



SPORTS • The Chargers' volleyball team improved to 2-0 in conference play after taking care of Bonduel on Thursday.

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Hearing to look at Wittenberg water rates

Water rates are expected to go up about 60% in the village of Wittenberg if the Public Service Commission approves the request. A public hearing on the rate hike is planned for Oct. 10

PAGE 2

Birnamwood teen arrested on sex charges

Hobil Bravo-Perez, 19, was arrested last week and charged last week in the sexual assaults of three teenage girls, one of whom was 12 at the time. He is also believed to be in the country illegally.

PAGE 3

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN AT ANTIQUE STORE

Locals Paul and Nancy Pehlke peruse possible purchases at Shops on Grand at 203 E. Grand Ave. in Wittenberg on Saturday. The newly opened antique store has displays from several vendors and is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

MIRIAM NELSON | NEW MEDIA



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WITTENBERG
ENTERPRISE
& BIRNAMWOOD NEWS

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Wittenberg water rates could rise 60%

Village schedules public hearing on utility rate hikes

By **KEVIN MURPHY**

Correspondent

MADISON — An Oct. 10 public hearing on a request to double the cost of water for Wittenberg Municipal Water and Sewer Utility customers adds another event to the utility's unusually active year.

In March, the water utility filed its first comprehensive rate case since 1995 on an order from the Public Service Commission. The utility had reported losses of \$141,317 during the two previous years and had little cash on hand, which triggered the PSC to require a utility to file a rate case.

While reviewing the water rate application, PSC staff learned that the water utility had been replacing outdated water meters with automated meters since 2015 without PSC authorization.

In June, the PSC ordered a halt to the meter project to investigate. Earlier this month, the PSC reprimanded the utility for not seeking authorization before swapping out the old meters. On Sept. 16, the PSC authorized the project, which lifted the cease and desist order it had issued in June, and allowed the utility to recover the project's cost in the pending water rate case.

Village Board President William Switalla said the meter project was nearly completed when ordered to halt, and it should be finished by the end of the year. Utility employees have been swapping out the manual-read meters with automated devices along with their other duties.

The PSC put the cost of the meter project at \$132,000, which shocked Switalla. He said it was probably closer to \$35,000.

"We budgeted for it every year ... at about \$10,000 for the materials ... since we were already paying the employees," he said.

Many municipalities around the state have been reprimanded by the PSC for gradually replacing old meters with new ones. They didn't know that the PSC looks at a project's total cost, and not the annual cost, which elevates the dollar figures on paper and puts them under the PSC's jurisdiction.

The new meters transmit usage data that can be read without having to visit each meter location. It used to take two days to read all the meters in the village quarterly; now it will take two hours, Switalla said.

Customers will appreciate the new meters' ability to better detect uncommon usage amounts, which can indicate a problem or leak that could lead to huge bills for the unused water and require correction action. The PSC will require the utility to review customer data and try to resolve cases within a month when the meters indicate unusually high or low consumption, based on parameters set by the utility.

The old meters contained lead; some were 30 years old, and replacements parts were getting difficult to find.

Since the village had gone more than two decades without filing a comprehensive rate case, the pending case calls for a 60% overall increase in rates. Average residential customers currently paying \$52.90 quarterly for 9,000 gallons of water would pay \$84.54 for the same volume of water under the new rates.

Those dollar amounts include the Public Fire Protection fee charged for hydrant maintenance and other firefighting-associated

expenses the water utility incurs. Rates for commercial, industrial and public entity customers are also subject to change.

The PSC is taking comments on the rate request at an Oct. 10 public hearing at 3 p.m. in the Community Room of the Wittenberg Community Center, 208 Vinal St., Wittenberg. Sewer charges are also billed quarterly, but those rates are set locally.

The water utility's total expenses have been exceeding its revenue in three of the past four years, with it posting a net negative income of \$72,382 last year. This year, PSC staff estimates a \$29,192 negative net income on estimated revenues of \$142,293 and total expenses of \$171,485.

However, Switalla says the utility's cash flow isn't as bad as what the PSC represents. The total expenses include about \$60,000 annually in depreciation costs, a non-cash item that doesn't impact the utility's bank balances.

