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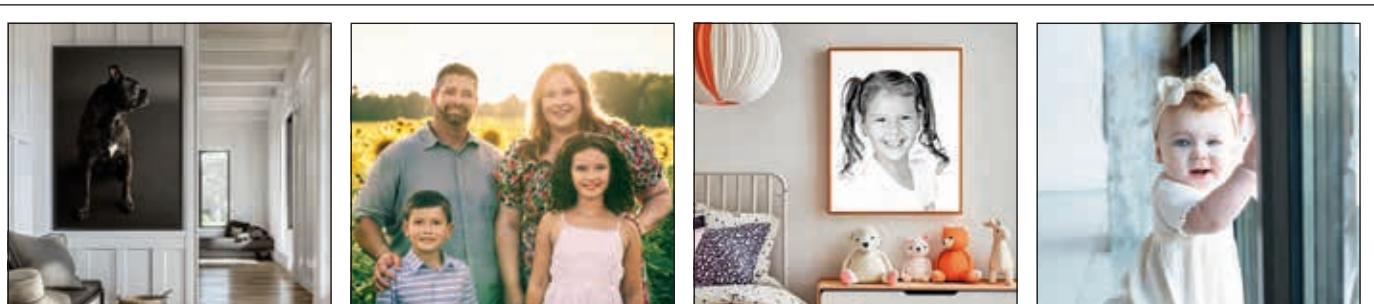
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## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**FRANCHISE OWNER** John Hildebrand  
**PUBLISHER AND** 920 254 4884  
**SALES INQUIRIES** john.hildebrand@n2co.com  
**CREATIVE TEAM** The N2 Company Design Team

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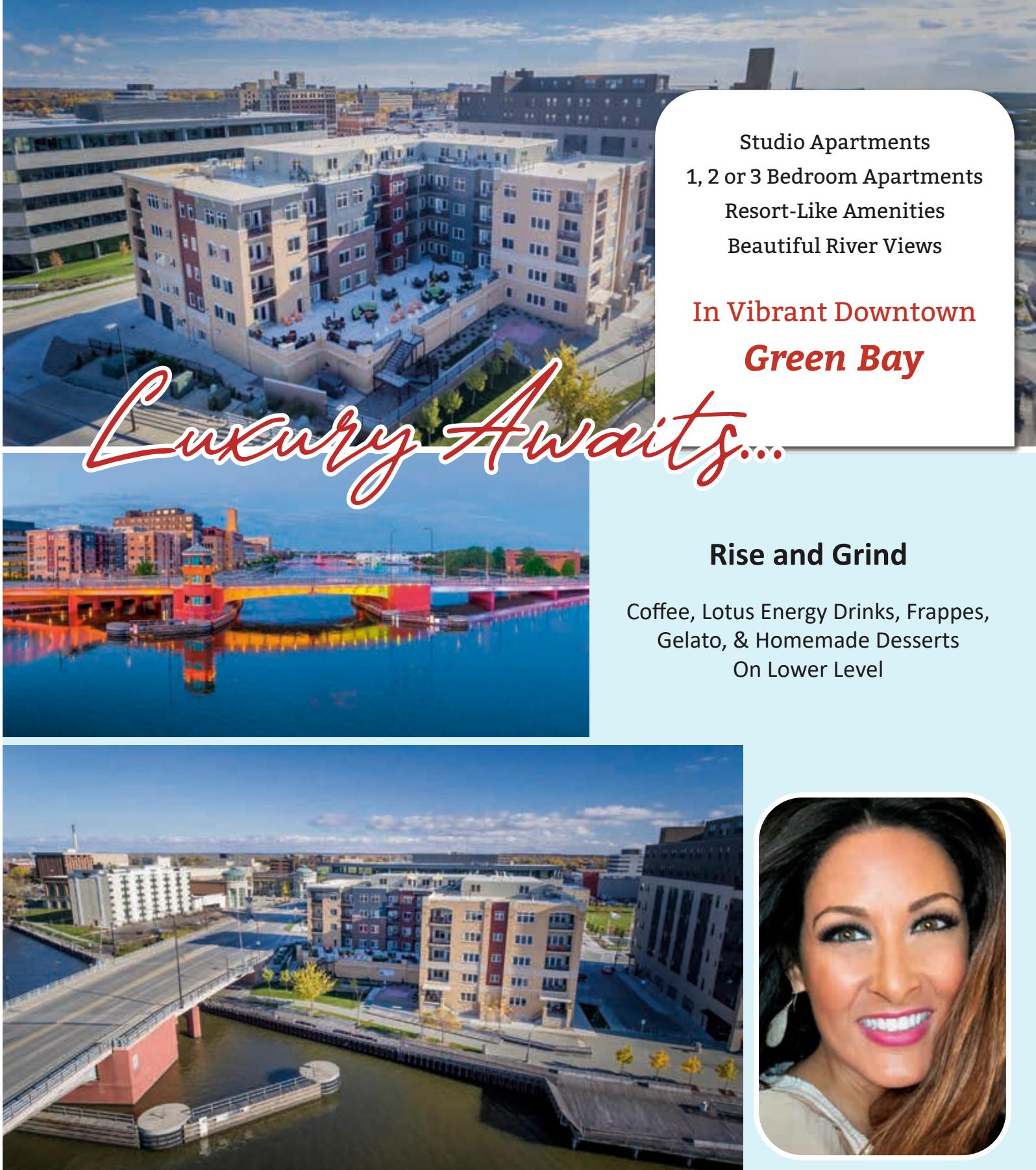
  

