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women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

**MAKERS &
SHAKERS**

**Making:
A Creative Superpower**

**Jamie Heiden's
Magical Photography**

A Mansion Restored

**Makers, Shakers
& Bakers**

**Celebrate
Local Art**

**Crochet a
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MAKERS & SHAKERS

11 PROFILE

PASSION + COMPASSION

Stacy Shapiro is a force for good among Coulee Region nonprofits.

15 DESIGNING WOMEN

THE POWER OF MAKING

The West Salem Makers' Market creates community while celebrating the handmade.

19 HEALTHY LIVING

NOT ONE OF THE BOYS

Surgeon Virginia Wintersteen blazes trails and paves the way.

23 PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL STORIED IMAGES

The ethereal photography of Jamie Heiden speaks volumes.

25 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

WORKING IN HARMONY

The La Crosse Girlchoir builds musical, social and character development in girls.

27 HOME

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

RLR Properties restores the jewels in La Crosse's crown.

31 FOOD

MAKERS, SHAKERS AND ... BAKERS

Baking fills the sweet tooth of three Coulee Region creatives.

35 FAMILY

A FARM-FRESH FAMILY

At Lynch Farms, food and family are raised the way they used to be.

37 NONPROFIT

A CELEBRATION OF ART AND EDUCATION

AAUW's Art Fair on the Green benefits artists, art lovers and students.

39 CAREERS

CREATIVITY WITH A CAUSE

A generous spirit fuels Renee Chrz's graphic design.

41 WOMEN IN THE REGION

A ROOM OF THEIR OWN

The owners of Dragonfly Retreat offer a space for women's wellness, rejuvenation and creativity.

43 MOTHER EARTH

CROCHETING A CORAL REEF

Art and environmental concern combine in a community craft project.

45 RETAIL THERAPY

LOCAL MATTERS

Support nearby makers by shopping in your community.

Pictured on cover: Stacy Shapiro, owner of Shapiro Strategies. Photo on cover by Jordana Snyder Photography. Photos on this page, from left: The crocheted coral reef at UW-La Crosse, goods from the West Salem Makers' Market and "Coasting to November" by Jamie Heiden.



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The last Christmas present my maternal grandmother gave me, when I was 7, was a children's craft book entitled *McCall's Giant Golden Make-It Book*, copyright 1953. As the editor's note promised, it was "filled with over a thousand things to make" as well as colorful, happy illustrations of rosy-cheeked children, boys in dungarees and girls with golden curls, all smiling as they crafted paper airplanes and soap boats, party hats and washcloth dolls.

I *loved* that book. I pored over it, bewildered by possibility, for hours—just as the editors had promised I would. It had a section on how to knit, and I tried so hard to teach myself. I scrutinized the drawings in the book and mimicked them as best I could, but there was always some point where everything fell apart, and I couldn't even get those first stitches on the needle. Taking pity on me, my mother handed me over to Oleeta Hermanson, the dear neighbor who finally taught me to knit.

These days, I am Oleeta to a tangle of kids at Emerson Elementary, where teacher assistant Tina Thomas bravely began a knitting club this past fall. The first few afternoons of teaching more than 40 kids to knit were utter chaos for us. I remember walking into the Emerson media center with my daughter Ivy those Wednesday afternoons, taking a deep breath and bracing myself for the onslaught—"Ivy's mom! I need help!" "Ivy's mom! I made a mistake!"—and the subsequent hour of unknitting, untangling, fixing, reassuring and encouraging. They made mistakes I'd never seen before and didn't know I could fix. But

I told them not to worry; it was all part of learning. Details like even tension and non-dropped stitches would work themselves out over time.

I don't know how it happened, but one day, and sooner than I would have expected, I walked into the center and found everyone clustered on couches or in cozy circles on the carpet, merrily talking while bent over their knitting. "Oh my God," I said to Tina.

"We've done it!" Actually, *they* had done it. They'd discovered the delight of making and the even greater delight of building a community around craft.

Now we have kids binding off their first projects and casting on their second; we have kids with scarves, doll blankets, washcloths and headbands. Now when I hear "Ivy's mom!" it's because someone wants to learn how to change color or bind off or find needles for something new. Or, best of all, it's because they just *made* something, and they are bewildered by their own possibility.

That's the magic I discovered in my childhood book, and it's the magic that infuses this issue of *Coulee Region Women*. Here, we present to you a community of makers and shakers—creative women who are making things and making change, often at the same time. Stacy Shapiro's creativity abounds, whether she's building plans for nonprofits or building a playground in Peru. The women of the West Salem Makers' Market celebrate making as they inspire others to make. The AAUW Art Fair on the Green turns art into opportunity for local students, Lynch Farms turns grass into healthy food, and you can even do your own making by adding stitches to a crocheted coral reef at UW-La Crosse.

I still have my old *Make-It Book*, and my kids pore over it as much as I used to. The binding is broken, certain pages are loose and the front cover is held on by camouflage-print duct tape. But the children in its pages are still cheerfully crafting, I am still knitting and the love and magic of making is still startlingly real for a whole new generation.

Betty

coulee region women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

ISSUE 90, VOLUME 15, NUMBER 6

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017

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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 300, Onalaska, WI 54650. Subscriptions available for \$24.95 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.

For advertising information

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CURL UP WITH A GOOD FILM

Just around the corner is the Frozen River Film Festival, an opportunity to see documentary films that will give you something to think about, talk about and act upon. Watch *Chasing Niagara* in the St. Mane Theatre in Lanesboro, Minnesota, on February 11, spend the afternoon of the 12th watching fast-paced short films (in icehouses!), then head inside on February 14 for beer, films and conversation at Ed's (No Name) Bar in Winona.

The Shack Shorts (in the icehouses) are free; other ticket prices range from \$12 for a single event to \$120 for a premier pass. Purchase tickets at the Frozen River Film Festival box office at the Winona County History Center at 160 Johnson St. Find a complete schedule—including more than 70 films running February 15-19—at www.frrf.org.

CELEBRATE THE ARTS WITH LCT

Come to La Crosse Community Theatre's

2017 Patron Gala on March 18 at the Weber Center for the Performing Arts, 428 Front Street S. VIPs will enjoy food and complimentary drinks 5:30-6:30 p.m.; the presentation of the 2017-2018 season follows

at 7 p.m. LCT will also showcase past and future shows, commemorate the 2016-2017 Volunteers of the Year and induct eight patrons/volunteers into the newly created Hall of Fame. Reserve your tickets at www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org or 608-784-9292. Tickets are \$50 for the VIP Social Hour and Presentation or \$25 for the Presentation only.



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CELEBRATE LOCAL ART

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum (MMAM) is home to some of the most significant works of art in the Midwest. MMAM collects and displays great art inspired by water, including European art and the strongest collection of American art in Minnesota. Artists include John James Audubon, Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso and Georgia O'Keeffe, to name a few. The collection also includes Emanuel Leutze's masterpiece "Washington Crossing the Delaware" in addition to exhibits by local artists. MMAM is located at 800 Riverview Drive, Winona, www.mmam.org, and is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

It's been nearly a year since **Gallery M** opened its doors at 33 South Walnut St. in La Crescent, and if you haven't stopped in yet to take a look around—or to sign up for a class—you are in for a treat. Photographers Janet Mootz and Cary Wyninger exhibit their love of art in the variety of media displayed at Gallery M. Gallery hours are 2-6 p.m. Tuesdays, 12-4:30 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays, or by appointment. For a complete listing of classes go to www.janetmootz.com.

The **Pump House Regional Arts Center** is a local art treasure in downtown La Crosse. February kicks off with "Where There Is Want," a series of oil paintings by Jacqueline Olson as well as "Political Propaganda, Pet Peeves, and People Pollution," a series of screen prints by Cody Bartz. February and March feature exhibits from local schools and Chileda. Admission to the Pump House Galleries, 119 King Street, is free; hours are Tuesday through Friday 11 a.m.-7 p.m. and Saturdays 12-4 p.m. The Pump House also offers an intimate venue for live performances. Check www.thepumphouse.org for upcoming performances and classes.

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PASSION + COMPASSION

**Stacy Shapiro is a force for good
among Coulee Region nonprofits.**

BY ANASTASIA PENCHI
Photos by Jordana Snyder Photography

Stacy Shapiro, consultant to many area nonprofits, is the owner of Shapiro Strategies and an all-around outstanding woman.

Stacy Shapiro has that “secret sauce”—a combination of goodness and passion and compassion—that causes people to open up when they are around her. It makes her an effective businesswoman as owner of Shapiro Strategies, a consulting firm that helps individuals thrive so the organizations they work for also succeed.

It drives her in her work with nonprofits—whether she is serving as executive director at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Seven Rivers Region or ringing bells for the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign.

It pushes her to be the best mom and wife she can be, even when that involves developing a statement of family values with two children under the age of 7 who are more likely inspired by the gummy treats provided at the family meeting (more on that later).

Knowing this makes it easy to see why she was recognized as a YWCA Outstanding Woman in the Nonprofit category in 2016.

“Those that know me well understand that I was initially a bit reticent in receiving this award,” she said in her acceptance speech. “What I do, and how I live, has never been something I imagined I would win an award for.”

The beginning

Shapiro grew up in the Milwaukee area and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. After college, she spent three years in Utah with her then-fiancé (now husband), Dan Baumgardt, but both were anxious to get home to Wisconsin. They moved back more than 20 years ago, when Baumgardt was hired by the National Weather Service of La Crosse. They have been in the same house ever since.

Shapiro spent her first years here as executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the 7 Rivers Region. While she loved her job, she ultimately switched direction to focus on being a mom to their two boys, Hunter and Sawyer, after they were born. She started her part-time consulting business in 2006—not surprising, considering she is from a family of entrepreneurs; both parents and four siblings share that title.

Shapiro credits some of her personality to her mother, who thrived despite a bout of childhood polio and other physical challenges. Her mother taught her not to judge others until she had “walked in their shoes.”

Shapiro’s father and stepmother are similarly inspiring, she says,



Left: Shapiro and her family (from left, Sawyer, Dan and Hunter Baumgardt) attend Mass in Lurin, Peru, where they volunteer with at-risk youth at the orphanage Casa Hogar. Center: Shapiro delivers her acceptance speech at the YWCA Tribute to Outstanding Women. Right: Painting a newly installed playground at Casa Hogar.

as they set up a family foundation that allows their children and grandchildren to select nonprofits to receive its interest annually.

She remembers watching the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Association Labor Day Telethon with her mother, but the nonprofit bug really took hold in college when she raised money for the March of Dimes. In Utah, she worked as regional director of the American Heart Association. She later served as YES AmeriCorps Advisory Council Chair for the La Crosse area.

Janie Morgan, executive director of the UW-La Crosse Alumni Association, nominated Shapiro for the YWCA award and says she feels blessed to call Shapiro her friend. They met more than 20 years ago, brought together by their love of the nonprofit world.

“One of the things I respect most about this amazing woman is her acceptance of others,” Morgan says. “She was raised in the Jewish faith, married a Lutheran man and now prays with me at the Adoration Chapel at the Franciscan Spirituality Center.”

The entrepreneur

In her consulting business, Shapiro is a facilitator and trainer who conducts board and staff retreats in the UW System and for area businesses and nonprofits. Leadership and communications are her areas of expertise.

A fan of 360-degree evaluations, Shapiro always values the perspective of both her staff and board of directors. She says she is inspired by leaders who aren't afraid to try to change the culture of a company, especially battling tradition and ingrained perceptions.

She brings personal experience, as well as lessons from others' experiences, to trainings. An avid reader of nonfiction books on leadership, she enjoys lectures at the D.B. Reinhardt Institute for Ethics in Leadership, and she has served on its Advisory Council for seven years.

