



Farewell to the queen
Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-serving monarch in Great Britain's history, died Thursday at age 96, Buckingham Palace said. [Page 7B](#)

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Weekend Gazette

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Rock County Board member says he's not an Oath Keeper

By **Ryan Spoehr**

Adams Publishing Group

A member of the Rock County Board has denied being a member of a far-right extremist group with ties to the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

News reports on Wednesday listed Rock County Board member Rick Richard as on a leaked list of Oath Keepers members, one of six from Wisconsin.

Richard serves portions of the towns of Janesville, Rock and Beloit on the county board and is the

chair of the public works committee. He is also a member of the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport Board and a variety of other county board committees.

The county issued a statement Thursday afternoon, without naming

Richard, saying that "the county board supervisor involved in these media reports has publicly denied being a member of the Oath Keepers."

"We want to make it perfectly clear to our community that the statements and actions of the Oath

Keepers are inconsistent with Rock County's values and vision for diversity, equity and inclusion," the statement continued. "Rock County takes pride in being a leader in creating an inclusive environment where all

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RELATED

• **City asks county for help:** Janesville City Manager Mark Freitag appealed to the Rock County Board on Thursday for \$2.5 million to go toward the proposed Woodman's Sports and Convention Center. [Page 4A](#)

A mural menagerie

New batch of works takes shape as Art Infusion returns

By **Kimberly Wethal**

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JANESVILLE

A zoo is moving into Janesville's downtown—and they're here to stay.

An Italian sparrow now overlooks the Rock River from its cream yellow perch alongside the outdoor porch of Genisa Wine Bar, 11 N. Main St.

Two blocks to the northeast, animals including a sloth, butterflies and a platypus were taking shape Thursday along a playground retaining wall at St. Mary School, 307 E. Wall St.

The murals are part of Janesville's annual Art Infusion series which aims

Turn to **INFUSION** on [Page 3A](#)



Anthony Wahl/awahl@gazettextra.com

Artist Chris Silva, right, is assisted by Erik C. Harris on a mural located in the outdoor dining area of Genisa Wine Bar in downtown Janesville on Thursday.

Contractor abruptly ends Beloit's Bird scooter program

By **Neil Johnson**

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BELOIT

Beloit's Bird scooter program has been shut down, not by the city, but by the vendor who worked for Bird as a contractor for the program.

But if the future of the phone app-driven electric scooter program in Beloit is now in limbo, Bird still has a short-term foothold in Janesville via a program launched earlier this month by a different vendor.

But Janesville's program, just three weeks into a three-month pilot OK'd by the city, has drawn fire from downtown business operators over a ridership they say is predominately underage.

Beloit

Nick Yoss, a South Beloit, Illinois, paving operator who contracted through Bird to make the electric rental scooters available in downtown Beloit, said Thursday he nixed his agreement with the California tech company after a year. He said Bird was "non-responsive" to problems and made progressive cuts to his pay agreement as a Bird scooter fleet manager.

Yoss said he is not sure if Bird will relaunch a scooter program in Beloit, but he said that last week he returned all of Bird's scooters, erased his contractor's account with the firm and severed his relationship as an independent fleet manager, effectively curtailing the program in Beloit.

"Bird is non-responsive. They

Turn to **BIRD** on [Page 2A](#)

The Gazette's new look debuts next week

Gazette staff

Next week, we will bring you a new look for your local paper.

The Gazette has been redesigned to be in sync with the world around us. It will now be a single product in a convenient size and easy-to-read format.

We have combined the sports and A sections into one. News as you read from the front, sports from the back. Everything else in between.

When you see the first edition, take a few minutes to look through it front to back—we think you will be pleasantly surprised.

A review of our current business model led us to be creative and bold with a redesign that kept the meat of the paper today and gave us flexibility for the paper in the future. We looked at sample variations and settled on what you will see next week. It has been exciting for us to redesign, and we hope the new look will be a positive experience for you, as well.

As you look at the new edition of your paper, several things will be obvious.

Not only is it a single-section, it's also shorter in height. The paper has a new font and the front is more focused on

photography. It also has more pages.

But there is more to the story.

We assembled a cross-functional team and worked for several months with other Adams Publishing Group papers that had made a similar change. We compared formats and outlines to see what could be a cleaner version our readers would approve of. We settled on a final version knowing it can grow and change in the future.

Allow us to share a bit of the story behind the story:

The design changes help with efficiency, costs and our production workflow. This helps us

manage inflationary pressure.

Our pages are shorter, taking advantage of some newsprint efficiencies, but our page count is higher, since we did not cut out critical content. Think of it as going from the hardback version of a book to the paperback—same content, more pages.

The shorter size was created as a more efficient way to handle our newsprint consumption. Newsprint has had 11 price increases in 13 months, with more looming.

Our aluminum plate consumption will improve, offsetting the price increases driven

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OBITUARIES AND DEATH NOTICES, 7A-8A

- Susan Marie Doubleday
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- Mary Marjorie (McNeill) Singleton
- Dale June (Peterson) Wallace
- Alvin F. Walmer

TODAY'S WEATHER

High 83 | Low 58
Mostly sunny and warm
More on 8A

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