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# woman

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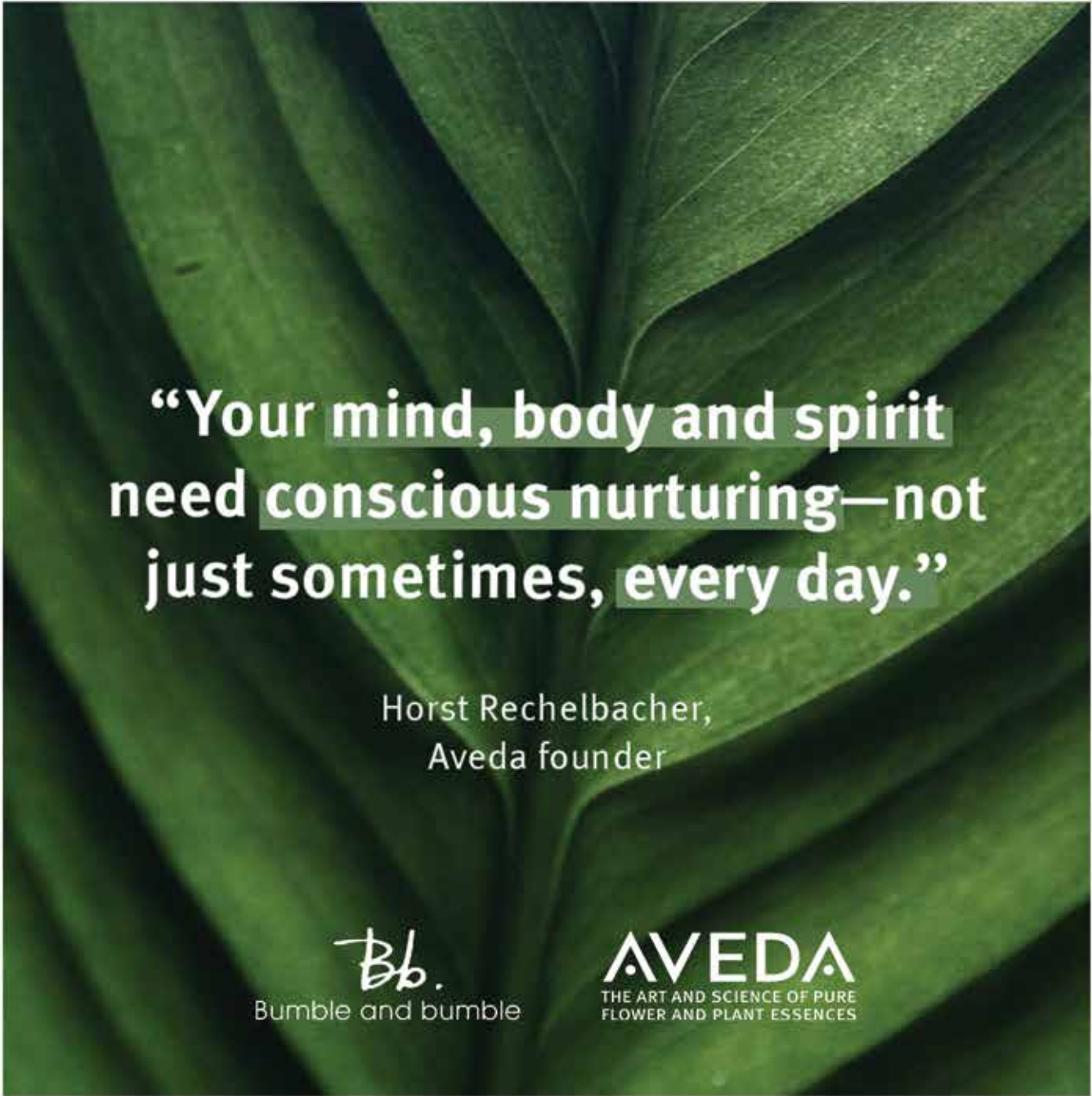
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Pictured on cover: Sue Graf, with the nonprofit WINN. Photo by Jordana Snyder Photography. Makeup by Trudy Swenson, Sales Director with Mary Kay.

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Last August, when things were looking bad but before they got worse, when we were hoping for but couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel, our staff sat down—outside in the fresh air, socially distanced—to plot out our themes for 2021. In the midst of Covid concerns and unrest everywhere, we managed to find optimism and hope, and for our theme this issue, we settled on “Nourish the Soul.” Didn't that sound wonderful, we thought, after all we've been through? An issue focused on taking care of ourselves—and right when the seasons were inviting us indoors and inside ourselves for contemplation and a cozy place. We envisioned an issue filled with things that would lift our spirit—and man, did that sound like a good thing.

We looked forward to planning this issue like you look forward to a warm cup of tea and a blanket on a gray November afternoon. But as we discussed ideas that might illustrate nourishing the soul, we found ourselves looking not inside to what we needed but outside to what others needed more. The issue became less about the comfort we find for ourselves than the comfort women in this community bring to others.

We found women who nourish the soul in ways big and small: through grass-roots, one-woman efforts as well as by rallying a team of movers and shakers to create something large enough to benefit hundreds. We found women who work one-on-one with people on a deep level to help them reconnect to who they are and what they believe, and we found small groups of women who made a big impact imparting comfort to others via handcraft and the healing company of each other.

We chose for our cover woman Sue Graf, someone who radiates kindness and positivity, who understands that simply listening to a person's story without judgment, and assuring them you can be trusted with that story, can be life-changing for them. And as we planned, fixing idea to story and finding words to fit the women, we learned healing happens when we help others heal. We are part of a web called community, and the threads we weave to lift another up in turn uplift us all.

We even circled back to our original inspiration, because—as we women have learned this past year and a half—you can't take care of others if you haven't also taken care of yourself. And so we take some turns inward in this issue as well, seeking cozy spaces, learning how to lift our spirits as the days grow dark, discovering a little holiday magic and preparing the most nourishing of comfort foods—soup.

We've all been through so much this past year and a half, and some days that light at the end of the tunnel is dim. But in the words of Sue Graf, “Although there's pain and struggle, there is hope and joy in every day and something to be thankful for.” And every day, that is true. We have faced—we continue to face—challenges we're not sure how to navigate and deep losses we didn't see coming, ones that leave us feeling disoriented and unmoored. But if we can ground ourselves anywhere, it's in knowing that we are not alone, and reaching out to hear a story, lend a hand, share a kind thought or offer a cup of tea won't just light the way to the end of the tunnel. It'll show us we're already out.

*Betty*

# coulee region women

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## PUBLISHER

Betty Christiansen

## EDITOR

Shari Hegland

## DESIGNERS

Lisa Houghton Design  
Jaclyn Berg

## MARKETING ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES

Rachel Persson, Director  
Claire Ristow-Seib

## WEB MASTER

Mader Web Design LLC

## PHOTO EDITOR

Diane Raaum

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Diane Raaum Photo  
Frontier Photography  
Hazel Media LLC  
Jordana Snyder Photography

## DISTRIBUTION

Carol Schank  
Jennie Kolek  
Joanne Mihm  
Heide Herron

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Email: [editor@crwmagazine.com](mailto:editor@crwmagazine.com)



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Adrienne Sweeney as Ebenezer Scrooge

## CHRISTMAS AT THE COMMONWEAL

Leave it to the Commonweal Theatre in Lanesboro, Minnesota, to put a new twist on an old classic—in this case, the eternal *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. For the first time in the company's history of producing this holiday favorite, the role of Ebenezer Scrooge will be played by a woman. Associate Artistic Director Adrienne Sweeney will sit behind the miser's desk this winter, beginning November 19.

"We knew there was a real demand for fresh takes on this classic story," says former Resident Ensemble member Philip Muehe. Muehe took the lead on adapting the Commonweal's version and eventually landed on a script that tells the same familiar story, with all the characters you know and love, accompanied by female-identifying actors portraying Scrooge, Marley and all three of the Christmas Ghosts. "The material works just as well for women as it does for men," Muehe says, "and the lessons Dickens intended apply to all of us, regardless of gender identity."

"It's a role I've always wanted to do but never thought possible," says Sweeney. "It's a dream come true and a challenging proposition all at once. I am excited for our patrons to experience this story in a whole new way. With fresh eyes, they may see or feel something they hadn't before."

For a complete performance schedule of all 2021 offerings visit the Commonweal's website, or call the Box Office at 800-657-7025 or visit [www.commonwealtheatre.org](http://www.commonwealtheatre.org).



## BITTERSWEET: A GRIEF GROUP BY NEW HORIZONS

In 2019 alone, 53 individuals in Wisconsin were lost to domestic violence-related homicides, leaving many grieving loved ones behind. This fall, New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Centers will offer programming to the families and friends of those who were lost to this senseless violence through a six-week grief group, Bittersweet.

Bittersweet will be offered Monday evenings from 6 to 7:30 p.m. October 25 to November 29. The program aims to give individuals a supportive and nonjudgmental space to share their experiences and feelings and to connect with others who have experienced a similar loss. Structured programming will discuss techniques to assist them through their grieving process.

This group will be offered to a limited number of participants, and attendees must register by October 15. To do so, contact New Horizons Community Outreach Advocate Rosanne at 608-791-2610 ext. 1309 or at [ra2@nhagainstabuse.org](mailto:ra2@nhagainstabuse.org).

New Horizons is a frontline provider of safety and services to survivors of domestic and sexual abuse in La Crosse and Trempealeau counties. Through an emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children and direct services provided by agency advocates, survivors are able to get back on their feet to rebuild their life free from danger and violence.



Carolyn Colleen, Acton Midwest

## A NEW WAY TO LEARN

La Crosse's Carolyn Colleen, founder of FIERCE Academy, has launched a new education opportunity for students in first grade through high school—Acton Academy, located in Misty's Dance Unlimited building in Onalaska. Acton Midwest—the local manifestation of a national program—is a STEM school with an emphasis on independent learning and entrepreneurship.

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Onalaska, WI 54650  
kris.birkholz@edwardjones.com



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Sparta, WI 54656  
heidi.lydon@edwardjones.com



**Denise Halverson, AAMS®**  
Financial Advisor  
608.269.9136  
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Sparta, WI 54656  
denise.halverson@edwardjones.com



**Sheri Plantz**  
Financial Advisor  
608.788.6420  
2424 State Road  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
sheri.plantz@edwardjones.com



**Jenny Akins**  
Financial Advisor  
608.781.4333  
1200 County Road PH - Suite 200  
Onalaska, WI 54650  
jenny.akers@edwardjones.com



**Margaret Severson, AAMS®**  
Financial Advisor  
608.637.7233  
520 N. Main Street - Suite A  
Viroqua, WI 54655  
margaret.severson@edwardjones.com



**Amy J Stodola, AAMS®**  
Financial Advisor  
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1212 Horton St - Suite 200  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
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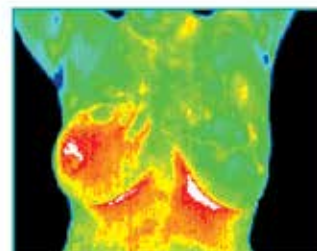
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# Reaching People Where They're At

Sue Graf's mission brings essentials, understanding and acceptance to those in need.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE  
PHOTO BY JORDANA SNYDER  
PHOTOGRAPHY



I don't feel like I'm anything special," laughs Sue Graf, an unassuming self-starter, who for the past 10 years has served the homeless population in the La Crosse area. "I'm just someone who saw a need and made it my goal to reach people where they're at." It's an undertaking that Graf believes she is called to do and one that has blossomed into a full-time mission.

