

# THE COMMUNICATOR

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## Grant County Employee Newsletter

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Editor:  
Dawn Mergen,  
Personnel  
Specialist

## Welcome Our New Orchard Manor Administrator



Hello, my name is Alesha Erdenberger and I became the Administrator of Orchard Manor on September 12<sup>th</sup>. I have both a Bachelor's and a Master's in Healthcare Administration with over 15 years of experience in healthcare. I am also licensed as a Nursing Home Administrator. Over my professional career, I have gained many healthcare management experiences while working for a non-profit and a for-profit. These experiences include working for Community Health Services Corporation as the Administrator of Bluff Haven/Labatisse in Prairie du Chien, and most recently the Administrator of Care and Rehab in Boscobel.

I currently reside on a farm in Glen Haven (3 miles south of Bloomington) with my husband, Bill, and our three children, Will, Ava, and Tom. In my free time, I volunteer at my church as a Sunday school teacher, and I enjoy gardening, baking, and anything to spend time with my family.

I am excited to be part of the Grant County team and I look forward to meeting and working with each member of my team; in addition, to getting to know all the residents, family members, staff, associates, and volunteers at Orchard Manor.

# Dana's Desktop

Dana C. Andrews, Grant County IT Technician



## Plastics may be a Girl's Best Friend



In the fun world of planetology, there has been a theory that the rain on Neptune and Uranus is made of diamonds. To see if they could prove that, in 2017 scientist were able to turn Styrofoam (polystyrene) into

nanodiamonds (molecular sized diamonds) by zapping (I assume their coffee cups) with something called a *Linac Coherent Light Source* (a very powerful X-ray laser) from two opposing directions. These lasers were able to heat the plastic instantly to 5000° kelvin while simultaneously compressing it with 150 gigapascals of pressure. These are conditions similar to the deep atmospheres of most large icy planets. While the experiment worked, it had a theoretical issue. Polystyrene does not contain any chemical oxygen. Therefore, it did not completely match real-world conditions. In re-visiting this experiment, the scientists realized that the PET class of plastics (polyethylene terephthalate) did have the needed oxygen and in the correct amount. So, using the very stuff we try to keep out of our landfills, they re-ran their experiments from 5 years ago and were able to make the correct type of Neptune-style "rain" diamonds. They further discovered that by varying the amount of oxygen in the target sample, they could also dictate the size of the diamonds (although still of the nano size variety). Now, except for the nano diamond I once used for an engagement ring, these diamonds are too small to be useful for every day purposes. However, they will be perfect for things like quantum sensors, chemical catalysts, and even have medical applications. Something that will be

of great demand in the future while helping to deplete our waste levels of plastics. Note that it takes over a billion nano diamonds to make 1 gram of product.

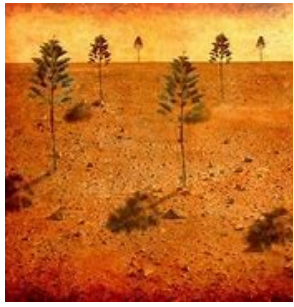
## No School like Old School

We associate Japan these days as being bleeding-edge hi-tech adopters. And for the most part, that is true. However, as it turns out, the Japanese government and senior levels of business management are still ruled by legacy and tradition along with a corporate culture of senior managers being computer illiterate. This came to a head In 2018 when it was discovered that the head of the Japanese government cyber-security division had never actually used a computer (his feeling was its a staff function). This led to the Japanese government creating a Digital Agency headed by a minister level supervisor (the equivalent of our presidential cabinet members). The new agency identified over 1900 procedures that require businesses to continue to use floppy disks.

