

# Brookfield & Elm Grove

## THIS MONTH

JANUARY 2020

## New housing development concept proposed in Brookfield

Cottage Commons would be a ‘pocket neighborhood,’ rarely been used in Midwest

By Dave Fidlin  
Special to The Freeman

BROOKFIELD — Two traditional single-family homes near the city of Brookfield’s historic village area could soon give way to a new concept housing development known as Cottage Commons, which has been referred to as a pocket neighborhood.

Based on the concept plan from developer Winter Fields LLC, Cottage Commons would encompass 16 single-family, detached condominiums on land of more than 4 acres at Pleasant and 186th streets.

At their core, pocket neighborhoods have a central courtyard area that becomes a focal point for the cluster of homes surrounding it. The condo-style units each have garages in a denser setting that in some respects is different from Brookfield’s more sprawling suburban codes and standards.

“It enhances a sense of community,” Scott Simon of Winter Fields said of the

goal behind Cottage Commons. “Rather than build a traditional apartment building, we are trying something different.”

Simon, who went before the city Plan Commission recently with his initial pitch, received favorable reviews at first blush. However, a number of granular, technical details still need to be hashed out.

Since it is a new concept in Brookfield, “It may take some time to reconcile it in its application,” Richard VanDerWal, neighborhood planning coordinator, told commissioners since the city’s code does not currently permit some of the features within the proposal.

With a few exceptions, Simon said pocket neighborhoods essentially are a foreign concept in the Midwest. They are more common, he said, in the Pacific Northwest, namely in Washington and Oregon.

Commissioner Steve Pettit, who has professional experience with pocket neighborhoods, said there



Submitted rendering

Renderings of the “pocket neighborhood” proposed for Brookfield.

have been critiques of the concept in other locales.

“It kind of turns its back on the community a little bit,” Pettit said, pointing out how the fronts of the homes typically feed off the central courtyard. However, Simon and other representatives have said they are amenable to making modifications so the development blends with other homes in the area.

While he noted concerns raised elsewhere in the past, Pettit said he did favor the pocket neighborhood concept for the area.

“It’s been slow to catch on in our area because of the weather, the climate,” Pettit said. “But I think it’s something that’s going to catch on, for sure.”

Alderman Gary Mahkorn, who serves on the Plan Commission, said he believes Cottage Commons would be a logical fit, given its proximity to the historic village area.



“If it’s going to be any place in the city of Brookfield, it’s going to be here,” Mahkorn said. “It’s one of the most charming areas. It has that vitality, and we want to support that charm.”

In terms of price point, Simon said he envisioned the pocket neighborhood having a luxury concept with each condo-style home unit being priced in the upper \$300,000 range and possibly in the lower \$400,000 range.

The city’s review of the concept plan remains in its tentative stages, and a number of further reviews are anticipated as 2020 gets underway. Neighborhood meetings, rezoning the land and reviews from the decision-making Common Council are still part of the process.

“February probably would be the soonest,” VanDerWal said, in reference to when the project will go back under the microscope for further review.

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Star Wars fans show up in Force

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# Farewell to The Force

'Star Wars' premieres  
final movie  
in third trilogy

By Alex Nemec  
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TOWN OF BROOKFIELD — "Taking one last look, sir, at my friends."

Those words were spoken by the iconic character C-3PO in the trailer for "Star Wars: Episode 9 - The Rise of Skywalker," the last installment in the third "Star Wars" trilogy.

Thousands flocked to movie theaters opening week-end to possibly do the same as they find out the fate of their beloved characters in the massive franchise.

Marcus Theatres Vice President of Sales Clint Wisialowski said movie premieres like this release are like the Super Bowl for theaters.

"We get a few of these opportunities a year," Wisialowski said. "You get the excitement of this film and all the advance ticket sales and people geared up for it."

Wisialowski said once people buy their tickets online, Marcus Theatres has a chance to showcase what it offers to moviegoers.

"When you get a film like this that brings a whole bunch of people out, some of them not regulars, it's a really neat chance to show them what we provide," Wisialowski said.

A huge "Star Wars" fan himself, Wisialowski said he thinks movies — and this final episode in the "Star Wars" trilogy specifically — are great cultural works that everyone talks about.

"I think as conversation starters and what I call bubble talk, movies are still the thing you want to talk about," Wisialowski said. "On Monday, people are going to be asking each other if they saw 'Star Wars' and if they liked it."

To make the occasion special, Wisialowski said Marcus Theatres tries to build up excitement for the movie with anything fans can touch.

"We've got a 'Star Wars' specialty tub in the concession stand, and what I think is a phenomenal R2D2 specialty cup," he said.

In addition, he said multiple locations had "Star Wars" trivia and characters from the movie on site.

Wisialowski — who grew up with the "Star Wars" franchise and recently celebrated 30 years with the company — said he loves how big movie franchises bring in tons of fans because of how everyone interacts with one another and how the fans are all there to enjoy something they truly love.

"The pride that these people have. For them and for me, this is a defining film, it taps into my geekiness and I love that I'm not alone," Wisialowski said.

"That theater is going to be packed with nerds just like me."



Alex Nemec/Freeman Staff

Sree, Veer and Rocky Karri get ready to see the new "Star Wars" movie Dec. 19.



Darth Vader wished moviegoers a merry Christmas at the premiere Dec. 19.



The special "Star Wars" popcorn tub and R2D2 mug.



Andrew Alling and Greg Flearman with Paragon Development Systems don their "Star Wars" memorabilia at the Dec. 19 premiere.



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# Town of Brookfield incorporation would include ‘islands’ of land

## Several boundary agreements with neighbors under review

**By Dave Fidlin**  
Special to The Freeman

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD — Efforts to incorporate the Town of Brookfield into a village would include the so-called “islands,” or portions of the municipality that are not contiguous with the bulk of the community, officials have confirmed.

Looking to take advantage of state legislation that could offer special exceptions for incorporation, Town of Brookfield officials continue to take the necessary steps to try achieving village status, Town Administrator Tom Hagie said this week.

The limited-term legislation enacted in 2015 offers special provisions for certain towns falling under specific parameters. Some of the typical sticking points, including encompassing a 4-square-mile radius footprint, do

not necessarily have to be present for incorporation under the legislation, which sunsets June 30, 2020.

Another exemption in the 2015 legislation is what a town can and cannot add into its boundaries. Under normal circumstances, town islands are typically absorbed by another surrounding city or village.

But Hagie said all of the Town of Brookfield’s existing footprint is being included in the incorporation application.

“The boundaries would stay just as they are now, including the islands,” Hagie said.

In typical circumstances, towns seeking incorporation need to go through a lengthy process, including hearings and similar steps through the state Department of Administration.

The 2015 legislation has given towns the opportunity to sidestep the process, meaning input from

neighboring municipalities is not an outright requirement.

