

State GOP leaders at odds over local government aid bill, putting it at risk ▶ 4A



WAUKESHA COUNTY



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‘MISCHIEVOUS, PLAYFUL, FUN’

Latin fusion restaurant Travieso opens today



Isabella Kostolni/Freeman Staff

Martin Magaña, left, Dillon Knight, right, and Arnie González, not pictured, are looking forward to opening Travieso's doors to the public today.

By Isabella Kostolni
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WAUKESHA — Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, chefs Martín Magaña and Arnie González have been stirring up some trouble with their culinary creations. Now, the fun-loving rabble-rousers behind Trouble Makers' Cocina restaurant group are taking on a new adventure — Travieso. The Latin fusion modern supper club opens today inside the Clarke Hotel at 314 W. Main St. in downtown Waukesha.

When Alan Huelsman bought the building, he had approached the Trouble Makers about opening something inside the former Five Points Pub. Huelsman had seen the positive response to the Trouble Makers' cooking when they hosted events at nearby Chef Pam's Kitchen and wanted them to become a permanent fixture in the community.

Business partner Dillon Knight said that he and the two chefs jumped at the chance to occupy the old Irish pub.

"When the opportunity came across, we looked at the space and thought it was the perfect place to do the (restaurant)," he said.



Travieso's bar area is decorated in deeper hues to give the space a modern supper club vibe.

Magaña noted that opening a restaurant was high on their list of priorities.

"We always had a dream to open a full-service restaurant. Before that, we started with the pop-ups and food trucks," he said. "We started combining all the talents that we have together and putting it all in one place."

Travieso, the name of the restaurant, translates to "mischievous" in English. The

Trouble Makers plan on bringing that name to life with a variety of creative, unexpected dishes.

"With Travieso, we're playing around with the influence of South America and Central America," Magaña said. And if he had to describe the restaurant in three words, it would be "mischievous, playful, fun."

See TRAVIESO, PAGE 8A

Heyer Elementary teacher behind 'Rainbowland' controversy faces termination

Melissa Tempel was put on leave in April

By Karen Pilarski
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WAUKESHA — The School District of Waukesha teacher who brought attention to the removal of a song from a spring concert is facing termination. Melissa Tempel is a dual language teacher at Heyer Elementary School for the first grade.

According to her Twitter profile, Tempel calls herself a "teacher activist."

In a tweet on Wednesday, Tempel said, "Some first graders in Waukesha have been without their teacher for 31 days, they haven't been told anything about where she is or why she's gone. Tomorrow they will go to school and find out she is

never coming back. Another dark day in Waukesha."

The Alliance for Education in Waukesha, on behalf of Tempel, provided a copy of the investigation letter to The Freeman. The letter was from school district Superintendent Jim Sebert to Tempel.

The letter dated May 15, said the district completed its investigation into Tempel's conduct in response to the "Rainbowland" song not being included in a Heyer concert.

The letter said the investigation included interviews with staff in the district, her social media postings, voicemails, emails and interviews she did with local and national media. District policies were also reviewed.

See TEMPEL, PAGE 8A

County dispatchers experience frequent abandoned, misdialed calls

Communications Center shows large increase in accidental 911 calls

By Faith Rae
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WAUKESHA — Two weeks ago, the Waukesha County Communications Center uncovered a nearly 400 percent increase in abandoned or misdialed 911 calls over a three-day period, compared to the same three-day period in 2022.

The communications center analyzed data on Friday, May 5; Saturday, May 6; and Sunday, May 7; and found that they took 398 accidental calls within those three days. They compared that data to the same three-day period in 2022 and found that they took 112 accidental calls.

Director of Emergency Preparedness at the Waukesha County Communications Center, Gary Bell, said

questions and concerns about the frequency of abandoned calls came from their telecommunicators in the operation space. After doing an initial assessment, they quickly realized that people need to be aware of the problem.

"It is becoming a problem for those responsible for delivering those services," said Bell.

