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FROM
THE
EDITOR

Hey there, September!

YOU'RE THAT CLEAN-SLATE MONTH WE'RE ALL CRAVING, BUT SUMMER WEATHER CAN STICK AROUND. We've got lots to do. A fresh school year is underway and our local football teams have kicked off a new season. From Labor Day weekend through the first weeks of fall, there's no shortage of fun to be had all around. We've got Irish Fest coming up and the start of apple-picking season, which means Octoberfest (but in September) is almost here!

The very special Women's Inspire Awards edition of *Appleton Monthly* showcases the incredible work of this year's nominees with appearances by a few more women leaders. In VOICE, Tim Froberg describes the fashion expertise of Pam Goel and her hugely popular Olive and Rose Boutique (see pink blouse in editor photo). Then, guest contributors, Alyssa Johnson and Amanda Krueger, take us on six awe-inspiring journeys in the TODAY Women's Inspire Awards cover story. You will be moved by the selfless missions of these women as they build a better future far beyond the Fox Cities.

In TASTE, Jenni Eickelberg introduces us to the restaurant and food truck offerings of Chicken Grill, where father and daughter chefs share their heritage through homestyle deliciousness. Before we get to read the favorite, ONE MORE THING, we learn when and how to spot some super-cool goats doing their thing at 1000 Islands as they almost single-handedly clear up invasive plant species.

September, we're ready for you. Let's go!

Jamie

Jamie Sheridan
EDITOR

jamie@appletonmonthly.com

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Tammi Johnson

Tammi was born and raised in the Midwest. Her family has lived in the Fox Valley area for over fifteen years. She currently runs a women's giving circle POWER of 100+ Fox Cities raising money for local non-profit organizations. Tammi enjoys baking, gardening, and spending time with family and friends.



Sarah Peterson

Sarah Peterson is a lifelong resident of Appleton, where she is a mother of four, a wife, a writer, an artist, and an active community member. She finds inspiration in her family and faith, exploring themes of nostalgia and the beauty of simplicity in her work.



Phyllis Collar

Phyllis Collar is an Appleton lover who hails from Long Island, New York. She is a fashionista and foodie, a lover of words and music, and an absolute hopeless romantic. Phyllis is delighted to share with you all things stylish. She contributes to *Appleton Monthly* with her Style & Fashion article as well as monthly features.



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VOICE

BUSINESS & FINANCE 14 | HEALTHY LIVING 16 | UPFRONT 18 | GOOD STUFF 20

A portrait of Pamela Goel, a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling. She is wearing a black long-sleeved top and a maroon skirt with ruffles. She is also wearing a gold necklace and a ring.

**Pamela
Goel**
Olive & Rose
Boutique

By TIM FROBERG

All Dressed Up

ENTREPRENEUR EARNED FASHION BUSINESS AT YOUNG AGE

By TIM FROBERG

Pamela Goel has a college degree, but Boutique 101 wasn't part of her curriculum. Prior to her formal education, Goel gained life-changing boutique operation skills in her hometown of Galveston, Tex., where her former boss served as a mentor and quasi-professor. Goel learned well.

Goel is the owner of Olive and Rose Boutique: an impressive women's clothing store in downtown Appleton. Olive and Rose offers a wide range of women's clothing and accessories including tops, outerwear, bottoms, dresses, and some footwear. The store sells everything from blouses, tunics, and bodysuits to cardigans, sweaters, jackets, pants, shorts, and skirts. Jewelry (earrings and bracelets) is also available along with bath and beauty products, gifts, books, journals and candles, gift cards and a small line of menswear.

Goel is more than just a single-store owner; she's an entrepreneur. She and her husband, Suyash, own multiple area gas stations along with three bars: Tippy Turtle in Appleton, and Dragon's Den in New London, and The Vault, which also serves as a dart and pool hall in New London.

"You never get a day off," said Goel with a chuckle. "I do more of the marketing for the businesses and my husband does more of the operations. We have good managers and employees. We allocate a lot of the tasks to them, so it's not all on us."

Olive and Rose is Goel's business focus. Everything in the boutique is carefully curated by Goel to keep customers up to date with the latest trends in women's fashion. The store draws people of all ages, but the business is geared around offering styles for millennials.

"We're more a lifestyle boutique where we have a combination of women's clothing and accessories and home and gift items," said Goel. "We cater more toward that 25- to 40-year-old. That's our main target. It could be a teacher, someone working in an office or someone going on vacation.

"We try to get brands that are well known like Vera Bradley, Steve Madden and Julie Vos, which is very big in the South. I'm from Texas, so I like to bring a lot of things from the south to the boutique. For our candles, we carry popular candles like Voluspa—candles you usually find at places like Anthropologie, Capri Blue, and Thymes.

"People come mainly for the clothes and jewelry, but





once I opened the Appleton location, I started expanding more by bringing in more gifts. We do sell a lot of gift items. Books are one of our best sellers.”

Goel opened Olive and Rose at its current location (121 E. College Ave.) in 2021. She launched the original Olive and Rose in Oshkosh in 2019 and ran both businesses before deciding to focus on the Appleton store and its online business (shopoliveandrose.com).

STAYING ON TOP OF FASHION

Goel stays on top of industry trends by attending fashion markets and using social media on a regular basis. She follows social media influencers to keep pace with the ever-changing fashion world and posts regularly on Instagram and Facebook.

“When I first opened the boutique, Instagram was my go-to; Facebook was not,” said Goel. “But now I feel like I’m getting better views on Facebook. I’m getting more of a reach than on Instagram, which seems like it’s changing every second. Sometimes it seems like the algorithm is never on your side.

“But I do both daily. TikTok is not really my cup of tea. I’m not going to be dancing and doing all these things.”

Goel also takes frequent trips to New York to visit her sister (Iran Cuevas), but does more than just catch up with family. She makes it a point to window shop and visit various New York stores and boutiques to get ideas for Olive and Rose.

It helps her bring a little bit of the Big Apple back to Appleton.

“Oh, I absolutely try and bring home ideas I see in New York,” said Goel. “I’ll be walking around Times Square and see a Macy’s window. I’ll look at the clothes and think: ‘I would wear that. Where is this in Wisconsin?’ I always look and try to get ideas. I’m interested in

everything from the clothes to how they set the store.”

LEARNING THE BUSINESS

Goel has a marketing degree from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, but earned it after learning the nuances of the boutique business at the Front Parlor, a Galveston boutique where she worked for nine years. She started the job at the age of 16 and Front Parlor owner, Iris Speed, took Goel under her wing and taught her everything from A-to-Z about running a boutique.

“Iris showed me and taught me everything—from buying and sales, to running the store, everything,” said Goel. “I still keep in close contact with her. We’re very close. She’s like a second mom to me. But even before that, I loved fashion. My grandma used to make my dresses when I was growing up.”

Goel eventually moved to Wisconsin with Suyash, who grew up in Sugarland, Tex., for a business opportunity. The couple have been Cheeseheads ever since.

“At the time, we had been dating for only a year, and he asked me if I wanted to move to Wisconsin,” recalled Goel. “My geography isn’t the best and honestly, I wasn’t even sure where Wisconsin was. I got a map out and was like, “Oh, so you want to live near Canada?”

Goel adjusted and made the Appleton area her home.

“I moved here in December and had never experienced single-digit temperatures and negative numbers,” said





Goel. "It never got colder than 30 degrees in Texas, but I've gotten used to it. I prefer the cold over the heat. My mom always asks me when I'm going to visit her. I'm like, 'Not during the summer.'"

In addition to the climate, Goel has also adjusted to the demands of the business world. She feels that consistency is the most important part of being a successful business owner.

"You absolutely have to be consistent," she said. "I have to remind myself that every single day because sometimes I get tired. Sometimes I'll go a few days without posting and it will show. Your customers

will see it. You need to be consistent with everything, especially if you are starting a new business. You have to be consistent with your time of operation, your social media, keeping up with seasonal changes, ordering, everything. Because once you stop, it's hard to get back on track."

Goel opened her Appleton business at one of the worst possible times: smack-dab in the middle of the COVID-19 global pandemic. She persevered and got through it, learning some valuable lessons along the way.

"Running your own business is kind of like a rollercoaster," Goel said.

"You have your ups and downs, your good days and slow days. COVID was a learning experience. You have to find ways just to get people through the door. But overall, it's been a really fun experience.

"I love doing this. I fell in love with it when I started working at the boutique in Texas when I was younger. I knew this is what I wanted to do."

So what's trendy right now in women's clothing?

"It's been very Western," said Goel. "We're seeing a lot of prints on dresses with horses. Also, we're seeing a lot of summer prints with fruits and vegetables, which is so weird. We had a dress with lemons on it and it sold.

"You never know what the prints are going to be like. I've been to other boutiques like SLB in New York and a lot of the prints have the most random things. I remember seeing a dress that had a print with brunch items like pancakes."

IT'S ALL IN THE NAME

Goel named the boutique after her grandmother, Rosalyn. Her favorite color of olive green is also the name of Pam's beloved Shih Tzu, Lhasa Apso mix, one of four dogs the couple owns. "Customers would ask, 'Who is Olive?'" said Pam with a laugh. "When we got her, I said, 'OK, you're going to be Olive.' She added, 'We love our fur babies. We don't have a lot of hobbies. Our thing is to just stay home with the dogs.'"

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Here are a few online comments about Olive and Rose:

"Olive and Rose is hands-down my favorite clothing boutique! Pam, the owner, is so sweet and does a fantastic job curating versatile and stylish looks for great outfits. I always find something I need anytime I stop in."

"Cute styles, perfect for shopping for my girlfriend!"

"I love the slippers I got and the candles are amazing too. I definitely will be back."

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.

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By KELSEY WELCH



The first printed newspaper in the U.S. was published on September 25, 1690. The paper was published in Boston and called *Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick*.



September has two different birth flowers: the aster and the morning glory. The aster is said to represent love, while the morning glory represents affection.



Garlic is part of the allium family that includes onions, leeks, scallions, and shallots.

Did you know goats have four stomachs?

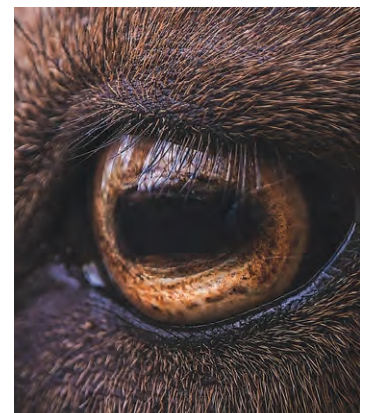
They are ruminant animals, which means they have a complex digestive system with multiple stomach compartments: the rumen, reticulum, omasum and abomasum.



The cranberry is Wisconsin's state fruit. Cranberry harvest season starts in late September. **Would you believe, Wisconsin produces more than 60% of the nation's cranberries?**



September's full moon is the Harvest Moon, which is much brighter and rises much earlier than a typical full moon.



Goats also have rectangular pupils that allow them to see 320-340 degrees around them, without having to move. They have to move their heads if they want to look up or down due to the pupil shape.



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Eloise is a fox.

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LARGEST SELECTION OF CHILDREN'S FURNITURE IN WISCONSIN

DIGITAL PAYMENT SOLUTIONS BRICK AND MORTAR BUSINESSES

By ADRIANA SANDERFOOT, VP-Retail Leader, American National Bank Fox Cities



In an era where convenience and speed drive consumer behavior, brick-and-mortar businesses are embracing digital payment solutions not just as a modern upgrade, but as a necessity. The shift from cash and checks to contactless cards, mobile wallets, and integrated point-of-sale systems is reshaping how local businesses operate and connect with their customers.

Why Digital Matters

Today's shoppers expect seamless transactions. Whether they're grabbing lunch at a local café or browsing shelves at a boutique, they want payment options that are fast, secure, and intuitive. For business owners, meeting those expectations means adopting technologies that enhance the customer experience while streamlining back-end operations.

