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THIS MONTH

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Housing boom spurs interest in rentals

Consumers innovate in a seller's market

By Jake Ekdahl
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WAUKESHA — With a robust housing market and fierce competition for single-family homes, some buyers and sellers are turning to a temporary living arrangement to help navigate the process: renting.

"We are in what is called a seller's market right now," First Weber Realtors Sales Manager Amy Curler said. "We have less than six months of inventory available... The homes are selling very quickly (and) there is competition for those houses."

A balanced market would see six months of inventory and a buyer's market is considered greater than six months. Low mortgage rates help boost the market, too.

In some cases, consumers — both sellers and buyers — may find themselves in need of housing while finding that next home. Some may be first-time buyers actively searching yet unable to find that perfect fit, others may be sellers who have moved out of their last home but haven't finalized the

next one. Curler, who is based in West Bend, said in those cases people have been known to sign a traditional apartment lease but can also opt for more nimble arrangements like Airbnb, Vrbo or even coming to an agreement to rent their former home for a month or two until they find their next one. "We're trying to help them with all options that are available," she said.

Brookfield Mayor Steve Ponto said his niece just moved to the area from La Crosse, and is renting in New Berlin while she and her husband search for their home. Ponto pointed out that current renters often become homeowners, and he finds Brookfield's rental properties might help families get used to life there and "at least give it a strong consideration" when they decide to look for a single family home.

"Homes have been getting scooped up so fast," said Laramie Severson, Ponto's niece. "It gets listed in the morning and it gets sold by the end of the day." She and her husband chose to rent for now during their home search rather than try to make that work from La Crosse in such an intense market.

New apartments are rising up to meet the demand, too. The former Toys "R" Us



A Mandel Group rendering shows the Townhome Building project in Oconomowoc.

location in Brookfield is being developed for apartments as well as the riverfront near Waukesha State Bank in downtown Waukesha. A spokesman for Brookfield Heights, one of Waukesha's existing apartments, said the place is at 98% occupancy currently and saw relatively minimal disruption during COVID-19.

Mandel Group Development Associate Dan Romnek said COVID-19 may have in fact increased rather than suppressed interest in local apartments.

"We've seen recently a trend where the suburbs are becoming more and more

desirable for residents and there is significant demand for some of the surrounding suburbs — not just downtown — where maybe there hasn't been apartment development for a while, and therefore the appetite is growing," he said, adding that while so much was shutdown during the pandemic, residents may have decided to ditch downtown rental prices for more of a balanced approach in the suburbs. There amenities are still available and the city is within commuting distance, but at a more reasonable monthly cost. The Mandel Group has

apartment ongoing projects in Oconomowoc, Waukesha, Oak Creek, Franklin and West Allis.

Curler said that while all price points are selling, the most popular is between \$200,000 and \$400,000 — the average sale price in West Bend is \$332,774 and the median is \$295,000.

Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly said it's likely homes in his neighborhood are viewed as being optimally priced for a quick turnaround. He said there's been unsolicited texts to homeowners, including him

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Golden Mast thanks longtime head chef, welcomes successor

Moosreiner has worked for restaurant for decades

By Jake Ekdahl
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OKAUCHEE — The Golden Mast Inn has announced longtime Executive Chef John “Moose” Moosreiner is stepping back into a supporting role and Trevor Clubb, also a Golden Mast chef, is serving as his successor. Moosreiner, who has been with the organization for half a century, said he and Clubb have worked together for about 10 years. “I want to take a step back,” he said. “I started out there as a dishwasher and kind of worked into the position where I was head chef ... You kind of get it in your blood. It’s fast paced, things change on a regular basis.” He emphasized the kitchen functions at its level thanks to contributions from several individuals rather than one.



Submitted photo
Recently promoted, Golden Mast Executive Chef Trevor Clubb smiles inside the restaurant’s kitchen.

Clubb said he’s always been interested in food and has worked in kitchens since he was a teenager. He earned a bachelor’s degree in culinary arts from Kendall College in Chicago before working at the Gasthaus in Mequon and eventually coming to the Golden Mast, W349-N5293 Lacy’s Lane, Okauchee — both restaurants were part of the Weissgerber family restaurant group. One new dish that’s been added to the menu is the quinoa cake with chickpea salad, an addition Clubb said he worked on to expand options for the vegetarian

and vegan customers. He said other dishes are in the works, but none is ready to be showcased quite yet. Clubb said he’s glad Moosreiner is staying on as a senior supporting chef. “I’m still learning a lot from him actually and he’s just been a good mentor and a good friend,” he said. Golden Mast Owner Hans Weissgerber said the restaurant’s success can be attributed to good staff. He said Clubb “shows a lot of ability, (is) ambitious, works hard.” He added in addition to Moosreiner, he himself is stepping back and letting his daughter, Lisa Marks, take over much of the day-to-day operations. “We are proud to have the opportunity to work with Chef Trevor in this very important and challenging position in our business,” Marks said, in a statement. “We do so with the fullest confidence and trust, knowing that Trevor has the professional knowledge, experience and leadership that are necessary and required to manage the broad scope of responsibilities presented by the Golden Mast kitchen operation.”