"Every year, the village (government) may pay some thousands of dollars into the utility, but we don't write very big checks to cover the utility," he said.

Switalla doesn't put much stock in the PSC wanting utilities to calculate depreciation costs into total expenses. The PSC states that doing so gives a more complete view of the long-term cost of operating a utility.

"If we need to replace a treatment plant, we're going to have to borrow money for it. We don't have that kind of money laying around, and keeping tabs on depreciation won't help pay for it, either," he said.

Switalla expects the PSC to act on the rate request by the end of the year and for the new rates to take effect in early 2020.

CORRECTIONS

Accuracy is important to the Enterprise & News, and it wants to correct mistakes promptly. Call errors to our attention by phone at 715-526-2121, ext. 7018.

Meet Matthew Christian, ag teacher at WBHS

New ag building
will provide great
learning experience
for students

By **MIRIAM NELSON**
News Editor

Editor's Note: The Enterprise and News recently chatted with Matthew Christian, the agriculture teacher who is starting his second year at Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: I went to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls for ag education. My goal was to be an ag teacher.

Q: What motivated you to pursue teaching?

A: In high school, I was interested in ag and forestry and those types of classes. But I didn't know I wanted to be a teacher until my senior year when I had an ag teacher that really made a connection with the students, and that appealed to me. I want to inspire more people like me to get interested in the ag industry.

Q: What first interested you in agriculture?

A: I didn't grow up on a farm, but I like to say I was raised on a farm. My dad quit the family farm and started his own business in welding and stainless fabrication. My grandparents had a 40-cow farm north of Wausau, so I would help my grandpa and uncle on the farm.

Q: What is your style for teaching?

A: I'm big on the hands-on learning aspect. Kids are in classes all day



Matthew Christian begins his second year teaching agriculture at Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School.
MIRIAM NELSON | NEW MEDIA

long, and this is a different approach. They get to get their hands dirty and experience something different. I'm about giving kids the opportunity to learn in a different way. I want students to realize how expansive the field is and how everything is tied to agriculture.

Q: What will you be hoping to do in the new building?

A: We're hoping to work with a few pigs and a few goats. I think they're easier to work with and less intimidating for the kids. With the livestock, I'm hoping to have two rotations. I want to have the students treat them like show pigs so they can get the experience of washing them, walking them, keeping track of the food they eat and their growth rate so they're able to do a cost

analysis. With the goats, it will be easier to treat as a breeding program so they get to learn about the breeding process and handling pregnant goats and the babies.

There will also be a brand new greenhouse, which will be part of the new structure. We will be able to increase our flowers and vegetable crops. We normally do the greenhouse sale, which is a big fundraiser for the students. It gives them the opportunity to interact with the customers and get experience growing and marketing products.

We'll have an aquaponics area where we'll have a tank with fish in it and then attempt to grow lettuce and other aquaponic plants.

Q: What brought you to Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School?

A: I taught in Thorp my first year, but that wasn't an ideal fit for me. Also, I was still living in Wausau, so that was an hour commute each way. Bill Hass, the principal at Birnamwood, had been the principal at Thorp. I had a close relationship with him, and he told me about the job opening. I applied right away and took the job. In my interview, they told me about the referendum and the plans to add a new building. It's exciting to be a part of it.

Q: How popular is the ag program and FFA at WBHS?

A: I have an average of about 20 students per class, and I teach all four years. We have over 120 kids interested in FFA already, and I'm hoping to reach 150 by next semester. Leadership development events through FFA offers students the opportunity to improve their professional social skills. I had two students last year taking high honors at state competition, and that has helped generate interest in FFA.

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Birnamwood teen facing sex offense charges

Bravo-Perez allegedly in the country illegally

By **TIM RYAN**
Reporter

BIRNAMWOOD — A Birnamwood teen, apparently in the country illegally, has been charged with multiple child sex offenses, including trafficking and prostitution.

Hobil R. Bravo-Perez, 19, is accused of the sexual assault of three female juveniles after striking up relationships with them on Facebook, according to the criminal complaint, including one girl who was 12 years old at the time.

