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**Red Wing resident publishes  
'The Cabin Coffee Clutch'**  
Page 12

**Columnist Randy Johnson: Do the  
uncommon in this uncommon year**  
Page 5

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Michele and Peter Borne sit in front of the helm of their boat The Joyful Noise on June 25, 2020.

Steve Gardiner / RiverTown Multimedia

## 'MIC DROP AND ANCHOR UP'

Couple launching  
floating music studio

By Steve Gardiner  
sgardiner@rivertowns.net

RED WING

Anyone who has passed by Vogel Harbor recently can't help but notice the 65-foot long, four-level Skipperliner boat docked there.

The boat, called the Joyful Noise, is owned by Peter and Michele Borne, and is the centerpiece of their Unlocked Mission project which has a website at [unlockedmission.com](http://unlockedmission.com). They plan to turn the boat into the only floating music studio in the United States.

"We want to unlock potential in the music and arts," Peter said. "I am a music producer and do video work, as well. Michele is the educator. We are a one-two punch."

The Bornes' dream is to restore the boat, set it up for musical performances and recording, and then teach classes, play music, and record artists in locations up and down the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

"We all have our life's journey," Peter said. "Everything I've done has kind of brought me to this moment. I was a producer, so I did commercial work. That turned into video work for commercials, which turned into my other passion which is tinkering with cars. I wanted the Batmobile. This is just a bigger version of the Batmobile. It is so quirky, so odd, so unique."

MUSIC: Page 3



Steve Gardiner / RiverTown Multimedia

This 65-foot Skipperliner boat arrived in Red Wing mid-June and will be docked here while owners Peter and Michele Borne renovate the interior into a floating classroom and music studio.

## Risks for Pierce County Fair proved too great

By RiverTown Multimedia  
news@rivertowns.net

ELLSWORTH — The 137th Pierce County Fair will be in 2021 instead of 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its uncertain impact on community health, the Pierce County Board passed a resolution Tuesday, June 30, ordering the Pierce County Fair to be canceled for 2020. The county was among the last in the region to cancel its fair.

The board, with the guidance from the Pierce County Health Department, assessed the risk to the public, exhibitors, families, employees and volunteers. Coupled with the uncertainty for acceptable social gathering sizes and financial implications, the risks were deemed too great; the board determined that it is unable to host the fair scheduled for Aug. 13-16.

"Our fair traditions, youth and community are important to us," Fair Manager Ann Webb said. "It brings great joy to gather with friends and family, creating memories, enjoying fair food along with checking out the vendors, rides, grandstand events, entertainment and exhibits. The impact of the fair's cancellation will be felt far beyond the loss of our annual celebration."

The Fair Board earlier in June had proposed a partial fair, called option 2. The board opted to cancel.

Pierce County had 68 COVID-19 cases as of July 2 but no local deaths.

FAIR: Page 2

## Cannon Falls has the bulk of cases

County:  
Stay vigilant

By Michael Brun  
mbun@rivertowns.net

Despite being home to less than 10% of the population, Cannon Falls has had more than a third of Goodhue County's lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases, according to a city-by-city comparison released Thursday, July 2.

There are a couple explanations for the apparent disproportion of cases, according to Goodhue County Health and Human Services.

First, not all suspected cases of the respiratory disease are confirmed through testing, so the numbers reported by the state health department may not fully portray the scope of the pandemic in local communities.

Second, there was an exposure to COVID-19 at a long-term care facility in Cannon Falls. Though the facility responded quickly to stop the spread of the disease and has not had a new case in a month, the cases there contributed to the city's overall case count.

CANNON: Page 2

## Researcher walks with wild black bears

Study refutes many  
myths about bear behavior

By Steve Gardiner  
sgardiner@rivertowns.net

Before there was a North American Bear Center in Ely, Minn., there was Dr. Lynn Rogers and his curiosity.

