

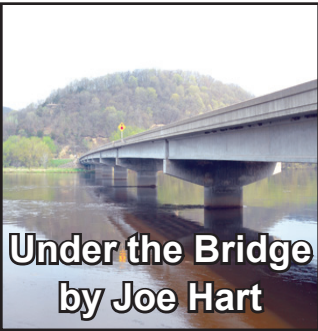
IN YOUR DIAL

Sports **Section 1, Pg. 4**
K-9 Brecken passes..... **Section 1, Pg. 6**
Organic Valley receives Carbon Smart Ag grant..... **Section 2, Pg. 1**

The Boscobel Dial



VOL. 150—NO. 40 BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2022 \$45 PER YEAR IN WISCONSIN, SINGLE COPY \$1.25



When a friend comes to visit us in Smith Hollow, I see our little homestead through fresh eyes.

The textured ridges that protect our valley, the limestone outcrops overlooking the lowlands, the perpetually nodding grasses, and the chattering creek—I see them again for the first time.

It's funny what you can get used to, what you take for granted. Even beauty.

I thought about this notion recently when I walked to get the mail.

Like all of you, my mailbox is stuffed these days with political advertisements. But unlike all of you, I find them fascinating—or at least interesting enough to glance at before I toss them.

They've become blandly predictable, whatever party they represent: The foreboding photo, probably Photoshopped, of the enemy politician, overlaid with dire predictions of doom and destruction. And on the other side is our hero, bathed in light in a field of wildflowers, and likely posed with a baby or two.

The "vibe," as they say, is all fear, all mistrust, all end-timey.

It's so pervasive in our current political moment, we don't notice that it's a choice.

What if instead we chose hope? Common cause? United in the values we share? Civil when it comes to those we don't?

The biggest disconnect I'm seeing in our political moment is between working class rural people and the urban elites.

It's a divide as old as America, but once, our best leaders tried to bridge it.

The farmer who grows our food. The hard-hats who pave our streets, build our bridges, and make the trains run on time. The small-town nurses and doctors. The friendly guy at the hardware store.

I recognize my neighbors in these Norman Rockwell images.

Sure, we might be a little rough around the edges compared to a downtown accountant in a Wall Street suit. And lord knows we have our problems.

But we're more than the sum of our problems.

We hear a lot these days that our democratic values are in jeopardy.

The truth is that our democratic values have been in jeopardy for a long time, and now the proverbial chickens are coming home to the proverbial roost.

It's not something either political party can blame on the other. Don't believe me? Google "net worth" "congress."

I can't predict the future. But history tells us that when the ruling class fails to consider everyone else, things start to get really weird.



Two contested evictions were scheduled for trial and one settled with a payment plan this week. Two more go to pre-trial on October 17, and more maybe coming.

New allegations at Cozy Acres

By JOE HART

Residents facing eviction from their mobile home parking spaces at Cozy Acres raised new allegations at a pre-trial hearing in Grant County Court this week. The hearing before Judge Robert P. VanDeHey took place on Monday, October 3.

Matthew Turner, who owes \$4,374.03 in back rent, and who's lived in the park for eight years, told the court that he'd been illegally charged \$2,000 to cover back rent owed by the previous owner of his trailer before being allowed to sign a lease.

Wisconsin's administrative code, which has the force of law, states that no operator may "solicit or receive any payment or other thing of value as a condition to the assignment... of a rental agreement."

VanDeHey said that these statutes take precedence over the evictions proceedings and scheduled a trial for October 27 at 2 p.m.

Steve Woodside was also scheduled for trial on the same date. He alleged in court that the eviction was retaliation after he discussed conditions at the trailer park with the Dial. Turner and Woodside both were quoted anonymously in the story. None of the other evicted parties were quoted.

A third resident, Donald Shawgo, reached an agreement with manager Bruce Zinkle before the hearing. In an interview, Shawgo said that he traded his girlfriend's trailer, which she'd bought from Zinkle in 2021 for \$4,500, to pay off his back rent \$1,884.24.

Zinkle, who manages the property for the absentee landlord, Michelle Gillette, told the Dial that it's not unusual to make a Cozy Acres lease contingent on paying the former occupant's back rent.

"There are times when people are in a situation where they want to buy the house, and the park is interested in recovering the back rent, so that would be the price of the house," he said. "We're not interested in making any money on the homes. We just want to recover the back rent."

State oversight

As has been reported here, a patchwork of local and state agencies share jurisdiction over mobile home parks. Of these, Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is charged with enforcing landlord-tenant laws as they apply to mobile-home owners who lease a parking spot.

In 2016 a park resident filed a complaint with DATCP against Cozy Acres and Zinkle. In the complaint, John Anderson wrote that he had purchased a trailer for \$800 in June of 2016. His complaint alleges that he was refused a lease unless he paid the previous owner's back rent of \$1,626.56, and that the water and electric were disconnected from his trailer until he paid up.

Included in his complaint were text messages that he alleged came from Zinkle responding to his refusal to pay the back rent. In one exchange, from November 2016, Zinkle allegedly texted that the owner would have Anderson evicted "by Christmas."

"I've tried to work with you," Zinkle allegedly texted. "Put the wheels on both your homes and get them out of my park. You seem to forget that you live on rented land, and I don't owe you a place to live."

Anderson wrote back: "Bruce there is no way we have to pay Whitney's back rent and water

bill. We know by law we don't have to."

