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APLAUG



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FROM
THE
EDITOR

It's. Still. Summer!

IT'S HOT, HUMID, AND STILL GLORIOUSLY SUMMER IN WISCONSIN.

While kids may grimace at the aisles of school supplies, there's still plenty to experience before the season ends.

Sing along as Tim spotlights musician and Road Trip founder DJ Doty in **the 920**. Natasha shares how our community helps students gear up with supplies, and Tim introduces Mackenzie Morey of 715 Beautify, whose express skincare services suit busy schedules.

Come "Up North" with me to discover the best camping, lodging, food, and adventures in **Go!** Jackie profiles local artist Kevin McGillivray, Angela offers tips on getting the most out of blueberries, and Phyllis highlights the latest back-to-school trends.

Don't miss our new feature, **THE LOCAL**, where Natasha explores Appleton's arts and music renaissance.

Jenni takes us on a mouth-watering tour of Prime Steer Supper Club in **Taste**. Chef Carly shares her recipe for creamy Amish Potato Salad, and Steve Lonsway explores the dark side — of beer.

In **Life**, John Van Den Brandt photographs the vibrant red cardinal, Joel teaches us about coffee table style, and Holly has tips for floral containers.

There's still time to enjoy everything August brings.

Go, Appleton!

Sarah Peterson
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Tammi Johnson

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



Natasha Winkler

Natasha Winkler is a versatile author and strategist specializing in journalism and storytelling, leveraging her background in Human Behavior. She blends psychological insights with strategic vision to create impactful, resonant content for audience connection.



