FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

Taking the Pulse of the Coulee Region

• Medical Care
• Exercise
• Food
• Lifestyle
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- fatigue
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- waking up with headaches
- waking up with a choking sensation
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- dry mouth upon awakening
- depression
- heartburn
- sexual dysfunction
- rapid weight gain
- frequent trips to the bathroom during the night
- restless sleep, tossing & turning

Obstructive Sleep Apnea or OSA is a potentially life threatening condition that is more common than most realize. Over 20 million Americans suffer from this & don’t even know it! An apnea is when breathing stops for 10 seconds or more while you are asleep. Coughing or choking sensations, which force you to wake up or get elbowed by your sleeping partner are common signs. These abrupt disturbances during sleep place significant strain on your heart and cardiovascular system. Snoring is often associated with OSA, although not everyone who snores has this condition. OSA prevents air from reaching the lungs even though your body continues its effort to breath.

Untreated sleep apnea can cause or worsen:
- high blood pressure & other cardiovascular disease
- risk for heart attack
- risk for stroke
- pulmonary hypertension
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- hyperactivity in children
- memory problems
- impotency & sexual dysfunction
- depression & anxiety
- weight gain
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FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

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Love ✫ Medicine
I like to think I come from pretty hardy stock, especially on my mother’s side. The women in that family were hardworking and long-lived, with two of my great-aunts, Aunt Jennie and Aunt Rose, running their respective farms into their 90s. They were strong, independent Czech women with old-world ways, long silver hair coiled in braids and knobby cheekbones like ruddy apples. My grandmother, their sister, should have lived longer than she did, with cancer cutting her life short at the respectable age of 82. My own mother is going strong at 80, and I figure that, genetically speaking, my odds too are good if I take care of myself.

A friend of mine reminded me of a phrase common among her forebears: “As long as you have your health … ,” and when you think about it, that’s really what it all comes down to. You can weather all types of misfortune, endure all forms of hardship, as long as your body, mind and spirit hold up. The women in my family modeled that for me. My Aunt Rose, as the family story famously goes, once became paralyzed when she got too close to a dynamite-laden stump she was detonating. Confined to a chair afterward, she rehabilitated herself by listening to an exercise program on the radio until she could first move a finger, then two, then eventually her entire body.

I like to think I have that spirit of determination in me, too, though the stumps I dynamite are largely metaphorical. But it’s absolutely true that fielding what life blasts at you is considerably easier when your body is strong, your mind is clear and you are centered. Getting all three in balance is the challenge of the modern woman, but I’ve found that if at least two of the three pillars are in place, the third, as Rose demonstrated, can be built up, too.

We put together this issue of Coulee Region Women “just for the health of it,” and although we focus on many aspects of health in it, every story touches in some way on those three components: body, mind and spirit. We examine health in the Coulee Region through four different lenses—medical, exercise, food and lifestyle—featuring local businesses, organizations and women who are leading efforts to improve health in the region, in their families and in themselves. We hope to inspire you to try a new workout, try new foods, broaden your experiences and embrace a healthy lifestyle in all ways. We can’t guarantee you’ll live into your 90s—you’ll have to rely on your genes for that—but we can offer you a fresh way to look at your health, a renewed respect for it and our support in keeping your own mind, body and spirit strong. The result, we hope, is that resilience and determination that helps us move forward with optimism and strength.

Because when we have our health, not only do we benefit, but everyone around us does, too. Our families have a strong center, our colleagues have a positive presence and our community is populated with members who have the energy and the hope to improve health for all. My great-aunts, my grandmother and my mother were all this to the people around them. I strive to be, too.
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Getting answers.

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**SEE THE SOFTER SIDE OF OKTOBERFEST**

If you walk into the 2016 Oktoberfest Needlework Show anticipating a display of pillowcases embroidered by a bunch of grandmas, expect to be amazed. The artists—of all ages—contributing to this show are entering exquisite needlework in seven different categories, including cross-stitch, canvas embroidery and Hardanger, a Norwegian specialty. Vote for the People’s Choice in each of the categories at this free show, held in the museum room of the La Crosse Public Library October 6-8 during the library’s open hours. The show is open to anyone; if you’d like to participate, drop off your entry at the library from noon-6 p.m. on Wednesday, October 5.

The Coulee Country Chapter of the Embroiderers Guild of America will also have works on display at the Heider Center in West Salem throughout November. Find more at www.onour.com/Coulee/index.htm.

**FOOD, FASHION & FUN**

**The Women’s Clothes Closet** will hold their ninth annual Fashion Cornucopia Style Show and gourmet meal on Saturday, November 5, 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 Dale’s, Duluth Trading Company, Touch of Class, Mainstream Boutique, Grand Bluff Running and E&C. The event includes live music and tours of the Women’s Clothes Closet. Tickets are $35 each or $240 for a table of eight and are on sale now with reserved seating available. All proceeds will benefit the Women’s Clothes Closet, which provides gently used clothing to low-income women who are entering or in the workforce. For tickets, call 608-782-3468 or visit www.oursaviourslutheranchurch.net.

**CELEBRATE OUTSTANDING WOMEN**

**The annual YWCA La Crosse Tribute to Outstanding Women** celebrates Coulee Region women who have demonstrated qualities of remarkable leadership and excellence in their professional and personal endeavors. Join the celebration Thursday, November 10, beginning at 5 p.m. with a social hour, followed by dinner and award presentations at 6 p.m. The 2016 recipients are Kay Berra, Aquinas Catholic Schools; Ronda Lettner, Stein Counseling & Consulting Services; Debra McKenney, Wells Fargo; Stacy Shapiro, Shapiro Strategies; Sue Weidemann, Hera Marketing; Virginia “Ginny” Wintersteen, Gundersen Health System; and Myrna “Dec” Peacock (posthumous honor). Young Women of Tomorrow honorees are Po Too, Western Technical College, and Olivia Stewart, Sparta High School.

To purchase tickets, call 608-781-2783, visit www.ywcalax.org or text “Outstanding” to 41444. RSVP deadline is Wednesday, November 2.

**LIPSTICK & LAUGHTER**

Join a roomful of smart, socially involved women and men on Thursday, October 20, when the Women’s Fund of Greater La Crosse hosts their 2016 Fall Luncheon. This year’s speaker, Renee Rongen, an international award-winning humorist, author and business consultant, will have you laughing and counting your blessings with “Lipstick, Laughter and Life.”

Early bird registration (before October 14) is $40. The luncheon will be held 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in Valhalla Hall in the Cartwright Center of UW-La Crosse. Bring a new pair of pajamas size newborn through adult, and the Women’s Fund will donate them to those in need. For more information, go to www.womensfundlacrosse.org.

**HANDBAGS FOR A SAFE HAVEN**

Handbags, hors d’oeuvres, a fashion show and wine … if that sounds like the ideal night out, you’ll want to check out Handbags for a Safe Haven. Sponsored by Marine Credit Union, this event helps New Horizons provide shelter for those who have experienced domestic violence. Handbags for a Safe Haven takes place Thursday, October 13, from 5-9 p.m. at Celebrations (next to Shenanigans) at 2100 Dawson St. in La Crosse. The evening includes a fashion show of upcycled garments from local consignment shops, a handbag auction, an upcycled handbag mart and a raffle. General admission is $25 and one gently used handbag (which will become part of the handbag mart). VIP admission is $50 and one gently used handbag and includes VIP seating, a VIP swag bag, drink ticket and souvenir wineglass.

For more information, contact Sheila Connors at 608-791-2610 x1305 or register at www.bit.ly/handbag-haven.
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Devoting an issue of Coulee Region Women to the theme of health is like opening Pandora’s box. Once you begin thinking of the ways the Coulee Region celebrates, improves and nurtures a healthy lifestyle, it’s hard to stop.

It’s no secret that the Coulee Region is a fantastic place to live, if for no other reason, “for the health of it.” In many categories—which we’ve also used to organize this issue of Coulee Region Women—health is at the forefront of daily life in our area.

Medical

In terms of quality medical care, the Coulee Region is a wonderful place to live. Our cornerstone medical facilities—Mayo Clinic Health System–Franciscan Healthcare and Gundersen Health System, along with Winona Health and Vernon Memorial Healthcare—have put the Coulee Region in the national spotlight with their quality of care, especially in terms of heart health and cancer treatment. Gundersen Health System’s advance care planning effort, Respecting Choices, has set a national standard for patients directing their own end-of-life care.

We also have the La Crosse Medical Health Consortium, which fosters collaboration among all these health centers as well as UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University and Western Technical College to optimize the health of our community. In terms of educating medical professionals and treating the community, this is a vibrant place to be.