His alleged activities came to light after one of the girls, a 15-year-old, reported a sexual assault that allegedly took place at Bravo-Perez's Birnamwood residence.

Shawano County authorities then learned of a 14-year-old girl

who had been dating Bravo-Perez since June of last year.

The criminal complaint alleges Bravo-Perez had sexual contact with the girl more than 50 times between June and December 2018.

The complaint also alleges Bravo-Perez had sexual intercourse with a third child, a 12-year-old girl, between December 2018 and February of this year.

Bravo-Perez was arrested Sept. 13 after sheriff's deputies executed a search warrant at his residence.

According to the criminal complaint, Bravo-Perez has used multiple aliases and was in possession of two fake U.S. Permanent Resident cards and a fake Social Security card.

He had been going by the name Alexis Bravo on his Facebook page, which is also the name the girls knew him by, according to the complaint.

According to the complaint, Bravo-Perez did not speak English and had been using his iPhone to

translate Spanish to English when he was in contact with the girls.

The complaint states Bravo-Perez was in the country illegally, along with his two brothers who were at the Birnamwood address when the search warrant was executed.

One of the brothers, Edgar B. Bravo-Perez, 22, has been charged with a felony count of possession of methamphetamine. He was also scheduled for a plea hearing Thursday in an unrelated case where he faces misdemeanor counts of operating while intoxicated-causing injury and hit-and-run.

According to the criminal complaint, Hobil and Edgar Bravo-Perez had each been cited in the past for operating a vehicle without a license and were using false names at the time of those incidents.

The third brother, Jorge Luis Bravo-Perez, 29, is listed by the border patrol in Texas as an inadmissible alien, according to the criminal complaint.

Hobil Bravo-Perez could face a maximum 60 years in prison if convicted of first-degree sexual assault

of a child under the age of 13.

He is also charged with trafficking of a child, for allegedly soliciting a child to have sex for money. The complaint alleges Bravo-Perez offered one of the girls \$50 to have sex with him.

That charge carries a maximum 40 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine if convicted.

He is also charged with two related felony counts of child enticement and child enticement for the purpose of prostitution, each of which carries a maximum possible penalty of 25 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Bravo-Perez is also facing felony counts of sexual assault of a child under the age of 16 and repeated sexual assault of a child, each of which carries a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Bravo-Perez was ordered held Wednesday on a \$100,000 cash bond set by Judge James Habeck. He is due back in court for an adjourned initial appearance Sept. 30.

tryan@newmedia-wi.com

Fake documents hid presence of illegal immigrants

One arrested on multiple felony sex offense counts

By **TIM RYAN**
Reporter

BIRNAMWOOD — False documents and multiple aliases hid the presence of three Birnamwood residents alleged to be in the country illegally, including one now facing multiple sex offense charges, according to the Shawano County Sheriff's Department.

Hobil R. Bravo-Perez, 19, has been charged with first-degree sexual assault of a child under the age of 13, trafficking of a child, child enticement, child enticement-prostitution, sexual assault of a child and repeated sexual assault of a child.

He was arrested Sept. 13 at his residence in Birnamwood after authorities executed a search warrant.

The complaint states Bravo-Perez

was in the country illegally, along with his two brothers who were at the Birnamwood address when the search warrant was executed.

One of the brothers, Edgar B. Bravo-Perez, 22, has been charged with a felony count of possession of methamphetamine. He was also faces misdemeanor counts of operating while intoxicated-causing injury and hit-and-run.

According to the criminal complaint, Hobil and Edgar Bravo-Perez had each been cited in the past for operating a vehicle without a license and were using false names at the time of those incidents.

The third brother, Jorge Luis Bravo-Perez, 29, is listed by the border patrol in Texas as an inadmissible alien, according to the criminal complaint.

That wasn't known by authorities at the time the search warrant was executed, according to Shawano County Sheriff's Detective Chris Gamm.

"It wasn't until later in the day when I was looking at the criminal histories that I saw that notification

on his criminal history," Gamm said.

Gamm then contacted the Milwaukee office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"They're aware of the case, and that's their jurisdiction," he said. "We have not been contacted by them to assist in locating him yet."

