

# Lake Country

THIS MONTH

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## Stay active in winter at Lapham Peak

State park offers trails for skiing, hiking, biking and horse riding

By Chris Bennett  
Special to The Freeman

TOWN OF DELAFIELD — The easiest way to discuss winter fun at Lapham Peak might be to talk about what you can't do, because there is plenty one can do.

There is no devoted sledging hill. But there are miles of trails for cross country skiing, hiking, riding horses and more.

Lapham Peak — known officially as the Lapham Peak Unit in the Kettle Moraine State Forest, and located in the Town of Delafield — might best be known for viewing fall panorama from its lookout tower and the SummerStage series that takes place each summer.

"We see more activity at Lapham Peak than is present in most Wisconsin state parks in the winter months," said Anne Riendl, chairwoman of the Lapham Peak Snowmaking Committee. "Most parks dial down in the winter. I would say we don't."

Lapham Peak is a Wisconsin state park. It is open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., year-round. A state park vehicle admission sticker is required for admission.

Lapham Peak's parks observation tower is the highest point in Waukesha County. Lapham Peak is named for Increase A. Lapham, who is considered one of Wisconsin's first scientists and helped form the National Weather Service.



Skiers take to the trails on New Year's Day in the Lapham Peak Unit in the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Photo courtesy of Thomas Davenport

The park that now bears Increase's surname is home to some of the best Nordic skiing — cross-country skiing — in the area. Riendl said there are three interconnecting loops that form the cross-country skiing trail system.

The Friends of Lapham Peak organization makes snow for and grooms the trails. Riendl said cross-country ski trails were previously available through a ski club that used space at a hill at the intersection of Highway 83 and Interstate 94.

The facility closed in 1989, and donated the lights for their course to the Friends of Lapham Peak, for use in the state park.

"The Friends of Lapham

Peak's first project was to get the lights up for skiing," Riendl said. "There's been a strong skier community that was nurtured back then, and has continued to grow."

Riendl trained as a physical therapist and then attended medical school and worked as an obstetrician/gynecologist, and said cross-country skiing is one of the best workouts for the body.

Lessons are available on-site — some are free, and some come with a charge. Ski rental is also available.

The Lapham Peak candlelight ski is coming up on Jan. 27. Riendl said plastic milk jugs with candles mounted in sand are placed on the cross-country ski

courses.

Another cross-country skiing event this winter at Lapham Peak is the Loppet Ski Race. It's a day-long race for skiers of all ages. More information is available at the Web page of the Friends of Lapham Peak snowmaking project — [www.laphampeaksnowmaking.org](http://www.laphampeaksnowmaking.org).

Riendl said the Loppet started in 2005, and is a fundraiser for the Friends of Lapham organization that draws skiers from throughout southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Riendl said horses and bikes also share the same trails. Horses are allowed on the trails on the west side of Highway C year-

round. Every Thursday night is "Fat Bike Night," which is when bicycles with snow tires take over the same trails. Riendl said almost 60 people show-up each Thursday for cycling.

The best testament to Lapham Peak is the number of people who use — skiers, hikers, cyclists and more — not just in the summer, but year-round. Riendl said the space offers something all of us desperately need.

"I think it's an area that's presented in a way that you can still feel regenerated after you spend some time there," Riendl said. "We spend so much time indoors now — we crave and treasure the opportunity to be outside with nature. It's really a healing thing."

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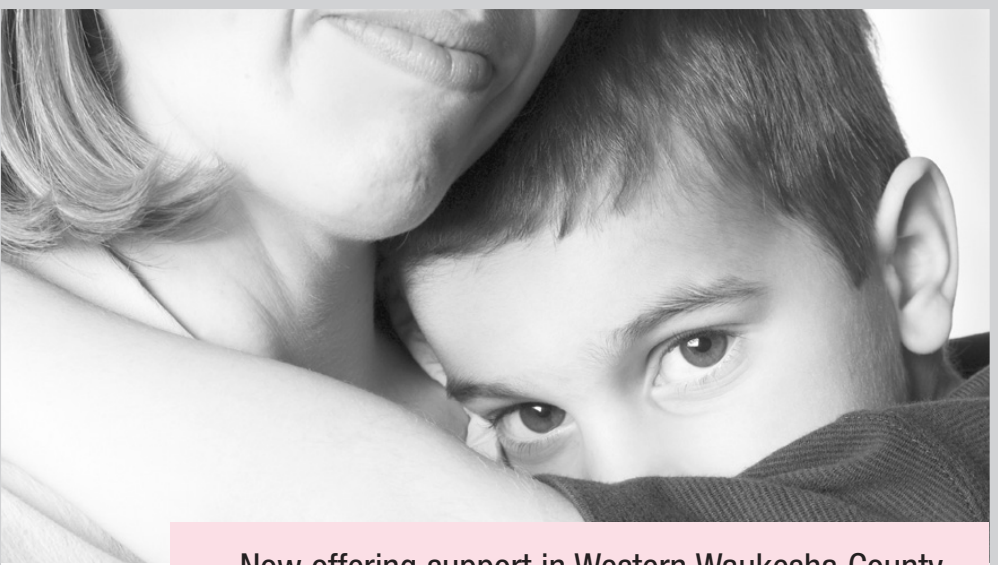
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# Culver's has the inside scoop on helping others

Restaurant provides real-life experience for employees with special needs

By Rebecca Seymour  
Special to the Enterprise

OCONOMOWOC — Customers of Culver's of Oconomowoc already know about the restaurant's farm-fresh ButterBurgers and creamy frozen custard. Behind every mouthwatering bite, however, is a heartwarming recipe for how this community-minded business is helping to make a difference in the lives of others.

Owned by Mike and Tammy Derynda of Oconomowoc, the restaurant is well-known for assisting local charitable organizations with fundraising efforts, hosting food drives for the Oconomowoc Food Pantry, and partnering with community blood drives by providing free custard to donors through the "Give a Pint, Get a Pint" campaign.

