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Serving the Delavan Lakes area

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Center

Town of Delavan properties see hike in values

By Michael S. Hoey
CORRESPONDENT

Town of Delavan property owners may have noticed an increase in what their property's assessed value is.

Accurate Appraisal recently conducted a 2024 assesses market revaluation that led to an average increase of 47 to 52%. The revaluation was discussed at the Town Board meeting on July 16.

Representatives from Accurate Appraisal explained that the revaluation was an intermarket update that used sales data up to Jan. 1 to set fair and equitable assessments. Wisconsin law requires periodic market updates to keep assessments within 10% of actual market value for all properties.

Due to significant recent changes in sales prices of real estate, it was necessary, according to a letter sent to town property owners Accurate, to make significant changes in assessed values.

Town Chairman Mary Knipper clarified that the intermarket update was not a full assessment that included an inspection of the property. Supervisor Bill Thummel encouraged property owners to attend either of two Open Book meetings that were offered July 29-30. They can also email Accurate Appraisal with questions.

The letter from Accurate also said in bold print that property owners should not fear that their taxes will rise dramatically just because the assessed value of their property went up. The letter said property owners will not automatically pay higher taxes due to a higher assessment. The property tax burden is redistributed after the market update based on all properties being assessed to fair market value.

The last intermarket update was conducted in 2021 and the market has changed substantially since then, according to Accurate. The town's estimated property value before the revaluation was at 72% of actual market value as a result. The figure needs to be at or near 100%.

Hotel proposal sent back to committee

A conditional use permit that would have allowed the construction of a 16-unit hotel was

sent back to the Plan Commission and the motion also required input from Walworth County be gained before the Board would again consider the permit.

Stanley Tomala has proposed the hotel for 5291 State Highway 50 near its intersection with Theatre Road. The proposed hotel would be a new structure on what is currently vacant land.

Two neighbors spoke in opposition to the plan. Reverend Stephen Hollenbeck of East Delavan Baptist Church and neighbor Josh Schmidt expressed concerns about there being a lot planned for a small lot, small parking spaces in the proposed parking lot, and the potentially negative impact on the intersection of Highway 50 and Theatre Road.

Knipper said the town has received new information since the Plan Commission considered the permit and the proposal has not been reviewed by Walworth County. Knipper said input from the county is something the Plan Commission usually has to guide it in its decision. She said there were also some questions about the business plan at the Plan Commission level.

Knipper said changes have been made to address those concerns, but the Plan Commission has not had the opportunity to review those changes. Knipper said that as the chairman of the Plan Commission, she was not comfortable recommending approval of the permit to the Board without the Plan Commission having seen the changes.

Supervisors Ben Nixdorf and Hugh Charvat both said the changes they have seen are in the right direction but agreed approving the permit at this meeting was rushing too much. Charvat said he also wanted input from the county.

The motion to send it back to the Plan Commission and wait for input from the county passed unanimously.

Variance sent back to Plan Commission

The board also voted to send a request for a variance by Russell Heitz and Tom O'Halloran back to the Plan Commission. Heitz and O'Halloran wanted a 13-foot variance to the rear yard setback that would allow them to build a

new home that would replace a house that will be torn down on another nearby lot at 1610 Wall St.

Daniel Watson said the Plan Commission recommended denial of the permit and he said that was a sound decision. Scott Diamond also opposed the variance. Knipper made the motion to refer

the variance back to the Plan Commission because, she said, she wanted the commission to review comments received by the town since the commission's last meeting.

Shodeen gets approvals

Shodeen received approval for

two conditional use permits and an amended developer's agreement for the recently started Shores of Delavan Lake development. The first permit will allow Shodeen to have up to six model homes within the development. The

• CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE



Rev-up Weekend

Delavan's Rev-Up Weekend was held July 12-14. It kicked off with a community street dance and other activities on Friday night. Saturday featured a car parade through town and the SuperTramp tribute band Long Way Home in a concert at the Phoenix Bandshell. Sunday was the Cars Time Forgot car show at Lake Lawn Resort, with awards being presented for the top cars.

Sweet Corn Lady offers fresh fruit, produce

By **Jennifer Eisenbartr**
STAFF WRITER

On a recent sunny afternoon near the Delavan Lake inlet, Theresa Lee tries to shoo off a photographer.

“You can’t take a photo now. You have to come in the morning,” she said. “We’re almost out!”

That it’s 2:30 in the afternoon and the Sweet Corn Lady produce stand is nearly empty when the it’s normally open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. is a sign of how business is going.

In addition to the eponymous sweet corn, the stand also stocks tomatoes, peaches, muskmelon and watermelon – among other fresh delights when available, like nectarines and plums.

On Saturdays, the stand has homemade Amish bread, along with several selections of homemade jam.

Add in peppers, cucumbers, green and wax beans and zucchini, and the Sweet Corn Lady stand has just about everything fresh a visitor could look for.

“We are well known because we have been there for 68 years and are known for our quality,” Theresa said.

The farm stand is part of a Wisconsin tradition – fresh product from fields and trees, brought to market by farmers, who then sell the fruits and vegetables directly to the consumer.

The Sweet Corn Lady, located on Highway 50 in Delavan, near the bridge in the inlet, is also part of that tradition. The stand started by selling sweet corn out of the back of a truck in downtown Delavan back in 1957.

