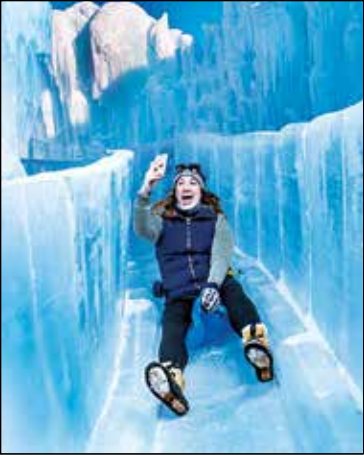
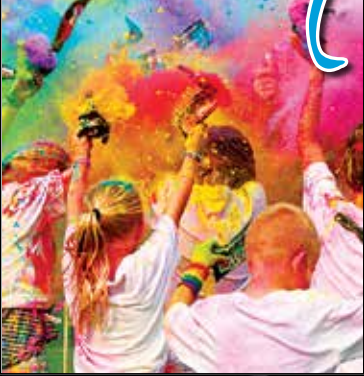


Winter
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Wonders

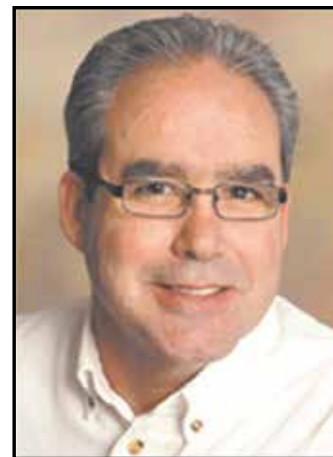
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Attention: Local Area Home Owners To Get Opportunity of the Year...

Frustrated Contractor is "Giving Away" \$3,151 Furnaces for \$1,275 with Off-Season Central Air...



Keith Nissen
King of Comfort

**(This is the "Hottest AND Coolest Deal of the Year"
... especially if your furnace is over 10 years old)**

Yes, it's absolutely true. You can actually replace your old (and probably very inefficient) furnace and air conditioner as a package for at least \$1,876 less than you would have to pay at any other time. Let me explain. Every year, the months of January, February, March and April can "Kill" my business. I end up losing a ton of money during these "Killer" months and it can take me the remaining eight months to make up for them. And I'm looking for the same thing to happen this year.

My Problem Is Your Opportunity

I've decided to give up trying to make a profit during the "killer" months. If I can only minimize my losses during January, February, March and April I will come out ahead in the other eight months. Here's how this (admittedly daring) offer came about. Every year, the big manufacturers of air conditioners have to guess how many to build to meet the demand. Of course, they're never exactly right. So, they always have some inventory they must hold over until the next summer season. I went to one of my distributors and they allocated 66 premier air conditioners and furnaces. And, because of the quantity and time of year, I was able to buy them at drastically reduced, dirt cheap, out-of-season prices. They are brand new 2022 models. And they are NOT the seconds or "blems" or standard "builder" models. They are factory-fresh, premier air conditioners and furnaces and have a full factory warranty.

Here's How You Can Get

A Furnace For Peanuts

By putting this furnace and air conditioner package together (then "Jaw-Boning" the distributor) and committing to a do-or-die purchase agreement of these systems, I was able to buy both the furnace and the air conditioner for less than anyone should have a right to pay! So, if you buy one of these normal new, premier air conditioners, I am "giving" you the furnace and all I ask for is the \$1,275 it costs to have your furnace installed.

Here's How

Just call me at 262-248-2103 anytime. We will come out and measure your home (and determine the availability of the proper size). Don't forget, I only have a limited amount of matched systems. When they are gone, this remarkable offer ends also. I will show you the real world price on the air conditioner that fits your home. Then, I will show you the substantial savings now. And it will include all labor and installation materials. Nothing is left out.

The Concept Is Simple Really

By letting you win big now, I will win at the end of the year. I'm betting that if I make you an offer that is "irresistible" (at least it should be if your furnace or air conditioner is over 10 years old) and I barely mark it up above the price I paid, I will accomplish two things:

1. I will cover my rent, utilities, insurance and taxes in the "killer" months.
2. I can pay my professional staff and technicians to work instead of paying them to sit at home.

If I can accomplish these two objectives, I will minimize my losses and the rest of the year, I can be a winner.

No Obligation

Even after I completely explain the installation, there is absolutely no obligation. If you decide you don't want to take advantage of the

spectacular savings... that's okay. I will give you a surprise gift worth \$60 because you are kind enough to read this ad and give me a chance to solve my problem. I want you to think well of Master Services Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, even if you don't buy.

You Can Buy With NO Cash

You don't even have to pay me right away. I have set up a bank rate financing plan. Consider this. If you decide to make monthly investments instead of paying cash the entire amount of your payments might be more than offset by the savings on your utility bills. It's like "having your cake and eating it too".

Ironclad Guarantee

I'm so confident that you will save at least 25% on your cooling and heating bills (I'm projecting more like 35% +), that I will pay you Double The Difference for two years if you don't! I'll show you exactly how this works. There is no way you can lose. Your lower utility bills will help you save big. And I will even double your savings if you save less than 25%. If these premier systems were not among the best on the market, I couldn't afford to make such a promise.

Why This Offer Can't Last

You must act before April 15th. Here are two reasons why.

1. I only have a limited amount of pieces of equipment. When all of the air conditioners are sold and all the furnaces are "given" away, that's it. There are no more at this price.

2. If I have any of these systems that are left on April 15th (although I doubt I will), this offer still ends. Here's why. The only reason I am making this virtually no-profit (for me) offer is because of the "killer months". My business always picks up about May first. Since these furnaces cost me so little, I can sell them at last years prices next November and December and still come out ahead. Give me a call now at 248-2103 and I will set an appointment for your no-obligation survey.



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"We Think You're Kind of a Big Deal"

Spelling bee leads to literacy support

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

It was inevitable that the sheriff would have to concentrate to avoid curiosity over odious words as apprentice spellers took on peculiar situations, causing a commotion during the second annual Walworth County Literacy Council Bee for Literacy was forced to adjourn in jubilation.

Well, OK, the Walworth County Sheriff wasn't at the bee, but the word sheriff – along with several other words above – were in the first round of the second annual bee, which was held in October.

In the end, the title from the event was shared by two teams the teams from the Williams Bay Lions and Holiday Home Camp – after the word denouement proved to be too much for both squads at Lake Lawn Resort.

