

coulee region

women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE



BEHIND THE SCENES

Cottage Garden Floral

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Building a Beach House

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coulee region women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

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Pictured on cover: Marci Cordes and Louise Coughlin, co-owners of Cottage Garden Floral. Photo by Janet Mootz Photography. Other photo credits: page 28, top and right, Bruce Defries Photography.

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Every so often, at the beginnings of semesters, I get a flurry of emails from young journalism students hopeful of becoming an intern, getting a chance to write a story or—my favorite—asking to “shadow” me for a day in hopes of seeing what it’s like “behind the scenes” at a magazine. An internship? Send me your resume. A story? Send me some clips. Shadow me? Well . . .

I love these requests—once I was that intern eager for a glimpse behind the scenes, and I’m grateful to all the professionals who accommodated me. But I also have to laugh a little. Do they realize they’d be hunkered down at my dining-room table with me, surrounded by LEGOs, puzzling over turns of phrases, comma placements and missing photos? We’d drink plenty of coffee, peruse the Web in search of correct spellings of names and organizations and debate how best to word the story assignments I detail in lengthy emails to our writers. We’d track down emails and phone numbers of subjects, and alert a few unsuspecting women that they are about to join the ranks of our magazine subjects—and can we photograph their house while we’re at it?

At our office, the atmosphere is a bit more professional and just as hardworking, with the added lightness of camaraderie. My “shadow” would witness the magazine coming together from a different perspective—sales calls being fielded, emails flying out and in, a boisterous planning meeting taking place or even a photo shoot in a neutral corner with decent lighting. She could tag along to a shoot in the field—attending hair and makeup appointments, picking out merchandise to feature, previewing the shoot site—or better yet, she could jump in and make the countless phone calls to set it all up.

Though particularly compelling for journalism students, our magazine is but a sample of the thousands of ways women in the Coulee Region work behind the scenes to serve the people who live here. Pick a nonprofit, a business or an arts organization, and you’ll find devoted women enthusiastically making the connections, making the phone calls, sending the emails or staging the sets to make something wonderful happen. They may be running the show singlehandedly, they may be part of a team or they may claim to be but a small cog in a big wheel; nonetheless, they all are a part of what makes this community a great place to live. From the women who bring beauty to our lives with flowery works of art, to those who save lives in an emergency room, to those who clean our clothes and those who create an atmosphere in which to enjoy a splendid meal, all bring something crucial to the Coulee Region.

As you curl up with our “Behind the Scenes” issue of *Coulee Region Women*, coffee cup in hand, think of the women you know who are making a difference in our area—in the world—in ways seen and unseen. Regardless of where we’re working or what we do to make the wheel of *Coulee Region Women* go round, we’re thinking about them, too, and how we might best introduce them to you.

Betty

coulee region women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

ISSUE 66, VOLUME 11, NUMBER 6

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013

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DISTRIBUTION

Citywide Marketing Services, L.L.C.

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Coulee Region Women is published six times per year by Coulee Region Communications, L.L.C., 816 2nd Avenue S., Suite 600, Onalaska, WI 54650. Subscriptions available for \$17.95 per year (six issues).

Send check to the address above.

All unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Coulee Region Women assumes no responsibility for unsolicited materials.

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Printed at Crescent Printing Company, Onalaska, WI. Printed in the U.S.A.

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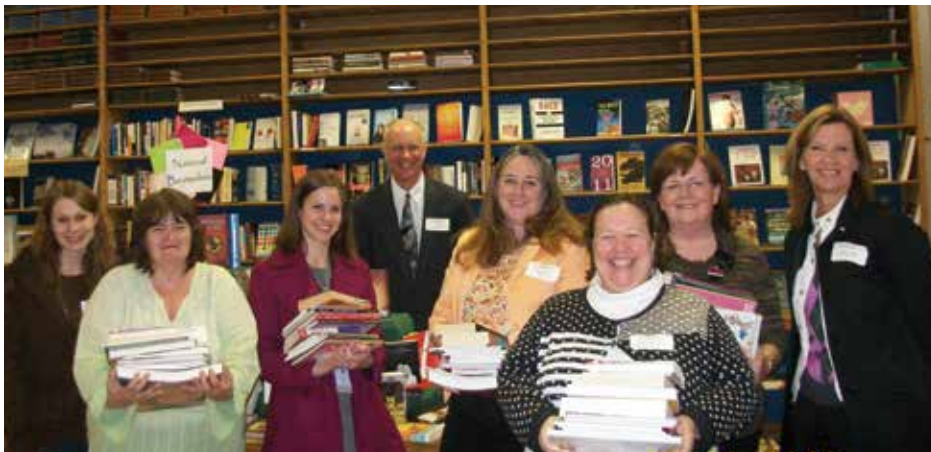


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CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH WITH A GOOD BOOK



Since 1881, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) has been the nation's leading voice promoting education and equality for women and girls. To celebrate March as Women's History Month, the La Crosse branch of AAUW will again sponsor 25 Books for 25 Years, a program that provides books related to women and women's history to local organizations such as Couleecap, the Family & Children's Center, Hope Academy of Western Wisconsin, YWCA and Brighter Tomorrows. The goal is to furnish inspirational books about women to women and children who might not otherwise have access to them. Last year, AAUW donated more than 100 books.

The program runs from February 15 to March 25, 2013. Community members can help by either purchasing a book (or books) or donating funds. A bookplate will be placed in each book with the donor's name. A list of books is available at Pearl Street Books and can be purchased at a 20 percent discount. Send monetary donations to AAUW La Crosse, 25 Books for 25 Years, PO Box 2112, La Crosse, WI 54601. For more information, contact Erica at aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com.

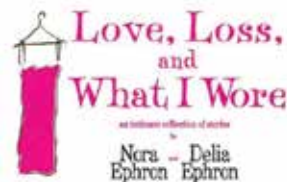
FREEZIN' FOR A REASON

Take the plunge at Pettibone Beach on March 2 in support of Special Olympics. The Special Olympics Wisconsin Polar Plunge winter fundraiser is a unique opportunity for brave Wisconsinites to support Special Olympics athletes by leaping into icy bodies of water across the state. Plungers consist of individuals and teams of students, law enforcement officers, business professionals and families. Too chicken? No problem—register as “Too Chicken to Plunge” and participate by raising donations or joining a team. All proceeds from the Polar Plunge will benefit Special Olympics Wisconsin and the City of La Crosse Parks & Recreation Special Olympics program. Last year, 1,400 individuals participated in the Coulee Region Polar Plunge, raising more than \$215,000 for Special Olympics Wisconsin. For more information contact Kerry Gloede, Plunge Coordinator, at 608-789-7596 or gloedek@cityoflacrosse.org.



VALENTINE'S SWEETHEART DANCE

Dads, grandpas, uncles and anyone who is a positive role model for an adolescent or teenage girl are invited to bring her to the Valentine's Sweetheart Dance at the YMCA-La Crosse Branch, 1140 Main Street, on February 15 from 7-9 p.m. The event, presented by the YMCA, Festival Foods and Dave and Barb Erickson, will be a night filled with music, dancing, laughter and special moments with your precious little girl(s). Music, beverages and snacks are provided. Keepsake photos and wrist corsages are available at the event. For more information or to reserve space, call 608-782-9622.



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Join the Pump House Regional Arts Center in the premier ladies'-night-out event of the season. The evening includes a stage performance of the play *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* by Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron, cosmos, a history of fashion and a celebration of local women's stories. The Pump House is the first venue in the region to gain access to this memorable theater event. *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* is not only a story about women and their clothes, but a memorable journey through topics including relationships, personal fashion and all the messiness that comes with life. The event runs March 7-9, 15-16 and 22-23; doors open at 7 p.m. and the show starts at 7:30. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$21 the day of the show. Visit www.thepumphouse.org for more information and for a list of pre-show activities. Cocktails are allowed in the theater!

