

Coulee Region Women

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

Celebrating
our 50th issue

50
2002-2010

Live & Learn

CONNIE METTILLE
LEARNS TO LIVE AGAIN

Shall We Dance?

The Global Classroom

Secrets to lifelong love

Parade of Homes Planbook Inside!

JUNE/JULY 2010

www.crwmagazine.com



TMJ stands for Temporomandibular Joints.

These are two joints that connect your jaw to your skull
and when they are out of place, they can cause:

- Clicking or popping of the jaw joints
- Cracked Teeth
- Pain in or around the jaw joints
- Locking or limited opening
- Severely Worn Teeth
- Headaches, Pain around the eyes
- Dizziness
- Ear Ringing
- Clenching or grinding
- Neck and shoulder pain

Muscle Spasms go hand in hand with the displaced joint. Because the nerves and muscles are very complex, when they are in spasm in the jaw joint area, the problems can extend into other areas of the body. It is for this reason that the symptoms masquerade as so many other conditions, making people travel from doctor to doctor in search of relief. It is estimated that 45 to 50 million Americans suffer from one or more of the above symptoms and many never think to seek a neuromuscular dentist for help.

How can the position of my teeth affect the jaw joint?

Each jaw joint is like a ball and socket. When this joint functions properly, a thin cartilage disc moves smoothly between the ball and socket. This thin disc acts like a cushion allowing the TMJ joint to move smoothly. Each disc is held in place and guided by a muscle. If your bite is not right, the joint is actually pulled out of alignment and usually the disc is pulled forward. Since the disc is no longer acting like a cushion, the joint itself now rubs against the bony socket. Mild displacement causes popping/ clicking noises in the joint and more severe displacement causes pain and eventual permanent damage to the joint.

So an unstable bite can cause jaw joint displacement, muscle strain and pain. When the jaw joint is displaced for an extended time, the body begins to compensate and adapt by involving the muscles of the neck, back, and often the arms, pelvis, and legs.



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PICTURED ON THE COVER AND ABOVE: Connie Mettille

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Makeup by Mary Kay—Trudy Swenson



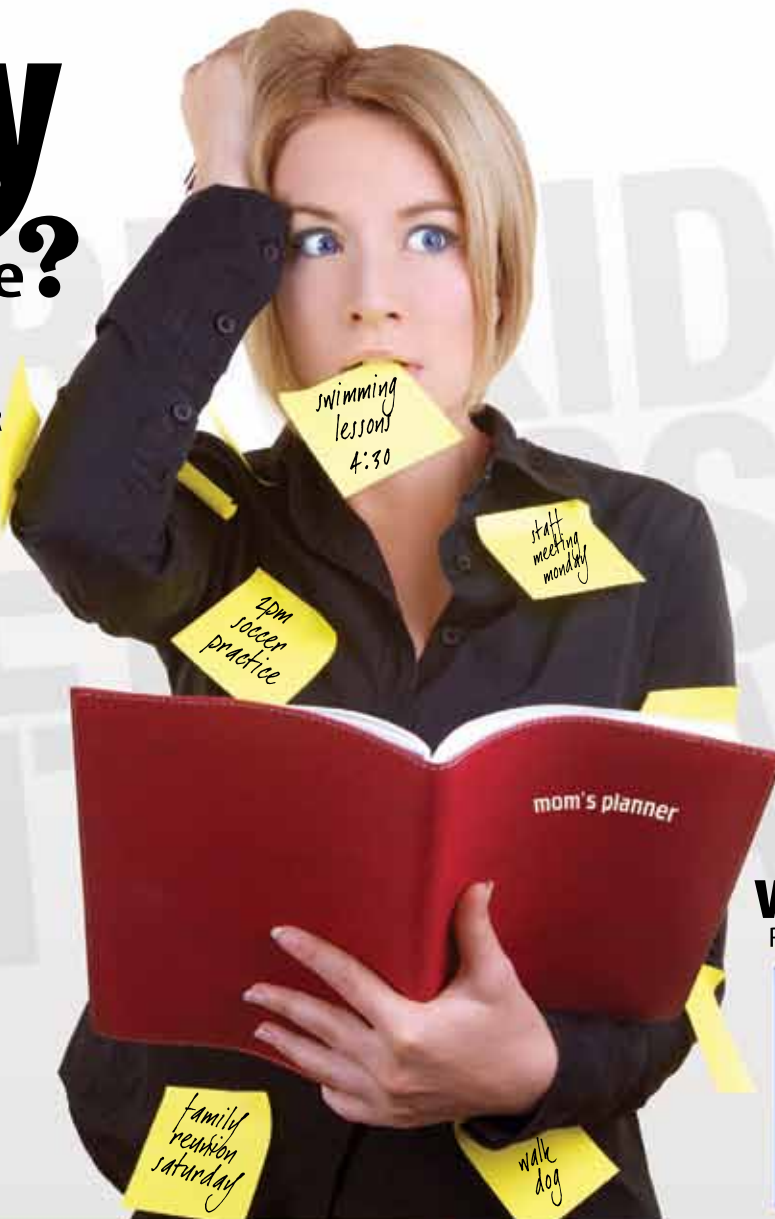
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Coulee Region Women

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Be sure to sign up as a fan at www.crwmagazine.com to share your thoughts on our stories and learn more about upcoming events.

When I was in graduate school outside of New York City, I banded together with two other volunteers to teach a Friday afternoon writing class to middle school kids in a nearby homeless shelter. Kate, a *New York Times* writer and the mother of tweens, provided insight into the middle school mind. Kim, a poet, showered the kids with metaphors and unconditional love. I, the essayist, was the disciplinarian.

The kids lived behind security doors, played on concrete and often did poorly in school. But every Friday afternoon, we found them crowded by our meeting-room door. They gobbled up our exercises, taught us their vocabulary, performed raps and mined memories. There were days we painfully coaxed words out of them and days we couldn't get them to sit down. But we always left feeling we'd done something good.

One Friday morning, I opened the *Westchester Journal News* to discover there had been a drug bust at their facility the night before. I recognized the surnames of several kids in our class, and realized their parents had been arrested. We didn't expect to see those kids anytime soon. Sure enough, a good half of our class that day was in protective custody.

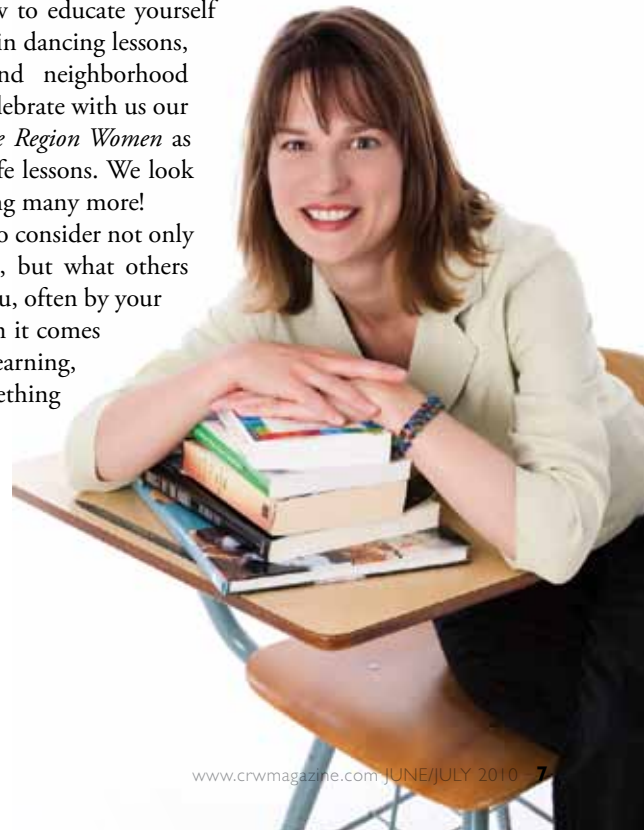
But the next week, they were back. They sat huddled in parkas with hoods drawn over their faces. They did not write. They did not talk. But they were there.

Their very presence taught me so much: that trust is a gift, that creativity can be a haven, that nothing can be taken for granted—which is why the fact that three ordinary women showed up every Friday afternoon, without fail, supplying love, understanding and a few good rules, was terribly important.

There is no greater teacher than life, and the stories in our "Live and Learn" issue reflect just that. Take a lesson from Connie Mettille, a Winona woman who relearned to walk and talk after a serious car accident, and who has done so with grace and gratitude. Learn the secrets of marriage from Hazel and Ortis Price, who boast 72 years of experience. See life through the eyes of a family living with autism, in which each day is a new lesson in living. Discover how to educate yourself in local classrooms, in dancing lessons, on family trips and neighborhood associations. And celebrate with us our 50th issue of *Coulee Region Women* as we share our own life lessons. We look forward to publishing many more!

As you do, stop to consider not only what you can learn, but what others are learning from you, often by your very presence. When it comes to living, and learning, we all have something valuable to share.

Betty



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Left to right: YWCA GardenFest, Great River Shakespeare Festival, Art Fair on the Green, Minds in Motion Bike Tour

GARDENING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

The YWCA GardenFest, a fundraiser for YWCA of the Coulee Region, will take place on the Southside Oktoberfest grounds on June 5 and 6 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$4 for one day or \$7 for both days. Admission is \$1 for ages 5-12 and free for children under 5. Vendors will be selling plants, trees, garden art, ponds, landscaping services and potting and gardening benches. There will also be a workshop on dying silk scarves and four other gardening seminars daily, including how to make potting or gardening benches. On June 5 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., WineFest will be held on the grounds as well. Admission is \$25 and there will be seminars and wine tasting. Come share your passion with 3,000 other gardening enthusiasts while supporting local services for women and kids. For more information, visit www.ywcagardenfest.com.

