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# Delafield debates downtown development

Big buildings could change downtown aesthetics

By Kelly Smith  
Special to The Freeman

DELAFIELD — There were sharp words exchanged between newly elected Mayor Kent Attwell and developer Rob Gerbitz during the April 25 Plan Commission meeting.

It was not the first rodeo for either guy.

Attwell served as an alderman, plan commissioner, and chair of the influential Lake Welfare Committee before being elected mayor three weeks earlier.

Gerbitz played an instrumental role in the redevelopment of downtown Delafield in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

He was a top aide to developer Bob Lang, the former gift card and calendar entrepreneur whose colonial architectural visions dominated the downtown business district.

Gerbitz is now CEO of Hendricks Commercial Properties of Beloit, which recently purchased its 20th downtown building, including all the former Lang properties.

His boss, Diane Hendricks, is one of the richest women in the country. She and her late husband made millions from a roofing supply company that she changed into a big real estate development company.

Sitting next to Gerbitz was architect Kent Johnson, who spent much of his career designing the Lang buildings which have become the city's signature.

Hendricks Commercial Properties is proposing to build two large four-story



Attwell

buildings in the center of the downtown business district at the intersection of Genesee and Main streets.

One is a commercial retail and office building facing Genesee Street that may include a public market.

Around the corner, on Main Street, a residential building of condominiums is proposed.

Gerbitz and Johnson argue the development will bring more residents downtown and encourage development of new retail shops and other businesses, including a public market.

However, waivers will be required if the city approves construction of the buildings since the designs do not meet city codes.

The buildings are too tall, have too many stories, and are not set back far enough from city sidewalks, City Planner Roger Dupler said.

Attwell is frustrated that Gerbitz and Johnson have not made changes in the plans to bring the buildings into compliance with city codes.

During two previous commission meetings, citizens and commission members said the buildings were too big, too tall and the early 1900s architectural style did not fit into the quaint, historic ambience of downtown Delafield.

Attwell told Gerbitz, "We have had people come in and tell you they don't think it's compatible with the surrounding area. The Plan



Kelly Smith/Special to The Freeman

Plans to replace a gas station at the corner of Main and Genesee streets with large multistory buildings is creating a controversy in Delafield because the new buildings would be across the street from another large building at the intersection.

Commission has given you the same kind of feedback."

"I don't see you people trying to make it blend in," the mayor added.

"In three iterations, I don't see you guys taking the feedback and coming back with what people have commented on," Attwell concluded.

However, Gerbitz was also frustrated.

He did not believe he was getting clear guidance from the commission.

"The first day we were here we asked you what you wanted to see and not anyone was able to tell us," Gerbitz responded.

Changes had been made in the plans reducing the buildings by one floor, increasing the distances set back from sidewalks, and adding architectural amenities, Gerbitz rebutted.

"I want direction from you. We brought it down another floor, we set them back further. We are trying to accommodate when you guys give us direction," he concluded.

Commissioner James Reiher summarized the importance of the debate.

"If this were three blocks from Genesee Street it would not be as significant. But it is going to be right in the middle. Everything is going to be focused on this building," Reiher observed.

## Delafield Square

Other commissioners expressed concerns the buildings would alter the downtown landscape because they would be located immediately north, and across Main Street, from another large building,

Delafield Square.

Built in 2006, the block-long, three-and-a-half-story building, was the subject of an intense battle between then-Mayor Paul Craig and Lang.

Lang was able to win approval and code waivers from the city for the building only after agreeing to reduce the height of the building to three stories and a partial fourth floor.

Attwell has told The Freeman that if Hendricks would design buildings like Delafield Square, he might support its plans.

He has asked Gerbitz to present new details about the design of the buildings, the overall height, and how far the buildings would

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## INSIDE



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MAY 2018

# Beer gardens returning to county parks this summer

More locations announced;  
hours extended

By Katherine Michalets  
kmichalets@conleynet.com  
262-513-2644

WAUKESHA — When the days finally warm up, area residents will want to celebrate and they'll be able to do that at one of the numerous beer gardens planned for Waukesha County parks this summer.

Raised Grain Brewing Co. is again partnering with Waukesha County Parks to hold the beer gardens, which will kick off May 14 at Eble Park, 19400 W. Bluemound Road, Brookfield. The kickoff will include three days of events to celebrate the opening of the beer garden season and the 30th anniversary of Eble Park.

