



Elm Grove NEWS- INDEPENDENT



Vol. 16 No. 4

Serving Elm Grove, Wisconsin & Neighboring Communities

December 2025

Freedom of the Press is Essential. Community News Matters.

On the Ballot

A 2026 Elections Preview

By Lisabeth Passalis-Bain
elmgrovenews@yahoo.com

Village of Elm Grove ---

Residents who wish to take an active role regarding current and future issues of importance to our community may want to consider running for a seat on the Board of Trustees next year.

Village Board seats up for election on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 include those currently held by **Trustees Shawn Hillmann, John Schindler, and Jennifer Stuckert**, whose terms all expire on April 20, 2026. The two-year terms are volunteer / unpaid positions. A Primary Election, if needed, will be held on February 17, 2026.

To qualify as a candidate, you must be age 18 or older, a resident of the Village of Elm Grove for at least 28 days before any election, and an eligible elector.

The first day for circulating nomination papers for office is December 1, 2025; 20-100 signatures are needed for all elected offices. A candidate may circulate their own nomination papers. A Registration Statement must be filed with the Village Clerk regardless of whether the candidate accepts contributions and/ or makes disbursements. **The last day for filing nomination papers, Declaration of Candidacy, and Campaign registration Statements with the Village Clerk is not later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026.** Qualified electors of the Village of Elm Grove may sign as many nomination papers as there are vacancies for any office. Candidates' packets are available at Village Hall, 13600 Juneau Blvd.

School District of Elmbrook ---

Three school board seats are up for election in 2026.

- **Area I** – Candidates must reside within the District's northeast quadrant (seat currently held by **Scott Wheeler**)
- **Area III** – Candidates must reside within the southwest quadrant (seat currently held by **Preetha Kurudiyara**)
- **At-Large** – Candidates can reside anywhere within the District boundaries (seat currently held by **Sam Hughes**).

School Board members serve three-year terms and receive an annual compensation of \$4,200. Those wishing to become a candidate and have their name appear on the 2026 Spring Election ballot must file all necessary forms at the District Office, 3555 North Calhoun Road, Brookfield by no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Contact **Christy Westfall** with questions at westfalcc@elmbrookschoools.org or (262) 781-3030 x 11124. Additional information about school board elections is available at www.elmbrookschoools.org/elections.

Highland Drive Pathway Project Public Information Meeting to be Held

By Lisabeth Passalis-Bain, elmgrovenews@yahoo.com

In the wake of the completion of some new Elm Grove pathways in recent months, the Village is planning to further expand that infrastructure in 2026 with a proposed Highland Drive pathway segment, extending from Gebhardt Road to Watertown Plank Road.

A public engagement meeting will be held on **Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall Courtroom, 13600 Juneau Blvd.** to discuss community questions regarding the proposed pathway alignments and design. The meeting will essentially follow an Open House format with a brief presentation about the proposed pathway slated for 6:00 to 6:30 p.m.

"The Village will look to combine the planned 2026 and 2028 portions of this (Highland Drive) pathway to capture maximum efficiencies in the design and construction process, while also limiting overall impacts to local residents," according to a statement by Village officials. During the 2026 construction season, specific segments may be selected for work, contingent on estimated costs and available budget.

Questions about the proposed project and public meeting may be directed to: **Village Manager Tom Harrigan** at (262) 782-6700 or tharrigan@elmgrovewi.org and **Travis Brush, PE of KL Engineering** at (262) 345-3363 or travis.brush@klengineering.com



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www.elmgrove.news

Click on Archive.

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Coming in Our January 2026 Edition...

- **Profiles** of the Elm Grove Public Library's New Director & the Village of Elm Grove's New Recreation Director
- **MORE "Ways to Help"**
If your organization, club, school, church, or business is planning a Blood Drive, Food Drive, etc. send the details to: elmgrovenews@yahoo.com.
Deadline: December 20

Let's Spread *The News* and try to help as many of our community members as possible!

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"I Know Where You Live!"



Elisabeth
Passalis-Bain

We **THANK** all of our
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– Golden K

*Gary McWithey Concert Series
at Brookfield Congregational
Church - UCC

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*Jen Studebaker

*The Lange Family

*Bruce & Susan Davidson

*Herbie, Gus Gus & Toby

*Anonymous Readers

for helping to **Sponsor** this edition.

If **you** appreciate the local news,
features, and information that
The News-Independent provides...
complete and submit
the “Friends” form, today!

From the Staff of
The Elm Grove News-Independent

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Ways to Help

- **WOLLER-ANGER,
A RELATION COMPANY**

Collecting thermal underwear, hats, gloves
and mittens (and other winter gear) for the
benefit of **Mr. Bob’s Under the Bridge**, an
outreach serving the homeless community
in the City of Milwaukee and surrounding
areas.

Drop off items at 930 Elm Grove Road,
Elm Grove. Call Terry at (262) 574-2214 for
more information.
- **ELM GROVE WOMAN’S CLUB**

Annual **Toys for Tots** Toy donation on
Tuesday, December 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Collecting new unwrapped toys for kids in
Waukesha County. Drop off items near the
front door of the Woman’s Club at 13885
Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove.
- **TONAWANDA
GIRL SCOUT TROOP 1171 &
ELMBROOK BSA TROOP 156**

Seeking donations of new, unwrapped toys
and gifts for children ages 1–17, including:
Stuffed animals, blocks, learning toys (1–
5); Dolls, action figures, cars, arts & crafts
(6–10); Board games, books, sports items,
puzzles (11–13); Journals, headphones, LED
lights, self-care items (14–17); and Gift cards
for Walmart, Target, Amazon.
- **COMMUNITY UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

Collecting Non-Perishables & Hygiene
Products. Drop-off at Community UMC -
14700 Watertown Plank Road - Elm Grove
from Monday - Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
and Friday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. We collect year
round for **Rooted & Rising - Washington
Park**. Donations by check can be sent to:
Community UMC - 14700 Watertown Plank
Road - Elm Grove, WI 53122; Online:
www.cumceg.org Please note “Rooted and
Rising”.
- **FRIENDS OF
THE ELM GROVE LIBRARY**

The Used Book Sale Committee accepts
donations year-round! We accept books
of any kind (children’s, adults’ hardcover,
paperback, fiction, non-fiction). Also, CDs,
DVDs, puzzles and games. Please, no
magazines. Donations can be dropped off
any time of the year at the library circulation
desk during open library hours. Please let the
staff know they are for the Used Book Sale
(or label them as such). As a registered non-
profit organization, your donation to FOEGL
is tax-deductible. A form is available at the
circulation desk.
- **CITY OF BROOKFIELD FIRE
DEPARTMENT- STATION #21**

This is one of many donation sites for the
Christmas Clearing Council of Waukesha
County Toy Drive. Items can be dropped
off from Monday -Friday, 8 a.m. to 4
p.m., through December 16, at the Public
Safety Building, 2100 N. Calhoun Road,
Brookfield. Donations wish list: NEW
books, hats, mittens, gloves, and toys for
children ages birth – 11 years old. Children
ages 12-18 who are not sponsored will
receive gift cards in lieu of toys.

NOTE: Visit: [https://www.christmasclearingcouncil.org/toy-
collection-sites](https://www.christmasclearingcouncil.org/toy-collection-sites) for a complete list of
needed items and drop off locations by
community.
- **WISCONSIN LIONS
FOUNDATION**

Welcomes donations of used
eyeglasses, hearing aids, and cell
phones.

Their motto is “*Care, Give,
RECYCLE! Reaching, Touching
& Improving Lives!*”.