Like many Wisconsin towns, Brookfield once encompassed 36 square miles before a series of annexations occurred.

A large chunk was incorporated into the city of Brookfield in the mid-1950s to prevent annexation from Milwaukee, and other slivers were absorbed over time into other municipalities, including westerly portions into the city of Waukesha.

While there is a large contiguous portion of the town still intact — including areas surrounding the new Corners development — there also are detached areas, including subdivisions along Springdale Road.

While not directly tied to incorporation, Hagie said the town has been or is in the process of entering into cooperative boundary agreements with some of its neighbors, including New Berlin and the Town of Waukesha.

“These were required plans (under state statute), and we held the necessary public hearings,” Hagie said. “We’re going through

the whole process.”

Other municipalities, including the city of Brookfield, are beginning to explore possible legal strategies in response to the Town of Brookfield’s incorporation effort. The Brookfield Common Council on Dec. 17 met behind closed doors to discuss the issue.

Brookfield is one of at least five towns in Waukesha County — the others being Lisbon, Vernon, Oconomowoc and Waukesha — seeking to take advantage of the 2015 legislation and achieve the fast-tracked incorporation process.

Incorporation is not a new concept in the Town of Brookfield. Nearly a decade ago, an attempt was made to become a village, though the effort failed because the state’s traditional 4-square-mile radius threshold was in play at the time.

An attempt was made at the time to incorporate with an adjacent portion of Town of Waukesha land to meet the threshold, though the effort ultimately failed.

# Brookfield mayor: \$32M Conference Center opening in April

**By Nikki Brahm**  
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BROOKFIELD — The \$32 million Brookfield Conference Center is nearing completion for January and is about 54,000 square feet.

The conference center will include an 18,000-square-foot main ballroom, a 6,000-square-foot junior ballroom, a 10,000-square-foot atrium and a 9,000-square-foot outdoor plaza.

The conference center is located on the south side of Brookfield Square Mall off of I-94 and will connect to the new Hilton Garden Inn via an enclosed walkway. The New Hilton Garden Inn will feature 168 rooms, 1,700-square-feet of additional meeting space, and an onsite restaurant and bar.

“The land is \$5.5 million, which has been acquired through a tax incremental financing district on the south end of the Brookfield Square Mall,” said

Mayor Steve Ponto.

Ponto said the remaining \$26.5 million is the cost of construction, professional services and furnishing.

“That amount is being paid by an increase in the room tax on city of Brookfield hotels,” Ponto said. “The room tax was increased from 8% to 10.5%. The hotels were generally supportive of this increase because the conference (center) is anticipated to generate a lot of hotel stays and other economic activity.”

Ponto said the conference center is expected to finish construction at the end of January and be open for business in the beginning of April.

“I think that’s going to have a major beneficial impact on the area,” Ponto said.

Brookfield, along with Visit Brookfield and North Central Group, broke ground for the conference center and adjoining Hilton Garden Inn in October of 2018.



Nikki Brahm/Freeman Staff

The Brookfield Conference Center is nearing the end of its construction.

## Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria eyes summer opening

### Chain making inroads into state with second site

BROOKFIELD — Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria will open a full-service restaurant in Brookfield in summer 2020.

“Wisconsin has long been apart of our business,” said Meggie Lindberg, marketing manager at Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria. “We’ve been sourcing our cheese, which is a critical competent of our pizza, since our beginning from Wisconsin. So it just made sense to put one up there.”

The 7,750-square-foot pizzeria will be located at 15795 W. Bluemound Road.

Brookfield will be the second Lou Malnati’s location to open in Wisconsin, but it will be the Chicago-style pizza chain’s first full-service restaurant in the state.

“We want to have a couple of locations in the Milwaukee market,” Lindberg said.

The restaurant will be able to seat over 180 dine-in customers. The pizzeria will also include a full bar, an outdoor patio for the warmer months and private party rooms where guests can host special occasions. Carryout, delivery and drop-off catering services will also be offered at the Brookfield location.

Lou Malnati started working at Chicago’s first deep dish pizzeria in the 1940s and opened his first restaurant

named after himself in 1971. Today, the pizza chain has over 50 locations in Illinois and 3 locations in Arizona.

Lou Malnati’s has been praised by food critics and fans of Chicago-style pizza since it first opened. In a battle of old school vs. new school on “Good Morning America’s” “Strahan and Sara” show on May 8, the hosts of the show along with celebrity chef Anne Burrell declared Lou Malnati’s deep dish pizza the official best pizza in Chicago.

“It’s nice to be named “best pizza” on morning shows and newspapers,” Lindberg said. “But it’s really just getting involved in the community that’s the most important thing.”



Photo courtesy of the Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce

## International Barbershop has ribbon-cutting

BROOKFIELD — The Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for International Barbershop on Dec. 3.

International Barbershop is considered an upscale barbershop that provides old-school barbering services exclusively for men and boys with a modern twist. It is located at 13720 W. Captao Drive. For more information visit [www.internationalbarbershops.com](http://www.internationalbarbershops.com).

Pictured in the front row, from left: **Robert Feest**, Robert J. Feest & Associates and Brookfield Chamber board member; **Carol White**, Brookfield Chamber president; **Sua Thao**, International Barbershop; **Jose Martinez**, International Barbershop owner; **Yaimelys Ortiz**, International Barbershop; **Kazoua Lor**, International Barbershop; **Melisa Maroo**, Brookfield Chamber investor relations manager; and **Alan Fischer**, Voya Financial Advisors.



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# Another reason to smile

The Smiley Barn selected for one of two Playmobil playrooms

By Ian Bergersen  
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DELAFIELD — Despite being loved by children around the world, Playmobil had yet to bring its interactive playrooms to the United States prior to this holiday season. After exhausting its list of potential toy stores across the nation, the company decided on just two locations: world-renowned FAO Schwarz’s store in New York City, and local favorite The Smiley Barn in Delafield.

Maria Luther, owner of The Smiley Barn, and Mary O’Malley, The Smiley Barn’s general manager, got together for lunch one day and discussed the possibility of having a Playmobil store in the upper space of The Smiley Barn, similar to Lego stores in malls. O’Malley is a seasoned toy sales representative with experience selling Playmobil, so she knew people within the company that they could reach out to.

It turned out that Playmobil had already been putting together a list of candidates to host a dedicated showroom, and the company decided to consider The Smiley Barn. Playmobil’s vice president of U.S. sales flew in from New York City with one of its top marketing professionals to tour The Smiley Barn and its upper space.

“I think they were impressed by the barn and the amount of space it had, and with the location being proximate to Milwaukee, Madison and the Chicago area,” Luther said.

The Playmobil representatives liked what they saw, and decided to choose The Smiley Barn as one of the first two toy stores in the United States to house a Playmobil-themed play-

room. Luther and O’Malley incorporated ideas and suggestions from Playmobil’s marketing professional, and also came up with some on their own. Corporate supplied all the decorations, such as play stations, life-size Playmobil figurines and a huge mural featuring the toys.

