

To submit events for The Week, email editor@theplattevillejournal.com or call 608-348-3006 at least two weeks before the event date. Schedules are subject to change without notice.

Thursday, May 26
• Platteville Regional Chamber Good Morning Platteville, Mound City Bank Motor Branch, 90 S. Second St., 7:45 a.m. 608-348-8888, www.platteville.com.

Friday, May 27
• Belmont High School commencement, 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 28
• Iowa-Grant High School commencement, 1 p.m.

Sunday, May 29
• Potosi High School commencement, 1 p.m.
• Belmont Fire Department street dance, 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

Monday, May 30: Memorial Day
• Ritchie-Bowers-Kohout VFW Post 9298 Memorial Day services, St. John Nepomuc Catholic Cemetery (Don Stanek grave), Castle Rock, 9 a.m.; Rock Church Cemetery (Daniel Knutson grave), west of Livingston, 10 a.m.; Hillcrest Cemetery, Montfort, 11 a.m.
• Memorial Day program, Municipal Building Auditorium and City Park, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 31
• Registration for Platteville Public Library Summer Library Program "Oceans of Possibilities." www.plattevillepubliclibrary.org.

Wednesday, June 1
• Platteville Kiwanis Chicken BBQ, Broske Center, 400 Pitt St., 4:30-7 p.m. 608-348-6628.

Thursday, June 2
• Ruby's Pantry food distribution, Platteville United Methodist Church, 1065 Lancaster St., 4-6 p.m.
• Platteville Main Street Program Music in the Park: The Wundo Band, City Park, 6 p.m.
• Democratic Party of Grant County monthly meeting, Wisconsin Bank & Trust, 10 Keystone Parkway, Platteville, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 4
• Platteville Farmer's Market, City Park, 8 a.m.-noon, Saturdays through Oct. 29.

Sunday, June 5
• Platteville High School commencement, south gym, 1 p.m.

Monday, June 6
• Platteville High School music awards night and pops concert, PHS auditorium, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 7
• Rundell-Biddick family reunion meeting, Kay Moen home, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, June 8
• Livingston Public Library Summer Library Program, "Oceans of Possibilities": Hula hoop dance program, Livingston-Clifton Fire Station, 1-2 p.m.
• Platteville Public Library Bingo in the Park, City Park, 6 p.m. 608-3484771 ext. 4, www.plattevillepubliclibrary.org/calendar.

Thursday, June 9
• Platteville Food Pantry, Lutheran Church of Peace, 1345 N. Water St., 9 a.m.-noon.
• Platteville Main Street Program Music in the Park: Sarah Day with Chase Peabworth, City Park, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, June 14: Flag Day, Robert M. La Follette Day
• Grant County Democratic Party 2022 Picnic, Broske Center, 400 Pitt St., Platteville, Prairie Lights String Band 4:30 p.m., picnic 5 p.m., candidate speakers 6 p.m. RSVP deadline June 7, 608-642-3054, grantdems49@gmail.com.

Thursday, June 16
• Platteville Main Street Program Music in the Park: Panchromatic Steel, City Park, 6 p.m.
• Herbs and Herb Lore, Platteville Public Library, 225 W. Main St., 6 p.m. plattevillepubliclibrary.org/calendar, 608-348-4771 ext. 4.

SOUTH WEST

www.swnews4u.com

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022

SECTION B



The last race



The end of greyhound racing in Iowa

The last race date at Iowa Greyhound Park in Dubuque May 15 marked the end of 37 years of greyhound racing. Jeff Mergen (below) started announcing at Dubuque Greyhound Park one year after it opened and returned for the track's final four years.

Top and below photo by Steve Schiferl, Greyt Expressions Photography
Other photos by Steve Prestegard



by Steve Prestegard
editor@theplattevillejournal.com

Parimutuel betting began in Iowa with greyhound racing at Dubuque Greyhound Park in 1985.

Greyhound racing ended in Iowa at Iowa Greyhound Park in Dubuque — the track where greyhound racing began and ended in the state — May 15.

The last day also ended the employment of Jeff Mergen, a Platteville native once known as the "voice of Wisconsin greyhound racing" after he started at Dubuque Greyhound Park one year after the park opened in 1985.

"It's an interesting but strange day here," said Mergen toward the end of the 10-race day. "I've done over 60,000 races — you want to do the best you can, and you never really get it right."

The final day of racing featured a capacity crowd inside and mostly full track-side seats, ending with the wedding of a longtime trainer, with one of his greyhounds included in the wedding party.

Mergen is the son of Mark and Rose Mergen, who owned and operated Mergen Funeral Home in Platteville for 27 years. He graduated from Platteville High School in 1981.

Mergen graduated with a radio and TV degree from UW-Platteville in 1985 after working at WSUP radio and hosting a show on the former TV-5.

He was the weekend sports anchor at the former KDUB-TV in Dubuque when the station's substitute meteorologist told him the new greyhound park was looking for a race announcer. Mergen worked his first night despite having lost a contact lens and being able to see out of only one eye.

The thrill for Mergen was "the challenge of speaking clearly at a very, very fast pace, creating an exciting atmosphere. If I make it exciting ... this is a visual thing, the people watch the dogs, but the background can make it exciting. And they are beautiful athletes — 45 mph."

Mergen said he needed little preparation other than pronunciations. Racing greyhounds' jacket colors and numbers match — red is number 1, blue is number 2, white is number 3, black is number 4, orange is number 5, black with white stripes is number 6, green with white stripes is number 7 and pink is number 8.

Mergen occasionally sprinkles well known announcer catch phrases into his calls. At the end of the last race, he announced, "Elvis has left the building."

The Dubuque track hosted up to 110 race days per year. "There is a big difference
See RACE page 3B ▶