Drop off items in the lobby of
the Elm Grove Public Library.
White plastic collection buckets
are located to the left of the main
entry doors. (See photo at right.)
- **VERSITI BLOOD CENTER
OF WISCONSIN**

Donor centers are located at:
*8733 Watertown Plank RD, Wauwatosa
* 638 N. 18th St., Milwaukee
* 2111 Springdale Rd., Waukesha

Call 1-877-BE-A-HERO
1-877-232-4376
Visit: versiti.org/Wisconsin
- **THE FOOD PANTRY
SERVING
WAUKESHA COUNTY**

* Host a food drive. Call (262) 542-5300
Email: info@waukeshafoodpantry.org
* Volunteer. Email:
volunteer@waukeshafoodpantry.org
* Donate online at:
[https://waukeshafoodpantry.networkforgood
com/](https://waukeshafoodpantry.networkforgood.com/)

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Sponsor Coverage of hyper-local **NEWS & INFORMATION.**

* Sponsors’ names are published in every issue in recognition of their support.

QUESTIONS: E-mail: elmgrovenews@yahoo.com OR Call (262) 782-6193

*To become a **Friends of *The News* sponsor**, complete & mail this
form + check (payable to *Elm Grove News-Independent LLC*) to:
Friends of *The News*, 14420 Watertown Plank Rd., Elm Grove, WI 53122

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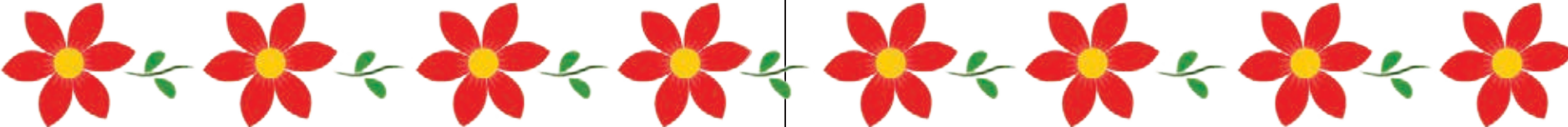
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* **I/We want to help sponsor *The News-Independent*:**

* \$10.00 per issue x _____ issues = \$ _____

* Additional contribution = \$ _____

A check for a total of \$ _____ is enclosed.



Village Update

By Jim Koleski, Village President / jikoleski@elmgrovewi.org

As we turn the calendar to December, the Holidays are fast approaching. Throughout this season may we find peace, joy and happiness focused on our blessings and family.



May this time mark an opportunity to experience and create new memories and launch ourselves into the New Year. Many things are happening in your Village as we close out 2025!

Lights of Love Sunday December 7th

The Friends of the Elm Grove Library are celebrating the season with the 31st Lights of Love program. The festivities kick off at 3:30 p.m.. at the Village Hall with story time with Santa and a musician. Caroling and Tree lighting will start at 4:55 p.m.. Treats will be served following the tree lighting inside Village Hall.

Elm Grove Junior Guild

A huge thank you to the Elm Grove Junior Guild for a donation to support the Village totaling over \$27,700! This donation will support many safety needs and Village programs, including infrared cameras for the Police, audio visual and speaker equipment for our recreation programs and Movies in the Park, lifesaving equipment for the pool and trees to replace the those taken down due to Ash Borer disease.



Police Update

Police Chief Hennen wanted to emphasize a few simple steps that help keep Elm Grove safe. Our village is not immune to crime, particularly during the holidays when package deliveries increase and many families are traveling. Please remember to keep your home and vehicles locked and be sure garage doors are closed even when stepping away for a short period. If you are expecting deliveries, consider using secure delivery options or asking a neighbor to pick up packages, and report any missing packages to the Police Department so they can track activity and patterns. I also encourage you to contact the Police Department right away if you notice suspicious persons, unfamiliar vehicles lingering in the area, or anything that seems out of place. Our officers would always prefer to be called early rather than miss an opportunity to intervene. Looking out for one another continues to be one of Elm Grove’s greatest strengths.

Pathway Update

Pathways are complete on Gremoor, Underwood Parkway, Juneau and Highland. The Public Works team and our contractors did an excellent job executing these projects and I am very pleased to see residents walking them regularly. Getting the grass launched and growing in the spring will be our final step.

Planning for the expansion of the Highland Pathway on the west side of the street from Gebhardt to Watertown Plank Road is underway with 30% complete plans reviewed by the Public Works Committee in November. An open meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 10th from 5:30 to 700 p.m.. in the Village Court Room. This meeting is to review the plans and hear any concerns and suggestions as this project continues through design.

Daylighting / Public Works Committee

In November, the Village received a favorable ruling related to the acquisition of the 2.2 acres of Railroad Land that positions the project to move forward. Still open is the difference in value the appraiser hired by the Village has generated and the request from the Railroad, however the Village now owns the land. Reading between the lines I believe the Railroad would like the Village to acquire the entire parcel that extends to Bluemound Road, not just the parcel required to construct the Daylighting Project. We will keep you posted.

In November the Public Works Committee took action to reject all bids previously submitted to construct the Project. The Village’s Engineering Firm presented the Committee with a redesigned set of drawings reducing the scale and complexity of the Project. The Village will be seeking new bids incorporating the new plans in January with the expectation that costs will be meaningfully reduced. The expectation is that a construction contract will be signed in March 2026 with construction to follow. In an effort to receive the most competitive bid proposals, it is planned to leave the start date flexible.

2026 Village Budget

The Finance Committee has been hard at work finalizing the 2026 budget in collaboration with Village Staff led by Finance Director, **Brain Lahey**. In November, the Finance Committee finalized a recommendation to the Village Board for approval at its November 25th regular meeting. The budget recommendation represents a balance of the Village’s strong fiscal control and meeting the needs of staff to continue to serve the community at a very high level. Key challenges to overcome is the persistent increase in health care costs



which is expected to be 10% in 2026 and the inflationary pressure on wages, materials and outside contractor fees. I am pleased to report that the proposed budget increases the total Elm Grove Village tax on a median priced home in the Village by approximately \$163 or 3.99%. Thank you to staff and the Committee for the time, talent and thoughtful discussions during the review process.

Caroline Heights Update

Final review of the storm water management plan was completed in November and approved by the Village’s Consulting Engineer. With this approval, final occupancy was granted to the project on November 7th. The Village is finalizing a punch list of open items to wrap up construction. Cariline Heights shared that the Project is currently 80% leased.

In addition, new home construction permits have been issued for 16 of the 21 lots in the project area.

Other Community News

Public Works team is ready for winter. The team has worked hard preparing the materials and equipment to handle whatever mother nature sends our way in the months to come.

Wishing everyone a joyous, merry, safe and memorable Holiday season!

Business Directory

* Insurance

Woller-Anger, a Relation Company
930 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122
(262) 789-2500
“Relationships Matter”

* Community Theatre

Sunset Playhouse, Inc.
700 Wall St., Elm Grove
(262) 782-4430
SunsetPlayhouse.com
”Entertainment Begins at Sunset!”

Clubs & Organizations Directory



Elm Grove Golden K Kiwanis Club

Come Join with Us, Men & Women, to serve the children of our community. We meet each Friday at 9:30 a.m. in the St. Mary’s Senior Center in Elm Grove. We have stimulating speakers each week and offer socializing among all present.

See us on Facebook
kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com
www.kiwaniselmgrove.org

LET READERS
KNOW
ABOUT
YOUR GROUP.

PLACE
AN AD
HERE.

Elm Grove Department of Public Works Recycling / Yard Waste Facility

900 Wall St.

(off Elm Grove Road, between Watertown Plank & Bluemound Road)

===== OPEN =====

DECEMBER 2025

Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*NOTE: The facility is for Village residents only; no contractors, contractor equipment, or contractor vehicles are permitted.
Please bring your driver’s license showing your current Elm Grove address.