Joel Laper

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



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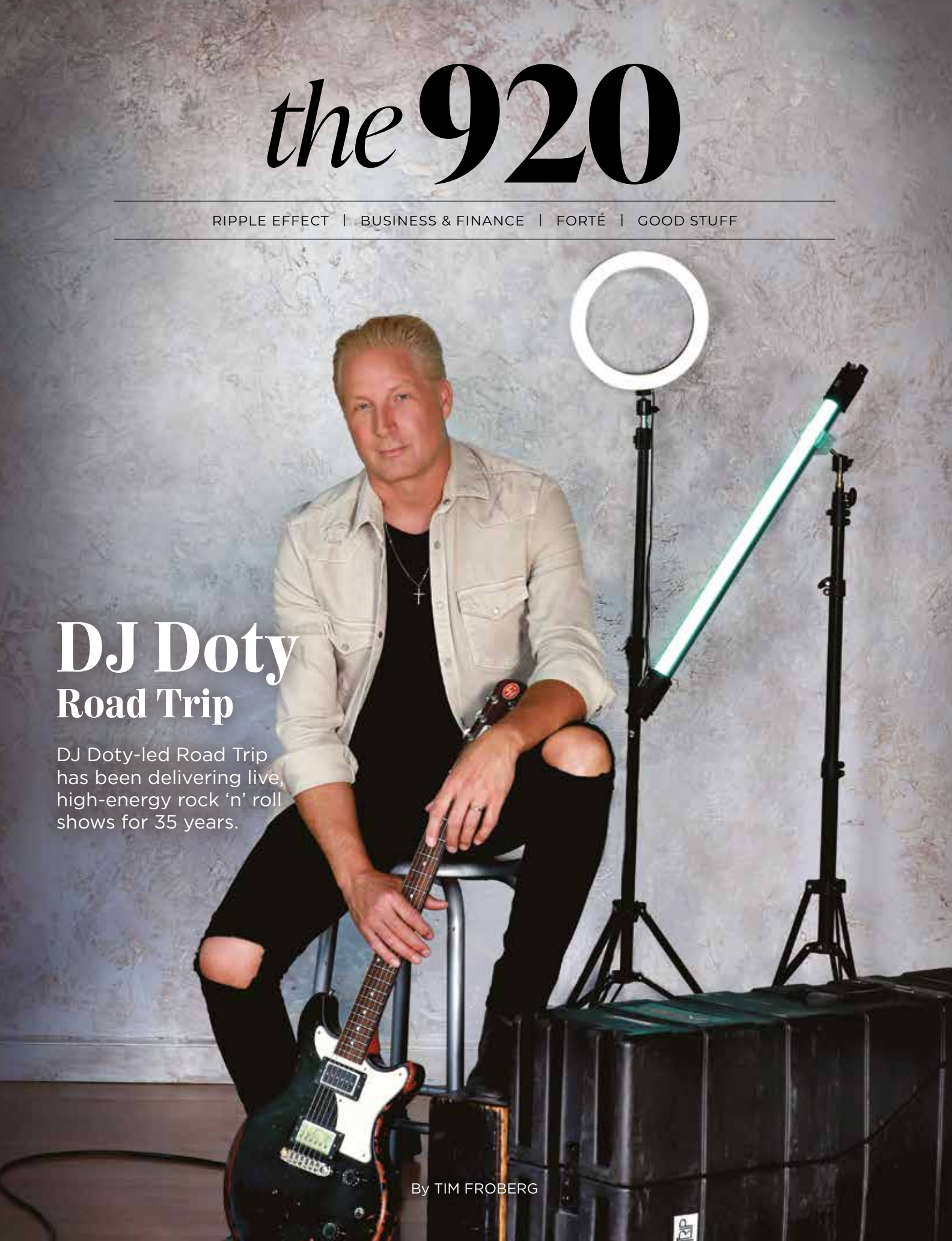
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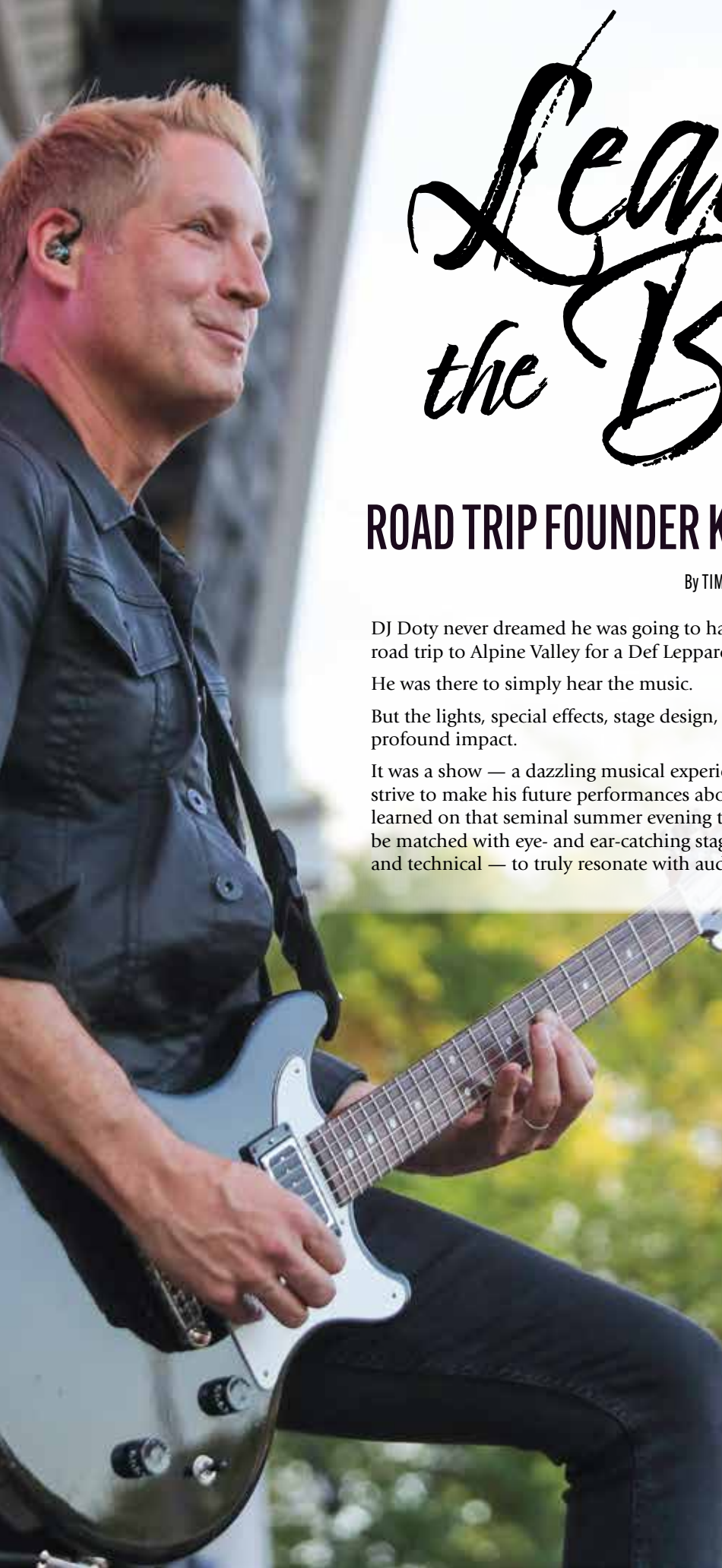
RIPPLE EFFECT | BUSINESS & FINANCE | FORTÉ | GOOD STUFF

DJ Doty Road Trip

DJ Doty-led Road Trip has been delivering live, high-energy rock 'n' roll shows for 35 years.

By TIM FROBERG



A photograph of DJ Doty, a man with short blonde hair, wearing a dark leather jacket and playing a light blue electric guitar. He is looking off to the side with a slight smile. The background is blurred, showing green foliage.

