Our weekly community profile

Play time: Cindy Luedke, left, co-owner of Color-Me-Kids Daycare in Sobieski plays in the sand at the day-care center with Andrew and Jarod Hogan of Little Suamico.

Sobieski residents have their space

By Lisa Sumter
Press-Gazette

SOBIESKI — Amanda Carmody and her younger sister Amy walked barefoot down "Main Street" Sobieski, hand in hand, enjoying the sunshine.

The girls, 11 and 3, respectively, have lived at 6065 Lake St. in this Oconto County community for only a year. That's long enough for them to decide they like it.

"It's nice. There's lots of space to play in," Amanda said. "We do lots of things around the yard. There are lots of families and kids here."

Although farming has declined in recent years here, wide open spaces are still plentiful. Sobieski, about 20 miles north of Green Bay, is one of a circle of Polish communities in the area, including Pulaski, Krakow and Zachow.

The visible core of the community, four taverns and a day care center, is in a small area straddling County Highway S. Up the road is the expansive operation of Pomprowitz Trucking, P&Z Trucking and Pomprowitz's Country Side Waste Disposal.

Sobieski is home to the Little Suamico Town Hall and fire department. A variety of at-home businesses, including two woodworking shops, also are here.

St. John Catholic Church is off the well-traveled highway at 6501 Noble St. The community is part of the Pulaski School District.

Through the years Sobieski has been the site of an elementary school, grocery store, blacksmith shop, train depot, hardware store and cheese factory.

They are gone now and life is quieter, but residents don't mind.

Jerome Reyment, 1443 Krause Road, is retired and said those with spare time often fish.

"That's about all there is to do," he said. "And then we come back here and lie about it."

Michelle Kroll, 23, always has lived in Sobieski. She owns Kroll's Bar, 6061 County Highway S, with her husband Lester, who works at Packerland Packing Co., 1330 Lime Kiln Road, Green Bay.

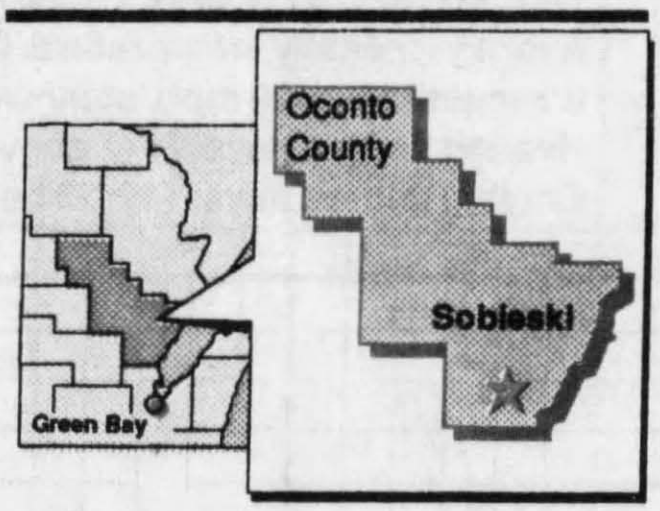
She described life in Sobieski.

"Everybody knows everybody. That's sometimes good and sometimes bad," she said with a laugh.

There's camaraderie, a willingness to help a neighbor, she said.

Dave Scheelk built a workshop for his woodworking business at 1332 County Highway S about a year ago. A few residents didn't want the site rezoned indus-

