

Good NEIGHBORS

A Publication of the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce

EASTTROY.ORG

MARCH 2021

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Q & A

You Asked, We Answered

Our First Q&A Issue

Our first Q&A issue combines two vital things: the real-life concerns of our readers and the knowledge and expertise of our community members.

Community = Magic

East Troy Lights: Here's How We Did It

Downtown East Troy twinkled like never before this December, thanks to the debut of East Troy Lights – an all new holiday light attraction.

The interactive and imaginative light display experience transported visitors to a dazzling display of lights utilizing the backdrop of the historic East Troy Village Square.

All month, people flocked to the square to walk through the lights or see the show from their vehicles.

Not only could attendees watch the shows - on the hour, every hour - but, with the help of a mobile phone, they were able to try to make their own light shows.

Q: How did the light show come to be?

Jamie Rohrer:

We finished a proof-of-concept light show in 2019, and although it was not publicly announced, thousands of people either saw the show live, on Instagram/Facebook, or

had the chance to interact with it at www.easttroylights.com.

Vanessa Lenz:

After unveiling this beta version in 2019, the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce and our entire community has worked together in 2020 to give people a unique experience in beautiful, historic downtown East Troy this holiday season.

The foundation of the project was collaboration with the East Troy Community School District (from 4K to 12), our businesses, attractions and residents coming together to make it happen.

Q. What makes East Troy Lights so special?

Jamie Rohrer:

Quite simply, community: each control box was hand crafted by local businesses and kids, the custom software running on

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



See the newly released Behind the Scenes East Troy Lights video on EastTroyLights.com!

This beautiful photo, submitted by Dogs and Dreams, instantly captured both our furry friend and photography loving hearts, winning second place (and \$100 to East Troy Brewery) in the East Troy Lights Photo Contest. See additional photos at easttroylights.com.

DOGS AND DREAMS Good Neighbors

Elegant Farmer celebrates 75 years

In celebration of its 75th anniversary, The Elegant Farmer, 1545 Main St., Mukwonago, will host a yearlong celebration featuring family fun events and a variety of delicious food specials.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

The Lowdown

The Elegant Farmer is open daily 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information, call (262) 363-6770 or visit www.elegantfarmer.com.

April 6 election heats up

Why should I vote?

We've all been told since elementary school that voting is our civic duty.

While high profile national elections draw large numbers of voters, participation in local elections are traditionally low.

If you care about East Troy, casting a vote in local elections on April 6 is a must.

Village of East Troy, Town of East Troy, Town of Troy and East Troy Community School District races are starting to heat up as several new candidates throw their hats into the ring.

You will be deciding who is responsible for many of the government functions that impact your daily life.

East Troy Community School District residents will see two referendum questions that will play a major role in the future of East Troy schools.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Author Q&A: Christina Clancy

Q. We are so excited “Shoulder Season” is based on a young woman from East Troy! How did the book come to be written and published?

I initially started a book set in the present day on Lake Beulah, but I couldn’t figure out how the characters ended up in East Troy.

I wanted them to have a connection to the old Playboy Resort in Lake Geneva, and the more I learned about it, the more drawn I was to that story, and also the ways in which Alpine Valley enlivened the community.

Somehow my character Sherri Taylor emerged in my imagination, and through her I had the opportunity to imagine the area in another time, and also the present.

My publisher offered me a two-book contract. I was a little nervous to tell my editor that my follow-up to a Cape Cod family drama was set in a Playboy Resort in small town Wisconsin.

I thought she’d think I’d “jumped the shark,” as they say, but she was open from the start.

Q. What was your writing process like with this book?

I wrote “The Second Home” like it was a hobby, and “Shoulder Season” like it was a job. That’s because with “Shoulder Season” I was writing on deadline, with just over a year to finish, and I had to conduct so much research, so there was a lot to do!

There’s a real risk in writing about real people and places. Readers with intimate knowledge of your subject matter will be distracted and annoyed by anything you get wrong. At the same time, I was writing fiction so I had to take some artistic license to use details that served the story.

I wrote most of the book at our cottage on Lake Beulah. I always seem to get a lot of writing done there—it’s also where I wrote most of “The Second Home”. Lots of my writer friends like writing in a cave, but I prefer the bright open space of the three-season porch and the view of the lake. I also got a lot done at 2894 on Main. In fact, that’s where I was when I wrote the words THE END when I completed “The Second Home.”

Kayleen also let me use the apartment above the bookstore for a few nights as I was revising “Shoulder Season.” Since Sherri grew up right on the square, it was really helpful to immerse myself in her world.

Q. Can you discuss the East Troy connection? What makes you love it here?

I was lucky to marry into a family with deep roots in East Troy.

My husband’s great-grandfather started Lacey Clancy Hardware Store on the square (imagine how thrilled I was when InkLink Books opened in that space!), and several Clancys have served as mayor and postmaster.



Writer Christina Clancy wrote most of her recently released second book, “Shoulder Season,” from East Troy.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors

My father-in-law, Lawrence Clancy, put me to shame as a storyteller. He lit up when he shared tales of his childhood exploits in and around East Troy.

I’ve always been interested in the “It’s a Wonderful Life” sort of narrative that ran through his family’s history. My husband’s grandfather wanted to leave East Troy for Chicago, but his father died so he had to return to run the hardware store.

