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A peak into the past:



The long history of the Brown County Bookmobile

The Brown County Bookmobile visits rural areas and communities that lack a library building. Residents enjoy the convenience the Bookmobile offers, like these young readers in November 1965. **Neville Public Museum Photo**

BY DONNA SCHULD
CORRESPONDENT

BROWN COUNTY – The storied history of the Brown County Bookmobile – a library on wheels – dates back to the late 1940s.

Though the vehicle itself has evolved over the past seven decades, Brown County Library Community Engagement Manager Susan Lagerman said the philosophy behind the Bookmobile

– to provide library services to people in otherwise underserved locations – has remained the same.

“The Bookmobile is meant to go into areas where there isn’t a physi-

cal library building,” Lagerman said. “That’s what bookmobiles do. That’s

See **BOOKMOBILE** page 10

Green Bay takes first step in city rebranding initiative

BY HEATHER GRAVES
EDITOR

GREEN BAY – The City of Green Bay is in the market for a rebrand – the first suggested change in more than 15 years – but not everyone agrees that it’s a necessary expense.

Alderpersons voted 9-3 to direct staff to create a request for proposals, or RFP.

Alderpersons John Vander Leest, Jesse Brunette and Chris Wery voted “no.”

District 9 Alderperson Brian Johnson said the initiative is far more than a logo redesign.

“I would reiterate that this isn’t a logo rede-



Chris Wery

sign, this is a branding initiative – and they are two very, very different things,” Johnson said. “I do think that has been one of the biggest misconceptions of the proposal, and I think there is still a lot of opportunity

See **REBRANDING** page 9

Autumn’s fight: Green Bay kindergartener battles rare form of leukemia



Kindergartener Autumn Gauerke was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia which attacks blood-forming cells in the bone marrow. **Submitted Photo**

BY HEATHER GRAVES
EDITOR

GREEN BAY – While many gathered with family and friends this Thanksgiving – stuffing themselves with turkey, catching up with those they haven’t seen in quite some time and enjoying the time off – Andy and Mallory Gauerke spent the day at St. Vincent Hospital with their youngest daughter, Autumn, receiv-

ing news no parent ever wants to hear.

At just 5 years old, Autumn was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia.

“She had a cold in late October, and seemed to be over it, but then she got another one,” Andy Gauerke said. “Nothing too unusual, but after a couple more weeks, she started feeling increasingly tired and even nauseous, and

See **LEUKEMIA** page 12

Being in a pickle (company) holds good memories for some

BY ERIN HUNSADER
STAFF WRITER

HOWARD – With the demolition of the former pickle factory building, located at 2014 Glendale Ave. in the Village of Howard, imminent following approval by the Village Board last month, those connected to

See **FACTORY** page 11



The former Balza Pickle Factory on Glendale Ave. in Howard will be demolished beginning this month. **Submitted Photo**



Shop with a cop
Kewaunee County Sheriff’s Deputy Ryan Vandermoss, left, and Owen Sidawong take a lap through the Bellevue Target, checking off items on Owen’s list during Shop With a Cop Day, Saturday, Dec. 4. **Josh Staloch Photo**

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REBRANDING
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here yet to engage the public and perhaps some other key stakeholders.”

He said he also doesn't see a need to rush the process.

“After having conversations with staff, I think there is a real opportunity here for us to better understand from experts in the field who do this, companies that would potentially bid on this project, to really explain to us the value and meaning behind a branding initiative – not a logo – a branding initiative and what it means for the City of Green Bay,” Johnson said. “Specifically, what is it meant to accomplish that currently we are not accomplishing on our own, and I think we can do this without encumbering the funds, because I do believe that is one of the concerns that some folks have, including myself.”

Johnson made the motion to move forward with the RFP process, but delay a decision on the resolution that would have allocated \$100,000 of unbudgeted dollars from the 2021 cooperative governance agreement with the Oneida Nation to fund the branding initiative.

