

SAUK PRAIRIE **Star**

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New book shares story of Sauk City recycling pioneer

by **ERIN VANDER WEELE**
Editor

Author Elise Moser says when she heard the story of Sauk City recycling pioneer Milly Zantow, she learned “the power of rural communities.”

Fascinated by the life of Zantow, Moser wrote a children’s book to share a glimpse into the early days of the recycling movement and tell the story of how Zantow worked hard to build community support for an idea that became an international standard.

Moser says she wrote the book, “What Milly Did: The Remarkable Pioneer of Plastics Recycling,” because she wants kids to know, “you can invent the thing that you need to make change in the world.”

“I also wanted them to know that a woman did that because women’s accomplishments are not always as visible as they should be, especially in the area of science and technology,” she added.

With a bag filled with recyclables in one hand and her newly released book in the other, Moser talked about the book and Zantow’s life at an author’s visit on Aug. 16 at the Sauk City Public Library.

Moser began visiting Sauk City about five years ago from Montreal, Canada, where she lived for more than 30 years. When she first heard about Zantow, Moser assumed she did not know the story because she was new to the area, but quickly learned she was not alone. After finding no one else interested in writing the book, the former publisher sales representative, who previously wrote fiction, decided to take on the task.

She started doing research and also had the opportunity to interview Zantow, who died at age 91 in 2014.

“Once I started doing research and trying to figure out the rest of the story, it turned out to be a much bigger, more fascinating, wonderful story than I had imagined,” Moser shared at the author visit. “And once I started learning more about Milly’s life, it turned out that she is a much more amazing, wonderful person than I had realized.”

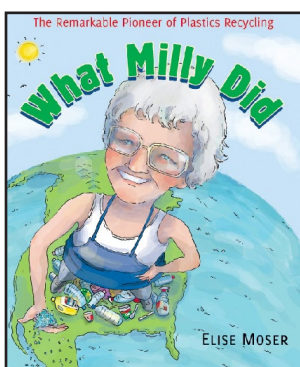
Making change

Moser enthusiastically summarized Zantow’s story to the audience, explaining how the idea to recycle came to Zantow while she was volunteering for the Crane Foundation in Japan and noticed different bundles of recyclables on the curb each day of her visit.

When Zantow came back to Sauk City, she heard reports that the landfill was almost full and it would take three years before another could open. One day, while sitting on top of the landfill, Zantow realized plastic made up a large part of the garbage.

After being told she was 20 years ahead of her time when Zantow approached the village board with the idea to recycle, she decided to learn about plastics and begin recycling herself. Zantow figured out it wouldn’t be enough to collect and separate, but to also do something with plastic that was going to generate enough money to make it sustainable.

“Somebody needed to want to do it and be able to keep doing it,” Moser said.



The book, “What Milly Did: The Remarkable Pioneer of Plastics Recycling”

Zantow then convinced a plastic company in Baraboo to experiment with products that could be created out of recycled plastics. The company would take 10,000 pounds at a time and wanted the plastics ground into pieces. To get the money to purchase a \$5,000 grinder, Zantow and her friend Jenny Ehl decided to cash in their life insurance policies. They drove to Chicago in a pick-up truck to buy the large machinery.

Moser shared with a smile, “Milly said in an interview, ‘well she figured she didn’t need the life insurance policy right away, but needed the grinder.’”

When they came back, Zantow and Ehl started collecting and grinding plastics, which began the first complete recycling service in Sauk County in 1979. One of the items collected was plastic milk jugs, each needing to be washed, dried and ground. To bring to scale, Moser says they would have needed to grind 70,000 milk jugs to have 10,000 pounds of plastic.

“It’s easy to look back on



Author Elise Moser signs her newly released book, “What Milly Did: The Remarkable Pioneer of Plastics Recycling,” during an author visit at the Sauk City Public Library Aug. 16.

PHOTO BY ERIN VANDER WEELE

it and it seems almost inevitable that this [recycling] would happen, but in fact, it happened because a couple of very determined women did an awful lot of hard work,” she said.

Zantow discovered how to recycle plastics on a large scale by developing an easy way to separate the different types of plastics with the numbers inside the triangle symbol we see

today.

“It sounds simple, and if you’re just thinking about the number, it is simple, but brilliant,” Moser said. “What is really amazing is that it wasn’t just about the number; what Milly put in place was a whole system.”

And it wasn’t easy for Zantow and the small group of women to make it happen.

Moser says in addition to the hard physical work, the women also were presenting to village boards, school children, service clubs, women’s groups and whoever they could reach to build community support.

“They convinced people that it was in the interest of the community to start recycling,” Moser explained.

— SEE MILLY, PAGE 3



Public tours of Prairie du Sac Dam announced

Rare opportunity offered in September

by **ERIN VANDER WEELE**
Editor

During the fourth weekend in September, the public will get a special opportunity to tour Alliant Energy’s Prairie du Sac Dam, built more than one hundred years ago and still creating energy today.

“It’s this structure that is just really stunning and interesting to look at,” said Jody Kapp of the Sauk Prairie Area Historical Society. “It’s such an iconic structure.”

The historical society is partnering with Alliant Energy to offer the tours for the third time

since 2014 when the structure reached its 100-year anniversary, which was the first time the public had access to the dam on a large scale in decades.

“To be able to go inside of it allows people to have an even closer connection to this structure that has been a part of our lives, each and every one of our lives, since we’ve been born for the people who lived here,” Kapp said.

