

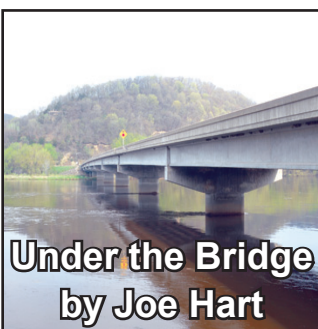
# The Koscobel Dial

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BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN

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**Under the Bridge**  
by Joe Hart

Monday morning found me snapping photos of "Rumble," a handsome milk cow from Pride Rock Genetics, who stood more or less patiently in her stanchion while several area civic leaders did their level best to milk her by hand.

The event was a contest and part of Boscobel's Sesquicentennial celebration—a repeat idea borrowed from the Centennial celebration.

Our current mayor, Brenda Kalish, was declared the winner, after she squeezed out more milk by weight than the rest.

A lot has changed in 50 years. Hand-milking is largely a thing of the past. Overseas, most cows have been milked by robots for a decade or more.

Here in the states, robots are slowly gaining ground over traditional milking machines. They not only milk the cow, but they also analyze the quality and nutritional content of the milk, and keep track of each cow's health stats.

They're not cheap, however. Each one costs up to \$200,000, and that can only handle about 75 or 80 cows.

Drought conditions continue for the area. There's a little rain in the 10-day forecast, but as of today, it doesn't look to be enough to level us up.

Grant and all of its neighboring counties continue to experience "severe drought."

Only "consistent rain for several weeks" will reverse the trend at this point, according to the National Weather Service.

And it's also happy birthday to America, let's not forget.

Independence Day is a good time to assess where we stand vis-à-vis the "American Experiment."

Apparently, we're taking a pretty dim view.

In a Pew Research Center poll from earlier this year, nearly 60 percent of those polled think that life is worse for "people like them" today, than 50 years ago.

That one has me scratching my head a little bit.

Now don't get me wrong, there's plenty to complain about, and I do my share of complaining.

Still, 50 years ago was hardly idyllic: Young men were being drafted and sent to war, for starters. Much of the south was still segregated. Women didn't really have much of a say in life beyond who they married. Medicine was a joke compared to today's advances. Crime rates, which spiked in the 1980s, are now about the same as 50 years ago.

Do we have problems today? No doubt about it. Do we even agree what those problems are in the first place? Yeah, maybe not.

Still, as I watched the fireworks this year, I put my very best hopes forward.



In just two years, Sleep in Heavenly Peace has made almost 300 beds for children to lay their heads at night.

## Cozy Acres cited for violations

By JOE HART

A five-month state investigation into conditions at Cozy Acres Mobile Home Park has uncovered violations of Wisconsin statutes, according to a notice of violations and orders dated June 9, 2023.

The park owner, Michelle Gillette of Baraboo, has until August 9 of this year to bring the park into compliance and could face fines of up to \$250 a day for each violation if she fails to do so.

The investigation was launched in January by the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS), the agency charged with licensing mobile home parks at the state level.

By law, Gillette has the right to request a variance of any rule. She also has the right to a hearing to appeal the orders. Gillette did not respond to a request for comment.

### Violations identified

According to the notice, issued by the Division of Industry Services and signed by attorney Matthew McCasland, four violations of Wisconsin statutes need to be corrected:

- Three trailers at Cozy Acres are spaced closer than 10 feet apart, the legal minimum.
- Septic tank covers are missing chains and locks.
- Some lots in the park had dangerous items present—broken glass was cited as an example.
- A yard hydrant used to spray pesticides and herbicides had no back-flow valve, presenting "an acute risk of contamination to the groundwater and water supply of the park and surrounding areas."

Additionally, the department identified "an old open and unsecured well casing" in the mobile home park and requested that the owner cap it in compliance with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) personnel.

Numerous tenants have complained about the drinking water and two told the Dial they had become sick after ingesting it. Data on water test results collected by the DNR show no record of contamination.

### Penalties ordered

The document states that Gillette "is not maintaining

the community in a clean, safe, orderly and sanitary condition" because there are "no apparent penalties to occupants who leave their site in disrepair."

Under the terms of the order, the owners must devise a way to compel residents to maintain their sites through either penalties or "appropriate and prompt action."

### Second probe "ongoing"

A second state agency, the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), is also investigating Cozy Acres. The focus of the second probe is on the business practices used by management and remains ongoing, according to a spokesperson for the department.

At eviction hearings held in October of last year, Cozy Acres resident Matthew Turner told the court that he'd been illegally charged \$2,000 to cover back rent owed by a former resident, a practice prohibited under state law. In 2016, DATCP had issued a warning to Cozy Acres' manager, Bruce Zinkle, over a similar dispute.

Another resident, Steve Woodside, claimed at the October hearing that he was being evicted as retaliation for complaining to the Dial about conditions in the park. State law specifically prohibits evicting tenants in retaliation for complaints.

Both men, according to court records, owed back rent; tenants at Cozy Acres own their mobile home and rent the ground it's parked on, as well as access to power, water, and septic.

