



Vol. 29 No. 12

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A TIME TO SHINE

Whether it's a display of nutcrackers at the Cornerstone Shop and Gallery in Lake Geneva or twinkling lights on the Christmas tree in your own living room, the holiday season brings a special sparkle to all. In this edition, we offer you features on the activities – from skiing and snowboarding to dining and New Year's Eve partying – that will help you make the most of the brightest season of them all.

PHOTO BY ED NADOLSKI
Spirit of Geneva Lakes





IT'S COMIN' UP

DECEMBER EVENTS

1, 2 Trees on Parade and Holiday Shopping at St. John's Community Center, 701 N. Lake Ave, Twin Lakes. twinlakeschamber.com

1 Tree Lighting and Santa Reception – 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Downtown Square in Elkhorn. Santa himself will light the town's own Christmas tree, then all will head over to the Matheson Memorial Library for crafts, cookies, hot chocolate and music.

1 Burlington 36th annual Christmas Parade, 6:30 p.m. Theme: Who-ville Christmas in Burlington. (262) 763-6044

1 Whitewater's Christmas Parade of Lights – 5 to 7 p.m., downtown, featuring the lighted holiday parade (begins at 6 p.m.), family fun activities, holiday shopping, storytelling, cookie decorating, roasted chestnuts and hot chocolate.

2 Union Grove Holiday Craft Fair, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Union Grove Elementary School, 1745 Milldrum Ave. Crafts, art, gifts, potted plants, wreaths, live music and more. (262) 891-3477

2 Waterford's annual Christmas Parade, 5:30 p.m. on Main Street. Santa and Mrs. Claus will greet children in the library following parade.

2 Annual Reindeer Run at Sunset Park, Elkhorn, 9 a.m., sponsored by the Elkhorn Recreation Department and Elkhorn Running Club with all proceeds going toward a Park Dedication Fund to replace outdated equipment. All participants will receive a Reindeer Run T-shirt, goodie bag and refreshments. Medals will be awarded to the top three male and female finishers in each age category, and fastest male and female overall. Prizes will be awarded for best holiday outfit. Registration is \$30 on the day of the race. runsignup.com and search "Elkhorn Reindeer Run." (262) 741-5114, elkhornparkandrec@cityofelkhorn.org.

2 Elkhorn's annual Christmas Card Town Parade, 1:30 p.m., downtown Elkhorn. Bundle up the family and grab a spot downtown to see Christmas-decorated floats, novelty acts, music, animals, and of course, Santa and Mrs. Claus. (262) 723-5788 or info@elkhornchamber.com

2 Union Grove Holiday Craft Fair, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Union Grove Elementary School, 1745 Milldrum Ave. Crafts, art, gifts, potted plants, wreaths, live music and more. (262) 891-3477

2 Waterford's annual Christmas Parade, 5:30 p.m. on Main Street. Santa and Mrs. Claus will greet children in the library following parade.

2 Midnight Magic, 10 a.m. to midnight. Old-fashioned Christmas celebration with a village-wide festival featuring pictures with Santa, an indoor crafter marketplace, shopping, parade, fireworks, holiday entertainment, horse drawn carriage rides and more.

www.mukwonagochamber.org

2 Annual Holiday Cookie Sale, 10 a.m. until noon or sold out, First Congregational Church, 76 S. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn – stock up on an assortment of holiday cookies. (262) 723-3246

2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17 Christmas Express Santa Train, 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. boarding for magical ride from the East Troy Depot, 2002 Church St., to Santa's Workshop at the Elegant Farmer. Children can visit Santa, get a photo taken, and complete with a craft project. Hot chocolate and cookies, too. The trolleys are heated and bathrooms are available at the East Troy Depot. Tickets: www.easttroyprr.org. Bring a non-perishable food item with each member of your party and receive a 10 percent discount on tickets at the depot. All donated items benefit the East Troy Food Pantry. Cost: adults, \$17.50; children (ages 3-14), \$15; toddlers, \$5.

2, 3, 9, 10 Old World Holiday Breakfast, Old World Wisconsin, W372 S9727 Highway 67, Eagle. Holiday buffet in our big, red Clausing Barn (262) 594-6301, oldworldwisconsin.org

2, 3, 9, 10 An Old World Christmas, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Old World Wisconsin, W372 S9727 Highway 67, Eagle. Daylong 19th-century celebration of Christmas tales and holiday customs, featuring Old World storytelling, live performances by holiday characters, free horse-drawn bobsled rides (or wagon rides, if there's no snow on the ground) available from noon to 3 p.m., caroling and hymn singing, food sampling from cherished recipes, and many, many more activities that capture the merriment of the season. (262) 594-6301, oldworldwisconsin.org

7 Holiday Open House – celebrate the holidays with Peoples Bank and the Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Peoples Bank, 837 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn. Call (262) 723-4200 or email twatts@peoplesbankwi.com.

9 Old Time Radio Show – "The New Andy Williams Holiday Show," 11 a.m. to noon, Lake Lawn Resort - Wisconsin Room, 2400 E. Geneva St., Delavan. The shows mimic the old time radio shows of the 20s, 30s and 40s – complete with actors and sound effects. The show is performed and broadcast in real time. Cost: \$10. Breakfast and show package is available for \$20. Reserve a seat at (262) 725-9155. www.lakelawnresort.com

17 Walworth County Agricultural Society, Inc.'s annual meeting, 7 p.m., Walworth County Fairgrounds, 411 E. Court St., Elkhorn. walworthcountyfair.com, (262) 723-3228

Although we make every attempt to provide accurate information regarding area events, dates and times may change or events may be cancelled. We suggest you call ahead prior to making travel plans.

THE SPIRIT

IS A PUBLICATION OF



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A well-decorated, natural Christmas tree is the centerpiece of the holiday season. Picking the right tree and caring for it properly are key to keeping looking fresh, tree industry experts say.

FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes



Symbol OF THE Season

Area tree farms are here to assist with a holiday tradition

Other than the birth of Christ, perhaps the most iconic and enduring symbol of the Christmas season is the decorated tree.

For many people, picking out the perfect tree is a daylong event that is rooted in tradition and family fun.

The Christmas tree as we know it began to appear in Germany in the 1500s. The early German trees were decorated with paper roses, apples, candies, nuts and accented with strips of red paper. Then candles were added to light the tree. With the addition of the candles, fire became a danger to these households.

By the late 1800s, hand-blown glass ornaments were produced in Germany and the area of Alsace-Lorraine (a small area on the border of Germany and France which has been part of each country over the years). Glass beads were strung together and used as garlands on the tree. These exquisite hand-blown ornaments became family treasures and were passed down from one generation to another.

Closer to home

The Christmas trees in early America were usually decorated the same way families had



Tree shoppers can select and cut their own Christmas tree at Country Side Trees in Walworth. The tree farm offers white pines, scotch pines, blue spruce, Frasier fir and Norway pines.



FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

decorated in Europe. Through the years American Christmas trees have taken on new looks. Today themed trees with ornaments all of one color or one type – such as all snowmen, angels or Santas – are popular. Victorian trees are also common.

For many, trees are a combination of ornaments from the past and present. We add new ones to the tree but continue to hold onto Grandma's glass ornament from Germany, the ones we purchased while on vacation, the ornaments given to children and those special ornaments made by our children.

Around the world

Today German Christmas trees are decorated with electric lights often in the style of the candles of old. Glass ornaments are the decoration of choice along with handmade chains and ornaments made by the children of the family. A special ornament in the shape of a pickle is hidden on the tree and the child who finds it receives an extra present. In olden days a real pickle was hung.

Like the early German Christmas trees, the people of France decorated the early trees with fruits, nuts, apples but also added dried cakes, pine cone dolls and colored paper shaped into flowers. Were these dried cakes the first of the holiday fruitcakes?

They began to use the glass ornaments after the 1858 drought left apples, cakes, and nuts in short supply. The glass blowers produced ornaments in the shape of the fruits that were not available. Of course candles, then electric light strings brought the tree to life. The tree was topped with a star symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem.

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Why buy a real tree?

Queen Victoria of England brought decorated trees into the palace and, of course, the fashionable people of England followed the lead of the Monarch. Victorian-decorated trees with blown glass ornaments, jeweled ornaments and crystal or glass garlands and lit by candles gave the palace and the homes a festive appearance. Victorian style trees are still popular.

From Eastern Europe colorful candles were added to the trees and birds were made from eggs to decorate the tree. The Ukrainians also decorated with eggs but painted intricate, exquisite designs and gave them as gifts to friends and family to decorate their trees.

In the early 1800s, the Scandinavian countries began the practice of decorating Christmas trees. Their trees had a very different look. White lights, first candles and then electric strings of lights, lit up the tree. Swedish or Norwegian flags would be attached to ribbons and hung from the top of the tree to the bottom. Straw ornaments in the shapes of stars, angels, or intricate designs were the most popular. Tole painting on wood often on a piece of wood in the shape of a heart could also be found hanging on the tree.

The people of Norway each year since 1947 have given a Norwegian Spruce to the people of London in gratitude for their support in helping to protect Norway during World War II. The tree is usually 50 feet tall and 50-60 years old. It is displayed in Trafalgar Square in London with a very impressive lighting ceremony that is still well attended after all these years.

Whatever the customs and traditions, Christmas trees are a sparkling and fragrant reminder of the season.

Here are two of Spirit magazine's preferred area tree farms:

Country Side Trees

**W7015 N. Walworth Road,
Walworth (262) 275-5105
www.countrysidetreeswi.com**

Cut your own trees or purchase freshly cut trees, freshly made wreaths and garlands available. Open until Dec. 24. Weekday hours Monday through Friday 10 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Saturday

Here are some facts to consider from the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association:

- Christmas trees are grown as a crop for you, just like pumpkins and flowers.

- Christmas tree farming is sustainable: two to three trees are planted for every one that is cut.

- Trees are locally grown, keeping money in the local economy.

- Tree farming provides local jobs each year (planting, digging, re-planting, shearing, mowing, harvesting, delivery, sales, machine maintenance, wreath making, office personnel).

