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OCTOBER 2022

 The FREEMAN & ENTERPRISE

Lake Country

THIS MONTH

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Courtesy of Paul Humphreys

Judith Sherman and Dewey Sherman, a Pewaukee couple married for 61 years, sharing smiles of joy the moment they were reunited with Dewey's wedding ring that he lost in 2020.

Pewaukee couple reunited with long-lost wedding ring

Hospice chaplain helps them find it after two years

By Faith Rae
 frae@conley.net
 262-513-2644

PEWAUKEE — Dewey and Judith Sherman, a Pewaukee couple married for 61 years, thought they would never see Dewey's wedding ring again after he lost it in the summer of 2020 while working in their yard. At least not until St. Croix Hospice Chaplain Paul Humphreys came along with his expertise in metal detection.

Humphreys is in his fifth year of providing spiritual care and comfort to terminally-ill patients and their families through St. Croix Hospice. During a routine visit with terminally-ill patient Judith and her husband Dewey on July 28 of this year, the couple told the

sad story of their long-lost wedding ring to Humphreys. "I just knew at that point it was something I really wanted to help with if I could," said Humphreys after hearing the story. He recalls Judith telling him how she watched her husband band down by the lake, spending many nights searching for the ring. "She felt heartbroken, in her words, to see him down there looking for this wedding ring."

Humphreys is a metal-detecting specialist who has been detecting for over 40 years. He is currently a member of a directory of over 580 metal detectors, 98% of whom work on a voluntary-reward basis and in the spirit of kindness, according to Humphreys.

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Inside



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under new
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Bartolotta Restaurants
preps the former
Seven Seas property
for new era

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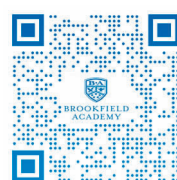
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Ukrainian family welcomed to Pewaukee

By Faith Rae
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PEWAUKEE — On Sept. 7, Anna Ismailova, her husband Eugene Borys, their two daughters and soon-to-be-born son, arrived from Ukraine in Pewaukee Lake under the sponsorship of Jennifer Raml, a former work colleague of Ismailova's from 12 years ago, and her husband, Timothy Raml.

On Feb. 24, Ismailova woke up at 5 a.m., in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, to a call from a friend, asking a short question: "Are you awake?"

"At that moment I realized something was going wrong," said Ismailova. Just one hour later, the family heard the sound of airplanes and bombs. They witnessed smoke from the airport that Russian troops had just bombed, 500 meters away from their home.

Unprepared, Ismailova found herself pregnant, with two children and in the midst of a war.

"It was just a terrible day because we hadn't been prepared for that. It was just like from a scary movie," said Ismailova.

With supermarkets closed and ATMs unusable, the family had no choice but to pack their belongings and move to shelter in the ground level production facility of their business, Nursery Décor. The family slept on mats, in sleeping bags, taking shelter for one whole day and night. Shortly thereafter, they moved further west to Ismailova's grandmother's home.

Though a program was made available in April called Uniting for Ukraine, providing U.S. sponsorship for Ukrainian citizens to stay in the U.S. for two years, Ismailova had hopes that the war would soon end. She initially declined help from Raml, who had reached out to her in concern.

But when cities were randomly being bombed too close for comfort, and for no reason, said Ismailova, she quickly realized she needed to get her family out.

"I've seen so many brave women who gave birth in a bomb (shelter), and I'm really proud of them," said

Ismailova. "But having a chance to make it different, I would prefer to give birth in a safe place. We decided to come over here and see how it goes."

Arrival

Owning several properties in the village of Pewaukee, Raml and her husband were a month away from vacating their last rental home, which they had renovated. Upon Ismailova's request of sponsorship from the Pewaukee couple, Raml moved swiftly to welcome the family to the U.S.

"We just happened to be in a position where we could help this family get on their feet, and let them live in the house rent-free to help them get established," said Raml.

The pledge to sponsor the family through Uniting for Ukraine was amazingly simple to Raml's surprise, and within two weeks of submitting her supplication for sponsorship, Ismailova's family was approved.