On Nov. 17, the Playmobil room had its grand opening and became one of The Smiley Barn’s highest days of sales, second only to the opening day of the store itself.

“It was packed,” Luther said. “Sales of Playmobil were through the roof. It was a wonderful way to start.”

Playmobil sets remain extremely popular items at the store, and the room continues to see steady traffic.

“We’re working as hard as we can to keep the shelves stocked,” Luther said.

### Bringing back the magic of old-fashioned toy stores

An attorney by profession, Luther wanted to start a business where she could be creative and give back to the community, so she decided to start a local toy shop.

“When looking for a business, I didn’t have the goal of just making money, I had a goal of doing something that could benefit others,” Luther said. “I feel that there’s a loss of these magical, old-fashioned toy stores that can become part of a kid’s happy childhood memories. I wanted to give that to others.”

After looking at regular commercial properties, Luther found out that The Smiley Barn, which had lost its smiley face in 2001 when The Amish Barn moved in, was up for sale. There were already two bids on the location from



Ian Bergersen/Special to The Freeman

Pierce Anderson plays with the Playmobil space toy set as his mother, Becky Anderson, watches.

buyers who wanted to tear the barn down and build fast food restaurants on the property.

“I took that as a sign that it was meant to be,” Luther said. “We had to save the barn.”

Her bid on the property was accepted, and she immediately got to work restoring the barn’s former smiley face. But the problem was that the smiley was too large under Delafield’s signage ordinance. So the Delafield community gathered over 1,000 signatures to get approval on restoring the smiley face.

“We had so much community support,” Luther said. “People really missed their Smiley Barn. It was gone for 17 years, but everyone remembered it.”

The Delafield Plan Commission deemed the smiley face to be public art, rather than signage, and allowed it to return home.

Getting the iconic smiley face back wasn’t the only challenge; the barn was in rough shape and needed to be dramatically remodeled.

“There were a lot of things that needed to be done that we didn’t recognize when we came in,” Luther said.

The wood that made up the outside walls and floors was rotted out and needed to be replaced. None of the



Ian Bergersen/Special to The Freeman

The second-floor playroom at The Smiley Barn features Playmobil toy sets, life-size Playmobil figures and a mural of Playmobil characters.

electrical was up to code, the heating and air conditioning was outdated and the parking needed to be redone. The interior of the barn was partitioned into display rooms and offices, new bathrooms were put in and everything was repainted.

After constant work on the barn and planning the business, The Smiley Barn held its grand opening on Aug. 25, 2018. Luther said

that the local toy shop has been thriving since the day it opened.

“It’s nice not to put so much money into the remodeling and maintenance of the barn, and instead being able to put that more directly into the customer experience,” Luther said. “We are going to continue to expand as we grow into our space.”

She said that the next step planned for 2020 is to

rebuild the dilapidated patio outside of the barn to allow for outdoor seating and events. In the next two years or so, Luther wants to make use of the barn’s silo.

“The outpouring support from the community has been absolutely amazing,” Luther said. “I’ve had over 100 people personally thank me as they walk through the store for bringing the smiley back. They just love it.”

# A league of their own

## Competitive gaming coming to Carroll University in fall

By Nikki Brahm  
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WAUKESHA — Carroll University students can expect a new form of competitive recreation that may not traditionally be viewed as a recreational sport, through electronic sports, which is coming to the Campus Center with a gaming facility in the fall of 2020.

Carroll University’s first esports coach, Joe Loomis, has been involved in developing the program. Loomis said a little over a year ago he developed a program at another university before coming to Carroll. Loomis has been involved with the National Association of Collegiate Esports and is a member of the National Association of Esports Coaches and Directors.

Loomis said esports are simply video games which date back to when two people were competing for a high score on an arcade video game. Now, esports on Carroll’s campus will include popular video games on both PC and console.

“Those could be games such as Overwatch, Rocket League, League of Legends and Dota 2,” Loomis said. “Those are some of the most popular games in the world on PC. On console we’ll have games like Madden, 2K Basketball, Street Fighter ...”

Esports will be similar to traditional sports, with students able to join together to form teams for each game where they compete against other teams from other universities. Competitions will be mostly in-house, where students will be able to compete from a new gaming facility which will be renovated during the spring semester. The facility will have PC and gaming consoles including PlayStation 4, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 5 when it comes out. Both recreational and varsity team esports opportunities will be offered. Team sizes will vary depending on the amount of players needed in each game.

“Marquette, Edgewood, UW-Stout (and) UW-Whitewater are some of the universities that are local,” Loomis said. “The NACE currently has 170 colleges and universities across the United States and Canada that are associated with them. NACE is the governing body, they formed about three years ago, and they’re overseeing the growth of esports through the collegiate scene right now.”

Loomis said teams will be competing on online venues from their home gaming facilities.

“So Tespa and Collegiate Starleague are the two big leagues that we’ll be participating in,” Loomis said “As well as the NACE championship series, which is the national series we will hope to be in in the near future. Now there are also some other small leagues that we may participate in like the Midwest sports league and we’ll have some opportunities there to also participate in with our different titles.”

Loomis said esports is still new and many schools do not have an official university program. Some are led by student organizations.



Nikki Brahm/Freeman Staff

Esports Coach Joe Loomis discusses the future of Esports coming to Carroll University in the fall of 2020.

“So for instance a school might be an organization but not receive funding from the university or might not have a true facility as Carroll will have,” Loomis said.

Loomis has related experience with a master’s degree in recreation and an undergrad degree in sports management. Students will also have requirements for joining the league similar to those of a varsity sports team — 15 hours of practice a week.

“That practice, while some of it is in front of a computer screen and they’re working on their skills for their game, there’s also a physical requirement to it,” Loomis said.

In order to keep a healthy heart rate, competitors will have physical training which includes cardio and weight training built into their practice schedule. Loomis said gaming addiction is not necessarily a concern but something they want to keep in mind.


“We’re going to be monitoring how often students are using our facility to make sure who’s using it and how much they’re using it, so that we know that we don’t have somebody in there for 40 hours a week playing video games,” Loomis said.

Loomis said there are benefits that come with students playing esports.

“Research says that students that are participating in esports test higher in areas of critical thinking,” Loomis said. “We are a liberal arts institution and that’s very much at the forefront of who we are. Making sure that we’re building that skill with our students.”

