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What's  
on Your  
BUCKET LIST?

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**A year ago, a friend of mine** did something extremely bold. After decades in the publishing industry, with an illustrious position and a book imprint named after her, she left it all to do her own thing—whatever that was. When I called her to get the scoop, she told me she felt she could keep going through the motions of her career as she had been for years, or she could step away from it to focus instead on other goals—some large and amorphous, some small and very specific—before they got swept under the rug of routine. She wanted to travel more; she wanted to write another book. She wanted to take design classes; she wanted to spend more time in her flower garden. “If not now, when?” she said, and that one small phrase rang in my head for a long time.

“If not now, when?” How many of our goals become relegated to the “not now” pile—because of work, because of family, because of that very routine that is crucial to our survival yet by necessity holds our dreams at bay? I need to look no further than my family’s own summer bucket list—the camping trip we haven’t scheduled yet, the friends we haven’t called—to see how quickly time slips by when the day-to-day takes hold. Still, we can’t exactly leave the career that sustains us to cross an item off our bucket

list. We can’t ignore our family’s needs to “follow our heart.” And yet—what happens when we don’t honor our deepest goals and dreams?

It was in pondering these deep questions—and planning our “Bucket List” issue—that I realized I don’t really have a bucket list right now. I have a couple of those large, amorphous goals, but nothing really specific and doable. Swept along by routine for years, I haven’t dreamed the dreams to begin with. Keeping up with the day-to-day isn’t the same as reaching for a goal, bettering yourself and perhaps bettering the world while you’re at it. There, I thought, is the place to start.

The women in this issue of *Coulee Region Women* began a long time ago. They dreamed their dreams, then came up with specific goals—whether to bring dragon boating to the region, qualify for a marathon or start a business—and identified the steps necessary to achieve them. Then they set out to complete them, one by one, until they had an item crossed off their list.

Oftentimes, they didn’t do it alone. Lori Freit-Hammes was part of a team at Mayo Clinic Health System that pulled together to make the Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival the community event it is. Alice Holstein relied on the support of others to come back to health after mental illness, and now she offers a hand up to others in a similar struggle. La Crosse women celebrated in the upcoming Silent City event sought to make their city a better place and ended up going down in history. Whether it’s writing a book or running the Boston Marathon or even traveling the world, the women in this issue have crossed item after item off their bucket list—and others supported them in doing it.

What’s on your bucket list? If you don’t have one, I encourage you to join me in writing one. It’s one small step toward breaking out of the everyday to do something just for yourself, to have something to reach for, to have a higher self to aim for. You might think you’re too busy, or too depended upon, or that there just isn’t time for it all, or that, in the greater scheme of things, your hopes and dreams don’t matter that much. But truthfully, they do. More important, you matter enough to pursue them. And if not now, when?

*Betty*

# coulee region women

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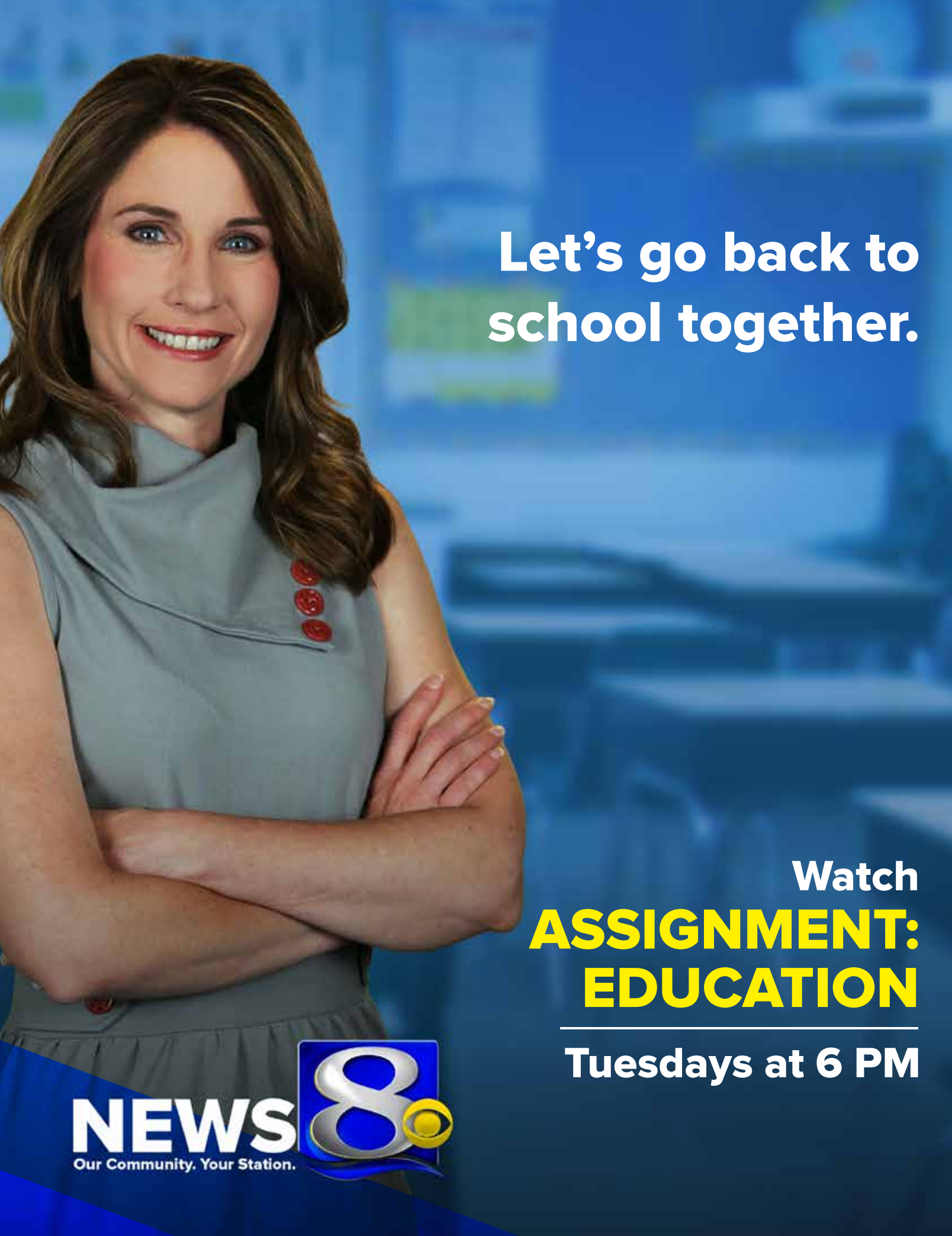
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## STEP OUT FOR BREAST CANCER

**The 11th annual** Steppin' Out in Pink breast cancer walk is Saturday, September 10, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Gundersen Health System's La Crosse Campus. Sport your pink attire and walk with a team, with friends, with family or by yourself to honor survivors and remember loved ones. All ages are welcome. There will be music, entertainment, kids' activities and shopping galore. A portion of all vendor sales will benefit Steppin' Out in Pink. You can earn prizes, too, by collecting pledges to support local breast cancer research.

Sign up before September 5, and the event fee is just \$20 for ages 12 and up; \$5 for ages 5-12; and free for ages 0-4; as of September 6, registration will be \$25 for ages 12 and up. Ages 5 and up will receive a T-shirt. Register online today at [www.steppinoutinpink.org](http://www.steppinoutinpink.org).

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## TURNING AWARENESS TO ALZHEIMER'S

**Almost everyone has been affected** by Alzheimer's disease in some way, and this fall you can step up to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's support, care and research by participating in the 2016 Walk to End Alzheimer's in La Crosse. Held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, the local Walk to End Alzheimer's will take place Saturday, September 17 at Myrick Park.

Walk to End Alzheimer's is more than a walk. It is an experience for over 500 participants in La Crosse, Arcadia and surrounding communities who will learn about Alzheimer's disease and how to get involved with this critical cause, from advocacy opportunities and clinical studies enrollment to support programs and services. Walk participants also honor those affected by Alzheimer's disease with the poignant Promise Garden ceremony.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, and the walk begins at 10 a.m. In addition to the 3-Mile and 1-Mile Walk, participants will enjoy team photos, music, food, beverages and a special tribute to those who are experiencing or have experienced Alzheimer's. Sign up today by going to the Alzheimer's Association website, [act.alz.org](http://act.alz.org), and following the links to the La Crosse event. Register as a team captain, team member or individual, and start raising funds and awareness.

Alzheimer's disease disproportionately affects more women than men; in fact, of the more than 5 million Americans living with the disease, almost two-thirds are women. Additionally, there are more than 15.9 million caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and other dementias in the United States. If you are one—or if you know someone who is—consider stepping up in support of this cause.



## WOMEN HEADLINE AT THE GREAT RIVER FOLK FESTIVAL

### This summer, La Crosse's 41st annual Great River Folk Festival

hosts another great lineup of folk bands and musicians for entertainment in Riverside Park, with a fantastic cast of women performers including Sarah Vos of Dead Horses, Kelley McRae, Sally Barris of the Waymores and Lindsay Lou & the Flatbellys (pictured above, clockwise from top left). They're joined by a number of talented local women, too, including Elisi Smith of Crooked Willow, Jessie McDonald of Pigtown Fling and Julie Patchouli. Whether singers, fiddlers, guitar players or banjo pickers, these women know how to reach the hearts and souls of music lovers from around the area.

The Great River Folk Festival opens in Riverside Park Friday, August 26, at 5:30 p.m. with an opening concert starring Paul Cebal with Patchouli at 7:30 p.m. The family-friendly festivities continue Saturday and Sunday beginning at 10 a.m. with a traditional arts and craft fair, craft demonstrations, children's activities, food from a wide variety of vendors, local beer and wine, music workshops, a songwriting concert and, of course, more performances. In particular, don't miss the lively children's area, featuring the Magic of Isaiah on Saturday, and concerts ranging throughout the evenings. In addition to the women headliners, you'll enjoy John Gorka, the Sawtooth Brothers and more. Concert times vary; for more information and to see a list of events, visit [www.greatriverfolkfest.org](http://www.greatriverfolkfest.org). Tickets are available for purchase on the Great River Folk Festival website. End your summer on a sweet note with the music of women and more at the Great River Folk Festival.

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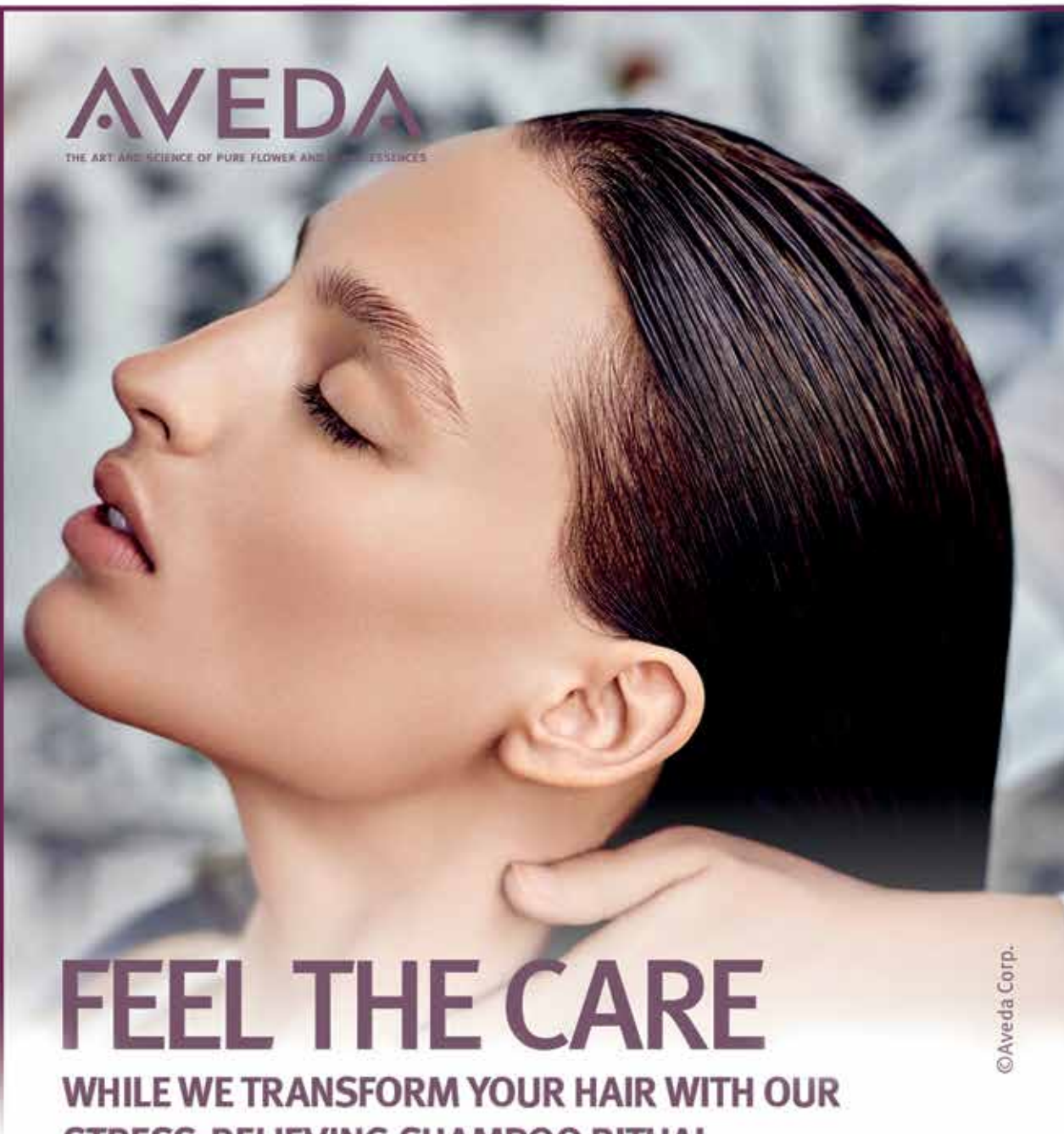
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## A DREAM OF

