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June 2026

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By JIM COLLAR

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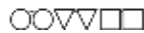


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APL JUN



7
VOICE
 Maeghan Johnson
 Fox Cities YMCA
 Bits N' Pieces
 Thrive
 Business & Finance
 Healthy Living
 Bravo
 Upfront
 Sarah Behm
 The Twist
 Good Stuff

25
TODAY
 Summer Guide
 Arts & Culture
 Lindsay Huehns
 Great Reads
 Music Vibes
 Smile!
 Style & Fashion
 Ask Tammi
 Zoo Time
 Go!
 Sports Page

63
TASTE
 The Duchess
 Eatery & Spirits
 Outdoor Dining
 Best Patios
 Chef's Table
 Italian Sloppy Joes
 Carly's Pastries
 Easy M&M Cookies
 Beer & Brewing
 Food & Drink
 Dragon's Den

73
MORE
 Backyard Tune Up!
 Create an Oasis
 Design & Decorating
 Chinoiserie
 House & Home
 Summer Gatherings
 Pet Care
 In The Garden
 Hosta Pairings
 One More Thing
 Too Much Stuff



BACKYARD TUNE UP!
PAGE 73



FROM
THE
EDITOR

Summer Vibes

SUMMER IS HERE, AND WE'RE READY. Whether it's a day on the water, outdoor festivities, or simply stepping barefoot into our own backyard, we're ready to bask in every drop of sunlight shining down from the wide Midwest sky.

In *VOICE*, Tim tells us how former professional dancer Meaghan Johnson of the YMCA shares her passion for the arts, and how Sarah Behm of Greenville puts a frosty "twist" on summer treats. Amanda offers insights on brand ambassadors, and Angela discusses nutrition for Lyme disease.

Jim shares local fairs, festivals, food, and fun in *TODAY*, and Jackie profiles Lindsay Huehns, a clay artist with muscle. Phyllis helps us step into summer with the latest in footwear, and Tim goes ape over local zoos.

Summer sizzles in *TASTE* as Jenni spotlights Duchess Eatery & Spirits, and Katie shares the best in outdoor dining. Carly adds Italian flavor to a traditional comfort food, and Steve takes a nostalgic look at his history with beer.

In *MORE*, I share ideas for creating a backyard oasis, Katie gives tips on summer hosting, and Joel shares the beauty of choinoiserie. Dr. Ziegler discusses spaying and neutering, and Tyler surprises us with clever yet insightful rhymes.

Unfold your chair, spread out a blanket, slather on some sunscreen, and enjoy all that this issue — and this season — have to offer.

Let's go,

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VOICE

THRIVE 14 | HEALTHY LIVING 18 | BRAVO 20 | UPFRONT 22



Maeghan Johnson

YMCA Fox Cities
Arts & Humanities Director

By TIM FROBERG

The Dance Continues

FORMER DANCE PRO SHARES PASSION FOR THE ARTS

By TIM FROBERG

Maeghan Johnson has danced professionally across the globe. Her dance background includes performances on three continents: Europe, Asia, and North America.

Johnson, though, doesn't spend much time reflecting on her performing days as a ballet dancer.

She's proud of what she accomplished on the stage, but the dancer-turned-teacher gets even more satisfaction when she sees a broad smile on a student who has just nailed a routine, completed an art project, or learned a new piece of music.



Johnson is the arts and humanities director for the YMCA of the Fox Cities and is deeply passionate about making the arts accessible to everyone. She oversees a wide range of programs for children through older adults, including dance, fine arts, and music. She, along with experienced instructors, teaches dance genres, such as ballet, pointe, jazz, tap, poms, hip-hop, lyrical, and contemporary, and coaches the Y's competitive dance teams.

Beyond dance, Johnson coordinates Y classes in fiber arts, painting, drawing, sewing, and pottery, which is widely popular due to their two in-house kilns. She also oversees music lessons in piano, guitar, drums, and voice taught by professional, degreed musicians.

Her programs generate plenty of interest. The YMCA's annual spring dance recital involves more than 600 dancers from the Appleton, Heart of the Valley, and Neenah-Menasha YMCAs and has grown so significantly that it is now held at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center.

"Developing young people in dance is absolutely my passion," said Johnson. "It's so exciting to see them start as an absolute beginner in our 3-year-old classes and then develop. Many of our dancers are with us through their later high school years. To see their growth is absolutely inspiring."

Johnson has worked for the YMCA of the Fox Cities for the past 23 years, including the last 11 in her present role after serving 12 years as its dance program coordinator. She brings energy, enthusiasm, and expert knowledge to her position and her various teaching and coaching roles.

"I love being a part of their lives," said Johnson. "It's really a privilege to be able to spend this time with them. It's so much fun to dream forward with my dancers. Since I've been in their shoes, it's easy to relate to them."



Competitive dance has grown into a legitimate sport in recent years. It's a structured, high-energy activity where dancers perform routines in various genres and receive scores and critiques from judges.



"We're developing artists as athletes, and it's really exciting to see their hard work being acknowledged," Johnson said. "They're not only learning choreography and going up against other teams, but they're learning life skills as well.

"We're teaching confidence, sportsmanship, and teamwork, and they're developing friendships. I really believe we're developing both mind and body in the sport of dance. I'm so proud of our Studio Y teams and their success."

SEEING THE WORLD AS A DANCER



Johnson's distinguished dance background has made for an easy, enjoyable transition from performer to teacher-coach. She grew up in Beloit, won a national dance competition at the age of 13, and danced professionally from the ages of 14–24 with ballet companies such as the Rockford Dance Company, Milwaukee Ballet, and Oakland Ballet.

Johnson, who started as an apprentice and was

a full-time salaried employee at 16, performed in China, Germany, Italy, France, the U.K., and across the United States. She danced in iconic shows such as *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia*, *Paquita*, *The Firebird*, and *Les Sylphides*.



"It was incredibly exciting," said Johnson. "I found I had a love for ballet production and the joy of performing character ballet roles. I was very focused and driven toward my goal and my passion. It was hard work, but I got to be a part of a wonderful group of dancers.

"I was working mostly with people who were in their 20s and low 30s, and I got to work with some world-renowned choreographers. I got to see the world and broaden my horizons. I mean, it was just an incredible experience."

Johnson said that her most memorable performance was dancing the opening number at the 1994 International Arts Festival in Shanghai.

"Being surrounded by patrons of the arts from other countries and finding a global connection, that was a special memory," she said. "I was quite young to be doing this, but I realized in that moment how very special it was and how privileged I was to be part of it.



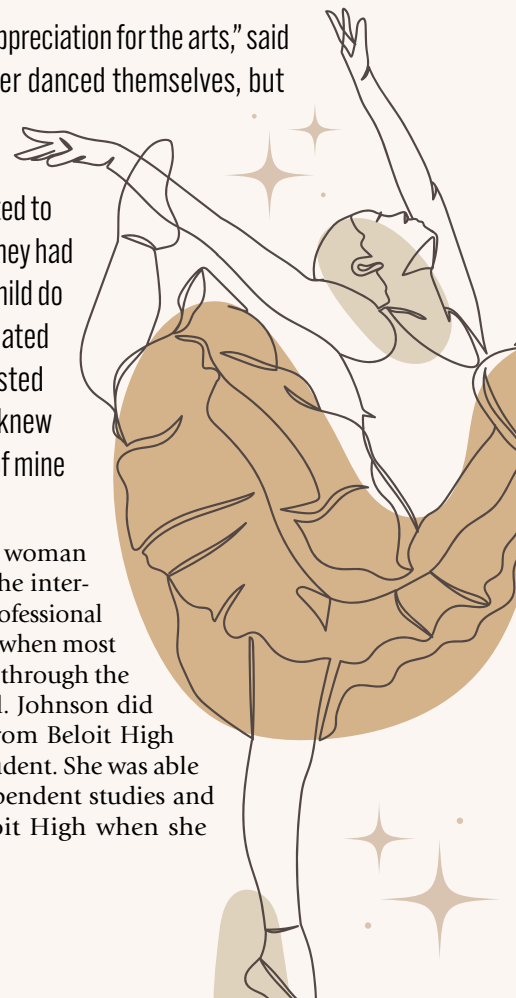
"I was on a stage performing not only with dancers, but aerial artists, synchronized swimmers, and performers from arts of all different levels. It was just so exciting to be a part of it. I was fortunate enough to spend my 17th birthday in Shanghai."

Johnson is grateful to her parents, William and Sandra Sullivan, for allowing her to pursue her passion for dance at such

a young age. William, a physician, and Sandra, a homemaker, are retired and reside in Stevens Point.

"They've always had an appreciation for the arts," said Johnson. "They had never danced themselves, but saw a drive in me they appreciated and wanted to cultivate it. I'm indebted to them for their support. They had the courage to let their child do that, and I really appreciated their support. They trusted the hands I was in and knew this had been a passion of mine for a long time."

It took a mature young woman to be able to navigate the international landscape of professional ballet dancing at an age when most are simply trying to get through the traumas of high school. Johnson did that, too, graduating from Beloit High School like a regular student. She was able to do so through independent studies and simply attending Beloit High when she wasn't touring.



"I like to joke that I'm more immature now than I was then," said Johnson. "I watched others around me and observed their work ethic and determination. The whole experience helped me really find myself as an artist and helped me understand that I wanted a career connected to dance."



AN EARLY DESIRE TO DANCE

Johnson's love of dance started shortly after she learned to walk. She began taking lessons at the age of three, after seeing her older sister, Melissa, take part in dance classes.

"My parents tried to get me involved with other sports like soccer and basketball," Johnson said. "But I'd be on the soccer field or basketball court, working on my turns or other dance moves. My parents were like, 'OK, dance is really her thing. We have to put Maeghan where she wants to be.'"



Johnson became skilled in various genres of dance and eventually received a bachelor's degree in dance from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. She minored in arts administration.

"When I think of myself as a dancer, it's kind of my former self because it was like 30 years ago," said Johnson with a chuckle. "All my souvenirs and all that I collected from my past are like relics living in my parents' basement."

"It's fun to look back, but I identify now as a Y director, a mom, and a wife."

DEALING WITH LIFE'S OBSTACLES

Ballet dancers need physical and mental toughness, and Johnson has plenty of both. She has overcome some challenging obstacles in life. Johnson has undergone seven kidney operations due to complications from two difficult pregnancies.

When her oldest son, Will, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of 7, Johnson became an expert at diabetes management. She made sure that Will's blood levels were monitored regularly and that meals were carefully planned to keep his levels from spiking.

Maeghan and her husband, Chad — a firefighter for the Appleton Fire Department — also faced family tragedy after both lost their only siblings. Melissa died of sepsis at 47 following liver transplant surgery, and Chad's brother, Brian, passed from a rare form of cancer.

"Melissa was a very healthy, young, active woman, and we were so proud of her," said Johnson. "She worked in hospice for Rock County and had a heart of service. She did a beautiful job of helping people, including my brother-in-law. She was an incredible soul. She inspired me in every way."

"I'm fortunate because I have a wonderful husband and incredible children. They bring me great joy. But I don't take life for granted."

Will is now a grown adult who works as an ER nurse at St. Elizabeth Hospital. Maeghan and Chad's younger son, Connor, is working on a criminal justice degree at Fox Valley Technical College.

When she's not teaching the wonders of dance, Johnson enjoys cooking, traveling, hiking, and experiencing the great outdoors.

"We're a big Disney family," said Maeghan. "We take one or two Disney trips a year. We're hobbyists, too. We're everything Lego."



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Katie Carlson

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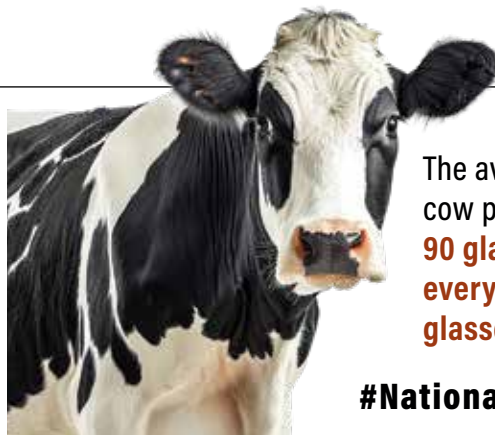
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Father's Day was started in Spokane, Wash., on **June 19, 1910**, by Sonora Smart Dodd, who wanted to honor her father, William, a single parent and Civil War veteran.



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Twenty-nine different species of Junebugs have been documented in Wisconsin, emerging from soil in late May and early June.



Frank Lloyd Wright, the American architect famous for his geometric and prairie-style designs, was born in Richland Center, Wis., on June 8, 1867.



June 2 is National Rocky Road Day, celebrating the combination of chocolate ice cream, marshmallows, and nuts. Its name references the Great Depression's "rocky roads" and was meant to cheer people up.



June's full moon is called the **Strawberry Moon**, occurring on Monday, June 29, marking the peak of strawberry season.



The primary birth flowers for June are **the rose and the honeysuckle**, representing love, passion, beauty, honor, and the sweetness of life.

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TURNING SELF-DOUBT INTO SELF-CONFIDENCE

By KATIE CARLSON

WE all have those days when we question whether we're capable enough and on the right path. You may even feel a bit self-conscious about mistakes you've made in the past. Thoughts like these can create self-doubt.

The challenge is that these types of thoughts may be affecting your mental state and may be holding you back from becoming the best version of yourself. No one is born with self-confidence; it is something that you have to work at and build up over time. One hiccup in your journey could throw you into a spiral, making it difficult to bounce back and causing you to feel as though your future and how you view yourself will always be a struggle.

The good news is that while all of this may be true, there is hope for brighter days ahead. Here's how you can learn to overcome self-doubt and regain some much-needed and much-deserved self-confidence.

DON'T LET FEAR STAND IN YOUR WAY

You're not alone if there are aspects of life or situations that you are afraid of. Fear is real and it can be quite debilitating if you don't face it head-on. Reach deep inside yourself and find the courage you know is within you, just waiting to be released. There's no better time than the here and now to follow your passion and go after your dreams. At the same time, you also need to accept that there's a chance you may fail.

TAKE ACTION STEPS

You can think all day long about what you want to do or who you want to become. However, these thoughts don't automatically turn into reality. It's always wise to manifest what you want in life, but you also need to be prepared and motivated to take action. Start small, take baby steps, and celebrate your successes along the way. Keep in mind that one tiny action leads to another and another, and soon you will be pushing forward and never looking back.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

You may be someone who tends to isolate or isn't as picky as you should be about who you share your time with. It's

important to choose to surround yourself with the right crowd if you're going to overcome self-doubt and build self-confidence. Make it a point to find people in your life — friends, family, and mentors — who believe in you and provide encouragement, rather than those who zap your energy and are eager to downplay your accomplishments.



REVIEW YOUR STRENGTHS & SET DAILY INTENTIONS

No matter who you are, you are a unique, special, and deserving individual. Now is the time to sit down and review your strengths — what you're good at, what you enjoy doing, and where you shine. Engrave these in your mind and continue to remind yourself that you have a lot to offer. You can also overcome self-doubt and build self-confidence by setting a daily intention or reviewing a positive affirmation. This is your opportunity to rewire your mindset and overcome self-doubt, while simultaneously building self-confidence.

Be realistic and remember that as time goes on, you'll gain experience in certain areas, and you'll notice your self-doubt diminish while your self-confidence starts to truly unfold.



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TURNING YOUR CUSTOMERS INTO BRAND AMBASSADORS

By AMANDA KRUEGER



In a small town or tight-knit community, word travels fast, and that's one of the greatest competitive advantages that a local business can have. When a neighbor tells a neighbor, "You have to check out this place," no ad budget in the world can replicate that kind of trust. The question is: How do you turn satisfied customers into enthusiastic advocates who spread the word without being asked? Here's how to make it happen.

Start with an Experience Worth Talking About

Brand ambassadors aren't manufactured — they're earned. Before anything else, ask yourself honestly: Is my customer experience genuinely memorable? This doesn't mean flashy or expensive; it means consistent, personal, and thoughtful.

In Northeast Wisconsin, people notice the little things: remembering a customer's name, following up after a purchase, or going slightly out of your way when something goes wrong. These moments are the seeds of a story someone tells over a Friday night fish fry.

Make It Easy to Share

Even your most loyal fans need a nudge. Give them simple ways to spread the word:

- **Ask directly.** A sincere, in-person "If you enjoyed your experience, we'd love a Google review" works surprisingly well. Most happy customers simply never think to do it unprompted.
- **Create shareable moments.** Think about what in your store, restaurant, or shop someone might photograph and post. A clever sign, a beautifully packaged product, or a unique detail can generate organic social media reach.
- **Referral incentives.** A simple "Give \$10, Get \$10" referral program rewards customers for doing something they'd already gladly do. It doesn't cheapen the relationship — it acknowledges it.



Build Community, Not Just Customers

People become ambassadors for things they feel part of. Host a customer appreciation event, feature a loyal customer on your social media, or partner with a neighboring business on a local event. When customers feel invested in your success, they become protective of it.

