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Love & Passion

It Takes Two:

Vicky and Ben Schroeder

**How to Write
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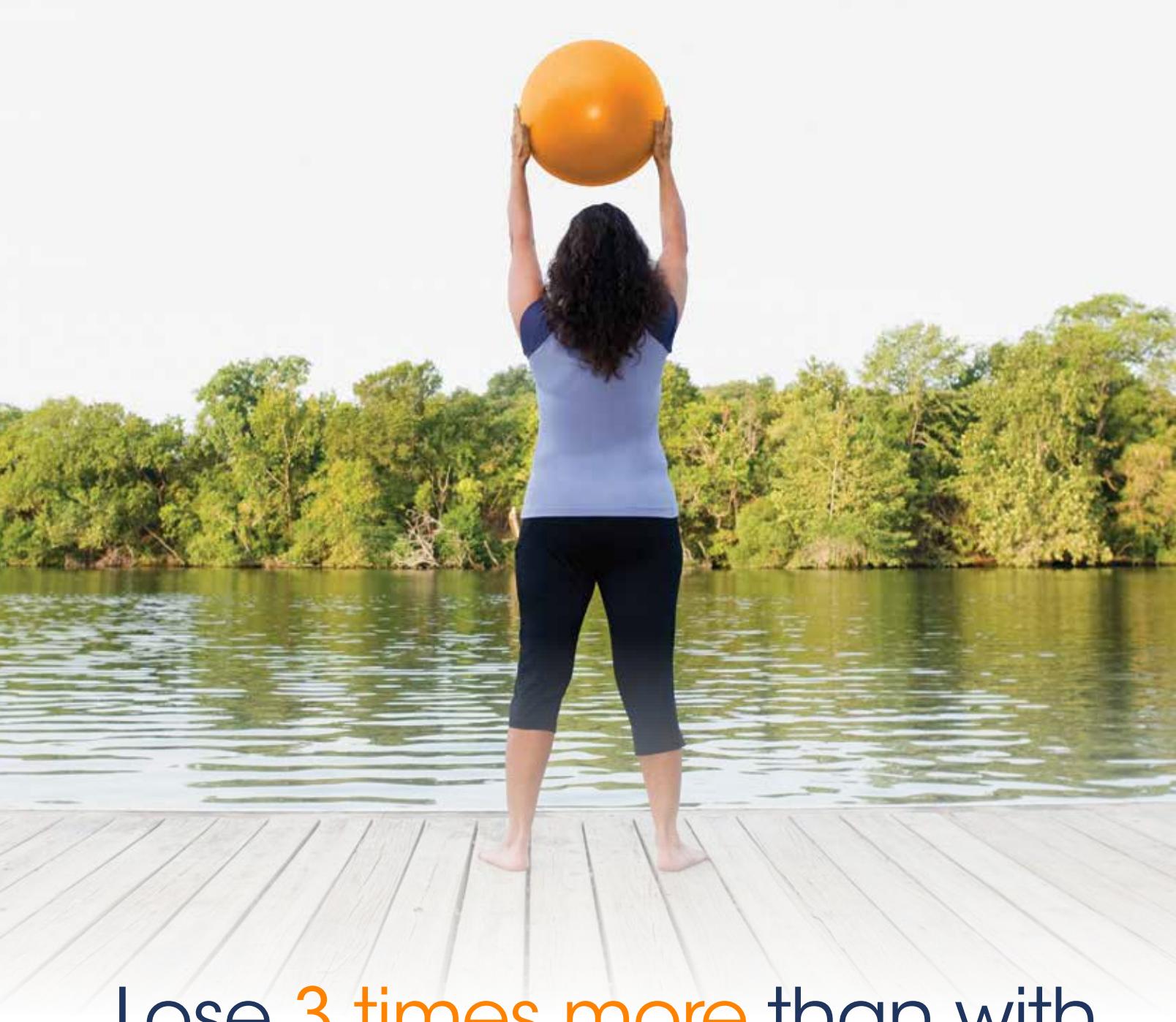
The mysterious majesty of Iceland can make you believe in magic.

Pictured on cover and above: Vicky Wang Schroeder and Ben Schroeder. Photos by Jen Towner Photography.

Love &
Passion



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| FROM THE EDITOR |

Photo by Jen Towner Photography



One day this week, as deadlines were looming and the final pieces of this issue were fast coming into place, my computer shut down. The evening before, it was functioning fine; in the morning, it refused to wake up. I tapped keys. I tried to reboot. I unplugged it and plugged it in again. It was gone.

Taking deep breaths and reciting affirmations, I texted tech support—i.e., my husband: “My computer won’t start up!!! Starting to panic.” Then I packed up my dead laptop and drove home, where he was working. My hands shook on the wheel, thoughts of losing work and missing critical deadlines rocking my head.

My husband was on a conference call but already googling the solution. “Stay calm,” he whispered. I paced the house while he opened up my laptop and got to work, fielding questions from his own job simultaneously. By the time he was off the phone, it was fixed. Even the documents that were open when the thing went down were still up on the screen, exactly as I’d left them.

“I had to reset your SMC,” he said with a sweet smile. “That shouldn’t fail again for a while.”

I felt such love in that moment.

Perhaps that isn’t everyone’s ideal expression of love, but consider this: He understood the urgency of the situation and also my emotional state. He made helping me his top priority, no questions asked, and he did it kindly.

As we’ve planned this issue, “Love & Passion,” I’ve thought a lot about love and how people express it. We think of epic expressions of love happening at marriage proposals, while exchanging vows, at births, at the highest moments that can happen between partners. But I think love is best revealed at times when someone desperately needs it, and someone steps up to give it selflessly.

In the past weeks, I’ve witnessed a daughter hold vigil at her father’s side, reading him the newspaper while he, sedated, awaits lifesaving surgery. I’ve witnessed a woman move house—in the days before Christmas—to accommodate her husband’s health needs. I’ve seen how beautifully a woman can run a business when she is passionate about her work. I’ve watched children open their hearts and say or do the exact thing a hurting person needs, almost by intuition, and we all witnessed the passion of a Wisconsin community welcoming home a missing girl.

This, to me, is true love.

But don’t just take my word for it. In this issue of *Coulee Region Women*, you’ll read stories of love and passion dedicated to partners, family and community. Vicky Wang Schroeder opens the issue with a swirl of love and joy for her husband and dancing partner, Ben. Amy Schaack puts her passion for music and helping people to work with her business, Life in Harmony. Barb Larsen leverages the love she’s received from her dog, Levi, to serve a community. You’ll see what happens when love is funneled into a house, baked into pastry and channeled in a love letter. You’ll enjoy Valentine-appropriate love stories and gift ideas, and despite the cold and dark this time of year, you’ll be tempted further north with a trip to magical Iceland.

I’ll spend the holiday setting aside my newly restored laptop—as vital as it may be to me—for my true Valentine, my tech-savvy, sweetly smiling, lifesaving guy.

Betty

coulee region **women**

AREA HOME AND HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

ISSUE 102, VOLUME 17, NUMBER 6
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

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Coulee Region Women is published six times per year by Coulee Region Communications LLC
816 2nd Avenue S., Suite 300, Onalaska, WI 54650.
Subscriptions available for \$24.95 per year (six issues).

Send check to the address above.

All unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Coulee Region Women assumes no responsibility for unsolicited materials.

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Printed at Crescent Printing Company, Onalaska, WI.
Printed in the U.S.A.

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For more information, visit www.festivalofowls.com or contact the International Owl Center at 507-896-6957. Plan now to attend, as some events require pre-registration and have limited space. Ticket prices are \$10 per adult, \$6 per child age 4-17 and free for children under 3. Admission is also free for International Owl Center members.



FREEZIN' FOR A REASON

How brave are you willing to be for a good cause? Find out March 1-2 at Pettibone Beach by jumping in to the Polar Plunge. Supporting Special Olympics Wisconsin, this event gives you the opportunity to see how cold you can go or participate in an activity more to your comfort level: a 5k Run/Walk, volunteering, donating or other “too chicken to plunge” activities.

Event highlights include Super Plunge, Cool Schools Plunge, Toss Your Boss, PeeWee Plunge and Moonlight Plunge, rounded out by entertainment, concessions, free shuttles and prizes, including Best Costume by a Chicken, Best Costume by a Plunger, Best Group Plunge and Most Memorable Splash. To learn more about this event and to register, visit www.plungewi.org and click on the La Crosse event. Take advantage of the cold and plunge for a good cause!



CELEBRATING HER HEART HEALTH

This Valentine's Day, celebrate your heart health! Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic Health System are teaming up on Friday, February 22, to empower women to keep a healthy heart. Gather at the Cargill Room for a delicious luncheon, socialize with friends and neighbors and learn more about heart health through free health screenings and informative exhibits. A medical expert in women's heart health, Andrea Winters, PA-C, will give a presentation highlighting the awareness and prevention of heart disease, advances in care for women with congenital heart disease, prevention of sudden cardiac death and the importance of knowing hands-only CPR.

The luncheon takes place 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Cargill Room at the Waterfront Restaurant, 332 Front Street S., La Crosse. Tickets are \$25. Invite the women in your life to join you for this special event! It will be fun, informative and may one day save a life.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH GRIT AND GRACE

In celebration of International Women's Day, Women's History Month and all women who have faced obstacles and ordeals yet persevered, kept the faith and emerged more resilient,

the Franciscan Spirituality Center is hosting a special conference, “Overcoming Challenges with Grit and Grace,” on Saturday, March 16, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., at Mary, Mother of the Church at 2006 Weston Avenue, La Crosse. The keynote speaker will be Sarah Thebarge, a San Francisco-based author, physician assistant and inspirational speaker. Thebarge spent years training to become



Sarah Thebarge

a physician assistant, hoping to use her skills to help patients heal. Then, at age 27, when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, she began her own personal journey of pursuing wellness for herself. She realized that wellness is an even higher ideal than healing, because it's possible to be healthy (disease-free) in your body but not well in your heart, mind and soul. And it's possible to be dealing with health issues and yet still find wellness deep inside. Joining Thebarge will be a panel of regional women—Elizabeth Lewis, Tara Shilts and Melina Garcia—each with her own story of overcoming challenges. The cost for this event is \$40 and includes lunch. For more information, or to register, go to www.fscenter.org.

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It Takes Two to Tango

Vicky and Ben Schroeder take their love story to the dance floor.

BY MARTHA KEEFFE

Photos by Jen Towner Photography



If you ever have the chance to talk with Vicky Wang Schroeder about the topic of love, be prepared—she takes it very seriously. “I’m concerned about the matters of the heart,” she says as she reaches across the table to rest her hand on my arm. “How you relate to the people in your life is what really counts.”

Born and raised in Arizona, she also met her future husband, Ben, there, and so began a journey filled with surprises, challenges and ultimately a truer understanding of love. “I was completing my doctorate degree in pharmacy, and my girlfriend and I took a rare break from studying to go to a club,” she says, laughing at the thought that she actually met someone at a place as cliché as a bar. “And there was Ben. You literally couldn’t miss him; he was tall with extremely blond, almost platinum hair. And when my notoriously reserved friend didn’t give him (and his friend) the brush-off when they came over to dance with us, I was a little bit thrown by the situation.”

But it was Ben’s manners that won her over. “First of all, he respected my space, and second, he gave *me* his phone number, which gave me the choice whether or not to call him.” Following a series of chance meetings and some mixed-up phone numbers, the two were able to connect, eventually getting married and moving to Ben’s hometown of La Crosse.