Dispatchers noticed that most people were unaware that their device had activated an emergency SOS call to 911. On many devices including phones and watches, there are features to activate an emergency system. This can be done by pressing a certain sequence of buttons, pushing and holding a button or activating a call through a

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WEATHER



Tomorrow:
Sunny
High 69 / Low 49

See complete forecast on Page 8A

How to set boundaries around your time ▶ 7B



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Tempel

From Page 1A

The letter said Tempel is entitled to agree or disagree with the decision over the song. “However, the manner in which you chose to express your disagreement was inappropriate, disruptive, and in violation of various district policies. You failed to raise your concerns through the appropriate channels and instead took your concerns public in a manner intended to bring as much attention to the district’s decision as possible, which resulted in substantial disruption to the school environment,” the letter said.

The letter said Tempel violated several policies regarding employee concerns, student supervision and welfare, and employee expressions in a non-instructional setting.

The letter said Tempel “significantly undermined the interests” of the district and did so “deliberately and repeatedly.”

Sebert concluded the letter saying that he will be recommending to the Board of Education that her employment be terminated.

The letter said Tempel will be offered an opportunity for a hearing before the Board of Education regarding the recommendation of termination. The letter said Tempel needs to let Sebert know by May 26 if she wants a hearing. Otherwise, the board will consider and vote on the recommendation for termination based on evidence presented.

“At the hearing, you will have the right to legal representation at your expense, as well as the right to call witnesses, present evidence and/or testimony on your behalf, and to cross-examine district witnesses. At your request, the hearing may be held in open session,” the letter said.

Tempel’s statement

AEW provided a statement from Tempel on her behalf.

“During the last month and a half, I have received an outpouring of loving, supportive emails, phone calls, text messages and hand written letters from parents, colleagues, residents of Waukesha, and beyond. I have not been able to answer any of them, nor have I been able to check in on my students and their families. I would like to thank all of those who contacted me. Your support kept me going during this stressful time,” Tempel said.

Tempel, in the released statement, said the information she shared was during her personal time and off duty.

“I shared my feelings as an individual member of this community. I cannot allow others to be intimidated into silence so I do plan to pursue a First Amendment claim. These are matters of public concern which the public has a right to know about and I should not have been recommended for termination because I shared them,” Tempel’s statement said.

The AEW released a statement on Wednesday expressing disappointment over Tempel’s recommended termination.

The AEW said it sees this recommendation for termination “as one more attempt of the District to avoid accountability for its own poor decisions and lack of transparency. Melissa Tempel is an outstanding educator who spoke to parents and members of the community about the District’s on-going misuse of policy as a shield for its pattern of harmful decisions negatively impacting the school community.”

Sebert told The Freeman on Thursday, “This is a personnel matter so we are unable to make any comments at this time.”

The Freeman also reached out to all school board members. Board of Education President Kelly Piacsek said it “remains a confidential personnel matter that is being handled by administration.”

In a previous letter, Piacsek and Sebert addressed the policy used to decide on the fate of the song.

“This policy which is shared among hundreds of school districts across the country, states controversial topics include those which might create significant disagreement within the community, which this topic certainly has done,” the letter said.

The letter said the Heyer officials made their decision after considering the song’s appropriateness for the school setting and subject matter in its lyrics. They also considered the age and maturity of the grade level.

Strong reactions

At the April 12 board meeting, the United Unitarian Universalist congregation also hosted a “Rainbowland” singalong outside the Lindholm Building in a show of sup-

SOUND OFF

What do you think?
Phone: 513-2641
Email: soundoff@conleynet.com

port for Tempel. Over 100 people sang the words to the song and held up signs in support.

Several people discussed the topic during public comment at the meeting.

Jay McDivitt discussed the negative impact the topic is having on the district.

“This has made us a global laughing-stock,” the parent said. “We want to celebrate diversity because kids learn better in their own skin. Our children are not pawns in a political game of chess,” McDivitt said.

