WHAT’S YOUR DRIVE?

MICHELLE FELTON
Behind the Wheel at Sleepy Hollow Auto

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Passion for Fashion
Food Truck Fervor
A Car-Lover’s Dream Home
Get Your Kicks on Route 66
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Pictured on cover and above: Michelle Felton, owner and vice president of Sleepy Hollow Auto in Viroqua.
we’re up, too!

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I bought my first car, a 1987 Ford Tempo, from a guy my dad knew who ran a small-town used-car lot in northern Wisconsin. His name was Chuck, and he had slicked-back hair and a cigar clutched between his grinning teeth. He seemed a little untrustworthy, and my instincts were correct. The car stopped inexplicably on Interstate 35E that night on its way to my apartment in St. Paul, and a kind stranger helped me limp it to a service station. It was the alternator, it turned out. I named that car “Fritz,” because ever after, it was always on the fritz.

My next car was a 1996 Nissan Sentra, a brand-new five-speed manual, bright teal. I wanted a stick shift to prove to myself that I could drive one even though my ex-boyfriend’s attempts to teach me had failed. My younger sisters came along for the test drive, shrinking in their seats from embarrassment as I sputtered down city streets. But I bought the car and forced myself to learn—and impressed every boyfriend after that. I still have it. It’s a bit untrustworthy, and my instincts were correct. The car stopped inexplicably on Highway 2 just east of Alliance, Nebraska—a story you can read about online in our June/July 2018 “Adventure” issue—and we found ourselves orchestrating a complicated tow back to Wisconsin and springing for a new engine. It runs just fine now.

Though just machines, my cars are part of my life story. I’ll never forget driving Fritz to that ex-boyfriend’s house to break up with him, changing the course of my life. I remember struggling to click the car seat into the A4 when we brought our first baby home. And I’ll never forget the rush of accomplishment I felt shifting gears on New York’s West Side Highway in my little Sentra.

Cars, wheels and the passions that fuel us feature prominently in this issue of Coulee Region Women, themed “What’s Your Drive?” We showcase women and their relationships to cars, like Sleepy Hollow Auto owner Michelle Felton, mechanic Natasha Normand and car collector Stacey McIlquham. But we also feature women who follow an inner drive—like Ayo Uko’s passion for creativity and Linda Riddle’s drive to help other women. We throw in a car-themed home and kitchens on wheels, and top it all off with a road trip on Route 66.

It’s fitting, perhaps, that over the course of producing this issue, I bought a new car. Even more fitting, I bought it from a woman: Julie Ramos, who’s made a career of selling cars for over 20 years. Whatever your drive—whether a car that captures your own story or the calling that gets you up in the morning—we’re happy you’re riding with us here at Coulee Region Women.
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CELEBRATING HEART HEALTH

To live as your healthiest self, you must learn more about not only your health, but the health of your loved ones. Join Her Heart Health for its third annual luncheon and educational event on February 21, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Cargill Room. There will be free health screenings, exhibits and a speaker from Mayo Clinic Health System, Jamie Pronchinske, RDN, CD. The event is hosted by Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic Health System. The mission of the event is to empower women to take charge of their heart health through a social initiative, eliminate the myths of heart disease and raise further awareness of women's health. Individual tickets are $25, and a table of eight is $200, with registration ending on February 14. For more information, go to www.herhearthealth.org.

PLUNGE FOR A CAUSE

Embrace the cold at the La Crosse Polar Plunge March 7 at Black River Beach. Each year, thousands of jumpers at different locations around the state take part in the plunge. This event is for all ages and will include food, drink vendors and more! Since 1999, $20 million has been raised by plungers and their supporters for Special Olympics Wisconsin athletes. If you are not interested in plunging, you can spectate, donate or volunteer for the event. Every participant must raise a minimum of $75 in order to plunge on the event day, which guarantees you a long-sleeve event T-shirt. You can plunge as a single or with a team by registering at https://www.classy.org/campaign/2020-la-crosse-polar-plunge/c254953. All proceeds are donated to Special Olympics Wisconsin athletes. For more information, contact Kerry Gloede at gloedek@cityoflacrosse.org.

A SLICE OF IRELAND

Children and adults of all ages will find joy at the Irish-themed family fun event Coulee Hoolie Ceili Dance Fundraiser and Irish Heritage Night held March 28, 6-10 p.m. at the American Legion Hall in La Crosse. Hoolie is a dance with music by the Coulee Hooligans and features Tim Jenkins, a popular caller who will lead the audience in a variety of group dances. There will also be Irish fare and a silent auction. The goal of the event is to raise money for nonprofits in La Crosse and Bantry, Ireland, that share the same missions. For 2020, WisCorps in La Crosse and Bantry Tidy Towns have been chosen. Both of these organizations engage in conservation projects to improve the environment. The admission to the event is $20 per family, $10 per adult and $8 for military members, seniors and students. Tickets can be purchased in advance at Festival Foods stores in La Crosse starting March 1, or at the door. For more information, contact Lynn West at lrcrosse@gmail.com.

STORIES ROOTED IN THE DRIFTLESS

From hunting rattlesnakes to staying high and dry during a flood, from savoring beauty to coping with loss, the Driftless Writing Center’s recently published collection of new works by area authors and artists highlights the diverse people, history and stories of the Driftless area. Contours: A Literary Landscape features previously unpublished essays, poems, short stories, novel excerpts, artwork and hybrid forms from 64 contributors who have been influenced by the richness of the region and offer readers a multitude of viewpoints and vistas.

Copies of the collection are available now and may be ordered by visiting www.driftlesswritingcenter.org. Books are also available at select local retailers and at the many readings that will be held throughout the Driftless Region during 2020. The DWC is also donating copies of the anthology to area libraries.
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Michelle Felton, co-owner and vice president of Sleepy Hollow Auto in Viroqua, never imagined working in the automotive industry when she was younger, but now she can’t imagine doing anything else.

“It’s fun to see the expressions I get when new customers ask what my role is at the dealership, and I explain that my husband and I own and operate the business,” says Felton of being a local female leader in an industry that is often seen as male dominated.

Fueling a family business

Felton and her husband, LaVon, own and operate the Viroqua business, which includes three franchise dealerships within a block of each other. LaVon started selling used cars on his family farm in Richland County in 1987 and moved to Viroqua in 1989. Felton, who is a Viroqua native, met her future husband in 1993 and, after the couple married, contributed to the development and growth of Sleepy Hollow Auto.

In 1995, they built a new building on the north side of Viroqua with six service bays and 50 used cars; in April 2007, they purchased the GM franchise store, moving across the street. In August 2009 they bought the Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram franchise dealership and the Ford franchise store in 2013.

In the early years of the business, Felton stayed at home with her two young children but started spending a few hours at the dealership each day once her son started school, helping where she could.

Those few hours a day turned into weeks, which turned into months,” says Felton. “I discovered that I loved working with customers and our employees. When we were planning the remodel of the Chevy store, my husband and I decided that it would be beneficial if I worked at the dealership full time.”

Felton currently serves as a one-person human resource department for Sleepy Hollow, which gives her a unique view into how the HR department can benefit the company’s goals and purpose.

“I believe that our employees are our greatest asset, and they truly are the backbone of our company,” she explains.

Felton has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and two master’s degrees: one in health psychology and the other in human resources development.

“My education has helped me have a better understanding of consumer behavior theory and the individual customer experience,” says Felton. “My background in human resources development has allowed me to help maximize our company’s human capital through training and organizational development initiatives.”

While the majority of Felton’s time is spent working on employee payroll, benefits and other HR tasks, she also takes time each day to talk with customers and tries to enhance their experience.

Employee empowerment

Felton says that one of her favorite parts of her job is working with, empowering and supporting her employees, whom she considers family.

“One of my main mottos is ‘family comes first.’ Our employees
know we’ll support them in challenging situations,” says Felton. “They know my door is always open for them.”

Felton says she strongly believes in her employees and their potential. “My purpose is to assist in the development of those who really want to develop,” she explains. “One of the biggest rewards of my job is fostering the growth of an employee and then watching them flourish in their skill sets, ideas and autonomy.”

Felton adds that empowering and supporting the women on her staff is particularly important to her. “Celebrating their strengths, encouraging them to step outside their comfort zones and showcasing their leadership elevates the entire organization to a new level,” she explains. “It’s essential to realize that other women doing well helps us all.”

Felton has 15 women on her team and says they are the pillar of the Sleepy Hollow Auto dealerships. Two of these women are her own family members: her mother, Vicki Anderson, is chief financial officer, and her aunt, Patty Wilson, is a dealership controller.

“I would encourage more women to consider a career in the automotive industry,” says Felton. “We need more women in leadership roles and as sales consultants. Young women thinking of trade school should consider careers as service technicians if they have a passion for automobiles.” This is a particularly opportune time for that, as veteran service technicians are retiring and qualified replacement techs are hard to find.

Felton says this has led Sleepy Hollow Auto to create a tech program with Western Technical College. “We have been promoting the trades by founding the first Automotive College Course in Wisconsin,” she explains. “This three-credit college course for high school juniors was taught at Sleepy Hollow in partnership with CESA 4 and Western Technical College and is now being modeled across the state.”