Digital payment systems can reduce wait times, minimize errors, and offer valuable insights into purchasing trends. They also open doors to loyalty programs, mobile ordering, and even e-commerce expansion—tools that help small businesses stay

competitive in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

Navigating the Options

Choosing the right digital payment solution isn't one-size-fits-all. Business owners should consider:

Integration: Does the system work with your current POS or inventory software?

Security: Are customer data and transactions protected with up-to-date encryption?

Cost: What are the processing fees, and how do they impact your margins?

Support: Is there reliable help available when issues arise?

These decisions can feel overwhelming, especially for small teams focused on day-to-day operations. That's where trusted local partners can make a difference—offering guidance, resources, and a deep understanding of the community's unique needs.

The Community Advantage

Local businesses thrive when they have access to personalized support and practical solutions. Whether it's understanding merchant services, exploring financing options for tech upgrades, or simply having a conversation about what's working and what's not, community-focused institutions play a quiet, but powerful role in helping businesses grow.

Digital transformation doesn't mean losing the personal touch; it means enhancing it. When technology is thoughtfully integrated, it allows business owners to focus more on what they do best: building relationships, serving their customers, and

contributing to the vibrancy of the local economy.

Looking Ahead

As digital payment trends continue to evolve, brick-and-mortar businesses that embrace innovation will be better positioned to adapt and thrive. The journey may start with a tap-to-pay terminal, but it leads to greater efficiency, deeper customer engagement, and long-term sustainability.

In the end, it's not just about keeping up; it's about moving forward with purpose, supported by partners who understand the value of local business and the power of community.

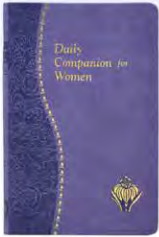


Adriana, Vice President of Retail Banking at American National Bank, is dedicated to creating meaningful connections and helping individuals achieve their goals. She actively volunteers with Junior Achievement and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Outside of work, she enjoys golfing, hiking, and traveling with her husband.



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BREAKING THE BURNOUT CYCLE: REDEFINING SUCCESS THROUGH BALANCE

By ANGELA HALDERSON

In today's high-speed, hyper-connected world, many women are celebrated for how much they can juggle—careers, families, side hustles, community leadership, and more. The hustle is often worn like a badge of honor, but beneath the surface, too many women are running on empty, quietly battling burnout. The Women's Inspire Awards offer a powerful counter-narrative: success is not measured by overexertion, but by impact, intention, and well-being.

Burnout is more than exhaustion; it's a state of emotional, physical, and mental depletion caused by prolonged stress—especially when that stress is tied to identity, expectations, or a sense of duty. For many women, particularly those in caregiving or leadership roles, burnout feels like an inevitable consequence of ambition, but it doesn't have to be.

The first step in breaking the cycle is recognizing the signs of overexertion. Often hiding in plain sight, overexertion can include constant fatigue even after sleep, irritability, lack of joy in things that once felt meaningful, difficulty concentrating, and the feeling that no matter how much you do, it's never enough. Women tend to absorb and juggle invisible responsibilities—coordinating family schedules, nurturing relationships, managing home life, maintaining professional performance—all while meeting the unspoken expectation to do it with grace. When the calendar is full, but the soul feels empty, it's time to pause.

Managing expectations is another critical piece. Many women are conditioned to equate their worth with productivity or caretaking. Saying "yes" too often—whether out of fear of disappointing others, wanting to be seen as dependable, or simply out of

habit—can lead to chronic overcommitment. Learning to say "no" with clarity and kindness is a powerful tool for protecting energy and time.

So how do we begin to stop the cycle? Small, intentional shifts can make a profound difference. Start with **planned lunch breaks**—real ones, away from screens. Give yourself permission to step outside, eat slowly, breathe deeply, and reset. Even 15 minutes of presence can nourish the nervous system.

Moments of mindfulness—a quiet cup of chamomile tea, a brief breathing exercise between meetings, or walking barefoot in the grass—help regulate stress and create space for clarity. They don't have to be hour-long rituals. The key is consistency and presence.

Setting boundaries with work notifications, carving out screen-free evenings, or scheduling time just for yourself, without guilt, are other forms of reclaiming your well-being. When you build in daily pauses, you interrupt the autopilot of overdrive and give your mind and body space to recalibrate.

Ultimately, honoring your needs is not a sign of weakness; it's a form of leadership. As more women choose balance rather than burnout, they create a ripple effect. They model a new kind of success—one rooted in sustainability, health, and self-trust.

If you are looking for more ways to help balance life and worldly expectations, check out my blog at www.strongmeridian.com.



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.



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UPFRONT

Charm Der

HR Pro, DEI Strategist,
Teacher, Author, and
VP of Human Resources
for Family Services of
Northeast Wisconsin

Charm Der leads a busy life and wouldn't have it any other way. In addition to holding down a full-time job as vice president of human resources at Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin, Der volunteers her time to help guide multiple boards built around social issues, such as women's leadership and empowerment, diversity, equity and inclusion, and homelessness.

The Appleton resident is also an adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay where she is a people, culture and equity instructor. She's the author of the 2021 children's book entitled, *My Happiness Counts*.

Der has served as a guest speaker at HR conferences, libraries and schools and is the founder and CEO of Get to Gather—a social organization geared around building inclusive communities.

The Detroit native has a bachelor's degree from Wayne State University, a master's in education from Central Michigan University and a diversity and inclusion certificate from Cornell University.

Der doesn't get much time to chill at home. She and her husband, Jayden, a physician at ThedaCare, are the proud parents of two active boys, Jet, 7, and Chance, 6.

"My boys are involved in a lot of extracurricular activities, including hockey, which I've learned to like," Der said with a laugh.

By Tim Froberg
Photo by Ashley Schmit
Debbie Daanen Photography

HOW DID YOU DEVELOP YOUR PASSION FOR DEI AND OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES?

"My mom (Yvonne Washington) is incredible. She genuinely modeled how to care for others. She would always say, 'Individualism exists, but we all have to be connected. We're here to help each other. An issue that someone may have in the community is not just the issue of that family; it's an issue for all of us.' I remember her bringing us to community meetings, like town halls, when we were really young. She would encourage us to ask questions. She helped us see that even at a very young age, we had a voice."

DOES IT EVER GET OVERWHELMING BEING INVOLVED WITH SO MANY BOARDS AND ORGANIZATIONS?

"Another thing my mom did was encourage me to be multi-passionate. I never felt like my career defined what my personal interests are. I wanted to be a writer, so I wrote a book. I wanted to do art, so I did art in a gallery. The way I'm involved in the community, there are so many forms of activism. One of them is education. If I can teach a workshop or a course, I do that. If I'm on a board offering HR advice, I do that. I'm able to do many things and I don't like feeling limited. People are my purpose. That's what motivates me."

WHERE IS OUR COMMUNITY AT IN TERMS OF DEI AND OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES?

"I moved to Wisconsin about 10 years ago and conversations about equity and diversity were very rare. But I remember introducing topics in my workplace and my community and seeing a growing interest. The people that surrounded me were genuinely interested in how they could be involved in making their community a better place. As time has passed on, some organizations are stepping away from the work. I don't think that's a representation of the people of Wisconsin. I think it's a representation of the organizations trying to protect themselves from what they're seeing as risks. Regardless, caring for each other, being humanity-minded and helping one another doesn't go away. When they go away, humanity goes away."

WHAT IS YOUR BOOK ABOUT AND WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE DID YOU HAVE IN WRITING IT?

"It's a children's book that takes little ones on a journey to help them discover that happiness is within them and all around them in everyday moments. It was an amazing project to put together. It originally started as a song and my husband was like, 'You have to put this in a book. You have to share this.'"

Hey Siri...

Where can I find a **REAL** store that sells **unique Halloween puzzles**? I'm tired of shopping online.

Just go to the **top of page 37** in this issue of **Appleton Monthly!**



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GOOD STUFF

By MEGAN REINHOLD



VISIT A LOCAL APPLE ORCHARD

APPLE PICKING

It's officially time for all things fall to commence! What better way to kick off the season than a trip to the local apple orchard? We have a handful of orchards to choose from including Hofacker's Hillside Orchard and Sharky's Orchard (Appleton), Star Orchard and Sprangers Orchard (Kaukauna), Bauer's Apple Shed (Hortonville), Heritage Orchard (Chilton) and more. All include a pick-your-own apples option, which is the best part.

foxcities.org/blog/fox-cities-apple-orchards-bushel-of-fun1



VIEW A LASER SHOW

BARLOW PLANETARIUM SHOWS

The shows are put on by Barlow Planetarium and they're enjoyable for all ages. Check out the website for a list of shows, dates and times. You are also able to order tickets ahead of time once you find a show you're interested in. *Warning: The shows contain flashing images that could affect photosensitive individuals.

barlow.winnebagocountywi.gov/show-schedule



SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD TRUCKS

MIDWEEK MUNCHIES

Hosted by Antique Up, this event is located in Kimberly. Along with the food trucks, you can experience face painting, balloon art, magic, and a variety of local vendors. Taking place every week this month on Wednesdays, it goes from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

facebook.com/AntiqueUpKimberly/events



EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS

HECKRODT WETLAND RESERVE

If you're looking for a scenic place to take a fall hike, we have just the place for you. Heckrodt has numerous trails for you to explore with plenty of pretty views. You may even spot a deer or two and a variety of other wildlife. They also have a wonderful playground with tons of nature-related fun.

heckrodtnaturecenter.org



GRAB THE BEST APPLE CIDER DOUGHNUT AROUND

MISTY RIDGE

Are you craving a tasty fall treat? You won't want to miss out on these apple cider doughnuts (among other treats). Baked fresh, they're sure to delight your taste buds. Make sure to check out all the fun activities they offer as well.

facebook.com/MistyRidgeOrchard



GRAB A TASTY DRINK

7 BREW

Are you searching for a new favorite coffee and drink spot? You're sure to find something that you enjoy at 7 Brew. In addition to coffee, they have a wide variety of options, such as teas, lemonades, fizz, energy drinks, and shakes. The possibilities are endless as they have many different flavors and add-ins. With its convenient drive thru set-up, they also have a rewards program where you can earn free or discounted drinks.

7brew.com

TODAY

MUSIC VIBES 34 | GREAT READS 36 | STYLE & FA



WOMEN'S INSPIRE AWARDS

By AMANDA KRUEGER and ALYSSA JOHNSON
Photography by ASHLEY SCHMIT
DEBBIE DAANEN PHOTOGRAPHY

WOMEN'S INSPIRE



This Is What *Impact* Looks Like

AWARDS

Four years ago, this celebration began with a simple, but powerful idea: to honor the women whose quiet strength and everyday dedication inspire those around them.

These are not women who seek the spotlight. They don't chase recognition or applause. They are the ones who show up early, stay late, and pour themselves into the work that matters. They are the ones who lift others, often while carrying their own burdens. They are the heartbeat of our community.

The Women's Inspire Awards were created to honor women who lead with compassion, who build with grit, and who give with grace. They are teachers, artists, healers, organizers, mentors, and mothers. They are women who

have faced loss, hardship, and uncertainty—and turned those experiences into fuel for change.

The 2025 honorees remind us that inspiration doesn't always come with a title; it comes with action, with courage, and with love.

Each was nominated by someone who saw their light and couldn't let it go unnoticed. Their stories are deeply personal, profoundly moving, and undeniably impactful. While their paths are different, their purpose is shared: to make life better for others.

We are honored to share their stories with you. As you read, we hope you'll think of the women in your life who inspire you. We hope you'll feel moved to celebrate them, to thank them, and

maybe even to nominate them next year.

