



# THE NORTHWOODS RIVER NEWS

Supreme Court  
race heads to  
the finish line  
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## O'Melia, Burns vie for Oneida County judgeship

By Richard Moore  
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Earlier this year, during the spring primary season, *The Lakeland Times* asked the candidates for Oneida County circuit judge — incumbent judge Mary Roth Burns and Oneida County district attorney Michael Schiek — a set of the same questions and both responded in timely fashion. (Oneida County corporation counsel Mike Fugle also answered the questions but has been eliminated from the race.) Burns answered the questions one-by-one; Schiek combined his answers in an in-sum statement. We thought readers would like to refresh themselves with both candidates before they head to the polls next Tuesday:

### Oneida County judge Mary Roth Burns

**What about your career experience most qualifies you for position of circuit court judge? Or, related, of all your skill sets, what is the most important that you could bring — or do bring — to the bench as a judge?**

I am the only candidate

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## FIRE DESTROYS RHINELANDER RESTAURANT



HEATHER SCHAEFER/RIVER NEWS

Firefighters from three departments responded to R&T's Dinky Diner (230 Thayer Street) Tuesday evening, March 28, 2023, after black smoke was reported coming from the back of the building. Firefighters were on scene for several hours containing the fire and ensuring it did not spread to neighboring buildings. The building, constructed in 1896 and the former home of the Sportsman's Cafe, is a total loss, according to Rhinelander Fire Chief Brian Tonnancour.

## Dinky Diner 'a total loss'

By Heather Schaefer  
OF THE RIVER NEWS

A historic building that housed a well-loved Rhinelander eatery was destroyed by fire Tuesday evening. R&T's Dinky Diner is a considered "a total loss," Rhinelander Fire Chief Brian Tonnancour said Wednesday.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, he added.

Rhinelander firefighters were called to the restaurant, located at 230 Thayer St., just before 6 p.m. Tuesday as dark smoke could be seen billowing from the back of the building. They were soon joined by firefighters from the Pine Lake and Pelican fire

departments who responded to a request for mutual aid.

Almost immediately a crowd began to gather in the area known for decades as the hollow, home of the city's "hobo jungle" in the Depression era. Friends and customers embraced the diner's owners, Rick Covin and Terrie Bowman, and offered words of support while watching the fire crews work to contain the fire.

Covin stated they had closed for the day at approximately 2 p.m. and no one was inside the restaurant at the time. The building dates back to 1896, he said.

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RENEE DRASZKIEWICZ/RIVER NEWS

A friend embraces Terrie Bowman and Rick Covin, owners of R & T's Dinky Diner, as firefighters worked to contain a fire inside the restaurant Tuesday evening, March 28, 2023.

## PFAS issue shadows race for Stella town chair

By Heather Schaefer  
OF THE RIVER NEWS

The discovery of high levels of PFAS (per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in the drinking water in the Town of Stella in late 2022 has upended the lives of a number of local families and motivated both candidates for town chairperson to seek election.

Kristen Hanneman is running for town chair to help

her fellow townspeople navigate the challenges associated with PFAS. At the same time, current town chair David Brunette is seeking to retain the office he's held for nearly four decades as the town faces some of its most difficult days.

Voters will make their choice on Tuesday, April 4.

Hanneman, who would be the first woman to serve as town chairperson in Stella, has experience in municipal

government having served as treasurer for the City of Eagle River. She is also currently employed as state and local government auditor.

A resident of Stella since 2008, Hanneman noted that her family has been directly impacted by the PFAS contamination.

"What piqued my interest (in running for town chair) was the PFAS issue we're having out here and wanting to be more involved with the

process and making sure that we see progress," she said. "My family is directly affected by the PFAS issue so to me it's really important."

Like her neighbors, Hanneman said she learned her well had dangerous levels of PFAS after it was tested as part of a statewide well testing project conducted by the DNR.

"It's absolutely terrible," she said of the contamination. "It's

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