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THIS MONTH

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The story behind the wine

Town of Delafield vineyard focused on growing unique, cold-weather grapes

By **Cara Spoto**
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TOWN OF DELAFIELD — Scott Cepolski and his wife bought their wooded, rolling lot off Silvernail Road seven years ago with an eye toward being outdoors and doing what they love best, which is growing things.

With an already established love of wine, the couple started planting the first of their grapevines, hoping to someday create wine they could appreciate themselves and perhaps one day share with others.

By the middle of 2019, Cepolski, who spent 20 years helping to improve the operations of multi-national companies, had left the corporate world to focus on creating a boutique vineyard and winery at the five-acre property.

Today Bela Vista Vineyard — “Bela” is spelled with one “l” as an homage to Cepolski’s wife’s Brazilian heritage — has about 465 vines in various stages of growth, with plans to add another 225.

Although Cepolski is mainly focused on growing vines that will produce the best possible grapes, he recently received approval from the town Plan Commission to run what Cepolski has dubbed FeNori Winery out of the couple’s soon-to-be-

expanded home. The name is a combination of his father’s and mother’s first names: Felix and Norine.

Vine focused

A recent visit to the property found the grapevines wound about their trellises, soaking in the July sunlight, and the FeNori wine cellar already under construction.

Standing amid bunches of Maréchal Foch grapes, Cepolski said his focus is on creating truly unique wines produced entirely from cold-weather grapes he grows himself.

“If I want to be a great cook, I just don’t want to buy my groceries from anyone. If I can grow them, it is going to help me be that much better. Not to mention, when I give someone that plate of food, I am going to be able to tell them, from the beginning, what went into that dish,” Cepolski said.

“To me that’s what wine is really about. It is not just how it tastes. It’s ‘what is the story behind it?’ That is my personal goal here. It’s not, how can I retire making the most wine? Or have people saying, ‘Scott’s got the best wine.’ It’s ‘OK, what’s unique about it?’”

Cold-weather revolution

While there are plenty of wineries that produce wine from cold-weather grapes, Cepolski says many of them

combine the juice from those grapes with those from grapes they buy. He wants to be a leader in making wine solely from cold-weather grapes. Right now, he has the Maréchal vines, which can withstand below-freezing weather, as well as some of extremely cold-weather-hardy La Crescent grapes, which can survive temperatures of 36 degrees below zero.

Eventually he hopes to grow other varieties, like Frontenac grapes, which can also handle frigid weather.

Unlike European varieties, which have been grown for centuries, most cold-weather grapes were only developed around 30 years ago by universities in Minnesota, Wisconsin and New York State. Being on the frontier of working with the grapes is something that excites Cepolski.

“I probably won’t be alive when cold-weather grapes really start to get big, but the opportunity to be at the beginning of that growth is awesome,” he said.

In addition to the five acres here in Waukesha County, Cepolski has land in Sawyer County, where he hopes to someday grow around 9,000 vines of the coldest-weather-hardy grapes, and even someday make ice wine, where grapes must freeze on the vine before being harvested.



Cara Spoto/Freeman Staff

Scott Cepolski, owner of Bela Vista Vineyard in the Town of Delafield, stands near a stand of Maréchal Foch vines. Cepolski is currently expanding his home on the property, which will someday be home to the boutique FeNori Winery.

Growing experience

Although Cepolski could end up making wine from his four-year-old Maréchal Foch grapes this year, whether he’ll be in a place to sell any of that wine will depend on whether he likes the wine himself and wants to share it, and if he has all the necessary approvals.

In the meantime he’s focused on making sure his youngest vines grow up to be just as healthy as the Maréchal vines. Doing that requires a lot of picking and pruning to ensure that the roots grow deep into the soil and produce plenty of cordons, which are the woody parts of a grapevine that produce the grapes.

“You want to have more of those little buds that can survive in case there is a frost. It’s

your new growth that produces the grapes,” he said, inspecting the La Crescent vines.

He’ll also be spending plenty of time honing his craft, both in viticulture (vine growing) and oenology (winemaking).

“It’s like carpentry. I grew up doing it, because my dad did. How to hit a hammer with a nail is one thing, but then you start learning all of these nuances of how to be a carpenter. It’s the same thing with viticulture. It’s all about the experience,” he said.