* Metal items are now accepted for recycling. They cannot contain any flammable liquids, freon, or pressurized tanks.

Contact Village Hall at (262) 782-6700 for more information / questions.

Classifieds

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Happy Birthday!

Chris
(19,447,200 minutes old)
&
Jody
(25,754,400 minutes old)

+ many more to come!



Business Directory,

Clubs & Organizations Directory & Classifieds

Listings are \$25 per issue (for up to 20 words)
+ 50 cents for each additional word. / + \$20 extra per photo or logo.

To place an AD...

Email: elmgrovenews@yahoo.com or Call: (262) 782-6193

Our History: *Remembrances of Things Past*



Photo courtesy: Tom Ramstack

A SLEIGH DRAWN BY A STEER, 1912. This photograph by J. Robert Taylor was taken at North 2nd Street and West Wisconsin Avenue and shows Brookfield residents (from left to right), Joseph Gebhardt, Joseph Ramstack, and William Gebhardt. The men travelled from Brookfield to Milwaukee in the winter of 1912.

Our Good Neighbors

Do you know a community resident who should be recognized in print for their extraordinary kindness, generosity, or service to others?

*Stories & photos for this section(300 words maximum)may be submitted to: elmgrovenews@yahoo.com (Subject line: Good Neighbors) or mailed to: EGNU, 14420 Watertown Plank Rd. Elm Grove, WI 53122-2423.

News Briefs

Call for Nominations: American Red Cross of Wisconsin Seeks Local Heroes

By Jennifer Warren

Wisconsin is filled with everyday heroes, people who step up in moments of crisis, lend a hand to neighbors in need, or create lasting change in their communities. The American Red Cross of Wisconsin is now accepting nominations to honor these remarkable individuals and organizations at one of three upcoming chapter-hosted events across the state. If you know someone who embodies courage, compassion, and service, we invite you to share their story. Visit redcross.org/wisconsin to nominate your hero by December 31, 2025.

“Our communities are filled with people who go above and beyond every day and often go unrecognized,” said Catherine Rabenstine, Chief Executive Officer of the Red Cross of Wisconsin. “By nominating someone, you’re helping us share the inspiring stories that embody the very best of humanity.”

Heroes are selected across several different categories by an independent awards committee composed of local community leaders. Each nominee is evaluated on how well their actions embody the values of the American Red Cross and their positive impact on the community. Nominees must reside in a county within the chapter that is hosting the event to be eligible.

***Local 2026 Red Cross Hero Event: Southeast Brave Hearts - May 13, 2026** at the Pfister Hotel - 424 E Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee.

***Categories:** Blood Services Hero; Community Impact Hero; Disaster Relief Hero; Emergency Response Hero; Military Hero; Red Cross Hero; Youth & Young Adult Hero.

***Eligible counties** include Milwaukee and Waukesha.

Help Us Celebrate Wisconsin’s Heroes
Let’s honor those whose courage and compassion strengthen our communities every day. To learn more or to submit a nomination, visit redcross.org/wisconsin. For additional information, please contact: **Beth Rieth** at beth.rieth@redcross.org.

About the American Red Cross
The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or follow us on social media.



In Memoriam

*Honor the Life
of a beloved
family member or friend.*

To place an Obituary Notice in this newspaper,
e-mail: elmgrovenews@yahoo.com
or call: (262) 782-6193
for Rate information.



Imperial
Hair Care
of Elm Grove

13425
Watertown Plank Road
in the
Elm Grove
Park & Shop

(262)
784-4241



Unitarian
Universalist
Church West

13001 W. North Ave. Brookfield
In-person or online services
uucw.org/livestream

Join us for our
Holiday Services

Annual Holiday Music Service
“A Season of Hope”
December 14, 10 am

• Performance by the UUCW Choir

• All ages welcome in service

• Childcare available

Winter Solstice Ritual
“Let Us Rest in the Mystery”
December 20, 5 pm

• Featuring the Solstice Singers

• All ages are welcome in service

• Followed by a Yuletide Potluck

“Called to Ministry, Together”
December 21, 10 am

• Sermon by the Rev. Jill Braithwaite

• Childcare available

Christmas Eve
Candlelight Services
“Telling the Story”
December 24, 4 and 6 pm

• Multigenerational Choir at 4 pm

• Singing of carols – old and new

• All ages are welcome in service



Learn more at uucw.org

53 one 22

Elm Grove Community Foundation

www.elmgrovefoundation.org

NEW at the Community Foundation

Happy Holidays from the Elm Grove Community Foundation Board

Happy Holidays
As December brings its familiar warmth and wonder, the Elm Grove Community Foundation Board extends our heartfelt wishes to you and your family. May this season brighten your home with joy, fill your days with gratitude, and bring peace to the year’s end.

Annual Appeal Letter
In November, we shared our annual appeal with all Elm Grove residents. As you reflect on your year-end giving, please consider a tax-deductible contribution to the Foundation. Your support directly fuels projects that strengthen our community, preserve the charm of our village, and enhance the quality of life we all cherish. Together—with your generosity and our annual events—we can continue making Elm Grove a truly special place to call home.

Open Board Seat
We currently have an open board seat. If you or someone you know would be interested in serving on the Elm Grove Community Foundation Board, please contact us at elmgrovefoundation@gmail.org.

BOOK IT! Oktoberfest - September 18 & 19, 2026

Calendar of Events – December 2025

Monday – DECEMBER 1

RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE...

- * First day to submit the required nomination paperwork to become a candidate for:
 - Village of Elm Grove Trustee
 - Elmbrook Board of Education.
- (See story – Page 1.)

Friday – DECEMBER 5

- Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K Club Board meeting.
- kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com

Saturday – DECEMBER 6

- Elmbrook Historical Society presents “Christmas at the Inn” – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- (See AD – this page.)

Sunday – DECEMBER 7

PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

- Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force meets: 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. beautification@elmgrovewi.org
 - *Elmbrook Historical Society presents “Christmas at the Inn” 1 to 4 p.m.
- (See AD – this page.)
- Friends of the Elm Grove Library “Lights of Love” tree lighting ceremony & activities, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- (See details, Pages 1 & 8.)

Tuesday – DECEMBER 9

- Elmbrook School Board Public meeting: 6 p.m. at the District Office, 3555 North Calhoun Road, Brookfield. www.elmbrookschoools.org.

Wednesday – DECEMBER 10

- *Village of Elm Grove presents “Highland Drive Pathway Project” Public Information meeting – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Village Hall Courtroom. (See story – Page 1)

Friday – DECEMBER 12

- Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K Christmas luncheon.
- kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com

Saturday – DECEMBER 13

- American Legion Post 449 Auxiliary presents “A Cookie Walk” to benefit veterans. (See AD, this page.)

Sunday – DECEMBER 14
HANUKKAH begins at Sundown.



- Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force meets: 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. beautification@elmgrovewi.org

Tuesday – DECEMBER 16

- Elm Grove Board of Trustees meeting – 7 p.m. at Village Hall Courtroom Open to the Public. (262) 782-6700 Agenda & Live Stream at www.elmgrovewi.org

Friday – DECEMBER 19

- Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K Meeting: 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary’s Senior Center; Speaker: Jim Kieso, Topic: Scouting Wood Projects kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com

Sunday – DECEMBER 21

FIRST DAY OF WINTER



- Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force meets: 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. beautification@elmgrovewi.org

- Brookfield Congregational Church presents a “Christmas Concert” – 3 p.m. at 16350 Gebhardt Road. (See AD, this page; story – Page 6.)

