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Local state senate candidate accused of misconduct while working as police officer

By Andrew Dannehy
Times Editor

Various accusations of misconduct were made by women against state senate candidate Dave Estenson while he was working as a police officer in the city of Osseo and village of Strum, according to an investigation conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

Estenson — a Republican running for the District 31 seat currently held by Democrat Jeff Smith — denied nearly all allegations against him in an interview conducted by investigators on March 21, 2007. He admitted purchasing alcohol for women he knew were not of legal drinking age and that he “may have said ‘if you are with me you don’t have to worry about getting a ticket.’”

In a statement issued Monday of this week Estenson said:

“Nearly 20 years ago, as a single young man, I made some poor decisions surrounding my

personal relationships. Allegations of misconduct were made, and thorough investigations were conducted independently by my employer and the Wisconsin Department of Justice. No legal action was taken. After the investigation concluded, I went on to serve in law enforcement for six more years and no other allegations have been made against me.

Prior to the investigation being concluded, I had already met the woman who is now my wife and had assumed the role of stepfather to her two boys.

As a husband and father of two girls of our own, my wife and I are striving to instill the family values and morals that I had lost sight of in my youth.”

Estenson said in his 2007 interview with the DOJ that he had been involved in several relationships with females while employed as a police officer with the city of Osseo and that he had “a whole bunch of one-night stands.” He denied having any sexual relationship with females while he was on duty, making a threat or statement about planting items in anyone’s car and any non-consensual sexual relationships with any females. At the time, he stated he “would love to take (a polygraph).”

Estenson was not charged for a crime related to the complaints. The Department of Justice did not return an e-mail asking for clarification as to what the conclusion of the investigation was. The Times made Free-

dom of Information Act requests for disciplinary records from the Osseo and Strum police departments and to the Wright County, Minn. Sheriff’s Department, but were told all records had been destroyed. Local ordinances allow for police employment records to be destroyed seven years after the employment has ended in Wisconsin and after five years in Minnesota.

In addition to running for state senate, Estenson is a member of the Whitehall School District Board of Education.

An investigation was launched in 2005 when Terry Miles — a former Whitehall resident and one-time candidate for Trempealeau County Sheriff — reported to the Department of Justice’s Division of Criminal Investigation that he received information regarding the “possible misconduct” of Estenson.

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Dave Estenson

State asks high court to review Killian case

By Debbie Foss
Times Staff

State prosecutors have asked the state supreme court to overrule two lower courts and allow them to try an Independence man for alleged child sexual assault.

Assistant attorney general Kara Janson is asking the state supreme court to overturn a Wisconsin appeals court decision that concluded bringing new charges against James Killian, 62, of N39243 Jimmy Lane, would be unconstitutional double jeopardy, saying it gave the court the chance to better define the term. Killian’s attorney argues that the “dirtyhanded” prosecution in Trempealeau County of Killian was so rare that a new ruling is unnecessary.

“This case presents this court with an opportunity to develop the law on two important questions,” reads the department of justice argument for the supreme court to review the Killian case. Department attorneys say a review could clarify double jeopardy in cases involving a mistrial, which is how the original Killian prosecution ended. The state said a review would also allow the high court to tighten the defini-

tion of when a defendant fears versus actually faces conviction and punishment for a charge. “The bench and bar need guidance on both issues,” the brief states.

As of Monday, the supreme court had not announced whether it would review the Killian case.

Killian’s attorney Todd Schroeder argues, how-

ever, that the misconduct of then-Trempealeau County District Attorney Taavi McMahon is so rare that a similar case “will not resurface so long as the state

does not intentionally cause mistrials for the purpose of circumventing the double jeopardy clause.”

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End Of Summer Smoke

Chang, the Osman Shrine Dragon, helped mark the unofficial end of summer on Sunday as he blew smoke on some unsuspecting parade goers at the annual Blair Cheese Fest parade. The festival is the last of the area summer celebrations, which began Memorial Day weekend. More photos from Cheese Fest can be found on Page 2.

(Times photograph by Andrew Dannehy)



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HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

Candidate accused of misconduct while working as police officer

(continued from Page 1)

The names of the alleged victims were redacted from the report received by the *Times* on Friday following a Freedom of Information Act request made to the DOJ in mid-August.

The first interview was conducted by investigators in February of 2005 as Jane Doe 1 (JD1) told investigators that Estenson had requested she "go home" with him in August of 2004. JD1, who was 20 years old at the time, said she was not interested in sleeping with him.