Seeing fireworks

For Ben—who not only grew up in La Crosse but attended University of Wisconsin-La Crosse—the desire to move back to the Midwest to raise a family trumped the pull of living in a warmer climate. For Schroeder, the move unwittingly bestowed upon her an abundance of love beyond measure. “We rolled into town on the evening of July 4. There were fireworks—which you almost never see in Arizona—and they were absolutely beautiful. I couldn’t help

thinking they were meant for us," she says, recalling how the serendipitous magic of the sight helped make her feel less displaced. "But it wasn't until Ben and my father-in-law remodeled our house and we had children that I had an epiphany," she says. "Ben put his heart into building a life for me here. I knew this was home."

Though Schroeder has faced a number of challenges since then, including miscarriages, she refuses to become defeated by those losses, focusing instead on her blessings and looking for ways to express her love and gratitude for all that she has. "I still remember the devastation and the sadness," says Schroeder, who is mom to kindhearted Rex, 6, and rambunctious Cammi, 4. "But with lots of tears and prayers I know that God always had a purpose and a plan for me, and that has really shaped my mind-set and thinking.

"Now, I never take anything—my kids, my husband, my family, my in-laws, my jobs—for granted," she says, commenting that life is too short to be lived without joy and passion. "If you love something, who cares how you show it? Just do it." And to Schroeder's delight, she has found that passion in ballroom dancing.

Dancing on air

"The first time that I really paid attention to ballroom dancing was at our wedding," says Vicky. "Ben's mom brought polka music, and I remember watching his grandparents fly across the floor. I thought, 'I want to be just like that.'" And though Ben admired his grandparents' skill on the dance floor, he did not immediately share Schroeder's interest in dancing, instead joking that it was something they could do when they were old. However, remembering how impressed his wife was by seeing his grandparents dance, he surprised her at Christmas with a handmade gift certificate good for dance lessons.

Although Schroeder wasn't able to redeem the certificate in Arizona, she brought it to Wisconsin, and Ben (who is more partial to playing baseball and golf) kept his word. In 2010, the Schroeders put on their dancing shoes and headed to the Moose Lodge for



Ben and Vicky Schroeder strike poses with their children, Cammi (4) and Rex (6). Photo by Sarah Schultz Photography.

*You have to be uniquely in tune
with your partner to dance well.
In fact, I think it's one of the best
relationship builders a couple
can have."*

—Vicky Wang Schroeder

their first lesson taught by friends who had learned to dance from Ben's grandparents. Since then, they have been invited by Ben's grandparents to become members of the Senate Dance Club, which carries on a 100-year-old tradition of fine dining and dancing, and they continue to hit the dance floor whenever they have the chance.

Grateful to all those who have encouraged their dancing, the Schroeders have learned to step their way through myriad dance styles, ranging from the fox-trot to the tango to the waltz. "Each month the Continental Dancers host a dance that begins with a 45-minute dance lesson," says Schroeder. "Afterward, you can practice what you've learned for the next few hours. Now we know so many dances that we get upset when we can't remember all of the moves!"

It takes two

But it's the intimacy of dancing with someone you love that Schroeder finds most appealing. "There is something so beautiful about dancing with your spouse," says Schroeder, explaining how dancing requires the couple to communicate through nonverbal cues such as posture and touch. "You have to be uniquely in tune with your partner to dance well. And for someone like me, who likes to be in control, letting Ben lead has taught me to trust. In fact, I think it's one of the best relationship builders a couple can have."

Not only is Schroeder extremely grateful to be able to use dance as an expressive way to connect with her husband—she considers it the best date night ever—but also that she has a spouse who shares her enthusiasm. "I love getting dressed up and striking dance poses, and Ben looks forward to dancing as much as I do," she says. "He puts on his tux (which he bought on his own), and we go dancing. And we always have a blast because that time is meant just for us." 

Martha Keeffe lives and writes in La Crosse. Taking inspiration from Vicky's story, she and her husband have taken to the dance floor and learned the rumba!

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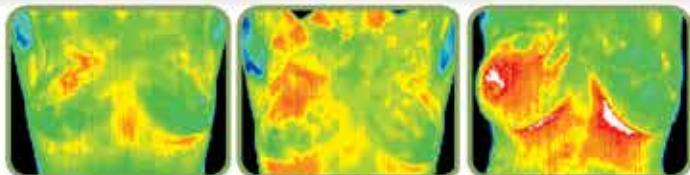
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RubyAnne puts community-integration skills into action while giving back to the community through bell ringing and singing. Life in Harmony director Amy Schaack, MT-BC, assists.

LIFE IN Harmony

Music therapy offers healing in a range of ways.

BY JANIS JOLLY

Contributed photos



Matt and his music therapist, Sarah Kolander, MT-BC, work together to perform at the Life in Harmony Annual Music Therapy Recital. The purpose of the recital is to give the community a snapshot of music therapy in action.

A nonverbal child with autism spectrum disorder uses his iPad to communicate his preferred song. A small group of young adults come together to share ideas for song lyrics to give to a friend who is battling an aggressive form of cancer. An older woman with memory loss who can no longer remember her own name is able to share details about her homestead after listening to "The Green, Green Grass of Home." These are the small but significant daily observations of a music therapist: a trained professional who uses music to treat cognitive, physical, communication, social and emotional areas of need through music.

In the Coulee Region, music therapy is well established, and access to this specialized service continues to grow. Eight neurologic music therapists at Life in Harmony Music Therapy LLC in West Salem work full time serving an eight-county area.

Music as a tool

Music therapy is not entertainment or comfort. It is the planned use of music to reach a specific goal.

Because music helps us recall information, some clients are taught to associate a simple familiar tune with abstract information, such as a phone number or street address.

Music therapy is an effective tool for processing and identifying emotions. In a group session targeting anger management, the music therapist used drums and other instruments to imitate the sound of a thunderstorm to evoke the feeling of becoming angry. The class members verbalized how the music made them feel. Minor keys, low bass and thundering rhythm gave way to a soft, comforting melody in a major key, replicating how it feels when anger passes, allowing the participants to experience and label the emotions without specifically talking about themselves.

Living in harmony

The director of services at Life in Harmony, Amy Schaack, MT-BC, explains that music therapists study the impact of music and rhythm on the brain through specialized college courses in psychology, anatomy and physiology, and music. The Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) maintains quality standards for the profession that must be met before receiving the credential of Music Therapist – Board Certified (MT-BC).

Schaack received her bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She established Life in Harmony after developing a music therapy pilot program for hospice and cancer patients at Gundersen Health System. Now she and seven other therapists serve around 200 active clients. They operate the only mobile music therapy studio in the nation, the Songbird Express, to increase access to services in rural areas and have opened satellite locations in Viroqua and Tomah.

Serving others by using her own musical talents drew Schaack to this profession. "I loved music but didn't want to make my passion my career," she says. One day spent shadowing a music therapist convinced her that this was the way she wanted to use her gifts. "I felt called to use my musical talents to help others," she says. Honored as Music Therapist of the Year for Wisconsin in 2018 by the Wisconsin Chapter for Music Therapy, Schaack plans to keep Life in Harmony growing in the future. 

Janis Jolly loves music and believes in its healing powers.



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OPEN YOUR DOOR TO LOVE

Adopt a pet and change its life—and yours.

BY SAM STROOZAS
Contributed photos



Levi the therapy dog has made the transition from shelter animal to beloved pet to community servant, thanks to the devotion of his owner, Barb Larsen (above). In return, he has brought her joy, healing and love.

A house becomes a home when a new light enters that sparks joy among all. For many, this joy comes in the form of a pet. Embracing a pet is a process, and adoption is a beneficial route that supports shelters and secures the future of many animals, especially older ones that are often overlooked. Heather Hankins, executive director of the Coulee Region Humane Society, champions the many strengths of adoption for animals that need a place to call home. “There are so many wonderful pets that made it here through no fault of their own, but because something did not work out in their former home,” she says.

If adoption is not feasible, fostering is another option that can give you a taste of what your life would be like with a new pet. “Our foster program is wonderful; it has saved so many lives in the last few years,”

says Hankins. “We are always looking for foster families (who are) willing to take the time to work with an animal.” The humane society pays foster families for all of their expenses, including food and medical needs, but it is the caring nature of foster families that has allowed the foster program to grow. “Fostering has changed the number of animals we are able to serve because we have all of these extra places to house animals that need the extra care,” says Hankins. And it’s changed the lives of the humans who foster or adopt, too.

Life with Levi

Barb Larsen found a new and comforting meaning to life when her newly adopted dog, Levi, helped her endure a time of grieving. A border collie and Australian shepherd mix, Levi has been a constant in Larsen’s

life since the sudden death of her first husband. Larsen and her family adopted Levi from the humane society when he was 10 months old, having been surrendered from a home in Viroqua. "Levi was very young and full of energy," says Larsen. "I was impressed by how much life he had." After Larsen's husband's passing, she says, "I entered this new period of my life that I was unfamiliar with, and it was a period that included Levi. In my 27 years of marriage, my first husband and I had four dogs, but having Levi is the best thing that could have happened to me after the death."

Larsen and Levi became very close. "He brought me so much comfort," she says, "and grief is a long journey. What I liked about having a dog is that he was always there to greet me when I got home, and he got me through some very tough and lonely times." Larsen always wondered if Levi would make a good pet therapy dog, as his impact on her life was so substantial. In the summer of 2017, she signed up for six weeks of classes with Levi, who passed his pet therapy exam that following October.



For Larsen and Levi, life is good.

Sharing the love

A new lifestyle was on the horizon as Larsen and Levi began to provide relief and comfort to residents of the La Crosse area. They have paired with Festival Foods for Paw Away Hunger, and once a month they go to Trempealeau Elementary School for the Read to Rover program. They have also helped at Viterbo University, Holmen High School, the YWCA and more. Recently, Larsen and Levi went bell ringing for the Salvation Army, and by the time Larsen left her shift, the kettle was overflowing with money. "Customers thought it was wonderful to have pet therapy available in a spot it would usually not be," says Larsen.

"Levi's impact has been worth every second of my time," she adds. "I cannot imagine my life without him in it. He has brought so much joy and happiness, and it's fun for me to see that impact when I bring him other places." Larsen's life would not be the same if it were not for Levi, a sentiment held by many other people who have opted for adoption. There are always animals looking for their place in the world, and you can make a difference by allowing them into your loving home and providing the stability and trust they wish for. 

Sam Stroozas is a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse who, if allowed, would adopt a black cat and name it Salem.

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| COMMUNITY |

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

Karma Classes at Root Down Yoga Studio give back to the community.

BY TALLITHA REESE
Contributed photos

Mandy Roush, La Crosse area native and founder of Root Down Yoga Studio, first discovered yoga during some challenging times in her life.

"It was what helped me reconnect with myself and make some positive life changes," explains Roush. "I gained the courage to face a lot of fears, confront some things that were holding me back and take better care of myself. It was like I was living in the dark, and suddenly the lights were back on."

Roush was inspired to begin teaching yoga as a result of the profound impact it had on her own life, and she wanted to share that impact with others.

Seeds grow into roots

The seeds of Root Down Yoga were planted in a garage studio, where Roush and her husband, Nick, offered free yoga classes for two years before outgrowing that space and restoring one of the original buildings in Old Towne North with the help of their growing community.

Root Down Yoga Studio opened its doors for their first class on November 11, 2011. Since then, the studio has continued to expand and evolve, while still striving to stay true to its roots.

