



NEWS GRAPHIC

OZAUKEE COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER SINCE 1883



Undefeated

Cedarburg wrestlers beat Homestead to post a 4-0 record in the North Shore Conference.

▶ Page B2

Jam 4 Charity

Cedarburg High School jam session to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims.

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Man charged in bank robbery

Suspect remains at large

By Gary Achterberg
News Graphic Staff

Port Washington — A 29-year-old Milwaukee man remains at large, but has been charged with armed robbery in connection with the New Year's Eve robbery of a Mequon bank.

Zeno L. Lowe Jr. has been charged with armed robbery with use of force in connection with the hold-up of Associated Bank, 10509 N. Port Washington Road. Ozaukee County Circuit Judge Paul Malloy signed a warrant for Lowe's arrest on Wednesday, the same day charges were filed, court records said.

The criminal complaint said a male subject entered the bank at 12:48 p.m. Dec. 31, 2012, pointed a handgun at two clerks working at the counter and demanded money. The tellers handed cash to the man and he left, the criminal complaint said.

A Mequon officer responded to the scene, saw footprints in the snow and also located a silver handgun lying near the entrance. It was later identified as the gun used in the robbery, the complaint said.

The officer followed the footprints to where a vehicle had been parked. Witnesses told police the suspect got into the vehicle and drove off. The officer found a hat near where the vehicle had been parked. Witnesses said it was the hat the suspect had been wearing, the criminal complaint said.

Police learned that the vehicle, a white cargo van, had been observed fleeing southbound on Interstate 43. Glendale police saw the vehicle and started pursuing it. The pursuit ended at 12th and Burleigh streets in

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Photo by Mark Justesen

Area firefighters work at an ice edge in Cedar Creek on Saturday as the search for Robert Steinbrecker continued. The 24-year-old man has been missing since Dec. 27, 2012.

Missing man still a mystery

Authorities say they have no new leads

By Lisa Curtis
News Graphic Staff

Cedarburg — The search for a missing former Cedarburg man is as intense today as the day he separated from his friends early Dec. 27 and seemingly vanished.

Several Ozaukee County sheriff's deputies have been assigned to the case while firefighters from area



Steinbrecker

departments and dogs from a search and rescue organization continue to comb the areas in and around Cedar Creek where 24-year-old Robert Steinbrecker was last seen.

"There are still search efforts going on and we anticipate that those will continue," said sheriff's Lt. Rod Galbraith. "We are conduct-

ing an investigation as extensive as possible."

Steinbrecker was last seen by two friends as they were walking from downtown Cedarburg to the town of Cedar Creek around 2 a.m. Dec. 27. Galbraith said they walked onto the frozen Cedar Creek behind the Cedar Creek Settlement. At some point, about a half-mile north of where they started, Steinbrecker took off running away from, or ahead of, his friends, who Galbraith said are from the area.

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Rare Mequon mayoral race highlights local candidate filings

News Graphic Staff

Ozaukee County — The first contested race for mayor of Mequon since 1998 is one of the highlights of the candidate filings for public office in the spring election.

While there are a handful of other contested races, many other contests include incumbents running unopposed in the Tuesday, April 2, general election. When required, a primary will occur on Tuesday, Feb. 19.

Here are the candidates:

Municipalities

■ **City of Cedarburg** — Only the incumbents have filed papers to run for the open council seats. They are: Ronald Reimer in District 2; Paul Radtke in District 4 and Douglas Yip in District 6. A city ordinance that limits council members to four terms would have prevented Radtke from seeking another term, but because no one else filed papers for it, Radtke is allowed to run for a fifth term.

■ **City of Mequon** — Mayor Curt Gielow, who is completing his first three-year term, will be opposed by Dan Abendroth, a long-time member of the common council. Abendroth also will appear on the ballot as he seeks re-election for his District 1 seat on the council. He will be opposed by Robert J. Strzelczyk. In District 4, three candidates will seek to fill the seat now held by John Wirth, who is not seeking re-election. They are Cherry Lange, Jeffrey F. Hansher and John Lexczynski. The field will be narrowed to two in the Feb. 19 primary.

Lack of notarization keeps Cedarburg School Board candidate off ballot

A missing notarization means that Cedarburg School Board candidate — and incumbent — Rick Leach will need to run as a write-in candidate for the April 2 election.

Leach said his plan was to get the candidacy papers notarized at the school district office, but that didn't happen. He said he accepts full responsibility.

"We have three children and we have told them since they were little that when you make a mistake, you accept responsibility for it," said Leach, who has been on the board since 2010 and currently serves as its vice president.

Candidates for school board are required to submit a campaign registration statement, 25 signatures and a notarized declaration of candidacy form. Leach's lacked the necessary notarization, but that wasn't caught until after the Jan. 2 deadline.

Leach said he is declaring himself a write-in candidate and will file the necessary papers. He said he apologizes to all of the clerks and poll workers in advance for having to count the votes by hand, which he said is a time-consuming task.