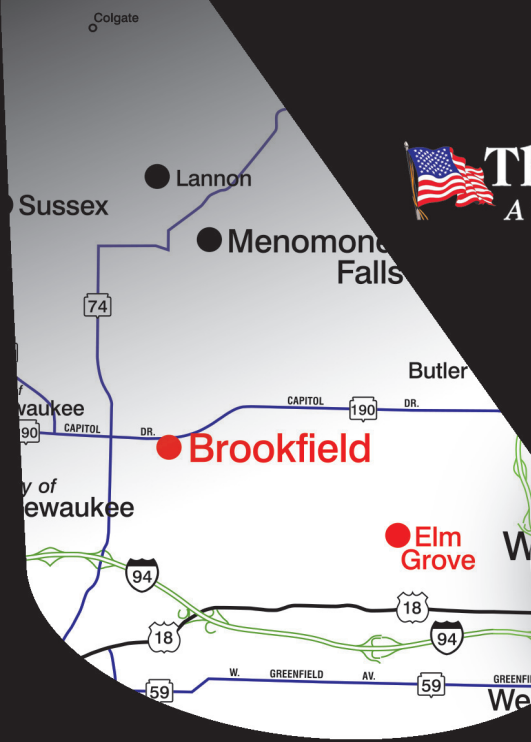
Loomis said students will also be able to apply for private scholarship opportunities. Carroll will not offer scholarships for its competitive players.

Esports is open to students of all majors at Carroll. The gaming facility will be available for students to use in their free time outside of reserved hours for the competitive leagues. Students will be able to rent games to play in their room as well. Carroll University is currently recruiting students for teams, including students from all over the world.



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# Mementos of Christmases past

## Hooligan ornament will keep you Happy, but chalkware value fades



**Q.** My father told me he never liked this ornament on Grandmother’s Christmas tree in the 1940s. I considered it so fascinating and was allowed to hang it on the back of our tree. Any thought on value or history?  
— Margaret, North Prairie

**A.** From 1900-1932 Fredrick B. Oppen created a newspaper comic strip for Hearst’s New York Journal called “Happy Hooligan.” Often called the laugh maker, Oppen’s reputation heightened via the use of a hobo figure. During presidential election campaigns, biting caricatures were hurled weekly. Your example’s colors are red, white and blue; it was no surprise when President Hoover and former President Coolidge attended the Happy Hooligan 30th birthday celebration.

Even famous doll companies like Steiff and Schoenhut sold hobo dolls. There are earlier versions of Happy Hooligan with far less detailing, smaller sized, but with extended annealed glass limbs. For an added layer of protection, blown-glass ornaments often were wrapped with fine, curly wire.

Your 9-inch ornament with rich paint color, in near mint condition, has an estimated value of \$350 and could be much higher in an antique Christmas collectibles auction. I think Happy Hooligan had a protected place on the back side of the tree!

\*\*\*

**Q.** My grandmother was born in 1880. At some point this 13-inch tall Santa belonged to her. Can you tell me more about it?  
— Phyllis, Waukesha

**A.** Often called chalkware, plaster composition figures of every description were molded and hand-decorated. Thousands were made in early 20th century and given away (or won) at county fairs and carnivals.

Chalk will disintegrate when washed, often will chip or break, and paint wears off easily. The jolly and plump Santa that we know today was created in the 1950s as an advertising gimmick. Vintage chalkware items are always highly sentimental but sadly retain little value.



BARBARA EASH

Antiques Appraised

Estimate for your grandmother’s Santa: **\$25.00**

### Packing Christmas memories

In the early 20th century, most tree ornaments were imported and then purchased from the local dime store. However, care instructions were never included.

To keep your antique and vintage items in the best possible condition, avoid these five common mistakes:

■ **Attic storage:** Temperatures fluctuate, especially in cardboard boxes.

■ **Damp basements or a garage:** Pests and mildew destroy keepsakes.

■ **Rough cleaning:** Use only a soft baby toothbrush.

■ **No newspaper:** Wrap in white tissue paper or archival paper.

■ **Avoid direct contact with plastic baggies, tape, rubber bands or paper clips.**

### Have an item for appraisal?

If you have an item you’d like to be appraised, mail entries to Waukesha Antique Shop, 1427 E. Racine Ave., Unit E-2, Waukesha, WI 53186.

Send sharp, well-lit photos of front, back and underside of your item, and measurements are important.

List any known history or even hearsay, length of ownership and all markings, even partial ones.

Include your name, address and phone number.

No photos can be returned and no purchase of antiques 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.)*



# Behind the numbers: Why your 401(k) is the key to your retirement future

By Chris Hogan

Do you know what millionaires say is the number one tool for building wealth? Is it single stocks? Nope. How about real estate? Guess again. What about an inheritance? Not even close.

The answer, according to our National Study of Millionaires (<https://www.dav-eramsey.com/research/the-national-study-of-millionaires>), is the 401(k). In fact, eight out of 10 millionaires said investing in their employer-sponsored retirement plan—which included 401(k)s—was their main tool for reaching millionaire status.

That’s right: The same tool that thousands of millionaires used to build their wealth is likely available to you at your workplace! Are you making the most of it?

Let’s take a closer look at what makes the 401(k) the perfect place to begin saving for retirement and building wealth:

■ If your employer match-

es your contributions (and most do), you get an instant 100% return on part of the money you invest in your 401(k). That’s free money, people. Take it!

■ **Tax-deferred growth** means your money grows faster.

■ **Pretax contributions** lower your taxable income, allowing you to invest more.

■ You can invest up to \$19,000 per individual per year. If you’re 50 or older, the contribution limit increases to \$25,000 per year to help you catch up.

■ If you leave your company or the company goes under, your 401(k) is safe and you can roll it over directly into another retirement account.

That’s a pretty good deal, right? But listen to me, before you start investing in your 401(k), you need to be debt-free (everything except the house) and have an emergency fund with enough savings to cover three to six months of expenses. Why?

Because you’ll be able to

invest more when you don’t have any debt payments, and you won’t have to turn to a credit card or your 401(k) to repair a broken air conditioner or car engine. Those are really bad ideas!

Getting back to the 401(k) and saving for retirement, way too many Americans are getting close to retirement with nowhere near enough money saved up. Among households headed by someone over 55 years old, almost half of them (48%) have nothing saved for retirement—not a single penny. That’s not okay!

If you invested just 4% of your \$50,000 income into your 401(k) from age 25 to age 65, you could have \$1.2 million saved for retirement. What if your company matches that 4%? You could have \$2.4 million saved for retirement. And this is assuming you never got a single raise. That’s crazy!

A lot of folks come up to me and say, “Well, that sounds great, Chris, but I’m in my 50s and I have nothing

saved for retirement! What am I supposed to do?” Listen to me: Whether you’re 21 or 61, it’s never too early or too late to start saving for retirement. You can start right where you are.

Let’s say you just turned 50 years old and you’re worried that you don’t have enough saved for your retirement years. You’re panicked! But instead of giving up, you get really focused and save \$625 every month into your 401(k) starting today. If you did that, you could have around \$500,000 by the time you’re 70 years old. That’s pretty good!