Case proceeds against man accused of shooting police officers in Delafield

Hearing set for June 3

By Jake Ekdahl
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WAUKESHA — The man charged with shooting two police officers in Delafield last year will next appear in court June 3. His case was heard May 3 at the Waukesha County Courthouse, but only to schedule the next hearing. Nathanael Benton, 23, is charged with two counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide — with the charge modifier of use of a dangerous weapon

— and one count of possessing a firearm while being convicted of an out-of-state felony. He is also wanted in North Dakota where he was charged with attempted murder for an incident on Nov. 1 and is a registered sex offender for a conviction that took place there. If convicted on the charges in Wisconsin, he could face more than 60 years in prison. Both officers shot in the incident survived. During a previous court appearance, Waukesha County District Attorney Susan Oppen said Benton is “alleged to have shot a person in the head during an incident in North Dakota” and it is not currently known what he was doing in

Wisconsin when he allegedly shot the officers in Delafield in the early morning of Nov. 6. On Monday before Judge Paul Bugenhagen Jr., public defender Paul Crawford requested a motion hearing for a return of property, though it was not stated what the property was. Both he and Oppen agreed only a short hearing would be needed. “I certainly think it’s appropriate to schedule that for a motion hearing,” Oppen said. Crawford said a psychological evaluation of Benton is not yet completed, but has made progress, citing the arrival of documents from North Dakota they’d been waiting for.

Arrowhead rescinds annexation request

By Cara Spoto
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TOWN OF MERTON — The Arrowhead Union High School District has rescinded its request to annex the school and a nearby farm it owns into the village of Hartland. Looking to capitalize on the 42-acre farm, district officials initially approached the village back in September with the goal of selling the land to a developer. Speaking about the petition in September, Arrowhead Superintendent Laura Myrah said the district learned that the land would be more valuable as part of Hartland, mainly because the village could allow the land to be subdivided into smaller lots, which would allow for more homes to be built. Addressing the request to rescind the annexation petitions at a Village Board meeting last week, Hartland Village President Jeff Pfannerstill said the school district and village hadn’t encountered any hiccups in the process. “That doesn’t mean there isn’t the anticipation that (the farm) will come into Hartland, they are just pulling (the petition) back,” Pfannerstill said. Arrowhead Union High School School Board President Robert Rosch added that the board is still actively looking to sell the farmland. “We are all set with our marketing strategy and we are probably going to roll that out within a month,” Rosch said. Responding to concerns from the public that the district might pursue a multifamily development, Rosch said the district would like to see a residential development on the farm site that would be something both the Swallow School District and neighboring subdivision could support.

Housing

From Page 1

self, gauging their interest in selling their property — even if their house isn’t on the market currently. A call to “Kyle” at the number Reilly received a text from recently went to voicemail with the message: “Hi, if you’d like an offer on your property, please leave a message. Thank you.” Curler said ultimately it’s important to have affordable housing in the area so inventory can remain strong. She said the Wisconsin Realtors Association is working with the state Legislature on that front. “The Waukesha County Center for Growth is seeing growth in all types of housing developments within our communities,” said Judie Taylor, Waukesha Center for Growth executive director, in a statement. “We know there is a large demand for housing at all price points to continue supporting our businesses, schools, and the overall economic growth to our area. These new developments, and the efforts of our communities to provide life-cycle housing, further support the attraction of families to live, work and play in Waukesha County.”



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Delafield panel backs site plan for new Olive Garden

Smiley Barn concerned about potential obstruction

By Cara Spoto
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DELAFIELD — An Olive Garden restaurant proposed for the former Perkins Restaurant site at 2440 Milwaukee St. received an initial site plan approval from the Plan Commission on April 28, but not without commissioners asking applicants to make adjustments.

The biggest concern among commissioners was the potential impact a 39-foot pylon sign being proposed for the development might have on motorists' ability to see the smiling face of the Smiley Barn while driving westbound on Interstate 94.