These are both the 3 ½ inch hard plastic storage devices or 5 ¼" soft floppies from the seventies. Taro Kono, the Digital Agency minister, has declared war on these inefficient storage policies as well as fax machines. Of course, this also means someone in Japan is still making floppy disks! To note the problem with floppy disks; a single 32GB USB stick can hold the equivalent of 20,000 floppy disks contents. However, let us not be too harsh with them. Up until at least 2016, our own nuclear forces were using 80kb 8" floppies for launch codes and to program ICBM nuclear missiles. (Note for my boss: They used IBM series/1 machine).



## Trees on Mars (hint: they're fake)

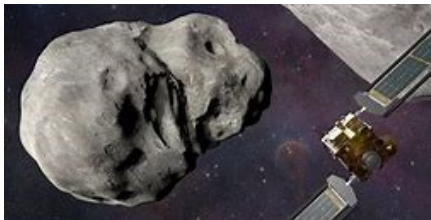


One of the experiments currently being conducted with the *Perseverance* rover on Mars is the MOXIEs. This is a lunch box sized device that takes carbon-dioxide from the Martian atmosphere and converts it into oxygen. So far, it has been able to reliably produce about 6 grams of

oxygen per hour, about the same rate as the typical earth tree. They are testing it in as many types of Martian conditions as they can. If this continues to pass all its tests, several large industrial sized MOXIEs will be “planted” prior to the planned manned Mars mission. These would be able to provide all the O<sub>2</sub> needed for the astronauts and also refuel their rocket for the return trip.

## In Defense of Earth

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, NASA slammed a space vehicle into an asteroid with the hope that the asteroid's course was deflected



enough, if it was headed to earth, that it would miss us. Traveling at 15,000 mph at impact, its job was not to destroy the rock (which would lead to many pieces heading to earth) but just change its course slightly. For a future ‘real’ event, so long as this can be done at a great enough distance, and the asteroid is not too large, we now have a way to protect ourselves from an extinction-level event.

## Not Enough Hours in the Day



Earth, our home in space, set a record recently by having the shortest day ever recorded. Specifically, it rotated 1.59

milliseconds less than 24 hours. This happened, not only on June 29<sup>th</sup> but again on July 26<sup>th</sup>. In fact, since the advent of the ‘atomic’ high-precision clock in the sixties, there have been 28 recorded instances where earth rotation took less than 24 hours (however, the

previous record was 1.47 milliseconds). Since a ‘full’ day is 86,400,000 milliseconds, missing 1.5ms is not a lot. But to those involved in network management, GPS positioning, satellite control, and various other high precision operations, this has causing quite a stir. Meta, the parent of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has even suggested a negative leap second to address this. Note, the current IT system is for clocks to go from 23:59:59 to 23:59:60 and then reset that number to 00:00:00. This has some inherent problems but so does the negative leap second (going from 23:59:58 direct to 00:00:00). Conversation about this is why network engineers never get invited to parties.

## Future Plans to Make the Internet Safe Again

There are five pending technologies coming in the near future that could radically change online security and make networking a lot safer. They are *DNS Encryption*, *Passwordless Authentication*, *Onion Networking*, *Cryptocurrencies*, and (my favorite), *Homomorphic Encryption*. Quite the mouthful of terms. The short explanations are: DNS encryption is just a way of setting up the internet address book in a way that makes it hard for malicious actors to use it in a bad way. Passwordless authentication is biometrics or something similar where, for you, the computer or phone can be used without any logon. Onion networking, currently used by the dark web, could actually be repurposed to guarantee integrity, privacy, and unblockability of communications. Cryptocurrencies, currently getting a lot of bad press, can be done in a way that would provide secure financial transactions that could be used anywhere in the world. And finally, Homomorphic encryption is encryption that is not decrypted. For example, our laptop Veracrypt program protects data on the hard drive and https:// webpages protects the transmission of data but when you use the data, it is first decrypted. H/E however would keep the data encrypted at all times.



## VR for Real

The U.S. Army has ordered more than 120,000 augmented reality headsets from



Microsoft. These ‘gee-wiz’ goggles will allow the user to see their environment on a map overlay, show heat signatures of friends and foes in their immediate area, allow them to communicate and coordinate with other team members, and provide other real time data. They will also be used to simulate battle conditions for training. Weapon systems are being development that will aim based on holo-tracking data from the goggles.