A driving force in the community

Sleepy Hollow Auto is involved in the community in several other ways as well, from donating to benefits and fundraisers to providing local schools with equipment and scholarships.

Felton has served as a board member for the Viroqua Area Foundation, Sugar Creek Bible Camp and American Cancer Society Relay for Life. She’s also been an education superintendent and confirmation guide mentor at Immanuel Lutheran Church as well as a hospice volunteer for Vernon Memorial Hospital.

Being on the go so much for both work and her personal life, Felton drives a GMC Yukon XL, even though she thought she would switch to a smaller vehicle now that she’s an empty nester.

“I am constantly hauling items around, whether it be parts, promotional items for an event or even lunch for 100 to serve to our employees,” explains Felton. “I sometimes help with courtesy transportation, and the larger SUVs are generally more comfortable for customers. I am switching out of vehicles quite often because our sales team keeps selling them, which I’m not complaining about because a sale is always a wonderful thing!”

Tallitha Reese is a freelance writer and content manager based in Cashton. She owns Words By Reese, and you can find out more about her and her work at www.wordsbyreese.com.
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Margaret Severson, AAMS®
Financial Advisor
608.637.7233
520 N. Main Street - Suite A
Viroqua, WI 54665
margaret.severson@edwardjones.com

Jenny Akins
Financial Advisor
608.781.4333
1200 County Road Ph - Suite 200
Onalaska, WI 54650
jenny.ains@gmail.com

Sheri Plantz
Financial Advisor
608.788.6420
2424 State Road
La Crosse, WI 54601
sherri.plant@edwardjones.com

Denise Halverson, AAMS®
Financial Advisor
608.269.9136
2101 West Wisconsin Street - Suite C
Sparta, WI 54656
denise.halverson@edwardjones.com

Heidi Lydon
Financial Advisor
608.487.9509
605 West Wisconsin Street
Sparta, WI 54656
heidi.lydon@edwardjones.com

Kris Birkholz
Financial Advisor
608.781.3716
1052 Oak Forest Drive, - Suite 260
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Sue Kundy
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608.582.2495
16864 South Davis Street
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Natasha Normand is a young woman who has figured out what she wants to do with her life. It wasn’t an instant discovery, but once she found herself in the Automotive Technician program at Western Technical College in La Crosse, she knew she was in the right place.

“I’ve always been fascinated by mechanics,” says Normand. “My father worked on cars at our home in Chippewa Falls. I watched him in our garage, and he shared his knowledge with me. I loved working with him.”

But her father passed away when she was 19, and Normand joined the military. For the next six years, she worked mainly in food service—“everybody has to eat,” she says—and spent time in Iraq, Kuwait and the United States. In the military, she learned to organize her time and work efficiently. But she also developed post-traumatic stress disorder, and when she came out, she spent some time at the Tomah VA Medical Center, where she investigated opportunities at the Wisconsin technical colleges.

She entered the Medical Lab Technician program at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, but during that time, her interest in cars and engines resurfaced—and she followed it. Now she is one of two women out of 50 students enrolled in the Auto Technician program at WTC.

Women’s work

Women are well suited to automotive work, Normand says. The work isn’t as physically demanding as one might think. It is rare that you have to lift over 50 pounds because jacks and supports are used for the heavier engine components, she explains.

It’s true that there are so many men in the field, it can feel like a boys’ club. But Normand is not easily intimidated. “Being in the military and growing up with three brothers, I don’t take any guff from the guys,” she says.

Driven to succeed

Motivated to prove her skills, she is at the top of her class and plans to stay there. She also serves as the SkillsUSA president for the Automotive Club.

Instructor and Automotive Technician program head Andy Olson describes Normand as “driven.” “If she wants to learn something, she’ll do whatever she needs to do,” he says. And Normand thinks her instructors are top notch.

There is a lot of material to cover, because every engine is different, and they change every year. “It’s very interesting how the engine works. I like to solve problems, and when I can figure out what is going on with an engine and complete a project, I feel great,” Normand says.

Her class rebuilt a standard transmission engine last year and will tackle an automatic transmission engine next semester. Rebuilding isn’t done much in the field anymore because of the labor expense, but it’s an excellent way to learn how today’s complex engines work, she explains. The course includes chassis, electrical, basic maintenance, brakes, tires, transmission and engine performance.

When she finishes this course, Normand is thinking of taking a course in diesel mechanics, which is a better-paying field with higher job security. A single mother of an 18-month-old daughter, Aurora, Normand finds those benefits appealing—while modeling to her daughter that there’s no work a woman can’t do.

Janis Jolly is a La Crosse freelance writer who credits good auto technicians with the longevity of her 14-year-old car.
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Ayotunde Uko is a woman of profound accomplishments—but it is her drive to create that has put her on the map not only in the Coulee Region, but on the global stage.

Ayotunde Uko—Ayo to most people—was born in Malawi, East Africa. “I grew up surrounded by women who were beautiful, bold and accomplished in various professions,” says Ayo, who founded Ayo Uko. Hats, Truly Yours. about 10 years ago.

Growing up, her family instilled in her the belief that she could do anything she wanted in life and the passion to seek it. “A lot of what I saw inspired what I do today,” she says.

Ayo attended medical school in Nigeria, where she met her husband, Victor, and then went on to work as a family physician in England, where the couple lived for seven years.

Doctor to designer

In addition to her medical interests, she’s always had a “creative streak,” she says. As young as 5, she would cut up her clothes and redesign them. “I got into a lot of trouble for that,” she says, smiling. But her mother, a home economics educator, encouraged her and got her a sewing machine. She started making her own school uniforms in high school, as well as party clothes.

While living in England, she returned to her love of design and enrolled at a millinery school, where she studied hatmaking with Ann Morse-Brown. She still uses the handmade wooden hat blocks, or forms, created by Guy Morse-Brown, Ann’s husband. “It’s part of the ethos of the Ayo Uko brand—exquisite hand-finished millinery,” she says, stroking the fine solid wood.

Ayo wanted to innovate the African headdresses from her youth using a combination of traditional blocking and free-form millinery techniques. Ayo says she uses “modern techniques to make exquisite headwear more accessible to clients across the world.”
A world of inspiration

Ayo moved to La Crosse six years ago with her husband—now a pediatric gastroenterologist at Gundersen Health System—and their son, Jonathan, now 8. “When I design hats, I want a woman to feel really special—truly unique,” she says. “These luxurious hats elevate the outfits they wear.” Ayo’s life experiences of traveling globally have connected her to global culture, which inspires her designs.

Ayo knows her hatmaking market and uses social media to promote her business globally. She has made hats for women and men worldwide, in Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States. Her clients are often repeat customers and might order a hat for a wedding plus other special events. One such customer was a woman who wanted a hat for a wedding in Tuscany and told Ayo, “I trust your creativity.” Ayo began by asking her what she wanted to feel like at her special event. “I want to feel glamorous,” said the woman. After receiving her hat, she told Ayo she “felt like a queen.”

Each hat takes anywhere from 12 to 48 hours of actual labor, depending on how elaborate it is, over a three- to four-week time period. “A hat has to be hand-finished to be truly exquisite,” Ayo says. She uses a variety of luxury fabrics, such as sinamay, felt, straw, damask, silk, satin and velvet. She utilizes a special layering technique while forming the hats, which adds fine detail in the finished product. She finishes each hat by hand with luxurious embellishments. “It’s in the details,” she says.

When a customer connects with her via email, they set up an exclusive consultation and the client sends photos of the outfit and designs that they would like the hat to match. Ayo offers fittings when possible and guarantees her customers happiness with their finished hats.

Empowering women in all ways

Amid her hatmaking, Ayo is still involved in the medical field as a health care consultant, having earned an MS in Health Policy in London and an MBA in Business Leadership at Yale University. As a consultant, she helps to create plans for health care organizations to be more sustainable and effective, and she has assisted groups in Malawi working on medical projects to gain funding and help the organizations grow.

Ayo would like to expand her designing to create luxurious workwear for women using high-quality artisan fabric woven in Africa. “A phenomenal aspect of this business model is that it creates sustainable value for the artisans and the communities in which they live,” she says.

Ayo reaches out to customers for feedback and requests photos of them wearing their new artwork. “The smile says it all,” she says of these images. “I love working with people, and I want to empower each woman to feel special.”

Jan Wellik is a writer and educator based in the La Crosse area.
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Just as you wouldn’t wait for your car engine to seize up before checking your oil, you also don’t want to wait until you’re sick to check in on your health.

Jenna Bauer, a certified nurse practitioner at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse, acknowledges that preventive health care screenings and recommendations are constantly changing. However, she says certain aspects of your health should be addressed regularly. While your personal health may impact these screening recommendations, the schedules below offer a good guideline for maintenance checks.

**Blood pressure screening**

Women 18 to 39 should have this checked once every 2 years. Women over 40: at least once a year.

