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of WALWORTH
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Summer
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In honor of all veterans



Congdon Gardens now site of Delavan Veterans Memorial

On a cool and breezy spring morning May 20, veterans assembled, people came out to offer their respects as a new memorial to the U.S. Armed Forces was dedicated at Congdon Gardens in Delavan.

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

The combined work of several different veterans' groups, volunteers and the Delavan Rotary Gardens Foundation, the new memorial features steel emblems of the six U.S. armed forces – Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and Space Force – plus plants, a flag and pole

and memorial bricks.

While some memorial bricks have already been purchased, they are for sale through the foundation.

A meeting of the Congdon Gardens board three years ago gave birth to the idea of a veterans memorial. Ed Wichman, who served as master of ceremonies for the dedication May 20, was park foreman and a member of the City of Delavan Streets Department when discussions began.

"The city had talked about a memorial for the veterans all that time, and it just never happened," Wichman said.

The park board and parks and recreation department spoke with the American Legion, and then the Delavan Rotary Garden Foundation decided to take on the project.

Wichman said that members of the group went online and typed in "war memorials," taking a look at a variety of

different spaces in the state, particularly in Elkhorn and Milwaukee.

"We started looking around and what do we want to do here?" Wichman said. "We wanted to do something a little different."

The idea to do the round steel emblems was born, and R.C. Welding in Elkhorn was asked to do the work.

Other groups that contributed to the construction include Delavan's American Legion Post 95, Fao Concrete LLC, Kruger Landscape, Little Limestone, Lowes of Delavan, Unilock Block and Women's Auxiliary Post 95.

Now, the special space features, in addition to the paved bricks area and the emblems, a flagpole for the American flag.

At its base is the sign, "Lest We Forget."

Two weeks before the dedication, Lowes came in with the flowers for the space. Volunteers planted them a little over

a week before the ribbon cutting.

Wichman said, in the end, everything came together, in spite of numerous moving pieces.

"It was a God thing," he said. "It all fell into place so nicely."

For more information on the paving bricks, contact the Delavan Rotary Gardens Foundation, P.O. Box 385, Delavan, WI, 53115.

Wonders of Walworth County

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top: Congdon Gardens in Delavan is the home for the city's new veterans memorial, which was dedicated May 20. **Top:** The sign "Lest We Forget" sits in front of the memorial area. **at left:** An honor guard fires a 21-gun salute at the dedication.
JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Walworth County

On the cover:
American Legion Post 95 Commander Brian Balsewicz raises the flag with other veterans watching at the dedication of the Congdon Gardens new veterans memorial on May 20.

JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Walworth County



All aboard!

East Troy Railroad opens new season

The East Troy Railroad Museum has been a staple in East Troy longer than many of its current residents can remember.

By **Callie Koehne**
CORRESPONDENT

There are moments when you catch one of the many historic cars quietly rumbling down the tracks and almost feel transported to a simpler time when train journeys were commonplace and life moved at a slower pace.

As soon as the snow thaws and the sun feels warmer than it did in the winter months, people from throughout the state and beyond know that it's almost time for a beloved summer and fall tradition.

That's how it began for many of the volunteers who dedicate so much of their time to the preservation of the railroad.

Ward Komorowski, the recently elected president of the East Troy Railroad Museum board has been a volunteer at the museum for over two years, but his history with the East Troy Railroad began long before that to when he was a young child with an ever increasing passion for his Lionel train set.

He recalls visiting his grandparent's cottage near Lake Beulah by train and seeing the East Troy Railroad. After a 39-year career with Johnson Controls, combined with 21 years as an adjunct professor with

the Milwaukee School Of Engineering, Komorowski knew it was time to focus on his earliest passion. It wasn't just a hobby for him as he had run those same Lionel trains he had as a child for his children, and later put permanent tracks all along the ceiling of his basement, running through the walls from room to room for his grandchildren.

"The things that we love that we can give to our kids and grandkids, they take root when we share them and are memories that last lifetimes," Komorowski said, adding that what they want most when people come out to ride the trains and take part in the many events offered, is for those memories to live on and become precious to the children and adults who experience them.

In an effort to help create those memories, Komorowski and the more than 150 volunteers that make the adventures possible spend the off season months brainstorming ideas to help foster those memories for the countless visitors that anxiously await the season.

As of mid-April, and all the way through Sept. 2, trains run from the East Troy Railroad Museum on Saturday and Sunday, with Friday trips starting in June. But their journey from the depot to Indianhead Park in Mukwonago and Elegant farmer are far from the only chance patrons have to take a closer



Car 846 rides the rails between East Troy and Mukwonago.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Wonders of Walworth County

look at the fleet of trains the museum has gathered.

