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AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

A SENSE OF TIME

Tracy Littlejohn Links Ho-Chunk Past,
Present & Future



The Future of Health Care Education

It's Time for Women at Fort McCoy

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Pictured on the cover and above left: Tracy Littlejohn of La Crosse. Photos by Frontier Photography at La Crosse Area Heritage Center.

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It flies. It crawls. It catches up to us. It even warps.

Time.

For many of us, it dictates nearly everything we do in a day, from the morning alarm to meeting reminders, deadlines and trying to “beat the buzzer.” We try all kinds of tricks to save it, but too seldom savor it.

I’ve always been fascinated by how my own perception of time has changed over the years. Oddly, the 1960s don’t seem any longer ago to me now than they did when I learned about the social upheaval of the time in a history class, though it has now been much longer since I took that class than the time that passed between the moon landing and my high school graduation.

And as I approach one of those landmark birthdays in May (you know, the kind that are frequently celebrated with black decorations and only half-funny jokes), I can see the truth in the statement often shared with struggling parents that “the days are long, but the years are short.” I struggle to understand how the numbers can correspond with my perception that so many things were just the other day, or maybe a couple years ago, when in reality decades have passed.

But no matter how we perceive time, we can’t escape its passage or the impact that times past have had on today’s life.

That impact is one our cover woman Tracy Littlejohn (Cooṇinaḗjwǐ, pronounced Cho neenh nahn zheenh winh) feels deeply. While many aspects of her Ho-Chunk heritage have been lost, or nearly lost, through time, she is dedicated to reclaiming them while recognizing how the past directly impacts the lives she and her contemporaries live today. Whether she is advocating for social justice or developing exhibits for the La Crosse Area Heritage Center, Littlejohn won’t let either the beauty of her heritage or the tragedy of generational trauma dating back hundreds of years be forgotten. She honors the past, while working for a brighter future for the youth and adults she encounters through a variety of roles in the tribe and in the larger community.

Her sense of time stretches beyond her own experience.

Our stories look at others who are creating ways to keep us, today, linked to the past. Norskedalen shares stories that director Lori Dubczak hopes will inspire current and future generations to overcome challenges, just as their ancestors did. Devon Lee turns her talents to preserving history that stretches across millennia, introducing us, through art and science, to the lives of those who have gone before.

We also look ahead to what the future holds for women in military and civilian leadership, for health care education and more. As these women share ways to make the most of our time when juggling multiple commitments and diverse responsibilities, we also hear reminders that time is not only for striving, rushing and counting. Time is for exploring, laughing and connecting with family, friends and nature.

But I’ll wait just a little longer—though the calendar says I’m almost eligible—before I connect with the hardwood in a game of basketball by bygone rules. I’m not yet ready to be a granny.

Shari

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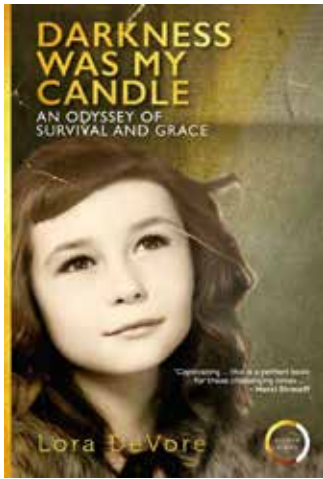
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STORIES OF “GRIT AND GRACE”

Four amazing women will share their personal stories of resilience and faith during the Franciscan Spirituality Center’s annual women’s conference, *Overcoming Challenges With Grit and Grace*, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 6, at the center, 920 Market Street in La Crosse.

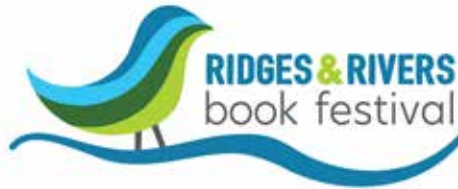
The keynote speaker is Lora DeVore, an author, therapist, educator and catalyst for transformational change for both health-care individuals and institutions. DeVore is a survivor of abuse, sex trafficking, illegal pharmaceutical drug research and institutional abuse.

Her memoir, *Darkness Was My Candle: An Odyssey of Survival and Grace*, recounts these horrific experiences but also tells a story of transcendence, healing and the possibility of living a luminous life.

Additional presenters include:

- Kathleen Jensen of Onalaska, who will share her story of depression, CPTSD, anxiety and suicidality. She went years not wanting to live, not thinking anything would ever get better and having no hope of a better future. After years of intensive therapy, she has finally started to see that the light at the end of the tunnel is not a train headed straight toward her.
- Cheryl Killilea of Wildwood, Missouri, formerly from the Coulee Region, will demonstrate that regardless of past experiences, by improving our overall wellness we can move forward and live a life full of purpose and help others in the process.
- Jodie Rubenzer of River Falls, Wisconsin, will share the power of redemptive love through the heartbreak and joys of adoption.

Cost is \$50-\$65 per person, and lunch is included. Overnight accommodations are available for an extra charge. Register at www.FSCenter.org or call 608-791-5295.



CELEBRATE BOOKS AND WRITING IN THE DRIFTLESS

The Driftless Writing Center and the McIntosh Memorial Library are pleased to announce the creation of the Ridges & Rivers Book Festival. The event will be held April 28-30 in Viroqua.

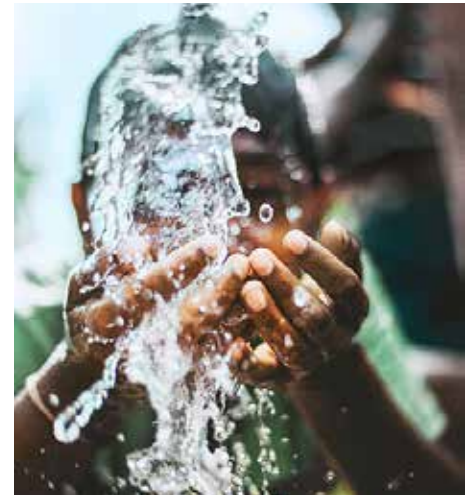
The festival has an expansive calendar of events that can be viewed on the event website at www.ridgesanddriversbookfestival.org. All events are free of charge except for two writing workshops and food purchased from event vendors.

Friday, April 28, we welcome Dasha Kelly Hamilton with her one-woman show “Makin’ Cake” to the historic Temple Theatre at 7 p.m. Yes, there will be cake!

Saturday, April 29, will be the biggest day with authors, booksellers and representatives from independent presses located inside the library lobby, at Western Technical College and at the Viroqua Eagles Club. There will be authors to meet, presentations to join, workshops to attend and food to enjoy. The McIntosh Memorial Library will host events for children and families including gaming, readings, Comic-Con, a magician and more. The featured author will be Kao Kalia Yang with two presentations scheduled at the historic Temple Theatre.

Sunday, April 30, will begin with a pancake breakfast at the United Methodist Church followed by a celebration of poetry at the McIntosh Memorial Library with featured poets Franciszka Voeltz, Angela Trudell Vasquez and Nikki Wallschlaeger.

To register, visit the event website at www.ridgesanddriversbookfestival.org and sign up for the festival newsletter. You can also visit the event Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RidgesandRiversBF> or call 608-637-7151 x 8.



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Resoul Day Spa in Onalaska is celebrating its third annual Earth Month by partnering with the Aveda to support efforts to supply clean and safe water throughout the world. In April (Earth Month), Resoul Day Spa will provide numerous opportunities to support clean water nonprofits Alliance for the Great Lakes and charity: water. Resoul will offer reusable totes filled with swag from local businesses for purchase, as well a “local experience” card featuring 20 local businesses; 100 percent of the proceeds raised will go directly to clean water efforts.

Aveda strives to set an example for environmental leadership and responsibility, and Earth Day provides a special opportunity to spread greater awareness of clean water efforts. Aveda partners with charity: water to provide access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to people in developing countries, and with Alliance for the Great Lakes to support our regional supply of fresh water.

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EXPECT MORE



Tracy Littlejohn of La Crosse is a member of the La Crosse County Historical Society Board and the guest curator of the Ho-Chunk history exhibit at the La Crosse Area Heritage Center, which includes these moccasins that belonged to her grandfather.

On Being a Ho-Chunk Woman

La Crosse's Tracy Littlejohn recounts and rebuilds a cultural history lost over time.

BY JANIS JOLLY | PHOTO BY FRONTIER PHOTOGRAPHY

Strong.

For Tracy Littlejohn, this word expresses the past and future of Native women who have come full circle as powerful people in their community.

