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FEBRUARY 2022

 The FREEMAN & ENTERPRISE

# Lake Country

## THIS MONTH

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## 96 YEARS YOUNG

Merton WWII vet reflects on his time in military, shares secrets to longevity

By Dave Fidlin  
Special to the Enterprise

TOWN OF MERTON — More than seven decades have passed since William Kosky hung up his Navy uniform. But the grit, work ethic and discipline from that period remain a pivotal part of the 96-year-old's approach to life.

Kosky, who more commonly is known as Bill around town, was a member of the U.S. Navy from 1942 to 1951. He served on the USS Milwaukee, a cruiser originally built in the 1920s that transported Kosky and other servicemen to the Pacific. It ultimately was transferred to the Soviet Navy.

At age 17, Kosky said family and world events prompted him to roll up his sleeves and be of service.

"The war was on," Kosky said, referring to World War II, in a recent interview. He reflected on his military service and other monumental moments throughout his life, which, at the time, included the loss of his father and the desire to assist his mom and four siblings.

The Stevens Point native is four years shy of becoming a centenarian, but people close to him

say he remains as young at heart as ever.

Friends drop by the rustic, cabin-style Town of Merton home he built decades ago, and Kosky's average week is peppered with various routines.

"Saturday is cleaning day for me," Kosky said. "I get up at 4 a.m. Everything is cleaned, top to bottom. Everything is dusted, everything is vacuumed. I like to be disciplined; the Navy taught me that."

The home construction is the outgrowth of Kosky's post-military life.

"After (my service), I took a carpenter's apprenticeship and became a carpenter by trade," Kosky said. "I never regretted it."

Mark Gilbert is one of several close friends who check on Kosky regularly. Up until recently, Gilbert pointed out, Kosky routinely shoveled his 120-foot-long driveway when it snowed.

While he has since retired from shoveling the driveway, Kosky does tend to outdoor chores, including painting projects.

"I get tired of looking at the same colors," Kosky said as he shared why he enjoys the task.

Around town, Gilbert and other

friends drive Kosky to some regular spots, including VFW Post 9537 and Netty's Irish Pub, both in Pewaukee, and Mission BBQ in Brookfield, where he receives a standing ovation.

### A Bud man

Kosky has been a loyal consumer of Budweiser, a beer he was introduced to in the Navy, and he regularly enjoys it at Netty's.

"They love him there," Gilbert said. "They make room for him anytime he's there. He's always got (a Budweiser) waiting for him when he comes in."

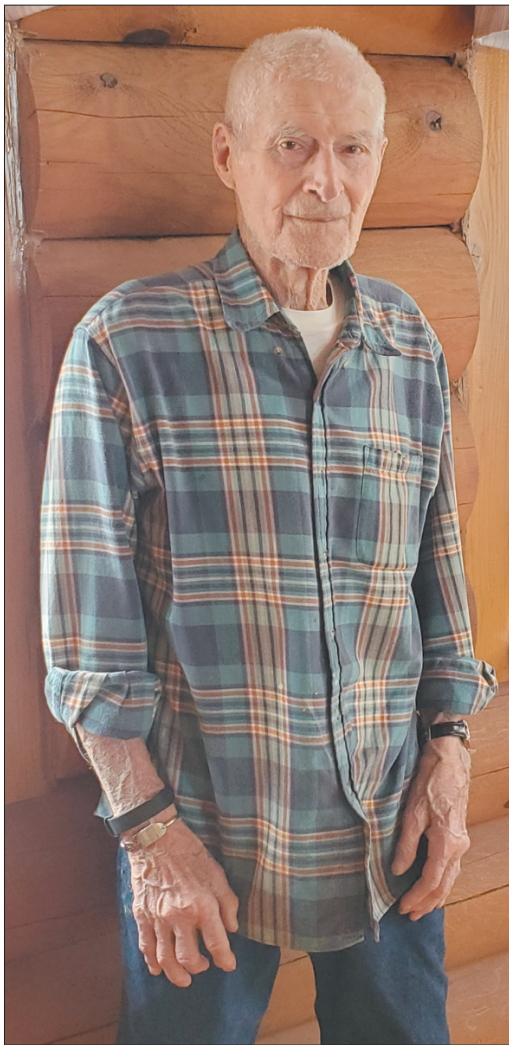
### Close inner circle

Kosky, who is widowed, said he still finds joy and purpose in life, thanks to his loyal cadre of friends. His cat, Jasper, also provides companionship.