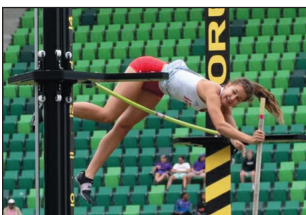
“I took classes to get that basic knowledge. Now, it’s all about making mistakes and getting things right. From a viticulture standpoint I think I am about 90 percent there, but that’s as far as I am going to get, because I am always going to be learning.”

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Hartland Sportsmen's Club vision shared

Former WCTC dean gives Delafield officials a glimpse of his club's plans

By Dave Fidlin
Special to The Freeman

DELAFIELD — It seemingly had a spotlight shined on it the past decade because of the attention it has drawn. Yet it has a relatively unassuming appearance to the casual passerby.

Brian Dorow, who hopes to breathe new life into the dormant, controversial Hartland Sportsmen's Club, shared his visions for the site, 801 Maple Ave., during a special Plan Commission meeting July 26. A number of city officials indicated they had not previously been on the grounds.

Dorow, a former Waukesha County Technical College dean, said he is attempting to reinvigorate the sportsmen's club's grounds because he believes there is a need for such a service in the surrounding area.

"I will work with the community," he said in response to concerns that have arisen about bringing the site back online. "My word is my word."

The official government gathering on July 20 was a field trip beyond the walls of City Hall.

Dorow, whose resume also includes service in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, gave the panel an hour-long walking tour

of the 34-acre site, where shooting ranges are tucked away beyond a deeply wooded area at the foot of the property.

"Right about here, you can start to see the property open up," Dorow said about a quarter-mile into a walking trail leading to the entrance. "You can see the tree lines."

Early this summer, Dorow gave a preliminary pitch to reopen the sportsmen's club with a series of refinements he said would have safety protocols in mind. He also has discussed scaling back on operations and removing some of the existing outdoor shooting ranges.

Thus far, Dorow has not filed any official paperwork for a requisite conditional-use permit with the city for the reopening. At the Monday meeting, however, he said further details would be coming down the pike.

"I plan to come forward with an application (for the permit) at the next meeting," Dorow said, hinting at a potential review at a Plan Commission meeting in late August.

Hartland Sportsmen's Club has been closed for more than a decade and has been the source of a drawn-out legal battle.

The city revoked a permit to oper-

ate at the site in 2010 on the heels of an incident involving a 37-year-old pregnant woman, who was grazed by a stray bullet from the firing range as she was dining at the nearby Delafield Brewhaus restaurant.

During the tour of the sprawling grounds, Dorow doubled down on a preliminary detail he shared a month ago, calling for the closure of four of the existing outdoor ranges. He outlined which of the sites would be permanently closed.

When asked by a commissioner, Dorow explained the closure meant the existing infrastructure would be removed, and an environmental remediation process would follow.

"It will be cleaned up, and the land will be abated," he said.

Dorow indicated his proposal does call for the continuation of two other concrete enclosed firing ranges, one for pistols and another for rifles. The outdoor component of his business would be capped at 12 hours per week, with each block lasting no longer than 3 hours.

Additionally, Dorow has proposed constructing a new indoor range and outlined where he would like to place the facility on the grounds.

During his review with commis-



Dave Fidlin/Special to The Freeman

Brian Dorow shares with the Delafield Plan Commission his vision for the 34-acre Hartland Sportsmen's Club property.

ever the indoor or outdoor range is operating, he said range officers would be staffed to monitor activity. "I want to make sure it will be the safest it possibly can be," Dorow said.

Last year, Waukesha County Circuit Court settled the legal action on the property, requiring the city issue a new permit, as long as a series of conditions are met.

Election to fill Bergman aldermanic seat for Sept. 28

By Cara Spoto
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CITY OF PEWAUKEE — A special election will be held Sept. 28 to fill the Aldermanic District 1 seat left vacant by former Alderman Brandon Bergman.

Aldermen, including Bergman, voted 6-0 to hold a special election to fill the seat as opposed to appointing a replacement and/or waiting until the next regularly scheduled local election, which takes place next April.

According to a legal notice, whoever is elected to the post on Sept. 28 will finish out the remainder of Bergman's three-year term, which ends on April 15, 2024.

