

# Sun-Argus

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The Gateway to Pierce County

Your LOCAL source for weekly news!



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SUBSCRIPTION SPECIAL! PAGE 3

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 09, 2021

## Sen. Tammy Baldwin tours Sailer's in Elmwood with other area meat processors



Senator Baldwin discusses issues facing small community meat processors with Jake Sailer (center) on a visit to Elmwood as the USDA issues funds to expand meat and poultry capacity for small processors. Photo by Paul J. Seeling

USDA issues \$500 million for expanded meat and poultry processing capacity

By Paul J. Seeling  
Sun-Argus/Gateway News

ELMWOOD, WI – Wisconsin U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin made a stop in Elmwood at Sailer's Market and Meat Processing last Friday as part of her swing around Western Wisconsin to tout the "Build Back Better" agenda and other funding programs she has sponsored or worked on. Other stops in addition to Sailer's included visits to the Pablo Center in Eau Claire, and Grantsburg Industrial Park in Grantsburg.

Senator Baldwin was given a tour of the popular fifth generation Sailer's Market and Meat Processing retail store and meat processing facility in Elmwood by certified Master Meat Crafter Jake Sailer. They were joined on the tour by four or five other local meat processors including Roy Elsenpeter of The Smokehouse in Woodville and Durand.

Part of the \$500 committed by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) "Build Back Better Initiative" funds through the American Rescue Plan is to provide \$150 million to strengthen existing small and very small meat process-

ing capacity, benefiting smaller producers, and processing plants. These funds are to help them weather COVID, compete in the marketplace and get the support they need to reach more customers. This will also benefit U.S. consumers with more choices and fresher local options for their families' tables.

Senator Baldwin worked to secure \$4 billion for food supply chain resiliency in the American Rescue Plan, which was signed into law in March. Baldwin met with local business owners and meat processors to discuss the challenges small and medium-scale meat processors face when getting started in meat processing, expanding, and meeting the ever-strengthening food safety requirements from USDA.

"Sailer's has been servicing Elmwood and the surrounding areas since 1923," said Senator Baldwin. "It was great to visit a five generation Pierce County family small business and discuss some of the unique challenges facing small meat processors. Business like the ones I met with last Friday are a cornerstone in regional and local economies and have made a huge impact on their local com-

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## 'Our doors are open'

Elmwood and Rock Elm Methodist Churches welcome Pastor Meg Erickson

By Cari Cornelius  
Sun-Argus/Gateway News

ELMWOOD, WI – Pastor Meg Erickson officially began her ministry over the United Methodist Churches of Elmwood and Rock Elm on August 1, 2021. A proud wife, mother of three, and grandmother of five, she is no stranger to the family values shared by many in our small rural towns.

Growing up in Racine, Pastor Meg was used to a more metropolitan lifestyle, but after spending countless summers as a kid at her grandparent's house in Menominee, Michigan, it was no culture shock to venture to more rural parts.

She began her ministry over forty years ago starting as a youth leader on mission trips each summer. According to Pastor Meg, "I was able to take high school youth on mission trips each summer through



Pastor Meg Erickson, the new minister of the Elmwood and Rock Elm United Methodist churches. Photo by Cari Cornelius

the Appalachia Service Project." When asked what her favorite part of these experiences were, she noted that it was wonderful to be a part of enlightening youth to a different lifestyle, teaching them to care for

others, and learn how to love their neighbor, and not pass judgement on others because their situations may be different. It was these experiences

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## Single motorcycle fatal crash reported in Pierce County



Here is the 2017 Harley Davidson motorcycle that was operated by Ronald Bithell. Submitted photo

Submitted by Herman Kreig, Lieutenant

Pierce County Sheriff's Office  
ELLSWORTH, WI -- On Saturday, September 4, 2021, at about 5:55 pm, the Pierce County Sheriff's Office was notified of a single motorcycle crash near the inter-

section of Highway 35 and 1050th Street, Prescott, Wisconsin, in Oak Grove Township.

It was determined a 2017 Harley Davidson motorcycle operated by Ronald Bithell, 59 years old of Minneapolis, MN was traveling north on Highway 35. Mr. Bithell

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## Summer Reading Program a huge success at the SV Public Library

**SUMMER READING SPONSORS**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Submitted by Katie Schneider, Spring Valley Public Library Director, with Paul J. Seeling, Gateway News

SPRING VALLEY, WI -- The Summer Reading Program hosted by the Spring Valley Public Library was a huge success this summer, and it's all thanks to local businesses that donated to the cause. These donations brought in \$2,000 to spend on

amazing prizes for all ages. A huge thank you to our sponsors! A huge thank you to our sponsors!

