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Women in Business

Pictured on cover: Laura Delaney Roessler

Pictured above: The women of Elmaro Vineyard.

From left: Claire Collison, Tara Corrigan, Sandra Muellenberg, Lynita Docken-Delaney, Ava Roessler, Emily Hein, Margaret Kearns, Barbara Hypes, Vickie Docken, Laura Delaney Roessler.

Photos on cover and above by Megan McCluskey, Atypik Studio.

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Twenty-some years ago, I started my own business. As a book editor with my eye on graduate school, I was looking for a way I could do my job on my own time. Over the course of a year or so, I collected contacts from other publishers, took on side projects and did my full-time job so well I ensured I could retain my employer as a freelance client. (It still is.) As luck would have it, I met my husband the same year, so by the time I struck out on my own as a freelance editor, I was conveniently married with health insurance.

Mine is about as simple a business as one could have. My overhead is minimal (basically, my computer) and my accounting is simple enough to track on paper. Still, I've learned some important things as a woman in business. First, networking is critical. The fancy degree I earned in New York was not nearly as important as the women I met there—editors who gave me magazine writing opportunities, book editing opportunities and the avenues through which to write my own books.

One of these women, Harry Abrams editor Melanie Falick, who published my

first book, was once asked the secret to her own success. "I know what I'm good at," she replied. There are two "takeaways" from her response. One is to recognize and believe in your strengths—your skills, loves and knowledge—and the other is to know what you are not good at, so you can seek out and surround yourself with those who complement you.

At *Coulee Region Women*, I have always felt that we succeed at exactly that. Each one of us on the staff—from our publisher to our sales representatives, our graphic designers, our intern, our proofreader and me—has a specific and strong talent. We mesh together and trust each other to do the job we excel at—and the result is the publication you hold in your hands. We are proud of what we do, as an independent company composed entirely of women, and we lift each other up no matter what personal or business circumstances bring.

This issue of *Coulee Region Women* tells the stories of women throughout the region who have built a business, big or small. You'll meet the women who run the locally loved and nationally acclaimed Elmaro Vineyard, as well as other women who have started businesses out of personal passion, such as Emily Vance of River Trail Cycles and Amy Kepler of Coulee Region Adult Day Center. Some have made a business out of a quirky niche, such as Jill Kruse of Ovenbird Bindery or the circle of friends who opened Sparta's uRban neSt. We feature women whose businesses became a source of personal growth, such as Sue Bute and Despina Kozidis, and women, like Laura Milner, whose job is to ensure others succeed in business, too.

These women, like the women who have inspired my own business pursuits, have something to teach all of us, whether we're in business or not: Surround yourself with supportive people. Discover what you're good at. Lift others up. Their words are inspirational to all of us running the business of life.

Betty

coulee region women

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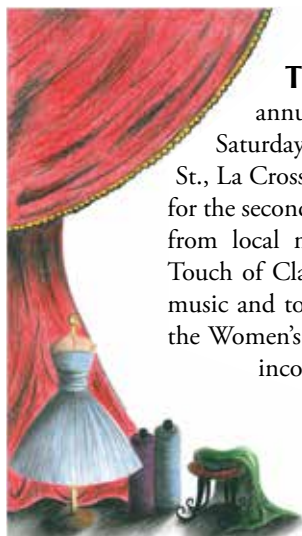


ALL WOMEN ARE REMARKABLE!

Don't miss La Crosse's very first Miss RemarkAble Pageant! This event is put on by Riverfront, a nonprofit organization that supports individuals with disabilities. Girls and women ages 13+ with a disability will be showcasing their abilities and achievements at the Weber Center for Performing Arts in La Crosse on Saturday, November 7, at 2 p.m. All participants will attend an educational workshop prior to the pageant covering conversation and public speaking, and self-esteem and confidence-building to help prepare for the onstage performance. Each participant will receive a scholarship, a personalized title (Miss Energetic, Miss Congeniality, Miss Determined, etc.), a crown, sash and flowers. One woman will be selected as Miss RemarkAble to represent the Miss RemarkAble Pageant and Riverfront in the community. All program proceeds support Riverfront's Achievement Fund. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased in advance. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Elizabeth Smaby at 608-785-3559.

BRING IT TO THE BALLOT

As we approach the election season, it is important to be informed on recent changes to the election law and what is necessary to bring to the polls. You are now required to present a photo ID whether you are voting in person or as an absentee. This can be a Wisconsin DOT-issued identification card or driver's license, a military ID card, a U.S. passport or a Wisconsin accredited university/college ID accompanied by a document that proves present enrollment. Voter registration can still be done at the polling place on Election Day, by mail, in the municipal clerk's office or with a Special Registration Deputy and requires an accompanying proof of residence document; however, a photo ID is NOT required for registration. To get more information on these rules and changes, visit www.bringit.wi.gov or call 608-261-2028.



FASHION CORNUCOPIA

The Women's Clothes Closet will hold their eighth annual Fashion Cornucopia Style Show and gourmet meal on Saturday, November 7, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church at 612 Division St., La Crosse. Doors will open at 11 a.m. for the first show and at 5 p.m. for the second show. The style show will feature women's and men's fashions from local merchants, including Dale's, Lark, Three Rivers Outdoors, Touch of Class, Mainstream Boutique and E&C. The event includes live music and tours of the Women's Clothes Closet. All proceeds will benefit the Women's Clothes Closet, which provides gently used clothing to low-income women who are in or are entering the workforce. Tickets are on sale now with reserve seating available, and are only \$35 each or \$240 for a table of eight. Quilt raffle tickets, silent auction items and table wines are also available for purchase. To purchase tickets, call 608-782-3468 or visit www.oursaviorslutheranchurch.net.



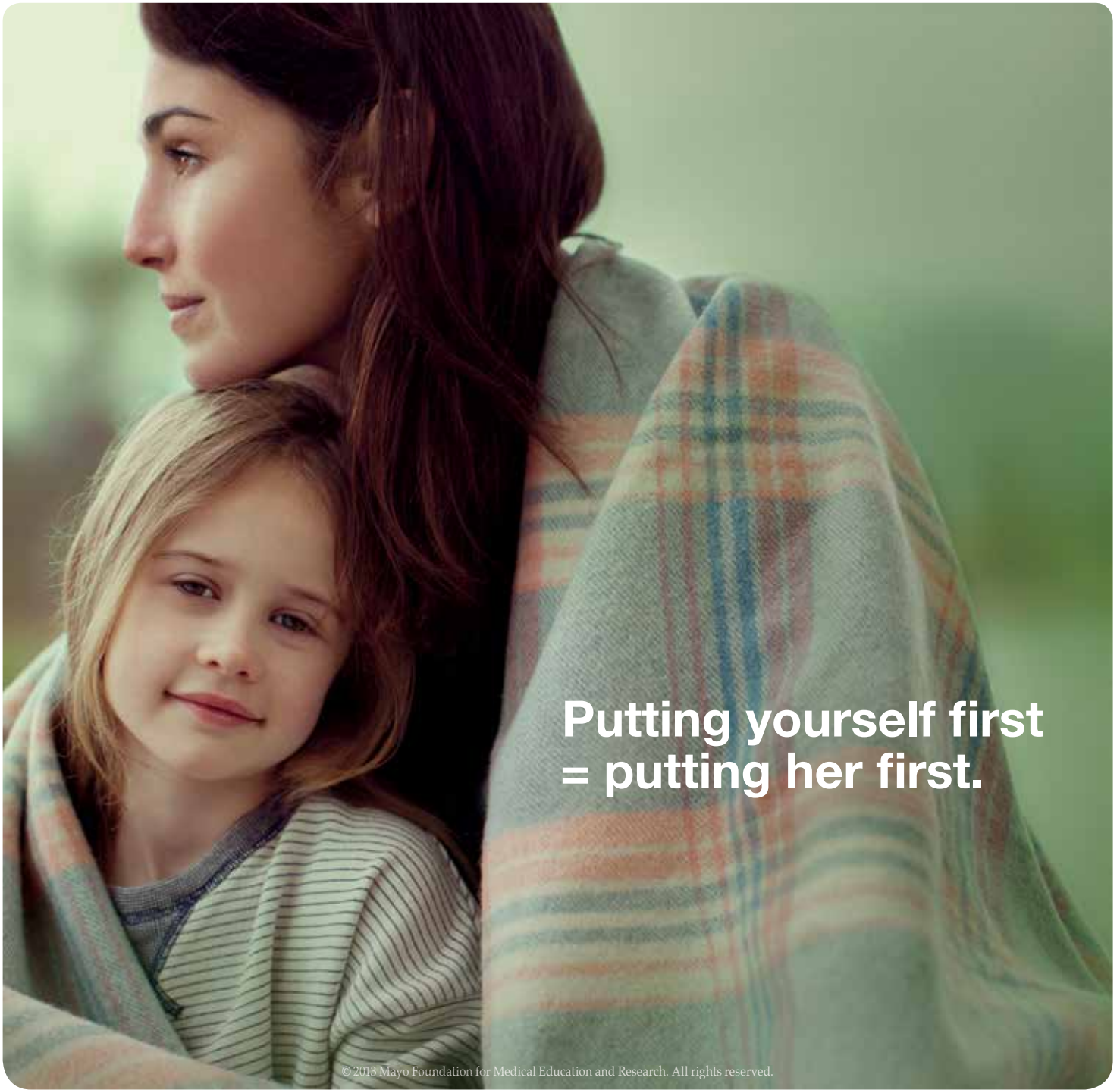
GET CONNECTED

Ever find yourself wishing you could do more volunteer work but finding it difficult to uncover the right opportunities? Or are you with an organization in need of some awesome volunteers? There is finally a website to fix these problems! Ugetconnected.org is a collaboration between the Great Rivers United Way, UW-La Crosse, Viterbo and Western Technical College that pairs up volunteers with opportunities in the Coulee Region. Go to the website, sign up and use the unique search engine to find volunteer opportunities that fit your skills and interests. If you represent a company, sign up your agency to make use of this great website and find the perfect volunteers today. To learn more, visit www.ugetconnected.org.



GO GLOBAL

Celebrate the Coulee Region's global connections during this year's Global Initiatives Week, November 6-13. This week will be packed full of events that showcase the cultural, social and economic value of our community and encourage us to become a community with a deep sense of global responsibility. Use this week to start thinking globally and acting locally by enjoying unique events ranging from discounts at local stores and restaurants to an international film festival at UW-La Crosse to conference talks and expert panels, and much more! Past participants say they have a higher level of awareness and a better sense of local and global community; take advantage of Global Initiatives Week, and you could feel the same way. For questions and a full list of events, contact heidi_svee@experienceworks.org.

A photograph of a woman and a young girl wrapped in a plaid blanket, looking out a window. The woman is in the background, looking out, and the girl is in the foreground, looking towards the camera.

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RAISE A GLASS

A mother and daughter harvest dreams at Elmaro Vineyard.

BY HEIDI GRIMINGER BLANKE

Photos by Megan McCluskey, Atypik Studio



Laura Roessler (left) and Lynita Docken-Delaney bring their expertise and graciousness to Elmaro Vineyard.

For many, Napa Valley—a region abundant with sunshine, grapevines and fine wines—is a dream destination. But right here in the Coulee Region, Lynita Docken-Delaney and her daughter, Laura Delaney Roessler, are living that dream. They and their family run Elmaro Vineyard in Trempealeau, and, while the business is fairly new, the farm it's on has been in the family for more than 150 years. The building housing the tasting room and the winemaking apparatus sits peacefully amid the grapevines, as if the land were born to grow grapes.

