

**SCRAP INTO CRAFT:** Gary Schone certainly isn't singing the junk yard blues **P24**



APRIL ZIEMER | AMERY FREE PRESS

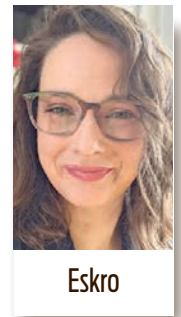
## Music on the River returns to Michael Park this Friday

The first of the three series summer concert event returns to Amery this Friday and is set to be the best summer Music on the River has seen in Amery yet! Between the bands, the boogie, the brew, the bites, the buggies and buddies; it is bound to be a beautiful bash. See story on page 18.

## Residents still seeking answers in city affairs

BY APRIL ZIEMER  
EDITOR@THEAMERYFREEPRESS.COM

A recently terminated city employee will be able to return to her position after only one city council member opposed Bethany Eskro's return to the Amery Police Department. Although four members of the council voted in favor of Eskro getting her job back, closed session meetings, ethics



complaints and investigations still have residents wondering what has been taking place at City Hall over the past six months.

SEE CITY, PAGE 10

## Public is invited to various Juneteenth events

BY APRIL ZIEMER  
EDITOR@THEAMERYFREEPRESS.COM

If you are out and about in Amery this Saturday and you see a bunch of wheels, here is the deal:

Saturday, June 17th at 10am, the community is invited to

participate in the first ever Juneteenth Bike Parade! Participants will meet at the Amery Public Library for crafts and discussion. At 10:30, the Bike Parade through town begins. Everyone is encour-

SEE JUNETEENTH, PAGE 2

## Discover everything you could want and need and more

### Amery Woman's Club hosts Art and Craft Fair this Saturday

BY APRIL ZIEMER  
EDITOR@THEAMERYFREEPRESS.COM

\$3000 worth of scholarships to high school graduates, leaders, and nontraditional students are going

to make their loads a bit lighter and these gifts are made possible each year by proceeds of the annual Art and Craft Fair put on by the Amery Woman's Club. By supporting this tradition and purchasing something from local artists and crafters this coming Saturday, you are contributing to the talented hands producing the product, the

Amery Woman's Club and the education of those chosen to receive the generous scholarships.

Saturday you can plan to stroll through an outdoor mall of sorts. The event is held the Saturday before Father's Day each June. 2023 sees the Woman's Club hosting

SEE ART FAIR, PAGE 2



APRIL ZIEMER | AMERY FREE PRESS

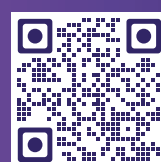
Shoppers check out art at a past Woman's Club event.

# Just around the bend

Orthopedic care close to home



Scan to learn more



Amery Hospital & Clinic



NEWS  
715-268-8101  
editor@theameryfreepress.com

ADVERTISING/PUBLIC NOTICES  
715-268-8101  
marketing@theameryfreepress.com

EMPLOYMENT ADS  
715-557-1722  
classifieds@theameryfreepress.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS  
715-268-8101  
dstangl@theameryfreepress.com





APRIL ZIEMER | AMERY FREE PRESS

## Camelot renamed Deer-a-lot?

What you see above is just some of the damage to a room at the Camelot Motel in downtown Amery. Owner Virginia Ormsby was recently laying down for a nap, when she heard a crash that she assumed was an accident outside. She was about to call 9-1-1, when a member of the Amery Fire Dept. told her he had just witnessed a deer run across Keller Ave. straight through the window of one of her rooms. The renter was on the phone when the deer came crashing in. The renter then hid in the bathroom and the deer jumped out of the room looking for a motel with vacancy.



APRIL ZIEMER | AMERY FREE PRESS

## Van Blaricom receives award

City Alderperson Rick Van Blaricom recently received the annual Mayor's Award, which is usually presented at the Amery Community Club Banquet. Van Blaricom was chosen to receive the award by Mayor Chad Leonard.

# CITY: An Open Records Request was officially denied

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

An Open Records request made by the Amery Free Press for "Copies of public records relating to the ethics complaint and all other materials relating to the recently completed investigations into the mayor and city and city administrator" was officially denied Friday, June 9, 2023.

During the regular June meeting of the Amery City Council, members of the council shared their thoughts before casting votes. Mykaela Thompson began discussion, "I have had a lot of people write me and approach me for conversations and I have also spent a lot of time in thought."

