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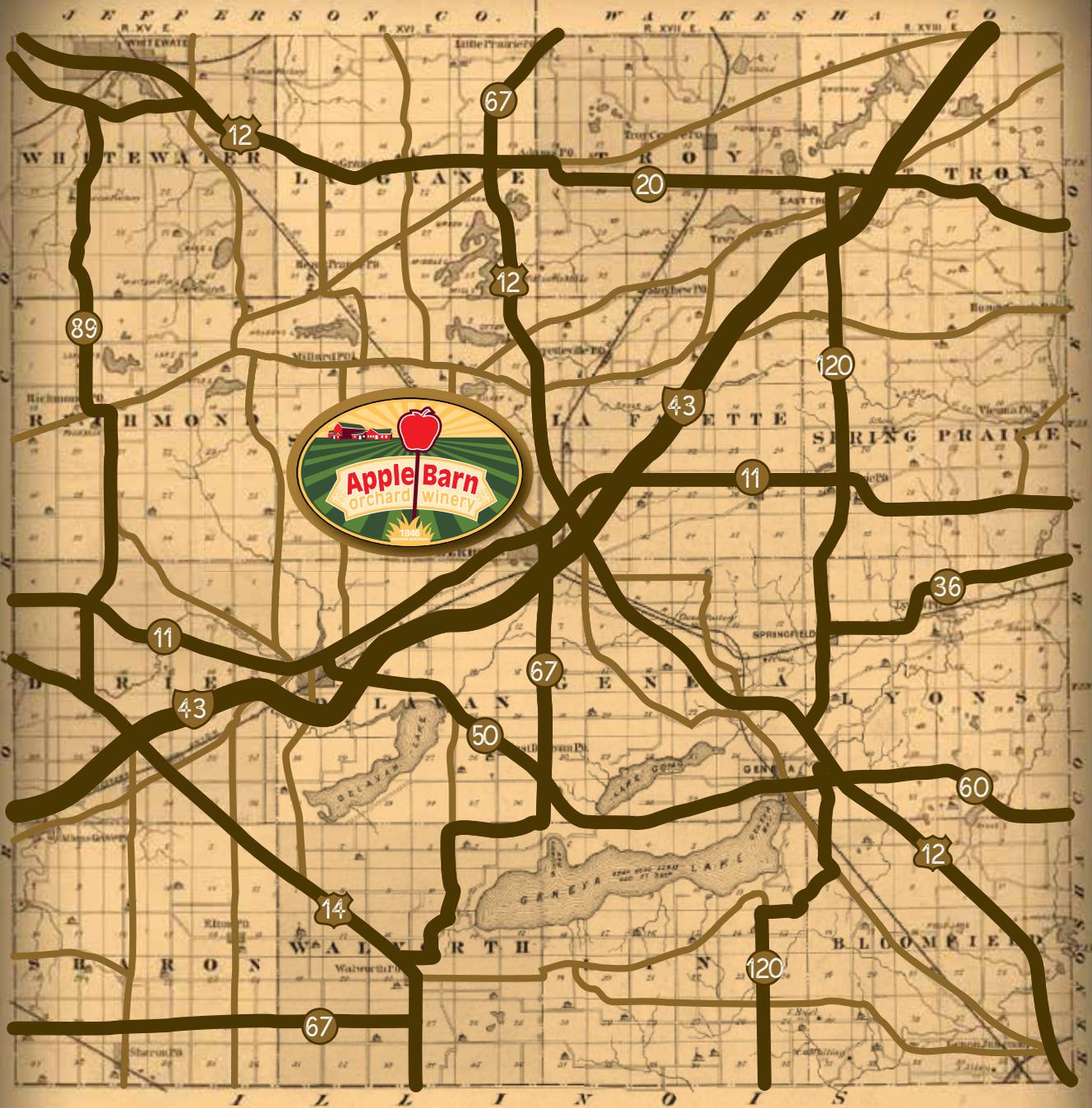
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More and more individuals are discovering, or re-discovering, Delavan – especially in recent years – and have been amazed at what awaits them.

We have a revitalized historic downtown with great restaurants, a variety of small businesses, antiques, event space locations, and a new coffee shop, to name just a few. We also have Lake Lawn Resort right on Delavan Lake, with restaurants that invite you to share special moments, plan a business conference, wedding, or other special occasions in one of their spacious meeting rooms.

In addition, we have a variety of businesses that offer many different service specialties. Between the Chamber of Commerce/Visit Delavan, Friends of the Phoenix Park Bandshell, and other stakeholder groups, we host a variety of events like beer and wine walks, the Chamber Car Show and Scarecrow Fest throughout the year that showcase our small city atmosphere.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



A day for celebration

The City of Delavan celebrated its 125th anniversary last July, coinciding with the annual Brick Street Day event. There were multiple performances throughout the day, a special red ale sold by Duesterbeck's Brewing Co. and numerous vendors in the downtown area.

above: Mayor Ryan Schroeder leads a tour of the historic downtown.

top: Beth Zwolski works on duplicating the 125th anniversary logo.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Our Town*

on the cover: Visitors at Lake Lawn Resort watch Fourth of July fireworks.