East Troy is such a special, amazing place, but many people from small towns are drawn to the allure of “elsewhere.”

Sometimes you have to leave the place where you are from in order to appreciate it. I wanted to write about that. Although my character Sherri wants to experience life outside of East Troy (an opinion informed by her mother who never really wanted to live there), she eventually comes to appreciate what was right under her nose.

Unlike Sherri, I appreciated East Troy as an outsider. Because my husband spent all of his summers on Booth Lake, he really wanted our kids to have the same experience growing up.

We were lucky to find our cabin on Lake Beulah. I’ve always loved the lake, and I loved East Troy, but I wasn’t a full-time resident.

It wasn’t until the Rohrs opened 2894 on Main and InkLink Books that I really started to feel like I was part of the community.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Village preps for busy construction season

Main Street in East Troy will get a giant makeover in 2021.

The project, which will stretch from Main Street at Highway 20 to Main Street at West Street, includes Village Square improvements and Walworth County Road ES resurfacing.

Village of East Troy officials gave us the latest updates on the project.

Q. When does construction begin?

Bids for the project are due Feb. 23 and the project won’t be awarded to a contractor until around March 15, 2021.

Construction is estimated to begin in the spring and is planned to be completed mid-October.

Q. Can you give a brief overview of what the project entails?

This project will consist of road construction updates, enhancements to the Village Square, sanitary lateral and water main improvements, installation of curbs/gutters, sidewalks, and driveway approaches.

Q. When will we have details on the road closures, detours, etc.?

A public information meeting will be scheduled mid-April.

Information for the meeting will be posted in the newspaper, on our website, via e-mail notification, Facebook & Instagram and letters will be sent out to those properties directly affected by the construction.

Q. How do we find out additional information?

We will be creating a page on our website, easttroywi.gov, dedicated to construction updates, including detour information, that residents and businesses can refer to.

Updates will be sent to those that have signed up for e-mail notifications via our website and we will post updates to Facebook and Instagram also.

Questions and concerns regarding the project can be directed to DPW Director Jason Equitz at (262) 684-5475 or jequitz@easttroywi.gov.

Q. What are you most excited about the project?

We are looking forward to the enhancements on the square!

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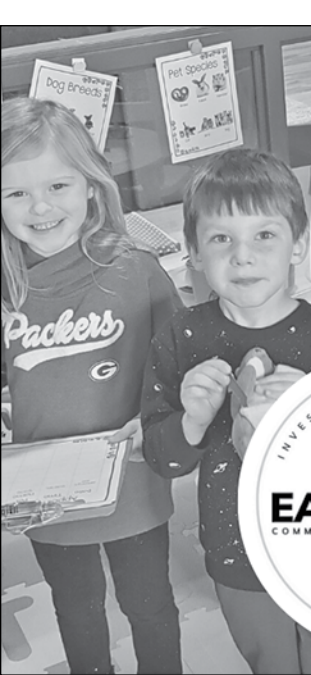
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TWO

referendum questions will be presented for voters' consideration in the spring election of April 6, 2021. Combined, the questions would have a tax impact of \$94 per \$100,000 of property value.



The board views these questions as short-term and long-term **investments** in our community, businesses, property values, school district, and children.

• ELECTION CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Facing a financial squeeze with state revenue caps not allowing it to keep pace with rising expenses, the first question is asking voters to approve an operational levy for a five year term.

A second question will also appear on the ballot seeking \$8 million for a wide range of capital projects.

The East Troy Community School District answered the following Frequently Asked Questions about what's on the ballot.

Q. What are the East Troy Community School District's needs?

In Wisconsin, the amount of money a school district receives is restricted by a state-imposed revenue limit, also known as a revenue cap. Every district has its own revenue limit.

The East Troy Community School District revenue limit has always been lower than most other districts.

This is because when the state created revenue limits in 1993, low-spending, frugal districts like ours were locked into a very low limit. In fact, only 15 percent of the schools in Wisconsin had a lower revenue limit than East Troy in 1993.

As a result of being locked into a low revenue limit 27 years ago, our district has one of the lower per-pupil revenue limits in southeastern Wisconsin.

In 2017-18 alone, East Troy would have had \$1.2 million more dollars if just at the state average. Over the course of 25 years this gap represents \$26 million.

Q. Didn't the community recently vote on a referendum?

Yes. The ETCSD community voted on a proposed operational referendum question in April 2020. That question did not pass, and the district was unable to address our larger maintenance projects.

We moved forward with addressing the 2020-21 deficit by reducing seven staff positions, making reductions to employee health insurance, and enacting salary freezes for the 2020-21 school year.

In the months after that vote, the School Board got back to work to find a new solution to the district's financial and facility needs. The result of these efforts is reflected in the questions being presented for the community's consideration on April 6.

Q. Why are the district and board moving forward with these proposals now?

East Troy's schools continue to experience financial and facility needs that will continue to persist unless our community addresses them.

The board recognizes the impacts that addressing ongoing structural deficits through reductions to staffing and programming have on our students, schools, businesses,

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Q. Why Should I Vote Yes for East Troy Schools?

YES Twice
FOR EAST TROY SCHOOLS

YES Twice for East Troy Community Schools Committee:

East Troy has always been a special community. It's the kind of place where you want to raise your family, and you want to invite people to visit because there are fewer and fewer places like it. We didn't need people to tell us that it takes a village to raise a child, because we were already living that.

