



THE SPIRIT of Geneva Lakes



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OCTOBER 2024

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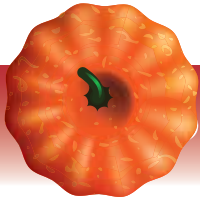
RUSTIC ROADS

The Rustic Road program features country roads throughout the state. One of the newest to be designated is in Walworth County, which has several and fall is an ideal time to slow down and take a back road. The autumn colors offer quite the view on this rustic road.

WISCONSIN DOT PHOTO
Spirit of Geneva Lakes

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IT'S COMIN' UP

OCTOBER EVENTS

4, 5 Dynamic Duos of the 60s Belfry Music Theatre 3601 Highway 67, Delavan, will host Zach Stevenson and Kieran McCabe Oct. 4 and 5 for 7 p.m. performances both nights. They're a duo that charms audiences with their sense of humor and spontaneity while performing harmonies of the Everly Brothers, Simon & Garfunkel, Peter and Gordon, Chad and Jeremy, Lennon and McCartney and more. Tickets range from \$62-79 a person. For more information, call 262-394-6460, visit belfry.org or email info@belfry.org.

4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 & 26 Exploring the Night Sky From 8 to 10 p.m. 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.

5 Holiday Craft Bash Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., more than 300 crafters, artisans and food booths will descend upon the Walworth County Fairgrounds for the "round robin of craft shows." Held rain or shine, proceeds support the Barnyard Adventure Agriculture Education area at the fair. Parking is free, admission is \$5, there will be door prizes and booths indoors as well as outdoors. For more information, call 262-723-3228 or visit walworthcountyfair.com.

Walk the Lake for Kira Faith Kira Faith Spedale was an 11-year-old triplet and resident of Illinois and Fontana. She loved Lake Geneva, where she first learned to swim and spend long summer days with her family. In May 2013, Kira was diagnosed with an inoperable, malignant brain stem tumor called DIPG (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma) and endured a pioneering fight. Join a celebration of Kira's life Oct. 5 with music, laughter, raffles and fun in Walk the Lake!

The Forbeck Foundation began in memory of Billy Guy Forbeck, who died of Neuroblastoma in 1984. The Foundation has hosted scientific forums for over 35 years, with many being held

in Lake Geneva. Walk the Lake funded one of these forums on DIPG in 2019. The proceeds from this year's Walk the Lake will fund an upcoming brain tumor meeting in 2025.

Registration is from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Reid Park Pavilion in Fontana. There are three different walks of various lengths along Lake Geneva's public path allowing for participation at different skill levels. Please check-in at least 15 minutes before your start time.

9 a.m. - start of the full lake walk
12:30 p.m. - bus from Reid Park to Lake Geneva for a 10-mile walk
3 p.m. - start of the 3-mile fun walk
4-6 p.m. - refreshments, snacks and raffle at Chuck's in Fontana.

For those who haven't walked the shore path, information will be handed out at registration with places to get water, stop for bathrooms or snacks, and where to call if you need a ride back.

For more information, to register or to sponsor this event, visit walkthelake.com.

5, 6 October Fest at Pearce's Farm Stand Saturday and Sunday, Pearce's W5740 N. Walworth Rd., Walworth, will host its October Fest weekend. Features include live music, dancing, brats and kraut, roasted sweet corn and concessions, mums, fall decorations, fall produce and the corn maze. For more information, visit pearcefarms.com or call 262-275-3783.

Local Farmers Markets

Lake Geneva Farmer's Market Held 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays through Oct. 31 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 (and read the story featured in this issue.)

Geneva Outdoor Market Lake Geneva House of Music presents the Geneva Outdoor Market, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sundays through Oct. 27. 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.

The calendar of events is compiled from a variety of sources including area chambers of commerce and visitor bureaus and contains events available as of press time.

Dates and times may change, and events may be canceled. Please verify details and locations prior to making plans.

THE SPIRIT

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NEW LISTING

214 N Church St, Elkhorn - Classic Brick Two Story on Church St within walking distance to all the restaurants, Elkhorn square and Fairgrounds activities. This 4 Bedroom, 2 full bath is awaiting its new owners personal touches. Hardwood floors on main level. Situated on .50 acre lot offering a ton of outside entertaining possibilities. Spend evenings on the large covered front porch. Also you'll find a two car detached garage and 4 garden sheds. **\$325,000**



NEW LISTING

W5834 Mariner Hills Ct, Elkhorn - Completely renovated inside and out. Come see the quality of finishes through-out this 3 BR, 1 Bath Chalet, situated on 1.92 acres of privacy. This Lauderdale lake access home offers vaulted ceilings in the living room, eat-in kitchen with Granite tops and stainless-steel appliances with slider to deck overlooking wooded backyard that abuts a marsh full of wildlife. Full Bedroom and bath on the main level and laundry closet. Upstairs you'll find the 2nd and 3rd Bedrooms with vaulted ceilings and shared sitting area with ample closet space. Brand new 1.5 car detached garage with storage possibilities in the rafters. Mariner Hill offers lakefront park with day boat slips and in-ground pool. Short drive to the boat launches and minutes to Kettle Moraine Trail head. Dream location. **\$357,900**

W5712 North Dr, Elkhorn - Completely remodeled in 2020 with expansive views down Middle Lake on 92' of frontage you'll find this 3 Bd, 2 Bath Ranch with walk-out lower level to huge lakeside patio. As you enter you're greeted by the lake with vaulted ceilings throughout the main level and wall of sliding glass doors leading to wrap around deck. Kitchen boasting of Quartz counter tops and backsplash, Kitchen Aid SS appl, Quartz waterfall island with bar stool seating adjoining LR, and dinette. Bd and full bath with heated floors and clear glass shower complete the main level. As you enter the LL you have a beverage center with Quartz top, beverage refrig and Ice maker. Also, you'll find 2nd & 3rd bath, full bath with glass shower and laundry closet. Two 9x12 sheds one lakeside with lakeside yard leading to the pier. **\$1,099,700**



NEW LISTING

W5742 North Dr, Elkhorn - Why go through the hassle of building when this 2023 custom built 4 Plus Bedroom, 3.5 bath two story is ready to enjoy. Situated on 75' of Middle lake frontage you'll find this open concept main level with wall of windows lakeside. Inside Kitchen offers everything the discriminating chef would demand and ultimate living and dining space with gas fireplace, custom wet-bar and deck access. Master Bdrm ensuite with breathtaking lake views offering double vanity, large tile shower and ample walk-in closet. Family room walk-out with gas fireplace, full bath, work-out room or Bdrm, 4th bdrm and screened porch. Kitchen also features large island/breakfast bar with Delton countertops and Zline Autograph appliances. Outside fireplace and level lakefront yard by pier and storage shed. **\$1,659,700**



