



# The Stoughton Courier Hub

September 29, 2022 • Vol. 141, No. 11 • Stoughton, WI • StoughtonCourierHub.com • \$1.50

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Photo by Tim Erickson

Interim Stoughton Downtown Merchants Association board members are, from left: Ingrid McMasters (Spry Whimsy Fiber Arts), Brian Johnson (Cheesers), Brook Johnson (Yahara Chocolate and Tea), Lisa Zovar (Zovar Fine Art), Joanne Grassman (Grand Inspired Home Gallery) and Katherine Simdon (Overt Space Gallery & Gift); not pictured: Chris Kelley (Smokes on the Water).

## Stoughton Downtown Merchants Association holds first meeting, aims to spur downtown business

SCOTT DE LARUELLE  
Staff reporter

A new group has been formed to help revitalize and enhance Stoughton's downtown and its businesses, with an initial meeting this week attended by more than 30 downtown business owners.

Association (SDMA) is a non-profit group whose mission is to support the promotion and vitality of downtown Stoughton as the place to visit for shopping, entertainment and dining. It covers the area two blocks north/south of Main St. from King St. on the west to Academy St. on the east, with membership limited to business owners who operate locally in retail, hospitality and entertainment.

The group held its first general membership meeting on Sept. 26 to hear ideas from members and potential members, with a goal to start the process of

making the historic area a more popular spot. Interim board member Joanne Grassman, owner of Grand Inspired, said meeting participants contributed ideas to topics ranging from publicizing downtown events, communicating and sharing knowledge and resources with each other, making downtown appealing to pedestrians, and working with the city on issues such as parking and permits.

"Studies have found that 12,000 to 14,000 vehicles pass through our downtown every day (and) what the occupants see is the reputation that is

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## Stoughton Area School District

# Board hears promising news on enrollment projections

### Increase in area development is good financial news for the school district

SCOTT DE LARUELLE  
Staff reporter

With Wisconsin's public school funding so dependent on increasing - or at least maintaining student levels, enrollment numbers mean everything to the Stoughton Area School District.

After years of hearing projections on declining enrollment, school board members shared some positive news at their Monday, Sept. 19 meeting.

It came from the finance and facilities committee meeting that immediately preceded the board meeting, where they heard an encouraging annual update on development and enrollment projections from district consultant Mark Roffers. The board will invite him to a future meeting to further discuss the community development and growth analysis and forecast, released last month.

A few quick takeaways from the latest study: While births in the district have decreased by nearly a quarter since 2000, numbers have generally stabilized over the last 10 years.

The district has an aging population (43.1) - considerably above the county average of 35.2 years.

New housing development is increasing in the city after a slow period.

Stoughton is well-located for commuting to

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## Stoughton Area School District

# SHS student newspaper wins top national award

## 'The Norse Star' one of only 14 newspapers honored

The Norse Star, Stoughton High School's acclaimed student newspaper, has added another honor to its journalistic trophy case.

The newspaper won an International First Place award through the national journalism honors society, Quill and Scroll, just one of only 14 student newspapers to receive that ranking.

The Norse Star adviser Laura

Streyle said staff submitted several issues of the monthly newspaper for the comprehensive news media award, with students having to collaboratively fill out the application, letting the judge know how the staff works, how they practice journalistic ethics, and how they choose stories as a student staff.

So far this fall, the staff has "received extensive feedback to help inform the work that they will do this year," she wrote the Hub in an email last week.

Senior Ava Parr, this year's

editor-in-chief, said Streyle paired up staff members to handle the various parts of the application. She and business manager Lauren Amstadt wrote about how the newspaper utilized its budget last school year, going through invoices for all expenses, while others answered questions such as what challenges the newspaper faced, and what choices staff made in coverage.

Parr said the media evaluation contained compliments and

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Photo submitted

The award-winning 2021-22 Norse Star staff was Delaney Gauthier, Gabe Rousseau, editor in chief Anja Royko, Mylah Hall, associate editor in chief Ava Parr, Lauren Amstadt, Madeline Monthie, Autumn Evenson, Emma Farley, Bhoomi Patel, Clare Borchardt and Emma Phillips.