Docken-Delaney and Roessler are the women in the five-person Elmaro family; Docken-Delaney's husband, Mark; their son, Cameron; and Roessler's husband, Todd, fill out the ranks. Neither woman dreamed she'd be in the wine business, but they've both jumped in with a splash, taking winemaking courses, creating award-winning wines and keeping the family farm robust.

Taking root in Italy

A long time ago, Docken-Delaney says, she was an electro-neuro diagnostic technician at a hospital in Minneapolis. She met Mark and moved to his farm. "I didn't know what I would do for a living in the Coulee Region, so my mother suggested that, as my father had a plumbing license, I start plumbing with him, and that way I could stay in town." Ultimately, Docken-Delaney worked for the State of Wisconsin writing plumbing codes, commuting between Madison and the farm.

"She's brilliant at almost everything that she does," says Roessler, 35, of her 61-year-old mother. "She's a master plumber, one of three in the state, even when women weren't in plumbing at all. She is the artist between the two of us and just has a million



While the vineyards at Elmaro are beautiful, a step inside to the airy and inviting tasting room is a must on any visit.



Elmaro's youngest "employee," Laura Roessler's daughter, Ava, charms customers and always lends a helping hand.

ideas a day." Roessler credits Elmaro's success, especially the gold medal wines, to her mom's energy and creativity.

Roessler's journey to winemaking followed its own unlikely path. As a biochemistry engineer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she already tended to the analytical. But it was her involvement in curling (yes, curling) that led to her family's infatuation with wine. In January 2003, she was on a curling team for World University Games, which is hosted in the country that will host the next Winter Olympics. That year, it was Italy.

"Our family fell in love with wine when I was curling in Italy," says Roessler, who had been accompanied there by her parents and younger brother. "In Italy, wine is so much easier to come by than soda; ice is rare, and these nice red wines are available everywhere." The wines were lower in alcohol and tannins, making them a perfect accompaniment to meals. The family decided wine would be a perfect accompaniment to their lives as well.

In preparation for their new business, Docken-Delaney and Roessler each completed winemaking courses: Roessler has a certificate in enology (the science of winemaking) from Des Moines Community College, and Docken-Delaney completed a two-and-a-half-year online program through the University of California-Davis. In 2006, they planted their first vines.

Harvesting a dream

Both Roessler and Docken-Delaney agree there is no such thing as a typical day at Elmaro. For Roessler, it means mixing raising her two children, 4 and 9, with vineyard duties. "Right now, I'm in the vineyard with my dad on Mondays. On Tuesday or Wednesday, I'm watching my kids; Thursdays

and Fridays I'm in the basement with Mom, and we're working on different wine stuff. Wednesday I teach yoga."

Docken-Delaney's perspective is more global. "It's seasonal because winemaking is seasonal," she says. "The last couple of months have been fairly stress-free with lots of sleep and catching up. The end of August begins the winemaking season, the harvest—the vintage, as they call it. We'll start bringing in grapes and start to press and get juice in tanks from the white grapes. We get some red grapes from Arkansas; we get those in the tanks when they come on the truck. It becomes extremely busy from now until May."

Though the business is successful, the Elmaro women are not ones to kick back and watch the vines grow. "We take continuing ed classes through different universities," notes Roessler. In August, they hosted a University of Wisconsin Extension sparkling wine specialist. Next up is a class for "pre-harvest parameters."

Running a business can stretch a woman to capacity. Docken-Delaney considers herself fortunate that her family is involved. In the winemaking industry, she says, "you need a lot of people. It takes a village, as they say, not only to raise children, but also to make wine." For women starting a business, Docken-Delaney has some basic advice. "I think a five-year plan is the best. It takes that long to understand the business. Don't expect to hit the ground running."

Roessler speaks to the importance of passion for your work, noting that she leads "with my heart." She goes out of her way to find the perfect wine for each customer, even when it's difficult. "People will come in who definitely know a ton about wine and totally don't like anything. They will always have that thing that could create doubt in you.

But you can always take something away and learn from them."

Keeping it fruitful

Though the grapes may have ripened for the year, Elmaro Vineyard is far from done growing. In addition to improving and expanding their wine selections, the family looks for new ways to make the business even more inviting. They host yoga classes, movie nights, live music and dinner events. "We're thinking about creating a 5k run from here and doing a loop, because we have the wildlife refuge and Perrot State Park nearby," says Roessler. Or, you could just come for the award-winning wines: Elmaro's 2014 West Prairie White won the Sweepstakes Award at the Long Beach Grand Cru, three wines won gold medals at the Indy International Wine Competition this summer, and silver and double gold medals were awards at the Wisconsin State Fair Professional Wine Competition.

Docken-Delaney and Roessler are adamant about the importance of community in the business world. "We've had a lot of people help us," says Docken-Delaney. "You can't say, 'Oh, I just did this on my own.' You can't do that with winemaking because there are too many intricacies, so you have to listen to everyone: listen to your customers, listen to people also making wine, listen to lots of people."

"If small businesses are going to thrive, we all have to work together," sums up Roessler. **(crw)**

Heidi Griminger Blanke, Ph.D., has enjoyed a glass or two of wine at Elmaro and looks forward to her next visit there. She thinks Elmaro truly is world-class.

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CREATIVITY + COMPASSION

Vendi Advertising provides creative solutions with innovation, talent and heart.

BY ANDREA CULLETO

Contributed photos



Julie Haas, Client Services & Strategy Principal at Vendi Advertising, collaborates with Kathy Van Kirk-Przywojski, Vendi's creative principal.

Each morning, the staff at Vendi Advertising arrives to the smell of freshly brewing coffee and an impromptu musical performance, courtesy of director of development and volunteer barista Chris Haas. Founding owner and creative principal Kathy Van Kirk-Przywojski explains, “We’re greeted with delicious coffee and an animated Chris Haas singing to Snoop Dogg or something. This morning it was Manfred Mann!”

It is this kind of fun, outside-the-box atmosphere that has kept the creative juices flowing at Vendi since the agency’s inception in 2004. Underlying this playful environment is an exceptionally high level of competence and experience. Vendi videographer Kevin Cram illustrates this combination perfectly: “We recently had a video shoot that centered on a 5-year-old boy and a puppy. I know, what could go wrong? All possible contingencies were planned for and covered. Everyone on the team had a job to do and did it with finesse. No one lost their head, no one cried and no one went potty on the floor.”

Cultivating a creative environment

The environment at Vendi is intentionally structured to support both collaboration and solitude. For Van Kirk, “both are equally important to creativity.” For example, the team utilizes a computer-free

conference room affectionately dubbed the “Boiler Room.” This space features a floor-to-ceiling white board extending almost the entire length of the building. According to Van Kirk, “When we step away from our computers, we work through ideas more collaboratively and more quickly. Clients love being involved in that part of the process, too. They love the Boiler Room.”

Van Kirk emphasizes the secret to Vendi’s success: “Coming up with new, creative ideas and then executing those ideas—usually through digital platforms—takes really talented, smart people who happen to like to work hard. We have MBAs leading our research and digital marketing, and most of our designers have both a fine art degree and skills in brand, graphics and web. Our head developer is among the top 1 percent of developers on Stack Overflow, the leading peer programmer review community. And as importantly, they are about the nicest, most interesting and kindest people I know.”

Vendi also stands out in the way employees truly listen to their clients. “That shouldn’t be that remarkable,” says Van Kirk, “but it clearly is to clients who have worked with other agencies. They’ve felt that our strategies, ideas and work are real solutions to challenges they haven’t been able to crack before working with us. I attribute that to our collaborative approach.”



Kathy Van Kirk-Przywojski

Innovation with heart

Today, Vendi offers strategy, brand, marketing, research, media, digital, web, mobile, app, design, photography and videography services. They bring their national agency and brand experience to regional companies like Mayo Clinic Health System, Western Technical College, UW-Madison, Health Tradition Health Plan and Inland.

Vendi is known for the high quality of its work, which Van Kirk sees as the result of having 12 accomplished and experienced employees in house, rather than relying on part-time staff or contractors. Vendi boasts award-winning designers, writers, videographers and an excellent marketing and media team, led by Client Services & Strategy Principal Julie Haas. This approach has worked well, as Vendi regularly receives national recognition and awards.

Vendi also utilizes its considerable talent to benefit the local community. Van Kirk and her staff provide pro-bono services to area nonprofits through Vendi Share. Beneficiaries include essential and life-enhancing programs like the La Crosse Community Theatre, Freedom Honor Flight, Great Rivers United Way, the Hunger Task Force and 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection. "Vendi Share helps these organizations tell their brand stories, raise awareness and gain support," explains Van Kirk. "The projects allow us to flex our creative muscle and connect us to the community on a personal level."

Moving forward, Van Kirk plans to focus on several areas. "I want every person at Vendi to feel like the entire agency, and especially me, has his or her back. I want the environment to support creativity and inspire ideas. I want clients to feel supported and respected and to achieve their goals."

For Van Kirk, "Great advertising is a blend of art and science. It's hard work that, at its very best, looks easy." And at Vendi, creating innovative solutions looks like a breeze. **(CRW)**

Andrea Culletto is a Coulee Region freelance writer. Her writing can also be found at AndreaCulletto.wordpress.com.



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TENDING THE URBAN NEST

**Longtime friends
chalk up success
to laughter and love.**

BY LAURA ROWLETT
Photos by T. Lynn Photography

The featherers of uRban neSt, (from left) Staci Bruce, Rachel McPherson and Julie Burke, don trending apparel from Lizzie's Boutique.

To Rachel McPherson and Staci Bruce, paint is love. Each occasion to pick up a brush is another opportunity to laugh together and to grow as friends, furniture artists and businesswomen.

Together, they tend their uRban neSt home décor shop in downtown Sparta, but they have been comrades for more than two decades. In 1995, they both relocated from Austin, Minnesota, to Sparta and joined forces as stay-at-home moms, helping one another to raise children while honing a savvy knack for “upcycling” interior design items on the side.

“We are really housewives and hobbyists who know how to take care of kids and a family, cook a great dinner and clean a house,” McPherson says. “And we know how to love on people. That’s exactly the way we want visitors to feel when they come to visit uRban neSt.”

Passion for people

Odds-n-ends from Mom’s living room, Grandma’s attic and far-reaching garage sales, along with inspiration from online and specialty shops, became fodder for a weekend hobby. In 2010 McPherson and Bruce joined Sparta’s fall craft show. Then came regional artisan markets ... and two garages packed

tighter than a dovetail joint. Seeking a larger workspace and some customers, uRban neSt’s first location cropped up in fall 2012.

“Back when we were collecting furniture and furnishings and trying to figure out what to do with this pastime (and all this stuff), we kept coming back to our passion for people,” McPherson says. “We love this venue we’ve created for guests to interact, to discover their likes and dislikes, to refine their ideas, to discuss their lives and, most of all, to feel special. When people come in and have a fun time looking around, the store becomes more than a shop; it’s a place to build friendships and nurture bonds, to hang out. Inspiration is always free here.”

