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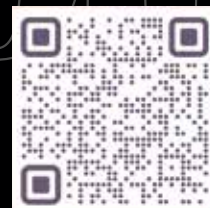
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FROM
THE
EDITOR

Dash & DINE

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT ANTICIPATING YOUR FAVORITE TAKEOUT — whether it's delivered to your door or picked up from a favorite neighborhood spot. It's easier than ever to enjoy a meal in the comfort of your home — no dishes required.

Get ready to order as Jenni highlights the hottest local takeout spots in *TASTE*. Steve promotes bringing Wisconsin wines into the "locavore movement," and Jason introduces a café-quality canned coffee made in Appleton. Plus, Chef Carly's makes chicken, spinach, and artichoke dip sliders — perfect for warm-weather celebrations.

In *VOICE*, Tim profiles two women with a passion for helping our community — Michelle McRae of Saving Paws Animal Rescue and Mandi Dornfeld of Youth Go. Aneth helps businesses build credit, and Angela discusses key nutrients for those taking GLP-1 medications.

Grab your Kleenex as Tim shares how Diane MacDonald of Missions of Honor is helping veterans heal in *TODAY*. Jim covers a benefit for local musician Bobby Evans, and Tim previews the upcoming Apple Blossom Festival.

In *MORE*, Tim spotlights a classic "Model A" car club, I reminisce about Memorial Day and vintage Americana, and a local volunteer shares an unusual yet heartwarming story of animal rescue.

Whether you're trying something new or returning to a favorite, savor the best of our community, one bite at a time.

Bon appétit!

Sarah Peterson
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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.



Carly Cerniglia

Carly Cerniglia is a young chef and food photographer interested in fresh, local, and exciting food. Located in Milwaukee, Wis. Follow her culinary adventures on Instagram: @chef.carly



Steve Johnson

Steve Johnson is co-owner and winemaker at Parallel 44 in Door County. His passion is growing and crafting wines from Northeast Wisconsin, an unexpected, but increasingly recognized corner of the wine world.

AMERICA
250
YEARS IN THE MAKING

VOICE

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Michelle McRae
Saving Paws
Animal Rescue, Inc.
Founder/Co-Director

By TIM FROBERG

A Furball's Best Friend McRae's Life Dedicated Toward Helping Animals

By TIM FROBERG



Michelle McRae's passion for helping animals goes back to her childhood.

She was basically a one-person animal hospital and sanctuary.

"When I was a little girl, I brought everything home," said McRae. "If I saw something hurt or injured by the side of the road, I'd bring it home and take care of it. We had a spare room where I had cages for all the critters I brought home. There were birds, gerbils, guinea pigs, bunnies, everything you can imagine."

McRae never lost her love of animals or her strong desire to care for them. She and Elizabeth "Betsy" Moder are the founders and operators of Saving Paws Animal Rescue Inc., a nonprofit, volunteer-run, no-kill rescue dedicated to rescuing and rehoming homeless, abandoned, and special needs animals.

Saving Paws is located in Appleton at N3141 Meade St., directly across from McRae's house, and focuses on assisting dogs and cats of various breeds and mixes. It has a recently constructed building for canines and another for cats. Saving Paws relies on its dedicated volunteers and is funded by donations to provide care, veterinary attention, and shelter space for animals.

Saving Paws has an impressive adoption rate, especially for dogs. It is involved with two transfers each month that bring 15 to 25 dogs from Texas and Tennessee to Saving Paws. Transferring rescue dogs involves relocating them from overcrowded high-kill shelters, often in southern states, to shelters such as Saving Paws with more resources and higher adoption rates. Volunteers typically transport the dogs in vans.





"It's hard to give a number for the dogs we have because they're often going out (to foster and permanent homes) just as quickly as they're coming in," McRae said. "Most are either adopted right away, or they go into foster homes because they've already been vetted, seen doctors, and many of the adopters have been pre-approved."

"So they're rarely with us for a long time. They're all dogs that are going to be euthanized if we don't take them."

"We work with wonderful rescues. The Texas rescue drives them all the way to us, while the one in Tennessee, we'll meet them in Madison or Chicago. They're so grateful that we're helping them out."

Saving Paws' cats reside in separate rooms in the rescue's main building.

"We're no-kill, so everything that comes to us, we deal with it," McRae said. "That can get a little

tricky, especially with cats, because you get cats with diseases or digestive problems. Or maybe they're picky eaters, or there are age differences among them. That's why we turned the main house into a cat

building and why we put our cats in separate rooms."

Saving Paws actually started in McRae's garage. She had been rescuing, caring for and



providing sanctuary to unwanted animals for several years — and doing it out of pocket. Moder had been doing the same thing when she met McRae at an area veterinary clinic where they had both taken rescue animals for treatment. The two quickly discovered they shared a common love for helping animals and formed Saving Paws, which became a nonprofit in 2006.

"I had been doing this on our own for quite a while, and so had Betsy," said McRae. "My husband (Dennis) said, 'This is getting expensive. You need to go nonprofit. That way you can save more animals.' Betsy is the number one reason, along with our volunteers, why Saving Paws is what it is today."

McRae and Moder had helped various types of animals prior to the creation of Saving Paws, but decided to focus on cats and dogs.

"Before we went nonprofit, I had rehomed pigs, hedgehogs, horses, birds, reptiles, all kinds of critters," said McRae. "We just didn't have the space for larger animals, and other rescues for birds and reptiles had formed. So we knew they were getting the help they needed."

When asked if she had a particularly memorable rescue story, McRae had a tough time pinning down a favorite because she had several. Here are three of her personal favorites.

A Major Challenge

Prior to launching Saving Paws when she was rescuing animals on her own, McRae was able to find permanent homes for six horses, two of which were blind, which made rehoming them very challenging.

"It was two different situations and both horses were completely blind," she said. "Finding them their forever homes was a little tricky because in both situations we had to find a horse they connected with and who they could follow. But we did it and that was beyond heartwarming."

Taking a Chance

Another Saving Paws success story involved a sweet, affectionate domestic short-hair tiger cat named Chance, who was found in Little Chute during the winter months behind a cheese factory.

Saving Paws took Chance in and scanned him for a microchip. It was learned that he was 6 years old, but the owner's phone number had been disconnected. Saving Paws took Chance to an urgent care veterinary clinic to treat a badly injured leg and Chance eventually needed surgery to amputate the leg.

Saving Paws was able to raise enough money to help with Chance's medical bills and he healed and became a Saving Paws feline resident. However, his bad luck continued when Chance tested positive for FeLV, also known as feline

leukemia virus. It is a contagious retrovirus that weakens animals' immune system, making them vulnerable to infections, anemia and cancer.

It was later learned that Chance had regressive FeLV. That was great news considering it meant the virus was minimal in his blood and could be controlled by his immune system, giving him a good chance to live a normal life.

Still, McRae wondered if Saving Paws, with Chance's medical history, would be able to find a forever home for him.

"We were still concerned that his adoption would be difficult due to his needing to be with other cats that also tested positive for FeLV, or be the only cat," McRae said. "Plus most people are scared off when they hear of FeLV."

But one person wasn't.

"Within a week of being available, we received applications for Chance," McRae said. "One application stood out and we did a meet-and-greet with him. The visit went perfectly and Chance was adopted."

"We went over Chance's medical history with him and explained everything. Chance's new owner had already researched FeLV and was OK with it. He wanted to give a hard-to-adopt-cat a home. We're excited to say that Chance went to his new home and is doing well."

Finding a Home for Flounder

And then there was Flounder, a female Labrador mix who was born at Saving Paws and bottle fed as a young pup because she came from such a large litter. Flounder was diagnosed as a pup with pulmonary stenosis, a congenital heart condition characterized by the detection of heart murmurs that can be fatal if left untreated. She needed to have routine checkups for a year before she could have surgery, which was essential toward saving her life, and her impending surgery delayed her adoption.

Flounder, though, had a foster mom, Robin Fisher, who routinely took Flounder to Madison for the checkups and the January surgery. Saving Paws raised roughly \$7,000 through fundraisers to pay for Flounder's operation which was a major success.

"Robin is now her adoptive mom and says she is doing wonderful," said McRae. "She helped her through this whole journey, so of course, she had to adopt her. She says that Flounder is submissive, young, wild, and quite the character. She's even thinking of training her to be a therapy dog."

What McRae also finds heartwarming is the dedication of the 150 to 200 volunteers who help keep Saving Paws alive.

"Oh my goodness, we have a wonderful, amazing group of volunteers," McRae said. "I can't tell you how important they are. This whole organization runs because of them. Some come here every day, others come every week. We have

volunteers who have been with us since the beginning. They're just so compassionate and love animals so much."

A Compassion for Animals

McRae is an Appleton native, who grew up on Franklin Street near City Park. Her family owned three cats and a dog throughout most of her childhood – not counting the animals Michelle would bring home.

"I feel the reason the good Lord put me here is to help animals," she said. "Anything that was wounded, injured, or homeless, I would bring home. My dad would always take me to Bubolz Nature Center to rehabilitate injured animals that I picked up. If it was a dog or cat, we usually would bring it to humane society, but we did end up keeping a few. This has always kind of been in my blood."



Saving Paws is very active with social media and regularly hosts events to raise money for the rescue.

"Every time we host an event, we seem to attract an adopter or a volunteer," McRae said. "They're huge."

McRae doesn't say goodbye to pets when the rescue get locked at night. She and Dennis, who have been married 25 years, own two dogs, Macy (a Great Pyrenees mix) and Moose (a Collie) along with a cat, Ash (a Chinchilla Persian). The couple has two boys, Quintin, 16, and Dain, 13.

"The boys help out with the rescue a lot," said McRae. "They help mom with the dirty work."

To adopt a cat or dog, volunteer, or make a food, toy, or financial donation with Saving Paws, visit savingpaws.com. The group can also be emailed at info@savingpawswi.com.

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Memorial Day (originally called Decoration Day from the tradition of decorating graves) was first observed on **May 30, 1868**, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers.



The premier meteor shower, Eta Aquariids, will peak on the nights of May 5-6, and can be seen as fast-moving, bright streaks, especially in the early morning hours.



Approximately **122 million phone calls** are made in the U.S. on **Mother's Day — Sun., May 10, 2026**

Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland on May 20, 1932, becoming the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic.



May 22 is National Poppy Day and encourages the wearing of red poppies to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform.

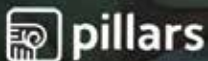


Secretariat holds the record for the fastest Kentucky Derby, winning the 1973 race in 1:59.40 for the 1 1/4-mile distance.



May's birth flowers are the hawthorn and the lily-of-the-valley. The hawthorn means hope, while the lily-of-the-valley symbolizes sweetness or the return of happiness.

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BUILDING BUSINESS CREDIT: STRATEGIES FOR NEW AND GROWING COMPANIES

By ANNETH ORTEGA



Strong business credit opens doors: better loan terms, higher credit limits, and the ability to seize opportunities quickly. Whether you're launching a new venture or scaling an existing one, building business credit doesn't have to be complicated — just consistent.

1. Separate Personal and Business Finances

This is your foundation.

Start with:

- A dedicated business checking account
- A business credit card used only for business expenses

Separation builds credibility and keeps your records clean.

2. Establish Accounts with Vendors Who Report

Not all suppliers report payments to credit bureaus. Choose vendors who do and make payments early. These small, consistent habits build a healthy credit profile faster than most business owners realize.

3. Monitor Your Credit Regularly

Business credit reports may contain errors, especially when your business is new. Track your reports quarterly and dispute inaccuracies quickly.

4. Borrow Strategically (Even Small Amounts Count)

You don't need a large loan to build credit.

Options include:

- A small line of credit
- An equipment loan
- A secured credit product

Using credit responsibly signals reliability to future lenders.

5. Maintain Good Financial Hygiene

Lenders appreciate clarity.

Keep:

- Updated financial statements
- Organized tax records
- A clear budget for the year ahead

These practices support both strong credit and confident decision-making.

6. Understand How Banks Evaluate Creditworthiness

Banks look at more than just your credit score. They consider your payment history, debt-to-income ratio, business longevity, and the separation between personal and business finances. Leveraging secured credit products, like a secured business credit card or loan, can help establish your profile if you're just starting out. Consistent, on-time payments and transparent financial records make your business more attractive to lenders.