The woman behind it all, Theresa’s mom, Jerry Lee, moved the location to the inlet area in the early 1970s and has been there since.

In the 1980s, she added a second

location in Elkhorn, though that one no longer exists.

The stand has been a destination for many a family, but Jerry Lee raised four daughters and six grandchildren at the stand.

“My dad started to raise melon in 1940,” Jerry said. “He then got into the sweet corn. He would just take the truck to Delavan or whatever and they’d just buy it from the truck.”

When Jerry graduated from high school, she asked if she could take the truck to Delavan – which started the business.

Jerry worked at the stand, at least in part, until three years ago when she broke a hip. Now, Theresa has taken over the stand, with her children working beside her – just like she did.

“They’ve all done well for themselves,” Jerry said of her family.

Jerry explained the stand is a people-oriented business, with families coming up and sharing hugs when the stand first opens at the end of June. The children working for the Sweet Corn Lady also learn better people skills, Jerry said.

Operating a farm stand allows the flexibility in working part time and still having time for family.

But the stand also stands (pun intended) on what it carries and the quality of what it provides to its customers.

“We just carry what is popular,” Theresa explained.

In July, that is ripe, ready-to-pop watermelon, the sweet corn, and Missouri peaches that taste nothing like the ones in the grocery store.

“We are known for our peaches now,” said Theresa, adding that the stand is the only one in the area with the particular kind they carry.

The reason for the stand lasting 68



Children have been a part of the Sweet Corn Lady stand for most years, as first Jerry Lee and then her daughter, Theresa, brought their children to work at the stand. Shown here is Theresa Lee’s daughter, Sierra (left), with family friend Tanner.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *The Breeze*

years, though – in addition to the family dedication – might just be attributed to the dedication of the customer base.

“We have kept it going because of our amazing customers telling us we can never leave them,” Theresa said.

The Sweet Corn Lady stand is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day until Labor Day. For more information on the stand, including special notices and new arrivals of fruit and vegetables, search for Sweet Corn Lady and Daughters on Facebook.

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on the cover: The blue sky and clouds are reflected on a calm Delavan Lake recently as geese paddle their way through the water next to a pier.

HEIDI SCHULZ *Delavan Breeze*

Man sentenced to prison for fatal hit and run

A man has been sentenced to prison for killing a Delavan man with his truck when the victim was returning home from work and collecting mail at the end of his driveway.

Walworth County Circuit Court Judge Philip Koss handed 35-year-old Travis Arlyn Brown, Whitewater, a 15-year sentence in Wisconsin State Prison for the 2020 hit and run that left a man dead.

Brown will spend seven years incarcerated and eight years with extended supervision. He was facing 25 years for the Class D felony.

According to the criminal complaint, on Nov. 14, 2020, Delavan police were called to Fox Lane at 10:09 p.m. where a 59-year-old man was laying unresponsive near his driveway. The man's father, who also resides at the home, told investigators that the man usually arrives home from work at 10 p.m. and then retrieves the mail along the road.

Police noted the mailbox door was open with mail still inside, and one of the man's shoes was located near the road, as well as his cell phone. The GoFundMe page #justicefornoe identifies the victim as Noe Rendon Jr., a son, brother, friend, and uncle.



Travis Arlyn Brown

A medical examiner reported Noe died from blunt force injuries of the head and torso due to a pedestrian versus vehicle crash. He was pronounced dead at 12:17 a.m. on Nov. 15, 2020.

A woman told investigators she was on the phone with Noe at approximately 9:41 p.m. and that during the brief conversation he told her he was getting his mail and then the phone went dead.

On Feb. 20, 2021, investigators spoke with a 26-year-old man who stated he,

Brown and two other friends had been drinking at the End Zone in Delavan and they left together at the same time. Brown followed behind two other vehicles in his truck. When they drove down Fox Lane, the man said he recalled Brown pulled over and asked Brown whether everything was OK.

Brown reportedly did not respond, only got out of his truck and checked the passenger side. When questioned again whether everything was OK, Brown shook his head and they all continued. Video surveillance obtained by investigators showed the three vehicles traveling in the area at 9:41 p.m.

A sister of one of Brown's drinking friends reported on March 4, 2021, she drove with her brother back to End Zone Bar to get his house keys. When they drove past the scene where Noe was laying, her brother told her to stop because he thought he saw something. She turned the vehicle

around and located Noe, who she began giving CPR to until paramedics arrived. The man denied knowing that Brown struck the victim.

Investigators learned that Brown reported a crash on Nov. 20, 2020, to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and claimed it occurred in Burnett County. The report included an image of Brown's truck, which shows damage to the driver's side hood of the vehicle. He reported hitting a deer and said that the deer also went under the truck.

Investigators further learned that Brown's truck was repaired at Kunes Country Collision Center and traded in on Jan. 29, 2021, after Kunes completed the repair work. Photos of the truck before it was repaired were shared with a crash reconstruction expert, who advised the damage was not consistent with striking a

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Town of Delavan police chief to retire

By **Michael S. Hoey**

CORRESPONDENT

Town of Delavan Police Chief Ray Clark will retire in January. The Town Board began the process of replacing him on July 16.

The board approved a list of qualifications for the next chief. Candidates will have to submit to a background check, drug screening, medical exam, oral interviews, and a psychological examination.