Shapiro loves the idea of servant leadership, and says when a culture can't change at the top, employees can still create “pockets of good.”

Brad Quarberg, director of News & Marketing at UW-La Crosse, who met Shapiro when they were both building a house for Habitat for Humanity, said he's most impressed with her thoroughness. Recently, she worked with his department to help employees create goals and develop a branding initiative.

“She spends ample time finding out what your goals for a

workshop are, works extremely hard and does her homework to be thorough for her hands-on work, and then follows up to make sure she accomplished what was desired,” he says.

The giver

Shapiro is savvy, and she always included her young sons to increase giving during Salvation Army kettle drives (and to teach them to give). Her family Christmas tradition involves serving meals at the Salvation Army; they also volunteer at WAFER food pantry.

She is a charter member of Women in Philanthropy, a local giving circle that pools money to help those in need, and says she is continually inspired by others who do good.

“That is one of the major reasons I love living here in the Coulee Region,” she says. “It is truly a beautiful way to live.”

A personal dream of Shapiro's came true last summer when her family went on a volunteer mission trip to Casa Hogar, an orphanage in Peru with 64 children.

Baumgardt, who always supports his wife's passion, was “completely on board” when she suggested they sit their two young boys down to create family values (hence the gummies). They hold annual family meetings to reaffirm those values and set goals.

The banner she bought listing those values (love, respect, honesty, laughter, teamwork, volunteerism, healthy living and appreciation for life) was “the best \$50” she ever spent. But seven years ago, her oldest son noticed they were missing the word *compassion*. Shapiro bought a new banner. Now it's the best \$100 she ever spent.

Annette Mikat, president of Mikat Public Relations, Inc., met Shapiro during a La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce event about 20 years ago. They had both lived in Utah and were in the same Rotary Club (La Crosse Downtown).

Mikat remembers the first time she walked into Shapiro's home and saw the banner of values hanging on the living-room wall. She had seen that in businesses, but never in someone's home.

Looking back, she says it made sense.

“She personifies those very values in every facet of her life,” Mikat says. “She is the most principled woman I've ever known.” **(crw)**

Anastasia Penchi is a graduate of UW-La Crosse and a longtime Coulee Region writer who has written for many area publications. She can be reached at callmeloislane@hotmail.com.



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THE POWER OF MAKING

The West Salem Makers' Market creates community while celebrating the handmade.

BY ELIZABETH D. LIPPMAN

Contributed photos

Though the women artists of one of the Coulee Region's newest and most successful makers' markets spend much of their time thinking and creating in solitude, their process is one of deep connection—with beauty, their fellow makers and their community. They share their work through a cozy, three-day holiday sale in West Salem, offering customers hot beverages and warm cookies and the chance to meet the minds and hands that craft a diversity of high-quality handmade items. Sales are growing exponentially, and plans for 2017 are already ramping up. And Makers' Market founders Opal Tulpo and Stephanie Sharp say it's all because they are doing what they love.

"It just kind of blew up," Tulpo says of the event's popularity. "It spread on Facebook like wildfire."

For two years on the second weekend of November, Sharp has transformed her home's first floor into an eclectic display of refinished furniture, pillows, jewelry, clothing, fiber art, ornaments, kitchen

accessories and much more. Many of the pieces are inspired by vintage objects and ideas and given a modern twist, and others utilize items from nature or embody the energy and unpredictability of talent combined with a "use what you've got" philosophy.

Process is vital

"What I love doing," Tulpo explains, "is pulling out some wool felts and seeing the sheets lying there and maybe some thread and scissors, then looking at it afterward and seeing that this is what I created from just this little amount of stuff. It's like a superpower!"

The process, Tulpo and Sharp agree, is vital.

Tulpo, who creates pillows, penny rugs and coasters that fuse roles of function and flamboyant décor in always-changing and unexpected ways, enjoys the trial and error of artistic evolution. She has conquered designs both simple and complicated. And people, she says, seem to be drawn to simplicity.

"When I make something, there's something in colors that is calming to me," she says. "I put one on top of the other and think, 'No, that doesn't work.' But then I put a different color on top of another and get this feeling of, not euphoria, but 'Wow, that's it!' I just enjoy doing it. It makes me feel good."

Sharp says she has been a maker for as long as she can remember. "I grew up on a farm," she recalls. "My dad is a gifted woodworker and worked in a metalworking shop, where he often made the tools that other people needed to use to fix things."

A common delight

A maker's mission, Tulpo and Sharp say, is perpetuating beauty in the world. And their practice is soul medicine.

"If I go too long without being in my studio," Sharp explains, "my spirit doesn't feel light anymore. So I get back in there and start making something, and who knows what it's going to be. I switch it up all the time."

Tulpo's work is featured at Inspired, a La Crosse shop that celebrates local art, and Sharp's is sold at Maiden Wisconsin in Sparta.

The Makers' Market, though, plays an important role in their offerings, providing the particularly warm feeling of home, holiday spirit and the opportunity to mingle with the artists.

"Teach me something new"

The women who compose the Makers' Market come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but they share a common delight in engaging their creative impulse to fashion new and interesting ways of enjoying the ordinary.

"Everything I make has a recycled element," says Makers' Market participant Angie Hemker. "That includes my jewelry. It is a challenge to take something that would normally be discarded and give it new life and purpose and return it to a new and beautiful thing."

"Finding an old kitchen cart abandoned on the curb makes me giddy," Ruth Hage adds. "Turning T-shirts into a rug, giving furniture a makeover, sewing unwanted sweaters into plushies—all are things I enjoy immensely. A lot of items that are unwanted can have a new life as something fun and functional."

The women of the West Salem Makers' Market, for certain, are committed to a lifetime of learning.

"I want to learn how to do everything," Sharp exclaims. She and Hage, for instance, want to learn how to weld. "Teach me something new," Sharp says, "and then let me figure out how to link that back to what I already know—or maybe not." She's now thinking about how she might combine welding with her fused-glass skills.

Making a community

In addition to showcasing their work at shops and happenings around town, Tulpo, Sharp and others enjoy teaching. They offer classes, clubs and gatherings featuring fiber art, painting techniques and beyond for adults and kids alike.

"I come XL from a family of makers," Hemker says. "Both parents and both sets of grandparents made things. It brings me joy and even relief at times. It is a gift to be able to share my love of making things with others in the form of teaching art, as well as making things to sell and as gifts."

For many of the women, in fact, art is a family affair.

Tulpo's daughter learns and creates along with her and hopes to sell at the Makers' Market one day.

The two women like that their children see them doing what they love—and that they see their work being valued and appreciated by others.

"I think making is in my blood, and I see it passed along in my children who are musicians and makers themselves," Sharp says.

The group saw more sales in the first four hours of the 2016 market than during the entire three days the previous year, and the tribe of makers is considering hosting some pop-up events and a spring makers' market. To stay up-to-date, connect with West Salem Makers' Market on Facebook.

"I'm over-the-moon grateful for a community that supports local makers," Sharp says. "I can't wait to see what the next year brings." *(crw)*

Elizabeth Lippman is a freelance writer and editor based in Winona. She holds a master of liberal studies degree in literary nonfiction and Appalachian studies.



Angie Hemker/Red House



Stephanie Sharp

The makers of the West Salem Makers Market (front, left to right): Missy Wilde, Ruth Hage, Stephanie Sharp; (back, left to right): Angie Hemker, Katie Rasmussen, Opal Tulpo; not pictured: Alice Waldhart

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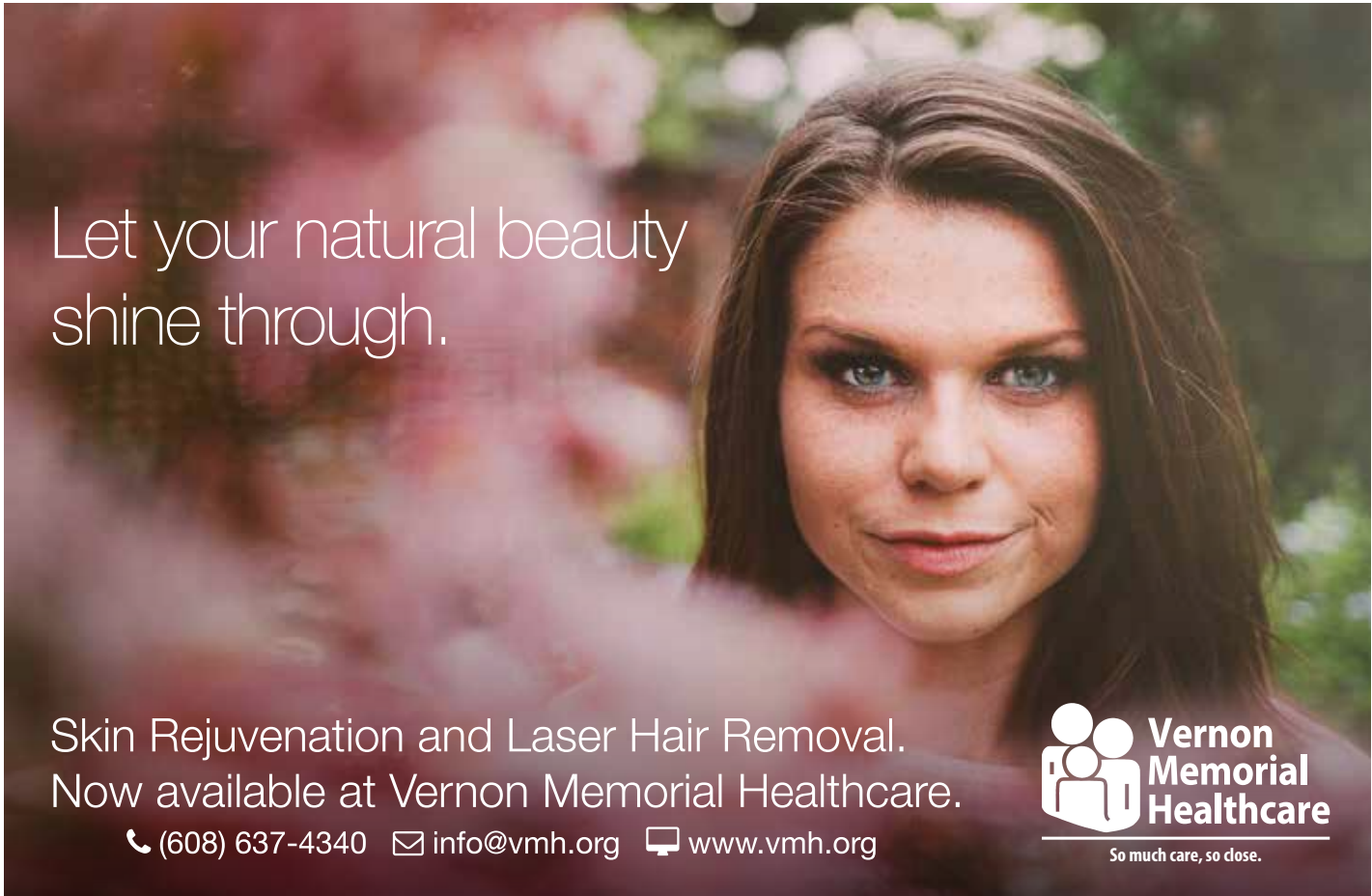
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NOT ONE OF THE BOYS

Surgeon Virginia Wintersteen blazes trails and paves the way.

BY LISA HEISE
Contributed photo



On the very day that a new study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reveals what many of us have already guessed—that women probably make better doctors—a feisty female physician sits in the lobby of Gundersen Health System’s Legacy building, pondering the path that led her to become an orthopedic surgeon during an era when few women were going that direction.

