



# Five people to watch in 2013



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January 01, 2013 10:00 am • [State Journal staff](#)

*Each year, the Wisconsin State Journal selects five newsmakers from the worlds of sports, business, politics and the arts who will be confronted with momentous decisions — or asked to deliver on past promises — in the coming year.*

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## Badgers fans



The top three revenue-producing sports at the University of Wisconsin all experienced drop-offs in season-ticket sales in the last year.

Football, men's basketball and men's hockey all ranked among the top 20 nationally in game attendance in 2011-12 — they were 15th, fifth and first, respectively — but the simultaneous decreases bear watching in the coming year.

Are UW fans sending a message about the rising cost of watching the Badgers in person? Are those downturns simply a reflection of performance by a particular team? Or is there a more complicated equation at work?

The cost of season tickets in all three sports has gone up since 2010-11. There have also been increases in premium seating assessments, the adoption of a variable pricing system where marquee football game tickets cost more than others and an increase in certain parking areas and concession prices.

Ticket sales have long represented the largest piece of the income pie for the UW Athletic Department. In 2011-12 fans purchased tickets worth \$27.569 million — including premium seating locations at Camp Randall Stadium and the Kohl Center — which represented 30.1 percent of the \$89.998 million in revenues.

According to figures made available through UW Athletics, 1,465 fewer general public season tickets were sold for home

football games from 2011 to 2012 even though the Badgers were reigning two-time Big Ten Conference champions.

Now that UW has won three straight league championships and become the first Big Ten team to play in three straight Rose Bowls since the 1970s, will there be a surge in ticket sales, especially now that a new coach, Gary Andersen, has taken over?

Meanwhile, men's basketball has 313 fewer general public season ticket-holders for 2012-13 than it did last season and men's hockey lost 1,457 season ticket-holders from its general-public rolls in the last year, continuing a trend of attendance regression since 2007.

The slight downturn for men's basketball followers is notable because the Badgers have been such a consistently strong draw while qualifying for 14 straight NCAA tournaments. The freefall in hockey is due in good part to the fact UW has failed to qualify for the NCAA tournament four times in the last six seasons.

— *Andy Baggot*

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## Tammy Baldwin

**U.S. senator**



Tax fairness — making sure millionaires pay at least the same percentage as their secretaries — is among the issues that Tammy Baldwin hopes to tackle when she is sworn in as Wisconsin's newest U.S. senator on Thursday.

Baldwin, a Madison Democrat, takes office after 14 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. In that 435-member chamber, she was seen as having limited influence. But as one of just 100 senators, with an expertise in health care and the



status as the first openly gay person elected to the Senate, Baldwin may find her stature increase.

She said she expects to take part in “some pretty consequential debates” about making sure the federal tax code does not let the wealthy and big corporations dodge taxes. Baldwin will serve on Senate committees dealing with health, education, the budget and homeland security.

“I would not be surprised if there is a strong commitment to tackle tax reform ... on the individual and corporate side,” said Baldwin, 50, who served 14 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. “I think there’s acknowledgement on the part of many that the tax code is no longer fair.”

Wisconsin’s first female senator said she hopes to work on issues of “long-term economic security” including finding ways to boost the manufacturing sector in Wisconsin and beyond. She also supports investing more in education — ranging from Head Start to colleges and universities — and helping train workers to take available jobs to close the current skills gap.

Baldwin said she also supports proposals by President Barack Obama and Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., to restrict high-powered guns and multiple-ammunition clips that were used by the gunman who killed 20 schoolchildren and six staff members at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., on Dec. 14.

She also supports increased mental health funding so that troubled individuals, such as those who carried out the latest series of mass shootings, can receive help. Baldwin said the nation needs to examine “our capacity to respond to those with mental illness, in terms of services and treatment. When we can’t do that, obviously, situations can spiral out of control.”

— *Dee J. Hall*

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## Michael Johnson

## CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Dane County



In a recent meeting with Madison Mayor Paul Soglin and Dane County Executive Joe Parisi, Madison School District interim Superintendent Jane Belmore said that moving forward, it would be key for the district to look at partnerships with local government and nonprofits to address the racial achievement gap.

So it comes as no surprise that Michael Johnson, CEO of Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, is primed for a challenging year.

In February Johnson will announce specifics of a new five-year strategic plan for the Boys & Girls Club. The plan will aim to increase fundraising and partnerships with local businesses, better expose children to post-secondary opportunities, put more assistance into schools and increase the number of children served from 3,000 to 10,000 by 2018.

“Our big audacious goal is that 90 percent of all Boys & Girls Club kids will not only graduate high school, but they will receive a post-secondary education,” Johnson said. “A kid graduating high school is not a real result for me.”

