

# Lawyers sense payday on Lejeune

## Marine vet says attorneys look to gouge those injured by tainted water

By Todd S. Bergmann

A local Marine, who served two years at Camp Lejeune during the 1960s, said he is afraid that attorneys will get most of the money Congress designated to help people who got sick from drinking water on the base.

But, area veterans organizations offer an easier way to get compensation than filing a lawsuit with a law firm that advertises on television.

While stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., from 1967 to 1969, Dave Baumann of Clarks Mills ran the base gymnasium, about a block from the source of water contamination.

"There were tens of thousands of men and women who came through," he said. "Everybody worked out there. Everybody was getting water when they were working out."

As a physical fitness instructor, Baumann said he drank the water, too.

"We drank the water," he said. "We took showers there."

About 10 years ago, Baumann said the Marine Corps asked him and others who

served at Camp Lejeune to fill out a survey.

"They told us to fill out a survey, about any adverse effects we had had," he said. "About everybody I know died from Agent Orange or the water at Camp Lejeune."

"There were guys in my outfit. Their kids were born with deformities, cancer," connected with tainted water.

This summer, Congress passed and President Joe Biden signed the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022, so people could sue the federal government after contracting diseases related to the tainted water at the Marine Corps base.

The act, with bipartisan support, will cost the government an estimated \$6 billion to \$7 billion.

Under the act, people who served at Camp Lejeune at least 30 cumulative days from August 1953 through December 1987 may sue if diagnosed with adult leukemia, aplastic anemia, bladder, kidney or liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

or Parkinson's disease.

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 prohibits the U.S. government from asserting immunity from litigation as it often does in cases of diseases contracted while in the military. Also, the law prohibits an individual who brings a suit from suing for punitive damages.

The passage of the law triggered a barrage of television ads, phone calls and other advertising by lawyers.

"Now, all these law firms are jumping on the bandwagon and they want to represent us in a lawsuit against the Marine Corps," Baumann said.

After watching the commercials, Baumann said he called the law firm of Hupy & Abraham, which sent him a contract. The contract gives that law firm and another in California, each 40% of what they recover for Baumann and charges him for miscellaneous fees.

"They are taking 40%, 40% and who knows what else," he said. "I don't know if the Marines at Camp Lejeune

will get much of anything.

"The law firms are taking tons of money, billions of dollars, that are set aside for this.

"For us veterans, the Marines, I have doubts about what we would get. I did not sign with Hupy & Abraham."

In talking to other lawyers, Baumann said he learned that fees normally do not exceed 30% for a big settlement.

Baumann called Hupy & Abraham and ask it to modify the contract so he would be guaranteed 60% of any settlement or judgment, but he said the firm would not agree.

Seeing the need to get just compensation for drinking the water at Camp Lejeune, Baumann said he plans to talk to other law firms, elected officials and other Marines.

Instead of suing the government, Todd Brehmer, Manitowoc County veterans service officer, said people who served at Camp Lejeune should file a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs through his office.

"I cannot turn on the tele-

# Barn fire quelled before disaster

By Todd S. Bergmann

With help from the property owner, the Valders Fire Department put out a fire on Sunday before it could damage more than one end of a barn.

The fire department received a call at 3:52 p.m. of a barn fire on the property of Ryan Mueller, 10416 U.S. Highway 151, east of Valders, Fire Chief Chris Dallas said.

While burning weeds next to the barn, Mueller walked away and the fire spread to the north side of the traditional, 90-by 40-foot-barn, which contained no animals or equipment, Dallas said.

"The property owner along with a firefighter put the garden hose on it to keep it in

check until we got there," Dallas said.

Three trucks and 11 firefighters arrived at 4:07 p.m. Using 500 gallons of water, they had the fire under control by 4:15 p.m.

The fire caused an estimated \$5,000 of damage to the outside of the barn, Dallas said.

"They just lost a couple of barn boards," he said.

Initially, Valders called the Branch, Collins, Manitowoc, Reedsville, St. Nazianz and Whitelaw fire departments for assistance. Once firefighters determined the small size of the fire, Valders canceled mutual aid.

Firefighters left the scene at 5:15 p.m.

# Whitelaw plans for hike in utility rates

Water and sewer rates will soon be on the rise in Whitelaw.