**Cholesterol screening**

Recommended ages for beginning cholesterol screening for women are between 20 and 45. Repeat every 5 years, unless you experience significant changes in your weight and/or diet, or if you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems or certain other conditions.

**Diabetes screening**

This test can wait until age 45; then you should be tested every 3 years. If you are pregnant, you should be tested for gestational diabetes.

**Colorectal cancer screening**

If you are between 50 and 75, you should be screened. Do this every 10 years if you get a full colonoscopy, but more frequently if you do a fecal or other test.

Under age 50: Talk to your provider if you have a strong family history of colon cancer, or inflammatory bowel disease.

**Hearing**

Your provider may recommend a hearing screening if you are 65 or older or are experiencing hearing loss.

**Mammogram**

Guidelines on this are frequently changing, though all agree age 40 is a good starting point—unless you are at risk. Continue every year until your provider tells you otherwise. Contact your provider right away if you notice a change in your breasts.

**Mental health**

If you are struggling with stress, anxiety and/or depression, an annual screening is recommended.

**Eye Exam**

An eye exam helps detect eye problems at their earliest stage—when they’re most treatable. In general, if you are healthy and you have no symptoms of vision problems, have your eyes checked on this schedule:

- every 5 to 10 years in your 20s and 30s
- every 2 to 4 years from 40 to 54
- every 1 to 3 years from 55 to 64
- every 1 to 2 years after age 65

**Have your eyes checked more often if you**

- wear glasses or contact lenses
- have a family history of eye disease or loss of vision
- have a chronic disease that puts you at greater risk of eye disease, such as diabetes
- take medications that have serious eye side effects
Two quick screening tools are the General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) and Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9).

Osteoporosis and osteopenia
Get your first screening bone density measurement at age 65.

Pelvic exam and Pap smear
Ages 21 to 29: every 3 years. Ages 30 to 49: every 3 to 5 years. Most women can discontinue these at age 50.
Women who are sexually active should be screened for chlamydia and gonorrhea up until age 25. Women 25 years and older should be screened if at high risk.

Other screenings
Your provider will screen for alcohol abuse, depression, intimate partner violence, obesity and tobacco use every year throughout your life. Older adults will also be assessed for risk of falling.

“Results from preventive screenings and exams are important, but it does not end there,” adds Kelley Bahr, MD, in Family Medicine at Gundersen Health System.

Immunizations
Flu shot: Every year, all ages.
Tdap: If you missed these as an adolescent, get caught up now, then get a booster every 10 years.
Chicken pox/shingles: You should receive two doses of varicella vaccine if you never had chickenpox or the varicella vaccine. If you are 50 or over, you should get the shingles vaccine.

Human papilloma virus (HPV): If you haven’t gotten this vaccine in the past, or didn’t get complete the entire series, get caught up between ages 18 to 26.

Meningococcal B: Women up to 23 years of age may want to consider this vaccine.

Your provider may recommend other immunizations if you are at high risk for certain conditions, such as hepatitis, measles and mumps.

Go to the dentist once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning. Your dentist will evaluate if you need more frequent visits.

“Results from preventive screenings and exams are important, but it does not end there,” adds Kelley Bahr, MD, in Family Medicine at Gundersen Health System.

Julie Nelson is a regular contributor to Coulee Region Women who got a flu shot this fall and needed the reminder to get a shingles vaccine.
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Welcome to the La Crosse Area Builders Association 2020 Home Show! We’re so glad you’re joining us as a vendor or as a guest. Spring is such an exciting time in the Coulee Region, and the Home Show is the perfect place to get spring plans rolling. Have you been peering out the window thinking the backyard could use a little pick-me-up? A fresh patio, deck, sunroom or maybe a fire table? You can find all of that at the Home Show as well as the experts to help you best utilize the space and assist with finding the perfect products to make that dream project a reality.

Building or remodeling? Looking for options to make your home more functional as you age? The Home Show offers you the opportunity to meet your potential builder face-to-face and get to know them personally before you sign the contract. You can also walk just a few booths away from your builder’s booth and see the exact product they would be using for your project. All the latest in cabinets, countertops, lighting, building styles and trending colors are here under one roof!

We also invite you to browse the projects area high school students have made that are up for auction at the Home Show. The funds raised through the auctioning of these projects is used to support LABA’s Building Careers program. The Building Careers program helps to raise funds each year that are used for scholarships for trade students and also to put thousands of dollars of trade-related tools into the hands of students in our area high schools. In 2019 alone, 19 area schools received over $10,000 in tools through our LABA Tools for Schools program! These schools are located all over our coverage area of La Crosse, Vernon, Trempealeau, Monroe and Jackson counties. Please consider placing a bid on one of these amazing projects!

Now we invite you to grab a beverage and browse both arenas of the Onalaska Omni Center as you enjoy the 2020 La Crosse Area Builder’s Association Home Show!

Thank you for joining us!

Jody Swenson
LABA President
Knight Barry Title United LLC

Let 2020 be the year that you focus on your largest financial investment—your home! Interested in improving your home’s value, curb appeal and comfort, but not sure where to start? Have an idea, but need some help on the details or implementation? Attend the 2020 La Crosse Area Builders Association Home Show for everything you need in one convenient location!

This year our Home Show has expanded to two full arenas featuring over 93 vendors. Meet with our industry experts now to find out what the new trends are, which investments have the greatest resale value for you and how to get your dream home. Vendors include builders, remodelers and experts in kitchens and baths, fireplaces, decks, energy efficiency, roofing, siding, audio-visual, home sales, compact tractors, HVAC, financing and more.

Friday night we continue the tradition of Date Night. Bring your significant other for a night out and enjoy two free drinks and live music while you take a stroll through our show. We will have beverages from Turtle Stack Brewery, Pearl Street Brewery, Elmaro Winery and Vernon Vineyards on site.

Saturday is our Demonstration Day, where you can enjoy two free drinks while watching live presentations on improving your home’s performance, audio-visual home technology and more. We will be joined by MOKA, Oma Cafe, Pearl Street Brewery, 608 Brewery, Brambleberry Winery and Vernon Vineyards—and make sure you check out the Student Built Project Auction and see the talented local youth we have! The auction helps support the LABA Building Careers Tools for Schools program.

Sunday is fun day for the whole family. We will once again be featuring Touch-a-Truck, kids’ crafts and activities, pet therapy dogs, a sample of flavored popcorn from Great River Popcorn & Ice Cream or a free scoop of Ranison’s ice cream.

So mark your calendars for March 27-29 and let us help you with all of your home improvement needs!

Dallas Werner
Home Show Committee Chair

Dallas Werner
Home Show Committee Chair

Jody Swenson
LABA President

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Thank you for joining us!

Jody Swenson
LABA President

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10 Tips for a Smooth Home Remodel

Communication and compatibility are key to a great remodeling experience.

Is a home remodel in your future this year? Follow these 10 tips to ensure the process—and the product—are what you expect:

1. Establish effective two-way communication with the home remodeler. It’s essential to have good communication for a smooth home remodeling project. Does the remodeler listen? Does he or she answer questions clearly and candidly? Can you reach them when you need to? Do they return phone calls promptly? Do they let you know when problems arise and work with you on solving them?

2. Make sure you are compatible with the contractor. You’ll spend a lot of time with your remodeler, so it’s important to have a good rapport and trust in him or her.

3. Set a clear and mutual understanding about the schedule. You and your home remodeler should agree on the schedule up front to avoid conflict and problems later in the project.

4. Request a written proposal. Often, two people remember the same conversation differently. Get the proposal in writing and work with the remodeler to ensure it reflects your wishes.

5. Get a clear and mutual understanding on miscellaneous details up front. Settle these details before work starts. What times of day will the remodeler be working? How will they access the property? How will cleanup be handled? How will they protect your property?

6. Be flexible. Remodeling is an interruption of your normal life. Remember to be flexible during the project so that you can handle the unexpected and go with the flow.

7. Discuss and agree on how change orders will be handled. There is always a chance you will want to change materials or other project details during the job. Before work starts, make sure you agree with your remodeler about how these changes will be handled. Also understand that changes could affect the schedule and the budget, so it’s important you have all changes in writing.

8. Agree on a well-written contract that covers all the bases. The contract should include these elements: a timetable for the project, price and payment schedule, detailed specifications for all products and materials, insurance information, permit information, procedures for handling change orders, lien releases, provisions for conflict resolution, notice of your right under the Federal Trade Commission’s Cooling Off Rule (your right to cancel the contract within three days if it was signed someplace other than the remodeler’s place of business) and details on important issues such as access to your home, care of the home, cleanup and trash removal.

9. Ask for a written lien waiver from the home remodeler upon completion of the work. If the remodeler hires subcontractors for portions of the work, then it is their responsibility to see the subcontractors compensated. In order to ensure this has been done and to protect yourself, ask for a written lien waiver when the work is finished. This document will verify everyone has been paid.

10. Establish a project plan, covering all phases and dependencies in the work. Plan your big-picture goals with the remodeler and discuss your needs. Hire a remodeler who will plan with you, listen to concerns and answer questions.