Littlejohn, a contemporary Ho-Chunk woman (her Ho-Chunk name is Coonįnažiwj, pronounced Cho neenh nahn zheenh winh), uses her unique perspective on tribal history to enrich the lives of other Indigenous people and to educate the general population. Her motivation is twofold: her need to connect on a deeper level with traditional values and to show how things have changed for Native people since Europeans migrated to North America.

LOOKING BACK

Littlejohn's interest in history goes back to her childhood. "I wish I would have had more time with my grandparents," she says. Instead, with a fascination piqued even by the cryptic clues of the

annual Oktoberfest medallion hunt, she learned about the history of her culture and heritage in the La Crosse area through reading and through work with the cultural resources division of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

"We didn't get to learn about (our heritage) in school, so I had to do it on my own," she says, often having to interpret the real story from old articles written from a standpoint that was highly slanted or completely missing Native perspectives on history.

What she learned shapes her approach to preserving that history now.

"Contact with European culture changed the way Native men and women lived together," she says. "Huge changes took place in a short period of time to a people who had lived here for hundreds of years."

FORCED MOVES, CHANGING ROLES

"Traditionally, Ho-Chunk men and women had completely equal

but different roles,” Littlejohn explains. “Women were in charge of the home. They owned the home and everything in it. Men were protectors, who hunted and fished to support the family and tribes. ... Women were held in high esteem because we bring forth life like the Creator.”

Jesuit missionaries who came to convert Native populations in the 1600s brought attitudes interpreted from Old Testament texts that said men were the head of household and women were helpmates. The roles were not equal.

For the Ho-Chunk, the change away from the traditional way of life intensified with the social trauma of removal to reservations. “The first removal took us to Iowa in the 1830s,” Littlejohn explains. Later moves took the tribe to northern Minnesota, South Dakota and Nebraska. “With each move, the reservations got smaller. The government insisted the people live in stick-built houses and that children went to school. They taught the men to farm, which took away their traditional roles as hunters and fishermen,” Littlejohn says.

The harshest blow to Native culture came with residential boarding schools starting in the 1870s. Native children were removed from their homes and forced to live at the schools, as though they were orphans. The purpose of the schools was assimilation, not accommodation. The schools aimed to do away with Native language, history and values. Many Native children were adopted by white families, another step away from traditional lifestyle.

The moves and schools also left the people scattered; Littlejohn’s grandmother was born on the reservation in Nebraska, but her grandfather grew up in Wisconsin. She says it is hard to find information on the entire experience of the tribe throughout the forced relocations, something she would like to remedy someday by writing a comprehensive book on the topic.

RECLAIMING CULTURE

“In every tribe, some maintain traditional beliefs, and some are more assimilated,” Littlejohn says. Many women lead efforts to preserve culture and language and to educate others about climate and social justice issues. “The experience of leadership helps Native women realize that they come from strength and are equal with men,” she says.

Following her work with the cultural resources division, Littlejohn has continued to be a voice for her culture and people in the



Tracy Littlejohn educates students on Ho-Chunk culture at the La Crosse Area Heritage Center. Photo courtesy of the La Crosse County Historical Society.

community, serving several years on the board of directors for the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and currently on the board of the La Crosse County Historical Society, where she has been the guest curator for the Ho-Chunk history exhibit at the La Crosse Area Heritage Center.

“So much of (our culture) has been lost through all of the different things that have been done to us,” she says, and she is passionate about bringing the history and culture back to share with her hometown. Littlejohn grew up in La Crosse and earned a bachelor’s degree in public policy at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

While her current professional role is as director of Housing and Public Works for the Ho-Chunk Nation in Tomah, she has also worked closely with youth at the Three Rivers House in La Crosse, where she strove to connect young people with their heritage.

“I want them to know who they are as a Native youth,” she says.

WOMEN IN PERIL

Littlejohn is also a strong advocate for justice for her community, raising awareness about concerns such as missing and murdered Indigenous women. The FBI’s National Crime Information Center reported 5,203 missing Indigenous girls and women in 2021. This is two and a half times their estimated share of the U.S. population.

Littlejohn says complexities in the criminal justice system around jurisdiction on tribal lands, including a need for FBI involvement, which is often lacking in the rural areas where many reservations are located, has failed these women. She says it is a continuation of the exploitation of women and children that can be traced to the boarding schools that created intergenerational traumas of addiction, sexual assault and mental illness.

LANGUAGE CONNECTS PRESENT WITH THE PAST

Today, Ho-Chunk people live in two worlds, balancing living in the dominant culture with traditional ways that are important to them. Language preservation is vital to keeping the culture alive, with the Ho-Chunk language being taught in schools in Wisconsin Dells, Black River Falls and Tomah, as well as online. Littlejohn is learning the Ho-Chunk language and did her best to share it with youth while working at Three Rivers House.

“I wish I could speak better. Without our language, we aren’t Ho-Chunk anymore,” Littlejohn says. “I am relearning the truth of myself as a Ho-Chunk woman.” As a strong woman. As Cooninaḻiwj. **CRW**

Janis Jolly is a freelance writer living in La Crosse. She has long been interested in Native American history.

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Brilliant Bodywork has moved to our new home at 400 4th Street North in La Crosse and we invite you to come and celebrate with us. Our Celebration on Fourth Event will be held June 1st starting at 6:00 PM. There will be live music with the Coulee Region Steel Drum Band and Tom Conrad. There will also be hors d'oeuvres, and over \$10,000 in giveaways that night. This is a night you will not want to miss.

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Liane Haun, director of public works, U.S. Army Garrison Fort McCoy. U.S. Army photo by Chris Hanson.

It's About Time

Women take the lead in Fort McCoy's civilian operations.

BY SHARI HEGLAND | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

If you visit the Commemorative Area at Fort McCoy during the installation's annual Armed Forces Day open house May 20, you will see a depiction of the way life once was at the 114-year-old facility: male military officers and civilians in leadership roles, with female support staff on the periphery. But if you peek into today's meetings where decisions are made to guide the 60,000-acre Army post, you see women in key leadership positions directing U.S. Army Garrison Fort McCoy, the 500-person strong full-time civilian staff.

"We've experienced a change in the Army culture, even the world culture, over the last couple decades that allows us to see women in these seats at the table and for it to not be an unusual thing," says Bonnie Hilt, chief of resource management.

Put simply, Hilt and her colleagues Alexa Law-Blakeborough and Liane Haun oversee the finances, people and physical features of a facility with a \$2.5 billion per year impact on the local economy. Fort McCoy's tenants—military units and private service providers ranging from child care and recreation to grocery and restaurants—bring full-time on-site employment to nearly 2,500 in support of up to 150,000 military personnel who train at the base each year.

THE FACILITY

Haun, 43, has been at Fort McCoy since graduating from college

in 2003, first as a contracted entry-level engineer and now as director of public works since 2016. Her role: "If you picked up Fort McCoy, turned it upside down and shook it, everything still attached is what the Directorate of Public Works is responsible for."

That means all 1,400 buildings, the water and wastewater utilities, roads, refuse and recycling services and environmental impact. "It's very similar to being a director of public works in a community," she says, with one key difference. Every decision is focused on making Fort McCoy a premier training facility for the U.S. military.

As one example of how that overriding mandate impacts decisions, wildlife biologists in Haun's directorate are responsible for managing the deer herd on the facility in a way that will prevent degradation of the forested areas to provide the proper training environment for the fort's primary mission.

And missions can shift in a heartbeat, as when the fort mobilized in just days to house and serve nearly 13,000 refugees from Afghanistan in 2021.

THE PEOPLE

Law-Blakeborough's Directorate of Human Resources provides support for nearly every aspect of life for both civilian and military staff at Fort McCoy: ID cards, drug testing, workforce development



Bonnie Hilt, chief of resource management, U.S. Army Garrison Fort McCoy. U.S. Army photo by Chris Hanson.



Alexa Law-Blakeborough, director of human resources, U.S. Army Garrison Fort McCoy. U.S. Army photo by Chris Hanson.

and training, mobilization and demobilization, transition services for retiring veterans and myriad other personnel and administrative services for the total customer base.

Law-Blakeborough's career path reflects her passions for education, the military and serving others. Now entering her 25th year in the U.S. Army Reserve, she started her adult work life as a teacher in Madison but was mobilized in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For four years, she was a mobilized drill sergeant at Fort McCoy, training soldiers for service overseas. When the opportunity came to move her daughter to Sparta, she explored opportunities to remain in a civilian position once her activation ended, becoming a military technician at the installation post 10 years ago.

She went on to earn an MBA and was promoted to director of human resources in early 2022. At 43, Law-Blakeborough is not done with her education, eyeing a doctorate in servant leadership once she has settled into both her civilian leadership position and her current Army Reserve role as a command sergeant major.