All candidates must live within the city's First District. If more than three eligible candidates file, a primary will be held on Aug. 31. The winner of the election will be sworn in on Oct. 5.

Bergman, who ran unopposed this spring, said he is resigning from his seat because he is moving out of the district. His last day on the Common Council was July 19.

"(My wife) Andrea and I have decided to move to the other side of the City of Pewaukee, but no longer in the district in which I was elected," Bergman wrote in a letter to fellow officials.

"I thank the City of Pewaukee's staff for working so diligently with me over the past 20-plus years to make our community the special Lake Country municipality that we each appreciate and love," he wrote. "I look forward to seeing all of you in and around the city in the near and long term."



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Comedy Sportz (no cover) 6:30 pm - 8 pm
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Jake Ekdahl/Freeman Staff
Salbador Aguilera ladles pizza sauce onto dough for a fresh order at Sal's Pizza in Waukesha.

Popular and perseverant

Pizza still hot option

By Jake Ekdahl
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262-513-2657

WAUKESHA — Through the last year and a half, pizza has emerged as one of the most popular options for consumers looking for a meal with reliable results, even in uncertain times.

During the pandemic, few foods were able to compete with pizza's literally baked-in advantage to delivery and carryout. But even as day-to-day life looks more normal, consumers can't seem to get enough. According to data scientists at the firm Zenreach, pizza restaurants have seen an increase in foot traffic of 49% nationwide since the beginning of 2021.

At Sal's Pizza in Waukesha, owner Salbador "Sal" Aguilera said business has increased since the pandemic began. Thin crust remains the most popular option. "I try to always do coupons for the customers," Aguilera said, adding they tend to be 10-15% off. "You have to make sure the customer is happy first."

Aguilera has family in the business with a brother running Noah's Pizza in

Pewaukee and a brother-in-law at Rosati's in Brookfield. He said there are more call-ahead orders now as people are gathering in groups more often and need more pizzas to feed the party.

At Mauricio's in Barton, in Washington County, Mary Waters said she and her husband and co-owner Rick Waters have been busy. "Every time that phone rings or the door opens we're just thankful," she said. "Our full menu is available for carryout." The supremo pizza with pepperoni, mushrooms, onions, black olives, and red and green peppers is a favorite as well as the specialties like spinach, chicken and artichoke pizza.

Both Waters and Aguilera said the success of the Milwaukee Bucks has offered a boost as well on game days, with locals having watch parties or even just grabbing an easy dinner for the game. "Game nights, we definitely saw a lift at our stores," said Lou Malnati's Public Relations Manager Natalie Levy. "Pizza and sports just go together."

Marty's Pizza Manager Maynard Carl said with a

dine-in and catering heavy business the last year and a half had challenges. "We're surviving, we're doing everything we can to stay in business," he said. "Delivery overall in this area has been a really big struggle."

Carl said the last three months have "started to feel normal" however, and orders of single pizzas to-go have somewhat given way to dine-in groups ordering appetizers and drinks in addition to pizza. The restaurant reduced its menu to focus on what it already excels in as well. "We're driven by our customers we're driven by a good relationship with the people who come in here on a weekly basis," Carl said. "I'm super thankful to the people who have supported us in the lake country area, they're phenomenal."

Wisconsin Restaurant Association Vice President Susan Quam said National Restaurant Association data puts pizza as the No. 3 bestseller in full-service restaurants and the No. 2 best seller in limited-service restaurants, bested only by sandwiches.

The ongoing popularity of a good pizza doesn't look to be going anywhere soon. "Everyone loves pizza," Levy said.

Lake Life Shop adapts to local market

Okauchee business offers lake apparel, accessories

By Jake Ekdahl
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OKAUCHEE — After opening last fall, Lake Life Shop in Okauchee has had time to grow and tailor its selection to local residents' desires.

"We've been finding out what people in Lake Country want and what they don't want," said Mike Drake, who owns and operates the shop with his wife, Sue. About 80% of the store's sales are now women's fashion and accessories.

In particular, comfortable clothing items like loungewear have been popular along with the accompanying accessories.

Drake said the business has also expanded its selection for young girls, in their "small mermaids" section. "All of our granddaughters love mermaid stuff," he said.

