



Newsletter

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REPORTS

Clerk’s Corner by Julie Kriewaldt, Town Clerk

General Election 2020

The general election will be on Nov. 3, 2020. The town hall, 1846 Hwy 83, is open for in-person voting 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. This is the biggest election of the year so be ready for longer lines when voting in person.

Voter Registration

Open registration is anytime 20 days or more before the election. Within 20 days of an election, voters can only register in the office of the clerk.

Please register if you moved since you last voted and have lived at your present address at least 28 consecutive days, if you have had a name change, or if your registration has become inactive due to not voting for at least four years.

There are four ways to register:

- If you updated your driver’s license with the Department of Motor Vehicles, you can register at myvote.wi.gov. If you do this on-line, you must do it at least 20 days before an election.
- You can fill out a registration form and mail it into the clerk but it **MUST** include a proof of residency and must be received by the clerk’s office at least 20 days before an election.
- You can take your registration form and proof of residency into the Clerk’s office.
- You can also register on election day with a poll worker. Remember to bring your proof of residency.

College students

Students who are away at college, with the intent to return to Erin, may receive an absentee ballot. Many college students signed up to receive absentee ballots last spring. COVID-19 sent many of those students’ home and many absentee ballots for the August election were returned to the clerk’s office. **Absentee ballots cannot be forwarded to a new address.** If you are a college student with a request for an

(Clerk, Continued on page 2)

REPORTS

(Clerk, Continued from page 1)

absentee ballot and have moved, please contact the clerk at clerk@erintownship.com to update your mailing address for the November election.

Voting options:

There are three ways to vote in the Nov. 3, 2020 election:

- **Voting at the polls.** You can cast your ballot at the town hall, 1856 Hwy. 83, Hartford, on election day, November 3, 2020. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- **In-person voting by absentee ballot.** You can cast an absentee ballot in person before election day. In-person absentee voting begins Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020 and ends Friday, Oct. 30, 2020, Mondays – Thursdays 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Oct. 30, 2020 noon to 5:00 p.m.
- **Voting absentee ballot by mail.** You can request an absentee ballot at myvote.wi.gov. You can also make your request by postal mail. Your mail request must be in writing, accompanied by a copy of your photo ID and received by your municipal clerk no later than 5 p.m. on October 29, 2020. Please submit the request early.

Returning absentee ballots

Absentee ballots may be mailed back to the clerk or dropped any time into the secured drop box outside the town hall doors at 1846 State Hwy 83.

Confusion Regarding absentee ballots

A post from Erin Next Door was shared with the clerk. The biggest confusion is when absentee ballots need to be returned. **Absentee ballots must be back no later than 8 p.m. on election day, NOT postmarked by election day.** Any absentee ballot received after 8 p.m. on election day is not counted.

There are groups sending out “Wisconsin Absentee Ballot Request forms” that voters can fill out, sign and mail to the clerk’s office. The request must be accompanied by a copy of the voter’s photo ID. When the clerk receives the request and there is no photo ID on record for the voter, an absentee ballot cannot be sent. The clerk’s office then tries to contact the voter

by phone number or letter.

Recommendation: Request an absentee ballot early and allow one week for ballots to be mailed back to the clerk, two weeks if you are out of state. There is a secured black drop box outside the town hall at 1846 Hwy. 83 where ballots may be dropped any time. You may also take your completed ballot to the clerk until 8 p.m. on election day, Nov. 3, 2020.

Treasurer by Marjorie Bruha

Property Taxes

Property Tax Bills



The property tax bills should be out by mid-December. The tax paying rules are the same as last year. The Town accepts tax payments up to Jan. 31, 2021 and checks must be made out to Town of Erin, not to Town Treasurer. Tax payments made after Jan. 31, 2021 must be made out to Washington County Treasurer and mailed to Washington County Treasurer, Room 2053, 432 E. Washington Street, West Bend, WI 53095-7986. No credit card payments are accepted after Jan. 31, 2021.

Review your tax bill for complete instructions about when and how to pay your property taxes. Also included in the tax bill is a dog license application. All dogs are required to be licensed every year. Previous year’s licenses expire at year’s end.



