



Eye on Evergreen

Conversations with your friends and neighbors

Vol. 5 No. 20 March/April 2026

Spring at Evergreen



SAFETY FIRST: SEVERE WEATHER

Independent Living Severe Weather Alerts Procedure

Do You Know What To Do?



Severe weather season is around the corner. Time to make sure you have your Evergreen-issued weather alert radio and battery powered lantern handy. If you do not have either or both of these items, you can submit a maintenance request through Resident and Guest Services (920-233-2340), or the WorkHub found in the Resident Portal.

TORNADO WATCH/WEATHER ALERT

When the National Weather Service detects an area where conditions are right for a tornado, it issues a **TORNADO WATCH**. At Evergreen this is announced as a **WEATHER ALERT**. Although a tornado can strike without warning, normally several hours elapse between an **ALERT** and the time the storm reaches the area. Please follow these procedures during an **ALERT**:

- Have your weather alert radio on or keep tuned to a local radio or TV station.
- Have blankets, flashlights or Evergreen-issued lantern ready for use.
- Close all windows/drapes/blinds in your unit/apartment and remove items on window sills that could become airborne. Make sure to lock windows.
- Stay away from windows as much as possible.
- Put sharp objects and glass items in a safe place where they cannot be dangerous in case of high winds.
- Be prepared to go to the nearest designated Shelter Area if a **WARNING** is announced. (See Tornado Warning Section below for list of Shelter Areas)

TORNADO WARNING

This means a tornado has been sighted in the area and you need to go to the nearest Shelter Area immediately! **Shelter areas are Located:**

MANOR BUILDING – Lower level spaces such as lowest section of stairwells, restrooms, Behnke Center or any interior room with no windows.

COURTYARD APARTMENTS – Lower level spaces such as lowest section of stairwells, underground parking and storage areas, first floor storage spaces or public restrooms, or any interior room with no windows.

EVERGREEN HOMES – An interior space away from windows in your home, or a Shelter Area in the Manor Building.

EVERGREEN VILLAGE – An interior space away from windows in your home, or a Shelter Area in the Manor Building.

If you are in any other area of Evergreen and hear a **WEATHER ALERT**, take cover away from windows and in an interior space. If you happen to be outdoors and hear the tornado siren, go as quickly as possible to the nearest Shelter Area, unless it is the weekly test on Saturdays at noon.



A VIEW FROM THE VILLAGE



A Taste of Summer at the Behnke Center

On Wednesday March 4th, the residents of the 1040 Building hosted a wonderful picnic style lunch at the Behnke Center. Thirty plus people enjoyed pulled pork and pulled chicken sliders, plus baked beans, potato salad, and monster cookies. A special treat were the homemade potato chips that are a favorite of Evergreen residents. There were also 3-4 BBQ sauce options available which added to the fun. It was nice to get out of our accommodations for several hours and share a meal and conversation. It felt that spring was really on the way. Thank you to Leanore Rommelfanger and her team for an early spring fling. -Vicki M.




Leanore Rommelfanger



A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our Hygiene Drive!

Your generosity will directly support eight local homeless and crisis programs in the Oshkosh area and the individuals they serve.

We're proud to have partnered with the *Oshkosh Area Community Pantry* to help make a meaningful difference for those in need.

Just for Fun: Can you find the "Eye" on Evergreen? In each issue of "Eye On Evergreen," an eye is hidden somewhere. Can you find it?  **Happy Hunting!**

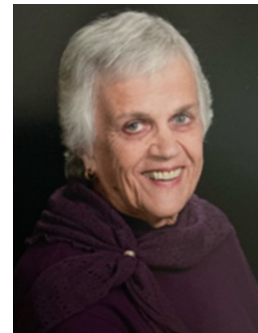
Evergreen Prairie Project

From the Diary of the Late Carol Niendorf

Edited by Vicki Moss

PHASE 1, PLANNING

Bob and I moved to Evergreen during Covid. We exercised and walked on Evergreen grounds almost every day. On our walks we always noticed the berm across from Creekview and thought it would be a good site for a prairie garden. We had developed a prairie garden at our home in Oshkosh, so we had had some experience with this type of project. We had read in Green Leaves about the prairie planting Barbara Bowlus had spearheaded in the parking lot islands near her Village 1140 building off of Eagle street. She had used plants from Prairie Nursery. One fall day we made a point of going over to look at the plantings and noticed there were a few weeds, so we began pulling them. When Barbara saw us, she hurried out and asked “what are you doing in my Prairie?” We visited with her a bit and told her about our Wild Ones native plants. We offered to send her some membership information and a grants program brochure. We were so glad that we had made the contact and our Berm Project seemed possible.



