

# The Chetek Alert

## FIRST LOOK

### Chetek FD open house pancake breakfast June 24

The Chetek Fire Department will be hosting an open house and pancake breakfast on Saturday, June 24, from 7-10:30 a.m. at the Chetek Fire Hall. All are welcome. It is a chance for residents to visit and meet the firefighters, see the fire hall and all of the equipment. On the menu are pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, coffee, juice and milk. There is no cost to attend or to eat, but free-will donations for the department will be accepted. Raffle tickets will be available for purchase for a chance to win a series of large cash prizes that will be given away at the 20th annual Chetek Fire Department Ice Fishing Contest on the Chetek Chain of Lakes on Jan. 20, 2024.



### Music in the Park returns June 26

Music in the park at Main St. Park starts Monday, June 26. The event is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and musicgoers are encouraged to bring along a lawn chair. Future Music in the Park dates are as follows: July 10, July 24, Aug. 7 and Aug. 21. This event is dependent on weather conditions. This is a Chetek Chamber of Commerce sponsored event.

## DEATHS

**Della May Dole, 94**, Traverse City, Michigan  
**Irene May Orton, 91**, Scottsdale, Arizona  
**Beth Parker, 37**, New Auburn  
**Sandy K. Thibault, 77**, Chetek



## Two dead in apparent murder-suicide in rural New Auburn

Two people died of apparent gunshot wounds at a rural New Auburn residence on Sunday, June 18, according to the Barron County Sheriff's Department.

At 6:47 p.m., the Barron County 911 Center received a call of two possible deceased subjects at a residence just north of New Auburn.

Initial investigation shows Jeremy Wittrock, 38, of Rice Lake, shot Beth (Ebler) Parker, 37, who resides at the location of the incident, 2942 First Ave. in the Town of Dovre.

Parker, a 2004 Chetek High School graduate, was transported to an area hospital with a gunshot wound and later died as a result of her injuries. Wittrock was pronounced dead at the scene from what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

A 15-year-old at the residence at the time of the incident was not

physically harmed.

At the time of the shooting, Wittrock was under a court order not to have contact with Parker.

Wittrock was charged in Barron County Circuit Court June 6 with disorderly conduct-domestic abuse, and one of the conditions of his \$1,500 signature bond was to have no contact with Parker.

According to the criminal complaint in that case, at 6:19 p.m. on Sunday, June 4, a caller reported a verbal altercation between a man and a woman, identified as Wittrock and Parker.

Wittrock allegedly blocked Parker from leaving the residence, and when she finally did get by him, he threw a beer can at her.

While speaking to Parker and the caller, a Barron County sheriff's deputy observed Wittrock drive away from the residence. The officer motioned for

SEE MURDERED, PAGE A7

## Have a wine-derful time at first wine walk of season June 22-23

Chetek's first wine walk of the year starts this Thursday, June 22 and Friday, June 23. Shoppers will be able to sample wines at local businesses and have the chance to win several prizes including several gift baskets and a grand prize. Proceeds from this wine walk event will benefit the Chetek Public Arts League Mural Fund. Local artist CJ Conner started the painting project in May. The CPAL's purpose is to revitalize Chetek's downtown area using art.



For the wine walk, there will be 300 stemless wine glasses available for \$25. Attendees will also be given a book of more than 30 coupons, a tote to carry the wine glass in and a punch card. The custom, hand-painted wine glasses were made by local artist, CJ Conner. The coupons will be valid until Aug. 23.

As a reminder to those planning to attend, only cash and checks will be accepted at this event. 16 local businesses will be providing wine samples, wine glasses, and coupon books including The Milkhouse, the event's major sponsor. The wine for this event is being provided by Clover Meadow Winery of Shell Lake.

See the ad on Page A8 for wine glass locations and participating businesses. Businesses participating in the wine walk will have business hours from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday and Friday.

The "Chetek US Out" Retail Group said they are excited to kick off the summer season with this event and look forward to seeing familiar faces and some new ones.

For every \$10 spent at the participating wine walk businesses, shoppers will have an additional entry to win one of the gift baskets or the grand prize. Two entries come with the \$25 wine glass.

The wine walk will conclude Friday night with the prize drawings at 7:15 p.m. at Main Street Park, between Ohde Pharmacy and the Northwoods Bakery. Attendees do not need to be present to win.