- Tree farms provide green space and habitat for wildlife. These farms are maintained in an early succession forest with young trees and plenty of ground covers. This provides habitat for deer and bear, ground birds such as turkey and quail, rodents, which bring in predators such as hawks, foxes, and bobcats, and flowering plants that help feed butterflies, bees and all manner of insects.

- Real trees are good for us. They utilize carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, recyclable through decomposition.

- Celebrating the holiday season with a real Christmas tree is a long-standing tradition. In 1856, Franklin Pierce, our 14th President, brought the first Christmas tree into the White House.





FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes



Whatever the customs and traditions, Christmas trees are a sparkling and fragrant reminder of the season."

and Sunday 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Choose from white pines, scotch pines, blue spruce, Fraser fir and Norway pines. Assistance is available through the Upper Midwest Newfoundland Club and the Janesville/Beloit Kennel Club.

There will be a bake sale on Dec. 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Special adoption events featuring dogs from Lakeland Animal Shelter will be held on Dec. 9 and 10.

T.P. Pines

Holy Hill Road just west of St. John's Church, Twin Lakes (262) 877-2797 or (262) 877-2344

Bob Livingston of T.P. Pines welcomes all to choose one of their freshly cut trees from an array of Fraser firs, balsam or white pine trees. He advises that Fraser firs are the "Cadillac of Christmas Trees" due to fragrance and needle retention. Balsam is also very fragrant and has a flat needle. White Pine is a basic lumber tree, which also works well as a Christmas tree if you have lightweight ornaments. Scotch pines with long needles are also available.

T.P. Pines will help load trees into vehicles or provide delivery within 10 miles. Prices vary depending on type of tree and size. It is open from 3 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends.

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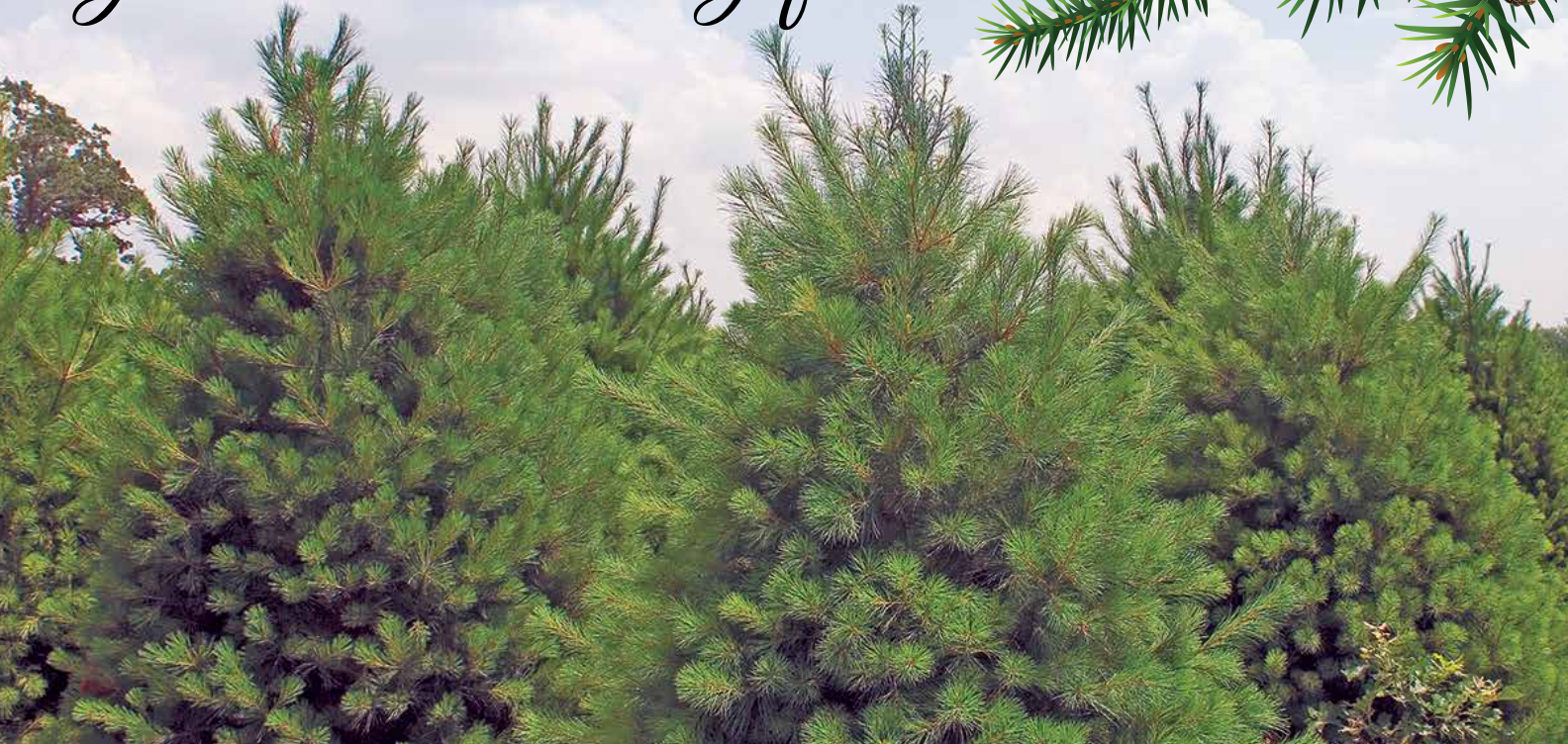
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Secrets to keeping your tree looking fresh



INDUSTRY EXPERTS OFFER TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS TREE CARE

The key to maintaining your live Christmas tree throughout the holiday season is to give it the proper care from the time it is purchased until the tree is removed from your home.

Maintaining a high moisture level in the tree is the single most important factor in reducing needle loss and keeping the tree fresh. This is accomplished primarily through the use of water-holding stands and maintaining the water level in the stand above the base of the tree.

Every year there are many articles written concerning the handling and care of Christmas trees. Unfortunately, they often contain erroneous information.

The following research-based guidelines will help you to maintain the freshness and aroma of your live Christmas tree this holiday season.

- Use a tree stand with an adequate water-holding capacity. A tree stand should have a water basin that provides 1 quart

of water per inch of stem diameter. For most Christmas trees, the stand should hold at least 1 gallon of water. A cut tree will absorb a surprising amount of water, particularly during the first week, so replenish the water daily.

- The tree stand should fit your tree. Some stands have circular rings at the top, so the ring must be large enough for the trunk to go through the hole. Avoid whittling down the sides of the trunk to fit a stand. The outer layers of wood are the most efficient in taking up water and should not be removed.

- If the tree is to be stored more than a couple days before display, it is advisable to place its trunk in water and store it in a cool, shaded and protected area such as an unheated garage.

- If the tree has been cut within the past 12 hours, it will not be necessary to recut the trunk prior to display indoors. If it has been longer than 12 hours since harvest,

the trunk should be recut to improve water uptake.

- Cutting off a disk of wood about ¼-inch thick from the base of the trunk is all that is necessary before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis. Don't cut the trunk at an angle, or into a v-shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree in the stand and also may reduce the amount of water available to the tree.

- Keep displayed trees away from sources of heat (fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, direct sunlight). Lowering the room temperature will slow the drying process, resulting in less water consumption each day.

- The temperature of the water used to fill the stand is not important and does not affect water uptake.

- Check the stand daily to make sure that the level of water does not go below the base of the tree. With many stands, there



FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

Proper care can keep a Christmas tree shining brightly – and safely – throughout the holiday season, according to tree industry experts.

can still be water in the stand even though the base of the tree is no longer submerged in water.

- Drilling a hole in the base of the trunk does not improve water uptake.
- The use of IV-type devices to supply water directly to holes drilled into the sides of the tree trunk is not as effective as displaying the tree in a more traditional, water-holding tree stands.
- Applying anti-transpirants to the tree does not significantly reduce the rate of moisture loss. These products are marketed as a way to block evaporation from the foliage surface, but in reality they have little effect on a cut tree displayed indoors.
- Adding water-holding gels to the stand is not beneficial and they can reduce the amount of water in the stand that is available to the tree.
- Do not use additives in the water, including floral preservatives, commercial tree preservatives, molasses, sugar, bleach, soft drinks, aspirin, honey, and other concoctions. Clean water is all that is needed to maintain freshness.
- Displaying trees in water with proper care is much more effective in reducing fire hazards than spraying trees with flame retardants. Some flame retardants can damage needles and actually increase the rate of moisture loss from trees.
- Monitor your tree for dryness. Run your fingers across the needles to determine if they are dry and brittle. If the needles break easily or fall off in your hand, the tree is dry and should be removed from the house.

A well-cared-for tree should normally remain fresh at least three to four weeks before drying to an unacceptable level.

This article was written by Ricky M. Bates of the Department of Horticulture at Penn State University. It is provided here courtesy of the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association.



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RIDIN' THE RAILS WITH...

Santa



Santa and Mrs. Claus take a ride on the East Troy Railroad's Christmas Train. The railroad's holiday festivities continue through Dec. 17.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

Christmas
Trains are
running at the
East Troy
Railroad



The fun of the holiday season joins with nostalgia of days gone by on the Christmas Trains at the East Troy Railroad Museum.

The annual holiday event is running Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 17 from the East Troy Depot, 2002 Church St., East Troy.

The fun, family-friendly rides take passengers from the depot to Santa's Workshop at the Elegant Farmer, Mukwonago, and back. The rides take a little less than 90 minutes round-trip, and they include Christmas carols on the trains and hot chocolate and cookies at the Elegant Farmer, where kids can visit with Santa and have their photos taken.

"Santa's Workshop will be better than ever and kids will receive a small gift that is fitting for the occasion," East Troy Railroad Museum President Ryan Jonas said. "You might also see an elf or two and lots of Santa's Helpers along the way."

The historic railroad cars are heated and rest rooms are available at the East Troy depot. Tickets can be purchased online anytime and are \$17.50 for adults, \$15 for children (ages 3 to 14), and \$5 for toddlers who ride on their caregiver's lap. Advance

The East Troy Railroad's Christmas Train departs from the East Troy depot at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. on weekends through Dec. 17. Tickets can be purchased at www.easttroyrr.org/christmas-train. Reservations are required.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

reservations are required.