Tuesday – DECEMBER 23

- Brookfield Congregational Church presents “Christmas Eve Eve Jazz Vespers” – 7 p.m. at 16350 Gebhardt Road. (See AD, this page, story – Page 6)

Thursday – DECEMBER 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Friday – DECEMBER 26
KWANZAA BEGINS

- Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K Happy Day After Christmas! No meeting. kiwaniselmgrove@gmail.com

Sunday – DECEMBER 28

- Elm Grove Beautification Committee Invasive Species Task Force meets: 11 a.m. at Elm Grove Village Park. Volunteers needed. beautification@elmgrovewi.org

Wednesday – DECEMBER 31

NEW YEAR’S EVE! Cheers to 2026...



OWLS

OLDER | WISER | LIVELIER | SENIORS

Delighting 50+ Adults since 2005

EXPERIENCE

- “Phyllis Diller is ON!” Presented by Ellie Carlson
- Wisconsin POW Camps with Robert Block, Historian
- Jazz/Pop Classics with Carmen and Kostia, musicians
- “Rosie the Riveter” Presented by Judy Pelt
- Heartbreak Hotel at Lincolnshire Theatre
- “Winston Churchill: The British Bulldog” by Terrence Lynch
- UWM Treasures
- Mys?ery Trip – Our beloved OWLS Mystery Trip is back climb aboard for a secret outing and a delicious lunch. The destination is a mystery; the fun isn’t.
- Delightful Delavan, Wisconsin
- Downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Following the Trail: The Story of Bluemound Road with Stephen House
- Holiday Luncheon – Holiday Serenade with Barb and Tom Webber, musicians

www.cumceg.org/owls

JOIN TODAY

\$15.00

PER PERSON FOR MEMBERSHIP

Christmas at the Inn

ELMBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum – 1075 Pilgrim Parkway, Brookfield

TOURS

Sat, December 6
10:00 to 4:00

Sun, December 7
1:00 to 4:00

ADMISSION
Adults - \$6.00,
Children 3-12 - \$3.00
CASH ONLY

BAKE SALE

held on the grounds at AGGIE'S ANTIQUE SHOP
Bake sale only, no admission fee

Dickens Delights Carolers Sunday 1–3:30



GARY MCWITHEY CONCERT SERIES PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS ORGAN & CAROL FESTIVAL

James Gradzinski - organist
Rachel Gradzinski - soprano

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST
3:00 PM

Festive holiday cookies & cozy beverages to enjoy!

BROOKFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
16350 GEBHARDT ROAD, BROOKFIELD, WI

GARY MCWITHEY CONCERT SERIES PRESENTS

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TUESDAY
DECEMBER 23
7:00PM

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STEVE PEPLIN, GUITAR AND BASS
YANNI CHUDNOW, DRUMS
BRIAN PACKHAM, PIANO & ARRANGER

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Written by Dan Goggin

December 4 - 21, 2025

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COOKIE WALK Sale

Saturday, December 13th – Noon to 3 p.m.
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This cookie, candy & bread sale is one way the Auxiliary can raise funds for our Veterans.

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Each plate or package is \$5.00 & UP.

Thank you!

Co-chairs Colleen Gotowitz & Carol Jensen

News Briefs



Joseph Krechel (center) loads donated loaves of bread into a vehicle, as **Tom Raley** (at left) and **Tom Curl** (at right) look on.

Community United Methodist Church Partners with Elmbrook School District to Support Families in Need

By Community United Methodist Church Mission Team

In early November when there was a likelihood of SNAP benefits being delayed or not coming to families in need, the people of Community United Methodist Church, 14700 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, reached out to the Elmbrook School District to see how they could help. When they learned that approximately 400 families within the school district rely on free or reduced lunch programs and would be the most impacted by the loss of food assistance through SNAP, they launched an initiative to provide basic, essential food items—bread, peanut butter, and jelly to those families.

While the Elmbrook School District provides ongoing access to free or reduced meals during the school day, the church recognized a significant gap in food security for these families during evenings,

weekends, and school breaks. “Our mission is to love God and neighbor, and we believe that everyone deserves to eat,” said a church representative.

The current initiative is part of a broader, longstanding commitment by the people of Community UMC to local nonprofits and community needs, going beyond financial support to actively engage the congregation in addressing food insecurity. The church is also working in collaboration with other local resources, such as Rooted and Rising food pantry in Milwaukee, the FOOD Pantry Serving Waukesha County and the Hope Center. For more ways to help people in need, please check out our website: www.cumceg.org.

Public Welcome to Attend Free Holiday Concerts

(BROOKFIELD, WI) - The Sounds of the Season come to Brookfield and the Gary McWithey Concert Series in December 2025.

On Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 3:00 p.m., **James Grzadzinski**, organist, and **Rachel Grzadzinski**, soprano, will present a festive afternoon of Christmas carol singing alongside beautiful organ music and a few breathtaking vocal solos that are sure to bring fun and the spirit of Christmas to anyone seeking this peace and joy. This afternoon of fun is appropriate for families and all audiences.

On Tuesday, December 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m., Milwaukee-based composer and jazz musician, **Brian Packham**, and other guest jazz musicians **Mitch Shiner**, **Steve Peplin**, and **Yanni Chudnow**, will present Christmas Eve Jazz Vespers, a contemplative, contemporary prelude to the Christmas celebration.

All are welcome. No ticket purchase is required for either program. Freewill offerings at each event will benefit the Gary McWithey Concert Series and its growth.

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Report from The Capitol

By Robyn Vining, State Representative – Assembly District 13
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Welcoming New Staff: Meet The Team!

I have two new team members, so I’m dedicating my column this month to introducing you to the extraordinary members of my Capitol staff! These are the folks who will be answering the phones and who you might meet when you come to the office (or when they come to the district!) As you read about them, I hope you are as excited as I am about the policy initiatives we can begin to work on with their talent in the office.

Meet Caroline!

Caroline joined the team in August. She graduated with her Masters in Public Affairs from the UW-Madison La Follette School of Public Affairs this summer, and served as a Research Assistant with the Institute for Research on Poverty and the Division of Extension. Prior to starting graduate school in Madison, Caroline worked in Washington, D.C. for several years, including at Brookings Metro, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, and the Greater Washington Partnership. She has worked on a wide range of issues, such as workforce development, housing, transportation, small business, and environmental health. She enjoys cooking and getting outside when she can, and is excited to be working on policies for the greater good of Wisconsinites.

Meet Elizabeth!

Elizabeth joined our team this fall. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Population Health Sciences doctoral program and the West Virginia University School of Medicine. Prior to joining our office, Elizabeth worked in Washington, D.C. within the United States Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and in the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. She has experience working on primarily health and healthcare policy issues, such as healthcare workforce and training programs, primary care access, and alternative healthcare payment models. She really enjoys solving issues for constituents, learning from stakeholders and advocates, and the wonky work of drafting legislation. Prior to her career transition into health policy, Elizabeth was a primary care pediatrician. She lives in Fitchburg with her husband, Patrick, and enjoys travel, Wisconsin’s live music scene, Badger basketball, the Milwaukee Brewers, and hiking in the state’s many beautiful public parks.

So much talent! Now what?

Next year our team will be diving into environmental health. I’ve had great conversations with many of you about this and am excited to get to work. Climate change is real, and it’s happening fast. Our changing climate has significant impacts on our health, and we need policies that protect



human and planetary health. When the legislature gavels out next spring, I plan to be working on health policy ahead of the next legislative session, and I am so thrilled to have such extraordinary talent in my office to drive this initiative. As always, we welcome your input—send us an email, give us a call, or sign up for our in-district office hours. We’ll have more to share soon!

In Case You Missed It: Assembly Republicans Continue to Block a Vote on Postpartum Medicaid Expansion.

