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INSIDE



Lexi LeFever broke the 45-year-old UWRF school mark of 12.14 seconds in the 100-meter race set by Falcon Hall of Famer Jane Ubbelohde in 1977. **Page B1**



More than 100 people marched to call attention to the stigma still attached to mental health. **Page A7**

Devon and Isaac Brazil have curated a space that "inspires a childlike state of wonder" in a nearly 137-year-old home. **Page A9**

OBITUARIES PAGE B7

Vonnie Hall
Marian Hamann
Donna Mae (McKahan) Killian
Ruth A. Lewis
James Kuhn
John Jerome Marson
Richard Meyer
Lyle H. Mickschl
Linda Sharretts



STAR-OBSERVER



STAR-OBSERVER PHOTO

The Star Observer team will work out of 126 Second St. Ray Paul, Caleb Anderson, Joe Paul, Sally Shepherd, Chris Knott, Nikki Lee, Sam Fristed and Hannah Coyle.

Back in DOWNTOWN

Star-Observer opens office in downtown Hudson

BY HANNAH COYLE
Staff Writer

The Star-Observer, the local newspaper acquired by O'Rourke Media Group at the beginning of 2021, has opened an office in downtown Hudson, 126 Second St.

"Caleb Anderson, VP of sales, and Joe Paul, digital sales manager, pushed really hard to make this happen," CEO Jim O'Rourke said. "At first, I was a little hesitant because the sales and news teams have been doing a great job working remotely, but nothing beats in-person engagement to take

what we're doing in the local community to a new level. And we think Hudson was the best place to do it."

Both sales and news teams for the Star-Observer will be working out of the new office.

"I have never seen a team more eager to get back out into the workplace and establish long overdue team camaraderie," Anderson said. "Having an office is improving employee morale, keeping work and home life separate, creating a cohesive company culture and encouraging a

See Downtown Page A6

Get in touch

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We're always open for feedback as well, and we look forward to continuing to serve you.

RIVER FALLS

Over 800 graduate from UWRF

Speaker: 'Your ship sails now'

BY SAM FRISTED
Staff Writer

RIVER FALLS – More than 800 students graduated from the University of Wisconsin River Falls May 7 in front of hundreds of family, friends and faculty.

The numbers were so big, two ceremonies were held – one in the morning for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and the College of Business and Economics.

The weather provided a good send-off for the graduates; bright and sunny. The sunshine and temperatures in the 70s provided ample photographic opportunities outside and around campus.

Graduates continued their celebration with friends downtown and at outdoor parties throughout the afternoon and evening. The positive atmosphere combined with the sunny Saturday made the city feel alive and vibrant.

The afternoon ceremony represented graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences and College of Education and Professional Studies.

Capt. Richard Phillips gave an impassioned

See Graduates Page A6

EP ROCK

Keeping trash from landfill

Waste reduction challenge proves successful

BY HANNAH COYLE
Staff Writer

What does it take to cut lunchroom waste in half in an elementary school? A few recycling bins, compost buckets, a bunch

of motivation that only children have and the promise of the golden garbage bin trophy.

EP Rock Elementary students have been participating in a waste reduction challenge, cutting the waste they send to the landfill.

A group of fourth- and fifth-grade students were on

See Trash Page A5



HANNAH COYLE/STAR OBSERVER.

Lucas Larson and Francy Bunch use the nurses office scale to weigh one of the day's trash collections.

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NEWS



HANNAH COYLE/STAR OBSERVER.

Back row: Lucas Larson, Jackson Stanga. Front row: Annika Stelling, Bella Brady, Francy Bunch, Emma Ewald, Aylah Tepper.

Waste reduction by grade level

Kindergarten by 53%
First by 50%
Second by 64%
Third by 75%
Fourth by 55%
Fifth by 50%
Schoolwide reduction of 57%



Some students used the scale, some moved the trash bins, some wrote numbers and other did the math. It was a team effort to run the waste reduction challenge.

