

editor's notes

Chris Rogers, editor, Winona Post

Winona's restaurant scene has transformed

When I first moved to Winona in 2012, Dibs was still serving seaweed grilled cheese out of its funky little cafe, and one of my favorite restaurants, Little Thailand, was still in business, making the best, authentically hot Thai food — Midwestern taste buds be damned. Shrimp and lemongrass swimming in citrusy, rich broth, its tom yum soup was so spicy I would become a sweaty mess at the table, eyes watering in pain, but still wanting more.

When it came to getting dinner downtown, however, the options amounted to essentially burgers or pizza. For people looking for something else, one of the most popular choices was to leave town entirely. Every weekend an exodus of Winonans would take their money to La Crosse or nearby touristy towns a fraction of Winona's size but with seemingly more variety.

Now there have been people making great food in Winona this whole time, and complaining about where to eat out is the epitome of a first-world problem, but as you looked across other cities in the area, it was hard not to draw comparisons. For a town with three colleges, a world-class art museum, and more festivals than you can shake a stick at, the food scene seemed to be the one missing piece. In a 2017 article I wrote, it appeared to be a chicken or the egg dilemma. Would restaurateurs take a chance on Winona? Would Winona support them if they did?

Since then Winona's restaurant scene, especially downtown, has

transformed. At least five new restaurants have opened downtown since 2019, including Miya Japanese Bistro, NOSH Scratch Kitchen, Sapori di Sicilia, and most recently Heirloom Seasonal Bistro, and Sliced. Winonans really don't have much to complain about anymore. We now have dueling sushi joints — which at one point seemed to be outdoing each other with complimentary desserts — and you can get cannolis, hibachi, walleye tacos, handmade ravioli, and a rack of lamb within a few blocks of the river. Congratulations to the new joints, and many thanks to the eateries that have been making great food for years.

There has been churn in the downtown food scene, too. In the last couple years we lost Betty Jo's, Jefferson's, The Oaks, and a short-lived gyro shop, to name a few. Highly competitive and demanding, the restaurant industry is not for the faint of heart. Back when I worked as a line cook, I would have nightmares about the ticket printer spooling off a nonstop stream of orders until I woke up in cold sweat, then got ready for my next shift. Despite all the hard work cooks, servers, dishwashers, bartenders, and managers put in, success is far from guaranteed.

The good news is that new restaurants are taking a chance on Winona, and Winonans are returning the favor. But if I've learned anything from Dibs and Little Thailand, it's that you shouldn't take your favorite spot for granted. If you have the means, go support them and bon appetit!



Tar spot

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the lookout for tar spot going forward, experts advised. There are steps they can take to protect their fields, but because the disease is so new in North America — it was first spotted in Indiana and Illinois in 2015 — research on management and resistance is still in early stages.

In southern Wisconsin, Okonek said, "Some of the yields I've heard down around that area, they've lost close to 100 bushels per acre ... That takes it from a profit to a loss real fast, and a large loss per acre financially. The people who have the fields that are severely infested, it's going to hurt big time."

University of Minnesota Plant Pathologist Dean Malvick had a lower, though still significant, estimate for the potential yield loss: "Some people think it could take 25 percent of yields in certain conditions or even more."

"Tar spot has been known in Latin America for decades," said Malvick, who documented the first case of tar spot in Minnesota in 2019 in Fillmore County. How did it pop up in Indiana and Illinois in 2015? "That's still the million-dollar question," he responded. "There's lots of guesses and hypotheses." Perhaps infected corn or leaves were brought to the Midwest from Latin America, or maybe the disease simply spread on the wind, he said. In any case, the disease has been spreading outward since then.

In Latin America, tar spot thrives in cool temperatures (60-70 degrees F), high humidity, and periods when leaves are wet for hours from rain, fog, or dew, Crop Protection Network reports. Exactly how the disease behaves in North America is still not completely understood, Malvick said. There have been reports of major outbreaks despite the weather not matching the conditions tar spot normally prefers, he noted.

What can farmers do?

What can farmers do about tar spot? "The main option is probably going to be fungicides, unfortunately," Malvick responded, "which of course brings in an expense that may not normally be part of a farm's expenses." According to Malvick and the Crop Protection Network, there is not yet a playbook for which fungicides are best or when to apply them. "We have a lot of learning to do, and that extends to the fungicide question: When? How much? How many applications? What products work best in what places?" he explained.