The colleagues met in 2010 when Ismailova came to Chicago from Ukraine through a global internship program. She worked with Raml at Applus Technologies Inc., who was the company's chief of staff. Ismailova worked as an intern for 18 months before moving back to Ukraine.

The two clicked instantly and kept in touch for 12 years.

"I never expected her generosity like that when I asked her to be a sponsor," said Ismailova. "I never expected from her to give us a house."

When Ismailova, her husband, her eight-year-old daughter Yeva Borys and four-year-old daughter Emili Borys arrived at the Pewaukee home, the house was equipped with two twin beds, books, dolls, towels, kitchen wear and other housing items.

Prior to the family's arrival, Raml put out a donation link and received over 400 emails and messages from community members offering and donating to Ismailova's family.

Yeva and Emili had bikes and scooters before they arrived, people bought them toys and others donat-

ed furniture. The donation link Raml made on her own for the family raised \$1,350.

"It was really rewarding because they are happy to be where they are," said Raml. "I'm really happy for them."

Business back home

Though well-established in Pewaukee, Ismailova and her husband are struggling with finances as they continue to pay their employees from their business back home.

Nursery Décor, with all Ukraine-made products consisting of Advent calendars, pillow coverings, hand-stitched embroidery, nursery décor and more, was started by the couple six years ago with the plan to hire single moms.

"For them, it's very important to find a job that is part-time or full-time, but still a flexible schedule," said Ismailova. "There is no chance for us to quit them now or let them go, but we are really very short in sales."

With the bulk of their sales previously coming from Ukraine, the couple is having trouble keeping the business going. However, Raml is determined to help Nursery Décor rise again. The couple has always used Etsy to reach U.S. and U.K. customers. Sales through the online site have also gone down due to the shipping costs and slower delivery from Ukraine.

Money raised from the donation link will be put towards paying their employees and bills and taxes on their business.

Though the family doesn't have definite future plans right now, they are working towards buying a car, receiving their work authorization to gain full independence and finding a doctor to welcome their third child in November.

"Jennifer was always kind to me," said Ismailova. "But you know, there is something different between kindness and real generosity."

To view Ismailova's business on Etsy visit <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Kikakids> and <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Baidyky>.



Courtesy of Jennifer Raml

Pictured from left to right in the back row are parents Eugene Borys and Anna Ismailova, and in the front are their two children from left to right, Yeva Borys and Emili Borys. The family arrived from Ukraine in Pewaukee on Sept. 7.



Pictured from left to right are Anna Ismailova and Jennifer Raml in downtown Chicago in 2010, when Ismailova interned for the company where Raml worked.

Courtesy of Jennifer Raml

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Bartolotta Restaurants preps former Seven Seas property for new era

The Commodore, a fine dining restaurant, will open next summer

By Karen Pilarski
kpilarski@conley.net.com
262-513-2657

DELAFIELD — Excitement is still simmering over the news that Bartolotta Restaurants will open The Commodore, a fine dining restaurant and elevated catering venue on Nagawicka Lake at the former Seven Seas property.

Bartolotta Restaurants owner and co-founder Chef Paul Bartolotta said the thrill of his work never gets old. He used the examples of great performing artists, athletes and speakers. In order to stay engaged you have to be a little apprehensive and nervous. As the restaurateur said, you never walk out on a stage or in a business calm.

“You hear these great stories of great performers in the world after a 20-year career are in the bathroom throwing up due to nerves. At the end of the day it is what you live for, it is that adrenaline that excites you,” Bartolotta said.

Developed in partnership with David Herro and Jay Franke of HF Hospitality Group, a hospitality design and investment group, The Commodore – A Bartolotta Restaurant is expected to open next summer with plans to revitalize the historic waterfront property.

“We are in the final design development of the interior and the exterior is under a massive overhaul to preserve it and bring it into the next era of life. It’s going to be spectacular,” Bartolotta said.

Projects such as The Commodore allow the company to stretch itself, grow and expand. And also, Bartolotta added, to elevate what they are doing as an organization.

“Fundamentally Joe (Bartolotta) and I for all the years have only had a handful of partners. We are very prideful of the partners we have had,” he said.

