

# experience downtown fond du lac

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**PG 2** Bagels are king at Bagelmeister

**PG 3** Coffee, soups and salads

**PG 4** Upcoming events in downtown Fond du Lac

## service



# Wood Sampler features Amish-built furniture

Shop keeper is fourth generation downtown business owner

**Dorothy Bliskey** | Special to The Reporter

When Patti (Brauer) Rhode opened the Wood Sampler eight years ago, she became the fourth generation of the Brauer family to run a business at 116 S. Main St.

Stocked with solid wood Amish-built furniture, the Wood Sampler was the site for 84 years of Brauer's Clothing—a family venture started by her great grandfather, William Brauer Sr., in 1916. Brauer's Clothing continued under the reins of her grandfather, William Brauer Jr., and then her father, William Brauer III, until 2000.

"My dad continues to help me in my store from time to time," Rhode said. Her husband, Bruce, and their three children help out when needed.

Those who shopped at Brauer's over the years will recognize the space where they once hunted for the latest in men's, women's and children's fashions amidst the wildlife displays that greet them when they walk into the store.

"My dad and grandfather were hunters, but my grandfather was also a decoy carver," Rhode said. "My grandfather started the wildlife collection and my dad continued it. Some of the mounts, such as the pair of locked antler deer, have been in the

store a long time. People enjoy looking at the turkey, eagle and sandhill crane my grandfather crafted from wood."

### WILDLIFE DISPLAY

The wildlife display is an interesting background for the solid wood furniture carried at the Wood Sampler. Craftsmen, primarily Amish, from throughout the Midwest hand-build the items — beds, dressers, hope chests, dining tables and chairs, hutches, bookcases, rocking chairs, curio cabinets, living room tables, hall trees, quilt racks, children's furniture and wooden rocking horses, to name a few.

Traditional and contemporary styles built with a variety of woods and finishes are available. Custom ordering allows shoppers to design their furniture in order to get the result they want.

"The furniture is solid wood," Rhode said. "There is no particle board. Our builders use solid construction and quality finishes. The pieces are definitely built to last."

Other home décor items that complement the wood furniture are also sold at Wood Sampler. Wooden bowls, braided rugs, chair pads, table runners, seasonal items, curtains and more round out the selection for shoppers.

A bridal registry, custom orders, gift certificates, free local delivery and set-up, free layaway and in-home consultations are some of the services available at Wood Sampler.

### DELIVERIES

"Local is a fairly loose term," Rhode said. "We have done many free deliveries throughout Wisconsin and Chicago."

Customers of Wood Sampler aren't just local residents. The store draws customers from throughout the Fox Valley, Milwaukee and beyond, Rhode said.

"Many local customers bring visiting family members in to see the store, the furniture and the wildlife. Lots of people just love the look, feel and smell of the real wood," she said. "Many enjoy the old historic building and the wildlife collection."

The downtown location is one Rhode is adamant about.

"I hear many good comments about our downtown from out-of-town shoppers," she said. "My heart is in the downtown. The nostalgic location is an important part of the business to me. People do really come downtown. There is a character here that can't be duplicated elsewhere."

Patti (Brauer) Rhode stands among furniture items available for purchase at Wood Sampler in downtown Fond du Lac. (PATRICK FLOOD/THE REPORTER)

**Hours at the Wood Sampler** are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday or by appointment. In addition, the store is open Mondays in December. To learn more, go to [www.woodsampler.com](http://www.woodsampler.com) or call the Wood Sampler at (920) 926-9663.

## service



# Bagelmeister serves up 'subs in the round' downtown

Dorothy Bliskey | Special to The Reporter

Mike Damm's former career was in the electronics and cable television industry in California and Colorado.

But the Fond du Lac native returned home about 15 years ago with a business plan to open a coffee and bagel shop on Main Street. Since 1997, The Bagelmeister, 110 S. Main St., has been drawing customers for fresh ground coffee and bagels handmade by Damm every morning.

His career change occurred shortly after he lost several close family members all in the same year.

"It was time to move back home," Damm said.

A Colorado coffee and bagel shop he frequented for years became the guiding light in Damm's business plan and the source for his bagel recipe.

"I hired the owner, consulted with him and got his bagel recipe," Damm said.

While bagels are the main item made daily and served with fresh ground coffee, other items are baked on site, from scratch and without preservatives. Carrot cake, muffins, brownies, cookies, scones, cupcakes and several kinds of pastries satisfy customers' sweet cravings. Damm also makes homemade breads such as whole wheat, sour dough and cinnamon raisin.

But bagels are king at The Bagelmeister — a combination coffee house, café and bakery that offers free WI-FI, leisure tabletop activities like cribbage, backgammon, playing cards and newspapers. Outdoor tables with umbrellas are available in nice weather.

Damm makes 16 kinds of bagels ranging from plain and sesame seed to blueberry,

cranberry, honey whole wheat, onion, raisin and veggie. One of the most popular is the "Everything" bagel, which has many different seeds on top.

