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of RACINE COUNTY

Spring 2023





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Cast members of "Mamma Mia!" appear on stage at the Burlington High School auditorium before the March production of the musical.

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A CHANGE OF *Perspective*

Mother's death, COVID-19 helps artist find new inspiration

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

For years, Lynn Garwood has been recognized – both nationally and internationally – for her paintings and artwork.

But when her mother passed in July 2019, Garwood found herself on a different kind of artistic journey – one that started with what Garwood said began as visitations from the spirit of her mother.

“It was a very confusing time,” Garwood explained. “I was excited she was coming to me, but I never had had that kind of thing happen to me before.

“What that led for me was a healing journey,” she added. “I think she was absolutely instrumental in helping me on my healing journey.”

Now Garwood’s art has taken a more soulful turn. While she still works with realism in her paintings – her most famous work is a painting of an old, rusted 1937 Chevy pickup – Garwood is clear that she’s trying to communicate more than just color and shapes.

“What I used to observe with my eye, I now try to feel with my heart,” she said. “It’s just more internal.”

LIFE-CHANGING

When Garwood’s mother died of leukemia in 2019, she admitted she needed to do some soul-searching. While a successful artist, Garwood was on the verge of becoming an empty nester. Her youngest daughter, Jesse, was about to graduate high school and Garwood also found herself taking care of her stepfather.

“You’re left with yourself again,” she said. “All the things you wanted to do, you



Garwood said she has found herself sketching more and more lately, oftentimes of women and mermaids. She said the work is her trying to show empowerment.

JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Racine County

can do, but it isn’t always possible.” Garwood found herself “blocked” on her artwork, wanting to paint from her heart but finding herself falling back on her realism background.

“It wasn’t an open valve,” she explained about painting with emotion.

She also found herself healing from numerous different traumas she had suffered in her life, everything from being bulimic as a teenager to self-worth issues she is still dealing with now.

The visits from her mother, she said, helped her along the way. As Garwood explained, her mother had felt powerless to help her when she was living. Now, Garwood could feel her mother’s presence as she began dealing with everything.

“She had no power here to help,” Garwood said. “When she crossed over, she was in my face, all the time, helping me. She’s a wizard in heaven, helping me.”

Less than eight months after her mother’s death, another life-changing event happened. Suddenly, Garwood – not to mention most of the world – found herself in quarantine to guard against COVID-19.

It became the catalyst for developing her new style. The need for change actually dates back to a show in Tennessee in 2018, a “crown jewel” type of show; something she felt would mean she had “arrived” as an artist.

“I remember being there and feeling nothing,” Garwood said. “I was embarrassed. I kind of felt like a fraud in a way. There was something bigger inside of me that was wanting to get out, but I was hiding behind the realism.”

Given the time away from others, Garwood began seeing more inside of herself, better understanding her emotions and herself.

“COVID-19 gave me space,” she said. “I don’t know how much it was a catalyst as it was a vessel. Even putting a mask on my face gave me that anonymity I craved. It helped me separate from people.

“It gave me time to explore me,” Garwood added, pointing out that because of her obligation to caring for others, she had stuck to mostly realism in her artwork.

“Realism feels safe,” she said. “Painting from your soul is risky.”

CHANGES

As Garwood began to understand the emotion behind her work, the process of painting began to change.

“It’s just a feeling,” she explained. She began to sketch more, drawing women and mermaids from what she saw in her mind. What came out on paper, though, wasn’t what she was imagining. She called her work “cartoonish” and “stiff.”

“I went on a figure-drawing quest,” she said, adding that she filled sketchbooks of nudes, trying to get a better understanding of how to best show the female body.

“It’s the curves,” Garwood said. “A woman is beautiful, and it’s the way her body can move.”

That study has helped her develop a mastery of not only the human figure, but in the emotions that come from humans.

“I didn’t put my work out there a lot,” she said. “I told my husband, ‘I need to take my time.’”

Garwood admitted that she was also protecting herself as she opened herself



Artist Lynn Garwood has been on a journey of self-exploration and self-examination over the last few years, trying to get at the “heart” of her painting and not just the realism she is known for.

JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Racine County

to new emotions. As a result, her artwork began to grow, and as Garwood said, become more “fluid.”

