

**SPORTS EDITOR: DAVE BOEHLER**

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**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

"You wouldn't have won if we'd beaten you."  
- Yogi Berra

# Calling all seniors

**Dave Boehler**



THE REVIEW  
SPORTS EDITOR

## ■ Tom & Jerry's starts September mini-golf league for those 60 and older

Since I'm not old enough, there's got to be a way I can sneak in to the new Senior Mini-Golf League at Tom & Jerry's that runs through the end of the month.

"You bring your mom," Sarah McMullen said. "Come on out and golf with your mom. Split the prize money."

McMullen, who became the new owner of the place with her husband in January, had been asked several times if they considered doing a league. She was not that familiar with running one, however, so

she did her research.

At first, McMullen came up with Senior September.

Then she figured she might as well start a league this month, and also combined it with a charity (which was also suggested to her).

So Generations was contacted and was more than excited at the offer.

"When I think of Generations, I think about people coming together to have fun, have a social aspect," McMullen said. "So I thought I could be a part of that here at Tom &

Jerry's.

"A lot of the seniors at Generations participate in fitness events and classes, things like that, so I know they're an active bunch. And I thought having them come on out and pilot a league here would be a good combination."

It is open to anyone at least 60 years old and the entry fee is \$20.

To qualify for league prizes, there is a six-game minimum - three rounds at each of the two 18-hole courses - and golfers can also have a chance to win

a Generations fitness membership if they purchase a \$50 senior 10-game fun pack and use it by the end of September.

Tom & Jerry's will donate \$1 per league game and give half of the entry fee it collects to Generations. The other half will be awarded to the top three golfers.

"It's a great way to enjoy the outdoors without it being strenuous," McMullen said.

"Enjoy some time with friends."

The older crowd has been visiting Tom & Jerry's all sum-

mer "from all over creation," says McMullen, because it's one of very few mini-golf courses in the area that has visual interest as well as some challenging holes.

"We've kind of got a botanical garden feel to it," she said. "The plantings are wonderful, the place is in bloom all year long and there's always something to see here."

"And the senior market really is very complimentary of the grounds that we keep here as well."

Did you hear that, mom?

# Well worth the walk

Twelve members of the Elkhart Lake Fire Department, including 73-year-old Lynn Bub, took part in the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb on Saturday at Lambeau Field.

Lieutenant Jay Riemer also did it last year and says the 90-minute or so walk up and down the stadium's stairs is emotional.

"As a firefighter, it hits you a little harder than the average person," he said. "The significance of this, it's quite an honor but yet it's very humbling."

Participants walk the equivalent of the 110 stories of the World Trade Center.

At the equivalent of the 78th floor, which is the highest one reached by a firefighter on the tragic day in 2001, each person rings a bell in honor of a fallen hero on their badge they received before the endeavor.

Riemer admits it was a very exhausting experience.

"When you start it, it's 'oh yeah, we're just going to do a couple of steps,'" he said. "Oh no, halfway through you want to quit. You don't want to go any further."



LYNN BUB leads the Elkhart Lake Fire Department down the stairs of Lambeau Field. - Photo by Nicole Riemer

# July return for NASCAR

Another NASCAR weekend is coming to Road America, but it will have a different name.



Kwik Trip has switched places with 2021 title sponsor Jockey for the NASCAR Cup Series race scheduled for July 3 (Sunday). It will be called the Kwik Trip 250 presented by Jockey Made in America.

Start times and broadcast details are yet to be determined.

Fans will have the opportunity to watch reigning Road America winner, Chase Elliott, battle it out with NASCAR's future stars such as Cole Custer, Tyler Reddick, Christopher Bell, and Erik Jones, and superstars such as Kyle Busch, Martin Truex Jr.

This past July, NASCAR returned to Road America for the first time in 65 years.

"The opportunity to partner with a NASCAR Cup Series race at Road America is a thrill, as race fans across Wisconsin and the Midwest flock to Elkhart Lake for this premier event," said Mark Meisner, Kwik Trip's director of marketing and advertising. "NASCAR fans are some of the most enthusiastic in all of sports. ... We look forward to sharing in the excitement next summer."