The grand prize drawing includes \$250 in Chamber Bucks and a pontoon rental provided by Lake Country Marina. A separate drawing will be held for attendees with a punch from each of the 16 participating businesses. The prize for this drawing is a "Make and Take" night at Off R Rockers for six people, a \$270 value.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Serpent wrangled off roof gets a little 'hissy' with deputies

Barron County Sheriff's Deputies were requested at a residence in Chetek for a report of a giant snake that had escaped its residence. The reptile slithered out of a window and was reported to be on the roof. According to the sheriff's department, the description of the creature did not do it justice. "We think the description of [the] giant was an undersell." The department said that when deputies arrived, they were able to utilize some tools and retrieve the giant "nope rope" and secure the animal. "We won't judge people's choice of pets, but we're pretty sure most people live in Northwest Wisconsin to avoid these jungle monsters."

## Liberty Fest weekend kicks off Friday, June 30 Construction detours add complications to travel in city

Chetek's most popular festival is almost here, and the area is preparing for five days of entertainment, food, music and a great time. One obstacle attendees will face at this year's event is construction detours caused by the closure of the bridge over the Chetek River on CTH SS, west of Whisky Way and Chetek Lanes Event Center & Pizzeria.

The Chetek Chamber of Commerce has updated its map for the event to help attendees navigate the detours and can be viewed on A7 of this edition and in the Liberty Fest brochure available at local businesses and in the June 28 edition of The Chetek Alert.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30  
9 a.m.—The 12th annual

Liberty Fest Golf Tournament begins at Sunset View Golf Course, located at 1015 25/25-1/4 St., Chetek. The tournament is 18 holes.

4-10 p.m.—WorldWide food truck fundraiser event at Phillips Park on City Park Drive. Food trucks at the event include Bubbles BBQ, Ponytail Pizza, My Momma's, SEE LIBERTY, PAGE A7

## Chetek Police Department puts Therapy K-9 Program on hold

BY KENTON TROUTMAN

Chetek Police Department has undergone a tumultuous two months after Officer Emily Breidenbach was killed in April. Last week, the department had to say goodbye to another one of its own. Officer K-9 Grizz has been transferred to Wautoma Police Department, where he started his first day with the PD's school resource officer on Thursday, June 15.

Chetek Police Chief Ron Ambrozaitis said it wasn't a decision made lightly. SEE GRIZZ, PAGE A7



PHOTO COURTESY OF WAUTOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Officer K-9 Grizz started his new job with Wautoma Police Department on Thursday, June 15. Grizz is working with the department's School Resource Officer.



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# MURDERED: Suspect had previous charges for domestic abuse

FROM PAGE A1

Wittrock to pull over, and he complied.

The officer observed a beer can in the vehicle's center console and detected the odor of intoxicants on Wittrock.

After repeated commands, Wittrock eventually exited the vehicle and stumbled several times, almost falling. He failed sobriety tests.

Wittrock allegedly said that he had been drinking since 8 a.m. and usually drank a 30-pack of beer per day.

Wittrock was subsequently charged with disorderly conduct-domestic abuse and operating while intoxicated-third

offense.

Wittrock was also charged and convicted in 2020 of violating a domestic abuse restraining order involving a different woman.

The Barron County Medical Examiner Office is conducting autopsies of the deceased with the assistance of the Midwest Medical Examiner Office.

The Barron County Sheriff's Department is handling the investigation with the assistance of the Wisconsin State Patrol Reconstruction Team. The New Auburn Fire Department, Barron County First Responders and Chetek Ambulance also responded to the scene.

# GRIZZ: Decision to transfer K-9 Grizz did not rest with PD alone

FROM PAGE A1

but after the tragic events of April 8, Officer Grizz has struggled with the loss of his handler. "Grizz is going to be okay, but he was severely traumatized by what he experienced."

The chief of police said the department did not have full ownership of the K-9, but had shared custody through an agreement with Blueberry Cottage Labradoodles. "Ultimately, the final decision did not rest with us but with the breeder who felt it would be best for him to be moved to a different department and a new pace of life," Ambrozaitis explained. "Grizz is fantastic with children, and we believe he will do well working in Wautoma schools where he can do what he loves in a safe environment."