# DRAGONS

**Dragon boating has come to the Coulee Region with a spirit of determination, teamwork and support.**

BY LISA HEISE

Photos by Jordana Snyder Photography

**The Black River along Copeland Park** in La Crosse is full of movement in early summer: Pontoons lumber along, passed by speedboats and the occasional Jet Ski. Through and among them all, a long, thin watercraft—its fiberglass sides painted with rounded blue scales—slices the river's current. Amid the summertime leisure, over the sound of the Loggers baseball game nearby, the terse commands of the dragon boat coach, who is steering the boat, guides the craft and its occupants with a purpose much different from anyone else on the water.

Paddlers sit side by side, lined up in the shallow boat, paddles in their laps. Upon a call from their coach, the paddles rise until they are perpendicular to the water, poised above the surface like weapons. Another call from the lady at the rudder, and all 20 paddles dive into the river simultaneously. Although they represent every age and body type imaginable, the paddlers move as one. The boat surges forward as coach Lori Freit-Hammes shouts directions and steers the boat. The boathouse dwellers along the shore pause to watch. Some call out to the dragon boat. But Freit-Hammes, focused, continues to guide her paddlers along the snaking path of the dark water.

### An ancient sport made modern

Freit-Hammes has played an active role in building the culture of dragon boating in La Crosse with considerable tenacity and community support. What began as an initiative to support the Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare Center for Breast Care has evolved into a tradition that unites people across cultures and abilities.

As Director of Health Promotion at Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare, Freit-Hammes was on board with the dragon boating concept from the beginning. The idea was proposed at a steering committee meeting with the purpose of fundraising and creating tangible support for local breast cancer survivors. Shortly thereafter, Freit-Hammes was on a plane to attend her first dragon boat camp. "The first time I sat in that boat, I got hooked," she says. "My desire to be part of a team again was reignited." She was amazed to look around the first boat she paddled at that camp and see that her mates ranged in age from 20 to 76. "Everyone was just there to support one another, no judgment."

### Here come the dragons

Freit-Hammes says she came back to La Crosse "fired up," determined to put together a plan to bring dragon boating to the Coulee Region. The challenges were daunting, to say the least: They had no boats, and local lakes and rivers were still iced over. Missing two of the major ingredients necessary for dragon boat training, Freit-Hammes and others forged ahead nevertheless. Freit-Hammes gathered a group of interested participants at a local hotel swimming pool. She found old paddles and modified them to resemble dragon boat paddles; then, she lined everyone up around the perimeter of the pool and taught them the dragon boat stroke.

From those humble beginnings, the momentum built. That very same year, in 2013, La Crosse hosted its first dragon boat race, attaching the event to La Crosse's annual Riverfest. Carole Gibb, an



*Coulee Region Paddlers is a local team that developed because of the Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival. Many of its current team members paddled together that very first year, having bonded in the boat and outside of the boat. The team has since added new paddlers and expanded their numbers even more. Team founder Lori Freit-Hammes paddles from her spot in the front row (second from right, above).*

early participant in the local dragon boating initiative, says of Freit-Hammes: “She’s one of the most amazing, energetic, focused women I know, to (help) create a wonderfully successful event in that first year.”

Gibb has her own stories of perseverance, having endured a shoulder surgery, a heart procedure and the loss of her job in the years since she joined the dragon boat movement. Through it all, Gibb’s dragon boat teammates have offered comfort and encouragement. Says Gibb of her experiences with her team: “It’s important as a woman to have a group of women that support you.” She’s passing that tradition on as she mentors a youth team in dragon boating.

## Paddling toward higher goals

In the years since its humble beginning, dragon boating has grown in La Crosse. Each year, more paddlers have attended the dragon boat training camp in Florida. The Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival has become a signature event in the community with scores of teams participating—some made up of breast cancer survivors, some corporate, some competitive, others recreational. A youth division has also sprung up. The 2016 festival took place July 15-16 on the Black River at Copeland Park and will continue each year on the third weekend in July.

Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare has invested in four dragon boats for community use. Their goal is to have all four boats on the river throughout the seasons. Freit-Hammes currently coaches the Coulee Region Paddlers, a dragon boating team that practices on the Black River twice a week throughout the spring, summer and fall. The team has competed regionally in races in Madison; Dubuque, Iowa; and Superior, Wisconsin, and is working toward some national competitions. Some of the women, including Gibb, have been encouraged to try out for national teams that compete internationally.

## Every person counts

A longtime fitness instructor, Freit-Hammes has a commitment to physical wellness. The results she sees from participation in dragon boating, however, far transcend fitness. “When I coach, I’ll have the entire team paddle, then have just one person stop,” says Freit-Hammes. She then points out the speed of the boat. “We add the teammate back in and notice how the boat picks up power. Every person in that boat is important in so many different ways, not just in making the boat go faster,” Freit-Hammes observes, “but in spirit and friendship.”

When they consider the future of dragon boating, Freit-Hammes and Gibb have a similar hope: growth. Both women, having experienced a unity in the dragon boat unlike any other, want others to experience the same. Maintaining participation can be expensive, and they invite sponsorship and support on many levels. To get involved as a paddler or as a sponsor, send an email with your questions to [couleeregionpaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:couleeregionpaddlers@gmail.com) or find Coulee Region Paddlers on Facebook. Also important to note is that this sport is not only for women. While some events are female-only, men also participate in Coulee Region Paddlers.

As the dragon boat steers toward the shore, cheering in the distance signals a great play made by the home team at Copeland Park. The paddlers smile. In Chinese mythology, the dragon symbolizes strength, power and control over the water. Tonight, once again, they have conquered the river. crw

*Lisa Heise is a La Crosse-based freelance writer who has stood beside loved ones fighting breast cancer and who knows the power of a team united in purpose.*

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# the POWER of COLLABORATION

## Community Credit Union brings VERVE to area members.

In today's fast-paced, digital world, local businesses are faced with ever-changing technology, industry regulations, and sophisticated consumer expectations, all of which play a role in whether or not a business can survive. In September 2015, local area Community Credit Union broke from the trend of merging to survive, instead turning to collaboration as a way of thriving. By blending its culture and resources with Verve, a Credit Union, in a bold, collaborative partnership, the credit union has ensured it will have the resources it needs to grow and evolve to stay relevant for years to come.

What exactly does this mean for Coulee Region members? In addition to a new name and brand, members can expect ramped up community involvement, powerful tech tools and top-notch products, to name a few.

"The actual definition of verve is vigor, spirit or enthusiasm," Chris Butler, Regional President of Verve, explained. "As the name of our credit union, it stands for all that we are: enthusiastic, energetic, strong and driven—characteristics we put to work every day on behalf of our members."

### The key to keeping pace? Cooperation.

The trend of small or midsize financials merging out of necessity has been a reality for many years now, as the total number of credit unions in the state continues to fall. Moving from already strong positions in their markets, Community and Verve aimed to

break this cycle by refocusing on the cooperative idea that working together creates a better situation for everyone.

According to Kevin J. Ralofsky, President and CEO of Verve, a shared commitment to cooperative principles like community and member participation motivated the collaboration.

"Community and Verve sought each other out as partners in order to develop new ways to benefit our communities," he explained. "United as Verve, we've been able to leverage increased scale to offer new, innovative products to members. The collaboration has also freed up resources for increased community engagement, helping the credit union find new relevance in the communities we serve."

### A win-win for career opportunities, too.

Many merging financials suffer job loss as they seek to consolidate in overlapping regions. Being located in separate parts of the state allowed Community and Verve to avoid elimination of local jobs and branches.

"Although our name has changed, Community's branch locations, hours and team members have remained the same through the transition to Verve," said Butler. "In fact, the merger has created even more opportunities for promotions and new hires," he added.

Butler himself, who was formerly President and CEO at Community Credit Union, has

taken on the role of Regional President and oversees activity in Verve's La Crosse-area communities. An Advisory Board has been created to be the voice of business within the Western region. Additionally, members of Community Credit Union's Board of Directors went on to serve on the larger Verve Board of Directors.

### Collaborating to turn goals into reality.

The collaboration between Community and Verve has brought many benefits to La Crosse-area members. The merger increased commercial lending capacity, brought in additional mortgage and member service technologies and created new products and services. The credit union's outreach efforts now supports over 290 organizations throughout Wisconsin each year, a number that will continue to grow in the years to come.

Internally, the credit union gained greater marketing and digital expertise as well as additional legal, compliance and information technology resources. And, based on its regional structure and sound governance model, Verve is positioned well for growth, both organically and through branch expansion.

By working together with the goal of giving back more, these two credit unions have been able to evolve, meeting members' changing needs head-on and ensuring that they will play an active role in their communities for years to come.

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*Tammy Addleman leads a class of tap dance students at the YMCA-North.*

# Giving Everyone a Chance to Succeed

**The YMCA's Tammy Addleman helps people of all ages discover their dreams.**

BY JUDITH MUNSON  
Contributed photos

**Even kids have bucket lists.** All children want a chance to show their stuff, but not everyone is a straight-A student. And maybe team sports just aren't their thing. One place that lets young people discover their inner talents is the La Crosse Area Family YMCA.



*Tammy Addleman, Arts and Humanities Director at the YMCA*

Tammy Addleman, as Arts and Humanities Director, has helped thousands of people—young and old—pencil off their bucket lists with the many programs she has developed throughout her 26 years with the Y. She is responsible for all of its dance, martial arts, music and other creative arts programs.

"There are so many choices here," begins Addleman. "There is truly something for everyone at every stage of life. Maybe they've always wanted to play an instrument or take a watercolor class but didn't have the time or place to do so."

In her work, Addleman has witnessed countless moments of "firsts." "It is really something to get to see someone step out on

that stage and perform for the first time," she says. Many people have a lifelong passion but have to wait nearly a lifetime to realize it, such as one woman who recently took one of her adult tap dance classes.

"She came up to me after a class and revealed this was on her bucket list—to learn how to tap dance!" says Addleman. "This was a woman nearing retirement, and she was just beaming. It absolutely made my day."

## Finding that one thing

For people at the other end of the age spectrum, Addleman—a tap dancer since she was little—knows how vital it is for them to find that one thing they excel at, they love and they have the opportunity to share with others.