Trains depart at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Nov. 25 and 26, and Dec. 2, 3, 9, 10, 16 and 17.

Purchase tickets online at www.easttroyrr.org/christmas-train.

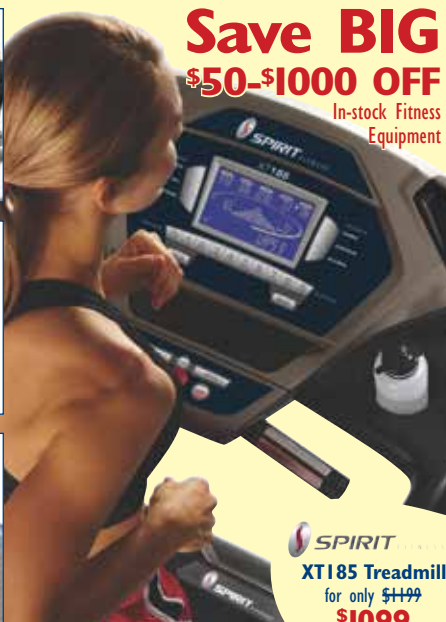
The East Troy Railroad Museum operates regular 14-mile round trip excursions from its historic East Troy depot and

museum to Indianhead Park in Mukwonago, with a stop at the popular Elegant Farmer store and deli. Celebrating 110 years of riding the rails through Southeast Wisconsin's Kettle Moraine countryside, the not-for-profit railroad is operated and managed by more than 130 volunteers.

For more information, visit www.easttroyrr.org or call 262-642-3263.

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**A look at two of the
area's winter fun destinations**



Wilmot Mountain offers lessons for children and adults at its family friendly facility.

FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes



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A real snow job

WILMOT MOUNTAIN OFFERS A WHOLE NEW SKIING EXPERIENCE

For many the feeling of the cold, crisp air with those first snowflakes tickling our noses and falling gently on our hair and clothing remind us of those days of our childhood when we embraced winter and could not wait to get outside and enjoy fun in the snow.

We engaged in snowball fights, making snow angels, building snowmen, sledding, ice skating, tubing, tobogganing, and that special winter activity skiing. For some it was cross country skiing in local parks or outdoor fields, while for others it was that special treat, a trip to a downhill ski slope.

Located here in the Midwest, there are downhill skiing

by **Sandra Landen
Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

facilities that are easily accessible. Not the large mountains like those found in the western United States, but big enough and with sufficient height and difficulty to make a day of skiing fun.

One such facility that has been a favorite in the area for 80 years is Wilmot Mountain, conveniently located just north of the Illinois-Wisconsin border. It is the place where many local families learned to ski.

"Places like Wilmot Mountain are where families learn to ski and develop their love for skiing," said Rachael Muhlenbeck, marketing and public relations manager for Wilmot Mountain, now a Vail Resorts Company.



Skiers have been enjoying the hills at Wilmot Mountain for eight decades. When Vail Resorts bought the facility, it made multiple improvements to the grounds, restaurant and buildings.

FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

Wilmot is one of these easily accessible ski facilities where families can go for a day or a weekend to enjoy time on the hill. It is often after perfecting their skiing locally that they move on to taking longer ski trips to more intense slopes in places such as Vail, Keystone, or Breckenridge, which are known as world class resorts.

Wilmot first opened in 1938, when Walter Stopa leased property from a local farmer in the Wisconsin border town of Wilmot to open a skiing facility, which he named Wilmot Hills. It soon became a favorite for residents from Chicago and Milwaukee and surrounding areas, as the place to go for outside winter activities.

Surprisingly it was not until 1950, according to the Wilmot Mountain website, that the facility became the first to master the art of snowmaking by using rubber hoses, aluminum pipes and sprinkler heads along with water and air.

Over the years, many changes and improvements were made. Lights were installed to allow nighttime skiing and before the 1970 season, Wilmot Mountain's first chairlift was installed.

New features were added regularly including jumps, and the Iron Kettle restaurant opened for full service dining.

The 21st century added other changes including the tubing facility, which provided another outdoor activity for family members of any age to enjoy a day in the snow together. Snowboarding also became popular at Wilmot. But the biggest change occurred when Wilmot was purchased by Vail Resorts in January 2016.

Big changes

For those who have not been to Wilmot Mountain since its purchase by Vail Resorts, they will be in for a surprise. Vail has made \$13 million worth of "epic" improvements to give it a brand new look, Muhlenbeck said.

"Everything from the base area to the ski lifts have been upgraded to provide a more interesting and exciting day on the slopes," she said.

The new lifts' towers and chairs were brought from Colorado and allow an increased capacity. Skiers are now

able to spend more time on the slopes rather than waiting for a ride as the replacements are three- and four-person lifts.

Teaching the kids

One of the new areas that will be enjoyed by families is the state of the art children's ski and snowboard school and enhanced beginner area, which opened in the former Wilmot Mountain maintenance building.

The rope tows have been replaced by two new surface conveyor lifts making easy access for kids to get to the top of the hill. The children taking skiing lessons also have an open space for play and their own lunch and break room. In this area the learning terrain has been re-graded to be more accessible for teaching beginners.

A variety of classes are available as starting children young and teaching them the correct way of skiing is a way to help them have a safe and successful ski experience.

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Along with skiing and tubing, Wilmot Mountain offers snowboarders challenging terrain, including rails.



FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

skiers of any age, there are nearly 120 skiable acres, 23 trails, seven lifts, two surface conveyor lifts and progression terrain parks.

Returning skiers will be excited by the new improvements as they spend a day or several days skiing down the hills. The latest snow-making techniques will keep the surfaces in the best possible condition, Muhlenbeck said.

Other things to do

Downhill skiing is not the only activity to enjoy. Snow tubing is a fast growing winter activity that is enjoyed by young and old. Families find tubing an enjoyable activity for all the family members.

No need for lessons or any great skill. Tubes are available at Wilmot, just bring enthusiastic family members, wearing warm clothing to withstand the cold weather and the force of the cold winds, hats and goggles or sunglasses. No need for lessons; just grab the tube settle on and let gravity do the rest.

Two surface conveyor belts return tubers to the top of the hill for their next run down. Wilmot has 22 tubing lanes, more than 1,000 feet long.

When the cold becomes too much, visitors can enjoy a snack or a warm drink in the tubing lodge, which overlooks the tubing hills.

The snow tubing area is not located at the same entrance as the ski and snowboard hills, but about a half mile south of the ski and snowboard entrance.

The Terrain Parks offer a wild experience for snowboarders and snow skiers.

According to the website, "The newly expanded progression terrain parks will offer unique and innovative features designed and created by terrain park staff at Vail Resorts' Western resorts, as well as the addition of a new high speed rope tow to enable skiers and snowboarders to spend more time in the terrain park."

Visit Walt's Tavern

The snow surfaces aren't the only thing that's changed since Vail Resorts purchased the property. Upon arrival at the base lodge visitors will notice a completely new look.

The former Iron Kettle restaurant has been redesigned and re-named Walt's Tavern, after Walter Stopa, the founder of Wilmot Mountain.

The redesigned restaurant includes comfortable lounge seating, and updated casual dining

Walt's Tavern is the space to stop and enjoy a drink or snack while waiting for the kids to finish their ski lessons. Or it is the perfect place to bring friends and family for lunch and dinner, enjoying the view from the floor to ceiling windows and the fine elevated tavern cuisine that includes enjoyable starters, and gourmet sandwiches.

The Lodge has also been updated and enlarged with an additional 400 seats for skiers to enjoy a break or lunch. With farmhouse-style bench seating that overlooks the ski hills, it is a spot to enjoy lunch with friends or family, and spend time chatting with other skiers.

Walkup service areas are divided into various food items to provide fast self service to get skiers back out on the mountain. The Lodge has a new bar where signature cocktails can be enjoyed. Wi-Fi is available throughout the space.

The Epic ski passes for the 2017-18 season are on sale. There are a variety of passes that include admission for several days to full season passes. Single day passes are also available.

The passes may be purchased for local skiing at Wilmot or there are a variety of different passes that include use of the many other Vail resorts properties in the western states at www.epicpass.com or by calling 970-754-0005.

Wilmot Mountain is at 11931 Fox River Road, Wilmot, Wisconsin. Visit them on line at www.wilmotmountain.com or reach them by phone at 262-862-2301, or email at WilmotMountaininfo@VailResorts.com.

Tubing is just one of the fun activities for kids of all ages at Wilmot Mountain.



FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

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The Mountain Top at Grand Geneva Resort and Spa as seen from the Leinenkugel Lodge.

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winter fun

The Mountain Top at Grand Geneva Resort and Spa features 20 ski slopes covering more than 30 acres of downhill ski runs and terrain with elevations peaking at 1,086 feet.

The ski and snowboarding offerings are perfect for winter getaways for all levels, according to staff at The Mountain Top.

Some additional amenities and services offered by The Mountain Top include:

- The “Burton Experience” Learn to Ride program designed to help newcomers of any type.
- Skiing and snowboarding all winter long with The Mountain Top’s snowmaking capabilities
- Three chairlifts and two carpet lifts.

- Six-acre Terrain Park with dedicated lift.
 - Lessons offered by professional ski instructors for kids and adults
 - Equipment rentals
 - Trolley transportation from guest rooms at Grand Geneva and Timber Ridge Lodge
- After a day in the snow, skiers and snowboarders can relax and enjoy a warm fire, hot beverage and food at the Leinenkugel Mountain Top Lodge. The lodge offers bites such as a turkey avocado sandwich and hand-tossed wings.

Ski packages

And for those who want to make it a weekend getaway, the resort offers a few



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specialty packages to enjoy skiing and snowboarding.

These include:

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Celebrate the New Year slope style with the whole family at The Mountain Top. The package includes a two-night stay in a deluxe guestroom, four lift tickets for one day of skiing and snowboarding at The Mountain Top, a dinner buffet for four at the Forum at Grand Geneva, family games and activities, party favors and a midnight balloon drop. The package is valid Dec. 30 through Jan. 2.