A Butchery Shoppe, Arneson Insurance Agency, Cenex - Spring Valley, Crystal Cave, Dragonfly and Damsel, First Bank of Baldwin, MBC Sports, Mooney's Rusty Horse Bar & Grill, Pierce Plumbing INC, Sneaker's Pub & Eatery, The

Spillway, Spring Valley Bakery, Spring Valley Dentistry, Spring Valley Drug, Spring Valley Golf Course, Spring Valley Police Dept., Team Oil, VINO in the Valley, RC&D Transportation LLC, and Wild & Raw Wellness.

"Summer Reading Program

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## Kevin 'Cubby' Grant charged with Arson and more

Extensive jail time and fines possible if convicted

By Cari Cornelius, with Paul J. Seeling

WOODVILLE, WI – A former Woodville man now from Glenwood City or Forest, Kevin "Cubby" Grant, the former owner of the Cubbyhole Bar and building in Woodville, Wisconsin, has been formally charged with Arson with Intent to Defraud following a 2018 incident. Along with one count of Arson with Intent to Defraud, Grant is also charged with seven counts of Second Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety.

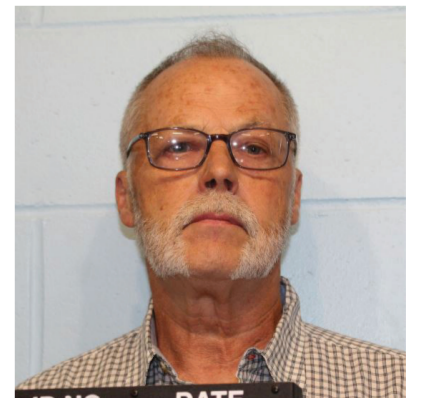
The charges against Grant were filed on July 7, 2021, with his first appearance being held on July 29, 2021, in St. Croix County Circuit Court.

According to the criminal complaint, on December 29, 2018, at 2:02 a.m., Woodville Police Department Officer Joel Benson was on duty when he observed smoke coming

from the roof of the former Cubby Hole Bar.

He requested that the dispatch center page United Fire and Rescue. He then attempted to contact the known owner of the building, Kevin Grant but was unable to reach him. He then contacted Grant's daughter and she agreed to contact her parents. Kevin and Dayna Grant then arrived at the scene and spoke with Officer Benson about the fire.

Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Special Agents and ATF (Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms) agents were then brought in for additional assistance to help determine the location and origin of the fire. From this investigation starting from the exterior to the interior, agents identified the cause of the fire to be incendiary. These findings were supported from samples of charred carpet that tested positive for gasoline, and included a void found in the floor of the restaurant/bar area. In the debris of the void, an older style space heater



Kevin Grant. Photo courtesy of the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department

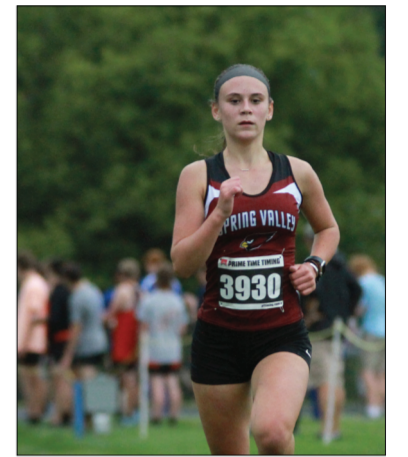
was found. Within the space heater, wooden sticks consistent with those of match sticks were found, as well as other wooden sticks of similar size bound together with electrical tape. Also, within the void, were the remains of a partially melted red plastic gasoline can.

These items brought investigators to the conclusion that the space

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What's inside...



PAGE 8: SV Cross Country results. Photo by Sam Niebeling

### Photo of the week



When you'd rather play in the mud than sit in the blind. Photo by Cari Cornelius

Submit your photos to editor@mygateway.news for a chance to have them picked as Photo of the Week!

Current results from this month's

### Reader Poll

Have you received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes - 50%

No - 50%

Vote now at mygateway.news!

.../SAILERS' cont. from Page 1

unities." "It's times like these that our small processors stood up to the challenge of when this country was really in need for protein," said Jake Sailer, owner of Sailer's Food Market and Meat Processing. "With our demand being high, its programs like the American Rescue Plan funding that would help us to add on to our facility, build new, purchase modern equipment to process more protein and fulfill the gap between the small/very small and large processor."

