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Ladysmith students sing Page A7
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Holds special meaning for many Page A11

What should council do in 2022?

## City officials set sights on goals for coming year

**By Luke Klink**  
Ladysmith officials at the December common council meeting listed many goals they would like to see accomplished in 2022 that will better position the city to be successful 5 to 10 years down the road.

The list included everything from housing and streets to broadband to recreational fish stocking.

Ald. John Pohlman III cited building more housing. He called for new development, saying if population starts increasing the city also will grow.

"That is an immediate need," Pohlman said. "You might get more business in and things might keep going."

The city's existing housing stock is older and younger families are looking for smaller homes.

"Even people close to retirement don't want a 2-story house. They want single story living," Pohlman said. "I don't think there is much for sale right now. There isn't much for rent. Everything is full."

*Hopefully in 2022 we can make some steps toward realizing some of these*

— Ladysmith administrator Alan Christianson

Ald. Al Hraban called for continued road work.

"Keep doing the roadwork," Hraban said.

Ald. Bill Morgan backed the personnel committee keeping up with policy updates and job descriptions.

"When these positions open up we can maybe have the people we want in there," Morgan said.

Ald. Mark Platteter cited the former elementary school,

and the city's vision for housing development on that property along Lindoo Avenue.

Public Works Director Kurt Gorsegner backed rebuilding industrial park roads.

"I don't see how you are going to entice any new manufacturing company to come to town when they have to drive on the roads out there with the condition they are in," Gorsegner said.

City Attorney Allen Kenyon cited broadband. He added people

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**LAST STOP FOR SANTA** — Ladysmith Elementary School is the last stop on Wednesday, Dec. 22, waving to students, staff and families. He was making a list and checking it twice before racing back to the North Pole to fill up his sleigh for his round-the-world travels on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. He reports a high level of goodness in Rusk County this year and his greatest gift to the area in the coming year is more of the same.

— News photo by Luke Klink

Couple with Ladysmith connection flirts with Grammy Award nomination

## Album features decades old Friedel songs

**By Luke Klink**  
A husband and wife with Ladysmith connections have touched the sky with their music, recently soaring among the select group being considered for a 2022 Grammy Award nomination.

The CD, *Under the Venus Moon*, centers on the music of Mario Friedel.

Featuring a collection of big-band jazz sounds arranged by Tom Washatka and sung by legendary Wisconsin vocalist Janet Planet, the recording rose through the ranks of the music industry this year. The CD made the first round nomination ballot for Grammy's Best Vocal Jazz Album of the Year.

Mario and Sherry Friedel are long-time musicians and music educators. In Ladysmith, he served as elementary school principal and school district administrator. She was the school district's music instructor, teaching students at every level.

The Friedels will return to Ladysmith this Friday, performing a special New Year's Eve concert as part of the Flambeau Valley Arts Association season.

"We are really looking forward to coming up on New Year's Eve to spend time in our hometown of 18

years," Sherry said.

**The nomination process**  
There are seven pages of rules in the Grammy nominating and awarding processes.

Recording Academy members and record companies enter recordings and music videos they consider worthy of recognition in the Grammy Awards process. Screening review sessions by more than 350

**NEW RELEASE** — Mario (left) and Sherry Friedel are part of Songa, out with a new album *Sunshine in the Rain*, with William Deblaey on acoustic bass, John Richardson on percussion and Jimmy Herman on fiddle.

experts in various fields are held to ensure entered recordings meet specific qualifications and have been placed in appropriate fields such as Rock, R&B, Jazz, Country, Gospel, New Age, Rap, Classical, Latin and o t h -

ers. The purpose of screenings is not to make artistic or technical judgments, but rather to make sure each entry is eligible and placed in its proper category.

First-round ballots are sent to voting members in good dues standing. To help ensure the quality of the voting, members are directed to vote only in their

areas of expertise; they may vote in up to 10 categories across up to three genre fields plus the four categories of the General Field that includes Record Of The Year, Album Of The Year, Song Of The Year and Best New Artist. After nominations have been determined and announced, Academy voting members vote in up to 10 categories across up to three fields in the genre fields plus the four categories of the General Field to determine the final winners.

Final winners receive a Grammy Award during a live broadcast of the ceremony. All nominees receive a medallion and certificate.