CONTENT COMMITTEE	
John Hildebrand - <a href="mailto:john.hildebrand@n2co.com">john.hildebrand@n2co.com</a>	
Mary K. Bishop - <a href="mailto:maryk.bishop4@gmail.com">maryk.bishop4@gmail.com</a>	
Eva Vitale - <a href="mailto:vitale.eva@gmail.com">vitale.eva@gmail.com</a>	
Verna Kreutz - <a href="mailto:vernafk@new.rr.com">vernafk@new.rr.com</a>	
Sarah Krause - <a href="mailto:sarah.krause1028@gmail.com">sarah.krause1028@gmail.com</a>	
Karen Gorecki - <a href="mailto:gbpack_fan@hotmail.com">gbpack_fan@hotmail.com</a>	
Karen Doster - <a href="mailto:dosterkaren@gmail.com">dosterkaren@gmail.com</a>	

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# TEAM

## AREA DIRECTOR



Area Director  
John Hildebrand  
920 254 4884  
john.hildebrand@n2co.com

## RESIDENT CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTENT COMMITTEE



Eva Vitale  
Volunteer  
Resident Writer  
vitale.eva@gmail.com



Jena Cool  
Ad Strategist  
greenbay.ads@  
n2co.com



Verna Kreutz



Karen Doster



Mary K. Bishop



Karen Gorecki



Sarah Krause



Social Media Strategist  
Emily Rae Schutte  
Emily Writes

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# Publishers Note

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND

## DEAR INDIAN TRAILS AND THORNBERRY CREEK RESIDENTS,

Over the past year, it has been my privilege to get to know so many of you in this wonderful community. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives and allowing me to play a small part in sharing your stories, milestones, and celebrations with your neighbors. This is truly a special place, and I am grateful for every conversation, submission, and warm greeting along the way.

This past year has also brought meaningful changes in my own life, and after much consideration, I will be beginning a new chapter. With that, the decision has been made to discontinue publication of *Stroll*.

It has been an honor to provide your monthly neighborhood magazine. I hope the spirit of connection continues to grow here as neighbors keep sharing, supporting, and getting to know one another.

Thank you to everyone who submitted stories, photos, updates, and ideas. *Stroll* would not have been possible without your enthusiasm and willingness to celebrate each other. You helped create something meaningful.

To our dedicated sponsors—thank you for your trust and support. Your partnership made this publication thrive, and your commitment to the residents of this community has always been evident. We encourage everyone to continue supporting these local businesses that help make the neighborhood stronger.

Thank you again for welcoming me into this community and for supporting *Stroll*. I have truly enjoyed meeting many of you and being part of what makes Indian Trails and Thornberry Creek such special places to live.

All the best,  
John Hildebrand

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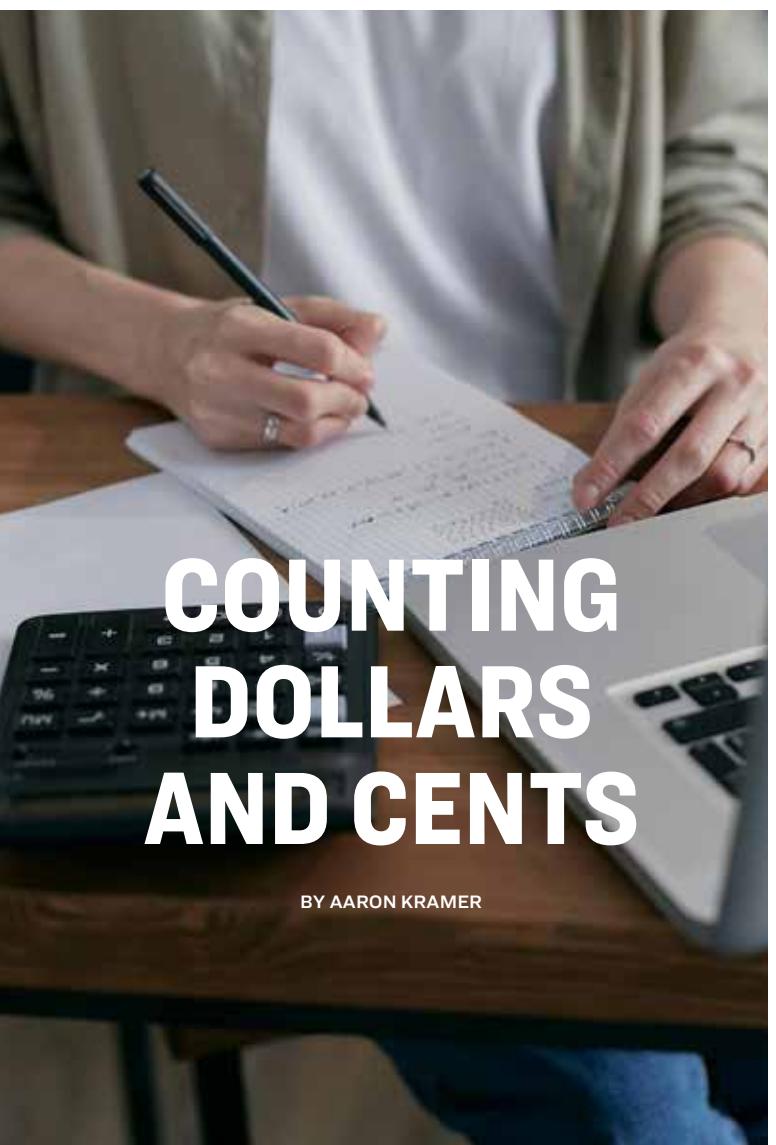
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# COUNTING DOLLARS AND CENTS