Bartolotta and his brother went out to the Seven Seas property years ago after hearing it might be for sale.

“We looked at it and thought what a magnificent location. But the scale and scope of it was a little bit too ambitious for us. Obviously with my brother’s (Joe) passing and COVID, I really had to focus on the four walls of my current businesses and make sure I did right by my employees, then re-engage with our community. It was an inward focus for the moment,” he said.

After some time he was approached by David Herro and Jay Franke and after one short meeting he knew they were the right partners. Bartolotta said they understood the scope and scale of what it would take to bring the building back.

The Commodore – A Bartolotta Restaurant will be a multiple-level destination, with a main level dining room setting inspired by the yacht clubs of the 1920s, while embracing modern Lake Country.

In its history, the property has changed hands more than 15 times over the past century, serving as, among other things, a hotel, a discotheque, a girls camp and a school. “Everyone has a story about the Seven Seas. We have had people calling to book weddings already. There is real genuine interest,” Bartolotta said.

Location is also a perk as The Bartolotta Restaurants doesn’t have any restaurants this far out west. It’s off a major highway.

Looking at the company’s reward program, there are many members who live in the Lake Country area. There is an enormous amount of surface parking.

“The views, facing the sunset, we know the sunsets will be breathtaking,” Bartolotta said.

A people business

When The Bartolotta Restaurants looks at its values as a company, they take care of their employees first, Bartolotta said.

“What are we going to do to make it a place where employees want to work?” Bartolotta said.

The pandemic, he noted, was tough on the business.

“I caught some real flack about



Courtesy of Bartolotta Restaurants

Bartolotta Restaurants owner and co-founder Chef Paul Bartolotta shares his excitement over the news of The Commodore, a fine dining restaurant and elevated catering venue on Nagawicka Lake at the former Seven Seas property in Delafield.

our strict mask policy. I did it because I wanted to protect my employees and my guests. My employees were frontline employees and I was worried about them and their families and their health. Not only did I make my employees wear masks but guests had to put up their masks when a server came to their table,” he said.

He admits it wasn’t fabulous hospitality and a bit stringent.

“But if you understand the motivation behind it, it was my staff wearing masks and using sanitizer to provide a safe place

for our guests. I have an obligation as well to make sure my employees are being safe as well,” he said.

The purpose of the business is more than just restaurants and catering venues, he added. It is to be integrated within the community where they operate and its people.

“We are excited to be integrated in the community of Lake Country,” Bartolotta said.

More information about The Bartolotta Restaurants and its menus can be found at bartolottas.com.



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THIS MONTH

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Peripheral Neuropathy Breakthrough!

"My feet feel like they're on fire." "Each step feels like I am walking through wet paint." "I live in constant fear that I'll fall." "I can't sleep, my hands and feet tingle all night."

What do all of these people have in common? They suffer from **peripheral neuropathy**. It's estimated that more than 20 million people in the United States have peripheral neuropathy. Unfortunately, this figure may be significantly higher as the disease is often misdiagnosed because of its wide array of symptoms.

Alison Ali of Ali Ali Healing in Pewaukee shares this belief. "I've been treating neuropathy and all its various forms for over 5 years and so often my patients come to me because of the symptoms, not because of a diagnosis. They read a testimonial from another patient and say to themselves, 'hey, I feel the same thing'."

Sally L. of Delafield testified to this. "I remember my husband driving me to my consultation and I saw a woman running just outside our neighborhood. I was so envious - I just kept thinking 'I would give anything just to walk again'. My primary care doctor told me my troubles with pain and balance were just symptoms of old age and gave me a prescription. I was so depressed."

Fortunately Sally would eventually find Alison Ali talking about similar symptoms and how she offers a real solution at Ali Ali Healing. "I just knew I had to see her. She was my last hope."

Almost all of our patients come to us with a story similar to Sally's. They've been everywhere else. They've been told there's no hope. They've been told 'it's just part of getting older'." shares Kelly, a Patient Care Coordinator at Ali Ali Healing. "It just breaks my heart but I know how much we can help people like Sally so I'm always so happy when they walk through the door."