Local businesses thrive when they act like community anchors, not just commercial transactions. Sponsor a youth sports team, show up at the farmers' market — let people see the humans behind the business.

Respond Like It Matters — Because It Does

When someone leaves a review — good or bad — respond promptly and personally. A thoughtful reply to a critical review can actually win potential customers because it shows you care and take accountability. Publicly thanking a glowing review reinforces the behavior you want more of.

The Bottom Line

You don't need a big marketing budget to build a base of loyal advocates. You need to deliver real value, show genuine appreciation, and make it easy and rewarding for happy customers to talk about you. In communities like ours, authenticity travels far, and the businesses that earn true loyalty don't just survive — they become fixtures in the community for generations. Your best marketing team is already walking through your door. Treat them that way.

Amanda Krueger is the chief marketing officer for American National Bank Fox Cities, a local business bank. She is a 2016 Future 15 award recipient and graduate of Leadership Fox Cities.



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Nutrition for Real Life

SUPPORTING THE BODY THROUGH LYME DISEASE

By ANGELA HALDERSON

Many people experience lingering fatigue, brain fog, joint pain, or unexplained symptoms and never connect them to a possible tick-borne illness. For busy, everyday people, these symptoms are often brushed off as stress, aging, or burnout.

What Is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused primarily by *Borrelia burgdorferi*, transmitted through the bite of infected black-legged ticks.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that approximately 476,000 people are diagnosed and treated for Lyme disease each year, making it the most common vector-borne illness in the country.

Ticks that transmit Lyme are often very small — sometimes the size of a poppy seed — which means bites frequently go unnoticed.

Early Warning Signs

One of the most recognized early signs of Lyme disease is the “bull’s-eye” rash, but this does not appear in all cases. Research suggests only 70-80% of people who contract Lyme disease develop a rash. That leaves the other 20-30% with no warning sign. Other symptoms may include: fatigue, headache, muscle or joint aches, fever or chills, swollen lymph nodes, anxiety or depression.

However, what makes Lyme particularly complex is that symptoms may not appear immediately.

Delayed Symptoms

While some people develop symptoms within days to weeks, others may not notice changes for months after exposure.

This delay can make it difficult to connect symptoms back to

a tick bite, especially if a person had no bull's-eye rash. Over time, if untreated or undetected, symptoms may evolve into more chronic patterns, such as:

- Persistent fatigue
- Joint pain
- Brain fog and memory issues
- Insomnia
- Nervous system dysregulation



Because these symptoms overlap with many other conditions, Lyme disease is often called “the great imitator.”

Testing Challenges

Conventional Lyme testing typically uses a two-step process:

- An Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) screening test
- Western blot confirmatory test

While these tests are widely used, they have big limitations. Antibody-based testing relies on the immune system mounting a detectable response, which may not always occur in early infection or in certain immune states.

Because of this, false negatives occur. Some practitioners and patients also explore specialty or expanded testing options, often out-of-pocket, which may include:

- Lyme-specific specialty labs (such as IGeneX or similar expanded tick-borne panels)
- Broader tick-borne illness panels (including co-infections like Babesia or Bartonella)

These tests are not perfect diagnostic tools on their own, but they may provide additional information when symptoms are complex or persistent.

Why Nutrition Matters in Lyme Disease

While nutrition is not a standalone treatment for Lyme disease, it plays a powerful supportive role in helping the body manage inflammation, immune response, and energy regulation.

Lyme disease often involves heightened inflammatory activity in the body. Supporting a lower inflammatory load can help reduce symptom intensity and support overall resilience.

Key principles include:

- Emphasizing colorful fruits and vegetables (polyphenols and antioxidants)
- Increasing omega-3 fatty acids (flax, chia, walnuts, fatty fish)
- Reducing ultra-processed foods and added sugars
- Supporting steady blood sugar to reduce stress on the immune system

Evidence-based nutrition research, including resources from [NutritionFacts.org](https://www.nutritionfacts.org), consistently highlights the role of whole plant foods in reducing systemic inflammation and supporting immune balance.



Immune Modulation

In functional nutrition, the goal is not to “boost” the immune system, but to modulate it — helping it respond appropriately without overreacting or underperforming. Adequate protein intake is a must for immune repair, while micronutrients such as zinc, vitamin C, and vitamin D are key foods that keep the immune system running. Fiber from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and seeds feeds beneficial gut bacteria, which also help support a healthy immune response. A regulated immune system is more effective than an overstimulated one. Therefore, proper stress management is also important.

Herbal Support

Herbs have traditionally been used to support resilience in infectious and inflammatory conditions. In a functional herbal approach, botanicals may be used to support inflammation balance, energy, repair, and recovery.

Commonly discussed herbs in integrative care include:

- Japanese knotweed
- Cat’s claw
- Andrographis
- Lemon balm
- Ginger and turmeric

These are best used under the guidance of a trained practitioner, especially when symptoms are complex or long-standing.



A Gentle, Real-Life Approach

If you are dealing with nagging or unexplained symptoms — fatigue that doesn’t resolve, brain fog, joint pain, or chronic inflammation — it is important not to ignore your body’s signals.

Your symptoms deserve attention, not dismissal.

When to Reach Out

If you are experiencing persistent or concerning symptoms, have sought medical attention only to be told there is nothing wrong, and to understand possible underlying causes, visit strongmeridian.com.

A deeper clinical evaluation may help you explore whether tick-borne illness, immune dysfunction, or other underlying imbalances could be contributing to your health picture.

Professional Opinion

My Lyme journey began with anxiety, followed by persistent insomnia that completely disrupted my sense of well-being. These symptoms were unsettling, especially because I had never struggled with anxiety before. When I sought help through conventional doctors, I was repeatedly told that nothing was wrong with me. It wasn’t until I turned to alternative care practitioners that I finally began to find answers. Through that process, I learned I had Lyme disease and began the journey of understanding and helping others.

[cdc.gov/lyme](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme)

[cdc.gov/lyme/signs-symptoms/index](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/signs-symptoms/index)

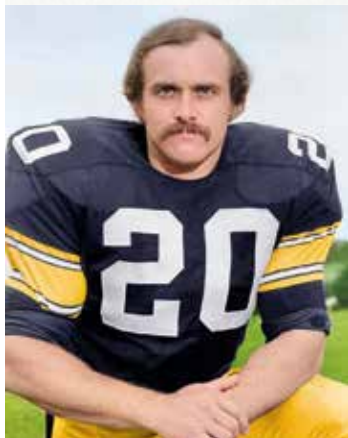
[cdc.gov/lyme/diagnosis-testing/index](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/diagnosis-testing/index)

hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/anti-inflammatory-diet

Angela Halderson is the owner of Strong Meridian, a natural healthcare practice focusing on the root cause of dis-ease. She is a dietitian trained in functional medicine, energy medicine, homeopathy, and herbalism. When you are tired of being sick and tired, reach out to angela@strongmeridian.com for a virtual visit.

NFL GREAT BLEIER RETURNING TO APPLETON

By TIM FROBERG



Rocky Bleier was a hard-nosed running back who didn't go down without a fight.

His unrelenting style on the field is generally how Bleier has lived his life.

Bleier — a war hero in Vietnam and a four-time Super Bowl winner in Pittsburgh — is one of the most famous individuals to hail from Appleton.

He'll return to his hometown this month to help raise funds for the Wisconsin Veterans Village Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing affordable housing and support for military veterans.

Bleier's appearance will give local residents a unique opportunity to meet a remarkable man with a mind-blowing story of resilience, courage, and grit.

Bleier will be the guest of honor on **June 10 for "An Evening with Rocky Bleier" at American Legion Post 38 in Appleton from 5-9 p.m.** Bleier will be available to the general public for a meet-and-greet and will sign autographs at no charge. The free event will include a live interview and a question-and-answer session.

Copies of **Bleier's book, *Fighting Back*, will be available for \$20.** Various Bleier memorabilia will be raffled off along with Vet Village items. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

The fifth annual **Rocky Bleier Golf Outing will follow on June 11 at Royal St. Patrick's Golf Links in Wrightstown.** The popular event has raised over \$200,000 to assist veterans, including \$70,000 last year. **To register, visit the website: events.golfstatus.com/event/2026-5th-annual-rocky-bleier-golf-outing.** The fee is \$800 for a foursome and includes 18 holes, a box lunch, and a photo with Bleier, who will attend the tourney.

"The golf tournament is filling up fast, and we're excited about having Rocky at the legion hall," said Steve Day, vice president of fundraising for Veterans Village. "I'm hoping we

can get a bunch of young people there who maybe haven't heard Rocky's story because it's a great one."

Bleier — the oldest of four children raised by Bob and Ellen Bleier — was a former football and basketball star at Xavier High School, graduating in 1964. Bob and Ellen ran a tavern known simply as Bleier's Bar, while the family of six lived above it.

Bleier was selected by the Steelers in the 16th round of the 1968 NFL Draft after a distinguished collegiate career at Notre Dame. He was drafted into the U.S. Army following his rookie season in the NFL, volunteered for duty in South Vietnam, and was assigned to an infantry unit where he operated a grenade launcher.



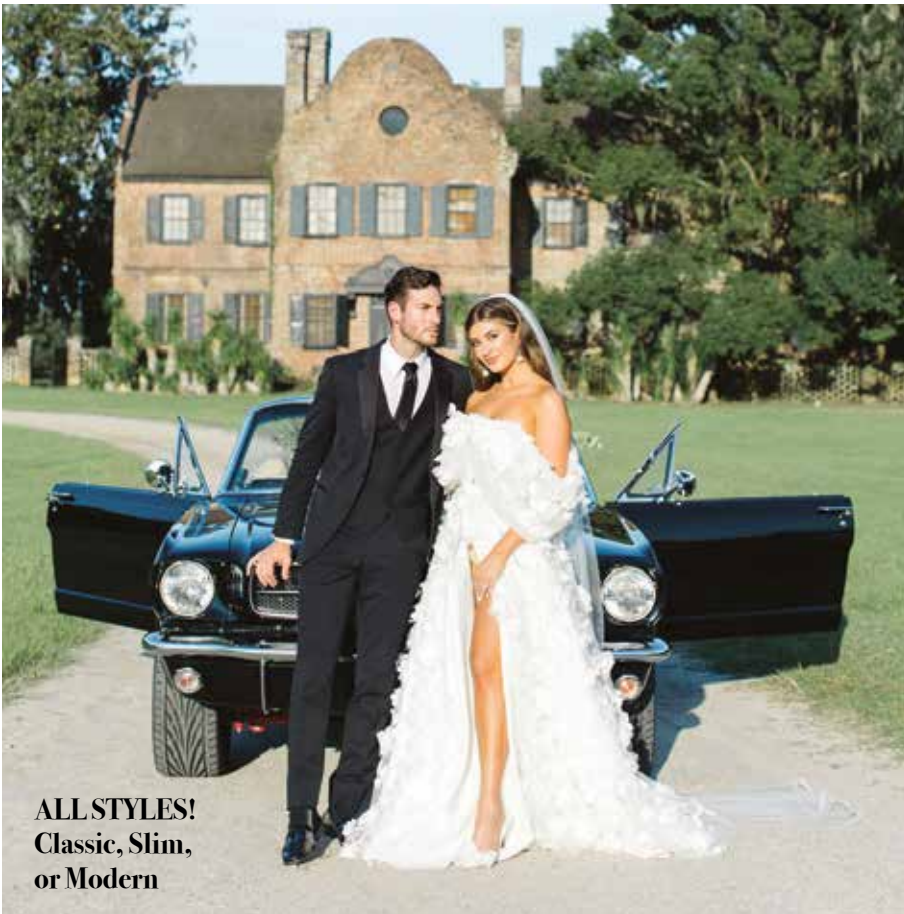
Bleier was wounded in the left thigh by an enemy bullet on Aug. 20, 1969, when his platoon was ambushed in a rice paddy. While he was down, an enemy grenade exploded nearby, sending shrapnel into Bleier's lower right leg. His right foot was also injured in the blast. Bleier was eventually awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his valor.

"The doctors told him, 'Rocky, you're going to be lucky if you even walk again,'" said Day.

Bleier not only walked but returned to the NFL and won big in Pittsburgh. Bleier played a significant role in helping the Steelers win Super Bowls in 1974, 1975, 1978, and 1979. He spent his entire 11-year career in Pittsburgh, rushing for 3,865 yards and 23 touchdowns.

"Rocky is about as humble a man as there is, and he's very inspiring," said Day. "His book is terrific. He was a true patriot in addition to his football career. One thing that I didn't know about him was that he played center for Torchy Clark's state championship basketball team, and he was only 5-10."

To learn more about the Bleier events, go to Vet Village's website, wisvva.org.



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UPFRONT

SARAH BEHM

THE TWIST OWNER, OPERATOR

Ice cream melts fast, but a successful ice cream business can last an eternity. The Twist fits into that “forever” category.

The Greenville ice cream shop-restaurant, owned by Sarah and David Behm, will celebrate its 30th anniversary this summer.

The Behms are busy folks. They own two additional businesses: Behm Trucking in Hortonville and Meister & Behm Tax Services in Kaukauna.

The Twist, though, has been their baby since it opened its doors in 1996. David’s parents, Carol and Eugene Behm, were also part of the original ownership, and The Twist was built on farmland previously owned by David’s great-grandparents, Frank and Anna Reimer.

“It used to be just this big empty farm field,” said Sarah Behm, a Muskego native and University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh graduate who was a teacher at Greenville Elementary School for seven years before entering the business field. “When we bought it, we thought there was this great intersection there with a lot going on. My mother-in-law, Carol, always thought it would be really cool to have a little ice cream shop, and that’s how we started.”

The Twist originally featured only ice cream. Hot dogs, burgers, and fries were added a few years later, and coffee drinks eventually became a part of the menu. The shop is dog-friendly and offers “pup cups” for ice-cream-seeking canines.

All of the Behms’ businesses have a family feel. Sarah and David’s son, Sam, runs most of the day-to-day operations for Behm Trucking, while their daughter, Mandy, has been a long-time member of The Twist staff.

Sarah and David may have some additional family employees at The Twist. They are proud grandparents of Chloe (22 months), and twins Bonnie and Paisley (six months). A third grandchild, Theo, is expected in mid-May.



WHAT'S MADE THE TWIST A LONG-TERM SUCCESS?

“We have great employees and really good vendors. Our ice cream is really good, and our employees excel at customer service. They enjoy putting smiles on faces. They love little kids, and we definitely love dogs.”

WHAT IS THE TWIST'S SIGNATURE ICE CREAM TREAT?

“The thing we sell the most is a medium twist cone — a swirl of chocolate and vanilla ice cream. But if I’m recommending something, my favorite is the raspberry cheese-cake flurry. I never get tired of that. In the fall, I’d recommend the apple pie flurry.”

WHAT'S THE TWIST'S SIGNATURE FOOD ITEM?

“Our top seller is our quarter-pound cheeseburger. We get the meat from The Meat Block, and it’s just a really good burger. We’ve added a grilled chicken sandwich this year, and that’s been a very popular hot-food item. We also have really good sloppy joes.”

DOES RUNNING THREE BUSINESSES GET TO BE A LOT?

“You have your days where you wonder how many things can go wrong in a day. But when you look at the big picture, the good things always outweigh those stressful days. At the end of the tax season, my husband and I are both pretty tired. But after a few weeks, when it gets warm and sunny, we’re both excited about another year of ice cream at The Twist. You need good help. Without the backbone of solid employees, you wouldn’t be able to do it. You’d be too tired. I have people I trust who work hard, have integrity, and are responsible.”

By Tim Froberg
Photo by Ashley Schmit, Debbie Daanen Photography

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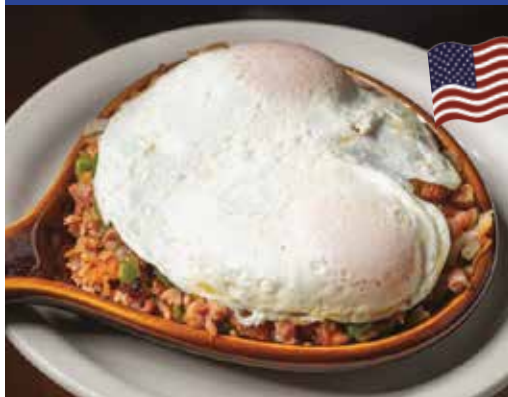


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**ENJOY OUTDOOR
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GOOD STUFF

By SARAH PETERSON



DOUGHNUT MISS THIS SUGAR LLAMAS

A new sweet spot, Sugar Llamas of Greenville, is serving up hot, fresh mini doughnuts, specialty coffees, refreshing drinks, and famous, award-winning ice cream. Their signature mini doughnuts include house favorites, such as cinnamon sugar, powdered sugar, cocoa powdered sugar, and Plain Jane, and can be glazed with flavored “drizzles” such as chocolate, orange, strawberry, marshmallow, cotton candy, and more. “Llama Legend” custom doughnut creations include flavors such as Banana Split, Cinnamon Roll, Flintstone, Hazelnutty, and Total Turtle. Signature beverages include coffee drinks, Red Bull mixers, and “Llamanades.”

sugarllamas.com/greenville



ENJOY SUMMER SHOPPING

OLIVE & ROSE BOUTIQUE

Olive & Rose Boutique, located in downtown Appleton, is a female-owned lifestyle shop featuring an extensive selection of women's apparel designed to reflect individual style — from casual to dressy and sophisticated. Carefully curated to showcase the latest fashion trends, their selection of clothing, jewelry, and luxury bath and body items enhances daily wardrobes with a touch of elegance. They also carry home goods and decor, often from fellow locally owned small businesses, as well as a large collection of meaningful gifts. Shop in person or online.

shopliveandrose.com



ENERGIZE

7 BREW NEW LOCATION

7 Brew, an energetic drive-thru beverage brand offering more than 20,000 drink combinations, is opening a new stand in Grand Chute at 3305 W. College Ave. Specialties include coffees, energy drinks, smoothies, sodas, and teas.

