

Brookfield & Elm Grove

THIS MONTH

SEPTEMBER 2019

A love affair of a career for Major

Variety — The Children's Charity CEO speaks about her life, nonprofit mission

By Christina McAlister
Special to Conley Media

ELM GROVE — Nancy Major, CEO and executive director of Variety — The Children's Charity of Wisconsin, has gone from being a child faced with many adversities to running a nonprofit that helps children overcome their own adversity.

As a child, Major recollected on how she starved due to hunger, was homeless, lived in extreme poverty and was a victim of sexual abuse. Despite her difficult childhood, Major said that it inspires her and has made her the person she is today.

"It gives me a perspective, a level of compassion and just a strong, burning desire to ensure that no other children experience what I've been through," said Major, a former Freeman Citizen of the Year.

At age 19, Major began working in a hospice unit which eventually led to her opening Family Haven Assisted Living in Marshfield around the age of 23. This was the first business she owned and she recalled that there was no other facility that served the elderly population at that time.

Major said this was when she began to work within the disabled population. Then, the United Cerebral Palsy organization recognized and recruited her. Within a year and a half of

starting with the organization, she became the youngest executive director of a United Cerebral Palsy location.

"I began a love affair with service work," Major said. "That's really what it is, it's not a job."

After her first nonprofit experience, Major was recruited by Special Olympics and worked with children for the first time. Major claimed that once she started working with children with disabilities, she knew her life-long calling was to utilize her business expertise for the benefit of nonprofits.

However, Major stopped working with children with disabilities, and Special Olympics specifically, for a while to help a variety of different nonprofits dissolve and flip their organizations.

Although she said that flipping was some of her favorite work, Major soon found herself back at a nonprofit organization that enriches the lives of children with special needs and their families.

This nonprofit is Variety — The Children's Charity of Wisconsin and Major has been the CEO and executive director for a year now.

"I'm right back to the feeling of it's a love affair," Major said. "I don't see an end for this organization."

Variety serves all 72 counties of Wisconsin and receives all of its funds



Christina McAlister/Special to Conley Media

Nancy Major, CEO and executive director of Variety — The Children's Charity of Wisconsin, sits before pictures of the organization's history at its office in Elm Grove.

from the communities it helps, as well as corporations who want to be a part of their mission, said Major.

'Standing in the gap when insurance won't'

Major said she would like to see Variety partner with the Department of Health and Human Services in each county to figure out where and how they can best help families with children who have special needs.

"We see ourselves as standing in the gap when insurance won't and hard-working families can't cover the cost of having a disabled child," Major added. "That's when Variety comes in."

"We see ourselves as standing in the gap when insurance won't and hard-working families can't cover the cost of having a disabled child. That's when Variety comes in."

— Nancy Major,
CEO, Variety — The
Children's Charity

Variety has year-round programs that provide activities, social outings and events to promote inclusivity, diversity and accessibility for low-income families.

Major said her past has helped her succeed in this nonprofit because she has a

deep sense of compassion and understanding for low-income families because she was in a similar position as a young child.

The nonprofit and Major were recently recognized by Kathy Ireland on her television show "Modern Living with Kathy Ireland." This feature story, which aired on July 25 and 26, showcased Major's hard work with Variety.

"I am so grateful to Kathy Ireland," Major said. "Our cause really touched her heart and I am truly honored."

For more information about the organization and to see the Kathy Ireland episode, visit Variety's website at www.varietywi.org.

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INSIDE



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When ink meets Inc.

Study finds no evidence of wage or employment discrimination against those with tattoos

By Eileen Mozinski Schmidt
Special to Conley Media

WAUKESHA — It wasn't long ago when George Wang would advise his clients against getting certain types of tattoos.

As recently as two decades ago, in fact, he would caution his female clients considering arm tattoos. There were too many potential pitfalls in the work place.

But now things have changed.

"These days, for a gal to have a full sleeve is not uncommon," said Wang, owner of Waukesha Tattoo Company.

He and others in the industry say attitudes have changed toward tattoos, with the number of employers who object to them increasingly in the minority.

"These days, servers, bartenders, nurses, even teachers, they have tattoos," Wang said.

With a smaller employment pool, he mused it's possible employers cannot afford to be as picky.

Research published recently in the journal Human Relations surveyed more than 2,000 people and found that those with tattoos were just as likely to be employed as those who were not, according to an Associated Press story.

The figures were not impacted by the number or visibility of the tattoos, the article said.

At Waukesha Tattoo Company, more clients are asking about tattoos for faces and hands, places that used to be uncommon for requests, Wang said.

But even with more accommodating workplaces, Wang said at his business he and



Submitted photo

A henna arm tattoo by henna artist Khushbu Randerwala. Her business, Elegant Henna Tattoos, is located in Menomonee Falls. Randerwala has had customers interested in tattoos on their hands, feet, ankles and thighs recently. At Waukesha Tattoo Company, owner George Wang said today's employers are more accommodating of tattoos than in the past. He has had more clients asking about tattoos on faces and hands recently.

the other staff will talk with clients about face or hand tattoos, asking if their career path is set before going forward.

"Going on the face or neck, on the fingers or hands, sometimes it's a little bit too visible. Sometimes that can limit your potential," he said. "It doesn't mean your abilities are different, but some people will still have that preconceived notion."

