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Contents

- 2.....Shopping Local: The Wayzata Bay Center
- 4.....Tonka Lifestyle Guide: Fishing Report & December Events
- 6.....The Engels: Faith, Family & The Foursome
- 8.....Thankful By Dr. Barbro Brost, D.C.

From The Editor

Happy December folks!

Shopping is in high gear. Have you found that special someone the perfect gift? Boy, there are a lot of choices out there with limitless possibilities on the internet and endless aisles at the big box stores. But remember that there is an alternative this holiday season - shopping local.

Throughout Wayzata you will find mom and pop shops that specialize in very unique things. Plus, the experience counts too. Walking in and out of businesses along Lake Street or Colonial Square is a wonderful experience. Especially when the snow is flying, holiday music is playing, and the Salvation Army bells are ringing.

Have a great December folks and consider shopping local!

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Construction in progress, mid 1960s
Courtesy Wayzata Historical Society

Shopping Local: *Wayzata Bay Center*

Shopping looked very different half a century ago in Wayzata. Of course there is still Lake Street and Colonial Square, but there was also another place that served the residents of Wayzata for decades.

Some of you remember Wayzata Bay Center. It was located where the Promenade currently sits at Superior and Lake. It was a community hub for many years.

During the early 1960s, an idea was floated to build an indoor mall on what was a swamp.

A few of the big concerns for residents was an increase in the amount of vehicle traffic as well as the drainage of water should the swamp be filled in. There were 21 specific stipulations the developer had to follow to move forward with the project.

Aerial of Wayzata, 1969-70,
Bay Center is pictured far right
Courtesy Philip Braden

This was a long process. The city council greenlighted the project in 1963 and it was finally finished in 1967. Building on a swamp presents numerous problems which would re-surface when the area was redeveloped again in the 2000s.

Researching newspaper articles and information at the Wayzata Historical Society was important to putting this article together, but it was also important to hear from those who grew up here. So I asked folks about their memories of Wayzata Bay Center on Facebook.

According to my very informal poll, The Foursome, Bridgeman's, and Ben Franklin topped the list of what people remembered most.



The Foursome was the go-to place for clothing. Bridgeman's was a big hangout for teens and served food, but more importantly, ice cream! And Ben Franklin was where you could find pretty much everything you needed. It was also a place many young people, like my wife, got their first job. And if you visited frequently, you certainly got to know a very nice woman named Anna Mae Perry.



The mall also had a grocery store, hardware store, hair salon, electronics store, a toy store, and many more places to shop. There was a Goodyear auto shop, and the Muni (Wayzata Bar & Grille) was located just across the parking lot.

Wayzata Bay Center also showcased children's artwork on the walls. It was a busy place during Crazy Days and you should have seen the lines to see Santa during the holidays.

Remember that bit about being built on a swamp? Well, according to my sources, under the floor of the Ben Franklin sat a rowboat. Apparently, it was used for those who maintained the subfloor mechanical and electrical equipment. Yes, a boat under the mall.



In 2011, the mall closed and gave way to a new development – the Promenade. This piece of land changed from a swamp, to a mall, to residences, business spaces, and a hotel. A few businesses that were in the mall until the end relocated and are still in business today - The Foursome, Bob's Shoe Repair, and Barber's Inn are reminders of Wayzata's shopping past.



From Top to Bottom:

Main Entrance, circa 1980

Courtesy Wayzata Historical Society

Main Entrance after exterior remodeling, circa 2000

Courtesy Wayzata Historical Society

Wayzata Bay Center interior, 2008

Courtesy Dave Haas Photography



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We hope you have a safe and festive holiday season!

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Events

City of Orono Annual Tree Lighting, 12/2

5-7pm | Orono Orchards Golf Course

Christmas in Excelsior, 12/2, 9 & 16

Enjoy festivities, events & holiday spirit!

Photos w/ Santa & The Grinch + Holiday Hayrides

Every Saturday & Sunday thru 12/17 | Minnetonka Orchards

Wayzata Fire On Ice Tournament, 12/1-3

Wayzata Trojans | Hockey Tournament

Holiday Lights at the Hilde, 12/2

3-6 pm thru the snowy season | Hilde Performance Center

The Plymouth Rockers Holiday Concert, 12/3

3-4:30 pm | Wayzata High School

Crafternoon

Wednesdays (times vary) | Wayzata Library

Blue Water Theatre Company Presents

All Shook Up | 12/7 - 17 @ 7:30 pm

Hanukkah (1st day), 12/8

Holiday Tree Lighting, 12/8

5:30-7:30 pm | Holbrook Park, Long Lake

Skitzo Fonik - Pop & Rock Music Madness, 12/8

8 pm | The Narrows Saloon

Winter Farmer's Market, 12/9

10-2 pm | Minnetonka Community Center

Skate With Santa, 12/9

5-8 pm | Central Park Ice Skating Loop, Maple Grove

A Festival of Lessons & Carols 12/15

7:30-8:30 pm | St. Bartholomew Church

The Apollo Club, 12/17

2:30-4:30 pm | St. Philip the Deacon Lutheran Church

Tyler Herwig @ Wayzata Country Club, 12/19

acoustic artist | 5 pm

Ugly Sweater Party w/Pandora's Other Box, 12/23

8-11:30 pm | Birch's on the Lake

Christmas Eve, 12/24

Christmas, 12/25

Kwanzaa, 12/26

Noon Year's Eve Celebration, 12/30

11:30-12 pm | Westonka Library, Mound

New Years' Eve, 12/31

Live Music @ ninetyfive, 12/31

6-9 pm | Early Set with The Jorgensens

9:30 pm | NYE Late Set with Leslie Vincent Trio

Birch's on the Lake Rockin' New Year's Eve, 12/31

8 pm - 1 am | The 70's Magic Sunshine Band



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Fishing Report:

Water temperatures will be in the mid-40s and likely open water at the beginning of the month. Live bait is the way to go (sucker minnows, fatheads, shiners). If you find small perch, you'll find walleye. This is a great month to start to get your ice fishing gear ready. Black Lake and Seton Channel are typically the first to freeze over on Lake Minnetonka. But you have to wait until you have 2-3 inches of clear ice before venturing out and starting the ice fishing season.

Safety is paramount!



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Gordy Engel at The Foursome in Plymouth.

Fast forward to the mid-50s. Ron and Lucille Engel moved to Wayzata from Iowa to become part owners of the business. The Engels became sole owners in the 1960s. Ron and Lucille’s son Gordy joined the business and now his children are a part of this third-generation store.

Many remember The Foursome at its location in the Wayzata Bay Center mall. More on that in another article in this magazine issue.

Gordy and his wife Nancy have six children (Nicole, Keri, Christine, Beth, Kathrynne and Michael) and 18 grandchildren.

The Engels:

Family, Faith & The Foursome

If you’ve driven directly in front of the Hotel Landing in Wayzata, you were on Engel Street. There’s a reason why a street was named Engel and there’s a reason why that street sign is where it is.

The name refers to the Engel family - these are the folks who own The Foursome clothing store near the intersection of Highway 55 and Highway 101 in Plymouth. The business was in Wayzata previously and served the community for a long time. In 1935, four teachers launched the shop. The men were also golfing buddies and that’s where the name, The Foursome, was born.

“Not a week goes by that we don’t have a customer share a story about an experience they had at The Foursome long ago - whether it be jeans they bought 50 years ago when in high school or how our grandpa made their first suit buying experience memorable,” said Nicole (Engel) Chose. “We are also truly blessed by our long-time staff - both former and current - who we lovingly refer to as our Foursome family.”

Gordy’s daughters Nicole Chose and Keri Rouen are the Marketing Director and HR Manager respectively, making it a three-generation operation. In 2011, son Michael Engel also joined the family business in the role of finance and buyer. Michael’s wife Kelsey and another Engel sister Beth also work part time in the areas of merchandising and design.

“It’s a blessing to get to work alongside family members that care about this so deeply and have learned from our dad and grandpa how to run this business with humble service and gratitude,” said Chose.



The Foursome’s outside entrance at the Wayzata Bay Center in the 1970s

All images courtesy of the Engel family

The Engels are a very humble crew so you may not know about all of the accolades the family business has received through the years. In 1976, Men's Wear Magazine voted The Foursome the best family clothing store in the country. Many local publications have written about the Foursome formula. For example, Corporate Report Minnesota in December of 1986. In 1998, DNR, a trade journal for men's fashion and retail, selected The Foursome as one of the top 30 specialty stores in the country.

In 2013, the Foursome was honored to receive the prestigious Uptown/Downtown Award for retail innovation from Menswear Magazine. Family members flew to New York along with 10 other retailers nationwide to receive the award that summer. In 2018, The Minnesota Retailers Association honored Gordy Engel with a lifetime achievement award.

The Engels are a family of faith. It is a big part of their lives. They are very involved with Redeemer Lutheran Church in Wayzata and have been for decades. Gordy leads the Saturday morning men's bible study.

"Ours is a legacy built on family openness to change and mutual respect, a commitment to quality merchandise and service, making and cherishing lasting relationships, and reinvesting by serving in our community," said Gordy Engel. "We are a family of faith working together to help others in need."

So, will The Foursome become a fourth-generation clothing store?

"Some of the grandkids come in to wrap presents during the holidays and help with taking inventory, getting a taste of the business as former generations did when they were young," said Chose. "Time will tell if any of them make this a career!"



From Top to Bottom:

Ron & Gordy Engel

Three generations: Ron, Gordy & Gordy's Children in the JJ Hill Days parade, 2005

Gordy & Nancy's 50th Wedding Anniversary Party in 2022



Thankful

By: Barbro Brost D.C

This time of the year we pause and think about everything we have to be thankful for.

Living in Wayzata is something we all can be grateful for. We have a wonderful town and a great community of people, who truly care about each other and our little town.

As a chiropractor, I am very grateful for the high level of health consciousness and the strong desire and determination, by many people, to put in the work and effort to keep healthy and fit. Helping people that are health motivated and look for drug free, natural health choices makes it very rewarding to practice in Wayzata.

About 80% of our health status is related to lifestyle and daily choices. Eating healthy food, getting daily exercise, taking vitamins and supplements, getting regular chiropractic adjustments, enjoying family and friendships, being part of a spiritual community are some of the known choices that all add up to tip the health scale in a positive direction.

The Wayzata community has a high percentage of people that understand that health is something you earn, and disease is often not something you "get", but something you acquire by poor lifestyle choices.

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