Fresh and funky

Beyond their vintage finds, a freshly designed assortment of extras marries fancy with farmhouse. Freehand-embroidered throw pillows line a parson’s bench, blooms fabricated from aged sheet music garnish a tricked-out milk pail and delicately strung pennants dangle near a primitive birdcage lampshade. Chunky, rustic letters lay in wiry bins, and trays with pops of Barcelona Orange pair with crisp turquoise tones atop sophisticated, velvety gray surfaces. From the hand-scraped engineered-wood floors to

the blanched antique tin ceiling and exposed brick walls, this airy shop exudes a fresh and funky panache with a hipster-provincial flavor all its own.

McPherson and Bruce spent this year’s first quarter revamping uRban neSt’s new home, the historic space next door to their first address. The March 6 grand opening also unveiled the brainchild of longtime friend Julie Burke: Lizzy’s Boutique, featuring a first-rate clothing collection and whimsical wardrobe accoutrements. Mandala-print leggings peek out of painted drawers while Aztec and kimono-inspired tops blend with Bohemian blouses on industrial-chic racks.

Laugh every day

“We want to be that place where visitors feel supported and pampered and inspired to be their best and to try something new,” says Burke. Their business plan is simple: follow your heart and laugh every day. “We’ve always said, ‘When it’s not fun, we’re done,’” she says. “This boutique is about fun and friendship more than anything. Creating our shop helped me to connect with what really matters: listening to your heart and going for what you love. There is no greater reward.” **(crw)**

Laura Rowlett agrees retail therapy is most effective when shared with friends.



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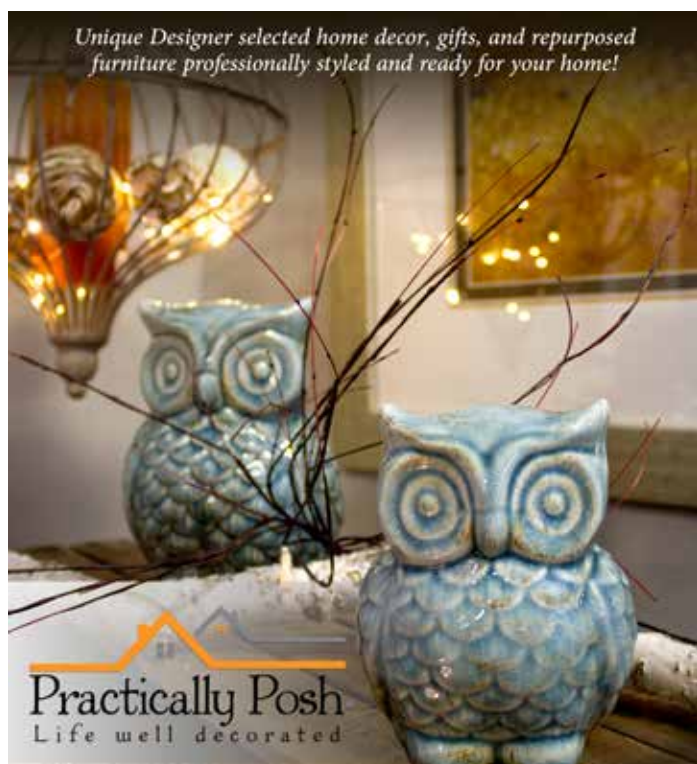
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She Peddles Great Bikes

Emily Vance turns biking into business at River Trail Cycles.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN
Contributed photo

It's hard not to get excited about biking at River Trail Cycles in Onalaska. Bikes, biking gear and abundant expertise fill the shop, infused by the enthusiasm of owner Emily Vance. Here, Vance tells *Coulee Region Women* what it takes to put a dream on the road.

What inspired you to open River Trail Cycles?

I started my “career” in the bike industry when I was 15 as a part-time employee in a Twin Cities bike shop and was immediately hooked. I worked my way up to store manager and buyer, but I wanted more. I left the retail side and became an outside sales rep with a distributor based out of Milwaukee. In that position, I learned so much about the bike industry from my boss, my direct connection to manufacturers and the nearly 100 bike shops I visited throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin. The knowledge I gained inspired me to open my own bike shop in March 2007. I wanted to bring something new, fresh and unique to the area that represented all areas of cycling and abilities.

Many people dream of turning their passion into a business—then find that when passion becomes work, it's no longer enjoyable. How have you dealt with blending the two?

It has not been an easy road. When I first started in the bike business, I was in high school, biking was “cross-training” with my running training and I was only working part time. Soon I needed to find a way to make my interest in cycling pay the bills. Being an owner has taken a great deal of my free time, and I have tried really hard to set time for the occasional bike ride, but as my friends know, work has had to come first. I have satisfied myself by talking with customers about their bike experiences and hearing about their success stories. The joy in seeing a

small child learning to ride or a middle-aged person getting back on a bike after much time away brings me just as much satisfaction.

As a woman starting a business, what has been challenging for you?

I think I have overcome a bunch of “speed bumps,” as I like to call them. The outdoor recreation industry has been mostly comprised of men. I think I broke through some barriers when I was a sales rep that made me pretty tough. I gained confidence that I knew what I was talking about, that I was experienced as a mechanic and salesperson and that I will stand up for myself when I feel I have a good idea or sales plan. At the store, people ask for the owner and get a surprised look as I wipe the grease from my hands and reply, “You are looking at her.”

What's the most important lesson you've learned as a woman starting a business?

You must be ready to put all that you have into your dream—mentally, physically and financially. It is a pretty tough road, but success can be achieved if you have the drive, desire and work ethic behind you. I have had tremendous support from my family and come from a line of very hard workers. I have learned to be persistent, to fight for what I think is fair and to expect the unexpected. I love what I do, and I hope that it shows in the everyday operations of my store and with each interaction I have with my customers. The most important thing is to stay connected with both the staff and customers—listening to their needs, making sure communication is clear and loving what we do and why we do it. 

Betty Christiansen is the editor of *Coulee Region Women*.

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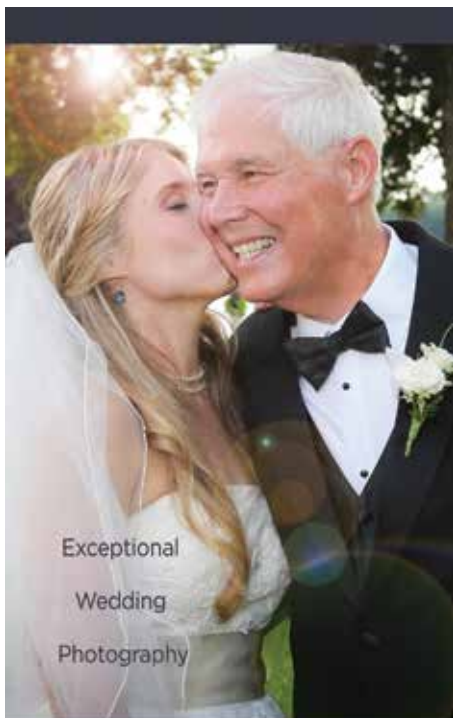
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TAKING ORDINARY TO *Extraordinary*

**Kristin Ottesen blends artistry
and business skills for success.**

BY KIM SEIDEL
Contributed photos

All Kristin Ottesen's natural talents—her passion to work hard, to improve and grow, and to make clients beyond happy with her final products—have culminated in a new business: Kristin Ottesen Upholstery.

Ottesen considers herself an artist first and entrepreneur second, but she knows the importance of balancing those two titles for success. What's extraordinary about Ottesen's company is that she works with ordinary pieces of furniture—take chairs, for instance—to transform their style and extend their beauty and life. Many pieces she works with have sentimental value to their owners, and she takes pride in having these under her artisanship. She makes “old” appear “new” with her skills in design, color matching and minor repairs.

The art of redesign

“Reupholstering is not just replacing material on an existing item but an opportunity to redesign your project,” Ottesen says. “Customizing can be done through tailored padding to make an item look different, modify comfort” and add or remove such items as buttons, tacks, trims and skirts.

Not all furniture needs upholstery work. “I do cushion replacements, fabric matching and repairs, minor frame repairs, foam rebuilding,

seam repair, trim replacement and more,” says Ottesen, 33, who worked in Alaska for an upholstery business for three years before returning to the Coulee Region last fall with her 5½-year-old sled dog, Maynard, and the goal to begin her company.

Melding artistry and construction, Ottesen often does heavy physical labor from a workshop in her childhood home, located in the beautiful countryside just outside Holmen. She can build custom projects from the frame up, but she also collaborates with other professionals to build and design booths (think restaurants and coffee houses), other built-in seating (think motorcycles and boats) and sofas (think love seats and the favorite family couch).

Along with a workshop for construction, she shares a large sewing and office space with her mother, Betty Ottesen, who has worked as a professional seamstress her entire life. Betty taught sewing to all three of her children, but it was Kristin who took the most interest in it. Betty recently started Hipnotions Tool Belts, creating belts for gardeners, travelers, hairstylists, medical professionals and others, and sells them worldwide. The two women run their own businesses, sharing not only space, machinery and material, but also ideas, assistance and support on projects—not to mention good coffee and conversation.



Kristin Ottesen (right) and her mother, Betty

A personal touch

Not only does Ottesen repurpose and repair, but she'll also design original pieces, offer estimates for potential projects and special-order materials. She's a one-woman show, but she has connections, knowledge and personal service that, Ottesen says, people couldn't find easily at a store. She invites people into her business, where she enjoys helping them make educated decisions. Once there, customers can browse shelves full of thick books of hundreds of fabric samples, placing in Ottesen's hands their hope for a fresh look and longer life for a beloved object. **(crw)**

Owner of Seidel Ink LLC, Kim Seidel is an award-winning freelance writer and editor who resides in Onalaska. She enjoys writing about women who find ways to turn their passions and gifts into a successful business.

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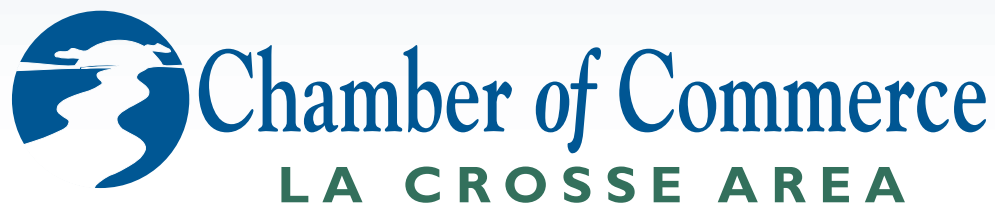
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INSIDE: SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, EXPO FLOOR MAP, BUSINESS EXPO LISTINGS

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Dave Cornell

Owner of Fox Hollow Golf Course



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Jordana Snyder Photography

Re-Energized

Twist #1

The Small Business Breakfast continues. Small-business leaders also have great success stories, so we've decided to feature one in addition to our traditional large-employer speaker.

We are proud to have Sue Kolve-Feehan (Sue Kolve's Salon & Day Spa and The Salon Professional Academy) share the key decisions small-business leaders make during breakfast. Dr. Andrew Temte (Kaplan Professional Education) will share his company's growth story over lunch.

Twist #2

For the first time in the Expo's history, we've turned the show floor to help with traffic flow and direct you to new companies. Last year, 68 percent of attendees discovered a new company as a result of walking the floor.

We've challenged our vendors this year to give you an experience as you visit the booths and to solve your problems. Come walk the floor to see how they've met that challenge.