At Epic Ink in Allenton, Mindy Murphy has witnessed a variety of requests with increasing interest in tattoos in places like under the sternum.

She said trends have evolved so that many employers are fine with workers' tattoos, although she has seen variances in responses as well. Murphy has had some clients working in health care where tattoos needed to be covered but also a client who "worked at a hospital in the Milwaukee area and she had a neck tattoo and they were completely open to that."

If there is a more problematic area for tattoos lately, Murphy agreed with Wang that it would be facial tattoos.

She will counsel clients to consider their lifestyles, along with policies in their work place, when deciding on a tattoo.

"I wouldn't recommend losing a job over getting a tattoo," Murphy said.

Non-permanent options like henna tattoos are an option for some.

Henna comes from a plant grown in warm climates, said Khushbu Randerwala, whose business, Elegant Henna Tattoo, is located in Menomonee Falls.

She said the dry leaves are crushed with lemon, sugar, coffee and tea and soaked overnight. The resulting paste is put in a cone for application and Randerwala said the tattoos last for 8 to 10 days and are free of chemicals.

She said it is a type of tattoo children often try, as they are temporary, and occasion-

ally those who want to try out a design before getting a permanent tattoo, like a recent customer who opted for an Om sign symbolic of yoga and meditation.

"People do them for fun since they can wear them for a week," she said.

Randerwala has had customers interested in tattoos on their hands, feet, ankles and thighs. She's also seen some newer trends, like henna tattoos on baby bumps.

For some, the tattoos are used in cultural context, frequently weddings, Randerwala said.

Murphy agreed. "A lot of people are looking to incorporate their culture and ancestors," she said.

In general, Murphy said she feels tattoos can often be a means of starting conversations, as people will discuss things like the artwork and meaning behind each tattoo.

"It does help you interact with more people," she said.



Submitted rendering

Kiddie Academy, an early child care facility with locations in 30 states, could be coming to 15435 W. Capitol Drive.

New child care facility could be coming to Capitol Drive

By Ashley Haynes
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262-513-2681

BROOKFIELD — A new child care facility is being proposed in the city. According to Plan Commission documents, Bright Future of America, LLC has submitted architectural and site plans for a Kiddie Academy location at 15435 W. Capitol Drive.

Kiddie Academy is an early childhood education facility. Plan Commission documents propose a single-story facility that would be licensed for approximately 150-170 children and include adjacent play areas for different age groups.

The proposed hours for Kiddie Academy are Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"Based on the interest of parents who may wish to go out for date nights, we may operate indoors for 3-4 hours on weekends and weeknights," said Kuldeep Gupta, the owner of Bright Future America, LLC.

Gupta has brought the proposal to the Plan Commission.

In Gupta's letter to the commission, he explained that Kiddie Academy locations use "The Life Essentials" curriculum, which is "rooted in early childhood theory and incorporates learning through play while addressing physical, social, language, cognitive, and emotional development."

Some Brookfield residents in a neighboring subdivision to the site of the proposed Kiddie Corner location have sent concerns regarding hours, traffic and location to the Plan Commission.

"Permitting the construction of Kiddie Academy will substantially change the community type and purpose in an area that is zoned for residential use which is inappropriate and irresponsible of the City," said residents Michael and Michelle Hartmann in their written comments.

Resident Macy Zeznanski added that there are "many families in this neighborhood who love that space," which is a naturally wooded area.



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Elmbrook School Board approves new gym, HVAC projects for Tonawanda

By Ashley Haynes
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262-513-2681

BROOKFIELD — Tonawanda Elementary School is getting a long-awaited revamp.

During the recent Board of Education meeting, members gave the go-ahead for a \$4.4 million gymnasium project at the school as well as a \$2.8 million HVAC project that's been in the works for some time now. A key factor within the gym project is the addition of a new area for bus drop-off and pick-up.

"One of the village's (Elm Grove's) great challenges at the end of and beginning of the school day is that unique inter-

section right out front of Tonawanda becomes very congested because we pour every car and bus out of that parking lot simultaneously," said Superintendent Mark Hansen, adding the police department would love to see a solution in which the traffic is more split up.

Access to the school would also be created on Legion Drive.

The approved gym project will see a remodel of the existing art room, general music room and cafeteria.

A Facility Planning Task Force charged with bringing recommendations to the Board of Education in relation to space constraints within the district determined that a

new gym would allow Tonawanda to use all classroom spaces without the constraints of the current gym and cafeteria area.

"I just want to speak in favor of this proposal. I think it will go far towards the safety and convenience of the community in terms of traffic and parent pick-up and drop-off. It improves the capacity of the gymnasium and lets us make more efficient use of the building," said board member Linda Boucher.

HVAC project

In addition to the gym project, an HVAC project that school administrators said had been on the horizon was approved at the meeting.

An HVAC project was not part of the formal Task Force recommendations; however, both the Task Force and the board have considered the need to upgrade Tonawanda's HVAC system. The project was initially scheduled for this summer and was put on hold pending the Task Force's recommendations. The group recommended the upgrade of the HVAC system coincide with new gymnasium construction to save money and take advantage of efficiencies.

Elmbrook administrators also brought forward a proposal to do some security work at Tonawanda while other projects are already planned to take place.

But the security project

was tabled for now.

"We only have so much money to go around and so that's always my question. Is this the best place we should spend our money now?" said board member Allison Malnar.

