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How consumers can help small businesses

Small businesses continue to be the backbone of the North American business community. According to the career resource Zippia, there are 33.2 million small businesses in the United States.

Those organizations employ around 62 million people. The financial wellness company Fortnly says that small businesses account for nearly half of all private sector jobs in Canada. In fact, small employer businesses made up 98.1% of all businesses in Canada in 2021.

Despite the prevalence of small businesses and the abundance of people willing to become entrepreneurs, 20% of these firms fail within the first year, and only 55% survive five years or more, says Zippia.

The COVID-19 pandemic was particularly harsh on small businesses. However, many of them survived through digitization that they plan to continue to utilize even when the pandemic is long gone.

Maintaining a small business through economic highs and lows and other issues often comes down to customer involvement. Consumers are the driving forces behind the success of small

businesses. Here are some effective ways for consumers to help small businesses grow.

• Shop local

The “Shop Local” movement has been around for awhile but remains as relevant as ever. Shopping local means becoming repeat patrons at the independent businesses that comprise Main Street as opposed to the chain stores that dominate strip malls.

• Share on social

Social media can be a great way to spread the word about businesses you like and point out particular examples why you shop there. Utilizing social media platforms to highlight the positive attributes of a business can help that business grow.

• Call direct

Call direct for take-out orders. Those ubiquitous third-party food delivery services may be convenient, but businesses have to share the profit from your purchase with the delivery service, cutting into their bottom lines. Pick up your order or rely on

the restaurants’ own delivery teams.

• Go online

Engage with the business online. Complicated algorithms and other factors determine how a business’ website or social media page gets seen by the public. You can help things along by liking pages, visiting the website frequently and sharing any posts.

• Talk about it

Speak about a business in person. When out and about, whether you’re dining with friends or chatting with a stranger, try to push and recommend businesses you support. If someone compliments your lawn, shoes or haircut, mention the businesses that did the work or sold you the products.

• Suggest opportunities

Suggest opportunities for exposure. If you know about a school or organization looking for vendors, make the suggestion to a small business you use frequently. They may get new customers from participating in the event.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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above: Small businesses are driving forces in the economy. Consumers can do their part to keep them thriving and profitable.

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– GET ARTSY AT –

CREATIVE SPACES STUDIO

Creative Spaces Studio, a mother-daughter co-owned business in Waterford, opened in 2019.

Barb Hayes and Donna Fearing started Creative Spaces Studio after years of attending arts and craft fairs all over the state. They started small, in a space on Milwaukee Street in Waterford, with one long-arm stitcher, a small classroom space and a small retail space.

In 2020, Barb drove by the old Napa building on Main Street, saw a rent sign, called the number, and set up a meeting. They moved in and opened in July 2020 into a space five times bigger than where they started. A scary move, but with the support of family and the community they are doing well.

Creative Spaces Studio is a gift shop/art gallery representing more than 20 local artists in various mediums. The shop is a great place to find unique gifts and home décor pieces that you are not going to find anywhere else. Watercolors, acrylic paintings, and collage art are just a few of the paintings you can find at Creative Spaces Studio.

They carry unique jewelry made from wire wrapping, resin, and upcycled jewelry. Hand-crafted teddy bears, gnomes, unique flower sculptures, beautiful purses, bags, wallets, table runners, quilts, and throw blankets are a few of the sewing creations available. Glass suncatchers, alcohol ink tiles, glass sculptures, and pottery are also a highlight for their shoppers.

Creative Spaces Studio and Waterford Bee Company have partnered together this year and you can find all of their products in the shop.

Creative Spaces Studio is also a quilt



Barb Hayes (from left) with her son, Dane Hayes, and daughter, Donna Fearing. Barb and Donna own Creative Spaces Studio in Waterford.

shop. They sell fabric on the bolt, precuts, and kits. They carry notions, patterns and batting. With two long-arm stitchers in the shop, they finish people's quilts for them to a variety of levels from just stitched to fully completed (i.e. binding sewing on and down). Barb, Tom and Dane (all family members) can be found creating, crafting, and building custom quilts for customers as well.

The glass department at Creative Spaces Studio has a variety of things happening.

fused glass, stained glass, and mosaics are the classes that are most frequently hosted in their classroom. Fused glass classes are most frequently scheduled, accomplished in a few hours, and have to be picked up a week later. Stained glass classes are scheduled monthly, kept small in capacity, and are accomplished in one day with you leaving with a completed piece.

Mosaic classes are sporadically available and can be a fun class if you enjoy puzzles, trying something new, and being creative.

Custom glass orders can be placed with Donna and make exceptionally personal gifts for any occasion. New this year, Donna will be attending a few art shows with the hope of more exposure to art collectors and lovers alike.

Visit them in person at 318 E. Main S., Waterford. Or to find more information about what they carry in their shop, their services, and their classes online at creativespacesstudio.net.

See their ad on Page 18.

– MEET THE –

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Chuck and Cheryl Kullberg

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Jen Jacob

and they say they love the people who walk through their doors.

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For more information, see their ad on Page 11.

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The excavation business got started in the early 1950s when John Wanasek, the fourth generation owner's grandfather, Louis was building a house and he couldn't get anybody to dig a sewer lateral. Undaunted, he bought an old tractor with a backhoe on it and did the work himself ... eventually doing dig work for plumbers. That evolved into a full service, sewer water and excavation business.

Today, the company is a reflection of the needs of Southeastern Wisconsin and the shaping of the company to meet those needs. The Wanasek Corp. is a respected contractor in Southeastern Wisconsin and has been for more than 70 years. The Wanasek Corp. remains a family business offering quality excavating and related services. Most projects are in Southeast Wisconsin where they specialize in sewer and water main installation in new and existing streets and both large and small commercial sites.

The skill, loyalty and diversity of Wanasek's more than 80-person workforce make Wanasek a standout in the industry. Over the years the Wanasek Corp. has successfully completed many projects for well established architects, municipalities, developers and general contractors in Southeast Wisconsin.

. See their ad on Page 8.

From cars to carpet: Area business owner connects with community

My name is Mike Ciezki; I am the owner and operator of In Home Floor & Window Fashions.

My wife Michelle, who was pregnant with our daughter Jessie at the time, and I moved from South Milwaukee to Waterford in November of 2001. Since then we have fallen in love with this community and all that it has to offer.

Our move here was born of a desire to raise our daughter in a more rural setting with a "small town" feel. We couldn't be happier with our choice and have grown to love Waterford and call it home. Not too long after the move to Waterford, I was ready for a career change as well.

After spending nearly 20 years in the car business in one capacity or another, from lot attendant to commercial accounts sales manager and numerous positions in between, I knew it was time for a change. My wife and I had a then 4-year-old daughter at home and I knew I didn't want to miss her growing up because of the long hours and demanding schedule of the automobile business.

Growing up, my dad had his own business and I always thought I would one day follow that path of working for myself. Wanting more flexibility in my schedule, I started looking for an opportunity. Through a relationship with one of my accounts, that opportunity presented itself and in March of 2006, I bought a Nationwide Floor & Window Coverings franchise.

They had franchises across the United States and in Canada and their corporate headquarters was just up the road in Milwaukee. The training and support I received were fantastic and really gave me a good start in the flooring and window

coverings industry. I completed my training and launched my shop-at-home business from an office in my basement and a van in my driveway, here in Waterford, in May of that year.

After I had been operating for a little more than two years, the franchisor closed their doors. At that point, I renamed the company In Home Floor & Window Fashions and kept operating as a shop-at-home business from my home office.

About the beginning of 2011, I was ready for another change and wanted to take In Home Floor & Window Fashions out of my house and into a showroom location. In March of that year, I bought our current "home" at 241 N. Milwaukee St. in Waterford and opened the Design Center. Ten years later, we are still here serving clients in Waterford and all-over Southeastern Wisconsin.

I still love offering our shop-at-home service for a number of reasons. I think it makes it much easier for clients to choose carpet, flooring or window treatments in their home or office, with their lighting, paint colors and décor. It's a level of service that sets us apart from the big box stores and puts us in a better position to help make sure the entire process goes smoothly. Not only do I love helping people finish or renovate their homes or offices, I love the opportunities owning In Home Floor & Window Fashions has given me personally over the last 15 years.

It gave me the flexibility to do more with my family as my daughter was growing up. I was able to be a part of the booster club at St Peter's when she attended school there, and joined the Lions Club and Chamber of Commerce



Mike Ciezki, owner In Home Floor & Window Fashions, lives in Waterford with his wife, Michelle, and daughter, Jessie.

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to support Waterford. When she became involved in shooting sports and joined the Waterford Wolverine Shooting Team, it gave me the time to volunteer and eventually become the head coach of the team.

Now that she's attending college and shooting for Concordia University in Nebraska, it gives me the ability to stay

on in my role as head coach and to give back to the community that has given us so much.

The journey from cars to carpet may not have originally been the path I thought I would take, but I'm sure glad it led my family and me to Waterford.

For more information, see the ad on Page 22.

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Burlington Lumber built on strong family foundation

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

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

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

Eddie 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.

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

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

Burlington Lumber, 140 Front St., Burlington will celebrate 35 years in business on April 1.

The family-owned establishment, said Eddie Impens, continues to thrive based on reputation.

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

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 prosperous.

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

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

Additionally, Burlington Lumber 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.