NEW LISTING



NEW LISTING

W5357 Lauderdale Dr, Elkhorn - The Iconic Lauderdale Lakes home, "The Boathouse" on Deakin Isle is situated on 192' of premier shoreline. Rebuilt in 2015 to its original 1915 Jazz Age glory, this 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath home is bursting with historical details and architectural styles. Ballroom features 1,200 sq ft with original hard rock maple floors, unique hanging Meiji era Japanese lanterns, with the original Opium Den prepped for a future hidden wine cellar. All 3 Lauderdale Lakes are visible from numerous vantage points throughout the four levels. Kitchen features custom marble countertops, farm sink, Wolf & Sub-Zero appliances. Master BR ensuite with luxury freestanding tub, full steam room, and private deck with fireplace. A finished swim basin provides access to the marquee wet boathouse w/ underwater lighting. **\$4,499,700**



BUSINESS

300 W Main St, 111, Palmyra - Located downtown Palmyra you'll find this Turnkey established Restaurant/Bar and separate 4 lane bowling alley waiting for an energetic entrepreneur to bring their vision to life. Restaurant/Bar has a seating capacity of 173 with an updated kitchen in 2019. Charming bar area overlooking main street and soaring ceilings in the dining area. Potential outdoor space for a beer garden and additional space to expand the bar area or rental opportunity. Income producing apartments on the second floor which consist of a 3 Bd, 2 Bd and 1Bd currently rented. Liquor license included. Palmyra is in the heart of the Southern unit of Kettle Moraine Forest offering hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails. Minutes from Blue Spring Lake and steps to Lower Spring Lake. **\$695,000**

W1260 South Shore Dr, Palmyra - Your lakefront search stops here with spacious 5 BD, 2 full, 2 half bath move in ready 2 story with walk-out lower level with 65' frontage on Blue Spring Lake. Lakeside kitchen with breakfast bar and large dining room with access to deck offering extended lake views. LR with cozy fireplace, main floor Master BD ensuite with sitting room lakeside, main floor laundry room. Upstairs offers 4 bedrooms and a full bath. Lower level Rec Room with sliding glass door that leads you to the lake. Lakeside level lawn and shed. Spacious back yard ideal for entertaining with multi-level patio. 2.5 detached garage with lower level storage. Blue Spring Lake is a All Sports Lake featuring crystal clear water in a North woods setting minutes to Kettle Moraine hiking, biking and SERENITY! **\$759,700**



W5135 Sterlingworth Ct, 13, Elkhorn - Prime location at the Sterlingworth Condominiums in the atrium, is just the beginning with this 2 Bedroom, 2 bath unit, steps off the beach with boat slip. The lake welcomes you as you walk in the door and head to the wall of sliding glass doors that leads to rare expansive deck. Eat-in kitchen with breakfast bar and dinette, living room with gas fireplace, large master bedroom with updated bath featuring walk-in multi-head tile shower and double vanity. Wood flooring throughout. Located right off the clubhouse with easy access to indoor pool. Tennis and Pickle Ball Courts and they finest sand beach on the lake. Short walk to Lauderdale Golf Course and minutes to Kettle Moraine trail head. Turn-key allowing for an easy transition to the lake! **\$709,700**



PRICE REDUCED



W5369 Baywood Dr, Elkhorn - Welcome to your home that's surrounded by lake views, a large yard for family fun as well as plenty of parking for everyone. Enjoy amazing 4th of July fireworks with the best seats in the house. Situated on 103' of level frontage on 0.81 of an acre, you'll find an updated, move in ready, 4BR, 3BA, two story home with upper end finishes. The large vaulted ceiling kitchen has an adjacent dining area & bonus playroom/den. The family room, also with vaulted ceilings, features a wall of windows that welcomes the lake inside. The living room with a natural fireplace and sliders leads to a spacious brick patio. This home offers the privacy of a main floor primary bedroom and the upper level has 3 generous sized bedrooms and 2 full baths. Accommodates 19 guests. **\$1,999,700**



PRICE REDUCED

W1411 N Blue Spring Lake Dr, Palmyra - Just completed in 2021 this spectacular Craftsman style 5 BD, 3 bath ranch situated on 100' of level frontage on crystal clear Blue Spring Lake. Inside you'll appreciate the owner's attention to detail throughout with lake views from every room. Kitchen features granite counter tops, island/breakfast bar, Bosch appliances and dining area with access to lakeside covered deck. Kitch is open to LR with stone gas fireplace Master BD ensuite with dream bathroom, LL family room with amazing wet bar plus 4th and 5th bedrooms and fitness room. Main floor has Hickory hardwood floors and hand-stained Maple doors, panels, molding and trim. Throughout the house you'll find hand-stained Amish Cabinets. Wet-boat house and permanent pier. Plus 1,200 sq ft 4 car garage. Municipal sewer with private well. **\$2,099,700**



Trio of events will celebrate with a German flair

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

One of the joys of fall is appreciating the delightful fall weather and the changing colors as green leaves turn yellow and orange before finally fading to brown and falling from trees. The swish of walking through the fallen leaves tells us that fall is here and with it the end of the growing season.

It's now that we celebrate this change of season, thankful for the year's harvest. And thankful for the food that will feed us through this season and into the winter and the grains that will be brewed into beer by microbreweries and enjoyed both now and over the winter season.

It's also time for one of the favorite end-of-summer – or beginning-of-fall – celebrations: Oktoberfest.

Oktoberfest's roots go back to the year 1810 in the city of Munich, located in the region of Germany known as Bavaria.

It was the marriage held on Oct. 12 of the Crown Prince of Bavaria to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. The celebration of the marriage lasted five days and ended with a horse race.

The next year the race was held again, and a state agricultural fair was added to the celebration. By 1818, booths serving food and drink appeared as well.

The 20th century brought another change to the festival as the emphasis turned to the large beer halls created by the major brewers of Munich, where visitors gathered to enjoy music, dance, eat festive foods, and, of course, drink beer. Often, special brews were created specifically for Oktoberfest, as the festival began to be called.

Oktoberfest continues to be held each year in Munich and in other German cities, usually from late September until the first Sunday in October.

As many German families migrated to the United States and many settled in Wisconsin, they brought their beer-brewing skills and continued brewing in Wisconsin, making it one of – if not the top state – to be known for beer brewing expertise. In addition, many of the traditions that were popular in Germany carried over, adapted to life in Wisconsin including Oktoberfest.

With so many microbreweries found in the southern Wisconsin area, it's not difficult to find a place to enjoy Oktoberfest. There are several celebrations in the area and here are details on a few of them.

Duesterbeck's Brewing

On Saturday, Oct. 5, enjoy Oktoberfest at Duesterbeck's Brewing Company, N5543 County Rd. O, Elkhorn. This event, which offers fun for the whole family, will be held 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"Music will begin at 10 a.m. with the Mike Schneider Band, who will continue to play through 1 p.m. in our Pig Barn," said Laura Duesterbeck Johnson, who founded this family-owned business in 2019 with her husband Ben Johnson.

While it's called the Pig Barn, it does not house any pigs. It's a large clean space ideal for holding large groups of visitors. At 11:30 a.m., the entertainment continues with the addition of Tanzlustig, a group of German dance instructors, who will be ready to perform and teach visitors German dances typically enjoyed during Oktoberfest.