THE FINANCES

Hilt, 42, also has experience both in and out of uniform, serving on active duty as a communications specialist before leaving the Army when her first child was born, only to join the Army Reserve just two months later. Her 23 years ranged from monitoring convoys in Iraq to human resources and finally commissioning as a finance officer.

She came to Fort McCoy in 2009 and began working for the Garrison in 2014 as a budget officer before becoming chief of resource management, roughly equivalent to a corporate CFO. "I oversee all of the spending, and we are also responsible for agreements with local entities and communities," she says, along with documenting staffing and equipment requirements, auditing, civilian payroll and more.

FINDING TIME

Law-Blakeborough shares a quote from writer Harvey Mackay with both her civilian staff and the soldiers she trains: "While time

is free, it is priceless. We cannot own it so we must use it wisely. While we cannot keep it, we must invest and spend it on one another, because once we've lost it, we can never get it back."

Wise use of time is essential for women with jobs that require balancing diverse roles, in addition to family life and Army Reserve commitments.

"Every morning, I take a new piece of paper and write on it the things I need to accomplish, knowing full well that I might only get one or two items complete with more priorities added before the end of the day," Haun says. She also believes firmly in trusting her staff and delegating tasks that fall within their field of expertise, rather than taking on everything herself.

While Law-Blakeborough jokes that sleep is optional, she credits her success in balancing her full-time job, family life, education and reserve obligations to prioritization, goal-setting and a little extra motivation from her daughter as they challenged each other to a friendly competition for the highest GPA.

"In the military, as I was coming up through the ranks, I wasn't just thinking about the next rank, but the one beyond that," she says. "It's always important to have a clear glidepath to your objective and know everything you need to get there."

Hilt, with seven children ages 3 to 21, says her strategy is to be present in the moment. "For me, the key has been just dedicating 100 percent to my job when I'm here at my job, and then as much as I'm able completely disconnecting and giving the same dedication to my family when I am home," she says.



She also credits the current culture of both the Army and civilian service. "The 'People First' approach the Army has adopted has been instrumental in helping me balance all my life's competing priorities," Hilt says. **CRW**

This story provided Coulee Region Women editor Shari Hegland with a deeper understanding of all that happens at Fort McCoy.

Into the garden we go!



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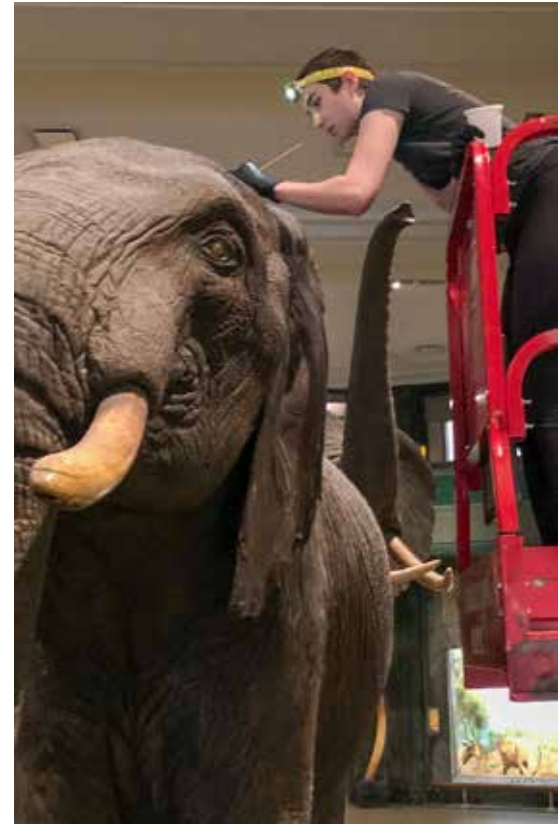
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A Fascination with Art and History

Devon Lee preserves the past for the future.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



As a student of the conservation of historic and artistic works at NYU, La Crosse native Devon Lee relishes her role at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where her work is instrumental to preserving natural history.

If you've ever visited the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City, you'll remember the Hall of Saurischian Dinosaurs, which displays America's most favorite specimens: *Tyrannosaurus rex*, *Allosaurus*, *Apatosaurus*. But even these mighty creatures require a bit of caretaking. The *Apatosaurus*, for instance, recently had a claw break from the armature supporting its foot. There to repair it was La Crosse's Devon Lee.

Lee has also had a hand in cleaning and rehousing the Museum's collection of dried corals, painstakingly cleaning taxidermy specimens from snowy owls to elephants, and—her absolute favorite—reattaching legs on tarantula specimens for permanent display in the forthcoming Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation at AMNH. "I pretended they were deformed hamsters," says the arachnophobe.

There's more than meets the eye to the career Lee is building as an art conservator, a path that has wound from La Crosse to New York, with stops in Malta and soon Italy and Denmark. It's a career born of love for art, nature, science and especially history.

A LIGHTNING STRIKE MOMENT

Now working on a dual master's degree—an MA in the History of Art and Archaeology and an MS in the Conservation of Historic and

Artistic Works—at New York University, Lee has taken full advantage of New York City and the opportunities it offers. "New York is the place to be for an emerging professional in this field," she says.

A Logan High School graduate born and raised in La Crosse, Lee began her coursework at the University of Minnesota. While working on a BFA degree in Drawing and Painting, she took a field trip to the Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) as part of an art history class. There, she found herself up close to original Audubon prints and Italian Renaissance paintings on easels being treated by conservation experts, and she had a "lightning strike moment," suddenly realizing this was a field that would merge her love of art and love of science. "I went back to the MACC conservators and interviewed them about a career in art conservation," she says. "They recommended NYU for graduate school." The rest, as they say, is history.

It certainly was for Lee, who spent her remaining year at U of M cramming in classes for an additional BA in Art History. Degrees in hand, "I bought a one-way ticket and moved to New York with a backpack and no place to live," she says. Once established, she took necessary classes in chemistry at a community college, applied to the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and became one of only six applicants accepted to the program that year.

RESPECTING THE LIFE OF AN OBJECT

The modern philosophy of art conservation is not necessarily to restore an object to its original, like-new state, but to honor its life and history—imperfections and all—and prevent further degradation, making it look, as Lee says, “as though it’s aged gracefully.” This is where the chemistry comes in. Conservators need to be able to examine an item and understand how it was made, with what materials and how it might degrade. This informs the selection of methods and materials for cleaning and repair, as well as the appropriate environmental conditions to best preserve that object.

At NYU, Lee learns conservation treatment approaches based on the technology and structure of inorganic materials ranging from ancient Roman glass to contemporary carved stone, and organic materials including works on paper, polychrome wood sculpture and bone. “It’s an incredible gift that this field has given me,” says Lee, “to be able to examine an object and have some sense of how it was made, how it was used and how it might look in the future.” This insight also informs how best to preserve these items. “For example,” she says, “fox fur will fade,



A healthy fear of spiders did not deter Lee from the tasks necessary to repair tarantula specimens.

and ivory elephant tusks will yellow, warp and crack if they are exposed to improper lighting, temperature and relative humidity.” Understanding preventive conservation and limiting an object’s exposure to the many agents of deterioration can prolong its lifespan. When a deteriorating object requires more interventive treatment, conservators will learn everything they can about its materials and structure using methods such as microchemical testing and X-radiography. Using this information, conservators will develop a unique treatment plan that is stable, retreatable and sensitive to the origins and history of that object.

Currently, Lee is preparing for summer internships in Florence and Copenhagen, as well as working with her AMNH team to put the finishing touches on the new Gilder Center, which will open in the spring of 2023. As she looks forward in her conservation career, and learns to work with a wide variety of art and artifacts, she hopes to delve deeper into the realm of natural history conservation. “Nature is the greatest artist,” she says. **CRW**

Betty Christiansen is the publisher of Coulee Region Women.



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Today's Technology Advances Teaching

Lifelike simulations and virtual reality bring innovative modalities to local health care education.

BY SARAH ARENDT-BEYER | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Students and staff at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse use a simulation center as one of their education methods for training health care personnel.



Megan Smith, right, interim dean and associate professor with the College of Nursing and Health at Viterbo University, and Alison Dietz, simulation technician and interim clinical coordinator, use manikins like Apollo to provide realistic situations for nursing students in the university's simulation lab.

Apollo lies in the hospital bed, staring up at the ceiling. He's clad in a hospital gown and is surrounded by imposing monitors. He doesn't move, and the monitors are silent. He's not breathing.

Apollo isn't alive. He's an adult patient simulator—a manikin.

And he's not in a hospital room, though it feels exactly like one. He's in a classroom, part of Viterbo University's School of Nursing.