Dining cars

Komorowski said this year he is most excited about the return of the Mother's Day Dining Car Train which was May 13. Statistically, women purchase most of the tickets for the railroad's events. When Komorowski made that discovery, he said it made him sit back and wonder why there wasn't a train day dedicated to celebrating mothers. This year the event had an updated menu – and in light of its popularity in its first year as well as limited availability, they expect it to sell out quickly. With 17 official dinner trains, and four Sunday Brunch trains, there are ample opportunities for those looking to find a dinner train that interests them.

Steve Thomas, a volunteer with the museum for nearly nine years, said there's an experience for everyone.

"We've got a Kentucky Derby Dinner train, a Surf-N-Turf, a Family Picnic train, and an adult Halloween train, and people have such a great time coming out and experiencing something a little different than normal."

Special events

The line-up of this season's events doesn't stop with the increasingly popular dinner trains. The most anticipated events will all return this year, such as the Christmas parade train that gives Santa Claus a ride to the residents of East Troy, or the dozen opportunities throughout the holiday season that visitors have to ride the Christmas Train and see Santa's workshop as well as the Halloween train that takes riders trick or treating.

Railfan Day also returned this year, which is when all of the museum's equipment is taken out and put on display, and every train that leaves the station throughout the day is a different combination of cars. The family-friendly event is full of activities, from face painting and games to tours of the trains and model railroads. There is also free popcorn and new events added every year.

"People really like to see the different trains that they don't normally see," Thomas said. "It's a day for everyone, and all of us love seeing the families who come year after year grow up and continue to look forward to the day."

For adults, on Sept. 16, the Beer Tasting Train will run again, featuring five different beers and hors d'oeuvres. The joint conjunction with Black Point Estate on Geneva Lake will run for 2 1/2 hours and dive into the history of beer making and the beer barons of yesterday, many of whom kept homes in Lake Geneva.

Komorowski said he hopes to use his 21 years of experience as an adjunct professor at the Milwaukee School of Engineering to facilitate the new STEM program the museum offers.

Last year with the launch of the pilot program, an official committee went to work and as a result, they now have two STEM curriculums developed and ready to go. Through collaborations with The Discovery Museum in Milwaukee and Yerkes Observatory in Williams Bay, they're focused on figuring out the challenges as well as raising funds to be able to afford buses so their programs are affordable for participants.

"We couldn't be more excited to get this off the ground and hopefully offer these classes later in the season," Komorowski said. "It's important not only to help create a passion in the next generation but to help educate them and give them the best start."

Komorowski said what the East Troy Railroad Museum continues to accomplish would not be possible without the amazing volunteers who dedicate their time and energy so thoughtfully. If the East Troy Railroad is to continue to thrive and live for future generations of families it's important that their focus is threefold, on operation, restoration, and maintenance.

Every year the non-profit museum works on fundraising and uses those funds to restore the cars and tracks as needed. In the past three years they've been able to see through the complete restoration of three cars all while maintaining equipment.

East Troy Railroad 2023 Dinner Trains

STARS AND STRIPES

July 15

Wisconsin Cheese Board, Artisan Salad, Bacon Wrapped Filet, accompanied by Twice-Baked Mashed Potatoes and sautéed seasonal vegetables

THAT'S AMORE

July 22

Italian Garden Salad, Italian Meatballs in House-made Marinara Sauce, Pasta Bundles, sautéed farm-fresh vegetables

SURF-N-TURF

Aug. 5

Wisconsin Cheese Board, 6-ounce filet topped with skewered Garlic and Lime Shrimp, Truffle Oil Potatoes, sautéed farm-fresh vegetables

FAMILY PICNIC TRAIN

Aug. 19

All Beef Hot Dogs with assorted toppings, with Kettle Crunch Potato Chips, pickles and fresh fruit

SOUTHERN DELIGHT

Aug. 26

Southern Shrimp Dip with Alabama Crackers, Slaw Salad, Baby Back Pork Ribs with Bourbon BBQ sauce, Creamy Buttermilk Mashed Potatoes, Summer Kernelled Corn

FALL HARVEST

Sept. 23

Wisconsin Cheese Board, Chopped Kale

Salad, Beef Bourguignon, Roasted Garlic and Chipotle Smashed Potatoes, roasted farm-fresh vegetables

OKTOBERFEST

Sept. 30

German Beer Cheese Spread and Pretzels, Cucumber and Radicchio Salad, Sauerbraten, Brussels Sprouts, German Dill Mashed Potatoes, Soft Pretzel Roll

