

Park Ridge recall election scheduled for Dec. 8

BY KRIS LEONHARDT

STEVENS POINT – An election to recall two Park Ridge village board members has been scheduled for Dec. 8.

Several Park Ridge residents petitioned to recall two village board trustees, citing “failure to represent the will of his/her constituency.”

Petitioners say that the board has failed to “engage the people or listen to earnest requests for more conversation or a different process throughout.”

Some of the discord surrounds the planned construction of a new village fire station.

On Sept. 22, the board received recall papers from Park Ridge resident, Matt Chitwood to recall trustee, Gert Neuendorf and on Sept. 23 also received recall papers from Chitwood for President Steve Bergin.

On Oct. 8, Chitwood filed the necessary signatures to move forward with the recall.

“In accordance with the recall election protocol, a certificate of sufficiency was presented to Matt Chitwood on Oct. 27 of this year,” Bergin told the remainder of the board at an Oct. 29 special meeting. “In compliance with the protocol, the board is required with the setting of the date for recall election. That has to occur at six weeks from Oct. 27. This date would then be Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020.”

The original agenda incorrectly stated the recall election would be held on Dec. 15, which was later revised.

The board voted unanimously to schedule the Dec. 8 recall election, with Bergin abstaining.

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Nelsonville woman lends talent to latest Voices of the 21st Century book

BY KRIS LEONHARDT

PORTAGE COUNTY – A Nelsonville woman will be featured in the fourth volume of the Voices of the 21st Century book series.

Paula Kramer is a speaker by profession, noted for promoting positivity, a trade she discovered while obtaining her education.

“When I was 12 years old, a boy in school pulled my chair out from under me. I landed hard on my tailbone. Medical professionals misdiagnosed my spinal injury for 33 years. By my late 20s, normal sitting and standing was becoming more and more painful. I started college when I was 35. To attend my classes I used an adapted chair that was low to the ground, sat with my feet on another chair, sat on the floor with a lumbar pillow against the wall, or lay on the floor,” she recalled.

While attending UWSP for women’s studies/writing and communication, Kramer realized a talent for giving speeches.



Kramer

“I became a professional speaker in 1997 for two reasons. First, I didn’t have to sit or stand normally to speak because I could lean against a tall stool. Second, I was good at it. I did talks for a number of church groups, business groups, women’s groups, as well as family groups on two U.S. Army bases in Germany.

“I worked at my career until 2003 when my teeth went bad. I had no insurance and was not getting enough speaking engagements to pay dental bills. I managed to work in home healthcare, but the work was still hard on my back.

“In 2016, I got so poor that I qualified for Medicaid and got my teeth fixed. Afterwards, I discovered the Women Speakers Association, which helped me restart my speaking career. They also invited me to write a chapter for their fourth Voices of the 21st Century book.”

In “Voices of the 21st Century: Resilient Women Who Rise and Make a Difference,” which will launch in February 2021, Kramer contributed the “Resilience against Stereotypes” chapter.

“Keep negative stereotypes outside you by bringing positive reality inside you,” she said is the focus of the chapter.

Kramer believes that life is the “most effective teacher.” She said that her life of “one tragedy after another” taught her that failure flares failure and success sparks success.

“Negativity creates costs,” she states.

For more on Kramer, visit www.speakingfromtriumph.com.

Becoming Mystic Ponds

Couple opens new indoor/outdoor venue in Junction City



The property includes a 6,400 square-foot, renovated barn which includes a main hall and rustic loft, outdoor deck, and patio area. Submitted photo

BY KRIS LEONHARDT

JUNCTION CITY – “Looking back I think many cards came into play. While I was engaged in 2015, I was looking for a venue in central Wisconsin that had privacy and a natural setting for all my family and friends. I ended up compromising and doing a micro wedding in northern Wisconsin because I was not willing to give up on the natural setting,” recalled Faith Rutzen.

“Fast forward a bit and my husband and I often talked about eventually moving out of our subdivision and into the country which we both loved growing up.

“Casually surfing internet real estate one day my oldest daughter saw a listing over my shoulder and said we should go look, but my response was that the home needed a lot of work.

“Because we were bored that day we decided to take the drive anyway. I only made it half way down the driveway, not even to the house and fell in love with the property. I could feel it was meant for us.”

After convincing her husband, Tim, to take that drive the following week, he was hooked as well.

“We jumped all in,” Faith recalled.

The couple purchased the historic farm at 4340 Pine Road, Junction City, in 2016.

“After we ourselves did a lot work on the house and property our family and friends were appreciating it just as much as we were. It was a natural next step to renovate the barn and share the property with many more,” Rutzen said.

“The renovation has been nights and weekends for three years.”

Mystic Ponds Estate Event Venue opened to private showings in mid-October.

Mystic Ponds is a unique venue tucked in quaint surroundings. The property includes a 6,400 square-foot, renovated barn which includes a main hall and rustic loft, outdoor deck, and patio area; an outdoor pavilion; a six-acre pond with a walking trail; and four small cabins.

The venue offers bookings for events held May-October.

“Weddings are our base business since there is an immediate need for large outdoor spaces for engaged couples,” Rutzen added. “We are working on a potential weekday mini music festival series where families can social distance around the pond and enjoy local musicians while also having various nonprofit organizations the ability to fund raise through food sales. It is important to use to give back to the community that has welcomed us. We are thinking of calling it Music on Mystic Ponds or something like that. I really enjoy hosting events so there are a lot of ideas to explore in 2022.”

For more information, visit www.mysticponds-estate.com.

UW-La Crosse announces summer 2020 graduates

The following area students completed degree requirements at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in August:

Lindsey Herzog, Stevens Point, bachelor of science, nuclear medicine technology major; and

Eryn Leahy, Stevens Point, bachelor of science, public health and community health education major.

UW-La Crosse, founded in 1909, is one of the 13 four-year institutions in the University of Wisconsin System.

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An update with Mayor Mike Wiza

BY TAYLOR J. HALE
STAFF WRITER

STEVENS POINT - Mayor Mike Wiza sat down with Gazette staff to give an update on Stevens Point developments. Wiza touched on changes coming to Iverson Parks Winter Sports Area, the downtown ice rink, and more.

City hosts Halloween costume contest

Wiza said that staff is tallying the final votes for the city’s Halloween home decor and costume contest and that he expects to send out prizes this week. The mayor added that there was less public participation than expected, so the bulk of participants would be receiving an award.

The contest came about after Wiza was looking for alternatives to traditional trick-or-treating due to COVID-19 concerns. Participants were asked to post their photos on a city managed Facebook page.

Iverson Park winter sports area changes

City leaders will discuss modifying how the Iverson Park Winter Sports Area will be utilized this winter due to COVID-19, at a Nov. 4 Parks board meeting.

Wiza said the changes should be straight forward and follow CDC guidelines on social distancing.

“We’re not going to have people congregating in the warming house at full capacity,” Wiza explained. “I like to think the warming house will be open, but I’m not sure it will be open with the number of cases we have in the city, and it’s clearly not going down.”

Wiza added that the board would likely make a recommendation on closing or reopening the warming shelter.

Results of the meeting were not available at publishing this edition.

Downtown Ice Rink

Wiza noted that COVID-19 has not slowed down plans to pour an ice rink in the downtown square as soon as weather permits.

“The intention is to have the ice rink up, but we have to have the right weather. It needs to be cold enough for a long enough period,” Wiza said. “But it should be going up yet.”

Wiza said the city would start work on the ice rink as soon as colder temperatures settle in for the winter.

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