Apollo is one of several manikins used by Megan Smith, Ph.D., R.N. CNE, the interim dean and an associate professor with the College of Nursing and Health, and Alison Dietz, simulation technician and interim clinical coordinator, to train aspiring nurses.

During a simulation, learners are placed in a lifelike scenario to practice their medical skills in a realistic yet safe environment. In the simulation, manikins can present with any number of woes. According to Dietz, Apollo “can do pretty much anything you want him to do. He can bleed, ... we can fill him with urine so they can put a Foley catheter into his bladder, ... he can also have seizures.” From a control panel set behind one-way glass, Dietz can remotely operate Apollo, doing things like changing his cardiac rhythm strip to approximate a heart attack so the students can practice running through a full code.

Gundersen Health Systems' Integrated Center for Education (known as the ICE House) is home to 12 high-fidelity manikins, approximating different ages. “Our 5- to 7-year-old is one of our newer manikins and the most realistic,” says Carley Buisman, manager at the Integrated Center for Education. “He will actually turn and look at you when you talk to him; you can check his blood sugar; you



Carley Buisman, manager at the Integrated Center for Education at Gundersen Health System, La Crosse

can do IOs on him; when he cries, his face moves. He's very realistic looking.” (IO is short for Intraosseous cannulation: the placing of a sturdy needle into bone to infuse fluids and blood products into critically ill patients.)

INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The manikins are just one part of a larger effort within health care to provide better training with the ultimate goal of improving patient outcomes.

At the ICE House, there are a variety of spaces for different learning opportunities. In one room, learners practice techniques on chicken legs. In another, staff listen attentively during an American Heart Association CPR training. It also houses a mock operating room and a skills lab where staff practice on everything from pigs' feet to the high-fidelity manikins

to cadavers.

Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse also uses a variety of learning techniques to improve engagement and retention. “We're on the forefront of some different, fun learning modalities,” says Barbara Reardon, MSN, R.N., the nursing education manager in La Crosse. “We've really done some fun things with escape rooms where they are given an assignment and have to either perform technical skills to get to the next clue or critically think about what's going on to answer a question.”

Mayo is also exploring virtual reality technology that allows participants to experience what it's like as a patient, to practice working with a patient and to hone specific skills. “Mayo Clinic is taking an intentional scholarly approach to it, and studying it, and gathering



Ana Ehtemami, PhD, senior engineer, develops an augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) application for enhanced medical training at Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

the data necessary to determine how it's best utilized, in what settings it's best utilized, for what kinds of competency development is it most appropriate, and for which learners," says Darcy Reed, M.D., Internal Medicine, dean of education for Mayo Clinic Health System.

A SAFE SPACE

"I think what's really important is that simulation is a safe place for our students to learn. While it's not a clinical replacement, it is a clinical *complement*, and they see things here that they may not see in the clinical space, or we can build upon what they've seen in the clinical space," says Viterbo's Smith.

Her colleague Dietz echoes the sentiment: "We always tell them, we want you to make mistakes; this is the place to make them," adding that students have shared that "if they make a mistake here, they never forget it."

At Gundersen, Buisman, too, notes that "whenever we have new learners, we make sure to let them know that [this is a safe space]. That if you're going to fail, this is the place to do it because you can practice again and again."

TEAMWORK

Another vital element is practicing as a team to cultivate skills like collaboration and effective communication. Mayo's Dr. Reed notes that "the performance of the team and the excellence that team delivers is more than the sum of those individual health care providers' competencies or skills ... health care is a team sport, it's a team activity, and so the key is having that full team learning and working and practicing together." Reardon agrees. "I think whenever we can get a team together, practicing in that safe



Dr. Darcy Reed, dean of education for Mayo Clinic Health System



Barbara Reardon, MSN, R.N., nursing education manager at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse

environment, that's when you really learn how to work effectively as a team and figure out what your gaps and barriers are, to perfect those."

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

All three institutions also work to encourage interest in health care careers. At Gundersen Health System, the operating rooms are live-streamed into a conference room in the ICE House, allowing visiting high school students to watch surgery in real time. According to Buisman, "the high school students love it. We work with the Health Science Academy, which is a two-year program, and they get to come once every year. They wish they could come more."

"We have events where we invite high school students here ... and part of their rotation that they'll go through is simulation," says Viterbo's Smith. At one event, students could listen to a manikin's heart and lungs, check his "wounds" for infection and even give IV medication. "They all loved it because it felt like they were nurses, using actual needles and syringes and gloves and getting to give him medications," adds Dietz.

Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse also regularly invites high school programs to experience the Simulation Lab, Reardon notes, adding "we work very closely with all of our local colleges too, so we've got a lot of different programs who utilize the Simulation Center."

One thing is certain: even though Apollo is not alive, thanks to him, manikins like him and our health care providers' commitment to excellence, many more *real* patients will be. **CRW**

Sarah Arendt-Beyer is a writer in the Coulee Region.



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LEARNING FROM SETTLERS' LIVES

Norskedalen looks back in time to teach about challenge, hope, history and nature.

BY JOAN KENT | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Asked why it's important for people to learn how the Norwegian settlers carved out a life on the rugged terrain of southwest Wisconsin, Norskedalen executive director Lori Dubczak answers quickly: "Because history gives us hope."

"If we can see the challenges and the hopes and joys, we can learn from those who met the challenges and built a good life. If we look back at the Depression, we can learn from those who made it through," she says. "If you have a problem, would you want to start at Step 1 or Step 10? Those steps have probably already been made by our ancestors."

Dubczak, who's been director of the museum outside Coon Valley for six years, isn't Norwegian. But she says she could almost see her Swedish and German parents, who farmed in southern Iowa, at Norskedalen. "My family did more pork and kraut," she laughs. "I didn't know about lutefisk, but I love lefse."



Lori Dubczak, executive director of Norskedalen

For example, Dubczak says early conservation efforts included farming in a way that regenerates the soil rather than stripping it of nutrients, planting fields in a way to help water be absorbed rather than lost to floods and using a spring house to preserve foods.

"Letters from Anne," a virtual curriculum for grades 3-8 built to Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction standards, looks at life in the 1860s as told by a teenager. In reality, the letters are a compilation of those written by immigrants, but Anne Engum was a real person who came to what is now Norskedalen as a teenager and lived in the same house there the rest of her life. The lesson ends with a field trip to visit the house. The family prospered, but when they first came, all eight—Anne, her mother and father, two sisters and a brother with his wife and child—all lived in a kitchen, with no indoor plumbing, Dubczak says. "Imagine that in a Wisconsin winter."

SHARING LIFE IN THE VALLEY

Norskedalen offers educational programs via tours and virtual tutorials showing how history and nature intertwine and how the environment has significant impact on the way settlers lived and whether they thrived.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT NORSKEDALEN

- Midsummer Fest, June 17
- Music in the Valley, Wednesdays starting June 21
- Threshing Bee Dinner, August 15
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REACHING ALL AGES

The Civil War program looks at perspectives of the Union and Confederate sides, and nature programs include bird-watching and hiking.

Heritage virtual classes teach folk arts including wood carving, needlework and Norwegian baking, plus genealogy. They come with all the tools needed except ingredients. Through these lessons, participants of all ages learn skills such as how to make lefse or crochet, Dubczak says. "One grandmother purchased a lesson and watched it virtually with her daughter."

Norskedalen's programs examine "push-pull," what pushed immigrants from Norway and what pulled some of them back.

"It was extraordinarily hard to settle here," Dubczak says. "And it was hard to leave relatives behind. One of Anne's letters, sent when she was a grandmother, recalls the last time she hugged her own grandmother. Moving and settling here was more than an adventure." **CRW**

Joan Kent is a retired journalist who immigrated from New Orleans to La Crosse in 1989 and then to La Farge in 2007.



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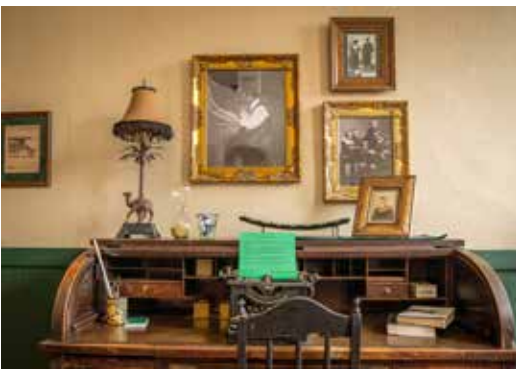
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A Healthy Dose of Downtown History

The Original reimagines Adolph Gundersen's first clinic as an event space and overnight rental.

BY HEIDI BLANKE | PHOTOS BY HEELCLICKERS PHOTOGRAPHY

An unassuming door on Pearl Street opens to a wide green staircase topped by a set of majestic wooden doors. Behind them is the original Gundersen Clinic, now an elegant overnight rental space called The Original, owned and managed by Khouri Markos.