"So much of what I love about our studio now is unchanged since

the beginning," says Roush. "It is still a warm and welcoming space that feels immediately supportive."

After about a year in business, Roush wanted to develop a way to give back to the community, and in August 2012, the studio began offering Karma Class—a discounted class with all proceeds being donated to a local charity.

"We talked to the teaching team and asked if they would be willing to donate their time, so we could reduce the class price, and they were all in," says Roush.

"I thought it was a wonderful idea," agrees Jessie Fortuna, one of Root Down's teachers. "We all feel like stumbling on yoga was such a gift for us that we want to share and use it to do something better with our time, and all of the teachers wanted to participate right away."

Creating karma

Karma Class is held every Saturday from 4 to 5 p.m. and is team-taught by two instructors who split the class time, giving students the opportunity to work with multiple teachers while also allowing the teachers to mentor each other.

For Root Down teacher Stephanie Callen, the opportunity to co-teach is a great experience.

"I think that when two teachers are paired up, it's an opportunity



Root Down Yoga's Karma Class has raised more than \$40,000 for local charities since it began in 2012.

to grow as teachers, to become better skilled at what we love to do," Callen says. "And we get this playfulness of being in the same room together. It's creative and fun and allows us to explore who we are as teachers and learn from one another."

The teachers begin the class by introducing themselves and talking about which charity will be benefitting from the proceeds of the class. Each month, the studio's student of the month is given the opportunity to select a charity to receive the Karma Class funds.

"They select a charity that is near and dear to their hearts, often one they have a deep personal connection with," says Roush.

Supporting community

Roush says the response has continued to grow since they first introduced the Karma Class, and by the end of 2018, they had donated over \$40,000 to local charities through the years.

Students at Root Down have expressed that attending Karma Class makes them feel good, not only for doing something positive for themselves, but also for being able to contribute in a broader sense to the community.

Pam Popp, another Root Down teacher, notes that the Karma Classes are a great way for the teachers and community of Root Down to keep connecting with each other on different levels, while also reaching out beyond the Root Down Yoga Studio.

"That's what's really dear to me," explains Popp, "when we're supporting causes that are really super close to our students. Knowing how we can support a really personal cause and rally as a community for a student—that really hits me quite deeply."

Roush notes that there are definite regulars among the students that attend Karma Classes with a lot of new faces from week to week as well.

"There's a special something to the energy of Karma Class," says Roush. "Everyone there knows they are contributing in a special way, and that shapes the feeling of the practice for students and the teaching for teachers. It goes beyond practicing for their own good to practicing for others, too." **(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.

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*Sue Breyer,
Financial Advisor*

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A group of women are sitting in a circle on the floor of a wooden-paneled room, performing a seated yoga pose. They are all wearing athletic clothing. In the center of the circle, there is a pink speech bubble containing the text "Your First Class is Always FREE!". To the right of the circle, there is a pink starburst graphic with the text "Celebrating 20 years!".

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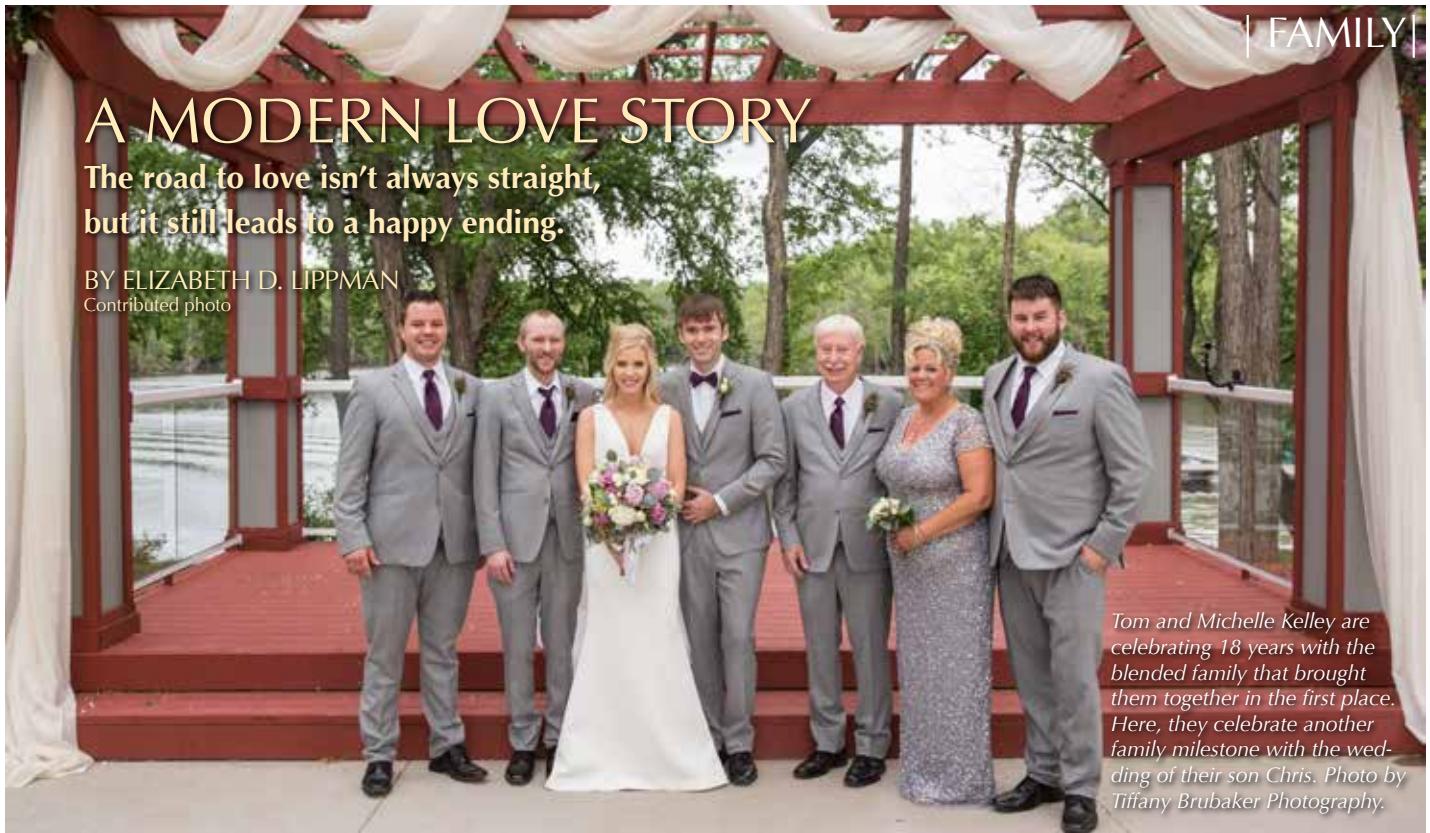
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2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the opening day of my first yoga studio. Wow, where does the time go? They say, choose a career that you love and do it passionately. Be creative, take chances, evolve, express yourself and share your passion with others. When we lead our life and career from our heart, passionately, everything will fall into place. These are the mantras I live by: Do what you love and lead your life passionately, and you will find peace, success and happiness. See you on the mat. **Namaste ~ Tammy**

A MODERN LOVE STORY

The road to love isn't always straight,
but it still leads to a happy ending.

BY ELIZABETH D. LIPPMAN
Contributed photo



Tom and Michelle Kelley are celebrating 18 years with the blended family that brought them together in the first place. Here, they celebrate another family milestone with the wedding of their son Chris. Photo by Tiffany Brubaker Photography.

These days, Michelle and Tom Kelley are busy raising a bounding golden retriever puppy. But in 2000, when they met, they were single parents, each with two sons, who found themselves living across the street from one another. A broken bicycle chain quickly led to a gathering with Tom's rock band and then a kiss—and later this year they'll celebrate their 18th wedding anniversary.

The parent trap

"It was kind of love at first sight with him," Michelle says.

Trinity and Tyler, Michelle's 7- and 8-year-old boys, were riding their bikes in the neighborhood cul-de-sac when one of their bikes threw its chain, Tom explains. His son Chris, 14 (Chris' brother Ryan was 17), enlisted his dad's assistance. "No big deal," Tom says. "Just helping neighbor kids out."

"The next day," Tom continues, "the doorbell rang, and Trinity and Tyler were at my door. 'Do you have any batteries?' they asked. I gave them some batteries, and off they went."

When the doorbell rang again the day after, Tom thought, "What now?"

"Tyler is at the door," he says. "This time he has a business card. On the back of the card it says, 'Give me a call sometime' and a phone number."

"You don't have to marry him"

After a couple of days, Tom was in his driveway, washing down his boat. "I had been out on the river in my boat. I'm covered in sand, hadn't shaved, and was in my driveway washing the boat down—not the way you'd like to meet someone for the first time," he explains.



Michelle and Tom Kelley

"Michelle had been out jogging, and she decided to take the initiative and introduce herself. She was a beauty. I was a mess," he continues. "I ratcheted up my courage and asked Michelle if she would like to go with me to hear my band, the Executives, play at a summer solstice party."

"I thought he was cute!" Michelle adds. She was at work when he called to confirm their date, and she debated whether or not to accept. "One of my friends said to me, 'Well you don't have to marry him. Just go out!'"

And she did.

Love at first kiss

"After the party, I took Michelle home," Tom remembers. "A steady summer rain provided a background hush. I kissed her for the first time at her front door."

It was, as Michelle and Tom tell it, love at first kiss. They were engaged that Christmas Eve and married in June in Hawaii at sunset. "We've been married for 17 years now, and I still have that business card!" Tom exclaims.

"He was a breath of fresh air," Michelle adds. "It was like walking on air. I didn't know a guy could be this way! We just hit it off."

Michelle credits blended-family counseling for much of their success in joining their two families.

And though their boys are now grown and on their own, and they have been busy sharing the responsibilities of care for aging parents, music continues to enliven their life together. Michelle and Tom will soon see Paul McCartney for the fifth time in Madison.

"By the way," Tom insists, "it's Michelle *my* belle—not yours, Sir Paul!" 

Elizabeth Lippman is a freelance writer and editor in Winona.



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Mark your calendars for the 2019 La Crosse Area Builders Association Home Show March 8-10 at the Onalaska Omni Center!

If you own a home and are remodeling, are planning on building or buying a home, or just want a night out, this is the show for you!

The Home Show brings local businesses together to showcase products and services that allow you to see new trends and get ideas for improving the value, curb appeal and comfort of your new or existing home. We will host vendors who can meet all of your building needs, including experts in energy efficiency, kitchens and baths, pools and spas, home building, home sales, building materials, heating and air conditioning, painting, roofing and siding, financing, landscaping and more!

As in the past, we will have themed days, so you can pick which day best fits you or join us for all three:

Join us Friday night for Date Night and enjoy two free drinks with admission, a live musician and a scavenger hunt while you check out the booths.

Saturday will be Demonstration Day, where you will receive two complimentary drinks, watch live demonstrations from vendors and complete a scavenger hunt. New this year, come support our local high school tech-ed programs Saturday afternoon by attending the live auction, where student-built projects will be sold to raise money for the Tools for Schools program.

Sunday will offer activities for the whole family, featuring Touch-a-Truck, crafts, ice cream, pet therapy dogs and a scavenger hunt.

This will be the only Home Show in the La Crosse Area this year, so be sure to check it out. We hope to see you there!

Dallas Werner
Home Show Committee Chair

Kraig Lassig

LABA President
Lautz Lassig Custom Builders



Greetings!