AUTUMN GLOW

Oct. 7

Wisconsin Cheeseboard, Mixed Green Salad, Whisky Glazed Brisket, Cheddar Mashed Potatoes, Sautéed Fall Vegetable Mélange

SWEETEST DAY

Oct. 14

Wisconsin Cheese Board, Autumn Walnut Salad, Filet Mignon with Bourbon Glaze, Red Skin Potato Mashers, roasted seasonal vegetables

SURF-N-TURF

Oct. 21

Wisconsin Cheese Board, 6-oz Filet topped with Skewered Lime and Garlic Shrimp, Truffle Oil Potatoes, sautéed farm-fresh vegetables

ADULT HALLOWEEN

Oct. 28

Caudron Dip, Spooky Salad, Cider Marinated Short Ribs, Smoked Cheddar Scalloped Potatoes, seasonal vegetables

Take trip back in time



Black Point Estate offers a glimpse into a bygone era

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

Visitors to Black Point, the summer cottage of Chicago beer baron Conrad Seipp and his second wife, Catharina, and their children, arrive just as visitors to Black Point did back in the 1800s and 1900s – by boat. They then climb the more than 100 stairs to the house.

While visitors back then arrived by Seipp's private launch to enjoy time at the cottage, today visitors arrive on a Gage Boat Lines boat – usually the Geneva – after having toured a large portion of Geneva Lake.

On the cruise, they enjoy the stories of the wealthy Chicagoans who built lavish summer cottages along the shores of Geneva Lake to escape from the hot, dirty air of the city. These cottages can be more correctly described as mansions, since many were as large, or larger, than their mansions in Chicago.

When Black Point comes into view, a large, three-story Victorian mansion in Queen Anne style with a large turret set high on the shore, visitors are often overwhelmed by its beauty. Built in 1888, Conrad was only able to enjoy this summer

cottage for two years as he passed away in 1890. His family would continue to enjoy and care for this property until 2005.

Catharina continued to bring the family up each summer. They would spend the entire summer at Black Point enjoying the fresh outdoor air, the lake and the home.

While it was a summer home, a place to relax and enjoy, Catharina kept the children busy. They had a tutor brought in who gave them lessons each day in subjects such as Latin, German and the sciences according to the book “The Black Point Legacy,” published by the Black Point Historic Preserve, Inc. Everyone had chores to complete before being allowed to swim, boat, and play with siblings and friends.

Who was Conrad Seipp?

Who was Conrad Seipp and how was the Seipp family able to afford to build and maintain this summer home?

“Conrad Seipp was one of the largest beer barons in Chicago,” Black Point Estate Site Coordinator Dave Desimone said. “He came to



top: The Black Point Estate features balconies and a tower. Custom stained glass windows along the tower to let in some light as visitors climb to the top. **above:** The formal dining room is set ready for dinner. Family dinners were served here nightly.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

In tune with herself

Local singer takes a run on NBC's The Voice after musical upbringing



It can be a little hard to believe that Rachel Christine Gebel was once a shy little girl.

The 22-year-old who has been belting out popular classics like Alanis Morissette's "Uninvited" and Maggie Rogers' "Light On" once got so nervous, she didn't even think she could sing in front of a crowd.

In fact, there is one moment that stands out to her mother, Micki, and to Rachel a testament of what kind of challenges Rachel would one day power through.

When Orange

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

Crush kicked off its unique story in 2009 – the rock and roll band was THE pep band at Burlington High School basketball games – Rachel was singing backup vocals for her older sister, Micah.

After Micah graduated, Rachel was the natural choice to follow her sister as lead vocalist.

And yet, on the first night Rachel was supposed to be lead, she grabbed her mother as she walked into the gym, and pulled her out into the hall.

"She said, 'I can't do this,'" Micki recalled. "The band is tuning up. I said, 'Rachel, just get that first note out, and you'll be fine."

"She's just been sailing ever since that opportunity."

What the longterm future brings for Rachel is still up in the air. She was recently on NBC The Voice's 23rd season and began that journey in the blind auditions where she hooked up with "Team Kelly" – pop vocal star Kelly Clarkson.

In the weeks that followed, Gebel survived the Battle Rounds of the show, going against a singer virtually everyone wanted on their team, JB Somers.

We'll circle back to how Gebel's time on the show came to an end but regardless, she and her family know what an opportunity it presented her.

"You know it's a chance of a lifetime," Micki said of The Voice. "There's not too many people who get that opportunity. It still blows me away."

Family history

The two sisters come from a musical family. Micki has performed in a number of different bands, with her brothers throughout her adult life.

When asked about the family genes, Micki admitted there had to be something to it.

