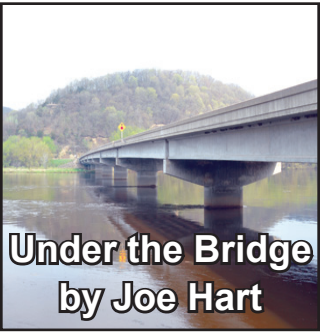


IN YOUR DIAL

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The Boscobel Dial

VOL. 150—NO. 38 BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2022 \$45 PER YEAR IN WISCONSIN, SINGLE COPY \$1.25



Under the Bridge by Joe Hart

I'VE BEEN thinking a lot about the notion of compassion.

Sympathy for the suffering of others. Or, in its original Latin form, simply "to suffer with."

We witnessed a good example of compassion here in the Boscobel area this weekend. Donations to the fund to restore our cemetery from tornado damage poured in from all corners.

And at the end of the day, the fund for repairs topped \$130,000.

One reason the pandemic has made us harder, more suspicious, more divided, less compassionate, might be that unlike a tornado, with its random violence, disease is spread from person to person.

Perhaps we were doomed to our current state of conflict back in 2019 when we learned to mistrust a handshake.

What does a compassionate person bring to the events unfolding at Cozy Acres?

For me, I've just always rooted for the underdog—lived, I guess, at the place where compassion meets a sense of justice.

Some readers have focused on the notion of people taking personal responsibility for their choices. There's a deep truth to this idea.

And then there's the question of what choices are laid out in front of you to begin with. All of us reading this, we'll never be royals.

Some people who encourage others to pull themselves up by their bootstraps did so themselves. But not many.

A compassionate person can believe that a suffering person could do better, overcome difficulty, take personal responsibility, and live with the consequences of their actions.

But if you believe all those things, without "suffering with," it might be time to take a dry, honest look at that choice and how it's affecting those around you.



Bell received Chuck Yahn award The 36th Annual Boscobel Athletic Boosters Tailgate was held Friday afternoon, Sept. 16 at the Gene Larsen Memorial Shelter at Kronshage Park. The Boscobel High School Marching Band performed while food was served, and student-athletes from Boscobel's fall sports programs (cross country, football, and volleyball) were recognized during the tailgate.

Photo by Wendi Stitzer

Referendum approved for 2023 ballot

Boscobel District recognized by SWTC for Dual Credit participation recently

By GILLIAN POMPLUN Southwest Technical College has recognized the Boscobel School District for their high level of participation in the technical college's 'Dual Credit' program.

college credit. It provides an opportunity for high school students to take college level coursework while in high school in order to get a head start on earning college credits while fulfilling high school graduation requirements.

The district achieved the 'silver' level of recognition, with a 7.9 percent increase in student participation over the 2020-2021 school year.

At the meeting, four students addressed the school board, sharing what the Dual Credit program had meant to them. Those students, all seniors, are Kira Brownlee, Caydon Elliott, Skyler Carlin, and Logan Davidson.

"This newly established award recognizes the four top performing school districts for largest percentage increase from the previous year for students enrolling in the dual credit programs," Schmelz said.

"I was able to take an Introduction to Corrections class through SWTC, and I really enjoyed the class," Brownlee told the board.

The 'Dual Credit' program refers to a course in which a high school student receives both high school credit and

Caydon Elliott said he had been able to take EMT certification classes both in-person and online. He said his grandfather had inspired him to pursue the training, and he looked forward to serving the community after graduation.

Logan Davidson said that through the Gear Up program she was able to take diversity studies and introduction to psy-

(See BOARD, Pg. 6, Col. 1)

Five in two weeks

Evictions hit Cozy Acres trailer park

By JOE HART

Five households in Boscobel's Cozy Acres Mobile Home Park have received eviction notices since September 8, two weeks after The Dial published a two-month-long investigation into substandard living conditions in the trailer park.

rent is not yet listed for these cases.