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New look for old-time site at Turtle Lake Tap and Grill

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

EDITOR

Jeff Hufford has considered Turtle Lake to be at least a part-time home for 20 years.

But when the COVID-19 pandemic stuck and shut down much of the country in March 2020, he and his wife, Annie, moved to their home on the lake and now call it home.

They also took managing ownership of Turtle Lake Tap and Grill, and have slowly developed a loyal following for the restaurant, which sits on a former long-time campsite and hotel.

“We’re going to give you a great experience,” Hufford explained, adding that he, the other owners and his staff pride themselves on a family-friendly culture and quality food and service.

“If we mess something up,” he added. “We’re going to fix it.”

The site, which has a mailing address in the Town of Delavan but actually resides in Richmond Township, is more than a little hidden. Located on back country roads, it’s about a 10-15 minute drive from Whitewater, Delavan and Elkhorn.

Located at N6513 Anderson Drive, the restaurant site was formerly part of the Anderson family farm, and then a



Turtle Lake Tap and Grill, located at N6513 Anderson Dr., Delavan, offers both indoor and outdoor dining. **top:** Managing owner Jeff Hufford shows off the newly decorated inside.

above: This shot shows the outdoor seating available by the lake.

TURTLE LAKE

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4



Just for the kids

The City of Delavan celebrated its 125th anniversary this past summer, coinciding with the annual Brick Street Day event. There were numerous special activities for children, both at Aram Public Library and down in Tower Park. Clockwise from above: Madi and Valerie Leitzke, Elkhorn, watch as Whispers the Clown makes balloon animals; Monet Thornwall gets her face painted; Mr. Chris performed a comedy act in Tower Park.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Our Town*

CHECK OUT DELAVAN • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

It's a wonderful opportunity for families of all ages to come out and enjoy many free activities and fun. As of late, we have even seen a bigger increase in manufacturing jobs and industry coming to Delavan. That allows families to earn a higher wage and look at purchasing or building a home in many of the new housing development neighborhoods going up around the City of Delavan.

In addition, we have an array of beautiful green space parks used for walking and biking along numerous nature trails. Take

a self-guided historic mural tour and learn more about our rich history in the area of circus beginnings, early industry, big band era personalities, and the Wisconsin School for the Deaf still in existence today.

A strong partnership with our schools, businesses and the array of stakeholder entities have helped us build a strong foundation for continued business investment, existing business expansion, tourism, and residential growth to Delavan and the surrounding area.

— *Delavan Mayor Ryan Schroeder*

campground/hotel. Hufford and his partners closed on the property Dec. 20 of 2019, and had grand plans for the space.

"I think we've got a gem," he said. "We wanted an open, fresh air space."

But while renovations began, the pandemic quickly put the brakes on welcoming customers. While the business did open for limited seating in May of 2020, Hufford said much of the year was a loss, though it did allow the business time to handle a good number of renovations.

There is now ample indoor and outdoor seating, the latter of which becomes popular during the summer. And as the weather warms up, the customers begin enjoying all of the different spaces available. "A beach feel," Hufford explained. But there is also a private dining room space that can be rented for parties, wedding rehearsals and even weddings, plus a game room and restaurant/bar space inside.

"People want a place to go," Hufford said. "So it's on us."

The menu at the restaurant is newly revised, and contains a mixture of classic Wisconsin food – like fried cheese curds, burgers, hot dogs and sandwiches – but also different salads and entries. Almost everything is made from scratch.

"The only thing that comes out of the freezer are the curds and the fries," Hufford explained, adding that Pastries by Chad uses the kitchen space when the restaurant is closed and provides fresh-baked desserts as well.

The menu also included a wide variety of pizzas that use homemade dough that the baker provides.

Appetizers include truffle fries – beer-battered fries drizzled with truffle oil and served with garlic aioli – stuffed jalapenos and stuffed mushrooms, and familiar Wisconsin faves like chicken tenders, cheese curds, onion strings and spinach artichoke dip.

There is also a children's menu (named the "Little Turtles") as well as the traditional Wisconsin fish fry and daily specials.

Hufford said the business has really taken off since December of 2021, but there is still plenty of room for growth.

"We're just getting started," he said. "I want to build an icon."

An icon, Hufford added, that has been built from the ground up with loyal customers.

"They're loyal to the culture, and the quality," he said.

The restaurant is open four days a week – Thursday from 4-10 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to midnight and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The restaurant will be expanding to add breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

There is limited boat parking available during the summer.

To reach the restaurant, call 262-458-0342.

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Wieters takes over at St. Andrew Parish School

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
EDITOR



David Wieters

For most of his career as a school administrator, David Wieters admits he was blessed to be close to home – first as a principal at St. Francis De Sales in Lake Geneva, then three years at Catholic Central in Burlington.

But for the last four years Wieters worked in Illinois, first rescuing a school in need of help in Lake Forest, Illinois, and then moving closer to home at St. Bede in Ingleside, Illinois.

So when the principal position opened up unexpectedly this past summer at Delavan’s St. Andrew Parish School, Wieters jumped at the chance.