"Also starting at 10 a.m. will be a variety of activities to please the children," Laura

Traditional dancing in German attire takes place on the open patio at Duesterbeck's during Oktoberfest.

PHOTO COURTESY DUESTERBECK'S *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



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said. “These activities will all be fundraisers to support the Delavan-Darien track team, as well as the Elkhorn swim team.”

Kids events will include a bouncy house and cabbage bowling, along with hair braiding. These activities will continue until 4 p.m.

There will be music throughout the day: the Alpine Blast Trio will play on the outdoor stage 2 to 5 p.m., from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Jon Bon Stamos will be playing in the Pig Barn.

Food trucks will offer a variety of items including Joanne Vouseth, who will be serving German foods; Pepperoni Pub, individual pizza slices (not German, but a favorite especially for children;) and Gracie’s Kitchen.

Five local artisans will also be on-site selling their hand-created craft items.

No Oktoberfest is complete without a beer of the same name. Duesterbeck’s Oktoberfest beer has been aged in a whiskey barrel, giving it a unique taste. It will be available as long as it lasts, along with a variety of other beers brewed at Duesterbeck’s all year round.

This will be the 5th Annual Oktoberfest at Duesterbeck’s.



Lake Geneva

The second weekend in October is when Lake Geneva will celebrate Oktoberfest, sponsored by the Downtown Lake Geneva Business Improvement District. It will be held Saturday, Oct. 12, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 13, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

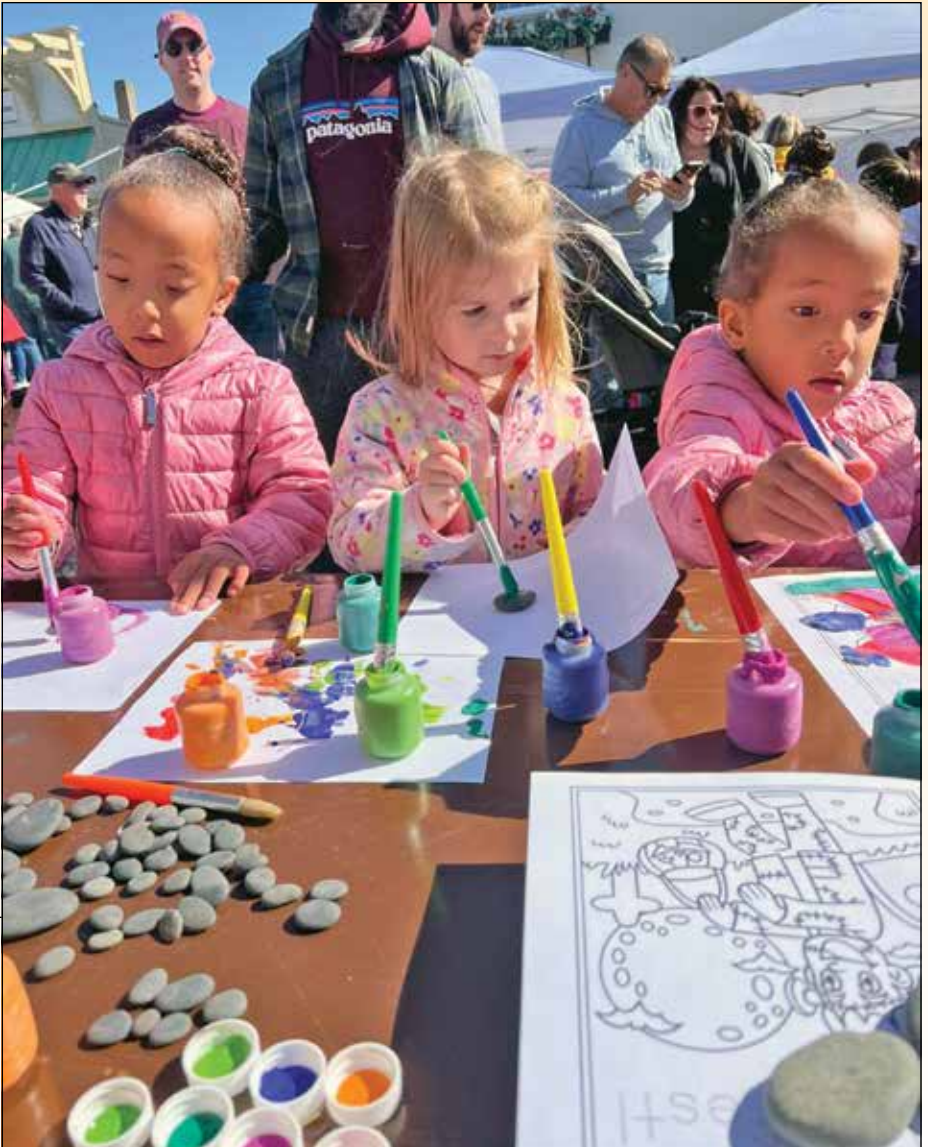
The 200 block of Broad Street downtown will be closed to traffic during the festival. Like the Oktoberfest celebrations of old, there will be live music and dancing, craft brewed beer, traditional German foods, along with local artisans and vendors.

“This year, the Lake Geneva Oktoberfest will be holding a pie-eating contest in place of the pie race,” said Alexandria Binanti, Executive Director of Downtown Lake Geneva BID. “We will have live music all day at our stage near the beer garden.”

The pies for the contest will come from the Lake Geneva Pie Company. Register on the website at downtownlakegeneva.org. Proceeds will go to the Lake Geneva Mural Program.

The Stein Hoisting contest – featuring contestants holding a full stein extended with one arm for as long as possible – will be held again. It’s always an entertaining time whether participating or watching from the sidelines.

Oktoberfest in Lake Geneva is not just for adults, as there will be a variety of kid-friendly activities from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., including a bounce house, face painting, pumpkin decorating, and crafting activities.



top: Attendees gather on the street in Lake Geneva for the annual Oktoberfest event, which features music, dancing, craft brewed beer, traditional German food and more. **at right:** A variety of activities for the kids are set up at Oktoberfest in Lake Geneva, including art projects such as painting and coloring.

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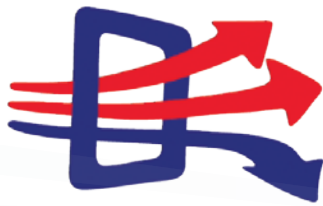
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“There will be a coloring contest for the kiddos, plus a pumpkin to take home while supplies last,” Binanti said.

Another favorite is the Dachshund Races, where the fastest dog earns the Wiener Takes All Trophy and gift cards for dog treats. A goodie bag is given to each entrant, so be sure to register your wiener dog for this fun event. Registration can be done online and proceeds from this event will go to the Walworth Food and Diaper Bank.

For more information, visit www.downtownlakegeneva.org.