In the case of Sailer's Market and Meat Processing they have purchased the large old Stockman's building in Wilson with plans on the drawing board for expansion underway. Surely this new USDA funding will be a significant boost to those plans. The other meat processors on the tour spoke of the challenges they are currently facing with supply chain, increased equipment costs and delays, skilled labor issues and more. All of which Senator Baldwin was quick to note and understand. .../PASTOR' cont. from Page 1

that led Pastor Meg to continue her ministry calling.

Prior to coming to Elmwood, Pastor Meg was the minister of the Alma Center-Hixton-Merrillan United Methodist Churches (that's right, THREE congregations) where she served for over 20 years. According to the United Methodist tradition, Pastor's are appointed to congregations by the Bishop and Cabinet of their conference (in this case, the state

of Wisconsin) which is how she ended up serving the Rock Elm and Elmwood UMC's.

When asked about how she was handling having two congregations, Pastor Meg said, "In my previous appointment, I served three congregations that were in an eleven-mile radius. My biggest adjustment has been going from three Sunday morning services down to two. I now have the luxury of being able to greet folks each Sunday after worship, and I have really appreciated that!"

Since arriving in Elmwood, Pastor Meg has been lucky enough to be able to take in some of the community celebrations including parts of UFO Days, and two of the Rock Elm Ice Cream Socials. While social events have been happening, following recommended COVID protocols and the emergence of the Delta variant, things have still been not quite back to normal. This includes making it possible for residents to worship from home and make worship services available virtually.

With no prior experience of recorded worship services, Pastor Meg has risen to the challenge and become comfortable with being in front of the camera. She said while she was nervous at first, it's really become second nature and she loves giving people the option to be able to attend if they can't in person. As far as services go, Rock Elm UMC and Elmwood UMC are gathering in person for Sunday worship but, they are asking folks to wear face masks at this time, with Pastor Meg reminding all that, "In all things, we strive to love and care for

the world and each other."

My final question to Pastor Meg was if there was anything she would like to share with the community. Her response, "Our doors are always open! If you have a need or a concern, I'm here, I'm approachable, and I'm reachable!"

If you would like to attend a Sunday worship service, the Rock Elm service begins at 9:00 a.m., or the Elmwood service begins at 10:30 a.m. The option to watch the Elmwood worship service virtually is available by visiting their Facebook page at "RockElm & Elmwood UMC."

Pastor Meg, welcome to the community and we are happy to have you here!

.../CRASH' cont. from Page 1

lost control of his motorcycle and crossed the centerline and entered into the west ditch and was ejected from the motorcycle.

Deputies arrived on scene and began performing lifesaving measures with no success. Mr. Bithell was pronounced deceased on scene.

The Pierce County Sheriff's Office was assisted on scene by Prescott Police Department, Prescott Fire Department and Ellsworth Area Ambulance Service.

The Crash remains under investigation by the Pierce County Sheriff's Office.

.../LIBRARY' cont. from Page 1

Statistics" - A total of 276 people signed up for the Summer Reading Program -

an amazing turnout with all age groups represented. The group represented were: nine babies and toddlers, 102 children under 5th grade, 71 tweens (6th - 8th grade), there were 482 books read among the tweens group, 18 teens (9th - 12th grade), 42 books read among the teens group and 76 adults with 533 books read among the adults group.

Participation over the last 4 years for the Summer Reading Program was: 2020 - 62, 2019 - 83, 2018 - 69 and 2017 - 78.

"Craft Tuesday Participation" - Slime: 61 children, Lava Lamps: 46 children, Stress Balls: 59 children, Cloud Dough: 85 children, Galaxy Jars: 36 children and Tie-Dye Shirts: 61 children.

"Other Events" - Hero Day: 30 participants, Lock-in Party: 20 participants, Trivia: 28 participants, Adult Book Club: 30 participants, Bingo: 18 participants.

Many patrons have visited the Spring Valley Library over the summer. We served 1,338 patrons in June, 2,210 in July, and 8,727 in August!

"COMING SOON"

The Spring Valley Library is in the process of remodeling and will have a space for future events, a reading / lounge area, and a coffee bar!

The Magic Show for Dam Days is on Saturday, September 18 at 10:30 a.m. All ages welcome!

Trivia has been moved to the 1st Monday of each month at Mooney's Rusty Horse.

September is "Library Card Sign-Up" month: Just by signing up for a library card in the month of September,

you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win Apple AirPods, an Echo Dot, or Mario Kart 8 Deluxe - Nintendo Switch. You can get a library card at ANY age! (If you already have a library card, come in and renew it for a chance to be entered into the drawing!)