HANNAH COYLE/
STAR OBSERVER.



SUBMITTED

The Golden Garbage Cans were awarded to the winning grades during the waste reduction challenge at EP Rock.



HANNAH COYLE/STAR OBSERVER.

Each student's tray could be emptied into four different containers. The trash, recycling, liquids or compost.

TRASH PAGE A1

“lunchroom duty.” Each day, they alternated jobs, helping the younger students place their waste in the correct bins.

These students explained the goal of the challenge: cut down on waste by composting and recycling.

Since the beginning of the challenge, EP Rock has reduced its lunchroom waste by 57 percent. One of the student

strategies was to only take what they wanted to eat. You can always go back for more, one student said.

They learned there is only a certain type of food you can place in the compost. It has to be fresh. It can't be cooked. And there can't be any additives, like some of the prepackaged fruit cups.

The students also learned that all of their garbage goes to a landfill in Eau Claire.

“It all doesn't belong in there,” one fifth grad-

er said.

Liz Malanaphy, educational assistant at EP Rock, spearheaded the challenge at the school. She said by cutting down on waste, the school is not only diverting trash from the landfill, they're diverting carbon emissions by reducing the number of trips to the Eau Claire landfill.

As each group ate lunch, the fourth- and fifth-grade helpers made their rounds, asking students if they had items they were finished with. They then placed them

in the correct bin.

When that lunch period finished, the older students helped their younger peers place waste items in the correct bins before leaving their trays to be washed.

The fourth and fifth graders then gathered to weigh the bins on an old school nurse's scale, determining how many pounds of trash that period had accumulated.

Immediately, the school started to see exceptional results.

The students admitted the challenge was a lit-

tle tricky, but ultimately they're excited about the impact they're having and optimistic about their progress.

When the challenge came to a close, the golden garbage bin trophy wasn't on the line anymore.

A golden garbage can was presented to the first grade for the least garbage every day (under 10 pounds) and a golden garbage can was presented to the third graders for the greatest waste reduction.

One of the fourth graders said even though they won't be tracking it, she'll still try to eliminate some of her waste.

Malanaphy is hopeful the school will continue to use recycling and

composting as alternative options to the landfill, especially since the students have been so receptive and the numbers speak for themselves.

Malanaphy said they did look for a pig or chicken farmer who could take all the food waste, including compost and the meat, bread and other food products, but they were not able to find one.

“If we were able to do so, we would be really close to a zero waste situation,” she said. Those interested are invited to contact Malanaphy at malanaea@hudsonraid-ers.org.

Readers can reach Hannah at hcoyle@ourourkemediagroup.com

BRIEFS

Habitat groundbreaking

St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity kicked off its work with partner family No. 72 at a groundbreaking ceremony in New Richmond, Wednesday, May 4.

The Patraw family is a multi-generational family who will partner with the nonprofit to build an affordable, five-bedroom home on the city's northeast side.

New Richmond Mayor Jim Zajkowski, Pastor Amelia Houdek, Lori and Allen Patraw and their grandson JJ, St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Kristie Smith and Family Selection Chair Carol Hajicek were joined by community members, nonprofits, sponsors and volunteers at the event.

Excavation begins this week. Volunteers are needed to help the family and organization complete the home. More information can be found at scvhabitat.org.

HUDSON BRIEFS

Class of '82 reunion

The Hudson High School Class of 1982 will celebrate its 40th anniversary. A reunion will be held on July 30 on the St. Croix Cruise Lines Grand Duchess. Tickets are \$50. Email Hudsonhs1982@gmail.com for more details.

Syttende Mai celebration

The St. Croix Valley Syt-

tende Mai Society will hold its 45th annual observance of Norway's Constitution Day on Tuesday, May 17, at the Bradshaw Celebration of Life Center located at

2800 Curve Crest Blvd. in Stillwater, Minnesota.

There is free parking, and the building is handicap accessible.