Over a century and a half, the three floors of the 1870 structure have housed numerous businesses including The Mint tavern, a sewing machine shop and a dance hall. Markos' family has owned it since 1955, when her paternal grandfather and his brother purchased it.

IT'S AUTHENTIC

The 2,800-square-foot space was a rental apartment for years and, in a way, nothing has changed, yet everything has changed. While the configuration of walls and doors is much the same as in its clinic days, the kitchen and bathrooms are up to date and an ensuite was added to one of the three bedrooms. In a hark to yesteryear, some of the doors still display patient room numbers.

Khouri's pride in the building is palpable. She feels strongly about the building's place in history and wants to share that story with the public. "My grandfather used to deliver malted milkshakes to the doctors," she says. Photos of her ancestors (her father's family came to La Crosse in the early 20th century) and of Adolph Gundersen and his nursing staff adorn the walls.

IT'S A PROCESS

When Khouri and her mom, Terri Markos, visited a paint store to choose colors for the space, the person assisting them sensed they were overwhelmed and offered to connect them with his mom, interior decorator Carla Callies. "My son was trying to help them, and he said 'I think you need to call my mother,'" Callies says. She hadn't expected to be brought in on the project, but she and the Markos women had an immediate connection.

Khouri calls it "a serendipitous meeting of strangers."

Much of the furniture and accessories was culled from a third-floor storage area and from a house Callies had owned in South



From left: Carla Callies, Khouri Markos and Terri Markos are the creative minds behind *The Original*, a rental space in what was once the original Gundersen clinic in downtown La Crosse.

Dakota. “There’s so much stuff here that was from upstairs. Every day I found what I wanted, brought it down, cleaned it, painted, and we did whatever we could do for it.” The massive light fixtures now hanging in the stairwell were rewired and their broken globes replaced. Photos, tables, couches, chairs, lamps and more made the journey from third to second floor. Dishes and glassware, accessories and artwork migrated from South Dakota.

Khouri’s admiration for Callies is hard to contain. “She helped us reimagine the space and shared her knowledge. It was mutually beneficial. I feel so fortunate to have met such a talented woman.”

IT’S DELIGHTFUL

The front doors open to an entry with a magnificent chandelier and a table whose pedestal base came from an old sink, courtesy of the third floor, of course. Callies topped it with marble. To the left is an ensuite room with a king-size bed, and to the right is a bathroom and laundry.

The entry morphs to a large gathering area, complete with a soaring brick fireplace—now renovated with gas—a dining table, two couches and other seating areas.

The kitchen, once the medical storage area and nurses’ station, has modern appliances. An asymmetrical closet that juts into the room once held medicines and other items requiring extra supervision. A secondary door from the clinic area opened into it for easier access.

A cozy room with dark green walls houses a bar area (shelves behind the bar are in the plans) and a television. A quirky floral couch that might be out of place in today’s homes luxuriates here, inviting guests to sit down, stretch out and tune in to a favorite show or movie.

Two more bedrooms and a bridal dressing area take up the west end of the space. The first bedroom, with two queen beds, was Dr. Gundersen’s office; a roll-top desk that has been in Khouri’s family for over a century is reminiscent of the one he worked at. The middle bedroom also has a queen bed.

The bridal suite, a corner room lit by tall windows, would make any bride feel special and is furnished with a vanity, an antique three-way mirror and a blue velvet fainting couch.

The Original is more than just a spot to sleep before hitting the area’s sights. It’s a perfect space for wedding showers, family reunions, Thanksgiving dinners or, as Callies suggests, a girls’ night out and slumber party. It can be rented for shorter events during the week, but weekends require a two-night minimum. Food can be brought in or catered, with dish service for large groups available upon request.

IT’S JUST THE BEGINNING

Khouri and Callies excitedly share ideas for the third-floor space, though access would require a costly elevator installation. In the meantime, light streams in through the ceiling-high windows, layers of wallpaper wait to be discovered and more furniture, accessories and architectural details sit patiently waiting their turns to shine.

Updating an old building is not for the faint of heart. “If you’re renovating a historical space, it’s helpful to be able to DIY and to jump in and be prepared to take on different kinds of projects, whether painting or reupholstering,” Khouri says. However, she cautions: “Know your limits; you can’t replace the expertise of professionals.”

Her mom served as both a sounding board and a shopping partner, and she’s grateful to have the experience of working alongside her. “It’s vital to have a support system. It takes a village to put things together,” Khouri says. “Find a person or group who can build you up and keep you moving forward. There will be obstacles.”

IT’S A PASSION

“People seek out an AirBnB for a special and unique experience, so you want to put your personality into it,” Khouri advises. “Put yourself in the shoes of your guests, and think about the amenities and what guests want.”

If what you want is a welcoming space with a helping of history in the heart of downtown La Crosse, *The Original* is your go-to. Check AirBnB or VRBO for rental details. **CRW**

*Heidi Griminger Blanke is a La Crosse writer who is scheming up reasons to rent *The Original*.*

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From Slow Cooking to Instant Pots

Schedules and dietary concerns feed the use of time-saving kitchen appliances.

BY TALLITHA REESE | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Everyone has days that just don't seem to have enough hours—from work and school schedules to extracurricular and family activities plus to-do lists of household tasks.

Busy lives filled with obligations, tasks and schedules call for finding ways of preparing meals quickly and conveniently. Enter the age of cooking appliances that promise to do just that.

COOKING CONVENIENCE

Slow cookers have been around for decades, but with more and more demands on people's time, there seems to have been an explosion of appliance offerings in recent years that all promise to cut food prep and cooking times, such as all-in-one multi-cookers, pressure cookers and air fryers.

"All of these appliances assist people with busy schedules to get a home-cooked meal on the table which can help save money, offer control over ingredients and provide family members an opportunity to gather and check in with each other," says Mary Hoeft-Leithold, a nutrition educator with FoodWise in La Crosse County.

FoodWise is a federally funded nutrition education program through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) offered through the University of Wisconsin's Division of Extension that provides community nutrition education to limited income individuals.



Mary Hoeft-Leithold, nutrition educator, FoodWise in La Crosse County



Karie Johnson, nutrition coordinator, FoodWise in La Crosse County

The program is headed by nutrition coordinator Karie Johnson, nutrition educator Hoeft-Leithold, bilingual Hmong nutrition educator Maimie Vang and human development and relationships educator Heather Quackenboss.

"The shift of spending less time on food preparation, purchasing more ready-to-eat foods and decreased food preparation skills has contributed to the popularity of slow cookers, Instant Pots and air fryers," says Johnson.

ALTERNATIVES FOR DIETARY CONCERNS

In addition to the ease and convenience of these appliances, there are also dietary considerations that can contribute to the desire for alternative cooking options.

"With the increased diagnoses of food intolerances, sensitivities and allergies, it is even more important to know what is in our food," says Quackenboss. "Equipment like air fryers give people who need to avoid gluten the opportunity to have food like french fries or chicken tenders that taste like they were made in a restaurant while we can be sure that the food has no inadvertent cross contact with gluten."

Joel Hollow, a registered dietitian for Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse, adds that while air fryers have likely become recently popular due to the convenience of lower cooking times and the attraction of a lower calorie alternative to deep-fat fried foods, the technology is not new.



Heather Quackenboss, human development and relationships educator, University of Wisconsin Extension

“Air fryers are miniature convection ovens—meaning they have a heating element and a fan that circulates that heat. The main difference between an air fryer and your convection oven is that air fryers are much smaller and can preheat faster. Since air fryers generally have the food closer to the heating element, they tend to cook foods faster than a traditional convection oven,” says Hollow.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT APPLIANCE

With so many appliance options on the market, choosing one can be overwhelming.

“Slow cookers may save the time you need to wait for them to cook, but the prep time to get all the meat and vegetables cut up will take some time,” explains Rebecca Cripe, registered dietitian with Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. “It depends on what someone wants to save time on. Is it easier to prep a meal in the morning before you leave for the day? That way you just come home and can eat right away when you are hungry. Yet, the pressure cooker can cut time cooking things like rice or hard-boiling eggs, when you need it quicker at that moment.”



Rebecca Cripe, registered dietitian, Gundersen Health System in La Crosse

“The tip is really to know yourself, like really know what your habits are, when your times of energy are and go with that appliance,” adds Quackenboss.

As with any new gadget or appliance, reading and following included manufacturer directions and manuals in order to safely operate and care for your new tool is imperative.

“There are so many resources out there,” says Cripe. “I feel when it’s time to explore another feature on these appliances, we can search a recipe, blogger or YouTube video. Of course, you can always check out the brand website for instructions.”