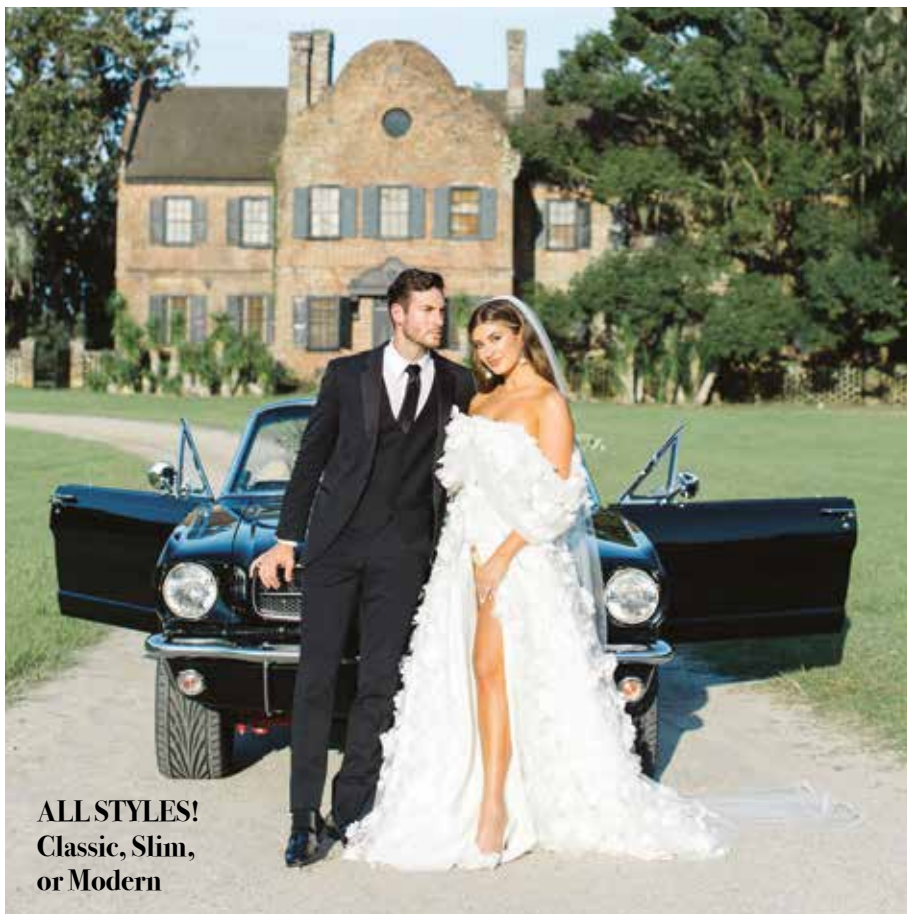
7. Partner with a Bank That Knows Your Story

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Annet Ortega is the Branch Manager at American National Bank, drawing on her experience as a Branch Manager Designee and her ongoing studies in Business Management at FVTC. She is bilingual in English and Spanish, and enjoys helping her team grow professionally by connecting with a diverse range of customers.



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GLP-1 WEIGHT LOSS AND KEY NUTRIENTS

By ANGELA HALDERSON

The use of GLP-1 receptor agonists — such as semaglutide (Wegovy, Ozempic), liraglutide (Victoza, Saxenda), and tirzepatide (Zepbound, Mounjaro) — has rapidly increased due to their effectiveness in promoting weight loss and improving blood sugar control. These medications work primarily by suppressing appetite, curbing cravings, and slowing gastric emptying, helping individuals feel full sooner and eat less. However, emerging research suggests that these same effects may increase the risk of nutritional deficiencies, making intentional nutrition strategies essential for those using these therapies.

A recent review published in *Clinical Obesity*¹ examined data from nearly 500,000 adults and found several notable trends. More than 60% of participants consumed inadequate amounts of calcium and iron, while deficiencies in vitamins B1 and B12 increased over time. Vitamin D deficiency affected 7.5% of participants at six months and 13.6% at one year. Iron status was also impacted, with ferritin levels significantly lower compared with individuals using other diabetes medications. The review also noted that 30–40% of weight lost on GLP-1 medications may come from lean muscle mass, often due in part to insufficient protein intake.

To counteract these risks, individuals taking GLP-1 medications should prioritize protein intake. Protein is critical for preserving muscle mass, maintaining metabolism, and supporting overall health. A general target is 1.2–1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of adjusted body weight per day, though individual needs may vary. Because appetite is often reduced, it can help to focus on protein-rich foods first at meals. Convenient, nutrient-dense options include eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, lean meats, fish, tofu, beans, and protein shakes.

Micronutrient intake is equally important. A daily multivitamin can help fill common nutritional gaps, especially one that includes B vitamins, such as B1 and B12, and vitamin D. Adding nutritional yeast to meals can be a natural and tasty way to help reach B vitamin goals. These nutrients are essential for energy production, nerve function, and bone health, and may be more difficult to obtain in adequate amounts when overall food intake is reduced.

Vitamin D deserves particular attention due to its high rate of deficiency. Many adults benefit from supplementation in the range of 1,000–2,000 IU daily, although individual needs should ideally be guided by lab testing and healthcare provider recommendations.

Calcium intake should also be emphasized, preferably through food sources. Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese are rich in calcium, as are fortified plant-based milks, leafy green vegetables such as kale, almonds, and calcium-set tofu. Adults generally need 1,000–1,200 milligrams of calcium per day to support bone health.

Lastly, regular monitoring can help identify deficiencies early. Periodic lab tests for vitamin D, B12, and iron levels can guide adjustments in diet and supplementation.

While GLP-1 medications are highly effective, they are not without nutritional considerations. By focusing on adequate protein intake, incorporating nutrient-dense foods, and using appropriate supplementation, individuals can protect their health and maximize the benefits of their treatment.



1. Urbina J, Salinas-Ruiz LE, Valenciano C, Clapp B. Micronutrient and Nutritional Deficiencies Associated With GLP-1 Receptor Agonist Therapy: A Narrative Review. *Clin Obes*. 2026 Feb;16(1):e70070. doi: 10.1111/cob.70070. PMID: 41549912.

**“To me recovery means
I have another chance at life.”**

*“Don’t be so quick to judge a person.
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they’re just battling their own demons.”*

Sabrina

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UPFRONT

MANDI DORNFELD

YOUTH GO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bringing people together is what Mandi Dornfeld does best.

She gets to do that on a regular basis as executive director of Youth Go in Neenah.

Youth Go — founded in 1969 — is a free, safe, and supportive recreational, social, and educational center for Fox Valley youth in grades 5-12. It offers a home-away-from-home environment where youth can interact, socialize, and engage in a variety of after-school activities such as gaming, sports, art, and field trips.

Dornfeld is a Little Chute native and resident with more than 20 years of experience in youth services, family support, and community mental health leadership.

Prior to starting her Youth Go position in January, Dornfeld worked nearly 11 years for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's extension department: seven as its human development and relationship educator and the last three as an area director.

Dornfeld worked in previous positions with United Way Fox Cities and Family Services of Northeastern Wisconsin in its Parent Connection program. She received her bachelor's degree from UW-Green Bay in human development and family studies and a master's from UW-Oshkosh in educational leadership and policy.

Dornfeld and her husband, Dave, have two adult daughters, Hannah and Callah. She is the founder of a charitable organization, "60 for Jack," which is named after her father, Jack Keddell, who died of cancer in 2016.

HOW HAS YOUR FIRST YEAR AT YOUTH GO GONE?

"I know a lot of people say this, but I was not looking for a job. This is really a culmination of everything I needed as a kid and everything I devoted my career towards. I landed in this perfect place for my skills and experience and really being rooted in knowing and understanding what not belonging feels like. What I love the most is our staff. They're committed, talented, and brilliant."

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOUTH TO FIND A STRUCTURED GATHERING PLACE?

"It's fantastic that we have a space where kids can go and just be in a supportive environment. I absolutely know that we are not meant to try and navigate our lives alone. I get to see the kids, hear and talk to them. When they walk through our door, they know without a shadow of a doubt they are loved and belong. They don't have to be anybody other than who they really are. There are people who never get to experience that. Our kiddos get to do that every time they walk through our door."

CAN YOU, AS AN ADULT, RELATE TO SOME OF THE THINGS KIDS ARE GOING THROUGH?

"I'm almost 50, and it wasn't until maybe the last four or five years when I took a deep breath and figured out who I was. I think we're all trying to figure out where we belong and what our purpose is. And it's so critical to have people walk alongside us."

HOW REWARDING IS IT TO SEE KIDS INTERACTING WITH ONE ANOTHER?

"It's so fun to come to work. We make dinner every night for the kids, and I love listening to dinner conversations. It's very fun and you hear a lot of funny stories. And I love watching the kids play — like kids should play. They play cards, games, they do art, they play in our recreational area. Just to see them set aside all their worries for a few hours, that's what I love the most."

By Tim Froberg

Photo by Ashley Schmit, Debbie Daanen Photography



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GOOD STUFF

By SARAH PETERSON



TASTE & TAKEOFF

GRAIN & GRIND COFFEE & DELI

Appleton International Airport is partnering with Copper Rock Coffee Co. to open a new restaurant, Grain & Grind Coffee & Deli, which will replace the current Central Kitchen & Bar in the existing concourse. Set to open this summer, travelers will be able to enjoy local specialty drinks, including espresso, lattes, cappuccinos, and smoothies, as well as breakfast and lunch options, and cocktails. Two new gift shops will also open: North River Trading Co. and North River Express, a convenient self-serve gift shop with snacks, drinks, and travel essentials.

atwairport.com/dine-shop



TAKE A PHOTO

SIGNATURE PEDESTRIAN ALLEY IN NEENAH

Nestled between the Future Neenah office and Town Council Restaurant, a simple pedestrian alley has become a unique downtown landmark. Seasonal décor, creative lighting, and rotating art installations transform this alley into a vibrant, year-round backdrop for photos, social media, and community gatherings. The alley's look changes four times a year with each installation featured for at least 30 days. Free and family-friendly, it's where creativity, charm, and community come together.

futureneenah.org



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The Garden in Neenah is a charming urban farm and specialty shop. It offers fresh organic produce, local meats, and artisan goods. Visitors can browse houseplants, unique gifts, and attend creative community workshops.

thegardeninneenah.com



MAD CHICKEN

Mad Chicken is opening a new location in Kaukauna in addition to its current restaurants in Menasha, Oshkosh, Ashwaubenon, and Green Bay. Its menu features high-quality, crispy, farm-fresh poultry and comfort foods that pack a punch.

madchickenusa.com/home



STAY FIT

FITNESS FRIDAY

Fitness Fridays at the Neenah Public Library are a great way to get in a full-body workout. The classes, guided by Nicole from Absolute Wellness, alternate between boot camp, balance, and strength. All abilities are welcome. Bring a yoga mat and a water bottle.

neenahlibrary.org/events



GET CREATIVE

ART CLASSES AT TROUT

The Trout Museum of Art in downtown Appleton offers a variety of hands-on workshops and camps for adults, teens, and children designed to help discover and grow creativity. All classes are taught by professional artists and feature painting, drawing, pottery, jewelry making, and more.

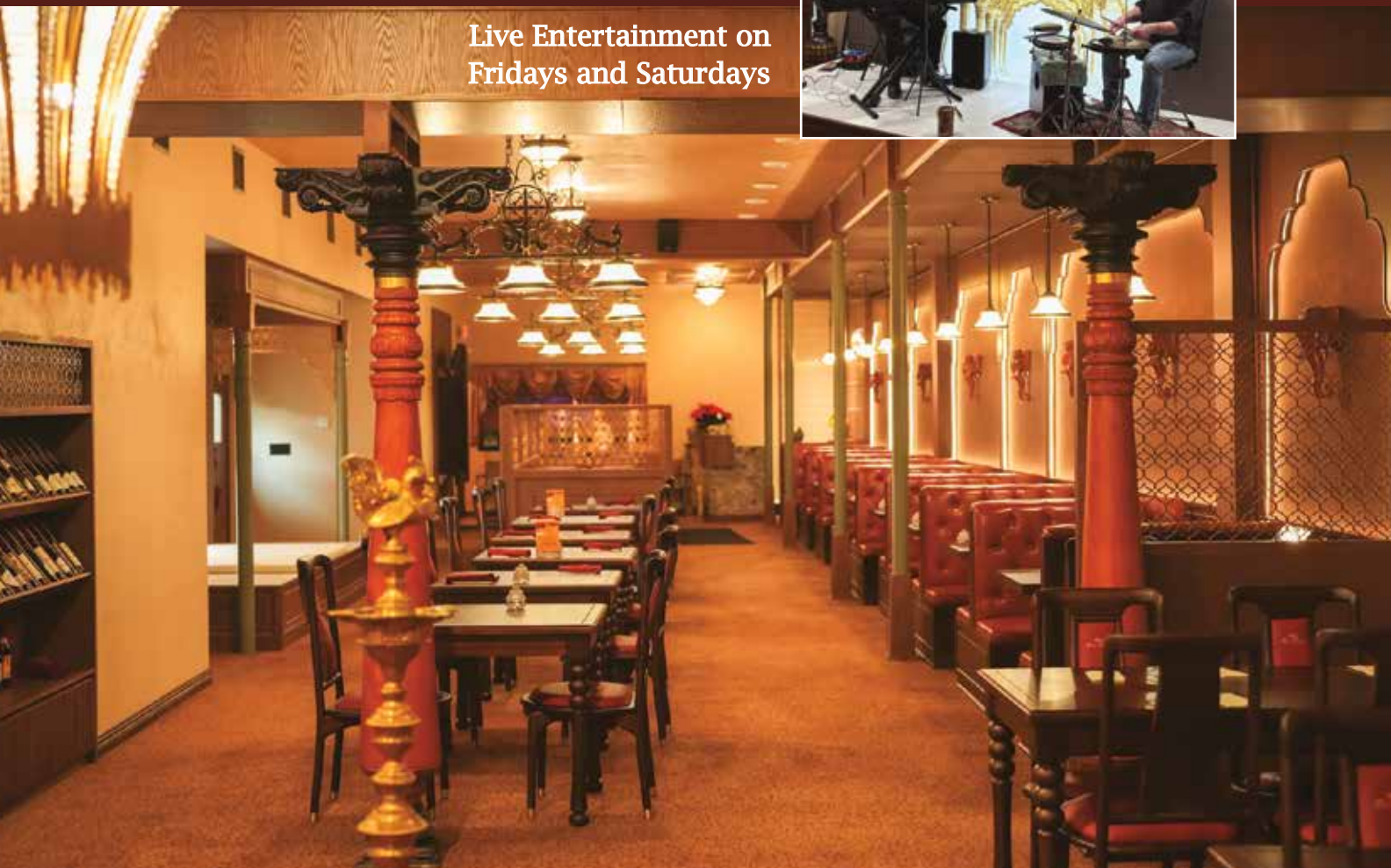
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**Diane
MacDonald**
Old Glory Honor Flight
Executive Director

By TIM FROBERG

HELPING HEAL OLD WOUNDS.