Stay and Ski Free: Stay the night at Grand Geneva Resort and Spa Sunday through Thursday and ski free at The Mountain Top. Package includes overnight accommodations (deluxe guestrooms, suites and new villas), two lift tickets for one day of skiing or snowboarding at The Mountain Top, and 15 percent off WELL Spa + Salon services.

Other offers include the Family Ski special, where a beginner can receive an area ticket, one-hour group lesson and ski rental for \$85 per person on Friday through Sunday and holidays, and \$70 Monday through Thursday.

For those who would prefer a private family instructor, the fee increases by \$60.

The resort also offers the Snow Cubs program, a 90-minute program designed for children 3 to 6 years old. Participants are introduced to skiing or snowboarding in a controlled setting under the supervision of a professionally trained instructor.

A similar program, Mountain Mites, is designed for children 6 to 14 years of age and is a series of three-week sessions.

About the resort

Grand Geneva Resort and Spa is an award-winning, all-seasons resort set on 1,300 acres in the Lake Geneva area. The property features 609 guest accommodations; WELL Spa + Salon; two championship 18-hole golf courses; The Mountain Top – a three-chair/20-run ski and snowboard facility; 62,000-square-feet of meeting and convention space and three restaurants.

For more information, visit www.grandgeneva.com.



COURTESY OF GRAND GENEVA Spirit of Geneva Lakes

With three chairlifts and two carpet lifts, the Mountain Top provides plenty of ways to get back to the top.



COURTESY OF GRAND GENEVA Spirit of Geneva Lakes

The Mountain Top offers ski and snowboard lessons for people of all ages from professional instructors.



The views from the top of the hill provide a spectacular backdrop for photos, as this snowboarding couple discovered.



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For the love of...

Books



Kayleen Rohrer opened InkLink Books on the East Troy Village Square in July, making a decades-old dream come true.

TRACY OUELLETTE *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Tiny store
with big
ideas
sprouts in
East Troy



or avid readers – those who have been surrounded by books since their first word – there's something special about a bookstore. It's more than just a place to pick up the latest novel or biography – it's a destination.

And while the national chain brick-and-mortar bookstores might have large selections to peruse and purchase, it's the small, independent bookstores that can be truly magical for literature lovers.

Tucked away in a small storefront on the East Troy Village Square is one of those bookstores. InkLink Books opened in July and for the owner, Kayleen Rohrer, it was a dream come true.

by **Tracy Ouellette**
STAFF WRITER

"I've always wanted to open a bookstore. It's been a dream of mine for a long time. I've been keeping lists of books I wanted to sell for ages," she said.

"Like for about 20 years," her husband James Rohrer added.

The quaint shop reflects Kayleen's passion for literature and her personality with its warm, welcoming appeal and a touch of whimsy.

"I had a vision of a store that would be like walking back in time," she said. "I wanted it to look like an old, Parisian bookshop."

She had the bookshelves custom-crafted by a local woodworker, Dave August.

"He did a phenomenal job," she said. "I wanted an old-fashioned look and he knew

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“I had a vision of a store that would be like walking back in time. I wanted it to look like an old, Parisian bookshop.”

exactly what I needed.”

Murals fill the walls

Another area artisan also helped take Kayleen’s vision from the idea stage to reality. Stacey Williams Ng, of Mequon, painted the four murals on the walls of the bookstore.

“I had this vision of Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom,” Kayleen said. “I knew I wanted a mural on the ceiling and because I couldn’t get Athena out of my head, I knew it had to be her. So, I had Stacey out here to look at the space and she expanded on the idea, offering to do four murals of other Goddesses of Wisdom from different areas of the world.”

The four goddesses are Athena, who is on the ceiling; Saga, the Norse goddess who reclines atop the bookcases on the mezzanine level; Seshat, the Egyptian goddess; and Saraswati, the Hindu goddess.

Kayleen said she couldn’t be happier with how the store turned out and has been humbled by all the support she’s received from the community since the doors opened.

“It’s been absolutely amazing,” she said. “And it’s not just people from East Troy who come here, it’s people from all over.”

A ‘gem’ for the area

In fact, a gentleman from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, visited the store Sept. 28. Bob Manson came to East Troy for the purpose of checking out InkLink as part of his mission to support local, independent bookstores across the nation.

Manson has visited nearly 300 independent bookstores in the last three years.

“I’ve covered just about every state,” he said. “And a few in Canada and Mexico, too.”

Manson said his bookstore adventure began when he read “My Bookstore:



InkLink Books has an old-world feel to its décor and is at home on the historic East Troy Village Square. It is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.



Saga, the Norse Goddess of Wisdom, is one of four murals decorating InkLink Books in downtown East Troy. The other three murals are the Egyptian, Hindu and Greek Goddesses of Wisdom – Seshat, Saraswati and Athena, respectively.

Writers Celebrate Their Favorite Places to Browse, Read, and Shop” and he decided to visit all of the bookstores profiled. He has since expanded his travels and has blog where people can read about his bookstore discoveries, theindiebobspot.blogspot.com.

“I find places like this (InkLink) and I just am in awe,” Manson said. “I hope the people of East Troy appreciate what a gem this is. So many towns have nothing.”

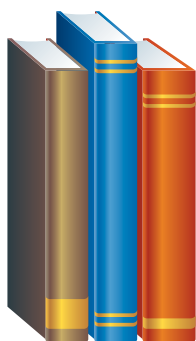
Manson said one of the things he’s discovered in his bookstore tour is that there are actually more independent bookstores opening in the country than are closing.

“Don’t believe the occasional national article you read about bookstores closing everywhere,” he said. “Yes, some are, but many more are opening, which is so exciting. Shopping local is so important.”

That is one concept the Rohrsers also hold close to their hearts.

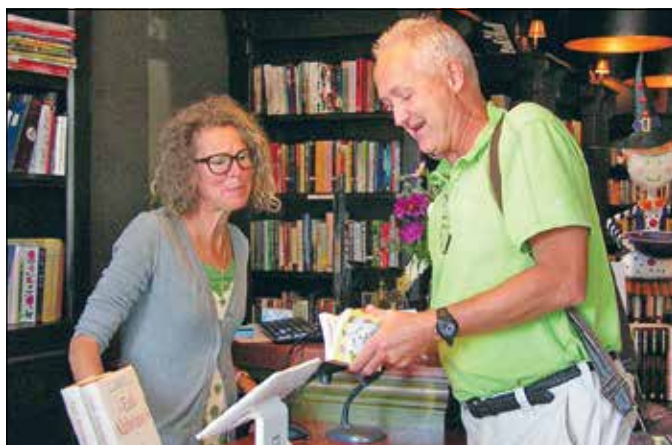
“There is a value added feature to a store like this,” Kayleen said. “We’re more than just a shop, we’re part of the community.”

“Even some people who don’t buy a book have come in to tell us what a great thing this is for the community,” James added. “It’s drawing attention to East Troy and what we have here. It’s what we need.”



Downtown renewal

The Rohrsers and their family have been instrumental in the revitalization of the East Troy Village Square for many years. They have purchased and restored, or are in the process of restoring, several of the old buildings on the square, including the popular coffee shop/café, 2894 On Main, which hosts InkLink’s periodic Read and Feed book dinner events, which include dinner and discussion on a featured book. Contact the store for more information of these events.



TRACY OUELLETTE *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

InkLink Books owner Kayleen Rohrer tries not to laugh as bookstore enthusiast Bob Manson, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, reads jokes from one of the books in the store. Manson travels North America to support independent bookstores and visited InkLink recently.

James said he has a passion for restoring the buildings, which are more than 150 years old, and the history of East Troy, which has been demonstrated repeatedly as building after building has been restored, or, in one case, rebuilt in the same design with the same footprint.

The coffee shop, which is next to the bookstore, was the first step for the Rohrer family and has become an anchor for further development on the Village Square, starting with InkLink, because what goes better with a good cup of coffee or tea than a good book?

InkLink Books is at 2890 Main St., East Troy. The store is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, call (262) 642-9607, or find it on Facebook.

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HEATHER RUENZ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Lakeside
Fireplace
offers large
showroom
to showcase
options

Though it's only been open a few months, Lakeside Fireplace, in the former Hearthside fireplace building on the north end of Lake Geneva, has seen a steady stream of business.

"(We) have been doing a lot of fireplace installs and conversions with gas logs," Frank Stellato, store manager, said.

He said a lot of people are choosing to convert from wood to gas while adding a gas log set to maintain the traditional fireplace look.

"The conversion for most people is more for the convenience than anything because you flip a switch and you're good to go," Stellato said.

Lakeside carries three brands of

by **Heather
Ruenz**
STAFF WRITER

fireplaces – Heat and Glo, Heatilator and Quadra-Fire – to offer a wide variety of fireplaces as well as the ability to convert a wood-burning fireplace to gas.

Stellato said the store underwent a major remodel and now features a large, open showroom with several working models on display – an advantage for those considering a fireplace purchase or conversion.

"The wide variety of displays we have in the showroom really helps people make those decisions and we're here with them every step of the way," Stellato said.

While some people prefer a traditional-looking fireplace, he said the new, modern look is becoming more and more popular.

"Brass is making its way out, I would

“

The wide variety of displays we have in the showroom really helps people make those decisions and we're here with them every step of the way.”



HEATHER RUENZ Spirit of Geneva Lakes

The entry at Lakeside Fireplace features this large fireplace and a custom outdoor table made out of pier cribs from Geneva Lake.

say, with more people choosing dark or chrome looks," he said.

Sometimes giving a fireplace a new look can be achieved easily.

"For example, we have wall panels and doors from Stoll Industries for those that want to give their fireplace a new look. They also customize doors, whether you want a design on it or your family's name... basically, if you can draw it they'll make it," he said.

"We also sell lightweight, non-combustible mantels for fireplaces so they can go closer to the flames whereas the old, wood ones had to be a certain distance," he added.

Stellato said there are options to fit just about any budget for those wanting a fireplace, beginning at roughly \$1,600.

"We can do small jobs all the way up to large, complete fireplaces including the stonework, installment and venting," he said.

Stellato said safety is top priority and recommends an annual service inspection to maintain fireplaces, fire pits and grills.