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Vicki Markussen

Executive Director, La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce

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La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce - Business Expo 2015
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Breakfast & Luncheon Keynote Presenters

Expo Kick-Off Small Business Breakfast

Key Decisions for Small Business Success



Sue Kolve-Feehan, Owner
*Sue Kolve's Salon & Day Spa and
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With 30 years of experience, Sue Kolve-Feehan is a small business owner who earned global recognition by setting high standards. Kolve-Feehan began as a La Crosse salon stylist, then started

Sue Kolve's Hair Studio in 1985. In 2006, she opened her own educational facility—The Salon Professional Academy. She has since earned national accolades, and she continues to be a model for other salons across the country. Come learn the key decisions Sue Kolve-Feehan made that rocketed her to success while she continues to support our community by serving on local boards as well as in state and national positions.

Thursday, October 29 • 7:30-8:30 a.m.

Registration: 7-7:30 a.m.

Cost: \$15 for Chamber Members, \$25 for Non-Chamber Members (registration includes breakfast)

Register online at www.lacrossechamber.com

Business Expo booths are open after the breakfast program concludes. Please plan some extra time to visit the booths on the exhibit floor before you leave to start your business day. The Expo is your opportunity to do business with local companies that keep our region vibrant.

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Kaplan Professional Education

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Thursday, October 29 • 12-1 p.m.

Registration: 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Exhibit Floor Open:

8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. & 1-3:30 p.m.

Cost:

\$25 for Chamber Members

\$35 for Non-Chamber Members

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Schedule of Events

7-7:30 a.m.	Registration: Kick-Off Small Business Breakfast
7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Kick-Off Small Business Breakfast (Pre-Registration Required) Key Decisions for Small Business Success Sue Kolve-Freehan, Owner Sue Kolve's Salon & Day Spa and The Salon Professional Academy
8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Exhibit floor open Free Admission with a Business Card Exhibit floor closed from 12-1 p.m. for the luncheon
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	Registration: Featured Luncheon
12-1 p.m.	Featured Luncheon (Pre-registration required) Dr. Andrew Temte, CFA, President Kaplan Professional Education



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Re-Energizing

a (nearly) 150-Year-Old Chamber



Uniting ... an irresistible force ... advancement are words used when the 1868 La Crosse Board of Trade transitioned into a Chamber of Commerce. Then-Chamber President Frank P. Hixon envisioned unifying all industries “to create an irresistible force

for the advancement and materials up-building of the City of La Crosse and its trade territory.”

As the La Crosse Area Chamber approaches its sesquicentennial in 2018, it is rallying around the same but still-modern mission—uniting and connecting to grow businesses.

A Voice for Business

The Chamber’s history is rich with ways it’s changed the community—from successfully lobbying for a university and nurses in K-12 schools to creating Lang Drive to connect the La Crosse Rubber Mills to downtown.

“The Chamber existed before many social organizations did,” says Chamber Executive Director Vicki Markussen. “Chamber businesses cast the vision and met the needs. To this day, businesses continue to be a driving force in many nonprofits.”

Markussen says the Chamber still unites businesses and is re-energized to tackle barriers to business growth. By uniting, businesses are able to do together what none can do individually.

A Thriving Service Sector

As manufacturing and headquartered companies grew, the companies servicing them multiplied. As a result, health care,



professional services, insurance, banking, retail and restaurants are all thriving.

“Small businesses add to the quality of life that helps our larger businesses attract talent,” says Markussen. “With 58-percent of Chamber members having fewer than eight full-time employees, we are re-focusing on providing education, best practices and marketing opportunities.”

Growing Our Future Workforce

Markussen says 98 percent of the businesses she meets with express the need for either entry-level or special-skilled workers. “This will be one of our main issues for 2015 and 2016,” she says. To meet the needs, the Chamber revamped its education program to offer numerous leadership development programs, and will continue to hold a banquet for top high school graduates and to offer a Career Expo for high school juniors.

The Chamber’s Young Professionals Program is nearly 100 members strong. Representing 21- to 40-year-olds, this group is forming networks and learning skills to launch members to the next level.

“Our Young Professionals group helps people new to the area form roots and experience new areas of our business community,” says Markussen, adding that many companies use the group as a recruitment tool to connect and grow our next-generation workforce and our businesses.

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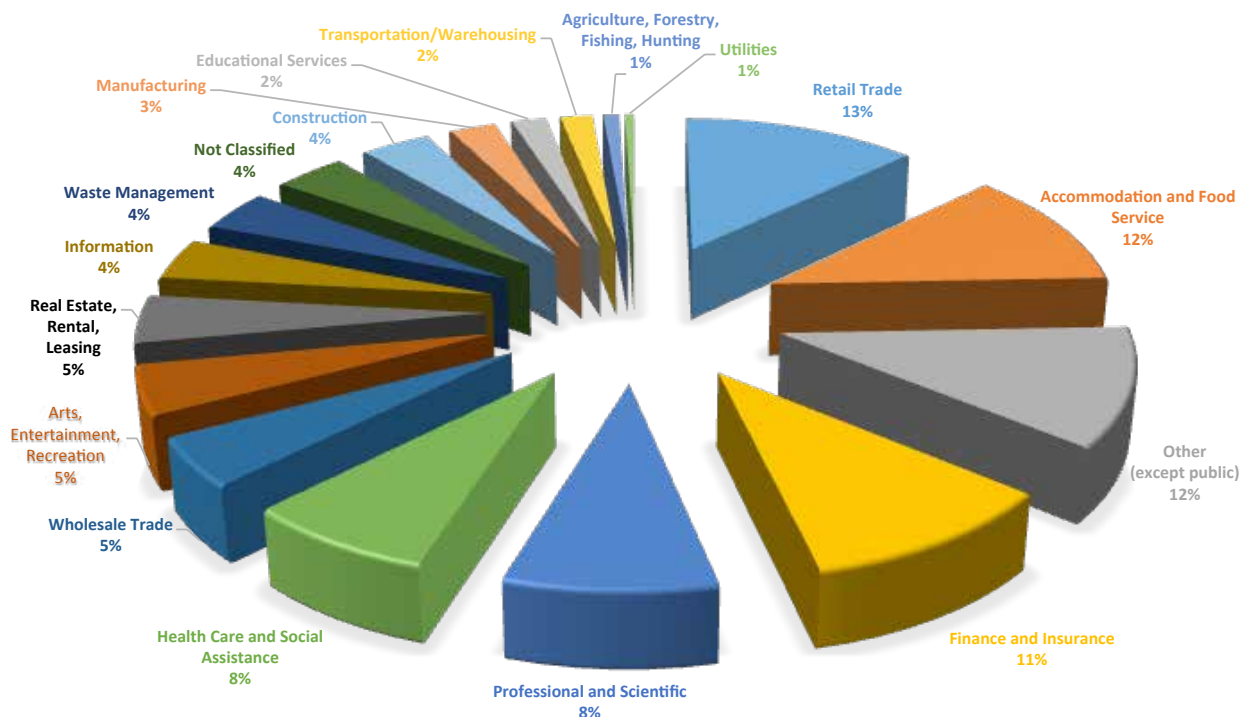
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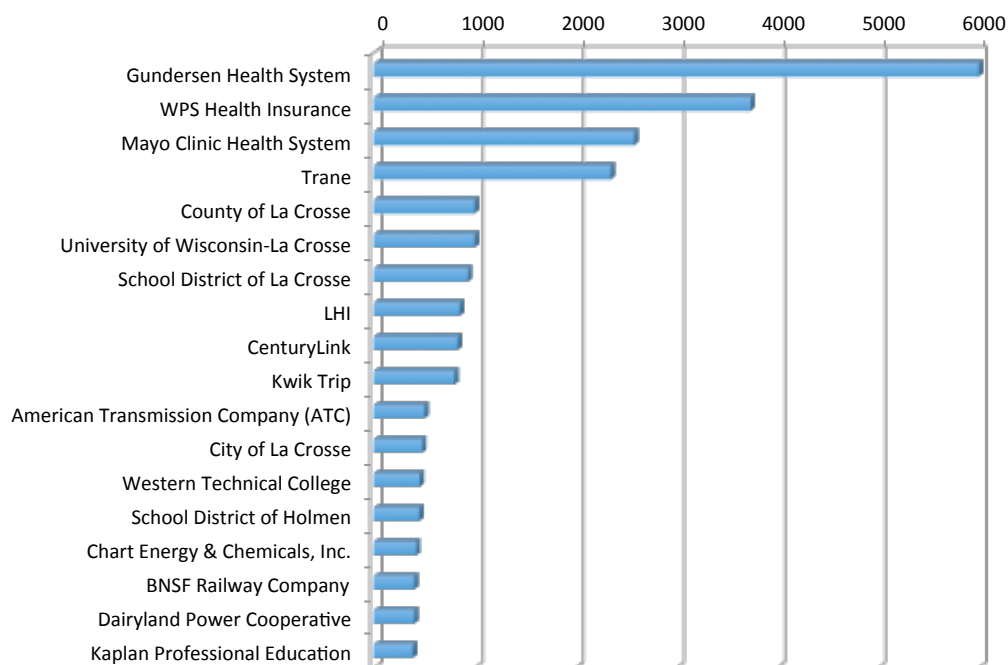
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Chamber of Commerce
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Chris Butler, President
 Verve, a Credit Union

"I'd encourage all businesses in the community to join because we're all in this together. If we don't all support the community, then it's left up to a few to pull the weight for everyone."



JoAnn Steffes, Owner/Principal
 Steffes HR Advantage

"As an HR consultant working with small to mid-size companies, those companies are looking for training and development opportunities for their employees and the Chamber has been a great resources on those training and development opportunities."



Joe Kruse, Chief Administrative Officer
 Mayo Clinic Health System

"The Chamber is the single most important entity in our community that focuses on community growth, the development of business, and the creation of jobs. These are the formula for a rich community and life."

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Health Tradition Health Plan

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MAP OF LA CROSSE CENTER SOUTH HALL

SOUTH HALL A (EXPO BOOTHS) & SOUTH HALL B (BREAKFAST & LUNCHEON)

SMALL BUSINESS BREAKFAST:

Key Decisions for Small Business Success
with Sue Kolve-Feehan, Owner
Sue Kolve's Salon & Day Spa and
The Salon Professional Academy

Registration: 7-7:30 a.m.

Breakfast & Presentation: 7:30-8:30 a.m.

