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DockHounds ready to play ball

Q&A with the DockHounds, Lake Country's new pro baseball team

OCONOMOWOC — In just a short amount of time the first pitch will be thrown for the home opener of the Lake Country DockHounds — the area's very own professional team.

The team's director of marketing and communications, Lisa Kelenic, shared some background on the team with The Freeman. The home opener on May 20 is already sold out. It will be played against the Winnipeg Goldeyes at Wisconsin Brewing Company Park on Blue Ribbon Circle in Oconomowoc.

For more information and to buy tickets, go to www.dockhounds.com.

FREEMAN: Why was Oconomowoc chosen as the DockHounds' home city?

KELENIC: It had been a four-year process to evolve to our current home. We had looked at a couple of different leagues, three different locations and through that evolution it became very clear the location in Oconomowoc was going to align best with our goals and vision of what this facility can be.



Photo provided by the Lake Country DockHounds
An aerial photograph provides a glimpse of the DockHound's Wisconsin Brewing Company Park on Blue Ribbon Circle. Work at the site is continuing ahead of the May 20 home-opener against the Winnipeg Goldeyes.

See DOCKHOUNDS, PAGE 2

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INSIDE



Dockhounds have their own beer, on-site brewery [Page 2](#)



700 stock muskies released [Page 4](#)

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Dogs and suds: Dockhounds have their own beer, on-site brewery

OCONOMOWOC — The city’s new baseball team has its own beer and an on-site brewery. Ty Maiden of Wisconsin Brewing Company said the Verona-based craft brewery decided to invest in the Lake Country DockHounds stadium — called Wisconsin Brewing Company Park —and decided to use the park as a testing ground for new beers.



Photo provided by the Lake Country DockHounds

That includes Walk-Off, a light-tasting lager that Maiden said is an ideal summer baseball drink. It will be brewed in one of the stadium’s five in-house barrels and is aiming to become the team’s signature sip.

“We didn’t want something heavy,” Maiden said. “It’s something absolutely perfect for a 90-degree day watching baseball, that ballpark experience.”

Maiden said he hopes the beer will evolve to become one of Wisconsin Brewing Company’s flagship offerings. It will become available to purchase at some area Piggly Wiggly stores and at participating bars, he said.

The brewery at the DockHound’s stadium will be an “innovation center,” Maiden said. That means brand-new beer varieties will be available to purchase, and if they sell well, the company may ramp up production of them at their 80-barrel facility in Verona.

Maiden said that with the beers and baseball stadium, the company is aiming to expand into Waukesha County and into Milwaukee. He called the move into Oconomowoc a tremendous opportunity to extend the brand’s recognition.

“We’re just really excited as a brewery, and I know the fans and community are excited,” Maiden said. “We’re really pumped to be doing this.”

“It’s baseball and beer,” Maiden added. “What could go wrong?”



Photo provided by the Lake Country DockHounds

Sign of good luck

OCONOMOWOC — The Wisconsin Brewing Company Park sign was recently installed at the Lake Country DockHounds stadium. A rainbow in the background could be considered a “sign” of good luck.

DockHounds

From Page 1A

The rich baseball history, the strong community support and the location were all factors.

FREEMAN: There are teams as near as the Milwaukee Milkmen and the Chicago Dogs. Is there an early rival for the DockHounds?

KELENIC: The fun rivalry with the Milwaukee Milkmen has definitely already started, and it is the perfect start to our season at the Milkmen’s field on May 13.

FREEMAN: The Lake Country DockHounds is a team within the American Association of Professional Baseball and is affiliated with Major League Baseball.

What kind of partnership does the AAPB share with the MLB?

KELENIC: It is a partnership with the league. We are not affiliated with one specific team. As the MLB made changes to their minor league structure, this really opened up a big lane for MLB teams to leverage the talent pipeline from independent teams and give players a chance for more looks.

FREEMAN: How are players recruited into the DockHounds organization?

KELENIC: There are a variety of ways players can be identified — scouting reports, current relationships with players and knowledge of their skillset and what they can bring to a team, tryouts etc. Every day the team has access to see who is out in the baseball market — either recently been released or opted to play for an independent team.

FREEMAN: According to the team roster, DockHounds players come from as far away as Taiwan. What attracts them to play in Lake Country?

KELENIC: Each player who travels internationally to play — the number one reason is their passion for the game and seeking the best opportunities for them to best advance their baseball career. The uniqueness of being part of a brand new team in a community who has been so welcoming and excited for the DockHounds to start their first season.

FREEMAN: Are players encouraged to engage with the Oconomowoc community, and if so, how?