Member Jian Sun agreed that just under \$400,000 for an "entrance change" seems like a lot.

The initial proposed project was similar to what other county school districts are doing in improving the line of sight for office staff to the parking lot so that they may immediately see who is approaching the school building.

The project was sent back to the Finance and Operations Committee for further research.

Renovated Sendik's in The Corners to reopen in October

Additions to include wine, beer offerings, bistro area

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD — Sendik's is investing \$5 million in renovations at its store in The Corners of Brookfield, which is only a few years old.

The company announced the official debut of the 40,000-square-foot grocery store with a new home store concept, new services and expanded selection will be in mid-October.

New additions to the store, include a sophisticated bistro area, complete with an extensive list of wine by the glass, local craft beer on tap, gourmet espresso drinks, nitro cold brew on tap, fresh-squeezed, cold-pressed juices and homemade smoothies.

On the main level of the renovated store will be a 7,000-square-foot Sendik's Home store, which will feature curated clothing selections, an in-store dressing room, a floral shop, international gourmet food selections and a variety of brand-name kitchen products like LeCruet, Staub, All Clad, Zwilling-Henckels and more.

"As The Corners continues to innovate and enhance the customer experience, we're thrilled to be taking part and elevating the shopping experience to one that has never been done before in southeastern Wisconsin," said Ted Balistreri, co-owner at Sendik's. "Our renovated store is so much more than a grocery store — it's a bistro, home and clothing store, floral shop and, most importantly, community gathering space all in one."

Sendik's is planning a weekend full of events and activities for its grand opening.



Submitted rendering

On the main level of the renovated store will be a 7,000-square-foot Sendik's Home store, which will feature curated clothing selections, an in-store dressing room, a floral shop, international gourmet food selections and a variety of brand-name kitchen products like LeCruet, Staub, All Clad, Zwilling-Henckels and more.



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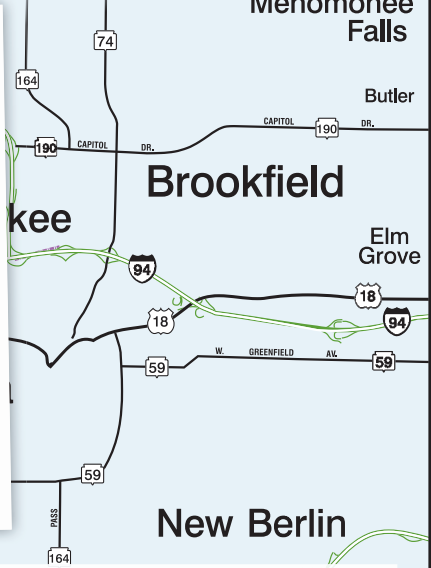
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Submitted photo
Arepa's Place is located in the Brookfield Square food court and opened in late June.



Submitted photo
Orangetheory is a new fitness center that has opened in Brookfield Square.

Brookfield Square announces new tenants

BROOKFIELD — Visitors to Brookfield Square just got a new food option and a place to get fit.

Arepa's Place is located in the food court and opened in late June. Orangetheory Fitness occupies a newly constructed 3,500-square-foot studio located at the south end of the property.

Arepa's Place serves traditional Venezuelan cuisine. According to the announcement, the restaurant has interpreted the taste of Venezuelan homemade food and offers local dishes with a modern touch. Arepa's offers fresh food prepared with quality ingredients with a combination of

Caribbean flavors. Menu items include arepas, empanadas, and Venezuelan drinks. Orangetheory Fitness is a science-backed, technology-tracked, coach-inspired group workout designed to produce results from the inside out.

"We are excited to welcome Arepa's Place and Orangetheory to Brookfield Square," said Scott Oleson, general manager of Brookfield Square. "The addition of Arepa's fits nicely into the mall's desire to provide a good mix of quick dining options in the food court and Orangetheory provides a convenient fitness option for our customers."

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Sadowski named principal of Dixon Elementary

BROOKFIELD — The School District of Elmbrook’s Board of Education approved the administration’s recommendation of Luke Sadowski as principal of Dixon Elementary last month. Sadowski was previously the associate principal of Swanson Elementary.

“Luke has proven educational leadership skills and has helped to cultivate a rich school culture at Swanson,” said Superintendent Mark Hansen. “We are excited to have Luke join Dixon’s administrative team.”

Prior to his position at Swanson, Sadowski also served as dean of students in the Wauwatosa School District and as a special education teacher for Wauwatosa, New Berlin,



Sadowski

and Waterford school districts.

“I am honored to have been selected as Dixon’s next principal and I look forward to continuing to serve Elmbrook students, families, and staff at this extraordinary school,” said Sadowski. He earned his Bachelor of Science and master’s degrees from Edgewood College, a Wisconsin Special Education Certification from St. Mary’s, and his principal license from Viterbo University.

Sadowski replaces Jeanne Siegenthaler, who was Dixon’s principal since 2008.

Town of Brookfield establishes visitors bureau

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD — The Brookfield Town Board approved the creation of a visitor bureau in partnership with the Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce, which will also end the town’s use of Visit Brookfield as its tourism entity.

As the town has added significant development and become more of a destination in recent years, the board took action to create its own visitors bureau. The new Town of Brookfield

Visitor Bureau will focus on attracting more visitors to the town and its restaurants, hotels and businesses.