“And the purpose of that is, without the resolution we can't spend the money,” he said. “But it does allow us to conduct an RFP, get more tangible quotes on what it would cost, not only for the first phase, which is the design, but the second phase, which would be the implementation.”

City staff said the estimated cost to the city for consultation services is between \$65,000-75,000, with an additional \$25,000-35,000 to deploy the plan.

District 3 Alderperson Lynn Gerlach applauded the plan, saying it's long overdue.

“When I moved back to Green Bay three years ago, I said to myself, ‘Oh, my gosh, they've got to do some rebranding here,’” Gerlach said. “People might be tired of hearing this, but it might be worth saying again. I have lived all over the United States. I have lived in 25 different communities and neighborhoods in my adult life, and there is so much in Green Bay that is so unique and so wonderful, and we are just not promoting it like we could.”

Gerlach said she also supports the city taking its time with the process.

“Let's take our time and do it well,” she said.

However, not everyone thinks a rebranding initiative is the right move.

“Given how quick this idea came out... I think tonight, the council, in my opinion, is really stuck within its own echo chamber,” Brunette said. “I think you are all, I mean this with respect, though I know it is going to sound disrespectful, you all are talking amongst yourselves trying to find a way to justify spending, or looking to get a quote to spend \$100,000 that up to a few weeks ago, even a week ago, no one even had this registered on their radar.”

Brunette said a re-

branding initiative is not what residents would want that money spent on.

“If you go door-to-door in our community and you say to the average person ‘If we had \$100,000 in the City of Green Bay to spend on an issue, what would be your top 10, or 20 things the City of Green Bay should spend that money on?’” he said. “Branding initiative would not crack the top 10 or 20, I'm fairly certain of that... And this City Council, and our leadership, have spoken more about branding initiatives here in the Green Bay City Council meeting than the collective leadership has talked about the real issue on the minds of the public.”

Wery said he's heard many in the community asking if a branding initiative is necessary.

“Putting that much money into something, it should not just be a feel-good endeavor,” he said. “It really needs to have some tangible expectations. So, I'll be looking for that. If those don't appear, I won't be sold on it, and most people won't.”

Brunette submitted a communication at the end of Tuesday's meeting requesting the Finance Committee to draft a resolution to allocate the unspent revenue from the 2021 cooperative governance agreement with the Oneida Nation to pay down city debt, or be put toward hiring a civilian crime prevention specialist with the Green Bay Police Department for 2022.

Packers Jean-Charles teams up with Alzheimer's Association

BY PRESS TIMES STAFF

GREEN BAY – No. 22 for the Green and Gold, Rookie Shemar Jean-Charles, is teaming up with the Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's and dementia.

Jean-Charles is hosting a GET one, GIVE one blanket campaign through Dec. 31.

For every \$35 donation made to Jean-Charles' team, donors will receive a green and gold blanket with a Walk to End Alzheimer's logo, and Jean-Charles will personally deliver a blanket to a local senior care community in the donor's honor in January 2022.

“It's important to me to give back to the community,” Jean-Charles said. “It's a difficult journey for any family dealing with Alzheimer's or dementia. This is one way I can support those families and bring more awareness to the prevalence of this devastating disease.”

Statistics

An estimated 6.2 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's or dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death



Green Bay Packers Rookie Shemar Jean-Charles is helping to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's and dementia.

Submitted Photo

in the United States.

In Wisconsin, there are more than 120,000 people living with Alzheimer's, and more than 196,000 family members and friends serve as caregivers.