The Women's Inspire Awards event continues to grow, as does the community around it. Thank you for being part of it.

With gratitude,

*Alyssa Johnson and
Amanda Krueger*

Alyssa and Amanda are proud to support and uplift the women who make our community stronger every day. Thank you to American National Bank Fox Cities for believing in this mission, and to Appleton Monthly Magazine for giving us the opportunity to celebrate these remarkable women!

Photography by Ashley Schmit,
Debbie Daanen Photography



What brought you to *your work*?

Brienne: My journey into community work really started with AmeriCorps. I worked with their National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) program for years, and that instilled in me a deep comfort with serving others. When my family moved to Appleton six years ago, a neighbor invited us to join the local neighborhood group. That small invitation led to big things—eventually I was organizing events, securing \$80,000 in city grants, and helping revitalize spaces like Columbus Elementary. I’ve always had big ideas, and I’m not afraid to push for them.

Carri: I’ve always been deeply curious about the human experience—why we make the choices we do and how we end up on the paths we take. That curiosity led me to pursue education in human services and counseling. I worked full-time while raising my kids and going to school, and I’ve been fortunate to hold roles that allowed me to support others in meaningful ways. Whether it’s through public health or counseling, my goal has always been to walk alongside people; not to fix them, but to help them feel seen, heard, and supported.

Kara: I describe it as a carefully cultivated dream. I’ve been a violinist since I was 3, and over time, I became curious about the instruments themselves—how they’re made, how they’re repaired. My mom is a portrait artist, and my dad was a skilled woodworker. I grew up surrounded by creativity and craftsmanship. Eventually, I took a leap of faith and enrolled in violin making school. Now, as head luthier at Heid Music, I get to combine my love of music with my passion for helping others make music of their own.

Betsy: I’ve been a hairstylist since 2004, but every-

thing changed after a serious car accident early in my career. I nearly lost my life and had to relearn how to walk. That experience left me searching for purpose. When my grandmother told me about the joy she saw in women receiving wigs at the cancer center where she was working, something clicked. I began volunteering with the American Cancer Society and eventually opened a salon inside a cancer center. That journey led me to create Peaceful Purpose—a nonprofit that provides free wigs, head shavings, and support to women and children experiencing medical hair loss. It’s my calling.

Mary: My husband Mike and I were high school sweethearts. He fell in love with baking while working at his parents’ bakery in Shawano, and after college, he went on to study at the American Institute of Baking (AIB). I joined him in the business, eventually becoming a cake decorator—something I’ve now done for over 50 years. We opened Uncle Mike’s Bake Shoppe in 2001, and it’s been growing ever since. Now, our children are part of the business too, and it means the world to me to see them carrying on what Mike and I built together.

Susie: I started Wisconsin Swim Academy in my backyard 15 years ago as a way to pay for a pool heater. My husband, a banker, asked how I’d fund it, and I said, “I’ll teach swim lessons.” I’d worked at a swim club before and loved it. I’ve always had a heart for kids and people. What started as a summer side gig turned into a full-blown business! The pool brought kids to our home, and I became a mentor to many of them. The Wisconsin Swim Academy was never about building a business—it was about creating a space where kids felt safe, seen, and supported.

What motivates you on your *most challenging days?*



Brianne: What keeps me going is knowing that positive change is possible. I've seen it happen. Even when things feel overwhelming or broken, I remind myself that we can make an impact. That belief—that things can get better if we work together—is what drives me through the tough days.

Carri: My family is my biggest motivation—especially my kids. Watching them grow into strong, compassionate people inspires me every day. I also find strength in the belief that we all have purpose. Even on the hardest days, I remind myself that the work I do matters. When I learned I was receiving this award, it came at a time when I really needed that reminder and it helped me see that I am making a difference, even when it doesn't always feel like it.

Kara: Even on the busiest days, I love what I do. The work is incredibly detailed—sharpening tools on Japanese wet stones, fitting bridges, adjusting sound posts—and I find joy in that precision. What keeps me going is knowing that every instrument I work on helps someone express themselves. Whether it's a professional musician or a child just starting out, I want their instrument to feel like an extension of themselves.

Betsy: My daughter motivates me every day as does my incredible team—both at the salon and on the nonprofit board—but most of all, it's the clients. When someone walks in scared and vulnerable, and I can help them leave feeling more like themselves-- that's everything. I don't always share my story, but this work is my therapy, too. They're helping me as much as I'm helping them.

Mary: Some days I'm up at 3 a.m. and don't leave until 6 p.m., but I just keep going. I feel like Mike is still pushing me—reminding me that the work matters. Our customers motivate me too. When people call to say, "thank you," or share how much they love what we do, it keeps me going. Sometimes, when I'll walk in and *Sweet Caroline*, Mike's favorite song, is playing, or a cardinal appears on my computer screen, I know he's still with me.



Susie: I'm a problem solver at heart. I always want to make things right—as long as it doesn't compromise my values. On tough days, I stay positive and ask myself, 'If I were the client, what would I expect? What's the fairest solution for everyone?' That mindset keeps me grounded. I don't wait for someone else to fix things—I jump in and figure it out.



What do you envision for the *future of your work?*

Brianne: I want to keep helping and serving our community as long as I can. My hope is to build enough momentum in our neighborhood that city and county resources reinvest here. I also want to help create more sustainable systems—things like formal leadership roles, consistent communication channels, and long-term planning—for this work to continue even if I step back. We need more structure, more support, and more belief in what's possible at the neighborhood level.

Carri: I'd love to open my own counseling practice someday—something holistic and grounded in nature, where people can feel truly safe. I also want to continue building momentum in the community around harm reduction and overdose prevention. My work in public health and counseling gives me a unique perspective, and I hope to keep bridging those worlds to create safer, more compassionate systems of care.

Kara: My goal is to remove barriers to music-making. Playing a stringed instrument is already challenging. My job is to make sure the instrument itself isn't part of that challenge. I want every student, regardless of age or ability, to feel confident and supported with optimal setup, the right accessories, and education. I also hope to continue mentoring and increasing visibility for women in skilled trades. Representation matters, and I want young people to see that this path is possible for them, too.

Betsy: My dream is to expand Peaceful Purpose into a full wellness center. I recently purchased the building where I run both the salon and the nonprofit and I'm working on creating a space that offers services like areola tattooing, massage, and more—everything to help women feel whole again. I also hope to secure funding to make my nonprofit work a paid position where I can dedicate even more time to it. Ultimately, I want to train others to carry on this mission with the same care and compassion.

Mary: My son has big dreams for Uncle Mike's. He wants to expand our kringle offerings and open more locations focused on that specialty. We're opening a new store in Appleton this fall, and if that goes well, he hopes to move further south—maybe even open a production facility in Milwaukee. I'll keep working as long as I can, supporting him and sharing what I've learned. This business is part of our family, and I'm proud to see it grow.

Susie: We're expanding into Green Bay, which is exciting, but this has never just been about swimming lessons; it's about mentoring. Most of my 50 employees are high schoolers, and we've built a culture that supports them. We've partnered with Team Trek to teach leadership, communication, and how to have tough conversations. I want to keep creating safe spaces for young people—places where they feel empowered, heard, and valued. Even after I retire, I'll keep doing this work in some form.

What would you tell your younger self *to inspire her?*



Brianne: You can do it. I've always been someone who waits until I feel fully qualified before jumping in, but I'd tell my younger self to have more confidence. You don't need to know everything to start. Just go for it. Trust yourself.

Carri: Believe in yourself. Write down your thoughts. Trust that your heart is leading you somewhere meaningful. I've always been someone who wants to spread love and kindness. I'd tell my younger self to hold onto that. You don't have to be perfect, you just have to keep going.



Kara: You can do anything. That's what my mom always told me, and she lived it—breaking barriers and leading by example. I'd tell my younger self to trust that passion and hard work will take her far. You may not see someone who looks like you doing this work yet, but that doesn't mean you can't do it.

Betsy: Follow your intuition—not the opinions of others. Stay consistent. Don't take “no” for an answer. You'll grow from every experience, even the hard ones. One day, you'll realize you actually like who you are. That's when everything changes.



Mary: Just put one foot in front of the other. Take it one step at a time. The more you do it, the easier it gets. Life will throw you challenges you never expected, but you'll get through them, and you'll be stronger for it.

Susie: Don't forget who you are. Your beauty comes from within. Be true to yourself, trust your gut, and don't follow the crowd. Don't care so much about what others think—value yourself. Don't ever give up. When you face obstacles, ask yourself: Who do I want to be? What do I want this outcome to look like? Then go after it in a way that aligns with your values.

BRIANNE CONNELLY

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER | FITNESS INSTRUCTOR | NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTOR

Brianne Connelly is a community organizer, fitness instructor, and mother of two based in Appleton. Originally from Oshkosh, she brings a background in AmeriCorps NCCC and a deep commitment to grassroots change. For the past six years, she's worked to strengthen her neighborhood through connection, creativity, and advocacy.

Brianne serves as the Community Outreach Coordinator at Zion Lutheran Church, where she supports local engagement and neighborhood initiatives. She also teaches yoga and cardio dance classes through the YMCA, blending her love of movement with her passion for building community.

Brianne's passion lies in "micro-organizing"—fostering close-knit community bonds through block-level events, shared interests, and youth programming. She played a key role in securing an \$80,000 city grant to improve local spaces and launched a summer playground program to fill gaps left by school and park closures. Brianne continues to advocate for reinvestment in Appleton's central neighborhoods, believing that every community deserves to be seen, heard, and supported.

Inspired by strong women such as Joyce Brooks, Linda Thomas, and her mother, Brianne leads with heart, purpose, and a belief in the power of everyday people to create lasting change.

“If something isn't the way it should be, you can make an impact. Positive change is possible, and that's what keeps me going.”



CARRI CISKE

COUNSELOR-IN-TRAINING | COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATOR | BUILDER OF SAFE SPACES

Carri Ciske is a counselor-in-training and the community health educator for Outagamie County Public Health, where she leads overdose fatality prevention efforts and champions harm reduction with empathy and intention. Whether she's facilitating a training session, supporting a client, or holding space in her chronic pain support group, Carri brings a deep sense of care and connection to everything she does.

Her path has been shaped by curiosity, compassion, and a desire to help others feel safe, seen, and understood. With degrees in human services as well as human development and family studies, Carri blends academic insight with lived experience to walk alongside others—not to fix, but to support. “Everyone deserves to feel loved and purposeful,” Carri said. “Sometimes we just need someone to sit with us while we figure things out.”

Carri is especially passionate about creating spaces where people feel they belong. She founded a chronic pain support group to offer community and validation for those living with invisible conditions. “I knew my people were out there. I just needed to find them,” she said. “Sometimes I need the group as much as they do.”

She credits her husband, her children, and the people she serves for inspiring her every day. “We’ve grown together,” Carri said. “Hopefully I’ve inspired them, but I know they’ve inspired me.”

“Overdoses and fatalities have ripple effects, but it’s really important to remember that the positive things do, too.”



KARA MCCANNA

HEAD LUTHIER | VIOLINIST | ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADES

Kara McCanna is the head luthier at Heid Music, where she leads a team of trained violin makers and sets the gold standard for instrument care across five Wisconsin locations. A professional violinist and lifelong musician, Kara brings both technical mastery and artistic sensitivity to her work, ensuring every instrument—from a child’s first violin to a concert-level cello—is treated with the same precision and care.

Kara’s journey into lutherie began with curiosity and a deep love of music. After years of performing professionally, she took a leap of faith and enrolled in violin making school, fueled by her passion for helping others make music. Since joining Heid Music in 2020, she has found a home in a company that shares her values of excellence, education, and community service. She now oversees repair standards and training across all Heid Music locations, supporting musicians of all ages and abilities—from students to symphony professionals.