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BUSINESS IS Blooming

Friendship and flowers flourish
behind the scenes at Cottage Garden Floral.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE

Photos by Janet Mootz Photography

Twelve years ago, feeling the need for a change, longtime friends Marci Cordes (pictured above) and Louise Coughlin decided to go into business together. Bringing their unique talents and experiences together, they opened Cottage Garden Floral—an endeavor that combines Coughlin's business sense with Cordes's creativity. "It only made sense that we go with something we kind of knew," says Coughlin. "What we didn't anticipate was how much we'd get to know people in the community—that they'd become more like family."

Establishing roots

Establishing and maintaining connections has always been a part of both women's lives. It also played an intricate role in bringing them together as business partners. "We're old friends. Well, actually we're not that old, but we've known each other for a long, long time," laughs Cordes as an expression of just how well they know each other.

Their husbands, both employed by Coughlin's father at his woodworking business, introduced them. The women quickly became friends, and soon the couples were hanging out. When the kids came along, it only seemed natural to include them in the family activities. During this time, Cordes earned a two-year degree in garden center technology before she was hired at Sunshine Floral in La Crosse, and Coughlin worked for her family, where she gained experience in accounting, inventory and sales. To supplement the business, she often traveled around the country to craft shows where she bought and sold items.

"Marci would travel with me on a lot of these craft trips," says Coughlin. "We both have an interest in gardening, so we were always looking for cool nurseries to visit and unique plants to buy. We just always seemed to be in sync."

Tending the garden

The direct connection they share has worked well for their business. Not only are they equal partners at Cottage Garden Floral, but they also have a common vision for how the store should be run. In short, they capitalize on each other's strengths and respect each other's limits, knowing when to air a grievance and when to back off. "A lot of people warned us not to go into business with a friend," says Cordes. "But we don't hide anything; we get everything out in the open, and that works for us."

Coughlin agrees. "I know to stay out of Marci's creative business, and she stays out of mine. We perfectly complement each other."

This straightforward approach to tackling problems results in a comfortable working environment that makes the employees feel like welcome members of the family—in some cases, literally. Coughlin's mom, Kathryn Neumann, a self-described "part of the woodwork," helps make deliveries and is a master of covert cleaning tactics. In addition, the store, which is decorated with inviting seasonal arrangements and flowers, is made cozier by a plate of homemade cookies that Neumann places out each morning for the customers to enjoy. "It's like we have an elf working here," says Cordes.

Other reliable help—including Kacie, who works full time, and the owners' husbands, who lend a hand during the busy holiday and wedding seasons—magnifies the sense of connection with the community that the women have unwittingly created. "We even have a very part-time employee whose help and company we just enjoy," adds Coughlin. "She came to us as a friend of the shop."

Where friendships grow

Friends of the shop, as Cordes and Coughlin refer to their regular customers, are plentiful. "People who shop here get to know us, and



Marci Cordes (left) and Louise Coughlin (right) provide the brains—and beauty—behind Cottage Garden Floral.

we get to know them," says Coughlin. "They just start telling us what's going on in their lives. It's that personal relationship that keeps the customers coming back."

Through the years they have had the privilege of celebrating important milestones with many of these customers. Hundreds of their attractive floral arrangements have graced the tables at events from birthdays to funerals, and Cordes and Coughlin take pride in the knowledge that they delivered a product that reflected the individual tastes and sentiments of the customer, even if it is a bit unconventional. "In the past I have been asked to make wedding boutonnieres that incorporated fishing lures," says Cordes. "And another time I made a casket spray that was adorned with jars of salsa."

Letting ideas bloom

Inspired by the positive response to their out-of-the-box thinking, Cordes and Coughlin decided to share their ideas with the public. Armed with suggestions on how to trim a Christmas tree, arrange a festive centerpiece and decorate a home for the holidays, the first hourlong "A Cottage Garden Christmas" was held at the La Crosse Public Library in 2009. The show was such a huge success that four years later, it was moved to the Black River Beach Neighborhood Center—a site that could not only accommodate the crowd, but also give participants easy access to the Cottage Garden Floral shop across the street. "We love having this interaction with people," says Coughlin. "After these shows, people act like they know us intimately."

Cordes agrees, noting that a key element to the show is collecting nonperishable food items for the Salvation Army. "The Christmas show provides a great way for us to reach out to the community."

A grand display

Back at the shop, the ladies continue to run a full-service floral shop while tossing ideas back and forth on how to improve and expand the business. "We like to stand out," Coughlin says, which is evident by the wide array of eye-catching arrangements that fill the store. "I can imagine things, and Marci can make it happen." And though things don't always turn out the way they planned, they both admit they are having a lot of fun in the process. "Sometimes running a business is a struggle," says Cordes. "But we're in this together. We're family." 

Martha Keffe lives and writes in La Crosse. She enjoyed talking with these women who work so well together.

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MAKING A HOUSEHOLD NAME

Synergy Leadership Group's Julie Hatlem tells the story behind the brand.

BY LEAH CALL
Contributed photo



"I think the key to running a successful business is doing what you love to do and establishing a niche. And if you are focused on your niche, you can be successful."

— Julie Hatlem



Do you recognize logos at a glance, or instantly know the words to a product jingle? Does a product or company name evoke a feeling of safety, comfort or reliability? That's brand recognition. And behind every successful brand campaign is a team of marketing professionals making it happen.

Three years ago, Julie Hatlem (pictured above), along with Ralph Heath, started Synergy Leadership Group in downtown La Crosse to focus on just that: creating high-impact brand campaigns for businesses and organizations of all sizes. With a background in fine arts and marketing, Hatlem says she has always been interested in how people were attracted to brands. After running the creative department at Ovation Marketing for 15 years, she broke away from the traditional agency model to start her own niche firm specializing

in brand strategy.

"I think the key to running a successful business is doing what you love to do and establishing a niche. And if you are focused on your niche, you can be successful," says Hatlem.

Think big

Since its launch, Synergy has worked behind the scenes locally with campaigns for Aquinas Catholic Schools, Misty Lown's More Than Just Great Dancing™, Onalaska Great River Landing, 7 Rivers Alliance and the La Crosse Fitness Festival, which started as an idea for a marathon and turned into two days of running, cycling, children's events and much more thanks to the big-picture thinking at Synergy.

"Our goal and our job is to help clients elevate their ideas and

think bigger ... taking something like a marathon and turning it into a festival and inviting runners, bikers, having kids' events—to reach out to more people and turn it into a health and fitness event,” says Hatlem.

On a larger scale, Synergy worked with 3M in Minneapolis to create a global brand campaign for its Occupational Health and Environmental Safety Division. That campaign, “The Power to Protect Your World,” was translated into 14 different languages.

“We provided them with key messages so they can go out and create their own campaigns—so the message is consistent from one country to the next,” explains Hatlem. “We also created a testimonial campaign, where I led an international photography shoot as part of the campaign. That included photographing and interviewing safety directors from Italy, England, Scotland, Canada, Chile and Brazil. To this day, we are still getting great commentary from the people who are doing the work, putting the campaign together. It is cool to see how that message is being utilized by the entire division on a global level.”

Tell a story

For projects both big and small, Hatlem explains, “Our focus is on the front end of a project, helping companies determine a strategy and creative direction. We do that by taking a look at the brand and how to tell their brand story effectively to make a connection to the customer.”

That connection is made through stories, tag lines, visuals, images, icons, sounds, colors and other tools. Hatlem says her firm works an average of two to three months behind the scenes before ever rolling

out the final brand campaign, which also requires gaining buy-in from multiple stakeholders.

“Internally, you have to get buy-in and make sure everybody really understands the brand and how to communicate their brand,” notes Hatlem. “We create a brand guide for everyone to follow, so there is consistency with the campaign message.”

Whether it is a large company such as 3M or a smaller organization such as Aquinas Catholic Schools, Synergy follows a process that includes identifying the target audience along with key words that represent the brand and make a connection with customers. They also conduct hours of research on customer satisfaction and how to differentiate its client from the competition.