At the center of our community lies its heart and soul, our kids and the schools that educate them.

Whether it's listening to the bands play on the Square during the Memorial Day remembrances, sitting in the bleachers on a cold Friday night for a football game, or sitting back with pride during the Independence Day Parade watching so many of East Troy's next generation begin to take their place, there is no question that their contributions are immeasurable and make this place special.

We are at a crossroads. Since 1993, East Troy has received less per pupil state aid than 84 percent of the school districts in the State of Wisconsin, and it has taken its toll.

In just the last 14 years our District has had to implement \$8.2 million in budget-balancing measures. Despite receiving less state aid, our school District mill rate of \$8.72 per thousand is far lower than the state average of \$9.18.

During all of this, as a result of excellent planning and community support, we were able to replace an unsafe, non-functional elementary level building with a state-of-the-art primary education building that is now the biggest draw for new families who want to come to East Troy.

There are two referendum questions on the April 6 ballot, and we urge you to vote YES on both questions.

The successful passage of the Capital Referendum allows us to improve the safety and security of our Middle School, brings our Middle School science classrooms to current Science education learning standards, and allows us to complete the deferred maintenance that has not been able to be addressed due to ongoing budget limitations.

The Operational Referendum, if approved, provides five years of support that allows our students to benefit from the current levels of programming that they currently enjoy.

If both questions are successfully passed by voters, our District will also be in a unique position to refinance a large portion of the existing debt and dramatically cut the interest costs that our District pays annually.

Our District understands that the last year has been difficult for all, and that many are struggling to make ends meet at home.

Both referendum questions were specifically designed to minimize the amount requested from our taxpayers in the first years, in the hope that we all feel stronger in the year ahead, and to afford our community additional opportunities to grow and get fully back on its feet. But the reality is that our District has balanced its budgets every single year, and the State is not offering to close the discrepancy between what East Troy receives as compared to other districts.

We either act now, or we face an uncertain future, as a School District and as a community.

We need to come together for one common purpose -- maintaining the viability and strength of a rural community, which necessitates having an independent rural school. A strong rural school district is critical to residents who live here, and it is vital to those currently or considering building their business here.

We all know the story of Palmyra-Eagle. When a community is divided about how to proceed



Gina Dingman

with their school district, the entire community is negatively affected. Home values fall. Businesses leave. The community culture and vibrancy disappears. We cannot let that happen.

We must choose to say YES Twice on April 6. For our kids. For our neighbors. For our business community. And also, for ourselves.

Gina Dingman:

As a local Real Estate Agent for 19 years, and living in this community for 31 years, I have seen many issues affect our market.

I am happy to report that the housing market is currently very strong and homes are worth now more than ever!

There are many reasons for this, including low interest rates and a desirable community with schools that have strong leaders, staff, and programs.

Do you remember why you chose to buy or build your home in East Troy?

More than any other reason, my clients choose to bring their family to East Troy because the quality of their children's educational experience is at the top of their "wish-list."

They want to raise their kids in a safe community that offers a great education and other opportunities such as sports, STEM, music, and the arts. East Troy offers all of these benefits and it is critical that this continues, rather than having students choose to go to school in other communities.

If our schools suffer, the value of our homes, our businesses, and our entire community will suffer, too.

Please take a moment to consider whether a business will realistically choose to come to a community without strong schools?

The answer is absolutely not! They want their employees to live and work in the community, and those employees want to send their kids to a great school.

Let's choose to keep our schools and our community strong. Voting YES on both referendum questions is the right answer for our community unless we are willing to watch our real estate values fall and our business community wither.

But above all that, voting YES on both questions is the right answer because our kids deserve to receive a strong education.

Vote YES TWICE to support our kids, our community, our businesses, and our neighbors! Vote YES TWICE to keep East Troy great.

Mary Ann Glowinski:

In 1976, our small family moved from West Allis to East Troy. We came so that our children could learn and grow in a community that supported education, small business, and was friendly and safe.

Those residents who came before us made sure that my children would receive a great education, and we are grateful for that.

Now we need to do our part for the current and future generations. If we don't think towards their future, and think only of our property taxes we become short-sighted and our community will suffer. It's time for us to pay it forward.



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“We recognize the importance of continuing our 75 years of tradition at the Elegant Farmer,” said co-owner John Bauer. “The only thing we hope to change each year is to have more and more people from all over America enjoy the wonderful food offering that our friends here in Wisconsin have enjoyed for years.”

Bauer talks about The Elegant Farmer’s past, famous apple pie and what to expect in 2021.

Q. Congrats on celebrating 75 years! How will the celebration begin?

The 75th anniversary kicks off in celebration of National Pie Day. All three generations of Elegant Farmer fans are invited to visit the Elegant Farmer May 13-15 to enjoy a wonderful shopping experience and a variety of special pricing.

Q. Can you take us back to how you got started?

The Elegant Farmer began back in 1946 as a roadside farm stand by Elmer and Dave Scheel which grew into Davelmer Market in 1958.

To encourage families to visit the Davelmer Market, the brothers pioneered the concept of customers coming to pick-your-own strawberries on their 65-acre farm.

In 1970, Elmer’s son Dan Scheel and his wife Karen took over the business and dubbed it The Elegant Farmer.

Over the next few decades, The Elegant Farmer expanded its business by introducing its famed Apple Pie Baked in a Paper Bag® and Farm Kitchen, Bakery, Deli & Market sections.