Elkhorn

Elkhorn is well known for its Oktoberfest, which fills the entire downtown area with a variety of activities, food, and their special Hofbrau Oktoberfest Lager beer. It’s held the third Saturday of October, so this year will be on Oct. 19.

The event, which is now in its 19th year, is sponsored by the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism.

The adjacent Veterans Park will again be filled with craft and commercial vendors, offering visitors an opportunity to do a little shopping while enjoying the live entertainment. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Delite Duo will perform, and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Doghouse Roses will take the stage.

“Explore while walking down Wisconsin Street and enjoy a variety of foods from the local restaurants and food trucks that will be on-site,” Chris Clapper, Executive Director of the Elkhorn Area



above: Elkhorn’s Oktoberfest includes live music (above), a vendor and craft show in the adjacent Veterans Park, an All Around Town Wine & Beer Tasting, and a variety of food vendors. **below:** The stein holding contest is always a big hit at Elkhorn’s event. The day begins with a 5K run/walk sponsored by the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce and the Elkhorn Rotary Club.

PHOTOS COURTESY ELKHORN CHAMBER *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Chamber of Commerce said. “Adults will enjoy exploring downtown Elkhorn and participating in the All Around Town Beer & Wine Tasting.”

The morning kicks off at 9:30 a.m. with an Oktoberfest 5K Run/Walk, which people can register for online at www.oktoberfest.5k.run. The event is a partnership between the chamber and the Elkhorn Rotary Club and those who register by Oct. 12 will get a t-shirt.

Cost for the 5K will be \$35 (\$20, students), Sept. 21 to Oct. 11; \$40 (\$25, students) Oct. 12 to race day. Awards to

the top three finishers will be presented in various age groups for both male and female. Details can be found on the registration website.

The classic car show is always a draw, allowing visitors a chance to wander among classic vehicles on display.

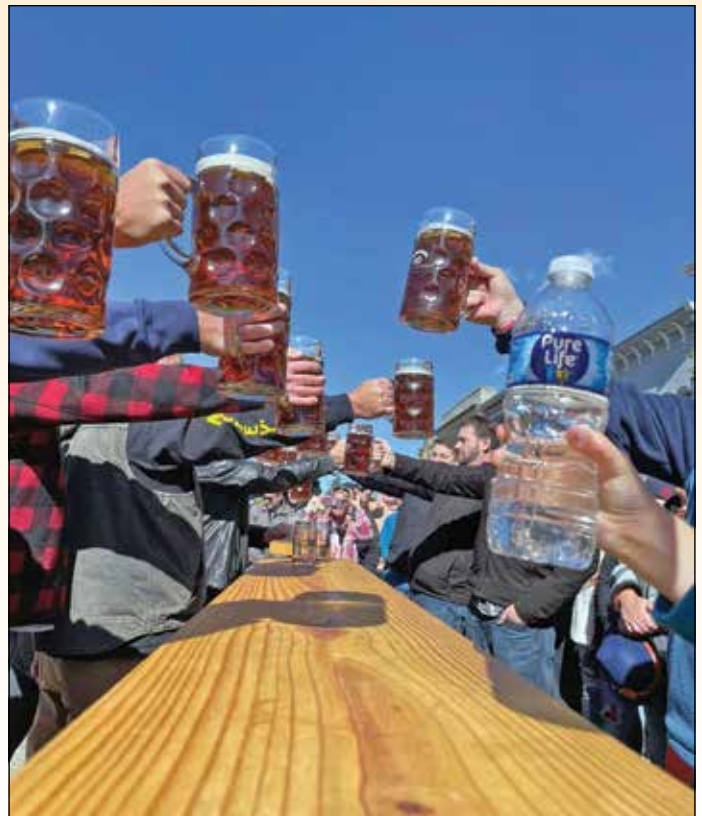
The Hofbrau Oktoberfest Lager will be served along with bratwurst and other traditional German foods, which can be enjoyed while listening to music and participating in some German dancing.

For more information visit Elkhorn Oktoberfest on Facebook.



This Corn Crib Cabana at Duesterbeck’s can be rented by groups. It has seating for eight people and is just off to the side of the outdoor stage on site.

PHOTO COURTESY DUESTERBECK’S *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



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CELEBRATE FALL AT *Staller Estate Winery*

Venue hosts many events including bridal showers, weddings

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

Located on County Highway A near Delavan, Elkhorn and Whitewater, Staller Estate Winery stands out with its bright red buildings and beautifully tended grape vines.

Tables and chairs sit under a large pergola, with the bright green vines adding color and warmth to the space. Originally an old dairy farm, Joe and Wendy Staller purchased the space more than 10 years ago with the plan to turn it into a vineyard and winery – a venture that has been a success.



*Fall
Weddings*

A bridal couple embrace as they pose among the grape vines at Staller on their wedding day.

PHOTOS COURTESY NICOLE ZADOR
Spirit of Geneva Lakes



Wine making had been a hobby since the couple's college days at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Wendy was so interested in learning more about wine that, after graduating from UW-Whitewater, she attended the University of California-Davis to complete a wine program, becoming knowledgeable about all aspects of wine making.

The business has taken off, turning the dairy farm into the vineyard much quicker than planned.

"It was a hobby that grew out of control and is now a full-time business," Wendy said. "We began with a small vineyard and then began to increase the number of vines. We now have three acres of grapes growing near the winery and another acre up on the hill."

As the vines began to produce, the couple started to experiment with a variety of wines – reds, whites, sweet wines and dry wines until there was a good line of wines. The couple began entering the wines into contests, often winning awards, and as they found an audience for the wines, they began tastings at the winery.

When more and more visitors came to the vineyard, the two began to add even more services.

Ideal for many events

"We now hold a variety of different events here throughout the seasons," Wendy said. "Bachelorette parties, bridal showers, baby showers, special

With the sun shining, it was an ideal day for a bachelorette party, complete with wine tasting and charcuterie snacks in the vineyards at Staller Estate.

PHOTO COURTESY STALLER ESTATE *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

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birthday or anniversary events and even small weddings can be arranged.”

Both ample indoor and outdoor space is available, though many use the fall to enjoy the last days of comfortable weather.

A favorite activity for bachelorette parties and bridal showers is to hold a wine tasting out in the vineyards. A long table to fit the number of guests will be set up between two rows of the vines, giving privacy while still outdoors. Green grapevines and even potentially ripe grapes can be seen hanging around guests.

Bachelorette parties often include a wine tasting and the sharing of a charcuterie board or a picnic platter. As charcuterie boards have become more popular, various sizes and kinds have been added to the menu. A variety of meats, cheeses, olives, nuts, dried fruits, a special olive blend and fig preserves, as well as freshly baked French baguette bread are available, with the cheese chosen by the customer from many local cheeses.

If being outside in the vineyard is not where you want to be, events can be held indoors in the sunroom, the gazebo or in the newer Barrel Cellar Room. The sunroom is bright and cheerful as is the gazebo. The Barrel Room has a very different vibe. Located on the lower level, it is a true wine cellar. With large wooden barrels and racks of wine, it is a bit darker and more intimate.