According to the list, the new chief should be able to handle several tasks simultaneously, react quickly and effectively to stressful situations, perform essential functions of the position, create and maintain a budget, possess a firearm, use all standard law enforcement equipment, and work evenings, weekends, and holidays when needed.

The new chief should have a valid Wisconsin driver's license, possess Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board Certification, a minimum of eight years of law enforcement experience, at least two years of law enforcement supervisory experience, at least an associate's degree in criminal justice or related field, training, in courses of law enforcement supervision and management, experience in emergency management operations, and a clean criminal record.

"Chief Clark is the consummate professional and has led a strong and respected law enforcement department for the Town of Delavan," Town Chairman Mary Knipper said after the meeting.

"Although we will miss his leadership, I have no doubt that his successor will carry on and maintain the legacy that Ray has established," she added. "The community wished the chief a rewarding and well-deserved retirement."

Clark was promoted to Chief of Police in December of 2014. He started with the town in May of 1991 as a marine unit officer. Clark was promoted to part-time road officer in June of 1991. In April of 1993, Clark was hired as a full-time officer and was promoted to sergeant in March of 2001. He served as a Patrol Sergeant until he was promoted to Detective

Sergeant in April of 2008.

In his time with the town, Clark has served as a Field Training Officer, the lead Firearms Instructor, and the Training Coordinator. He has also been a member of the Walworth County Metro Gang Unit, the Walworth County Metro Drug Unit, the Walworth County Metro Sensitive Crimes Response Team, and a negotiator on the county's SWAT team.

Clark said that after 33 years of law enforcement, he just decided it was the right time to retire.

"While I still love this career, I believe that it is time for me to spend more time with my family," he said. "I think a good 'shelf-life' for a Chief of Police is about ten years."

Clark said having a new chief come in allows for new ideas and perspectives, which allow the department to grow and evolve.

During his own time as chief, Clark said the department has added several officers to the department, which allows the department to be better staffed and provide a greater level of service to the community. Community policing, in his opinion, has been the area in which the town has seen the most progress.

"I have long believed that the Town of Delavan is a fantastic community and I have stressed the importance of community policing and involvement in the community during my time as chief," Clark said. "I believe the department has greatly increased in this area and hope that this will continue long after I am gone."

Along with simply adding more officers to the department, Clark enjoys promoting officers to leadership positions rather than filling those positions from the outside.

"I am a firm believer that if we have qualified people in the department, those people should fill leadership roles," he said. "Officers from within the department, most times, understand the community we serve and the department goals toward that service better due to their time with the department."

Clark said the Town Board and



Out and about!

City of Delavan police grilled out in the Fleet Farm parking lot recently for a Hot Dogs with Cops event. Several of the city's officers were on hand, including, above, from the left: Lieutenant Josh Flitcroft, Sergeant Brian Mair, K9 Officer Danielle Apker and Sergeant Brad Schroeder. At left: Mair takes a turn manning the grill.

DAVE DRESHOW *The Breeze*

Equine skills center earns reaccreditation

Special Methods in Learning Equine Skills (Smiles) in Darien once again earned the designation of Premier Accredited Center by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (Path Intl.).

Smiles partners individuals who have special needs, with certified professionals and equines to achieve health, wellness and learning goals. By earning Path Intl. Premier Accredited Center status, Smiles has demonstrated it is operating in accordance with almost 200 Path Intl. standards for the equine-assisted services (EAS) industry. Out of nearly 800 Path Intl. Member Centers, only 250 hold this prestigious distinction.

To become a Path Intl. Premier Accredited Center, Smiles, successfully

passed an evaluation by trained Path Intl. site visitors. Center evaluations cover a wide range of topics such as horse management, participant safety, equipment, quality of instruction, facility operations, volunteerism and best-business administrative practices, all with specific standards that must be met. These standards were developed and adopted by the Path Intl. membership to ensure that centers follow procedures essential to safe, quality EAS programming. Path Intl. Premier Accredited Center is a designation indicating to the public that a center has met a rigorous set of quality and safety standards. Path Intl. requires that Premier Accredited Centers be

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Workers at Special Methods in Learning Equine Skills (Smiles) in Darien help an individual with special needs by partnering certified professionals and equines to achieve health, wellness and learning goals for the individual.

PHOTO SUBMITTED *The Breeze*

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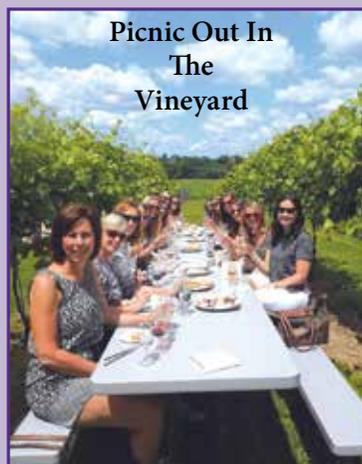
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Reaching kids, one page at a time

Author illustrates his life through books, in English and Spanish

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

STAFF WRITER

Raul Gonzalez grew up with a decidedly interesting cultural background.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Gonzalez spent his childhood there and in his mother's hometown of Juarez, Mexico. His border-town home was Spanish speaking, but he grew up bilingual.

Books, though, especially books for children, give him an outlet to touch the world – especially picture books.

“I really love picture books,” Raul said. “Picture books, and children’s books in general, I love how accessible they are to kids.”

