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women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

CONNECTIONS

MAIN STREET MAVENS

- Winona's Emily Kurash
- La Crosse's Robin Moses
- Viroqua's Nora Roughen-Schmidt

10 WAYS
TO CONNECT TO YOUR
COMMUNITY

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FARM-TO-TABLE FAVES

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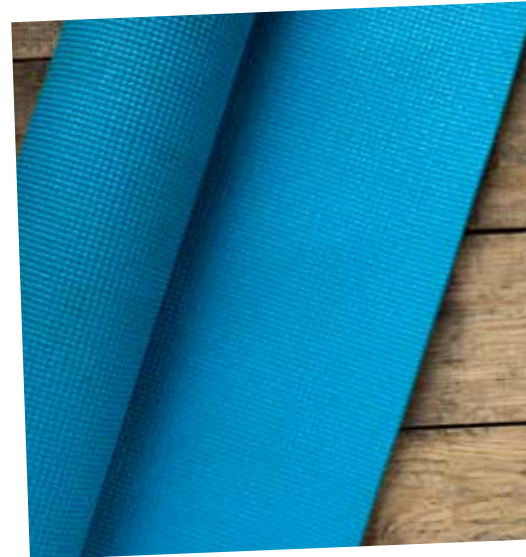
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CONNECTING WITH THE COULEE REGION

The Coulee Region's outdoor beauty is a natural draw—three businesses show you how to enjoy it.



Pictured on cover and above: From top, Nora Roughen-Schmidt, Viroqua Chamber Main Street; Robin Moses, Downtown Mainstreet, La Crosse; Emily Kurash, Winona Main Street Program. Photographed at the Friendship International Gardens, La Crosse. Photos by Jen Towner Photography.



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The theme of connection has been an important one for me this year, in happy ways and sad, with the two often colliding in ways I don't expect. For example, there's nothing like a funeral to illustrate the importance and presence of connection, and I've attended a few so far this year. Two were for family friends, delightful women who touched many lives with their optimism and kindness, their strength as mothers, grandmothers, wives and community members. I left each one struck by the impact each woman had made in her world and longing for the missed opportunity to have known her better. But I also left feeling challenged to make that kind of an impact in my own world. What would people say about me at my funeral? Each woman presented me with the task to live fully and be remembered for the good that I had done.

The third funeral was for my aunt Emma, my mother's older sister. This should have been the saddest event of the three, but somehow, it was not. I loved Emma for her radiant smile, her wholehearted laugh and her generous love. When she walked in the door, she swept warmth and energy and happiness in with her. As with the other women, I regretted that I hadn't kept in closer contact with her over the years—how ironic that in this age of über-connectedness, it's still so

hard to make a phone call or jot a note. But I'd gotten to visit her recently, and her funeral was a reunion of once-close cousins I now see only rarely, a good time to catch up, tell stories and promise to keep in better contact. It was as if Emma herself had orchestrated our reconnecting; we all experienced, at one time or another, the sound of her laugh or the expectation of her sweeping into a room, all smiles. Our hearts would drop when we realized that we were mistaken and she was gone—but then we all realized that, really, she wasn't.

These women, like all of us women, were—and are still—part of an intricate web of connection spun over the course of a lifetime. In that web—so delicate looking but really quite strong—we women catch children, our own and others who need love and nurturing. We catch neighbors, always willing to lend them a hand or step up in an emergency. We catch our spouses, our schools, our colleagues, our communities. And then, in the most beautiful of maneuvers, we become woven into the webs of other women, creating a powerful net of friendship in which we hold each other close. In this interconnectedness, we help each other, support each other, hear each other out and love each other.

This issue of *Coulee Region Women* is all about that web—that net that spans our families and community, keeping each other close and holding each other up. We focus especially on women who have scooped up Coulee Region communities in their web, by heading downtown-building programs, providing services to our community, striving to connect with everyone they meet each day and seeking out and telling their stories.

And while we celebrate this, let me honor a particular group of Coulee Region women who create connections and tell stories like no other: our own *Coulee Region Women* writers. I have been, with every issue of late, amazed and humbled by an ever-growing cadre of deeply caring and deeply talented women, all of whom have internalized our own dedication to create connections in our community. I am honored to work with you all and delighted that we have found ourselves in each other's webs.

Betty

coulee region women

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ART IN THE CITY

Kick off the summer festival season in an artsy way with Artspire—La Crosse's downtown outdoor art festival taking place June 9-10. Stroll by the river and hear storytellers and poets. Have a seat in the Pump House parking lot and listen to live music. Walk along King Street and peek in tents filled with paintings, jewelry, pottery, photography and more. Sample foods from vendors including Big Boar BBQ, Big Mama's Gyro, Crepes JeanLuc, Ole's Pizza Company and Five Star Eggroll.

The event begins 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, with a Pow Wow, live music, food vendors and a beer garden featuring Pearl Street Brewery. If you see something you like, you can take it home during the art fair and sale on Saturday, June 10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. When the tents close down, the party moves to downtown La Crosse with the Artspire Happy Hour at 5 p.m. and more live music 8-10 p.m.

Admission to this fun, family-friendly event is free. Find more information at www.artspire.thepumphouse.org.

ART ON THE RIVER

Imagine spending a day in Stockholm, taking in exhibits from more than 100 juried artists and listening to live music. When you get hungry, local food vendors are ready with wood-fired pizza, portobello mushroom



sandwiches and freshly roasted coffee. And it all takes place in a beautiful setting overlooking the water.

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The 44th annual Stockholm Art Fair takes place Saturday, July 15, in the Stockholm, Wisconsin, Village Park overlooking Lake Pepin. You'll enjoy paintings, jewelry, photography and art in media including clay, glass, fiber, wood, leather and more. Rain or shine, the Stockholm Art Fair is a hit with people up and down the Mississippi. For more information, go to www.stockholmartfair.org.



GET ON THE BOAT

If you're looking for an excuse to spend a summer's day with friends and family alongside the river, be sure to put the Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival in your calendar. The weekend of July 14-15 will mark the fifth year of paddling, community and support for breast cancer efforts. It all takes place on a 300-meter slice of the Black River along Copeland Park. The festival includes music, free family activities and food.

The Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival promotes fitness and teamwork while raising funds for breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. With more than 50 teams of 20 paddlers each, chances are good you will know someone participating, so come cheer them on. Admission is free. Opening ceremonies are Friday at 6 p.m.; racing begins 8 a.m. Saturday and wraps up about 4 p.m. A breast cancer survivor recognition ceremony is held Saturday at 1 p.m. For more information, go to www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/locations/la-crosse.



MEDITERRANEAN FESTIVAL

Celebrate some of the area's ethnic diversity and enjoy some really good food on Sunday, July 23, when St. Elias Orthodox Church hosts its annual Mediterranean Festival. Greek is the primary influence of this festival, but with congregation members hailing from throughout the Mediterranean, you'll also find influences from places such as Russia, Syria and Bulgaria.

The festival runs noon-5 p.m. and includes ethnic music, dancing and crafts as well as a silent auction and the Still Small Voice Book Store. The menu includes a lamb sandwich, marinated chicken kabob and falafel. The bake sale is hugely popular and tends to sell out early. It all takes place in the yard next to St. Elias Orthodox Church on 716 Copeland Ave. in La Crosse. For more information on St. Elias and its traditions, check out the August/September 2016 issue of *Coulee Region Women* or go to www.stelias-lacrosse.org.



MEET MISS REMARKABLE

Riverfront's Miss RemarkAble Pageant is a shining example of beauty that is much more than skin deep. On Saturday, July 29, 10 women 13 and up who have a documented disability will participate in the third annual pageant. The Miss RemarkAble Pageant focuses on celebrating the accomplishments and building the confidence of each contestant.

Pageant contestants attend confidence-building workshops—including conversation and public speaking—prior to the pageant. Onstage, the contestants wear a favorite evening outfit, introduce themselves and answer a question. The audience will get to see a 90-second video of each of the contestants showcasing her abilities and talents. Hair and makeup assistance will be provided by the Salon Professional Academy in Onalaska.

Tickets to attend the Miss RemarkAble Pageant at the Weber Center for the Performing Arts in La Crosse are \$15 and may be purchased in advance. For more information, please visit www.riverfrontinc.org/events/missremarkable.

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Whether it's coffee and a sidewalk stroll with friends, a celebration of art and song at a summer festival or holiday shopping at local businesses, time spent in a downtown reveals the spirit and health of a particular place. Wherever it may be, downtown at its best serves as the intersection between a city's history and vision. And here in the Coulee Region, three women are working to ensure that connection is enlivened by imagination, growth and opportunity.

Robin Moses

Downtown Mainstreet, La Crosse

"A downtown is where you find the character of your community," says Robin Moses, executive director of La Crosse's Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. (DMI), a nonprofit organization created to further economic development and downtown revitalization.

Moses grew up in rural Wisconsin and, as a child, enjoyed trips to downtown Superior. She eventually studied marketing there and then graphic design at Western Technical College in La Crosse. During a stint in Eau Claire, Moses became involved with the downtown movement there, planning and creating advertising materials for various events. When she returned to the Coulee Region, she knew she wanted to work in the downtown area. "There were a lot of iconic memories of downtown La Crosse," she says.

Moses applied for a job in the DMI office helping with events and eventually was named executive director.

"Working in Eau Claire with their downtown organizations provided a great background for me," she says. "To build relationships with the downtown businesses is really important to me. That's one of the things that is so charming about downtown. It's that feeling of community—of knowing people and caring about their businesses."

Downtown boasts more than 600 businesses, some of which have been run by families for generations.

"I think it's where you find your history," Moses says. "You see it in the buildings, especially those we have here in downtown La Crosse."

La Crosse, she explains, has the largest historic commercial district in Wisconsin. And DMI is working with the city to create grant programs to help improve those properties.