The bottom line is, there’s no time to waste. It’s time to get focused. No matter what age or stage of life you’re in, you can use your 401(k) to build wealth and get closer to the retirement you’ve always dreamed of. Let’s get to work!

*(You can follow Chris Hogan on Twitter and Instagram at @ChrisHogan360 and online at [chrishogan360.com](http://chrishogan360.com) or [facebook.com/chris\\_hogan360](http://facebook.com/chris_hogan360).)*

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

## Hotel tax projected to collect \$800,000

Will help fund visitors’ bureau

By Nikki Brahm  
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262-513-2651

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD — After the Brookfield Town Board approved the creation of the Town of Brookfield Tourism and Visitor Bureau, early stages of development of the bureau and a tourism board are in the works.

The town switched from Visit Brookfield to create its own tourism entity. Town of Brookfield Administrator Tom Hagie said the goal is to focus on promoting the town attractions and offerings that benefit the businesses and residents.

Funding for the bureau will be through Town of

Brookfield hotel room tax collections, as mandated by state law. Hagie said the town’s current hotel room tax rate is 8%. The projected 2020 room tax collection is roughly \$800,000. Hagie said the tax rate has been the same since it first began in the ‘90s.

“Out of the \$800,000 there’s a split in there,” Hagie said. “So in 2020 the town will retain roughly \$440,000 and then the rest of it goes towards the tourism [bureau].”

Hagie said the board and bureau should be established soon, but does not have a specific date.

“Their next steps will be to start meeting with the board and start planning out projects to go forward,” Hagie said.

Local businesses on the board have not yet been named. Final members of the board have not yet been selected.

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# ProHealth Care offers new incontinence therapy

WAUKESHA — ProHealth Care is the first health care system in Wisconsin to use an advanced wireless therapy to help women who experience incontinence to better manage their condition. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, urinary incontinence affects twice as many women as men due to pregnancy, childbirth and menopause. More than four in 10 women 65 and older have urinary incontinence. Bowel incontinence is also common in older adults.

Urgency urinary incontinence, sometimes called urge incontinence, is a sudden, intense urge to urinate followed by an involuntary loss of urine. Bowel incontinence is involuntary leaking of stool.

“Patients who experience urgency urinary incontinence or bowel incontinence often limit their activities, which affects quality of life and can be socially isolating,” said Dr. Sarit Aschkenazi, a urogynecologist with ProHealth Medical Group. “Wireless sacral neuromodulation therapy is for patients who have already tried lifestyle changes, physical therapy and medication.”

The therapy uses a stimulator implanted under the patient’s skin on one side of the lower back to provide discreet, imperceptible and continuous electrical pulses



Submitted photo

The Axonics Therapy sacral neuromodulation device for bowel and urinary urgency incontinence includes a miniaturized rectangular neurostimulator that is placed under the patient’s skin in the lower back, a handheld remote, a battery recharging system and a small square wireless receiver for the charger.

that help the patient maintain bladder and bowel continence. The device gently stimulates sacral nerves in the pelvis that control the pelvic floor muscles, sphincter, bladder and lower bowel.

“I kept waiting for the next good thing to come out, and this is one of them,” said Leona Joslyn, a Waukesha resident who began the therapy in November. “Before I had the implant I was really going through a lot of bladder protection products.”

Once it is confirmed that the therapy is efficiently treating urgency and incon-

tinence symptoms, the stimulator is implanted during a short surgical procedure. The patient uses a small, handheld, programmed remote to adjust the strength of the stimulation.

Aschkenazi said that in the past, the implant was not MRI compatible. Patients expecting to need MRI imaging would often opt out of this treatment. In addition, the prior device was not rechargeable and had a life span of about five years.

For more information, contact ProHealth Care’s Women’s Health Services at 262-928-2594.

# Two Republicans express desire for medical marijuana ‘conversation’

By Benjamin Yount  
The Center Square

MADISON — A pair of Republican legislators say they want to at least have a conversation about medical marijuana in the state.

Rep. Mary Felzkowski, R-Irma, and Sen. Kathy Bernier, R-Chippewa Falls, have introduced a proposal to create a Medical Marijuana Regulatory Commission.

The idea is to allow patients with certain medical conditions to get a recommendation for medical marijuana from participating doctors. That would then give people access to a medical marijuana card.

Felzkowski and Bernier claim such an approach is a popular idea in Wisconsin.

“The 2018 referendums made it clear that Wisconsinites are asking the Legis-

lature to really look at this issue,” Felzkowski said. “Each one of us knows someone that has suffered through an illness. Medical marijuana is just another tool in the toolbox to help our suffering loved ones make it through the day with some semblance of normalcy.”

“With 33 other states leading the way on this, we can and must find a way to make this work in Wisconsin,” Bernier added. “The medical marijuana program our bill establishes is highly regulated while still creating access to the relief many Wisconsinites need as they deal with continuous pain.”

But the proposal is very likely dead on arrival in the Capitol.

Senate Republican Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald

quickly said he doesn’t support a medical marijuana program, and added that he doesn’t think other Republican senators do either.

Many of Wisconsin’s Democratic leaders do support medical marijuana, and some even support recreational marijuana.

Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, said so do a lot of Wisconsin voters.

“At some point, GOP leadership needs to realize that Wisconsin has quickly fallen behind. Our neighboring states have legal cannabis in some form, and Wisconsin residents overwhelmingly support it for medical use,” Erpenbach said.

“Let’s get the discussion started and figure out a bill that works for Wisconsin. We need a public hearing, it’s the best next step.”

# Supreme Court to decide rules for police searches

By Benjamin Yount  
The Center Square

The Wisconsin Supreme Court will decide when police can, and when they cannot, search a motorist’s car.

The high court has agreed to hear five cases. Among them is the State of Wisconsin v. Alfonso Lorenzo Brooks. The case is based on Brooks’ 2015 arrest for having a gun while also being a felon.

Brooks’ appeal is predicated on what his attorney claims was an abuse by Milwaukee County deputies when they exercised “community caretaker” powers

while searching his car during a traffic stop.

Deputies told the trial court and the appeals court that they stopped Brooks in August 2015 for speeding. That’s when they discovered that he had a suspended license. Because he didn’t have a license, deputies told Brooks to get out of the car and informed him that it was going to be towed. Brooks was free to leave, but deputies suggested he stay until the tow truck arrived. That’s when deputies say they conducted an “inventory search” ahead of the tow. That search turned up the gun, police said, and Brooks was arrested.

Brooks’ lawyers are arguing that deputies should have allowed him to leave the car as-is, where it was. They say the car was not illegally parked and was not a traffic hazard. Brooks told deputies during the stop that his girlfriend was on her way to get the car.

The Supreme Court said the issue before the court is just how broad Wisconsin’s “community caretaker” standard can go. The appeals court that heard the case last said Brooks is claiming deputies could have allowed his car to stay where it was without searching it.