Gamm said fake paperwork prevented the other two brothers from being caught sooner for their illegal status.

"At the house, we found fake U.S. Permanent Resident cards and fake Social Security cards, which is what they were using for employment, or what they told us they used to gain employment," he said.

Gamm said those false documents could have also been used when stopped by law enforcement.

"I've stopped a few from out of the country and I see these cards also," he said. "Unless they are in the database when we run them under the name that they've given, they could give us any name. Right now we don't have a good process to identify them. If they don't have any ID on them, we're stuck using

the information that they give us."

The county jail does have an identification system that is tied in with the national Automated Fingerprint Identification System, which scans fingerprints and scans all other available databases for identification.

"Everyone in every jail across the country, when they're fingerprinted, their fingerprints go into that AFIS system," Gamm said.

"We're working on getting some of those units in the car, because people lie to us all the time," he said.

Gamm said, however, that putting the system into squad cars would be costly and would take multiple steps to access the AFIS system remotely.

Gamm said fake immigration documents often "look real enough" to the lay person, but often don't have the official government decals or protections on the ID.

"A lot of time we don't know that," he said. "We're always behind the technology."

tryan@newmedia-wi.com

Legals
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#1107
Sept 11, 18, 25 2019
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
SHAWANO COUNTY
Notice Setting Time to Hear
Application and Deadline for Filing Claims
Case No. 19PR74

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Daniel A. Baker
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 4/12/1926 and date of death 7/29/2016, was domiciled in Shawano County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of 139 Humphrey Circle, Shawano, WI 54166.
3. The application will be heard at the Shawano County Courthouse, Shawano, Wisconsin, Room probate before Darlene Hoffman, Probate Registrar, on October 15, 2019. You do not need to appear unless you object. the application may be granted if there is no objection.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is December 20, 2019.
5. A claim may be filed at the Shawano County Courthouse, Shawano, Wisconsin, Room probate.
6. This publication is notice to any persons whose names or address are unknown.
Darlene Hoffman
Probate Registrar
Attorney Mary Rose Orcutt
Geimer & Orcutt Law, S.C.
2333 Riverside Drive
Green Bay, WI 54301
920-432-4433
Bar Number: 1043259

WNAXLP

#1108
Sept 11, 18, 25 2019
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
SHAWANO COUNTY
Notice to Creditors
Case No. 19PR73

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Thomas C. Schweitzer
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 12/09/1932 and date of death 7/10/2019, was domiciled in Shawano County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of 306 W. Picnic St, Shawano, WI 54166.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
You do not need to appear unless you object. the application may be granted if there is no objection.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is December 13, 2019.
5. A claim may be filed at the Shawano County Courthouse, Shawano, Wisconsin, Room probate.
6. This publication is notice to any persons whose names or address are unknown.
Diane Hartwig
121 E. Madison St.
Clintonville, WI 54929
715-460-4744

WNAXLP

#1109
September 11, 18, 25
2019
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
SHAWANO COUNTY
Case No. 19CV142

NOTICE AND ORDER FOR NAME CHANGE HEARING

IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME CHANGE OF:
Mhylei MayLouise Druckrey
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
From:
(First) Mhylei
(Middle)MayLouise
(Last)Druckrey
To:
(First)Mhylei
(Middle)MayLouise
(Last)Christensen
Birth Certificate:
(First)Mhylei
(Middle)MaryLouise
(Last)Druckrey
IT IS ORDERED:
This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Shawano County, State of Wisconsin:
Judge's Name: Habeck
Place: Circuit Court Br., 1
Shawano, WI 54166
Date: 10/18/2019
Time: 11:15 am
WNAXLP

Legals
WNAXLP

#1110
September 11, 18, 25
2019
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
SHAWANO COUNTY
Case No. 19CV141