Tax receipts

New this year is the ability to print off your own tax receipt from the Washington County website. Here are the directions:

- Go to <http://www.co.washington.wi.us>
- On the left-hand side of the main page, click on **Taxes/Assessment information**. This will take you to the Washington County Ascent Land Records site
- Choose the municipality by clicking on the drop-down and pick **T3-TOWN OF ERIN**
- Search by last name, street number or Parcel ID.
- Once you find your parcel, click on the **red Parcel number** and it will take you to your parcel information screen
- Under “Select Detail” choose **Taxes**

(Taxes, Continued on page 3)



REPORTS

(Taxes, Continued from page 2)

- Go to the correct Tax Year which for this tax year is **2020** and click on it
- A small box will open, click on **Printer Friendly**

Emergency Management by Bradley Bautz, Director

COVID/Coronavirus and the response to it has certainly been more than I thought it would ever be. I think we can all agree that it, or the response, has impacted everyone. That has impacted other important work such as updating our emergency plan and mutual aid agreements with our neighboring partners. Hopefully, we can get back to that work soon. We will be monitoring things to ensure the town operations continue to meet the residents' needs and ensure a safe election this fall.



Fire Prevention Week was Oct. 4-10, 2020. There are many tips available at www.NFPA.org/FPW. Feel free to call your specific fire department-Ashippun, Hartford, or Richfield, if you have safety questions.

If you are cleaning up your yard, please make sure your driveway has enough clearance for an ambulance or fire truck to get to your house. This is true for private roads as well. Low-hanging branches can damage equipment.

If your address sign is damaged, or needs replacement, contact the town. They are replaced free of charge. This is to ensure that they stay up and help emergency responders for years to come.

Please follow the burning ordinance. We had several complaints last year involving burning. Please be cognizant of conditions before you burn. Your fire **must be attended at all times**. You must be near the

(EM, Continued on page 4)

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REPORTS

(EM Continued from page 3)

fire. You cannot burn during a burning ban. Do not burn if the wind speed is greater than 12 miles per hour. Violations can result in a citation. The rules for burning are in Chapter 168 of the town code.

- **No burning permits are required**

- When fire danger is high, very high, or severe, all outdoor burning will be banned (this includes fireworks, which are already restricted by county ordinance) by order of the emergency management director or town chairman. Outdoor cooking (grills) is an exemption. For such a ban, I will notify the sheriff's office and local radio stations. Notices will also be on the town posting boards and the website. At any time of year:

- **Open fires must be attended at all times**

- The jurisdictional fire department, or preferably the Washington County Sheriff's Office, must be notified of any bonfire in excess of 10 feet in diameter or if a large area of grass is burned (i.e. over one-quarter acre).

- Fires can't be started on the roadway surface, and only leaves and grass can be burned in the right-of-way.

- **The burning of garbage, plastics, rubber, treated wood, petroleum products or anything that emits noxious or toxic odors is PROHIBITED.** The DNR already bans the burning of these items as they pose a health hazard to residents if burned.

- DNR regulations also prohibit businesses from disposing of solid waste by burning.

Have a safe and happy fall.

Erin Park by Maureen Fitzsimmons-Vanden Heuvel

We welcome new Erin supervisor, John Luby, as our Park liaison. John was chosen by the Town Board to fill the big shoes of Dan Zignego, who will never be forgotten, along with former supervisor Dan Goodreau. John's knowledge and expertise are valued, especially with the rough and finish grading project that is nearing completion. By the time you read this newsletter, the finish grade and seeding of the old rental house and new salt shed areas will be completed.

It has been a wonderfully productive summer in Erin Park. We are so grateful for the hard work of our Park Manager, Todd Kozlencer, and our summer hire, Michael Flanagan. We wish Michael good luck at Marquette University this fall. We are proud to announce that Erin Park now has a 12 Hole Disc Golf Course. Two of



the newer holes are truly spectacular and challenging. Todd and Michael also completed the extension of all the Disc Golf pads. Additionally, they removed 17 dead or dying ash trees, all the while keeping up with their weekly mowing tasks and weeding of the park beds. Except for some weather-related leaf/bug issues with some of our trees, the park and fields look incredible.