Katherine Beck/Conley Media

A home listed for sale on Oxford Road in Waukesha recently.

# Home sales up, listings down in November

## Metro-area home sales remain slow

By Katherine Beck  
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262-513-2644

Home sales in metro Milwaukee saw a slight increase during the month of November, while listings were down compared to the same time last year, according to data released Dec. 12 by the Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors.

The four-county region of Ozaukee, Waukesha, Washington and Milwaukee counties saw a 0.3% increase in home sales last month.

Ozaukee County experienced a significant drop in home sales of 32.1%. Washington County’s sales also declined — 5.9%.

Milwaukee and Wauke-

sha counties both saw an increase in sales: 2.9% and 5.1% respectively.

November marked the fifth consecutive month of positive sales in 2019.

“At this point in the annual cycle we often see sales trail off, but with listings up in September and October there were enough homes available for buyers to close on in November,” reads the report by Mike Ruzicka, president of the GMAR.

“There is nothing on the horizon that would indicate the first few months of 2020 will not continue the current trend. The regional economic footing that the housing market is built on — low unemployment, household growth, low

interest rates — provides an environment for healthy demand.”

Both Washington County and Ozaukee County had increases in listings in November. Listings in Washington County had an uptick of 19.1% and Ozaukee County went up 14.3%. Waukesha County was down 11.7% and Milwaukee County was down 6.1%.

“While it seems that the overall market is leaning in favor of sellers, it really depends on which price point a property is in. Multiple offers have slowed, and buyers are making counter demands. Also, a home must be in ‘move in’ condition to attract good, quality offers,” reads Ruzicka’s report.

# Group sues to stop proposed victims’ rights amendment

## Marsy’s Law grants victims more access to the cases involving them

By Benjamin Yount  
The Center Square

There could be a court fight looming over a proposed constitutional amendment granting crime victims more rights in Wisconsin.

The so-called Marsy’s Law would require courts and judges to include victims when sentencing and dealing with suspects and convicted criminals throughout the court process.

But the Wisconsin Justice Initiative is challenging the proposal in a lawsuit filed recently.

“Voters are being asked to vote on a single sentence that doesn’t remotely begin to describe what Marsy’s Law is and what it does,” Craig Johnson, board president of the Wisconsin Justice Initiative (WJI), said.

The sentence that voters are supposed to see in April isn’t that simple.

“Question 1. Additional

rights of crime victims. Shall section 9m of article I of the constitution, which gives certain rights to crime victims, be amended to give crime victims additional rights, to require that the rights of crime victims be protected with equal force to the protections afforded the accused while leaving the federal constitutional rights of the accused intact, and to allow crime victims to enforce their rights in court?” the ballot question reads.

Essentially, supporters of the law say that language will protect victims of crimes and keep them as part of the legal process.

“Victims of crime often feel re-victimized by our legal system,” Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin State Chair Teri Jendusa-Nicolai said in a statement.

“Rather than allowing the voters to have their say this April, [WJI] has launched this desperate

attempt to derail this effort through drawn-out legal delays that will waste taxpayer dollars.”

Jendusa-Nicolai said a large majority of Wisconsin lawmakers twice voted in favor of Marsy’s Law.

But the WJI claims Marsy’s Law would give victims new rights that step on the constitutional rights of the people convicted of crimes.

“In Wisconsin, we already consult and protect the rights of victims during criminal proceedings,” Johnson said.

“This deceptive amendment threatens to force people into our already clogged criminal justice system by undermining the fundamental concept of ‘innocent until proven guilty.’ Wisconsin’s rate of incarceration already makes us a nationwide outlier, and this proposed amendment will add to the staggering human and financial costs of mass incarceration. We either need to stop this amendment, or make clear to voters what it would really do.”

Voters are supposed to have their say on the proposed amendment in April.

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# Draft bill would make harassing sports officials a crime

**By Ashley Haynes**  
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WAUKESHA — State lawmakers are backing up sport officials with a draft bill that would create a new penalty for spectators who act disorderly at sporting events.

The preliminary draft of LRB 4781, which has not yet been formally introduced, would make harassing a referee, umpire, judge or other sports official a Class A misdemeanor. Currently, any person found to be harassing a sports official is subject to a Class B forfeiture.

Over the last several years, an increasingly aggressive culture of verbally and sometimes even physically abusing sports referees has led to a national shortage of such officials.

“The crescendo of this, of people being obnoxious at games, is probably 10 years ago. I think it’s a little better now. It’s still there, don’t get me wrong, but I think it’s a little better now,” said sportswriter and Freeman corre-

spondent Chuck Delsman, who has also been a local referee for 47 years and officiates around 250 games annually.

He explained that right now, at high school sporting events, there are normally gym supervisors on hand to deal with unruly fans. Delsman said he finds it best not to approach or make a comment to a fan directly, but have the gym supervisor or home team coach handle it.

The draft bill specifies that if a spectator were found to be harassing a sports official, they could be penalized with up to 40 hours of community service or ordered to participate in counseling such as anger management.

Delsman said he was unsure if any incidents he’s seen at sporting events would warrant those kind of penalties.

“I don’t know about that. Not knowing the background of those people who are obnoxious in these stands ... I could see it might work but I don’t know how enforceable that might be,” Delsman said.

He has questions about who would be responsible for actually issuing the ticket if the draft bill were to eventually get through all the needed stages of approval.

He also questioned whether the bill could just be a “scare tactic” to discourage spectators from unruly behavior.

Regardless, Delsman said, in his opinion, spectators have actually gotten a little better this year, ending a several-year trend of increased disruption.

Dave Birch, another local referee who has been a high school basketball official for 36 years and a volleyball official for 25 years, said he would support the bill, especially if it helps retain younger officials who need more time to learn how to deal with fans.

Birch said he could also see the bill serving as a deterrent to disorderly behavior.

“I hope it does but without real consequences, I don’t think it will help much. I’d love to see a hefty fine if (it’s

a) first offense,” Birch said.

**Statewide support**

Despite still being a work in progress, the draft bill has already received official sponsorship from the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association. WIAA officials released a statement that voiced concern with the ongoing decline of high school sports officials.

According to the National Association of Sports Officials’ National Officiating Survey, which questioned 17,000 sports officials across the country, 56.9% of respondents said sportsmanship is getting worse and 42.8% of respondents believed that most new officials quit within the first one to three years.

“Responding to the national crisis as a result of the shortage of amateur and youth sport officials, we applaud and recognize the Wisconsin legislature’s bipartisan efforts to create protections for the men and women that officiate these events,” said WIAA Executive Director Dave Anderson



Photo courtesy of Kenny Yoo

Referee Patrick Courtney officiates a hockey game between Arrowhead and Kettle Moraine-Mukwonago-Oconomowoc (KMMO) hockey teams.

ties and society.”