NOTICE AND ORDER FOR NAME CHANGE HEARING

IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME CHANGE OF:
Tinisa Leigh Marie Druckrey
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
From:
(First) Tinisa
(Middle)Leigh Marie
(Last)Druckrey
To:
(First)Tinisa
(Middle)Leigh Marie
(Last)Christensen
Birth Certificate:
(First)Tinisa
(Middle)Leigh Marie
(Last)Druckrey
IT IS ORDERED:
This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Shawano County, State of Wisconsin:
Judge's Name: Habeck
Place: Circuit Court Br., 1
Shawano, WI 54166
Date: 10/18/2019
Time: 11:15 am
WNAXLP

#1113
Sept 11,18,25 2019
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
SHAWANO COUNTY
Case No. 19PR76
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
ROBERT J. WESTPHAL
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth August 26,1946 and date of death June 23,2019 was domiciled in Shawano County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of N3477 Evergreen Rd.,Pella, WI 54950.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is December 23,2019.
5. A claim may be filed at the Shawano County Courthouse, Shawano, Wisconsin, Room Probate
Darlene Hoffman
Probate Registrar
9/4/2019
Michael Steber
345 Williamstowne,
Delafield, WI 53018
262-646-4850
1005518

WNAXLP

#1122
September 25, 2019
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
SMALL CLAIMS
OUTAGAMIE COUNTY
AMENDED SUMMONS
FOR PUBLICATION
Case No.2013-SC-2623

STUMPF MOTOR COMPANY, INC.
2501 West Wisconsin Avenue
P.O. Box 771
Appleton, WI 54912-0771
Plaintiff
vs
Cody J. Watzka
W5188 Northwood Drive
Shawano, WI 54166
Defendant
THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to said Defendant
You are being sued for:
\$10,000 plus costs, interest, and attorney fees.
If you wish to dispute this matter, you must then be in Courtroom H, Human Services Building, 410 South Walnut Street, Appleton, Wisconsin 54911, on **October 7, 2019 at 9:30 am.**
If you do not appear, a judgment may be given to the person suing you for what the person is asking.
You are encouraged to bring with you all papers and documents relating to this matter, but there is no need to bring witnesses at this time.

Legals
WNAXLP

Dated this 3rd day of September 2019.
By David G. Ahrens
Ahrens, Veternick & Norby, LLP
Attorneys for Plaintiff
225 N. Richmond St. Suite 201
Appleton, WI 54911
State Bar No. 01015611
920-739-7781

WNAXLP

#1133
September 25, 2019
T970337

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT
MENOMINEE COUNTY
Case No. 19SC000619
SMALL CLAIMS
AMENDED SUMMONS

SECURA SUPREME
INSURANCE COMPANY
AS SUBROGEE OF
JOSEPH G MASTEY AND
KARYN M MASTEY
Plaintiff,
vs.
JOHN J QUINN JR
Defendant.
TO: JOHN J QUINN
230 S ANDREWS ST #3
SHAWANO, WI 54166
You are being sued by: SECURA SUPREME INSURANCE COMPANY AS SUBROGEE OF JOSEPH G MASTEY AND KARYN M MASTEY
in the Small Claims Court of Shawano County located at 311 N. MAIN ST. SHAWANO, WI 54166
A hearing will be held at 1:00 p.m. on October 14, 2019. If you do not appear, a judgment may be given to the party suing you. A copy of this amended summons along with the summons and complaint is being mailed to you.
Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin this September 9, 2019.
KOHN LAW FIRM S.C.
BY: JENNIFER ANDERSON
Plaintiff's Attorney
State Bar No. 1030556
735 N. Water St.,
Suite 1300
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 276-0435

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Kohl Foundation seeks nominees for educator awards

MILWAUKEE — Nominations of Wisconsin teachers and principals are being accepted for the 2020 Herb Kohl Educational Foundation teacher fellowship and principal leadership awards.

Awards are \$6,000, with an additional \$6,000 grant going to the school of each selected teacher and principal. The deadline for submissions is Oct. 8, and nominations can be submitted online at www.kohleducation.org.

Established in 1990, the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation awards 100 fellowships and 16 leadership awards annually from among all applicants throughout the state.

For teachers or principals to be eligible, they must be nominated by a parent, student, other teacher, community member or school administrator. Wisconsin teachers and principals in grades pre-K through 12 who plan to continue in their current capacity for at least one year are eligible.

The Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Fellowship rewards teachers who have demonstrated superior ability to inspire love of learning in their students, have motivated others and have provided meritorious service both in and outside the classroom. It also recognizes and supports principals who demonstrate administrative leadership and positively influence school culture.

Selection of recipients will be made by a state-level panel composed of representatives from the Wisconsin Newspaper Association, cooperative educational service agencies, Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools, several education-related associations and community representatives. Since the program was established in 1990, the foundation has awarded more than 6,000 total grants to Wisconsin teachers, principals and their schools for a total of \$10.6 million.



Gresham School District is looking to fill several positions.

All positions are open immediately and applications will be taken until the position(s) are filled.

We have the following positions available:

* **Director of Finance/Operations.** Full-time, year round position. Will be responsible for the financial and business operations of the District including, but not limited to: development and maintenance of the annual budget and district annual projections; seeking out, writing, and management of federal and state grants, planning and financial analysis of district programs, and fiscal reporting; supervision of payroll and accounts payable; maintaining all human resource programs; supervision of maintenance and other support services departments; oversight of the transportation contractor; assisting the superintendent and communicating with board and committees.

* **Maintenance and Facilities Coordinator.** Full-time position Monday-Friday year round. Will be responsible for leading and assisting with the maintenance and upkeep of the District's facilities and equipment. Qualifications should include the ability to:

- perform routine HVAC maintenance and repairs;
- perform routine electrical, plumbing, and other equipment maintenance and repairs;
- perform routine daily cleaning of district facilities;
- maintain and order supplies and equipment as necessary;
- develop and maintain professional relationships with staff, students, and vendors.

* **Custodian.** Full-time position Monday-Friday year round. Will be responsible for assisting in the upkeep and daily cleaning of the school for the Gresham School District.

Both custodial positions will report directly to the Director of Finance and Operations. Both positions will be compensated at an hourly rate pay which will be determined based on the qualifications of the successful candidate. Full benefits are available. Please note that this is not an administrative position.

* **2019-2020 Substitute Teachers:** Must have an associate degree or higher from an accredited college or university and who has successfully completed an approved substitute training program, but has not completed a state-approved educator preparation program (Three-Year short-term substitute license).

* **2019-2020 Substitute Special Education Aides:** Must have an associate degree or higher, two years of post-secondary education equal to 48 credits, or be able to pass an assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics.

* **Middle School Soccer Assistant Coach**

* **JV Boys Basketball Coach**

* **6th-7th Grade Boys Basketball Coach**

* **8th Grade Boys Basketball Coach**

For these positions, pick up an application in the Gresham School District office OR submit a letter of interest, resume, references and/or licensure to:

Mr. Newell Haffner, 501 Schabow Street, Gresham, WI 54128
For further information or a copy of the position description, contact Mr. Haffner at 715-787-3211, ext. 850 or email haffner@gresham.k12.wi.us.

Never underestimate the value of friendship

I've always had a wide circle of friends and am grateful for those who were in my life for only a brief period, as well as for the ones who have been lifelong friends.

I never really had much trouble making friends until I moved to the



MIRIAM NELSON

Twin Cities. I suppose it was the sheer size coupled with the fact that I never had the good fortune to work for stable companies the first decade I was there. I remember expecting the people I met to welcome me with open arms — who couldn't use another friend?

What I failed to factor in was the fact that many of the people who lived there were natives and not transplants like me. They already had their circles of friends and rarely felt the need to expand those borders.

I would imagine that a great deal of my sense of community came from my parents, who were transplants to this area. Working at the "children's home," it was their job to make these kids feel welcome in what must have been strange and terrifying times for them. Many times, the children who came to live at Homme were there because one parent had died and the other had to work to support the family.

Many times I've thought about what it must have been like for a single mother or father to entrust total strangers to the care of their fam-

ily. It must have been a very strange feeling of trepidation and also relief. The bonus of having parents work in child care is that you got to witness compassion and understanding of the human condition on a daily basis.

I'm sure their work was not always easy, but I never really saw too much of that as they always kept any troubles at work. The payoff for them was certainly not financial, but their wealth in friendships was astounding.