- Road America

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# Playing takeaway working so far

Plymouth not only leads the state with 11 interceptions, the Panthers have returned five of them for touchdowns - two more than anyone else.

The team finished with four picks, including two for TDs, Friday in a 31-12 victory over visiting Kewaskum.

Plymouth is one of two teams with a 2-0 record in the East Central Conference and is the only one 4-0 overall, as the squad moved up one spot to No. 7 in the Division 3 state rankings.

Dominic Riederer picked off two passes, and Ian Struve and Marco Troka returned theirs for touchdowns.

"I think the defense is disguising coverages well and that confuses quarterbacks," coach Dan Knaus said. "Marco's, he was dropping into his hook-curl and the quarterback never saw him."

"And Ian's was a squat cor-

## PLYMOUTH FOOTBALL

ner, and I think the quarterback thought he was bailing and threw an out-route, and he jumped in."

Riederer, who was injured the first two games, had an interception that led to a 9-yard touchdown run by Kellan Mella for a 10-0 lead in the first quarter.

"He's just a natural free safety back there," Knaus said. "They tried to go deep and he got them from center field, he snuck over and got them."

## SPEAKING OF MELLA

The quarterback dislocated his pinky on the first offensive play of the game but returned shortly after.

"He came back and played pretty well," Knaus said.

"It was kind of ugly when I saw it."



PLAYERS SHAKE HANDS at midfield, where the Panthers' logo was specially painted for 9-11. - Photo by Tyler Luedtke

## SPECIAL NIGHT

It was Military Appreciation Night, and those active or retired got in free.

Two players ran out carrying the American flag and the team ran through an Army inflatable arch before the start of the game.

"It fit in the schedule at a

perfect time to do the night," Knaus said.

That's because the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks was the following day. To commemorate, the Panthers' logo was painted red, white and blue instead of the usual orange.

"The field looked amazing," Knaus said. "That's the first

time we've ever done that. I really appreciate the maintenance crew putting a little extra time in it. It looked so cool."

## UP NEXT

**Plymouth at Kettle Moraine Lutheran, 7 p.m. Friday:** The Chargers are 2-2 after a 44-7 victory at Ripon last week. Last year, Jeb Nytes caught a touchdown pass from Mella on the final play of the game to give the Panthers a 14-12 win over Lutheran.

"It'll be a good test," Knaus said.

## STANDINGS

	Conf.	O'all
<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>2-0</b>	<b>4-0</b>
Port Washington	2-0	3-1
Kewaskum	1-1	3-1
Berlin	1-1	3-1
KM Lutheran	1-1	2-2
Sheboygan Falls	1-1	2-2
Waupun	0-2	2-2
Ripon	0-2	0-4



KADE NOVAK (10) battles for the ball at Green Bay Notre Dame on Sept. 9. - Photo by Sara Baltus

# First loss quickly forgotten

Plymouth is back to dominating.

After suffering its first loss of the season, the Panthers rebounded with two shutout victories, including a 5-0 decision at Ripon Tuesday in the East Central Conference opener that gave them a 7-1 overall record.

"We're kind of injured right now and just didn't have a lot of energy; it was 2-0 at half," coach John Lenz said. "The second half we kind of just decided to play our game and focus on short, but tight, accurate passing to work our way to the goal. We ended up probably quadrupling the amount of opportunities we had to score."

Plymouth, which shared the league title last year and hosted Winneconne Thursday, got three

## PANTHERS SOCCER

goals from Nate Stucke. Owen Plate and Kate Novak also scored, and Micah Falk had an easy time as goalie.

In the last 10 games against the Tigers, the Panthers are 9-0-1 and have allowed two goals.

## PHS 2, HARTFORD 0

On Saturday, Ryker Daggett scored his first goal of the year and Jaren Baltus added the other. Two starters did not play and were replaced by Issac Falk (outside back) and Matt Sheridan (midfield).

"We knew (the loss) was either going to be a fork in the road in the right direction, or we were

going to get defeated by it and play down and mad," Lenz said. "But instead we countered and played a really strong game of soccer."