“As a rule, websites sponsored by federal government agencies are accurate sources of information,” notes Johnson from FoodWIse.

TIPS FOR FOOD SAFETY

In addition to appliance specific directions, following regular food safety guidelines while handling and preparing food is another necessity.

“Cooking food safely starts before cooking with making sure your food is not expired and stored properly,” explains Cripe. “When you do cook, use a thermometer to check the internal temperature of eggs and ground meats, which should be 160°F, poultry and fowl at 165°F and meat steaks, chops and roasts should be 145°F”

“The USDA Food Safety Inspection Service has good guidance resources as well,” adds Hoeft-Leithold.



Joel Hollow, registered dietitian, Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse

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Slow-Cooker Beef Stew

www.myplate.gov

- 2 lb. stew meat (cut into 1-in. cubes)
- ¼ cup flour (all purpose)
- 2 cups water
- 2 tsp. beef bouillon (2 cubes)
- 1 garlic clove (finely chopped)
- 3 carrots (sliced)
- 3 potatoes (diced)
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 celery stalk (sliced)
- Salt and pepper (optional, to taste)
- Herbs as desired: bay leaf, basil, oregano, etc.

Place meat in slow cooker. Mix flour, salt and pepper in a medium bowl and pour over meat; stir to coat. Add remaining ingredients and stir to mix.

Cover and cook on low setting for 8 to 10 hours or high setting for 4 to 6 hours. Stir stew thoroughly before serving. If using bay leaf, discard before serving.

Pulled Pork Sandwich with Red Cabbage and Carrot Slaw

www.myplate.gov

- ½ pork shoulder (bone-in)
- ½ cups cider or white vinegar (or a combination of both)
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp. salt
- 8 100% whole wheat dinner rolls or slider buns

For the carrot slaw:

- 1 head red cabbage (shredded)
- 2 carrots (scrubbed and shredded)
- ¼ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper

Pulled Pork

Put pork, vinegar, pepper, red pepper flakes and salt in the slow cooker and turn the heat to medium. Cook, undisturbed, for 8 hours or until it is fork-tender (about 190°F with a meat thermometer).

Remove the pork from the slow cooker but keep the liquid. While still hot, use two forks to shred the meat. Remove any fat found between the shreds.

Skim as much fat as possible from the liquid in the slow cooker. Add about 1 cup of the cooking liquid to the shredded pork.

Red Cabbage and Carrot Slaw

Put the shredded cabbage and carrots in a bowl.

Mix the canola oil, vinegar, salt and pepper in a small bowl and stir or whisk well. Add the dressing to the cabbage mixture and coat thoroughly.

Add ½ cup of pulled pork to each roll or bun and top with ½ cup cabbage and carrot slaw. Serve right away.

Creamy Buffalo Chicken & Cauliflower

www.sizzleandsalt.com

- 1 head cauliflower, chopped
- 2 cups chicken, cooked
- ½ cup buffalo wing sauce
- ¼ cup ranch dressing
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 4 oz. cream cheese, cubed (½ block)
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Green onion, optional garnish

Place cauliflower, chicken, seasonings, buffalo sauce and ranch dressing into the Instant Pot. Mix together. Secure the lid and select the manual setting for 5 minutes.

Allow the Instant Pot to release pressure. Open and immediately stir in cream cheese while the mixture is still hot. Once fully combined, add cheddar. Stir. Heat on KEEP WARM for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Serve drizzled with buffalo sauce and some green onion. **CRW**

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.

SLOW COOKER SAFETY TIPS

Thaw Ingredients: Always defrost meat or poultry before putting it in a slow cooker; this is especially important with larger cuts of meats.

Use the Right Amount of Food:

Follow the manufacturer's instructions; most manufacturers recommend filling the cooker no less than half full and no more than two-thirds full.

Cooking Times: Foods take different times to cook depending upon the setting used. Certainly, foods will cook faster on high than low. However, for all-day cooking or for less-tender cuts, you may want to use the low setting. If possible, turn the cooker on the highest setting for the first hour of cooking time and then to low or the setting called for in your recipe. However, it's safe to cook foods on low the entire time.

Storage: Store leftovers in shallow containers, no more than three inches deep, and refrigerate within two hours after cooking is finished. Do not reheat leftovers in a slow cooker. However, cooked food can be brought to 165°F or until steaming or boiling on the stove top and then put into a preheated cooker to keep hot for serving.



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ACCOMPLISHMENTS



KRZYCH NAMED PUMP HOUSE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Pump House Regional Arts Center has appointed Allison Krzych as executive director. An employee of the Pump House since 2020, Krzych has been serving as acting executive director following the retirement of Toni Asher in October 2022.

A self-identified entrepreneurial spirit with a heart rooted in community, Krzych brings a wealth of experience in retail and brand management as well as event planning. “With her combined business acumen, working knowledge of the Pump House and rapport with Pump House patrons and staff, Allison is the ideal candidate to lead the Pump House” says board president Robin Cosby.



COOPER STOLL IS NEW YWCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Laurie Cooper Stoll, Ph.D., became the new executive director of YWCA La Crosse on Feb. 1, succeeding Lauren Journot.

Cooper Stoll was previously professor of sociology in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, where she founded the Institute for Social Justice in 2013. Her research explores inequalities in social institutions. She is the author of two books: *Race and Gender in the Classroom*, winner of the 2015 Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Book Award from the Race, Gender, and Class Section of the American Sociological Association, and *Should Schools Be Colorblind?* She has also published several book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals.



KEYES NAMED SMALL BUSINESS AWARD NOMINEE

Mara Keyes, Regional Project Director of the Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC), Southwest office is a nominee for the 2023 Small Business Administration Wisconsin Women’s Business Center of the Year award. The Southwest office, located in La Crosse, opened its doors under Keyes’ leadership in 2021. WWBIC provides direct lending and access to fair and responsible capital as well as financial wellness training and coaching, entrepreneurial training and one-on-one technical assistance. WWBIC focuses on women, people of color, lower-wealth individuals and veterans and their spouses. Award winners will be announced during National Small Business Week (April 30–May 6).

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Prioritizing Time Outdoors

Ardelle Tuxen creates memories and finds connections in nature.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Ardelle Tuxen of La Crosse has enjoyed outdoor adventure since her childhood. Many of her experiences in nature are shared with family or with friends like Mary Luehne (in pink) who joined her backpacking in the Porcupine Mountains.

Ardelle Tuxen of La Crosse has never shied away from the outdoors. “I grew up on a farm,” she says, “and soon as the chores were done, we headed outside—it didn’t matter if it was night.” Ice skating on a frozen creek, playing tag after dark with the fireflies or taking turns to ski down an ungroomed hill on their property (just to walk back up and do it over again) were commonplace adventures for Tuxen.

“My parents encouraged us to be outside, and I had so much fun doing all the activities that came with that,” says Tuxen, even if that meant sharing one pair of skis with her ten siblings. “These were the type of experiences that I wanted my kids to have, so I tried to expose them to as many of those experiences as possible.”

FAMILY TIME WITH A SIDE OF ADVENTURE

“When my children were growing up, we would go on hikes, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping, and on weekends, road trips to state parks,” says Tuxen, whose two grown children, Mike and Diane, have inherited their mom’s penchant for recreating outdoors. Now, family gatherings and holidays are not complete without a group hike in the bluffs or a bike ride around town.

There was even a time when Tuxen and Diane walked through a snowstorm just to sit on the shore of Lake Superior. “(The outdoors) is where you can put other stuff aside and connect with others,” says Tuxen, as to why she loves these somewhat quirky expeditions. “It’s a tradition that keeps family strong.” And to Tuxen’s delight, Diane has embraced this tradition of outdoor adventure and joined her mom in taking adventure to a whole new level.

From braving torrential rain during a kayaking trip on the Brule River to getting lost while cross-country skiing without cell phone service on the North Country Trail (both of which are located in northern Wisconsin), the Tuxens did not let a little bit of inconvenience scare them away from planning their next event. “We can laugh about such things now,” says Tuxen of how she and her daughter learned to take struggles in stride. “The rain was coming down so hard that we couldn’t tell which way the river was running. We ended up leaving our kayaks on shore and walking for help,” says Tuxen, recounting that day on the Brule. “We’ve encountered challenge in our recreational pursuits but have always had a positive attitude and plenty of fun.”

SHARING EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE YEARS

Though life changes and family obligations have kept them closer to home, Tuxen continues to make time to connect outside. “I decided to make being active a priority,” says Tuxen, who takes a walk almost every day. In fact, she has continued a 30-plus year tradition of doing an outdoor activity each New Year’s Eve Day with a group of companions—all of which her friend Mary Luehne has partaken in. “I don’t understand why you wouldn’t want to have these experiences to share,” says Tuxen. “Take along your friends and family. Hopefully they’ll repay others in kind.” **CRW**

Martha Keeffe enjoys writing about women who love to be active outdoors and share that passion with others.