"Most people say it's in the genes," she explained. "And I think there's something to that. When you hear families sing, there's just something about the way voices blend. It's like butter."

And for the two sisters, music began at a very young age. While Mom was practicing in the basement with the family band, Micah and Rachel started singing with each other.

"I must've been 5 and we would do karaoke at home in the house together," Rachel said. "It clicked. She taught me harmonies and we blended well."

"They just had these voices. So pure, so mature," said their mother. "And as shy as Rachel was, she liked to sing."

The two grew up with

vocal music, both learning how to play the keyboard as Micki bartered lessons for work for Jane and Scott Carson's book store.

The two ended up following each other in two very important gigs. Micah won the Riverport Chorus' DivaQuest competition when she was a freshman in high school in 2011, singing "Blue Skies" by Ella Fitzgerald.

"I wanted to finish second so I could perform the next year," commented Micah about her somewhat surprising win. "

Rachel was 11 when Micah won and was intrigued.

"I looked up to her like she was a celebrity," Rachel said. On her first try at the event, Rachel finished third, singing "Ain't No Other Man," by Christina Aguilera.

The following year, Rachel showed up with "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," a take on the Sara Bareilles' vision.

That time, Rachel won. Her biggest cheerleader was her sister.

"Winning a few years later was the best feeling in the world and I felt like I made her proud by following her footsteps," said Rachel, something Micah confirmed. "In the video of me singing my song that night, you can hear her in the background going, 'do yo thang, honey!'"

The two then were the back-to-back lead singers for Orange Crush – Micah was the lead when the group started in 2010 school year, while Rachel was the lead when the group ended seven years later.

Rather than providing a traditional pep band for BHS home basketball games, the school – led by teachers Ron Pedersen and Rob Stoughton – put together a house rock band.

The two said that the experience was invaluable.

"We owe Rod and Ron a lot. They taught us a lot about working with a band and that was their goal for the band," Micah said. "I think we learned a lot about ourselves in Orange Crush."

Added Rachel, "It was such a blessing to get to be a part of something like that at such a young age. You learn stage presence, stage banter, sooo many songs, and more."

Gebel Girls

Watching Micah and Rachel interact now, it's clear there's support between the two.

That has led the two to their next endeavor, an act called the Gebel Girls. What started as a solo act for Micah turned into a chance for the two sisters together.

The harmonies that the two worked on together as children still synced as adults. Now the two have every weekend between now and the end of the year booked as "The Gebel Girls," performing at various restaurants, taverns and events around the area.

"We've both been kind of doing the same thing, and then we both kind of went our separate ways for a while," Micah said. Micah was singing at an event, and Rachel

far left: Rachel Gebel, who went as Rachel Christine on NBC's The Voice, belts out "Uninvited" by Alanis Morissette during the blind auditions. Gebel's time on the show came to an end but her time spent there was quite the opportunity.

at left: Rachel has a smile on her face while being interviewed by the judges after the blind audition on The Voice, knowing she would advance in the show.

came in and harmonized a little. “And we were like, why didn’t we do this before?” Ironically, the two work at one of the mainstays of performance venues – The Delavan Lake Store. Rachel is the daytime bartender while Micah is the evening bartender.

It was a slow evening last year that led to Rachel watching The Voice while at work. Intrigued, Rachel sent in a pair of audition videos – one of her singing “Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road” and another of “Anyone” by Demi Lovato.

“I said, it’s a one-in-a-million chance, let’s see what happens,” Micah remembered. “Then she showed me the two auditions videos.”

Micah wasn’t the only one impressed. Rachel was immediately invited to California for the blind auditions, getting a chance to skip part of the audition process. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Voice

It was an interesting spring for Rachel Christine, the stage name she used. While the show was filmed in the fall of last year, episodes of Season 23 just began airing earlier this spring.

That meant Rachel had to keep a very hard secret – that not only had she turned two chairs during the blind auditions, but she also ended up getting to work with her childhood idol, Clarkson.

Rachel said that she was fully aware of the fact that Chance hit his button first, but she kept hoping Clarkson would push her button as well.

“I just had to have her,” Rachel said. “I was so excited that she turned around on the last note.”

From there, another week passed before the Battle Round between her and JB aired. Clarkson made a difficult decision, choosing

Rachel over Somers.

Her reasoning had to do with the depth of quality she heard in Rachel’s voice.

“I feel like she’s a consistent singer,” Clarkson said. “She has this incredible tone.”

For eight glittering, gratifying, glorious weeks, Rachel Christine Gebel got to experience life as a star.

The Burlington native and Delavan resident’s time on NBC’s The Voice came to an end in early May, as she came up short of advancing out of the playoff rounds to the live show rounds.