From How to Hire Your Dream Remodeler by Tom Higgins, Superior Products Home Improvement, Littleton, Colorado.
The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a professional organization that unites and represents people in the building industry. We promote safe, attainable, quality housing through education and interaction.

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What is La Crosse Area Builders Association (LABA)?
The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a nonprofit trade organization unifying more than 175 building-related companies in western Wisconsin.

At LABA, we
- educate our members on the latest in the building industry
- advocate for affordable housing at a local, state and national level through responsible government
- provide networking opportunities
- run the Parade of Homes and Onalaska Home Show

What does LABA do?
LABA works to better the building industry:
- We are watchdogs for changes that can affect home building and remodeling.
- We offer a membership of trained, qualified and insured builders and tradespeople to the consumer. From builders to electricians, plumbers, concrete specialists, roofers, fireplace installers, heating and air specialists, and so many others, our members affect the work on your most expensive purchase ... your home.
- We work to support the future of the building industry with programs like: Tools for Schools (putting tools into the hands of high school students), Scholarships, Building Careers Day, Building Futures for Kids Program at the Boys & Girls Club.

Why should I use LABA?
LABA members are insured, licensed (if applicable), and do continuing education to keep up with industry standards. One phone call to LABA can open doors to having a better experience and better success with home projects. LABA members have ties to the community in which we all work and live.

Our list of members is FREE to everyone and available on our website at www.labonline.com. Make us your first call in your search for help with your home!
Demonstration Schedule
Saturday, March 28

Arena 1
10:15 a.m.
Residential Solar + Storage
with Dave Pluym from Eagle Point Solar

11:15 a.m.
Vinyl Plank Flooring
Demonstration
with Keith from Home Depot

12:15 p.m.
Bath & Kitchen Design
with The Board Store

1:15 p.m.
Technology for the Home
with Justin Snyder from The Audio Video Pros

2:15 p.m.
Dealing with Household Hazardous Materials
with Greg Smith from La Crosse Hazardous Materials Facility

3:15 p.m.
The 5 Variables That Affect All Construction Projects
with Tom Kruse from Professional Home Inspection Company

Follow LABA Home Show on Facebook for the latest information!

Arena 2
10:45 a.m.
Standards-Based Home Inspections & Radon Gas
with Tom Kruse from Professional Home Inspection Company

11:45 a.m.
Improving Your Home’s Energy Performance & Comfort
with Dallas Werner from First American Roofing & Siding, Inc., Dave Geissler from Onsite Performance Testing, Nat Peplinski from Focus on Energy

12:45 p.m.
How to Install a Reclaimed Wood Accent Wall
with Larry Hutson from Used Anew

1:45 p.m.
Geothermal 101
with Mark Flock from Flock’s Heating & Air Conditioning

2:45 p.m.
Do-It-Yourself Landscaping—Pruning Tips
with Mic Armstrong from McKay Nursery Co.

3:45 p.m.
Tiling/Backsplash Installation
with Keith from Home Depot

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- DJK
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Sunday “Family Day”
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Spring Forward with Home Improvements

Here are 5 ways to freshen the look of your home.

Spring is the perfect time to start planning for home projects. Maintenance projects are a great way to keep your space comfortable, make it functional and possibly add value to your home. Not all projects are boring chores. Adding new space to your kitchen or sprucing up your décor can be fun and rewarding. Here are a few spring pick-ups for your home.

Increase square footage

When it comes to increasing the value of your home, adding “livable” space such as a bedroom or bathroom can make a difference. When you’re ready to expand your space, make plans to attend the LABA Home Show and the LABA Parade of Homes, and/or contact the La Crosse Area Builders Association to find and consult with a builder. A residential construction professional can provide guidance on the feasibility of your project, estimates, zoning, building codes and the permitting process.

Refresh floors and décor

Worn floors or dated interior home features can make your home feel dreary. Not all flooring is expensive, and sustainable options are available. Aesthetics are important, but you should consider other factors when selecting new floors, such as durability and moisture. If you’re happy with your current flooring and need to liven up your rooms, consider upgrading fixtures, updating lighting or adding greenery.

Energize your home’s exterior

A well-maintained yard is the first step in boosting curb appeal. Fresh paint or a new door with a bold color can also make your home more attractive. Consider replacing your garage door or mailbox, or adding new lighting features such as walkway or entryway fixtures to make your home inviting.

Take steps towards sustainability

There are many ways to reduce the energy consumption in your home. Begin by replacing heating, cooling or water heaters with more energy-efficient units—then maintain them regularly so they run at an optimal level. Installing drapes and shades on windows are easy and low-cost ways to regulate the temperatures in your home. Conserve water by taking shorter showers, turning off the water when brushing teeth and only using the dishwasher when it is full. Consider reducing the amount of garbage you generate by buying and using products wisely.

Clean, clear and declutter

Cleaning and clearing your home is a great spring endeavor. An easy way to tackle a whole-home decluttering project is to organize room by room and sort items by type: toss, keep, reuse/repair, recycle and donate.


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<th>DECKS &amp; GAZEBOS</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABC Supply Co.</td>
<td>(608) 779-2001</td>
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<td>Balduzzi Lumber Co., Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 783-3329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lautz Lassig Custom Builders</td>
<td>(608) 786-2535</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillips Outdoor Services</td>
<td>(608) 783-4200</td>
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<th>DESIGN SERVICE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mastercraft Homes, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 781-7200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proformance Construction</td>
<td>(608) 788-0115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rugroden Drafting &amp; Design</td>
<td>(608) 526-2990</td>
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<tr>
<td>T.N. Thompson Enterprises</td>
<td>(608) 792-8453</td>
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<th>DRYWALL CONTRACTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Al’s Drywall</td>
<td>(615) 299-1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earley Drywall &amp; Construction, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 784-5611</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Drywall</td>
<td>(608) 385-6375</td>
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<th>DRYWALL SUPPLIERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bond Drywall Supply, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 783-6273</td>
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<th>ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elite Electrical Solutions, LLC</td>
<td>(608) 386-0575</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graf Electric, Inc.</td>
<td>(507) 895-6156</td>
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<td>Kish &amp; Sons Electric, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 783-5474</td>
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<td>Olson Solar Energy</td>
<td>(608) 780-2347</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seymour Electric</td>
<td>(507) 724-1323</td>
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<td>Stetter Electric</td>
<td>(608) 769-5890</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viking Electric Supply, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 796-1761</td>
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<td>Werner Electric Supply</td>
<td>(608) 783-7596</td>
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<th>EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>PeopleReady</td>
<td>(608) 782-0452</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradesmen International</td>
<td>(608) 781-5647</td>
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<th>EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY &amp; TOOLS SUPPLIER/RENTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>United Rentals Excavating</td>
<td>(608) 781-7671</td>
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<td>Hess Excavating</td>
<td>(608) 788-1763</td>
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<td>MJG Excavating, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 783-7223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rybold Excavating &amp; Plumbing Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 526-5994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wieser Septic &amp; Excavating</td>
<td>(507) 896-3922</td>
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<th>FENCING/PET CONTAINMENT</th>
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<td>Phillips Outdoor Services</td>
<td>(608) 783-4200</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Community Credit Union</td>
<td>(608) 366-2306</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altra Federal Credit Union</td>
<td>(608) 779-3188</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associated Bank</td>
<td>(608) 793-3824</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Jones</td>
<td>(608) 788-6420</td>
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<td>Merchants Bank</td>
<td>(608) 779-8294</td>
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<td>Park Bank</td>
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<td>State Bank Financial</td>
<td>(608) 791-4212</td>
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<td>Verve a Credit Union</td>
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<td>WNB Financial</td>
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<th>FIREPLACES, STOVES &amp; CHIMNEYS</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Home Fireplace &amp; Patio</td>
<td>(608) 786-1233</td>
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<td>E &amp; B Insulation</td>
<td>(608) 269-5839</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Crosse Fireplace Company</td>
<td>(608) 788-7200</td>
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<th>FLOORING</th>
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<td>Builders Flooring, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 779-5366</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpet One of La Crosse</td>
<td>(608) 784-9800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpets To Go</td>
<td>(608) 783-3750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decker Design, Inc.</td>
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<td>Floorcrafters, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 783-1088</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interior Designs, Inc.</td>
<td>(608) 526-3386</td>
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<td>Paveman Designs LLC</td>
<td>(507) 995-8215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used Anew LLC</td>
<td>(608) 487-0547</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wesco Home Furnishings</td>
<td>(608) 269-2115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Terrazzo, Inc.</td>
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You might say Cindy and Bernie Gross’s dream home was 20 years in the making. Modeled closely after the Kenosha area home from which they recently moved, their new La Crosse-area home is updated for retirement and single-story living. The kitchen, great room, master bedroom, office, laundry and garage access are on the main floor. “We loved our old house, but we didn’t want to stay in that area,” Bernie says.

This house is what Bernie calls their “rest of your life home.” With everything needed for daily living on one level, there’s no need to navigate stairs. More, it’s a home set up for immersion in life interests—and for Bernie, that’s cars.