SHAKESPEARE COMES TO LIFE

If you slept through your Shakespeare class in college, now is the time to give the Bard a second chance. Witness Shakespeare's greatest works almost every night between June 23 and August 1 this summer. The Great River Shakespeare Festival will feature *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Daly News*. The performances will take place at the Performing Arts Center on the campus of Winona State University. Ticket prices vary depending on the day and performance. For more information on directions, dates and tickets, visit <http://grsf.org/>.

*beautiful
cultural
creative
physical*

ART FOR STUDENTS' SAKE

Support art and local education at the annual Art Fair on the Green, supported by the American Association of University Women. The event takes place on the UW-La Crosse campus from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 24 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 25. More than 100 professional artists from around the country will display their work. A \$4 entry fee goes toward scholarships for local students. This is a juried art show featuring a variety of media.

TAKE A RIDE FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Hop on your bike and join hundreds of other riders on June 19. This is the sixth anniversary of the Minds in Motion Bike Tour, which was founded to promote fitness for students through the Fit Kids Living Healthy Program in the Onalaska School District. There are four routes designed to meet various skill levels. The 5-mile-plus route will be on the Great River Bike Trail and costs \$15 (ages 6 and under ride free). This is perfect for families with young children because they can choose how far they want to ride. For more experienced riders, there are 16-mile, 32-mile and 62-mile rides. Registration fees for these rides will be \$20 or \$25, depending on the route. Registration starts at 7 a.m., and there will be a mass start at 8 a.m. from the Onalaska Middle School. Preregister at www.mimbiketour.org for a \$5 discount. Registered riders will receive a free T-shirt, lunch and entertainment. Make sure to bring a helmet, as it is mandatory for all riders.



before (woman)



after



before (man)



after

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LEARNING TO LIVE AGAIN

What a car accident took away, Connie Mettillle has worked hard to regain.

by **FRAN RYBARIK**

PHOTOS BY JANET MOOTZ PHOTOGRAPHY



Work hard. Be kind. Be grateful. Appreciate. Love. Achieve. Work harder.

These were Connie Mettillle's values, her life lessons, until she turned 38. Then, a terrible car accident took away much of what she'd taken for granted, and she embarked on a new set of lessons—which included learning to walk and talk again.

A fighting spirit

As the youngest of eight children, Mettillle learned independence at an early age. "If I wanted to play a game with my brothers and sisters, I had to keep up. I never learned how to ask for help," Mettillle recalls. If a problem arose, her family worked to make it better. Blaming and wallowing were never part of her growing-up experience.

She dreamed of teaching and coaching. After completing her undergraduate degree at Winona State University, she moved westward to teach, coach and complete her post-graduate degree.

In 2001, Mettillle returned to Winona as a professor in Health Sciences at Winona State. Her family all lived in the area, and she could become part of their regular gatherings again. When she landed the head volleyball coach position at the university, she thought all her dreams were coming true.

"If I could have skipped it, I would," says Connie Mettillle of her accident. But determination, perseverance and a fighting spirit have brought her back.

In the early morning hours of December 28, 2005, Mettille's life changed. A car ran a stop sign and struck the car she rode in with her life partner, Tom Sawyer. The 18-year-old female who hit her was drunk, speeding and using a cell phone. Ironically, the young woman was slated to start a volleyball program with Mettille the following week.

Sawyer's wounds included injuries to his spleen, ribs and lungs. Mettille had a traumatic brain injury. She doesn't remember anything from 4 p.m. the day before the accident until 22 days after it. Her memories of her seven days in intensive care and 13 days in the rehabilitation unit come from a journal kept for her and stories she's been told.

The long road home

Mettille's slim body, big gray eyes, small features and perky hairstyle belie the last five years of her life.

"I am an athlete," Mettille says proudly. "Everything I lived was the opposite of what I was told during rehab. In order to get better at a sport, athletes work harder, push farther. My doctors and therapists said I needed to stop, to rest, to get better. It was hard for me to comprehend.

"My strong desire to get back on track—teaching, coaching, running, biking, hiking—helped me heal," Mettille explains. "But I also got excellent medical care at the scene of the accident, then at Winona Hospital and Gundersen Lutheran. I developed relationships with so many of my caregivers. They didn't just take care of my head or my physical injuries. They took care of all of me."

Mettille's balance, vision and ability to communicate were also impaired. When a therapist threw her a ball, she got frustrated. She asked Sawyer to explain to the therapist that this was "too simple" of a task. In Mettille's mind, she threw the ball perfectly. Others could see that she hadn't. She thought her words made complete sense. But others couldn't understand her.

When she went home, she had to be supervised 24 hours a day. "Besides my independence, I lost any sense of privacy," Mettille says. "I couldn't be left alone. I couldn't go to the bathroom or shower unless someone was with me. I couldn't be trusted, because I had no awareness of

my limitations. At the time, I didn't always appreciate all the help I was getting."

She looked forward to visits from her students. "These kids had to find transportation to get to my house," Mettille explains. "They came regularly. I didn't realize that they were my supervision. My colleagues at Winona State set up care schedules for me for months."

The first time she tried to run, she only lasted a city block, then came home defeated and exhausted. Continued therapy, a positive attitude and a refusal to consider disability options brought her back to her dream of teaching and coaching.

Last summer, a First Responder recognized Mettille and Sawyer at a restaurant. The woman told Mettille she hadn't known if Mettille would survive the accident. A similar thing happened during a follow-up medical procedure. A caregiver who had been with her the first night shared her amazement at Mettille's recovery.

"To have someone tell you that they were worried by your condition is astounding," Mettille recounts, her eyes filling with tears. "I had the chance to thank these women for what they did for me. So many things fell into place, so many people did the right thing at the right time to make my recovery possible."

A new life

Mettille may look the same, but nothing about her life is the same. Big things and little things have changed. Her sense of smell has changed, and she sneezes differently. And she's not in such a rush anymore.

"For 38 years, I hurried to get places, get another degree, win more games," she relates. "My life changed in ways that let me blossom. I've learned to slow down and to appreciate being with Tom or my family.

"I think I was always kind," Mettille adds. "Now I express it more. When I say 'please' or 'thank you,' I really mean it. I recognize and appreciate acts of love, like my mom checking on me. I have a new understanding of the words *honor* and *cherish*. I regret not being aware of what this time was like for Tom and for my family, and I am grateful to everyone who protected me through my prolonged recuperation."

At the trial of the young woman who caused the accident, Mettille's statement



In her healing, Mettille has learned to slow down and appreciate life. "My life changed in ways that let me blossom," she says.

confirmed her commitment to her values, dreams and life:

"This accident in and of itself is an unfortunate chain of events that has forever changed many lives ... I would ask the court to consider how this accident can be used to create a learning environment for this community ... It is my wish that the 'punishment' for this crime be geared toward educating others so no other family has to go through what my family has and will continue to go through."

Almost five years after the accident, Mettille still deals with vision deficits, motion sickness, slower reactions on one side of her body and migraine headaches. She manages her life by slowing down, lightening up and choosing the activities that matter most to her.

Once unable to walk, she is running and biking. Once unable to talk, she lives her dream of teaching, although she retired from coaching volleyball last year.

"If I could have skipped this experience, I would," asserts Mettille. "But I wouldn't want to give up my new way of living. I'm a better educator and a better person now. I walk my life more." ♣

Fran Rybarik writes from her home in La Crescent, Minn., where she strives to learn from her life experiences, too.



Solutions for Individuals, Families & Communities



For Marriages & Couples:

Walk Away Wife Syndrome

In the early years of marriage, women are the relationship caretakers. They carefully monitor their relationships to make sure there is enough closeness and connection. If not, women will do what they can to try to fix things. If their husbands aren't responsive, women become extremely unhappy and start complaining about everything under the sun...things that need to get done around the house, responsibilities pertaining to the children, how free time is spent, and so on. Unfortunately, when women complain, men generally retreat and the marriage deteriorates even more.

After years of trying to successfully improve things, a woman eventually surrenders and convinces herself that change isn't possible. She ends up believing there's absolutely nothing she can do because everything she's tried has not worked. That's when she begins to carefully map out the logistics of what she considers to be the inevitable - getting a divorce.

While she is planning her escape, she no longer tries to improve her relationship or modify her partner's behavior in any way. She resigns herself to living in silent desperation until "D Day."

Unfortunately, her husband views his wife's silence as an indication that "everything is fine." After all, the "nagging" has ceased. That's why, when she finally breaks the news of the impending divorce, her shell-shocked partner replies, "I had no idea you were unhappy."

Then, even when her husband undergoes real and lasting changes, it's often too late. The same impenetrable wall that for years shielded her from pain now prevents her from truly recognizing his genuine willingness to change. The relationship is now in the danger zone.

If you are a woman who fits this description, please don't give up. I have seen so many men make amazing changes once they truly understand how unhappy their wives have been. Sometimes men are slow to catch on, but when they do, their determination to turn things around can be astounding. I have seen many couples strengthen their marriage successfully even though it seemed an impossible feat. Give your husband another chance. Let him prove to you that things can be different. Keep your family together. Divorce is not a simple answer. It causes unimaginable pain and suffering. It takes an enormous amount of energy to face each day. Why not take this energy and learn some new skills and make your marriage what you've wanted it to be for so long?

