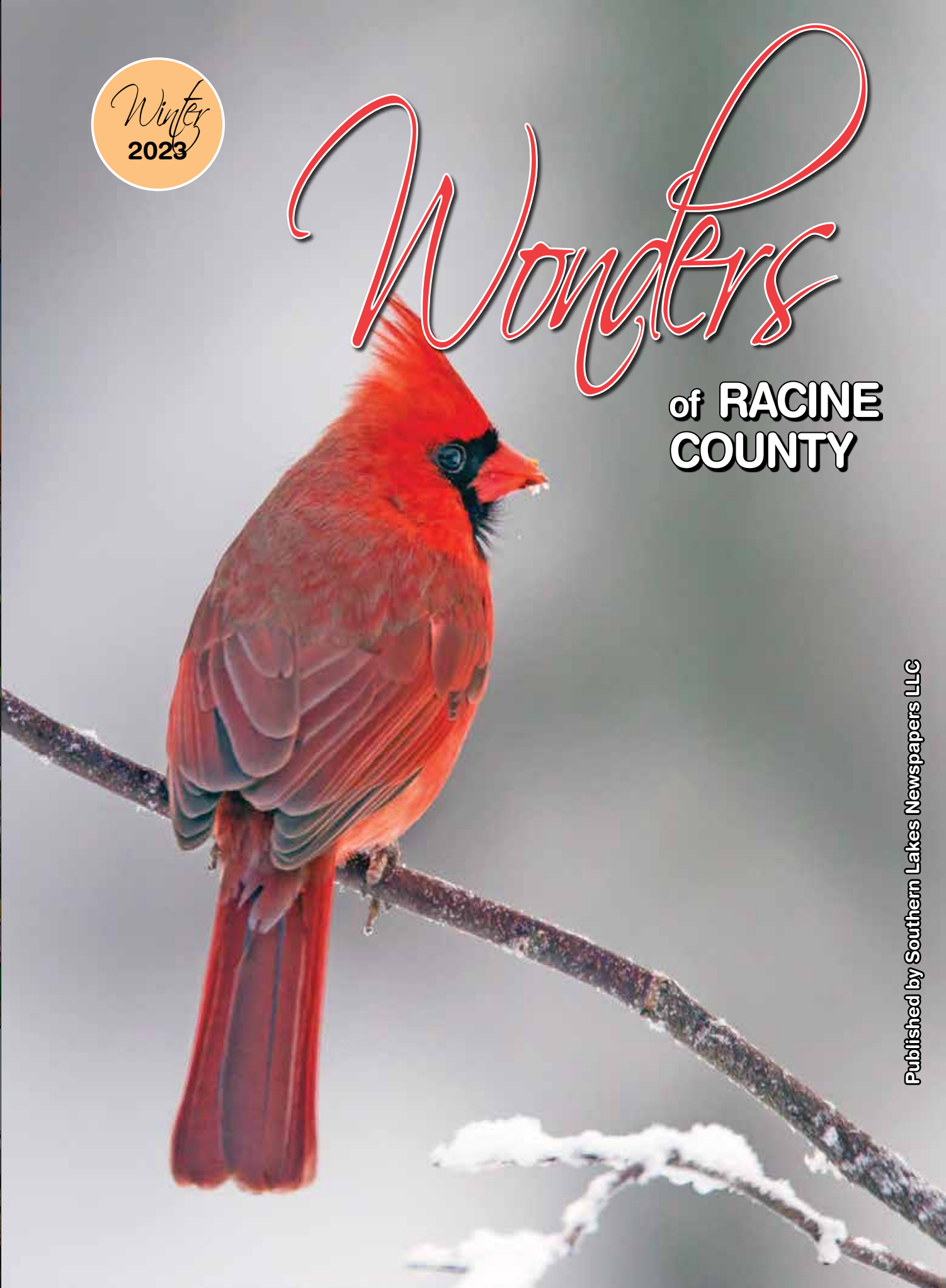




Winter
2023

Wonders

of RACINE
COUNTY



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Consignment for kids: New shop features clothing for children

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

When presented with the term, consignment shop, people oftentimes perceive the industry is tailored to women's apparel.