Wieters started as principal in July of 2022, replacing Michael Brown, who left to work in a field outside education. He had been on the job for two years, seeing the school through its re-accreditation with the Wisconsin Catholic Schools accreditation process.

The school offers enrollment through the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, with about 38% of its students last year a part of that. In fact, Wieters said how Wisconsin handles offering its voucher program – compared to just private donations filling scholarships in Illinois – was part of his decision in returning.

“The voucher system in Wisconsin played a role,” said Wieters, adding that 40 students were attending St. Bede on scholarship – while another 62 remained on a waiting list.

“I feel we can serve more students who want a Catholic education than we could in Illinois,” he said.

Wieters was also quick to point out the parish school’s reputation for quality Catholic education.

“I know it’s a good school,” he said. “They have quality people here.”

While at the School of St. Mary in Lake Forest, Wieters saw the school through a number of staff changes. The school then earned a National Blue Ribbon School award, which honors high-performing academic schools.

He has worked in education for more than 30 years, the last 18 as an administrator. He said he’s excited at the changes coming to St. Andrew Parish School, which include a security upgrade this year from a \$100,000 safety grant.

The school now has guaranteed instantaneous contact with the Delavan Police through the “WAVE” system, and upgraded entrance ways. The school also recently received a \$60,000 grant for its STEM program, which will go to having a teacher trained and able to institute Project Lead the Way – a program that empowers students to develop and apply in-demand, transportable skills and explore real-world challenges.

“I think we’re a good, solid school,” Wieters explained. “Our focus has been academic, faith development and leadership development, all in a family oriented atmosphere.”

Wieters pointed to a recent “back-to-school” pizza party that drew more than 200 attendees.

“I think it was a great way to celebrate our families and our kids,” he said. “I’m excited to be here. I hope I can build upon what is a solid, good school and hopefully make it even better.”

Wieters lives in Lake Geneva with his wife, Beth, and two sons – Kevin and Kurt.

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262-728-5585
ci.delavan.wi.us

Mayor Ryan Schroeder
262-740-0142

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262-374-3679

First District Bob Beighton
262-909-1270

Second District
Megan Armstrong Garcia
Not listed

Second District
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Third District
Paul Wilson
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Third District
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Not listed

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Mary Knipper
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Ben Nixdorf
Not listed

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262-325-5064

Micah Hartlaub
262-475-9848



An evening out

The City of Delavan celebrated its 125th anniversary in July of last year with a special fundraising dinner at Lake Lawn Resort. The colors were presented by the local American Legion, numerous auction items were available, and the Underground Sound Jazz

Orchestra performed (above).

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The Walworth County Board of Supervisors meets the second Tuesday of the month at 3:30 p.m. in the County Board Room of the Walworth County Government Center, 100 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn. Meeting dates and times may vary therefore, it's advised to contact the County Clerk's Office at (262) 741-4241 to confirm meetings. For more information about county government, visit co.walworth.wi.us

WALWORTH COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

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Elkhorn

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mlubberda@co.walworth.wi.us

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Deputy County Clerk
Susi Pike

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treasurer@co.walworth.wi.us

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(262) 741-4255

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(262) 741-4233

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rmerry@sewrpc.org

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walworth.extension.wisc.edu

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(262) 741-7012

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walworthda@da.wi.gov

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Medical Examiner
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Carlo Nevicosi
Deputy Director
Trista Piccola

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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262-728-6280

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262-728-2522

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262-223-6800

Interim Superintendent

Anthony Klein
aklein@ddschools.org

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262-233-6300

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Grades 3-4
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262-233-6400

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Grades 5-8
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150 Cummings St.
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Delavan-Darien Virtual

Grades K-12
262-233-6800

DD Tech School

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Administrator: Luke Taylor
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262-728-5667

Our Redeemer Lutheran School

Interim Principal: Ken Anclam
416 W. Geneva St., Delavan
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Erica Bergstrom

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Rick Dorgay

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Talk about 'corny'!

Darien hosts its annual CornFest event every year at Darien West Park, offering free corn for the taking - both roasted and uncooked. There are also sporting events, including softball and horseshoes, a carnival and plenty of vendors and artisans. This fall will be the 62nd celebration of the event.

DAVE DRESDOW *Our Town*



Personalized for each customer

Sperino's Pepperoni Pub features self-pour wall in new Delavan location

With the former Sperino's site for sale in Elkhorn, the Italian eatery has found a new home in Delavan at 627 S. 2nd St., right across the street from Delbrook Golf Club.

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
EDITOR

The restaurant features several changes, including a popular beer and wine self-pour wall, where customers are charged by the ounce so they can try what they want from the wall.

Co-owners Cory and Kristin Aune made the decision to move from Elkhorn to Delavan in spite of the long-time Elkhorn site.

"It's a move of necessity for family and overhead purposes," Cory Aune said.

So far, the move has gone well.

"It's going great," Cory said. "Support over here has been unbelievable. We're seeing a lot of new faces that we were just getting a chance to know. And we're seeing a lot of our

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old faces.

“This first week has been fantastic,” he said shortly after opening.