If you're a man reading this and your wife has been complaining or nagging, thank her. It means she still cares about you and your marriage. She's working hard to make your love stronger. Spend time with her. Talk to her. Compliment her. Pay attention. Take her seriously. Show her that she is the most important thing in the world to you.

Perhaps your wife is no longer open to your advances because she's soon to be walk-away wife. If so, don't crowd her. Don't push. Be patient. If you demonstrate you can change and she still has eyes...and a heart, you might just convince her to give your marriage another try.

For additional support, give us a call right away at 608.785.7000 x21 for an appointment with a Licensed Professional Counselor or Marriage & Family Therapist.

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50 THINGS EVERY WOMAN NEEDS . . .

Celebrate 50 issues of *CRW* and
learn tips for living from wise women.

by **COULEE REGION WOMEN**

In celebration of our 50th issue, we asked our staff, writers and readers to come up with a list of 50 tips for women. From the practical to the sublime, here are 50 things we think every woman needs . . .

TO LEARN

To learn

1. How to change a tire and check the oil in her car
2. Some self-defense moves (see page 21)
3. How to access the family investments and understand how they work
4. How to read a map
5. Another language—or two or three
6. How to swim
7. Her “numbers”—blood pressure, cholesterol, healthy weight
8. How to operate a power drill, lawn mower and snow blower
9. Basic sewing skills
10. How to spoil herself
11. That she can go to a movie or restaurant by herself
12. How to ask for help
13. Where her food comes from
14. What unconditional love is
15. How to be happy without a significant other
16. How to fall in love without losing herself



To have

- 
17. A passport
 18. A checking account in her name
 19. A good set of tools—hammer, pliers, screwdrivers
 20. One great dress—little or not, black or not
 21. One signature dish that is always a hit
 22. One good friend she can share anything with, and who is always there for her
 23. Comfortable shoes that look great, too
 24. A will and advance medical directive
 25. A Crock-Pot
 26. A friend who always tells her the truth, as painful as it might be
 27. A mirror and lighting that makes her look her best
 28. One outfit that makes her feel so good that just wearing it can improve the worst day
 29. Someone to hold her accountable to her hopes and dreams
 30. One pair of jeans that really fits
 31. A decent purse
 32. A good moisturizer
 33. Sunscreen
 34. Duct Tape—
one roll in the house and
one in the car
 35. Good, sharp tweezers
 36. A fitness routine
 37. A hidden stash of chocolate



TO DO

To do

- 
38. Put herself first, at least once in a while
 39. Choose a job or career that is truly a passion
 40. Appreciate nature—by gardening, taking walks
or just lying in the grass
 41. Cry when she needs to
 42. Embrace her age instead of fighting it
 43. Live by herself at least once in her life
 44. Turn at an angle when she has her photo taken—it's slimming!
 45. Realize how beautiful life is and what really matters
 46. Not take herself too seriously—laugh!
 47. Trust her instincts
 48. Ignore negative comments and let go of past hurts
 49. Accept her mother as she is—faults and all
 50. Take time for herself every day

*Celebrating
women!*



TO HAVE

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



GUNDERSEN LUTHERAN WELCOMES KATIE DAVY, APNP

Gundersen Lutheran is pleased to welcome Kathleen (Katie) Davy, RN, APNP, to its Cardiothoracic Surgery department.

A lifelong interest in helping people and solving problems brought Davy into the field of health care. She is excited to join Cardiothoracic Surgery, where she'll be challenged to help patients improve cardiac health and be a part of new cutting-edge treatments such as minimally invasive coronary artery bypass surgery.

Davy completed her master's degree at Viterbo University and is a member of the American Nurses Association, Wisconsin Nurses Association, Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing, American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and American College of Nurse Practitioners.



LOCAL WRITER HEIDI OVERSON WINS AWARD

Creative writer Heidi Overson recently received the Al P. Nelson Feature Article Award through the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association (WRWA). Her article "The King of Bees" won first place in the prestigious statewide writing contest, and Overson was presented with the award at WRWA's spring conference in Manitowoc, Wis.

Overson is a writer and editor who owns Lane Writing Company in Coon Valley, Wis., and is a frequent contributor to *Coulee Region Women* magazine and various other area and national magazines and businesses. This is her third writing award through WRWA.

To learn more about Overson's writing and offerings, visit www.lanewriting.com.



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Genny Trushenski opened Truly Delicious Cakes in La Crosse in March, specializing in custom cakes for any occasion. Whatever your special event—whether a wedding, birthday, baby shower, graduation or office event—Trushenski will design a custom creation that you will remember for years. Trushenski graduated from UW-La Crosse with a degree in art and has been in the wedding industry for eight years. Her love of baking and design comes together in her cakes. Call today to order yours. Visit www.trulydeliciouscakes.webs.com or contact Trushenski at trulydeliciouscakes@hotmail.com or 608-397-9271.



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FRANCISCAN SKEMP OPENS CONVENIENT CARE CLINIC IN SOUTHSIDE WALMART

Walmart and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare announced La Crosse's newest offering of health care services: "The Clinic at Walmart," operated by Franciscan Skemp. This convenient care clinic is open in the Walmart Supercenter located at 4622 Mormon Coulee Rd., La Crosse. The clinic will provide fast, affordable access to basic health care services such as checkups, immunizations, screenings and treatment of minor injuries. The clinic will be open for walk-in service Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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HOPE FOR TOMORROW

Local services guide families through life on the autism spectrum.

by **KIM SEIDEL**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Optimism and a sense of humor have helped the Mahlums cope with autism. **Left to right:** Austin, Peggy, Spencer, Ella and Doug.

Raising two children diagnosed with autism, Peggy Mahlum of Holmen says she's learned her most important attribute is a sense of humor. "Maybe it's not funny at the moment, but my husband and I can usually laugh about our situations later," she says.

Her sons, Austin, 18, and Spencer, 15, were diagnosed with a form of autism—PDD-NOS (pervasive developmental disorder—not otherwise specified) in 2001. At an early age, they both had been diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Yet when the autism diagnosis was given, both she and her husband, Doug, were shocked. "After all, they were both verbal," she says. "When people think of autism, they often think of a child not being able to speak."

According to the Autism Society (www.autism-society.org), autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees.

Living "on the spectrum"

"There is a very wide range of autism, so one mom's experience will be greatly different than another's," says Chris Howard of La Crosse, who has a son with Asperger's syndrome. "This is on the autism spectrum, but he is at the very high-functioning level."

Mahlum's sons are on a different part of the autism spectrum than Howard's son. "There are also kids who are simply autistic, and they fall in a completely different place. The classic 'Rain Man,' or savant, would fall on the opposite end of the spectrum from my son," Howard says. "Because of the very wide array of autism, the experiences and services that each child needs will be quite different as well."

Along with her sense of humor, Mahlum's optimism is another vital attribute she's learned to enhance while caring for

her family. They also have an 11-year-old daughter, Ella, who does not have autism.

It's Mahlum's "eternal optimism," she says, that motivates her to continue to search for the tools and services that help her sons. "I've tried a lot of things," including homeopathic therapy, she says. "I'm willing to try almost anything."

Local services help kids

There is no known single cause or cure for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families.

The Mahlums started receiving services from La Crosse County when the boys were diagnosed with autism. Austin no longer obtains services because of the progress he has made. A senior at Holmen High School, Austin plans to attend Viterbo University in the fall.

"He is the success story I wish for every parent of an autistic child," Mahlum says. "A lot of things have worked for Austin, but it's hard to pinpoint one thing."

Mahlum points to Austin's soccer playing, running, part-time job and banjo playing (he taught himself) as activities that have helped him. His medications and his maturity level also have played a role in assisting him to function highly.

Spencer continues to have many health and behavioral issues, and services from La Crosse County greatly support the family. Their goal is to keep Spencer living at home. That hasn't been easy, but it would've been impossible without county services, Mahlum says.

"Spencer uses respite, and on occasion, emergency respite. This is a very important piece for our entire family," Mahlum says. "We love Spencer dearly, but we all need a break from him and the constant struggles that we deal with on a daily basis. It's been very beneficial to Spencer as well."

Support helps families cope

Mahlum, of course, considers herself Spencer's primary advocate and caregiver, but having a county social worker

coordinate services for them has been “absolutely essential,” she says. The social worker attends school meetings and psychiatric appointments with them on occasion, and meets with the family monthly—sometimes more often, when necessary. The social worker is a strong presence in the times of crisis.

“She is there to remind me of how far we have come, what our goals and plans are, and what options we have,” Mahlum says. “Sometimes, I just need a listening

ear or someone to bounce some ideas off.”

Horse therapy at Flying Horse Stables has been helpful for Spencer. “When we visited there the first time, I cried because I had not seen Spencer that happy and peaceful in a long time,” she says. The county provides the transportation for Spencer to and from Flying Horse Stables in La Crosse. “This is a wonderful and very much appreciated service,” Mahlum says.

Stein Counseling and Consulting Services, the Crisis Intervention System,

Riverfront, Chileda, and Catholic Charities also have assisted the Mahlums.

“I’m always hanging on to hope that tomorrow will be a better day. We have a lot of hope for Spencer,” Mahlum says. “We will continue to help him in whatever way he needs.” ❖

Kim Seidel of Onalaska is a writer, specializing in parenting and health, and the mother of two daughters.

Community Resources for Autism

La Crosse County Human Services
608-785-6054

Visit www.co.la-crosse.wi.us and click on Services, then Family and Children’s Services for other community resources.