## NOTRE DAME 3, PHS 0

Plymouth won its first five games by a score of 31-1 but lost to the Tritons Sept. 9.

They remained No. 2 in the state in the Division 3 poll and the Panthers slipped three spots to No. 7 as a result.

"It woke us up, definitely," Lenz said. "Notre Dame is a really good team. We just played very passively and very kind of afraid, just overall pretty slow and weak. It was a shock to our system. We'd kind of been rolling really well."

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# PHS volleyball team among best in county

■ Other Plymouth squads finish second in cross country, tennis and swimming

Plymouth's volleyball team reached the semifinals of the annual Sheboygan County Tournament held Saturday at South.

After beating all five teams in pool play, the Panthers lost to the host Redwings, 2-1, in the semifinals.

"Injuries played a huge part throughout the day," coach Stephanie Schultz said. "But the girls did an amazing job serving throughout the whole tournament, finishing at a 94% as a team."

Ella Bindl led with serving 54 out of 55 attempts to go with 69 assists.

## PANTHERS ROUNDUP

Ella Ahlstrand had a team-high 38 kills, and Clarissa Jones and Claire Leynse each added 28.

Emily Schweitzer finished with 66 digs, Taylor Miller contributed 54 and Ava Booth tallied 60 assists.

"The girls came out with a high level of play and intensity following the loss to Ripon (last week)," Schultz said.

## CROSS COUNTRY

**Mike Hurlbert Invite:** The girls took second and the boys

placed third last Friday in Mayville.

Olivia Rabe's time of 19 minutes 46.84 seconds was good for second, behind Laconia's Molly Duel (19:35.19).

Plymouth's Hannah Downs finished fourth (19:53.64), ahead of teammates Masee Selk (21:05.57), Isabella Tracy (21:11.03) and Sarah Welsch (21:12.97).

Jacob Gruttner came in third in 17:01.30, and was followed by Carter Selk (17:48.17), Carson Anhalt (17:51.68), Emmitt Huhn (18:38.01) and Wyatt Herzog (19:17.60).

## TENNIS

**Kaukauna Tournament:** Plymouth had two flights take second place on Saturday, which helped the Panthers take second as a team.

Hailey Batzner (No. 2 singles) and Addy Hill/Riley Meyer (No. 1 doubles) were runner-up after losing to Green Bay Notre Dame.

PHS 5, Roncalli/Two Rivers 2: Batzner was also victorious on Sept. 9, as were Isabella Toutloff (No. 3), Boden Budrecki (No. 4), Megan Fontany/Kayla Sprenger (No. 2) and Claire Nelson/Alise Mooney (No. 3).

## SWIMMING

**PHS Triangular:** The Panthers finished second, behind Kohler/Lutheran/Falls and ahead of Berlin/Green Lake Sept. 9.

"Ella Josephs had a great diving night," coach Dave Coley said. "We improved our times and gained valuable meet experience."

Josephs was Plymouth's lone winner, as she finished with 232.25 points. Third-place swimmers came from Adelynn Seymour in the 50 freestyle, the 100 free and the 200 free relay (with Kaitlyn Levens, Cadence Seymour and Connelly Jarr).



THE DAWN TENNIS LEAGUE, which celebrated its 50th season this summer, features singles (left) and doubles (right) players. - Submitted photos

# 50 and counting for Dawn Tennis League

■ Ages range from 20-70-plus years old

The Plymouth Dawn Tennis League recently wrapped up its 50th season and features players ranging in age of their 20s to 70s.

The oldest is Dan Sobieski,

who says he is "over 70" and has been playing for about two decades since he moved to Plymouth from Sheboygan.

"It's a fun league," he said. "I enjoy it, so I guess I'll

keep playing as long as I can. When you get over 70, you don't know when the pain is going to start to a point where you have to quit."

Sobieski, who did not start playing the sport until he was in his 30s, won a season-ending doubles tournament with Dan Baltus.

Jer Dentz was the singles champion.