Local appreciation
“When my husband had his Harley, we put it in the trailer and rode around. Once we started doing that, we knew we wanted to retire in this part of the state,” Cindy explains. “It’s so beautiful.”

The search for the perfect lot began in 2006, with the property purchased in 2013 and the house completed last summer under the expert guidance of Kraig Lassig, Lautz Lassig Custom Builders. “We were picky,” says Bernie. “We had to have flat land, and in La Crosse, that’s hard to find.” The lot had to be secluded, yet somewhat close to town. After selling their business, Stainless Products, Inc., which had been founded by Cindy’s father, they took the plans from their Kenosha home, made a few changes and built their 3,000-square-foot forever home. Now, Cindy can sit back in a favorite bedroom chair, read and look out the window. “It’s a nice view and relaxing,” she says.

The brick ranch home sits at the end of a nearly 2 mile narrow and curving country road. An impressive tree-themed metal gate guards the driveway. Step through the front door, even on a cloudy day, and light fills the home. The kitchen opens directly into the family room, one of Cindy’s favorite parts of the house. Wood floors, railings and cabinets balance the streamlined décor and give the feeling of being in and out of the surrounding woods at the same time. A couple of walls are warmed by exquisite framed cross-stitch projects done by Bernie’s grandmother.

Heated floors, a cozy winter feature, run throughout the house, even in the three-car garage. “I didn’t think they’d make that much of a difference, but they are so comfortable,” Cindy says.

As much of the house as possible was locally sourced, from the construction materials to the furnishings to the artwork on the walls. Barn photos and paintings by Wisconsin artists hang throughout. “We tried to have everything local,” says Bernie.

State of the art
Cindy enjoys cooking—“She’s a very good cook,” Bernie confirms—and the kitchen was designed to her specifications. A large pantry, bigger than some walk-in closets, affords easy access to ingredients and small appliances. An island prep area with a sink, an eight-burner Wolf stove, three ovens and a large Sub-Zero refrigerator.
allows Cindy to cook numerous items at one time. Tile backsplashes, granite counters and hickory cabinets make the kitchen inviting.

While the house has a somewhat traditional layout, the technology is as modern as can be, controlled by circuitry headquartered on the lower level. “This is an integrated home,” Bernie says. “It goes through a computer. We can keep an eye on this place from a phone.” There’s not a toggle light switch in sight.

“If I go in the basement,” Cindy explains, “I can hit one button at the top of the stairs and turn the basement off. It’s really, really nice and very convenient.”

A car-lover’s dream
You could say Bernie is a car guy, but that would be an understatement. The basement rec room is a car lover’s fantasy.

Turning the corner at the bottom of the stairs leading to the lower level is like entering a mini-museum devoted to cars. Bernie’s smile as he talks about the items in the room is quiet evidence of his passion. Model cars line multiple shelves, and old gas station globes and pumps punctuate the area. A hanging stained glass pool table lamp has a car theme.

The basement level also features a guest suite, gym and sauna, and a second commercial kitchen. What would be a furnace room is an open space with a wall of tubes, pipes and wires that heat and monitor the entire house. An opposite wall blinks with computerized aspects of the setup.

It’s a cold, snowy day for this home tour, but we head for a 7,200-square-foot outbuilding a few steps from the back door. Larger than the main house, it’s a vintage car aficionado’s dream, at least one who enjoys collecting and working on them in an airy, warm and completely equipped space with car lifts, bright lights and multiple garage doors. “I restore them and drive them quite a bit. A lot of them are pretty rare.”

Cindy does drive the cars on occasion, and she enjoys meeting people at car shows. She isn’t quite as much into cars as is Bernie, though. “I’m part of the support system,” she says with a laugh.

The building contains a kind of anteroom the couple lived in while the main house was constructed. Though the amenities were minimal, a small kitchen and a bathroom, still in perfect working order, made the place livable. “When we built the house, we lived in here,” Bernie says.

Even with the dream home and the impressive workshop, Bernie and Cindy want to travel, mostly in the United States. An RV—their home on wheels—sits ready and waiting. Cindy, though, seeks to do a little more international travel than her husband. Wherever they go, it’s a sure bet they’ll be ready to return to their retirement oasis.
Overcoming Challenges With Grit and Grace

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FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

How Coulee Region Women Connects You to Your Community
Highlights great women
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You may have heard of the drive to update Wisconsin driver’s licenses to the REAL ID. Perhaps you already have one. But if you don’t, be aware that the deadline to update your license is October 1, 2020, and that not doing so may result in big travel inconveniences. Here’s why you’ll want to update yours, and how to do so.

What is a REAL ID?
The REAL ID Act, passed by Congress in 2005, enacted the 9/11 Commission’s recommendation that the federal government “set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver’s licenses.” The new REAL IDs, introduced in Wisconsin in 2013, are designed to meet those standards for identification. A REAL ID is not required for voting.

Why do I need a REAL ID?
On October 1, 2020, the regular Wisconsin driver’s license or ID will no longer be accepted identification for domestic air travel or to enter a federal building or military base. Therefore, if you plan to fly even within the United States, you will need to present a REAL ID-compliant driver license or state ID card or another acceptable form of identification (such as a passport). Travelers without a REAL ID will be denied boarding their plane.

Cheryl Schleis, a longtime DMV trainer employed in the La Crosse area service center, located in Onalaska, says now is the time to get a REAL ID if you haven’t yet. “We expect a crush before the October 1 deadline,” she says. “We encourage customers to come in now, in the slower months.”

What do I need for a REAL ID?
To obtain a REAL ID-compliant driver’s license or ID card, individuals must visit a Wisconsin DMV and bring the following original documents or a certified copy (not a photocopy, fax or scan):

- Proof of name and date of birth (certified birth certificate or unexpired passport)
- Proof of legal presence (same as above plus immigration documentation, if applicable)
- Proof of identity (current driver’s license, ID card or passport)
- Proof of Social Security Number (Social Security card, 1099 form, W2 or pay stub with name and complete SSN)
- Proof of any name changes (birth certificate PLUS marriage certificate, divorce decree and subsequent marriage certificates, as applicable)

Special concerns for women
“The biggest issue is for the woman who’s changed her name since birth,” says Schleis, which includes married, divorced and remarried women who have changed their names. Documentation for each name change—birth certificate, marriage certificate(s) and divorce decrees—are required to acquire a REAL ID. Newly married women planning a honeymoon involving air travel after October 1, 2020, should be especially aware of this requirement.

Note that if you have a current, unexpired passport, you have already provided the required information to the U.S. Department of State, and the passport is all you need for all name change documents. If you are married and did not change your name, you do not need to provide marriage documentation.

How do I get a REAL ID?
Once you’ve gathered the required documentation, Schleis says, simply stop in to the DMV and take a number. You’ll have your photo taken, your documentation will be scanned and you’ll receive a 60-day driving receipt while you wait for your ID to be mailed. You can visit wisconsindmv.gov/REALID for more information and to generate a personalized checklist of the required documents you will need to bring.

If it’s time to renew your driver’s license or ID, you can receive a REAL ID-compliant card for no additional fee if the upgrade takes place at the same time as the renewal. Customers whose current driver’s license or ID will not expire before 2020 may obtain a REAL ID-compliant card for $14 (the cost of a duplicate driver license) or $16 for a duplicate ID card.

Betty Christiansen, publisher of Coulee Region Women, does not yet have a REAL ID but has been inspired to get hers soon.
Who will represent La Crosse as the 2020 Mrs. Oktoberfest?

La Crosse Festivals Inc./Oktoberfest is now accepting nominations for Mrs. Oktoberfest.

Nominate a woman who is...
» Actively involved in La Crosse community
» Able to devote her time to numerous Oktoberfest activities throughout the upcoming year
» Living within 20 miles of La Crosse
» Married (or has been married)
» At least 50 years old
» A La Crosse and Oktoberfest enthusiast!

VISIT www.oktoberfestusa.com for the complete nomination information.

Mail to:
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P.O. Box 1716
La Crosse, WI 54602-1716
Or drop off at the Oktoberfest Office the corner of La Crosse and

Nominations will remain active for three years of the original nomination. All nominations must be received by the Mrs. Oktoberfest Selection Committee no later than noon Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

La Crosse Festivals Inc./Oktoberfest is now accepting nominations for Mrs. Oktoberfest.

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Photo by Luann Dibb Photography
Persistence, creativity, adaptability—three traits that these two entrepreneurs share in bounds. Inventing a plethora of new menu items and expanding their businesses to meet community needs, Nicole Elliott and Maria Norberg have found their niche in La Crosse area food trucks and beyond. You could certainly say these women have drive.

The Damn Tasty
Nicole Elliott was born and raised in La Crescent, but she’s been cooking, serving and bartending in La Crosse for 20 years. Her first job was in the deli of the People’s Food Co-op. A few years later, she pursued culinary school in Chicago, and moved back to La Crosse in 2005. Her plan has always been to launch The Damn Tasty food truck.

“My husband and I borrowed his sister’s old egg roll truck in 2013. Back then, it was a lot harder to get started, as far as regulations, so I started the lunch delivery. That became a pretty successful catering business.”

