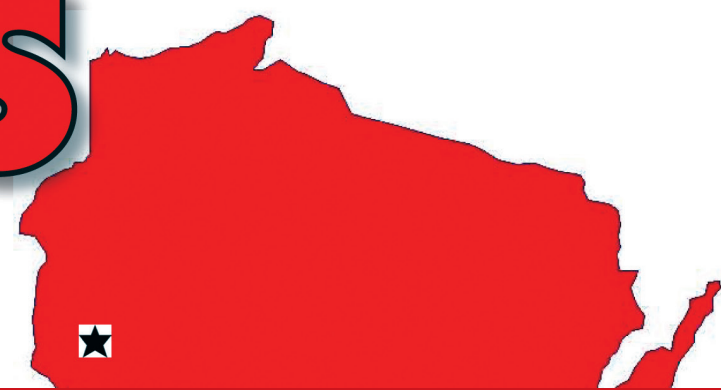


Sun-Argus

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The Gateway to Pierce County



VOL. 131 NUM. 23

JUNE DAIRY MONTH INSERT INSIDE!

THURSDAY, JUNE 08, 2023

'Flood heaven with prayers' suggests minister at Elmwood Prayer Vigil



People waited as the two families arrived for the Prayer Vigil. Photo by Paul J. Seeling

Three dead from Memorial Day Barron County car versus van crash
Compiled and by Paul J. Seeling
Sun-Argus/Gateway News

ELMWOOD, WI - The death count is now three from the tragic two vehicle crash that occurred on Hwy 25 at County Road A, north of Ridgeland, in Barron County Wisconsin. The Barron County Sheriff's Department received a report of a two-vehicle crash around 5:52 p.m. on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, 2023.

The Sheriff's report of the accident stated the investigation indicated a van with 10 people inside, ranging in age from eight to 54, was driving north on Highway 25 when it was hit by a car carrying four teenagers driving west on County Road A.

A 54-year-old man from Spooner in the van, was a passenger and the father to the additional passengers in van. The man and 13-year-old boy from Elmwood, Wisconsin a passenger in the car both died from their injuries. The driver of the van, a 54-year-old man, and two 17-year-

old boys from the car were also flown from the scene in critical condition.

The rest of the passengers in the van and car were taken to area hospitals with serious to minor injuries. A Barron County Sheriff's Deputy was also treated and released at an area hospital for smoke inhalation, after she had helped people get out of the van after it caught fire.

Highway 25 was closed by the Barron County Highway Department for four hours.

As stated, passengers in van range in age from 8-54. All are related to the deceased from the Spooner area. All other passengers were taken to area hospitals and treated for serious to minor injuries.

The driver and the other passengers in the car, were from Elmwood, and were flown to area hospitals in critical condition. All passengers in the car were related family members according to authorities.

On Friday, June 2, 2023, Barron County Sheriff Chris Fitzgerald

Continued on Page 10...



What's inside...



PAGE 7: Celebrate June Dairy Month. Photo by Paul J. Seeling

Photo of the week



Bush Katydid Nymph insect on a Dame's Rocket flower. Photo by Kyle Fosburgh

Submit your photos to editor@mygateway.news for a chance to have them picked as Photo of the Week!

Current results from this month's

Reader Poll

Do you think the conflict with Russia and NATO will escalate?

Yes - 100%

No - 0%

Vote now at mygateway.news!

Among Friends and Neighbors: Betty Larson

By Cari Cornelius
Sun-Argus/Gateway News

SPRING VALLEY, WI - If you've ever had the pleasure of meeting Betty Larson (formerly Christopherson, nee Jacobson) you will know she's Norwegian, and a storyteller, with a sense of humor strong enough to have you laughing so hard you'll cry.

Born in 1924 in Spring Lake, Betty recalls spending time with her grandmother, who was severely affected by arthritis. She recalls how she came to live in Western Wisconsin.

Her grandmother's father died before she was born.