LOCAL ORGANIZATION MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR VETERANS

By TIM FROBERG

Military veterans often need closure, peer support, reflection, and validation to heal emotional wounds that linger long after their days of service.

Missions of Honor helps them achieve that.

The Appleton-based nonprofit organization does everything in its power to assist veterans in northeast Wisconsin with post-war trauma. It was formerly known as Old Glory Honor Flight but rebranded in January to reflect expanded services for veterans.

Old Glory Honor Flight — which provides veterans who served prior to May 7, 1975, with a free flight to Washington, D.C., to visit memorials built in their honor — remains a significant part of the organization, which has added more trips and events to accommodate additional war veterans.

Missions of Honor is now the umbrella organization for Old Glory Honor Flight and all of its programs. It is a prominent, independent regional hub of the national Honor Flight Network.



"We're a very evolving group and we've grown," said Missions of Honor executive director Diane MacDonald.

Missions of Honor is offering at least six honor flights in 2026 at no cost to participating veterans. Four of them are one-day Old Glory Honor Flights to Washington for World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans.



Two of the honor flights are Freedom to Liberty Retreats for veterans of the Global War of Terrorism, who served in combat or direct support of it in Iraq, Afghanistan or anywhere in the Middle East.

The Freedom to Liberty Retreats — first offered in 2023 — take veterans on a three-day trip to New York City to visit the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, the Statue of Liberty, and the Freedom Tower (formerly known as the World Trade Center), while hearing directly from 9/11 first responders and distinguished veterans.

A new special missions trip planned for later this year is expected to fly World War II veterans to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the attack on the military base.

A Desert Shield and Desert Storm Flight of Honor to Washington to visit the DSDS Memorial at the National Mall is also in the works for 2026 once the memorial is completed in the fall.

All of the flights and travel excursions include the availability of the Missions Medical Corps: trained medical volunteers who accompany the veterans to ensure their safety. The trips also include transportation, lodging (if necessary), guides, meals, and professional photographers. The trips conclude with welcome-home celebrations at the airport.

Missions of Honor also offers retreats and bus trips for veterans to hear guest speakers and visit military-related sites and items, such as the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall.

In addition, Missions of Honor provides home visits for veterans who are unable to travel and puts together fundraising events to support trips. The next Missions of Honor event is scheduled for June 2 at the Swan Club in De Pere. It is a dinner program featuring guest speaker Will Jimeno, one of only 20 survivors rescued from Ground Zero following the Sept. 11 attacks.

"All of our projects are our way — and our communities' way — of saying thank you to veterans for their service and sacrifice," said MacDonald. "It's an amazing way to get these veterans together to build camaraderie and really help them with their mental health issues, if they have any."

The organization has flown 8,300 veterans on 120 flights since Old Glory Honor Flight was founded in 2009 in Appleton by a group of dedicated local volunteers.

"Our plane trips are more than just a free flight," MacDonald said. "We've provided thousands of veterans with an experience they will never forget. It's a day or multiple days of healing, closure and reverence, and celebration of their service, all tied into one."

MacDonald has accompanied the veterans on many of the trips, which often prove to be meaningful, powerful, emotional, and therapeutic for the veterans.

"It takes a lot of guts for someone to hop on an airplane with other veterans who they don't know," said MacDonald. "For older veterans, many of them haven't really thought about their service for many years, so there's a lot of anticipation once they apply and maybe a little nervousness as it approaches. But in the end, it's a day (or days) that can provide peace and closure to our veterans."

A HEROES WELCOME

The warm, festive reception veterans receive at the airport upon their return from the honor flights is especially rewarding and reaffirming for the veterans — many of whom never experienced a hero's welcome for their service.

"They get the most beautiful welcome home at Appleton International Airport or EAA, depending on the trip," said MacDonald. "Thousands of people come out for them, waving flags, and wearing red, white, and blue and cheering them on."

"I think it really knocks their socks off. I don't think they're ever prepared for all those handshakes, smiles, and people saying thank you. I think it's very humbling for them, and I believe it makes a big impact on them."

The honor flights often help veterans, who have been reluctant to talk about their military service, open up to friends and family about their war experiences. MacDonald used an example from a 2013 Old Glory Honor Flight to Washington





for more than 100 Vietnam veterans who flew out of EAA in Oshkosh as part of the AirVenture festivities for the first time. Due to the success of that initial trip, it has become an annual event at EAA AirVenture known as "Salute to Veterans Day."

"It was the first time we did that, and we had one veteran who was incredibly emotional from the minute he stepped into the airport to the time he got on that airplane," said Diane. "He received a lot of pats on the back, thank-yous, and hugs."

"A week and a half later, his wife called me and said, 'You know, since that flight my husband has been different,'" MacDonald recalled. "He sleeps better at night, he doesn't have the nightmares, and he's talking about his service and what he went through as a Vietnam veteran. His kids are so eager to listen to him."

"To me, that was pretty remarkable. These trips help our veterans strengthen bonds within their families."

VIETNAM VET DISCUSSES EXPERIENCE

Darboy resident Glenn Zimmerman is one of the many veterans who have benefited from Missions of Honor programs.

Zimmerman is a Vietnam veteran who has experienced two meaningful flights arranged by Missions of Honor. One was a two-week "Return to Nam" special missions flight in 2019 that took 52 veterans back to Vietnam. The group made visits to Saigon, Mekong Delta (in My Tho), Da Nang, Hoi An, Perfume River (in Hue), Khe Sahn, and Hanoi.

Although other veterans groups have returned to Vietnam over the years, it was believed to be the first honor flight of its kind to return to the country. The veterans received a spectacular welcome upon their return, with thousands of supporters braving a March snowstorm to pack the Menasha High School Fieldhouse to show their appreciation.

"They were wonderful experiences, especially the one to Vietnam," said Zimmerman. "That was a tearjerker. It really brought back a lot of memories. Everybody on that trip



came back and said we had so much peace in our hearts after seeing how that country turned out and how nice the people were. It was totally different than when we were there fighting the war."

Zimmerman's first trip was a one-day Old Glory Honor Flight to Washington in 2016. He was moved by the memorials his group visited and blown away by the heartwarming welcome-home reception at Appleton International Airport.

"The way they (Missions of Honor) treated and honored us by taking us back to Washington and giving us a wonderful day there with meals and everything we saw, that was great," Zimmerman said. "Just the fact that they were willing to honor us after all the crap we took when we first came home. The way people treated us at the airport was fantastic. That was the real welcome home we were looking for."

Zimmerman served in Vietnam from 1969-70 at a base roughly 60 miles north of Saigon. He was a rifleman, carrying all the ammunition for his unit's machine gunner along with his own M16 rifle.

"It was tough," said Zimmerman, a Fox Valley Lutheran High School graduate who was 19 when he joined the service and 20 when he arrived in Vietnam. "It was a terrible war. War is hell. It was not a lot of fun. We were always afraid. You never knew if you were going to step on a trip wire or landmine, or if someone was going to jump out of the bushes and start shooting at you.

"You were on pins and needles all the time. But you made some really good friends with the guys who fought next to you. They had your back, and you had their back, so you get close to them. I'm still good friends with some of those guys and we see each other on a regular basis.

PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT LOOKS BACK

Iraq War veteran Mary Bigalk has taken part in a pair of Old Glory and Freedom to Liberty Retreat flights to Washington and New York. The Oshkosh resident was deployed in Iraq from 2003-04 as a civil affairs specialist.

"I don't know if I could put it (the honor flights) into

words," said Bigalk, who works as a corporate compliance worker for Froedtert ThedaCare. "They were amazing opportunities. They were very, very emotional."

Bigalk went on the Old Glory Honor Tour to Washington as a Guardian, a trained, traveling companion who provides safety, friendship, and comfort to the honored veterans.

"It was interesting to talk to people who had experienced a very different war than what I experienced, because it was obviously a very different time," Bigalk said.

The Freedom to Liberty Retreat proved to be life-changing for Bigalk.

"I can easily say it was like ripping off a 20-year-old Band-Aid," said Bigalk. "At the time, it had literally been 20 years since I had been in Iraq — 20 years since I had come back and reverted back to civilian life.

"It gave me the opportunity to understand the why of what I did and why I joined. Being able to share that with fellow veterans was indescribable."

Bigalk saw combat action in Iraq. She spent six months in Fallujah where 150 U.S. service members were killed in two major battles in 2004. Bigalk was the recipient of a Purple Heart medal for her valor.

"I have seen a lot of things that I wouldn't wish upon anybody," said Bigalk. "But I also had the opportunity to experience a different culture, knowing I had a job to do with respect to that culture.

"It was also very interesting being a female in that type of cultural environment, where females are considered inferior and coming from a culture where that wasn't the case. Trying to balance that with respect to one another was definitely a challenge. But it was an amazing experience, regardless of some of the not-so-great things I had to endure."

A DETAILED GAME PLAN

Planning and financing the Missions of Honor trips and events is a lengthy, complicated process involving transportation planning, logistics, fundraising, and safety and security preparation. Missions of Honor relies upon a large volunteer base to support the veterans on their excursions.

"It's what we do," said MacDonald. "It's what we spend months planning for. Chartering a plane and loading almost 200 passengers, and figuring out the logistics, the insurance, the medical team, and all the paperwork, it's a lot. But we always get it done

"I've been lucky enough to have taken almost all of the honor flights except for a small handful over the years, and to see the smiles and the gratitude — that's what we call payday,"

MacDonald is a founding member of the organization. She and her husband Andrew "Drew" MacDonald joined Old Glory Honor Flight when it was created 16 years ago.

"Neither me nor my husband is a veteran — we just have a heck of a lot of respect for them," said Diane MacDonald. "We were new to the community and looking to get involved in something meaningful. We had heard about honor flights



across the country and knew there wasn't an honor flight hub in this area. And here we are, 16 years later, doing this incredible work. I'm incredibly proud of the work we've done and the missions we've been able to produce for our veterans."

HELPING WITH A PERSONAL CRISIS

Diane served as a volunteer for the organization for 13 years before she eventually became a paid staff member. She was named its executive director in 2021. Diane is close to many of the veterans she has helped and is far more than just an employee to them — she's a friend.

Many veterans have expressed their friendship to MacDonald and shown their support while she has been dealing with a major health issue. She went in for a scheduled hip replacement in 2025 and learned a few days later that a meningioma brain tumor had been discovered.

Diane underwent emergency surgery, and doctors were able to remove much, but not all, of the tumor. MacDonald recently underwent a second surgery in late March.

"What has really touched me is the way that veterans have reached out to me," said Diane. "They have sent me letters, texts, emails, Facebook messages, cards, and flowers.

"I had one veteran tell me, 'We're all praying for you. You are one of us.' That's something I'll never forget. The level of support has been amazing, and I'm so grateful for all the prayers and well wishes. I kind of get teary-eyed when I think about it. It's been very humbling. I wish everyone could feel this type of incredible support."

Zimmerman, the president of Veterans of Mekong, Chapter 351, is one of countless veterans who has provided Diane with support.

"This (Missions of Honor) is a wonderful organization, and Diane is a wonderful person," Zimmerman said. "She's a good friend."

Veterans who wish to go on these flights should apply online at missionsofhonor.org or visit the Missions of Honor Facebook page. The organization can also be phoned at 920-257-2563 or emailed at info@missionsofhonor.org.

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MAY BENEFIT EVENT WILL RAISE FUNDS FOR WELL-KNOWN LOCAL MUSICIAN

By JIM COLLAR



Ask just about any Wisconsin music fan, and they'll tell you the same: If Bobby Evans is on the bill, you're in for a great time.

Now, as Evans battles cancer, his many fans, friends, and an all-star lineup of performers are coming together with hopes of paying back even a fraction of the goodwill he's cultivated across the state over five decades.

"HAVE ANOTHER ROUND: A BENEFIT FOR BOBBY EVANS" WILL TAKE PLACE SATURDAY, MAY 16, AT TANNER'S GRILL & BAR IN KIMBERLY, BEGINNING AT NOON. ALL ARE INVITED TO THE DAYLONG CELEBRATION, WHICH WILL INCLUDE LIVE MUSIC, FOOD, DRINKS, RAFFLES, AND THE KIND OF CAMARADERIE THAT HAS DEFINED EVANS' CAREER.

Evans has long been among the hardest-working performers on the Wisconsin scene. A rock and blues mainstay, he's played thousands of shows from the big stages at Summerfest to small-town community events and just about every tavern with room enough for a drum kit. Evans brings quick wit, solid musicianship, and his signature beer-bottle guitar slide, all of which lend to a party atmosphere just about everywhere he plays.

Evans received the cancer diagnosis in September. His partner, Jeanne Behm, said some days have been better than others, and he's done his best to keep his spirits high through treatment — but it's tough.

"He's trying so hard to heal," she said. "He's trying to fight, but he's worn out. Chemo is so hard."

