



JAN - FEB 2026 ISSUE 371

The Voice of 4-H

The Vernon County 4-H Family Newsletter



UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF AN ADULT VOLUNTEER, A YOUTH COMPLETES A POT HOLDER AT A RECENT SEWING WORKSHOP

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A Full Line Up: Sparks Away!

Emery Bork - 4-H Educator

Happy New Year, all!

Warning: this newsletter is packed full of trips, adventures, programming, workshops, distance learning, and more! There is something for everyone, and we hope that you are able to attend and participate in a few.

Each season, I work to find volunteers or create opportunities for our young people to explore new things. You never know when a small project, like sewing potholders, will spark a child's interests. I invited my own daughter, Annabelle, to try out sewing for the first time. She loved it and ended up sewing six, and would have made more! She's been after me to sew more things, so over winter break, we headed to the quilt shop in town to look at fabrics. She came home with a pattern for sleeping bags for her dolls and a few pieces of beautiful purple fabric. We will see where this goes, but for now, it's exciting to see her interest, creativity, and drive to learn something new. It was also a good reminder for me, that I should always continue to learn something new myself!



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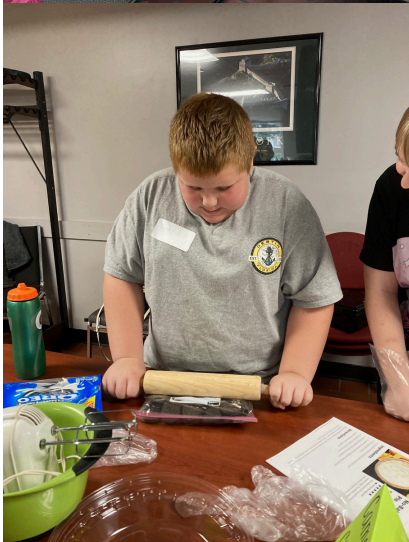
Photo Happenings:



11 youth of various ages attended our potholder sewing workshop held in early December.



4-H Educator, Emery, traveled to Atlanta, GA to receive a National Award for the Cooking With Meats curriculum, co-written with the Calumet County 4-H Educator. If you'd like a copy, we have plenty in the office! It's full of amazing recipes for beef, lamb, pork, rabbit, goat, and poultry.



Youth worked together in teams of two: one older and one younger, to make two different types of cream pies. They also learned about mindful eating.

Updates: What you need to know

Trip Award Information:

Vernon County 4-H wants to send our youth on trips! Most of the state, region, and national trips enroll during the fall months. If you are considering going, please keep an eye out for emails from the state. Remember that Federation typically pays for half of your trip. You can also ask for funds from your club! We will help financially support your youth to go, so please do not hesitate to reach out to get more info.

Arts Fest Entries Are Out

What is Arts Fest? It's an opportunity for 4-Hers to come together and celebrate the arts, music, and performance. Arts Fest consists of judging youths' abilities and is broken up into two distinct entries: fair and fest. The Vernon County Fair in September hosts many competitions but it does not host demonstrations, vocals, piano, and instrumental. Those are done during Arts Fest, along with 'fun' or 'fest' entries: Cloverbuds, artwork, photography, and forensics speaking. This can make the application process a little confusing, so we have included an informational sheet at the end of the newsletter. There are additional rules and entry guidelines posted on our website as well. Entries are due back by Friday, January 30th. Arts Fest will be held on March 7th at the Viroqua Church of Christ.

*** New this year, each youth who enters and participates in musical or speaking entries will receive a \$5 gift certificate to Kwik Trip***

To register:

<https://forms.gle/b1hMmy5RfLasZMqA8>



Rules and Entry Requirements:

<https://vernon.extension.wisc.edu/files/2023/12/4-H-Arts-Fest-Rules-and-Instructions.pdf>



Attendance Policy

If your family is interested in exhibiting their projects at the Vernon County Fair, which is hosted by the Vernon County Agricultural Society, your youth must attend 50% of your club's meetings. Your youth can make up two missed meetings in order to reach their quota by participating in other 4-H programming. Ask your club leader or the Extension Office for a copy of the attendance policy in its entirety.

Shooting Sports Project: Keep your eyes tuned for an announcement for our annual check-in/safety meeting. Each year, every youth involved in shooting sports must engage in a safety screening training. This meeting typically takes place in the beginning of April.

February is Food Drive Month

Clubs will need to identify a food pantry or shelter (homeless, pregnancy, or halfway house) that they would like to donate to. It can be in the county or outside the county—whatever works best for your club members. Please contact them ahead of time to make arrangements, and to find out what they need and what they can handle (freezer space, etc.) Please communicate that information to all members.

There are so many possible things that a pantry/shelter may need—if it is not on the sheet, write it on the back. Throughout February, members should work to collect items and complete their point sheets. Record sheets should then be turned in to the leader to do a final tally and then submit the club total to the Extension Office by 4:30, March 2nd. The club is responsible for getting items and cash to the pantry/shelter. Clubs are strongly encouraged to plan their Feb meeting at a pantry, invite a pantry worker to present, etc., as a learning component to this challenge.

Updates: What you need to know, etc.

Horse Project: Photos

Congratulations to Grace Strangstalien on a successful State Horse Expo in September!



A plaque was presented to Pat Stevenson by the Horse and Pony Project members thanking him for his years of service to the project. Thank you Pat!



Congratulations to Grace Strangstalien and Kinley Stenslien on your success competing at the State Gymkhana!