Specialty businesses, she says, are thriving. "People are looking to shop at buildings that are charming and have character. They want to experience the community and the city that they're in. They want that unique experience, and those are found in a downtown district."

In addition to support services for current and potential businesses, DMI also invests in design and beautification efforts and hosts a variety of special events—including a Holiday Open House, Summer Days and Downtown Walk-Around. And plans are only expanding.

"This is a very positive time for downtown La Crosse," Moses adds. The city has \$400 million worth of investment going into downtown in about a four-year period, and Moses expects more. Residential growth is projected to be one of the strongest areas of progress, with 500 new apartments and living opportunities on the horizon.

Moses is quick to credit the help of volunteers and members of the board of directors, which consists of the heads of businesses throughout the city. "It's because we work together," she says of their accomplishments. "We leverage the resources, the opportunities and other organizations so that we're all working together. And that's where the magic happens."

THE MAVENS OF MAIN STREET

**Coulee Region Main Street programs vitalize
downtowns and create connections.**

BY ELIZABETH D. LIPPMAN

Photos by Jen Towner Photography



Robin Moses, executive director of La Crosse's Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.



Nora Roughen-Schmidt Viroqua Chamber Main Street

Downtown revitalization efforts in Viroqua are meeting with similar success. Led by Executive Director Nora Roughen-Schmidt, Viroqua Chamber Main Street has 220 member businesses, local and regional, and was one of the first communities to participate in the national Main Street program. “This year is 27 years, and we are very proud of that,” Roughen-Schmidt says.

A Madison native, Roughen-Schmidt moved to Viroqua about a decade ago, having studied marketing and public relations at UW-Madison. At first she sold advertising for the Vernon County *Broadcaster*. “It was a great way to meet people in the community and really get a feel for what was going on here,” she says. She moved on to the marketing department of Vernon Memorial Healthcare, where she learned about the power of community involvement in message delivery. Her mentor there encouraged her toward a board of directors position with Viroqua Chamber Main Street, and in 2014 she was selected as executive director.

“We have started to run this little nonprofit like a business,” she says. “It’s changing and growing the organization in ways we never really thought were possible.”

Roughen-Schmidt attributes that growth to fresh ideas, a strong and diverse board of directors and the power of connection. “Reaching out to the community and member businesses has created a sense of belonging, ownership and partnership that resembles the original vision for Viroqua Chamber Main Street,” she says.

Soon after she began her position as executive director, Roughen-Schmidt helped launch what has become Viroqua’s signature program—Pop-Up Shops. Viroqua Chamber Main Street subsidizes the rent for a new business or entrepreneur and assists with marketing and promotion during the two-to-three-month Pop-Up Shop period. “In 2016 we had 17 applicants for the Pop-Up Shop program. Four were selected, and all of them stayed,” she says. “That is a win-win for the community.”

The program’s success has led to regional and statewide consulting opportunities, and Roughen-Schmidt has presented at conferences and meetings. The League of Municipalities, she says, is featuring the program in an upcoming issue of their magazine.

Viroqua Chamber Main Street also sponsors activities such as Movies in the Park, Twinklefest and a downtown farmers market.

“Viroqua is unique,” Roughen-Schmidt says, “because of its beauty, diverse population, businesses and tourist economy.” Vernon County has the second-highest concentration of organic farms in the nation, and a recent Trout Unlimited study indicates that trout fishing and the cold-water economy have contributed more than \$1.6 billion to the region.

The group offers comprehensive business start-up services, as well as business succession planning, with opportunities for businesses to be involved with 16 networking events each year.

“Viroqua is a really amazing community. What makes it so special is the manner in which the community supports each other,” she says. “We may have different opinions or experiences, but ultimately we are all ready, willing and able to support each other on just about everything. This is the magic formula.”



Nora Roughen-Schmidt, executive director of Viroqua Chamber Main Street

Emily Kurash Winona Main Street Program

Across the river in Minnesota, Emily Kurash leads the Winona Main Street Program.

After graduating with a degree in theater and theology from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, Kurash worked as director of communications and programming with Decorah's Chamber of Commerce. "I fell in love with that kind of work. I didn't expect to be so excited about working with communities, local businesses and nonprofits, but I fell into it happily," she says.

She moved to Winona when offered the role of director of marketing and audience services with Great River Shakespeare Festival (GRSF). This year, she took charge of a variety of downtown initiatives as the Winona Main Street Program coordinator.

She volunteered for the Winona Main Street Program while serving GRSF, and when the coordinator position opened, Kurash says, she realized how passionate she was about the idea. "There are really important things happening downtown and exciting things happening in our community. I wanted to get back into that world and be a part of that process."

The Winona Main Street Program has been around about five years and is part of the Minnesota and national Main Street programs. Directed by a steering committee, it operates through the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce and was designed to strengthen downtown Winona by supporting numerous partnerships between the city, businesses and residents.

"Our goal is to connect," Kurash says. "We connect people who want to work on projects and who want to work on downtown. We connect people with grants and programs that are helpful to them. We connect the public to private businesses that they maybe didn't even know existed."

The group also hosts popular events like Touch a Truck and Sweet Stroll, and last year launched the Big Muddy Brew 'N Que, which drew thousands of participants and will be expanded into a two-day event this September. Kurash emphasizes the importance of slow and steady progress through activities involving downtown beautification.

"One thing that's really cool and unique is that the Mississippi River flows through our downtown," she says. "For Winona, downtown definitely is where things started. That's where the river was. That's where the railroads were. That's where we can really tie some of our roots in."

Kurash notes the importance and appeal of Winona's historic buildings, including the Latsch Building, and the revitalization of open spaces such as Levee Park. "We're lucky that we still have so many of our historic structures that are part of our downtown, and finding new ways to use them is an exciting challenge."

The community response has been overwhelmingly positive. "I hear people all the time talking about the changes and growth that have already happened, which makes us even more excited for what is to come," she says. "We're at a jumping point and are ready to really take off." *(crw)*

Elizabeth Lippman is a freelance writer and editor in Winona.



Emily Kurash, coordinator of Winona Main Street Program





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TELLING THE “PEOPLE STORIES”

Heather Armstrong fosters connections within the community both professionally and personally.

BY TALLITHA REESE

Contributed photos



Heather Armstrong takes an active role in the community, (top left) reading to kids during storytime at the Kane Street Community Gardens, (top right) as an advocate for those with disabilities, for which she received an Outstanding Service award, and (bottom) connecting with students after an assignment at Lincoln Middle School in La Crosse.

As a news anchor for WXOW News 19 of La Crosse, forging connections is standard professional practice for Heather Armstrong. She consistently reaches an audience and provides an avenue of connection between viewers and news, but it's much more than just another task of the job. Armstrong is known for her compassion and ability to utilize her position to benefit area organizations. She is a dedicated volunteer and an advocate for those who need a voice, both in her professional and personal life.

Knowing these things, it's a surprise to discover that Armstrong is somewhat shy. “I don't like being the center of attention; I nearly fainted on my wedding day,” she says. “I can't bear the thought of being in front of so many people.” It may seem contradictory, considering her profession, but those feelings don't stop Armstrong from completing work she is passionate about or furthering causes she supports. “What I care about trumps the feeling,” she says. “My role as anchor is about connecting these resources, these stories, these problems to the viewer—to the people.”

Learning early

For Armstrong, a love of stories and journalism began as a child, growing up in New York City. “I would hold the hairbrush and act like I was reporting,” she says. Her passion for kindness and volunteerism was also developed during childhood by parents who believed in doing what you could for people as often as possible, whether that meant opening a door, providing a ride or visiting a lonely neighbor.

Growing up with a brother with special needs also influenced Armstrong's inclusive nature. "I know what it's like to be left out," says Armstrong. "I know what it's like to have a brother with special needs and have people not include him. I would end up taking all the kids on the block to feed the ducks or to the pool, because I wanted my brother to have friends."

The fascination with stories followed Armstrong to Saint Francis University in Pennsylvania, where she double-majored in communication and broadcast journalism. After graduation, however, she did not immediately enter the world of news and instead returned to New York City, where she worked as a sales assistant for brokers on Wall Street, a job that eventually took her to Los Angeles.

Following the heart

It was on the West Coast, where most of her family would also eventually relocate, that Armstrong's passion for journalism reignited, and over the next several years she established her career. She took internships while still working as a sales assistant and then a corporate flight

attendant on the side, and she moved on to freelancing roles in reporting, producing and hosting. She went to many interviews that never felt quite right. Eventually, she got a call about a job with a Wisconsin station—in La Crosse.

Armstrong admits that she almost immediately dismissed the offer, but the agent insisted she hear it out. Armstrong agreed, started researching the area and found herself drawn to La Crosse and what the station was looking for: someone to take on feature news. "A lot of us go into journalism wanting to do that hard-hitting investigative piece or breaking news, and I love that, but my heart just wasn't lit on fire," she says. "I love the people stories. I talk to people and learn their whole story, and it's because I'm interested. You can't fake that you care." Armstrong believes that people can tell when someone is passionate about people, that people can tell by the way you treat them.

Connecting through volunteerism

Armstrong lives south of La Crosse with her husband and animals: a roster of goats, donkeys, dogs, cats and a pig, many of which accompany her during visits to local nursing homes, Riverfront and other locations. "I've brought my goat, my cat, all my dogs to visit, and everybody can hold them and pet them," explains Armstrong.

Armstrong also volunteers at places like Meals on Wheels and The Salvation Army when she can, and she serves on the board of directors for Riverfront. She believes deeply in the importance of volunteering. "I do volunteer a lot, and I'm doing it because it's part of my core. I feel that everyone should do something, and that something small can make a difference," says Armstrong.

Much of Armstrong's volunteer work focuses on providing connections for people who may not have many opportunities to connect with others, such as residents at nursing homes. It is something that Armstrong feels very strongly about. "I don't want them to feel like they're forgotten about, like they don't matter," she explains. "I just always want people to feel comfortable, and welcome, and that they do matter." 