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## Downtown: Business owners see plenty of local potential

Continued from page 1

Stoughton,” she wrote in an email to the Hub. “The SDMA wants them to see a vibrant, pedestrian-filled, fun destination with places to go that can’t be found anywhere else.”

The initiative to start the group, Grassman said, was a 2019 city-commissioned study on downtown

revitalization that recommended creating an organization to specifically address the downtown.

It read, in part, “to achieve future success, downtown Stoughton’s interests need to collaborate in an integrated and

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## Board: Millennial ‘baby boom’ expected to add students

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regional jobs and destinations.

Stoughton housing is more affordable than its neighboring communities.

A large millennial population in the district suggests an increase in births.

School board president Frank Sullivan said the study “suggests that the current projected development we’re seeing will result in arresting the declining enrollment skid and starting very gradually to move us back up the curve.”

“There’s a lot of details that are tremendously exciting as you read through it,” he said. “It is, I think, the best enrollment project news we’ve had since I’ve

been on the board.”

Sullivan said the study examines a variety of factors in planned development.

“It looks at the type of housing that’s going into the development and says, ‘if you have this many of this type of houses, you can expect this many students,’” he explained. “And not only the development, but the turnover that we’re probably going to start seeing soon in some of the neighborhoods that were built in the ‘90s and early 2000s as the folks living in those start to age out of those houses.”

“And those are supposed to be super desirable for families with children.”

### Butz leaves school district

SASD buildings/grounds supervisor/safety coordinator Luke Butz’s last day was Sept. 14 as he accepted a position closer to his residence. Business manager Erica Pickett said the district hopes to hire a replacement by the end of the week. “Luke did a great job leading our buildings and grounds department as well as serving as our school safety coordinator for the past four years,” she said.

## Students: Staff helped write award-winning application

Continued from page 1

critiques from Quill and Scroll, covering general practices, coverage, writing and editing, visuals, and digital (social media and website).

“The comments were primarily positive, and it was wonderful to know that the work the members of the Norse Star put into this publication is appreciated,” she wrote in an email to the

Hub. “The critiques were all very constructive and gave me some things to focus on as editor-in-chief.”

“It sets a good tone and mentality for this year and hopefully many more.”

For more information on the annual awards, visit [quillandscroll.org](http://quillandscroll.org). To find out more about The Norse Star, visit [thenorsestar.com](http://thenorsestar.com).

## Obituaries

### Richard R. “Dick” Schade



Schade

Richard R. “Dick” Schade, age 87, passed away on Thursday, Sept. 15, 2022 at St Mary’s Memory Care Facility. He was born in Milton Junction, Wisconsin on March 18, 1935 the son of Harvey Alfred & Rose Venita Schade (Smith). Richard is survived by the love of his life Donna, sons: Todd (Stephanie) Schade, and Troy (Tara) Schade; granddaughters Lauren Schade and Allison (Naman) Nanda; Twin Brother-Ronald (Sharon) Schade & Sister Lavonne (Phillip) Samuelson; Sister In-laws: Florence, Jean, Phyllis & Mary Schade. Preceded in Death by his parents Harvey and Rose Schade, Brothers-Maynard,

Harvey, Bernard, and Robert

He started his early career working for the family Salvage yard business driving semi-truck. He later became a welder for Dorsey Trailers and retired from Heurikon/Artesyn Technologies as a janitor/maintenance worker. He was known as a hard worker and very friendly man, with a great sense of humor. Defining

moments for Richard is when he became acquainted with Jehovah’s Witnesses & was baptized on November 20, 1950 and from that point on centered his life around the ministry and putting spiritual things first. Marrying Donna Jean Learned on November 7, 1959 in Brooklyn, Wisconsin. Richard loved to travel to Colorado & see Jehovah God’s beautiful creations. He will be greatly missed by his family, close friends and congregation. Richard was always generous to his sons and granddaughters. Richard also enjoyed family gatherings and trips. He took comfort in the scripture at Revelation 21:4 “God will wipe out every tear from their eyes, & death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain

be anymore. The former things have passed away.”

The family would like to thank the nurses & social worker at St Mary’s Memory Care Unit for the excellent care & compassion they gave to Dick.