Chileda
608-782-6480

Crisis Intervention Services
608-784-HELP

Catholic Charities
608-782-0710

Franciscan Skemp Child Development Services
608-791-9770

Gundersen Lutheran Learning and Developmental Diagnostic Center
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Stein Counseling and Consulting Services
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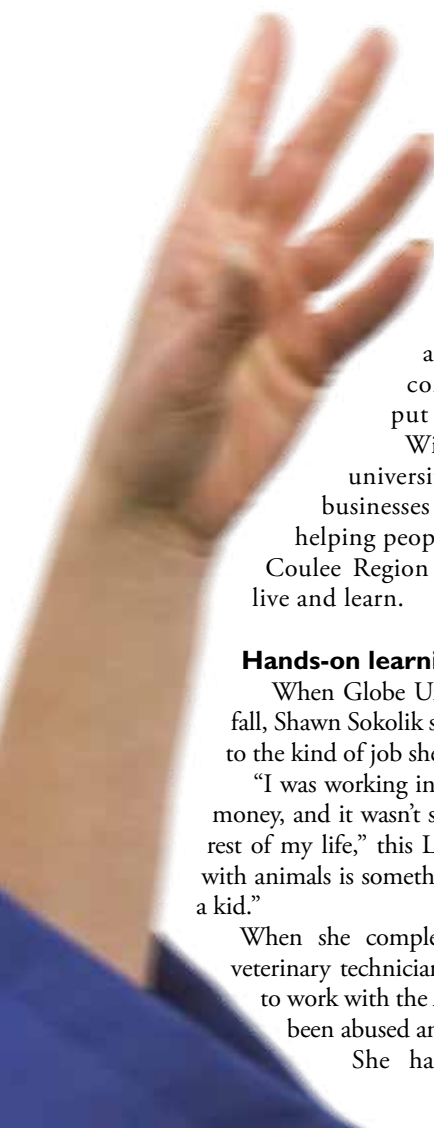
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WISE WOMEN KEEP LEARNING

It's never too late to pursue a degree, knowledge or a dream.

by **SHARI HEGLAND**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Someday, I would love to learn _____. (You fill in the blank.) Chances are good that, whatever it is, you can find a place in the Coulee Region to learn about your dream, whether it is developing the skills for the job you want, knitting a sweater on your own or completing that degree that was put on hold years ago.

With several colleges and universities, plus a wide range of private businesses and public entities focused on helping people advance their knowledge, the Coulee Region is a great place for women to live and learn.

Hands-on learning is key to dream job

When Globe University opened in Onalaska last fall, Shawn Sokolik saw an opportunity to move closer to the kind of job she really wants.

"I was working in a factory. I wasn't making much money, and it wasn't something I wanted to do for the rest of my life," this La Crosse woman says. "Working with animals is something I've wanted to do since I was a kid."

When she completes her associate's degree as a veterinary technician in about a year, Sokolik hopes to work with the ASPCA, aiding animals that have been abused and abandoned.

She had attempted to take classes

toward a vet tech degree in the past, she says, but the classes were largely online, then required three hours of travel to get to the occasional lab. At Globe, everything is located on the local campus, including labs where they get to work with animals in need.

"It's hands-on experience, which is the best way to learn—to actually do it," Sokolik says.

Globe's class schedule, with support from Sokolik's parents, has allowed the mother of two to pursue her dreams and spend time with her family.

"I try to do (homework) when my son is doing homework, or after the kids go to bed," she says.

Now it's Mom's turn

Gwen LaPour has helped guide children—her own, those she has cared for through her in-home day care and numerous foster and respite care children—for nearly 30 years.

"I wanted to be the one who helped my children grow and learn the values I felt were important," she says, "to learn the character, integrity and respect I wanted them to have as young adults."

Though she attended college for a short time after high school, her own education was set aside to care for her family. When the youngest of her four children graduated from high school and started college, LaPour decided it was time to return to school herself, for the education she would need to be a social worker.

She started out with the Self-Sufficiency Program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, a program designed to extend the availability of higher education to low-income parents by preparing them to be successful college students.

"(Program director Amy Sullivan) helped me see that I could go to school, and I could write papers and do different things," LaPour says.

Then, after talking to a counselor at Viterbo University,



Left: Through adult learning opportunities in La Crosse, Gwen LaPour (center) found a way to arrange her social work studies around her family. **Center:** UW-La Crosse's Learning in Retirement program offers classes, arts opportunities such as the LIR Singers, and travel outings such as Mississippi Explorer cruises. **Right:** Shawn Sokolik is pursuing her dream job as a vet tech through Globe University while raising her children.

LaPour enrolled at Western Technical College, with the intent of taking her general classes there and then transferring. When she struggled with the classes, she had herself tested for learning disabilities. She learned that she is dyslexic, was reading deficient and has ADD. Advisers at Western were able to help her find the aids she would need to succeed, including books on tape.

"I sit in class and I listen, and I tape-record the class so I can sit and listen to it again. It just takes a little while for me to process. That's just my learning style," she says. "I'm enjoying going back to school and the teacher interaction."

LaPour has been taking classes two evenings a week, but because it makes it difficult for her to provide consistent care for her foster children, her goal for the fall is to take two classes online.

If the online classes are a success, she hopes to transfer to Viterbo soon and complete the degree she is seeking.

Learning knows no retirement

"Your body needs exercise, and so does your brain," says Sally Olson of La Crosse. Olson has been exercising her brain in the 13 years since she retired from her job as a registered nurse by participating in the Learning in Retirement program at UW-La Crosse.

Learning in Retirement offers classes in the fall and spring for retirees and others who can attend classes during the day. There are a half-dozen classes each session, which meet four or five times for two hours each.

"There is always one on finance, which is, I think, very educational," Olson says. This spring, she participated in a class

on local Native American history and culture. Others classes she's taken have ranged from bird watching and cooking to English literature and poetry.

In addition to the classes, Learning in Retirement members can participate in field trips to museums, theaters and other attractions or listen in on travel talks and the Cabin Fever series of onetime talks in the winter. There are also luncheons and meetings in the fall and spring.

"It is not only keeping your brain going, but you meet so many really nice people," Olson says. ♣

Holmen freelance writer Shari Hegland looks longingly through the noncredit class lists at local institutions, and wishes she had time to take them all. Someday ...

Resources for Continued Learning

The organizations listed below offer adult educational opportunities at any level.

Hobby and self-enrichment learning:

The Pump House Regional Art Center

Pottery studio and art classes.

608-785-1434

www.thepumphouse.org

Myrick-Hixon EcoPark

Events and classes on ecology and nature.

608-784-0303

www.mhecopark.org

Franciscan Spirituality Center

Programs on spirituality, art, yoga, writing and more.

608-791-5295

www.franciscanspiritualitycenter.org

W.I.S.E.

(Women Initiating Safe Environments)

Self-defense for women;

eight-week program begins June 7.

Three Rivers Martial Arts Academy

608-784-9900

<http://threeriversmartialarts.com>

Western Technical College

Lifelong Learning program offers noncredit courses ranging from art and needlecraft to computers, gardening, photography, small engine repair and languages. Ed2go program offers a wide variety of classes online each month. 608-789-6100

www.westerntc.edu/lifelonglearning

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Continuing Education/Extension Learning in Retirement program offers short-term classes on a wide range of topics. Art & Leisure programs include storytelling, archeology and more. Online courses available through JER Online and Ed2go. 608-785-6506

www.uwlax.edu/conted

Continuing education and professional development:

Western Technical College

Offers degree programs, continuing education credit classes and noncredit classes to enhance job skills in administrative fields, health care, food service, manufacturing and more. www.westerntc.edu

Southeastern Technical College

(Winona)

Offers degree programs, continuing education credit classes and noncredit classes to enhance job skills in administrative fields, health care, food service, manufacturing and more.
877-853-8324

www.southeasternmn.edu/training

UW-L Continuing Education/Extension

Offers professional development opportunities for educators; health care professionals; local, state and federal governments; and professional organizations.
608-785-6506

www.uwlax.edu/conted

Winona State University

Continuing education program provides classes and workshops that fulfill CEU requirements in a range of fields.

507-457-5080

www.winona.edu/OCED/continuinged.asp

Kaplan Professional Schools

Based in La Crosse, Kaplan Professional Schools offer both classroom and online courses in real estate, appraisal, home inspection, mortgage, insurance and securities.

www.kaplanprofessionalschools.com

Bachelor's degree and advanced programs:

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Graduate programs are offered in education, business, physical and occupational therapy, public health, biology, software engineering and more.
608-785-8124

www.uwlax.edu/graduate

Viterbo University

School of Graduate, Professional and Adult Education offers graduate programs in business, education, nursing and servant leadership, and associate and bachelor's programs tailored to adult learners.
608-796-3000

www.viterbo.edu/gpaed

Globe University

Globe University offers programs leading to diplomas or degrees in business, health science, information technology and legal science. MBA and MSM programs are available through the online college.

608-779-2600

<http://lacrosse.globeuniversity.edu>

St. Mary's University of Minnesota

(Winona)

Schools of Graduate and Professional Programs assist adults in completing bachelor's degrees or professional certificates and offer advanced degrees at the master's, specialist, doctoral and certificate levels in business and technology, education, and health and human services.
507-452-4430

www.smumn.edu

Winona State University

Adult learners program for undergraduate students, life/work experience credits and the BA in Professional Studies provide flexible opportunities for adults pursuing bachelor's degrees. WSU also offers graduate programs in education, counseling and nursing.