The restaurant features signature pizzas – everything from traditional thin-crust cheese to Margherita and Hawaiian and even the Inferno (with the note, not spicy – as well as salads and bread options.

“We’re very focused on pizza,” Cory said, adding there is a gluten-free cauliflower crust option available.

But the self-proclaimed pub also offers something new to the area – the self-pour beer and wine wall.

About a year ago, the Aune family took trip down to Florida, and stayed with cousins in Naples.

They went out to dinner the last night there, and the restaurant had a self-pour beer wall.

“It was 60 taps,” Aune said. “I thought it was really neat. We got to see how it worked, and I definitely said it was something we’d like to try and bring north.”

The iPourIt company provides the self-pour set-up, which includes an iPad at each tap. Customers have their ID scanned when they arrive, and then get a wristband they use at each station.

Cory said that when he contacted iPourIt, he found out only a handful of sites in Wisconsin had the set-up, but amount them was Geneva Tap House in Lake Geneva.

“When I heard the Tap House was doing what they were doing...it has a lot of allure to it for the future of our industry,” Cory explained.



Pepperoni Pub features more than a dozen taps, including CO2 beers and seltzers, a nitro beer line and two wine or cocktail lines.

“It’s constantly evolving and changing,” Cory explained, but added that Pepperoni Pub has partnered with Duesterbeck’s Brewing Company in Elkhorn to provide some of that

company’s specialties, including the Back Forty Irish Nitro Stout that is so popular.

Also popular is the Ecto Cooler seltzer by Beachwood – yes, that is a take on the famous 1980s film, complete with the “slime” color – a JP’s Casper White Stout from Whole Hog in Stevens Point, the Chesterwhite peach seltzer from Duesterbeck’s, and an English brown ale from Duesterbeck’s.

“We see ourselves committing a couple of lines to Duesterbeck’s all the time,” Cory said.

Customers, again, are charged by the ounce, with some 40 cents, some 65 cents.

“You can pour as little or as much as your want,” Cory explained, adding that customers can then sample and go back for a larger pour if they want.

The pub, Cory Aune said, is looking to offering flights in the future.

The wine options, which currently are a Cabernet and Chardonnay, offer an option to those who don’t like beer.

“What goes better with pizza than beer?” Cory said. “And wine.”

Pepperoni Pub opens at 11 a.m. and generally is open to about 10 or 11 p.m. For more information, go to sperino.com/pepperoni-pub/, or call 262-723-2222.



above: Sperino’s Pepperoni Pub has relocated to 627 S. 2nd St., Delavan, and now offers a self-pour beer and wine wall.
top: Sperino’s offers a casual atmosphere to go with specialty pizza and its new self-pour beer and wine wall.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS *Our Town*

In tune with herself

Rachel Christine Gebel making charge on NBC's *The Voice* after musical upbringing

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
EDITOR

It can be a little hard to believe that Rachel Christine Gebel was once a shy little girl. The 22-year-old who has been belting out popular classics like Alanis Morissette's "Uninvited" and Maggie Rogers' "Light On" once got so nervous, she didn't even think she could sing in front of a crowd.

In fact, there is one moment that stands out to her mother, Micki, and to Rachel a testament of what kind of challenges Rachel would one day power through.

When Orange Crush kicked off its unique story in 2009 – the rock and roll band was THE pep band at Burlington High School basketball games – Rachel was singing backup vocals for her older sister, Micah.

After Micah graduated, Rachel was the natural choice to follow her sister as lead vocalist.

And yet, on the first night Rachel was supposed to be lead, she grabbed her mother as she walked into the gym, and pulled her out into the hall.

"She said, 'I can't do this,'" Micki recalled. "The band is tuning up. I said, 'Rachel, just get that first note out, and you'll be fine."

"She's just been sailing ever since that opportunity."

What the future brings for Rachel is still up in the air. Just weeks into the show's 23rd season, she's already survived *The Voice*'s blind auditions, hooking up

Rachel Gebel, who is going as Rachel Christine on the show, belts out "Uninvited" by Alanis Morissette during the blind auditions of NBC's *The Voice*. Gebel has currently made it through two rounds of the show, after a musical career that has seen her follow in the footsteps of her mother and sister.

PHOTO COURTESY CASEY DURKIN/NBC *Our Town*

with "Team Kelly" – pop vocal star Kelly Clarkson.

In the last two weeks, Gebel survived the Battle Rounds of the show, going against a singer virtually everyone wanted on their team, JB Somers.

Regardless, though, of what happens on the show, it's been a lifetime of music for Rachel Christine, as well as her mother and her sister.

"You know it's a chance of a lifetime," Micki said. "There's not too many people who get that opportunity. It still blows me away."

Family history

The two sisters come from a musical family. Micki has performed in a number of different bands, with her brothers throughout her adult life.

When asked about the family genes, Micki admitted there had to be something to it.

"Most people say it's in the genes," she explained. "And I think there's something to that. When you hear families sing, there's just something about the way voices blend. It's like butter."

And for the two sisters, music began at a very young age. While Mom was practicing in the basement with the family band, Micah and Rachel started singing with each other.

