

SHOW SKI NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS COMING TO SHAWANO



A Shawano Ski Sharks pyramid is formed during a show earlier this summer. Shawano is hosting the Division 2 Show Ski National Championships from Aug. 6-8. FOR MORE, SEE PAGES 6, 7 AND 9.

DAVE BLACKMAN

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BALLOON ARTISTRY

Kids wait in line for Freddy's animals

By **WARREN BLUHM**
Editor-in-chief

Freddy Alfredo works intently as kids watch balloons transform into the magic they asked for: a puppy, a sword, a monkey, a Jedi light saber — even a sunflower.

His creations emerge gradually until a glimmer of recognition lights in the children's face and they reach for the reward for their patience.

There was a long line of children and parents willing to wait July 30 during Sunflower Fest 2021 at Bergsbaken Farms in Cecil, next to a pair of face painters.

Freddy's Balloon Animals grew out of Alfredo's need to strengthen his hands as he deals with the limitations that keep him in a wheelchair.

"I tried doing it with weights, but they were too heavy," he said. "The doctor said I needed to do it with something light."

He tried manipulating a Rubik's Cube but found a more fun alternative when he started learning how to mold balloons into toy creatures and other objects.

"I had a room full of these things, and a friend suggested I go to flea markets and parks," Alfredo said.

Freddy's Balloon Animals can be found most Sundays at the Shawano flea market and at other festivals around the area.



Balloon artist Freddy Alfredo puts the finishing touches on a monkey he has created for a young admirer July 30 during Sunflower Fest 2021 at Bergsbaken Farms in Cecil.

WARREN BLUHM | NEW MEDIA

Lakewood Arts and Crafts Show returns

The Lakewood Arts and Craft Show is planning a return bigger and better than ever after a brief hiatus due to the pandemic in 2020.

Taking place Saturday at the Lakewood Town Hall and Activity Center, 17258 North Road, Lakewood, the free event will feature 281 booths occupied by 215 vendors showcasing original work, including painting and

prints, fine art photography, jewelry, art glass, stained glass, pottery, woven textiles, carvings, clothing and much more.

The festival grounds will be open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sponsored by the McCaslin Lions Club, the Lakewood Arts and Craft Show has been an annual celebration of Oconto County creativity for more

than 40 years. Each artist is juried and chosen out of many talented applicants, highlighting the area's arts community, and giving attendees a chance to discover new favorites and take home a piece of authentic Oconto County culture.

"There's no better way to experience the thriving arts world in Oconto County than the Lakewood

Arts and Craft Show," said Samantha Boucher, tourism manager for Oconto County Economic Development Corp. "Summer wasn't the same without it in 2020, so we're all excited to welcome back art lovers of all ages to enjoy everything our creative community has to offer.

For more information, visit www.ocontocounty.org.



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SHAWANO
CITY ON THE WOLF

Congratulations Ski Sharks!!!

The City of Shawano is Proud to Host the D2 National Show Ski Competition this Weekend!!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FRIDAY, AUG. 6

SHAWANO: Shawano Ski Sharks host Division 2 Show Ski National Championships, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Smalley Park, 211 Riverside Drive.

BOWLER: Bowler Bash, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bowler Area Historical Society, 104 E. Main St. Music, food, refreshments, craft show.

BONDUEL: Lions Club Corn Roast, 5-7 p.m., Village Park, East Park Street.

SATURDAY, AUG. 7

SHAWANO: Shawano Ski Sharks host Division 2 Show Ski National Championships, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Smalley Park, 211 Riverside Drive.

LAKEWOOD: Arts and Crafts Show, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Town Hall, 17258 North Road, 200 crafters offering original work. Free admission and free parking. No pets allowed. Sponsored by the McCaslin Lions. Food and refreshments on the grounds.

BOWLER: Bowler Bash, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bowler Area Historical Society, 104 E. Main St. Music, food, refreshments, car show and craft show, tractor parade 1 p.m.

WABENO: WAM Fest (Wabeno Art and Music Festival), 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., downtown. Continuous music, family activities, visit wabenoartandmusicfest.org or Facebook page.