"It was no joke to be a widow in Norway, you had nothing. Her brother took over the farm, and the rest of those kids were expected to



Betty Larson during a visit to her old farmhouse off Cty Rd I. Photo by Kathy Nyeggen

Continued on Page 10...

WWH Fruit and Veggie Wellness Warriors Program



WWH is once again, for its fifth year offering the Fruit and Veggie Wellness Warriors Program for a child 1-17 years of age who visits Western Wisconsin Health for a well-child visit. Submitted photo

By Rosa Magnus, Development Manager, Volunteer Services
Western Wisconsin Health

BALDWIN, WI -- Western Wisconsin Health (WWH) has once again teamed up with

Nilssen's Foods and Russ Davis Wholesale's Crazy Fresh Produce for its fifth year of the Fruit and Veggie Wellness Warriors Program.

Continued on Page 10...

Correction - Jake Sailer moving small and medium sized meat processors forward

WAMP President plans for 100-year company celebration October 5, 2023
By Paul J. Seeling
Sun-Argus/Gateway News

ELMWOOD, WI - In last week's Sun-Argus in this article about Jake Sailer the fifth generation (fourth in Elmwood) of meat cutters that have been servicing Elmwood and

the surrounding areas since 1923 held a joint interview with three local newspapers on Thursday, May 25, 2023. Sailer's Food Market & Meat Processing is a USDA inspected custom processor of beef, pork, lamb, and buffalo. Jake said everyone should mark their calendars for the big Sailer's 100th

Anniversary Celebration he and the company has planned for Thursday, October 5, 2023, in Elmwood.

There was this mistake in the article, "The company now employs about 135 people." That is an error that should be amended to "The company now employs about 35 to 40 people." My apologies for this error.

As Jake went on to state, "Finding help is still a challenge."

In fact the company is hiring right now, and if you or someone you know is interested in a good job in Production, Retail and Packaging at Sailer's Meat Processing they should call 715 639-2191.

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SPORTS PHYSICALS

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Ellsworth School District - Tuesday, July 11 | Glenwood City School District - Wednesday, July 12

Spring Valley School District - Tuesday, July 18 | Baldwin-Woodville School District - Thursday, July 20

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ELMWOOD' cont. from Page 1

issued a press release stating that a 14-year-old from Elmwood who was a passenger in the car involved in the crash on Memorial Day passed away from his injuries.

The crash is under investigation by the Wisconsin State Patrol, which is handling reconstruction of the crash scene. The Barron County Medical Examiner's office is also assisting.

Deputies from the Barron County Sheriff's Department, along with two Marshfield Medical Center Ambulances, a Mayo Ambulance, Cumberland Ambulance, Chetek Ambulance, Dallas Ambulance, Colfax Ambulance, Clear Lake Ambulance, Boyceville Ambulance, Dallas Fire Department, Ridgeland Fire Department, Barron County First Responders, three Lifelink Helicopters, North Memorial Helicopter, WI DNR Warden, Dunn County Sheriff's Department and the WI State Patrol all responded to the scene.

A Prayer Vigil for the Elmwood Bleskacek and Loga families was held at the Elmwood Football Field, on Wednesday, May 31, 8-9 p.m. It was their children that were in the car involved in the crash.

The Vigil was conducted by Lead Pastor Kyle Gunderson, and Mitch Haaby, Associate Pastor, ministers from the Cedarbrook Church in Menomonie, Wisconsin where the families attend the church. They also had prayer counselors there as well. Hundreds of people from the community filled the bleachers and spilled out onto the grass at the Elmwood Schools football field to support the grieving families and comfort each other at this overwhelming tragedy that has broken their hearts. There were many tears shed, many hugs shared.

Soft music played as the crowd filed in. Pastor Gunderson asked the crowd to stand as the Bleskacek and Loga families came to the east end of the football field where the pastor met and shared hugs with them and escorted them to the bleachers to be seated for the Prayer Vigil.

Pastor Gunderson set a comforting tone for the evening by stating that they wouldn't be going into any details, nor would they be blaming

anyone for anything.

