

Wildcats top Spartans in OT thriller ▶ 1B



Contested races in county on April 4 ▶ 4A



WAUKESHA COUNTY



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Katy's Kloset looking for a lift 'Medical equipment lending library' in need of wheelchairs



Brian Huber/Freeman Staff

Volunteers Carol Mengel of Waukesha and Roger Hoene of Muskego tend to the stock at Katy's Kloset, a medical supply lending library in Waukesha, on Thursday.

By Brian Huber bhuber@conley.net.com 262-513-2674

WAUKESHA — Katy's Kloset has gone from literally being based in a closet to an organization with world-wide reach, helping people who need to borrow medical equipment on a loan basis, or in need of supplies.

A cadre of volunteers works to meet the needs of hundreds of customers a month in southeastern Wisconsin, around the state and beyond who are not asked to pay for what they need.

See KLOSET, PAGE 2A

At a glance

What: Katy's Kloset, a medical equipment lending service. Where: 404 Wilmont Drive, Waukesha. Contact: 262-746-9034. To reserve equipment: Visit www.teamupwithfamilies.org

Heyer Elementary removes 'Rainbowland' from concert District: Dolly Parton, Miley Cyrus song was deemed controversial

By Karen Pilarski kpilarski@conley.net.com 262-513-2657

WAUKESHA — A song about positivity in turbulent times has been labeled as controversial. "Rainbowland" by Dolly Parton and Miley Cyrus was on the list of songs for first-graders at Heyer Elementary School to sing during a spring concert.

SOUND OFF

What do you think? Phone: 262-513-2641 Email: soundoff@conley.net.com

Melissa Tempel is a dual language teacher at Heyer for the first grade. The music teacher selects songs for the spring concert for the school and organizes the concert.

"This year we were trying to coordinate with the music teacher that we could pick songs together and do one program instead of two. He was really open to collaborating," Tempel said.

The music teacher gave them a list of ideas for songs. "We told him we really wanted to do 'It's a Wonderful World.' The kids really love that one. Parents really love that one too. Off of that we thought we should do a theme about the world," she said.

Tempel said she and her colleague found "Rainbowland" and felt the students would love the catchy tune. The two first-grade teachers came up with "Rainbow Connection" from "The Muppet Movie." There is also a Spanish song called "De Colores" which is about the colors of the world.

See RAINBOW, PAGE 7A

New Berlin oil spill reportedly came from Moorland Auto Repair

Occurred on March 16 but wasn't reported until Sunday

By Karen Pilarski 262-513-2657 kpilarski@conley.net.com

NEW BERLIN — An oil spill on March 16 originated from Moorland Auto Repair, according to New

Berlin Community Development Director Greg Kessler. The Freeman reached out to the shop for comment but didn't hear back before deadline.

The city held a special meeting on Thursday evening to discuss the lat-

est information regarding the spill. The spill from the auto shop entered a storm drain on the property that feeds into the city's storm sewer system.

See SPILL, PAGE 8A

Milwaukee Public Museum: Wisconsin Journey gallery to be part of Future Museum

Three more galleries to be announced in coming months

By Faith Rae frae@conley.net.com 262-513-2644

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Public Museum and exhibit design

partner Thinc Design revealed Thursday the second of five permanent galleries that will be incorporated in the Future Museum due to open in late 2026.

The reveal showcased the Wisconsin Journey gallery. This gallery will allow visitors to see the natural and cultural wonders and landscapes of Wisconsin. The gallery will also

See MUSEUM, PAGE 8A

COMING UP



Girls basketball player of the year, coach of the year and All-Freeman team in Saturday's Freeman

The Freeman sports section is shining the spotlight on the best of the best basketball players in Waukesha County. Make sure to check out tomorrow's Freeman for the girls basketball player of the year, coach of the year and All-Freeman team, and then check out the Saturday, April 1st edition for the boys basketball player of the year, coach of the year and All-Freeman team.