Thompson said she had significant concerns she wanted to bring up including the fact there should have been Human Resources (HR) or a third party involved when Eskro was questioned the day she was terminated. Thompson said it was also very clear there are major trust issues between the new Chief and his staff. That is very disheartening to me as I am very pro Amery Police Department," said Thompson, "I do not think these trust issues are going to lead to productive police work in our city." She said she believes trust issues led to this investigation as she doesn't believe she would have jumped immediately to someone's intent of taking a photo of a city council agenda.

Thompson said, "I also believe disrespect is extremely subjective. I saw a woman who was uncomfortable most likely because it happened without warning and we all respond differently to that. I know Steve (Chief Hainzl) sees her behavior as disrespectful and he has the right to that, which is why I still believe a third party should have been involved to navigate those interpersonal issues."

Thompson said she feels both Hainzl and Eskro made emotional decisions that day.

Council President Eric Elkin agreed that emotions were involved. "It is difficult to navigate emotion from practical discussion, especially when you are in the heat of that discussion."

Elkin said they were lucky to be able to see body cam footage, but he felt like it went from an interview to an emotional discussion. "Which for whatever

reason can trigger somebody to want to get away from that situation. In my mind it only comes down to Ms. Eskro leaving," he said. Elkin said the other parts have nothing to do with his decision at all.

Mike Manor agreed that the Facebook material had nothing to do with the decision he would be making that evening.

Council member Sharon Marks said she had changed her mind various times over the past week and saw both points of view but agreed emotions played a part. "So much has transpired over the last several months."

Council member Sarah Flanum wondered if there could have been a little time between that day and the next day without having the last five minutes happen, would there have been a different outcome?

"I would love to rewind back twenty days ago. I would love to rewind back five months ago and we cannot do that, but I would however like to believe in the good of humanity regardless of the circumstance the last five months have brought up," said Flanum, "This is not a personal decision for me and it is not easy."

Mayor Chad Leonard weighed in and said he didn't get a vote but would like to have a voice. He said, "A committee hired Steve to be the Police Chief. I agree with a lot of the council members that there has been a lot of emotions and I am sure I would have been emotional as well. Ultimately, we did hire Steve to do a job and it is up to this council to override what we have hired him to do, which is to run the department?"

Both Eskro and Hainzl were asked if they felt they could continue to work together and both responded they could.

Council member Rick Van Blaricom abstained from voting as he used to employ Eskro and knows her on a personal level. Eskro was ultimately hired back on a 4-1 decision. Votes for "yes" came from Marks, Thompson, Elkin and Flanum. The lone "no" vote came from Manor.

The Amery Free Press plans to continue with their requests of looking into city matters over the past six months.

# Officers involved in fatal shooting named

Sergeant Chase Durand of the St. Croix County Sheriff's Office and Officer Katie Chevrier of the New Richmond Police Department are the officers involved in the incident that resulted in the death of Tyler Abel June 3 in the Town of Star Prairie.

Polk County Sheriff Brent Waak, whose department is investigating the shooting, released the names of the officers June 12.

Durand has eight years of law enforcement experience. According to Waak's release, Durand began his career with the New Richmond Police Department in 2014. In 2015, he joined the staff of the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department in 2015.

Chevrier has 15 years of law enforcement experience. According to Waak's release, Chevrier began her career with the Somerset Police Department, where

she worked from 2008-2013. She worked at the St. Croix County Jail in 2013, and has been full time with the New Richmond Police Department since 2013.

Waak estimates the investigation will take at least three more weeks until the medical examiner's report and other information has been collected.

A team of investigators from Polk County are working on the investigation, according to Waak.

## Find our E-Edition online at: [www.theameryfreepress.com](http://www.theameryfreepress.com)

**SPECIALIZING IN QUALITY POST FRAME BUILDINGS**

Commercial Equestrian Hobby Shops      Agricultural Garages And More!

Eastern CO 719-822-3052      Nebraska & Iowa 402-426-5022 712-600-2410      Eastern Wisconsin 920-889-0960      Western Wisconsin 608-988-6338

**GINGERICH STRUCTURES**      www.GingerichStructures.com     

**COUPON**

**BOGO**      **Grill & Chill**

Buy one box of Dilly Bars, get 2nd box for \$1

221 S. Keller Ave., Amery 715-268-2117

Mon - Fri 11-7; Sat-Sun 11-8:30      Coupon expires June 20, 2023

715 Real Estate

A better way to do Real Estate

Home of the 4% Listing

**Jered Everts** Real Estate Broker 651-248-5481 jeredevts@gmail.com

**Rose Martin** Real Estate Agent 715-377-5055 rose\_martin55@yahoo.com