In this issue, we take a particular look at complements to these rich sources of medical care. We’ll examine complementary medicine, skin care and supportive care for cancer patients—all important details in the bigger picture of medical care in our community.

Exercise

In the Coulee Region, you have no excuse not to exercise. The trails in Hixon Forest and Perrot State Park beckon hikers, bikers and runners; the newly renamed Dahl Family YMCA in La Crosse and R. W. Houser Family YMCA in Onalaska offer fitness options for all ages; and the city of La Crosse is making it ever easier to bike to work, school and more. In this issue, we celebrate the many opportunities available to active people of every fitness level by focusing our sights on exercise accessible to all, such as walking and yoga, but we also invite you to discover new centers devoted to fitness in all its facets and

JUST FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

When it comes to health, the Coulee Region has much to be proud of.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN
especially for women: Burn Boot Camp and the La Crosse Wellness Center. Getting into shape not only is healthful, but social, supportive and great fun.

Food
Living in the Driftless Region of western Wisconsin, it’s hard not to be immersed in a sustainable, farm-to-table lifestyle; we have a high concentration of organic farms in the area, family-run CSAs abound and the national organic cooperative Organic Valley is just up the road. We feature Organic Valley, and another local-gone-big business, Kwik Trip, as we focus on what local companies are doing to bring healthy and often organic food to the masses—here in the Coulee Region, regionally and nationally. Then we zoom in to the micro, to see how the small, couple-run business Straight to the Plate Organics is doing the same for local clients. We see what dietitians at our medical centers have to say about following USDA guidelines for balanced meals and, best of all, we give you recipes for doing so yourself.

Lifestyle
All of these factors add up to create a healthy lifestyle, but a healthy lifestyle encompasses so much more than good medical care, exercise and food. It’s also how we live—who with live with, what we surround ourselves with and what we do to keep our minds and bodies and spirits happy. A healthy lifestyle includes surrounding yourself with family and friends, people who are positive and relationships that form an important safety net for emotional health. It includes feeling safe and secure, having our immediate needs met. It also includes the “extras” that bring joy and encourage us to broaden our minds and experiences, and help us grow.

As a “home and healthy lifestyle” magazine, we naturally focus on these factors. We feature a home that absolutely makes its owners happy and encourage you to fill yours with companions—furry and otherwise—who uplift you just with their very being. We’ll inspire you to push your boundaries by exploring new terrain, and we’ll also make sure you’re outfitted to do it.

Room to grow
It’s true we’re very lucky, living here, to be in a place where health is at the forefront of so many people’s lives. But it’s also true there’s room to improve, and we are a region armed with caring people who work diligently to address regional health concerns such as poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, alcohol and opioid abuse and more. Organizations such as St. Clare Health Mission, Coulee Council on Addictions, Couleecap, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and so many, many more are working to ensure that the Coulee Region is a healthful place for all. And perhaps that’s the most important quality of a healthy community—looking out for the health of your neighbors as well as your own.

It’s a great place to be—just for the health of it.

Betty Christiansen is the editor of Coulee Region Women.
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“Did you get everything you needed? Okay, come here, here’s your healing hug. Keep up the good work.”

That’s Patti Bartsch, Ph.D.: part cheerleader, part coach and all about health.

“I see myself as a tour guide on your path to wellness,” says the owner of Naturally Unbridled Wellness in Onalaska. “My passion is in teaching. I provide education and inform you of options that can help get your life back in balance. Then it’s up to you and your health care professional to decide what you want to do.”

Bartsch is a traditional naturopath, a wellness expert who focuses on natural approaches to health and healing and who takes a holistic approach—body, mind and spirit—to health. She is not a medical professional, yet she got into the field because of her interest in medicine, specifically a medicine to cure cancer.

“I started my career as a scientist and spent eight years doing cancer research.” Then, she says, the pharmaceutical companies came to a realization that changed their business model and disrupted her desire to work for them.

“The drug companies recognized that if they cured cancer or the patient died, the financial outcome for them was the same. They lost a customer. So they began developing drugs that would manage the symptoms but would keep the patient dependent on the drugs. And, if there are side effects to that drug, then the customer just takes more drugs to manage the side effects.”

Bartsch offers a startling statistic regarding prescription drug use in America. “Most Americans age 40 or over take an average of four prescription medications daily, and they’re not getting any better.” A 2005 study published by AARP reports similar findings: “Seventy-six percent of Americans say they are currently taking at least one prescription drug on a regular basis, and most of those say..."
they take on average four different prescriptions drugs daily.

Bartsch says her practice appeals to people who want to break that trend, or who are “freaked out” by the drug commercials and warnings of side effects. “With homeopathy, nutrition, herbs and complementary therapies like acupuncture, we can help get the body back into balance” without the side effects and without a lifetime commitment to prescription meds.

**Ancient remedies, timeless results**

Naturally Unbridled Wellness offers a number of complementary, or what are sometimes called alternative, practices. “These are practices that have kept people alive for thousands of years, long before the advent of penicillin and modern medicine.” She cites irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) as an example. “Many of my clients have tried everything. They’ve been given prescription medications and told ‘this is your new normal.’ Using herbs, homeopathy and nutrition, we can often get the digestive system back in balance in weeks to a couple of months.”

At one time considered fringe practices, complementary medicine is now in the mainstream. Mayo Clinic Health System has 18 practitioners skilled in Complementary and Alternative Medicine and reports nearly 40 percent of their adult patients have used CAM. Gundersen Health System refers to its complementary services as Integrative Medicine, as the practices are often used in conjunction with conventional treatments.

Interest in the practices is growing. Bartsch opened five years ago as a solo practitioner; now she has six practitioners, two locations and an extremely full schedule.

Fans of the Olympics may remember the round marks seen on swimmer Michael Phelps’ back and shoulders. These circles were the result of cupping, an ancient form of Chinese medicine that increases blood flow and promotes healing. Cupping is one of the practices offered at Naturally Unbridled Wellness’ Holistic Therapies Center; acupuncture, Reiki, zone therapy, craniosacral therapy and homeopathy are among the others.

Bartsch says her favorite part of the job is meeting with people and discussing the possibilities. “There is a time and place for drugs and surgery,” she says, “but I want people to know there are additional choices. I would like someone with cancer to come to me before they decide what to do so they know all their options. We do not treat, diagnose or prescribe here; we just educate and inform. We empower our clients to be in control of their wellness.”

**Detoxifying body, mind and spirit**

Daily life takes a toll on the immune system, says Bartsch. How many of us use a spritz-on hair product, nail polish remover and chemicals to clean the kitchen and bathroom? Then there are the times you walk past the fragrance aisle in a department store or shop for new carpeting or new tires. All these toxins you breathe in build up in the body over time. “Envision your attic or basement or junk drawer. Over the years you’ve collected more and more junk in there. It’s the same with your body. We want to help you clean out the toxins in a healthy manner.” Bartsch says while detoxifying is good, some people try to do too much, too suddenly. “They’re mobilizing all these toxins without a good exit strategy. If you are detoxifying, you should start to feel better and better. If you’re feeling worse and worse, there’s a problem.”

Toxins are just one part of the picture. Bartsch says she and her practitioners take into account body, mind and spirit. Are you angry a lot? Grieving? Obsessive-compulsive at times? Are you sleeping well? All these factors are part of the entire picture when helping a person get on a path to wellness.

“We often start with simple things,” says Bartsch. “Most people are dehydrated. A good guideline is to take your body weight and divide it by two. That’s the number of ounces of water you should be drinking in a day. One good tip is to make sure water is the first thing you drink each day. You haven’t had any water all night, and your body needs it. Try to drink 16 ounces of water before you have a cup of coffee.”

Complementary medicines won’t put you into the pool with Michael Phelps, but they may help you improve your health and change your life.

For more information, go to www.naturallyunbridled.com, www.gundersenhealth.org/integrative-medicine or www.mayo.edu and search for complementary medicine.

After meeting with Patti, Julie Nelson, a freelance writer based in La Crosse, has a new goal to drink 16 ounces of water first thing in the morning. Some days are better than others.
Gather your girlfriends, mom, sisters, daughters and treat yourself to an evening filled with the information you need to be your sparkling best. New this year: “Dessert with the Docs” — a chance for you to ask questions and get to know some of our health experts you may or may not have met yet.

Date: Tuesday, October 18, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Location: Tau Center, Hilbert St, Winona, Minn.
Admission: FREE, RSVP by Friday, October 15
To RSVP: 507.457.4161 or winonahealth.org/spirit

Enjoy hors d’oeuvres, sparkly cupcakes, informative booths and the company of inspiring women. To learn more about this dazzling event, please visit winonahealth.org/spirit or call 507.457.4161.
When Judy Verage beat breast cancer the first time, she finished radiation and, she says, was “done.” Sixteen years later, doctors diagnosed her with breast cancer again. Now, after completing chemotherapy treatments in February, Verage is armed with a personalized care plan and a network of support as she—for the second time—navigates the transition to a new life as a cancer survivor.

