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MONDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2016 | STEVENSPOINTJOURNAL.COM | PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK RAIN | HIGH 47 | LOW 35 | DETAILS, BA

Quick facts on county's water testing

Portage County enlists UWSP to examine random samples for both nitrates, bacteria

SARI LESK
USA TODAY NETWORK WISCONSIN

STEVENS POINT — Portage County wants to know the quality of its groundwater and will spend \$25,000 next year to find out.

Health officials warn that drinking water high in nitrates can be damaging to a person's health, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. In that case, the County Board approved funds in next year's budget to collect and test water samples for nitrates and bacteria to de-

termine how safe the drinking water is across Portage County.

Here are some quick facts about water testing:

1. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point will oversee the testing. Staff members at UWSP will work with their students next year to conduct the testing and will report the results back to the county when the process is complete. Portage County Executive Party Dreyer said the testing will be random and that the county's
2. The goal is to provide a



Portage County budgeted \$25,000 to pay for randomized water quality testing next year. UWSP will conduct the tests.



Gale McKenzie, president of The Plant People Inc., trims a tree in the Lambeau Field Atrium. The Green Bay business has been decorating the stadium since 2002. This year's installation took three weeks, but planning for the design begins in January.

DECKING THE HALLS AT LAMBEAU

Packers stadium gets decorated with custom-made designs that take months' worth of planning

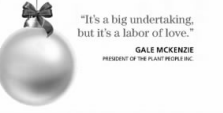
KENDRA MEINERT
USA TODAY NETWORK WISCONSIN

To track down the imaginative elves who decorate Lambeau Field for the holidays, you need only to follow the trail of glitter.

It's all over my house," McKenzie said. "Just a little reminder of what a big job—dressing up the sprawling home of the Green Bay Packers for the holidays. With more than 1,000 feet of garland, 30 wreaths, 14 Christmas trees and countless handmade floral swags, bows and gift-wrapped boxes, it's an annual tradition that takes the notion of decking the halls to new heights, including all the way up to the



The Plant People started their three weeks of holiday decorating at Lambeau Field by decking out the Packers Pro Shop the first week in November.



"It's a big undertaking, but it's a labor of love." GALE MCKENZIE, PRESIDENT OF THE PLANT PEOPLE INC.

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'Making a Murderer' conspiracy theories abound

JOHN FERAK
USA TODAY NETWORK WISCONSIN

There's no shortage of alternative theories when it comes to the 2002 murder of Teresa Halbach. Thousands of people across the globe who watched the Netflix docu-series "Making a Murderer" have gone online to criticize the Halbach case and the plight of the two men convicted in her death: Steven Avery and Brendan Dassey. Many of these online sleuths have raised questions about witness statements and evidence.

Meanwhile, there's another group of "Making a Murderer" fans whose commentary and research has also generated considerable discussion — they're the conspiracy theorists.

They've taken to blogs, social media outlets and YouTube to dish up some of the craziest conspiracy theories on the planet about Avery's case.

In the sure, most Avery and Dassey supporters do not give credence to these conspiracy theories. Nonetheless, based on the enormous popularity of fake Internet news sites, it's hardly shocking that these conspiracies have gained some traction.

USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin has examined six of the most outrageous conspiracy theories that have provoked discussion since "Making a Murderer" came out last December.

Conspiracy theory No. 1: Trivial serial killer Edward Wayne Edwards murdered Halbach to set up Avery.

Background: Shortly after the release of the series, Manitowish resident John Cameron contacted USA TODAY NETWORK and other media outlets, proclaiming that the late serial killer, Edward Wayne



Participants in a January rally in support of convicted killers Steven Avery and Brendan Dassey at the Manitowish County Courthouse.

OBITUARIES 2A
Ronald Ratta
Joyce L. Franks
Michael J. Hynak
Mary Katherine Stratton

INDEX CLASSIFIED 5-6B
COMMUNITY 7A HEALTH 9B
LOCAL 10-11A SPORTS 12B

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Theories

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in their YouTube video, but there does not appear to be any supporting evidence to validate their version of events. In 2005, during his numerous interviews with the media and law enforcement investigators prior to his arrest, Avery made no mention of leaving his property during the late afternoon or early evening hours to frequent the Two Creeks gas station. If Avery drove there, that special prosecutor Kim Kratz introduced as evidence against Avery only contained a work IDA profile for Halbach. Posing the speculation, People magazine published a story headlined "Observed: Avery's Mom: I Don't Think Teresa Halbach is Even Dead." Earlier this year, Halbach's mother, Dolores, said.