## GROWING COMMITMENT TO SERVE

Graf's first inkling that her life would take a new path came when she was approached by a member of her church to help make meals for the homeless at the former Winter Warming Center, located in the First Baptist Church on Main Street in La Crosse. Compelled to give it a go, Graf agreed and became part of a dedicated team of volunteers that furnished food and overnight shelter to up to 15 men and women. "I thought the people were so interesting," recalls Graf when asked about her first impressions of the Center, "especially since my mother suffered from mental illness and was homeless at times."

Graf's continued interest in working with homeless individuals eventually led her to become the Tuesday overnight coordinator at the Center, even though she was working full-time in special education for the Hiawatha Valley Education District in Winona. "I have always

been a people person, and I feel comfortable talking with anyone," explains Graf. "I was there for a few years and loved it!"

When the Warming Center outgrew its space and moved to a new location in downtown La Crosse, Graf went along with it. "We could now take up to 30 people, but I never thought that we'd fill up," says Graf, who continued on as the Tuesday night coordinator. "I was kind of surprised at the need."

In 2018, Graf made a career change and accepted the position of coordinator for the Franciscan Hospitality House, a daytime drop-in center that provided a safe, caring place for people to come in and warm up or cool off, grab a snack, take a shower or do some laundry. "Between noon and 4 p.m., I saw about 75 people a day," says Graf of those who not only were looking for help finding work or housing, but simply wanted a welcome place to rest and a friendly smile. "I remember playing music or cracking jokes and just taking the time to really get to know people—looking for anything that we might have in common. I wanted people to understand that whether they were dealing with mental health issues, addiction or whatever, I was there for them. And people responded! I was often the only person that they felt they could trust."



**"I can't just go home and forget about the people I've cared for, because they still need help."  
—Sue Graf**



*Sue Graf's kindness and encouraging nature spill out to touch the lives of people who need it most, like community members experiencing homelessness. Left: Graf and her "business partner" Brian bring food and supplies to Houska Park, where many homeless people camp. Contributed photos.*

## A MOBILE MISSION

However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Hospitality House (along with numerous other social service resources) closed in 2020, leaving Graf without a job and the homeless literally out in the cold. Those who were already living in overnight facilities could remain in that shelter, explains Graf, but due to health concerns, additional boarders could not be admitted. "It was a time of great uncertainty for everyone, especially our homeless neighbors."

Keeping true to one of her many adages—"today is a new day, and I can only do what I can do"—Graf informed her husband that she had an idea and was heading to the dollar store. There, she filled up her cart with items that would satisfy the most basic and immediate needs of people in crisis. "I thought, 'I can't just go home and forget about the people I've cared for, because they still need help.'"

Equipped with hand-warmers, basic hygiene items, clothing and ready-to-eat foods such as Vienna sausages, canned fruit and granola bars, Graf loaded up her car (which has been replaced since with a generous donation of a van) and set out as a one-woman mobile mission, certain she'd find people on the streets. Her instinct proved right. "As time went by and we were dealing with Covid, no daytime shelter was open and the community meals didn't resume, it was clear that a mobile mission to serve unsheltered people was needed in our community," she says. With donations and monetary support from friends, churches, community groups and her "business partner"

Read the stories of some of the individuals Graf serves at the blog *People Seeing People* ([www.peopleseeingpeople.com](http://www.peopleseeingpeople.com)), written by Charlotte Roberts and Gracie Quinn at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Brian (a former guest of the Hospitality House), Graf's mission has evolved into a nonprofit organization called WINN (What I Need Now), which has added batteries, Band-Aids, bus tokens and more to the list of essentials that it provides—all from the back of her van.

## SOUL-NOURISHING RELATIONSHIPS

It's the personal relationships that Graf has built with the homeless that give her the greatest satisfaction and have dispelled many of the misconceptions she—or the public—may initially have. "There are very few people who choose to be homeless," Graf says. "Usually their situation is due to past trauma and a lack of the life skills and support that is needed to help them deal with what they have experienced." She emphasizes that it's the smiles, lifelong friendships and success stories that make her work worthwhile. "Among our local homeless neighbors there are, or have been, doctors, teachers, construction workers, artists, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, and grandmas and grandpas. Many of them work but don't earn enough to afford housing."

Though some people remain cynical about her unconventional approach, Graf chooses to focus on doing what her heart tells her: to accept people as they are without judgment. As she sees it, she's not trying to solve the homeless problem; instead, she simply wants to show kindness to those who often are marginalized. "I am a Christian, and I try to treat others with the same love and forgiveness that I've received," she says, even when there are times that she feels discouraged. "But although there's pain and struggle, there is hope and joy in every day and something to be thankful for." **CRW**

*Martha Keefe lives in La Crosse and writes stories of amazing people who do amazing things.*



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# Nourishing New Perspectives in Leadership

A trio of young mothers steps into positions on La Crosse City Council.

BY TALLITHA REESE | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



*Mac Kiel, pictured with her husband, Andy, and son, Fynn, represents District 7 on the La Crosse City Council.*

Three of the newest members of the La Crosse Common Council hope to bring a perspective that is often missing on elected boards: that of young mothers. All elected to their first public office in April 2021, Mac Kiel, Mackenzie Mindel and Rebecca Schwarz say they are excited to learn from their constituents and colleagues as they expand the viewpoints represented on the council.

## MAC KIEL, DISTRICT 7

Kiel moved to La Crosse for college and met her husband while working at the Boys & Girls Clubs. Together, they decided that La Crosse was where they would settle.

Now with a young son and newborn daughter, Kiel is an admissions coach at Western Technical College. She decided to run for the city council position after realizing that for many, city government can be confusing and not very accessible.

"I truly wanted to better educate the public on city government and when and how their voices could be used," says Kiel.

"It is important to have different life experiences at the tables making decisions, and as a young mother, I see things differently than others," explains Kiel. "I truly want to serve the community I live in

and saw this as an opportunity to step up and do that."

Being the parent of young children also helped Kiel understand how difficult it is to be involved in or educated on what is going on in the community.

"Meetings are not family friendly," says Kiel. "We need to re-envision how we do local government and how to get everyone involved, not just those whom it works for timewise."

Kiel is learning every day, and she is determined to bring the community right along with her. "It is my mission to help everyone understand the decisions that are made, how they are made and how they can have an impact," says Kiel.

Kiel was pleasantly surprised by the acceptance and support she has received from other city council members, city employees and citizens.

"There truly are amazing people all over this city," says Kiel. "So many are willing to answer questions and help support my learning, even if we don't agree on a topic."

## MACKENZIE MINDEL, DISTRICT 8

Since moving to La Crosse in 2011 for college, Mindel has served on nonprofit boards, volunteered, participated in community engagement efforts and worked for both nonprofits and for-profit businesses, developing a broad perspective of the community.

Mindel and her husband welcomed their daughter at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, but before she finished maternity leave, Mindel lost her job with a local nonprofit due to the impact of the pandemic.

"My identity as an individual and a new mom, and now someone who had experienced job loss and parenting in isolation during a global pandemic was difficult," says Mindel.



Mackenzie Mindel, pictured with her husband, David, and daughter, Bluma, represents District 8 on the La Crosse City Council.

She found positives, however, in discovering that city council meetings had gone virtual, offering her the opportunity to listen and participate—something young mothers didn't always have pre-pandemic. A few months later, a friend and mentor suggested she run.

"My first response was that it was impossible," says Mindel. "How could a young mom who just lost her job run for office? But then I realized how terrible it was to have that thought. Of course, young women could run for office. I had the skills, education and eagerness to serve our community, so I decided to run and show my daughter that regardless of our circumstances, women belong in spaces where decisions are being made, as the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg said."

Mindel notes that when only one demographic is involved in decision making, the presented solutions are limited.

"Women, mothers, racially diverse folks and those with other identities and abilities have long been left out of the decision-making process," she says. "Having folks with different backgrounds and experiences in the decision-making process helps us become more resilient, culturally rich, more interesting and more beautiful. It allows us to be innovative in the face of our biggest challenges and continue to move forward together."

"What's particularly exciting to me is that I am serving our city in the first female council majority and during a time where we are receiving once-in-a-lifetime funds to truly make a lasting difference in our community," says Mindel.

"How could a young mom who just lost her job run for office? But then I realized how terrible it was to have that thought. Of course, young women could run for office. I had the skills, education and eagerness to serve our community, so I decided to run and show my daughter that regardless of our circumstances, women belong in spaces where decisions are being made, as the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg said."

—Mackenzie Mindel

"Much has changed in the 40 years since I was (my son's) age, but it's that sense of belonging that I want to pass on—not just to my son, but to our whole community."

—Rebecca Schwarz

## REBECCA SCHWARZ, DISTRICT 10

Schwarz, mission impact coordinator at YWCA La Crosse, says community advocacy and education work led her to closely follow local government and politics.

"That, along with my determination to make sure La Crosse is a thriving community for my little one to grow up in, led me to run for public office," says Schwarz.

Originally from the La Crosse area, Schwarz moved out of state after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, but she and her spouse moved back to be closer to family in 2017.

"Growing up in the La Crosse area, I felt safe, that I belonged here, that I had opportunities and was connected to our many outdoor spaces," says Schwarz. "Much has changed in the 40 years since I was (my son's) age, but it's that sense of belonging that I want to pass on—not just to my son, but to our whole community."

Being the parent of a young child while serving on city council is a challenge, but Schwarz notes that she wouldn't sacrifice the time with her toddler if it weren't for the purpose of making his future brighter. "I have a constant and visceral reminder of why the future of our city matters so much," she adds.

Schwarz says she's experienced tremendous support from other female elected officials.

"It's been a real gift," she says. "Many of us can share in the experiences of balancing caregiving, having jobs and still doing our best to support the larger community."

With the large variety of issues that come before city council, Schwarz says one of the most challenging aspects of the position is balancing the many needs of the community.