Stay curious

For those considering a career in marketing, Hatlem offers this advice: “Stay curious. You have to ask ‘what if’ and ‘why,’” and always see the questions before the solutions. “That’s how I approach life, too,” she adds.

In addition to running a successful business, Hatlem takes advantage of the many recreational opportunities in the Coulee Region. She stays involved with the La Crosse Fitness Festival and serves on the boards for the Children’s Museum of La Crosse and Tri-Quest, a run/ bike/golf competition for area youth. Hatlem also teaches yoga classes at the YWCA and Root Down Yoga Studio. *(crw)*

Westby-based freelance writer Leah Call witnesses examples of successful branding every day through the product requests of her four children. She admires the accomplishments of Hatlem and Synergy.

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BY KIM SEIDEL
Contributed photo

Contrary to common notions of a dietitian, Marla Withey doesn't spend her days helping people to eat better and lose weight. Withey works as a dietitian during patients' most dire times, after suffering from an accident or battling a disease. She's a board-certified nutrition support and critical care registered dietitian at Gundersen Lutheran Hospital.

Starting at 7:00 each morning, Withey makes interdisciplinary team rounds at the hospital to check on patients in critical care and surgical units and does metabolic support consults. The patients she assists require nutritional support through an IV or feeding tube. They need food to heal and live, just as the patients on the other hospital floors depend upon healthy meals.

"I operate from the belief that if I'm out of sight, I'm out of mind," Withey says. "So I make sure that I am around for the patients, so that doctors, nurses and staff know I'm available."

The best care possible

Withey, who has worked more than 32 years as a dietitian at Gundersen Lutheran, plays an important role for patients as part of an interdisciplinary team. This approach gives each patient a plan for care and ensures that every team member—from the doctor and nurses to the dietitians, residents and other staff—works together to best serve the patient.

Withey starts her days early and doesn't leave until she knows each patient's plan is in place for the evening. "We need to take care of our patients, and we need to provide the best care possible," she says. "In acute care patients, for example, a plan can change quickly, and we need to be flexible."



Marla Withey, critical care dietitian, Gundersen Lutheran

Withey embraces the positive difference she can help make in people's lives. "I work on very sacred ground here," she says. "We are witnesses to miracles every day."

A love of teaching and science

Withey passes on her wisdom and knowledge by working closely with dietetic students and interns from Viterbo University, where Withey herself graduated.

"Gundersen Lutheran is well known as a teaching facility," Withey says. "It's an honor and a blessing to be involved in teaching and providing the right care for patients."

Withey recalls one resident's "aha" moment in the critical care unit, where the resident mistakenly believed patients don't eat and therefore don't need dietitian services. The resident soon learned that although there may not be lunch trays at their bedsides, the patients eat through IV or feeding tubes, and they require specific "formulations," Withey says.

As a dietitian, she's able to blend her love of teaching and science. She's a student, too, as every five years she must pass an intense test to maintain her professional status. Withey brings a strong sense of care to her work, which is more than just a job to earn a living for her. "I have a passion for what I do," she says. "We are all really servants to everyone we come in contact with here." **crw**

Kim Seidel is a writer and editor based in Onalaska. As owner of Seidel Ink LLC, she specializes in parenting, health and family life topics. For more information, visit www.seidelink.com.

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BEHIND EMERGENCY ROOM DOORS

What goes on in a real ER? Here's a peek.

BY CLAIRE RISTOW-SEIB

Contributed photos

Brett Whyte, MD, chief of Emergency/Urgent Care Services, attends to a patient in the ED at Winona Health.

When my mother was an emergency-room nurse at Lutheran Hospital in the 1960s and 1970s, my dad, siblings and I would sit in the waiting room and watch the activity while we waited for her shift to end (this was long before HIPAA privacy laws). Perhaps it's because of this early exposure—or because I have three sons, or because I have been the “nurse chaperone” on many youth mission trips, or because I am a registered nurse—that I feel somewhat comfortable in an emergency room. Most people don't; there is often mystery—and no small amount of fear—surrounding a visit to the emergency room (ER), emergency department (ED) or trauma emergency center (TEC). In hopes of demystifying the ER experience, I visited Winona Health to tour their emergency department and offer a glimpse “behind the scenes.”

Welcome to Winona Health's ED

My tour guide, Director of Emergency and Urgent Care Services Beth Poulin, begins at the point of entry. Most patients enter the ED as a “walk-in” through the main doors, then check in to be seen by a triage nurse—in this case, it's Laura Cummings, a registered nurse (RN). She will do the initial assessment by taking vital signs and asking what brought the patient in. Depending on the severity, or “acuity,” of their health issue, they may be taken to an exam room immediately or wait until more acutely ill patients have been seen.

The other way to be seen in the ED is to arrive by ambulance due to a 9-1-1 call. In this case, the patient is immediately taken to an exam/treatment room and stabilized. In rare cases, they may be transferred to another hospital via ambulance or helicopter. For certain conditions, when time is of the essence, the patient is immediately taken for a computed tomography (CT) scan to confirm and receive immediate

treatment. Winona Health's 320 detector row CT, located adjacent to the ED, can reveal conditions such as stroke within seconds.

Whom and what you'll find

Either point of entry will get you into one of Winona Health's 11 interchangeable rooms, all of which have a bed, a wall-mounted monitor for vital signs or cardiac monitoring, a computer for staff documentation, IV poles and equipment, special lighting and various other instruments. When a patient is en route to the ED via ambulance, the staff can prepare any additional necessary equipment and assemble additional team members to meet the patient's specific needs.

The staff's work area is located in the center of the ED, convenient to all patient rooms. The health unit coordinator (HUC) is stationed in the area nearest the ambulance bay. At Winona Health, this position is called a HUT, which indicates they have received emergency medical technician (EMT) or nursing assistant training. On the opposite end are the certified nursing assistants (CNAs); at Winona Health these are ED techs, having received emergency training. In the center is the nurses' station staffed by RNs. Of course, there are computers, printers, IV poles, monitors, a “crash cart” and other necessary gadgetry on hand. Department coordinators are on site as well to assist with a variety of communication needs and to assist the patients' families.

In a room off to the side is an office area for the physicians and associate providers—otherwise known as physician assistants (PAs) or nurse practitioners (NPs). Winona Health has six ED physicians, three of whom are board-certified ED physicians, plus two associate providers. I met with Dr. John Gallagher, who in addition to being



Left: Marla Carlson, PA-C, works with ED physicians to provide care for patients in the ED at Winona Health. Bottom: In addition to serving as medical director for Winona Area Ambulance Service, John Gallagher, MD, also cares for patients in the ED. Top: Marilou Dienger (left) is a nurse supervisor and Beth Poulin (right) is director of Emergency and Urgent Care Services in the ED at Winona Health.

an ED physician is the medical director for Winona Area Ambulance Service. I also met with Marla Carlson, one of the two PAs who provide care during the department's busiest 12-hour shift.

To enhance staff communication and effective coordination of care, a large electronic flat-screen monitor displays the status of each patient, including what tests have been ordered and when the results will be available for review. To ensure patient privacy, patients are identified on the monitor by initials only.

Imaging devices, such as X-ray, CT scan and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), are located on site, with the CT scan located nearest the ambulance bay.

What to expect

Immediately after being roomed, a patient will be assessed by an RN, perhaps at the same time as the ED tech, who will ensure that the patient and family members are as comfortable as possible. When necessary, an IV is started. Shortly thereafter, the physician or associate provider will come in and order

any labs, imaging, medications, therapy or other treatments. A white board in each room displays the patient's first name; names of the provider, RN, charge nurse and ED tech; and the plan of care, which includes any labs and imaging to be done; the time of arrival and the estimated time of stay.