She called the process “Metamorphosis,” ending with a pair of butterfly wings that now adorn a building in Silver Lake – the old post office.

The wings themselves are based in the realism of Garwood’s older work, but also hold a fantastical quality – a wild variety of colors that exist together on no butterfly other than in Garwood’s mind.

“This whole project was inspired by angels,” Garwood said. “They gave it to me step by step. It was a total leap of faith.”

That leap started with Garwood resuming dancing – albeit it at home by herself. She would dance with bracelets on her wrists that made a soft noise that reminded her of butterfly wings.

As the butterfly wings became to take form as a vision in her head, she began working with Lainie Callahan of Sparrow Dance Company. The two created a work of movement to music by Labyrinth and Post Malone, eventually making a video that is in the process of being released.

Then a friend found the wall in Silver Lake she thought would be perfect for the wings.

“It was, and it is,” Garwood said.

The painting was finished this past summer, and has been on display since.

“People have been going in front of the wings and taking pictures in front of it,” Garwood explained. “It’s meant to uplift, and it is.

“Metamorphosis is all about healing and transformation,” Garwood added. “How art heals. To bring upliftment. Even when you’ve gone through really strong challenges, there is beauty that comes out of it.”

Now, as she works through commissions this winter, she is finding joy again in her work. It’s the next step as an artist Garwood has been waiting to take. She said she always felt her success as an artist would define her, make her more worthy. That hasn’t been the case, and she’s now learning that being worthy, is “just because.”

“You don’t earn it, it isn’t given,” she said. “You just are.”

Wonders of Racine County

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On the cover: The Burlington Jamboree, which replaced ChocolateFest a few years back, will return Memorial Day weekend.

CHAD HENSIK Wonders of Racine County

JERRY HILL, 1931-2023

Remembering a legend

Hill recalled as mentor, coach, family man, friend

By **Jason Arndt**
STAFF WRITER

As a teacher and coach at Burlington High School, Jerry Hill had a penchant for being laid back in the classroom while showing a competitive drive on the basketball court, where he produced a legendary career leading the program.

Hill, a former physical education, driver's education and English teacher at BHS, died March 2 in Burlington at the age of 91.

During his illustrious career, which included induction into the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 1982, he guided the Demons to 10 Southern Lakes Conference championships, seven Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association regional championships, two sectional titles and led Burlington to its only two state tournament appearances – the last coming in 1979.

During his 26-year tenure, Hill registered more than 300 career wins, while playing a key role in the Burlington community.

"When most think of the tradition of Burlington boys' basketball, it is hard not to remember the 26 years Jerry Hill spent leading the Demons on the hard court," said Athletic Director Eric Plitzuweit. "Many former players, alumni and community members have fond memories of spending cold winter evenings watching Coach Hill's teams compete successfully in the Southern Lakes Conference and throughout Southeast Wisconsin."

Hill became a pioneer for the athletic program, serving as Burlington's first-ever boys' track and field coach in 1961 and first boys soccer coach in 1987, Plitzuweit added.

Besides his coaching duties, Jerry served 33 years as a physical education, drivers ed and English teacher at BHS, Plitzuweit said.

"Even though Jerry accomplished a lot as a basketball coach, he also helped produce student athletes who developed skills that would allow them to become successful individuals in their careers, families, and communities," Plitzuweit said.

Born on June 11, 1931 to the late Victor and Emma Hill, Hill grew up in Montfort, and married Jeanene Suttle, whom he met in college.

According to his obituary, sports played a key role in his life, from the time he was a kid who climbed through a window to gain access to Montfort High School to shoot baskets to retiring from coaching basketball in 1987.

Hill, who later enlisted and served four years in the U.S. Navy, returned home and enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville where he graduated with majors in English and Physical Education.