Seeing the smile
Smiley Barn owner Maria Luther was the first to raise the issue.

"We are absolutely thrilled that the Olive Garden is coming to Delafield. But ... we need to ensure that nothing about this project impairs the sight line from travelers on I-94 to the Smiley Barn smile," said Luther, speaking during the public comment period.

Luther added that she had spoken with some of the people behind the project, who said they didn't believe the sign would obstruct the Smiley Barn smile, but she wanted to be sure the city would fully study the issue and try to ensure that it wouldn't.

Later in the meeting, a project manager said the company could likely do some renderings for the Plan Commission to show just how the sign at its proposed height and location might impact the view of the Smiley Barn smile.

City Planner Amy Barrows said the city would expect that there might be a conflict between the two signs somewhere along the elevation line as motorists drove past, but commissioners seemed to indicate that they wanted to avoid any-

thing that would noticeably obstruct the view of the Smiley Barn.

Commissioners also expressed a desire for sidewalks planned for the development to be extended and meet up with existing paths in the area.

Other local concern

The only other person to speak on the issue during the public comment period was Silver Mitchell, the general manager for the Fishbone's Cajun and Creole, 1704 Milwaukee St.

Mitchell didn't object to the site plan for Olive Garden, but to the prospect of a large chain restaurant siphoning would-be employees away from her business and other local restaurants.

"The whole restaurant industry in Delafield is at a strong standstill for employment. We are having a really hard time finding employees at all...I think voting "yes" on Olive Garden puts us out of business," said Mitchell.

The applicants for the Olive Garden project will follow up with the Plan Commission at their next meeting in late May.

Vaccinations will be required for Honor Flights

No word on whether flights could resume this year

By Lisa Curtis
Special to The Freeman

PORT WASHINGTON — A decision has not yet been made on whether Honor Flights will resume before the end of the year, but whenever they do, vaccinations will be required for those who participate.

In a statement posted on the Facebook page for the local hub, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, the national network announced that flights will be postponed until at least Aug. 15.

The Honor Flight Network, comprised of independent hubs across the country, transports veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit war memorials, Arlington National Cemetery and other sites of importance, at no cost to the veterans.

Stars and Stripes Honor Flight President Karyn Roelke said they are waiting for guidance from the national network on when they can resume flights. Even if the local hub takes all of the safety precautions possible, it would have no impact if Washington, D.C. is not allowing group gatherings, she said.

The Honor Flight program was started with World War II veterans in mind, but has since expanded to include veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars and terminally ill veterans.

The Stars and Stripes hub, the first in Wisconsin, was started in 2008 by Joe Dean in Ozaukee County. Since that time, the group has organized 56 flights for 7,606 veterans, with the help of more than 200 volunteers.

The last Stars and Stripes Honor Flight was Nov. 9, 2019.

According to the April 23 announcement, once it has been determined that it is safe to resume flights, proof of full vaccination will be required for veterans and their guardians who take an Honor Flight in 2021. There will be no exception to the rule in 2021.

No Stars and Stripes



File photo

Honor Flight participants will have to wait just a while longer before trips will once again be scheduled. When they resume, vaccinations will be required for all passengers.

flights for this year have been scheduled.

That national network said it does not know whether the vaccination requirement will extend into 2022.

"Veteran safety has always been our most important consideration, and we are glad that the Honor Flight Network is so carefully working on how and when to safely resume flights," according to the statement.

"In the meantime, we will continue to plan and to be ready for the exciting moment when we can resume flights for our oldest local veterans."

Meanwhile, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight is organizing several area events to continue its appreciation of veterans and to raise money for the organization. This includes:

■ A Parade of Honor, at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 23 in Milwaukee. The event will cheer and thank veterans whose Stars and Stripes Honor Flights have been postponed due to COVID-19. Attendees are encouraged to line up at 25th and Canal streets, at 6th and Canal streets, and at Wisconsin Avenue and Prospect Avenue... or anywhere in between.

■ Stix Golf Virtual Scramble for Honor Flight, now through June 6. Teams of



four can participate by going to Stix Golf in Germantown and playing nine virtual holes. The cost is \$140 per team, with \$100 going directly to Honor Flight. The scramble, which started April 3, will conclude with an outdoor party from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 6. To learn more or sign up, go to stixgolfbar.com/bookonline.

■ Stars and Stripes All Star Night, Nov. 20, 6 p.m. at the Brookfield Conference Center. This will be a special evening dedicated to raising funds for local veterans to enjoy a Stars and Stripes Honor Flight.