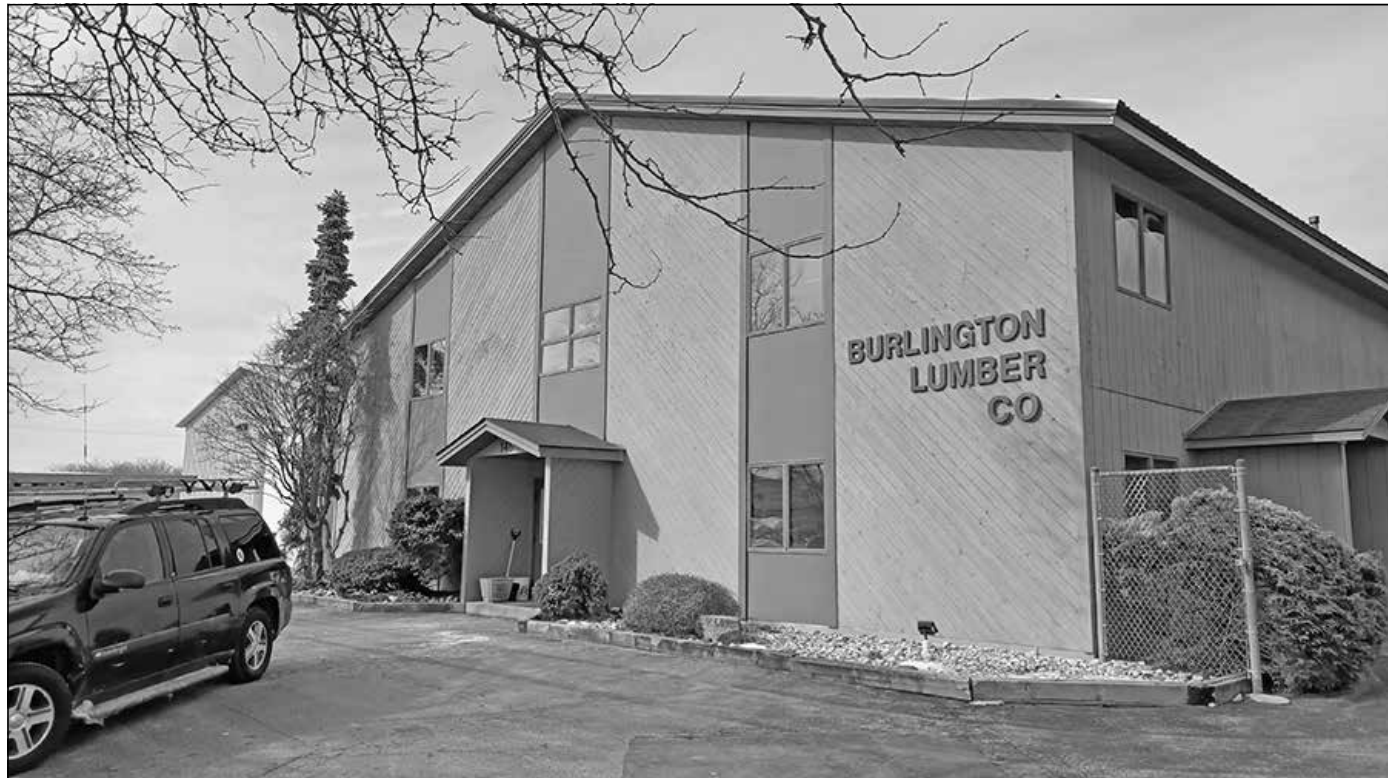
Since then, Eddie has been involved in multiple community groups, such as the Burlington Liars Club, Burlington Rotary Club and Chocolate Fest.

“He has been really involved with the community and has built great



Burlington Lumber Company is a family-owned establishment. (from left) Craig, his wife, Lisa Impens, founder Eddie Impens and Chris Impens celebrate at a recent Christmas Party.

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

JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated

relationships with both the customers and contractors,” Chris said.

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

According to Eddie, the weekly lunches also allow contractors to build rapport with each other.

“It gets them together and gets them to know each other better,” Eddie said. “They are really appreciative.”

Dealing with demand

When the pandemic struck, Burlington Lumber 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.

Eddie explained that while prices have subsided, the industry still needs more time to return to pre-pandemic levels.

“It has got a ways to go, but it is slowly heading that way,” Eddie said.

While Burlington Lumber presents a strong foundation, Eddie acknowledged the growth boils down to one aspect - love.

“It is a labor of love,” he said.

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

– PREPARING FOR THE –

HOME IMPROVEMENT RUSH

Burlington-based Martin Construction, founded as a father and son team more than 30 years ago, specializes in home improvement projects from floors to ceilings and everything in between.

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

The fully insured and licensed contractor launched in 1992 works on projects such as residential construction, light commercial and external finishes.

Owner Tony Martin, son of Jim, became inspired to continue the family tradition after his father retired from the industry.

“It was something that I was able to do and learned a lot and stayed with it throughout,” Martin said. “I like to see something from start to finish.”

While Tony Martin has enjoyed seeing his progress, he and others in the industry are prepared for the home improvement rush, which begins shortly after the snow disappears in the spring.

The construction industry, like other trades, continues to grapple with supply and demand issues as well as labor shortages.

“We are as prepared as we are going to be, everyone in the trades is really busy because we are having a difficult job of finding help. It seems like more guys are coming out of the trades than coming in,” he said. “I am anticipating everybody will be busy again, come spring, when the snow completely disappears and people decide to do things again.”

Martin Construction, which has about two employees, receives assistance from area subcontractors to complete some project.

“It is hard to find employees, per se, but I got quality subcontractors and



above: Tony Martin (left) and his father, Jim, launched Martin Construction in 1992 as a father-son team. **below left:** Tony Martin, owner of Martin Construction, has completed remodeling projects including bathrooms. **below right:** Martin Construction, of Burlington, helps homeowners with remodeling projects such as kitchens.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS Family Owned & Operated

contractors that I deal with,” Martin said.

As Martin prepares for the upcoming rush, he said demand has been steady for bathroom and kitchen remodeling projects.

Other projects include additions, such as four season rooms and three season rooms, he said.

“Lately, it has been a lot of bathrooms and kitchens, small additions like four season rooms, three season rooms and things of that nature,” said Martin, adding

hard countertops such as quartz have been a popular item.

While he has seen consistent demand, some projects may take a bit longer, considering the supply chain has not been fully resolved.

“Supplies are harder to get, everything is more expensive than they used to be, lumber has come down in price, but all of your windows and cabinets have not come down in price,” he said.

“There is more sticker shock nowadays than there used to be.”

Bringing visions to life

Martin said customers often have initial concepts in mind before they contact contractors.

Mostly, customers find ideas online, and ask contractors to bring them to life.

Martin said he sits down with customers, discussing supply needs and costs, before coming up with a concrete project plan.

“It is a small process back-and-forth that takes a little bit of time,” he said. “But at the end, they generally know what they are getting and what the costs are.”

Project timelines, he said, largely depends on the scope and could range anywhere from a couple weeks for a simple bathroom remodel to a few months for a large-scale project.

According to the Martin Construction website, Martin offers other services, including new construction, commercial projects, recreation rooms, window replacement in addition to remodeling projects.

After more than 30 years in the industry, Martin said customer interactions, and new projects have motivated him to continue the Martin Construction tradition.

“I like that I don’t do the same thing everyday, there is always something different,” Martin said. “I meet a lot of great people in the community. It is just a nice change of pace everyday.”

Martin Construction, accessible online at martinconstructionofburlington.com, also has a Facebook page.

For more information, call 262-492-8944.



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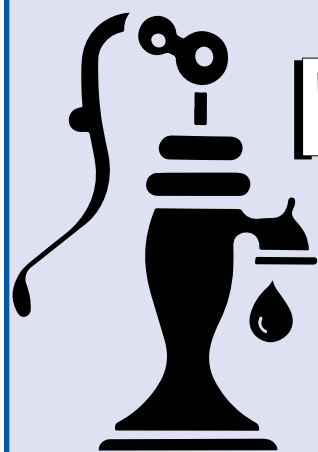
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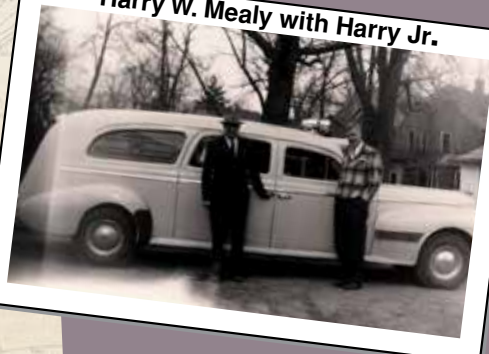
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lone (Mealy) Kojis

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A Family Operation

BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattresses has been a staple in southeastern Wisconsin for nearly a century.

In 1928, Irwin Kerns opened what was then called BILTRITE Upholstery, manufacturing and selling custom made sofas out of a small storefront on Third Street and Garfield. Over 20 years, the business grew enough that Kerns moved into a five-story building on Mitchell Street in 1948. That same year, he renamed the shop BILTRITE Furniture to reflect its growing inventory.

Irwin's daughter, Claire, married Mort Komisar, who took over the business in 1964. He was succeeded by his son, Marty, who started as a part-time employee as a teenager and took over leadership in 1970, while Mort continued working at the store into his 80s.

Marty married his wife, Gail, in 1977, and she soon joined the staff at BILTRITE. Their children, Randi Komisar Schachter and Brad Komisar, have both been involved in the family business since they were children. "We all work hard," Randi says. "We have passion, commitment and love for the business."

In 2006, BILTRITE once again outgrew its location and the family moved from Mitchell Street to Layton Avenue in Greenfield, where it now has a 45,000-square-foot showroom. The retailer once again changed its name to reflect its expanding purview: BILTRITE Furni-



ture-Leather-Mattresses. BILTRITE keeps thousands of items in stock, including affordable Amish furniture, other American-made furniture, flippable mattresses and much more.