Thank you to the project members and families for their support over the last several years. It's been a privilege serving as your leader.

Keep riding!
Brook Strangstalien

Update: We are very grateful for the time and effort put in by Brook over the years! She has done an absolutely fantastic job of guiding and helping advocate for the project. Several new horse project leaders have stepped up. They are Tabitha Volden, Wendy Johnson, and Jordan Burke. Stay tuned for more announcements in the future, and feel free to follow the horse project's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/231378910220751>



County, State, and National Events



Open to all ages and grades. Youth 5th grade and below will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult for the workshop. 4-H will provide all of the food and may ask for participants to bring some kitchen utensils and tupperware to bring left over food home. Deadline to register, Jan 7th:

<https://forms.gle/2jt5iRSBL3Ujk7Tm6>



To register for this Distance Learning Kit, head here:

<https://wonderswithinwood26.4honline.com/>



WONDERS WITHIN WOOD

Carving and Design Distance Learning Kit

Audience: 5th Grade and Up

Register By: Jan 5th in 4HOnline

Cost: \$5

Participants will get to:

- Explore how people first began thinking about and making carvings by using several different art mediums
- Connect with carving traditions, and head outdoors to observe and journal.
- Begin building green wood carving skills by shaping a flower from fresh wood

What's Included

Included in the kit:

- Interactive curriculum guide with links to an online learning video and a sharing community just for this project
- Informational insert on selecting a good carving knife and care (carving knife not included)
- Art supplies



The Artist In Residence

This program was made possible through "Culture, Community, and the Classroom Residency." We are honored to host Derek Brabender, an artisan green wood worker. We will host a Zoom with Derek where youth can display his carving work, ask questions, and learn about the green wood carving community as it exists today. This event will take place in March.

Please note that due to the nature of this activity, youth will need to be supervised and assisted by a trusted adult during carving. This is an independent learning activity.



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



County, State, and National Events, etc.



ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION (AI) AND CALVING WORKSHOP

UW-MADISON EXTENSION

**SUNDAY
MARCH 29
9AM-3PM**

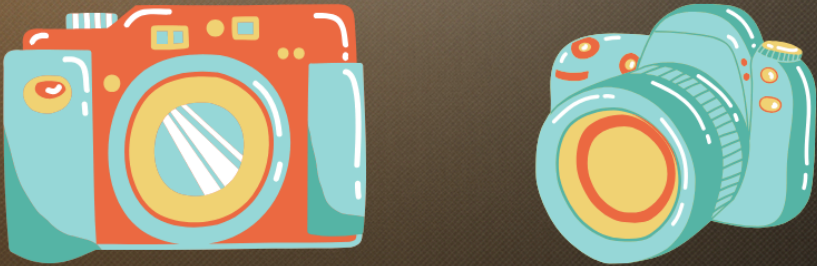
- Open to youth grades 8 and up, parent or trusted adult must attend
- \$15 per person to cover AI materials, calving model, and lunch

Will be held at UW-Extension Office

Our UW-EXT agriculture educators will bring a full calving model that simulates a birth. Participants will have the opportunity to practice various calving scenarios and try AI techniques on reproductive tracts. There is a grade restriction due the necessary height and arm length needed to perform this work, 8th grade and up. Space is limited. More information and registration can be found here: <https://forms.gle/a3BFTuphVW3noZ2TA>




To register for this opportunity, head here.
Space is limited:
<https://forms.gle/KwZbd6E2pJ2mjfr68>




PHOTOGRAPHY SESSION

Open to all levels, grades 3-13

Beginners will learn about the rule of 3rds and lighting in a short lesson. More advanced youth are able to listen or have the building open to practice and receive feedback from our two adult volunteers. All youth will have an opportunity to both practice and take photos to enter into Arts Fest and the fair.

 **10:00-11:30 AM, YOUTH MAY LEAVE WHEN THEY ARE READY**

 **FEB 28**
THE OLD RED SHED, WESTBY

UW-MADISON EXTENSION

County, State, and National Events, etc.

Art Beat



REGISTRATION OPENING SOON!

WHO

Youth in grades 3-5, parents, leaders

WHERE

Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center

WHEN

March 14-15, 2025

REGISTER JAN. 12TH - FEB. 8TH



4-H ArtBEAT! is the introductory program for Wisconsin 4-H expressive arts and was created for 4-H members in grades 3-5, their parents and leaders. ArtBEAT! provides an opportunity for youth and their parents to experience different art forms in a camping environment at the Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center in Wisconsin Dells. ArtBEAT! The event offers a taste of several arts projects including music, visual arts, Theater, and more!

Registration will be on 4HOnline, under the "Events" tab.

To learn all about this committee and to sign up, head here:
<https://forms.gle/yuJ5Tezkhc5HY2gT7>



If you didn't hear the great news, watch the announcement on our YouTube channel!

https://youtu.be/2_GYetl8VBY




YOUTH COMMUNITY ORCHARD COMMITTEE



JOIN US AS WE DESIGN OUR 'ALMOST' 2-ACRE ORCHARD AND PERENNIAL FOOD PLOT

WE'RE LOOKING FOR MEMBERS ASAP!



Digging Into 4-H

Vernon County 4-H Annual Awards
Banquet & Cloverbud Graduation Ceremony
Sunday, January 18th

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Location: The G.Y.M.

S3637 Duncan Ln.

Viroqua, WI 54665



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

To register:
<https://forms.gle/maXtQaPVypFlEfVy9>





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Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so 10 days before the program activity so that proper arrangements can be made.

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