

# The Chetek Alert

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Chetek, Wisconsin | One Dollar & Twenty-Five Cents

## FIRSTLOOK



### Barron County real estate taxes due July 31

Samantha Sommerfeld, Barron County Treasurer, is reminding residents that the 2022 postponed real estate taxes are due on or before Monday, July 31, 2023.

The City of Rice Lake 2022 property taxes must be paid to the City of Rice Lake Clerk's Office. All other property taxes in Barron County must be paid to the Barron County Treasurer.

The county does have a drop box by the main entrance of the Barron County Government Center, located on Monroe Ave. When mailing payments, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if the resident would like a receipt mailed to them.

Payment options, tax amounts, and payment status can be found on the Barron County Website at [www.barron-countywi.gov](http://www.barron-countywi.gov). Click on the "Tax Data" tab to pay online with a credit card or by e-check (there are additional fees if using the online payment options). Please call the county treasurer's office at 715-537-6280 with any questions or for further information.

## DEATHS

James Murch, 95, Chetek



KENTON TROUTMAN | THE CHETEK ALERT

## Hundreds attend Barron, Rusk Pork in the Park fundraiser

The Pork in the Park fundraiser for the Barron and Rusk County Emergency Response Teams (ERT) and SWAT was held Saturday, July 15, at the Weyerhaeuser Park Pavilion. The event began at 2 p.m. and ended at 11 p.m. Those in attendance were treated to chicken cooked by the Weyerhaeuser Fire Department and pork roast. The family friendly event had a little something for everyone including kids activities and face painting. The event boasted a gun raffle, cash raffle, and various other prize raffles, music by Dylan Martinson, a bouncy castle for children, a beanbag tourney and pickleball. Funds raised at the event will be used for additional training and much needed equipment for the Barron-Rusk ERT and SWAT teams. Pictured above at left, attendees chatted under the pavilion while sipping on refreshments after perusing the tables full of raffle prizes. The evening's musical entertainment was provided by Chetek local Dylan Martinson. The Barron County Sheriff's Dept. ERT BearCat armored vehicle was parked outside the pavilion for visitors to take a look at, as pictured below at left. Children had a blast at the Saturday event and enjoyed some old-fashioned entertainment on the park's merry-go-round, pictured at bottom right.



## Chetek Fire Department sponsoring circus this weekend



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Chetek Fire Department is sponsoring The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus to raise funds for necessary equipment and training.

KENTON TROUTMAN

The circus is this weekend! The Culpepper & Merriweather Circus is visiting Chetek on Saturday, July 22, at 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., at Gotham Park, located across from the City Beach Pavilion.

The circus is sponsored by the Chetek Fire Department. A portion of ticket sales purchased before the day of the circus will go to the Chetek FD for necessary training and equipment.

Early birds who pur-

chase their tickets ahead of time will pay \$13 for adults and \$8 for children and seniors. Tickets are now available around town at local businesses including:

- The Chetek Alert.
- Sterling Bank.
- Stardust Drive-In Movie Theater.
- Carpe Diem.
- Candy Corner & Creations.
- Chetek Visitors Center.

Tickets may also be purchased on

SEE BIG TOP, PAGE A7

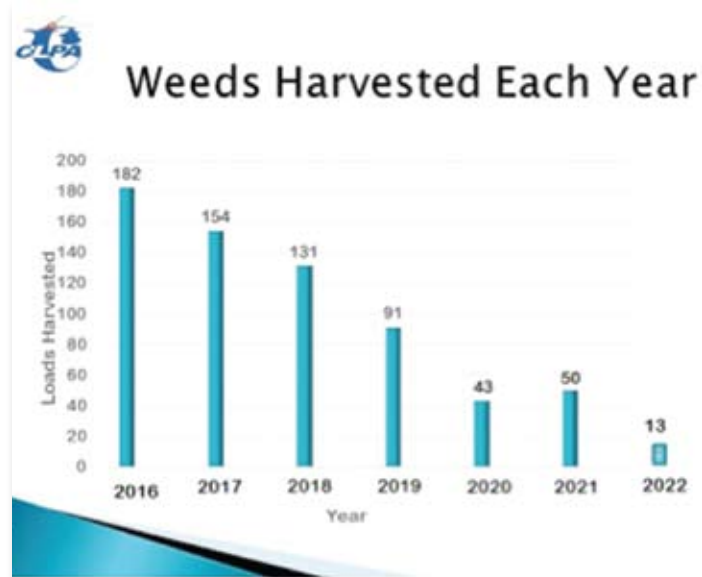
## CLPA improving Chetek Chain one project at a time

*Editor's note: The following article is Part 2 of a three-part series composed by the Chetek Lakes Protection Association.*

This is the second article in a three-part series highlighting the needs of protecting our lakes and the work being performed by many working groups to protect and improve our lakes and watershed. The first article in the series summarized the online survey conducted last year by the Chetek Lakes Protection Association (CLPA) as input to the updated Chetek Lakes Aquatic Plant Management Plan. In this article we will summarize lake improvement projects being currently performed or considered for the future to improve the health of the Red Cedar Watershed.

### AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Not surprisingly the CLPA survey found that the most popular activity on our lakes is "cruising/boating" followed closely by fishing. The CLPA is in the midst of a multi-year project to increase aware-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Pictured above is a graph of the weeds that have been harvested from the Chetek Chain by the CLPA's Ecoharvester since 2016.

ness of the laws governing our waterways through improved signage and safety-focused messaging. An example is Wisconsin's "100 Foot No Wake" rule which requires all watercraft, including jet skis, to stay at least 100 feet away from objects including other boats, swimmers and the shoreline. The survey also recognized erosion of the shorelines as a problem on

our lakes with most respondents believing the primary cause is wave action from boats. To address this, over the past two years the CLPA has replaced or updated the signage at 13 landings throughout the chain. The new signage states current regulations, bag limits, etc. to aid visitors and the community. "No Wake" shoreline signs are available

SEE LAKES, PAGE A7



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## Semiannual homeless count scheduled for July 26

The Barron County Salvation Army will be participating in the Balance of State Continuum of Care Point in Time Count on Wednesday, July 26, as required twice a year by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care is an organization whose mission is to end homelessness by supporting local coalitions throughout the state. During the Point in Time Count, each local area will count the homeless who are either sheltered in a facility or unsheltered and living on the streets. The physical count begins at 11 p.m. on Wednesday, July 26 and takes place simultaneously in each county.

The Salvation Army of Barron County will provide volunteers with information as to how to connect those individuals with local

resources for food and shelter in the county. Each community then submits their counts for sheltered and unsheltered persons in each county for that night. The resulting numbers help to determine whether the services provided in the county meet the needs of those who are homeless.

To learn more about the Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care, please visit <https://www.wiboscoc.org>.

For more information on how The Salvation Army is working toward combating homelessness in Barron County go to: <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/barroncounty> or visit: [www.facebook.com/BarronSalvationArmy](https://www.facebook.com/BarronSalvationArmy).

Contact Patty at 715-554-4928 with questions or further information on how to volunteer.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## One cited after two vehicles collide on Hwy. 8

One person was slightly injured, and a Chetek motorist received two traffic tickets after a crash took place shortly before 5 p.m. Tuesday, July 11, at an intersection on U.S. Hwy. 8, east of Barron. According to the report, a 2015 Ford Taurus driven by Heather Dickrell, 21, of Marengo, Wisconsin, was going west on U.S. 8, while a 2002 Chevy Trailblazer driven by Clifford Bronstad IV, 31, Chetek, was southbound on 18th Street and halted at a stop sign. Bronstad's vehicle then went into the intersection and collided with the rear passenger side of Dickrell's car. Dickrell sustained what the report said was a suspected minor injury. A passenger, 22-year-old Curtis Netz, of Mason, Wisconsin, and Bronstad, were uninjured. Bronstad was issued two citations, for failure to yield the right of way from a stop sign and operating a vehicle without insurance.

## Victim transported by helicopter after suffering multiple bee stings

BY MEGGAN MEISEGEIER | LADYSMITH NEWS

Local EMS teams recently responded to a call in New Auburn involving a subject who was stung multiple times by a bee and not breathing. The victim started breathing again before EMS arrived, but remained unconscious. He started coming around after he was administered three Benadryl. Life Link arrived on the scene and transported the patient for further medical treatment.

Honey bees, yellow jackets, and paper wasps are the most common bee and wasp stinging offenders in the United States. Bees are important pollinators in our ecosystems, needed for the healthy growth of the plants that all life depends upon. Most bees are docile and mind their own business as long as people mind theirs, but some species of wasps are known to be aggressive. Yellow-jackets can be particularly vicious if they feel humans are threatening their nests

or invading their territory and will attack people for no good reason.

With summer in full swing, most people view bee stings as a common, if painful, annoyance. However, for about 2 million Americans, being stung by a bee can be a life-threatening event.

Rusk County Emergency Management Director Thomas Hall stated, "We respond to several allergic reactions every year. They range from insect bites to allergies to medication and even dusty conditions. We seldom have to treat someone with these reactions in the field, but they do get treatments at times in the ED setting."