Other organizations supporting the bill include the National Association of Sport Officials, Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.



Photo courtesy of WISDOT

A member of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation State Patrol makes contact with a vehicle. A legislator is touting a plan to toughen penalties for those who break the state's move-over law.

## Legislation would strengthen Wisconsin’s move-over law for first responders

**By Benjamin Yount**  
The Center Square

Crashes and traffic stops along Wisconsin’s highways could soon be treated like makeshift work zones under a new proposal at the statehouse in Madison.

Rep. Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point, is pushing a plan that would strengthen the penalties for anyone who speeds past first responders on the side of the road.

“I heard from multiple fire departments around the state that they’d rather run into a burning building than respond to an accident on the highway due to the risk of reckless drivers,” Shankland said recently.

The proposal does a few things. First, it strengthens the penalties for things like reckless driving in areas where first responders or roadside response vehicles are present.

Second, it creates an

“I heard from multiple fire departments around the state that they’d rather run into a burning building than respond to an accident on the highway due to the risk of reckless drivers.”

— Rep. Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point

“emergency response area” similar to a work zone, and allows first responders to slow down traffic in the area.

And lastly, Shankland’s plan requires the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) educate drivers about any changes, as well as the general risks involved in driving when first responders are on the side of the road.

“This bill strives to protect our first responders and roadside workers from danger by creating an emergency response area, similar to a work zone, in which first responders can

slow down traffic by reducing the speed limit, and where fines would double for speeding, reckless driving, and other traffic violations, including using a cell phone while driving,” Shankland said.

The current penalty for reckless driving in Wisconsin is a ticket that starts as low as \$25 and goes up to \$200 for a first offense. If a driver hits someone, the penalty can jump to 3.5 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The WDOT reports the state sees about 200 crashes involving first responders each year.

## Report: Wisconsin, Texas lead 30 states that slashed environmental agency funds

**Study: Half of states cut environmental agencies 10%**

**By Bethany Blankley**  
The Center Square

According to a new study of state budget records, 30 state governments cut funding for their environmental agencies’ pollution control programs and 40 reduced environmental agency staff size.

The nonpartisan Environmental Integrity Project’s report, “The Thin Green Line: Cuts to State Pollution Control Agencies Threaten Public Health,” examined spending and staffing in state pollution control programs in 48 U.S. states excluding Alaska and Hawaii over a 10-year period.

Twenty-five states imposed cuts of at least 10 percent on their environmental agencies; 16 reduced spending by more than 20 percent, when adjusted for inflation, according to the report.

The states with the most cuts to environmental agency funding are Wisconsin, Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina, Delaware, New York, Arizona, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Mexico.

Anne Rolfes, director of the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, an environmental organization, said in response to the findings, “The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality needs two things: more money in its budget and the will to enforce the law. Demoralized employees lack the proper funding to do their jobs, and they are vulnerable to industry pressure.”

Twenty-one states cut their environmental workforce by at least 10 percent; nine cut their workforce by 20 percent or more.

The states with the most cuts to their environmental agency staff were Illinois, North Carolina, Arizona, Louisiana, New York, Tennessee, Michigan, Delaware, Florida and New Jersey.

Illinois cut the most environmental agency jobs between 2008 and 2018, by 38%, or the equivalent of 1,028 full-time positions.

Jen Walling, executive director of the nonprofit Illinois Environmental Council, said in response to the reports findings: “I know the people at IEPA are trying to do their jobs and the obligations we’ve given them with limited resources, but it’s just too little and the work isn’t getting done. This means that people are subject to more pollution, polluters are getting away with more violations, and also, for industry, it takes longer to obtain a permit in Illinois.”

Overall, states eliminated 4,400 positions at their environmental agencies.

“The White House and Congress reduced EPA’s funding and staffing for pollution control and science programs by 16 percent from 2008 to 2018, when adjusted for inflation,” the report states. “During this period, many states slashed their own environmental agency funding by an even greater percentage – notably Texas (35%), North Carolina (34%), and Illinois (25%). The reductions in these state environmental programs came even though state spending was growing overall, and environmental threats were rising, including a booming oil and gas industry and climate change.”

Drew Ball, director of

Environment North Carolina, said in response to the findings, “This idea that we can just slowly underfund our state environmental agencies, and that is somehow going to be beneficial to the state or business is just really backward. It doesn’t help business and certainly doesn’t help the health and safety of families.”

The cuts were “deliberate policy choices,” the reports states.

In Texas, after adjusting for inflation, funding for the state Commission on Environmental Quality was cut by 35%, while state government spending increased by 41%.

In fiscal year 2008, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality had \$578 million in its budget, accounting for inflation. In 2018, it had \$374 million.

TCEQ staffing declined by 9%, from 2,884 full-time-equivalent positions in 2008 to 2,616 positions in 2018, according to the report.

TCEQ’s Pollution Prevention Planning program was cut by 70%, according to the report, from \$6 million in 2008 to \$1.8 million in 2018. The agency’s waste assessment and planning program was cut by 61%, from \$16.4 million to \$6.4 million.

But the numbers don’t tell the whole story, according to a TCEQ spokesman.

“The agency reallocates positions as needed to meet resource needs,” state environmental agency spokesman Brian McGovern said in a statement. “TCEQ’s regulatory programs are protective of human health and the environment.”

According to the state, the correct number of full-time environmental employees, as of the current fiscal year, is 2,820.

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# Packers consistent force in December

## As weather worsens, Green Bay only gets better

By Rob Reischel  
Freeman Correspondent

GREEN BAY — The December weather in Green Bay is often some of the worst in the country.

Wind chills can dip below zero on a daily basis. Or in the case of the Ice Bowl, they can hit an inhumane minus-46.

In an average year, it snows 9.2 days with an average accumulation of 13.1 inches.

And adding to the melancholy mood, the average December daylight in Green Bay is just 8.9 hours.

But somehow, some way, as the conditions worsen, the Green Bay Packers get better.

Since 1992 — when Brett Favre helped lead a football renaissance in the NFL's smallest city — the Packers have played remarkably well in the final month of the year.

In that time, Green Bay is 90-37 in regular-season games played in December and January for a .710 winning percentage. Only New England is better in that stretch, going 91-35 (.722).

When asked the No. 1 reason why the Packers have shine late in the year, many players immediately pointed to their ability to excel in adverse weather conditions.

“Being in Lambeau Field

in December, it's an advantage,” Packers right tackle Bryan Bulaga said. “People can cut it one way or the other. They can say, ‘Oh the Packers have to play in the lousy weather too and the rotten conditions.’ But we're very much acclimated to the climate and the weather conditions and to the snow and the rain. Whatever it's going to be, we like being here in December.”

Running back Jamaal Williams agreed.