“And with that, we have reached the ... denouement of this spelling bee,” said pronouncer Erin Creed, an English teacher in the Williams Bay School District and a former “Jeopardy!” contestant.

The adult spelling bee isn't exactly like the ones you've read about. Ten teams, all sponsored at various levels by a variety of area businesses and organizations, compete in teams of two, with each having to spell a word each round.

But there's more: teams can have a “stinger” bought for them – for \$100 – or can get a “buyback” (for \$200) back into the competition after a misspelled word.

Seven different teams got buybacks into this year's bee, and the stingers proved useful in the second round when no one felt confident enough to spell *dachshund*.

The team that finally tried it misspelled it, but promptly got bought back into the competition.

With fun names like “BarBee and Ken” (representing the Service Club of Delavan-Darien) and “Spells Like Team Spirit” (the Holiday Home Camp team), the event drew enthusiastic spellers, a large audience that got a full dinner and

dessert, plus plenty of laughter.

While the exact total wasn't known shortly after the event, the various incentives at the bee plus the mission appeal, silent auction (which raised \$3,000) and sponsorships likely pushed the it above \$30,000, the pre-event goal.

“I think we can say we most likely met our goal,” said Lily Barrett, executive director of WCLC.

WCLC also took time to honor those who use its services during the event. Among the attendees were two former students – Josefina Sanchez and Alla Tieriekhova.

Sanchez, a first-generation immigrant, is now a member of the board of directors and shared some of her writing in the event's program book.

“The first time I wrote something was because it was part of an assignment,” Sanchez's piece, entitled “Something Good,” stated. “I didn't know how to start. There was a turmoil in my mind over the many ideas that I had. I sat down, grabbed the pencil and started to scribble on a piece of paper.”

Tieriekhova, meanwhile, attended with her tutor, Mary Atkinson, and daughter Tatyana Miller. A former resident of the Ukraine, Tieriekhova just became a U.S. citizen in the last month.

Her son is still living in the Ukraine in the middle of a warzone, and both she and her daughter were exceptionally thankful for the opportunities WCLC offered Alla.

Those two plus Ryoko Ono – who came to the U.S. for a job with Kikkoman Foods – all were featured in a video shown during the event, talking about their experiences with the WCLC.

“The following day, I received many emails and texts from people, saying how much fun that they had,” said Barrett, adding that the students being present was another great moment in an evening full of moments.

“It was really heartwarming to see our students present,” she added.

The Walworth County Literacy Council held its second annual Bee for Literacy in October at Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan. The adult spelling bee offered plenty of difficult words, second chances and drama, as the competition ended in a tie when neither team could spell denouement. **top:** The Lake Lawn Resort spelling duo of Jessie Salee (left) and Mary Daly got into the theme of the event. **at right:** Literacy Council tutor Mary Atkinson (from left) joins her student, Alla Tieriekhova and Tieriekhova's daughter, Tatyana Miller, at the bee.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*



Wonders of Walworth County

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On the cover: Visitors flocked to Williams Bay Beach Jan. 1 for the annual Polar Plunge and as is customary, guests aboard the Grand Belle of Lake Geneva Cruise Lines were treated to an unobstructed view of the New Year's Day event.

DAVE DRESDOW *Wonders of Walworth County*




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'Something new in my shop every day'

Consignment shop in Walworth a longstanding success

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

For most people, the go-to place for a trip to Kohl's, Wal-Mart or Target. For someone like Sandy Lenz, though, who has operated Sandy's Upscale Consignment in Walworth for more than 25 years, some people want a wider world view of clothing.

"People shop all over the world to condense it to my consignment shop," said Lenz, who has owned and operated Sandy's now for 26 years. The store is currently located at 212 N. Main St., Walworth, on the edge of downtown Walworth. During her many years in business, according to Lenz, she has developed plenty of consigners, which she said is in the "hundreds."

"Possibly because I've been in business for 26 years," she said. "And I have consigners and customers both who've been coming here for 26 years." Lenz owns the building where the store is now located, a building that ties to the history of the Walworth community. The building is the site of the original blacksmith, and Lenz has been in the location since 2005.

As for why she chose to start a consignment shop, Lenz simply said, "I shop this way." "I just felt you could find something unique and different," she explained. She said she feels her store offers a personalized shopping experience with upscale clothing and accessories, and that she truly has everything.

"I have everything a woman would want to wear," Lenz said. The store deals exclusively in women's clothing and accessories, the latter of which can include shoes, purses, jewelry or other items. The store is arranged by sizes, and there is a counter for jewelry.

'More bang for your buck'

Lenz's store definitely offers a little bit of everything. For example, she recently had a cashmere cloak with real mink fur trimming. And she also had a small women's purses with what appears to be unusual carvings that indicate an ethnic trade.

Her store features mostly modern pieces, items that have been popular in the last few years. While she's not opposed to stocking a high-quality vintage item, Lenz admits those are rare. "I think you can get way more bang for your buck using consignment," she said. Lenz said even she herself is kind of fussy about brands.

"People travel. You just get something kind of unique," she said. As for the purse, Lenz said, "I don't think you'll ever see another one like it." She explained that she goes for quality because she knows it's what has built her reputation.

"They're coming from all over. Even my merchandise comes from all over, because I have people box up stuff and ship it to me," Lenz explained.



Sandy's Upscale Consignment, 212 N. Main St., Walworth, has a long reputation of providing quality women's apparel and accessories. Owner Sandy Lenz (shown here) shops consignment herself and finds the large variety a chance to offer something different.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*



above: Every accessory from hats to purses to shoes and jewelry is available at the consignment shop in Walworth. **at left:** This stylish dress, which was recently on display at Sandy's, is shown complemented by a cashmere cape with real mink.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Wonders of Walworth County*

"They typically know what I want," she added.

With that kind of range and versatility, one thing is very clear: Lenz has built her brand.

She also said the reason people continue to shop her store is simple and is how she's chosen to run the business for so many years.



A feast for the eyes

Williams Bay's Yerkes observatory offers views of the sky, opportunities

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

In the summer and fall, 373 W. Geneva St., Williams Bay, can play host to anything from tours to sky-gazing.

During the past two winters, the world's tallest glass Christmas tree was put together at the address.

The site, of course, is Yerkes Observatory, which started in 1892 and has undergone renovations and an opening to the public in the spring of 2022.

Yerkes bills itself as the birthplace of astrophysics, as several famous scientists – including George Ellery Hale and Albert Einstein – worked through the observatory.