There will be triple the number of beer garden locations in 2018, custom beer steins available and new food and entertainment options for patrons.

"This year's beer garden season brings a lot of new experiences for Waukesha County families," said Nick Reistad of Raised Grain Brewing Co. in a statement. "In addition to new locations, music, and activities, the season is kicking off with a big opening weekend celebration."

All Pop-Up Beer Garden locations will be open Thursday and Friday from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.,

and Saturday from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. A rotating list of five of Raised Grain's beers will be on tap, and custom beer steins will be available for purchase. The Pop-Up Beer Gardens will also have food trucks, yard games and music. Some parks have swimming access and playgrounds.

In addition, the Pop-Up Beer Garden is expanding to nine Waukesha County Park locations in 2018 from three in 2017. Minooka, Fox Brook and Naga-Waukee Parks will continue to host beer gardens, and Muskego, Menomonee, Fox River, Nashotah, Mukwonago and Eble Parks will host their first beer garden events this season.

"The Pop-Up Beer Gardens draw more people into our parks — some for the first time — to enjoy our wonderful facilities," said Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow in a statement. Raised Grain, our local brewery, has been an excellent partner in creating this enjoyable experience for all ages."

Annual sticker members will have access to the park, while day pass visitors will receive a beer token with their daily entry pass (\$6 for entry and one token).

For full details on the Pop-Up Beer Gardens, visit [rgbrewing.com/beer-garden](http://rgbrewing.com/beer-garden).



Kenny Yoo/Special to The Freeman  
Raised Grain Brewing bartender Kasey Englebert pours some beer during Waukesha County's first beer garden kick off at Minooka Park in Waukesha last summer.



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Kelly Smith/Special to The Freeman

Downtown Delafield business owner and former Alderman Rick Lieblang supports Hendricks Commercial Properties' proposed construction of two new multistory buildings downtown.

## Develop

From Page 1A

be set back from the sidewalks.

The city code requires a maximum height of 45 feet and three stories, Dupler said.

Hendricks' buildings are 57 feet and four stories.

Based on the height of the buildings, the code requires the setback to be a minimum of 44 feet on all sides, Dupler said.

The setbacks on the proposed building range from 37 feet to 11 feet.

### Talking traffic, parking

For decades, there was a gas station at the intersection of Main and Genesee streets.

The number of vehicle trips per day would double at the intersection ranging from about 115 to 240 additional trips depending on the day and time of the trips as result of the development, according to a traffic study.

However, Patrick Hawley of rSmith engineering said the increased traffic would not significantly affect traffic flow in downtown Delafield.

Regarding parking, Hawley said the development will not significantly impact available parking spaces downtown provided shoppers are willing to use public parking lots within a block or two from the downtown business district.

However, Hawley conceded that local consumers may not be used to walking a couple of blocks to their favorite shops.

### Realtor, downtown business owner weigh in

Local real estate agent Joe Deklotz cannot remember a downtown development project he has not supported.

But he does not like this one.

"The development is very much out of character with the look and feel of the historic district in Delafield. The reduced setbacks and massive size of the proposed development would dwarf and overpower all other buildings in the city," he wrote in a letter to the city.

"I am also concerned about the impact such a development would have on other businesses within the city especially given the parking problems we already experience," he added.

Downtown business owner Rick Lieblang, a former alderman, disagrees with Deklotz.

"Those buildings will add \$400,000 in real estate taxes. They will bring in customers who will shop with the other downtown businesses. There is a going to be a public market that we need in Delafield," Lieblang said.

"And you will get all of that without an increase in police and fire protection costs," he concluded.

# Warmer weather means tasty, comforting treats

## Lake Country landmarks LeDuc's, Buddy's are ready for peak season

By Chris Bennett  
Special to The Freeman

WALES — Custard and a beef hot dog are to summer what pot roast and meatloaf are to winter.

Dairy treats and grilled food should be lumped into the category we all know as comfort food. There is little more refreshing and comforting than a vanilla cone on a hot day, or a freshly grilled hamburger as the sun starts to disappear over the horizon following an afternoon on the water.

Your passion for the food of summer is shared by those who provide such wonderful cuisine.

In Wales, Steve Kinsey is still surprised that people stop to take pictures of the sign at LeDuc's Frozen Custard. Some patrons express their love for the restaurant so frequently that they have nicknames — like "Root beer float guy," or "No pickles guy."