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Grannies on the Rebound

Century-old rules and uniforms bring fun and friendship to the basketball court.

BY JULIE NELSON | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



The La Crosse Does are one of two Granny Basketball teams in Wisconsin: women ages 50 and older who use the rules and uniforms of Iowa girls' basketball a century ago.

It's Wednesday night at the Logan High School gym, and approximately 14 women are either shooting hoops or putting on regulation uniforms for the night's practice.

While Lisa Radtke buttons up her long-sleeve white dress shirt, Carol Ziehlsdorf ties a square knot into her "collar"—the sailor-style rectangle with her number on it. Meanwhile, Sandy Jore is tugging on homemade black bloomers and grumbling about how quickly she becomes overheated while wearing them. Once everyone is dressed, complete with black and orange kneesocks, practice begins.

THROWBACK TO EARLIER DAYS

Welcome to Granny Basketball, a growing passion for women ages 50 and older who get together to play what you might call age-appropriate basketball. The year is 2023, but the uniforms—and the game rules—hark back to the 1920s, when girls' basketball in Iowa was gaining momentum. What was designed to keep the fairer sex safe back in the day is now extremely helpful for those who just don't move as quickly as they used to.

Each team consists of six players: two forwards, two centers and two guards. Each pair stays only on their third of the court, lest they get too tired running up and down the full court. Other rules, which now seem archaic, include no running (though "hurrying" is allowed), no jumping (we would hate to ruin a woman's chances of getting pregnant, after all), no hovering (leaning into another player's space to guard them) and only two dribbles per player per possession.

Other rules generate a lot more laughs among the players, and they delight in calling a "flesh foul" if a player's shirt rides up or socks

fall down, exposing a scandalous amount of skin. Any basket made shooting underhanded is worth three points, and any player who falls down during the game elicits cries of "Granny down!" Dutifully, the fallen player heads to the bench for one play, giving the long-ago coaches the chance to make sure the player is not seriously hurt.

FUN WITH A SIDE OF COMPETITION

The La Crosse Does are coached by Cindy Sjolander, a 72-year-old from Quebec, Canada, who plays center and had never played basketball in high school or college. "This league is really about having fun," says Sjolander. Playing by the original Iowa rules "makes the game safe and inclusive for older women, and it honors those who came before us."

Most of the other Does, who range in age from 59 to 74, have played basketball in the past, and some are old enough to recall playing only half court. Radtke remembers the excitement of playing 5-on-5 basketball in Appleton in 1973, one year after the passage of Title IX.

The Does practice once a week from February through May. They are one of only two Granny Basketball teams in Wisconsin (the other is in Viroqua), and they compete in various tournaments in the tri-state area. New players are always welcome.

"We are here to learn, and we prefer to win," says Sjolander, "but mostly we are here for the camaraderie." Because sometimes even older girls just wanna have fun. **CRW**

Julie Nelson had a ton of fun when the Grannies invited her to join their practice. Even with the half-court rule, Julie had to admit she was out of breath a couple times.

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A '70s-Inspired Spring

Get your groove on with style from the disco decade.

BY ELISE WEINBENDER

PHOTOS BY
JORDANA SNYDER PHOTOGRAPHY
PHOTOGRAPHED AT LOVECHILD

This spring, let your sense of time bring you back to an era of bold silhouettes and groovy patterns. Bright colors and natural accessories make inspiration from the '70s perfect for spring.

Hippie Chic

Embrace a carefree '70s style with a flowy blouse and headscarf from **Outrageous Boutique**. The look is complete with dark-wash jeans, platform sandals and a red clutch for a pop of color.

Dolma blouse, \$57; Grace bootcut jeans, \$69; Cripple Creek Creations purse, \$79; Rain earrings, \$16; Tolani scarf, \$49; Naked Feet platform sandals from Urban Shoetique, \$149. Modeled by Ruby Thaler.



Poised in Paisley

Play with '70s trends like paisley patterns and wide-leg pants from **Shiny Objects**. A leather bag, clogs and turquoise jewelry give the look a boho feel.

Free People bodysuit, \$78; Kut from the Kloth wide-leg pants, \$99; Nash purse, \$235; Zodiac bracelet, \$35; Seth Barnum earrings, \$30; Seeds necklace, \$35; BedStu platform sandals.

Modeled by Olivia Pennington.



Funky Fashion

Make the eccentric disco style modern with a geometric dress and go-go-inspired ankle boots from **Mainstream Boutique**. Add a matching cream clutch and hoop earrings for a bright spring look.

Lulu-B dress, \$96;
Jen & Co. clutch, \$39; bracelet, \$36;
hoop earrings, \$26; heeled boots, \$84.
Modeled by Elise Weinbender.

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A TRIP FOR THE AGES

A multigenerational Michigan vacation offers something for everyone in the family.

BY ANASTASIA PENCHI | CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Above left: A view of the Ludington Breakwater Light as seen from the S.S. Badger during the author's three-generation family vacation to Michigan. Above right: Members of Anastasia Penchi's family checked off a bucket list item with a ride across Lake Michigan on the S.S. Badger. Left: The entire group enjoyed a jeep ride through the dunes at Mears, Michigan.

No one knows how much time we have left with our loved ones. And we can always learn something new about those we think we know best when we ask.

A random “What do you want to do this summer?” posed to my world-traveler mother revealed a never-completed bucket list item: she had always wanted to ride the S.S. Badger car ferry that travels between Wisconsin and Michigan.

It became my goal to help her complete this item. But if we were planning to boat over to Michigan, shouldn't we stay there, too? I started thinking vacay.

So, a bucket list trip over Lake Michigan became a vacation to be planned for me, my mom, my husband and our 13-year-old son. But what about my 25-year-old, I thought? And his girlfriend? I wanted to spend more time with them, too.

As soon as we were all in, I began planning a multigenerational trip that would appeal to a wide variety of ages, interests and abilities. Challenge accepted.

WHERE TO START?

The first decision was choosing between a hotel and rental house. That was easy, as both my mom and I love to cook and frequently compete in that department. Sure, my oldest likes to take his girlfriend

to fancy restaurants, but he could do that at either location. A rental it was.

Next I needed to select the right house. I knew we'd have a four-and-a-half hour drive to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where the S.S. Badger loads, and then a three-hour boat ride before arriving in Ludington, Michigan. I also knew my family would get crabby if it was a long drive to the house. I decided the house should be no more than one hour from the port.

And what did we need in a house? I went down the list of family members and tried to determine the most important things for each person. My husband loves to fish, but he also needs air conditioning on hot days. My mom loves the water and likes to be carted around in a pontoon boat. My youngest needs his own sleeping area (shared rooms make him crabby) and physical activities. My oldest needs sun and internet; his enigma-of-a-girlfriend loves hiking, national parks and driving machinery (snowmobiles, UTVs, etc.) as fast as possible.

I found the perfect four-bedroom lake home. It had internet, air conditioning and kayaks available for our use. It was only 45 minutes from the port in Ludington and close enough to lots of hiking and various tourist attractions we could all choose from. I rented a pontoon boat for the week to top it off. The basic idea was set.



Left: Kayaking on Ford Lake in Fountain, Michigan, provided an active outlet for some members of the family.
Below: Others enjoyed a stroll along the beach at Stearns Park in Ludington, Michigan.



TIME TO LET IT GO

Once the house and pontoon boat were rented, I stopped making decisions. I put all my effort into researching nearby tourist attractions, but booked nothing. I wanted everyone to be able to do their own thing ... or not.

All I need to be happy is family, some sunshine and a lake tour every morning on the pontoon boat with my mom, my pontoon captain husband and a bloody Mary. You better believe I got my wish.

As it turned out, my oldest had no interest in the car ferry, so he and his girlfriend drove to Michigan and met us at the house. On the way home the two of them stopped at Indiana Dunes National Park. The rest of us experienced the S.S. Badger, which is kind of like a basic, stripped-down cruise ship that brings your car along for the ride.

At the house, there were shared meals, campfires by the lake and plenty of Magic (a card game obsession shared by both boys and now the girlfriend, too). The kayaks got plenty of use, as did the pontoon boat. The biggest bummer involved the lack of good fishing for my husband. Still, he managed to make up for it by inventing a new game with our youngest: Upper Decker, where a Wiffle ball is hit until it sneaks between the second story deck railings of the house.