Behind the counter, the Culver's team members also demonstrate their "True Blue Crew" spirit in how they support and inspire each other.

For several years, young adults with special needs have had the opportunity to gain real-life skills, as well as employment at Culver's. The current team members include Lauren Morrissey, Emily Donner, Emma Imperl, Nick Bach, Tyler Warren and Robert Carter.

Tim Czaplowski is the general manager and has been working at Culver's of Oconomowoc for 19 years.

"The young adults with special needs who work here are an integral part of our team. They're always trying to do better at their job and

they're also laughing and having fun," he explained. "Every day they remind me that life is a gift that should never be taken for granted."

Lauren Morrissey of Ashippun has been part of the Culver's team for four years. The 25-year-old is also involved with the Special Olympics through the YMCA at Pabst of Farms and volunteers her time making chocolate chip cookies at the Aurora Medical Center in Summit.

"I help make custard, deliver food to customers, count money and I butter the buns," said Lauren with a big smile. "I like working here. I really like working with the guys in the back. Mr. Tim likes giving me high fives!"

"I'm very grateful for what Tim and the Culver's team have done for my daughter. It's a testimony to their support and commitment to this community," said Lauren's dad, Doug.

Emma Imperl and Nick Bach often work with Lauren during the busy lunchtime shift. "I like to see my friends at work. It's so much fun," said Emma, hugging Lauren during a short break.

"I love making twisty vanilla and chocolate cones the best," added Nick, laughing.

## Learning real-life skills

Culver's of Oconomowoc also offers students, ages 18-21 enrolled in the Oconomowoc High School Transition Program, opportunities to learn workplace skills.

Presently, there are four students, Steven Conny,



Rebecca Seymour/Special to The Freeman

Culver's of Oconomowoc team member Nick Bach works the register while his "True Blue Crew" teammates, Emma Imperl, left, and Lauren Morrissey help with food orders.

Michael Fisher, Nick Ehrhaardt and Brady Diderich, who work two to three hours each week, alongside a paraprofessional job coach at Culver's.

"It is a great partnership. The opportunity gives students a purpose beyond school and also opens the door to a possible future job. They gain knowledge in vocational tasks, communication and social skills, and employers and community members get to see the potential all people possess doing meaningful work," said Kristi Staus, special education teacher and learning strategist for the transition program. "Experiences like these make me feel very proud of the students and our community."

For more information about the program, email Staus at stausk@oasd.org.



Rebecca Seymour/Special to The Freeman

Lauren Morrissey, left, and Emma Imperl have fun during their recent lunchtime shift at Culver's of Oconomowoc.



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# Developments augur well for ice fishing

Technology making it easier for more to enjoy hobby

By Chris Bennett  
Special to The Freeman

DELAFIELD — One of Wisconsin's coldest winter activities is also becoming one of its coolest.

Advances in cold-weather gear and accessibility are helping make ice fishing increasingly popular, especially among women and children.

"It's something to do in the winter," said Mike Smith. Mike and his sister, Becky, run Dick Smith's Live Bait in Delafield. "For one thing, unlike boat fishing, you can go in large groups. And the fish taste really good coming right out of the water."

Mike and Becky's father, Dick, founded Dick Smith's Live Bait 35 years ago. It was located in the "Smiley Face" barn along Interstate 94 in Delafield. The barn has since been painted, and is now home to The Montage — Amish Furniture and Home Accessories, along with the bait shop.

"It's the excitement of the flag going up, and the

fish hitting your jog rod — it really is an addiction," Mike Smith said of ice fishing. "Actually, ice fishing — I don't know the statistics — but it seems to be a growing sport in the Midwest, just by the number of people participating over the last five to 10 years."

Smith said if there is consistent, good ice on any of the 35 lakes that are within a 15-mile radius of the store business in the winter will rival or surpass business in the summer.

## Staying safe, getting started

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in a graphic on its website, reminds everyone that no ice is ever 100 percent safe.

Look for a minimum thickness of 4 inches for ice fishing. At 5 to 7 inches, the ice is likely safe for a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle. At 8 to 12 inches cars and small pickups are safe, and medium pickups can go on the ice at 12 to 15 inches.

You might be able to get started in ice fishing for less than \$100. Smith said the shop sells an assortment of augers, which are used for boring a hole in the ice. A power drill with a large, circular bit can also be used, but Smith said one needs a really strong drill



Submitted photo  
Wes Systma holds a 32-inch northern pike that was caught in a Waukesha County lake during winter.

for such a task.

You can purchase a few tip-ups. Tip-ups sit above the ice, and hold a line and bait suspended in the water. Tip-ups are spring-loaded. When the fish bites and applies enough pres-

sure, the flag pops up and you — with luck — caught a fish.

You'll also want some jig rods, some jigs — a type of fishing lure — and a skimmer. A skimmer removes the ice from the hole as it

slowly freezes over. All of these items can be purchased at Dick Smith's.

You'll also want to be sure you can stay warm while on the ice. Due to the advances in cold-weather clothing, Smith said, there are probably twice as many who now fish in single-digit temperatures, compared to 10 or 15 years ago.

"The advances in the clothing and the ice shelters, and augers and heaters, have really helped guys get out in (cold) weather," Smith said. "I was out with a buddy on Nagawicka Lake, it was 8 below and I was out in the elements, and I was not cold, outside from my hands."

Smith said not to forget safety, which is the most commonly overlooked aspect of ice fishing.

"People are on Pewaukee Lake with their vehicles already," Smith said. "Make sure you're not going where no one else is going, unless you really know the lake."

Smith advocates for the use of safety picks, which are devices to be used in the event one falls through the ice, and also encouraged fishing with a friend.

Dick Smith's Live Bait and Tackle is online at <https://www.dicksmiths.livebait.com>.

# John Mielke leaves lasting legacy in county

Co-founder of Ruekert & Mielke had impact on county's growth

By Dave Fidlin  
Special to The Freeman

CITY OF PEWAUKEE — Most of his work took place behind the public eye, but many of John Mielke's accomplishments are readily recognizable.

