



THE SPIRIT of Geneva Lakes



Vol. 36 No. 9 • COMPLIMENTARY COPY

SEPTEMBER 2024

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ON THE COVER

READY TO WELCOME FALL

Fall will be here before we know it and that means it's time to visit a local orchard. Whether stopping to grab a bag of the fruit – or picking your own where allowed, don't forget fresh cider, apple pie and other goodies.

FILE PHOTO
Spirit of Geneva Lakes

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IT'S COMIN' UP

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

15th Walworth County Fair the state's largest county fair runs through Labor Day, Sept. 2 at the Walworth County Fairgrounds, 411 E. Court St., Elkhorn.

Sept. 4 Blood drive the Geneva Lakes YMCA, 203 S. Wells St., Lake Geneva, will host a blood drive from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 4. All donors will receive a pint of custard from Culver's, a complimentary coffee mug and a chance to win a \$500 gift card.

To make an appointment, visit rvbc.org, choose "Find a Blood Drive," enter 53147 in the zip code and Sept. 4 as the event date.

Sept. 5 Swift Night Out the City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee and the Geneva Lake Museum will host the Annual Swift Night Out on Thursday, Sept. 5 at the museum, 255 Mill St., Lake Geneva.

Witness an amazing show of nature as thousands of acrobatic Chimney Swifts circle and swoop into Geneva Lake Museum's tall chimney. This awesome spectacle happens every year in early September as the small birds gather in large groups to begin their fall migration to South America.

Admission to the museum for the event is free. Food trucks open at 5 p.m., Schiltz Audubon Nature Center will present a "Raptor and Friends" program at 6 p.m., the birds will begin their aerial displays at 7:15 p.m.

Sept. 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 28

Exploring the Night Sky from 8 to 10 p.m., as well as several dates in October, Yerkes Observatory will host Exploring the Night Sky with the Great Refractor.

With only 12 tickets are available for each tour, the evening illuminates the inner workings of the observatory after dark. Curated by the Astronomy Team, each two-hour tour features a viewing of the cosmos if the skies are clear. If not clear, they'll delve into their vaults with 180,000 glass astronomical images, explore the evolution of astrophotography and visit darkrooms in subterranean chambers.

This experience is best enjoyed by those 13 and older. Because of the historic construction of the building and domes, there are several flights of stairs – standard, steep and tight spirals – that will be climbed and descended.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit yerkesobservatory.org. Adults are \$140, youth are \$85. Yerkes is at 373 W. Geneva St., Williams Bay.

Sept. 10 Kareers4Kids Golf Outing

Fundraiser – on Tuesday, Sept. 10, the Walworth County Economic Development Alliance will host its Kareer4Kids golf fundraiser at Majestic Oaks & Lake Lawn Queen at Lake Lawn Resort, 2400 E. Geneva St., Delavan.

Single golfers are \$125; a foursome is \$450. The shotgun start will be at 8:30 a.m. and a lunch buffet and networking will take place in the clubhouse afterwards.

To register, visit walworthbusiness.com. If interested in sponsorship availability, email WCEDA's executive director Derek D'Auria at derek@walworthbusiness.com.

Local Farmers Markets

Lake Geneva Farmer's Market Held 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays in downtown Lake Geneva, rain or shine. Farmers, artisans, craftsmen and vendors offer up some of the area's very best.

Horticultural Hall is at 330 Broad St., Lake Geneva. For more information, visit horticulturalhall.com.

Geneva Outdoor Market Lake Geneva House of Music presents the Geneva Outdoor Market, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sundays. Celebrating local farmers, producers, food and beverages and artisans.

Held on the Lake Geneva House of Music festival grounds, N3241 County Trunk H, Lake Geneva. For more information, email chris@LGHOM.com.

Williams Bay Farmers Market Williams Bay Farmers Market is a boutique Friday market, held 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a variety of farmers, makers and bakers with home-grown, hand-made, and home-made foods and goods.

Featuring all local produce, fresh cooked dishes, baked goods, sweet treats, fresh flowers, hand-made jewelry, hand-designed art and décor, soaps, and gifts.

Edgewater Park is on Geneva Street, Williams Bay. For more information, email williamsbayfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

Saturdays on the Square, Elkhorn This farmers market is on Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. It features a variety of fresh produce, crafts, commercial products and more.

Vendors set-up on a first come first serve basis with plenty of room for all who attend. Find food trucks and a morning workout on the square to get your weekends started off right!

Held at Veterans Park, 100 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn. For more information, email info@elkhornchamber.com.

Market at Tower Park, Delavan Home-grown & hand-crafted items, fresh produce, eggs, baked goods, plants, and more on Thursdays, June 6 through Sept. 19, from 3 to 7 p.m.

The market is at Tower Park, between Walworth Avenue and Park Place in downtown Delavan. For more information, email info@delavanwi.org.

The calendar of events is compiled from a variety of sources. Please verify details and locations prior to making plans.

THE SPIRIT

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Overflowing with fall family fun

by Sandra Landen Machaj
CORRESPONDENT

From baked goods and an orchard to a wine shop and a festival... the Elegant Farmer has it all

Located in Mukwonago, The Elegant Farmer has been a favorite of local residents and visitors for more than 75 years.

