August 2025

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COVER DESIGN BY RACHELLE HANSEN

FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, *August!*

HOW CAN YOU NOT FALL IN LOVE WITH WISCONSIN THIS TIME OF YEAR? The grass is definitely greener here and the sky is blue all around. Everyone is outside for more fun in the sun, making the most of the water, patio seating, and country drives with the windows down. The good news is the best is yet to come. Grab your shades and a cooler. *Appleton Monthly* has you covered like a good sunscreen. Get ready to soak it all up and make it the greatest summer ever!

In this August issue we explore local road trips with a sprinkle of delicious, summer indulgences. The amazing Tim Froberg in VOICE shares the rich history of the Appleton Dairy Queen sweet-treat legacy told by owner, Steve Liebzeit. Then, in TODAY, Tim shares his Midwest road-tripping prowess as he takes us along for the ride on some less-er-known routes as well as those well-traveled.

What else goes better with August than road trips and ice cream? Barbecue, of course! Jenni Eickelberg covers TASTE exploring some of the Appleton region's best barbecue you'll want to dive into year-round. For those who want to work for those cravings on two wheels instead of four, in MORE we cover all-things bicycles. Whether you're upgrading to a fat-tire or test riding an e-bike, you'll love this guide.

Jamie

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Steve Johnson is co-owner and winemaker of Parallel 44 and Door 44 in Kewaunee and Door Counties. His passion is growing and crafting wines from northeast Wisconsin, an unexpected yet increasingly recognized corner of the wine world.

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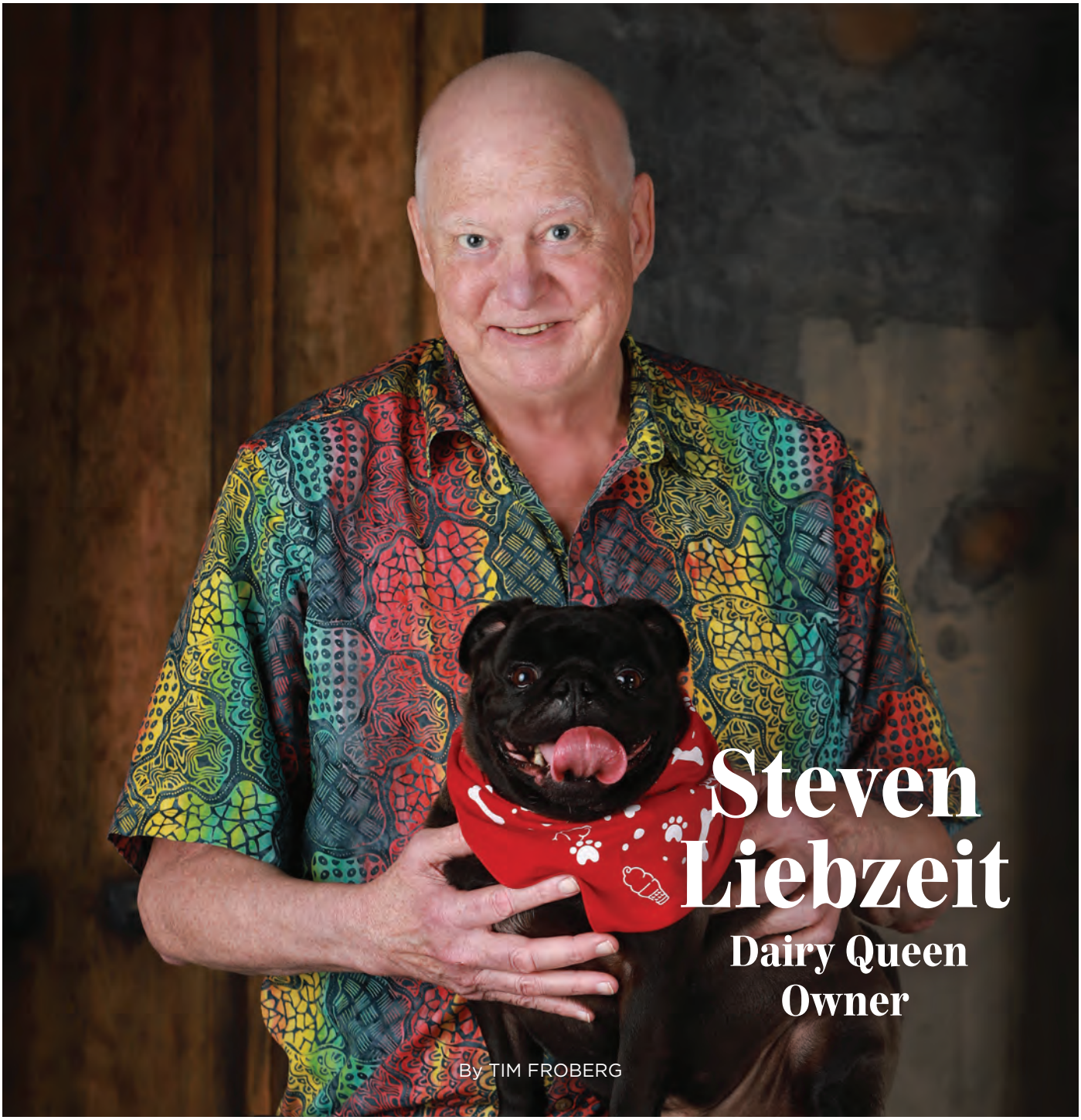

Steven Liebzeit

Dairy Queen Owner

By TIM FROBERG

An Ice Cream Story

GET THE SCOOP ON ICE CREAM ENTREPRENEUR

By TIM FROBERG

Steve Liebzeit doesn't drive a refrigerated truck stocked with summertime treats and equipped with a bell. Call him the "Ice Cream Man," though, and you will get a hearty laugh from Liebzeit and no disagreement.

Most of Liebzeit's life has revolved around the tasty frozen dessert. The Hilbert native grew up in a family ice cream business and is a third-generation Dairy Queen owner. Liebzeit owns the two Appleton Dairy Queen locations, at 2000 S. Oneida St., and 1813 N. Richmond St.

"Dairy Queen is my life," said the 70-year-old Liebzeit, who has no intentions of retiring any time soon. "I don't know what it would be like to not be here. People come here to be happy. That's why I love this business so much."

Liebzeit has owned the two Dairy Queen stores for 44 years. He purchased both in 1981 from his parents, Merlin and Erna, after working as an employee in the family business.

"Steve is a big history buff," said Nicole Foth, who has worked as Liebzeit's general manager since 2017. "Ask him about any past war and he'll tell you all about it."

Ask Liebzeit about the ice cream business and he will happily reflect on his family's long and distinguished history with Dairy Queen. Appleton Dairy Queen recently celebrated its 75th anniversary.

THE START OF A DQ LEGACY

The Liebzeit family owned the very first Dairy Queen franchise in Wisconsin. On June 4, 1950, Merlin and Erna opened the doors of the current Oneida Street location.

Dairy Queen, however, wasn't simply a clever name that Merlin and Erna created for their new drive-in business. The name had been used by the Liebzeit family for several years prior to the opening of their original store.

The Liebzeit's Dairy Queen legacy started in 1913 when Henry Liebzeit—Steve's grandfather—opened

a cheese factory in Sheboygan County. Henry purchased a second cheese factory in Calumet County in 1925 and named it the "Dairy Queen Cheese Factory." The factory came with cheese and ice-cream making equipment, along with a milk-bottling machine.

"It had all the extra equipment that other cheese factories didn't have," Liebzeit said. "They would process and bottle milk and would send the crème down to Fond du Lac to get butter made. And they made ice cream."

In 1941, Henry and his wife, Lydia, opened an Appleton eatery known as the Dairy Queen Restaurant at 730 W. Wisconsin Ave. Three years later in 1944, Henry, Lydia, Merlin and Erna launched a partnership known as the Dairy Queen Products Company: a family-run dairy products company that included the Dairy Queen Cheese Factory. The partnership was formed after a consultation with an attorney, which allowed them to secure all legal rights to the Dairy Queen name in Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, a chain of ice cream-restaurant franchises also named Dairy Queen began to grow across the country. The signature soft-serve ice cream formula was initially developed in 1938 by an Illinois man named JF McCullough and his son, Alex. The first Dairy Queen ice cream shop opened in Joliet, Illinois in 1940.

By the late 1940s, there were more than 1,400 Dairy Queen stores and the chain eventually wanted to move into Wisconsin. However, the Liebzeits held Dairy Queen naming rights in Wisconsin and weren't about to get pushed around. The family initially denied the Dairy Queen chain from establishing businesses in the Badger State.

Negotiations followed and the Liebzeits relented. They agreed to allow the Dairy Queen name to be used in Wisconsin in exchange for the right to establish Dairy Queen drive-ins in Appleton. The Liebzeit's Oneida Street location became the first Dairy Queen in the entire state and the family added the Richmond Street location in 1953.

In the early days of Dairy Queen, the sale of ice milk—also known as low-fat ice cream—was illegal in Wisconsin. The Liebzeits and other Wisconsin Dairy Queen operators only sold ice cream that was higher in fat, but in 1952, they successfully pushed for the law to be changed.

"Well, we're a big dairy state, right, and the farmers had a lot of pull back then," Steve said. "They didn't want ice milk to be sold because there was less milk fat going into it. It wasn't until 1952 that my parents could sell the real Dairy Queen product."

The Liebzeits sponsored many promotions at their Appleton Dairy Queen stores in the 1950s, including appearances by Miss Wisconsin and Miss Appleton along with a special visit by a circus elephant named Bertha. One of the most popular Dairy Queen promotional devices was the arrival of the Dilly Wagon in the 1960s, which used motorized vehicles to sell DQ Dilly Bars along with other items.

Today, there are 4,147 Dairy Queen stores across the

country—including 125 in Wisconsin—and more than 6,000 worldwide. Dairy Queen is the world's largest chain of soft-serve ice cream stores with restaurants in 19 countries. The company's stores are operated under several brands, but all bear the Dairy Queen logo and carry the DQ signature soft-serve ice cream. Dairy Queen is currently headquartered in Bloomington, Minn.

"It's a good feeling to be a third-generation owner," said Liebzeit. "I'm very proud of the business and the work my grandfather and dad did to get it established.

"I've always said that running a business is like keeping a flywheel turning. There is a lot of work at first to get it going around, but then it's a lot easier to keep it going."

MAKING A BIG DECISION

Prior to purchasing the family business, Liebzeit attended the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and received his bachelor's degree in 1976 in foreign languages-literature and business. He was working in the family ice cream business and contemplating whether to attend the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona for further business training when he was given a life-changing opportunity.

"I had never been a (Dairy Queen) partner—just a salaried employee—and had two options in life," said Liebzeit, a 1972 graduate of Fox Valley Lutheran. "I could either go to international business school or buy my dad's stores. I remember sitting in my parents' house at the kitchen table and filling out residency papers for international business school in Arizona and my dad coming up to me and saying, 'Well, are you going to buy the Dairy Queens or not?' I mean, there it was."

Liebzeit went the Dairy Queen route. He chose to keep the business in the family by purchasing both stores and never looked back. He kept both at the original locations, but didn't pinch pennies. He renovated and enlarged them, making

them model Dairy Queen franchises.

"After I bought the stores, my dad used to travel around the country going to Dairy Queen conventions and selling coupon books," Liebzeit said. "He would always refer to my stores as the most beautiful Dairy Queens in the system. They were both designed by myself and my sister, Betty."

What did Liebzeit learn from Merlin?

"He taught me a couple very important things," Liebzeit said. "One of the big things dad taught me was fiscal conservatism. I never bought anything that I couldn't afford to pay for. Don't spend money that you don't have was one of the lessons he taught me.

"Another thing I learned from him is to treat your employees well. He was all about treating his employees like family. We're still doing that today and have had great success with it. Our employees are happy people and we go out of our way to do what we can for them."

Foth agrees. She has worked with his Appleton Dairy Queen stores since her teen years.

"Steve is a great guy to work for," Foth said. "I think that one of the reasons the businesses have been so successful is because he really doesn't spare expenses when it comes to the stores.

"We have 70 people on our payroll right now which is the highest we've ever had, but Steve just laughs when I tell him that and asks us what we need. He's a really smart guy and quality comes first with him."

FOCUSING ON ICE CREAM

Many Dairy Queen stores sell food, but the Liebzeits have never gone that route. Instead, his stores focus solely on ice cream products, including their delicious ice cream cakes designed and decorated by Candice Gumm, a highly skilled cake decorator who has won multiple international cake decorating (Iron Tip) contests.

"We've never had food," Liebzeit said. "We just decided a long time ago that, hey, we do this (ice cream) really well. Why bother putting food in? I remember the days when I worked for my dad and we would travel around to different Dairy Queens in places like Rhinelander and Antigo with two-window walkup stores, some of which sold food. We would go in through the back door and the smell was never great. It was like, 'phew!'"

Liebzeit was just five years into his Dairy Queen ownership when the DQ national business spiked with the 1985 introduction of a game-changing product known as the Blizzard. The highly popular, tasty treat blends candy, cookies, fruits, and nuts with soft-serve ice cream for a thick, creamy and flavorful dessert. Currently, there are as many as 17 different Blizzard flavors on Dairy Queen menus, and for years, the Blizzard has been the best-selling DQ product.

What does Liebzeit opt for when he digs into a Blizzard?

"I'm really simple," he says with a laugh. "I just go for the Oreo."

Liebzeit believes strongly in supporting his community and has generously given away thousands to charities and worthwhile causes throughout the years. He once paid the funeral expenses of a former DQ employee who had moved out of state because his family couldn't afford to do so.

"He doesn't like to advertise it, but Steve donates a ton of money," Foth said. "He's donated to the Ascension Foundation, the Children's Miracle Network and different children's hospitals. His mom was hard of hearing so he donated to a smaller charity called 'Hear in the Fox Cities.' He makes sure to give back to the valley that has taken care of him and his family all these years."

Liebzeit still works five or six days a week and doesn't seem to be slowing down.

"Everybody asks me, 'Why are you still doing this?'" Liebzeit said. "I always say: 'Because I don't know anything else.' One of my biggest assets is my GM, Nicole Foth. She's very personable. She's great to our employees and their needs and problems. I've become more and more of a philanthropist over the years."

When he's not dealing with Dairy Queen matters, Liebzeit, an animal lover, enjoys spoiling Boo, his beloved black pug.

__Tim Froberg__ has worked as a reporter for the Appleton Post-Crescent, Green Bay News-Chronicle, and Marinette EagleHerald. He won eight Wisconsin Newspaper Association writing awards.

By BRITTANY FRANCIOSI

Officially opened in 1926, Route 66 operated continuously for nearly 60 years. During this period it became a symbol of America's economic and industrial prowess.

In 1963, the first presidential barbecue at the White House was hosted by Lyndon B. Johnson, as his first State Dinner. The first White House barbecue featured Texas-style ribs.

In 2009, researchers **found mammoth ribs in a 4-foot cooking pit** that appeared to date back to 29,000 B.C.

The average American eats at least four times during a five- to six-hour road trip. For more than half of survey respondents, the road trip snack of choice was pretzels or chips.

71% of people say a road trip wouldn't be complete without their spouse or significant other. **Nearly half say their travels are to visit family.**

The first barbecue competition took place in Hawaii in 1959 and was only open to men.

Road trips help local communities. In a survey on RV travel, half of Americans said they stay two to three nights on average and spend money in local communities.

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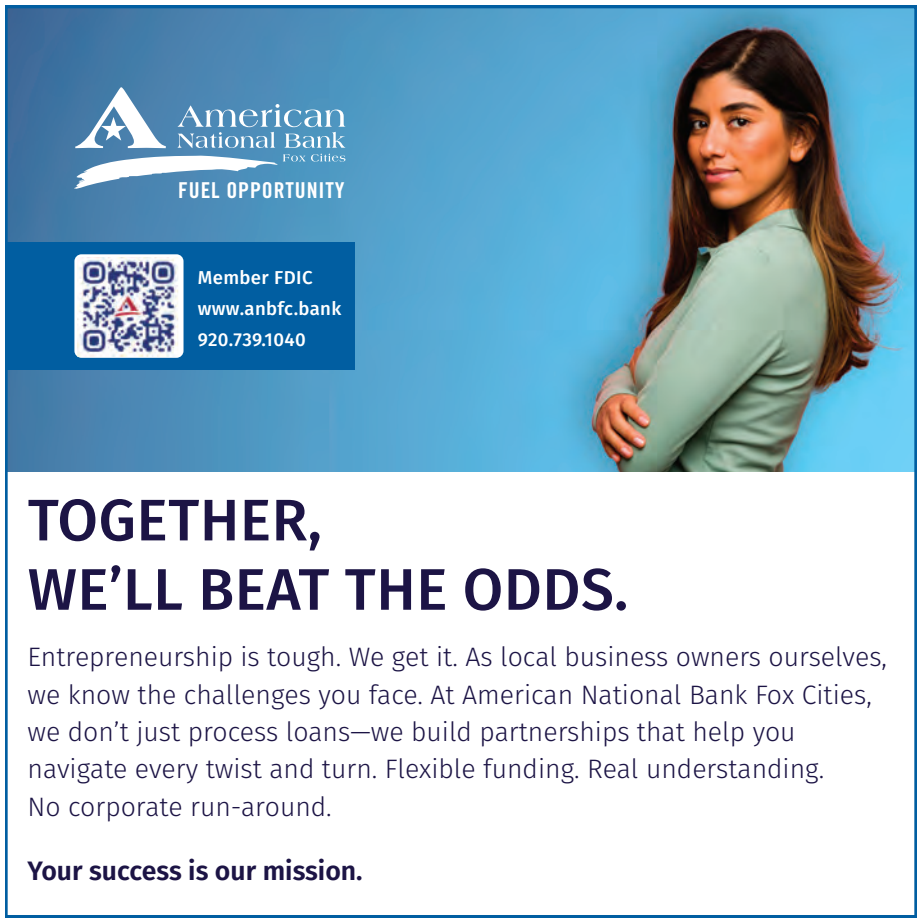

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INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS AND BUSINESS LENDING

By BRENT WALBRUN

Understanding insurance requirements is crucial for both lenders and borrowers in business lending. Insurance not only protects the financial interests of both parties but also ensures the stability and continuity of business operations. This article delves into the various types of insurance necessary for business loans, their significance, and how community banks can assist in navigating these requirements.