Tallitha Reese is a freelance writer and content manager based in Cashton. She owns Words By Reese, a content creation and management business, and you can connect with her at www.wordsbyreese.com.



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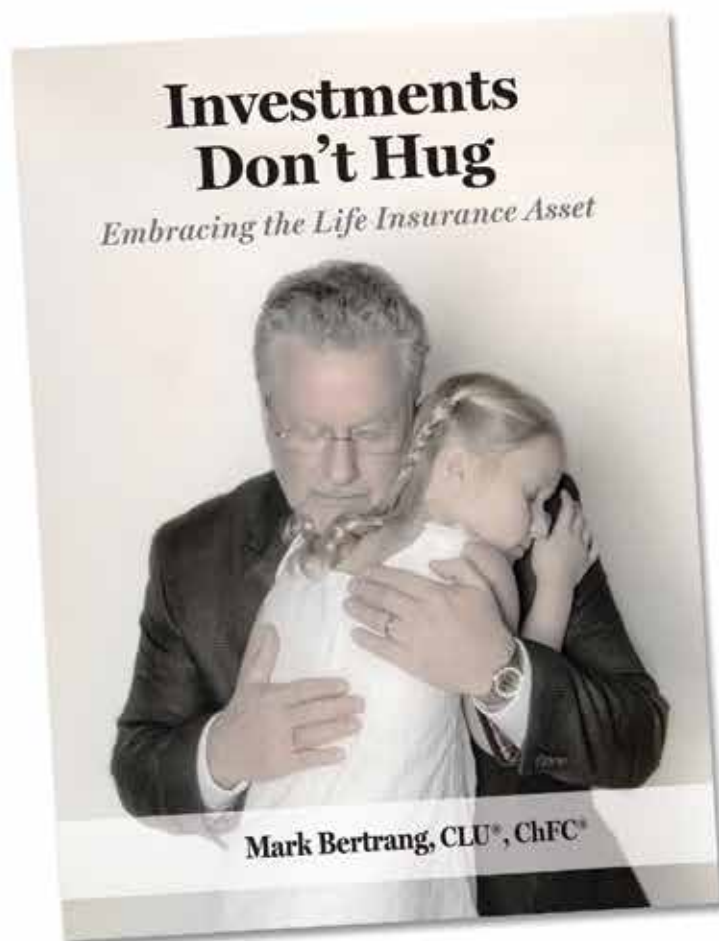
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EXCERPT

It should have taken only six short minutes from the gymnasium floor, where Jim had collapsed during the first few minutes of that winter basketball game, to arrive to the sterile regional hospital emergency room. Though the distance Mary was traveling was twice that which would bring Jim to the hospital, she arrived before the ambulance.

"I don't remember arriving at the hospital," Mary said. "I just remember standing there, asking if he was there yet; and he wasn't. So, I just stood by the door and waited for what seemed like an eternity. They worked on him at the school, and they continued to work on him in the ambulance and all the way to the hospital. It seemed like it was taking forever. I remember someone telling me that he was coming in, and that his skin color would be blue. They were still trying to revive him. I was in the emergency room when they brought him in. As they worked on him, I held his hand."

As you read "Investments Don't Hug," have a highlighter nearby to mark important passages, and a pen at hand to make notes within the margins of its pages. It's also wise to have a box of tissues close by, as you pause to take in the emotional significance of its message through the tears shed by the narrators and the author.

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Financialoscopy

Connecting Women, Connecting Flights

Women make connections at the
La Crosse Regional Airport.

BY ANASTASIA PENCHI
Contributed photos

Alissa Romero, general manager for Envoy Air Inc.

Those who work at the airport get to know the Coulee Region's business travelers and regular airport users quite well. And "connecting women" Alissa Romero, Stacey Tabbert and Kelly Colgan Hammen say they love the perks that come with working at an airport, as well as the associations that develop over time.

Fly the friendly skies

Alissa Romero, general manager for Envoy Air Inc., which is the regional American Airlines carrier, considers herself somewhat of a problem solver for airport users. She began working for the airline in customer service in 1999 in Duluth, Minnesota, but transferred to La Crosse in 2004 after the September 11, 2001, attacks resulted in the closure of that airport.

Romero says the smaller size of the La Crosse Regional Airport encourages relationship development between workers and customers. Good staff can anticipate the needs of regular travelers over time, she says, and will know to place certain people where they like to sit before they are even asked.

"You know every Monday morning who the travelers are," she says. "Or they come in with family. It's kind of nice to see that side of them, too—traveling for fun."

The resulting relationships can result in a plate of cookies for airport workers at Christmastime.

Romero has been manager for almost two years, and while she still helps customers at the counter as needed, she spends most of her time on back-room managerial duties like employee scheduling and payroll.

Married to her husband, Franklin, whom she met during one of her "travel perk trips," which come with working for an airline, Romero has three children: Albert, 14; Ruby, 6; and baby Milly, who was just born in December.

Romero says one added benefit of the airport relationships that develop over time is that if there is ever a really big problem, local customers can work out details with her directly instead of an anonymous person at an 800 number.

That's a benefit rarely seen at larger airports.

"Here, you really do get to make that connection," Romero adds. "It's not just face after face after face."

A driving force

Holmen native Stacey Tabbert knew within six months of starting her sales associate position at Midwestern Wheels Inc. (the Avis and Budget car rentals at the airport) that she had found her career, thanks to company culture and the family atmosphere she found at work. The Appleton-based car rental company owns all the Wisconsin-based rentals except those in Milwaukee, she says, and is the largest licensee in the country.

Tabbert, now the area manager, says building relationships with customers is a priority at Midwestern Wheels, and the ease of dealing with the company itself and staff at other locations only makes it easier. She says there are some customers she's been working with for the entire 11 years she's been there.

Knowing customers well means Tabbert knows what kind of cars they like to drive, and it means she can effectively problem-solve and make appropriate restaurant recommendations when needed. One regular customer even brings Tabbert and others popcorn from Chicago whenever she comes to the Coulee Region to visit family.

"She reminds me so much of my mother," Tabbert says. "She'll hang out in the airport with us for two hours."



Stacey Tabbert, sales associate at Midwestern Wheels Inc.



Kelly Colgan Hammen, president of Colgan Air Services

Close connections are especially important when repeat business is a priority. When Fort McCoy was doing demobilization, which it did for 10 years until 2011, Tabbert and others were inspired to do anything they could for the military personnel passing through the airport on their way home.

Tabbert and her husband, John, who is also a Holmen native, have two boys: Parker, 10, and Brice, 7. Tabbert says she loves that her small-town life means her own

kindergarten teacher also taught one of her sons.

And yes, she says, you do get used to moving cars in Wisconsin's extreme hot and cold temperatures. It doesn't bother her at all anymore.

Private flights available

Across the runway from the La Crosse Regional Airport is the airport's "little brother," as Kelly Colgan Hammen likes to call Colgan Air Services. Colgan Hammen has been busy making her own connections since moving back to La Crosse and taking on the job of president of Colgan Air Services three years ago.

Colgan Hammen spends her days managing private charter

operations, whether that means getting airplanes fueled, maintaining insurance or managing paperwork for airplanes owned by local businesses.

She says there is a passionate aviation community in La Crosse that includes hobby pilots, the corporate jet set, medical traffic pilots and many others. Her dad, Tim Colgan, remains a pilot and the CEO of the family business. Her mom, Debbie, is the accountant. Her brother, Christopher, is the chief pilot. And her husband, Derek Hammen, is assisting with the new accounting software while also attending graduate school at the UW-La Crosse.

"We know people's first names here," she says.

Colgan Air Services is almost done remodeling a 90-by-36-foot building into a new customer welcome center that will have more room for pilots and guests. The project took two years to plan before construction began in October 2016, Colgan Hammen says, and is on trend with the positive efforts many area businesses and municipal entities are making.

"The whole city is sort of getting a facelift," she says.

Colgan Hammen admits she is not above peeking through windows when well-known musicians come to town to play concerts, or even when politicians come to the Coulee Region to campaign. Excitement is part of every airport's atmosphere because there is always a variety of people coming and going.

"It's fun," she says. "You never really know who's going to come." *(crw)*

Anastasia Penchi is a Coulee Region writer who loves the idea of making airport connections as she needs lots of legroom in both airplanes and rental cars. She can be reached at callmeloislane@hotmail.com.

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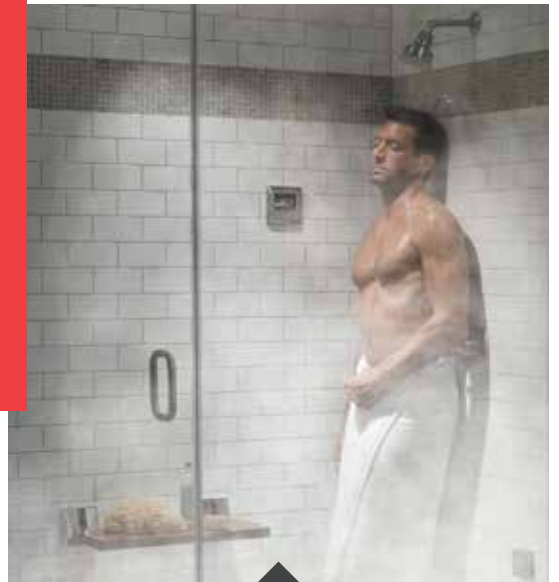
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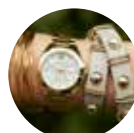
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AMBASSADORS OF GOODWILL

Area nurses celebrate long careers of caring and connecting.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN
Contributed photos

If you've ever been to the hospital—to have a baby, to undergo a procedure, to shepherd a loved one through surgery—it's likely the presence you remember most was that of a capable, caring nurse. They not only answer questions and deftly perform routine yet critical tasks, but also look in your eyes and give a reassuring squeeze of the shoulder to soften your worry or celebrate your joy.