As the co-founder of Ruekert & Mielke, a venerable, 72-year-old engineering firm, Mielke played a role in establishing a number of municipalities across Waukesha County. He also was credited with using state-of-the-art technology to help develop Brookfield Square in the 1960s.

But Mielke, who died Jan.

1 at age 99, has local roots that stretch back much further. He was born in Waukesha, graduated from Waukesha High School and, briefly, worked for the city of Waukesha. His accomplishments at City Hall included overseeing a board that developed the municipal building code.

In 1946, after serving in the U.S. Army, Mielke and business partner Frank Ruekert developed their namesake engineering firm, which was initially housed in a two-room upstairs space at 203 N. Grand Ave. in Waukesha.

Today, the company is

housed in an office complex in the City of Pewaukee.

"He was my mentor and my trainer," said Mielke's son, William Mielke, the company's board chairman, president and CEO. "He was very ethical and set a very high bar for his profession. I had very big shoes to fill."

William Mielke said he was inspired by his father's work ethic from a young age.

"He was a great father," he said. "His influence helped drive me, and it helped make me a better, more successful engineer."

With their engineering prowess, Mielke and Ruekert played a pivotal part in developing a number of Waukesha County communities. They developed the

infrastructure needed to complement the incorporations of the cities of Brookfield, Muskego, New Berlin and Pewaukee and the village of Oconomowoc Lake.

"He developed all of these as cities and a village when they were just towns, mostly with farms," William Mielke said. "He has played an important part in Waukesha County's history."

As a Feb. 22, 1957 article from The Freeman's archives attests, Mielke's interest in engineering began at Waukesha High School. In the article, Mielke said the village of Pewaukee gave his then-infant firm "a really big break" when the municipality hired him and Ruek-

ert to design a sewage treatment plant in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The article stated Ruekert & Mielke employed eight engineers as it surpassed its decade anniversary. Today, William Mielke said the company's team of engineers is around 100 professionals.

While much of the company's legacy is traced to the growth of area municipalities, Ruekert-Mielke's stamp is also on an assortment of private developments across the county.

Mielke and his late wife, Lois, had four children: Linda Melham (John), William (Barbara), Cherry Finck (Doug) and Jill May (Ron). They further had eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.



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**Lake Country**  
THIS MONTH



# Opening nears for Two Brothers Wines in Richfield

Business moving from Pewaukee to new home in Washington County

By Joe VanDeLaarschot  
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262-306-5054

RICHFIELD — The three owners of Two Brothers Wines hope to have their business moved into a new location in the village in January with a grand opening possibly around Feb. 1.

The company, which is owned by twin brothers Joe and Henry Gutmann and Peter Laundre, has been making wine for nearly 20 years and has operated from a Pewaukee location for about 10 years.

“The business has been going so well and we are having such success that we have simply run out of room at the Pewaukee location and the space in Richfield will be twice as large as what we have now. We will be able to produce more wine,” Laundre said.

The trio has been working since September to renovate one-half of the Richfield Post Office building along Highway 175 in the village’s downtown to become the business’s new home.

“On average we bottle 11,000 bottles of wine annually (less than 25,000 gallons) and have distributorships all over the state,” the Gutmanns said. “We produce several fruit wines as well as red and white wines each year.”

The artistic talents of the twin brothers are showcased at the business. Joe’s sculptures and glass work along with work from various other Wisconsin artists is featured at their Pewaukee store and will be on display and for sale at the new Richfield location. Henry’s winemaking, which started with the desire to make a wine that would pair well with Wisconsin’s wild game, has evolved into a wide assortment of grape and fruit wines. Each bottle is produced by hand inside Two Brothers Wines. They harvest their own fruit and



John Ehlike/Conley News Service

Owners Henry Gutmann, center, and Peter Laundre work on cutting wood to be used as a base board in one of the rooms at the future site of Two Brothers' Wine in Richfield. The business moving from Pewaukee is expected to open in January.

## Loving art and wine

According to the business’s website, Joe, the elder twin, from an early age had a great love of art depicting nature and wildlife. His first venture started with stained glass, making leaded glass pieces large and small. He then turned his interest to metal work, working with copper and steel. He eventually opened an art gallery in West Bend featuring his work and that of other artists whose works include the nature and wildlife that he loves. He and Henry together formulated the idea of a winery and art gallery.

Henry began making wines as a hobby in his basement in the early '90s. His interest in local ingredients and sharing his wines became so popular that Two Brothers Wines was created to share his passion.

Laundre is a good friend of the brothers and his

involvement, he said while laughing, began “as a wine taster.”

“I was a neighbor and friend so that’s where my involvement began. Now I’m a partner,” Laundre said. Laundre, a descendant of French Canadian and Belgian ancestry, grew up on a dairy farm outside of Green Bay. His first experience with wine at 10, was of his father creating his own wild grape brew. According to the business’s website, “Peter and Henry have been long-time neighbors, winners, pisches, mustache wearers, and military men.”

“We’ve had to build a tasting room, a bar area and of course the area for making the wine and for the art to be displayed,” Laundre said. “Once we open here we’ll close down the location in Pewaukee, which we had been leasing. There will be a lot of equipment that will have to be moved here from there.”

The business is currently going through the process to obtain a Class B wine and beer license from the village.

# ‘Pretty wild:’ Hartland has most trustee candidates in decades

8 running for 3 seats, including former village president

By Hannah Weikel  
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HARTLAND — In the small, lake-ringed village of Hartland, it’s not uncommon for years, even decades, to pass with Village Board incumbents running unopposed in almost every spring election. This year, new candidates have obliterated that norm — out in force with hopes to claim the three open trustee seats.

Eight candidates will be on the ballot this spring: all three incumbents, former Village President David Lamerand, two past unsuccessful candidates and two new faces. They will compete for the openings in a Feb. 20 primary election. When reached by The Freeman, several said they were energized by last year’s election of a new village president who beat a 26-year incumbent.