A reaction to a bee sting or other allergen is called anaphylaxis. Symptoms usually occur within minutes of exposure, but can also occur after 30 minutes or more. Signs of anaphylaxis include skin reactions such as hives and itching, low blood pressure, constriction of the airways and a swollen tongue or throat, which can cause

wheezing and trouble breathing, a weak and rapid pulse, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea and dizziness or fainting.

A bee allergy can be a lifelong issue, or it can develop suddenly later in life.

Those who think they are having an adverse reaction to an allergen should seek help right away. The ambulance can provide Epinephrine and oxygen to someone with a severe reaction such as a swollen face and tongue and respiratory issues.

The best way to avoid a painful bee or wasp sting and the possible allergic reaction that could come with it is to not attract the insect's attention in the first place. Experts say to cover trash cans, not to leave food out and avoid wearing bright colors and perfumes to avoid the attention of bees and wasps. Steer clear of any visible wasp nest and don't swat or run from any bees that approach you. Remaining calm is the best policy when it comes to remaining sting-free.

## Suspect in Prairie Lake stabbing to appear in court

A preliminary hearing is set for next Monday, July 24, 2023, for a 30-year-old Chetek man charged with trying to stab his mother to death during a June 7 domestic quarrel in the town of Prairie Lake, according to Barron County Circuit Court records.

Defendant Michael A. Townsend has been in jail on \$50,000 cash bond since his June 7 arrest. He made an initial court appearance Wednesday, July 12, 2023.

The 54-year-old victim was flown to an Eau Claire hospital after she called 911 June 7 to report that

her son had stabbed her in the back of the neck during a quarrel over money.

The criminal complaint charged the defendant with first-degree intentional homicide, a felony punishable by up to 60 years in prison, court records added.

## BIG TOP: The Chetek FD has list of equipment they hope to purchase with funds from ticket sales

FROM PAGE A1

The Culpepper & Merriweather Circus website at <http://www.cmcircus.com/?fbclid=IwAR250-HQtCcOVRCOcuQFXD-PFnOAvxO1pwMDmytaeTKxKNmgmp-9KfAFYFU> for those who may not be local or able to stop in at any of the participating businesses, a portion of the tickets purchased online will be awarded to the Chetek FD as well.

Tickets purchased the day of the event at the box office are \$16 for adults, \$9 for children ages 2 to 12 years old and seniors ages 65 and up.

Gotham Park is located at

226 City Park Drive.

The FD is looking to raise funds to be used toward the purchase of equipment used in various emergency situations. Chetek FD member and EMT Tom Blatz, said the fire department compiled a list of equipment they hope to purchase with the community's generosity including the purchase of sonar for the department's dive pontoon, a thermal-imaging camera, battery-spreaders to be used for vehicle extrications and new gear lockers for crew members. "This is a great event where everyone can come out and have a great time while also supporting their local

fire department," noted Chetek Fire Department Chief Ryan Olson.

The 90-minute family-friendly show under the big top will feature big cats, tight rope walking, aerialists, foot juggling, horses, daredevils and so much more.

A tent raising will be open to the public on the morning of the circus at 9:30. Onlookers will have the opportunity to observe the raising of the Big Top. Anyone can attend this event including groups. Those curious about circus life will have the opportunity to learn about living on the road and to see the animals.

## ZONING: Zoning of property to be discussed, voted on by plan commission; moved to council if approved

FROM PAGE A1

concluded.

City residents are encouraged to contact their council members to share their thoughts on this proposal.

The proposal will go before The Plan Commission of the City of Chetek at city hall located at 220 Stout St., on Thursday, July 20, at 6 p.m. to discuss and vote on chang-

ing the zoning from C-2 Highway Commercial to C-1 General Commercial zoning.

This meeting will have a public hearing where residents can share their thoughts on the proposal. A regular plan commission meeting will follow.

If the zoning is approved, the proposal would move forward to the city council's meeting agenda.

Listed below is contact information for City of Chetek Council Members:

- Ward 1-Scott Bachowski: [ward1@cityofchetekwi.us](mailto:ward1@cityofchetekwi.us) or 715-931-0502.
- Ward 2-Earl Grover: [ward2@cityofchetekwi.us](mailto:ward2@cityofchetekwi.us) or 715-642-3192.
- Ward 3-Terry Hight: [ward3@cityofchetekwi.us](mailto:ward3@cityofchetekwi.us) or 715-475-9811.
- Ward 4-Thea Hempel: [ward4@cityofchetekwi.us](mailto:ward4@cityofchetekwi.us) or 715-924-4838.