They were there to provide comfort, support and strength to all in attendance. There was an opening prayer followed by a reading of the 23rd Psalm, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me..."

Pastor Kyle Gunderson said they were there to process grief in the right way. Pastor Mitch stated that he wanted to help you with your grief by reading about Elijah from Kings 1 and his efforts to hide from God...Then he spoke of lamentations; crying out. Lamentations is a book in the Bible that is a prayer language with four aspects for us to consider. One - Turn to God, even though you don't want to. Two - To complain, things are unfair, this is not right. Three - Ask, "Please God show up." Four - Trust. Faith. "I don't know what is happening God." The Pastor said it is okay to put your trust in God. ... "Let's flood heaven with prayers," said Pastor Mitch.

He concluded describing a little more from I Kings and Lamentation and telling everyone to say to God, "If you are there here is what I want."

Lastly the pastors gave everyone the opportunity to write a message of hope and encouragement to the Bleskacek and Loga families on one of four 4 x 8" pieces of plywood that were in front of the bleachers. People streamed out to grab a Sharpie and inscribe a message of love, sympathy, care and support. (These boards have been placed at each one of the family's homes in Elmwood, much like a large Sympathy card.)

There was a prayer prior to the writing, then more comforting music played while the community expressed their heartfelt feelings to the Bleskacek and Loga families before departing the Prayer Vigil that concluded with one last prayer as the community gathered arms around each other in groups and closed reciting the Lord's Prayer together.

It should be noted that a gofund-

me site has been started for the Bleskacek and Loga families should you care to donate to help them with the many expenses.

...BETTY' cont. from Page 1

work. As fast as those kids could get their pennies together, they bugged out."

While both her grandparents were from Norway, Betty said that they didn't meet until they both arrived here. She said, "They would get here and then send back money for the next one to come. At the end, they would come two to three at a time."

Many Norwegians ended up in Glenwood City and then branched out.

Her grandfather, who had originally landed in Menomonie, came to Spring Lake after finding 80 acres for sale. He decided it was then time to start a family and married her grandmother in 1891.

They went on to have eight children, although not all of them survived to adulthood. Their first child died as an infant, with the cause being unknown. Their second child, now the oldest, contracted TB and passed in early adulthood.

Another sibling, named Olga, was around six years old when she visited a neighbor. She returned home that night deathly ill and was gone by the next day.

At this point, Betty's grandma had been expecting who would become her mother.

"My grandmother was expecting my mother, and so they named her Olga. You know, they did that a lot, if one child passed, they would name the next child that. What a pain in the neck that was for future generations when they're looking for family history," said Betty.

Betty married Marvin Christopherson and moved to rural Gilman Township where they lived on the Christopherson farm on what is now 770th St, next door to one of Betty's good friends to this day - Sylva Anderson, who she was confirmed with and went to high school with.

"I knew his whole family, but I had never met him, he was new to me. We had a Sons of Norway party, and he was there. I was 20

years old when we got married. I remember it was a nice day, my grandmother's birthday, and I spent the whole morning scrubbing the kitchen floor and then went and took a bath. I was too busy to be nervous. And then the clouds started coming in, and my husband's sister was to make the cake and she was late! The roads were so bad, and the ruts were so bad, they fell off in between the ruts and the cake went flying. They had some words," said Betty.

She then recalls taking the bus from Baldwin to the cities. They had a plan to pick out a bedroom set at Sears. Betty still remembers the terrible shoes she chose for the journey, and the ten-block walk to the Sear's store. "After the first two blocks, I couldn't feel my feet, so I guess it worked out okay." After searching for a set in their price range, they found one for \$100. When it came time for the set to be delivered by train to Spring Valley, Betty commented in shock, "Where's the rest of it?" not realizing that the mattress and box spring weren't included. "What a shock!" she said.