KELENIC: Most definitely. Players will always share how much they feed off the energy from the fans at the games and that only strengthens when they are engaged with the community off the field. They will participate in player appearances at schools, businesses or community events. Many are staying with host families and will have a chance to get more familiar with the community through those relationships, signing autographs and speaking with fans, or interacting with kids at the games.

FREEMAN: The stadium, Wisconsin Brewing Company Park, is slated to include a brewery of its own. Will there be a special DockHounds variety of beer?

KELENIC: The brewery will include a five-barrel brewhouse located on-site that will have eight different batches brewing at all times. This brewhouse team is committed to creating popular tastes that has the craft beer world buzzing about. The DockHounds will feature its very own Louie’s Walk Off Lager, that will be available at the stadium and also at local stores, along with favorites from Wisconsin Brewing Company and Lake Louie.

FREEMAN: Did Colt, the Dockhounds’ bat-retrieving dog, require any special training?

KELENIC: Colt has been trained by Kate, local trainer and owner of KC K9 Training Academy. He has been featured on “America’s Top Dog” show. He has competed nationally in a number of different obstacles, endurance, skill competitions. He has been the Bat Dog for Madison Mallards for a number of years and is very excited to be performing in his hometown of Oconomowoc.

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A team of their own

Rasberry, Clarke and Kelenic join a wave of women getting involved in sports, as they form the all-woman front office for the Lake Country DockHounds

By Michael Grennell
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This summer will mark the 30th anniversary of the release of the movie, “A League of Their Own,” which highlighted the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that ran from 1943 through 1954. That movie is generally seen as one of the main inspirations for a growing interest to pursue careers within baseball among girls. And in recent years, there has been a steady increase in the number of women playing a major role within the sport. In 2021, Kim Ng became the first woman to be named general manager of a Major League Baseball team when she was hired by the Miami Marlins.

And then this year, Rachel Balkovec was hired by the Yankees to be the manager of their minor league affiliate in Tampa — making her the first woman hired to be the full-time manager for a Major League-affiliated club. Even just earlier in April, history was made yet again as Alyssa Nakken became the first woman to coach on the field in a Major League Baseball game when she took over as first base coach for the Giants midway through a game.

Beyond those three women, there have been countless others who have been steadily rising through the ranks and taking on more and more leadership roles within baseball. But you don’t need to travel far to find an example of this growing trend.

As the Lake Country DockHounds gear up for their inaugural season this summer, they will boast an all-woman front office, consisting of General Manager Trish Rasberry, Assistant General Manager Noelle Clarke and Director of Marketing and Community Relations Lisa Kelenic. And this trio of women are ready to begin the season and bring their passion for the game to the Lake Country area.

“I just love sports,” Rasberry said. “There was just something that fascinated me when I went to sporting events when I was younger. I didn’t pay as much attention

to the actual game on the field or on the court or whatever it was. I was always paying attention to everything else and thinking like, ‘Oh I wonder why that bank is advertising,’ or ‘Oh, that’s a really cool game they’re playing on the field between whatever it is.’”

“So I was always fascinated with everything else that goes on besides the sport itself. So I think that lends into the direction that I went in, because I wanted to learn more about behind-the-scenes and how that was all created.”

The passion is evident when talking to the three of them, as each one has spent many years in and around sports. Rasberry has worked in the sports industry for over 20 years. Clarke started off at age 14 working as a gameday intern with the Milwaukee Wave, before eventually joining the Milwaukee Brewers’ Brew Crew, and then receiving an internship with the Minnesota Timberwolves. And Kelenic is a former three-sport athlete who, along with her husband Tom, has helped improve and support youth baseball with fields and practice facilities in the area. And with the DockHounds, Kelenic has been involved from the start, as her husband is part of the management group that brought the team to Oconomowoc.

“I’ve just really been interested in being involved in helping build the footprint in the community,” Kelenic said. “How do we build this so they feel like it’s really theirs? We really have that mantra around, ‘Our team, our town,’ and always asking that question which is, ‘What can we do to involve (the community)?’”

Fan experience

Community involvement is something that all three of them are passionate about, and something they are looking forward to seeing unfold this summer.

“We know there’s going to be hiccups, but I’m just fired up to see people’s faces enjoying the game. That’s what I love about gameday,” Rasberry said. “We can’t control the wins and losses on the field,

but we control every other aspect to it, so making sure that people have the best time and that when they leave they go, ‘Wow that was awesome,’ and they don’t even remember if the team won or lost, they just want to come back for more.”