While her catering business was thriving, Elliott missed the customer interactions. “I’ve spent so much of my career connecting with people, which you don’t get a lot of as a caterer. You are perpetually in the ‘back of the house.’ Well, my husband and I are always hatching plans and coming up with great ideas, so we thought, ‘why not do a breakfast truck?’ A place to get great food in the morning that is both fresh and convenient for folks headed into work. And damn tasty, too!”

Elliott admits the whole process of launching the food truck has been “a pain in the butt,” but her passion for delicious food and beautiful presentation kept her going. “Anyone who has a food trailer, cart or truck can tell you, it’s a lot of hoops. I’ve basically felt like a circus performer since August. But now that I’ve gotten started, I’m very happy. I’m excited to get more creative with my menus, being able to offer The Damn Tasty on wheels to more people, whether through vending at local events, or being able to offer the truck as a catering option for rehearsal dinners and smaller parties.”

Some of Elliott’s favorite menu items have been the Vietnamese Caramelized Pork Belly Bowl and Bacon, Cheddar and Chive Biscuits. “The Thai iced coffee, our famous mac and cheese, our gyro/falafel bowls are good … I could go on and on.” Her passion is personal. “I love eating really tasty food. It can literally make my day.” Her goal for her customers? “Create food that makes them happy to take every bite.”

Recently, Elliott has become a hybrid cook and baker, making baked goods from scratch. “Anyone in the food industry can tell you, you’re either a cook or a baker. Cooks hate to follow directions, and baking is, basically, directions and math. I’ve been learning a lot and
I love it.”
Elliott attributes the success of The Damn Tasty to her community. “All of the people in my life who have helped make The Damn Tasty even possible—family, friends, staff, even clients and Damn Tasty customers I’ve had since the beginning. It has definitely contributed to our success.”

Apothik

Maria Norberg purchased Grounded Specialty Coffee in downtown La Crosse in 2011, knowing the empty lot next to it held a lot of potential. She gave herself space to learn how to run a beloved business and room to grow. She had no idea just how much growth lay ahead for her.

“I fell in love with La Crosse while attending Viterbo University,” she says. After purchasing Grounded, “the goal was always to do a big restaurant and name it Apothik.”

The name Apothik comes from Grounded’s history as an apothecary in the 1860s. Norberg was busy moving forward with building plans and new staff when she learned another neighbor held an easement on the lot property. What followed was a lawsuit that went on for two years.

Not wanting to lose momentum, Norberg adapted. “With all things, plans change and grow. We knew we had people in place, and we were ready and committed.” So, thanks to her nimble thinking, Norberg launched the Apothik food truck in July 2015.

“Apothik slowly and surely grew into a strong brand,” says Norberg, “and the drive to do the restaurant wasn’t the same after the legal battle. I decided to invest in Grounded.”

Invest she did. Norberg and team expanded the coffee shop with an outdoor patio and added beer and wine to their menu. She also learned more about the food truck industry by attending food truck fairs in Minneapolis, and she brought chef Nathan Wang to the team. “We work really well together, and he deserves a shout-out for his ability to create really interesting, unique and accessible food for a frequently changing menu.”

Apothik strives to offer as much locally sourced, seasonal and organic food as possible. Its menu typically changes every few weeks to keep ingredients fresh and in season. Some menu favorites of Norberg’s include an Asian-inspired burrito called the Wangton Burrito, named for its chef and creator, as well as any of their ramen bowls. “I look forward to the marinated egg on that dish,” she says.

Norberg’s success comes from her business model. “I thrive on change. While having a fast-changing menu is more work, we’ve figured out how to do that successfully and make it stand out. Plus, it’s also better and healthier for you. It’s a niche for us, and people look forward to it.”

The job isn’t easy. “Basically it’s a kitchen on wheels,” she laughs. “It’s a challenging environment with high heat, sharp knives and small space. The main challenges are always operational and making sure things run smoothly. But I thrive on challenges and troubleshoot to find the right solution.”

And, there’s more ahead! “The dream is still to do more,” says Norberg, who has purchased another building downtown that will serve as a brick-and-mortar kitchen allowing Apothik to more easily cater to events and deliver food. “We want to make sure we’re delivering what people want. We’re working with different businesses on catering for them so we’re open all year long.”

SHOYU RAMEN BROTH

Apothik

Makes 10 servings
2 T sesame oil
2 yellow onions, roughly chopped
1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 bunch green onions (6-8 onions)
4 oz. cremini mushrooms
4 oz. shiitake mushrooms
1/2 oz. kombu (or nori sheet)
4 oz. sake

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<td>Cremini mushrooms</td>
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<td>Kombu or nori sheet</td>
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Wine with Intention

Living your best life every day often starts with the first step of trying to live in the moment. Put the screen down. Be in the present. These practices help you to not only be mindful of where you are, but also what you are doing. Take time to love what you put into your body—wine included. Experience your wine. Completely change your perspective and savor every drop.

Look. Smell. Feel. Taste. The attributes you sense tell you where the grapes came from and how the wine was made. Your senses communicate everything you need to know ... all you have to do is listen to them and enjoy.

Hungarian Mushroom Soup

**The Damn Tasty**

1 gallon water
2 oz. soy sauce
4 oz. honey
2 oz. rice wine vinegar
3 T vegetable base
Salt to taste

Heat sesame oil in a large stockpot. Add onions and carrots and sauté over high heat until heavily browned, 5-10 minutes. Add green onions and mushrooms and cook for 1 minute, then add kombu. Deglaze the pan with sake. Stir and cook until slightly reduced. Add water and simmer on low heat for 2 hours.

Strain broth, discard “leftovers.” Return broth to stove. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Taste and adjust any seasonings according to taste.

To make Shoyu Ramen: In a separate pot, cook your choice of ramen or udon noodles according to package instructions. Place noodles in a serving bowl, top with shoyu broth, and add desired toppings, such as fresh scallions, sliced radish, sautéed mushrooms, blanched vegetables, soft boiled egg, protein of choice, sesame seeds, chili oil, etc.

2 T butter
1 large onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 container of mushrooms, chopped

2 tsp. paprika
Small handful of fresh dill, chopped
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. black pepper
4 T butter, divided
3 T flour
1 cup heavy cream or half-and-half
2 cups beef broth
3-4 dashes soy sauce
½ cup sour cream

Melt 2 T butter in a small pan. Sauté the onions. Add garlic and sauté for another minute. Add mushrooms and sauté until the mushrooms release their juices.

Add 2 T butter to the mushroom mix and stir in the flour, constantly whisking for several minutes until the mixture is slightly starting to brown. Add the cream, broth and soy sauce, still whisking until the soup starts to slightly thicken. Add the paprika, dill, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, cover and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in the sour cream. Serve with a bit more chopped fresh dill.

Jess Witkins is a writer, blogger and storyteller. Her mission: making pathetic look cool since 1985. She can often be found wordmongering in the Coulee Region’s many coffee shops.

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2016 Wisconsin Winery of the Year!

www.crwmagazine.com FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020 33
Their passion is cars. Collecting cars, repairing cars—even photographing cars, there are plenty of women in the Coulee Region who make cars their business, their hobby and their drive. We'd like to introduce you to a few of them, all amazing in their knowledge of autos and love for great cars.

A couple and their cars
Stacey Mcllquham of La Crosse is one of these car enthusiasts. This 45-year-old La Crosse-area native is a physical education teacher at Blessed Sacrament Elementary School. She's in her 21st year of teaching and enjoys working with children, but she really loves her afterschool hobby: her car collection. She currently has a classic Toyota 4Runner (“Ole Reliable,” which is 20 years old), a 2012 Ford Mustang (her “fun” summer car) and a new 2019 Jeep Wrangler (her “adventurous” vehicle).

“My husband, Curt (Mac), and I don’t have children, but we have our extended family … and our cars,” says Mcllquham.

The couple has five cars in all. Mcllquham drives the Wrangler, but in the spring she unleashes the Toyota and the Mustang, which gets driven the most.

“The Mustang is the one we take on trips,” says Mcllquham. “It’s great on gas mileage, and we can fit two sets of golf clubs in that trunk.”

Mcllquham’s passion for cars took her by surprise. “Mac and I often ride bikes around La Crosse-area car lots, and early on I became intrigued by the different cars we looked at,” she says. “I educated myself on the many I liked and ended up purchasing some.”

Mcllquham found the Mustang in 2013 at Brenengen Auto in West Salem and the Wrangler in 2019 at Chrysler Winona. “We bought the Toyota from a private seller through Toyota of La Crosse,” she says.

Mcllquham has had a blast driving all three of them. In December, she and her husband participated in the annual Jeep charity food drive in La Crosse, in which 28 Jeeps were decorated with holiday lights and driven through the Rotary Lights display. The participants brought in 3,600 food items for area food banks.

“I have gained a lot of knowledge about cars over the years,” says Mcllquham. “But I didn’t get here all on my own; for example, before this year’s Jeep charity drive, Morgan, an auto technician at Pischke Motors, did a great job educating our group on Jeeps.”