BREED: Music by Sixx Guns Loaded, 3-7 p.m., Arrowhead Saloon, 13486 County Road AA.

TOWNSEND: Luau on the Beach, 3-11 p.m., Birch Hills Resort and My Bar, 16688 Nicolet Road. paddle boat races (with a twist). Registration for races begins 3 p.m.; races start 4 p.m. Karaoke on the beach starting 6 p.m. Bring your own lawn chair.

SUNDAY, AUG. 8

SHAWANO: Zurko Promotions flea market, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Shawano County Fairgrounds, 990 E. Green Bay St.

SHAWANO: Shawano Ski Sharks host Division 2 Show Ski National Championships, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Smalley Park, 211 Riverside Drive.

OCONTO FALLS: Oconto Falls Flea Market, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Memorial Field.

SHAWANO: Music in the Park featuring KNX Party Band, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Memorial Park, 909 S. Lincoln St. Bring a lawn chair.

TUESDAY, AUG. 10

OCONTO FALLS: Oconto County Farmers Market, 4-8 p.m., Highland Plaza, 323 E. Highland Drive.

SHAWANO: Interactive Outdoor Movie, 8:30-10 p.m., Arlington Park, 300 N. Humphrey Circle. "Welcome to the Jungle." Bring your own chairs and snacks.



Fields of sunflowers are among the highlights of late summer in Northeast Wisconsin. This friendly face appeared in the middle of the Bergsbaken Farms Sunflower Fest last weekend in Cecil.

WARREN BLUHM | NEW MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 11

SHAWANO: Shawano Ski Sharks, 6 p.m., Smalley Park, 211 Riverside Drive. Pre-show 5:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUG. 12

SHAWANO: Thursdayz at Franklin featuring Conscious Pilot, 6-8:30 p.m., Franklin Park, 235 S. Washington St. Food and beverage vendors.

FRIDAY, AUG. 13

BOWLER: Annual Mohican Pow-Wow Honoring All Veterans, Many Trails Park, Moh He Con Nuck Road. Grand Entry 7 p.m.

SHAWANO: Bluegrass Bash in the Woods, 8:30 p.m., Classic's Restaurant and Lounge, W6026 Lake Drive. Music by Liver Killers. Grill'n meats provided by Smoke'n Joe and proceeds to benefit Safe Haven. \$5 cover.

SATURDAY, AUG. 14

GILLET: Oconto County Youth Fair Horse Show, 9:30 a.m., Zippel Park.

SHAWANO: Annual Folk Music Festival, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Franklin Park, 235 S. Washington St. Free, bring lawn

chair or blanket, live music, quilt raffle.

BOWLER: Annual Mohican Pow-Wow Honoring All Veterans, Many Trails Park, Moh He Con Nuck Road. Grand Entries 1 and 7 p.m.

BREED: Music by The Rejects, 3-7 p.m., Arrowhead Saloon, 13486 County Road AA.

SUNDAY, AUG. 15

SHAWANO: Zurko Promotions flea market, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Shawano County Fairgrounds, 990 E. Green Bay St.

GILLET: Oconto County Youth Fair domestic animal shows, 8 a.m. to noon, Zippel Park. Caged bird and small pets 8:30 a.m., junior cat show followed by open class 9:30 a.m., dog show 11:30 a.m.

OCONTO FALLS: Oconto Falls Flea Market, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Memorial Field.

BOWLER: Annual Mohican Pow-Wow Honoring All Veterans, Many Trails Park, Moh He Con Nuck Road. Grand Entry at noon.

SHAWANO: Music in the Park featuring Blue Notes, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Memorial Park, 909 S. Lincoln St. Bring a lawn chair.

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Shawano Ski Sharks members perform a jump during a show earlier this summer. The Ski Sharks will perform as a team on Saturday of the Division 2 Show Ski National Championships.

DAVE BLACKMAN

Shawano eager to host national championships

Bringing event to Smalley Park was several year process

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Shawano is eager to host its first ever national championship, an event that took several years to prepare for and bring to the Shawano Ski Sharks show site.