Winona Health is a Level IV trauma center, a designation that is earned by meeting the criteria of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma Verification Program and guidelines from the State of Minnesota. The Level IV designation ensures that the facility can provide advanced trauma life support prior to patient transfer to a higher level of care if need be. Winona Health is capable of caring for 95 to 99 percent of the 17,000-plus patients seen in the ED each year—40 to 60 each day. However, when a higher level of care is necessary—a cardiac, severe head injury or stroke condition, for example—the providers will immediately initiate a transfer, either to Gundersen Lutheran in La Crosse, which is a Level II Adult, or to Mayo Clinic's St. Marys in Rochester, which is a Level I Adult and

a Level II Pediatric facility. Winona Health collaborates with both neighboring medical centers and has developed strict protocols to ensure the most effective care possible.

Once the provider has reviewed the results of any tests they've ordered, provided treatment, performed procedures or prescribed medication, he or she determines whether the patient should be admitted to a medical unit in the hospital, transferred to another medical center or allowed to return home. If it is determined that the patient can return home, they are given discharge information including the name of the provider, a diagnosis and information about medications and recommended follow-up care.

Now that you've learned about the mysterious emergency room, here's hoping you won't ever need to see one firsthand. But should you ever need to, you'll be prepared—and you can be sure that the ED team will be prepared for you. (crw)

Claire Ristow-Seib, RN, has experienced the emergency room in five different hospitals in three states, only once as a patient.

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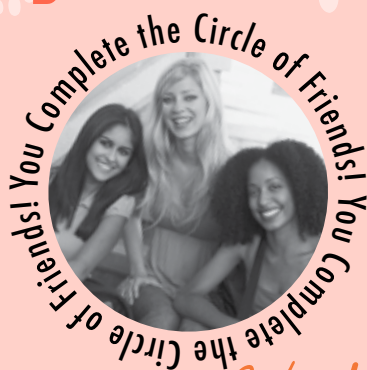


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Samantha Frauenkron, counter clerk



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Green Clean

Area women (and a couple men) work cleaning, sewing and repair magic for Midwest Garment.

BY SUSAN HESSEL
Contributed photos

Most of us rush into the dry cleaner's without much thought to the process that will clean our clothes. We grab a ticket, hear when the work will be ready and head to the next errand.

There is more to this field than many people imagine, as Amy Christianson can attest. She has gone into homes after fires and floods to rescue clothing and other textile items.

"Our focus is on getting in and getting their clothes, so we can clean them and help get them back to a normal life," says Christianson, office manager for Midwest Garment's Certified Restoration Drycleaning Network (CRDN).

Removing smoke and soot from clothing and other household textiles after a fire or mold after a flood requires technical skill. Each has its special needs.

Perhaps most important is the need for sensitivity. "Our clients are upset. Everything is so difficult, which is why we take our time with them," Christianson says.

The CRDN's goal is to return two weeks worth of clothing to customers within 24 hours with the promise of the rest within 21 working days. "They are so grateful and excited," Christianson says.

Textile experts

CRDN is a service line of Midwest Garment, the company that evolved out of Desmond's, a downtown La Crosse men's clothing store and later a tuxedo business. John Desmond, son of the founder, also named John Desmond, sold the formalwear business in 2003.

After the sale, the younger Desmond opened Sew Clean, a dry-cleaning business that continues to operate in La Crosse. Sew Clean

and CRND share a location at 620 Cass Street in La Crosse. "We consider ourselves textile experts. We dryclean, sew, repair and salvage," Desmond says.

It is a business that is changing. Sew Clean uses the Green Earth Cleaning environmentally friendly dry-cleaning process. Regular dry cleaning and the fire/flood restoration work are done in the same facilities, but kept separate to prevent cross contamination.

"The satisfaction comes in doing the work well and when customers compliment you," says Crystal Marsh, Sew Clean manager.

Sew Clean also has contracts to clean and repair uniforms at Fort McCoy, following strict military regulations. Sew Clean even cleans the UW-Madison Marching Band uniforms—they arrive on Sundays and are returned by Wednesday.

Repurpose and restore

While Desmond is out of the formalwear retail business, his company's largest operation utilizes the skills of 64 seamstresses/tailors to repair hundreds of tuxedo jackets from around the country.

"Sometimes it is a sleeve; sometimes it is a front or the rear panel," says Jackie Wehrenberg, Midwest Garment manager. "We take it apart and re-cut panels to sew back in."

When formalwear companies discard tuxedos, Midwest Garment cuts out usable material that can be matched to a tuxedo in need of repairs. The highly skilled workforce can repurpose a pant leg into a sleeve. Jackets on any given day come from California, Pennsylvania and Texas.

"It is not sewing the same thing all day, every day, like we would in



Beth Zimmerman, seamstress

manufacturing. Every job is different,” says Wehrenberg, who joined Desmond’s in 1985 after first working for the Jack Winters clothing manufacturing plant in La Crosse.

Job satisfaction

Margarita and Walmir Cobox came to Midwest Garment about 10 years ago, after owning their own clothing manufacturing company in California. She is a native of Mexico and he of Guatemala. “We’ve sewn all our lives,” says Walmir, the only male sewer in the shop.

Pa Xiong Lee began sewing at Midwest after she came to the United States from Laos. She previously sewed cheerleading uniforms for Elite Uniforms and also worked for Northern Engraving for 13 years before coming to Midwest in 2008.

“I enjoy this job. I have a good job,” she says.

Yer Thao, who joined Midwest in 2010, sewed in her native Laos and in Thailand before she came to the United States. “I like everything about it,” she says of her job.

Beth Winchell, who has been with the company for about 18 months, appreciates the emphasis on quality rather than speed and quantity. “With my old job, we had to go really fast. Here I set my own pace,” she says.

The business is unpredictable, according to Desmond, especially in the restoration work. “We can have four in a week or none in a month.” As far as the tuxedo repairs, he notes, “It’s a little like putting a car back together. The color has to match and the parts have to fit the same.” **(crw)**

Susan T. Hessel, who doesn’t clean up all that well, is a writer/personal historian who is pleased to write about businesses who expand their services and recreate themselves in new and better ways.

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THE PATH TO A BEACH HOUSE

When renovating a home,
sometimes the journey is the destination.

BY HEIDI GRIMINGER BLANKE
Contributed Photos



Roxanne and Joel Guberud live in a beach house, but they never have to leave La Crosse to get there. They simply open their door, race down their dock steps and take advantage of the sandy beach lining their property. The home is a dream come true for Joel and Roxanne, and the yearlong renovation to make that dream was, as Roxanne points out, simply “part of the journey.”

A surprise move

Less than two years ago, a move to a new home was not on the Guberuds' agenda, but, as Roxanne explains, “Everything happened almost for a reason. I got a message from an acquaintance on Facebook that his parents were going to have to be moving out. We came over the next day, and I wanted to buy [the house] that second. We had that dream of living on the water someday, whenever that time would come, but we weren't really looking.”

The home was livable and the plan was to redo parts of it. “Originally,” Roxanne says, “we were going to remodel. It had a cabin feel, and I could have made that work.” However, since the first day Joel stepped in “with a sledgehammer,” envisioning the possibilities, the 1971 split-foyer home has been gutted. Even the home's orientation was changed to take better advantage of the property's natural beauty. Walls came down, cabinets were moved, rooms were repurposed and the detached garage was redesigned as a continuous part of the house. As Joel likes to point out, “There are only two things we did not change, and those were the shingles and the view.”



Top: The beauty of the outdoors is the inspiration for the fresh and organic look of the Guberuds' home. Left: The nearby bay invites the family to play in the water. Right: Materials reflecting nature appear everywhere—here, it's the earthy tones of a hand-thrown bathroom sink. Top and right photos by Bruce Defries Photography.

A home in the making

While some folks dread the construction process and the frustrations and inconveniences associated with it, Roxanne is more upbeat. She doesn't view her home as a finished product or a means to an end, but as an ongoing entity for family and friends. "You're not trying to get to the end point," she explains, but "trying to experience everything along the way."

Roxanne bubbles with enthusiasm when she speaks about the renovation process, even though every room was taken down to its core studs, filling seven Dumpsters. Despite full-time careers, Joel and Roxanne did much of the work themselves. "The weekends were very full. Everything had to be knocked down. I've got a picture of our boys with their respirators on because they had to go up in the attic and take out all the old insulation."

