

Oconomowoc man raising funds for family member killed in Las Vegas

Money raised will help to form nursing scholarship

By Jake Meister
Freeman Staff

OCONOMOWOC — Sonny Melton's big heart will continue to have a loving, lasting impact thanks to a crowdfunding campaign formed in memory of the 29-year-old — one of dozens killed during the Oct. 1 shooting massacre in Las Vegas.

A cousin of Melton's mother Susan, Mike Clayton of Oconomowoc, formed the GoFundMe campaign last week. Apex Bank, where Melton's mother has worked for 40 years, will match every dollar of the campaign up to \$50,000 to establish the Sonny Melton Scholarship Fund, which will be bestowed to prospective nursing students in Melton's hometown of Big Sandy, Tenn.

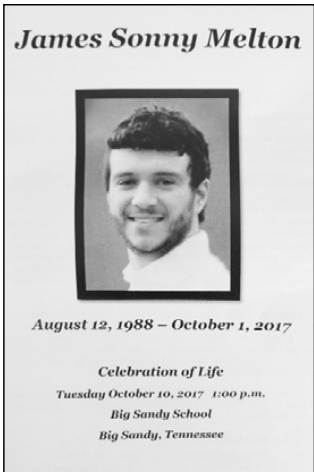
"He always wanted to be (a nurse) in an ER because he thought it was like being in the front line," Clayton said during a phone interview Monday as he traveled to Melton's funeral.

Clayton added, "He loved what he did. I mean he absolutely loved being a nurse."

A giver until the end

Melton's actions on Oct. 1 have gotten a good deal of publicity — and for good reason.

He and his wife, Heather, were celebrating their one-year wedding anniversary at the Route 91 Harvest Festival when the shots began, Clayton said. The couple ran for cover with Melton sprinting with his hands up in an effort to maximize the coverage his body provided between the shots and his



Submitted photo

Sonny Melton was killed during the Oct. 1 shooting in Las Vegas.

wife.

The couple was so close to one another as they fled that Heather could feel the bullets hit her husband's body, Clayton said.

A medical professional herself, Heather provided CPR on her husband until men came to deliver her and Sonny to their truck. The group traveled to an area hospital where lifesaving efforts were performed without success.

Clayton and Susan have been close their entire lives. He grew up about 10 miles from Big Sandy, where Melton was raised and will be buried.

When Clayton's mother was hospitalized this past winter, it was in the same facility where Melton worked. Melton, Clayton said, made sure to personally check on his mother during the hospitalization.

The closeness of the fami-



Submitted photo

Mike Clayton of Oconomowoc raised this sign through various points of a marathon he ran on Oct. 8 in Chicago. Clayton started a GoFundMe campaign for relative Sonny Melton, one of the victims of the Oct. 1 shooting in Las Vegas.

ly has driven Clayton and Susan to speak every day since the shooting. Clayton said his cousin has been overwhelmed by the human compassion demonstrated in the wake of the horrid event.

During one those conversations, Susan told Clayton, "It's good to see how much good there is in the world."

Running with a purpose

His mind and heart still heavy, Clayton participated in a Chicago marathon on Oct. 8. He said he was pro-

pelled, in part, by the crowd which cheered each one of the half-dozen times Melton unraveled and raised a roll-up sign dedicated to Melton, and the fundraiser efforts.

"The crowd was incredible," Clayton recalled. "I mean, it was like they knew the story firsthand."

He added, "For me as a runner, it was very lifting and motivating."

Nearly \$2,000 was contributed to the GoFundMe campaign Sunday, a good portion of which Clayton

believes was from people who saw him run with the sign in the marathon.

As of Monday afternoon, the GoFundMe campaign has received \$8,458 in pledges. Clayton said the pledges have generally been driven by word of mouth and "re-sharing" of the campaign online.

Visit online at www.gofundme.com/sonnymeltonfund to make a pledge.

Email: jmeister@conley.net



Photo courtesy of VJS Construction

Ground breaks on Fowler Lake Village

OCONOMOWOC — Ground was broken Thursday afternoon on Fowler Lake Village, a massive mixed-use condominium development being built on vacant land at the corner of St. Paul Street and East Pleasant Avenue, across from City Hall. Fowler Lake Village is slated to feature 28 residential condominium units priced from \$349,000 each, and commercial units starting from 515 square feet to 3,525 square feet.