"I must've been 5 and we would do karaoke at home in the house together," Rachel said. "It clicked. She taught me harmonies and we blended well."

"They just had these voices. So pure, so mature," said their mother. "And as shy as Rachel was, she liked to sing."

The two grew up with vocal music, both learning how to play the keyboard as Micki bartered lessons for work for Jane and Scott Carson's book store.

The two ended up following each other in two very important gigs. Micah won the Riverport Chorus' DivaQuest competition when she was a freshman in high school in 2011, singing "Blue Skies" by Ella Fitzgerald.

"I wanted to finish second so I could perform the next year," commented Micah

about her somewhat surprising win. “

Rachel was 11 when Micah won and was intrigued.

“I looked up to her like she was a celebrity,” Rachel said. On her first try at the event, Rachel finished third, singing “Ain’t No Other Man,” by Christina Aguilera.

The following year, Rachel showed up with “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road,” a take on the Sara Bareilles’ vision.

That time, Rachel won. Her biggest cheerleader was her sister.

“Winning a few years later was the best feeling in the world and I felt like I made her proud by following her footsteps,” said Rachel, something Micah confirmed. “In the video of me singing my song that night, you can hear her in the background going, “do yo thang, honey!”

The two then were the back-to-back lead singers for Orange Crush – Micah was the lead when the group started in 2010 school year, while Rachel was the lead when the group ended seven years later.

Rather than providing a traditional pep band for BHS home basketball games, the school – led by teachers Ron Pedersen and Rob Stoughton – put together a house rock band.

The two said that the experience was invaluable.

“We owe Rod and Ron a lot. They taught us a lot about working with a band and that was their goal for the band,” Micah said. “I think we learned a lot about ourselves in Orange Crush.”

Added Rachel, “It was such a blessing to get to be a part of something like that at such a young age. You learn stage presence, stage banter, sooo many songs, and more.”

Gebel Girls

Watching Micah and Rachel interact now, it’s clear there’s support between the two.

That has led the two to their next endeavor, an act called the Gebel Girls. What started as a solo act for Micah turned into a chance for the two sisters together.

The harmonies that the two worked on together as children still synced as adults. Now the two have every weekend between now and the end of the year booked as “The Gebel Girls,” performing at various restaurants, taverns and events around the area.

“We’ve both been kind of doing the same thing, and then we both kind of went our separate ways for a while,” Micah said. Micah was singing at an event, and Rachel came in and harmonized a little. “And we were like, why didn’t we do this before?”

Ironically, the two work at one of the mainstays of performance venues – The Delavan Lake Store. Rachel is the daytime bartender while Micah is the evening bartender.

It was a slow evening last year that led to Rachel watching *The Voice* while at work.



Rachel and Micah Gebel perform together as the “Gebel Girls” at River Jack’s in Elkhorn recently.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Our Town*

Intrigued, Rachel sent in a pair of audition videos – one of her singing “Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road” and another of “Anyone” by Demi Lovato.

“I said, it’s a one-in-a-million chance, let’s see what happens,” Micah remembered. “Then she showed me the two auditions videos.”

Micah wasn’t the only one impressed. Rachel was immediately invited to California for the blind auditions, getting a chance to skip part of the audition process.

The rest, as they say, is history.

The Voice

It’s been an interesting few weeks for Rachel Christine, the stage name she is using. While the show was filmed in the fall of last year, episodes of Season 23 just began airing last month.

That meant Rachel had to keep a very hard secret – that not only had she turned two chairs during the blind auditions, but she also ended up getting to work with her childhood idol, Clarkson.

Rachel said that she was fully aware of when Chance hit his button first, but she kept hoping Clarkson would push her button as well.

“I just had to have her,” Rachel said. “I was so excited that she turned around on the last note.”

From there, another week passed before the Battle Round between her and JB aired. Clarkson made a difficult decision, choosing Rachel over Somers.

Her reasoning had to do with the depth of quality she heard in Rachel’s voice.

“I feel like she’s a consistent singer,” Clarkson said. “She has this incredible tone.”

What comes next? Only Rachel, Micah and Micki really know. And as Micki explained, it’s almost impossible to know what the judges or fans are looking for.

“They’re listening for certain things, not necessarily what we’re listening to,” Micki said.

Regardless, what has happened already has gotten Rachel plenty of attention. Micah said she hopes that Rachel will get to live her dream – being the lead singer of a rock band.

“That’s where she belongs, and that’s what she wants to do,” Micah explained, adding that she hopes they will still get to make the Gebel Girls a growing concern in the area.

Whatever the outcome, though, it’s clear some things will not change. Doing a podcast recently, Micah said she got a question that’s become common.

“They asked me, ‘are you sick of talking about Rachel?’” Micah explained. “I said no. I’m her biggest fan.”



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Satisfying *the* Sweet Tooth

Pastris by Chad offers numerous different sweet treats for a variety of events

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

EDITOR

A chance playdate at the park gave Chad Visger a unique opportunity in 2020.

As Jeff Hufford began the work to start up Turtle Lake Tap and Grill, Visger met him when their children were playing together at Phoenix Park in Delavan.

A chef at a resort in Lake Geneva, the two talked – and then didn't talk again until 2021.

