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Libraries adapt, pivot during COVID-19

Technology enables virtual programming, services

By Jake Ekdahl
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WAUKESHA — Waukesha Public Library Director Bruce Gay remembers how nearly a year ago the library had to temporarily close its doors as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold across the country.

Since then, the library has adopted a variety of strategies to continue delivering services to the community, despite complications due to coronavirus.

Technology proved a major factor. Gay said use of e-books and other electronic resources rose in 2020; the library also added Hoopla, an online media streaming platform with books, movies and more.

“That was really keen for us, it was kind of fortuitous (and) came at exactly the right time to meet peoples’ needs,” he said.

Although the public can once again enter the library building, operating the circulation of books and other materials by curbside pick-up was the norm at times and continues to be an option. “There were thousands of items circulating that way,” Gay said. Book

clubs and story times moved online.

The library also installed an HVAC deionization system to help protect against COVID.

Oconomowoc Library Director Betsy Bleck said the library’s journey with COVID-19 has been “a book with many chapters in it.” She said she’s proud of how libraries pivoted to meet peoples’ needs in new ways.

“Throughout this whole time we were able to keep serving people, it was just the way that we were serving people that was different,” Bleck said. One of those new ways was by utilizing online children’s programming and “take-and-make” kits for tactile learning.

Oconomowoc’s library has also utilized Hoopla, opened study rooms and extended Wi-Fi to the parking lot.

The Oconomowoc Public Library is currently busy preparing for summer programming, and will offer both virtual and in-person options.

“Summer is always a big time for us to make sure that we’re meeting peoples’ learning needs when school is out,” Bleck said.

In Brookfield, Library Director Edell Schaefer said

the library is open and offering some in-person programming, but “it really hasn’t had wide acceptance yet.” Much of the programming is still offered virtually, such as online story times conducted by children’s librarians.

In some months of 2020, Schaefer said usage statistics were actually higher than 2019.

“The library is an essential service, in that, because we’re open and we’re providing almost normal service levels and access, it’s one of the most normal things for people during COVID, when there were so many restrictions,” she said.

Gay said one service being offered in Waukesha is pick-up orders for specific types of books. He said patrons can call in and ask for a bag of children’s books on a particular topic, like dinosaurs, and have one ready when they arrive hand picked by staff.

“We’ll pull 20 books for you and have them all checked,” he said.

Muskego Library Director Brittany Larson said keeping in communication with the community has remained constant.

“Nothing is more important than making sure our communities have reliable access to reliable information, technology and entertainment,” she said. “Those are just so essential.”



Submitted photo
Oconomowoc Youth Services Librarian Caitlin Schaffer hosts a live kids cooking program while staff member Sierra Boettcher films.

Some of the virtual programming offered in Muskego includes story times, singalongs and virtual LEGO clubs. Larson said being a part of the Bridges Library System enabled individual libraries to have access to resources, like Hoopla, which might have been harder for them to manage on their own.

With senior living community patrons in the area, Larson said the library has delivered materials so they can easily access them.

In some cases, access to information, whether about how to use technology in a newly virtual time or navi-

gate the vaccination process, has been what locals are seeking. Larson said one person told the library they were able to receive a vaccine because of the information made available there.

“Lots more people asking how to use computers, how to use tablets, how to use our electronic resources,” Larson said. “Technology has certainly been at the forefront of peoples’ minds.”

Larson commended her staff and all library staff for being creative and passionate in continuing to provide for their communities.

“They are the heart of the library,” she said.

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Michael's House of Prime now at The Petite Chef

Popular eatery serving weekly dinners at local cooking school, event space

By **Cara Spoto**
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262-513-2653