BY AARON KRAMER



Work on the 2026 budget will have been completed by the time this column appears, but I wanted to take this opportunity to point out some of the important parts of the financial planning document which will guide our Village this coming year. First, I have been an advocate of zero-based budgeting from my first budget as an administrator (in 2010), and this is how the 2026 budget was crafted. Each line is reviewed; each number is checked and double-checked; each dollar and cent is counted (even the pennies, despite their recent obsolescence.)

Second, this year's budget had three "mountains" to climb before the first numbers were even calculated:

- 1) A twelve percent increase in health insurance,
- 2) the full impact of the 2023 Fire Station bond on the Debt Service Fund (an increase in annual payments from \$619,370 in 2023 to \$1,036,891 in 2026), and
- 3) no increase in the payment from Lawrence toward the Hobart-Lawrence Police Department (HLPD) for 2026, though this was offset partially by an increase in revenue retained by Hobart next year. Staffing changes were minimal - the budget included a proposal to add one (1) part-time position to the Village Office staff.

As a result, the overall tax levy has increased 5.6 percent to \$3,813,462.58, with the entire increase being allocated to paying off the Village's debt. This will result in an increase of 15 cents in the mill rate (\$3.88 to \$4.03 per \$1,000 of equalized valuation), which translates to a roughly \$45 increase in the Village portion of a tax bill for a \$300,000 home. Overall, the Village will make a record \$6,428,729.55 in debt payments in 2026, reducing the overall debt portfolio from \$54,839,008 on January 1, 2026, to \$48,410,278 by the end of the year.

For more financial information, please go to the Village website for more financial information - <https://www.hobartwi.gov/village-administrator>. On behalf of the Village, thank you for the opportunity to serve you in 2025 as we look forward to 2026!

## Don't Forget Your Dog This Holiday Season!

INCLUDE YOUR DOG'S 2026 LICENSE ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST!

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# Red Bird Martini

BY PAT CONWAY



Looking for a cocktail that's as festive as it is refreshing? This jewel-toned martini blends bright cranberry, rich pomegranate, and a hint of citrus for a drink that feels perfect for the holiday season—or any special gathering. Balanced with a splash of vodka, a touch of dry vermouth, and a dash of bitters, it's smooth, vibrant, and beautifully simple to make. Garnish with cranberries or pomegranate seeds for an elegant finishing touch. Cheers!

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 1/2 oz. Vodka
- 1/2 oz. Orange liquor (Cointreau)
- 1/2 oz. Dry Vermouth
- 3 oz. Cranberry juice
- 1 oz. Pomegranate juice
- 2 shakes Peychauds Bitters
- 1 cup ice
- Cranberry for garnish or seeds from pomegranate

**DIRECTIONS:**

Combine all but cranberries in shaker with ice. Shake to chill. Pour into chilled martini glass, garnish and serve.

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# THREE DAYS IN BORDEAUX

BY EVA M. VITALE, VOLUNTEER WRITER



My parents first introduced me to luxury cruises, traveling from New York to Sicily on the *Leonardo da Vinci* in the late sixties. It was an opportunity to meet my Italian family. I was 11 years old. It would take me 50 years to step aboard another cruise ship.

Although my husband and I have enjoyed traveling for years, he believed cruising was *for the elderly*. And so, we would not cruise until I retired. Looking back on that decision, we wasted so much time.

This past April, we found ourselves aboard a cruise ship originating in Lisbon, Portugal. This story shares our adventures in Bordeaux, France. The name alone conjures images of red grapes on the vine and the joy of sampling their flavor. Bordeaux is synonymous with full-bodied red wines and makes this visit one to truly savor.

We arrived in Bordeaux on a Sunday morning, traveling up the Garonne River and docking alongside the beautiful, well-maintained Old Town. Locals were sunning themselves along the riverbanks, awaiting our arrival. We disembarked and spent much of the day wandering through the town, enjoying the old-world French architecture. A music festival was happening in the large public park just a short walk away. That same evening, we rode through the beautifully lit streets on a twilight tour of major city sites—the Place de la Bourse, the Cathedral, the old bridge and the new one, and the elegant shopping district.

The next day, we headed to the Saint-Émilion wine region and the Château Fleur de Lisse, where they specialize in Grand Cru Bordeaux wines. The new owner constructed a modern winery, complete with automated monitoring equipment and stainless-steel casks for fermentation. After walking the vineyard and winery, we were treated to a tasting of several of their 2020 and 2021 wines. Our guide shared that 2020 was an excellent year.