While all area nurses are worthy of having their story told, the two featured here—Ann Kotnour of Gundersen Health System and Mary Schubert of Mayo Clinic Health System—Franciscan Healthcare—are particular ambassadors of goodwill for our medical centers because of their devotion to their hospitals and their professions, as reflected in their long careers of caring and connecting.

A nurse with heart

Ann Kotnour, RN, just celebrated 39 years at Gundersen this May, all spent in the cardiology department. If you or a loved one have suffered from heart issues, you know a nurse like Kotnour: She's the one who whisked you in when a heart attack was underway; she explained your procedure straightforwardly but kindly; she assured you the best of care. Then she scrubbed in on your surgery, and later, while you were recovering, she was in the waiting area putting your family's worries to rest.



Ann Kotnour, RN, Gundersen Health System

"My goal is to take care of every patient as if they were a family member," says Kotnour. "If I can put a patient and their family at ease, I've done one of the most important parts of my job." This extends from caring to compassion toward people when they are at their most vulnerable. "If

you can put yourself in a patient's or a family's spot," she says, "you can understand why they're acting the way they are. It's important not to be judgmental." And you can't underestimate the power of these connections; Kotnour is still in touch with the wife of a patient who passed away early in her career.

Versatile expertise

Gundersen's cardiac cath lab nurses are cross-trained in a variety of responsibilities, from patient care to procedures involving balloon angioplasty, defibrillators, pacemakers and stents. They monitor patients, conduct electrophysiology studies and record patient data. Their versatile expertise allows for greater flexibility among nurses in their department, but also a greater understanding of each other's responsibilities. "We anticipate what each other will need," says Kotnour. "People come in and tell us they can't believe how well we work together."

Kotnour has seen many changes in her years at Gundersen, chiefly the rapid development of technology. It's a challenge, but not one that fazes Kotnour. "I've been around long enough that I can pick it up quickly," she says, "and again, I've got great support." More demanding is the pace. "Some days you start out with five patients and end up with 12," she says. "You want to take more time with them, but you just can't."

In college at UW-La Crosse, Kotnour studied elementary education but changed direction when her grandmother became ill and Kotnour helped care for her. "The day before she passed away, she looked at me and said, 'Why don't you be a nurse?'" says Kotnour. "I did, and I have never regretted it." It's a job she'd recommend to any young person interested in a career of caring. "There's lots of flexibility to work around a family; there's all types of shifts, and you can work evenings." It's a job that requires a lot of passion and a desire to keep learning. "The emotions can be hard to deal with," she admits. "If you find yourself becoming hardened, it's time to stop." Still, it's a job she's been passionate about her entire career, and she hopes to fuel that passion in the new nurses who rotate in. "We must always be open to teaching the next generation," she says.

"My goal is to take care of every patient as if they were a family member."
—Ann Kotnour

Motherly love

Mary Schubert, LPN, has spent the last 42 years in a department many women in the Coulee Region have also spent time in: the Family Birthplace at Mayo Clinic Health System—Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse. “St. Francis has a history of caring,” says Schubert—referring to the hospital that hired her four decades ago—and she does, too. Caring, compassionate, hardworking, motivated—these qualities apparent from a young age indicated that Schubert and nursing would be a good match. “I started the nursing program at WTC right out of high school in 1973,” she says, “and I’ve always loved the job.”

As an LPN, Schubert works under the supervision of an RN, taking care of moms and babies postpartum, checking vitals, helping with those delicate early attempts at feeding, caring for moms after surgery and generally making sure all is well. These are a few of the many responsibilities and ways nurses serve patients and their families.

“Everybody works well together; we have to,” says Schubert of her team. “There’s something new every day.” She may assist in labor and delivery or scrub in for C-sections; through it all she offers that bedside warmth so important to mothers at a vulnerable time. “Sometimes I just hold a mom’s hand and tell her she’s doing a great job,” says Schubert. “I’m there to give them that support.”

A big, caring family

Like Kotnour, Schubert emphasizes the connections she has made with the members of her team in the Family Birthplace. “We’re a big, caring family, always willing to help each other out, stepping in and picking up when needed,” she says. “The doctors, midwives, nurses,



Mary Schubert, LPN, Mayo Clinic Health System—Franciscan Healthcare

neonatal nurse practitioners, lactation consultants, health unit coordinators and leaders on the unit work with other support staff to ensure we deliver exceptional care to all of our patients—we’re all really good.” Schubert does not hesitate to tell her teammates so. “That thank-you from your coworker goes a long way,” she says, and this sentiment extends to patients. Although patients are not there for an extended period of time, unique relationships are built quickly between patients and staff. “I always give my patients a hug and tell them thank you for coming to our hospital.”

It’s Schubert’s mission to always be there for these families, acknowledging that, while many think of the fifth floor as a joyful place, it isn’t always. “But we offer a great support system,” she says. “Not even saying anything—just a look, a

touch—can mean so much.”

Losses are definitely among the challenges of her job, but “I love it through highs and the lows,” she says, and it’s a career she would recommend to other young people who also possess caring, hardworking traits. “The opportunities are endless,” she says of nursing’s many options. “You get into it and you want to do more.”

And Schubert has. Her role as a preceptor—training incoming LPNs—has earned her recognition at Mayo as well as the respect and affection of many new nurses. “You want them to be the best,” she says. “I know my values, and I give them 100 percent.” It’s what was given to her as a young nurse years ago. “When I took this job, I knew I’d work here till I retired,” she says, and families all over the Coulee Region have benefitted since. (crw)

Betty Christiansen had three babies at Mayo’s Family Birthplace and wholeheartedly appreciated the kindness and compassion of her nurses.

**“We offer a great support system.
Not even saying anything—just a look,
a touch—can mean so much.”**

—Mary Schubert



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In Touch With the Place You Call *Home*

When it comes to making connections,
Kay Mazza has a style all her own.

BY LISA HEISE
Contributed photo

She sits in the window of a downtown La Crosse coffee shop, waving and smiling at every other passerby. The barista knows her by name. Her look is well suited for a high-end fashion boutique manager—classy jewelry, gorgeous shoes, the perfect shade of lipstick—polished, with an East Coast edge. But her depth, her compassion and her connections to this community add a million other dimensions to Kay Mazza.

Serving others with integrity

Mazza's career path has focused on fashion retail, and this La Crosse native has had some great adventures. "I'm still shocked about being a small-town girl, having had the experiences I've had in life," she muses. As a young professional, Mazza created opportunities for herself. She worked at Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue in Minneapolis and was hand-picked by a corporate manager to work in Manhattan. "He thought I was fun at a training," she remembers, "and called to offer me the spot the next day." She experienced September 11, 2001, in Manhattan, stuck in the city for days. She has lived in Philadelphia, San Francisco and Minneapolis.

Currently the manager of Touch of Class in downtown La Crosse, Mazza frames her career choice a little differently than might be expected: She serves others through her work. "I'm actionable; I assist people in getting to the place they want to be. You know, retail is (service) and then some, except you fold

shirts. You fold a lot of shirts.” Her laugh fills the small coffee shop. When asked about her knack for connecting with her customers, Mazza struggles with the label “customer.” She says, “I think of people as people. When they come through the door, I don’t judge motives or what they look like, or background. It’s an integrity issue for me.”

“Think about the personal”

There’s more to retail than meets the eye, according to Mazza. In her industry, she observes, women can sometimes be self-defeating: “‘I’m fat, I have big feet, my skin looks terrible, don’t look at me, I’m in sweats ...’ I would rather have a nice rapport with you. I’ve had fantastic experiences my whole life because I think people are wonderfully exceptional.” She sees women who have had a death in the family or who have been diagnosed with cancer and knows they are looking to have someone focus on them. Mazza trains her employees to “think about the personal,” understanding that they’re dealing with an entire person who has a story to tell.

Mazza has her own story. Having come from a multigenerational La Crosse family, she broke tradition and moved away in 1986 to pursue her dreams. Her connection with her family, though, has remained strong. The sudden death of her father, Lee Gilbert, brought her home to La Crosse in 2002, after 25 years of big-city adventures. “My dad is the whole reason I am who I am,” she says of the former Aquinas athletics director.

She sees her mother, Sue Gilbert, as a role model. As an early advocate for social justice in the La Crosse community, her mom won one of the first tribute awards from the YWCA. Mazza tenderly shares her pride in her family—a brother who sings in a barbershop quartet,

a sister who is a school psychologist, another who is disabled—and she tells of her twin sons, Simon and Dylan, who live in St. Paul. “They turned out incredibly well,” she says, smiling. She tells the story of her grandmother Helen Larkin, who, at the age of 16, took a job with the railroad after the untimely death of her own father. Fast-forward decades: At the age of 102, Larkin finally agreed to sell her home to Mazza, who says that even though her grandmother passed away two years later, “she’s right in there with me. I relish that feeling, like I still get a little bit of strength from her standing in the corner of the kitchen or of her garden.”

In touch with home

Beyond her relationships with her customers and her family, Mazza has built beautiful connections in the community. Her loyalty to her family drew her back to La Crosse, and her loyalty to this community has enriched it. Mazza has had her hands in more community initiatives than can be listed, among them some favorites like Artspire, UW-La Crosse’s Distinguished Lecture series, the Midwest Music Festival, La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, the Lupus Alliance Murder Mystery and so many others. “This downtown area seemed so vulnerable when I came back,” says Mazza, growing emotional. She loves the revitalized downtown, she loves working in an established, family-owned pillar of local retail and she loves helping her community thrive. Whether you move away or stay put in your hometown, Kay Mazza asks herself and others, “Are you in touch with the place you need to call home?” *(crw)*

Lisa Heise lives, teaches and writes in La Crosse.