507-457-5038

www.winona.edu/gradstudies

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SECRETS TO LIFELONG LOVE

Learn about marriage, life and love from Ortis and Hazel.

by **MARTHA KEEFFE**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Take a moment to visit with Ortis and Hazel Price of La Crosse, and you'll learn a few things. Married for 72 years, they'll tell you that patience and understanding—not drama and fireworks—keep a relationship alive. “Nothing ever came really easy to us,” says Hazel. “But we never thought to give up, either.”

The spark

“She was walking downtown, and I knew right away that I wanted to meet her,” recalls Ortis, 94, about his first glimpse of Hazel, now 92. And though he dated a number of girls before he spied Hazel, “none of them looked as good.”

Compelled to introduce himself, Ortis followed Hazel into the Golden Punkin', a popular dance spot located on Third and Jay streets. He asked her to dance. “I thought he was pretty neat,” remembers Hazel. “He had hair and everything. And he was a pretty good dancer.” Afterward, Ortis walked Hazel home, confident that they would meet again.

They dated for a year and a half, taking in movies at the Rivoli and Wisconsin theaters, dancing at the Avalon or Concordia or spending the afternoon fishing. “And all of the places we went to we walked,” says Hazel. “It's no wonder we never got fat.” They have walked together ever since.

The wedding

On January 22, 1938, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in La Crosse, Ortis and Hazel exchanged vows. They had two witnesses and celebrated the occasion by going out for dinner after the ceremony.

“I was lucky enough to have the money to buy a dress,” says Hazel. “You worked hard and saved your money,” adds Ortis. “I remember the first twenty-dollar bill I brought home from work. Don't spend it, save it. I think (Hazel's) still got it.” To this day, Hazel's work ethic benefits the community—from the quilting she does at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church to volunteering at Gundersen Lutheran and Bethany Riverside, often helping out folks much younger than she.

The marriage

Ortis and Hazel have one child, two grandchildren and one great-grandson, a combined work history of more than 80 years and an unwavering, if not pragmatic, approach to life together. It is precisely

that philosophy of hard work, responsibility and solid commitment to marriage that has sustained them through the years.

“We haven't had a lot of downs,” explains Hazel. “And until Ortis had his stroke (about one year ago), we've both been healthy.”

“When we have an argument, two minutes later we forget about it,” puts in Ortis. “Don't carry a grudge. It eats you.”

“Our major problem was that we liked two different things,” says Hazel. “He hunted and fished. I

bowled, worked and visited relatives. I worked all week, then had to do all the housework. That was the biggest rub.” Ortis nods. “My brother and his wife divorced over that same thing.” “Ortis liked to cook,” continues Hazel. “Especially all the stuff that he shot and killed. We lived on fish, venison, grouse, pheasant and also rabbit.

“I loved to travel,” adds Hazel when asked to share her fondest memories. “I loved flying. (Ortis) hated flying. Our worst trip was to Hawaii. Ortis couldn't sleep because he wanted to be over land.” And Ortis's fondest memory? “The biggest buck I shot.”

“See, we didn't have a lot in common,” laughs Hazel.

The lifelong love

But what they do share is a clear perspective on how to react to life. “We worked with what were we given,” says Ortis, noting that he never tires of being with Hazel. “He's always hunting around the house for me,” smiles Hazel. “And I just never thought of it being any other way.” ♣

Martha Keffe lives in La Crosse with her husband, Kevin, and daughter, Barrette. She enjoys writing articles that promote strong and healthy relationships.



Ortis and Hazel Price married in 1938 and are still going strong, seventy-two years later.



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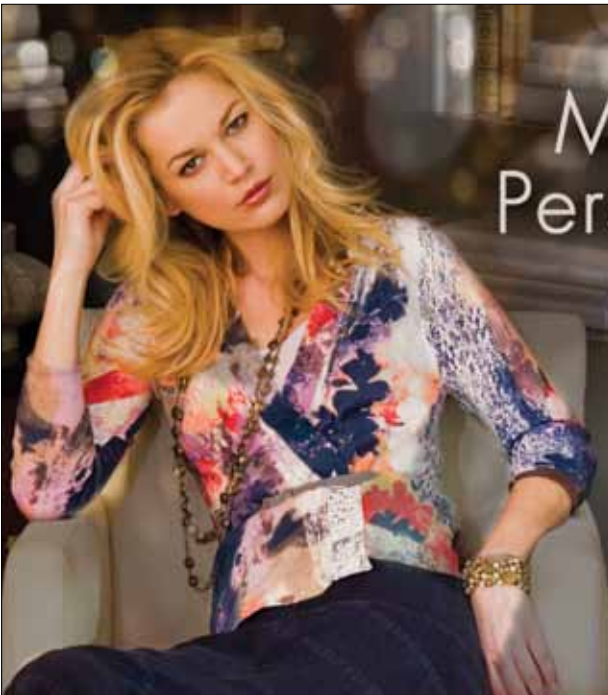
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SHALL WE DANCE?

Local dance studios offer classes that move body and mind.

by **KIM BRASEL**

PHOTOS BY JANET MOOTZ PHOTOGRAPHY

Walk into one of the dance studios in town, and you will be greeted by familiar sights and sounds: little girls bounding about in leotards and tutus, the rhythmic cadence of tap shoes clicking away and voices of dance instructors counting out beats of music. But take a peek into one of the rooms, and it may not be a pint-size prima ballerina you see gliding across the floor. It may just be a co-worker or neighbor.

Amanda Vertheim, owner and director of Amanda's Academy of Dance, says she has seen a rise in adult participation in everything from tap, ballet and Irish dancing, to hip-hop, ballroom and Middle Eastern dance classes.

"I have women and men call who want to try the dance classes but don't want to feel silly since they are a beginner," she says.

While some of her adult students took dance classes when they were younger and are now trying it again, others have never had a dance class and are looking to try something new. Students range from high schoolers who don't fit into a traditional beginners class to baby boomers.

"I had a lady in her 60s or 70s take a tap class just so she could say she did it. She took a session and had a blast," Vertheim says with a smile. This proves you are never too old to learn something new.

Vertheim sees many students who were hesitant in the beginning, but leave with a new perspective by the end of class. "Initially, some are shy, think it isn't for them and are afraid they won't get it, but once they realize everyone is in the same boat, they relax and have fun."

Dancing has numerous health benefits for people of all ages and is a good way to meet new people and try something different. And



Kellen and Kathy Burgos make ballroom dancing look effortless. The owners of Moonlight Dance Studio help couples connect with each other through dance classes.

for those wondering what to wear, don't fret. No leotards, tutus or tights are required, just comfortable clothes that allow you to move.

Not your parents' polka

Amid the din of classical ballet music and jazz tunes, you may hear hypnotic melodies reminiscent of the Middle East, not the Midwest. Take a look into the studio the music is coming from, and it won't be your parents' polka that you see, but women from all



Barbara Albrechtson teaches belly dancing at Amanda's Academy of Dance. Her class helps women step out of their comfort zone and try a unique form of art and expression. **From left:** Jo Oland, Alicia Parshall, Albrechtson and Dana Roland.

walks of life learning a new way to move via Middle Eastern dance (belly dancing).

When Monika Buggy found out about the class, she thought it sounded like fun and would be a good release. "It's something completely different and is totally not me, but I am thoroughly enjoying it," she says. "It's a great workout, and I plan to do this for many years to come."

While you may feel like the only place you should be dancing is on the inside of a dark and well-taped-up box, many of the ladies will tell you that stepping out of that box is why they are here, and Buggy's advice is to challenge yourself and remember that regardless of your age, it's not too late to try something new.

"I've never taken a dance class, but this is a great group of women who are very supportive," she says. "And it's been a fun way to try something out of the realm of my comfort zone but in a safe environment."

Helping women feel good about themselves is one of Barbara Albrechtson's motivations for teaching the class, and she says to forget about the stereotypes people may have in mind when it comes to belly dancing.

"As with all forms of dance, this is an art form that comes from your center. It is a way to celebrate being a woman, and it is great for women of all shapes and sizes and all walks of life," she says emphatically. "It's an absolutely beautiful dance and a wonderful way to express emotions and individual personality."

A good date night

For those who have found their inspiration via shows such as *Dancing with the Stars*, put on your dancing shoes and swing on over to one of the many ballroom classes in the area.

If you don't know your tango from your foxtrot, and the words *salsa* and *merengue* only conjure up images of Mexican food and pie, Kathy and Kellen Burgos, owners and instructors at the Moonlight Dance Studio, will help you sort it all out. They offer classes and private instruction in swing, Latin and ballroom dance styles.

"Social dance is a great way for people to get out of the house and do something together," Kathy says. "It's a great way to connect."

She says that sometimes the guys are hesitant at first and a little nervous. "We tell the ladies, 'You get them there, and we will do the rest.'"

But guys aren't as apprehensive as they used to be about taking a dance class, and Kellen says things are changing as popular dance shows make an impact and baby boomers look for new ways to stay healthy.

"We've seen a lot more men buying gift certificates for their wives and girlfriends, and it's nice to see that even though they may be leery about it, they are stepping out of their comfort zone to make their partner happy," Kellen says.

Kathy and Kellen go out of their way to create a relaxed, positive environment for their students, who range in age from early 20s to mid-50s. Once the hip-swaying Latin music starts, the couples put Kellen's instructions to

use, with no one looking self-conscious as they move to the beat of the music, taking on the fun and flirty nature of the dance. Even an accidental elbow to the nose doesn't diminish the smiles.