“I’m super excited, especially to meet all the fans. Just to walk through that gate for the first time, see the stadium,” Clarke added. “Obviously within the past however many months, just emailing back and forth with season ticket holders or having phone calls. I’ve met a few here at the office, but just to meet more of them as they come through those gates and get to sit in their seats and see the stadium, it’s going to be an awesome experience for sure.”

And as excited as the trio are for the start of the season, Kelenic says the community has been just as excited — if not more.

“The common word I hear from the community and from the fans is excitement,” Kelenic said. “I think what really leads this is back from the start when we had the groundbreaking in May 2021, everything we’ve put out there, the community completely blew out of the field.”

Kelenic pointed to the successful turnout for the team’s naming contest and season ticket sales as proof of the community’s excitement.

“We asked what should we expect? And (the marketing firm) said, ‘Well you know, let’s see if we can get maybe 150 to 200 entries,’ and we had just under 3,000,” Kelenic said. “When we opened it up to fans to put down deposits to secure ticket packages ... we put a goal for 150 (people) and then we amped it up to 250. To say that a grand slam would be 250 people, we had just under 1,000 (make deposits).”

“So everything we’ve put out there, any target that we were hoping to see if there was any kind of attraction to it, the community has like quadrupled it. So I think that enthusiasm is what drives us as we’re building this.”

Female leadership



Photos provided by the Lake Country DockHounds

The DockHounds front office is comprised of three women. From left to right: General Manager Trish Rasberry, Assistant General Manager Noelle Clarke and Communications and Marketing Director Lisa Kelenic.

But in the midst of all the excitement, sometimes it has flown under the radar to them how unusual it is that they make up an all-woman front office for a professional baseball team.

“It’s been so busy right now with what we’re trying to do, I guess I didn’t realize that until you wanted to bring this story to life that, ‘Oh my gosh, we’re being run by three women.’ We’re in the office grinding away doing our thing, and didn’t realize I guess how special that was until you brought it to light for me,” Rasberry said. “It’s interesting when I first started in sports over 20 years ago,

it was absolutely true I was only one of a handful of women in an office of 50 people. You could see interns apply and it was mostly male-dominated, and now actually it’s probably more female-dominated just for interns that apply.”

“It’s a really cool trend to see. I’m glad that the doors have opened, if you will, to kind of allow us to rise in what we can do. We’re just as talented in many things. Sometimes you don’t think about how you are being a role model, until you get asked that question.”

“I’m a huge advocate of women in sports. Have been

for quite some time,” Clarke added. “To Trish’s point, you don’t typically see a lot of women in sports, so anytime an intern comes through, even just talking about my story or what they want to achieve in sports ... just giving that inspiration for younger girls or those younger women that are trying to get into the sports career.”

At the end of the day though, Clarke has only one thing to say to any girl or woman who wants to find a career in sports.

“Go for it,” she said. “Don’t let anything stop you.”

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DELAFIELD PLAN COMMISSION

‘Significant improvements’ planned for Seven Seas site

By Dave Fidlin
Special to The Freeman

DELAFIELD — A series of interior and exterior improvements have been proposed as new life is breathed into a storied lakefront property that has been dormant for much of the past year-and-a-half.

The Plan Commission on Aoruk 27 hosted a preliminary concept presentation for the changes proposed at the Seven Seas restaurant and banquet hall, 1807 Nagawicka Road.

In November, investors Jay Franke and David Herro of Walkers Point Property LLC announced plans of resuscitating the site, which has been a popular spot for special events and dining in a scenic setting. Saz’s Hospitality Group has been tapped to oversee the operational aspects of the new business.

“The applicant is proposing significant improvements to the property,” City Planner Amy Barrows wrote in a memo to commissioners.

While the shell of the Seven Seas building is expected to remain intact, the new ownership group is proposing a wholesale list of interior and exterior changes to spruce up the aging facility.

The list of changes includes installing a new brick chimney, replacing all exterior doors, removing a portion of the siding and replacing it with stone veneer and shingles and constructing a new entry canopy.

According to the investor’s details, a new interior floor design is also included to accommodate a three-tier business plan. The upper level has been designated for banquet and event space, the main level for the restaurant and the lower level for a private members’ club.

From her analysis and conversations with the applicant, Barrows said the rehabbed restaurant will mesh more seamlessly with the surrounding area.

“They’re going to be giving it quite a residential feel,” Barrows said during the Wednesday meeting.

Peter Damsgaard, architect of the Seven Seas refresh, said the entire overhaul could take about a year. Based on the current timeline, Walkers Point Property officials have indicated they would like to begin the venue’s metamorphosis this summer.

“We would like to start construction as soon as possible,” Damsgaard said.