The village board voted on Oct. 3 to apply to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin for a 3% rate increase, as recommended by the utility committee and required by the state Department of Natural Resources.

Municipalities need the PSC's permission to raise water rates, but are allowed to change sewer costs without state oversight.

The village board also discussed sewer rates and looked at projected rates and revenues with a higher rate.

Following the utility committee's recommendation, the board voted to hike the base sewer rate by \$30 a quarter to \$120.75, effective Jan. 1.

In another matter, village President Gene Schneider reported on a recent meeting with Valders Ambulance about an expected cost increase in 2023.

The projected cost will rise by \$7 per person to \$32 next year, which will cost the village nearly \$4,700 more.

Schneider noted that he has been checking into the costs of other ambulance serv-

ices that cover area municipalities. The board then tabled the matter until its November meeting.

In other business, the board approved the employee contract for 2023 and 2024, as the personnel committee presented. The committee noted that wages for Whitelaw employees have been low in comparison to other area communities.

The following hourly raises were set: Jerry Linsmeier, public works director, \$3.50 to \$30 an hour in 2023 and \$1 to \$31 in 2024; Jim Peterik, public works employee, \$1.41 to \$18 in 2023 and \$1 to \$19 in 2024; Clerk/Trea-

surer Chris Hill, \$2.25 to \$25; and recycling center attendant Dave Aebly, \$1.50 to \$12 an hour.

In addition, vacation hours that are not used by the end of the year will be paid out each year.

The board also set its annual budget meeting for Nov. 9 at 6:30 p.m. and public hearing on the budget for Nov. 28 at 6:30 p.m.

In other matters, the board discussed a ball diamond drag the village recently bought from Beacon Athletics, which does not have wheels for easy transport between diamonds. The village will work with the Whitelaw Lions Club and

Whitelaw Baseball Club to exchange it for one that better meets their needs.

The zoning and setback committee reported that it is planning to meet with 3rd Gen Salvage about its conditional use permit.

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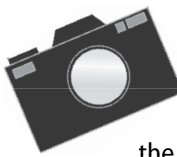
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The Valders High School yearbook staff is looking for photos of your days at VHS that we can include in the 2022-23 yearbook under the theme "A Journey Through: 100 years of Valders High."

Contact adviser Nicole Wittmus if you can share a photo or two. Email your photos to: [yearbook@student.valders.k12.wi.us](mailto:yearbook@student.valders.k12.wi.us).

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# Bakery

Continued from p. 4

"I had a dream to do this," she said. "It became a successful business. COVID wasn't that bad. We stayed pretty successful through it."

Kristy said her business has adjusted to changes in the industry. Years ago, couples ordered wedding cakes with four or five tiers. That has changed.

"Cupcakes are the big thing," she said of current trends.

Sometimes, Paul said, couples ordered two-tiered cakes along with cupcakes.

Paul said his mother-in-law bakes cakes for children's birthday parties, as they grow up for high school graduation and later for weddings.

"It's been pretty wild for only 11 years," he said.

Favorite products include cakes and jumbo gourmet peanut squares, both with filling inside, Kristy said.

"We do so many flavors," she said. "We try to keep our new ideas out there. We have always done well."

Customers are preparing for the Nov. 27 closing, Kristy said.

"This last week has been crazy," she said on Oct. 5. "We have people ordering Christmas cookies already.

They are going to freeze them, so they have them for Christmas."

Candi said she makes a large variety of Christmas cookies.

Along with the cookies, Kristy said the dessert bars are in high demand.

"I can't keep up," she said. "People come in and buy bars. It takes time to bake those."

Kristy said she has hundreds of bakery recipes in her head.

"I don't have anything written down," she said. "I can go back there and whip things out."

However, Kristy said she will write down the recipes and give them to the next owner.

She hopes someone will buy the business and continue it.

"If someone purchases this, we are going to stay on and show them what we do," she said.

It has been listed with a real estate agent for more than a month.

Paul said people have been interested, but not yet making offers.

One customer, Mary Karbon of Manitowoc, said she has had a good, but limited experience with Cravings.

"We finally got here," she said. "Now, they are going to leave us."



## Nice Shot

Brooke O'Connor, 13, shot this 9-point buck on opening morning of the Wisconsin youth deer hunt. She is the daughter of Casey and Becky O'Connor of rural Manitowoc.