Volume 164 No. 255



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WEATHER



Tomorrow: Snow likely High 36 / Low 25

See complete forecast on Page 8A

TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE FREEMAN, call 262-542-2500 or go online at: gmtoday.com/subscribe

Advertisement for Downtown Waukesha 2023 featuring a logo and website information.

Advertisement for Downtown Waukesha Easter Bunny Hop with large text and a bunny graphic.

Advertisement for an event on Saturday, April 8, 1pm-3pm, involving Easter baskets and a bunny picture.

DEATHS

LaVerne P. 'Bernie' Schmoller

LaVerne P. "Bernie" Schmoller was born to eternal life on Friday, March 10, 2023.



Bernie was born in Green Bay in 1921 the daughter of Norman and Delores (nee Hussin) Schultz. She was a 1940 graduate of Waukesha High School. She was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church where she enjoyed volunteering as an usher.

She worked for General Malleable, ManPower, Inc. and Kohl's Department Store, Waukesha. She retired from Kohl's after 25 years at the age of 93!

During her younger years she played on many girl's softball leagues and her baseball uniform is on display at the Wisconsin Historical Society. She also bowled for over 50 years at Fracaro's Lanes and was proud to have been inducted into the Bowling Association Hall of Fame.

She will be sadly missed by her daughter Sandy Gardner (Robert) of Sequim, Wash.; daughter-in-law Anne Biebel of Cross Plains; grandchildren Daniel (Jenn) Schmoller of Menomonee Falls and Mary Beth (Dane) Small of Menomonie; and great-granddaughter Addison Schmoller. She is further survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 38 years, Raymond; her beloved son Mike Schmoller; her sister Shirley (Clarence) Rasmussen; and brother Melvin (Eldora) Schultz.

Services were held in Sequim, Wash., and a private entombment took place in Prairie Home Cemetery.

If desired memorials in LaVerne's name are appreciated to St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 822 N. East Ave., Waukesha, WI 53186.

Randle-Dable Brisk Funeral Home, Crematory and Preplanning Services is honored to serve the family. For further information, please call the funeral home at 262-547-4035 or visit us online at www.randedable.com to leave the family an online tribute message.

(Freeman — March 24, 2023)

POLICE BLOTTER

Waukesha Police Department

WEDNESDAY

10:30 a.m. — A physical altercation between a patient at the hospital, 725 American Ave., and family members was reported.

11:13 a.m. — A man said a woman he believes he knows the name of stole his dog while it was off-leash in Frame Park near Corrina Boulevard.

1:05 p.m. — A woman in the 100 block of Hartman Place said she received harassing calls from a man using a phone number she did not recognize.

3:43 p.m. — A man reported seeing someone point a rifle out of a vehicle in the 2500 block of Plaza Court, but the hotel staff where the man was staying said he appeared to be paranoid and he had said people were after him.

3:49 p.m. — Juveniles called 911 several times in the 900 block of Oakland Avenue and made profane comments to WCC and then disconnected. They were advised by police.

FREEMAN OBITUARY GUIDELINES:

- All obituaries must be emailed in a reproducible format to obits@conley.net.
- The deadline for obituaries is 4 p.m. the day prior to publication.
- **Obituary rates as of Jan. 1, 2023:**
Less than 150 words: \$50
151 words-600 words: \$160
601 words-1,000 words: \$320
1,001 words or more: publisher's discretion
- A half-column picture, flag or other icon may be published at no additional cost. A full-column picture may be added for \$20. Please include photos as a separate .jpg attachment.
- All private and out-of-state obits must be paid for in advance. Obituaries paid for by credit card will have a 3.5% charge added.

Drone strike kills U.S. contractor in Syria; U.S. retaliates

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. contractor was killed and five U.S. service members and one other U.S. contractor were wounded when a suspected Iranian drone struck a facility on a coalition base in northeast Syria on Thursday, the Pentagon said.