That curiosity drove him to go out in the Midwest forests to walk with wild black bears, an activity he has done for more than 50 years. He's talked to bears, sat by bears, and visited bears in their dens. Knowing that about him makes it hard to believe he grew up seriously afraid of bears.

"I grew up in a nature-loving family," Rogers said. "I was

intrigued by birds, especially the birds that came to a mulberry tree outside my bedroom window. I learned all the birds that came there by the time I was in first grade."

But he also heard about another side of nature — snakes, snapping turtles, and bees — things that could hurt human beings. "I tried extra hard to get to know them," he said. "I caught many snakes. I put on a mask and flippers and would swim along the dropoff in lakes and see a muddy, stirred up trail.

BEARS: Page 3



Photo courtesy of Lynn Rogers

Dr. Lynn Rogers spent 50 years studying bears in northern Minnesota and published several peer-reviewed articles that established many of the standards for black bear research.

Today's obituaries Page 6

Idah Bauer  
Philip Henry Johnson  
Karin Orr

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# MUSIC

From Page 1

The boat was built in 2000 by Skipperliner in La Crosse, Wis. It went through several owners, and eventually went back to the Skipperliner yard in 2013 where it was essentially abandoned. It sat on land there in disrepair until the Bornes discovered it and bought it in 2019.

While the Bornes' children were growing up, the family spent a dozen summers boating in Red Wing. In the winters, they stored their boat with Regelman's in Bay City. Last year, when it came time to launch the boat in La Crosse, Peter learned that the only transport company with equipment large enough to move the Joyful Noise was Regelman's. They brought jacks, lifted the boat, and moved it into the water.

Electricians and mechanics showed up to help them get the mechanical systems running, and when the boat was ready for the river, Peter and several of his musician friends played for the marina staff.

"We did a thank you show for the marina in La Crosse," Peter said. "At the end, I said, 'Mic drop and anchor up.'"

The next day the boat left and traveled to Red Wing the weekend of June 13. Peter and Michele had enjoyed their



Steve Gardiner / RiverTown Multimedia

Restoration of the interior of the Joyful Noise is underway and the Bornes hope it will be complete by spring 2021.

summers boating in Red Wing, so it is their first choice as a homeport for the Joyful Noise. They have been meeting with city officials, foundations, and local craftsmen to find the help they need to get the boat totally ready for its new purpose.

"We are working with people who have time, talent, or treasures," Peter said. "Some are foundation people. Some are from the city and want to

see how we can benefit the city, with a youth program especially, but beyond that to the community at large. This is basically a large, floating classroom. It has the capability to be converted for all kinds of things."

As part of his research into this project, Peter searched the internet for other people who had made music studios on boats. He found a boat called

the Astoria, which is owned by David Gilmour of Pink Floyd and is docked in the Thames River.

"We decided to make contact with him and his team," Peter said. "We got a call back inviting us to come and visit, so last July, we did."

They flew to London and talked with Nick Whittaker, the man who built the boat for Gilmour, and he listened to the Bornes talk about their

boat. Then he started making suggestions.

"He was saying we can do this and we can do that," Michele said. "Very soon it was all three of us in on this together."

Whittaker then arranged for the Bornes to tour a boat called the Grand Cru, owned by Pete Townsend of the Who.

"All the people we tell about this are intrigued," Peter said. "They know what it takes to run a boat on the water in that world, but they are also intrigued by the idea of the Mississippi."

Peter and Michele hope that with some help from the community and people of Red Wing that they can have their boat ready for full programming by the spring of 2021.

"Imagine what a weeklong program would look like through a YMCA, churches, or community organizations," Peter said. "We would start the week learning about songwriting and work on songwriting. By Wednesday we would be recording and tracking."

The Bornes said many people have made donations to their nonprofit organization and others have offered their skills and time to work on parts of the boat.

"We thought this story would start when we had the renovation complete," Peter said, "but the story has already started."