7brew.com



HOT BIDDY'S

A popular local food truck serving Nashville-style fried chicken is opening a brick-and-mortar in Appleton. Hot Biddy's will feature great food, patio drinks, game-day viewing, and a laid-back atmosphere where everyone can feel at home.

facebook.com/HotBiddysfoodtruck



LIVE HERE

APPLETON TOP CITY

Appleton has been ranked 65th among the top 100 best places to live in the United States in 2026. Out of more than 2,000 cities, it earned high marks for its strong community, affordability, family-friendliness, stable economy, and abundance of outdoor recreation options.

livability.com



EXPLORE HERE

DISCOVER APPLETON CHALLENGE

The Discover Appleton Challenge is a citywide scavenger hunt for all ages. Complete missions, explore local landmarks, and learn about city departments. Participate solo or as a team to earn points and prizes. It's free to join with a smartphone, tablet, or Chromebook.

parks.appletonwi.gov/programs_events/discover_appleton_challenge.php

TODAY

SMILE 42 | FASHION 44 | ASK TAMMI 46 | ZOO TIME 50



Summer!

Your guide to fun!

CONCERTS, FESTIVALS, MUSIC, EATS, WEEKEND ESCAPES,
EVENTS, FIREWORKS, FAIRS, AND MORE...

By JIM COLLAR



MAKE THE MOST OF
Summer
in Wisconsin
FAIRS, FESTIVALS, FOOD & FUN

By JIM COLLAR

IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT THERE ARE FEW BETTER PLACES IN THE WORLD TO SPEND THE SUMMER MONTHS THAN RIGHT HERE IN WISCONSIN.

Certainly, the winter months leave some of us questioning our residency. Though in the summer, our key challenge is figuring out how to fit all of the fabulous events, great tastes, and gorgeous sights into a few short months. There's fun to be had over every single weekend from Memorial Day barbecues and camping trips to the Calumet County Fair leading into Labor Day.

It's a season that is best experienced with all the senses. You hear it in the crack of a bat at Fox Cities Stadium, at concerts in every corner of the state, or in the rising hum of engines at Road America. You see it in the tents of Art at the Park or along the trails of Kaukauna's 1000 Islands Environmental Center. You taste it in funnel cakes from a food truck or in an ethnic dish crafted with love and served at one of our cultural events.

What makes Wisconsin summers special isn't just the traditions, places, and events, but the way they layer into a season that feels both familiar and new every year. Our traditions run deep, yet each summer brings its own surprises, its own stories, its own reasons to linger a little longer in the warm evening air.

The Fox Valley's summer rhythm is shaped by the way people gather. Families spread blankets at outdoor concerts, neighbors meet at farmers' markets, and crowds wander through car shows. Even simple moments — whether it's dining outside on a patio, walking along the riverfront, or catching a sunset over Lake Winnebago — feel like small celebrations.

Embrace the challenge and make the most of these precious months ahead. There are plenty of ways to enjoy this beautiful season in this beautiful place, whether you choose to spend nothing, spend a little, or decide to splurge.

The following pages offer some great ideas and might provide a head start on your summer planning, but they are by no means comprehensive. Ultimately, the very best plans for a perfect Wisconsin summer are your very own.



GET YOUR FILL AT THE FAIR

If you want to capture the essence of a Wisconsin summer, the fairgrounds are a good place to start.

Our fairs are a grand tradition dating back to the earliest days of our state. From the animals and exhibits to the carnival and food, it's a timeless experience that's maintained relevance from generation to generation.

All the fun starts this month in Seymour. The Outagamie County Fair, themed "Barn in the USA," takes place from June 24-28, featuring nightly motorsports events and music from favorite regional acts. Head to Oshkosh for the Winnebago County Fair, held July 29 through Aug. 2. Enjoy rodeo, tractor pulls, great music, and more. The Fond du Lac County Fair, held July 15-19, will include concerts from Trace Adkins and Night Ranger.

Grab a good pair of walking shoes and prepare to break your diet when the main event of the fair season arrives.

The Wisconsin State Fair will celebrate its 175th anniversary this season, taking place on Aug. 6-16 in West Allis.

Come for the exhibitions, animals, and top-tier entertainment, including The Beach Boys, Nelly, and comedian John Mulaney. Stay for the over-the-top concessions, including sweet lemon-berry cheese curds and hot-honey chicken lemonade.

The Calumet County Fair will again close out the summer on Sept. 4-7, and feature a concert from country musician Kip Moore.

RELEASE ALL OF YOUR OOHS AND AHHS

The pops and crackles, booms, and vibrant colors never fail to touch our sense of wonder. This year, our Independence Day fireworks displays will carry additional meaning as our nation celebrates its 250th anniversary. Make sure to squeeze some fireworks into your perfect Wisconsin summer.

Appleton and Kimberly will light the sky in celebration of our nation on July 3 above Veterans Memorial Park and Sunset Park, respectively. Neenah and Menasha will offer their displays on July 4, along with Green Bay, Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, Hilbert, and New London.

Don't limit a gorgeous nighttime display to the holiday. This year's most impressive fireworks displays in our region will come in August.

The 2026 Pyrotechnics Guild International (PGI) Convention returns to Wisconsin International Raceway in Kaukauna from Aug. 8-14. The convention will present "Ignite the Night," three high-energy, professionally choreographed displays open to the public on Aug. 8, 12, and 14. Tickets to these incredible shows can be purchased at tickets.pgi.org.

Still looking for more? The Wisconsin Timber Rattlers will add dazzle to the night skies following Friday and Saturday home games throughout the summer.

Meanwhile, the Green Bay Packers will offer post-game fireworks on June 12, July 2, and July 24.





HEAR ALL YOUR FAVORITES AT A MAJOR MUSIC FESTIVAL

Whether you like country, hard rock, or something in between, there's a good chance that you'll find your favorite artist on a concert lineup somewhere in the Dairyland over the summer.

Wisconsin is a hotbed for major music festivals, and Milwaukee's Summerfest bills itself as the world's largest. Held along the Lake Michigan shoreline, Summerfest will feature more than 600 artists performing across 12 stages. The fun unfolds over three weekends: June 18-20, June 25-27, and July 2-4. Headliners this year include Garth Brooks, Ed Sheeran, Post Malone, and Jelly Roll.

Oshkosh is home to two major festivals, including one of the largest Christian music festivals in the United States. Lifest is expected to draw up to 30,000 attendees each day during its run from July 9-12 at the Sunnyview Expo Center. Headliners include Skillet, CAIN, and Josiah Queen.

Xroads41 in Oshkosh welcomes its biggest lineup yet in its third year. The country festival will welcome the Zac Brown Band, Lainey Wilson, and Jason Aldean as headliners from Aug. 6-8.

Other notable Wisconsin festivals include Rock Fest in Cadott, Rhinelander's Hodag Country Festival, and the Blue Ox Music Festival in Eau Claire.

CATCH A GREAT CONCERT AT A BETTER PRICE AT WATERFEST

Famous bands. A beautiful venue. Reasonable prices.

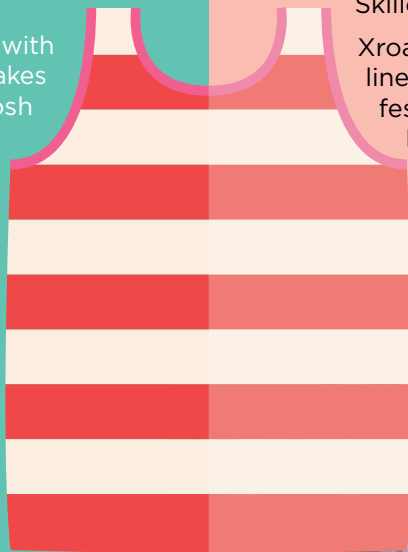
The first two items very rarely match up with the third, and that's a big part of what makes the Waterfest concert series in Oshkosh so special. Waterfest will celebrate its 40th season in 2026, bringing national recording artists and a variety of popular regional acts to the scenic Leach Amphitheater along the Fox River over eight summer Thursdays.

The 2026 season features several notable headlining acts, including original Beach Boy Al Jardine and The Pet Sounds Band on July 30, Starship featuring Mickey Thomas on Aug. 13, and the Little River Band on Aug. 20.

Waterfest's commitment to staying accessible has made it a favorite among local music fans and a breath of fresh air in an era of exorbitant ticket prices. While many festivals lean into premium pricing, Waterfest keeps admission reasonable with entry as low as \$15 for those who arrive before 6 p.m. Veterans enter for free throughout the season. Kids 12 and under can also enter at no cost with a responsible adult, opening great concert experiences to local families.

Community is the entire point.

The concert series is organized by the volunteer-driven nonprofit Waterfest Inc., with the expressed goal of improving quality of life through their events. Any profits are invested into the next year or to cover shortfalls from the year before. Visit waterfest.org for the schedule and additional information.





ENJOY AN AL FRESCO MEAL

Outdoor dining is satisfying in a way that goes beyond the meal itself. It's the feeling of stepping out of your routine and letting the outdoors become part of the experience. Food tastes a little brighter when there's a breeze moving through the table, and conversation feels easier when it drifts into open air.

There are many great restaurants with outdoor seating in the Fox Valley. Katie has the scoop and will provide all the details in our TASTE section on page 63.

For a great variety and a picnic atmosphere, make a point to head to a food truck rally.

Area 509, at 1025 N. Badger Ave., in Appleton, hosts the Foodie Frenzy Midweek Rally each Wednesday from 5-8 p.m. They offer a rotating cast of food trucks along with music, games, fire pits, and patio seating.

The Fox Valley Food Truck Association has events throughout the summer, each featuring a variety of trucks, tastes, and options, including entrées, desserts, and novelties. It's a perfect way to explore new food, and everyone in the family can get something different. For a schedule of events and locations, visit foxvalleyfoodtruckrally.com.

ROOT, ROOT, ROOT FOR THE HOME TEAM

Few things are more emblematic of an American summer than a trip to the ballpark. Baseball fills every sense — from the crack of a fastball hitting the mitt to the taste of a cold ice-cream treat. In the Fox Valley, we're lucky to have great baseball at every level of the game, all within easy reach.

Start with a visit to Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium, home of the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers. The ballpark has seen a wave of recent upgrades, including a beer garden, a giant slide, and new play areas for the kids.

As the High-A affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers, the Rattlers give fans a chance to see future Major League stars up close. Current Brewers like Jackson Chourio, Brice Turang, and Jacob Misiorowski all spent time developing in Grand Chute.

High school fans will want to circle June 15-18, when the state's top prep teams take over the stadium for the WIAA State Baseball Tournament. The region also boasts summer collegiate action, with the Green Bay Rockers and Fond du Lac Dock Spiders — both Northwoods League teams — playing competitive, wood-bat baseball within an hour's drive. Catch them locally during the I-41 Showdown at Fox Cities Stadium on June 2.

And of course, a summer baseball season isn't complete without the Brewers and a trip to Milwaukee's American Family Field, where tailgating, the famous sausage races, and Bernie Brewer's celebratory slide promise a great time, rain or shine.





GEAR UP FOR FOOTBALL SEASON AT PACKERS TRAINING CAMP

Only in Wisconsin would NFL football appear in a summer fun guide, but the Green Bay Packers are something special, and so is our connection to the home team.

Get up close and watch the Packers prepare for their new season during training camp, which begins in late July and runs through August. Unlike many NFL teams that train off-site, the Packers host training camp at home, practicing at Ray Nitschke Field.

Fans can sit in the bleachers or bring lawn chairs or blankets to stand along the fence for a close-up view of practices. Players often stop to sign autographs for fans, particularly after practice, as they walk back to the locker room.

Bring the kids to Titledown and toss around a football on Emplify Health Field, a regulation artificial turf football field in Lambeau's shadows.

You can also head over to the Lambeau Field Atrium and grab new gear at the Pro Shop, enjoy the Hall of Fame, or grab a great meal.

Training Camp festivities also include Family Night at Lambeau Field, featuring a full practice and scrimmage. Lambeau fills just as it would on a fall Sunday, offering a gameday experience for a fraction of the price.



CATCH A FLICK UNDER THE STARS

Drive-in movies are a slice of pure summer, and in the Fox Valley area, the Field of Scenes Drive-In in Freedom keeps that nostalgic magic alive.

As the grounds begin to fill, families spread blankets in truck beds, kids toss the football in front of the screen, and the smell of popcorn begins to drift across the lot. Prices are reasonable, and each evening includes a double feature.

The grounds include playgrounds for the kids, basketball hoops, and a volleyball net. Enjoy popcorn, or even a meal with options including burgers, brats, and homemade pizzas.

The Appleton Parks and Recreation Department will host several outdoor movie nights in 2026. Families are invited to the Veterans Memorial Park Amphitheater on June 18 for children's games, followed by a 7 p.m. showing of *Zootopia 2*. On Aug. 7, come to Erb Park for a showing of *Lilo & Stitch*. Their Flicks and Sips Series at the Jones Park Amphitheater will feature *Back to the Future* on July 17 and *Hot Rod* on Sept. 12. All movies are free to attend.

Oshkosh also has two outdoor movie nights scheduled at Leach Amphitheater, with *Trolls* showing on June 26 and *Daddy Day Camp* on July 17.

DIP A PADDLE IN WISCONSIN'S WATERS

There is no better place to be than Wisconsin's scenic waters once summer temperatures hit their peak. Fortunately, boat ownership isn't a prerequisite to an enjoyable day on our lakes and rivers.

Appleton's Fox River Kayaking Company offers guided excursions. In Shiocton, Dragonfly Paddlers provides a kayak and a shuttle ride up the Wolf River before you make a slow paddle back to home base.

Self-service kayak rentals are available at multiple Fox Valley parks through the Rent. Fun app in partnership with the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau. Rentals cost \$20 for the first two hours, which includes a life jacket, kayak, and paddle. They're available at Telulah Park, Lutz Park, and along Riverheath Way in Appleton. Stations are also available at Kimberly's Sunset Park, Fritse Park in Fox Crossing, Black Otter Lake in Hortonville, and Herb & Dolly Smith and Doty parks in Neenah.

Those looking for less exertion can rent a tube at Wolf River Trips & Campground along County Road X near New London. Experience gentle rapids as you meander downstream with a cold beverage in hand.

It's a short drive to an incredible experience on the Chain O' Lakes in Waupaca County. Rent a canoe, kayak, or paddleboard from any number of businesses, then enjoy the gorgeous scenery on 22 crystal-clear lakes connected by channels and streams.



EXPERIENCE BEAUTY AND CREATIVITY AT LOCAL ART EVENTS

In the summertime, the very best art galleries are found in the open air.

Appleton's Art at the Park, hosted by The Trout Museum of Art, returns to City Park and its surrounding streets on July 25-26. The 66th annual event will fill the historic neighborhood with works of more than 200 artists from across the region and country. Visitors can browse paintings, ceramics, jewelry, photography, and mixed-media works while enjoying live music, food trucks, and hands-on art projects for kids. The festival also features a Young Artist Marketplace for artists ages 7 to 18 to display and sell their art.

A short drive north, Artfest will transform downtown Green Bay into a vibrant creative corridor on August 22-23. The festival will feature more than 100 artists, live music on multiple stages, interactive art opportunities, and local food and drink vendors.

Oshkosh will also offer the chance to find that perfect, original piece while enjoying a beautiful environment. Faire on the Fox takes place on July 12 at the Leach Amphitheater. The arts and crafts fair will include more than 100 vendors offering garden art, woodwork, glasswork, jewelry, and more. The day will also include food trucks, live music, and demonstrations.





STOP AND SMELL THE FLOWERS

A summer visit to a botanical garden feels like stepping into a living work of art.

The Scheig Center Gardens in Appleton's Memorial Park, open daily and free to wander, offer an opportunity to explore beauty at your own pace. The gardens unfold in a series of thoughtfully designed spaces, including a native rose garden, a serenity garden alive with butterflies, a wildflower garden, a fragrance garden, and a Veterans Memorial garden that provides a moment of stillness.

