

SPORTS • Local Wisconsin Badger hockey players excited for Chippewa Falls scrimmage/1B
YOUR REGION • Children's Museum of Eau Claire breaks ground on new facility/3A

Q & A
COVID-19 boosters available locally

Who, when and where to get a booster shot if you're eligible

By Sarah Seifert, Leader-Telegram Staff

EAU CLAIRE — Booster shots are now recommended for some who received the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, but not for everyone. State and local health officials this month answered some common questions about who, when and where to get a COVID-19 booster shot in the Chippewa Valley, and noted other things people should consider. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services on Monday announced that it is supporting the federal government's recommendation to offer Pfizer booster doses to certain groups.

SEE BOOSTERS PAGE 2A

L-T INSIDE

- 'Endanger the safety of others' Chippewa Co. health director criticizes schools' voluntary quarantines. Page 3A
Prison sentence Man receives three years for possession of child pornography. Page 3A

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MONDAY
Pandemic impact on restaurants

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KEEP CALM and STOP THE SPREAD

Protect against COVID-19

FOLLOW PRECAUTIONS

4 X 50 = LOVE

Last of four EC siblings to celebrate golden wedding anniversary

By Eric Lindquist, Leader-Telegram Staff

EAU CLAIRE — When the U.S. Census Bureau last checked, just 6% of the nation's married couples had been together for at least 50 years.

That makes the Johnson-Brownell family in Eau Claire a statistical marvel. When Tom and Mary Brownell celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with a party on Saturday, it will surely be a special occasion, but it won't qualify as unusual for family members attending their fourth such event in the past four years. Indeed, Mary will become the last of four siblings in her family — the children of the late George and Trudy Johnson of Eau Claire — to reach the golden milestone.

"It's pretty amazing," Mary said. "I don't know how it ever happened, but I'm sure glad it did."

Family members recognize there is a fair amount of luck involved in having all four kids in a family reach the 50-year mark — good health and all four husbands surviving military service during the Vietnam War era being chief among the reasons to be thankful — but they also credit growing up in a loving family that led by example.

"Their was a lot of love in our family. Dad adored our mother," recalled Mary's sister Carol Brownell, who



Staff photo by Dan Reiland

Couples, from left, Ken and Carol Brownell, Duane and Helen Anderson, George and Gerri Johnson and Mary and Tom Brownell gather Thursday in Eau Claire. They will come together again Saturday to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Tom and Mary, the last of four siblings to reach the milestone.

celebrated her golden anniversary three years ago with her husband, Ken.

Adding to the tangled web of the close-knit family, Mary met Tom, who is Ken's brother, at Carol and Ken's wedding 52 years ago.

Carol knew Tom from when they all attended Memorial High School.

"He was a pretty nice guy, so I thought he'd be good for my sister," Carol said with

a laugh. "I kind of wanted a spark there, so I was pushing for it."

Five decades later, the fire created by that spark still burns.

When asked to share the secret to their marital success, Tom and Mary said it is built around basic building blocks of a strong relationship: love, compromise, trust and family.

"We have a happy marriage

that has been filled with ups and downs, but mostly ups. It's built around family," Tom said, mentioning the couple's two sets of twins.

Two of those twins, Jamey and Joe, expressed pride in having parents and so many aunts and uncles whose marriages have lasted for five decades.

"It's a huge achievement — once in a lifetime," Joe said.

SEE GOLDEN PAGE 7A

SAWDUST STORIES

Southside rules

Chippewa Falls, like most cities, is divided into neighborhoods, each with its own character and reputation. When I was a Catholic kid growing up here in the 1970s and '80s, a separate parish church and grade school represented three of them. Southsiders like me went to Holy Ghost, East-hillers to Notre Dame and West-hillers to St. Charles. On the basketball court or football field we were rivals as different as the taverns our families frequented after Saturday night mass.



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 Experiences 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. She lives in Lake Hallie with her husband, writer Bruce Taylor. Her essay collection, "Here on Lake Hallie: In Praise of Barflies, Fix-it Guys, and Other Folks in Our Hometown," is forthcoming in 2022 from the Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

I still call some of those subtleties "Southside rules." In 500 Rummy, the queen of spades is worth 45 points. You can plea a do-over in any game. And you always leave out mini marshmallows in Watergate Salad.