"A lot of people are playing at a competitive level, but yet having laughs and enjoying it," said Eric Plate, who finished his sixth season.

Matches begin at 6 a.m. every Tuesday (singles) and Thursday (doubles), and the season runs from May until early September.

Although another player in his 70s will not return in order to travel more next summer, Sobieski will be back for sure.

"I'm not a traveler, so I don't plan on giving this up anytime soon," he said. "I'm going to play until my aches and pains don't recover."

Those interested in playing next year should send an email to plymouthdawntennis@gmail.com.

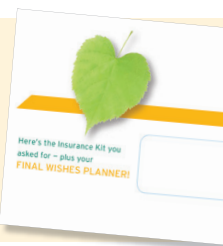
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# Baierl is fourth at school with 2,000 assists

■ Football team wins third straight, tennis squad improves to 4-1, cross country also in action

Howards Grove senior Emma Baierl became the fourth volleyball player at the school to reach 2,000 assists on Tuesday. She is the first to do so since assistant coach Taylor Bubolz did it in 2016, and it came on her second assist of the night against visiting Appleton Xavier.

Play was halted and the game ball was given to Baierl, who made all-Big East Conference second team last year and will play at Truman State next season.

"It was pretty awesome to see," coach Brett Damrow said. "Emma's so consistent. She's a very steady player and she's continued to master her craft. Couldn't be more excited for her and it's neat to see her continue to grow."

**HG 3, Xavier 0:** Howards Grove continues to prove it is one of the best volleyball teams in the state, regardless of division, as the Tigers (No. 1 in the Division 3 state rankings) cruised past Xavier (No. 5 in Division 2) in front of their home crowd.

"The fan support has been great and it's getting better as we go," Damrow said. "We probably had one of the biggest student sections we ever had (Tuesday). We're really appreciative of that."

In the 25-18, 25-13, 25-13 victory, Karissa Kaminski had 16 kills and 12 digs. Saige Damrow totaled 14 digs and 11 kills. Elle Kennedy provided 12 digs and Baierl made 21 assists. Kamryn Kaminski tallied 18 assists, Myka Roethel ended with six kills and Eden Maranell had four blocks.

"We just kept pressure on them the entire night and I could not be more proud of how they executed the game plan," Damrow said.

**County Classic Tournament:** The 33rd annual event was held Saturday at South, and the team used 2-0 scores to beat Christian, Lutheran, Cedar Grove-Belgium, North, South, Oostburg and the Redwings again in the final.

"It was a phenomenal team culture," Damrow said. "It is starting to be team-led instead of coach-led. The athletes, 100%, are holding their own culture right now. It's been a great transformation the first month of the season. I'm proud of the whole team."

## FOOTBALL

**HG 25, Manitowoc Lutheran 14:** Howards Grove (2-0, 3-1) is in the top half of the Big East standings thanks to 193 yards rushing from Tyler Rittenhouse last Friday.

"It was fun, it was a blast, really," he said. "I couldn't have done it without the line. Without their job, I really wouldn't have been able to do that."

The Tigers won their third

## TIGERS ROUNDUP

straight game, as the sophomore averaged 11.4 yards per carry.

"Tyler brings a unique running style from the standpoint he just does not want to go down," coach Mark Maranell said. "We made some adjustments at halftime that helped us out, helped to be able to create more holes. Our offensive line did a great job making those adjustments and Tyler was able to capitalize on that."

Howards Grove held a five-point lead but increased the score to 19-8 in the third quarter thanks to a 72-yard touchdown run by Rittenhouse. In the fourth, he added another TD, from 6 yards out.

Maranell told his assistants during the game that Rittenhouse gets stronger as the game goes on.

"Which is really fun to see," the coach said.

Maranell says he definitely saw he had the capability to be a special back while playing on the junior varsity last season.

"It was good because it taught me some of the offense without like a lot of risk and really prepared me for this year because it's basically the same," Rittenhouse



**RITTENHOUSE**



**EMMA BAIERL (2)** reaches 2,000 assists Tuesday and is the fourth at the school to do so. - Submitted photo

said.