"So often there are multiple needs and values illustrated in an agenda item," says Schwarz. "I spend a lot of time making sure that every vote I cast is meaningful in that I understand the full implications of my decision and how it will impact our community in multiple ways, both financially and on a human level." **CRW**



Rebecca Schwarz represents District 10 on the La Crosse City Council.

Tallitha Reese is a freelance writer and content manager based in Cashton. She owns Words By Reese, and you can find out more about her and her work at [www.wordsbyreese.com](http://www.wordsbyreese.com).



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# Compassion and Hope

Ann Wales connects La Crosse inmates to spiritual guidance.

BY JAN WELLIK | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Working with inmates to help inspire their spiritual connection has been Ann Wales' passion for nearly two decades. This year, in January, she became a full-time chaplain for the La Crosse Jail Ministry, which, she says, "exists to connect or reconnect inmates to their faith communities."

## BUILDING HOPE THROUGH FAITH

Before becoming a chaplain, Wales volunteered with the Jail Ministry for about 18 years, helping with Bible studies and Sunday worship.

"There are many services provided in jail, and we are the faith component," she says. Wales is responsible for multiple aspects of the ministry, including providing supplies for the inmates, such as pencils, paper, stamps, cards, magazines and books. They also provide games, puzzles and spiritual material—much of which is donated by the community.

As chaplain, Wales also helps the board with grants, newsletters and presentations. She does one-on-one visits and connects inmates to their chosen faith communities, including Buddhist, Muslim and Christian faiths. She helps them make decisions in their lives and offers encouragement and support.

"It takes a lot to build resilience in people: education, jobs, health care, help with addiction. For us, it's being part of a community," she explains. "It's important to have people who encourage you with hope."

## A LIFE'S JOURNEY

Wales, now 60, brings a lifetime of experience to her job. Many years ago, she started a Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Cloquet, Minnesota, with her late husband, and they worked as



Ann Wales, chaplain for the La Crosse Jail Ministry

missionaries in Lebanon for two years. She then worked in human resources for 23 years, including 13 years at Gundersen Health System, where she retired.

Wales also received clinical pastoral training at Gundersen, and her intern site was at the La Crosse County Jail eight years ago. After this training, she decided to go back to school to get a master's degree in Christian studies at an online college.

"I always wanted to get back into ministry," she says. "I was so grateful for this opening." In choosing to work with inmates, she says, "I developed a compassion for the people and hope for them. I totally believe people can create change in their lives, and God can help."

## COMPASSION FOR CREATING CHANGE

"There are many programs within the jail to help (inmates) make different choices to become resilient, productive members of society," says Wales. "I truly believe their lives can be recreated, and there is hope for them," she explains. "It is hard, but it can happen."

She emphasizes that none of this could happen without the support of community donations. "It's so nice to see everyone coming together to help make this happen, to help them when they get out and to navigate their lives," she says. **CRW**

*Jan Wellik finds compassion and hope by remembering that anything can happen and sometimes in the most surprising ways. Being a mom, teacher and writer provide daily opportunities for discovery and practice.*



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# FACE THE WINTER BLUES HEAD-ON

**Take steps now to nourish your body and mind for darker months ahead.**

BY JANIS JOLLY | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



In the Coulee Region, we treasure summer. We hold precious the long days filled with sunshine, the bright, early mornings, the leisurely sunlit evenings. But the fact is, after a few months of these pleasures, we must let go. The days shorten after the summer solstice in June. Vacations are over, school starts, stricter routines begin. For many, this brings feelings of sadness, fatigue and general malaise.



*Keely Rees, Ph.D., is a professor at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and health educator.*

Those who struggle with the transition into fall and winter have many tools to fight off the seasonal blues: therapists, gyms, hospitals and clinics to provide help. But the main source of help is ourselves. We may be able to improve our mood if we plan time for ourselves and make some intentional changes.

## SUNSHINE AND VITAMIN D

Local health educator Keely Rees, Ph.D., a professor at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and therapist Sheryl Gora-Bollom of The Therapy Place both treat clients with seasonal adjustment issues. One of the first things they each look for is the client's vitamin D level. Depressed mood often indicates low vitamin D levels. D, "the sunshine vitamin," is made naturally in the body when the skin is exposed to sunlight.

However, in winter, there are fewer hours of sunlight, and the angle of the sun is less intense. Besides, when we go outdoors in the cold, most of our skin is covered.

Other benefits of sunlight include the production of melatonin, needed for deep sleep, and serotonin and dopamine, both of which contribute a feeling of well-being.

To get enough vitamin D in the darker months, we must supplement by taking it orally. Rees recommends approximately 2,000 IU daily for adults. Vitamin D levels can also be increased by using a light therapy box for 20 to 30 minutes per day. These provide full-spectrum light that mimics natural sunlight.



## GET MOVING, GET SOCIAL

There are other things we can do besides increasing vitamin D and sunlight exposure.



Sheryl Gora-Bollom is a therapist and licensed clinical social worker with The Therapy Place in La Crosse.

Exercise is known to increase serotonin and dopamine levels. Activity becomes more challenging in winter because we spend more time indoors. Our hibernating instincts may even result in excessive napping. To feel good, we must get up and move. A minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity a day is ideal, although, according to Gora-Bollom, it doesn't have to be all at once. She says finding an "accountability buddy," a friend you can exercise with or check in with to help each other stick with an exercise goal, is helpful by encouraging consistency and providing socialization.

The importance of social interaction is a lesson we all learned during the isolation of Covid. Combining exercise with socialization in group classes or walking with a neighbor meets both needs. Outdoor activities in the winter such as skiing, snowboarding or ice skating are great ways to exercise and socialize. Find something to do outdoors that you enjoy, even if it is walking the dog. Your spirits will lift, your muscles will benefit and you'll be more likely to keep at it.

## BEATING SEASONAL DEPRESSION

Seasonal depression is well established in the historical record of agrarian societies, according to Rees. There are ample examples of pioneers suffering mentally during the winter, mainly from isolation. Think of Beret in O. E. Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth*.

Four-season climates provide adjustment challenges, and some are harder than others. "Actually, anyone living in northern states or countries who experience lack of light and outdoor exposure during winter are at greater risk," Rees says.

Here's what do: Make a plan.

Evaluate the ways your life will change as you transition into the fall season: colder weather, school starting, your job and family activities. How much time will these activities take up every day? How much time can you carve out and protect for yourself? Be very intentional about this. You are the only person who can take care of you.

If you are trying to create a new habit, Gora-Bollom suggests you "piggyback" the new onto an established one. For example, if you keep your vitamin D pills by your toothbrush, you will remember both.

Use your "me time" wisely. Exercise, socialize. Join a book club. Keep a regularly scheduled Zoom meeting with friends.

Prepare for fun. Check your winter outdoor equipment, making sure you have what you need on hand, because the supply chain may have some hiccups as it did last year during Covid.

Plan mini vacations—a weekend in another city, a trip to a warmer climate. Give yourself events to look forward to.

Work with your health care providers to put prevention measures in place well before negative signs and symptoms arise. With a plan in place, winter may become your favorite season. **CRW**

*Janis Jolly has always lived in northern places and appreciates all the good ideas presented here for making the most of the darker months.*

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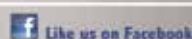
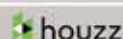
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# The Joy of Play

All Abilities Trane Park brings smiles as the realization of a dream eight years in the making.

BY SARAH ARENDT-BEYER | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Amy Hendrickson and her children say this tree and stage is one of their favorite places in All Abilities Trane Park. Pictured at top are (from left) Avalyn, 11; Jaycie, 9; and Hutson, 15.



Occupational therapist Katie Bakke was instrumental in designing All Abilities Trane Park, which is now a place where her son Bo can play safely.

Amy Hendrickson, a former board member with the La Crosse Area Autism Foundation, remembers when she and her husband, who have a son with autism, were hosting a picnic for a group of families with individuals on the autism spectrum.

“We were trying to find a safe place to do that, and we searched throughout the community and soon found out that we didn’t really have a secure, safe spot for our families to come together,” she says.

Now, La Crosse’s All Abilities Trane Park, which she was instrumental in developing, provides that safe place to gather on 2.7 acres along Chase Street between 15th and 16th Streets. Its pavement feels springy, thanks to poured-in-place resilient surfacing. The park is filled with natural elements—flowers, greenery, boulders—and features neutral colors instead of the bright reds, oranges and blues commonly found in playgrounds. It is enclosed and includes a double-gated entry and clear sight lines that make it easier for caregivers to keep an eye on children.

## A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

To plan the park, which opened in June, committee members held community focus groups, seeking out parents and caregivers of persons with disabilities, community organizations that work with persons with disabilities and medical specialists.

One of those medical specialists was Katie Bakke, an occupational therapist. She provided guidance on how to design the park in a

way that would promote learning based on how the sensory motor system functions. Beyond her professional involvement, Bakke also has a personal interest in the park: one of her three children has a visual impairment. “The way we created the park allowed him a great experience,” she says, “and I hope that it is serving so many other families in the same capacity as my own.”

## GROUNDING IN LEARNING

Each of the park’s zones is designed to target different components of play and interaction.

“Friendship swings” allow two people to face one another and swing together. “The beauty of those kinds of swings,” says committee member Martha Tymeson, now retired from the School District of La Crosse following a 37-year career as an adaptive physical education teacher, “is that you get that calming back and forth movement. As you’re swinging, you can be engaging in conversation with someone else, and you can be stimulating that eye contact.”

Individuals using a wheelchair can enjoy the Sway Fun, a piece of equipment that produces a similar swaying motion, without having to transfer out of their chair.

There’s also a zero-entrance merry-go-round called a We-Go-Round, which allows individuals using a wheelchair to wheel right in. There are also seats, or users can stand. It can be moved from inside or pushed from the outside, but it has an accelerometer that limits its



*All Abilities Trane Park is designed to be a soothing environment where anyone of any age or abilities can find an activity that fits.*

speed. In fact, pushing harder increases the resistance. Says Tymeson, “It’s a real bang-for-your-buck piece of equipment because you get a lot of different things and reach a lot of different sensory components without really knowing it—by just playing!”

The park’s sliding zone features metal slides positioned on a hill, with the slides descending into a small valley. Transfer stations at the top and the bottom allow individuals using a wheelchair or other assisted mobility device to access the slides, and users are never more than 2 feet off the ground. Why metal? Plastic slides can cause a static

shock in people using cochlear implants.

“It’s not equal play, it’s equitable play,” Tymeson says. “Everybody can’t necessarily play on every piece of equipment, but there is something that everybody can play on.”

## ALL ABILITIES, ALL AGES

“There’s an intergenerational component,” notes Tymeson. “We wanted the park to be not just for the little kiddos, but a destination for persons of all ages and all abilities.”

One zone features an adult fitness area made possible when the State of Wisconsin selected the park to be the site for an AARP grant for an Adult FitLot. That’s become the favorite space of Hendrickson’s son, now a 15-year-old, 6-foot-6-inch football player.