Sgt. Todd Miller of the Grant County Sheriff's Office said he forwarded a list of August's sheriff contacts at the trailer park to manager Bruce Zinkle. "I made contact after the story ran," Miller said.

Bad apples?

A glitch in the department's software makes it difficult to accurately count the number of 911 dispatches to any particular trailer in Cozy Acres.

But for department records that do exist, all five properties show Sheriff contact, to varying degrees, for offenses like disturbing the peace or animal complaints.

determine whether they're responsible for more law enforcement contact than other residents of the park.

Miller's August report includes a domestic disturbance at Turner's address, a property dispute at Woodside's, and an abuse and harassment complaint at Atkinson's.

No arrests or charges were made in connection with these 911 calls.

Turner, who owns and operates a thrift store and works part-time as a mechanic, told the Dial that most of his troubles came from an ex-girlfriend who no longer lives at the residence.

"It's nothing criminal," said Turner. "No one was arrested or anything. I've had 911 calls in the past with my ex and it was just a lot of drama. I nor-

(See EVICTIONS, Pg. 2, Col. 1)

New policy follows council blunder

By JOE HART

Boscobel's Common Council recently sold a one-acre parcel of city land on Cedar Road that included a roughly 26-by-34-foot insulated shed used by the Street Department for vehicle storage.

vacant parcel—for \$12,000.

The error was brought to light by Dirk Brown, who addressed the council during public comments. "I don't know who set the price on that building," he said.

"We were under the impression it was just the land, and we sell land for a dollar per square foot," Alderman Milt Cashman

said. "No one ever mentioned a building."

In fact, the shed received passing mention during at least one prior meeting and is marked and labeled on the survey map that was included in the council materials.

(See COUNCIL, Pg. 6, Col. 5)

School board questioned about missing trophies

By JOE HART

Upset alumni are giving Boscobel High School staffers a Bronx cheer after some athletic trophies ended up in

the trash.

The dustup began with a routine reshuffle of the many trophies on display in the hallway of the school, according

to District Administrator Lisa Wallin-Kapinus.

"The cases are overcrowded," she explained. "We have lots and lots of cool trophies and we're trying to put them in order." School staff, including the activities director and coaching staff, emptied the cases and began the process of sorting trophies into categories, as well as sending some to be refurbished or remade, she said.

"Some were broken, and some were aged," Wallin-Kapinus said. "Some were in storage for years. And there were some that got disposed of. It was a limited amount. Very limited. This happens at all schools, I know for a fact."

Discarded history One of those phone calls was to Pam Zimpel. With her husband Doug, she founded a cross country course to honor the memory of their son, Ryan, an athlete who died in a car accident in 2003.

"I was really mad about it," she said.

She called a classmate, Verne St. Vincent, who felt the same way and called the school board to let them know.

(See TROPHIES, Pg. 4, Col. 5)



Freedom to read

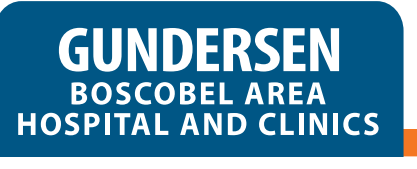
Boscobel's Hildebrand Memorial Library is celebrating the American Library Association's (ALA) Banned Books Week with a display of frequently banned books.



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# EVICCTIONS

Continued from Page 1

finally try to keep to myself. I drink my beer and stay in the house."

Turner said that he has owned a total of five different homes in the park, including one that he fixed up for his mother. He says he started falling behind on his lot rent during the pandemic but has been trying to catch up since then.

"People out here like me and [Steve Woodside], we're trying to fix them up to make them nicer. I just put on a brand-new window. I gutted this place because no one else would touch it," he said. "Maybe they should figure in the rent that the road is so bad we have to fix our cars every few months, and I have to pay \$120 a month because the roaches are so horrible and I'm trying to deal with them."

### State action

State Representative Travis Tranel told the Dial that after our story ran, he reached out to the Wisconsin Legislative Council, which advises office holders on legal matters, asking for a report on what role the state might play in improving conditions at Cozy Acres.

