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## Road-funding sales tax may continue

by CHRIS ROGERS

For political leaders, it is a bit of a Catch-22. Nobody likes potholes, and nobody likes more taxes. So how can governments fund road repair?

The half-cent sales tax Winona County began in 2017 helped its road-funding

situation significantly, but county staff say roads are still deteriorating faster than they are being resurfaced. Some local leaders thought Minnesota Governor Tim Walz's proposed gas tax increase would solve this problem for them, but that proposal failed in this spring's legislative session, leaving

local governments in more or less the same situation as before. So far, Winona County Board members are sticking with the clear tax they adopted in 2017 and steering sales of property tax increases for roads or raising fees on vehicle registration.

"With the half-cent sales tax that the

board approved several years ago, we are much closer to holding our own. I would say that we are still falling behind in keeping our pavements in decent shape, but we are falling behind at a much slower pace

see **ROAD-FUNDING** page 5a

## Father battles kidney failure



by NATHANIEL NELSON

Three times a week, Andy Kuklinski gets ready for a day at Winona Health. He preps his arm, says goodbye to his son, Yusef, and heads out to the hospital for an afternoon of needles and machines pumping his blood in and out of his system. Kuklinski suffers from kidney failure and, for the last three years, has been undergoing dialysis treatment while he waits for a new kidney.

"There's a lot to say about it," Kuklinski said. "Being on dialysis pretty much consumes your whole life."

Wearing a shirt with an hourglass on the front, Kuklinski pointed out what was written on the back: "Single father of 13-year-old son seeking living kidney donor blood-type O+," along with his phone number and email address. He explained that the shirt was modeled after one he saw on TV, where a man wearing a similar shirt to a live show eventually received an organ from the notice.

Just last month, Kuklinski was still waiting for a donor to come along and offer him a kidney, but three weeks ago, he received the best news he could get: he had made it onto the kidney transplant list.

"I've been waiting for this for three years," he explained, adding that he was one step closer to going back to living his life with his son.

Dialysis, or more precisely hemodialysis, is a treatment for kidney failure which involves constant attention for the rest of a patient's life. A hemodialysis machine takes

see **KIDNEY** page 4a

Contributed photo

■ Andy Kuklinski poses for a photo with his son, Yusuf. Andy, who has been undergoing dialysis treatment for kidney failure for the past three years, explained that his son is the reason he continues to push forward in his treatment.

## Winonans fundraise for 4th-gr. orchestra

by NATHANIEL NELSON

This April, the Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS) Board voted in a split decision on \$2.25 million in budget cuts. Among the reductions were well-loved programs and services, including elementary music and art, educational assistants in special education, and the complete elimination of fourth-grade orchestra — despite outcry among parents, students and staff members. However, three months later, parents in the district are moving forward with a fundraiser to show board members that they aren't going to stop without a fight — a Go Fund Me page was launched to raise \$20,000 to bring back fourth-grade orchestra to WAPS.

Meredith Mihm, a local mother, teacher, pianist and foster mom, explained that the fundraiser's goal is to find a way to convince the WAPS Board to reverse its decision and bring back the recently cut orchestra program.

"I feel like if we lose the orchestra now, we're never going to get it back," Mihm said. "Having gone to the listening sessions and talking to other parents

see **ORCHESTRA** page 8a

## Winona council gives initial nod to Madison Place

by CHRIS ROGERS

After suffering multiple defeats earlier this year, developer Andrew Brenner won a major victory on Monday for his plan to convert the former Madison Elementary School into apartments. The Winona City Council unanimously supported Brenner's request to change the city's comprehensive plan land-use designation for the former school. That change will set the table for the property to be rezoned from R-2 (medium-density residential) to R-3 (multi-family residential) and allow the 21 apartments Brenner wants to develop inside the school, while preserving the historic building.