REPORTS

Roads by Dan Coffey

Please remember that tree donations in a loved one's name are always appreciated. You can contact our Erin Town Clerk, Julie Kriewaldt for information.

The town of Erin has a responsibility to keep town roads safe for everyone. Unfortunately, a fair amount of misinformation is being shared on social media. In the interest of all concerned, these are the facts:

- The town is responsible for the repair and maintenance of Rustic Roads the same as any other town road.
- The town will remove only trees that are 12 feet or less from the edge of the road (with the exception of dead or dying ash trees)
- The width of the pavement will not change.
- In other social media posts, an article titled "Effects of street tree shade on asphalt concrete pavement performance" by E. Gregory Mcpherson was cited. This study was done in Modesto, California, where the December and January nightly average temperature is 38 degrees and the average yearly precipitation is 13.11 inches. The trees they planted were crape myrtles. This may be a good study but it sure doesn't apply to Emerald Drive in Wisconsin.

We remove the trees (within 12 feet of the road edge) for many reasons.

- Safety: if someone runs off the edge of the road.
- Safety: Snow plows need to push snow somewhere and shouldn't have to move to the center of the road for all the obstructions.
- Safety: To allow the UPS, Fedex, and other delivery vehicles to drive near the road's edge and not drive down the middle of the road.
- Safety: When we have the next ice storm, the salt truck will be able to spread salt. During the last ice storm, we couldn't salt some of Emerald Road because the branches were too low.
- Safety: Animal avoidance. If the trees and brush are right up to the road edge, you are not going to see the deer (or other animals). If we have a 12-foot clear zone, there's a better chance of avoiding them.
- Safety: If we cut the trees back 12 feet from the road's edge, hikers, bikers, and walkers have a

place to step off when traffic approaches.

- Economics: It was suggested that the town buy a smaller plow. Our plows are the same size as all the towns and the county. We will often keep the same plow truck for more than 20 years. A new plow truck can cost more than \$200,000. Buying a small plow truck for one road doesn't make economic sense. We have more than 56 miles of road to plow each snow storm.
- Economics: We can't even fix Emerald Road without removing some canopy. We will have to be able to dig with an excavator to undercut bad spots and raise a truck box for gravel. We also have to be able to pave the road for which, again, we need to raise a truck box. The box on a truck is 16-20 feet long and needs to be raised at an angle high enough to dump its contents.
- Economics: If we spend extra money on a custom road repair for Emerald Road, other roads won't be repaired. We receive roughly \$120,000 per year from the state to maintain and repair 56-plus miles of road. It costs roughly \$250,000 per mile in today's prices to rebuild a road. Other Erin residents want their roads fixed also. We have some stretches of Erin roads that no longer have any asphalt because we don't have the money. Cutting trees back 12 feet is the most economic way to prepare the road for rebuilding. Having a tree service open up the canopy and maintain Emerald Drive would cost the town significantly more money. I would guess we are talking more than \$200,000.00 for the next five years. Any other trimming process would cost much more.
- Economics: Tree roots do a lot of damage to roads and sidewalks. We often remove tree roots when we undercut to repair the road base even when the tree is 25 or more feet away. A good rule of thumb is the tree canopy marks how far the roots reach.

Erin has two full-time employees for roads and a volunteer manager. We use your money to accomplish as much as we can. We are losing the battle with road repair. Short of more money from our taxpayers or the state, our roads will continue to deteriorate. We are doing our best to balance money vs. repair.

Emerald Drive is a public road paid for and used by all

(Roads, Continued on page 6)



REPORTS

(Roads, Continued from page 5)

residents of Erin as well as visitors. Once repaired, the canopy will still exist. Everyone will benefit from the repair.

Summer keeps road crew busy

The summer's predominantly good weather paved the way for the town road crew to complete a number of projects, which include:

- St. Augustine Road rebuild
- Robins Run rebuild
- Robins Run ditch line rework
- St. Patrick's Lane rework
- County Line Road wedge
- County Line Road chip seal
- Skibbieren Way chip seal
- Limerick Court chip seal
- S. Limerick Lane chip seal
- Roosevelt Road East road raise

In addition to the specific projects, the crew mowed road shoulders and ensured driver visibility on town roads.