Please see **Sobieski/B-2**



The Sobieski file

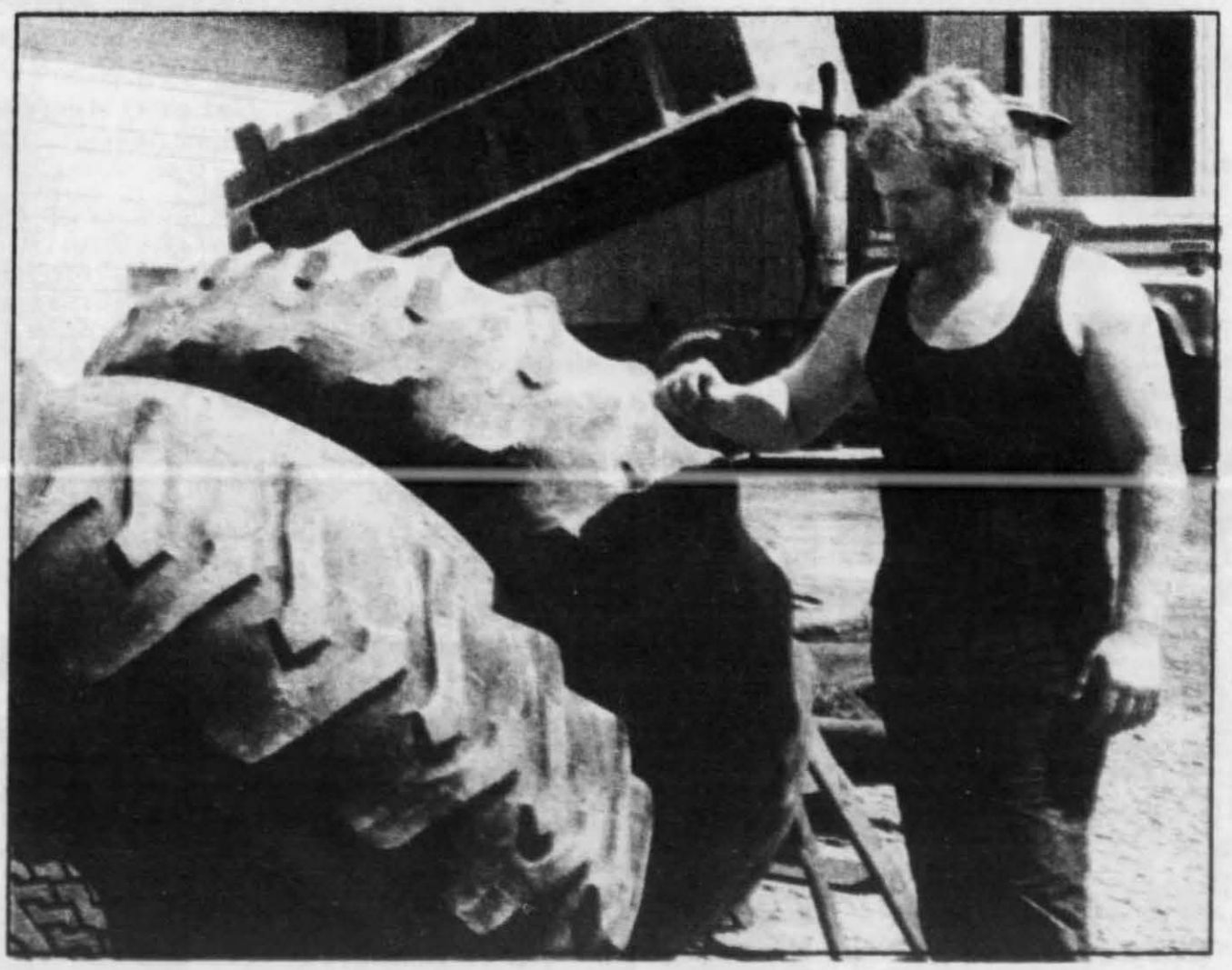
☐ **Population**: 225, estimated by Mary Nelson, longtime Sobieski resident.

☐ **Waltz the bases**: Joe Kuwala has a picture of a baseball team he played on years ago hanging in his kitchen. Another member of the team was Pee Wee King, Abrams native and Country Music Hall of Fame member who wrote *The Tennessee Waltz*.

☐ **Born to teach**: Although no school is in the Sobieski area, that was not always so. Mary Nelson would know. She taught at all of them. Nelson taught at the one-room Dewey and West Side schools, just outside Sobieski, from 1934-37. In 1938 shetaught at Sobieski Elementary School, which closed about eight years ago. The building is now used as the Little Suamico Town Hall.

Press-Gazette photos by Ken Behrend

Hot business: Michelle Kroll is a fire warden and tavern owner in Sobieski.



Tire check: Robert White of Oconto Falls walks past tires at Pomprowitz Trucking, P&Z Trucking and Pomprowitz Country Side Waste Disposal in Sobieski. White works for the businesses.

☐ Sobieski

trial. Most supported Scheelk, though, and the site was rezoned.

"We all said that's his living. You can't just take that away from him," Kroll said.

Down the street from Kroll's, friendly chipmunks, ducks and mice on the side of the building beckon children to Color-Me-Kids Daycare. Run by SanDee Markiewicz of Sobieski and Cindy Luedke of Little Suamico, the center has been here since 1986. About 40 to 50 children ages 6 weeks to 11 years are enrolled.

Joseph Kuwala, 6342 Kuwala Lane, left Sobieski at age 14 to find work in Chicago. He returned to his parents' 80-acre farm 11 years later. Now, at 85, he and much of his family call Sobieski home.

Kuwala's parents left their farm to him when they died. Over the years he has doled out parcels to family members. His sister, brother and nephew all live nearby.

Kuwala, a town of Little Suamico supervisor for 13 years, has watched Sobieski grow and remembers when it was dominated by the Polish, with a few people of German and French heritage.

"Now there's a mixture," he said. "At one time we only had four farmers on this road. Now there's 12 homes."

■ **Next week:** Langes Corners in Brown County