While there are many women's consignment shops, both locally and statewide, there is another niche to consider – children's wear and toys.

grayson grape & Co., 265 Milwaukee Ave., Burlington, is a children's consignment boutique featuring new and gently-worn clothing, toys, baby items and many more items.

Dana Erickson, owner of grayson grape, said children's consignment stores are typically found in larger cities.

"It is very common, there is quite a few, not so much in this area, but in Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee and they are nationwide," she said.

Additionally, she noted the Wisconsin State Fair grounds in West Allis hosts popup events, which include children's consignment items.

New venture

Erickson, originally from Lake Geneva, presently has a full-time job.

While she holds a day job, Erickson had an interest in becoming a business owner, but couldn't quite determine what she wanted to offer.

"I have always wanted to be a business owner and I just wasn't quite sure what that was or what that looked like," she said.

She eventually found a niche, simply by driving home from Grandparents Day at her grandson, Grayson's school.

During the routine, she saw a local consignment shop up for sale, and the idea clicked.

"I just started from ground zero," she said.

Erickson, who enjoys being a grandmother to Grayson, opted to create the business in his honor.

"Grayson is my grandson and the grape comes from when he was in preschool, and all of the kids had an object that went along with the first letter of their names, so he was Grayson grape," she said. "It just kind of all made sense with the kids consignment."

From there, she opened grayson grape and co. on Nov. 26, 2022, when local and national business promoted Small Business Saturday.

The initial opening, she said, drew favorable reviews from customers and consigners.

"It was good, there were a lot of people who came through," she said.

Unique store

Erickson enjoys the uniqueness of her store, considering the diverse range of offerings, including clothes and toys.

"It has got a little bit of everything," she said.

Additionally, since many parents see their children quickly outgrow clothing and shoes, they have found grayson grape an ideal place to distribute gently used items.

"Kids grow super fast and they grow out of their clothes, shoes and everything else," she said.

She typically receives her items through donations or people looking to consign their clothes for extra money.

On days she is open, there is always a steady flow of people looking to contribute items, she said.

"I have got 32 consigners so far, which is amazing for just being open for a couple of months," Erickson said.

Grayson Grape is typically open on weekends, since Erickson holds a full-time job, and sometimes has popup hours.

For more information, including hours of operation, visit grayson grape's Facebook page.



This display of children's toys is set up at Grayson Grape a new consignment shop in Burlington. The shop caters to children and offers a wide variety of clothing and toys.

JASON ARNDT Wonders of Racine County

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Honoring the archivist

BURLINGTON 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 in January, 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.

President Julie O'Neill, of the Burlington Historical Society, 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



BURLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO *Wonders of Racine County*



above: Don Vande Sand's brothers and sisters joined the open house at the Burlington Historical Society in January 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. **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.

JASON ARNDT *Wonders of Racine County*

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, 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 come 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.

According to its website, the Burlington Historical Society was the first in Racine County, and runs as a non-profit organization.

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

The website includes high school yearbooks from Burlington, Catholic Central, Wilmot Union High School, local directories, photo galleries, and historical databases.



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Game, set, match, Dolatowski

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

Long-time Burlington High School coach ends career with induction into Hall of Fame

Out in her garage, tennis coach Rose Dolatowski stores many things – including a great deal of tennis memorabilia from her time at Burlington High School. On the top shelf of the garage, Dolatowski recently found herself looking up at a picture of her 1994 team. That squad was the first to win a tournament under her tutelage, the Oak Creek tournament.

“That was the gift they gave me that year,” explained Dolatowski of the team photo.

But other than an unobtrusive fleece throw – tennis ball green on one side, the print of a tennis net on the other – and an ornament on her Christmas tree from the 2013 state-qualifying squad, Dolatowski doesn’t display much memorabilia from her years as a tennis coach.

“I’m just not that kind of person,” Dolatowski explained.

It’s no wonder, then, that when Dolatowski chose to retire this year, after 35 years of coaching the Demons, she did so with nary a mention. She quietly coached her last team to the WIAA Division 1 sectional in Mukwonago, and walked away from the sport she’d basically started at Burlington High School.