“It's part of our nature, part of Green Bay football,” Williams said. “If you want to play football in Green Bay, you've got to be able to play in all weather. Rain, snow, sleet, it don't matter to me. You've just got to be ready to play.”

The Packers certainly have been ready late in the season.

Mike Holmgren, who coached Green Bay from 1992-98, went a sensational 22-7 in the final month of the year (.759). Mike Sherman, the Packers' coach from 2000-05, matched Holmgren by also going 22-7 (.759).

Mike McCarthy, became Green Bay's coach in 2006 and was fired with four games left in the 2018 season. In December and January games, McCarthy was a stellar 39-18 (.684).

Joe Philbin, who finished up for McCarthy last season,



Freeman file photo

Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers seems to play better in December.

was 2-2 in the final month (.500). And Ray Rhodes went just 2-3 (.400) in 1999, his only year as the Packers' coach.

Now, compare that to the rest of the year, where the Packers have played solid football, but nowhere near as good as the end of the season.

Since 1992, Green Bay is 61-36-1 in September games for a .628 winning percentage. The Packers are 58-39 in October (.598). And Green Bay's worst month has been November, where it's 61-51-1 (.544).

“The cold is a factor,”

Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers said. “It's not like we're a bunch of Wisconsin folks who were born and raised here, but I think you just learn to deal with the elements a little bit better when you're spending eight months a year here.

“When I go back to California, I laugh at all the Californians wearing long sleeves and coats in 60-degree weather. I'm thinking, ‘Man, this is shorts weather, short sleeves. Get the speedo out or something.’”

While the weather certainly works in Green Bay's favor late in the year, there's

much more to it than that.

Since 1992, the Packers have reached the postseason 19 times. Only New England (20) has been to the playoffs more in that time.

Green Bay has won two Super Bowl titles in that stretch, played in a third, reached seven NFC championship games and won 12 NFC North crowns.

That means that most seasons, every game Green Bay has played in December has held great meaning. Even in the rare years when the Packers have struggled, their passionate fan base demands maximum effort,

which has led to respectable finishes.

“There's such an emphasis of finishing strong in the fourth quarter to propel yourself into the postseason,” Bulaga said. “If you win one game in the fourth quarter and you limp into the playoffs, you're probably not going to have great success moving forward. So there's a big emphasis on finishing out these last four games in December in a strong fashion. And winning teams and guys that have been around winning understand that mentality. There's a little more sense of urgency.”

All of that could mean big things for Green Bay in 2019. The Packers are 12-3, lead the NFC North by one game over Minnesota and are currently the No. 2 seed in the conference.

“We love this time of the year,” Bulaga said. “Yes, it snows and rains, but you eventually get used to it and you embrace it and you learn to play well it. You learn to truly let it be an advantage for you.

“We move around in this weather all year long. We go outside and practice in it, and you just have to embrace it and get your body ready to play in it. And that's a big deal up here.

“Right now, we've put ourselves in a great position. Everything's in front of us. If we take care of our business, we'll put ourselves in a good spot. That's all you can ask for, and I think this team is ready to embrace that.”

# Hamilton, Central in loaded sectional again

## Lancers knocked off Chargers in last year's final

It seems almost like a crime that for the second straight year arguably the two best boys basketball teams in the state could meet in a WIAA Division 1 state tournament sectional championship game.

And you know what that means. One team and its entire school district and student body gets to enjoy the euphoria of advancing to the prestigious season-ending state tournament at the fabulous Kohl Center in Madison. Unfortunately, the losing team has to make the long trip home, knowing they won't be going to the state meet with a chance to hoist that coveted gold ball. Even though that team could be the best team in the state.

Last March, on a cold Saturday night in Oconomowoc, arguably the two best teams in the state played in the sectional championship game and underdog Brookfield Central stunned Hamilton, 69-62 in a classic showdown of outstanding high school basketball. It was a shame one of them had to lose, because both belonged at the state tournament.

To tell you how even in talent the Chargers and Lancers were is the fact that Hamilton won both games in the regular season in the highly competitive Greater Metro Conference. The Chargers, coached by Andy Cerroni, stopped Dan Wandrey's Central team by

scores of 69-61 and 67-56. Despite losing those two games by a total of 19 points, it was Central that got the upper hand in the sectional and grabbed the state tournament berth.

And of course, to nobody's surprise, the Lancers, with five losses, won the state title by grabbing two relatively easy wins. In the title game, Central was clearly the best team, defeating Sun Prairie by a comfortable 69-52 score.

So, here we are again, with the same sad scenario. Hamilton and Central recently were ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in the state in the wissports.net Division 1 state rankings. Most likely, no matter who wins their two games in conference play, those two schools will just flip-flop in the top two spots.

But come March, the two state powerhouses are once again locked into the same sectional. If things go as planned, barring any upsets, the Chargers and Lancers will play in the sectional finals at a site to be determined. If indeed that happens, let's hope the WIAA puts this game in a venue large enough (how about the Al McGuire Center?) to accommodate as many fans as possible. Because this will be the best pairing in the state.

However, there's more talent in the same sectional. As good as Central and Hamilton are, they're not mortal



CHUCK DELSMAN



locks to make it that far. The sectional has had four teams ranked in the top seven in the state and several other teams that are off to good starts with the potential to spring an upset or two.

Right behind Hamilton and Central are No. 6-ranked Arrowhead and No. 7-ranked Brookfield East. There must be something in the water in Brookfield these days, producing all of these outstanding teams and players.



Freeman file photo

**ABOVE:** Hamilton's Patrick Baldwin Jr. drives the ball to the basket against Brookfield Central in last year's WIAA Division 1 sectional final at Oconomowoc. The Lancers won the game and went on to win the state title. Both teams are again in the same loaded sectional this season. **LEFT:** Brookfield Central's David Joplin drives the ball to the basket and draws a foul on Hamilton's J.T. Hoytink in the first half of last season's sectional final at Oconomowoc.

But there's more danger in the sectional. Throw in the likes of Milwaukee King (4-0), Bay Port (4-0) and Homestead (4-3) and you have the best sectional in the state.

Take a look at these early-season records. Hamilton and Central are both off to 4-0 starts, same as Brookfield East. And Arrowhead is off to a solid start, sporting a 5-1 record, that only loss coming to Central.

Could the WIAA have split

the Chargers and Lancers up this season? That's always a possibility. They knew both would be powerhouses once again. But it's easier said than done. The WIAA's job is not an easy one.

So, still with a lot of season to be played and barring any major roster losses, it certainly looks like Hamilton and Central are ready to clash once again in the sectional final. These two teams both belong at the

state tournament. But that's not how things work out all the time.

I do know this: Both are exceptional teams. And seeing that the cards have been dealt, I hope that epic rematch takes place in a venue big enough so that every fan that's interested, not just those from Hamilton and BC, can enjoy the game. And bring their friends.

Let's see how this all plays out.



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