There’s also an early childhood development zone designed for children ages 9 months to 5 years. That’s unique because most playgrounds are designed for kids ages 5 to 12.

“The cool thing about it,” says Tymeson, “is that anyone, of any ability and any age, can truly enjoy it and have fun playing.”

## A PARK FOR ALL

In the end, it’s not about the design or the equipment.

“Any way that we can help promote inclusivity, allyship, being conscious about others outside of yourself and getting individuals outside just to enjoy the beautiful things that our communities have to offer,” says Hendrickson, “to me, that’s the best kind of gathering point.” CRW

*Sarah Arendt-Beyer is a La Crosse area writer and cherishes the community spirit that brings people together to accomplish amazing things—like the All Abilities Trane Park.*



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# Warming the Holidays with Market Memories

Sparta creates a European-style experience with Kriskindlmarkt.

BY ANASTASIA PENCHI | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



*Kriskindlmarkt is a Bavarian-inspired holiday market in Sparta designed to charm locals and tourists alike.*

In need of some holiday spirit? Imagine shopping with a few friends at a German-inspired, outdoor holiday market while sipping a cup of hot cocoa. There's music in the background. Maybe a few snowflakes fall while you are there. Would a magical experience help nurture your soul?

Sparta's Kriskindlmarkt is celebrating its seventh year starting on Black Friday, so there's no need to drive to Chicago or another big city for this type of encounter.

It started as a passion project by Sparta resident Reinhard Mueller and was supported by a downtown Main Street cooperative group. Kriskindlmarkt has since evolved into a traditional Bavarian-inspired market with classic wooden huts, fire tables and other improvements designed to lure locals and tourists to the unique outdoor shopping experience.

In November 2020, despite the Covid-19 restrictions and changes, Sparta's Kriskindlmarkt was named #7 of the top 15 "Best Small Town Christmas Markets in the U.S." by Travel Awaits.

"The experience of Kriskindlmarkt these past two weekends in Sparta, Wisconsin, was for me remarkable and an alignment of what was conceived to be the ultimate goal of this growing celebration," Mueller wrote after last year's event. "To witness people with all different backgrounds and stories to come together, as we should

always, to celebrate the season and each other was for me remarkable more so this year than any time in the past."

## AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER

Heidi Prestwood, executive director of the Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce (the agency now in charge of Kriskindlmarkt), said there will be 22 huts this year—an increase of six from last year. Visitors can purchase everything from dolls to winter apparel to soap to Christmas ornaments. Beer, pretzels and brats will also be for sale, and many downtown businesses will remain open during Kriskindlmarkt.

"I'm trying to help people create an experience to remember," Prestwood says. "It helps get people in the Christmas spirit and the Christmas mood."

The market will be held for three consecutive weekends beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving: 4 to 8 p.m. Friday nights and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturdays. Discussions are also taking place about whether to expand its hours and/or add another weekend.

"It's grown little by little every year," Prestwood says. "It brings a lot of people. People come from all over."

Prestwood said she noticed more 20- and 30-year-olds coming to the market last year. They drink coffee and hot chocolate from their Kriskindlmarkt collector mugs. They eat kringle and scones.



Sparta's Kriskindlmarkt brings a European flair to the Midwest with open air stalls, warm drinks, holiday shopping and handcrafted gifts. Visitors might even be treated to caroling, horse-drawn carriage rides or a sighting of Sparta's own Ben Biken. The market is open for three weekends beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving, 4 to 8 p.m. Fridays and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturdays.



Their children participate in special youth activities and can even take pictures by a larger-than-life Olaf, the snowman from the movie *Frozen*.

Improvements to the event location are made each year thanks to grants and business sponsorships. Awnings were recently added to the huts, which are trimmed in festive pine boughs. Patio heaters and fire tables help warm shoppers up on chilly days. New wooden bridges can be found around town.

### "LIKE A MOVIE"

Of course, the main thing affecting the celebration—the weather—is under no one's control. A little bit of snow makes it magical. Beautiful weather on the first two weekends of the market last year resulted in a couple thousand visitors.

"It's like a movie sometimes," Prestwood adds. "I love it."

Sue Archer sells homemade ornaments from the same hut every year. She started selling them that first year as a fundraiser to help the market purchase propane to keep market-goers warm. Nowadays she gets her own booth to sell "Susie's Doozies."

Archer's homemade ornaments are made from clay, wire, fabric,

wood and other materials; she says she makes "a hundred different kinds." She has incorporated bicycles, glasses of wine and buttons. She is also known for her rustic nativity sets.

"(Kriskindlmarkt) definitely brings people to town, and I think it gets people downtown more inspired to improve their businesses," she says.

And it's not just a hobby for Archer. She has traveled to Germany to tour the factories that make the German smokers she imports and sells during the event. Every employee at the factory has a specialized job in the making of these detailed incense burners, she said.

It's those authentic German touches, like the smokers Archer sells and the roasted almonds, pecans and cashews sold by the Nut Haus, that help create the memories for Kriskindlmarkt visitors and make Sparta a destination.

"You forget about everything else," Archer says. "You get caught up in the ambience and spirit." **CRW**

*Anastasia Penchi loves the holidays and is excited to shop at Sparta's Kriskindlmarkt this year. She can be reached at [callmeloislane@hotmail.com](mailto:callmeloislane@hotmail.com).*

The final details for this year's event are still being determined. Could the horse-drawn carriage rides that were dropped last year come back again? What about the parade? Will organizers add another weekend? Check the event Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SpartaKriskindlmarkt](http://www.facebook.com/SpartaKriskindlmarkt) to stay informed.



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## Nothing Nourishes Like Soup

Stir up a meal that combines health, flavor and comfort in one steaming bowl.

BY JULIE NELSON | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

According to the church ladies who contributed to my copy of the ever-classic “Methodist Church Cookbook,” the key to making tasty, crowd-pleasing soup is cream-of-something soup. Cream of mushroom, cream of chicken, cream of celery—doesn’t matter, every recipe called for a can of some sort of cream soup.

When I asked a registered dietitian at Gundersen Health System about what makes a soup healthy, however, a cream-of-something soup was in no part of the description. Sodium and fat are two reasons Natalie Schmit has put cream-based soups on her “on occasion only” list, and she recommends avoiding soups that call for large quantities of cream, cheese and/or butter.



Natalie Schmit, registered dietitian at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse

Outside of that, Schmit says soup can definitely be a healthy choice, especially when you make it yourself. “If you try to incorporate three food groups—a lean protein, some veggies and a complex carbohydrate—you’ll have a balanced meal that leaves you feeling full and satisfied,” she says.

### TAKING STOCK

Dietitians and chefs alike agree a good soup begins with the broth, whether it is chicken, beef or vegetable. “This will allow the true flavor of the soup to come through,”

says Schmit, “plus it will be more nutritious.” Making your own broth is the ultimate way to control how much sodium you put into your soup, but Schmit says nearly any low-sodium broth bought in a store

is fine. She professes no preference for chicken, beef or veggie broth, as long as what you get is low sodium.

If low sodium is synonymous with no flavor at your house, Schmit has some ideas to soup up your broth. “Use natural herbs and spices such as garlic, basil, thyme and parsley,” she says. “Taste your soup, and if it still needs more flavor, use pepper or a product such as Mrs. Dash as some good, salt-free options.” If you still feel as though you need a little salt, she says, it won’t be the end of the world if you add a pinch.

While making your own soup from your own homemade broth is the ultimate in healthy, flavorful meals, Schmit recognizes canned soups can be a good option when you need something quick and easy. Just as with homemade, you’ll want to look for those with a lean protein such as chicken or beans; complex carbohydrates such as whole wheat pasta, potatoes or brown rice; and plenty of veggies. Several canned soups offer low-sodium options, so choose those to stock your pantry.

The same guidelines apply when making or buying a classic winter comfort food: chili. The protein should be a lean ground beef, chicken and/or beans. Adding carrots or other veggies and using a tomato base helps balance the bowl to create a satisfying meal. For those of you who consider crackers a vital topping to your soup or chili, Schmit says go ahead and crumble what you need, just be mindful of how many crackers you are adding. “The sodium can add up fast,” she says.

And for those of you who believe the best way to make chili *souper*-special is to grate cheese and/or plop a dollop of sour cream on top, Schmit says moderation is the key with cheese, and she suggests Greek yogurt as a nutritious alternative to sour cream.

Tasty, warm and healthful, are you ready for your own *souper*-star meal?



## Roasted Tomato Basil Bisque

Rachel Persson, *Coulee Region Women* marketing account director  
Serves 8

- 3 lb. ripe roma tomatoes (cut in half lengthwise)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion
- 1 head of garlic
- ¼ tsp. roasted red pepper flakes (optional if you don't like spicy)
- 1 28-oz. can diced tomatoes (do not drain)
- 1½ cups packed fresh basil leaves
- 1 pint heavy cream (optional if making dairy free or vegan)
- 1 qt. chicken or bone broth (vegetable if making it vegetarian or vegan)

Salt and pepper to taste

Shredded Italian cheese to taste (for garnish)

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Slice tomatoes and place open side up on a cookie sheet. Drizzle olive oil over them and then salt and pepper. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until parts of the tomatoes turn dark on the edges.

Dice onion and add it to the bottom of a soup pot with garlic (minced) and red pepper flakes (optional); sauté until onions are translucent.

Add canned tomatoes, fresh basil (no need to chop, since the blender will do that) and broth of choice.

Pour roasted tomatoes and their liquids on the sheet into the soup

pot. Bring to a simmer and allow to cook simmering for 30 minutes so that all the flavors combine. Before serving, add heavy cream and blend soup pot ingredients. (An immersion blender works best, but if you don't have one, a regular one works as well. Just pour it in sections until all blended.)

Serve hot and garnish with shredded Italian cheese.

### Variation:


For a heartier soup, prepare meatballs of your choice. Serve in a bowl and top with soup. (Do not mix into soup, as they will fall apart.)

## Turkey and Wild Rice Soup

Gundersen Health System

- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ¾ lb. boneless, skinless turkey, chopped
- 1 cup uncooked wild rice
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 4 oz. mushrooms, sliced
- ½ tsp. black pepper, ground
- 1 tsp. olive oil

Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. Stir to mix well. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.




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## SOUL-NOURISHING MEMORIES FROM GRANDMA'S KITCHEN

BY RACHEL PERSSON

Grandma Kate was a thin but sturdy woman. She raised 10 children on a farm up on the ridge just outside of La Crosse. She was my great-grandmother, so my memories of her are fleeting and dim. I recall sitting on her front porch while the adults talked about adult things, and I played with the barn kitties. She was known for many things, but her prowess in the kitchen might be the most talked about by her family today. Her recipes have been handed down, shared and tweaked by us all to feed our own families. Her green bean soup recipe was always a favorite and perfect for fall.