Living just a short distance from their store, the Drakes often walk to work these days. Mike Drake said with years of experience in wholesale to tourist shops, he and Sue decided to open the business in a vacant spot they often walked past right in their town. "We're having a ton of fun and that's the main reason we did it," he said.

Now that the spot's no longer vacant,

Drake said Lake Life has "great synergy" with neighboring businesses like bars and restaurants, and foot traffic flows both ways through word of mouth. "Okauchee's a very fun town," he said. "The people are incredible. We are very happy we opened up a shop in Okauchee."

Now that the business has had time to get established, it has a brand statement: "Whether you're going out to a supper club, out on a boat, or just out on your pier we have the clothing and accessories to help you enjoy your lake experience."

Inventory for the transition period between summer and fall is already being established, with long-sleeve shirts, lightweight sweatshirts as well as more girls clothing and plus-size clothing.

Drake said listening to the locals expressing their needs for certain goods has been a powerful driver for the business, and over time customers have expanded from just locals to out of town residents making the trip in.

Looking ahead, Lake Life Shop is working with a marketing consultant to craft an ad campaign and expand social media presence as well as an online shop. For now, those interested can check them out on Facebook at: <https://rb.gy/gsxeej>.

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THE FREEMAN'S 2020-21 FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Moore keeps soaring to new heights

Arrowhead senior broke pole vault state record, added fifth-place state medal in diving this fall

By **Dave Radcliffe**
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TOWN OF MERTON — The wait was well worth it for Julia Moore.

After losing her junior track and field season to COVID-19, the Arrowhead graduate entered her senior year with a full head of steam. Whether it came to embracing the expectations she and others put on herself or just going out there and having fun, Moore took on each challenge with the same demeanor.

On the final day of her high school career, she went out with a bang, setting the state record in the girls pole vault. Coupled with the state medal she earned on the diving board last fall, Moore earned the distinction of The Freeman's 2020-21 Female Athlete of the Year.

"That made it that much better of a feeling — losing last year and then still being able to compete and perform this year," Moore said. "I'm really just thankful to be able to compete. You never think you're going to lose a season and then you do, so it made it so much rewarding."

Moore's journey to becoming the best pole vaulter in the state was a rapid ascent. But it wasn't until this past spring when she was able to show off just how much better she was than the rest of the field.

As a junior, she would have entered the season as the favorite to win gold as she was coming off a runner-up finish as a sophomore.

"I think her freshman year toward the end she jumped 9 feet a couple times and to do that as freshman girl is super impressive," Arrowhead girls pole vault coach Brent Ribble said. "Once we ramped up to that level she thought, 'Oh wow, I could be really great at this.'"

So Moore began working year-round to only not master the technique of the pole vault, but to become stronger and faster as she grew into her own body. She also put aside other events to focus solely on the vault to prove to her coaches she could become something special.

"The winter of my sophomore year I went to a pole vault club because I wanted to go into my sophomore year telling my coaches,

as much as love the other events I really, really like pole vault and really want to do it," Moore said. "If I kept having high heights I wanted to be able to say, 'Hey, if I keep working on this I can make it to state,' they would let me fully do it. I really just got more and more passionate about the sport."

Moore's progression during her sophomore year was nothing short of remarkable. Ribble said her best jump during the regular season was 10 feet, 6 inches, and she would exceed that mark by over a foot at regionals, suddenly putting herself on the pole vaulting map in Wisconsin.

"I think that she knew she was talented and we all recognized it, but to have that one meet where everything just clicks — she PR'd multiple times — that really put her on pace to have success at the sectional meet and then runner-up at the state meet," Ribble said. "I think it all kind of clicked."

"I remember thinking, 'Oh my gosh. She is going to be so successful at this.'"

Moore would clear 11-9 once again at state, only finishing behind De Pere senior Olivia Fabry (12-0). That caught the eye of NCAA Division I programs, including the University of Wisconsin, where Moore committed last summer.

"I had been to a few camps when I was younger," Moore said. "I actually went there when I was an 8-foot vaulter, so the coach has really seen me all the way through. I sent videos so he was able to keep up with my progress. I actually met a couple people that were going to be on the team and it just got me super excited."