About a week later Barbara called and invited us to meet with her. We did so and talked in more detail about our Berm planting idea. We found out during that meeting that she was the chair of the Resident's Grounds Committee. She invited us to their next meeting and asked that we describe our proposed idea. Howie Dunham, Grounds Manager and Ed Potempa, Village resident were also at the meeting. All were excited and believed that the project had merit. They then voted to spend their unspent \$1000 budget on the Berm project. We were elated. We told them that Evergreen would probably be eligible for a \$500 Wild Ones grant, and said we would apply for one. We received it and decided to use that money for a second phase planting in the spring.

The next day Bob and Ed went over and measured the berm. They then called Neil Diboll at Prairie Nursery and told him what we were proposing to do. Ed sent him the pictures he had taken of the berm, which at that point was mostly filled with weeds. Neil asked Bob and Ed to dig down a foot and try to determine the soil content. A day or two later, Neil e-mailed a plan for a shortgrass prairie with 17 species in a quantity that would fit about 345 square feet on the south end of the berm which faces Creekview. We got Evergreen's business manager, Bill Kreuger's permission to expend \$1048.46 for the plants. The plants were ordered and arrived at the end of September.

In the meantime, Howie cleared out the large mullein and day lily plants and hoed out the tiny weeds along the upper path. He agreed to remove the dead walnut trees and trim the cedar tree branches. He declined however to cut any of the cedars. Neil said the cedars were good trees for birds, including cedar waxwings, so we had to make our plans including the trees. We had our project, our plans and now needed to map out the plantings. We first laid out plants in one half of the berm to see are far they could get. This was a new experience, working with a committee, but we were sure it would work well. Wear as our yard was very regular, this berm had irregular terrain trees, etc., and was challenging to lay the plants out well. We also had no plan for what we would do in the spring, once they were established. Who would weed and who would prune, etc.? Bob was hoping that the Grounds crew would do it but we still had to make plans in case our little committee would be responsible for that.



Bob and Carol Niendorf

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Implementation

“The plants were shipped on Tuesday September 29 and Tom Tuchscherer carried them to the Green House for overnight storage. The weather had been very dry for several weeks, but after receiving the plants, there were sudden rain showers that came and went throughout many days. The next morning, Ed, Bob and I started inventorying the plants and found they were all there. Then we spent about 2 hours laying out the plants and dividing them roughly in half started to lay them out from the south end of the berm northward to see how far they would go. The weather in the last few months had been very hot and dry, but now we were getting sudden rain showers that came and went with no warning. We continued laying the plants out as the rain kept coming. When finished, we called our team helpers that we were ready to plant. The following people spent about 1 hour and 20 minutes planting this afternoon through the rain (see sidebar).

Carol: The whole afternoon was cloudy and chilly. I had worn four layers but the temperature and gloom was very hard to ignore. We went home feeling glad to be finished but very concerned about how well the plants would do. The soil had lots of roots, probably from the cedar trees, and the soil was wet and very gummy with clay. The temperature dropped to almost frost level overnight so the plants will have to be persistent to make it. We wondered if we should apply for a grant to do another phase next spring, or wait a year and see how the plants grew.

PHASE 2

May 17, 2021

We applied for a grant of \$500 from Wild Ones to match the \$500 from the Evergreen Grounds Committee and received it. We were on the right track. The weather conditions had now become brutal, hot and humid and noisy as a construction crew had arrived to convert the bocce ball court to a parking lot that would join our berm. As our elderly crew labored in the difficult conditions, several other persons called and asked if we needed help with the plantings. A few kind souls also brought us water to drink and to moisten the new plantings. We did not have a hose on the one side of the berm so this made a heavy chore to water the plantings. (We did finally get a water source to cover the whole berm.) This project was a labor of love combined with dedication to a very large project. It continues today as weeds need to be picked and plants watered. If you are interested in helping with the project, let Barbara Boulus know and she will put you on the list of volunteers.