The Role of Insurance in Business Lending

Insurance acts as a safeguard in the business lending process. For lenders, it reduces the risk associated with providing substantial loans by ensuring that they can recover their funds in case of unforeseen events. For borrowers, having adequate insurance coverage means that their business assets are protected, and they can maintain operations even when faced with unexpected challenges.

Essential Insurance Policies for Business Loans

When seeking a business loan, borrowers may be required to secure several types of insurance. Here are some of the most commonly required policies:

Property Insurance: This policy covers damages to physical assets such as buildings, machinery, and inventory. It is vital for businesses that own or lease property.

General Liability Insurance: This insurance protects against claims of bodily injury or property damage caused by the business' operations, products, or services.

Business Interruption Insurance: This type of insurance compensates for lost income and operating expenses if the business is temporarily unable to operate due to a covered event.

Workers' Compensation Insurance: Mandated in most states, this insurance covers medical expenses and lost wages for employees who are injured on the job.

Professional Liability Insurance: Also known as errors and omissions insurance, this policy is essential for businesses that provide professional services, protecting against claims of negligence or inadequate work.

How Community Banks Can Help

Navigating the insurance requirements for business loans can be complex. Community banks like us are uniquely positioned to offer personalized guidance and support. They have a deep understanding of local markets and can provide tailored solutions to meet the specific needs of your business.

In conclusion, understanding the various insurance requirements for business loans, meeting these criteria, and seeking support from community banks can significantly enhance your chances of securing the funding you need. Whether you're looking to start a new venture or expand an existing one, the right insurance coverage can be a powerful tool in achieving your business goals.

__Brent__ is a seasoned business banker with over 30 years of experience supporting local business owners, holding a B.S. in Finance from the University of Wisconsin and a graduate degree from the Graduate School of Banking in Madison. A passionate volunteer and accomplished hydroplane racer with three national championships, Brent also enjoys giving back to his community alongside his wife, Jill.

Hey Siri...

Where can I find a great store that sells **premium women's handbags?**

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MIDWEST ROAD TRIP

WITH A COOLER FULL OF WELLNESS

By ANGELA HALDERSON

There's something nostalgic and freeing about hitting the open road through the Midwest—the rolling cornfields, glimmering lakes, roadside farm stands, and small-town diners. But too often, road trip fuel comes in the form of gas station chips and sugar-laden drinks that leave you feeling sluggish.

If you want to stay energized, focused, and digestion-friendly during your drive, a little planning goes a long way. Here's how to pack your cooler with whole-food nutrition that keeps you going mile after mile.

Cooler Essentials for Energy and Balance

Cooler essentials are the nutrient-dense foods and drinks that keep you energized, hydrated, and satisfied on the road. These include proteins, fiber-rich produce, healthy carbs, and beverages that support steady blood sugar and digestion. To safely pack them, start with a well-insulated cooler and, at the bottom, layer large ice packs or frozen water bottles. Place the most perishable items—such as proteins and leafy greens—closest to the ice and use smaller containers or zip bags to maximize space. Keep frequently used items near the top and consider separating snacks into grab-and-go portions for easy rest-stop access.

1. Smart Proteins

Protein is key to staying full and mentally sharp on long drives.

- Pre-grilled chicken strips
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Salmon or tuna salad jars
- Cheese sticks or sliced Manchego
- Nut butter packets (perfect with apple slices or celery)

2. Fiber-Rich Produce

Fiber keeps digestion moving—which is especially important when sitting for hours.

- Snap peas, cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks
- Apples, blueberries, or dried plums
- Pre-washed salad greens in a zip bag
- Sliced cucumber and bell pepper

3. Healthy Carbs

You don't need to skip carbs—just choose those that stabilize blood sugar.

- Cooked wild rice or quinoa
- Sprouted grain wraps
- Oatmeal jars for overnight breakfast
- Sweet potato wedges with olive oil and sea salt

4. Hydration Boosters

Dehydration leads to fatigue and cravings.

- Refillable water bottles
- Electrolyte packets
- Herbal iced teas (try ginger or hibiscus)
- Coconut water for potassium-rich sipping

Recipe: Apple & Wild Rice Salad with Herbed Chicken

A refreshing and grounding Midwest-inspired salad that is easy to prep ahead for a road meal or a picnic stop.

Ingredients (serves 2):

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Salt and pepper to taste

1 cup cooked wild rice, cooled

One apple, diced (try Honeycrisp or Gala)

½ cup cooked chicken breast, chopped or shredded

¼ cup chopped pecans or walnuts

2 tablespoons dried cranberries or golden raisins

1 tablespoon minced red onion

2 cups greens (arugula or spinach)

Directions:

1. In a small jar, whisk together olive oil, apple cider vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper.
2. In a medium container or bowl, mix wild rice, apple, chicken, nuts, cranberries, and onion.
3. Add greens and drizzle with dressing. Toss gently before serving.

The salad holds up well in a cooler for 1–2 days and can be eaten chilled or at room temperature.

Final Tip: Balance Indulgence with Intention

Sure, enjoy a small-town ice cream cone or local cheese curds—it's part of the fun! Be sure to anchor your day with nourishing meals that support stable energy, gut health, and hydration. When your cooler is full of whole-food goodness, you'll feel better, drive safer, and truly savor the Midwest miles.

***Angela Halderson** is the owner of Strong Meridian, a natural healthcare practice focusing on the root cause of disease. She is a dietitian trained in functional medicine, energy medicine, homeopathy and herbalism.*

HOBO

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LARGEST SELECTION OF CHILDREN'S FURNITURE IN WISCONSIN

UPFRONT

Dawn Gohlke

Executive Director of Mary Beth Nienhaus Activity Center

Dawn Gohlke has a friendly wager for anyone curious about the new Mary Beth Nienhaus Activity Center.

Walk into the newly renovated senior center, located at 3000 E. College Ave.—formerly known as the Thompson Center on Lourdes—and Gohlke predicts the visitor won't be surrounded by strangers.

"People have told me in the past, 'I always wanted to go there, but didn't think I'd know anyone,'" said Gohlke. "Come here now and I'll bet anything that you will find someone you know. We have a wonderful culture here."

The Appleton native has been the organization's executive director for the past year. A 1992 Appleton East graduate, Gohlke has more than 20 years of experience working with youth, nonprofit and now senior organizations. She holds a master's degree in strategic management from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater after receiving her bachelor's from UW-La Crosse.

Gohlke previously worked high-level executive jobs at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Green County, Best Friends of Neenah Menasha, CASA of the Fox Cities and Kids Matter Inc. of Milwaukee.

Away from the office, Gohlke enjoys camping and hanging out with her sons, Conner, 16, and Ethan, 14.

By Tim Froberg
Photo by Ashley Schmit
Debbie Daanen Photography

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING PART OF THE NEW MBN ACTIVITY CENTER?

"Amazing. I've been here a little over a year and it's been a whirlwind. You never think that when you start a new job, you're going to be in the middle of a capital campaign and your organization is building a state-of-the-art facility. As executive director, I'm wearing a lot of hats. We have a lean staff. When it comes to my job, it's not always strategic planning, working with the budget and volunteer management. This morning, I was doing maintenance work."

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE MOST ABOUT THE CENTER?

"A lot of senior centers don't get a facility that is state of the art. They're in a church basement or in one room. This whole place was designed for individuals 50 and over and what their needs and wants are. That's what I love about it. Our largest champion and donor, Mary Beth Nienhaus, is very active in our community. She has always wanted this center to be a hub . . . for friendship and resources. Another thing I really love is when you step through those doors, it feels very warm and inviting. It doesn't feel cold like it often does when you're walking into a new place. Then you come around the corner and you're at the center and you see everyone: individuals playing billiards, people playing pickleball. People aren't hidden away anymore."

WHAT HAS THE TRANSITION BEEN LIKE IN GOING FROM CHILD WELFARE WORK TO SENIORS?

"It's been very gratifying. I fall into this age category myself and we all want the same thing. We want to be loved, we want to belong and we want to be heard. It doesn't matter what age you are. That's what I like about the Mary Beth Nienhaus Activity Center. We listen to our participants. There are a lot of resources here that I hope will help us reimagine what aging looks like in the community. We are not quiet. We are vibrant and active individuals."

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. HOW DID THAT START?

"I love providing service to the community. It's the way I was raised. I learned at a very early age that you volunteer. You get involved. You do something. My parents (Henry and Beverly Yunk) always made sure we were doing something with them to help the community, whether it was for school or at church. I do the same with my children today. If it's appropriate for kids, they come along with me"

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- Live Music & Entertainment
- Activities for all ages
- And More!

Scan the QR code for more details.

*All special events pending City approval

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appletondowntown.org

GOOD STUFF

By MEGAN REINHOLD

EXPERIENCE THE TROLLEY

DOWNTOWN APPLETON TROLLEY

Want to travel through Appleton in style? Then hop aboard the Downtown Appleton Trolley! Ride all summer long (until Sept. 27). Catch the trolley Thursdays and Fridays from 5:15 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:15 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. Every Saturday through August 30, hop aboard for storytime, from 9:45-10:15 a.m. Visit the website to see all the stops and to find a spot to jump aboard.

appletondowntown.org/downtown-trolley

SUPPORT A LOCAL BOOKSTORE

A SECOND CHANCE ROMANCE

A Second Chance Romance is an independent bookstore based in Appleton. You can shop the website and find a large variety of romance books available and other goodies such as bookish candles. An actual physical bookstore will be coming soon, but for now, you can enjoy pop-up events and author signings at a variety of fun venues. Check out the website for more information on the pop-up events or to do some shopping. Any day is a great day to support a local business.

asecondchanceromance.com

PLAY A ROUND OF DISC GOLF

LOCAL DISC GOLF COURSES

The Fox Cities area has a handful of places to consider for disc golf. Some local options are Pierce Park, Telulah Park, and Plamann Park in Appleton; Grignon Park in Kaukauna; O'Hauser Park in Fox Crossing, and Clayton Park in Neenah.

udisc.com/places/appleton-wi

HILL TOP BAKERY

Hill Top Bakery, located in Kaukauna, has been serving delicious doughnuts (among many other delicious treats) for more than 80 years. Everything is baked fresh and from scratch each day. You're sure to satisfy your sweet tooth here.

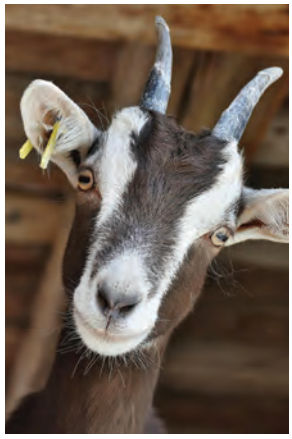
facebook.com/HillTopBakeryKaukauna/

DELICIOUS ICE CREAM SANDWICH

JD'S DRIVE-IN

Summer is the best time of year to enjoy some ice cream. If you're looking for the best bang for your buck, JD's Drive-In surely won't disappoint with their 57-cent ice cream sandwich! Not only is it a steal, but they are delicious. The ice cream sandwich special runs every Wednesday.

facebook.com/JdsDriveIn



CHECK OUT SOME FARM ANIMALS

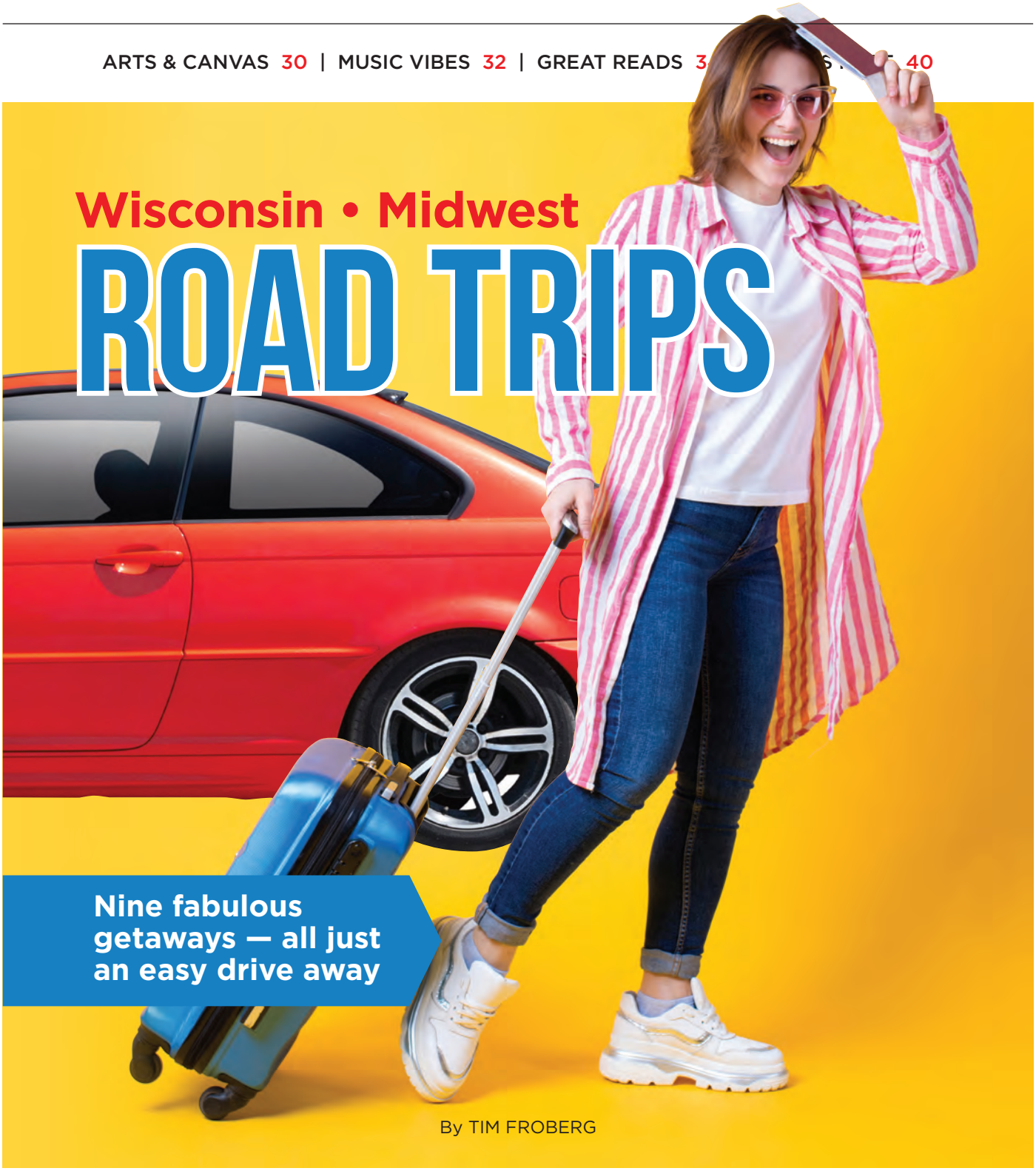
PLAMANN PARK CHILDREN'S FARM

Looking for a fun and free activity that gets you out of the house? Be sure to check out Plamann Park Children's Farm. They have a wide variety of farm animals to see including calves, piglets, miniature horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, and a bunny!

outagamieparks.com/parks/about/page/childrens-farm/

TODAY

ARTS & CANVAS 30 | MUSIC VIBES 32 | GREAT READS 3 40



Wisconsin • Midwest

ROAD TRIPS

Nine fabulous getaways — all just an easy drive away

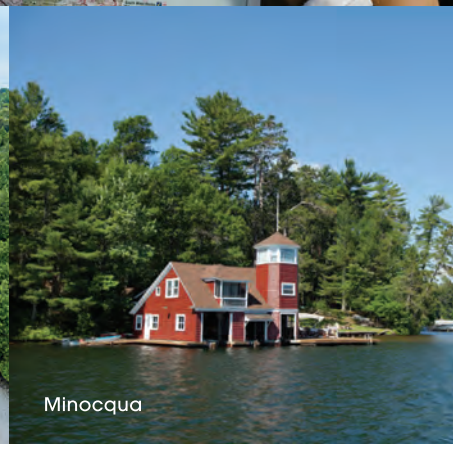
By TIM FROBERG

TAKING THE Scenic Route

By **TIM FROBERG**

Tim Froberg has worked as a reporter for the Appleton Post-Crescent, Green Bay News-Chronicle, and Marinette EagleHerald. He won eight Wisconsin Newspaper Association writing awards. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Greenville with their border collie mix, Jasper.

