



The Gazette

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In the know

SPORTS

Lexi Huber scores four goals as Stillwater upends Park in girls soccer to move into first place in SEC standings.

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Brooke Elfert leads trio of Ponies across the finish line in girls cross country victory over Roseville at Lake Elmo Reserve.

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FROM THE GAZETTE FILES

Sept. 20, 1919 – One of the most disastrous fires of recent years swept a portion of the manufacturing district of South Stillwater. The fire destroyed portions of an old planing mill and caused \$100,000 in damages

PUBLIC NOTICES

Legals – Keep up on the latest notices in your area.

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Volleyball and football moving back to fall

BY STUART GROSCKREUTZ
THE GAZETTE

It's far from business as usual, but a more familiar fall sports season is now possible for football and volleyball athletes following votes by the Minnesota State High School

League's Board of Directors on Monday, Sept. 21.

The special meeting, which was conducted virtually, was called to reconsider the board's directives on Aug. 4 that moved football and volleyball to a new season that would fall between the tradition-

al winter and spring sports seasons.

Six other fall sports, including boys and girls cross country, boys and girls soccer, girls swimming and diving, and girls tennis, were allowed to take place this fall with significant modifications

in an attempt to limit the spread of COVID-19.

By a 15-3 margin, the board on Monday approved a 10-week football season that will begin with practices starting on Sept. 28. Teams are allowed six regular season games, starting on Oct. 9.

The Ponies will host White Bear Lake to open the season, followed by a trip to Woodbury on Oct. 16.

At the conclusion of the regular season, a two-week football postseason will be held, with further

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Moving picture



Above: From left to right, Amy Adamle, Madison Iseman (who plays Amy in the upcoming film "Clouds"), Grace Sobiech, Mitchel Kluesner, Sammy Brown and Fin Argus (who plays Zach in the film) all pose together in downtown Stillwater in September 2019.

Below right: Zach Sobiech Plays guitar in a clinic during August 2011. Sobiech died from a rare form of bone cancer in 2013. (Photos courtesy of Laura Sobiech)

Sobiech's legacy lives on in film

BY MATT DEBOW
THE GAZETTE

The story of a Lakeland teen who was diagnosed with cancer and died from the disease in 2013, is coming to Disney+ on Oct. 16. Before he passed, 17-year-old Zach Sobiech wrote and performed the farewell song "Clouds," that went viral on YouTube.

The film "Clouds" depicts Sobiech's journey with osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. He died in May 2013, shortly before he would have graduated from Stillwater Area High School.

The movie is based on his mother's, Laura Sobiech, memoir "Fly a Little Higher" about his journey. Laura and her husband, Rob

Sobiech, watched an advanced streaming version of the film on the night of Friday, Sept. 18.

"Yeah that's crazy," Laura said of seeing her family depicted on the screen. "It's a whole mess of feelings."

Laura told the Gazette while she is happy with how the film turned out, she couldn't be an unbiased viewer.

"It made us laugh, and it made us cry," she said.

After Zach's song went viral, a TV documentary series called "My Last Days" profiled the teenager for an episode. Justin Baldoni directed the episode, and he directed the Disney film.

When Baldoni was working on the documentary, he was moved by Zach's personality, according

to a press release from Disney.

"I fell in love with Zach's infectious joy and spirit ..." Baldoni said in the release. "Just before he passed, I made a promise to him that I would do whatever I could to make sure the world heard his music."

Laura thinks that everyone will connect with the film — even if her take is a bit skewed.

"There's something in the story that everybody will walk away with," Laura said. "For some people that will go deeper and for others it will not."

Stillwater reflection

Viewers will get to see much of the St. Croix valley in the film. "Clouds" was shot in Montreal, but the Canadian school the film



was decorated with Ponies gear sent from Stillwater area residents.

"They made the set look as much like our beautiful valley as they could," Zach's mother said.

Laura also shipped up Zach's clothing along with his guitars. So Finn Argus, who plays Zach in the film, is actually wearing

See Sobiech, Page 11

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SOBIECH

(Continued from page 1)

Zach's clothes.

Madison Iseman, who plays Zach's girlfriend Amy Adamle, visited Sobiech's home last summer along with Argus.

The Sobiechs still have Zach's room setup exactly the way it was when he was alive. Argus spent an hour in Zach's room exploring the ambiance and memories.

Amy Adamle, who dated Zach at the end of his life, got to meet the actress who plays her in the film during the actors' summer visit.

"Madison, who really cares about the story, wanted to give it her all," Adamle said in a phone interview with the Gazette. "That was the only thing I could ask for, and it all turned out to be amazing."

Adamle only saw a rough cut of the picture a few months ago, and she is looking forward to watching the final version. From what she saw, Adamle was thrilled with how the director captured an aspect of her life that shaped who she is as a person.

"It was breathtaking honestly," Adamle said.

Zach's mother was delighted how her son was portrayed in the film. The preparation he took spending time with the Sobiech family and friends paid off.

"He really nailed it," she said.

"Clouds" path

Zach started playing guitar when he was 11, but didn't really start singing until after his cancer diagnosis when he was a sophomore in high school.

He started singing with his friend Sammy Brown, and he stayed as more of a backup singer.

"And it wasn't till the last year of his life that he really started singing," Laura said.