“Not everyone has access to an art museum or an art gallery,” he added. “But picture books are a way to bring art directly into your house.”

Now, Gonzalez – better known to children as Raul the Third (because he is the third Raul in his family) – is a recognized, award-winning children’s author and illustrator, winning several Bank Street Children’s Book Committee awards as well as the Pura Belpre Illustrator award in 2017, 2020 and 2021 for three different books.

Gonzalez visited Delavan recently, making several different presentations to area librarians, students and the public. The day of activities concluded with a presentation at Delavan-Darien High School,

where attendees learned about his work and how he puts books together.

His books were available for purchase courtesy of Reads By the River Books and Gifts in Waterford, and the Delavan-Darien School District sponsored art kits for all the youth attending the summer school session and also the evening presentation.

The visit, as well as the purchase of 300 of Raul the Third’s book, was funded by Aram Public Library’s application of the Maureen Hayes Award, and a local grant. The award, established with funding from Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing, allowed a library to apply for up to \$4,000 to bring a national author/illustrator in for a visit.

ART AT A YOUNG AGE

Raul said that a good part of his artwork and storytelling comes from his own childhood.

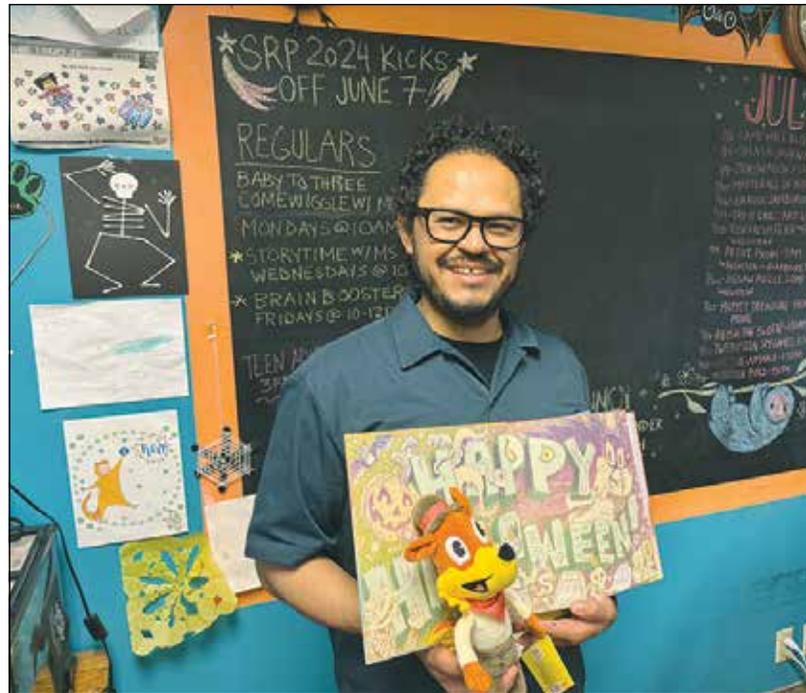
Growing up in the two cities on the Mexico/United States border, he spent a lot of time in both places.

His mother and her family moved from Mexico City to Juarez when she was 13, and the family began working at the Mercado Cuauhtemoc – where many of his relatives still work now.

Raul spent time in both cities growing up – as he put it, they were “right across the bridge from each other.” He was raised in a Spanish-speaking household, his father was an insurance agent and his mother worked in the mercado.

That specific marketplace ended up playing a “lot” in the first book he wrote and illustrated, “Vamos! Let’s Go to the

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Children’s author Raul the Third visited Delavan July 11, thanks to a pair of monetary awards to Aram Public Library.

JENNIFER EISENBART
The Breeze



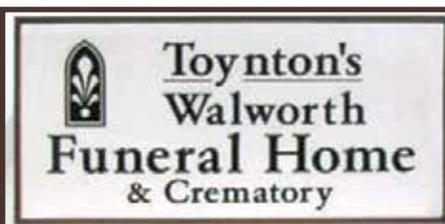
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Tax levy approved at annual meeting

By **Michael S. Hoey**

CORRESPONDENT

The Delavan-Darien School Board approved the tax levy and mill rate for the 2024-25 school year on July 22.

The levy was set at \$18,984,455 with a mill rate of \$666 per \$100,000 of property value.

The levy came in 4.84% higher for 2023-24 but the budget for the coming school years is balanced. The estimated mill rate is assuming that property values will be the same as they were this year.

Business Administrator Anthony Klein said it is very likely that property values have gone up in value, which would result in a lower mill rate.

Klein said the district's projected mill rate is the second lowest in the area behind only Williams Bay, a district with far fewer students. Since the 2020-21 school year, the district's mill rate is projected to have fallen by \$239 per \$100,000 of property value despite there being a \$26 increase per \$100,000 in the state's voucher program.

Klein said the district's fund balance is currently at 19.64% of its projected expenditures for 2024-25. The goal of the district is to get that number up to at least 20%, which is why the district made the commitment in a previous operational referendum to add \$500,000 a year to the fund balance. Accomplishing that goal makes the district less reliant on borrowing. The district's fund balance was under 7% in 2017-18 and has steadily climbed since then.

Klein said school districts often have to take out lines of credit or borrow money to cover operating costs as they wait for state aid. He said the district only had to use its line of credit this past fiscal year for three days at a cost of \$3,000. The board did approve a \$2 million promissory note for cash flow purposes going forward because Klein said the district may need it briefly in August or December. If it is not needed, it won't be used and will cost the district nothing.