Schoolhouse Beach, Door County



Minocqua

Buckle up fellow Cheeseheads, it's time to hit the open road.

Granted, we reside in a beautiful part of the country. The Fox Cities is a fantastic place with plenty of terrific leisure activities to enjoy right in our own backyard should you choose a "stay-cation" with your days off from work. Most of us, though, enjoy a change of scenery and an opportunity to explore new places and shake up our lives a bit by getting away from our routine.

Allow me to play travel guide and escort you (well, at least verbally) on some great road trips across Wisconsin and neighboring Midwest states that can be enjoyed on a tank of gas or two. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, bring along your bicycles or kayaks, or rent them at your destination site.

Summer moves at warp speed in Wisconsin and August is already here. Don't waste this warm, wonderful month by doing the everyday grind. Hit the road and enjoy what is left of Wisconsin's summer.

Here are nine very nice getaways that won't shatter the budget or leave you as frazzled as Clark Griswold on his trek to Walley World. I'll conclude this section by sharing my experiences from a recent trip to the Apostle Islands.

Cave Point County Park

Minocqua

IF YOU'RE THE OUTDOORS TYPE WHO APPRECIATES THE BREATHTAKING BEAUTY OF THE FOREST ALONG WITH CLEAN SPARKLING WATERS, MINOCQUA SHOULD BE ON YOUR GETAWAY LIST.

Photo from Minocqua Visitors Bureau

Door County

Door County has been called the Cape Cod of the Midwest and for good reason. The picturesque Door Peninsula offers more than 300 miles of shoreline along the blue waters of Lake Michigan and Green Bay. Door County blends the natural beauty of the great outdoors with the charm of harbor towns such as Sister Bay, Egg Harbor, and Fish Creek.

Looking to camp? Door County has you covered, boasting five stellar state parks including Peninsula in Fish Creek and Potawatomi, just west of Sturgeon Bay. Peninsula is Wisconsin's third-largest state park and offers an incredible 460 campsites along with hiking and biking trails, a lighthouse, a summer theater, and an 18-hole golf course. Potawatomi is equally stunning and a haven for hikers because of the Ice Age Trail, a scenic 1,000-mile path that starts at the park. Whitefish Dunes State Park features some great shoreline and is perfect for beach lounging. Cave Point State Park, located practically next door, is known for its spectacular limestone ledges and underwater sea caves. Kayak tours are available, allowing paddlers to explore the caves up close.

Washington Island is a must-visit destination across the mainland about seven miles northeast off the tip of the Door Peninsula and is accessible via daily trips by the Washington Island Ferry Line. Once you arrive, you'll find countless hiking and biking trails and it's easy to find kayak rental kiosks.

Washington Island Ferry

Door County is also known for its fabulous cherry orchards, 11 historic light-houses, 10 wineries and an assortment of wonderful restaurants. Do yourself a favor and take in a traditional Door County fish boil for a fun and healthy dining option.

Located in northwest Oneida County, Minocqua is known for its spectacular natural scenery and countless recreational activities.

Hikers and cyclists should hit the fabulous Bearskin State Trail. A 21.5-mile crushed granite path, this trail starts in downtown Minocqua and takes you through thick forests, past gorgeous blue lakes and streams, and across trestle bridges. A mostly flat trail, it's one of the most scenic hiking-biking-walking paths in northern Wisconsin. Keep your eyes open for wildlife because there's a decent chance you'll bump into a critter along the way.

With a mind-boggling 3,200 lakes and bodies of freshwater, Minocqua is a water world. The Minocqua Chain of Lakes—an enormous lake chain of nearly 6,000 acres of waters and more than 15 miles of shore-line—is ideal for swimming, boating and fishing. Drop a line in Minocqua Lake, Clear Lake, or Crystal Lake and who knows? You might land a lunker of a fish.

Marinette County

Marinette County is all about woods and waterfalls—and that's a good combination for outdoor enthusiasts looking to find solace in the slow lane. Some call it the Waterfall Capital of Wisconsin and it's not a stretch. The area is home to a whopping 15 accessible waterfalls, including Long Slide Falls, Caldron Falls, Eighteen Foot Falls, Strong Falls, Veterans Falls and Piers Gorge, located in Norway, Michigan, just a few miles from the Wisconsin border.

Dave's Falls in Amberg may be the best of the bunch overlooking the Pike River in a tranquil, wooded area and offers both upper and lower falls along with a wooden bridge and some stunning rock formations. Easy to find, it's a great place to take in nature and ponder life's mysteries. Reaching most of the waterfalls requires short, intermediate and long hikes through some beautiful woodsy areas.

If you want to add more oomph to your vacation, head to the Peshtigo River which is heralded for its excellent whitewater rafting. Known for having the longest stretch of continuous whitewater in the Midwest, it features a variety of rapids that create challenges for rafters of all skill levels.

Campers often flock to the nearby Crivitz area where Governor Thompson State Park—with its more than 2,800 wooded acres—is considered to be a top campground.

Noah's Ark Waterpark

Marinette County

Photo from Wisconsin Dells Visitors Bureau

Wisconsin Dells

THE DELLS IS THE DEFINITION OF AN AMERICAN TOURIST TOWN. A SMALL CITY THAT GETS LOUD AND ULTRA BUSY DURING JULY AND AUGUST, IT'S BEEN WISCONSIN'S NO. 1 SUMMER VACATION DESTINATION FOR YEARS.

Noah's Ark Waterpark

The list is long of popular tourist attractions that allow adults and children to go splish-splash at well-known water, theme and adventure parks. And you know what? They're all worth the visit. I've been going to Noah's Ark Waterpark for years and it still brings out the kid in me. A Wisconsin summer just isn't a Wisconsin summer unless I slide down the Point of No Return at least a few times.

Mt. Olympus Water and Theme Park, Witches Gulch, Wisconsin Deer Park, the Tommy Bartlett Exploratory, the Rick Wilcox Magic Theater, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Big Chief Go Karts, Christmas Mountain Village, and Alligator Alley Adventures are additional popular attractions for the armies of tourists who invade the Dells each summer.

If you don't want to deal with the summer heat, the Dells has several indoor water parks which have turned it into a year-round destination. Some, such as Wilderness Resort, offer both indoor and outdoor parks.

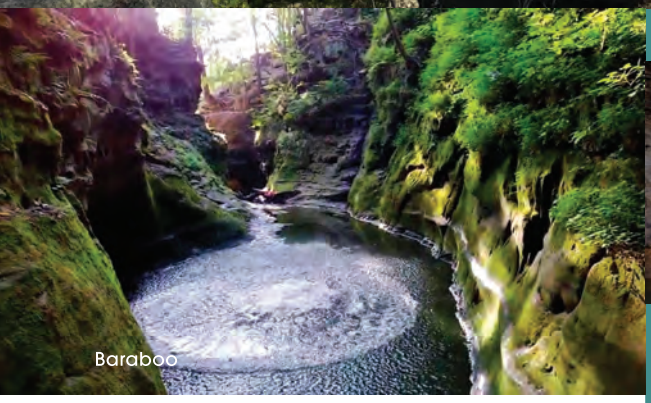
Wisconsin Dells Boat and Duck Tours—known more commonly as "The Ducks"—is another popular Dells tradition that hasn't faded away. Passengers climb aboard an amphibious World War II-era vehicle and are taken on a wet and wild tour of both land and the lower dells of the Wisconsin River.

With many businesses aimed at tourists and the carnival-like atmosphere of the downtown, the Dells can be commercialized, but it is a fun, high-energy place that's ideal for families.

Munising, Mich.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A HIDDEN GEM, THIS SMALL TOWN OFF THE SOUTHERN SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR IN MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA, MIGHT BE THE PLACE.

Devil's Lake State Park



Baraboo

Baraboo

Devil's Lake State Park is what makes this small Sauk County town tick during the summer months. Devil's Lake is Wisconsin's largest (9,217 acres) and most visited state park. The park's overwhelming natural beauty is no secret to tourists, even referenced by the great Johnny Cash (along with Baraboo) in his hit song, *I've Been Everywhere*.

Devil's Lake is known for its exceptionally high cliffs and quartz bluffs that are wrapped around a gorgeous lake where canoes, kayaks, and rowboats dot the waters.

Many of the scenic hiking trails (30 total) lead to high vantage points that offer jaw-dropping bird's-eye views of the park and the lake. The most popular trail may be the stunning Tumbled Rocks Trail. An extraordinary pathway next to the lake lined with fallen boulders that almost seem to have been strategically placed by nature, this is a truly memorable and photo-worthy trail.

The more advanced hiker should take on Devil's Doorway which features a remarkable doorway-like rock formation and steep bluffs that rise 500 feet above the lake for an unforgettable view.

Photo from NPS

Baraboo can also be a bit of a circus—literally. The hometown of the famous Ringling Brothers, bring the kiddos to the well-known Circus World Museum for a daily live circus along with circus exhibits and artifacts.

Visitors should also check out the International Crane Foundation, a nonprofit that strives to protect cranes and their ecosystems and habitats. There, 15 crane species can be observed and nature trails are abundant.

Photo from NPS

Munising is the gateway to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Pictured Rocks gets its name from the 13 miles of colorful sandstone cliffs that soar 200 feet above Lake Superior. Time and nature have sculpted these rock formations into a variety of amazing shapes and colors and created shallow must-see caves and arches.

Pictured Rocks is best viewed from the water. Take one of the daily boat tours or rent a kayak which will allow you to paddle through some of the caves. If you're on land, check out Miners Castle—one of the most famous landmarks along the Pictured Rocks shoreline—offering breathtaking views of Lake Superior and Grand Island.

The hiking trails in the Pictured Rocks area are exceptional and take you through beautiful country. Look for several gorgeous waterfalls that are either in or around Munising and make sure to stop by Munising Falls, a 50-foot waterfall that is located within city limits and easy to find.

Milwaukee

Despite being Wisconsin's largest city, I find Milwaukee to be a friendly, not-so-intimidating, easy-to-navigate city loaded with fun events and recreational activities.

Milwaukee Brewers games, lakefront festivals (don't miss Milwaukee Irish Fest on Aug. 14-17) and the Wisconsin State Fair (July 31-Aug. 10) top the list of must-do August activities.

But there's more to Milwaukee than just beer, ballgames and festivals. Milwaukee's lakefront area is a wonderful place to take a walk, jog, or bike ride. You can also charter a boat on Lake Michigan, rent a jet ski or just chill on a nice stretch of sand at Bradford Beach where beach volleyball games are the rage. Take a tour of the city with Milwaukee Boat Line. Or, paddle down the Milwaukee River on kayaks and dock at a local restaurant or Lakefront Brewery for a cold one.

To get a nice view of the water and the city, I recommend visitors take a stroll down the Riverwalk. A 3.1-mile public walkway along the Milwaukee River, this trail takes you through the historic Third Ward with art galleries, boutiques, and dining options. Along the way, you can stop and say "Ayyy" with the bronze statue of The Fonz.

Photo from Choose Chicago

Photo from Choose Chicago

Chicago

OK, YOU HATE THE BEARS AND THE CUBS. I GET IT. BUT IF YOU CAN DEAL WITH THE TRAFFIC AND WANT A MORE URBAN EXPERIENCE, THE WINDY CITY IS AN INCREDIBLE PLACE TO VISIT.

Photo from Visit Milwaukee

Chicago is jam-packed with spectacular sights and venues. My list of favorites starts with Wrigley Field and Wrigleyville and includes Navy Pier, the Field Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, Lincoln Park Zoo, the Kenneth C. Griffin Museum of Science and Industry, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium, and Millennium Park. At the latter stop, it's almost mandatory to take a selfie at the Bean—an enormous sculpture known for its reflective surface.

The downtown section of Chicago is bustling and amazing. Take a stroll along the Magnificent Mile. A mile-long stretch of Michigan Avenue, the Magnificent Mile offers a mix of restaurants, department stores, hotels, and residential and commercial buildings. Check out the Chicago lakefront where beaches, boats, marinas, and tiki bars give off a Florida vibe during the summer. An 18-mile paved trail is great for walking, running, biking, and rollerblading.

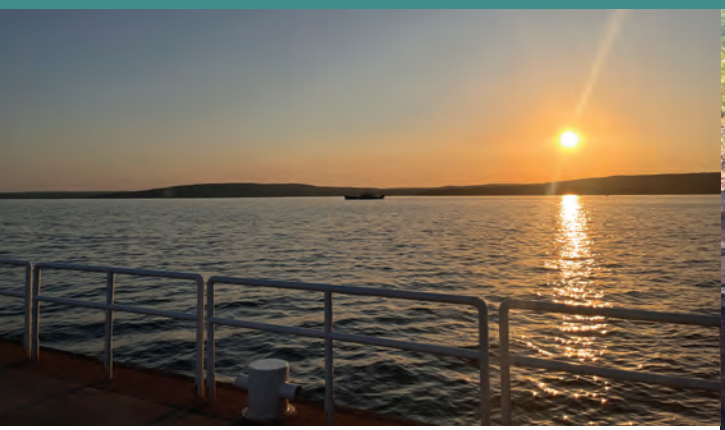
The food in Chicago is extraordinary. Practically every type of ethnic cuisine is available and few disappoint. As a deep-dish pizza lover, I have a tough time leaving the Windy City without inhaling a pie from Giordano's or Lou Malnati's Pizzeria.

Photo from Visit Milwaukee

Photo from Visit Milwaukee

Photo from Visit Milwaukee

A WORTHWHILE TRIP TO *the Apostle Islands*



Bayfield

"The Lake is Boss" is a well-known saying seen on T-shirts in the Bayfield area. The shirts don't lie.

Lake Superior is the Boss of Bayfield—the gateway to the fabulous Apostle Islands. The phrase means that Lake Superior's waters have more control over you than you have over them, but it could apply to everyday life in Bayfield.

Practically everything in this area—whether it's the whitefish you eat at local restaurants or the ferries transporting you to Madeline Island—is connected to the deep waters of Lake Superior.

Growing up near Marquette, Mich., on the southern shore of Lake Superior, I had seen one side of the Boss. I decided it was time to check out another side of the deepest of the Great Lakes. A four-day stay in Bayfield, a small city off Lake Superior in Wisconsin's deep Northwoods, followed and I was able to knock the Apostle Islands off my travel list.

The Apostle Islands are a stunning group of 21 islands featuring pristine beaches, historic lighthouses, and the star attraction: jaw-dropping sea caves. "Wow" will likely be the first word out of your mouth when you see them. The ridiculously gorgeous rock formations are a geological marvel—a visual masterpiece from Mother Nature—formed during the ice ages and shaped into arches, caves, and caverns by years of erosion created by Lake Superior waters pounding against sandstone cliffs.

The sea caves alone are worth the four-and-a-half-hour drive from Appleton and my wife, Sharon, and I got to see them up close. We took a laid-back, three-hour boat tour called the Grand Tour (contact Apostle Islands Cruises) on our second day in Bayfield that took us past Devils Island, home of the caves.

The caves are so breathtakingly beautiful we wanted to reach out and actually touch them. The next day we got that opportunity when we kicked things up a notch with a six-hour kayak tour that actually took us through the sea caves and allowed us to explore them up close.

A far more adventurous way to see the caves and worth the money, the kayak tour is not a leisurely expedition due to the relentlessly powerful waves of Lake Superior that make paddling the tandem sea kayaks no picnic. Our full-day tour with local company Trek and Trail included a friendly, knowledgeable and much-needed guide because the Superior waters not only humble you, but put you in danger if you don't respect them.

Once back on the mainland in Bayfield, we took a ferry to picturesque Madeline Island, the only inhabited island of the Apostles. We had an awesome dinner at The Pub—one of the area restaurants I heartily recommend—along with Hoop's Dockside, Manypenny Bistro and The Pickled Herring.

I'm not a big fish guy, but it's just wrong to dine in a Bayfield restaurant and not order some type of whitefish (fresh from Lake Superior) for your entrée. At Hoop's—where you can see stunning views of Lake Superior—I devoured an incredible whitefish sandwich. At the

Pickled Herring, where we dined outside and enjoyed one of the weekly outdoor concerts in downtown Bayfield, I had an off-the-charts whitefish po' boy sandwich.

On our way out of town, we hit Morgan Falls, a beautiful 70-foot waterfall with a scenic hike, and it was worth the stop.

The Boss delivered on our in-state vacation. We found Bayfield to be a charming, friendly town and were dazzled by the mind-blowing beauty of the Apostle Islands. The Boss is always right.