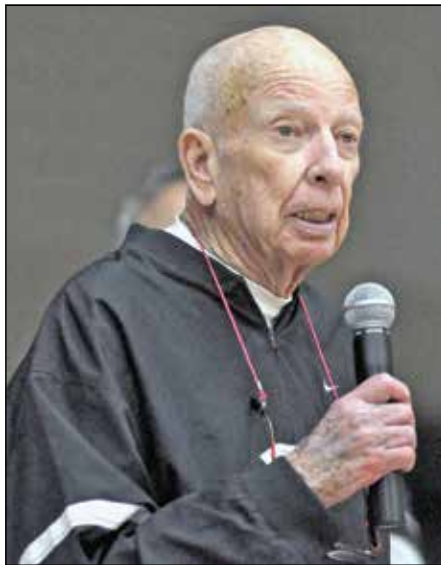
Hill, who earned a master's degree from the UW-Madison, taught and coached at Mazomanie High School.

After a few years at Mazomanie, he and his wife moved to Burlington, where he continued his teaching and coaching career.

'A BIG DEAL'

John Wiemer, of Burlington, served as captain for the Demons' 1979 state team and remember Hill for his competitive style on the court and laid back demeanor in the classroom.

"I had him for driver's education," he



above: Longtime former coach Jerry Hill addresses the crowd during a ceremony honoring him in late 2019. **right:** Legendary Burlington boys basketball coach Jerry Hill meets with current coach Steve Berezowitz on Dec. 20, 2019, when the program honored Hill for his historical achievements. Hill, inducted into multiple Hall of Fame institutions, passed away in early March at 91 years old.

FILE PHOTOS Wonders of Racine County



said. "He was very laid back and always, always entertaining. What I would mean by that is he would find humor in whatever he was doing."

Wiemer's teammate, Jeff Kohout, concurred.

Kohout, who played for Hill in 1978 and 1979, said he and his teammate always enjoyed Hill's scrimmages.

"He would coach on the fly during scrimmages, which we really liked about him. We all loved playing for him," Kohout said. "He was very, very competitive, no doubt about that. He did not like to lose. He wanted to win and I think that is why he won so much."

While he showed competitiveness on the court, Hill always cared for his players, Kohout and Wiemer each stated.

"He was a great coach, a great person. When the game was over, he was just a lot of fun to be around," Kohout said.

"He was a great man and he will be missed by quite a few," Wiemer said.

"He was a big deal," Wiemer added.

MEMORABLE STORYTELLER

Demons coach Steve Berezowitz, like Hill's former players, said Hill made an impressionable mark on him and basketball program.

"Jerry has a huge affect on me and our entire program. Jerry would always admit he had great success because he had great basketball players come through Burlington High School," Berezowitz said.

"It was always hard to stay connected as years pass by, but Jerry always made a point to follow the Demons. He and I would talk fairly regularly because he simply loved talking basketball."

Burlington honored Hill before a game in 2019 when Hill made one of his last public appearances.

During the 2019 appearance, dozens of former players gathered for about an hour during the junior varsity game to socialize and reminisce about Burlington's glory days, including Kohout and Berezowitz.

"I feel grateful in this position to have a pretty good career," Hill said after his speech. "It's nice to have all these players back that I haven't seen in a long time. That's why he had name tags."

Berezowitz called the 2019 appearance "special" for Hill.

"He talked to me often about his former players and how good they were," Berezowitz recalled. "Having many of them back made it special for Jerry. Watching his former players interact made it very clear on the impact he had on them in high school and how that impact had carries over for decades after."

Berezowitz, meanwhile, shared similar sentiments and Kohout and Wiemer about Hill's demeanor.

"Those that know Jerry know what a character he was. He always had something witty to say and he always kept you on your toes," Berezowitz said. "I will miss Jerry greatly. He took me under his wing as a young coach and I will always cherish our friendship."

Outside of BHS, Hill belonged to Burlington United Methodist Church, Kiwanis and Jaycees, according to his obituary.

He also advised youth at Love, Inc. and delivered for Meals on Wheels.

His community involvement did not come as a surprise to Wiemer.

"He was involved in a lot of things in that respect. He was always visible and approachable," Wiemer said. "He was a great man and he will be missed by quite a few."

Hill, survived by his wife of 64 years, Jeanene, and twin sons, Todd and Tully, and was laid to rest on Saturday, March 11.

Jeanene said Monday that someone once asked her why she liked him.

"Because he's fun," said his wife. She also said she was impressed there were two sides to him – the athletic and English side.

"Personally, he was kind," Jeanene said. "He was kind and helpful. His family came first, always, but basketball was almost equal."