One of the most notable recent developments was The Corners at the corner of Barker and Bluemound roads, which is a 750,000-square-foot lifestyle center and has several first-to-Wisconsin retailers and restaurants.

“The Town of Brookfield has truly become a regional tourism destination,” said

Keith Henderson, town chairman. “We are thrilled to establish the Town of Brookfield Visitor Bureau in partnership with the Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce, which will help us distinguish the town and its many entertainment, dining and recreational draws.”

The new Town of Brookfield Visitor Bureau will be funded through Town of Brookfield hotel room tax collections, as mandated by state law, and those funds

will be managed by the Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce for town-focused tourism efforts.

A task force will be set up initially to develop a framework for the structure of the tourism board and how it will operate. It also will plan on reaching out to local business partners to serve on the newly formed tourism board.

For more information about the Town of Brookfield, visit www.townofbrookfield.com.

Nominations sought for the 2019 Business Person of the Year Award

BROOKFIELD — The Elmbrook Rotary Club is seeking nominations for its 3rd annual Business Person of the Year Award.

The rotary club will present the 2019 Business Person of the Year award to a majority owner and operating head of a successful, for profit business that has

been located in the City of Brookfield, Town of Brookfield or Elm Grove for five or more years, who can show the impact of their leadership on the company.

“Elmbrook Rotary presents the Business Person of the Year Award to honor a strong local leader who

has entrepreneurial skills and strategic vision,” said Award Program Chair Ralph Gould. “This award helps Elmbrook Rotary Club shine a spotlight on a successful business owner and operator who is making a difference in our community.”

Award nominations will

be accepted online only through Saturday, Oct. 5 at the Elmbrook Rotary Club website at www.elmbrookrotary.org/Page/business-person-of-the-year. The 2019 Business Person of the Year award winner will be honored Friday, Oct. 25 at the Elmbrook Rotary Club meeting.





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Endangered bee species found in Waukesha County

WAUKESHA — Waukesha County’s Park System announced recently that the rusty patched bumble bee, a federally endangered species in the United States, has been discovered locally.

During the Park System’s first bumble bee survey of the year, administered by volunteers in Citizen Science Programs, residents made the discovery.

According to a County Parks press release, the rusty patched bumble bee was the first species of bumble bee to be listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2017.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that populations of the bee have declined by 87% in the last 20 years.

But several of them were found in native prairie plantings that park staff and volunteers are working to restore and maintain.

“One of the leading causes of the rusty patched bumble bee’s decline has been habitat loss and degradation due to factors such as invasive species,” said Waukesha County Conservation Biologist Julia Robson. “To find such a unique species in one of our parks that is actively utilizing native ecosystems such as prairie and oak savanna that we are working to restore and improve throughout the county is a sign that what we are doing has been successful.”

Bumblebees are among the most important pollinators of crops such as blueberries, cranberries and clover, and almost the only insect pollinators of tomatoes. Bumblebees are more effective pollinators than honey bees for some crops because of their ability to “buzz pollinate,” a technique used to release pollen firmly held by anthers.



Photo courtesy of Sam Holm

Rusty patched bumble bees, an endangered species, have been discovered in Waukesha County parks.

The economic value of pollination services provided by native insects (mostly bees) is estimated at \$3 billion per year in the United States.

Elmbrook ranked top school district in state

Niche lists best school districts for 2020

WAUKESHA — The results are in and Niche has ranked the Elmbrook School District as the best public school district in the state for 2020.

Niche, a team of data scientists, engineers and parents that rate categories like schools, companies and neighborhoods, rates school districts in the state and across the U.S. annually based on several criteria.

The 2020 Best School Districts ranking is based on “rigorous analysis of academic and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education, along with test scores, college date and ratings from millions of Niche users,” according to the Niche website.

Academics get the high-

est weight when it comes to the overall score at 50%; followed by a teachers grade, which is ranked at 15%; and a culture and diversity grade, which is ranked 10%.

Behind Elmbrook School District at No. 1 are:

■ Pewaukee School District at #10

Niche gives the PSD an overall grade of A+.

■ Hamilton School District at #11

Niche gives Hamilton an overall grade of A+.

■ Kettle Moraine School District at #14

Niche gives KM an overall score of A.

■ Menomonee Falls School District at #20

Niche gives the Falls an overall score of A.

No other Waukesha County school districts made the top 20 districts. When it comes to the best local schools, Elmbrook claims the best public middle school in the state with Pilgrim Park Middle School.

Brookfield Elementary was also ranked the best public elementary school in the state. Tonawanda Elementary came in second.

Elmbrook was knocked out of first place when it comes to the best public high school. That, according to Niche, is Whitefish Bay High School.

Elmbrook’s Brookfield East High School was ranked at No. 2 in the state, followed by Brookfield Central in eighth.



Photo courtesy of Waukesha County Business Alliance

Centare joins Business Alliance

BROOKFIELD — Centare, a software development firm based in Brookfield, recently joined the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

From left, Lisa Fetzer, Buzz Buswell and Sam Goeb of Centare, display their membership plaque.



Photo courtesy of Waukesha County Business Alliance

Business Alliance welcomes Sunbelt Business Advisors

BROOKFIELD — The Waukesha County Business Alliance recently welcomed Sunbelt Business Advisors as a new member. Sunbelt Business Advisors is a business brokerage firm with an office in Brookfield. Jim Gaulke of Sunbelt Business Advisors holds his membership plaque.