DOUSMAN — There's a new fine dining restaurant in Dousman. Michael's House of Prime, which lost its iconic City of Pewaukee eatery in a devastating December fire, has taken up a weekly residence at The Petite Chef, 119 N. Main St., serving dinner to regulars and newcomers on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The arrangement has been working out well for restaurateurs David and Rick Buckley who had been looking for spaces to keep their decades-old restaurant in operation and their beloved staff employed. "We had been trying to keep our key people

engaged with the business even though we don't have a permanent location. We were looking around for commissaries or kitchens, and we found The Petite Chef," Rick Buckley said. "It had the kitchen we needed, but it also had some seating for us as well." The Buckleys served their first string of dinners at the location over Valentine's Day weekend and expect to continue their four-nights-a-week residency through at least the end of March, Rick Buckley said. The restaurant opens up at 4:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, with dinner service starting at 5 p.m. The service will continue as long as there are guests. Sometimes that means things wrap up around 9 p.m. or 10 p.m.,

other nights it could be closer to 8 p.m. **New dishes, old favorites** Chefs Erik Hyslop and Anthony Ludwig have been manning the kitchen at The Petite Chef, and other staff are working as well. The restaurant has also added a few new items to the menu, including a pork cheeks dish with Asian slaw and bao buns, and cioppino. The prime rib is remaining a draw for diners at the new location, but the crab legs and sea scallops have also been popular given the Lenten season. "The location is very nice. It's got a nice bistro vibe. We have had a lot of our regulars come out to Dousman, but we are also hoping we are going to catch the attention of Dousman folks that might like to have some fine dining," Rick Buckley said. The arrangement has also worked out well for The Petite Chef, which has struggled during the pandemic to use the cooking school/event area of its

operation, owner Nancy Kopperud said. "Our back kitchen is our culinary incubator, but the front kitchen is where I do cooking classes and corporate events. COVID-19 didn't shut us down per se, but it did put a big damper on that part of the business," Kopperud said. "It is a good spot for (the restaurant), and their whole group is really wonderful." **What's next?** As of right now, there is potential for Michael's House of Prime to stay at The Petite Chef through the end of April, but the owners are also looking at other options, and potentially other locations that are closer to the City of Pewaukee. The brothers still hope to rebuild, but there could be logistical snags to doing that at their original location, Rick Buckley said. If you're interested in checking out the restaurant's offerings in Dousman, call 262-691-1450 for reservations. The restaurant is also doing takeout from The Petite Chef location, as well as catering.



Submitted photo

Chef Erik Hyslop of Michael's House of Prime slices a prime rib at a recent pop-up dinner service the restaurant had at The Petite Chef in Dousman. The restaurant, which saw its longtime home gutted by fire in December, has been hosting weekly dinners at The Petite Chef.



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LOOKING BACK IN HISTORY



From the Freeman negatives at the Waukesha County Museum

Bette LeQue of Hartland, Heidi Grimm of Nashotah and Mary Olankech of Hartland sample the fare in a Swedish meatball dinner in this photo which appeared April 7, 1967. The dinner was a fundraiser for Arrowhead High School's band and chorus trip to Expo '67. The event was held at Chuck's Supper Club on Valley Road near Silver Lake.

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Mequon police K-9 gets new vest thanks to late Hartland girl

By Lisa Curtis
Special to the Freeman

MEQUON — Mequon Police Officer Matthew Bottoni likes to think of Emma Mertens as a guardian angel watching over his K-9 partner, Djuke.

Emma, an 8-year-old Hartland girl who died of a brain tumor in 2019, was known worldwide for her love of dogs, asking people to send her pictures of dogs and letters as she endured her difficult medical treatments. In her short life, she also raised funds to donate to animal shelters and police K-9 units.

Her family has carried on that wish with the Emmas Loves Dogs Foundation. It is through that foundation that the Mequon Police Department was gifted a ballistic vest for Djuke, who joined the force in October.

Bottoni said Emma's foundation makes donations to the Wisconsin Vest A Dog Foundation, which then donates equipment to K-9 unit. He said Emma's organization also donated money to the Mequon Community Foundation last summer. That money helped fund Djuke's purchase and his training.

Ballistic dog vests can cost around \$1,000, but are a vital part of their uniform.

"We, as police officers and police K-9s, are often asked to respond to dangerous situations. Due to Djuke's unique



Submitted photo

Mequon police K-9 Djuke shows off the vest he received from the Wisconsin Vest A Dog Foundation and Emma Loves Dogs.

skill set, he is often in the forefront of these situations," Bottoni said. "I regularly ask Djuke to go into dark buildings and treacherous places by himself and before any officers. (On Feb. 26,) a K-9 was killed in the line of duty in Minnesota after responding to a domestic disturbance call. Having this vest and knowing Emma is watching over Djuke from heaven gives me comfort as we go into these dangerous situations."