Today, the observatory remains the owner of arguably the world's largest refracting telescope, as well as two other domes with sizable telescopes. Star-gazing programs are offered throughout the year, and the site can be booked for special events.

Yerkes has played host to weddings, and recently, the homecoming of Miss America 2023 – Wisconsin's Grace Stanke.

Viewing the skies

Hale – a professor of astrophysics at the University of Chicago – was the start of the observatory power of Yerkes in 1892. He learned of a pair of 40-inch telescope lens collecting dust in a warehouse and convinced university president William Rain Harper to purchase the lens.

Chicago tycoon Charles Tyson Yerkes provided the funding for the observatory, which also had laboratories, workshops and libraries on site. It opened its dome to sky in 1897, and the list of astronomers who came to the observatory is long and full of dignitaries.

Sherburne W. Burnham cataloged 13,665 star systems, while Edward Barnard discovered the large clouds of the Milky Way. Optician Frank Ross introduced the wide-angle lens to astronomy, while Edwin Hubble – from whom the Hubble Space Telescope is named – photographed the first evidence of the expansion of the universe on site.

Nancy Grace Roman – NASA's first chief of astronomy – and Carl Sagan both did their graduate work at Yerkes, as well.

Telescopes and more

The telescopes and sky-viewing at Yerkes remain a huge draw – the original telescope is called The Great Refractor. The barrel of the telescope is 64 feet long, weighs six tons, and was built of steel from Carnegie Steelworks in Homestead (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania.

It pivots on a German equatorial mount at the top of a pier that stands 65 feet tall from its base. The column, constructed of concrete, brick and steel, is secured 40 feet into the ground. The entire telescope is estimated to weigh 82 tons.

Surrounding it is a hardwood floor, 75 feet in diameter, that can be raised or lowered 23 feet by an electrically powered system of cables, pulleys, and weights so astronomers can see through



the telescope regardless of its angle.

The Great Refractor is not the only sight to behold at Yerkes. Two smaller domes house 40-inch and 24-inch reflecting telescopes, along with smaller instruments on display.

There are also 50 acres of grounds surrounding the observatory.

The observatory offers regular tours of the buildings, the grounds and the arboretum on site, which take visitors behind the scenes and up and down staircases, into small spaces where astronomers work and around the grounds to various buildings.

On Fridays throughout January and during the weekend of Winterfest (Feb. 2-4), Yerkes will offer its Spaces & Spaces tour.

That tour and others are offered at various times throughout the year. Tickets are required for tours and can be purchased through the website.

Special events

The observatory can also host special private events including weddings, cocktail parties, business meetings and more.

A variety of different settings and places on the grounds are available for private rental, which the observatory said can be used for a variety of events. Food and beverage service can be arranged with caterers and a bar service of the guest's choice.

For more information, including upcoming tours and events and to purchase tickets, visit yerkesobservatory.org, call 262-245-5555 or send an email to info@yerkesobservatory.org.

Editor's note: History of the observatory included in this story is from the website, yerkesobservatory.org.



above: The telescope that makes its home in the observatory was the largest operating telescope in the world from 1897 to 1908. The dome where it resides is 112 feet high and 90 feet in diameter. The telescope itself is 64 feet long. **top:** Yerkes Observatory has experienced a series of upgrades, including the installation of solar panels, at its Williams Bay complex, the expansive footprint of which can be seen via this photograph from above.

Putting it all down on paper

Renowned track and field coach passes on wisdom about team, family in book

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

For two days every year, Whitewater's Mark Maas gets a chance to shed one title that carries tremendous responsibility – that of “coach.”

During those two days of the WIAA Track and Field Championships, Maas gets to take on another role, that of “announcer.”

During the most recent stint however, those two ended up blurring a bit.

Shortly before rain moved in and caused chaos on the first day of the meet, the Division 2 girls 4x200 preliminaries were held. Maas, calling the race last June with Jay Wilson, held to a professional tone for most of the event, but just before the handoff to the anchor on the team, Maas said a quiet, “C’mon, Kindyl.”

Kindyl Kilar ran the anchoring, and even though Whitewater didn’t win the heat, it set the Whippets up for a mighty race that weekend – a race that saw Kilar, Madelynn Buehler, Emma Wiegel and Sydney Schilt win a state title with a time of 1:42.95, less than a tenth off the state record.

Maas was in the booth for the final, watching athletes he has worked with on and off for years. When Kilar powered across the finish line first, all Maas could say was, “Wow.”

Looking back now, he remembers apologizing.

“I remember distinctly, too, apologizing to the fans. Folks, I’m sorry, but I’ve had the opportunity to work with these girls,” Maas said recently. “I was standing up there in the booth. As it was getting closer and closer... I was leaning into Jay, saying, ‘C’mon, c’mon.’”

For those two days each year, Maas gets to live what he considers a dream.

“It’s a track junkies’ dream,” Maas explained. “You’re at the state meet for two days, you’re sitting in an air



Whitewater's Mark Maas has put in more than 40 years coaching track and field, much of it in charge of the Whippets but prior to that, Delavan-Darien. He recently published a book called “One Team/One Family” to share his knowledge and stories from his years spent coaching.

JENNIFER EISENBART Wonders of Walworth County

conditioned press box, you’re looking at Granddad’s Bluff (in La Crosse) ... I pinch myself sometimes. ‘How did I fall into this?’”

In the last year or so, Maas has tried to answer that question. After 40-plus years coaching – both in Delavan-Darien

and Whitewater Unified School districts, among other opportunities – he is more or less retired.

With the help of a journalist in south-central Wisconsin, Maas recently published a book: “One Team/One Family: Winning Is A Lifestyle.”

The book is available on Amazon.com as well as BarnesandNoble.com, with a paperback version costing \$16.95, and the eBook costing about half that at both outlets.

The book is Maas’ opportunity to share the stories he accumulated in a lifetime’s worth of coaching – a chance to share not just his successes, but also his mistakes.

“In teaching, academics is paramount, don’t get me wrong,” Maas said. “But it will always be relationship, relationship, relationship.”

“If you want to get the most and you want the team to be as great as they can be, it’ll be the relationships they build with each other and that the staff builds with them.”

Life as a coach

In Maas’ home in Whitewater, there isn’t much out in the open in terms of showing off his successes.

In fact, in order to see the pictures Maas is most proud of – those of his various state championship teams at Whitewater High School – you have to convince him to open the door to his basement.