The Assembly was recently in session for what was scheduled to be the final votes of 2025. But a key vote missing from our agenda was 2025 Senate Bill 23: a bill that extends postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one year. This bill passed the Senate 32-1 in April and has 75 co-sponsors in the Assembly (including 30 Republicans), meaning that it has more than enough support to pass. So why haven’t we voted on it? Because Speaker Robin Vos refuses to. We have tried several times to bring this bill to a vote, but Assembly Republicans have blocked it every time. Postpartum Medicaid expansion saves lives and Wisconsinites should not have to wait any longer for access to life-saving healthcare. Assembly Democrats will keep fighting and will explore every procedural option to get this passed. We know this isn’t a partisan issue, and we have to come together and get this done.

I am wishing each of you a warm holiday season. It has been an honor to represent you in 2025, and I look forward to spending more time with you in 2026!

Forward together,

Robyn Vining
Wisconsin State Representative
13th Assembly District

Rep. Vining's Website:

Small Business Feedback:

Women's Health Feedback:

PHONE (608) 237 9113 / (888) 534-0013

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<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/13/vining>



Public Safety Reports

From the files of the Elm Grove Police, Fire, and Emergency Services Depts.



Photo courtesy: Elm Grove Police Department

On October 27, **Shawn Wurtzbacher** and **Bill Selzer** from the Elmbrook Rotary Club presented Dispatcher **Wendy Priest** and Officer **Alex Hockett** with the Distinguished Service Award. The Distinguished Service Award program, sponsored by the **Elmbrook Rotary Club**, recognizes members of Police, Fire, EMS, and Dispatch for exceptional service to their communities. We are grateful to the Elmbrook Rotary Club for including Elm Grove Police, Fire, EMS, and Dispatch in this meaningful recognition.

*** See FIRE SAFETY DURING WINTER STORMS – Page 11.



Photo courtesy: Elm Grove Fire Department

Elm Grove Fire Department member **Claudia Roedl** (center) receives a Distinguished Service Award from **Shawn Wurtzbacher** (at right) of the Elmbrook Rotary Club, alongside Elm Grove Fire Chief **Brian Naylor** (at left).

The Elm Grove Fire Department is proud to announce that **Claudia Roedl** has been selected as the recipient of the 2025 **Elmbrook Rotary Club** Distinguished Service Award. Roedl was chosen by department officers in recognition of her outstanding dedication, professionalism, and commitment to service. Over the past year, she responded to more than 90% of department calls and training sessions—a testament to her reliability and strong work ethic. Known for her energetic, positive attitude, Roedl consistently demonstrates a level of enthusiasm and teamwork that strengthens the department and sets a high standard for others. Claudia embodies the values and spirit every fire department strives for in its members. Her dedication and positive presence make a meaningful impact on our team and the community we serve.

Green is Good!

Wrap Up the Season with Greener Giving

By The Elm Grove Green Team

Gift-giving is one of the season’s most joyful traditions—and it’s also an opportunity to live your sustainability values. Green gifting starts with thinking about what the recipient truly needs or will use, rather than buying out of habit. A few ideas for your list:

- **Choose gifts with purpose and longevity.** Look for items that will be used often, are made well, and sourced responsibly. Products created locally or from recycled materials often come with a story and support small businesses in your community.
- **Give experiences instead of things.** Concert tickets, cooking classes, or memberships create memories that last long after the holidays.
- **Share your time or skills.** Help with a home project, offer a day or night of childcare, or share a skill like cooking or photography for a unique and sustainable gift.
- **Opt for digital alternatives.** E-books, audiobooks, online courses, or digital subscriptions require no physical materials, and are especially thoughtful for recipients who prefer clutter-free living.
- **Add a personal touch.** Homemade treats, candles, or crafts show genuine care and reduce packaging waste.
- **Support causes that matter to the recipient.** Purchasing from certified fair-trade or social-enterprise organizations or donating in someone’s name can make a lasting impact.
- **Wrap it wisely.** Reuse boxes, bags, and ribbons, or use fabric or recyclable paper for a polished but low-waste presentation.

Green gifting reflects creativity, care, and community! By being intentional about what and how you give, you spread holiday cheer, support sustainable businesses, and lighten your environmental footprint.

News’ Hounds

& other beloved animals

Adopt a Pet at the Elmbrook Humane Society

By Morgan Pelon

Our next featured pet is Doug! He may be a big guy, but don’t tell him that; he’s absolutely convinced he’s a lap dog! This lovable goofball is all about people, and he’s never met a stranger. Whether it’s kids, adults, or anyone in between, Doug is ready to shower you with affection. Doug is happiest when he’s outside exploring the world. Walks, yard time, adventures, he’s up for it all, as long as it means being by your side. He’s also fully potty trained and crate trained, so he’s a perfect gentleman indoors. Doug has had several skin mast cell tumors removed. Mast cell tumors are the most common skin tumor in dogs, with between 7 and 21 percent of all canine skin tumors being mast cell tumors. Mast cell tumors do not have to involve the skin and can develop internally, but most of the time there is skin involvement. They can reoccur and are common in Doug’s breed but his prognosis is quite good. He’s currently doing great, full of life, and there’s no set timeline for his condition; just lots of love and tail wags ahead. He’s bouncy, joyful, and lives every day to the fullest. We’re looking for a special family who’s ready to do the same for him. Doug is more than just a dog, he’s a reminder to live in the moment, to find joy in the little things, and to love with your whole heart. Doug’s adoption fee has been sponsored by Ashley Schmidt.



Photo courtesy: Elmbrook Humane Society

Doug

The EBHS is at 20950 Enterprise Avenue, (off Barker Road) Brookfield. Call (262) 782-9261 for more information.



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News Briefs



Lights of Love: A Treasured Elm Grove Tradition

Each December, Elm Grove shines a little brighter as families, friends, and neighbors gather at Village Hall to celebrate *Lights of Love*—the community’s beloved holiday tree lighting and annual fundraiser for the Elm Grove Public Library.

Now in its 31st year, *Lights of Love*, presented by Friends of the Elm Grove Library (FOEGL), is a treasured holiday tradition and the perfect way to kick off the festive season. This year’s celebration will take place on Sunday, December 7th.

The afternoon will begin at 3:30 p.m. with children’s activities in the library, including a chance to visit with **Santa**, listen to stories read by **Mrs. Claus**, and craft a holiday keepsake. At 4:00 p.m., guests will be treated to an award-winning magic show by **Glen Gerard** in the O’Neill Room. Following the performance, everyone is invited outdoors to enjoy caroling led by **Tom Leahy** and local Girl Scouts as anticipation builds for the lighting of the village tree. One lucky young library patron will be chosen to Flip the Switch and officially illuminate the tree. (Details on how to enter the drawing to Flip the Switch will be available at library checkout beginning November 1st.) After the lighting, guests are welcome to gather inside for cake and refreshments, continuing the celebration among neighbors and friends.

Beyond its festive charm, *Lights of Love* serves a vital purpose: raising funds and awareness for the Elm Grove Public Library. Over the years, contributions from this campaign have supported the library in countless ways—from purchasing new collections and online databases to providing educational technology, furnishings, and experience passes that benefit patrons of all ages.

Residents and supporters are encouraged to participate by making a donation to the *Lights of Love* campaign.

Donations can be dropped off at the circulation desk, made online at friendsofelmgrovelibrary.org/lightsoflove, or mailed to Lights of Love, PO Box #5111, Elm Grove, WI 53122.

Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of Friends and donors, *Lights of Love* continues to brighten both our library and our community year after year.

Village Tree Lighting Details
Sunday, December 7th | 3:30–5:30 p.m.
Elm Grove Village Hall & Library.
All ages welcome!

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Library News and Programs

December 2025

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Holiday Book Talks with Daniel Goldin / Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m.