Marty remains fully active as BILTRITE's president and CEO. He, Gail, Brad and Randi continue to work at the store, and Brad's wife, Sarah, has also joined the staff. This year, they're celebrating 95 years in business.

"We're excited, appreciative and humbled by the fact that we're still going strong," Randi says. "We're four generations of the family in this business, and we celebrate our whole team because it's taken all of us together to hit this milestone."

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JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated



SUBMITTED PHOTO Family Owned & Operated

Hundreds served at Archives

Burlington establishment touts gluten-free menu, Fish Fry

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

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

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, 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 five 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 yummy 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. 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."

While Archives offers a Friday Fish Fry,

the establishment touts the item is gluten-free, according to Bock.

"That is starting to become our niche."

Like the beer-battered cod, Archives also uses homemade recipes for its condiments, such as ketchup, mustard and mayo.

"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 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



top left: Archives Bar and Grill, 356 N. Pine St., Burlington offers multiple menu offerings ranging from burgers to a Friday Night Fish Fry. **top right:** The bar and grill is run by a group of four people. (from left) Gary Hanline Jr., Lauren Hanline, Maxwell Boyle and Samantha Bock. **above:** The business boasts homemade items such as tartar sauce, coleslaw, to go along with a menu option of a customer's choice.

MT BOYLE COURTESY PHOTO Family Owned & Operated

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 serve 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, meanwhile, works diligently to solicit feedback during business, 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. Sundays, 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

On Fridays and Saturdays, Archives operates 11 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Making the outdoors home

Landscapers ready for home improvement work

For Michelle Castleman, her husband, Dale, and the crew at B&J Tree and Landscape Service, there really isn't ever an off-season.

By Jennifer Eisenbart
STAFF WRITER

Even when the company – at W2795 Krueger Road, Lake Geneva – isn't performing landscaping and hardscape work during the winter months, B&J will still trim and remove trees throughout the winter.

And of course, with a mild winter and the knowledge that landscape companies fill up their work schedules early, it seems that there's always work to be done.

"We'll start getting many calls in March," said Michelle Castleman. "Depending on the weather, that's when we'd start doing cleanups and other jobs. Tree work is year-round."

B&J was started by Dale's father, Bob, in 1959. Since then, B&J has won several Best of Walworth County and Best of Lake Geneva awards for both landscaping and hardscaping work. Michelle and Dale said they pride themselves on providing quality work and unique looks for each customer.

"Every job's different. Every job's a challenge," Dale said. "I like to be creative. I don't want each house to match."

The company features several different staff members with certifications, including Gregg Johnson, a licensed arborist who serves as project manager for any work with trees. That kind of knowledge, Dale explained, helps the company know to trim oak trees after the first frost, so insects don't get into open cuts.

Oak tree trimming, Dale added, normally will run through April 15, and other trees are trimmed almost any time.

Johnson also can recommend trees for new plantings, which is helpful as many area municipalities require projects to replant when trees are removed.



Outdoor landscaping work can entail everything from mulching areas to putting in stone details and lighting. This work was done by B&J Landscaping in Lake Geneva.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS Family Owned & Operated

The family-owned business features Dale and Michelle's son, Blake, as the landscape design and installation manager. He and the rest of the staff will work small projects to large, which these days could mean everything from a simple sidewalk to retaining walls, patios, step work and lighting for all of the above.

These days, Dale said, most of the work the company does revolves around outdoor living. Brick patios, outdoor kitchens and fire pits – "People love their

fire pits," Dale said – are all standards in the work the company performs. Outside lighting for those areas has also become popular, Michelle explained, saying that low-voltage effects lighting can now be installed with a lifetime warranty.

Those looking to start a landscaping or hardscaping project will find that booking early is key. Dale said there is a central scheduling board at the office that all managers work off of and by April, the company can be booked out to July and August for work.

Projects almost always run about eight to 12 weeks out, though smaller projects can be booked in gaps. Work starting depends on availability of materials – which are ordered specifically for projects – and staff.

People do come in late, Michelle said. "That's difficult, because there's already people in front of them," she said, adding that some are willing to wait while others can't.

The company and its staff will work until the snow falls. This year, staff was working on projects through the end of December and even doing some work in January with the milder weather.

While the COVID-19 pandemic didn't slow business down – both Dale and Michelle said that people actively began looking for projects to do with the quarantine – it can still affect the supply chain. Nowadays, it can take six to eight weeks to acquire materials.

"It's just the way it is," Dale said. "It's a very high demand on all the materials. If it's sold out, you have to wait and look around for stuff. It's just that materials are slower getting in and they've gone up (in price)."

Dale and Michelle stressed, though, that the company works from a point of experience. Blake has a degree in landscape and design, while Dale worked with his father since the inception of the company until his father's death.

"A lot of our employees have been with us for a long time," Michelle said, "and we're fully insured."

The family also boasts a second company, Westside, which provides all-natural hardscape material, topsoil and mulches, as well as grass seed and straw mulch.

"Whatever people need to complete a project, except for the plant material," Dale said, pointing out that is acquired through B&J.

For more on B&J Landscape, go to www.bandjlandscape.com or call 262-248-3653.



These photos show a before and after shot of a large tree removed from a yard by B&J Tree and Landscape Services in Lake Geneva.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS Family Owned & Operated

Grilling with a Big Green Egg

Versatile outdoor cooker develops a strong following

For barbecue enthusiasts, owning a Big Green Egg can be one of their goals.

By Tracy Ouellette
EDITOR
IN CHIEF

Jared Hembrook at Lyle's TV and Appliance in Elkhorn said the versatile backyard cooker is a hot commodity.

"The Big Green Egg is the last grill you'll ever own," he said. "The ceramic holds up, holds in the heat and can heat up to 1,200 degrees and go as low as 200 degrees. You can do just about anything with it."

From burgers to briskets to pizza, Hembrook said the Big Green Egg is easy to use and tough as nails.

"There is learning curve, of course, but once you get that down, it's the best food you've ever had," he said.

Hembrook said the BGE website, biggreeneegg.com, offers free tutorials and recipes for backyard barbecuers.

"The website will teach you how to cook, give you recipes and has videos that take you through the baking and grilling techniques."

Yes, it will bake cakes, cookies, pies and more, Hembrook said.

"We do sell quite a few," he said. "We

set up at Ribfest every year and we make ribs and hand out samples and people come back asking about it. We also run a contest during Ribfest for a \$50 entry fee to win a Big Green Egg."

Hembrook added that the lifetime warranty on the BGE covers all the ceramic pieces, excluding the "convEGGerator."

"They do like their Egg puns," he said with a laugh."

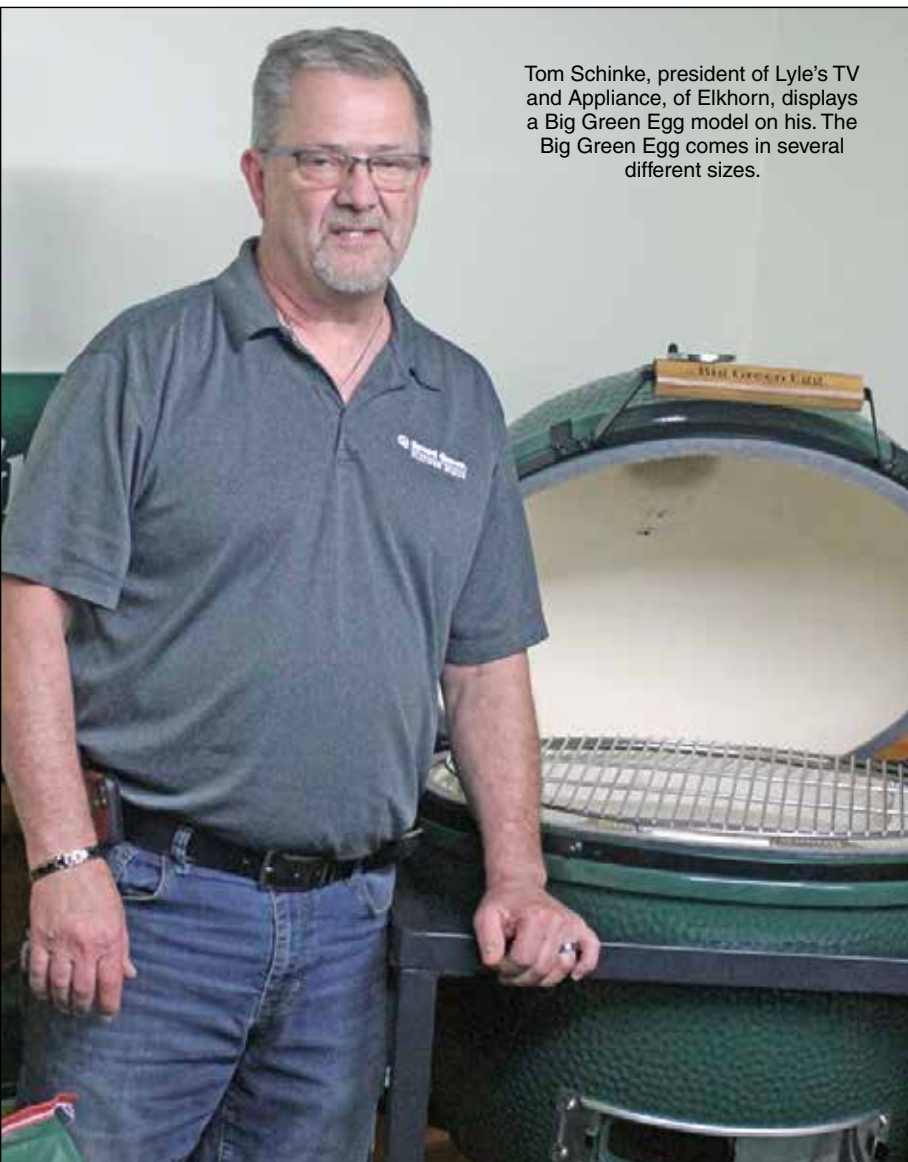
One of the biggest misconceptions about the Big Green Egg is that it takes a long time to heat up, Hembrook said.