Dolatowski also received another honor last fall – one three years in the making. She was inducted into the Wisconsin High School Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame Nov. 11 at the Holiday Inn in Middleton, one of three coaches inducted. Dolatowski and her class were originally scheduled to be inducted in 2020, but the class was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“They wanted me to do it a few years earlier, but I was, ‘no, no, no,’” Dolatowski explained.

How it all started

Dolatowski didn’t begin playing tennis until middle school, when she decided to try a summer camp in Highland, Indiana.

“I got my \$2.99 wooden racquet with a press, hopped on my bike and went to the park and learned how to play tennis,” she explained.

Growing up in an era where high school sports didn’t exist, Dolatowski was working at a summer camp when someone suggested she try out for the Indiana University tennis team. She made it and spent three years playing for the Hoosiers before transferring to Indianapolis her senior year for her major, which was

nursing.

While working at IU Med Center, someone suggested she try out for the men’s team. Dolatowski made the cut, but quickly saw the differences between men’s and women’s sports at the time.

“When I left Bloomington, I had to turn in my sweats, racquet covers and towels,” Dolatowski remembers. Playing for the men’s team in Indianapolis, Dolatowski was given a pair of Converse tennis shoes and a fleece-lined jacket – which she still has to this day.

Playing collegiate tennis also gave her an experience that would end up being significant – a chance to play at Nielsen Tennis Stadium in Madison in 1974. The future host of the WIAA state tournament would end up coming full circle for her.

Bringing tennis to Burlington

Dolatowski came to Burlington in 1986 as a school nurse. Seeing a lack of tennis opportunities at the high school, she went to then-BHS athletic director Glenn Braunschweig and asked to start a team.

“He gave me this strange look and said, ‘I’ve never had anyone ask me to coach tennis,’” she recalled.

At the time, Dolatowski and her husband, Tom, had a 2-year-old daughter, Liz, and newborn Michael. Rose went to her husband and pitched the idea of coaching the team.

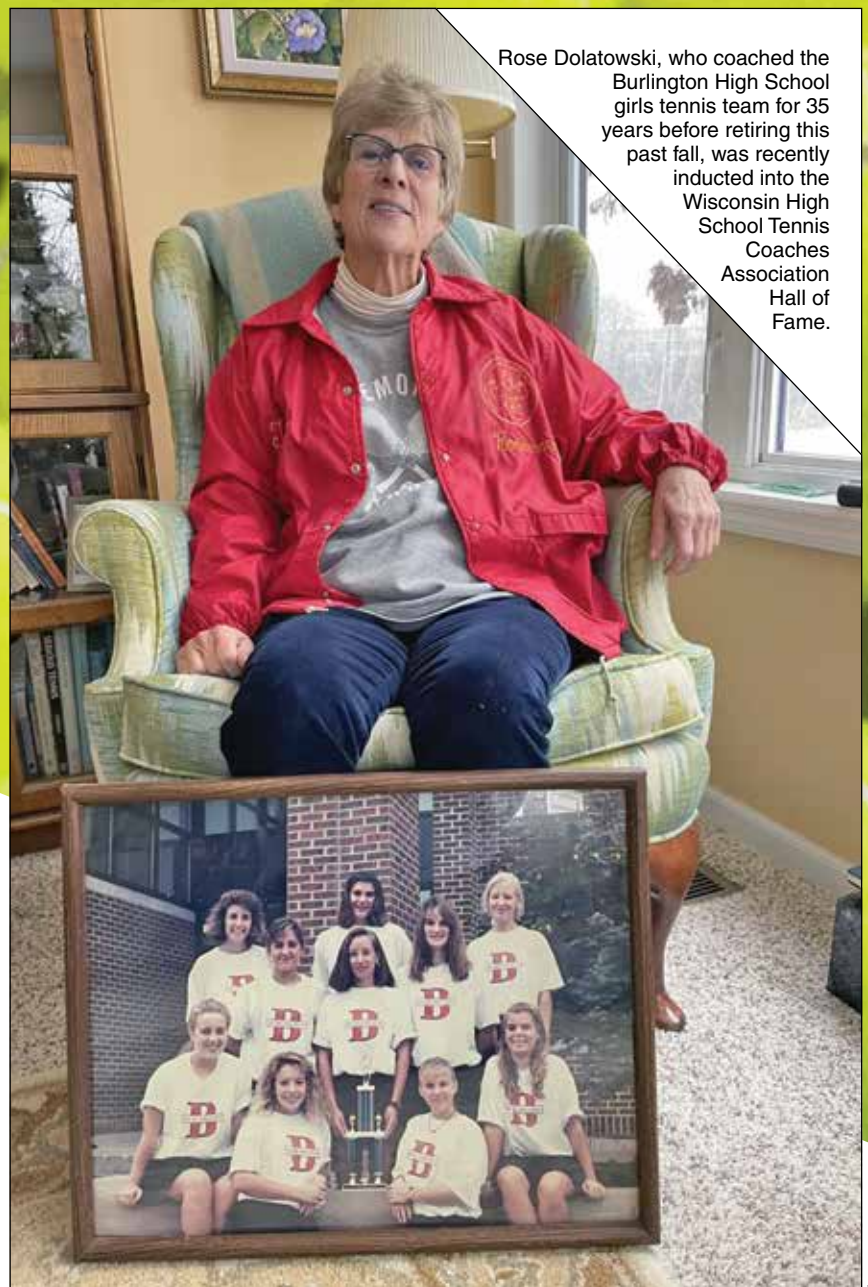
“He said, ‘oh, Rosa (his nickname for her), we can do anything for six weeks,’” Dolatowski said, laughing now at the idea of tennis being “just” a six-week season.