While it began as a family dairy farm owned by brothers Dave and Elmer Scheel, they soon started selling their surplus fruits and vegetables to locals. The produce was grown while also caring for a herd of 50 Guernsey cattle.

As the vegetable business continued to grow, the family built a permanent roadside market in the 1950s. By 1958, the produce side of the business had grown so much that the brothers decided to sell the dairy herd and concentrate solely on fresh fruit and vegetables, at what they named Davelmer Market.

They did not want to just sell products but make it a family



above: The Elegant Farmer is at 1545 Main St., Mukwonago, on the corner of Highways ES and J. **below:** Elegant Farmer owners, Keith and Tina Schmidt, and daughter, Katie, stand near the pie counter in the store. Apple pie, and other flavors, baked in a paper bag are among the favorite items for many customers.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



PHOTO COURTESY ELEGANT FARMER Spirit of Geneva Lakes

destination. They were among the first to add the concept of families coming to the apple orchards and fields to pick their own fresh fruits and vegetables. The concept was embraced by local families and especially by children who enjoyed time out in the fields, gathering the crops.

In 1970, Dave and Elmer were ready to retire so turned the business to Elmer's son, Dan Scheel and his wife Karen. They changed the name of the business to what it remains today, The Elegant Farmer. The business continued to expand, adding a variety of specialty items baked on site.

"In January of 2023, my parents, Keith and Tina Schmidt and I took over ownership of the Elegant Farmer," said Katie Schmidt. "My dad had been partners with brothers Mike and John Bauer for 25 years so when Mike and John were ready to retire, it was only natural that my dad – with the help of family – would take over managing the Elegant Farmer."

The Schmidt family has continued the many traditions that have made The Elegant Farmer so popular while also working to add new products and traditions.

"Among our most popular items are our bakery goods," Katie explained. "Especially our pies baked in a paper bag. This goes back to the original owners Dan and Karen Sheel."

Pie in a paper bag

According to Katie, the Sheel family was testing pie recipes when they came across one that suggested baking the pie in a paper bag to make the crust crunchier. They tried it with their best pie recipe at the time and realized it was special indeed. So, the pie cooked in the paper bag was born, quickly became a best seller for the business and continues to be so today.

Initially it was the apple pie in the bag which is still a favorite and is available year-round but that's not the only pie baked that way. The Elegant Farmer also carries caramel apple, blueberry apple, peachy apple and rhubarb apple. In addition, the business' apple and cherry crisps are also baked in a paper bag for especially good flavor and crispy crusts.

"The pies are made with Ida Red apples. They are just one of 12 varieties of apples grown in the orchards on the farm but are the favorite for pies. The pies are available year-round," Katie said.

Over the years the bakery has continued to grow and add more products including a variety of breads and cookies. Families from the area and far away can regularly be spotted in the store, choosing items throughout the bakery section. On a recent day, John Russell and his children, August and Cassidy, from Colorado, were shopping at The Elegant Farmer.

"I grew up in this area and every time we come to visit, we make a trip to the Elegant Farmer for some of our favorite treats,"



above: The Russell family of Colorado gives their approval to the many choices available. John Russell is from this area and said each time they visit, it's a must to stop by and pick up some goodies. **top:** Many products especially made for the Elegant Farmer are found displayed throughout the store, including salad dressings, sauces, salsas and more.

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John explained while his children were busy selecting their favorite cookies.

The deli counter is another popular area where customers can purchase house made salads, chicken or turkey pot pies to take home or eat on site, as well as freshly made soups – ready to be enjoyed at the barn or frozen option to take home and enjoy later, among other offerings.

“We cook a delicious cider baked ham that we use in our ham salad. The specialty baked ham gives it a delicious flavor, making our ham salad really special,” Katie explained. “The ham itself – which is also sold to be taken home is unique and very flavorful. Almost everything in our deli and in the bakery, from breads to pies, are made in house.”

Fun fall festival

Fall is a special time at The Elegant Farmer for it's when they host Autumn Harvest Festival. There are few things more enjoyable for many people than heading out to the country in the brisk fall weather while enjoying the change of colors in the trees.

The Autumn Harvest Festival at The Elegant Farmer is a fun time for families. Held on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., from Sept. 7 to Oct. 27, it features a variety of farm activities to be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Hay wagons pulled by tractors through the fields while taking in the beauty of Wisconsin farmlands are a favorite pastime. Those looking for even more excitement can take a pony ride.

Another popular activity during the Autumn Harvest Festival is guests being able to choose their own apples and pumpkins. While all 12 varieties of apples do not ripen at the same time, there are always several options ready for picking in the orchards on site. A bonus of taking part in

such an activity with children is the fun of spending time outdoors together while the weather is still enjoyable, but that's not all. Kids picking fresh apples they'll eat from a tree can be a special experience, one that they'll likely remember and may even become a tradition they'll pass along to their own children someday.