About his friendships with Gilbert and others in his close inner circle, Kosky said, "Any time I need them, they're here for me. You don't find friends like that very often."

Alongside his work ethic and routine, Kosky said he also tries staying in shape by doing simple stretches and enjoying every moment he can be physically active.

"As long as I'm mobile, I'd like to live forever," he said.



Dave Fidlin/Special to the Enterprise

William Kosky, 96, inside the log cabin-style home he built decades ago in the Town of Merton.

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# Snowshoe adventure

**O**KAUCHEE — Despite the almost 50-degree weather on Feb. 1, a group of kids from the public charter school Lake Country Classical Academy still spent some time racing one another while wearing snowshoes. While the students had plenty of fun playing in the snow, according to a press release from the school, the race was held so that kids could better understand the lives of the LCO Ojibwe tribe. For more information about the school, visit <https://www.lakecountryclassical.org/>.



Vera Weber carries an animal trap at Lake Country Classical Academy.



Photos by Derek Johnson

Jack Pazurek holds up a stuffed “coyote” that he “trapped” during an activity designed to teach students about the LCO Ojibwe tribe at Lake Country Classical Academy.



Matthias Petersohn races with an animal trap during an activity designed to teach students about the LCO Ojibwe tribe at Lake Country Classical Academy.



Asher Braun races with a bow at Lake Country Classical Academy.

# WCTC launches program for high schoolers

## Allows students to earn credit at college and high school

By Derek Johnson

**PEWAUKEE** — Going to college immediately after finishing high school may be difficult for some people, but with WCTC Excelerate, high school students can cut down the amount of time they need to spend in a classroom after graduation.

The new initiative from the Pewaukee-based technical college allows high school juniors and seniors who are at least 16 years old and otherwise qualified to enroll in one of the college’s programs and receive high school credit for it.

According to a press release, the initiative is designed for students who know what they want to get their degree in, and they can potentially even complete their associate

degree or a certificate while still in high school.

While the technical college already has some dual enrollment programs, according to a press release, Excelerate builds on those programs and allows students to make the most of their high school experiences.

“This will build upon and amplify WCTC’s many current dual enrollment offerings, with the main goals of providing high school students with a shorter time to a college degree, a reduction of student debt and earlier preparedness for the workforce,” said WCTC President Rich Barnhouse in a press release.

Barnhouse also noted in the release that, using Excelerate, high schoolers can potentially transfer to a 4-year college in junior

standing immediately after graduation.

“This really speeds up the cycle of higher education,” Barnhouse said.

In addition, Sandra Maylen, the manager of WCTC’s Center for Early College Opportunities, said in a press release that students who make use of the program will be offered priority registration at WCTC.

She also said students may be able to combine Excelerate with Start College Now, a program that allows students to take college classes which are sometimes paid for by their high school, to reduce the economic burden of college.

Most of WCTC’s programs qualify for this new initiative, according to a press release. To learn more about it as well as WCTC, visit <https://www.wctc.edu/>.



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Eileen Mozinski Schmidt/Special for TimeOut

Kathy Bodine from Glenview, Ill., slides after throwing a stone during a curling match at the Kettle Moraine Curling Club during a bonspiel, or tournament, this month.



Eileen Mozinski Schmidt/Special for TimeOut

Curlers taking part in the Kettle Moraine Classic Bonspiel in Delafield this month. Craig Sharkus, a member of the Kettle Moraine Curling club, said he believes the appeal of the sport is a combination of enjoyment of the game, social connections it fosters and the chance to keep playing throughout one's life.

# Curling: A winter sport for everyone

By Eileen Mozinski Schmidt  
Special to Conley Media

DELAFIELD — As Craig Sharkus sees it, curling is a sport of finesse. “You don’t need to be the strongest or fastest or tallest,” said Sharkus, who said he began curling in middle school in 1979 or 1980 in a junior program in the Kettle Moraine Curling Club. He has been a member of the Delafield-based club ever since. “I fell in love with the sport and I’ve never wanted to do anything else,” said Sharkus, who said the appeal is a combination of enjoyment of the game, social connections surrounding the sport and the chance to keep playing throughout one’s life. “It’s a sport where you can play from a junior level up to age 100” or beyond, he said.