As the year continues, the crew will be filling road cracks and preparing the ash trees and Emerald Drive for upcoming projects. There are also a number of large rocks that should be removed from the rights of way, as time permits.

Zoning by Maripat Blankenheim

Plan Commission tables proposed zoning changes

A proposal from the town zoning department to make changes to portions of the zoning code was tabled by the Plan Commission at its September meeting. Commissioners directed the zoning staff to provide a modified document that identifies only the changes required by state statute.

Changes or amendments to Section 360 of the code are being recommended by the zoning staff for several reasons – to bring our code into compliance with new state statutes, to correct conflicting sections, to improve the readability of the code and correct clerical errors. The plan commissioners' action delays making necessary, but not mandatory, changes to the

code.

The following is a real example of a conflict within the current code that is affecting how the town operates.

☘ The zoning staff was recently asked to provide information on how best to do a land split given that the property contained accessory structures. The property was in the five-acre density, which allows for the creation of parcels of five acres or more.

☘ Section 360-16 dealing with accessory structures and uses was added on June 15, 1997. Read this closely and see what is possible for accessory structures on a parcel of five acres:

☘ **\$360-16 G. (1) Number of accessory structures**

Lot Size in Acres	Maximum Number of Accessory Structures
Up to 3 acres	1
3.0 but less than 5	2
5.0 or higher	3

From this we can see that a parcel of five acres or more can have up to three accessory structures.

☘ **\$360-16 H. (1) Size limits for accessory buildings**

The maximum building footprint for all accessory structures on the same residential lot shall be 1% on lots of five acres or less and 2.5% on lots greater than five acres or 900 square feet whichever is greater.

Translated into actual size on a parcel of five acres, 2,178 square feet of building space (1% of five acres) is allowed. Even though three buildings are allowed on a five-acre parcel, the allowable square footage is restrictive. If the lot were slightly more than five acres, more than 5,445 square feet of building space or 2.5% of five+ acres is allowed.

The proposed changes would allow up to three buildings and 5,445 square foot of building space on parcels of five acres. This change would make residents with exactly five acres very happy. They

(Zoning, Continued on page 12)



SCHOOL NEWS

Erin School District



What a crazy summer and start of a school year...

In the May 2020 town newsletter, Erin School shared what the staff did to make sure learning continued over the last two months of school.

We acknowledge all the parent support we received to make sure that our efforts were successful for the students. We understand parents, like most of us, were asked to do some heavy lifting, and we thank you so much for all your assistance.

Over the summer, the school and staff worked hard to make sure we could offer a face-to-face environment for all our students. We heard loud and clear that the majority of our parents wanted students back at school, if at all possible. For this to happen, we needed to rethink what school would look like and what we would need to do if we had

to go virtual once again.

Prepping the Lesson

Staff prepared lessons to present to students in a face-to-face environment, as well as in a virtual option. This meant staff members spent their summer learning various programs and new software. Many learned how to record lessons while using various pieces of equipment and multiple platforms.

Prepping the Building

The word of the year is 'mitigate.' The building and grounds crew spent a good part of the year completing the five classroom remodels and preparing all the areas to mitigate the spread of COVID, along with other viruses and flu. Protective barriers were put in place throughout the building to alleviate infection spread to the best of our ability. We have also expanded our learning

(School, Continued on page 8)



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SCHOOL NEWS

(School, Continued from page 7)

boundaries to the outdoors whenever possible. We have new tools in place and personnel to help us have a cleaner learning environment.

Prepping the Routines

Along with changes in instruction and to the building, our operations within the building also received a makeover. The board and administration worked over the summer to incorporate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be followed. These procedures address most of the issues from when students arrive to when they depart. Schedules for lunch, recess, drop-off and pick-up were addressed, along with special schedules and even passing time. All of these changes help us to mitigate the spread of COVID and make sure our students and staff stay healthy and IN SCHOOL.

Prepping Parents

The administrative team spent most of the summer talking with parents. They sent out emails, letters, and videos while also meeting others in person or conducting numerous video meetings. In August, the parents were surveyed to collect more information on how to start the year and how parents were feeling. This information helped guide the board while completing the SOPs and learning options for the students.