## BAGELS, CREAM CHEESE

In addition, The Bagelmeister mixes up 12 flavors of cream cheese to spread on the bagels. Flavors like strawberry, garlic herb, honey cinnamon, Snickers, Jalapeno and chocolate chip allow coffee shop guests to create their own bagel and cream cheese combinations.

With seven part-time and one full-time employee, Damm operates The Bagelmeister from Monday through Saturday. Bagels are made fresh every morning, with Damm making the dough the day before and baking them early each morning. A warm "steam bath" process is



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used during the rising of the dough.

Bagels are the foundation for most of the sandwiches. The new tagline at The Bagelmeister is "Subs in the Round" — due to their hearty lunch sandwiches that include many of the same ingredients traditionally found in submarine sandwiches.

**VARIETY GALORE**

"For lunch we offer 25 different hot and cold sandwiches from smoked turkey and tuna salad to big hearty specialty sandwiches," Damm said.

A specialty sandwich called The Bagelmeister consists of layers of ham and turkey, mayonnaise, lettuce, onion, cucumbers, tomato, alfalfa sprouts and cheese.

The Lighthouse sandwich is similar but with smoked turkey. Sandwiches can also be ordered in a wrap, a croissant or with any of the homemade breads available at The Bagelmeister instead of in a bagel.

Grilled Panini sandwiches such as the tuna melt, Tuscany ham or veggie special are also on the menu.

The Breakfastmeister sandwich offers a hearty start for the day and is layered with egg, bacon, ham, onion, green pepper, tomato and American cheese.

"We have egg sandwiches on bagels, breads, croissants or tortilla wraps," Damm said. "You can get plain egg sandwiches or add sausage, ham, bacon, veggies and cheese. Many just opt for a toasted bagel with butter or cream cheese."

A full-service Espresso Bar provides handmade drinks like Macchiato, cappuccino, lattes, and Americanas, served either hot or iced. Smoothies, Italian sodas and fraps are also available. Ice cream can be dessert — in a dish, a cone or as a sundae or shake.

**COFFEE, SOUPS, SALADS**

And if bagels are king, coffee reins as the

queen at Bagelmeister. Fresh roasted beans from Weeden Creek Coffee in Sheboygan are ground daily to get the freshest brew. Regular, decaf and a flavor of the day are available continuously.

Soups and salads complement the sandwiches. Chili is made daily throughout the cooler months. A soup of the day is served year round.

"Our most popular is the Italian wedding soup," Damm says, noting the chili is also a draw. "Many like our cheesy enchilada soup too."

Services include free delivery to homes and businesses. Another option is a box lunch menu complete with a sandwich, dessert, chips, pasta salad and a canned drink.

"The box lunches are great for office meetings and get-togethers," Damm said, noting he also offers party platters loaded with bite-size samples of sandwiches, wraps and bagels for groups.

**DIVERSE CLIENTELE**


His clientele are from the area but also come from far and wide.

"Bagel shops aren't everywhere so I have people from all over Wisconsin come in. I've been contacted by people in other areas asking me to put a shop by them," Damm said.

A famous guest — actor Paul Newman — once dined at The Bagelmeister.

"He was staying at the Ramada for a race in Elkhart Lake and came in for breakfast one morning. He liked it so much he brought a bunch of people back for lunch," Damm said.

"It was a dream of mine to own and run a business on Main Street," Damm concluded. "I grew up in Fond du Lac, and downtown was where you did business. Who doesn't remember going to a Saturday afternoon matinee, first stopping at the Caramel Crisp Shop for goodies? There's history downtown."

 Hours at **The Bagelmeister** are 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday.  
For more information, go to [www.bagelmeister.com](http://www.bagelmeister.com) or call **(920) 926-0046**. Those who "friend" The Bagelmeister on Facebook can earn a free cup of coffee.



The Bagelmeister at 110 S. Main St. is a popular downtown dining spot. (PATRICK FLOOD/THE REPORTER)



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## what's happening?



For more information on what's happening in downtown Fond du Lac, call **920.921.9500** or log on to **www.downtownfdl.com**

**SEPTEMBER 21****Family Art Night****Jennabee Art Gallery & Studio**

87 S. Main St., FDL  
5:00pm-6:30pm  
\$15.00/per family  
www.jennabeeartgallery.yolasite.com  
Family oriented class designed to bring families closer together by working together to create one individual piece. This time families will be learning to make paper using various elements and sizes.

**Farmers Market****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Hamilton Parking Lot, Division & Sophia, FDL  
Shopping at a farmers market is a great way to meet local farmers and get fresh, flavorful produce.

**Guided Painting (Adults)****Jennabee Art Gallery & Studio**

87 S. Main St., FDL  
6:00pm-8:00pm  
\$10.00-\$15.00  
www.jennabeeartgallery.yolasite.com  
Weekly painting class that continues each Wednesday night (unless other events are scheduled, see event calendar). During this class you will be able to paint with individualized attention and guidance to help you overcome and tackle those ideas floating around.