The decision is not final yet. However, a majority of council members made it clear they support Brenner's request. The council plans to formally approve the comprehensive plan change at its next meeting. City Council member Eileen Moeller — who represents the Madison neighborhood — criticized some of Brenner's comments but ultimately voted in

see **MADISON** page 8a

## Behind the magic: Local pro wrestling



Photo by Chris Rogers

by CHRIS ROGERS

The crowd simmered with resentment. Behind the curtain, Nathan Cooley had just donned a fringed unitard and an attitude and transformed into The Greatest Spectacle in Professional Wrestling, DDS. DDS grabbed the mic and let the Winona crowd know: "I hate everything

about this place. I hate your football team. I hate your face. I hate this river. I even hate your beer."

Spectators jeered, eager for someone to smack down this bald villain. Then their hero emerged in a bathrobe, sipping a beer: The Dad Bod God Nathan Sensation. "I was sitting here, relaxing

in the back, when baldy comes running his trap," Dad Bod told the crowd. He threw a barb at DDS, a callback to a past match: "You know, you sure talk a lot for someone who's been beaten by a woman." The crowd cheered Dad Bod's taunts, the bell dinged, and it was on.

see **WRESTLING** page 6a

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# FAMILY Milestones

## Obituaries

### Hinkley, Faith M.

Faith M. Hinkley, age 92, of Austin, Minn., and formerly of Winona, passed away on Sunday, July 14, 2019, at her home in Austin.

She was born on March 4, 1927, in St. Charles, Minn., to Neil Francis and Mathilda (Reed) Hinkley. While living in Winona, Faith was employed with ORC Industries, attended Central (Wesley) United Methodist Church, and she volunteered with the Winona Senior Friendship Center.

After retiring, Faith resided with several group homes in Southern Minnesota, the most recent being in Austin. While in Austin, Faith participated in many activities, including dance classes, and she especially looked forward to going on various day trips. One of her most memorable trips was to New York City, where she was able to see the World Trade Center and the Statue of Liberty.

Faith is survived by her brother, Neil Allen

(Lillian) Hinkley; brother-in-law, Gale Hill; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents; and her brothers and sisters, Robert (Bonna) Hinkley, Etta (Virgil) Hoy, Helen (William) Bruss, Jessie (Clifford) Babcock, Vonnie Hill, and Anna Marie (Marlen) Riddle.



Visitation will be held from 10 a.m. until the funeral service at 11 a.m. on Friday, July 19, 2019, at the Watkowski-Mulyck Funeral Home. Pastor Deb Bebout will officiate. Faith will be laid to rest in the Fremont Scottish Cemetery.

Faith's family would like to express their thanks to all those who gave her loving care over the last several years.

Online condolences or memories may be left for Faith's family at [www.watkowski-mulyck.com](http://www.watkowski-mulyck.com).

Watkowski-Mulyck Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.

### Volkman, Wilbert F.

Wilbert F. Volkman, 89, of Lewiston, Minn., died on Monday, July 15, 2019, at Watkins Manor Assisted Living.

Wilbert was born on June 22, 1930, in Winona County, Minn., to Hubert and Emma (Nelson) Volkman.

He was united in marriage with Jean Hamilton on November 22, 1952. Wilbert was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Lewiston, Minn.

He is survived by his wife, Jean; two chil-

dren, Sherry (Dennis) Zeise of Medford, Minn., and Rocky (Julie) Volkman of Rushford, Minn.; and eight grandchildren, Dareck, Jeremy, Amy, Heather, Jennifer, Randy, Melissa, and Kati.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

A private family burial will take place at a later date.

Hoff Funeral and Cremation Service is assisting the family with arrangements.

### Orlikowski, Donald George

Donald George Orlikowski Jr. passed away unexpectedly but peacefully in his sleep on July 12, 2019, at Lake Winona Manor. He was born on November 28, 1952, to Donald George Orlikowski Sr. and Mary Elenor Davidsavor.

He is survived by a daughter, Alicia Orlikowski; and siblings, Sharon Gill, Ruth Rackow, Kathy Skarr, Richard Orlikowski, The-

resa Orlikowski, Robert Orlikowski, Renee Orlikowski and Debra Pratt.

