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RAMPING UP *for* SUMMER

Skate club gives another option to kids seeking independent sports

By **Bridget Dean**
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TOWN OF DELAFIELD — Kelli Alf's eldest daughter Coco received a penny board for Christmas in 2021, but the 11-year-old skater has long since ditched it for sturdier, larger boards more her speed. Alf began promoting skate meet-ups in her daughter's school newsletter last spring, starting the Lake Country Unofficial Skate Club. They held their first Thursday meet-up of the year on April 25, thanks to the nice weather.

"We kind of started out as a joke. We were meeting every Saturday, just for fun," said Alf. "I was like, 'Oh, we should start a club!'"

A small group of students from the Prairie Hill Waldorf School in the Town of Delafield had already been meeting to skateboard at local parks, but towards the end of fall 2023, Alf got more serious about the club.

She reached out to a skateboard competition organizer in Minneapolis.



Photo by Bridget Dean/Freeman Staff

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Pulling off a trick at the top of one of the ramps at the Delafield Skate Park is Bobby Merkt.

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County Board Chairman Heinrich: Hitting the ground running

By James A. Heinrich

It is my privilege to be chosen as Waukesha County Board chairman by my fellow supervisors. I am a veteran of local government, serving eight years on the Brookfield Common Council and appointed to the County Board in 2007. For the last 10 years I served as chair of the County Board's Finance Committee, which reviews the entire county budget. I valued this role because it fits perfectly with my professional background as a certified public accountant, and my desire to keep Waukesha County a low-tax leader in the state.

One thing you might not know about me is I am a runner. I started later in life, at age 60, at the urging of my wife, who in all likelihood was just trying to get me out of the house. To date I have run one marathon, over 20 half-marathons and countless 5Ks. Starting to run later in life seems intimidating, but I was able to stay motivated by following best practices that I also plan to apply to my role as County Board chairman.

Discipline and consistency are essential. Even if you like running, there are days you don't feel like running. Resisting the temptation to skip a training day is a mental hurdle every runner must learn. At the county level, it's very tempting to fund every program or project that we are contacted about, but that would put us on an unsustainable path. We create discipline and consistency in budgeting through policies adopted by the County Board. When the county is constructing Moorland Road or remodeling our courthouse, we always put 20% down and pay off

GUEST OPINION

our debt in 10 years. This policy prevents us from taking on projects we cannot afford that run counter to our conservative budgeting philosophy.

Each training run gets your body and mind one step closer to achieving the long-term goal of the race. If you ran 1 mile today, a 2-mile run next week won't look so difficult. The county determines long-term goals and steps to achieve them through its strategic planning process. The county establishes links between core county functions and measurable program outcomes to make sure we are providing high-quality services at the lowest possible cost to our constituents. Every time we survey residents, they resoundingly say public safety is their number one priority, and our county budget reflects that, with 41% of tax levy going toward public safety.

Things rarely go as planned when training for a race. Setbacks are part of the training process, and as a "senior runner" I had to deal with my share of injuries. Navigating these obstacles only improves your ability to problem solve on race day. When the county has been hit with outside obstacles, whether it is inflation or a public health crisis, we are in a better position to respond because of our past conservative fiscal management.

In running when you put in the work, the results will come. Waukesha County has received



Courtesy of Sarah Spaeth, chief of staff, Waukesha County Board Office
James Heinrich, left, was elected the new County Board chair on April 16 during the County Board's Organizational Meeting. Pictured are Heinrich with former Chair Paul Decker as he hands over his gavel.

its share of accolades. Our borrowing policies have preserved the county's esteemed AAA/Aaa bond rating. Waukesha County has the second lowest property tax rate and the lowest rate of counties without a sales tax. All this to say, I see some challenges ahead of us. County Executive Paul Farrow is leading us forward with the formation of a Budget Task Force to provide direction for future county budgets. I am looking forward to working with him to keep Waukesha County on the steady path.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns to: jheinrich@waukesha-county.gov.

(James Heinrich is chairman of the Waukesha County Board.)

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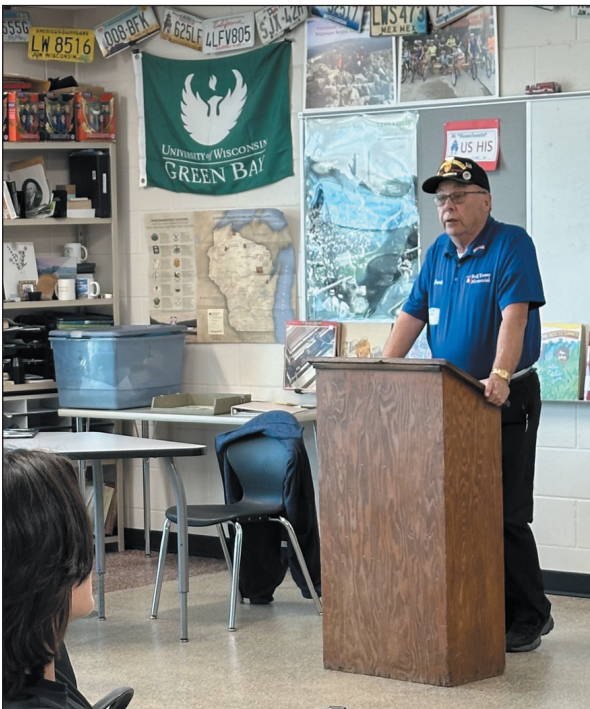
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Bell Tower Memorial members share war experience with Pewaukee High history students

PEWAUKEE – Members of the Bell Tower Memorial alumni group spoke to a Pewaukee High School history class on April 24, sharing their stories of serving in the U.S. Army and Air Force.