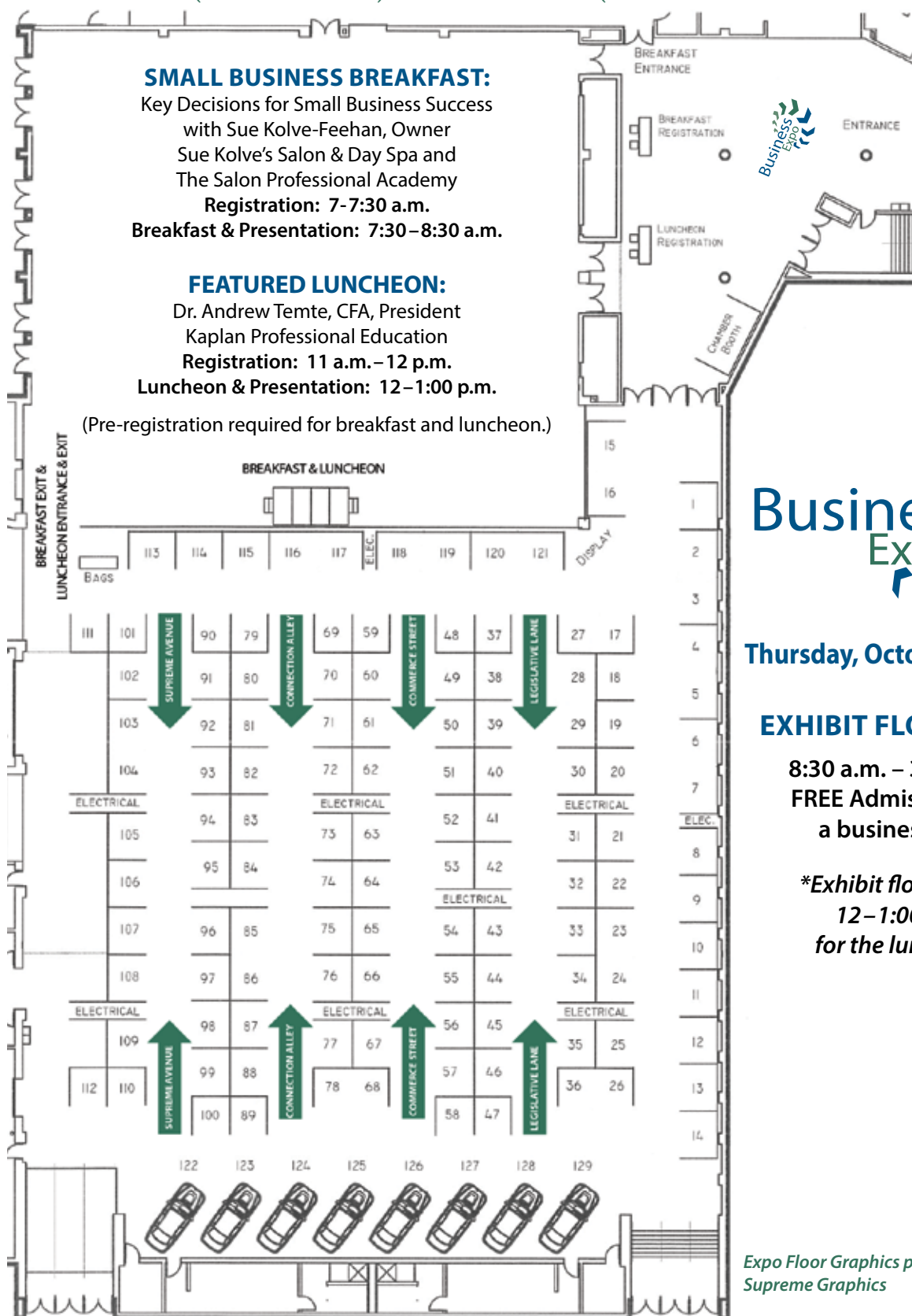
FEATURED LUNCHEON:

Dr. Andrew Temte, CFA, President
Kaplan Professional Education

Registration: 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Luncheon & Presentation: 12-1:00 p.m.

(Pre-registration required for breakfast and luncheon.)



Thursday, October 29, 2015

EXHIBIT FLOOR OPEN

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.*
FREE Admission with
a business card.

**Exhibit floor closed
12-1:00 p.m.
for the luncheon.*

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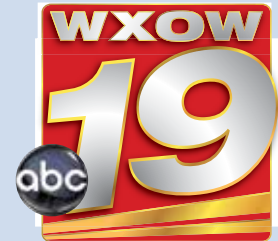


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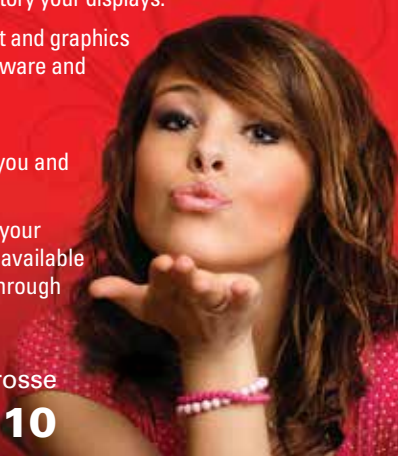
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Alphabetical listing of exhibitors in the Business Expo. The booth number is noted on the first line of each listing. Please refer to the map on page 13 for booth location on the Expo floor.

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www.abrjobs.com
Designing workforce solutions that address your unique business issues while improving your staffing R.O.I. ABR will deliver the work-ready talent when you need it.

Access Commercial Real Estate (ACRE) - #83

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608-304-5700
www.accesscre.com
ACRE provides a full range of commercial real estate services including brokerage, development, site selection, management and investment services to clients in the Upper Midwest.

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608-781-5440
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Advanced Multimedia Solutions - #99

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608-783-0949
www.amsaudiovideo.com
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Advisors Management Group, Inc. - #40

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www.advisorsmanagement.com
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Aging & Disability Resource Center of Western Wisconsin - #21

300 4th Street N.
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www.adrcww.org
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Onalaska, WI 54650
608-787-4500
www.altra.org
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APAC Customer Service, Inc. - #93

3201 State Road 16
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-779-8500
www.apaccustomerservices.com
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www.associatedbank.com
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Mobile Life, Inc. d/b/a Be Mobile - #53

40 Copeland Avenue, Suite 108
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608-782-2963
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www.cclse.org
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608-519-5440
www.cell-plus.net
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www.thecharmanthotel.com
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Chippewa River Industries - #91

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608-796-1455
www.crind.org
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Coulee Region

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608-784-4880
www.lacrossechamber.com
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La Crosse Area Development Corporation - #35

601 7th Street N.
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-74-5488
www.adcoweb.org
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BUSINESS EXPO LISTINGS

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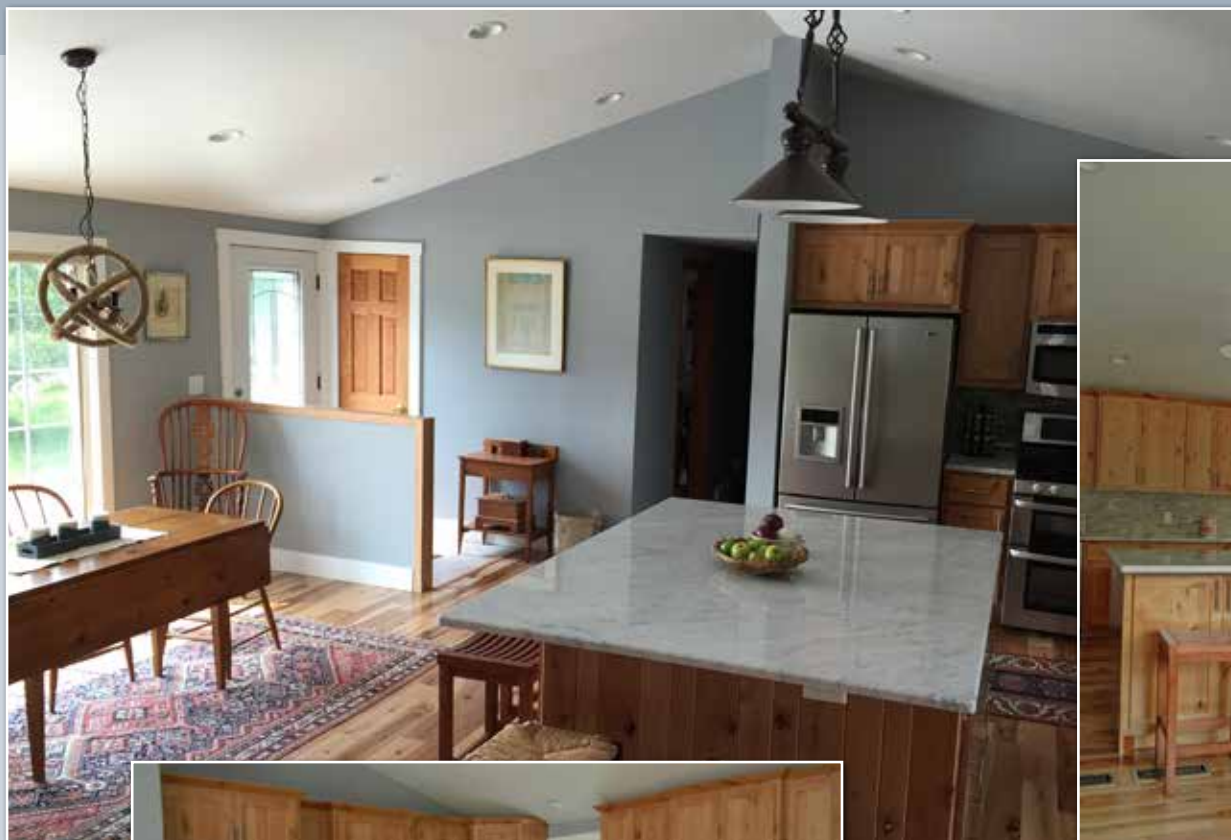
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**When you find the perfect location,
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BY JESSIE FOSS
Contributed photos

For Cal and Marcy Ainsworth, the vision of the perfect home in the Coulee Region began while living in the desert region of Washington State. The two knew they wanted to retire to the La Crosse area; both had vacationed in northern Wisconsin during their growing-up years, and Cal had graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

About eight years ago, as Cal's retirement grew nearer, he began perusing La Crosse-area properties online, and a home just outside of Holmen caught his eye. Cal kept his eye on the property, and over the course of a few months—and with the addition of a shed and more acreage to the property—it became what the Ainsworths believed would be the perfect place to retire.

In January 2007, Cal and Marcy flew in to see the property, made an offer on it and had an accepted offer before flying back to Washington.

"We saw (the house), and we thought we could do whatever we want with this," Cal says.

A kitchen conversion

Upon moving to Wisconsin, Cal set to remodeling the shed on the property into a workshop. The next step of making the property into the Ainsworths' perfect retirement sanctuary began June 1 of this year with the start of the kitchen remodel.

The Ainsworths had a vision and a budget for their new kitchen, and with the help of Home Maintenance Experts and its subcontractors (including Schafer Woodworking, Travis Powers Plumbing LLC, Viking Electric and Jambois Builders), they were able to make that dream a reality.

Both Cal and Marcy say the general contractor and subcontractors they worked with were excellent and had great ideas on how to finish the kitchen.

"They all made suggestions," Marcy says, "and 99 percent of them we agreed to."

One of the biggest changes in the kitchen came with the demolition



of a wall that closed the space off from most of the rest of the house. The other big change was the raising of the roof. The new roof's pitch is now double that of the old roof. In fact, the old roofline would now fit under the new roofline.

The brightening up of the kitchen continued with a gray/blue color on the walls and wide, white trim throughout.

Blending old homes and new

Going in to the renovation, Cal and Marcy knew what types of woods they wanted in the kitchen, and it was up to Schafer Woodworking to make that happen. Five-inch-wide hickory flooring was installed throughout the kitchen and dining room. The two knew they wanted the cabinets to be made of red alder. Red alder, a tree native to Washington, harks back to the Ainsworths' former home. The completed cabinets are soft-closing and feature crown molding across the top.

At the heart of the new kitchen is a 5-foot by 7-foot island, weighing in at approximately 950 pounds. Also made of red alder, the island's end detailing mimics the details of a bookshelf Cal made. A light fixture that hung in the Ainsworths' home in Washington made the cross-country trek, was stored away for eight years and now hangs above the island. The light fixture was something Marcy definitely wanted to see in her new kitchen.