"We clean the unit annually to make sure it's safe and we also diagnose and tune it, as needed," he said.

Under the agreement, which saves customers about 50 percent the cost of a service call, Lakeside Fireplace will schedule an annual inspection and maintenance of fireplaces. The company also offers annual service for grills and fire pits.

"That means no more worrying about your products performing during prime season," Stellato said.

All of the technicians at Lakeside Fireplace are certified through Hearth and Home Technology, and the company offers full service on fireplaces, stoves, grills and smokers, removal and remodeling of old fireplaces, and installation of gas lines, electrical, mantels and stone surrounds.

While indoor fireplaces are the main feature in the showroom at Lakeside, the company also has on display a variety of outdoor fireplaces, fire tables, fire pits and fire urns and heaters with wall-mounted and freestanding options.

The front of the store has several grills on display – including some that can be customized for those building outdoor kitchens, and they distribute brick ovens and smokers. Lakeside is also an AmeriGas distributor for propane tank exchange.

In addition to the standard outdoor living features, Stellato said Lakeside offers custom, one-of-a-kind furniture made with



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Frank Stellato (left), store manager at Lakeside Fireplace, and Linda O'Connor, office manager, sit next to a modern-style gas fireplace on display at the store.

HEATHER RUENZ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

 The advertisement is framed by a string of colorful Christmas lights (red, blue, green, orange, purple) along the top, bottom, and sides. The background shows a store interior with various lamps and home decor items. In the center, there is a white oval containing the following text:

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HEATHER RUENZ *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*



A variety of gas log sets by Real Fyre are on display at Lakeside Fireplace, to give an appearance of wood.

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Discover Wisconsin to focus on Lake Geneva

An episode of Discover Wisconsin highlighting things to do in Lake Geneva during the winter season was scheduled to air at 10 a.m. Dec. 3 on WITI TV 6 in Milwaukee.

Produced in partnership with VISIT Lake Geneva and Discover Wisconsin, "Lake Geneva – It's a Wonderful Lake" will reach more than 500,000 viewers across the Midwest including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Northern Illinois and Upper Michigan.

This is the second episode Discover Wisconsin has aired this season featuring the Lake Geneva area. The first, "There's No Place Like Lake Geneva in the Fall," aired in August and can be viewed online at discoverwisconsin.com.

"Winter in Lake Geneva is a great time to visit, and Discover Wisconsin captures the fun perfectly," said Ed Svitak, president of VISIT Lake Geneva. "Starting with the holiday season to Winterfest and the U.S. National Snow Sculpting Competition, and all of your favorite winter activities in between, viewers will have the opportunity to see winter at its best – Lake Geneva style."

The show is hosted by Mariah Haberman and Eric Paulsen, with the duo kicking things off at some of the shops along Delavan's Historic Brick Street including the oldest department store in the United States located on a brick street, Bradley's Department Store. Also featured is

Discover Wisconsin host Mariah Haberman enjoys Lake Geneva in the winter at Dan Patch Stables on the grounds of the Grand Geneva Resort and Spa.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes



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world champion sailor Buddy Melges, who shares his love for ice boating on Geneva Lake.

Many local winter events receive air time such as Sky Circus on Ice, U.S. National Snow Sculpting Competition and Winterfest, Human Dog Sled Competition, National Snocross Championship, Festival of Lights and Grand Geneva's Winter Carnival.

Discover Wisconsin also shines its spotlight on a handful of area lodging options including Lake Lawn Resort and Grand Geneva Resort and Spa. The crew calls attention to each resort's array of winter recreational opportunities including cross country skiing, ice skating, snow shoeing and horseback-riding. Haberman goes back in time at the Baker House, a boutique hotel where she interviews owners Bethany Souza and Andrew Fritz, and later attends a musical murder mystery dinner at the Maxwell Mansion.

"After wrapping this episode, I can now say with complete certainty that the Lake Geneva area is just as fun and interesting in the winter as it is in the summer," said Haberman. "I've had the honor of being a part of both Lake Geneva episodes this season and have fallen in love with Lake Geneva two times over. I can't wait for the rest of the Midwest to do the same."

"Lake Geneva – It's a Wonderful Lake" was written and produced by Casey Liddicoat and AJ Marz, producers for Discover Wisconsin.

The episode can also be viewed online at www.discoverwisconsin.com.

LIBRARY OFFERS scarf painting workshop

The Lake Geneva Public Library will host a scarf-painting workshop on Dec. 13 at 6:30 p.m. with award-winning quilter, Wendy Reeves.

Registration is required at the library's front desk by Dec. 4. Blank silk or rayon blend scarves, 15 by 60 inches, will be sold for \$10 each to interested participants, who may also bring their own blank silk or rayon blend scarves to paint. All other supplies will be provided.

Participants are encouraged to paint a scarf to give away as a holiday gift. The program is sponsored by the Friends of the Lake Geneva Public Library.

Reeves has 30 years of quilting and crafting experience, and she has been a crafting instructor for many years. She is from Brookfield.

For more information, call the library at 262-249-5299 or visit the

library Facebook page.

Current conversations

On Dec. 12, at 6 p.m. at The Ridge in Lake Geneva, W4240 Highway 50, Eric Loepp of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater will present "Current Conversations" on the First Amendment and current controversies.

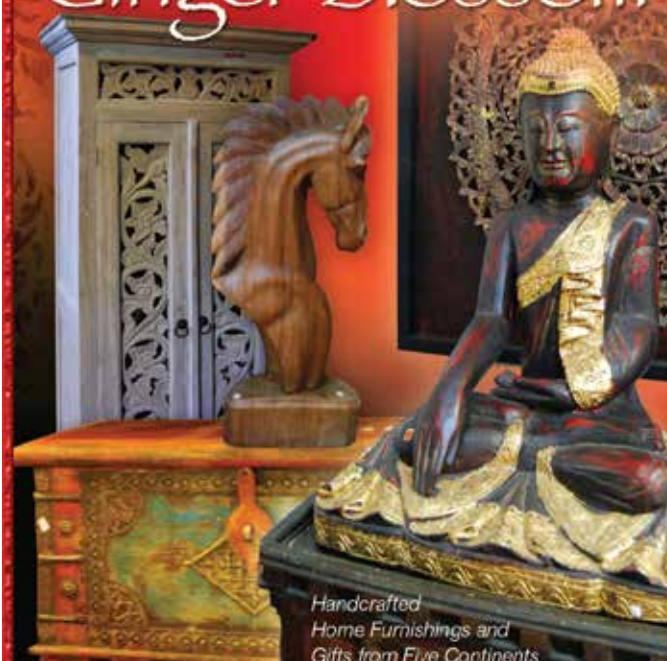
This informal conversation is presented in partnership with Barrett Memorial and Lake Geneva Public Library and is sponsored by the friends of both libraries.

Loepp is known for his engaging, non-partisan conversations on current events. The conversation will continue in Crafted Americana after the program.

For more information, call the Barrett Memorial Library at 262-245-2709.

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Rising above the FLOOD

Luisa's restaurant
rides a wave of
good pizza, loyal
customers

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

Luisa's Pizza has been a fixture at Highway 50 and 317th Street in Wheatland for the last 21 years according to owner Paul De Luisa.

"I began working with pizza when I was just 12 years of age," De Luisa said. "After working in the business for about 13 years, I decided it was time to go out on my own."



Owner Paul De Luisa stands next to the fireplace in his recently renovated dining room. On a cold chilly night this room is a favorite place for diners.

"I was fortunate to find this place up for sale. It had been a restaurant for about 14 years, first serving Polish/German food then for the last year prior to my purchasing it, as a pizza restaurant," De Luisa said. "It probably worked in our favor as people were used to coming here for pizza."

With a strong Italian heritage, and a legacy of fine cooks in the family, De Luisa developed his way of cooking using the same methods he had seen his family use. He chose the best ingredients to prepare the best foods possible.

His goal was to develop a pizza that would keep the previous customers happy and encourage new customers to make Luisa's Pizza their favorite. They seem to have done that as they have been awarded the "Best of Kenosha" award for pizza west of the I (Interstate 94) not just once or twice but for all seven years that the award has been given.

Choices abound

Luisa's offers a variety of pizzas to meet a wide variety of tastes and preferences. The restaurant offers a thin crust that is a favorite of many, the traditional hand-tossed, and the pan style or the stuffed crust.

According to De Luisa, the traditional thin crust cheese and sausage or cheese



COURTESY OF PAUL DE LUISA *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Luisa's is known for its fine quality pizzas which can be ordered in a variety of types of crusts and toppings. Thin crust pizzas like this one are the most popular.

and pepperoni remain the most popular, but there are many other different choices for pizza toppings available at Luisa's.

In addition to the popular vegetables and meat combinations, there are some specialty pizzas that are definitely outside the box. How about a bacon, lettuce, and tomato pizza with mayonnaise? Or perhaps you would prefer a barbecue chicken pizza with shredded chicken spread over a barbecue sauce base.

Not every pizza has to have tomato sauce. The broccoli and cheddar pizza includes broccoli and cheddar cheese mixed with mozzarella and here, again, there is no tomato sauce. It has an alfredo sauce instead.

"The Carnivore's Craving is a favorite as it is loaded with all the possible meats – sausage, pepperoni, Canadian bacon, ground beef, and bacon complete the list," De Luisa said. "While on the other side there is the Herbivore's Hankering, a vegetarian pizza of mushrooms, onion, green pepper, tomato and black olives. (It's) sure to please any taste."

Or go for the pizza known as the Works and enjoy both meats and veggies covering the pizza.

Other Italian specialties

While pizza is the most favored item,



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FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO
www.lakegenevariviera.com or call Lake Geneva City Hall at 262-248-3673.



Luisa's is a family-friendly restaurant where young and old may enjoys the pizza and other Italian and American dishes.

COURTESY OF PAUL DE LUISA *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Luisa's also has full dinner menu of Italian specialties, American dinners, seafood dinners, and a variety of sandwiches. All the Italian specialties are cooked much as De Luisa's great grandmother cooked them with love and the best ingredients possible. The variety of Italian dinner entrees offered may make choosing difficult.