Other specialty items that were created and offered include CiderBaked Ham®, Fruity Applesauces, Fruit Crisps, Jumbo Muffins & Cookies, Fruit Breads, Gourmet Sauces & Seasonings, Blue Ribbon Cheeses and Old Fashioned Gourmet Popcorn.

With former owner Farmer Dan Scheel’s blessing, The Elegant Farmer passed to its third generation of owners in 2006 as longtime employees, John Bauer and Keith Schmidt took over the helm along with John’s brother, Mike Bauer.

Q. What have you tried to keep consistent through the years?

Nowadays, this dynamic trio is committed to offering the quality and traditions that The Elegant Farmer has been known for the past 75 years: small town charm, simply the best foods and outstanding customer service.

We want to thank everyone that has supported our local, family-owned business over the years from our humble farmstand beginnings to today’s thriving market, bakery, deli and online store.

Q. What can we look forward to in 2021?

The Elegant Farmer continues its 75th anniversary year with additional weekly price specials and 2021 events including their Cheep, Cheep Easter Fun, March 27, 28 and April 3, Wisconsin Blue Ribbon Cheese Fest, June 5 and 6, Wisconsin Simply the Best Cheese Sale, Aug. 28 and 29, Autumn Harvest Fest, Saturdays and Sundays, Sept. 11 through Oct. 24. Come join in the fun and say happy anniversary to the Smilin’ Barn.



The Elegant Farmer began as a roadside farmstand in 1946 run by brothers Elmer and Dave Scheel before becoming a retail market in 1958.

PHOTO SUBMITTED
Good Neighbors



Elegant Farmer’s third generation of owners for this family owned business, (from left) Keith Schmidt and John and Mike Bauer with their famed Apple Pie Baked in a Paper Bag.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors

Iconic Pie

Q. Your Apple Pie Baked in a Paper Bag is The Elegant Farmer’s most beloved product. What makes the pie so special?

We are truly blessed by the love people have for our Apple Pie Baked in a Paper Bag and all our other handmade specialty foods.

Noted by “Milwaukee Magazine,” “Food Network,” “The Wall Street Journal” and three generations of fans as having one of the best pies in America, The Elegant Farmer’s Apple Pie Baked in a Paper Bag is piled high with 1 1/2 pounds of juicy, sweet-tart Ida Red apples and baked in a paper bag.

This unique baking method helps steam the apples while at the same time creating a crunchy sugar cookie-like top crust and a light, flaky old fashioned bottom crust.

The Elegant Farmer has been making its Simply the Best pies in the Mukwonago/East Troy area for decades now handcrafting more than a quarter of a million pies each year.

The pies along with their other Simply the Best specialty are shipped all over the nation through online sales and wholesale distribution to more than 300 locations throughout Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan.



The Elegant Farmer is best known for its Apple Pie Baked in a Paper Bag.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors



The Elegant Farmer family includes (from left) former owner Dan Scheel with wife Karen and current owners Keith Schmidt with wife Tina, John Bauer with wife Linda and Mike Bauer with wife Nancy (not pictured).

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors

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So, what's good here?

Chefs & owners share their faves

We've saved you the trouble of asking your waiter "So what's good here?" by going directly to the source. Local chefs and owners from East Troy's restaurants and taprooms share their favorite food and drink items from their menu.



East Troy Brewery

Gumbo Season has arrived at East Troy Brewery! Chef Ashley Turner's from-scratch favorite will be on special throughout Lent. Visit etbrew.com for details.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors



Sauced, a pizzeria

Spicy or Sweet? Take your pick between the El Diablo or the new The Perfect Pair. Sauced Pizzeria is a locally sourced, 100% wood fired Neapolitan style pizzeria. Visit getsauced.pizza for details.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors

East Troy House

Owner Reenie Allen recommends East Troy House's house specialty Salmon Risotto. The delicious dish features pan seared salmon, lemon risotto, broccolini & roasted tomatoes, garnished with basil oil. Visit easttroyhouse.com for a full menu.

SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors



2894 on Main

Cozy up to your favorite 2894 On Main creation or enjoy one of their seasonal drinks. Visit 2894onMain.com for details.

MOLLY MOODY Good Neighbors

The Hive Taproom

Owner Tim Guild's current favorite mead on the menu is one of The Hive Taproom's brand new specialty meads. Let It Bee features flavor notes of grapefruit, spice & blood orange— with a hint of bitters. Visit The Hive to try a glass for yourself. See the full menu at thehivetaproom.com.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors



Alpine Valley Resort

Treat yourself with the melt-in-your-mouth juicy Grilled Beef Tenderloin from Alpine Valley Resort's Bistro Menu, complete with potato planks, grilled sweet onions and espagnole. Visit alpinevalleyresort.com for details on hosting your next event or golf outing.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors

Coming Soon!



SARAH MANKE Good Neighbors

This March, the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce will be launching Take Out Thursdays. We will get people to follow along for a new take-out adventure every Thursday, encouraging them to order from the same place on the same day and/or evening. The goal is to provide the restaurant with a stellar night, and in return, people get a delicious local meal. For details, visit easttroy.org. If your restaurant wants to participate, email: vanessa@easttroy.org.



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The Tunnel

Always a big fan of building Christmas Light Shows, John Vilanj, who owns his own construction company, jumped in headfirst to help build the popular East Troy Lights Tunnel.