“The village is looking for change,” said candidate Diane Vernon, who has run twice in the past several years. “The first time I ran, the whole board had been unopposed for many years.”

Vernon said Hartland politicians “cling to their seats” and that’s triggered residents to push out the old and bring in the new.

“We need new people, we need younger people,” she said. “Our village is growing. We need to keep up with the times and the Village Board doesn’t do that.”

Incumbent Mike Meyers couldn’t say for certain how long he’s been on the board. “About 15 years,” he said, adding he’s excited about the opposition this year. “People

are starting to get involved. Maybe it’s because of the news, maybe it’s because of the economy, maybe it’s something that happened. I wish I knew.”

Incumbent Rick Stevens, who says he’s been on the board somewhere between 12 and 14 years, believes there’s an unprecedented interest in this race because former village president Lamerand is also running.

“A lot of them are running to keep a certain person out,” he said, adding, “I feel that with the new president we are going in the right direction.”

Vernon had a similar take on this year’s race.

“The grumblings around Hartland is that it’s odd that (Lamerand) is running after he was beat out for his spot last year,” she said.

When asked about such comments, Lamerand told The Freeman: “It’s news to me.

“I’m not aware of any issue. I don’t know where this is coming from.

“No one knew I was running until I turned in my papers ... I have a feeling it’s aimed at the other three incumbents on the board,” Lamerand added. “I didn’t talk to anybody about my running. I kept a pretty low profile.”

Lamerand said there was a death in his immediate family right before last year’s election and due to his focus on other things and low voter turnout, Pfannerstill was elected instead.

Pfannerstill said that before last year, “no one could remember the last time someone ran against the president.”

“There was a pretty big election last year with a 26-year incumbent unseated by me,” Pfannerstill said. “I think my winning let people in Hartland know it wasn’t just an old boys’ club ... if you want to run and have a say in local government you can.”

He said immediately after his win in 2017, residents started calling to tell him they would run in the next election. He said the number of candidates for Village Board this year is “pretty wild” because Hartland residents have been afraid to get involved in local politics for many years.

“There’s a lot of people in Hartland who wanted to see it going in a different direction. I’m excited to see that so many people want to get involved and now Hartland can decide for themselves who they want to serve on the Village Board,” Pfannerstill said.

Dave Pride, who ran against trustee incumbents last year, said people in Hartland are interested in issues like village debt and high water rates.

Still, Lamerand and incumbent Karen Compton said there aren’t any major issues right now in Hartland and the number of candidates is likely a fluke.

“Usually when you get an influx (of candidates) it’s because of a particular issue,” Lamerand said. “Financially we’re well set and the tax base has been growing.”

“There’s no burning issue in front of us,” Compton said. “But I’ve run without competition for many, many years and it’s refreshing to have so much competition.”

Candidates Donna Doran and Jeffrey Anson did not return a request for comment.

## County Board Chairman Decker facing challenger

WAUKESHA — For the first time in his nine years on the Waukesha County Board, Chairman Paul Decker is facing a challenger for this 13th District seat: John Stellmacher, 35, of Nashotah.

Stellmacher made a suc-

cessful bid for a Whitewater-area Assembly seat when he was in college in 2005.

Stellmacher, a chief financial officer for the School District of Hartford, said he is eager to run for local office so he can help ensure the core priorities of the

county are sustainable.

Decker, 65, who has been county board chairman for six years, said that he has tried to “serve all constituents in a matter that will create the best possible outcome, while doing the greatest good.”

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# Municipal taxes on rise around Lake Country

Many hikes below the rate of inflation

By Kelly Smith  
Special to The Freeman

DELAFIELD — Barely half of the 20 Lake Country municipalities have been able to keep their 2018 real estate tax levies below the 2.2 per cent rate of inflation or at comparable level with 2017 taxes.

The communities with levy increases below 2.2 percent are the city of Delafield and the villages of Chenequa, Dousman, North Prairie, Pewaukee, and the towns of Delafield, Genesee, Merton and Ottawa.

The communities with increases of more than 2.2 percent include the cities of Oconomowoc and Pewaukee, the villages of Hartland, Lac La Belle, Merton, Lannon, Pewaukee, Summit, Sussex and the towns of Lisbon and Oconomowoc.

The rate of inflation is a valid benchmark for comparing tax levies from one year to the next, said Dale J. Knapp, research director for the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance.

The current rate of inflation is 2.2 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Municipal tax rates are a small portion of an individual tax bills compared to school districts, which compromise the largest portion of the overall tax rate.

### Wide range

Overall rates in Lake Country range from a low of \$9.15 per 1,000 assessed valuation in the Lake Country School district within the Town of Delafield to \$17.98 per \$1,000 in Dousman.

State law limits how much municipalities can annually raise their levies based on the value of new construction in the com-