The pit crew
Mcllquham likes to think of Morgan Hampe as part of her pit crew, as her vehicles wouldn’t be what they are without this special group of women.

Hampe started working at Pischke in April 2019, and she absolutely loves it. This friendly 28-year-old is a self-dubbed Jeep geek, who was born and raised in La Crosse and is a graduate of the Automotive Technician program at Western Technical College.

“I grew up loving to work on cars,” Hampe says. “My dad and I would tinker and build things together, and we’d do some car work. I love working with my hands and love keeping busy, so becoming an auto technician made perfect sense.”

Hampe first went to Pischke to special-order her Jeep Wrangler,
which led to an on-the-spot interview for a technician position. “There were never any problems or prejudice,” Hampe recalls. “I am just one of the guys!”

Hampe’s Jeep Wrangler is pretty hard to miss. “It has a 2-inch lift kit, 35-inch tires, it’s green and has a six-speed manual drive,” she says. “I have Loki on the dash, military stars, Lord of the Rings and Avengers details, Supernatural decals and a Captain America spare tire cover. There’s nothing like driving around in the summer, playing music with the top down and the wind whipping all around you.”

Car lovers everywhere
The other members of Mcllquham’s pit crew are Jennifer Donley, the manager at Advanced Auto Parts on Losey Boulevard in La Crosse, and Jordana Snyder, Mcllquham’s car-session photographer.

“Both of these women are experts in their fields but also share the passion I have for cars,” says Mcllquham. “Snyder used to be a technician at Honda Motorwërks in La Crosse, and in high school she rebuilt a car with her father, so she knows her stuff. I got to know Donley over the years, as she has helped me countless times in the store when I have questions. She always has the answers!”

Mcllquham’s journey is a wonderful example of how an intrigue can develop and grow into a fantastic hobby. It’s also a testament how women can form an uncommon bond and break a stereotype. Women stuck in neutral? Nope. Definitely moving forward.

Heidi Overson’s car is close to hitting 145,000 miles, but, like the women in this story, she’s completely devoted to it. You can find Overson in the Internet world at www.createsegue.com.
Linda Riddle—community activist, artist, mother, grandmother, wife—was an extraordinary Coulee Region woman known for her advocacy of women experiencing domestic violence and her passion for honoring their stories. She passed away after surgery for a brain aneurysm on August 12, 2019, at the age of 65.

During her lifetime, Riddle received many honors, including the 1996 Chrysalis Center Woman of the Year Award, the 2004 Glass Ceiling Award from the Minnesota Women’s Consortium and the 2009 Virginia McKnight Binger Human Service Award. In October 2019, Riddle was the first woman to receive the Roberta Zurn Award posthumously. All of these awards are given in honor of commitment to social justice and to empowering women who are impacted by cultural inequities.

Riddle’s commitment came from her personal experience of domestic abuse and becoming a single mother of two children. She didn’t try to leave that experience behind; instead, she used it to bring transformation to the lives of other women and improve the support and resources offered to those experiencing domestic abuse. “Linda had the ability to create beauty in all aspects of her life,” Riddle’s daughter, Celeste Mader, observes.

Hired in 1992 to be the director of Hokah County Resource Center (now Bluff Country Family Resources), Riddle believed strongly in honoring the stories of individuals. “Linda would have loved the term herstory for an article,” Mader adds. “It was a term that she used often.”

Building a groundswell

Riddle was a trailblazer for culture change through advocacy and education, and she hoped to build a “groundswell” with others.

In 2007, Riddle expanded her efforts to Duluth, Minnesota, as executive director of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program and later as manager of the Safe Harbor Program. She later worked with international partners in Russia, Singapore, Cuba, Colombia and Kurdistan to make the world a better place through education.

The work Riddle did was understandably stressful. In a model example of self-care, she returned to her home community to be closer to family and became the Member Services Outreach Manager at the People’s Food Co-op. Co-op general manager Lizzy Haywood remembers Riddle as someone who “put her whole self into her work.” Co-op marketing specialist Kevin Ducey remembers how Riddle used her position at the co-op to continue to work for social justice. “She organized and facilitated memorable International Women’s Day events and classes and outings for women and children,” he says.

Riddle also impacted the Co-op by making connections within the community—with minorities, with farmers and with others who may not otherwise have been given opportunities. Patrons would often stop by the Co-op just for the chance to visit with her.

Riddle was a pillar and an inspiration to her family, too. She absolutely adored her two grandchildren, Aaiden and Odessa. She had a wonderful sense of humor and delighted in making her family laugh. Riddle loved to garden and was able to grow beautiful flower and vegetable gardens everywhere she lived. She especially took joy in harvesting, preserving and preparing delicious food. She took solace in nature, and some of her favorite times of year were the annual monarch butterfly and tundra swan migrations.

Doing the right thing

As often happens when we lose someone who has tirelessly worked for the common good, the community steps up to recognize, remember and honor that goodness. In November 2019, YWCA La Crosse presented its first Linda Riddle Community Activist Award to Joella Striebel. Mader says that Riddle would be pleased that the work to create the “groundswell” of change will be taken up by others.

Mader says that Riddle “was just doing what she knew needed to be done and was the right thing to do.” Riddle was a woman who effectively brought change to communities. Even as she went into surgery for the aneurysm, she expressed a wish that “everyone could just be kind to each other.”

Kathleen Wallace is a resident of La Crosse and an occasional contributor to Coulee Region Women.
Royal Bank is pleased to welcome Susan Weber as a loan officer at their Viroqua location. Susan has a deep understanding of the community banking landscape. Her favorite things about being a community banker are the excitement of helping first-time buyers own a home and talking with young people about loans and credit. Her philosophy is that everyone deserves to be treated with respect.

Weber has immersed herself in the Viroqua community, including volunteering with the Driftless Humane Society and the Vernon Women’s Alliance. She enjoys watching the Packers, golfing, hiking, biking and spending time with her husband, their yellow lab, their kids and their grandkids.

Weber can be reached at 608-637-3142 or sweber@royalbank-usa.com.

Naturally Unbridled Wellness is proud to welcome to its team one of the top Functional Nutritionists in the country, Susan Barendregt, MNT, BCHN. Barendregt provides in-office and virtual functional nutrition consultations and lab reviews.

Barendregt was vice president of the National Association of Nutrition Professionals from 2017 to 2019. Board-certified in Holistic Nutrition, she is a Certified Master Nutrition Therapist and a Certified Herbal Therapist.

Functional nutrition is a practice that understands wellness is more than the absence of disease; rather, it is a state of ease and optimal functioning. It is the goal of a functional nutritionist to help you reach that state. Learn more at www.naturallyunbridled.com.

Altra Federal Credit Union recently won the Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award, which recognizes a credit union or chapter/multiple credit union group for social responsibility and charitable projects that support its community. Altra won the Wisconsin Credit Union League award for the inaugural Altra Gives Back Day initiative in which employees helped 36 organizations by volunteering over 1,300 hours in one day. In addition to volunteering in the community, employees created blankets for Project Linus, assembled activity kits for CMN Hospitals, put together personal hygiene kits for local shelters and wrote letters to soldiers stationed overseas.

Winona Health’s Cancer Care Program has been accredited since 2013. Learn more at www.winonhealth.org/cancercare.
What’s Your Drive?

One word can define your style and your intention for 2020.

Photos by Kristina Olson Photography and Jordana Snyder Photography

Ease

Uncomplicated, comfortable, peaceful—nothing spells out style like an outfit you feel completely yourself in. Soft knits, neutral colors and classic denim sum it up in this ensemble from Drifting Boutique in Viroqua. Modeled by Ava Olson; photo by Kristina Olson Photography.

BB Dakota cardigan, $108.00; Paige Denim mid-rise ultra skinny jeans, $189; Sub_Urban Riot V-neck T-shirt, $38.
Vision

It is 2020, after all. And what better way to showcase your unique outlook for the year than with bright patterns combined with classic staples and eye-catching footwear? All this from Urban Shoetique in La Crosse. Modeled by Connie Peter, owner of Urban Shoetique, La Crosse; photo by Jordana Snyder Photography.

Yana K “Milan” cardigan, $130; Liverpool pull-on high-rise skinny jeans, $89; Melania Clara bracelets, $55; Irregular Choice “Star Light” sneakers, $125.

Action

This is the year to take charge—you know your goals and you are prepared to act on them. A bold splash of color makes a statement; a structured denim jacket paired with flowing pants lends contrast and intrigue in spring wardrobe staples from Mainstream Boutique in Onalaska. Modeled by Kimberly Bentzen-Tabbert, owner of Mainstream Boutique; photo by Jordana Snyder Photography.

Liverpool jean jacket, $98; Easel pant/skirt combo, $49; Down East top, $32; Alex and Ani necklace, $88; Alex and Ani bracelets, various prices.
Friday, April 3rd  4 - 8 pm
Our charming shops invite you to kick off the season with open houses to discover new spring fashions, products, and fun!