Tim and Liz Carlson say they had talked about taking dance lessons for a while but didn't have the time when the kids were younger. "We both love music, and it's something we can do together," Tim says. "It's a good date night."

Rick and Laura Schill were given dance lessons as a Christmas present from their daughters and have been taking lessons for three weeks.

Laura, a physical therapist, recommends dancing for its excellent health benefits. "It's a great way to get people up and out of their chairs, and a good way to exercise and have fun."

Give it a try

Both couples say to forget any preconceived notions about ballroom dancing, don't be self-conscious and give it a try. You won't be the odd person out if you don't know what you are doing.

As Vince Lombardi once said, "The Good Lord gave you a body that can do most anything. It's your mind you have to convince." ♣

Kim Brasel writes from her home in La Crescent, Minn. After writing this article, she feels inspired to give those unfortunate swing and tango lessons another try.

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A ROOM WITH A VIEW

The patio is the place where indoors meets outdoors.

by **LEAH CALL**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A patio can take on any character a homeowner desires. This clean, light setting adds a touch of elegance to al fresco entertaining.

After the long, cold Wisconsin winter, we savor those pleasant sunny days of spring and summer. For many in the Coulee Region, the perfect place to soak up the sun and enjoy the outdoors is in their own backyard—on a deck or patio.

Christine Christen of Onalaska says her perfectly designed paver brick patio is the most-used room in her home from early spring until the snow flies.

“We run a business here, so we do seminars on the patio; we have all our employee parties here,” says Christen. “We can sit there on cooler evenings and enjoy the fireplace, and we have a table with a lighted umbrella and ambient lighting installed underneath the cap of a sitting wall that goes all around the patio.”

This owner of Christen Farm Nursery adds the finishing touches with plants, flowers and skilled landscaping. “Plants are my love,” she says. “We have a lot of plants around the patio to soften the look.”

As an avid gardener who also enjoys using fresh herbs when she cooks, Christen insisted that her patio included a garden area, close to her kitchen. “I can step right out my back door and pick my cilantro or basil. It is part of my hardscaping. The garden area fits on the end of the sitting wall.”

Extend your living space

Whether you contract someone to build the space for you or build it yourself, there are a lot of things to consider as you plan your outdoor haven. First, determine the type of space you want and how you will use it. Do you want a deck or a patio? Do you want a place to get away with a glass of wine and a good book? Or do you want to be able to host the annual neighborhood block party?

The outdoor living space—that room without a ceiling—should complement your home and fit your lifestyle. Patios can be made of concrete, stamped concrete and paver bricks. If a deck is your preference, there is treated lumber, composite decking and vinyl.

Do you plan to do a lot of outdoor dining? If so, plan a patio or deck that is close to the kitchen. You also need to consider exposure to the elements (such as wind and sun), privacy and, of course, cost.

Building that dream patio space is a good investment. “They say that anything you do outside your home, you recoup 100 percent when you sell,” notes Block & Brick Supply owner Brent Brudos, who designed and constructed Christine Christen’s patio.

Be sure to make the patio big enough, advises Brudos. “We do go back quite often and add on for people that, a year later, want a little more here or a little more there.”

The Silver Creek line of paver bricks and the Rochester and Interlock Concrete Products that Brudos uses come in various natural colors and textures, including flagstone, limestone, slate and concrete.

An advantage of using paver brick is that it already has cracks in it, notes Brudos, and it lessens the likelihood of frost damage that can happen to concrete patios. "It is initially more money to put in paver brick, but it lasts a lot longer."

To help clients with their design decisions, Brudos first listens to their ideas. "Most people have something in mind, and I just guide them in the process and let them know what will and won't work considering drainage issues and where the sun rises and sets."

Sometimes determining the shape of the patio is as simple as using a garden hose to lay it out on the yard. Brudos also has brochures and photos to help clients solidify their design decisions.

Get off the ground with a deck

If you prefer a deck over a patio, you have many of the same planning considerations. Regarding material, Jeff Baumbach of Wisconsin Building Supply notes, "You have to be a little careful, because there are so many different companies and products on the market right now. You want to stay with a name brand manufacturer."

Sticking with a name brand company like Trex, TimberTech or Azec can eliminate future dilemmas. "We've heard of some that

find material online and three years later want to add to it, but you can't get that material anymore. A company like Trex is going to be there for a long time," notes Baumbach, who also advises customers to think about cost in planning their outdoor living space. "When you start looking at composite decking, it can get really expensive. Size is a big thing. If you have a 14-by-16 deck in treated, it may run \$3,000. In composite, it may run



A retaining wall creates a cozy, protected feeling on this brick patio.

\$6,000 to \$8,000."

Baumbach warns that some of the composite deck materials may stain easily. "So a lot of companies are going to vinyl. It doesn't stain, and it's not supposed to scratch or fade."

Retailers such as Wisconsin Building Supply often have in-store software programs to help customers design their decks and select materials.

Accessorize

From plants to hot tubs to lighting, it's often those extra touches that turn the outdoor room into a really enjoyable and unique living space. One trend in patio accessorizing is an outdoor kitchen and bar with openings for a gas grill and refrigerator. Another more affordable trend is the fire pit.

"I sell a fire pit kit for \$380 that I can drop off in someone's driveway, and in less than half an hour, they can set it up in their backyard and have it operational," states Brudos.

Landscaping and lighting complete the picture. Landscaper Christine Christen suggests Elegance roses, original Endless Summer hydrangea and the new Twist and Shout hydrangea, which will thrive in a patio pot and bloom all summer. "Then they can be planted in the ground in the fall and will come back in the spring," she notes.

Try a pot with fragrant herbs like chamomile, lavender and lemon balm for that extra olfactory ambience. And annuals in a patio pot provide a splendid outdoor bouquet that lasts all summer.

If you are worried about privacy, a fence or trellis provides a barrier while creating a safe place for young children and pets to enjoy the outdoors with you. ♣

Leah Call, a freelance writer in Westby, enjoys spending time on her deck with her family, friends and two dogs.



Christine Christen's outdoor space allows for entertaining day or night, thanks to a fireplace and ambient lighting. Brick, umbrellas and potted plants create a warm and eclectic setting.



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Cooking classes introduce students to new techniques and unusual cuisines—like this decadent dessert pasta.

COOKING WITH CLASS

Want to get creative in the kitchen? Local classes can show you how.

by **MAURA HENN**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Culinary classes can be a great way to build upon basic cooking skills. They can also be a unique opportunity for friends or family to do something fun together. For those of us who want a little more diversity in our cooking repertoire, two downtown La Crosse businesses—People's Food Co-op and Sideboard—offer creative cooking classes sure to inspire any fledgling chef. Each business provides a hands-on cooking experience aided by the knowledge of instructors.

Sideboard Fine Gourmet Kitchenware

Kelly Anderson, owner of Sideboard, a kitchenware store that offers cookware, utensils and ingredients, has recently been hosting classes in the store's newly remodeled kitchen classroom. Classes instructed by renowned chef Monique Hooker as well as Mary Cody, owner of Traditions and Maggie's restaurants in Onalaska, cover topics such as "Flavored Vinegars and Oils," "Cooking Light" and "Jazz up the Grill." The classes accommodate up to 15 guests, and the cost ranges from \$35 to \$65. Check out Sideboard's full list of classes at www.sideboardkitchenware.com.

People's Food Co-op

People's Food Co-op offers several group-oriented cooking classes. If you are a new cook, one of Jen McCoy's basic cooking classes will get you up to speed. Cooking enthusiasts will be challenged by "Northeastern Thai Cuisine" with Jill Peterson or "Indian Cooking" with Sangeeta Agarwahl. Looking for a seasonal or traditional class? Theresa Burchell, one of the Co-op's own very talented deli cooks, teaches guests the finer points of making gnocchi and summer vegetable salads. All classes run approximately two hours in length. Classes generally cost \$15 for members and \$25 for nonmembers. Find a current list of classes at www.pfc.coop/cookingclass.asp.

These two delicious but very different pasta dishes show you what can be created during one of these exciting classes.

CHOCOLATE PASTA

by **CHEF MONIQUE HOOKER**

Makes 6 servings

Pasta

- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose unbleached flour
- ¼ cup Dutch cocoa powder
- 2 large eggs
- 1 T olive oil
- 2 T water

Sauce

- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 T cornstarch
- 2 cups plain, low-fat yogurt
- Fresh raspberries for garnish

For the pasta, blend together the flour and cocoa powder. Beat the eggs with oil and water; then add to the flour mixture. Mix well until it forms a dough, then knead for 3 to 5 minutes. Let rest for at least 30 minutes, covered or wrapped. Pass through pasta machine or hand-roll dough with rolling pin and cut into strips. Let the pasta dry for a few minutes before cutting into fettuccine. Cook in boiling water for 5 minutes, then drain well.

For the sauce, cream the sugar, vanilla extract and egg yolks. Mix the cornstarch with yogurt. Add yogurt to the egg mixture, then mix well. Heat mixture over medium heat, cooking until thick but not letting the mixture boil. Once the sauce has thickened, pour some on dessert plates, then arrange the pasta on top. Drizzle more sauce on top and garnish with fresh raspberries.

330 calories, 10g fat, 12g protein, 51g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 85mg sodium.



SPICY GLASS NOODLE SALAD (YUM WUN SEN)

by **JILL PETERSON**

Makes 4 servings.

Be sure to assemble this dish right before serving. If it sits too long, the noodles absorb too much of the dressing. Serve this salad with lettuce leaves to scoop up the noodles.