The difference is due to Gundersen Health System’s Cancer Survivorship Program and the efforts of medical professionals like Dr. Leah Dietrich, a physician at Gundersen who is part of a growing movement to better understand the physical, emotional and social needs of cancer survivors.

“They follow you for two years after active treatment,” says Verage, a retired psychotherapist in La Crosse. “They treat people holistically. Sixteen years prior to that, they were good doctors, but you weren’t treated holistically like you are now.”

A better life after cancer

Thanks to improved screening and treatment, there are more than 14 million cancer survivors in the United States. Experts expect that number to reach more than 18 million by 2020. Programs like Gundersen’s help address the challenges of life as a cancer survivor, including long-term health effects such as cardiotoxicity, pain and fatigue, cognitive dysfunction and secondary cancers, as well as issues with nutrition, finances, childcare, employment, psychological distress and more.

Dietrich teamed up with a survivorship nurse, social worker and physical therapist to launch Gundersen’s survivorship program in 2011. From the moment of diagnosis, it places individuals within a coordinated system of vital resources and helps ensure smooth communication between patients, their cancer care providers and their primary care provider.

“I feel supported, knowing I can pick up the phone and make contact,” Verage says. “It’s so important that I have that resource and that they know my history. It’s the kindness and the caring and the warmth and their time. You never feel like you are rushed. You are their priority.”

Connecting with community

“One of the most difficult things for patients to do is change their wellness behaviors,” Dietrich says. When active
of small-group personal training.

“Part of survivorship is connecting you with other women with similar cancer stories and other support in the community,” Verage adds. Though she has completed the LIVESTRONG program, she continues to enjoy regular gatherings with the women she met at the YMCA, crediting the emotional and mental support she receives as key to her ongoing health.

Several national organizations and accrediting agencies recommend and mandate survivor care, but, Dietrich notes, they give little information on how to implement it. She is working to help fill that gap.

The *Journal of Oncology Practice* recently published the results of a study Dietrich led with almost 200 breast cancer survivors. While previous studies have affirmed that patients appreciate survivorship programs, Dietrich’s was one of the first to show that the survivorship program has a positive impact on patient behavior, making them more likely, she says, to follow through with recommended visits and tests.

**Personal passion**

Not only is she engaged in cutting-edge research and patient care, but Dietrich also knows survivor needs firsthand. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011, just as the survivorship program was taking off.

“Having experienced cancer personally has definitely ignited my passion for this work,” she says. “From my personal experience, I know that life after cancer is never the same as life before cancer. A cancer survivor needs to find their ‘new normal.’ Often there are silver linings to experiencing cancer, such as renewed priorities and relationships. However, there is often also the downside of having to deal with psychological distress and physical and mental changes due to cancer or treatment side effects. That’s why I feel it is so important to recognize the special challenges that cancer survivors face and offer support, resources and tools to help survivors face those issues.”

Dietrich is now working on a study of breast cancer survivors designed to help determine which types of treatment summary and care plans patients and primary care providers prefer. She hopes to see the results published this year.

Elizabeth Lippman is a freelance writer and editor in Winona. She holds a master’s degree in literary nonfiction.
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Putting our best face forward means having healthy skin, and keeping skin healthy requires different thinking at different stages in life. We asked three of the area’s skin care experts about the care options most beneficial for the teen years, the 20s and 30s, and the “how do I erase these wrinkles?” years.

A fresh face
Stephanie Andresen, owner of Brilliant Bodywork in Onalaska, has helped teens with acne-troubled skin for years. “We put a serious emphasis on a healthy lifestyle,” says Andresen. “Dairy, whey, soy, peanut butter and peanut products are some of the foods to avoid, as these all aggravate sebum—the oil that causes breakouts.”

Although whey and soy protein shakes are popular with many teen athletes today, Andresen recommends shakes that are egg- or veggie-based. Instead of peanut butter, cashew or almond butters are safer bets for avoiding breakouts.

Chocolate as an acne trigger is a myth, Andresen says. Salt is also OK if it does not contain iodine, so use sea salt as a healthier option. “And drink lots of water, since dehydration contributes to blemishes,” she says.

A common aggravator to acne is use of drugstore remedies. “Avoid benzoyl peroxide products unless directed and supervised by a professional. They often damage your skin. Many of our teen clients need to have that damage repaired before we can begin treating the acne.”

Brilliant Bodywork’s acne clients come in for a chemical peel every two weeks for 90 days. “This exfoliates dead skin, which hydrates the new skin underneath,” explains Andresen. “Think of your healthy skin as a sponge lying beneath a thick layer of dead skin. The treatment won’t penetrate if it’s sitting on top of dead skin.”

The peel not only exfoliates, but extracts oil from clogged pores and kills bacteria inside them, allowing the skin to be more receptive to healing products, says Andresen.

That healthy glow
Amy Lattos, owner of Thrive Health Center in Onalaska, says chemical peels are helpful for keeping skin healthy even beyond the teen years. “Peels are really just a workout for your skin,” says Lattos. “They allow us to get to the cellular level with our pharmaceutical-grade serums, which, unlike drugstore products, contain a much higher level of active ingredients to be more effective.”
Thrive Health Center uses ultrasonic technology for professional exfoliation. Products then penetrate deep enough to reach the cellular level. The treatment ends with the use of microcurrent technology to reduce wrinkles.

Lattos recommends women follow three steps in the morning and night for healthy skin. “A morning regimen would include a cleanser, a treatment serum and a moisturizer with sunscreen,” she says. “Your evening routine would be the same except replacing the sunscreen moisturizer with a night cream.”

She is also seeing good results with a new supplement drink. “Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body that gives our skin its strength and structure,” Lattos says. “This supplement drink restores your skin’s hydration and increases its firmness by infusing collagen peptides, ceramides (which protect against dryness) and biotin—a nutrient that also promotes healthy skin.”

All of our contacts agree it can’t be said enough: The No. 1 factor to helping skin stay wrinkle- and spot-free—and, most important, cancer-free—is to shield it from the sun.

**Line management**

Amy Ebersold, owner of the Forever Young Laser and Skin Care Clinic in Onalaska, says sun exposure is the No. 1 factor contributing to wrinkles, age spots and dry skin. “A majority of the damage occurs in our youth, but we don’t see the effects until much later.”

She recommends using a moisturizer with an SPF of 45 to 50 in the summer. “It can be less in the winter, but then we need to switch to a more hydrating moisturizer.”

Although most of her clients are in their mid-40s and 50s, Ebersold says the time to start thinking about antiaging strategies is much younger.

“To stop lines from becoming permanent, we use Botox when people are in their 30s, because once certain lines form, such as lines on the forehead, they are so hard to reverse. Botox relaxes the facial muscles where lines usually form.”

Although Botox has a bad rap with Hollywood’s fake, plastic faces, Ebersold says that is far from the typical result. “It must be used sparingly and carefully by a physician who knows when to stop,” she says. Her clinic enlists the services of the No. 4 Botox physician in the country, Dr. Dave Christianson, several times a month.

Other tools for fighting the effects of aging include photorejuvenation, which uses light therapy to improve discolored or blotchy skin, and eMatrix technology, which treats wrinkles, scars and large pores and improves skin texture by using radio frequency therapy.

“Skin is our largest organ,” reminds Ebersold. “It’s important to take care of it.”

Judith Munson is a freelance journalist and memoir writer living in western Wisconsin.
YOGA:
BENEFITS BEYOND BODY

In La Crosse, a variety of yoga styles connect mind, body and spirit.

BY LISA HEISE

The refrain from the Beatles’ song “Across the Universe” includes the words “Jai Guru Dev … Om.” The Sanskrit phrase, an expression of respect for a celebrated yoga teacher, is said to bring the speaker to a higher state of consciousness. It also highlights the value of a good yoga teacher.

A yoga teacher can help adjust postures, advise a student to go deeper into a pose or take it easy and help personalize yoga regimens. Furthermore, a yoga class can provide a community of support to help explore the physical, mental and emotional benefits of yoga. Three yoga studios in La Crosse approach the discipline in different ways, all with inspiring results.

Hatha yoga

For Tammy Zee, helping others through movement has been a passion for 30 years. Her yoga studio, Tammy Z’s, is located on Cass Street in La Crosse. Zee focuses on the individual in her Hatha yoga classes, keeping her classes small—15 students max—and exploring challenges and goals for each student. Some come for strength and flexibility, says Zee, while others seek recovery from PTSD or help with anxiety issues. Zee believes in yoga as a practice that addresses the mind, body and spirit, and she honors that spiritual element by sharing inspirational thoughts and readings during yoga sessions.