"Kids come out of their shell when they take to something," she says. "I get to watch them develop from 3 to 4 years old all the way through high school. This is very special to me. It is a privilege to see people discover their strengths. It is the best part of my job."

Compared to a couple of generations ago, the activities available to kids seem without number. But the monthly budget breaks quickly when the amount of kid activities starts to grow along with them and their interests. The Y is especially known for making all of these outlets affordable and available for everyone.

"I have to give kudos to the instructors I have hired who work with the kids," says Addleman. "Many of them do this as a sideline to their regular job; because that activity has changed their life, they want to share it with others."

## Tapping to the top

When Addleman began her career at the YMCA in Holmen in 1991, it was located in a strip mall. "I answered an ad for a part-time group fitness instructor," she says. She soon shifted to full-time, developing all the fitness and dance programs. In 2006, the beautiful new YMCA North was built in Onalaska.

Participation in YMCA programs has grown to capacity in recent years, and an expansion to both the YMCA-La Crosse and YMCA-North facilities is in the final stages with new spaces now open. The Y also collaborates with local school districts and the Town of Holland in Holmen to provide satellite classes.

Life at the Y became a family affair for Addleman, which is fitting because it is, after all, the La Crosse Area Family YMCA. "My kids grew up here," she says. "My daughter has volunteered for many events, and my son has worked as a lifeguard."

The Y has helped fill Addleman's professional bucket as well. "I love tap dance, and it's been wonderful to work at an organization where I'm supported in both my dancing and professional development," she says. "My goal is to give back through mentoring others."

Addleman's personal bucket list contains an interesting combination: chickens and yoga.

"I really enjoy yoga, and I want to become an instructor someday," she begins. "For now, I'm working on becoming a proficient student. And this may sound odd, but I've always wanted to learn about raising chickens. I'd like to learn more about chickens and try sustainable farming on a small scale."

## Supporting others in success

If you visit either YMCA and enjoy a dance class, attempt a black belt in karate or take a painting or cooking class, Tammy Addleman helped make those opportunities happen. But it's the opportunity to help people that makes her day.

"The staff and members of the Y often form a bond that extends beyond class time," she says. "There are so many stories that have touched our lives. Two years ago, the mother of a couple girls in one of my dance classes was diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer. Their lives changed overnight. The Y family was here for them in every way possible.

"Everybody struggles with something, but the more one is surrounded by supportive people, (the more likely it is) they will succeed. That is the heart of Y work." 

*Judith Munson is a freelance journalist and memoir writer living in western Wisconsin.*



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## Improve Long-Term Health & Prevent Cancer for Your Children

by: Patrick Conway MD, Radiation Oncologist

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Most parents worry about how well they are raising their children. When my wife was six months pregnant with our first child, I exposed my own fears when I told her I didn't think I was ready to be a parent. Timing has never been a strength of mine.

All my years of medical training as a cancer physician have had minimal impact improving my role as a parent. However, one aspect of parenting that has been aided by my experience in cancer care is ensuring that our children are vaccinated for the Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

### WHAT IS HPV?

HPV is a commonly transmitted virus spread by both males and females through genital and oral contact. The Center for Disease Control estimates 79 million people are currently infected with HPV, and 14 million more become newly infected every year. Most people are unaware they were ever infected and have no long-term problems.

Because they're unaware of the presence of HPV, infected persons can unknowingly transmit the virus to others.

Although the majority of HPV infections are cleared by a person's own immune system, some strains will incorporate into the tissue and cells of the affected area and lead to the development of cancer.

### CERVICAL AND HEAD/NECK CANCERS

HPV has been shown to cause most types of cervical cancers. In the U.S. there are 13,000 new cases of cervical cancer diagnosed each year resulting in 4,000 deaths. Through the use of the HPV vaccine and early screening tools, like the Pap smear, the risk of pre-cancerous lesions and cervical cancer in women could be dramatically reduced.

There are 12,000 new cases of HPV related head and neck cancer in the U.S. per year. While there has been a decreased incidence of smoking related cancers of the head and neck region, cancer providers

worldwide are seeing an alarming increase in HPV-related head and neck cancers. The sites of these cancers are usually in the tonsil region or at the base of the tongue.

Treatment for these cancers of the head and neck can include surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. While these cancers are frequently cured, treatment can result in long-term alterations in the function of the mouth and throat.

Oral cancers have no prevention or screening tests. Currently, our only prevention strategy is use of the HPV vaccination to lower the risk of the development of a malignancy.

## ABOUT THE VACCINE

The HPV vaccination lowers the incidence of HPV-related infections, with the long-term goal of reducing the risk of HPV-related cancers for those individuals who've been vaccinated. Despite the fact a vaccine to prevent HPV has been around for 10 years, completion rates for the series of three vaccinations is a dismal 30 percent throughout the U.S. Even with low vaccination rates however, there has been a marked decrease in the incidence of the types of HPV strains contained in the vaccine.

Currently, the recommended vaccine is Gardasil 9, which protects against nine different strains of HPV. These include the strains that can cause genital warts and, more importantly, the strains that have a higher risk to cause cancer. The vaccine is recommended for boys and girls ages 11-12. Additionally, males and females can be vaccinated through age

26. The vaccine is given in three injections spaced several months apart. Side effects from the vaccine are temporary and can include pain at the injection site, low-grade fever, and headache. Refer to the CDC website, <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/vaccine.html>, for more information regarding HPV and use of the vaccine.

Please be an advocate for your children's future health and talk to your healthcare provider regarding the HPV vaccine. By working with your child's healthcare provider, the completion rates of the HPV vaccine can be markedly improved. More importantly, we can protect our children from the risk of cancer.

Dr. Conway is a Radiation Oncologist practicing at Gundersen Health System and the father of four children. For more information on the HPV virus and the vaccine, please call 608-785-9723 or email [bweigel@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:bweigel@lacrossecounty.org). This article supported by the Coulee Region Immunization Coalition. This publication also supported by the Cooperative Agreement Number: IP13-130101PPHF14, Increasing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Coverage Rates among Adolescents funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.

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# BACK FROM THE BRINK

Alice Holstein's resilience and persistence helped reframe her chronic mental illness and gives others hope.

BY SUSAN C. SCHUYLER  
Contributed photos



*Alice Holstein has turned her life around after struggling with mental illness and helps others to do so today through the mental health clinic of the La Crosse Department of Veterans Affairs.*

**Alice Holstein's steady gaze** and soft, measured voice are at odds with her horrifying narrative of bipolar mood disorder, the mental illness that shattered a third of her life. "I was paranoid, which made me get in my car and run, and then create terrible messes for myself," she says. "Really awful messes." She ended up without a car or money, sleeping in homeless shelters and lying to find refuge in battered-women shelters. "I was desperate," Holstein says.

Bipolar disorder, which affects 3 percent of the U.S. population, causes unusually extreme mood-swing cycles, characterized by euphoric highs, or mania, and severe depression at its low points, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website. Over 12 years, Holstein suffered 15 manic episodes, which lasted six weeks or more. Her spells of depression lasted longer.

When Holstein was in her 40s, the initial symptoms—energy surges and modest buying sprees—seemed like spiritual experiences. In 1995, a decade later, she became psychotic, and the doctors' prognosis was grim.

## Bouncing back

Suddenly, Holstein's eyes brighten along with the tone of her narrative. By 1998, she'd had enough. "I said, 'I'm not accepting this bleak prognosis. I'm going to be as well as I can be,'" she says.

## Building Resilience

The American Psychological Association offers the following tips to build resilience:

**Make connections.** Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

**Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.** You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to them.

**Accept that change is a part of living.** Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

**Move toward your goals.** Develop some realistic goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"

**Take decisive actions.** Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

**Look for opportunities for self-discovery.** People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss.

**Nurture a positive view of yourself.** Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

**Keep things in perspective.** Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.

**Maintain a hopeful outlook.** An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

**Take care of yourself.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

**Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful.** Some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.

Source: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>



Sheryl Gora-Bollom (left) and Melissa Hellwig, therapists and owners of The Therapy Place of La Crosse



Cindy Ericksen, therapist at HeartJourney, La Crosse

She then recounts an astonishing story of resilience with an unexpected, but welcome, happy ending.

Our skill in adapting to difficult, life-changing experiences like Holstein's can rewire our brains, according to one of Holstein's friends, Cindy Ericksen, who also is a licensed therapist at HeartJourney in La Crosse. The more we turn our minds toward the positive, the better our resilience. "It's like working out," Ericksen says.

Research suggests there are traits highly resilient people share. According to a 2014 study published in the journal *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, the personal attributes associated with resilience include "positive affect and optimism, cognitive flexibility, active coping (including religious coping), social support and intimacy, ability to regulate negative emotions and mastery."

### Looking out for No. 1

After stating her intention to be well, Holstein developed many of these characteristics. "I sought alternative healing methods and did everything I could think of, like support groups and self-healing methods," she says. She says the most effective strategies for managing her illness, which has been under control for more than a decade except for a 2011 setback, are routines like sleeping and eating well, exercising, taking her medications and being part of a strong community.

Holstein's practice of tending to self-care is essential in managing loss, although everyone does it differently, according to psychotherapists Sheryl Gora-Bollom and Melissa Hellwig, owners of The Therapy

Place of La Crosse. Hellwig says that "not comparing, not being too rigid, sitting in the distress and tending to self-care," are important guidelines for "holding yourself gently with self-compassion."

### Moving forward

Setting realistic and manageable goals also is important in adapting to life changes. "Goals are guideposts to help you know for sure if you're living your values," Gora-Bollom says. Hellwig adds that reviewing goals regularly and letting go of those that aren't working also is vital.

Completing goals comes naturally to Holstein. For example, in addition to her part-time job as peer support specialist in the mental health clinic of the La Crosse Department of Veterans Affairs, Holstein is completing the final year of a three-year program at the Franciscan Spirituality Center to become a spiritual director, although she prefers the more compassionate title "spiritual companion." Also, she is a thrice-published author who is beginning a fourth book, her "hybrid" memoir. "I'm thrilled to have this kind of challenge at age 73," she says.

Holstein is eager to share her recently launched website, [www.aliceholstein.net](http://www.aliceholstein.net). "I am thrilled at having put that up, which I had not imagined I would do," she says. The site offers information about mental illness and celebrates her professional and personal triumphs, which are remarkable reminders of what is possible—no matter the obstacle. (crw)

Susan C. Schuyler is a freelance writer who learned from writing this article never to take mental health for granted.

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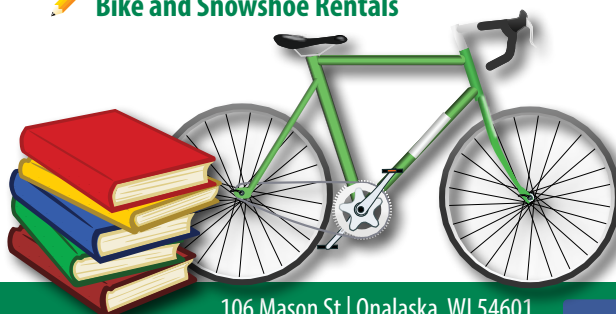
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# HOW MANY MILES TO BOSTON?

A marathon runner logs her journey to her highest goal.

BY LINDSEY CLARK  
Contributed photos



Lindsey Clark (second from right in middle row) enjoyed the support of her running group as she set out to achieve her goals.



Clark crossed an item off her bucket list by running the Boston Marathon.

**I have always considered myself** a runner. I loved to run when I was young, and I discovered competitive running when I went out for cross country at Central High School in La Crosse. I never really thought about running a marathon until after college, especially since a relentless knee injury left me unable to run consistently. I really missed the freedom of running and was determined to get back into it. Having gained about 50 pounds, I was also determined to get back in shape! I carved out time for early-morning P90X sessions, I regained the strength I needed to relieve a muscle imbalance and, in 2011, at the age of 27, I was able to start running regularly once again.

## Minneapolis

Once I started achieving my weight and running goals—including just being able to run again—I knew I needed a larger goal. I decided to train for a half marathon with plans for doing a full marathon. My first marathon was the Minneapolis Marathon in my new home city. I started training about four months before the race in June, which is

typical of a marathon-training season. After my first few 10-mile runs on the treadmill (not fun!), I decided to find some training partners and make friends who also prioritized running and living an active lifestyle. I joined the Calhoun Beach Running Club, and with their support, I ran my first marathon in 2012 with a time of 4:06:37.