It began in 1973. A first-year student athlete named Virginia Wintersteen made her way down the tunnel of UW-Madison’s Camp Randall Stadium and into the athletic training room ... which was smack in the middle of the men’s football locker room. “I was real professional, dressed in cut-off jeans and a T-shirt,” quips Wintersteen. “I told the head trainer [Gordie Stoddard] that I wanted to be a student athletic trainer.”

Despite the obvious logistical issues of having a woman in a busy men’s locker room before games, Stoddard gave Wintersteen a chance; he pulled a training table outside the locker room into the tunnel. There was no heat in the tunnel, says Wintersteen, and she didn’t have much to do early in the season. “Some guys had to come to me because all the other tables were busy,” laughs Wintersteen.

Then, one day, the team captain and senior linebacker showed up at Wintersteen’s table to have his ankles taped. “After that, he came to me every day, and the other guys were saying, ‘OK, she can do this.’”

At first, Wintersteen saw her training job as a building block toward her future career as a physical education teacher. One experience transformed that: She observed the team physician at his clinic one day. “I thought, ‘This is interesting and pretty cool,’” she says. “The next

“To think that women’s issues were resolved by Title IX is naive. Women still fight on a daily basis to establish their positions, and they often don’t stay in their chosen fields because of the lack of camaraderie. They’re not one of the boys.”

—Virginia Wintersteen

day, I skipped class and went to his office and asked, 'What do I need to do to get into med school?'" Upon graduating with a degree in physical education, Wintersteen continued at UW-Madison as a medical student.

A trailblazer on her own terms

Fast-forward to 2016: Honored by the local YWCA chapter as a Trailblazer, Wintersteen notes the examples and mentors who helped pave her path. "My great-grandmother was a physician," she notes, "so it wasn't a question of whether I could do it. I knew I could." She sees her life as a series of intersecting paths, noting the directive power of those who gave her a chance. "What if that trainer had said, 'We don't allow women trainers?'" she asks. "What if nobody came to me to tape their ankles? What if that physician had laughed when I asked him how to get into med school?" Wintersteen says she doesn't see herself as a trailblazer. "I was just doing what I wanted to do."

She doesn't mention the courage it took to walk into that locker room or approach that doctor, but Wintersteen does acknowledge some obstacles she experienced early in her career. Having gone to med school with the express purpose of pursuing sports medicine, Wintersteen changed direction during her residency. "The sports medicine guys were jerks," she says. "Pediatrics was more open and accepting" to her as a woman. And here is where she shares the other side of her story.

Her residency was tough. Male colleagues and faculty called her "Honey" or "Sweetie." Sometimes, she walked into a room to be greeted with, "I want a real orthopedic resident!" Once during a professional conference, a colleague in her field began a sentence with, "So, you don't have the balls to try ..." and then described a particular treatment.

Wintersteen says she promptly informed her condescending colleague that, no, she did not have balls.

Women still fight

When Wintersteen entered the field of orthopedic surgery in the 1980s, only 3 percent of physicians in her specialty were women. Thirty years later, that ratio hasn't changed: Although the general population of female physicians has risen to one-third overall, only three out of every 100 orthopedic surgeons are women.

"To think that women's issues were resolved by Title IX is naive," observes Wintersteen. "Women still fight on a daily

basis to establish their positions, and they often don't stay in their chosen fields because of the lack of camaraderie. They're not one of the boys." She values her role in encouraging young women to pursue their dreams. The key to their success, says Wintersteen, is tangible support and encouragement. "How you respond to a young person's dreams really makes a difference."

Wintersteen notes that, in terms of policy and support, her workplace has been wonderful. As a single mom raising six kids throughout much of her career, she says she would not have been successful without the support and flexibility of Gundersen's administration.

Now, back to that *JAMA* study. All other differences considered, the gender of the treating physician seems to be a key factor in rates of recovery and longevity of older Medicare patients. While Wintersteen operates in a different realm—pediatric orthopedics—the study adds fuel to her fire and hopefully helps pave the way for the next generation of women looking for a chance to change lives. **(crw)**

Lisa Heise lives, teaches and writes in La Crosse. She delights in true stories of women who blaze trails.

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"Off Line" is a classic example of Jamie Heiden's haunting photography style, where each image begs a story to be told.

STORIED IMAGES

The ethereal photography of Jamie Heiden speaks volumes.

BY JESSIE FOSS

Photos by Jamie Heiden

"Simplicity is my inspiration; story is my goal" is how Jamie Heiden describes the vision and ambition behind her distinctive artwork.

Others have described her type of artwork as photo impressionism. Heiden says the definition of the painted impressionistic image is "a literary or artistic style that seeks to capture a feeling or experience rather than to achieve accurate depiction." She believes the definition works, but adds that it is never her intention to create an image that would be described as painterly.

Heiden's process of creating her artwork begins behind the camera, and she says she gets the most satisfaction from releasing the shutter. A day of shooting results in 300 to 500 images on her camera.

"I was taught back in my university schooling that film is your cheapest commodity," Heiden says. "If that was true, then digital memory is even cheaper."

Once at a computer, Heiden edits multiple photographic layers through dodging, burning, boosting contrast and adjusting exposure.

"All tasks once performed in the darkroom are now tools I have at my fingertips using the computer," she says. "I don't use any filters or presets or photographic actions but build the image layer upon layer until I get the desired result. Some images are finished in one sitting; others take weeks before they are where I want them."

Pictures as stories

It is not only the process of creating the artwork that is significant to Heiden. The title of each piece is also really important to her. She says there is something about the combination of words and pictures that completes the process for her.

"Sometimes the titles are there from the beginning, and other times they don't come until I finish an image and it sits for a while," she says. "I'm not a writer and cannot offer this journey with words alone. I take pictures, and they are my stories. The story is there the whole time and has guided the image along, but the picture is never complete until it has a title."



Photographer Jamie Heiden

The language of art

Heiden's love of art goes back as far as she can remember. She says she's always been a collector, whether clipping images out of magazines, sketching them or capturing them in her head to save forever. Her love really blossomed when she received a camera as a gift from her parents.

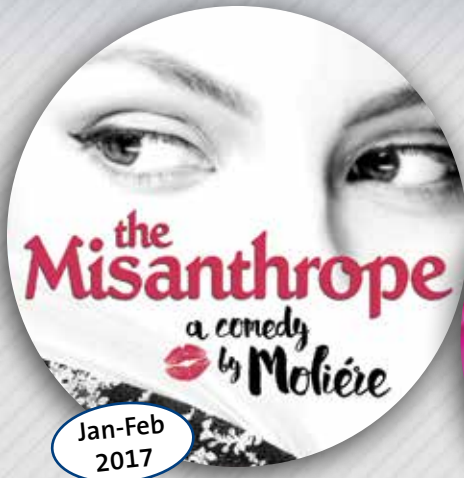
"Art has always had power in my life," she says. "Whether it comes in the form of words on a page, paint strokes on paper, notes in the air, movements on the stage or any number of other dialects, art speaks directly to us. It allows us to tell our stories and hear others'. It is a language I understand."

Heiden, who grew up in the eastern part of Wisconsin, earned a degree in photography from Northern Arizona University and moved to Holmen in 1994. She and her husband, Rick, have raised their family on 65 acres along with chickens, goats, horses, cats and dogs.

Much of Heiden's exposure has come online, through Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest and her website, www.jheidenphoto.net. She is also represented by a few galleries, has done solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally and also does about eight to 10 art fairs each year from Chicago to Minneapolis and points in between. **(crw)**

Jessie Foss is a freelance writer who lives in La Crosse. She enjoyed being exposed to a different type of artistry and creativity.

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Working in Harmony

The La Crosse Girlchoir builds musical, social and character development in girls.

BY KIM SEIDEL
Contributed photos



The La Crosse Girlchoir performs at events such as the Rotary Lights in Riverside Park.



Shane Drey, La Crosse Girlchoir Assistant Director and leader of the Concert Choir

“Did I see you running this morning?” Best friends and running partners Shealan Bahr and Shane Drey often hear that question. The answer is easy. “If it was someone this size,” says Bahr, stretching her right arm high, “running with someone this size,” she puts her left arm lower, “then yes, that was me with Shane.” Picturing the scene—Bahr is 5 feet 8 inches tall and Drey is five feet 2 inches tall—is easy as well. It brings smiles between the two over coffee. While running, the women, both age 42 and residents of Onalaska, talk about the details of life every close friend shares: family, jobs, food, shopping and more.

Yet what distinguishes these two women from other longtime friends—they met in high school in the early 1990s—is their shared leadership of the La Crosse Girlchoir. Bahr has served as director of the organization since 2007 and instructs the Touring Choir. Drey has served as assistant director since 2013 and leads the Concert Choir. The women won’t accept all the credit for the organization’s success; they receive tremendous support from the volunteer board of directors, staff, families of the girls and even alumni.

On their runs and on other occasions they’re together, they’ll discuss plans for the distinguished musical foundation. Again, the word *easy* comes up when asked how it is working with your best friend. It’s easy because Bahr and Drey share a passion not only for music but also for the organization, particularly the young girls that compose its dedicated membership.

Building musical, social and character skills

The 25-year-old La Crosse Girlchoir shines brightly in the Coulee Region arts scene. A lot of great music is created and performed locally, but the focus for the girls starts and ends with a three-pronged approach: musical, social and character development.

“Working on all of those skills really lifts a girl’s confidence in all aspects of her life,” Bahr says. “Many girls stay with us for several years, and it’s remarkable to see how a 12-year-old girl has matured and grown since she was 8.”

The choir is open to any girl age 7 to 18. Being a member of La Crosse Girlchoir, after a “gentle” audition, Bahr says, requires a lot of discipline and commitment. Membership has ranged from 50 to 70 girls throughout the years.

Bahr instructs the more advanced, typically older girls in the Touring Group. Shane teaches members of the Preparatory Group. While they rehearse separately, they practice simultaneously at Viterbo University, where Bahr graduated with a music performance degree. Drey holds a degree from North Central College in vocal music education.

After each rehearsal, ranging from about 2½ hours weekly and one Saturday monthly, the singers join into one large choir. “This is a ‘safe place’ for each girl,” Drey says. “The older girls are like big sisters to the younger ones.”



Shealan Bahr, La Crosse Girlchoir director and leader of the Touring Choir

The total group rehearsals build bonds among the musicians. It also prepares them for joint performances at the La Crosse Girlchoir's two major concerts for the holidays and spring. They share the stage together at various community events as well.

Learning beyond music

During rehearsal breaks, conversations and sharing extend beyond music to issues affecting the girls. The song "I Dream a World," prompted conversations of equality, hope and peace. "Tear Them Down" spoke of tearing down walls that divide us, perseverance and unity," Bahr continues. "These are ideals that appeal to young people and excite them, and the girls will freely talk about it."

La Crosse Girlchoir learns many genres, from the Jackson 5's "Rockin' Robin" to "Die Forelle" (German for "The Trout") by Franz Schubert. Silly songs about ugly Christmas sweaters, uplifting Irish tunes, Top 40 pop hits, spirituals and iconic choral repertoire by Randall Thompson and John Rutter make up the variety of music the girls and their audiences enjoy.

The annual spring tour brings the girls to

local elementary and middle schools. Every other year, the Touring Group travels to a big city like New Orleans or Nashville. This fall, an exciting journey to New York City is in the planning stages. The organization works diligently at fundraisers, including their popular homemade apple pie sale.

"I want to bring them to places they probably wouldn't visit with their families," Bahr says. "I enjoy introducing them to real working musicians and going to professional shows, too." The girls sing in different venues, experience a new culture and partake in service-oriented projects.

Bahr and Drey believe their actions speak louder than words. They're much more to the girls than their music teachers. They're role models and mentors. They work hard in their families, careers and health pursuits. Perhaps it's a choir member who asks them, "Did I see you running this morning?"

Girls audition every January, June and September. For more information, visit www.lacrossegirlchoir.com. 