Each Wednesday during the festival, The Elegant Farmer website will include a list of the apple varieties that will be ready for picking that coming weekend, which can help families plan their visit around the availability of their favorite apples.

While there for the festival, make a day of it by enjoying lunch in the greenhouse attached to building at the Smiling Barn Café. Then stop be sure to pick up some apple cider donuts to take home and – if still hungry after lunch, indulge in one a ready-to-eat caramel apple or make your own for a personalized treat.

More to see and do

With October not too far off, the pumpkins in the field will be ready and waiting for someone to pick them to take home and carve a Jack-O-Lantern in celebration of fall and Halloween. Children will delight in choosing a pumpkin that's growing on the vines, especially with so many in a wide variety of sizes available while offering yet another memorable experience.

Don't forget to get lost – temporarily, go on a special train ride, and for the adults – stop by the wine shop.

“A highlight of the Autumn Harvest Festival is the corn maze. The maze is professionally designed and cut, making sure it will be a fun experience for all to meander through and find their way to the end of the maze,” Katie explained.

During the festival season, the East Troy Electric Railroad



top: Large muffins, available in several flavors, are the perfect accompaniment to a cup of coffee or tea. **middle:** Homemade chicken and turkey pot pies can be purchased to take home and be enjoyed on site. **at right:** A variety of homemade cookies are displayed on an antique sideboard.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

makes runs to The Elegant Farmer. Families can combine a visit to the Autumn Harvest Festival with time at the railroad museum and a trip to The Elegant Farmer on a historical train. For more information about the train rides, including schedules and ticket prices, visit easttroyrr.org or call 262-642-2263. The railroad museum is at 2002 Church St. in East Troy.

A fairly new space at The Elegant Farmer is a wine shop, The Elegant Cork.

"We just celebrated its 1-year anniversary," Katie said. "My parents opened it when they took over The Elegant Farmer. It is known for Wisconsin wines from different areas of the state. The brands carried include but are not limited to, Wollershein, Von Stiehl, Cedar Creek and Stones Throw."

The wine shop is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday to Sunday with a variety of wine tastings offered. The Elegant Cork is at 1541 Main St., adjacent to The Elegant Farmer. Stop in or visit the website at theelegantcork.com.

On The Elegant Farmer website, Katie's dad, Keith, is quoted sharing what it means to be in a local, family owned business that is treasured by many.

"It is a pleasure to bring in my family to help me continue The Elegant Farmer's long-standing traditions, family- friendly events and production of our simply the best specialty foods," Keith said.

"Staying as a local, family owned and operated business for four generations is one of the reasons The Elegant Farmer is so beloved. Tina and I are especially delighted



above: The friendly smiling face on The Elegant Farmer barn building welcomes visitors. **below left:** Cheese is a staple in Wisconsin and The Elegant Farmer offers a large selection to choose from. **below right:** The Elegant Farmer, which got its start selling produce to locals, continues to offer fresh vegetables.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

to have our talented daughter bring the next generation's fresh eyes and forward-thinking approach to help maintain and expand The Elegant Farmer for generations to come," he added.

The Elegant Farmer is at 1545 Main St. (Highways ES and J), Mukwonago. Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., daily. For more information, call 262-363-6770 or visit elegantfarmer.com.





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Celebrating the longest summer day

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

A tradition in Norway and other Nordic countries that have short periods of daylight throughout the long winter season, is to celebrate the presence of daylight on the longest day of the year with a midsummer celebration.

The traditional celebration in Norway includes large gatherings of community members and include food, alcohol, dancing and other creative activities. It usually concludes with bonfires believed to cleanse the area of evil spirits.

With so many Norwegian immigrants settling in the United States, it's not surprising that a form of this long-standing tradition would make its way to Wisconsin, and there likely isn't a better place to celebrate it than at Old World Wisconsin in Eagle.

"This year, Old World Wisconsin held their first Midsummer Celebration on Saturday June 15, with many of the same traditions that were an integral part of the traditional celebrations in Norway," Kendall Poltzer, of the Wisconsin Historical Society, said.

While the tradition is typically observed on the eve of June 24 in Norway, for Old World's purposes, June 15 was chosen for the midsummer celebration. It was to be an evening of music, food, fun and beer and unlike most programs at the outdoor history museum grounds, this one was for adults 21 years of age and older.

Upon arrival at Old World Wisconsin the day of the event, a tram was available to drive guests from the parking lot to Crossroads Village where the activities would be taking place. Along the way the driver pointed out the number of farms owned by Norwegian settlers that had been relocated to Old World Wisconsin and remain a living monument to these early Wisconsin settlers.

The sound of music being played was permeating through the air as the tram arrived in the center of the activities, the Norwegian Pavilion. It held a large number of picnic tables where visitors were gathering to enjoy the beer and music with some guests dancing in the aisles.

Each visitor was given a small glass – much like a small brandy snifter – labeled "Midsummer Celebration Old World Wisconsin" to be used for beer tasting and kept as a souvenir of the evening.

Beer, food and crowns

While the glasses were small, made for tasting, there was no shortage of beer available from the eight breweries that were represented, seven from Wisconsin and one from Illinois.