Klein outlined some of the

challenges the district faces now and some it will face in future years. Right now, the district pays private schools in Delavan to educate students that could be going to district schools but choose not to because of the voucher program. Klein said the district has no control over that cost or the cost of other students open enrolling out of the district. The district must pay a portion of the education for those students as well.

The district also gets less state aid than other surrounding districts because it is property rich, but it also has a high rate of student poverty and special education needs other districts don't have.

In the future, funding will become tighter because this will be the final year the district has access to federal ESSER COVID-relief funding. Klein said the district is in better shape than many in that it used ESSER funds for one-time projects, not to pay staff. Other districts will now have to find alternate funding for staff hired with ESSER funds.

One discussion that occurred during the public hearing for the budget was a request by resident and former staff member Peggy Fleck for a pie chart breakdown of exactly how referendum money has been spent since the last operational referendum was passed. Fleck said she wanted the information so she and others could better understand and explain to others the need for another operational referendum.

In defense of a potential need to go to referendum again in the future, which has not been voted on or approved at this time, Board Member Dawn Salas said 80-85% of school districts are forced to go to referendum every election cycle. She said the need for another referendum should not be perceived as a sign the district is doing poorly. Resident Andy Terpstra pointed out that under the current state aid system that is designed to keep property taxes down and force districts to ask taxpayers permission to increase the levy, districts should have to



Fancy a puzzle?

Aram Public Library in Delavan held a Jigsaw Puzzle Competition July 20 at the library, with 10 teams fighting to complete the same puzzle first. Above: a team is intent on assembling the puzzle. Upper photo: Aram Public Library Director Michelle Carter (from left), Linda Zell and Thrivent's Joe DeCiccio show off the puzzle used for the competition.

DAVE DRESLOW *The Breeze*

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AUTHOR • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Market!” with the market in the book being Mercado Cuauhtemoc.

“(It’s) almost a replica of the market that I grew up going to,” he explained. “Things you see in the market are things that my family sold.”

When his aunt saw the book, she told him, “It looks like you’ve found a brand-new way to sell our merchandise!”

When the artistic bug bit, it bit hard. Raul said he’s been drawing his entire life, but he didn’t do so seriously until his teenage years.

His ambitions started off as whoever he “could find on the spinner rack at the 7 Eleven,” he explained, meaning comic books.

FINDING HIS STYLE

He explained things changed at the age of 15, when he got a job at Bill’s Coins, Cards, Stamps and Comics.

“I learned a lot about the industry through trade magazines,” Raul explained. It was there he first learned about the San Diego Comic Book Convention, which is held annually in San Diego.

Raul began attending when he was 16.

“I learned I could share my portfolio with professionals there,” he said. “I would catch the bus from El Paso all the way to San Diego, all by myself.

“My dream was that I could drop out of school and just start working professionally.”

Of course, it wasn’t quite that straightforward. Now 48, his first book wasn’t published until 2014 – when his son was 4 years old.

He doesn’t really credit any one major achievement, though – instead pointing to small moments that led up to that first book hitting print, where he illustrated, “Lowriders in Space.”

Since then, his work has continued to evolve. He’s illustrated two more Lowriders books: “Lowriders to the Center of the Earth” and “Lowriders: Blast from the Past.”

Those books are written by Cathy Camper, who he said was the biggest break in his career. “Lowriders to the Center of the Earth” earned him the Pura Belpre Illustrator Winner award for 2017, and he’s had other

TAX LEVY • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

go to referendum to get more funding. That is what the system is designed to do, he said.

Klein said providing specific data about what referendum funds have been used for annually could have a negative effect in that people would take that list negatively and see it as a threatened list of things or staff that will be cut if another referendum does not pass. Others, he said, may look at such a list and think the district is in bad shape when it isn’t and raise concerns about problems that do not yet exist.

Fleck and Terpstra also suggested several other things to the board, like



When Raul the Third visited Delavan, the children’s author made numerous presentations, including to a group of summer school students.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *The Breeze*

illustrator jobs since.

He’s also worked on the “Spongebob Squarepants” comic, and his first “Vamos!” novel through Houghton Mifflin Harcourt led to “Vamos! Let’s Go Eat,” “Tag Team” and “Training Day.”

There are now six books in the Vamos! Series, and Raul has books ranging from children’s “board books” to picture books to early readers and middle-grade readers.

He’s working on his 24th book now.

FAMILY, WORK AND LIFE

Now, Raul works with his wife, Elaine Bay. She serves as the colorist and collaborator.

“It’s a family business,” he said with a laugh.

He’s usually working on a few books at a time, so Raul said it can be difficult to put a timeframe on how long it takes to finish one.

But scripting normally takes about three weeks, and it takes about three months to do the drawings – and then about three months for Bay to color the books.

It’s not a full six months, though, because Bay starts coloring the pages “as soon as I’m done with them,” Raul explained.

His books are unique because they give him a chance to work in both the English and Spanish language.

“For me, there was no way I could make

a book in the world where I’m drawing without both Spanish and English, growing up in a border town,” he said.

“It just makes sense for me to write both in English and Spanish – and sometimes in Spanglish, when I was writing my characters,” he added.