Benches encourage you to slow down, breathe in, and notice how the colors and textures shift with the season. Most of the plantings are native to Wisconsin, grounding the experience in the region's natural beauty.

Just north in Green Bay, the Green Bay Botanical Garden expands that sense of wonder across 47 acres and more than 120,000 plants. What began nearly 50 years ago as an idea among a handful of passionate gardeners has grown into one of the state's most beloved outdoor destinations. Today, its winding paths, specialty gardens, and seasonal displays provide a vibrant, immersive escape.

Enjoying summer isn't always about activity. Whether you're seeking inspiration, a scenic walk, or a quiet moment surrounded by color and singing birds, our local botanical spaces invite you to connect with the wonders of the season.

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORS AT A CULTURAL FEST

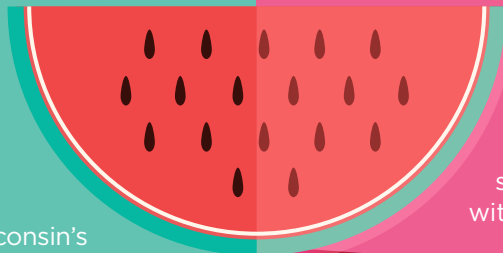
As we celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary, there is no better time to learn about and connect with the many cultures that form the colorful tapestry known as America. Wisconsin's many summer cultural celebrations offer a great opportunity to get a better understanding of our friends and neighbors.

Start with the food-focused Fiesta 920, taking place on June 20 at the Resch Expo in Green Bay. Enjoy a full day of food and beverages, live music, and interactive activities.

The Oneida Pow Wow is one of Wisconsin's most significant indigenous cultural gatherings, bringing together dancers, singers, families, and visitors for a full weekend of celebration. The pow wow will take place on June 26-28 at the Norbert Hill Center, N7210 Seminary Road, in Oneida. Experience contest dancing, grand entries, drum groups, and vendor booths offering Native foods, crafts, beadwork, and artwork.

The first-ever Wisconsin Asian Summer Festival, hosted by the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, will be held on June 13 at the Ozaukee County Fairgrounds in Cedarburg. This free public event will bring together community and culture through sports, dance, small-business vendors, and food.

Head to Milwaukee for a wide variety of cultural festivals throughout the summer, including Polish Fest in June; Festa Italiana, Armenian Fest, and German Fest in July; and Irish Fest and Mexican Fiesta in August. Go to visitmilwaukee.org/events/city-of-festivals/ for more details.



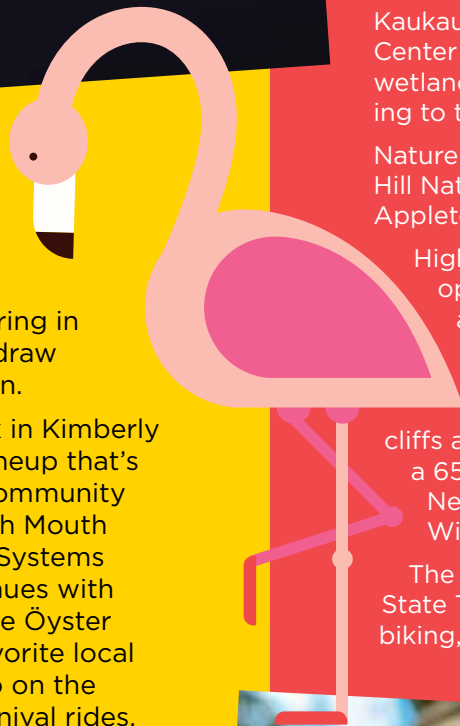


LOCAL FESTIVALS FOCUS ON MUSIC

Two local community festivals bring in some star power in an effort to draw neighbors together in celebration.

Paperfest returns to Sunset Park in Kimberly July 16–19, with another music lineup that’s incredibly rare to see at a free community festival. On opening night, Smash Mouth headlines the Event Production Systems Sunset Stage. The festival continues with Lauren Alaina on July 17 and Blue Öyster Cult on Saturday night. Many favorite local and regional performers are also on the schedule, along with games, carnival rides, sports, food, and much more. While free to attend, Paperfest has still managed to raise more than \$1.35 million over the years to benefit community non-profits.

Just down the road, Greenville’s Catfish Extravaganza combines quirky community fun and a major concert event over two days at Lions Park. The festivities begin July 10 with the beloved catfish races and a free evening performance from local favorites, Ask Your Mother. The next night, July 11, the Catfish Concert will light up the park with a high-energy country lineup featuring Billy Currington, LoCash, and Shaylen. The Saturday concert is a ticketed event and a major fundraiser for the Greenville Lions, which uses the proceeds to benefit community causes.



LACE UP YOUR BOOTS AND SPEND SOME TIME IN NATURE

Wisconsin’s natural beauty is unmatched, and there is no need to travel any great distance to have an awe-inspiring experience.

Bubolz Nature Preserve in Appleton features more than eight miles of trails and also offers educational programs throughout the year. Keep your eyes open for a variety of wildlife while walking through Heckrodt Wetland Reserve in Menasha. Its diverse habitats include forested wetlands, cattail marshes, and prairies. You might run across turtles, deer, groundhogs, and muskrats. The reserve is home to more than 160 species of birds.

Kaukauna’s 1000 Islands Environmental Center provides trails through woodlands and wetlands. Watch for bald eagles while listening to the soothing sounds of the Fox River.

Nature lovers can also find refuge at Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London or Appleton’s Bruce B. Purdy Nature Reserve.

High Cliff State Park near Sherwood offers opportunities to come up close to nature and Wisconsin history. The park is home to several effigy mounds constructed by Native Americans more than 1,000 years ago. Its limestone cliffs are part of the Niagara Escarpment, a 650-mile-long feature stretching from New York through Ontario, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The Friendship State Trail and Wiouwash State Trail offer extensive routes for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.



MAKE A WEEKEND GETAWAY

Wisconsin is a beautiful state filled with world-class events and fabulous places, and yet, it's easy to take it for granted.

It's worth remembering that tourists travel from far and wide each summer to experience what we have every day. A weekend getaway to any one of Wisconsin's top destinations will not only provide a relaxing escape and great memories, but help you see our wonderful home through a fresh set of eyes.

Door County has the feel of a coastal getaway, when strolling through its quaint towns dotted with galleries, boutiques, and cafés. Visit a cherry orchard or experience the beauty of its five state parks. It's just the right place if your idea of relaxing includes scenic hikes, fish boils, and awe-inspiring sunsets.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin Dells delivers high-energy fun with a generous side of natural wonder. Hit the slides and recognize why it's known as the "Waterpark Capital of the World." Enjoy a boat tour and experience all the beauty of its sandstone cliffs. Make sure to leave enough time for go-karts and mini-golf.

Then there's Lake Geneva, a scenic and charming escape with something for everyone. Visitors can stroll the historic Shore Path, offering close-up views of its historic estates. Cruise the lake on a classic boat, browse boutiques, or unwind at a lakeside resort. If you're fortunate enough to live in Wisconsin, a fabulous vacation is only a short drive in any direction.



EXPERIENCE THE HIGH-OCTANE THRILLS OF AUTO RACING

While some enjoy a comfortable resort, others clamor for the thrill of roaring engines. Wisconsin's auto racing scene doesn't disappoint, turning the summer into a showcase of speed, skill, and spectacle. Whether you're an enthusiast or simply curious, our region offers ideal destinations to feel the vibrations, smell the burning rubber, and hear the whirring of race cars as they fly past your seat.

Wisconsin International Raceway near Kaukauna offers racing on Thursdays on its half-mile asphalt oval track. It also has special events as well as drag racing on select weekends. Outagamie Speedway in Seymour offers racing on Friday nights on its one-third-mile, semi-banked clay oval track.

Meanwhile, one of the nation's most revered tracks is only a short drive away.

Road America is one of the most important and respected motorsports venues in the United States. Tucked into the rolling hills of Elkhart Lake, the four-mile circuit is one of the longest permanent road courses in the country. It's known as the "National Park of Speed" and has hosted most of the major racing series over its history.

It's a favorite of drivers, and for fans, Road America is equally special. The massive, park-like grounds offer open viewing areas, wooded trails, and a relaxed atmosphere. Families picnic on hillsides, campers fill the infield, and spectators can get remarkably close to the action.





CHECK OUT SOME CLASSIC RIDES AT A CAR SHOW

While racing celebrates power, there are also some wonderful opportunities to appreciate the beauty and history of the automobile.

Experience the gleam of chrome and the low rumble of a classic engine during a summer car show. These gatherings have a certain way of stirring both nostalgia and curiosity, and the Fox Valley has two of the region's biggest and best right in our neighborhood.

The Appleton Old Car Show returns to Pierce Park on July 19 with more than 1,000 vehicles expected across its shaded grounds. It's a free, family-friendly tradition where you can wander rows of restored muscle cars, vintage trucks, antiques, and specialty builds. Add in food trucks and swap-meet vendors, and the day feels like a block party built around horsepower and history.

Just up the road, the legendary Iola Car Show — one of the largest in the country — will celebrate the car and our country from July 9-11, with this year's theme, "America's Car Show and Swap Meet." Featuring more than 2,500 show cars, 4,000 swap-meet spaces, and 1,600 campsites, Iola is less a show and more a small city of enthusiasts. Visitors can explore specialty displays, meet builders, hunt for rare parts, or simply soak in the spectacle.

Together, these events offer a summer full of shine, stories, and the unmistakable joy of seeing automotive passion on full display.

TAKE FLIGHT AT EAA AIRVENTURE

Flight enthusiasts all over the world dream about the opportunity to visit EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh. Even those in Wisconsin who are only remotely curious owe it to themselves to check out this famous, enormous, world-class event staged right in our own backyard.

AirVenture is the world's largest aviation gathering with an annual attendance of more than 600,000 people. Its sprawling grounds showcase more than 10,000 aircraft, ranging from vintage biplanes and warbirds to modern, cutting-edge designs.

EAA AirVenture 2026 will spotlight America's 250th anniversary with major military demonstrations, world-class aerobatic performers, historic warbirds, and special appearances, making it one of the most expansive lineups in recent years.

EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2026, set for July 20-26, is built around the national "Celebrating the Freedom of Flight" theme, honoring 250 years of American history through aviation. The week will feature nine air shows, including night shows on July 22 and 25, blending aerobatics, military power, and heritage aircraft in a way few events can match.

One of the biggest highlights is the return of the B-29 Superfortress *Doc*, one of only two flying examples in the world. *Doc* will be on display in Boeing Plaza, AirVenture's main showcase area, from July 24-26.



TEACHING, MUSCLE, AND CLAY: *The Art of Lindsay Huehns*

By JACKIE SANDERS



Lindsay Huehns is a down-to-earth clay artist, educator, and powerlifter living in Appleton. Her work is simple but beautiful, combining art with function. She finds inspiration in the everyday, creating items such as mugs, plates, planters, matcha bowls, and even quirky, sometimes cheeky butter dishes (these are my personal favorite).

Lindsay was born in Texas but grew up in Sheboygan. She attended the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay for studio arts, focusing on ceramics, most specifically raku firing and glaze making.

If you're not familiar with the process, raku is a very special kind of firing where a red-hot piece of bisque-fired pottery is placed into a container filled with combustible materials like paper, dried leaves, or hay, creating interesting markings and striations. After the reduction process, the piece is cooled in water and then cleaned. It is a very earthy and beautiful form of firing.

Lindsay relies on simple tools for her work, nothing too fussy, just clay, glaze, and a handful of tools like her favorite rib tools that allow her to refine her work in the way she likes. She says, "I think my background taught me to be resourceful. You don't need anything fancy to be able to create art, you just need to have the drive to do it."

Lindsay's love of the arts started as a child. When I asked about her earliest memories of art making, she told me, "I have always loved working with my hands and being able to create. As a kid, I would wake up every day and ask my mom what craft we were doing that day, and she always had something new for me. It wasn't just coloring books. I mean, she would have papier-mache out, or we would make homemade playdough. I think this really shaped me from a young age to love the arts and love being creative."

Lindsay started teaching at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College two years ago, something she absolutely loves. She told me, "I learn so much from the students - I love getting asked a question that makes me think or look into it further. It keeps me always thinking, always learning, and always exploring new ways to do things!" She also teaches workshops, working with local small businesses.

While her current studio space is a corner of her basement, she hopes that as she grows, she will be able to throw larger-scale pieces, like planters, lamps, or even a sink!

Lindsay is multifaceted, taking part in heavy lifting, not just in the studio. "For the last five to six years, I've competed in strength sports. I love weight lifting and have competed in powerlifting, strongman, and armlifting. I love being able to compete, but staying strong and healthy has absolutely helped me be able to keep doing my work on a larger scale, as it does take a toll on the body." How neat is that?!



Follow Lindsay on Instagram @art_isdirty

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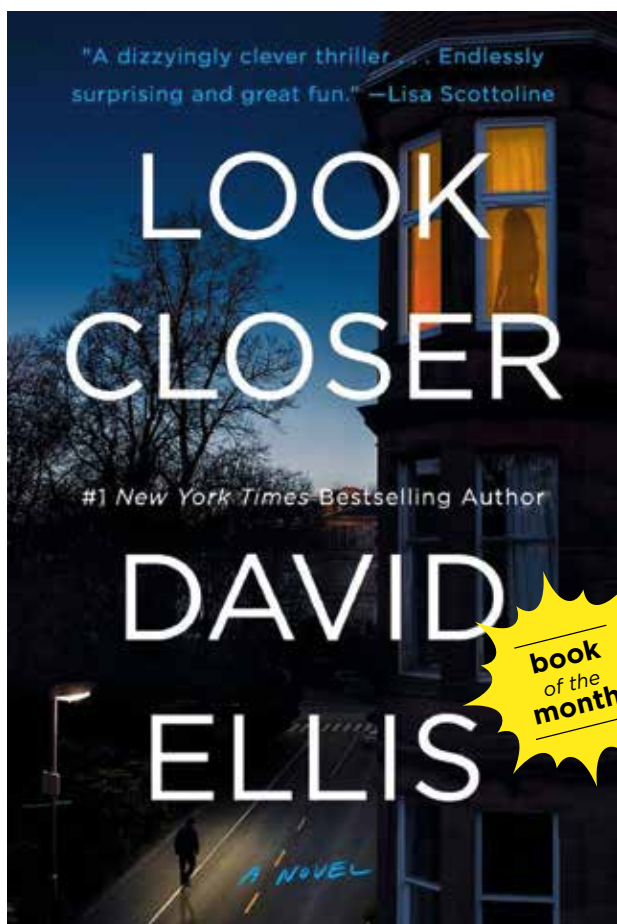


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David Ellis
Look Closer

Look Closer is the domestic thriller readers have been waiting for. The novel follows Simon and Vicky, a young, successful couple living in an affluent Chicago suburb. To outsiders, they appear to have the perfect marriage and an enviable life. But when an old flame is found murdered in a nearby town, long-buried secrets begin to surface. With a multi-million-dollar trust fund about to be released and a dangerous affair threatening everything they have built, Simon and Vicky are willing to lie to protect themselves. As the tension builds and the truth unravels, they realize they must ask themselves one question: Do you ever *really* know who you're married to?

Noelle W. Ihli
Run on Red

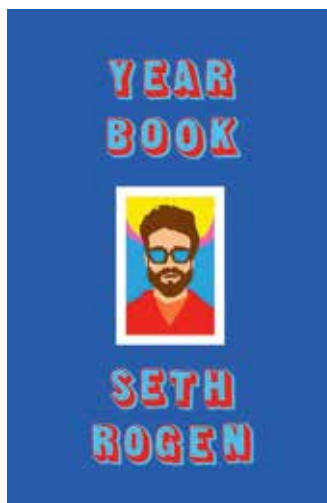
Laura and Olivia are on their way to a party when they notice headlights behind them. Deep in the hills without cell service, the girls realize they've been caught in a horrifying game of cat-and-mouse. Suspenseful from cover to cover, this novel is downright addictive.

Emma Simmerman
Here Lie All the Boys who Broke my Heart

This debut novel follows Sloane during her senior year at Pembroke College, where her ex-boyfriends begin turning up dead. As suspicion grows, she is forced to play detective while protecting her increasingly notorious reputation and future career from being destroyed before it ever begins.

Liza Minnelli
Kids, Wait Till You Hear This!

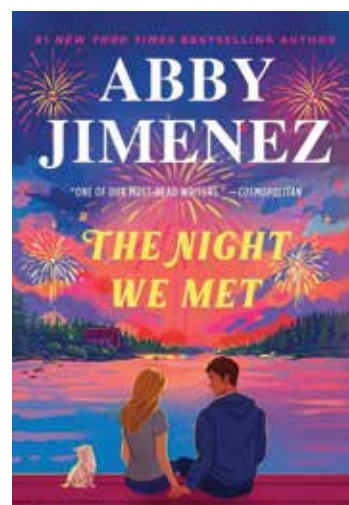
Kids, Wait Till You Hear This! dives into EGOT winner Liza Minnelli's lifetime of fame. From struggles with fertility, marriage, and family to the realities of being a successful artist in Hollywood, Liza leaves nothing out in this beautifully written tell-all.