Those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy often face a very grim reality; Western medicine declares that there is no solution while most alternative therapies carry large price tags and offer little to no resolve. Which is why Alison Ali and the staff at Ali Ali Healing pride themselves on being 'the last resort with the best results'.

Peripheral neuropathy is the result of damage to the nerves and this damage is commonly caused by lack of blood flow in the hands and feet. A lack of blood flow results in a lack of nutrients; the nerves then begin to degenerate and die which causes pain ranging from discomfort to debilitating. Because neuropathy is a degenerative condition, once those nerves begin to deteriorate they will continue to do so until they are completely expired, leaving those suffering with crippling balance issues. "In this case, the absence of pain is not necessarily a good thing," shares Alison Ali. "This usually indicates that your nerves are hanging on by a fragile thread."

So how exactly is Alison Ali able to reverse the effects of degenerative disease? "Acupuncture has been used to increase blood flow for thousands of years which helps to get the necessary nutrients to the affected nerves. But the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance Biotherapy™. This is tech that was originally developed by NASA to expedite recovery and healing."

"I just can't say enough about Ali Ali Healing, " Sally shared through tears of joy. "My husband and I moved here 3 years ago and he's gone to the golf course almost everyday. I always stayed home because of the pain and discomfort. Yesterday I walked on the course with him! And next week I'm starting golf lessons. I'm truly living life these days."

According to Sally's test results, she has seen a 74% improvement with pain and functionality, which is on par with a majority of our patients, " shares Kelly.

"But more important than those test results is the joy she's expressed being here and hearing about all the amazing things she's able to do because she feels great!"

By seamlessly blending the ancient science of acupuncture with modern medical solutions Alison Ali has achieved a 90% success rate in reversing the affects of neuropathy. She starts each patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed. "This not only aids in making a proper diagnosis but it helps to define just how much nerve damage has occurred" tells the Practitioner. "This is important because if a patient has suffered more than 95% damage, there is little that I can do to help them. I'm familiar with the medical miracle but I know my limits as a practitioner and the limits of my medicine."

When it comes to treating peripheral neuropathy, regardless of it's origin, early detection greatly improves your chances of a full recovery.

If you or someone you love are suffering with chronic pain that presents as burning, tingling or 'pins or needles' or you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, it's important to know that there are options. There is hope.

Call (262) 264-8462 to schedule an initial consultation.



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The crew of the Oconomowoc cheer team and their entry find the going a bit wet as they struggle from the start line. Making a bit of a splash are Tayler Bscherer, in back, and Ella Pakenham.

OCONOMOWOC — Engineers of all ages tested their ideas and creative efforts during the 2nd annual Cardboard Regatta held Sept. 18 at City Beach in Oconomowoc. There were plenty of smiles and even more miles of duct tape for a large crowd to enjoy.

The Ewald crew struggles to stay upright as the Five O's entry paddles past them in the 2nd annual Cardboard Regatta held at City Beach. Trying to stay afloat are Austin Devivo, left, and Trevor Zane.



Photos by Sue Boyer,
Special to The Freeman



Jessica Laughlin, in back, and Cami Bacik team up to paddle their Tiki Barge toward the finish line in the 2nd annual Cardboard Regatta at Oconomowoc City Beach.



Stevie La Sage tends to her entry prior to the start of the Cardboard Regatta held in Oconomowoc. Nearly two dozen creative designs participated in the second year of the event.

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Former Ronald McDonald, actor and entertainer remembered as ‘Greatest Showman’

Aye Jaye was former resident of Okauchee

By Karen Pilarski
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OKAUCHEE — Aye Jaye was a consummate performer who always enjoyed making people’s days, in and out of makeup. Aye Jaye, who was born Alexei Jankowski, is remembered for portraying Ronald McDonald around the world in addition to other stage and film work. The former longtime Okauchee resident died on Sept. 9 at 83 years old.

His performing lineage came from his parents who came from the Soviet Union as performers. His daughter, Zsajsha Jaye, said her father’s parents were flower peddlers and on the carnival midway. Aye Jaye’s mom ran the high striker or a strength tester for many years.

