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Daley Farm's lawsuit reveals county, LSP ties

by CHRIS ROGERS

In 2019, Winona County rejected the Daley Farm's request to expand its dairy feedlot, and now the farm's lawsuit challenging that decision is coming to a head. A trove of documents newly made public as part of the suit show that one or two of the same county officials who were supposed to act as impartial judges partici-

pated in a campaign opposing the farm expansion. The records also suggest County Board members Marie Kovacs, Chris Meyer, and Greg Olson worked closely with opponents of the feedlot expansion when deciding who to appoint to a committee charged with deciding the project's fate.

Two years ago, the Daley Farm sought state and local permissions to expand its

Lewiston dairy feedlot to from roughly 1,600 cows to over 4,000. In 2018, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) conducted an environmental review and solicited public comments before deciding that the expansion did not pose significant environmental risks and issuing a permit. However, a Winona County ordinance limits farm size to no more than 1,500 animal units (1,071 cows), and in a

3-2 vote, the Winona County Board of Adjustment (BOA) denied the Daley Farm's request for a variance — an exception — from that rule. That stopped the project. BOA members Cherie Hales, Wendy Larson, and Rachel Stoll cast decisive votes against the variance. The Daley Farm

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Winona doctors explain COVID basics



by CHRIS ROGERS

It's not just public health officials and the government telling people to wear masks, social distance, and stay home when sick or exposed to COVID-19. Local doctors — the same ones Winonans turn to for checkups, broken arms, and heart attacks — explained why these measures are crucial to preventing the spread of the virus.

What's at stake

The virus is invisible, but for these doctors and other health care workers, its impacts couldn't be more concrete. "I think this is the worst it's

been, and it may get worse, to be honest," Winona Health Urgent Care Physician Dr. Ian Young said. Winona Health's eight-bed intensive care unit was completely full for at least one day last week, and hospitals across the region are at or near capacity.

Many people only have mild symptoms from COVID or none at all, and advancements in treating the disease have helped drive down hospital stays and deaths. However, the sheer number of people getting infected right now means a lot of people are getting seriously ill at the same time. On top of that, health care workers' exposure to the virus

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Photo from Winona Health

Winona Health Medical Technologist Erin Rako loads an antibody test in the laboratory at Winona Health.

WSU scraps Kwik Trip land swap

by CHRIS ROGERS

Following pushback, Winona State University (WSU) is scrapping its plan for a land swap with Kwik Trip at Huff and Sarnia streets in Winona. Many neighbors welcomed the news.

The university had planned to sell its parking lot at that corner to Kwik Trip to build a bigger gas station, and Kwik Trip had planned to sell WSU its current gas station property — part of an entire block WSU hopes to someday acquire for the construction of a new field house. Some Winonans greeted the proposal as a win-win for the university and customers. However, the deal would have brought a bustling gas station closer into the quiet, residential neighborhood north of Lake Winona. It would have required major zoning changes from city hall, including a supermajority vote of the City Council to change the city's comprehensive plan.

WSU and Kwik Trip officials never brought a formal application to city hall, but the two organizations met with neighbors to discuss the project. After homeowners expressed concerns — roughly 160 of them signed a forthcoming letter to the editor — WSU dropped its plan. "While we are grateful to Kwik Trip for bringing this idea forward, Winona State University has decided not to pursue this particular proposal," university officials wrote in a statement.

see **SWAP** page 8a

Bringing care kits to families

by ALEXANDRA RETTER

On the doorstep sits a kit. Inside, a magazine and activities on health and wellness are bundled. The kit is part of the Bridges-To-Go initiative, which aims to support the overall health of families amid the pandemic by bringing wellness tools directly to their homes.

"Anything we can do to mitigate some of the stress that families are experiencing right now with school being distanced, learning being distanced and family stress levels up ... is part of what we want to do at Bridges," Winona State University (WSU) Assistant Professor of Nursing and Bridges Health Coordinator Jennifer Timm shared.

An interdisciplinary group of WSU students from the fields of nursing, social work and public health design the free, monthly kits. Each kit comes with a magazine, which is also created by students. The magazine has a theme, such as immune health or health during the holidays, and includes descriptions of the items in the kit. The magazine is also designed to be engaging and colorful so children will want to get involved with learning

see **CARE KITS** page 8a

With sports on pause, WSHS students persevere



by ALEXANDRA RETTER

Winona Senior High School (WSHS) sophomore John Ringlont is trying to hone his craft by acting while in front of his computer. He is on a virtual meeting with other members of the WSHS Theatre Group.

see **SPORTS** page 8a

Photo by Chris Rogers

In an abbreviated season with limited crowds, the Winhawk football team faced off against Austin High School's squad in October. Sadly, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz ordered a temporary stop to youth sports until December 18, due to a surge of COVID cases filling hospitals across the state.

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WAPS Foundation announces 2020 Dare to Dream project

Congratulations to Barrie Schank for *Daring to Dream* with The Purpose Project. The Foundation for Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS) started the *Dare to Dream* project as a way to encourage and support the creative spirit within the district. The goal is to provide an opportunity to apply for a grant for up to \$5,000 to completely fund a new innovative program that will support ideas to enhance learning or provide new opportunities for students of the WAPS.