Seth Rogan
Yearbook

I stumbled across *Yearbook* whilst browsing through my local library, and I couldn't be happier with my decision to take it home. Seth Rogan weaves laugh-out-loud comedy into personal essays and stories about growing up. His conversational writing style and sharp comedic timing make each chapter feel like a stand-up set. Well-crafted, thoughtful, and surprisingly sincere, *Yearbook* is an entertaining read that showcases Seth Rogan's writing talents beyond the big screen.

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.



Abby Jimenez
The Night We Met

The Night We Met by Abby Jimenez is a brand new contemporary romance that explores love, loyalty, and the consequences of difficult choices. Larissa and Chris share an undeniable connection that begins the night they meet at a concert. Their bond quickly deepens through a shared love of books, animals, and life's simple comforts. For the first time, Larissa feels she has something effortlessly genuine. The catch? Larissa is currently dating Chris' best friend. As emotions intensify and loyalties are tested, both must confront the impact their choices could have on the people closest to them. Jimenez delivers an emotional, engaging story perfect for fans of Ali Hazelwood and Elena Armas.





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COMMUNITY CONCERTS

Set Soundtrack for Fox Valley Summer

By JIM COLLAR

It's time to give our televisions a well-deserved break.

Summer invites us outdoors to explore and come together as communities. Live music is the perfect vehicle.

There's a unique satisfaction in resonating with songs you're hearing for the first time, while long-time favorites carry new energy when they're shared as part of an audience. They're experiences in which the world feels a little bigger and a little more connected.

In the Fox Valley, summer is made for music fans as outdoor stages come alive nearly every night. It's an enriching way to spend the season, and in a time of tight budgets, it can also be an affordable one. From community concert series to festivals and events, fans can get their fill without purchasing a single pricey ticket.

Here are a few ideas to get your summer music calendar started:

Spend Sunday afternoons in Green Bay for a curated series of incredible musicians from all across the country. The Levitt AMP Green Bay music series takes place at Leicht Memorial Park on Sundays at 4 p.m. Concerts run weekly through Aug. 9, with a break over Independence Day weekend. The series aims to present high-caliber talent and a broad array of music genres, in addition to cultural programming. Upcoming events include Blackcat Zydeco on June 7, The Local Honeys on June 14, and Leon Timbo and The Family Band on June 21.

Want some great guitar work? Head to Manitowoc later this month for a free concert from a guitarist who Eric Clapton

regards as one of the very best. Sonny Landreth, a 2026 Grammy Award winner, will headline Metro Jam at Washington Park. The free festival takes place on July 19-20 and will feature 10 performances. Landreth, an acclaimed slide guitarist in the blues, blues-country, and zydeco genres, will perform at 8:30 p.m. on July 20.

Concert experiences go beyond the music. When it comes to our community bands, it's also about the feeling of home and being part of something that belongs to everyone. Put down a blanket at Pierce Park this summer for the Appleton City Band, which performs hour-long concerts each Tuesday at 7 p.m. from June 9 through Aug. 11. The Kimberly, Little Chute, and Neenah community bands also offer concert series over the summer.

On some nights, we all like to sing along. The Glam Band performs at Future Neenah's Summer Kickoff Concert on June 10 along W. Wisconsin Avenue. Their Wednesday concert series then moves to Shattuck Park from June 17 through Aug. 12.

Catch a band along the lakeshore as Brews on 'Bago returns to Menasha's Jefferson Park. Model Citizens will provide the music on June 19, in an event featuring food trucks, lawn games, and craft beer from Stone Arch Brewpub. The series continues on July 10, Aug. 14, and Sept. 11.

These are just a few of the great shows to come. Summer is short, but the music is everywhere. Grab a lawn chair, pick a night, and let our summer soundtrack guide you through new discoveries and familiar favorites alike.



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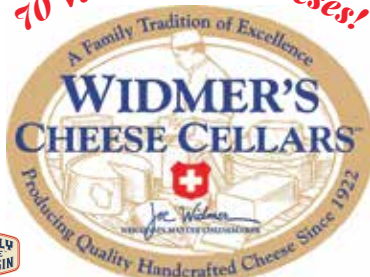
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BY: SARAH PETERSON

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Pam, Brook, and Shanna of Olive & Rose Boutique in downtown Appleton **don their fanciest hats for the Derby-themed Wine Walk.** Credit: Olive & Rose Boutique



The team at Brehmer Law LLC gets ready for the **Spring Wine Walk in downtown Neenah.** Credit: Future Neenah



Teachers James Six-Fronek, Theresa Kischnick, Jamie Schumacher, and Teresa Aerts attend the **Educator Appreciation Event at the Fox Cities P.A.C.** Credit: Fox Cities P.A.C.



Even babies love **Appleton Monthly Magazine**, especially 8-month-old Liesel of Brillion.



Allan Sanders **plays his fiddle at Little Known Art House in Appleton.** Credit: Jackie Sanders



William and Max enjoy a **giant slice of pizza (or three) from Sal's of downtown Appleton.**

ADVENTURE AWAITS

at the 2026-27 Viewpoint Speaker Series

In Northeast Wisconsin, the spirit of exploration isn't just a personality quirk — it's woven into our DNA. Whether we're navigating the open waters of nearby waterways or trekking through the rugged beauty of the Northwoods, we possess a natural curiosity for what lies just beyond the horizon.

Returning for the 2026-27 season, the Viewpoint Speaker Series at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center is designed to scratch that very itch. This series serves as your personal invitation to rediscover the world and your unique place within it. By journeying alongside world-class adventurers, visionaries, and researchers, patrons experience vivid visuals and bold personal stories that reveal the unseen dimensions of life. These compelling speakers are here to indulge curiosity, challenge long-held perspectives, and expand our understanding of the incredible planet we call home.

For longtime attendees such as Tawana Hanamann, the series is a hidden gem that facilitates deep connections to cultures and ideas that once seemed out of reach.



Tawana Hanamann with astronaut and Viewpoint Speaker Terry Virts

"I think it is one of the best kept secrets in the area. I've found the Viewpoint Series to be wonderful for families and a great way to 'pause' during the busy work week. I end up talking about the presentations for days with friends, family, and coworkers — so much so that they now attend as well."

That sense of shared experience is enhanced by the high caliber of the presenters. Because the series has historically collaborated with world-renowned organizations such as National Geographic, curious patrons like Tawana jump at the chance to see their heroes in person. "Many of the speakers, like Brian Skerry and Albert Lin — I'd already followed their work, so it was amazing to hear their stories," Tawana explains. "And to be able to chat with them after the show and talk about their experiences is just a priceless opportunity. I end up watching more documentaries and buying their latest books to be able to continue learning."

Ultimately, the series brings the ends of the earth right here to the Fox Cities — something Tawana is grateful for. "We are so fortunate to be able to have renowned photographers, scientists, and historians come to Appleton. For those that have not seen or considered this series, I just say, 'Do it.' It's a wonderful way to expand your worldview and realize that these are regular people who get to do a 'job' they love in the oceans, forgotten jungles, and outer space."

Ready to join in the journey? Season packages for the Viewpoint Speaker Series are available now, and by purchasing the full three-show season, buyers save 20% and secure their seats before tickets become available to the general public.

At the 2026-27 Viewpoint Speaker Series, adventure is calling. Will you answer it?

Viewpoint Speaker Series ticket packages can be purchased at foxcitiespac.com or by calling the ticket office at (920) 730-3760. The Viewpoint Speaker Series is presented with support from the David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund with the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.



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Step Into Style

SUMMER'S SHOE SCENE

By PHYLIS COLLAR

Just as we anticipate boot styles for winter, it's time to talk about what we'll be wearing for summer! From reinvented classics to joyful new creations, sneaker and sandal trends deliver in both style and comfort.



teva.com

The T-strap sandal is the ultimate barely-there staple for summer — available in everything from classic black with interesting embellishments to bright pops of color. For a sportier look, consider a new pair of Teva sandals.



New variations of the classic jelly sandals scream 90s nostalgia. Nearly every brand is embracing the look for both men and women.



birkenstock.com

Other casual sandal styles include strappy numbers for both daytime and evening, as well as wedges and slides. If you seek pure comfort, get yourself a pair of Birkenstocks.



Clogs are back and have been reinvented, while flip flops are no longer just for casual events.



adidas.com

As for sneakers, this summer brings an abundance of retro styles. Leather and suede appear in pops of color and even metallics. Nostalgic neutrals remain constant, while slimmer silhouettes predominate. Enjoy wearing them everywhere with everything.



Don't be afraid to play with bright colors, unique fabrics, and even wild prints on your sneakers. Trail-running-inspired styles offer a more casual look, for both on and off the trails. See you out there!

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ASK TAMMI

Got questions for Tammi?



My wife and I have three children and hope to take them on a couple of fun trips this summer. With gas prices being so high and the increasing costs of eating at a restaurant, do you have any tips for us to have some fun without breaking the bank? — *Brent T.*

DEAR BRENT: The cost of travel has definitely climbed recently. However, I think focusing on “one-tank” trips with your family is a good idea. There are many wonderful things to explore here in Wisconsin. For information tailored to your family’s interests, visit travelwisconsin.com. It provides you with planning guides, attractions, and hidden gems across our great state. One of my favorite trips with our children was just across the state line to Mackinac Island, Mich., where motorized vehicles are prohibited. It’s a wonderful family adventure — you can explore the island by bike, on foot, or by horse-drawn carriage. You can save money by staying on the mainland and taking the ferry over to the island. It is a unique, nearby experience without the expense of extensive travel.



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



We have many friends who are becoming grandparents. We would like to get their kids a baby gift. Do you have any suggestions for gifts when the parents are not registered anywhere? — *Gina B.*

DEAR GINA: It is very difficult to guess what the new mom and dad need for their little one if there are no options provided. In today’s world, new parents have so many choices, and they can be very personal. My best recommendations are books and age-appropriate clothing. Everyone seems to appreciate books to start their child’s library. Board books are durable and can be interactive as the baby matures. I always suggest giving clothing for the current season and the baby’s age, so it can be enjoyed right away and not stored for the future.



I see my neighbor’s dog in my yard on my doorbell camera. My neighbor is in the vicinity and appears to be aware that this is happening, but does not pick up the dog’s droppings. What is the best way to handle this so the behavior doesn’t continue? — *Maggie S.*

DEAR MAGGIE: Well, I want to believe the neighbor did not see the dog doing his business in your yard. However, I do think it is worth mentioning that you saw it on your camera, next time you see your neighbor. Hopefully, they will apologize, and you can clear up the situation without further confrontation. You might want to place a small sign in your yard asking people to pick up after their pets. If this does not work, you may want to consider investing in a fence!



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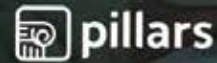
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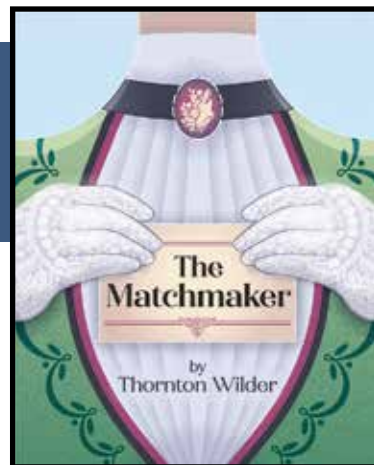


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GETTING UP-CLOSE WITH ANIMALS

TWO WISCONSIN ZOOS WORTH THE DRIVE

By TIM FROBERG

ZOO VISITS ARE PART OF SUMMER FUN IN WISCONSIN.

Zoos offer a combination of conservation, education, and entertainment, providing visitors with a unique opportunity to connect with the animal kingdom in a safe, accessible setting.

They appeal to people of all ages, especially children, and are extremely popular with families and nature lovers. Many zoos operate year-round, but summer — with its longer days and warmer temperatures — is the ideal time to visit one.

Whether you're checking out the big cats, primates, or penguins, zoos provide hours of fascinating, educational fun. The animals live in expertly crafted, temperature-controlled habitats that mimic their natural environments, from freezing Arctic-like conditions to warm, southern African shores.

Aside from their enormous entertainment and educational value, zoos serve an important role in protecting endangered species. Many zoos participate in captive breeding programs designed to increase the population and genetic diversity of endangered or threatened species, helping to ensure long-term survival.

Fox Cities residents have two excellent zoo options, both within driving distance: the NEW Zoo and Adventure Park in Suamico and the Milwaukee County Zoo. Both are year-round facilities that are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The AZA is recognized as the "gold standard" for zoological facilities and ensures the zoo meets rigorous standards for animal care, welfare, and safety.

NEW ZOO & ADVENTURE PARK

The NEW Zoo & Adventure Park in Suamico isn't a large facility, but it is well regarded. It was named as the 27th-best zoo in the U.S. by hospitality organization, Time Out, in 2025 despite being significantly smaller than others on the list like the top-rated San Diego Zoo and the Henry Doorly.

The NEW Zoo is an affordable, well-maintained, family-friendly zoo that provides an intimate, up-close look at the animal experience. It won't overwhelm you like a big-city zoo, but it is packed with a nice variety of animals and makes for a pleasant afternoon.

The NEW Zoo offers more than 200 animals from 90 different species and is paired with an adjoining high-adrenaline activities park that contains a 1,000-foot dual zipline along with a climbing wall and ropes course.

Animals that reside at the NEW Zoo include mammals such as African lions, alpacas, giraffes, penguins, red pandas, snow

leopards, Canadian lynx, bobcats, moose, American bison, American Elk, wolves, goats, North American black bears, otters, and white-tailed deer.



Credit: Alicia Plowman

Reptiles include American alligators, boa constrictors, Aldabra tortoises, and bearded dragons, while African penguins, pelicans, bald eagles, and whooping cranes highlight the bird section.

One of the zoo's most popular interactive activities is a high feeding tower in which visitors can nourish the giraffes with leaves and lettuce. There are also opportunities to feed animals like penguins, pelicans, otters, goats, cows, and alpacas.

The big cats, giraffes, and penguins are definitely worth checking out, along with the zoo's giant Aldabra tortoises, Al and Tootie.

The zoo offers a Wild Encounters program in which visitors can get a closer behind-the-scenes look at their favorite animals.

"We have a lot of really great ways to get very close to the animals," said Angela Kawaski, education director for NEW Zoo & Adventure Park. "We have a variety of daily opportunities to get up close and personal with the animals through things like our giraffe, penguin, and otter feedings and our snow leopard VIP experience.

"We have an outdoor tortoise experience where you can go inside the habitat with the giant tortoises. There are a lot of really cool hands-on experiences."

A couple of baby American red wolves were born in late April.

"Red wolves are an endangered species, so they were exciting births for us," Kawaski said. "They should be more visible as the summer moves on."

Make sure to take the Neil Anderson Canopy Tour: a 1,400-foot treetop walk from Adventure Park to the zoo over a dozen



Credit: NEW Zoo & Adventure Park

suspended bridges and platforms up to 15 feet high, providing unique zoo views.

Check out the Billy Goats Gruff Tower. It is a multi-level climbing structure inside the Children's Zoo that accesses two goat yards through a bridge, allowing the zoo's 12 domestic goats to showcase their climbing skills. Meet Jo, the internet sensation whose googly-eyed photo went viral in September of 2025, drawing millions of views after the zoo posted his picture on its Facebook page.

"We've made new improvements to our habitats," Kawaski said. "Aldo (the black bear) has a new swimming pool, and our whooping cranes have a new wading pool."

The NEW Zoo is open daily from 9-6 p.m. until Oct. 31 and 9-4 p.m. in the winter months. Admission fee is \$14.50 for adults and \$10 for children from ages 3-15.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY ZOO

The Milwaukee County Zoo is a 90-minute trip from Appleton and is worth the drive. It is a large metropolitan zoo (190 acres) and draws 1.3 million visitors annually.

Operated by the Milwaukee County Parks Commission, the zoo started in Washington Park in the 1890s before moving to its current location on Bluemound Road in 1961. It is a world-class zoo considered to be one of the Midwest's finest and has been ranked among the nation's top 10 on Ranker.com.

"We have a bigger zoo feel, but you can walk around and not get exhausted," said Megan O'Shea, communications director for MCZ. "It's a nice, convenient loop and an easy zoo to navigate. We have some great animals and a lot of opportunities where you can get really close to them."



Credit: Milwaukee County Zoo

The Milwaukee County Zoo is home to more than 340 species and 3,000 animals, including headliners like elephants, rhinos, lions, tigers, seals, penguins, apes, zebras, and giraffes.

African elephants are a prominent part of the zoo's popular Adventure Africa exhibit, which includes rhinos, hippos, and red river hogs.

"We're the only zoo in the region that has elephants," O'Shea said. "The next closest is in Indianapolis."