Iyengar yoga

Pam Starcher is a student-turned-owner of The Yoga Place on Main Street in downtown La Crosse. The Yoga Place focuses on Iyengar yoga, a practice defined by the use of props that enable students of differing ability levels to achieve specific poses. When longtime teacher and owner Chris Saudek expressed a desire to sell the studio and retire, Starcher jumped at the chance. “It’s a perfect fit for me,” says Starcher. “I wanted to see the studio continue because it’s a gem.” Starcher began taking yoga to develop better strength and balance as a runner and biker. Teachers at The Yoga Place, says Starcher, “don’t just lead the class. They observe and correct for proper alignment of different poses so you get the most benefit from doing them.”

Vinyasa yoga

Mandy Rousch of Root Down Yoga asks, “Does taffy stretch more easily when it’s cold or when it’s warm? It’s the same with our muscles.” Rousch, who co-founded Root Down Yoga with her husband, Nick, adds the element of heat to most Vinyasa yoga classes offered at her studio. The heat, she says (95 degrees with humidity), requires more mental attention from students and helps them focus. While the physical benefits of strength and flexibility manifest themselves in Rousch’s studio, she credits yoga with much more. “It really transformed my life,” says Rousch. “I became more positive and optimistic, and I wanted to share that.” When a professional transition freed her up, Rousch devoted herself to the study of yoga, eventually offering informal sessions in a heated room above her home garage. It wasn’t long before she knew it was time to open a studio, which is now located on Caledonia Street in La Crosse.

Benefits beyond body

All three yogis agree that the benefits of yoga illustrate the interconnectedness of our own minds, bodies and spirits. For instance, once we improve posture, we breathe more easily. Better breathing becomes better stress responses. Better stress responses mean decreases in inflammation and increases in serotonin, which circle back and improve our overall health.

If you want to try yoga at one of these three studios, don’t just drop in: Doors are locked while classes are in session. Visit their websites to learn more about these teachers, practices and philosophies: www.tammyzyoga.com, www.yogalacrosse.com, and www.roottoownyogastudio.com.

Lisa Heise is a local freelance writer who lives and teaches in La Crosse.
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Health and happiness. Not unlike many women, Sonya Pennel was searching for both in her life. Pennel, a mother for more than two decades, had been putting on an average of 10 pounds a year over the last 10 years, and she didn’t realize the toll it was taking on her.

“In the past few years, I had become very sad, angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, overweight, unhealthy and overall not the mom and wife I wanted to be,” she says. “What I didn’t know at that time was that all of those emotions were at my fingertips to control.”

What Pennel did was become what she describes as “selfish” and act how she needed to in order to live many more happy and healthy years. She began her life transformation by concentrating on her diet—not a diet in the way many think when they hear the word—but diet in the sense of what one eats. After losing 60 pounds, Pennel began moving more and turned her sights on helping other women in the Coulee Region.

Pillars of health

Pennel opened Burn Boot Camp, located at 4320 Mormon Coulee Road in La Crosse, in January 2016. Burn Boot Camp focuses on a pillar philosophy. First, participants must have the right mind-set to take health head-on. Second, nutrition is focused on and, lastly, exercise is added. Exercise centers around strength training combined with bursts of high-intensity interval training. Workouts are never repeated, so Pennel says boredom is never an option at Burn Boot Camp.

Community is key

What sets Burn Boot Camp apart from other gyms, Pennel says, is the sense of family and community found at the gym.

“These ladies watch out for each other,” Pennel says. “They know when one of them is missing from camp, and they are likely to be called, texted or Facebook-messaged.”

Burn Boot Camp offers a free 14-day trial to anyone who has not tried the gym. Participants are asked to be ready to make a life change when they come to the gym. Pennel and the others at Burn Boot Camp want those who are hesitant to try the gym to know that they’ll be taken care of, and modifications are made for any exercise. On the flip side, trainers are also ready to push those who are ready to be pushed both physically and mentally.

More information at Burn Boot Camp can be found at www.burnbootcamp.com/lacrosse-wi.

Jessica Foss is a freelance writer who lives in La Crosse. As an adult, the joy of exercise is something she has learned to embrace.
With ingenious stagecraft and boundless creativity, \textit{Peter and the Starcatcher} upends the Peter Pan story and brings the legend to life. Starcatcher apprentice Molly Aster and three orphans are hunted by cut-throat pirates and their mustachioed captain as she races to protect a trunk of magical “Starstuff.” This wildly theatrical production will have you hooked the moment your imagination takes flight!
When River Bank created a wellness challenge for employees, pitting employees at different branches against each other, Debbie Woodruff reached out to her teammates to join her on a charitable 5K walk.

“We got points for doing different activities. You got 20 points if you participated in a 5K. I tried to motivate the group, to see if someone would do the 5K with me. Nobody responded,” she says.

“Her competitor did,” says Marlene Heal, who was on another River Bank team.

That one event, the Ky's 3.1 Run, honors Kylie Von Ruden, a Westby High School student who died in a car accident. Despite the pouring rain, Woodruff and Heal loved the walk for scholarships—their enthusiasm prodded a bit by the Bloody Mary bar at the end of the race, now a post-race tradition for them.

Ky's led to 16 other run/walks for Heal in 2015 and 15 for Woodruff. Even more are expected in 2016. They have another goal together: walking the year, or 2016 miles in 2016. Also, they each want to do a race with all of their children and grandchildren.

Feeling so strong

These women are Fitbit-aholics who track their miles and steps. On the day of this interview, they received notice from Fitbit that they've walked the equivalent of the distance across the Sahara Desert.

“I have always walked. When I was getting a divorce, it was a cheap single thing to do for myself,” says Heal, who is now in a happy marriage. One day she walked about 9 miles: “I felt so strong. I am woman, hear me roar!” She has since walked 20 miles in a day.

Their toughest race was the Apple Festival race in La Crescent, Minnesota, because it involves going up the Apple Blossom Trail. “It was our worst race, but it was our best time,” Heal says. “We signed up for this year again.”

Low impact, high rewards

Heal and Woodruff recommend getting a partner and encouraging each other. Age does not matter. You will find, as they did, that races get easier the more you do.

Has their commitment to fitness paid off? About to turn 60, Heal says she has never felt better. “I went in for this year’s checkup, and my doctor was amazed with my blood pressure. He said, ‘I can't wait for you to come in next year for your blood test for cholesterol.’”

All this walking has led to Heal eating better, although Woodruff, 64, says, “I have always eaten healthy. I'm married to a chiropractor. That's always been huge with us, eating properly.

“What motivates me to stay in shape is the idea that as you get older, it gets so easy to start losing strength,” she adds.

They were reminded of the value of lifelong fitness when an 85-year-old woman tapped Woodruff on her shoulder at the end of Ky's 3.1 and said, “I finished in 56 minutes!” She then realized Woodruff was not her daughter.

“We want to be her when we’re 85,” Woodruff says.

Clearly they are walking that path.
The road to good health has many components. That’s why a group of health and body experts teamed up to house several businesses under one roof, allowing Coulee Region residents to access one facility that focuses on the many facets of well-being.

The La Crosse Wellness Center, located at 3239 12th Ave. S., just off Hwy. 16 south of Grizzly’s Grill N’ Saloon, offers not only a 24-hour fitness facility, group fitness classes and personal trainers, but also houses a dietician, physical therapist, massage and chiropractic services, CrossFit training and a 12,000-square-foot indoor turf with batting cages and other activities.

Personal guidance

“Our goal in opening La Crosse Wellness Center was to be a one-stop wellness/fitness facility that offers all areas of wellness,” says owner Kara Schuster.

Schuster says personal training is key to the center because statistics show that people get better, faster results when they meet with a trainer or have one provide programs to help them reach their fitness goals. The center offers one-on-one training, small group training, online programs and unique program design.

General manager Emily Sturomski, who also has experience as a personal trainer, says people can be uncomfortable in a gym setting if they haven’t been there in a while. A personal trainer can help give them the confidence to know what they are doing. Even if people have experience working out, they may need a boost if they hit a plateau or want to set new goals.

“To be there to support them, guide them and give them the best experience possible from the minute they walk in the door to when they reach their goal—and everything in between—is why I am involved in the La Crosse Wellness Center,” Sturomski says. “I love that every day is different and that as a business we are learning and growing and offering great services to the La Crosse community and surrounding areas.”