Those who come to Tanner's to offer their support will be treated to an incredible show from a who's who of local musicians — many of whom have shared stages, stories, and late-night laughs with Evans over the years.

The lineup includes 15 acts, culminating with a performance

from Tom Petty tribute band, Petty Things, at 10:30 p.m. The benefit will also feature performances from Janet Planet & Tom Theabo, The Cool Waters Band, Road Trip, Copper Box, Star 69, and the Jay Stulo Band, among others.

The day goes beyond honoring Evans as a performer. The benefit also serves to recognize his incredible generosity over the years. He has always stepped up in times of need and regularly performed at fundraisers, whether for nonprofit groups or on behalf of others in circumstances similar to those he's now facing.

Beyond the physical toll, being separated from the stage has been difficult for Evans, both emotionally and financially. He's always made his living through music, and his treatment has forced him to step away. Organizers hope to raise enough over the course of the benefit to help offset mounting medical and living expenses, allowing Evans to keep his full focus on healing.

Bobby would love nothing more than to get back to the stage with his guitar and many fans.

For now, "you can only take it one day at a time," Behm said.

On May 16, the Wisconsin music community will take a day to give something back. They'll raise a glass, raise some money, and hopefully raise the spirits of a musician who has spent many years doing the same for others.



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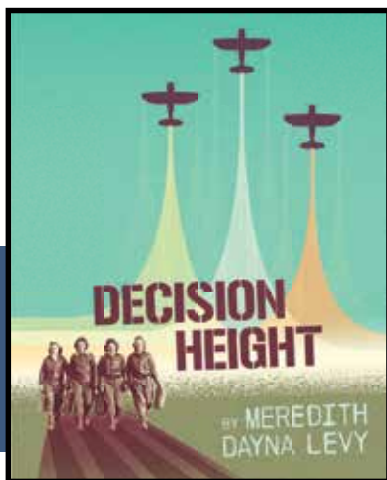
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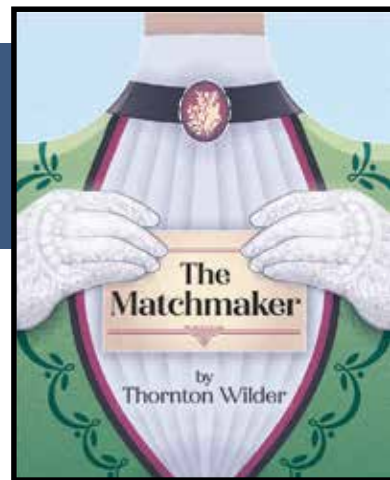


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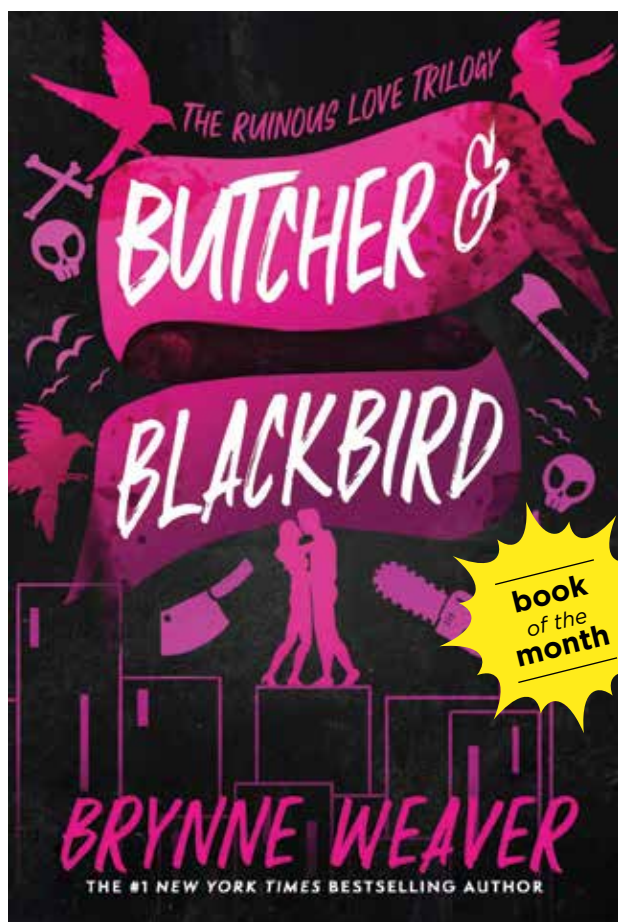


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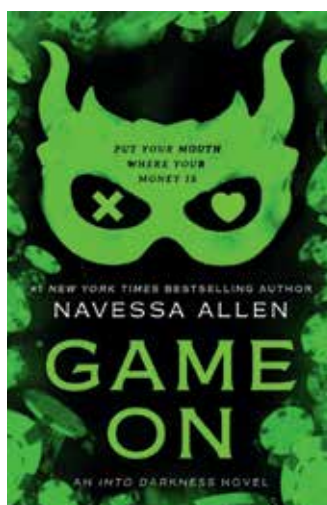
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Brynne Weaver
Butcher & Blackbird

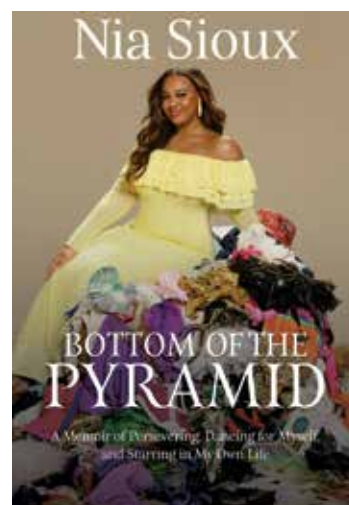
This dark romantic comedy from Brynne Weaver follows two vigilante serial killers who, after a chance encounter, decide to make a game of their shared hobby. Each year, Rowan Kane and Sloane Sutherland go head-to-head in a lethal competition. With the help of Rowan's brother, the pair hunts down the worst of the worst. Soon their impenetrable friendship develops into something more. Now, Rowan and Sloane must navigate their newfound love and prove to themselves that they are capable of more than just destruction. With all the charm of a contemporary romcom and gore that is guaranteed to make you squirm, *Butcher & Blackbird* is the perfect cure for any spring reading slump.



Navessa Allen
Game On

Game On, the third and final installment in *Into Darkness*, was released on March 31. This dark romance follows Tyler Neumann, an ambitious young bookie determined to confront his distant, wealthy father. To gain access to his father's elite social circle, Tyler blackmails Stella McCormick into a fabricated relationship. As their arrangement unfolds, undeniable chemistry intensifies, blurring the boundaries between pretense and genuine emotion, complicating everything Tyler has spent his whole life working for.

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



Nia Sioux
Bottom of the Pyramid

Nia Sioux, best known for her role on the reality series *Dance Moms*, recounts her early introduction to televised performances at just 9 years old. Each week, she trained and competed under the demanding instruction of Abby Lee Miller, whose pyramid-ranking system publicly evaluated the dancers' performances. As the only permanent Black cast member, Nia offers an unfiltered perspective, sharing experiences and truths often overlooked by the cameras. Her narrative highlights challenges of identity, perseverance, and self-expression within a high-pressure environment. *Bottom of the Pyramid* ultimately emerges as a compelling account of resilience, encouraging readers to find their voice and step confidently into the spotlight with courage.

B.A. Paris
When I Kill You

Fourteen years earlier, Elle Nugent witnessed the start of a horrific crime, sparking an obsession that led her down a dangerous path. Now, convinced she is being followed, she fears someone from her past has resurfaced, threatening to expose long-buried secrets.

Stephanie Garber
Once Upon a Broken Heart

Evangeline Fox has always believed in love, but when the man she loves becomes engaged to another, she is determined to stop the wedding. Desperate, she makes a bargain with a mysterious prince, agreeing to grant three kisses at moments of his choosing in exchange for his help.

Shari Lapena
The Couple Next Door

Cynthia and Graham are asked to leave their 6-month-old baby alone. Monitor in hand, they come back from their neighbor's party to find baby Cora gone. Soon, the cops have been called, and they're thrown into the spotlight, desperate to clear their names and find Cora before it's too late.



A DECADE OF CENTER STAGE:

Celebrating the Stars of Tomorrow



PHOTO: Fox Cities P.A.C.

For the past decade, the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center has served as more than just a venue for students in the Center Stage High School Musical Theater Program; it has acted as a classroom, a common space, and even a launchpad. This year marks a major milestone with the 10th anniversary of the Center Stage Program, and later this month, the spotlight will shine on the talented young artists of Northeast Wisconsin.

Throughout the 2025-26 season, more than 2,200 students from 34 area high schools have participated in this transformative educational experience. Guided by professional adjudicators and fueled by a passion for the craft, these students have spent the year developing confidence and creativity as they collaborate with other young artists.

The season reaches its crescendo on Saturday, May 16, 2026, with a red carpet, Tony Awards®-style Showcase, featuring high-energy performances and heartfelt recognition for every participating school. Two standout

nominees will be selected to represent the region at The Jimmy Awards® in New York City this June, performing on a Broadway stage at the Minskoff Theatre.

"Watching this program grow over the past decade into a vital platform for young artists has been exhilarating to witness, but it's also a major milestone for the community," says Amy Gosz, Chief Programming Officer for the Center. "The talent and heart these students bring to the stage after 10 years of excellence is truly inspiring."

EVENT DETAILS

Center Stage Showcase

Saturday, May 16

7:30 p.m.

Fox Cities P.A.C.

Tickets for the Center Stage Showcase are on sale now. They can be purchased at the Fox Cities P.A.C. ticket office in person, by phone at (920) 730-3760, or online at foxcitiespac.com and Ticketmaster.



PHOTO: Fox Cities P.A.C.

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BY: SARAH PETERSON

Send your photo submissions to: editor@appletonmonthly.com



Friends and family of Appleton Bundt House are ready for a busy day at Downtown Appleton's Café Walk.



Badger Elementary's Men of Distinction (MOD), a mentoring program led by Kempton Freeman and Appleton West seniors, **show off their MOD polos provided by the AASD.**



Lola and Jenna **get out to vote at a polling place in Grand Chute.**



Appleton resident Maria and her handsome border collie, Jake, **enjoy a beautiful day on one of their many walks.**



Jakob Schutte and Lynne Clark **enjoy an evening on the Trestle Trail near Neenah.**



Tilly poses with Bella, who played "Young Anna," after an **Appleton North Theater performance of Disney's Frozen.** appletonnorththeatre.org

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APPLETON TO HOST APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

MAY 7-9, 2026

By TIM FROBERG

Appleton sounds like a town known for its apple production. That's not really the case, but if the hard work of the Smith family comes to fruition, Appleton could one day be known as the Apple Blossom City.

Babs Smith, her husband Michael, and son Matthew have been donating and planting apple blossom trees for years along the Apple Creek Trail.

With the assistance of volunteers and city officials, the Smiths have planted over 200 trees — the majority being apple blossom — along a 1.25-mile stretch of the trail near the Scheels USA Today Youth Sports Complex. Their goal is to eventually cover the trail's full five miles with apple blossom trees.



The nonprofit group — known as Apple Blossoms for Appleton — is taking another major step to give Appleton a strong connection with apple blossoms. The group will host the inaugural Apple Blossom Festival May 7-9 in the Apple Creek Trail area. It will feature fun events such as a bike ride, a dog walk, and a kite festival.

"We're very excited about it," said Babs Smith. "This

all started when my husband made a trip to Washington, D.C., to see the cherry blossoms in bloom. We thought, 'Hey, if Washington can be known for cherry trees, why can't Appleton be known for apple blossom trees?'"

The Smiths started slowly, planting three to five trees annually before increasing that number to 50. City of Appleton employees and leaders, including Mayor Jake Woodford, have assisted with the planting. The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region has established a fund to help maintain the trees and replace them when needed.

Most of the events for the free festival will be held in the USA complex area at 3300 E. Evergreen Drive.

The festival opens May 7 (Thursday) with the Pedals & Petals Bike Ride. It starts at the Stoneyard Restaurant and takes bikers along the Apple Creek Trail.

The Paws & Petals Dog Walk will follow on May 8 from 6-8 p.m., beginning at the USA complex. The two-mile walk on the Apple Creek Trail is a fundraiser for the Fox Valley Humane Society. Dogs are welcome but not mandatory.

"People are always walking their dogs on the trails, so we figured why not help dogs, cats, and all stray animals by partnering with the humane society," Smith said.

The festival's big day will be May 9. A Blooms, Birds & Butterflies nature walk along the trail kicks off the festivities at 9 a.m. A bird and monarch expert will be on site to identify different species, and an "I Spy" game is planned for the kids.

"There's a particular section of the trail that is a beautiful bird and butterfly area with lots of wildflowers," said Smith. "It's incredibly gorgeous. We just want people to come out and enjoy the trail."

A kite festival from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. — hosted by the Wisconsin Kites Association — will be one of Saturday's biggest events. Various kids' activities will follow from 4-6 p.m.

"When we talked about a festival, my son said, 'We need to have a kite festival because it's always windy there,'" Smith said. "It's the best place in Appleton to fly a kite. It's a wide-open area with very few trees."

A hot air balloon glow at sunset will also be part of Saturday's festivities, along with live music and a beer garden. A concession stand will also be available for several events.



For more information, visit the "Apple Blossoms for Appleton" Facebook page.





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GO!