One of MCZ's most recent zoo additions is located within the Adventure Africa exhibit: the Ladish Co. Foundation Rhino Care Center, which opened in December. The \$22.6 million, 62,000-square-foot facility provides state-of-the-art indoor habitats for its two Eastern black rhinos, Zuri and Kianga. The two arrived in October, marking the return of rhinos to the zoo for the first time since 2021.

"With that, there's indoor space for rhinos and an indoor space for hippos on the other side of the building," said O'Shea. "It also includes renovated outdoor yards. So now we have zebras and red river hogs over there, and the rhinos can go outside along with the hippos."



Credit: Milwaukee County Zoo

Make sure to visit Florence Mila Borchert Big Cat Country. There, visitors can check out the three Amur tigers, Natasha, Kash, and Tula, who rotate through the indoor and outdoor habitats along with rare snow leopards and the zoo's beautiful pride of lions, which includes lioness Patty and her daughters, Amira and Eloise.

The Stearns Family of Apes of Africa exhibit is also impressive, featuring Western lowland gorillas and one of the largest groups of bonobos in North America. Orangutans, black-handed spider monkeys, and De Brazza monkeys are among the inhabitants of the Primates of the World exhibit.

Have you ever seen a king cobra, a green anaconda, a Grand Cayman blue iguana, or a giant Pacific octopus? You can check all four off the list by stopping by the Aquatic and Reptile Center.

Are you a bear's fan — as in the hairy four-legged type? Stop by the North America exhibit and observe grizzly and Alaskan brown bears along with American elk.

Tired of walking? Take the zoo's North Shore Safari Train, which provides a scenic 20-minute MCZ tour.

The zoo also offers animal encounter events, a petting zoo, and a gift shop.

The Milwaukee County Zoo uses flex pricing. Ticket prices range from \$12.75 to \$19.75 for adults and \$9.75 to \$16.75 for children ages 3-12. Buying tickets online usually provides a discount.

GO!

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By SARAH PETERSON

1. AN EVENING WITH ROCKY BLEIER

Meet Rocky Bleier, Vietnam veteran, four-time Super Bowl champion, and inspirational speaker, at American Legion Post 38 in Appleton. Signed memorabilia will be raffled to support the Wisconsin Veterans Village Association. *June 10, from 5-9 p.m.*

wisvva.org/evening-with-rocky-bleier

3. VICTORIAN SUMMER ON THE VERANDA

Experience Victorian elegance with live piano music, period-costumed staff, and complimentary drinks in a beautifully restored 1882 mansion. Victorian attire is encouraged but not required. Tickets are available online. *June 12, July 10 (special 1920s edition), and Aug. 7 from 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the Hearthstone Museum.*

hearthstonemuseum.org/events

5. RHUBARB FEST

New London's 9th Annual Rhubarb Fest will feature rhubarb-inspired baked goods, a bake sale, live music, craft vendors, and farm-themed activities. *June 13, 2026, from 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. at the historic Thern Farm.*

newlondonwithhistory.org/thernfarm-events

7. FUTURE NEENAH FARMERS MARKET

Shop fresh produce, local goods, artisan crafts, vibrant florals, and more, all while enjoying live music along the scenic Fox River. Sign up for the Market Loyalty card and earn rewards with every visit! *Saturdays, June 13 to Oct. 10, 8 a.m. to noon at Shattuck Park.*

futureneenah.org/events/featured-events/farmers-market

9. OUTAGAMIE COUNTY FAIR

The 2026 Outagamie County Fair, themed "Barn in the U.S.A.," celebrates America's 250th anniversary. The event features traditional fair staples, including carnival rides, 4-H livestock shows, live entertainment, and grandstand events such as tractor pulls and fireworks. *June 24-28 in Seymour.*

outagamiecountyfair.com

2. EXPLORE FIREFLIES

Explore the Bubolz Nature Preserve during evening hours and learn about the fascinating bugs that illuminate summer nights. Then go on a night hike to search for fireflies and other creatures that are active at night. Registration required. *June 12 from 8 a.m.-9:30 p.m.*

bubolzpreserve.org/bubolz-events/calendar

4. DOTY ISLAND RUMMAGE SALES

The Doty Island Rummage Sale includes more than 70 participants from all over the island. Doty Island Community Partners provides free signs in front of each registered house, as well as a map available on their website. *June 13, beginning at 8 a.m.*

dotyisland.net/events

6. APPLETON FLAG DAY PARADE

Join more than 50,000 spectators to honor "Old Glory" at the 75th annual Appleton Flag Day Parade — the longest-running Flag Day parade in the United States. The parade will run east along College Avenue from State Street to Drew Street. *June 13, at 2 p.m.*

appletonwi.gov/community/appleton_parades/flag_day.phpmosquitos-and-mojitos

8. FOX CITIES BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

Spread your wings while participating in free games, crafts, finger painting, relay races, face painting, balloon animals, martial arts demonstrations, butterfly education, music entertainment, and more. Purchase and release monarch butterflies for \$5 each. *June 20 from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at City Park.*

foxcitiesbutterflyfestival.com

10. MANDALA YOGA FESTIVAL

Join the community celebrating the diverse expressions of yoga and wellness. This free festival includes workshops, classes, and activities designed to inspire and uplift, creating a space for growth and transformation. *June 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Pierce Park in Appleton.*

beingcollective.us/event/mandala-yoga-festival



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SIX PACK OF PICKS SHOULD BOLSTER PACKERS

By TIM FROBERG

The exit door leading out of the Green Bay locker room has finally stopped spinning.

The Packers are in full recovery mode after letting a handful of valuable players walk away — and with enormous new paychecks — during the NFL's free-agent version of March Madness.

Strolling into Titledown to the cheery walk-up song of The Beatles' *Hello, Goodbye* ("You say goodbye and I say hello") are members of the Packers' 2026 draft class.

Judgment day for draft picks is roughly three years down the road, so it's tough to know whether the Packers properly replenished and repositioned themselves for a return to relevancy following last season's epic collapse.

The hunch here is they did — in a defensive-heavy draft geared toward finding much-needed pieces for Jonathan Gannon's new-look unit.

This was a quality-over-quantity process for general manager Brian Gutekunst, who was handicapped by the absence of a first-round pick and finished with a mere six selections in a very un-Gutekunst-like draft. That shockingly low number won't mean a thing if all the picks stick and Green Bay finds a keeper or two among a well-regarded group of undrafted free agents, including some with late-round value, like wideout J. Michael Sturdivant and tight end R.J. Maryland.

Green Bay addressed its two most glaring needs early with athletic cornerback Brandon Cisse and versatile defensive tackle Chris McClellan. Cisse needs refinement but has the size, speed, and physicality to become a high-level corner. Cisse was a bit of a slam dunk for Gutekunst at 52, considering he was projected to go among the first 40 picks. I'll be stunned if Cisse isn't a full-time starter by 2027, and he could immediately replace Carrington Valentine, a liability in run support who brings a flag football approach to tackling.

McClellan is a big man capable of playing multiple spots, including nose tackle, in Gannon's diverse defense. He brings juice as an interior pass rusher and has the potential to be a three-down player. Chances are, he'll contribute immediately as a rotational player along the defensive line.

Penn State edge rusher Dani Dennis-Sutton is an athletic freak who looks like a fourth-round heist. Several mock drafts had Green Bay selecting him at 52, and Gutekunst tried to trade up in the third round to nab him. At nearly 6-foot-6, with long arms and a hot motor, Dennis-Sutton gives off Danielle Hunter vibes and could be a special-teams weapon considering he blocked three punts last season.

Fifth-round pick Jager Burton doesn't move quite like Jagger but is a prototypical Packers lineman — big, smart, and versatile — and has a shot at being Green Bay's future center. Sixth-round corner Domani Jackson has the physical tools to play in the NFL.

Gutekunst rolled the dice by trading up for his final selection, Florida's Trey Smack. What made it a small gamble was the cost — two seventh-round picks for a sixth — and a general belief that kickers should be avoided during draft weekend like rattlesnakes, radiation, and great white sharks.

But who knows? Smack may turn out to be Gutekunst's best pick. He gets good trajectory on his kicks and has a powerful leg that extends to 60-plus yards. Expect Smack to beat out journeyman Lucas Havrisik for the job, allowing him to redefine the term "smack down" whenever he lines up for a field goal.

I can't be Marty McFly and jump into Doc Brown's DeLorean to tell you how Green Bay's draft picks will perform in the future. But I'm encouraged by the Packers' work in the war room. In the NFL's version of high-stakes poker, where everyone is bluffing, Gutekunst opened with some weak cards, but I wouldn't be surprised if he comes away with a winning hand.



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.



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By JENNI EICKELBERG

THE DUCHESS EATERY & SPIRITS

A NEW CHAPTER IN LITTLE CHUTE'S FOOD STORY

By JENNI EICKELBERG



When Ryan Richeson scrolls Facebook Marketplace, he isn't looking for antiques or oddities — he's hunting for potential. That instinct has guided his entire entrepreneurial path, from landscaping to restaurants to food trucks, each venture building on the last. So when a listing for the former Heiting Place in Little Chute appeared, he clicked. Then he drove by. Then he stepped inside. What he found was a building with history, a prime location, and the kind of energy that could support his vision for a new concept.

That spark became The Duchess Eatery & Spirits, Little Chute's newest restaurant, and a project shaped by Ryan's love of solving problems and growing businesses. "I like to find problems and fix them," he told me. "Each business leads us to where we are now."

Ryan and his wife are no strangers to building something from the ground up. Their first restaurant, Bean City Bar & Grill in New London, tripled its customer base under their ownership. Their follow-up venture, the BC Burgers food truck, became a place for burger experimentation — S'mores burgers, blueberry burgers, spicy creations, and more. Customers loved the bold, unique flavors, and the Richesons realized they were ready for a larger stage.

Along the way, Ryan also learned something about himself: he's an ambivert. He enjoys people, but what truly energizes him is the challenge of growing a business — tweaking systems, refining ideas, and building something that lasts. That balance helps explain why he thrives in the restaurant world, where creativity and customer connection meet business strategy.

Little Chute offered the perfect next step. The Heiting Place building sat on a high-traffic road surrounded by neighborhoods and businesses, but with surprisingly few dining options nearby. It was the kind of place that could become a community anchor. And Ryan wanted the restaurant's identity to reflect that. The name "The Duchess" ties back to Little Chute's Dutch heritage and provided the restaurant a chance to design a memorable character to represent it. To honor that connection, they also added a few Dutch-inspired menu items — including the standout bitterballen.

I made it a point to try them. Each bite featured a warm, meaty, gravy-like center — like my grandma's meatloaf — inside a crisp, golden, cheese-curd-style crust. A dip in the accompanying mustard highlighted the rich flavor of the bitterballen. It's the kind of dish that tells you the kitchen is having fun — and knows exactly what it's doing.

That same creativity carries over to the burger menu, where their signature half-pound patties are juicy, flavorful, and full of bold flavor. The Old Fashioned Burger, topped with bacon,



homemade bourbon cream cheese, American cheese, candied cherries, and an orange slice, is both whimsical and genuinely delicious — like the supper-club classic reimaged. The Duchess even has the Blueberry Burger, which gives a nod to their BC Burgers food truck.

Opening a new restaurant hasn't been without challenges. Ryan admits the "keyboard warrior trolls" have been a thorn in his side. But he and his team have thick skin — and a sense of humor. They're even starting to sell sarcastic T-shirts inspired by the rudest comments. Through it all, he credits their success to their staff: "None of this would be possible without our amazing team." I had amazing customer service from my waitress, who was very attentive to my needs.

The Duchess is still young, but it's already carving out its place in the community — rooted in local heritage, guided by Ryan's instinct for turning ideas into action, and fueled by a menu that's both comforting and creatively daring.



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Angela Halderson

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lamersdairyinc.com
Mon-Fri 8am-6pm; Sat 9am-5pm





OUTDOOR DINING

By KATIE CARLSON

'Tis the season! No, not Christmas — but we should all feel like celebrating. The sun is shining, the temperatures are rising, and restaurants all over the Fox Cities are opening their outdoor seating for summer. Whether you prefer a quiet table with a river view or a spirited patio with live music, you're sure to find a spot you'll enjoy.

Nothing beats gathering with friends or family for a meal at a local restaurant while sitting outdoors. It's an experience that should be appreciated during our few months of pleasant weather. You can make the most of it by putting away your phone and being fully present with your guests. Take a look around, soak up the sunshine, gaze at the flowers, and breathe in the scents of summer. Be grateful that you get to relax outdoors while sharing a meal.

Here are a few tips to make your outdoor dining experience a good one. Be sure to dress for the weather and the occasion. Bring a light sweater or jacket in case it's windy or cools off when the sun goes down. You may also want to bring a pair of sunglasses if it's earlier in

the day or evening. Keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and be sure to wear sunscreen to protect your skin. If temperatures are high, try to choose shaded seating if possible. Be mindful of insects and bees, especially if you are dining with children.

There are many benefits to choosing outdoor dining in the summer. For starters, you're going to get an instant boost to your mental health due to the sun, fresh air, and being around others. You'll also get to take advantage of fresh, seasonal food, and produce such as tomatoes, berries, corn, herbs, and grilled meats.

You're not only doing yourself a favor when choosing to eat outside at a local restaurant, but you're also supporting the local community and businesses. Summer patio season is a win-win for everyone and an experience that ignites the senses and puts a smile on your face. Enjoy learning about some of the best outdoor dining restaurants and patios in the area, and then get out there and take full advantage of the experience!



SPECTACULAR VIEWS

PULLMANS AT TROLLEY SQUARE

You can't go wrong dining outdoors at Pullmans at Trolley Square, where you will be immediately drawn to the spectacular views of the Fox River. They offer plenty of comfortable seating on the spacious patio. There is a genuine summer vibe and a delightful ambiance. With a broad menu — from seafood and burgers, to specialty salads and cocktails, and happy hour specials — there's truly something for everyone. Keep in mind that patio seating at Pullmans is first-come, first-served, so if you have a large group, you'll want to arrive early.



APPLETON
619 S. Olde Oneida St.
920-830-7855
pullmansrestaurant.com



OUTDOOR BRUNCH

ANGEL'S RESTAURANT

Angel's Restaurant offers a classic Wisconsin brunch. It's a long-time favorite of many people in the community. There's a family-owned charm that makes its patio dining feel welcoming and relaxed. Being outdoors means you can spread out and enjoy hearty comfort food with less noise. It's the perfect spot for those seeking sunshine, fresh air, a delicious cup of coffee, and a satisfying brunch. It's also a great way to kick off your Sunday, leaving you with the good energy that an outdoor patio brings to any meal.



APPLETON
1401 E. John St.
920-993-8847
angelsappleton.com



FUN ATMOSPHERE

PARKER JOHN'S BBQ & PIZZA

Parker John's BBQ & Pizza is yet another outdoor dining establishment to add to your summer bucket list. It's known for being casual and inviting. There are two patio areas at the Appleton location, so you can spread out and feel comfortable. With a fun and energetic atmosphere, it's the right choice for a large group or family. The menu offers a variety of foods, including barbecue, pizza, wings, and hearty salads. Picture yourself sitting outside — enjoying generous portions of your favorite foods, a cold drink in hand, surrounded by good company.



APPLETON
2331 E. Evergreen Drive
920-815-3264
MENASHA
124 Main St.
920-215-6568
parkerjohns.com



ENTERTAINMENT

THE MAD APPLE BURGER & BILLIARD CO.

If you're looking for an area restaurant with big energy, a vibrant atmosphere, and excellent food, look no further than The Mad Apple Burger & Billiard Co. It's not your average outdoor dining experience — it's also a hangout spot where you can play cornhole, relax by the fire pit, or listen to live music. It's the ideal mix of drinks, tasty burgers, and entertainment. The outdoor patio can accommodate large groups and offers a laid-back vibe. It's the best of both worlds — dining outside and diving into some classic Wisconsin-style bar food.



APPLETON

3025 W. College Ave.

920-955-3990

madapplebilliards.com



GREAT DATE NIGHT

MICHIELS BAR & GRILL

Another local place for outdoor dining is Michiels Bar & Grill in Menasha. Looking for the supper club atmosphere outdoors? Then this is the spot for you. Many describe the patio as charming and comfortable. It offers a community feel with a more traditional experience featuring stained-glass décor, a propane fire table, and an inviting ambiance that you simply can't get elsewhere. Enjoy the soup and salad bar before your steak or seafood main course, along with a full bar featuring supper club classics and brunch cocktails. Perfect for date nights or group dinners.



MENASHA

1100 Appleton Road

920-722-7885

michielsbarandgrill.com



BEER GARDEN

STONE ARCH BREWPUB

This unique brewpub turns from dim and cozy in the winter, to bright and lively in the summer. There's nothing like enjoying Stone Arch's house-brews in an old-world style beer garden with family or friends on a beautiful summer evening. If you have visitors from out of town, consider bringing them to Stone Arch to enjoy the brewery culture, fried cheese curds, fish fry, historic building, and outdoor dining. It's a casual place to dine, and a trendy spot to grab a drink or bite to eat before heading to a comedy show or going downtown.