All pieces of the puzzle

Sturomski says the center has friendly staff that truly care about clients. She says she likes that she can offer a free 20-minute screening with a physical therapist to anyone who joins. This allows both new and experienced fitness buffs to address any concerns or weaknesses before beginning a fitness journey.

Group exercise classes that focus on interval training, boot camp conditioning, cycling and weightlifting are also available to members. Youth and adult sporting leagues play on the 12,000-square-foot indoor turf, called the Fieldhouse, which is available for flag football, soccer, tennis and even birthday party rentals.

Starting this fall, Sturomski says, the La Crosse Wellness Center will offer a free gym membership to anyone who decides to meet with a trainer or dietitian. She says diet can be as important as exercise when developing goals because you can’t “out-exercise” bad eating habits.

“Physical fitness is only one piece of the puzzle,” Sturomski adds. “Nutrition is one of the biggest pieces to health and wellness goals becoming a reality.”

Anastasia Penchi is a longtime Coulee Region writer and graduate of UW-La Crosse. She lives in Genoa with her family.
If you’ve loved the shoes at Urban Shoetique, you’ll love what you’ll find at its new second location. Owner Connie Peter brings her flair for footwear to Winona in a shop located in the historic Latsch Building at 120 E. Second Street, where you’ll find handbags, belts, jewelry and more in addition to a unique shoe line. The new location expands upon Peter’s existing shop, located at The Ultimate Spa & Salon in Onalaska. For more information, call 608-881-1852 or find Urban Shoetique on Facebook.

If you’ve ever been a bridesmaid, you’ll enjoy the newest photography exhibit at Janet Mootz’s Gallery M in La Crescent. The Bridesmaid Dress Project opens November 4 with an opening reception 4-7 p.m. “We are promised when purchasing a bridesmaid dress that it can be worn again,” says Mootz. “But it ends up in the back of our closet. Here, we are making use—and making fun—of that dress in everyday activities: feeding farm animals, working in a garage and even beekeeping.” The exhibit will be up until November 30 at Gallery M, 33 Walnut St., Suite 140, La Crescent, 608-792-2382.

2016 Mrs. Oktoberfest Sue Weidemann is not new to Oktoberfest. Her father, Ken Wing, was Torchlight Parade Marshal in 2001. And she served for 15 years as the chair of the Northside Festival Ground’s Senior Breakfast and Beer-Tapping Olympics.

The owner of Hera Marketing, Weidemann has also been involved with Valley View Rotary, Rotary Lights, United Way, the YWCA, Thunder Ride for Diabetes, American Heart Association, Choices Task Force, La Crosse Promise and more.

“We live in a beautiful community, and we all get so much from it,” Weidemann says. “It is our privilege to give back.”

Married to Mike for 17 years, Weidemann has four children, two stepchildren and five grandchildren.
Nutrition is critical to good health. And two well-known businesses—Organic Valley and Kwik Trip, both headquartered here in the Coulee Region—have taken great strides to offer healthy food choices for people in the region and beyond.

A healthy mission

Local farms are among the 1,800 member farms in 36 states that produce food for Organic Valley. Now the No. 1 organic food producer in the nation, Organic Valley was started nearly 30 years ago by seven area farmers. “When those seven farmers said, ‘We are going to do an organic cooperative,’ people laughed at them,” notes Organic Valley Director of Public Affairs Anne O’Connor. “And here we are, a billion-dollar business, and it is working.”

Headquartered in La Farge, Organic Valley’s mission works not just to boost economic conditions for farmers, but also to offer organic dairy, meat and produce to consumers throughout the country.

“We really take that mission to heart. We work together with our farmers, with our staff, with our consumers, and we help connect the dots between good food and the land and rural communities,” says O’Connor.

In 2015, Organic Valley surpassed $1 billion in sales. With approximately 900 employees, it sells its products at food co-ops and mainstream grocery markets throughout most of the United States plus Canada, England and Australia.

As the holiday baking season approaches, bakers around the nation will reach for Organic Valley butter for their pies, cakes and cookies. Dairy products—including butter, milk, creamers, heavy whipping cream and yogurt—make up 88 percent of Organic Valley sales.

Just 5 percent of food on the market today is organic, but it is the fastest-growing segment in the food industry.

“Organic isn’t just a label slapped on a product,” says O’Connor. “It is an entire system of checks and balances and oversight. When people buy organic, they can count on that product made without synthetic pesticides, without antibiotics, without added...
hormones, without GMOs and with some real consideration for the environment.”

**Healthy choices on the go**

Kwik Trip recently added organic milk and eggs to the numerous healthy choices available to consumers at its stores throughout the region. And it all started with bananas.

Kwik Trip sells 400 pounds of bananas per store, per day, reports Kwik Trip dietitian Erica Flint. Success in banana sales led to more produce options. “That kind of changed the landscape of convenience stores and what they have to offer,” notes Flint.

Today, in addition to chips, candy and soda, Kwik Trip consumers can easily grab a healthier option of yogurt, fruit and water.

Kwik Trip is a family-owned business that began in 1965 and now has 491 stores throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. The convenience store leader adds 30 to 40 stores per year and employs more than 17,000 people companywide.

Kwik Trip produces much of the food it sells at its own dairy, kitchen and bakery in La Crosse, sourcing many of its ingredients locally. “A lot of the cheeses and things we use on our pizzas are bought in Wisconsin,” notes Flint. “We certainly do our best to source from Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota.”

For many people, Kwik Trip stores are a nearby source for fresh produce, milk, eggs, butter, bread and other essentials. That’s especially important for those in small communities without a local grocery store. “We realize that we are the grocery store for those places,” says Flint. “We know we can be a viable business in those areas, and people like us there, so we stay committed to continuing to build in those areas in addition to the more populated places.”

The role it plays in smaller communities influenced Kwik Trip’s decision to add fresh meats at its stores. “We want to be able to provide for people who don’t have a grocery store,” adds Flint. “They can stop here and make an entire meal, a healthy meal.”

In 2014, Kwik Trip teamed up with Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), a nonprofit organization that works with the private sector to reduce obesity in America’s youth. Since partnering with PHA, Kwik Trip has added more fruits and vegetables and expanded its whole-grain options. It also has launched many PHA initiatives, including Drink-Up, which promotes water as a healthy drink option.

“We are always trialing new foods and bringing new things to the table,” notes Flint.

Because of new labeling regulations, Kwik Trip visitors can expect to also find new labels throughout the store noting calories and other nutritional facts. “I think that’s great,” notes Flint. “It helps consumers make choices that are right for their diet.”

Freelance writer Leah Call appreciates the efforts of Organic Valley and Kwik Trip to provide healthy food options for her family.

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What began as a favor for a friend turned into a business for Kate Suskey and her husband, Jake. “We have a friend whose husband was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease that makes it very difficult for him to go out and eat,” explains Kate. “And because Jake is quite creative in the kitchen—he has 16 years of experience as a chef—they asked if we could come up with something that would fit his very restricted diet.”

What the Suskeys cooked up not only fit their friend’s strict dietary guidelines, but was surprisingly tasty. “We gave them a few sample meals, and after that they were hooked—so much, in fact, that they suggested we start a business.”

Serving health

For Kate, whose mind continually searches for ways to build upon existing projects, ideas and skills (like Jake’s culinary expertise), the thought of opening a business seemed like a no-brainer. “I love to organize and market things, and Jake loves to cook,” says Kate, who recently took over as general manager at JavaVino café in La Crosse, where Jake mans the kitchen as chef. “Therefore, the thought of using our strengths to provide a service that directly benefits the health of our customers seemed perfect.”

Within a few months of their successful foray into dietary cooking, the Suskeys began generating 100 percent nut- and gluten-free recipes for their new business, Straight to the Plate Organics, based on firsthand feedback they received from volunteer “beta testers.” In addition to having specific dietary requests, the testers evaluated the food for its palatability and appeal, which the Suskeys used to create one-course, all-organic meals that included everything from low-carbohydrate options for managing diabetes to free-range protein plates featuring chicken, pork and beef (and antelope, elk and venison to satisfy those with a more exotic palate) to Paleo diet entrees that exclude grains, dairy and processed foods.

Inspired meals

And although Kate admits that it’s been a challenge, the inspiration that comes with having to work within tight dietary parameters has resulted in a menu that is full of taste, texture and variety. “Who knew you could make ribbon noodles out of squash and zucchini?” laughs Kate as she lists menu selections such as coconut lime soup, Memphis pulled pork and chicken tacos with pico de gallo in a romaine lettuce wrap.

And not only are all Straight to the Plate meals made using locally sourced, seasonal meats and produce, they can be delivered, are packaged to remain fresh up to a week (unless otherwise advised) and require virtually no preparation other than a simple 20-minute reheat.