Kim Seidel enjoys writing about the positive impact the arts makes on young people and the community, and the inspiring women behind the scenes.

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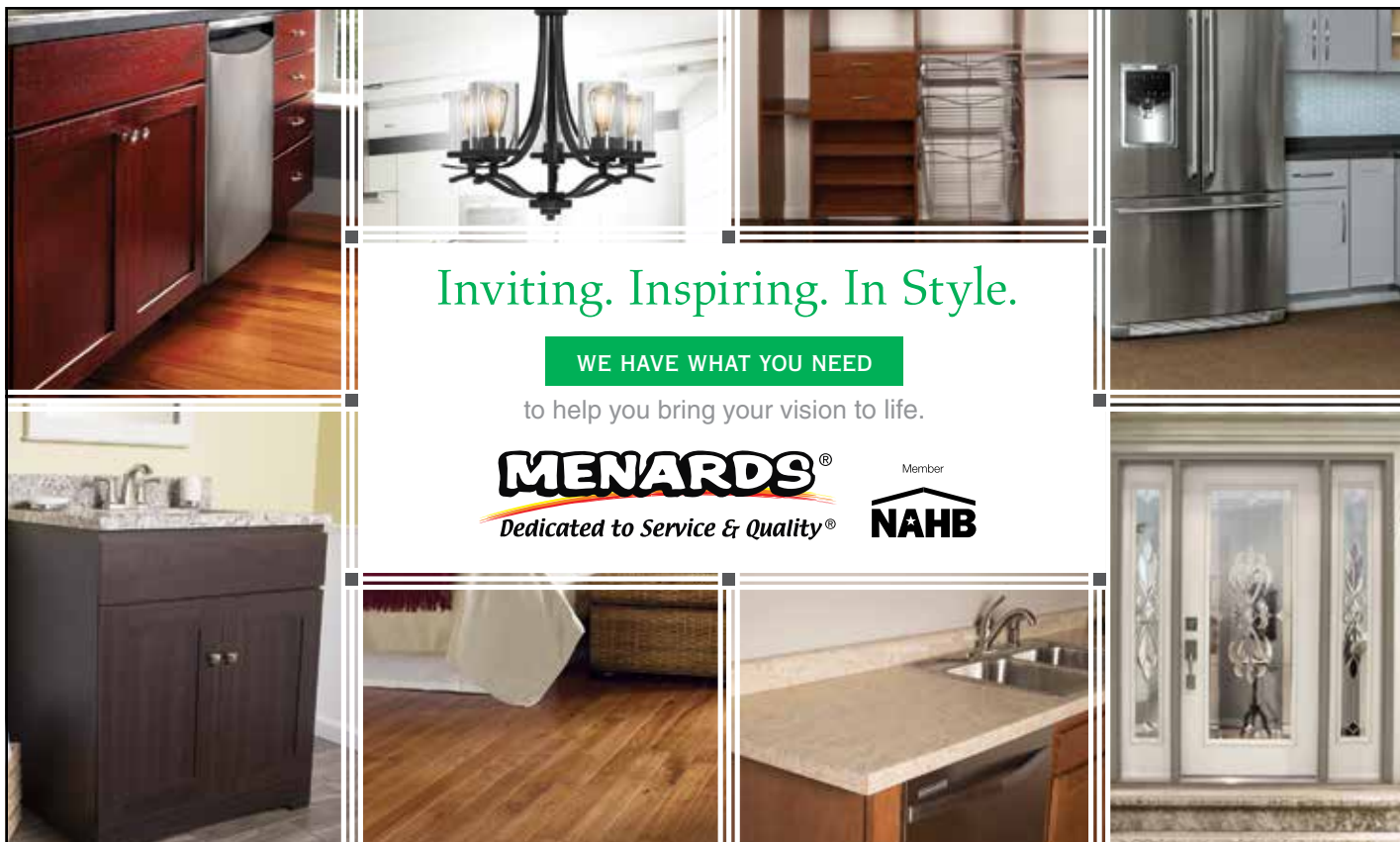
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Jason Etrheim
LABA President
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I would like to welcome everyone to the 2017 La Crosse Area Builders Association Home Show! It's such a great local event to attend because whatever your idea or project—big or small—you'll find all types of professionals from the design and building industry in one location to chat with and get to know. Members of the La Crosse Area Builders Association are experts in their fields and are a great resource for any information you may seek. Spend some time walking through the different booths and getting to know the professionals. They have a wealth of knowledge and are excited to help you out!

This will be a special year for the Home Show as we've implemented a different theme for each day. Friday night is Date Night! So grab your significant other or even come with a group of friends and enjoy a cold beverage or glass of wine while you visit the booths. Have a home project you want to tackle yourself? Saturday's Demo Day will be the perfect day for you to watch industry professionals perform some basic skills so you can do those DIY projects at home. Bring the kids on Sunday for Family Day! There will be activities for kids like bounce houses and even Segways to ride around.

On behalf of the La Crosse Area Builders Association, I would like to thank you for attending this year's show. We hope you have an enjoyable experience and find the right resources for your needs. We look forward to seeing you at the 2017 LABA Home Show!

Jason Etrheim
LABA President



Kraig Lassig
Home Show Committee Chair
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Come Friday after work and enjoy a beverage on us! Are you planning on attending Saturday? You can participate in all the demonstrations being put on or rest your legs by taking a brief trip on a Segway. Don't forget Sunday is Family Day. Bring the little ones down for some fun time while you browse the aisles for that dream idea.

Thanks to all the volunteers, committee members and LABA staff who helped make this year's show outstanding. I can't wait to see you at the show!

Kraig Lassig
Home Show Committee Chair

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Not Just Another Home Show

LABA unveils a new, event-filled Home Show for 2017.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN

When Tena Bailey, the executive director of the La Crosse Area Builders Association, sat down with LABA Home Show committee members to plan the event for 2017, she was faced with a challenge: How do you take a longstanding event—running since 1994—and keep it fresh, make it new? “After 2016, we realized we had two different organizations in town running basically the same show,” Bailey says, referring to a similar event held by the La Crosse Builders Exchange. “So we wondered, ‘How do we set ours apart? What do we need to do to make it fun?’” Their plan will be unveiled at the Onalaska Omni Center March 10-12, at the 24th annual LABA Home Show.

Same quality, but more

Bailey is quick to point out that the best aspects of the LABA Home Show will remain. “The high quality of the vendors and the booths will be the same,” she assures. “It’s still all about building, all about the home. In this Internet society especially, we need to be able to put faces and personalities to the people building our cabinets and laying our floors. It’s not just about the best prices you can find, but capitalizing on connections.” The most important features the Home Show brings to its guests—the chance to meet contractors face-to-face, to see and touch the building products headed for your home—are still the heart and soul of the show. But it’s that other element—fun—that’s been ramped up this year.

“We did some research and asked other builders associations what worked for them,” Bailey says. “The answer was events”—ideally something unique every day.

Events for all

Bailey and the Home Show committee have come up with a show that offers just that—something fun, every day, for everyone.

The Home Show opens Friday evening at 4 p.m.—just when many couples are thinking of heading out for a drink or dinner. And when they do, Bailey hopes the Home Show will be their first stop. “It’s Date Night!” says Bailey. “We moved up our opening time so couples can come before going out to dinner, see the show and sample some wine and local beer.” Adult guests on Friday night will receive tickets for free wine and beer tastings offered by area vendors, which they can enjoy while they browse the booths and converse with contractors.

Saturday is Demo Day at the Home Show, with a long list of DIY project demonstrations intended to inspire guests to try something new at home—or perhaps realize they’d rather hire a professional. Over the course of the day, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., professionals will demonstrate projects from the basic to the ambitious, including installing a toilet, installing a faucet, creating a kitchen backsplash, changing a light fixture, planting basics, painting techniques and more.

“The demos replace our traditional seminars,” says Bailey. “Now, we’re not just talking about a homebuilding topic, but showing, teaching, doing something hands-on.”

On Sunday, the whole family is invited to come for kid-friendly fun. In a new twist that pumps up the family-friendly nature of the day, admission is free for everyone under 18. Opening at 11 a.m. that day, the Home Show is an ideal destination for families after church or after brunch, offering kids’ crafts, a bounce house, a magician and more.

In addition, daily activities enliven the show, including door prize drawings and a scavenger hunt with daily prizes. “If your spouse is busy talking to a vendor, this is something you can do,” laughs Bailey.



Attendees and contractors mingle and exchange information at the 2016 LABA Home Show. Look for the same face-to-face connections being made at the 2017 Home Show, but with events and demonstrations to spice things up.

A community asset

While the La Crosse Area Builders Association is most publicly known for its events, like the Home Show and Parade of Homes, Bailey points out that it's also an incredible community asset that serves the area in less-publicized ways. LABA's members comprise a wide variety of area tradespeople, whom LABA serves with the purpose of filling its mission "to educate our members and advocate for affordable housing and responsible government." "LABA is a member organization, driven by members and serving its members," Bailey says.

The public can be assured that LABA is a trustworthy resource for finding building professionals who are insured, are licensed, have signed a code of ethics and continue education to keep up with industry standards. "It just gives you that added protection" when hiring a builder, Bailey says.

Building careers

But perhaps what is most impressive is LABA members' commitment to educating a new generation of building professionals. Just last year, LABA donated \$6,500 worth of tools to building programs at local high schools.

Then, in October 2016, LABA hosted more than 100 high school students for a hands-on career day, where participants could discover what careers the building trades have to offer and ask

questions of professionals on the job.

The day began with a tour of an area lumberyard, during which students were shown everything from door construction to painting, staining, sales and marketing and more.

The second half of the morning was spent at a framed-up house on a working jobsite. Here, students were able to talk to builders, electricians and other professionals involved in the project. They also met architects, bankers and mortgage specialists, suppliers and representatives from Xcel Energy, all of whom discussed with the students all aspects of building a house. "It showed them there was more to it than swinging a hammer" in terms of opportunities in a building career, Bailey says.

Not just another Home Show

Bailey, who has served as executive director of LABA since October 2015, wishes to emphasize and applaud the hard work the Home Show committee has put into planning and invigorating this year's Home Show. "We want to invite the public to not just another Home Show, but an event," she says. "We want people to get out, get excited and get thinking about spring projects." And from the looks of this year's lineup, bets are that they'll succeed.

Betty Christiansen is editor of Coulee Region Women.



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Insider Hints for Design on a Budget

Mini-makeovers are key to transforming the look of your home.



Don't have a big budget but want to make some big design changes to your home? Well-designed rooms don't always have to come with a huge price tag; in fact, designing on a budget may be easier than you think.

Many times, by changing small elements, you can give a room an entirely new personality. Sometimes adding a few colorful pillows or picking up a paintbrush is all you need to do to make your room look like something out of the pages of a magazine.

The power of paint

One of the most common fixes for a boring room is color. "Color is easy to do and inexpensive," says Kathy Browning, owner of Design Consultants, a design firm in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Updating the color of just one wall in any room will give it an entirely new feel. Painting, when approached correctly, can be an enjoyable experience with instant rewards. Lauren Warnock, an interior designer based in Chicago, reminds homeowners that warmer colors can make a room feel cozier and more inviting.

Cooler colors like gray or stark white, on the other hand, may give a room a more industrial feeling. "Light, airy colors open up a space, while deep, darker colors can make a room appear smaller," Warnock says.

Connie Edwards, director of design for Shenandoah Cabinetry, has her own advice when it comes to color, particularly if you are looking at the kitchen. "You can never go wrong with neutrals, but color is hot now," Edwards says. "Not necessarily vibrant colors—although for the right space, they can be fabulous—but think along the lines of buttery yellows, soft sage greens and nearly neutral blues."