## 2018 Municipal Tax Levies and Rates

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	ASSESSED VALUATION	BUDGET	LEVY	RATE	ALL RATES
City of Delafield	7,141	\$1.4 billion	\$13.2 (D 4.7%)	\$600,000 (E)	\$4.35 (E)	\$12.17-\$15.19
City of Oconomowoc	16,800	\$1.9 billion	\$64.5 (E)	\$10.8 (U 2.9%)	\$5.50 (E)	\$16.23-\$16.33
City of Pewaukee	14,332	\$2.8 billion	\$25.7 (U 3%)	\$9 (U 5%)	\$3.19 (U 3%)	\$14.27-\$16.60
Village of Chenequa	589	\$471 million	\$2.4 (E)	\$1.9 (D 6.5%)	\$4.09 (D 8.8%)	\$13.74-\$16.56
Village of Dousman	2,320	\$181.6 million	\$1.9 (E)	\$1.2 (E)	\$6.70 (E)	\$17.98
Village of Hartland	9,197	\$1.2 billion	\$16.2 (U 8.7%)	\$5.8 (U 6.2%)	\$4.78 (U 4%)	\$12.79-\$15.79
Village of Lac La Belle	285	\$112 million	\$542,000 (U 7.9%)	\$542,000 (U 7.9%)	\$4.86 (U 7%)	\$15.22
Village of Merton	3,567	\$412.5 million	\$1.8 (E)	\$1.3 (U 4%)	\$3.21 (E)	\$13.05-\$14.84
Village of Nashotah	1,349	\$175 million	\$1.1 (E)	\$722,753 (E)	\$4.13 (E)	\$13.17
Village of North Prairie	2,175	\$205 million	\$1.1 (U 3.7%)	\$843,243 (E)	\$3.92 (E)	\$14.28-\$16.25
Village of Oconomowoc Lake	591	\$347.1 million	\$1.6 (E)	\$1.4 (U 4.4%)	\$4.20 (E)	\$14.76
Village of Pewaukee	7,970	\$970.7 million	\$6.6 (U 4.8%)	\$4.9 (E)	\$5.12 (D 6.8%)	\$15.55
Village of Summit	4,757	\$941.1 million	\$3.5 (E)	\$2.5 (U 17.4%)	\$2.73 (U 17.4%)	\$14.05-\$15.17
Village of Sussex	11,047	\$1.3 billion	\$30.3 (U 29%)	\$7.5 (U 5.4%)	\$5.65 (E)	\$15.09
Village of Wales	2,544	\$368.3 million	\$3.1 (U 33%)	\$1.3 (U 3.1%)	\$3.70 (E)	\$15.17
Town of Delafield	8,311	\$1.5 billion	\$3.8 (E)	\$2 (E)	\$1.31 (E)	\$9.15-\$12.14
Town of Genesee	7,348	\$933 million	\$2.5 (D 2.2%)	\$1.8 (E)	\$1.94 (E)	\$11.33-\$13.27
Town of Merton	8,383	\$1.4 billion	\$5.2 (E)	\$2.8 (E)	\$1.98 (E)	\$10.02-\$13.74
Town of Oconomowoc	8,300	\$1.5 billion	\$5 (U 3.17%)	\$3.9 (U 8%)	\$2.20 (E)	\$11.78-\$13.34
Town of Ottawa	3,895	\$549.7 million	\$1.2 (E)	891,000 (E)	\$1.62 (E)	\$10.95-\$13.62

munity each year.

However, the state-imposed limits do apply to levies to pay debt service.

Some municipalities in Lake Country took advantage of that exemption, along with increases in their assessed valuations and increased levies to pay debt services on past or future public works projects such as street and road improvements or new municipal buildings.

For example, levy increases in the villages of Hartland, Lisbon, Sussex and Summit are partly the result of increased payments for debt service.

Chenequa's levy dropped by 6.5 percent in 2018 because it was able to reduce the amount of debt service paid in 2018 compared to debt payments in previous years, said Vil-

lage Administrator Robert Douglas.

Tax levies represent the total amount of real estate taxes each local government and school district collect.

Tax rates are used to calculate how much individual property owners will contribute to the levy.

However, the levy is the most accurate barometer of how much local governments and school districts are spending in taxes, Knapp said.

“The tax rate is nothing more than a mathematical calculation based on the amount of the tax levy,” he explained.

He noted tax rates can fluctuate up and down depending upon the growth of the assessed value, or tax base, of a community.

For example, in Pewau-

kee the levy increased by about 2 percent while the tax rate dropped nearly 7 percent because of a 10 percent increase in the assessed valuation.

The assessed valuation in the Town of Genesee increased, which resulted virtually no increase in the tax rate even though the tax levy increased by 2 percent.

### Comparisons difficult

However, Knapp cautioned against trying to compare municipal tax levies.

He pointed out that a municipality's levy may depend upon its annual budget, whether it is a city, village or town, and its assessed valuation and population.

Municipal budgets are difficult to compare

because of how they are reported.

The budgets consist of various funds such as the general (operations) fund, debt service, highways and public works, capital projects, cultural and/or park and recreation, tax increment financing districts, and sewer, water, and stormwater utilities.

### Separate utility budgets

Some municipalities, like the City of Pewaukee and Summit, maintain separate budgets for utilities that are not included in the overall budget.

Summit Administrator Henry Elling added Summit separates it utilities from the village budget because most of the utility districts do not serve the entire village.

However, city of


Delafield Treasurer Marie Williams believes utilities should be part of the over all city budget.

“It is a matter of being transparent. They are part of the city government,” she says.

“It depends on how you ask the question,” added Laurie Sullivan, finance director for the city of Oconomowoc, which owns and operates an electrical utility in addition to sewer and water services.

“If you ask me a general question about our budget, I will probably tell you \$13.3 million because that is our general fund (operations) budget.”

“If you ask me more specifically for our budget, all funds, I will tell you 64.5 million which includes our electric utility,” she concluded.



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Photo courtesy of the Waukesha County Business Alliance

Business Alliance welcomes Wellspring Construction

PEWAUKEE — The Waukesha County Business Alliance recently welcomed Wellspring Construction as a new member. The company has developed software for technology scouting, corporate venturing, sponsored research and licensing. Pictured from left to right are: Heather Cichy, Tim Knepprath, Nicole Howland and Steve Royer, all of Wellspring Construction.



Photo courtesy of the Hartland Chamber of Commerce

Birch & Banyan Coffee gets Golden Hammer Award

HARTLAND — The most recent winner of the Hartland Chamber of Commerce's Golden Hammer Award is Birch & Banyan Coffee. The award, according to the announcement, is presented to a chamber business that has made an addition or expansion that has contributed significantly to the enhancement of the Hartland-area business community. Pictured receiving the award is owner Jessie Senglaub, center. She is surrounded by chamber board members and ambassadors, from left to right: front row, Dr. Kelly Newman, Generations Dental; and Cindy Bong, Global Financial Group; back row, Matt Gaulke, Great Midwest Bank; Nick Miller, Lake Country Bed Barn; Jessie Senglaub; Scott Heyerdahl, First Weber – Premier Partners; Mike Merkt, The Specific Chiropractic Center; Karl Scheife, Competitor Awards & Engraving; and Ryan Bailey, the village of Hartland.