“We want to make Straight to the Plate as convenient as possible for our clients so that they can can focus on remaining healthy,” says Kate, who has learned from her clients how burdensome it can be to make lifestyle adjustments. “It’s become our mission is to serve people who have dietary concerns—always.”

Martha Keeffe lives and writes in La Crosse. After interviewing Suskey, she’s been inspired to try eating a little bit healthier.
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While the latest nutrition guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture continue to utilize the “My Plate” imagery of a plate half-filled with fruits and veggies before adding in whole grains, lean meats and dairy, local dietitians say the emphasis is shifting more to thinking about eating as a whole, rather than counting out servings of individual food groups.

“The shift in the last couple years is focusing more on your overall dietary pattern,” says Romi Londre, a registered dietitian with Mayo Clinic Health System–Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse. “We want to make it easier for people to eat healthy and treat it as a lifestyle, not as a diet.”

Jessica Lind, a registered dietitian with Gundersen Health System, agrees. “We don’t eat meals in a vacuum,” she says, so we need to consider the overall picture.

The USDA’s 2015-2020 recommendations (found online at https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/) follow five basic guidelines. Here are suggestions from Londre and Lind for putting the guidelines to work in your life.

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.

Meal planning can be helpful in ensuring that you follow an 80/20 ratio of healthy eating to treats. Londre suggests taking a few minutes to think through what meals you will prepare in the coming week before creating a shopping list. Consider the family schedule and how to work around activities, including planning to take healthy snacks along when you are at events where there may not be many options, such as sporting events.

“Think about your environment and try to set yourself up for success that way,” she says.
2. Focus on variety, nutrient density and amount.

Londre says that trying new things, mixed in with favorites, is a good way to introduce variety into your family’s eating habits.

Lind notes that this guideline also points out the need to really focus on choosing nutrient-dense foods, even if that sometimes means choosing a higher-calorie option, such as nuts or whole milk, that will leave you feeling full longer and reduce the likelihood of overeating later.

3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.

Londre says we may often not realize how much added sugar is in some things because we think of them as healthy, such as granola bars. But those “sneaky sugars” add up. Coming changes to nutrition labels will make it clear which foods have added sugars, as opposed to the natural sugars in fruit.

Sodium is also “sneaky,” Lind says, showing up in breads and processed foods as a cheap preservative.

4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.

“Treat every eating occasion as an opportunity to make a good choice,” Londre says. One simple and effective way to do so is to change your definition of a “snack.” Rather than turning to crackers, chips or sweets, use snacks as an opportunity to include more vegetables and fruits in your daily diet.

Lind points out that healthy foods can still be “fast” foods. “It’s just as easy to grab an apple and a cup of yogurt on your way out the door as a bag of chips,” she says.

Beverages are another place to make an effective switch—plain water is always best, the dietitians say, but if you need some flavor or bubbles, consider infusing water with fruit or herbs or using plain sparkling water.

5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.

“As early as you can, get your kids involved in making healthy choices at home,” Londre says. You can also lead the way by encouraging healthy snacks for group activities.

Lind reminds us that eating is a social activity, and taking time to plan and eat meals together improves not only our physical health but our relationships as well.

Other changes in the newest guidelines include

**Cholesterol:** “The science shows that dietary cholesterol doesn’t necessarily increase blood cholesterol, but saturated fat does,” Londre says. What that means is that low-fat, high-cholesterol foods like shrimp are no longer limited.

**Protein choices:** Local dietitians say the guidelines also lean toward more plant-based protein options such as nuts, beans and soy over high-fat red meats.

Lind sums it up with this: “Just choose the most nutrient-dense whole foods you can and don’t get caught up in the details.”

**Try a day of positive shifts**

Londre offers these recipes as a sampling of how you can include lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins into a day’s meals.

### BREAKFAST

#### STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE OVERNIGHT OATS

**Serves 6**

1. lb. strawberries (fresh or frozen), chopped
2. cups rolled oats
3. cups milk
1. cup vanilla yogurt
½ cup strawberry jam
½ tsp. vanilla

Honey, sliced almonds, peanut butter or coconut (optional toppings)

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients; stir well. Cover the bowl and place in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour or overnight. Serve chilled. Add optional toppings as desired. The oats will keep for about 2-3 days in the refrigerator.

**Calories 320, fat 4.5g, saturated fat <1g, sodium 70mg, carbohydrates 61g, fiber 7g, protein 13g. Excellent source of calcium and vitamin C.**

### LUNCH

#### MAKE SOUP FROM ANY VEGETABLE

**Serves 4 to 6**

1-2 lb. fresh or frozen vegetables
Aromatics such as an onion, a couple garlic cloves or leeks
1-2 T olive oil
4-6 cups low-sodium broth
Pepper and seasonings (try spices such as cumin, chili powder, ginger, curry powder, cinnamon or dried herbs such as basil, sage, oregano, a bay leaf, etc.)

Cut up the vegetables and aromatics. Heat olive oil in a pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Sauté the aromatics for about 5 minutes or until fragrant and soft. Add vegetables, except for delicate greens, and continue cooking for several minutes until softened slightly. Add seasonings now so the flavors blend well in the soup.

Add 4-6 cups of broth and bring to a simmer. Turn the heat down to low and cover the pot. Let cook for about 30 minutes; then check the soup. If you want to leave the vegetables intact, take the soup off the heat when vegetables are tender but still firm. If you want the vegetables very soft for pureeing, keep cooking until they are falling apart. Add delicate greens, such as spinach, a couple minutes before taking soup off the heat.

Once the vegetables are very soft, you can puree the soup in a blender or with a stick blender. Re-warm gently after blending. When pureeing the soup, you can add flavor and creaminess by adding beans, tofu, coconut milk or plain yogurt.

Once the soup has finished cooking, you can jazz it up more, especially if you’re not pureeing it. Add leftover cooked pasta or rice, cooked ground turkey, diced chicken breast, a can of rinsed beans, chickpeas or tomatoes, and simmer until warmed through.

### MAKE SOUP FROM ANY VEGETABLE

**Serves 4 to 6**

1. 4-6 cups low-sodium broth
2. 1-2 T olive oil
3. 1-2 tsp. garlic, minced
4. 1 cup chopped celery
5. 1 cup chopped carrots
6. 1 cup chopped onions
7. 2 cups chopped tomatoes
8. 2 cups water
9. 1 cup small cooked beans
10. 1 lb. shrimp, cooked and peeled
11. 1 tsp. dried thyme
12. 1 tsp. dried oregano
13. 1 T chopped fresh parsley
14. 1 T chopped fresh basil
15. 1 T chopped fresh sage
16. 1 T chopped fresh rosemary

Dutch oven over medium heat. Sauté the aromatics for about 5 minutes or until fragrant and soft. Add vegetables, except for delicate greens, and continue cooking for several minutes until softened slightly. Add seasonings now so the flavors blend well in the soup.

Add 4-6 cups of broth and bring to a simmer. Turn the heat down to low and cover the pot. Let cook for about 30 minutes; then check the soup. If you want to leave the vegetables intact, take the soup off the heat when vegetables are tender but still firm. If you want the vegetables very soft for pureeing, keep cooking until they are falling apart. Add delicate greens, such as spinach, a couple minutes before taking soup off the heat.

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The Art and Science of Food and Wine Pairing

Wine and food pairing can be considered an art, but much of it is based on science. For example, a heavy wine like Cabernet Sauvignon would be delicious with a grilled filet mignon, whereas a lighter-bodied wine, such as Pinot Grigio, would be overwhelmed by the heavy flavor of the beef. A light fare of chicken noodle soup might pair well with a lightly oaked Chardonnay.

Sweetness levels of foods can hint at what wine might pair. With dessert, try matching the sweetness level of the wine. Or try contrasting the wine to the dessert: think Champagne with strawberries.

With appetizers, which can be varied in type and flavor, try a dry rosé. Rosé is a versatile wine that is a combination of red and white, or made from red grapes without much influence of the skin and seeds. Rosé wines are nice as a “go-to” as they have characteristics of both types of wines.

Trying wines with dishes is the best way to know if the food can make the wine “sing.” Practice your pairings before that special dinner, if possible. After you’ve tried a few pairings, you will naturally feel comfortable adventuring on your own!

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Sometimes a house waits for the right people to love it, to see past the four layers of wallpaper, faulty wiring and uneven floors. David and Dianne Dalgleish were just those people, moving from a twindominium to this family home on Marcou Road in Onalaska.

“We kept passing this house and wanted to see it. Our Realtor discouraged us because she said the house needed so much work,” Dianne says.