Stacy Keene said, “Each family has their own values, and a teacher has no right to come between that.”

DPI leader reacts

State Superintendent Jill Underly wrote a letter in April to Sebert and the Board of Education urging the reversal of the district’s Controversial Issues in the Classroom Policy.

The Controversial Issues in the Classroom Policy was created in 2017 and revised in 2022.

The district said certain signage within classrooms, including flags and posters about Pride, Black Lives Matter, Thin Blue Line, and more was not permitted.

The administration’s stated reasoning behind the signage directive has been to keep classroom displays within the confines of curriculum. The policy also states controversial topics include those that might create significant disagreement within the community.

Underly said in her letter that the district should re-evaluate the Controversial Issues in the Classroom Policy.

State Rep. Scott Allen, R-Waukesha; state Rep. Adam Neylon, R-Pewaukee; state Sen. Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield; and state Sen. Rob Hutton, R-Brookfield, sent a letter in response to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction chief.

The local Legislative leaders said Underly’s letter undermines local control.

“You should trust that the people of Waukesha have elected a board that represents them. The policies they enact reflect the values of the local community. This is what local control is all about,” the local legislative leaders said.

Underly’s letter expressed concern about potential harm to students and staff over the policy. She alludes to the controversy over the “Rainbowland” song. Underly mentioned the decision to place an employee on administrative leave.

“As district leaders, you can choose to re-evaluate the decision to place a district employee on administrative leave and, instead, recognize that ‘acknowledging the rights of [the district’s] professional staff members as citizens in a democratic society’ is, in fact, in the best interests of the School District of Waukesha,” she said.

“Whether you realize it or not, you are, under the guise of protection, causing undue harm to students and staff,” she said.

In a separate letter, Allen said Underly failed to provide examples of how the policy harms students. He also said she could have called Sebert to talk through the issues instead of sending the letter.

“The controversy has to do with a school district policy that seeks to keep the focus on education instead of indoctrination. In calling for a change to that policy, Superintendent Underly is violating the principle of local control of school boards. Meanwhile, Wisconsin math and reading scores have dropped during the tenure of Superintendent Underly, and Wisconsin ranks as the worst state for discrepancies between black and white students. Instead of focusing on quality public education, Superintendent Underly has chosen to engage in stirring up political controversy without even taking time to understand the facts,” said Allen.

“As the State Superintendent, you likely realize that with over 400 school districts in Wisconsin, one size does not fit all of us on any given topic. In the future, I would hope that you would ask for our perspective on topics as leaders first as opposed to forming your opinion based on a press release from an advocacy group,” Sebert said.

The Alliance for Education in Waukesha, a grassroots parent group, has been critical of the district. In the statement, the AEW said it has been in contact with the Department of Justice and the Wisconsin Department of Public Education. Their mission was to encourage the School District of Waukesha to rescind the controversial policy.



Isabella Kostolni/Freeman Staff

The interior decorating of the main dining area reflects the foliage found in Latin America.

Travieso

From Page 1A

Knight sings the praises of Magaña’s culinary skills and encourages everyone to give the restaurant a try.

“He gets these visions in his head of things you wouldn’t necessarily think would pair together well, how he wants certain things to look,” Knight said. “I call the food his form of art.”

Magaña’s favorite item on the menu is a fresh take on surf and turf. Travieso’s Tierra y Mar features a vanilla bean beurre blanc base, followed by confit potatoes and scallop-crust tenderloin topped with a chorizo bearnaise sauce.

Knight is a particularly big fan of Travieso’s wedge salad which puts a Latin twist on the classic dish. Customers can also find octopus, flounder, salmon, and shrimp on the menu along with churro cheesecake and a couple other distinctive desserts.

Interestingly, Magaña made a rule for himself that he never tastes the final product himself. He gets all the validation he needs from the looks on his customers’ faces.