Another year has passed, and the La Crosse Area Builders Association is once again gathering more than 70 professionals in many different fields to help you with your construction project! Each booth is unique and will usually have an expert to answer any questions you might have.

What type of windows should I use for replacement on a 100-year-old house with stucco on the outside? I would like them to be energy efficient but meet my budget. What's all this talk about laminate flooring, engineered flooring and vinyl planking? Do I really have to take off one layer of shingles before I reshingle? These are good questions. At the LABA Home Show, you'll find multiple booths where experts will be able to help you answer them.

The National Home Builders Association has projected a steady increase in building and remodeling for 2019. This will give confidence to lenders, prospective builders and remodelers alike. Ideas like building that dream home, moving the master bedroom downstairs, getting the laundry room out of the basement, adding that brick patio or finally erecting the third garage bay are huge passions for many people, and now is a great time to think about starting them.

Sometimes projects are years down the road. You are still welcome to come and see the current "latest and greatest" items. Browse the aisles and pick out items that might interest you. We would love to help you start down the path of an idea and see that idea blossom into reality.

Come and relax. The doors will be open March 8-10!

Sincerely,
Kraig Lassig
LABA President



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Why Hire a Contractor?

When it comes to building and remodeling, a general contractor can save you money, time and pain.

BY BETTY CHRISTIANSEN

When it comes to home building and remodeling, it pays to hire an expert to oversee your project. Many homeowners, especially those with some construction knowhow or desire to put in “sweat equity” on their dream home, see hiring a general contractor as an unnecessary expense in a project they think they can accomplish themselves.

But the hidden costs of these construction projects—financially, emotionally and legally—can be immense. Hiring a general contractor—who brings considerable experience in managing building budgets, ordering materials and hiring and managing a crew of subcontractors—ensures that permits will be secured, problems will be solved, subs will be paid and the entire project will be done correctly and on time.

Money matters

Hiring a general contractor to oversee a major building project affects your project at its very inception, which usually begins with financing. Having a general contractor is often a requirement of loan approval, says Brenda Fisher, a real estate loan originator at Altra Federal Credit Union. “We will rarely approve a loan for someone acting as their own contractor,” she says.

Fisher also points out that when a subcontractor is hired by a reputable general contractor, that sub knows he or she will be paid for work done. As a result, says Tena Bailey, executive officer of the La Crosse Area Builders Association, when prioritizing jobs on any given day, subcontractors may give preference to those headed by a contractor over yours, resulting in delays on your project. “Their loyalty may be to builders who give them reliable work and who they know will pay them,” she says.

How to Choose a Contractor

A good first step in finding a reliable contractor to oversee your homebuilding project is contacting the La Crosse Area Builders Association (608-781-5242 or www.labaonline.com) for a referral. LABA requires their members to be licensed (if necessary) and insured. With more than 175 members, including general contractors, LABA can be a great place to look for a builder. Then, be sure to ask potential contractors the following questions:

- Could you show me your Dwelling Contractor Certification and Dwelling Contractor Qualifier Certification cards?
- Do you have a permanent business location?
- How long have you been in business?
- How long have your tradespeople been working for you?
- Can I see other projects your company has

done, both completed and in progress?

- Can you provide names and phone numbers of people with whom you work?
- Have you ever been sued?
- Are there any liens against properties you have built?
- Who supervises your construction?
- Whom will I be dealing with during construction? Will that person have the authority to make final decisions?
- Will you be providing me with a contract?
- What type of warranty program do you offer?
- Are you a member of a trade association?
- Do you hold any industry designations?
- Have you won any awards?

Adapted from www.wisbuild.org. Learn more about choosing a contractor at www.wisbuild.org/empowered-homeowners.

The hidden costs

The costs of acting as your own contractor can go far beyond financial. Before you decide to oversee a major project, Bailey says, ask yourself these questions:

- **Do I have the time to undertake this project?** A general time estimate for building a 1,500-sq.-ft. home is 35 hours per week for at least five to six months. Considering the time required for your job, your family and other responsibilities, can you realistically allow this? If you're trying to fit construction into a specific time frame, what will happen when emergencies, obligations and other delays interfere with your deadline?
- **How stressful will it be on my family?** If your family will be temporarily displaced during this project, what happens if it's not completed on time? Can you handle long-term disruption of family schedules? Will you be able to uphold family responsibilities while working on a major project?
- **Do I have the skills to build a home properly?** These go beyond the ability to use power tools. Do you know how to analyze a cost breakdown, or order and account for all needed materials? Do you have the technical expertise to oversee the work of subcontractors? Be realistic about your level of skill and the amount of time you can spend on the worksite. Can you ensure that your completed home will meet codes and last a lifetime?
- **Do I have the tools I need?** If not, how much money will you spend on those tools, and how likely is it that you will ever use them again? Are you informed enough about changes in building trends, techniques and technology to make the best decisions about what is required for building your home?

Serious consideration of these questions can help you evaluate whether taking on a huge project—and a major investment—is something you can realistically do. Turning a project over to a contractor who has expertise in all facets of building may be well worth it in terms of health, happiness and financial matters.

Legal pitfalls

As a self-contractor, you are responsible for any third-party injuries that occur on your property. Without the proper general liability protection—which general contractors carry, along with builders' risk and workers' compensation insurance—you will be held responsible if anyone gets injured on the project. You can also be held responsible for the missteps of your subcontractors—if any fail to pay their own suppliers or laborers, those people can place a lien against your property, even if you paid the subcontractors.

Additionally, as the general contractor of your own home, you can be held responsible for subcontractors who do not follow the construction site OSHA requirements. If your job site becomes the target of an OSHA inspection, penalties for infractions can be very costly.

Finally, if you sell your home down the road, you may be responsible for any defects that are discovered within a seven-year time. As the builder, you will be responsible for claims brought by future owners of the home.

Add to this the fact that, for every subcontractor who earns \$600 per year or more from you, you must prepare and send a 1099 form, and you may see there's much more to self-contracting than meets the eye. Perhaps, in your case, it's a task best left to an expert.

Betty Christiansen is editor of Coulee Region Women.

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Remodel or Relocate?

Ask these questions to help you find your answer.

You'd really like a kitchen where two of you can cook at the same time. A playroom that's not the living room. Increasingly, it seems like there are too many people and not enough bathrooms. Or maybe you're looking ahead and want your place to be more safe and usable as you age.

You're ready to make a change and now you have to decide: remodel or relocate?

Consider both options

There's no one right answer for every situation. So before you look at houses for sale while also sketching out plans to redo your master bath and expand your kitchen, take a look at which approach best suits what you want and can do. That way, you can decide the best option to pursue and focus your efforts toward that goal.

Answering these questions can help you sort it out:

- **How do you feel about your neighborhood?** Do your friends and your kids' friends live there, is your favorite park or coffee shop within walking distance, are the schools a great fit for your family? Or do you keep wishing you were closer to work, had more open space nearby, had shops within walking distance, or a bigger or smaller yard?

- **How does your home compare in value to others in the neighborhood?** Would your ideal remodel make your home the priciest on the street? If you're thinking about ease and value of resale, it's best not to have the most high-end home around. On the other hand, if you're more concerned that your house be comfortable and convenient for you so that you can stay there a long time, relative value may not matter as much as other factors.

- **How long do you expect this change to suit you?** If your house is feeling small because of kids, how old are they? How much longer do you expect them to be living there? Would converting the basement to a playroom give you enough room to spread out? Does square footage per person seem totally inadequate?

Or are you looking ahead to retirement? If so, will you want a smaller home, with less square footage to clean and maintain? Or are you happy with your current home's size but would like it better configured and equipped for aging?

- **What is your tolerance for being under construction compared with the difficulties of a move?** How many changes are on your remodeling to-do list, and how long and disruptive would the remodeling process be? Moving is costly. In addition to purchase price, there are costs for closing, fixing up your current house to sell, and making the move. And once you do move, there may also be costs for fixing up the new house.

- **What's the market for the type of home you want?** How likely are you to find a place that you can afford with the features you're seeking in a neighborhood of your choice? Check out real estate listings to get a sense for what kinds of properties are available and how many choices you can expect to see in your range.

Weigh these factors to help you decide if a move or a renovation project is most likely to get you what you want in a home.

Adapted from National Association of Home Building, www.nahb.org.

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What is La Crosse Area Builders Association (LABA)?

The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a nonprofit trade organization uniting 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, sign a code of ethics, 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!





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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Demonstration Schedule Saturday, March 9

10:15 a.m.

**Do it Yourself Landscaping:
Pruning Tips**
with Travis Seigenthaler &
Mic Armstrong from
McKay Nursery Co.

11:15 a.m.

Tiling/Backsplash Installation
with Keith from Home Depot

12:15 p.m.

**Home Construction
Workshop**
with Chris Gartner from
Compeer Financial

1:15 p.m.

Geothermal 101

with Mark Flock from Flock's
Heating & Air Conditioning

2:15 p.m.

Luxury Vinyl Tile Installation
with Keith from Home Depot

3:15 p.m.

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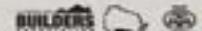
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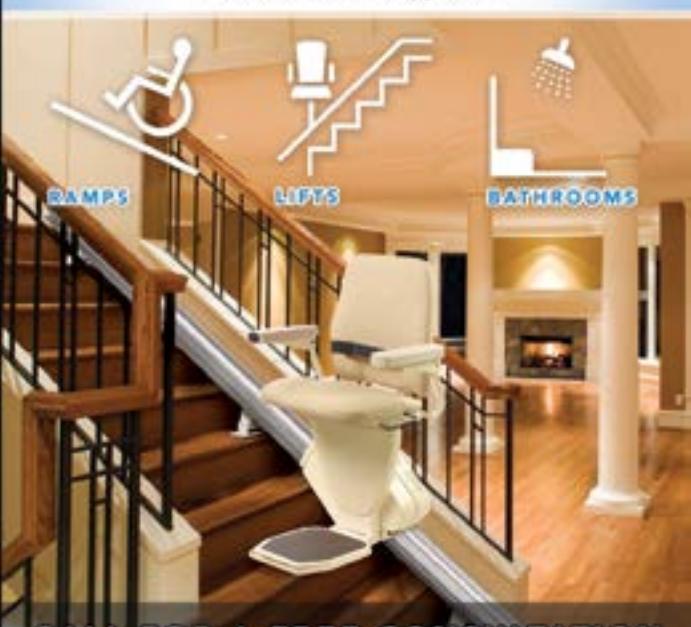
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Heidi Eglash Opens Law Office

Attorney Heidi Eglash has returned to independent practice to serve and support clients wishing to design and maintain comprehensive estate plans for themselves and their loved ones. "It takes more than just good intentions or willpower to plan well," says Eglash. "It also takes the right systems, resources, advisors and allies. I seek to help my clients build and sustain their plans by offering not just the documents included in them, but also these other key elements for good planning. Independent practice focused on this is well suited to serving clients in this manner." To contact Eglash Law Office, call 608-782-6110, email heidi@eglashlawoffice.com or go to www.eglashlawoffice.com.



The Local Maven Opens in Holmen

The Local Maven, located at 208 S. Holmen Drive in Holmen, is a positive environment that's home to locally made goods. An array of products occupies the shop, all made right here in the great state of Wisconsin, with the majority coming from the community surrounding us. Every dollar spent on the goods at The Local Maven supports a member of the community, those we share our streets and schools with, those we meet in the grocery store or at church. By shopping at The Local Maven, you are supporting your community, the families in it and the children of the generations to come. Shop local!