Gebel offered up a summary of her time on the show on Facebook:

“That’s a wrap for Rae Rae on The Voice,” Gebel wrote last week. She later added: “Now that my Voice era is officially over, I’d like to say THANK YOU. To everyone who watched and supported this entire journey. You have made this experience so incredible. Blinds, Battles, Knockouts, and Playoffs the support was unbelievable. To be given a platform like this as a singer, to represent Wisconsin, and encourage other small town singers to put themselves out there! If you’re thinking about trying out for a singing show, I can personally say The Voice was WORTH IT. Again and alwayssss, thank you, with all my heart, THANK YOU.”

Gebel recorded the show out in California last fall, and had a chance to perform four different songs on national TV.

In the knockout rounds, Gebel performed Fleetwood Mac classic “Rhiannon,” but lost to Holly Brand on coach Kelly Clarkson’s decision.

Gebel was then picked up as a steal by Blake Shelton – his last ever steal on the show – and performed the song “The Only Exception” by Paramore. While Gebel earned praise for the song, fellow Team



Rachel and Micah Gebel perform together as the “Gebel Girls” at River Jack’s in Elkhorn recently.
JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Walworth County

Blake singers Noivas and Grace West advanced.

Gebel’s mother, Micki Gebel, offered some insight on her daughter’s time on the show. She said that while the contestants were technically in competition with one another, the support for each other was certainly apparent.

“I think that’s one of the biggest takeaways I have from that particular show is the competition was only there for each of them with their self,” she explained. “It didn’t seem to be with each other.”

Micki said that with Rachel’s act with her sister, Micah, taking off (The Gebel Girls), she is thrilled to see both her daughters

thriving.

“I never get tired of hearing those two sing together,” Micki said. “Micah has an amazing voice. I hope the world gets to hear her as well. And Rachel hopes the same thing for her.”

She added that Rachel really wants to work in music production.

“She’s one of the most creative people I’ve ever known,” Micki said. “And I always tell her she’s one of the funniest people I’ve ever known.”

“She loves to sing. That’s her happy place, but for her career, I think she wants to be behind the scenes doing the writing, doing the producing.”



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Visitors to Black Point Estate enjoy sitting on the wrap-around porch after their long walk up to the house while the docent shares the history of the property and family.

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY/BLACK POINT ESTATE *Wonders of Walworth County*



Arriving at Black Point by boat, passengers disembark and begin the walk and climb of more than 100 steps up to the home, which was a "summer cottage."

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY/BLACK POINT ESTATE *Wonders of Walworth County*

BLACK POINT ESTATE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

America as an immigrant from Germany and worked hard to build his dream. He became among the most successful brewers, fifth in the United States."

The Seipp brewery survived the Chicago fire, in part because they had earlier had a fire and rebuilt the brewery out of brick and in part because he was far enough south to avoid the fire. The brewery continued to grow until prohibition, when, like many breweries, it was shut down.

"This year, Lauren Mack, a great-, great-, great-, great-granddaughter of Conrad Seipp, has started making beer under the Seipp label," Desimone said. "We have the Seipp's beer on site for sale in the gift shop only to be consumed on site."

After a visit to Kaye's Park, a popular upscale resort on Geneva Lake, Seipp knew he had found the place to build his summer home. He purchased a bluff on the south shore of the lake known as Warwick Park and there he built his summer home.

Construction on the lake

To build the house, all materials had to be shipped to Williams Bay, transported by boat to the building site and hoisted to the top of the bluff. Building the 17-room house was a massive job.

The first floor contained the public rooms. A dining room which could seat up to 40 at a time was usually full at meal times as the Seipp family enjoyed sharing their summer home with family and friends. Meals were served in formal style and visitors dressed for dinner. Interesting since the home was built without a kitchen. The kitchen was a separate building where the staff cooked the elaborate meals served in the main home.

The other rooms on the main floor were a formal living or greeting room, a pool room, and the music room. Music was part of the daily evening activity and several of the Seipp children were accomplished musicians. After dinner the entire Seipp family would retreat to the music room and participate in playing and singing.

The second and third floor contained the bedrooms – 13 of them. Some had two beds so more guests could be accommodated. There was one bathroom, located on the second floor that is believed to have been used primarily by the older women. Chamber pots were used in those early days.

The home was truly meant to be a summer cottage so did not have a full-house heating system. There were fireplaces throughout the home to help take out the chill on cool fall days. A coal stove was

occasionally used to heat the second floor. The home was used through mid-October and then shut down for the winter when the family returned to Chicago.