Get into the holiday spirit with a lively and insightful presentation by Daniel Goldin, proprietor of Boswell Book Company. Daniel will share his top book picks for adults and kids alike—including year-end favorites and perfect selections for holiday gift-giving. Books will be available for purchase at the event, with 10% of sales generously donated to the Friends of the Elm Grove Public Library. Don't miss this festive opportunity to discover great reads and support your local library!

First Friday Films: A Christmas Story Christmas / Friday, December 12, 1:00 p.m.

First Friday Films will take place on the second Friday of December due to a staff training day on December 5. This month we will be showing *A Christmas Story Christmas* the long-awaited sequel to *A Christmas Story* (1983). The movie follows the now-adult Ralphie as he returns to the house on Cleveland Street to give his kids a magical Christmas like the one he had as a child, reconnecting with childhood friends, and reconciling the passing of his Old Man. Peter Billingsley reprises his role as Ralphie Parker. PG. 1h38m.

Annual Holiday Evening for Families / Friday, December 12, 4:30 p.m.

Get ready for a night of holiday magic at the Elm Grove Public Library! Join us on Friday, December 12, 2025, from 4:30–7:00 PM for a festive evening the whole family will love. Enjoy holiday crafts throughout the evening and meet and take photos with your favorite ice princesses! Registration is required. Visit our programs & events page to register online.

Holiday Trivia Night! / Monday, December 15, 6:30 p.m.

Think you know your holiday traditions, festive tunes, and seasonal fun facts? Gather your friends and join us for a jolly evening of trivia at the library! From classic carols to winter celebrations, you'll test your knowledge across a merry mix of categories. Enjoy friendly competition and plenty of holiday cheer. Prizes await the top teams—so bring your best holiday spirit and get ready to sleigh the competition!



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Young Writers & Reporters

All About Winter
By Rylan Cainion, 3rd Grade - Tonawanda

Winter is a season with snow falling down and having hot chocolate. Hanging out with family and it’s Christmas with SANTA! He comes on the 24th of December. You better be good or Santa won’t give you presents. You should be on the good list, and school is out because it’s a holiday! You can do snow activities like sledding and making snowmen.

Christmas
By Ada Yavas, 3rd Grade - Tonawanda

Christmas is Everybody’s Favorite Holiday!
Cold weather
So much snow!
Everyone is playing with snow
Christmas is everybody’s favorite holiday!

The Snow
By Sydney Sosalla, 3rd Grade - Tonawanda

The snow comes in bursting cold
it flies in my eyes
and it is freezing cold
so, I came inside
and warm up
by the fireplace
to hope that it is warmer.

When I Lost a Tooth
By Axel Nilsen, 3rd Grade - Tonawanda

Have you ever lost a tooth in class? Well I have! To start, I was in first grade and my tooth was wiggly. I felt worried. My tooth fell out! I was reading a book. I felt something in my mouth. I opened my mouth then PLOP! My tooth fell out! I went to the health room and I was scared. The nurse was nice. There were tooth treasure chests. I took one then I went back to my classroom. My mouth felt weird! In conclusion, I was very scared and I had a nice time.

When I made cookies
By Logan Springstead
3rd Grade - Tonawanda

“Who wants to make cookies?” My aunt said. My aunt woke up and asked us if we wanted to make cookies. We said yes. We put chocolate chips on the cookies. Then we put it in the oven for 20 minutes. I was 7 years old. First, we were going to put in M&M’s on the cookies. But because we did not have any M&M’s we put chocolate chips on instead. In other words, we were prepared to make cookies. So finally, we started to eat the cookies. They were truly tasty. They tasted like smores. I ate three cookies. Those were the best cookies I’ve ever had.

The Time I Scored a Crazy Hockey Goal
By Henry Rouleau
3rd Grade - Tonawanda

One morning I had a hockey game. It was time for me to go out to the ice and my teammate got the puck. And then he passed it to me and I was wide open. I was by the net. And I stick handled and they tried to get the puck from me, I was about to shoot. I shot the puck and I scored! I hit the crossbar and it bounced in the net. The fans were cheering. I was in disbelief! At the time it was sunny but it was freezing outside now.

Have You Ever Gone Swimming?
By Jack Horning, 3rd Grade – Tonawanda

It was noon and I asked if we could go swimming. Dad said yes. We got the stuff then we got in the car. I sat in the car for five minutes and finally we were there. I got out of the car. It took a minute to walk there. We finally got inside, checked in the pool. I was excited, I saw the pool, I was going to run to go into the pool. I said can I get a ball? I went under the water and I started to swim. Then I went to the deepest part. I held my breath for 35 seconds. I swam for an hour then I was tied so I fell asleep. Then we went and got a snack.

Students Make an Impact in our Community
By Hailey Dooyema, Senior - Brookfield East High School

Kiwanis Key Clubs have been around since 1925 and have been sponsored by Kiwanis International around the world since their beginning. There are more than 5,000 schools in the U.S. who have a key club chapter, and there are currently 130 students who are a part of Brookfield East’s Key Club. Key Club members around the world are learning how to lead and stand for what’s right through service and volunteerism. In partnership with Kiwanis, high school students are making a positive impact as they serve others in their schools and communities.



The Key Club at Brookfield East strives to impact the lives of those around them through their mission of creating opportunities for students to grow as helpers and leaders in the community. Key club members help out at Bob’s Under the Bridge, Nourish MKE, a Food Pantry led by Life Center Milwaukee, and more.

They help out in our Milwaukee community and at events like the Winter Run Series, Burleigh Fall Costume Party, and Elmbrook Education Foundation Ladies Night.

The Brookfield East Key Club also works alongside the Brookfield Central Key Club through events like the Gold Out football game when Brookfield East plays Brookfield Central. It brings awareness to childhood cancer and is a great opportunity to serve the students and families at the high schools. Key Clubs give students an opportunity to learn what service is all about and to spread kindness to the communities around them. **Sean Neylon**, the president of Brookfield East’s Key Club, says that people should join Key Club because it’s a welcoming way to make a true impact to the world, build relationships with those serving, and learn how to be a leader. It also helps students connect to their community in a very easy and fun way with their friends.

Overall, being a Key Club member is a great way for students to make a difference, meet new people, grow as leaders, and continue to have a lasting impact on the communities in Brookfield and around the world.

Creatures for Comfort
By Aarza Bal
Grade 6 – Brookfield Academy

This past summer my brother and I were involved in a service project called Creatures for Comfort. Creatures for Comfort is organized by Ascension Columbia St Mary’s Hospital and is a program that comforts kids in the hospital and the ER.

My brother and I collected stuffed animals from our friends and neighbors and donated them to this program. Being in the hospital is a scary situation especially for a kid. These comfort creatures hopefully provide comfort to these kids in need.

I felt really good helping out this group, it was a way I could give back to my community. I spent a couple weeks in the hospital a few years ago and understand the feeling. I really look forward to doing it again next summer.

The Brightest Star: Truth
By Saya Masters – Brookfield Academy

We use the five stars at Brookfield Academy to steer our choices and guide our behavior. The star of truth is the most influential of the five stars, enhancing the trust of many students. Following the star’s path, students learn great virtues and build the trust of their peers. Without trust, no one would be able to rely on anyone to do anything. Trust helps build healthy relationships with anyone. To build a healthy relationship with tons of trust, you must tell the truth. Lies can leave your friendship in ruins, your lies will come back to you as shown in a quote by **Mark Twain**, “*If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.*” Additionally, learning virtues is very beneficial throughout a student’s time at Brookfield Academy. With many years ahead of the student, telling the truth will raise them from a good to great student. Teachers also appreciate the student who always does the right thing, whether it’s from admitting you were out in four-square to stealing the markers and returning them. Truth also will help the student’s journey to college much smoother in making everlasting friendships and achieving As. Overall, a student who accompanies the star of truth during their time at Brookfield Academy will make for an excellent scholar and beyond.