In a statement released late Thursday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said U.S. Central Command forces retaliated with "precision airstrikes" against facilities in eastern Syria used by groups affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The Defense Department said the intelligence community had determined the unmanned aerial vehicle was of Iranian origin.

"The airstrikes were conducted in response to today's attack as well as a series of recent attacks against Coalition forces in Syria" by groups affiliated with the Revolutionary Guard, Austin said.

Overnight, videos on social media purported to show explosions in Syria's Deir Ez-Zor, a strategic province that borders Iraq and contains oil fields.

Iran-backed militia groups and Syrian forces control the area, which also has seen suspected airstrikes by Israel in recent months allegedly targeting Iranian supply routes.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been suspected of carrying out attacks with bomb-carrying drones across the wider Middle East. In recent months, Russia has begun using Iranian drones in its attacks on sites across Ukraine as part of its war on Kyiv. Iran has denied being responsible for these attacks, though Western nations and experts have tied components in the drones back to Tehran.

The attack and the U.S. response threaten to upend recent efforts in the region to deescalate tensions, as Saudi Arabia and Iran have been working toward reopening embassies in each other's countries. The kingdom also acknowledged efforts to reopen its embassy in Syria, whose embattled President Bashar Assad has been backed by Iran in his country's long war.

U.S. Army Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla, the head of the American military's Central Command, warned that American forces could carry out additional strikes if needed. "We are postured for scalable options in the face of any additional Iranian attacks," Kurilla said in a statement.

Syria's state-run SANA news

agency did not immediately acknowledge any strikes. Syria's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

There was no immediate reaction from Iran over the strikes, which come during the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Austin said he authorized the retaliatory strikes at the direction of President Joe Biden.

The U.S. under Biden has struck Syria previously over tensions with Iran. In February and June of 2021, as well as August 2022, Biden launched attacks there.

U.S. forces entered Syria in 2015, backing allied forces in their fight against the Islamic State group. The U.S. still maintains the base near Hasakah in northeast Syria where Thursday's drone strike happened. There are roughly 900 U.S. troops, and even more contractors, in Syria, including in the north and farther south and east.

"As President Biden has made clear, we will take all necessary measures to defend our people and will always respond at a time and place of our choosing," Austin said. "No group will strike our troops with impunity."

North Korea says it simulated nuke attacks with drone, missiles

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday its cruise missile launches this week were part of nuclear attack simulations that also involved a detonation by a purported underwater drone as leader Kim Jong Un vowed to make his rivals "plunge into despair."

North Korea has stepped up its weapons demonstrations in a tit-for-tat response to military exercises between the United States and its ally South Korea aimed at countering the North's growing nuclear threat. The allies completed an 11-day exercise that included their biggest field training in years on Thursday, but North Korea is expected to continue its

weapons tests as the United States reportedly plans to send an aircraft carrier in coming days for another round of joint drills with the South.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim supervised a three-day exercise that simulated nuclear counterattacks against enemy naval assets and ports that involved detonations of mock nuclear warheads. KCNA said the drills were aimed at alerting the United States and South Korea of a brewing "nuclear crisis" as they continue with their "intentional, persistent and provocative war drills" the North portrays as invasion rehearsals.

The report came hours before South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol pledged to make North Korea pay for its "reckless provocations" as he attended a remembrance service honoring dozens of South Korean troops killed during major clashes with the North near their western sea border in past years.

KCNA said the latest drills verified the operational reliability of an underwater nuclear attack drone the North has been developing since 2012. It said the drone was deployed off the North's eastern coast on Tuesday, traveled underwater for nearly 60 hours and detonated a test warhead at a target standing for an enemy port.

Russia's security chief blasts West, dangles nuclear threats

MOSCOW (AP) — A top Russian security official warned Thursday about the rising threat of a nuclear war and blasted a German minister for threatening Russian President Vladimir Putin with arrest, saying that such action would amount to a declaration of war and trigger a Russian strike on Germany.