Photo courtesy of Waukesha County Business Alliance

CornerStone One joins Alliance

BROOKFIELD — Located in Brookfield, CornerStone One is an engineering, mechanical and earthwork firm in the construction and plumbing industries. The company recently joined the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

Matthias Bollmus and Dan Parman, both of CornerStone One, hold their membership plaque.



Photo courtesy of Waukesha County Business Alliance

Yorkshire Insurance Advisors joins Alliance

BROOKFIELD — Yorkshire Insurance Advisors is an independent insurance advisory firm in Brookfield. It recently joined the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

Lisa Dregne of Yorkshire Insurance Advisors, left, accepts a membership plaque from Janet Curtis of the Bryon Riesch Paralysis Foundation and a Waukesha County Business Alliance ambassador.



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BARBARA EASH

Antiques Appraised

Q: I inherited this vintage cookie jar from my loving grandma and have added a few matched pieces. She would tell me Mr. Cookie's eyes were closed and never knew who took a cookie.

— *A.P., Delfield*

A.: There were very few things that introduced smiles following the Great Depression of the 1920s-'30s. Moving from West Virginia to Ohio, the American Bisque Co. earned the title "King of Figural Pottery." This ceramic manufacturer designed whimsical containers that were on the outer margin of art.

Your piggy examples with a multicolored indented "dot pattern" was also modeled as cats, clowns or chicks. They were originally sold in Woolworth's and Kresge's until the 1950s, when cheaper imports far outnumbered originals. Replica molds were fashioned from authentic molds, resulting in less weight and they were usual-

ly 1-2 inches shorter. Most American Bisque pieces will be ID marked with (faint) under-glaze letters of "USA." Some earlier examples had a paper label which easily fell off. On the bottom there should be an unglazed wedge-shaped area known as a "dry foot" to prevent kiln sticking.

Most public libraries have books containing a wealth of information on cookie jar collectibles. Homemade cookies have never needed a false elevated status; your grouping certainly stretches smiles across generations! The 12-inch cookie jar, 8-inch milk pitcher and coin banks have brilliant coloring, no crazing and in near mint condition. **\$325.**

NOTE: Alternate uses for cookie jars today include daily vitamin bottles, recycled plastic bags, camera chargers, garlic or onions, hidden valuables or even packaged cookies.

A rare, American Bisque, Herman & Katnip Cookie Jar in mint condition recently sold for \$1,500.

Q: Thank you for considering a value on this lamp. It

was originally on a stair rail in the house belonging to grandparents, Lac La Belle, Oconomowoc.

— *P.J.N., Brookfield*

A.: Late 19th-century newel-post lamps would be installed on or near stairway banisters. Often dual sides had a matching pair. It became a form of decorative arts when ornamental presentation rated first, then utilitarian purpose second.

Lamp advertising print boasted terms like sculptural, multi-branch and flowing organic tendrils. However, there was no attempt to conceal the low lighting that impacted staircase safety issues.

French Art Nouveau style broke historical ranks and extensively used designs in art, architecture, furniture, jewelry and more. Lamps were draped with exaggerated lily plant vines, billowing garments on poised maidens with no restraint in use of curves. Like your example, American companies would recast famous French works from smelted metal. This white soft metal was weighty and had a bronze-like finish. The surface painting is an enameling technique producing fasci-



nating results — but eventually wore off from cleaning procedures. Often when musical instruments were incorporated like a lyre harp, these lamps would have been placed near a music parlor.

Your antique 25-inch newel-post lamp with a historical connection has a value of **\$1,600.**

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.

(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.)

Snapdragon designer earns Wisconsin Professional Designer of the Year Award

ELM GROVE — Jenn Breitbach, lead designer at Snapdragon Flowers of Elm Grove, was officially named Wisconsin Professional Designer of the Year recently after winning a statewide floral design competition at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Breitbach, lead designer at Snapdragon since 2016, won two honors: the judges' vote for Professional Designer of the Year, and an audience vote for the People's Choice Award. She is the first-ever winner of both awards, defeating three other finalists in the Wisconsin & Upper Michigan Florists Association competition.

"We're extremely proud of Jenn for winning these honors while competing against the best of her professional peers," said Rhonda Deaver, owner of Snapdragon Flowers of Elm Grove. "Jenn worked extremely hard to prepare for this event, and represented our Snapdragon team very well. She continually strives to improve her craft,

which is reflected in the amazing arrangements she creates for our customers."

A large crowd attended the Saturday competition, where Breitbach competed against florists from Green Bay, Portage and Appleton. Each was given one hour to create a centerpiece for a small table, and a buffet piece to be used on a larger table. The rules required that at least two of three specified design techniques be used, and that wire floral mesh be incorporated into at least one piece.

Breitbach, who qualified for the competition by taking top honors in March at the WUMFA convention, said she aimed to keep her designs simple, while closely following the rules. She used a floral mix of tropicals, lilies, roses, celosia, birds of paradise and berries in her winning arrangements. She added monstera and foxtail fern as greens.

Breitbach, a professional floral designer for 13 years, pre-

pared for months by studying floral design manuals, taking classes, watching an untold number of YouTube videos, and interacting with other designers on social media.