As the first woman in the Heid Music repair department, Kara is also a visible advocate for women in skilled trades. Today, she’s part of a growing team of women technicians proudly mentoring others in the field. Her workbench sits in the front window of the Appleton store on College Avenue, literally and figuratively increasing visibility for women in her craft.

Kara credits her success to the support of her family, especially from her husband, Collin, and her parents, who instilled in her the belief that “you can always do anything.” She lives in Appleton with Collin and their daughter and continues to perform with regional symphonies while shaping the future of music through her work at Heid Music.

“If we don’t put time and care into the instruments our children play, we’re not supporting the future of music.”





MARY VANDE WALLE

BAKERY CO-FOUNDER | COMMUNITY PILLAR | KEEPER OF LEGACY AND LOVE

Mary Vande Walle is the co-founder and heart behind Uncle Mike's Bake Shoppe, a beloved Wisconsin bakery known for its award-winning kringle and deep community roots. With more than 50 years of experience as a cake decorator, Mary has helped grow the business from a single storefront into a thriving, family-run operation with multiple locations and more on the horizon.

Mary's influence extends far beyond the bakery. Whether she's raising money for families in need through special kringle fundraisers or offering a warm smile to a customer who's become a friend, her work is grounded in generosity, resilience, and love. She's a quiet force behind countless moments of comfort and celebration in the community, often starting her day before sunrise to make it all happen.

Her motivation? A deep sense of purpose, the support of her children and grandchildren, and the enduring presence and entrepreneurial spirit of her late husband, Mike, still guide the business. For Mary, every batch of dough and every act of kindness is a way to keep building something meaningful—one sweet, heartfelt step at a time.

“Just put one foot in front of the other and keep going. The more you do it, the easier it gets.”

BETSY RACHUBINSKI

**SALON OWNER | NONPROFIT FOUNDER |
ADVOCATE FOR DIGNITY AND HEALING**

Betsy Rachubinski is the owner of Naava Salon and Spa in Appleton and the founder of Peaceful Purpose, a nonprofit that provides free wigs, head shavings, and compassionate support to women and children experiencing medical hair loss. As a hairstylist and salon owner, Betsy has transformed her personal story of survival into a mission of healing—restoring dignity, confidence, and a sense of self to those navigating some of life’s hardest moments.

What began as a volunteer effort has grown into a deeply impactful service that touches lives across the Fox Valley. Betsy’s clients often arrive feeling vulnerable and afraid, but they leave with renewed strength, a sense of normalcy, and the knowledge that they are not alone. Whether she’s fitting a wig for a young girl with alopecia or helping a cancer patient feel beautiful again, Betsy meets each person with empathy, skill, and unwavering care.

Her work is more than a service; it’s a source of hope. While she’s proud of the growth of Peaceful Purpose, Betsy is most moved by the quiet moments: the tears, the smiles, and the transformations. She credits her daughter, her team, and the women she serves as her greatest inspirations, and she’s committed to building a legacy of compassion that will continue long into the future.

**“I’m helping these women,
but so many times, they
don’t even understand that
they’re actually helping me
and giving me purpose.”**





SUSIE VANEKEREN

SWIM SCHOOL FOUNDER | MENTOR | CHAMPION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Susie VanEkeren is the founder of Wisconsin Swim Academy, a year-round swim school that has become a trusted space for families across Northeast Wisconsin. At the heart of her work is a deep commitment to helping kids feel confident, safe, and supported both in and out of the water.

What began as a few backyard lessons has grown into a thriving business with more than 50 employees, mostly consisting of high school students. For Susie, the real success lies in the relationships she builds. Her swim academy is a place where young children learn life-saving skills and where teens find mentorship, leadership, and a sense of belonging. “I want every kid who walks through our doors to feel empowered, valued, and safe,” she said. “That’s what drives me.”

Susie’s leadership is rooted in empathy, trust, and the belief that every young person deserves to be seen and supported. She’s especially passionate about equipping teens with tools for communication, confidence, and personal growth—skills that extend far beyond the pool. As she looks to the future, Susie hopes to continue creating spaces where kids and young adults can thrive, both through her business and beyond it.

She credits her husband, her family, and her staff for their unwavering support, and is proud to work alongside her son, who now serves as general manager. “I couldn’t do any of this without my staff,” Susie said. “They’re the heart and soul of what we do, and they inspire me every day.”

“I want to build something that lasts—not just a business, but a culture where young people feel empowered to grow into who they’re meant to be.”

WHAT CLASSIC AND MODERN MARVELS HAVE IN COMMON



As the air begins to crisp and the rhythm of autumn settles in, October approaches, bringing with it the perfect excuse to trade your busy schedule for a few unforgettable escapes. Right here in Appleton, you can plan to steep your upcoming evenings in wonder, artistry and perhaps even unexpected delight. As a reminder to those familiar (and an introduction to the uninitiated), at the heart of downtown Appleton resides a local nonprofit commonly known for opening its doors to touring Broadway performances. But did you know that the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center is home to more series and events than those which began their journeys in New York City?

One example: the Boldt Arts Alive! Series. Celebrated for its expansive cultural offerings and international acts, the Series' 2025-26 Season lineup is no exception to its storied ability to offer wonder and awe on the sprawling Thrivent Hall stage – the very same boards that touring Broadway performers tread.

Up first in the Boldt Arts Alive! Series 2025-26 Season, the Fox Cities P.A.C. opens its doors for two dynamic performances that promise to captivate hearts and inspire spirited conversation.

First, The Lord Chamberlain's Men bring their acclaimed production of Twelfth Night to the stage in what marks the esteemed company's very first U.S. tour. For one night only, this renowned all-male British company invites you to experience a story of mistaken identity, hidden love and lively mischief, all brought to life through Elizabethan-era costumes, music and movement. Lifelong fans of the Bard and curious newcomers alike can appreciate why Shakespeare's plays continue to endure. On October 29, Twelfth Night promises an evening as clever as it is timeless.

Then, on October 30, prepare to be astonished by Masters of Illusion, a dazzling, fast-paced display of modern magic that blends grandeur with the impossible. Starring some of the world's greatest illusionists, this live performance combines sleight of hand, comedy and gravity-defying spectacle together in one thrilling night of disbelief. You'll gasp. You'll laugh. You'll ask yourself more than once, 'How did they do that?'

These two October performances may have origins in vastly different areas of the world – one rooted in centuries-old tradition across the pond, the other built on cutting-edge trickery and broadcast internationally from America's West Coast – but each offers a shared promise: to make the impossible feel within reach, if only for an evening.

So, this fall, as the days grow shorter, consider these nights a gift to your imagination.

Tickets and more details can be found at www.foxcitiespac.com/artsalive.

THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN
AUTHENTICITY | EXCELLENCE | MAGIC

Twelfth Night

by William Shakespeare

Oct. 29
7:30 p.m.

MASTERS OF ILLUSION

Oct. 30
7:30 p.m.

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MARCH-TORMÉ

PAYS TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY FATHER

By JIM COLLAR

Steve March-Tormé initially scoffed when he was first approached to perform a tribute to his father—the late, great Mel Tormé.

Many of the songs Mel performed were attached to a variety of singers of that era. He drew from the Great American Songbook just the same as Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and Perry Como, among others. His distinctive sound came from his arrangements and the way he sang, and Steve wasn't keen on offering an impersonation. Yet, March-Tormé said he warmed to the idea of a tribute concert when realizing there are, indeed, unique elements he can bring to the table. "There are stories that only I know and photos and footage that only I have," he said.

March-Tormé will give his adopted hometown of Appleton a proper introduction to his father on Sept. 12 at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. *Tormé Sings Tormé* will celebrate what would have been Mel's 100th birthday and will also recognize the 80th anniversary of his most noteworthy musical composition, *The Christmas Song*, which he wrote in 1945. Beyond the classic songs, March-Tormé will also give the audience a closer glimpse of the legendary artist through his personal stories and images.

March-Tormé moved to Appleton from California about 20 years ago and raised his family here. While he's done plenty of touring over his career, March-Tormé frequently performs jazz, pop and rock around the Fox Valley. He's recorded an album here. He's also part of the band, STEEM, and is a popular host on local radio station, 91.1 The Avenue.

While he's taken *Tormé Sings Tormé* across the country, the September concert will mark the first time he's performed the full-scale tribute show in Appleton. He'll be backed by a 10-piece band performing the original arrangements of Marty Paich, Mel's longtime collaborator. He said it'll be fun to celebrate his father's milestone anniversary with family and friends.

March-Tormé said performing his father's songs brings a feeling of honor, but it's not as personal as many might think. His parents divorced when he was quite young. "I invest myself emotionally because I want to, and because



Detroit Jazz Festival

the music is really good," March-Tormé said. "It's a different feeling."

He also knows how to keep his emotions in check. "I can't look back at the photos," he said. "I'd be a mess. I'll let the audience look at the photos and I'll continue to look straight ahead."

March-Tormé said he's been fortunate to have a wide variety of projects across his musical career. While it only seems natural that he would pay tribute to his famous father, *Tormé Sings Tormé* isn't typical of his wider repertoire. "For someone who grew up on The Beatles and Steely Dan, I never thought I'd be singing *The Trolley Song*," March-Tormé said with a laugh.

All the same, he's proud to honor his dad's important contributions. Mel Tormé was among the few in his genre who went beyond singing to writing and arranging. "He was an amazingly talented guy," March-Tormé said.

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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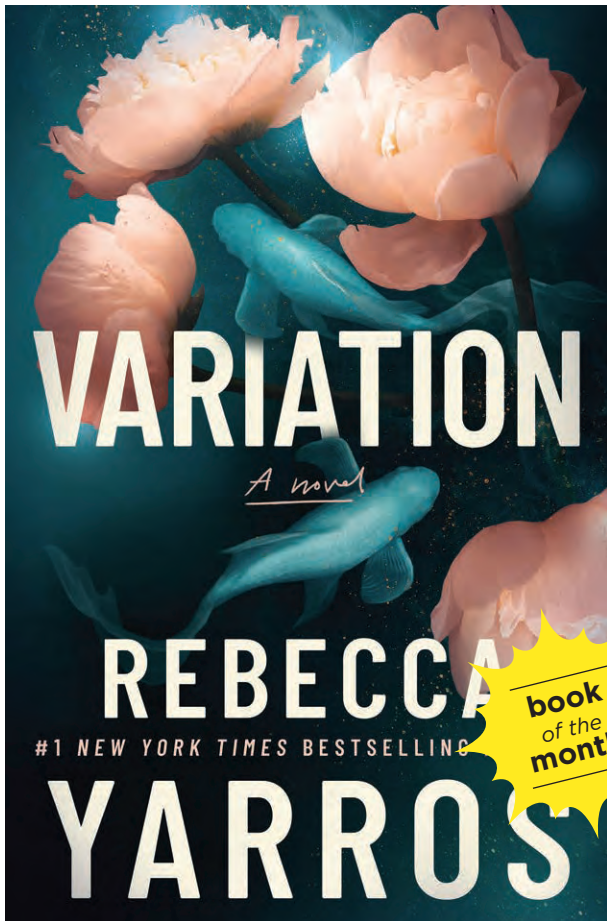


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Rebecca Yarros

Variation

CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE

Allie Rousseau, a professional and very talented ballerina, is no stranger to living under pressure. Her mother is the root cause of this. Unfortunately, a horrible injury gets in the way of her dancing. She returns home to hopefully make a quick recovery, but much to her surprise, she is reacquainted with an old friend, Hudson Ellis. Being a Coast Guard rescue swimmer, he is quick to jump into action, especially for those he cares about. When Hudson's niece shows up on Allie's doorstep claiming she is her daughter, their lives begin to intertwine in ways that they never expected.

Nancy Bush

The Camp
SUSPENSE/HORROR

More than just stories are being shared around the campfire at Camp Luft-Shawk. The camp is officially re-opened after 20 years of being closed, and anything can happen now.