## Duluth to Prague and back

After that, I was hooked, and I knew I could get my time below 4 hours. At my next marathon, I set my true bucket list goal: qualifying for the Boston Marathon. The qualifying time for my age group is under 3:35:00, which meant I would need to shave off more than a minute per mile.

At Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota, in 2013, I ran a 3:45:00. It was very painful, and I did not qualify. After that, I tried to qualify for Boston at each marathon I completed: Twin Cities (where I was injured), Prague, Czech Republic (again I was injured), Philadelphia (bonked at the end, meaning my legs "stopped working" due to running out of glycogen fuel stores from food) and



A grueling first run at Grandma's Marathon didn't qualify Clark for Boston, but it taught her not to give up.

Phoenix (again bonked). After that, I trained with a coach, worked out my injuries and learned a lot more about marathoning, including how to prevent the bonking with adequate fueling and building my endurance. I didn't give up, because I knew I could do it. In 2015, I qualified for the Boston Marathon with a time of 3:31:31 at Grandma's Marathon.

## Boston

The same year, I ran a marathon in Chicago with a time of 3:26:54, a time I never thought possible when I started running in 2011, and then went on to run the 2016 Boston Marathon. It was a tough day for me at Boston since it was hot and the hills are difficult, but I still ran with a respectable time.

One of the best things about this journey has been the friendships I've made. Without those friends, I wouldn't have had the motivation to keep my training so consistent. These are the friends who are so reliably up for meeting at 5:30 a.m. before work, or after work on a Friday when nobody else will. There is nothing like celebrating achieved goals with people who truly understand what it takes to get there. (crw)

*Lindsey Clark is a run club enthusiast who developed a great love for running with friends in Hixon Forest. She continues to enjoy the running community both on the road and on the trails in the Minneapolis area.*



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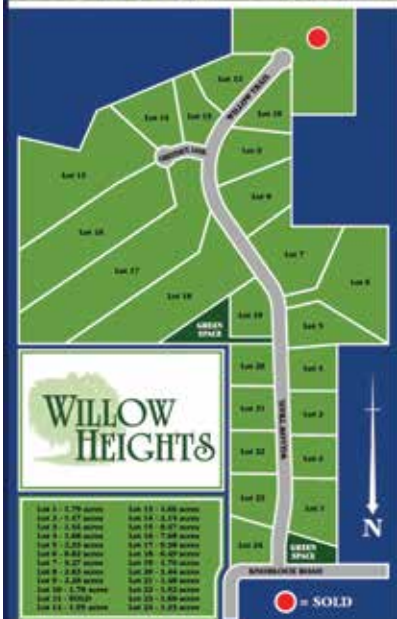
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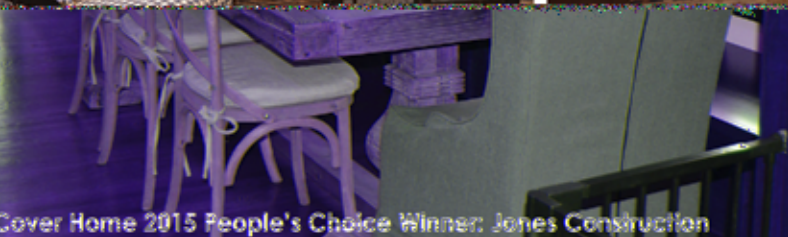
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608-781-5242      www.labaonline.com



## WELCOME



Paul Westlie  
Chair, Parade of Homes® Committee  
Hartland Construction, LLC

**A**re you thinking about buying or building your next home soon? Perhaps you are planning to do some improvements to your existing home. Are you overwhelmed with the decision-making process? Are you uncertain of where to start? Start by attending the 40th anniversary of the La Crosse Area Builders Association Parade of Homes!

One can gather only so many ideas online and in print. At the Parade of Homes, you get to see it all up close and in person. You can touch it and feel it and, most times, ask a professional about it in person.

The Parade of Homes immerses your mind in visions of what will fill your new space: the laughter in the halls, the conversations in the kitchen, the spilled juice and sticky fingers from backyard picnics (it happens).

Whether you are out gathering ideas, searching for a contractor or just taking a look at some of the latest home trends, the 2016 Parade of Homes is a must for you!

This year, we have 13 homes built by highly qualified La Crosse Area Builders Association members. This is your opportunity to soak it all in, take notice of all the details, meet the builders in person and cast your vote for the house that strikes you the most.

We thank all our past years' attendees and builders for making this annual event such a success. We also thank you in advance for making the 40th year another great success of showcasing the area's best in design, construction and remodeling. We hope that in every corner and in every room, you'll see the quality craftsmanship and cutting-edge ideas that make our members excellent.

See you there!

### Parade of Homes® Planbook, August 2016

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SCALE

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LA CROSSE

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## Parade Home Listings 2016

| NO | BUILDER                      | PHONE        | ADDRESS                          | EDITION           | BEDS | BATHS | SQ FT | PAGE |
|----|------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1  | Jon Olson Construction, Inc. | 608-781-5428 | W13807 River Dr., Ettrick        | NA                | 3    | 3     | 3140  | 7    |
| 2  | Jon Olson Construction, Inc. | 608-781-5428 | N8345 Duche Dr., Holmen          | Holland Estates   | 3    | 2     | 2000  | 8    |
| 3  | Fletcher Construction        | 608-781-5274 | N8341 Bringe Ct., Holmen         | Holland Estates   | 3    | 2     | 1750  | 9    |
| 4  | Lifetime Design Homes        | 608-386-0638 | N7277 Eagle Rd., Holmen          | Cottonwood        | 5    | 3.5   | 3331  | 11   |
| 5  | Sader Construction           | 608-769-4949 | 700 Knollwood Dr., Holmen        | NA                | 4    | 3.5   | 3500  | 12   |
| 6  | North Country Contractors    | 608-769-4663 | 1521 Bridger Dr., Holmen         | Cole Addition One | 3    | 2     | 1900  | 14   |
| 7  | Lautz Lassig Custom Builders | 608-792-0656 | N5785 Lake Park Dr., Onalaska    | NA                | 1    | 2.5   | 2000  | 15   |
| 8  | MasterCraft Homes            | 608-781-7200 | 1089 Fair Meadow Way, Onalaska   | Savannah Village  | 3    | 2.5   | 2676  | 17   |
| 9  | J. Preeshl Construction      | 608-792-0117 | 5245 Grandwood Pl. E., La Crosse | Oneotamesa        | 3    | 2.5   | 2450  | 19   |
| 10 | Lautz Lassig Custom Builders | 608-792-0656 | W3766 Highland Dr., La Crosse    | Ridgeview Estates | 1    | 2     | 2850  | 20   |
| 11 | T.N. Thompson Enterprises    | 608-792-8453 | 717 7th St. S., La Crosse        | NA                | 3    | 2.5   | 1800  | 23   |
| 12 | Western Technical College    | 608-785-9200 | 751 24th St. N., La Crosse       | NA                | 3    | 3     | 2597  | 25   |
| 13 | City of La Crosse            | 608-789-7393 | 1603 Prospect St., La Crosse     | NA                | 3    | 2     | 1568  | 26   |



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## JON OLSON CONSTRUCTION, INC.

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 3 • Square Footage: 3,140**

Enjoy the short, scenic country drive just north of Holmen to this unique home built to look like an 1800s-style farmhouse. You will be able to spot the low-maintenance red steel roof and white LP smart siding as you pull into the driveway, but then your attention is directed to the first of two stone chimneys and the large wraparound porch, where you can imagine the family enjoying many nights visiting with their friends. This home features cherry trim and cabinets throughout and granite countertops. The home features hardwood floors and two fireplaces. Family and friends will be able to enjoy the beautiful location without having to worry about any bugs with the screened porch. This home is Focus on Energy certified and features geothermal heating and cooling and LED lighting.



Jon Olson  
608-781-5428  
[www.jonolsonconstruction.com](http://www.jonolsonconstruction.com)  
[jolsonconstruction@centurytel.net](mailto:jolsonconstruction@centurytel.net)

W13807 River Drive  
Ettrick (located between Holmen  
and Galesville)



SINCE 1990



Jon Olson

608-781-5428

[www.jonolsonconstruction.com](http://www.jonolsonconstruction.com)

[jolsonconstruction@centurytel.net](mailto:jolsonconstruction@centurytel.net)

N8345 Ducke Drive

Holmen

Holland Estates

## JON OLSON CONSTRUCTION, INC.

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 2,000**

Built for the family in mind, this is a unique contemporary-style home with vaulted ceilings throughout. This custom-built open-concept home has 2,000 square feet finished on the main floor with a large cupola and windows in the center of the ceiling. There's a large covered patio to enjoy the cool summer nights and a party room off the garage with a vaulted cedar ceiling for more fun! Details include poplar trim, modern-style cabinetry and recycled glass countertops. This home is Focus on Energy certified and features LED lighting throughout.



SINCE 1990



## FLETCHER CONSTRUCTION, INC.

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 1,750**

This charming ranch features 1,750 square feet on the zero-entry main level with three bedrooms and two baths. There's also potential for a large family area, a bedroom and a full bath in the basement, to be finished as desired. A large laundry and mudroom are located right off the three-stall garage. You'll find hand-scraped ¾-inch birch flooring and 12-by-24-inch porcelain tile with stain resistant grout underfoot and beautiful three-panel oak black pepper doors with painted millwork. The layout features a large open-concept living, dining and kitchen area with a large one-level island. Focus on Energy certification with ICF basement for great efficiency is always standard. Please come see us at the LABA Parade of Homes with your questions.

Fletcher Construction is moving to the next generation with Ben taking the reins this past year with his wife, Abbey, as a full-time interior designer as of early August. We are also very happy to have BJ working with us for more than four years.



Ben Fletcher

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## LIFETIME DESIGN HOMES

**Bedrooms: 5 • Baths: 3.5 • Square Footage: 3,331**

This ranch plan features all the quality you have come to expect from Lifetime Design Homes. It flows beautifully with the kitchen, dining and living areas open, yet defined as separate spaces. The home has white trim and kitchen cabinets, dark poplar three-panel doors, stunning floor coverings and quartz countertops. The great room features a custom fireplace and a decorative ceiling beam separating the dining area. The first floor has three bedrooms and two-and-a-half baths, with the half bath located off the mudroom. The lower level features two additional bedrooms, a full bath, a large family room and an exercise room. WOW! This is a great plan for a young family or empty-nesters, as all bedrooms vary in size, so if you are looking for a toy room, craft room or office space upstairs, it will work perfectly for those transitions.

Thanks to Tim and Megan Hoehn for letting us showcase their beautiful home.



Ed Haupt

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## SADER CONSTRUCTION

**Bedrooms: 4 • Baths: 3.5 • Square Footage: 3,500**

This Craftsman-style home is another great design and floor plan by Rugroden Drafting and Design. It features a master suite with a large shower by the Marble Shop on the main level, as well as a large and spacious open-concept kitchen, dining and great room with a wood fireplace. Other main-level features include a mudroom with locker and desk area, laundry room and powder room. The lower level has three bedrooms, a "Jack and Jill" bathroom and a full bathroom. A spacious family room includes a wet bar. The mechanical room has storage and stairway to the large three-car garage. A unique feature of this home is the 15-by-35-foot bonus room above the garage. We would like to thank all our subcontractors for another quality and professional job. We give a special thank-you to Brooke and Steve for allowing us to share their home with you and for being great people to work with.

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## NORTH COUNTRY CONTRACTORS

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 1,900**

North Country Contractors' 2016 model home is a must-see; it features a three-bedroom, two-bath open floor plan with custom cabinetry and built-ins. The home has 1,900 square feet of finished space on the main level. The basement is a walkout with framing done for future finish.

LABA members used: Bagniefski Heating & Air Conditioning; Maxwell-White Plumbing, Inc.; Badger Corrugating Co.