I imagine her walking out to their garden and digging fresh potatoes, picking green beans and dill to use to feed her growing bunch. She needed a hearty soup to fill the bellies of her large family, warming them up when it was cold outside. So, using the things she had on hand, this recipe was born.

I am sure you can find dozens of soups like this one with a quick google search, but this soup, made with love, warms the soul. While eating this soup, we recall happy days sharing meals, laughing and growing together. She fed her little ones with this countless times, and now her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren prepare it for our own. With each bite our family keeps her memory alive for generations to come.

## Grandma Kate's Green Bean Soup

Rachel Persson, *Coulee Region Women* marketing account director  
Serves 12

- 2 lb. red potatoes, diced into bite-size chunks
- 1 lb. fresh green beans (not canned)
- 1 qt. heavy whipping cream
- 1 white onion, diced
- 4 T butter
- 1 lb. bacon, chopped into small pieces (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh dill to taste

Wash and dice red potatoes and onion, and snap the green beans into bite-size pieces. Put them into a deep soup pot and fill with water until just covered. Bring to a boil and cook until potatoes are tender.

While those are cooking, fry the bacon until crispy, and then chop. It's important to have crispy bacon, so that it doesn't get soggy when added to the soup.

When potatoes are tender, dump half the water out and fill back up with heavy cream and return to the stove on low heat. After adding cream, add butter and stir in until melted.

Then add chopped bacon, chopped dill and salt and pepper to taste. It's best served hot and to family.



## Gourmet Potato Soup

Shari Hegland, *Coulee Region Women* editor

- 2 stalks of celery, chopped fine
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 T melted butter or margarine
- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 3 cups water
- 5 chicken bouillon cubes or 5 tsp. Better than Bouillon chicken stock concentrate
- ¾ tsp. seasoned salt
- ½ tsp. dried thyme
- ½ tsp. dried rosemary, crumbled
- Dash pepper
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese or marble jack
- 1-2 cups diced ham, turkey or chicken (optional)

Saute celery, garlic and onion in the melted butter in a large pot. Add the next nine ingredients (all but milk, cheese and optional meat); cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are done. Remove from heat and mash with potato masher.

Add milk and cheese (and optional meat). Cook, stirring constantly, until cheese melts. **CRW**

*Julie Nelson believes a soup-perb winter meal consists of a bowlful of broth and goodness. You might say she is nuts for soup.*





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# SAFE AND SOUND

**Coulee Region Mobility remodeling turns a basic house into an accessible home for a Tomah family.**

BY HEIDI BLANKE | PHOTOS BY HAZEL MEDIA LLC



*Coulee Region Mobility helped the Shumway family of Tomah turn a basic ranch-style house into a safe and accessible home that provides a level of independence for their son, Andrew. It includes (pictured at right) a ceiling track system and sling seat for transfers from Andrew's bedroom to the bathroom.*

Lauri and Stephen Shumway's new Tomah home is more than simply a roof over their heads. It's a place where they can take refuge with confidence that their son, Andrew, who uses a wheelchair, can safely access his home. The house was featured in the La Crosse Area Builders Association 2021 Parade of Homes in a virtual tour.

## READY AND WAITING

The Shumways, retired military, chose the ranch-style home because it could likely reach the level of accessibility the family required. With the assistance of Independent Living Resources (ILR), a local agency that helps people with disabilities live more independently, improvements went into place. The agency made suggestions for how the home could work to Andrew's advantage, and its recommendations paved the way for funding. "We knew the house could be accommodated," Lauri Shumway says.

The Shumways lived in their previous Tomah home for 18 years, and Andrew was wary of the move. Now, though, Lauri says, "He thinks it's nice. He loves *Monsters, Inc.*, so we did his bedroom with monsters on the wall." Large cartoon characters dominate a wall in the bright blue room, and stuffed animals populate a bookcase.

But it took more than décor to make the home work for the family.

## ENTER COULEE REGION MOBILITY

With the help of Brandy Ender, owner of Coulee Region Mobility, the home became a place where Andrew could live and be cared for because of the carefully designed integrated features.

Ender started his company in 2015 when the company he worked for was sold. "I've always been into construction or some sort of trade, so I went to work for a bathroom remodeler who started doing accessible bathrooms," he says. Ender was eventually sent to train for chair lift installations and discovered he really liked doing the accessibility work. He jokes that he "makes people cry," but only because they gain a level of independence. "It's about the satisfaction of knowing I helped a person stay in their home, safe and sound," he says. "I have given them access to their home so they can stay there."

Ender had been looking forward to completing a home that would showcase all of his business's capabilities, and the Shumway place fit the bill.

Improvements included an entry ramp, stair lift to the basement, vertical platform lift and a ceiling track system from the bedroom to a bathroom with a no-step shower. Inside, the décor is streamlined to allow wheelchair movement, yet it is still warm and inviting.

Lauri says Andrew loves showing off his accessible features. "He calls the vertical lift his elevator and the ceiling track system his zipline," she says. The ceiling track is a U-shaped rail in his bedroom that leads to the bathroom. A chair-like sling is the "zipline" seat, and a push from Mom sends him on his way.

Ender built a custom drive-under vanity that matched the original vanity perfectly so that Andrew can access his bathroom sink. "He's never had the ability to wash his hands in a sink under running water before. This is pretty significant for him," Lauri says.

In the living room, tubular white rails looking much like a



Adaptations to the Shumway's home that make it safe and accessible include (at top) a chairlift from the upstairs living room into the basement area and a vertical lift in the garage (lower right) for Andrew's wheelchair. A specially designed sink and vanity in the bathroom (lower left) allows him to roll up close enough to wash his hands under running water, which is typically not possible with standard bathroom fixtures. The home was featured as a virtual entry in the La Crosse Area Builders Association 2021 Parade of Homes and may be viewed through Oct. 31 at <http://www.labaonline.com/2021-parade-homes-builders/>.



rollercoaster track turned sideways bend around the staircase leading to the lower level and take Andrew up and down via a chair resembling one you might find in an office, though one with a seat belt to prevent falls. A wheelchair awaits its occupant at the bottom. In the garage, an open lift transports Andrew from the house to car level and allows him to negotiate the two-step difference.

Some costs, Lauri says, such as upgrades beyond the basic suggestions, came out of pocket. "I had the ramp upgraded and paid the difference because we put in no-maintenance wood." The ramp, rather than being obtrusive, fronts the home like a white picket fence.

## ROOM FOR GROWTH

Ender said there is no one definition of accessibility with which he is familiar because everyone's situation is different. "People may need a door widened or a stair lift or a wheelchair-accessible ramp," he says. "There is no one term that fits all.

"There is always a call for this type of work," he adds. If you're unsure how to begin the process, he advises, ILR or the Aging and Disability Resource Center of La Crosse County are great starting points.

## THINKING AHEAD

Two areas of accessibility stick out in his mind as general priorities if families are considering needs for the future. "If a walker or wheelchair is used, a ramp is often the solution to get into the home," he says. "The next thing would be bathroom safety." Items such as grab bars and adaptations for bathing accessibility are fairly easy to add to most homes.

He often finds that people think their accessible needs are unique and that common solutions won't work where they live. "The reality of it is I feel I have seen every scenario possible. Most of the time, there's a solution for you," Ender says.

Ender encourages people to think ahead when building or remodeling. For example, he says, "At some point in your life, you're not going to be able to do steps. Make sure your stairway is wide enough for a chair lift." Quite a bit of new construction, he points out, incorporates wider doorways to allow wheelchair access.

Lauri advises those looking for accessible improvements to educate themselves on what their options are. She speaks from experience. "People don't know what else to ask, so they don't ask the right questions. I have learned to broaden my questions. I don't give specifics, so I get more choices," she says. "Ask broad questions and collect data from people who have knowledge." For example, rather than asking for grab bars, ask what will make it easier to bathe.

No one knows how the need for accessibility will look in the years to come, but Ender is adamant about hoping that more accessible homes are being built. "I have younger customers with disability issues who have searched for a home they can work with, but there are so few out there," he says. "There is such a need."

Thankfully, his knowledge and passion are moving the housing industry in the right direction. **CRW**

*Heidi Griminger Blanke is a La Crosse area writer and an aging baby boomer who appreciates Lauri Shumway's advice and Brandy Ender's talents.*



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# Crafting for a Cause

Coulee Region women gather to create crafts that make a difference.

BY JESSICA ZEN | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



*Creating in the community of others can provide opportunities for connection and healing, as is experienced by participants in the Women's Craft Program at the Coulee Recovery Center. The women spend time together creating a wide range of items, including jewelry, paper flowers and more. One particularly interesting project is making a purse out of a used feed bag and duct tape.*

Healing can happen in unexpected ways. Whether it's through prayer, medicine, exercise or therapy, there is no limit to the different ways our bodies and souls can find balance, health and happiness. Though not traditionally thought of as having healing powers, crafting can have a bigger impact on your life than you think.

## BEAUTY IN HEALING

The Women's Craft Program at the the Coulee Recovery Center is proving, without a shadow of a doubt, that crafting has the power to help heal. Group leader Missy Wilde has been helping women focus on creating beauty for the past eight years. One of the great things about crafting is that it isn't a formal program that focuses on "getting clean" and "Step work." "We come in here to turn all of it off," says Wilde.

Craft group members who are new to fighting addiction benefit from having an easy activity they can focus on, explains Wilde. Finding a new way to pass the time can be scary, and crafting is a positive way to fill time that doesn't require any particular skills or

money. The Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse makes it all possible by funding the program.

Coulee Recovery Center board member and craft instructor Susan Fox finds that "crafting helps with recovery because it helps you discover something that you've never done before or uncover things that you used to enjoy." There are no quality expectations, and everyone goes home with something they created. At the end of the day, the program is just a bunch of women hanging out together in a judgment-free zone and creating beauty.

The craft group doesn't follow any strict rules—members are encouraged to do what speaks to them. Group members use rocks, salt dough, gel pens, foam, felt balls, fleece and more to create unique items that can be kept or used as gifts.

Wilde notes that some members use the crafts as gifts as a way to apologize to someone they have hurt. "They have such pride when they approach a project like that," she says.

Fox notes that another popular craft is using a magazine page and a glue stick to make an envelope, then writing a letter to someone who has made a positive impact on their life.





Members of groups such as the Prayer Shawl Ministry at First Presbyterian Church in La Crosse infuse their crafts with prayers for those who will receive the knitted or crocheted shawls, hats and booties.

## SHARING IS CARING

The women at Coulee Recovery Center aren't the only ones who have found healing in crafts. The Prayer Shawl Ministry at First Presbyterian Church in La Crosse meets every month to knit or crochet intricate shawls, blankets, hats, scarves and baby booties to present as gifts to people in the community who may be in need.