The labor-intensive project featured an estimated 30,000 lights, about 33 man hours to cut, assemble and install the tunnel and another three days of work with multiple volunteers to hang the lights.

Q. How did you build that tunnel?

John Vilanj:

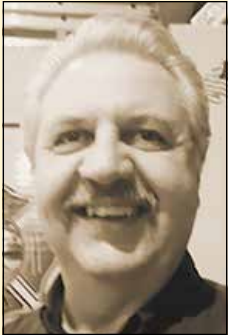
Initially you had talked about using a hoop house and the cost would have been enormous due to the size, (which ended up being 73 feet long, 7 feet wide and 8 feet tall in the center of the arch.)

I thought using PVC pipe would allow you to make a true tunnel shape, so I picked up 83 sections of 3/4 by 10-foot PVC pipe (cut to 5-foot lengths) and 66 cross tees. I cleared them out at Menards.

I cut out about 44 pieces of rebar and anchored them into the ground and after we placed and connected them, we screwed all the pieces in place.

We marked every foot so we could have a nice pattern with the scrolling lights. It worked out great.

Next year, hopefully we can make another tunnel and work on making it a little bit taller so the Village DPW can get their plows through it.



John Vilanj
East Troy Area Historical Society & Light Tunnel Mastermind



Top: Volunteer Mary Rohrer hangs lights on the popular East Troy Lights Tunnel, which sparked throughout the month of December with an estimated 30,000 lights. Below: Javier McCormack and Corin Rohrer help test lights before hanging them on the tunnel.

VANESSA LENZ, Good Neighbors

the boxes allowed the East Troy Middle schoolers to simulate and create the light shows, and the wonderful decorating done by the downtown businesses brought the magic together.

Q. How did the partnership with East Troy students come about?

Vanessa Lenz:

One of the biggest goals was to engage our young minds and for that we went to straight to the East Troy Community School District.

We were thrilled to learn the entire district (4K-12) was on board.

From East Troy Middle School Students coding the shows, to East Troy High School students building the interactive boxes to East Troy elementary school students making blown glass LED ornaments to hang on the Christmas trees on the square, their efforts were remarkable.

Q: You said middle school students created the shows. What!?

Jamie Rohrer:

We are so impressed by them and the entire STEM/ Robotics program at the East Troy Community School District.

After learning about the entire school's involvement, I built a light show simulator. Essentially a way to code light shows and mimic them on the square. And, using the simulator, the East Troy Middle School students rocked it! They coded all of the daily East Troy Light shows that played on the square. Kudos to them!

Q. Who put up lights?

Vanessa Lenz:

We looked to our East Troy Village Square storefronts to get their buildings dressed in Christmas cheer, building each of their individual strengths and expertise.

East Troy's downtown businesses took every opportunity

to get festive from larger than life installations, holiday window displays and sparkly lights surrounding the square.

The Chamber worked with volunteers to put lights on the 50-foot Bob Barutha Memorial Christmas Tree, wrap the trees in twinkle lights and build the signature East Troy Lights Tunnel.

And while our square is always beautiful in my eyes, there was truly something magical about wandering through downtown when there was extra sparkle.

Q. How was it funded?

Vanessa Lenz:

We are beyond fortunate to have such a supportive community that helped bring East Troy Lights to the finish line.

Several area businesses and organizations, along with volunteers and donors, worked with the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce to create this unique event to draw visitors to the area in a safe manner, including our downtown businesses and presenting sponsors Dither Studio, Allan Integrated Control Systems, East Troy Community School District, East Troy Brewery, James R. Taylor & Sons and Sauted Pizzeria.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism put the cherry on top of our support by giving East Troy Lights a \$19,225 Joint Effort Marketing grant (JEM). It felt great to know they saw the potential in what we were doing, helping to bring more people to East Troy.

While we loved using these funds to put the spotlight on East Troy and market it across the state, we could not use any of the funds to build the interactive show or to fund the technology behind it.

Q. How can I support East Troy Lights?

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Thanks to our 2020 Corporate Partners!

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A STRONG SCHOOL BENEFITS ALL

Tax payers find that **strong schools** attract **committed, contributing** residents. Strong schools **positively impact property values** and overall **quality of life**.

STATE FUNDING IS NOT DETERMINED BY NEED

The current State funding formula is NOT based upon need, but on a formula set in 1993. Districts like ours who were **frugal** then continue to be under-funded, and referendums are the only way to close that funding gap.

While many districts state-wide have relied on repeated referendums to close the funding gap, East Troy has relied on **cost-cutting** and **conservative management practices**. We've passed only one operational referendum since 1993 (it expired in 2010), and continued to employ fiscally responsible practices to balance its budget EVERY YEAR.

Passing the referendum means our district can **operate as we do currently**. A failed referendum will result in immediate cuts to programs and staffing across the district, more children per classroom, and the increased likelihood of the district being dissolved in the coming years.

Our Community is Worth It.

Vote YES Twice April 6

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EAST TROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH THIS MESSAGE



Vanessa Lenz
Executive Director,
East Troy Area Chamber
of Commerce



Jamie Rohrer
Light Show Creator,
Dither Studio

Vanessa Lenz:

All of our lives have been interrupted by the pandemic and we were happy to bring something to East Troy to lift the spirits of residents and visitors from our town during these challenging times.