The tours will take place from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, Sept. 23, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 24, and Sunday, Sept. 25. Tour directors will include re-
— SEE DAM, PAGE 7



People will have the opportunity to tour the Prairie du Sac Dam Sept. 23-Sept. 25.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Addiction recovery programs shared

On Wednesday, Aug. 10, the Sauk Prairie Optimist members learned about several forms of addiction in the community and what St. Vincent de Paul is doing to help people with recovery. Speakers were (left to right) Deborah Johnson, L.P.M. and client coordinator, Joan Mack, R.N. and St. Vincent de Paul Care Director, and Caroline Miller, Director of Residential Services at the John Adams Recovery Home.

Johnson reminded people about the Al-Anon Group that meets on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. at the Resource Center. Al-Anon is a support group for family and friends of addicts. The John Adams Recovery Home currently has room for six residents. Their goal is to have a safe and healthy place for women recovering from alcohol and/or drugs and help them with a plan for recovery and to gain self-confidence, develop positive relationships with family and others and return to life with an entirely new lifestyle and approach to living.

For more information on any of the programs offered at St. Vincent de Paul, please call Miller at 608-977-0673, Mack or Johnson at 608-644-0504, ext. 12.

The Sauk Prairie Optimist Club meets every Wednesday, the first Wednesday of each month at noon and the remaining Wednesdays at 7 a.m. at the Blue Spoon Café, Prairie du Sac.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Bus signup for Honor Flight

Join to welcome the veterans home from the Sauk Prairie Badger Honor Flight on Saturday, Sept. 24.

Sign up for the Badger Honor flight bus to the welcome home

ceremony at the Dane County Airport is now available until Sept. 14.

The bus leaves promptly at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 24 from Sauk Prairie High School.

Stop in the Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce to receive a ticket required to ride the bus. For questions, contact the Chamber at 608-643-4168.

MILLY

FROM PAGE 1

Moser, who had previously thought social change typically came from large cities, says she found through her research that change often comes from rural communities with a small group of strong-minded people.

Liz Nevers, 68, who volunteered with Zantow at her recycling center, also spoke during the author visit at the library.

She said Prairie du Sac was one of the first communities in the state to make recycling mandatory 33 years ago. Nevers is glad to see a children's book published about her good friend.

"It's wonderful," Nevers said. "It's long overdue. A lot of us that worked with Milly knew how special she was, and what

she has done, but she was an incredibly humble woman. She didn't like to draw attention to herself; she was incredibly hard-working and she had that ability to pull in other people."

Ehl also attended the event. People from the audience shared their memories of Zantow, describing her as a wonderful, humble person and thanking Moser for writing the book.

Fire destroys home in Honey Creek

Sauk City and Prairie du Sac firefighters responded to a house fire on the 7900 block of Petzke Drive in the Town of Honey Creek on Aug. 16. It took firefighters approximately four hours to extinguish the flames.

The single-family residence and its contents are considered a total loss, Tom Wipperfurth, President Sauk City Volunteer Fire Department, wrote in a press release. There is no damage estimate at this time. No one was injured from the incident.

With the Auto-Aid agreement in place, Prairie du Sac Fire and Sauk Prairie Ambulance were also paged. While enroute, the Sauk City Command Staff ordered a Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) pulled to the box level. Along with Sauk City's full response, water tenders from Loganville, Plain and North Freedom, an Engine from Plain, an aerial truck from Baraboo, and an additional Chief from Baraboo were dispatched. Canteen services from the Salvation Army were also requested to the scene. Spring

Green Fire Department provided protection to the citizens of the Sauk Fire District while firefighters were on location at the structure fire.

"The Sauk City Volunteer Fire Department would like to thank the emergency service units that responded to the MABAS Division 131 Box alarm call," Wipperfurth said.

Additional support was received from the Sauk County Sheriff's Department and Alliant Energy.

Sauk Prairie alum to perform house concert

Cleary Breunig, 2007 Sauk Prairie High School alum, will perform a house concert on Friday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m. at River Arts on Water Gallery, 590 Water St, downtown Prairie du Sac.

"Clearing the Bases" will be a hit-by-hit lineup (of mostly music theatre repertoire) explaining the lessons and accomplishments Breunig has experienced in this game called life. Each base has served as a stepping-stone to his journey, all leading him back home where it all started.

After receiving his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Cleary has enjoyed multiple opportunities and performances in New York City and Milwaukee. Breunig has been fortunate enough to become a staple in Milwaukee's Skylight Theatre ensemble, performing in five of their musicals over the past three years. In 2013, Breunig was cast in an Off-Broadway

production of "Waiting, A Song Cycle" at the prestigious Cherry Lane Theatre in New York City's Greenwich Village. In that same summer Cleary was accepted into the Open Jar Institute, a Broadway training intensive led by Broadway's finest actors, directors, and producers.

The following summer, Breunig was asked back as a Teaching Assistant/Production Assistant. Breunig's Open Jar network led to an incredible opportunity as a production assistant for the New York City Fashion Week event. He has worked this event for two years and is now a production supervisor, working and living in New York City three months of the year. Breunig recognizes that one's ending destination is determined by the people you meet, and things you learn while on your journey.

House concerts at River Arts on Water are casual, intimate, solo or small ensemble musical performances designed



Cleary Breunig

around the notion of having friends over to your living room to enjoy live music. There is no advance ticket sale, only a suggested donation at the door. Beverages are provided by Woodshed Ale House.

To learn more, visit www.RiverArtsInc.org, call 608-643-5215, or visit in person at River Arts on Water Gallery at the address listed above. The gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. This event is sponsored by Milwaukee Valve.

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