Accessories pack a punch

Adding accents to pieces you already own can also make a large difference. For instance, if your couch is not as exciting as it once was, try throwing a few fun accent pillows on it. Throws and cushions, when selected as accents, can really bring new life to a tired piece of furniture.

"The use of pillows, throws and draperies in living spaces enhances a room in many ways," Warnock says. Fabrics also can add beautiful softness to a room and allow additional patterns and textures to be brought into it.

Rethink your artwork

Another budget-friendly change is to rotate the artwork in a room. Using the same frames but changing the images can easily create a new theme or mood, and combining several different frames in different finishes and sizes can achieve different looks.

Love your lighting

Often overlooked but strikingly effective, updated lighting can work wonders. "Lighting will dramatically change the mood of a room," Warnock says. Try installing a new fixture or simply swapping out the shades on current fixtures. Installing dimmer switches is another simple change that can transform any room.

Adapted from National Association of Home Building, www.nahb.org.



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What is LABA?

The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a nonprofit trade organization uniting over 190 building-related companies in western Wisconsin.

At LABA, we

- educate our members on the latest in the building industry
- advocate for the building industry
- provide networking opportunities
- run the Parade of Homes and Home Show
- partner with area high schools and WTC to encourage and assist individuals to pursue careers in the building trades

Tools for Schools Auction

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Home Show

Building Careers

What does LABA do?

LABA works to better the building industry:

- We are watchdogs for changes that can affect home building and remodeling.
- We offer a membership of trained, qualified and insured builders and tradespeople to the consumer.
- We do the homework so consumers can build, remodel or repair their homes with confidence in our members.

From builders to electricians, plumbers, concrete specialists, roofers, landscapers, fireplace installers, stonework specialists, heating and air specialists, and so many others, our members affect the work on your most expensive purchase ... your home.

Why should I use LABA?

LABA members are insured, sign a code of ethics, and do continuing education to keep up with industry standards. One phone call to LABA can open doors to having a better experience and better success with home projects. LABA members have ties to the community and often do service projects to help strengthen the community in which we work and live.

We often get calls from consumers who are having issues with a builder or remodeler who is not a member of the La Crosse Area Builders Association, and all the calls end the same way: "Next time I am going to call LABA before I hire someone." Our list of members is FREE to everyone and is available on our website at www.labaonline.com. Make us your first call in your search for help with your home!





The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a professional organization that unites and represents people in the building industry. We promote safe, attainable, quality housing through education and interaction.

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Overhead Door Company of the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.	8	www.overheaddoor.com
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Ultimate Insulation	8	www.ultimateinsulationllc.com
Waldenberger Inc.	7	
Wisconsin Building Supply	7	www.wibuildingsupply.com
Xcel Energy	18	www.xcelenergy.com/Builders

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- Make sure the builder or home remodeler has a permanent business location and a good reputation with local banks and suppliers.
- Find out how long they have been in the building business. It usually takes three to five years to establish a financially sound business. You want to make sure they will be around after the construction is complete to service any warranties.
- Make sure the builder/remodeler has sufficient workers compensation and general liability insurance. If not, you may be liable for any construction-related accidents on your premises.
- Ask the builder/remodeler to provide you with names of previous customers. If they won't, beware. If they do, ask the customers if they would hire the builder/remodeler again.
- Ask if you can see the builder's/remodeler's work, both completed and in progress. Check for quality of workmanship and materials.
- Do you feel you can easily communicate with the builder/remodeler? Remember you will be in close contact with them throughout the construction process and afterward as you live in your new home.
- Make sure the builder/remodeler provides you with a complete and clearly written contract. The contract will benefit both of you. If you are having a new home built, get and review a copy of the home warranty and homeowner manual as well.
- Be cautious of unusually low-priced bids. If the builder/remodeler is unable to pay for the materials and labor as the project proceeds, this may indicate a potential problem. Keep in mind that less expensive does not necessarily mean better!

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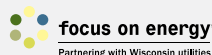
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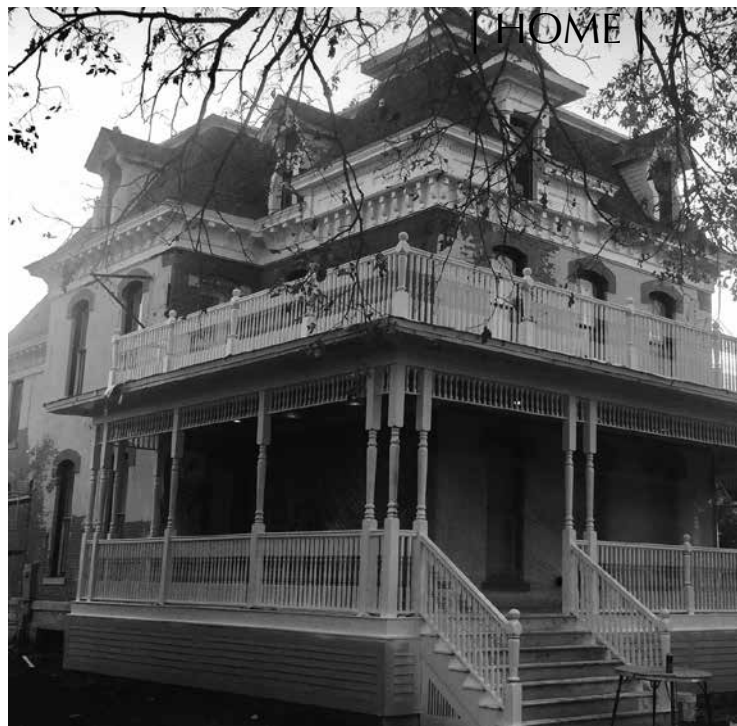
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Left: The house now known as the Cargill-Pettibone house was built in 1876 at the corner of King and Eighth streets in La Crosse. Right: After years of neglect, the house has been restored down to the original details.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

RLR Properties restores the jewels in La Crosse's crown.

BY HEIDI GRIMINGER BLANKE
Contributed photos

You might think an article featuring an old La Crosse mansion would be about its high ceilings and elaborate staircase. The article could highlight its French Second Empire style, parquet floors and delicate moldings. It might even mention the wide porch, servants' quarters and prime location.

But it's not. Instead, this article is about history, community and a dedication to preserving the best of the Coulee Region, now and for years to come.

Taking a chance

Dick Record, Jay Lokken and Ken Riley, partners in RLR Properties of La Crosse LLC, whose website states "piecing together history and property—one structure at a time," purchased the long-abandoned Cargill-Pettibone house on the corner of King and Eighth streets in 2015. One year later, they opened the building to the public as a bed-and-breakfast and event space. Four en-suite bedrooms are available, complete with use

of the common rooms on the first floor and laundry facilities.

The spec home, built in 1876 by Henry Esperson, was purchased in 1878 by W.W. Cargill and by A.W. Pettibone in 1884. After Pettibone died in 1915, the house was converted to apartments, eventually sitting vacant.

"In the Depression," explains Lokken, the house "initially was a duplex, and then was made into a fourplex. They had taken the staircase out," severing access between what is now the living room and the second floor.

"We looked at (the house) when it first went for sale. We didn't know the whole history, but we got in it and we knew there was something. We could see it was a great house underneath." However, at the time Lokken was in the midst of renovating his own house, and the property was purchased by someone else. That owner's health problems soon forced the house back on the market. "They came to us. (The owner)

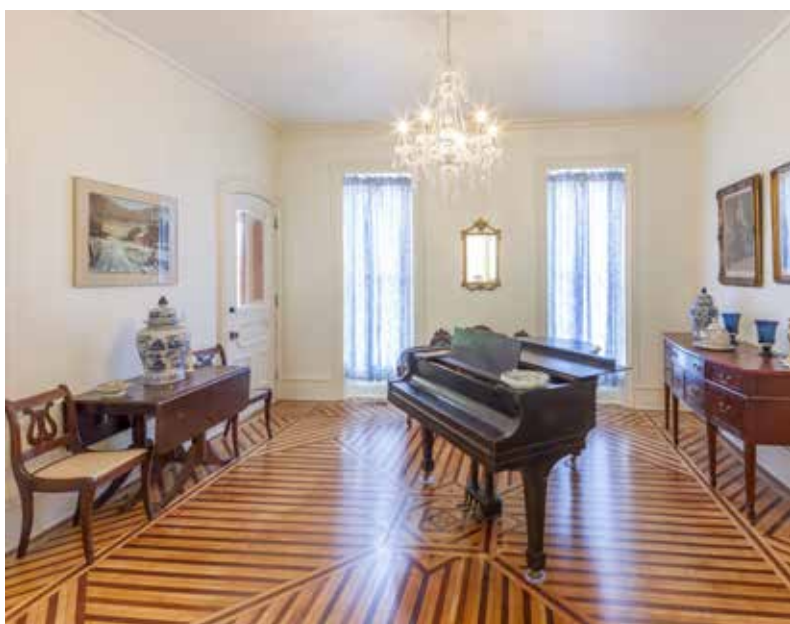
put a lot of effort into the house, stripping woodwork and cleaning it up. They asked if we would be willing to buy it."

One of the most interesting parts of the house is the second-floor apartment belonging to a resident named Elvena Tullock. "The second floor was hers. Her apartment was left exactly as it was in 1967. Even the washcloth was hanging on the bathtub," relates Lokken.

Today, the 12-foot ceilings top light-filled rooms furnished with period furniture and modern amenities. The staircase was reinstalled. It's not the original, though it came from a house at King and West streets torn down in 1980. "The staircase fit perfectly, the sideboards and everything," says Lokken. "It looks as if it's always been there."

Investing in community

This is the seventh building that Lokken has been a part of renovating. All have been in central La Crosse locations. He, Record and Riley firmly believe in the value of



The interior of the Cargill-Pettibone house has been restored as painstakingly as the exterior, revealing ornate patterned floors, restored woodwork and a repurposed staircase that is true to the original. Interior photos by Roger Grant.

keeping urban areas intact, or in bringing them back to life. Homes once forgotten and neglected are becoming prime territory as more people seek to be in the city's center rather than on the city's outskirts.

"We can help people understand that you can't build something like this now," Lokken says. Still, most people don't want to tackle the renovation. "People like to have it done."

"There's a national movement to buying local, going to local shops. The new rule is to be in the center," he explains. "The neighborhood is in a boom now," he said, referring to the Cargill-Pettibone home's location.

"The two hot markets are the central-city neighborhoods and Caledonia Street Uptowne," Lokken continues. "That's where millennial professionals are going to be; that's where the baby boomers are going to want to retire." Access to transportation, restaurants, schools and activities will be driving forces.

"It's changing everything. There's so many diamonds in the rough out there. So many people don't see it. They don't realize what they have. That's starting to change, too. People are looking for a house; they have kids, they want to be downtown. They don't want to be that far out."

Pursuing history

Lokken's enthusiasm is contagious when he speaks about the history of the house's occupants, including George W. Poage, whose mother worked for the Cargills. While much of the Cargill and Pettibone families' history is readily available, their stories are mainly about the prominent male heads of households.

"We know nothing about the women," says Lokken, referring mainly to Mrs. Cargill, Mrs. Pettibone and Mrs. Poage. Photos of them are turning out to be elusive. "We'd like to have those pictures because they ran the house." RLR Properties plans to name the upstairs bedrooms after these women. "We're trying to find anybody who can help us with the pictures."

"We've got to do more research on the women; it's easy to research the men. You know that Cargill's wife played a huge role in the family, in the company, in the house; yet there was not as much oral history (about her) recorded."

Lokken emphasizes how vital it is to know more about the women who made so many household decisions and likely had some

influence on business and community decisions, too. "We have a huge missing piece of this local history, which has national implications."