THE SCENE

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By MEGAN REINHOLD

1. LOCAL AUTHOR FAIR

While attending the Downtown Appleton Farm Market on Aug. 23, make sure to also check out the Local Author Book Fair at Houdini Plaza running during the same time.

allevents.in/appleton/local-author-fair-at-the-farm-market

2. YOGA IN THE PARK

If you want to catch a free yoga class, check out Yoga in the Park with 95 Yoga House on Aug. 5 and 12 at the Sunset Park Amphitheater in Kimberly from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

allevents.in/kimberly/free-yoga-in-the-park-with-95-yoga-house/200028231387316

3. DIY SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Before you know it, school will be starting up again. For ages 6 and older, this event is hosted by the Neenah Public Library. Bring your creativity with you on Aug. 5 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. to decorate and personalize school supplies.

allevents.in/neenah/diy-school-supplies-ages-6-and-up/200028260072252

4. FRITSCH PARK CRAFT SHOW

Check out Fritsch Park in Menasha, Aug. 23, to shop a variety of crafts and vendors. The fun kicks off at 10 a.m.

allevents.in/menasha/fritsch-park-craft-show

5. MENASHA NIGHT OUT

Located in the community building at Barker Farm Park on Aug. 6, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., this free event is where you can expect family fun, demonstrations, kids' games, and food.

allevents.in/menasha/menasha-night-out/200028313365457

6. HAMBURGER FEST

Downtown Seymour—Home of the Hamburger—is the perfect place to host Hamburger Fest. Held Aug. 8-9, visit the website for a full list of activities and events.

homeofthehamburger.org

7. FLIGHT NIGHT-SUMMER IN THE PARK

Mark your calendars for Aug. 13 from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., at Darboy Community Park for a night focused on hot air balloon fun! Weather permitting, witness the thrill of balloons taking flight and a variety of activities.

allevents.in/appleton/flight-night-summer-in-the-park

8. MILE OF MUSIC

Join in on the entertainment for Mile 12, taking place July 31st-August 3rd and catch this year's 200 artists performing at 40 different venues!

mileofmusic.com/homepage

9. GREEN BAY PACKERS FAMILY NIGHT

Calling all Packers fans, you won't want to miss out on Family Night taking place on Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. Make sure to check out the website to snag your tickets online.

packers.com/training-camp/family-night

10. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK SALES

Aug. 1-3, Downtown Appleton will be hosting its Sidewalk Sales from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Grab a coffee and shop while supporting a variety of local businesses.

appletondowntown.org/events/sidewalk-sales

Hills and headwinds – the reason everyone falls in love with an e-bike!

Como full-power electric bikes were designed for city streets and come equipped with fenders, lights, and a low step-through frame, making it perfect for daily commutes or riding around town.

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Art Galleries

TROUT MUSEUM OF ART
(officially opening Oct. 11)
325 E College Ave
Appleton, WI

RICHESON SCHOOL OF ART & GALLERY
557 Marcella St
Kimberly, WI

BERGSTROM-MAHLER MUSEUM OF GLASS
165 N Park Ave
Neenah, WI

THE HANG UP GALLERY OF FINE ART
204 W Wisconsin Ave
Neenah, WI

JAMBALAYA ARTS, INC.
413 N Main St
Oshkosh, WI

THE ART GARAGE
1400 Cedar St
Green Bay, WI

LAWTON GALLERY
2420 Nicolet Drive
Green Bay, WI

SHARE FINE ART GALLERIES, LLC
228 S Military Road
Fond du Lac, WI

LOCAL ARTIST PERFECTING HER MARK

By JENNY JAKL

Looking at the work of Zipporah Elrich, one would never know she was featured in the Young Artist section of the 2024 Art at the Park. Her work is extremely detailed, expertly executed, and flawless. Anyone who has attempted pen drawings understands the tedious process, but Elrich has the raw talent to take this artform to the next level.

Elrich's artistic ability runs in her family. Raised with several artistic family members, she was surrounded by all mediums of art throughout her childhood home. Elrich specifically remembers a series of giant quilted paintings created by her godfather, which were her favorites. At a young age, being surrounded by beautiful artwork is what naturally inspired Elrich to tap into her own creative abilities. Her home was always stocked with art supplies for experimenting and creating. She turned to YouTube to watch other artists draw and then began teaching herself. Throughout the process she's been supported by her family and friends as she's expanded her artform.

Growing up with creative people, including some of those closest to her, her family has been her biggest source of support, especially her dad. "He's always creating things," said Elrich. "I also found inspiration in Ralph Steadman's art, along with E. Hubert Deines, who did woodblock printing."

Spoken as a true artist, she says her inspiration stems across several media.

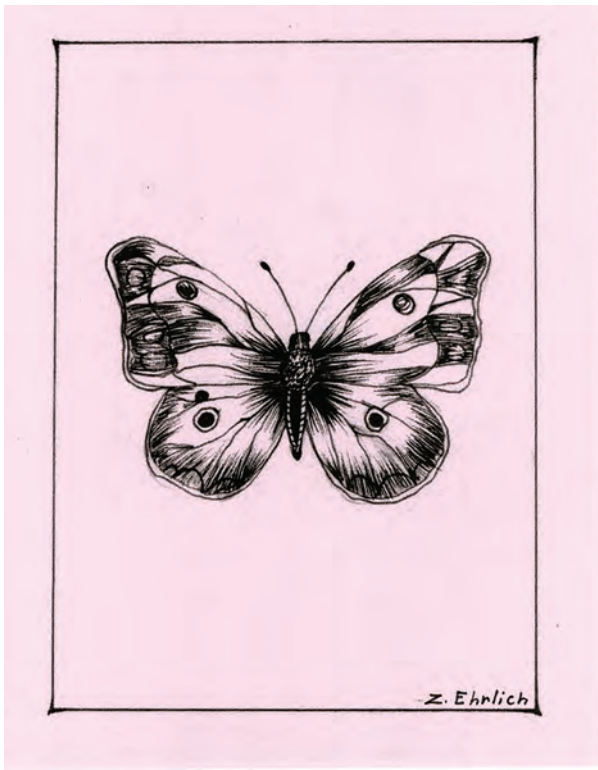
"I always love learning about an artist's inspiration," she added. "It always makes me see things in a different light." Elrich finds her own inspiration for her subject matter in the simple items and natural beauty of everyday life, which is reflected in the natural and minimalistic beauty of her finished projects.

When asked what she finds most rewarding about her creative career, Elrich says it's seeing how her work has evolved as she continues improving each year. One of her goals for her creative business is to network with local artists in an effort to expand her community and grow her creative practice.

Working with a pen, where ink is a permanent medium, leaving no room for mistakes doesn't deter Elrich. She takes a bold approach to the work she creates and moves slowly to create each intricate piece. She expanded her portfolio this year by combining watercolors with her ink work. She's also making digital copies of her artwork.

"I have interest in doing collaborations with other artists, but for the time being, I want to work on my own improvement," said Elrich.

During her free time, when she's not creating art, Elrich enjoys reading and listening to music by Lana Del Rey, Olivia Rodrigo, and Mac DeMarco.



__Jenny__ is a Vibrant Abstract Artist & Creative Community Leader. She works with creatives of all skill levels to help them achieve their creative goals. Clients can work with Jenny through classes, coaching, or by utilizing her online resources. To learn more go to jennyjakl.com

MAKE TIME FOR WONDER AND DISCOVERY

By DARBY MCCARTHY

We're midway through summer, and for many of us, that means enjoying the characteristic warmth and freedom that comes this time of year. It also means that right now is the perfect time to plan before the busy pace of autumn kicks back in.

Enabling your future self to indulge in evenings of self-care is an important part of finding balance in your personal life. After all, work, school, and family schedules all heaped together can be a lot to juggle with no pockets of preset self-care!

Enter: The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center Viewpoint Speaker Series. For three nights total (one each in November, January, and April), you are invited to step away from the stress of everyday coordination and enjoy an engaging presentation and conversation with three changemakers. These are explorers who have traveled the world and now come to the Fox Cities to present their findings on ways to more fully appreciate the beauty in little elements that make up our world.

Pete McBride and Kevin Fedarko in the Viewpoint Speaker Series, 2024

Find comfort in kinship, as breathtaking imagery of wolves, chimps and gorillas are shared by the biologist-turned-photographer who captured moments that prove there is more instinctive charisma and communication in the world than there is chaos and distance.

Remark with awe at how much is left to be discovered when a real-world, female Indiana Jones shares her journey from NFL cheerleader to groundbreaking primatologist and professional explorer and Bigfoot researcher.

Learn about Blue Zones – areas of the world where the average human lifespan has surpassed 100 years! What secrets do those societies keep? Is there an art to the foods we consume and the ways in which we interact?

Each of these speakers include audience Q&A opportunities and post-show Meet & Greets, bringing you face-to-face with inspiration in a surprisingly grounded encounter.

Though you may not yet be able to foresee whether you're heading into the next season with a full plate or a flexible docket, give yourself an allowance of three special nights to reignite your passion for the wonder of the wide world we live in.

The Fox Cities P.A.C. offers a package for the Viewpoint Speaker Series that bundles all three shows together and allows you to ensure the same seats for each speaker. Purchasing a package also comes with the advantage of saving a total of 20%.

Packages, individual tickets, and more information are available at foxcitiespac.com/viewpoint.

FOX JAZZ FEST
CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN 2025

By JIM COLLAR

Wisconsin summers are dotted with great music festivals, though jazz fans in the Fox Valley would argue that we save the very best for last.

Celebrating 30 years in 2025, Fox Jazz Fest will again leave an exclamation point on an incredible season of live music with two days of jazz along the Lake Winnebago shore. It's held each year on Labor Day Weekend.

Jazz Fest photo by Kate Ward

Throughout its history, the festival has brought a wide variety of top national performers to Menasha's Jefferson Park and has always been free to attend. Moreover, the festival is just as much about community as the great American music style that is its reason for being.

John Harmon, an acclaimed jazz composer and pianist, is among the festival's founders. He's proud that the volunteer organization, the Jazz Corner Society, has been able to continually produce a quality festival that is accessible to everyone.

In its early time slots, Fox Jazz Fest showcases the talents of youth performers. They also shine a spotlight on local, professional artists while bringing in renowned, award-winning performers as headliners. Long-time jazz fans are drawn in by the top talent, but importantly, novices can also find a seat at the park and enjoy. "We've made many new fans with the quality of the music we're bringing in, and there's real satisfaction in knowing that you're spreading this wonderful artform to more people," Harmon said.

GRAMMY Award winner, Nicholas Payton, will headline on Saturday, Aug. 30. The New Orleans-born multi-instrumentalist has released more than 20 recordings as a leader.

The Isaiah J. Thompson Quartet will headline on Sunday, Aug. 31. An acclaimed pianist, Thompson's recording debut was featured on the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra *Handful of Keys* album. He has since released multiple recordings as a leader.

Fox Jazz Fest isn't alone among the August opportunities for fans of the genre. Oshkosh Jazz Festival takes place on August 23, and this year, will include a celebration of John Harmon's rich musical legacy. "I'm humbled and I'm also flattered that people find it important," Harmon said. "To tell you the truth, it's a little heavy. I like to go under the radar."

Pianist and composer, Emmet Cohen, will headline the Oshkosh festival. In 2023, Cohen was named Pianist of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. He won both the 2014 American Jazz Pianists Competition and the 2011 Phillips Piano Competition.

Those who want to make a jazz-filled getaway can head northeast for the inaugural Door County Jazz Festival, Aug. 4-10, at various venues throughout the county. Its concerts will feature musicians and ensembles in a collaboration with some of Wisconsin's top music education institutions.

Jazz listeners will find yet another great opportunity in Milwaukee as the sixth annual Fresh Coast Jazz Festival takes place at The Pabst Theater Aug. 21-23. One of the country's premiere smooth jazz festivals, this year's edition features performers including Gerald Albright, Jeff Lorber Fusion, Chris Standring, Four80East, Kayla Waters, and The Braxton Brothers.

__Jim Collar__ is a journalist, lifelong resident of the Fox Cities and a supporter of our local music scene. He previously worked as a reporter for The Post-Crescent and The Oshkosh Northwestern.

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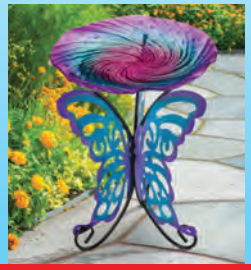

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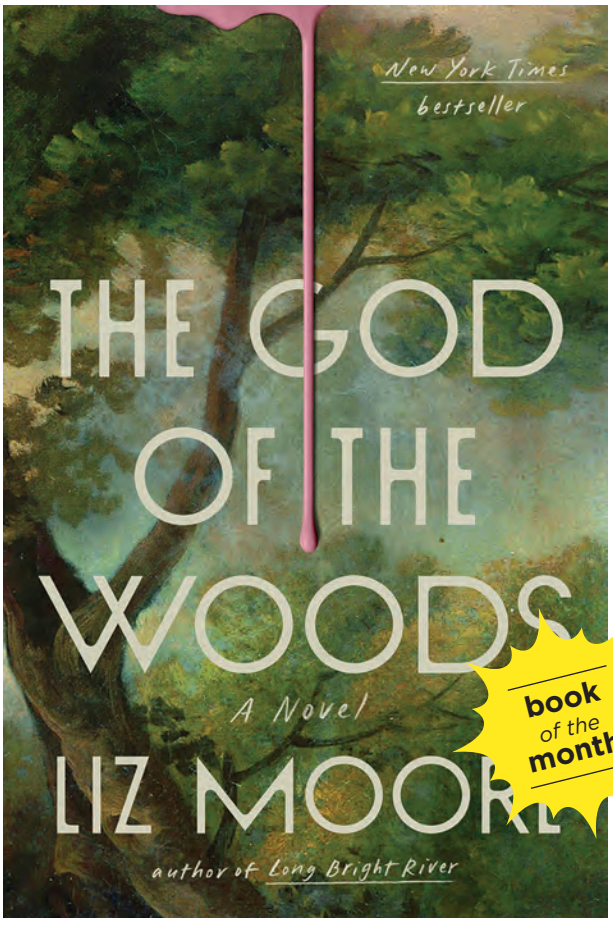


Liz Moore

The God of the Woods

MYSTERY/LITERARY FICTION

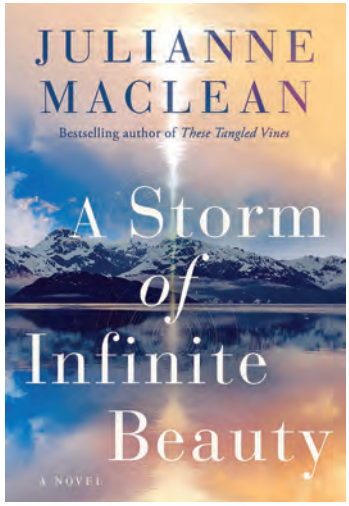
A gem of a read, *The God of the Woods* is the perfect book to add to your summer reading list. Set in August 1975, it has come to the counselor's attention that a camper is missing from their bunk and it just happens to be the child of the camp owner, Barbara Van Laar. What makes this situation even more odd, is the fact that the exact thing happened 14 years prior to the same family. Barabara's younger brother, Bear, disappeared and was never found. Once again, a panicked rescue party is formed to find Barbara, but as chaos unfolds some deep and dark secrets may also be exposed.

Rebecca M. Zornow

Landsome Roads

ROMANTIC FANTASY

I received an advanced reader copy of Rebecca's novel, which is expected to release on Sept. 30. Dottie is a huge fan of reading. She particularly and deeply enjoys the *Landsome Roads* series. One day, a unique opportunity comes about when Sorrel, who claims to be her Fairy Bookmother, promises to send Dottie off to the actual world of Landsome Roads. First, she asks her to fix a late series plot issue caused by a ghost-writer. Will Dottie be able to fix her favorite series and perhaps sneak in a chance to find love? You'll just need to wait and find out.



Julianne MacLean

A Storm of Infinite Beauty

WOMEN'S FICTION

Scarlet Fontaine was a true icon. Gwen Hollingsworth is the curator of a museum dedicated to Scarlet's life, and also a distant relative. Scarlet tragically died at the young age of 36 with no known children. Gwen is also the sole heir to her entire fortune. She has a lot going on in her life including a messy separation from her husband. Enter Peter, a biographer and photojournalist who comes to the museum one day claiming that there is more to Scarlet's story, including her having a baby very few people knew about. Together, they try to uncover the truth once and for all.

Alice Feeney
Daisy Darker
THRILLER

After many years have passed, Daisy's whole family will be getting together again. When the tide comes in, they will be cut off from the rest of the world and anything is possible.

John Green
The Fault in our Stars
YOUNG ADULT

Hazel has been considered terminal for quite some time now. A plot twist by the name of Augustus crosses her path at a cancer support group session and is exactly what she needs.

Sally Hepworth
The Ex-Wives Club
DOMESTIC THRILLER

When celebrity chef, Ian Curley, is found deceased in the walk-in freezer of his own restaurant, the prime suspects are his three ex-wives who dine together at his place every Friday night.