A social sport

With the Winter Olympics underway, spectators may have tuned into some of the curling competition and be interested in trying their own hand at the sport. The American team was led into the opening ceremony for the 2022 games by Superior native and curler John Shuster as one of the nation’s flag bearers. The American curler, who is appearing in his fifth Olympic Games according to the Team USA website, is known personally to some at the Kettle Moraine club, according to Steve Everett, Jr., who coordinates communications for the club. Intermingling of players of all levels is one of the unique features of curling, he said. Sharkus agreed. “It’s a sport where I can take three people to a tournament and you can be playing against someone that’s been to nationals and you can be competitive,” he said. The Kettle Moraine Club typically sees an influx of younger members following a Winter Olympic Games, according to Sharkus. He also runs a business, Rock on Curling, offering products and gear for players. He sells out of a store in the Kettle Moraine club and through his website to players worldwide. The socialization after bonspiels, or tournaments, is a fun

part of the curling culture, according to Sharkus. Pennie Everett, wife of Steve Everett, agreed. She noted how her children will connect with other players at their own tournaments. “They sit down and have dinner with their opponents. They’re all friends. It’s really cool to see,” she said. She was volunteering at the club on a recent weekend this month, when players had gathered for the club’s Kettle Moraine Classic Bonspiel. Everett described how the local club had welcomed her family when they started in the sport in 2017 and noted how people of all ages can play. “You could technically curl with four generations. What other sport can you do that?” she said.

The curling tradition

The first record of curling was found in Scotland and the Netherlands several centuries ago, according to the World Curling Federation website. Sharkus said nods to the Scottish history can sometimes be found in modern clubs. “A lot of clubs will bring in a bagpiper and for the finals the music will get piped onto the ice. It’s really cool,” he said. The Milwaukee Curling Club has tapped into this history. The club, based in Cedarburg, is the oldest continually operating club in the United States and therefore was invited to Kinross Curling Club of Scotland in recent years, according to Kristin Smith. “That club in Scotland had their 500th anniversary and invited all of the oldest clubs of countries. We had a team that attended,” said Smith, immediate past president of the Milwaukee Curling Club. The Milwaukee Club has celebrated its 187th anniversary, according to Smith, whose aunt and uncle played in the Milwaukee area in the 1950s and she learned as a child with her parents in Green Bay and central Illinois before returning to the Milwaukee area. After college, she started curling again in the late 1980s. Like Sharkus, Smith touted the social aspect of the sport. “It’s a great social sport. A great way to get involved,” she said, noting there are lots of opportunities to participate. “I could curl nine times a



Eileen Mozinski Schmidt/Special for TimeOut

Curlers playing at the Kettle Moraine Classic Bonspiel in Delafield this month. Steve Everett, who coordinates communications for the Kettle Moraine Curling Club, said the intermingling of players of all levels is a unique feature of the sport.

week in mixed or women’s events,” she said. In Wauwatosa, the curling club celebrated its 100th anniversary this month, according to the club website. This year is also the 75th anniversary of the Tosa Juniors program, the site said. The Olympic Games do tend to drive some interest, according to Smith, who noted that the Milwaukee Club offers learn-to-curl sessions throughout the season. She said the club is home to a wide variety of people, from younger couples to earlier retirees and more. “It’s a mixed bag of people,” said Smith, who said learning to curl has some parallels to golf. “It takes time, the mechanics. It’s like golf where you get better and better,” she said. ‘Nuanced’ strategy The Milwaukee Club hosts four area high schools attend the club for physical education classes. For classes and learn to curl sessions, the club provides equipment for participants, including brooms, grippers and sliders for shoes, according to Smith, who said the curling stones are permanent fixtures of the club. While the time it takes to master the sport varies by individual, Smith said a general time frame for getting a good

handle on curling is about three years. “The skill part is easier. The strategy has more nuances; it is like billiards combined with bowling technique,” she said. “If you make it through three years you’re going to be doing pretty well.” Smith described the sport’s strategy as “open.” “In curling you talk a lot in front of your opponents,” she said. “That is thought-provoking.” Teams are made up of four players, which she said adds to the social component of the game. “You can jump in a car and travel all over the country and curl,” Smith said. She agreed with Sharkus that the team and social aspects of the game are a real draw. “The fun aspect, I can’t even describe it,” she said. “There’s no other sport like it. You’ll feel it when you come to the club.” Sharkus echoed the thought. “I think everybody needs to give it a try. You just don’t know what you’re missing,” he said. And Tom Godar, of Oconomowoc and a member of the Kettle Moraine Curling Club, noted that curling is a way to stay active during Wisconsin’s long winter. “It makes the winter fly by,” he said.