"Now my challenge is to get enough people to go to the polls and write my name on it," said Leach, a Cedarburg police sergeant. "Hopefully those who supported me last time will support me again."

— Lisa Curtis

■ **Village of Grafton** — Incumbents are running unopposed for both village trustee and village president. For the trustee positions, David Antoine, Richard Rieck and James Grant will be on the ballot. Village President James Brunnuell also submitted papers.

■ **Village of Thiensville** — Trustees John Treffert and David Lange do not face opposition in their bids for new three-year terms on the village board. Treffert is a long-time board member.

Lange was appointed this spring to fill a seat vacated by Van Mobley after he was elected village president.

■ **Town of Cedarburg** — Incumbents are unopposed in their bids for re-election. They are Chairman Dave Valentine and supervisors Wayne Pipkorn and Gary Wickert.

■ **Town of Grafton** — Incumbents are unopposed in their re-election bids. They

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No easy resolution to Denow landfill saga

Town hopes to find answers to contamination questions

By Steve Schuster
News Graphic Staff

Grafton — Decades worth of legal action over the contamination of Ozaukee County's groundwater still hasn't reached settlement, according to town of Grafton officials who, for the past four years, have been meeting in closed session discussions as recently as last month.

The contamination is the result of claimed illegal dumping of toxic materials at the Denow landfill, which operated on Cedar Sauk Road from 1970 until 1989 in the town of Grafton.

Currently, the town is in negotiations with a third party, who is allegedly responsible for part of the illegal dumping.

According to town officials and reports from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the illegal and/or unsupervised dumping at the privately operated 10-acre landfill began in the 1970s.

The illegal dumping and resulting contamination was discovered two decades later.

Early testing of the well water near the landfill revealed multiple contaminants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as vinyl chloride, a cancer-causing agent, according to Kenneth Wein, a consultant who worked on the initial cleanup of the landfill during the 1990s.

A water sample taken near the landfill in the late 1990s revealed the presence of vinyl chloride at 33 parts per billion, well above the 2.0 ppb maximum level deemed safe by government officials. In addition to vinyl chloride, several other chemicals were found, including tetra-chlorethene and dichloroethane.

According to federal government documents, a follow-up water sampling revealed that eight private wells had vinyl chloride levels as high as 60 ppb.

In 2005, the contamination became so severe an Emergency Response Branch from the Environmental Protection Agency Region V office in Chicago was dispatched to the contamination site to evaluate the source of the contamination.

In 1998, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources said they were the first agency involved in determining the extent of the environmental contamination and necessary cleanup. The EPA became involved in 2003, allegedly due to the failure of town officials to

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Denow: Environmentalists credit town of Grafton with handling landfill correctly

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comply with requests made by state officials, according to Nancy Ryan, a hydrologist with the DNR.

In 2008, the DNR referred the town of Grafton and Great American Financial Resources Inc. to the Wisconsin Department of Justice for allegedly failing to comply with an administrative order.

Town officials have a different story.

Town Chairman Lester Bartel Jr. said Jan. 2 that he personally called the EPA right after learning about the contaminated water,

knowing that the problem was serious.

"The first thing on our mind was to get (this situation) taken care of," he said.

The EPA failed to respond to the News Graphic's questions prior to publication.

At the time, Grafton officials also informed residents they shouldn't consume, bathe or cook with the water, provided residents with bottled water and eventually connected the affected homes with an alternative water supply with the help from village officials.

"The town did what they

were supposed to do. Grafton did the right thing," said Dr. Thomas Burke, an environmental expert, professor and Associate Dean at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

State environmental groups agreed.

According to Dr. Shahla Warner, Chapter Director of the Wisconsin Sierra Club in Madison, other municipalities across the nation have experienced similar water contamination issues. Not all cities however have been truthful about the extent of the problem as it appears

Grafton was.

"Grafton did the right thing by telling their residents. It sounds like Grafton did this the best way they could, in the most expedient way," Warner said.

Grafton went one step further, and even successfully determined the source of the contaminants.

According to Bartel, several years ago the town hired an investigator who determined that various companies were dumping barrels of chemicals on the site after hours and now the town is conducting settlement negotiations with

one of those parties.

Bartel also said that while the DNR ultimately called upon the EPA to intervene, it was not because the town was unresponsive.

He said the town believed that it should not be held responsible for the contamination because the landfill was privately operated, and the town was only the license holder of the landfill.

"The town did not permit in any way or condone in any way the actions that resulted in the groundwater contamination," Bartel said.

But state and federal officials disagreed with the

town's original position.

"They (town of Grafton officials) were the operator and the license holder. It was their responsibility to make sure it (the landfill) was operated appropriately," Ryan said.

Town of Grafton's legal counsel for the matter, Michael Carlton with von Briesen & Roper SC, declined to comment as did Linda Benfield with Foley & Lardner who represents a third party.

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