Cindi Kyte, Jan Beckwith, Marilyn Horn, Jane Radloff, Minetta Jansky, Sue Lee, Audrey Gerzema and Camille Gerzema have been giving back to the community with prayer shawls for more than five years. The comfort they have brought people in need has been evident at the Boys and Girls Clubs, Family & Children's Center, Warming Center and Gunderson Health System.

For Kyte, crocheting is therapeutic. "I've had three family members who have received prayer shawls from their community, and I know how important it was to them. It's very significant to receive something like that," she says.


Beckwith agrees. "Prayer shawls are something to give to someone to convey warmth that shows them God is with them. If they are ill or if they have had a death in the family, it offers support and comfort," she says.

It's all done out of the love of making the shawls and the satisfaction of knowing that the final products are going to people who need them, notes Horn. Perhaps the most comforting part of receiving an item from this group is knowing that the women have prayed over it in hopes that the gift will bring the receiver some peace.

When the group gets together, a lot of socializing happens, which can be just as healing. "We get more done at home," says Horn, but that isn't always a bad thing. The fellowship that comes with the crafting is just as important as the products themselves. Spending time together with women in the community can help fill your soul.

Both the Women's Craft Program and the Prayer Shawl Ministry are making their mark on this community by promoting health, healing and a better tomorrow, one craft at a time. **CRW**

*Jessica Zen is a local freelance writer who has been known to dabble in the creative arts. Scrapbooking is her craft of choice.*



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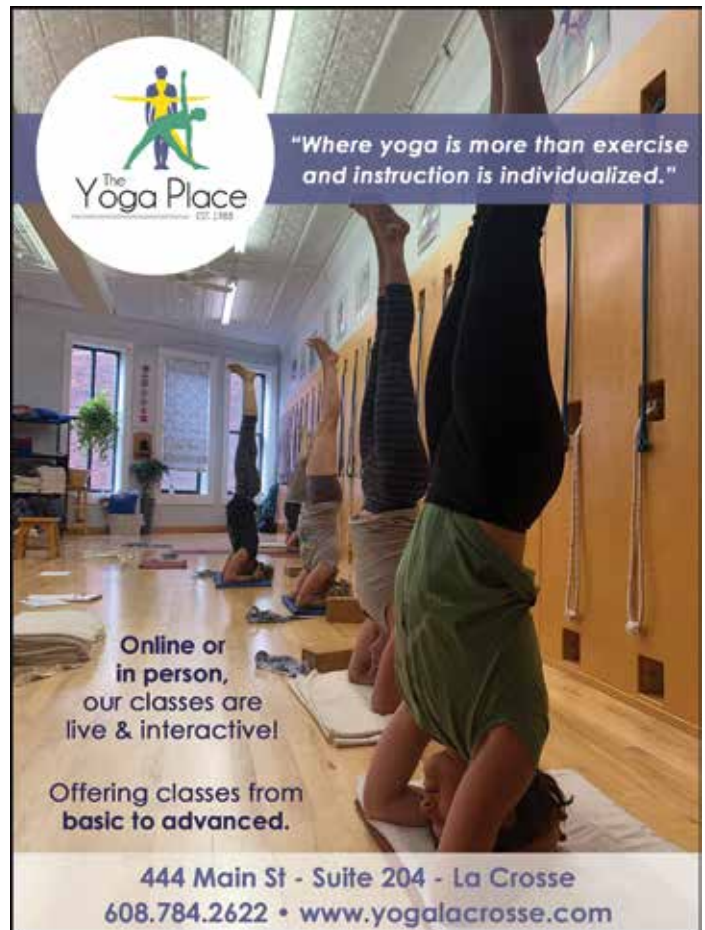




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Above: Betty Stoll, named Mrs. Oktoberfest in 1971, still loves celebrating the festival with her husband, Wally.  
Center: When 1970 Mrs. Oktoberfest Carol Bluske tapped Betty Stoll for the 1971 crown, nominees were still judged on the basis of their homemaking skills.



Photo by The Studio

In recognition of Stoll's energy and dedication, she was honored with a hand-cast ring from Designing Jewelers in La Crosse during the 2021 Mrs. Oktoberfest Reception September 28.

## 50 YEARS IN THE OKTOBERFEST FAMILY

**Mrs. Oktoberfest 1971 still embodies a spirit of service.**

BY ELIZABETH TEVIS | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

**L**a Crosse's annual Oktoberfest event is a revered celebration of German food and drink, dance, clothing, music and revelry set against the generous colors of the fall Driftless landscape. Folks like Betty Stoll, who this year celebrated her 50th anniversary of being crowned Mrs. Oktoberfest, experience the Coulee Region wonder as all of that and more. For Stoll, this longest-running Oktoberfest in the Midwest is nothing short of a family gathering.

"We moved here in '68 and didn't know the city that well. With five children, our youngest was nine months old when we moved here," Stoll says. She became active with the Jaycettes and volunteered with individuals with special needs and nursing home residents. With experience teaching eight grades in a rural school in Menominee, she taught catechism class at St. Thomas More Catholic Church on La Crosse's south side. And in 1971 she found herself being selected as Mrs. O from a record number of more than 40 finalists.

### EVOLUTION OF MRS. O

These days the event, held this year September 30 to October 3, chooses the year's Mrs. O by committee. The year Stoll was named, she says, she spent an entire day sharing her canning, baking and sewing, as well as talking with the judges. In the evening, she got dressed and went on stage. "It was amazing," she says. "When they said I was Mrs. Oktoberfest, there were big shouts from the balcony. The master of ceremonies said, 'Your sorority sisters are here.' All of them were actually sisters from St. Thomas More."

When asked what she would like to do as Mrs. O, she responded that she wanted to visit the schools. Stoll added that she wanted to

visit the nursing homes because she had been involved with them, too. "The next week, that's what we did."

### SERVICE AND CONNECTION

Stoll embodies the spirit of service that characterizes many of the ongoing Oktoberfest activities. A longtime active member of the Sunshine Committee, she sends out all the birthday and anniversary cards. If someone is sick, she sees that they're remembered, just like family. At 87 years old, she has 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. "I did lose a son in 1992," she says. "Our oldest son passed away. The Fest was behind you all the way. At the funeral, they were all there. That's how close our families are."

Even now Stoll delights in interacting with area residents who excitedly recognize her when she's out and about. "We were on a train trip out West a few years back—in Oregon. A lady looked at me and said, 'You're Mrs. Oktoberfest, aren't you?' She was from Westby!" Stoll laughs.

These days Stoll also enjoys time tending the petunias and other flowers she grows from seed and spends evenings with her husband, Wally, in the gazebo he built as one of his many woodworking projects. She never misses an opportunity to share the friendship and connection she's enjoyed through the years as part of her Oktoberfest endeavors. "Stay involved, and stay in touch with your people," she urges. "I have no regrets—not at all. We have found this town to be very friendly. That means a lot." **CRW**

*Elizabeth Tevis is a librarian based in Winona. She holds an MLS in literary nonfiction and is completing her master's degree in library science with UW-Madison and her book arts certificate through the Minnesota Center for Book Arts.*



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# Giving Cancer Patients Back a Piece of Themselves

Laura Leatherberry's halos infuse love into the treatment journey.

BY SHARI HEGLAND | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



**H**air is personal, especially for women. Yet one of the cruel realities for a woman undergoing treatment for cancer is that she may lose her hair to chemotherapy, just one more way in which she may seem to lose herself during one of the most arduous journeys of her life.

As Laura Leatherberry supported her sister, Amy Gabrielson of Chaseburg, through that journey in 2019, Gabrielson decided to take control of her hair. Leatherberry's years of experience as a professional stylist positioned her to enable that decision, and what she created has led to a ministry that has touched the lives of dozens of Coulee Region cancer patients.

"My sister wanted to cut her hair," Leatherberry says, rather than waiting for it to fall out, and they made it a family event as Leatherberry shaved her shoulder-length hair. As she gathered the hair into ponytails, still not quite certain what to do with it, her teenage



Laura Leatherberry,  
Three Halos Ministry

daughter and niece both asked to also have their hair cut to donate to what would become the first "halos."

Gabrielson was unable to tolerate synthetic wigs, but what Leatherberry crafted from her hair and that of the girls, stitched with cotton and Velcro on her home sewing machine, was a headband that could be worn under a scarf or hat.

While those first halos were personal, for her sister, Leatherberry says she was called to do more. "I was driving to my daughter's house, and on my way, God spoke to me and said, 'You need to share your idea,'" she says.

## THREE HALOS

A busy businesswoman with a family farm in Viola and a chair as an independent stylist at City Style Salon in Viroqua, Leatherberry nonetheless took that calling seriously and began to let it be known



that she would cut hair for donations to create hair pieces for more cancer patients. Three Halos was born.

In the last two years, she has crafted more than 50 halos, many combining patients' hair with hair from other donors—often family members. Donors range in age from as young as 3 to men and women in their 70s, with all of the donated hair cut by Leatherberry so she can check quality and be able to match it with other donations in the halos. Recipients have ranged from age 8 to over 70.

Leatherberry says the halos are better than wigs in many ways, not the least of which is cost—she provides them to cancer patients at no cost. Because they are real hair, rather than synthetic, they are less likely to cause irritation. And they are less heavy and heat-trapping—important especially for women facing treatment for cancers involving female hormones, who may experience uncomfortable hot flashes throughout their treatment. The halos can also be adjusted to accommodate changes in the body due to water retention or weight loss.

The halos are worn with a hat of some type, and Leatherberry has been joined in her efforts by partners who donate handmade knit hats and embroidered ball caps to accompany the halos.

Those partnerships, the generous donors who grow out their hair to be used to supplement patients' own, and the occasional cash donation for supplies have all seemed to just come together to enable Leatherberry to continue the ministry. Her connections with social workers in the oncology departments at both Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse send patients her way.

"I've seen so many different journeys. And I've had people tell me their whole story during that short time of donating," she says.

## BEING THEMSELVES AGAIN

Halo recipient Lori Lunney of Onalaska treasures the care she felt from Leatherberry when she had her hair cut for a halo in November 2020. "What stands out most in my mind is Laura's loving heart," Lunney says. "She took the time to give me a quality short haircut, even knowing my hair would be gone in a week or two. She paid attention to every detail. It's hard to describe the many feelings you have when you lose your hair—knowing I had my hair via the halo made it less formidable for me."

The process is inherently emotional. "When they come back and I put the halo on with the hat, there are a lot of tears," Leatherberry says. "I've given them back who they are. My joy comes from seeing them be themselves."

So, why Three Halos? "Three signifies my sister, my daughter and my niece who started the halo journey," she says. "The other reason, more important and significant, is that cancer patients live by three things: 'faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.' This ministry is just that: love."