To learn more about the organization or to donate, go to www.starsandstripeshonorflight.org/. To see more information on upcoming events, go to www.facebook.com/starsandstripeshonorflight.

Delafield Sentry using plastic bags made from ocean waste

By Derek Johnson
Special to The Freeman

DELAFIELD — As floating islands of trash become more common across Earth's many oceans, Albrecht's Delafield Sentry is trying to reduce its environmental impact by offering new bags made out of plastic recycled from these trash islands.

The new, more environmentally friendly bags are provided by a company based in California called Crown Poly. The company employs families in countries like Haiti to collect plastic waste from ocean shores, then it recycles that plastic into the new bags, which are also recyclable. Those bags are used at supermarkets

across the country, including at Albrecht's Sentry.

Jordan Jeanpierre, who works in marketing at Albrecht's Delafield Sentry, said that using the new bags are just one of the ways that the grocery store is trying to be more environmentally friendly, and that it's happy that it doesn't have to rely on traditional plastic bags anymore.

"Normal plastic bags are a huge waste," Jeanpierre said.

He also said that the new bags work just as well as traditional, non-recyclable bags, which is important because of the number of bags that the store goes through on a daily basis.

"We've loaded them up just



Derek Johnson/Special to The Freeman

The new bags offered at Albrecht's Delafield Sentry are made from ocean plastic waste.

as much as normal bags and they've held up just as well," he said.

Because of this, he said that the store is going to continue offering the bags at all of its grocery checkout counters, and that it's excited to pursue more environmentally conscious projects.

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NCAA WRESTLING

O’Toole shows his mettle after loss

Arrowhead grad wrestles way back to third at NCAA Championships for Missouri

By **Dave Radcliffe**
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262-513-2655

HARTLAND — The original plans didn’t call for Keegan O’Toole to even wrestle during his true freshman season at the University of Missouri.

But knowing he wouldn’t lose a year of eligibility because of the coronavirus pandemic, the four-time WIAA state champion from Arrowhead joined the Tigers’ lineup with his sights set on the gold.

Sure, maybe O’Toole fell just short of that goal. But what he learned about himself during that grueling three-day stretch at the 2021 NCAA Division I Championships may wind up being even more valuable.

After falling in the 165-pound quarterfinal round to Pitt senior Jake Wentzel, O’Toole entered the consolation bracket and battled all the way back to finish third, helping Missouri to a seventh-place finish as a team in St. Louis on March 20.

“I have great coaches here at Mizzou,” O’Toole said. “After the quarterfinals I walked off the mat, obviously I was upset, but I never let it bother me to the point where I couldn’t focus or have a conversation about what I needed to do. My assistant coach (Kendric Maple), he told me, ‘This sucks. I bet it does. But you’re going to come back and you’re going to beat four guys in a row for third and get the next best thing.’

“I looked at him and I said, ‘Let’s do it.’”

O’Toole did just that, clinching All-American status after his next two victories and then fighting tooth-and-nail to earn a bronze medal with a 4-3 decision over Oklahoma State’s Travis Wittlake in the third-place match.

As the No. 6 seed at 165 pounds, O’Toole technically finished higher than expected, but not high enough in his mind.

“I was looking for nothing

other than gold,” O’Toole said. “But one thing I’m very proud of myself for is taking that loss and winning four straight matches to take third. One thing I noticed is a lot of guys quit after losing that All-American match and I wasn’t about to do that.”

It was a dream come true for O’Toole to wrestle on the NCAA’s biggest stage after watching that same tournament growing up in Hartland. To do so, he had to call another audible in the early portion of his freshman campaign.

O’Toole was able to cut enough weight to wrestle at 157 pounds — his final state title for the Warhawks came at 160 — but with another 157-pounder in the mix, junior Jarrett Jacques, O’Toole would have to make a sacrifice.

“Our coach basically said you guys are going to have to wrestle and see what happens, so we wrestled a bunch in the practice room and unfortunately it didn’t really go my way,” O’Toole said.

That initially left O’Toole with a sour taste in his mouth as he would have to bump up to 165, but as it turned out, it was a blessing in disguise.

“It was definitely meant to be,” O’Toole said. “I was really feeling it cutting down to 57 and my body was trying to grow. I definitely have a bigger frame to fill into. Two of my assistant coaches said, ‘I think this is the best thing for you.’ Characteristically I’ve never wrestled good when keeping weight down. Stepping into the lineup right away, I’m so happy that happened to me.”