**In the beginning**  
The music that makes up *Under the Venus Moon* was conceived of almost 30 years ago.

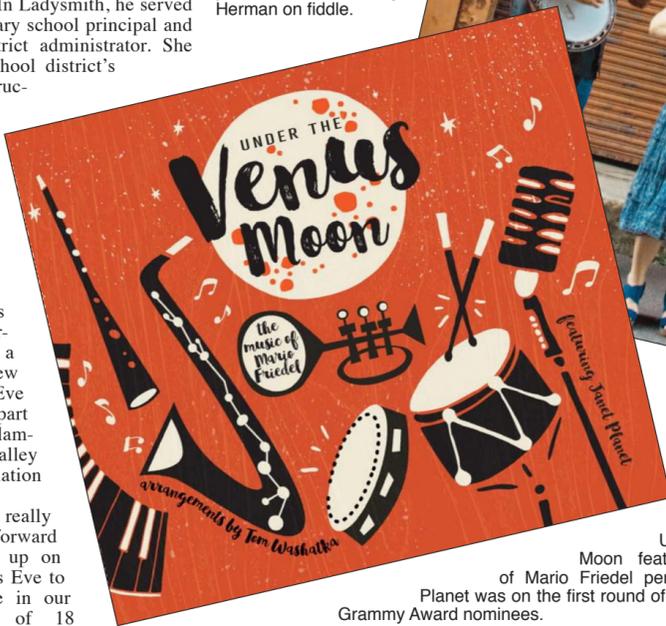
Mario lived in Nashville in the

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**BEING GOOD** — Santa and The Grinch spend a morning last week visiting youngsters and Ladysmith Elementary School. Santa is pleased to report even the Grinch has been pretty good this year and enjoyed spending time with the kiddos.

— News photo by Luke Klink



**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION** — The musical recording *Under the Venus Moon* featuring the music of Mario Friedel performed by Janet Planet was on the first round of balloting for 2022 Grammy Award nominees.



# Friedel: Couple rises in Grammy nominee ranks

Continued from Page A1

early 1970s, when he played with legendary musicians, Jimmy Buffet and John Hiatt. He wrote many of the songs that eventually would be included on the CD at different times during the 1970s and 1980s, before the couple met. He had them recorded in a project in the early 1980s with musicians he was playing with at that time.

First meeting as musicians in a band, composer Mario Friedel, vocalist Janet Planet and arranger Tom Washatka quickly realized their compatibility with the performance of jazz music. Years later, Friedel put in motion an effort to record *Under the Venus Moon* in collaboration with Planet, Washatka, and other artists.

Mario has 30 years experience as an educator in both public and private schools, and a lifetime of experience as a musician and songwriter.

Washatka has been performing, producing and recording music for more than 4 decades. He is also a saxophonist, composer, arranger, recording engineer and producer.

Janet Planet has been a working musician from the Midwest for more than 35 years. Self-produced and managed for the majority of her career, she is a productive recording artist, performer, teacher and clinician. She is a 6 time WAMI award winner and in 2014 she became the second woman in 32 years to be inducted in to the WAMI Hall Of Fame.

It's printed on the cover of *Under a Venus Moon* the CD, "Evokes a high level of emotional connection to things of beauty and artistic expression."

The whole work consists of seven songs which are both dynamic yet strung together like they were meant to exist as one. The songs include "Mixup At The Station", "Footprint," "Heat of the Daytime," "Keep Them From The Cold," "Mood For Love," "Living in the Rain" and "Wait."

The CD can be listened to at [stellarsound.net](http://stellarsound.net), Spotify and most streaming platforms.

### The CD

The couple had lived in Nashville in the mid-1990s when they wrote many of the tunes that would go on a Songa CD released in 2019.

The concept for *Under the Venus Moon* began while the Friedels were living in Ladysmith, they said.

Janet Planet came to Ladysmith for a 2015 concert, also through the Flambeau Valley Arts Association. She also appeared earlier in the city as part of a Beatles music tribute.