NO OTHER TIME COMMITMENT NECESSARY

Ultimately, we did get out and do some day trips—sometimes all together and sometimes in small groups. I like history and museums, so I got my husband and youngest to take me to the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum, where I learned the city has a connection to the Coulee Region. Both communities lost many lives during the Great Armistice Day Storm of 1940—we lost duck hunters after the nice weather suddenly turned; they lost sailors.

Per Penchi family tradition, our family of three has to play mini golf while on vacation, and the loser (usually me) has to buy ice

cream. The Ludington Area Jaycees Mini Golf Course is the cleverest course I've ever seen, with each hole featuring a tourist attraction in the city. The local House of Flavors ice cream is also the bomb, even if you avoid new concoctions and always get cookies and cream like my husband.

I enjoyed my visit to the Ludington Market where I bought fresh produce (great berries), and I introduced my youngest to Big Apple Bagel, a favorite establishment that used to have a location in downtown La Crosse many years ago.

We all went to the beach in Ludington together, and most of us walked the half mile on the breakwater wall to the Ludington North Breakwater Light. Technically not a lighthouse (no one ever lived in it), the building still looks like one and has a little shop inside it once you get there.

A favorite highlight involved an outing we all attended where my son's girlfriend discovered her future dream job: driving sand dune buggy tours in Mears, Michigan. There were lots of smiles that day.

All in all, everyone reported having a great time. The only issue now is that they want me to plan another vacation for us to all go on this summer. **CRW**

Anastasia Penchi loves to travel and dreams of becoming a travel writer. She can be reached at callmeloislane@hotmail.com.

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aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com, aauw-wi.org.

Coulee Region Toastmasters Club 1st and 3rd Mon.
of each month, noon-1 p.m., Goodwill, La Crosse.

Holmen Area Rotary Club, every Wed. 7 a.m.,
Holmen Community Center, 600 N. Holmen Dr.,
holmenrotary@outlook.com.

La Crosse Area Genealogical Society 4th Tuesday
of each month (Sept.-May), 6-7:30 p.m., La Crosse
Public Library, lacrosseags@gmail.com.

La Crosse Area Quilters 4th Tuesday of each
month, 6:30 p.m., Stoney Creek Hotel-
Conference Center, Onalaska,
www.lacrossequiltguild.com.

La Crosse Christian Women's Connection 2nd Tues.
of each month, 12-1:45 p.m., Cedar Creek Golf Club,
Onalaska.

La Crosse Rotary every Thurs. noon-1 p.m., Cargill
Room, Waterfront Restaurant,
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,
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Onalaska Area Business Association 2nd Tues. of
each month, noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club,
oaba.info.

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

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

Valley View Rotary, every Wed., 7:30-8:30 a.m., La
Crosse Famous Dave's, 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.
of each month, Schmidy's, noon-1 p.m., Shari
Hopkins, 608-784-3904,
shopkins@couleebank.net.

Women with Purpose, 2nd Wed. of each month,
11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., Stoney Creek Hotel and
Conference Center, cr.wwpwi.org.

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

APRIL

Apr. 6, Moors & McCumber, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House
Regional Arts Center, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org.

Apr. 12, Women with Purpose featuring Kari Keleman,
"Navigating Grief," 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., Stoney Creek
Hotel and Conference Center, Onalaska, cr.wwpwi.org.

Apr. 12-15, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 7:30 p.m.,
Performing Arts Center, Winona State University, www2.winona.edu/theatre-dance.

Apr. 13-15, Earth Month Tree Planting, Mississippi Valley
Conservancy, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Trempealeau Lakes, register
at www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/earth-month-tree-planting.

Apr. 14, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals Miracle
Gala, 5 p.m. social hour, 6:30 p.m. dinner, the Cargill
Room at The Waterfront, La Crosse, purchase tickets at
bit.ly/miraclegala2023.

Apr. 14, Ted Vigil, Tribute to John Denver, 7:30 p.m., The
Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.

Apr. 14, Gina Chavez, 7:30 p.m., Weber Center for the
Performing Arts, www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

Apr. 15, Women's Fund Spring Fling 2023, 10:30 a.m.-1
p.m., Fox Hollow Banquet Hall, W3847 County Rd. O,
La Crosse, www.womensfundlacrosse.org/events/spring-fling.

Apr. 15, *Lightning Thief*, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., La Crosse
Community Theatre, Weber Center for Performing Arts,
www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Apr. 15, Dan Sebranek & Friends present: The Crosby,
Stills, Nash & Young Show, 7 p.m., Westby Area
Performing Arts Center, wapac.ludus.com.

Apr. 15, Modern Broadway: A
Symphonic Journey, 7:30 p.m.,
La Crosse Symphony Orchestra,
www.lacrossesymphony.org.
◀ **Apr. 20**, AAUW Women
Supporting Women Locally
presenting Dr. Sona Kazemi
Talk/Lecture, 6-7 p.m., UW-La
Crosse, Centennial Hall, Rm. 1309,
aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com.

Apr. 20, Justin Moore: The You, Me & Whiskey Tour, 7
p.m., La Crosse Center, www.lacrossecenter.com.

Apr. 21, Spring Fever open house, 4-8 p.m., downtown
La Crosse, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

Apr. 21-30, *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche*, 7:30 p.m.
Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., La Crosse Community
Theatre, Weber Center for Performing Arts, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

Apr. 21-30, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-
Sat., 2 p.m. Sun, Toland Theatre, Center for the Arts,
UW-La Crosse, www.uwlax.edu/theatre-arts.

Apr. 22, Downtown Clean-up Day,
downtown La Crosse, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

◀ **Apr. 22**, *Karve In 7*
featuring carver Ken Larson,
10 a.m.-4 p.m., Westby
Elementary School, 122
Nelson St., Westby, <https://www.facebook.com/people/Karve-In/100068760886109/>.

Apr. 22, Between the Bluffs Beer, Wine & Cheese
Festival, 12-6 p.m., Oktoberfest Grounds, La Crosse,
www.explorelacrosse.com/betweenthebluffs.

Apr. 22, Platinum Edition and Diamond Edition:
Celebration 2023, 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center
Main Theatre, www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

Apr. 22, Ellis Paul, 7:30 p.m., The Pump House Regional
Arts Center, La Crosse, www.thepumphouse.org.

Apr. 28-30, Ridges & Rivers Book Festival, Viroqua, www.ridgesandriversbookfestival.org.

Apr. 28-30, Dance Kaleidoscope 2023, 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat.,
2 p.m. Sat.-Sun., Viterbo Fine Arts Center Main Theatre,
www.viterbo.edu/fine-arts-center.

Apr. 30, Earth Fair, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Myrick Park, La Crosse,
www.earthfairlacrosse.com.

Apr. 30, Tour of Downtown Living, 12-5 p.m., downtown
La Crosse, www.lacrossedowntown.com.

MAY



◀ **May 5-21**, *Rent*, 7:30 p.m.

Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun.,
La Crosse Community
Theatre, Weber Center for
Performing Arts, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

May 6, Festival Foods La Crosse
Marathon, 6 a.m., Sparta Area

Chamber of Commerce; Half Marathon, 7 a.m., La Crosse
Speedway Race Track; 5k, 8 a.m., Riverside Park; register
at www.lacrossemarathon.com.

May 6, Moving Day Community Walk Parkinson's
Awareness Event, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Myrick Park Shelter, La
Crosse, register at www.movingdaywalk.org/community-walk.

May 6, Overcoming Challenges with Grit and Grace
featuring Lora DeVore, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Franciscan
Spirituality Center, register at www.fscenter.org.

May 6, Springtime in Paris, 7:30 p.m., La Crosse
Symphony Orchestra, www.lacrossesymphony.org.

May 10, Women with Purpose featuring Connie Sweiter,
"Heard From," 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., Stoney Creek Hotel and
Conference Center, Onalaska, cr.wwpwi.org.
May 10, Chicago, 7 p.m., La Crosse Center, www.lacrossecenter.com.

May 13, Nature Art Journaling for Families with Jan Wellik,
9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Franciscan Spirituality Center, register
at www.fscenter.org.

May 12-13, Mid West Music Fest, various times and
venues throughout downtown Winona, plus free events 9
a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at Levee
Park; <https://www.midwestmusicfest.org>.

May 13, *Junie B's Essential Survival Guide to
School*, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., La Crosse Community
Theatre, Weber Center for Performing Arts, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.

May 19, Steely Dane: The Ultimate Steely Dan Tribute
Band, 7:30 p.m., Westby Area Performing Arts Center,
wapac.ludus.com.

May 20, Walk MS La Crosse, 10 a.m., La Crosse Center,
https://secure.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Walk/WIGWalkEvents?pg=entry&fr_id=31281.

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DAY TO MOTHER EARTH AND
ALL OF THE MOTHERS
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