The Cellar Experience is a special event for two people. Visit the website to learn more about the Cellar Experience. Because

it is a true wine cellar and the temperature is true cellar temp between 55 and 60 degrees, dress appropriately. Don’t forget a sweater.

In addition to the intimate Cellar Experience, the cellar can be used for other events, holding up to 40 guests comfortably. As with other venues, reservations for special parties need to be made as far in advance as possible.

“We do hold weddings at Staller’s Estate Winery,” said Wendy. “We have had couples schedule their wedding ceremony out in the vineyard and then move to the Cellar for their reception.”

She explained that Staller does not provide food for weddings, but couples can use a caterer of their choice.

It’s been a big year

This has been a special year for the Stallers. In addition to the award-winning wines the couple has produced, Staller also creates vodka, cognac, brandy and a liqueur that tastes similar to Grand Marnier.

“This year we entered our brandy into the Finger Lakes International Competition, and it was awarded the 2024 Gold medal and was also awarded best of class,” shared Wendy. “We sell the brandy bottled and we have also bottled our Wisconsin Old Fashioned, made with our brandy. It is available in our gift shop and also is on our cocktail menu.”

It’s not just private parties that gather at the winery. On any given day, you may

find friends getting together for a short afternoon visit and enjoying a small table outside in the vineyards or under the pergola, while they enjoy a glass of wine, or a tasting accompanied with an item from the food menu.

“Private tastings can also be scheduled on most days,” added Wendy. “You can pair your wine tasting with chocolate flights, cheese wheels or a picnic platter.”

The chocolate flight pairs a different chocolate with each wine sample. Wendy shares her knowledge of wines during the private tastings, making it not just a pleasant social event but also a learning opportunity.

Staller Estate also serves a variety of custom-made cocktails made with liquor created from their own distillery. On the menu are the favorites, the Wisconsin Old Fashioned or a traditional Old Fashioned, the dressy Bloody Mary and a Lavendar Lemon Drop.

Special offerings

There is also a seasonal menu. A current favorite on this menu is the Purple Dragon Fruit Mojito. There are also a number of non-alcoholic offerings for those who prefer them.

“All the syrups used in these cocktails are created by hand on site,” Wendy explained. “We also offer cocktail classes on a monthly basis.”

Call and register for a class and learn all about creating perfect and unique cocktails.

A bride and groom arrive for their reception held outdoors in the vineyard.

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“Another new event that has been added this year is our Bingo games,” Wendy said. “We have been holding them about every other month, on Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Check the website for the next dates.”

The next special event at Staller is the October Harvest Dinner Oct. 13. The meal will again be prepared by chefs Maria and Jeff Halpin, known throughout the area, with the dinner from noon to 2 p.m.

The Harvest Dinner will start with an appetizer of the chef’s choice. This will be followed by fresh butternut squash soup, an autumn favorite. The salad will be an autumn salad with a maple dressing, followed by the main course – chicken fricassee with pumpkin alfredo pasta.



above: Wendy Staller displays a bottle of the brandy that was awarded a gold medal and the Best in Class award at the Finger Lakes International Competition. **above left:** The winery and distillery sells a variety of alcohol including an Old Fashioned made with the award winning brandy. **below:** The barrel cellar can host a variety of events from baby and bridal showers to special birthday celebration. It can hold up to 40 guests comfortably.

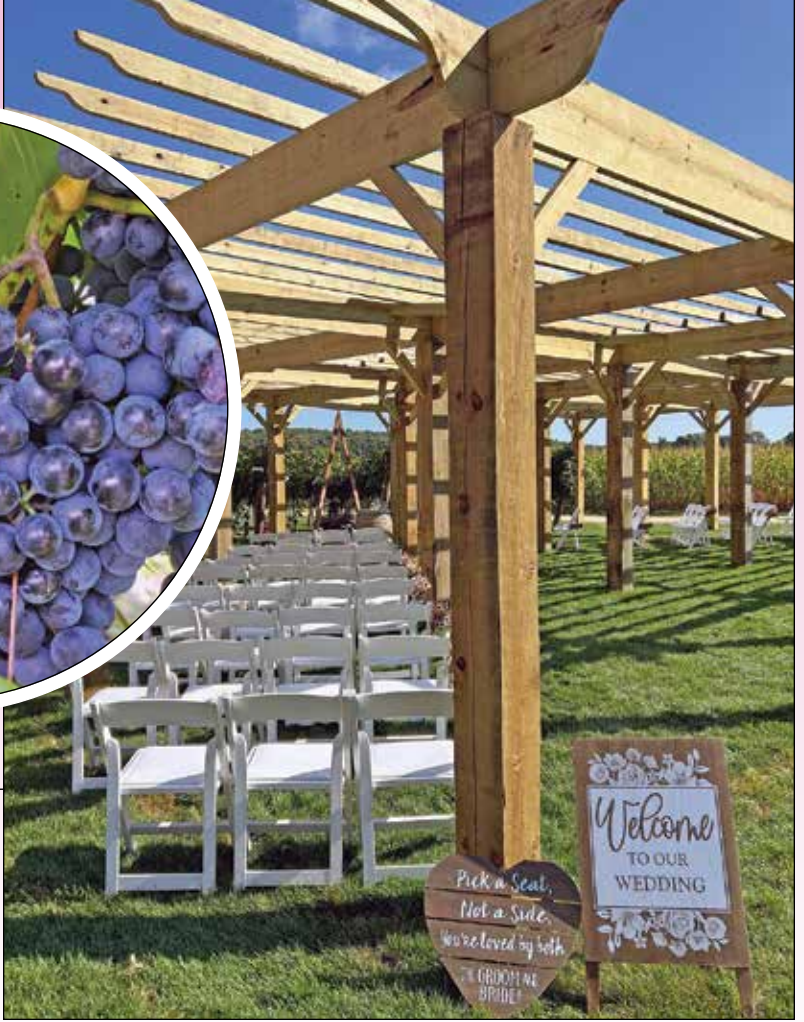
SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



Dessert will be a baked fall apple with toffee sauce. Order tickets online for this event before they sell out.

Staller Estate Winery is at W8896 County Road A, Delavan. Reach them by phone at 608-883-2100 or online at www.stallerestate.com. Email Wendy with questions at wendy@stallerestate.com. Or visit their Facebook page.

Fall hours are Wednesday and Thursday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends, Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Staller Estate Winery is currently closed Mondays and Tuesdays.



opposite: An old whiskey barrel is transformed into a planter with colorful flowers for a wedding. **at right:** The venue is ready for a wedding ceremony in the pergola with white chairs aligned for the guests.

PHOTOS COURTESY STALLER ESTATE *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

inset: The grapes at Staller are ready to be harvested to be turned into this year's wine.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



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Taking the Rustic Roads less traveled

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

There was a time when traveling in Wisconsin meant a ride through quiet open spaces and small roads, many unpaved and lined with the open country land and farms. But through the years, times and industry have changed and some have become paved multi-lane venues filled with advertising signs while others are Interstate highways that encourage us to get everywhere faster.