April 3rd-5th  All Weekend
Celebrate springtime in the city. Enjoy great dining, food and beverage tours, art, music and more throughout downtown!
Yours to Explore
La Crosse Regional
AIRPORT

JOIN US...
SEPT. 12, 2020
Walk for local breast cancer research, programs and services at Gundersen Health System

Walkin’ Pink

Celebrate 15
2006–2020

Steppin’ Out
in Pink

GUNDSEN MEDICAL FOUNDATION

JOIN US...
SATURDAY
SEPT. 12
2020
Walk for local breast cancer research, programs and services at Gundersen Health System

Steppin’ Out In Pink.org

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GARY MICHAELS

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DAVE KENNEDY

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Have you ever wanted to rewind a part of your life and do it over? Maybe it was a certain day you’d like to live differently or a particular memory that was so enjoyable that you’d like to relive it? Most of us don’t get the chance to do that, but Cheryl Armstrong of Kendall, Wisconsin, got together with an old friend this past fall to do just that and kick an item off their bucket list.

Back in 1978, college roommates Armstrong, originally of Tomah, and Jessica Clark, now of Waukesha, departed Wisconsin and drove to Modesto, California, then down the coast to stay with Clark’s uncle in Los Angeles. This was quite an adventure for two young women in what Armstrong describes as a “crappy AMC Matador.” Over time, as the years and the miles spanned between them, they always talked about “doing it right someday”—driving the iconic Route 66 in a convertible, the way it was meant to be driven.

This September, they did just that. With a detailed itinerary, a dashboard full of maps and a trunk full of enthusiasm, they hopped in Armstrong’s newer Camaro SS convertible, left from Chicago, where Route 66 originates, and in 20 days drove the route to its end at the Santa Monica Pier.

Heading out

They knew the trip was going to be sensational right from the start. In Chicago, they met several other enthused drivers who were starting the same trek and were just as excited as they were. “We met four guys from the Netherlands, a couple from France and numerous other folks we kept running into along the way to California,” Armstrong says, “including a guy from Canada on a motorcycle and others from Belgium and Spain.”

They followed their itinerary but veered from it if they saw something more they wanted to see or tour. They took in everything they could in the time they had, starting with the Lincoln sites in Springfield, Illinois; the Gateway Arch and Anheuser-Busch tour in St. Louis; and Meramec Caverns in Missouri. They continued through the tip of Kansas, Oklahoma and the panhandle of Texas. Near McLean, Texas, they stopped at the Devil’s Rope Museum also known as the Barbed Wire Museum, mostly for a laugh and a nod to Armstrong’s significant other, Dennis, who is a farmer. “Turns out,” Armstrong recalls, “it was the most interesting place, and we spent a lot more time there than we had planned!”

They continued through northern New Mexico, where they explored the Petrified Forest and the Painted Desert. One memorable evening, they stopped in Tucumcari and spent the night in the Safari Motel, a retro 1960s motel. The motel owners recommended a restaurant, but when the women arrived, the place was packed. As they stood around with other waiting customers, the hostess told them she had a table for 10, and if they didn’t mind sharing, they could all be seated together. They all agreed, and Armstrong says they had the best time visiting with dinner companions from New York, Iowa and Florida.

Off the beaten path

While traveling through Arizona, they visited the Grand Canyon and went off the beaten path to see the London Bridge in Lake Havasu City. They also did the section of road near Kingman, Arizona, called “Hair-raising Road.” Armstrong didn’t think it was that hair-raising, though, after driving roads here in the Coulee Region.

Although these highlights were memorable, Armstrong also recalls the “kitschy” little places they stopped at. “I don’t think people realize how much there is to see in this country,” she says. “There are so many unique American places along the way—lots of Route 66 museums with old cars, what was happening during this era or that era, where this celebrity stopped or lived, little places with the oddest stuff. And most were free.”
People, past and present

Armstrong and Clark had not spent much time together since they both were married decades ago, so this trip was not only a chance to relive a time from their past, but a time to renew their friendship. “Twenty days on the road with someone is a long time, so make sure it’s with someone you’re compatible with,” advises Armstrong. “We had the greatest time and called ourselves Thelma and Louise.”

When asked what her favorite part of the trip was besides spending quality time with Clark, Armstrong answers, “Meeting people from across the world. Everyone was so nice and so enthused to be on this trek, like we were. We ran into a classic car club from Alabama that was doing the route in sections. They would do one section one year, then come back and do another section another year. That makes it doable for people who can’t take three weeks or so to do it all at once.”

Was there anything she didn’t like about the trip? “The traffic in LA,” Armstrong says. “It is as horrendous as they say. But there’s no avoiding it.”

Armstrong admits they overpacked, as most of us do for any trip. They took way too many guidebooks, clothes and even a cooler that they never used since they stopped so often. Armstrong said the only book they really needed was Jerry McClanahan’s EZ66 Guide for Travelers, which is the bible for anyone traveling Route 66. It is laid out with maps, side trips, historical markers, hints and more.

Would Armstrong recommend driving the iconic Route 66? “Yes” she says. “Definitely do it—and maybe even add on two more weeks if you can spare the time so you can get out and stretch more and get off the beaten path.” Her best advice, though: “Enjoy the drive!”

Christine Hall has done plenty of road trips, traveling east and west and all around the Coulee Region. But after hearing Cheryl’s adventures, she’s up for a Route 66 excursion.
ON GOING EVENTS

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

Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW)
4th Tues. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant,
Women’s Alliance of La Crosse (WAL)
shopkins@couleebank.net.

La Crosse Rotary
every Thurs. noon-1 p.m., Radisson Center, www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org.

La Crosse Toastmasters Club
2nd and 4th Tues. of each month, 7 p.m., La Crosse County Administrative Building, 212 6th St. N., Room 100, La Crosse, 411.toastmastersclubs.org.

NAMI Family Support Group
2nd Mon. of each month, 6:30 p.m., Family and Children’s Center, 1707 Main St., La Crosse.

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

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., Goodwill, La Crosse.

Set Me Free Shop,
Saturdays & Sundays, 30 minutes before & after services. First Free Church, 123 Mason St., Onalaska. Also available by appt. 608-782-6022.

Valley View Rotary,
every Wed., 7:30-8:30 a.m., La Crosse Famous Dave’s, http://www.valleyviewrotary.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 Empowering Women (WEW)
last Wed., Hospital, Taylor Conf. Rm., Lower Level, Viroqua.

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

Women’s Alliance of La Crosse (WAL)
2nd Thurs. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant, Visit www.womensalliancelacrosse.com for more information.

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

CALENDAR EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Feb. 5-9, Frozen River Film Festival,

Feb. 7-9, Downtown La Crosse Winter Days,

Feb. 8, Coulee Blues and Brews
starring Anthony Gomes and with special guests Sena Efrhardt & Cole Allen, 8:30 p.m., Lyche Theatre, Weber Center for the Performing Arts.


Feb. 9, Legendary Ladies of Country Music, 7:30 p.m.,

Feb. 11, Lulu Washington Dance Theatre, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.


Feb. 12, AARP’s What’s Brewin’ Wednesday, 4-6 p.m.,
Pearl Street Brewery, www.aarp.org/lacrosse.

Feb. 13, Art Reception, 6-7:30 p.m., The Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.

Feb. 14, Billy McGuigan’s “Rock Twist,” 7:30 p.m.,

Feb. 18, The Choir of Man, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Feb. 20-23, 9 to 5: The Musical, 7:30 p.m.
Thurs.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sun., Page Theatre, Saint Mary’s Performance Center, Winona.

Feb. 20, Two and the Night and the Music: An Evening of Jazz with Dave Mark and Tim Harrison, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Feb. 21, Sweetheart Dance, 7-9 p.m., YMCA-North, Onalaska, www.lawymca.org

Feb. 21, An American in Paris, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Feb. 21, Celebrating Her Heart Health Luncheon, 11:30-1 p.m.,

Feb. 22-23, La Crosse Chamber Chorale Performance, 7:30 p.m.
Sat., 3 p.m. Sun., Mary of the Angels Chapel.
www.chamberchorale.org.

Feb. 23, Chicken Que and Bake Sale, The American Cancer Society Sole Burner of Chaseburg,

Feb. 13, Art Reception, 6-7:30 p.m., The Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.

Mar. 14, Chili Cookoff and Bake Sale,

Mar. 14, Uptown Girls, 7:30 p.m.,

Mar. 17, Goitse, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

Mar. 21, Night Fever: The Bee Gees Tribute, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.


Mar. 26, Art Reception, 6-7:30 p.m.,

Mar. 28, Coulee Hoolie Ceili Dance Fundraiser and Irish Night, 6-10 p.m.,
American Legion Hall.

Mar. 28, Women’s Fund Spring Fling, 10-1 p.m.,

Mar. 28, Holler Bingo for Scholars, Coulee Region Professional Women fundraiser, 5-8 p.m.,

Mar. 29, Jim Witter’s The Long and Winding Road: The Songs and Stories Behind the Music of John Lennon and Paul McCartney, 7:30 p.m.,
Viterbo Fine Arts Center.

APRIL

Apr. 3, Downtown La Crosse Spring Fling Open House, 4-8 p.m., www.lacrossedowntown.com.

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