By then, Hufford was looking for a general manager for Turtle Lake Tap and Grill and Visger was looking for a commercial kitchen for his pastry business.

It was a match made in heaven. While Visger consults with Turtle Lake Tap and Grill, he runs Pastris by Chad with his wife Sam – an upscale pastry business that specializes in French pastries that supplies sweets to a variety of resorts, coffee shops and restaurants in the area.

Visger also takes special orders for everything from birthdays to holidays. The two live in Delavan and are raising their family there.

"Anniversaries, weddings are a big thing," said Sam, now co-owner along with Chad of TLTG since the two purchased equity in the business and are now partners.

Chad said business is "very busy." So is the family, as the couple has a 5-year-old son – already interested in his own cookie company – and another child on the way.

"We've grown a lot from year one to year two," he said. "Picked up a lot of wholesale accounts. I love being a part of other businesses, in terms of providing them a premium product they can't find elsewhere."

"I'm able to meet with the chefs and owners of a restaurant, to come up with something that really speaks to their brand," Sam added, "But also meshes with and compliments their brand."

"It lets him be creative," Sam said, which Chad agreed with.

Sam and Chad have been together for 13 years, "and it was always our dream to start our own business," Sam said. She has a degree in hospitality from Roosevelt University, while Chad graduated from Johnson and Wales University in Denver.

The two are self-described dreamers, and came up with their first catering company in 2013 after college in Colorado. While not originally involved with one another, they met on a mutual job and first became friends – then romantically involved.

"We would kind of sit out on our balcony," said Chad, then finished by Sam, "daydreaming about what our future



Delavan residents Sam and Chad Visger, long-time friends and now married, recently started Pastris by Chad, which operates out of Turtle Lake Bar and Grill. The two focus on pastries that offer not just a beautiful look, but a layered taste. Shown here are, from left, Chad Visger's versions of tiramisu, a Key Lime tart and a blueberry prosecco tiramisu.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Our Town*

could bring."

The two work well as a pair. Sam handles the logistics and the business side, while Chad does the cooking. Everything from fancy French pastries to cool cakes to cupcake to cookies are available.

"We do change it seasonally," Chad said, adding that the cake and cupcake stay

throughout the year but the French-style pastries change with the season.

Some examples of the deluxe pastries:

- Gluten-free Tiramisu – made with a mascarpone mousse, coffee cremeux and a chocolate flourless cake. Topped with

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



**ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITY
GROWING FOR OUR FUTURE**
Aram Public Library Campaign

Existing space to be renovated

New space to be added



From the Director's Perspective

Library renovation and expansion needed

By **Michelle Carter**

ARAM PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The City of Delavan's plans for a much-needed library expansion and updating are rapidly moving ahead.

Preliminary plans are to add an additional 23,162 square feet of net space to the existing 12,116 square-foot building at an estimated cost of \$9 to \$10 million.

Design work will be completed this year with construction scheduled to begin in 2024.

The Campaign

The City of Delavan has committed to providing most of the estimated cost of the project. Nevertheless, the budget assumes at least \$1 million must be raised through donations and fundraisers.

A fundraising campaign, called "Rooted in our Community, Growing for our Future," is being coordinated by the Delavan Aram Public Library Foundation. DAPLF is an IRS-recognized non-profit charitable organization established to help the library meet its major financial needs.

The campaign is going very well after just 18 months. Fourteen area families and businesses have made donations or pledges over \$10,000, topped by a 100,000 anonymous contribution and a pledge by the Kunes Family Foundation to provide \$450,000 over the next several years.

Wayne Osborn, DAPLF president, said, "The great generosity of these lead donors is an example of the strong support in our community for the library project. Without them reaching our goal of at least \$1

million would be very, very difficult."

Osborn noted about \$60,000 has also been raised through small donations and fundraisers. One of the most popular donation choices has been the Women with Words initiative.

Women with Words aims to raise \$50,000 for the Youth Art Gallery through \$500 donations honoring women in people's lives. It has reached 48 honorees. The gallery is planned to stretch nearly 50 feet along the wall connecting the adult, teen, Makerspace and children's areas.

Fundraising has also involved events with community partners – Bingo Night at the Delavan Legion Post 95; share-the-profit nights at local Delavan eateries including Culvers, Burger King, and

These architectural drawings from FEH Design show what the renovation and expansion of Aram Public Library will look like when the project comes to fruition.

SUBMITTED GRAPHICS Our Town



Panera; a percentage of oil change receipts at Hunter’s Auto; and participation in the Rotary Artisan Fair and the Delavan downtown beer and wine walks.

Next up is a fun Trivia Night at Greenies Pavilion on Saturday, May 13, from 6 to 8 p.m. Tickets are selling fast at \$40 per individual, or \$300 for a table of eight. Hearty appetizers are included, and tickets can be purchased at aramlibrary.org.

The campaign has to date received \$405,989.29 with additional pledges of \$391,000. This is almost 80% of our goal.

Project Progress

This Aram Library expansion project has been many years in the making and is desperately needed as the library long ago outgrew our current building in regards to space. There is no meeting room and no small individual study places.