Basis for conspiracy Because Halbach was young, adventurous and enjoyed being a world traveler, conspiracy theorists suggest that she took an assumed identity and lives abroad. According to her published obituary notice, Halbach had visited Spain, New Zealand, Australia and Mexico and several states across the U.S. Separating her hometown, the fact that only a small portion of charged houses and practically none of Halbach's teeth were ever found. Avery's property has bolstered claims that those bones were not those of Halbach, because she isn't really dead. Moreover, the alibi, that special prosecutor Kim Kratz introduced as evidence against Avery only contained a work IDA profile for Halbach. Posing the speculation, People magazine published a story headlined "Observed: Avery's Mom: I Don't Think Teresa Halbach is Even Dead." Earlier this year, Halbach's mother, Dolores, said.

Testing federal standards for public drinking water. Wisconsin's DHS advises that no one, especially infants and pregnant women, should consume water with a higher concentration of nitrates than 6 months, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources warns. Consuming nitrates could hinder a baby's blood from carrying oxygen, leading to methemoglobinemia in a private well could signal a problem with the well's construction, Kratz said. He said he recommends homeowners get their wells tested annually for nitrates and bacteria. The sampling will test for E. coli, specifically, according to county records.

Lambeau

Continued from Page 1A

stadium's club level. From one end of the stadium to another, there is a festive touch on a light fixture by an elevator here, in a bar area there. The Lambeau Field Museum gets the most attention, with a themed main display in front of the elevators and lighted around the pillars. All the green and gold of the Packers Pro Shop is accented with red, white and silver, including shiny balls and snowflakes hung from the ceiling and trees nestled among the merchandise. South end zone areas like the Champions Club and Festival Foods MVP Deck are decorated as well, right down to a wreath on the dessert table. The 399 Kitchens & Tap and corporate lobby get a dusting of good cheer, too. "Everything gets a little something. It's very high detail work, but that's what makes us stand out," McKenzie said. "All the little details you would never think of. It's a big undertaking, but it's a labor of love." It's a transformation that happens, not by Christmas magic, but by a year's worth of meticulous planning by McKenzie and Hansen, president and vice president, respectively, of The Plant People, the Green Bay retail store and floral design studio at 31 Main St.

that a medical examiner, a long-standing reputable funeral home in concert with the Calumet County Sheriff's Department, to trick Halbach's friends, the media and the community at large into believing Halbach was dead when they secretly knew that she wasn't.

Conspiracy theory No. 6 The Manitowish County Sheriff's Department killed Halbach. **Background:** A number of Avery and Dasey supporters, struggling to find a convincing alternative suspect, have floated the theory and discussed on social media outlets the far-fetched idea that the Manitowish County Sheriff's Department gunned down the 25-year-old professional photographer shortly after she left Avery's property on the afternoon of Halloween 2005 to use her death to frame Avery.

Basis for conspiracy The theory is based on the fact that Halbach's death was part of a well-organized conspiracy hatched within the upper levels of the Manitowish County Sheriff's Department. They suggest that her body was burned off site, perhaps in an abandoned building or at a mortuary to make sure that a autopsy was impossible, thus allowing them to shape their own narrative to blame Avery and ruin his life. Avery was framed by the sheriff's department for Halbach's disappearance since it was the same agency that was exposed for framing Avery once before. Here's an excerpt from one person on Reddit on the conspiracy: "I am sure that Sgt. Andrew Colburn knew she was being framed by the sheriff's department. He followed her over on scene side road. Ask her out of the car for whatever reason and then himself or someone else strangled her."

Flaw with conspiracy No direct evidence points to anyone in law enforcement affiliated with the Manitowish County Sheriff's Department, past or present, of being involved in a cold-blooded premeditated killing of Halbach. Even Avery's defense attorneys, Brian and Bunting tried to discredit such outlandish theories. To carry out such a twisted killing during broad daylight would, theoretically, require a crooked cop to park his vehicle, exit on the side of the road, and then have to kill Halbach without anyone else witnessing it. The entire sequence of events would have exposed law enforcement to the danger of having another approaching motorist from either direction — or someone off in the distance — being a witness to such an unspeakable crime.