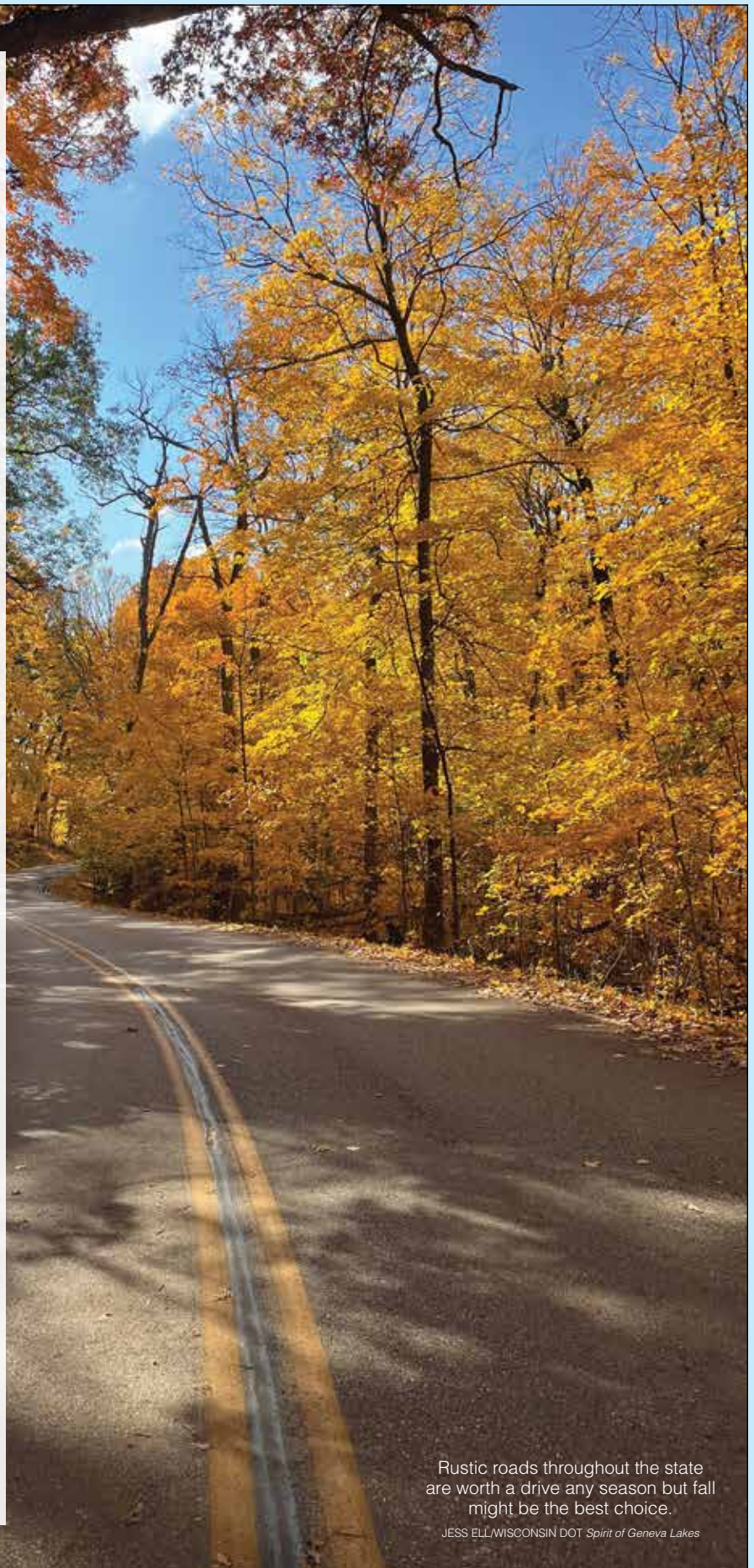
The laid-back days and beauty of the open country were fast disappearing when, in 1973, the state Legislature created the Rustic Road program to help to retain some of the picturesque country located throughout the state.

Although the plan was created in 1973, it wasn't until 1975 that Rustic Road No. 1 was designated. It's located just north of Medford and crosses through hills and valleys that were formed by the last Wisconsin glacier, which covered the area nearly 12,000 years ago.

So, what exactly makes a road a Rustic Road? According to Wisconsin DOT staff, it must have outstanding natural features along its borders, including such things as rugged terrain, native vegetation, and wildlife, along with open areas with agricultural vistas that make the road unique.

In the introduction to the 2024 Wisconsin Rustic Roads Guide, Governor Tony Evers shares his views.

"Rustic Roads take us to quiet scenes that define our state. These less-traveled routes show us the lakes that glaciers left behind and the bluffs they left untouched. They span our varied forests and tour our



Rustic roads throughout the state are worth a drive any season but fall might be the best choice.

JESS ELL/WISCONSIN DOT *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



diverse agricultural heritage. No matter how you travel these roads, or in what season, please enjoy the beauty of our state and the people you meet along the way,” Evers said.

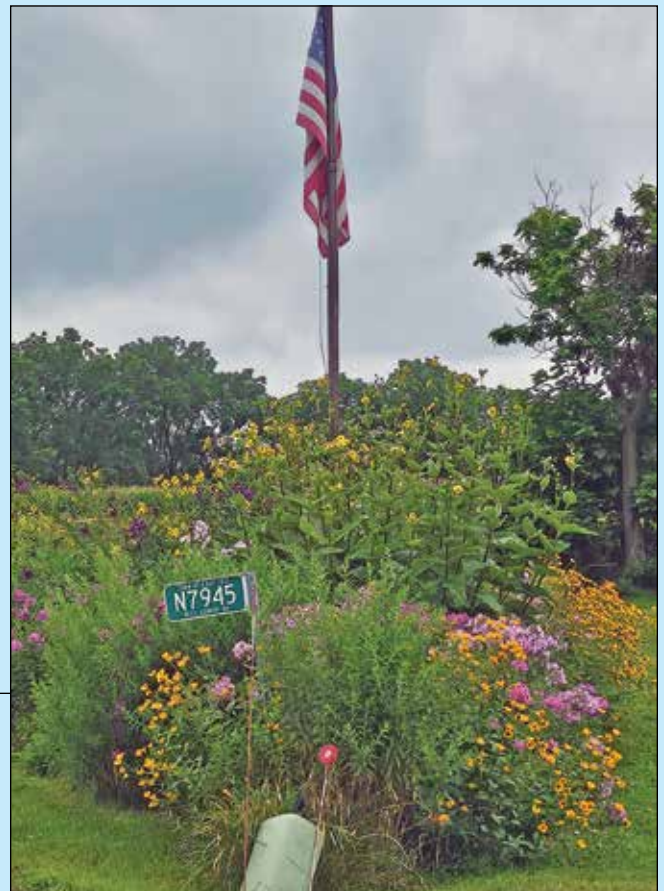
To become a Rustic Road, it must be nominated by residents who recognize the beauty and quality of the road, and there cannot be any plans for the road to undergo major improvements that would change its characteristics. The road may be dirt, gravel, or paved, or a combination of these road surfaces. The roads have a maximum speed of 45 miles per hour, but in some areas the speed limit is even less, especially in curvy or hilly areas. After all, there is no reason to hurry if you are trying to enjoy the countryside.