CRW

*Shari Hegland of Holmen is editor of Coulee Region Women magazine.*

*Amy Gabrielson of Chaseburg models the halos her sister, Laura Leatherberry, made for her during her battle with breast cancer. Made from real hair, often donated by the patient themselves, Leatherberry's halos can be styled to wear under a variety of hats and provide a cooler, more comfortable alternative to synthetic wigs.*





**SWENSON  
NAMED WBA  
RISING STAR**

The La Crosse Area Builders Association is excited to announce that LABA member and past president Jody Swenson has been awarded the Wisconsin Builders Association Rising Star award. Swenson received this honor at the Celebration of Housing event in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, on July 14. Swenson is a construction escrow coordinator with Knight Barry Title United LLC in La Crosse. In addition to being LABA's president in 2020, Swenson has served LABA on several committees, including those organizing the Home Show and Parade of Homes. LABA is proud and thankful to have her as a member of this association.



**PEOPLE FIRST  
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Melissa Klein has recently become a managing partner of People First HR Solutions in La Crosse. Klein brings over 25 years' experience in a variety of leadership roles from Fortune 500 companies to her own small businesses. Serving as a leadership coach, corporate learning and development director, adjunct faculty and senior administrator, Klein specializes in developing strategic relationships with corporate partners and small business leaders. Coaching and mentoring within senior leadership and management teams are an integral part of her experience. A dynamic and engaging presenter, Klein has facilitated learning and development events across the United States. To learn more, go to [www.peoplefirsthrsolutions.com](http://www.peoplefirsthrsolutions.com).



**KERNOZEK  
NAMED MRS.  
OKTOBERFEST  
2021**

"All about community" is the theme for Ilene Kernozeck, who has been named 2021 Mrs. Oktoberfest. Kernozeck is a financial advisor at Stifel, one of the nation's leading full-service wealth management firms. She holds a Certified Trust and Fiduciary Advisor (CTFA) designation. Kernozeck has served on local boards including UW-La Crosse Foundation, La Crosse Symphony Orchestra and Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse. Her volunteer efforts include delivering Mobile Meals, serving as an FSPA Community Prayer Partner and leading Girl Scouts. She is also an active member of Downtown Rotary. Ilene is honored to be an ambassador for the Coulee Region in her role as Mrs. Oktoberfest.



**AKINS RECEIVES SPIRIT OF  
CARING AWARD**

Jenny Akins, of the financial services firm Edward Jones in Onalaska, recently received the firm's Spirit of Caring Award, designed to recognize financial advisors who exemplify the values, culture and spirit of giving back.

Akins is dedicated to giving back to her clients, community, other financial advisors, branch teams and their regional network. "Edward Jones is a partnership," says Akins. "We work together, help each other and all share in the rewards of working with long-term individual investors."

Edward Jones is a Fortune 500 company whose nearly 19,000 financial advisors serve more than 7 million clients with a total of \$1.6 trillion in assets under care. Visit [edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com). Member SIPC.

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**AMERIDOWN MOVES TO  
AIRPORT ROAD**

AmeriDown Factory Outlet, a destination for high-quality bedding, bath linens and accessories at outlet price points, has moved to a new location. Still on French Island, the store has relocated to 2929 Airport Road. Offering pillows and comforters produced in its La Crosse factory, plus a wide array of other bed and bath staples, AmeriDown is open seven days a week. For hours and more information, go to [www.ameridown.com](http://www.ameridown.com) or call 608-791-5876.

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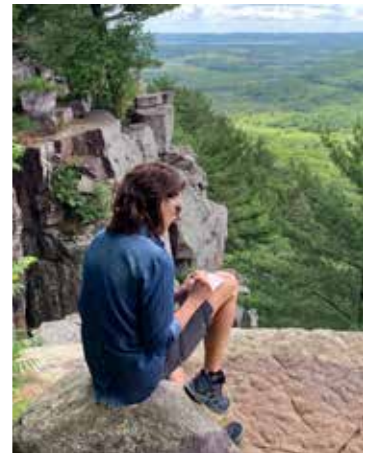
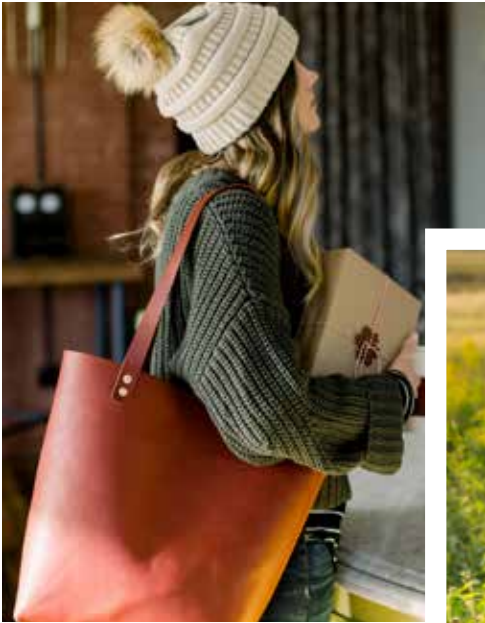
**PRACTICALLY POSH CELEBRATES  
NEW LOCATION**

Brenda Schaefer, owner of the home décor and gift shop Practically Posh, is delighted to open her store in a spacious new location in Onalaska. Having moved from its former location in Great Big Outlet in La Crosse to a storefront at 986 12th Avenue South, near the Crossing Meadows shopping area, Practically Posh is open for business and gearing up for its popular Holiday Open House held the first weekend in November. For a sneak peek at the shop's wares, store hours and more, go to [www.practicallyposh.com](http://www.practicallyposh.com) or find Practically Posh on Facebook.

Accomplishments is a paid section featuring your business or organization. Call 608-783-5395 or e-mail [info@crwmagazine.com](mailto:info@crwmagazine.com) for more information.

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# Serene Spaces

Create a space that soothes your soul in any room of your home.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN | PHOTOS BY DIANE RAAUM PHOTO

There's no place like home—especially when it contains a room, nook or patio that's beautiful and comforting. Let **J Company** in La Crosse and **International Furniture** on French Island inspire your own space.



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## *Somewhere in Time*

Mackinac Island delights with its slow-paced sense of nostalgia.

BY CHRISTINE HALL | PHOTOS BY CAROL SCHANK



No cars are allowed on Mackinac Island. You'll explore its charms—like the Grand Hotel and beautiful views of multiple Great Lakes—by bike, foot or horse-drawn carriage.

The year was 1980, and I was a senior in high school. I had just watched a movie called *Somewhere in Time* starring Jane Seymour and Christopher Reeve, and I was smitten with the idea of time travel, romance and an island in Lake Huron where a horse-drawn carriage would take my love and me on rides along the lakeshore where breaking waves were the foreground for glorious sunsets. I was sure that someday I would experience this same scenario if I somehow got to Mackinac Island.

Well, high school graduation came, followed by college, marriage, kids and career, and while I am an avid traveler, Mackinac Island is one place I have yet to explore. One of my dearest friends made regular pilgrimages to Mackinac, repeatedly telling me, “You would just love it there—horses, shops, the scenery, the people—it’s just amazing!” If there’s one thing the past year and a half has allowed me to do, it’s research travel and this is what I’ve discovered about Mackinac Island.

Getting there is not that difficult, but you won’t be driving your

vehicle directly to the island. No cars allowed! The only motorized vehicles allowed on the island are one firetruck, one police car and one ambulance, used only for emergencies. Even garbage pickup is done by horse-drawn carriage.

### GETTING THERE AND GETTING AROUND

A ferry is the most common way onto the island, departing from Mackinaw City or St. Ignace, Michigan. There are ample places to park your car at the ferry docks for a fee. A few different ferries run numerous times a day from mid-April to around the first of November. If you want to spend the money, you could go by air, as Mackinac Island does have a small airport for propeller planes and small jets. In the wintertime, this is the only way to get there. You can also take a private boat.

The population of Mackinac Island is a little over 1,000 people, but in the summer, it swells to thousands. Tourists come from all over



the world to enjoy the unique attributes of this scenic place. Carol Schank of Onalaska is one of those who visited this summer. Her group took one of the horse-drawn carriage tours around the island, and she says it was incredible, not just for the sites they saw, but for the interaction that the carriage masters have with their horses. Always talking to their horses—in this case their names were Clifford, Reese and Sharon—the carriage masters treat their horses as more than working horses; they are a dynamic part of the tour.

Bikes are also available for rent, or you can bring your own to get around the island. The many carriages take the place of taxis. Or you walk. At less than 4 square miles, the island is relatively conducive to walking.

## WHAT TO SEE

Schank says one of the highlights of the island was the Original Mackinac Island Butterfly House, which is the first of its kind in Michigan and the third oldest live butterfly exhibit in the United States. It is 1,800 square feet of tropical gardens full of butterflies from four continents. “It was thrilling to have hundreds of butterflies soar around you, and some would even land on you,” Schank says.

Schank’s group also toured Fort Mackinac, now a Michigan state park. The fort was founded during the American Revolution, built by the British. The Americans took control of it in 1796. In July 1812, in the first land engagement of the War of 1812, the British captured the fort. Then, in a bloody battle in 1814, the Americans tried to take it back, but failed. It was, however, returned to the United States after the war. While Schank was there, they were able to observe a cannon-firing demonstration and learned that the cannonballs weigh 6 pounds each and could be shot up to 1 mile away. The thrilling live history presentation brought to life the history of the island.

## THE GRAND HOTEL

Of course, no visit to Mackinac Island is complete without a visit to the Grand Hotel, where most of the movie *Somewhere in Time* was

filmed. “The Grand Hotel is truly *grand!*” Schank says.

Built in 1887, the hotel pours out old-world charm at every approach. Its white stairs and verandas, afternoon teas and 388 rooms make you feel as though you truly are stepping back in time to a more relaxed and traditional period. So popular was the movie *Somewhere in Time* that the hotel offers a yearly weekend theme package featuring the movie. This year, the event takes place October 29 to 31, and rates start at \$1,284 for a couple. This includes breakfast, dinner, a screening of the film, appearances by cast and crew, a discussion of the movie production and a costume cocktail reception. Considered one of the most popular special events of the year, the hotel says it is the perfect time for movie lovers to learn cinematic secrets of the movie and visit with many people who played a role in the timeless romantic classic. Actress Jane Seymour even visited in 2019.

## WHERE TO STAY

You can stay on the island at one of the numerous hotels or bed-and-breakfasts, but they are quite pricey, usually starting at \$400 a night. There are no chain hotels and no Airbnb rentals, but there are plenty of those available in nearby Mackinaw City or St. Ignace. Many people come to the island for the day from their hotel based on the mainland.

One thing Schank pointed out—and I’ve heard from others—is that a clear mistake to make with the locals is to pronounce their island “Mack-i-nack.” It’s pronounced “Mack-i-naw,” like there’s a W on the end. If you go, you can earn points with the locals by using the correct pronunciation.