With our 2020 event lineup cancelled, we took a leap of faith to launch this endeavor as a reminder that East Troy will return stronger and brighter than ever before.

If you like what you saw, please donate to help us continue to build East Troy Lights for next year's show –\$1, \$5, \$20, \$100 – any amount will help us continue to build East Troy Lights and make next year's show even better.

Visit EastTroyLights.com to donate or mail donations to East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 312, East Troy, WI 53120.

Q. What's next?

Jamie Rohrer:

World domination, obviously. We'll be adding more control boxes, decorations, songs, and shows. If we're lucky we might even have a second light tunnel!

We also plan to further build out the interactive portion of the lights by adding physically controllable inputs...it should be interesting!



Right: This December, the East Troy Area Chamber of Commerce launched East Troy Lights – an all new holiday light attraction featuring dazzling displays like the one at Sauced, a pizzeria, throughout downtown East Troy. Middle: Students from East Troy High School helped get the square dressed in Christmas cheer. Left: The interactive and imaginative light display experience kicked off Dec. 5, in conjunction with the 112-year-old East Troy Electric Railroad Santa Parade Train and East Troy's annual Bob Barutha Memorial Christmas Tree lighting.

REESE BILLINGS Good Neighbors & VANESSA LENZ Good Neighbors

• ELECTION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and community. We must act with urgency to ensure a quality educational experience for our students while maintaining the attractiveness of our district and protecting property values.

While the board understands that we are in an unknown time because of the pandemic, now is also an ideal time to act, considering the extremely low interest rates we are currently seeing.

Q. Has the district tried other cost-saving measures to address its financial needs?

The East Troy Community School Board has implemented \$8.2 million in budget-balancing efforts over the past 14 years.

Each and every year, the board has taken the revenue cap gaps (the difference between increased costs and minimal, if any, revenue increases from the state) and balanced our

district's budget.

This has included changes and reductions in all benefits packages—including health, retirement, dental, and life insurance—along with moderating wage increases. These measures lead to challenges in attracting and retaining high-quality staff in a competitive and transient labor market.

Changes have also included making energy efficiency gains, eliminating positions, restructuring positions to part-time for benefit avoidance, competitively pricing purchases, applying for grants and gifts, refinancing debt, and pre-paying debt to minimize interest costs in the long term.

Q. What is the current property tax rate in East Troy?

Currently, the East Troy mill rate (the tax rate per \$1,000 of home value) is \$8.72, down from \$10.42 in the 2014-2015 school year.

This is well below the current state average of \$9.18 for K-12 districts.

Q. What would be the tax impact of the referendum questions?

If both questions are approved April 6, they would have an estimated property tax impact of \$94 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value.

The cost of the two referendum questions would be offset with a refinancing process on our current debt and capitalizing on currently low interest rates.

If only the operational question passes, but the capital question does not, the estimated tax impact would be \$84 per \$100,000 of assessed property value over the next five years.

If the capital question is passed, but the operational question is not, the estimated tax impact would be \$18 per \$100,000. The capital bond would last 20 years.

The Light Show Boxes

With only a few boxes made in 2019, our journey to 40 boxes began with Allan Integrated Control Systems, owned by Ann & Ted Zess, who are also majority owners of East Troy Brewery.

Allan ICS is based in East Troy but known for big time projects like designing the control system for Chicago Landmark Buckingham Fountain.



Ann Zess
Allan Integrated Control Systems



Ted Zess
Allan Integrated Control Systems



Tim Stockton
Allan Integrated Control Systems

Q. What was your role in building the interactive light show boxes?

Tim Stockton:

We helped get the boxes built and ready to control the lights.

I worked directly with East Troy High School and Gateway Technical College students to build the boxes on a bigger scale.

It's always good to be able to pass on experience and see the excitement with the kids.

Q. Why did Allan ICS want to get involved with this project?

Ann Zess:

I thought this was a good community project. It was very creative and a fun project for us as a company to get involved in.

Ted Zess:

We were happy with the results and are looking forward to 2021 and making things bigger and better as always.

We'd love to see more boxes up and down Main Street and get more boxes up at the schools to make their shows even bigger.

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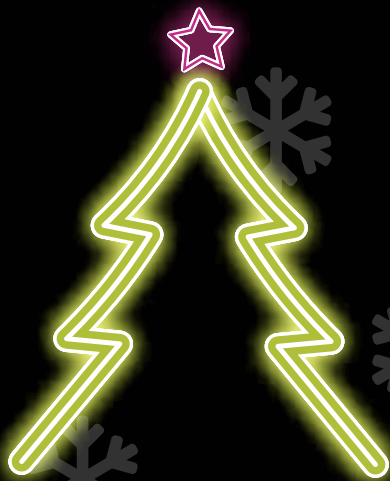
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Light Show Locations:

EAST TROY VILLAGE SQUARE PARK

Bandstand, sponsored by the Village of East Troy
Bob Barutha Memorial Christmas Tree, sponsored by
Wisconsin Oven Corporation
East Troy Lights Tunnel, sponsored by Dither Studio

EAST TROY VILLAGE SQUARE

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2894 on Main
East Troy Area Historical Society
East Troy Brewery
East Troy House
East Troy Lions Lodge
ECP 123
Edward Jones-Jim Jakscht
The Global Glass
Home on the Square
InkLink Books
James R. Taylor & Sons
KB's Barber
Lakeside Painting
Magic Touch
Realty Executives Integrity
Sammy's Place
Sauced Pizzeria
Squareside Boutique
State Farm Insurance- Tim Werwie
The Cobblestone
Urban Cloud Factory
Zinn's Mercantile

