



SPORTS • Menomonie has two advance to D1 semifinals at state wrestling tourney/1B
YOUR REGION • Local entrepreneurs pitch startup ideas including app, solar projects/3A

Russia attacks Ukraine; peace in Europe 'shattered'

BY YURAS KARMANAU, JIM HEINTZ, VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV AND DASHA LITVINOVA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Thursday, unleashing airstrikes on cities and military bases and sending troops and tanks from multiple directions in a move that could rewrite the world's geopolitical landscape.

President Vladimir Putin ignored global condemnation and cascading new sanctions as he unleashed the largest ground war in Europe in decades, and chillingly referred to his country's nuclear arsenal.

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Midwest WeirdFest returns to Eau Claire next weekend. Page 8B

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MONDAY Impact of inflation

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Universities spend COVID relief money



Staff photo by Dan Reiland

Students walk to class on UW-Eau Claire's campus on Thursday. Local universities have allocated eight-figure federal COVID relief funds to pay for pandemic-related expenses, send emergency grants to students and stem the impact of lost housing, dining and tuition revenue.

By SARAH SEIFERT

LEADER-TELEGRAM STAFF

EAU CLAIRE — UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stout have allocated eight-figure federal COVID relief funds to pay for vaccine clinics, COVID tests, remote learning, emergency student grants and to shore up financial impacts from millions in lost housing, dining and tuition revenue.

U.S. universities received three

Half of funds went to students, much of remainder covered lost revenue

rounds of federal relief funding in three phases of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, or HEERF. The funding is aimed at helping the schools recover from pandemic-driven financial fallout.

UW-Eau Claire most recently received just over \$20 million and UW-

Stout received \$14.8 million in HEERF III funds after Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act in March 2021.

At least half of HEERF III funds must be spent on emergency grants to students, prioritizing those in need or who are facing hunger, homelessness and other hardship. That amounts to roughly \$10 million of UW-Eau Claire's HEERF III funding and \$7.4 million at UW-Stout. (As of December, just over 7,000 students had received an emergency grant, according to UW-Eau Claire's website.)

SEE RELIEF PAGE 6A

SAWDUST STORIES

'Tis the season for 'Freezing Man'



Patti See

See is an award-winning author whose work has appeared in Brevity, Salon Magazine, The Wisconsin Academy Review, The Southwest Review, HipMama, Inside HigherEd and many other magazines, journals and anthologies. She wrote the blog "Our Long Goodbye: One Family's Experience with Alzheimer's" which has been read in more than 100 countries, and she is a frequent contributor to "Wisconsin Life" on Wisconsin Public Radio.

The Black Rock Desert in Nevada hosts Burning Man every summer on what used to be an ancient lakebed. Anyone who's been there will tell you it's not a "festival" but a temporary metropolis, Black Rock City, created every year by "Burners" who come to assemble giant art installations or to appreciate them, and, of course, to party and burn stuff.

Here on Lake Hallie, it seems like we host "Freezing Man" each time a group of anglers comes out to ice fish. At least that's what my new neighbor, Ken Smith, calls it. He recently showed me a photo he took from his front porch of five guys huddled on the back side of their pop-up ice shelter. Ken and his wife Kim Ferguson are in the midst of their second winter on Lake Hallie. They notice things us old timers no longer do. I love Ken's concept of Freezing Man.

Just like at Burning Man, a temporary village materializes on Lake Hallie. Ours involves dudes in Pac boots and Carhartt

gear on four-wheelers and snow machines surrounded by Eskimo-brand shelters that are a bit like grown-up pup tents.

My husband says each time he watches someone set one up it looks like a cat thrashing around inside a gunny sack. One afternoon Bruce and I watch a guy move his to another spot. Rather than pulling it on the ice, he simply lifts the nylon shelter a few inches off the ground while standing inside. All we can see is a levitating tent with boots.

Anglers adhere to the Burning Man mantra "leave no trace," though I've noticed the occasional too-small blue gills left on the ice. They attract bickering eagles, which bring neighbors like me to our windows with binoculars.

Burning Man is held in an extreme environment, just like Lake Hallie in winter.

There are other similarities. Vendor free? Check. Everyone's expected to participate? Check. Balancing cooperation, self-reliance, individual expression and creative collaboration in a community? All checks.

SEE SAWDUST PAGE 2A

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