Learn to curl

■ The Kettle Moraine Curling Club offers sessions for those looking to learn the sport. The next is 6 to 9 p.m. Feb. 20 at the club at 2630 Oakwood Road, between Nagawicka Lake and Highway 83 in Delafield. Register online. All participants need are clean tennis shoes to prevent salt from getting on the ice. The club offers all other equipment needed. The temperature on the ice is in the mid-30 degrees. Visit [kmcurlingclub.com](http://kmcurlingclub.com) to register or for more information. ■ The Milwaukee Curling Club is hosting learn to curl sessions in February and March. The club offers use of equipment needed. Visit [milwaukeeecurling-club.com](http://milwaukeeecurling-club.com) to register or for more information.

Membership

■ The Kettle Moraine Curling Club is always open to new members. Visit [kmcurlingclub.com](http://kmcurlingclub.com) to learn more. The club’s season typically runs from early October through March. The club is offering a special membership deal in honor of the Olympics for potential members now through March, according to Sharkus. ■ To register for membership in the Milwaukee Curling Club, visit <https://milwaukeeecurlingclub.com/signup.php>. ■ For information about the Wauwatosa Curling Club, including membership and upcoming bonspiels, visit [wauwatosacurlingclub.com](http://wauwatosacurlingclub.com).

Corporate events

The Kettle Moraine Club offers events for corporate groups ranging in size from five to 50 people, which organizers said is a good way to work on team building. The club supplies teachers and trainers to help newcomers learn how to curl. For more information, contact the club via email at [kmcurlingclub@gmail.com](mailto:kmcurlingclub@gmail.com) or by calling 262-367-8862.



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# The last Coon Feed?

## Event in jeopardy due to low pelt prices

By Dan Colton  
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DELAFIELD — Ninety-five years after its first iteration, the Delafield American Legion Post 196 hosted what might have been the best-attended Coon Feed dinner on Jan. 29 — but it could also have been the last.

According to the post's adjutant Mark Corgiat, the event raised well above \$6,000 and served more than 320 people.

It was as busy, or busier, than Corgiat has ever seen it during his 11 years on the job; yet he worries that next year will pass by without the post's most popular event being held.

Due to falling pelt prices, the post's two raccoon trappers might bow out in 2023, according to Corgiat.

"It could very well be the last year," he said Monday. "Time will tell."

Lower prices for raccoon pelts coincides with higher prices for food items and merchandise. Corgiat said the price for 60 event T-shirts increased by \$90 alone this year.

However, Corgiat said, the Legion still managed to raise more money without needing to charge more for food or other items.

### Low sale price reflects decreased demand

Kurt Kernan of Fort Atkinson has been trapping raccoons for 47 years, many of them for the Delafield American Legion's Coon Feed. But the animals' meat doesn't make him money; profits from the animals are associated with their fur pelts.

Ten or 15 years ago, Kernan said he was selling individual pelts for \$25 on average. That price has been slashed to \$5 or below today, he said.

When he was selling high, Kernan said, the majority of fur was shipped to Russia from auction. But he believes a dip in oil prices since then has stripped the Russian economy of extra spending power. Now, profits from raccoon trapping don't cover his gasoline expenses.

"I think it's the global economy and demand," he said, adding that fewer and fewer trappers were pursuing raccoons as a result.

Without trapping pressure, Kernan said he's concerned a bolstered raccoon population will expand and threaten other species like ground-nesting birds or the crops in farmers' fields. He's been trapping at some farms for 30 years and said the farmers appreciate removal of raccoons in their areas.

"I hope it comes back," Kernan said.

"I'm sure the farmers do, too."

Still, Kernan hasn't given the Legion a definitive "No," and doesn't want to let anybody down if he decides to bow out next year.

### Early arrivals, late departures, plenty of competition

The crowd appeared to be enjoying each other's company. The mood remained festive throughout the night.

Food was served at 4:30 p.m., but people were already arriving hours early. By 8 p.m., Corgiat said, "We were still going strong." Only a few spoonfuls of the roasted raccoon meat remained by the time everyone was done.

