) is also called blue beech, or musclewood. It has blue-gray smooth bark and long ridges on the unbroken trunk, while hophornbeam (O. virginiana) has thin scaly bark that looks like it spirals around the trunk. Both have strong wood that is used for tool handles, and both are marcescent.

While I have been looking at leaves that do not drop, I have also noticed seeds hanging on some of the trees. Boxelder trees will keep their seeds throughout the winter,



(Top) Oak trees holding onto their leaves.
(Bottom) A small oak tree with a few leaves still hanging on.
Photos by Martha Wright

HayRiver

REVIEW

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LARGE VALENTINE \$30 = 30-35 WORDS

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ADS.HAYRIVERREVIEW@GMAIL.COM

PLACE YOUR AD
BY JAN. 23RD

THREE AD SIZES
AVAILABLE

providing food for wildlife and allowing the seeds to drop at an optimal time for spring germination. Ash trees are also known for holding their seeds, and at this point in time, stressed ash trees that are falling prey to the emerald ash borer beetle are producing massive numbers of seeds in a last desperate attempt to preserve their species. The US Forest Service

is collecting ash seeds in a seed bank for the future while working on a solution to control the beetle.

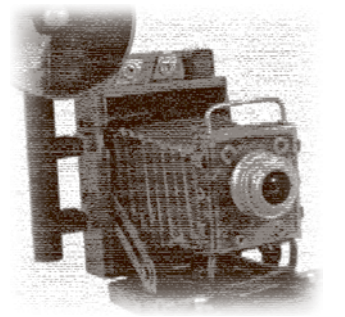
For the rest of the winter, I will be paying attention to leaves to see how long they hold on. I wonder how many of them will drop whenever the wind increases, and how many will make it until spring when the new leaves begin to grow.

PRAIRIE FARM - SHERIDAN
Fire Department

PANCAKE BREAKFAST & RAFFLE

SUNDAY, MARCH 1ST, 7AM-12PM
Prairie Farm Community Center

All proceeds go towards new equipment for the fire department



PHOTOS FROM OUR PAST

By Lon Christopherson

A few weeks ago, I came across this photo of an advertising item, a broom holder, from one of Ridgeland’s earliest businesses. The store itself was originally called the Swanson and Company General Store and was built in 1900 on the lot that sits on the corner of Diamond and Center streets in Ridgeland, better known as the site of Lewie Hanson’s store from 1956 to 1996. The original store was built and run by Carl Johnson and Adolph Swanson. In February of 1914, Adolph Swanson decided to move his family to California, and an auction was held at the store, disposing of the inventory and the lot. The building was purchased by two of the five Stenerson brothers, Otto and Henry, and the store was renamed the Stenerson Mercantile Company.

The Stenerson brothers were sons of one of Wilson

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

Township’s pioneer settlers, Peder Stenerson. They grew up in the Blairmoor area south of Ridgeland and were quite involved in the early history of the village. Otto Stenerson, according to his obituary, was born in a post office in Wisconsin in 1892 (probably at Blairmoor). He became Ridgeland’s postmaster in 1911, and was responsible for moving the Post Office from the store to a room under the hall, which building in town was referred to as the hall is unclear. Henry Stenerson worked both in the Post Office and as a carpenter. After the store was sold, he moved to Montana, where he owned a ranch. Later, he moved to Washington State.

Christopher, also known as C.P., worked as the manager of the Mercantile. He was also the rural mail carrier for the Ridgeland area until 1917, along with serving as the Justice of the Peace in Wilson Township in 1916. Sem “Samuel” Stenerson was born in 1875. He ran a feed mill in Ridgeland until 1907, at which time he advertised it for sale in the Dunn County News. His inventory included a 15 H.P. International Harvester Co. gas engine, a