A gift to the community

While the home was intended as a bed-and-breakfast, Lokken is finding longer-term rentals are more the norm. "There's so much going on in La Crosse; more people want to rent it for a month," whether for business or leisure. "It's acting more like a rental, and we didn't expect that," he says, adding that he's received requests for stays up to three months at a time.

While the house had its share of challenges—for example, removing the paint from a unprimed exterior—the reward was humbling. "The best part was watching the people in the neighborhood and the excitement from the community. Some people didn't remember it was here. It sustained us during the process, as people were stopping all the time and saying thank you, thank you for doing this for our city and community.

Thank you, RLR Properties, for making history as you save it. **(crw)**

Heidi Griminger Blanke is a La Crosse-area writer and author of Redesigning Love, a romance novel under the pen name Lisa Gabrielle. She adores old homes, though she's never lived in one, and applauds RLR for championing downtown and the North Side.



La Crosse residents long used to seeing this version of the Cargill-Pettibone house have cheered on the restoration, especially as a gabled roof and detailed porches were rebuilt.



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MAKERS, SHAKERS *and ... Bakers*

Baking fills the sweet tooth of three Coulee Region creatives.

BY JULIE NELSON
Contributed photos



Keely Chrest, Peace Oven Cakes LLC, Holmen



Sue Thom, The Cakery and Bake Shop, Viroqua

When treats are needed for school or other gatherings, do you gleefully pull out recipe books and immerse yourself in flour, sugar and measuring cups? Or do you dread the task and end up grabbing something at the grocery store on the way to the event?

Sue Thom, Keely Chrest and Kathy Wall are all bakers in the first category, who have staked a business in hopes of catering to Coulee Region women who fall into the second category.

Sue Thom, The Cakery and Bake Shop

The Cakery and Bake Shop, located on the far south side of Viroqua, was the first of the three to open its doors. About 13 years ago, Thom had the intention of going into business for herself, but it seems baking is a calling in the Thom family, and within two months, her husband, Dan, was mixing and measuring right alongside her. Now he makes the bulk of the cookies, donuts and breads, while Thom makes and decorates the cakes and cupcakes.

"I never planned on being a cake decorator," Thom says of her

career path. She was working in a grocery store at the time and often watched others artfully apply frosting to cake. "One day a coworker said, 'I'm going to take a cake decorating class. Want to come with me?'" Thom attended and ended up taking first place in the class decorating contest.

The Cakery and Bake Shop has expanded to become even more of a family affair, with daughter Jessica taking on increasing responsibility and grandchildren Verralynn and Hayden helping out when school is not in session.

Keely Chrest, Peace Oven Cakes

Family is also the key motivator for Holmen's Keely Chrest, who installed a commercial kitchen at the back of her garage and opened Peace Oven Cakes LLC a little more than a year ago. She says she went into business to minimize college debt when the time comes for her kids, Alex and Lucy, to attend. But the truth is, Chrest loves baking and decorating, especially when it comes to cupcakes.

She makes all her cupcakes from scratch and decorates them with



Kathy Wall, owner of Kathy's Cookie Company, La Crosse, displays her artwork (above and below).



everything from swirls and real flowers for an elegant wedding to Minions for a child's birthday to a sports logo for a Super Bowl party.

Chrest says the name Peace Oven Cakes "is because I am an old hippie at heart. I love '60s music, I have the long braided hair and I wear Converse and a lot of tie-dye." In addition to cupcakes, Chrest makes cookies, muffins and pies for her customers who order them.

Kathy Wall, Kathy's Cookie Company

Kathy Wall says her sweet tooth has always pulled her to cookie baking. Like Chrest, Wall opened up shop a little more than a year ago, but unlike Chrest, she plunged immediately into a storefront.

"I had worked a variety of different jobs—with big corporations and small companies—and was ready for the independence that comes with owning your own business." She opened Kathy's Cookie Company in downtown La Crosse and now spends her days baking standards such as chocolate chip cookies, peanut butter cookies and snickerdoodles as well as decorated cutouts, monster cookies and her own creation, The Granddaddy! Named after the local bluff, this cookie contains coconut, walnuts and oatmeal. She can make gluten-free cookies on request.

Wall's storefront on Sixth Street is a little off the beaten path, but she likes the availability of parking spaces out front, making it easy for customers to run in and pick up their orders. Kathy's Cookie Company shares its retail space with two other women business owners who operate a gift shop featuring homemade crafts and jewelry. Wall says the connecting businesses complement each other; browsers for one will usually wander into the other. Wall also makes her kitchen available to another woman-owned business startup, The Cupcake Underground.

"I've always been baking for friends and coworkers, and I've always had fun with it," says Wall. Now she is having even more fun, baking for appreciative customers every day.

Thom, Chrest and Wall all agree baking and decorating is a joy in life. If you don't happen to share that philosophy, you now know three women who would be happy to take your order!

CREAM WAFERS

From Sue Thom, The Cakery and Bake Shop

- 1 cup butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whipping cream
- 2 cups flour

Roll dough to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Cut with small, round cutter or glass. Coat each cookie in sugar and prick with a fork to prevent from bubbling. Bake at 350°F for 8-10 minutes.

Filling:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Blend until smooth. Ice one cookie and then make a sandwich with another wafer.

PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

From Kathy Wall, Kathy's Cookie Company

- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- 1 pinch salt
- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour

Cream the butter and sugars together in a mixer. Mix in the egg and vanilla; then mix in the peanut butter. In a separate bowl, mix the baking soda, baking powder, salt and flour. Slowly start mixing the blended dry ingredients into the mixer, and slowly mix until ingredients are combined. Form dough into balls and place on an ungreased cookie sheets. Bake at 350°F for 12-15 minutes.

WHITE CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

From Keely Chrest, Peace Oven Cakes, LLC

- 1 cup salted butter
- 7 oz. good cocoa butter white chocolate, chopped
- ⅓ cup heavy whipping cream
- 2-2½ cups powdered sugar

Cut up butter and let it sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes. In a large mixing bowl, place the chopped white chocolate and set aside. In a saucepan, heat the whipping cream until just simmering—do not boil.

Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and let it stand without stirring for 5 minutes. Stir chocolate and cream until smooth and let stand for 15 minutes. Slowly add butter into the chocolate mixture, beating on medium speed until smooth. Gradually beat in the powdered sugar until the desired consistency is achieved.

This buttercream is great on a variety of cupcakes or cookies, and if you like, you can add ½-1 tsp. of flavoring. Peppermint is Chrest's favorite. (crw)

A freelance writer in La Crosse, Julie Nelson enjoys both cakes and cookies and is more than happy to let someone else do the baking.



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Todd Roessler, Elmaro Vineyard



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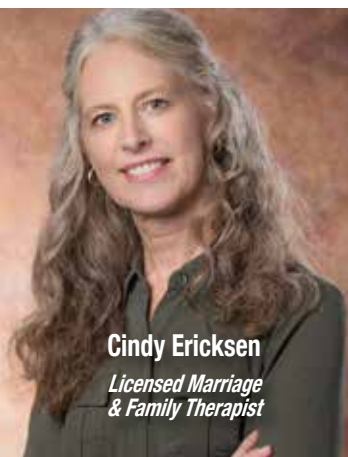
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At Lynch Farms, food and family are raised the way they used to be.

BY JUDITH MUNSON

Contributed photos

The phrase “farm to table” is heard increasingly these days. More tables in local dining rooms, school lunchrooms and restaurants are featuring the health benefits and flavor farm-fresh food offers. And by “farm fresh,” we’re not talking a grocery-store label on a plastic-packaged tube of hamburger. More consumers are seeking local suppliers, such as Lynch Farms in Houston, Minnesota, for beef, pork, chicken and eggs.

Liz Lynch and her husband, Mike, are carrying on the family farm’s long tradition of doing things “the way Grandpa did.” That means you’ll spy pigs peeking out from behind the walnut trees, beef cattle lounging around the farm’s 200 acres and chickens skittering across the yard.

The science behind good food

A UW-La Crosse graduate with degrees in microbiology and biomedical science, Lynch knows the science behind why eating farm fresh is healthier.

“This is one of the things that drives me to do this,” she says. “Studies show that meat and eggs from animals fed a pasture-based diet have healthier fatty acid profiles. You’re getting more quality calories in a pasture-based diet. The omega-3 to omega-6 fatty-acid ratio is super-important, and a grass-based diet has a much higher ratio of omega-3 to omega-6.”

Currently working as a food safety and quality professional at a large local company, Lynch has also worked in product development for Organic Valley, the world’s largest cooperative of organic farmers based in La Farge.

“I learned a lot about the nutritional aspects of food there,” she says. “I’ve always had an interest in healthier eating, and it is especially important to me now for my two daughters.”

The way food used to be raised

When Lynch met her husband, Lynch Farms had long-since transitioned from dairy

to beef cattle. “When I came to live here, we added pigs, chickens and turkeys,” she says. Although Mike has purchased the farm from his parents, they are still active in the day-to-day action. “Their knowledge and help is invaluable.”

Homesteaded in the 1850s, the farm steers clear of artificial methods of animal care. “We feel very strongly about raising food the way it used be raised,” says Lynch. When pigs are allowed to bask in the sun and eat good stuff like grass and walnuts, the results are much tastier.

“It takes longer for our animals to mature, and that lends itself to more marbling of the meat for a richer flavor profile,” says Lynch. “We like to emphasize the animal quality of life on our farm versus being inside all day. They can go outside and have the vegetation-rich diet they were meant to have.”

That flavor is attracting customers for their meat from as far away as the Twin Cities. “Interest is definitely growing,” says Lynch. “We see a lot of families with young



The Lynch family (from left, Pearl, Annabelle, Liz and Mike) raises food the old-fashioned way: by pasture-raising animals, allowing them plenty of fresh air, space and access to grass.

kids. That's our biggest customer. They are looking for high-quality, healthier meat and eggs." Lynch Farms also supplies local farm-to-table restaurants.

Generations of traditions

The lives of the Lynch family, their 50 cows, 25 pigs and 400 chickens were literally uprooted May 22, 2011. A tornado tore through their farm, decimating many of the buildings and centuries-old trees. Winds picked up a new 100- by 60-foot pole barn and dropped it 500 yards away.

The storm served as a reminder that, along with the staggering amount of knowledge a multigenerational farm creates for its successors, many memories are passed down also, says Lynch.

"One of the buildings we lost was built around 1910 as a barn for chickens but later housed the first automobile that came to the farm. Many of the trees we lost had stories, such as how people tied teams of horses to

them when they came in from working in the field. One tree we lost was well over 100 feet high. Mike's dad remembers chickens roosting in the top of it when he was a small child. Another extremely large black walnut tree was so old that Mike's grandmother, who was born in 1912, said it was that big when she was a small girl."

For Mike, who recently purchased the farm from his parents, generations of his family's hard work was on the line. "Mike often refers to this time as starting over with a blank canvas, since everything was gone," says Lynch. "The cleanup after the tornado was an extremely large financial burden. Mike decided to rebuild the barn that the tornado carried away and replanted a large number of trees."

Building a legacy

Throughout the rebuilding process, the Lynch family hopes to preserve the farm's legacy for future generations. "We plan to

add additional buildings and more trees for shade for the animals, as well as fruit and walnut trees to help supplement their diet. The hope is that where our contributions to the farm end, there will be space and options for the next generation to continue with their chapter of our family farm's history."

Future chapters for the farm may include a pumpkin patch and sheep. For now, Lynch and her husband, who both work full-time jobs off the farm, and whose 7-year-old daughter received a newborn sister right before Christmas, life is plenty busy. "We get up, do chores, go to work, come home, and do chores ... but it doesn't feel like work when doing something you love to do."

For more information, check out the farm's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LynchFarmsMoundPrairie/> or email lynchfarmsfresh@gmail.com. 

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

A CELEBRATION OF ART AND EDUCATION

AAUW's Art Fair on the Green benefits artists, art lovers and students.