“It’s just something that I always said in my mind. When I walk in the dining room, I want to see the reaction of the people,” he said. “It’s what motivates me to get to the next point.”

The Trouble Makers wanted the ambience to reflect the fresh, fun fare. So, they recruited Knight’s mother, Tricia, and wife, Sam, to bring their vision to life. As a way to honor the Latin influence on the restaurant’s cuisine, Tricia sought out pieces to reflect the region’s foliage.

“I wanted it to feel like we were inside a plant or tropical rainforest,” she said. The walls of the dining space are painted a crisp white and are adorned with a variety of plants and paintings. Tricia and Sam opted for an eclectic mix of chairs in various shades of green to mimic the natural variation in the coloring of the leaves.

Magaña is happy to see how well Tricia and Sam encapsulated the concept for the restaurant in the interior decorating.

“You have the feeling of the supper club with the bar on that side — a little dark. Then you walk into the green area with more of the Latin flair that comes out,” he said. “The vision that she has,

and then everything we talked about, has become a reality.”

They also wanted to incorporate Waukesha’s many small businesses in the design, so Tricia and Sam sought out the expertise of Waukesha Floral & Greenhouse to help with the greenery and commissioned the dining tables to be made by Fisk Avenue.

The Trouble Makers are glad to be surrounded by such a vibrant community with many other successful restaurants in the area. Tricia said that Travieso is in good company with the other fine dining experience downtown.

“They’re a good complement to Tofte’s (Table),” she said. “They came in and changed the culinary scene here in Waukesha. What they do is amazing and I think (the Trouble Makers) also have that similar vision.”

The trio behind Travieso also have a mission to make the restaurant a safe space for all their employees. Unlike many other restaurants, Travieso’s back-of-house staff is almost all women. Magaña says he enjoys the dynamic of working with his female staff.

“I keep learning more and then I can also share the knowledge that I have,” he said. “The female (employees) are super particular. They have every single aspect figured out before I even do it.”

Travieso also keeps a sober kitchen. With its long and demanding hours, the restaurant industry can be stressful for chefs. Travieso wants to make sure all of its employees are comfortable.

“We want a healthier work environment,” Knight said. “That’s one of the things we pride ourselves on. We have a sober kitchen and it’s a safe space for people that are recovering.”

Magaña is looking forward to opening Travieso’s doors to the public today and bringing a new flavor to downtown Waukesha.

“It’s my dream come true. It’s (Knight’s) dream come true. It’s Arnie’s dream come true,” he said. “We will keep going as a family, keep supporting each other. The sky is the limit.”

Travieso is open Tuesday through Saturday. The bar opens at 4 p.m. Dinner service begins at 5 p.m. and runs until 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Dinner service runs until 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. For more information, visit traviesolatinfusion.com.

Calls

From Page 1A

jarring action or fall in which the device is impacted.

Bell said they see an increase in abandoned calls around this time of year because people are outdoors and doing more activities.

“You have a bagged chair with a cup holder in it, you go to a la crosse or soccer game,” said Bell. “You set the bag chair down and put your phone inside that cupholder not

realizing that your side button is pressed into that cupholder and it’s activating a 911 call.”

According to Bell, most devices will give you a number of seconds and ask if you are sure about calling 911. However, if you don’t see it, the smart device will launch the call.

“The important message is, if your device does dial 911, it hit the system and it’s coming our way,” said Bell. “So just stay on the phone and we can quickly mitigate and clear that event mak-

ing sure you’re not in need of public safety services, and it will speed up our process with regards to verifying that.”

It takes about four minutes to clear one abandoned or misdialed call, which is a significant amount of time as it takes time away from other incoming 911 emergencies. Dispatchers are required by policy to attempt two callbacks to a device that reached out to 911.

“I think these features are being placed on devices for a very purposeful reason, and they are good reasons when we are good advocates and good consumers of products and are aware of what our devices are capable of doing,” said Bell.