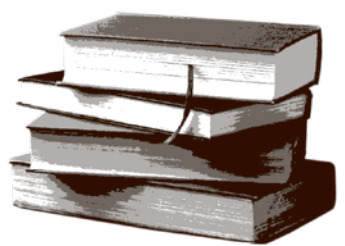
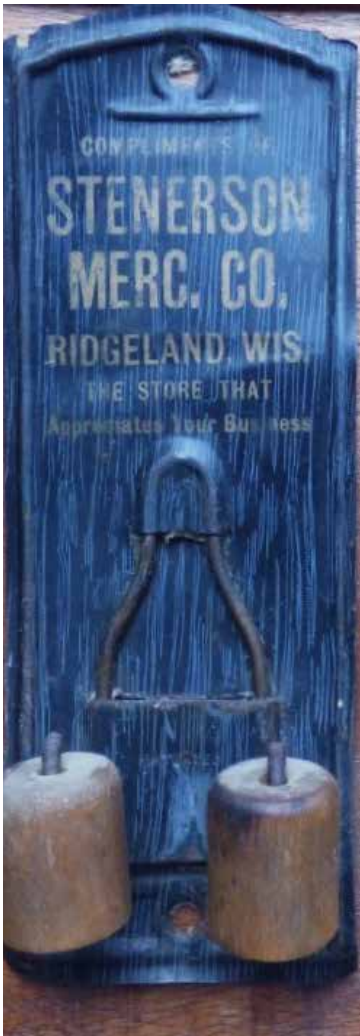
monarch French Burr Mill, and a Challenge Corn crusher and feed grinder. Perhaps it didn’t immediately sell because he continued to run his mill through 1908. A few years later, he traveled to the Dakotas and to Montana, where he operated a threshing rig. In 1915, while in Montana, tragedy struck. The thresher he operated used a small starter motor to start the working one on the thresher. When the starter refused to work, they wrapped a large rope around a wheel on the thresher engine to pull-start it. As the engine caught, the rope became caught in the clutch valve of the wheel. Sam’s legs became entangled with the rope, and he was pulled up over the wheel, crushing his leg and breaking it in three places.

His leg was amputated at a hospital in North Dakota, but blood poisoning ensued, and Sem died a few days later. Nels Stenerson was born in 1880. He lived most of his life in the Ridgeland/Dallas area. He was first married to Ada Belle Clyngenpeel (1918) and later to Amanda Carlson Moen (1927). In 1910, Nels took over as rural mail carrier



(Above) Swanson’s Store, later known as Stenerson’s Mercantile. (Below) Broom holder advertisement for Stenerson’s Mercantile. Photos submitted by Lon Christopherson.

for route #1 of Wheeler and continued the job through 1913. He passed away in 1979. Martin Stenerson (1883-1962) was the first student to enter the Dunn County Normal School, a school for training teachers. He later became the principal of the training school of Polk County and, later, Sauk County. He later moved on to Washington State, where he spent his remaining years. Several of the Stenersons are buried at Zion Cemetery, Sheridan Township.



MICKELSON’S BOOK BINGE

By Donnette Mickelson

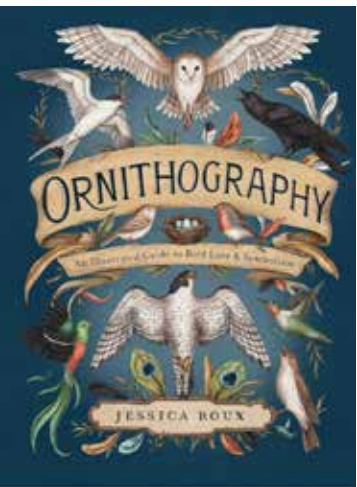
Many ancient cultures believed birds possessed a strong spiritual connection and served as powerful symbols and messengers. The ancient Greeks practiced ornithomancy, the art of interpreting bird behavior and flight patterns to predict the future. Birds were viewed as a link between heaven and Earth, and their movements, calls, and appearances were carefully observed to better understand the natural world and receive spiritual guidance.

Ornithography: an Illustrated Guide to Bird Lore and Symbolism

By Jessica Roux

In ancient Rome, no major decisions were made without consulting the augurs or priests who interpreted omens through birds, most commonly chickens, to determine whether actions were favored by the gods.

In this book, Jessica Roux presents each bird across a two-page spread, pairing a beautifully detailed illustration with its symbolic meaning and folklore. The book is an engaging and accessible read, made even more captivating by Roux’s striking artwork. Featuring one hundred birds in total, it offers both visual delight and rich mythological insight. This book is perfect for readers



who appreciate nature, mythology, symbolism, and art, and it makes a wonderful title to share or revisit often. For further reading, also take a look at her book “Floriography,” in which she connects flowers to their meaning and ancient uses and beliefs.

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Pastor Sara Feld (715) 455-1454
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...“Year” cont’d. from front

activity. It was a fun—and very tasty —experience for everyone.