He was preceded in death by parents, Donald Orlikowski and Mary Duresky; brother, James Orlikowski; and son, Danial Orlikowski.

A memorial is being planned for Thursday, July 18, at the VFW in Winona from 4-8 p.m.

## Arrangements

### Urbick, Florence Irene

Florence Irene Urbick, 105, of Fountain City and formerly of Arcadia, died on Thursday, July 11, 2019. Her funeral service will be held on Thursday, July 18, at 1:30 p.m. at the Wozney-Killian Funeral Home. Friends and family may call on Thursday, July 18, 2019, from noon to 1:30 p.m. prior to the service. Burial will be in Fagernes Lutheran Cemetery, rural Blair.

### Ellinghuysen, Patricia M. 'Pat'

Patricia M. "Pat" Ellinghuysen, age 79, of Winona, passed away on Thursday, July 11, 2019. Visitation will be held from 4:30-7 p.m., with a devotional service at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 22, 2019, at the Watkowski-Mulyck Funeral Home. Visitation will also be held from 11 a.m. until the funeral service at noon on Tuesday, July 23, 2019, at St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Burial will be in Woodlawn Cemetery. A complete obituary will follow.

### Quimby, Maynard

Maynard Quimby, of Goodview, passed away on July 10, 2019.

- Hoff Celebration of Life Center

### Bronk, Robert 'Rollin' Anthony Sr.

Robert "Rollin" Anthony Bronk Sr., 63, of Winona, died on Saturday, July 13, 2019. A Funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 20, 2019, at the Basilica of St. Stanislaus Kostka. Visitation will be from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

- Hoff Celebration of Life Center, Goodview

### Adank, Lyle Robert

Lyle Robert Adank, 79, of Waumandee, passed away on Sunday, July 14, 2019. Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, July 19, 2019, at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Waumandee. Family and friends are welcome for visitation from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. prior to the mass at church on Friday. Burial with Military Rites presented by C-FC American Legion Post #56 will be in St. Boniface Catholic Cemetery.

- Wozney-Killian Funeral Home

### Meska, Patricia A.

Patricia A. Meska, age 77, of Winona, passed away on Saturday, July 13, 2019. According to her wishes, funeral services will be held privately, with burial in St. Mary's Cemetery. A complete obituary will follow.

- Watkowski-Mulyck Funeral Home

## Wrestling

continued from page 1a

In an interview, Cooley explained this is what it is all about. "When you have [the crowd] hooked on everything you're doing and reacting to everything you're doing, it's an addiction," he said.

Dad Bod embarrassed DDS in the opening moments, dragging him through the crowd, smacking him around Levee Park's grass amphitheater, and even smashing his head against a steel railing. But then DDS got the upper hand and pummeled a helpless Dad Bod in the corner of the ring. The crowd started chanting, "Dad Bod! Dad Bod!" Someone yelled, "The Bears still suck!" DDS is from Chicago. Finally, Dad Bod pinned his opponent in glorious victory.

Welcome to the world of local professional wrestling. It has a long history in Winona and steady following. Cooley competed as part of the La Crosse-based River City Championship Wrestling's (RCCW) LeveeMania event in Winona last Saturday, which also featured former WWE Hall of Fame inductee The Honky Tonk Man. Part theater, part stunt work, part improv comedy, the wrestlers go to great lengths to put on a show.

"People just think about it as a wrestling match, but it's so much more than that," LeveeMania organizer Paul Ebner said. "It's a choreographed dance that these guys are doing." He added, "The storytelling is amazing." For each match, Ebner said, "There's a reason why they're fighting." That story plays out, not just in pre-match taunts, but over the course of multiple matches and over social media. For fans who really follow the wrestlers, there are rivalries and plot lines that build up over months, Ebner explained.