About the Alzheimer's Association

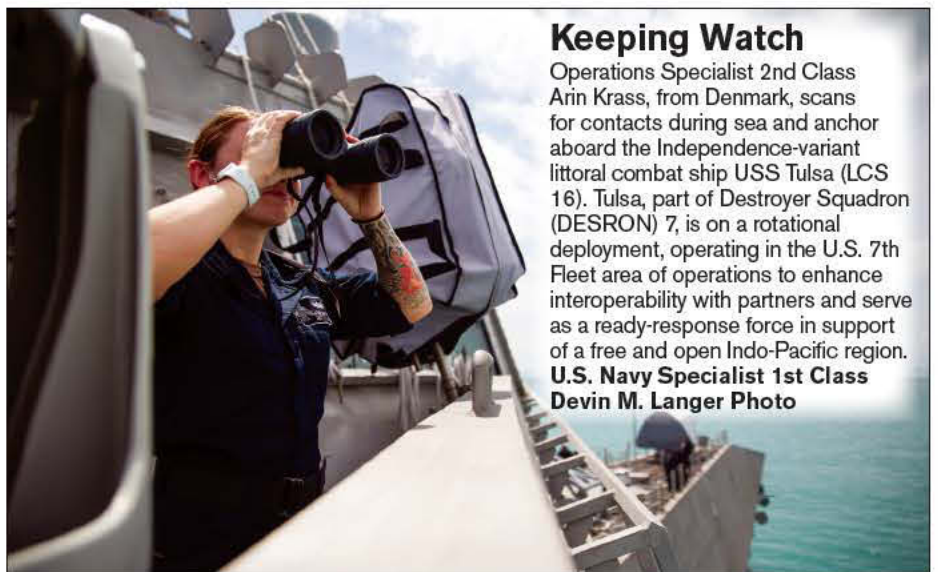
The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Its mission is to lead the way to end Alzheim-

er's and all other dementia by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection and maximizing quality care and support.

For decades, the nonprofit has worked to raise awareness and funds with its annual Walk to End Alzheimer's held in communities nationwide.

The organization's vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia.

For more information, visit alz.org.



Keeping Watch

Operations Specialist 2nd Class Arin Krass, from Denmark, scans for contacts during sea and anchor aboard the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16). Tulsa, part of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 7, is on a rotational deployment, operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations to enhance interoperability with partners and serve as a ready-response force in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. U.S. Navy Specialist 1st Class Devin M. Langer Photo

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BOOKMOBILE

from page 1

what they're known for. That's been its job since its inception, and that's what it still does."

For county residents living outside populated areas, she said the Bookmobile is a treasured convenience.

"Traditionally, we've served the more rural areas, such as Morrison, Dyckesville, Hollandtown," Lagerman said. "In the last couple of years, we've added Ledgeview, and we're constantly looking at places we can go. We call those community stops... People get excited when they see it driving down the street."

Local Historian and Special Collections Manager Mary Jane Herber said at one point, a single bookmobile wasn't enough to meet demand.

"In the early 1970s, the library actually had two Bookmobiles - one similar to the current Bookmobile and one that had a larger semi-tractor and trailer unit," Herber said. "With the expansion of the libraries in Denmark, Pulaski and Wrightstown, and the decline in rural schools, the second unit was eventually eliminated."

The driver

Lagerman said an instrumental part of the program is the person who sits in the driver's seat, which has remained pretty consistent since 1948 with just five drivers handling the wheel.

Lagerman said the Bookmobile driver has to be a "people person, obviously."



A library on wheels, the Brown County Bookmobile has been a part of the library system since 1948. **Josh Staloch Photo**

"(They're) there to answer questions about other library services or demonstrate databases on our website," she said.

For the past three years, that person has been Jenn Koetz.

"The operator before (Koetz) retired after almost 35 years," Lagerman said. "It takes a special person to be in that role. (Koetz) really takes ownership and takes the whole job responsibly."

More visible

Lagerman said one of the biggest changes the Bookmobile has had over the years is its increased visibility.

"What's probably different than in 1948 is that the Bookmobile goes to special events," she said. "It gets invited to special events, and we love that because there are a lot of people and many have not ever been on a bookmobile."

Lagerman said people are sometimes surprised it's an actual library.

"It has books for children, adults, teens, every-

one," she said. "People think a bookmobile is just for children. It's not, it's for all ages. It's really an extension of our library."