In Norwegian, “Syttende Mai” means the “17th of May” and is often thought of as the country's Fourth of July. Comparing it to our Independence Day is appropriate because Norway's Constitution was patterned after the American Constitution.

Activities will begin with a social hour at 5 p.m. A dinner of typical Norse food will be served at 6 p.m. and at 7 p.m. enjoy a presentation, music and stories of Norway by the Rev. Gunnar Kristiansen who is the present pastor at Mindekirken Church (Norwegian Memorial) in Minneapolis. Kristiansen was born in Bodo, Norway, and has been a chaplain and family therapist in mental health care systems for many years.

Kristiansen has many interesting stories about his life in Norway, and this should be a very enjoyable evening for everyone.

The banquet is open to the public. Reservations can be sent to Janet Ziebell, 13945 Upper 58th St. N, Apt. 221, Oak Park Hts., MN. 55082.

Reservations will be accepted until May 12.

Admission is \$28 per person. For more information call Roger Bosmoe at 651-439-9423.

High schoolers composting project

Evgenia Roth and Thea Bentley are seniors for a few more weeks at Hudson High School. For their STEM capstone project, they're looking to establish a composting program at the high school. Though there are many potential avenues to executing this, they are looking for a few things to get the ball rolling: a used (for extra sustainability) industrial composter, donations or grant opportunities and insight.

The two have experience composting on a small, household scale, but they're looking for community members who may have knowledge to help advise them on this larger scale project.

As they will be graduating this spring, both heading into collegiate, environmental studies programs, Bentley and Roth are hopeful to continue working on the project through the summer and pass it along to like-minded students for the years to come.

Those interested in providing insight or leads on funding are invited to reach out to Bentley and Roth at thea.e.bentley@gmail.com and evgenia.roth@gmail.com.

RIVER FALLS BRIEFS

Distinguished agriculturalist

Francis G. Ginther, professor emeritus of youth development, was honored as the 2022 Wisconsin Distinguished Agriculturalist by the UW-Riv-

er Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences on April 21 in front of a crowd of nearly 200 students, faculty, staff, supporters of the college and Ginther's family and friends.

The occasion was the college's 56th annual Scholarship and Awards Program back in-person for the first time in two years.

Ginther spent 30 years as a 4-H youth development agent.

Over the course of his career, Ginther planned, coordinated and conducted hundreds of youth experiential learning events including camps, field trips, conferences, adult and youth leadership training, and countless fair educational activities.

The Wisconsin Distinguished Agriculturalist Award was established in 1970 to recognize individuals who have provided leadership, service and other contributions to the broader agricultural community.

Outstanding faculty

Agricultural Education Professor James Graham was presented the 2022 College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Outstanding Faculty Member award at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Graham was honored at the 56th annual scholarship and awards recognition program on April 21.

Graham's nomination materials highlighted his commitment to integrating high impact practices with a

focus on service learning and collaborative assignments and projects that connect students with the community and area high school agricultural education programs.

His teaching excellence is reflected in his high student evaluation scores. He advises an average of more than 70 students per year yet still earns their praise.

Commencement trip

Samira Teymurova traveled 20 hours one way by plane from her home country of Azerbaijan to see her son, Jamal Teymurlu, walk across the University of Wisconsin-River Falls commencement stage May 7.

“It's worth it,” Teymurova said. “I knew I needed to go and be here.”

Her son, who graduated with a degree in applied physics engineering, fulfilled a dream his mother had for herself, to study in the United States.

“I wanted to study in the U.S.,” Teymurova said. “I didn't have the opportunity. He kind of continued my dream. That's why I wanted to see him in the gown and graduate. Graduation is very important in our family.”

His mom traveled with him when he started at UWRF, and she is now on her fourth trip to River Falls.

Teymurlu said he is pleased his mother attended his commencement and is proud he is graduating from UW-River Falls.

“I did this,” he said. “I didn't let them down. For my family, and for myself, education is very important.”