When asked to take a picture with those photographs, Maas almost declined.

“Does it look OK?” he asked.

It’s what one might expect from Maas, who explains that not only is the story really not about him, it’s not about any one individual.

“What if I had a school where I had people who believed it was job number one to make each other better,” Maas explained. “Being kind, doing better for each other... it isn’t a weakness, it’s a strength.”

The idea of a team being a family is at the heart of Maas’ coaching philosophy – and at the heart of the hundreds of stories he has about track and field.

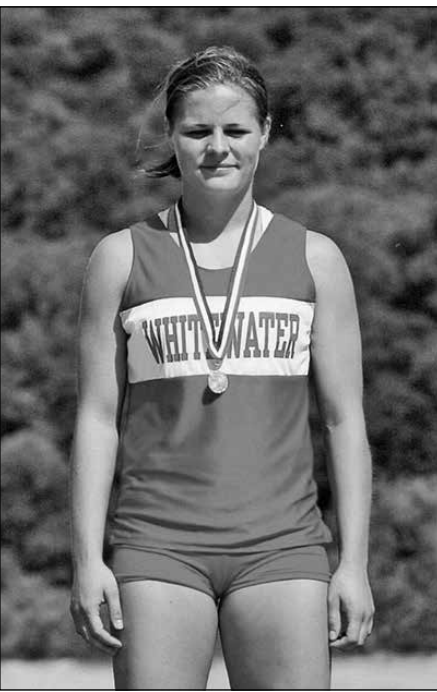
Those stories aren’t just confined to

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



LeAnne Ehlen was another athlete who recovered from injury to help the Whippets medal at state under the guidance of Maas.

BOB MISCHKA Wonders of Walworth County



Holly Matthews recovered from a torn ACL to win a state title in the pole vault under Maas’ guidance as her coach.

BOB MISCHKA Wonders of Walworth County



Jacob Dennis-Oehling was one of Whitewater High School’s true success stories under Maas, coming in as an awkward freshman who almost didn’t go out for track and then ended up winning state titles as a junior and senior.

BOB MISCHKA Wonders of Walworth County

Man honored for work with bluebirds

Ralph Konrath receives 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award

Ralph Konrath, of East Troy, recently received the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin.

Konrath, who is 90, was cited for tirelessly promoting bluebird awareness over the years.

This year he put up and monitored a pair of successful nest boxes in the Oak Grove Cemetery near the entrance to Old World Wisconsin in Eagle Township.

The retired Big Cat House and Bird Building employee of the Milwaukee County Zoo at one time monitored three dozen nest boxes at the Whitnall Park Golf Course, plus another 70 in Adams County.

Konrath's interest in birds started eight decades ago. "My grandmother taught me how to monitor bluebird houses," said Konrath. "She also showed me how to discourage invasive species like house sparrows and starlings."

Growing up on a farm eventually led Konrath to become involved with taking care of animals and birds as a profession. In retirement, he focused on pigeon racing.

His main concern now, he said, is "that people take care of the environment for all plants and wildlife."

About BRAW

Established in 1986, BRAW's 900 members manage and monitor nest boxes statewide which annually produce about 18,000 bluebird fledglings and a like number of other native cavity dwellers.

Organized in 1986, the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin's volunteer officers and members generously donate thousands of hours annually to ensure that bluebirds and other cavity nesters survive and thrive in Wisconsin.

Key things BRAW does include the following:

- Creates awareness of the challenges faced by cavity nesting birds. In 1964 there were only an estimated 600



Above: Ralph Konrath holds the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award he recently received from the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin. **Above, right:** A bluebird pair successfully nested in one of Konrath's nest boxes.

PHOTOS COURTESY MARY KIRSCHER Wonders of Walworth County

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Making **music** together

Orchestra brings harmony to stages, schools and greater community

By **Tom Ganser**
CORRESPONDENT

Many people in Walworth County and beyond know about the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra.

What may fly below the radar is the LGSO's partnering with many musical organizations – including colleges, universities and high schools, and its long-standing goal of promoting music appreciation and music education.

David Anderson is in his 14th season as the LGSO Music Director, following Andy Dogan who in 2001 guided its transformation from a handful of players into a full symphony orchestra.

LGSO bass player Louis Dolmon has worked with more than 20 orchestras and similar organizations over five decades.

"I have not encountered a conductor or music director as committed to musical education as Mr. David Anderson. He is a naturally gifted teacher and leads by example. He has conducted both youth orchestras and adult groups alike. He teaches by providing context to the pieces we play and knows the interpretation he wants to elicit. The orchestra improves every year and because of his efforts (backed by the fine music educators in the area) more secondary education students enroll in music classes," Dolmon said.

Anderson, named winner of the American Prize in Conducting in the community orchestra division in 2019, compares selecting the music for a concert to creating a diet.

"You have to have a nice diet throughout the concert and throughout the season," he said. "You need certain

kinds of music, but you can't do all of one kind: all desert or all main course or all appetizers."

For Anderson, a major symphony or concerto is often at the heart of a memorable concert, and why "players join the orchestra, to play the greatest musical works."

Unlike the need to take a trip to Paris to see the original Mona Lisa, Anderson said, "You can hear the huge monuments of orchestral music -- Brahms, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart – right here."

His recommended musical diet also calls for shorter and often well-known pieces like "Hoe Down" from Copland's "Rodeo" or "Finlandia" by Sibelius.

He said an important part of what all orchestras should do "is perform music that is being composed now, because all of the music we play now was at some point new music."

Anderson described Stravinsky's revolutionary "The Rite of Spring" – composed in 1919 – as having had a great impact on the history of music, especially in the area of rhythm, similar in prominence to Beethoven's influence on classical music more than a century earlier. Accordingly, he described "The Rite of Spring" as "the Beethoven 9th Symphony of the 20th Century."

Variety of venues

LGSO musicians showcase their skills in large churches, high schools and the Young Auditorium at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater for regular concerts; small churches for the chamber



above: The Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra presents a summer concert at the Phoenix Park Bandshell in Delavan. **below:** David Anderson is in his 14th year serving as director of the LGSO. They are shown in a Music by the Lake concert at George Williams College in Williams Bay.

TOM GANSER Wonders of Walworth County



The Lake Geneva Middle School Fiddle Club performs at a family concert that also featured the LGSO.

