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Doug Moe: Beatle sighting? Nah, it's Olie

Doug Moe — 10/18/2007 10:54 am

ONE OF my favorite kind of stories is the celebrity sighting in an unlikely place.

It's probably because I have received so many calls over the years about one famous person or another being spotted in Madison. They often turn out not to be true, though not always.

Either way, it's fun to watch the stories take on a life of their own, which they seem to do even more now that everyone is text-messaging and blogging.

Which brings us to **Paul McCartney** and Wausau.

Tuesday afternoon, **Jane Reynolds**, a Madison native living in the Twin Cities, contacted me saying she'd read in a [blog](#) on madison.com that McCartney, the rock music legend, might have been in Wausau last week.

"Was he?" Reynolds asked.

It was the first I had heard of it, and I decided to try to check it out.

Both the Wausau Daily Herald and Wausau station WSAW-TV carried stories last weekend about McCartney having seemingly dined at a Wausau establishment, 2510 Restaurant, last Wednesday night. The paper, under the headline "Rock legend sighted in city," quoted a patron: "I didn't get a good look at him, but it seemed like everything going on around him indicated it was him." The TV station quoted a restaurant manager saying McCartney's group was gracious and that the former Beatle was in Wausau to shoot a commercial for Wausau Insurance.

"You know," **Mike Olie** was saying this Wednesday, a week after the dinner at 2510 in Wausau, "I've done things like this in the past, but this was the first time everyone really did seem to think I was Paul. It blew me away. It turned out to be quite a deal."

Olie (real name, Mike Oltersdorf), lives in the north Chicago suburbs and is a Paul McCartney impersonator. He's good enough that when AOL posted a notice about McCartney's famous Concert for New York City in 2001, their original photo was of Olie, not McCartney. The impersonator has appeared on "Good Morning, America" and other shows. I found him Wednesday, after seeing his name in a Wausau Daily Herald story from Tuesday that finally solved the "mystery" of whether McCartney had really been in Wisconsin last week.

Olie said he was hired by **Mike O'Dell**, president of an Elkhorn-based financial planning company that has an office in Wausau, to entertain at a client appreciation event last Thursday. The day before, Wednesday, O'Dell had gone into 2510 Restaurant at lunch time and said he would be bringing in "a celebrity" for dinner, reserving a private room.

That night at the restaurant, it seemed everyone thought Olie was McCartney. "We had this private room but people would come to the door, and Mike would talk to them and then bring me over to have a photo taken. This one woman cried, 'Oh, my God, it's really him!'"

O'Dell described it like this to the Wausau Daily Herald: "I might have dropped a little leak that someone famous would be at 2510. We never said he was Paul McCartney. Before we knew it people were looking through the windows, pounding on the doors and chasing us when we left."

The real McCartney, it should be noted, was in court in London early last Thursday morning on matters pertaining to his pending divorce.

Olie, 57, says his corporate gigs as McCartney are intended to be "entertaining and educational," and you can learn more about them at his Web site, paulmccartneylookalike.com. They've lately taken an inspirational turn, after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease two years ago. Originally Olie had thought that might be the end of his public persona. Instead, he shares his efforts to fight the disease with his audience.

Olie told me he didn't really start looking like McCartney until the 1990s, when he began working in a pie shop. He'd weighed 135 pounds most of his adult life, but when he kept sampling the shop's wares and adding weight people started talking about his resemblance to the music legend.

"I'm thinking of writing a book," Olie said.



Submitted photo

Mike Olie as Paul McCartney

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"What's the title?"

"How to Gain 40 Pounds and Look Like a Rock Star," he said.

Heard something Moe should know? Call 252-6446, write P.O. Box 8060, Madison, WI 53708, or e-mail dmoe@madison.com

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