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HouseWarmings Celebrates 5 Years

HouseWarmings, located at 1522 Commercial Street in Bangor, is celebrating its five-year anniversary. Co-owners Kim Herman and Patti Evans started the business in its current building, which was originally built as a hotel in 1902. HouseWarmings features gifts galore, including quality toys, cards, wedding and seasonal holiday décor. They also feature antiques, vintage décor, crafted and new items in a charming atmosphere. Offering a little bit of everything, a trip to HouseWarmings is well worth the drive! Open Wednesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Om yoga studio

Om Yoga Opens in Onalaska

Longtime friends and yoga instructors Tammy Zee and Nedra Blietz have teamed up to create Om Yoga, a new yoga studio in Onalaska. Zee is a licensed Yoga Therapist through the International Association of Yoga Therapy and an experienced 500-hour Yoga Teacher through Yoga Alliance who brings 25 years of experience instructing yoga to this new practice. Blietz is an experienced Yoga Alliance 200 Hour Yoga Teacher, a certified Crystal Healer and a certified ThetaHealing® Practitioner and Master Instructor. Located at 1288 Rudy Street #102 in Onalaska, Om Yoga can also be found at www.omyogaonalaska.com.

Gerhard's Kitchen & Bath Store by First Supply Acquires Wettstein's Lighting

Gerhard's Kitchen & Bath Store by First Supply has acquired the lighting division of Wettstein's and will continue to offer decorative lighting in downtown La Crosse. The expanded store will offer trade professionals and homeowners an accessible, innovative and convenient location for plumbing, cabinetry, tile and lighting. "We look forward to continuing the tradition of customer service that Wettstein's has established for the lighting industry," says Katie Poehling Seymour, COO of First Supply. Gerhard's Kitchen & Bath Store by First Supply is located at 106 Cameron Avenue in La Crosse. For more information, go to www.gerhardsstore.com.

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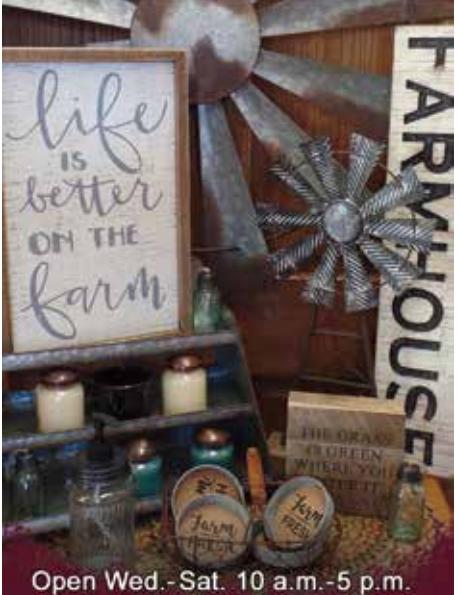
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Light, warmth and love imbue the Hughes home in West Salem. The log theme and well-chosen furnishings create a cozy feel, while abundant light, open spaces and gorgeous views offer expansiveness.

A WELL-LOVED HOME

The Hughes family embraces their log home and all it has to offer.

BY JESSIE FOSS
Contributed photos

The Hughes family—Doug and Jennifer, along with children Jackson, Aidan, Lauren and Samuel—have spent the past five years making the Coulee Region home.

Doug and Jennifer, who both grew up in Indiana, lived in Augusta, Georgia, while Doug completed his medical residency. The family relocated to this area when Doug was hired at Gundersen Health System.

Besides having to invest in a whole new wardrobe fit for Wisconsin winters, the Hughes family also needed to find the perfect home. Jennifer says they looked at a few different houses, but it was a large log home on Innsbruck Road near West Salem that most captured the family's attention.

"A log home is so different," Jennifer says. "We came in for the first time, and it just had its own personality. We fell in love right away."

Cozy and comfortable

The approximately 25-foot great room ceilings and a wall of windows are the highlights of the five-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bathroom home. The windows provide for a stunning view that Jennifer says is her favorite part of the house.

"Doing dishes has never been such a pleasure," she says of the view from her kitchen sink.

The family members, who enjoy snow skiing, sledding and "embracing the cold when we can," also love the land surrounding



The woodsy theme even extends to the Hughes boys' bedroom, then takes a sophisticated turn in places such as the dining room.

their home. They all enjoy getting out and exploring the trails throughout the property. They all love being surrounded by land but also living in a neighborhood setting.

Once back inside, they enjoy plenty of hot cocoa and sweet treats during the winter months spent in their cozy home.

Creating a cozy home despite the home's size and openness is something Jennifer has strived for.

"We don't have close family in the area, so it's important to me to have a place of total comfort for our family. Because we're not spending time at Grandma's house," Jennifer says, "I want this to be a place where the kids feel safe and comfortable."

Jennifer turned to interior designer Kristin Boettcher of J Company Studio in La Crosse to help her cozy up the Hughes home. Working with Boettcher, she says, has opened options she didn't have shopping online.

"Kristin has found things you can't just find anywhere," Jennifer says. "She didn't veto any of my ideas. She just brought choices."

A partnership of design

Boettcher says working with an interior designer is a collaboration between the designer and homeowner.

"One of the reasons the Hughes project turned out so well is because Jennifer followed the process through," Boettcher says. "I wasn't going to force a style on them. Through the journey, I learned a lot about them, what's important to them, styles and things they like. I worked with them to achieve the result with the wow factor they were looking for. Jennifer trusted the process and trusted the expertise."

Boettcher suggests those looking to redo a room, or an entire house, begin with research. Boettcher especially likes the website Houzz to find trends and styles. She says to begin gathering ideas and creating a catalog of things you like. It's not important to know why you like this or that, she says, but you will probably start to see similarities.

Jennifer, for example, added textures and colors to bring warmth to the house and added literal warmth through the installation of another fireplace.

Creating a warm and cozy feeling is accomplished by working with



colors and textures that flow, Boettcher says, as well as remembering each family's personal tastes. "Nothing should be cookie-cutter," she says. "Each piece should reflect a journey and things you like. If they're things you like, they will all eventually go together."

The home's great room was one of the last rooms the Hughes family decorated. In fact, the room had a foursquare court in its center—"the large space might as well be used for something" was the motto—while they figured out how they wanted the room to look. The family settled on large overstuffed couches and chairs with plenty of pillows and replaced the insert of the wood-burning fireplace with a gas insert.

Honoring past and future

Taking time to choose items for the house that would stand the test of time was important to Jennifer.

"I went slow and put things in the house rather than filling it with things I will get sick of quickly," she says. "I wanted to be thoughtful of the future."

Jennifer also wanted to be mindful that their log home "isn't a hunting cabin in the woods, but rather their everyday house."

What Jennifer has put together is a look and feel she describes as "rustic, traditional and eclectic."

It was also important to the Hughes family to keep the integrity of the home as an ode to its previous owners, Bob and Sharon Petry. The couple, who have become surrogate parents and grandparents to the Hugheses, built the home and raised their family in it.

Doug and Jennifer both appreciate building a relationship with the home's original owners; Bob and Sharon come over and make pizza for the Hughes family. It has allowed them to ask all kinds of questions regarding the home.

The Hughes family has additional plans for their house, but they are also enjoying just living life in it.

"When we've been on vacation," Jennifer says, "I love coming home and realizing there's no better place to be than here."

Jessie Foss is a freelance writer living in La Crosse. She enjoyed seeing the Hughes home and meeting the family.

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BODY CONFIDENT

Let your doctor help you navigate the sexual health questions you're afraid to ask.

BY JUDITH MUNSON

Contributed photos

February—a time to ponder love, romance and all things Valentine. But while we're focusing on romance and all that goes with it, let's not neglect our own health—particularly our sexual health. It's an important subject, but not exactly one women relish bringing up with others, including their doctor. Here, we hope to temper the awkwardness of that topic and embolden you to discuss your concerns with your doctor—and perhaps even answer some delicate questions for you.

Nothing's off the table



Deborah Hatanpa, MD,
of Winona Health

"My patients represent a wide range of comfort levels, from very forthcoming to not wanting to discuss it at all," says Deborah Hatanpa, MD, of Winona Health. "I want every patient to feel comfortable enough to talk about anything related to their health and ask me questions about something they're concerned about: birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, anything."

Dr. Hatanpa says younger women are usually shyer about broaching these

issues, while older women are more willing to tackle them directly. "You know, once someone's gone through childbirth, pretty much anything's on the table," she says. "They're more consistent about scheduling pelvic exams and other appointments."

In other words, the more our body is asked to do, the more we realize we need to take care of it, and our confidence increases regarding discussing all aspects of our health.

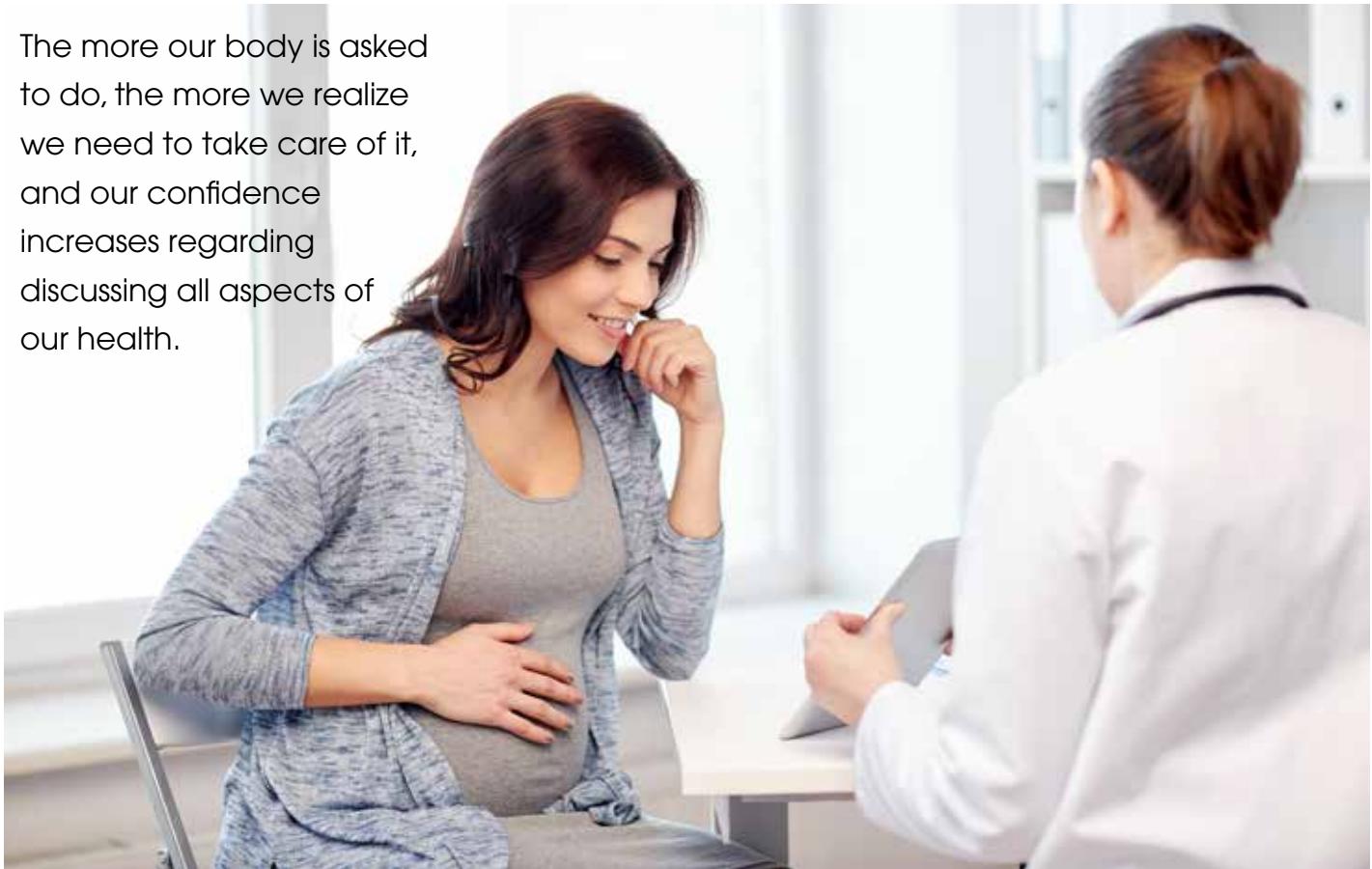
Exploring options

One health issue for women that's changed significantly in recent years is birth control; far more options are available than the 30- or 31-day pill pack many women started with. Nowadays, there are extended cycling options, hormonal and nonhormonal IUDs and progesterone implants that last up to three years.