We found ourselves on Rue Notre-Dame and ventured into an antique shop filled with unique French porcelain, art, crystal, and unusual artifacts.

From there, we explored the town of Saint-Émilion, where a wall of an ancient monastery still stands outside the city wall. Our guide led us through the winding streets up to the top of the town. There we found wine-tasting shops, incredible views of the surrounding landscape, and even an ancient underground church. We learned that the town specializes in the original macaroons (not the modern versions) and “Les Petits Canelés”—a traditional Bordeaux pastry with a caramelized crust and soft, custard-like center, originally created by nuns in the 18th century. The best way to discover them, of course, is to taste them. By late afternoon, we headed back to the city.

On our final day, we took a walking tour of Bordeaux and got up close to the shops and people of the city. We found ourselves on Rue Notre-Dame and ventured into an antique shop filled with unique French porcelain, art, crystal, and unusual artifacts.

Tired and hungry, we stopped at “Chez Dupont,” a restaurant specializing in oysters—my husband’s favorite. But alas, they had run out.

Our last outing was a visit to the wine museum, *La Cité du Vin*. With modern architecture resembling the pop of a cork, the museum did not disappoint. Full of fabulous displays, videos, information, statistics, and rich history, we could have spent an entire day there. Most importantly, it had a colossal wine room and shop. A true *must-see*.





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## A Flag, A Memory, A Moment: Honoring 9/11 at Lambeau

BY MARY KAY BISHOP



I was invited by my dear friend Doug Storhoff to carry our American flag with his wife, Diane, for the 9/11 Packers game against the Washington Commanders. When Doug asked, I felt deeply honored—humbled, really—to take part in something so meaningful on such a solemn day.

In the week leading up to the game, my mind kept returning to the memories of 9/11 and the impact it had on our nation and my own family. Like so many Americans, I remember exactly what I was doing when I heard about the attacks. I can still feel that heavy, sick feeling in my stomach as I drove to the Milwaukee airport to pick up my husband Rusty, who was flying home from Germany once the skies reopened. Along the highways, people stood on overpasses holding American flags and candles. Those images are forever etched in my mind.

In the weeks after 9/11, I helped organize the cheerleaders from the school where I taught—and the school my children attended—to hold a massive American flag during the

Star-Spangled Banner. The flag was so enormous and heavy that we had little kids crawl underneath it to help keep it raised. Their only instruction was simple: *Don't let our American flag touch the ground.*

At the time, our son Will was in eighth grade, already fascinated by the military. After 9/11, it was all we could do to keep him from signing up the moment he turned 18. He later joined ROTC at Madison, served in the U.S. Army, and deployed to Afghanistan. Our Thornberry neighbors supported us in every way imaginable—flying American flags, sending care packages, and helping ship more than 1,000 CamoQuilts to his soldiers. I'll never forget Will saying, "Mom, I don't worry about me. I worry about my men." That sentence still brings tears to my eyes.

All of those memories came rushing back during the week as we prepared to carry the flag at Lambeau Field. My patriotic friend and former TC neighbor, Diane, was right beside me. And let me tell you—if there is fun to be had, it is with Diane Storhoff! We practiced with the flag in the Hudson Center before carrying it through the crowd heading into Lambeau. I had worried the flag might be so heavy that I'd struggle to carry it—but surrounded by so many helping hands, it felt light. That's true of life, too: when we carry things together, the burden becomes easier for everyone.

The Star-Spangled Banner, played by a lone trumpet, echoed hauntingly through the stadium. The crowd fell silent, illuminated only by thousands of glowing cell phones. Then came the flyover—four F-35s from the 115th Wisconsin Fighter Wing soaring overhead with perfection and power.

We learned that the Green Bay Packers are the only NFL team that holds an American flag ceremony at every home game. Thank you, Green Bay Packers, for honoring our country with such steadfast tradition.

What an incredible privilege it was to carry our American flag on 9/11 at Lambeau Field. It is an experience Diane and I will cherish for the rest of our lives.



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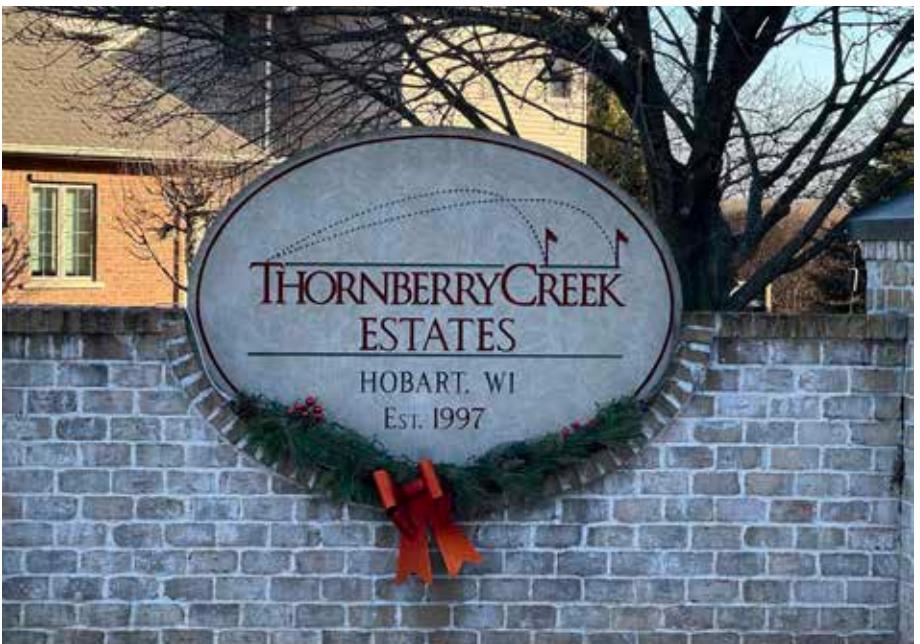
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# About Thornberry Creek Community Association