Civic Club members, along with community volunteers, enjoyed a fun-filled Sunday afternoon on December 7 as the final phase of the ice rink was completed. The tarp, side walls, and bumper pads were installed, followed by the addition of an impressive seven inches of water!

With more than 12 volunteers on hand, this final phase went lickety-split. In less than an hour, the ice rink was already being filled with water. For those who enjoy a bit of math, the rink measures 64 by 72 feet—needless to say, that is a lot of water!

A special thank-you goes to Corey and Jeff for hauling the water. We also extend our gratitude to the Pioneer Days Committee for this wonderful addition to our park, providing another opportunity for our community to gather and enjoy the winter season.

Civic Club members are now researching the addition of a warming house and outdoor lighting to further enhance the ice rink experience. During Pioneer Days, we will also be hosting hot chocolate and popcorn in the Village Pavilion for everyone to enjoy.

So, what’s next on the schedule for the Ridgeland Civic Club? Members are

busy preparing for our Spaghetti Fundraiser, to be held on Wednesday, January 21, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Ridgeland Community Center.

Lilly’s homemade sauce was such a hit last year that she’ll be back at the stove once again, cooking up everyone’s favorite! Funds raised from the event will go toward several important community projects and programs, including the warming house, scholarships, senior citizen packages, Easter Egg Hunt, flowers, Family Fun Night, and our annual Santa event.

If you would like to consider becoming a member of our Civic Club, we meet on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Ridgeland



The Ridgeland/Dallas elementary students enjoyed a day out on the new ice rink! Photos submitted by DM MICK

Area Library. Membership is open to both men and women. Come when you can—there are no dues, laughter is guaranteed, and your heart will be warmed

as we give back to our community.

On behalf of the Ridgeland Civic Club, we want to wish everyone a very Happy New Year!



HOMESTEAD HACKS

By Sam Dodge

Well, here we are at the turning of another calendar year! The days are just starting to get longer here in western

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.

Winter’s Lesson

Wisconsin. 2025 is in the taillights, and we shine our high beams ahead to what 2026 might bring. If there’s one thing I have observed about this time of year, it’s that we humans really like to light

things up right about now. It almost seems that we’re hell-bent on blotting out the moon and stars. Not so many decades ago, a candle was considered to have a merry glow. Today, it feels like looking at “merry” requires dark sunglasses so as not to be blinded.

Here at the Wiseacres Estate, we find the moon and stars sufficient... and all their twinkling, glowing glory doesn’t cost a single kilowatt of coal-fired energy. We revel in the sight of comets and meteors; bold planets and constellations; the radiance of the great Milky Way overhead. Such divine illumination gives

me a sense of wonder that no chain of flashing technicolor LEDs ever could. And to top all that off, we have been witnessing the grandeur of Aurora Borealis, in colors and contours no factory-produced illumination could ever hope to duplicate... even though those assembly-line twinklers and blazers can obfuscate all the natural astral glory for miles around.

But enough of my humbuggery! It is a special season nonetheless. Throughout human history, in the dark months of the year, people have always known that making time for and with each other, whether under the stars or in the warmth and light of our various shelters, pushes back the darkness, however it is illuminated. A bonfire or starlight, a spray of Christmas lights or a smiling

moon, a hearth and candles... and the company of friendly faces. We’ve always known to find cause for merriment and celebration when the nights are long and the air is cold.

We save up our internal sunshine for these cold days, bringing a special sort of generosity that blazes up our hearts like that glowing hearth when we, our companions and neighbors, even the lonely strangers that find their way to our locale, need it most. We reflect the very best of ourselves now, and we receive reflection in return. Our warmth is amplified and shared. Like our cellars and pantries full of the Summer’s plenty, we’ve cached away a rich modicum of goodwill that brings the most warmth and light when it is passed around, hand to hand and heart to heart.

So I welcome this new year, in the dead of Winter! Greetings, 2026! Warmth and goodwill to all of us, from our little neighborhoods and as far as every outstretched hand can embrace the next! As I stand under the cold, glittering stars; as I gaze up at the pale, beautiful white Moon, I offer this prayer: May we all find cause to learn this lesson from the darkness... to amplify our warmth and light by sharing it from hill to glen, from neighborhood to neighborhood, from sea to shining sea, throughout all the Lands and with all the Earth’s peoples, in every month of this new year and in every year hereafter!