Well where is this berm? It's just a bit east of the swing and the fishing pier on Sawyer Creek. As our weather warms, plan to take a walk to see it and to imagine all of the thoughtful planning and enormous amount of “elbow grease” that went into this huge community project. A big thanks to Carol Niendorf who took diligent notes as the project developed and who shared her diary with me so that their work could be documented. Thanks also to the dedicated team of volunteers, the Evergreen Grounds team, and others.



Start of berm, near fishing pier

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Team Planters

Ed Potempa, Bob Niendorf, Carol Niendorf, Dan Baumann, Barbara Bowlus, Barbara's 13-year-old grandson Konrad, Barbara's friend Margot, Bill Urbrock, Barb Stanek, Bruce Niendorf, Louis Niendorf. The team planted 207 plants that afternoon of the following 17 species.

First Planting, October, 2020

32 dropseed, 9 nodding pink onion, 12 butterfly weed, 6 cream false indigo, 9 lanceleaf coreopsis, 12 purple prairie clover, 12 shooting star, 9 spider wort, 32 bluestem, 9 smooth aster, 12 purple cornflower, 12 blazing star, 6 penstemon, 9 mountain mint, 12 orange coneflower, 6 Ohio goldenrod, 9 golden alexander

Second Planting, May 2021

50 prairie dropseed, 24 little blue stem, 8 nodding pink onion, 8 New England aster, 6 shooting star, 12 purple coneflower, 12 prairie blazing star, 8 smooth penstemon, 6 Ohio goldenrod, 6 spiderwort, 10 black-eyed susan, 8 common boneset, 10 pale purple coneflower, 6 culver's root, 8 rattlesnake master, 6 poppy mallow, 8 purple prairie clover, 8 swamp red milkweed



Pictured: Sarah Averkamp, Meg Potempa, Ed Potempa, Joe Tesch, Carol Niendorf, Barbara Bowlus, and Bob Niendorf



Smooth Penstemon
Penstemon digitalis



Butterfly Weed
Asclepias tuberosa



Lanceleaf Coreopsis
Coreopsis lanceolata



Red Milkweed
Asclepias incarnata

Benefits of Planting Natives:

- They flourish without fertilizers or synthetic pesticides and rarely need watering.
- They provide food and habitat for wildlife.
- They attract butterflies and other pollinators.
- They contribute to biodiversity.
- They connect us to our home places and help us celebrate the things that make our regions unique.
- And last but not least, they're beautiful!

This **Native Prairie Garden** features species suited to this site's full-to-partial sunlight, clay soils, and moderate rainfalls.

For more native plant information:
www.wildones.org



What is a Native Plant?

Natives are plants that have evolved over thousands of years to thrive in their local environmental conditions. Just a few hundred years ago, prior to the changes brought about by European settlers, the North American landscape was rich with woodlands, prairies, meadows, savannas and wetlands full of native plants.

This prairie garden and signage were made possible thanks to:

- Evergreen Residents' Council - Grounds Committee
- Evergreen Foundation, Inc.
- Evergreen Grounds Crew
- Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter
- Winnebago Audubon Society
- Prairie Nursery



Black Eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta



Purple Prairie Clover
Dalea purpurea



Rattlesnake Master
Eryngium yuccifolium



Ohio Spiderwort
Tradescantia ohiensis

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Spiritual Wellness means different things to different people. Some think of it as only supporting a person's religious practices, and seeing to it that they have access to church or clergy. Others view Spiritual Care somewhat differently, and more broadly, with concern for what it means to be human, and recognizing the life force that we all share.

Professional chaplains are theologically and clinically qualified to work with individuals and families in a way that is sensitive to multi-cultural and multi-faith realities. They are trained to show respect for the spiritual or religious beliefs and preferences of all people, being curious about others while committed to their own.