"Obviously when it came time to look around, Madison was going to be on my list. I only took an unofficial visit there and that's really all it took. I love the school and grew up a Badger fan."

With a college decision made, Moore still had one last thing to do — become a state champion.

She did so in dominant fashion, needing just one attempt to successfully clear the bar all the way through 12-7, which was not only good enough for gold, but to have her name etched in the record books.

"She is absolutely one of the hardest working kids we had," Arrowhead track coach Chris Herriot said. "With her goal of not only winning state but setting the state record, it's rare to have such lofty goals and attain them. But since COVID hit and her sophomore year she put her head down and got it done."

Fellow Arrowhead senior Evan Bartlesen won the boys competition, and it was that ability to push one another on the runway day-in and day-out that helped Moore reach an entirely new level.

"This year I expected myself to do well, so I put that pressure on myself," Moore said. "As quick and fast as the season was, I think there were way more expectations set for myself. That's really the one big difference (from my sophomore year)."

She lived up to those expectations and then some. The only mark Moore came short of was the school record of 13-2, which she took a crack at June 26 in La Crosse after having already secured the state title.

"She was really in the zone," Ribble said. "She was really kind of feeling the flow at that meet. The last four meets were like that for her. She really found her groove at the end of the season."

Ironically, it was the pole vault that Moore picked up last among her three sports.

Before she could even remember, Moore was competing in gymnastics and stuck with it through her sophomore year at Arrowhead. While she didn't consider herself "a really good gymnast," it set the stage for what she would do in both pole vault and diving.

"I was like, you know, as much as I love the sport, I'll use winter to get into lifting, get stronger for pole vault," Moore said. "But I really enjoyed gymnastics and owe it everything. I would not be a pole vaulter or diving or going to Madison to vault if it weren't for gymnastics. I wouldn't have the mindset and the will to do all the crazy things you have to do."

Of course, the Arrowhead gymnastics room is never short on talent as a perennial state power. Nor do the Warhawks lack in the swimming



Submitted photo

Arrowhead's Julia Moore was a state champion pole vaulter and won a fifth-place medal as in diving. For her accomplishments during her senior season, she was selected as The Freeman's 2020-21 Female Athlete of the Year.

and diving department, a sport Moore competed in all four years even if she had her reservations.

"My junior and senior year I didn't have anybody in my grade that knew doing it, so I was like, I don't know if want to do it," Moore said. "Especially senior year it really took a push at the beginning of the year to get me to do it, but I'm really glad I did."

Moore expressed how grateful she was for diving coach Mary Woodson, who helped mold her into one of the better divers in the state by the time she reached the end of her senior season.

"Julia is a natural-born athlete with an amazing mindset," Woodson said. "Even though diving wasn't her No. 1 sport, she put forth a lot of work in and out of the pool to become one of the top divers in the state. When Julia started as a freshman, I could tell she had all the ability to be a great diver, but she needed to break through some barriers to mentally achieve her goals. She did that and more."

In Moore's words, with a laugh, Woodson had to put up with a lot during her high school career. But she was a state qualifier in the 1-meter dive in each of the last three years, culminating in a fifth-place medal last fall when state was held at the Waukesha South Natatorium.

"She attempted more difficult dives and mentally pushed through injuries and smacks to make the

podium," Woodson said. "Not only is she a fantastic athlete, but an extraordinary leader. Julia was so much fun to have at practices and she's going to be greatly missed by the divers and myself. I know she's going to do amazing things, academically and athletically, at Madison and I can't wait to see all her achievements."

Both as a junior and senior, Moore was in position to medal after the semifinals. But she said the difference during her latest season was simply staying calm.

"I think being able to have that attitude of just soak it in one last time," Moore said. "I knew I was never going to do it again. Being there at state, it's definitely not like track because I wasn't going out there to win it. You're just going out trying to do your best."

She showed that her best was pretty darn good in diving as well as in pole vault, a sport she's poised to do big things in at Wisconsin.

Ribble was ecstatic Moore was able to go out on the highest of notes.

"She's a really gifted athlete but she's also just a really phenomenal person who has a great attitude," Ribble said. "It's really great to see a kid like that who just has so much dedication and wisdom. It was really great to see her have such a successful year, especially after losing her junior season. I'm thrilled for her because she deserves it."



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