Bottoni also pointed out that vests only last for about five years, so outfitting a department's K-9 can be expensive.

"Foundations like WI Vest

a Dog and Emma Loves Dogs allow the police department to not worry about providing a vest for Djuke and to use our funding for different equipment and training," he said.

Bottoni said Djuke has been a great addition to the department. He and his partner are growing together as a team and have already had success on the road.

"I can tell you that he has responded to numerous traffic stops where he has alerted on a vehicle and a subsequent search has revealed illegal drugs such as suspected heroin and cocaine," Bottoni said.

Delafield Town Board backs quiet zone for Highway KE and Glacier Road

By Cara Spoto
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TOWN OF DELAFIELD — Residents living near Highway KE and Glacier Road could soon have quieter nights.

The Town Board this week voted 4-0 to back a resolution throwing their support toward the designation of a quiet zone for the Canadian Pacific railroad crossing at the intersection.

The move comes just over a year after safety improvements to the crossing — specifically the installation of a quad-gate crossing system — made a quiet zone designa-

tion available to the town at no cost, and about three years after the residents first requested the change.

According to the resolution, a representative of the nearby Somerset Moors subdivision had first petitioned the town for a quiet zone for the railroad crossing in 2018. While the town did not pursue the quiet zone designation at that time, safety improvements made to the crossing as part of grant program funded by the Federal Railroad Agency (FRA) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation wrapped up in January 2021.

Now that the board has backed the proposal, town

staff will need to prepare and submit the application materials necessary to complete the designation process.

As for how long it could take before a quiet zone is officially in place at the crossing, Town Clerk/Administrator Dan Green said at least 90 days.

"I know that the process allows for a 60-day comment period from other communities, and another 30 days once the FRA grants approval," Green said. "The minimum would be 90 days, plus time to get paperwork together from the engineer and some of the community members who are working on the project."

Taxing bodies support St. Mary's TIF District

By Cara Spoto
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PEWAUKEE —Area taxing bodies have backed the village's plan to create a tax incremental financing (TIF) district aimed at redeveloping the St. Mary's church property.

Meeting March 9 to take a final vote on the plan, the village's Joint Review Board (JRB) wasted little time approving the plan, with representatives from the village, Waukesha County, Pewaukee School District, and Waukesha County Technical College all voting in favor of the TIF district's creation.

There was little discussion during the 15-minute meeting, which Village Administrator Scott Gosse closed by thanking JRB members.

The JRB's vote was the approval village officials needed before moving ahead with the TIF district, which will provide Pewaukee with

the revenue to prepare most of the property and nearby utilities, for a single-family home development.

No changes are expected to be made to the church. The cemetery will remain under the ownership of the Queen of Apostles congregation.

According to the project plan, the TIF district would be used to generate roughly \$3.24 million in tax increment for the village: \$1.5 million for the purchase of the property; \$690,000 for water main and sanitary sewer improvements; \$750,000 for related financing and administrative costs; and \$300,000 to raze the former school and rectory buildings and conduct environmental and site preparation work.

Since the village and other taxing bodies don't currently collect any taxes from the property, any tax increment generated by the land once a taxable development is completed would go directly into the TIF district

fund until after the district closes.

The village will borrow money to pay for the project expenses, and then use the increment it receives from the TIF district to pay that debt off.

The TIF approval comes on the heels of the Village Board's recent approval of an offer to purchase the property from Cornerstone Development.

The Sussex-based developer has offered to purchase the developable portions of the roughly 14-acre parcel for \$1.1 million with plans to construct 46 single-family homes on the site.

Under the TIF district plan, no increment will go to Cornerstone directly, but the site clearing will make it easier for the company to prep the site for construction. The village faces an April 1 deadline to close on the property. Village President Jeff Knutson said that he is confident that the sale will be finalized by then.