TOM GANSER Wonders of Walworth County

music series; elementary and middle schools for school day concerts; parks for summer concerts; and the Ferro Pavilion at the George Williams College of Aurora University for "Music by the Lake."

They offer three chamber music concerts each season on Sunday afternoons that feature small ensembles from trios to octets.

Laurie Cornue is a violinist who frequently performs in the chamber music concerts.

"The chamber music series is valuable to the community because the musicians bring their love of music-making on a smaller scale to a more intimate setting, usually in the acoustically rich sanctuaries of our local churches. In addition to nourishing our own souls, we are hopefully able to touch our audience members through incredible music. It is our desire that people can sense our love of making-music together and that we bring that joy to those listening," Cornue said.

Anne McCord, cello player, said it's like having a conversation with friends.

"Everyone has something to say and an important role to play. In small group playing, there is no conductor, so it is up to the members to decide on elements such as tempo and dynamics, and which part is the most important at any given moment. Playing with other musicians who 'feel' the music the same way is truly a joy," McCord said.

The annual LGSO Gala is the orchestra's major fundraiser for the year. It's scheduled near Valentine's Day and will be on Feb. 10 this year, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Abbey Resort.

"The wonderful thing about the Gala is it's the best way for the orchestra and audience to mingle and get to know each other. The orchestra isn't on a stage and that bridges the distance that is usually between us. Orchestra members and the audience are side by side as they

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Winter Realms



Walking through an illuminated tunnel is one of many features at Winter Realms, the re-branding of Ice Castles to remain open even in mild weather, which led to the attraction closing after just a few days last year. It will still be held at Geneva National and was expected to open in January. For more information and tickets, visit winterrealms.com.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WINTER REALMS *Wonders of Walworth County*

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Showing their heart

Local ambassadors give special meaning to Kids Heart Challenge

By Dan Truttschel

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

The 2023-24 American Heart Association Kids Heart Challenge is off and running at schools throughout the state.

Kids Heart Challenge is a school-based program designed to support long-term mental and physical health among students, while also raising funds to support the life-saving mission of the American Heart Association, a global force for healthier lives for all.

The program offers a variety of physical activities to get elementary students' hearts pumping such as dance, basketball or jumping rope, paired with Finn's Mission, an online component where students can earn digital badges for learning life-saving skills like Hands-Only CPR and how to spot a stroke, ways to combat stress and ideas for healthy eating.

Kids Heart Challenge has nearly 50 years of proven success rooted in scientific research that shows that kids who are regularly active feel better, have improved mental health, build self-esteem and decrease and prevent conditions such as anxiety and depression.

Direct connections

The program has been vital for two Elkhorn children, Braelyn Fletcher and Finley Moore, who both were selected as Youth Heart Ambassadors.

Fletcher, who was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome – in laymen's terms, with half a heart. She underwent three different open-heart surgeries before she was three years old.

She first became involved with the Kids Heart Challenge in kindergarten and continued in the program through fifth grade – she credited her gym teacher, Chris Behrens, with sparking her interest in helping others.

“(He) really took me under his wing my kindergarten year and wanted to show the rest of the school who we were raising money for,” Fletcher said. “It made me feel a little like a celebrity in the school, and I was happy that kids could see that I was just a normal kid, even though I had a special heart.”

Another Elkhorn youngster, Finley Moore, a first-grade student at Jackson Elementary School, has had her life positively affected by the program, her mother, Rita said.

“The American Heart Association has been so wonderful to our family and Finley,” Rita Moore said. “Just a few months after her surgery, her older brother, Renly, was able to participate in the ‘Kids Heart Challenge’ and feel excitement about heart health and ‘heart things’ weren’t all scary and terrible.”

Just three days into her young life, Finley was diagnosed with heterotaxy, which meant that most of her internal organs were located on the opposite side of her body. Two months later, she had a nine-hour open-heart surgery to repair those defects.

Association unveils ‘Heart Heroes’

Earlier in 2023, the American Heart Association unveiled its eight “Heart

Heroes,” fictional characters meant to encourage students to get active and learn more about how to impact their health, as well as that of their families and communities.

Each hero represents a positive trait that aligns with the school-based initiative aimed at improving students' health, while raising life-saving donations for the Association.

This year's “Heart Heroes” are:

- **Buster**, who loves to cheer on and celebrate others. Buster is the one throwing a party to celebrate all the kids and grown-ups who are pitching in to raise funds to help kids with special hearts as part of Kids Heart Challenge.
- **Skip**, who knows that, when it comes to vaping and tobacco, the best choice is just to “Skip” it.
- **Bolt**, who knows being active is a real boost to mood, muscle strength and brain power.
- **Beat**, who encourages everyone to learn Hands-Only CPR, because calling 911 and performing CPR could save a life.
- **Star**, who knows a good night's sleep not only helps you feel good, it also keeps your heart and brain healthy.
- **Splash**, who loves creating fun and healthy things to eat and drink to support a strong and healthy heart.
- **Tru**, who began a Kids Heart Challenge Kindness Club that looks for acts of service they can do to help others.
- **Spark**, who loves science, technology, engineering and math.

The educational curriculum and physical activities included in the Kids Heart Challenge program help meet the needs of today's youth and educators. The program, a successful part of thousands of schools from coast-to-coast, targets improving whole-body wellness, which is vital to drive immediate and long-term health in children.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



above: Braelyn Fletcher, an eighth grader at Elkhorn Area Middle School, is a new youth ambassador for the American Heart Association. Fletcher is shown with her mother. **top:** Elkhorn native Finley Moore, shown dancing and enjoying life, was diagnosed with heterotaxy at a very young age, meaning most internal organs are on the opposite side of the body. That led to open-heart surgery at 2 months old. Now, Moore, 6, is a Community Youth Heart Ambassador for the American Heart Association.



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his teams, either.

Ask Maas about almost any year at the WIAA State Track and Field Championships and he has a story worth sharing.

When the name of one of Wisconsin's top distance runners comes up, Maas has a story that didn't even take place at state. Chris Solinsky, a several-time WIAA state champion, 14-time All-American and now an assistant coach at the University of Oregon, was exactly the kind of team player Maas loved.

Maas shares a story of Solinsky racing in high school, where he told another runner he would pace him to the school record in an event.

Kenny Bednarek, now an Olympic medalist, originated in Rice Lake. Maas remembers talking to his coach.

"To hear his coach talk about what an amazing teammate he was to the rest of his team, that means as much or more," Maas said.