A funeral service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 8, 2022 at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses at 542 N Pleasant View Rd, Middleton 53562 with a visitation at 1:00 pm. The funeral will be streamed on Zoom, contact Todd or Troy for this information.

To view and sign this guestbook, please visit: [www.ryanfuneralservice.com](http://www.ryanfuneralservice.com).

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### Joanne R. Vander Zanden



Vander Zanden

Joanne R. Vander Zanden, age 79, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on Saturday September 24, 2022, in Lake Mills. Joanne was born November 23, 1942, in the Town of Forest, Wisconsin, to the late Alois and Bernice Braun. She loved to have grown up on the family dairy farm. She married Howard C. Vander Zanden on May 15, 1971, at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Fond du Lac.

Joanne loved her family and babysitting. She enjoyed listening to polka music, gardening, watching the Brewers, playing Uno, watching game

shows, and playing sheepshead and bingo.

Joanne is survived by her husband of 51 years Howard; daughter Sherry and son Jeff; brother Jim (Roseann) Braun, sister Geri (Frank) Steiner, Darlene (Jim) Mueller, brother Mike (Lori) Braun; as well as numerous nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends.

She is preceded in death by her parents, and brothers Bernard Braun, Richard Braun and Paul Braun.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at 12:00 Noon on

Saturday October 1, 2022, at ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 323 N. Van Buren St. Stoughton with Fr. Randy Budnar presiding. Burial will follow at St. Ann Catholic Cemetery. Visitation will be from 10:00 a.m. until the service at the church on Saturday.

Please share your memories at [www.cressfuneralservice.com](http://www.cressfuneralservice.com)

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### Gerald T. Mullen



Mullen

Gerald T. Mullen, age 80 of McFarland, Wisconsin, passed away on Sept. 14, 2022, at St. Mary’s Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. He was born in Shullsburg, Wisconsin, on July 15, 1942, the son of Thomas Mullen and Eileen (Palfrey) Mullen. He graduated from Gratiot High School in 1960. Following high school, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and received his bachelor’s degree. Following his schooling, Gerald started farming and later worked as an Agricultural Sales Manager.

On May 15, 1990, Gerald was united in marriage to Barbara Hink at St. Ann’s

Catholic Church in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

Gerald is survived by his wife Barbara at home; his children: Tawny (Jeff) Hardyman of Darlington, Wisconsin; Kevin (Renee Shirley) Mullen of Portland, Oregon; Kirk (Kristen) Mullen of Wappingers Falls, New York; John (Naomi)

Hink of Brookfield, Wisconsin, Carrie (James) Allison of Portland, Oregon; and Matt (Tammy) Hink of Sykesville, Maryland; his 11 grandchildren: Nicholas (Kaylin) Siler, Sydney Beasley, Austin Mullen, Evan Mullen, Jack Mullen, Colin Mullen, Grant Hink, Blake Allison, Gavin Allison, Holden Hink and Alex Hink; his 2 great-grandchildren: Bentley and Briggs Siler; his sister, Lola Hannah; two brothers-in-law: Al Smith and Doug Moore; two sisters-in-law: Rosemary Moore and Trâm Klein; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; mother-in-law Dorothy Klein; two brothers-in-law: Jack Hannah and Richard Klein; and

one sister, Mae Smith.

Gerald enjoyed watching Wisconsin sports including the Brewers, Packers and Badgers. Gerald also had his pilot’s license and loved to fly. In his free time, he enjoyed playing golf. Gerald valued the time he spent with his family, making memories that they will cherish forever. He will be fondly remembered by all who knew him.

Visitation was held on Saturday, Sept. 24, from 1-1:45 p.m. at Erickson Funeral Home, 235 N. Judgment St., Shullsburg. The memorial service followed at 2 p.m. at the funeral home with the Rev. Nick McElrath officiating. Burial was in Evergreen Cemetery in Shullsburg, Wisconsin.

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## Downtown: Group aims to complement Stoughton Chamber

Continued from page 10

sustained way, recognizing that downtown revitalization is an ongoing process. Communications, information, and downtown-related media need to be coordinated, easy to search, and user-focused.” It also found that thriving downtowns in similar cities had in common an organization that was operating to “specifically address downtown promotion and concerns while working collaboratively with other community organizations.”