BY DOREEN PFOST
Contributed photos



Fiber artist Katherine McMahon



Painter Karri Jamison



Stained-glass artist Laurel Gray

The annual AAUW Art Fair on the Green is a must-attend event for artists and art lovers alike. Best of all, proceeds provide scholarships for area students.

Picture a summer day, if you can. Surrounded by artwork and natural beauty, people stroll about, listening to music, talking with artists and celebrating creativity. It's a pretty scene, one that will come to life in La Crosse once again this year July 29-30.

Held each July on the lawns of the UW-La Crosse campus, the Art Fair on the Green is a 59-year-old tradition that brings art lovers and artists together in a pleasant outdoor setting. You could say it's all about art ... but it's also about community and education.

"There's such a feeling of camaraderie," says Carol Robertson, chair of the art fair's organizing committee. The grassy, tree-shaded grounds lend themselves to a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, she says. "You get the feeling from people that we're all in this together."

More than an art fair

Part of that feeling undoubtedly comes from knowing that artists and fairgoers, through their participation, are helping others. Since 1967, the La Crosse branch of AAUW (formerly the American Association of University Women) has sponsored the art fair and used its proceeds to fund scholarships and change lives in the La Crosse area. Last

year's event provided more than \$25,000 for local students.

But most of us attend art fairs for the art, and in that regard visitors to the Art Fair on the Green won't be disappointed. Fairgoers are drawn, says Robertson, by the quality of work that the juried show offers and by the variety. With offerings in diverse—and sometimes unusual—media, it's possible to find something you might not see anywhere else. Upwards of 80 artists display work in categories ranging from painting, sculpture and glass to metalwork, fiber art and jewelry.

A community effort

Producing an event of this scale is almost a work of art in itself—and a learning experience. Nearly all of the AAUW branch's active members—more than 60 volunteers—give their time and energy to the fair. Furthermore, Robertson notes that the chairs of all 11 subcommittees routinely groom new volunteers for leadership positions to ensure that the Art Fair on the Green will be here in the future. Add in assistance from UW-La Crosse staff and promotional help from Explore La Crosse, and you have a real community effort. And the volunteers, even though they are working, have fun. That

mood, says Robertson, "permeates its way through the grounds."

Artists enjoy the atmosphere as well, and many return year after year. La Crosse artist Phyllis Martino, whose paintings feature scenes of the Coulee Region, has attended for nearly 30 years. She says, "It's a beautiful setting and a comfortable show for an artist to be in." Robertson concurs, noting that the well-spaced 10-by-10 booths provide flexibility for displays and room for artists to chat with fairgoers or even set up an easel or other demonstration.

And what's the best part of it all? Seeing the faces of students who receive scholarships and share their stories at AAUW's May banquet, Robertson says without hesitation. "When we know that our volunteer effort has contributed to someone being able to complete their education and pursue their dreams, that's what makes it all worthwhile."

That sounds like something we can all celebrate. [crw](http://www.crw.com)

Doreen Pfoست is the author of This River Beneath the Sky: A Year on the Platte. She lives in Elroy.

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Creativity WITH A CAUSE

| CAREERS |

A generous spirit fuels Renee Chrz's graphic design.

BY LEAH CALL
Contributed photos



Left: Renee Chrz, owner of Innovative Graphics and co-founder of the Local Lupus Alliance. Right: The Murder Mystery Theatre, an annual fundraiser for the Local Lupus Alliance, has become a community favorite.

Innovative Graphics owner Renee Chrz puts her creativity and heart to work for others.

People who know Chrz might describe her as kind, compassionate and creative. All would be true of this Coulee Region woman. Committed to both her craft and to helping others in the community, Chrz has been the go-to graphic designer for multiple nonprofit organizations including the La Crosse Symphony, La Crosse Community Foundation, YWCA, Living for Liz and the Local Lupus Alliance.

"I love working with nonprofits. That is really how I built my business," explains Chrz, whose volunteer work often led to paid opportunities as the appreciation for her talent grew.

With more than 30 years of graphic design experience, Chrz started her own business, Innovative Graphics, 10 years ago. Through the years, she has designed logos, brochures, flyers, annual reports, posters and more to help market local charitable events.

"Anytime I hear of a cause, individual in need or an organization that needs help, I try to contact them and offer design services or volunteer my time," says Chrz. "I think it

is sad when these organizations don't have the funding or volunteers to do the work they need to do. It touches my heart to help someone else."

Founding the Lupus Alliance

Perhaps the cause that is closest to Chrz's heart is the Local Lupus Alliance. Chrz's husband, Richard, once a runner who completed 100-mile runs, was diagnosed with lupus six years ago. The diagnosis left the couple desperate to find information and support to deal with the debilitating autoimmune disease. "We tried contacting the state and national lupus foundations, but no one returned our calls or emails. We decided we didn't want anyone to go through what we had gone through," explains Chrz. "There had to be a way to give people answers when they are diagnosed."

Today those answers come from the Local Lupus Alliance, which the Chrzes cofounded along with Deb Brague, a local radio personality who also lives with lupus. The alliance connects those diagnosed with lupus to much-needed information and support. Chrz applies her design skills to market the

organization's two biggest fundraisers: the Goosebumps 6- and 24-hour Run/Walk (September 22-23), and the Murder Mystery Theatre (March 25).

Creative release

The rigors of running a business and volunteering with numerous organizations call for some creative relief. Chrz escapes through making jewelry. Her stunning handcrafted pieces are made with dichroic glass, a multicolored glass originally developed by NASA. Chrz currently makes the jewelry for herself and as gifts for others. "I've been tossing around the idea of starting an Etsy site. I've had people ask if they can buy it and encourage me to sell it."

While the jewelry is a creative outlet for Chrz, serving others is what feeds her soul. "My heart and passion are really about helping others. I feel like that is what we were put on this earth to do, love and help one another." *(crw)*

Westby-based freelance writer Leah Call has tremendous respect for the generosity and kindness of Renee Chrz. La Crosse is a better place with her in it.

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Dragonfly Retreat in Bangor is as elegant as it is useful. It's fully equipped with abundant workspace, cozy sleeping quarters and just about any accoutrement a crafting group or women's retreat could need.

A ROOM OF THEIR OWN

The owners of Dragonfly Retreat offer a space for women's wellness, rejuvenation and creativity.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE | Contributed photos

When Gerlyn Brasic, MD, and Angie Roggensack, MBA, of Bangor talk about Dragonfly Retreat, it's easy to appreciate their passion for their new business venture. Brasic, an internal medicine physician, and Roggensack, a behavioral health specialist, have used community and women's wellness as the focus of their retreat center and have worked diligently to keep them central to their mission. "We both know a lot about how busy women's lives can be," says Roggensack.

Brasic couldn't agree more. "I belong to a large group of quilters, and we were running out of spots that could hold us," she says. "That gave us the idea that we should create a space that would not only provide women with a getaway but allow them to feel open to create, rest their souls and rejuvenate."

"We kind of goofed around with different ideas for a while," says Roggensack. "Then one day, I saw this house with a for sale sign in front of it. Then boom! Within one month, we owned it."

From that point, the two, along with their husbands, have enthusiastically poured their extra time and energy converting the 81-year-old, three-story, Colonial-style home at 305 17th Avenue North in Bangor into a unique blend of homey comfort with a roomy, open-concept gathering area.

Lots of dragonflies

Inspired by the dragonfly, which is symbolic of change, strength and courage, the pair has discreetly incorporated its image throughout the house. Upstairs, dragonflies can be spotted on the handmade quilts that adorn each of the 16 twin beds and in the original artwork that adds a touch of whimsy to the four bedrooms and full bath. Downstairs, the dragonfly theme is continued, and its image even



Gerlyn Brasic (left) and Angie Roggensack, owners of Dragonfly Retreat

appears on the coffee mugs. "We had so much fun shopping, and that was only intensified by our mission to find dragonflies," says Brasic. "And because our property borders a creek, we get lots of dragonflies in the summer."

"Women appreciate those details," she continues, noting that they paid careful attention to create an elegant, worry-free environment. From the fully equipped kitchen, which includes porcelain place settings, cloth napkins and plenty of coffee mugs and wineglasses to the handsome Amish-made dining table that seats up to 16 guests, the two women want to make

sure their guests feel pampered. "We even have a garlic press," quips Roggensack.

A warm, welcoming place

Intent on carrying that level of detail into the newly added great room, the women designed the space to make it large enough to host family gatherings, craft groups, business meetings and small banquets. Outfitted with tables and chairs to accommodate up to 60 people, there are also chafing dishes, slow cookers and a 40-cup coffee maker, as well as a buffet-style serving counter available for use. An abundance of natural light pours in through the many windows, and a projector and screen make the retreat an appealing venue for banquets, business meetings and classes.

And should you need a break from all the activity, there is a cozy living room and TV directly off the great room and a small, quiet sitting room with a day bed. "We wanted a warm, welcoming place where you feel like you are sitting in your own home with friends," says Brasic. "And we think Dragonfly Retreat lends itself well to that." **(crw)**

Martha Keefe lives and writes in La Crosse. She encourages anyone who is planning a getaway to check out Dragonfly Retreat.

Spring Fling

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CROCHETING A CORAL REEF

Art and environmental concern combine in a community craft project.

BY JANIS JOLLY
Contributed photos



Abigail Voyer (left) and Jordan Schmidt (right) begin work on crocheted corals during a seminar by project founder Margaret Wertheim.



Most corals are hyperbolic, meaning they are not flat planes or spherical, but have a wavy, undulating shape. These can be accurately represented in crochet. While the forms are accurate, the colors and yarn types are freely chosen by the artists.

Since February 2016, small groups of people have been gathering, equipped with balls of colorful wool and crochet hooks, concentrating intently on their work. What are they making? Hats? Tea cozies? Scarves? Nope. They are crocheting a coral reef.

The idea for the UW-La Crosse School Reef grew out of a seminar presented at last year's Creative Imperative festival, an annual event that promotes artistic and scholarly works of the School of Arts and Communication. Australian science writer Margaret Wertheim, founder of the national Crochet Coral Reef project, talked about the dangers facing coral reefs, reef structure and how to interpret corals in crochet. Inspired by her talk, the attendees decided to work together to create a reef of their own.

A natural pattern

The crocheters follow a formula that mimics the growth pattern of corals. A crochet 3, increase 1 pattern results in the curly, undulating form common to corals, sea slugs, leaf lettuce and other natural forms. The purpose of the UW-La

Crosse School Reef is to raise awareness of the danger to coral reefs caused by global warming. When ocean temperatures rise even a tiny bit, coral dies off. The coral crochet project's stunning, colorful displays illustrate what is in danger of being lost forever.

Kate Hawkes, associate professor in the UW-La Crosse art department, has been orchestrating the local project for the past year. UW-La Crosse's reef will join hundreds of other "satellite" reefs around the world that were inspired by Wertheim, who states that crochet coral reef combines a feminine handcraft, marine biology, mathematics and environmental activism.

According to Hawkes, each participant brings his or her own knowledge and motivation to the project. "I'm primarily interested in the community involvement aspect, where anyone can come to the sessions, learn to crochet, choose their own forms and colors and learn from the others," she says. "Much broader learning can take place in a shared endeavor." Math professor Karl Kattchee has taken up a crochet hook

and joined in. "I love anything that combines art and mathematics," he says.

A community project

Plans are to display the coral during the Creative Imperative in February 2017. UW-La Crosse sculptor Marc Manke is building a wheeled base to hold the display, which will include signage explaining the vulnerability of coral reefs as well as the mathematical, biological, social and artistic value of the project. In January, Hawkes will put a call out for people who have been crocheting corals at home as well as those in the crochet circles. Hawkes plans to exhibit the reef in the new student center for at least a year and then show it at a location outside the campus.