In Oconomowoc, John Suttner named Buddy's Beach Bungalow after the best man in his wedding. Suttner's wire fox terrier, Buddy, served as the best man. Buddy's been gone for about nine years.

"When he died, I was just miserable," Suttner said. "I said, 'Don't worry — you'll never be forgotten.'"

### All are buddies at Buddy's

Suttner said Buddy's Beach Bungalow is meant to evoke the feeling conveyed by the Kenny Chesney song "No Shirt, No Shoes, No Problem." One doesn't need to travel to the shores of the Caribbean — hit the sands on the shores of Lac La Belle Lake instead.

"It's what you feel

when you're sitting there," Suttner said. "You don't have to be 1,000 miles away. You can be three miles from your house or 20 miles from your house, and you have that relaxed atmosphere."

Buddy's serves beer and margaritas for adults and also slushies and ice cream for children — Suttner stresses that Buddy's is meant to be family-friendly.

Suttner operates Buddy's under a contract with Oconomowoc, and he praises the relationship he maintains with the city. He's run Buddy's for eight years.

"I believe that they like that we did it right," Suttner said. "We serve good products at a fair price. If you get a hot dog, it's a good hot dog. We're just doing it right, and it works."

Buddy's opens for business on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend and is open only on weekends until school lets out. Buddy's closes for the season the Monday of Labor Day weekend.

### LeDuc's luscious offerings

Steve Kinsey is open year-round at LeDuc's, but in rare moments questions the wisdom of his logic.

"At least golf courses are smart enough to close in the winter," Kinsey said. "This is a community where people still come here all the time. There are a lot of regulars."

Add "Strawberry shake guy" to the list of aforementioned regulars who would take exception to LeDuc's closing in the winter. It doesn't, by the way, but Kinsey admits the recent shift in weather from winter to spring

caught the restaurant off-guard.

"We went from snow to warm so fast — it's just hard to make that adjustment," Kinsey said. "We went from hoping someone pulls in to two lines outside the window. It's crazy."

Kinsey bought the restaurant a couple of years ago after a career making circuit boards. He and his family were longtime, regular patrons of the custard stand. Those who don't know the joy of custard should make the trek to Wales and get an education in the art of frosty treats.

Custard contains a higher amount of butter, fat, and egg yolks. There is very little air in custard, unlike ice cream, which contains a lot of air. Kinsey said custard is very dense.

Kinsey and his family took over LeDuc's on July 1, 2016 after buying it from the Shackton family. The Shacktons owned the restaurant for 17 years after buying it from the LeDuc family, who started the endeavor in 1980.

Steve Kinsey's three daughters — Alicia, Andrea and Anna — each worked their way through college at LeDuc's. Anna Kinsey is now the general manager. Anna Kinsey holds degrees in marketing and finance from UW-White-water.

Anna Kinsey predicts a bold, bright and tasty future for LeDuc's.

"I always wanted to own my own business, and go the entrepreneurial route," she said. "I really liked the old owners, and got really close to them."

"I'd like to expand, in the future and, hopefully, open a couple of more stores."



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# Here comes the bride!

Godey's Lady's Book was one of very few printed magazines that lasted through the Civil War. It was published between 1830 and 1878. Louis A. Godey's Philadelphia women's magazine had an annual \$3 subscription rate.

The most beloved component in each issue was a picture of French fashion. This was before color printing. Mr. Godey printed the black-and-white image of French designer clothing and each sheet was hand-tinted to add color. This process required 150 women to individually hand-tint, then stitch the centerfold page into every volume. Inevitably, each copy had a degree of variation in tinting skill; your neighbor's version could differ from yours.

These fashion inserts recorded the progression of clothing and hair styles for almost 50 years. The publication's success was largely due to Mr. Godey hiring a female editor, which was totally unheard of. When these pages are found today, many are framed and authentic examples that will have a center crease, proof it was delicately removed from the magazine. Framed examples can be found today with value ranging from \$25-\$75.

Note: Before 1840, wedding dresses were often made from common color fabrics and had shorter length. These dresses could be worn for future occasions, but also pure white



**BARBARA EASH**  
Antiques Appraised

was difficult to achieve. In 1840, Queen Victoria married Prince Albert and initiated a widely copied trend when she chose a pure white wedding gown. Brilliant, strong colors of the monarchical regalia showed well on white.