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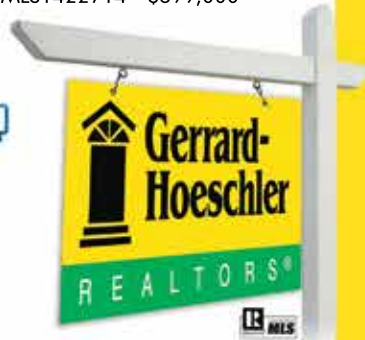
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RUN LIKE A WOMAN

Our local governments need leaders like you—here's how to run for office.

BY JESSIE FOSS
Contributed photos

Recruiting women to become involved in local politics is a passion of La Crosse County Board Chair Tara Johnson's. It is this passion that drives her not only to recruit women, but also to coach them on how and why to become involved in local government.

"For me personally, (getting women involved in politics) really comes from a deep belief that local elected officials should reflect the population and the makeup of the population," Johnson says.

La Crosse County's population is approximately 51 percent female; however, Johnson says women representation at local levels lags behind. The La Crosse County Board of Supervisors is about 45 percent female, and that is one of the highest percentages of females serving on county boards in Wisconsin.

These numbers are even further off when looked at on a state and national level. According to data from Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics, women hold only about 20 to 25 percent of United States Senate and House seats as well as state senate and house/assembly seats.

Wanted: citizen leaders

Johnson's path to being elected formed her belief that it is her responsibility to help other women become elected. She decided to run for public office during a time in her life when she was out of the workforce and staying home with her young children but still wanted

to maintain ties to the community. It was during this time that she read an editorial in the La Crosse *Tribune* urging area citizens to run for public office.

"When I was first elected in 2000, I got some advice from some people, but I was clueless," she says of the election process. "I beat an incumbent by 19 votes. I surprised myself by winning that race. When I ran the next few times, I got more and more help from people who served on the county board who helped me figure out how to organize my campaign."

How to get started

For those interested in running for public office, the first step Johnson recommends is reaching out to someone already in office.

"Think of a local elected official who you admire and respect, go have a cup of coffee with them and ask them what it's like to do their job."

There are a few basic minimum qualifications to hold public office. You must

- be a United States citizen
- be at least 18 years old (or older for some offices)
- satisfy residency requirements for certain offices
- not have been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States unless pardoned of the conviction



La Crosse County Board Chair Tara Johnson

The process for getting one's name on a ballot varies slightly for local versus state elected positions. Local positions include county, city, village, town, school district and other special-purpose district-elected offices. State positions include offices such as governor, secretary of state, legislative office and court of appeals judge.

Those interested in running for local office must file ballot access forms with their local county clerk. Write-in candidates in local elections must file a Campaign Registration Statement form with their local clerk by noon the Friday before an election. Those interested in state positions must file ballot access forms with the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

Part of this process includes gathering signatures from supportive voters. Deadlines and the number of signatures required to get onto a ballot vary by position. All forms, deadlines and signature requirements can be found on the Wisconsin Elections Commission website, elections.wi.gov.

Once a name has been added to a ballot, it cannot be removed except, in the case of death. A candidate could release a statement asking voters not to vote for him or her, but the name will still appear on the ballot.

Why not you?

Deciding to run for office can be a difficult decision for many women, Johnson says, because of the difference in the way men and women perceive their qualifications.

Women are more likely to believe they aren't capable of running a campaign or developing a budget. She also believes many women don't like the idea of being categorized as a politician, a vocation many see in a negative light.

However, Johnson says it has been her experience that most people are very supportive of their local elected officials and view them positively.

"I think especially at the local level, people have an appreciation for how important the decisions are that local officials make in our daily lives." *(crw)*

Jessie Foss is a freelance writer who lives in La Crosse. She enjoyed learning more about the local political process and the importance of citizen involvement.



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A NEW HOME ON THE OLD FAMILY FARM

A Viroqua couple enjoys the home of their dreams.

BY THERESA WASHBURN

Contributed photos



Prairie-style details reflect the architecture of the Kleiber home's exterior as noted in (clockwise from top) a very generous kitchen, a rustic staircase and a great room that lets in abundant natural light and offers a connection to the outdoors. Ample dining space embraces plenty of guests.

Going back to the farm was a priority for Amy Kleiber and her husband, Joe. They dreamed of building a new house in the familiar surroundings of his family farm, which boasts nearly 300 acres of pasture, crops and woodland near Viroqua. With a great deal of planning and help from local experts, the Kleibers merged the fresh elegance of a new home with the timelessness of multigenerational farm. "It's a beautiful, quiet spot on a dead-end road," says Amy Kleiber. "We are so lucky."

When Amy and Joe began to consider what they wanted in their

new home, they turned first to the Internet, searching for plans that appealed to both of them. The couple agreed that they liked the look of a Prairie-style exterior, and after some effort, they found a few different plans with qualities both were attracted to. Knowing that they couldn't create something themselves from their combination of ideas, they sought out Nuzum Home & Design Center's Jon Zahm. Zahm took the Internet plans and listened to the Kleibers' wish list. He drew up new plans to meld various designs into one home. "Jon did a great job with what we gave him," says Amy.



The Kleiber home includes an old twist on a new wine bar: The woodwork is all old tobacco lath, once found in barns and tobacco sheds all over Vernon County.



The great room boasts 15-foot ceilings, lots of natural light and abundant peace. Ruby, the family dog, approves.

With their dream home laid out on paper, the couple began to think about site placement. Joe planned to serve as the general contractor for the project, so he and Amy had to agree on the perfect spot. Amy knew she wanted to take advantage of all amazing vistas. “It’s really important to look at all the angles, to consider sunlight and the views,” she says. Taking that time paid off; Amy is thrilled at how the light comes in the house and the views from the different rooms.

The perfect place to cook

Amy is passionate about cooking and loves to entertain, so the main priority for the interior space of the home was a kitchen and dining space that could accommodate up to 50. This passion drove the interior design of the house to revolve around a large kitchen and adjacent dining room, all in an airy open plan. In order to ensure the look she wanted, Amy went to local carpenter Rick Soltau for help with the cabinets. Soltau, who specializes in custom cabinetry, built trim for the windows and the industrial appliances, which included a large LP stove, double oven and stainless steel refrigerator. The substantial island and two hardworking sinks allow multiple cooks in the kitchen. Amy was also pleased with their choice of flooring, which offers the warm look of wood but the durability of ceramic tile. Now, Amy can host holiday meals and family events in a space built to accommodate all the activity. “It is my favorite place in the house; I look forward to coming home to cook after work,” she says.

Not to be outdone, Joe carved out his own dream space in the lower level. A wine lover who makes his own wine, Joe created a bar area equipped with a large flat-screen television, refrigerator and sink. The woodwork is all old tobacco lath, once found in barns and tobacco sheds all around Vernon County. The refinished lath, laid in a bricklike pattern, adds a homey touch to the full-service in-home bar.

Great room peace

After eating and drinking, the Kleibers find repose in their great room. This light-filled space captures the surrounding views. Hanging from the 15-foot ceiling are two large fans that keep the air circulating. “What is amazing is how quiet it is. I love it,” says Amy. She credits the hush on their choice of using spray foam insulation and buying

good insulated windows, both of which add to the peaceful silence in the large space. While the decision to heavily insulate added some extra costs, Amy feels it was worth the expense, as the house has proven to be highly energy efficient.

Throughout the home, windows trimmed with dark wood add a counterbalance of light and dark to every space. The woodwork creates strong lines and warmth in all areas of the house including the central stairwell, which is another favorite feature of Amy’s. The rich solid banister is reminiscent of the Prairie-style exterior. Wood floors throughout the family areas keep the spaces grounded while the light from the large windows allows the eye to move beyond the house into the pastoral landscape.

Taking in the landscape

An approach to the home from the front offers the illusion of a one-story structure, but the sloping site placement means the back of the house expands to its full height. A large cement patio increases the space for entertaining during the warm summer months. Amy explains that the views dictated the position of the patio. It is the perfect place for grilling, sipping a glass of Joe’s homemade wine and taking in the unique, rolling landscape of the Driftless area.

Only one of Joe and Amy’s three boys still lives at home, and the couple knows that there will be a time when it will be just the two of them. Amy’s work as a nurse has taught her to plan for all types of future scenarios, so the home is equipped with a wheelchair-accessible bathroom. The main floor is wheelchair accessible as well.

With their dream home solidly on its foundation, Amy and Joe look forward to a long life of quiet days mixed with lively evenings of entertainment. Looking back on the journey of designing and building the perfect place for their family, Amy admits that all the hard work was worth it. “It does take longer than you think it will,” she warns. But all the effort pays off, and Amy counts herself as extremely lucky. “It is ridiculously beautiful here,” she says. “We just love it.” **(crw)**

Viroqua-based writer and teacher Theresa Washburn is the Director of Member Affairs at Organic Valley.

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HONEST FOOD

Local restaurants embrace the farm-to-table movement to delicious acclaim.

BY JULIE NELSON
Contributed photos

The menu at the La Crosse farm-to-table restaurant The Mint changes each season with the availability of locally grown foods.

Farm-to-table—it sounds like a high-end concept in big-city restaurants. But to local restaurateurs who put it into practice, it's more like life as they know it. This age-old way of eating has become a trend, making Ruthie and Luke Zahm's Driftless Café and Corrie Brekke's The Mint local culinary destinations.

Driftless Café, Viroqua

Two farm kids—Ruthie from Boscobel and Luke from La Farge—the Zahms grew up drinking milk out of the bulk tank, eating vegetables from the organic garden they could see from the house and trading produce with the farmers down the road.

Now, as owners of Driftless Café in Viroqua, the Zahms operate the same way: What's grown on the farm is what's on the table tonight.

"I like knowing where my food comes from, and I like knowing the people who are growing it," says Ruthie. "I really appreciate the connectivity to the farmers."

Ruthie says farm-to-table makes a lot of sense for Viroqua. "We have one of the biggest concentrations of organic farms right here in this area. And in a small town, you feel even more connected to the growers. People recognize Organic Valley and may know someone who works there, or their kids may go to school with the kids of someone like David Miles, who supplies us with our microgreens."

