

The Chetek Alert

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Chetek, Wisconsin | One Dollar & Twenty-Five Cents

FIRSTLOOK

Alert office closed on Memorial Day

The Chetek Alert office will be closed on Monday, May 31, in observance of Memorial Day. The office will open at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 1.

Articles, ads and payments can be dropped off anytime in the drop-box at the office at 312 Knapp St., Chetek.



Live music, raffle ticket sales at CLPA fundraiser, May 29

The Chetek Lakes Protection Association is holding its first fundraiser of the year at Pokegama Lakeside Cantina on Saturday, May 29, from 2-4 p.m.

At the event will be folk performer and recording artist John Perkins.

The event is free to attend. The CLPA will be selling hats, T-shirts and polos with the new CLPA logo. CLPA raffle tickets will be sold, and the winners' names will be drawn at the Canoes for a Cause event at Gilligans on July 25.

Graduation special section in this issue

The Chetek Alert's special section for the Class of 2021's graduates is inserted in this edition of the newspaper. Inside, find photos of the graduates, along with info about their school career and what they plan to do after graduation.

DEATH

Kenneth Abrahamson, 64



Flyover, parade, services for Memorial Day, May 31

Memorial Day services will be held in Chetek and surrounding communities on Sunday, May 30, and on Monday, May 31. The public and veterans are encouraged to attend the local observances.

CHETEK AREA

The Chetek Memorial Day parade and ceremony will start at 10:42 a.m. on Monday morning. Parade lineup will be at the Chetek Lutheran Church parking lot, just south of the Long Bridge.

The parade will head across the Long Bridge and stop halfway to remember and pay tribute to those who gave their lives at sea. Memorial wreaths will be dropped into the water. At 10:50 a.m., weather permitting, there will be a World War II warplane flyover.

The parade will head to the Chetek Area Veterans Memorial, southeast of the intersection of CTH D and CTH M and across from Lake View Cemetery. There, the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Marching Band will play, the flag will be raised by Boy Scouts and veterans auxiliary groups will lead ceremonies. Addresses and prayers will be said during the program as well. A bell will be rung

Weather permitting, a World War II warplane flyover will happen above the Long Bridge at 10:50 a.m. on Memorial Day, May 31.



CARL COOLEY | CHETEK ALERT

for each veteran who passed away since last year's Memorial Day.

If there is inclement weather, the program will be delayed to 11:30 a.m. and moved to the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser High School gym, 1001 Knapp St. Any changes will be posted on the Chetek Alert page on Facebook.

Donations are being collected for the flyover and

for the CAVM. Checks can be sent to Chetek Area Veterans Memorial, P.O. Box 23, Chetek, WI 54728. Write "flyover in the memo line if donating for the flyover."

WEYERHAEUSER AREA

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5780 will conduct the following Memorial Day observances on Sunday, May 30, including Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary Church Cemetery in the town of Strickland at 9:30 a.m., Bass Lake Cemetery in Strickland at 9:45 a.m., Old Catholic Cemetery in Strickland at 10 a.m., Catholic Cemetery in Weyerhaeuser at 10:30 a.m. and Village Cemetery in Weyerhaeuser at 11 a.m. All available veterans are asked to muster at the hall at 8:30 a.m. for instructions.

NEW AUBURN AREA

The New Auburn American Legion Post 267 will hold a Memorial Day program on Monday at 10:30 a.m. at Freedom Community Church, 503 Southeast Street, New Auburn.

Deadline for Chetek Citywide Garage Sale ads is Friday, May 28

The Chetek citywide garage sales take place on Saturday, June 5, (with many being held the day before and the day after). The deadline to be included in the citywide garage sale ad page is Friday, May 28, at 12 p.m.

Ads and a handy map showing where the sales are will be published in



the paper on Wednesday, June 2.

Ads are \$15 and must be placed in person. They include a 2-inch, one-column ad, a number on the citywide map that corresponds to your ad and three

garage sale signs. You may purchase more than one ad slot. See the ad on Page A3 for complete information.