His mother saved his reading logs from when he was a child. Raul now recognizes that most books are either windows – looks into other cultures – or mirrors, which reflected his own experience.

“I wanted to create books that my mom and dad could look at and be reminded of specific things in their lives,” he said. “My parents didn’t read books to me. They didn’t sit me in their lap and read books to me, and I often feel that maybe the books they saw didn’t really attract them in any way.

“I wanted to make it so a parent or a grandparent could read a Vamos! book to their child or their grandchild and immediately be reminded of things in their life,” he said.

Those books, Raul said, will make it possible for children of all ages, races and ethnicities to participate in one of America’s strengths – its public libraries.

“You can be anywhere in the country and enter your library and go into the children’s room and check out a gigantic stack of books,” he said.

POLICE CHIEF

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

staff have been great to work with most of the time. While there are always challenges working with multiple people, Clark said the current board, staff, and department heads all work very well together and share a common goal for a better community.

Moving forward, Clark said the growth in technology, especially artificial intelligence, presents new problems for the department to address. He said people will use this technology to find more inventive ways to commit crimes and law enforcement will need to adapt to combat that.

An even bigger issue facing all law enforcement departments, Clark said, is attracting and hiring quality candidates.

Clark said his role in selecting the next chief will be advisory. The Police and Fire Commission makes the selection and the Town Board sets the contract. Clark said he will be there to assist in both of those processes if needed with his opinions and advice, but he will not actively participate in selecting the next chief.

Clark will, however, help with the transition to a new chief. He said he has a comprehensive list of duties and responsibilities for the position that the new chief can use as a reference guide and he has informed the Board that he is willing to assist with any training or transitioning needed for the new chief. He said he will always be available to answer questions even after he leaves.

“Over my career, this community has been my home and this department my family,” he said. “I still plan on living in and being active in our community.”

Clark currently teaches part-time at the Gateway Technical College Law Enforcement Academy. He plans to take a short time off after he retires and then return to teaching there. His biggest retirement goal is to spend time with family and travel with his wife.

“Working for the Town of Delavan has been more than just a job for me, it has been a prestigious career, an exciting journey, and, most importantly, a home for my family and myself,” Clark said. “My time at the Town of Delavan has shaped me both personally and professionally and has allowed me to become the person I am today.”

Clark said he is eternally grateful for that and he will always cherish his time here.

“Over the past 33 years, I have had the privilege to work with some of the most dedicated men and women in law enforcement and have learned something from each and every officer I have worked with,” he added. “I have chosen to leave for no other reason than it is time for the next chapter of my life.”

Clark said that he is leaving the community in the capable hands of one of the most professional and respected police departments in Walworth County.

recording how many people were in attendance at the Annual Meeting. Other than school administration and staff, there were six residents in attendance on this night. The district could, they said, do more to advertise the Annual Meeting, live stream all meetings, allow people to sign up to receive meeting agendas directly before meetings, and hot-link agenda items so people can see what is being discussed.

In a special meeting that followed the budget hearing and Annual Meeting, the board approved a plan for a budget surplus of almost \$300,000. The surplus resulted from several positions not getting filled

during the 2023-24 school year. The district did not have to pay salary and benefits that had been budgeted for and saved money.

The Board voted to put the surplus into the Fund Balance, which is how the Fund Balance got to 19.64% of the expected 2024-25 expenditures. The Board also approved a plan for about \$200,000 of other funds it had previously approved spending. About \$100,000 was allocated for debt and another \$100,000 was allocated for the capital improvement fund for projects like maintaining Borg Stadium’s artificial turf or saving toward the cost of a new swimming pool.



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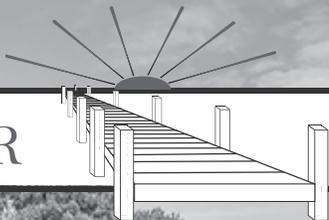
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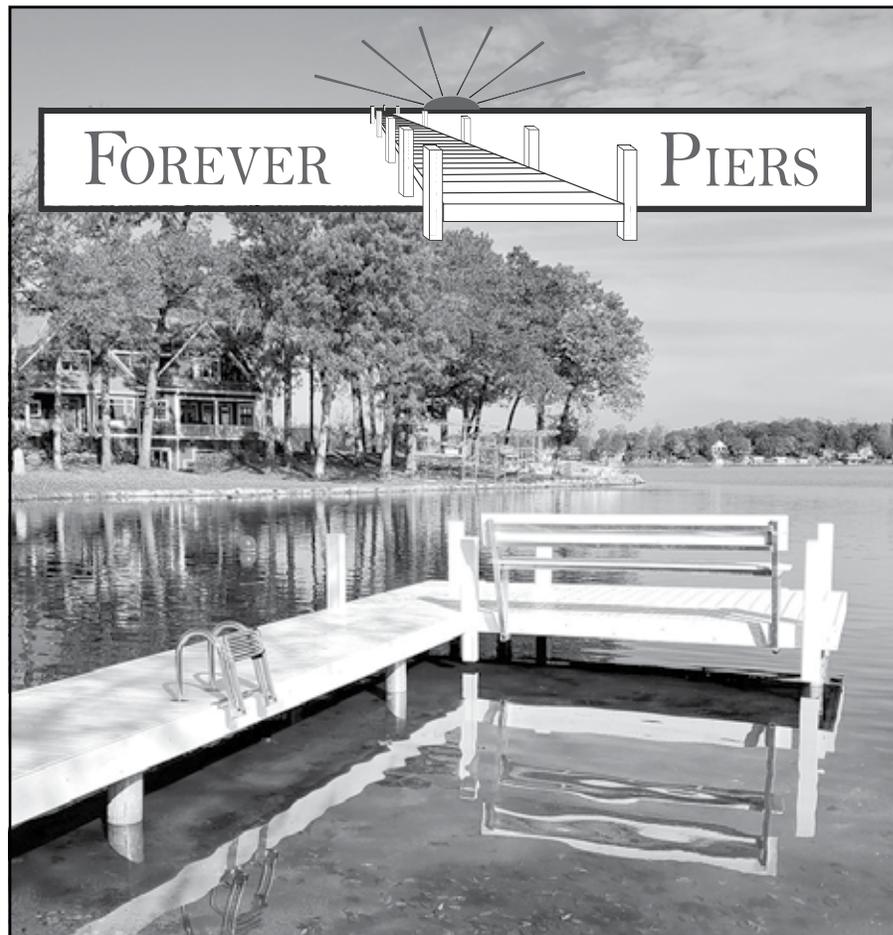
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Couple hospitalized after being driven off roadway