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DON'T MOVE

(THRILLER 2024)

STARRING: KELSEY ASBILLE (IRIS) & FINN WITTROCK (RICHARD)

Iris meets a young man while hiking on top of a mountain. After their heartfelt conversation, the man follows Iris back to her car and injects her with a paralytic drug that only takes a few minutes to kick in. While time is ticking fast, Iris must fight for her life before she is unable to completely defend herself.

TIME CUT

(HORROR/SUSPENSE 2024)

STARRING: ANTONIA GENTRY (SUMMER) & MADISON BAILEY (LUCY)

Stumbling on a time machine, Lucy accidentally travels in time from 2024 to 2003. She arrives a few days before a masked killer murders a group of teenagers including her sister, Summer, who died before she was born. Having the chance to meet and possibly save her sister's life she does her best to fit into this new era while trying to not get herself killed.

FRACTURED

(THILLER/MYSTERY 2019)

STARRING: SAM WORTHINGTON (RAY)

After Ray and his daughter take a horrible fall, Ray and his wife rush her to the hospital. Waiting hours for news, he becomes impatient and asks the front desk how his daughter and wife are, but there is no record of them ever checking in. He believes the hospital is hiding something. Ray will do anything to find his family, but not everything is as it seems.

KINDA PREGNANT

(COMEDY/ROMANCE 2025)

STARRING: AMY SCHUMER (LAINY)

Lainy's best friend becomes pregnant at the same time Lainy's love life falls apart. Feeling lonely, she puts on a fake baby bump to see how it feels to be pregnant. Loving the attention the bump brings, she ends up making some new friends and even meets a handsome young man. Now she must live a double life—bump and no bump—to prevent anyone from discovering her little secret.

__Marissa Laird__ is a movie lover who lives in Appleton. Her favorite genre is horror, which makes sense since she is obsessed with Halloween. She also enjoys spending time with her husband and their dog, Remi.

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SCAN TO VIEW OUR EVENTS

Smile!

We ♥ seeing our readers having fun and making the most of our beautiful communities!

BY: JAMIE SHERIDAN

Send your photo submissions to: Jamie@appletonmonthly.com

The Hodgkiss family making time for an early evening game of **pickleball at a neighborhood park.**

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center staff members gathering at **Appleton Beer Factory** to celebrate the Center's Season accomplishments.

PHOTO CREDIT: FOX CITIES P.A.C.

Waiting for the fireworks show at the **Appleton Independence Day Celebration.**

PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY HICKS

Just a glimpse of the team spirit powering **local leadership.**

PHOTO CREDIT: ANINDITA ANAAM

Maggie Duehring and her family enjoying a **favorite hometown lunch spot** during their annual Wisconsin summer trip.

The Chase family out for a beautiful **Sunday afternoon stroll** with pup, Luna.

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THE MIZ ADDS
TO SUMMER HEAT IN WISCONSIN

By TIM FROBERG

August has arrived and there is plenty happening in the sports world.

The Packers have launched training camp, high school football practice has started and the Milwaukee Brewers are in the heat of a pennant race.

Here's a few random thoughts and observations on Wisconsin's wild world of sports.

- Let me get this straight. The Milwaukee Bucks are going to pay Damian Lillard $112 million to NOT play basketball for them? Another move like this and we're going to be calling them the Milwaukee Need Some Bucks.
- The Miz has been a whiz for the surprisingly relevant Milwaukee Brewers. I'm talking about Jacob Misiorowski, Milwaukee's fireballing rookie pitcher who has emerged as a strikeout machine since being called up from the minors. Misiorowski compares favorably to Paul Skenes, Pittsburgh's insanely talented mound ace. Both have basketball height (Misiorowski is 6-7 and Skenes is 6-6) and bring a towering presence to the bump along with triple-digit fastballs that sometimes can only be heard.

Misiorowski has electric stuff. If he can keep that prized arm healthy and continue to develop his secondary pitches, he might be baseball's next big thing. Congrats to local fans who were smart enough to catch any of the six games Misiorowski pitched for the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers during the summer of 2023.

It's just a shame the late, great Bob Uecker isn't around to tout the talents of the young flamethrower. I can just hear Uecker saying something like, "Jacob works for NASA in the offseason, lending his right arm to America's rocket program." Or, "Misiorowski threw that one so hard Milwaukee firefighters are rushing to the plate to extinguish the flames from William Contreras' mitt."

- Here's a fun fact about the likeable and highly skilled Brewers manager, Pat Murphy. He's a former boxer who won several amateur tournaments as a teen and considered professionally pursuing it. Murphy still spars in the offseason at the age of 66. If I'm Christian Yelich and a bench-clearing brawl breaks out at American Family Field, I'm hanging with Murph.
- Corbin Burnes may have more cash than Montgomery Burns of *The Simpsons*, but the former Brewers ace is yet another example of why it's financial poison to sign even elite pitchers to blockbuster contracts. After inking a six-year deal with Arizona for a whopping $210 million, Burnes made just 11 starts for the D-Backs this season before undergoing Tommy John surgery that will sideline him for all of 2026. Keep it up baseball. If salaries keep escalating, Elon Musk is going to be the only fan who will be able to afford box seats in 2035.
- With three players—Cooper Flagg (1), Kon Knueppel (4) and Khaman Maluach (10)—selected as the top 10 of the 2025 NBA draft, I still can't figure out, how, in the name of James Naismith, Duke didn't win the Big Dance. Did the Blue Devils play that Final Four in hockey skates?
- The Dallas Mavericks were not only wise to select Flagg with the first overall pick, but patriotic, too. What's more American than procuring a Flagg a week before Independence Day?
- I'm fine with Green Bay's release of seldom-healthy Jaire Alexander. The man spent more time in street clothes on Sundays than members of the team's public relations department. But I do feel the Baltimore Ravens got a bargain in signing Alexander to a one-year contract worth just $6 million. Alexander is only 28 and still has elite skills. If he can play 8 to 10 games next season, Alexander will be worth the Ravens' modest investment.
- On the opposite side of the toughness spectrum, Contreras deserves a shout-out for playing most of this season with a fractured left middle finger. Imagine catching 100-plus pitches a night from fireballers like Misiorowski, Freddy Peralta, and Trevor Megill with a busted-up finger. To quote George Costanza, "That's gotta hurt."

TASTE

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THE BEST BBQ OF THE FOX CITIES

By JENNI EICKELBERG
Photo By CARLY CERNIGLIA

FOX CITIES BARBECUE TOUR

By JENNI EICKELBERG

Barbecue is more than just a meal—it's a full-on flavor experience. Whether you're into smoky brisket, saucy ribs, or tangy pulled pork, there's a style of barbecue for everyone. While we might be far from the Carolinas or Texas, the Fox Cities region is home to some seriously good spots that bring those regional flavors right to our plates.

Across the U.S., barbecue styles are diverse. In Texas, it's all about the beef—especially brisket—seasoned simply with salt and pepper and smoked low and slow. Kansas City barbecue is famous for its sweet, molasses-based sauces and a wide variety of meats, from burnt ends to ribs. The Carolinas lean into pork, with eastern North Carolina favoring a sharp vinegar-pepper sauce and South Carolina going bold with a mustard-based "Carolina Gold." Memphis is known for dry-rubbed ribs, served "dry" with a spice crust or "wet" with a tangy tomato-based sauce. Then there's Alabama, where white barbecue sauce—a creamy, peppery mayo-vinegar blend—shines on smoked chicken.

Even if a restaurant doesn't advertise a specific regional style, many offer creative mashups or house-made sauces that draw inspiration from these traditions. It's not uncommon to find menus featuring different types of barbecue styles all under one roof. Some places even offer multiple table-side sauces meant for sampling flavors from across the barbecue spectrum.

Let's be honest. Sauce is half the fun. Whether you like it sweet, spicy, tangy, or creamy, there's a barbecue sauce out there with your name on it. The variety is endless: thick and sticky, thin and vinegary, mustardy, peppery, or even white and zippy. Sauce preference is the kind of thing that sparks friendly debates and second helpings.

Barbecue is also about the experience—the smell of smoke in the air, the sound of meat sizzling on the grill, and the joy of gathering with friends and family. It doesn't matter if you're dining in, grabbing takeout, or enjoying a summer festival: barbecue brings people together in the most delicious way.

Whether you're a sauce sampler, a dry-rub devotee, or just here for the sides (hello, barbecue nachos), there's something smoky and satisfying waiting for you right here in the Fox Cities. Grab a napkin—or three—and dig in!

PARKER JOHN'S

Appleton *(2331 E. Evergreen Drive)*

Menasha *(124 Main St.)*

Parker John's

Smoked, Sauced, and Sizzlin':

Inside Parker John's BBQ with Derek Mattson

When Parker John's first opened in 2008, it was all about sandwiches and pizza, but once barbecue hit the menu, everything changed. "We wanted to give guests something unique," said Derek Mattson, director of operations. The unique twist of Texas-style barbecue with a Wisconsin flair has since grown into a beloved brand with multiple locations and a loyal following.

Parker John's

The journey began when Derek and the owner, Aaron, met in restaurant management school. In 2011, they retooled the menu to focus on barbecue, and the concept took off. Today, Parker John's smokes everything fresh, from brisket and pulled pork to turkey and burnt ends. Their nine Southern Pride smokers—each capable of holding more than 1,200 pounds of meat—nearly run nonstop. Brisket and pork go in around 5 p.m. and cook for 12–14 hours. Burnt ends are smoked twice and timed to be ready right at lunch.

The four signature Parker John's sauces are made from scratch daily and took more than six months each to perfect. The KC Classic is sweet, the PJ Signature adds a little zing, Memphis Mop is thick with molasses, and Carolina Mustard brings a tangy balance. All of their sauces—and most of the menu—are gluten-free, including the buns and even the beer used in their baked beans.

But Parker John's isn't just about food; it's about people. Staff are trained for more than 40 hours before hitting the floor and many are cross trained in catering, which ranges from small gatherings to events with 3,000 guests. They've catered more than 100 weddings in 2025 alone.

The restaurants are decorated with hand-picked antiques and quirky touches such as foam-carved flying pigs. Each location has its own vibe, but the menu stays consistent. Guests are greeted with the smell of smoked meat and a warm, welcoming atmosphere that feels like home.

With a new location opening in Stevens Point later this year and plans for many more, Derek says it best: "We want people to walk in, smell the smoker, and feel like they're part of something special."

THE COZZY CORNER

111 N. Walnut St., Appleton

Soulful Smoke and Southern Comfort at The Cozzy Corner

Tucked into downtown Appleton, The Cozzy Corner is a warm and welcoming spot where Southern soul food meets Wisconsin hospitality. Owned and operated by Phillip and Heidi Bennett, this family-run restaurant has become a local favorite for comfort food that's rich in flavor and tradition.

The Cozzy Corner specializes in Southern classics—think fried chicken, catfish, mac and cheese, and collard greens—but it's their barbecue that really brings the heat. From tender baby back ribs to smoked barbecue chicken and pulled pork, every dish is packed with smoky goodness and seasoned with love. Their barbecue offerings are available in generous dinner plates, combo platters, and even fried versions for an extra crispy twist.

Each meal comes with two sides and a slice of cornbread, making it feel like Sunday supper at grandma's house. Popular sides include creamy mac and cheese, candied yams, and flavorful rice and beans. Don't skip dessert—the sweet potato pie is a fan favorite!

The vibe inside The Cozzy Corner is just as comforting as the food. With its nostalgic décor and friendly staff, it's a place where everyone feels like family. Whether you're dining in or grabbing takeout, you'll leave full and happy.

The Cozzy Corner was recently featured on an episode of Wisconsin Foodie on PBS, where co-owner Phillip Bennett described the restaurant as a true "soul food" place, proudly stating, "We're not fast food, we're good food." The episode highlighted the heart and heritage behind the menu, showcasing how the Bennetts bring Southern comfort and community spirit to every plate.

For those craving authentic Southern barbecue and soul food in the heart of the Fox Cities, The Cozzy Corner is the real deal. It's more than a meal—it's a taste of home.

The Cozzy Corner

MILL CITY PUBLIC HOUSE

1103 W. College Ave., Appleton

Bold Barbecue and Gourmet Twists at Mill City Public House

Mill City Public House in Appleton is redefining what it means to serve barbecue. With a menu that's both upscale and approachable, this chef-driven pub is known for creative takes on comfort food—and their barbecue offerings are no exception.

A feature on the menu is the 15-hour smoked brisket, served in a French dip sandwich that's nothing short of unforgettable. The brisket is tender, smoky, and piled high on a toasted roll, served with rich au jus for dipping. The Brisket French Dip is a gourmet twist on a classic that barbecue lovers won't want to miss.

The pulled pork sandwich is another standout—juicy, flavorful, and perfectly balanced with house-made slaw and sauce. During my visit, I sampled the limited-time peanut butter stout barbecue sauce, which delivered a bold yet smooth flavor with a hint of sweetness, adding an unexpected and delightful twist to every bite.

While Mill City Public House is known for its barbecue, it has also built a reputation for its smash burgers, which are seared to perfection and stacked

Mill City Public House

Mill City Public House

(continued from page 44)

with inventive toppings. It's the kind of place where you can order a burger or brisket and feel like you're treating yourself either way.

The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, and the staff is just as memorable as the food. Dusty, one of the owners, brings a friendly, down-to-earth vibe that makes guests feel right at home.

For a barbecue experience that's both elevated and comforting, Mill City Public House hits all the right notes.

PAPA B'S PIZZA AND BARBECUE

N7721 State Park Road, Sherwood

Papa B's Pizza & Barbecue

Southern Smoke and Family Flavor at Papa B's Pizza & Barbecue

Just outside High Cliff State Park, Papa B's Pizza and Barbecue is serving up more than just great food—it's delivering "A taste of southern hospitality." Opened in spring 2024, this family-run gem is already turning heads with its hickory-smoked, slow-cooked barbecue and a welcoming atmosphere.

Owner Justin, who trained in Memphis, brings authentic Southern barbecue techniques to Wisconsin, smoking all meats in-house for deep, rich flavor. His passion for barbecue is matched by his commitment to family—many of whom are involved in the day-to-day operations. From the kitchen to customer service, Papa B's is a true family affair, and it shows in every detail.

The brisket is a local favorite and sells out fast. Get there early if you want a taste. For those who want to sample it all, the Smoked 3 Meat Plate is the way to go.

Papa B's also offers a rotating lineup of homemade sauces inspired by different barbecue regions. From sweet and smoky to tangy and bold, each sauce brings something unique to the table. The summer standout this year is a Door County Cherry Habanero sauce that's sweet, spicy, and proudly local.

Don't miss the "Lil Piggy" appetizer—a creative twist on nachos. House-made chips are piled high with pulled pork, cheese, sour cream, and barbecue sauce for comfort food with a smoky kick.

Whether you're stopping in after a hike or making a special trip, Papa B's offers a warm welcome, unforgettable flavor, and a true taste of the South—right here in the heart of Wisconsin.

PETERS' BOYZ TEXAS BBQ

100 S. Birch St., Suite C, Kimberly

From the Lone Star State to Wisconsin Plates: Peters' Boyz Texas BBQ

Craving real Texas barbecue in Northeast Wisconsin? Peters' Boyz in Kimberly has you covered. Tucked just off downtown, this small-but-mighty restaurant delivers big, bold flavors rooted in true Texas tradition. While the space may be cozy, the flavor is anything but—and yes, you might wait a bit for your food, but it's worth it.

Unlike typical barbecue slathered in sauce, Texas barbecue is all about "low and slow" smoked meats, cooked for more than 14 hours. The flavor comes from the meat's fat and custom dry rubs, with sauces served on the side.

Owners, Reggie and Amanda Peters, named the restaurant after their sons and bring Southern passion to every plate. Reggie, a seasoned pitmaster, has perfected his own rubs, making every bite of brisket, pork, or ribs a flavorful experience. Amanda, the heart of the front-of-house, welcomes guests with genuine Southern hospitality.

The menu includes standout appetizers such as Southern Fried Okra—crispy outside, tender inside—and the indulgent Texas Tater Boatz, loaded with mac and cheese, pulled pork, jalapeños, and house-made sauces. Speaking of sauces, Peters' Boyz offers four from-scratch varieties: Southern Sweet, Southern Heat, Alamo (extra hot), and Texas Tangy.

The smoked beef brisket Platterz meal is a showstopper, served with house slaw, smoky baked beans, and sweet cornbread. The portions are generous and best shared. Don't skip dessert—Grammy's Southern Pecan Pie—made from Reggie's grandma's recipe, is unforgettable.

As Reggie and Amanda say, "It's not fast food, it's passionately made food." Yee haw, indeed!

AREA 509

1025 N. Badger Ave., Appleton

Jerk Barbecue with Heart and Heat at Area 509

If you're looking for bold barbecue with a cultural twist, Area 509 in Appleton delivers flavor with purpose. The name itself is a nod to Haiti—509 is the country's international calling code—and that's no coincidence. Owner Reggie, a proud Haitian native, brings his heritage to life through every smoky, spicy bite.

At the heart of the menu is the Area 509 signature jerk barbecue. Whether it's chicken, pork, or ribs, the jerk seasoning is a standout—layered with heat, herbs, and just the right amount of char. The flavor is bold, balanced, and unforgettable.