BY EVA VITALE, PRESIDENT THORNBERRY CREEK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



Our neighborhood organization, the **Thornberry Creek Community Association (TCCA)**, is an unincorporated non-profit association. Membership is voluntary, with nominal annual dues that allow us to provide key services aligned with our mission:

**“Promoting a safe and beautiful place to live, with a spirit of community.”**

TCCA supports the entire Thornberry Creek area, consisting of Thornberry Creek Estates and its subsequent additions—Barnard Woods, Silverthorn Estates—and our independently developed properties. In essence, the Association represents all homes accessed through Pine Tree, Hillcrest, and our two Trout Creek entrances at Windemer and Crooked Stick.

**The Association’s Board is committed to serving our members and residents by:**

- **Planting, caring for, and improving landscaping** at our four community entrances, and preserving our unique masonry structures to create a beautiful welcome for all residents and guests.
- **Creating opportunities for neighbors** to meet, mingle, and have fun.
- **Establishing community guidelines** to help maximize property values and working collaboratively with residents to maintain the appearance and health of our neighborhood.
- **Promoting safety awareness** and helping to address concerns where possible.
- **Providing conveniences**, such as area dog stations that help keep our community clean.
- **Representing our community** with the Village of Hobart, respecting its jurisdiction, and **engaging with Thornberry Creek at Oneida Golf Course management** when appropriate, while maximizing the golf course’s positive impact on our community.

- **Supporting philanthropic and environmental initiatives** with volunteers who help the larger area and Village achieve shared goals.
- **Keeping members informed** through Association communications and alerts on our Facebook page. We also collaborate with *Stroll* magazine to highlight events and the special people who make our community unique.

Our website — **Thornberry Creek Community Association** — provides timely information to residents and to the broader community. Members and residents can always reach us with questions or concerns at [info@thornberrycreekcommunity.com](mailto:info@thornberrycreekcommunity.com).

Our ongoing efforts, along with the dedication of many volunteers, help make Thornberry Creek a truly wonderful place to live.

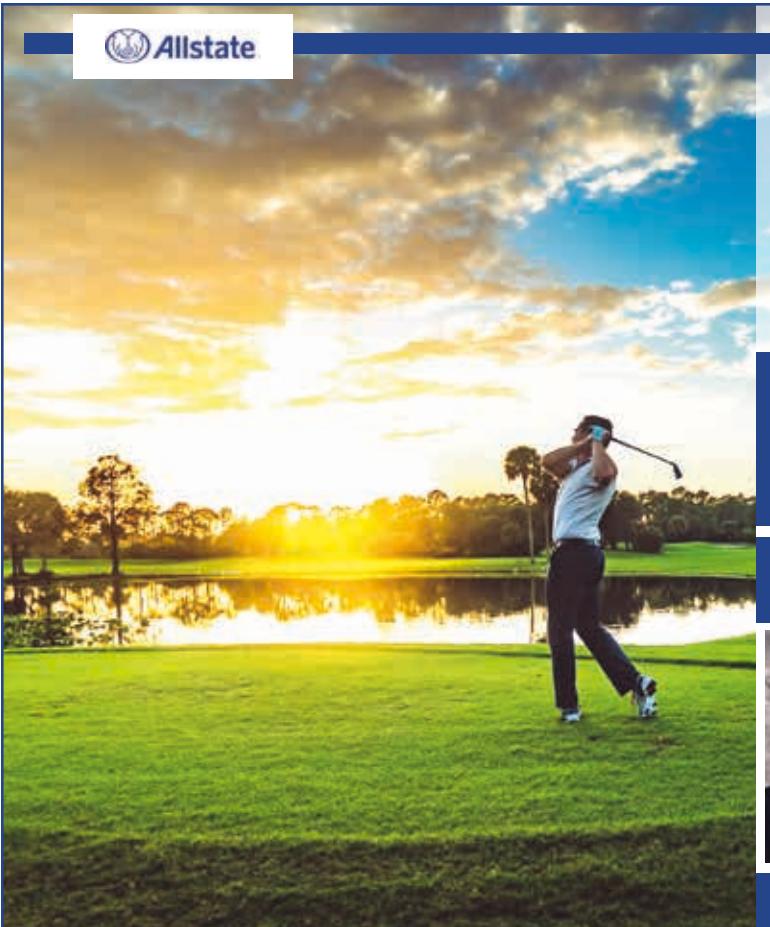
## THORNBERRY CREEK WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Your TCCA is sponsoring a Food Drive to benefit Paul’s Pantry.