## LAUTZ LASSIG CUSTOM BUILDERS

**Bedrooms: 1 • Baths: 2.5 • Square Footage: 2,000**

This cottage-style house presented by Lautz Lassig Custom Builders is an accumulation of 34 years of Paul (Stretch) Mendell and his wife, Brenda, putting ideas and repurposed materials into a house that they can grow old in, with everything that they need on one floor. The breezeway between the house and garage gives a great view of the front and back yards. Designing and building all the trim and cabinets himself, Stretch was able to use custom woods in different arches. The open concept and cathedral ceiling add to the character of the main area of the house. The wraparound front porch with an 18-foot-diameter octagon built into the corner of the deck makes a great area for relaxation in the shade. Using repurposed items in different areas of the house and landscaping added a personal touch for Stretch and Brenda's personal tastes. Don't miss the one-of-a-kind grandkid playhouse area.



**Lautz Lassig**  
Custom Builders, Inc.  
West Salem, WI

Kraig Lassig

608-792-0656

john@lautzcustombuilders.com

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## MASTERCRAFT HOMES

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2.5 • Square Footage: 2,676**

Take a step inside this gorgeous home designed and built by MasterCraft Homes, Inc., and let it spark your imagination for what your dream home could be. Upon entering, you'll find a Craftsman-style home with vaulted ceilings emphasized by long, dark beams. The kitchen displays rich, varied wood tones and opens into the living room, creating plenty of space for family and friends. The large deck and a master suite with walk-in closet and master bath complete the first floor. Lovely details like grass wallpaper lining the upstairs hallway and a custom-designed railing are examples of the attention to detail found in every square inch of this home, built to the customer's taste. The lower level consists of two more bedrooms, a full bath and lots of room for entertaining in a spacious family room. Nestled in the bluffs of Savannah Village, this home displays the creativity and specialized design touches MasterCraft Homes, Inc., has become known for!

LABA members used: Arcade Portables, LLC; Badger Corrugating; Bond Drywall; County Materials Corporation; Design Masonry, LLC; Hartland Construction, LLC; HillTopper Refuse & Recycling; Interior Designs, Inc.; La Crosse Fireplace Co.; Maxwell-White Plumbing, Inc.; MJG Excavating, Inc.; Overhead Door Company of the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.; Paul's Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.; Seymour Electric; Waldenberger Poured Walls, LLC; Wisconsin Building Supply.



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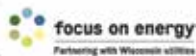


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## Your Vote Counts!

When you purchase a ticket to the annual Parade of Homes, you take on an important responsibility. One of the highest honors a LABA Builder Member can receive is to have his or her Parade entry named "People's Choice," and you have the power to make that happen.

Here's how to cast your vote for the "People's Choice"

Award:

- Purchase your Parade tickets in advance of Opening Day for just \$8, or at any Parade Home during the Parade for \$10.
- Visit as many of the Parade Homes as you like. Your ticket will be punched at each home you visit.
- When you are finished with your tour, indicate on your ticket which home was your favorite, then deposit the ticket in the box provided at each home for this purpose.

For additional information,  
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## J. PREESHL CONSTRUCTION

Your Design Build Contractor

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 2.5 • Square Footage: 2,450**

J. Preeshl Construction's Parade of Homes presentation is a 2,450-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath ranch-style home with many custom features. From the large front porch into the foyer and a great room are eight raised panel pillars by Jay Preeshl, arches to accent the entry into the great room and a study that features a unique seven-piece cornice molding. The gas fireplace has a marble and raised panel surround with custom details. The flooring is dark-stained solid oak. The open family room, dining room and kitchen have 11-foot ceilings. A large open kitchen with an impressive quartz island also has unique bulkheads. The master bedroom features a beautiful custom tile shower, soaking tub and double sink vanity. With the split bedroom plan, the two additional bedrooms are located on the other side of the great room. The hardwood floors continue into the bedrooms; a ceramic tile tub and shower is in the full bath. Tile floors continue into the half bath, hallways and expansive laundry room with many cabinets and great counter space. The paint detail and custom window coverings throughout are must-sees. The full basement provides storage, utilities, a future rec room and two future bedrooms and baths. The side entry three-car garage with epoxy flooring, stairs to the basement and zero entry into the home make these additional features a plus. The beautiful deck and large patio provide an excellent entertaining space.

**J. Preeshl**  
Construction

Jay Preeshl

608-792-0117

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5245 Grandwood Place East

La Crosse

Oneotamesa



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Kraig Lassig  
608-792-0656  
john@lautzcustombuilders.com

W3766 Highland Drive  
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## LAUTZ LASSIG CUSTOM BUILDERS

**Bedrooms: 1 • Baths: 2 • Square Footage: 2,850**

This modern Craftsman home features custom tile with inlays, double arched entryways inside, zero entry (no steps), 16-foot patio doors, tray ceilings, hand-scraped floors, a chef's kitchen, a butler pantry and a regular pantry. In the kitchen you'll find a brushed nickel farmer's sink, a 48-inch gas stove top, a double oven, quartz countertops and a butcher block island. The great details continue with two pop-up sewing machines in the laundry room, occupancy sensors for closet lights, remote-controlled window coverings, a walk-in shower with body jets, a 1,600-square-foot three-car garage and even an automatic dog water bowl.

Subcontractors include Ac/Doc's West Salem Appliance, Earley Drywall & Construction, Elite Electric Solutions, Interior Designs, Wisconsin Building Supply, Waldenberger Poured Walls, Hidden Valley Designs, Energy Elements, Green Built Insulation.

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## WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE (WTC) AND THE CITY OF LA CROSSE

**Bedrooms: 3 • Baths: 1 Full, 2 Half • Square Footage: 1,568**

Enjoy entertaining or prefer to spend your time leisurely? This charming 1,568-square-foot home has exceptional craftsmanship for all to appreciate. The home features a large front porch, custom-made cabinets, a prep island with a custom-crafted butcher block top, engineered hardwood floors, first-floor laundry, three bedrooms, one full bath, two half baths and a two-car attached garage. The basement has 784 square feet of space ready to be finished with stubbed plumbing to accommodate another full bath. This home will be sold to an income-qualified household earning 80 percent of the County Median Income or less.

The construction of this beautiful home demonstrates how the Replacement Housing Program contributes to fill the city's mission. The unique partnership between the City of La Crosse and Western Technical College provides educational opportunities to Western Technical College students while supporting economic growth by contracting with local suppliers and subcontractors. The end result is a safe and affordable home for those who desire to be a homeowner in the City of La Crosse.



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# BEST IN SHOW

Tour the 2015 Parade of Homes winner.

Contributed photos

**Located in the heart** of La Crosse, this beautiful 1916 home—remodeled, added to and featured in the 2015 La Crosse Area Builders Association Parade of Homes—proves that you can keep a classic feel while incorporating the newest technologies. Parade attendees were so impressed by the renovation of a historic home that they voted it the “People’s Choice Home.”

Contractor Phil Jones oversaw the project, which included a total “gut” of the interior while leaving the original exterior largely untouched. Interior work included new plumbing, new electrical, an HVAC system, spray foam insulation, drywall and finishes—essentially, everything needed to make an old house updated and energy efficient.

However, not everything that was taken out was thrown away. The beautiful entry, staircase, foyer and living room feature all-original floors, doors and woodwork—even the mantel and fireplace cabinets. Some pieces were removed and refinished off site; others remained in place and were refinished during construction. The original windows on the main level were all rebuilt and refinished to keep the classic features of this home. While other trim in the house is new, it was crafted to mimic the period and stay true to the home.

This home features the original 1916 look and build that first drew the homeowner to it, but it also incorporates modern technologies, from full home audio and security cameras to a complete Savant lighting system, which allows the homeowner to control the home from anywhere there is Internet access.

This home proves that everything old can be made new again—and that in doing so, you can enjoy the best of both worlds. (crw)

*A classic 1916 La Crosse home received a thorough update while retaining the charm of its original details—and received the 2015 Parade of Homes People’s Choice Award as a result.*



*Classic spaces are made modern with fresh design and furnishings. Yet the original woodwork is retained, preserving the home’s historic look. Even the windows are original—though rebuilt to keep up with modern standards.*



*Top left: This chic and user-friendly kitchen blends the best of old and new looks. Appliances are thoroughly modern, while brickwork and classic cabinetry lend a period feel.*

*Top right and right: Amazing features like this stone fireplace and surrounding built-ins were preserved and celebrated in this old-turned-new home.*

*Bottom: A courtyard in the heart of town provides opportunities for relaxing with privacy or entertaining guests.*



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# IT'S NOT ALL GREEK

Mediterranean influence is at the heart of St. Elias.

BY JULIE NELSON

Contributed photos



*At St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church, (from left) Terri Markos, Connie Mahairas and Olga Anderson are among the cooks who provide delicious treats from ethnicities as varied as Greek, Russian, Syrian/Lebanese, German and Bulgarian.*

**On La Crosse's North Side** is a small church you may have never before noticed. The outside of St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church is relatively common, yet the inside is truly remarkable. The individuals, their stories and their traditions have created a melting pot of people, cultures and food.

St. Elias is the only Orthodox church in the area, which means it connects people of Greek, Russian, Syrian/Lebanese, German and Bulgarian traditions, to name a few. The walls are decorated with a series of icons, or sacred images, depicting stories from the Bible. Most of the icons were drawn by Connie Mahairas, a church member of Greek descent and self-taught iconographer. Every Sunday, people who are drawn to the Orthodox belief system attend the worship service and take part in communion.

## A tradition of food

Communion in the Orthodox church involves fasting prior to the service, so when church is over, the people are hungry. "We started out having cookies or cake after the service," says church member Olga Anderson, "but we quickly realized this wasn't going to be enough. Many of our members come from an hour or more away, so they want a meal." With that, a tradition was born. Now each Sunday, a different family takes a turn preparing a complete lunch for everyone in church that day, usually 30 to 40 people.

"Every family tries to cook from their heritage," says Anderson, which makes both the eating and the cooking enjoyable. "It's wonderful to be able to prepare something that is not so common in America and have people try it and then like it so much they ask you to bring it again the next time."

Ethnic food is not a requirement for the St. Elias lunches. Mahairas, for example, often brings cold cuts for sandwiches or sometimes tuna salad when her Sunday rolls around. But it's equally likely she will bring baklava, wedding cakes or some other Greek pastry for dessert.

## Bringing flavor to the Coulee Region

Fortunately for the rest of us, St. Elias' ethnic food extends beyond the church walls and into the vacant lot next door. That's where the congregation holds its annual Mediterranean Festival, an important fundraising event for the church and a gastronomic treat for the community.

"A lot of the baked goods sell out fast," warns church member Terri Markos. "You'll want to get there early." The baked goods, including baklava, apricot-filled blinis and Zalaybee, a Syrian/Lebanese fried bread with cinnamon and sugar, are just the start of the festival. Markos' husband, Dick, makes yogurt from scratch. Yogurt making, she reports, is quite a process, involving heating ingredients to the right temperature, letting the mixture cool and adding a "secret

family ingredient.” The yogurt then spends an entire day marinating chicken that will be grilled to create a popular festival dish called Shish Tawook. Falafel, lamb, hummus and stuffed grape leaves round out the culinary experience, and ethnic dancing, Ukrainian egg making and other crafts are all part of the atmosphere. “If you appreciate authentic, ethnic food and ethnic culture, this is an opportunity to try a lot of things,” says Markos.

## Cooking for peace

Markos says the people who are part of their church and those who come to the festival are “very open to different languages and to different foods. I wish the world could be this way.”

The women say the benefits of the festival go well beyond the money it raises. “Cooking together really bonds people,” says Anderson. “There are a lot of laughs coming from our kitchen,” Mahairas adds.

“This is one of those churches where everyone gets along,” says Markos. “How special is that?”

For more information about St. Elias and its Mediterranean Festival, visit [www.stelias-lacrosse.org](http://www.stelias-lacrosse.org).