## Computers and Medicine

I was not going to write this last piece as it is a complicated subject that probably wouldn't result in anything you'd see in news stories. However, it is a big deal with real ramification for future health and wellness. Last night I read where this new technology has won some prestigious awards with large cash funding so now I'm thinking it wouldn't hurt to talk a little bit about this technology (and maybe CRISPR too).

An Artificial Intelligence (AI) super computer called DeepMind has been thinking about protein folding. Proteins are the building blocks of life. Formed of chains of amino acids they fold up in very specific shapes that determine their function. Once you know how a protein folds up, you can start to understand how it works, and how



to change its behavior. Although DNA provides the instructions for making the chain of amino acids, predicting how they interact to form a 3D shape was not well understood and, until recently, only a fraction of the 200 million or so proteins had been deciphered. Starting in November 2020 DeepMind was given a program called AlphaFold to work with. AlphaFold can process genetic code for almost every living organism. Using this, DeepMind created a database of protein folds for 20 species, including all 20,000 proteins used in the human body. This database has already proved useful, helping to provide a breakthrough in creating a new and more effective antibody for malaria. Another group has started using this information to work with enzymes that will liquefy or recycle various plastics compounds. CRISPR is a tool that is able to directly edit DNA. By having a road map to what changes in DNA will produce which kind of proteins that are generated, creates an exciting potential to revolutionize modern medicine. To use an example of a car engine, knowing how a car engine works will allow you, through trial and error, to eventually fix it; but knowing all the parts of the motor, what they do, and how they do it will make the fix faster, more reliable, and ensure you are only affecting the broken part. This new protein roadmap should generate a whole new level of cures for “incurable” diseases and physical conditions. The fact they could get a super computer to do this also lays the foundation for other “impossible” tasks to now be calculated and quantified.



# Orchard Manor Celebrates in a Big Way!

*Submitted by Heather Novinskie, Orchard Manor Activities Manager*



On Friday, September 16, we celebrated in a big way at Orchard Manor. We hosted another successful Car Show in the front parking lot of our facility. This year was our second go at such a highly anticipated event and it did not disappoint. There were smiles to be seen from east to west of the parking lot. We had the support of our Grant County Sheriff's Department, as well as the Lancaster Fire Department. The residents have been looking forward to this for the past few months and it did not disappoint. The organizer of the event, Tonya Mish, Volunteer Coordinator, helped bring in 30 cars to this event and she says her goal for next year is to go bigger! Our cars came from all around the county and as far away as Sherrill, IA. We also took this event as an opportunity to introduce our new Nursing Home Administrator, Alesha Erdenberger, to the community. Once all the residents were finished with their trip down memory lane, we treated them to an ice cream cone and reminiscing in our Activity Room. A huge thank you goes out again to all those who helped bring so much happiness to so many people.

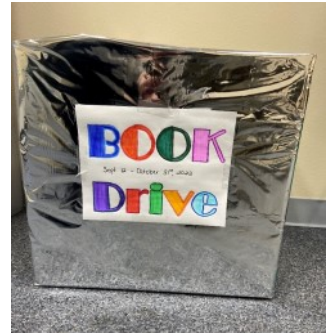


*Anyone wishing to have a specific subject discussed in a future newsletter may contact Joyce Roling at 723-2045 or [jroling@co.grant.wi.gov](mailto:jroling@co.grant.wi.gov).*

## Orchard Manor is Hosting a Book Drive!

*Submitted by Heather Novinskie, Orchard Manor Activities Manager*

We are hosting a book drive! Our ICF-IID unit is in need of gently used books to build up our library in the classrooms! Any and all donations with reading levels of 0 to 5th grade would be greatly appreciated! We are running our drop off donation until October 31, 2022. If you have any books within this reading level that are gently used and you are looking to downsize, we would be happy to take them off your shelves. Our residents have been given the task to black out any previous owner's names as to provide any privacy if need be. We have received nice donations from several families, and one huge donation from the Lancaster Schools. Books may be dropped off any day of the week during the hours of 8 am and 5 pm. We greatly appreciate any and all support in this drive and the residents are looking forward to the new and exciting stories coming their way!