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council chaired by Putin, said in video remarks to reporters that Russia's

relations with the West have hit an all-time bottom.

Asked whether the threat of a nuclear conflict has eased, Medvedev responded: "No, it hasn't decreased, it has grown. Every day when they provide Ukraine with foreign weapons brings the nuclear apocalypse closer."

He has issued a barrage of such strongly-worded statements in the past, blasting the U.S. and its NATO allies for what he described as their

efforts to break up and destroy Russia. It's been a drastic metamorphosis for the gentle-looking politician, who once was hailed by the West as a liberal hope.

In Thursday's comments, the 57-year-old Medvedev denounced the International Criminal Court's decision to issue an arrest warrant for Putin on charges of alleged involvement in abductions of thousands of children from Ukraine as legally null and void.

Rainbow

From Page 1A

"It was a slow song so we thought we should pick 'Rainbowland' because it is faster. So the kids don't get bored with slower songs," she said.

On Monday the teacher gave students the song list on their iPad and they could listen to it. Tempel played the songs a few times to get her students used to them.

"They really liked 'Rainbowland' because it is a fun song," she said.

Change of mind

On Tuesday Tempel received an email from the music teacher indicating the principal said they were not able to use "Rainbowland." Also on Tuesday, according to Tempel, she was told they couldn't use "Rainbow Connection" due to a complaint.

The Freeman reached out to the principal at Heyer, the Waukesha Board of Education, as well as Superintendent Jim Sebert, about the songs.

"It was determined that 'Rainbowland' could be perceived as controversial according to SDW Board Policy 2240. The teacher was asked to pick a different song for the first-grade concert which ended up being 'Rainbow Connection' by Jim Henson. That song is great for first graders and fits in their concert theme as well," Sebert said in an email.

He added the first-graders will be singing "Rainbow Connection" in their concert.

"Policy 2240 has a number of areas that it covers and remember these are six- and seven-year-olds. The main question was is the song appropriate for the age level and maturity

SOUND OFF

What do you think?

Phone: 262-513-2641
Email: soundoff@conley.net

ty of the students," he said. In 2021, the School District of Waukesha said certain signage within classrooms, including flags and posters about Pride, Black Lives Matter, Thin Blue Line, and more was not permitted.

The administration's stated reasoning behind the signage directive has been to keep classroom displays within the confines of curriculum.

In March the district debuted "Our Commitment to All" signs. The signs are designed to further ensure that schools and classrooms are welcoming environments for teaching and learning.

Tempel said students and parents are sad they can't sing the Dolly Parton song. She is happy at least the kids can sing the song which brings up visions of Kermit the Frog playing his banjo on a log.

The teacher thinks the

concern over the song has to do with part of the lyrics. "Living in a Rainbowland/The skies are blue and things are grand/Wouldn't it be nice to live in paradise/ Where we're free to be exactly who we are," according to the lyrics.

She has heard from parents who think it is because of Dolly Parton being supportive of drag performers. "We haven't gotten an answer about it," she said.

The Freeman asked the school district what about the song specifically was controversial but was directed to the policy online.

According to previous interviews Parton has done, she stated the song offers hope and a sense of

positivity in dark times. There has been no mention of the song being affiliated with the LGBTQ community.

Taking it too far?

In January the board of education approved a dress and grooming guideline for staff. The guideline does not permit staff to wear political or controversial clothing.

Tempel thinks the district is taking things too far and not looking out for the best interest of students.

"They need to feel wel-

come at the school and we need to be transparent about what is going on. They are very confused as to why they can't sing 'Rainbowland.' They are very hurt by it. They were so upset. I don't know what to say. That is the honest truth," she said.

For now the students will at least be allowed to sing "Here Comes the Sun," by the Beatles, "It's a Wonderful World," and "Rainbow Connection." She is hoping for a change of heart as the students still have a month to learn "Rainbowland."

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