The most impressive part of the home, both from the outside and the inside, is the turret. It was impressive when viewed from across the lake and even more so up close. From the turret there was an unobstructed view of the entire lake from above the tree line. At the top of the turret the American Flag would fly from the time the family arrived until they left in October to return to Chicago.

Visiting the estate

The majority of visitors to Black Point arrive by boat. Partnering with the Gage Boat Lines, visitors board the Geneva in downtown Lake Geneva, and enjoy a 45 minute tour of the lake while they learn its history and about the summer cottages that were built by the wealthy Chicagoans.

After arriving at Black Point just as the Seipp family did, they climb the more than 100 stairs from the pier up to the house where they are greeted on the wraparound porch with its view of the lake and met by a docent who shares the history of the Seipp family and of the beautiful home.

Visitors are then taken on a tour of the first two floors of the home. The first floor consists of the public rooms, the billiard room, the music room, the formal living room, and the formal dining room. On the second floor they will view some of the family and guest bedrooms.

Outside are the beautifully landscaped gardens. The lintel from the old brewery is on display there and has recently been reset with new plantings surrounding it.

Upon completion of the tour, the boat returns guests to the Lake Geneva docks. The entire tour takes about 3.5 hours and is recommended for those older than 12 years of age.

Order tickets at www.cruise.lakegeneva.com. Cruises are held throughout the summer at 10:30 a.m. daily with an additional cruise on weekends at 12:30 p.m. Price is \$49 for adults.

Special programs

"Our goal is to continue to encourage people to come and enjoy Black Point, not just for one visit but to return and learn more about it. Each time one visits, they discover things they didn't notice before," Desimone said. "To encourage people to visit more we also offer a number of special events held

on site. These include two separate beer programs."

Summer on the Veranda programs include two separate beer programs. The Spectrum of Beer studies the variety of beers from light to dark, or from Pilsners to Stout. Only 20 people are included in each program. It is held three times each summer. This year's dates are June 22, July 20 and Aug. 17. Tickets may be purchased on the Black Point website.

The other beer program is a boat program, Beer Barons of Lake Geneva, which must be booked through www.cruiselakegeneva.com.

There were three dates this year with the two remaining being July 15 and Aug. 12. They feature the history of the beer barons from the area.

Summer on the Veranda will also include a visit by renowned author, Agatha Christie, as portrayed by local actress and historian, Chris Brookes. Tickets may be purchased on the Black Point website.

Are you interested in Paranormal Parlor Games? This event will be another event of the Summer on the Veranda events. Joe Diamond will share paranormal adventures and Victorian Spiritualism. Tickets can be purchased on the Black Point website.

Open to the public

While taking a boat tour around the lake, the beauty of all the beautiful summer homes is impressive. Unfortunately, they can only be viewed from the boat, except for Black Point.

For four generations, the descendants of Conrad and Catharina Seipp owned, maintained, and enjoyed the property and way of life.

In 2005 that all changed when William O. Petersen, great-grandson of Conrad Seipp turned over the title to the house, all of its furnishings, along with 8 acres of land and 620 feet of lake frontage to the state tourism secretary with the understanding that the home would be used as a museum. There is a limited conditional use permit which only allows 50 guests at a time.

The home provides a unique look into life at Black Point not just in the late 1800s but throughout the years the Seipp family and their descendants made this their summer home, the only summer cottage of the era that is open to the public to tour.

"Our goal is to increase the number of people who are able to visit and learn more about Black Point," Desimone said.

"The house was turned over to the Wisconsin State Historical Society in 2013

and we have increased the number of visitors from 3,000 a year to the current 10,000 yearly by becoming more involved in local community partnerships. We are sponsoring not only tours here at Black Point but partnering with local hosts for programs," he added.

These partnerships include a movie series with the Lake Geneva Library which Desimone attends, tours of the local cemetery, the downtown Lake Geneva Historic District, known as Maple Park, and a winter book club which are held offsite.

This spring, in conjunction with the Geneva Lake Museum, there is a display of some of the clothing owned and worn by members of the Seipp family and on loan to the museum.

Fundraiser set

A special fundraiser was held June 8 at the Geneva Lake Museum in Lake Geneva. "The Gilded Age Clothes and the Stories They Tell" was hosted by the museum, Black Point Estates and Gardens and the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra.

For the event, guests were invited to step back in time and enjoy a summer evening of elegant entertainment by the string quartet of Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra while enjoying wine, Seipp's beer, soft drinks and water. Light bites were provided by Tarts and Truffles.

Caring for a property as large and varied as Black Point requires much maintenance and expense. According to Desimone, they have a long-term plan in place to keep the building and grounds in excellent shape.

