

SCHOOLS BRIEFLY

Preschool event slated:

Janesville Child Development Days for children ages 2 to 4 1/2 and their families will run from March 15 through March 19. The program will be held from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. March 15 through March 18 and from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. March 19 in the board rooms at the Educational Services Center, 527 S. Franklin St. in Janesville. Participants can take part in developmental skill screenings; consult with district Title I Pre-K/P4J and early childhood teachers or speech and language pathologists, Rock Walworth Head Start teachers, Exchange Family Resource Center representatives and Birth – Three Therapeutic Learning Center representatives; gather community resource information; collect parenting tips and child development information; receive a free take-home bag for their child; and enroll their child in Preschool for Janesville. To enroll in the P4J program, bring your child's birth certificate, immunization records, the parent's picture ID and proof of residency. Families must live in the district to attend. Walk-ins will be accepted, but appointments are encouraged. To make an appointment, call (608) 743-5063.

Forensics students shine:

Two Parker High School students recently earned finalist medals in forensics competitions. Freshman Megan Mitchell, daughter of Leslie and Laurie Mitchell of Janesville, was a medal-winner in the four-minute speech at the DeForest High School meet and at the Delavan-Darien High School meet. Freshman Grace Bothwell, daughter of Suzanne McCord, Jeff Goecks and Michael Bothwell of Janesville, won a finalist medal in public address at the Delavan-Darien meet.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- MONDAY:**
■ Evansville:
 7 p.m. Jazz and show choir concert, Evansville High School Performing Arts Center.
- TUESDAY:**
■ Janesville:
 6 p.m. PTA meeting, Marshall Middle School.
- WEDNESDAY:**
■ Janesville:
 8:30 a.m. Fifth-grade mock trial, Jefferson Elementary School.
 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. Family brunch, Jackson Elementary School.
- THURSDAY:**
■ Edgerton:
 4 p.m. Elementary drama play, Edgerton Performing Arts Center.
■ Janesville:
 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. PTA carnival, Madison Elementary School.
 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Family fun night at Franklin Middle School, Washington Elementary School.
 6 p.m. National Honor Society induction, Craig High School.
- FRIDAY:**
■ Edgerton:
 7 p.m. Elementary drama play, Edgerton Performing Arts Center.
■ Janesville:
 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Rec night, Edison, Marshall and Franklin middle schools.
■ Milton:
 9 a.m. PTSO meeting, Milton High School.

WITH PASSION AND A PEN

Beloit author shares interest in social justice, history with young readers

By LISA M. SCHMELZ
 FOR THE MESSENGER

BELOIT — Ann Bausum, 52, is in the office of her second-story Beloit home. Black and white photographs of Bausum with Civil Rights activists hang on the wall alongside photos of her grown children. Her computer is on and humming. Across her desk and on the floor are neat piles of papers. Organizing research and scouring maps of places far and near are all on today's to-do list.

Cocooning all this multi-tasking are the hundreds of books lining the shelves of Bausum's office. Among these hundreds of books are those Bausum wrote. A historical author who publishes with National Geographic, Bausum considers herself lucky to combine her love of social justice with writing.

"The third book I had published was the book about women's suffrage in America, and I really felt like I hit a stride with that," she said. "I really am drawn to social justice topics. I think a lot of that is because of the informative time I grew up in, the 1960s, and social justice was just in the air. That left with me a very special passion."

Bausum will share that passion at 7 p.m. March 16 at Hedberg Public Library. Admission is free.

Sponsored by The League of Women Voters, her presentation is titled "Voting Rights, Voting Fights: Securing the Ballot during American History." She'll discuss not only the battle women waged to gain the right

to vote, but also that of other minority groups.

"Her speech is in conjunction with the League of Women Voters' 90th anniversary, so we're expecting a broad range of audience members," said library spokeswoman Sharon Grover.

Divorced with two grown children, Bausum has seven books to her credit, all targeted toward the middle school reader. An eighth, "Unraveling Freedom: The battle for democracy on the home front during World War I," is in the works.