Commissioners support plans

Since the agenda item was conceptual, commissioners did not take any formal action on the preliminary plans presented. The panel, however, was overwhelmingly supportive of the vision outlined.

“I think you’re on the right track,” said Alderman Tim Aicher, who sits on the Plan Commission. “The plan looks great.”

Mayor Kent Attwell, who chairs the commission, offered similar comments to the new investment group.

“Thank you very much for taking on this challenge,” Attwell said.

Seven Seas closed permanently Dec. 31, 2020. However, it reopened for one evening — on Oct. 31 — to satisfy an intricate clause related to a legal, non-confirming conditional-use permit that has been attached to the site since 1977.

Based on city code, business at a site must occur at least once within a 12-month period to maintain the legal, non-confirming status.

While the revamped Seven Seas likely will not be operational until next summer, the new owners have indicated the business will be open at least once between now and October to keep the status in good standing.



Courtesy of Paul Farrow

Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow with Muskellunge Club of Wisconsin President Scott Wilkie.

700 stock muskies released

By Dan Colton
dcolton@conleynet.com
262-513-2661

OKAUCHEE — Roxanne Baumann’s husband, Bob, loved to fish. They would spend hours together on the water, rod and reel in hand, searching for a creature so elusive that it’s often referred to as “the fish of 10,000 casts.”

So when Bob passed away nine years ago, Roxanne knew she had to do something to support the pastime she and her husband shared a love for.

She approached members of the Wisconsin Muskellunge Club and made a \$500 donation for stocking area waters.

“When Bob and I were in the group together, he said we need to help these people do the stocking,” Roxanne said.

After making the donation, Roxanne said she was stunned by the result: The club decided to honor Roxanne’s late husband by naming their muskie-stocking fund after him.

Now, she often participates in the stock releases and feels connected to him every time.

“It could be raining at my house, but every time I go out to stock the sun comes out,” she said. “If that isn’t my husband, I don’t know what it is.”

In April, the fund named after Bob, together with grants through Waukesha County, contributed \$10,000 for the release of 700 fingerling muskies in lakes Okauchee, Pewaukee and Lac La Belle.

Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow is also a muskie fisherman and was on hand in Okauchee for the release there.

Farrow said muskie fishing brings back memories of his mother, former Wisconsin lieutenant governor and devoted muskie fisherwoman Margaret Farrow. She died recently at the age of 87.

Farrow said his maternal grandfather “hooked” his mom on muskie fishing (“Pun intended,” he added) when she was a girl. That passion continued throughout her life and included several victories at muskie tournaments.

He recalled the story of her netting a 28-inch muskie that his son had on the hook.

“It’s something my family loves to do, get out on the lakes and enjoy the water,” Farrow said.

The muskellunge is regarded as a fearsome freshwater predator. In Wisconsin, it has been recorded at more than 69 pounds and nearly 64 inches, according to the Department of Natural Resources.



Photo courtesy of Robert Lemanczyk

700 muskie yearling were released in three Lake Country lakes.



Photo courtesy of Robert Lemanczyk

Scott Wilkie, Muskellunge Club of Wisconsin president, and Tom Perdzock during last month’s muskie stock release.

Stolley’s Hogg Alley to remain open during construction

SUMMIT — Stolley’s Hogg Alley is open for business while major renovations are being completed.

Jeff Stoll, owner of the establishment, said the bar and restaurant is undergoing kitchen, bathroom, dining room, parking lot and upper-floor revamps. He hopes all work will be completed by autumn.

“This is top-to-bottom, inside-and-out renovations,” Stoll said.

He said the project has been in the works for years and it is finally coming to fruition.

Still, Stoll said it’s a shock to see the building in a state of construction.

On May 2, workers were tearing apart the roof.

“I took a step back and looked at it and said, ‘Holy cow, what did we do?’ But the end result will be nice for the community and us,” Stoll said.

Stoll said he’s owned the building for 14 years. Since then, he’s remodeled the bathroom and bar areas, but the structure has largely remained unchanged.

He doesn’t want the appearance of construction to dampen visitors from stopping in for food and drinks.

“We’re just a corner bar, but it’s a landmark,” he said.

The restaurant portion of Hogg Alley will temporarily switch to carry-out only while the 45-seat dining room undergoes renovations soon. Once completed, a brand-new new outdoor seating area will offer visitors a chance to dine and sip on a raised patio.

In the meantime, Stoll said he is thankful for a dedicated customer base for continual support.

“Our building might not have always looked new, and the parking lot has always been gravel and full of puddles, but it never stopped people from coming in,” Stoll said. “You can’t judge a book by its cover.”

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