**SEPTEMBER 22****Paper Mache (Youth ages 5+)****Jennabee Art Gallery & Studio**

87 S. Main St., FDL  
4:00pm - 6:00pm  
\$20.00 \*preregistration required  
www.jennabeeartgallery.yolasite.com  
Children will be creating their choice of paper mache ideas. Children can bring their home and decorate them with crayons, markers, or paint to add even more uniqueness to their masterpiece.

**SEPTEMBER 24****Farmers Market****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
7 a.m. to Noon  
City - County Parking Lot, Western & Linden, FDL  
Shopping at a farmer's market is a great way to meet local farmers and get fresh, flavorful produce.

**SEPTEMBER 25****Sunday Stories****Childrens Museum of Fond du Lac**

51 Sheboygan St., FDL  
11:30-12pm  
\$4.25 per guest, infants under 1 are free  
www.cmfdl.org  
Museum visitors are invited to hear a story enhanced with creative dramatics and group participation. Featuring selections from the New York Public Library's "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know". Participants will be inspired by literature to create art and fun! Program is free with paid admission. No reservations are necessary.

**SEPTEMBER 28****Farmers Market****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Hamilton Parking Lot, Division & Sophia, FDL  
Shopping at a farmers market is a great way to meet local farmers and get fresh, flavorful produce.

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**GANNETT EXPERIENCE**  
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**OCTOBER 1****Farmers Market****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
7a.m. to Noon  
City - County Parking Lot, Western & Linden, FDL  
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**OCTOBER 2****Sunday Stories****Childrens Museum of Fond du Lac**

51 Sheboygan St., FDL  
11:30-12pm  
\$4.25 per guest, infants under 1 are free  
www.cmfdl.org  
Museum visitors are invited to hear a story enhanced with creative dramatics and group participation. Featuring selections from the New York Public Library's "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know". Participants will be inspired by literature to create art and fun! Program is free with paid admission. No reservations are necessary.

**OCTOBER 5****Farmers Market****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Hamilton Parking Lot, Division & Sophia, FDL  
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**OCTOBER 8****Farmers Market****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
7 a.m. to Noon  
City - County Parking Lot, Western & Linden, FDL  
Shopping at a farmer's market is a great way to meet local farmers and get fresh, flavorful produce.

**OCTOBER 9****Sunday Stories****Childrens Museum of Fond du Lac**

51 Sheboygan St., FDL  
11:30-12pm  
\$4.25 per guest, infants under 1 are free  
www.cmfdl.org  
Museum visitors are invited to hear a story enhanced with creative dramatics and group participation. Featuring selections from the New York Public Library's "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know". Participants will be inspired by literature to create art and fun! Program is free with paid admission. No reservations are necessary.

## Calendar of Events

### Tour the Town Art Walk

www.tourthetownfdl.com

Friday, Oct. 21

4 - 8 p.m.

### Monster March

www.downtownfdl.com

Saturday, Oct. 29

1:30 - 3 p.m.

### Holiday Open House Weekend

www.downtownfdl.com

Friday - Sunday

Nov. 11 - 13

### Home for the Holidays

www.downtownfdl.com

Saturday, Dec. 3

8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**OCTOBER 11****Play for All!****Childrens Museum of Fond du Lac**

51 Sheboygan St., FDL  
6:00pm-7:30pm  
Free for families with autism  
www.cmfdl.org  
Play for All provides families an age-appropriate, quiet place to come play in a welcoming environment, where children can try new things while developing their communication, social and motor skills and self-confidence. Sponsored by Grande Cheese

**OCTOBER 12, 2011****Farmers Market - Wednesday****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Hamilton Parking Lot, Division & Sophia, FDL  
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**OCTOBER 15, 2011****Farmers Market - Saturday****Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**

www.downtownfdl.com  
7 a.m. to Noon  
City - County Parking Lot, Western & Linden, FDL  
Shopping at a farmer's market is a great way to meet local farmers and get fresh, flavorful produce

**OCTOBER 16, 2011****Sunday Stories****Childrens Museum of Fond du Lac**

51 Sheboygan St., FDL  
11:30-12pm  
\$4.25 per guest, infants under 1 are free  
www.cmfdl.org  
Museum visitors are invited to hear a story enhanced with creative dramatics and group participation. Featuring selections from the New York Public Library's "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know". Participants will be inspired by literature to create art and fun! Program is free with paid admission. No reservations are necessary.

# downtown

## Map

fond du lac

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<b>1</b> - 2ndTimeAround Resale Shoppe	<b>5</b> - JacksTeam Sports
<b>2</b> - Ahern Gross, Inc.	<b>6</b> - JJC Interior
<b>3</b> - All the Details, LLC	<b>7</b> - Kitz & Pfeil
<b>4</b> - Fox Valley Savings Bank	<b>8</b> - Krail Jewelry
	<b>9</b> - Woods Floral and Gifts

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