"We will never be done taking care of the property. Currently we are continuing to restore and improve the gardens including expanding these gardens. Fortunately, there is an endowment for the landscape. We continue to improve them with an eye to easier maintenance," DeSimone said. "And we appreciate the volunteers who help keep the gardens in shape."

He went on to share that both interior and exterior maintenance are ongoing concerns.

"We will need to restore rotted wood, probably next year. The goal will be to restore the home while keeping to the original look as much as possible," Desimone added.

The third stage will be a longer-term project, the restoration of the interior.

Visit www.cruiselakegeneva.com for tours and prices or visit www.wisconsinhistory.org for more information about the museum and its programs.

TAKE A lakeside hike

Traveling the Lake Geneva Shore Path

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

After several days in Lake Geneva enjoying the beautiful sights and activities, many visitors feel they have experienced all that the area has to offer. They have enjoyed at least one of the boat trips on Geneva Lake, spent a day at the beach enjoying the sun and water, overate at the many unique restaurants in the area and shopped until they were ready to drop at the local boutique stores, and maybe even taken a bike ride, a hot air balloon ride, or gone zip lining.

In spite of partaking all these activities, they may have missed one special feature of Geneva Lake, the Shore Path.

The popular walking trail completely surrounds Geneva Lake, although the trail itself is about 26 miles long.

The history of the path goes back to the days of the Indigenous people of several Native American tribes, who made their home in this area, including the Potawatomi led by Chief Big Foot.

A plaque placed in Library Park on Geneva Lake's shore in Lake Geneva gives a short history of this trail that began many centuries ago.

"The 26-mile lakeside trail along the shore of Geneva Lake was used by several Indian cultures from 2500 BC

and continuing to 1836 A.D. Chief Big Foot's Potawatomi tribe walked the trail between their villages at present Fontana, Williams Bay, and one at Lake Geneva located in this park. Later the trail became the workmen's path from Lake Geneva to the summer estates of wealthy Chicago families," the plaque reads.

These wealthy Chicagoans made their way to the shores of Geneva Lake after the Chicago Fire of 1871, remember the one that was said to be started by Mrs. O'Leary's cow? At that time the citizens of Chicago looked for an escape for their families, away from the smoke and polluted air of the city as it was rebuilt.

It was to Geneva Lake that they traveled, where they found the perfect setting to build summer cottages. But unlike the summer cottages most would envision, theirs were actually mansions, large and elegant, much as their homes in Chicago.

Wives and children would come to the lake for the summer, with their servants, while the husbands would commute up on weekends as they continued to work during the week.

Many of these lavish homes can still be found on the shores of Geneva Lake, and their view is enjoyed either while on the lake or walking the Shore Path. Over the years many of those lavish homes have been torn down and the properties divided into smaller parcels with new buildings often less impressive than the originals, they are still a gorgeous sight from the shore.

Public domain

It was the early settlers who deemed that the "20 feet leading to the shoreline be preserved as public domain."

The plan was to keep this historical path



above: Walking along the Geneva Lake Shore Path there is always a variety of scenery from different fences to a variety of walking surfaces as each owner is responsible for maintaining their section. **top:** This section, for example, is attractively decorated with greenery. The path, which is about 26 miles long, has a few entry points and is often walked in sections.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT LAKE GENEVA Wonders of Walworth County

for future use in memory of the past and to assure that the lakefront would remain available for all to enjoy. Each property owner, then as now, is required to maintain the path through their property, which has made each section of the path unique. Just as each estate has a different look, each owner has provided a different manner of creating and maintaining their portion of the path.

Not all property owners were pleased

to have strangers rummaging through their property. These owners would try to discourage visitors from traveling across their property by making their section of the trail narrow or overgrown.

In 1970, the then owners of Stone Manor were sued by the City of Lake Geneva for constructing a fence that blocked the Shore Path. The city won, the fence came down, the Shore Path remained intact.

While walking the entire path in one day is possible if one is in good health and walks regularly, it is said to take eight to 10 hours to complete. By dividing the walk into sections, it is easier to navigate the length. There are public access points where walkers can join or leave the path. Cutting through owner's lawns is not acceptable. Nor is sitting on their piers or the chairs or benches on their property. It is only the actual path that is open to walkers.

For those who wish to tackle the Shore Path in shorter stretches, there are several access points to enter and leave the path. They are Lake Geneva, Fontana, Williams Bay, Linn and Big Foot Beach areas.

Each one of these sections will provide a comfortable walk especially on a beautiful day.