"It really doesn't take long to get it up to temperature," he said. "You can get it up to 400 degrees in seven minutes."

According to the BGE website, "unlike tradition gas grills that use gas and are made from metal, the Big Green Egg is fuelled by natural lump charcoal and made from shuttle-quality ceramic that retains heat and moisture better than any other cooking unit today. And with the EGG, cooking takes place with the lid down so that heat, moisture and flavor is preserved to perfection."

Hembrook said the ability to control the temperature of the Egg is what makes it so versatile.

"If you want to cook burgers at 600 to



Tom Schinke, president of Lyle's TV and Appliance, of Elkhorn, displays a Big Green Egg model on his. The Big Green Egg comes in several different sizes.



Tom and Sue Schinke, are second-generation owner of Lyle's TV & Appliance in Elkhorn.

FILE PHOTOS Family Owned & Operated

700 degrees, you can do that," he said. "If you want to cook pizza with a pizza stone at 700 to 900 degrees you can do that. Other grills won't do that."

Hembrook added that the ceramic surfaces of the Egg also make it safer.

"The ceramic protects you from burns," he said. "It gets hot but it won't burn you and that makes it safer to be around."

Some local restaurants use Big Green Egg, he added.

"LD's BBQ (East Troy) has a couple and Fiddlesticks does too," Hembrook said.

He encourages anyone who's interested in upgrading their grill to stop by the store for more information.

"Come in and check them out," he said. "We'll be happy to answer your questions."

A history of Lyle's

Sue and Tom Schinke, owners of Lyle's TV and Appliance in Elkhorn, take pride in the fact that they are the last independently owned appliance store in Walworth County.

Being local, Lyle's not only sells the appliances, but they deliver and service them as needed.

"Our customers come from the local area not only Elkhorn but also the southern Wisconsin area and across the Illinois border to nearby towns such as Richmond

and McHenry. We limit our delivery and service areas to about a 30-mile radius so that we can offer the best in service," Tom Schinke said.

Lyle's offers a wide variety of kitchen and household appliance in all price ranges. Lyle's was opened by Tom's father, Lyle Schinke in 1954 out of his home.

"He later purchased the building at 17 S. Washington in Elkhorn where the business continues to grow," Tom said.

Tom joined his dad in 1973 and Lyle's daughter-in-law, Sue, joined the business in 1996.

Lyle was well known for his knowledge about the appliances he sold and also for the service that he offered to his customers, service that continues today. Lyle continued to actively work in the store until his retirement in 2006 when Tom and Sue, took over.

Now as owners of Lyle's, Tom and Sue have brought in other family members including their daughter.

Lyle's TV and Appliance at 17 S. Washington St. in Elkhorn. Hours are: 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Wednesday and Friday; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday; and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 262-723-3477 and visit www.Lylestv.com.

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— Jared Hembrook, Lyle's TV and Appliance



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Fresh from the farm

left: The Apple Barn family consists of Hannah Heggernes (from left), Rebecca Terpstra, Judy and Steve Jacobson, Maren Jacobson, Madalyn Reichert and Emma Jacobson. **above:** Strawberry season at the Apple Barn usually runs from mid-June to early-July. The Apple Barn Orchard and Winery is at W6384 Sugar Creek Road in Elkhorn. For more information, see the company's ad on Page 35.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS Family Owned & Operated

Remodeler sees high demand

Homeowners are still renovating despite increased costs

With inflation at a 40-year high and interest rates going up, it wouldn't be surprising to see the home building and remodeling market slowing down. For one area remodeler, that isn't happening.

By Tracy Ouellette
EDITOR
IN CHIEF

Chris Stebnitz, of Stebnitz Builders in Elkhorn, said business is booming.

"COVID isn't over and people are spending a lot of time at home still," he said. "There hasn't been a lot of big-ticket purchases for travel in the last couple of years, so people are still buying things for their home. Right now, three-season rooms are big along with kitchen and baths that are always popular."

Because of the high demand for remodeling, Stebnitz said people need to be aware that there will be delays in getting projects done and prices have increased.

"Across the board we have seen increases in costs," he said. "Everything is up. Just look at everyday life. Everything it up from material cost to labor, all the things have increased. A lot of it has to do with supply and demand. Raw goods costing more contribute to an increase to produce the products."

He added that the main struggle they are facing now is the availability of materials.

"There are certain products that can take up to a year to get," Stebnitz said. "That's where the design process comes in, so we schedule things accordingly. Does it make sense to start now or wait, so we can seamlessly go into the project without putting the homeowner in discomfort?"

"The last thing you want is a surprised homeowner, our goal is every client having knowledge of what's going on and what they need to do."

Rising rates

Stebnitz said that while inflation is high and 30-year mortgage rates are about twice as high as a year ago, it hasn't



The Stebnitz family has provided 51 years of service in the community with Stebnitz Builders, Inc. The home remodeling company is headquartered in Elkhorn and ready to assist in your next home-improvement project. Founded by Stan Stebnitz in 1972, original projects were limited to general carpentry work and the occasional addition. With the help of Stan's three sons, Dave, Gary and Dan, the company grew and was recognized for its quality and integrity. In 1985, the brothers approached their father about purchasing the business. The tradition of family ownership and involvement continued when Dave's son, Chris Stebnitz, purchased the business in 2005 and became the company's third-generation owner.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Family Owned & Operated

translated into a decreased demand for housing or remodeling.

"Sure, interest rates on a 30-year mortgage are about 5% to 5.5% not, about double last year, but that's not crazy at all," he said. "Houses aren't as affordable as before, but interest rates are still low."

Be patient

With housing often difficult to find, Stebnitz said many are choosing to remodel and stay where they are.

"One of the safest places to invest your

money is your home," he said. "The value rarely drops and any money you put into your home adds value on top of being able to enjoy it while you're living in it. It adds resale value to the property."

However, because so many people are remodeling their homes, either to stay put or when they buy a new home and want some changes, Stebnitz said people need to be patient and understand there will probably be some delays.

"Most of us are really busy," he said of the remodeling industry. "We have about

17 to 18 guys in the field and we can handle upward to about 12 to 15 projects at a time as a company. Compare that to a consultant who has his own businesses and is managing all his projects, it might mean you can't get ahold of them during the day because they return their calls at night when they're off the job."

Stebnitz said they are telling prospective clients that most projects won't start for about six months.

"We lay this out for the client," he said. "We have our first consultation with the client within six weeks and once we're engaged in the project it takes about eight weeks to get it designed and a contract together. Once that's signed, it's two to three months minimum before we have an opening and once you add all that up, it's about six months."

Stebnitz added that most people coming to them for their services understand the issues facing builders right now.

"It's just going to take some time," he added. "Be patient, work with a company that has a plan for how you're going to get from here to there. I mean a plan of action not just a building plan."

"Find out who's in charge of what and what each company you're looking at provided. There's a huge difference in working with a larger company that has a business model with that planning in place than for a contractor that doesn't. You may not be able to contact them during the day if they're working in the field."

Stebnitz also cautioned homeowners to be realistic about the costs of a project.

"Understand when you have that first conversation with a builder, you need a clear idea of the budget, timing and what will fit in the space. After that budget conversation, get into the details. Having these conversations with the contractor is important."

Stebnitz Builders sit at 204 Commerce Court, Suite 3, in Elkhorn. For more information, call and visit www.stebnitzbuilders.com.

See their ad on Page 14.



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Finding her antique niche: New storefront fulfills owner's plans

For five years, Luberry's owner Lauryn Mattilla sold her antiques, vintage items and more at area markets in Kenosha, Waterford, Lake Geneva and Antioch, Illinois.

Mattilla, however, always had interest in opening a storefront in Burlington, where she lives with her husband and three children.

When local card and collector store Campaign Plus relocated from Pine Street to 208 Chestnut St., Mattilla found an opening and seized the opportunity.

"I just decided to jump at the chance and do my own things because this space opened up," Mattilla said in her new storefront at 532 N. Pine Street. "It was great timing, so I just felt it was right to bring my brand to Burlington."

Luberry's is a curated home decor store consisting of vintage items, antiques, primitives, and handmade decor.

Additionally, she plans to offer classes on seasonal decor and furniture as well as interior design services as she specializes in painting/restoring furniture and home staging, the Burlington Area Chamber and Commerce wrote on its Facebook page.

Early inspiration

Growing up in Oconomowoc area, Mattilla recalled spending time with her grandmother, who demonstrated a passion

for home decor.

Her grandmother's passion soon became a multi-generation family activity, spreading to her mother, before passing it on to Mattilla.

"I have such a passion, I guess for decorating and seasonal items. My mom as well and we both got it from her mom," Mattilla said. "I remember growing up, she would let me make stuff for her sales. It is kind of in the family."

In 2017, Mattilla decided to follow her own passion, opening up booth spaces in Kenosha, Waterford, Antioch, and other area artisan markets.

She opted to call her new business, Luberry's since Luberry was her childhood nickname.

While she has been to many markets, residents in Waterford likely know Luberry's products the best, she said.

"Those were great. Those were really fun because it was a great way to market your business," she said.

Mattilla, who eventually moved to Racine with her family, relocated to Burlington about four years ago.

