

Madison School and Community Recreation to hold orienteering class

NEAL PATTEN
Unified Newspaper Group

Madison School and Community Recreation is holding an orienteering class from 9 a.m. to noon, Sunday, July 26 at the Madison School Forest, 1680 Fritz Road.

Orienteering is an activity in which participants find their way to various checkpoints with the aid of a map and compass. Orienteering can be competitive (groups compete to finish finding all the check-points with the lowest time) or a fun leisure activity.

MSCR has two "courses" located at the Madison School Forest.

Participants are assigned to a course to avoid too many people on one course. Groups are also assigned time slots for arrival to avoid too many people gathering in one space at the same time. Each course takes approximately one hour to complete, if walking, however participants

If You Go
What: Orienteering outdoor class
When: 9 a.m. to noon, Sunday, July 26
Where: Madison School Forest, 1577 Fritz Road

can stop at any time.

Orienteering at the School Forest is recommended for ages seven years old and up and for groups of five or less people.

Madison School and Community Recreation provides participants with course maps, compasses and markers for recording.

The school provides directions on how to use the map and compass to find the checkpoints, meaning no experience is necessary by participants.

Registration is required. For information, visit mscr.org

Coronavirus curtails the curtain rise

VACT cancels two remaining end-of-year shows

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All remaining 2020 shows are off, Verona Area Community Theater announced on its Facebook Page Tuesday, July 14.

Four planned productions were already casualties of coronavirus, including "Seussical Kids," "Pajama Party," "Getting to Know... Footloose," and "Chicago: High School Edition."

"Elf," based on the Will Ferrell holiday movie and "Matilda" based on the children's book and film by Roald Dahl, were two musicals slated to round out VACT's 2020 schedule.

But VACT founder Dee Baldock said even more than some community organizations, the theater group had a responsibility to the health of its casts, students, musicians and production teams, so those productions were canceled as well. However, Baldock said VACT still hopes to present the play "Don't Dress for Dinner" scheduled for February 2021.

"We really can't have these shows because of the singing thing," she said. "In

singing, you're splattering stuff out there even more — we have these huge casts all on stage at the same time."

The board of directors made the decision in part after attending online seminars by the nonprofit American Association of Community Theatre, which provided guidance.

Based on that guidance, she said while VACT will rehearse for the play and think it will be safe because fewer people are in the cast, she said the other challenge will be how many people they can put in the audience.

Baldock said the VACT theater building on Lincoln St. only holds 100 people, and she anticipates that there will need to be social distancing in February. That raises questions about the sensibility of producing a play for such a small audience.

She said she can go to the end of the year before deciding whether to go ahead with the February play, casting performers in late December to early January and then having a short rehearsal period.

Baldock feels VACT is in a financially stable position to weather the pandemic, even passing on some stimulus opportunities.

"We could have applied for the business relief package through the Verona

Chamber, but we felt pretty good about our position and decided to leave it to people who needed it," she said.

Baldock said "the most wonderful thing that happened" when VACT canceled its spring shows — most people who had purchased tickets didn't ask for their money back, but instead donated it back to the organization.

The organization will hold its annual fall fundraiser and Baldock expects the typical level of support this year, despite the pandemic.

VACT has put some of that money toward its performers' and patrons' health.

Baldock said the organization installed UV in its HVAC system so that as air circulates in the theater building, the virus doesn't get spread around.

"We did it with hope of having summer school and thought it was imperative, but I don't think it's a bad thing for us, I don't think it's unwise," she said. "Often by the end of shows, performers pass around a lot of germs, this is a good way to keep that down."

The organization will also determine in September whether it is able to facilitate its Verona Youth Dance program as normally scheduled.

Hometown Days: Chamber working on online fundraiser

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the Forward Dane plan reached Phase 3.

She said the festival financially supports more than a dozen local civic and community groups.

"Obviously we're very disappointed we can't have it because not only is it fun, but it provides funding for a lot of groups in Verona and a lot of those groups are hurting anyway," she said. "But to not have

this funding is tough, so we held off as long as we could."

The Chamber is looking into ways to organize an online fundraising effort for the Verona area nonprofits affected by the loss of fundraising during Hometown Days. Jordan said that a couple bands would be willing to help out, but at this point, there is nothing formally in the works.

Neal Patten, community reporter, can be contacted at neal.patten@wcinet.com.

Chamber planning Fall Fest, despite uncertainty

Despite canceling Hometown Days, the Verona Area Chamber of Commerce is still planning Fall Fest and potentially other seasonal outdoor events.

Chamber executive director Le Jordan said if the Chamber can conduct Fall Fest, it might try to get some of that funding to the nonprofit and civic organizations affected by the cancellation of Hometown Days. As for other Chamber events, they also remain on

hold. Music on Main — held at Hometown Junction Park — and Concerts in the Park — held at Harriet Park — became impossible when Dane County tightened its restrictions of Phase 2 reopening guidelines.

Jordan said she's talked to the musicians and bands whose concerts have been canceled and they are going to try to schedule some music events at the parks in late summer/early fall, if possible, once restrictions loosen.



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