"With tar spot being relatively new, it takes a while for industry and university to get ramped up and come up with fungicides and other treatments to manage this," Okonek noted.

For now, Malvick recommended Crop ProtectionNetwork.org's fungicide guides. One of its publications lists fungicides' efficacy ratings against tar spot: tinyurl.com/5yarz7t.

Okonek recommended the UW Extension app Tarspotter (ipcm.wisc.edu/apps/tarspotter/), which attempts to predict the risk of tar spot outbreaks based on local weather forecasts in order to guide fungicide application decisions.

Winona County Farm Bureau President Glen Groth proactively applied fungicide on some of his fields that were damaged by hail, and he reported seeing less tar spot compared to untreated fields. "That would be your best bet, but it's not necessarily a cure-all," he said.

There are not yet any corn varieties in North America specifically bred for tar spot resistance. "I truly expect to see some resistant varieties in the future," Okonek said. "Now how long it's going to be, don't know."

Some existing corn hybrids have some degree of resistance to tar spot, though Malvick said the data on that topic is not very strong yet. While certain companies are rating their corn as partially resistant, he said, "That may or may not be solid information." The research needs more time, he explained, adding, "I think in the next couple of years, we'll have a much better idea of what hybrids work better."

The Crop Protection Network also recommends tilling under crop residue and rotating crops. Those recommendations are based on the fact that infected crop residue can cause new outbreaks the following year.

However, Malvick was skeptical that tillage or rotation would be the best safeguards. "[Tar spot] has been recorded and found in a lot of fields where it's never been seen before, including fields that were in soybeans there the year before," he said. He noted that the disease appeared in the U of M's research corn plots in St. Paul, with no other corn fields for miles around. "I have strong suspicions it can spread considerable distances," he said. "Until we know more, rotation — we would think it would be helpful, as well as tillage," he explained. However, Malvick said he might not choose to implement those practices himself if they came with significant costs.

Asked if he would consider more tillage on his farm, Groth responded, "Not if I don't have to ... Any time you do tillage, you're disrupting any soil health gains you've made."

Tar spot will be another disease farmers need to pay attention to in the future, and as researchers learn more, hopefully the tools for managing it will improve, Okonek said. Chris@winonapost.com

letters

Learning CPR could save a life

From: Helen Bagshaw, American Heart Association CPR instructor, Winona Health

October is National Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Month. Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a public health crisis. It strikes 1,000 people each day in the U.S. alone. Thousands of lives could be saved each year if more people understood the critical importance of bystander intervention with CPR and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). I encourage all community members to talk about and learn with their family and friends some simple steps of CPR.

Sudden cardiac arrest is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. Usually, there is no

warning. It strikes people of all ages who may seem to be healthy, even children and teens. When SCA happens, the person collapses and doesn't respond or breathe normally. They may gasp or shake as if having a seizure. SCA leads to death in minutes if the person does not get help right away. Survival depends on people nearby calling 911, starting CPR, and using an AED as soon as possible.

Today, only one in 10 victims survives. But when bystanders give CPR and use an AED at the scene, as many as five in 10 victims survive. And, since sudden cardiac arrest most often occurs at home, laypersons will most likely be called upon to help save the life of a loved one.

Here's what everyone needs to know. Survival from SCA depends on the quick actions of people nearby who call 911, start CPR and use an AED to restart the heart. Specifically, they should:

- Recognize sudden cardiac arrest. If a person is unresponsive and not breathing normally, assume it is SCA.

- Call 911 and follow dispatcher instructions.

- Start CPR. Push hard and fast on the center of the chest at a rate of 100-120 beats per minute (e.g., to the tune of "Baby Shark" or "Staying Alive").

- Use the nearest AED as quickly as possible to restart the heart.

Learn where your nearest AED is located at work and in your community. If you need refresher on hands-only CPR, how to use an AED or what to do in a choking emergency, you can contact me for a free half-hour class at hbagshaw@winonahealth.org.

Most cardiac arrests occur in the home, taking time to learn CPR and how to use an AED could mean the difference between life and death for a loved one.