ATTRACTIONS

Alpine Valley Resort
East Troy Electric Railroad Museum

EAST TROY SCHOOLS

Little Prairie Primary School
Prairie View Elementary School
East Troy High School
East Troy Middle School



Volunteers:

Jamie Rohrer ~ Sarah Manke ~ John Vilanj ~ Justin Rohrer
Ann Zess ~ Ted Zess ~ Tim Stockton of Allan ICS
Jimmy Bennett of Allan ICS ~ Jake Stockton of Allan ICS
Caitlin Hunter ~ Lauren Hunter ~ East Troy High School
East Troy Middle School ~ Little Prairie Primary
Prairie View Elementary School
Nolan Pawelski, East Troy High School
Stacey Kuehn, East Troy High School
Aaron Judd, East Troy Middle School
Stephanie Iodence, East Troy Middle School
Michelle Larson, East Troy Middle School
Jennifer Ledin, Little Prairie Primary School
Jarrett Church, Prairie View Elementary School
Michael Mass, East Troy High School
East Troy High School Tech Ed Students
Gateway Technical College
JD Jones, Gateway Technical College
Coen Taylor ~ Sam Marsh ~ Conrad Dierks
Raegen Feucht ~ Makenna Zess ~ Caitlyn Preiser
Laci Fredlund ~ Rae Equitz ~ Scott Owens
Bob Feucht ~ Ann Feucht ~ Evergreen Acres
Annette Rhode ~ Kim Price ~ Christmas Rescue
Reese Billings ~ Rachel Bottum
Carrie Maass Luedtke ~ East Troy High School Cheer
East Troy Titan Cheer ~ Factory Stars Cheer
Infinity Dance
JoAnn McCormack, Spotlight Real Estate
Keri Jacoby ~ Jeff McKone ~ Vicki McKone
Jason Heidelmeier ~ Alicia Kirkpatrick
Jon Lenz ~ Becca Rohrer ~ Mary Rohrer
Rachel Tanis ~ Tom McCormack
Megan Kehl ~ Cadence Kehl ~ Silas Kehl
Ella Kraus ~ Cali Heltemes ~ Fisher Stoychoff
Rachel Zweck ~ James Baumeister
Ben Keating
David Allen, East Troy House
Bailey Kaiser, Citizens Bank
Cheryl Siemers, 5 O'Clock Somewhere Travel and Cruise
Mike Garber
Wisconsin Oven Corporation
Village of East Troy Department of Public Works
Doug Gauger ~ Derek Gauger ~ Jason Equitz
Kristen, Emma, Gina Henningfeld
Jonah Edwards ~ Chloe Gorres ~ Connor LaFreniere
Colleen Henningfeld ~ Lea Sperle of Citizens Bank
Beth Keiser of Citizens Bank
Ken Frymark ~ Russell Markestad
Alex Alger of Twilight Tree Service
Mike Barutha of the East Troy Fire Department
Rick Strieter ~ Todd Kiersztian ~ Mike Gitz
Chuck Dimick ~ Lloyd Sineni
Gary Neumann of the East Troy Fire Department
East Troy Volunteer Fire Department
Village of East Troy Police Department
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translation with singing and fellowship. Our Youth Bible School serves 3 to 12 years. Please join us!
Services are Sunday at 10 a.m. to noon and Thursday 5 to 7 p.m.



Agent Miguel Najera and Minister Abraham Adame joined members for a ribbon cutting at their new church, Apostolic Christian Church of the Living God Pillar and Support of the Truth New Israel.

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Matt Wanasek recently opened Matt's Wild Foods, offering fresh gourmet mushrooms, kits and supplies to grow your own mushrooms at home, and unique local products.

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Coming soon to Square: *Sushi and Cakery*



East Troy residents Jeff and Vicki McKone will soon begin construction of a new building in downtown East Troy. The former East Troy Motors site at 2919 Main St. is situated directly west of East Troy Brewery on the Village Square. The lot was purchased last summer by the Village of East Troy Community Development Authority, which then put out a Request for Proposals to accelerate the development of the site. The McKones gave us the following sneak peek at the project.

Q. What are the preliminary plans for the site?

We're not ready to share these quite yet. (We don't want to give people fuel

Locals Jeff and Vicki McKone are currently developing a multi-tenant building at 2919 Main St., which will house a sushi restaurant and cakery/bistro.

PHOTO SUBMITTED *Good Neighbors*

to complain and would rather keep them curious.)

Q. Any details on the new businesses that will be there?

The building that we are constructing will house two businesses and include a drive-thru. The first business will take up approximately two-thirds of the building and will become a sushi and steak restaurant, Chinuk Bistro. The tenant in this larger portion has been in the sushi restaurant business for 30 years and will be coming from the Chicago area to open his third establishment here in East Troy. The smaller portion of the building is also going to be housing an exciting new business for our area also. The second tenant and owner of Sweet Bevvie Cakes comes from the Rockford area. Sweet Bevvie Cakes is a cakery/

bistro that creates designer specialty cakes and cupcakes for special events or the everyday sweet tooth, and will also offer delicious quick to-go options to accompany signature coffee/tea beverages.