APPLETON

1004 S. Olde Oneida St.

920-731-3322

stonearchbrewpub.com



CASUAL DINING

CHRISTIANOS PIZZA

Picture this: you're in the mood for authentic wood-fired pizza but the thought of getting dressed up makes you want to stay home. In this case, check out Christianos Pizza and enjoy a few slices on their casual, comfortable, and relaxing patio. It's a private setup with a calm vibe. The taste of fresh ingredients combined with warm-weather seating is sure to put a smile on your face and make your taste buds dance. Summer brings live music to their patio, where there is always a wide selection of your favorite beer, wine, or cocktails to sip on.



APPLETON

2400 S. Kensington Drive, Suite 500
920-234-9206
christianospizza.com



FARM SETTING

LACLARE CREAMERY

You may also want to consider taking a short drive to check out LaClare Creamery in Malone. Guests love this countryside gem and their outdoor patio where you'll be surrounded by good food, animals, gardens, and of course, specialty cheeses. This charming and beautiful farm setting is a must when craving tasty, cafe-style food and the perfect summer scenery. With extended patio seating, there is plenty of room for everyone. It's a perfect spot for families or for any cheese lover. Be sure to grab an ice cream cone on your way out!



MALONE

W2994 County HH
920-670-0051
laclarefamilycreamery.com



UPSCALE VIBES

FRATELLOS RIVERFRONT RESTAURANT

If you're looking for upscale vibes with a relaxed atmosphere then consider Fratellos Riverfront Restaurant. Enjoy inspiring views of the Fox River and catch the sunset as you finish your dinner and sip award-winning wine. Perfect for special occasions or special guests, it's the ultimate combination of scenic views, warm evenings, cold drinks, and chef-inspired food, such as pasta, seafood, and wood-fired pizza. The popular patio is full of character and many consider it one of, if not the best, outdoor dining spots in the Fox Cities.



APPLETON

501 W. Water St.
920-993-9087
fratelloswaterfront.com

more spots to enjoy fresh-air flavors:

- Antojitos Mexicanos, Appleton
- Apple Valley Pancake House, Appleton, Menasha
- Author's Kitchen + Bar, Appleton
- Bazill's, Appleton
- Chicken Grill, Appleton
- Cinder's Charcoal Grill, Appleton
- D.2 Sports Pub, Appleton
- Dragon's Den, New London
- El Palenque Mexican Gastropub, Menasha
- Fox River Brewing Company, Appleton
- Game Day Sports Bar, Appleton
- Glass Nickel Pizza, Appleton
- Greene's Pourhouse, Neenah
- Harbor Bar, Stockbridge
- Heritage 71, Sherwood
- Hop Yard Ale Works, Appleton
- Lake Park Pub, Menasha
- Lucero's Mexican Restaurant, Appleton
- MAD Elephant, Appleton
- Mr. Brews Taphouse, Appleton
- Mud Creek Coffee, Hilbert, Sherwood
- Rusted Root, Appleton
- Rye, Appleton
- Solea's Mexican Grill, Appleton, Menasha, Neenah
- Spats, Appleton
- Stone Toad Brew Pub, Menasha
- Tanner's Bar & Grill, Kimberly
- The Waters, New London
- Waverly Beach Bar & Grill, Menasha
- Ziegler Winery, Malone



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Celebrate June Dairy Month!



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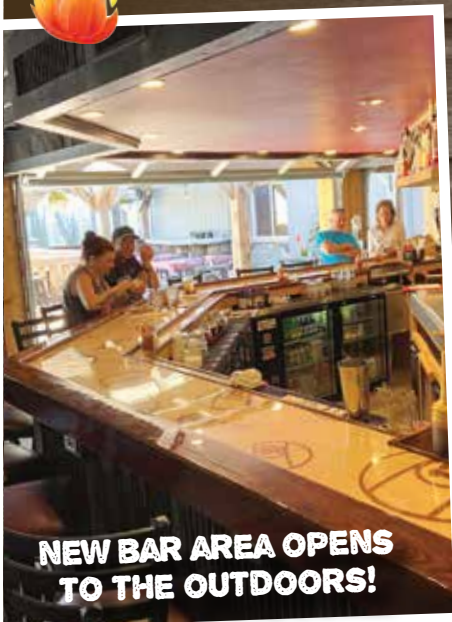
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N1716 Hyacinth Lane, Greenville | (920) 757-6243 | www.greenvilletwist.com

Coffee open: Mon-Fri 6:30am-8pm, Sat-Sun 8:30am-8pm

Ice cream: Sun-Thurs 11am-8pm, Fri-Sat 11am-9pm | Hot food ends at 7pm on school nights.

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Sloppy Joes

ITALIAN

These Italian Sloppy Joes are delicious! Rich meat sauce topped with spicy kale and creamy burrata makes this sandwich the star of any weeknight dinner. An easy, one-pan meal, this flavorful twist on traditional sloppy joes might just become a recipe staple!

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2-3 cups kale, finely chopped
- 3-4 tablespoons pesto
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 pound ground Italian sausage
- One jar (about 2 cups) red pasta sauce
- 8 ounces burrata, quartered
- Four ciabatta rolls

Directions

In a medium frying pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil until hot. Add the kale and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring for 3 minutes. Add the water, garlic powder, red pepper flakes, and pesto, and continue cooking until kale wilts and softens, about 5-7 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the Italian sausage to the same pan and cook, breaking it apart, until fully cooked. Add the pasta sauce and bring to a simmer. Turn off the heat.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 400 degrees F and heat the ciabatta rolls for about 4 minutes. Remove them from the oven and set aside.

Assemble sandwiches: Halve the ciabatta rolls and layer the meat sauce, kale, and burrata. Top with the remaining half of each roll. Serve warm and enjoy!

By CARLY CERNIGLIA



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1/3# Beef Hamburger with
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Michiels Bar & Grill 1100 Appleton Road, Menasha
920-722-7885 | michielsbarandgrill.com

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619 S. Olde Oneida Street, Appleton
(920) 830-7855 | www.PullmansRestaurant.com

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Facebook!



Something about an M&M cookie just gets me all nostalgic. The crunchy M&Ms, the chocolate chunks, the soft cookie... YUM! These cookies are super simple to whip up at home, and make enough to feed a small crowd. Don't want to make so many? Simply freeze some dough balls before baking or freeze the baked cookies for later. Who doesn't want cookies on demand?

Makes 22-24

Ingredients

1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup granulated sugar
Two eggs
3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1 cup chocolate chunks
1 1/2 cup mini M&M candies, divided

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a stand mixer, cream together the butter and sugars until fluffy. Add the salt and vanilla bean paste and mix until incorporated.

Add eggs and mix until incorporated. With the mixer on low, slowly add flour, cornstarch, and baking soda. Add chocolate chunks and 1/2 cup mini M&M candies and mix until just combined.

Scoop the dough into 24 balls. Gently press each ball into the remaining mini M&M candies so they stick on top. Place the balls, candy side up, 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets, 6-8 per sheet.

Bake for 12-15 minutes, until the edges are slightly golden. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack.

Repeat the baking process with the remaining cookie dough.

Store leftovers in an airtight container. Enjoy!



EASY M&M COOKIES

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

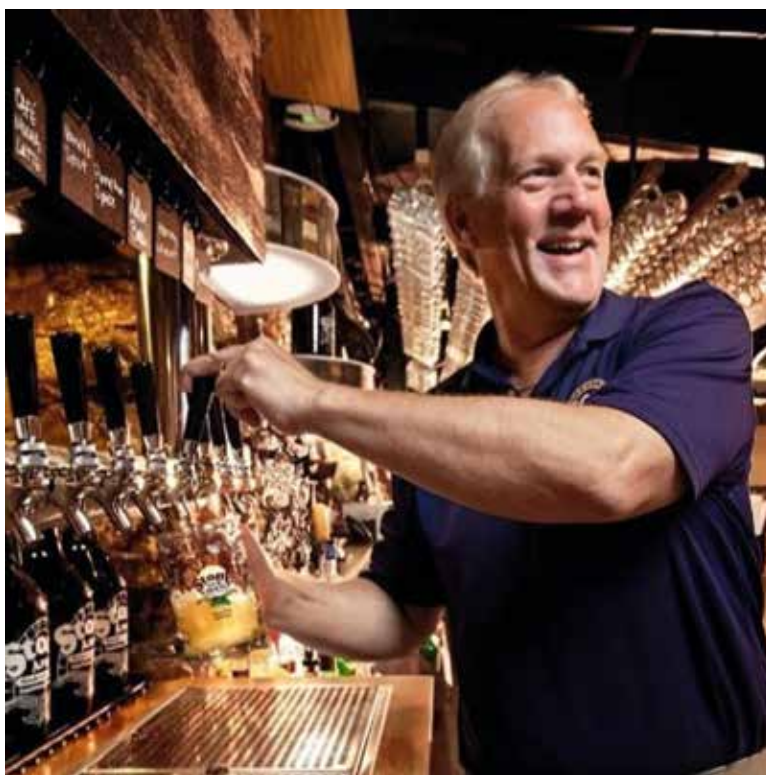
A BREWMASTER'S INSPIRATION

By STEVE LONSWAY

As I reflect on my 33 years in the beer and brewing business, I look back at the beers that helped pave my way in the industry.

I was a late bloomer when it came to enjoying the flavor of beer. I remember a few sips during my teens, but beer just did not appeal to me in any way. Then one day we stopped at Crowe's Liquor, a quaint little neighborhood liquor store on Glendale Avenue in Appleton, and I purchased a 20-ounce bottle of Bass Ale. I have to admit I started that session with a very cold 16-ounce can of Old Style, which I could only get halfway through. I then turned to the chilled Bass Ale. Still a rookie, I drank from the large-format bottle (something I now never do) and quickly realized that beer can have flavor. This is not a knock on Old Style by any means, but my taste buds needed something with a little more malt and a lot more hops.

At that time, craft beers were almost non-existent, but imports were prevalent. When Bass Ale couldn't be found, I would order Newcastle Brown Ale, Guinness, or Beck's Dark. These beers were readily available, and I enjoyed them immensely. As time passed, craft beers began to pop up in stores. One beer that made a big entrance to the market was George Killian's Irish Red. It was an amber lager brewed by Coors Brewing Company, and it was everywhere. It was a decent beer, and I definitely drank my share of it. The market was pretty naive at that time. Often, I would ask the bartender what imported beers they offered, and frequently, they would answer with "George Killian's." I always chuckled and thought



to myself, "Imported from Colorado?"

Soon the shelves were stocked with the likes of Leinenkugel's, Point, Pete's Wicked Ale, Sam Adams, Anchor Brewing, Fat Tire, and of course, my go-to... Sierra Nevada. I, as well as many beer connoisseurs, quickly converted to all craft and left the imports behind. This was also exacerbated by the fact that craft brews took over the cooler shelves at the retail level, and imported styles were moved to the warm shelf. This did not help the quality of these beers, which may have

taken a portion of their shelf life to get to the U.S. retailers in the first place. Unfortunately for these imported brands, many got old, stale, or even skunky, which was not ideal. Plus, the consumers' palates were becoming more keen on fresh flavors (at least mine was).

At that time in history, I focused on porters, stouts, bocks, and Oktoberfest styles. A few years later, the hop bug bit me and hasn't let go! My go-to styles now are pale ales, IPAs, and my new staple: hazy New England-style pale ales. Cheers!

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

Strawberry Mojito Mocktail

A virgin strawberry mojito is a refreshing, non-alcoholic summer drink featuring sweet strawberries, cool mint, tangy citrus, and a splash of fizz. Serve this all season as a bright alternative to traditional cocktails.



DRINK

INGREDIENTS

- 3–4 fresh, ripe strawberries, sliced
- 8–10 fresh mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon simple syrup, maple syrup, or sugar
- 1 cup club soda, sparkling water, or lemon-lime soda
- Ice, crushed or cubes
- Garnish: mint leaves, strawberry, or lime slices

DIRECTIONS

In a sturdy glass, muddle the strawberries, mint leaves, lime juice, and sweetener together to release the juices and oils. Fill the glass to the top with ice. Top with your choice of sparkling beverage. Stir well to combine, then garnish with a sprig of fresh mint and slices of strawberries or lime.

GRAPEVINE



SIP

STRAWBERRY BLUSH

Strawberry Blush is a fruity grape wine enhanced with strawberry juice for a burst of sweetness. It's the perfect refreshing treat to sip at a summer picnic, pair with dessert, or serve over ice.

**STRAWBERRY BLUSH • CEDAR CREEK WINERY
CEDAR CREEK, WIS.**



SPECIAL

DRAGON'S DEN BAR & GRILL
318 W. North Water St., New London
920.250.5107

facebook.com/dragonsdenbar

EAT

Dragon's Den Bar and Grill is popular local hangout located in downtown New London, right along the scenic Wolf River. The kitchen is famous for its fresh half-pound burgers, such as the Wisco burger and the Texan burger, and its sides, such as the spicy ghost pepper cheese curds and mac bites — there is something for everyone to love. Enjoy a casual atmosphere with happy hour food and drink specials, live entertainment, karaoke, and crowd favorite — music bingo.

MORE

DESIGN & DECORATING 77 | HOUSE & HOME 79 | IN THE GARDEN 81 | ONE MORE THING 82

backyard tune-up

TRANSFORM YOUR BACKYARD
INTO A FUNCTIONAL AND ENJOYABLE
OUTDOOR ESCAPE WITH THESE
SIMPLE SEASONAL TIPS.

By SARAH PETERSON

Your Guide to a Summer-Ready Backyard

By SARAH PETERSON

As June arrives in Wisconsin, it's the perfect time to transform backyards from winter-worn spaces into functional and enjoyable summer retreats. The warmer weather and peak growing season make it an ideal time to care for your lawn, plant new garden varieties, create relaxing spaces, and entertain guests. Here's a guide to help you tune up your outdoor living space and make the most of it this summer.



Lawn Care & Maintenance

Your lawn will need extra attention in June to thrive throughout the summer months. Making a few adjustments to your routine will help your grass stay healthy during heat waves.

High mowing: Adjust your mower blades to 3-3.5 inches to help your grass stay cool and conserve moisture. Taller grass provides shade to the soil, which reduces water evaporation.

The 1/3 rule: Avoid cutting more than one-third of the grass height at once. This prevents stressing the roots, allowing your lawn to grow strong and healthy.

Deep watering: Water your lawn early in the morning (5-9 a.m.) to minimize evaporation. Aim for 1 inch of water per week, which may include rainfall. Adequate watering encourages roots to grow deeper, which helps the grass survive the summer heat.

Mindful fertilizing: If your lawn is irrigated, early June is a good time to apply a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer. However, skip this step if temperatures soar or if your lawn is not regularly watered.

Pest control: If you've had issues with grubs in the past, late June is the best time to apply a preventative treatment.



- **Oaks and other trees:** Avoid pruning oak trees from April to July to prevent the spread of oak wilt, a serious disease affecting these trees.
- **Deadheading:** Remove spent blooms from annuals and perennials. This encourages a second flush of flowers and helps keep your garden looking fresh.



Gardening & Planting

June is the perfect time to add new plants and maintain your existing garden. Warm-season plants such as vegetables, herbs, and flowers thrive during this month.

Planting crops: For a bountiful summer, plant warm-weather crops, such as tomatoes, peppers, melons, and pumpkins. You can also direct-sow corn, squash, and cucumbers once the soil reaches 60-65 degrees F.

Mulching: Apply a 2-inch layer of mulch around perennials and trees. Mulch helps retain moisture, suppresses weeds, and protects roots from temperature fluctuations. Be sure to keep mulch several inches from the base of plants and trunks of trees to prevent disease.

Weeding: Early June is the time to tackle weeds before they go to seed. For a natural, chemical-free weed control method, use a vinegar-based weed killer.

For more summer gardening tips, read *In the Garden* on page 81 by Master Gardener Holly Boettcher, or follow her Facebook page, *Gardening Through Life with Holly*.

Pruning & Plant Care

Proper pruning is crucial for maintaining the health and beauty of your plants. Here's what to focus on this month:

- **Spring-blooming shrubs:** Prune lilacs, forsythia, and spirea after they bloom to promote next year's flowers. These plants set their buds early in the season, so timely pruning ensures a full bloom next year.



Thoughtful Spaces

2026 outdoor living is all about blending functionality with aesthetics that engage the senses. Creating multiple zones, each with a unique purpose, will make your backyard both practical and inviting.

Aromatherapy garden: Plant fragrant lavender, chamomile, jasmine, or rosemary to lower stress and improve mood.

Create soundscapes: Add wind chimes, a small solar fountain, or a birdbath to promote relaxation through calming sounds.

Simple seating oasis: Designate a quiet corner with a hammock, hanging chair, or comfortable outdoor cushions for reading and journaling.