Scarlett St. Clair

A Touch of Darkness
FANTASY ROMANCE

If you're a fan of Greek mythology, you may just enjoy this loosely retold story of Persephone and Hades in this first book of the seven-series collection.

Carissa Orlando

The September House
HORROR

Margaret finally has acquired her dream home and really likes it. In fact, she will do anything to stay in it, even after it becomes a haunted nightmare that completely overwhelms her.



Liv Constantine

The Next Mrs. Parrish

PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

In this sequel to *The Last Mrs. Parrish*, Amber and Daphne are once again thrown back into each other's lives. Amber feels as though she has come far in life, as she is now a socialite. Even through her husband's tax evasion scandal, she is back on top and greatly enjoying her freedom. Daphne, thrilled to finally be rid of Jackson, swore up and down she would never allow him back into her life. Unfortunately, one of her daughters runs away and tries to find Jackson. She then feels obligated to allow supervised visits. When an unlikely person from Amber's past randomly pops up, shocking twists and turns will keep you reading.



Freida McFadden and Kelley Stoddard

Baby City

LITERARY FICTION

Emily McCoy is a Labor and Delivery nurse who works in a New York Hospital, also known as "Baby City." Day after day, she helps to deliver baby after baby. She is in a constant state of exhaustion. On a typical day, she delivers more babies than her average hours of nightly sleep. She and her coworkers quickly learn babies never show up when you want them to; they always come when you aren't ready for them, and you never know who your true friends are until you become a parent.



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THE SCENE

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By MEGAN REINHOLD

1. FOX CITIES MARATHON

A great way to get involved in our community whether you're a runner, volunteer or spectator, the Fox Cities Marathon is Sept. 19-21. Many races are available, including The Diaper Dash/Toddler Trot, Kid's Fun Run, 5K, 10K, Relay, Half Marathon and the Full Marathon.

Check out the website for a course map. foxcitiesmarathon.org/



2. OCTOBERFEST

The Appleton Octoberfest is Sept. 27. Beginning at 9 a.m., this annual event features endless things to do and see including arts and crafts, a family fun area, food booths, and tons of live music. You won't want to miss out on the mile of fun!

octoberfestonline.org/

3. IRISH FEST OF THE FOX CITIES

The 5th annual Irish Fest will take place Sept. 19-20 at Jones Park. A large lineup of artists will perform. Whiskey sampling will also be available. A variety of activities including face painting, and Irish storybook reading will be available for kids of all ages.



irishfestfoxcities.com/

5. LITTLE LEARNERS PLAY GROUP

Appleton Public Library hosts a Little Learners Play Group on Fridays in the Children's Program Room at 10 a.m. Geared for ages 0-5, older siblings are welcome to join as well for play, learning and socializing opportunities.

apl.org/calendar/



4. THE CEDARS FESTIVAL

You have another chance to hear some music this month in Little Chute, Sept. 12-13. Find the full lineup and purchase tickets on their website where you can also find more events by The Cedars Project.

thecedarsproject.com/

6. GRANDPARENTS DAY ON THE FARM

Who doesn't enjoy a trip to Mulberry Lane Farm? Grandparents have an extra reason to visit on Sept. 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. They will be admitted for free! Come and see all the farm animals and make some fun memories.

mulberrylanefarmwi.com/special-events/grandparents-day/

7. NEEDLES & NOVELS

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting and a good book? If so, stop in at The Book Store on Sept. 11 to work on your current project and chat about your current read.

The Needles & Novels events take place the second Thursday of each month from September through May.

thebookstoreappleton.com/events



9. DOWNTOWN MENASHA HARVEST FESTIVAL

A free-admission event, this Menasha festival takes place Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Come and celebrate the start of fall with an arts and crafts fair, pie eating contest, live music, kids' games, fall photo ops, and delicious food from local vendors.

facebook.com/people/Downtown-Menashas-Harvest-Festival/61560998979739/



BUBOLZ NATURE PRESERVE

Fox Cities Environmental Learning Campus

8. NIGHT HIKE

Bubolz Nature Preserve is hosting a night hike on Sept. 12 from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Join the naturalist team for a fun time under the night sky. Hikes include some sensory activities as well. Tickets are available for purchase online.

bubolzpreserve.org/bubolz-events/calendar/

10. LICENSE TO CRUISE

Kick off Octoberfest weekend with a classic car show that includes almost 400 classic cars, some live music and food. Come and watch on College Avenue on Sept. 26 between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. You won't want to miss this huge car show!

octoberfestonline.org/license-to-cruise/

CONNECTING LIVES, SHARING LIFE

HELP SAVE LIVES WITH THE COMMUNITY BLOOD CENTER

By EMILY ROBERTS

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Every blood donation at The Community Blood Center (CBC) provides local hospital patients hope, healing and the chance to make new memories with their loved ones.

Patients depend on the generosity of donors to get through some of life's most challenging moments. Many require blood products during routine surgeries, childbirth complications, cancer treatments, and life-threatening emergencies.

"Every donation can help up to three people, so the little bit I give can really provide a great benefit for others. That gives me a lot of fulfillment," Tammy M. expressed while donating in Appleton.

Donors, such as Tammy, are community heroes, giving blood, courage and the gift of life to those who need it most.

Right now, CBC encourages all eligible donors to schedule a donation during a period of critical need. Type O blood supply is critically low after multiple patients required large amounts of blood within one week in August. There is also an urgent need for platelets, essential for many cancer, trauma and surgery patients to help stop bleeding.

Innovation

Every donation goes to CBC's state-of-the-art laboratory to be carefully tested, expertly processed and transported to patients in need.

CBC is proud to shape the future of blood donation and inspire the next generation of lifesavers. CBC is the fifth blood center in the country to implement the innovative Reveos Automated Blood Processing System. Reveos is the first whole blood automation device available in the United States that separates blood, platelets

and plasma in a single cycle. Reveos minimizes processing time while maintaining exceptional quality.

"This technology helps deliver lifesaving blood products to hospitals faster and with more precision than ever before," said Tricia Voskuil, Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "We support more than 40 hospitals in the Midwest with a safe and reliable blood supply. Your donation stays in our communities and has the potential to benefit friends, family members and neighbors."

Make An Impact

CBC's lifesaving mission is made possible thanks to dedicated donors, volunteers, coordinators, team members, and advocates. Everyone is welcome to join in and further the collective impact.

"I know that my blood is valuable for many people. It's a good thing to do and it's something I can do to help others," donor, Kristen N., said at a blood drive in Merrill. "Having had family members that have benefited from blood donation, I know that somebody else's family is receiving that help as well."

If you are not eligible to donate, there are many ways to make a lasting difference. Host a blood drive at your business or organization, volunteer with CBC or simply spread the importance of blood donation on social media.

To schedule a donation or learn more about getting involved, visit: communityblood.org, download the CBC Donor App on mobile devices or call: (800) 280-4102.

Your donation today could be someone's lifeline tomorrow.





ASK TAMMI

Got questions for Tammi?



Lately I have been feeling like all I do is work and take care of my parents. My spare time is spent doing laundry and cleaning my house. How can I carve out some self-care time for me? — *Doreen B.*

DEAR DOREEN: Work and caregiving is a tough balance at times. The struggle between doing what is necessary and what we would like to do can be challenging, especially if you have parents who need more daily care.

This may sound simple, but first I suggest listing all the things you are doing. Categorize them by level of importance, then highlight those items you could either hire out or find family members to assist with. For example, maybe a sibling or one of your children could help by taking on a household task or bringing a meal to your parents. Search the internet for quick house cleaning tips to reduce your time. Creating a schedule to provide organization is a good idea, too. You may find there are things you could reduce the frequency of or eliminate.

Hopefully these tips will help you find a few hours each week for yourself. Take time to schedule a massage, enjoy a bubble bath or take a long walk. Find a fun hobby or pick up something you used to enjoy before life got so busy—baking, gardening or painting. It doesn't have to take a long time, but make whatever you do intentional. Ask yourself if what you are doing is "just for you." As time goes on, try to continue to add these enjoyable moments for yourself.



My husband's cousin was recently visiting us for the weekend and broke the glass carafe for our coffee maker. It was an accident, but it is expensive and not easy to replace. Should I ask her to cover the cost of ordering a new one? — *Julie V.*

DEAR JULIE: I think this is a simple, "NO." As a host, you have to absorb some risk when you have guests visiting. I guess if it were an intentional act I might feel differently, but I would just replace it yourself and not mention it as an issue to your guests.

Send your questions to Tammi via email at tammi@appletonmonthly.com



My wife and I have both been retired for five years and we are considering downsizing our home. We have been in our current location for 23 years and have accumulated so much the process seems very daunting. Do you have any suggestions on how to make this transition bearable? — *Mark S.*

DEAR MARK: This question really hits home for me. My husband retired a year ago and we have been mulling over this very question. First and foremost, I recommend you give yourself plenty of time for the "sorting and getting rid of clutter." Some of the items could be sold or given to family members, others donated to various organizations and then some may just need to be tossed. The process always takes longer than you think; however, it will provide much clarity moving forward. You will be relieved to reduce the amount of stuff you need to pack! Bottom line: Take your time.

FALL 2025...

MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS

By PHYLLIS COLLAR

SUMMER IS RUSHING PAST, AND I HAVE HARDLY HAD TIME TO WEAR ALL MY SUNDRESSES! Despite this, the buzz of a new season is just around the corner; a season replete with boots, light jackets, sweaters, and slacks, to name a few. I have been considering the notion that I have not been inclusive enough of the men out there and thought I might review the trends coming up for men as well as women this month.

According to experts from Paris to New York City, fashion seems to be coming alive once again this fall with apparel that is bold, more dramatic, and distinctive. Rather than a sense of minimalism, the runways saw a more modern twist on the 1980's influence. While shoulders grew increasingly structured, silhouettes became refined via luxurious materials and bold colors. It is not simply about basic suits anymore. Dr. Carolyn Mair, fashion psychologist and author, explains "Fashion empowers us to reclaim our autonomy." Fall 2025 fashion serves as a means for individuals to express their identities and announce their values. Recent global tensions and a growing emphasis on personal freedom beget clothing that conveys optimism and dissent.



Not only suits with structured shoulders, but everything from tops to dresses to outerwear can channel your inner Joan Collins or Adam Ant.

Speaking of outerwear, although global warming (and extended summer climates) might keep us from wearing them until further into fall, I could not help but notice that coats for men and women have gained length.



Coats and other garments are heavy in jewel tones and rich textiles such as velvet and corduroy.



Skirts are also gaining length, most notably to just at the knee, and are rich in colors, textures, and prints. There's a common theory that skirt lengths follow economic trends, but knee-length skirts also offer a poised, effortless, and professional look befitting today's mood.



The famous "What can brown do for you?" slogan for UPS befits another trend this fall. Both male and female runways feature a lot of brown in varying fabrics and textures. Although black leather will always remain a classic, brown leather blazers, skirts, dresses, and pants from shades of mocha to mahogany are all the rage. Brown is also popular in other fabrics and fashion iterations, such as faux fur and suede.

Pants for men and women are boxy and loose, yet clean and sophisticated. Low-rise sees a resurgence, especially for women's pants. Tailoring makes fall pants for both men and women soft in volume and modern in silhouette. Trousers feel relaxed yet polished in appearance, and men's runways pair them with scarves, large bows, and silk shirts to boot.



Following several years of sleek, structured designs, a shift toward bohemian-inspired lines becomes obvious on the runway this year. Regardless of lines and textiles, the theme is evident this season: embrace a relaxed approach to fashion.



Finally, our looks will not be complete this fall without new boots, and this year, it is the "buccaneer boot" to go with the boho theme. Each designer's unique interpretation is evident by the treatments they choose to embellish their designs. From romantic styling to equestrian flair to glam iterations, the 80s have clearly returned with buckles, knee-high lengths, and again, that slouchy silhouette that screams Fall 2025.