It's the entire point of his book. After 40 years of coaching, he knew he had a chance to share both the good and not-so-good from over the years.

"Getting to know the backstories of some of these kids ... those stories mean as much as the greatness of the performance. I enjoy the backstory as much as I do the performances," Maas said.

"That's the message of the book: team and family. The principles apply across the board," he added.

Writing the book

After his first attempt at retirement five years ago (unsurprisingly, it didn't take at the time), Maas knew he wanted to take a shot at sharing some of his stories.

"I wanted there to be lessons within it. I wanted it to be lessons that go across the board," he explained.

"My wife, Lexi, she came to me one day and said, 'You have a good book inside of you. Now write it,'" Maas added.

It took five years for the book to come together. He credits journalist Josh Smith – a former distance runner from Elkhorn – with helping Maas pull the book together.

Smith did an article on Maas when he was inducted into the Wisconsin Track and Field Hall of Fame, and the two remained in touch.

"I would take him out for lunch periodically. He gently prodded me and kept me going. When I needed a little push, he gave me a push. When I needed different thoughts, he gave me different thoughts," Maas said.

"I am so indebted to him. There was never a time where he wasn't encouraging to me," he added.

Smith said that Maas simply needed the outlet.

"He's a great person with a lot of wisdom for the next generation of coaches and teachers," Smith said. "The philosophies that Mark shares in his book are genuine. He doesn't have a coaching persona. He is that generous, he is that kind. He lives these principles on a daily basis."

The book officially hit the shelves early last year. In it, Maas got a chance to talk about everyone from his own son to an unnamed youngster at Delavan-Darien High School. He talked about his fellow coaches, and he talked about his wife, Lexi – and her battle with cancer.

Throughout the entire book, family is at the heart of the message, whether it be

blood relatives or family by choice.

"We've gotta all be on the same page," Maas said. "You have to foster a 'team first, family first' mentality, where everyone wants the best for one another. That's when the magic happens."

A few of the stories

In the book, Maas talks about several highs and lows.

For example, he speaks of Jacob Dennis-Oehling, a young man who almost didn't come out for high school track and field.

"He was humiliated as a seventh grader," Maas said, explaining in the book that a coach and other students laughed at his running form.

But Dennis-Oehling did do out for the team and turned into one of the talented state champions Maas said he had the privilege of coaching. As a junior, he won the 200-meter dash at state.

"I can still see him, it's just so clear," Maas said, adding that he said to Dennis-Oehling, "You're going to have to change your blocks a little bit and run the curve."

"He wins the 200, and he almost never came out," Maas said.

As a senior, Dennis-Oehling did something that almost every track and field athlete has nightmares about – a false start at a major meet. For the senior, it happened at state in the 100-meter dash final.

"(He) was just devastated for his team," Maas recalled. In the book, the coach recalled how upset the athlete was, thinking he may have cost the team a state title.

But the teammates rallied around Dennis-Oehling, Maas recalled, and the team went on to secure the state title behind another win for the senior in the 200-meter.

As important as the win was, teammate Louissant Minnett was waiting for Dennis-Oehling at the finish line, as promised.

Not all the stories are positive, though, and Maas is the first to point out he's made mistakes as coach. In one chapter, Maas shares a raw story of using sarcasm with an athlete during a pool workout.

"It haunts me to this day," Maas explained. The athlete walked out of practice and never returned.

"She may have been looking for an excuse," Maas said. "I offered it up to her on a silver platter. I said, 'Here you go.'"

Maas doesn't remember what he said to the athlete, but he knows it hurt her, enough so that he relates the story along with the meaning of the sarcasm – the base of the word sarcasm – "to literally tear flesh."

"That's a lesson I learned in a heartbeat," he said, adding that he would reach out to that athlete in a heartbeat if he could.

He learned his lesson and hopes that others can as well.

At the end of each chapter of storytelling, Maas poses questions, similar to many textbooks.

"Coaching is teaching. You're a teacher. I never understood why coaches feel it's OK to curse kids on the field. You certainly wouldn't do it in a classroom," he explained.

Back to the present

It's ironic that Maas wrote a book about coaching, in the sense that he is so quick to credit others.

In talking through some of his stories,

he was quick to say that Ed Lauzon of Delavan-Darien High School was a great role model for him as a young coach.

In high school, he said learned two teammates who took the time to embrace his passion for track take him out running with them.

Also on his mind were his throws coaches at Whitewater, Susan Reinholz and Mark Mattison – coaches who shared a position because he couldn't pay a third coach – and Kaptan Wilson, the longest tenured track and field coach at Whitewater. All of these coaches contributed and helped make him successful.

But, beyond his assistants, Maas credited the athletes – the athletes whose stories he has been honored to share.

"It's not about the coach. It was about the student athletes," Maas said. "Those kids accomplished their goals. What mattered was they got there."

To that point, Kilar – the senior that anchored the Whitewater 4x200 relay team to victory this past spring – speaks of the passion Maas has shared with her and her teammates.

"You can just tell, in his heart, he believes the best in his athletes. He sees the potential in every single one of his athletes," Kilar, who is now a freshman at Florida International University, said recently.

Kilar explained that when the Whippets won their state title, they didn't

CONSIGNMENT SHOP

 • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

"For the personalized shopping experience, that's why people keep coming back," Lenz said.

"And there's something new in my shop every day. Every day, we put something new out on the floor," Lenz added.

HONORED

 • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

nesting bluebird pairs left in the state due to habitat loss. Each year BRAW members' nest boxes alone fledge over 20,000 bluebirds, plus numerous tree swallows, chickadees and other birds.

- Educates state residents about building, locating, maintaining and monitoring nest boxes. BRAW's 900 members who maintain and monitor over 7,000 nest boxes throughout the state bring a wealth of experience to those wanting to learn how to do it.

- Coordinates statewide conservation efforts geared to sustaining bluebird populations and creating habitat for all cavity nesters. BRAW's county coordinators facilitate these efforts, plus serve as "go to" help sources.

- Serves as an online resource for

HEART

 • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

With deep roots in physical activity, the program has expanded through the years to additionally support student mental health through social emotional learning.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, only 20% of kids get enough activity to meet physical activity recommendations. In addition to improved physical health, the benefits of physical activity for children include better grades, school attendance and classroom behavior.

"Our Youth Market staff is so excited to get this year's Kids Heart Challenge off and running," American Heart Association Senior Development Director Lisa

know how emotionally involved Maas was up in the booth. The team got to watch the relay, though, on the bus trip home.