Following these hearings, Representative Travis Tranel reached out to the investigating bodies to request they look into the conditions and management of Cozy Acres.

In an email statement to the Dial, Tranel expressed satisfaction with the results:

"Child safety is a priority and we recognize the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) plays an essential role in efforts to ensure a clean, safe, orderly, and sanitary environment for children and families living in manufactured home communities. Addressing issues such as accessible opening covers to septic tanks and requiring them to remain locked and secured

is common sense in order to prevent a potential tragic accident. We also appreciate the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for their due diligence to ensure the wellbeing of these communities in Wisconsin from unfair business practices."

### Next steps unknown

Conditions at Cozy Acres were first reported by the Dial in August 2023. Tenant complaints included ill-kept homes, poorly maintained roads, rowdy neighbors, inadequate trash service, erratic fees, and the persistent threat of eviction if they complained about conditions to management.

Operated by Zinkle, Cozy Acres is one of six owned by Gillette, who also owns a wedding and event center in her adopted hometown of Baraboo.

In a previous email to the Dial, Gillette wrote that she would "comply with all that is necessary and move on."

## More about the powers of each of the three branches of government

Wisconsin is one of only eight states that do not require the teaching of civics in high school. This series of articles, submitted by The Orion Civics Initiative, presents some of the topics that would be covered in a high school civics or government class. For each topic in the series, there is much more that can be learned, and we encourage readers to do more research.

### By THE ORION CIVICS INITIATIVE

At the federal level, the Executive branch consists of the President, his/her Cabinet Secretaries, and the heads of various agencies. The President is responsible for

- enforcing all the laws,
  - nominating judges and ambassadors to be appointed, and
  - negotiating treaties with other countries.
- The President can
- veto bills passed by the Congress,
  - issue executive orders, and
  - grant pardons to person convicted of federal crimes.

At the federal level, the Legislative branch consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which together comprise the Congress. The Congress is respon-

sible for

- creating bills to become laws.
- The Congress can
- declare war,
  - override a presidential veto of its proposed legislation on occasion, and
  - can impeach and try the president.
- The Senate is responsible for
- confirming (or rejecting) appointments submitted by the President for judges and ambassadors, and
  - confirming (or rejecting) proposed treaties.

At the federal level, the Judicial branch consists of the Supreme Court and the lower Appellate and District courts. The Judicial branch is responsible for

- hearing and deciding legal cases.

The Supreme Court can

- declare laws and executive actions and orders unconstitutional.

On this topic, as on every topic that will appear in this series, there is much more that can be learned, and we encourage readers to use this article as a starting point for more research.

## SHP gives children a place to sleep

Imagine the feeling a child would get the moment he or she gets home from school and there is a brand new bed waiting for him or her.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) has a mission: "no kid sleeps on the floor in our town."

The reaction SHP gets from children is priceless. There are hugs given, sometimes tears of happiness, and lots of gratitude. Most of the children don't want to get out of the bed they just received.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace began in Idaho. The Grant County chapter is two years old. The core team of seven — cofounder and volunteer coordinator Leon Neuheisel, bed inventory coordinator Brad Biddick, cofounder and community liaison Hap Daus, building coordinators Frank Steck and Chuck Smet, com-

munications coordinator Sarah Imobersteg and finance coordinator Hannah Coder. The chapter has delivered almost 300 beds, including mattress, pillow, twin sheet and quilt or blanket, to Grant County children.

Neuheisel read about SHP in a newspaper and could not shake the idea that he had a comfortable place to lay his head at night, but there were children who did not have that simple luxury. He then banded together some friends and colleagues. With the help of many volunteers, two years and more than 275 beds to Grant County children later, SHP is trying to keep up with the demand. Beds are going out as fast as SHP can build them.

SHP receives referrals for children ages 3 to 17 from

(See BEDS, Pg. 12, Col. 1)

## Hazy shade of summer

By STEVE PRESTEGARD

Weather phenomena that can be found in Southwest Wisconsin include tornadoes and summer severe weather, floods from snowmelt or heavy rains, droughts, heavy snowfalls, ice storms, heat waves, and below-zero temperatures and wind chills.

Air pollution is not typically thought of as a Southwest Wisconsin weather problem.

But pollution from particulates from wildfires all across Canada created air quality problems of unprecedented levels in Southwest Wisconsin last week.

The state Department of Natural Resources issued air quality advisories for the southern half of the state or the entire state from June 26

until Friday noon, with air quality ranging from hazardous for sensitive populations to "very unhealthy," with the worst air quality from June 27 to Wednesday.

The Air Quality Index at the DNR's monitoring site near Potosi reached 207 Thursday at 6 and 7 a.m., exceeding 200 "very unhealthy," Thursday between 1 a.m. and 1 p.m. The AQI jumped over 150, "unhealthy," June 27 at 10 a.m. and didn't dip below 150 until Friday at 8 a.m. The AQI was over 100, "unhealthy for sensitive groups," between June 27 at 5 a.m. and Friday at noon.

The Family Aquatic Center — which has had restricted hours of operation and swimmer capacity due to staffing

(See FIRES, Pg. 12, Col. 1)



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