- Simply grab a shopping bag and some dry goods from your pantry. Examples: soup, pasta, pasta sauce, beans, crackers, salt, etc.
- Place the bag at your front door by Dec 3, and we will pick it up.

If you miss the date, you can drop off your bag(s) on Dec. 4-5 at 1305 S. Sedona Cir.

We'll accept donations (for milk and other perishables) as well. Thank you for your generosity.



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# Holiday Magic!

Find festive words and hidden surprises in this holiday-themed word search—perfect for a cozy, brain-teasing break!

BY CAROLINE PERROTT

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Candlelight	G	M	U	F	E	D	N	X	G	R	Y	E	I	A	H
Evergreen	A	P	E	Q	C	V	R	O	W	X	G	Z	F	T	B
Snowflake	N	P	M	X	A	B	E	E	W	O	I	J	T	I	H
Gift	G	V	I	K	N	W	O	R	I	F	Q	Z	J	V	I
Christmas	E	M	S	K	D	R	U	N	G	D	L	L	X	I	N
Mistletoe	L	H	T	K	L	E	C	A	F	R	E	A	B	T	S
Nativity	R	O	L	W	E	A	H	T	M	I	E	L	K	Y	W
Ornament	I	R	E	A	L	T	R	I	E	E	R	E	E	E	I
Hanukkah	B	N	T	N	I	H	I	N	P	S	N	E	N	H	N
Menorah	B	A	O	Z	G	K	S	S	X	N	L	O	J	T	T
Bonfire	O	M	E	A	H	E	T	E	U	O	L	S	R	B	E
Winter	N	E	I	A	T	W	M	L	F	W	B	R	S	A	R
Dreidel	J	N	L	V	M	E	A	H	A	N	U	K	K	A	H
Kwanzaa	T	T	L	G	P	Y	S	C	F	Z	S	A	N	T	A
Ribbon															
Santa															
Wreath															
Tinsel															
Angel															
Snow															

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The ice is tricky, and so is this scene! Can you notice the 15 changes among the skaters in this chilly challenge?

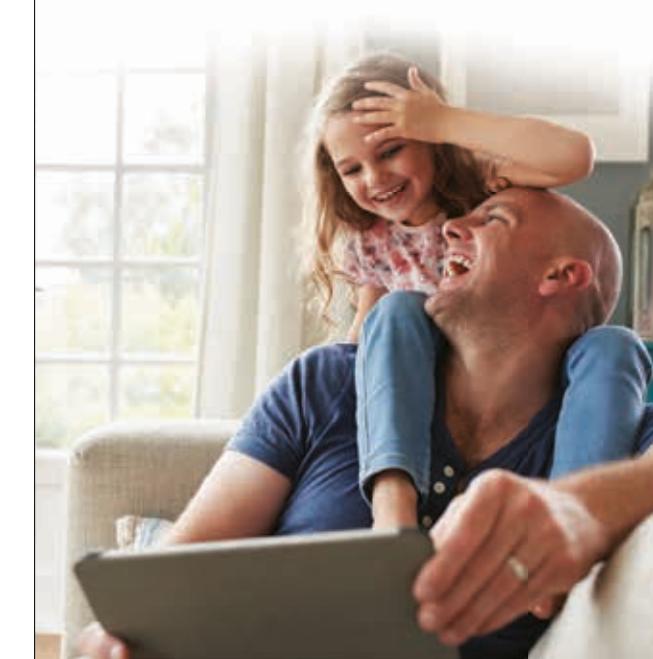


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## A Month of Fun, Learning, and Community at Hillcrest

BY SYB BUHR

**N**ovember was a lively and memorable month at Hillcrest, filled with learning, laughter, and special moments that brought our school community even closer together.

We kicked things off with **Gnome Game Night**, held in partnership with our friends at Gnome Games. They arrived with an impressive variety of board and card games, giving families a chance to discover new favorites and enjoy friendly competition. Kids played side-by-side with friends and family, and several lucky participants walked away with

PTO-sponsored door prizes. The evening was a wonderful blend of fun, strategy, and community spirit.

Students also took part in the **Hillcrest Knowledge-A-Thon**, our annual fall academic fundraiser. Each grade level dove into study questions, then worked together in small groups to put their knowledge to the test. The event brought out the very best in teamwork, perseverance, and school pride.

Of course, **Halloween** added extra excitement to the month. Classrooms celebrated with themed parties, games, and costumes that filled the hallways with creativity and wide smiles—always a highlight of the fall season.

Our third graders went on a memorable field trip, spending time at **Bay Tech in Pulaski** and the **District 82 Pinball Arcade**. The day provided a unique mix of hands-on learning and interactive fun that students will surely remember.

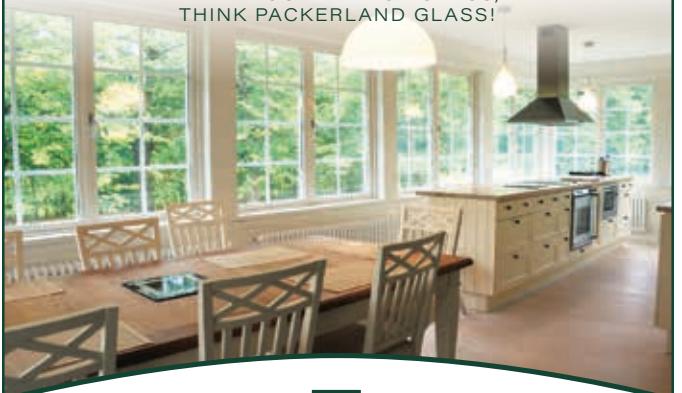
As November comes to a close, we wish all Hillcrest families a warm and happy Thanksgiving filled with rest, gratitude, and time together.