Pictured from left: Fowler Lake Village LLC representatives Tony Bryant, John Boettcher, Gary Lato, Joan Lato, Jerry Couri, and Andrea Bryant, Oconomowoc Mayor Dave Nold, Oconomowoc Alderman Lou Kowieski, City Administrator Sarah Kitsemel, Jeff Seymour of Fowler Lake Village LLC and Project Architect Chris Sauve of VLS Construction.

Bible Smugglers at Wooded Hills Church

COLGATE — Find your contact, crack the code and smuggle out illegal books before the King's spies find out at Bible Smugglers, an interactive play and escape game on Oct. 28th and 29th at Wooded Hills Church, 777 WI-164 in Colgate.

Offered as an alternative to trick or treating, patrons will travel back to Martin Luther's Germany in the 1500s, according to a press release.

On the Bible Smugglers' course, located behind the church, groups of 10 to 15 people will encounter characters in 16th-century costumes at various scenes — at the site of a book burning, a graveyard, a cottage and more. Teams will interact with characters to gain insight on who to trust and where to go next as they maneuver down torchlit trails.

Bible Smugglers will have events from Luther's life woven into the story because it is the 500 year anniversary of Luther's 95 Theses. Luther is known a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation who rejected several teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. He became one of the first mass media celebrities by using the recently invented



Submitted photo

Alexandria Eggert plays the milkmaid, one of several 16th-century characters in the Bible Smugglers plot line.

printing press to spread his message.

Over 1,000 students will attend Bible Smugglers events this fall, according to a press release. Event start times are every 15 minutes from 2:30 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 per person and \$7 each for groups of eight or more.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.morningstarproductions.org or call 414-228-5220, ext. 119.

— Brandon Anderregg,
Freeman Staff

Oconomowoc man injured in Washington County crash

WEST BEND — Two people were injured in a Saturday afternoon crash in the Town of Addison.

The Washington County Sheriff's Department said it received a call shortly before 3 p.m. reporting the two-vehicle crash on Highway 33 near Highway 175. Both lanes of traffic were closed for about 90 minutes after the crash.

According to the accident report, a witness told authorities a vehicle being driven by Jesse Hahn, 29, of Oconomowoc was westbound on Highway 33 when it swerved, crossed the centerline and struck an eastbound pickup truck being driven by Barry Coffey, 61, of Hartford. The report said neither driver could remember what happened, but based on evidence at the scene it appeared Hahn lost control of his vehicle, which then fishtailed due to poor tire tread depth, and went into the oncoming traffic lane.

Coffey was transported by ambulance to St.

Joseph's Hospital, while an ambulance transported Hahn to Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital.

According to the accident report, Hahn was to be cited for driving too fast for conditions and operating left of the center line.

No other information was available about the drivers' injuries or their conditions, but they were alone in their vehicles during the crash.

— Freeman Staff

WAUKESHA

Water provider still up in the air

Council to discuss negotiations

WAUKESHA — Common Council members will again go into closed session to discuss Lake Michigan water purchase negotiations during a meeting Tuesday. It will be the fifth time they have done this since mid-August.

Waukesha's water utility is weighing between Oak Creek and Milwaukee water and is in the process of finalizing negotiations and agreements over big issues like cost.

Waukesha Water Utility General Manager Dan Duchniak has not said when the Water Commission will be ready to make a recommendation to the Common Council, but the decision is still expected this fall.

Also to be discussed at the Common Council, the Department of Public Works solicited for proposals for consultants to provide engineering services for the city's storm sewer and flood mitigation projects though 2019. Four firms responded and the city ranked them. Donohue and Ayres scored the highest for their experience and expertise in the Waukesha area, according to the cover sheet.

The council will also discuss the rescindment of a previously approved agenda item that would place "No Parking" signs on Pendleton Place and South University Drive near Bethesda School. The school plans to change the location of their dropoff and pickup area.

The Common Council will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday at City Hall, 201 Delafield St.

Later in the week, the Human Resources Committee will discuss a proposal to restructure the city's IT Department.

Three positions would be renamed and reclassified to lower pay grades and a new technical operations manager position would be created.

The Human Resources Committee will meet Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

— Hannah Weikel, Freeman Staff

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