An arraignment was scheduled Aug. 6 for a Beloit man accused of reckless driving that resulted in a couple being hospitalized.

Gavin J. Hernandez, 18, is charged with first-degree recklessly endangering safety, a Class F felony; hit and run and possession of THC.

According to the criminal complaint, Walworth County Sheriff's deputies were called to County Trunk A in the Town of Richmond on June 20 at 8:06 a.m. for a report of a hit-and-run rollover crash with injuries. Callers stated a Chevy Tahoe left the scene.

When a deputy arrived, the Tahoe was about 450 yards from the crash scene and had significant front-end damage. A Honda CRV was flipped onto its roof after what appeared that it struck a culvert, then electrical pole, and breaking the pole.

Witnesses reported that the Honda CRV was traveling eastbound before striking the pole, and the Tahoe continued eastbound past the crash at a high rate of speed, between 60 and 90 miles per hour, in the 40-mph zone.

Two people inside the Honda were transported to the hospital with injuries.

Deputies located open intoxicants inside the Tahoe and a THC vape cartridge.

Hernandez was arrested and taken to jail from the scene. During the transport, Hernandez said he continued past the scene because he wanted to see if his vehicle still worked.

One witness reported that before the crash, Hernandez was driving more than 90 miles per hour, swerving, and passing other cars. The witness further stated that Hernandez rear-ended the Honda, which rolled and landed on the utility pole. The witness added that Hernandez walked back to the scene after his car broke down and, based on the noises coming from the vehicle, believes Hernandez was attempting to flee before his car broke down.

Another witness stated she was driving westbound on County Trunk A when it appeared Hernandez was attempting to pass the Honda and she feared that his Tahoe would strike her vehicle head on. Instead, the Tahoe quickly jerked back into its lane and continued at the high speed before rear-ending the Honda.

A third witness admitted she was speeding at about 72 mph when the Tahoe passed her. She estimates it was going more than 100 miles per hour.

If convicted, Hernandez faces up to 13 years in prison and \$13,000 in fines.



Gavin J. Hernandez

Woman reports man assaulted her for three years as a child

An adjourned initial appearance was scheduled July 11 in Walworth County Circuit Court for a Delavan man accused of sexually assaulting a child nearly two decades ago.

The man is charged with three counts of second-degree sexual assault of a child younger than 16. Each of the Class C felonies is punishable by up to 40 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine. He is not being named in order to protect the victim.

According to the criminal complaint, on June 24, a woman came into the Delavan Police Department to report that she had been sexually assaulted by the man multiple times between 2002 and 2005 in his Delavan home, when she was between the ages of 12 and 15.

She said the sexual abuse

would start when the man was drunk, frustrated, and lonely and would ask her to "help me out," by performing a sex act. The abuse happened on 15 to 25 different occasions, and he would sometimes have pornography playing.

The man would tell her that it was normal and "OK" to do the sexual acts and that she would comply if she "loved him."

She said that following one occasion of abuse, she vowed to herself that the man would never do this again to her.

The last time he attempted abuse, was during a camping trip when she was 15 and he asked her to "help him out." She refused and it was the last time he ever tried to do anything sexual with her again.

She said she "suffered and still suffers" from major

depression because of the abuse, and struggles severely with daily fatigue, apathy, lack of motivation, anger, and denial. She said that due to the abuse, she has merely "existed" in life.

On June 25, a Delavan police officer went to the man's house where he asked if him knew the reason for his visit.

"I have been accused of some pretty horrendous things ... improprieties with (the victim) years ago," the man said.

After responding to a few follow-up questions, the man stopped speaking to the officer and said he "should probably talk to an attorney."

When the man appeared in court for a bond hearing June 26, Judge Kristine E. Drettwan set his bond at \$20,000 and ordered him not to have contact with the woman.

Traffic stop ends in Rock County crash

Driver intoxicated, also found to be carrying drugs

On June 30, a Walworth County Sheriff's Office second shift patrol K9 deputy was operating with a fellow officer as a two-deputy patrol unit. They conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle with Illinois registration for Unlawful Side Window Tint and No Front License Plate.