Residents divided on C-W mask policy



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Nearly all the seats were filled in the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Middle School/High School IMC for the C-W Board of Education meeting on Monday evening, May 24. Many residents were present to voice their support for or opinions against the school's indoor mask mandate for students and adults. Nineteen people spoke over 50 minutes.

BY CARL COOLEY

Several dozen people attended the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Board of Education meeting on Monday evening, May 24, to show their disapproval or support of the district's current face mask requirement while in school buildings.

Most meetings have few people in the audience and even fewer making public comments. But on Monday evening, 19 people spoke, including students and teachers. Ten people spoke in favor of the board or its policy, and nine spoke against the mask policy.

Board President Carri Traczyk opened the floor for public comments after Superintendent Mark Johnson spoke about the district's accomplishments over the past year. Traczyk noted that each person had three minutes to speak. "No action will be taken on the face masks tonight," Traczyk said. "We have our policy in place and that will not change; we are going to finish out the school year."

Traczyk said the board asked people to wear masks in the building. Those not wearing masks were "disrespecting our building," however the board would respectfully let people voice their opinions, she said.

Speaking first was Peter Wise, an eighth-grade student, who recently began protesting the school's mask policy by refusing to wear one. Wise was glad that classes were in person, after school had been canceled at the end of the 2019-2020 year. But masks gave him trouble.

"But the masks were terrible and it seemed like no one wanted to wear them," Wise said. "I had trouble breathing. It was hard to hear my teachers and friends."

They seemed to affect students' emotional health and teachers were often scolding students about the masks, he said.

"This policy doesn't seem consistent with the school board's mission of promot-

ing social and emotional growth of students. Masks make it harder to learn."

He felt that adults—the board and administrators—were not following research, thinking critically and not standing and speaking up for the truth. His parents showed him data, articles and videos from scientists showing that schools were safe when masks were optional.

The policy was unjust and harmful, he said. "That's why I decided to stand for truth by going to school without a mask."

As such, he was not permitted to participate in band—his favorite class—and go on field trips.

"I'm sad about missing these activities, but if my actions can help change the school's policy on masks, it will be completely worth it," Wise said. "I urge the board and school administrators to follow the evidence and make masks optional for summer school and the next school year."

Speaking next was Laura Sauve, Barron County's public health officer. She thanked the board for its leadership and credited the district's work in keeping the school open.

While the pandemic has felt long, more is being learned about COVID-19 each day, she said. "I urge you to follow the experts' interpretations of the known science and containment strategies as well."

A life-long resident of Chetek, Mikki Jerdet,

spoke in support of the teachers and board. "You can pick and choose whatever study you want, but we know that masks are a means, and an effective means, of preventing this virus," she said.

Asymptomatic carriers and the new variants of COVID-19 that affected younger people were a concern, she said. She hoped that masks would be worn until 70 percent of the school was vaccinated or case rates were low.

"There's no harm in wearing a mask, we know that, but there is potential great harm in not wearing a mask," she said.

Bob Rykal spoke, noting he was a former administrator. The board had a tough job, where everyone could not be appeased, but it was all about keeping kids safe. "Do what the science tells you what you have to do and you can't go wrong with that," Rykal said.

Speaking next was Bob Rogers, a Chetek resident and county board supervisor. His grandson was in another district that was in virtual-only learning, and his grandson has struggled with it. Rogers said his grandson would be thankful to go to school in person, even wearing a mask. He supported the board's efforts in keeping kids safe, he said.

Dolly Neby, a 29-year teacher of the district, thanked the board for their support and

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CARL COOLEY | CHETEK ALERT PHOTOS

Peter Wise, left, a student at Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Middle School, spoke against the district's mask policy. Barron County Public Health Officer, Laura Sauve, right, spoke in support of the board's decision to keep the mask policy in effect.

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