The Wisconsin beers included Tumbled



at left: An Old World brewmaster pours a glass of beer for a guest.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ
Spirit of Geneva Lakes

above: Dancing around the maypole, men go in one direction and women in the opposite while each holds a colorful ribbon.

It results in a unique decorated pole. **below:** In the Raspberry School House, these "students" work diligently to spell words correctly on their chalkboard slates as the teacher presents them during the Midsummer Celebration.

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Rock, 1840, UD Working Draft, Old World Wisconsin, BRBC, r, and Radix. Mikerphone Brewing from Illinois rounded out the selections and each of the brewers shared the history of their personal beer brewing.

Two food trucks – Jandy’s Basecamp and Sap Sap – were on site to provide food. Choices ranged from cornbread waffles filled with a choice of chicken strips seasoned with hot sauce and honey or the waffles filled with barbecued pork piled with cole slaw on top.

The pulled pork was the early favorite and sold out the fastest.

“We brought 10 pounds of the pork and it was gone within the first hour,” the owner of the food truck said. “We also had dessert waffle cones which were a big hit.”

Eating and drinking was not all there was to do after all, a Norwegian feast is not complete without flower crowns being worn. In the Raspberry School yard, visitors gathered to create their own flower crown to wear while celebrating the true spirit of the evening.

A formed frame was given to each person interested in creating a flower crown, the flowers were able to be chosen from a variety of different blooms and then woven into the headpiece.

Each one created was unique and varied from others, some differed by just a few blossoms while others – created by more patient workers – were very colorful and full of blooms. At times, there was a wait to create flower crowns while new frames were completed by the staff of Old World Wisconsin.

Back in school

Spelling bees are a memorable, if not favorite school activity for many. Throughout the Midsummer Celebration, Norwegian spelling bees were held in the Raspberry School House with visitors



above: The band Sweet Sheiks entertains guests during the event. **below:** Guests work on preparing flower crowns, each of which is custom made by choosing the types of flowers and how many they want in their crown.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

allowed to participate.

Guests who thought English spelling bees were difficult were in for a rude but awakening as the ones at Old World used Norwegian words and the unique letters of that language.

Adding to the fun, participants in the spelling bee sat at student desks and wrote their words on a small blackboard slate.

“I thought I was good at spelling,” said John a visitor from Madison. “Here, I was pleased that I got two words right.”

One of the places visited during the event was an 1840s Norwegian Settler’s Cabin where guests were given a glimpse into the life of the Norwegian immigrants who made their way to Wisconsin.

The small home had little if any insulation and the only heat was coming from a fireplace, which is a far cry from the homes of today. It was remarkable that families were able to stay warm during the cold Wisconsin winters and in many cases, the children slept on the second floor in one large room and one large bed with heavy quilts on them to try to stay warm.

Outside, a docent dressed as a Norwegian was cooking lefse over a campfire. Lefse is a traditional Norwegian bread-like dish. It’s soft and flat and made from potatoes, milk, and flour, then rolled out very thinly. In the 1840s, it was cooked in a frying pan over a campfire and then served with butter or jam and rolled or folded to eat.

Music and dancing

Dancing was a popular way to celebrate during the party and there was a special maypole dance. It featured 12 participants who were chosen to gather around the pole, each given the end of one of the colored ribbons tied to the top. They had to hold onto the end of their ribbon while they danced around the maypole, men in one direction and women dancing in the other direction.

The ribbons were of a variety of colors and as they continued to circle the maypole, the ribbons covered it in a beautiful pattern... when everyone was dancing in the right direction though sometimes the group had to stop and get untangled.

The evening ended with a pickled herring eating contest, in keeping with the food one would eat – and perhaps enjoy – in Norway. Often herring or other fish were served for breakfast. And then there was the drunk history trivia contest.

With the contests finished the band, Sweet Sheiks, returned to playing music with one of its members playing an old-fashioned washboard.

As the sun set on this Midsummer Celebration, guests enjoyed the last of the music and a time of friendship. It truly was a celebration and likely was enjoyed as much at Old World as the events held in Norway for hundreds of years.

While the inaugural celebration has ended, there are plenty of other activities, many of them family oriented for you to enjoy this year at Old World Wisconsin.

For a complete list of upcoming programs at the outdoor history museum, most of which are family friendly, as well as advanced ticket purchases for special programs, visit oldworldwisconsin.org.

Old World Wisconsin is at W372 S39727 WI-67, Eagle. Current hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.





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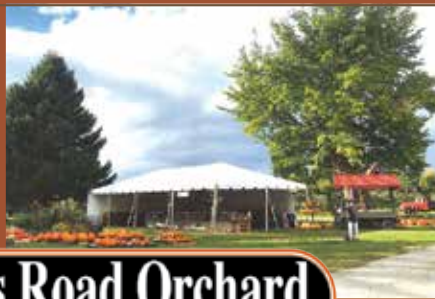
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Is it time for a new mattress? Check out Verlo

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

How old is your mattress? Is it still a comfortable place to relax? When you wake up in the morning, do you feel well rested, and did you sleep comfortably through the night?