Thus it began, in its simplest form. “I wanted kids to love tennis, so it was something they would do forever,” Dolatowski explained. “I wanted them to love it as much as I did. I always said, ‘if they weren’t having fun, they shouldn’t play.’”

Burlington, as Dolatowski said, wasn’t exactly a tennis town. When she first started coaching, she taught the entire sport to a group of newcomers, “almost all of them,” she said.

One of the first players with true experience was exchange student Daniela Aramu, who joined the squad in 1990 while spending the year at BHS. In Europe, sports are played at the club level, not like extracurriculars are at schools in the U.S.

As a result, Aramu had an extensive background. She dominated Southern Lakes Conference play that year, winning the No. 1 single title and qualifying for state – a first for Dolatowski. While Aramu



Rose Dolatowski, who coached the Burlington High School girls tennis team for 35 years before retiring this past fall, was recently inducted into the Wisconsin High School Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

JENNIFER EISENBART | Winders of Racine County

didn’t have the state tournament everyone was hoping for (a broken racquet in warmups contributed to an early-round exit), the standard for BHS was set.

“They were easier to teach,” Dolatowski said.

Utilizing all kinds of talent

Dolatowski said she always understood that Burlington was a volleyball town. With the WIAA schedule being what it is, tennis started a week earlier than volleyball.

She would tell the volleyball players to come play tennis, get a week’s experience – then come back to play tennis if they weren’t cut from the varsity volleyball squad.

As a result, Dolatowski tended to get juniors and seniors with the kind of shared athletic experience between the two sports.

“They could play doubles very well, because they loved being at the net,” Dolatowski explained.

Dolatowski also coached siblings. For example, in the 1990s, Kierstin, Shannon and Megan Rohner all played for Dolatowski. Kierstin graduated in 1992, Shannon in 1994 and Megan in 1996 – all two years apart.

But it was Kierstin’s experience with Dolatowski that got her sisters playing for the coach.

“I was the first sister,” Kierstin said. “We had tennis courts in our backyard. I could have a tennis racquet in my hand since I could walk. We’d go and hit a tennis ball for hours.”

When it came to high school, tennis was

a natural fit. Kierstin admitted that she had to learn to score and play the game, but Dolatowski was the perfect coach for that.

“Rose was just, she was that perfect combination of empathetic and ‘go out there and get it done,’” “She understood and was sympathetic and just a great coach, but she was competitive, too.

“She was a really great motivator, but she was never too harsh,” she added.

Her sisters followed her example and learned a lifelong sport as a result. It became a family trait, as all three sisters had children who played tennis in high school – at Burlington, Germantown and Arrowhead.

