



WRESTLERS OPEN WITH WIN

SPORTS/B1

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JUDY WIFF PHOTO
Alaina Arthurs (left) and Patti Albertson say the COR retreat program changed their lives. Now they invite others with eating problems to Overeaters Anonymous meetings that will soon start in Pierce County.

A fight with food

They ate, ate and ate, then they took steps to end the binge cycle

BY JUDY WIFF
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One night on her way home from work, she stopped for an ice cream and ate it in the car. Three stops and three ice cream treats later, Patti Albertson, rural River Falls, was home and sick from eating, but she couldn't stop. She said she never ate at work, never let her coworkers see her eat. But another evening she carried out a dozen leftover donuts and ate them all in the car. Alaina Arthurs understands. She has made pasta for herself and her daughter, telling herself she'd cook twice as much as they needed and save half for another meal — know-

ing all along that she'd eat the whole batch in one sitting. Both women bought and stored food in ways they now call compulsive. "I bought so much food for other people in case they came. They never came," said Albertson. So she ate it. She bought mix for cookies she never baked and instead ate the dry mix. Her problems with food started at an early age, said Arthurs, who now lives in River Falls. She would sneak food. She would hide food. Albertson said she was heavy as a child and heavy as an adult. Still, friends would comment in wonder that they had never seen her eat. It was about the control, the strategy and the planning for her next binge, she said. "Eating made me hungry," said Albertson, explaining

See Food, page A3

He planted seeds of service, say Harsdorf's kin, friend

BY DEBBIE GRIFFIN
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His farm, his family and his community were the cornerstones of his life, say those who are mourning the death of Ervin A. Harsdorf, 88, who died Sunday, Dec. 3, at Hudson Hospital. His daughter, state Sen. Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls), said her dad loved life and people and had a great sense of humor. His son, Jim, said their dad still joked with them and nurses in the hospital. "That sense of humor never left him," Sheila said.

Harsdorf had fallen in mid-October but was getting therapy and gaining strength. He had some pains on Thanksgiving that led back to the hospital and to the discovery that his heart was "not good" and was accumulating fluid, said Sheila. She added that she and her brother feel blessed and thankful their father died a "peaceful man" and left a legacy of being involved and making a difference wherever possible. Sheila said her father taught his kids a passion for living life, for enjoying what they do and for working hard.

The older she's gotten, the more she treasures those values and appreciates how they shaped and influenced her. Her father had a deep faith in God and was active at church both in River Falls at Ezekiel and when the family lived and farmed in Minnesota, said the daughter. "He had a passion for farming," stated Sheila. The family started selling open-class dairy when they moved here, so they got to know many area dairy farmers. The last few days have included lots of reminiscing

See Harsdorf, page A3



Ervin Harsdorf

BLAZING TRAVELS



A city pickup truck's engine caught fire around 11:30 a.m. Monday on Apollo Road near the wastewater treatment plant. No one, including the driver, public works maintenance employee Kenneth M. Thill, was harmed. Police briefly blocked traffic at Apollo and Maple streets while firefighters put out the blaze. Fire Chief Scott Nelson said a crew finished its work in half an hour, adding: "The most spectacular thing was the flames. Otherwise (it was) pretty much an uneventful incident." Nelson said the blaze seemed to have been triggered by a mechanical malfunction in the 1988 Ford 150 pickup. It was towed. Damage was described as "very severe."

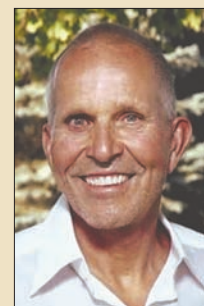


SUBMITTED PHOTOS

A new place to turn

BY JUDY WIFF
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Alaina Arthurs and Patti Albertson say they started recovery from compulsive overeating when they signed up for a new program called COR.



Burt Nordstrand

The five-day, four-night COR program is held once a month at the McIver Center for Spiritual Development at The Retreat in Wayzata, Minn. The COR residential retreat is designed to provide participants with positive experiences in food management, including selection and portion control, according to its website. COR is the Latin word for "heart" or "soul."

"It just means the heart or the center," said program director Michelle Goldberg.

She explained, "Basically it's a program for people who have tried everything else."

COR was founded by Burt Nordstrand, who grew up on a farm near Ellsworth and founded SSG Corporation, which owns the Auto Stop stores and many Holiday stations in Wisconsin.

At age 70, Nordstrand wrote his autobiography. In "Living with the Enemy" he tells of his battles with multiple addictions — compulsive overeating, diet pills, nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, irresponsible sex, gambling and over-exercising.