“My father’s father died when he was 11. At that time they had many children in the family. As a widow they basically gave him to a family who was a carnival family,” Zsajsha Jaye said.

He went to work with them on the Badger State Show, which was a carnival that traveled in the Midwest. His love of performing came from taking part in the 10-in-1 show, where there are 10 performing acts.

One day the man who tries to get people to attend a show, known as the talker, provided Aye Jaye with a life-changing opportunity.

“The talker on the midway was one day passed out drunk and as a young boy my father had heard the pitch a hundred thousand times. He knew it. He took that opportunity to pick up the microphone and invite everyone to step right up,” she said.

Zsajsha Jaye’s father often told her, and her sister Z’dra, that moment of hearing his voice over the loudspeaker was the moment he realized what he was destined to do.

Aye Jaye performed as a clown while growing up and did many parades and other shows such as local television show “Kids Klub” on WTMJ. He served his country while still performing, with his service in the Vietnam War from 1962-1964. He was active in local theater

and the U.S. Army’s theater group, entertaining fellow soldiers. He legally changed his name to Aye Jaye after his time in the army to better fit his career.

“He used to say his former name didn’t fit on the side of a drum while performing,” Zsajsha Jaye said.

Aye Jay was active as well in the stand-up comedy scene in the greater Wisconsin area as an adult. His career took off and he was doing speaking gigs for American Airlines and United.

A man named Frankie Little, who sold newspapers in Milwaukee, told Aye Jaye about an audition for a clown in the early 1960s, but unknown to him it was for Ronald McDonald.

“He was told he got the part but asked what the part was for. It really started from there,” Zsajsha Jaye said.

Performing meant the world to him. Her father used to say he would rather die in greasepaint than push a pencil or clock in.

His hard work paid off and made it a career. Aye Jay was promoted in 1965 to International Boss Clown in charge of hiring, writing for and training other Ronalds around the world.

As the McDonald’s mascot he made appearances at the White and Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York, among other exciting gigs. He got to play golf with comedic legend Bob Hope and met the Queen of England.

Aye Jaye met his wife of 36 years, Annie, at the 1984 Summer Olympics while she was playing Sam the Olympic Eagle in Los Angeles. Annie Jaye worked for McDonald’s and was her husband’s assistant.

“He always said he lost his greatest assistant the day he asked her to marry him,” Zsajsha Jaye said.

He lived in Okauchee in the 1970s and was a member of the fire department, becoming head of the diving and rescue team and lieutenant of ladders, according to his daughter.

His children and wife had a part in performing during Summerfest and other comedy clubs through the years.

“He coached my magic career. I was a young junior magician and I did a lot of competitions in my early teens. My sister had been his

assistant for his magic act in Los Angeles,” Zsajsha Jaye said.

One authentic clown

For Aye Jaye, nothing was challenging about being a clown. If he was in makeup, he and his children would stop to visit children’s hospitals regardless if they were a Ronald McDonald House or not.

“It was never hard for him. It was probably hard for him to take off the greasepaint. Even when he took it off ... he was always on,” Zsajsha Jaye said.

When the family would go to a restaurant he would always have a magic trick handy in his pocket. He always had a joke on standby to make someone’s day better.

“He was always entertaining everybody,” Annie Jaye said.

Twenty-five years ago Aye Jaye hung up his yellow suit with the M monogram on it. After that he continued to perform, entertain and speak to audiences. He wrote “The Golden Rules of Schmoozing” in 1998, which helped increase his speaking engagements.

His daughter revealed her father never learned to read or write. It was Annie Jaye who transcribed the book from an audio recording of her husband.

The book was about the practice of treating each others well. Zsajsha said her father was very kind in addition to being a great performer and entertainer.

“He always wanted to make people laugh and smile. If someone had a very unique laugh he would love that and want them in the audience,” Zsajsha said.

It was Aye Jaye’s authenticity that made him a special performer and friend. He believed in building relationships with everyone around him.

“They always say comedy comes from great loss and sadness. His sister died when she was 16 years old from cancer. A year after that his father had drank himself to death and passed away when he was 11,” Zsajsha said.

A lot of times when children experience great sadness, they propel that into making others laugh, according to Aye Jaye’s daughter.

