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THE NORTHWOODS RIVER NEWS

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Spring election: Contested races in Newbold and Crescent

BY RIVER NEWS STAFF

Key leadership positions in a pair of Oneida County townships are up for election this spring as Crescent town chairman Joel Knutson is being challenged by former Oneida County supervisor Robb Jensen and longtime Newbold town chairman David Kroll steps away from public service.

Kroll announced his intention to retire at the end of the July 28 town board meeting.

"This hasn't been announced at a meeting yet but it is my intent to retire from public service and I will not be running for reelection next April," he said.

Kroll was first elected to the town board in April 1999 and has served as town chairman since 2005.

Town supervisor Dan Hess, chief deputy at the Oneida County sheriff's office, has filed paperwork to run for the Newbold chairmanship. He is unopposed.

There are two Newbold town supervisor seats up for election in April.

Supervisor Mike Sue-

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Township seeks assistance with PFAS contamination issue

'The health of the residents of the Town of Stella is at stake'

By Heather Schaefer
OF THE RIVER NEWS

The Town of Stella has reached out to Department

of Natural Resources (DNR) representatives and elected officials to request assistance in responding to an ongoing water crisis prompted by the recent discovery of PFAS contamination in local private wells.

In letters to DNR and elected officials dated Dec. 31, 2022, town chairman David Brunette advises that

the eastern Oneida County hamlet of approximately 670 residents simply does not have the resources to respond to a crisis of this magnitude on its own.

"Private wells in the Town of Stella have tested positive for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") at levels so high that the water can no longer be safely con-

sumed by our residents," Brunette wrote.

The letters note that the DNR discovered the PFAS in the wells during randomized testing conducted as part of a statewide project and agency representatives attended the Dec. 13 town board meeting to provide

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HEATHER SCHAEFER/RIVER NEWS

SLEDDING AT SAROCKA

Sledders trek up the hill for another run down one of the area's most popular sledding locations Monday afternoon, Jan. 2, 2023, at Rhinelander's Sarocka Park. The hill in question is the former location of the old Rhinelander High School building and is the "sunset hill of glory" referenced in the school's alma mater. The park is named after a local football star, Antone "Tony" Sarocka, who died in October 1931 after sustaining a head injury in a football game at what was then called "the Bowl". See **related story below**.

Community was rocked by death of football player in 1931

By Heather Schaefer
OF THE RIVER NEWS

Over 90 years ago the Rhinelander community suffered a terrible jolt not unlike what the nation experienced last Monday evening when Damar Hamlin suffered cardiac arrest while playing safety for the Buffalo Bills in a professional football game in Cincinnati, Ohio.

As longtime Rhinelander residents and local history buffs may recall, Antone "Tony" Sarocka, a resident of the Town of Woodboro, died on April 25, 1931, approximately one hour after suffering a head injury while playing the tackle position for the Rhinelander Rhinos city football team. He was not wearing a helmet.

The opponent that day was a team from Clintonville and the game was played at what was then known as "the Bowl" near the city's center.

It has since been named Sarocka Park in memory of the young star.

According to a 2014 *River News* story referencing Sarocka's death, the 21-year-old was a star in high school but delayed a college football career to stay home and help run the family business after his father died in 1928.

In the interim, he was playing for the Rhinos, a local city league team. There were many such teams from around the state that formed during that time period, according to the 2016 article. Rhinelander's first city team was formed in 1895, according to the article.

According to local historian Bill Vancos, Sarocka's caption in the 1928 Rhinelander High School yearbook said:

"In football he was a bear,
A track star too, is he;
An athlete with curly hair--
What more can a hero be?"

According to a clipping from the Oct. 29, 1931 edition of the *Rhineland Daily News*, predecessor of the *River News*, Sarocka's death hit the community hard.

"No event of recent date has caused more sorrow among teachers and alumni of R.H.S. than the death of Antone Sarocka," the article reads. "To us, who knew him, Antone seemed the

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PFAS

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town residents with more information. However, according to the letters, “the meeting did not provide the Town with any concrete guidance, nor did the DNR instruct the Town on how to handle the PFAS contamination moving forward. Moreover, at this time, the Town has still not received further information regarding the DNR’s findings, including the locations of the contaminated wells or the source of the contamination.”

As a result, the Town had made the following requests of the DNR:

- 1) Immediate testing to determine the location of the contaminated wells.
- 2) Assessment of each source of contamination.
- 3) Provision of temporary water to all affected residents in the community, pursuant to NR 738, including

the resources to administer the program.

4) Work with the Town to create a long-term solution to providing clean water to our residences and to remediate the contamination in our area.

“We further requested a meeting with DNR officials within ten business days of receipt of the correspondence to further discuss the PFAS contamination and develop a coordinated strategy to address the issue,” town officials noted in a “public statement on PFAS contamination” posted on the town’s website.