But an appealing concept only gets people in the door once. To keep them coming back, you have to be good. And Luke Zahm is one of the best. He was recently named a James Beard semi-finalist for Best Chef in the Midwest, a recognition he never thought he would receive

“We have one of the biggest concentrations of organic farms right here in this area. And in a small town, you feel even more connected to the growers.”

—Ruthie Zahm

as a small-town boy cooking in a town of 4,000. Ruthie says they still ask themselves, “Did that really happen?”

Luke is both a phenomenal chef and a natural people person. He got to know farmers and CSA (community supported agriculture) providers when he was cooking at Epic in Madison. He made use of those connections when, in 2013, he followed his dream to Viroqua and opened his own restaurant. Today, farmers contact Luke on a daily basis, often driving up with a pickup full of produce picked that morning. Each day Luke looks at all his options, makes his choices and, by 4 p.m., creates the menu for the night. That unpredictability creates an eating adventure for patrons and a challenge for the chefs.

“Running a restaurant is hard work,” says Ruthie, who gave up a career as a labor and delivery nurse to join Luke at the restaurant. “We are fortunate to work with staff who are really, truly just as excited to be a part of this as we are.”

The Mint, La Crosse

The success of Driftless Café is good for Corrie Brekke, the co-owner of The Mint and The Root Note in La Crosse. Like the Zahms, she is committed to procuring as many products as possible from local sources. “We know our farmers. Not all of them are certified organic, but we know their growing practices. By working with local sources, we are able to cut out the middleman, and the farmers are able to make a little bit more money. Plus, the food just tastes so much better.”

Brekke takes her commitment to locally sourced products beyond produce. She serves locally made beers and wines, as well as spirits distilled in the Twin Cities area. She even extends her commitment to soda. No Diet Coke at the Mint; all soft drinks are either Wisco Pop or made onsite.

Brekke began her interest in whole, natural foods at the age of 16, when she became a vegetarian. Her mother supported this in theory, though not so much in practice. Brekke had to learn to cook for herself.

Fast-forward to 2009, when Brekke got the chance to take her cooking skills public as one of seven co-owners of the newly formed Root Note. By 2011, five owners had dropped out, with Brekke and Dane Gonzales remaining. Three years later, Gonzales and Brekke added The Mint to their repertoire. While the restaurant drew in many people from the community, it was not immediately popular with the university students across the street. But when the Mint began serving lunch and brunch, and Brekke and Gonzales worked out some specials that fit the student budget, the place became a regular stop for their UW-La Crosse neighbors.

Though the menu at The Mint is a little more consistent than at the Driftless, Brekke describes their daily offerings as “a moving target, depending on what the season is telling us.”



Ruthie and Luke Zahm bring their farm-kid backgrounds to the Driftless Café, where the menu can change daily depending on what local farmers bring in.

For people who would like to do more farm-to-table eating at home, Brekke recommends purchasing a share in a CSA, going to farmers markets (and talking with the farmers) and shopping at the food co-ops, where they label locally sourced produce.

Farm-to-table is a growing trend, and Brekke is glad to be benefitting from that interest, but she says she worries about the health of the planet. If global warming changes the environment and the types of food that can be grown, that will have a big impact on all of us. She says that's why The Mint and the Root Note are so committed to shopping locally. “If everyone makes small steps,” Brekke says, “it will make a bigger impact eventually.”



ASPARAGUS MILANESE

Driftless Café

- 1 lb. local organic asparagus
- 4 local organic whole eggs
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper, freshly ground
- ⅓ lb. Sartori Sarvecchio parmesan cheese, finely shaved or grated
- 5 oz. tub local organic microgreens or other local greens
- 2 T. Driftless Organics sunflower oil, divided

Trim or peel asparagus ends to remove the woody stalks. The asparagus can be either steamed or grilled depending on your preferences. If you are steaming, do not season the asparagus until you have finished cooking it. If grilling, toss the asparagus lightly in sunflower oil, salt and black pepper. Grill or steam until the asparagus can be bent slightly without snapping. Divide asparagus and place onto four separate plates.

In a sauté pan, add 1 T. sunflower oil, fry eggs sunny-side up and season with salt and black pepper. Once the eggs are cooked, carefully remove from pan and place one on top of the asparagus on each plate. Take care not to break the yolks when transferring.

Shave or grate one-fourth of the parmesan cheese over each egg until it resembles a snowcapped mountain.

Place one-fourth of the microgreens (or other local greens) on the top of each egg and drizzle the remaining sunflower oil evenly over each plate. Serve immediately and enjoy!

RAMP CHIMMICHURRI

Anthony Swarthout, The Mint

- 3 cups ramp leaves
- 2 T. fresh parsley
- 1 T. fresh oregano
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- ⅓ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cups grapeseed oil
- 1 T. whole-grain mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

Clean ramps, removing any roots and debris; cut leaves at the point where the leaves meet the stem, reserving the bulbs for other uses.

Roughly chop ramp leaves, parsley and oregano. Add to food processor and pulse until mixture looks like a paste. Add garlic and apple cider vinegar, and pulse until mixture looks similar to pesto.

Slowly add oil in a in a slow, thin stream while the food processor is running on highest speed. When all the oil is incorporated, turn off the food processor and add the mustard. Pulse until the mustard is fully incorporated. You can adjust the thickness of the sauce with a splash of water.

This sauce is great with any grilled meats, or use it as a marinade for vegetables or tofu. Coat vegetables or tofu for a minimum of two hours before grilling. [\(crw\)](#)

Julie Nelson is a native of Viroqua and is thrilled to see a small-town restaurant doing so well.

Remember Rosé

Your phone pings: It's a text from your best friend from college, and she's dropping by this afternoon. The decision about what to serve is important and immediate: Hmm ... summer ... light ... cool ... rosé.

Whether dry, semisweet or sweet, a rosé wine is a great summer afternoon refresher, served with a light appetizer or chips.

Rosés are made using two different processes. One involves quickly pressing recently harvested red grapes, and the other involves blending white and red juice or wine. A winemaker then chooses the sweetness level of the finished wine based on the acidity and strength of flavor.

Whatever the process or sweetness level you prefer, this summer, remember rosé!

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Sizzling Summer

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Beat the heat with these key summertime essentials.

BY PAIGE FORDE

Photos by Jordana Snyder Photography

Let your style shine! Dive into summer with this season's top products and fashion that will leave you looking (and feeling) sun-sational.



Hit the beach for some fun in the sun with a colorful patterned bikini from **Island Outdoors** on French Island. If you're active on the river, throw on a sun-battling hoodie and keep a water bottle on hand to stay hydrated.

Prana Briana high-neck top, \$60; Prana Saba bottom, \$50; Simms Solarflex hoodie, \$59.95; Klean Kanteen water bottle, \$22.49; Chaco candy gray sandals, \$110.

Keep it cool and casual with a basic white tee and distressed jean capris from **Mainstream Boutique** in Onalaska. Jazz up this everyday look with teal-accented jewelry, comfortable sandals and a standout bag.

Tribal white tee, \$49; Dear John jean capri, \$89; Madeline Girl taupe sandals, \$59; Mona B tie satchel, \$59; Em & Gem Connie necklace, \$26; bracelet, \$32; Belle Via earrings, \$28.



While soaking up the sun, protect and nourish your skin and hair with sunproof products from **Ultimate Salon and Spa** in Onalaska. Stop by **Urban Shoetique** to switch up your summertime vibes and dazzle with fresh, on-trend footwear.

Shoes: Toms polka dot sneakers, \$55; Miz Mooz teal sandals, \$80; Toms Lexie tribal print sandals, \$69; Miz Mooz metallic sandals, \$80.

Aveda Products: foot relief crème, \$24; sun care masque, \$27; sun care hair/body cleanser, \$21; sun care hair veil, \$28; daily light guard, \$42; lip saver, \$8.50.



Metallic accents and playful nature-inspired prints pair effortlessly in this look from **Touch of Class** in downtown La Crosse. Whether you're attending meetings or taking a stroll in the park, this light and breezy outfit is perfect for any occasion.

Lilap scoop-neck top, \$78; Elliot Lauren jungle print capri, \$189; Lafayette double chain necklace, \$248; Femmes de Cupcakes wristlet, \$112; The Flexx slip-on sneakers, \$145.





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The towers of Budapest's Castle District offer a sweeping view, including the Pest side of the city across the Danube River. Top center: The well-known Hungarian paprika dries at a market stand.

Beautiful Budapest

This European jewel makes art of history.

BY LELA NEWHEY
Contributed photos

Budapest, brimming with a rich history, is considered one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. This sophisticated city, known for its art and architecture, was first settled by the Celts in 1 AD and later occupied by the Romans. Invaders from the East and West have since marched over the rolling hills of Hungary. The people seem to have absorbed not only the culture of the invaders but have managed to keep a strong culture of their own. This shows in everything from the architecture present in the metropolis of Budapest to the quaint villages scattered throughout the country.

Hungarian history

Budapest has had a stormy political history, beginning in 896 AD with Magyar tribes. The Roman walls were still being used. In 1541, the Turks took over the Buda Castle, and in 1872, the towns of Buda, Pest and Obuda were united as Budapest. In World War I, the Treaty of Trianon took two-thirds of Hungary's territory, and an anti-Jewish law set a quota on Jews in universities. In World War II, Hungary was forced to side with the Nazis. The Soviets took power in 1948. In 1956, the Hungarian people revolted, and 3,000 people were killed when the Soviets suppressed the revolution and 200,000 people fled Hungary. In 1990, communism was finally defeated, and free elections were held.



The Weeping Willow Monument tells the history of the 600,000 Hungarian Jews killed by the Nazis.



The Parliament of Budapest, always a stunning building, is particularly so when lit up at night.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban, under a Nationalist viewpoint, was just re-elected. His reign has been steady, and he could be discerned as a likable leader. His policy has been to let no refugees into the country, which many Hungarian citizens have agreed with. The economics of Hungary seem to be strengthening, though many still work three jobs with very little pay.