He also wanted to find happiness in starting a family, which he did later in life.

“I want him to be remembered as the greatest showman,” she said.



Courtesy of Annie and Zsajsha Jaye

Aye Jaye performed as a clown and did many parades and other shows such as local television show “Kids Klub.”



Aye Jaye met his wife of 36 years, Annie, at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles while she was playing Sam the Olympic Eagle. Annie Jaye worked for McDonald’s and was her husband’s assistant. (both pictured).

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Western Lakes Fire Department Board OKs 59% budget increase for next year

By Karen Pilarski
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OCONOMOWOC — The Western Lakes Fire Department Board approved a 59% budget increase on Sept. 28. Ever since the referendum failed to pass in August the community and fire district have had to evaluate the critical needs to ensure an effective fire and medical response, Western Lakes Fire Department Chief Brad Bowen said.

Bowen said with the current wages of part-time staff, which is the majority of the department workforce, the 2023 budget helps bring the wages up to competitive market values in the fire service as well as the private sector. “Currently we are competing with Taco Bell, Kwik Trip for employees who are able to work for those locations for \$5 or \$7 more an hour,” Bowen said. Wages are a critical need in the budget to maintain staff as WLFD continues to

lose employees who need to make ends meet in that industry or in a different job, Bowen said. The loss of staff has left openings and made them further short staffed, he added. The budget included a phased approach. The referendum proposal was a long-term sustainable solution, according to Bowen. He said the State of Wisconsin doesn’t allow municipalities to have a phased-in referendum. Staff wondered what were other options.

“Each municipality has to navigate those independently. I don’t make those decisions. The communities had to navigate what are other options to fund. As a district we looked at critical needs of wages to be competitive and phasing in some additional full-time positions (firefighters and paramedics), which is what we do in 2023,” Bowen said. The referendum had 33 firefighters and paramedics in it. If the referendum would have passed, the district’s current budget of

over \$6 million would have nearly doubled. The 2023 budget includes 15 firefighters and paramedics but not all at once. There will be some added in the first, second and third quarters of the year to ensure an adequate response. Bowen cited a house fire as a prime example of the crisis that public safety is in right now. There was a fire in the 200 block of South Elm Street on Tuesday afternoon. A resident noticed smoke coming from their home when they pulled up and called 911. “We already had a medical call going on and a working fire requires more than the resources we have on staff right now,” he said. WLFD called for mutual

aid. As Bowen was responding to the house fire, he was listening to the radio and fire departments from nearby who said they didn’t have enough staff to send. As a county and region the staffing shortages are a challenge everywhere, Bowen said, The budget has a phased-in approach over three years, starting with a \$4 million budget increase. Bowen said the annual budget would be about \$10.8 million. “This is a phased-in approach and we will take it one year at a time. The phased-in approach helps with the tax levy, and also allows the WLFD to appropriately evaluate this year by year,” Bowen said.

Residential project proposed for the Olympia Fields area

By Karen Pilarski
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OCONOMOWOC — The Oconomowoc Common Council heard from Neumann Developments on Oct. 4 about a proposal for a redevelopment project near the Olympia Fields area. The proposal includes multi-family and single-family residential developments. It is zoned for up to

640 residential units on 236 acres of land. Matt Neumann, CEO of Neumann Developments, told the council how excited he is about the project and opportunity. “We think it’s a very critical piece of the city. Frankly, I think one person described it as the tenderloin or kind of the backbone of the city given where it’s located between kind of connecting down-

town and connecting the Pabst Farms district along the interstate,” Neumann said. He added it is a very large parcel and it is unique as there are not many large parcels like this around metro Milwaukee. “It right there in the middle of the city. Its location right by the high school obviously is really important as well, and then being right along State Highway