The décor is a mix of antiques and new purchases, international treasures (the couple has spent a good deal of time in Curaçao and the Bahamas) and local rummage sale finds, original woodwork and state-of-the-art appliances. However, the Dalgleishes were adamant about keeping the integrity of the house. “Contractors would say, ‘We can get new and cheaper,’ and we would say that’s not the point; it’s part of the house,” says David. He had a plan for each room in the house, even the laundry room.

The house is soft-spoken and elegant, much like Dianne. Petite and blond, she explains that she had no intention of purchasing a house this large until this one came along.

While the Dalgleishes felt the call of the house, they state they wouldn’t have entertained the thought without Brenda Schaefer, owner of Let’s Imagine Design and a designer and buyer for Practically Posh, by their sides from the very start.

Schaefer was the key player while the Dalgleishes were out of town. “When questions arose, I was Dianne’s eyes; I was selecting for her and David. I fell in love with this house, too. It meant a lot to me to do the right things and pay attention to the details,” Schaefer says.

Dianne was delighted with the arrangement. “I totally trust her. Brenda’s decision is my decision because we think alike. I don’t think we’ve disagreed on one thing.”

Walk right in

The house is beautiful, but not pretentious. Upon entering, one is greeted by cubbies for jackets and bags. Stairs to the immediate right and a hallway straight ahead entice visitors to step past the front door of the 1947 home. Gray walls play a leading role, though different in every room, making each one peaceful and elegant. “I wanted to keep a constant feel throughout the house,” explains Schaefer.

On the first floor, each room leads into the next, so that it’s a circular path from the entry to the master bedroom to the atrium to the kitchen and back to the entry. The living room branches off to one side, and the indoor pool, original to the house, branches off to the other.

The master bedroom, originally the home’s family room, is the couple’s getaway, with colors and artwork reminiscent of their beloved Caribbean islands. “In this room and the en suite bathroom, you get the feeling of water. It’s restful and calming,” Schaefer says.

Schaefer and Dianne talk with pride of the master bathroom. Wainscoting goes halfway up the wall, and a ledge provides room for shells. The closet, whose French door belonged to the original family room, contains a long floor-to-ceiling unit once housed in the laundry room. Its many drawers and cabinets attest to an earlier time when linen storage was necessary. In addition to repurposing the laundry room’s furnishing, the master bedroom also took some square footage from that room.
In the master bedroom, Dianne opens a pair of doors that one might think closes off a closet, but they instead lead to the nautically themed atrium. From there, one accesses the pool, the kitchen and the future deck, complete with water feature and outdoor kitchen.

The kitchen itself mixes “some modern details in with some history,” says Schaefer. “It was important to choose details that paid homage to the house.”

Dianne interrupts with an excited “I love, love my kitchen. I’m just thrilled with it.”

Details abound. The copper range hood was an eBay find, and the pantry door came from Sparta’s Used Anew. “It cost $50 and 200 hours of work. We’ve been sanding this for days,” jokes David. Instead of an island, the kitchen makes use of a peninsula; a microwave oven under the bar is perfect for grandkids.

A cozy upstairs

Schaefer’s favorite room is the one used by the Dalgleishes’ granddaughters. Nearly everything in the room is repurposed, from the side tables original to the house to the once-tired thrift store chest now dressed up with coral and white paint. A second bedroom currently used by a grandson will one day be David’s office.

A whole house project

While most of the layout and woodwork stayed intact, the exterior, including an attached garage, received a major makeover. New siding, windows, porch and landscaping make the outside of the house as eye-catching as the inside.

The location, although blocks from large box stores, is peaceful, surrounded by trees and backing onto a wooded area. “We are in the middle of town, but it feels like we are in the country,” says David.

Dianne agrees. “When you’re in the back, you don’t hear any noise. It’s amazing out there.”

While most of the decorating is complete, there’s still more to be done, but no one seems to mind. Pursuing objects for the house is a shared passion. Schaefer says she and Dianne “like to go shopping together, thrift sale together, rummage sale together, do all kinds of fun things.”

Every room contains multiple items that have been repurposed. Dianne calls Schaefer “the repurposing queen,” a title of honor.

It’s easy to see how much David and Dianne adore their new home. With David’s know-how, Dianne’s vision and Schaefer’s talent, this house reflects love from every corner.

Heidi Griminger Blanke, Ph.D., is a La Crosse-area writer and a member of Women Writers Ink. She hopes Brenda and Dianne will invite her along on their next thrift store jaunt.
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Caught off-guard by the high-pitched squeaks and deep purrs coming from the adorable guinea pigs, we laughed with surprise. Behind our meeting table at the Coulee Region Humane Society (CRHS), about nine fluffy guinea pigs captured our attention with wheeks of excitement and purrs of contentment. We enjoyed their loud chutting, a series of short, staccato sounds. It echoed like sweet singing as they playfully scampered about on quilted blankets.

During those minutes, we felt happy experiencing these cute creatures. Happiness creates health. Laughter heals. Living in the moment slows us down and relaxes our minds and bodies. Loving and caring for an animal takes us outside of ourselves and helps us feel needed. Being loved unconditionally by a pet can give comfort and hope even after a difficult day.

Heartwarming help

CRHS offers a wide variety of volunteer options for most everyone, says Samantha Luhmann, community outreach coordinator. Whether it's visiting the cats, dogs, small animals and other critters on hand (like birds and sometimes fish and reptiles), playing with felines, walking the canines or providing foster care for kittens, you can choose your way to wellness.

My 18-year-old daughter Rachel volunteered in the CRHS cat areas for her enjoyment. “They made me happy. I loved to hug them.” As her mom, I knew her “cat therapy” times helped to ease pressures of school, sports and peers. We’ve also adopted two dogs from CRHS, and each in their own unique way brought our family closer together.

On a larger scale, CRHS’ Ambassadors of Love Pet Therapy Program serves as a strong testament to how pets can heal. Their visits touch the lives of nearly 60,000 area residents annually at nursing homes, hospitals, schools, libraries, community events and numerous other places.

“Pets positively impact us in many different ways,” Luhmann says. “They can lift people out of depression, feelings of isolation and so much more.”

Pets heal at home

As the owner of Yoda, a six-year-old chocolate Labrador she adopted from CRHS, Luhmann shares how she stays healthy, both physically and mentally, because of her dog.

“Yoda and I go on daily walks around the neighborhood. We also hike a lot,” Luhmann says. “He is my constant encouragement and motivation, and he is always making me laugh. His silly and fun personality reminds me not to take life so seriously.”

My family also has learned this healthful concept of the importance of keeping active—for ourselves and our pet. Four-year-old Ava, our second beloved adopted dog, acts either over-excitible or extra-lazy without her walks. If you’re a pet owner, you understand. She’s comic relief. She’s a talking point when the words aren’t there with your teenager or spouse. She gives hugs and kisses and always listens without interrupting.

Our Chihuahua-terrier provides us with great material for funny stories to share with one another. This brings me to an important point: So much of our happiness in life gets measured in the quality of our relationships. That means people and pets. When you meet friends on walks or at social events and talk about pets, it can help to bridge communication gaps. And what can be healthier than that? 

Kim Seidel and her two daughters enjoy visiting the CRHS, where they always nearly adopt another pet to take home.
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Have you been eager to add a new workout to spice up your fitness routine? Finding the right outfit may be just the push you need to motivate yourself into trying something new to challenge your body.

Flexibility Wear
A wide variety of movement is critical for exercises that challenge core strength, balance and flexibility, such as yoga and Pilates. Keep your mind worry-free of pesky clothing adjustments by wearing a form-fitting top and leggings. Pair with a low-impact sports bra to provide maximum comfort.

Macy’s, Valley View Mall
Ideology graphic fitted tee, $29.50; Calvin Klein Performance capri leggings, just $49; Ideology sports bra, $24.98.
Outdoor Wear
Whether you are running, walking or hiking outdoors, breathable clothing is key. A long-sleeved top, jacket and leggings help protect against the cooler outdoor temperatures. However, as your workout intensifies, synthetic fabric wicks away sweat and keeps you cool; it’s the perfect balance! Slip on some running shoes, a supportive sports bra and stylish sweatband, and you are ready to go.

Grand Bluff Running, downtown La Crosse
Nike Impossibly Light running jacket, $110; Nike Dri-Fit long-sleeve top, $80; Saucony Scoot capri leggings, $55; Brooks Fiona supportive sports bra, $46; Brooks Ghost 8 running shoes, $120; Sweatybands 1-in. multicolored headband, $15.

Modeled by Grace Walker, Grand Bluff Running.

Gym Wear
Hit the gym with a pop of color and unexpected patterns to jazz up your dance class, spin class or weight-training session. Keep it cool with a mesh tank and cutout leggings, as well as a pair of flexible training shoes. Throw on a classic hoodie to take this fashionable look straight from the gym to lunch with friends.