If your answer to any of these questions is no, it may be time to look for a new mattress.

“Verlo Mattress is a unique mattress company,” said Ray Westman, owner of Verlo in Lake Geneva, McHenry and Crystal Lake. “We do not carry a number of mattress brands but only our own and each of these mattresses, sold in our stores, is built on site in our McHenry store.”

When a refrigerator, stove or automobile is no longer working properly, people immediately call someone to attempt to repair them. If they aren’t repairable, they



top: The Verlo mattress store in Lake Geneva is at 2462 Highway 120, on the north end of the city. **above:** Mattresses are displayed throughout the Verlo stores, helping customers compare the various styles and levels of firmness.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



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are replaced.

The same should apply to mattresses. People spend about one third of their lives in a bed. When it is no longer giving a comfortable night's rest, though, people don't immediately go to a store for a replacement; instead, complaining about poor sleep and a backache.

Even when people finally think of the mattress, they may often discard the idea of it being a mattress problem because the mattress is often considered a staple, something that lasts forever. In reality, no mattress will last forever. It is recommended that the mattress be replaced about every 12 years, maybe sooner if it is not cared for properly.

"The number of years before a mattress needs to be replaced is dependent on a number of things," Westman said. "First of all, our mattress needs change over the years as our bodies change. And the care that is given to the mattress also determines how long it will last."

Early mattresses were much different than today's mattresses. The early ones were composed of natural materials such as straw, feathers or horsehair. It was in 1899 that John Marshall introduced the first individually wrapped, pocketed spring coil mattress. This was a design that has lasted through the years and continues to be improved as mattress technology moves forward.

By the 20th century in the United States, mattresses had advanced to often having an innerspring coil, latex or viscoelastic or other polyurethane forms included in their construction.

Over the years, new forms of mattresses and new mattress companies began to appear. Mattresses began to be made in two standard sizes, what today are called the twin bed and the double bed. Occasionally a $\frac{3}{4}$ size bed was created that was somewhere between the twin and double bed in size. As homes became larger and more luxurious, people wanted larger and more luxurious beds and other sizes of mattresses, including those that today are considered standards, began to appear. The queen- and king-sized beds and other custom sizes like the California king made their way into mattress stores.

While there was a growth of mattress companies over time, competition for customers developed. Making mattresses required space, so they were often created in a central factory and then delivered to various stores. They were could also be stored in a central warehouse until they were delivered to the home of the purchaser.

The concept of producing all of a company's mattresses in one factory, though, soon was to change. In 1958, Guy Day and Dale Williams – two entrepreneurs from Wisconsin who together owned a furniture store in Wheeling, Illinois – decided to add a new item to their business.



above: Verlo mattresses, once constructed, are delivered by company staff to customers' homes. **below:** The large showroom in Lake Geneva offers an opportunity to try a variety of mattresses made by Verlo.

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They would create mattresses that were custom built at the store. Their mattresses would be created to order and because they were self-manufactured, eliminated the middleman.

The mattresses were given the name Verlo, a combination of the two men's wives' first names, Verna and Lois. Surprising to them, the custom-made mattresses became successful – even more successful than their furniture lines.

By the early 1970s, when their children were starting college at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, they opened another store in that community. The mattresses soon became the focus of their business and by the 1980s, the mattress business had grown so much that they began to franchise locations.

When entering a Verlo store today, a clean, open environment greets customers. Mattress styles are arranged in pods to allow customers to peruse various styles, firmness and price points. Sales staff will greet customers and not only answer questions, but share knowledge about mattresses that customers may not know.

“One of the advantages of purchasing your mattress from Verlo is that we eliminate the middleman, making a high-quality mattress for a lower price,” Westman shared. “Our sales people actually are very knowledgeable about our mattresses because they are involved in building them here on site. We can also build the mattress specifically for your



above: The mattress covering is sewn into place using a Singer sewing machine, which is moved by hand around the mattress for a smooth finish. **at right:** Local Verlo owner Ray Westman puts the finishing touches on a recently completed mattress. **top right:** Nelly Garcia begins to work on building a mattress at the shop, which is in McHenry, Illinois.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

needs in about a week from the time it is purchased.”

Mattresses can be made either one-sided or two-sided, with the latter being turned over at regular intervals to allow for even wear. One-sided mattresses do not need to be turned over, but do need to be rotated at regular intervals – again to again promote even wear. Verlo produces both kinds.

The custom-made mattresses are produced at the McHenry location for the Lake Geneva, Crystal Lake and McHenry stores. Customer’s needs, which can include making a mattress softer or firmer, are taken into consideration when the mattress is built.

“Once the mattress is built and delivered to the customer, we aren’t through with the mattress or the customer,” said Westman. “We offer a one-year comfort promise on most of our mattresses. If after sleeping on the mattress they find it needs more or less firmness, it can be returned to have additional firmness added or to be softened once during that period. After the one-year time, the mattress can still be picked up and rebuilt as needed for a nominal fee.”



Having an area to build mattresses requires a good amount of storage space for



Westman stands near an adjustable frame, which can add comfort and prevent snoring.