Army veteran Dennis Ziebell spoke of his time serving in Vietnam, the unpleasant reception of Vietnam veterans, and his experience being a “Tunnel Rat” who spent time underground searching for explosives and enemies. Air Force veteran Bill Rheingans also spoke to the class, talking about his time serving in Kuwait and Iraq.

The Bell Tower Memorial is available to arrange for veterans to speak to groups about their experiences. The group is also fundraising for a memorial in the Kiwanis Village Park. More information and opportunities to help can be found online at www.belltowermemorial.org.



Courtesy of Bell Tower Memorial

Dennis Ziebell, Army veteran, speaks to a history class at Pewaukee High School about his experience serving in the Vietnam War.

Woman’s Club of Hartland donates \$1,000 to village for beautifying parks

HARTLAND — On April 22, The Woman’s Club of Hartland presented a check for \$1,000 to the village for parks beautification. Left to right are Meg Haag, treasurer of the Woman’s Club; Dave Felkner, director of Public Works; and Renee Rasmussen, president of the Woman’s Club.



Courtesy of the Woman’s Club of Hartland

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Skate

From Page 1

“He is involved with a nonprofit called Be a Boarder, and I reached out to him to see if they would be able to help us get kids outfitted with skateboards,” said Alf. “They got us 25 complete skateboards. They’re not brand new; they’re donations that they take in and they put together and make sure that they’re good to go.”

Alf said one of the missions of the LCUSC is to get kids on quality boards. Most bring their own equipment, but if anyone wants to try it, there are boards and safety equipment to borrow or even possibly take home. She also organized two clinics with 4Seasons Skate Park in Milwaukee for 20 kids last fall.

The club now meets at 4Seasons on Saturdays for a beginners’ skate session and holds weather-dependent meet-ups around Lake Country. While it originally began as a club for students at Prairie Hill, Alf has since opened it to the entire community.

“My husband is in the baseball industry, and so we’re just naturally putting our kids into traditional sports,” said Alf. “We put (Coco) into softball, and it just was not clicking for her. What I find ...is that for kids where traditional sports doesn’t work for them, skateboarding really can be a haven.”


Discipline and patience

There are no rules, no expectations. The individual is in control. Kids have to motivate themselves to learn skills; it takes discipline and patience.

“If you don’t show up for practice it’s not a big deal. It’s not like you have to sit the bench. You just missed a little bit of practice,” said Coco Alf. “It’s not like anybody’s mad at you or anything. Nobody’s telling you what to do. It’s mostly just you.”

One of Coco’s two younger sisters, Anneke, who is 7, began skating this year. She was sick of sitting and watching. Coco said it’s fun to watch her younger sister get involved.

“It has helped her to be really brave,” said Alf. “It’s really taught her to push her limits and take risks!”



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Coco Alf gets ready to drop in, carefully leaning into the fall so as to not fall or fly off her board. Bobby Merkt stands at the top of the ramp behind her.



Anneke Alf only began skating last year, but she shows no fear as she gets ready to skate down a ramp.

For more information

Join the skate club private group for more information on meet-ups: <https://bit.ly/lakecountryusc>

leap to say that this supports them not only physically but cognitively.”

Coco Alf is always thinking and calculating her moves while boarding. She said it could be intimidating to get into skateboarding.

“If you go too fast, you’ll fall. If you go too fast and you don’t bend your knees, you’ll go flying up. Your board goes flying and you go flying,” she explained, with not even a bit of hesitation or fear in her voice. For as terrifying as it sounds, the kids at the Delafield Skate Park that Thursday afternoon didn’t show fear, taking turns showing off tricks and speeding down the ramps.

If they fell, they got up and tried again. If they got a scrape, they put a bandage on and went back to the ramps. Geared up in wrist, elbow and knee pads and helmets, they proved Alf’s points about independence, dedication and learning from mistakes.

Alf encourages any parents interested in getting their kids involved in skateboarding to join the Lake Country Unofficial Skate Club Facebook page, where she posts meet-up information and is available for questions.



Coco Alf speeds across the ramps on her board. She got her first board in 2021, and has since been taking lessons and competing. Fellow Lake Country Unofficial Skate Club member Reid Hauke watches and waits his turn.



Norah Malik practices dropping down a ramp at the Delafield Skate Park



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