With the transfer of Officer Grizz, the Chetek PD has said its Therapy K-9 Program is on hold. "Emily was the perfect fit for Chetek's Community Officer and Therapy K-9 handler. There is no one currently at the department who is able to fill that position."

Chief Ambrozaitis met with major donors for the

crowdfunded Therapy K-9 Program. All donations made to the program were placed in a specific fund for the care, equipment and maintenance of the therapy K-9. The donors gave their permission to the police department to utilize the funds for its needs, including equipment and training.

The Wautoma Police Chief Paul Mott, is a frequenter of Chetek and promised Ambrozaitis he would bring Officer Grizz to Chetek when he visits. "Saying goodbye to Grizz was difficult for everyone at the department, but we want what is best for him, and we know Emily would want him to continue to offer support to those in need," said Ambrozaitis.

The Wautoma Police Department said in a Facebook post, "Emily will always be a mentor for all officers with community service in their heart. We hope to make Grizz's momma proud of all he will accomplish in Wautoma. The Chetek Police Department and community will forever be our sister city. Grizz and WPD look forward to visiting Chetek as we blend our PD families."



KENTON TROUTMAN | THE CHETEK ALERT

# Wisconsin's fallen heroes remembered

On Wednesday, June 14, Zechariah Cartledge of Running 4 Heroes came to Chetek to run one mile in honor of Wisconsin's fallen first responders. Cartledge ran with CW School District students, family members of fallen first responders and community members. "We truly hope our time here brought comfort and healing to everyone within the city of Chetek and to the entire state of Wisconsin," Cartledge said. Families of the fallen officers were awarded \$5,000 each through the Homes for Heroes grant program.



# LIBERTY: Donkey Baseball making its debut for 49th Liberty Fest

FROM PAGE A1

La Cantina and more. Additionally, there will be live music and raffles—a fun and tasty event for the whole family.

6-11 p.m.—Gary Haugen Softball Tournament kicks off the Liberty Fest weekend at the Denny Overby Field (Chetek City field) behind Kwik Trip. Times may change depending on the number of teams.

8 p.m. to midnight—Fosbites Pub and Antczak Angus will hold a street dance. Tippen' Back Ridge is opening and the headliner will be SAGE.

### SATURDAY, JULY 1

8 a.m.—34th Annual Fishy Four Mile Run/Walk will be held at the Chetek Beach.

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.—Vintage Voyagers' Blast from the Past car show at the north end of the Chetek Airport. Admission is \$2 for spectators. Car registration is \$5. Awards will be announced at 2 p.m.

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.—36th Annual Wisconsin Indian Head Country Art & Craft Fair at Airport Park. The Chetek Lions Club will be selling pulled pork, brats, hot dogs, soda and water starting at 10 a.m. at the park pavilion.

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.—The Stitching Sisters Quilt Guild is presenting its Liberty Fest Quilt Festival at The Center of Chetek located at 711 Second St. Admission is \$5.

More than 100 quilts—new and antique—will be at the show. Additional vendors and a boutique will be at the event as well.

9 a.m. to 10 p.m.—Gary Haugen Softball Tournament continues at Denny Overby Field.

10 a.m.—Volleyball tournament at Chetek Lanes Event Center & Pizzeria. Registration at 10 a.m. \$30 per team. Coed teams.

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.—Kids' activities at City Beach on Lakeview Drive. There will be yard games, crafts, a DJ and a bounce house, sponsored by the Chetek Resort Owners Association. Hot dogs, chips, water, freeze pops and popcorn will be for sale. A sawdust coin hunt will be held at 12 p.m., sponsored by the Chetek Chamber of Commerce. Kids will be split up into four age groups. A sanctioned kids' pedal pull will be at 1 p.m.

5 p.m. and 6 p.m.—Hydroflites Water Ski show at the show site located at 728 Lakeview Drive. Concessions and beverages will be available. The pre-show begins at 5 p.m. and the main show at 6 p.m.

### SUNDAY, JULY 2

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.—The Stitching Sisters quilt show continues at The Center of Chetek. Admission is \$5.

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.—Gary Haugen Softball Tournament continues at Denny Overby Field.