Barrie Schank, a language arts instructor at the Winona Senior High School, wrote a *Dare to Dream* application to begin The Purpose Project. In Ms. Schank's application, she discussed creating a small unit in her Practical 12 English class, which will work in conjunction with the WSHS counseling offices' Minnesota Career Information System to help students pinpoint areas of personal interest. The Purpose Project will require students to pen yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily action steps to achieve specific goals. Students will be required to read books, annotate articles, take notes during video clips, organize information, journal daily, and chart results.

Students are in need of *Dare to Dream* moments, and Schank found multiple resources to enhance the Purpose Project and relate it to what students are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic. She sees students who are unsure of the future and, therefore, are not daring to plan for it. *Dare to Dream* funds will be used to purchase classroom book sets, planning pages, binders and digital notepads. This unit will help fill the gap

to help students prepare for their future when they are unsure how to begin. As stated in the Harvard Business Review article from May 2011, "Success is a progression of small tasks done consistently." This unit will help students create a system of consistent, small tasks that could lead to reaching many goals and accomplishing great results. It is based on reading, writing, and communication habits, which are proven to help people's lives overall, and it includes resources from Jack Dorsey, Benjamin Franklin, Denzel Washington, Oprah Winfrey, Steve Harvey, Warren Buffet, Jim Carrey, Richard Branson, Fergie, Jack Canfield, Tony Robbins, John Spencer, Emma Stone, Drake, Terri Savelle Foy, Zig Ziglar, and Mark Walberg, to name a few. Schank hopes to help students see the value in pinpointing and accomplishing personal goals. The *Dare to Dream* grant money will help provide resources for students to do just that and to give them hope for the future when they need it most.

Congratulations to Barrie Schank and The Purpose Project for *Daring to Dream*. For more information on this project or other exciting things happening at the Foundation for Winona Area Public Schools, call 507-494-1004 or email shelleymilek@winona.k12.mn.us.

■ WSHS Language Arts Teacher Barrie Schank won a WAPS Foundation grant for her Dare to Dream project.



Swap

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Kwik Trip representatives weren't immediately available for comment.

Neighbor Will Gibson, who recently ran for City Council, called the decision sensible. "[The gas station proposal] was a 24-hour operation. It was more than doubling its pumps. It was just a massive development. It doesn't belong or fit with the neighborhood," he stated. Nodding to the light, neighborhood business dis-

trict zoning city officials had been eyeing for the rezone — as opposed to a heavier business zoning — Gibson added, "Obviously, 9,000 square feet and 24 hours a day is not serving the neighborhood. It's serving a much larger population." He added, "Kwik Trip certainly is a nice amenity to have. They run a great store ... Some people were looking forward to having more of those amenities available, but for a lot of reasons, it just wasn't a fit."

"Our house would have been just across the street from 20 fuel pumps, so yeah, we're glad that they withdrew the propos-

al," neighboring homeowner Jerry Windley-Daoust stated. "Like a lot of the older homes on our block, we have bedrooms right on the street, so we were anticipating a lot of noise and light in our bedroom and our kids' bedroom all night long."

The head of WSU's astronomical observatory, professor Jennifer Anderson argued, "We need to preserve our dark skies as we would our natural areas. Building a large gas station near to the natural area of our lakes would only serve to wash out even more stars in our night sky, damaging our natural beauty."

Windley-Daoust added, "One good thing to come out of this was how the whole neighborhood pulled together." He credited a few of his neighbors with much of the work. "We had one big outdoor meeting and then a few Zoom meetings and lots of emails and leafleting. We had something like 160 people sign the letter we were planning to put out against the proposal, and about a dozen people put in hundreds of hours organizing. It just goes to show what people can accomplish when we work together."

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Sports

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"You have to look directly at the screen," Ringlien shared. "If you look at the other side, your voice gets lost."

Ringlien and his fellow Theatre Group members are practicing monologues and skits at their computers. Other WSHS students are staying in touch after their sports seasons ended abruptly. With the pause on in-person high school activities and sports due to the extreme COVID-19 case rate, students are taking advantage of opportunities to get involved in activities virtually and reflecting on the shortened fall sports season.

For WSHS seniors like Trent Langowski and Kaitlyn Clemons, this shortened season was their final opportunity to participate in a fall sport during high school.

"I was really thankful for everyone who helped make it happen ... I was just happy and excited when I found out we were able to play," said Langowski, who played football.

Some of the senior volleyball players had been playing the sport together since middle school, Clemons noted, so having this last season was meaningful.

Like sports, activities have been modified. The theater group at WSHS, which had been able to meet in person earlier this school year, is now gathering virtually.

"It's like meeting up with friends after school," Ringlien said.

The virtual meetings have helped with maintaining mental health and have provided a venue for self-expression, Ringlien shared. Group members are able to share

their interests, as well as their ideas and other parts of their lives, like their pets and their rooms, he added.

Knowledge Bowl, an academic competition team, and National Honor Society (NHS), an academic honor society, are also meeting virtually. Knowledge Bowl team members will have virtual practices and competitions. NHS members are completing some service hours online. They may tutor virtually or assist with adult education classes via Zoom, for example.