67 gives us a lot of access opportunities in sight,” he said. He added the historical context, which is significant for the city. The Olympia Resort was known to be a significant feature of Oconomowoc and hosted thousands of weddings over the years. There were outdoor recreational opportunities. He said they look forward to bringing that back. “We are very excited to find ways to activate and energize that area for a lot of different family-friendly uses,” Neumann said. Neumann stressed they are under a tight timeline and hope to break ground

in the spring. “We share the city’s vision that this this can be something great, but we’re gonna have to work together on it and make it ready to become what it can be. It was a focal point and it was almost synonymous with a kind of warmth for a long time. And we think that can happen again,” according to Bryan Lindgren, project manager for Neumann Developments. Central to the whole project is the ski hill and they want people to think about it when thinking of the south portion of the city, Lindgren said. The developers envision bike paths and walking

paths that connect people to commercial uses. “There’s an opportunity to bring tubing back, perhaps some learning type levels of skiing. It’s a hill that we can bring that back to this area and we have users that we’re talking with already that are really excited about that prospect outside of winter activities,” he said. Lindgren added there is opportunity for an event venue there such as a catering business or a brewery pub operator, something along those lines to create year-round, indoor-outdoor type experiences.

Ring

From Page 1

“There’s just nothing quite like finding a highly sentimental jewelry item and being able to hand it back to the owner,” said Humphreys, who immediately offered to find the ring for Dewey and Judith. Humphreys came back later that day with his equipment and walked through the back yard with Dewey to investigate where he might have lost it. “I looked out there a couple hours later, and I saw he was still down there,” said Dewey, who added that Humphreys didn’t come back up to the house until it started getting dark. After spending hours in the lake behind the couple’s house and in the majority of the back yard, Humphreys suddenly caught a flash of two numbers on his metal

detecting machine. After further investigation of the hit, Humphreys pulled up a plug of grass in the lawn to discover the missing ring buried six-and-a-half inches under the ground. Years ago, when Dewey was working in the yard, he filled an area in the lawn and had a stump ground up resulting in the deep burial of the ring. The fact that the ring was found was startling to Humphreys. **The moment of return** With the ring in hand, Humphreys returned to the house to find Judith lying in her bed, set up in the living room and overlooking the lake. “I put the ring into her hand and her eyes glistened up with tears, and I told her I wanted her to be the one to give the ring to him (Dewey),” said Humphreys. Dewey recalled the moment his

wife asked him to sit by her on that day. “I put my hand out and there was the ring after two years of being down there,” said Dewey. “I just couldn’t believe it. I was stunned.” Humphreys watched the happy moment as the couple was reunited with the ring. He now has helped 89 individuals get their rings back. “The moment was almost beyond words,” said Humphreys. Judith died in early September, and her funeral was held two weeks ago. Dewey said Humphreys attended the funeral and shared the story of finding their ring. “I just thank Chaplain Paul. He’s so dedicated to what he does it’s just unbelievable,” said Dewey. “She was in so much pain, but she had that smile on her face, and she was just so happy that we had the ring back.”



Pictured is the ring after it was pulled out of the ground by hospice chaplain and metal detector Paul Humphreys, who found it buried six-and-a-half inches under the ground in the Shermans’ back yard.

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Red Circle Inn under new ownership

State’s oldest restaurant getting updates, new decor

By Katherine Beck
Special to The Freeman

NASHOTAH — Wisconsin’s oldest restaurant, the Red Circle Inn, has been purchased by Geronimo Hospitality Group, which owns and operates upscale boutique hotels, eateries, clubs and entertainment facilities.

Coinciding with the announcement of the restaurant’s purchase was the closure of its dining room and bar for renovations. According to the Red Circle Inn’s Facebook page, the dining room and bar should reopen soon and new and existing banquets and events will remain as scheduled.

First opened in 1848, the Red Circle Inn is Wisconsin’s oldest restaurant and counts Frederick Pabst as a former owner, per the announcement. The bar in the restaurant dates to 1889.

Geronimo Hospitality Group is no stranger to Lake Country and already operates The Delafield Hotel, I.d., Blue Collar Coffee and be FITNESS in Delafield. Its other properties are located in Beloit,

Indianapolis and Boise, Idaho.

New décor and furnishings will be added to the restaurant, which will continue to operate as a restaurant and event venue under Geronimo’s oversight, according to the announcement.

“Updated décor and furnishings will pay tribute to Red Circle Inn’s storied past, infused with modern amenities and Geronimo’s signature twist on hospitality,” reads the announcement.