Former players reunite with coach Jerry Hill at Burlington High School on Dec. 20, 2019, when the school recognized him for his achievements.

FILE PHOTO Wonders of Racine County



JASON ARNDT Wonders of Racine County



SUBMITTED PHOTO Wonders of Racine County

above: Archives Bar and Grill is run by a group of four people. (from left) Gary Hanline Jr., Lauren Hanline, Maxwell Boyle and Samantha Bock. **left:** Archives Bar and Grill, 356 N. Pine St., Burlington offers multiple menu offerings ranging from burgers to a Friday Night Fish Fry.

Hundreds served at Archives

Burlington establishment touts gluten-free menu, fish fry

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

The former Gabby's Palace, known for its Friday fish fry, became an iconic and historic establishment in downtown Burlington.

However, when the previous owners decided to retire after decades of service, two local couples dove in and bought property at 356 N. Pine St. before renaming the establishment Archives Bar and Grill.

Archives Bar and Grill, which had a soft opening in July 2022, underwent a transformation through renovations and menu changes while maintaining a family friendly environment.

Samantha Bock, co-owner of the establishment, along with business partner Gary Hanline Jr. have brought decades of experience into Archives Bar and Grill.

"With decades of combined experience in the service industry, the owners, Gary and Samantha, decided it was finally time to dive into the deep end and become their own bosses," Archives wrote on its website.

Archives, meanwhile, presents itself as a small-town hangout with fresh, scratch-made food and specialty cocktails.

Since its predecessor specialized in a Friday fish fry, and considering customer demand, Bock said she and her business partners felt it was imperative to include the option on the menu.

"Out of necessity, since this used to be the Gabby's Palace, we needed to have fish," Bock said, adding Hanline uses a homemade family recipe for its beer-battered Atlantic-cod dish.

"Our batter is an old family recipe and it is actually meant for fish fry," Bock said. "We have been using it for others things, but it is meant for fish fry. It has been going through our family for years and years."



Archives Bar and Grill boasts homemade items such as tartar sauce, coleslaw, to go along with a menu option of a customer's choice.

M.T. BOYLE COURTESY PHOTO Wonders of Racine County

While Archives offers a Friday fish fry, the establishment touts the item is gluten-free, Bock explained.

"That is starting to become our niche," she said.

Like the beer-battered cod, Archives also uses homemade recipes for its condiments.

"The main thing about us is we make everything fresh and homemade, even our ketchup, mustard and mayo," she said. "Our tartar sauce is homemade, our coleslaw is homemade."

The fish fry dinner is served with

homemade coleslaw, tartar sauce, a slice of fresh Turano Marble Rye and a choice of housemate potato chips or hand-cut french fries.

COMING TO FRUITION

Bock, whose fiancé, Maxwell Boyle, is also part of the establishment, began in the service industry as a teenager growing up in Burlington.

She spent several years serving, bartending, and managing restaurants, including Next Door Pub and Pizzeria, where she worked with Hanline.

Hanline Jr., married to Bock's sister, Lauren, spends hours preparing for Friday-night fish fry at Archives.

The two couples – Bock and Boyle as well as the Hanlines – then decided they wanted to own their own establishment in the Burlington area and discovered Gabby's Palace was up for sale.

As for the name, the ownership group opted to rebrand itself as Archives, with a photo of Tom Waits serving an inspiration.

Waits, according to the Archives website, was photographer smoking a cigarette with his morning newspaper.

"As we were perusing the web for art to hang on our blank walls we happened upon (the Waits) photo," the website states.

"Knowing that we wanted to feature live music we started to collect old photographs of famous musicians to hang on the walls as a general aesthetic."

Additionally, since Archives is across from the Burlington Public Library and Wehmhoff Square Park, Bock said Archives wanted to incorporate book art into its decorative scene.

While they worked on remodeling the property, customers of former Gabby's

Palace still stopped in, asking whether Archives would continue to serve Friday-night fish fry.

"It was definitely hard, even during the remodel process," Bock said of having to follow in the footsteps of its predecessor. "We would have the door open and people would stop in looking for a fish fry."