Whether or not you are happy to see the 80s rearing its head again, I hope you can find something that suits your fancy this fall. *See you all out there!*

Health and Healing BEGIN AT BE.

By JAMIE SHERIDAN



those seeking the healing process in an intentionally cozy and nurturing environment. With support from her family and after more than a year of renovations, Be. opened its doors in the spring of 2018. “I knew I was meant to create this space as something to change the face of mental health,” said Sorenson.

Be. also understands conventional talk therapy serves a good purpose, but when trauma is held onto, it remains at the root of patients’ needs, which is where yoga is beneficial. “We fit our services around our clients; not fit our clients to our services,” said Sorenson. “I’m in the industry of helping people. It’s the language I speak. I understand the kids I work with and speak their language,” she continued.

The goal at Be. is to think ahead and get creative in offering out-patient services that might keep patients out of in-patient treatment facilities. With a full staff of psychologists, counselors and yoga instructors, the space feels more like a home than an office or clinic. Through collaborative relationships in the community, Be. partners with organizations and contractors to offer clients with physical limitations a variety of private or public yoga offerings including sound yoga, hammock yoga, and an emotional freedom technique. Be. serves as a foundational support, enhancing connection and engaging the health and healing process through a strengths-focused, holistic approach. Be. also features infrared

sauna rental and Reiki and Craniosacral Fascial Therapy (CFT). The intention at Be. is to establish an initial connection with the space and practitioners, allowing visitors to harness unity of mind, body, and spirit to inspire growth, inner calm, and renewal.

“My role in Be. has evolved in many ways! I’m so glad we have many great practitioners alongside us and have created something to change the face of mental health,” Sorenson said. “People are dynamic. Our needs are not prescribed. We try to offer new services, and I love the freedom to adapt and change as our culture does. I think that’s the beautiful thing about Be.”

Be. is located at 1309 S. Oneida St. For more information on services or to register for private or public yoga offerings, visit the Be. website, at: beholisticcenter.com or call, 920-903-8841. Find Be. on Facebook @Beholisticcenter and on Instagram @be.holisticcenter

Raised in Wisconsin, Jamie also resided in Minneapolis and Greater Seattle, where she launched her career in communications and freelance editing with several publications. She also enjoys photography, traveling and hiking with her family.

Driving on Oneida Street in Appleton, one might spot the charmingly renovated house at the southwest end of Skyline Bridge and assume it’s home to a well-established growing family, and they would be right. The stories inside the walls of this treasured 1915 find are what make up the masterpiece – Be. A Center for Holistic Mental Health & Healing.

Appleton born and raised, founder and owner Dr. Carey Sorenson, graduated from Hortonville High School and discovered her passion for psychology as a student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. While pursuing her master’s degree in school counseling, she worked with inner city students through forgiveness-focused interventions. After she earned her doctorate, she returned to her hometown with her family in 2011. She completed her postdoctoral work in an in-patient setting where she and a colleague launched a Body Awareness program utilizing personalized mind and body wellness plans meeting the needs of each patient.

By the time Dr. Sorenson completed her in-patient doctorate work, she knew she wanted to create a place where she could establish out-patient treatment for underserved youth where she could expand on the Body Awareness concepts. When she found the homebase for her dream center, she knew it was meant for her mission and would aim to serve as a haven for

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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



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Lisa Randerson, Erin Vande Hey, Katie Olp, and Jessica Meitner pause to take a photo on their **early morning bike ride** by the Fox River.



Ava, Anna and Sarah Berken celebrate with long-time neighbor and dear friend, Joanne Delforge, at her **90th birthday gathering**.



Appleton North High School coaches, Rob Salm and Chris Sievert, **kick off a new football season!**



Our own Tyler Sjostrom, with wife Erin, at the **Mile of Music** festival where Tyler’s band, “Tyler & the Ess Jays” performed.



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PACK LOADED

WITH POTENTIAL IN PIVOTAL SEASON

By TIM FROBERG

The Green Bay Packers were both exciting and exasperating in 2024.

The Packers cracked the playoffs for the fifth time in the last six years and won more games (11) than 24 of the league's 32 teams.

Still, the season didn't feel like a success. Matt LaFleur's team was a bit of a fraud. The Packers finished an unacceptable 1-5 in the NFC North and were smacked around by the league's finer teams, finishing a hideous 0-6 against the Eagles, Lions and Vikings.

That's why Green Bay faces a pivotal 2025-26 season. The team is either going to take a step forward and become a championship contender or the questions about LaFleur, Jordan Love and, perhaps even, Brian Gutekunst will multiply.

Standards are always steep in Tittleton and it's time for the Packers to hit a higher level. This is a deep, balanced squad with enough talent on both sides of the ball to compete with the big boys for the Lombardi Trophy.

It all starts with Love, who put up OK numbers, but didn't play to his massive contract in an injury-plagued season. Love has already shown he has the secret sauce to become an elite QB, but needs to sharpen his overall game, particularly his accuracy, to get the Packers within sniffing distance of Levi's Stadium.

Yes, there are 52 more names on the Green Bay roster that also need to deliver, but the NFL remains a quarterback-driven league where a stud QB like Jayden Daniels can camouflage weak spots and take a team deep into the postseason. Love should be well protected by a sturdy offensive line and has a top-tier running back (Josh Jacobs) to keep defenses honest. Intriguing rookie, Matthew Golden, adds another playmaker to a well-stocked receiving corps where Jayden Reed, Romeo Doubs and Tucker Kraft are skilled pass-catchers and Dontayvion Wicks and Luke Musgrave are potential breakout candidates.

Defensively, it was a huge offseason win for the Packers to retain well-regarded coordinator, Jeff Hafley, whose aggressive style helped Green Bay construct a top-10 defense. The Packers

need better play from overpaid Kenny Clark and signs of life from Lukas Van Ness, but the 'D' is stacked with first- and second-round picks that give Hafley sufficient talent to play his high-pressure schemes found nowhere in Joe Barry's playbook.

Green Bay even has a kicker (Brandon McManus) who can consistently split the uprights with an extra point. Anders Carlson and Brayden Narveson were the Phil Collins—*I Missed Again*—of NFL kickers and I'm still baffled why the Packers gave both such a long leash.

As for LaFleur, he's been wildly successful (67-33) during the regular season and is regarded as a solid head coach. Still, he's 3-5 in the postseason with no Super Bowl appearances and his Packers crashed and burned late last season when they needed to play their best football. Two years remain on his contract and he may be sitting on a hot seat if this team continues to get bullied by the NFL elite.

Love, LaFleur and the Packers need to get their mojo back. Can this team make the jump from good to great? That's what we're about to find out . . . and right away with powerhouses, Detroit and Washington, visiting Lambeau the first two weeks.

My guess is the Packers will remain a playoff team that will hit double-digit wins. I see them going 10-7 due to a brutally tough schedule. I'm not going to be a homer and forecast a Super Bowl run because so much—injuries, officiating and flat-out luck—has to go right. But I expect this team to be better than last year and capable of challenging for the NFC championship.

Predictions aside, the time has come for the Packers to stop navigating NFL waters like a dolphin and evolve into a great white shark.

Tim Froberg is a professional writer who covered the Packers Super Bowl appearances in New Orleans (1997) and San Diego (1998), and has written several feature stories for various Packers Yearbooks.



TASTE

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**CHICKEN
GRILL**
Mexican Restaurant
Menasha

By JENNI EICKELBERG

CHICKEN GRILL:

A FLAVOR LEGACY IN MENASHA

By JENNI EICKELBERG

Chicken Grill Mexican Restaurant, located on Appleton Road in Menasha, is more than a local dining spot—it's a story of flavor, family, and entrepreneurial spirit. Originally launched as Chicken Palace in a tiny storefront on College Avenue in 2013, the restaurant quickly built a loyal following, thanks to its standout grilled chicken and welcoming vibe.

Owner, Carlos Ayala, known for his dedication to quality and customer care, guided the restaurant's evolution from its modest beginnings to its current, larger space. His daughter, Jennifer Mireles, now works alongside him and credits her father's passion and persistence for the business' success. "My dad started it all," she said. "His love for good food and bringing people together is really what made Chicken Grill take off."

The restaurant's signature grilled chicken—marinated in spices and grilled to smoky perfection—remains the heart of the menu, whether in combo plates, burritos, or tacos. As demand soared, the menu expanded to include Mexican classics such as, al pastor and carne asada tacos, saucy enchiladas, hearty tortas, and burritos filled with meat, rice, cheese, and crema. Even the side dishes reflect the restaurant's home-style attention to detail, from slow-cooked beans to elotes and vibrant house salsas.

Inside, the atmosphere is relaxed and colorful, echoing the Chicken Grill roots and commitment to warm, family-style service. One surprise favorite is the in-house ice cream and smoothie bar, where rotating flavors range from mango-chile and tamarind to horchata and strawberry. "Especially in the summer, people go wild for our ice cream," Jennifer shared. Agua frescas—made fresh daily—are a consistent hit, with horchata and strawberry among the most popular.

Beyond the dining room, Chicken Grill has expanded into catering and mobile service. The team provides a full spread of grilled chicken, carnitas, fajitas, taco platters, rice, beans, and salsa for special events such as baptisms and family gatherings. To bring their bold flavors to outdoor venues, they've also added a food truck—stationed daily at Latino Express



on College Avenue—and a portable grill option. "People love watching the food cooked right in front of them," Jennifer said. "It's more than just a meal; it's an experience."

Carlos remains at the helm, ensuring consistency and quality in every aspect of the business. His influence is felt not only in the recipes, but in the relationships Chicken Grill continues to build with its customers and community.

From its modest beginnings to its thriving presence today, Chicken Grill offers more than delicious food—it serves up heritage, heart, and hospitality. Whether you're craving tacos, planning a special event, or indulging in a spicy-sweet dessert, Chicken Grill delivers bold flavors and dependable quality, securing its place in the Menasha dining scene as a cherished favorite.



Jenni Eickelberg is a married working mom with two teenagers. She's an Appleton native passionate about food blogging on her "Food for Thought Fox Valley" Facebook group page. In her spare time she loves to read, spend time with her family, volunteer, and travel.



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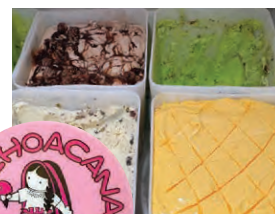
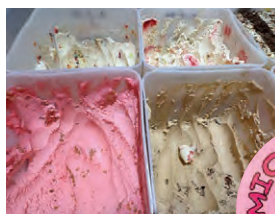
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Broccolini Crostini

with Hot Honey

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

Broccolini Crostini are a deliciously light appetizer perfect with a glass of white wine. The zesty, lemony ricotta pairs beautifully with the tender broccolini and spicy hot honey. My dear friend, Liza, brought these to a game night and they were gobbled up in no time. Perfect for your next gathering, these crostini are a hit!

INGREDIENTS

12 ounces broccolini/baby broccoli
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive oil as needed
Pinch garlic powder

1 ciabatta demi-baguette

5 oz. ricotta
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon salt
Zest of one lemon
Hot honey, to drizzle
Red pepper flakes, to garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. On a sheet pan, toss broccolini with salt, pepper, and olive oil. Sprinkle with garlic powder. Roast for 19 minutes, or until broccolini is starting to crisp on the edges. Remove from oven and set aside.

Slice the baguette into 12 slices. Lay flat on a sheet pan and drizzle with olive oil. Bake for 10 minutes, or until edges start to brown. Set aside.

In a small bowl, mix together ricotta, minced garlic, salt, and lemon zest. Spread evenly onto baked crostini. Top with warm broccolini and drizzle with hot honey. Sprinkle with red pepper flakes and enjoy!