Fun events will be held at the library during the school year when there is NO SCHOOL.

Be sure to follow the Spring Valley Public Library Facebook page and the Sun-Argus newspaper so you don't miss out on future events and excitement happening at the Spring Valley Public Library!

"The summer is coming to an end, but that doesn't mean the fun will come to an end for the Spring Valley Public Library. We have many ideas planned for the library and can't wait to share that with the community!" said Katie Schneider, Spring Valley Library Director.

.../ARSON' cont. from Page 1

heater could have been intended as a delayed ignition device for gasoline vapors.

The fire was initially responded to by several firefighters from United Fire and Rescue. Crews entered from both the East and North doors of the building to contain the fire.

On December 29, 2018, Grant filed an official insurance claim to State Farm, including a Sworn Statement of Proof of Loss. The monetary amounts

reflected in that statement show that Grant would have received up to \$600,000 had he chosen not to rebuild, and up to 1.15 million if he did choose to rebuild. He also had no current mortgage on the property, making the insurance payout a cash profit.

In the filed complaint there appears to have been found more incriminating evidence found at Grants home and shop and conflicting statements made by Grant to the investigators about that evidence.

In addition to the Arson with Intent to Defraud charge, the other counts include seven counts of Second Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety for each firefighter that responded to the fire. The maximum penalty for the Arson with Intent to Defraud (a Class C Felony) upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and or imprisonment of not more than 40 years or both. Each of the Second Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety charges (Class G Felonies) carries a fine of \$25,000 each and or imprisonment of not more than 10 years or both. Could Grant's total maximum imprisonment be 40 plus 70 years and possibly \$275,000 in fines?

His next appearance in court is scheduled for a Preliminary Hearing on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

Note: At this time, this case is still open. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

**PIERCE & PEPIN COUNTY  
2021 FALL  
CLEAN SWEEP  
HAZARDOUS WASTE  
& PHARMACEUTICAL  
COLLECTION EVENT**



**Saturday  
September 18<sup>th</sup>  
8:00am – Noon  
Pierce County  
Recycling Center  
707 N. Maple St./  
Hwy 65 N.  
Ellsworth WI**

**Free of charge to Pierce and Pepin  
County Households & Farms  
(However, a charge may be applied for Large  
Loads of Household Hazardous Waste/Paints)**

**Farmers • Businesses/Institutions  
Must Pre-Register by Monday  
Sept. 13, 2021 Call: (715-273-3092)**

**Call in advance if you have**  

- over 500 lbs of hazardous waste
- more than (3) drums of hazardous waste
- rusted deteriorated containers
- loose pesticides needing to be containerized

**CLEAN SWEEP HAZARDOUS WASTE ITEMS**

**Garage & Workshop**

- Adhesives
- Auto Repair Products
- Battery Acid
- Chemicals
- Cleaners/solvent based
- Gasoline/Oil Mixtures/  
Other Fuels
- Non-Automotive Fluids
- Paints (*Latex* paints can also be  
dried out & placed in your trash)
- Sealers (wax-shellac-varnish)
- Stains
- Thinners/Strippers/Removers

**Kitchen & Bathroom**

- Cleaners/solvent-based
- Disinfectants
- Floor Care Products
- Removers (nail polish-hair)

**Home & Garden**

- Aerosol Cans/full
- Chemicals
- Cleaning Solvents
- Fungicide
- Herbicides
- Insecticides
- Pesticides
- Poisons (Iye-mothballs)
- Polish (furniture-metal-shoe)
- Stump Remover

**FREE  
PHARMACEUTICAL  
COLLECTION  
EVENT **

*Being held in conjunction with the  
Pierce County Fall Clean Sweep Event*

**ALL Businesses/Institutions  
Must Call Ahead: 715-273-3092**

**Accepting:**

- Household Prescriptions
- Over The Counter Meds
- Pet Medications
- Empty your medications into a  
bag for collection at event
- Black out personal information  
on original container and place in  
your trash

**UNACCEPTABLE  
ITEMS**

- Household Garbage
- Explosives/Ammunition
- Radioactive Materials
- Infectious/Sharps Wastes  
(Needles or Other Medical Sharps)
- Biological Wastes
- Foam Insulation Cylinders

**2021 Minnesota Renaissance Festival**  
 Weekends (Sat. & Sun.) + Labor Day  
 Aug. 21 – Oct. 3 • Festival Friday, Oct. 1st  
 9am – 7pm • Rain or Shine  
 RenaissanceFest.com • Free Parking