FROM PAGE A1

action from boats. To address this, over the past two years the CLPA has replaced or updated the signage at 13 landings throughout the chain. The new signage states current regulations, bag limits, etc. to aid visitors and the community. "No Wake" shoreline signs are available from the CLPA.

### WHY ARE OUR LAKES GREEN IN THE SUMMER?

Another subject that received considerable mention in the survey is the "green" color of our lakes. Records going back to the early 1900's indicate the Chetek Chain has been green in midsummer. It is believed that logging which started 150 years ago converted the forests to farmland. Without the thick tree population buffering runoff into lakes/streams, the loss of buffers and increased use of fertilizers and pesticides increased nitrogen and phosphorous in the waters throughout the upper Midwest.

Biologists describe the Chetek Lakes as eutrophic, meaning the water body has excess nutrients which cause excessive growth of plants and algae. In our case, the excess nutrients are nitrogen and phosphorus. As the overgrown plants die off each year, they consume dissolved oxygen from the water which can threaten other aquatic plants and fish. The damage these nutrients caused to Wisconsin's lake systems resulted in the outlawing of the sale of commercial turf fertilizers containing phosphorus throughout the state in 2000. Education programs were also put in place to increase awareness as to other sources of phosphorus including wood-fire ash, animal waste, leaking sewage treatment plants, leaking septic systems, and decomposing vegetation.

In addition, the shallow nature of our lakes allows the muck on the lake bottom to get churned up by boat and wave action and released into the water. To better understand the role that this "muck" could be playing in our waters, the CLPA secured a grant

earlier this year from the WI DNR to fund a project to sample and measure sediment throughout the 6 lakes in our chain. The sampling was performed in June with the final report and analysis expected this fall. This information will be evaluated to determine what actions can be taken to reduce exposure to the nutrients in the lake bottom. These actions could include dredging of certain areas, addressing low water flow, or other actions.

### PROTECT AND IMPROVE

Since 1996, the CLPA and local volunteers have supported a Water Quality Monitoring program in which samples are collected throughout the summer to document water quality attributes and provide it to the WI DNR. The CLPA has also completed multiple habitat improvements through the years including installation of fish cribs, fishsticks, shoreline improvement and repair, tree/plant giveaways, education materials and supporting County/State agencies, and working with WI University research teams.

Walleyes for Chetek is a volunteer organization that performs stocking of walleyes to support lake health and a healthy fish population. Each year they release several thousand extended growth walleyes into the Chetek Chain and have stocked more than 100,000 walleyes in the chain to date.

Staff and students from UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stout work on analysis and projects each year. Projects are performed throughout the Red Cedar Watershed to the benefit of all our lakes.

The Barron County Conservation Department works with farmers and famer-led groups to implement the principles of improving soil health by armoring the soil with cover crops, minimizing soil disturbance, increasing plant diversity through crop rotation, and maintaining a living root in the soil after harvest. By doing so, farmers reduce fertilizer usage, prevent soil erosion, and reduce the risk of nutrient runoff into lakes and streams.

The WI DNR is involved and plays a pivotal role in supporting all these groups through technical support, past and present data collection and modeling, and providing grants to co-fund projects and improvements for agencies and nonprofit groups.

### PLANS DRIVE ACTION

All effective organizations work with a plan. In the case of the Chetek Lakes, the Chetek Lakes Aquatic Plant Management Plan has directed the actions and activities of the CLPA and DNR for the last 10 years. First published in 2012, the plan documents the water quality of the Lakes which is used to set goals and prioritize future actions. One of the more visible, direct outcomes of the 2012 Plan is the CLPA's Weed and Algae Skimming operation. The 2012 Plan indicated that rooted submerged weeds, in our case curly-leaf pondweed, was spreading rapidly throughout most areas of our lakes. In response, in 2015 an Eco-Harvester, a machine that pulls and collects weeds and clumped algae from the water, was purchased with funds from member and community-wide donations. Since then, a dump trailer, a custom transport barge and a tow vehicle have been added to the fleet also through community donations. For the last seven years, the manpower to manage, operate and maintain the equipment has been provided through volunteers, as well as operating and maintenance funding coming from donations. Since 2016, more than 2,640 cubic yards (220 dump truck loads) of plant debris has been removed and recycled through the program! As you can see in the chart below, the removal of weeds and seeds over the last seven years is significantly reducing new weed growth in following years.

Watch for Part 3 of this series for a broader view of the role these and other local initiatives, including farming, are playing to improve the quality of the Red Cedar Watershed, the source of the water feeding the Chetek Chain of Lakes!