My parents were Southsiders since the 1940s when they moved here for Dad's first job off the farm. As a girl I remember asking my mother why we were a "side" even though we also had a hill. She shrugged. Mom likely didn't know our section of town was not originally part of the city.

Frenchtown was settled around 1850, founded on what one writer deemed "a collection of taverns and shacks on the other side of the river." The village was only accessible from the north by way of Frenchtown Ferry, which connected Schmidmeyer's Brewery in Chippewa Falls to Rousseau's House, a saloon in Frenchtown.

The first bridge was built in 1868, and Frenchtown was later annexed to the city. Even as the area expanded further away from the river's edge and up the hill, children here continued to be called "river rats;" we never quite shook our reputation for coming from the poor side of town.

Globensky is a name synonymous with the Southside. Not just the family I grew up next-door to on Harding Street, but going back to 1883, when French-Canadian immigrant John Globensky opened a hotel in Frenchtown. After his death, widow Jennie and their young children rented rooms in their Greenville Street home. Years later, son John and his wife Alice bought a homestead at 223 Main Street and raised their eight children. It still stands across from Thaler Oil.

SEE SAWDUST PAGE 7A

Advertisement for Osseo Ford Sales & Service, Inc. featuring the Ford logo, contact information (HWY 10 & I-94, 888.875.7618, OSSEOAUTO.COM), and a photo of the dealership staff including Spec Pederson (Owner), Shawn Pederson (Sales Manager), Shannon Giacomino (Sales), Les Vold (Sales), Greg Pettis (Sales), Presley Giese (Sales), Chad Gomsrud (Sales), David Anderson (Finance Manager), and Darek Davidson (Sales).

Woman who survived 1918 flu, world war succumbs to COVID

By **TODD RICHMOND**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

She lived a life of adventure that spanned two continents. She fell in love with a World War II fighter pilot, barely escaped Europe ahead of Benito Mussolini's fascists, ground steel for the U.S. war effort and advocated for her disabled daughter in a far less enlightened time. She was, her daughter said, someone who didn't make a habit of giving up.

And then this month, at age 105, Primetta Giacopini's life ended the way it began — in a pandemic.

"I think my mother would have been around quite a bit longer" if she hadn't contracted COVID," her 61-year-old daughter, Dorene Giacopini, said. "She was a fighter. She had a hard life and her attitude always was ... basically, all Americans who were not around for World War II were basically spoiled brats."

Primetta Giacopini's mother, Pasquina Fei, died in Connecticut of the flu in 1918 at age 25. That flu pandemic killed about 675,000 Americans — a death toll eclipsed this month by the 2020-21 coronavirus pandemic.

Primetta was 2 years old when her mother died. Her father, a laborer, didn't want to raise Primetta or her younger sister, Alice. He sent Alice back to Italy, their ancestral homeland, and handed Primetta to an Italian foster family that then relocated to Italy in 1929.

"The way Mom talked about it, he didn't want to raise those kids alone, and men didn't do that at that time," Dorene recalled. "It's ridiculous to me."

Primetta supported herself by working as a seamstress. Raven-haired with dark eyes and sharp features, she eventually fell in love with an Italian fighter pilot named Vitto-

rio Andriani.

"I didn't see too much of him because he was always fighting someplace," Primetta told the Golden Gate Wing, a military aviation club in Oakland, California, in 2008.

Italy entered World War II in June 1940. The local police warned Primetta to leave because Mussolini wanted American citizens out of the country. Primetta refused. Several weeks later, the state police told her to get out, warning her that she could end up in a concentration camp.

In June 1941, Andriani was missing in action; Primetta learned later that he had crashed and died near Malta. While he was missing, she joined a group of strangers making their way out of Italy on a train to Portugal.

"In Spain, one can still see, after 2-3 years, the traces of the atrocities of the past," Primetta wrote in a letter to a friend in the midst of her flight.

"At Port Bou, the Spanish border, not one house is left standing; everything got destroyed because the town is an important train transit point that brought supplies to the "Reds," the enemy ... I've seen so much destruction that I've had enough. The day after tomorrow, I get on the ship, and I'm sure all will go well."

In Lisbon she boarded a steamer bound for the United States. She returned to Torrington, bought a Chevrolet sedan for \$500 and landed a job at a General Motors plant in Bristol grinding steel to cover ball bearings for the war effort. She met her husband, Umberto "Bert" Giacopini, on the job. They stayed married until he died in 2002.