Conspiracy theory No. 5 Halbach wasn't killed, she's still alive. **Background:** This theory has been floated by several conspiracy theorists and it's garnered support from Steven Avery's mother, Dolores.

Basis for conspiracy Because Halbach was young, adventurous and enjoyed being a world traveler, conspiracy theorists suggest that she took an assumed identity and lives abroad. According to her published obituary notice, Halbach had visited Spain, New Zealand, Australia and Mexico and several states across the U.S. Separating her hometown, the fact that only a small portion of charged houses and practically none of Halbach's teeth were ever found. Avery's property has bolstered claims that those bones were not those of Halbach, because she isn't really dead. Moreover, the alibi, that special prosecutor Kim Kratz introduced as evidence against Avery only contained a work IDA profile for Halbach. Posing the speculation, People magazine published a story headlined "Observed: Avery's Mom: I Don't Think Teresa Halbach is Even Dead." Earlier this year, Halbach's mother, Dolores, said.

Next year's county-sponsored water testing will be a public service in that respect, Dreier said. "People who are for some reason afraid of a water test," she said. "I think we owe it to our people, our citizens, to be able to do what we can to alert them about the impact to their own health."

4. The county will use the results for public education. Dreier said the county will use the results from the university's testing to educate the public about groundwater quality. The education will focus on the health implications of the water tests, according to county records.

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August through October. Wrapping 48-foot wreaths with fabric from 25-inch rolls requires some elbow room. The 3,000-square-foot basement of The Plant People with 9-foot ceilings and tiered shelving makes for the perfect holiday workspace. That's not to say McKenzie doesn't take some of it home at night to work with the wireless TV, too.

Once everything is made, the real challenge is getting it to Lambeau for installation. Hansen is in charge of organization and production. It takes more than 15 min loads to transport it all — very carefully. "You can't squish it," Hansen said.

"Well, you can squish it, but then he has to deal with one," McKenzie jokes. They work off a six-page blueprint of what goes where. It's important every item is tagged so they know its destination. They work section by section, this year starting with the Pro Shop. Between the two of them, they put on some serious miles trekking through the stadium with the appropriate security clearance badges and courtesies of decorations. Even after so many years, McKenzie says she would still get lost without Hansen leading the way. The Plant People have about a dozen other commercial and high-end residential clients they decorate for the holidays, but two, stands about 29 months from the end of

circumstances. Placement of decorations, for example, must take into account things like security cameras and not blocking space that might be used to food or drink. Given the crowds on game days, space is at a premium, so much of the decor is hung rather than being mounted on the floor. Trial and error to find the best IM fastener products prevents any holes from being punched.

Each year, Hansen said they learn how to better fine-tune the logistics. Last year's winter fantasy scene in the lobby with snowflakes was set off with a snowflake fence. Just one problem: During a cold, rainy home game, fans put their wet clothes on. It had to be repeated several times throughout the season. This year's fence around a display with trees and nutcracker figures features a heavier, sturdier fence.

And where else but Lambeau would innocently bring with a blue-silver theme one year be interpreted by visiting Dallas Cowboys fans as a welcoming nod to the opposition? "Think hard enough," McKenzie said, and nobody every color scheme can be another NFL team's colors. Lambeau Field uses the same holiday theme for three seasons, and then The Plant People start fresh with new decorations and colors, consulting with the Packers on their wishes. This year, red and silver is more traditional than the previous years, a whitish mix of silver, lime green, teal and

develop a groundwater quality monitoring application, the budget states. Further, the state can use next year's test results as a baseline to see how the quality changes over time, Dreier said.

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magenta. In case you're wondering, the Packers have never opted to do green-and-gold decorations. Retired decorations still in good shape are often pulled apart so that materials can be reused, McKenzie said. It wouldn't be the holidays without a little finesse, even for decorating pros. There was the one time McKenzie's ribbon selected by the Packers was cancelled by the supplier. If McKenzie runs short of a specific material while making the decorations, sometimes she can call more, but often times it's an import. She always finds a way to make it work. "We just want it to be fun. This is a joyous time," she said. "I don't ever show the Packers) over stress. That's what they're here for. That's why they're here, so they don't have to worry." The decorations stay on through New Year's Day or longer depending on playoff games or if a special event being held in early January requests they remain. What takes "an unlimited amount of hours" to go up comes down in just a week, McKenzie said. The glitters, however, has a way of sticking around. "We have sparkles all over it," Hansen said. "It never comes off."

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