During the renovation, the family lived in the lower level and, while there was no stove, they had a sink, refrigerator, microwave, grill and Crock-Pot. Accessing the upper level, where the bulk of the renovation was taking place, meant a vertical climb. Roxanne points

to a door separating a lower level hallway from the adjoining main downstairs area. "We had no way to get upstairs except to use the ladder." Coming into the house meant walking on mud, because they "even had to take out all the yard. All the decking is new, everything."

Roxanne is quick to praise the numerous workers and artisans who helped create this dream home. She jokes that the many workers were like an extended family, as someone was always at the site completing one job or another. At the renovation's completion, an appreciation open house was held for all associated with it. Anyone who helped in any way was invited, says Roxanne, "from the person who helped pick out paint colors to the contractor to the cement guys."

A home for living

When Roxanne and Joel awaken in their master suite, they can take a few steps to a sliding door and balcony facing Richmond Bay (Catgut Slough), where trees and water present an ever-changing canvas. Their 1-acre property was the inspiration for the

"fresh and organic" look Roxanne created throughout the house, as if the house were simply an extension of the land. Nearly every room uses materials reflecting that theme. Wavy balcony railings capture the movement of water, a maple floor is hand scraped as if the tide has just rolled out, and the glaze on a hand-thrown bathroom sink mirrors the blues and browns of the river. In the two-story entry, a ceiling fan's blades look like giant leaves rotating in the air.

Roxanne and Joel worked together designing and decorating the home and nearly all materials were locally sourced.

The water, of course, is a main draw. "The first thing I did was go out and buy two kayaks. We really did splurge on water toys because that's the reason to live here."

A repeat performance

Roxanne is not new to *Coulee Region Women* magazine. In 2004, she was its cover girl as a breast cancer survivor. At the time, she made and sold jewelry as a hobby, but she now concentrates on outdoor activities and yoga. A Gundersen Lutheran nurse for 32 years, Roxanne is delighted to be in a home where she, Joel, their children and grandchildren can be together, enjoying every part of the house, both inside and out.

A highlight of the summer was seeing what seemed like dozens of turtles make their way onto the acreage's beach. "They came up and laid their eggs," Roxanne enthused. "At first, I didn't know what all these things in the water were, but they were turtle heads. When my granddaughters were here, they had their hands full of baby turtles."

The Guberud home is not at all pretentious, but warm and welcoming, just like Roxanne herself. She knows its purchase was the right decision. "We bought it to enjoy now. The opportunity came, and we have learned, through different things in life, not to wait."

That viewpoint has served the Guberuds well. "We've always had the philosophy that you want to be living and aware," Roxanne affirms. In the Guberuds' previous house, a kitchen wall featured the words "The journey is the destination." While those words may no longer be in physical sight, they've followed the Guberuds to the new house, permeating every inch of this very special home. **(crw)**

Heidi Griminger Blanke is a freelance writer who was glad to have the opportunity to be reminded that the journey is the destination.



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BY JESSIE FOSS

Contributed photo

Having resolved to de-clutter in the new year, you look around your house and think, *I have so much stuff. My closets are full of clothes I don't wear. My cupboards have appliances that haven't seen the light of day in years, and what do I do with that extra couch sitting in the basement?*

Meanwhile, across town, someone else is thinking, *I could really use a Crock-Pot, and a couch would be amazing.*

How do you two connect and help one another?

Lindsey Schwarz-Nichols (pictured at right), a social worker with La Crosse County, offers the perfect forum to connect those in need with those with excess through For Goodness Sake.

The program consists of two projects. Part of the program is run during the holiday season. Needy individuals and families are matched with sponsors who provide gifts and needed items. Throughout the year the program is active by running a needs list each Sunday in the Hometown section of the *La Crosse Tribune*.

Not just at the holidays

Schwarz-Nichols compiles the weekly portion of For Goodness Sake through a collaborative community effort. Those in need cannot refer themselves for the program. All needs must be confirmed by a social or case worker, who then contacts Schwarz-Nichols to get the need listed.

The weekly program has been operating for about 10 years, serves those in need throughout the area and meets between four and five needs each week, Schwarz-Nichols says.

"We see needs year-round," she says. "Not just at the holidays."

The list is intended to help meet needs like clothing, furniture and appliances. No vehicle, rent or utility assistance is listed. Occasionally financial assistance can be requested, but only in very unique situations.

Donations are also accepted, which allows for some needs to be met before they even run in the newspaper.

Spirit of the season

In September of each year, Schwarz-Nichols meets with individuals from local social service agencies to start planning the holiday portion of For Goodness Sake. Social workers bring lists of their neediest families. The families are cross-referenced with other agencies in the area to avoid duplication.

Those needs are then presented to the public in a special section that runs in the *Tribune* on Thanksgiving Day. The section features stories of those in need and lists of needs of those throughout La Crosse County.



In 2012, For Goodness Sake connected about 1,000 needy individuals with 200 sponsors. Supporters include families, individuals, churches, businesses and other groups.

"I love how appreciative people are," Schwarz-Nichols says. "People are touched just knowing someone in the community wanted to help."

In addition to basic needs, Schwarz-Nichols says in recent years she's seen a lot of families requesting gift cards for things they can do together, like going out to dinner, visiting the Children's Museum or going to the movies.

She adds that she's amazed at how For Goodness Sake, a small idea that started with a conversation, has grown.

"People can grumble about this and that," she says. "But in the long run, we have a very generous community."

To donate to For Goodness Sake or for more information, contact Lindsey Schwarz-Nichols at schwarz.lindsey@co.la-crosse.wi.us or 608-785-5841. (crw)

Jessie Foss is a freelance writer who lives in La Crosse. She has the utmost respect for those who come up with innovative ideas to help others.



THE FACES BEHIND FARM-GROWN FOOD

Sarah Bekkum wears many hats and boosts her family business to great heights.

BY HEIDI OVERSON
Contributed photos

How often do you spread butter on your toast or bite into a bit of cheese without a second thought as to where it came from or how it was made? It's easy to pick these products off store shelves without fully appreciating all of the work it took to create them. You may silently thank the source (the cow or goat) as you're savoring the flavor, but wouldn't it be nice to know where that animal lives? Is it healthy and happy? Who tends to it, and what kind of farmers are they? The quality of an animal's output stems from its farmer's care, and if you happen to be eating something from Nordic Creamery in Westby, rest assured that it came from a happy, healthy animal, partly in thanks to Sarah Bekkum, the hardworking business partner wife of farmer Al Bekkum.

Multitasking at its best

Sarah Bekkum is a sweet and pleasant woman with an ever-active mind. A mother of six, she is the queen of multitasking. Hardworking, she puts many of us to shame. Her day starts at 5:00 a.m., when she gets up to help her husband milk their herd of 23 cows. Then it's back to the house to get her children ready for school and jump into the rest of her day. She may supervise the Nordic Creamery store and dairy production plant, manage paperwork, ship products or travel to a farmer's market in Chicago; every day is a bit different. If she's not working for the business, she is going to her part-time job as a lab technician at a local medical clinic, a job she held full time before Nordic Creamery opened its plant and store in 2011.

Needless to say, Bekkum's abundant energy has kept the business running smoothly, although she sometimes (and understandably) feels like there are not enough hours in the day. "My eight-year-old says I often remind him of Dory from the movie *Finding Nemo*," Bekkum laughs. "I guess I *can* be a bit forgetful at times."

There is a lot to remember, as any business owner can attest. One look around the store, though, shows the fruit of Bekkum's labor.

Shelves are stocked with delicious jams and treats made by local Amish families and neighbors, freezers are bursting with meats from the Bekkums' own beef and pork herds, and there's even homemade ice cream. Then, of course, there are the freezers full of their award-winning butters and fine artisan cheeses, including a goat-and-cow-milk pepper cheese named after Bekkum, called Sarah Select.