Primetta gave birth to Dorene in 1960 and received devastating news: The infant had been born with spina bifida, a birth defect in which the spinal cord doesn't fully develop.

Four marriages have totaled more than 200 years

» **GOLDEN**
FROM PAGE 1A

It has been a blessing, Jamey added, to celebrate such a landmark event with the others — George and Gerri Johnson in 2017, Carol and Ken in 2018 and Helen and Duane Anderson in 2020 — and now, finally, to have the opportunity to do the same with his own parents.

Even though George and Gerri live in Ohio, the siblings — Mary, Carol, Helen and George — and their spouses, of course, will all be in attendance when it's time to cut the cake at the foursome's final golden wedding anniversary celebration on Saturday.

"I think what makes their bonds so strong is that my parents and relatives adhere to those traditional values which have guided their decisions to get married and stay married for better or worse, for richer or poorer and in sickness and health," Jamey said.

In assessing his parents' marriage, Jamey concluded, "What I admire about their relationship is that they are truly each other's best friends. Their love for each other and family is strong.

Even during trying times they were able to work through the difficulties and come out stronger as a couple. They enjoy life to the fullest and share their joy and happiness with their friends and family."

Tom, 71, worked at the former Uniroyal Goodrich Tire Co. plant in Eau Claire for 23 years until it closed in the early 1990s and then for an Andersen Windows distribution center in Menomonie. Mary stayed home with the kids until they were school-aged and since has worked for more than 30 years at Menards.

Thanks to the 11 children and 16 grandchildren that have emerged from the marriages of the four siblings, the Johnson and Brownell family members still keep their eye on the ball, continuing to model the values that have kept them together for a total of 208 years.

"We spend a lot of time together," Mary said. "Our grandchildren are in a lot of sports, so we enjoy spending a lot of time watching them play. They keep us busy."

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PICTURING OUR PAST



Photo courtesy of Chippewa Valley Museum (cvmuseum.com)

Local landmark

The base of the Adin Randall statue at the Eau Claire park named after him is under construction in 1914, according to the Chippewa Valley Museum. The bronze statue "was designed by Wisconsin's most celebrated sculptress, Helen Farnsworth Mears," according to the City of Eau Claire Landmark Commission. Mears was born in Oshkosh in 1872, the Wisconsin Historical Society reports, and studied her craft at the Chicago Art Institute before furthering her education in New York City and Europe. She was living in NYC when she died in 1916. Randall was a contractor and builder in Madison before becoming a successful businessman in Eau Claire. A picture from the Chippewa Valley's past appears in this section each Friday.

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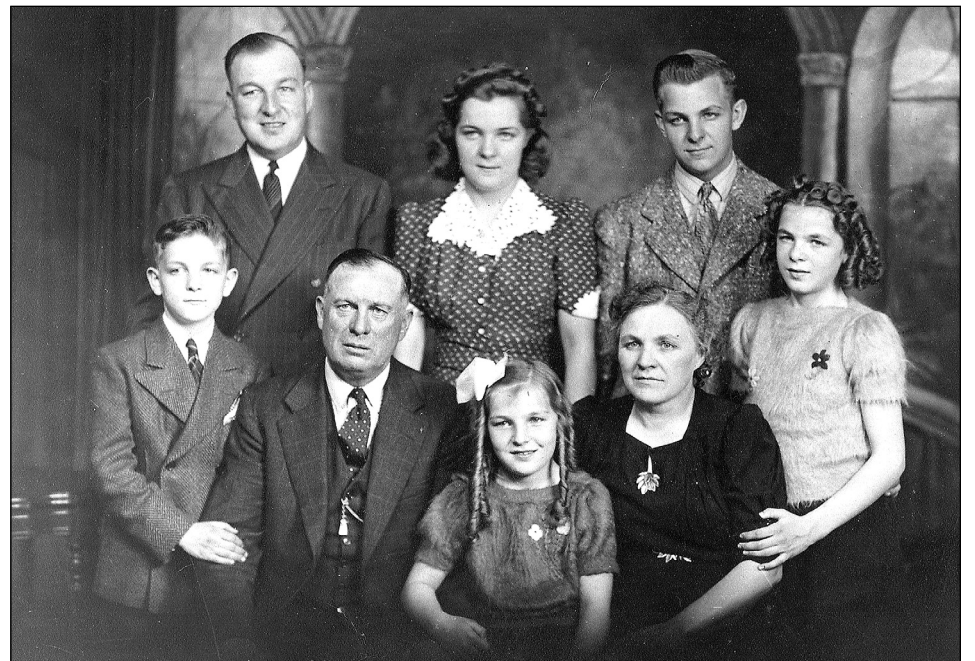
Enjoyed Saturday nights at Skateland