There is still time to join in and help on the project. For information, contact Kate Hawkes at khawkes@uwlax.edu. To read more about the larger project, go to www.crochetcoralreef.org. Margaret Wertheim's TED talk on the reef is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=soxS8VtMi9E. 

Janis Jolly is a retired copy editor and ESL teacher who lives in La Crosse.

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LOCAL Matters

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BY PAIGE FORDE

Photos by Dahli Durley Photography

Here in the Coulee Region, there are endless options when it comes to shopping—including wares made by local artists. Support art in your community by checking out these locally made products that are available right here in your hometown!

When it comes to skincare, it can be difficult to find products that are free of hidden chemicals. Luckily, **Not Your Mother's Apron** has got you covered. Committed to the exclusion of unnecessary artificial ingredients, founder Sara Kujak strives to make products that are as pure and natural as possible. These products and more can be found online at www.notyourmothersapron.com, as well as the People's Food Coop and Full Circle Supply in La Crosse and Style Encore in Onalaska.

Clockwise from bottom left: Hibiscus & Evening Primrose Facial Cream, \$11.99; Night Owl Soap, \$4.27; Bee Mold Lavender Lotion Bar, \$6.99; Rosehip Facial Serum, \$8.99; Goat's Milk Body Cream, \$4.99; Lavender & Orange Soap, \$4.27; Dirty Hippie Soap, \$4.27.





If you're looking for eye-catching, handcrafted clothing and accessories, look to the **LARK** boutique by Andrea Fisher Designs. This lovely scarf is made using hand-carved patterns to ensure that each is one-of-a-kind—just like you! Find Lark of La Crosse on Facebook to browse the collection.

Vibrant Leaf Rayon Challis Scarf, \$46.



Tina Kupitz demonstrates that jewelry can be more than just a fashion statement by focusing on the energy and therapeutic qualities particular stones hold. **Tina Kupitz Jewelry** introduces an exceptional line of essential oil diffusing jewelry created to help you live a balanced life. Many other original pieces can be found online at www.tinakupitzjewelry.com.

Amazonite Double Wrap 8mm EO Diffusing Bracelet (left), \$40; EO Diffusing Yoga Necklace (right), \$58.



Mary Johnson of **Hagstone Jewelry** loves giving new life to vintage pieces. By repurposing found objects, any accessory can be given another chance to be adored by a new holder. Each accessory is handmade and holds its own bit of magic. Look up Hagstone Jewelry on Facebook to stay updated on new pieces and where to find them.

Autumn Lake Necklace, \$29; Copper Filigree Earrings, \$10.



Located in downtown La Crosse, **Satori Arts** encompasses rare, handcrafted jewelry, as well as fine art and artifacts. Artist John Satory creates much of the jewelry using stones with personal qualities that tell their own story. With a wide selection of unique jewels, Satori Arts ensures you'll find the perfect piece for you. (crw)

Freshwater Pearl 14K Gold Earrings (left), \$222; Lapis Freshwater Pearl 14K Gold Bracelet, \$315; Freshwater Pearl Vermeil Earrings (right), \$68; Lapis Freshwater Pearl Necklace, \$225.



Chelson B Welcomes New Stylist

If you're feeling the need for a fresh look, try one on with Chelson B Salon Center's new stylist, Marissa Pehler. Hailing from Arcadia and newly graduated from the Cosmetology Academy at Minnesota State College Southeast, Marissa Pehler specializes in trendy hair color and makeup services. Call Chelson B at 608-788-2875 to schedule an appointment—and receive 20 percent off service with Marissa Pehler by mentioning this accomplishment. Chelson B Salon Center is located at 2606 Ward Ave., La Crosse.



Murder Mystery Theatre Supports Local Lupus Alliance

Prepare for a night of movie stars, murder and fun March 25 at the annual Murder Mystery Theatre fundraiser for the Local Lupus Alliance. This year's crime takes place at a movie premiere: Dress for the theme and do your part to solve the murder mystery as you enjoy appetizers, a cash bar, silent and live auctions and a raffle.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. at the La Crosse Country Club, and the mystery unfolds 6:45-9 p.m. Proceeds from the event support local families in their fight against lupus. Tickets are \$60 per person and can be purchased at www.localupus.org.



Women's Alliance of La Crosse Awards Scholarships

The Women's Alliance of La Crosse provides annual assistance to bright, motivated women seeking further education. WAL looks for candidates who may have overcome significant challenges or who can demonstrate that this financial support will enable them not only to complete their studies but also to make their community a better place. In 2016, WAL was pleased to distribute \$9,000 to eight women who showed strength, leadership and drive in their past, and the motivation to strive for more in their future. To learn more about WAL and its scholarship opportunities, go to www.womensalliancelacrosse.com.





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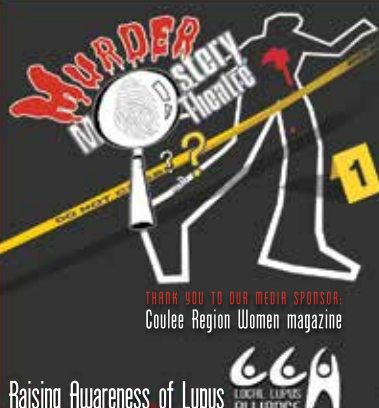


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2017 La Crosse Go Red Executive Leadership Team



Photo by Jordana Snyder Photography



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Take Charge of Your Heart Health

Heart disease is the #1 killer of women. Coulee Region Women magazine is committed to making women aware of the importance of heart health and making your journey a healthy one. The Executive Leadership Team of the American Heart Association's La Crosse Go Red Luncheon has made it their mission as well to help fight heart disease. Please join us at the luncheon to learn how to make your heart journey a healthy one.



La Crosse Go Red for Women Luncheon

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Altra Federal Credit Union.....	52
American Heart Association	48
Ameriprise Financial/Hanson & Associates	38
Breidenbach Chiropractic.....	14
Bremer Wealth Management/Dyanne Brudos	30
Chelson B Salon	34
Contour Clinic-Dave Christianson	9
Coulee Region Professional Women	40
D. M. Harris Law, L.L.C.	34
Dahli Durlley Photography	47
Downtown Mainstreet Inc.	44
Edward Jones.....	47
Elmaro Vineyard	33
Endlessly & Constantly	21
EWB Small Business Accounting	22
Fayze's	44
Feist Seigert Dental	2
Fitness Lying Down.....	14
Franciscan Spirituality Center	34
Gholson Periodontics Group	18
Gundersen Health System	5,51
Heart Journey Counseling.....	34
Honda Motorwerks.....	38
House Warmings	24
Johns, Flaherty & Collins, SC	21
Jordana Snyder Photography	34
JRMCPAs.....	40
Kristin Ottesen Upholstery.....	29
La Crosse Area Builders Association	40
La Crosse Community Theatre	24
La Crosse Media Group	30
Local Lupus Alliance	47
Mainstream Boutique	21
Mary Riedel Counseling Services, LLC.....	44
Mayo Clinic Health System	3
Naturally Unbridled Wellness LLC.....	14
Painted Porch.....	26
People's Food Co-op	30
Practically Posh	22
ReMax First Choice - Patti Evans	24
River Bank.....	22
River Trail Cycles	17
Satori Arts Gallery.....	44
Schumacher-Kish Funeral and Cremation Services.....	34
Style Encore.....	42
Sue Pinski-Ron Hammersley Team Realtors	21
Take II, Staging & Redesign.....	29
Tammy Z's Yoga & Pilates Studio.....	21
The Company Store Outlet	26
The Pilates Studio LLC	38
The Therapy Place of La Crosse.....	14
Touch of Class	38
Trust Point	13
Ultimate Salon & Spa	10
Vernon Memorial Healthcare	18
Waxing the City.....	17
Winona Health.....	20
WKBT Newschannel8	7
Women in Wellness.....	14
Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse.....	42
WXOW News 19	49
YWCA	13
ACCOMPLISHMENTS	
Chelson B Salon	47
Local Lupus Alliance	47
Women's Alliance of La Crosse	47

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

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

CALENDAR EVENTS

Jan. 26-Feb. 12, *The Misanthrope*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Feb. 3, Winter Shop 'n Stroll Open House, 4-8 p.m., www.lacrossedowntown.com.

Feb. 3-4, Snowflake Ski Jump Tournament, Westby, www.snowflakeskiclub.com.

Feb. 3-11, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., Viterbo University at Weber Center for the Performing Arts.

Feb. 4, Peter Mayer, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

Feb. 8, *Alice in Wonderland*, 6:30 p.m., Page Theatre, St. Mary's University, Winona.

Feb. 9, Purses With Purpose, Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse, www.womensfundlacrosse.org.

Feb. 10, Candlelight Snowshoe Hike, 5-8 p.m., Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center, Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

Feb. 11, Valentine's Heart Throb Walk/Run, 8 a.m., YMCA-North, Onalaska, www.laxymca.org.

Feb. 11, Valentine Ball, La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, 5:30 p.m., Cargill Room, Waterfront Restaurant, 328 Front St. S., La Crosse, www.lacrossesymphony.org.

Feb. 11-17, Frozen River Film Festival, Winona, www.frff.org.

Feb. 16-17, DanceScape 2017, 7:30 p.m., Performing Arts Center, Winona State University, www.wsuartsstickets.com.

Feb. 17, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Feb. 18, Old School Variety Show, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

Feb. 19, Sons of Serendip, 4 p.m., Heider Center for the Arts, www.heidercenter.org.

Feb. 22, The Remedy Event, AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, 5 p.m.-12 a.m., Boot Hill Pub, 1501 Saint Andrew St., La Crosse.

Feb. 23-25, MOSES Organic Farming Conference, 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., La Crosse Center, www.lacrossecenter.com.

Feb. 24-Mar. 5, *Company*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Toland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.

Mar. 2-12, *Xanadu*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Mar. 2-18, Forever Plaid, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

Mar. 3, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Mar. 3-4, La Crosse Polar Plunge, 5 p.m. Fri.-1 p.m. Sat., Pettibone Beach, La Crosse, www.polarplungewi.org.

Mar. 3-5, International Festival of Owls, Houston, MN, www.festivalofowls.com.

Mar. 4-5, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, 7:30 p.m. Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Mar. 5-12, Eat Week La Crosse, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

Mar. 8, Route 66, 7:30 p.m., Heider Center for the Arts, www.heidercenter.org.

Mar. 10-12, La Crosse Area Builders Association Home Show, 4-8 p.m. Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sat., 11-4 p.m. Sun., Onalaska Omni Center, www.labahomeshow.com.

Mar. 11, Victory Over Violence Gala and Auction, New Horizons, 5:30-10 p.m., Radisson Hotel Ballroom, La Crosse, www.nhagainstabuse.org.

Mar. 18, La Crosse Community Theatre Patron Gala, 5:30 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Mar. 19, La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestra 50th Anniversary Concert, 2 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Mar. 20, *I Have a Dream*, 6:30 p.m., Page Theatre, St. Mary's University, www.pagetheatre.org.

Mar. 21, The Young Irishers, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Mar. 24, M5 Mexican Brass, 7:30 p.m., Heider Center for the Arts, www.heidercenter.org.

Mar. 25, The WhiskeyBelles, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

Mar. 25, Murder Mystery Theatre, 5:30-9 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, www.localupus.org.

Mar. 30-Apr. 2, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat, 3 p.m. Sun., Valência Arts Center, St. Mary's University, Winona, www.pagetheatre.org.

Mar. 31, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Mar. 31-Apr. 9, *Avenue Q*, 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun, Viterbo University at Weber Center for the Performing Arts.

April 7-9, River Trail Cycles Spring Sale/10th Anniversary Celebration, 106 Mason St., Onalaska, www.rivertrailcycles.com.



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