Prepping the Children

On the first day of school, Sept. 1, we had 405 students return either face-to-face or virtually. While this was down by 18 students from last year, we expected it, due to various factors, including COVID. Students and staff spent the day getting to know each other again and developing new relationships with our new classmates. Students received their own computers. Teachers worked with each class to make sure they were able to log into the various accounts and be ready in case school needs to move to a virtual platform. It was amazing how quickly the students adapted to the technology. Teachers were so happy to see the smiling faces as they received the instruction.

Prepping the Budget

The board and administration worked hard to build a budget to fit the times. With additional one-time purchases of technology, the carry-over projects from the summer, and increased staffing, the board presented a

final budget to the voters on Sept. 28.

While this year will be tighter than years past, their goal was to work within the established revenue caps and make sure our students can stay in school as long as possible.

Where are we at now?

At the time of this writing, we are in day seven of school. We have had no cases of COVID for staff or students while in school. We are not fooling ourselves and know the day will come, as it has for most other public schools in Washington County, but we know the work that has been done will keep our school community safe and in school. Each week we are tweaking our plan to make it better. Each month the board reviews the SOPs and makes adjustments. Staff continues to learn along with the students. Teachers are providing a solid curriculum to both virtual and face-to-face students. We are improving our virtual education and will not stop trying until it is equally as good as the face-to-face instruction we provide.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Erin Soccer by Becky Bautz,
Secretary



The fall soccer season is underway, the kids are enjoying being back at soccer after a long break! It is great to see them having fun while being active and outside. Games are scheduled through the end of October.

We are always looking for referees. Most games are Saturday mornings. If you or someone you know wants to help the kids learn while making a little extra money, please contact us.

Unfortunately, we made the difficult decision to cancel Erin's Annual Leah Fenney Tournament, which was scheduled for October 4, following recommendations of the Washington Ozaukee Health Department. We look forward to being back next year.

If you have a child who is interested in playing soccer

in spring, watch our website and follow us on our Facebook page for updates. Registration will open in February - March. We have teams for children ages 4-13. Practices are held one to two times a week at the Erin Town Hall, and most games are played on Saturdays. We are a recreational club and part of the Kettle Moraine Soccer League (KMSL). Come join us for Fun, Fitness and Fair Play!

Erin Soccer Club Contact Information:

Website: erinsoccer.org

Email: erinsoccerclub@gmail.com

Facebook: Erin Soccer Club

St. Patrick's Day Parade By Derek Wilcox

Unfortunately, 2020 will be a year without a Erin St. Patrick's Day Parade. It was our hope that we would be able to host the parade this fall, but that doesn't look like it will be possible. We look forward to 2021 and will start the planning process this winter. We could always use more help, so please reach out if you would like to volunteer or help plan the event.

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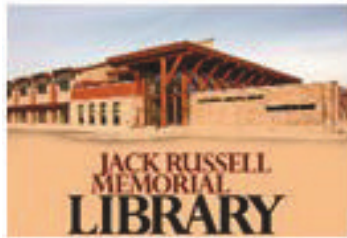
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Jack Russell Memorial Library



The library is open. Please visit to browse for materials, pick up holds, use a small meeting room and for computer or internet access.

Library Hours

Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Friday 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Due to COVID-19, the library is limiting visitors to two-hour visits each day to allow for more people to visit the library. Two study rooms are open on the second floor for up to two people to meet for a maximum of two hours. Please call 262-673-8240 and select 2 to make a reservation. Please visit our website at www.hartfordlibrary.org for more information about operations under COVID-19.

For those who want to print or scan documents, please visit the reference desk on the second floor for assistance. We are able to scan and email documents directly to your email. Photocopying and faxing service is available at the circulation desk during regular hours.