As an example, due to the large number

of attendees, the summer reading programs have been held outside, under a rented tent with kids sitting on carpet squares to protect their bums from the gravel. The Friends group has donated the tent for many years.

The library building, while lovely and historic, is “of an age” and needs significant structural repairs. Our community is in need of a modern library with beauty and ability to offer the services that are now demanded of libraries in a city of our size.

Planning began in 2019 with staff and public meetings with architects on what people would like to see in a new library. The consensus was a modern expansion added to the historic building with most patron services on one level. This resulted in a rough plan and cost estimate. After a two-year COVID-19 delay, the city approved moving ahead in August 2021 and fundraising began.

The City of Delavan’s application for a USDA Rural Development Loan for the project was approved in August 2022. This low-interest loan now allows aggressively moving ahead without having to wait for all funding to be in place.

A preliminary timeline prepared by the architects called for design work to begin in November. There was a slight delay caused by the requirement that architect contracts be reviewed by the USDA before approval, which is now done. The design work has started and will take approximately 12-15 months to complete. Construction will start late 2024 and be completed before the end of 2025.

The new building will include larger, flexible meeting rooms and study rooms, a youth area including an early literacy Discover Zone, an expanded Teen Area, a Makerspace, and larger computer area including places for remote workers to name just a few exciting details.

SWEET TOOTH • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

espresso macaron and edible 24-karat gold.

- Key lime tart – pate sucre filled with key lime filling. Topped with toasted meringue

- Blue prosecco tiramisu – blueberry genoise with a layer of prosecco blueberry, pate de fruit, topped with white chocolate mousse and then topped with blueberry pepin and gold dust.

While those are full-size pastries, the item both Sam and Chad feel are the most popular are their Petit Fours – small, one-two bite versions of those items (and more).

“It’s this little, tiny one-to-two-bite piece that can have five to seven different layers in one bit that has this crazy depth to it,” Chad said. “So get so many different flavors in one to two bites. Not only are they very pretty, but they taste better than they look.”

That, Chad said, is the thought process – a unique taste that looks as good as it tastes (but not better).

“Really, I feel like anyone can make anything look pretty,” Chad said. “If it tastes better than it looks pretty, that’s really difficult.”

Sam said the Petit Fours give the business a chance to share unique

“You get to do a crème brulee bite, you get to do a chocolate tart,” Sam said. “You get the variety.”

Chad said the variety allows people to try something different and not commit to a whole dessert.

The two said they are grateful for the support of the community. They both come from big cities – Chad grew up in the Bay Area in California while Sam grew up in McHenry County in Illinois but spent a large amount of time in Chicago and

Denver.

“We have met people along the way, which 90% of them have been small business owners,” Chad said, with Sam adding, “giving us advice ... opened doors.”

Chad added, “Just very good people in the Delavan community.”

Some of the businesses they work with include The Treasury in downtown Delavan, Boxed and Burlap, TLTG, area wedding coordinators and chefs at resorts.

“Without all of those people, we wouldn’t have figured it out. Maybe we would have but we wouldn’t have figured it out so quickly,” Sam said. “The people of Walworth County are just incredible

Added Chad, “We’re one big community. We’re peers.”

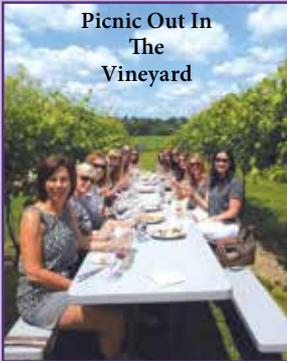
To reach the Vigers and Pastries by Chad, call 815-919-2307.

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435748

Lakeland Community Church opens free play area

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
EDITOR

Lakeland Community Church, located at N3181 Highway 67 in Delavan, has taken its community interaction to a new level.

Earlier this year, the church opened an indoor public playground with free hours for the public and the ability to rent the space to groups.

“The church wanted something that was going to reach more of the community,” said Amanda Breen, the brand and communications director at the church. “They’re really excited to offer something for free.”

Breen said the 5,000-square-foot space is the largest indoor play space in Walworth County and the second largest in the state – behind The Wilderness in Wisconsin Dells.

“There really wasn’t anything indoor for the winter,” Breen said. “There’s nothing really in our area, especially for free.”

“People can come in and let their kids run around, even just for an hour,” she added.

The facility, which is attached to the church but does not require church membership, has a half-court basketball court, an interactive game wall and a toddler play and climbing area.

Public hours for the play area are Monday-Wednesday, 9 a.m. to noon, Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m., starting when the park opens in January.

The church included the public indoor playground as part of last year’s capital campaign. The church also redesigned its “next gen” spaces, including classrooms and other parts of the church.

The play area, Breen said, gives everyone a chance to check out what Lakeland offers.

“People are really excited about it,” Breen said, adding that the church was originally hoping to cater to mom and kids, but is now also getting responses from homeschool communities, groups in the church.

“Really just times for adults to come and let their children play,” Breen said.

For more information or to reach the church, call 262-245-4567.