Looking ahead to December, we're excited for the return of the **Holiday Shop**, where students can choose gifts for loved ones, as well as the delivery of our always-popular holiday wreath orders.

Thank you for being a part of every event and celebration—your continued support is what makes Hillcrest such a special place. November was truly a month to remember!

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# BASTEN FAMILY

**& LOVING LIFE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

BUILDING ROOTS, RAISING BOYS

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND • PHOTOS BY SHANNON PITEL PHOTOGRAPHY



You may have seen the Basten boys racing down the sidewalk on bikes, hockey sticks in tow, or fishing poles slung over their shoulders. For Kelli and Drew Basten, raising their four energetic sons—Hal (7), Cliff (5), Micky (3), and baby Crosby (1)—in the community they both grew up in has been a dream come true.

#### A FAMILY FULL OF ENERGY, CURIOSITY, AND HEART

The Basten household is lively, creative, and always on the go. Their oldest, **Hal**, is a first-grader at Hillcrest who loves tinkering, building, crafting, and exploring nature. If he's not fishing, he's sketching... or chasing down whatever critter crosses his path. He also enjoys hockey, baseball, tennis, and golf.

Right behind him is **Cliff**, just 16 months younger and in kindergarten at Hillcrest. Cliff shares many of Hal's passions but brings his own personality to the mix—quiet and shy around new people, but a one-man comedy show at home. He's athletic, coordinated, and so light on his feet that gymnastics may be in his future.

Three-year-old **Micky**, a preschooler at Shepherd's Kids, is the family's tiny comedian-turned-strong-willed threenager. He adores dinosaurs, trucks, Power Rangers, and riding on his papa's four-wheeler—always hustling to keep up with his big brothers.

And then there's sweet **Crosby**, who just turned one and has recently taken off walking. He divides his time between Mom, Mimi, and Nana—and currently enjoys reorganizing (or unorganizing) the kitchen cabinets. Story time, open gyms, and Let's Run Around Green Bay are among his favorite activities.

#### DEEP LOCAL ROOTS

Both Kelli and Drew grew up in the Green Bay area—Kelli in Ashwaubenon and Drew in Hobart—so the decision to move to this neighborhood in 2016 felt natural. With Kelli's parents moving nearby and Drew's already established in the community, the couple knew they wanted to raise their family here. Since moving in, they've transformed their home, including adding a sport court that becomes a full hockey rink each winter—one of the boys' favorite features.



#### COLLEGE, CAREERS & A SHARED PASSION FOR HOMES

Kelli graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Elementary Education and an Entrepreneurial Certificate. She spent years teaching kindergarten, first grade, and later working as a reading interventionist. Teaching barre classes at Pure Barre Green Bay and Pure Barre Howard Suamico—owned by Drew's sister—has been her energetic outlet since 2016.

Inspired by Drew's long family history in real estate—his father founded Basten Home Inspection over 30 years ago—Kelli recently decided to step into real estate herself. She now works with Shorewest Realtors. Meanwhile, Drew owns and operates Basten Home Inspection with his father, and also manages rental properties and home flips.

Together, the pair love serving neighborhoods they care deeply about. As Kelli says, "With me in real estate and Drew handling inspections, we're excited to help families in the areas we love."

#### LIFE WITH THE BOYS

The Basten kids are active in hockey, baseball, tennis, golf, and neighborhood

adventures. They're often spotted at Hillcrest Park, Pamperin Park, and on long family walks—where fishing poles now come along by default.

The family also stays engaged in community events, especially those at Howard Commons, Titletown, and Green Bay Community Church, where the boys thrive in their kids' programming. Summers are filled with cabin trips up north, and the family frequently travels to Florida when they can.

#### REMEMBERING GOOSE

The family once had a beloved English Cream Golden Retriever named Goose, known to many neighbors as the gentle dog lounging in the driveway. While they're not quite ready for another pup yet, they look forward to adding a dog back into their lives someday.

#### CELEBRATING FAMILY & BUILDING COMMUNITY

With both extended families living nearby—and both coming from large families—holidays and special occasions are full, festive, and lively. Cousins abound, laughter is guaranteed, and memories are plentiful.

Philanthropy is woven into the family's values. Each year, Pure Barre adopts a local family at Christmas, and the Bastens involve their boys in selecting gifts. Through Shorewest, Kelli participates in fundraisers benefiting local charities. The couple also supports community causes like HER Alliance, MDA, and sports-related fundraisers in Pulaski and Green Bay.

#### WHAT THEY LOVE MOST ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

For the Bastens, the best part of living here is the people. They've made strong connections with families in both Thornberry and Indian Trails, and their kids have found friendships that feel like extended family. Longtime residents have warmly welcomed them, sharing insights and stories that have made the Bastens appreciate the area even more.

"It's special to raise our kids so close to where we grew up—and especially close to the grandparents," Kelli shares. "We truly love this community."