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By SARAH PETERSON

1. SPRING BABY FARM ANIMALS EVENT

Spring comes to life at Mulberry Lane Farm's Spring Baby Animal Event! Enjoy chicks, ducklings, kid goats, lambs, piglets, calves, baby mini horses, kittens, and baby bunnies. Milk a cow, take a hayride, kiss a pig, and more. *The first weekend in May. Admission required.*

mulberrylanefarmwi.com/special-events/baby-farm-animal-event

3. APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Take part in Appleton's inaugural Apple Blossom Festival, a free, family-friendly event hosted by Apple Blossoms for Appleton. Events include a bike ride, dog walk, kite festival, and more! See page 38 for more information. *May 7-9 at USA Sports Complex along the Apple Creek Trail.*

Visit the Apple Blossoms for Appleton's Facebook page for more information.

5. BOOK SIGNING BY KARL L. STEWART

Karl L. Stewart, author of the acclaimed *See Bird* saga, an eight-book series of historical adventure fiction, will meet with readers and discuss his latest novel, *Charlie's Wings*, a story of World War I aviation. *May 9, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at The Bookstore in Appleton.*

thebookstoreappleton.com/events

7. LIGHT THE NIGHT MARKET

Experience the magic of Light the Night Market as downtown Appleton is illuminated with an enchanting open-air event including food trucks, arts and crafts, hands-on activities, street performers, live music, and glowing lights. *May 15, 5-10 p.m.*

appletondowntown.org/events/light-the-night-market

9. CRAFT YOUR OWN CLAY WHISTLE

Craft a working whistle out of clay and sculpt it into your favorite critter at this fun, beginner-friendly, two-part workshop! Part one includes hand-building and sculpting, and part two includes glazing and firing. *May 21, 5 p.m. to May 28, 7:00 p.m. at Mud and Prints.*

mudandprints.com

2. SPRING SHOP, SIP & STROLL WINE WALK

Shop, sip, and stroll your way through downtown Appleton — Derby style! Browse local shops while sampling festive wines. Wear your Derby hat or make one at a hat-making party, then get your photo taken with horses at Houdini Plaza. *May 2, 1-4 p.m.*

appletondowntown.org/events/spring-shop-sip-stroll

4. SOLE BURNER 5K WALK-RUN

Rally together to fight cancer as the Fox Valley community honors, celebrates, and remembers loved ones, and takes action for lifesaving change. This safe, family-friendly event includes a 5K run, 5K walk, kids' fun run, and virtual 5K. *May 9 in Appleton.*

runsignup.com/Race/WI/Appleton/SoleBurner5KWalkRun

6. MOSQUITOS & MOJITOS

Enjoy a lively, spring evening on Bubolz Nature Preserve's patio spaces nestled in one of their prairies. Sample three refreshing mojitos and try your luck at insect-themed bingo. Tickets are \$25; must be 21 or older. *May 14, 6-8 p.m.*

bubolzpreserve.org/bubolz-events/mosquitos-and-mojitos

8. CITY CELEBRATION: TOUCH-A-TRUCK

Get an up-close look at the vehicles that help keep our community moving - fire trucks, police vehicles, buses, heavy equipment, and more. Families can explore the vehicles and meet the people who operate them. *May 21, 4-7 p.m. at Appleton Memorial Park.*

Search Appleton City Celebration: Touch-A-Truck on Facebook for more information.

10. APPLETON MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Salute the service members who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in defense of the United States. The procession will start at the corner of College Avenue and Appleton Street and will end with a memorial service at Riverside Cemetery. *May 25 at 9 a.m.*

appletonwi.gov/community/appleton_parades/memorial_day





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Summer! & SO MUCH MORE!

June 21st marks the first day of summer 2026!

People will be looking forward to getting out and about, shopping and dining at their favorite establishments and discovering new places throughout the Fox Cities. **Appleton Monthly's SUMMER GUIDE** has it all and will be a must-read! There is so much to do this summer! Concerts, festivals, music, weekend escapes, outdoor dining, events, fireworks, fairs, and so much more! **PLUS Father's Day** is Sunday, June 21st!

AD DEADLINE IS TUESDAY, MAY 12TH

Plan now to reserve your ad in Appleton Monthly's **June Issue** by contacting Jon Croce at 920.707.0013 or email jcroce@appletonmonthly.com.

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WOLVERINES' WINNING FORMULA WASN'T TAINTED

By TIM FROBERG

Random thoughts while wondering what Sixto Lezcano's up to.

- If the Artemis II astronaut crew can travel more than 250,000 miles from Earth to the Moon, why can't prominent sports coaches (Ben Johnson, Matt LaFleur, Geno Auriemma, and Dawn Staley come to mind) walk 10 feet and exchange civil handshakes following games instead of throwing nationally televised tantrums?
- Johnson, who basically extended his middle finger to the Green Bay Packers and their entire fan base with his obnoxious behavior following the Bears' playoff win, would have no problem finding a costume if he ever decided to go on *The Masked Singer*. America, meet the "male donkey," also known as the "jackass."
- I'm just hoping that Roger Goodell — always looking to push boundaries with his global expansion agenda — doesn't get inspired by the Artemis II success and go intergalactic by scheduling the first NFL game on the moon.
- Michigan's NCAA men's basketball championship is truly reflective of the mad, mad world that college sports have become. Four of the Wolverines' starters — Elliot Cadeau, Yaxel Lendeborg, Morez Johnson, and Aday Mara — along with rotational player Roddy Gayle, were 2026 prizes out of the transfer portal.

The Wolverines forked over a reported \$10 million in NIL money to pay the five transfers and the remainder of their top-tier roster. It was money well spent, allowing Michigan to win its first national title since 1989.

The Wolverines weren't even the biggest spenders in the Big Dance. That award went to Kentucky, which invested \$22 million in its roster, only to be bounced in the second round.

I'm not condemning or even criticizing the Wolverines. They did nothing illegal or even immoral in their shopping spree, which allowed them to completely revitalize a team that went 8-24 two seasons ago. They simply took advantage of a

crazy system that didn't exist five years ago and now allows colleges to become the Los Angeles Dodgers and buy their way to championships.

Call it what you want, but I'm calling it a mess: a broken, chaotic system in a Wild, Wild West landscape that rewards the wealthy, discourages loyalty, and greatly challenges the "amateur status" that college athletes have held for years.

But don't blame the athletes for accepting the enormous payouts or the schools for offering them... because the rules say they can do it.



- I don't know what was the bigger mess: the March blizzard that dropped 27.5 inches of snow on the Appleton area, or the Milwaukee Bucks' 2025-26 season. Still, if the Bucks decide to trade Giannis, one word may best describe them: unwatchable.
- No problem here with MLB's new ABS Challenge system. Challenges have been reviewed and generally settled within 15 seconds, and early statistics show a 54% overturn rate, which has made for a more accurate game at a very minimal cost in time. Who would have thought that 2026 technology and a 187-year-old game could get along so well?
- Local baseball fans are getting a chance to get a close-up look at two

of the Milwaukee Brewers' top prospects. Wisconsin Timber Rattlers shortstop Luis Peña is the second-ranked player in the Milwaukee system and is rated No. 26 overall by MLB Pipeline. Third baseman Andrew Fischer — the Brewers' first-round pick in 2025 — is ranked No. 6 in the Milwaukee system and No. 99 by MLB Pipeline.

Hurry up, Appleton, and watch these two gems because they're not going to be in Grand Chute very long.

- In case you're actually wondering about Lezcano, he's now 72 years old — yes, 72 — and living in his native Puerto Rico after playing for five teams in a 12-year MLB career.

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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By JENNI EICKELBERG

WHY TAKE OUT IS Having a Moment

By JENNI EICKELBERG



Across the country, Americans are rethinking how — and where — they eat. Recent reporting from USA TODAY highlights a clear trend: as food prices continue to climb, more people are choosing to stay home rather than dine out. In the article, a story was shared about a busy mom who realized she was spending most of her food budget on delivery — a reminder of why many families are turning to carryout instead. Same great food, without the extra fees.

Families everywhere are feeling the strain of higher grocery and restaurant costs, and many are looking for ways to stretch their budgets without sacrificing the pleasure of a good meal. It's no surprise that people are searching for easier, more affordable ways to enjoy great meals without the full cost of dining out.

That's exactly where takeout shines. Takeout offers the perfect middle ground: the comfort and cost control of eating at home paired with the flavors, creativity, and convenience of restaurant cooking. Whether it's a cozy pasta dish, a fragrant curry, a wood-fired pizza, or a fresh grain bowl, takeout lets people enjoy a wide range of cuisines without the added expense of drinks, tips, or lingering at a table. From global comfort foods to local specialties, takeout brings a world of flavor right to your kitchen table. It's food on your terms — enjoyed on your couch, at your kitchen table, or even outside on the patio when Wisconsin weather cooperates.

With today's busy lifestyles, takeout also saves time — another major reason it has become such a go-to option for many households. Instead of waiting for a table, navigating a long dine-in experience, or trying to coordinate schedules, people can place an order, pick it up, and be eating within minutes. It's a simple way to reclaim part of the day while still enjoying a high-quality meal.

Today's takeout experience is also far more streamlined than it used to be. Nearly every restaurant now offers some form of carryout, and many have made the process incredibly simple with online ordering, quick-pay options, and designated pickup spots. Even restaurants that rely on call-in orders have refined their systems to keep things efficient, allowing customers to place an order, swing by, and be on their way in minutes. For busy families, shift workers, and anyone juggling a packed schedule, the ability to grab a great meal without the time commitment of dining in has become a real lifesaver.

Choosing takeout is also a meaningful way to support small businesses. Local restaurants rely on steady carryout orders, and every meal picked up helps keep kitchens busy, staff employed, and neighborhood favorites thriving.

As you explore this issue's Best Takeout picks from around the Fox Cities, you'll find a vibrant mix of flavors, traditions, and creativity — proof that great food doesn't require a reservation.

BEST TAKE OUT!



Angel's Restaurant serves homestyle comfort food made with care, from fluffy pancakes to hearty omelets and fresh lunches. Their generous portions and consistently well-made dishes — make takeout an easy, satisfying choice — bringing the flavors of this longtime Appleton favorite right to your table.

Angel's Restaurant

1401 E. John St., Appleton
920-993-8847
angelsappleton.com



Chicken Grill in Menasha offers fast, flavorful Mexican takeout, from grilled chicken plates to big burritos and street-style tacos. With generous portions, fresh ingredients, and a convenient weekday drive-thru, it's an easy way to bring bold, satisfying flavors home without getting out of your car.

Chicken Grill

1550 Appleton Road, Menasha
920-486-6198
chickengrillmenashareviews.com



Family-owned Christiano's Pizza crafts wood-fired pies with fresh-made dough and Wisconsin mozzarella. Their handcrafted flavors and quality ingredients show why pizza is the ultimate takeout food — hot, shareable, and always satisfying. Perfect for bringing a slice of this local favorite home.

Christiano's Pizza

2400 S. Kensington Drive #500,
Appleton
920-221-7529
christianospizza.com



BEST TAKE OUT!



El Azteca makes takeout easy with generous portions, fresh ingredients, and family recipes that have kept this local favorite thriving for over 25 years. From homemade guacamole to hearty entrées, their carryout brings bold, authentic Mexican flavor home — fast, affordable, and always satisfying.

El Azteca

201 W. Northland Ave., Appleton

920-996-0983

N474 Eisenhower Drive, Appleton

920-830-6605

elaztecawi.com



George's Steakhouse brings its classic supper-club comfort to your dining room table with easy, satisfying takeout. Their popular Friday Fish Fry—served with generous portions and traditional sides — makes carryout a perfect way to enjoy this longtime Appleton favorite without the wait.

George's Steakhouse

2208 S. Memorial Drive,
Appleton

920-733-4939

georgessteakhouseappleton.com



Good Company keeps takeout simple and satisfying. Their menu stretches from classic American favorites — burgers, steaks, and more — to a bit of Mexican and Italian fare, plus a Friday Fish Fry that travels well. Pickup is quick, portions are generous, and dinner lands on the table without any effort.

Good Company

110 N Richmond St., Appleton

920-735-9500

goodcompanyltd.com



Hank & Karen's Tavern is the spot when you're craving a real, non-fast food burger. Their hearty, no-nonsense tavern classics make takeout easy — great burgers, solid comfort food, and the familiar flavor of a neighborhood bar meal brought home, ready for a satisfying, low-fuss dinner.

Hank & Karen's Tavern

1937 E. John St., Appleton

920-731-1265

wiscobars.com/bars/appleton/hank-karens-tavern





Heritage 71 is all about wood-fired flavor you can bring home. With handcrafted sauces and rubs and the passion they put into every brisket, rib, steak, and smash burger, their slow-smoked meats deliver bold, satisfying takeout. Located just minutes outside of Appleton, it's an easy stop for hearty food to go.

Heritage 71

580 Robinhood Drive,
Sherwood
920-475-9924
heritage71.com



Lake Park Pub & Grill makes takeout easy with classic pub favorites — burgers, pizza, sandwiches, and especially their popular Friday fish options — ready for pickup. It's a convenient way to bring their local, game-day-friendly neighborhood tavern staples home without missing a beat, perfect for an effortless, satisfying evening meal.

Lake Park Pub & Grill

N8904 Lake Park Road, Harrison
920-739-1901
lakeparkpub.com



Mad Apple Burger & Billiard Co. brings scratch-made, locally sourced flavor to go. Their takeout lineup — burgers, wraps, apps, and more — lets you enjoy fresh, hand-crafted pub food at home without sacrificing quality or comfort, making it an easy choice when you want a satisfying meal made from real ingredients.