Regardless of the name, however, this island is a treasure locked somewhere in time, just waiting to be discovered. **CRW**

*After hearing about Schank’s adventures and years of her friend’s trips to Mackinac Island, Chris Hall is ready to pack her sketchbook and walking shoes and get on the ferry. Clifford, Reese and Sharon, can she get a lift on your carriage?*

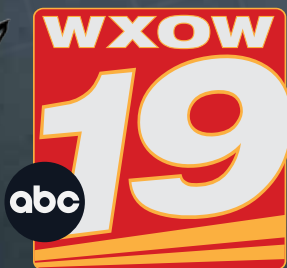


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# Community Calendar

## ONGOING EVENTS

**American Association of University Women (AAUW)** 2nd Sat. of each month (Sept.-May), 9:30 a.m., [aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com](mailto:aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com), [aauw-wi.org](http://aauw-wi.org).

**Cameron Park Farmers Market**, May-Nov., 4 p.m.-dusk Fri., 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Sat., Cameron Park, La Crosse, [www.cameronparkmarket.org](http://www.cameronparkmarket.org).

**Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW)** 4th Tues. of each month, [www.crpwomen.org](http://www.crpwomen.org).

**Coulee Region Toastmasters Club** 1st and 3rd Mon. of each month, noon-1 p.m., Goodwill, La Crosse.

**La Crosse Area Genealogical Society** 4th Tuesday of each month (Sept.-May), 6-7:30 p.m., La Crosse Public Library, [laresseags@gmail.com](mailto:laresseags@gmail.com).

**La Crosse Christian Women's Connection** 2nd Tues. of each month, 12-1:45 p.m., Cedar Creek Golf Club, Onalaska.

**La Crosse Rotary** every Thurs. noon-1 p.m., Radisson Center, [www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org](http://www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org).

**La Crosse Toastmasters Club** 2nd and 4th Tues. of each month, 7 p.m., La Crosse County Administrative Building, 212 6th St. N., Room 100, La Crosse, 411.toastmastersclubs.org.

**NAMI Support Groups** Please refer to [namilacrossecounty.org/support](http://namilacrossecounty.org/support) for information on the many programs offered.

**Onalaska Area Business Association** 2nd Tues. of each month, noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, oaba.info.

**Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary** every Wed. noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, Onalaska.

**Onalaska Rotary** every Mon. at 6 p.m., lower level of Blue Moon, Onalaska.

**Valley View Rotary**, every Wed., 7:30-8:30 a.m., La Crosse Famous Dave's, [www.valleyviewrotary.com](http://www.valleyviewrotary.com).

**Viroqua Toastmasters Club** 2nd and 4th Thurs. of each month, 7-8:30 p.m., Vernon Memorial Hospital, Taylor Conf. Rm., Lower Level, Viroqua.

**Women Empowering Women (WEW)**, last Wed. of each month, Schmidy's, noon-1 p.m., Shari Hopkins, 608-784-3904, [shopkins@couleebank.net](mailto:shopkins@couleebank.net).

**Women's Alliance of La Crosse (WAL)** 2nd Thurs. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant, Visit [www.womensalliancelacrosse.com](http://www.womensalliancelacrosse.com) for more information.

**Please contact each group to confirm meeting status and location.**

If your organization would like to be included in our Community Calendar, please contact us at [editor@crwmagazine.com](mailto:editor@crwmagazine.com) or call 608-783-5395.

## CALENDAR EVENTS

### OCTOBER

**Oct. 6-10**, Voices from the Past Cemetery Walk 2021, 6 p.m. Oct. 6 at Winona History Center; 12-5 p.m. Oct. 6-9 at Woodlawn Cemetery, [www.winonahistory.org](http://www.winonahistory.org).

**Oct. 7**, Meditation for Emotional Health (Zoom and in-person), 6:30-7:30 p.m., Franciscan Spirituality Center, preregistration required, [www.fscenter.org](http://www.fscenter.org).



**Oct. 8-24, Blithe Spirit**, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, Weber Center for Performing Arts, [www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org](http://www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org).

**Oct. 9**, Fall Fest, Downtown La Crosse, [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com).

**Oct. 9**, Virtual Civil War Immersion Weekend, Norskedalen, Coon Valley, [www.norskedalen.org](http://www.norskedalen.org).

**Oct. 9**, Sparta Half Marathon/5K, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Elroy Bike Trail, [www.spartahalfmarathon5k.com](http://www.spartahalfmarathon5k.com).

**Oct. 9**, Jeny Kochany Festival with Live@the Levee free concert, 12-9 p.m., Levee Park, Winona, [www.kcc2020.org/jeny-kochany-fest](http://www.kcc2020.org/jeny-kochany-fest).

**Oct. 12**, League of Women Voters October Virtual Lunch & Learn with Sheriff Jeff Wolf and Chief Shawn Kudron, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., register at [www.lwvlacrosse.org](http://www.lwvlacrosse.org).

**Oct. 13**, Women's Fund Virtual Fall Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., register at [www.womensfundlacrosse.org](http://www.womensfundlacrosse.org).

**Oct. 13**, Women's Alliance of La Crosse Fall Fundraiser, 5-7 pm, The Waterfront Cargill Room, register at [www.womensalliancelacrosse.com](http://www.womensalliancelacrosse.com).

**Oct. 15-17, 21-24**, *Severe Clear: September 11 from Memory to History*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun, Toland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.

**Oct. 16**, Winona Outdoor Collaborative Monthly Meet Up: Trail Running and Coffee 7:30-8:30 a.m., Holzinger Trail System, Winona, register at [www.winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com](http://www.winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com).

**Oct. 16**, The Return to Life Live Chamber Concert Featuring Ilya Yakushev, La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center, [www.lacrossesymphony.org](http://www.lacrossesymphony.org).

**Oct. 17**, Saturday Art Market, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Main Street Plaza, Riverside Park, La Crosse, [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com).

**Oct. 18**, Art as Prayer (Zoom and in-person), Franciscan Spirituality Center, 6-7:30 p.m., preregistration required, [www.fscenter.org](http://www.fscenter.org).

**Oct. 22**, Uptown Girls "Girls Night Out," 7:30-9:30 p.m., The Heider Center, [www.heidercenter.org](http://www.heidercenter.org).

**Oct. 22**, StarLite Drive-In Theater featuring *Field of Dreams*, Adult & Teen Challenge 2021 Fall Event, Dahl Auto Museum, 5 p.m., register at [www.atcwww.org/2021fallevent](http://www.atcwww.org/2021fallevent).

**Oct. 22-23**, Cameron Park Farmers Market, Fri. 4 p.m.-dusk, Sat. 8 a.m.-1 p.m., King and Fifth Streets, La Crosse, <http://www.cameronparkmarket.org>.

**Oct. 23**, Willy Porter, 7:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, [www.thepumphouse.org](http://www.thepumphouse.org).

**Oct. 28**, Family Trick or Treat, Norskedalen, 6-9 p.m., Coon Valley, [www.norskedalen.org](http://www.norskedalen.org).

**Oct. 29**, StarLite Drive-In Theater featuring *The Princess Bride*, Adult & Teen Challenge 2021 Fall Event, Dahl Auto Museum, 5 p.m., register at [www.atcwww.org/2021fallevent](http://www.atcwww.org/2021fallevent).

**Oct. 29-30**, Ghoulees in the Coulees, Norskedalen, 6-9 p.m., Coon Valley, [www.norskedalen.org](http://www.norskedalen.org).

**Oct. 30**, Downtown Trick-or-Treating, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Downtown La Crosse, [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com).

**Oct. 30**, Witches & Warlocks Wine Tour, 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Downtown La Crosse, [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com).

**Oct. 30**, Spooky Stories on a Dark Night, 7:30-9 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, [www.thepumphouse.org](http://www.thepumphouse.org).

### NOVEMBER

**Nov. 2**, Winona Outdoor Collaborative Monthly Meet Up: Hiking, 4-5:30 p.m., Great River Bluffs State Park, Winona, register at [www.winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com](http://www.winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com).

**Nov. 4**, Meditation for Emotional Health (Zoom and in-person), 6:30-7:30 p.m., Franciscan Spirituality Center, preregistration required, [www.fscenter.org](http://www.fscenter.org).

**Nov. 5-7**, Love/Sick, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun, Toland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.

**Nov. 12**, Storyhill, 7:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, [www.thepumphouse.org](http://www.thepumphouse.org).

**Nov. 12-14**, Holiday Open House, Downtown La Crosse, [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com).

**Nov. 13**, Heroic Journeys Live Chamber Concert Featuring Elissa Lee Koljonen, La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center, [www.lacrossesymphony.org](http://www.lacrossesymphony.org).

**Nov. 15**, Art as Prayer (Zoom and in-person), Franciscan Spirituality Center, 6-7:30 p.m., preregistration required, [www.fscenter.org](http://www.fscenter.org).

**Nov. 18-21**, Annual Holiday Fair, 12-8 p.m. Thurs.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Center, [www.lacrossecenter.com](http://www.lacrossecenter.com).



**Nov. 19-20, A Christmas Carol**, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 1:30 p.m. Sat.-Sun., Commonwealth Theatre, Lanesboro, MN, [www.commonwealththeatre.org](http://www.commonwealththeatre.org).

**Nov. 20**, Expert-led Owl Prowl, 4 p.m., International Owl Center, Houston, Minnesota, [www.internationalowlcenter.org](http://www.internationalowlcenter.org).

**Nov. 20**, ABBA FAB!, 7:30-9:30 p.m., The Heider Center, [www.heidercenter.org](http://www.heidercenter.org).

**Nov. 26-Dec. 11**, Kriskindlmarkt, 4-8 p.m. Fri., 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Sat., Sparta, [www.facebook.com/SpartaKriskindlmarkt](http://www.facebook.com/SpartaKriskindlmarkt).

**Nov. 26-Dec. 18**, *Who's Holiday*, 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., La Crosse Community Theatre, Weber Center for Performing Arts, [www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org](http://www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org).



**Nov. 26-Dec. 31, Rotary Holiday lights**, open daily 5-10 p.m., Riverside Park, La Crosse.

**Nov. 27**, Small Business Saturday, Downtown La Crosse, [www.downtownlacrosse.com](http://www.downtownlacrosse.com).

### DECEMBER

**Dec. 2**, Meditation for Emotional Health (Zoom and in-person), 6:30-7:30 p.m., Franciscan Spirituality Center, preregistration required, [www.fscenter.org](http://www.fscenter.org).

**Dec. 3**, Winona Outdoor Collaborative Monthly Meet Up: Curling, 4-8 p.m., Centerville Curling Club, Galesville, register at [www.winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com](http://www.winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com).



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