**"IT'S SPECIAL TO RAISE OUR KIDS SO CLOSE TO WHERE WE GREW UP—AND ESPECIALLY CLOSE TO THE GRANDPARENTS," KELLI SHARES. "WE TRULY LOVE THIS COMMUNITY."**



# MAGICAL HOLIDAY COOKIE BARS

BY KAREN DOSTER



Photo Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

If you're looking for a holiday dessert that delivers the perfect balance of sweet, salty, creamy, and crunchy, this layered cookie bar is about to become your new seasonal favorite. With a buttery chocolate-chip cookie base, a rich mascarpone center, pops of colorful M&M's, and the irresistible crunch of pretzels, each bite is a little celebration. Finished with a drizzle of white chocolate and a sprinkle of crushed candy canes, these bars are as fun to make as they are to share—ideal for cookie exchanges, family gatherings, or cozy nights in. Happy baking!

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup Wisconsin Mascarpone cheese (8 ounces)
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup confectioners sugar
- 1 cup pretzel twists
- 1/2 cup red and green M&Ms

**TOPPINGS**

- 8 ounces white baking chocolate, chopped
- 1/4 cup crushed candy canes

**BAR INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
2. Cream butter and sugars in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the two eggs and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda in another bowl; gradually add to butter mixture. Fold in chocolate chips.
3. Spread two-thirds of the dough into a greased 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Whisk the mascarpone, one egg and confectioners sugar in a small bowl and spread over dough. Dot spoonfuls of remaining dough over top.
4. Press pretzels into dough. Bake for 28-32 minutes or until center is set and a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. (Do not overbake.) Immediately, lightly press M&Ms into top. Cool completely. Refrigerate overnight.

**TOPPINGS INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Melt chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl on 50% power in 30-second intervals, stirring until smooth. Drizzle with chocolate. Sprinkle with candy cane pieces. Allow chocolate to set before cutting into bars.

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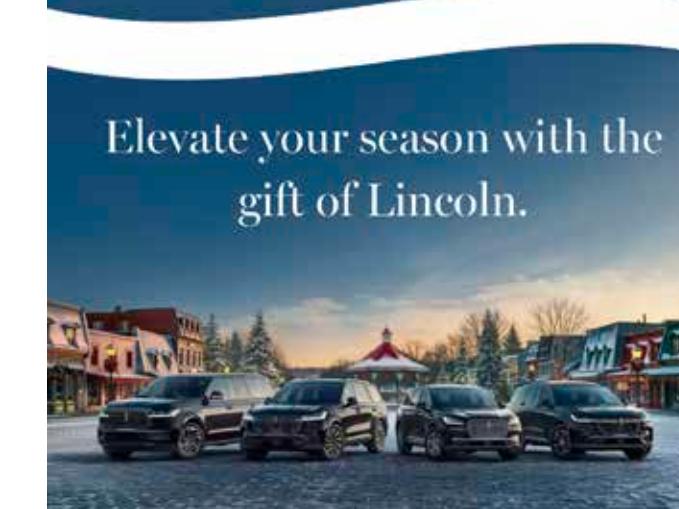
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# resident business guide

This is a current list of business owners and professionals from our neighborhood. It is an opportunity to network, qualify, and potentially build a business relationship with other successful individuals who also live here. To be included in the Resident Business Guide, email your name, business name, phone number, and email address to [john.hildebrand@n2co.com](mailto:john.hildebrand@n2co.com).

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# Moments That Matter

*A few minutes of reflection can change more than your mood. It can boost your brain, perspective, and your holiday season.*

BY CAROLINE PERROTT

Around the holidays, “being thankful” and “gracious” are buzzwords that come up a lot. And while yes, this is a great time to express those feelings, your brain actually needs it now more than ever. Gratitude isn’t just a warm feeling; it physically changes your brain. Studies show that regularly practicing thankfulness increases activity in areas linked to happiness, lowers stress hormones, and strengthens emotional resilience. In short, gratitude doesn’t just make you feel good; it helps you handle life’s challenges better.

Cultivating gratitude can be a game-changer when calendars overflow and stress levels spike. It shifts your focus from what’s missing to what’s present, turning hectic weeks into moments of connection and meaning. Even a few minutes of intentional reflection can improve your mood, sharpen your perspective, and help you respond to stress with calm instead of tension.

The science is clear. Focusing on what you’re thankful for boosts dopamine, the “feel-good” chemical, and activates brain regions that help you connect with others and feel empathy. It also reduces cortisol and calms the amygdala, lowering stress. Over time, regular gratitude rewires your brain for more positive thinking, strengthens emotional resilience, and can even improve sleep.

Practicing gratitude doesn’t have to be complicated. A quick mental note, a kind word, or a short journal entry can make a big difference. Especially during the holidays, pausing to focus on thankfulness can turn ordinary days into meaningful ones.

## GRATITUDE STARTERS

Bookmark these prompts for daily reflection:

- What traditions make this time of year feel meaningful?
- Who in your life made a difference this week?
- What beautiful things do you see around you?
- What small moment brought you joy today?
- What challenge taught you something valuable?
- What do you often take for granted that deserves recognition?
- What’s one thing about yourself you’re proud of this year?

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