### Top it off

Recently, I attended a wedding where the grandmother's personal collection of vintage cake toppers was a charming and popular part of the reception decorations. Bride and groom figures on top of wedding cakes were not used extensively until the 1920s; earlier ones were wax or bisque with a 2-inch height. Most vintage cake toppers found today are from the mid-20th century. With each generation, clothing styles changed on cake toppers. This 1920s example is 4 inches in height, the groom wears a tuxedo, the bride has a satin gown and bobbed hair.

The most valuable examples are found from the World War II era with a military groom and a short, tailored dress on the bride. Most are regarded as family treasures and very few reach the marketplace. Condition, color fading and damage will affect



value. Today's example is worth \$55.00.

### 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,

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*(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.)*



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Kelly Smith/Special to The Freeman

**Attwell sworn in as Delafield's mayor**

DELAFIELD — Mayor Michele DeYoe turns over her gavel to newly elected Mayor Kent Attwell shortly before Attwell was sworn into office during ceremonies last month at City Hall. Attwell defeated fellow Alderman Al Zietlow in the April election. DeYoe did not seek re-election.

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# Veterans still serving others in local Herus Group chapter

**By Chris Bennett**  
Special to The Freeman

CITY OF PEWAUKEE — A magnetic resonance imaging scan of any part of the body is off-limits to those men and women who return home from defending American interests abroad filled with shrapnel.

Ben Pechacek is one of those men. Pechacek counts multiple combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as a noncommissioned officer in the United States Army.

He returned home from one of his deployments full of shrapnel from a combat injury. In 2016, a motorcycle accident forced him to the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, which is named for Clement Zablocki.

With an MRI out of the question, a doctor decided to perform a CT myelogram. Dye is injected into the spine and tracked by X-ray in the process.

That's when almost everything went wrong. Pechacek spent days in severe pain as a result of the CT myelogram, not knowing why the pain

was there or when it would subside. After being shuffled off to a back room at the Froedtert Hospital in Wauwatosa.

"To this day, we still don't know what happened," Pechacek said. "During my CT myelogram, my legs didn't work. Froedtert did everything they could to try to work with me."

Pechacek is now in a wheelchair, and recently received his final orders from the Army. His final rank as a soldier will be staff sergeant. He is paralyzed from the waist down.

It's difficult to say if the complications Pechacek experienced at Zablocki are the impetus for the Herus Group. Servant leadership is an obvious and well-established trait among those who once wore the cloth of the nation. Pechacek might have founded an organization that puts service ahead of money without the personal travails he endured.

"My focus is not on profit — it's on service," Pechacek

said. "By doing the correct job, we focus on experience and helping people, and we've been blessed."

The Herus Group is licensed in 37 states, and Pechacek said he hopes to expand the company's national footprint in the future.

According to its website, herusgroup.com, the Herus Group is a business consulting firm specializing in comprehensive risk management and financial security. Pechacek started Herus Group in September 2016. Herus Group is located at N19-W24400 Riverwood Drive, Suite 350.

"Herus is Latin for 'master of the household,'" Pechacek said. "The master of the house is someone who conveys a sense of responsibility or character. If you're making service your main priority for your clients, it makes sense that you speak from a position of trust and authority."

Pechacek said the Herus Group is staffed by a large number of combat veterans. The organization possesses



Photo courtesy of the Hartland Chamber of Commerce

The Hartland Chamber of Commerce welcomed Herus Group as a new member recently. Ambassador Mark Walters of REMAX/Realty Group, right, presents Allen Bowe, senior vice president of Herus Group with a membership plaque from the chamber.

Also pictured from the Herus Group left to right are: Ben Pechacek, president; Tommy Endres, chief operations officer; Bradley Bechard, businesses solutions specialist; Nick Guerino, BSS; Karina Ainsworth, BSS; Vern Hagstrom, vice president of personnel; Christina Deal, BSS; Dave Weber, BSS; and Diane Holzmann, BSS.

the ability to compare the cost of a business's existing benefit structure against the offerings of its partners, and help the client realize savings.

Herus Group is also part of the trend in health care that is centered on smartphone technology to diagnose medical issues and render a diagnosis, which saves both

the employer and employee money.

**'A soldier to my core'**

When Pechacek reached his lowest point, he still could fall back on the insurance he purchased as a younger man.

Pechacek founded Herus Group with that guiding principle in mind — to make sure people could have access to

the insurance coverage they need, before they need it, at a reasonable price.