**Early deficit:** Lutheran held an 8-0 lead in the second quarter when Ryan Binversie scored on a 7-yard run that was followed by a 6-yard touchdown pass from Payton Danen to Laine Brendel for a 13-8 lead at halftime.

**Stars on defense:** Brock Dortman had an interception to go with four solo tackles and 12

assists. Landyn Helmer and Binversie had a team-high seven solos, and Jack Schroeder and Payton Specht were complimented by Maranell for stopping Lutheran's option-style offense.

**Up next:** vs Cedar Grove-Belgium, 7 p.m. Friday. The 4-0 Rockets own a 17-game winning streak against the Tigers and have scored at least 41 points 15 times.

## TENNIS

**HG/EG 7, Kiel 0:** The co-op team improved to 4-1 in Big East action on Tuesday, and one of the highlights came at No. 1 doubles.

Olivia Bramstedt and Abby Tegen won the first set, but lost the second and were down 4-3 in the third.

"When down a break and serves are not making it in like we wanted, it was time to relax and make clean shots, and that is what the girls did to take the final three games of the set to win it," coach Elizabeth Hill said.

## CROSS COUNTRY

**Roncalli Invitational:** The girls finished seventh Saturday in Manitowoc, as Mary Athorp had a team-best time of 23:49.52 to put her in 19th place.

Jonah Waller's 19:25.00 was good for 18th and helped the boys place eighth.

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# Bunke has interesting job

## Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah senior waves flag at track

So what did you do this summer?

Jack Bunke got to wave the green and checkered flags at Road America's CTECH Manufacturing Motorplex as the starter for the kart and motorcycle races.

The Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah senior football player - he made first-team all-Big East as a defensive lineman last year - was even interviewed by NBC Sports during Indy weekend about his job and also met Ryan Newman when NASCAR was in town.

"I really like being up there for the big weekends, and you don't have to pay," he said. "You're being paid to be there. That's awesome."

Bunke can see the main track from his perch, but his eyes focused on his own race.

"It can be difficult, but I've got to pay attention to the go-kart track," he said.

Bunke's second year working at Road America wraps up in a few weeks.

His great-grandfather was an auxiliary sheriff's deputy for four decades on a paddock bridge, his grandmother ran a concession stand and his mother worked at the track during



BUNKE

college.

At first, Bunke was hired to just assist the go-kart races. But about a month later he was waving the flags.

"I was nervous at first because it's a lot of pressure," Bunke said. "Sometimes the tendency is no one likes the flagman."

He serves as the official of the races, so if there is an incident, he has to determine whose fault it was.

Drivers will even approach him after a race to 'discuss' things.

"You never like the yelling, but it does happen," Bunke said.

"Normally it gets resolved well."



JACK BUNKE waves the checkered flag at the go-kart track at Road America. - Photo by Connie Sullivan



MAYA McMILLAN makes a nice dig. - Photo by Les Tension

# Miller to the rescue

## Girls also take 2nd in cross country, football team loses

Normally, Lexi Miller hits and passes the volleyball.

But because of an injury, she was a setter - after just two days of practice - for Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah in the 33rd annual Sheboygan County Tournament at South on Saturday.

"Lexi did a nice job stepping in," coach Diane Feldmann said.

The Resorters finished with a 2-3 record thanks to wins over Kohler and Random Lake.

Haley Mersberger totaled 41 kills and Kat Miller added nine.

### RESORTERS ROUNDUP

"This was our best performance of the year for both the boys and the girls," coach Bart Larson said. "They are starting to figure things out with what works best for them. I was very pleased with our performance."

**Crusader Challenge:** On Tuesday at Sheboygan Lutheran, Sabrina Tanouye's 16th-place showing in 22:41.82 helped the girls finish sixth. Roth took 26th in 19:16.02, as the boys finished 10th.

"Sabrina and Ariana both had excellent races and medaled in a very tough field," Larson said. "Sixth place was very respectable."

"This meet has some of the best teams and individuals in the state, so it is a good marker

of where we are at."