The Mad Apple Burger & Billiard Co.

3025 W. College Ave., Appleton
920-955-3990
madapplebilliards.com



BEST TAKE OUT!



Mark's East Side makes takeout simple with classic Wisconsin supper club food ready to go. Their popular Friday Fish Fry pairs perfectly with the convenience of drive-up service — place your order, pull up, and they'll bring your meal right to your car for an easy start to the weekend.

Mark's East Side

1405 E. Wisconsin Ave., Appleton
920-733-3600
markseastside.com



Mary's Family Restaurant makes takeout feel like a comforting home-cooked meal. From hearty breakfasts to classic comfort-food dinners, their carryout menu offers familiar favorites made with care. It's an easy way to enjoy the flavors of a longtime Appleton staple wherever your day takes you.

Mary's Family Restaurant

2312 N. Richmond St., Appleton
920-733-0948
marysfamilyrestaurant.com



Michiels Bar & Grill brings classic supper-club comfort to go. Their takeout menu — stacked with burgers, sandwiches, and hearty dinners — lets you enjoy the flavors of this longtime local favorite wherever you are. Perfect for nights when you want a satisfying supper-club meal without the sit-down wait.

Michiels Bar and Grill

1100 Appleton Road, Menasha
920-722-7885
michielsbarandgrill.com



Parker John's BBQ & Pizza makes takeout a flavor-packed win, with slow-smoked meats, signature sauces, and wood-fired pizzas ready to go. Their carryout menu brings bold, comforting barbecue and crowd-pleasing pies straight to your table, making it easy to enjoy their big, smoky flavors at home.

Parker John's BBQ & Pizza

2331 E. Evergreen Drive, Appleton
920-815-3264
124 Main St., Menasha
920-215-6568
parkerjohns.com





P rime Steer is a dependable choice when you're craving a true supper-club dinner to go. Whether you're in the mood for a perfectly prepared steak or a generous cut of prime rib, they deliver every time. You'll also find nightly seafood and fish options, all at prices that stay refreshingly reasonable for the quality.

Prime Steer

704 Hyland Ave., Kaukauna
920-766-9888
primesteersc.com



S ai Ram Indian Cuisine offers vibrant, flavor-forward takeout, from aromatic curries to tandoori specialties. Their carryout menu makes it easy to enjoy fresh, authentic Indian dishes at home — perfect for anyone craving comforting spice, bold, beautifully balanced flavors, and the ease of bringing truly traditional Indian cooking straight to their table.

Sai Ram Indian Cuisine

253 W. Northland Ave., Appleton
920-733-3003
sairamcuisine.com



Most restaurants now offer takeout, making it easy to enjoy your favorite meals at home. Many places provide convenient online ordering through their websites or apps, while others still use the classic call-ahead approach. With so many options available — and all just a short drive away — takeout has become a standard service across nearly every type of restaurant.

HERE ARE SOME OTHER TAKE OUT-WORTHY OPTIONS:

- Acoca Café** – Appleton
- Appleton Beer Factory** – Appleton
- Author's Kitchen + Bar** – Appleton
- Basil Café** – Appleton
- Broken Tree Pizza** – Neenah
- Fratellos Waterfront Restaurant** – Appleton
- Good Company** – Appleton
- Greene's Pour House** – Neenah
- Hollander's Pub & Grill** – Little Chute
- Little Diner Express** – Appleton
- Lindo Mexican** – Appleton
- Maple Tree Restaurant** – Appleton
- Osorio's Latin Fusion** – Appleton
- Ototo** – Appleton
- Pullmans at Trolley Square** – Appleton
- Rookie's Sports Bar & Grill** – Appleton
- Sangria's Mexican Grill** – Appleton
- Solea Mexican Grill** – Neenah
- Stone Arch Brewpub** – Appleton
- Tanner's Grill & Bar** – Kimberly
- The Bar on the Avenue** – Appleton
- The Legacy Supper Club** – Appleton
- The Wooden Nickel** – Appleton
- Tipsy Taco** – Appleton
- Weathervane** – Menasha
- Zuppas Market Café & Catering** – Neenah

Chicken, Spinach, and Artichoke Dip Sliders

By CARLY CERNIGLIA



These chicken, spinach, and artichoke dip sliders are amazing! The creamy spinach and artichoke dip, paired with the soft slider bun and savory buttery topping, are a match made in heaven. Great for parties or a weeknight dinner, these sliders will get eaten up in no time!

Ingredients

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
6 ounces fresh baby spinach
One white onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
12 ounces marinated artichoke hearts, drained and diced
8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
1/2 cup mayonnaise
8 ounces shredded mozzarella or Swiss cheese
1/2 cup Greek yogurt
24 slider rolls, cut in half

For the butter glaze

8 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon poppy seeds

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Place chicken on an oiled baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 165 degrees. Remove from the oven and let cool. Dice into small pieces.

While the chicken is cooling, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to a medium saucepan and bring to a medium heat. Add onion and sauté until translucent and starting to caramelize. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring. Add spinach and cook until wilted. Turn off the heat.

In a large bowl, mix together the onion and spinach mixture, cream cheese, mayonnaise, cheese, Greek yogurt, artichoke hearts, chicken, and remaining seasonings.

Place the bottom halves of the sliders into a greased 9x13 baking dish. Top with the chicken, spinach, and artichoke dip. Place the tops of the buns on top. In a small dish, melt butter for the butter glaze. Mix in the remaining glaze ingredients and brush evenly onto the tops of the sliders. Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake again for 7-8 minutes, until golden brown and melty. Serve hot and enjoy!

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200 E Washington St., Suite 2F
Appleton, WI 54911

920.993.9994
wish.org/wisconsin

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MOTHER'S DAY BUFFET

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Michiels Bar & Grill

1100 Appleton Rd. Menasha | 920-722-7885 | michielsbarandgrill.com

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GO-TO COFFEE – TO GO

By JASON PATZER



With this being the “Best Take Out” issue and the fact that every coffee shop is basically a take-out option if you want it to be, I decided to highlight a relatively new coffee company in the area that specializes in take out.

Complex Coffee Roasters is a specialty coffee company that only does ready-to-drink (RTD) canned coffee drinks. They started in June 2025, and you may have even seen them at Mile of Music. I wish I had. Sadly, I didn’t discover them until just this past February, when I saw Jake, the owner, sampling them at Urban Market in Neenah during the Warm Your Heart event. My column is only supposed to be 500 words, and that is not enough to explain how excited I am to have found this company. These aren’t corporate coffees canned at some global warehouse and shipped across the country. These are cafe-quality drinks made with care and thoughtfulness that just happen to be served in a can and are made right here in Appleton.

If you’ve followed my socials, you’ll know I have long advocated for and loved coffee and citrus together. Whether it’s the Mazagron from Whisk & Arrow, my beloved espresso tonic, or the espresso-orange juice trend of a few years ago, citrus and coffee just work. To the uninitiated, it sounds weird, but once you try a well-made version, you’ll understand. That’s where Complex Coffee and their Squeezzy line come in. Currently,

there are two options in the Squeezzy line: lemon or grapefruit, each offering a perfect balance of coffee, fruit, and sugar for a refreshing treat.

Coffee is primarily known and associated with warmth and comfort, rightfully so. However, there is no reason it can’t also be known as a refreshing thirst quencher. “A drink that tastes like sunshine and feels like possibility” and “reimagining what coffee can be” are two phrases you can find on the Complex Coffee website, and that’s exactly what they are doing. Now, don’t get me wrong — these aren’t brand-new inventions. The Mazagron I mentioned above has been around since about 1840, but bringing these drinks to the RTD market and trying to change the mass mindset that coffee can be refreshing and still coffee-forward, is relatively new. Not to mention, quite a tall task.

So, I’m giving you homework today — probably the easiest and most enjoyable homework assignment you’ve ever had. If you’re on socials, give Complex Coffee Roasters a follow, then go to their website for a list of locations that sell their product. My short list is Urban Market in Neenah; Wagner Market in Oshkosh; Jacobs Meat Market or Emery & Pearl, both in Appleton. Buy yourself a can and try it with an open mind. If you aren’t quite ready for a Squeezzy, try one of their seasonal oat milk lattes or the Natural Ethiopian black coffee, which is also the base coffee for the Squeezzy line.



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

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Savory Breakfast Scones

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

Breakfast just keeps getting better with these savory breakfast scones! Packed with bacon, cheese, and scallions, these savory scones are perfect for dunking into an over-easy egg or served warm with a pat of butter. These also freeze well for easy prep! Just slice and freeze the dough, and bake from frozen.

Makes 16

Ingredients

10 slices bacon, cooked and diced	1 teaspoon salt
Four scallions, sliced	1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 cups shredded cheese	1 teaspoon onion powder
8 tablespoons cold butter, cubed	2 cups plus 4 tablespoons heavy cream
4 cups flour	Optional:
1 tablespoon sugar	One egg
5 1/2 teaspoons baking powder	Flaky sea salt

Directions

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a food processor, add flour, butter, salt, baking powder, and sugar and pulse until the butter is pea-sized or smaller. Transfer the mixture to a large mixing bowl and carefully mix in remaining ingredients. Work together with your hands into a loose ball. Place the bowl with the dough in the refrigerator for 15 minutes.

Once rested, remove the dough from the bowl and shape it into two 8-inch discs. Cut each disc into 8 pieces. Place pieces on a parchment-lined sheet pan, at least 1 inch apart.

Optional: Whisk the egg and brush it onto the scones. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt.

Bake the scones for 15-20 minutes, until golden. Let cool slightly and serve. Store leftovers in the refrigerator. To freeze, either freeze the dough after it's been cut into pieces, or freeze the baked scones in a freezer bag. Enjoy!



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LET'S MAKE LOCAVORE Include Wine

By STEVE JOHNSON

We are all familiar with the locavore, or local food, movement. Whether it's the greens for their salads or the protein from grass-fed cattle down the road, it's the pride of many chefs and restaurant owners in this state. But what about loca-bibers, those who seek beverages that also reflect local, whether it's in the beer, distilled spirits, or wine they enjoy?

It appears that while the beers and spirits are perceived as new and interesting beverages to these establishments, the wines seem to carry the baggage of a past reputation. The reality is that the raw materials for beer and distilled beverages are often less local than they are for the wine. I contend that a beverage is authentically local if it is not only crafted locally, but also grown locally. Furthermore, the quality and style of authentic Wisconsin Origin (grown and crafted) wines have seen marked improvement and offer a very food-friendly aspect.

As a winegrower and winemaker here in Northeast Wisconsin, I can attest to the coalescing of a regional style and increasing quality of wines grown here. We most recently competed in the 2026 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, the largest in North America. In this competition — with over 50 sommeliers and wine industry professionals evaluating over 5,000 wines — we were honored to receive the fourth most medals of the participating 1,000 wineries. Every one of our 28 medaled wines was grown in Wisconsin, and I would guess the majority of the judges had never heard of or tasted wines from grapes called Frontenac, Marquette, and Lacrescent.

They say that what “grows together, goes together.” The truth is that wine is the epitome of local expression. The soils, topography, and the climate of a region directly impact the character and expression of the wine as much, if not more than, the locally sourced ingredients used for food entrees.

It is ironic to read many accounts of how French tourists in restaurants in New York will often order wines from New York before French wines. Europeans and the foodies of today acknowledge that there is something to enjoy when the wine comes from the same land from which the food was derived.

The reality is that cabernet often goes with steak and chardonnay with seafood. However, those who know wine and food will tell you that there are many foods that pair better with the dozens — if not hundreds — of other wines that you could enjoy with them. Lower alcohol, aromatic, less tannic, and crisper wines are often better complements to entrees.

So that you can experience this for yourself, I make a simple request: the next time you dine out at one of our fine restaurants priding themselves on the locavore philosophy. After the meal, let the staff know that the food and service were amazing, but you would love it even more if they considered some “Wisconsin Origin” wines to enjoy during the next visit.

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





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INGREDIENTS

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and 1/2 ounce simple syrup)
Club soda to top
Raspberries, lemon rounds,
and a sprig of mint for garnish.

DIRECTIONS

Combine liquid ingredients and berries in a shaker filled with ice.
Shake well until chilled, then strain into a highball glass over ice.
Top with club soda for effervescence.
Garnish with lemon rounds, extra berries, and a sprig of mint.