“Everyone loved Rose,” Kierstin said. “I think we all had a special bond with each other playing tennis and with Rose playing tennis.”

Milestones

In her time at BHS, Dolatowski and her players made a name for themselves. While Aramu was her first state qualifier, she had 10 others. Her teams also won five conference titles while playing in the Southeast Conference, and the Southern Lakes Conference.

Dolatowski also became the first area coach to take a full team to state. A year after graduating arguably the top player in school history – Stephanie Londre, who went to state all four years and went on to play at UW-Green Bay – BHS had a deep, talented squad in 2013.

Young *at* heart

Older bowlers savor time at the lanes

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Regardless of skill level, or how long a person has played, the Nifty Fifty Plus Co-Ed Bowling League welcomes anyone older than 50 to join in on the fun.

Nifty Fifty Plus, which meets Friday afternoons at Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington, currently has more than two dozen members with room to grow.

Milli Cramer, who serves as secretary for the league, said it has gone through many name changes dating back at least 40 years.

"We start in September, and we usually are done in either March or April," she said. "This year we will be done in March."

She said the group has at least 24 members but has boasted a high of 40 people at times.

Staying active

Richard Kuzelka, club president who has been part of the group for six years, said he decided to join because he wanted to find an activity instead of simply staying at home.

"It is a lot of fun, we don't really worry about how good, or how bad we bowl," he said. "Everybody cheers for everybody else."

Since the group meets weekly, during the season, Kuzelka said he has also made many new friends, some of whom he engages with beyond Towne and Country Lanes.

For example, some members of Nifty Fifty Plus also participate in a card club at the Burlington Senior Activity Center.

"It's fun to keep people active instead of sitting at home," he said.

Long-time bowling league member John Brensinger III said he continues to participate for the relationships with group members.

"We come here, and see a lot of smiles, and hear a lot of laughs," Brensinger said. "We are very happy people."

He said he never considered himself as a competitive bowler.

While he bowled as a youngster, it wasn't until another Nifty Fifty Plus member encouraged him to join the club, which he did more than a decade ago, that he became competitive, in a friendly way.

"I have met a lot of good people here," he said.

Relaxed environment, reasonable fees

The U.S. Bowling Congress sanctions many bowling leagues, championships, and even has several national teams representing the United States.

But that is not the case for Nifty Fifty Plus, which merely aims to foster a relaxing and fun-filled environment for area seniors.

"We are out to have fun. We are not out to try to beat the other guys... we just like to have fun and we do. I have got a lot of friends here. Everybody here is just so nice," she said.



Neil Martin, a member of Nifty Fifty Plus Co-Ed Bowling League, picks up a bowling ball before approaching a lane at Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington.

JASON ARNDT Wonders of Racine County



Nifty Fifty Plus member John Brensinger celebrates after bowling a strike during a game at Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington.

JASON ARNDT Wonders of Racine County

Since Nifty Fifty Plus isn't an official sanctioned league, Cramer explained that club members are able to pay reasonable fees to join the group for the 30-week session at Towne and Country Lanes.

"It works out well. We don't charge anybody if they are not here on a Friday," she said. "Our fees are very reasonable."

While the group boasts about 24 members, there are room for more and they remind those interested that the league is not limited to people in the Burlington area.

Cramer said members come from the Kenosha area, Waterford, Twin Lakes and beyond.

"We would like to go up higher. At one point I think we had 40 members," she said. "That was quite a long time ago, like 20 to 25 years ago."

While the league meets weekly, Nifty Fifty Plus will accommodate members who may have other personal commitments such as attending family birthday

parties, anniversaries and even doctor's appointments.

Because the club accommodates people's schedule, Cramer said they also have a need for substitute bowlers who can fill in when needed.

"We keep looking for substitutes because a lot of people have different things they have to do, or they might get sick, so we also are looking for anybody that can sub," she said.

Kuzelka agreed and said having those extra bowlers is important to the league. "If people have things going on in their personal lives, birthdays, anniversaries, we could use some substitutes," Kuzelka said.

"Sometimes members can't make it, so we use a lot of subs to make up that difference," he added.