Lakeland Community Church on Highway 67 recently opened a new indoor public playground for children of all ages. Public hours are available throughout the week. Included in the park are play and rest space, plus an interactive play board.

SUBMITTED ARTWORK
Our Town





Honoring *the* fallen

AREA AUTHOR HELPS RESTORE HISTORICAL GRAVESITE

By **Tracy Ouellette**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Frank Landi, of Delavan, has been writing books on architecture for years. He has written about Frank Lloyd Wright's homes in Delavan and historical homes in Lake Geneva. He is known in the Walworth County area for his historical presentations and can often be found in area libraries speaking on the local architecture.

Landi has even taken that passion for local architecture and history to a couple of cemeteries in Delavan – Old Settlers and Spring Grove.

That interest led to a recent, multi-year project to restore a vandalized headstone for a Civil War veteran at Old Settlers Cemetery.

"I started this project a few years ago and finally finished it a few months ago," Landi said.

Back in 2016, when Landi began researching Delavan cemeteries for his book "Delavan's Spring Grove Cemetery," he was alarmed at the number of gravestones that were neglected, deteriorating or vandalized. What really upset Landi was the vandalized gravestone of Civil War veteran Alonzo Chase in the



Financial contributors to the gravestone restoration include Charlene Staples (from left) and Pat Blackmer representing Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War; Robin Staudt, representing Blooming Prairie Questers of Delavan; Frank Landi and private contributor Terry Yanke.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PEGGY MURPHY *Our Town*

Old Settler's Cemetery.

The headstone had been broken into two pieces, with the top half being sheared off.

"The top half of the vandalized gravestone was stored in the city of Delavan's storage shed for almost 50 years and the bottom half was still in the ground at the grave site," Landi said.

This particular headstone and its disrepair "touched" Landi and he felt the need to make things right for "a veteran who deserves better," he said.

"I wrote a book on the cemeteries in Delavan. There are two historical cemeteries here, a small one in town (Old Settlers) and a larger one on the end of town (Spring Grove)," Landi explained. "When I was doing a survey in the little cemetery, I saw a Civil War veterans' monument. I found the bottom half of the gravestone still in the ground, I went to the city and asked where all the top halves of the tombstones were stored and they took me to a shed where they had six or seven piles of broken headstones. I asked for help to go through them and they said yes.

"Believe it or not, the headstone I was looking for was found right on the top of one of the piles. I felt like this headstone was sitting there all these years just waiting for me."

After writing his book in 2018, Landi went back to the cemetery, locating the top of the headstone and then set to work on repairing the monument.

"I took it upon myself to get the stone restored and asked for financing from local civic groups," Landi said. "I went to a Kenosha monument company for an estimate. Then COVID hit and by the time we got started again, a couple of years later, the cost had doubled. It cost \$2,400 now. Everybody kept asking at the monument place why not go to VA and get a new stone, but I wanted the original one restored."

So the fundraising picked up and Landi was able to get the restoration paid for this past year.

"This man was a Civil War veteran who was in his 30s when he died," Landi said. "He had four children and was discharged from service for medical reasons and he died shortly after he got home. I thought there should be some respect for him and his service and a new stone wouldn't have done that properly."

Both Spring Grove and Old Settlers cemeteries are maintained by the City of Delavan and with Landi's project, more efforts to repair damaged headstones is happening.

"Mark Wendorf, the city's Public Works director, has been working with a group of volunteers who started work on Spring Grove restoring gravestones and as they are finishing those up, they're going to work on fixing up the headstones at Old Settlers," Landi said.

Interest in cemeteries

Landi said his interest in cemeteries



Frank Landi (right) shows examples of damaged headstones at Spring Grove Cemetery on April 17, 2021. Landi along with Wayne Southern (far left) and a few others were planning work days in the spring of that year. Delavan Mayor Ryan Schroeder (center) and the local historical society helped raise money for the cause.

MIKE HOEY *Our Town*



Old Settlers Cemetery in the City of Delavan is where Frank Landi worked to have the gravestone of a Civil War veteran restored.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT DELAVAN *Our Town*

and their architecture came after years of researching architecture in the Delavan and Lake Geneva areas and writing multiple books about it.

"Architecture has always had my interest. I wrote about the Frank Lloyd Wright homes in the area, the old homes in Delavan and a book on the Wright hotel in Lake Geneva. I also wrote a book on the history of Delavan Lake," Landi said.

"When I ran out of ideas for books on architecture I started going to lectures in Chicago on buildings down there and began doing presentations in the libraries. I would find gravestones of these great architects and include them at the end of my presentations."

Landi said he went to Italy when he was in his early 70s to study architecture and

artwork and visit his parent's families.

"I visited two fantastic cemeteries in Milan and Genoa City in Italy. People would visit those cemeteries just for the architecture," Landi recalled.

He said that experience got him thinking about the architecture here and he began researching Delavan's historical cemeteries.

"That's what brought me to the gravestone that needed to be fixed," he said.

With the project finished, Landi said he's done with gravestone restoration, but encourages others to volunteer at the local cemeteries, as funding for maintenance is low, especially for cemeteries that have been absorbed by local municipalities.

He said preserving history is important and there's always something to be done.

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