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Fall storytimes for children and their families have returned. Please stop in to pick up weekly “storytime on the go” kits. Each comes with activities, suggested books to read together and a craft. For details on

dates, times and location of kits, please visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JackRussellLibrary>. Themes are posted weekly. All kits are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Adults, are you looking for something fun to do at home? Every week until the pandemic is over, JRML is releasing a Crafts for Grownups on the Go kit containing all the supplies needed to complete a project. Keep an eye on our Facebook page or Instagram for the release date and time as it varies from week to week. We also give a hint as to what kind of project the kit will be. Kits are limited in supply to 50 and available on a first-come, first-served basis.



September is National Card Sign-up Month. All Town of Erin residents should stop in and get a card. This

nationwide campaign encourages ALL citizens to obtain a free library card.

Especially during these unprecedented times, the library is more than a building. The library is also an online tool. Read ebooks, use our online research and study tools, or enjoy storytime from the comfort of home with one of our to-go kits. On your phone or on your computer, you can use the library anywhere.

If you already have that card, thank you. We hope the service and access have had an impact. For those who do not have a card, sign up online at getyourlibrarycard.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Washington County Humane Society

Fall is always an exciting time at Washington County Humane Society – but this year is different

As the weather gets cooler, people are thinking about our Oktoberfest Beertasting and our Festival of Trees. We love our events, but with COVID we felt it necessary to think about everyone's safety. We truly miss seeing all the warm and welcoming faces that help us greet the changes of the seasons.

We are making Oktoberfest Beertasting a virtual event - please watch our website for all the updates. The event will have curbside pickup for beer/wine/soda and food – and you will have the opportunity to get in on some raffle action.


In December, we will kick off our Festival of Trees

Cafe' with curbside pickup, so plan on stocking up on your holiday favorites and take home some chili for those busy holiday nights ahead. More details will be shared in the next month on days and times for pickup, pricing and how to sign up. What a delicious way to support WCHS.

We have been truly blessed with the support we have received for our building renovation – we are rounding the corner to our move-in target date of Nov. 30. We need \$250,000 to reach our goal for Phase 4 (our animal viewing areas). There are plenty of naming opportunities left (ranging from \$750 to \$3.5 million) – why not give the gift of honoring your family, a loved one or a loved pet through a gift that will help WCHS continue to grow. If you have any interest in donating to our Capital Campaign, please contact Kay Amland at 262-677-4388 or at dev@wchspets.org.



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REPORTS/COMMUNITY NEWS

(Zoning Continued from page 6)

would not be caught in between the maximum number of buildings and a less than appropriate amount of square footage. This sort of conflict and the obvious inconsistent wording would be cleared up in the next phase of proposed amendment changes should the plan commission make that recommendation.

Although the plan commissioners have this authority, their vote is a recommendation to the town board for final action.

The complete list of proposed changes and explanations are on the Erin Township website. If you have any comments, please email the zoning staff at zoning@erintownship.com.

Airport? What airport?

The town of Erin is not proposing to add an airport. No one has asked that an airport be established in the town, no proposals have been made to the town board or plan commission and nothing has changed in the code to allow airports.

A smattering of signs suggesting otherwise popped up in recent weeks telling residents to attend the Sept. 14 plan commission meeting to oppose zoning changes that would allow an airport to be developed. Again, this is simply not happening.

The Erin Zoning Code prevents airports in every zoning district. This will not change.

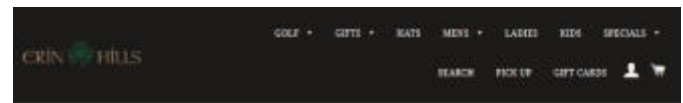
There are private airstrips in the town that operate with FAA and Wisconsin Department of Transportation approval. The town has no operational jurisdiction over these airstrips, which are used privately by their owners and not commercially as an airport operates.

Nevertheless, there are no airport considerations by the town board or plan commission.