Rustic Road applications are voted on at board meetings in the fall and spring. A signed resolution of support from the community is required as part of the application. It can take several weeks up to several months depending on when an application is received.

It’s easy to find roads in the program, as they are marked with brown and yellow signs identifying them with the number the road has been assigned and, usually, the length of the road listed at the start of the road.

This year, two new Rustic Roads were created:

- R-125 is in northwest Wisconsin in Bayfield and Sawyer counties. It has both paved and unpaved sections along its 9.4-mile route. It includes glacial till deposits, some wetlands rich with native species of greenery, and several lakes along the route. With a closed forest canopy, it offers a cool, quiet backwoods feel and is located just east



at right: This display of flowers was in full bloom recently along a new rustic road in the area, outside of East Troy. **inset:** A variety of sights can be seen traveling along the rustic road routes including barns.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

above: This rustic road, flanked by fences, is shown in the midst of the leaves changing colors.

BOYD/WISCONSIN DOT *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

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Each rustic road in the state has signs signaling the beginning – which includes the route number and length (inset) – as well as where the designation ends.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

of the American Birkebeiner Trail, the site of America’s largest cross-country ski marathon.

- R-126 is in Walworth County, north of Highway 20 near East Troy. It’s only 3.6 miles in length and has a paved surface, but is a beautiful route with sweeping agricultural vistas, preserved farms and woodlots. The route includes the Honey Creek Streambank Protection Area, a 251-acre public recreation area that offers hiking, hunting, fishing, canoeing, birding, and, in the winter, cross-country skiing. At the end of Bell School Road – one of two roads included in the route – is the former Bell School No. 7, a one-room schoolhouse built in 1853 that has been converted to a private residence.

Other local rustic roads

There are several Rustic Roads in the Southern Lakes area for visitors to explore and enjoy including three that are off Highway 50, two east of Lake Geneva, and one to the west of Lake Geneva’s busy downtown business center.

You may have driven past these yellow and brown signs and wondered what they mean, and fall is an ideal time to explore them.

The road with the Rustic Road Sign R-12 is Back Road. How appropriate that a road that follows a curving route of hills and valleys and passes through a peaceful back countryside is named Back Road.

From Highway 50, Back Road makes its way to the community of Lyons and crosses the White River. It ends at Highway 36. Nearby and easily accessible is Rustic Road

R-11, which also travels between highways 36 and 50 and features a large, wooded area filled with oak, maple and hickory trees.

Of the four rustic roads close to downtown Lake Geneva, a favorite for many is Snake Road – known as R-29 – west of the city. Watch carefully for the turn onto Snake Road, which is a small, winding path that follows the shoreline of Geneva Lake until it reconnects with Highway 50 in the Town of Geneva. The lake itself is only visible in a few areas, but the natural beauty of the countryside, with plenty of curves, floral displays, tall trees, and split-rail fencing is a sight to see.

“As a motorcyclist riding on Snake Road, it is wonderful because of all the curves and turns and how you feel like you are in such a faraway, secluded area when you are actually right near downtown Lake Geneva,” shared Candace Faur Wawak, a Delavan resident.

“For a motorcyclist who loves nature, in the spring, it’s a beautiful ride for the fresh green of the trees and the bright flowers. In the fall, Snake Road is the best of the fall colors. At any time, it’s the way the sun comes through the leaves on the trees and the light plays across the road. It’s mesmerizing.”

Preserving them is key

Although the Rustic Road designation comes from the state, local governments retain jurisdiction over the road, giving them the flexibility to maintain the road in its current rustic state, if safety and drivability are maintained.

To preserve a Rustic Road’s charm and

special features, residents, visitors, and local governments are encouraged to:

- Keep Rustic Road improvements to a minimum to avoid disturbance of vegetation, cultural, or other special sites.
- Preserve the natural and scenic characteristics of land along Rustic Roads with zoning, building setback regulations, access control, sign control and other tools.
- Keep the driving speed lower (45 MPH max).
- Discourage industrial, high-density residential and most commercial development.
- Encourage the development or continued presence of commercial establishments compatible with a Rustic Road, such as antique shops, craft shops, rock shops, and produce markets.
- Bury electric power and communication lines on private easements where possible. Where it is not possible, add lines on existing poles or towers.
- Utility installations shall strive to preserve or restore the route’s rustic quality.
- Identify with roadside markers any historical names, structures, places, and events which complement and enhance the road’s rustic character.

To learn more about the program or to nominate a road, go to WIRusticRoads@dot.wi.gov or call 608-267-3614.

The 2024 Wisconsin Rustic Roads Guide, published by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Rustic Roads Board, may be requested in hard copy or downloaded from www.wisconsin.gov.

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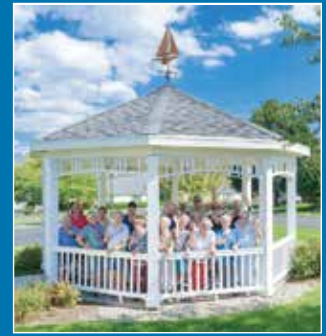
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Spiritualism in the Victorian Era

Dave Desimone shares the history of Spiritualism in the Victorian Era to guests gathered around the dining room table at Black Point Estate.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

On a cold, dark, rainy night – a Friday the 13th – more than a dozen visitors arrived at Black Point Estate, the elegant summer home of Conrad Seipp built in 1888, to explore the idea of Spiritualism in the Victorian Era.

These visitors arrived at the main entrance and – just as visitors would have when the Seipp family were in residence – were welcomed into the home. Greeted in the foyer by Black Point volunteers, offered a glass of white wine or water, each person was also given a card with one word printed on it, which would be important later in the evening.

“Welcome,” said Dave Desimone, director of Black Point. “Does anyone play the piano? You are welcome to play a piece or two if you would like.”

Music was an important part of any gathering at the Seipp home. Soon, someone in the group who acknowledged she could play provided music while the rest of the group gathered to chat. It was reminiscent of the days when the Seipp family entertained in the early 1900s.

The visitors were mostly strangers to each other, coming from Milwaukee,

Racine, Kenosha and Lake Geneva, but all were interested in learning more about Spiritualism in the Victorian Era.

Desimone called everyone to gather in the dining room, where the presentation would be given. Guests were directed to choose their seat based on the cards they had been given at entry. The cards – selected at random – distinguished whether one was a believer in Spiritualism, a skeptic, or uncertain of how they felt, for the evening, with each seated on a separate side.

Each guest was treated to a sweet cordial to sip during the program at Black Point. In the Victorian Era, these were popular as after-dinner drinks.

“Thank you for joining us today as we look at the history surrounding the rapid rise of Spiritualism in Victorian America,” Desimone began.