"If a couple decides to start a family, the implants can be removed," says Dr. Hatanpa. "A lot of women prefer the freedom this option and extended cycling offer."

Phoebe Devitt, MD, of Vernon Memorial Healthcare, agrees that the spike in birth control options is a common topic of conversation in her office. "Over the past decade, there's been more and more interest in LARC (long-acting reversible contraception) options," says Devitt.

The more our body is asked to do, the more we realize we need to take care of it, and our confidence increases regarding discussing all aspects of our health.



LARCs include intrauterine devices (IUDs), Nexplanon implants and the Depo-Provera injection.

"LARCs are more effective in preventing pregnancy and are lower maintenance compared to other birth control options," says Dr. Devitt. "Many women struggle with remembering to take oral birth control pills daily, and if you cannot remember to take the pill, it isn't an effective form of birth control. My personal favorite LARC is the IUD, because it lasts the longest—five years for the brand Mirena, and 10 years for nonhormonal Paragard—and is super easy to use."

Dr. Devitt explains these two brands involve inserting a small device inside the uterus during an outpatient procedure that generally takes about five minutes. "Many women find that their menstrual cycles become lighter or even go away completely," she says.

Extended cycling simply requires pill-pack users to skip the placebo days in order to avoid menstruation. "Not every pill is eligible for this option, so women must talk to their doctor about what pill will work best for them," says Dr. Hatanpa. "There are other, individual issues to consider with each option." For example, if a woman has a history of breast cancer in her family, a nonhormonal option might be best.

Ages and stages

Why patients seek counsel regarding sexual health varies by age, say both physicians, as younger women may experience severe discomfort with menstruation or irregular cycles. Newly married patients may

come in with questions about prenatal care. Older women may, of course, have questions about menopause, including changes in their cycle, sleep disturbance, hormone-replacement therapy (HRT), hot flashes and vaginal dryness causing pain with intercourse.

"The average age of menopause for a woman in the United States is 51," says Dr. Devitt. "Perimenopause begins, on average, four years prior to a woman's last menstrual cycle" and often marks the beginning of the symptoms mentioned above.

"All women might experience discomfort, no matter what their age," says Dr. Hatanpa. "Available treatment depends on the underlying cause, such as topical estrogen cream for vaginal dryness or physical therapy for pelvic floor dysfunction," she explains.

Another avenue to take to help ease health problems associated with menopause includes exploring—with your doctor—the variety of medications available. "These include topical moisturizers and prescriptions that help with mood, as well as HRT, but HRT is not for all women," says Dr. Devitt.

Don't be afraid to ask

Drs. Devitt and Hatanpa agree that all issues related to sexual health need to be discussed with your physician. These are not matters you can google, thinking you'll find a definitive diagnosis. Each woman has a unique health history and physical attributes that demand the careful, individualized attention of a health professional.

"Nothing's off-limits with us," says Dr. Hatanpa. "Advances in care happen constantly, and new guidelines are issued periodically, so it's vital we touch base with our patients on a regular basis." **(crw)**

Judith Munson is a freelance journalist and memoir writer living in western Wisconsin.

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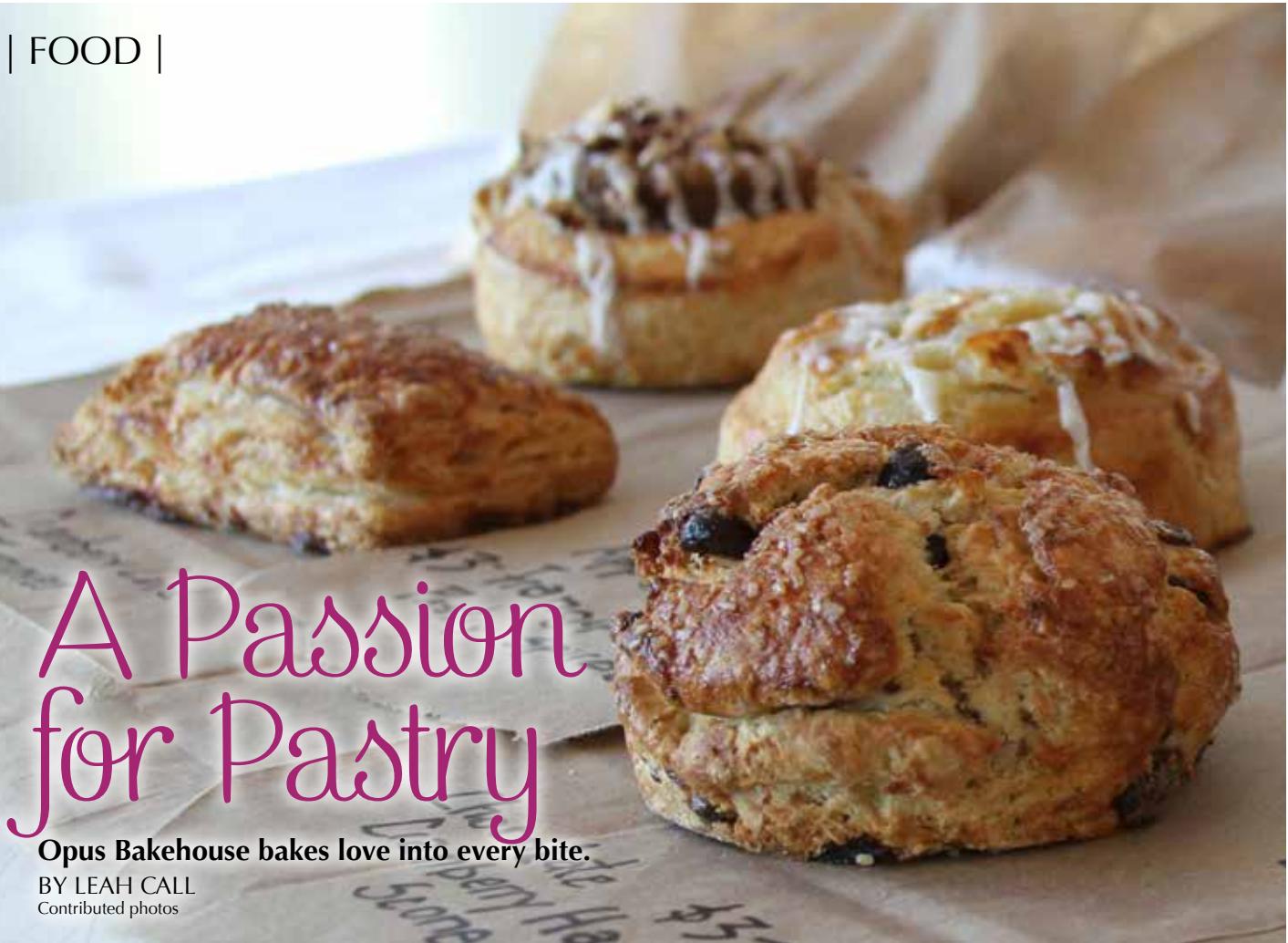
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A Passion for Pastry

Opus Bakehouse bakes love into every bite.

BY LEAH CALL
Contributed photos

Pumpkin maple pecan spirals. Chocolate ginger cranberry galettes with local cranberries. Caramelized onion and thyme scones with locally grown onions and thyme from the YMCA Food Forest. Is your mouth watering yet? If you've been to the Cameron Park Farmers Market or the winter market in the EcoCenter in Myrick Park, you may have tried one of these tasty pastries from Opus Bakehouse, a bakery whose love of fresh local flavors comes through in every bite.

"Opus products and Opus in general are really a reflection of many of our values," says Sarah Brown, who owns and operates Opus with her husband, Trevor. "We have a strong sense of environmental responsibility. That influences our use of organic and local ingredients. Sourcing locally is better for our environment, better for our community."

When the Browns moved to La Crosse in June 2017, they quickly discovered the area's bounty of vegetables, fruits and organic dairy, but they had trouble finding the type of baked goods they both enjoy. So they started Opus Bakehouse.

"We both have been interested in baking for a while. I've been truly passionate about baking for well over a decade," says Trevor, who first sold his baked goods at the Cameron Park market at the end of the 2017 season. "I have sold at pretty much every farmers market since then."

Making it work

As a stay-at-home dad to the couple's sons, 3-year-old Elian and

2-month-old Avi, Trevor manages to find time to bake at the Coulee Region Business Center's shared kitchen. Currently completing her residency at Gundersen Health System, Sarah has few hours to spare. "I love my work," says Sarah, "but it does limit what Trevor can do while being a stay-at-home dad and baking only when I have time free."

When that happens, "I bake like mad," says Trevor.

Juggling the responsibilities of dad, baker and business owner forces Trevor to think—and bake—fast. "This bakery was built on constraints. I don't know if I would have started it if it weren't for the constraints: constraints on time, constraints on my market, on the types of products that I'm able to produce. Without those, I would have turned in circles endlessly trying to decide what to make. But this really narrow, rigid path was created for me, and I decided to go down it."

Sarah calls herself Opus' "lead cheerleader." She also handles social media marketing and makes it to most markets. "I help sell and wrangle the toddlers. And we do recipe development together as a family."

Love for local

Conversations at home often center around flavor combinations. The farmers market itself is the inspiration behind most of the creations. "We frequently get most, if not all, of the fruits and vegetables used in our baked goods at the farmers market," notes Sarah. "It has turned out to be a really wonderful way to keep our menu fresh."

The level of recipe planning and use of local ingredients sets Opus apart from other bakeries. "One of the things that frustrates me about many of the baked goods in the United States is they are kind of an afterthought," says Trevor. "The kind of baked goods we really love have a spark of originality; they are imaginative. They excite our taste buds."

Once Sarah completes her residency, the Browns hope to expand Opus' menu and one day teach others constrained by time, money or physical ability to cook healthy, delicious food. A commercial space, possibly a café, may also be in their future.

"We will start growing Opus as our family situation allows. And when we do, I hope it is in La Crosse," adds Trevor. "We've fallen in love with La Crosse; it is precisely the kind of community I want to sell baked goods into."