Submitted photo

Ruekert & Mielke recognizes Hartland for infrastructure investment

HARTLAND — Ruekert & Mielke, Inc. awarded Hartland the Investment in Infrastructure Achievement Award with a monetary award of \$1,000 to the Hartland Area Food Pantry during the Dec. 11 Village Board meeting. Ryan Amtmann, vice president of Ruekert & Mielke, Inc., left, presents the award to Jeffrey Pfannerstill, Hartland village president, center, with Stan Sugden, president, Ruekert & Mielke, Inc. The Investment in Infrastructure Achievement Award is presented to exceptional communities four times a year to recognize their efforts to better their community and residential life through successful infrastructure projects. The village of Hartland chose the Hartland Area Food Pantry to receive a monetary award of \$1,000 on behalf of Ruekert & Mielke, Inc. in addition to the village's award.



Photo courtesy of Waukesha County Business Alliance

Tribute Companies joins Alliance

HARTLAND — Located in Hartland, The Tribute Companies specializes in cemetery ownership, development, expansion and revenue generation. The company recently joined the Waukesha County Business Alliance. Pictured from left are: Tim Hentges, Christie Hentges, Kim Krieg, Dan Merkt, Janelle Korinek, Zach Rasmussen, Ruxy McPherson and Kendall Larson, all of The Tribute Companies.

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# Antique chairs built to last and they have

Dollhouse more than mere child’s play

**Q.:** We look forward to your column and hope you can tell us more about this pair of chairs that was given to us from family. A few years ago we had them re-upholstered.

— H.A.C., Pewaukee

**A.:** Your pair of chairs (only one pictured), is composed of two styles that merged in late 19th century. An English architect turned designer, Charles Locke Eastlake published a book titled, “Hints on Household Taste.” This book was only a decorating guide but people were looking and ready to receive a new, modern furniture style. Eastlake wrote that overly decorative Victorian furniture was, “senseless with detestable ornamentation.” His designs could be made cheaper by using mass production and were welcomed by American manufacturers. Also, the basic style could be modified into different forms and generally, no upholstery was needed. As consumer demand grew, over 400 different furniture workshops made Eastlake-style furniture, but often without benchmark quality. To this day the Eastlake movement is credited to both excellent and inferior workmanship. The irony is that Eastlake only published design drawings and never build one piece of furniture.

Your fine pair of open-arm chairs was made for comfort with padded backs, armrests and wide seats. The clove feet on these parlor chairs have front casters for mobility. They could be brought to the hearth or shifted when different configurations of seating arrangements were needed. The straight rectangular back has a carved crowned top. Good workmanship is on the replaced upholstery padding and original re-tied springs honor the period. The

carved incised decorations are crisp and the chairs are structurally stable.

Your antique chairs have been well cared for over 100 years, with a value of \$2,000 for the pair.

### Mid-century style dollhouse

Dollhouses from the 18th century were only in estates of the noble born. In the 19th century, dollhouses were found in wealthy homes but small fingers were discouraged from touching. These “touch with your eyes only” examples spared no expense and were accurate in every exquisite detail. The multistory houses had custom wallpaper, hand-made rugs, grand stairways and doors with working hinges. Hundreds of miniature, inlaid furniture pieces filled the rooms and glass chandeliers were often added.

Fast forward another 100 years to the early 20th century. Dollhouses were made especially for the middle class with the purpose of teaching domestic duties. By the 1960s, baby boomers were becoming parents and wanted their children to have modern toys. The toy industry was forced to redesign for a new market demand. The Louis Marx Toy Co. of New York produced hundreds of dollhouses with updated architecture and they were designed with child-friendly furnishings. The Rooster tin lithograph house was one of the final models made by the famous toy manufacturer. This one-level ranch (Rambler) was the miniature version of the most popular house-plan style that attracted buyers. The box graphics projected not wife duties, but “Be Your Own Interior Decorator.”

Adding to the ease of designing rooms, the entire roof is removable. The



BARBARA EASH

Antiques Appraised

molded modern furniture is updated and the walls inside and out are lithograph decorated. Most 20th century dollhouses sell for under \$50.00. This dollhouse, with all original furniture, (scale-family and storage box not shown), can sell for upward of \$300.

(Barbara Eash is a member of the Certified Appraisers Guild of America, specializing in appraisals of antiques and collectibles and has extensive experience writing and speaking about antiques.)

### Submit an item for consideration

Do you have an item or collection of items that could be shared in a future newspaper column? Let Barbara Eash hear about it!

To have your item or collection considered send the following information: up to three, sharp, well-lit photos of front & back of the item(s), measurements as well as any history or hearsay, length of ownership and your full name, address and daytime phone number. Mail: Waukesha Antique Shop, ATTN: Barbara Eash, 1427 E. Racine, Ave. Unit E-2, Waukesha, WI 53186 or email: beappraisals@gmail.com. If your item(s) are considered for a future column, we will contact you. No photos can be returned and no purchase of items will occur.



# Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc to close at end of month

**OCONOMOWOC** — Olympia Resort: Hotel, Spa & Conference Center in Oconomowoc is closing Jan. 31, management told the Oconomowoc Rotary Club Monday night, said Rotary Club Director John Scambler.

The Rotary Club’s Oconomowoc Brewfest was scheduled for March 3 at Olympia but after hearing from Olympia that the venue would not be available, the club has since moved the event to the La Belle Golf Club, said Scambler.

Rumors circulated Wednesday that the resort was closing and several events were canceled. When a Freeman reporter reached out to Olympia’s owner Rick Eckert for com-

ment, he responded, “Yeah, I don’t have anything to say.”

Oconomowoc Mayor Dave Nold said he also heard talk of the resort closing at the end of January.

“From my understanding, it sounds like they’re going to close but I don’t have anything specific,” said Nold.

The more than 135,000-square-foot property at 1350 Royale Mile Road was listed for sale in August 2017 at a price of \$5.9 million.