JD1 said that on Oct. 27, 2004, she engaged in a telephone conversation with Estenson, who requested that she travel to Osseo from Strum so they could be together. She said he "indicated that he knew she was underage and that she was going to drive from Strum to Osseo after having consumed intoxicating beverages. He then made the comment that if she was willing to travel to Osseo to meet him, he didn't know anything about what was going on," according to the investigation documents.

She admitted to driving to Osseo and engaging in a sexual relationship with Estenson. She told investigators that she was "okay with what had occurred" between her and Estenson, according to the report.

The next day, JD1 said she was at a tavern and went behind the bar to help serve drinks. At some time during the evening a fight started outside of the tavern and someone had contacted law enforcement. JD1 said Estenson had approached her and asked to speak to her in the backroom of the bar. She told

investigators that Estenson said she was "putting him in a bad position." He said he did not want to give her a ticket and that there were "ways to get around this." Investigation documents said JD1 said it was clear in her mind that he "was hinting at receiving a sexual favor from her to avoid her receiving a citation for underage drinking."

She told investigators that she told Estenson it was up to him whether or not he issued a citation. He said he spoke to Strum Police Chief Craig Marsolek and believes Marsolek told him not to issue a citation. She said Estenson gave her a ride home in his squad car, where she sat in the backseat, despite him offering her a ride in the front. She said he "kept trying to say things to her."

JD1 said there was no other contact between her and Estenson.

Estenson told investigators that he had an "eyewitness" in a concealed camera device on the incident related to JD1 in which he was accused of soliciting sexual favors. However, the device was not activated during that contact, according to the report.

Another woman, Jane Doe 2 (JD2), told investigators on March 9, 2007 that she had a "friends with benefits" type of relationship with Estenson. She said she was 19 years old at the time they began having an intimate relationship in the summer of 2003. She said the relationship lasted approximately one year and that they had "sexual contact while he was on duty and in uniform while at the Strum Police Department building."

Shortly after commencing with their sexual relationship, JD2 told investigators that Estenson made a comment that she took as a threat. He reportedly told her that if "she told anyone about his having a sexual relationship with her, she would have problems." She added that he said "things would be found in her car that she could be arrested for or could cause problems for her...things would be planted in her car to cause the arrest."

JD2 said that Estenson told her that while they were in an intimate relationship together "she did not have to worry about getting in legal trouble while he was working."

A third woman told investigators on March 9, 2007 that, while at a party in Cleghorn, she and Estenson went into the basement area and he placed her hand on his exposed penis. She then yanked her hand away and left the basement. That incident reportedly occurred in 1998 before Estenson became a police officer. The woman was 27 years old at the time of the interview with investigators.

Investigators also spoke with then Osseo Police Department Chief of Police Greg Gregerson who said he heard a rumor regarding a consensual activity between Estenson and a 19-year-old female in an alley behind a

bar while he was off-duty. Gregerson said he confronted Estenson about the rumor and that Estenson would not say the incident "did or did not happen." He said he told Estenson that type of behavior would not be tolerated.

Estenson resigned from the Osseo Police Department in June of 2007 with the city council voting to "accept his resignation...to allow him to pursue a career in Minnesota" after a closed session for "consideration of employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility." The DOJ case

was closed in July of that year.

He had been employed in Osseo since October of 2002, while also working part-time in Strum from 2001 to 2004 and in Whitehall from 2001 to 2002.

After resigning from Osseo, Estenson went on to work for the Wright County Sheriff's Department in Minnesota. He resigned from that department in December of 2012 after a "performance audit" was conducted in October of that year, according to minutes from the Wright County Board of Commissioners meeting. Performance audits were reviewed monthly by the board.

Whitehall city council hears update on Larson Park project

By Julie Dick
Times Staff

The Whitehall city council heard an update on fundraising efforts for improvements to be made at Col. Larson Park.

Project organizer Chasity Huisman has set up a Facebook page with information on the renovation project. Current donations total roughly \$1,300, set aside in a specific account administered by the city council. Expenses for the project will be reimbursed by

the fund based on receipts.

The project is being privately conducted with the council's approval. According to the Facebook page, the project is "to refresh the park's playground in order to contribute to the park amenities, and provide a safe, inclusive and engaging place for the children of the Whitehall area to learn, play and socialize."