And though many people are not dialing 911 and hanging up on purpose, it still happens if folks are unaware of how those smart devices activate an emergency SOS system. Bell said the key for reducing those numbers is spreading awareness and taking time to understand your device.

According to Bell, the industry reports showed a significant increase in accidental calls in Colorado ski hill areas around Christmas time. Some Android and iOS features include setups of hard-fall or man-down situations, according to Bell, and for many, falling down on a ski hill activated the call even when it wasn’t needed. “This is a nationwide problem, not just a Waukesha County problem,” said Bell. “Every communications center that receives 911 calls from wireless devices is getting hammered with additional call volume from devices.”

FIVE-DAY FORECAST

TONIGHT
Partly Cloudy
44

TOMORROW
Sunny
69/49

SUNDAY
Mostly Sunny
74/45

MONDAY
Partly Cloudy
68/49

TUESDAY
Sunny
78/55

REGIONAL FORECAST

COMFORT INDEX
10
What the air will feel like tomorrow, based on the temperature, humidity and wind speed. 1 poor; 10 excellent.

ALMANAC
Statistics for Yesterday
High/Low, Waukesha 66/34
High/Low 63/40
Normal High/Low 67/48
Last year’s high for date 55
Last year’s low for date 48
Precipitation, Waukesha 0.00”
Precipitation 0.00”
Precip. month to date 0.66”
Precip. year to date 13.25”
Snowfall Yesterday 0.2”
Snow season to date 52.4”

WIND CHILL TOMORROW
A composite of the effects of temperature and wind on the human body
8 a.m. 56
Noon 65
4 p.m. 66
8 p.m. 67

HEATING DEGREE
An index of energy consumption indicating how many degrees the day’s mean temperature was below 65 degrees.
Yesterday 13
Month to date 183
Season to date 5697
Normal season to date 6301

ILLINOIS
Chicago 64/51
Rockford 71/48

TEMPERATURES SHOWN ARE TOMORROW’S HIGHS AND LOWS.

PRECIPITATION SOURCE: Gen. Mitchell International, Milwaukee. Precipitation is the liquid equivalent of snow, ice and rain.

NEW May 19
FIRST May 27
JUN 1 Jun. 3
JUN 10 Jun. 10
LAST Jun. 10

Sunset today 8:13 p.m.
Sunrise tomorrow 5:25 a.m.

Moonrise tomorrow 5:46 a.m.
Moonset tomorrow 9:50 p.m.

NATIONAL FORECAST

Saturday, May 20, 2023

0s 10s 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s 90s 100s 110s

Rain
Storms
Snow
Ice
Cold Front
Warm Front
Low
High
Stationary Front
Jetstream

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Tonight: Colder. Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 40s. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph.
Saturday: Sunny. Highs in the upper 60s. North winds 5 to 15 mph.

MARINE FORECAST
Lake Michigan near shore forecast:
Tonight: NNW wind 10 to 15 kt. Partly cloudy. Waves around 1 ft.
Saturday: NNW wind around 10 kt. Sunny. Waves around 1 ft.

Lake Michigan water temperature is 55 degrees.

ULTRAVIOLET INDEX FORECAST
The UVI forecast for Saturday is **8**
UV scale and warnings on possible skin damage: 0-2 low risk, 3-5 moderate risk, 6-7 high risk, 8-10 very high risk, 11-over extreme risk.

TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR TOMORROW

ATLANTA High: 80 Low: 62
CHICAGO High: 64 Low: 51
DALLAS High: 80 Low: 63
DENVER High: 74 Low: 52
LOS ANGELES High: 77 Low: 60
MIAMI High: 85 Low: 77
MINNEAPOLIS High: 74 Low: 53
NEW YORK High: 67 Low: 58
PHOENIX High: 96 Low: 73
SEATTLE High: 78 Low: 56
ST. LOUIS High: 74 Low: 53
WASHINGTON High: 77 Low: 56