"It's just a very, very difficult situation," Tranel said in an interview. "Adults have the right to live however they want to, but for me, I just worry so much about the kids."

Tranel also clarified that an earlier tour he made of the mobile home park was initiated by then Superintendent of

Boscobel Public Schools Greg Bell, who had concerns about a particular student's safety. In that case, Tranel and his staff worked directly with Grant County, including the board and the sheriff, to resolve the issue.

The September 16 council report to Tranel's office largely confirms the reporting in the Dial's initial story: That a patchwork of local, county, and state offices share jurisdiction over mobile home communities.

Most of the local-level remedies hold only the individual trailer owner responsible. For example, according to the report, an officer of the local health department, in this case, for Grant County, could declare a trailer a "human health hazard," and "order its abatement or removal within 30 days." But fulfilling that order would fall to the owner of the trailer in question, and many owners at Cozy Acres simply don't have the means to abate. (As in most parks, each resident at Cozy Acres owns their trailer and rents the lot where it's parked.)

Only the state-level statutes divide responsibility for maintaining a "clean, safe, orderly and sanitary condition at all times" between each individual mobile-home owner and the owner of the park itself—enforcement of which is delegated to Wisconsin's Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS).

In the case of Cozy Acres, that owner is Michelle Gillette, an absentee landlord that many residents said they have never met. Gillette owns five additional mobile home parks, as well as a 100-acre horse ranch and wedding and event center in Baraboo, all totaling some \$4 million worth of assessed real estate value, with gross rents exceeding an estimated \$50,000 a month.

(Gillette has turned down repeated requests for interviews with the Dial and most recently requested via email that we cease contacting her, giving her "one less swipe into the trash that I would have to do in my busy day." Her manager, Bruce Zinkle, did not return multiple phone calls for this story.)

The legislative council report clarifies that the DSPS is required to investigate any complaints filed against a park and can "notify the operator of changes necessary to bring the community into compliance."

If the DSPS investigation finds "reasonable cause to believe the construction, sanitary condition, or operation of the community creates an immediate danger to health," the council report continues, the agency has the power to order immediate removal of the danger and to impose fines on Gillette.

As this issue of the Dial went to press, no complaints had been filed against Gillette's Cozy Acres, although the complaint form is available online at the DSPS website. When asked, most residents of the park said they did not know this channel was open to them, and feared that if they complained, they would be evicted.

# Southwest Wisconsin COVID-19 scoreboard as of Sept. 19

COUNTY	Vaccination doses			COVID tests (increase over week)			COVID deaths
	1	2	Booster	Positive	Probable	Negative	
Grant	51.4	48.8	28.4	12,495 (+27)	1,997 (+7)	not reported	141
Green	64.9	62.7	39.8	10,026 (+29)	661 (+9)	not reported	48
Lafayette	58.6	56	31.9	3,672 (+9)	438 (+1)	not reported	26
Iowa	70.4	67.8	41.9	6,004 (+22)	330 (+1)	not reported	26
Crawford	58.6	56.5	32.5	4,657 (+16)	393 (+4)	not reported	30
Richland	59.9	57.7	36.2	4,202 (+10)	396 (+1)	not reported	43
Vernon	55.8	54.1	34.7	6,696 (+22)	346 (+1)	not reported	102 (+2)
Statewide	64.7	61.6	35.4	1,630,475 (+4,854)	221,411 (+938)	not reported by DHS	13,443 (+39)

### CDC COVID-19 COUNTY COMMUNITY LEVEL:

High (masks recommended indoors in public): Crawford

Medium (mask if in high-risk population): none

Low (test if exposed or have symptoms): Grant, Lafayette, Iowa, Green, Richland, Vernon