As for group membership, Cramer said Nifty Fifty Plus currently has people as young as 50 and as young at heart as 87 years old.

But they welcome potential bowlers from the younger end of that spectrum, especially people who are looking for an activity once they retire, or are close to retiring.

"Nifty Fifty is bowling for senior citizens. You have to be 50 or older," she said. "We are hoping to get more young people that are going to retire, or have extra time on their hands."

While the group promotes a relaxed environment and a welcoming atmosphere, Kuzelka said it goes beyond that as Nifty Fifty Plus members also look out for each other outside of the bowling alley.

"When something happens, we stick together when things go bad," Kuzelka said.

Supportive venue

Towne and Country Lanes, 246 S. Pine St., Burlington, is a family-owned bowling venue that was established in 1958.

In 1971, Merrill and Lorraine Draper bought the business, and continued the tradition of offering bowling to the area.

Since then, Theresa Riemer, daughter of Merrill and Lorraine, has become general manager while Cotie Holbeck runs the pro shop and serves as day time manager.

"We try to treat customers like family. We take care of customers as well as we can," Holbeck said in a previous interview. "We know most of the customers by name."

Cramer and Kuzelka said Towne and Country Lanes officials offer an ideal atmosphere for the Nifty Fifty Plus group.

Upon completion of the season each year, Towne and Country Lanes holds a party for its members, Cramer explained.

"The people at Towne and Country have been very good to us," Cramer said. "They have a party at the end of the year and it just wraps everything up for us. We just can't say enough about all of the people here."

Kuzelka said owner Merrill Draper has participated in Nifty Fifty Plus bowling on some occasions.

Kuzelka also expressed gratitude to the crew at Towne and Country Lanes.

"We are supported very well by management here," Kuzelka said. "They are always supportive and give us some good deals on bowling."

Members of the Nifty Fifty league bowl for a fun activity, Towne and Country Lanes as well as River City Lanes in Waterford plan to host a competitive event for seniors, which will begin in 2023.

Both venues will serve as hosts of the 42nd annual Wisconsin State Senior Championship early next year.

Riemer said Towne and Country Lanes previously served as hosts on two other occasions, and the event promises to bring thousands to the area from February through April.

"We will be welcoming over 2,000 bowlers to our area, plus spouses that come to visit and travel with them," she said. "Not only is it a great thing for our business, but for the City of Burlington and surrounding areas."

"The City of Burlington, Waterford, and surrounding areas are going to see an increase in business because of the bowlers coming from all over the state of Wisconsin."

From crime fighter to accomplished

Photographer

By **Jason Arndt**
STAFF WRITER

Former cop finds new craft in second career

John Fisher spent 25 years in law enforcement as an officer with the City of Burlington Police Department.

During that time, which concluded upon his retirement around 2017, Fisher also served as a K9 handler for two different dogs within the department.

However, before he retired, Fisher recalled a conversation he had with fellow K9 officers during a training session in the City of Racine.

"I was training, it was at night, and we were training in Racine with other K9 handlers from Racine," he said. "We were at break and they were talking about their retirement plans."

Fisher, at the time, didn't give retirement much thought, but soon discovered he needed to find a hobby.

"As the time went on, I knew I had to find something, and photography came up," he said.

Fisher initially began taking nature photographers, such as birds in the backyard, and often spent time honing this newfound passion at local high school sporting events.

Considering he had just begun the hobby, he posted some of his high school sports photos in an online forum, seeking a review from more experienced photographers.

"One day, I posted them in a forum for review from other photographers – good and bad," he said.

One photographer, he recalled, reviewed Fisher's photographs and

suggested he reach out to an Ohio-based company specializing in sports.

That company, which eventually went out of business, invited Fisher to join the team as a freelancer shooting football photos at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

"I shot there for just a couple of years, and one day, the company folded," Fisher recalled.

When the company closed, Fisher felt a small void, as he found the hobby enjoyable.

But a new opportunity arose, with Cal Sport Media offering him a new assignment, which was in Wisconsin.

He initially voiced hesitation, because a friend of his in Milwaukee had the assignment, but he soon learned his friend was moving to another gig.