Macy’s, Valley View Mall
Ideology black mesh tank, $29.50; Style&Co black hoodie, $24.98; Ideology printed capri leggings, $49.50; Material Girl molded cup sport bra, $34.50; Under Armor training sneakers, $69.99.

Modeled by Lexus Schroeder.
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Everyone loves a good story, and everyone in Ireland has one to tell.

What brought me to Ireland is my own story: I promised my two sons I would take them anywhere in the world when they graduated from college. My oldest, P.J. Leehey, chose Ireland.

Our 10-day guided tour from Galway to Dublin featured the Republic of Ireland’s greatest hits, many of which appeared among 2015’s top 20 fee-charging attractions, listed on the website of the National Tourism Development Authority, known as Fáilte Ireland.

After all, a trip to Ireland isn’t complete without a Blarney Stone smooch at Blarney Castle, a glance at the ancient Book of Kells at Dublin’s Trinity College, a peek over the rocky edge of the Cliffs of Moher and a stroll through the manicured gardens at Kylemore Abbey.

A road best traveled

However, the most stunning attractions in Ireland are free. An excellent example is the breathtaking view along the narrow, twisted road beside Ceann Sléibhe, Ireland’s westernmost point on the Dingle peninsula.

It is just one of 157 well-marked “discovery points” along the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s longest touring route that weaves along 1,600 miles of the island’s rugged west coast, from West Cork to Donegal.

According to its website, Fáilte Ireland invested €10 million to launch the route in 2014. During the official launch event, tourism minister Michael Ring said the investment is already a hit in “key overseas markets.” Clearly, Fáilte Ireland is doing something right. Tourism is fast becoming success story for Ireland, finally in recovery after the 2008 global recession. In 2015, the number of overseas visitors to Ireland soared 13 percent above the previous year to 8 million, 1 million of whom were U.S. tourists, according to Fáilte Ireland statistics.

Greener pastures

Ireland tells its most treasured tales, without words, in its unforgettable landscape. Johnny Cash’s song about the Emerald Isle, “Forty Shades of Green,” often became my soundtrack as the picture-perfect Irish countryside—a verdant, pastoral patchwork, fringed with ancient, stacked-stone fences and dotted with grazing sheep—rolled endlessly past the coach bus window.

Some of Ireland’s stories are tucked away in its terrain. In County Clare, the narrow crevices between the vast expanses of exposed limestone in the Burren are home to wildflower species from faraway Mediterranean and arctic-alpine climates.

Our expert guide explained the human and natural forces that created the conditions to allow these nonnative species to thrive side by side.

The Burren’s stark landscape is visually interrupted by a dramatic stack of stone slabs, the Neolithic tomb at Poulnabrone. The tomb is one of the few Irish portal tombs that archaeologists investigated. The excavation “revealed a wealth of information about the lives and burial customs of Ireland’s very first farming communities,” according to a 2013 article on irisharchaeology.ie.

Many, like me, come to Ireland just for its stunning setting. Ireland’s “beautiful scenery” ranked second in importance among attributes overseas visitors valued most during their visit, with “friendly, hospitable people” ranking first, according to a Fáilte Ireland survey.

An Irish blessing

I found examples of Irish people’s kindness were as plentiful as the island’s natural beauty. Even though we arrived at a Galway knitting shop just seconds before closing time, the owner kept her doors open for an extra hour to offer advice on yarn selections and online resources for traditional Aran Island sweater patterns. The evening before, an Irishman at
a crowded Galway pub offered me a seat and explained the nuances of pub etiquette, all with a kind smile and a pint in hand.

However, our tour guides were the country’s most remarkable ambassadors, adding the rich texture of storytelling to the fabric of Irish history. Ireland’s past is a tapestry woven of folk tale, myth and saga, telling “a broad and compelling range of narratives, reiterated in every generation,” according to R. F. Foster in his book The Irish Story.

Each day, our coach driver, Gerry, breathed life into the Irish landscape with anecdotes of haunted castles, unrequited love and epic battles. We even paused along the way to enjoy the magical tradition of making a wish at sidhe, or fairy rings, which were once ancient circular settlements.

And in the end

After each of his many stories, Gerry repeated a refrain: “There’s no such thing as a happy ending to an Irish story.” Indeed, Ireland’s centuries-long struggle against political and social colonization, especially by Great Britain, doesn’t offer many happy endings.

This year marks the centennial of the 1916 Easter Rising, when a small group of Irish rebels attempted to throw off British rule. Although the five-day uprising left more than 400 dead and Dublin in ruins, “it helped inspire a broader movement that led to independence in 1922,” according to a retrospective in the New York Times. Dublin’s National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks marked the event with its largest exhibit ever, “Proclaiming the Republic,” open through 2017. The personal items in the exhibit give the important event a remarkably human perspective, and it is worth the visit.

Happier times ahead

On the day we landed in Ireland, the people of Galway learned their city had earned the European Capital of Culture 2020 designation. According to the Galway 2020 website, “chosen cities and their regions are expected to present an innovative year-long cultural program that highlights the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe.”

To commemorate the honor, light blue “Galway 2020” flags flapped in the breeze on light posts along the city’s “prom,” a busy 2-kilometer seaside promenade lined with crowded beaches and parks, all with spectacular views of Galway Bay. Optimistic comments about the news were the first topic of conversation at restaurants, shops and pubs we visited.

There’s a lot to be optimistic about in Ireland today. Thanks to the seismic political and social changes in recent decades, Ireland is writing a new chapter in its storied history, and visitors should enjoy the opportunity to hang on every word.

Susan C. Schuyler thanks her son P.J. for creating and sharing this fabulous adventure, which she’ll treasure forever.
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Business Over Breakfast La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, 4th Wed. every month, 7:30-8:45 a.m. Preregister 608-784-3650 lacrossechamber.com. 
Children’s Museum of La Crosse weekly programming: Save-On-Sundays $1 off admission every Sun., noon to 5 p.m. 
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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@takeproductions.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., 1816 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, caba.info. 
Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary every Wed. noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, Onalaska. 
Onalaska Rotary every Mon. at 6 p.m., lower level of Blue Moon, Onalaska. 
Onalaska Toastmasters Club 1st and 3rd Mon. of each month, noon-1 p.m., Globe University, Onalaska. 
Viroqua Toastmasters Club 2nd and 4th Thurs. of each month, 7-8:30 p.m., Vernon Memorial Hospital, Taylor Conf. Rm., Lower Level, Viroqua. 
Women in Networking and Support (WIN) 2nd Wed. of each month, 6 p.m., Feasey’s, noon-1 p.m., 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, Kasey Heikel 608-519-8080 kasey.heichel.dc@gmail.com OR Amy Stodola 608-788-2668 amy.stodola@edwardjones.com. 

CALENDAR EVENTS

Oct. 6-8, Oktoberfest Needlework Show, La Crosse Public Library Museum Room, 608-797-6759. 
Oct. 7-9, Romeo and Juliet, 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m., Sun., Viterbo Fine Arts Center. 
Oct. 14-23, 26 Pebbles, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Tolald Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse. 
Oct. 18, Mamma Mia!, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center. 
Nov. 3-6, Silent Sky, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Frederick Theatre, Morris Hall, UW-La Crosse. 
Nov. 3-6, The Skin of Our Teeth, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sun., Page Theatre, Saint Mary’s Performance Center, Winona. 
Nov. 4, The Bridesmaid Project opening reception, 4-7 p.m., Gallery M, 33 S Walnut St., La Crescent, www.janetmootz.com. 
Nov. 5, Fashion Cornucopia Style Show 11 a.m & 5 p.m., Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 612 Division St., La Crosse, 608-782-3468, www.oursaviorslutheranchurch.net. 
Nov. 5, Missoula Children’s Theatre Presents Rapunzel, 1 & 4 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center Main Theatre. 
Nov. 5-19, The Snowy Day and Other Stories, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Sat., La Crosse Community Theatre, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org. 
Nov. 9, 13, Disenchanted!, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center Main Theatre. 
Nov. 12, Street Corner Symphony, 7:30 p.m., the Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org. 
Nov. 25-Jan. 1, Rotary Holiday Lights, open daily 5-10 p.m., Riverside Park, La Crosse. 
Dec. 4, Holmen Area Community Christmas Benefit, 3 p.m., Trygve Mathison Performing Arts Center, Holmen High School, $10 proceeds go to the Holmen Area Community Center. Sue Schultz, 781-1162.

If your organization would like to be included in our Community Calendar, please contact us at editor@crwmagazine.com or call 608-783-5395.
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