Yes, masks reduce aerosol transmission of COVID

From: Mark Martin
Winona

I recently read the masking comments from the Winona Post of 10/6/21. Some of the comments state that we need to follow the science to determine whether masks should be or should not be worn. Mr. Reinert states that the newest research finds that the virus is spread by aerosol of small particles which he states the masks do not stop. While no one states the actual

research, it appears they allude to the research out of Singapore, in the August 6, 2021 issue of Clinical Infectious Diseases entitled, "Viral Load of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome for Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Respiratory Aerosols Emitted by Patient's With Coronavirus Disease, 2019 (COVID-19) While Breathing, Talking, and Singing."

The research did show that fine particulate aerosols are produced at a much higher level while talking than was previously thought. It was also found that even some people will emit fine aerosol viruses while just sitting and breathing. The statement was made that masks do not stop aerosolized particles. Therefore, because aerosolized particles are much more prevalent than before, there is no reason to wear a mask.

Contrary to this reasoning, the authors of

the study stress the importance of reducing fine particulate aerosolized viruses by non-pharmaceutical ways. Their recommendations are to use physical distancing, increased and better room ventilation, HEPA air filters, as well as universal masking. Their reasoning, is that they found a 90 percent reduction in aerosolized particles using all of the above recommendations with universal masking. Without universal masking, they found only a 65 percent reduction in aerosolized particles. It would appear at this time that the science shows the efficacy of masking while indoors and does not support the idea that masks are ineffective for aerosolized particles.

Therefore, if we are to use science to make our decisions, we need to use all of the science. Like Paul Harvey said, now you know, the rest of the story.

HVAC

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air systems and would not require approval from voters, but rather simply School Board approval.

Finance Committee members also considered slightly less expensive options. According to the district's architecture firm, Wold, individual window units at W-K and Jefferson would cost about \$12 million, a central air system about \$14.2 million and the geothermal system about \$15.2 million. Wold representatives said the geothermal system would have a longer life-span than the individual units, 30 years as compared to 20, and not require as much replacement of parts as the individual units.

Several Finance Committee members said they would prefer the geothermal system. They said they felt it would be most cost-effective in terms of maintenance requirements.

School Board Chair Nancy Denzer said she supported the geothermal option. "Ultimately, I think geothermal is the best use of not only our buildings, but generating the maintenance piece," she said. "Overall, I think it is the most effective and responsible way for us to go."

School Board member Karl Sonneman also said he supported going with the geo-

thermal option. "The geothermal has some attractiveness because of long-term cost and efficiencies," he said. "I think if I'm understanding it correctly it's also the most environmentally friendly or neutral. And we have some experience with it." The Winona Area Learning Center currently has a geothermal system.

Building and Grounds Director Michael McArdle said he thought the geothermal system would be a good long-term option. He added that regardless of the option the School Board approves, he simply wants to make sure the option aligns with whatever long-term facilities plan the district develops, as well as data on building capacity and enrollment.

School Board member Steve Schild said it was more a question of where the systems would be going than the system itself. Schild said that while he felt the geothermal option was the best, he did not support investing in an older school. Choosing the geothermal option might limit what the task force considers for the district's buildings, as well, he said. As the School Board established the task force, Schild asked whether they could consider constructing new buildings. In a later interview, he said he wanted the task force to be able to consider any feasible facility option.

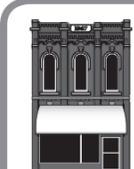
Denzer said the Finance Committee and task force will go down parallel roads with their work. The task force will be asked to

think into the future while guiding facilities planning, she said. She acknowledged the Finance Committee's work could impact the task force's. "If we're recommending that we move forward with geothermal at Jefferson and W-K, that does put the onus on this task force to consider what we're doing," she said. She added that she is in favor of keeping the district's current buildings and cannot necessarily see moving forward with a referendum to build a new school.

Sonneman said that all the district's buildings are old, with Jefferson and W-K just being slightly older. Jefferson and W-K have value in what they represent and how they function, Sonneman said, with W-K being an anchor school for one end of the community. He added that conversations about which buildings to keep could go on indefinitely, and he would like to remove Jefferson and W-K from any closure discussion, and get air systems up to speed at the schools.

"I don't agree with the idea of just continuing to say 'We have to have them because we have to have them,'" Schild said. He would feel differently if the task force wanted to keep them, he said.

The School Board will be briefed on the recommendation at their November 4 meeting at 6 p.m. at Winona Senior High School. Education@winonapost.com



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