The Daniel Johnson family of suburban Chicago was seen doing just that recently, "We come up several times a year and try to do a section each visit. Someday we hope to be able to walk the entire path in one day," said Dan Johnson, smiling. "But I think that will have to wait until these kids are a bit older," he added pointing to his 7 year old and 9 year old.

If a group only wishes to travel a section and has access to two cars, it is suggested that they park one at the beginning of their walk and one at the end to avoid having to walk back to the car.

Parking is available at each access point.

The walk from Lake Geneva to Williams Bay is about 7 miles, while a shorter walk from Williams Bay to Fontana covers about 3.5 miles.

Tips for comfort, safety

The Shore Path is a walking path and not made for bikes, scooters, strollers or wagons. With surfaces that include

cement, bricks, wood planks, gravel and stepping stones and narrowing in areas, it is not practical for these items to be on the path. Wearing comfortable walking shoes with non-skid treads is essential for safety especially when the path is wet and slippery.

Safety is important as some areas of the path are very close to the water and may not have a fence separating you from an unexpected swim. It is recommended that walking from Library Park in either direction from Lake Geneva is perhaps the easiest part of the path, especially if you have young children or someone with some mobility issues.

On the other hand, if you are going to try to walk the entire path in one day, experienced walkers suggest you start at the south end of the lake as that section is more difficult and is best attempted when you aren't tired.

Walking the path is a beautiful experience but when is it best enjoyed? Spring, when the trees are beginning to bud and flowers and greenery are just popping out of the ground? You may also see some early flowers peeking out of the ground in that season. Or is summer the time to enjoy the Shore Path, when everything is in full bloom, when all the flowers are a beautiful rainbow of color? Then there is autumn, with its myriad of colors as the trees turn shades of red, orange, yellow, and brown, and the fall flowers are found all around the lake.

So, when is the best time to walk the path? All of these seasons. In fact, a walk during each one of them will give you a different look of both the lake and the beautiful homes and landscaping in the area. While these three seasons offer a unique view of the path and lakes, winter too gives a nice view with everything a beautiful winter white. However, it may not be the best time to try



Each section of the path is maintained by the individual property owner.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT LAKE GENEVA Wonders of Walworth County

to walk the path as the path is not shoveled and will be icy and slippery in many areas. Also, in the off season some of the piers may be stored in a manner, blocking the path, possibly making passage impossible.

So, how does one prepare to walk the shore path? For safety as mentioned before, good sturdy walking shoes are important. On sunny days, walking will be out in the sun as the entire path is not shaded and there are no public shelters. Remember to wear sunscreen and a hat to protect from sunburn.

There are no restrooms or food stands on the path. Restrooms are available in areas such as near the public library in Lake Geneva, Williams Bay and Fontana. Carry water or other liquids with you to avoid dehydration.

Dogs must remain on a leash and under control the entire time while on the path. Walkers must clean up after the dog and remove the waste from the area. There are no public access garbage bins so whatever you bring in must leave with you.

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Music BY THE LAKE

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2023 SEASON EVENTS



Sunday, June 25 | 4 p.m.

Justin Roberts & the Not Ready for Naptime Players

Five-time Grammy nominee **Justin Roberts** is one of the founders of the modern family music scene. For 25 years, Roberts has been creating the soundtrack to families' lives, helping kids navigate the joys and sorrows of growing up, while inspiring parents to remember their own childhoods.



Saturday, July 8 | 7:30 p.m.

Martina McBride

Multiple Grammy nominee **Martina McBride** has sold over 23 million albums to date, which includes 20 Top 10 singles and six #1 hits. She has earned more than 15 major music awards, including four wins for Female Vocalist of the Year from the Country Music Association.



Sunday, July 16 | 4 p.m.

Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra

Travel with the **Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra** this summer and visit places across the country through music! Experience Chicago from the musical and Sinatra's New York, New York. Come along for this amazing adventure!



Saturday, July 22 | 7:30 p.m.

The Guess Who

Legendary Canadian band **The Guess Who** enjoyed chart-topping hits in the late 1960s and early 1970s with an impressive catalogue of songs, including "American Woman," "These Eyes," and "No Time." The band has released 11 studio albums, and charted 14 Top 40 hit singles.



Saturday, July 29 | 7:30 p.m.

BritBeat

Take a trip back in time with a fantastic voyage through the days of Beatlemania with **BritBeat's** multimedia concert journey through Beatles music history. See why this nationally acclaimed Beatles show is captivating audiences and generating rave reviews from critics.

Purchase tickets at musicbythelake.com or call 262-245-8501. | [f musicbythelake](https://www.facebook.com/musicbythelake)

Music by the Lake is presented by George Williams College of Aurora University on its Geneva Lake campus, just seven miles from downtown Lake Geneva in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.