Along with the value students have found overall in participating in sports and activities have come moments of both happiness and difficulty.

The theatre group is preparing monologues and skits now, and members hope to perform them next January.

"The main happy thing is knowing we get to do something rather than holding off an entire year ... It's nice to know there's something I can work on between everything," Ringlien stated.

Volleyball players were preparing to play an away match when they found out Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS) was moving to distance learning. The learning model shift meant the competition would likely be their last.

The varsity team came from behind to win, Clemons said, and while riding the bus back to Winona, team members were so excited that they sang.

"It was great to end the season on a high note," Clemons stated.

Langowski experienced a moment of joy when one team WSHS was scheduled to play cancelled, but another agreed to compete the next day in a game that WSHS ended up winning, he shared.

In a more trying instance, someone involved with the theater group became ill with COVID-19, so group members made them a video to tell them thank you for their work and to express their hope that they would recover soon.

"The theater group really is a family," WSHS Theatre Group Director and Winona Middle School (WMS) student services secretary Debbie Berhow said. "That's the thing that's most important, is that we support each other, and we truly care about each other ... I think it's just helped us all to realize you have other people out there that care for you and how you're doing and what you're doing."

Some student athletes had to quarantine during the season, which presented challenges as remaining teammates worked to fill in the gaps, Clemons and Langowski said.

Clemons had to miss her first two games due to being in quarantine. Langowski had to view his last home game from afar while in quarantine.

"It was unfortunate, but it is something I'll always remember," Langowski said.

Head football coach and WSHS Physical and Health Education Teacher John Caselli said having to tell student athletes they needed to leave practice because they were a close contact of someone who tested positive was a challenging part of the season.

"It's different than when you have a kid hurt or injured," Caselli stated. "When they're hurt or injured, you know they can't play. With the pandemic, you have kids that theoretically feel great. Most students that were in close contact never had symptoms, which is a great thing that they're feeling

fine, but they can't go to the game."

There also was not an opportunity for football players and coaches to close out the season together in-person, he said.

Limits on the number of people who could be in a space at one time made team-building a bit trickier than usual this year, head volleyball coach and WMS Math Teacher Amber Mlynczak said.

"I try to coach the program to be a family or group of people that is always together, so [grades] 9-12 are considered a part of our program, and I try hard not to break it down into smaller teams ... That was hard because we had to limit the number of people in the gym, on a bus," Mlynczak shared.

Technological limits on the number of people who are visible at one time during a virtual meeting can impact the atmosphere of the theatre group's meetings, Ringlien said.

"There's some people that end up maybe getting left out, which wouldn't happen in real life, because you could see everyone in the room," Ringlien noted.

As students athletes remain apart while WAPS is in distance learning, they are keeping in touch digitally, Langowski and Clemons said.

Caselli said he hoped those on his team learned how to manage adversity as a result of playing this season.

"High school is a four-year deal, and you have to embrace it and learn how to deal with things that don't necessarily go your way," Caselli shared. "I think that's one important thing about athletics in general — how to work as a team and function when things don't go right."

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Care kits

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about health and wellness, Timm said.

Kits have featured items like varieties of tea, children's books, coloring sheets, crayons, fruit snacks, masks and cards with yoga poses.

"It's trying to pull from a holistic health viewpoint, addressing mental health, physical health and creativity for families," said WSU nursing student Bailey Almich, who helped start the initiative.

Students drop a kit off right at the front door of each family who requests one to keep community members safe.

"The goal was, when the box arrives at the doorstep, there's a feeling of excitement and joy," Timm shared.

Almich said it was empowering as a student to be on a team completing community outreach.

"When we went into the community, we were very conscious of all the guidelines and regulations, but it was a feeling of connectedness we did get when doing this for families," Almich noted.

Almich added that it was meaningful to physically be in the community while delivering the kits.

The initiative arose from Bridges Health, a WSU program through which a team of faculty members and students have pro-

vided free preventive health services and health education to children and adults at locations like the Friendship Center and Winona Volunteer Services. The families receiving the kits currently are new to Bridges Health, Timm said, adding, "It is really exciting for us, because it's just expanding your reach."

Families were surveyed about what kind of health and wellness information they would like to receive and whether they would want to receive a kit. Those who subscribed were then surveyed again to determine whether they would like to receive a kit the next month.

Various community stakeholders, such as the Winona Community Foundation

(WCF), have supported the program. A WCF grant helped fund it.

As program organizers consider the initiative's future, they are thinking about expanding the operation to include kits for older adults who are living alone.

"It's preparing students to be advocates, particularly during times like this," Timm noted. "Advocating for communities and at-risk ... groups — that's what community work is all about."

More information about the Bridges-To-Go kits and the virtual services Bridges Health is offering during the pandemic may be found at <https://www.bridgeshealthwinona.org>.

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Correction

In its November 25 edition, the Winona Post described the Winona City Council vote to budget funds for alternative crisis response as a 4-3 vote. One vote in August to budget \$300,000 was 4-3. A later vote to budget \$225,000 was 5-2.

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