Top: Sarah Bekkum poses with a valued employee. Bottom: The Bekkums are the family behind Westby's Nordic Creamery.

It begins in the barn

Naturally, nothing of this quality could be produced without the happy cows and goats of which the business boasts. A visit to the barn with Bekkum can be very enjoyable; the stars of the show are lined up throughout the day, all looking healthy, all happily munching away at their hay and grain.

"We get about 42 pounds of milk per day from each cow," says Bekkum. "Some of these ladies have been producing for up to 10 years, which shows how well they're taken care of and how low stressed they are." This truly is something to boast about, as in larger commercial dairy operations, cows commonly have only a two-year production lifespan, notes Bekkum.

Bekkum walks in between the rows of cows, and some look up at her with fond recognition. It's surely a good life for the likes of Pokey, Betsy, Jersey Girl, Black Betty, Barbie, Gloria and the rest. They eat, sleep, eat some more and get milked twice a day. They reward Bekkum with delicious milk that gets turned into Nordic Creamery's delectables.

"It's been an adventure," says Bekkum, giving a cow a pat on the head. "We have goals, and they're all for our children. We hope that they will

find their niche in the business as they get older—this was all started for their benefit. It'll be there if they want it someday."

Meanwhile, Bekkum's customers get to reap the rewards of her family's journey—and what delicious rewards they are! (crw)

Heidi Overson quickly found her favorite cow in Bekkum's barn. After her visit, she debated becoming a dairy farmer, but has opted to remain a writer. Her husband is heaving a big sigh of relief.

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Nell's IN KITCHEN

Step into a historic past and savor the classic charm of Nell's City Grill.

BY CHARISH BADZINSKI

Contributed photos

Recipes analyzed by Gundersen Lutheran registered dietitians

Nell Hull started her career in the restaurant business as a “hat check girl.” But these days, people aren’t leaving their hats with her, they are tipping them to her talents. Now the owner of Nell’s City Grill and Catering in La Crosse, Hull knows her way around a kitchen, yet you might be surprised to know she’s largely self-taught. “I’m not really a chef,” Hull explains, “just a person who enjoys cooking and creating.”

In 1997, Hull bought her first restaurant, with no formal training outside of hat checking. That didn’t stop her. “Basically, owning a restaurant is cooking and entertaining people, and those are the things I enjoy.” Her innate sense of restaurant savvy is apparent in her success: Nell’s City Grill and Catering has been going strong for five years. Housed near the City Brewery Hospitality Center, the restaurant, bar and piano lounge offer gourmet dining in a casual and historic atmosphere: a slice of La Crosse’s storied past. “The bar was built in 1896 and has been in this location since 1919,” says Hull. Longtime Coulee Region residents will recognize the restaurant site as the original, former home of Walt’s Restaurant. To this day, the solid cherry wood bar and mahogany service top are still intact, and have been restored to their original luster.

Raise a glass

The historic feel doesn’t stop there. Hull says the artworks that grace the upper walls in the Grill Room of the restaurant are original oil paintings by Paul Stollenwerk, who painted them in 1954. The walls, like ghosts of the past, shout out toasts in various languages, and those who enjoy a cocktail at Nell’s may find themselves echoing the décor with a spirited shout of *lachim, slainte* or *skaal*.

The menu focuses on classic American favorites: expertly prepared steaks, chicken and seafood. In addition, Nell’s City Grill offers catering both on- and off-site, for everything from small gatherings to parties for 350 guests. Says Hull, “On the catering side, I love planning and executing events, weddings, parties, rehearsals, business meetings, etcetera.” Her inspiration for her work, whether at the restaurant or off-location catering? Simply put: “I love food.”

Slow down and savor

In a town where pizza and sandwich joints thrive, where many want to eat their food and run, Nell’s has carved out a niche and found an unsatisfied need. “There is a difference between fast food and dining. I like to think Nell’s is dining,” Hull explains. “I hope people leave the restaurant with a comfortable dining memory, and hopefully new friends.”

The upper wall leading to the Blue Room at Nell’s offers a nod to the area’s German heritage, with the words *Auf Wiedersehen*, or “until we meet again.” With its unique, historic charm, classic menu choices and warm and welcoming atmosphere, guests will surely hope to hang their hats at Nell’s again and again. But chances are, Nell Hull will be too busy in the kitchen, creating delicious food and fulfilling her love of entertaining others, to help them at the hat check. **(crw)**

When she isn’t writing or traveling, Charish Badzinski also loves to cook and entertain. She especially enjoys dining out and deconstructing recipes so she can enjoy them at home. You can follow her adventures in food and travel at <http://rollerbaggoddess.wordpress.com/>.

NELL’S QUICK AND EASY MARINADE FOR GRILLED STEAKS

Serves 6.

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup ketchup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soy sauce
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp. ginger
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup vinegar
- 6 8-oz. steaks of your choice

Combine all ingredients in a large plastic bag, place steaks in marinade and zip closed tightly. Allow to rest overnight in the refrigerator, turning occasionally. For stronger flavor, prepare two separate batches of the marinade, keeping them separate. Use one batch for the overnight marinade. As you cook your steaks on the grill, brush your steaks with sauce from the second marinade periodically.

670 calories, 47g fat, 17g saturated fat, 810mg sodium, 0g fiber, 15g carbohydrate, 46g protein,



BLACK BEAN-SMOKED CHILI SPREAD OR DIP

Serves 10.

- 1 T olive oil
- ½ cup chopped white onion
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves, divided
- ½ cup sliced green onions
- 1 T fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp. chopped chipotle chili canned in adobo sauce
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 15-oz. can of black beans, rinsed and drained

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped white onion, cumin and coriander to the pan, and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. In a food processor, combine the green onion, water and 2 T of the chopped cilantro and remaining ingredients and process until smooth.

Garnish the finished dip or spread with the remaining chopped cilantro.

40 calories, 1.5g fat, 0g saturated fat, 190mg sodium, 2g fiber, 6g carbohydrate, 2g protein

CARAMELIZED BROCCOLI WITH GARLIC

Serves 8.

- 3 T olive oil
- 2 heads of broccoli, stems peeled and heads halved lengthwise
- ½ cup water
- 3 fresh garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 pinch of crushed red pepper
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 T freshly squeezed lemon juice

In a large, deep skillet, heat 2 T of the olive oil. Add the broccoli, cut side down, cover and cook over medium-low heat until the broccoli is richly browned on the bottom, about 8 minutes. Add the water, and cover and cook until broccoli is just tender and water has evaporated, approximately 6 to 8 minutes. Add the remaining 1 T of olive oil along with garlic and crushed red pepper to the skillet, and cook for about 3 more minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and drizzle with lemon juice.

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THE DISH ON MOBILE MEALS

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**Bethany on Cass staff and volunteers team up
to make meal delivery a go.**

BY FRAN RYBARIK
Contributed photos



Volunteers like Connie Smith (left) and Charlie Haas (right) ensure that homebound people such as Elaine Canard (center) receive good meals.

The shiny stainless steel kitchen at Bethany on Cass comes to life at 5:30 a.m. One cook prepares meat; another makes potatoes and vegetables. A part-time dietary aide joins them at 7:30. Sandwiches and salads are assembled; desserts are cut. Numbered bags are packed with a dessert, bread and milk. Ice bags are readied for the coolers. On weekdays, they prepare about 70 “meals on wheels” for senior, disabled or homebound individuals. People who sign up for a two-meal plan also get a sandwich, a salad and some fruit. About 50 meals go out their doors on weekends.

At 10:30, the two cooks begin a choreographed routine of dishing up the food. A clipboard, hanging above a stack of numbered aluminum tins, lists the dietary needs for each recipient by number. The cooks fill the divided tins with cheesy or plain mashed potatoes, green beans and spare ribs, with or without barbecue sauce, depending on the diet. The aide covers each tin and puts it in a turquoise insulated carrier, which is numbered by delivery route.

Big white coolers loaded with cold food are stacked by the back door. The meals are counted to make sure no one is missed. The aide rolls the carriers to the delivery door just before the drivers arrive.