## Welcome Zelda, the Sheriff's Office Therapy K9

*Submitted by Sheriff Nate Dreckman*

The Sheriff's Office is excited to introduce our newest K9, Zelda. Zelda will be a multi-purpose therapy K9. Her handler, Jailer Cassara Bray, will utilize her to help staff here at the Sheriff's Office and other staff throughout the County Departments, make visits to nursing homes and assist schools if they should have an incident where the students need help. An example would be if a student were tragically killed, and the school would bring in counselors to help the students. Zelda would be brought in as an additional resource for the students.

Zelda will also be used in the jail setting to help the inmates maintain a sense of normalcy. Many have dogs, so seeing one and being around one may help ease some anxiety and depression in someone confined to a jail setting.

Zelda recently graduated from Puppy Preschool and will attend Obedience training in November. She has become acclimated to the jail setting and is a favorite among the staff!



# Changes – Who Do You Need to Tell?

**Are you having a baby?  
Are you getting married or divorced?  
Are you losing other coverage for insurance?**



It is your responsibility to promptly notify the Personnel Department of upcoming dates such as birth of a child, marital status, and need for insurance enrollment changes. The department can then make sure you are aware of items that may need to be changed, updated documents that need to be on file, and very important insurance deadlines. (608)723-2540 [dmergen@co.grant.wi.gov](mailto:dmergen@co.grant.wi.gov)

**Did you move?  
Do you have a new phone number?**



It is your responsibility to promptly notify your supervisor and payroll designee of any changes in personal data such as mailing address, telephone number, email address, and emergency contacts. Failing to keep this information current in your personnel file may impact receipt of important notices such as insurance and tax documents.

## Aflac

Grant County's benefit eligible employees may participate in Aflac. This coverage helps you pay for medical related out-of-pocket costs.

Policy changes/enrollments are effective July 1<sup>st</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Michelle Nodorft (608-778-8057) from Aflac will be in Lancaster to meet with employees that would like to learn about the coverage types, have questions, or want to make changes.

Please see the below schedule and choose the location(s) and time(s) that work best for you.

### November 17, 2022

9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Orchard Manor (Conference Room 104)

11 a.m. Group Presentation at the County Board Room; must contact Personnel Office if plan to attend

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Administration building (Conference Room 266)

1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Community Services Building (Lobby Conference Room)





# Annual Open Enrollment

The annual open enrollment period will be here soon! Where has the year gone?

Paperwork for open enrollment will be available in November. All changes will be effective on January 1st.

This will be your opportunity to make insurance changes and to enroll in flex spending for 2023.

It is your responsibility to watch for and read the open enrollment newsletter that contains instructions and insurance costs for 2023. The newsletter will be distributed around November 1st. It will be emailed to those that have a Grant County email address. Your department will give you a copy if you don't have a county email address. You can also contact our office for a copy. All forms/materials, as well as the newsletter, will be located on the county website [www.co.grant.wi.gov](http://www.co.grant.wi.gov) (click on County Employee HR Documents and then click Open Enrollment which should be at the top of the list).