The Division 2 Show Ski National Championships will be held Aug. 6-8 on the Wolf River, with fans scattered across Smalley Park to watch the action on the water.

The process of bringing a national championship to Shawano first began about 10 years ago, according to Brad Keuschel, a member of the Ski Sharks. Keuschel recalled telling team president Dave Passehl that one day he'd help bring nationals to Shawano.

The first step to getting their site to align with national guidelines was to move it. The Ski Sharks remained at Smalley Park but moved a couple blocks north to avoid the Wolf River Beach and create a bit more room between ski shows and the Green Bay Street bridge.

The next thing the site needed was to be able to hold at least 1,000 spectators at a single time and also have a place to park hundreds of

cars. The Ski Sharks have both of those things, and with improved seating areas, a new pavilion and a city willing to host, the site was ready for a national championship.

The call making the dream of Shawano hosting a championship a reality came in November 2019. After several more months of prep, Smalley Park is now ready to showcase its site.

A curveball was thrown after the pandemic eliminated some of last year's national championship — which typically only last two days — so Smalley Park was asked to host for an additional day.

Shawano accepted and will now host "probably one of the largest Division 2 nationals in a long time,"

said Keuschel.

"There's a lot of excitement about it. It'll be great when everybody gets here and we get to stand back and look at it," said Keuschel.

Keuschel said they are tentatively expecting to bring in 1,500-2,000 visitors during the three-day event.

The national championship will officially kick off at 8 a.m. Friday when individual competition begins.

There will be a swivel 180, swivel pairs 360, swivel pairs open, strap doubles intermediate, swivel 360 and freestyle jump intermediate exhibitions that day along with strap doubles, swivel and freestyle opens. Several Ski Shark members will be competing.

The duos of Carsten McHugh and Jessa Jochman and Kylie Wallace and Brad Keuschel will compete in the strap doubles open competition. Faith McHugh will take part in the swivel 360 exhibition before Carsten McHugh hits the water for the freestyle open.

Friday will be capped with a mandatory team meeting at 6 p.m. with the chief judge at the site's pavilion. Paperwork check in will also be completed then.

Saturday will have five of the

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championship's nine teams in action, with the Ski Sharks taking the water third. The Ski Broncs (Loves Park, Illinois), Shermalot (Nekoo-sa), Five Seasons (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) and the Badwater Ski-ers (Spread Eagle) round out the teams competing.

The other four teams will compete on Sunday. Silver Lake (Fenton, Michigan), Ski Sprites (Altoona), Plum Ski-ers (Sayner) and the Muskego Water Bugs (Muskego) are the teams in action.

Following Friday's individual competitions and Sunday's second day of team competitions, award ceremonies will follow.

"It's a great atmosphere," said Keuschel on what first-time water ski fans can expect to see over the three-day championships. "It's one of the only sports where the other teams are constantly cheering each other on. The water ski community in general is one big family. There's going to be hundreds of people here watching each other."

Keuschel added that anyone who has taken in a Ski Sharks' show and thought it was a big production should come check out some of the other teams in action, as there will be even bigger rosters in attendance.

When some of the larger teams are competing, Keuschel believes around 1,000 people could be looking on, so the usual seating areas, plus additional bleachers and the hills and any other areas with views of the water will also be covered.

After teams are done competing,



Shawano Ski Sharks members perform during a show earlier this summer. Several Ski Sharks are scheduled to compete individually on Friday.

DAVE BLACKMAN

a 30-minute break will be taken before the next team takes the water, at which time fans can check out some of the ski and food vendors that will be on site.

"We worked really, really hard to get to this point," said Passehl. "The expectation was that we would be able to host tournaments here. We know what it does for the communities that it's been in in

the past and that's really what we wanted to bring here. The investment that we have in Smalley Park is now going to really see what we did it for.

"Clearly our weekly shows are wonderful, there are huge crowds and we fill up Smalley Park and that's great, too, but when we can bring 1,000 spectators in to Shawano on just a weekend, we're pretty

proud of that. So yeah, super excited and we're looking forward to having all these teams from around several states showcased here and hopefully the community comes out and enjoys it."