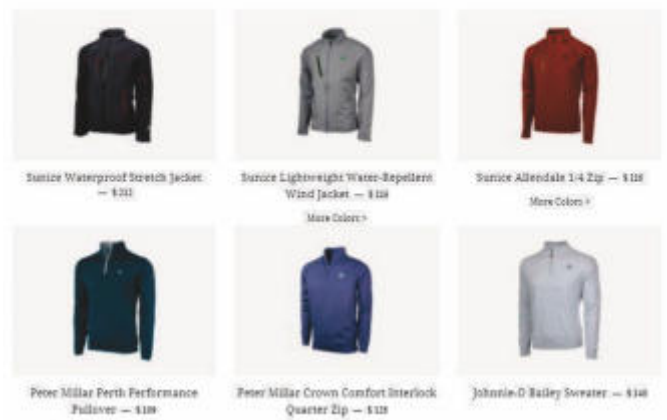


Online Holiday Sale from the Erin Hills Golf Shop By John Morrissett

While the need for social distancing prevents us from holding our traditional October and December sales in the Golf Shop this year, we will still have featured items on sale on our website. Starting Nov. 27, check out our special offerings through shoperinhills.com and take advantage of the savings while shopping for the golfers in your life. A pick-up option is available for online orders.



Fall Essentials



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Patrick Preservation by Maureen Fitzsimons-Vanden Heuvel

We are so appreciative of the beautiful job Advance Lawn Service Company has done caring for St. Patrick's Church and cemeteries. The grounds have never looked better.



Several weeks ago, St. Kilian's approached the Erin Zoning Office regarding splitting the St. Patrick's property. This is not possible with the present zoning. We are looking forward to communicating with the new Pastor of St. Kilian's of Hartford and St. John's of Rubicon, Father Britto, once he settles in.

Following in her parents' (Nancy & Ev Henke) footsteps of all things "ANCESTRY," Mary Hasslinger has undertaken a huge project to document every wedding that has ever taken place at St. Patrick's Church of Erin. Mary would love to have corresponding photos

as well. When the St. Patrick's Wedding Project is completed, all the information will be available for future generations at the History Room located inside the Jack Russell Memorial Library. If you have any wedding information on relatives who were married at St. Patrick's, contact Mary via email at mary.weddingday@att.net and please feel free to share this information with others.

The Erin Town Hall remains closed for meetings. We still meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at various members' homes.

Our annual membership drive began on July 1, 2020. Memberships are reasonably priced at \$5/Single and \$10/Family. If interested in becoming a member, please mail your check to: St. Patrick Preservation Fund, 2063 Saint Patrick's Circle, Erin, WI 53027-9776. Remember, all donations to the St. Patrick Preservation Fund are tax deductible and the CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020 allows for increased tax deductions for charitable donations.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Mary of the Hill Parish

1515 Carmel Rd. Hubertus

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A Journey in Faith as a Family at St. Mary of the Hill

By Vicki Dubnicka

If we did not know it already, we have come to realize this past year how very important relationships are in our lives – especially within our families. St. Mary of the Hill's newly restructured and cutting-edge religious education program, Family Faith Formation (FFF), invites everyone to attend in order to nurture these most precious relationships and strengthen the greater community.

St. Mary of the Hill Youth Minister Taylor Schmitt emphasizes that FFF is open to anyone, not just families. "Whether you are empty nesters, single, a young adult, or someone simply searching for community," she says, "you are welcome. Our ultimate goal is to form disciples of Jesus Christ and build Catholic Christian community through growing, learning, and worshipping together. We believe being formed as His disciples is a life-long journey – a beautiful journey."

Why participate? One answer is happiness and community building, according to recent research. A 2018 Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health study found that people who attended religious services at least weekly in childhood and adolescence were about 18 percent more likely to report higher happiness as young adults and 29 percent more likely to volunteer in their communities than those who had never attended services. That is promising for those who could use a little hope during this bleak time. Who wouldn't want to be the best and happiest version of themselves and forge positive relationships in their community.

St. Mary of the Hill's FFF nurtures relationships by bringing the whole family together for Sunday Mass and a shared activity. Each family member then attends catechesis personalized for their age level. This is in contrast to the previous structure, which entailed dropping off children for class and leaving instruction in the hands of teachers alone. It is also more aligned to the Church's teaching, as indicated by paragraph 2223 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which states, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children." Schmitt adds, "Through this program, we hope to empower and equip parents with the tools they need as the 'primary catechists of their children' and the 'first heralds of the Gospel' for their children," referencing the Catechism.

