

REGIONAL NEWS

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Point, counterpoint
Critical Race theory debated, SEE D1



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LABOR DAY 2021

Worker shortage continues

Help wanted signs still up going into Labor Day

STEPHANIE JONES, DENNIS HINES, KARENA TSE

Throughout the summer, there has been a seemingly endless row of help wanted signs. Along with those signs, businesses have reduced hours and even temporarily closed. Going into Labor Day weekend, there doesn't appear to be any immediate end in sight to the problem.

At Lake Geneva's Potbelly, for part of August they closed their indoor area and posted a sign that they were only taking online orders only.

Down the street at Northsiders, they have had to close early because of staff shortages. They used to be open until bar close nearly every night. Now they close at 10 p.m. weeknights and midnight on weekends.

It's what they had to do because of staffing, said Kierstin Johnson, the bar manager.

Similarly, Mars Resort this summer opted to close on Tuesdays due to staffing and Lake Geneva's Oakfire Pizza opted to close on Wednesdays.

For several weeks in August, Jimmy John's in downtown Lake Geneva reduced hours to 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Only recently were they able to increase back to normal hours 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. six days per week and until 8 p.m. on Sundays.

Besides staffing issues, Jimmy Johns also had supply issues and

had to temporarily close one day in August because a shipment from Sysco couldn't be delivered in time.

At the Bottle Shop, 617 Main St., Beth Tumas, said she feels fortunate because she hasn't been hit as hard as others by the worker shortage. She doesn't take it for granted. "I'm blessed and I don't forget that," she said.

However, she has been hit by other challenges like suppliers like Sysco calling and telling her they cannot supply her crackers

anymore and phone calls from other suppliers indicated some wine prices are going up because of wildfires.

And it's not just restaurants facing challenges.

At Lilypots flower shop, 605 W. Main St. they had a sign posted on their door on Aug. 26 that stated, "due to limited staff and previously scheduled events we are fully booked for all orders, delivery or pick-up, through Aug. 31.

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY THOM HOOKE PHOTOGRAPHY

MEMBERS OF THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA PERFORM

Members of the Glenn Miller Orchestra perform during the "A String of Pearls" Gala, Aug. 28 at the Riviera ballroom.

Indictment connected to fairgrounds

Company reportedly lied on visa applications, made false promises

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Following an investigation at the Walworth County fairgrounds, a man from Honduras has been indicted for his involvement in a forced labor conspiracy related to the federal H-2B visa program.

Denis Leonel Rodriguez Oyuela has been indicted on charges of forced labor, bringing in and harboring aliens and attempt and conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

To help obtain workers at the fairgrounds, the fair contracted with a third-party company to help obtain employees through the worker visa program, said Walworth County Fair General Manager Larry Gaffey.

He said they trusted the company they were working with. "We are as much victims in this as anyone," Gaffey said when contacted Monday.

The fair is cooperating with federal agents on the investigation, Gaffey said, and he was told by federal agents not to provide the name of the company the fair had worked with.

According to a 45-page affidavit filed in federal court, since July 2021, the FBI, U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service, Homeland Security and U.S. Department of Labor have been investigating management and staff of the Walworth County Agricultural Society "regarding various immigration and forced labor crimes committed in, around and in connection with the fairgrounds."

Bait and switch

According to the affidavit, the four men from Honduras who were working and living at the fairgrounds originally signed up

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GENEVA LAKE LAW ENFORCEMENT

Additional funding for lake police

Request made after agency had to move headquarters

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The City of Lake Geneva will join in with other lakefront communities to contribute additional funding to the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency.

Members of the Lake Geneva City Council unanimously approved, Aug. 23, to contribute an additional \$15,000 to the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency this year.

The Town of Linn, Village

of Williams Bay and Village of Fontana also recently approved to provide an additional \$15,000 to the law enforcement agency for this year.

The lakefront communities contribute about \$45,000 to the agency each year to help them pay the cost to patrol Geneva Lake.

Representatives from the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency requested the additional \$15,000 from each community to help pay for staff wages and other expenses for the rest of 2021.

Commander Thomas Hausner said the agency is in need of the additional funding because their lease at their Williams Bay office,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS, REGIONAL NEWS

An officer with the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency surveying the lake near the Williams Bay Municipal Pier.

7 E. Geneva St., was terminated earlier in the year, and they had to move their office to a new location, 478 Lake St. in Fontana.

Hausner said he is pleased the

lakefront communities agreed to provide the additional \$15,000 to the agency. He said it costed

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