Post-it Notes
By Max Swain, 3rd Grade - Tonawanda

Post-it notes have sticky stuff on them. So, they can STICK and you can also write on them. They are cool.

My First Audition
By Odette Walker, 3rd Grade - Tonawanda

Have you ever auditioned or acted? It was early one summer morning. My mom and I drove to Box Theatres. It was in Pewaukee. Everything felt right! Finally, we got to the Box Theatres. We got there early, so I went over my song and actions one more time. I felt nervous. Then, it was time to go in. We walked in and a friendly man greeted us. He said we could walk right into the auditorium. I walked in and the first thing I noticed was that it was very small. The judges started to play the music and I jumped right in! The next day I found out that I had made callbacks! I had performed my first audition!

Fin’s Birthday, Yay!
By Felix Kopec-Farrell
3rd Grade - Tonawanda

First, my mom and dad drove me to Sky Zone. Then, I took off my shoes. Then, I put on the socks they have there. Then, I jumped in the foam pit. And, I jumped on all the trampolines! Then, I climbed up on the pillar with my weapon and I battled my sister. There were so many people I couldn’t find Finn. I had so much fun!!

It’s Time for Fall
By Armaan Bal
Level 6 – Brookfield Academy

Summer is over but don’t be sad,
for we might have the best Fall
we’ve ever had!
Colors are changing and nights are cool,
Winter is near but we’re not fooled!

From pumpkins on porches
to skeletons on lawns,
Halloween was fun
and we got our fright fest on!
Time shifts back the nights arrive.
Dark by 5 but we survive.

Turkeys are roasting, candles are glowing,
It’s just a matter of time until it’s snowing!
Families get together, the holidays are near,
We’ll say goodbye until next Fall is here!

What Do You See?
By Amal Iqbal
Pilgrim Park Middle School - 7th Grade

Plop. Plop. Plop. Plop. Thunder and lightning rumbled through the sky and shook the house. It was a surprisingly rainy night in Wyoming, and the dripping water from the gutter woke me as the droplets scurried down it. At exactly 2:07 a.m., I looked in the antique mirror my grandma gave me and saw something different. There was someone in the mirror, but it wasn’t me. There wasn’t an expression on the figure’s face, just a shadow. It looked familiar somehow. Then, I heard a voice in my head. It wasn’t the natural one that tells you what dress to wear to a party, but a different one. *Marceline! Marceline! What do you see in my mirror?* I froze out of fear. I thought to myself, *Is that Grandma’s voice?* No, it didn’t sound anything like Grandma’s voice. It sounded ratchety and scratchy. I reassured myself, *You’re probably just hearing things, Marceline.* The next morning, it was gone. The mirror looked normal. I could see my own reflection. For a moment, I stared at the mirror, and I heard the same ratchety, scratchy voice.
“Marceline...”

If You Could
By Hebela Ayalew
7th Grade - Brookfield Academy

If you could
See inside her eyes
Maybe that would
Change your mind

You judge without reason
But don’t know what she’s going through
Instead you yell with passion
And that’s only your truth

Maybe when she cries
You finally see your flaw
But if you had tried
You could’ve avoided the cause

If we all strove
To practice empathy
We could stop the hurt we do not know
The suffering we do not see

You said you were sorry
A small word holds truth
But if there was another end to this story...
Just never forget what this taught you

You can never truly know what someone is going through.

More Than a Hunting Story
By Braylon Albers
Level 6 - Brookfield Academy

I would definitely recommend the book, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, because it teaches you life lessons. If you have “puppy love,” like Billy, it gives you hope and courage. This book teaches lessons like don’t let one life mishap turn your personality around. Billy’s dogs’ dying is an example because he didn’t let that change his life, and he ended up to be a happy man. Billy takes his dogs on a lot of adventures which is a great example of his “puppy love.” If you love dogs, you need to read this book. This book gives you hope and courage because when Billy chopped down the massive tree, he never stopped. As you can see, this is my most favorite book I’ve ever read and I recommend it.



Young Writers

Character: The Star That Impacts Us All

By Caroline Jing – Brookfield Academy

We have five stars at Brookfield Academy that act as guideposts, directing us as we make choices. Of all the stars, character is the one that shines the brightest in a student’s experience at Brookfield Academy. To have good character means to have integrity and empathy. Having these qualities is crucial for positive social interactions. Empathy allows students to understand the thoughts and feelings of other students, creating a more connected and supportive school environment. Similarly, integrity can improve student and teacher relationships. Honesty and sincerity build a sense of trust, earning the respect of teachers and creating a good and reliable impression. Perseverance and responsibility are also traits of good character. These qualities give students motivation for academic success. Perseverance motivates students to tackle difficult challenges and see failures as learning opportunities, building both confidence and self-esteem. Responsibility ensures that work is completed efficiently and on time, which reduces procrastination and the stress of struggling to get your work done, therefore improving a student’s mental well-being. Building good character has the biggest impact on students’ experience at Brookfield Academy and later on in life when you’re an adult.

When I Went to Aruba

By Jadon Rauscher
3rd Grade - Tonawanda

When we got on the plane, we put our bags on the plane. Then we sat on our seats. Later on, the plane I felt happy because I was excited. So was my brother. When we landed, we got our luggage and took a taxi and waited. It took so long to get there and finally we got there. When we got to our house, first when we got there we started to unpack. Later we realized that we had a problem we didn’t have and food. So, we went to get some food. Next it was already night time. Even though I was tired I didn’t want to go to bed because it was beautiful. Earlier, something didn’t feel right. So, I started to get very scared and freak out. But then I realized it was only the closet door closing, so I just went to bed and my bed was so comfy.

The Time I Lost My First Tooth

By Clara Magnor
3rd Grade - Tonawanda

Have you ever lost a tooth? Well I did too! I woke up like normal, but then I noticed my tooth was WIGGLY! I did not like my wiggly tooth. I tried many ways to make it fall out but that did not work. I was not happy! I did not like my wiggly tooth! After a while, I started to be scared, but my Mom said I would be fine. I did not think that. I did not want the tooth fairy to get MY tooth! I had to PROTECT MY TOOTH! What if I never saw it again? My tooth fell out and I tried to protect my tooth in my chest. The next day it was still there. I wrote a note so she would not get my tooth. The next day it was still there.



The North Star of Brookfield Academy

By Nityan Agrawal

The star of character is the most influential out of all the stars in Brookfield Academy on students. Since the star trains you to be kind, schools, not just Brookfield Academy should teach character to their scholars. For example, an easy way to be kind is by holding the door for others. People who hold the door get treated with good respect. Students can also make closer bonds with the kids or/and teachers they treat with kindness. As well as making new friends their reputation may increase. Character influences children to try and be trustworthy. It teaches students to do the right thing when no one is watching, inhibiting the quality of responsibility. Finally, character provides students with an aspect of caring for others. In the years of Brookfield Academy, helping others in need is a phenomenal example of character. Boosting your confidence as well as encouraging empathy are both major benefits of character. Character is the star at BA kids get most influenced by.

WANTED: Young Writers & Reporters!

Students in Grades K-12 are invited to submit for consideration:

NEWS ITEMS / INTERVIEWS / SHORT STORIES / POETRY
(about 200 words maximum)

***Send items (within an email or as a Word document) to:**

elmgrovenews@yahoo.com

Subject line: Young Writers

Include the writer’s name, grade level & school / homeschool

Letters to the Editor

NOTE: Letters (150 words or less) regarding issues of concern to the Elm Grove / Elmbrook / Waukesha County community will be considered for publication on a space-available basis. Submissions must include the writer’s name, community of residence, phone #.