For the next four years, she found the downtown area charming, and often had an interest in becoming a bigger part of the community.

"We haven't been here super long, but we love it. Opening up a store down here is my dream," she said. "I know there is

so much traffic down here and really busy, it is just so cute."

Refine and revive

Mattilla typically receives her inventory through barn sales, flea markets and a network of other antique collectors in both northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

While she offers multiple home decor items, and other products, antiques have always piqued her interest.

"I really like the antique pieces, I like the charm that they have, so I usually gravitate towards that," she said.

Additionally, she spends time working on handcrafted products, including finding new purposes for items.

For example, she used an old headboard, and transformed the piece as part of a chair.

During her explorations, Mattilla often finds quality beneath older items, like pieces of wooden furniture.

"The wood is really, really worth it and it just brings that back to life," she said.

Luberry's, 532 N. Pine St., is accessible online at luberrysproductions.com and on Facebook.

For more information, visit the website or email luberrys523@gmail.com.

Luberry's also has a store found at www.etsy.com/shop/Luberrysproductions.



Lauryn Mattilla, owner of Luberry's, recently opened a new storefront in downtown Burlington at 532 N. Pine St. She specializes in home decor, vintage and antique items, and even offers home staging services.

JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated

Hansen's expanded ice cream shop

At Hansen's Ice Cream Parlor in Burlington, some customers come for the delicious Cedar Crest Ice Cream while others crave diverse popcorn flavors, or even come for both during their visit.

But now, owners Kelly and Adam Hansen offer customers other options on the second floor, where they unveiled a candy store filled with childhood favorites as well as cotton candy at Christmastime.

"It is going to be what we call a penny candy store, but they won't be a penny," Kelly said before the opening. "It will be like a nostalgia candy store."

Nostalgia candy includes Necco Wafers, candy buttons, among others, Kelly said.

In addition to candy and cotton candy, the Hansens plan to have their merchandise on the second floor.

"Then we are going to make cotton candy up here, all of our merchandise will be up here, sweatshirts, t-shirts, our color changing cups," Kelly said.

The second floor renovations have been a vision for the Hansens since they opened the store at 129 E. Chestnut St. in January 2021.

The Hansens initially planned to open both floors at the same time; however, they incurred construction delays while working to find a new location for its first store in Wilmot last year.

"Just like every normal construction timeline, it doesn't always happen, but we really wanted to open downstairs and that is what we did," Kelly said. "In the meantime, we ended up having to move our Wilmot location."

Early beginnings

Hansen's Ice Cream Parlor originated on Fox River Road in Wilmot five years

ago, opening as a simple ice cream store, offering Cedar Crest Ice Cream.



ago, opening as a simple ice cream store, offering Cedar Crest Ice Cream.

"When we started out, we wanted to do one thing really well, which was ice cream and I feel like we knocked that out of the park," said Kelly. "We did really well in Wilmot."

Considering the Wilmot location drew thousands of followers on social media, the Hansens felt comfortable enough to expand, according to Kelly and Adam.

During discussions with their ice cream supplier, Kelly learned of a new venture with a popcorn distributor, but discovered the Wilmot location was too small.

In January 2021, Adam and Kelly took over the former Shy Violet store, where they began offering ice cream, popcorn

and continued to expand menu options for customers.

"We wanted to do something, I wanted to work for myself, I still have a full-time job, but I want to transition into this full-time," Adam said. "But basically, we just took a chance, we didn't know where it was going to go."

"Now, here we are and we are excited. We just keep expanding."

The Hansens, meanwhile, reopened their Wilmot location at 30807 114th Street.

More options

Hansen's Ice Cream Parlor, meanwhile, launched an online store on Black Friday for customers looking to purchase popcorn for shipment to their friends and family

Owners Kelly and Adam Hansen, of Hansen's Ice Cream Parlor - Burlington, continues to expand its footprint and product offerings and plans to unveil more on the second floor of their Chestnut Street loop building by the end of the year.

JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated

members.

Customers, much like the brick and mortar store in Burlington, will be able to purchase the same favorite popcorn flavors ranging from savory, savory and sweet, seasonal and simply sweet through its website at hansensicecreamparlor.com.

Each order, regardless of how much is purchased, includes \$3 flat rate shipping.

Seasonal promotions

Along with an online store, Hansen's continues to offer promotions and seasonal flavors. Follow them on social media platforms for current specials.

For more information on the shop, or to place an order, visit www.hansensicecreamparlor.com.

How a general store is born

Popcorn business features ice cream, products made in Wisconsin

About seven years ago, Christine and Ed Grochowski began selling gourmet popcorn, oftentimes at area fairs and festivals.

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Since then, the Grochowski's business enterprise expanded, and the Union Grove area couple found a silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Ironically enough when COVID hit, we had an opportunity to take a breather and decided what steps we wanted to take to expand the business," Christine said. "We always talked about a retail sort of location, but we were still deciding what is going to look like and how it feel."

After conducting research, including hitting the open road to other small towns for ideas and concepts, they decided on creating a general store, called Pine Acres General Store, in the heart of downtown Union Grove.

In keeping with the general store theme, the shelving units are made of reclaimed wood, with antique fixtures adorning them to offer customers an old-fashioned vibe.

Pine Acres General Store, 1002 Main St., doesn't only offer its well-known popcorn, but several other Wisconsin-made.

"Most people knew us for our popcorn, so my husband said, 'We need more than that,'" Christine said. "So, he said 'What about ice cream?'"

The store, in addition to popcorn and



Pine Acres General Store, Union Grove, offers an assortment of items such as its popcorn, ice cream and other Wisconsin-made products. The display cases were made to capture the look of an old general store.

JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated

ice cream produced by Madison-based The Chocolate Shoppe, also sells soup and baking mixes, among a series of other items.

"We actually only produce the popcorn, our ice cream comes from a company in Madison, about 50% of our food products come from small Wisconsin-based businesses and that is something that is

really important to us. We are proud to say we are from Wisconsin and we want to support other Wisconsin businesses."

Hunting for location

Ed, a current instructor at Gateway Technical College, spent time searching for a storefront before finding a historic building in Union Grove.

The building, Christine said, served multiple purposes since constructed more than a century ago.

According to Christine, the location offered an ideal fit, especially since the family lives in the Village of Raymond and their son attends Union Grove Union

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

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Stop by for a visit

far left: Diners at Luisa's Pizza enjoy a Friday-night fish fry. **left:** Paul and Jen DeLuisa are ready to welcome you to Luisa's Pizza, 6806 317th Ave., Salem. For more information, see their ad on Page 32.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS
Family Owned & Operated

Independent book store celebrates birthday

Independent book stores are not as widespread as they used to be, but for one area book seller, the personal touch and small-town feel has been a recipe for success.

By Tracy Ouellette
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Kelly Klein, who owns Reads by the River Books and Gifts in downtown Waterford, said the success she's seen can be attributed to the community support the store enjoys.

"It's exceeded our expectations," Klein said. "The community has just embraced us. The word of mouth advertising has been fantastic. Every day someone comes in and tells us, 'my friend or neighbor told me to come.'"

Reads by the River opened up last year at this time and Klein said it's been a whirlwind of activity since.

"We have a lot of regular customers and we're adding new ones each day, they're coming from all over, including Milwaukee and Waukesha," she said. "We're having a great time, we're loving it!"

The bookstore, which sits on the Fox River, stocks books, games, gifts and more.

"It's really interesting to see the variety of what people want," Klein said. "We see



right: Kelly and Steve Klein (back), owners of Reads by the River Books and Gifts in Waterford, and Kelly's sister, Wendy Harmon, await kids trick or treating during downtown Waterford's business trick or treat last year. **left:** Children enjoy a story time during the stuffed animal sleepover event at Reads by the River Books and Gifts in downtown Waterford. **below left:** Reads by the River Books and Gifts hosted a stuffed animal sleepover in October. Kids stopped by and dropped off their stuffies for a night of fun at the bookstore.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS Family Owned & Operated



a lot of kids and people are interested in all genres. People stop in for the new releases and to see things I've shared on social media all the time."

With the increased traffic over the last year, Klein said they've added some staff. "I have a really good friend who comes once a week to help me out and we have a part-time employee," she said. "We couldn't do it without them. We're at a level of business that we couldn't do it without them. My husband, Steve, does so much, too. He's here every day with me."

To keep things fresh and interesting, Klein said they host events on a regular basis, often working with other local businesses in partnerships.

"We've had three events, Cocktails and Conversations, with Waterford Stillhouse that have been popular. We have a book club and recently we partnered with a knitting store for a knitting event. We also did, just this month, a stuffed animal sleepover for the kids. We also did a

cookbook book club with DW Coffee in Rochester and we'll definitely be doing that again, maybe quarterly," Klein said.

The book store will be celebrating its one-year anniversary during Waterford's Christmas in the Village Nov. 18 and 19.

"We opened during that event last year and it was really nice," Klein said. "People were out and got the chance to see what we're all about. We're looking forward to it again this year."

Klein added that the Village of Waterford has been supporting local businesses with all its events in the downtown area.

"The Waterford Graded School District has been working with us too," Klein said. "We got an award from the district for our work with the library and schools."

"Thank you so much to the Waterford Graded School District for selecting us for the 2022 Wisconsin Association of School Boards Business Honor Roll," Klein wrote on the store's Facebook page. "We were

so thrilled to receive this honor in our first year in business. Partnering with our schools is so important to me as a business owner who is passionate about literacy but also as a parent and former teacher."

The store was also recently named the best local store by Best of the West (West of 1-94).

But, while the awards are nice, Klein said the reason they created the bookstore was for the community.