Area 509

One must-try side is the pikliz, which is a classic Haitian dish that pairs perfectly with any of the barbecue offerings. Best described as a vinegar-based spicy coleslaw, pikliz is packed with fresh vegetables and fiery peppers, adding a crisp and refreshing kick to every plate.

But Area 509 isn't just about what's on the menu—it's about the experience. The outdoor seating area, tucked behind the restaurant, has an easy backyard patio vibe. With both covered and open-air sections, it's the perfect spot to enjoy a plate of jerk chicken and a cold drink. The space also hosts food truck rallies and live music throughout the summer, making it a go-to hangout for locals and visitors alike.

From the food to the atmosphere, Area 509 is all about celebrating culture, community, and seriously good barbecue.

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BARBECUE RIBS

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

Pass the napkins and wet wipes, we have ribs on our hands!
These delicious barbecue ribs are near fall-off-the-bone and so easy to make at home. The spice rub adds that extra punch of flavor to the ribs and your favorite barbecue sauce helps make them extra special. Finished on the grill, these ribs get nice and smoky with caramelized barbecue sauce. Delish!

INGREDIENTS

2 4-lb. racks of ribs, membrane removed
2-3 cups barbecue sauce

For the rub:

½ cup dark brown sugar
½ tablespoon black pepper
¾ tablespoon seasoned salt
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon mustard powder
1 tablespoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon celery seed
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. Line 2 sheet trays with foil, allowing a good amount of overhang. Place one rack of ribs on each sheet tray. Generously apply the rub all over the racks of ribs, getting both sides. Wrap tightly with foil and bake for 3 hours.

Get your desired grill hot. Open foil and baste ribs with 1/2 of the sauce. Transfer to grill without the foil and grill for 5-8 minutes. Baste with sauce again and remove from grill. Cover lightly with foil and let rest for 5 minutes. Cut and serve. Enjoy!

Photo by Carly Cerniglia

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Open Road, Full Cup

By JASON PATZER

I always start my road trips with a fresh brewed cup made at home. The process can feel like a hassle or a bit too much to squeeze in while getting the car packed and making sure everyone has what they need, but once you're on the road and settled into driving, you'll be thankful for that cup. The adrenaline of getting ready and the excitement of leaving will fade and the early morning will hit. Taking a few extra minutes to brew something will be worth it. Plus, if you're starting with coffee brewed at home, it makes it easy to remember to bring your own mug (more on that later).

On the road, you're going to be limited on the quality of coffee you can get, but there can be some fun in that. Maybe you can enjoy the nostalgia of less-than-perfect gas station or diner coffee. Or maybe you enjoy the hunt for a good coffee shop in town. Off the interstate, I have found some true gems this way. Or maybe you just need something quick while filling up the tank.

If you fall into the last category, the good news is that gas station coffee options have significantly improved throughout the years. For starters, the popularity of bottled coffee options has increased greatly. Even at the smallest, middle-of-nowhere stations you're likely to find at least one option. If you want to stick with hot coffee, I look for the coffee machines with the little bean hoppers on top (pictured). Even when the bean options in the hopper are the same as the already big-batch brewed coffees, I still take the extra minute to use the machine. Oftentimes, the batch brews are weaker than they should be. The machines are programmed to brew

at the proper strength and will do so every time. They also grind the beans fresh right before brewing, whereas the batch-brew machines almost always use pre-ground coffee.

Back to that mug you brought from home … On more than one occasion, I have been given my coffee for free simply because I used my own mug. You can also fill it with ice and add your bottled coffee purchase as you go. If I'm drinking a cold coffee beverage, I actually want it to be cold. One other use that I don't do very often, but certainly have, is to just fill it with hot water from the coffee brewer. Whether it's an easy manual brew set up (like the AeroPress) or some sort of instant coffee, it'll be better than what the station was offering if you're in this situation.

Skipping the gas stations and instead looking for local shops can take some time, but if you're able, it is often worth it. With many different ways to go about looking for a local spot, I usually start with a simple Google search either in Maps or my browser. Skip all the sponsored responses and chain shops and look at the reviews for the local places. I like to look for coffee roasters to help narrow my search and avoid the café-type places that are primarily about dining. I also like to buy some beans to use once I arrive at my destination. You can often find images of or actual menus nowadays, too, which can help you figure out if it's a shop worth stopping at. Sometimes you can even order ahead which can keep you on the move. Better yet, if you have the time, stop in the shop and take your time exploring the town.

The road-trip coffee is more than just a cup of coffee; it can be a ritual that kick-starts an early morning when you're getting on the road with the warm comforting sips to alert the senses. When it's time for the much-needed pick-me-up after hours behind the wheel, the coffee search can even be the activity that helps you explore a new town. No matter what it means to you, there is no doubt that coffee is an essential co-pilot on any great road trip.

***Jason Patzer** has worked in coffee for over 11 years. He started Patzer Coffee as a way to continue his passion for coffee after leaving the industry. You can follow him on Facebook & Instagram @patzercoffee. Or on his website, patzercoffee.com, where he highlights the local coffee community.*

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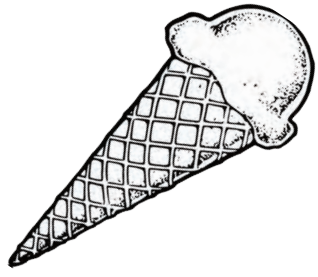
Photo by Carly Cerniglia

She's big, she's beautiful, and she's full of ice cream!

Ultimate Brownie Ice Cream Sandwiches are the perfect way to cool off in this August heat. The fudgy brownie stays soft in the freezer, making these extra chewy and delicious. Use whatever ice cream flavor you love, and these will be gone before you know it!

The Ultimate Brownie Ice Cream Sandwich



By CARLY CERNIGLIA

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cup butter, melted

2 ¼ cups sugar

1 ½ cup brown sugar

Six eggs, room temperature

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 tablespoons vanilla paste

½ teaspoon instant espresso powder

1 ½ teaspoon salt

1 ½ cup cocoa powder

2 ¼ cups flour

1.5-quart container of ice cream

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line 2 8x8 square pans with parchment paper and coat with pan spray.

In a medium bowl, whisk together butter, sugars, vegetable oil, and vanilla paste. Add eggs, salt, and espresso powder and whisk until eggs are fully combined. Stir in cocoa powder and flour until just mixed.

Divide batter evenly between the two pans. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out mainly clean. Be careful not to overbake.

Let cool for 10 minutes in the pan, then remove the brownies from the pans using the parchment. Keep the parchment on the brownies and let cool on a rack.

Once cool, return one brownie to the pan with its parchment paper. Take the ice cream out of the freezer and let thaw for around 15 minutes. You want the ice cream to be spreadable, but not too soft. Spread evenly over the brownie in the pan and top with the remaining brownie layer. Remove the parchment. Wrap with plastic wrap and return to the freezer for at least 1 hour.

Remove the ice cream sandwiches from the pan. Using a hot knife, carefully cut into the desired number of bars. I cut eight large bars, but you can cut as many as you like. Store leftovers in the freezer. Enjoy!

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Appleton Monthly

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Holly Boettcher

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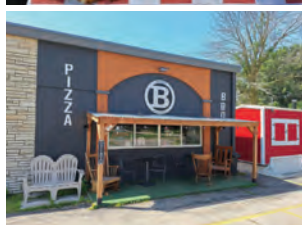

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Wisconsin Is Becoming the Next Napa Valley or Bordeaux

By STEVE JOHNSON

If I had told you 15 years ago that this corner of the world here in Wisconsin would be home to a future wine region, you most likely would have laughed me out of the room. Why? Because this is supposed to be the land of cheese, beer, and The Frozen Tundra, but certainly not wine country. Believe it or not, northeast Wisconsin finds itself in the epicenter of one of the newest wine appellations or regions of the world. Also referred to as an American Viticultural Area, this appellation was established by the federal government in 2012 and is called the Wisconsin Ledge in reference to the Niagara Escarpment which runs along the Lake Michigan shoreline from the top of Door County to just north of Port Washington.

Many of you may wonder, how does an area known for its bitter cold winters also have the capacity to produce world-class, distinctive wines that can rival the famous wines of places such as France and Italy? Well, due to our geographic latitude of approximately 45 degrees north, we are situated in an ideal spot on the globe for wine growing. While our winters are much more severe than that of our European counterparts, from the months of April through October we share almost identical growing degree days, amount of participation, and length of daylight with places such as Tuscany, Italy, and Bordeaux, France due to our similar latitudinal locations.

The big difference is that France and Italy grow a species of grape called Vitis Vinifera, which you know by such names as chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, and pinot noir. The reality is that if we plant those varietals here in Wisconsin, they will freeze back down to ground-level when the temperatures reach subzero temperatures.

However, this winter challenge was overcome through the ingenuity of a Wisconsin dairy farmer by the name of Elmer Swenson. He would be over 100 years old if he was still with us today. Swenson realized that here in Wisconsin we could capitalize on our perfect wine growing conditions and solve the challenge of deadly cold damage to the vines by hybridizing two different species of grapes. He noticed that on the many riverbanks of Minnesota and Wisconsin where the Vitis Riparia species of wild grapes have thrived through our severe winters for thousands of years. By crossing the pollen of the Vitis Vinifera with the pollen of wild grapes, after many years and tens of thousands of trials, he was able to develop wine varietals that are now planted and thriving in the Midwest, the Northeastern, and now even the Northwestern part of the United States.

While this region is in its infancy when compared to Tuscany or Bordeaux, there is no doubt this region and its new varietals will rival the quality and uniqueness of our European counterparts. Someday soon, instead of asking for a glass of Bordeaux from the restaurant wine list, you will be asking for a Marquette from the Wisconsin Ledge!

***Steve Johnson** is co-owner and winemaker of Parallel 44 and Door 44 in Kewaunee and Door Counties. His passion is growing and crafting wines from northeast Wisconsin, an unexpected yet increasingly recognized corner of the wine world.*

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BLT PASTA SALAD

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

Summer pasta salad is the perfect way to put those delicious tomatoes to good use! Thick chunks of bacon and zesty ranch pasta kick this salad into high gear, while the Greek yogurt adds a boost of protein to the mix. The toasted panko breadcrumbs are a game changing alternative to croutons. Delicious served day-of, this salad does get better over time. Just leave out the lettuce and breadcrumbs until you're ready to eat.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups dry fusilli pasta, cooked, drained, and cooled
6 strips thick cut bacon, cooked and chopped
1 ½ cup diced tomato
¼ cup diced red onion
3-4 cups romaine lettuce, chopped

3 heaping tablespoons mayo
5.3 oz. (1 small cup) plain Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons ranch dip/dressing mix
½ tablespoon white vinegar
1 tablespoon sugar

6 tablespoons panko breadcrumbs
1 teaspoon olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Mix panko, 1 teaspoon of olive oil, and salt and pepper, and spread onto a small sheet pan. Toast in the oven until golden brown. Set aside.

In a medium sized bowl, mix mayo, Greek yogurt, ranch dressing mix, white vinegar, and sugar. Adjust seasoning with more ranch or salt to preference. Mix in cooked pasta, bacon, onion, and tomato. Stir to coat.

When ready to serve, toss pasta mixture with lettuce. Sprinkle with toasted panko breadcrumbs. Enjoy!

Photo by Carly Cerniglia

Chef/Pastry Chef Carly Cerniglia *- A young chef and food photographer interested in fresh, local, and exciting food. Located in Milwaukee, Wis. Follow her culinary adventures on Instagram: @chef.carly*

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Appleton Monthly

GIN BUCK

In August, you want something that'll help you beat the heat while trying something different than the refreshing thirst-quenchers you've been drinking all summer long. The Gin Buck dates back to the mid-1800s and was typically spiked with whiskey, but any spirit works. The concoction was a popular summer cooler in the 1920s, but deserves to make a come-back.

Simply combine gin and lemon or lime juice in a Collins glass, then top with ginger ale and garnish with a citrus wedge. It's perfect for enjoying under the summer sun.

DRINK

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 ounces gin

1/2 ounce lemon or lime juice, freshly squeezed

Ginger ale or ginger beer, to top

Garnish: lemon or lime wedge

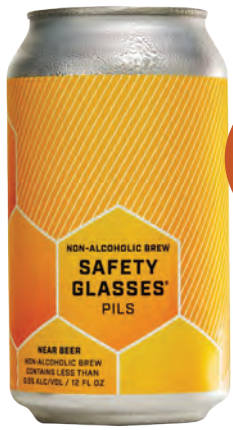
DIRECTIONS

1. Fill a Collins glass with ice, then add the gin and lemon or lime juice.

2. Top with ginger ale (or ginger beer) and briefly stir to combine.

3. Garnish with a lemon or lime wedge.

BREWS



SIP

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A great beer to sip at the ballpark or at a tailgate. If you're looking to skip the alcohol, this clear, golden-yellow pilsner has crispness combined with an herbal and citrus hop character.

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Treat yourself to a classic finish—our irresistible strawberry shortcake, layered with fresh berries and whipped cream.

Come and "sea" us soon at Rusted Roost before this seasonal favorite waves goodbye.

MORE

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Bikes! Bikes! Bikes!

By TIM FROBERG

LET'S GO BIKING

BICYCLE BOOM HAS GONE GLOBAL

By **TIM FROBERG**

***Tim Froberg** has worked as a reporter for the Appleton Post-Crescent, Green Bay News-Chronicle, and Marinette EagleHerald. He won eight Wisconsin Newspaper Association writing awards. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Greenville with their border collie mix, Jasper.*

BICYCLES ARE BIG IN THE BADGER STATE AND PRACTICALLY EVERYWHERE ON THE PLANET. A record 112 million Americans rode a bicycle at least once in 2024 and the global bike market has been valued at a whopping $110.38 billion. It's easy to see why.

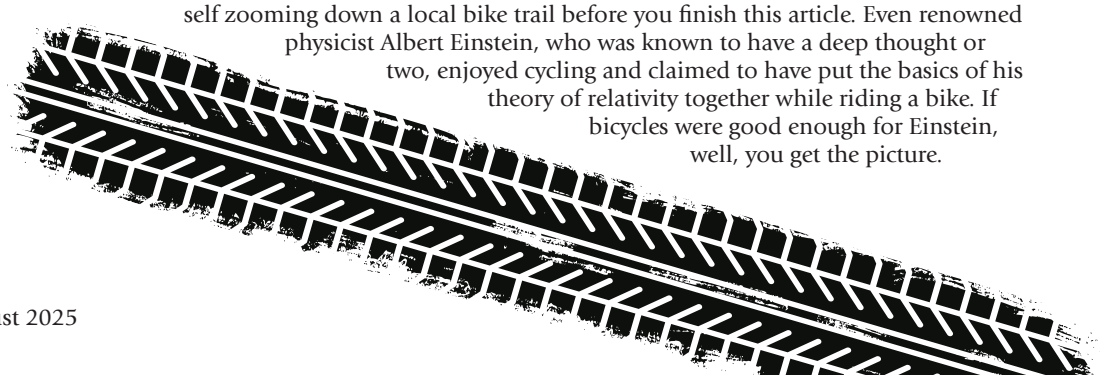
Cycling is a fun, recreational activity—without a steep learning curve—that provides excellent cardiovascular exercise. Regular cycling can lower blood pressure, strengthen cardiac tissue and reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes while guarding against weight gain. A terrific way to stay fit, it provides a low-impact workout that is easy on the body and it's a lifetime sport enjoyed at almost any age.

More than just an exercise or hobby, cycling can be a means of transportation, providing a sustainable, eco-friendly and money-saving option for those commuting to work or classes or just taking a quick trip to the local grocery store.

In the following pages, we'll take a deep dive into the wonderful world of bicycles. We'll look at some fun facts about cycling and what people are riding today—including the game-changer known as e-bikes.

When purchasing a two-wheeler, it's important to know what to look for and we'll go down that bike path, too. We'll even take you to Hollywood for cycling-based movies and help you start a playlist with a few unforgettable bicycle-themed songs. Finally, we'll check out the area's longest-running cycling store, Appleton Bicycle Shop, which opened just prior to World War II.

You won't need a helmet to come along for this ride. And who knows? You might find yourself zooming down a local bike trail before you finish this article. Even renowned physicist Albert Einstein, who was known to have a deep thought or two, enjoyed cycling and claimed to have put the basics of his theory of relativity together while riding a bike. If bicycles were good enough for Einstein, well, you get the picture.



VARIETY OF BIKES

The days of a bicycle just being a bicycle have long passed. Today's cyclist can choose from a wide variety of two-wheeled choices: road, mountain, fat tire, hybrid, and electric.

ROAD: Also referred to as racing bikes, these sleek, speedy models are designed for recreational riders who prefer to stay on payment and crank out multiple miles. They are lighter bikes designed for speed—not rough terrain—and have narrow tires for fast movement on smoother surfaces.

Road bikes were previously limited to drivetrains with 10 different speeds or gears, but many of today's models have multiple gears giving riders 16 to 24 different speeds. High-end bikes offer up to 30. When you see Wisconsin cyclists tooling down a paved bike path dressed in expensive biking apparel straight out of the Tour de France, they are likely pedaling a road bike.