Q. Why did you choose to build on the square?

We both have roots in East Troy and have seen the area grow and change a great deal in the last 12 years. Vicki's family has roots in the area that go back as far as 1840s and Jeff's family has been coming to Lake Beulah since the 1960s. We love our town and are excited to be a part of its evolution and transformation into a destination for visitors helping to bring revenue to our area and build memories.

Q. When do you expect to open?

The summer of 2021!

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Get your copy

You can pre-order your copy of "Shoulder Season" from InkLink Books, 2890 Main St., on the square or at inklinkbooks.com.

CITY OF GIRLS MEETS DAISY JONES & THE SIX WITH A DASH OF DIRTY DANCING.

ONCE IN A LIFETIME, YOU CAN HAVE THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE.

Christina Clancy's book "Shoulder Season" is based on a young woman from East Troy who gets a job as a bunny at the Lake Geneva Playboy Resort.

PHOTO SUBMITTED *Good Neighbors*

I hosted some of the famous InkLink "Read & Feed" events, and that gave me an opportunity to meet the residents and make friends—truly the most generous, fun, smart, wonderful book-loving people in the world. Linda Dodge, Sue Enright, Barb Jones and their wider circle have been so incredibly helpful with my research. I tell them all the time that I'm jealous of their upbringing in such a naturally gorgeous and interesting place. InkLink Books is the beating heart of the community, and it makes me happy to see so many people buying books and seeking out Kayleen Rohrer's recommendations.

Q: You released your debut novel, "The Second Home" last year in the middle of a pandemic. How have you had to adapt to reach your readers? Do you have plans for the launch of "Shoulder Season"?

My most "live" event was a book signing at InkLink on my release day, which was super fun. Most of my launch happened via

zoom, and I've met with book clubs in back yards and in the square. I would have much preferred to have in-person events, but it's more important for people to be safe. I'm so honored to have had this opportunity to publish a book with a major publisher. I don't want to sound like I'm complaining, but it definitely wasn't the author experience I'd dreamed of. I'm so hopeful that I can have some in-person book signings with the paperback launch of The Second Home on June 8, and with the launch of Shoulder Season on July 6. My fingers are crossed so hard for a summer filled with opportunities to interact with real, live readers.

Q. What's up next for you?

I'm working on a new novel set in Lake Geneva in 1927, but it's too early in the manuscript to say much more about it. I can't believe there aren't more novels set in SE Wisconsin. The more I learn about the area, the more I find stories percolating in my imagination.

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Director Q&A: Niels Mueller of ‘Small Town Wisconsin’

If you are familiar with East Troy, you might recognize what you see on screen when watching director, writer, producer and Whitefish Bay native Niels Mueller’s latest film “Small Town Wisconsin.”

That’s because Mueller returned to his Milwaukee roots to film the movie and some of the scenes were shot in East Troy and neighboring Palmyra-Eagle.

Known for his films “The Assassination of Richard Nixon” and “Tadpole,” and an episodic drama that aired on CBS, “The Defenders,” Mueller’s recent endeavor is about a Rhinelander native and his son who find themselves on an adventure to the “big city,” Milwaukee.

Aptly named “Small Town Wisconsin,” this comedy-drama is a combination of “Little Miss Sunshine” and “Winter’s Bone,” finally giving Wisconsin its shining moment.

Q. We are thrilled to see familiar sites and lots of love for Wisconsin in “Small Town Wisconsin.” Why was it important to film here?

Authenticity. Authenticity. Authenticity. To me that’s always the driving goal, especially with a script like this.

It was my dream to come back home and make a movie here. And I said to my financial backer at the time, ‘I will be your tax credit. I will call in every favor I possibly can from friends to family to people I went to kindergarten with,’ and I did that and beyond.

It was so great to come home and be there all summer. I’d love to do it again.



“Small Town Wisconsin,” which had its U.S. premier last fall, was filmed in Milwaukee and includes scenes from East Troy like the above shot of star David Sullivan.
PHOTO SUBMITTED Good Neighbors

Q. You shot the film in and around Milwaukee in the summer of 2018. Did the Wisconsin hospitality meet your expectations?

I had a great experience in East Troy and Milwaukee and had so much great support from the community.

Christi Clancy, local author, was a huge part in making this film. Christi and John Vilanj, volunteer Troy Center Firefighter, spent the afternoon with me and a professional location scout couldn’t have done a better job.

2894 on Main became our favorite spot for food while in East Troy.

We got to shoot at the Wisconsin State Fair, the Pfister, Miller Park – almost everyone opened their doors to us and wanted to support Wisconsin film making. It just goes on and on.

I had a friend of mine from Los Angeles fly out to the set, and I remember him saying, ‘These people are aggressively friendly.’”

Q. The film premiered last fall. How has the festival run been for you guys?

We’ve had a great run! We had our world premiere at Sarajevo and U.S. premiere in Boston and have played nearly 30 fests and won prizes at most of them.

Q. How can we see the film?

After the festival circuit, the film will become available to non-festival audiences. Stay tuned.

We’re playing the Green Bay Film Festival starting Feb. 27 and ending mid-March. Because the festival is virtual, audiences can watch the film online. Get details at gbfilmfestival.org.

We will also be at the Beloit Film Festival Feb. 19-28. Get details at beloitfilmfest.org.

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