Photo by Carly Cerniglia

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BEST BURGERS

Who doesn't love a burger that features hot, juicy stacks of deliciousness you want to sink your teeth into? Appleton Monthly introduces you to the **BEST BURGERS** in the Fox Cities and surrounding area. So enjoy the read and the eatin'!

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FROSTED SUGAR COOKIE BARS

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

No need for celebrations with these Frosted Sugar Cookie Bars.

These cookies are perfect for any time of year! A quick dessert, bursting with sprinkled goodness, you can't go wrong with these.

INGREDIENTS:

Dough:

- 1 ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 ½ cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 3 ¾ cups flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup rainbow sprinkles

Frosting:

- 1 stick butter, softened
- 2 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- Food color
- Rainbow Sprinkles

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat butter, sugar, vanilla, and almond extract from the dough ingredients. Once fluffy, add eggs until combined. Slowly add flour and baking powder, then sprinkles. Mix until well combined.

Pour onto a 9x13-inch baking dish or quarter-sized sheet pan. Bake for 15-25 minutes, until edges are golden brown, and the sheen on top of the dough has dulled. Remove from the oven and let cool completely.

Meanwhile, beat frosting ingredients in a stand mixer until fluffy for about 5 minutes. Color with food color if desired. Spread evenly over bars and decorate with sprinkles. Cut into desired portions and enjoy. Store leftovers in the fridge. Enjoy!



Photo by Carly Cerniglia

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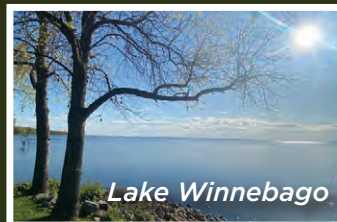


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MY GOODNESS, MY GUINNESS

By STEVE LONSWAY

Guinness Irish Stout is one of the most iconic beers in the world. From its humble beginnings in 1759 by its creator, Arthur Guinness, who was so confident in the brand that he signed a 9,000-year lease on the space in which he created this iconic brand. St. James Gate Brewery in Dublin, Ireland, still produces this dark, magical beer today and it is served all over the world

Being very proud of their Irish heritage, they instituted a golden harp as their logo. The harp is known as the national emblem of Ireland and appears on Irish coins and even Irish passports.

Another very recognizable feature of Guinness is the way the beer is poured. A special blend of gas, often called “Guinness gas”

is utilized. This special blend consists of 75% nitrogen and 25% carbon dioxide. The two gases react in such a way that millions of tiny bubbles are formed and rush to the surface when poured. As the liquid cascades into the glass, a lava-lamp-like effect develops, creating a thick, dense head with an authentic creamy texture that can be classified as velvety. As the beer is consumed, the foam doesn't break down and will leave significant lacing on the interior of the glass with every sip and oftentimes leaves a foam mustache on the consumer's upper lip. The flavors that one experiences is of coffee, chocolate and roasted barley. There is enough hop bitterness that it shines through into the finish and has a unique, yet pleasant dryness. Because it is a very dark beer, many people believe it is full bodied and “heavy.” On the contrary, it is a medium bodied brew with only 4.2% alcohol by volume.

When ordering a properly poured Guinness, please be patient as it is a 119.5-second experience. The barkeep places the glass at a 45-degree angle and pulls the special handle forward. When the glass is 75% full (or to the top of the harp on a Guinness glass) the faucet is shut and the beer is left to settle, upward of one minute. The bartender then finishes the pour in the middle of the glass. Some specially trained barkeeps will actually create the image of a harp in the foam head, which really amplifies the experience!

Guinness in cans can also allow you the draught experience with what is known as a widget or “smoothifier.” The idea was spearheaded in 1969 and took years to perfect. A small disc is placed within the can during packaging, and when the atmospheric pressure changes as the can is opened, the beer and nitrogen react and the beer flows through the tiny holes in the widget to create the patented Guinness appearance.

It is truly a lovely day for a Guinness!



It is truly
a lovely
day for a
GUINNESS!

Steve Lonsway is the brewmaster and owner of Stone Arch Brewpub in Appleton. His passion shows in the beers he creates and in the national recognition he receives for them.



Fall is for Family... Photos.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WOMEN'S INSPIRE AWARD WINNERS IN THIS ISSUE!

APPLE CIDER MIMOSA

A perfect fall twist on the classic mimosa uses apple cider and champagne to make a bubbly and tart cocktail. To create this cocktail, just combine apple cider and champagne in a glass and garnish with cut apple strips or slices and cinnamon sticks. If you'd prefer, you can add cinnamon and sugar to the rim.

To add something a little extra to your mimosa, try drizzling some caramel into your glass before adding your mimosa for a caramel apple taste. If you'd prefer to have a non-alcoholic drink, replace the champagne with sparkling grape juice for a drink everyone can enjoy.



DRINK

INGREDIENTS

- 3 to 4 ounces of fresh apple cider
- 5 to 6 ounces Champagne or Prosecco
- 1/2 tablespoon cinnamon sugar for the rim
- 1 Honeycrisp apple
- Garnish: cut apple strips and cinnamon sticks

DIRECTIONS

Instructions for cinnamon and sugar rim:
Pour cinnamon and sugar onto a small plate. Rim two glasses with a little water and then dip in the cinnamon and sugar, rolling the edges to coat.

Add apple cider to glasses. Top each glass with champagne. Add cut apple strips or thin apple slices for garnish, along with cinnamon sticks. Serve immediately and enjoy!

GRAPEVINE



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MORE

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WHAT GOATS HAVE TAUGHT US

By DEB JAKEL

What Goats Have Taught Us

BY DEB JAKEL

Since the fall of 2018, Kaukauna's 1000 Islands Environmental Center has worked hand-in-hand with Mulberry Lane Farm to teach important lessons to nature center visitors. While 1000 Islands has the capability to bring invasive species awareness to the citizens of the Fox Valley and surrounding areas, Farmer Pat of Mulberry Lane Farm in Hilbert has the resources to make an impact.

For approximately two weeks in the spring and fall of each year, the goats of Mulberry Lane Farm come to the environmental center. While there, they work to control invasive plant species by eating their way through them. Buckthorn is the largest problem in the conservancy zone due to its long growing season and broad leaves that create ground-level shade. Invasive plants harm native plants by using resources and creating competition. New seedlings of native species are unable to mature while invasive plants continue to spread and take over.

The fall of 2025 was the 15th time the goats grazed upon the buckthorn at 1000 Islands. Throughout the years, the goats have taught the young, the old and everybody in between many important lessons through their work, play, and determination to get the job done. Here are the top 10 lessons the goats have taught us:



#1 Be an Innovator

In 2018, in an effort to control invasive plant species, a dedicated volunteer researched the idea of bringing goats to the nature center. No similar projects existed in the area nor were there others to learn from. Through research and passion, the "Goat Project" was given the blessing by the former Director/Naturalist, Debra Nowak. The first task was developing a "Goat Team" to start brainstorming ideas and that's when Mulberry Lane Farm came into play.



#2 The Importance of Volunteering

Margaret Mead said, "A small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Goat Project volunteers are truly priceless and have a passion for teaching others about issues that can be solved in a safe, chemical-free manner.

A core group of volunteers has taken on the "Goat Team" title. Since the fall of 2025, it's consisted of Farmer Pat and Bonnie, the 1000 Island Environmental Center staff, and a small group of local volunteers who have committed their time, passion for the environment, and love of teaching to the project. They all do the behind-the-scenes work that is needed to make this project a success. Each day when the goats are on-site, the Goat Team tends to the daily farm chores. These include mucking the nighttime enclosure, checking fences, filling water troughs, and moving the goats to their grazing area early in the morning, then back to their nighttime enclosure. They constantly brainstorm new methods to make the project run more efficiently and grow from year to year.



A second group of volunteers known as the "Goat Watchers" are people from the community who sign up for two-hour increments of time throughout the day to walk around with the goats as they graze on the invasive plants. In the spring of 2025, Farmer Pat delivered 24 goats, both adults and kids, to the nature center. The job of the Goat Watchers is to monitor goat behavior, bend branches over for the babies to munch on, and make sure the goats are safe. Families, friends, and community members fill the open spots for a chance to spend a few hours with the four-legged munching machines.



#3 Perseverance

The spring of 2024 was filled with an abundance of storms in Kaukauna. The goats did their jobs in rainy weather for 13 out of the 14 days. One of the days, they needed to stay in their enclosure to stay safe, but they did receive "room service." Four Goat Team members adorned in raincoats with clippers in hand cleared two wheelbarrows filled with buckthorn and delivered them to the hungry herd.

Some might think the life of a goat is mundane. Their daily schedule really doesn't vary much during their stay at the center: Nine hours munching and foraging the grounds to rid invasive plants, running up and down the hill as they are moved to and fro from the grazing area to their secure enclosure, meeting new volunteers, having a sleepover with friends, and then doing it all over again. If we learn anything from their daily schedule it is to live in the present moment and find satisfaction in the simplest activities, from sharing a meal with loved ones, playing with buddies, napping, or listening to the rain on a quiet evening.



just functional as it controls the spread of buckthorn, but it is a deeply harmonized unit where each member plays a vital role in the collective well-being of the herd. Each morning it is easy to identify the leaders as the herd moves. We can also identify the nurturers that stay behind for the Nanny Goat, always keeping up the rear of the pack. The rule breakers want to keep eating even though it's time to move. The little troublemakers let their personalities shine as they chew on the clothing of the Goat Watchers or show escape-artist skills as they try to gain their independence.

#4 Importance of “Living a Simple Life”

The simplicity of a goat’s life includes not being a picky eater, spending time outdoors, playing with everyone, helping a friend, and taking care of planet Earth.

Goats do not thrive in isolation. Their mental health and well-being are intertwined with their social bonds. As connections are maintained, goats not only ensure the success of the herd, but they meet their individual needs for security and companionship. Goats remind us that fulfillment can be found in life's essential pleasures.

#5 The Joy of Play

Goats are renowned for their playfulness. Whether it's head-butting a friend, climbing on stumps, or climbing trees in their browsing areas, their fun is not merely recreational. This play is an integral part of their cognitive and physical development. As the Mulberry Lane Farm goats incorporate play into their daily lives it becomes a source of joy and well-being for the visitors and team of volunteers. This helps us humans manage stress, smile, and remember that play can be simple.

#6 Herd-Living is the BEST

The life of a goat herd is a model of community living. The citizens that visit 1000 Islands see the goats foraging, resting, and exhibiting a remarkable ability to thrive in their social group. The herd is not

#7 Connecting to the Community

During their two-week stints each spring and fall, the goat herd truly becomes part of the Kaukauna community. The goats become teachers, counselors, environmentalists, and friends to all who visit. St. Paul Elder Services brings community members down to the nature center to learn about the role the goats play in controlling invasive plants. As residents interact with them the goats transform into therapy animals as they're petted, hugged, whispered to, and loved. Groups schedule their weekly trail walks to be on-site when the goats run down the hill to their browsing areas each morning. Families gather at the end of the day for the moving of the goats. They know

the Goat Team will allow short visits in the nighttime enclosure for hugs and an up-close experience with the herd. Farmer Pat once said, “Their time at the environmental center is like a spa vacation for the goats—great greens to eat and lots of human attention!”



#8 Be a Leader as you “Walk the Walk”

Kaukauna High School Environmental Science class members have assisted the project in several ways, including a study of the plants before and after the grazing. Data shows the percentages of various plants eaten. In 2021, high school students, Lilly and Tatum, calculated the percent coverage of different plant species in a random quadrant within a larger study area to determine the efficiency of using goats as biological control against invasive species. The students concluded the goats were very helpful in defoliating buckthorn and ate many other plant species.