Mom and Dad weren't too much older than some of the families that stayed there. As the children left to create a lives and families of their own, they often stopped back to visit. Everyone was welcome at our home, and several became longtime friends.

There was one man who was particularly colorful in his expressions and exuberance for life. One Thanksgiving he stopped by the house to tell Mom and Dad of his latest adventure. He wasn't an educated man, but he had a vast amount of interesting life experiences from his years in the trucking business.

As a young adult, home from college, I was fascinated listening to this man weave a tale that seemed, at times, highly unlikely. I learned a lot that day about meeting people where they are at. Mom and Dad never judged or argued with him. They just graciously let him tell his tales and were happy to set an extra place at the table for him.

Miriam Nelson is the news editor of the Wittenberg Enterprise & Birnamwood News. Readers can contact her at mnelson@newmedia-wi.com

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BOOKS AND STUFF

Heartache and hardship for Russian immigrants

No matter how busy or tired I am, I can always unwind with a book.

This week I chose "The Little Bride" by Anna Solomon. I didn't think



JAN JONES

I'd like it, but it just kept me turning pages.

In the late 1800s, Russia is in turmoil. Jews are in peril. Horrifyingly violent pogroms are creeping closer to Odessa, where the orphaned Minna

Losk is living with a once wealthy aunt.

She has almost nothing of her own and must sneak food while her aunt sleeps. At 16, she decides to escape by becoming a mail order bride.

She is one of the few passengers to escape the misery of being seasick so must assume the responsibility of helping the others. Death and broken

AT A GLANCE

BOOK: "The Little Bride"

AUTHOR: Anna Solomon

PUBLISHER: Riverhead Books

PUBLISHED: Sept. 6, 2011

dreams are all around her, but she holds onto hope that her new husband will be handsome, rich and kind.

Minna is met at the harbor by Jacob Getreuer, the son of her future husband, Max. Together they travel across America to South Dakota. Along the way, Minna learns that she will be living on a homestead where Max and his sons are trying to eke out a living without the tools or skills required.

The house she hoped for is nothing more than a hole dug into the side of a hill furnished with crates and scrapes. Minna isn't prepared for this life, but she solemnly does her best. She soon learns that Max was supposed to become a rabbi and married a woman of means, but it became apparent that

Max lacked the leadership skills to lead a congregation.

As the pogroms spread, the family left for America and a new start. Sadly Max was as stubborn as he was devout. When offered a chance to homestead near Chicago, Max refused the financial help offered to fellow Jews and went off the South Dakota totally unprepared.

Minna can see that Max has no heart for farming as he usually watches as Samuel and Jacob do their best to prepare the fields, plant crops and manage the daily tasks. Jacob is the friendly, talkative one, while Samuel is remote and almost unfriendly.

When Max is nice to Minna, she feels like he treats her like a child. With a little advice from her (5 miles away, prosperous) neighbor, Minna learns how to deal with a sod house and what comes with it, but she remains utterly sad and lonely.

Eventually, Max receives a divorce so he and Minna can marry. The wed-

ding is hosted by their neighbors, but it is far from a festive affair. Life quickly returns to the same sad routines — until a prairie cyclone destroys with little they have.

Suddenly they must accept the hospitality of non-Jews. It is almost more than Max can bear, but it allows Minna hope for a future with some happiness. As the weeks pass, Minna realizes that she is strongly attracted to Samuel, and that he's been avoiding her because he feels the same.

With near brutal suddenness, Max dies and Minna and Samuel realize they can't be together. Thus begins Minna's quest for a place to call home without the constraints of religion, marriage or family.

We've never known the fear that gripped Europe in the time Minna lived, but we can see and feel it through a well-written book. Your public library has dozens of such stories. Stop by soon so you can check it out.

Wednesday's Cryptoquote: NEVER SAY YOU KNOW A MAN UNTIL YOU HAVE DIVIDED AN INHERITANCE WITH HIM. — JOHANN KASPAR LAVATER

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Jeff DePerry, Athletic Director

School District of Bowler

500 South Almon Street

Bowler, WI 54416

715-793-4101 ext. 6320

jeffdeperry@bowler.k12.wi.us

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