### TESTING SITES:

- Platteville:** Hartig Drug, Walgreens,
- Lancaster:** Grant County Health Department, Hometown Pharmacy, Hartig Drug
- Boscobel:** Boscobel Pharmacy, InHealth Community Wellness Clinic
- Cuba City:** Hometown Pharmacy
- Dodgeville:** Iowa County Health Department, Upland Hills Health, Walgreens, Hometown Pharmacy
- Fennimore:** Hartig Drug
- Gays Mills:** Ocooch Mountain EMS
- Muscoda:** Hometown Pharmacy
- Prairie du Chien:** Hartig Drug, Walgreens
- Richland Center:** Center Pharmacy, Richland County Ambulance Service
- Spring Green:** Spring Green Fire/EMS
- Viroqua:** Vernon County Health Department, Walgreens

### VACCINE SITES

- Platteville:** Southwest Health, Hartig Drug, Walgreens, Walmart
- Cuba City:** Hometown Pharmacy
- Lancaster:** Grant Regional Health Center, Hartig Drug, Lancaster Veterinary Clinic, Grant County Health Department (by appointment), Lancaster Hometown Pharmacy
- Boscobel:** Gunderson Boscobel Area Hospital & Clinics, Boscobel Pharmacy
- Fennimore:** Hartig Drug, Gunderson Fennimore Clinic
- Muscoda:** Gunderson Muscoda Clinic, Muscoda Health Center
- Dodgeville:** Iowa County Health Department, Upland Hills Health, Corner Drug Hometown Pharmacy, Walgreens, Walmart
- Prairie du Chien:** Mayo Clinic Health Systems Franciscan Medical Center, Hartig Drug, Walgreens, Walmart
- Richland Center:** Center Pharmacy, Richland Hospital Clinic, Walmart
- Spring Green:** Spring Green Fire, Spring Green Medical Center, River Valley Clinic
- Soldiers Grove:** Kickapoo Valley Medical Clinic
- Viroqua:** Hirsch Clinic, Vernon County Health Department, Walgreens, Walmart, AML La Crosse-McIntosh Library
- Westby:** Bland Clinic

SOURCE: Department of Health Services, CDC.gov

## HelpNow live tutoring at local libraries

As students begin a new school year, those in southwestern Wisconsin will have access to a tool for educational support and homework help through their public libraries.

A resource at the libraries called HelpNow, from a firm called Brainfuse, puts kids and adults from 4K through college in touch with tutors online — real people who are subject matter experts and can help learners at nearly all grade levels understand homework problems and develop skills in subjects ranging from reading and writing to math, history, science, and more.

Students share their work with a tutor in real time using HelpNow's online whiteboard or by snapping photos of written work to show to the tutor. Tutors can help with problems the students bring, and can also give students questions and problems to work through for skills development. Subject support is available in English and Spanish languages.

"Reports that the pandemic has significantly disrupted learning for many youth, and that they could use added learning support outside of school time, made the HelpNow tutoring service an attractive resource to provide," said David Kranz, director of the Southwest Wisconsin Library System. "Students have long used libraries as places to do homework, and HelpNow gives them access from a library computer or their own tablets or phones to qualified tutors who can walk them through a math concept or help them improve a writing assignment."

available Mondays-Fridays, 2-11 p.m., from the 28 public libraries in the Southwest Wisconsin Library System region, which spans Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, and Richland counties. Funding to offer the service for 12 months was provided through a federal grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Feedback from area students and teachers during the 2022-2023 school year as well as usage data will help determine whether to continue its funding beyond the initial year.

In addition to HelpNow, two other Brainfuse resources are also being made available, VetNow and JobNow.

VetNow provides peer assistance to military veterans — from veterans for veterans — navigating Veterans Administration services, as well as academic support and help with employment transition from military to civilian careers. VetNow navigators are also available 2-11 p.m.

JobNow gives job hunters a chance to practice interviews, update resumes, and get advice from live job coaches. Courses to develop specific competencies and skills are also available via JobNow.

Links to access HelpNow, VetNow, and JobNow are available through SWLS-member libraries and their local library websites.

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