"I think we just strive to be a place where everyone is comfortable and where everyone can visit and find something they want," she said.

Reads by the River is at 102 E. Main St. in downtown Waterford. Hours of operation are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday from noon to 7 p.m., and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday.

For more information, find the bookstore on Facebook and visit readsbytheriver.com.





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Flavor fusion



Chinuk Sushi Grill and el Pedro Taco offer unique taste combinations

By Sandra Landen Machaj
CORRESPONDENT

Last year a new and exciting restaurant opened just off the Village Square in downtown East Troy.

The Chinuk Sushi Grill and el Pedro Taco, 2919 Main Street, offers a fresh take at dining in the area.

"We are an Asian fusion restaurant," said Michael Salvatore, manager of restaurant. "We offer a variety of unique food combinations that appeal to many palates."

While many may not think of Asian Fusion and sushi as typical Wisconsin fare, it has been very well-received by customers, according to Salvatore.

For some, this type of food has been a special treat that they were only able to enjoy when out of town where this specialty type of restaurant was available. To others, Asian Fusion food is an entirely new experience that often becomes a regular part of their dining experience.

Asian fusion is a method of cooking that combines ingredients from different culinary traditions that may originate in different regions of the same country or from different countries and cultures. They are then presented in a new way. This method of cooking became popular in the 1960s and 1970s and continues to evolve in today's fine restaurants.

"Everything we serve is made by hand. Our head sushi chef, Jino, who is from

Korea, is known for his unique creations," Salvatore said. "Because each piece of sushi has to be hand created, customers need to be patient. We have three additional sushi chefs who work with our head chef. Each chef puts their own special touch on their sushi rolls."

A modern look

The building itself is unique and gives off a relaxing vibe. A modern exterior with large windows is accented with natural wood and white trim. The bar is casual with beautiful wood plank tables and bar, all finished in a natural wood tone. The wood itself was repurposed from a 120-year-old barn that was being torn down in the area.

The bar is full service offering traditional mixed cocktails made to order. They also carry Sake, a Japanese libation.

"There are four grades of sake, and we offer all four," said Salvatore. "Each grade has a special way to be served. The lower grades are served warm, but the top grade is always served cold."

While the bar is light and casual – a place to enjoy a beverage and an appetizer while one gathers with friends – a step into the formal dining room produces a very different vibe.

The formal dining room has white tablecloths and is perfect for that special date night dinner. It offers a more serene vibe, as one enjoys the specially made foods created by chef Jino. A special sushi

above: This is an array of freshly made maki rolls, which was the special of the day on a recent visit. **top:** Chinuk Sushi Grill and el Pedro Taco, 2919 Main St., East Troy, opened in February. Located just off the square, the restaurant features an Asian Fusion style of cooking.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Family Owned & Operated



A couple enjoys some sushi and a cocktail at the bar at Chinuk Sushi Grill. The restaurant offers a good place to relax and enjoy the freshly made cocktails and the individually created sushi rolls.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Family Owned & Operated

table where the chef creates the sushi rolls one piece at a time is in the dining room. There is seating around the chef's table for customers who prefer to eat there while watching him create their food.

Eating in an Asian fusion restaurant requires time and patience as everything is made to order. The sushi rolls are hand rolled by the chef, with each chef adding a special touch. Asian fusion requires savoring each unique ingredient in the food to appreciate how they work well together for the special taste.

"Quality ingredients are important when creating dishes. We use top quality fresh seafood in all our dishes. The fish is always fresh as we purchase it daily," Salvatore said. "Each day we purchase fresh salmon, tuna, and yellow tail in addition to other fresh fish that may be available. We only purchase fish that is sustainable."

Salvatore also notes that on some evenings – especially if you have a later reservation – they may run out of some specific varieties of the fish if it is particularly popular. But there are always other great choices from our menu.

Sushi primer

For those new to the sushi menu, understanding what each special dish consists of is important. Listed on the menu is a description of some of the foods available. Maki is a seaweed rice roll with a piece of fresh fish inside along with other items such as cucumber, special sauces, or avocado.

The Maki is more what most people think of as sushi. Here there is always a Maki of the day, which varies due to chef's preference. It can be ordered individually as one roll or as a combination of two rolls as a dinner entrée.

Nigiri is pieces of fish with rice, while the sashimi is the fish served alone. A combination of Maki, Nigiri, and sashimi dishes are often shared by a group.

The Chinuk menu carries a full

selection of starters both from the kitchen and from the fresh sushi bar. The restaurant offers the traditional Miso soup, made with soybean paste, tofu and green onions. There are several salads available from octopus salad or seaweed salad, for those looking for a new taste experience, to a traditional house salad of fresh greens and vegetables.

Entrees too can be the more traditional cooked Cornish hen, broiled salmon, pork cutlet or even rib eye steak with the Asian fusion twist. For the seafood lover, a grilled shrimp, scallops and lobster entrée is served with a creamy garlic sauce and udon noodles.

El Pedro Taco

The el Pedro Taco portion of the menu presents starters such as Panko breaded shrimp, guacamole or a variety of tacos, including al pastor (Mexican pork), Korean BBQ Pork, pescado (fish) or other varieties again keeping the Asian Fusion style of cooking by incorporating items such as the tempura or Korean BBQ pork into the traditionally Mexican taco.

According to Salvatore, while some

may have questioned the choice of an Asian fusion restaurant for this area, it has been very successful. Almost 93% of the customers are local residents who are embracing the new experience in food. Reservations, especially on weekends, are full.

"Along with our relaxing décor and fine food, our staff is our greatest asset. They are a young group who work hard and work well together as a team," Salvatore said. "They are always anxious to please the customer and are willing to explain food items that may be new to their customers. We are very proud of our hard working staff."

Because of the time required to create the special foods offered here, reservations are required on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and highly recommended on other days. The restaurant is open from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Reservations can be made online at chinuksushi.com or by calling the restaurant after 5 p.m. at 262-749-1452.

In nice summer weather, being outdoors in the evening, with family or friends is always a comfortable way to

end the day. This summer there will be a new addition – a rooftop bar. The bar will offer full service and will also offer Korean Barbecue cooked on the roof on a hibachi grill.

Imagine, being up on the rooftop enjoying a beautiful summer evening with a view of the square in the distance, and sipping your favorite beverage while the aroma of Korean BBQ wafts through the air. With the fragrant aroma in the air, there will not be many patrons who don't succumb to ordering Korean BBQ to enjoy.

"The plan is to have the rooftop open by June," said Salvatore.

"We are very pleased with the success we have had since opening. Most nights our reservations are completely filled before we even open," said Salvatore, who has managed several restaurants in the Lake Geneva area. "Sometimes we can fit additional guests at the bar but we recommend making a reservation to be certain of getting in."

Chinuk Sushi and el Pedro Taco is at 2929 Main St., East Troy. Call at 262-749-1452 after 5 p.m. for reservations or visit the website chinuksushi.com.



The bar at Chinuk Sushi Grill is full service offering a variety of quality liquors.

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The Rustic Barrel moves into former school

Couple finds dream building, moves from downtown to 'destination' setting

What's more antique than a one-room schoolhouse from the 1800s?

Dan Wilburth and his wife Chantelle Archambeau are turning back the clock to bring antique lovers a destination setting – whispering willows, outdoor dining and quaint, country quiet.

The Rustic Barrel started in 2019 in downtown Burlington but has moved into the former Winkler Elementary School building on the corner of Highway P and Fish Hatchery Road in Bohners Lake, and Wilburth couldn't be more excited about the possibilities.

With new sidewalks and asphalt, a beautiful mural alongside outdoor seating and even more space outside to sell beer and wine and in the basement for catered parties, Rustic Barrel offers an experience for people looking to buy affordable products that have been cleaned up, reupholstered or even made by hand.

Right when you walk in, a bowl full of Dad's Root Beer sets the tone of classic, fun products you never thought you'd see again.

The front entrance along with the old classrooms boast plenty to choose from, including hand-crafted woods, handmade lotions and bath salts and vintage clocks and more. Vendors rent out shelves and spaces, and Wilburth and Archambeau sell plenty of things they've acquired or created over the years.

The Rustic Barrel is their retirement dream, as Wilburth and Archambeau still work full-time, but the building is everything.

They couldn't pass on the move. "We just recently opened here, April 2

By Mike Ramczyk
CORRESPONDENT

(2022), so it's brand new," Wilburth said last year after the move.

"We lived out this way, and it was my wife's dream to get this building. She's driven by it all the time. She liked the parking lot, it's a little hard to park downtown sometimes. We worked on this building all winter long to have it ready. There are many options to do more and more with all the space."

Wilburth and Archambeau are both from the Milwaukee area and moved to this area eight years ago.

They still rent out their former building on Pine Street to Buzzed Wine Bar and a young couple that lives upstairs.

Wilburth does Rustic Barrel full-time, and Archambeau still works for We Energies.

"Melissa's doing a really good job with Buzzed Wine Bar," Wilburth said. "It's a cool building from 1888 down there, and this building's cool. The one-room schoolhouse was in 1908, and it was actually built in the 1800s. Another wing was built in the 1940s, and another in the 1950s."

"We're trying to make this a destination. We want flea markets, farmer's markets, a food truck night, maybe weekly...we're going to try to get some kind of Yoga set up among the trees. We have a lot of ideas, we just have to get them together."

Rustic Barrel offers antiques, vintage, repurposed, handmade and rustic products "at a reasonable price," according to Wilburth.

"We have new things, too," he added. "I make things out of Whiskey barrels, and my wife has a whole line of body whips, lotions, soaps, lip balms, she works on that. And we repurpose furniture and work on things together."