Dawn Mergen,  
Personnel  
Specialist

## Welcome to our Team!

New Employees - June 7, 2022 through September 10, 2022

Tracy Bausch ~ June 16 ~ ADRC  
 Brett Bendorf ~ July 27 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Ruby Breuer ~ July 20 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Kaden Crapp ~ August 4 ~ Sheriff  
 Devon Dimick ~ September 6 ~ Facilities Maintenance  
 Phoenix Ewers ~ June 8 ~ Sheriff  
 Samantha Flatter ~ August 31 ~ Sheriff  
 Elizabeth Grady ~ September 6 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Kenda Gullickson ~ August 30 ~ Sheriff  
 Loren Ihm ~ August 18 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Clarisa Kehoe ~ July 18 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Clara Kindrai ~ June 13 ~ Health  
 Mickey Knoble, Jr. ~ July 25 ~ Facilities Maintenance  
 Melvin Kopp ~ July 13 ~ Fair  
 Brooke Krueger ~ July 20 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Genesis Mayorquin ~ June 22 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Maddie Nielsen ~ June 22 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Tatianna Place ~ June 14 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Catherine Rosch ~ July 11 ~ ADRC  
 Brooklyn Russell ~ June 22 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Haley Schnepfer ~ June 22 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Sydney Schroeder ~ June 22 ~ Sheriff  
 Mariah Trenkle ~ August 18 ~ Orchard Manor  
 Michele Ubersox ~ August 23 ~ ADRC  
 Cameron Winkers ~ June 22 ~ Sheriff  
 Jenna Wolf ~ June 14 ~ Orchard Manor



## Retirement Recognition

June 7, 2022 through September 10, 2022

**Carol Schwartz (Orchard Manor), 14 years (retired August 1)**

***Grant County wishes you a happy and healthy retirement!***

*Reminder: Please contact the County Personnel Office at least two months before your retirement date so we can assist you with the process.*



## Service Anniversaries

October, 2022 through December, 2022 (5 year increments)

**Linda Orr (Social Services), 30 years on December 7**

**Amy Miller (Health), 25 years on December 15**

**Brenda Schneider (Fair), 25 years on October 27**

**Amanda Schnitzler (Orchard Manor), 20 years on December 3**

**Clark Thelemann (Social Services), 15 years on October 8**

**Kessa Klaas (Health), 10 years on October 3**

**Stephanie Moore (Sheriff), 10 years on October 7**

**Denece Udelhoven (Social Services), 10 years on November 26**

**Thomas Vesperman (Highway), 10 years on December 2**

**Grace Bailie (Orchard Manor), 5 years on October 14**

**Molly Donar (Social Services), 5 years on October 17**

**Debra Kirschbaum (Orchard Manor), 5 years on October 11**

**Lisa Sanger (Social Services), 5 years on October 23**

# Therapy Animals

O Y E O T E H T H E L P F U L N A  
 P P C S L O O H C S O T O C O N E  
 E A S R M F A N I M A L R I N M S  
 N R I E Y P A R E H T A T T P A P  
 T E S T V H E H T S N N R U M A O  
 O H M N N I T F L I E O O E E E A  
 E T E E O E L A M V M I P P A D N  
 N E T C C T M A R D E T P A S E V  
 S F V F O I L E E E L I U R T P T  
 O G S E N S T T D A P D S E I R P  
 R N I A D N E A N I M A L H F E R  
 A I M R I N C O R P O R A T E S A  
 N S P Y T E I X N A C T H L N S C  
 R R R I I T C I N H F C P T E I N  
 I U O W O R R Y D N U O R A B O R  
 D N V M N D M E U S E F U L N N P  
 O D E T S I S S A P O T M T O D A

Animal Assisted  
Therapeutic  
Intervention  
That  
Incorporates  
Animals

Therapy  
Animals  
Improve  
The  
Lives  
Of  
The  
People  
Around  
Them

Useful  
To  
Enhance  
And  
Complement  
The  
Benefits  
Of  
Traditional  
Therapy

Helpful  
For  
Conditions  
Such  
As  
Dementia  
Depression  
Anxiety  
Fear  
Worry

Often  
Seen  
In  
Nursing  
Homes  
Schools  
Detention  
Centers

Not  
The  
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As  
An  
Emotional  
Support  
Animal