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all the materials needed in mattress production.

"We do minimize the space needed for storage by purchasing everything in pre-cut sizes so there is no waste or mess," Westman explained. "Even the spring coils are rolled and shrink-packed in a large roll, minimizing storage space. We just unroll them to use them."

Because the company creates the mattress on site, Verlo also is able to custom design the mattress for whatever shape, size or firmness is needed.

"We are able to create a special size mattress to fit in your camper or boat and even special shapes such as round mattresses or one to fit a special-sized, built-in bunk bed," added Westman. "Such custom sizes are often needed here in the lakes area, where boats and recreational vehicles are prevalent, and may need to have their mattresses replaced. We also create mattresses for antique beds, which may also require special sizing."

Adjustable bed frames are very popular and, according to Westman, provide a healthier way to sleep. By raising the legs, it helps reduce swelling in the lower limbs, and when the head is raised, it allows one to breathe better and snore less. An adjustable bed is a favorite even for those who just enjoy reading or watching television from their bed.

Adjustable bed frames are available in the stores.

"Sleeping on your back is the best way to sleep," added Westman. Using an adjustable base means that the mattress does not require a box spring. What it does require, however – at least on some models – is a change in the construction of the mattress. A mattress that has a steel border rod must remove a portion of the rod and replace it with a cord to make the mattress more flexible. This way, the mattress will bend when the head or feet are raised.

Prices at Verlo are less than what most other mattress companies have to offer for the same quality, because there is no middleman markup. Local Verlo dealers are at 3710 W. Elm, McHenry (phone: 815-578-8275); 2462 Highway 120, Lake Geneva (phone 262-249-0420); and in Crystal Lake, Illinois at 5150 Northwest Hwy, Unit 1 (phone 815-455-2570).

All locations are open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A mattress is shown while being constructed
at the Verlo shop in McHenry.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

This sign at Hafs Road Orchard
directs customers to different
apple varieties.

When it's fall, it's time for apples



by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

While it might be sad to see summer end and know winter is going to follow, there are always reasons to look forward to fall.

In addition to cooling temperatures and fall foliage, it is also time to take a drive to the countryside and check out area apple orchards. Apples are enjoyable and have the added benefit of being a healthy food.

With a large variety from very sweet to tart, it's likely anyone can find one for their palate. They can be eaten fresh off the tree, or covered in caramel on a stick and baked into an apple pie.

HAFS ROAD ORCHARD

W632 Hafs Rd. • Genoa City • 262-279-3638

The history of Hafs Road Orchard goes back to the late 1930s, when 40 trees representing 25 different varieties of popular apples were planted by the family on the Hafs Road farm.

In 1982, Richard and Debbie Polansky purchased the orchard and have continued to increase both the number of trees and the

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number of varieties of apples grown here.

“The original trees planted were full-sized trees,” Debbie Polansky explained. “Over the years, we have added a variety of dwarf trees, increasing the number of trees and the number of varieties that are grown.”

Today, the orchard has about 3,000 trees, most of the dwarf variety. According to Debbie, there are still a few of the original full-sized trees that produce apples.

This year the weather has been extremely hot, leaving one to wonder how it has affected the apple crop.

“This year we expect to have a good harvest, as many apples as last year,” said Kimmy Gaul, who has worked with the Polansky family for the last five years.

Last year, the Polanskys introduced a new apple to their orchard, the Kinder Krisp – a sweet eating apple that was new to the area. Because of the limited number of these new apples that were grown during that first year, it was recommended that those wishing to try this new variety put in an order for them when they first became available.

“This year, since additional Kinder Krisp apple trees were planted, there will be more of these apples available to purchase, but we still expect them to go fast,” Gaul said. “They will be one of the early ripening apples and available in our early opening days.”

The orchard will also have a large number of Honeycrisp apples, which continue to be the favorite in the area. When the orchard first planted Honeycrisp apples in 1992, again, there were only a limited number of trees producing them. The new variety, developed by the University of Minnesota, proved to be a hit



above: Bushels of Gala apples are a sight to see at Hafs Road Orchard in Genoa City.

top: The east end of the orchard can be seen in this photo taken from above.

COURTESY HAFS ROAD ORCHARD *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

for both apples and caramel apples.

“Even if Honey Crisp are your favorite brand of apples, consider trying one or more other apples for a change of taste,” added Gaul. “You will need some of the other kinds of apples, especially if you want to bake with them, as some are much better for baking and cooking than others.”

Once the Honeycrisps ripen, the Polanskys will begin making their famous Honeycrisp caramel apples. They offer them plain or rolled in pecans. They are usually available the first weeks of September. Apple cider, apple cider vinegar and frozen applesauce made with a mix of apple varieties will also be available.

The orchard opened for the season Aug. 23, with Gaul saying the early ripening apples – Zestar, Ginger Gold and Kinder Krisp – would be available then. To find which apples are ready, or if seeking a specific type, call the orchard.

While Hafs Road Orchard does not offer the opportunity for people to pick apples, the orchards are open for walking. Later in the season, pumpkins and squash will also be available.