SPICED PEAR PASTRY SPIRAL

Makes 12

Dough:

- 4½ cups flour
- 2 T sugar
- 1¼ tsp. fine salt
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- 14 T butter, preferably European-style, chilled or frozen
- 11 fl. oz. buttermilk or yogurt, chilled

Filling:

- 4 T butter, melted and cooled
- 1 large pear or apple, cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 3 T sugar
- 3 T brown sugar, packed
- 1½ tsp. fennel seeds, ground
- ½ tsp. cinnamon

Egg wash:

- 1 egg beaten together with 1 T cream, milk or water



To make dough, whisk together the flour, sugar, salt, baking powder and baking soda. Using a coarse grater, grate the cold butter into the flour mixture—or cut in using a pastry blender—until all of the butter is uniformly incorporated. Slowly add the buttermilk while stirring. The dough may appear dry and crumbly. Once the liquid is mostly incorporated, turn it out on a lightly floured surface and fold the dough onto itself until it just comes together. Do not knead—you do not want to develop much gluten. If the dough appears very dry, drizzle extra buttermilk 1 tsp. at a time as you continue to fold it. If the dough is sticky, dust it with flour as you continue to fold it. Rest dough in the fridge 10-15 minutes to allow the gluten to relax.

Meanwhile, combine the pears, sugars and spices in a bowl to make the filling.

After the dough has rested, lightly dust your worksurface with

flour and roll the dough into a rectangle about 1 inch thick. Fold the left side one-third of the way over, then fold the right side over the left, like you are folding a letter. Roll the dough into a rectangle about 1 inch thick and perform the letter fold once more. This process creates flaky layers. If the dough warms too much, chill it again before proceeding.

To assemble the spirals, roll the dough into a rectangle about 12 by 11 inches and ¼ inch thick. Leaving a 1-inch border along the top for the seam, spread the melted butter over the surface followed by the pear filling. Starting at the bottom, roll the dough into a fairly tight log with the seam down. Using a sharp knife, slice the log into 12 1-inch pieces. Bake the spirals immediately or freeze them in a freezer bag.

To bake, place the spirals on a parchment-lined sheet pan and brush the sides and top with the egg wash. Bake in a 400°F oven (375°F if using convection) 18-22 minutes, rotating the pans halfway, until the spirals are a rich golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Filling variations

- Add ⅔ cup **nuts**, toasted and finely chopped, to the filling.
- Use about 1 cup of **dried fruit** in place of the pear. Cover with hot water, let cool to room temperature, and drain. Use the soaked fruit as you would fresh fruit. Chopped figs and lemon zest are a tasty combination.
- **Frangipane** makes a great standalone filling, but it is also delicious in conjunction with fresh or dried fruit. Try it with rosemary and apples.

CHOCOLATE CRANBERRY HAZELNUT SCONES

Makes 10

- 3½ cups plus 2 T flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¾ tsp. fine salt
- 2½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup hazelnuts, toasted, chopped
- 8 T butter, preferably European-style, chilled or frozen
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup cream, chilled
- ¾ cup plus 2 T buttermilk or yogurt, chilled
- ½ cup dried cranberries, soaked in hot water for 5-10 minutes and drained

Coarse sugar, for sprinkling

Egg wash:

- 1 egg beaten together with 1 T cream, milk or water

Whisk together the flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, baking soda, chocolate and hazelnuts. Using a coarse grater, grate the cold butter into the flour mixture—or cut in using a pastry blender—until all of the butter is





The Browns of Opus Bakehouse—Sarah, Trevor, and sons Avi and Elian—make baking for the business a family affair.

uniformly incorporated.

Whisk together the egg, cream and buttermilk. Gradually stir the liquids into the flour mixture, followed by the drained cranberries. The dough may appear dry and crumbly. Turn it out on a lightly floured surface as soon as the liquid is mostly incorporated, and fold the dough onto itself until it just comes together. Do not knead—you do not want to develop much gluten. If the dough appears very dry, drizzle more buttermilk 1 tsp. at a time as you continue to fold it. If

the dough is sticky, dust it with flour as you continue to fold it.

Use a rolling pin to roll the dough into a rectangle about 1 inch thick. Fold the dough into thirds, as though folding a letter, and then roll it out again about 1½ inch thick. Cut out 10 rounds using a 2½-inch biscuit cutter, gathering and re-rolling scraps as necessary.

Bake scones immediately or freeze them in a freezer bag. To bake, place the scones on a parchment-lined sheet pan, brush the tops with the egg wash, and sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake at 400°F (375°F if using convection) 18–22 minutes, rotating the pans halfway, until the scones are a rich golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Variations

You can easily change the flavor profile of these scones by swapping out different nuts, seeds or dried fruit, or omitting them altogether.

- Use **fresh fruit** in place of dried. For best results freeze fruit in a single layer on sheet pans before adding it. Start with about 1½ cups fresh fruit.

• **Raisins, orange peel, cinnamon and anise** make a great wintertime combination: Add the zest of one orange to the liquids and 1 tsp. cinnamon plus ½ tsp. finely ground anise seed to the flour mixture. Omit the chocolate chips.

• **Fresh herbs** like thyme, tarragon and rosemary play beautifully with a variety of sweet flavors. Try adding 2 tsp. minced herbs to the flour mixture. Try thyme with lemon zest and toasted walnuts. [\(crw\)](#)

Freelance writer Leah Call was impressed by the Browns' shared goals and passion for baking and local flavors.

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Black currants are popular in Europe and have been around for centuries. But the fruit was banned in the United States from 1911 to 1966 because it was thought to carry a fungus that infected white pine trees. Recently, new disease-resistant varieties of black currants became available, and as they can be grown in the Midwest, they're a locally grown product making their way to wine consumers.

The French have "kir" (pronounced *keer*): a wonderful cocktail of white wine with *crème de cassis* (a black currant liqueur). For special events, Champagne is used to create a "Kir Royale." The *crème de cassis* is also enjoyed in spritzers with lemon-lime soda or ginger ale.

With Valentine's Day near, prepare by stocking your cabinet with *crème de cassis* and your favorite wine or soda.

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| HOW-TO |

How to Write a Love Letter

Handwritten letters offer what no text can: a piece of yourself.

BY DOREEN PFOST
Contributed photo

"If you like to get letters, the way to get them is to write," my grandfather once advised me—in a letter, of course. A handwritten letter, whether a love letter or a note of friendship, is almost guaranteed to make you feel special.

"I love getting mail," says Nicole Uecker, who also enjoys writing letters and even "drawing a little something on the envelope." The owner of Twinkle & Twine Design on Market Street in La Crosse says, "People appreciate that you took time out of your day to write something personally."

Margie Wanek, whose Stamp 'n Hand shop in La Crosse offered paper and craft products for 27 years, agrees, noting that some of her customers crafted their own note cards, always with the card's recipient in mind. Others took pleasure in traditional fine stationery: "They liked the weight of the paper, folding it a couple of times, and putting it in the envelope."

While some of us may focus on holidays like Valentine's Day as occasions to write about friendship or love, Uecker observes that many customers stock up year-round on blank "just-because" cards, so they'll be ready to write when the mood strikes.

Writing letters is not only thoughtful; it can be good for you. Research suggests that people who write letters to express gratitude or appreciation experience a heightened sense of well-being, even before getting responses from recipients.

One word at a time

But how to begin? For rusty or inexperienced letter writers, the internet is a surprisingly useful resource, with hundreds of thousands of sites offering advice, especially regarding love letters. The suggestions are generally sound and, if followed, would produce beautiful letters.

Most tips can be adapted for letters to friends and relatives as well.

On nearly every website, Step One is to explain why you're writing. That sounds easy: "It's Valentine's Day, and I realize I have never sent you a love letter, so here goes." Next, websites say, recall a favorite memory—perhaps how you met or a similarly heartwarming experience. Tell the recipient how they have changed your life and why you love them. Then reaffirm your commitment to your future relationship. That's harder. Maybe hard enough to make a would-be writer put down her pen.

But if a nonrunner asked me how to finish a marathon, I wouldn't say, "First, run 26.2 miles." I'd suggest a brisk walk around the block. Similarly, nonwriters can begin with easy steps. Instead of an epistolary marathon, try a short letter that's essentially a note of gratitude.

Begin with the websites' Step One, your explanatory sentence. Then write about *one* thing you appreciate: the recipient's thoughtfulness or the way their laughter cheers you up. You may want to include a brief example. Finally, reiterate your gratitude and sign off.

Put a stamp on it

And you're done. Don't worry about perfection. Chances are, it's your effort that will be treasured as much as the actual content. Stamp and address the envelope (yes, even if the recipient lives with you) and send it off, picturing the pleasure your friend or loved one will receive upon finding their name on a letter—written by your own hand. It's not just a piece of mail. It's the best gift of all: a small piece of yourself. 

Doreen Pfost lives in Elroy. Her father's Air Force career took her family far from home, so she grew up writing—and receiving—long, newsy letters.



LOVE TO WEAR

Discover fashion pieces, accessories and gifts in this season's trendiest hue.

BY PAIGE FORDE

Photos by Jen Towner Photography

At the top of this winter's Pantone color trends, Red Pear is a beautiful, luxurious shade that has been stealing the show on the fashion runways of London and New York. This season, incorporate this striking burgundy tone into your wardrobe and spread appreciation to those special to you with treasures from the Coulee Region.

Deep burgundy accessories pair effortlessly with floral prints, creating a simply romantic and refreshed look. This fashion-forward monochromatic outfit from **Urban Shoetique** in Onalaska is the perfect Valentine's Day ensemble. Suzy D London dress, \$150; To Be Chicago Joni floral scarf, \$65; Melania Clara earrings, \$42; Miz Mooz shoes, \$165.



1



2

LOVE TO GIVE



3



4



5



6

- 1.** **Mainstream Boutique** (Onalaska): *Tempo Paris* floral blouse, \$69; *Bi Jou* earrings and necklace set, \$39; *Slim-sation* jeggings, \$69; *Madeline* burgundy shoes, \$65. **2.** **The Pearl Confectionery** (Downtown La Crosse): Homemade fresh raspberry chocolate fudge, price varies; raspberry and blackberry gummies, \$4.50; 16-piece truffle box, \$18. **3.** **The Orange Pearl** (Downtown La Crosse): *Glo Skin Beauty* runway lip duo, \$36; *Glo Minerals* lip temptation kit, \$42. **4.** **Willow Boutique** (Downtown La Crosse): Free People mulberry corduroy jacket, \$128; *Verloop* pebble scarf, \$50. **5.** **Satori Arts** (Downtown La Crosse): Sterling silver bracelet, \$86; sterling silver garnet heart ring, \$39; sterling silver garnet earrings, \$46. **6.** **Ultimate Salon & Spa** (Onalaska): *Aveda Feed My Lips* nourishing lipstick in "blushed plum," \$24; *Aveda* eye color trio in "plum mist," \$27; *Aveda Feed My Lips* nourishing lip liner in "raisin," \$18.

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These striking basalt-stack formations on the Reynisfjara beach were featured in a Game of Thrones episode.



The iconic Godafoss waterfall in the river Skjalfandafljot in northern Iceland falls from a height of 12 meters over 30 meters of width.



A view of the harbor at Stykkisholmur, a town of 1,200 inhabitants on the Snafellsnes peninsula in West Iceland.

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

The mysterious majesty of Iceland can make you believe in magic.

BY SUSAN C. SCHUYLER
Contributed photos

To visit Iceland is to feel as if you've landed on an alien planet. The island's otherworldly topography, forged entirely of fire and ice near the Arctic Circle, is an unspoiled showcase for nature's raw power.

My 12-day "Untamed Iceland" tour in October was aptly named. Menacing black mountain peaks jut from the ground, steaming geothermal pools bubble with neon-colored mud and rocky turquoise glaciers loom large, striped with volcanic dust.