Zinkle: "You're right by law you don't have to. The reality is, you are on a month-to-month lease. We only owe you a 30-day notice, and we don't need a reason for giving it. When I discussed this with you a few months ago you asked me if you could make payments and I agreed. When I told the owner that you've changed your mind, he will move aggressively to have you removed."

A DATCP investigator wrote that these practices violate the Wisconsin Administrative Code and asked Zinkle to provide a response to the complaint.

Zinkle wrote: "As Mr. Anderson does not have a lease for the lot on which he is currently living, and is therefore trespassing, we will be dealing with him through the court system."

Ultimately, DATCP issued the park and its manager a warning for shutting off the utilities at the trailer as a form of illegal eviction.

More hearings ahead

Two additional residents, Janna Smith and Travis Atkinson, face eviction hearings this month on the October 17.

Zinkle said there might be more evictions soon.

"Eviction, for me, is a last resort. I don't want to make anyone homeless," he said. "We don't like to let the balances get as high as this, but with COVID and all the restrictions with that, we decided that this summer it's time for people to get with the program. The eviction gets their attention and then they want to work it out. That's typically how it happens."

Heating assistance program begins

By JOE HART

October marks the official start of Wisconsin's heating season. Even the diehards holding out for colder weather are eying their thermostat. And given this year's inflation, many are eying it with dread.

October also marks the beginning of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP), which provides help with heating bills for those who earn 60 percent of the state's median income and below. That's about \$60,000 a year for a family of four.

Program workers started processing applications on September 15, according to

Fred Naatz, director of Grant County Social Services. It's too early to tell, he said, whether this year's demand will outstrip that of years past.

The program is funded by a small service fee tacked onto everyone's utility bill, half of which is used to fund the Focus on Energy program. When the fund runs dry, no further payments are made.

To apply in Grant County, call the Social Services Department at 608-723-2136 x1125. Applications will be conducted only by phone at this time. We will not be doing face to face or outreach sites around the county due to COVID.

Sugar and Spice making changes

By JASON KREUL

Sugar and Spice Bulk Food, located on US Highway 61, Fennimore, will be going through some exciting business and time of operation changes in the coming months. The biggest change being that the store will be going seasonal starting this fall, with the store closing for the season on Oct. 30 per the storeowners, Dan and Carylee Gressman.

The Gressmans plan to reopen at the beginning of April, with the store being officially called Sugar and Spice Greenhouse and Garden Center. While they will still be offering seasonal local produce, honey, and maple syrup, bringing their peaches from South Carolina and the bakery items, including their "energy cookies" (which will be available all winter during their closed period), they will no longer be offering the

bulk food items, choosing to focus on the greenhouse and garden center supplies.

Although they will be closed this winter, they plan on opening the greenhouse up on the Saturday after Thanksgiving selling Christmas evergreen porch pots and other decorations. Also, the bakery will still be operating through the winter while the store is closed. You can call or Facebook message the store this winter to place your orders for energy cookies, fresh ground peanut butter, and pizza crusts for pick up. Watch the store's Facebook page for other updates and bulk ordering options.

The Gressmans felt that putting these changes into effect would "serve the community best by them turning their focus onto what they do best, which is the greenhouse."

1926 painting will be displayed

By WENDELL SMITH

Arrangements were made last week for a 1926 oil painting, the work of a young local artist, to be on display for a period of time at the Muscoda Public Library.

The painting has been in the Doyle and Carol Hoke home in Blue River for about 20 years. The artist was the late Emma Scherer who lived in the Pulaski area at the location of the "Scherer Memories" property now owned by Dan and Bonnie Prochaska.

Doyle says the family story is a young Emma was studying art in Milwaukee when she showed a postcard picture

to her instructor, saying she wanted to paint that scene. The instructor supposedly discouraged the young artist, saying she was not ready for such a project. However, Emma went ahead and produced the large detailed scene, which she then signed.

The painting does not carry a title, but the Hokes refer to it as "Dance Lessons". Their family has this picture and several smaller Scherer pieces painted by Emma, who was Carol's great aunt.

There are other samples of Emma's work in the area. One is a picture of Jesus praying at a rock, painted on the wall of the Lutheran Church in Highland, and short bible verse design on the wall behind the altar at the Pulaski Presbyterian Church, rural Muscoda.

The "Dance" picture painting is currently in the library History Room and will made ready for a proper display.



Lynn Meister, library staffer, and Doyle Hoke, Blue River, held the "Dance Class" painting that will be on display.

The bat is a winged mouse. They live very retired during the day, but at night come out for a frolic. They fly very much uncertain, and act as though they had taken a little too much gin. They don't seem to be bird, beast, nor insect, but a kind of live hash, made out of all three. Bats have a destiny to fill, and I will bet they fill it better than we do ours.

~Josh Billings (1818-1885), "The Bat"

Boscobel Homecoming activities corrected

Homecoming Festivities open to public: Thursday, Oct. 6 starting at 6:30 p.m. Men's volleyball in Boscobel High School gym; Powder Puff Football on the Casey Nice Memorial Field.

Parade starts at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7. The route will start at the Boscobel Fire Station, going south on Wisconsin Ave, turn west onto Parker St, turn south onto Church St, turn east onto Mary St., turn south onto Wisconsin, turn east onto Brindley St. and back to the Boscobel Middle/High School.

No parking on the east side of 1000 block of Wisconsin Ave, starting at 12 p.m. (Wood Law Firm to Hildebrand Library.)

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