All O’Toole would do from there is go 19-1 in his first collegiate season as he was named the Mid-American Conference Freshman of the Year on April 5. After winning the MAC Championship at 165 pounds, O’Toole was slotted as a six-seed at the national tournament and reeled off back-to-back victories, one by pin and one via decision, to set up a quarterfinal clash with Wentzel.

The four-year age gap would end up being too much for O’Toole to overcome as Wentzel emerged with a 9-6 decision.

“He was a redshirt senior, so I knew very little of him coming in,” O’Toole said. “Obviously I knew he was a really good wrestler: I was just a little bit young to have any prior experience against him.”

But O’Toole made the most of his remaining stay in St. Louis and wound up standing just one spot lower than Wentzel, who fell to Shane Griffith in the championship match. Griffith created headlines by wearing a black singlet during the tournament after Stanford University made the decision to eliminate its wrestling program at the end of the 2020-21 academic year.

O’Toole is in line to make many more headlines in the coming years, as are his Missouri teammates.

O’Toole was one of three Tigers to medal at the NCAA championships, joined by a fellow true freshman, Rocky Elam, who was fifth at 197. There’s the potential to bring back the exact same lineup next season, but that remains to be seen.

“Whatever happens, we’re still going to be just as good if not better,” O’Toole said. “This was the first year we ever had this team together and we placed seventh at the national tournament. Teams like Iowa, Penn State, they’ve been working with those guys for a long time. We had two true freshmen in the lineup, we had some transfers come in, so we have a bright future.”

And the sky is the limit for O’Toole, who followed in the footsteps of the Askren brothers — Ben and Max — to go to school in Columbia. The last Missouri freshman to finish third or better at the NCAA Championships? That was J’den Cox, a 2016 Olympic bronze medalist and two-time world champion.

Cox is the only wrestler in



Photo courtesy of Sara Diggins/Mizzou Athletics

Missouri freshman and Arrowhead graduate Keegan O’Toole wrestles Oklahoma State’s Travis Wittlake in the 165-pound third-place match during the NCAA Division I Championships March 20 in St. Louis.



Photo courtesy of Sara Diggins/Mizzou Athletics

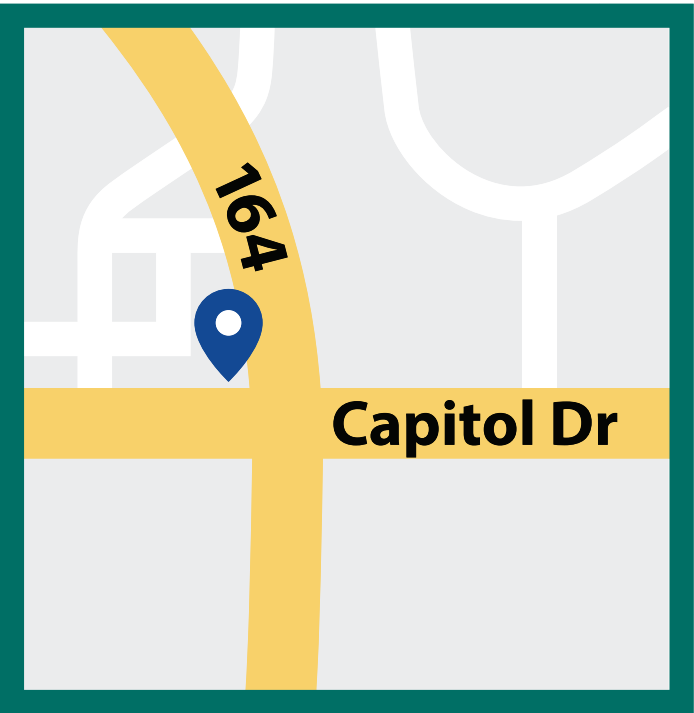
Missouri freshman and Arrowhead graduate Keegan O’Toole shoots on Bucknell’s Zach Hartman in the 165-pound consolation semifinals during the NCAA Division I Championships March 20 in St. Louis.

program history to win three NCAA titles (2014, 2016, 2017). Should he wind up using his extra year of eligibility, the dream of becoming a four-time national champion is still on the table for O’Toole —

and he knows it.

“I hate losing and I’m never going to be satisfied with what I got this year, but if not for the free route, I would have taken a redshirt,” O’Toole said. “But I took the opportunity and ran with it.

“Knowing I can still be a four-time national champ is on my mind. It would have been nice to be a five-time champ, but I’ve still got a lot of work to do.”



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