"I said I was not going to step on him, that is not right," he said. "They said it was my lucky day because he took on another job. That got me to Wisconsin."

With Cal Sport Media – and later Getty Images – Fisher became tasked with taking photographs of prominent sporting events including Milwaukee Bucks, Milwaukee Brewers, Wisconsin Badger basketball and football games, as well as Green Bay Packers contests.

At Getty Images, which carries a higher profile, Fisher said he's learned more about photography from some of the industry's best.

"There are some outstanding people that are teaching me the ropes with more exposure," Fisher said.

While he continually shoots professional sporting events, Fisher also maintains a local presence, owning John Fisher Photography.

His photography company specializes in high school sports photography, senior portraits and creative photography.

Fisher said he tends to avoid weddings because of technical reasons.

Stark contrast

Fisher admits working as a photographer pales in comparison to his first career in law enforcement.



Fisher owns three dogs including a collie puppy named Ivy as well as Reign (left) and Ukon.

JOHN FISHER PHOTOS *Wonders of Racine County*

Throughout his lengthy career as a police officer, Fisher often encountered people in distressing situations, from neighbor disputes to issuing traffic citations and making arrests of people who allegedly committed a crime.

Fisher said those experiences left him with a different outlook, and often had one burning question, "Over the years, you develop this attitude – are people really good?"

With photography, he explained, his attitude and outlook quickly changed, in part because the people he meets have refreshing smiles and amazing stories to tell.

"Every day, you are with happy people. So that was an incredible turnaround," he said.

Fisher often spends time taking senior photos, including students from Burlington and Catholic Central high schools, with all having unique and incredible stories.

Before each photo session, he meets with the high school senior, who conveys their interests and co-curricular activities.

"You would be amazed at these kids and their stories. You would be amazed," he said. "Each senior you would talk to, you would learn something very incredible about them."

Additionally, Fisher unveiled a new feature called media day, which consists of coordinating with area coaches and sports teams to shoot individual and group portraits to use for the upcoming season.

Recently, he held media days for the Burlington girls basketball team, as well as

the Catholic Central boys basketball team.

"I tell the coaches they don't need to worry about a thing," he said. "With me, you are going to get a ton of pictures of your kids."

The teams, Fisher said, use the photos to promote game days on social media, including Instagram.

Electric atmosphere

In the collegiate and professional sports atmosphere, Fisher said each Wisconsin venue carries a distinct quality.

In Madison, where he typically photographs the Wisconsin Badger football and basketball teams, Fisher feels a positive vibe coming from "Jump Around."

Everlast and "House of Pain," dropped "Jump Around" in 1992, and the song became synonymous with Wisconsin football.

To energize the crowd at every home game, Camp Randall blasts the song and the entire stadium starts jumping around.

The tradition has since extended to the Kohl Center.

"When you go into Madison, Camp Randall and the Kohl Center, the electricity of the students and the college atmosphere is incredible," Fisher said.

While Fisher finds taking photographs of college sports electric, he said pro sports arenas such as Lambeau Field have a



Since John Fisher retired from the Burlington Police Department, he took on a second career as a freelance photographer, taking pictures of national and local sporting events. Above: Kaleb Zabielski, a Demons senior, receives a kickoff for Burlington last fall.

JOHN FISHER *Wonders of Racine County*

DOLATOWSKI • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

"I kind of knew that when this team was coming up, we'd have a chance at sectionals," said Dolatowski. "They played tennis all the time."

That team included Stephanie's younger sister, Lacey. By the time the team did get to sectionals, Burlington had captured its conference title and its sectional.

With most of the players advancing, Burlington had a strong opening round at the sectional, winning most of its first-round matches.

"The Monona Grove coach came up to me during the day, and congratulated me," Dolatowski said. "I asked, 'what for?'"

He said for winning, which Dolatowski didn't want to concede – or jinx. Later in the day, though, Badger High School's head coach Paul Lauterbeck came up and did the same thing. The Demons had edged Badger by one point.

"I was thrilled. I had tears in my eyes," Dolatowski recall about being handed the sectional team trophy by Lauterbeck. A

year later, Badger beat Burlington by one point for the sectional crown.