## BABA GHANOUJ

Terri Markos

- 1 medium eggplant
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- Salt to taste
- 3 T tahini (sesame seed paste; available at local grocery stores)
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 2 T water
- 2 T pine nuts (available at local grocery stores)
- 2 T parsley, chopped
- Optional: Pomegranate seeds

Pierce eggplant with a fork on all sides and broil with skin on, turning it frequently until it is soft throughout (10-15 minutes). Remove skin and mash the eggplant. In a small bowl, pound the garlic; then add tahini, lemon juice and water. Mix with eggplant and salt. Spread on a platter and garnish with pine nuts, parsley and pomegranate seeds if desired. Serve with pita bread, crackers and/or vegetables.

Note: Tahini, or sesame seed paste, is a staple of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cooking and has been used since ancient times. It was first mentioned as being cultivated in the region of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.



## RUSSIAN COLESLAW

Olga Anderson

- ½ cabbage (white, purple, or both)
- Salt to taste
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ½ red bell pepper
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 3 T dill weed, parsley or cilantro, chopped
- 4 T vegetable oil

Thinly slice cabbage; add salt and lemon juice and crush well with hands. Add peppers, onions, and herbs; drizzle with oil and mix well.

# RUSSIAN ROLLS

Olga Anderson

## Ingredients for the dough:

- Pinch of salt
- 2 sticks butter (softened)
- 2 T sugar
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 4 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder

## Ingredients for the filling:

Note: Amounts are approximate; you may need to tweak and experiment until you reach the right consistency. Enough honey or preserves need to be added to hold the ingredients together, but not too much; it should not be runny.

## Pecan filling:

- 8 oz. pecans or other nuts (finely chopped)
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- 2 T honey, or more as needed
- ½ cup brown sugar
- Optional: Softened raisins, chopped

## Apricot filling:

- 1 cup softened apricots, chopped
- Apricot preserves as needed (see note above)

Prepare raisins and apricots for filling by soaking them in hot water for 15 minutes, then patting them dry on a paper towel. Chop. Mix with other filling ingredients.

Prepare the dough by beating the butter with the sugar until creamy. Add the sour cream and 1 cup of flour. Add the baking powder to the rest of the flour; mix well and add to the sour cream mixture. You should get a soft dough that doesn't stick to your hands (you may add more flour as needed).

Divide the dough into 6 balls. Roll out each ball until it is 1/10 inch thick. Cut into triangles (like a pie). Put some filling on the wide side of each triangle and roll it up. Place rolls on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake rolls at 350°F about 15-20 minutes or until slightly golden. Cool on a rack and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Enjoy! 

*Writing this article reminded Julie Nelson that it's been a long time since she's had some good Greek food. She is the public relations coordinator at The Salvation Army.*



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Traditional sangria is a blend of red wine, fruit, sweetener and brandy. But today, any wine can become a sangria with a little bit of imagination! A light wine can create a white sangria. To extend your bottle, it can be diluted with lemon-lime soda or given a little more kick with brandy or pisco (a Peruvian white brandy).

Any fruit can be added; for a more citrus flavor, add oranges, lemons and limes. Mint, strawberries, apples, pears and pineapple plus a sweet white wine make a wonderful concoction.

The best part of sangria is that after the wine is consumed, everyone can share the saturated fruit for dessert! Happy summer!

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Alicia Leinberger's company, Ethos Green Power, offers solar installation to residents, such as Dr. Brian Woody, whose solar-paneled barn features a 5 kw system (top left), and businesses such as Bleu Mont Dairy near Blue Mounds, Wisconsin (top right).

# USING POWER FOR GOOD

Alicia Leinberger lives to serve others and enact positive change.

BY LEAH CALL

Photos by Allison Wheeler

**Viroqua resident and Ethos Green Power LLC** owner Alicia Leinberger is passionate about renewable energy and making a difference in the world. In fact, she has devoted her life to empowering people and improving life for others. Through her business and now as the first woman to run for the 96th assembly seat up for election in November, this ambitious Coulee Region woman hopes to make positive change in her community and her state.



Alicia Leinberger, owner of Ethos Green Power

"This campaign is an extension of the service I have been paying to society my whole life," she says. "Ever since I became an adult, I have felt that my role in society is to serve in whatever way I could."

After earning a degree in Conservation Biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Leinberger joined the Peace Corps and taught sustainable agriculture to coffee farmers in Central America. When she returned to the United States, she founded a fair trade coffee business in Madison.

That experience helped her understand the impact she could have on the world through business. "That's how I became an accidental businessperson," she says, "an activist businessperson who believes that how we choose to use our resources makes all the difference in the kind of world we live in and leave to our children."

## Entering the energy world

Leinberger first got involved in renewable energy in 2002 after forming a nonprofit in Madison dedicated to energy education. When she moved to Viroqua in 2013, she launched Ethos, offering

solar installation and creating a marketplace for green power.

"We can help anyone who wants to get renewable power into their home or business by building solar where it makes sense or (using) the simpler method of buying renewable energy from other producers," says Leinberger. "Both avenues directly impact growth of renewables."

To offset installation costs, Ethos helps to identify available tax credits and grants. The average return on investment with a solar installation is seven to 10 years. "If you don't do anything, you still have to pay for electricity for those 10 years. You are just giving the money to someone else," says Leinberger. "Once you decide to put in a system, you take that money that is going out the door and into someone else's pocket and put it back in your own pocket."

## Let's talk energy

Leinberger encourages people to stop by her office on Main Street in Viroqua or call and talk energy. "In terms of purchasing green power, anyone can do it anywhere; it is an inexpensive way to get renewable power," she notes. "Sign up on our website, and we will send monthly updates on how your money is making a difference in the world."

While she hopes to spend more time in Madison after the November election, Leinberger is at home in the Driftless Region. "We are wealthy beyond belief living here. We have fresh water, clean air, neighbors we care about and small businesses that are thriving. People understand the value of local and cooperative community. It is one of the most valuable things a human can have on the planet—access to express their values and rights along with a clean, healthy environment." *(crw)*

*Leah Call is a freelance writer in Westby. She appreciates Leinberger's commitment to renewable energy and efforts to improve the world around her.*



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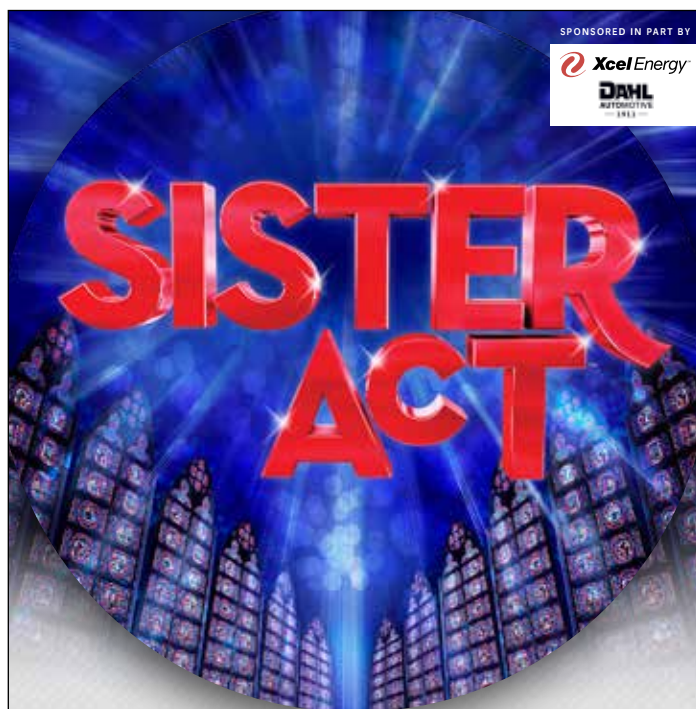


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for her patients and herself.

BY ELIZABETH D. LIPPMAN  
Contributed photo



**Dr. Amy Breidenbach dreamed** of becoming a chiropractor even as a 6-year-old girl. Today, as cofounder of Breidenbach Family and Sports Chiropractic, she has accomplished that and more. The business she and her husband, Ben, started now encompasses three clinics and an impressive array of specialties—and after 16 years in the profession, she says, at the end of the day her life still puts a smile on her face.

“There was never really any other career choice that I seriously considered,” she says. “As a child, I accompanied my mother when she was treated by our family’s chiropractor. He was very kind and always answered my curious questions. It became a vocation rather than simply a job.”

Breidenbach Family and Sports Chiropractic boasts offices in La Crosse and Onalaska and offers cutting-edge pediatric and maternity care, as well as treatment for scoliosis, massage therapy and more.

Chiropractic care focuses on noninvasive pain prevention and pain treatment by achieving proper alignment of the body’s musculoskeletal structure. Approximately 22 million Americans—from infants to the elderly—visit chiropractors annually. Patients

suffering from conditions such as back pain, neck pain, headaches, sports injuries and pregnancy discomfort have found relief.

## **Treating the whole person**

Breidenbach, who earned a B.S. in human biology and her Doctor of Chiropractic degree at South Dakota State University and Northwestern Health Sciences University, as well as a specialty certification in chiropractic pediatrics, credits her work and interactions with patients as vital sources of her own happiness and well-being.

“Family chiropractic care and wellness education are areas that drive me to continue to inspire and strive to provide the best care to my patients that I can,” she emphasizes.

Her sessions often address issues—such as nutritional counseling and lifestyle advice—that respect and treat the whole person, motivating patients to make healthy, life-changing choices.

Recalling a recent patient, she says, “This particular patient and I had a number of conversations during her appointments regarding other areas of her life that she wanted to make some changes to. After discussing and developing a strategy,” Breidenbach continues, “this patient was able

to significantly change her diet and lifestyle, reduce her pain and gain incredible, newly acquired self-confidence that has made a tremendous positive effect on her life. I have never seen her so happy. It was one of those experiences in practice that a health care provider will never forget.”

## **Being a whole person**

Not only has Breidenbach created a thriving business, but she and her husband enjoy a rich family life as well. “As my husband and I started our business and shortly thereafter our family, both began to grow and develop. It has been such a gift to have the opportunity to have both,” she says.

While she never seems to slow down or settle for the status quo, Breidenbach says her focus now is on continuing to provide the best possible care for her patients, empowering them on their journey toward health and wellness. And she does so with great enthusiasm.

“I look forward to each and every day and am grateful to be able to do what I love.” 

*Elizabeth Lippman is a freelance writer and editor in Winona, Minnesota.*

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# women

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## REMARKABLE WOMEN OF LA CROSSE

The Silent City series celebrates silent heroines this fall.

BY SUSAN T. HESSEL

Photos courtesy of La Crosse County Historical Society



**For much of time immemorial**, history has all but ignored women, despite their many accomplishments. That's why focusing on Remarkable Women of La Crosse—women whose highest goals included improving La Crosse—is both a challenge and an opportunity for the La Crosse Historical Society's 2016 Silent City reenactment in Oak Grove Cemetery.

"I'm not surprised there are so many remarkable women from La Crosse. I'm also not so surprised at how hard it is to research women's history," says curator Peggy Derrick. "Their accomplishments were not frequently recorded, especially in newspapers."

The idea to focus on women came from former board member Joe Kruse, who suggested it after the Silent City's Civil War theme during the war's sesquicentennial years.

Silent City, which this year will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, September 17, features actors portraying eight women connected with Oak Grove. They will tell their stories to groups coming on that day or through various school programs.

### Meet the women of Silent City

Some of the women featured came quickly to mind, including Fredericka Augusta Levy, Leona Forester Linker and Johanna Heileman.

"Fredericka Levy is one of my favorite historical figures, male or female, in La Crosse," Derrick says. "She and her husband, John, came to make a living, but they also came to build a life and stay here. Many early traders moved west as the Indians were removed. Fredericka and John stayed here and helped build community, assisted other new settlers and offered hospitality in their home. Records show they had surprisingly good relationships with Native Americans."

Leona Linker was a dressmaker who created an all-in-one undergarment worn under a corset that was sold across the country

*Top left: Leona Linker, inventor of the "all-in-one." Top middle: Johanna Heileman, one of the first female CEOs in Wisconsin. Top right: Actress Diane Breese as actress Laura Keane, Silent City 2015. Bottom left: Actors Jim and Lauri Parlow as Albert and Cordelia Pettibone, Silent City 2014. Bottom right: Actress Susan Hessel as Mrs. Nannie Colwell Dorset, widow of former La Crosse mayor Captain Dorset, Silent City 2011.*

and even the world. Linker was featured in {art}ifact, a collaborative project that included artist interpretations of objects made in La Crosse.