PFAS are a group of man-made, fluorinated chemicals manufactured and used since the 1940s. Because they are designed to be stable and unreactive to water, grease, heat, and other elements, they are often referred to as “forever” compounds. Studies have shown a link between human exposure to PFAS and adverse health effects.

“We understand and acknowledge the severity of this situation. We are hopeful that the State will prove instrumental in providing us with the necessary guidance, resources, and funding to identify the source of the contamination, while simultaneously providing our residents with safe drinking water on both a temporary and permanent basis,” the public statement posted on the town website reads.

The letter to the DNR was addressed to newly appointed DNR Secretary Adam Payne, James Yach, who is Secretary’s Director for the Northern Region and one of the DNR officials who attended the Dec. 13 town meeting, and Chris Saari, the Northern Region Team Supervisor (remediation & redevelopment program).

In response to an email message from the *River News* Thursday afternoon, Yach stated that the agency is “generating a response” to the Stella letter. We will report on the response as soon as it’s made public.

The second letter was addressed to Gov. Tony Evers, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson, U.S. Rep Tom Tiffany, State

Sen. Mary Felzkowski and State Rep. Rob Swearingen.

“Given the severity of the contamination, as well as the small population of our Town, we are respectfully calling on our elected public officials to assist in remedying this issue, as well as advocating for our municipality at the local and state level.” Brunette wrote. “As I informed the DNR officials, the Town of Stella simply cannot address this situation without significant State assistance. It is imperative that the State provide us with the necessary funding and resources to address this issue. Our Town Board is comprised of myself, the chairman, and two supervisors. We also have a Town Clerk and Town Treasurer. As a result, we are not in a position to serve our constituents and appropriately address the PFAS contamination on our own. In conclusion, the health of the residents of the Town of Stella is at stake. Please do what you can to assist us in speeding up the process, locating the source of the contamination, and, ultimately, developing a long-term solution to provide clean water to our residents and to re-

mediate the contamination in our municipality.”

In mid-December, DNR officials reported that “a handful” of the Stella wells tested as part of an ongoing state project showed PFAS levels higher than what was detected in the two City of Rhinelander wells taken offline in 2019 as a result of PFAS contamination. Some of the readings from Stella were among the highest levels ever detected in testing of private wells in the state, the DNR confirmed.

“The results are kind of across the board,” Yach said at the time, noting that “some were at marginal levels, some at non-detect or below the health advisory limit.”

“There’s continual testing and I’m sure we’re going to see some other exceedances that are going to be at similar levels,” he added.

When asked if the DNR has any theory as to why a broad spectrum of PFAS levels would be detected in wells located in this small township, Yach focused on the natural topography of the area.

“The only explanation that I can really offer you on that is that it’s an area of complex

hydrogeology,” he said. “And so when groundwater flows, there’s a shallow sand aquifer and a deeper bedrock aquifer and the way the groundwater interacts with both of those aquifers you could have literally a couple wells within a few hundreds yards of one another and they could have complete different results from their water quality tests based on where they are in the aquifer as far as depth and laterally.”

Yach also agreed that Stella, also referred to as Starks in honor of founder Leonard Starks, is different from the area where the two city wells are located. The city wells are located near the Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport and several manufacturing facilities while Stella is primarily an agricultural community. For more information on the Stella contamination, a PowerPoint presentation produced by the DNR and DHS and presented to the public during the town’s Dec. 13 meeting, is available on the town website, www.townofstella.com.

The two letters, as well as the “public statement,” are also posted on the website.

LEGAL NOTICES

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT VILAS COUNTY
 Publication Notice
 Harassment
 Injunction Hearing
 Case No. 2022CV000116

Jessica Klemmer
 Petitioner

-vs-
 Kelly Harrison
 Respondent

A harassment temporary restraining order was issued on 12/15/2022 against Kelly Harrison.
 A hearing on the petition to grant a harassment injunction will be held on 01/11/2023 at 11:00 a.m., at the Vilas County Courthouse, Eagle River, Wisconsin, in courtroom #1, before Martha Milanowski, Court Official.

TO THE RESPONDENT:
 If you fail to appear at the hearing, the relief requested will be granted.

105232 1/10 WNAJLP

STATE OF WISCONSIN, CIRCUIT COURT, ONEIDA COUNTY
 Notice to Creditors
 (Informal Administration)
 Case No. 23PR02

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
 Robert John Meyers

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:

1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 07/18/52 and date of death 11/12/22, was domiciled in Oneida County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of 4440 River Bend Rd., Rhinelander, WI 54501.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent’s estate is April 27, 2023.
5. A claim may be filed at the Oneida County Courthouse, 1 S. Oneida Ave., P.O. Box 400, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, Room A-318 (probate office).