February is also the month the Madison School Board has targeted for hiring a new superintendent.

If Johnson’s plan is to have the success he envisions, it will largely rely on the relationship he builds with the new superintendent.

Johnson has said he’s looking for the new superintendent to increase coordination with local organizations to create or expand a variety of programs tailored to students needs.

One of the ways Johnson plans to do that is by expanding over the next two years Boys & Girls Club’s AVID/TOPS partnership with the school district. Johnson hopes to reach 800 district students with the college preparatory program that

includes tutoring, mentoring and internship opportunities.

“We’re going to demonstrate — not through us saying it — but we’re going to get a reputable organization like the University of Wisconsin to say that yes, this is a program that’s making a difference. And out of the 800 kids, we know how each one of those kids are doing,” Johnson said. “We’re going to look at them individually and not in groups. If there was one single approach, somebody would have figured it out a long time ago.”

— *Jeff Glaze*

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## Greg Mickells

**City library director**



Later this year, Greg Mickells will relocate from a modest office in Madison’s cramped, temporary Central Library to a \$30 million facility touted as “the “library of the future.”

Mickells, who became the city’s 16th library director in September, has a daunting task in opening a long-desired facility carrying high expectations for architecture, amenities, service and pizzazz as a new cornerstone in Downtown’s continuing resurgence.

Challenges are many. Can the library capture the imagination in the Internet age? Will private fundraising come through? Will branches suffer? How does the library engage the homeless? Should it take over the Wisconsin Book Festival?

Mickells, 57, assistant library director in Lincoln, Neb., since 2007, finds the charge “invigorating.”

“Every once in a while you have a tremendous opportunity to make a contribution to your community,” he said in an interview

at the temporary library, 126 S. Hamilton St. “This is one of those. This is going to mean a lot to many people in Madison.”

The facility, he said, will have 50 percent more public space than its worn predecessor, built in 1965. It will still showcase books but have more digital media. It will be brighter inside and have more meeting space for lectures and events.

It will have places for children, teens and adults, gallery space, and perhaps a cafe.

The library will engage with “maker spaces” where patrons can learn screen printing, quilting and other skills, he said. Local writers, poets, artists and musicians will find opportunities to self-publish and display work. “Part of it is the evolution of libraries,” he said. “It becomes a place people just want to go.”

Visits should double to a million annually, he said.

The Public Library Foundation has raised \$7 million of \$9 million needed for construction and an endowment, he said. The facility shouldn’t be a drain on branches because staff and resources are shared, he said.

The homeless, he said, are part of the community and can be better served in the new facility.

As the new year begins, the Library Board will consider Mickells’ proposal to take over the book festival, which would likely bring changes to the event.

— *Dean Mosiman*

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## Matt Younkle

**Founder, Murfie.com**



Matt Younkle has a full plate and optimism.



He's growing the music storage company, Murfie.com, he founded in 2011. Younkle has several other business ideas and is looking for continued expansion of the Forward Technology Festival, an event he co-founded in 2010.

Throw in his 2-year-old daughter and it's easy to see why he is stretched for time. Younkle, 39, is also someone to watch in 2013.

But Younkle, an Ashwaubenon native and UW-Madison graduate, said the focus should not be on him; it should be on the growing technology and entrepreneurial community that is becoming pervasive in the Madison area.

"It's not just watching me, it's watching the Madison tech community because I think we're on the cusp of doing some really great things," Younkle said. "I think we're starting to see the community come together and I'm fortunate to play a role in that."

Murfie.com will move out of its 2,000 square-foot space at 1 S. Pinckney St. in February and into a 3,500-square-foot facility at 7 N. Pinckney St. The move will give his 40 employees more room and provide more space to store 300,000 compact discs, a number he hopes will balloon to 1 million by the end of the year. His 10,000 users would grow to 50,000, he said.

Younkle also wants to expand the mission of the company from just music. He wants to store books, DVDs and vinyl records, virtually anything that can be found on a shelf.

Younkle, the inventor of the Turbo Tap, which pours a 16-ounce beer in 2.5 seconds, said the keys to being a successful entrepreneur are unbridled optimism and brutal self honesty.

"My challenge is always thinking bigger and brighter as opposed to analyzing things over and over," Younkle said.

He uses that philosophy with his businesses and with the Forward Technology Festival, an 11-day event that drew 3,000

people this year. South by Southwest, founded in Austin, Texas, in 1987, draws about 50,000 people to its 11-day event.

“We’re just on the front end of really promoting Madison as a great place to be creative, to start companies, to build things,” Younkle said. “We don’t want to be South by Southwest. We want to be what makes sense for Madison as far as promoting Madison among creative types.”

— *Barry Adams*

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