Johanna Heileman, widow of Gottlieb Heileman, became one of the first female CEOs in Wisconsin. Not only was she an important figure for her work, but featuring her is an opportunity to tell about the German immigrant experience, which has not been as well documented, perhaps because of the two world wars involving Germany.

"She was working class, even though she ran a business and was fairly well-to-do," Derrick says. "She didn't differentiate between work and family."

The team of researchers—all women—identified other remarkable women as well, including Mary Markos and Dr. Abigail Adams. In addition, Derrick says, there is "a hilarious story about Grace Van Steenwyk that I will not give away."

## Women focusing on women

In addition to Laura Godden from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Special Collections and Anita Doering from La Crosse Public Library Archives, other volunteers researched women and wrote scripts. Among them were several former La Crosse Historical Society interns.

All the women who worked on the project "turned out to be remarkable La Crosse women," says Derrick. "There was a lot of excitement about focusing on women. The beauty of all this is that I have other people's research and knowledge."

Local actress Diane Breaser, who is organizing the portrayals, is pleased to be part of this project as well. "Instead of hearing the usual history from the male perspective, visitors will hear from women who will talk about their experiences about how they lived. Guests

may be surprised by how much strength these women had and their important but often unrecognized roles in La Crosse history."

## The Silent City speaks

Trish Grathen, Oak Grove's executive director, said the Silent City "is a way for us to share the historic relevance of the cemetery with the community."

Since its founding in 1852, more than 30,000 people have been buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. "We have a lot of the founding fathers—and mothers—of the community buried here," Grathen says.

"It's enjoyable for people to know more about the history of La Crosse and (for us) to showcase the history of people who are buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. It's great that the Silent City this year is focusing on the Remarkable Women of the La Crosse area. We do have many remarkable women."

Other remarkable women being featured are Dr. Mary Elizabeth Parker Finney Lottridge, Pastor Nellie Opdale Mann and Grace Pettingill Hogan Van Steenwyk.

Derrick loves the Silent City, which has grown to be a success because of volunteers like George Italiano, who was instrumental in creating it 17 years ago and is involved in its operations each year.

Derrick sees history as happening in concentric circles—personal, family, local, state, national and even world history. "Local history links to bigger stories in history and also connects us strongly to place," she says. "Local history gives you a sense of belonging." *(crw)*

*Susan T. Hessel is a writer, personal historian and past board member of the La Crosse County Historical Society. She is thrilled to find many remarkable women in La Crosse, past and present.*



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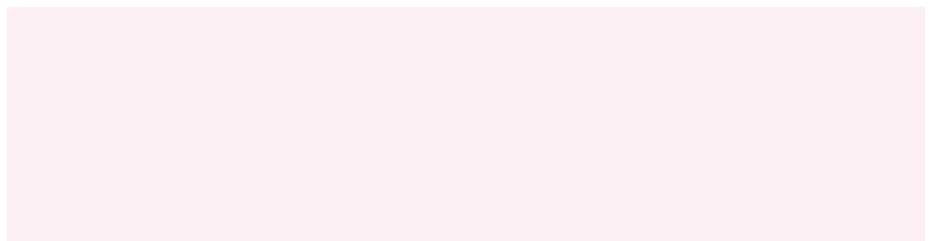
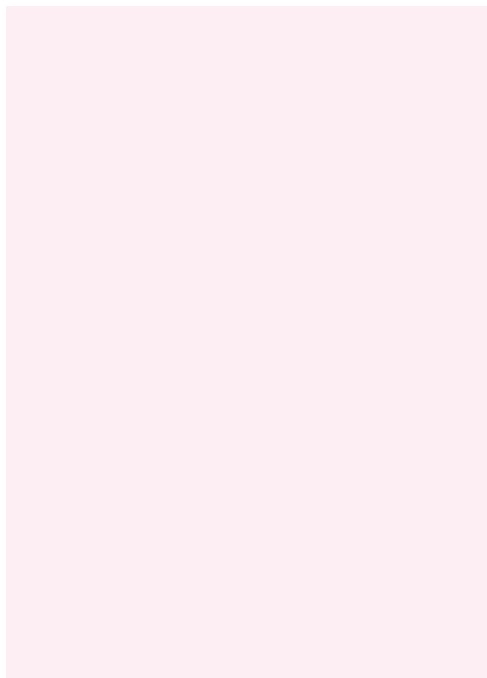
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Traditional naturopath, Patti Bartsch, PhD, of Naturally Unbridled Wellness LLC, has opened a Holistic Therapies Center to offer acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, massage, foot zone, Reiki and quantum biofeedback in a spa-like environment. Bartsch has been supporting clients in naturally achieving their wellness goals with homeopathy, herbal remedies and nutrition in Onalaska since 2011. The NUW Holistic Therapies Center is located at the corner of Sand Lake Road and Riders Club Road in Onalaska, just a few lots down from the company's main office. Learn more about the team of seven practitioners and the services offered at [www.naturallyunbridled.com](http://www.naturallyunbridled.com).

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to join the YWCA for YWCA Is On a Mission: Celebrating Allies on Wednesday, August 17, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at The Freighthouse Restaurant. YWCA La Crosse serves and advocates for some of the most vulnerable women, children and families in our community. This work could not be done without amazing allies. Join us for this inspirational evening where we share our mission and honor our valued ally, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Admission is \$10 at the door or by email at [info@ywcax.org](mailto:info@ywcax.org). The evening will include appetizers and cash bar.



# Women Who Write

Here's how three local women became published authors.

BY ANASTASIA PENCHI

Contributed photos



Heidi Griminger Blanke, author of *Redesigning Love*.



Fran Rybarik, author of *Travels with David*.



Andrea Culletto, author of *Lessons My Mustache Taught Me*.

**Publishing a book** can come about because writing is an “itch that needs to be scratched,” because you have stories to tell or because it’s on your bucket list. At least, that’s the case for three Coulee Region authors who are members of the group Women Writers Ink.

## Life lessons

Andrea Culletto was living in Sparta (recently relocated to Washington) when she self-published a book of essays, *Lessons My Mustache Taught Me*. She describes it as a “series of humorous and often poignant essays on life, motherhood and travel.”

Culletto has been connected to books since childhood and says she didn’t start out wanting to write a book, but writing was “an itch that needed to be scratched.”

“In the beginning, writing was a way for me to find humor, sanity and meaning in the often-difficult early years of young motherhood,”

she says. “Then, once I had written a decent amount of material, I was struck by the desire to create something more concrete.”

*Lessons My Mustache Taught Me* is available at [www.andreaculletto.wordpress.com/books](http://www.andreaculletto.wordpress.com/books) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

## A journey of healing

Fran Rybarik, a retired nurse/health educator from La Crescent, Minnesota, started writing essays in 2004 but didn’t have plans to publish a book until after her husband, David, died. Her sons started

taking his ashes to places they had been, and then on new adventures.

"The stories that went with each adventure were amazing, and I began recording them just so we wouldn't forget all the places David was going," Rybarik says. "I was told numerous times that I needed to compile the stories in a book, that these stories, along with my own journey of healing, could help others who were grieving."

*Travels with David* was self-published through CreateSpace to mark the 10th anniversary of David's death last year, and it is available in Kindle and paper format at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse.

## Romantic notions

Heidi Griminger Blanke of La Crosse said publishing a book was always on her bucket list. She started writing books over the years but didn't get one done until being inspired by romance novels she read during visits to her in-laws'. At one point, she thought, "If this author can get published, then I can, too."

*Redesigning Love* was published by Liquid Silver Publishing this year. In order to finish it, Griminger Blanke gave herself deadlines and changed the book from first to third person at the publisher's request. It's available in electronic format under her pen name, Lisa Gabrielle, at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) and [www.liquidsilverpublishing.com](http://www.liquidsilverpublishing.com).

## A circle of support

All three said joining a writing group helped them in the process. Women Writers Ink began at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in 1998 but became its own entity in 2013.

Griminger Blanke, group president, said bimonthly meetings are held to encourage women to write, whether it's poetry or prose, for publication or not. Attendants are invited to bring a piece for critique. Membership hovers around 25, and most have no experience with publishing.

"Publishing is a personal preference and by no means mandatory," Griminger Blanke says. "We write because we love to write and want to help each other become better and better at the craft."

Information can be found at [www.wwink.org](http://www.wwink.org) or at the Women Writers Ink page on Facebook. 

*Anastasia Penchi also feels the itch to write and is in the midst of an autobiography of her own. She can be reached at [callmeloislane@hotmail.com](mailto:callmeloislane@hotmail.com).*



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# BECOME A JEANIUS!

Find the perfect jeans for your body shape.

BY PAIGE FORDE

Photos by Jen Towner Photography

If finding the perfect pair of jeans is on your bucket list, your search is over! Follow these helpful tips for fitting jeans to your body type, and your next shopping trip will be a breeze.

## Cropped Jeans Body Type: Petite

If you have a small stature, avoid alterations by purchasing a pair of cropped skinny jeans. The slim fit and dark wash flatters a petite body type, while cuffing the bottom hem helps to accentuate and elongate the legs. Style with a light, neutral top and booties to create a trendy, poised ensemble.

### Touch of Class, downtown La Crosse

Beja-Flor Audrey Emana ankle jean, \$178; State & Manor Renvi Tank in white, \$88; White + Warren gray crochet sweater, \$320; Eileen Fisher Cluster bootie, \$250; Graphic Image "Fabulous" zip case, \$50; Chan Luu 14K gold layered necklace, \$435.



### Flare Jeans Body Type: Pear

For those with narrow shoulders and wide hips, a flare jean is flawless. Wide-leg openings instantly balance out curvy hips and create a more proportional torso. Try styling these iconic jeans with wedges and a touch of fringe for a trendy '70s vibe. A patterned cardigan and statement necklace also help to accentuate the shoulders.

**Buckle, Valley View Mall**  
BKE Stella Flare jean, \$72.95; Gimmicks chiffon beaded tank top, \$54.95; Angie floral cardigan, \$36.95; SBICCA fringe suede wedge, \$84.95; BKE statement necklace, \$19.95.



### Bootcut Jeans Body Type: Apple

For those who carry weight evenly through the torso and less throughout the legs, bootcut jeans are a must-have. A dark wash bootcut gently balances out the midsection, complementing the shoulders and hips. Dress up these jeans with some elegant pumps and a belted shirtdress to help form the waist and lengthen the torso.

**Touch of Class, downtown La Crosse**  
Beija-Flor Jennifer Bootcut jean, \$178; Joseph Ribkoff button-up shirtdress, \$244; Attilio Guisti Leombruni (AGL) nude/black pump, \$335; Deepa gold/silver clutch, \$275; Monica Rich Kosann black steel chain, \$120; Monica Rich Kosann 18K yellow gold with ruby poesy ring, \$600; Monica Rich Kosann 18K yellow gold with blue sapphire poesy ring, \$790; Monica Rich Kosann 18K yellow gold engraved poesy ring, \$845; Gurhan cuff bracelet, \$1,695.



### Boyfriend Jeans Body Type: Banana

Loose-fitting light wash jeans create the illusion of curves for those with a naturally straight figure. By adding in leather booties, a laid-back blazer and a sheer, feminine top, this outfit comes together in perfect harmony.

**Macy's, Valley View Mall**  
Lucky Brand Sienna Slim boyfriend jean, \$99; Hippie Rose sheer tank top, \$29; Freshman ivory knit blazer, \$44; Lucky Brand dual zipper bootie, \$129; INC gold fringe pendant necklace in green, \$39.50.



### High-Rise Jeans Body Type: Hourglass

High-rise jeans are a staple in the wardrobe of those with hourglass figures. A high waistline draws attention to a defined waist, while a slim fit flaunts natural curves. Pair with a bright patterned tee to add contrast, emphasizing this unique jean style.

**Mainstream Boutique, Onalaska**  
JAG Sheridan distressed high-rise skinny jean \$94; Ariella tie-dye ruched tee, \$49; Nicole peep-toe bootie, \$135; Mac and Me gold fringe necklace, \$32.