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WIAA DIVISION 2 STATE FINAL BOYS BASKETBALL: Pewaukee 54, Onalaska 37

Day of glory

Pewaukee claims program’s first state title

By Mark Hutchinson
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LA CROSSE — NBA teams have been playing games on consecutive days for years. Many Wisconsin high school teams were introduced to that grind when the WIAA compacted its 2020-21 season during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those that reached the state tournament faced the even more grueling challenge of playing the semifinals and the championship game on the same day. The Pewaukee boys team accepted and accomplished that mission and brought home the first gold ball in its program’s history. The Pirates knocked off top-seeded and previously undefeated Onalaska 54-37 in the Division 2 championship game at the La Crosse Center, just a few miles from the Hilltoppers’ roost. Pewaukee finished 27-3, setting a school record for victories in a season, while Onalaska wound up 19-1. The state champions played with the same passion and relentlessness they demonstrated all season, and they reaped the benefits of the taxing conditioning exercises that prepared them for the March 6 grind. “One drill we all hated doing was a drill called slide passing,” said senior guard AJ Hintz, who scored 16 points. “You and a partner would slide the entirety of the court doing chest passes, bounce passes and over-the-head passes. You would slide a total of 12 times without a break. “We did this drill during tryouts and the first few weeks of practice. There were definitely some other drills we did that kept us in shape, but that’s the one that stood out to me. I can guarantee we all don’t regret it.” Junior guard Ashton Janowski, who scored a game-high 19 points, recalled some punishing conditioning drills, too. “In practices, every time we

lose, we’re running down and back,” Janowski said. “Wearing masks impacts your tiring really fast. “Today, our whole team came in with the mindset that if we came in and played hard for 36 minutes for two games, lock in on the defensive end and get great shots and shoot the ball well on the offensive end, we liked our chances, and that’s exactly what we did.” Pewaukee coach Dave Burkemper felt the fatigue, too. “I don’t know about them (the Pewaukee players), but I was exhausted between games today,” he said. “It was a long day. One of our coaches said, ‘This is the way they used to do it in Indiana.’ “We set the mindset that, ‘Hey, this is the state championship. We’re so grateful to be playing.’ I mean really, truly, it’s an honor to play in the state championship. Whether they wanted us to play two or three games, physically, yeah, that would have been grueling. But I think this team mentally bought into the idea that we had a vision to win a state championship and we were going to do whatever it took to do it.” Pewaukee reached the title game with a 65-51 triumph over Lake Mills in the day’s second semifinal, leaving the Pirates with fewer than four hours to recharge. But it became obvious early in the title game that they had more juice than the Hilltoppers, who advanced with a 66-57 semifinal victory over Xavier that morning. “I don’t think we were as sharp as we could’ve been or as fresh as we could have been,” Onalaska senior guard Sam Kick said. “I think it showed all night. We were short and long on a lot of 3s and other shots. Normally we’re a little better at hitting those. “I really felt it at the end. They kind of pulled the ball out and were making us guard them up high. They got to a point where I could barely slide to get in front of guys.

I started cramping, too, which is kind of a problem for me.” Onalaska coach Craig Kowal saw fatigue’s impact on his team. “It was hard for the coaches to prepare for that,” he said. “You don’t want to push guys too hard because you want to save some legs. It was a just a tough situation. “That being said, you’ve got to tip your cap to Pewaukee. They were in the same boat as we were. But it’s extremely hard. It’s exhausting, to be honest.” Ashton Janowski and senior guard AJ Hintz somehow had fresh shooting legs early. They drilled a trio of 3-pointers apiece and scored 15 and 13 points, respectively, to help Pewaukee build a 38-24 halftime advantage. The 6-2 Janowski often found himself guarded by 6-foot-11 senior center Gavin McGrath, and he capitalized on that matchup. “We practiced how they switched out on guys,” Janowski said. “Seeing someone like that, he’s obviously really long and I know it’s tough to get my shot off. I know I have the speed advantage over him and I can take him on the dribble, but I know if their whole defense collapses, I can find easy kickouts. “I tried to do that to the best of my ability today. I tried to get everyone else involved while looking for myself. In the first half especially, it was really working for us. It really helped us as far as going to the mismatches we did have and using that to our advantage.” Kowal credited the Pirates for their first-half marksmanship, which saw them shoot 56.5% overall and 61.5% from long distance. “Congratulations to Pewaukee for the way it played in the first half,” Kowal said. “You’ve just got to tip your cap. “We’ve guarded extremely well all season long. We knew we had difficult matchups going in, and they just made shot after shot. When that