Now, said Nordstrand, "I'm on a mission to make food addictions part of the national conversation."

Nordstrand, 72, who subsidizes the program and provides scholarships, said he has struggled with food, generally sugar, all his life. "(But) a little program helped me 30 years ago."

That program is the 12 Steps used in Alcoholics Anonymous.

"I'm at a stage in life when I decided I want to give back, and

See COR program, page A3

Hospitals prepare for Medicare funding cuts

They'll look at services, revenues, say administrators

BY JUDY WIFF
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When Congress' special debt reduction committee, the Super Committee, hit a stalemate last month, it was a bad-news/ not-so-bad news situation for the hospitals in River Falls and Hudson.

While they are bracing to deal with a 2% reduction in Medicare reimbursements, at least for now the "critical-access hospital" issue that would have meant much larger cuts for rural hospitals is off the table.

The 12-member federal committee's failure to meet its November deadline to develop a package to save \$1.2 trillion triggered automatic across-the-board cuts, including the 2% reduction in



Marian Furlong



David Miller

Medicare reimbursements.

The automatic cuts will mean annual funding losses of about \$200,000 for each of their hospitals, according to River Falls Area Hospital President David Miller and Hudson Hospital President and CEO Marian Furlong.

That cut will come at a time when Hudson Hospital is serving more and

more elderly patients, said Furlong. She said about 33% of her hospital's patients are covered by Medicare, a number that has increased by 9% over the last year.

About 40% of patients who receive services at RFAH are either Medicare or Medicaid funded, said Miller.

He said the reimbursement reduction will mean a new Medicare fee schedule and \$200,000 worth of belt tightening for the hospital.

"It'll just make things tighter," said Miller, who has been RFAH's president for 3 1/2 years. He added that the hospital is already running very efficiently.

"We have a strong cancer program and a strong surgical program," said Miller, explaining that those programs help the hospital's bottom line.

First, he said, the hospital would look

See Medicare cuts, page A5



INSIDE TODAY'S JOURNAL
COMING ATTRACTIONSB
COURT & RECORDSA
OBITUARIESA
OPINIONA4
SCHOOL NEWSB
SPORTSB1
CLASSIFIEDSB
2nd Class Mailed 12/08/11



Military

The American Legion Fletcher Pechacek Post 121 finished the exterior part of its major remodeling project. Next Legion members plan changes to the inside of the 56-year-old building. A5



Literature

A local committee at the public library is promoting the newest community reading effort for early 2012. See what author was picked A8



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Thrivent grants big support to Habitat

The St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity and Thrivent Financial said Monday that Thrivent will provide \$80,000 in home sponsorship for the Eco Village sustainable housing project slated to begin in River Falls during 2012.

The organizations say this constitutes 55% of the funding needed to build one of the Eco Village homes.

A longtime supporting partner of Habitat's, Thrivent provides financial support and substantial volunteer labor.

In 2011, the organization provided 300 volunteers to help Habitat build in Woodville. In its seven years of existence, the ThriventBuilds program has provided whole-house funding for 10 Habitat homes.

The two organizations celebrate a nationwide partnership that has collectively surpassed the \$160 million mark.

Thrivent has committed \$9.2 million worth of support to Habitat in 2012, which will fund the construction and/or rehabilitation of 142 Habitat homes in 32 states.

To date, more than 480,000 Thrivent volunteers have donated more than three million hours to construct 1,600 homes.

Habitat for Humanity is a local non-profit Christian-based housing ministry work-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

River Falls-based Thrivent representative John Levi "walks the walk" at a Habitat for Humanity build site in the St. Croix Valley. Levi, of River Falls, along with regional representative Judy Dinger and counterparts in Glenwood City, Hudson and New Richmond, helps supply Habitat build projects with hundreds of member and employee volunteers.

ing in Pierce and St. Croix counties to partner with people in need and enable them to acquire simple, decent homes. Learn more at www.scvhabitat.org or on the St. Croix Valley Habitat's Facebook page.

ThriventBuilds is a program of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a non-profit

Fortune 500 financial-services organization that offers a broad range of financial products and assistance. Learn more at www.thrivent.com.

Food: 'I knew it was a problem and I kept doing it'

from page A1

there are foods, like ice cream, that she just can't get enough of.

AFRAID OF HUNGER

Arthurs understands. "I have a fear of hunger — super strong," she said, trying to explain her compulsion to hoard. She added, "But it's not about hunger. Food is on my mind 24 seven."

She had long since passed the point where she knew what "full" felt like.

"I've always loved food," said Arthurs. "I think I knew I had a problem with it for the last eight years. A lot of my eating was mindless."