### FOOTBALL

**Wisconsin Heights 69, ELG 13:** The 2-1 Resorters got touchdown passes from Brady Hassinger to Kean O'Neil in the third and fourth quarters on Friday. O'Neil caught seven passes for 65 yards and Hassinger threw for 115 yards.

**Up next:** vs. Oakfield, 1 p.m. Saturday. This is the team's only Saturday game of the season. ... The Oaks are 3-0 and have scored at least 42 points in each game. ... Grant Bass (No. 1) has thrown seven touchdown passes and Jack Fox (No. 20) has rushed for seven TDs. ... The schools did not play each other last year but in 2019, the Resorters earned a 34-33 overtime win after stopping Oakfield's two-point conversion pass.

### CROSS COUNTRY

**Chilton Invite:** The girls finished second, as Ariana Parantzke finished fifth in a time of 23:17.17. The boys placed fourth, led by the eighth-place showing from Aaron Roth in 10:42.55.

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**Question:**  
Who will win the Super Bowl?

**Answer:**  
Green Bay: 57%  
Kansas City: 0%  
Tampa Bay: 0%  
Someone else: 43%

(Editor's Note: most votes were before 1st game)

To see next question and vote, visit [plymouth-review.com](http://plymouth-review.com)

# Two drivers earn divisional crowns

## Frank, Sorce Jr., take first Saturday

The penultimate Plymouth Dirt Track Racing program of the season saw four drivers make return visits to A-main victory lane and a pair of competitors claim division championships Saturday.

### We're No. 1!

Second-year competitor **Trevor Frank** (Sheboygan) secured his first career PDTR championship in the Cellcom B Mod A-Main and **Don Sorce Jr.** earned his third career PDTR championship in the Grand National A-Main.

### PDTR 360 Sprint Car

Point leader **Travis Arenz** (Sheboygan Falls) rolled to his sixth A-main victory of the campaign in the 25-lap Kristine Hartmann Pleasantview Realty main event, and **Ben Schmidt**

(Howards Grove) finished fourth after starting 14th.

Arenz notched his 10th Midwest Sprint Car Association A-main victory of the season, 10th career PDTR 360 Sprint Car A-main win, third straight MSA victory and 21st career MSA main event triumph. He heads into the final race this weekend with a 22-point lead.

### Grand National A-Main

**Matt Loehr** (Dotyville) picked up his third 25-lap Oostburg Automotive victory of the season. On lap 17, Loehr powered around **Josh Pierce** (Random Lake) to secure the lead in Turn 2 and never looked back en route to his ninth career PDTR Grand National A-main triumph.

Pierce placed second, **Steven Weber** (Plymouth) finished third and **Dick Hed** (Plymouth) was fourth.

### Cellcom B Mod A-Main

**Steve Lorier** (Sheboygan)

## PDTR RESULTS

racked up his second 25-lap triumph of the year and his fourth career PDTR B Mod A-main triumph.

**Kyle Odekirk** (Plymouth) placed second after starting 10th, **Shane Long** (Sheboygan Falls) placed fourth and Frank took fifth after starting 13th.

### Badger Midget Auto Racing Association

**Chase McDermund** nailed down his third consecutive BMARA by claiming his 10th A-main victory of the season in the 25-lap main event.

He bolted away on a restart and maintained the top spot for his second Badger Midget A-main triumph of the season at the track.

### Up next

The final event of the season is Saturday at 5 p.m. Spectator gates open at 4:30.

## STANDINGS

### SPRINTS

Travis Arenz	1379
Brandon McMullen	1357
Ben Schmidt	1272
Kevin Karnitz	1265
Lance Fassbender	1201

### B MOD

Trevor Frank	937
Justin Bauer	935
Shane Long	877
Spencer Long	855
Steve Lorier	810

### LATE MODEL

Justin Schmidt	898
Turk Letizia	872
Charlie Schmidt	852
Jim Schmidt	825
Justin Ritchie	767

### GRAND NATIONAL

Don Sorce	996
Tyler Kulow	978
Luke Scholten	933
Donny Kulow	928
Bender Racing	919

# Road America hosts final race of year

The last event on Road America's schedule this season begins Friday: the Ariens Art on Wheels Vintage Weekend featuring VSCDA.