- 4 oz. ground pork
- 2 packages (6 oz.) glass noodles (also called bean thread noodles)
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 shallots, sliced
- 3-4 small red chilies, thinly sliced (more if you like it spicy!)
- 3 scallions, white and green parts, cut into 2-inch pieces and julienned
- 4 T fish sauce
- 3 T lime juice
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 plum tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 T dried shrimp (optional)
- Lettuce leaves
- Cucumber slices

Cook the pork in a small sauté pan with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water until it is cooked through. Set aside.

Heat a pot of water to boil for the noodles. While the water is boiling, soak the glass noodles in cool water for 10 minutes. Drain the noodles and, using kitchen shears, cut them a few times. When the water is boiling, add the glass noodles and cook for 1-2 minutes. Drain and run cold water over the noodles. Strain and place in a large bowl. Add the pork, garlic, shallots, chilies and scallions and toss to combine.

In a medium-sized bowl, make the vinaigrette. Whisk together the fish sauce, lime juice and sugar. Check the seasoning, and add more of any of the ingredients if necessary.

Add the tomato wedges, cilantro and dried shrimp to the salad. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to combine. Place the salad in the center of a platter, and arrange lettuce leaves around it. Serve immediately.

420 calories, 6g fat, 7g protein, 84g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 1410mg sodium. ❀

Maura Henn is the manager of Cameron Park Farmers Market. She hopes to see many familiar faces there looking for ingredients for these wonderful recipes.



Photos by LuAnn Dibb

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1. **L to R:** Kelly in **Anne Klein New York**, \$170 at Pearle Vision (Valley View Mall); Kendra in **Christiana by Coach**, starting at \$162 Optical Fashions (La Crosse) and Kim in **Forsake by Oakley**, \$130 at Pearle Vision.
2. **P.S. Plastic Slim by Charmant** in Demi Brown; \$149 at Optical Fashions
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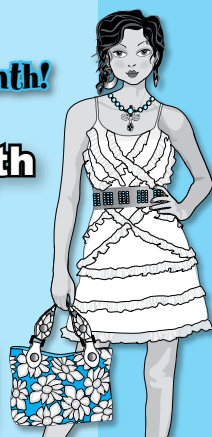
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THE GLOBAL CLASSROOM

Make the most of the learning experiences travel has to offer.

by JULIE NELSON

Travel can be more than a chance to relax and get away from it all; it's also an opportunity to experience something new, to unearth an unusual nugget of information or to gain insight into a different place or culture. Though we usually don't phrase it this way, we actually *like* to learn while we're on vacation. If you're among those who seek destinations and experiences that take you outside of your normal realm, the world is at your feet.

Travel for every interest

If you have a specific interest—say, cooking in Italy—the travel industry has evolved to meet your every need. Gwynne Watters, Leisure and Travel Agent with Travel Leaders, says you can now book everything from a safari in Africa, to a spa weekend in Phoenix, to a cruise dedicated to Irish music, to an adventure that includes hiking, bicycling or whitewater rafting. If you're bringing the kids, Watters says Disney, the king of family entertainment, offers packages featuring activities that keep everyone entertained and engaged.

Learning on the go

If your interest in a destination is more generalized, Watters says one of the best tips is to take a guided tour. Whether you ride on a bus or a boat, walk or pedal a bicycle, being with a tour guide allows you to keep your nose out of a map or website on your BlackBerry while you see and take in the sites being described. Usually, the guide will tell you stories and facts not often found in guidebooks, and you get the pleasure of meeting fellow travelers, too. The same is true for campers who seek out guided nature hikes.

Kids + learning = fun

If you regularly travel with your kids, you know the key to getting them to learn on vacation is to make it fun. Toss out some questions before you arrive at your destination: "I wonder how many steps there are in the Washington monument and why they didn't make the windows bigger at the top?" "I wonder if we'll see any trees that don't grow at home?"

Children's museums, aquariums and museums such as the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago are places where kids don't always recognize they are learning while they are having fun. If you'd like to take in an art museum or other exhibit you don't think your kids will be quite as enthused about, try turning the exploration into a scavenger hunt. Pick up some postcards in the museum's gift shop and challenge the kids to see how many of the pictured items they can find. You can even capitalize on their 'yawn factor' and ask them to find the ugliest painting or the most lame exhibit and take a picture of it on their cell phones. Make the daily finds a part of your dinner conversation. Who found the weirdest exhibit? Who found the most unbelievable fact? Who found something to tell Grandma about when we get home?

One tip is to acknowledge up front that some parts of the trip will be more

interesting to kids, and some parts will be more interesting to the adults, and we will all be respectful while the other is enjoying a favorite activity. Then make a point to do something that is clearly kid oriented, whether it's visiting an amusement park or stopping in an ice cream shop.

Make the world your home

If you're not traveling with kids, you may be willing to venture further from the beaten path. Cheryl Hanson has visited several of La Crosse's sister cities, each time staying with a host family. "Absolutely the best way to immerse yourself in the local culture is to stay with someone who lives there," she says. "You'll be able to experience firsthand what they eat, where they shop and some of the local customs."

In addition to sister city exchanges, Hanson says Rotary International offers host family experiences, even to non-Rotarians.

Or you can try CouchSurfing.org, a service that connects travelers with locals in places across the globe.

If staying with another family is a little outside your comfort zone, especially in a country where you don't speak the language, Watters says many hotels now offer "hosts" who will take you to lesser-known areas of a city to experience what it's like to live as a local. Their recommendations for coffee shops and restaurants tend to be neighborhood establishments that attract few tourists.

No matter where you go or what you like to do when you travel, you can always find opportunities to add to your wealth of experiences. The world is waiting. ♣

Julie Nelson and her family have enjoyed learning about places as diverse as Hollywood, a Colorado gold mine, ancient Rome and Wisconsin's Rock Island State Park.

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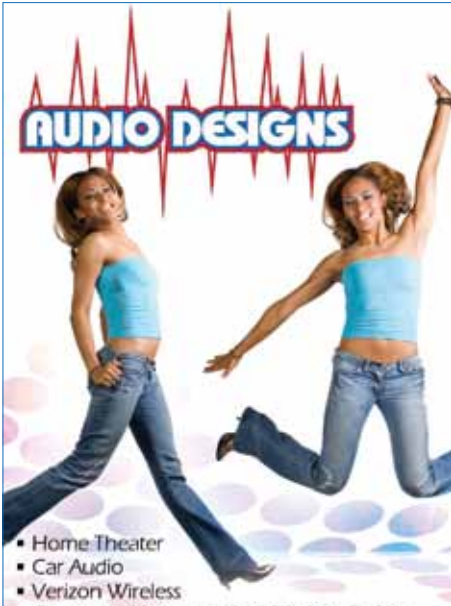
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SHARING A HERITAGE

LACA teaches the community about its Chinese neighbors.

by **KRISTY WALZ**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Chinese music, art and culture are celebrated during the Chinese New Year party held by the La Crosse Area Chinese Association. The group aims to maintain the traditions of the local Chinese community while educating others about their culture.

Wen Jiang's English teacher in China named her "Wendy" before she left for school in the southern United States in 1995. In 2001, after she had completed her master's degree, Wendy married Holmen native Troy Clemment, and they began thinking about moving "back home" to the La Crosse area. She soon learned that one of Troy's Holmen High School classmates had also married a woman from China, and they were already living in the La Crosse area. "(They) bought tickets for us for the 2007 Chinese New Year celebration party" put on by the La Crosse Area Chinese Association, she recalls. "At that party, I met most of the Chinese people in this community. The Chinese community here is not big, but everyone is very friendly and helpful."

In 2008, Wendy Clemment and her family arrived in La Crosse. Now president of the La Crosse Area Chinese Association (LACA), she credits the group with helping her integrate into the community.

For Chinese Americans new to the La Crosse area, LACA is a resource for transitioning into the community that helps them cope with culture shock and overcome a potential language barrier. There are frequent association activities, such as shopping trips and outdoor activities, and celebrations of traditional festivals like the Moon Festival and Chinese New Year.

Celebrating traditions

"Chinese New Year is our most important celebration of the year," says Clemment. "Our families get together and have a big banquet and exchange gifts. It's as important to the Chinese as Christmas is to Americans, and it feels like home if we can get together to celebrate."

Haxia Lan has organized the Chinese New Year celebration in the past and says that being a part of the association simply

makes her life richer. "It gives me opportunities to observe Chinese holidays in addition to American ones, eat Chinese home-cooked food in addition to American food, and have a few friends who speak, act and think Chinese in addition to my American friends."

Involving the community

LACA is a nonprofit organization of multicultural professionals, residents and volunteers of the greater La Crosse community. Membership is open to anyone, and events are open to the public. Celebration and preservation of Chinese heritage and culture in the La Crosse area may have led to the birth of the organization, but their efforts extend across the globe.

For example, in 2008, the association, along with the American Red Cross Scenic Bluffs Chapter, organized a fundraiser for victims of the Sichuan, China, earthquake. The group set up a tent in front of the La Crosse Center and offered egg rolls as thanks for donations.

LACA member Angela Schlicht says, "We received overwhelming support from the La Crosse community. They helped us raised over \$40,000, which was sent to American Red Cross-China. We're forever grateful (for) the generosity of (the) La Crosse community. It gave us a new appreciation of where we live. It is overwhelming to see so many strangers in this community offer their kindness to humanity."