She continued, "It was like I couldn't help it. It was really, really shameful and it was secretive. I knew it was a problem, and I kept doing it."

Albertson understands: "I was like an addict looking for a fix."

She said it's like eating and eating and "never getting the signal that you're eating yourself to death."

Albertson was bulimic for over a decade, and later off and on.

She tried every weight-loss group and every program she could find, trying some over and over.

She saw a doctor, who put her on drugs to curb her appetite. Such drugs couldn't be used for long and they had side effects.

Then one day on her way to work, listening to a local radio broadcast, she heard about a program offered through COR Retreat Food Recovery in Wayzata, Minn.

The broadcaster was mocking the program, but Albertson only heard the words "food addiction" and "Wayzata."

She thought somebody

finally understood. So she looked up the program.

"I called and said, 'I have to come.'"

Albertson immediately signed up for the five-day, four-night program and emailed her sister who signed up too.

In September she joined 14 other people for the second intensive program offered by COR.

"To me it was just life changing," said Albertson.

Suddenly she was surrounded by people who understood.

"We were all different, but we were all the same," she said.

Ages in the groups ranged from people in their 20s to those in their 70s. They've come from across the country.

Others felt the relief as intensely as she did, said Albertson. "There were people that never stopped crying all the while they were there."

Arthurs, who was working on her master's degree in marriage and family therapy, said she learned about the program from another therapist while doing her practicum in Hudson.

She called and talked to program director Michelle Goldberger. Because Arthurs couldn't afford the \$650 program fee, Goldberger approved her for a partial scholarship to the October session.

ONE BITE, AND YOU'RE DOOMED

"When I go to COR, I was so ready, but I was so terrified," said Arthurs.

COR, which attempts to help participants begin to live free of their obsessions with food, starts a 12-step program. During the five days, participants work on the first three steps.

Early on, the women said, they were asked to make a list of their "trigger foods."

Those are, said Albertson, "The stuff that if you took one bite, you're doomed."

Arthurs added, "I had like 30 things on my list."

She had a panic attack the second night of the program.

"It just started to hit me," said Arthurs, "that I could never have those foods and eat like a normal person."

Albertson said she was both thrilled and sad to reach the conclusion that while she needs food to live, she doesn't need some foods.

"I don't ever in my life have to eat sugar again," she said. That and white flour are prime problems, she said.

Arthurs paraphrases the first three steps of the program: "I can't. God can. I think I'll let him."

Letting go of that control and the feeling of shame helped her, said Arthurs.

"It takes it out of me," she said. "I'm not broken."

The COR program progresses with small group discussions, large groups, Overeaters Anonymous speakers and writing assignments.

Participants all eat meals together, dining on food prepared by a chef who cooks without sugar or white flour.

The change in diet soon made a difference, said Arthurs, who had been used to chronic joint pain but felt it slip away.

"You find your hunger again, and you find your 'full' level," she added.

The food — a lot of vegetables, fish and brown rice — was offered buffet-style and no one kept track of servings, but both women said no one over-ate either. Participants were served three meals and a snack

each day. Albertson said she felt the release.

"My whole purpose in life was never to eat because if I ate, I was doomed," she said. But in this group, she was too busy to think about eating except during meals, and binge eating in public wasn't an issue.

"I noticed that I tasted food," said Arthurs of her experience. She said she was eating more slowly and not eating between meals.

"It's eating what's right, what's good for me and what belongs to me," said Albertson, explaining her new attitude toward food.

"Food is always going to be there," agreed Arthurs. But her technique is to find what she can safely eat. As for the rest, she tells herself, "It's not mine."

When they leave the retreat center, COR participants get a lot of support, often through email, said the two women. They are also encouraged to attend Overeaters Anonymous meetings and continue working the 12 steps.

The two women met when Albertson was one of the alumni greeting the new members to the third COR program.

Afterwards Arthurs emailed Albertson to ask about starting a local Overeaters group.

Albertson was enthusiastic, attended an OA convention, met with the chairperson and registered an OA group for the River Falls area.

The first meeting will be 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at Albertson's home, N7478 County Road E, River Falls.

That will be the group's only December gathering, but meetings will be held every Saturday morning starting in January.

For more information, call Albertson at 715-425-7580.

Harsdorf

from page A1

and recalling of cherished memories — treasures in and of themselves, said Sheila.

She and Jim recall Ervin's involvement in the West Lakeland, Minn., town board and reflected how those activities impacted them.

Jim called his dad's influence in town politics "pivotal" and explained that back then, "They used to hold town board meetings in the home."