The future

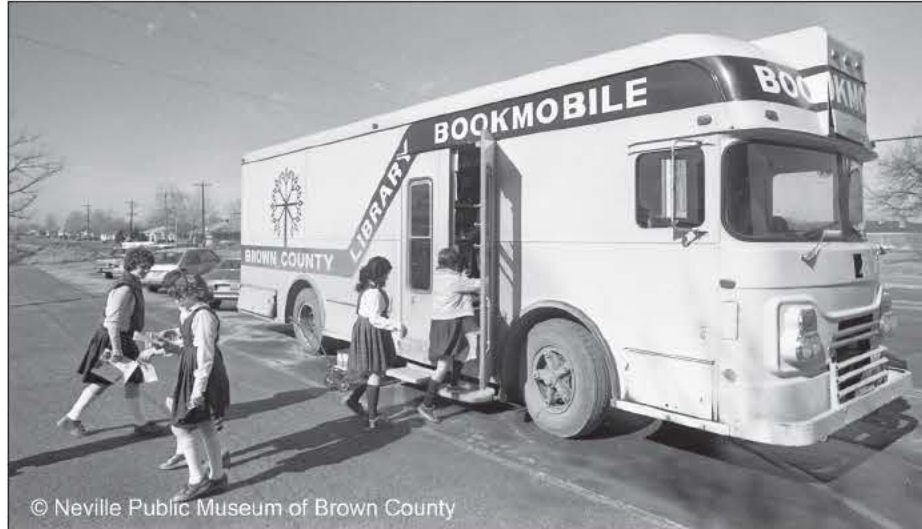
Lagerman said it's safe to say the Bookmobile will be rolling down Brown County streets for years to come, and will soon get an upgrade.

"We're in the process of buying a new Bookmobile because the purple one is a 1993 model and it's past its life expectancy," she said.

She said the Library Board committed funds to purchase a new Bookmobile, earlier this year.

"We looked at several different styles," Lagerman said. "You'd be amazed at what's available for bookmobile options. We worked with a consultant and determined that a bus-style very similar to what we have is the best option for what we do with it and the programs we offer through it. It will be a little shorter, but there will be little change."

She said the 18- to 24-month process has been



© Neville Public Museum of Brown County

Students visit the Brown County Bookmobile in March 1981. **Neville Public Museum Photo**



The Brown County Library's current Bookmobile has been in service since 1993, well beyond its 20-year life expectancy. A new model will roll out within the next two years. **Submitted Photo**

delayed some due to supply chain disruptions because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're hoping within the next year and a half, maybe two years (we'll have the new bus)," she said. "We don't really know."

Lagerman said the new bus will be equipped with WiFi, and more space will be dedicated for computer usage, which she said the current bus doesn't have.

"We're really excited about that," she said.

Lagerman said a library on wheels makes sense on many levels.

"The library system has had this service for so long it's really ingrained in us, and it plays an important role in what we do," she said. "Really, it can reach more people. We would not be able to build a library building to all these communities, so the Bookmobile is a great option to serve more people without having to

maintain buildings."

Lagerman said though the Bookmobile is out at festivals and parks more often in the warmer months, it is a year-round service.

"The Bookmobile does special requests to make school visits," she said. "We get a lot of invitations, and if we can accommodate them, we will."

The Bookmobile schedule can be found online at browncountylibrary.org.

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FACTORY
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the building's history can't help but look back at its past and the connections it had with the community.

Tim Rasmussen, president of the Howard-Suamico Historical Society, said specific dates of the building's history are a bit fuzzy.

In terms of how long it was a pickle company, Rasmussen said, "Forever."

With the news of the building's pending demo, Rasmussen took a deep dive in the historical society's archives and found several photos back from when the building thrived as a pickle company.

The original owner and operator was E. J. Balza.

Mike Balza, great grandson of the late entrepreneur, said he believes the company was started sometime in the mid- to late-1920's.

"We have evidence that the company existed in 1927 via a picture and letter dated from that year," he said. "Further evidence that the company existed in the 1920s is by the make of the truck used to haul the foodstuffs to the plant," Balza said.