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COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

AA Meeting, 6 - 7 p.m. at the Fire Hall in Clayton. For more information call Dave C at 715-948-4235

January 3

Ridgeland Area Library Hosts Soy Crayon Coloring Quilt Make and Take, 9-11 am, Due January 10

January 3

Ridgeland Area Library Hosts Teen and Adult Quilt Coloring Sheet Due January 17

January 3

Dallas Library Library Scavenger Hunt with prizes, 9 - Noon

January 5

Ridgeland Senior Citizens 500 Card Party, 12:30 p.m. at Ridgeland Community Center with Potluck

January 6

Dallas Library - Birdseed crafts/ Animal Facts, 2 - 5 p.m.

January 8

Dallas Library - Birdseed crafts/ Animal Facts, 2 - 5 p.m.

January 8

Dallas Library Board Meeting, 6 p.m.

January 8

Ridgeland Area Library Board Meeting, 6 p.m.

January 10

Dallas Library - Birdseed crafts/ Animal Facts, 9 - Noon

January 13

Dallas Library - Perler Beads - Snowflakes, 2 - 5 p.m.

January 15

Dallas Library - Perler Beads - Snowflakes, 2 - 5 p.m.

January 15

Ridgeland Civic Club Meeting, 6 p.m. at Ridgeland Area Library

January 17

Dallas Library- Perler Beads - Snowflakes, 9 - Noon

January 17

Ridgeland Area Library hosts Barn Quilt Painting, 8 a.m. at Ridgeland Elementary School

January 19

Ridgeland Senior Citizens 500 Card Party, 12:30 p.m. at Ridgeland Community Center with Potluck

January 20

Dallas Library - Snow Crafts, 2 - 5 p.m.

January 21

Ridgeland Civic Club Hosts Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser, 4:30 - 7 p.m. at Ridgeland Community Center

January 22

Dallas Library - Snow Crafts, 2 - 5 p.m.

January 24

Dallas Library - Snow Crafts, 9 - Noon

January 24

Ridgeland Area Library Hosts Children/Adult Denim Activity, 9:30 - 10:30 at Ridgeland Area Library

January 27

Ridgeland Area Library Cookbook Club, 6 p.m. at Community Center

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

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...**“Forward” cont’d. from front**

on beekeeping, solar energy, and prairie restoration—conversations that planted seeds for a greener future. Despite blustery weather, the American Legion’s fundraiser netted over \$9,000 for the Veterans Memorial, a victory born of unwavering community grit. Civic acts of kindness, from Valentine gifts for seniors to Easter Egg Hunt planning, warmed the thawing days.

Spring sweetened in April with John Mark Miller’s family maple syrup operation, tapping 350 trees in a ritual that bridged generations. The revival of Dallas Cemetery, fueled by over \$12,000 in volunteer-raised funds and Eagle Scout projects, honored our ancestors and reinforced the value of preserving shared history. Fundraisers abounded—spaghetti suppers, egg hunts, and VFW raffles—supporting scholarships and

playgrounds, each event a thread in the fabric of mutual support. Insights into vernal pools teemed with life, and students’ restoration of a 1966 Case tractor symbolized hands-on learning, a nod to the ingenuity that sustains our agricultural roots.

May ushered in renewal with efforts to revive a local Cub Scout Pack, building skills and family ties that promise to endure. Good Root Growers’ grant-funded greenhouse expansion for organic produce like ginger highlighted innovative farming, while the fishing opener and fly-fishing tips celebrated our waterways. Memorial Day services, complete with wreaths, flags, and a Huey helicopter tribute to Vietnam vets, evoked deep reflection on sacrifice. Community joys like Easter hunts and garage sales fostered laughter and connection, underscoring how these simple gatherings fortify our resilience in an

ever-changing world.

June bloomed with the 50th Barron County Dairy Breakfast at Ben and Sandee Kraft’s farm, where thousands of folks gathered for tours, music, and custard—a delicious affirmation of our dairy heritage. Young trap shooters competed with enthusiasm, their fundraisers at the Farmers Market blending sport and community. Synergy’s new office in Ridgeland signaled growth in collaboration, while graduations and memorials honored milestones and losses.

July exploded with energy during Prairie Farm Dairy Days, from tractor pulls and duck races to parades and fireworks, capturing the pure joy of summer in a small town. The Ren in the Glen Faire’s 15th year transported us to medieval realms with quests and merchants, sparking imagination across

“Forward” cont’d. on page 16...