Fox sisters and others

“Most histories of Spiritualism begin in Hydesville, a small college town in upstate New York where in 1848, two adolescent sisters, Margaret and Kate Fox, initiated communication with the spirit of a dead man.”

At this time, the Fox sisters were 16 and 14 years of age, and claimed they

communicated with a deceased man in their home by knocking on the walls and the spirit would respond. Since the Victorians were fascinated by death and were open to finding a way to communicate with members of family or friends who had passed on, they were eager to learn more about the Fox sisters and their experience with the other world.

Sitting and listening to the story of the Fox sisters, guests appeared to be intrigued but the question remained as to if it was real.

The Fox Sisters were taken on the road and entertained groups with their ability to communicate with the dead. They became well known and their ability to communicate with the other world continued to attract audiences. They are credited with the creation of the Spiritualist Movement in America, as they made appearances and spread their beliefs.

The Spiritualism movement continued to grow all over the nation. It became thought of as a religion although it did not have its own church. Believers, and those that wanted to see proof, flocked to their performances.

The movement made its way to Wisconsin and Cora Scott and Mary Folsom Hayes Chynoweth, would become the next

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More spooky events

Here are some upcoming events to get into the spirit:

• **Spiritualism in the Victorian Era** – Spiritualism was a social and religious movement that claimed to channel the voices of the dead. This event, held at Black Point Estate and Gardens, will take visitors back in time to learn of the Spiritualism movement throughout the country and especially its growth in the Wisconsin area.

The event will be held in the dining room at Black Point Estate and Gardens. The program will be held on Oct. 4, 11, and 25 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$75. Children younger than 13 not allowed at this event.

Purchase tickets at blackpointestate.wisconsinhistory.org, boxoffice@wisconsinhistory.org or by calling 608-264-4848.

• **Sordid and Scandalous Walking Tour** – While Lake Geneva is a place of beauty, it has also had its share of weird, wicked and scandalous stories over the years. Learn about activities that have taken place while walking through the historic downtown area and the Maple Park neighborhood.

Knowledgeable Black Point Estate and Gardens historians will share information of notorious bank robberies, riots, prohibition, gangsters and more.

The tour will be held on Oct. 5, 12 and 19 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$20. Purchase tickets at blackpointestate.wisconsinhistory.org.

• **Poe at the Point** – Begin with a boat ride to Black Point, where participants will gather in the living room for a dramatic reading of some of Edgar Allen Poe's spookiest works, including "The Raven" and "The Tell Tale Heart." A return boat ride to the pier in Lake Geneva will give you a late-evening view of the lake.

The tour will be held on Oct. 17, 18 and 19 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$65 for adults, \$63 for seniors. Purchase tickets at blackpointestate.wisconsinhistory.org.



most prominent Spiritualists of the 19th Century after the Fox sisters. Wisconsin was their home, although they traveled, giving performances and sharing messages from the deceased, and eventually moved from the area.

Cora was said to have become a medium at 11 years of age and was known as a trans medium. She would fall asleep and when she awoke her slate was filled with writing. One such message she gave to her mother from her mother's deceased sister.

She moved to the east and was said to have advised many famous people such as Ulysses S. Grant, Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln. Cora was asked to go to England and conduct séances and agreed to a

six-month stay but stayed for several years.

Mary Folsom was known for her x-ray vision and was said to be able to stop people from drinking and smoking by placing them in a trance. She was considered a healer.

"Morris Pratt was a successful businessman from Whitewater who witnessed Cora Scott and Mary Folsom firsthand and rapidly became an ardent supporter of Spiritualism," Desimone.

Pratt became so enamored that he built the well-known Morris Pratt Institute in Whitewater, dedicated to teaching Spiritualism. It was called the Temple of Science. The school was a three-story building with two apartments on the first floor and

from top: Music fills the air just as it did when the Seipp family made this their summer home, courtesy of one of the evening's guests; Getting to know each other, program guests enjoy time together in the historical Black Point home.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

at left: In later years, Harry Houdini spent his time debunking fraudulent mediums. At one point he expressed concern that one of these fake mediums would kill him. at left, top: The Morris Pratt Institute in Whitewater was the first school of Spiritualism in the country.

COURTESY BLACK POINT *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

a large room where visiting Spiritualists presented programs.

“The second floor was devoted to business and, on the third floor a room, dedicated to Spiritualism, was painted completely white and visitors had to wear all white to be in the space,” Desimone said. “Séances were held in this room.”

Desimone continued taking visitors through a number of other well-known Spiritualist leaders, such as Leafy Anderson

– a Wisconsin-born Black woman seeking a way to practice Spiritualism in 1913. She founded the Eternal Life Christian Spiritualist Association and transformed herself into Madame Leafy Anderson. By 1920 she headed south to New Orleans.

Spiritualism had to hold on to the believers while still attracting new followers. To do so they created new and more startling tricks – or were they real forays into the other world? Many of the communications were nothing more than tricks, such as placing a ghost image of a loved one on a photograph of the living person known as Spirit Photography.

In the 1920s, Harry Houdini gave up his career as an escape artist to focus on unmasking and lecturing on fraudulent mediums. It is said that he lived in fear that one of them would murder him.

One hundred and seventy years since the Fox sisters started their contact with the other world, thousands of mediums have and



The Fox Sisters were just teenagers when they claimed to be able to communicate with a deceased person in their home.

COURTESY BLACK POINT Spirit of Geneva Lakes

continue to hold séances, and throughout this time, millions of people have believed in their ability to reach out to those who have passed on. Yet many of these have been unveiled as frauds.

Desimone ended the program by asking, “Is there anyone out there?” Guests at Black Point were left to ponder their beliefs as they returned to the dark and wet night and prepared to find their way out of the quiet back roads.

See the related sidebar on page 27 for details on upcoming Spiritualism programs at Black Point.

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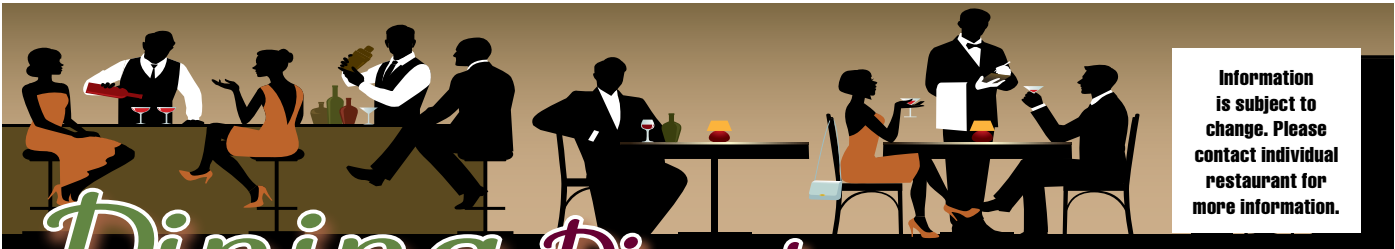
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