Spirituality is expressed not only through beliefs, but also values, traditions, and practices. And so spiritual care concerns itself with the whole individual, a person's emotional and social wellbeing as well as religious.

The commitment made by Evergreen to provide Spiritual Care to all our residents is one borne out of a faith tradition that has long respected the beliefs and convictions of all people. That is a commitment which we hold dear to this day.

-Pastor Steve Wood



HOW MUSIC IMPACTS YOUR WELLNESS

Have you ever heard a particular song and then are flooded with memories? Have you ever felt immediately happy, calm or energized from hearing a single song? **That is the power of music.** Music has been known to improve mood, help regulate emotions, provide comfort, improve memory, ease pain and increase cognition. At Evergreen, we see a variety of different musical performances including big band, western, rock, classical, etc. in the Worship & Performing Arts Center. What you might not know is that residents in our Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, and Memory Care have more entertainment provided for them in their respective areas, along with monthly music therapy. ShareHaven, our Memory Care, typically has 4 performances a month. This is because studies have shown great benefit to people living with dementia, including improved mood, stimulated cognitive function, and enhanced social engagement.

When you look at our Campus wide events at Evergreen, you can see how these events also encourage residents to engage, socialize, and enjoy. We see many residents come to performances with friends, and we see plenty of residents walk in alone and find someone to sit by. Not only is the music enhancing your health and wellness, but being social and engaging with those around you is also incredibly beneficial to you. We hope you all continue to enjoy the variety of entertainment, but more importantly, connect to the music, your friends, and allow yourself to reminisce.



Volunteer Appreciation

Celebrating the heart of our community our volunteers.

Volunteers are the quiet force behind so much of what makes our community strong, compassionate, and connected. They give their time, energy and talents not for recognition, but because they care. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the incredible impact volunteers make every single day.

From organizing events and supporting activities with residents to offering a helping hand or a listening ear, volunteers step in wherever they are needed. Their contributions go unseen, yet their influence is felt everywhere-in brighter smiles, stronger communities and lives made just a little bit easier.

What makes volunteers truly special is not just what they do, but why they do it. They show up with generosity, kindness and a genuine desire to make a difference. In a fast-paced world, their willingness to slow down and give back reminds us all of the power of human connection.

Volunteerism also inspires others. It creates a ripple effect-encouraging more people to get involved, to care and to contribute. Each act of service, no matter how small, builds toward something much bigger: a culture of compassion and shared responsibility.

To every volunteer: thank you. Thank you for your dedication, your selflessness, and your commitment to helping others. You are the backbone of so many meaningful efforts, and your work does not go unnoticed.



Library Committee



Human Slot Machine at Casino Night 2025

-Pam Sengstock, Volunteer Coordinator

125

Volunteers in 2025

7,800+

Volunteer Hours in 2025



Campus Notes

As of Saturday, March 14, the woodlands at Evergreen were still dormant and barren with some oak trees holding on to the dried-up foliage from the previous summer, while newly installed nesting boxes stayed ready for our feathery friends anticipating a new season.

Weather patterns had been moody, alternating between freezing and thawing, between sunny blue skies and dark blustery days. At the edge of the ice retreating on the creek, waterfowl, ducks and geese, were congregating, taking occasional forays into the newly liberated stream. Robins and Red-winged Blackbirds had returned, competing around the feeders with Juncos, Nuthatches, Chickadees, Sparrows, and Downy Woodpeckers.

On my daily walks through the woods and around campus, I observed subtle changes from day to day. While the last remnants of unsightly snow patches were disappearing, bulb plants, tulips and daffodils kept popping up in sheltered spaces near buildings. The prairie vegetation on the berm showed first signs of life. The new growing season was underway.

Yet not so fast! Waking up Sunday morning, the outside world was enveloped in a swirl of snowflakes, steadily covering the landscape with thick layers of fluffy white stuff. By noon, accompanied by gusty winds, six to eight inches of snow had accumulated, and there were no signs that the onslaught would be tapering off soon. Ultimately, the blizzard, named Elsa, raged all night and left between twelve and fourteen inches of snow on the ground in Oshkosh, somewhat less than the two feet that covered Green Bay and the Door peninsula.