More than \$1,000 of the money raised came from a 50/50 raffle held during the Beef and Dairy Days parade.

The council tabled the final payment for the Hobson Street project. Haas Sons had not submitted the final pay request for the project prior to the meeting so the matter was tabled until the next meeting. The roadwork is already completed.

The council met briefly

in closed session to discuss potential property acquisition, but no action was taken.

The agent for Kwik Trip's Class A retail license was changed due to a change in manager at the location.

The next meeting will be October 18, 6 p.m. at the fire station.

'Tools for caregivers' class offered virtually

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational series designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of yourself while caring for an older adult.

This program helps family caregivers who are caring for an older adult reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate feelings better, balance their lives, increase their ability to make tough decisions and locate helpful resources.

Classes consist of six virtual sessions held once a week. Two experienced Class Leaders (Dementia Care Specialists) conduct the series. Interactive lessons, discussions and brainstorming will help you take

the "tools" you choose and put them into action for your life.

You will receive a book, The Caregiver Helpbook, developed specifically for the class. You will also receive class handouts and Zoom link upon registration. There is no fee for the class. Class size is limited & registration is required.

Classes will be virtual and held on Tuesdays starting Sept. 27 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. weekly through Nov. 1. Registration is required by Sept. 23 and is limited.

For more information or to register contact: Becky Woodke at 715-538-1930 or Rebecca.woodke@co.trempealeau.wi.us

Race results in crash, injury

A rural Strum man was hospitalized after a race ended when he crashed his vehicle.

According to a press release sent by the Trempealeau County Sheriff's Department, Jeremiah Parsons, 18, was racing another vehicle on US Highway 10/53 near Tracey Valley Road in the town of Sumner. The investigation showed that Parson attempted to pass the other

vehicle in a no-passing zone and had to leave the roadway to avoid a head-on collision.

The release said Parson was transported to an area hospital with "minor injuries." He was issued a citation for passing in a no-passing zone.

The Osseo Police Department, Wisconsin State Patrol and Mayo Clinic Ambulance assisted the sheriff's department.

Musical Extravaganza at Old Main on Saturday

Doug Mahlum will perform and be show host for the Musical Extravaganza at the Old Main Cultural Center in Galesville on Saturday at 7 p.m.

Mahlum's guests will be Hunter Evenson, vocal and piano; Ron White, ragtime piano; Ron Reimer, accordion, and Eddie Kim, Jazz piano. Hunter, long known for his voice, first appeared when Robyn Docken started the "Extravaganza" in 2003; he was a student of Robyn's.

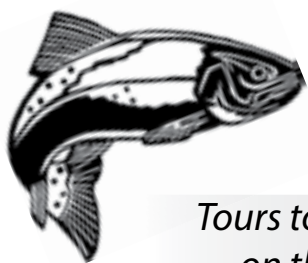
Ron White is well known for his ragtime music; Ron Reimer is known for making the accordion sing. Eddie Kim, new to the "Extravaganza" plays keyboard for "Flying Casual."

This show helps fund the rest of Old Main's "Gale Star" program. Music with the guitar, piano, and accordion remind us that when Galesville University opened in 1859, the school offered lessons in guitar, piano, and melodion. Old Main has recently collected the period melodion owned by Philip Jensen and a square Chickering piano built in 1859 that remind people of Galesville University's early music story.

Old Main is located at 20869 College Ave. in Galesville. Admission is \$10 at the door, \$5 to college students and free to people in high school and younger.

For more local government news you can use, turn to the...

Trempealeau County
Times



Elk Rod & Gun Club

Open House

Tours to show off what we have accomplished on the stream bank restoration project.

Saturday, October 1
10:00am - 3:00pm

North of Elk Creek on Roskos Road
Brats & Refreshments

Sponsored By:

Elk Rod & Gun Club, Peter Jonas of Clear Waters Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Quality Habitat Improvements, LLC



Saturday, October 8, 2022

Same day registration held from 9-9:45am

At The Waumandee Haus Resort. Race starts at: 10am

Register at all Waumandee State Bank locations & Waumandee Haus

Bloody Mary Bar available for purchase on route.

\$.25 Bud, Ultra & Busch products after race until 6pm

\$30 - Adults (18+) • \$15 - Children (8 - 17)

Free - Children (7 & under) • Light Lunch Provided

This year's proceeds to benefit the Waumandee Lions Club for improvements to Harmonia Park.