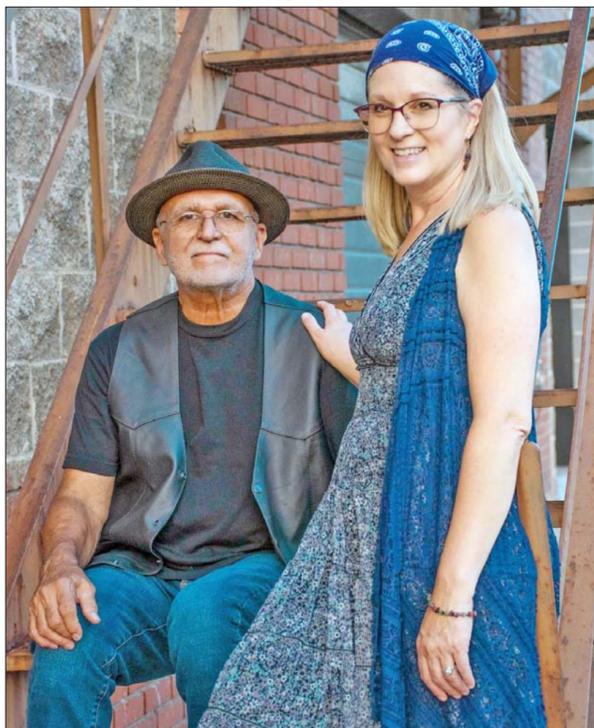
Mario learned of Tom and Janet's arrangements of the Bob Dylan songbook. It included the CDs, *Janet Planet Sings - The Bob Dylan Songbook Vol. 1*, released in 2010 and *Just Like a Woman - The Music of Bob Dylan Vol. 2*, released in 2015.

In 2017 Planet was acknowledged by the GRAMMY Foundation for her recording, *Janet Planet - Just Like a Woman - The Music of Bob Dylan*. The Dylan project also made the first round Grammy Award nomination ballot but fell short of becoming a final nominee.

Intrigued by the Dylan project, Mario reached out to Washatka to create arrangements of his own songs for a big band.

Everything was arranged. *Under the Venus Moon* was recorded at Steel Moon Recording, in Oshkosh. It features the works of Janet Planet on vocals, Sherry Friedel on background vocal on mixup at the station, Mario Friedel on background vocal on Mixup at the station, Tom Washatka on saxophone, Eric Koppa on saxophone, Vince Friedel on saxophone, Marty Robinson on trumpet, Kurt Shipe on trumpet, Ken Skitch on trombone, Dave Sawall on trombone, Noah Harmon on keyboard, Tom Theabo on guitar, John Gibson on bass and Zach Harmon on drums/percussion.

The CD was released on Aug. 30.



**MUSICAL DUO** — Mario and Sherry Friedel will perform live in Ladysmith on New Year's Eve.

— Submitted photo

### Reception

Janet Planet submitted *Under the Venus Moon* for Grammy Award consideration in the category of Best Vocal Jazz Album.

Washatka eventually notified Mario the project reached the first round ballot, in the top 78 albums of 10,000 submissions.

"As a songwriter, it was a humbling moment," Mario said.

The final Grammy nominees officially were announced on Nov. 23. While *Under the Venus Moon* did not make the cut, the acknowledgement gave Mario a newfound sense of confidence.

"I had never seen this type of recognition from people in the music industry in my musical career," Mario said.

### In Ladysmith

The Friedel family had a strong influence on the music scene in Ladysmith during their years in the city, according to Flambeau Valley Arts Association President Karen Ek.

As an administrator in the School District of Ladysmith one of Mario's first accomplishments was to increase the time allotted for elementary music. He was named Administrator of the Year by the Wisconsin School Music Association and subsequently served on its Board of Directors until after his retirement.

Sherry, who came to Ladysmith with a degree in music, did her student teaching under Ek's supervision and was hired as Ek's successor. She eventually moved to teaching elementary music as the hours were more family friendly for a mother of two.

The Friedels raised their children in Rusk County and still consider Ladysmith home as they maintain a "Cabin on the Flambeau," the title of a song the couple composed and recorded.

The Friedels did frequent performances in the area and were active in church music and the Ladysmith Community Singers. Their son, Vince, went on to major in music and is currently working on a masters degree at the Cincinnati Conservatory. All three can be heard on *Under the Venus Moon*.

"Their departure from Ladysmith left a big void in the music scene here," Ek said.

### Since Ladysmith

Since moving away from Ladysmith, Mario and Sherry have formed Songa. The group performs as a trio.

Songa is a band that focuses on original music, much of which was written in the early 1990s when the Friedels lived in Nashville.

Songwriting became a lifeline for

the Friedels during the pandemic. They called it their, "Way of finding hope through creativity during a time of introspection."

"A new sound evolved for them, along with a message of love and care for humanity," they said.

Songa recently released its latest EP recording, *Sunshine in the Rain*.

The Friedels note their children now are both graduated from high school, Vince from Ladysmith in 2016 and Maria from Chippewa Falls in 2020.