Grassman said Stoughton already has plenty to work with downtown, and plenty to promote, both locally and regionally.

“(It’s) already a beautiful place with an amazing variety of unique shops, entertainment and places to eat,” she said. “The Stoughton Opera House provides a solid anchor that is truly heads above other venues in this region for the stunning beauty of the building and the quality of performers. There is beautiful art, and shops that provide opportunities for learning creative processes. You can spend an afternoon playing board games at Gemini. You can even get married at two amazing event venues.”

Still, there is plenty of room to grow, and potential to be realized downtown, Grassman believes, including “a number of resources that could be enjoyed even more.”

“We have a beautiful river flowing right across Main Street and around downtown (that) holds so much potential with the planned riverwalk,” she said. “There are still some storefronts that are vacant so there are opportunities for additional attractions to be added to the downtown.”

Grassman said she considers the group, which just received IRS confirmation of its 501(c)(6) nonprofit status, an “extension or enhancement” of the work the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce already does.

“The Chamber is concerned with the prosperity of the Stoughton business community as a whole, including

### What’s up next

A couple of action items discussed at the group’s first meeting were how to make Small Business Saturday (Nov. 26) and Stoughton Victorian Christmas (Dec. 1-4) grow to be “truly special events for our downtown this year,” Grassman said. The group also plans to develop a map of all downtown businesses along with their hours to be available for visitors in paper and digital form.

### Seeking federal funding

The group has applied to the City of Stoughton for American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds to develop marketing and promotional activities to bring back visitors to the downtown area that were lost during the pandemic.

“Downtown businesses lost significant revenue during the closures and subsequent time period following reopening,” Grassman said. “We know we have a truly unique Downtown that few other communities can boast of. We are hopeful that ARPA funds will support us in jumpstarting shoppers to return to downtown Stoughton and reignite the enthusiasm that was just starting to build prior to the pandemic.”

manufacturing, large retail and events (and) unfortunately, they just don’t have the resources to focus the kind of attention and support to downtown that these small businesses need to thrive,” she said. “The sole focus of the SDMA is downtown and we will work with the Chamber to enhance the things they already do.

“The goal of the SDMA is to focus on the downtown area in particular, recognizing it as a symbol that forms the public perception of Stoughton as a thriving and unique place to visit,” Grassman said. “Five years from now, we hope (it) is an established group in Stoughton and its contributions are readily noticed and provide benefit to the downtown and to the entire Stoughton community.”

For more information, visit [StoughtonDowntownMerchants@gmail.com](mailto:StoughtonDowntownMerchants@gmail.com).

Contact reporter Scott De Laruelle @ [sdelaruelle@ourourkemediagroup.com](mailto:sdelaruelle@ourourkemediagroup.com)

### SDMA objectives

- Celebrate downtown historic beauty
- Offer a variety of merchant events to create an exciting destination experience
- Advocate and collaborate with local policymakers and regional merchant associations for the benefit of downtown Stoughton
- Provide opportunities for active communication and collaboration among downtown merchants
- Help attract and sustain new downtown and area businesses

## Odalen to give rosemaling talk at Livsreise Oct. 8

Renowned Stoughton artist Nancy Odalen will give a presentation about her love of rosemaling, and her 20-year journey from learning the art from scratch to earning the highest status among her peers.

A traditionalist who seeks to recreate authentic Norwegian folk art in the old style of the 1750s to 1850s, she recently won “Gold” status for her work at the 2022 Folk Art Competition sponsored by the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa.

Odalen will talk at Livsreise Norwegian Heritage Center (277 W. Main St.) from 1-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 8. Seating is limited (about 82 or so) and the overflow can sit in chairs in the hallway.

Contact reporter Scott De Laruelle @ [sdelaruelle@ourourkemediagroup.com](mailto:sdelaruelle@ourourkemediagroup.com)

### If You Go

**What:** Nancy Odalen talk on rosemaling  
**When:** 1-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 8  
**Where:** Livsreise-Norwegian Heritage Center, 277 W. Main St, Stoughton  
**Info:** Visit [livsreise.org](http://livsreise.org) or call 608-873-7567

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