Archives, which also serves items such as chicken tenders, wings, jalapeño poppers, various salads, a diverse range of sandwiches, recently added burgers to its menu offerings.

"We are actually getting pretty well known for our burgers," Bock said.

HUNDREDS SERVED

On a typical Friday, Archives reportedly serves a little more than 100 fish-fry dinners, which has gone beyond Bock's initial expectations.

"Now we are starting to show that we have a good fish fry," she said. "I have been getting really good reviews, really good feedback."

Bock said she works diligently to solicit feedback during business hours, oftentimes personally asking customers of their opinions.

While Archives is in its first year, the establishment intends to offer fish fry on a weekly basis, even after Lent.

"We will do it year round, so this is one of our first months," she said. "We are trying to get a gauge on what the demand is."

Archives Bar and Grill is open noon to 8 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

For more information, visit www.archivesbarandgrill.com or call 262-716-0073.

Built to last: Local woodworker touts durable furniture, products

By **Jason Arndt**
STAFF WRITER

When people need a piece of furniture, such as a dining room table or cabinet, they often flock to big box retailers like Ikea or browse through Amazon.

However, for customers seeking custom pieces built to last, owner Danny Zentiek from Danny Z's Woodworking in Burlington promises to deliver durable products.

"The furniture I am building is an investment. It will be the last dining room table you will have to buy," said Zentiek. "My business is for people who want that attachment to a piece of furniture where they will have those family meals forever."

Danny Z's Woodworking, in business since incorporating as a limited liability company in 2020, also builds cabinets, limited edition items posted on its website, wall art and custom products made from locally sourced lumber.

Zentiek has built relationships with local companies, like Creative Edge Landscapes in Twin Lakes, and Burlington-based Arbor Images to bring these items to consumers.

"They literally make lumber out of trees they harvest on properties in the area," he said. "They both believe that like this is more of an art, rather than just an industry. It is nice to know that they care about what my customers are going to get."

Zentiek, meanwhile, works with customers on creating an ideal piece of furniture they are looking for.

The customers, he said, often seek him out for ideas before envisioning the final product.



Danny Zentiek, owner of Danny Z's Woodworking, showcases a nearly completed project he built for a customer.

JASON ARNDT Wonders of Racine County

Most recently, a customer from Cudahy presented him with a photo of their home, and requested reclaimed wood for a piece of furniture.

"I try to tailor everything to exactly what the customers wants while making it so it lasts," he said.

Unlike big box retailers, and other large companies, Zentiek spends additional time

honing in on the finer and unique details of assembling products.

Compared to mass produced items, which can be tossed easily when broken due to low expenses, Zentiek strives to create pieces designed for the future.

"I want to bring it back to the times of this piece of furniture is going to be something that will last," said Zentiek.

EARLY INSPIRATION

Zentiek, who grew up in Lake Geneva, remembers spending time in his grandfather's basement wood shop.

While he merely watched at the time, Zentiek developed an interest in woodworking, which took off while he attended Badger High School.

"It just kind of followed with me to the point where I was a senior in high school, I was spending seven or eight hours a day in the wood shop," he said.

But shortly after graduating from Badger, Zentiek put away the tools, and decided to enlist in the U.S. Army.

From 2003 through 2013, serving the United States became his priority, instead of woodworking.

"Two days after I graduated high school, I was in basic training for Army Infantry, so I quite literally forgot everything (about woodworking)," he said. "My life was the Army and that was that."

Zentiek, who became a Staff Sergeant in the 101st Airborne Division, returned home in 2013 and bounced around various jobs ranging from the service division at Harley Davidson dealerships to a letter carrier in the City of Whitewater.

Around the same time, he reclaimed his love for woodworking, courtesy of his wife.

Zientek, a father of three, recalled his wife showing him something on Pinterest she wanted him to build for the bedroom of one of their children.

"From there, it just grew up and completed reignited that spark that I didn't know was there," Zentiek said. "I kind of picked up where I left off, and re-learned some things, and then some."

While reigniting his passion, Zentiek entered corporate America, working in sales positions.

"I was just getting tired of having meetings in preparation for meetings," Zentiek said. "It got to the point where I felt I had built up enough of a reputation to at least start a side job in woodworking. So I did."