Jim remembers picking up on a lot of the town business from those meetings and learning from his father that when someone had a problem, it was right to work on helping them solve it. Jim remembers hearing people's concerns, as well as seeing the ballot-counting process at the town hall during elections.

Their dad's influence helped lead Jim to serve in the Wisconsin Assembly for four years and the Senate for eight and Sheila to serve in the State Assembly for 11 years and the State Senate since 2001.

Jim recalls his dad's hard-working nature and cites one strong example — his father's willingness to move the Harsdorfs' farm from Minnesota into Wisconsin.

"It was not easy to move a farm," said Jim, who remembers that just about every Sunday for four years, they looked diligently to find the right new place.

Even after the family moved to Beldenville in 1970, the work of establishing the Trim-Bel Valley Farms continued, building friendships and relationships.

Jim said "Trim-Bel" incorporates the names of the two rivers that touch the property.

He said of his dad, "You could put him in any circum-

stances, and he'd have friends all around."

Ervin and Eloise celebrated 65 years of marriage in 2011 and enjoyed traveling together. They've been to some 13 foreign countries including Sweden, Germany and Morocco.

Jim expressed the Harsdorfs' thanks to their friends and neighbors, saying, "We're just appreciative of the community we live in."

Harsdorf family friend, Greg Andrews, who has been a Pierce County UW-Extension agent for 27 years, remembers Ervin well. Dairy farmers never seem to fully retire, said Andrews.

"I think Ervin's value of community set the stage for his life," said Andrews.

He recalls both Ervin and Eloise being at the Pierce County Fair Dairy Show every year — smiling and greeting people even after they were well past typical retirement age.

Andrews said he had many lively conversations with Ervin about dairy farming and production. He also worked with the Harsdorfs as the family transitioned the farm from one generation to the next.

"I always enjoyed my visits out to the Harsdorf farm," said Andrews.

Ervin's obituary tells of his other community involvement including as a 4-H leader, church-building committee member, and member of several dairy cooperative boards.

He is survived by wife Eloise and four children: Roxanne, Susan, James and Sheila, as well as their spouses and extended family.

The funeral was Wednesday, Dec. 7, at Ezekiel Lutheran Church.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

COR retreat participants spend five days and four nights together at the McIver Center for Spiritual Development in Wayzata, Minn.

COR program

from page A1

the area I'm most interested in is food addiction," said Nordstrand.

Goldberger said COR attracts people who have spent 20-30 years dieting, only to fall back to overeating.

"Our problem isn't lack of information," said Goldberger, a self-described "food addict" who has maintained a 60-pound weight loss for six years. "It's about a need to have a transformation. It (COR) is a spiritual program."

The cost for the COR pro-

gram is \$650, but will go up to \$750 in January, said Goldberger.

Now that COR is up and running, publicity is a goal.

Nordstrand said this month staff will be working with Joan Lunden on a film for National Public Television, Minnesota Public Television and cable TV. COR has scheduled 200 commercial programs on cable television for 2012.

For more information about COR, go to its website: www.cormn.org or call Goldberger at 612-669-6110.

Starting December 9th

DAILY 7:00 PM
Saturday & Sunday Matinee 2:00pm

HAPPY FEET 2

Mumble the penguin has a problem: his son Erik, who is reluctant to dance, encounters The Mighty Sven, a penguin who can fly! Things get worse for Mumble when the world is shaken by powerful forces, causing him to bring together the penguin nations and their allies to set things right. PG



DAILY 9:00 PM ONLY

TOWER HEIST



Josh Kovacs is the manager of a residential apartment in New York. He is close to all the tenants, especially Arthur Shaw, a financier. One day Shaw is arrested by the FBI for fraud. Josh thinks it's a misunderstanding that can be resolved. But later he learns that the employees' pension which he asked Shaw to handle is gone. When one of the employees tries to kill himself, Josh's views of Shaw change. He goes to see him and loses his temper. He loses his job. The FBI agent in charge of Shaw tells him that Shaw might walk and recovering the pension fund is unlikely. She tells him that it's been rumored that Shaw has 20 million laying around if he needs. Josh thinks he knows where it is. So with two other employees who also lost their jobs and an evicted tenant, they set out to get into Shaw's penthouse to get the money. But they realize they need the assistance of someone who knows what they are doing... PG-13

COMING NEXT:

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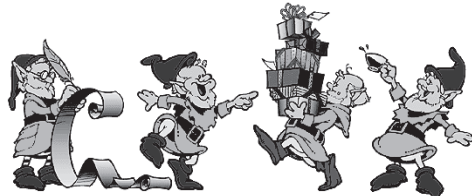


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