Mike Balza said though his great-grandfather dabbled in a handful of other business ventures, it was his pickle company that thrived producing "pickles, sauerkraut and olives as evidence by the canning jars in possession of all the family - I have an olive jar."

Balza said his great-



Workers fill pickle jars at the former Balza Pickle Factory in Howard, which later became Stokely Canning. The building is set for demolition beginning this month. Submitted Photo

grandfather had a well-oiled machine in terms of how they got their cucumbers to be processed into pickles.

"The company owned many stations along the train line to which the farmers would haul their foodstuff," he said. "The food would then be picked up by train and hauled to the processing plant. Trucks would then haul the foodstuff to the vats to be processed."

Rasmussen said some historical documents name the business as the first namesake of the park across the street.

"The park across from the processing plant - currently called Howard Memorial Park - it was said to have been donated by the Balza family and was then known as Pickle

Park," Rasmussen said.

Balza said though the start date was hard to pin down, documentation as to when the business put an end to pickle production was easier to come by.

"The plant closed its doors in 1936," Balza said.

The building, however, didn't stay vacant long.

Just two years later, pickle production picked back up again.

In 1938, the building was purchased by the Stokely Company which continued to can pickles, along with its cabbage cousin, sauerkraut.

"1938, Stokely buys pickle plant," Balza said as he read from an ad he had dated June 3, 1938. "The new purchasers are one of the largest canneries and packaging firms in the United States, operat-

ing 35 canneries in parts of the country, including 10 of them in Wisconsin."

Balza said though he was too young to remember his great-grandfather, he said he's heard many stories from people who knew him.

"I would have people who worked for him come up and tell me stories," he said.

E.J. Balza died in 1944.

Demolition

Demolition of the former pickle plant is scheduled to begin soon, Director of Public Works Geoff Farr said.

Last month, the Howard Village Board approved a low bid of \$91,999 from Earth Construction, LLC, to tear down the structure on village-owned property.

In addition to the contracted demolition work, the total estimated project cost of \$186,849 also includes tipping fee charges for 1,125 tons at \$50 a ton (\$56,250) and other expenses and contingencies.

Farr said the demolition project is being funded by the Community Development Block Grant program the village is using to remove blight.

"The pickle factory demolition, basically, knocks the entire building down, removes all the concrete from the basement (and) fills it back in with some general fill that we're getting from the county for free," he said.

Farr said gravel will be placed on top and left as a large parking lot, which could be used in the summer as overflow parking for swimmers at Duck Creek Quarry Park.

"The (demolition) schedule is basically December through February," he said. "But (Earth Construction believes) they can get it done quicker than that. They're going to start in late December and hopefully be done in January."

Farr said the village sent letters to neighboring property owners "to discuss fencing and how to kind of dress up the edges, make it look good, and kind of transition the land, so there's no sharp edges, and remove a few trees along the lot line."

"Depending on how (Earth Construction intends) to run their operation, they can actually crush all the concrete and

remove that offsite," he said. "Otherwise, they can crush a portion of it and keep it as a parking lot top. But they're also able to sell it all off and use it for other purposes, if that is more cost-effective for them."

Farr said the area where the pickle factory is located is being looked at for redevelopment, with realignment of that portion of Glendale Avenue being discussed.

"You may recall, this was part of the Green Bay Core property, where they recycled motors and spilled a bunch of oil and gas all over," he said. "The existing area around the building has contamination, so if that area is redeveloped at some point in the future, or we realign the roads, I think they were saying - I read a 100-page report - the top 2-4 feet is basically contaminated. I don't know over the years if it's been kind of abating itself naturally - generally not - but we can probably plan on when we put a road or buildings (on the site), we're going to have to haul 2-4 feet of the whole site off and take it the landfill, which is pretty expensive."

Under Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regulations, Farr said contaminated soil that's been excavated must be taken to a landfill and may not be re-spread anywhere else.

Press Times Staff Writer Kevin Boneske contributed to this story.



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