10-11 a.m.—Church on the Beach, at City Beach. Area churches and residents are invited for a nondenominational community church service. Lawn chairs or blankets are recommended. Everyone is welcome. Contact Monica Chamberlain at 715-642-0094 for more information.

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.—Wisconsin Indian Head Country Art & Craft Fair at Airport Park. The Chetek Lions will continue selling concessions during the event including pulled pork, brats, hot dogs, chips, water and soda.

12 p.m.—Chuck Schaaf Memorial horsepull at the Funny Farm located at 885 24 1/2 St., in Chetek. A chicken dinner starts at 11 a.m. For more info, contact Doug Huset at 715-764-2346 for more information.

5 p.m. and 6 p.m.—Hydroflites Water Ski show at the show site located at 728 Lakeview Drive. Concessions and beverages will be available. The pre-show begins at 5 p.m. and the main show at 6 p.m.

### MONDAY, JULY 3

3 p.m.—Donkey baseball at the Denny Overby City Field, located on Water St. in Chetek. This is a donation based fundraising event where all the proceeds from this entertaining display will go toward a new pickleball court, tennis court and basketball court at Gotham Park. Dairyland Donkey Ball will be providing the animals for

the event. Contact Paul Poppe at 715-642-5048 for further information.

5 p.m.—Vintage Baseball at Denny Overby Field, played with 1860s rules. Concessions will be available at the field. Contact Lee Killoren at 715-495-847 for further information.

### TUESDAY, JULY 4

7 a.m. to 10 a.m.—Independence Day Pancake Breakfast at the Chetek Masonic Lodge located at 216 Morrison St.

12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.—The Chetek Liberty Fest Parade. The streets of Chetek will be lined with people for the event. The parade starts on Knapp St. near Railroad Ave., turns south on Fourth St. west on Douglas St. north on Second St. and ends on Leonard St. Bring along a lawn chair for comfort and an early arrival for the parade is strongly encouraged because the event is so well attended. Registration for the parade is online at cheteklibertyfest.org Click the parade registration button. The Chetek Museum will sell snocones at 728 Second St. during the parade.

1:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.—The Liberty Fest Beach Party is at the City Beach located on Lakeview Dr. Admission to the event is \$5. Chris Kroeze and R County Gals will be providing the musical entertainment.

2 p.m.—The Chetek VFW will be serving brats and hot dogs after the parade.



## Shuttle Bus Pick-Up:

### Saturday, July 1

FREE shuttle buses will be available Saturday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Buses will be leaving from the Chetek Bus Garage and the Sterling Bank parking lot. The busses can be flagged down anywhere along the route for bus pickups. Shuttle bus services is provided by Erb Bus Service.

## Map Legend

- Independence Day Breakfast  
Masonic Lodge - 216 Morrison St
- VFW Post Hot Dog/Brat Feed  
102 Douglas Street
- Hydroflites Ski Site  
Follow Lakeview Dr for 1 mile to site
- Beach Party  
City Beach on Lakeview Drive
- Softball Tournaments/Vintage Base Ball  
Overby Field on First Street
- Fishy Four-Mile Run/Walk  
City Beach on Lakeview Drive
- Kids Activities  
City Beach on Lakeview Drive
- Church at the Beach  
City Beach on Lakeview Drive
- Shuttle Bus Pick-up  
Sat. 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- Volleyball Tournament  
Chetek Lanes Event Center
- Arts & Craft Show  
Airport Park on Lakeview Drive
- Fireworks  
A great view from anywhere in town
- Kids' Pedal Tractor Pull  
City Beach on Lakeview Drive
- Car Show  
Airport Park on Lakeview Drive
- Sawdust Pile Money Hunt  
City Beach on Lakeview Drive

Fireworks display will be shot over Chetek Lake at dusk. View from the city beach just east of Chetek on Lakeview Drive.

First Aid: Ambulance and first responders will be on staff at all Liberty Fest events. Please call 911 if you need assistance.

Fourth of July Liberty Fest parade formation begins on Knapp Street in front of Lampert lumber.

Units travel east on Knapp Street, turn right (south) on Fourth Street for one block, turn left (east) on Douglas Street for two blocks, turn left (north) on Second (Main) Street to Leonard Street where units turn left (west) for several blocks before disbanding. PLEASE DO NOT PARK VEHICLES ALONG THE PARADE ROUTE.