

The Chetek Alert

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Chetek, Wisconsin | One Dollar & Twenty-Five Cents

FIRST LOOK

CWHS hosting Color Blaze Fun Run/Walk

The Chetek-Weyerhaeuser High School Student Council organization is hosting the inaugural Color Blaze Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, Oct. 30. Registration for the event begins at 9 a.m. the day of the race with the run beginning at 10 a.m. and walkers following at 10:15 a.m.

The 2-mile Color Blaze Run/Walk will feature color powder splash stations along the route, which starts and ends at CWHS.

Proceeds go to Student Council Scholarship Fund and Special Olympics.

The registration deadline is Thursday, Oct. 14. To register, visit <https://runsignup.com/race/wi/chetek/cwbulldogstudentcouncilcolorfunrunwalk>.



Rustic Roads added to free, interactive GIS maps online

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation now has an interactive online map with Rustic Roads. These geographical information system (GIS) maps also have info for Adopt-A-Highway segments, crash statistics, asphalt pricing, future construction projects, weight restrictions and traffic counts.

Users can zoom in and out, add data layers, print, export and perform other actions to fit their needs.

Access the free maps at <https://wisdot.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>.

DEATHS

David Hoff, 90

Amanda Olson, 41

Eric Thoreson, 55

Gerald Zehner, 95



JIM MORAN | CHETEK ALERT PHOTO

Longtime Chetek resident Jim Babbitt joined the Chetek Alert staff earlier this month as contributing editor. He writes weekly feature stories for the newspaper.

Babbitt writing features as Alert's contributing editor

The award-winning Chetek Alert newspaper has announced an opening for a reporter/editorial staffer and Jim Babbitt thinks he has what it takes to do the job. He was hired as contributing editor earlier this month.

The Alert is a small-town weekly newspaper in northwestern Wisconsin which has won numerous awards for journalistic excellence and is beloved in this small tourist get-away about fifty miles northwest of Eau Claire.

Babbitt has had an impressive legal career spanning 30-years as an assistant district attorney, circuit court judge and special prosecutor, but few are aware of his interest in being a journalist. His undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was in mass communications, and he had several stories published in both the Stanford Daily newspaper and the UWM Post while in college.

"I also read the news on WUWM-FM campus radio station," said Babbitt. "But I think it was because I was the only one of the staffers who could say that tongue-twister on the first try."

On a more serious note, Babbitt said, as a prosecutor, he had over 270 jury trials. "A jury trial requires an attorney to not only understand the facts of the case, but the attorney must

be able to explain complex legal issues and jury instructions in straightforward terms enabling the jurors to render a just and true verdict."

As an instructor at WITC (now Northwoods Tech), Babbitt taught both police recruits and seasoned officers complex topics such as constitutional law, legal updates on search and seizure, and also the necessity to write clear, accurate and concise reports. He went so far as to have the tech school furnish the officers with the basic handbook on great writing, The Elements of Style, written by Strunk and [E.B.] White (yes, the same E.B. White who wrote "Charlotte's Web.")

Babbitt, who has now been enjoying retirement for more than a year, was asked why he might want to get back to work said, "the Alert is a great newspaper. I will be fair and unbiased and write readable, interesting and understandable articles. I welcome this opportunity to share my skills as a wordsmith with the community I have lived in for the last 30 years."

Outgoing editor, Carl Cooley, is now news director at WJMC/WKFX/WAQE radio stations in Rice Lake.

Messages for Babbitt may be emailed to features@thetekalert.com or left on his voicemail at the Alert at 715-924-4118, ext. 15.

Short-term rental permit denied; owners file lawsuit against county

BY BOB ZIENTARA | BARRON NEWS-SHIELD

Converting privately-owned summer cottages into revenue-generating businesses (or "tourist rooming houses") has been permissible by Barron County ordinance for more than 15 years, but now is the subject of a civil suit filed against the Barron County Board of Adjustment.

A married couple from St. Louis Park, Minn., filed the

action late last month, after the Board of Adjustment declined their request to use their newly-purchased cabin on Bass Lake (near Chetek) as rental property.

A formal response from the county will be filed after the plaintiffs submit further documentation to the court.

According to the suit, plaintiffs Mark A. and Leanne J. Funke

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Bugging out: salt gun enforces no-fly zone

BY JIM BABBITT

Everyone knows that to have a successful hunt, you need the right weapon, but when it comes to hunting the wily *musca domestica*, there's a new sheriff in town.

Believe it or not, there is a gun to hunt and kill the common housefly!

Gone are the sticky fly-paper days. The swatter is history. The hand-held tennis racket-shaped battery operated zappers are fun but nothing compared to the Bug-A-Salt weapon.

"They are very much fun," said Larry Mommsen, of Mommsen Sport. "Just give it a pump, make sure it has ammo, aim and shoot."

Ammo? For a fly? What about ammo shortages and cost?

"It's all in the name," said Mommsen. And so it is. This "assault" weapon uses salt as ammo. Salt. NaCl. Sodium chloride. The stuff your doctor tells you to use less of. Ordinary, everyday table salt.

Add a robust puff of air (stored in the gun after pumped up) and you can eradicate a fly from two to three feet away. Turns out too much

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JIM BABBITT | CHETEK ALERT

Larry Mommsen, of Mommsen Sport, in Chetek, holds the newest in fly eradication technology, the dreaded (by flies) "Bug-A-Salt" weapon, which will shoot table salt to kill flies up to three feet away.



A Look at Our Six Lakes

A Four Part Series

PART 2: A GUIDE FOR EVERY CITIZEN TO IMPROVE OUR LAKES

BY GARY LUEPKE AND JAMEY LIDEEN | CHETEK LAKES PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The Chetek Chain of Lakes has brought many things to our community that we likely wouldn't have without them. We live in a community that supports several retail stores, banks, multiple restaurants, downtown shopping, our own police force and a strong fire department. Many residents and visitors might not have come here if it wasn't for the chain of lakes!

Now, imagine what our lakes and streams would look like if the only water entering them was from rain or melting snow. Unfortunately, other materials enter our lakes through the forces of gravity moving materials from higher ground to lower ground (to our lakes/streams). Rain, snow and storm-water move other substances to our lakes if they are not stopped. Even materials that are 10, 20 or 30 miles away will eventually end up in our waters over time. This means that all citizens and visitors can make a difference in protecting and improving our lakes, no matter how far from the lake they actually live.

Looking back 150 years,

our country was growing rapidly and much of the land was being cleared for logging. Forests were converted to farmland and pastures. In the process many of the natural buffers that were removing foreign contaminants before they entered our lakes and streams are now gone. Over time, we figured out what was happening to our waters, and efforts were made to correct some of the problems created from the past 150 years. Today, we are trying to make corrections to return our waters to their former glory. Government agencies like the DNR, EPA, Conservationists and University of Wisconsin work continuously on improvements, and local groups like our own Chetek Lakes Protection Association (CLPA) and

Red Cedar Water Quality Partnership are working together to reverse a century of damage to our waters. If everyone can do a handful of small things that prevent runoff into our lakes, we will see a benefit sooner. Here are some examples of easy, common-sense things that property owners and visitors can do to help protect and preserve our lakes:

1. Manage nutrients—Excess nutrients, namely phosphorus and nitrogen, are the primary cause of excess weed and algae growth in our lakes. Controlling these nutrients requires a joint effort by area farmers, property-owners and visitors. Reducing or eliminating fertilizer use on lakefront lawns and creating buffer zones will

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Chetek Lakes Protection Association's algae skimmer.

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