“Pairs of volunteers deliver Mobile Meals from here and from Mayo Health System,” Nancy Wannemuehler, the dietary supervisor at Bethany on Cass, explains. “We also prepare food for two routes that are delivered by Bethany Lutheran Homes drivers, and three meals a day for residents of Bethany on Cass.”

Door-to-door service

At 10:50, a white SUV pulls up close to the kitchen delivery door. Doug and Cathy Johnson, volunteers from Trinity Lutheran Church, are ready to deliver the North Side Route.

“We volunteer in winter when our landscaping business is slower,” Doug Johnson states, as Wannemuehler helps load a cooler and two carriers into the back of their vehicle. She gives them a clipboard with a map of their route and a sheet for each recipient with their name, address and emergency contact number. The Johnsons will initial each page as they deliver the meals.

Melissa Greco coordinates volunteers, registration and billing for Mobile Meals of La Crosse. “Volunteers come from 42 partner churches, service organizations and businesses in the area, as well as individuals and families,” Greco says. “In 2012, we delivered over 50,000 meals within the city of La Crosse.”

“Missy’s done a great job of organizing the routes geographically, so drivers aren’t crossing paths,” Wannemuehler says.

Food with a friendly face

Wannemuehler enjoys cooking, packaging and occasionally delivering the meals, always looking for ways to improve the process.

“We help people stay in their homes,” she says. “Our recipients get regular nutritious meals, they have someone check on them and their family doesn’t have to worry about accidents with hot stoves—it’s safer and healthier.”

Mobile Meals of La Crosse has people on a waiting list for meal delivery and needs new volunteers. You can reach them at 608-784-4623 or www.mobilemealsoflacrosse.org. 

Fran Rybarik writes from her home office in La Crescent and would like to thank the dietary staff at Bethany on Cass for welcoming her into their kitchen.

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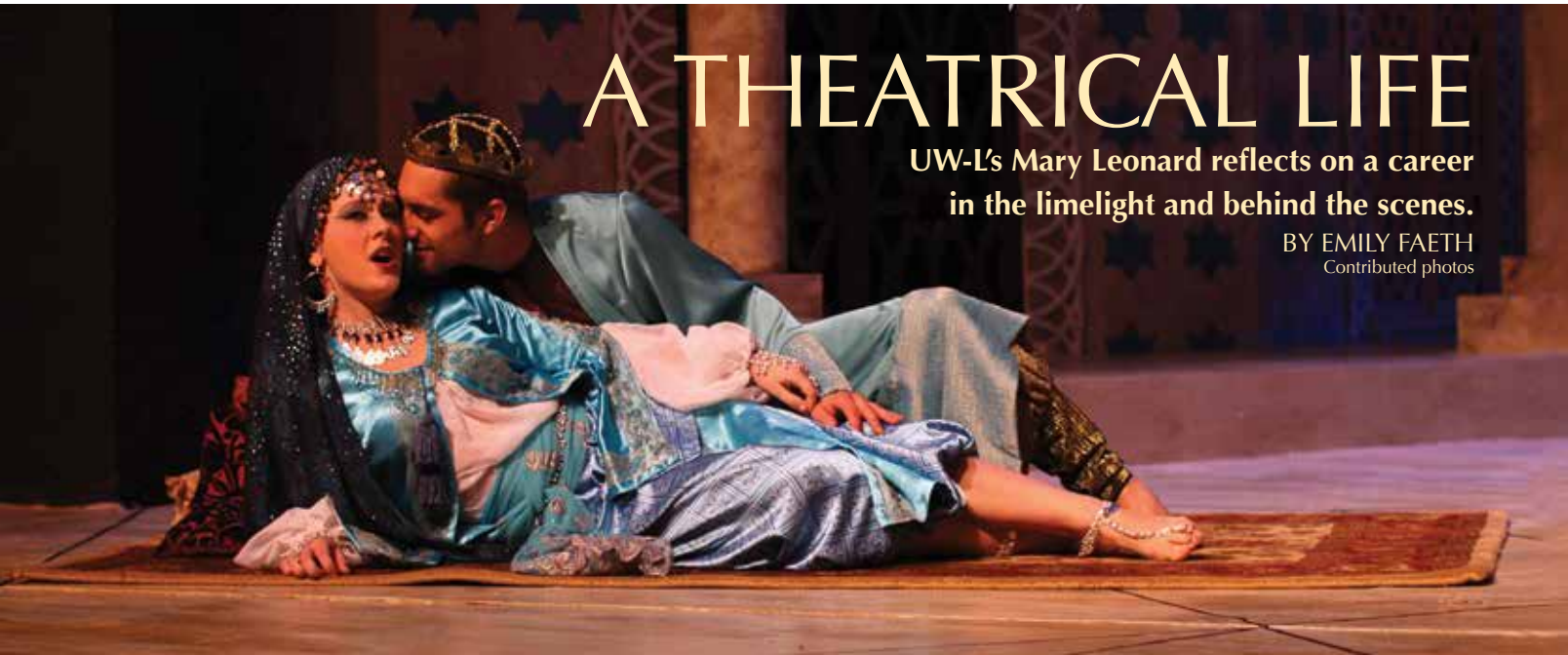
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A THEATRICAL LIFE

UW-L's Mary Leonard reflects on a career
in the limelight and behind the scenes.

BY EMILY FAETH
Contributed photos



Mary Leonard teaches acting and directs plays, such as *Mirror of the Invisible World*, at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

For Mary Leonard, the world is, quite literally, a stage—which is serendipitous considering the trajectory of her life. Though Leonard, who has served in a full-time capacity in UW-La Crosse's Theater Department since 2000 (she served as adjunct faculty at the school beginning in 1991), jokes that she "was 10 years old when [she] got here," her jest is more self-effacing than facetious.

Indeed, Leonard traces her love affair with theater back to the age of 10, when a woman in her St. Paul neighborhood was scouting for participants in a local children's theater. "I was scared, but I thought it sounded really interesting," says Leonard. "She gave me a small part in one of her plays, and that was the moment . . . that I realized, 'This is what makes me really happy.'" After an adolescence focused on gaining as much experience in the theater as possible, Leonard majored in theater at Hamline University, and later attended graduate school at Minnesota State University.

From stage to classroom

Leonard was an actress in Minneapolis for several years, working with a variety of theaters including SteppingStone Theatre Company. Throughout her career, though, Leonard's roles have always revolved around acting, directing and teaching, occasionally for youth outreach programs. One of her final forays into the Minneapolis/St. Paul theater scene was with a Murder Mystery Company, which she eventually gave up when her husband, Joseph Anderson, was offered a position in costume design at UW-La Crosse.



Mary Leonard, UW-La Crosse

Until Leonard became a permanent fixture at UW-La Crosse in 2000, she also taught at Viterbo, directed for the La Crosse Community Theatre and took part in many community projects. Though some might balk at the idea of working so closely with one's spouse, to Leonard, it's been a great partnership. "We've always worked together . . . we're right across the hall, and it's great! He's an amazing colleague and a talented person," says Leonard of Anderson, who now serves as Department Chair as well as Professor of Theatre Arts at UW-La Crosse. "And he's a great husband and dad, so of course that's a bonus," she adds with a laugh.

The upcoming semester will prove to be a busy one for Leonard. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Leonard will be directing UW-La Crosse's children's show, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Leonard will also be appearing in the Pump House's production of *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*, a play by Nora and Delia Ephron, featuring a cast of some of the Coulee Region's most talented performers, organized by Anne Drecktrah. Later, Leonard will direct UW-La Crosse's Summer Stage Musical. Though her life is busy and at times chaotic, such is the nature of the theater. And when things become trying, all Leonard needs to do is hark back to that 10-year-old girl who once upon a time realized what makes her most happy. (crw)

Emily Faeth's favorite plays include Antony and Cleopatra by William Shakespeare, Angels in America by Tony Kushner and most things she was assigned in her elective theater classes at UW-La Crosse, though she prefers Pygmalion to My Fair Lady.