Also, they rent spaces to home crafters, who may have one shelf or cabinet, and some people may have a 10-by-10 section.

"The average is \$100 a month, and we charge 7%," Wilburth added. "I'm trying to stay under the higher prices, because I want them to make money, too. I'm trying to build up."

Wilburth says his wife sells a lot of lotions and body whips, around the country to Texas. People drive from Chicago to purchase them. It's one of the company's top sellers.

He said they get plenty of traffic from the website, Facebook and Instagram, where they have a nice presence.

In these times of inflation and high gas prices, Wilburth says sales have gone down in the last year.

"It's hard with high prices and everything going on," he added. "Chantelle advertises on Facebook and on social media a lot. We used to do a lot of flea markets where we'd hand out flyers. We just did one in Elkhorn."

There's plenty of local flavor at Rustic Barrel.

Carl and Mary Anders, of Joyful Creations, one of the Barrel's biggest vendors, provided a large mural on the eastern wall of the building.

There are also items from vendors in East Troy, Waterford, Burlington and all over the area.

Wilburth is looking to secure a liquor license to sell beer or wine, and he knows he can partner his tenant, Melissa Smith, from Buzzed Wine Bar, to help out.

"The company has come a long ways," Dan added. "We have a stable clientele built up, and we're looking to add to that. Downtown, I didn't have the space to do a lot of things. Here, I could build on or offer

things in our large parking lot. The history downtown is really cool, but you can just do so much more here."

Wilburth said the road construction on Highway P wasn't helping, but just like they adapted through the COVID-19 pandemic, they are figuring it out.

"I try to buy things at fair prices and pass it on to the shopper," he said. "So people can come in and buy something, it doesn't necessarily have to be expensive. I even try to find things that kids can buy, and parents aren't spending \$50."

"The vendors are really talented. The stuff they create is pretty amazing. It's pretty crazy. We try to mix it in with newer, point-of-purchase sale type of things."

You can even find pig soaps made out of lard. There are syrups, jewelry and much more.

Ken Edwardson, a retired technical education teacher from Burlington High School, makes things to sell out of wood and leather.

What's the dream, Dan?

"We're hoping to get up and running really well and expand some things and make the flea markets and extra things," Wilburth added.

"We just have to keep building on it."

Dan Wilburth, owner of Rustic Barrel antiques mall, sits in front of the mural created by Burlington artists Carl and Mary Anders. The mural is at Rustic Barrel's new location in the former Winkler School at 7135 McHenry St., Burlington.

MIKE RAMCZYK Family Owned & Operated



Melissa Wandrey, owner of Baking Bird, sits in front of a wall containing multiple birdhouses with proceeds from each sale benefiting organizations dedicated to battling cancer. Baking Bird, located in downtown Union Grove, has been open for a little more than a month and offers multiple specialty baked goods.

JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated

Baking for her community

Baking Bird works to give back to those who support her

Melissa Wandrey has spent nearly two decades in the baking industry, working in grocery stores and other bakeries throughout the Midwest.

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Within the last five years, she moved to Union Grove and found an opportunity to open a new business called Baking Bird, which came from her childhood inspiration. "My nickname is actually Bird, it has been since I was a little kid and I have been a baker for almost 20 years," she said. "I just thought it sounded really cute."

Wandrey, born and raised in Illinois, initially started the business out of her home about a year ago as a test to see how receptive the community would be a new bakery.

"In that year's time, we just took off in popularity," she said. "I just started asking people how they would feel if I would open a bakery. The support was overwhelming."

Baking Bird, 1013 Main Street, launched on June 18 and offers multiple specialty items as well as favorites such as Cheesecake and Salted Caramel Bars.

Wandrey also has staple items available for customers looking for a treat.

"In this area, there is a lack of availability of specialized items. You would have to drive to the city or downtown Racine to get similar products," she said. "We have a huge variety of items. We have an ever changing menu."

The new establishment, open Wednesday through Sunday from 6:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., also caters to workers who typically start their day at 7 a.m.

Oftentimes, Wandrey sees customers waiting at the door before she unlocks the building for business.

"I have people usually waiting at the door at 6:30," she said. "There are a lot of people who start work at 7, so they will stop in for coffee, or a little treat."

Wandrey, however, acknowledges the early morning isn't even the most hectic for her establishment.

But once school begins, she expects more traffic, considering Baking Bird is just down the street from Union Grove High School.

"The reason I started so early is that we are open for all of the high schoolers," she said. "They don't have anywhere to go."

Wandrey said high schoolers would have more breakfast options, instead of merely stopping at the convenience store or gas station for a simple snack.

Unique blend

Customers will be able to find a coffee blend unique to Baking Bird.

Baking Bird uses Anodyne Coffee Roasting Co., of Milwaukee, for its coffee and has produced a proprietary blend.

"We actually have a chickadee breakfast blend, it is a proprietary blend that we created for Baking Bird specifically," she said.

"We also carry a few a Anodyne's other top types of coffee."

Established in 1999, Anodyne Coffee Roasting Company is a locally owned, small batch roaster, according to its website.

The coffee roaster aims to provide an exceptional cup

of coffee using just enough technology coupled with an experienced crew to assure satisfaction with every roast.

For customers looking to bring coffee home, Baking Bird offers bags of Anodyne, ground on site.

"You can actually buy a whole bag of coffee and we will actually grind it for you," she said.

Giving back

Last December, Wandrey's stepson was diagnosed with Leukemia, and has underwent extensive treatment.

According to Wandrey, since then, the community has been overwhelmingly supportive of her and her family by offering assistance such as gas cards.

In response to community support, according to Wandrey, Baking Bird's mission is to give back to the organizations dedicated to battling cancer.

The mission is simple, she said, with customers offering monetary donations in exchange for a wooden birdhouse.

Customers would decorate the birdhouse and return it to Baking Bird, where they would affix it to wall, which is painted as a tree.

"We wanted to be able to pay it back to the community and the organizations that helped us," she said.

"Whatever monetary donations you want to make, there is a no cap or minimum, you can take the birdhouse and paint it, return it and we let them put it where they want," she said.

At the end of each month, she donates all proceeds from the birdhouses to a specific organization, which she posts on Baking Bird's Facebook page.

"WE WANTED TO BE ABLE TO PAY IT BACK TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HELPED US."

— Melissa Wandrey, Baking Bird

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Finding the right cheese

Hill Valley Dairy helps customers create charcuterie boards

Assembling a charcuterie board, much like a jigsaw puzzle, presents many key components for the fixture to become complete.

Charcuterie boards, a common element at special occasions, typically includes cured meat, crackers, nuts, fruits and vegetables and multiple cheese varieties.

At Hill Valley Dairy, LLC, which opened a retail shop in Lake Geneva, co-owner Ron Henningfeld said his establishment can satisfy the cheese component.

Henningfeld, who grew up on a dairy farm in East Troy, states customers often come in seeking ideas on how to fill their charcuterie boards.

Customers typically seek variety, including differing consistencies, when deciding on a cheese to include on a charcuterie board.

"Usually people are looking for variety, so I say like a hard cheese, a semi-soft cheese and then a soft cheese. It is really what a lot of people do," said Henningfeld.

Hill Valley Dairy specializes in cheese curds, multiple cheddar varieties and Gouda, all produced from a third-generation family farm known as Romari Farms.

Presently, in the Lake Geneva cheese shop, along with common cheeses, Hill Valley Dairy offers wash rind gouda, black pepper cheddar, mountain rind alpine, shallot and herb alpine, floral alpine, Luna and Alina.

"At least from our cheese shop, our most common cheeses we are selling are the cheeses that I make at Hill Valley Dairy," Henningfeld said.

Additionally, Hill Valley Dairy brings in products from other regional cheese producers, such as Hoard's Dairy, Roelli Cheese, Landmark Creamery, Blakesville, Cedar Grove, Alpinage Creamery, and Hook's Blue.

With multiple options, Hill Valley Dairy staff assists customers, and even allows them to sample products before they bring them home for assembly on a charcuterie board.

"At our cheese shop, you can taste cheese before you buy them, so you know you are walking out of the door with something you really like," he said.

Rich history

Henningfeld, who co-owns Hill Valley Dairy with his wife, Josie, worked on his family farm as a child.

While he grew up on Romari Farms, Henningfeld became heavily involved in agriculture, including serving as an active member of 4-H and FFA, Wisconsin FFA state officer and later pursuing a career in agricultural education.

Henningfeld, meanwhile, sought a way to reconnect with the family farm through a cheesemaking venture.

"I got this adding cheesemaking to connect back with the family," he said. "It was a way to expand the farm without having to build a bigger farm."

Romari Farms, in its third generation, is run by Ron's brother, Frank, and sister-in-law, Colleen.

The farm features more than 60 milking cows producing 480 gallons of milk on average per day as well as other livestock.

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER



Ron Henningfeld, co-owner of Hill Valley Dairy, helps two customers with menu selections in the Lake Geneva cheese bar.

JASON ARNDT Family Owned & Operated

"We use milk from my brother's dairy farm to make our cheeses," Henningfeld said.

Early beginnings

After a few years of teaching, according to Hill Valley's website, Ron apprenticed at Babcock Hall under Gary Grossen while taking cheesemaking courses at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

From there, he continued training at multiple cheesemaking facilities, including stops at Uplands Cheese in Dodgeville and Cedar Grove before becoming a manager and cheesemaker at Clock Shadow Creamery, of Milwaukee.

In 2016, after working with other companies, Henningfeld established Hill Valley Dairy, LLC and began selling products at area farmers market.

Henningfeld takes milk produced at his family farm to Clock Shadow Creamery, just north of the prominent Allen Bradley clock, where he begins processing.