Getting around

The Budapest Airport is as modern as any other big-city airport. Taxi drivers are efficient and fair; Uber is not available.

The trains, trams and buses in Budapest are easy to use. The people are friendly. Mixed generations are visible, and people walk everywhere. The forint or huff is the currency. Many “ex-pats” happily reside in Hungary, and there are great international schools here. Prezi, a three-dimensional computer presentation format for business, was designed in Budapest and is doing great in the global market. English is taught in the schools, and almost everyone under 45 speaks some English.

What to see

If you are a history buff, the House of Terror is a must-see. It was completed in about 2012 using various donations and is an immersion into the Nazis’ interrogations and tortures. Later, the communists moved into the same building and continued their interrogations and torture. The pictures of thousands of citizens hang on the three-story walls. A Soviet tank rests in the center of the building, and a spiral staircase enables the viewer to see the tank from various vantage points. The torture chambers are in the basement and it is very chilly, both literally and figuratively.

The Castle District is mesmerizing. You’ll find great places to eat and so much more: the architecture of the past, the history, the statues, the view of the Danube and the bridges over it. Long after the Magyars, Nazi troops were stationed at the castle, which was later bombed by the Soviets. Massive work is still underway to repair and restore the Castle District.

The Danube River is a beautiful, powerful river flowing through the city. All the bridges crossing back and forth from Pest and Buda were destroyed during World War II; they have since all been rebuilt. The Chain Bridge, or the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, is exciting at night

as are all of the bridges uniting Pest and Buda. The lighting show put on by the city is extraordinary! Walking about the city night or day is a sightseeing treat. Ferries of all sizes cruise up and down the Danube offering drinks, food and/or entertainment. Seeing the river both day and night is essential, remarkable and awe-inspiring.

Quaint shops displaying lace, jewelry, clothing, dishes and anything of interest are all over the Castle District. Eateries and fine restaurants are readily available. The mulled wine on a cold day is to die for; goulash is good anywhere you choose to order it. Hungarian wine is everything a wine lover could look for—including great prices—and Hungarian beer is also a treat.

The Széchenyi Baths are among the oldest and most truly amazing “must see” destinations in Budapest. The baths are fed by an artesian spring and contain three sections: outdoor pools, multiple indoor thermal pools and a large sauna, which includes a large ice pool that is exhilarating.

Art and monuments

Art in Budapest covers all of the historical dates, the cultural interest and needs and the military conquests. Don’t miss Heroes’ Square, with its memorial built to remember World War I military deaths, engraved with the words “To the thousand-year boundaries.”

Another sculpture in Budapest tells the history of the 600,000 Hungarian Jews killed by the Nazis. Imre Varga, who erected this Weeping Willow Monument, inscribed “Your pain is greater than my pain.” Another tribute to the Holocaust is hundreds if not thousands of steel or iron pillars of various shapes, pulling out of the ground much like a ship would rise out of the depths of a sea storm wave. It was one of the most moving statues I’ve experienced.

There is historical and future power here in this incredible city. The people mostly speak some English and are very eager, kind and willing to answer whatever question you have. The transportation system is on time and works. The city is being cleaned and worked on in every direction one looks. This is a city as mindful of its future as it is of its past, and the result is an ideal European destination. (CRW)

Lela Newey has a daughter living in Budapest and so has reason to visit the city frequently. But even if she didn’t have family living and working there, she would happily spend time in this beautiful city.

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The logo for CPC Printing & Promotions features the letters 'CPC' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A small green star is positioned to the right of the 'C'. Below the letters, the words 'PRINTING & PROMOTIONS' are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

A collection of promotional products is displayed, including a black and blue golf bag, a blue folding chair, a shopping basket filled with snacks, a yellow umbrella, a blue backpack, a black cooler, a silver water bottle, a black and yellow case, a black and yellow case, a black and yellow case, and a black and yellow case. Two people, a man and a woman, are standing next to the products. The man is wearing a black polo shirt with 'CPC' and '1000' printed on it. The woman is wearing a white polo shirt with 'CPC' and '1000' printed on it.

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1

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6

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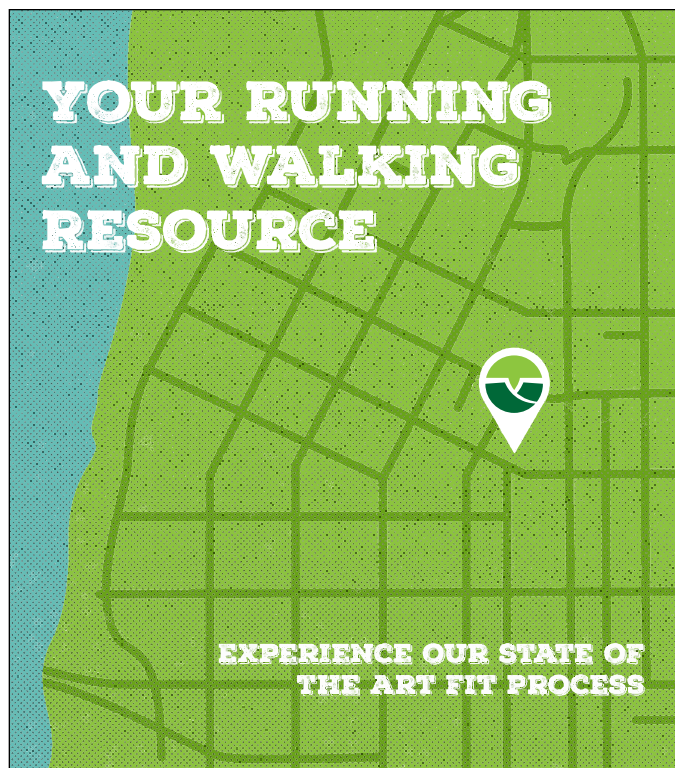
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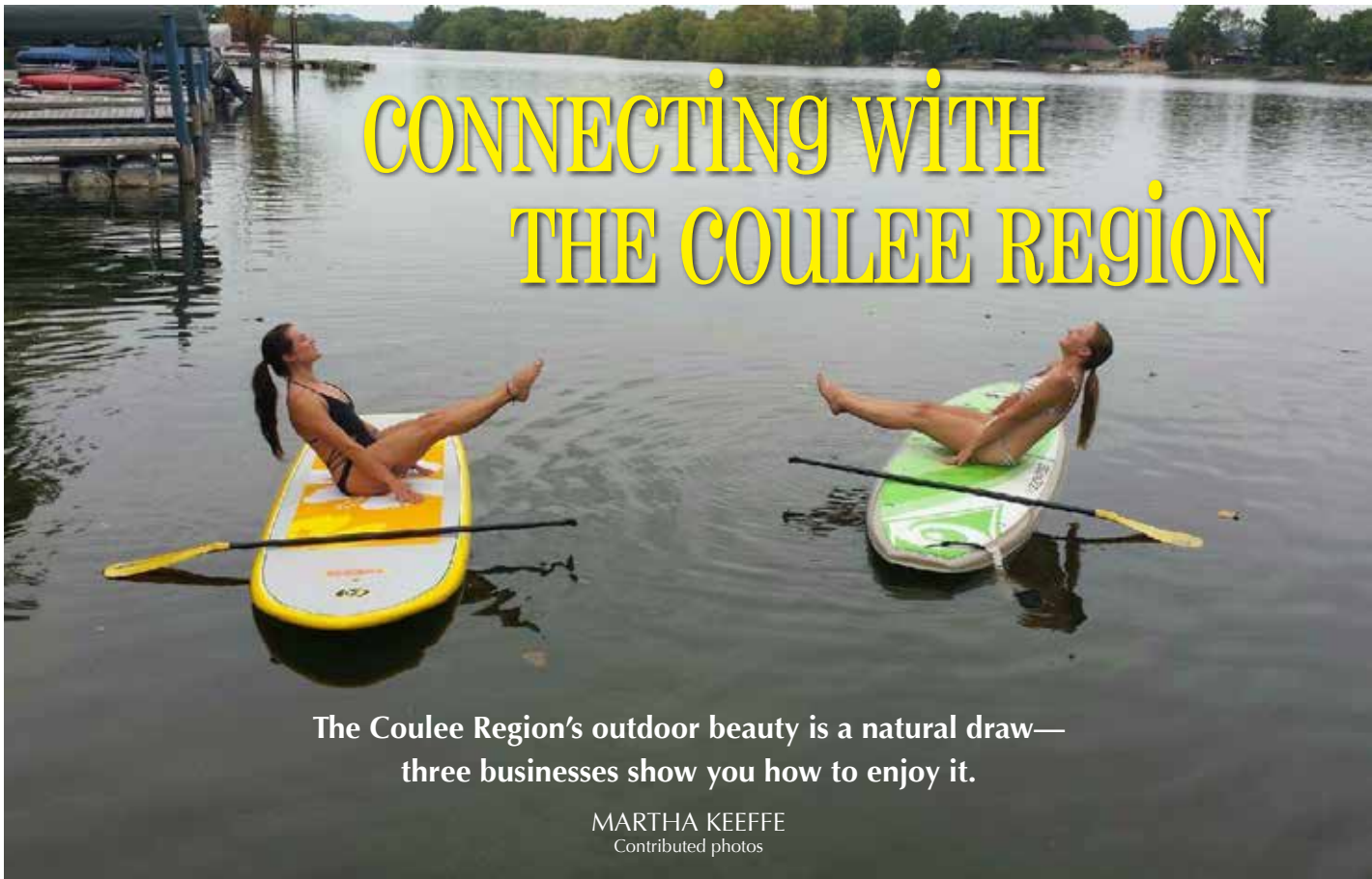
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CONNECTING WITH THE COULEE REGION

The Coulee Region's outdoor beauty is a natural draw—
three businesses show you how to enjoy it.