"To have him announce all of our names, when we were presented on that podium ... it's kind of indescribable," Kilar said. "It's just amazing, hearing his voice, hearing him so excited for us."

"What an amazing person he is. He just loves from the bottom of his heart," she added.

Dennis-Oehling, meanwhile, said while he was humbled Maas shared his story, the credit really needed to go to the coach.

"There are a thousand unwritten records of him empowering students with the same mentality and lessons that he writes about," Dennis-Oehling said. "For me specifically, he helped guide me on a path to success, not just because he wanted to 'win,' but because he saw more than just an awkward teenager. He saw someone wanting to do better and be a part of something greater.

"I wasn't skilled or confident when I started, but he had patience. Mark treated me equally to my peers and respected everyone. I wanted to model that patience and respect, because I knew how much better it made me feel," he added.

"While I did end up finding success, winning was a byproduct of the attitude put forth by his mentality and coaching," Dennis-Oehling said of Maas.

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organizations and individuals to obtain information about bluebirds.

- Conducts seminars and workshops to promote building, monitoring and maintaining nest box trails. From garden expos to seed store seminars to school workshops, BRAW members spend hours in face-to-face contact with the public.

- Keeps members informed via a quarterly newsletter Wisconsin Bluebird, social media, emails, and an Annual Meeting that features informative speakers. Networking focuses on sharing best practices for nesting success and practical experience.

To help Eastern Bluebirds and other cavity nesters, consider becoming a member of BRAW.

For more information, visit www.braw.org.

Schweitzer said in November. "We're pleased to have so many schools already onboard, but we always have room for more to join the fun!

"It takes all of us to create a healthy community where everyone has a chance to live a long and healthy life. We are so proud that so many schools have already stepped up to not only find new ways to keep their own hearts as healthy as possible, but for helping others to do the same."

To learn more about the Kids Heart Challenge, visit www.heart.org/ getstarted or contact Schweitzer at Lisa.M.Schweitzer@heart.org or 1-414-731-8686.

enjoy an elegant dinner and cocktails, a silent and a live auction, a paddle raise for donations, and dancing to the LGSO Swing Band,” said piccolo player and Gala Chair Sue Childress.

The Swing Band spotlights musicians in a fun way.

Percussionist Brad Boyle said it’s different than playing in the orchestra. “Orchestra music is very strict. Every note is written out not only when to play but how to be played. Swing music has a completely different feel. Not all the parts are written out, which leaves opportunity for interpretation. That said, it’s just as important for the players to be listening to each other to keep the music tight. The biggest difference is probably the dancing. People dance to swing music, so maybe our greatest responsibility is to keep them on the dance floor,” Boyle said.

The summer concerts in the parks and the Music by the Lake often include music from popular movies and television series, as well as classical selections the audience may recognize from commercials or cartoons.

LGSO musicians are all volunteers. For Anderson, providing them with a variety offers them the opportunity to develop their musicianship.

There are two ways for an orchestra to get better, he said. One way is by new players coming into the orchestra, the second is for the current musicians to improve over time – both of which are happening in the LGSO.

“If you’re playing with people who are experienced, it’s going to raise your level of playing,” Anderson said.

Partners in harmony

As a community-based group, the orchestra continues to grow its solid history of partnerships.

Christopher Martin, former principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, joined the LGSO in a performance of the Trumpet Concerto by Arutunian. Frank Almond, former concert master for the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, performed the Violin Concerto by Bruch.

In 2019, the LGSO performed Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 at Young Auditorium on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater for the first time.

The all-volunteer LGSO orchestra of 75 musicians from southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois teamed up with a chorus of 150 students from the UW-Whitewater, the University of Northern Illinois, and the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

In 2022, the LGSO teamed up with the Dance Factory of Delavan and Whitewater Lincoln Elementary School’s 5th grade chorus to perform “The Nutcracker” by Tchaikovsky.

Tina Hansen, Director of the Dance Factory, said it showcased the youngest cast ever.

Christine Hayes, Lincoln Choir Director, said any time you can connect music with another art form, there’s a new level of artistic experience.

“The Nutcracker” is an eternal classic, studied yearly by elementary children, focusing on the instruments and music used to portray various cultural dances and the endearing tale of Clara’s beautiful dream about her Nutcracker Soldier coming to life and traveling to the land of sweets. This production was the opportunity for our singers is a once in a



Members of the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra take part in a rehearsal for The Nutcracker in December 2022. The group partnered with the Dance Factory of Delavan and the 5th grade choir from Lincoln Elementary School in Whitewater for the performance.

TOM GANSER Wonders of Walworth County

lifetime behind the scenes event,” Hayes said.

On March 16, the LGSO will join musical forces for a first time with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Holst’s most famous masterpiece, “The Planets,” and “Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis” by Vaughan Williams.

More to the music

Supporting the musical education of audiences and musicians has always been a lasting trademark of the LGSO. To begin with, students through college receive free tickets to all regular LGSO performances.

During nearly every concert, Anderson and the orchestra spend a few minutes introducing the audience to a larger work.

For Saint-Saëns’s Symphony No. 3 – the “Organ Symphony,” Anderson helped his audience to understand Saint-Saëns’s use of “thematic transformation,” a compositional technique the composer learned from his teacher, Franz Liszt.

Anderson explained that “the original theme comes back but in a totally different mood.” To show this, the orchestra played the first version, which Anderson described as “restless, uneasy, constant churn, perpetual motion” followed by a second version “in totally different guise, like the sunshine is coming out.”

The annual school day tours are funded in part by the Walworth County Arts Council and are often the first time many students hear a live symphony orchestra. They also learn how its constructed of sections (strings, winds, percussion) and how they all work together. Students are even able to walk through the orchestra while a selection is being played.

LGSO percussionist Stacey Zwirlein arranged a school day tour at Walworth Middle School. She said it’s an opportunity for students to get an up-close experience with the musicians.

“The students get to be curious, imaginative, and ask questions to learn more about the ensemble. Seeing the musicians in this way shows the students that they, too, can achieve music performance at a high level. This type of inspiration is priceless for young musicians and school music programs,” Zwirlein said.

Following a concert at Lake Geneva

Middle School, members of the LGSO showed children how the instruments are played, and in some cases, the students were able to try them out.

Supporting students

The LGSO Private Lesson Scholarship Program provides financial support for instrumental music students in public schools to take private lessons.