The event draws more than 280 vintage and historic race cars, and the paddock is open for close-up views.

Practice begins Friday at 8 a.m. and qualifying is the same time on Saturday.

There is a "Gather on the Green" car show from 3-7 p.m. Saturday at the Osthoff as well.

On Sunday, races begin at 8:30 a.m., as drivers battle for the Kimberly, Sheldon and Elkhart Lake Cup.

The 50th anniversary of the 2.5-liter challenge is at 1 p.m., followed by the Peter Brock All-America challenge.

# OUTDOORS

## My idea of fast food is a goose

### Hello friends,

This week's column for the most part is about spending four days in Dodge County near Burnett with my super-duper most perfect buddy, the one and only, Rod Bensley!

I have written about Rod in the past and until recently he created, ran, and owned Roosters Run pheasant hunting preserve. Rod and his wife Wendy Vick still manage the prettiest 212 acres of pure paradise in Dodge County, but for a solid reason that you will soon find out, they do not market pheasant hunts anymore.

**Wednesday, Sept. 1st**  
**High 74, low 54**

All the credit for the best goose hunt that I have ever been on goes to retired Dodge County conservation warden John Christian. I had met John in the past but today would learn that the man is pure bird dog and he had left no weaknesses when we met with him long before daylight in a somewhat picked, sweet corn field.

There were three small spreads of decoys to put out and then the bird dog made a blind for me out of corn stalks, told me to lay on the ground and covered me up. I was told the geese would be in soon and the wait was not long.

Now here is the inside story and it is a big one, a sad one, but it is what life is all about.



# WILDERNESS JOURNAL

Mark Walters • OUTDOOR COLUMNIST

My super-duper buddy had a sore leg last fall and it got worse all winter. Due to COVID issues and some scheduling mishaps, a serious look at what was causing the pain did not happen until mid-spring and it was soon determined that Rod had prostate cancer that had progressed to his bones.

It was determined that Rod had a fighting chance until he became very ill on Memorial Day and found out that he had rectal cancer and quite possibly not long to live.

All summer I have been in regular communication with Rod and Wendy and four days at their place was scheduled to visit and for me to also be put into the Rod Bensley Labor Camp.

This is how John Christian comes into the story: it was determined that he could set up a hunt under conditions where there were next to no geese in the area for the opener and with his long-term buddy who has

less than perfect health.

Wendy Vick, who is a nurse at Waupun Correctional Institute, was so concerned about her husband that she came along and sat in the truck.

A flock flies over, I can't see boo because of corn stalks covering my face, and John drills one. A flock lands, I cannot do anything because they are out of range. A flock makes the mistake of coming too close and we drop five. Before it got light, we said we would be happy with a couple of geese, we now have six.

Rod sails a goose and Wendy goes home to get their German Wirehair "Sassy." Rod Bensley

is one of the best hunting dog trainers that I have observed. The goose is at least 500 yards away and in a sunflower field. Sassy finds the goose! We now have 10.

Rod Bensley knows that he is a man on a short rope. He is taking care of business in every way possible and doing his best to make sure Wendy is taken care of, including the two of them planning and building of a new house on the 212 acres.

After the amazing retrieve and some more exceptional shooting, I have four geese, as does John, and Rod has two. Rod's bad leg (cancer deterioration) is telling him he needs to go home. We literally had to lift him off the

ground.

A flock of Canada's makes a mistake; I shot one, John shot one and Rod gets a triple! Wendy hikes in from the truck and the first thing she tells me "It's God. I guarantee you it's God!"

I stayed with the Bensleys for two more days and did basic labor and mostly just visited and watched the non-stop parade of people visiting with Rod and it was an incredible experience for me.

Rod has had some good luck lately and is praying that he can hunt deer with his crossbow and maybe even with a rifle.

No matter what happens to this retired corrections officer, long-time tree climber/harvester is living large and each day to its fullest! Live like there is no tomorrow!

Sunset

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Rod Bensley