It is yet another example of the idea of servant leadership that is a significant driver in Pechacek's life.

"That's the NCO and the soldier in me," Pechacek said. "Regardless of my disability, I will forever be a soldier to my core."

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# Divine play leads to championship

Hartland’s Divine Redeemer wins Lutheran national title

**By Dave Radcliffe**  
dradcliffe@conley.net.com  
262-513-2655

HARTLAND — The eighth-grade Divine Redeemer boys basketball team has been on the rise in recent years.

In 2015, it finished fourth at the Lutheran Basketball National Tournament of Champions. Last year, Divine Redeemer won the consolation bracket.

This season? National champs.

It was the perfect season for Divine Redeemer, which finished 31-0 and bested 31 other teams to win the 2018 national title at Valparaiso University on March 25.

“Sunday was basically the final four,” head coach Eric Haertle said. “We ended up playing a team from Illinois and beat them pretty well and then it was us and a team from Minnesota. I believe we were the last two teams that were undefeated. The final game is held on Valpo’s main floor; so we ended up winning 50-40.”

It was akin to a three-day version of March Madness for Divine Redeemer and the participating teams. It clinched a berth by winning the state tournament and was one of three schools from Wisconsin to compete in Indiana.

The national tournament has been held for over 70 years. It was Divine Redeemer’s fifth appearance, the highest number among teams from Wisconsin.

“It turns we did get the No. 1 seed,” Haertle said. “We played a team from Missouri first on Friday morning, then we played a team from Indiana Friday evening. Saturday night we played a team from California and ended up hitting a basket with three seconds left to go up by one and held them off.”

The player to make that game-winning shot was none other than Eric’s son, Luke.

“It was such a fun shot,” Luke Haertle said. “Everything just had to go right. When the ball was inbounded, it went right to be Ben Lubbers, he tipped it away for (Noah Howard) to grab it. He passed to me right over a defender and for me to finish, everything went so perfect. After I made it I didn’t know what to say. I was in awe. Like, ‘Did I just make that shot?’”

Haertle and Lubbers were both named to the all-tournament team.



Photo courtesy of Andrea Sitzman

The eighth-grade Divine Redeemer Lutheran School boys basketball team poses with the first place trophy after winning the 2018 Lutheran Basketball National Tournament of Champions at Valparaiso University on March 25.

Luke Haertle led the team in scoring and rebounding this season, while Lubbers, the team’s tallest player, provided Divine Redeemer with a strong post presence.

“Ben is just scratching the surface on how good he’s going to be,” Eric Haertle said. “Noah is far and away the best shooter on the team. He knocked down some big shots in the tournament and throughout the season.”

“Josh Zimbal and Josh Pavlic round out our starting five. They all play club, they know their role. Nobody gets too frazzled and they can all knock down shots.”

Luke went to watch his older brother, Bryce — now a junior at Lake Country Lutheran and a three-time all-conference performer — when he reached the national tournament three years ago and finished fourth.

“It’s really been a goal of mine to beat him ... just a little brotherly competition,” Luke said. “But it was such a great experience for us. I thought it was the coolest thing that they got fourth, but now it was my turn to play. I’ve always been so excited for that. I’m just very proud of my team. Every win we stuck together and it was amazing.”

The local community rallied around the team, with a handful of teachers making the trip to Valparaiso and many family members and friends watching online.

“All the games are webcast so it’s on the web with announcers,” Eric Haertle said. “It’s generally communication students from Valpo. They said there were over 1 million hits that took place over the weekend.”

“Our own pastor when we won

Sunday morning to get to the final game, he’s based in Michigan, so it’s a three-hour drive for him and he ended up coming to the finals.”

Divine Redeemer won its conference along with four different tournaments that took place around the area this season.

“We’re blessed with some very good families,” Eric Haertle said. “The kids, a lot of them play club ball for Lake Country Lutheran, so we had a good group of boys that knew what they were doing. I knew (winning the national title) was a possibility.”

Luke did as well, but there was the unknown of what kind of competition they would be facing.

“We knew that we had a good team, but didn’t really know what other teams would be like because they are from all over the nation, so we’ve obviously never seen them play,” Luke Haertle said.

Luke and many of his teammates will go on to play at Lake Country Lutheran. He will have one season to play at the same school as his brother, and possibly even on the same team.