Iceland is a young land mass, geologically speaking. Its violent birth is thanks to a slash in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge where the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates meet. The island, roughly the size of Kentucky, continues to grow as volcanic pressure forces the two plates apart at a rate of 2 centimeters per year.

I lined up with hordes of visitors to straddle that cavernous fissure in the Earth's crust at Thingvellir National Park on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula for a photo op. Little wonder that Jules Verne chose the area for his protagonist to find the entrance to the center of the Earth.

An ever-changing land

Iceland is a work in progress. The separating tectonic plates release pressure and expose a sea of lava, which occasionally belches to the

surface in volcanic eruptions. According to Iceland's official website, there are 170 volcanos, up to 40 of which are still active, creating a major volcanic event about every five years.

Iceland's most recent eruption began March 27, 2010, when magma began to bubble beneath the Eyjafjallajokull glacier. Two weeks later, the volcanic ash plume had destroyed local farms and spread across Europe, halting air travel for eight days.

The good news is that this geological upheaval also generates an endless supply of geothermal energy. Iceland wisely makes excellent use of this cheap, clean energy source for heating, generating electricity and bathing.

After World War II, Iceland's National Energy Authority began research to use Iceland's abundant geothermal resources for residential heat. Today, more than 90 percent of homes in Iceland are heated using the technology.

Iceland generates 99 percent of its energy from hydroelectric and geothermal sources from 18 power stations, according to Landsvirkjun, Iceland's national power company. Even power stations' waste products are put to good use.

The condensation discharged from the Svartsengi geothermal power station near Reykjavik pooled in lava fields nearby, and people



The author stands at the Myrdalsjokull glacier, the country's fourth-largest ice cap, which sits atop the explosive volcano Katla.



Two 6-year-old girls walk together to the store donning bright safety vests in Stykkisholmur, a town of 1,200 inhabitants on the Snafellsnes peninsula in West Iceland.

began bathing in the bright-blue water after rumors of its healing powers spread. In 1992, the site became the Blue Lagoon, and the spa is now one of Iceland's top tourist attractions. I enjoyed my last afternoon in Iceland there, wading waist-deep through a steamy haze in its silica-infused azure water, sipping prosecco as a mud mask dried on my face.

Dramatic scenery

Its seismic geological history makes Iceland a freakishly fascinating tourist destination, but the strange scenery also offers unearthly backdrops for films. Iceland's picturesque vistas appear in the James Bond series, the Star Wars saga and *Game of Thrones*, just to name a few.

However, it is what you don't see in Iceland's landscape that adds to its primordial vibe. It didn't take me long to notice that there are almost no trees in Iceland. Our tour guide blamed it on the Vikings, who plundered the forest with their axes 1,000 years ago to clear land for farming, build homes and stay warm. Now, Icelanders want the forests back to fight climate change and enhance damaged soil.

Efforts to restore the once-vast forests to Iceland's denuded terrain are slow and daunting, according to a 2017 *New York Times* article. Recent initiatives to plant 3 million trees barely increased the amount of forested land above 1 percent.

The settlement

Although Iceland is the second-largest European island, it is sparsely populated, with only 340,000 inhabitants, making it Europe's least-populated country. In fact, 80 percent of Iceland remains uninhabited.

A whopping 95 percent of Icelanders live in urban areas, mostly in Reykjavik, which is home to two-thirds of the island's population. The few dwellings that dot the barren landscape along the roads I traveled between Iceland's cities are occasional clusters of stark, austere farm buildings, tightly huddled against the mountains, as if seeking refuge from Iceland's unpredictable harsh climate.

Iceland's human history begins with what Icelanders call "the settlement." The settlement story begins when Ingolfur Arnason arrived in Reykjavik in 874 AD in the midst of the Viking Age, when

improved ships and navigation made long-distance travel possible. Arnason was only the first of many Norse settlers who came to escape the tyranny of King Harald Fairhair of Norway.

Iceland's settlement is unique, as it is the only written account of settlement of an uninhabited country, according to experts on the Icelandic Sagas website. Those written documents are *The Book of Icelanders*, written by Ari the Wise in the early 12th century, and later, *The Book of Settlements*, which recounts the family histories of 400 settlers. Both are the basis of a genealogical database Icelanders use today to trace their ancestry.

Myth and magic

Just as surreal as its topography is Icelanders' belief in elves and trolls. My tour leader cited a 1998 survey, which revealed that 54 percent of Icelanders believe in elves. He told tales of roads diverted around boulders where the hidden people reside and of a former parliament member who claimed elves saved his life in a car accident.

Icelanders say trolls are crankier than elves but also have magical powers. As I stood in awe at the base of the magnificent glacier Myrdalsjokull, our guide pulled out a bottle of Katla, Icelandic vodka named for the active volcano beneath the glacier and the troll who inspired its name. As he chipped ice from the glacier into shot glasses he told us the story of Katla and her magic britches. When he finished, we toasted the troll in Icelandic. "Skál!"

After my visit I, too, came to believe that mythical creatures may be working their magic in Iceland—and there are data to prove it. While I was touring Iceland, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released their well-known Better Life Index, and Iceland ranked fourth out of 38 countries for life satisfaction. And after the catastrophic economic crisis in 2008, Iceland's economy is enjoying a miraculous, tourism-fueled rebound. But the best evidence is the remarkable warmth and kindness I experienced during every interaction with Iceland's people.

Couldn't we all use a little of that magic? 

Susan C. Schuyler is a freelance writer enjoying abundant travel in her retirement. She's going back to Iceland as soon as she can.

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ONGOING EVENTS

American Association of University Women (AAUW) 2nd Sat. of each month (Sept.-May), 9:30 a.m., aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com, aauw-wi.org.
Business Over Breakfast La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, 4th Wed. every month, 7:30-8:45 a.m. Preregister 608-784-4807, lacrossechamber.com.
Coulee Region Professional Women (CRPW) 4th Tues. of each month, Shelli Kult, crpwomen@gmail.com.
La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce monthly breakfast meeting. 2nd Mon. of each month, 7 a.m., Radisson. Admission is \$5 and includes breakfast, lacrossechamber.com.
La Crosse 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.
League of Women Voters 2nd Tues. of each month, noon, Radisson Hotel, Nancy Hill, 608-782-1753, nfhill@centurytel.net.
NAMI Family Support Group 2nd Mon. of each month, 6:30 p.m., 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, oaba.info.
Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary every Wed. noon-1 p.m., La Crosse Country Club, Onalaska.
Onalaska Rotary every Mon. at 6 p.m., lower level of Blue Moon, Onalaska.
Onalaska Toastmasters Club 1st and 3rd Mon. of each month, noon-1 p.m., 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.
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, Schmidty's, noon-1 p.m., Shari Hopkins, 608-784-3904, shopkins@couleebank.net.
Women's Alliance of La Crosse (WAL) 2nd Thurs. of each month, noon, The Waterfront Restaurant, Kasey Heikel 608-519-8080, drkasey@naturallyalignedchiro.com.

CALENDAR EVENTS

Jan. 24-Feb. 10, Wait Until Dark , 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2:00 p.m. Sun., Veterans Studio Theatre, Weber Center for the Performing Arts, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.
Feb. 1-2, The Vagina Monologues , 7:30 p.m., The Muse Theatre, 608-397-3752.
Feb. 1-2, Snowflake Ski Jump Tournament , Westby, www.snowflakeskiclub.com.
Feb. 2, Women's Health Fair , all day, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.
Feb. 6, Rock of Ages , 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.
Feb. 6-10, Frozen River Film Festival , Winona, www.frrf.org.
Feb. 7, The Shades of Bublé: A Tribute to Michael Bublé , 7:30 p.m., Lyche Theatre, Weber Center for the Performing Arts.
Feb. 9, Mojo and the Bayou Gypsies , 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.
Feb. 9, 60 Winters Later: A Tribute to the Day the Music Died , 7:30 p.m., Lyche Theatre, Weber Center for the Performing Arts.
Feb. 9, Valentine's Heart Throb Walk/Run , 8 a.m., YMCA-North, Onalaska, www.laxymca.org.
Feb. 9-10, Winona Winter Carnival , Lake Park Lodge, Winona.
Feb. 11, School's Out Day Camp , 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., La Crosse Wellness Center, http://laxwc.com.
Feb. 13-17, The Lady from the Sea , 7:30 p.m. Wed.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sat.-Sun., Studio Theatre, Saint Mary's Performance Center, Winona.
Feb. 14-15, Adolescent Health Symposium , all day, The Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club, register at www.uwlax.edu.
Feb. 15, Sweetheart Dance , 7-9 p.m., YMCA-North, Onalaska, www.laxymca.org.
Feb. 15, Ballroom Social Dance with a Band and Dance Lesson , 7-11 p.m., Concordia Ballroom, www.continentaldancers.org.
Feb. 16, Lightwire: The Show , 7 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.
Feb. 16, Old School Variety Show , 7:30-9:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, www.thepumphouse.org.
Feb. 18, Paint & Pour Workshop , 7-9:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, www.thepumphouse.org.
Feb. 20, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad , 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., Page Theatre, Saint Mary's Performance Center, Winona.
Feb. 22, Celebrating Her Heart Health , 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Cargill Room, Waterfront Restaurant, www.herhearthealth.org.
Feb. 23, Annual Spin-a-Thon , 7-10 a.m., YMCA-North, Onalaska, www.laxymca.org.
Feb. 26, The Queen's Cartoonists "Music from Classic Cartoons" , 7:30 p.m., The Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.
Feb. 28, Celtic Nights Presents: Oceans of Hope – The Epic Journeys of Our Ancestors , 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.
Mar. 1, Zumba-Thon , 4-6 p.m., YMCA-North, Onalaska, www.laxymca.org.
Mar. 1-3, International Festival of Owls , Houston, MN, www.festivalofowls.com.
Mar. 1-10, Urinetown , 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun, Toland Theatre, Center for the Arts, UW-La Crosse.
Mar. 2, La Crosse Polar Plunge , Pettibone Beach, La Crosse, www.polarplungewi.org.
Mar. 2-3, Hansel & Gretel , 7:30 p.m. Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., Weber Center for the Performing Arts.
Mar. 8, Sail On: The Beach Boys Tribute , 7:30 p.m., The Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.
Mar. 9, Comedian Tommy Ryan , 7:30-9:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, www.thepumphouse.org.
Mar. 15, Ballroom Social Dance with a Band and Dance Lesson , 7-11 p.m., Concordia Ballroom, www.continentaldancers.org.
Mar. 16, "Overcoming Challenges with Grit and Grace" , 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Mary, Mother of the Church, La Crosse, www.fscenter.org.
Mar. 16, Spring Fashion Show , Center Court, Valley View Mall, www.myvalleyview.com.
Mar. 18, Paint & Pour Workshop , 7-9:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, www.thepumphouse.org.
Mar. 20, One-Man Star Wars Trilogy , 7:30 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.
Mar. 21-24, She Loves Me , 7:30 Thurs.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sun., Page Theatre, Saint Mary's Performance Center, Winona.
Mar. 21-31, A Streetcar Named Desire , 7:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat., 2:00 p.m. Sun., Lyche Theatre, Weber Center for the Performing Arts, www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.
Mar. 28, Dallas String Quartet Electric , 7:30 p.m., The Heider Center, www.heidercenter.org.
Mar. 30, Popovich Comedy Pet Theater , 3 p.m., Viterbo Fine Arts Center.
Mar. 30, 37th Annual Radio Auction Fundraiser on 92.3 FM, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., www.thepumphouse.org.

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



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