While more and better music is a great end itself, that’s just the beginning. Members of the LGSO encourage them to be involved in music and be musicians, but also to have all the advantages music study provides.

The program is not based on financial need and is presently open to string students in Lake Geneva public schools though the LGSO hopes to expand the program.

Through a partnership with the Rotary Club of Lake Geneva, the orchestra hosts an annual competition for outstanding vocalists and instrumentalists in high schools located within 35 miles of Lake Geneva. The winner is invited to perform with the LGSO the following season and receives a \$750 prize supported by the Rotary Club of Lake Geneva’s Neal & Dotsy Heffernan Art Scholarship Fund.

That’s not all the LGSO does to support students.

For example, before the LGSO’s regular and summer concerts, members of the Delavan-Darien High School String Choir perform under the direction of Jennifer Bayerl. This is a select group from the 70-plus member DDHS Orchestra that performs for community events and studies advanced level music.

Recently, high school string students – sharing music stands with LGSO string players – were offered the opportunity to join in a performance of the “Egmont” overture by Beethoven.

“I think this was an extremely valuable experience for a few reasons. First, one of the most important things that we as music educators don’t do a great job of teaching our students is how to continue playing music after they leave our program. I think it’s very important for students to see that community orchestras exist and are thriving, so they know they have a future in music if they want it. Second, I really wanted as many of my students to participate in this event because one of the best ways to improve

as a player is to play with better players,” Michael Riggs, Director of Orchestras at Antioch Community High School and an LGSO bass player, said.

“It was a nice experience. I got to see what it would be like if I joined an orchestra in the future. It gave me a feeling of how it would be,” Debora Hernandez, a violinist who participated, said.

Bassist Hudson Swan said it was nice to be in an orchestra with people who really knew what they were doing.

“Because if you had any questions, you had 20 people right next to you who could give you answers. I’m in the bass section, and it was pretty cool to be able to play with your director,” Swan said.

Fellows program

The LGSO Fellows Program is a partnership with the UW-Whitewater Music Department in which undergrad and graduate string students can receive a scholarship provided from the LGSO to play with them for the season.

“I think the LGSO Fellows program is a great opportunity for college students to participate in a ‘professional’ orchestra outside of school, while also still being in a supportive learning environment, as well as making connections with other musicians in the area,” violinist Keri Kelly, a music performance major, said.

“Being able to work with so many different musicians and play a vast repertoire can really help students broaden their musical horizons and gain valuable experience for their future careers. My favorite LGSO experience has been playing the Beethoven triple concerto with my teachers from UWW, including my violin teacher Leanne Kelso, who is an amazing role model and musician,” she added.

Emma Dutcher, a music education major/theatre minor said her takeaways included “learning to be a good ensemble member, to play higher level music, making connections with peers outside of an educational setting, practicing music outside of rehearsals as efficiently as possible under a short time restraint, checking many iconic pieces of symphonic music off my bucket list, and bonding and becoming even closer” with other Fellows.

“It has been a priceless and valuable experience,” Dutcher added.

Fellow violinist Eric Funk – now serving as interim concert master for LGSO – said it’s an amazing opportunity.

“It has just been an absolute pleasure to work with these amazing musicians and people. The atmosphere of this group is so inspiring and warm. It’s truly a privilege to be a part of such a phenomenal group. I have learned so much both musically and just in life. It’s really nice to have a local orchestra of this caliber willing to take on big pieces,” Funk said.

The prominence and growth of the orchestra not only depends on musical talent but also on the work of dedicated non-musician volunteers who make up the Friends of the LGSO. The support provided by this group includes ushering at concerts, sorting music, planning and hosting events, financial development, mailings, approaching sponsors, community outreach and integration and publicity.

For more information about the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra, visit lakegenevaorchestra.com.

Beekeeper wins 'best of show'



Carl Christensen honored for his Black Locust honey

By **Karen Nielsen Lorence**

CONTRIBUTOR

The Wisconsin Honey Producers Association had their annual meeting at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells in November and Carl Christensen from Genoa City took home the high honors of the weekend.

Christensen placed first in the Best of Show category for honey produced in his eight hives of bees at his home in Genoa City.

When asked if he had a lot of experience competing, Christensen said it didn't go as planned. "I entered once before but was disqualified because I had only three jars rather than the required four jars," he said.

He immigrated from Denmark in 1968 and became interested in beekeeping because of some neighbor's hives. He inherited those two hives in the '70s and went on to expand to his present eight hives which produce 400 - 600 pounds of honey a year.

Christensen is a member of the Walworth County Beekeepers Association, the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association, the Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association and is a past member of the Racine-Kenosha Beekeepers Association.

Asked why he got into beekeeping, Christensen explained that he worked in industry and beekeeping was a relaxing thing to do when he got home in his spare time.

He said beekeeping has changed a great deal since he became involved.

"It was a lot easier when I started out," he said. "The crops in the county were more dairy industry related. Today they are more 'cash crops' like corn.

This means that most of my honey comes from early spring trees like basswood and black locust. The old yellow and white sweet clover used for nitrogen fixation are almost non-existent."

Christensen markets his honey mainly in buckets because selling by the jar - as he used to on the highway - was deemed unsafe.

Asked if he were worried about the future of keeping bees and honey production, Carl said he is somewhat worried.

"If I were a new beekeeper, I would join a local club and get as involved as I possibly could. It is from the 'old timers' that you pick up the most information. One of my best sources of being a good competitor was to prepare myself over the years by reading what and how to show honey," Christensen said.

"I have reached the point where I have memorized what to do and finally had the feeling of knowing what I should be doing. One of the better judges in the State of Wisconsin - Mary Kettlewell - came to Elkhorn once to judge honey at a show and she showed me what was good, how I could improve, what I should watch for," he added.

The Wisconsin Honey Producers Association recognized Christensen and his Black Locust honey as their 'Best in Show' at the 2023 Wisconsin State Fair Honey competition held during the convention in November.

This prize-winning honey was auctioned off for \$165 per pound for a total of \$660 which will go to help fund the Wisconsin Honey Queen fund.

Those interested in having the Wisconsin Honey Queen speak at an event are asked to contact Mary Kettlewell at wihoneyqueenprogram@gmail.com.

Carl Christensen, of Genoa City, holds the award he was presented by The Wisconsin Honey Producers Association - "Best in Show" for his Black Locust honey at the 2023 Wisconsin State Fair Honey competition.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Wonders of Walworth County



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