The big turnout was a welcome surprise, according to Corgiat, especially after last year's raccoon feed was canceled because of COVID-19. He can't be certain why this year's event provided such a robust turnout, but he speculated it might have something to do with taking 2021 off.

Some adjustments were made in recognition of the pandemic, Corgiat said, and takeout meals were offered for those who wanted to dine elsewhere.

Numerous other community events took place the same day, including the Oconomowoc Chili Fest and the Candlelight Hike and Ski at Lapham Peak. Factoring that in, Corgiat said he's left feeling thankful for his event's success.

"This group was just special to me," Corgiat said of the big turnout. "They were just happy, just wanted to come out and have a good time. Why is that? I'm not sure. But it ... was rather remarkable."

### Hopeful for the future

Should the post's trappers decide to hang up their hats next year, Corgiat said he would be open to working with someone new.

He is only interested in sourcing trapped raccoons as opposed to raccoons hunted on a game farm.

"If we had someone who would be interested in working with us ... that would be fun to just keep it going," he said. "What (event) today goes for 95 years? This is our signature event. This is what we're known for, and we're really proud of that."

Money raised from the event will go to fund the post and their sponsorships of Scout Troop 49 out of Summit, various youth sports and the Badger Boys program, according to Corgiat.



Dan Colton/Enterprise Staff

American Post Legion 196 Adjutant Mark Corgiat rings the "Virgin Cooner" bell to signify a new member of the raccoon dinner club. In this case, it's Mike Steinbauer of Monches.

# Four Flower Grannies honored at Oconomowoc wedding

By Rebecca Seymour  
Special to the Enterprise

OCONOMOWOC — It was a beautiful sunny afternoon recently as friends and family of Hanna Nicholson and Stephen Pralle arrived for their wedding at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in downtown Oconomowoc.

As the first notes of Pachelbel's 'Canon in D' signaled the beginning of the ceremony, guests turned in anticipation to catch a glimpse of the wedding party. Let's face it, oftentimes the flower girl tends to steal the spotlight as she enters the church in front of the bride. Not at this wedding.

Instead, the crowd was surprised as not one, but four beaming flower girls dressed in elegant sparkling outfits walked together down the aisle, expertly scattering white rose petals from little baskets.

"My granddaughter Hanna asked us all to be flower girls for her wedding and it was wonderful. We were deeply honored to be a part of it. We called ourselves the flower grannies and I think people really got a kick out of it," said 86-year-old Joyce Welzin, laughing.

The flower grannies included Hanna's grandmothers Joyce Welzin and Gwen Nicholson of Oconomowoc, and Stephen's grandmothers Gloria Grieger of Pewaukee, and Vanda Pralle of Huntley, Illinois.

Mother of the bride, Paula Nicholson of Pewaukee said she knew the impact of having four grandmothers honored in such a special way during the ceremony.

"We are so blessed to have all four grandmothers at the wedding. They were all so excited and over the moon to have the chance to carry the baskets and throw the flowers. Everybody thought it was the best," added Paula.

Gwen Nicholson taught 2nd grade at St. Paul's Lutheran School for 27 years and had four of five of her grandchildren, including Hanna in her classroom over the years.



Submitted photos

Pictured from left are grandmothers of the groom, Gloria Grieger and Valda Pralle (sitting), grandmother of the bride Joyce Welzin, bride Hanna Nicholson Pralle, groom Stephen Pralle, and grandmother of the bride Gwen Nicholson. All four grandmothers were honored to be flower grannies during the wedding ceremony held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Oconomowoc on Jan. 29.



Flower grannies Gloria Grieger (grandmother of the groom) and Gwen Nicholson (grandmother of the bride) during the wedding ceremony of Hanna Nicholson and Stephen Pralle on Jan. 29 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Oconomowoc.

"Hanna has always wanted to be married at St. Paul's. My heart was overloaded with joy as I walked down the aisle as a flower granny," she said with emotion. "So many people commented to us how special it was. It was very meaningful, and I don't think I will ever forget it."

"My granddaughter Hanna asked us all to be flower girls for her wedding and it was wonderful. We were deeply honored to be a part of it."

— Joyce Welzin



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\*New subscribers only. Those who have not subscribed in 60 days. Payment must accompany order to qualify for offer. Waukesha County addresses only. Offer expires 3/31/2022.

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