BREWS



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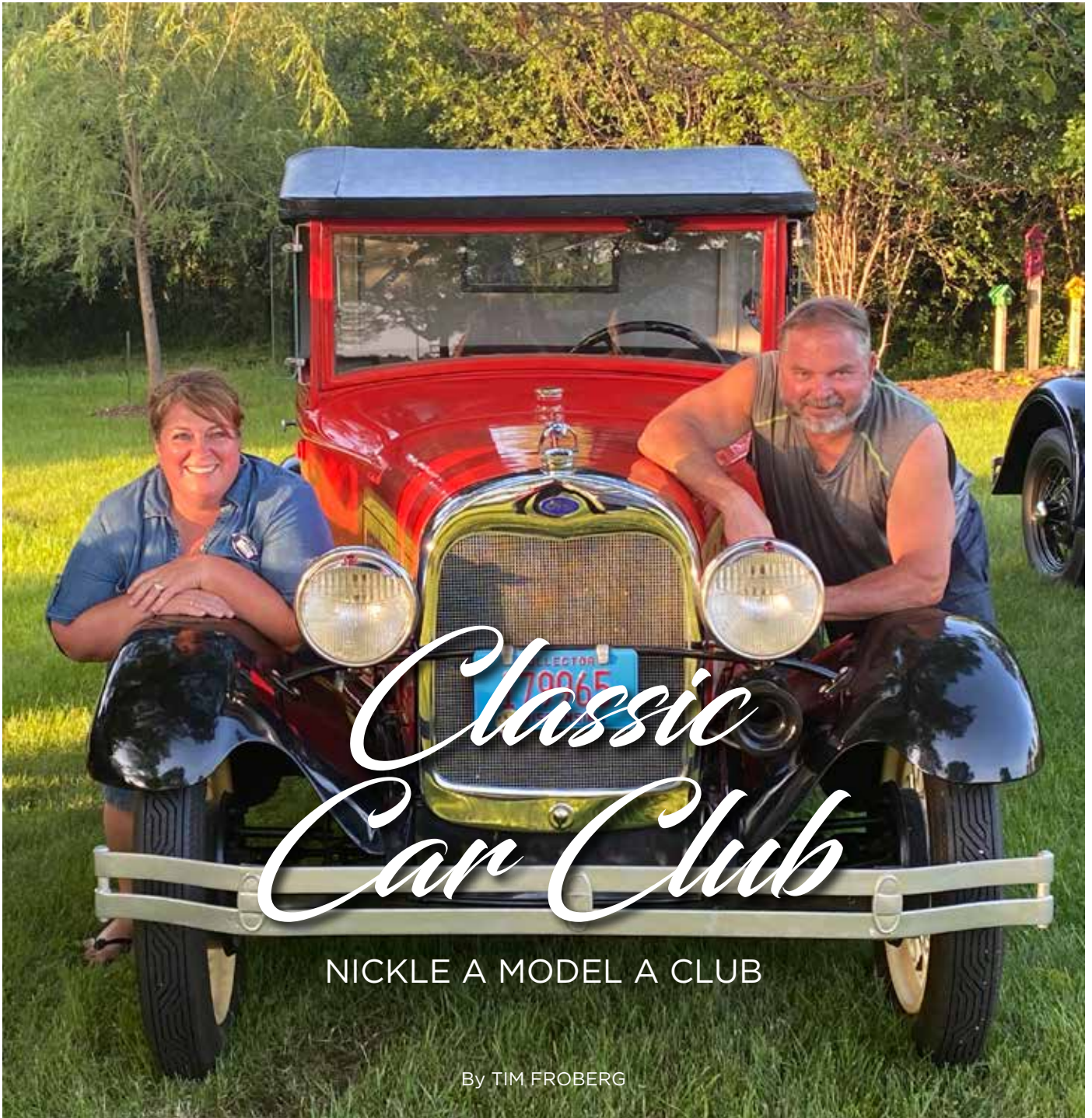
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ALL REVVED UP

MODEL A CLUB ENJOYS CARS FROM ROARING TWENTIES

By TIM FROBERG



MODEL A CARS ARE AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY ON WHEELS.

Still, members of the Nickle A Region Model A Club do more than just look at their cherished vintage vehicles.

They drive the near-century-old cars — just like they were 2026 models.

"We drive them all over the place," said club director Roy Farley. "We take tours with them on long trips to places like Niagara Falls, Branson, Mo.; Pennsylvania, and Ohio."

Club member Fred Pennings of Kaukauna added: "I use mine all the time. My (Model A) pickup truck is what I use to go get groceries. If I need a gallon of milk, I'm going to jump into my little pickup truck and go get it."

The Nickle A Region club – formed in 1964 – is based in Appleton and dedicated to the restoration, driving, and preservation of Model A cars. The club has more than 100 members and brings together Model A lovers for social events, car shows such as the Iola Car Show/Swap Meet, tours, and monthly meetings. It is a nonprofit organization run by a board of directors.

"It's just a lot of great people," said Farley, a De Pere resident who runs the food service department at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton. "We have people who work or have worked a lot of different jobs. We have electricians, plumbers, auto mechanics, truck drivers, engineers and we all help each other.

"If someone needs a starter, they contact the club and right away someone will help them out. That's what makes our club special: great people."

One of them is Jerry Braasch, a long-time club member who resides in Van Dyne.

"Everyone is always willing to help each other out," said Braasch, who drove his Model A 1,301 miles over the past year. "If someone has trouble with their Model A, a club member will often drive over to their house and get them going. It reminds me of the days when doctors made house calls."

AN UPGRADE TO MODEL Ts

Model A cars were produced by Ford from 1927-1931 with more than 4 million sold. They replaced the Model T vehicles that were built from 1908-1927 and were the first mass-produced, affordable cars.

The Model T — also known as the "Tin Lizzie" — was a revolutionary automobile that basically brought cars into

everyday life and was a much simpler vehicle. The Model T initially needed to be hand-cranked to start before eventually getting an optional electric starter and was far more basic in terms of instrumentation.

The Model A was a more refined, powerful, and comfortable successor to the Model T. It had a standard electrical starter along with upgraded instrumentation, improved lighting, hydraulic shocks, and more conventional driving controls.

The Model A was also larger than the Model T, with an extra 3.5 inches in wheelbase and over 24 inches in length. It weighed more than 1,000 pounds more than the Model T, which was slightly taller in terms of height. Both cars were developed by Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company.



"Model As have a real nice shape to them and just have a cool look," said Farley, whose wife, Julie, is also a prominent member of the club. "They have two-door and four-door models, so you can seat up to four comfortably. I also own a Model T and Model Ts have been around forever, but I like the Model A better."

Sedans are the common type of Model A cars and are either two-door (commonly termed "Tudor") or four-door (commonly termed "Fordor"). Other body styles include coupes, open-air models such as roadsters, and pickup trucks.

Model As are powered by 40-horsepower, 4-cylinder engines and some can reach speeds up to 65 mph, although most are driven at comfortable cruising speeds between 40 and 45 mph.

Pennings owns four Model A vehicles: a 1931 Sedan, a 1931 four-door, a 1930 pickup truck, and a 1930 fuel delivery truck.

"Model As are easy to drive and relatively easy to find parts for because they made so many of them," said Pennings. "It's such a simple car. It really doesn't have a lot of parts. Our club is great. Everyone helps one another and it's a fun hobby."

What type of reaction does Pennings hear from fellow drivers when he hits the highway with one of his Model As?

"I get a lot of thumbs-ups," said Pennings with a laugh. "And a lot of people yell, 'Hey, my grandpa had a car like that.'"

Pennings was just 17 when he obtained his first Model A.

"It's not as safe as driving a modern car which has so many features like backup camera, lane-changing features, and cruise control, but if you just kind of drive it cautiously, you'll be fine," Pennings said.

RUMBLING IN

Farley owns five Models Ts, including two trucks and a coupe with a rumble seat: a foldable, exterior-mounted seat at the rear of the vehicle designed to carry up to two passengers.

"The rumble seat was known as the mother-in-law seat," joked Farley. "You put your mother-in-law back there and you don't have to listen to her. Of the five, my favorite is the red truck."

Braasch owns a 1931 Model T coupe.

"Way back when I was a young lad in the 1940s, my dad was a backyard mechanic," said Braasch. "He would buy Model As, fix them up and sell them. That's when I learned how to drive a Model A."

The price to buy a Model A generally ranges from \$10,000-\$40,000, depending on the condition and restoration level.

"You can get a nice two or four-door for like \$18,000," said Farley. "They're pretty reasonable in price, but unfortunately the prices have been going up. Back in the 1940s, you could buy one for 50 bucks. You could trade a case of beer for one. There were lots of them and they were accessible."

"Most of them are very fixable and easy to work on. You can go to Fleet Farm and buy a tractor battery that fits in them. The trucks are harder to find and usually cost more."

Although many of Nickle A members are retired, young people are also showing interest in the vintage cars.

"Most of the people in our club are a bit elderly, but I tell you what, a lot of kids are getting interested and involved," said Farley. "My grandson is going to be 13 and we're just finishing up a Model A Doodlebug (a homemade tractor created from Model A cars) for him."

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

The Nickle A Club is generous to the community, both financially and in terms of volunteering. It is offering three \$1,000 scholarships this year to Fox Valley Technical College for its automotive program. It also supplies volunteers to help at various car shows, including the well-known Iola Car Show and Swap Meet where club members put in more than 2,000 volunteer hours last year.

"Our club members are very giving and we try and do a lot for others," Farley said. "We volunteer for Iola all-year long. We're called the A team for Iola. About 25 guys will usually go there once a week. We'll paint, mend fences and build picnic tables."

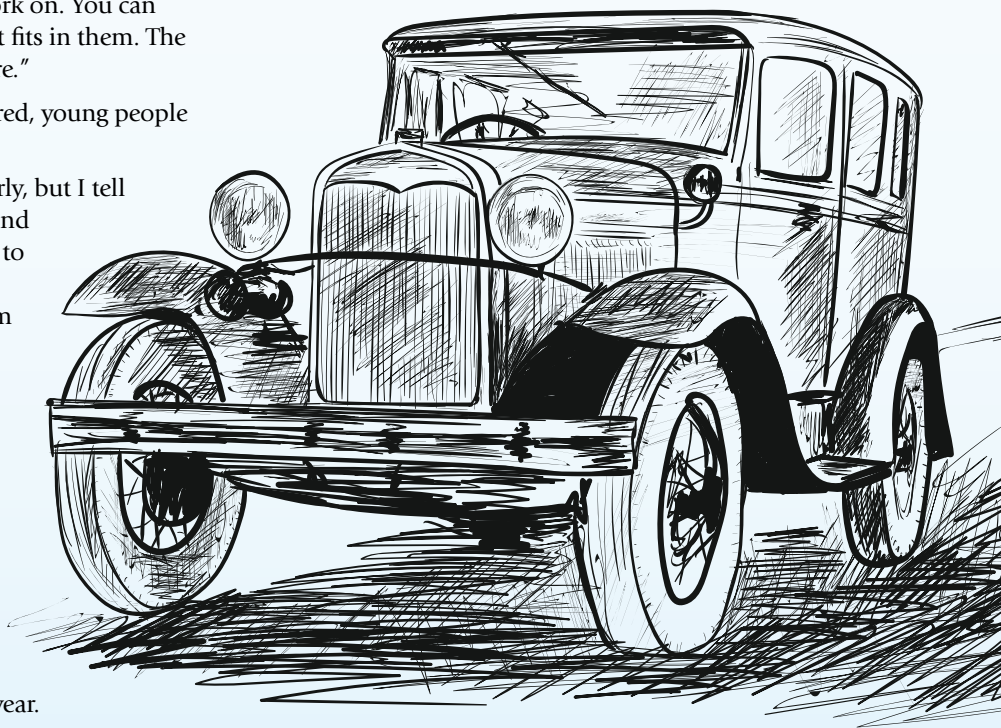
"Last year we raised over \$18,000 for our club and donated back \$10,000 to Iola to help preserve and promote old classic cars. We give money to children's hospital, fire stations, for juvenile diabetes, all kinds of stuff."

Club members like to hit the highway, too, in their Model As. They travel together, taking spring and fall tours across Wisconsin and the Midwest. In addition to the Iola Car Show and Swap Meet, the club usually participates at Grignon Mansion events in Kaukauna, Road America vintage rallies and Model A Days in Hickory Corners, Mich.

"I feel very comfortable when we go on tours because two or three of our members are class A mechanics," said Braasch. "If we have a breakdown, we always feel comfortable that we'll be able to get that car going and get to our destination."

The club recently named its award winners for the year. Bob Hegner received the high mileage award for driving 2,638 miles in his Model A. His brother, Gene Hegner, was selected as the region's outstanding member and praised for his mechanical expertise and generosity in helping repair broken-down cars. Randy Burhop was named as the Iola Car Show outstanding member-volunteer of the year, while Neil Damsheuser was presented an Iola Car Show lifetime achievement award.

To join, or learn more about the Nickle A Club, go to its website, nicklearegion.com.



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RED, WHITE, & BLUE

CELEBRATING AMERICANA THROUGH TRADITION AND DECOR

By SARAH PETERSON

Since I can remember, my family and friends have gathered to watch the Appleton Memorial Day parade. In Wisconsin, that Monday marks the near end of school, the near start of summer, and the beginning of what I refer to as “red, white, and blue season.” We dig out our patriotic clothing, grab our wagons and mini flags, and set our chairs along the curb. My aunt and uncle live across from Riverside Cemetery, where the parade concludes in a ceremonial rifle salute and taps. They fill their porch with pots of hot coffee, fresh orange juice, and the best home-baked bagels, cinnamon rolls, and scones you will ever eat. Family and friends slowly arrive, emerging from the long winter, until the porch and yard are brimming with excited chatter, the children are running in the now green grass, and outdoor life is no longer a pipe dream.

As the thump-thump and ta-ta-ta of marching bands begin to echo around us, we make our way to the street. It’s a short parade, but a deeply meaningful one — one that I keep my sunglasses on for. From local military veterans and service groups to young scouts, and of course, the faithful fallen. Lee Greenwood blasts God Bless the U.S.A. from a crackling parade float speaker, and the children stand unusually still, silently saluting and waving their flags, their little chests puffed with pride. The children, the chatter, the coffee, the drums...the service — the country I cherish.