Initially, the driver pulled over and provided the deputies with his Illinois driver's license. The driver was identified as Jerry Hamilton, of Milwaukee. While the deputies were interacting with Hamilton, who was the sole occupant of the vehicle, they could smell the odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle.

When they ordered Hamilton to exit the vehicle so they could further investigate, he shifted the vehicle into drive and fled the scene of the stop. As he fled, his vehicle struck the arm of one of the deputies. This caused the deputy pain but did not prevent them from returning to their squad car to participate in pursuing the suspect's vehicle.

The initial stopping deputies and other law enforcement officers pursued Hamilton south on I-43 into Rock County. During the pursuit, the suspect

vehicle consistently traveled at approximately 110 mph.

In Rock County, at around mile marker 4, a Wisconsin State Patrol Trooper attempted to deploy stop sticks to deflate the suspect's tires. Hamilton swerved his car as he approached the location of the trooper. This caused him to lose control of the vehicle and crash through the median barrier.

Hamilton was quickly taken into custody at the scene after the crash, and first aid was initiated. His vehicle was traveling at about 110 mph at the time of the crash. Clinton Fire and EMS were summoned to the scene to provide aid to Hamilton following the crash. Found in the vehicle with him was approximately one half-pound of marijuana in separate packages for distribution, 20 grams of cocaine and crack cocaine, and other THC ingestion products such as gummies and a vape device.

The Walworth County Sheriff's Office is referring charges to the Walworth County District Attorney's Office against Hamilton for:

- Vehicle Operator Fleeing/Eluding a Traffic Officer, 346.04(3)

- Operating While Intoxicated – 1st Offense, 346.63(1)(a)
- Battery to Public Officers, 940.20(4)
- First Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety, 941.30(1)
- Resisting or Obstructing an Officer, 946.41(1)
- Possession with Intent to Deliver Cocaine, 961.41(1m)(cm)
- Possession with Intent to Deliver THC, 961.41(1m)(h)

Additionally, Hamilton was issued 16 other traffic citations. Hamilton was confined at the Walworth County Jail on the night of the incident and was subsequently issued a \$15,000 cash bond in Walworth County Circuit Court.

Assisting agencies on this call included the City of Delavan Police Department, Wisconsin State Patrol, Rock County Sheriff's Office, and the Clinton Fire Protection District.

Pursuant to the directive of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, as found in Supreme Court Rule 20:3.6, Trial Publicity, you are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

SENTENCED • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

deer but rather, consistent with striking a pedestrian.

Brown was previously convicted in Walworth County for multiple charges relating to a hit and run, including failure to notify law enforcement of a crash, on or about April 29, 2018. In that case, Brown was involved in a single-vehicle rollover crash, leaving the crash scene, and walking to a

relative's house.

Conditions of Brown's supervision, once released, include mandatory five-year driver's license revocation, not to consume or possess alcohol or drugs; not to enter any bars, taverns or liquor stores, and no contact with the victim's family, among other conditions. He was also ordered to pay \$15,947.63 in restitution.

re-accredited every five years to maintain this designation.

“By reattaining its Path Intl. Premier Accredited Center status, Smiles has demonstrated a commitment to the highest standards when introducing individuals with special needs to a variety of equine-assisted services,” said Path Intl. Chief Executive Officer Kathy Alm. “Path Intl. Accreditation is a respected benchmark in the EAS industry. It demonstrates leadership and a commitment to safety and to the highest professional standards.”

For those that have not been to the business, stop in for a visit as the team loves to show visitors around. Those that are already familiar with Smiles, can also stop in and say hello. They are located at N2666 County Road K, Darien, and they have wonderful volunteer opportunities for community members.

For more information, please contact Executive Director, Troy Moldenhauer,

smiles@smilestherapeuticriding.org, or visit their website online at smilestherapeuticriding.org.

For more information about the Path Intl. Premier Accreditation process visit: pathintl.org/accreditation/.

The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International was formed in 1969 to promote safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted services (EAS) for individuals with special needs and others. At 794 member centers, more than 46,600 children and adults, including 5,200 veterans, may find improved health, wellness and a sense of pride, independence and fun through involvement with horses. Member centers offer therapeutic horsemanship including riding, driving, interactive vaulting, groundwork and stable management; physical, speech and occupational therapies; mental health services incorporating equines; and coaching and learning programs, among other services.

There are nearly 40,000 volunteers, 4,863 Path Intl. certified professionals, 5,250 equines, and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at Path Intl. Member Centers achieve their health, wellness and learning goals. Through a wide variety of educational resources and certification programs, the association helps individuals start and maintain successful EAS programs. Path Intl. offers the first and only independently accredited certification program in the EAS industry. The Path Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor certification, first accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies in 2022, demonstrates the competency of therapeutic riding instructors and adds credibility to the EAS industry as a career path.

PROPERTIES

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

second allows Shodeen to relocate the planned pavilion, clubhouse and recreational path to a new location. The amended developer's agreement simply adds those changes.

Town to sell lease to cell tower land

The board agreed to sell a 40-year easement to the property on which a U.S. Cellular tower is currently on to AIO, LLC, for \$304,000. U.S. Cellular was paying the town \$18,000 per year, but Knipper said a potential merger with T-Mobile could mean the tower will no longer be in use.

If that happens, the town would be stuck with a tower that is not generating any income for the town.

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