Nold said the city has been trying to schedule a meeting with Rick Eckert, Eckert’s son and Olympia’s general manager Rudy Eckert and the property broker for quite some time; however, they have been unsuccessful.

“We’re trying to contact management to verify,” said Nold.

City Administrator Sarah Kitsemel said she’s also heard that the resort will be closing but has not been given an official word. She said she’s reached out to management, but they have not been able to connect. “Different events are getting contacted, and that’s what we’re hearing,” said Kitsemel. “That’s what prompted us to give them a call.”

Kitsemel said the resort has done a lot of good for the community in Oconomowoc.

“They’ve really helped us showcase our community to different businesses and visitors that they’re bringing in,” she said. “So we’re really saddened to hear they may be closing.”

— Brandon Anderegg, Freeman Staff



File photo

The exterior of Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc, 1350 Royale Mile Road, which is set to close at the end of the month.



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# Hughes smashes borders for past seven seasons

## Former Badger reflects on playing overseas

By Mark Hutchinson  
Freeman Staff

OCONOMOWOC — Traveling is a violation in basketball.

Trevon Hughes became aware of that at an early age, but he has managed to make it a hallmark of a highly successful career in the sport, which he has played professionally for seven years.

For now, though, Hughes is keeping his feet firmly planted in Oconomowoc.

It seems only appropriate that Hughes, who is married to Kaylee and the father of Trevon Jr. and Jaeda, has put down roots in the city of five Os, because he has gone just about full circle over the last 13 years.

The 30-year-old began his travels when, at the insistence of his paternal grandparents, he left New York for Wisconsin and enrolled at St. John's Northwestern Military Academy of Delafield in 2002.

Hughes' grandparents learned about St. John's from Joe Bostic and Joe Bostic Jr., a New York-based father-son AAU coaching duo. The Bostics directed a number of New York athletes to St. John's over the years.

Within two days, Hughes found himself not only on a dramatically different landscape, but awakening to march at 6 a.m. each day, wearing a dress uniform and being subject to room inspections, following orders and doing drills.

"The biggest change was the scenery," Hughes said. "The drive from Milwaukee to the Academy seemed never-ending because I was used to the hustle and bustle of New York. Trees replaced skyscrapers and grass replaced concrete."

Hughes and his fellow cadets eased their transition to St. John's together.

"At St John's, it becomes one big brotherhood while attending the Academy," Hughes said. "With all the hardships and tough times you may face, you are able to get through knowing you have all your brothers there with you, facing those same challenges."

Hughes carried on a rich tradition of success for New

Yorkers who became nationally known basketball standouts at St. John's, following in the footsteps of Eddie Lee, Ronnie Williams and Dwayne Johnson.

He averaged 20.2 points and five assists as a sophomore, 22 points, seven rebounds and eight assists as a junior and 22.2 points, 5.9 rebounds, 5.7 assists and 4.8 steals as a senior.

He was named Midwest Classic Conference Player of the Year four times and led St. John's to its first WIAA state tournament berth in 2006. He received all-state honorable mention as a sophomore, second-team all-state honors as a junior and first-team all-state recognition as a senior.

Hughes further displayed his athletic prowess as the starting quarterback for St. John's football team. He was named MCC Offensive Player of the Year as a senior.

Basketball, though, became Hughes' sole college sport, and he elected to accept a scholarship from coach Bo Ryan to attend the University of Wisconsin, just 54 miles west of Delafield.

"When I was in New York, I had started to become noticed and make a name for myself," Hughes said. "When I left New York and came to Wisconsin, I had to start over with becoming noticed."

"As I began to grow in the state of Wisconsin, I wanted to stay here and play for a university that I had grown comfortable with during the recruiting process and play for fans that I had gained while playing at St. John's Northwestern."

"The state of Wisconsin has the most loyal fans in sports."

The structure and brotherhood that were instilled in Hughes at St. John's Northwestern served him well at UW.

"That same mentality transferred over to college with my teammates," Hughes said. "All of my teammates became my brothers, pushing each other and picking each other up to be the best we could all be."

"The days our training would become vigorous, with early morning workouts, 'The Hill' and intense practices seemed incredibly tough, but

they really taught us how to bond."

Hughes averaged 7.7 minutes per game as a freshman, but started 34 of 35 contests as a sophomore. He finished second on the team in scoring (11.2 ppg) and third in assists (2.5 apg) and ranked fourth in the Big Ten Conference with 62 steals.

His progress continued as he averaged 11.2 points, 3.1 rebounds and 2.8 assists as a junior. He emerged as the Badgers' go-to guy in the clutch, hitting winning shots in the closing seconds against Virginia Tech and Florida State.

Hughes was named captain in his final season as a Badger and became one of 11 finalists for the Bob Cousy Award, which is given to the nation's top point guard. He averaged 15.3 ppg, 2.6 assists and 4.5 rebounds per game as a senior; made the Big Ten All-Defensive Team and was a second-team All-Big Ten choice.

Hughes was not selected in the 2010 NBA Draft. He played for the Houston Rockets in the 2010 NBA Summer League, but soon thereafter he was packing his bags for a much longer journey than the 905 miles from New York to Delafield — a journey that is still in progress.

Hughes began a European professional career with Union Olimpia of Slovenia, then helped VEF Riga win the Latvian Basketball League championship in 2011.

Though Hughes was well-versed in transition, the one he made from American college standout to European pro was difficult.

"At first it was tough," Hughes said. "I was not ready to be a professional in Europe."

"I was used to being pampered at the University. Our equipment, shoes, jerseys were ready at our convenience. We were very well taken care of to make sure all of our things were set out when we needed them."

"When I became a pro in Europe, I was responsible for my practice gear, washing my own things, buying my own shoes. They provided us with necessary equipment and that was it."

"At UW, we chartered planes to the majority of our games. Once I started playing



Submitted photo

Trevon Hughes glides past two defenders for a layup while playing for TBB Trier during a 2013 game in Germany.

overseas, we took a lot of long bus rides to most games and a plane to very few games."