“I’m looking forward to it,” Luke Haertle said. “I’ve been with my brother, just from playing in the driveway I learned so much from him, so hopefully we’ll be on the same team. That would be amazing.”

Until then, the Divine Redeemer eighth-graders will continue soaking in that feeling of being the best.

“It really is a memory,” Eric Haertle said. “Parents will cherish it forever, and the boys will be called national champions forever, and that’s a really cool thing.”

# Pettine ready to toughen up defense

## Packers’ new D-coordinator reunites with Wilkerson, Williams

**By Rob Reischel**  
Freeman Correspondent

GREEN BAY — Muhammad Wilkerson experienced it firsthand in 2011 and 2012.

During Wilkerson’s first two years with the New York Jets, defensive coordinator Mike Pettine preached toughness, smarts, aggressiveness and physicality.

Tramon Williams heard the same thing from Pettine in 2015 when both men were in Cleveland. Pettine, who was the Browns’ head coach at the time, demanded ferocity and fire from his defense, all while keeping the scheme as simple as possible.

Pettine is now the Green Bay Packers’ new defensive coordinator. And Wilkerson and Williams — a pair of free-agent additions this offseason — insist the Packers are going to love playing for Pettine.

“It’s very aggressive, man,” Williams said at the start of the Packers’ offseason program. “You have to be smart. It’s simple, but it’s aggressive. There has to be a lot of smart guys on the field.”

Wilkerson agreed.

“Mike is a guy who can be exotic and creative with different blitzes and schemes,” said Wilkerson, who played his first seven years with the Jets before signing with the Packers in March. “He’ll help the guys on defense be successful.”

Defense has been Green Bay’s Achilles’ heel for years now. So much so that at the NFL Combine in February, Packers head coach Mike McCarthy said: “I’m sick and tired of our defense feeling like the stepchild. I mean, how many times do you have to tell them, ‘You’re not the stepchild?’”

But that’s exactly what the Packers’ defense has been. And McCarthy is hoping Pettine can fix it.

Dom Capers ran Green Bay’s defense for nine seasons and had far more success early in his tenure.

The Packers were second in total defense in 2009 and fifth in 2010, then had an average finish of 20th between 2011-17. Green Bay was also seventh in scoring defense in 2009 and second in 2010, then had an average finish of 18th from 2011 to ’17 and never cracked the top 10 again.

After Capers was fired following the 2017 campaign, many players talked about a lack of accountability. That’s never been a problem with Pettine.

“If you want to be on this team,

you have to hold yourself accountable,” Packers safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix said. “That’s being who you are and showing who you are. Last year was last year. This definitely is a new year and I think we’re all excited and pumped up about it.”

With good reason.

Pettine, a high school football coach in Pennsylvania from 1995-2001, broke into the NFL as a coaching assistant with Baltimore in 2002. Pettine worked his way up the ranks, was the Jets’ defensive coordinator from 2009-12, coordinated the defense in Buffalo in 2013, then was Cleveland’s head coach in 2014-15.

Even during Pettine’s first year as Cleveland’s head coach, the undermanned Browns were No. 8 in passing defense (224.5) and No. 1 in opponent passer rating (74.1). Things bottomed out the following season when the Browns were No. 22 in pass defense (250.8) and 30th in opponent passer rating (101.8).

“The thing that I respect over the years with him, they don’t give up a lot of completions, they hold vertical control, there’s always tight coverage and he does a very nice job implementing that,” said Joe Whitt, Green Bay’s passing game coordinator. “It’s a clean package, it’s a good package, but it’s a difficult package for quarterbacks to navigate through.”

Teams navigated right through Green Bay’s defense a year ago.

The Packers ranked 26th in scoring defense and 22nd in total defense last season. Opponents had a passer rating of 102.0 against Green Bay in 2017 — the worst mark in franchise history. Opposing quarterbacks also completed 67.8 percent of their passes, which again was the worst mark in franchise history.

Pettine tries making schemes as simple as possible for his players and complex for opposing offenses to decipher. For the most part, Pettine has found success at almost all of his stops — which has the Packers fired up.

Maybe, just maybe, the days of being a stepchild could be over.

“I’m very excited about this system,” Clinton-Dix said. “Mike is a great coach. He has a lot of energy. He’s not taking any mess. I’m excited about where this defense can go this year.”

“There’s not going to be any loose strings whether you’re a 10-year vet or a rookie. Guys are going to be held accountable and I’m excited about that.”

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