"I took inspiration from many amazing designers, and was humbled to learn from them," she said. "The competition itself was a big surprise. You don't know what you're getting into until you're there."

What's next after being recognized as Wisconsin's top floral designer? Breitbach plans to earn Certified Floral Designer status from WUMFA, which involves hands-on designs and a written test.

Located at 13458 Watertown Plank Road, in the heart of downtown Elm Grove, Snapdragon Flowers provides fresh, beautiful flowers and plants for people, events and occasions. Its unique, innovative arrangements and designs are designed to bring smiles when desired, and comfort when needed.



Photo courtesy of Snapdragon of Elm Grove

Jenn Breitbach, lead designer at Snapdragon Flowers of Elm Grove, left, and Rhonda Deaver, owner of Snapdragon Flowers, with winning arrangements.

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New golf experience like no other in state

Bauer opens The Practice Station in New Berlin as elite training facility

By **Chuck Delsman**
Special to Conley Media

NEW BERLIN — You’ve been to the driving range hundreds of times. You pound a couple of buckets of balls with a handful of clubs.

But when you’re finished, you’re not exactly sure just how much your practice time helped.

On the range, you can’t really tell just how far you were hitting your 6-iron. Other than the yardage signs, you can’t tell if you were short of your target or long. And with your driver, how far did you really hit it? Did it go 200 yards? Or maybe 220? And how far did it roll out?

And not many ranges have good, playable sand traps, if any at all. And that’s an area of concern for a lot of players.

The list of practice scenarios can go on and on. Until now.

Perhaps the most innovative practice facility in the state opened earlier this spring in New Berlin. The Practice Station, owned and operated by teaching professional John Bauer of Oconomowoc, can be found at the former nine-hole course called the Preserve at Deer Creek. While its still in its growing stages and improvements are being made daily, the facility is up and running, and open for business.

So, what makes The Practice Station so unique? It has



Photo courtesy of Emily Ho at The Practice Station

John Bauer of Oconomowoc has recently opened The Practice Station in New Berlin, which is a golf training golf course like no other in the state.

eight practice stations open every day, starting with a putting green, a groomed sand-trap area and six others that allow golfers to practice shots from measured areas as short as 35 yards out to driving holes.

And this is not like going to the range to work on 100-yard shots that just land in the grass. Every station has its own green with a hole and flag, allowing every golfer to actually see where his or her ball ends up. The stations are accurately measured to exact distances and marked accordingly. One of the stations was marked at 102 yards to the green last week. Others were marked at 137, 159, 170 and 200. And then there’s the driving hole where you tee it up and let it rip on a real golf hole.

Another thing that makes The Practice Station so unique is that all customers have three manicured golf holes they can actually play from tee to green. The first hole is a par-3 that measures 130 yards and the second is a par-4 covering 300 yards. The final hole is another par-4 that

measures 350 yards. The holes include freshly mowed greens with bunkers coming in play on all three.

Bauer, who owned and gave indoor lessons at JBJ Golf in Hartland for the last nine years, is excited about what The Practice Facility will offer golfers of all abilities from southeastern Wisconsin.

“I’ve been in the golf business quite a few years and I’ve never heard of anything like we have or seen anything like this,” Bauer said. “It’s the perfect practice facility because you can practice all the shots and hit into actual greens. If people truly want to work on their games and get better, this is the place to do it.”

Bauer also said at The Practice Station, you can work on all of the shots you’ll encounter when you’re playing a real round.

“You can not only hit the ball off of good lies, but you can also work on the difficult shots, tough lies and tough stances,” Bauer said. “We’ve got practice areas here for every shot you’ll see on the golf course. We’re excited about what we’re doing.”



Photo courtesy of Emily Ho at The Practice Station

Three players take turns hitting at practice holes at The Practice Station in New Berlin.

But unlike going to the range and hitting beat-up balls that have been around for a few years, The Practice Station has all brand new Titleist golf balls, making the experience even more realistic.

While not open yet, The Practice Station hopes to have a large driving range available on a year-round basis as well. Plans are to have that range open every day of the year, with heated bays available on those cold days in December, January, February and March.

And in those cold months of winter when all the local courses are closed, you can still play golf on two simulators located inside the clubhouse. Right now there is one indoor simulator available and come the fall, two simulators will be offered.

Bauer has purchased the cream of the crop in simulators, buying the Trackman units. Trackman is so sophisticated that it measures everything about the golf swing, from club-head speed, to ball-

speed, to swing path, to trajectory, to club-face angle and many more. Those are available on a rental basis every day, charging \$35 an hour; no matter how many players you have. And of course, on the simulators, you can play some of the best courses in the world, including St. Andrews, Muirfield, Innisbrook and Bethpage. There are more than 30 courses to choose from.

While Bauer does a lot of teaching, he’s also hired Heidi Haas-Brotchie to lead his instructors. Haas-Brotchie comes well qualified, having worked at prestigious Geneva National the last six years.

There are all kinds of ways to take part at The Practice Station. Daily fees are available for \$25 Monday through Thursday and \$30 on Friday through Sunday. That price gives you unlimited use of the outdoor facility. If you like, you can stay all day. It also includes the use of golf carts or push carts.

What might be the best value at The Practice Station

is that memberships can be purchased on a monthly or yearly arrangement. Plans are offered for individuals, couples, families and even businesses and corporations. All of the memberships include the three practice holes, eight practice stations, chipping and putting greens, discounted simulator practice, driving range (coming soon), golf carts and push carts, and alignment and training aids.