## Water

Continued from p. 3

vision without hearing the 'one call, that's all,' asking if I was stationed at Camp Lejeune," he said.

Dean Koenig, commander of the St. Nazianz American Legion Post, cautioned against calling an attorney.

"The best place to start is with the local county service officer," he said.

Marines who have physical disabilities, such as bladder cancer, which can be directly traced to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune may get compensation and medical care from the VA, Brehmer said.

"We would assist him with filing a claim, through the process of verification" he said. "The VA would determine what level of disability his health is at and would compensate based on that.

"There would not need to be any attorneys involved. Our office would assist with everything."

An active bladder cancer would result in an award of 100% service-connected disability, Brehmer said.

"That would be the end of it," he said. "We would go through what benefits come with that level of rating. Then, the VA would also treat him."

To reach the Manitowoc County Veterans Service Office, call 920-683-4056.

But, Brehmer said that the VA and his office do not help people who are trying to sue the government under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act.

Because of the vast number of commercials on televisions inviting people to sue under the act, Brehmer said many people could sue and courts will be jammed.

# High school cast plans fall musical

By Todd S. Bergmann

Valders High School will present the "Drowsy Chaperone," Nov. 11, 12 and 13.

"It is a Tony Award-winning musical celebrating classic musical theater but with tongue firmly planted in cheek," director Tom Berger said. "Valders High School is thrilled to be presenting this hilarious, dance-heavy and tuneful take on the Golden Age of musicals with a modern twist."

Shaun Bratz plays the Man in Chair, who guides the audience through a recording of his favorite 1920's musical of the same name.

The man celebrates the joy of musicals and winks at the quirks of the genre in its beginnings, Berger said.

In the "Drowsy Chaperone," wealthy widow Mrs. Tottenham, whom Ellie Vertz plays, hosts the wedding of the year, but gets more than a write-up in the society pages.

Janet Van de Graaff, glittering starlet of Feldzieg's Follies, whom Naomi Nelson plays, is leaving the stage for love.

This horrifies the angry and anxious Mr. Feldzieg, whom Pheng Lee plays.

Feldzieg's chief investor sends two gangsters, played by Ally Mikeal and Kai Mey-

er, disguised as pastry chefs to make sure the wedding never takes place.

Hiring Jon Knedle's character, Aldolpho, a vain Latin lover, to seduce the bride, is unsuccessful.

Janet's chaperone, portrayed by Emma Meyer, gets herself mistaken for the bride and is seduced instead.

The eager best man, George, whom Kevin Halverson plays, accidentally breaks up the happy pair, when he sends groom Robert Martin, played by Eric Pankratz, out to the garden, blindfolded and on roller skates.

Others in the cast include Andie Taylor as Kitty and Claire Zipperer as an underling.

The ensemble for the show is Adalin Archambeau, Gavi Bautista, Lilianna Bautista, Kaitlyn Brennan, Brittany Brunner, Sadie Groelle, Trinity Guilmette, Abby Jaekel, Nikita Jankowski, Shadow Lee, Daphne Nelson, Makenzie Neumann, Molly Taylor and Andy Wayda.

The musical features tunes including "Show Off," "I Am Aldolpho," "Toledo Surprise," and "As We Stumble Along."

Performances are Nov. 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 13 at 2 p.m. in the cafetorium. Tickets are \$10 each.

## Sewer

Continued from p. 1

the district will decommission its current sewage treatment pond in November.

Diane Bodart, secretary of the Clarks Mills Sanitary District board, said the district is still waiting for parts.

While a backup generator heads the missing parts list, LaFleur said the main lift station can operate without it.

The lift station will run on the same electricity that everyone else uses. But, if

the power goes out, the backup generator, using natural gas, will generate electricity.

"The gas line they will bring in this month," he said. "But, we won't get the generator. It's back ordered due to COVID. They are telling us January. We will get it when it gets here.

"The gas is going to be great. Then you don't have to have a person come down with a portable."

While waiting almost a year for the backup generator for the main station, LaFleur said smaller, portable backup generators for the other two stations are in Clarks Mills.

Once sewage starts flowing to Valders, Pritzl said both Valders and Clarks Mills will experience more economical sewage operations.

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