At Saturday's big show, Winona native Chris "The Deal Chris Steel" Jacobson battled with reigning champ Kyle Roberts for what RCCW dubbed "The City of La Crosse Championship." The fight became a river city rivalry with Steel swearing to win the belt and rename the title "The City of Winona Championship." Ebner and Winona Mayor Mark Peterson even got in on the action. "This one is for you, mayor," Steel said as he stomped Roberts' fingers. "My town, my title."

While Steel choked Roberts against the rope — despite the referee's best efforts to intervene — Ebner stepped out from the crowd to pile on Roberts. But then, when Roberts laid Steel out flat, Roberts grabbed Ebner by the hair and got ready to knock his lights out. Steel recovered at the last minute, saved Ebner from getting punched in the face, and pinned Roberts for the win. Ebner still got his comeuppance for badmouthing Winona earlier in the fight. "You're not a bad guy, but you can't be talking about Winona like that," Mayor Peterson told Ebner before smashing a water bottle on Ebner's head. The bottle did not quite explode like it was supposed to, but Ebner's stunned facial expressions sold the bit.

"You need a story to tell in the ring," Jacobson said. "If you just come out here and flop around, you won't tell a story." A story gets fans invested in a character, in a fight, he explained. Without that, even the most impressive moves won't get the crowd going, he added. "What I found out is I like the acting part more than the wrestling because the bumps aren't that

fun. They hurt. But getting a rise out of the crowd, that's exciting," Jacobson said.

"The more you can get the crowd invested and involved in what's going on, the easier it is to go out there," wrestler Chad "Psycho Chase McCoy" Linde explained. "I can get certain reactions from a crowd by just snapping my head and looking at them rather than jumping off the top rope and flying off and possibly messing up and breaking my neck or back ... It took me a long time to realize that."

That is not to say Jacobson and Linde were not performing high-flying stunts. Linde's opponent, Air Wolf, did multiple backflips during their fight, and both Linde and Jacobson absorbed flying kicks to the neck and body slams from the top rope.

"I don't consider what we do as fake because you can't fake falling down," Linde said. The last time he wrestled in Winona, Linde said, he got a large cut to his face and kept on wrestling before he noticed all the blood.

Asked how wrestlers and organizers put on a convincing show while keeping wrestlers safe, wrestler and RCCW Media Relations Coordinator Alex "A.C." Riley described the extensive training the athletes go through before performing. However, he added, "It's just like any contact sport. There's training involved to make sure people perform to the best of their abilities ... but realistically, people are going to get hurt."

The LeveeMania performers had different approaches to how to choreograph their fights. Sammy "The Blue Phoenix Vanessa Azure" Rupnick and Sarah "Sierra" Stelloh — who said of her character, "I do a millennial gimmick, selfies and stuff" — have wrestled together dozens of times. "I like talking it out. I like going over it and over it and over it so I don't forget anything," Rupnick said. "Maybe because we've wrestled each other so much, we play off each other really well," she added.

Meanwhile, Linde said he had never wrestled with Air Wolf before and that most of their fight would be improvised. "Realistically, there's just not enough time to rehearse," Riley said. The wrestlers are coming from all over the Midwest and showing up shortly before the event. "Just go in there, use your training and your experience and put on the best show you can," he said.

"About half of it we know," Jacobson said of his match with Roberts. "Sometimes it's not good to have a whole match planned out like a theater act. Leave a little room for improv," he explained, adding that he tries to interact with the crowd and gauge what they want to see. For many of the wrestlers at Saturday's throw down, professional wrestling was a childhood dream. "Ever since [I was] four years old, this is pretty much all I wanted to do," Linde said. "I saw Roddy Piper smash Superfly Jimmy Snuka in the face with a coconut and I was sold."

At eight years of age, Riley said, "I remember watching [professional wrestling] and thinking, 'This is what I want to do.'"

After wrestling for 12 years, Riley said, "I realized wrestling is a fraternity ... Those people turn into family. It's like a huge family reunion every time I get to wrestle." After all, despite all the insults and bravado, wrestlers have to trust each other to perform dangerous stunts and work together to entertain the crowd.

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