"I think middle school is my core audience, but my work is read by others," she said. "It carries over to high school audiences and beyond."

Why aim for the middle?

"Partly, because I just love working with middle schoolers and working for that age group," she said. "Our middle school kids often get overlooked, so I'm very happy if I can write a book or talk to them in a way that connects."

Bausum came to historical publishing 14 years ago, when her own children were in school. Over a period of four years, she wrote her first book. But no promise of publication kept her going.

"I got pretty good about sitting down, grabbing that time that was available and being productive. I had no guarantees I'd be published. Other moms go and drink coffee, I did this. That's not to knock coffee. I do go and drink coffee. But whenever I had time, I wrote," she said.

Born in Lexington, Va., Bausum went on to graduate from Beloit College. Later, she worked for her alma mater writing public relations pieces. During that time, she wrote a piece on Beloit College alum and famed American explorer Roy Chapman Andrews. She further mined Andrew's life with research on her own time and struck gold when she saw its potential for her first book:



I just love working with middle schoolers and working for that age group. Our middle schoolers often get overlooked.

— Ann Bausum



TERRY MAYER/STAFF

Ann Bausum of Beloit has written seven books mainly targeted at middle-schoolers. The historical books often focus on social justice issues.

Read on

For more about Ann Bausum, go to www.annbausum.com.

Or attend her free presentation, "Voting Rights, Voting Fights: Securing the Ballot during American History," at 7 p.m. March 16 at Hedberg Public Library, 316 S. Main St., Janesville.

"Dragon Bones and Dinosaur Eggs: A photobiography of Roy Chapman Andrews."

As is often the case for writers, Bausum endured her share of rejection. Her first manuscript was rejected by two pub-

lishers before it found a home at National Geographic.

"That was a big day," she said. "Good news always comes in a phone call. I think I can say that's the only time in my life that I felt like my feet didn't touch the ground. I didn't know you could feel that way and I did."

Bausum's interest in Andrews also led her to found the Roy Chapman Andrews Society at Beloit College.

"He was known around the world for going to far-flung places and making terrific discoveries," said college spokeswoman Susan Kasten, "and the society helps keep his memory alive and brings major explorers to the college."

As need increased, so did efforts to reach campaign goal

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who assisted with and contributed to a very successful 2009 United Way of North Rock County campaign. United Way's mission is to improve lives. Fundraising is simply the necessary means to that end.

At the outset, we knew that community needs were increasing, and at the same time, economic conditions would make our fundraising more challenging. When you consider the statistics, one of every six households has been affected by job loss or lay-off in the past 18 months. Our program partners are working hard to meet the local needs, providing nearly 90,000 service contacts last year. We learned that a growing number of previous United Way contributors now are service recipients; while many families are



both contributing and utilizing our program partners' services.

The campaign would need to raise as much money as possible to continue to fund vital health and human service programs in north Rock County.

This year's campaign focused on connecting our donors and potential donors with the real-life results of their contributions. Our goal was (and is) to reach out to as many people as possible, and to connect those who want to help our community with an opportunity to do so. We had speakers share their stories at about 100 workplace and service club meetings. We added several new campaigns. For the first time, the campaign video



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Phoebe Tobias and John Pearse served as co-chairs for the 2009 United Way of North Rock County campaign.

and pledge card were available in Spanish.

As a result, an outstanding 35 percent of workplace campaigns reported increases over their prior year's results.

In the past, it generally was thought that active employee contributions could adequately fund needed programs. With the

significant job loss our region has experienced, this is simply no longer true. Therefore, we established and will continue to expand contact with identified retiree groups and others not reached through workplace campaigns.

Now, as the campaign is wrapping up, gifts from individual donors, employee campaigns, corporations and foundations total nearly \$1.2 million. Once all results are finalized, we project the campaign will finish at approximately \$1.3 million – 96 percent of the \$1.35 million goal.

There is still time to support United Way, and help us reach the \$1.35 million goal. Every additional dollar raised is another life changed, improved or even saved.

Editor's note: Tammy DeGarmo, resource development director at the United Way of North Rock County, wrote this column.