In addition to the inside renovations, exterior improvements are also planned.

“We couldn’t be more excited to add Red Circle Inn to our collection of hospitality brands. It’s a special place with a great story and incredible staff,” said Jeff Whiteman, chief operating officer at Geronimo Hospitality Group, in a statement. “We’re proud to usher in a new era for Red Circle Inn, honoring its history and paving the way for all that’s to come.”

Red Circle Inn’s most recent owners, Norm and Martha Eckstaedt, oversaw the facility for 29 years.



Sue Boyer/Special to The Freeman
Wisconsin’s oldest restaurant, the Red Circle Inn, has been purchased by Geronimo Hospitality Group.

“The events, the guests and the staff are all most memorable but the relationships and friendships that have been built over these many years are priceless and will endure forever. We are both looking forward to the next exciting chapter that Geronimo Hospitality will write,” Norm Eckstaedt said in a statement. “One that will embrace the history while providing an excellent product with gracious Lake Country Hospitality.”

To learn more about Red Circle Inn, go to www.redcircleinn.com, or for more information about Geronimo Hospitality Group, go to www.geronimohospitalitygroup.com.

Langenkamp served nation in hotspots abroad as foreign service officer

By Brian Huber
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OCONOMOWOC — Sarah Langenkamp is remembered by many for her leadership talents exhibited while working for the U.S. government in several key areas around the world, from Haiti to Iraq to assisting the nation’s interests in Ukraine.

Langenkamp, an Oconomowoc native, died in a bicycle incident Aug. 25, weeks after returning home from Ukraine to Bethesda, Md., at age 42.

According to her obituary, Langenkamp returned to the U.S. after completing an assignment with the

U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine. There, she worked at reforming Ukraine’s anti-corruption efforts and providing assistance to Ukraine’s non-military security institutions.

“She saved hundreds of thousands of lives due to her actions early in the (Ukraine) war, and it’s so sad she had to lose her life,” her father, retired U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Dirk Debbink, said Wednesday.

Her career also took her to Iraq in 2009-10, where she helped the U.S. Embassy manage border control issues and the U.S. military drawdown there. She also worked in Uganda and Haiti, her obit said.

Debbink said the family has received several letters — “real let-



Sarah Joan Langenkamp
Nov. 8, 1979 – Aug. 25, 2022

ters, not form letters” — from Attorney General Merrick Garland, President Joe Biden, the deputy secretary of state and also a phone call from U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. He said he told his son-in-law, Dan Langenkamp, he

expected it would be a five-minute conversation but it lasted 25 minutes.

“Secretary Blinken talked to my wife, myself, and Dan, Sarah’s husband, and really knew what she was doing over there,” Debbink said.

A memorial service was held Sept. 6 at the U.S. Institute of Peace on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. Debbink said the guest book listed over 400 attendees, but he estimated there were closer to 600.

“We were really gratified so many State Department colleagues came to honor Sarah,” Debbink said.

Langenkamp, a 1998 graduate of Oconomowoc High School, earlier this year was named to the OHS Wall of Fame, joining her father, a 1973 graduate, who was inducted in 2006.

An avid bicyclist, Langenkamp decorated her home with bicycle themes and items.

Her family hopes to inspire bicycle safety policies in the wake of her death.

“Our commitment to biking is linked to our deep belief in living a life that is healthy, humble, and green. Sarah did not need to show the world she was a successful professional, diplomat, leader, and role model. Her grace, intelligence, kindness, and deep commitment to promoting U.S. interests around the world was shown in her work and actions,” Langenkamp’s husband Dan said in a GoFundMe.

Dan organized the online GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for bicycle safety to assist bicycle safety organizations working toward safer bike routes, be it by working with governments, legal assistance or raising public awareness. The goal of the campaign was to raise \$50,000, but the site page said more than 2,100 donors have already raised \$267,935 as of Wednesday.

Langenkamp is survived by her husband, Dan; children, Oliver and Axel; parents, Dirk and Teresa Debbink of Oconomowoc, three grandparents, three siblings and their spouses, and other relatives and friends.

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