"We are proud of and celebrate our heritage and are willing to share our culture with those who wish to learn about it," she continues. "We promote mutual understanding and respect between cultures and hope to contribute the best of it to society." ♣

Kristy Walz is a professional development specialist from Holmen, Wis. She is happy to be a part of Coulee Region Women and to contribute to this issue.



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SMALL CHANGE FOR BIG CHANGE

Area students help build schools, one penny at a time.

by **MARY MALAHY**
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Some people have proposed banning pennies, claiming they are worthless because manufacturing costs exceed the actual value of the coin. But students in the La Crosse area have proven pennies are valuable by raising enough of them to build a school.

Marilyn Hempstead, chair for the La Crosse area Pennies for Peace fundraiser, explains that author Greg Mortenson developed Pennies for Peace to raise money to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Mortenson witnessed the horrible conditions schoolchildren face in Pakistan when he was stranded in a small village there after being forced to abandon his attempt to climb K2, the second-highest mountain in the world, located between China and Pakistan. His experience inspired him to write *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace ... One School at a Time*.

At first, Mortenson struggled to raise money. Then his mother, Jerene Mortenson, who was the principal of Westside Elementary School in River Falls, Wis., invited him to visit a class to talk about his project. The students decided to host a "Pennies for Pakistan" drive. They collected 62,345 pennies, and Pennies for Peace was born.

Local kids act globally

Hempstead is a member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), which was responsible for bringing Pennies for Peace to the La Crosse area. The local schools that Hempstead contacted raised more than \$41,000.

"That amount would certainly build a school, pay for all the supplies and probably pay the teachers' salaries for a few years," she says.

Students at Viking Elementary in Holmen eagerly took on the challenge, and they alone raised \$11,000. Teri Staloch, principal of Viking Elementary, says she is amazed by what the program accomplished.

"I've been a part of a lot of events that end as soon as the money is turned in," Staloch says. "This was different. It definitely changed the culture of our school."



Jerene Mortenson poses with the fish tank full of pennies donated by the Holmen Viking Elementary students.

Staloch explained that Viking's mission is to be "a school of excellence where all children and adults learn and grow together to make the world a better place." Pennies for Peace helped the students make this mission statement something they work toward every day.

Together, we make a difference

Pennies for Peace teaches people that they don't have to make a huge contribution in order to help people. This is important because a lot of students don't have a lot to give themselves, Staloch says.

"The program also brings the notion of unity," Staloch says. "One of us couldn't have given \$41,000, but as a community, we could."

Mortenson's mom visited Viking Elementary for an assembly that brought all the area schools together, Staloch says. During this assembly, the students filled a large fish tank with the pennies they raised. Later in the year, Mortenson spoke at Viterbo University and, according to Staloch, some of her students were able to meet him and even sit next to him during his press conference.

"It has just evolved into an amazing experience that has been unbelievable for all of us," Staloch says. ♣

Mary Malahy graduated from UW-La Crosse in May. After hearing about Pennies for Peace, she is inspired to make the world a better place.

A promotional photograph of the WXOW news team. Four people are posed against a plain white background. In the back row, Scott Emerich (left) and Dan Breeden (right) are standing. In the front row, Scott Hackworth (left) and Molly Nichols (right) are seated. All four are smiling and dressed in professional attire.

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Emerich

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

American Association of University Women

(AAUW) 2nd Sat. of each month (Sept-May), 9:30 a.m., 608-788-7439, www.aauw-wi.org.

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

Children's Museum of La Crosse weekly programming: **Creation Station** for all ages, every Sat. 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 2-3 p.m.; every Sun. 1-3 p.m.

Save-On-Sundays \$1.00 off admission every Sun, noon to 5 p.m. **Book Swap:** On the first Sun. of each month, bring a gently used, clean, children's book from home and swap it for a different book from the museum's collection.

Mt. LeKid Climbing Wall open every Sat. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sun. 1-4 p.m.

A-B-C Learners' Club for ages 1-5 with parent, every Thurs., 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Coulee Region Autism Society for family members, friends and professionals who care for someone on the autism spectrum. 3rd Wed. of each month, Chileda Habilitation Institute, 1825 Victory St., La Crosse. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Child care available, call 608-519-0883. lax-autismgroup@centurytel.net or autismfyi-lacrosse@yahoogroups.com.

Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW) meets the 4th Tues. of each month, La Crosse Holiday Inn, 5:30 p.m. Madalene Buelow, 608-791-5282 or mbuelow@fspa.org.

Jazz in the Park, Sundays, 7 p.m., Riverside Park band shell.

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

La Crosse Concert Band concerts, Wednesdays, 7 p.m., Riverside Park band shell.

La Crosse Noon Wisconsin Women's Alliance (formerly La Crosse Noon Business & Professional Women) meets the 2nd Thurs. of each month, Radisson, noon. Mary Evers, 608-782-5400 ext. 106, mary.evers@thewaterfrontlacrosse.com.

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) meets the 1st Monday of each month, Olivet Lutheran Church, 6:15 p.m. Holly Zeeb, wyzeeb@centurytel.net, or Jessica Teff, craigteff@hotmail.com. www.mops.org.

Valley View Kiddie Crew meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, Valley View Mall Food Court, 10:30-11:30 a.m., with fun and education experiences for children and parents. www.myvalleyview.com.

Women in Networking and Support (WINS) meets the 2nd Wed. of each month, Piggy's, noon-1 p.m. Kay Buck, 608-791-9253, kay.v.buck@wellsfargo.com.

CALENDAR EVENTS

June 3, Sharon Lovejoy (nationally known gardener), 7 p.m., Heider Center; West Salem. www.heidercenter.org.
June 3-13, Father's Day Golf Giveaway events, Valley View Mall. www.myvalleyview.com.

June 4, First Fridays Art Reception, 6-8 p.m., Gallery La Crosse, 320 Main St., La Crosse.

June 4-6, June Dairy Days, West Salem Village Park. www.junedairydays.com.

June 5-6, YVCA GardenFest, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., South Side Oktoberfest Grounds. www.ywcagardenfest.com.

June 7-Aug. 23, Cloglam beginner clogging lessons, 6:45-7:45 p.m. Mondays, Doerflinger Building, La Crosse, \$60. www.cloglam.com.

June 12, Mississippi Valley Mayhem roller derby bout, 7 p.m., Green Island Ice Arena, La Crosse. www.mississippivalleymayhem.com.

June 13, Triona triathlon, 7:30 a.m., Lake Winona. www.triona.com.

June 13, Tim A. Dienger Memorial Golf Scramble and Silent Auction, 1 p.m., Drugan's Castle Mound Country Club. 608-797-3920.

June 18-20, 25-27, Monster in the Closet, 7:30 p.m., La Crosse Community Theatre. www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

June 16-21, Steamboat Days, Levee Park, Winona. www.winonasteamboatdays.com.

June 18, Houston County Charity Golf Tournament, 9 a.m., Valley View Golf Club, Houston, sponsored by Alzheimer's Association La Crosse Outreach Office.

June 19, Freedom Fest, La Crosse Airport. www.freedomfestlacrosse.com.

June 19, Minds in Motion Bike Tour, 8 a.m., Onalaska Middle School. www.mimbiketour.org.

June 21-23, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Camp Curiosity "Out of this World," 8:30-11:30 a.m., ages 4-7, \$55 members/\$65 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

June 22, Summer Memories: Early Stage Awareness Fundraising Event, 5-7 p.m., Waterfront, La Crosse, sponsored by Alzheimer's Association La Crosse Outreach Office.

June 23-Aug. 1, Great River Shakespeare Festival, Performing Arts Center, Winona State University. Othello, The Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus and The Day News. www.grsf.org.

June 25, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Freaky Friday "Gizmos That Go," 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., ages 7-11, \$40 members/\$50 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

June 26, Women's Resource Center Tour of Gardens, Winona. www.wrcfwina.org.

June 27-18, Minnesota Beethoven Festival, Winona. Featuring Yo-Yo Ma, Minnesota Orchestra and more. www.mnbeethovenfestival.com.

June 28-30, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Camp Curiosity "I Dig Dinos," 8:30-11:30 a.m., ages 4-7, \$55 members/\$65 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

June 30-July 5, Riverfest, 11 a.m.-midnight, Riverside Park, La Crosse.

July 2, First Fridays Art Reception, 6-8 p.m., Gallery La Crosse, 320 Main St., La Crosse.

July 9-July 11, Trempealeau Lions Catfish Days, Trempealeau.

July 10, Hixon House Ice Cream Social, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., entertainment, refreshments and discounted Hixon House tours. 608-792-1982.

July 12-14, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Camp Curiosity "I Spy Science," 8:30-11:30 a.m., ages 4-7, \$55 members/\$65 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

July 14-18, Summer Interstate Fair, West Salem Fairgrounds.

June 16-18, Summer Sidewalk Sales, Valley View Mall. www.myvalleyview.com.

July 17, Secret Gardens of Houston County, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$10 prior to July 15, then \$12. 507-894-4745.

July 19-21, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Camp Curiosity "Kids Create," 8:30-11:30 a.m., ages 4-7, \$55 members/\$65 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

July 22-24, Crazy Days, Historic Downtown Winona.

July 26-28, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Camp Curiosity "Adventure Camp," 8:30-11:30 a.m., ages 4-7, \$55 members/\$65 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

July 30, Children's Museum of La Crosse's Freaky Friday "Geology Rocks!" 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., ages 7-11, \$40 members/\$50 nonmembers. www.funmuseum.org.

July 31, 30th Anniversary Celebration, Valley View Mall. www.myvalleyview.com.

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