The Pewaukee boys basketball team holds up the gold ball after defeating Onalaska to win the WIAA Division 2 State Boys Basketball Tournament championship March 6 at the La Crosse Center.

happens, it just kind of gets you on your heels.” Sophomore Milan Momcilovic, who totaled 12 points, opened the second half with a 3-pointer and a two-point basket to extend the Pirates’ lead to 43-24, and they stretched the margin to 48-27 with 10:34 to play. The closest the Hilltoppers came thereafter was 14 points. Pewaukee finished shooting 43.9% from the field, 45% from 3-point range (9-for-20) and 81.8% from the free-throw line. Conversely, Onalaska shot 34.2% from the floor, 27.8% from the arc and 66.7% from the stripe. “We shot well in the first half and that got us out to a lead, but I think we won the game with our defense,”

Burkemper said. “It’s very rewarding to win a game with your defense, with as well as we can shoot.” Burkemper and Ashton Janowski were asked to share the thrill of winning the first state championship in Pewaukee history. “It’s definitely a dream come true to watch these kids play so well on the biggest stage,” Burkemper said. “It’s very enjoyable and very satisfying to watch the smiles on their faces and know that they’re going to have this memory for the rest of their lives. “For our community and our school and the amount of support we have, especially this year with COVID ... I don’t know if you can get a more special moment than

this.” The accomplishment seemed a bit surreal for Janowski. “It hasn’t really settled in for me yet,” he said. “But a state championship is a state championship. I’m beyond blessed to be here and to win this with basically my family. “I’ve grown up with these guys since first grade. We’ve been working for this and dreaming of this since we first started playing back in third grade. All of the time we’ve spent together paid off. You saw out there how we just came together and played hard. “Like I said, ‘Thirty-six minutes.’ We played double 36 minutes, so words can’t describe how exciting this is.”



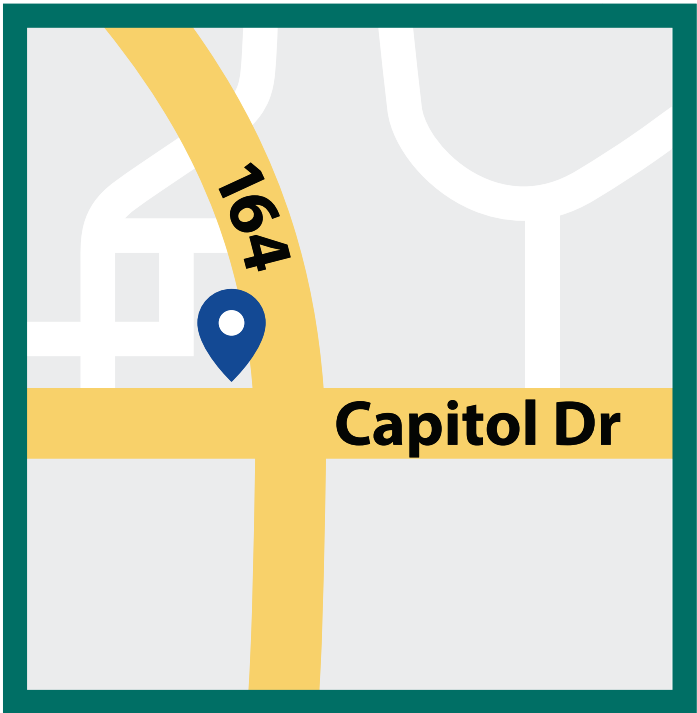
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Count on us for short hospital stays nearby with connections to our network of specialists. Here, we’ll treat conditions such as:

- Abdominal pain
 - Back pain
 - Bleeding
 - Broken bones
- Chest pain
 - Complications from chronic conditions
 - Dizziness
 - Fainting
- Seizures
 - Severe high fever
 - Skin infections
 - Upper respiratory infections

We're here, right where you need us ... Making more possible ... for you.

Froedtert Community Hospital – Pewaukee
209 Pewaukee Road
Pewaukee, WI 53072

Learn more: froedtert.com/pewaukee



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