Most quality road bikes with aluminum frames and multiple-speed drivetrains start around $800, but they can go as high as $15,000.

"If someone wants a road bike, they're going to be doing the longer miles," said Gwen Hinzman Sargeant, owner of Appleton Bicycle Shop. "They want to get out in the country and ride 60 miles or so or do a neat ride around the area like the Century Ride in Door County."

MOUNTAIN: Durable and rugged, these bicycles have much wider tires than road bikes with knobby thread for traction. They are designed for the more adventurous cyclist who prefers off-road biking and riding narrower dirt trails or singletracks (a trail that is roughly the width of a bike). Mountain bikes have flat handlebars, tires that range from 1.8 to 2.6 inches wide and wheels that are much wider (27-29 inches in diameter) than other bicycles. They are heavier than road bikes and less efficient on smooth surfaces. Mountain bikes cost anywhere from $300 to $3,000.

"Riverview Gardens has a nice, small singletrack for mountain bikes," said Hinzman Sargeant. "Baird Creek in Green Bay and Calumet County Park are also good places for the mountain biker to get off roads or do some singletracks."

FAT TIRE: Greater tire width is the main difference between mountain and fat tire bikes. The latter feature tires that are typically 3.78 inches or wider. Fat tire bikes are for all-season riders who enjoy powering through soft, loose surfaces such as sand, snow, mud, and rocky terrain that might bring the average mountain bike to a halt. They are heavier than mountain bikes due to the wider tires and larger frames. Fat tire bikes usually have a price range from $250 to $3,000.

"You see a lot of people riding fat bikes in late fall on sand or beaches, but others will ride them all winter," said Hinzman Sargeant. "Some people commute to work on fat bikes during the winter and you see people on fat bikes on frozen lakes."

HYBRID: A hybrid is a combination of a road and mountain bike boasting the speed and lighter weight of a road bike with the comfort and more rugged nature of a mountain bike. Hybrid bikes are great for commuting and simple leisure riding since they offer comfort and control along with the ability to handle rugged terrain.

"It provides for a more upright body position and it's meant for the recreational rider who just enjoys riding around town," said Hinzman Sargeant. "Hybrids are probably our second-biggest seller right now behind electric bikes. We sell both Giant and Specialized, which are the two biggest brands right now."

Specialized Como

IT'S ELECTRIC

ELECTRIC BICYCLES OR E-BIKES ARE THE CURRENT RAGE IN THE CYCLING MARKET, PRODUCING THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF BIKE SALES IN RECENT YEARS.

An e-bike is a motorized bicycle with an integrated electric motor used to assist propulsion. They are quick and smooth with easy-to-control power and a removable battery that recharges at any basic utility outlet.

Most e-bikes are classified as either pedal-assist or throttle.

Pedal-assist combines pedaling a bike with an electric motor that provides extra power. Once the rider starts pedaling, the motor kicks in, giving cyclists the opportunity to control their level of exertion and go faster with less effort. The pedal-assist option also helps the cyclist to continue riding if the battery runs out.

Throttle assist e-bikes don't require pedaling and are ideal for anyone with limited mobility. They are also great for dealing with hills and difficult terrain. Electric bikes come in a variety of different types such as mountain and fat tire (for off-road capacity), folding (with a frame that can be folded for storage and transportation), fat tire, cargo (to carry goods or passenger), commuter (for daily commutes), road (for paved roads), cruiser (for relaxed comfortable rides), and hybrid (with both pedal assist and throttle-assist).

Electric bikes are also classified based on the type and location of the motor. With hub bikes, the motor is integrated into the wheel hub in either the front or rear wheel. With mid-drive bikes, the motor is integrated at the crankset or bottom bracket. Mid-drives are known for their efficiency and climbing capacities, while hubs provide a more traditional look.

"Electric bikes are amazing because they give people the opportunity to ride who maybe aren't comfortable with hills or headwinds," said Hinzman Sargeant. "You don't have to worry

Loop the Little Trail Safety Signage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

about those things with electric bikes. You can ride with as much power or as little power as you want."

Electric bikes are also categorized by motor assistance and speed. Class 1 e-bikes are pedal-assist only and have a maximum speed of 20 mph. Class 2 e-bikes offer both pedal-assist and throttle assist and have a max speed of 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are the fastest of the three with a pedal-assist system and larger motors that can reach top speeds of 28 mph.

"Most of the bikes sold at bike shops are typically going to be the non-throttle versions," said Hinzman Sargeant. "There are more accidents related to throttles than with pedal assist e-bikes. The Specialized Como is one of our best sellers. It has a nice step-through frame, so it's easy to get on and off and it's a mid-drive, so the power is in the crank and it feels a little faster.

"I own a Specialized Como myself and I love it. I ride it a lot, especially when I'm doing a history tour ride where I'm leading people on a ride."

Electric bikes are expensive. A decent entry-level model starts at about $1,000 and the average price is roughly $2,000. High-end models go for $6,000 or more. Electric bikes can actually be purchased for less than $500, but they are of lower quality and will likely cost you more in the long run.

On Film and the Radio

Many movies and songs feature bicycles and cycling playing a major role in the plot or the tune. Here's a few of the most memorable:

Breaking Away is a coming-of-age dramedy about four working class friends trying to find their place in an Indiana college town, while pondering their futures and feuding with the frat boys and is one of my all-time favorite movies. The folks at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences loved it too. *Breaking Away*, featuring a young Dennis Quaid, won the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay in 1979, was a Best Picture finalist and won a Golden Globe for Best Film.

Bicycles play an integral part of this funny, quirky and moving underdog film in which one of the townies (played to oddball perfection by Dennis Christopher) becomes obsessed with the Italian cycling culture to the bewilderment of his exasperated father, expertly played by veteran actor, Paul Dooley. The grand finale features a real-life Indiana cycling event, the "Little 500," and culminates with a slam-bang finish which will have you rooting for the Cutters. If you don't like this film, you don't like movies.

Bicycle Thieves is a 1948 Italian classic film following the story of a struggling working man in post-World War II Rome doing his best to support his family with a job that requires a bicycle. The plot escalates when the bike is suddenly stolen. *Bicycle Thieves* is a simple yet powerful film that is ranked high on many greatest-ever lists.

Pee-wee's Big Adventure is the 1985 comedy gem directed by iconic filmmaker, Tim Burton. Considered to be the comedic version of *Bicycle Thieves* it follows the journey of Pee-wee Herman who is desperate to find his stolen bicycle. Sure, it's silly stuff, but it generates plenty of laughs and takes you into the outlandish, visually striking and wonderfully bizarre world of Burton.

Bicycle Race is an awesome 1978 tune delivered by legendary rock band Queen as part of its "Jazz" album. *Bicycle Race* was released as a double-A single with *Fat Bottomed Girls* and was part of Queen's 1981 Greatest Hits compilation. The song peaked at Number 24 on the Billboard Hot 100 in the U.S. The late, great Freddie Mercury, reportedly wrote *Bicycle Race* after watching the 18th stage of the 1978 Tour de France in Montreux, France where the band was recording "Jazz." The soaring instrumental section of the song makes you feel as though you are actually riding a bike—with bicycle bells ringing.

Daisy Bell is a classic tune known by most as "Bicycle Built for Two" and was written way back in 1892. The song has been recorded by several artists, including legendary crooner, Nat King Cole, in 1963, and is known as the first song to be sung by computer synthesis (in 1961 by an IBM computer). *Daisy Bell* has been used or referenced in many movies, including *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

A TRUE FAMILY BICYCLE BUSINESS

The wheels never stop turning at Appleton Bicycle Shop. The longest-running bike shop in the Appleton area, it opened its doors in 1939 in a small building on Soldiers Square. The store sells a wide variety of contemporary bicycles, ranging from road, mountain, hybrid, BMX, and electric. The downtown business also services bicycles and sells various accessories such as racks, cell phone bags, panniers, and items for commuting.

Visitors won't get a rush job when visiting Appleton Bicycle Shop. Gwen Hinzman Sargeant and her husband, Joe, own the business and the staff work closely with customers to pair them with a bicycle that best fits their needs.

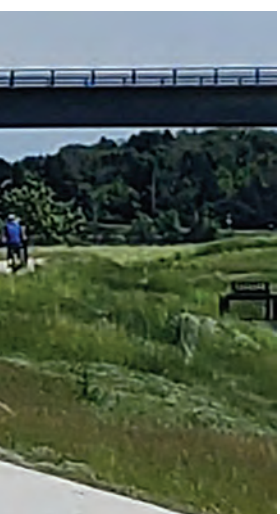
"There are a lot of different bikes out there and we ask a lot of questions when someone is looking to buy a bike," said Hinzman Sargeant. "Where do they want to ride? What do they want to do with their bike? Do they just want it for recreation? Do they want to commute to work with it? We try to help them figure out what's the best bike for them."

Hinzman Sargeant is a third-generation owner and the fourth Hinzman to work at the business. Her grandfather, Clarence Hinzman, was the original owner (along with his wife, Evie) and did general repairs along with selling Schwinn bicycles which went for $18.95 at that particular time. Clarence's father, Robert, also worked at the shop.

In 1950, Appleton Bicycle Shop relocated to its current address at 121 S. State St. Gwen's father, Paul, eventually took over the family business after returning home from Vietnam. Gwen, in partnership with Paul, became a co-owner in 2007.

"My grandpa used to ride a high-wheeler in Appleton parades," said Hinzman Sargeant. "Back then, they used to have Whizzer motor bikes. If he were alive today, I think he would find electric bikes to be really interesting because it's sort of the next generation of Whizzer motor bikes."

Clarence Hinzman on the Highwheeler



Apple Blossom Trail Ride Safety Talk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63

Appleton Bicycle Shop recently celebrated its 85th anniversary.

"We hosted a big party and brought back all of our amazing employees," said Hinzman Sargeant. "This is truly a family business and we've had a lot of incredible employees over the years."

Hinzman Sargeant does more than just own the shop and sell bikes. She is actively involved in repairs and enjoys the challenges that go with bringing a bicycle up to speed.

"Personally, I love bicycles," she said. "I really enjoy the mechanics of bicycles—figuring out what's wrong with them and getting them fixed. I get a lot of joy out of fixing bikes and making sure they are running correctly along with helping them [customers] find the right bike.

"When you see someone go out on a test ride and they come back with a big smile, you know that you have succeeded and they're really going to enjoy that bike."

Hinzman Sargeant, an Appleton native and a 1997 graduate of Lawrence University is also a board member of the Appleton Historical Society. She also volunteers her time with the Fox Cities Cycling Association, the Appleton Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, East Central Bike Planning, the Neenah Historical Society and the Fox River Environmental Education Alliance. Hinzman Sargeant is a history buff and leads moonlight bicycle tours of Appleton historical sites.

"I have a stable of bicycles and I ride quite often," she said. "There are some great trails in Appleton with a lot of different routes like the Hydroelectric Heritage Trailway.

"I also enjoy the Loop the Lake trail in Neenah and the Loop the Locks trail in Little Chute. I like to do this 20-mile loop that starts in Appleton, goes down to Little Chute, loops around Neenah and takes you back to Appleton."

Fun Biking Facts

- **The bicycle was invented in 1817 in Germany by a fellow named Karl Drais. A chainless, two-wheeled steerable wooden contraption, the bicycle was known as a "hobby horse." John Kemp Starley introduced a more sophisticated bike in England 68 years later that was propelled by a chain drive. The term "velocipede" was used for the early models of bicycles.**
- **Bicycles can reach outrageous speeds. The fastest time ever recorded on a pedal-propelled bike was a mind-blowing 183.932 mph by Denise Mueller-Korenek in 2018. The American cyclist rode a custom-built bike that was initially tethered to a speeding race car before she unhooked it and hit the record speed while pedaling. The previous record was a not-so-sluggish 167 mph set by Dutch cyclist Fred Rompelberg in 1995.**

- Cycling is popular in many countries, but it's especially big in the Netherlands where roughly 30% of all trips are by bicycle. France, Italy, China, Spain, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland are also regarded as countries with a prominent bicycle culture. China has the largest number of bicycles in use—more than 200 million—and averages about one bike per household. China is also the leader in electric bikes with an estimated 42 million manufactured in 2024.

- The Tour de France is the ultimate bicycle race and its dimensions are a bit crazy. The course is a whopping 2,175 miles and is raced in more than 21 stages during a three-week period. In 1903, there were only 60 competitors for the first Tour de France and only 21 finished it.

- The world's most expensive bicycle is the Trek Butterfly Madone, which was bought at an auction for a mind-blowing $500,000. Famed cyclist, Lance Armstrong, rode the bike in the 2009 Tour de France. Second on the list is the Trek Yoshimoto Nara, which went for $200,000 at a different auction. The latter bike is made of carbon fiber and was also pedaled by Armstrong at some major cycling events.

More Area Bike Shops

The Appleton area is loaded with quality shops that sell and repair bicycles. Along with Appleton Bicycle Shop, the list includes:

Active Bike & Fitness LLC *(1131 N. Badger Ave., Appleton)*

Wheel and Sprocket *(3939 W. College Ave., Appleton)*

Chain Reaction Cyclery LLC *(818 N. Superior St., Appleton)*

Cranked Bike Studio LLC *(407 S. Green Bay Road, Neenah)*

Recyclist Bicycle Co. *(631 Saunders Road, Kaukauna)*

Affordable Bike Repair *(370 E. Coolidge Ave., Appleton)*

Bike Garage Inc. *(1912 E. Melrose Ave., Appleton)*

REI *(3850 W. Wisconsin Ave., Appleton)*

Play It Again Sports of Appleton *(611 W. Northland Ave., Appleton)*

Hutch BMX *(712, S. Olde Oneida St., Appleton)*

Dick's Sporting Goods *(4350 W. Greenville Drive, Appleton)*

Scheels *(4301 W. Wisconsin Ave., Appleton)*

Busse Bicycles *(2220 W. Charles St., Appleton)*

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Moody Décor

By JOEL LAPER

Dark blue walls and sectional sofa contrast beautifully against the indirect source lighting in this moody family room.

A trending design style you might not be familiar with is referred to as *moody décor*. Don't think of moody décor as being sad, as it is quite the opposite. The popular design style is easily described by using darker color choices, luxurious fabrics, and dramatic lighting. Using these design elements, you can create a room that evokes emotion, mystery, or romance. Contrast and drama bring this design style to life. Don't let the word "moody" bring you down. In fact, it should spark emotion and warm your heart.

Think of richly saturated tones, such as navy blue, olive green, eggplant, and an array of dark grays and blacks with diffused undertones. If you love these deeper, rich tones, start by painting an accent wall or a fireplace. The larger areas provide an anchor to your room and help set the stage for adding other moody accents and lighting. Painting bookshelves darker is another way to add depth and dimension and will help make your personal display items really pop.

If you are unable to paint your walls as a renter or if you're not quite committed to making the jump into a darker wall color, there are other options. Creating an accent wall with peel-and-stick wallpaper is an easy way to make a big impact and it is easily removed should you decide to move or are ready for another change. Framing a large mural or tapestry is another way to give an instant moody look without a big commitment. Both are good ways to help you gently ease into the moody design aesthetic.

Natural and artificial lighting are always a consideration with designing and room décor choices, but especially with moody design. Consider whether the room you are decorating is bright and sunny all day, or if it faces north and has more diffused lighting throughout the day. Knowing how natural light impacts your space will help determine overhead lighting, lamp placement, and even color choices including how deep and dark to paint your walls. Lighting can even help you decide which room in your house you would like to drench in deeper tones. A favorite design tip we use in our house to help create a moody feel with lighting is to install dimmer switches, which control the lighting intensity. Placing smaller, battery-operated lamps on bookshelves and in areas of your home that don't have easy access to outlets is another great way to brighten and highlight those spaces.

If you are not sure where to start, I recommend visiting local antique malls and flea markets. As a great resource to finding fun and unique pieces, these venues offer that personal touch when it comes to decorating with this design style. Vintage chandeliers, brass décor, and decorative glass are perfect accents to look for when creating a moody style.

Whether you decide to go big with a complete room makeover, or start slowly with some smaller pieces or lighting, the moody décor trend is one you will want to embrace because of the cozy, warm feel it will bring to your space.

THE POWER OF CITRUS AT HOME

By CASEY MARION

Essential oils made from citrus fruits such as lemons, oranges, and grapefruits offer a wide range of practical benefits—especially when summer rolls in. From aromatherapy to insect repellent, there's no shortage of what a few drops of these natural oils can do. And the best part? They're completely plant-based and free of harsh chemicals.

Cleaning might not be the most glamorous use for essential oils, but in my experience, it's one of the most effective—particularly during summer—when housekeeping can feel like a full-time job. Spilled lemonade, muddy footprints, and sticky fingers on every glass surface can quickly turn your clean home into a chaotic mess. And if you're reaching for commercial cleaners too often, the overpowering chemical smell can be just as unpleasant.