NEW PLACE

In 2018, after his family grew to three children, the Zentiek family decided to move away from Lake Geneva because their home became too small.

Since their oldest daughter attending dance lessons in Burlington, he and his wife felt the area was a perfect, and decided to relocate.

"Our oldest daughter was in dance here, so we decided to look here, and we found a house that we liked," he said.

"We are full on Demons, now," said Zentiek, who recognized the Burlington Area School District, where his children attend.

For information, visit Danny Z's Woodworking on Facebook, or online at dzwoodworking.com.

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left: Don Vande Sand stands alongside the monument to Edward Dyer at the Burlington Historical Society museum on Perkins Boulevard. The monument was donated to the museum in 2006. **above:** Don Vande Sand's brothers and sisters joined the open house at the Burlington Historical Society on Sunday and stands in front of a newly installed plaque recognizing him (from left) Jon Vande Sand, Annette Vande Sand, Marge Kitkowski, Marge Brown and Jim Vande Sand.

BURLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO Wonders of Racine County

Honoring the archivist

Historical Society recognizes long-time volunteer Vande Sand

By Jason Arndt

STAFF WRITER

For decades, whenever a resident walked past the Burlington Historical Society and saw the light on, it was highly likely Don Vande Sand was inside scanning through thousands of documents.

A year ago, however, the lights dimmed after Vande Sande passed away unexpectedly.

But on a bright and sunny Sunday afternoon, the Burlington Historical Society opened its doors and hearts to the community, as the museum designated the second floor in honor of the long-time archivist.

The second floor, now known as the Don Vande Sande Research Center, holds the key to documents and photographs of Burlington history and surrounding areas with public access.

Burlington Historical Society Board President Julie O'Neill said Vande Sande played an important role at the museum.

"He did so much for the historical society and community and we wanted to honor the work that he did," she said. "It was the perfect day to show the public how we are moving forward with his research."

Vande Sand, who volunteered at the museum for more than 30 years, spent nearly every day in the building researching local history and uploading documents onto the website he helped launch.

According to O'Neill, all people needed to do was drive – or walk – by and see the light on.

"He came just about every single day. Everyone knew, if you drove by the museum and the light out front was on, Don was here and people were welcome to come in."

Even when he left the building, according to O'Neill, Vande Sand would continue his research at home.



DEDICATED TO HISTORY

Vande Sand, born on May 15, 1939, passed away at his home on Jan. 17, 2022.

After graduating from local schools and colleges, including Burlington High School and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, he moved to Washington, D.C. and took a job as a senior supervisory auditor with the U.S. General Accounting Office.

Additionally, Vande Sand served in the U.S. Air Force reserve.

Past President Dennis Tully, who worked with Vande Sand at the museum for decades, remembers when he returned to Burlington to be close to his aging parents.

"His parents were really really involved in the early years of the society, and things started quieting down," he said. "Don was working in Washington DC. He came back and his parents were getting up in years and he had that enthusiasm to start coming down to the museum and gathering materials."

Vande Sand then spent several years reviewing documents, and decided to make

most of the items available through the historical society website, accessible at burlingtonhistory.org.

He also spent time reaching out to area churches, requesting marriage records, vital statistics and baptism records to keep them preserved for the future.

"We wanted to share it with the rest of the community," Tully said. "He spent countless hours, almost every single day of the week. He was very dedicated."

Tully remembers working with Vande Sand on several projects, including gathering historical artifacts, which were oftentimes found in area homes.

When people moved out, or cleaned their attic, Tully and Vande Sand encouraged residents to donate the artifacts to the Burlington Historical Society instead of the discarding the items.

SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE

City officials and historical society members said Vande Sand always offered his knowledge about the Burlington area and beyond.

Burlington Mayor Jeannie Hefty showcases photo of long-time archivist Don Vande Sand during an open house at the Burlington Historical Society on Sunday, Jan. 15.

JASON ARNDT
Wonders of Racine County

Burlington Mayor Jeannie Hefty, who spearheaded the Veterans Memorial Wall at Echo Park, said she received valuable information from Vande Sand about local veterans who served the country.

"He was hugely important to our city when it came to history," Hefty said.

