

# Delavan Area Hot Spots & Happenings

Compiled by Jason Francis

## Hot Spots

The **Delavan Historical Society Exhibit & Resource Center**, 663 East Ann St., displays local artifacts and stories of local significance. Exhibits change four times a year and the Resource Center continues to grow as the society researches and collects documents and memorabilia from the public. The Exhibit and Resource Center is open Mondays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., or by appointment. 262-740-7410, [www.delavanhistory.org](http://www.delavanhistory.org)

Delavan has recently been turned into an art museum of sorts that can be viewed by car as well as by foot. In the summer of 2015, nearly 200 artists and helpers from the Walldogs organization turned 18 huge blank canvases—in the form of exterior walls of various city buildings—into prolific **murals that showcase Delavan's roots** while at the same time beautify the city's streets. The Wisconsin School for the Deaf, the temperance movement, World War II-era manufacturing, the P.T. Barnum Circus and other topics pertinent to the city's heritage are featured in stunning colors, detail and style. 262-728-5095, [delavanwi.org/walldogs-18-murals](http://delavanwi.org/walldogs-18-murals)

Take a stroll down the paths and discover the wonders and beauty of **Congdon Gardens**, 1424 Hobbs Drive, in Delavan. No matter when you visit the gardens, you will find it a beautiful and peaceful experience. There are many gardens to view from a walking path around the park. In 2003, Congdon Park's quiet pond and small flower garden experienced an important change, with an initiative by the Delavan-Darien Rotary, that created what has become Congdon Gardens. The small planting of annuals became a perennial garden with a large fountain as its centerpiece. It consists of seven granite boulders that signify the seven continents of the world united by water. Open dawn to dusk. 262-495-4818, [www.congdongardens.org](http://www.congdongardens.org)

**Delavan's park system** contains more than 100 acres of beautifully maintained natural preserves. There are a variety of scenic parks (with picnic and playground areas), including Mill Pond at Veteran's Park, Phoenix Park and Springs Park. Tower Park, Veteran's Park and the Town of Delavan Community Park are also popular recreation sites. [ci.delavan.wi.us/departments/parks-recreation/city-parks/p](http://ci.delavan.wi.us/departments/parks-recreation/city-parks/p)

The **Village of Darien's park system** includes West Park (18 Acres), Wildwood Park (26 Acres), Bruce Park (Center of Village) and Salas Park (Bella Vista Subdivision).

## Happenings

**June 24-Muddy Maniacs Adventure Mud Run:** An exciting adventure run in the mud for kids. The course will be about one mile long with various obstacles along the way. Come test your endurance and dress to get dirty. The race will start in Terrace Park (123 S. 2nd St.), across the street from the Mill Pond, and run through Lower Springs Park and the Sledding Hill. 9:15-11:15 a.m. 262-728-5585, [www.visitdelavan.com](http://www.visitdelavan.com)

**July 9-The Cars Time Forgot:** Classic and collector cars from all eras. Food, music and sales. Lake Lawn Resort, 2400 E. Geneva St. 262-728-5095, [www.delavanwi.org](http://www.delavanwi.org)

**Sept. 8-10-Cornfest:** A weekend celebrating all things corn, with sports tournaments, tractor pulls, raffles, outhouse races, live entertainment, carnival, fireworks, arts and crafts, raffles and much more. West Park, Darien. 262-949-9358, [darien-cornfest.us](http://darien-cornfest.us)

**Sept. 16-Scarecrow Fest:** Scarecrows line the sidewalks at this fun fall festival of food, arts and crafts, flea market, live entertainment and Delavan's famous duck race. Kid's carnival, petting zoo, kid's activity center and a street dance until 8:30 pm. Downtown, E. Walworth Ave., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 262-740-0959, [www.delavanwi.org](http://www.delavanwi.org)

Information compiled from internet sources, including local chamber of commerce websites, municipal websites, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com), and other websites, unless noted.

## Blue Toad has auctions hopping

By Troy A. Bruzewski  
Special to the Lakes Edition

GENOA CITY — Bill Theesfield makes his bids prior to the auction.

He would like to let everyone in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin know they have an option to sell and purchase collectibles other than posting them online. Theesfield — co-owner of Blue Toad Auctions in Genoa City — is the auctioneer voice heard at the location's regular Saturday auctions and other special events, which welcome consignments from around the country.

Theesfield began the operation a decade ago with his mother Carolyn and wife Gina, who've helped the operation go from nickel-and-dime to serious dollars.

"We were in a smaller 2,000-square-foot building and grew out of that about five years ago," Gina said. "We did auctions maybe once a month and had seating for maybe 25 people; through word of mouth and people being happy with the items they've purchased or consigned, we've continued to grow."

Blue Toad now is housed in a 15,000-square-foot building with over half dedicated to warehouse storage to allow for a vast selection of items to be auctioned. Along with more room, Blue Toad has obtained a higher level of merchandise and has filled more of its schedule.

"We've been a weekly auction for about eight years now, and in the last year we started adding bonus auctions, like sports collectibles on a Tuesday night or an auction on Sunday," Gina said. "We've graduated from lower-end items to collectibles and higher-end items over the years."

As word circulated about the auction, more recognizable clientele chose Blue Toad to liquidate overstock or a lifelong collection. The Theesfields say they've been contracted by Home

Depot to liquidate refurbished equipment, a guitar collector to sell his collection and even a dentist going out of business.

"We had a dentist whose entire collection came to us," Gina said. "We actually sold teeth, a lot of them."

Along the way, Blue Toad has garnered national attention. One of the many consignments received and auctioned was a rare pinball machine, which matched one sold by the nationally-renowned Christy's auction house.

"The first auction house to sell it was Christy's at like \$20,000 in mint condition," Gina said. "The guy didn't care what he got for it and even brought it here in the rain."

"We did a lot of research and found out it was very rare. We sold it and we have the second-highest amount brought in for that machine, nationwide."

Blue Toad also has featured a wide variety of collectibles over recent years, including boxing trunks autographed by Muhammad Ali and a drum cover autographed by Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Frank Sinatra.

Both businesses and individuals looking to sell



Bill Theesfield takes bids during an auction at Blue Toad Auctions in Genoa City. (Photo by Troy A. Bruzewski)

are welcomed by Blue Toad and they don't necessarily need to bring the collection to the auction house on Elizabeth Road. The company also goes on location to conduct estate sales and storage locker auctions.

The Theesfields say Blue Toad may eventually have an online presence or ability to receive remote bids, but the in-person auctions will remain the core of its business.

"There's a lot of competitors who do online bidding right now and Ebay has opened online bidding for auction houses," Gina said. "We're one of the few

auctioneers who have a warehouse, so we're still able to have that weekly in-house auction and you can't get that at a lot of places."

In the meantime, Blue Toad offers an option to those who'd like to bid but are unable to attend the auction.

"We have absentee bidding and we bid for you as if you're in the room," Gina said.

The auction's schedule and updates are posted on its website — [bluetoadauctions.com](http://bluetoadauctions.com). Saturday auctions begin at 10 a.m. with items available to view for an hour prior to start time.



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