Each of the Italian dinners is cooked to order so it will not appear instantly as it might in a fast food restaurant. Patience is required while it is being prepared, but it is worth waiting for the finished product. Whether you are looking for the simpler meals of spaghetti, linguini and mostaccioli or the more time-consuming items, such as Italian eggplant rolls, veal or eggplant parmigiana, each will be prepared to perfection.

How 'bout ribs or a fish fry?

If Italian food is not your favorite – and it is hard to imagine anyone not liking Italian food – try one of the American Dinners of chicken or barbecued ribs. Luisa's also offers a variety of cod, calamari, and shrimp entrees.

While every Wisconsin restaurant offers a Friday fish fry, Luisa's offers an "Any Day" fish fry. Its three-piece hand-breaded cod filets are served with coleslaw, rye bread, and a choice of potato, fries, baked or potato pancakes, or pasta. Diners may upgrade to Italian potato wedges known as mojos or onion rings for an extra dollar. No need to wait until Friday for your fish fry, you pick the day.

In the mood for just a sandwich? Start

with the build-your-own burger or chicken breast. Or choose a more traditional sandwich. Many of Luisa's sandwiches are also outside the ordinary.

For example its Italian grilled cheese begins with two slices of garlic bread, and ham, pepperoni and mozzarella. It's very different from the grilled cheese sandwiches many of us grew up eating which were made with packaged bread and packaged American cheese.

Recovered from the flood

"We are so glad to see our restaurant full with our friends and customers after our flood this summer," De Luisa said.

Luisa's, like many businesses and homes in the area, was engulfed by floodwater in



Water from the July floods surrounds Luisa's Pizza. Due to the heavy rains the restaurant accumulated 7 feet of water in the basement and was closed for more than two months.

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July of this year.

"In the 21 years I have been here, we have never had the building flood. We have had the parking lot flood, but nothing like what happened this year," De Luisa said. "Luisa's is on low land. In fact when approaching Luisa's from Highway 50 it is possible to miss the building entirely as the highway goes uphill and the view of Luisa's is of the roof. A turn onto 317th Street takes drivers downhill to the parking lot.

"In July we had seven feet of water in the basement. While we didn't have any in the actual restaurant, some did seep into the floor boards," De Luisa said.

It is often during the worst of times that we see the best side of people. According to De Luisa, more than a thousand people offered to help. "I am so grateful to those who helped. We could not have achieved all that was needed to get us back together and opened without all our friends who offered help. For that we thank all of you."

The project began by removing all the furniture in the restaurant to allow the restoration company to come in and drain the basement. Everything then needed to be cleaned and disinfected both downstairs and upstairs.

Regular customers will notice a new look in the restaurant. The walls are all painted gray, the popular color of the day. New decorative hangings adorn the walls in the various rooms. "Everything has a new, cleaner and fresher look," De Luisa said.

The restaurant reopens

The restaurant closed on July 13 and nothing could be done for the first two weeks because the water level was just too high. The restaurant was finally able to reopen on Oct. 11 after months of hard work.

De Luisa admitted that he was a little concerned that the business would lose some of its regular customers. After all, three months is a long time to go without a pizza or Italian food.

When the doors officially opened on Oct. 11, De Luisa was surprised to see many friendly faces arriving to again enjoy the restaurant's pizza and other dishes.

"Actually we did twice as much business that first day as we would have normally expected on a week day night," De Luisa said. "The large crowds continued for the first three nights with the business doing three times the expected business on the third night."

"I am really thankful to our customers who I consider to be friends for sticking with us through this terrible time," De Luisa added.

So why has Luisa's been so successful and able to continue to attract new customers?

"Combine the fine service provided by the staff with great food put together with love to make a great pizza and everyone is happy," De Luisa said.

The bar has taken on a new, warm look. "The back of the chimney from the fireplace was covered with dry wall. When we were

redoing the bar room, the drywall came down and the warm brick chimney gave the bar a new look," De Luisa said.

Catering offered

Catering is another specialty of Luisa's. Whether you are holding a small event of 15-20 guests or a larger group Luisa's is the place to order the food. Private party groups up to 75 can be held at Luisa's.

A variety of menu items are available. Packages that will serve groups of various sizes with a variety of different foods can be chosen. Customers also have the option to purchase a la carte items and set up their own package to suit the needs of your group.

Ordering food for a christening, family reunion, business event, graduation, or anniversary event will take the pressure off of those putting the event together. Food can be picked up at the restaurant or delivered. Luisa's can also provide on-site servers for the event. Catering can be ordered seven days a week.

If you haven't been to Luisa's now is the time to try their pizza. The restaurant is at 6806 317th Avenue, on the corner of Highway 50 and 317th Avenue in Wheatland.

Check out Luisa's at www.luisaspizza.co or visit them on Facebook. Order pizza for pick up at 262-537-4795. Luisa's is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.



COURTESY OF PAUL DE LUISA *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

The after-work crowd gathers at the bar for a drink before ordering pizza.



Chapel on the Hill to present **'Living Nativity'**

The Christian Arts Centre of Chapel on the Hill Community Church will present its fifth and final "The Living Nativity," the story of the birth of Jesus presented through music and narration.

This year's nativity features a concert followed by a musical nativity presentation.

"The Living Nativity" presentation is directed by Mark Badtke and produced by

Colleen Walker. Cast members include Audra Ferguson as Mary; Kerry John Knowlton as Joseph; Mark Rholl, Kerry John Kerros, and Don Robison as the Three Wise Men; Dale Johnson as Zechariah; Jesse Robison, Rebecca Robison, Elena Walker, Haylie Wanat and Caylie Wanat as the angels; and Adam Farence, Pete Thompson, Creighton Quinto and Sean Walker as the shepherds.

Shows are at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 8 and 9 and 3 p.m. Dec. 10.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased by calling The Chapel on the Hill office at 262-245-9122. Tickets may also be purchased or reserved at chapelonthehill.net/serve.

The Christian Arts Centre is four miles west of Lake Geneva on Highway 50 at N2490 Cisco Road.

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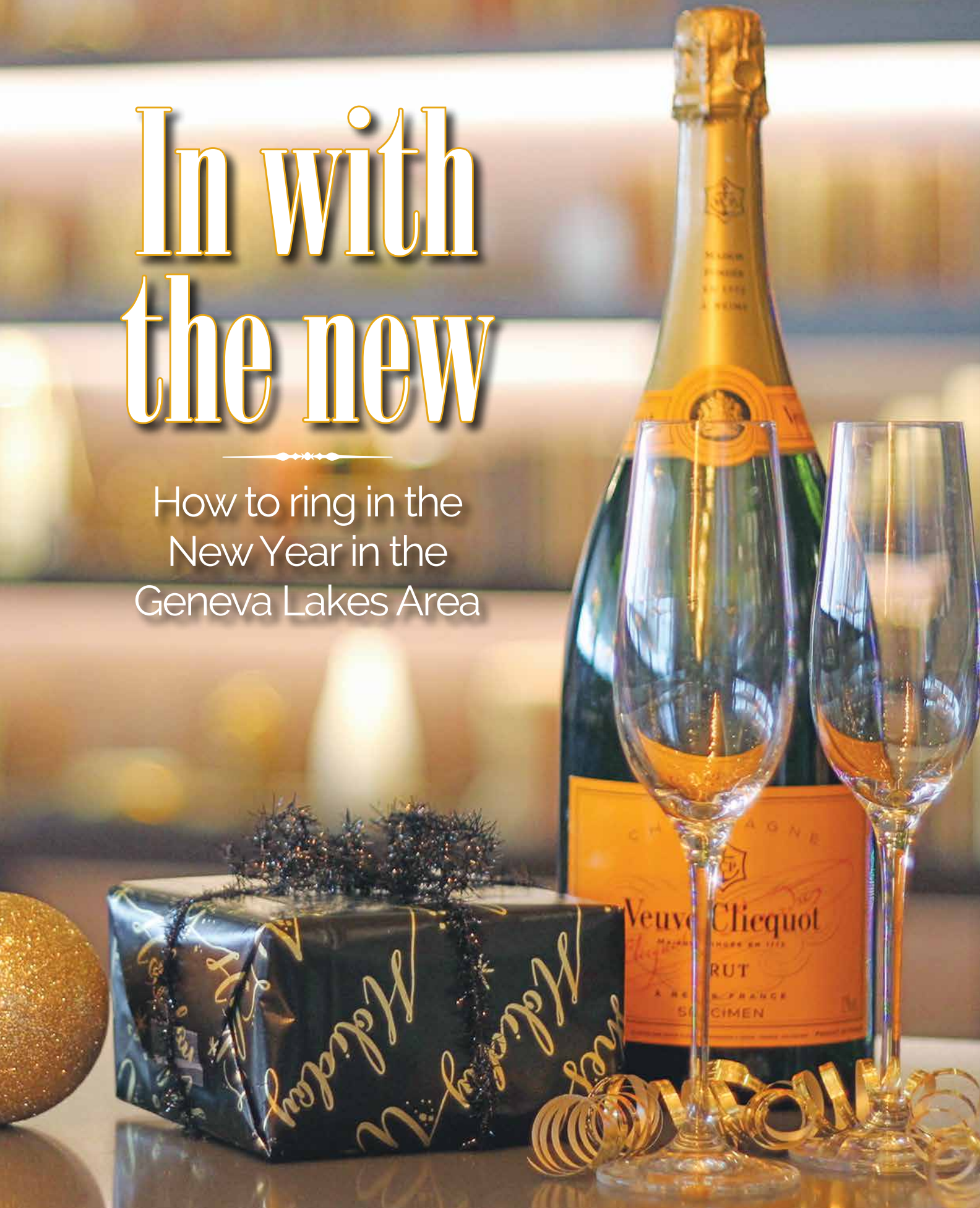


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In with the new

How to ring in the
New Year in the
Geneva Lakes Area





FILE PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

New Year's Eve is traditionally the grand finale of the holiday season. It is at once an ending and a beginning. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are filled with traditions. The celebrations that we share today have links to the past. Going out to dinner, having a few drinks, dancing, and enjoying a toast of the bubbly at midnight, singing "Auld Lang Syne" and giving a kiss to someone special at the stroke of midnight, are popular ways to spend this last holiday of the year.