Kaukauna High School students published the picture book, *Grover, the Goat*, written by Maddy Clark and illustrated by Lilly Roehrig. The story is written from the goat’s perspective as he spends two weeks eating buckthorn at 1000 Islands Environmental Center.

The goats of Mulberry Lane Farm have shown us to “Make Everyday Earth Day.” The simplistic life they live lends a hand to take care of the land. There is no “Planet B” and we all need to step up our game plan to do our part—just like our goats.



#9 Be an Environmentalist

Normally the only way to combat buckthorn is through labor-intensive removal of the plants or chemical treatments that not only kill the plant, but find their way to groundwater, streams and rivers. The goat herds that have foraged 1000 Islands Environmental Center ridding invasive plants have shown our community a natural, low-impact way to control buckthorn in the area while keeping our groundwater and waterways chemical free. In recognition of the great work the goats have done in the community, Kaukauna Mayor, Tony Penterman, declared it as “Invasive Species Control Month” in June 2024 in Kaukauna.



#10 There is no I in TEAM

As Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Mulberry Lane Farm, the 1000 Islands Environmental Center staff, the Goat Team, the Goat Watchers, and the herd of goats are a prime example of how working together is how things get done.



What We Like About Old

By SARAH PETERSON

Antique, vintage, retro, old-fashioned, faded, chippy, crazed, or rusted. Why does the mere mention of these words tug at our heartstrings? Well, maybe not everyone's heart strings, but if the old saying, "one man's trash is another man's treasure," is true, then call me a treasure hunter. "Old" is not for *everyone*, but for the right soul, "old" is *everything*.

If you've ever stopped to pick up a chippy wooden chair from the curb, ever felt a flutter when opening the door to a second-hand store, or ever excitedly scanned tables at a yard sale or flea market for that diamond in the rough, you might have a heart for "old."

And it's not just about old treasures *found*; it's also about old treasures *kept*. There's something about running your fingers through the pages of a book that was hand-inscribed to a long-gone relative, sorting through your grandmother's handwritten recipes, or displaying trinkets, relics, or collections that have been passed through the hands before us.

A few years back, my grandparents' Wisconsin farmhouse was cleaned out to make space for a new family to live there—a place where many of my core childhood memories of all seasons were formed. Crunching bright red apples in the orchard, riding a trailer full of freshly picked pumpkins, and roaming through fields barefoot and muddy. My aunt was gracious enough to let me come and sift through the things that had piled up through the years. I carefully chose some pieces I couldn't let slip into the donation bins.

Nothing of extreme importance or great monetary worth, but a few treasures to display in my own home as little reminders of a place I loved, filled with people I loved.

One item I kept was a slightly rusted tin from "Bremner Wafers" (circa 1960). The mint-green color and vintage graphics caught my eye and it's nothing you can find in the stores today. I display it on a shelf, stacked atop old books, or fill it with fresh flowers. Every time I see the tin, it is a reminder of my grandparents, their farm, the gardens, my childhood, and a connection to the past—a different time—and in my mind, a simpler time.

What is it about these items that gives us a little thrill? Is it nostalgia? Is it memories of a loved one? Is it the smell, sound, or feel of a place we once were, or could only imagine?

Or, perhaps, it's the cracks, the rust stains, the dents, and the wear that remind us of our own lives, which began shiny and new, but got a little bumped, dented, and rusted along the way. We get tattered and worn, but we remain, we persist, we grow in character, we are etched with memories in hopes that one day, we may turn into old treasures ourselves.

Sarah Peterson is a lifelong resident of Appleton, where she is a mother of four, a wife, a writer, an artist, and an active community member. She finds inspiration in her family and faith, exploring themes of nostalgia and the beauty of simplicity in her work.



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BEAUTIFUL THINGS FOR BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE.

The Essential Need for Affordable Veterinary Pet Care

By DR. JIM ZIEGLER

Over the last several years, veterinary medicine has seen incredible changes. The demand for services has skyrocketed. More pets are being acquired, and more pet owners are seeking services for them. The costs to run a veterinary clinic have also significantly increased across the board. Most clinics are working short-staffed, which is a problem that will not be going away soon. This has caused a dramatic increase in the cost of veterinary care, and thus, costs to the owner.

The result has been that many owners cannot afford to provide any or adequate care for their pets. It is estimated that at least 50% of pets in the United States are in this category and it is not a new problem. What is referred to as the "access to care crisis" has been discussed since 2019. Unfortunately, this can result in the pet either not receiving care or being surrendered to a rescue organization. The latter certainly is not preferable.

This is where organizations such as the Fox Valley Humane Association step in. FVHA has programs to help many pets in need of care—whether it be our in-house



animals, animals belonging to other rescue groups, or publicly-owned pets. With a full medical team and a surgery/medical center, we assist thousands of animals every year. Without the ability to do so, a large percentage of the pets we service would receive no care at all. We can provide lower-cost vaccinations and spay and neuter services (unfortunately, to offer other care such as dental or sick animal care for owned animals is not feasible at this time). These services help

to keep pets out of the shelter and in the home where they belong—a vital service to our community. I cannot imagine how dire things would be without these resources.

Interestingly, humane societies that provided veterinary services to the public years ago were seen as a threat to the success of the local veterinary clinics. Now, many private practice clinics refer clients to humane societies to lighten their workload and allow them to focus more on the medical and the more advanced surgical cases. It has been rewarding to see this evolution and to realize that we can all collectively play a role in providing care for as many pets as possible.

The access to care crisis, the demand for veterinary services and the shortage of veterinarians and support staff are predicted to have no end in sight. We are all apparently in this for the long haul!

Jim Ziegler DVM joined the Fox Valley Humane Association in 2021 as the Medical Director following a 34-year career in private veterinary practice.

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Toofer

Toofer is a large, neutered 7-year-old male mixed breed weighing in at 85 pounds of love and cuddly charm. Toofer would prefer a home without other dogs, but has done well meeting children and adults while staying with us at the shelter.



Aries

Aries is a neutered 5-year-old male shepherd mix. He has the cutest ears you have ever seen and is very emotionally intelligent, making him an excellent support pooch. He loves snuggling and walks nicely on-leash. He is an excellent car rider.



Nola

Nola is a spayed 13-year-old female cat looking for a home that will let her be herself. She takes a little time to put you on her friends list, but once you are there, she very much enjoys human companionship and chin rubs.



Dory

Dory is a spayed 1-year-old female cat that came to FVHA after being struck by a car. After a long road to recovery, she is ready for adoption. Dory is a shy kitty seeking the solace of a quiet home where she can learn to relax and enjoy the world around her.

Growing Elephant Garlic

By HOLLY BOETTCHER

Elephant garlic is a delight for those who treasure cooking with fresh ingredients and exploring home gardening. Despite its name, this versatile plant isn't a true garlic, but a close cousin to leeks. Its mild flavor makes it a perfect ingredient for delicate dishes and a favorite among food enthusiasts. The best part? Growing elephant garlic is incredibly simple and rewarding. Here's everything you need to know to cultivate this culinary gem.

Where to Begin

I have the best luck by ordering the bulbs from a gardening supply catalog because they are not as readily available in garden centers. By Googling elephant garlic, you will find numerous sources. They prefer well-drained soil in a sunny location and should be planted in our Zone 5 during late fall. Start by digging a trench about 12 inches deep and amend with sand and/or peat moss.

Setting the Bulbs

Gently separate the cloves from each large bulb. Healthy bulbs should have a white papery outside. Smaller sections called corms will not produce a bulb the first year, however, if left in the ground you will have a nice head of garlic the following year. Plant the cloves 6 inches apart and 4 to 6 inches deep.

Care and Harvesting

Water regularly to provide about 1 inch of water per week. It's best to water them in the morning to give the soil around the plants a chance to dry during the day, which will help prevent diseases. You can stop watering during the winter.

Harvest

They must remain in the ground through the winter. In the spring, you will notice the leaves beginning to emerge. In late July or August, the elephant garlic is ready to harvest once the leaves are bent over and beginning to die back. Once the leaves are completely brown, they are ready to be dug up and dried in a cool and dry environment. They can also be hung to dry for up to 10 months.

How to Use

Garlic scapes and bulbs are versatile and flavorful ingredients that can elevate your cooking in delightful ways. Here are some ideas to make the most of them:

Stir-Fry or Pickle the Scapes:

The tender flower buds, called scapes, are perfect for a quick stir-fry. Their mild garlic flavor adds a punch to any dish. You can also pickle them and use them in sandwiches or on charcuterie boards.

Sauté the Bulbs:

Thinly slice them and sauté to bring out the natural sweetness. They make a great addition to pasta dishes or as a topping on grilled meats.



Roast and Spread:

One of my favorite ways to enjoy them is roasted in the oven. The roasting process caramelizes the garlic, creating a rich, creamy texture. Spread this roasted goodness on crostini for a simple, yet irresistible, appetizer.

No matter how you prepare them, garlic scapes and bulbs are sure to add a burst of flavor to your meals. ENJOY!

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.

IN PRAISE OF PARTICIPATION: PART TWO

“Ty, I want you to remember—as much as I want you to play well and score a ton of points, I care much more about how you *act* if you play well and score a ton of points.”

This bit of fatherly wisdom was seared into my brain on a frigid North Dakota night after one of the first basketball games I ever played. I was a fifth-grade guard for the Cando Cubs, and I’d just gone off for 16 points in the first half because no one on the Edmore Vikings had ever seen a lefty before. Approaching the huddle before halftime, I visited the scorer’s table to gently inquire how many points I’d scored so far. Which, for any kids reading at home, is just not something that a person does, not ever, and definitely not at halftime.

Now, in my defense, I was positively *cooking*. But my dad didn’t see it that way—he was and is a steadfast Larry Bird fan, and my little me-first gesture was some very un-Larry-like behavior. So, my dad let me know it, and I’ve never forgotten. (I very much doubt my dad has either.)

I dredged up this memory a few nights ago as my son Ellis strutted up to receive his awards for the junior golf league. Faithful readers of *Appleton Monthly* might recall that a year ago, I wrote a column discussing his heart-break (and mine) as he watched all the awards go elsewhere and left empty-handed. My wife and I encouraged him to stick with it, and that the less he worried about getting awards as he practiced and improved, the more likely he was to hear his name called when the time comes. And now here he was, hearing our last name butchered twice—long drive champ, third place in putting. Funny how that works.

But like my father before me, I wasn’t content to simply jump out of my skin with pride when my son was celebrated for uncorking a 70-yard drive to the astonishment of everyone including himself. I was watching his



ONE MORE THING

By TYLER SJOSTROM

body language, noting that he congratulated and clapped for everyone as their names were called. And then, when it was his turn to approach the lectern to receive his medals, he quietly and confidently walked back to his spot, trying and failing to conceal his excitement. My wife and I tried and failed to conceal ours as well.

Later that night, I was still thinking

about that uncomfortable chat with my dad 30 years ago, and how so much of what he said still applies. I don’t know how many times I’ve told my sons that my first concern as they enter various competitive endeavors is simply that they enjoy themselves, and that the results are of less consequence to me than their effort. Not super complicated stuff, really.

But I also know that, for all the wisdom my dear old dad tried to impart, I didn’t always hear it or put it into practice. I can’t say I was always as gracious as I might have been in victory or defeat; I didn’t always hold up my end, even if my dad always held up his. And I imagine my sons won’t always be faultless in this regard, either. They’re just kids, after all, playing a game with fewer and lower stakes than most parents tend to notice.

As Ellis was deciding on the perfect spot to display his medals the next morning, I came to offer small talk.

“That was pretty fun last night, huh? How are you feeling about it today?”

“That was so much fun, Dad. Next year I want to get second place.”

“Second, why?”

“Because I have a gold and bronze. If I get a silver I’ll have every color. That would be so cool.”

They’re just kids, after all.



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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