"I kept saying, whatever we do, (the fixture) has to be over the island," she says. "I just love it because it's so unique."

The Ainsworths also decided to have ribbon lighting mounted under the cabinets, which Marcy says has added to the lightness and brightness of the kitchen.

The kitchen's countertops were one more detail Cal and Marcy had a hand in picking out. They decided to go with granite countertops and made a trip to Sullivan, Wisconsin, to pick out the exact slab their countertops would be made from. The slab was originally about 13 feet by 7 feet and was cut to fit their new island and other counters perfectly.

Surviving a "reno"

The Ainsworths lived in their home during the kitchen renovation—which is not something Marcy would recommend.

"I'm going to write a book about living in the home through a reno," she says. "Don't. End of book."

The two had a refrigerator throughout the process but no other major appliances and no kitchen sink for eight weeks. They improvised by washing dishes in the bathroom sink and bathtub and cooking with a slow cooker, griddle and outdoor grill.

It took a little more than two months to complete the kitchen renovation, and with their dream kitchen now complete, Cal and Marcy plan to spend plenty of time cooking, something they both love. Cal says the new room has plenty of space for them both to be working, and Marcy says they're looking forward to cooking even more often for their friends.

The Ainsworths say they are more than pleased with how their new kitchen turned out and are getting ready to start the next phase of making their home into their dream retirement home.

"It was fun," Cal says of the kitchen remodel process. "Well, looking back when it's all done, it's excellent." **(crw)**

Jessie Foss is a freelance writer living in La Crosse. While she loves home improvement, she thinks she'll stick with the slightly smaller do-it-yourself projects for a little while longer.

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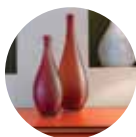


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A FRESH START WITH FINISHING

Sue Bute turns her passion into a growing business.

BY SHARI HEGLAND
Contributed photo

Sue Bute remembers looking at her hungry 3-year-old son across the table, having nothing to feed him, and then taking time off her \$4.25-an-hour job the next day to apply for food assistance, only to be told she didn't qualify.

She says years of alcohol addiction and times of homelessness, living in the woods in Florida, are all part of her story.

But her story today is that of having built a niche business doing something she loves. Her business, The Finish Line of La Crosse, is a testament to turning passion into success.

Steady growth

A native of the Coulee Region, Bute, 53, says she worked a lot of different jobs, mainly in accounting, as she struggled through her early adult years. After many years in Florida, she had returned to the La Crosse area and was working in the office of The Board Store when she had her first opportunity to stain a wood bench. She fell in love. A later job at Beyer Cabinets, which introduced her to spray finishes, sealed the deal. For a year, Bute continued to work full time while doing finishing on the side, and then she decided to make The Finish Line, a custom wood-finishing business, her future.

"I did it to be able to do something and not fail," she says.

Ten years ago, she moved into a building on French Island "with a cup sprayer, a tarp for a spray booth and an air compressor bought on a charge card at Menards," she says. This month, The Finish Line, now with eight employees, is relocating to an 18,000-square-foot space on Enterprise Avenue in the La Crosse industrial area. The new space, more than double that of her previous location, will increase efficiency

and provide a loading dock to be able to load and unload semis. She anticipates adding more employees in the next year, as well.

Success through passion

Along with custom wood finishing for local contractors and homebuilders, The Finish Line works with Carroll Chair, finishing between 600 and 1,500 chair parts each week, which find their way into chain restaurants across the country.

Bute says that building her business wasn't easy. For the first five years, she was a one-woman show, putting in 16-hour days, seven days a week. And while she has no post-secondary degree, she says she "paid for her college in 'stupid tax,'" her term for costly mistakes that taught her lessons along the way.

As the owner of a growing business, the biggest challenge, she says, is finding the right employees. Once she finds them, though, her philosophy is to keep them by giving them the room to do their job well and rewarding them for it. "If the company makes money, you make money," she tells them.

She says the bittersweet part of The Finish Line's growth is that her attention is increasingly focused on customer interaction, scheduling, bookkeeping and orders. "I want to play out there on the floor, but I barely pick up a stain rag anymore," she says. Still, her satisfaction is in finding a way to follow a passion and succeed at the same time. "If you love what you do, how can you call it work?" she asks. *(crw)*

Holmen freelance writer Shari Hegland loves sharing the stories of those who have a passion and follow it.



The La Crosse Area Builders Association proudly presents the award winning homes for the 2015 Parade of Homes. Winners were chosen by judges in three categories based on the price of the homes. The people's choice was voted by attendees who fill out their ticket and turn it in at the end of the tour. Thank you for your votes!

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LIVING TO FULL POTENTIAL

Coulee Region Adult Day Center supports people with disabilities, and their families.

BY JUDITH MUNSON

Contributed photos



Employees and clients at Coulee Region Adult Day Center enjoy special events like "pajama day."



Outings, like a boat ride on the river, enrich clients' days while easing their families' obligations.

When Amy Kepler helped care for her older brother as they were growing up in Sparta, she saw firsthand how much being home mattered to him. But not all who care for loved ones with disabilities can be home all the time or manage a loved one's care on their own.

Knowing the needs of these families inspired Kepler to create a place where these needs can be met, allowing both clients and families to thrive.

Employed as a caregiver since 17, Kepler opened Coulee Region Adult Day Center in Onalaska in March 2011, with a second location in Sparta in December 2011. Kepler also operates an adult family home in Onalaska, another in Richland Center and an adult day center in Croghan, New York, not far from where she graduated from college in 2004 with a degree in human services.

Married with two young children, Kepler has also completed a master's in psychology. Driving these accomplishments is a deep-rooted dedication to helping people with disabilities live to their full potential.

"My family did not have a lot of services available to us when my brother was younger," says Kepler. "Others who did not have family to help were left in institutions in bed all day."

A little help means a lot

At Coulee Region Adult Day Center, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Each member receives a care plan to help them reach their fullest potential. All clients can participate in field trips to various community attractions, events and resources, such as the YMCA.

Staff also provide 24/7 respite care and in-home care. Seeing an increase in her autistic clientele, Kepler seeks new ways to best serve this population. Other times a family may just need a little help, but what may seem "little" means the world to them.

For example, a member of a local family was diagnosed with brain cancer with only a few months to live. He was unable to bathe because the home was not fully handicap-accessible.

"So they came here to use our shower," says Kepler. "It's just one thing, but it helps (people) maintain their dignity during their final days and get to stay home with loved ones."

The center also serves the elderly, assisting them with shopping, hair appointments and other daily needs. Kepler's goal is to expand the center to help meet the growing needs of both populations.

Living as fully as everyone else

Kepler and her brother, now 35, are still together, as he has joined Coulee Region Adult Day Center. The quality of life for people with disabilities has much improved since her brother's youth. The general public is more accepting when the center's clients are out in the community. But occasionally there's a glare or two, or worse. If only these people could see what Kepler sees every day.

"I can be having a tough day, walk onto the main floor, and it's all smiles and hugs, turning my day around," says Kepler. "Last year we got a new member who had never gone swimming. We were at Mt. Olympus, and I helped him in slowly, since he seemed a little scared. All of a sudden I got this huge hug and 'thank you!' Up until then, this man in his 40s had never experienced this basic part of life we all take for granted."

It's this passion to help a person live as fully as everyone else that drives Kepler and her staff. (crw)

Judith Munson is a freelance writer living in western Wisconsin.

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A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Running Gracie's restaurant, Despina Kozidis has discovered strength she didn't know she had.

BY JULIE NELSON

Contributed photo

In the world where Despina Kozidis grew up, the man was the decision maker and the traditional head of the household. Never did she, or anyone else in her Orthodox Greek family, imagine she would one day own and operate her own restaurant. But time has a way of changing things.

Kozidis moved to the United States, specifically Racine, Wisconsin, when she was 14 and, using a translation of her name, started going by the name Gracie. Eventually she married a man who was a baker and loved the kringles Racine is well noted for. His dream was to bring kringles to La Crosse, so he purchased the building at 1908 Campbell Road and prepared to open a bakery. Tragically, he died shortly before the bakery was to open, leaving Kozidis at a loss. "What am I going to do now?" she wondered. "I don't like to bake ... but I do like to cook." So she pulled out her grandmother's recipes for gyros, kabobs and baba ghanoush and looked in her house for traditional costumes, icons and artwork that could serve as restaurant décor. In August 2002, she opened Gracie's Mediterranean Cuisine.

Success on her own

In line with her Greek upbringing, Gracie took on a male business partner, someone who could take the lead in running her business. As she gained confidence, she realized she was doing most of the work while her partner received most of the credit. So she left him with the restaurant. About eight months later, he gave Kozidis her restaurant back.

"I wanted to prove to *myself* that I didn't need a man to make my restaurant successful," Kozidis says. She streamlined the menu and listened to her customers. The gyro melt came at the request of diners who kept requesting cheese on their gyro—no surprise to those

of us who live in Wisconsin. The sampler platter allows people to have a little bit of several entrees, and the Greek-urito is an inventive combination of gyro meat and rice.

Stronger than she thought she could be

Kozidis cooks her gyro meat—a combination of lamb and beef—on a traditional vertical rotisserie, a process that prompts the fat to drop off at the bottom. The resulting lean meat cooks layer by layer and is always served fresh. Gracie also takes pride in her Greek salads and shops for fresh vegetables every two days.

Earlier this year, a comment made on the Gracie's Facebook page disparaging the LGBT community unintentionally resulted in a boost for the restaurant. With the help of her daughter, Sophia, Kozidis responded to the politically charged statement by saying all people are welcome in her restaurant and suggested that the person posting was more than welcome to stay away. The post went viral, and the positive response from the LGBT community—and the community at large—was overwhelming. "I almost cried when I saw the number of people who came in to support me," she says.

Kozidis continues to amaze herself every day. "I raised my kids by myself; I'm running a restaurant by myself; I stood up to hatred and spoke out for acceptance." Now, at 56, she says, "I find myself being a lot stronger than I ever thought I could be." *(crw)*

One of the first stories Julie Nelson covered as a TV news intern involved eating gyros at a Greek festival in Madison. She has been a fan of them ever since. Julie now does public relations for The Salvation Army in La Crosse.



Despina Kozidis, owner of Gracie's Mediterranean Cuisine in La Crosse

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Fancy desserts from Meringue stretch as far as the eye can see.

How Sweet It Is!

**A tale of three bakeries—
and the sweet women
who run them.**

BY HEIDI OVERSON
Contributed photos

What makes a bakery special? Certainly its delectable products, but as three La Crosse bakeries show, the key may be how they incorporate their personalities into their recipes. After all, sprinkling a little love into the mix makes everything taste better!

Meringue

When Jennifer Barney was growing up in Stanley, Wisconsin, she would watch her maternal grandmother bake amazing things.

“While most girls my age dreamed of Barbie dolls, I dreamed of baking,” says Barney, flashing a contagious smile.



Jennifer Barney, Meringue

A 2008 graduate of Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Minneapolis, Barney has worked as a chef and pastry chef at a number of fine local restaurants, including 4 Sisters, The Waterfront and The Mint. She loved working at each place but decided it was time to start her own business.

“Meringue is special because I use organic ingredients whenever possible,” says Barney. “I call it full-circle baking. I make connections with local farmers, getting back to the basics. Everything is fresh and made from scratch.”