He then brings the products back to the East Troy farm for storage and aging of specific cheese types.

In addition to the relatively new cheese shop, Hill Valley Dairy's cheese products are available at some local stores, Henningfeld said.

Recent opening

It wasn't until February 2022 when

Henningfeld opened the cheese stop, 510 Broad St., Lake Geneva.

Since opening the shop, according to Henningfeld, Hill Valley often sees repeat customers.

"Our customers love cheese," Henningfeld said. "They are excited to come into the cheese shop and try new cheeses."

"I made a lot of cheese curds, I make a lot of cheddars. We have some common and very popular cheeses," Henningfeld.

Most recently, the Henningfelds opted to expand the shop's footprint in Lake Geneva, launching a Cheese Bar next to the shop.

The Cheese Bar, open three times per week, offers several cheese boards, side options, children's options, non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages such as wine and beer.

"My wife and I wanted a place to gather around cheeses and have good experiences," Henningfeld said.

In addition to Hill Valley Dairy products, others items available for sale in the cheese bar include products from other producers, such as Lake Geneva Country Meats.

For more information, including hours of operation, visit hillvalleydairy.com, its Facebook page, or call 262-684-9524.

The website features an online shop, where customers can purchase sampler boxes, among other products, and garner cheesy recipe ideas.



Hill Valley Dairy, LLC, which has a retail shop in Lake Geneva, offers many cheese varieties for customers looking to assemble a charcuterie board.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Family Owned & Operated

Woman builds business on creative crates

Custom-made gift crates became popular during COVID

Leslie Strickland always had a genuine interest in construction, especially since her father was involved in the trade, which she continues today.

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Strickland, of Mukwonago, decided to use her passion to open a business named Cream City Crates.

Cream City Crates, formerly of Waterford and now Mukwonago, manufactures gift crates ranging from movie nights with common food items to custom products for consumers.

The business has grown in popularity since its launch.

Additionally, she works on custom signs, primarily based on requests from customers and other area business owners.

Strickland also creates wholesale and private label orders that are custom made for other customers and employees.

"Each wooden crate, soy candle and every other item here has been made just for you and your customers/employees," the company's website states.

Strickland fulfills orders not only locally, but nationally as well, and even has drawn requests from Canada.

"It has been good – some days slow, some days more busy," said Strickland, who revealed her business boomed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. "During COVID, it was busy for awhile. People were shopping online, so I did a lot of online ordering. I did a lot of gift baskets."

Strickland said most of her orders have come from people looking for a personal touch to gift baskets, gift crates and custom-made signs.

"The majority of my work is all custom," she said. "If someone has something in their mind that they want to do, but can't find it online, they reach out to me either through email or social media."

"I like to bring that vision to life."

Strickland initially opened the establishment in Waterford, however, decided to move operations to Mukwonago when she purchased a home there.

However, she still draws plenty of customers from Waterford, including Spanky's Sports Bar and Grill, which requested two custom made signs, among others.

Strickland's passion, meanwhile, began when she attended Milwaukee Pius, where she graduated, and worked on construction projects with her father.

"I grew up in construction – my dad had me doing drywall, painting,



Leslie Strickland, owner of Cream City Crates, works on carving a pumpkin using only power tools.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Family Owned & Operated

insulation when I was in high school," she said. "It is natural for me."

"I just love the craft side of it, I am very creative and I like to stay busy."

Strickland, meanwhile, looked to empower other women, when Cream City Crates hosted a Maker Extreme Pumpkin Carving Contest last October at Schuett Farm, W299S6370 Highway 83 N, Mukwonago.

Strickland enlisted contestants for the contest.

The women makers, she said, would be competing with only a limited amount of power tools to create the best carved pumpkin.

"The maker community, as well call it, everyone likes to help each other out and I thought this could be a fun way to get some friendly competition with each

other," she said.

Strickland said the contest would help to empower women.

"I always like empowering other women, I know sometimes, I do a lot on social media, where people are intimidated by tools and I want to kind of show them that you don't have to be scared of them," she said. "It is fun and unique field to be in. It is empowering."

Prizes were awarded in four categories: best costume, most traditional pumpkin, most unique pumpkin, and scariest pumpkin.

The voting was done online either through Cream City Crates social media channels, or on the website.

Information on the contest winners is available on the Cream City Crates Facebook page.

Strickland participated in the contest herself since she said she always enjoys a competition.

"I love competing, so I think it will be really fun to do," she said. "Everyone is super excited to be competing."

Cream City Crates, which is accessible online at creamcitycrates.com, on Facebook and Instagram. The website also has DIY projects.

Customers looking for custom orders, she said, can always reach out through email or on social media.

GENERAL STORE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

High School and participates in 4-H as well as baseball.

"We have connections to Union Grove, our son goes to the high school, he participates in baseball out here, we live in Raymond, so Union Grove just seemed like the best fit," said Christine, a former full-time teacher who serves as a substitute in the Union Grove area.

Christine, however, admits customers were hesitant since the Grochowskis began

as a simple popcorn business.

However, once they walked in, customers immediately discovered Pine Acres Country Store is more than just a popcorn shop.

"They have come back more regularly," she said, adding many request gift baskets with many items, among other reasons. "We have been very fortunate about the reception that we have gotten here in Union Grove."

That, she added, included positive feedback from other downtown businesses showing support since opening the establishment.

"The community is great," she said. "We love getting to know other business owners."

So, what's in a name?

The Grochowskis found inspiration from Ed's grandfather, who had a hobby farm in Hartford, where he also grew

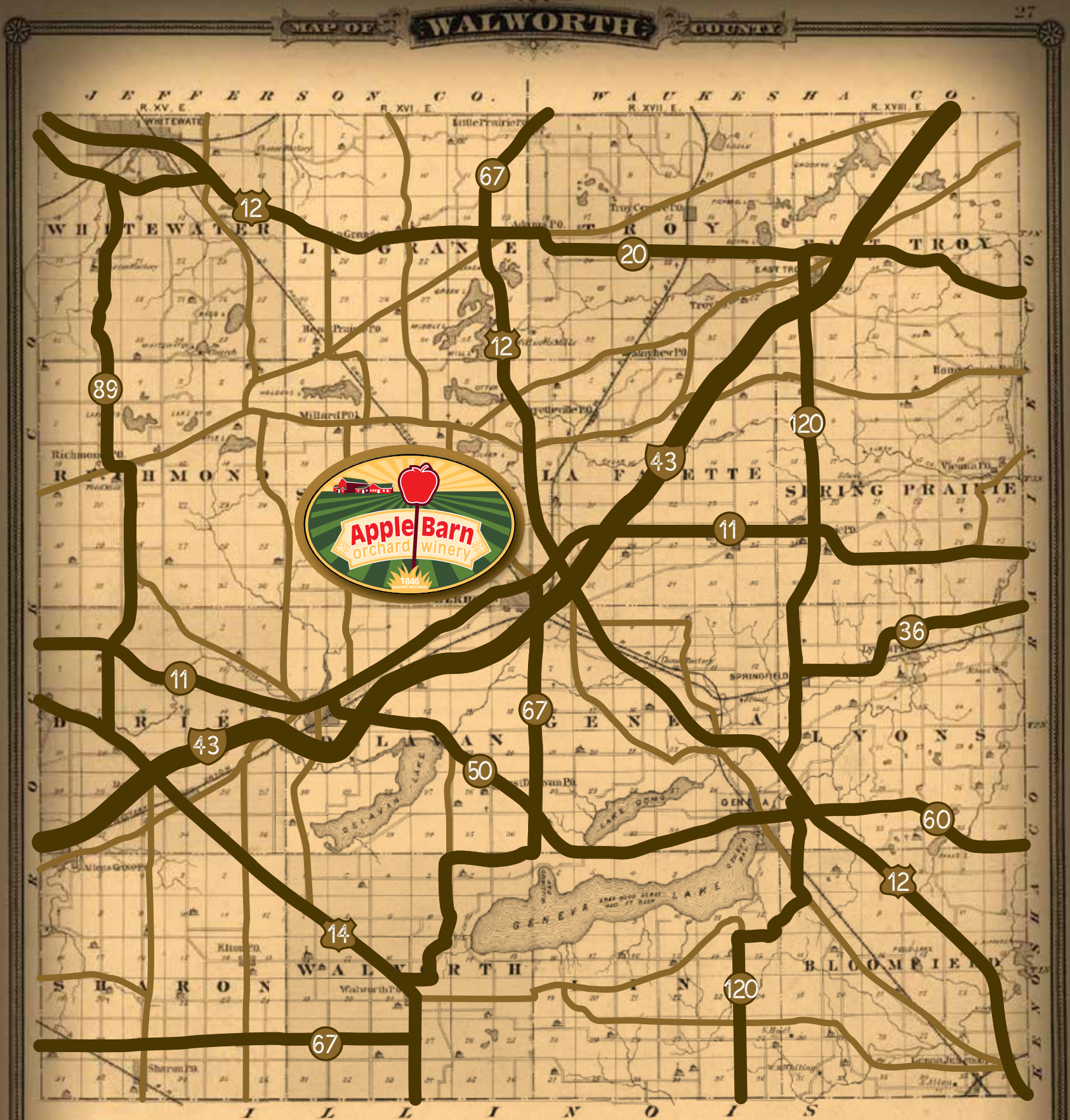
Christmas trees operating as Pine Acres.

"It is in honor of his grandfather," said Christine.

While Christine enjoys the area, and positive reception, she also found working with her husband and son as an added benefit.

"It is something that we do as a family," she said.

For more information, including hours of operation, find them on Facebook.



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crews operate in an orchestrated fashion.

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