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

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SUSTAINABLY
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THRIVE

By DKO Pike

25.12.16 at 10:30 a.m. 31 degrees out; 66 inside - no heat added since a small fire last night despite an overnight low of 11; we’ve been locked into subzero temps and dangerous windchill for the past weeks with a foot of snow accumulated over a series of small deposits since Thanksgiving. Yet, it was so warm then (the weekend before Turkey), we needed ice on deer harvested before they were processed.

Have you been outside today? Hardy, NW Wisconsin residents can claim bragging rights. While we are now in weather whiplash, for weeks we have suffered through sub-zero cold with dangerous windchills. During these same few weeks since Thanksgiving, some of us welcomed an insulating blanket of snow. It reached over a foot accumulation due to quite a few “Alberta Clippers” (fast-moving storms from the NW) bringing relatively small amounts with each event.

A friend quipped, “TV weather people get current conditions wrong at least half the time while looking out their office window.” Norwegians, on the other hand, inform those new

In this time of transition, we face multiple challenges from viruses, climate crisis, and political turmoil. Douglas has decades of experience helping homeowners and land managers move toward practices that help us survive with the least impact on future generations. He is a resident of Otter Creek Township in NW Dunn County.

Weather Whiplash

to our wildly fluctuating weather, “There is no such thing as bad weather, only poorly chosen apparel.”

While evidence suggests that the weather has become more extreme due to a warming planet, others intone that our conditions have always fluctuated. While it is true that glacial ice covered much of our region roughly 10,000 years ago, tree rings and other evidence suggest our planet has not seen so much carbon dioxide in our atmosphere for three million years.

Pre-industrial CO2 concentration was 280 ppm (which had been stable for the past 800,000 years). Today it measures 428. That is an increase of more than 50%. Since we started burning fossil fuels (mid-19th century), our average annual temperature has increased by 4 degrees F. here and by 7 degrees F. in the Arctic regions. Unfortunately, decades of this precise record-keeping have been defunded. Perhaps the attitude is that if we don’t know, it won’t hurt?

If we look back (via fossils and other preserved materials), what was our world like when the CO2 concentration was this high? The interior of what is now Alaska was

45-50 degrees F. warmer, and violent hurricanes and other tropical storms ravaged the landscape of that world.

We have yet to experience the full impact of this unprecedented change in our atmosphere due to buffering by oceans and masses of ice (Wrangel mountains NE of Juneau, AK, Greenland, and Antarctica) that have not yet melted. Our North Pole will soon be ice-free toward the end of the summer season. https://weather.com/news/climate/news/2025-12-20-arctic-report-card-2025?cm_ven=dnt_newsletter_feature&lid=p4m2sfmk5llg&lctg=cc6c0454a8d65e2b7e51af5223b11b03

This fall, North America escaped with little landfall from hurricanes. Yet, several island nations in the Caribbean will require many years to begin to function again. Their infrastructure, homes, and vegetation were stripped away from Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, and many smaller islands. The intensity of tropical storms has been enhanced by warmer ocean waters.

More recently, an atmospheric river keeps pummeling the Pacific NW with floods, keeping people trapped at home due to impassable, dangerous

roads. Entire homes have been swept downstream. The primary artery into Seattle from the east (I-90) has been closed due to washouts. It has remained too warm overnight for mountain ski resorts to make enough snow to stay open. There are economic costs in lives disrupted and businesses shuttered.

Oddly, our recent cold snap resulted from a bulge in the normal circular flow of Arctic air around the North Pole. That lobe of superchilled air was a product of abnormally high temperatures in Alaska and Canada.

What changes have you observed in the weather around your home? Certainly, spring is coming earlier, and fall is later. A massive, expensive shift is both warmer overnight lows in the growing season (making it expensive to keep livestock cool) and tropical humidity that has forced more people to invest in air conditioning.

As individuals, what can we do about such global problems?

Think efficiency: invest in products that reduce your energy demand, saving money by quickly paying you back for that purchase, as well as improving your comfort even during the coldest, windiest outbursts of cold or heat in the summer.