Keuschel added that the hope is to host as many national championships in the coming years as possible.

sports@newmedia-wi.com

Guidelines on Wolf River with water ski championship in town

With the Division 2 Show Ski National Championships taking place Aug. 6-8, there are some changes to Wolf River access and usage of which people should be aware.

On those three days, there will be a legal waterway closure to non-competition boat traffic from the

trestle to the dam. This is in place for the safety of all water ski individuals, teams and boats in action.

There will also be a no-wake passage from the channel to the trestle so that boat traffic can still move through. The area will be marked by buoys.

Finally, there will be a no-wake channel on the west side of the river for those who need to get through, primarily in place for property owners.

"We don't want to hinder anybody from being able to use the waterways," said Brad Keuschel,

ONLINE

For more details on the guidelines, visit the Shawano Ski Shark Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/shawano.sharks>.

Shawano Ski Shark member. "We're just asking for a chunk of it for a couple days."



Shawano Ski Shark members put on a show for their home crowd during a show earlier this summer. A total of nine teams will be competing at the Division 2 Show Ski National Championships.

DAVE BLACKMAN

**Congratulations Shawano Ski Sharks
Waterski Show Team on a Great Year!
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Show Ski Competition this Weekend!
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Local businesses prepare for water ski visitors

Shawano hosting national tournament from Aug. 6-8

By **LUKE REIMER**
Reporter

Local businesses are preparing for a wave of visitors to the Shawano area this weekend as the Shawano Ski Sharks host a national tournament Aug. 6-8.

“According to the information that I received, a couple thousand visitors are expected,” Shawano Chamber of Commerce Tourism Manager Patti Peterson said.

Many local businesses and hotels are preparing to host hundreds of guests, as they shop, eat and sleep all around Shawano.

“This weekend is similar to most summer weekends here,” said AmeriVu Inn and Suites manager Nick Patel. “We are fully booked.”

Patel said all 49 rooms at the hotel were full, with close to 100 people staying there.

Jessie Warrington, the manager of Quality Inn and Suites in Shawano, said they also were fully booked.

“We have around 150 people staying with us for that weekend,” said Warrington.

She added that she is excited to see the hotel booked for the tournament so visitors can get out and not only watch the tournament, but experience Shawano as well.

“This should help the Shawano area,” Warrington said. “It will bring more revenue into the city, as well as give people something to do rather than be cooped up inside from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Curt Preston, co-owner of Old Glory Candy, said that they are always welcoming visitors from big events in Shawano to his store.

“We are hoping and preparing for more traffic from visitors during the tournament,” Preston said.

He added that the preparation for the extra visitors will involve a staff increase.

“We want to be as staffed as possible,” Preston said. “We also want to create a great experience for the customers coming in, so we don’t want to rush people in and out. It will be a balancing act for the customers to have that great experience.”

Visitors to the store will be en-



Shawano Ski Sharks members look to the crowd after performing earlier this summer. The Division 2 Show Ski National Championships are expected to bring over 1,000 people to Shawano during the three-day event.

DAVE BLACKMAN

couraged to try some of the samples of fudge, including flavors like whiskey old-fashioned sweet and watermelon, he said.

Yvette Wilber, the owner of Tumbleweed, said she is anticipating the apparel store to very busy during the tournament.

“Business will be up not only for us, but for everyone in Shawano,” said Wilber. “This will be really great for everyone to get this extra foot traffic.”

Wilber said she hopes visitors enjoy the experience and spread the word about Tumbleweed and Shawano.

One business that has been seeing more traffic recently is anticipating more as the tournament proceeds. Stubborn Brothers Brewery has seen an uptick in business due to their Hometown Hero American ale, said

ONLINE

For more details on the Ski Sharks, visit <http://shawanoskisharks.org/>. For more information on the national championships, visit <https://www.facebook.com/SkiSharksNationals/>.

co-owner Aaron Gilling.

“We will be running business like usual,” Gilling said.

He said he believes that having a tournament with an anticipated audience of this size will have a positive impact.