Barney currently bakes in Pogreba Restaurant’s kitchen. She takes orders, delivers and arranges pickup times with her clients. Meringue also has a popular stand at the Cameron Park Farmers’ Market each Friday, where the biggest sellers are French macarons. The rest of each week, Barney makes specialty cakes. Her wedding and other special-occasion cakes boast beautifully colored frosting and edible

decorations. “I love making cakes for life’s milestones,” she says.

Fall is Barney’s favorite season. She suggests ordering a fall-themed cake, a 14-layer mocha cake or a beautifully decorated box of her gorgeous sea-salted caramel truffles.

D L Cakery

Lisa Butterfield and Deb Kreinbring met at their church, became fast friends, quit their jobs and started a bakery—with a twist. They dress as Santa’s elves during the holiday season and sing and dance



*Deb Kreinbring (left) and
Lisa Butterfield, D L Cakery*

while delivering cakes to college students, who just about die with embarrassment.

“It’s all about having fun,” says Butterfield. “If it wasn’t fun, we wouldn’t be doing it.”

The two laugh about being the “secret bakery” in town. They opened in 2011, and they bake from scratch in the kitchen of the

Partners in Excellence building on Caledonia Street in La Crosse.

“We thought about having a storefront but decided it just wouldn’t be us,” says Butterfield. “Operating as an order-only bakery gives our customers fresh items, and we don’t have any waste.”

Their best-selling item is their double-layer sheet cake. It’s moist, delicious and made exactly as the customer wishes. They also make to-die-for cupcakes, cake pops, cookies, biscotti, wedding and special-occasion cakes and more.



"We can make anything a person wants," says Kreinbring. "We had someone bring in his mother's old recipe for sour cream raisin pie, and he was overjoyed with what we made."

Despite being busy with orders, the women make time to work with schoolchildren and hold community-outreach baking events. With the holiday season approaching, they suggest calling early to order their famous apple pie and holiday cookie platters.



International Bake Shoppe

International Bake Shoppe is nestled inside a distinctive brick building on Main Street in La Crosse, where Mary Hennessey bakes exquisite desserts alongside her husband, Don.

"We've been working side by side for 14 years, when we bought the business," says Mary.

"We got married on May 19 and bought the bakery July 1, all simply because I tasted the buttercream frosting," chuckles Don. "We just dove right into it!"

International Bake Shoppe upholds a longtime reputation for making delicious and sophisticated baked goods. The shop is famous for the buttercream frosting that won Don over and an 8-inch white cake with raspberry filling. They also supply Digger's Sting Restaurant with its Triple Chocolate Cake. Two of their most unique items are photo cakes and doll cakes, which little girls love.

"We sell quite a bit of regular goods in the shop, but we mostly take orders to reduce waste," says Mary. "We concentrate on specialty cakes and wedding cakes."

The cozy shop invites visitors to savor a treat with a cup of coffee or tea. The display cases and coolers are filled with scrumptious desserts like Tres Leches (three milk), Death by Chocolate, Tuxedo and white raspberry cakes, in addition to Bavarian cream-filled cupcakes, white cupcakes, cookies and more.

"We love that we can make people happy with our goods," says Mary. "You can tell it's all been good; Don and I have been together 24/7 for this long and are still married!" **(crw)**

COCONUT MACARONS

Meringue

Makes 24 cookies

- 3 1/3 cups unsweetened shredded coconut
- 5 oz. water (1/2 cup + 1/8 cup)
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup corn syrup or Lyle's golden syrup
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 egg whites
- 1/2 oz. sour cream
- Citrus zest (optional)

In a small saucepan, boil together the water, sugar, corn syrup and salt. Remove from heat once the sugar reaches a rolling boil. Place the dry coconut in a mixer bowl with a paddle attachment. With the mixer on medium speed, slowly pour the hot liquids into the coconut. Continue to beat until the mixture is no longer very hot. Meanwhile, combine the egg whites, sour cream and optional zest. Slowly add the dairy into the bowl and stop just as all of the ingredients are equally combined. Prepare a sheet pan with parchment or a silicon mat. Scoop or portion dough into equal amounts. Bake at 350°F until macaroons are a nice golden color, about 15 minutes. If you want to make perfect balls, refrigerate the uncooked portioned dough until firm and roll the dough in your hands.

LISA'S BANANA BARS

D L Cakery

Makes 48 bars

Bars:

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 bananas (1 1/2 cup mashed)
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. soda
- 2 cups flour

Frosting:

- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3 T sour cream

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cream sugar, margarine and butter; add eggs and sour cream. Mix. Add bananas and vanilla. Sift together all dry ingredients and add to mixture. Spread into a greased 15x10x1-in. pan. Bake 20-25 minutes.

For frosting, melt margarine and butter until light brown and bubbly. Remove from heat and add powdered sugar and sour cream. Beat until creamy. Spread fast and add sprinkles, if desired.



International Bake Shoppe is famous for its glorious cakes and buttercream frosting.

WHITE ALMOND WEDDING CAKE

International Bake Shoppe

- 1 18.25-oz. package white cake mix
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup white sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups water
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 T vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 4 egg whites

Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease and flour an 11x13-in. cake pan. Stir together the cake mix, flour, sugar and salt in a large bowl until well mixed. Pour in the water, sour cream, vegetable oil, almond and vanilla extracts and egg whites, and beat with an electric mixer on low until all the ingredients are mixed and moistened but some lumps still remain, about 4 minutes. Pour the batter into the prepared cake pan and bake until the top is a light golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Allow to cool before frosting.

DEB'S MOLASSES COOKIES

D L Cakery

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ginger

Cream the margarine, sugar, molasses and egg. Add the dry ingredients and combine. Scoop out small balls and roll in sugar. Bake at 350°F for 9-10 minutes.

Heidi Overson brought something home from each bakery after each interview and can say nothing about herself at the moment—she is full of cake and needs to lie down.

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Chelson B Salon Hosts Holiday Open House Benefit

Chelson B Salon, located at 2606 Ward Ave., La Crosse, will host their holiday open house on Friday, December 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. This annual event, which is open to the public, raises money for local charities. This year, money raised will be donated to La Crosse Warming Center and the Franciscan Hospitality House. Enjoy a tasting of local wines, appetizers and desserts, as well as a silent auction, a huge product sale and a chance to win a \$200 gift basket. For more information, call 608-788-2875.



Meet Mrs. Oktoberfest 2015

Peggy Herlitzka, a partner with the Hale, Skemp, Hanson, Skemp & Sleik law firm, was named Mrs. Oktoberfest during the annual Mrs. Oktoberfest reception at the Cargill Room on September 29. Mrs. Oktoberfest is a designation given to a woman in the community noteworthy for her professional and community work. In addition to being a partner at Hale Skemp, Herlitzka serves as a Court Commissioner for La Crosse County.

Herlitzka is also a committed volunteer who has been involved over the years with Steppin' Out in Pink, WAFER Food Pantry, the YWCA, scouting organizations and other community and state organizations.

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Kelly Deng, Dim Sum Tea Shop



The Truth in Tea Leaves

Dim Sum Tea Shop offers a flavorful sampling of food and tea.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE
Contributed photos

Foods we might consider hors d'oeuvres, like egg rolls, dumplings and spiced meatballs, are commonly known throughout China as dim sum—a flavorful assortment of savory to sweet dishes that pair perfectly with tea and are meant to be relished and shared. “I wanted people to know we have tea and food,” says Kelly Deng, owner of Dim Sum Tea Shop in downtown La Crosse, explaining that she added the term *dim sum* to her store name as a way to encourage people unfamiliar with tea to visit her shop. “Everyone likes to eat,” she says.

Tea with tradition

Born in China, Deng moved to the United States in 2008 after she met her husband, who is from La Crosse. A former schoolteacher, Deng was eager to get back to work and decided to open a shop where she could introduce the traditionally non-tea-drinking public of the Coulee Region to the wide variety of flavors and health benefits found in loose-leaf teas. “My husband bought me tea in tea bags, and it was so bad,” laughs Deng, who was determined to demonstrate how properly prepared tea releases the soothing properties not found in commercial brands. “Loose-leaf tea is smooth,” explains Deng. “You feel good when you drink it.”

In 2010, Deng opened Cha Guan Tea Shop, where she sold loose-leaf teas and a limited menu of dim sum in a tiny shop tucked away in an inner hallway of the Doerflinger building. She stayed at that location for more than two years. “It was a hard job,” says Deng, recalling the challenges that came with maneuvering the nuances of

a new culture while overcoming the language barrier. Most business exchanges between Deng and her customers were done through trust intermingled with a lot of finger pointing and nods. “But I was always learning. And the customers were very nice and very patient,” a trait to which Deng attributes much of her success. “Those people kept coming back and with them their families and friends.”

Charming the region with tea

As word of her business grew, Deng changed its name to Dim Sum Tea Shop to emphasize her expanded food menu and relocated to 221 Pearl Street—a location that has increased her space and visibility. In this storefront, she keeps more than 150 different varieties of teas and offers a tempting selection of dim sum, soups, specialty gifts and the popular bubble teas made from a foamy concoction of tea, milk, sugar and large pearls of black tapioca. In addition, Deng hosts a number of events that include dumpling making, Chinese language classes and tea-tasting parties, which have retained a loyal following of tea lovers. “Some of my customers have been coming to my tea parties for five years,” says Deng. “These people are good for getting more people to try something new.”

It’s that support from the many tea converts that Deng says keeps business growing. “People who drink tea have soft hearts,” muses Deng. “It’s all been good.” *(crw)*

Martha Keefe lives and writes in La Crosse. Though coffee is her drink of choice, she sees herself making future trips to Dim Sum Tea Shop, where the food is delicious, the tea inviting and the staff delightful.



Laura Milner, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

WHERE BOARDROOM MEETS CLASSROOM

Laura Milner takes the helm of the College of Business Administration at UW-La Crosse.

BY ANASTASIA MERCER

Contributed photos

Everyone is in sales, says the new dean for the College of Business Administration at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Laura Milner, and that's why partnerships with businesses and internships are so crucial for college students.

She describes a lesson that began with students selling "frozen margaritas" at a minor league Yakima Bears baseball game in Washington during her time as associate dean at Central Washington University. Students soon realized sales increased when they relabeled the nonalcoholic form as "frozen limeade" at the family-friendly event. And as the heat of the day wore on, they needed to adapt again to sell the remaining "limeade," which was no longer frozen.

Business connections are key

Milner, who began working at UW-La Crosse on August 1, spent her first few weeks meeting business leaders and community members whom she hopes will help her take the CBA to the next level. Ultimately, she would like to create advisory boards for every major and identify potential area business partners so that internship opportunities can be expanded (and even required). In her experience with the aircraft manufacturer Boeing in Washington, Milner discovered businesses prefer hiring students who have had two or more internships. Central Washington ultimately became one of three colleges Boeing supported fiscally due to the close relationship they developed.

Milner was attracted to UW-La Crosse for its accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which she says is considered the premier national and international accreditation authority and is very important to those in the business world. She also likes that faculty is committed to continuous improvement, and that the campus is ready to solidify relations with alumni and the

community. "They seem to be poised to raise money here," she says. "People are in love with this institution, which is really nice."

Global perspective, local application

Milner brings the campus a global perspective, having worked in 13 countries on six continents—twice winning Fulbright scholarships to do so. In 2014, she spent six weeks in Colombia developing curriculum and focusing on tourism, entrepreneurship and globalization while still associate dean at Central Washington University. Her other Fulbright scholarship led her to spend six months in Cape Town, South Africa.