This year, when Elkhorn made the WIAA State Team Tournament, the Elks became the third team in the conference to do so.

That squad was special to Dolatowski for other reasons. She coached her niece, Paige Puntillo, adding to the list of family members she had coached. Her father was staying with her at the time, awaiting surgery. Dolatowski said he would read all the newspaper articles and "was just loving it."

"That made it a little extra special," she said. Her father would die unexpectedly a few months later.

Life lessons

Dolatowski admitted that she had many special moments as a coach.

As secretary of the WHSTCA, Dolatowski followed the example of the state high school golf association and started an all-academic team. Many

times, most or all of her team would earn that honor, and Dolatowski had five valedictorians play for her.

She also coached numerous family members, including both of her children. As an assistant with the boys tennis, she saw Mike qualify for state.

But it wasn't always the winning moments that had an impact. In fact, one of her memories that stands out was a loss. Stephanie Londre lost in the first round at state as a freshman, a disappointing end to what had been a brilliant freshman year.

Dolatowski said she went into the locker room after the match to talk with Londre, who was showing some rare emotion after the loss. The coach remembered having to tell Londre to walk out and hold her head high.

She said she told Stephanie, "People are going to want to congratulate you. You are one of 58 players in the state of Wisconsin (to make state)."

"I told her she should be proud of her accomplishment," Dolatowski recalled.

There were also humorous moments at state – at Nielsen, where Dolatowski once played – where she tried to remind players that "it's just a tennis match. It's just a tennis court."

And in the beginning, there were also mistakes. In teaching players the game, sometimes things got missed – like players getting the score wrong on the court. Her first year, Dolatowski noticed her double team did just that, so she went out to fix it.

The coach from the opposing team yelled at her and told her, "they have to figure it out themselves."

On the next changeover, the players changed the score – and again made an error. This time, a BHS parent noticed it

and pleaded with Dolatowski to fix it.

"I couldn't do anything," she said.

There were also gratifying moments. Dolatowski remembered a light-bulb moment with the team, a year she said Vincenza Pedone was playing for her. She gave them a drill and used tennis terms to set it up.

"I said you were going to hit an approach shot, a volley and an overhead," Dolatowski said. "And they did it."

Dolatowski's daughter, Lizzy, was there watching and Dolatowski remembered what her daughter had said.

"Oh my God, mom, they know what you're talking about," she remembered.

Into the Hall of Fame

When Dolatowski was inducted this fall, the number of people who came out to celebrate the accomplishment surprised her. It was also a rival coach, Lauterbeck, who presented her at the ceremony.

Twenty-three people attended the ceremony, held at Nielsen Tennis Stadium. Following that ceremony, Dolatowski's plaque was placed on the wall there.

Her inscription, in part, reads: "For more than 35 years, she has been an amazing role model for young women at Burlington High School.

"In her time as head coach, she won five conference championships, coached 11 state qualifiers and took the team to state in 2013. During her career, Rose has also been named Racine County Coach of the Year and Southeast Wisconsin Coach of the Year," it reads.

Player, then coach, now close to 50 years after playing there when the stadium was new, Dolatowski can appreciate the symmetry.

"It all came full circle," she said.

PHOTOGRAPHER • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

different flavor, noting the historic value.

Fisher recalled one photo he took of Packers' quarterback Aaron Rodgers as he made his way off the field toward the tunnel.

"I remember one picture I had on my desktop of Aaron, walking up the field at the end of the game, it is a night game, the snow is coming down – that is what Lambeau is," he said.

Unthinkable journey

When he was in law enforcement, Fisher said he never envisioned having a second career, especially taking photographs of some of the best sporting events in

Wisconsin.

The second career also includes highlighting high school seniors' personalities through portraits.

"When I started taking pictures, it was for a hobby," he said. "Not in a million years did I expect this to happen," Fisher added.

In law enforcement, he was dispatched to some unfortunate circumstances.

Now, he receives phone calls from parents seeking his services for senior photos along with freelance assignments to take pictures of Gianni Antetokounmpo and the Milwaukee Bucks as Fiserv Forum, among other requests.



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