“We’re excited what The Practice Station can bring to the area,” Bauer said. “We’ve got something for every golfer. You can come and practice for 15 minutes at lunch or stay for two or three hours or longer. The entire family can come to practice.”

The Practice Station is located on Sunnyslope Road, about five miles south of Greenfield Avenue. It’s just one property north of New Berlin Eisenhower High School on the same side of the road. For more information call The Practice Station at (262) 784-9779.

PACKERS

Undrafted rookie WR Shepherd creating buzz

Wideout has drawn comparisons to Randall Cobb

By **Rob Reischel**
Special to Conley Media

GREEN BAY — Tramon Williams, who’s seen just about everything in his 13 NFL seasons, remembers the buzz in Green Bay when Randall Cobb arrived back in 2011.

Quick. Shifty. Sudden. Explosive. Cobb had everything you’d dream of when designing the ideal slot receiver.

These days, Williams wonders if he’s watching Cobb 2.0 when he looks at rookie Darrius Shepherd.

Shepherd, an undrafted free agent from North Dakota State, has been one of the stars of the Green Bay Packers’ training camp. Shepherd has turned heads with his sensational play from the slot, excelling on a daily basis against anyone and everyone the Packers have thrown at him.

“He is the one receiver we have who has the body of a natural slot,” Williams said of Shepherd. “He has the quickness and is built specifically for that position. He is obviously showing up on the field every day and I think every team needs a really good slot, for sure.”

For eight years, Cobb was that player in Green Bay. Although Cobb battled through injuries that sidelined him for 23 games, he still ranks sixth in Packers’ history in receptions (470) and 11th in both yards (5,524) and touchdowns (41).

Cobb left for Dallas in free agency this offseason, and the Packers didn’t specifically address the position of slot receiver in either the draft or free agency. But Green Bay may have stumbled onto something when it signed the undrafted Shepherd nine days after the NFL Draft.

Shepherd has made his mark with steady, and sometimes spectacular performances on the practice field each day. Then in Green Bay’s preseason opener, Shepherd hauled in a 14-yard touchdown pass in which he went high in the air and survived a nasty hit afterwards from Houston’s Johnson Bade-mosi.

“It’s nice to do it on the big stage, when you know it really counts, come through for the team,” Shepherd said afterwards. “So hopefully just keep that up and stay consistent.”

Many of Shepherd’s measurable compare favorably to Cobb’s eight years earlier.

Shepherd is 5-foot-11, 186 pounds. Cobb was 5-10, 191. Shepherd’s vertical jump was 35.5 inches, which was two inches better than Cobb’s. Cobb’s time in the three-cone drill was 7.08, which was slightly better than Shepherd’s (7.13).

Cobb’s 40-yard dash time (4.46), though, was substantially better than Shepherd’s (4.57) and Cobb faced elite competition at Kentucky, while Shepherd played in the Football Championship Subdivision, formerly Division

1-AA. Those are two reasons Cobb was drafted with the final pick in the second round, while Shepherd wasn’t signed for more than a week after the draft.

How you get somewhere, though, doesn’t matter: It’s what you do once you’re there.

And halfway through training camp, Shepherd is certainly making the most of his opportunity.

“The key with him is he’s been really good mentally,” Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers said. “He’s not having any mistakes or repeat mistakes with plays as far as alignment. He’s fine in his feel, running routes. I think he’s a very shifty guy. I think he can play in the slot, be effective.”

Shepherd was certainly effective at North Dakota State, where he played the 2015 season with Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz and helped the Bison win three national championships (2015, 2017-18).

Shepherd finished his career with 188 receptions for 2,841 yards and 20 touchdowns. And last year, Pro Football Focus gave Shepherd the second-highest grade among receivers after he caught 62 passes for 1,065 yards and nine TDs.

“I hoped someone was going to take a shot on me,” Shepherd told reporters last week.

The Packers did — and could wind up with a steal.

Shepherd has impressed day-in and day-out on the practice field. In fact, during a practice last Saturday, Shepherd whipped safety Natrell Jamerson on what would have been a long touchdown, and afterwards, Rodgers raced downfield to celebrate with the little-known rookie.

“He’s been consistent. I think he was probably the first guy in this locker room to learn the playbook — before any quarterback learned it,” No. 2 quarterback DeShone Kizer said of Shepherd. “He was a guy who put a bunch of effort and time into making sure he was going to be prepared to play.”

“We all knew that he had the ability, with the speed and his smarts and his route-running, to be able to play well. I think it’s been shown throughout training camp. He came into preseason Game 1 and did exactly what we expected him to do. I wouldn’t be surprised if he continued to do it all the rest of the preseason and hopefully into the regular season.”

If Shepherd continues to shine, it will be fascinating to see what the Packers do.

Green Bay has talked all offseason about making Geronimo Allison its primary slot receiver this season. But Allison (6-3, 202) is built to play outside and has spent most of his career there.

It would be a remarkable leap of faith — and an incredible Cinderella story — if Shepherd is the Packers’ top slot receiver when they travel to Chicago on Sept. 5 for the season opener. Right now, though, anything seems possible.