"Along the same lines, the Christopherson's had six or seven children. And you know, those guys, they needed a hay wagon. They looked, and they looked, and finally, one day they took the pick-up and came back with four wheels, and they were so proud of themselves they got that for \$200. When they pulled up, the first thing I said is, 'Where's the rest of it?'" she laughed. "I was a farmer girl, but I never saw a hay wagon with just the wheels."

During their marriage, Betty and Marvin had three children. They were farmers by trade, tending to cows and chickens and managing to raise their family on half a salary. When her oldest was in high school, Betty took a job as town treasurer for Gilman to help make ends meet, where she served as treasurer for twelve years.

During their marriage, Marvin suffered from breathing problems, and after years of medical visits and trying any treatment they could find, Marvin passed away on May 1, 1975, at Sacred Heart in Eau Claire.

Before Marvin passed, Betty, now age 45, decided to take a leap, and inquired about a job at the bank

in Spring Valley. They didn't have any openings but said they would take her information down for the future. Shortly after, she got a call that there was an opening and she began her job at the bank, where she would work for the next thirty years, finally retiring at age 75.

In 1979, Betty married Irvin Larson, where they lived in the farmhouse off of County Road I, as she refers to as by "Matson's Mill."

After they were married, Betty recalls doing some work on their house, expanding the bedroom and completing an addition. She said, "We had a good life, the two of us, but he had some heart problems. He went to the doctor every month, for high blood pressure and other things. One day, he was working on the machine shed. After supper, he was sitting in the rocking chair, white as a sheet." After that, Betty got him to Woodville to see Dr. Heiser. Over the years, Irvin had to have a couple of heart surgeries, with Betty standing fast by his side for all of them. Irvin passed away in 2009.

After some time, Betty said, "I hated being alone, so I had a good friend who lived in the apartments. It just so happened there was one open and I moved there and lived there for a few years. One day, I had a cold, and I got bronchitis right away. I got up to put a coffee cup in the sink and the next thing I knew I was on the floor."

Shortly after, Betty took a tour of Welcome Home in Elmwood with her daughter, where she found her next home, and has lived for the past ten years. Nowadays, she enjoys spending her time reading, and visiting with her family when she can, with one of her daughters living right over in Stillwater. When asked if there was one piece of advice Betty could share with anyone, she said, "I've always worked hard. If it wasn't on the farm, it was otherwise. You have to learn to live whatever comes along, you can't give up your ship. Hard work pays off, and you can't expect to have anything given to you."

Betty will be celebrating her 100th birthday on February 16, 2024.

...VEGGIES' cont. from Page 1

When a child 1-17 years of age visits Western Wisconsin Health for a well-child visit, the family receives a \$10 voucher for fruits and vegetables at the Nilssen's location in Baldwin, Wisconsin. The Fruits and Veggies Voucher gives the WWH providers an opportunity to inquire about fruit and vegetable intake and discuss the importance of healthy eating with the child and family members.

In addition, families can have some of those same discussions while choosing their delicious, fresh produce. Along with the voucher, all families receive a gift and healthy kid-friendly fruit or veggie recipe from Cheri Rott, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist at WWH.

This program was a great success in 2022! Western Wisconsin Health had a total of 1,167 wellness checks for babies and children at the Baldwin and Roberts clinics from June 1 to September 30, which is an impressive number. Kevin Branstad, Nilssen's Store Manager reported that 234 vouchers were redeemed for fruits and veggies.

The Fruit and Veggie Wellness Warriors Program is back starting on June 1, 2023, and will go through September 30, 2023. With any well-child visits between these dates, a family will receive a WWH Wellness Warrior Fruit and Veggie \$10 produce Voucher to be redeemed at the Baldwin Nilssen's by December 31, 2023.

Western Wisconsin Health greatly appreciates the partnership and support Nilssen's Foods and Russ Davis Wholesale provide on this meaningful project.

To learn more about the wellness services and providers at Western Wisconsin Health, visit wwhealth.org or call 715-684-1111 to schedule an appointment. Western Wisconsin Health, Building a Healthier Tomorrow, Together.

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