“Everyone will benefit from this — Shawano will benefit from this,” said Gilling. “Every business will work together to benefit. We all support each other’s businesses, and that will help Shawano succeed in general.”

The businesses also plan to run special deals and promotions for the occasion. Stubborn Brothers is offer-

ing a buy-one-get-one deal on their porter and amber, Old Glory Candy is running a deal where if customers buy a pound of fudge, they get a quarter-pound free, and Tumbleweed is giving out hats with purchases.

Peterson said Angie’s Main Cafe, Old Glory Candy, The Stock Market and Stubborn Brothers are also taking part in a coupon sheet promotion, where coupons for those businesses will be distributed at the Ski Sharks tournament.

According to Brad Keuschel, a member of the Ski Sharks and a leader in bringing the tournament to Shawano, the action on the water will be wrapped up by 4 p.m. each day, giving visitors and competitors time to experience what Shawano has to offer.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 2021

9:30am Horse Show Horse Arena

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2021

8:00am Caged Bird & Small Pet Registration

8:30am Junior Caged Bird & Small Pet Show

9:00am Cat Registration

9:30am Junior Cat Show followed by open class

1130am Dog Show

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2021

4:00-8:00pm Open Class Exhibits Check In - Non-Animal

TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021

8:00-11:00am Open Class Exhibits Check In - Non-Animal

1:00-8:00pm Open Class Exhibits Judging - Non-Animal

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2021

1:00-4:30pm Junior Class Exhibits Judged Upon Entry - Non-Animal

5:00-7:00pm Junior Class Check In - Sheep, Swine and Goats

5:30-8:00pm Junior Class Exhibits Judged Upon Entry - Non-Animal

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2021

7:00-9:00am Market Steer Check In

9:00am-10:00pm Exhibition Area Open

1:00-8:00pm Junior & Open Class Exhibits Check In - Poultry and Rabbits

2:00-6:00pm Junior & Open Class Check In - Dairy

6:00pm Opening Ceremony Front of Expo Building

7:00pm Ag Olympics Grandstand

7:00pm-11:00pm Positive Energy / Karaoke Contest Budweiser Stage

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 2021

8:00am-8:00pm Flea Market/Craft Vendors, by AnT Promotions

8:30am Swine Show Swine, Goat & Sheep Barn

9:00am-10:00pm Exhibition Area Open

9:00am Rabbit Show Rabbit/Poultry Barn

11:00am Sheep Show Swine, Goat & Sheep Barn

12:30 Farm Tours Begin

1:30pm Beef Show Show Ring

4:00pm Rabbit Kiddie Showmanship Rabbit/Poultry Barn

5:00-6:30pm Truck Pull Registration

7:00pm-11:00pm NASHVEGAS Budweiser Stage

6:45pm Driver Meeting

7:00pm NEW Motorsports 4x4 Truck Pull Grandstand*

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 2021

8:00am-8:00pm Flea Market/Craft Vendors, by AnT Promotions

9:00am-10:00pm Exhibition Area Open

8:30am Dairy Show

9:00am Poultry Show Rabbit/Poultry Barn

9:00am Draft Horse Pull Grandstand*

9:00am-12:00pm Youth Cake Auction Registration

1:00pm-5:00pm The National Talent Polka Band (TNT) Budweiser Stage

12:30pm Farm Tours Begin

3:00pm Goat Show Show Ring

3:00pm Youth Decorated Cake Auction Expo Hall

4:00-5:00pm Farm Tractor Pull Registration

4:00pm Poultry Kiddie Showmanship Rabbit/Poultry Barn

6:00pm Farm Tractor Pull Grandstand*

7:00pm Exhibitor/Animal Formal Show Show Ring

7:00pm-11:00pm Revolution Budweiser Stage

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2021

9:00am-5:00pm Exhibition Area Open

9:30am Kiddie Showmanship Registration

10:00am Kiddie Showmanship Show Ring

11:00am-12:00pm Bidder Registration Honey Park

12:00pm Sale of Champions Auction Show Ring

12:30pm Farm Tours Begin

1:00-5:00pm Sugarbush Boys Band Budweiser Stage