/s/ Amy M. Franzen
 Probate Registrar
 01/04/23

Rachel Boehlen
 3963 Lakewood Rd
 Harshaw, WI 54529
 715-490-1195
 105289 1/10,1/17,1/24 WNAJLP

NOTICE TO ALL ONEIDA COUNTY DOG OWNERS

Pursuant to Section 174.052, Wisconsin Statutes, notice is hereby given to all owners of dogs in Oneida County that rabies vaccinations and dog licenses are required under the statutes. Vaccination by a veterinarian against rabies of all dogs is required (Section 95.21) within 30 days after the dog reaches 4 months of age and revaccinated before the certificate expires or within three years of the previous vaccination. Notice is hereby further given that evidence that the dog is currently immunized against rabies must be presented before a license can be issued. To qualify for the minimum license fee for neutered males or spayed females, presentation of evidence attesting to same must be presented when applying for the license.

PENALTIES

A minimum late fee of \$5 shall be assessed the owner of each dog 5 months of age or over who fails to obtain a dog license by April 1st of each year, or within 30 days of acquiring ownership on or before the dog reached licensable age. The minimum late fee may be raised by municipal action.

Any owner who fails to have a dog vaccinated against rabies as required by statute may be required to forfeit not less than \$50 nor more than \$100.

2023 dog licenses can be obtained from your LOCAL TREASURER.

Oneida County Board
 by Tracy Hartman, County Clerk

105233 1/10 WNAJLP

Sarocka

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embodiment of vigor, of health, of manly strength, and it is hard to believe that life could be wiped out so suddenly. In school he was intelligent and alert in his studies; in athletics he was a great asset. He was very anxious to continue his education after graduation in 1928, but the death of his father put family burdens on his shoulders and he unselfishly gave up his hopes and assumed the work to which he was called. The sympathy of Antone’s countless friends goes out to his mother, brothers, and sisters in this overwhelming loss.”

According to an Associated Press report from October 1931, after Sarocka’s death it

was decided that the Rhinos team would disband after playing one final game against Montreal.

That game was to be a tribute to Sarocka as well as a benefit to help his family with funeral expenses, according to the report.

To the great relief of many, the latest published reports indicate that Hamlin is awake, breathing on his own, and communicating with both family and teammates.

The *River News* is interested in obtaining additional information about Sarocka and the Rhinelander Rhinos. Please send an email to the address below if you have information or photos of Sarocka or the team.

Heather Schaefer may be reached at heather@rivernewsonline.com.

ANTONE SAROCKA.

Oct. 11, 1910 Oct. 25, 1931

Anton Sarocka was born in Port Washington, Wis., Oct. 11, 1910, and died Oct. 25, 1931, as a result of an injury received in a football game.

No event of recent date has caused more sorrow among teachers and alumni of R. H. S. than the death of Antone Sarocka. To us, who knew him, Antone seemed the embodiment of vigor, of health, of manly strength, and it is hard to believe that life could be wiped out so suddenly.

In school he was intelligent and alert in his studies; in athletics he was a great asset. He was very anxious to continue his education after graduation in 1928, but the death of his father put family burdens on his shoulders, and he unselfishly gave up his hopes, and assumed the work to which he was called.

The sympathy of Antone's countless friends goes out to his mother, brothers, and sisters in this overwhelming loss.

Pictured is a screenshot of an article published in the Oct. 29, 1931 edition of The Rhinelander Daily News. It was captured via www.newspapers.com.

Preview

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flohn has chosen not to run for re-election but incumbent supervisor Jim Staskiewicz is seeking another term.

The other candidates for the two town supervisor seats are Petra Pietrzak, Nicholas Vos, Steve Macheichok, Scott Ridderbusch and Bradley White.

Crescent chairmanship

In Crescent, incumbent town chairman

Joel Knutson is being challenged by former Oneida County supervisor Robb Jensen in the April 4 general election.

Two of the four town supervisor seats are also up for election in April.

Incumbent Kyla Waksmonski is unopposed, however incumbent Mike Pazdernik is being challenged by Steve Brich.

Town clerk Tracy Hartman and treasurer Carla Fletcher are running unopposed.

School District of Rhinelander Board of Education

Three veteran members of the School District of Rhinelander Board of Education are also seeking another term this spring.

Incumbents Duane Frey, Mike Roberts and Merlin Van Buren have filed declarations of candidacy for the spring election, according to the district administration office.

No challengers declared their candidacy for the three seats up for re-election, mean-

ing the incumbents will run unopposed.

Roberts has served on the school board since 2009 while Frey was first elected in 2014.

Van Buren’s most recent term on the board began in 2019, however he previously served on the board in the early 2010s.

There are no City of Rhinelander aldermanic seats up for election this spring.

Brian Jopek of the *Lakeland Times* contributed to this report.