MARTHA KEEFFE
Contributed photos

This summer, connect with the outdoors in a new way—perhaps by trying paddleboard yoga through Island Outdoors.

The Coulee Region is full of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors—and plenty of sports-minded entrepreneurs eager to get you out there. So if your passion is for the water, a run through the forest or a leisurely ride along city bike trails, a triathlon of active businesses are ready to launch you on your next adventure.

River Trail Cycles

Emily Vance, owner of River Trail Cycles in Onalaska, knows bikes. In fact, she has been maintaining and selling bikes for more than 25 years. And as a woman cyclist, she possesses the knowledge and experience to outfit you with the proper bike and gear to get you pedaling. “First of all, the color doesn’t make it a women’s bike,” says Vance, who recommends that you forgo the “one-size-fits-all” department store brands and invest in a bike designed specifically for women. “We’re built differently; therefore, the bike frame fits differently.”

Bikes are designed for specific purposes. While an upright “hybrid comfort” bike with a cushy seat works well for casual rides through the neighborhood or on flat trails, it would be a frustration on rugged, varied mountain bike terrain that requires a bike with knobby tires and handlebars in a less upright position. Likewise, a mountain bike would be a drag for someone who wants the speed and aerodynamics handling for on-road biking or touring.

Bike size, clearance, saddle size and the distance between the seat and handlebars are all factors that determine a comfortable ride. “Women tend to be smaller; therefore, their bikes require some specific design adjustments, particularly if you’re petite,” says Vance. “Seek out a reputable bike seller who knows how to fit you to a bike. It’s worth the effort.

“Don’t forget to buy a properly sized helmet. Look for one that’s comfortable, yet snug, sits level on your brow—then wear it,” stresses Vance. And don’t overlook hydration, exposure to the elements and comfortable clothing. “Whatever you need to make your ride enjoyable is out there. With everything from padded bike shorts to fun add-ons like odometers, we’re here to help.”

Grand Bluff Running

Whether you’re new to running or a veteran racer, the staff at Grand Bluff Running, located in downtown La Crosse, is dedicated to meeting your running needs. Created to be a unifying hub for all things running, Grand Bluff Running is committed to keeping the sport—and the health of its participants—up and running. “The La Crosse area is so active that I wanted a way to serve the community,” says founder and owner Tyler Heinz as to what inspired him to open the business. “And as a runner, I wanted to remain engaged in a sport that is always evolving.”



Kayaking, running, biking—local businesses can set you up for most any Coulee Region sport.

Are you running to keep in shape? Training for your first marathon? Or do you prefer to skip the pavement and head for the trails? “If you can figure out where you want the sport to take you, we can put you in the right shoe,” says Heinz. “Knowing that helps us determine the amount of cushion, control and stability you need to run efficiently.” In addition, a complimentary shoe-fit analysis helps the staff choose the best shoe for you based on your running form and foot measurements.

“Your sports bra should never celebrate its first birthday,” says Heinz, who notes that even if it looks presentable, if worn consistently, a sports bra will lose its elasticity during the course of one year. The same goes for shoes, though their life cycle depends on usage. “We encourage runners to purchase a new pair of shoes halfway through their life cycle so that they have a revolving set of shoes,” says Heinz. “This practice lessens the chance of injuries such as shin splints and knee and back pain.”

In addition to offering the latest in shoes, gear and apparel, Heinz and his staff work hard at finding ways to keep running interesting. Weekly group runs (some with post-run crepes and coffee made in-house), monthly summer trail and pub runs, race coaching and on-site physical therapy services are available to serve a diverse group of athletes. “We’re always open to ideas,” says Heinz. “It’s exciting to see what we come up with next.”

Island Outdoors

When asked to describe Island Outdoors, located on French Island, owner Scott Gartner is quick to answer, “It’s a unique place.” Stocked

with fishing gear, camping gear, kayaks and active wear, it offers a rare combination of services and products that not only cater to water sport enthusiasts but also satisfy the year-round needs of those on dry land. “Seasons are so short,” says Gartner, “that I saw a need to maximize their potential.”

Though Island Outdoors is known best for its bait and tackle, Gartner is enthusiastic about being able to outfit active people with a broad array of high-quality active gear to meet a wide range of interests. Old favorites, like canoes and kayaks, are available for rent along with trend-setting stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) and quirky hydrobikes. Camping gear designed for efficiency can be purchased to lighten the load of backpackers, and popular items such as ENO hammocks provide a relaxing end to the day. “We specialize in setting people up the correct way, from A to Z,” says Gartner about his choice in inventory. “And if we don’t have it, we can order just about anything.”

Located on a Mississippi inlet, Island Outdoors is able to offer convenient and stress-free ways to get people on the water. Guided women-only “Diva Paddle” and co-ed “Pints and Paddles” paddle nights give kayakers the opportunity to spend a quiet evening exploring the river. Certified yoga instructors invite fitness devotees who are looking for a challenge to join them for a class on a SUP, and when summer is over, Island Outdoors accommodates ice skaters, cross-country skiers and snowshoers. 

As an avid mountain biker, trail runner and occasional kayaker, Martha Keefe encourages others to experience the adventure of being outdoors.

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Acupuncture returns to Naturally Unbridled Wellness: Ellen Arndorfer began studying Oriental medicine in China in 1985 and has been a practicing acupuncturist for nearly 30 years. Arndorfer has been licensed in the state of Wisconsin since 1990, when she graduated from the Midwest Center for the Study of Oriental Medicine & Acupuncture. She is part owner of the Viroqua Healing Arts Center and has been supporting La Crosse-area clients for years. Arndorfer completes the team of six holistic practitioners at Naturally Unbridled Wellness in Onalaska. Learn more and book appointments at www.naturallyunbridled.com, 1129 Riders Club Road, Onalaska, 608-799-8326.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



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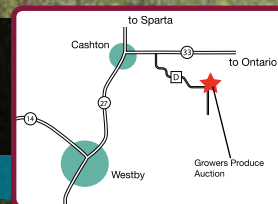
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW) 4th Tues. of each month, Shenanigans, 5:30 p.m. Beth Kirchner, crpwomen@gmail.com, 608-317-5703.

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, drkasey@naturallyalignedchiro.com.

CALENDAR EVENTS

June 2-4, Makers Market & Small Business Showcase, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

June 3, June Dairy Days Parade, noon, West Salem.

June 3, Winona Artisan Market, noon-5 p.m., Island City Brewing Company, Winona.

June 3-10, PFC Bike Week La Crosse, People's Food Co-op, La Crosse.

June 8, YWCA Taste of the Coulee Region, 5:30-8 p.m., Court Above Main Banquet Hall, www.ywcalax.org.

June 8-11, Radiant Woman—A Yoga Retreat, 3 p.m. Thurs. to 12:30 p.m. Sun., Franciscan Spirituality Center, www.fscenter.org.

June 9-10, Artspire Festival, 5 p.m., Downtown La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org/artspire.

June 9-18, *Aladdin Jr.*, 7 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2:00 p.m. Sat.-Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

June 10, Early Summer Foraging Class with Field Trip, 9 a.m.-noon, People's Food Co-op, La Crosse, pre-register at customer service.

June 11, Mayo's Biggest Baby Shower in Town, noon-3 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

June 11, Strikes for Tykes Fundraiser, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., All Star Lanes, La Crosse.

June 13, Paint & Pour with Pam Lee: "Spring Birch," 6-8 p.m., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

June 16, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-registration required, www.funmuseum.org.

June 17, March for Music 5k, 9-11 a.m., Myrick Park, La Crosse, www.explorelacrosse.com.

June 17, Midsummer Festival, Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center, Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

June 21-July 30, Great River Shakespeare Festival, Winona State University, www.grsf.org.

June 22, Dairy Month: Cheese Madness People's Food Co-op, 6-7 p.m., La Crosse.

June 24, Dixieland Jazz Festival, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Winona State University, www.visitwinona.com.

June 25, YMCA Got Energy Triathlon, 8 a.m., Swarthout Park, West Salem, www.laxymca.org.

June 28, Kids from Wisconsin 2017, 7 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts, www.webercenterfortheperformingarts.org.

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

June 30-July 4, Riverfest, Riverside Park, www.riverfestlacrosse.com.

July 1, Winona Artisan Market, noon-5 p.m., Island City Brewing Company, Winona.

July 3, Red Cross Blood Drive, 12:30-5 p.m., Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

July 4, Fireworks, 10 p.m., Riverside Park.

July 6-23, Minnesota Beethoven Festival, Winona State University, www.mnbeethovenfestival.org.

July 8, Kids Tri, 8-11 p.m., R.W. Houser Family YMCA, www.laxymca.org.

July 9, Art Fair & Wine Tasting, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center, Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

July 11, Paint & Pour with Pam Lee: "Koi," 6-8 p.m., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

July 14-15, Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival, Copeland Park, La Crosse, www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/bigbluedragon.

July 14-16, Women's Indigo Dye Weekend Retreat, Westby, Jennifer Falkowski, Retreat@DeeplntoIndigo.com, 608-852-3970.

July 14, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-registration required, www.funmuseum.org.

July 15, Stockholm Art Fair, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Stockholm, Wis., www.stockholmartfair.org.

July 15, Freedom Fest, 9 a.m.-11:30 p.m., UW-La Crosse Veterans Memorial Sports Complex, www.freedomfestlacrosse.com.

July 22, 27th Annual Rail Fair, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Copeland Park, La Crosse, 608-781-9383.

July 27-29, Summer Days Sidewalk Sale and Street Dance, Downtown La Crosse, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

July 28, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-registration required, www.funmuseum.org.

July 28-30, Holidays & Health Expo, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

July 28-30, Houston Hoedown, Houston, Minnesota, www.houstonhoedown.com.

July 29, Miss RemarkAble Pageant, 3 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts, www.riverfrontinc.org/events/missremarkable.

July 29-30, AAUW Art Fair on the Green, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun., UW-La Crosse Campus.



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