Child Minister Melinda Diels believes the current family approach imparts a greater positive impact. "If the family puts God and faith first," she says, "it will be easier for the children to continue that practice into their (young) adult years. During this time of pandemic, it became extremely apparent that the parents have to create a domestic church and be the primary educators of their children's faith. We need parents at this time to know more about their faith so they can defend it and pass it along to their children."

With the first year of FFF under their belts, St. Mary of the Hill's ministers continue to adapt and improve the program as needed. Diels reports that students in grades 5K-4 receive catechesis from the Discover Program by Saint Mary's Press. Each student receives a children's Bible. Lessons are based on Biblical passages and follow the four Pillars of the Catechism. Second-grade students preparing for the sacrament of First Communion follow the Signs of Grace curriculum, which was developed by the Augustine Institute, producers of Formed.org. Students in grades 5-11 receive both a Bible and Catechism and follow curriculum created by Youth Minister Schmitt. Service projects conducted as part of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation plant the seeds for a positive influence on one's community.

Grades 5K-4 child ministry and middle school youth ministry follow a two-cycle year, because class sizes are small and grades can be combined. One year, students complete course work for a given grade level and the next year they complete course work for the subsequent grade level. Upon completion of the two-year cycle, students will have received both grade levels' instruction.

High school youth ministry follows a three-year cycle with Confirmation occurring at the end of students' junior year. Also due to the small class sizes, the parish is able to maintain social distancing for in-person instruction. Online capabilities are also in place.

FFF emphasizes the importance of being a member of the church family. It is an intergenerational program designed to empower all to cultivate their faith. Diels says the parish is looking to start a mentorship program that pairs a parish member with a middle or high school student.

Everyone – whether or not they have children – is invited to participate in the Adult Speakers Series. The series brings in a variety of awe-inspiring presenters who share their faith journeys, experiences, and knowledge. This year's line-up includes fellow parishioners and members of the Carmelite community as well as an actor from the

(Parish, Continued on page 15)

(Parish, Continued from page 13)



COMMUNITY NEWS

movie "Power in My Hands" and members of the popular Catholic women's ministry Blessed is She. The talks launch intellectually stimulating discussions and help attendees make faith ever more central to their daily work. Likewise, the presentations provide opportunity for peaceful reflection that quiets the mind and deepens the soul.

Interested in developing a sense of community, establishing a stronger family bond, and/or growing your knowledge in the Catholic faith? New to the area? Contact St. Mary of the Hill Child Minister Melinda Diels child@stmaryhh.org for students in grades 5K-4, Youth Minister Taylor Schmitt ym@stmaryhh.org for students in grade 5-Confirmation, or contact Pastoral Associate Wendy Newburg at (262) 673-7505 if you are an adult wishing to participate in the Adult Speakers Series.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

495 St. Augustine Rd., Colgate, WI
www.stpaulserin.org 262-628-0656



Christmas Cookie Walk

Saturday, Dec. 5
 9 a.m. until sold out

St. Paul's Women's Guild 30th annual Christmas Cookie Walk may not be held this year because of COVID-19 safety concerns. Watch for updates on St. Paul's website and on Facebook.

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ERIN TOWNSHIP

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Email: clerk@erintownship.com
www.erintownship.com

Scheduled Meetings:
Town Board - third Monday of each month
Plan Commission - first Monday of each month

Meetings held unless holidays or other conflicts arise

For complete listing, see the website

CONTACT INFORMATION

TOWN BOARD MEMBERS

Dennis Kenealy, Chair: 262-673-3682
Jeff Millikin: 262-966-7204
Dan Coffey: 262-673-5840
Maripat Blankenheim: 262-673-2505
John Luby 262-673-3682

TOWN TREASURER

Marjorie Bruha 262-673-3682

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Road Contact: 262-673-3702
Tree Emergencies: 414-750-9529

ZONING OFFICE

Patti Lowe: 262-673-3682
Tuesdays/Thursdays 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

TOWN CLERK

Julie Kriewaldt: 262-673-3682
Mondays-Thursdays 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

ASSESSOR

Michael Grota
Office: 262-253-1142

BUILDING INSPECTOR

Rob Froh: 920-382-6202
Tuesdays/Thursdays 2-3 p.m.