Looking out my living room window on Monday morning, I spotted a congregation of birds, dominated by Red-winged Blackbirds, hunkering down on my big Hawthorn tree. My bird feeder was empty and the snow too deep to retrieve it for a refill. To remedy the situation, I poured bird seed into a shallow baking dish and shoved it out my patio door. Immediately, the feathery friends in the tree began swooping down to the food source: Cardinals, sundry Sparrows, Purple Finches, but above all an aggressive band of Red-winged Blackbirds that kept chasing smaller birds away. It was quite a spectacle!

Meanwhile the snow, driven by gusty winds, kept accumulating on Evergreen's roofs and parking lots, blocking access to entrance ways and filling up patio spaces. We had become captives of nature's whims. By mid-afternoon, as the storm finally abated, we were able to see what this onslaught had wrought. Sliding off the roof of our Village building, huge loads of snow were forming bizarre overhangs. Cars in the parking lot appeared as white bumps in an alien new landscape.

After several days of hard work, Evergreen's amazing ground crew managed to reestablish access to the condo buildings, reconnecting their residents with the rest of our community. As daily temperatures kept rising, the huge snow accumulations began melting away, opening more pathways on campus. Yet heaps of dirty snow, here and there, still keep reminding us of the historic blizzard that enveloped Eastern Wisconsin in mid-March 2026.

-Barbara B.



What Are You Reading?

Courtyard resident Geri Grine recently re-read *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Golden, Arthur, Vintage Books, division of Random House New York N.Y. (1997)). The book was a multi-year *New York Times* bestseller when it came out, later made into a movie. Although defined as historical fiction, the author's research included extensive interviews with several geisha about their profession, training, rules etc. Geri described it as "based in reality to a point".



Sayuri, the main character, was sold to a geisha house in Kyoto as a young girl by her impoverished family. The book follows her from the 1920's through and beyond World War II. Geri describes her as a person with an indomitable spirit. She preserves her sense of herself as she goes through the very rigorous, rule-bound geisha training and learns the arts – dancing, playing musical instruments, singing and entertainment skills like the tea ceremony – that are the hallmarks of her profession. The need to excel is intensely competitive. Contrary to some stories, geisha are not courtesans. They are highly skilled entertainers for private audiences of wealthy and influential men. Geri said that Sayuri in the book demonstrated "*kuro*" – a Japanese word meaning silent suffering to become stronger.

Geri brings a unique perspective to this book. She is third generation Japanese, born and raised on the island of Maui, Hawaii. She explained that living on an island, her family and others of Japanese heritage held closely to old traditions. She was raised to be bilingual, attending Japanese language school from kindergarten age through high school. She learned to read, write and converse in Japanese, as well as classical Japanese dance, flower arranging, and cooking of Japanese dishes.

While reading the book, Geri said it made her want to dance. She wished she could experience the geisha life firsthand. It is a hard life with many rules but she sees it as practicing an art over a lifetime.

Geri felt the author put himself inside the Japanese geisha culture, finding the book to be extremely well-researched with fantastic attention to detail. Her takeaway from the book is that it gives her a deeper understanding of her culture every time she reads it. She enthusiastically recommends it to others.

* * * * *



Joan Cason, an Evergreen Village resident, recently completed the novel *Still Life*, Penny, Louise. St. Martin's Press N.Y. (2005). It is a murder mystery and the first in Canadian author Penny's Chief Inspector Armand Gamache series, now up to nineteen volumes. Our Neta Library has many of them on its shelves.

The story is set in the fictional village of Three Pines, somewhere in Quebec Province, Canada occupied by a cast of interesting residents. The plot revolves around solving the murder of Jane Neal, a local teacher and artist who is found dead in the woods.

This book introduces Gamache, Chief Inspector and head of homicide at the Sûreté du Quebec and his investigative team including Jean-Guy Beauvoir, his second-in-command and son-in-law and Inspector Isabelle Lacoste.

Continued on next page...



What Are You Reading? Cont.