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# JUST CRUISIN'

A cruise can be a laid-back way to visit must-see destinations.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE  
Contributed photos



Jo Ann Buening of Travel Leaders enjoys a Regent Seven Seas cruise in Alaska (left). "River cruises are an excellent alternative to the ocean liner experience," says Buening, shown here on a river cruise through Europe (right).

**Dick and Judy Williams love** to cruise—so much, in fact, that despite a rocky maiden voyage, they have since traveled 13 more times. "Our first trip was to the Caribbean, back in the '70s, before the ships had refined their stabilizing systems," says Dick.

"I got seasick," adds Judy, just to clarify. "But after some time off, we got back on board and in 2004 took a cruise to Alaska. We've found that it's a very relaxing way to travel."

Since then it's been smooth sailing for the Williamses. They have glided on the Yangtze River in China, toured historic cities from Amsterdam to Vienna along the Danube and cruised through the vastly different environs of Bora Bora and the Baltic Sea. And because cruising offers a variety of means for relaxing on the world's waterways—from river to luxury to ocean cruises—the Williamses are planning a trip through the Panama Canal next year. "It's always fun trying out another type of cruise," says the couple. "Each one offers something different."

Jo Ann Buening agrees. As an Alaska, Luxury, River and Ocean Cruise Expert with Travel Leaders in La Crosse, Buening knows the language of cruising. With more than 25 years in the travel industry, she has devoted her career to helping match clients with the cruise experience that is best suited to their needs and expectations. "That's my job, and that's why I worked to achieve the highest level of cruise certification as an Elite Cruise Counsellor with the CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association)," says Buening. "I've done a lot of cruising on all types of ships—25-plus times to better assist my clients."

If you are considering a cruise vacation, Buening shares the following insights to help you choose the right river, luxury or ocean cruise to fit your needs.

## Luxury cruises

Geared toward the affluent and special-event traveler, luxury cruise lines such as Regent Seven Seas and Seabourn offer the perfect vehicle for vacationers who are seeking an intimate, indulgent adult getaway. Passengers can expect a higher level of sophistication, a little more polish when they board a luxury cruise," says Buening, who, with her husband, was attended to by a private butler during an anniversary cruise to Alaska. "He was just one of the incredibly thoughtful staff. Not only were they extremely courteous, they continually surprised us with extras like appetizers and drinks that were brought to our cabin."

In addition, elevated cuisine prepared by top-notch chefs serves to complement the creative—and often elaborate—entertainment found onboard. Having raised the bar on entertainment offerings, most luxury cruise lines feature professional Broadway-style shows and awe-inspiring performances, such as Cirque du Soleil. And should you feel spent after your night out, you can always book a massage at the spa the next day.

## River cruises

If the idea of sailing the open seas leaves you feeling queasy, cruising is still an option. "River cruises are an excellent alternative



A cruise ship docks in the harbor at Tallinn, Estonia.



A cruise ship floats down the Yangtze River in China.

to the ocean liner experience,” says Buening. “Though you’re on the water, you can always see the shore and won’t suffer from motion sickness.” For history buff Linda Dowling of La Farge, it wasn’t a fear of open water that steered her toward booking a Viking river cruise with her friend, but rather having increased access to see, experience and visit local sites and culture. “We traveled from Amsterdam to Budapest, and since we were on a river, we sailed by both the good and the bad—from little towns to industrial areas. I think that gave us a better feel for the country.”



Dick and Judy Williams enjoy a luxury Viking cruise to the Baltic region.

Being able to pull directly up to a port also has its distinct advantages. Long lines to disembark are nonexistent; there’s no need to shuttle to shore, and quite often the land excursions begin directly at the drop-off point. “It was really convenient,” remarks Dowling. “The whole trip was designed to give us the

optimum experience.”

From the excellent onboard fare to walking tours that included the famous Keukenhof tulip gardens in Amsterdam, Dowling declared her trip a positive and culturally intimate adventure. “Even the entertainment was performed by locals,” says Dowling. “It really made us feel a part of what we were seeing and doing.”

Buening concurs, adding that—as with luxury cruise lines—the wealth of onshore excursions available are specifically designed to give passengers a unique perspective into local culture. On her river travels alone, Buening has enjoyed a private watch-making experience in Switzerland with a renowned watchmaker, prepared a meal with a chef from a five-star restaurant and selected wine from the wine cellar to pair with the meal. “If you really want to get the feel of a place, book an excursion,” says Buening.

## Mainstream cruises

For families looking for a high-seas adventure that satisfies all age groups, mainstream cruise lines such as Royal Caribbean offer the ideal escape for active travelers. Equipped with amenities such as wave pools, rock climbing walls, spas, 3D theaters and even bumper cars, passengers are certain to find plenty to keep their families busy. Standard fare and familiar restaurants appease even the fussiest of eaters, and entertainment options with broad appeal bring families together. “Some cruises even have parades down their ‘main street,’” says Buening, as a testimony to the scope of what’s available onboard.

Despite their size (some ocean liners can accommodate up to 6,600 people and are 16 stories high), the ships are incredibly family- and user-friendly. “I often get lost,” says Buening. “But there are interactive kiosks everywhere that will tell you where you are and how long waits for restaurants will be.” And when the adults need a break, child care providers and age-appropriate day camps are available.

Before you get off the couch and hop onboard, do your homework. “Cruise experiences are all different, and a good cruise consultant will know what questions to ask to book you on the right ship,” says Buening. “Knowledge is power, and the plus to booking with a knowledgeable cruise consultant is the assurance that you’ll experience a trip of a lifetime.” **(CRW)**

*Martha Keefe lives and writes in La Crosse and enjoys travel in the States and abroad. As an experienced kayaker, canoer and stand-up paddleboarder, she thinks letting someone else do the paddling is not out of the question.*



# ***DAYBREAK***

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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, aauw-wi.org.

**Business Over Breakfast** La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, 4th Wed. every month, 7:30-8:45 a.m. Preregister 608-784-4807, lacrossechamber.com.

**Children's Museum of La Crosse** weekly programming: **Save-On-Sundays** \$1 off admission every Sun., noon to 5 p.m.

**Mt. LeKid Climbing Wall** open every Sat. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sun. 12-4 p.m.

**Wee Move** for ages 1-7 with adult, every Fri., 10:30 a.m.

**Little Learners** for ages 1-7 with adult, every Thurs., 10:30 a.m.

**Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW)** 4th Tues. of each month, Pogreba Restaurant, 5:30 p.m. Linda O'Connell, linda@take5productions.net.

**La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce** monthly breakfast meeting. 2nd Mon. of each month, 7 a.m., Radisson. Admission is \$5 and includes breakfast. lacrossechamber.com.

**La Crosse Toastmasters Club** 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m., Gundersen Health System Urgent Care Bldg., Basement, 1830 S. Ave., La Crosse.

**League of Women Voters** 2nd Tues. of each month, noon, Radisson Hotel, Nancy Hill, 608-782-1753, nfhill@centurytel.net.

**NAMI Family Support Group** 2nd Mon. of each month, 6:30 p.m., South Side Neighborhood Center, 1300 S. 6th St., La Crosse.

**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.

**Onalaska Toastmasters Club** 1st and 3rd Mon. of each month, noon-1 p.m., Globe University, Onalaska.

**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 in Networking and Support (WINS)** 2nd Wed. of each month, Fayze's, noon-1 p.m., Shari Hopkins, 608-784-3904, shopkins@couleebank.net.

**Women of Worth (WOW)** last Wed. of each month, Shenanigans, noon. Debbie Lee, 608-317-5023, deb@ais-cw.com

**Women's Alliance of La Crosse (WAL)** 2nd Thurs. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant, Kasey Heikel 608-519-8080 kasey.heichel.dc@gmail.com OR Amy Stodola 608-788-2668 amy.stodola@edwardjones.com

### CALENDAR EVENTS

**Aug. 5**, Art Teachers Show opening reception, 3-7 p.m., Gallery M, 33 S. Walnut St., La Crescent, www.janetmootz.com.

**Aug. 6**, Missoula Children's Theatre presents *Peter and Wendy*, 1 and 4 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center, La Crosse, www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

**Aug. 12-13**, Coulee Region Unscripted, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org.

**Aug. 12-14**, Irishfest, Southside Oktoberfest Grounds, La Crosse, www.irishfestlacrosse.org.

**Aug. 13**, La Crosse Promise Neighborhood Walking Tour, 10-11 a.m., South Side Neighborhood Center, 1300 S. Sixth St., La Crosse, www.lacrossepromise.org.

**Aug. 15**, Northside Community Block Party, 5-8 p.m., 1010 Sill St., La Crosse.

**Aug. 20**, Thrashing Bee, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center, N455 O. Ophus Rd., Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

**Aug. 20**, Old School Variety Show with Michael Scott, 8 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts, La Crosse, www.webercenterfortheperformingarts.org.

**Aug. 24**, La Crosse Promise Neighborhood Walking Tour, 6-7 p.m., South Side Neighborhood Center, 1300 S. Sixth St., La Crosse, www.lacrossepromise.org.

**Aug. 26**, Red Crosse Blood Drive, 12:30-5:30 p.m., Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

**Aug. 26-28**, Great River Folk Festival, Riverside Park, La Crosse, www.greatriverfolkfest.org.

**Aug. 27**, Back to School Pep Rally, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

**Sept. 1**, La Crosse Promise Neighborhood Walking Tour, 6-7 p.m., South Side Neighborhood Center, 1300 S. Sixth St., La Crosse, www.lacrossepromise.org.

**Sept. 2-5**, La Crosse Area Bicycle Festival, all rides leave from Cameron Park unless noted, www.explorelacrosse.com/bikefest.

**Sept. 8-24**, Heart of La Crosse: Lax-opoly, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., The Pump House, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.com.

**Sept. 9-10**, *This Property Is Condemned*, 7:30 p.m., Black Box Theatre, Winona State University, www.winona.edu/thad.

**Sept. 9-10**, La Crosse Storytelling Festival, 6:30-9 p.m. Fri., noon-9:45 p.m. Sat., Myrick Park, La Crosse, www.lacrossestoryfest.com.

**Sept. 9-11**, Special Occasion Shows: Made in Wisconsin/Winter Outdoor Show, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

**Sept. 9-11**, Elvis Explosion, 7 p.m. Fri., 2:30 and 7 p.m. Sat., 1 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Center, www.lacrossecenter.com.

**Sept. 9-25**, *Sister Act*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

**Sept. 10**, Steppin' Out in Pink, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Gundersen Health System's La Crosse Campus, www.steppinoutinpink.org.

**Sept. 10**, La Crosse PRIDE: PRIDE in the Park, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Riverside Park, La Crosse, www.7riverslgbtq.org/events/pride.

**Sept. 10**, Page Series: Shapiro & Smith Dance, 7:30 p.m., Saint Mary's University, Winona, www.smumn.edu.

**Sept. 10-11**, Great Dakota Gathering, Homecoming & Powwow, Grand Entry 1 p.m. Sat., Unity Park, Winona, www.winonadakotaunityalliance.org.

**Sept. 11**, Twilight Tour, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center, N455 O. Ophus Rd., Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

**Sept. 15-18**, Applefest, La Crescent, www.applefestusa.com.

**Sept. 15-18**, Holiday Hiring Job Fair, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

**Sept. 17**, Walk to End Alzheimer's, Myrick Park, La Crosse, 9 a.m. registration, 10 a.m. walk, www.alz.org/gwwi.

**Sept. 18**, Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two-Woman Show, 2 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center, La Crosse, www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

**Sept. 24**, Fall Festival on the Farm, GROW La Crosse, 2-7 p.m., Deep Roots Community Farm, W4406 County Rd. YY, La Crosse, www.growlacrosse.org.

**Sept. 29-Oct. 2**, Oktoberfest, Southside Oktoberfest Grounds, La Crosse, www.oktoberfestusa.com.

**Sept. 30-Oct. 2**, Special Occasion Shows: Food Show, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

**Oct. 1**, Maple Leaf Walk/Run, 7 a.m. half marathon, 7:15 a.m. 5-mile run and 5K walk, Riverside Park, La Crosse, www.laxymca.org/events/maple-leaf-walk-run.

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

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