“Shep’s done a great job,” Packers coach Matt LaFleur said. “He made a heck of a catch in the (preseason) game on that off-schedule. He’s made some nice plays in practice, so yeah, we want to see what he can do in more of those game-type situations.”

Willkom revisits stint with MU

Walked on for Golden Eagles

By **Mark Hutchinson**
mhutchinson@conley.net.com
262-513-2693

OCONOMOWOC — Their indelible images are always featured in “One Shining Moment,” which punctuates the NCAA men’s basketball season each year.

Most of them rarely see game action, but come tournament time, they get more television exposure than some of the players who actually play.

They are admitted to every game for free, yet they occupy some of the best seats in the house — when they’re not on their feet, jumping around, waving towels or taking part in pre-planned stunts and celebrations.

They are the walk-ons of the college hoops world.

John Willkom was one of them, but in his new book, “Walk-On Warrior: Drive, Discipline, and The Will to Win,” he shares a dramatically different perspective on his fraternity than the one many of us get while planted in front of our TV set during the winter months.

And thanks to a keen memory, storytelling prowess and writing skills, he shares it well.

Willkom, who began his prep career at Marshfield’s Columbus Catholic High School, transferred and became a three-time all-conference and all-area performer for Marshfield Senior High School.

Following one season of NCAA Division-II basketball at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, Willkom moved back to his home state and fulfilled a lifelong dream. He transferred to Marquette University, was awarded a roster spot as a walk-on by coach Tom Crean and experienced D-I basketball first-hand during the 2004-05 season.

Willkom’s odyssey bore almost no resemblance to those sideline scenes that he, too, has witnessed time and again on TV during the month of March.

“You would think that college coaches would want to keep the three best walk-ons they can find every year, but that doesn’t appear to be the case in a lot of places,” Willkom said. “There’s a family legacy involved with a lot of kids who are linked to a particular school by his parents or another family member.”

“We never jumped around like that and put on a sideshow on the bench. If we had, I’m sure Coach Crean would have walked us to the door himself and our college basketball careers would have been over.”

Willkom did have a lifelong family tie to Marquette, and he didn’t wind up there by coincidence.

“My dad (Monte) was a Marquette student during the national championship season in 1977, and my entire life revolved



Submitted photo

John Willkom takes the court with his Marquette University basketball teammates during the Golden Eagles’ 2004-05 season.

around Marquette basketball,” Willkom said. “We watched every game we could on TV.”

Willkom elected to transfer to Marquette to be in a fast-paced, urban setting where he knew he would receive a top-notch education. He didn’t consider himself talented enough to play basketball at Marquette, but he wrote a letter to Crean inquiring about the possibility of becoming a team manager and soon found himself working some MU summer basketball camps.

Former Marquette player Brian Wardle, then MU’s Director of Basketball Operations, oversaw the camps. Wardle was impressed enough with Willkom’s contributions that he asked him if he’d be interested in walking on to Marquette’s team.

Willkom worked out relentlessly back in Marshfield, and three weeks into his first school year at Marquette, he began going through an arduous series of workouts with several other walk-on candidates.

The coaches told them point-blank that, “We want you to quit. The faster you drop out, say you can’t, or just give up, the faster we can move on with our lives.”

The 5-foot-11, 160-pound guard found himself exhausted, sore and dehydrated on multiple occasions, but he persevered.

Between workouts, he was asked to write a one-page letter to Crean telling him why he should be on the team, and he expressed his firm belief that wearing the MU uniform meant more to him than anyone else vying for a spot.

The next day, Willkom met with Crean and was informed that he had earned a spot on the team.

One of Willkom’s primary responsibilities was to challenge MU’s starters — guys like future National Basketball Association players Steve Novak and Travis Diener — during daily practices and to mimic opposing teams’ top players to prepare the starters for each game.

Many of the individuals with whom Willkom crossed paths during his Marquette years left indelible impressions on him, but the most fascinating was the late Rick Majerus for whom he

worked doing odd jobs during the summer of 2006.

Willkom shares several classic Majerus tales in the book.

One of the missions on which Majerus sent Willkom was to pick up an order at Usinger’s Sausage Company. Willkom obliged and was amazed to learn that the order consisted of 89 pounds of bratwurst, which he later loaded into a freezer in Majerus’ garage.

“Rick Majerus was just so different from any other person I’ve ever been around,” Willkom said. “He would hand me his cellphone and tell me to call or text all of these famous people. He was so unique.”

“I’d heard things and seen things written about what a demanding coach he was, but when I asked him about the players he coached, he just gushed about them and how he believed he got the absolute most out of them.”

Willkom did his best to do the same over the span of several years while coaching basketball in several states at various levels.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in business, marketing and entrepreneurship from Marquette and a master’s degree in business administration from Loyola University of Chicago.

He is currently the Director of CPG at NetRush and resides in Vancouver, Wash., with his wife, Allison, and their eight-month-old daughter, Avery.

Willkom was asked if he wished he’d had a reference of what life as a D-I college basketball walk-on was like before he found out for himself.

“That’s a good question,” he said. “I worked Marquette summer camps, and (former MU walk-ons) Jared Sichting and Tony Gries were around, but we never talked about how it went down for them.”

“I had played Division-II basketball before I walked on at Marquette, so I had a taste of it, but the strength and conditioning demands that were required to play Division-I college hoops were eye-opening.”

“We got our butts kicked every day.”