E-mail: elmgrovenews@yahoo.com (Subject line: Letters to the Editor)
or Mail: EGNI, 14420 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122-2423.

Improvement to Zion Cemetery Appreciated

Regarding the article by Mason Kelly about his Eagle Scout project at Zion Cemetery (on Highland Drive in Elm Grove), printed in the November 2025* issue of the *News-Independent* (Young Writers & Reporters section – Page 8):

Congratulations and many thanks! As residents living close to this little cemetery, we are heartened by the attention given to it by Mason and his Scout Troop. Mason chose

a meaningful way to pay respect to those buried there, and to maintain a part of our Elm Grove history in a fitting manner. Thank you, Mason and friends, for enhancing this little corner of Elm Grove.

Sincerely,
Laurie and Tom Leahy – Elm Grove

(*Editor’s Note: Read Mason’s story online at www.elmgrove.news Click on Archive.)

Old(er) Writers

***Readers (age 18+) may submit poetry, short fiction, life stories / reminiscences (200 words maximum) to:** elmgrovenews@yahoo.com
or EGNI, 14420 Watertown Plank Rd., Elm Grove, WI 53122

On Infinity

By Gary Kerslake

What could this be – infinity?
It seems such a strange word to me.
Meaning the stars, the moon, the sun?
Or meaning a life or death or one.

Meaning the stars so high above
noticed by only those in love.
So great the number that exists
mortals know not of the ones
they’ve missed.

Meaning the moon with all its power
to guide men in their darkest hour.
A moon which seems to stand alone
the only moon that man has known.

Meaning the sun, the center, the source
without which man would have no course.
For cast away its light and see
how quickly life would fade from thee.

Meaning a life, so precious, so dear.
The life that man must play by ear.
Or life which was a mark in time
that stays unreal and seems divine.



Meaning death or the final state.
From such a goal we hesitate.
For modern man believes that he
shall never live eternally.

Meaning a symbol, as that of one
so vast its use, we know of none.
For man may use it so to speak
but what he sees in it is weak.

What could this be – infinity?
It seems such a strange word to me.

News Briefs

Spark Local Conversations with a \$500 America@250 Community Conversation Grant

(MADISON) - PBS Wisconsin, Wisconsin Public Radio and partners are launching America@250, a statewide initiative helping communities explore the themes of freedom, democracy and service as we approach the nation’s 250th anniversary. At the heart of the initiative is a \$500 Community Conversation grant program supporting local organizations as they create events and conversations rooted in our shared history. America@250 also includes national PBS programming like “The American Revolution” and new local content and educational tools from PBS Wisconsin to spark reflection and community conversation across the state. Apply for a grant by Dec. 21 at pbswisconsin.org/america-250/

MR. HUGH’S HISTORY

by Drew Sternitzky @mrhughshistory on Instagram



News Briefs



Photo courtesy: Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K

KIWANIS SERVE COMMUNITY: Elm Grove Kiwanis Club – Golden K members **Jim Buskel** (at left) and **Jim Kieso** (at center) present a check to the manager (at right) of The FOOD Pantry Serving Waukesha County. “We have much to be thankful for this holiday season and our club is out in the community sharing our blessings,” said a club spokesperson. The Kiwanis Club recently donated cereal, birthday bags and money to The FOOD Pantry and additionally gave a donation to their meeting facility for the purchase of new chairs.

Local Sports

Brookfield East Student Wins State Championship

(BROOKFIELD) – The WIAA Division 1 Girls Swim & Dive State Championship was held on Saturday, November 15 in Waukesha. Brookfield East’s **Caroline Wanezek**, a four-time qualifier in the 100 Yard Butterfly, broke through this year and won the event championship. Additionally, she placed third in the 200 Individual Medley, and led her team to a 10th place finish. Caroline recently signed to swim next season at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, continuing the Wanezek legacy of her sisters **Abby** and **Maggie**.



Other state podium finishes came from the 200 Yard Medley Relay of **Payton Keezer** (Senior), **Fiona Dold** (Junior), **Caroline Wanezek** and **Sadie Podoll** (Senior), and the 400 Yard Freestyle Relay of **Caroline Wanezek**, **Payton Keezer**, **Elise Miller** (Junior) and **Maeve Green** - both finishing 6th.

Brookfield East’s team finished 8th overall in Division 1. The school district extends its congratulations to all of Brookfield East’s state-qualifying swimmers on your great season, and to Coaches **Mike Rose** (Head), **Carol Rose** (Dive) and **Anne Leupold** (Assistant).

- BLANKETS, MITTENS, HATS, AND OTHER WINTER CLOTHES
- ICE SCRAPER AND SNOW BRUSH
- FLASHLIGHT AND EXTRA BATTERIES
- JUMPER CABLES
- FIRST AID KIT
- WATER AND NON-PERISHABLE SNACKS
- BAG OF SAND OR NON-CLUMPING KITTY LITTER
- CELL PHONE CHARGER AND ADAPTER
- SNOW SHOVEL

WINTER VEHICLE EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

Brookfield Academy Announces Students’ Achievements

By Melissa Ericksen

Junior **Luya Zhang** earned a perfect score of 36 on the ACT this fall. “More than 1.3 million students take the ACT each year, and only about 3,000 earn a perfect score,” said **Mr. Nick Spaeth** Dean of College and Academic Advising at Brookfield Academy. “We all extend congratulations to Luya, on this extraordinary achievement.”



Luya Zhang



Raghav Vijayapal

Senior **Raghav Vijayapal** has been named a Semifinalist in the prestigious Coca-Cola Scholarship Program. Approximately 107,000 students across the nation apply for this scholarship each year and only 1,238 were selected as Semifinalists. Ultimately 150 students will be selected and each will receive a \$20,000 scholarship and mentorship opportunities with Coca-Cola executives and alumni of the scholarship program.



In Memoriam

Charlotte Hirschfeld

With deep sadness, we announce the passing of Charlotte Fay Hirschfeld on November 18, 2025, surrounded by loved ones. She is reunited with her beloved husband of 33 years, Ernest (Jr.). Loving mother of the late Duane Gary, Dawn (Tom) Tryba, and Ronnie (Toni) Hirschfeld. Cherished grandmother of Emily (Derek) Westphal, Jessica (Ross) Miller, Bill (Ashley) Hirschfeld, and Anne Hirschfeld. Dear sister of Cheryl (Danny) Holsten and Dale (Uta) Krueger, and preceded in death by Sharon (Roy) Stott and Harlan Krueger. She is also remembered fondly by many nieces, nephews, extended family, friends, and her loyal dog Lola.



Charlotte will be remembered for her sharp wit, humor, honest and bold personality, and her remarkable gift for making others feel at home. Her humble heart and generous spirit touched countless lives.

She dedicated more than 50 years as caretaker for Mound Zion Cemetery, and decades more for Wauwatosa Cemetery, St. Mary’s Visitation Cemetery, and the Sisters of Notre Dame, serving families with dignity, compassion, and meticulous care.

Charlotte had a joyful love for Elvis Presley, famously organizing Elvis-impersonator shows that became local legends, drawing crowds by the hundreds with her enthusiasm and creativity. Born in Shawano, Wisconsin, and a graduate of Pulaski High School, she was a lifelong Wisconsin resident whose kindness, humor, and presence will be deeply missed.

Services were held at Krause Funeral Home, 12401 W. National Ave., New Berlin, on November. 26, 2025.
Please see: www.krausefuneralhome.com for condolences.

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Thursday, December 18th - 6:00pm
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