Citrus essential oils, particularly lemon oil, offer a refreshing, natural alternative. Thanks to their antibacterial and antifungal properties, lemon oil is a staple in many store-bought cleaners. However, you can easily make your own! Just mix equal parts white vinegar and water with 10 to 20 drops of lemon essential oil in a spray bottle. Shake well and spritz on countertops, glass, and other surfaces. Your home will look spotless and smell clean, without the harsh fumes.

No summer is complete without the familiar buzz of mosquitoes or the trail of ants finding their way inside. Bugs always seem to find a way in, regardless of how careful you are with screen doors or crumbs on the counter.

Fortunately, citrus oils such as lemon and orange can help keep these pests at bay. Not only are they effective, but they also smell amazing (unlike the chemical-heavy repellents on the market).

- *For ants:* Combine 1 cup of distilled water with 10 drops of lemon essential oil and 1 teaspoon of natural dish soap in a spray bottle. Spritz along doorways, windowsills, and any known entry points.
- *For mosquitoes:* Mix a few drops of citronella oil (which is also citrus-derived) with witch hazel to create a natural body spray. Be sure to do a patch test on your skin before using it regularly.
- *For fruit flies:* Add a few drops of orange or lemon oil to a bowl of warm water. Place it on your kitchen counter to help repel or trap the tiny invaders.

Why does this work? It's simple: bugs can't stand the scent of citrus oils, making them a safe and pleasant way to protect your space.

Of all the ways to use citrus essential oils, aromatherapy is probably the most beloved. Each oil offers something unique, but in the summer heat—when naps are rare and the days feel extra long—grapefruit and lime oils are especially helpful. Their invigorating scents help combat fatigue and mental fog, giving you the boost you need to power through.

Here are a few easy ways to enjoy their benefits:

- Diffuse citrus oils throughout your home for a bright, energizing atmosphere.
- Carefully inhale from the bottle for a quick pick-me-up.
- Apply topically (diluted with a carrier oil) to your wrists or temples for lasting scent and stress relief.

In addition to boosting focus and energy, citrus oils are known for their calming properties. When used mindfully, they can help reduce stress and elevate your mood, even on the busiest summer days.

Whether you're scrubbing countertops, fending off fruit flies, or just trying to stay sane through the heat, citrus essential oils offer a simple, natural way to enhance your home and well-being. With their fresh scents and multipurpose benefits, they're truly a summertime essential.

***Casey Marion** is an aspiring author and struggling college student. She works at the Kaukauna Public Library and can always be found with a book in hand.*

Solo Stove Pit Gets You Back to Nature

By TIM FROBERG

A campfire without s'mores is unacceptable, but one without smoke is nirvana.

The Solo Stove Bonfire 2.0 makes the latter scenario a reality.

Nothing beats a campfire on a pleasant Wisconsin summer or fall evening, and the Solo Stove Bonfire creates a cozy back-to-nature experience without the smoke hazards or distinctive smell that most outdoor fires produce.

The Solo Stove Bonfire is a low-smoke outdoor fire pit that won't leave you smelling like a campfire or worried about the health risks. That's because it produces very little smoke and ash due to its modern technology. The Solo Stove Bonfire is known for its signature 360-degree air-efficient flow system—with holes along the top and bottom to promote better air flow and cleaner burning that eliminates the smoke before it can reach your clothes, hair and lungs.

There is no way to make a wood-burning fire pit that is totally smoke free, but good ones like the Solo Stove Bonfire are extremely efficient in minimizing smoke to only small, harmless levels. You may experience some smoke in the first few minutes while lighting the fire, but this is completely normal as it takes time to get the Solo Stove Bonfire hot enough to neutralize the smoke.

The Solo Stove Bonfire is a relatively light (25 pounds) fire pit made from durable stainless steel with a high-heat ceramic coating. It is portable, easy to transport and comes with a convenient carrying case. The pit is ideal for backyard gatherings of up to five people, camping trips, and beach getaways. It features a removable ash pan and is easy to clean without requiring a special tool.

The Solo Stove Bonfire is compatible with natural firewood logs up to 16 inches long. Pellets can also be burned in place of logs.

The Solo Stove Bonfire comes with a stand which lifts the pit 2.75 feet off the ground, allowing it to be placed on grass and even wooden decks. Various accessories are available to customize the device for cooking.

Reviews of the Solo Stove Bonfire were overwhelmingly positive. Most purchasers consider it to be a safe, efficient fire pit that delivers a near-smokeless experience.

Mary Henn, the shopping editor of "Taste of Home" magazine and a Midwest resident, has used the Solo Stove Bonfire for more than a year with no complaints.

"It's a great, stainless steel smokeless fire pit," Henn said on the "Taste of Home" website. "I love that it's backyard-size and portable. What sets it apart from similar fire pits from different brands is its wide variety of compatible accessories. It's also made with high-quality materials that are made to last. I love my Bonfire, and I haven't had any issues with it."

"The perfect size for me," added a second reviewer. "I am enjoying the comfortable evenings around my pit. Great buy."

Product: Solo Stove Bonfire 2.0 fire pit with stand.

Price: $329.99.

Power source: battery.

Depth: 19.5 inches.

Height: 17.5 inches.

Housing material: stainless steel.

Weight: 25 pounds.

A Good Old Friend

By AMY GOTTER

A few years ago, I stumbled into the rescue world when I saw a local dog on social media needing a foster home. Since then, my family and I have fostered 15 more dogs!

Some of the dogs were with us for a short time, and others for many months. All of them were special, but a few were truly incredible. While fostering, I also held a volunteer role on the board of directors for a local dog rescue. Admittedly, my passion has always been for dogs. Most specifically behavioral cases that required extra time, patience, and training.

My daughter, Gemma, was in high school when we started fostering dogs. She helped at home with caring for the fosters and attended many rescue events with me, volunteering her time to help where needed. While Gemma loved my "dog world," her heart was always in the "cat world." Ever since she was a little girl, she would ask me if we could "go to the shelter and adopt the oldest cat."

One day, while scrolling Facebook, I saw a plea for a "forever foster" for a 20-year-old cat who was taken to Shawano County Humane Society after his owner had passed away. I showed the photo of the cat to Gemma and we instantly knew we should be his forever foster home.

Gemma spent many weeks slowly introducing him to her cat, Kit, in hopes that they could enjoy retirement together. Seeing Gemma become a foster has been such a joy. I love that I have passed down my love for animals to my daughter and I hope that she inspires other young adults to get involved with animal welfare. Wisconsin is in need of kind and compassionate foster families.

Gemma with their foster cat Remi.

Please Keep It Down! Noise Phobia in Dogs

By DR. SETH OBERSCHLAKE

Many pet owners have seen their dogs tremble, hide, or pace during thunderstorms or fireworks. While a little nervousness is normal, for some dogs, these reactions are much more intense. This condition is called noise phobia, and it's more common than many people realize. In fact, up to 67% of dogs have some form of noise aversion—many of them going untreated.

Noise phobia is an extreme fear of certain sounds, such as thunder, fireworks, gunshots, or even everyday household noises like vacuum cleaners or smoke alarms. Affected dogs may shake, drool, pant, dig, hide, vocalize, or even try to escape. Some become so distressed that they may injure themselves in the process. Over time, if left untreated, this fear can worsen and begin to affect a dog's overall quality of life—as well as the lives of their owners.

Often, pet owners do not view these symptoms as a significant issue and may not mention them to their veterinarian, assuming it's just normal dog behavior. Many also try to calm the fear by consoling or holding their dog. Unfortunately, this approach is often ineffective, and we miss an opportunity to proactively help the pet.

The causes of noise phobia can vary and

are not always fully understood. Some dogs may be genetically predisposed to anxiety (such as pointers and herding breeds), while others may develop it after a traumatic experience. Early exposure to certain sounds may help build resilience, while other exposures may increase sensitivity. Regardless of the cause, one thing is clear: these dogs are not just "being dramatic"—they are experiencing real fear, similar to a panic attack in humans. Repeated exposure to the triggering noise can make the problem worse and even lead to other conditions like separation anxiety or generalized anxiety.

The good news is that noise phobia is treatable, and in many cases, management can significantly improve your dog's comfort. We can take several approaches, often used in combination. Behavior modification techniques like desensitization and counterconditioning can help dogs become less sensitive to specific sounds over time. Creating a safe, quiet space during noisy events can also make a big difference. Calming aids such as anxiety wraps, pheromone diffusers, or natural supplements may also reduce stress.

Prescription anti-anxiety medications can be extremely helpful. Since noise aversion is a neurological condition, these medications help address the underlying cause. When given before predictable stressors—like fireworks or thunderstorms—and used under veterinary guidance, they can greatly improve your dog's ability to cope.

If your dog shows signs of fear during loud events, don't hesitate to bring it up. Your veterinarian is here to help. Together, we can create a personalized treatment plan to help your dog feel safer, calmer, and more comfortable.

***Dr. Seth Oberschlake** is a 2014 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine. He has worked at Heritage Animal Hospital since 2015 and recently became the sole owner.*

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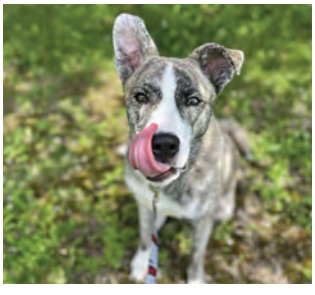
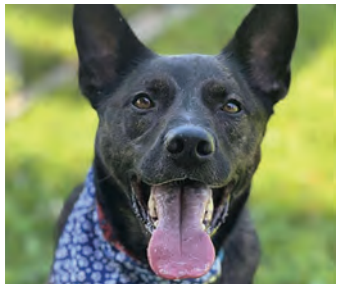


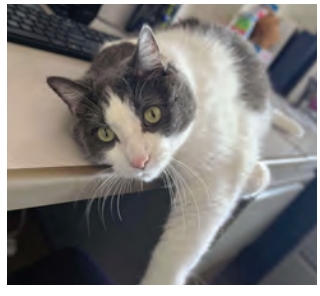
Dino

Dino is an 8-month-old neutered male husky mix. He has plenty of pizazz and is sure to bring a lifetime of fun to any home he joins. Dino would do well with children that are comfortable with his boisterous energy.



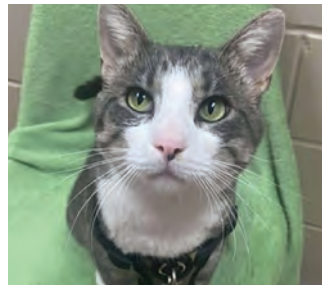
Bud

Bud is a 5-year-old neutered male shepherd mix. He is a gentle soul searching for a constant companion. Bud is as loyal as they come and is just waiting for his chance to shine!



Mr. Kitty

Mr. Kitty is a 7-year-old neutered male. He is diabetic and will require lifelong management of his condition. He is certainly worth it! This big guy is affectionate, loving, and conversational. He is sure to bring you joy.



Velcro

Velcro is a 2-year-old neutered male. He is bold and adventurous and looking for an active home that can provide the mental and physical stimulation he needs to thrive! He has learned to walk on-leash and loves soaking in the sights and sounds of the outdoors.

Consider an 'Owl Prowl' Adventure

By HOLLY BOETTCHER

Gardening is not just about planting flowers and vegetables; it's the privilege to share in the beauty of nature that surrounds us—whether it's birds, plants, insects, and so much more.

I'll never forget the first time I saw a live owl. It was being mobbed by a flock of blackbirds in a field of alfalfa. I remember feeling sorry for the owl. Although I knew interfering with Mother Nature wasn't the right thing to do, my instincts took over. I ran toward the commotion to chase the blackbirds away. The owl immediately flew off, and I'm almost certain it waved a wing in gratitude for the rescue.

At the time, I didn't realize owls and blackbirds were natural enemies. Owls are known to raid the nests of other birds, eating their eggs, and even their chicks. Being nocturnal creatures, owls are most active at night, which allows them to hunt undisturbed, but as daylight breaks, the roles reverse. Blackbirds, along with crows, take their revenge, harassing the owls in retaliation.

That's fascinating! Owls are such intriguing creatures, and it's amazing Wisconsin is home to many different types. Observing them at night is a wonderful activity, especially for families. In backyards and city parks, their presence highlights how adaptable they can be, even as habitats change.

If you're planning to monitor owls, you might want to listen to their distinct calls as each species has its own unique sound. A flashlight with a red filter can also help you spot them without startling them. Have you tried owl watching before, or is your first attempt at what I call an "owl prowl"?

Did you know there are at least ten different types of owls living in Wisconsin? Most are easy to identify. Here is a list of owls to help you know what to listen for.

Barn Owl – harsh, eerie "hiss" (Rare in Wisconsin)

Barred Owl – "who-cooks for you," or "whoo-awl" (Wow, that is really a call that is easy to distinguish)

Boreal Owl – fast and stuttering toots, "whoo(p), whoo(p), whoo(p)" (Also rare in our state)

Eastern Screech Owl – descending trill, horse whinny

Great Horned Owl – "who's awake, me too-too," (Juveniles have a harsh scream like that of barn owls)

Great Gray Owl – low, resonating, and repeating "hoo…hoo… hoo" (Another that is seldomly spotted in Wisconsin)

Long-eared Owl – deep, slow "whoo"

Northern Hawk-Owl – rapid, twirling and increasing "tu-tu-tu-tu"

Northern Saw-Whet Owl – slow and steady "toot, toot" (Sounding like a truck backing up)

Short-Eared Owl – raspy, laughing duck (Not rare, but seldom heard)

Discover the enchanting calls of Wisconsin owls on an unforgettable "owl prowl" with your children or grandchildren on a calm summer night. Get involved and learn how to become a "citizen scientist" by visiting Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources at: dnr.wi.gov and searching the keyword "volunteer."

Get out in nature and find peace enjoying all that our great state has to offer!

__Holly Boettcher__ is a Master Gardener and an aspiring Naturalist. Her love for the outdoors and nature shines through in everything she does. Holly and her husband own Whistler's Knoll Vineyard on Highway JJ near Hortonville.

THE FIVE Ws OF HAWAIIAN SHIRTS

ONE MORE THING

By TYLER SJOSTROM

When my wife was pregnant with our first son, I found myself at something of a fashion crossroads. I'd gained a few pounds (in husbandly solidarity, no other reason), my hipster shirts were snug in all the wrong places, and my impending induction into fatherhood required a new wardrobe to match. As she so often does, my wife had a suggestion:

"Why don't you get some Hawaiian shirts? Every dad needs Hawaiian shirts, for, like, standing around the grill and stuff."

She definitely had a point; I mean, dads do stand around the grill a lot. But after buying a few Hawaiian shirts and wearing each one once, I came to a painful realization: it wasn't me. I didn't have what it takes. Whenever I peer into my closet now, I see those shirts hanging unloved and unworn, a too-busy reminder of the man I could never become. But why? To help myself understand, I think I'll employ the five Ws we all learned about back before AI replaced our brains.

Who wears a Hawaiian shirt?
Predominantly men who, it must be said, are a little soft in the middle. Also, Parrotheads, people visiting from somewhere cold, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, guys who play softball, fellas who never remember to apply sunblock, and, of course, those of us who stand around the grill more than is necessary or recommended. There's a type, is what I'm saying. And even though I checked a few of these boxes, I still somehow fell short. Let's move on.

What is a Hawaiian shirt?
A Hawaiian shirt is an invitation to strike up a conversation with the person wearing it. If you're someone who doesn't mind hearing "Love the shirt!" from multiple total strangers in a single trip to Texas Roadhouse, there's a good chance that you actually wear the floral shirts in your closet, rather than just having them taunt you. (This may surprise some readers, but I'm the type who likes to eat my cinnamon buns in anonymity). If you'd prefer, in most cases, to just blend in, a Hawaiian shirt is

not for you (unless you're on a cruise ship, in which case, you'd blend in just fine).

Where to wear a Hawaiian shirt?
My dad is a retired pastor and sometimes in summer when the sanctuary was hotter than the place he was warning against in his sermons, he'd wear a nice Hawaiian shirt from the pulpit. That's because a Hawaiian shirt is really about a state-of-mind, and a pastor wearing one is saying "all are welcome." That's really the ethos of the Hawaiian shirt in full—if it's a place where people are wanting to feel included, then that's the message that will be sent when they see penguins in hula skirts on your shirt.

When to wear a Hawaiian shirt?
Whenever you please. That's precisely the point. A Hawaiian shirt flouts rules and norms just by existing; they're ill-fitting on purpose. And what are you gonna do, judge the guy wearing flamingo print? Trust me, the guy in the flamingo print does not care.

Why wear a Hawaiian shirt?
Maybe the better question is, why not wear one? It turns out that by overthinking what a Hawaiian shirt possibly-but-probably-doesn't represent, I may have withheld from myself the unbound freedom that comes with wearing one. A Hawaiian shirt doesn't ask for approval, so who am I to give it?

I think it's time I gave my Hawaiian shirts another spin on the ol' chassis. I think I'm ready for round two.

Kids, get in the car—Daddy wants Texas Roadhouse cinnamon buns and I don't mean the anonymous kind!

__Tyler Sjostrom__ is an Appleton-based writer who will show you pictures of his kids whether you ask for them or not. Heckle him at tysjostrom@gmail.com or read more at tyler-sj.com.

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