“We do not offer pick your own apples but do recommend that you take a walk through the orchard and enjoy the beauty of the trees,” added Gaul.

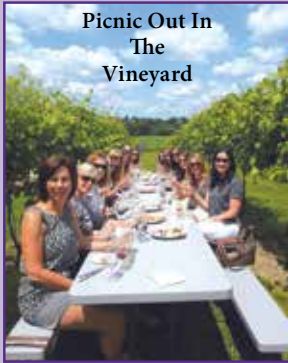
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BRIGHTONWOODS ORCHARDS AND AEPPELTREOW

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Brightonwoods Orchards were established as a weekend retreat in 1950. At that time the orchards, featuring a few apple trees, were located on a farmland getaway property.

Throughout the years, the number of apple trees increased and are now on over 18 acres. Bill Stone, son-in-law of the original owner, took over the property and has worked to continue the growth of the heirloom varieties and to include some of the newer varieties.

Currently the orchard has 150 varieties of apples, while seeded and seedless grapes, quince and pears are also grown on site.

The family friendly grounds feature a two-story playhouse for children, as well as open areas with picnic tables. The orchard opens for the season Aug. 24, and will be open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Charles McGonegal, the owner of AepelTreow, will replace Bill Stone in overseeing the orchards at Brightonwoods.

"Bill has been trying to retire for some time and now the time has come for me to take over managing the orchard," McGonegal said. In addition, Jeremy Thelen has been hired as orchard manager for the coming year.

"We expect an incredible crop this



season," added Judith Stone.

With many of Brightonwoods' trees full-sized, the orchard does not offer self picking. All fruit is sold inside the barn, in addition to Glas Naturals – a locally produced cheese spread.

Many of the same events that have been held on the grounds of Brightonwoods will continue this season. The first event will be the Farm to Table dinner, held by Braise Restaurant of Milwaukee, which will be held on site as it has been for over 15 years. Contact Braise at 414-212-8843 for menu information and to purchase tickets for the event.

On Sept. 28 and 29, the fourth annual craft and vendor fair will be at the orchard

from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. On Oct. 6, the Caledonia Lions Club will sponsor the Orchard Cruise In. A large number of classic cars will be on site from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In 2001, Charles McGonegal and his wife, Milissa, opened AepelTreow Winery and Distillery on the grounds of Brightonwoods in the large barn that was currently not used. They remodeled the barn to allow for space to distill their products and have a tasting bar.

AepelTreow is a producer of small-batch cider, perry and spirits. Ciders are made from apples and pears, using a fermenting process. Perry is the pear analogue to cider, and a distillery creates

at left:

Brightonwoods Apple Cider is made fresh and always a treat, especially in the fall.

top: The apples at Brightonwoods Orchard are sold in the barn. The two-story playhouse, which can be seen in the distance, is a favorite stop for children that visit.

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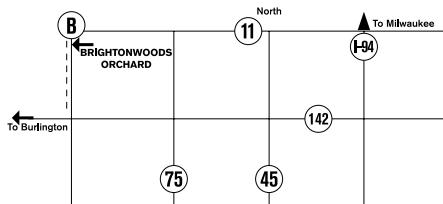
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"This year we have added a new light pear drink in cans," said Charles McGonegal. "This drink was due to obtaining some unexpected pears of opportunity. I obtained these pears after we had already purchased what we needed for our regular perry, so we developed this light drink with moderate alcohol content and a slightly sweet taste."

For more information, visit either of the websites at brightonwoodsorchard.com or aepeltreow.com.

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Six generations ago, beginning in 1848, the Jacobson family began farming the land. Along with the Apple Barn being a working farm, the family has grown the space to include the apple store, bakery and even its own winery.

With several thousand apple trees, one can expect a large

A large apple stands tall near the orchard entrance at the Apple Barn. It's across the street from the barn and shop that features everything from freshly baked goods and gifts to a variety of wine offerings.

HEIDI SCHULZ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Do you enjoy reading this publication?

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number and varieties of apples this year. The apples begin to ripen in late August and early September. Among the most popular apple varieties at the Apple Barn are Gala, Zestar and Honeycrisp varieties.

For the 35th year, Apple Fest will be held at the Apple Barn. This year it will begin Sept. 28-29 and continue through October on weekends. See the Facebook page for details on the weekend events.

"On weekends during Apple Fest, music and food vendors will be present on the grounds," said Judy Jacobson, who, with her husband Steve, are the current generation of the Jacobson family to own Apple Barn.

Apple picking is a favorite family activity and many visiting families look forward to coming to the Apple Barn to enjoy time together on the farm. It's one of the few orchards that still allows the self-pick option in the area.

As of late August, the Paula Reds and Zestar varieties were available. The ever-popular Honeycrisps tend to ripen in mid-September, but it's possible they may be available earlier. For precise dates, check the website for updates on apple varieties as they become available.

Apple picking is available only on weekends and pick your own pumpkins should start around Oct. 1.

Warm apple cider donuts are available as well as other baked goods made on site.