Outdoor yoga or stretching: Dedicate a flat, shaded spot such as a small deck, patio, or quiet patch of grass for morning stretches and yoga.

Edible landscapes: Blend beauty and functionality by incorporating food-producing plants into your landscape. Dwarf fruit trees, berry bushes, and aromatic herbs add color and flavor to your garden.

Ambient lighting: Use solar lanterns or stringed bistro lights to create evening tranquility. Downward-facing "moonlighting" in trees can create a magical, natural glow.



Kid-Friendly Ideas

If you have children around, creating a fun and safe outdoor play area is key. This year's backyard trends for kids emphasize budget-friendly, natural elements and activities that allow for exploration and (often messy) imaginative play.

Natural playsets: Rope swings or bridges, stick tepee hide-outs, or log balance courses offer adventurous play while blending with the landscape.

Mud Kitchen: Use old pots, pans, and a wooden pallet to create a station for messy, imaginative play.

Chalkboard wall: Paint a section of a fence or a large board with outdoor chalkboard paint for creative expression and instant backyard art.

Children's Garden: Plant easy-to-grow vegetables or flowers in a designated container or raised bed. Let kids choose what they'd like to grow and allow them to get their hands dirty!



Attracting Birds

June is a great time to invite wildlife into your backyard by creating a bird-friendly environment. "Birdscaping" is a growing trend that focuses on replacing traditional lawns with native plants that provide food and shelter for birds.

Native planting: Grow native plants like chokeberries and coneflowers that attract birds with seeds, nectar, and caterpillars.

Pesticide-free zones: Keep your garden free of harmful chemicals to protect insects, which in turn provide food for birds.

Water features: Install birdbaths or small ponds to provide birds with fresh drinking and bathing water.



Entertaining

Backyard entertaining is a must during summer in Wisconsin. Here are some ideas for creating a functional, comfortable, and stylish outdoor gathering space:

- **Outdoor kitchens:** Set up grills, pizza ovens, smokers, and beverage stations in a designated area. Purchase or build a prep station made from stainless steel, granite, or concrete for weatherproof, food-safe cooking.
- **Fire features:** A fire pit or stylish fire table adds both warmth and ambiance, making it an ideal spot for gathering or making s'mores. Be sure to check fire codes, as some cities may require a permit.
- **Modular spaces:** Create flexible outdoor zones with movable furniture, such as modular sectionals that can be rearranged for different events. Add weatherproof pillows and ottomans for color and comfort.
- **Lawn games:** Set up classic backyard games like cornhole, spikeball, or giant Jenga in an open green space away from the dining area.
- **Sun block:** If your yard lacks shade, patio or table umbrellas, pergolas, or awnings can offer sun and heat protection to your guests and keep you cool while entertaining.
- **Bug control:** Keep guests comfortable and itch-free by running a simple oscillating fan or two near your entertainment area. Mosquitoes are weak fliers and cannot land in a steady breeze.

For additional tips on hosting successful summer gatherings, read *House & Home* by Katie Carlson on page 78.

While yard maintenance, gardening, and entertaining may seem like big tasks for the few months of warm weather we have, implementing a few of these simple suggestions will have your backyard tuned up and ready for summer in no time. Whether you're looking to improve your lawn care, cultivate vegetables, create a fun space for kids, host the perfect gathering, or simply relax and enjoy nature, June is the ideal time to make the most of your outdoor space.

Decorating with Chinoiserie

By JOEL LAPER

I've always appreciated hand-painted and ornately decorated vases and ginger jars. After years of collecting them in many different shapes and sizes, I realized each piece in my collection shared the same design style. Some of you may also own pieces done in this style but never knew the name or where it came from. After doing some research, I discovered this unique decorative style has been around for hundreds of years and has an interesting origin.

Chinoiserie, pronounced shin-wah-zuh-ree, is an artistic style reflecting Chinese qualities or motifs. It is characterized by a combination of Chinese motifs and techniques and is related to the rococo style. Both are characterized by ornate decoration, asymmetry, and a focus on materials and stylized nature scenes.

The trend began in the 17th century because of the fascination of Chinese aesthetics by European artists and nobility. As Chinese imports of blue-and-white porcelain and other decorative items increased, European craftsmen started to imitate these designs, and the style gained momentum.

The 18th century was the peak of chinoiserie, driven by the growing demand for luxury goods from the Orient, such as tea and textiles. European elites and monarchs created elaborate chinoiserie rooms as status symbols. The style blended with European styles such as Baroque and rococo, which featured extensive gilding and lacquering.

Common motifs of chinoiserie include mythical creatures such as dragons and phoenixes, architectural elements such as pagodas and bridges, and nature scenes with mountains, weeping willows, and bamboo. Other popular designs include exotic birds, beautiful florals, and intricate patterns.

This beautiful, ornate style is also printed on a variety of textiles made from linen, cotton, silk, and wool. Silk wallpaper is a luxurious option done in this style. Embroidered fabrics, hand-painted furniture, and room screens are just a few more popular applications for this style.



Today, you can find chinoiserie in any of the latest color trends. If you are looking for a decorative accent with a curated feel, I recommend adding this beautiful design style to your home.

Joel Laper | Artistry, home design, and cosmetology have all been passions throughout Joel's life. He has created art and spaces of all styles. He enjoys keeping up with the latest design trends.

Host with Confidence: Tips for the Perfect Summer Gathering

By KATIE CARLSON

Summer is finally here,

which may give you the urge to throw a party or have a small gathering at your house. Being the host might sound like a good idea at first — until you realize that the success of the gathering rests entirely on your shoulders.

Instead of panicking, take on the role with a positive attitude and commit to giving your best effort to ensure a memorable and fun time for everyone. If you've already volunteered to be the host or are considering doing so in the future, then this article is for you. Here are some essential tips for planning and hosting the perfect summer gathering at your home.

Start Planning Early

The first step is to start planning and getting organized as early as possible. The more you do now, the less scrambling you'll have to do as the party date approaches. Create a detailed to-do list with deadlines. A timeline and priority-ordered list of tasks will keep you on track and

reduce overall stress. Once you know the date and time, send out the invitations so guests can secure the gathering on their calendars. If you like themes, choose one early so guests are aware. A theme can also help guide the menu and decorations.

Deep Clean Your Home

Your home is the "venue," and the truth is, people can't help but notice. You want guests to feel welcome and at ease. This is your chance to show it off and highlight the best features and aspects of your property. It is wise to set aside some time for a deep cleaning.

Dust, crumbs, and streaked mirrors can affect the vibe and make guests feel uncomfortable. Tidy your spaces and remove clutter and everyday messes. Focus on the areas that will get the most foot traffic and where guests will spend the majority of their time. Spruce up your entryway and pay special attention to the guest bathroom. It's also important to do some yard work and ensure your front porch creates a good first impression.





Spend Time on the Menu

Devote time and energy to the menu and what you will serve. It doesn't matter who you are; guests often judge a party by the food. Start with some appetizers or finger foods and drinks, then move on to the main course. Keep it simple by offering a signature drink, along with beer, wine, and some non-alcoholic options. It's wise to offer at least two main-course options to satisfy dietary needs and provide choices. Reduce your workload by setting up a self-serve station and allowing guests to help themselves. Wrap it up with some dessert options to ensure no one walks away hungry.



Create A Welcoming Ambiance

Ambiance isn't just about what you see, but how a space or room makes you feel. You want your home to feel welcoming and appealing. Set the scene by dimming the lights and placing some candles. For the backyard, hang string lights and place lanterns around the tables. Play light background music to avoid awkward silences.

Prioritize comfort and consider creating some "comfort zones." This could include cozy outdoor seating with pillows, as well as adequate shade if guests are outside during the warm, sunny parts of the day. Nobody likes feeling crowded. Avoid this at your summer gathering by creating separate areas for food and drinks and arranging the seating to encourage movement and spreading out.

Keep Guests Entertained and Engaged

Your guests are there to enjoy themselves, relax, and have a good time. Therefore, you may want to consider

incorporating some form of entertainment, which can help break the ice if guests don't know each other. Keep it low-key and optional, such as by having a few yard games for all ages or photo props for guests to create memories of the gathering. A DIY drink station or dessert bar can also get people to engage and enjoy themselves.



Create A Memorable Experience

Most importantly, do your best to be a considerate and personable host. For example, greet each guest and introduce people who may not know each other. Offer a welcome refreshment and then let guests help themselves. Leave the clean-up for after the gathering or the next morning. You are there to mix and mingle, and your guests want your full attention. Try to have as much food prep done before guests arrive so you aren't distracted and overwhelmed.

Be present and help facilitate connections and conversations. If you have pets, plan to keep them out of the way if you sense anyone is uncomfortable. The best approach is to relax and let the gathering unfold instead of trying to control the environment. Let go of perfection and simply take mental notes of what you can do better next time instead of stressing about it in the moment.



You should now feel more excited and prepared to host a summer gathering or party at your home. This is your chance to truly enjoy the season, good company, and some delicious food. Be proud of yourself for taking on the challenge, and always remember to thank your guests for coming when the gathering concludes.

Is a Spay a Spay and a Neuter a Neuter?

By DR. JIM ZIEGLER

At humane societies that offer low-cost spay and neuter services to the public, the question arises: How do spay/neuter surgeries at a shelter differ from the same procedure performed at a veterinary clinic?

While the basic surgical technique is pretty much the same in any facility, a procedure at a veterinary clinic typically involves additional care items such as standard preoperative bloodwork, placement of an intravenous catheter, the administration of intravenous fluids throughout the procedure, and perhaps a variety of medications before and after surgery, particularly pain-control and anti-nausea medications.

Preoperative bloodwork in a humane society for an outwardly healthy pet is rarely performed. Depending on the facility, an IV catheter may or may not be used. Every facility uses appropriate pain medications for surgery patients. Additional medications, such as anti-nausea medications, vary by facility.

The bottom line is that there tend to be fewer add-ons at a shelter. The question then arises: Is this a bad thing? Is the pet's well-being compromised in a shelter surgery environment? Is an appropriate standard of care being met without some of these additional items? The answer is a matter of opinion, but my experience



doing shelter surgeries is that procedures are done with high standards. Every pet is given a full physical exam before surgery. Modern anesthetic protocols are used, and the patients are closely monitored during and after surgery. The surgeries are performed by highly trained, experienced veterinarians. While any anesthetic and surgical procedure carries some risk, complications are very rare.

The importance of offering lower-cost surgeries is that for many pet owners — roughly half — without this service, their pet would not receive care. Cost is the major reason. Preoperative bloodwork, IV fluids, and additional care items, while all good, come with a price tag that can deter pet owners. While I would never criticize the use of all safety measures, we also

know that surgery can be done well and done safely in a humane society environment. If that were not true, then it would not be such a common practice.

Humane societies also have the benefit of being able to offset some costs through grants and private donations, making lower-cost surgeries feasible. Private practices do not have this luxury and have many overhead costs that dictate higher prices. They obviously cannot function at a financial loss; it is simply business and economics.

Humane societies that offer lower-cost surgical services may or may not require proof of financial need for the service. The general trend is not to be judgmental and to offer the service to the public as part of a community service. The true nature of the program, however, is to serve those with a genuine need for help.

There is a high demand for these services everywhere. The need is growing and will likely never go away. Without them, endless animals could be denied even basic care. We are fortunate to have several resources in northeast Wisconsin to help the community this way. That is always the goal — to help people and pets and to better the community we live and work in.

Dr. Jim Ziegler has been a veterinarian for close to four decades. He loves working with animal shelters and rescue groups. He currently works part-time at the Fox Valley Humane Association and the Humane Society of Waupaca County, along with doing some independent work helping pets and pet owners in need.

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Libby

Libby the mastiff mix is a 5.5-year-old spayed female. Her best friend is Murphy, an 11-year-old neutered male Old English Sheepdog. This duo is as sweet as can be and is sure to make you smile!



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 is making excellent progress. Apollo does well with other dogs that can match his energy level and play style.



Doe

Doe is a 1-year-old spayed female. Doe isn't just a wallflower; she is a sophisticated and highly sensitive soul who simply prefers a curated, quiet lifestyle over a chaotic one. She is seeking a pet-free home.



Hartford

Hartford is a 3.5-year-old female who had a rough start to life. She originally came from a hoarding situation and has been in and out of the shelter, never finding quite the right fit. Hartford has determined that, after spending too much time with other cats in her past life, she would prefer to be your one and only.

Perfect Pairings

Best Companion Plants for Hostas

By HOLLY BOETTCHER

Flower beds full and overflowing with texture, color, and interest are a sure sign that spring has arrived, and summer is on the way. As I check out the vibrant hosta plants that have begun to show their personality in my gardens, I look for ways to fill in the empty spaces.

Shade-loving perennials that complement bold hosta leaves are great choices. If this is the season for you to take your shade gardens to the next level, follow my suggestions below!

Springtime Appeal

Bulbs such as daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, and snowdrops provide splashes of early-season splendor, even before the hostas have completely emerged from their long winter slumber.

Holly's Tip: Plant bulbs in the fall in well-drained soil. Add some compost and stagger bulbs between your plantings. Follow the depth instructions carefully for the best success. Set bulbs with the pointed side up deep in the holes. Keep in mind that after the bulbs finish blooming in spring and their leaves turn brown, they can be cut back to the ground.

Different Heights

Adding plants with vertical structure is at the top of my list to capture the eye. My top picks are foxglove, Karl Foerster grass, little bluestem grass, and bleeding heart. Combining this diversity can make your gardens pop.

Holly's Tip: Keep in mind that foxglove, like many other plants, is poisonous. Also, the foliage of bleeding heart goes dormant in mid-summer and will turn brown. At that time, cut it back to the ground. Don't worry — the bleeding heart hasn't died and will wake up again and bloom next year.

Fill with Groundcover

To fill spaces around hostas, consider using groundcover plants such as creeping phlox, ajuga, creeping thyme, or pulmonaria (lungwort), which comes in different blooming colors of blue, purple, pink, violet, and white. The shiny leaves have mottled specks of white that I just can't resist!

Holly's Tip: Plant groundcover in front of taller plants so they remain visible as your garden matures.

Texture and Contrast

Think astilbe with its wispy plumes. Ferns such as the Ghost Fern are easy to grow in upright mounds and don't tend to spread like some varieties.

Holly's Tip: Check out the plant labels when purchasing astilbe to explore its numerous bloom colors.

Splashes of Color

Coral bells (Heuchera) come in so many interesting shades of purple, caramel, and lime green! Another favorite is Jack of Diamonds brunnera, which adds silvery foliage like that of the ghost fern.

Holly's Tip: When planting, try the Master Gardener pro-tip of one, three, five, or seven. What does that mean? Well, consider one as a specimen plant, and the odd numbers of three, five, or seven as groupings to give your garden a polished look.

By embracing these perfect pairings, your hostas will not only thrive but also create a harmonious and visually stunning garden that's a true testament to nature's synergy!



Holly Boettcher is a master gardener, entrepreneur, and aspiring naturalist. Her love for the outdoors and nature shines through everything she does. Holly and her husband are the founders of Whistler's Knoll Vineyard on Highway JJ near Hortonville. Follow Holly on her new Facebook page: Gardening Through Life With Holly.

"TOO MUCH STUFF"

By TYLER SJOSTROM

There's too much stuff
There's too many things
Too many threads
Too many strings
No time to dwell on the joy a thing brings
Just too much stuff, and too many things

Too many channels with too many shows
Too many seasons and spinoffs and people to know
I seldom recall what I've seen once it goes
Just too many channels with too many shows

There's too many shelves in too many stores
Too many buildings with too many floors
Too many websites, the checkout's secure
Too many passwords to know what they're for

Too many brands with too many choices
Too many commercials with known-to-me voices
Too many options, just upgrade for free
Too many decisions, much too many for me

How to decide? How do I choose?
Is it worth the effort?
How are the reviews?

How do I cancel? Is dopamine dispersed?
What if I quit once I start?
What if I die first?

I scroll and I search
I'm piqued by a bunch of it
Not saying it's all worthless
There's just too galldang much of it

Too many streamers
Too many apps
Too many diversions
Too many traps

Because on every street corner
Another one rises
A carwash, a coffee shop
Sign up and win prizes

Your prize comes in reminders
Unceasing and gruff
That there are just too many things
And way, way too much stuff

Try this new thing, you'll love this new fad
We have all the answers, right after this ad
We know what you're thinking, we know what you need
And it might feel like sinking, so let's kick up the speed

Here's a promo, here's a preview,
Here's a peek behind the scenes
Here's a rate increase and a data breach
Here's a contract you won't read

Here's a new thing like the old thing
You liked the old thing, remember?
Lose hours, lose sleep
And once you've lost those, your temper

But the scroll never stops
The feed never ends
Too many requests from too many friends
Too many updates to things that worked fine
This race has no winner, and no finish line

Too many this, way too much of that
Not enough nutrients, and way too much fat
Diminishing returns as if by design
When there's too many things
But not enough time



ONE
MORE
THING

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

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