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

In the United States the most popular site for ringing in the New Year is believed to be Times Square in New York City where most years since 1907 – except for 1942 and 1943 because of the wartime blackouts – millions gather to watch the descent of the Waterford crystal lighted globe from the top of 1 Times Square. Around the country others watch the event on television. The event was first organized by Adolph Ochs, owner of the New York Times to promote the new headquarters of the newspaper.

The ball has changed over the years from the wood and iron ball of 1907, lit with 100 incandescent light bulbs to the current ball covered with an outer surface of triangular shaped crystals lit by LED lights. The ball begins its descent at 11:59 p.m. and slowly drifts to the bottom of the pole as spectators count down to the New Year.

A kiss at the stroke of midnight is believed to bring good luck in the New Year.

Traditions abound

The tradition of kissing at midnight is meant to ensure a year of love and happiness whether it



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is kissing someone special or a stranger standing near. Not kissing someone is said to bring a year of loneliness and emptiness.

Midnight means a toast to the New Year and the singing of “Auld Lang Syne.” This is an old Scottish song which is traced back to a poem written by Robert Burns in the late 1700s. But it was Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadian Orchestra who played the song at midnight in 1939 and continued to play it at midnight each year until his passing in 1977.

It is considered to be the song most sung by Americans on New Year’s Eve and it is also considered to be the song to which no one really knows the difficult lyrics.

It is still played at midnight in Times Square and in many other New Year’s Eve parties throughout the country.

Fireworks are also widely used to ring in the New Year. They were used in New York until they were banned in the early 1900s for fear of fires engulfing the city and replaced by the ball drop. Today fireworks displays are routinely used around the world to celebrate the New Year.

Friends and football

New Year’s Day is another day filled with traditions. In the southern states, eating black-eyed peas and ham known as “hoppin jack” is believed to secure prosperity in the new year. Scandinavians must have herring on New Year’s Day for the same reason. Those from Spain traditionally eat 12 grapes, one on each

stroke of midnight to ensure prosperity for each month of the year.

Today we often welcome people to our homes on New Year’s Day to share dinner and to enjoy the football games on television.

That practice of sharing the day stems back to an old English and Scottish tradition called First Footing.

The first person to step into the house through the front door after midnight would bring silver coins, coal, bread salt and whiskey meant to symbolize good luck, sufficient food and heat for the year and a long life.

Originally it was believed that if this person was a tall dark haired man that was the best chance of good luck. Women and blond men were considered unlucky. The person had to leave through the back door.

While many of our guests bring food or drink no one brings coal. In most homes all friends and family are welcomed, not just tall dark haired men and they aren’t in most cases required to leave through the back door.

Cleaning out the house is another old tradition to start the New Year. People of Denmark would throw extra plates against the front doors of the homes of friends. The ones with the largest pile of broken china in front of the door were thought to have good luck in the coming year.

In England it was expected that everyone would wear new clothes to start the New Year and get rid of old clothes in their homes, while in South Africa the tradition was to throw unwanted furniture out the window. Today we give away unwanted clothing

With the clock ready to strike midnight, it is time to uncork the champagne and raise a glass in toast to 2018.



COURTESY OF THE RIDGE *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

and furniture to charities rather than just throwing them in the street.

In the Scandinavian countries a plunge into the ice-cold waters in freezing weather on New Year's Day was thought to prepare the body for the coming year. Today many charities support Polar plunges to raise money.

While today many of these traditions have been modified, the tradition of celebrating on New Year's Eve with friends and family continues.

Where to celebrate

If you are looking for an exciting way to celebrate this New Year's Eve, here are some suggestions of places that offer an enjoyable way to end the year 2017 and welcome in 2018.

THE RIDGE

W4240 Highway 50, Lake Geneva • 800-225-5558

At the Ridge the New Year's celebrations start as early as Dec.

29 with the High South Concert Series. High South, a Nashville musical group, will perform nightly on Dec. 29 and 30 at the Ridge. Their music is a return to the music of the 60s and 70s and is inspired by bands such as Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, The Byrds and the Eagles.

There is no cover charge and the event is open to hotel guests and the public.

For those looking for fun on New Year's Eve, The Ridge has two ways to enjoy the festivities. Begin with a prime rib buffet served from 5 to 10 p.m. (\$45 per person) in the Crafted Americana restaurant followed by an open bar bash (\$65 per person) in the lounge with live music by High South. The bash will be held from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m.

The Ridge also offers packages for those looking to turn the evening into a overnight getaway.

For that reason, the New Year's activities aren't limited to the evening celebrations. On New Year's morning the Pajama Jamma Bloody Mary Brunch with a DJ will be held in Crafted Americana. Since no one feels like getting dressed on New Year's Day, the official dress for brunch is pajamas. Guests may also catch the



Dining Directory

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FOLEY'S IRISH WOODS • Hwy. 50 Lake Geneva. **262-245-6966**. Traditional Irish fare is featured on the menu. Open Wed.-Sun. 5pm-10pm. The restaurant is adjacent to Foley's Bar & Grill, open 7 days per week at 11am. D, FF \$\$\$ ☺

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COLONY HOUSE • Hwy. JF, Trevor. **262-862-2076**. Dinner is served Tues., Wed., Thurs. 4pm-9:30pm; Fri. & Sat. 4pm-10pm; Sun. 3:30pm-8:30pm; Closed Monday. D, FF \$\$\$ ☺ ☎ ☺

Key

B: Breakfast L: Lunch D: Dinner NC: No credit cards accepted \$: Mostly under \$10 \$\$: Mostly under \$20 \$\$\$: Mostly under \$30 FF: Fish Fry ☎: Reservations requested ☺: Alcohol served ☺: Kids menu

Information is subject to change. Please contact individual restaurant for more information.

301192



Couples can start their New Year's Eve celebration with a romantic dinner in the Frontier Restaurant at Lake Lawn Resort overlooking Delavan Lake.

COURTESY OF LAKE LAWN RESORT *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

hotel shuttle after brunch to the Polar Plunge at Williams Bay Beach.

The cost of the entire package is \$493 based on double occupancy. The price includes resort fees, taxes, and dinner and brunch gratuities.

GRAND GENEVA RESORT AND SPA

7036 Grand Geneva Way, Lake Geneva • 877-741-9598

The question is not whether to spend two nights at The Grand Geneva, but which if the various packages would make the best getaway for you. Here is a rundown of the choices available this New Year's Eve.

- The New Year's Eve Grand Celebration package is for those who enjoy "dressing to the nines" as they celebrate from dinner to the midnight countdown. The package begins with two nights in a deluxe guest room. The package starts at \$699 for two nights for two people but may increase with a different choice of accommodations.

Begin the evening with a private table in the Grand Ballroom where you will enjoy a delicious dinner of prime rib and seafood, which includes freshly made sushi, crab cakes and many more treats. Dinner is served from 8 to 10 p.m.

After dinner join the Déjà Vu Party in the lounge with live entertainment by the band Déjà Vu. Two drink tickets per person are provided and then a cash bar is open for those who would like additional drinks.

All the party favors are included along with the Champagne toast at midnight with the balloon drop. Dance the night away as you end 2017.

- The New Year's Eve Brissago Dining Package is much like the Grand Celebration in that it too includes a two-night stay for two people, but prices start at \$799.

Enjoy a romantic dinner at the elegant Ristorante Brissago before joining the Déjà vu Party in the lounge. Two drink tickets are included along with party favors and the midnight champagne toast as you watch the balloon drop. It may not be Times Square but it will be just as much fun as you bring in the New Year 2018 with family and friends.

- The third package is the Chophouse Dining Package for two, which includes dinner at the Geneva Chophouse and all the other amenities included in the other packages. This package also starts at \$799 for two.

- If you are looking for a place to spend New Year's Eve as a family the Hills and Thrills Package is ready for you and your family. At \$799 for a family of four for a two-night stay, it will be two days of fun. The package includes four lift tickets for a day of skiing and snowboarding at the Mountain Top.

Enjoy a dinner buffet at the Forum at Grand Geneva. Afterwards enjoy family games and activities as well as DJ entertainment, party favors, and for those who can remain awake, the midnight balloon drop.

Whichever package works for you, these mini vacations will give you a fresh start for 2018.

LAKE LAWN RESORT

2400 E. Geneva Street, Delavan • 262-728-7950

Each year the Lake Lawn Resort hosts extravagant New Year's Festivities for both adults and families with a variety of packages available. These include New Year's Eve parties and overnight stays designed to meet a variety of needs. The one-night stay packages also offers an optional night either before or after New Year's Eve for an additional fee and an additional day of fun.

The resort will be alive with parties and activities in the Frontier Restaurant, the Lookout Bar and Eatery, The Great Room, the Geneva Club, Wisconsin Room and Geneva Ballroom. The variety of activities will include movies, indoor nine-hole mini golf and indoor carnival games from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. open to children and adults.

As usual a variety of wonderful meals will be served in the restaurants all prepared by award-winning Executive Chef David Ross and his culinary team.

The New Year's Family Package will be a fun and memorable way to spend New Year's Eve with the family and will make some wonderful family memories. A one-night stay in a Lakewood or Lodges double queen guest room is included in the package. Enjoy a special New Year's Eve International Family buffet in the Wisconsin Room, which will include a Taste of Italy, A Taste of Mexico, Taste of the Orient and a variety of desserts from each area.

The Family New Year's Eve party will be held in the Geneva Room, which will include DJ entertainment.



COURTESY OF LAKE LAWN RESORT *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

The iced seafood bar with beer boiled shrimp, mustard-marinated New Zealand mussels, and smoked lake trout and house cured salmon will be a favorite stop for many diners at Lake Lawn Resort.

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Kids and adults will enjoy the dance floor with flashy multicolored lights, lasers, and video projection screens. Movies will play in the Madison room from 7 p.m. to midnight. Scheduled movies are "Sing," "Moana" and "Trolls."

Looking for a more romantic New Year's Eve getaway? The New Year's Eve Couples Package also includes a one-night stay in a Lakewood or Lodges room in a double queen or if you prefer a king guest room. A dinner for two will be served in the Frontier restaurant. Make your reservation at the time of booking to be certain you receive your favorite time.