Simply cover windows with heavy curtains anytime windows are not providing heat from direct sunlight to warm your home. These can be lightweight, double-walled paper accordion style (Hunter

Douglas is a good brand). Invest in an energy audit to get the best advice on what changes will be cost-effective. Setting politics aside, objectively we can agree weather extremes and trends like the increased frequency of whiplash weather patterns are shifting us toward greater uncertainty. Heatwaves are hotter and more frequent. Downpours come harder. Gentle rains are less likely. Hotter summers have led to our smoke-filled air from longer fire seasons. Because more people are impacted, there are more insurance claims. Costs of repairs from weather-related disasters are going up, which in turn pushes up insurance rates. All of us have to pay those charges via both taxes (revenue required to repair infrastructure) and premiums.

Reuters reports that insured losses last year from disasters and storms around the world are expected to hit \$107 billion in 2025, driven by the Los Angeles wildfires. Some 83 percent of global insured losses happened in the United States. While health insurance tops the current debate in Washington for now, the cost of property insurance has risen dramatically over this same time period, and now it appears that disaster recovery assistance from FEMA is on the wane, just as disasters increase.

It was established 175 years ago that adding greenhouse gases traps heat and warms the planet. That’s not new or controversial science. We’re now seeing the results of this physics experiment playing out in our lives and for the most vulnerable across the world.

There is no need to debate. Rather, let’s work together to implement the most cost-effective steps to manage known risks. Already perfected, proven options will create jobs, cut waste, and make each of us more energy independent. Steady, persistent steps will reduce the worst impacts at reasonable costs. None will be perfect in responding to a crisis. Still, hiding from the trouble won’t make it go away.

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Light Up Pioneer Park



Families from near and far gathered to enjoy the beautiful lights, festive displays, and the true spirit of Christmas. Thank you to the volunteers who make the season brighter and give us something special to feel each year.
Photos submitted by Maranda Peltier

...“Forward” cont'd. from pg. 14

ages. Ridgeland Historical Park’s award for preservation efforts celebrated our commitment to history.

August saw A&M Sugarworks expand with new tree plantings, sweetening prospects for future harvests. The Veterans Memorial groundbreaking at Prairie Farm Schools, with plans for granite markers, marked progress in honoring our heroes. Prep for the 102nd Ridgeland Fair built anticipation for demos and parades, while Family Fun Night with first responders fostered trust and unity.

September marked the 150th anniversary of Hay River Lutheran Church, which brought services and dinners that traced roots to 1875, a milestone that prompted introspection on faith’s role in community endurance. Stories of WWII German POWs aiding local farms during labor shortages revealed forgotten chapters of compassion amid hardship. The 4-H Energetic Kids Club’s legacy, including a community park, highlighted youth-led change, a beacon for future generations.

October painted the landscape with the Walldogs Mural Project in Ridgeland, a fair-themed artwork that not only captures the essence of our local heritage but also invites community input and creativity. We look forward to the completion of



The Prairie Farm Ladies Civic Club doesn’t miss an opportunity to support our community.



The chicken cook-off found another year of success at Gosnell’s Packer Inn.



The Ridgeland Community Improvement Group and the Ridgeland Area Library announced that Ridgeland has been selected for a mural by the Walldogs.
Photos submitted by DM MICK

this vibrant addition to our already beautiful community. Dallas’s Oktoberfest brought folks together with lively kubb tournaments and whimsical wiener dog races, all while raising essential funds for playgrounds—the infectious energy of laughter, cheers, and friendly competition serving as a heartwarming reminder of how play and purpose can unite us.

November warmed hearts with the wrestling club’s Chicken Cook-Off fundraiser, netting over \$2,000 for programs. The Ridgeland Library’s 10th anniversary celebrated 10,000 volunteer hours and growth, a testament to the power of shared knowledge. “Spirits in the Night” tastings supported community center renovations, while Veterans Memorial updates with 132 reserved markers looked ahead to a 2026 dedication.

Finally, December wrapped the year in holiday magic with Light Up the Park’s Santa Workshop, Ridgeland

ice rink, and Memory Tree, illuminating memories old and new. Civic decorations in Village Park, barn quilt classes, and Veterans Day programs at schools wove tradition with education. Shared stories of cookies, sledding, and family gatherings evoked nostalgia, reminding us that in the Hay River area, the true gift is the community we’ve built together.

Looking back, 2025 was not just a sequence of events—it was a quilt still in the making, a year shaped by care, continuity, and quiet effort. Some moments stood out boldly; others blended into the background, strengthening what was already there. Together, they created something dependable and enduring, built through patience and shared work. As we step into 2026, may we carry forward what worked, tend thoughtfully to what needs mending, and remain open to the new stories still taking shape among us.



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