A first-generation college student from Atlanta, Georgia, Milner says she disappointed her father initially because she chose graduate school over marriage and children. She's not exactly sure why she was so driven to succeed, but she credits many people over the years who gave her professional support and advice. Milner attended graduate school in Kansas and worked a year at Kansas State University before spending 21 years in various teaching and leadership positions at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

Milner's wife, Barbara Brooks, whom she's been with for 28 years, still owns a sport fishing charter boat in Alaska and operates it during the summer. Brooks will come to La Crosse once the fishing season is over to help remodel the bungalow Milner purchased this spring on Main Street. Until then, Milner will continue to meet with locals and select a dojo where she can practice karate in her free time. "The people are incredibly kind and nice and generous with their time," she says of the La Crosse community. "It seems like a great place to be." *(crw)*

Anastasia Penchi lives in Genoa with her family, and has fond memories of her own years at UW-La Crosse.



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DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Downtown women in business model professionalism.

Photos by Jordana Snyder Photography

Successful businesswomen know how to dress the part, and Kay Mazza and Maria Norberg are no exceptions. Photographed in their places of business in downtown La Crosse, these women in business are smart fixtures in the downtown scene.



Maria Norberg, owner of **Grounded Specialty Coffee** and the forthcoming **Apothik** restaurant in downtown La Crosse, pairs good sense and great style in this ensemble from **Touch of Class**.

Finley blouse, \$173; Lisette knit skirt, \$142; White & Warren cashmere triangle wrap, \$324; Corso Corno “Maiden” boot, \$165; Anna Beck mother-of-pearl multi-chain necklace, \$340; MiMoneda gold necklace with carisma coin pendant, \$225; Honora drop pearl earrings, \$170; Anna Beck cuff bracelet, \$529; Reve pearl necklace/bracelet, \$120.

Store manager **Kay Mazza** excels at matching her customers’ tastes with the fine fashions at **Touch of Class** in downtown La Crosse. Here, she shows off a look that’s sure to be a fall favorite.

Repeat charmeuse tank, \$215; Repeat cashmere cardigan, \$429; Lilla P. pleat front pant, \$162; Gentle Souls “Balfour” ankle boot, \$250; Story brown topaz and brown pearl necklaces, \$379 each; Gurhan silver and gold ring, \$150; Monica Rich Kosann topaz drop earrings, \$1,195.

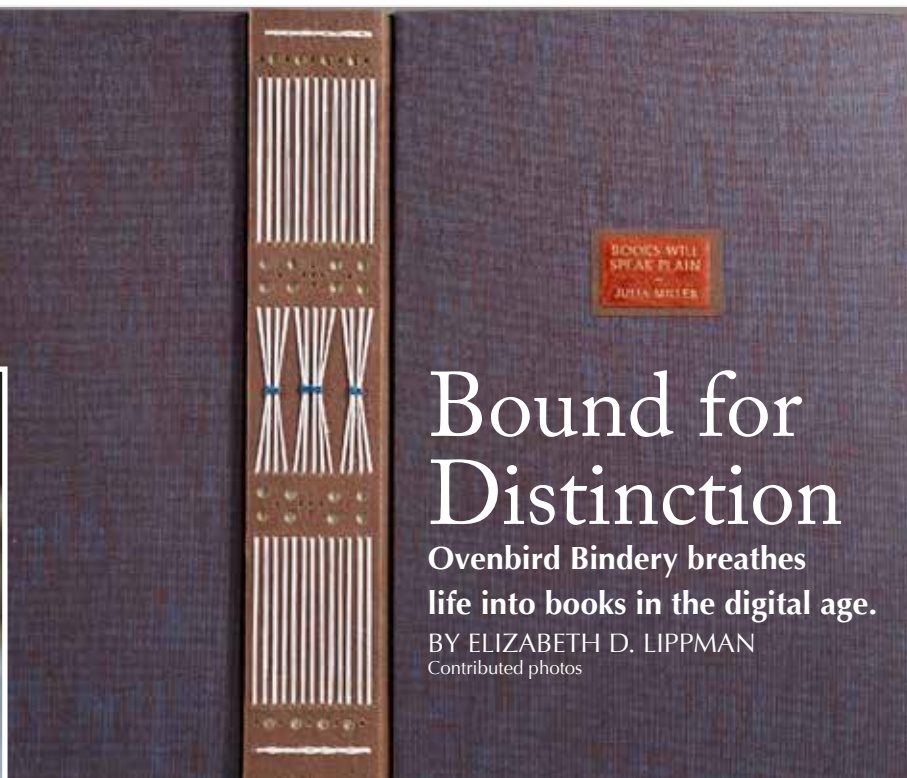


Jill Krase, Ovenbird Bindery

Bookbinder Jill Krase is a craftsperson in the richest sense. As skilled with materials as she is imaginatively attuned to the possibilities of content, Krase, owner of Ovenbird Bindery in Winona, creates handmade works enlivened by the interaction of beauty and function.

"Because we spend so much time on our computers and phones and Kindles, we're just increasingly desperate for authentic experiences with physical objects," Krase says. And through her binding, restoration and instructional services, she provides just that.

Krase, who earned a master's degree in English studies from Illinois State University, saw a handmade book for the first time 10 years ago. "I have always loved to read, and I really do think that's where it all starts—just with a general love of books. I thought, 'I love books, and I love making things by hand. And here are those two things together,'" she recalls.



Each book an heirloom

Krase began studying at the University of Iowa Center for the Book and, almost as quickly, accepted her first professional project—an edition binding of poems. Soon she taught a workshop, and since then she has collaborated with museums, libraries, private collectors, family historians and children as young as preschool age.

When Tim Hatfield wanted to create a memory book of letters written by his wife's family, friends and colleagues upon her retirement, he turned to Krase for help. "Susan was surprised and thrilled—it is lovely," he says. "And although the book already is a family heirloom, it's not nearly so much as it will be years from now."

Organist Erik Floan wanted to preserve his many handwritten annotations in a collection of Bach's complete organ works he bought as an undergraduate. Decades of use had resulted in ripped covers, loosened bindings and taped fixes. He and Krase formed a plan, which included built-in ribbon markers in place of rusty paper clips and sticky notes.

"The re-bound music is not only practical because the books are once again intact and will last decades, but they are also elegant to the eye and appealing to the touch," Floan says. "A couple of my organ students have already asked me to leave them in my will!"

Art that invites artists

Krase's work is imbued with an aesthetic sensitivity and dexterity honed through years of practice—and enhanced by local relationships and affinities she has formed along the way. A fine-furniture artist provided the red oak for a medieval-style book cover. An antiquarian book dealer informed her restoration of a set of full leather books from 1833. The southeast Minnesota landscape inspired a long-stitch binding accepted by jury into a traveling exhibit.

"I do get attached to every book I make," Krase confides. "It is kind of like sending children out into the world."

Admiring Krase's craft, a friend of Hatfield's remarked, "A hundred years from now, someone is going to see this beautiful, unique book on a bookshelf in their home and take it down for a look. It's worth it just for that. But then they're going to start reading the tributes and will say, 'Oh, my, I'm related to this amazing, accomplished woman.'"

Susan Hatfield, it turns out, is in good company. "We owe this," Tim Hatfield insists, "to Jill—herself an amazing, accomplished woman." 

Elizabeth Lippman is a freelance writer and editor who lives and works in the beautiful bluffland of Winona.

AHHH...SNOW DAYS.



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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., 608-519-0548, aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com, aauw-wi.org.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Onalaska Rotary every Mon. at 6 p.m., lower level of Blue Moon, Onalaska.

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

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

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

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

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

Women's Alliance of La Crosse (WAL) 2nd Thurs. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant, Patti Bartsch, 608-799-8326, nu@naturallyunbridled.com.

CALENDAR EVENTS

Oct. 1-4, Carnival, JCPenny Parking Lot, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Oct. 1-5, Oktoberfest, La Crosse Oktoberfest Grounds.

Oct. 8-10, Oktoberfest Needlework Show, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Thurs., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri., 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat., La Crosse Public Library Museum Room, 608-797-6759.

Oct. 9, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-reg/pre-pay, www.funmuseum.org.

Oct. 9-10, CRHS Make a Friend For Life Adoption Event, 1-5 p.m., JCPenny Court, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Oct. 9-11, Rodger & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* 7:30 p.m. Fri-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Viterbo Fine Arts Center Main Theatre.

Oct. 10-11, Civil War Immersion, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat., 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun., Norskedalen, Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

Oct. 11, Historic Downtown Day, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

Oct. 15, Super Hero Party, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Oct. 16-25, *Proof*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Tolland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.

Oct. 17-18, Sports Card & Collectibles Show, Sears Court, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Oct. 22-24, Ghoulees in the Coulees, various events and times, Norskedalen, Coon Valley, www.norskedalen.org.

Oct. 23, Wine, Women and Wellness: Holistic Breast Health, 5-8 p.m., Café D'Vine Yoga Studio, free, RSVP 608-799-8326 or NU@NaturallyUnbridled.com.

Oct. 23, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, pre-reg/pre-pay, www.funmuseum.org.

Oct. 23-Nov. 8, Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Oct. 24, 29-30, Booseum, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Children's Museum of La Crosse, www.funmuseum.org.

Oct. 25, Downtown Trick-or-Treating, 11 a.m.-3 pm., www.lacrossedowntown.com.

Oct. 25, Halloween Spooktacular, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Oct. 26, The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., the Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.

Oct. 29, Chamber Business Expo, La Crosse Center, www.lacrossecenter.com.

Oct. 30 & Nov. 6-7, Dark La Crosse Radio Show, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House, www.thepumphouse.org.

Nov. 5-8, *Come Back*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Tolland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.

Nov. 6, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., La Crosse Children's Museum, www.funmuseum.org.

Nov. 6-13, Global Initiatives Week, La Crosse.

Nov. 7, Fashion Cornucopia, 11 a.m. & 5 p.m., Our Savior's Lutheran Church, www.oursaviorslutheranchurch.net.

Nov. 7, Miss RemarkAble Pageant, 2 p.m., Weber Center for Performing Arts, 608-785-3559.

Nov. 7, Tiny Tim Gala, 5:30-9:30 p.m., Cargill Room, The Waterfront, La Crosse, 608-392-4208.

Nov. 7, Cirque Mechanics: Pedal Pump, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center Main Theatre.

Nov. 8, Jingle Bell Brunch, 10 a.m.-noon, Cargill Room, The Waterfront, La Crosse, 608-392-4208.

Nov. 14-15, 21-22, *Stuart Little*, 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. Sat., 1 & 3 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Nov. 13-Dec. 24, Santa Visits & Photos, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Nov. 14, Missoula Children's Theatre Presents *Sleeping Beauty*, 1 & 4 p.m., Weber Center for the Performing Arts.

Nov. 14-15, Holiday Craft Bazaar, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse, 401 West Ave., www.uulacrosse.org.

Nov. 19, Scott Kirby, 7:30 p.m., the Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.

Nov. 20, Night Out at the Museum, 5:30-8 p.m., La Crosse Children's Museum, www.funmuseum.org.

Nov. 20-22, Downtown Shopping Weekend, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

Nov. 27, Black Friday, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.

Nov. 27-Jan. 1, Rotary Holiday Lights, open daily 5-10 p.m., Riverside Park, La Crosse.



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