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Gundersen Lutheran has been named a Center of Excellence in Minimally Invasive Gynecology (COEMIG) by the American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists after undergoing a rigorous review process. Dana Benden, MD, OB/Gyn, is the COEMIG physician program director at Gundersen Lutheran.

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Valley View Mall Welcomes New Marketing Director

Valley View Mall announces a new Marketing Director, Laurie Cafe. Originally from the La Crosse area, Cafe is returning to the area after living and working in Milwaukee for 20 years. She brings an extensive background in event planning and management, sponsorship, sales and public relations.

Most recently, Cafe was Sales & Marketing Manager for Wisconsin State Fair Park. Prior to that, she served as Group Sales Manager for the Iron Horse Hotel, Corporate Sales Manager for Milwaukee World Festivals, Inc. (Summerfest, the World's Largest Music Festival) and Suite Manager for the Bradley Center.

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SPRING GETAWAY

Cutting-edge color and fresh styles invite escape to warmer destinations.

Photos by Megan McCluskey, Atypik Studio
Photos taken at Nordeen Design Gallery

Need a vacation from the grays of winter? Look no further than our own Coulee Region merchants for vicarious resort wear, vivid new colors and a sneak peek at what's new for spring.



Touch of Class presents a look that will take you places. Highlights of this resort-wear ensemble, modeled by Jennie Staige, include sophisticated lightweight knits accented with a luscious fuchsia.

Nic + Zoe cardigan (\$108), striped tank (\$98) and skirt (\$98); Anna Beck sterling drop earrings (\$115), 1/2-in. sterling twisted cuff bracelet (\$300), sterling skinny cuff bracelet (\$357) and 3/4-in. sterling twisted cuff bracelet (\$506); Joie "Conchita" wedge sandal (\$270). All from **Touch of Class**, downtown La Crosse.



Fall in love with a dress from **LARK** in the hottest color of the season: cobalt. Amanda Kleinsmith sports this swingy style that's bold yet feminine, and lots of fun.

Andrea Fisher dress (\$159); Sevy gold cuff bracelet (\$20); Stan Blodgett necklace (\$56); Nine West "Founder" platform sandals (\$99). Dress and jewelry from **LARK, downtown La Crosse**; shoes from **Macy's, Valley View Mall**.



Macy's offers a taste of sorbet spring pastels in Jenny Pretasky's casual-Friday spring look. Mint skinny jeans are the must-have item in this look, but don't miss the glittery Sperry Top-Siders.

American Rag jeans (\$49) and sweater (\$35); INC tank (\$20.50); M. Haskell teardrop earrings (\$22.50), necklace (\$28.50) and stretch bracelet (\$24.50); Sperry Top-Sider "Angelfish" boat shoes (\$95). All from **Macy's, Valley View Mall**.

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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., 608-788-7439, www.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, www.lacrossechamber.com.

Children's Museum of La Crosse weekly programming:
Save-On-Sundays \$1.00 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.

Sparkling STEMs Science for ages 1-7 with adult, every Tues. 10:30 a.m.

Toddler Spanish Ages 2-5 with adult, every Wed. 10:30-11:30 a.m., preregistration required.

Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW) 4th Tues. of each month, Nell's City Grill, 1111 3rd St. S., La Crosse, 5:30 p.m. Debbye SwardFihn, debbye@couleecoffee.com.

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

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

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

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

Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary every Wed. noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, 300 Marcou Road, 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.

Valley View Kiddie Crew 1st and 3rd Tues. of each month, Valley View Mall Food Court, 10:30-11:30 a.m., www.myvalleyview.com.

Viroqua Toastmasters Club 2nd and 4th Thurs. of each month, 7-8:30 p.m., Vernon Memorial Hospital, Taylor Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 507 S. Main, Viroqua.

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

Women of Worth (WOW) last Wed. of each month, Boot Hill Pub, noon, Debbie Lee, 608-784-2775, debbie.lee@westlandinsurance.com.

Women's Alliance of La Crosse (WAL) 2nd Thurs. of each month, The Waterfront Restaurant, noon, Kendra Brown, kendra@dmharrislaw.com.

CALENDAR EVENTS

Feb. 6-14, free Valentine's Day gift with purchase, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Feb. 7-9, 14-16, AVON recruiting events, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Feb. 7-10, *Angels in the Trees: Rockwell Kent in Winona*, Thurs. Fri.-Sat. 8 p.m., Sun. 2 p.m., Historic Masonic Theater.

Feb. 8, Night Out at the Museum 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Feb. 13, 20, 1-2-3 Magic parenting class, 9-11 a.m., \$45, Stein Counseling, Onalaska, 608-785-7000 or effectivebehavior.com/workshops.

Feb. 14, The Hornheads with John Paulson Big Band Project, 7:30p.m., Saint Mary's University Page Theatre.

Feb. 16, *Beauty and the Beast*, 7:30 p.m., La Crosse Center.

Feb. 16, Meet Pet Therapy Dogs, 10-11 a.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Feb. 16-17, Sports Card & Collectible Show, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Feb. 17-18, Living Out Loud with Lisa Warsinske, 7:30 p.m., Pump House, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org.

Feb. 19, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), presenter Evonne Kundert. 7 p.m., First Congregational Church, Losey and Main, La Crosse.

Feb. 21-23, MOSES Organic Farming Conference, La Crosse Center, www.mosesorganic.org.

Feb. 22-24, Gingerbread Arts & Crafts Show, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Feb. 22-24, Rossini's *Cinderella*, Fri.-Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Feb. 23-May 12, Curious George exhibit, Children's Museum of La Crosse.

Feb. 24, Family Fest, La Crosse Center.

Feb. 24, Mardi Gras Celebration; Dixieland Jazz, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Jefferson Riverside Event Center.

Feb. 25, La Crosse County HCE presents Connie Thompson, "Riverfront: Its Services to People with Disabilities and Its Impact on the Community," 1:15 p.m., Hamilton Town Hall, West Salem.

Mar. 1-10, *Spring Awakening*, Thurs.-Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2 p.m., Toland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.

Mar. 2, MVAC Artifact Show, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Mar. 2, Rockin' Out Hunger with the Reminders and the Executives, benefit for Hunger Task Force of La Crosse, Stoney Creek Inn, www.lacrossehtf.org or 608-793-1002.

Mar. 7, Empowering Women Inc. wine tasting event, 5:30-8 p.m., Cargill Room, the Waterfront, La Crosse. Raeanna Johnson, empowerwomenforlife@gmail.com.

Mar. 7, Off the Page: Alison Scott, 7:30 pm, Minnesota Marine Art Museum.

Mar. 8, Night Out at the Museum 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Mar. 8-24, *The Dining Room*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Mar. 9-10, Three Rivers Model Railroad Club 32nd Annual Model Railroad & Miniature Show, La Crosse Center.

Mar. 10, Yes (You'll Enjoy Seeing) Holmen, Holmen Business Association expo, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Holmen High School, www.holmenbusinessassociation.org.

Mar. 12, 19, 1-2-3 Magic parenting class, 6-8 p.m., \$45, Stein Counseling, Onalaska, 608-785-7000 or effectivebehavior.com/workshops.

Mar. 13, *Monty Python's Spamalat*, 7:30 p.m., La Crosse Center.

Mar. 14-16, *Picnic*, 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Mar. 14-30, Easter Bunny arrival and photos, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Mar. 17, Wee Bit O' Fun, St. Pat's Activities, 1-3 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Mar. 18 & 25, pet photos with Easter Bunny, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Mar. 19, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), "Social Security Benefits for the Mentally Ill—Disability, SSI, SSDI," 7 p.m., First Congregational Church, Losey and Main, La Crosse.

Mar. 22-24, Home and Builders Show, La Crosse Center.

Mar. 28-29, Easter Egg-Stravaganza, Thurs. 5:30-7:30 p.m., Fri. 9:30-11:30 a.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.



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