"We have been taking the time since to focus on putting an act together that reflects us and our life experiences," they said.

Having played in a variety of bands with a variety of styles over a lifetime, the Friedels find Songa reflects the Americana styles of folk, blues, country and jazz.

The audience will hear acoustic folk, blues, country and jazz tastefully blended with harmony and humor. The Friedels will share original songs from the two new releases as well as favorites from their 2019 release, *Dreams are in the Making*.

"Sherry and I perform an acoustic version of four of these songs in our jazz set," Mario said.

Janet Planet regularly includes these songs in her live set as she performs with a number of jazz ensembles. She has included them in La Crosse, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, and Wausau as she teams with community or university jazz ensembles for performances.

Mario continues to be a part principal and teacher at St. Joseph's Catholic School in Stratford. Sherry is in her fourth year teaching elementary music in the Chippewa Falls School District.

The Friedels have a website with a video of their song, "The Cabin Song." The recording is about their cabin on the Flambeau River that they still own in Rusk County. The link is <https://songaduo.com/>.

The 64th GRAMMY Awards show will be broadcast live on CBS on Jan. 31.

### In concert

The album *Under the Venus Moon* and the most recent Songa release, *Sunshine in the Rain*, will be available at the Songa performance in Rusk County on New Year's Eve, 7:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 31, Worden Avenue Exchange, Ladysmith. Tickets are \$10 in advance or at the door. To reserve tickets, call 715-313-0242. Masks and social distancing are highly recommended. Masks will be available at the event entrance.



**CHOIR PERFORMS** — The Ladysmith Middle & High School Choir performs a Winter Chorale Concert on Monday, Dec. 13, in the school auditorium.

More online at [www.ladysmithnews.com](http://www.ladysmithnews.com)



**SONGS SUNG** — The Ladysmith Middle & High School Choir performs songs "Theme from Elf," "The Holly and the Ivy" and "Silent Night."

— News photos by Luke Klink

# Raising Highly Capable Kids holds graduation

The Raising Highly Capable Kids parenting class, hosted by Flambeau Schools for the last 12 weeks, recently celebrated graduation.

This class would not have been possible without the PTA who provided the weekly door prizes, Community Education who covered the cost of meals and preparation by food service staff for the participants and their children, Linda Zimmer (a Flambeau teacher) and her team of volunteers who provided child care, and last but not least, the trainers.

Flambeau teachers Sandy Barnett, Heather Isham and Lucy Taylor vol-

unteered their time to lead the class through the curriculum for 12 weeks.

Gordie and Bev Dukerschein presented participants who completed 10 of the 12 sessions with \$100 gift cards.

Participating were Jessica and Earl Irwin, Jeff and Sue Stone, Cindy Miller, Isabella Quinell, Heather Isham (trainer), Shauna Biller, Lucy Taylor (trainer) and Linda Zimmer (child care coordinator.) Participants Kayla Anderson, Victorea Voldberg, Katie Channell, Jake Channell and Sandy Barnett (trainer) were unable to attend.

Organizers Bev and Gordie Duk-

erschein congratulated the group for investing in their families and the volunteers that made it all happen.

"The goal is to have this kind of cooperation in every school in our county to offer this valuable course to their parents," the Dukerscheins stated. "In other states where the program has been in place for a few years, schools are noticing a shift in school culture. Disciplinary issues dip, parents become more involved and the success is undeniable. Churches are also perfect locations to host a class.

For more information, call the Dukerscheins at 715-322-4481.



**RAISING HIGHLY CAPABLE KIDS** — These are the latest graduates of the Raising Highly Capable Kids class at Flambeau School. Participating were (from left) Jessica and Earl Irwin, Jeff and Sue Stone, Cindy Miller, Isabella Quinell, Heather Isham (Trainer), Shauna Biller, Lucy Taylor (Trainer) and Linda Zimmer (Child Care Coordinator.) Not pictured are participants Kayla Anderson, Victorea Voldberg, Katie Channell, Jake Channell and Sandy Barnett (Trainer.)



**RAISING HIGHLY CAPABLE KIDS** — These are the graduates of the Raising Highly Capable Kids class at First Church of Christ in Ladysmith, graduating last January. Participating were (in front, from left) Lanita Stutzman (trainer), Tiffany Johnson and Crystal Nelson (trainer); and (in back) Tim Mercer (trainer), Jame McCarter (trainer), James Cooley, Crystal Trudeau, Jacqueline Reisner, Jennifer Meng and Nathan Johnson

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