The Apple Barn store offers hand-



The country store features home decor and other items. After Labor Day, hours at the Apple Barn will be Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

HEIDI SCHULZ Spirit of Geneva Lakes

crafted and cooking items, as well as fruit wines created on site. All wines are created from non-grape fruits and berries in small batches, and wine tasting is available. And of course, apple cider can be purchased.

After Labor Day, hours at the Apple Barn will be Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's closed Mondays. For more information and updates, visit applebarnorchardandwinery.com.

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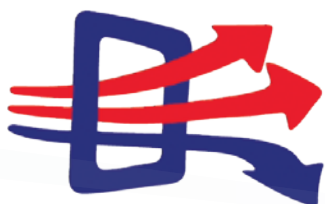
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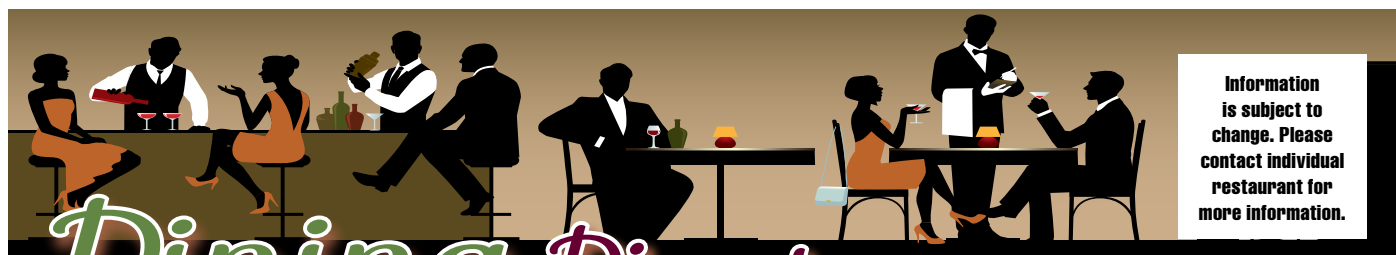
Tamera Hamilton

Email: tamera@southernlakesnewspapers.com

Office: 262-728-3411



369800



Dining Directory

Call for Carry Out & Delivery Options

1903 SALOON • 11230 260th Avenue, Trevor, WI 53179. **262-298-7005**. Comfortable gathering place with friends. Dine in or take out. Excellent food. Specialty drinks. L, D, \$\$ ☹

THE GREEN GROCER AND DELI • 24 W. Geneva St., Williams Bay. **262-245-9077**. www.greengrocergenevalake.com Organic grocery store with a deli. Serving sandwiches made with Boars Head meat and cheese, homemade soups, salads and pizzas, wine, beer and cocktails. Dine in, Carryout or delivery. Open 7 days a week. L, D, \$-\$\$ ☹ ☹ ☹

SPORTSMAN'S PUB & GRUB • 25313 W. Loomis Rd., Wind Lake, WI 53185. **262-895-1055**. Join us Friday and Sunday FOR THE BEST PRIME RIB IN TOWN! \$2.00 OFF Any prime rib dinner. L, D, FF, ☹ ☹ ☹

MICHAEL'S ON THE LAKE • 3101 Eagle Road, Kansasville, WI 53139. **(262) 878-3313**. A Wisconsin supper club on the shore of Eagle Lake. Known for our steaks, prime rib on Saturday night, fish fry on Wednesday and Friday, baby back ribs and our famous carrot cake. Visit www.michaelsonthelakeWI.com for our full menu. Open Wed. & Thurs. @ 3; Fri. & Sat. @ 11; Noon on Sunday. L, D, \$\$\$, GF, FF, ☹ SR ☹ ☹

LOCAL FOLKS RESTAURANT & PUB • 39601 60th St. (Slades Corners), Burlington. **262-539-3200**. Open 6am every morning! B, L, D, \$, FF, ☹ ☹

PINE STREET CAFE • 141 N. Pine St., Burlington, WI 53105. **262-763-9800**. Homestyle food made from scratch daily using only the finest, freshest ingredients. Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner. Fish Fry Every Friday. Sunday 6am - 3pm. Monday - Saturday 6am - 8pm. \$\$, B, L, D, FF, ☹

GINO'S EAST OF CHICAGO • 300 Wrigley Dr., Lake Geneva. **262-248-2525**. www.ginoseastlakegeneva.com. Chicago's original deep dish pizza, Italian sandwiches, salads and entrees. L, D, \$-\$\$ ☹

B&D'S VILLAGE INN • 34414 Geneva Rd., New Munster, WI. **262-537-4719**. Open daily at 11 A.M. Serving Friday fish fry!

LUISA'S • Just off Hwy. 50, 12 mi. east of Lake Geneva. **262-537-4795**. Superb Italian & American cuisine. Dine in, carry out, delivery, catering avail., call ahead & will have it hot ready to go. D, \$\$ ☹

Key

B: Breakfast L: Lunch D: Dinner NC: No credit cards accepted \$: Mostly under \$10 \$\$: Mostly under \$20 GF: Gluten free
\$\$\$: Mostly under \$30 FF: Fish Fry ☹ : Reservations requested ☹ : Alcohol served ☹ : Kids menu SR: Senior menu

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