Hughes moved on to play for BC Pieno zvaigzdes of the Lithuanian Basketball League from 2011 through 2013, making the All-Star team and leading the league in steals in 2013. He was the Most Valuable Player of the Lithuanian Cup.

His travels continued during stints with TBB Trier of Germany in 2013-14, Medi Bayreuth of Germany in 2014-15, Sekarya Buyuksehir Belediyesi of Turkey in 2015, Cholet Basket of France from 2015-16 and Duzce Belediyesi of Turkey in 2016-17.

Hughes and his wife have encountered some language barriers during their European travels, but they have cleared them together, utilizing some of the creativity that has been so essential to Trevon's basketball success.

"One day my family and I walked into a meat market because we were trying to find ground beef to make spaghetti," Hughes said. "For some reason, ground beef was really hard to come by in Lithuania."

"While in the meat market,

my wife was pointing to different types of ground meats, attempting to ask the lady behind the counter what each meat was. Because there was such a language barrier, it turned into a game of charades between my wife and the woman, full with moos, pig snorts and clucks while making chicken-wing motions. Turns out ground beef is called jautiena in Lithuanian."

"Another time, we were at a pizza place looking for a good ol' classic pepperoni pizza. Instead we received a pizza full of peppers."

Hughes has crossed paths with some familiar faces during his travels.

"In Germany, I played against (former Badger) Keaton Nankivill," he said. "During the NBA lockout, I played against Ty Lawson and Sonny Weems. I played with Yancy Gates from Cincinnati and LaceDarius Dunn from Baylor, who is the Big 12 all-time leading scorer."

"I have had anywhere from two to six passport players on my teams. What that means is the team is allowed so many players with a passport not

from their local country. Most of the time, passport players are American, but occasionally they may be from a different foreign country."

Hughes stayed in shape by playing pickup basketball at the YMCA at Pabst Farms during the offseason. He's now playing for the Pieno zvaigzdes Pasvalys in the Lithuania-LKL.

He's currently averaging 11.4 points, 3.5 rebounds and 4.6 assists per game.

Hughes was asked if he has any interest in pursuing a coaching career when his playing days are over.

"Yes. I feel as though I've learned all types of basketball, growing up in New York, playing under Bo Ryan, and then as a professional in Europe," he said. "I think I have a lot to teach."

"I have really enjoyed interacting with all the kids I have coached at camps so far, and feel as though I can never stop learning about the game. Staying involved in sports is what will keep me young."

Traveling can help with that, too.

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# Nothing easy about officiating basketball

## Referees have difficult job at high school level

I know you've been in the stands. I've heard you questioning an official's call. I've seen you shaking your head on a block/charge. I've seen you signalling traveling or for carrying the ball. And let's not even go with the apparent no call on an over-the-back, even though no such call really exists. The accurate call on that is pushing. (Just a technicality I thought I would bring up.)

So, here's the direction I'm going. I'm here to tell you that officiating a high school boys or girls basketball game is a tough assignment. At times it's close to impossible to get a high percent-



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age of the calls spot-on, even with the recent addition of three-person crews at just about every varsity game in the state.

The game has changed dramatically over the years. I watched a replay of an NBA championship game between Wilt Chamberlain's Philadelphia team against the legendary Boston Celtics, led by Hall of Famers Bill Russell and Bob Cousy. I was stunned while watching that replay, shocked when hardly a single defender ever had a hand on his opponent. Fouls were not a very big part of the game, as they played with their feet, not their hands.

But basketball is now a dif-

ferent sport than the 1960s. The game has gotten a lot more physical, from grade school competition, through high school, into the college ranks and the NBA, where making calls and officiating makes absolutely no sense to me. Do they ever call traveling in the NBA?

High school basketball players have never been bigger, faster and stronger. Some of them can jump out of the building. And remember, there are a lot of Division I football players that also play high school hoops. Because of that size, speed and strength, the game has gotten a lot more physical, with contact being made on every possession.

And therein lies the problem. What's a foul and what's not a foul? The officials are not blind. They know there's contact. As a group they're just trying to be as consistent as they can. The good crews set the tone

early and only can hope that the teams adjust. The rule book says there can be contact without a foul being called. But what's too much contact? That's the real gray area in the sport.

Every high school coach knows there's going to be contact. That's what the game has evolved into. And that's where the sport is at. Good or bad.

As a referee myself, I tend to be on the side of the officials most of the time. For a majority of the time, the refs we see on Tuesday and Friday nights do an outstanding job. The officials we see in Waukesha County, night in and night out, do an admirable job.

Coaches, some who have become so much more vocal on the sidelines over the years, have to realize more often that it's a difficult game to officiate. The guys in the stripes are not going to get every call right. Mis-

takes are made. Just like coaches make mistakes, just like players make mistakes. The refs also make mistakes.

And the fans in the stands, before they get too critical, have to make sure they know just how difficult calling a crucial conference or tournament game can really be. Remember, the refs are not trying to miss calls here and there. Trust me, they're trying to get them all right, even though that might be the next thing to impossible.

Because they now have three officials at all varsity games, that doesn't mean they see all the violations. Because of all the big bodies on the court, officials can get straight-lined or completely blocked out. Because of that, at times the fans in the stands might see something the refs didn't. But the good news is that's a rarity.

These high school officials do not have it easy. If you live in Waukesha County

and have a game to ref in Port Washington or Racine or Kenosha, you have to be on the road by about 5:15 p.m. And by the time they get home, it's 10:15 p.m. or later. Suddenly that \$60 check the official has collected comes out to a little more than \$10 an hour. As you can see, a high percentage of these officials are not getting rich or doing it just for the money, but more for the love of the game.

Next time you take in a high school game, don't be afraid to enjoy the contest with a sympathetic view for the guys in stripes. Unlike just about every other sport, the game of basketball has a lot of judgment calls. Calls that could go either way.

We all know the game has gotten way too physical. But that most likely is never going to change. And of all that physicality has made officiating a high school game a difficult task.



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# WEDDINGS



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