One thing I always appreciated about Memorial Day at my aunt’s house was her simple yet charming decor. From flag pennants strung across trees, to vintage plaid Thermoses and wooden picnic baskets, to old childhood toys. I realize my patriotic memories are relatively young in comparison to centuries before me, but I’m inspired to weave some American nostalgia into my own decor. This year, as America celebrates its 250th birthday — a semiquincentennial of history and all the struggles, growth, achievements, and change that go along with it — vintage Americana decor is as much a part of the celebration as the parades, cookouts, and fireworks.



Inspired by the vibrant tapestry of cultural heritage across the United States, Americana pieces evoke the character and traditions that wrote our nation's story. From the early colonial period to the mid-20th century, collectors, designers, and homemakers alike have found priceless value in timeless items such as tin and porcelain signage, patchwork quilts, shaker-style furniture, vintage flags, food or tobacco tins, ceramic crocks, wooden shipping crates, antique books, folk



Other treasures, such as farm tools, primitive kitchen items, ironstone pottery, and American-made enamelware are also popular, giving a nod to our roots. Retro items, including diner items, jukeboxes, roller skates, and classic car memorabilia are considered mid-century Americana style, representing the more playful side of our past.



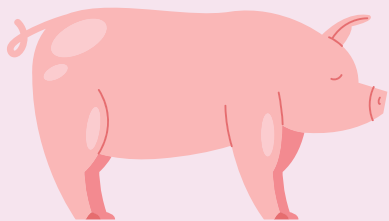
Simple Ideas for Adding Americana Decor to Your Home:

- ★ Fill vintage tins, baskets, or old jars with flags.
- ★ Stack patriotic-themed or red, white, and blue books on a table or shelf.
- ★ Hang an old quilt on a hook or over the arm of a chair.
- ★ Incorporate wooden items such as old crates, spoons, or spoons.
- ★ Shop thrift or antique stores for vintage tins; stack to display.
- ★ Frame and hang a vintage flag, print, or painting.
- ★ Stack antique ironstone dishes.
- ★ Fill a vintage picnic basket with flowers and flags for festive porch decor.

Americana pieces are unique in that they tell many stories — stories of bygone eras, memories made, moments in our lives, or times in our history. Beyond their decorative appeal, these pieces can serve as symbols of gratitude, pride, and the enduring spirit of the “red, white, and blue” traditions that bring us together.

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.



LOVE AT FIRST OINK

Discovering Saving Snouts

By KRISTEN TLACHAC

“KEEP YOUR HEART KIND, YOUR HANDS GENTLE, AND YOUR BOOTS MUDDY.”

That was the inscription on my Christmas gift from my husband. Last year, we toured Saving Snouts, a special-needs pig sanctuary in Kaukauna — and we fell in love!

My love for pigs began over a decade ago when I saw a photo of a “teacup” pig adorably nestled in a large mug. I had no idea there was a pig rescue in the Appleton area, and when I heard about it, I jumped at the chance to help.



Most people agree cats and dogs are easy to love, but pigs?! Surprise — they are just as easy to love! They just have hooves, not paws. But for many “animal lovers,” their compassion sometimes ends at the plate. Farm animals are seen differently than companion animals, when they all want the same thing — they want to live.

Saving Snouts is an amazing sanctuary. Unlike factory farms that send pigs to their death, sanctuaries like Saving Snouts give pigs a life — an amazing life! A life filled with lots of friends, cozy beddies, and full bellies. The pigs lounge in their wallows and bask in the sunshine. Every need is attended to by the exceptionally compassionate founder, TJ Dercks, who goes beyond the extra mile for all of them.

Life wasn’t always so sweet for these pigs. Many were rescued from neglect, cruelty, animal attacks, or testing. While some were born with physical differences or bravely jumped from a moving truck headed to slaughter. At Saving Snouts, they have healed not only their broken bodies, but also their broken spirits. Although their backstories are heartbreaking, their lives are now full of joy. They know that not all hands hurt — kind hands can heal.

Saving Snouts opened my eyes to the true wonder of pigs. Did you know that piglets play with squeaky toys just like puppies? Pigs love treats, tummy rubs, and get the zoomies — they run to those they love.

I’ve learned that “teacup” pigs don’t exist — they are actually very young, malnourished baby pot-bellies. I have also learned that although they are an intelligent, friendly, and social species, pigs are killed worldwide by the millions every day. For the precious few that are saved, you’ll witness something extraordinary: a contentment that shines. You’ll see their loving personalities, and perhaps it will stir something deep in your heart.

When my husband and I share that we volunteer at a pig sanctuary, we chuckle at people’s total loss of words. Many look bewildered before proclaiming, “I didn’t even know that was a thing!”

But it is. Now they know, and you do, too. You may not know a pig personally (yet), but once you fall in love with one, it’s so very easy to keep them in your heart — and off your plate.

Consider compassion — watch for upcoming events and tour schedules at savingsnouts.org and get ready to fall in love with pigs!

Kristen Tlachac is a dedicated volunteer at Saving Snouts, an organization dedicated to providing a sanctuary for pigs with special needs. Saving Snouts is founded and directed by TJ Dercks.

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Luxating Patellas in Dogs and Cats: A Quick Guide for Pet Owners

By DR. SETH OBERSCHLAKE

A luxating patella, commonly referred to as a “slipping kneecap,” is a frequent orthopedic condition in dogs and is less commonly seen in cats. It occurs when the patella (kneecap) moves out of its normal groove in the femur, resulting in abnormal tracking of the knee joint. Most commonly, the patella luxates to the inside of the knee (medially), though it can occasionally luxate to the outside (laterally). In most cases, this is a developmental condition, meaning pets are born with subtle anatomical variations that predispose the kneecap to shift out of place over time. It is particularly common in small breed dogs, although large breeds and cats can also be affected. Less commonly, trauma can result in a luxating patella.

Clinical signs vary depending on severity, but many pet owners notice intermittent skipping or hopping on a hind leg, brief episodes of holding a leg up, or sudden lameness that seems to resolve quickly. Over time, some pets may develop stiffness, decreased activity, or more persistent lameness. Cats often show more subtle changes, such as a decreased willingness to jump or reduced overall activity.



Diagnosis is typically made during a physical examination, where the veterinarian assesses how easily the patella can be displaced. The condition is graded from I to IV, with Grade I being mild and often incidental, and Grades III and IV representing more severe, often persistent luxations. Radiographs may be recommended to evaluate bone structure and assess for secondary arthritis.

Even in mild cases, luxating patellas can contribute to long-term joint wear, arthritis, and an increased risk of ligament injury in dogs, such as tearing the cranial cruciate ligament. Treatment depends on the severity and clinical signs. Mild cases are often managed conservatively with weight control, joint supplements, anti-inflammatory medications, and controlled exercise. More severe or symptomatic cases may require surgical correction to stabilize the kneecap and improve joint function.

Overall, the prognosis for pets with luxating patellas is very good, especially in smaller breeds. Larger breed dogs with patellar luxation may have a less favorable long-term prognosis, as they are more likely to have concurrent orthopedic conditions, such as hip dysplasia. Many pets with mild disease live normal lives without surgery, while those requiring surgical intervention typically experience significant improvement. If you notice any changes in your pet’s gait or mobility — even if intermittent — a veterinary evaluation is recommended, as early detection and management can greatly improve long-term outcomes.

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

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Abigail

Abigail is a 5-year-old spayed female mixed breed. Abigail is everything you could want in a dog: snuggly, playful with toys, and great with children of all ages. She does prefer to be your only pet, but promises with her love, you will be happy with just one dog in your life!



Apollo

Apollo is an incredibly handsome 1.5-year-old mixed breed. He is spunky, outgoing and exuberant. He has been working on his manners in foster care and making excellent progress. Apollo does well with other dogs that can match his energy level and play style.



Amanda

Amanda is an 8-year-old spayed female. She is a sweet and gentle girl that can be bashful at first, but we see her come out of her shell a little more every day. Amanda has lived with cats previously, and may enjoy a feline friend with proper introductions.



Marguerite

Marguerite is a 2-year-old spayed female. She has proven to be outgoing in her foster home, is curious, and enjoys head pets and ear scratches! She may enjoy having another feline companion in the home.



Planting Herbs in Containers

By HOLLY BOETTCHER

There's something magical about the burst of flavor and aroma that fresh herbs bring to a dish. Whether it's a cooling sprig of mint in your water or a mojito, a sprinkle of dill elevating grilled fish, or the earthy blend of rosemary, olive oil, and spices transforming roasted potatoes into a feast for the senses, fresh herbs have a way of turning the simplest meals into unforgettable experiences. Just thinking about it has my taste buds tingling and my kitchen calling.

If this has you dreaming of planting an herb garden, this is the perfect time to start. Garden centers have dozens of different herbs sitting on their shelves, ready for you to plant as soon as all dangers of frost are behind us. Some of my favorites: spearmint, chocolate mint, basil, lemon thyme, rosemary, curly parsley, flat-leaf parsley, purple sage, pineapple sage, variegated sage, chives, oregano, and dill, to name a few. Where to begin:

Check Out Your Space

What size container should you use? You will want to use a large planter, so the roots have enough room to grow. And make sure your container has proper drainage. Be creative! I like to plant my herb gardens in old wash tubs, wooden barrels, hanging baskets, or even in old shoes!

***Holly's Garden Tip:** Read labels so you know how much room you need. Don't overcrowd. Keep in mind that the herbs will fill in space, so give them enough room to spread out.*

Proper Soil

Use a good potting soil mix so your herbs have the proper environment to thrive in. Herbs are not needy as far as fertilizer goes.

Add Some Charm

I love to add a bit of whimsical charm to my containers. A simple trinket of any sort will add additional interest to your container.

Lots of Sunshine and Don't Overwater

Most herbs are sun lovers and need at least 4 hours of sunlight each day. Water when the soil is dry to the touch, although basil will tolerate more moist soil.

Beware of Mint

DO NOT plant mint in the ground or an existing bed, because it is highly invasive. It re-seeds itself, then spreads like CRAZY and can become difficult to control. I have a friend who planted chocolate mint in her garden, and 10 years later, she still has a lawn intertwined with mint. Although Gina

tells me it is a wonderful scent when mowing her lawn! Dill also re-seeds itself; however, it is easy to manage if you need to control it from spreading.

***Holly's Garden Tip:** Plant mint in a container so it doesn't spread.*

Annual vs. Perennial Herbs

Many herbs are annuals, which means they will not survive outside in Wisconsin's winter. Examples are basil, dill, parsley, and rosemary. Others, such as chives, oregano, and thyme, are perennials, so they will come up year after year.

Simple Joys

Savor the simple joys of summer, like stepping onto a sunny patio to snip fresh herbs for your favorite dish. Why not start your own herb garden today?



AN OBITUARY FOR “ARE WE THERE YET”

It wasn't so long ago that, on any family road trip, the front passenger seat was not the place to sit if you wanted to relax. Napping? Out of the question. Sitting shotgun next to Dad meant you had a job to do, and one that was vital to the mission itself: you were on atlas duty.

No gentle voice telling you that, after the next left, your destination is on the right. No helpful rerouting when you miss a turn. No hyperlinked map of every coffee cup and fuel pump for 1,000 miles in every direction. It was just you, the open road, and a highlighter to mark up a tattered Rand McNally. It was awesome.

Every summer, the Sjostroms piled into a two-toned Suburban for a three-day voyage to the Pacific Northwest, and the entire trip would be one long dalliance with disaster. Would we find a gas station in the vast swath of nothingness that is eastern Montana? Would there be any hotel vacancies in Wallace, Idaho, when Dad finally decided he'd heard enough Beach Boys and Ray Stevens for one day? Would there be a nearby payphone if/when some mechanical bugaboo befouled us in the high desert of Washington? It was impossible to be sure, and it was that faint chance for calamity that made it fun.

“Fun,” of course, is maybe a revision on my part, mostly because we had to make our own. I had a tablet, several of them actually, but they were spiral-bound and filled with transcribed

Stryper lyrics. I remember one trip when my older brother and I rehearsed the harmonies from the Boyz II Men “II” album for several hundred melismatic miles. I truly can't tell you how many truckers I mooned on that stretch of I-90, but it's a lot. And it's this specific



ONE MORE THING

By TYLER SJOSTROM

brand of chaotic adventure — “Getting lost builds character,” my dad used to say — that has been incrementally smothered by the efficiency of every facet of the modern road trip.

I realized this a few weeks ago as we pulled out of the driveway for a family

spring break trip to Gatlinburg. The odyssey itself was a milestone: our first “real” road trip that wasn't a pilgrimage to visit the biggest Ray Stevens fans in North Dakota. Leading up to our departure date, I was craving that same devil-may-care ethos I enjoyed as a kid.

But the 21st century wouldn't allow it. Before we'd even hit the interstate, push notifications presaged everything to come — every turn pre-mapped, every hotel pre-booked, every tollbooth pre-ignored by me. Our destiny, preordained.

I'll remember it as a wonderful trip, and I'm certain my wife and boys will too. In between chapters of a Toy Story marathon, we had a lot of laughs and sang along loudly to a lot of '90s Disney songs. We returned in one piece. No regrets.

But I'm starting to understand that “Are we there yet?” wasn't a question of time or distance; it was evidence that I had a stake in the answer. I held the atlas, I scanned horizons for “vacancy” signs, I knew how it felt to get lost and still get there anyway.

I hope my kids are allowed to learn how that feels too. I hear it builds character.



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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