Joan read this book because she had enjoyed others in the series and wanted to learn how it all began. She likes mysteries but prefers them without overt bloodiness. *Still Life*, she said, is more of a description of the lives of people in Three Pines and their secrets, with the violence of the crime “offscreen”. Many Three Pines characters reappear throughout the series, making the reader feel they are meeting old friends. Joan finds Penny’s manner of description delightful. She has thoroughly enjoyed the experience of getting to know the people of Three Pines, some of whom are on the “quirky side”, through Penny’s well written prose.



Her takeaway from *Still Lives*? “If there were such a place as Three Pines I’d like to go there.” Joan recommends the book, which won multiple awards including the Anthony Award for Best First Novel, a literary award for mystery writers, in 2006.

-Alyson H.

COLLECTIONS & TREASURES



Model John Deere tractors and other farm equipment joins a variety of old cars from the 1920’s forward in the April-May Isom Fireplace Lounge display cabinet. The items are shared by Courtyard resident Al Kash, also known as “Big Al”.

His John Deere collection brings back memories of the ten years he worked in the foundry at the Deere plant in Waterloo IA as a younger man. It includes the creation of one of the welders who built a creative tractor and farmer out of scraps and models from early in the company’s history.

Besides the John Deere models, Al has accumulated an eclectic collection of model cars and trucks. They include a 1920 International Truck postal delivery vehicle from his hometown of Lamott IA, a Wisconsin State Patrol vehicle and an early 20th century touring



car outfitted as a mini-bar. Al has stocked it with his homemade schnapps. Some of the items in his collection were received as gifts, but most he picked up for modest prices at garage sales and thrift shops encountered during travel or when just out for a drive.

Although they met, married and raised their children in Iowa, Al’s late wife Jan was from Wisconsin. They moved to Wisconsin to be closer to her family, first to Minocqua where Jan, a nurse, taught at Nicolet College and then to Monroe. After retirement they lived in Florida for many years. Their six children lived all around the country. After his wife died, several of them – including son Shawn Laibly, M.D. an OB/GYN at Aurora Oshkosh - persuaded him to return to Wisconsin and live at Evergreen rather than stay alone in Florida.

-Alyson Z.

Home Cookin' at Evergreen!

In the spring, if you venture for a walk into the deciduous forests, you may be fortunate enough to find the much-coveted ramps, a small pungent bulb and leaf with an onion-garlic flavor, only available in the early spring (April, May to early June), often found in farmers' markets, which begin to open, this time of year. The markets also begin to display lettuce, spinach, asparagus, scallions, and those tender early peas in pods.

I found this recipe in the May 1979 issue of **Bon Appétit** magazine and have been preparing this recipe almost every spring since.

-Pat B.

Pasta Primavera



Ingredients:

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
3/4 cup diced sweet onion
1 large garlic clove, minced
1 lb asparagus, tough ends removed, cut diagonally into 1/4-inch slices
1/2 lb white button mushrooms, very thinly sliced
6 oz cauliflower, broken into small florets
1 small zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch rounds
1/2 cup very thinly sliced carrots
3 cups heavy cream
1 1/2 cups Campbell's chicken broth (undiluted)
4 tsp dried basil leaf or 4 Tbsp chopped **fresh** basil

Servings: 4-6 (Meal) or 6-8 (Side)

1 cup tiny frozen peas, thawed
2 oz diced cooked ham or 1 lb cooked shrimp
5 scallions, chopped
Salt and ground white or black pepper to taste
1 lb linguine, cooked *al dente* or to desired level, and drained
2 lightly packed cups freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese



Directions:

- In a large, deep skillet or dutch oven, sauté onions and garlic in melted butter until softened.
- Add asparagus, mushrooms, cauliflower, zucchini, and carrots, and sauté two minutes longer.
- Add heavy cream, chicken broth, and basil. Boil lightly until slightly reduced, about 4 to 6 minutes.
- Add peas, ham or shrimp, and scallions, and cook one minute longer. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- Reserve half of the sauce, see note at bottom of page.
- Add linguine to vegetable/ sauce mixture.
- Add cheese and toss over low to medium heat until heated through.

Note: I doubled the amount of sauce given in the original recipe. Add as much sauce as preferred and reserve the remainder. Linguine tends to soak up "sauce," and reserved sauce may be needed.