» **SAWDUST**
FROM PAGE 1A

Their youngest and only surviving child, Alice Mae Marshall, has been a Southsider most of her 89 years. On a recent Saturday afternoon she reminisced how her Grandpa Globensky and his team of horses helped dig the foundation for Holy Ghost church. How her father's entrepreneurial spirit rallied the family through the Depression: he cut ice at Glen Loch, delivered coal, cleared forests, and ran a moving business. How their house near the railroad tracks was marked as a haven by hobos, who sat at their table for a many family meals.

As a teen during WWII, Alice Mae played for a women's ball league much like the one featured in "A League of Their Own." She started out as catcher for the "Reporters" — a team sponsored by a local newspaper — but, she told me, "I liked my front teeth." She soon switched to shortstop and helped win the state championship.

Alice Mae met her husband in the fourth grade at Holy Ghost and got married at 21. The way she remembers it, Al had dated most of her girlfriends first. Daughter Kathy calls her mom "the Jackie Kennedy of Chippewa Falls" because everyone knows and loves her. Kathy says her dad, who died in 2014, had "a blackbelt in storytelling." This was the perfect combination for launching "The Old Southsiders," a social group the Marshalls organized in the late 1990s. Alice Mae's photo albums chronicle their many annual picnics attended by 50 or more in those first years. Until



Contributed photo

The John and Alice Globensky family is photographed in 1940. Alice Mae is the young girl in front with the bow in her hair.

May of 2020, up to a dozen Old Southsiders met monthly for breakfast.

Writer Russell Banks claimed, "You have to love a town before you can live in it right, and you have to live in it before you can love it." Alice Mae Marshall is proof of that. And so are many other Southsiders.

When I asked for residents' memories on Facebook's two Chippewa Falls pages, I was inundated with positive responses. Many remembered corner grocery stores which not only fed Southsiders but were social hubs. Gordy Schafer's first, bought from Beaudoin's, was across from Holy Ghost. When I started school it had become Lindy's, where you could go in with a dime and come out with a fistful of Bub's Daddy or Laffy Taffy. One street over was Sokup's, run by Paul and his family. Before my time were Deniger's Food Market and Loiselle's, which Judith Rubenzer's

grandparents owned. She shared, "My dad, Bob, was a butcher. . . People as far away as Bloomer and Eau Claire would come to get the meats."

The same saloons are still on Canal Street, though the names have changed many times over. Southsiders recall that most were family taverns, where a guy could stop alone after a long shift at the factory and also bring his wife and kids on a weekend afternoon. All are a stone's throw from the river, in the area that once was Frenchtown.

For many generations the two best kid spots were on a stretch of Highway J. Four decades of teenage girls — who sang Marvelettes hits in 1962 through the Spice Girls in 1997 — got their first job at the Falls Drive-In, owned by Bud Flint and his parents, Howard and Marie. Grandson Pat McInnis remembers this rootbeer stand as "a legendary hangout for any Southsider." Many

of us carhops carved our names in the red painted countertop where we spent long shifts, our aprons jingling with tips. Regulars knew to ask for "slop," a mixture of all the sodas on tap.

Just a few doors down, Skateland was run by Francis "Frenchy" Introwitz and his first wife Dorenes. How many teens fell in love under those two mirrored "disco" balls? Larry Weese now owns one, which he loans out for display at the office for Chippewa Falls Main Street. He says about his neighborhood, "All you Southsiders know exactly how special this place is."

Frenchy died in 2010 at age 96, so he was almost 60 when I was a middle-schooler spending Saturday nights at Skateland. He could skate backwards like no one else.

Here's another Southside rule I almost forgot: whenever Frenchy yelled "Everybody skate!" — we did.