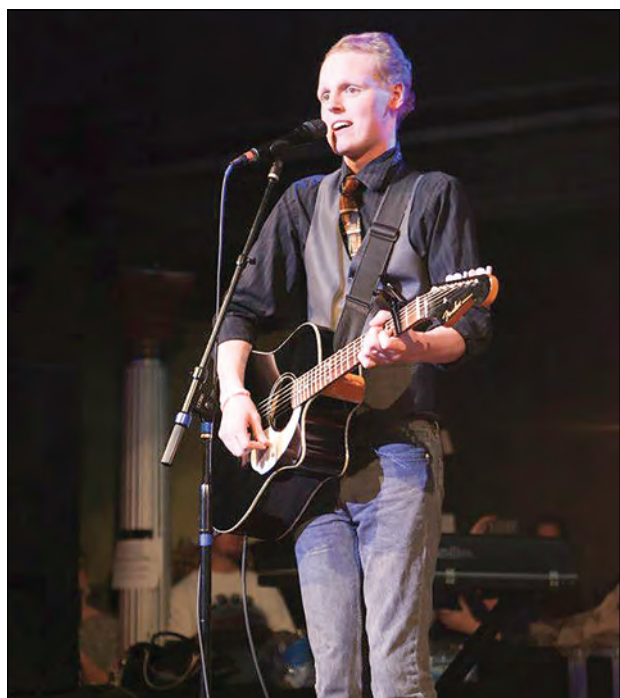
Zach was given an opportunity to showcase his voice when Zach was invited to participate in a radiothon and was asked to perform a song.

"I knew he wasn't very good," Laura said. "So I asked him, 'Are you sure you want to do this.' This is where he kind of schooled me in life: 'Mom, if I don't (take this) chance to do this when will I.'"

So he chose Ja-



Left: Fin Argus, who plays Zach Sobiech, and Sabrina Carpenter, who plays Sammy Brown, perform in the upcoming film "Clouds" (Photo courtesy of Disney)



Right: Zach Sobiech performs at the Varsity Theater in February 2013. (Photo courtesy of Laura Sobiech)

I want to be remembered as the kid who went down fighting, but didn't really lose.

— Zach Sobiech

son Mraz's song, "I'm Yours," but it wasn't a suitable selection.

"It didn't fit really well with the interview because it was too upbeat of a song, so they reached back out to us for a song that was more appropriate," Laura said.

As they were finding what Zach should perform, Laura found a scribbling downstairs in her home and the words became the lyrics for the song "Clouds."

"That's how the path for Clouds began and it turned into the message Zach wanted to share for our loved ones," Laura said.

Creative liberties

While the film is based on Laura's memoir about those events, she noted there are fabricated elements. She estimated about 80% of the film is true to life.

For instance, one fictional component is a scene where Zach gets really upset and drives away.

"That's not Zach," his mother said. "That's not true to who he was, but the movie needed it."

Him getting upset and driving off was a narrative film technique used to show what was going inside Zach's head.

"While that sort of frustrated feeling was part

of Zach, he didn't express it in any outward sort of way," Laura said.

Laura didn't try to change these elements during the film's production because she didn't want to give too much input.

"I didn't want a whole lot of say, but Justin was really good about reaching out," Laura said.

However, there was one big way Laura helped mold the film. During the table read, Neve Campbell (who plays Laura in the film) was reading a scene where Laura and her husband got into a fight.

"Neve Campbell said 'this isn't really working for me,'" Laura recalled.

So Laura told Campbell she could help with the scene.

Laura, Campbell and Tom Everett Scott, who plays Laura's husband Rob in the film, worked together and completely rewrote the scene.

"So that was really cool access," Laura said.

Writing a memoir about her son, and having a limited role in the movie production about Zach is

bittersweet, Laura said, because while they help raise money for osteosarcoma research, it also means the Sobiech family has to keep reliving the heartbreak of Zach's story.

The Zach Sobiech Osteosarcoma Fund foundation has raised more than \$2 million for cancer research.

While Laura wasn't hands on during the filming, she did attend the first day of production. When she saw Argus dressed up as Zach wearing a bald cap, she was stunned.

"It was like watching Zach walking in the room for the first time in a long time," Laura said. "To have those feelings was a mixed bag of emotion, and now watching the film, it's surreal."

Laura's memoir originally titled "Fly a Little Higher" is coming out in an updated form called "Clouds" to coincide with the movie's release.

The book contains an epilogue documenting what's happened in the Sobiech family since Zach's death. The book is available on Amazon.

To donate to Zach's fund, visit ChildrensCancer.org/Zach, and 100% of donations fund osteosarcoma research.

Lyrics to 'Clouds'

I fell down, down, down
Into this dark and lonely hole
There was no one there to care about me anymore
And I needed a way to climb and grab a hold of the edge
You were sitting there holding a rope

And we'll go up, up, up
But I'll fly a little higher
Go up in the clouds because the view's a little nicer
Up here my dear
It won't be long now, it won't be long now

When we get back on land
Well I'll never get my chance
Be ready to live and it'll be ripped right out of my hands
And maybe someday we'll take a little ride
Go up, up, up and everything will be just fine

We'll go up, up, up
But I'll fly a little higher
Go up in the clouds because the view's a little nicer
Up here my dear

It won't be long now, it won't be long now
If only I had a little bit more time
If only I had a little bit more time with you

We could go up, up, up
And take that little ride
We'll sit there holding hands
And everything would be just right
And maybe someday I'll see you again
We'll float up in the clouds and we'll never see the end

We'll go up, up, up
But I'll fly a little higher
Go up in the clouds because the view's a little nicer
Up here my dear
It won't be long now, it won't be long now



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