Tully, meanwhile, said Vande Sand seemingly knew the answer to the most obscure questions about Burlington.

If Vande Sand did not answer, said Tully, the dedicated archivist could always find it through the research documents he helped collect.

"He was good at it," Tully said.

After Vande Sand passed away, the Burlington Historical Society struggled to stay open, considering the long-time archivist offered his service to hundreds, if not thousands of community members, for several decades.

Since then, the historical society has garnered some volunteers, according to O'Neill.

"Now we are starting to open a couple of Saturdays of every month," she said. "We are starting to get more volunteers who interested and we would love to get more volunteers."

In the meantime, Tully couldn't quite put the open house into words, since the event drew the largest crowd inside the building he has seen in years.

"This is the largest crowd we have ever had in our museum. I have been here 30 years. This is great on super sunny day," he said. "It is beautiful showing this place, and people really appreciate what were doing, which we are thankful for."

The Burlington Historical Society, 232 N. Perkins Blvd., was established in 1928 to collect and preserve historical records and artifacts related to the Burlington area.

The society also maintains a pioneer log cabin in Wehmhoff Square Park and an 1840 schoolhouse known as Whitman School.

Burlington Lumber Company built on strong family foundation

By Jason Arndt

STAFF WRITER

Burlington Lumber Company is built on a strong foundation of reputation, family values and going above and beyond for both retail customers and contractors.

Founded in 1988 by the late Eddie Impens, of Burlington, the establishment offers everything from doors, building materials with a focus on decking, cabinets and countertops, windows and much more.

Impens, who handed off control to his two sons, Craig and Chris, said Burlington Lumber Company serves as an ideal establishment for contractors looking to build a home.

“Our main customers are contractors, although we serve anybody that walks in the door,” he said before his death.

Eddie Impens started Burlington Lumber Company after spending 30 years in the retail lumber business in Burlington.

However, following three decades in retail, he wanted to begin his own empire.

Burlington Lumber Company, 140 Front St., Burlington celebrated 35 years in business on April 1.

The family-owned establishment continues to thrive based on reputation.

“I dealt with contractors before I went into business for myself,” Eddie said.

“They knew we had the experience, we had the knowledge. We always have done deliveries to contractors to help them out.”

PASSING THE BATON

Chris and Craig Impens, who began working for their father while attending Catholic Central High School,

have continued the family tradition at Burlington Lumber Company.

For several years, Eddie Impens instilled a stellar work ethic in his two sons, including how to work with customers.

“I have taught them to treat customers like you’d want to be treated,” he said. “They are hard workers, they are honest, and they are good people.”

Pat, Eddie’s wife, said her two sons have always shown willingness to help customers even after hours.

Both sons, Pat added, carry specific specialties to keep Burlington Lumber Company prosperous.

While Craig works with contractors on site, offering perspectives on design, Chris manages the yard and other company facets.

“They will oftentimes work after hours,” Pat said.

Additionally, Burlington Lumber Company has welcomed a third-generation, with Craig’s son, Tai, joining the business.

According to Eddie, his grandson presently works in the lumber yard.

DEDICATED TO COMMUNITY

Eddie Impens, who moved to Burlington at a young age, attended St. Mary’s School, now known as Catholic Central, where he met his wife.

Eddie was involved in multiple community groups, such as the Burlington Liars Club, Burlington Rotary Club, and Chocolate Fest.

“He has been really involved with



Burlington Lumber Company, 140 Front St., Burlington celebrated 35 years in business on April 1.

JASON ARNDT Wonders of Racine County

the community and has built great relationships with both the customers and contractors,” Chris said.

From Memorial Day through Labor Day, Burlington Lumber Company bolsters relationships with contracts, holding luncheons every Wednesday.

The weekly lunches also allow contractors to build rapport with each other.

DEALING WITH DEMAND

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Burlington Lumber Company experienced an uptick in demand, primarily from

residential customers looking to upgrade their homes.

“When COVID-19 started, people were relegated to staying home, and as a result, instead of spending money on vacation, they invested in their homes,” said Chris.

However, with rising demand came increased prices.

While prices have subsided, the industry still needs more time to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Burlington Lumber Company, accessible online at burlingtonlumber.com, can also be reached at 262-763-6676.

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