At 7:30 and again at 10:30 p.m., stand-up comedian Sonya White and opener Rob Hallaway take the stage. Again, make your show reservation at time of booking.

The Adult New Year's Eve Party will be held in the Lookout Bar from 8:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Two drink tickets are included, which may be used in the comedy show or in the Lookout Bar. The balloon drop and traditional champagne toast will be held as midnight strikes. Contact Lake Lawn Lodge for package prices

When the New Year's Eve party has ended, retire to your comfortable room and get some rest before celebrating the first day of the New Year at the New Year's Day Bloody Mary Brunch

in the Frontier Room from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Begin with a Bloody Mary to toast the New Year. Then work your way through the gigantic brunch offerings. Start with the chef's custom omelet to suit your taste, or bring on the malted Belgian waffle with an array of great ingredients.

Don't miss the iced seafood bar, chef's carving board and the variety of hot chafing dish offerings. Whether it is cheese blintzes, eggs Benedict, or pistachio-crusted salmon from the chafing dish or a specialty such as cider-brined loin of pork from the Chef's carving board there is something special to start your New Year.

The prices for the brunch are: adults \$35; children 4-12 \$14.95. Reservations are suggested at 262-728-7950.

WILMOT MOUNTAIN

11931 River Road, Wilmot • 262-862-2301

Looking for an out-of-the-ordinary way to spend New Year's Eve? How about ringing in the New Year at Wilmot Mountain? Begin early in the day and bring the family. Enjoy skiing, tubing, or snowboarding perhaps taking breaks now and then to warm up with a cup of hot chocolate in the Lodge.



FILE PHOTO *Spirit of Geneva Lakes*

Whether it's a raucous party with hundreds of your best friends or a romantic dinner for two, the Geneva Lakes area offers plenty of ways to celebrate the New Year.



Enjoy the extra activities that will be held throughout the day. Visit the photo booth and take a year-end family photo. The face-painting booth is a favorite of children. Get the face painting before that photo for a whimsical picture. A variety of games will be offered throughout the day.

As the ski lifts close at 10 p.m., there will be a fireworks display to bring in the New Year a bit early. Live music will be played from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. to add to the festive air. The lodge will remain open until 12:30 a.m., and to formally ring in the New Year, a Champagne toast will be shared at midnight among those of legal age.

COLONY HOUSE

25811 119th Street Trevor • 262-862-2076

So you don't want to go out to a big party on New Year's Eve but wish to enjoy a wonderful dinner in a warm and friendly environment?

Colony House located near the Illinois border in Trevor has been a favorite place to enjoy fine dining in a friendly environment for many years.

On New Year's Eve the restaurant will be open for dinner and will have some special dishes especially created by the Colony House chefs.

Call ahead to make your New Year's Eve reservation.

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AREA TEENS STAR IN 'Nutcracker'

Dance Wisconsin artistic director JoJean Retrum is celebrating 41 years of presenting the classic version of the original "Nutcracker" in Shannon Hall at the Wisconsin Union Theater in Madison.

Performances will take place at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 16 and 2 p.m. Dec. 17.

Dancing from Delavan and East Troy is Ella Weerts, 13, daughter of Mark and Christine. Weerts is dancing the lead role of Clara in the production. She is a member of Dance Wisconsin Co. and dances locally at The Dance Factory in Delavan.

Dancing from Elkhorn and Lake Geneva are Cassie Gaulke, 12, and T.J. Gaulke, 13, children of Jason and Katherine Gaulke. T.J. Gaulke is dancing lead roles of Drosselmeyer's nephew, the Nutcracker, the prince, and a Russian in Act II. Cassie Gaulke is dancing as a party guest and Clara's friend in Act I. T.J. Gaulke is a Dance Wisconsin Co. member and Mad City Dancer, dances at Monona Academy of Dance. T.J. and Cassie also dance locally at Broadway Academy of Art and Dance in Lake Geneva.

"The Nutcracker" ballet begins at the home of the Silberhaus family on Christmas Eve. Friends (Cassie Gaulke) of Clara (Weerts) and Fritz have been invited for Christmas festivities. Clara's uncle Herr Drosselmeyer appears with his handsome nephew (T.J. Gaulke), gifts and a special nutcracker doll for Clara. After the party guests leave, Clara sneaks downstairs in search of her nutcracker and falls asleep on the sofa. Clara begins to dream that she is awakened to find herself surrounded by huge mice making mischief in the parlor. The Christmas tree begins to grow and the Nutcracker doll (T.J. Gaulke) comes to life and battles with the mice. After the

mouse king is slain, Clara is transported to a fantasy land where the snow queen and king perform for her. The spell that enchanted the nutcracker doll is broken, and he is transformed into a handsome prince (T.J. Gaulke). Clara and the prince travel together to Candyland.

The Tchaikovsky score will be performed by the Dance Wisconsin Orchestra and conducted by Taras Nahirniak. The Monona Grove High School singers will accompany several pieces.

Guest Artists are Maggie Batterman, who is studying at the Joffrey Ballet Academy in Chicago, and Kyle Cunningham from the University of

Utah. They will be joined by the Dance Wisconsin Co. and dancers from numerous southern Wisconsin studios. Many alumni and their children from the past years have returned to perform in this holiday tradition.

More information can be obtained by calling 608-221-4535 or visiting www.dancewisconsin.com

Ticket prices for adults range from \$22 to \$40. A \$2 discount is given for seniors, and children's tickets are half price. Tickets can be purchased at the Wisconsin Union Theater Box Office at 800 Langdon St. in Madison, by calling 608-265-ARTS, or at www.uniontheater.wisc.edu.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Spirit of Geneva Lakes

Ella Weerts (from left) as Clara, T.J. Gaulke as the Nutcracker, and Cassie Gaulke as a party guest will perform in the "Nutcracker" at the Union Theater in Madison.



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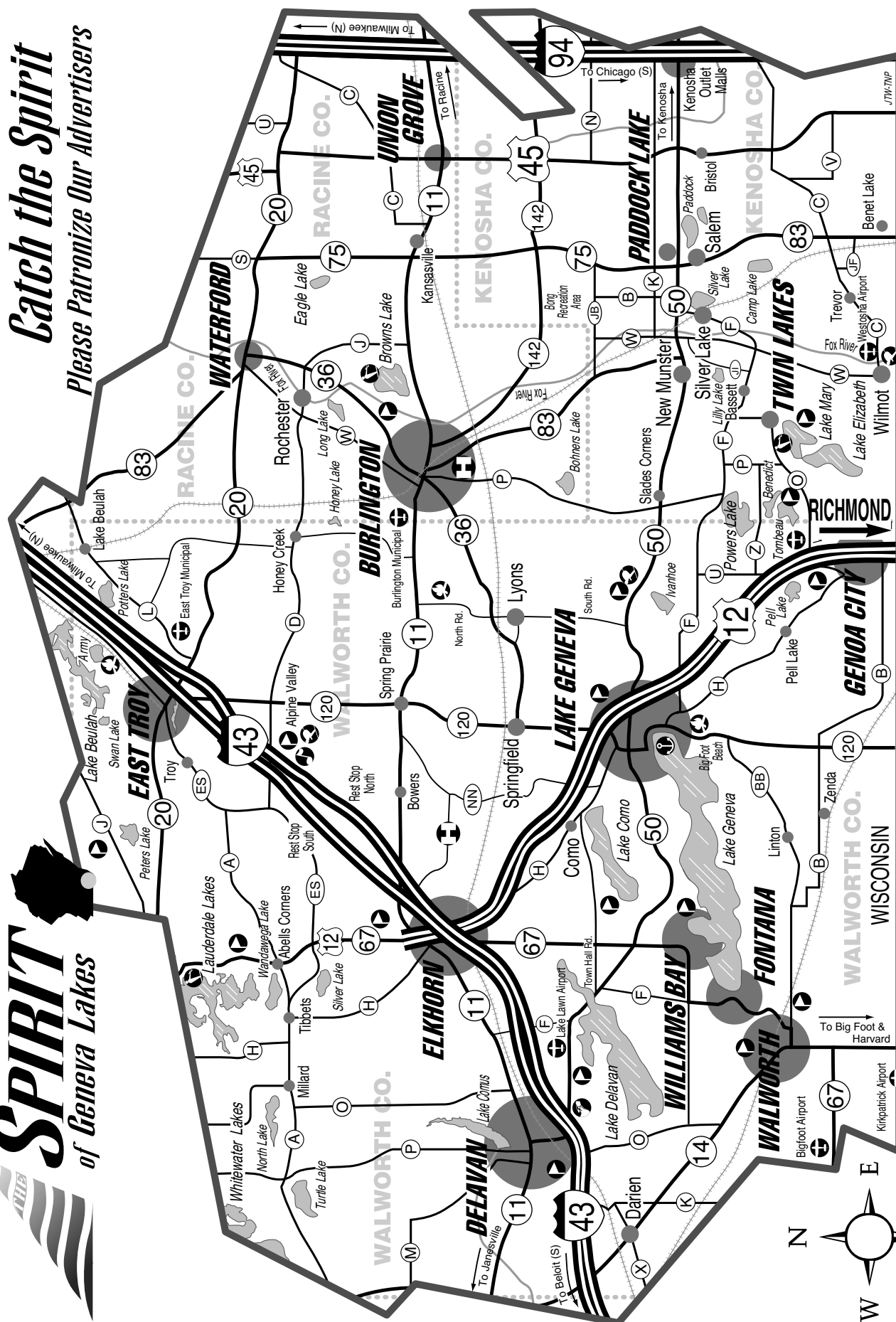


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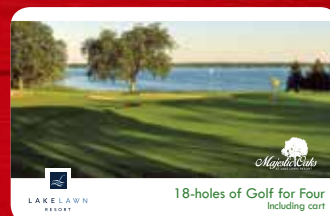
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DECEMBER 16 | 8:30 AM & 10:30 AM

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NUTCRACKER

DECEMBER 17 | 3:00 PM

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DECEMBER 24 | 5:00 PM-9:00 PM

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