Leader of the Band

ROAD TRIP FOUNDER KEEPS FOOT ON THE GAS

By TIM FROBERG

DJ Doty never dreamed he was going to have a transformative moment when he made a road trip to Alpine Valley for a Def Leppard concert in 1988.

He was there to simply hear the music.

But the lights, special effects, stage design, sound quality, and overall production made a profound impact.

It was a show — a dazzling musical experience that inspired the young musician to always strive to make his future performances about more than just guitars, drums, and vocals. He learned on that seminal summer evening that music alone isn't often enough. It needs to be matched with eye- and ear-catching stage elements and showmanship — both physical and technical — to truly resonate with audiences.

“My life changed in a significant way when I saw that concert,” said Doty. “It was the first concert I’ve seen that had high production value. The stage was massive, and the lights and sound that came from it made a huge impact on me. I was completely blown away.

“They opened the show with one of their early hits, *Bringin’ on the Heartbreak*, and Joe Elliott did the first verse and chorus a capella. I can still remember the feeling I had at that moment — how powerful it was to me. It was like the power of music and the way they presented it was theater. I’ve been chasing that ever since. I love music, but I want to present it in a way that

hopefully people will get some of the feeling I had at that Def Leppard concert way back then."

Doty is the founder and lone remaining original member of one of the Fox Cities' most popular and longest-running rock 'n' roll bands: Road Trip, which has entertained Wisconsin audiences for the last 35 years. He plays rhythm guitar and is Road Trip's manager, handling almost every aspect of the band from overseeing production areas such as lights, video screens, computers, and sound quality to booking gigs, running payroll, and setting up and taking down equipment for shows.

Doty started Road Trip in 1991, and the band is still going strong. It does roughly 80 shows per year.

Doty is well trained for both the musical and business sides. He's a 1994 University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh graduate with a double major in entrepreneurship and human resources. But making music and putting on a terrific show is what drives the 55-year-old Oshkosh resident.

"I still have a passion to put on a really good show that connects with audiences," said Doty, who owns Road Trip's technical equipment, including its lighting system and video wall. "I still, and this surprises me, love to play live music in front of people. We've tried over the years to improve things the best we could – not only our performance but the production side – to make the show the best it could be."



Road Trip also consists of lead vocalists Amy Doty and Bubba Lewis, Ryan Goes (bass guitar), Matt Gieseke (drums), and Matt Weinberger (lead guitar). Amy is DJ's wife. The two have been married for 25 years and have been together for 31.

"DJ absolutely loves music and loves running his own business," said Amy. "He loves creating. Even when he was a little kid, he would draw these pictures of how a stage should look and how the lights should be set up. Kind of strange for a little kid, right?"

So what's it like managing and playing in a group with your spouse, who happens to be the face of the band as its lead singer?

"It's mostly really great," said DJ with a chuckle. "Actually, we get to spend a lot of time together, but it can be a challenge. I don't care who you work with; you're not going to agree on everything. You have to work those things out. We've been able to make it work ... not perfectly, but it works."

Amy added: "It can be tricky, but at the same time it's great. We do everything together, and it makes for quite the unit. It's like we're the same person. We both have such passion for this."

FROM AIR GUITARS TO REAL GUITARS

DJ grew up in Kingston, a small town in Green Lake County about an hour from Madison. He gravitated toward music at an early age.

"I had this record player that was in the form of a jukebox, I got for a Christmas gift," he said. "I wore out several needles because I would play records all day, every day."

Doty was so fascinated with rock 'n' roll in his childhood that he and his cousin, Richie Plath, entered air band competitions and won several of them.

"We got involved in air band competitions because we were already doing it for fun," Doty said. "After a few of these, we decided to up our game. We went from tennis rackets to these fake guitars made out of wood. One of the guys' dads, who was a carpenter, made them for us. From there, we graduated to real instruments, which we took to our air band shows."

"Then we figured, we have all these instruments, we might as well learn to play them. The next thing you know, we had started a band. Honestly, that's how we got started. I was 12 when I first began to play music for real. It was not so good."

"Bad Attitude" was the name of Doty's first band, and it lasted a couple of years before he headed off to college. Plath would often visit Doty at UW-Oshkosh, and the two would jam with guitars in his dorm room.

"We'd play a few songs just sitting in the dorm room drinking beer and having fun," Doty said. "After a while, people started coming to hear us. We thought it was great and decided to start a band. I figured I'd do this for a couple of years and then graduate college and get a real job."

"By the time I graduated, we had become popular, so I figured I would do this for a little while and see where it goes."

There was never a plan to make music for any sort of income or career, but it became a career."

Doty, who was joined by Plath as an original member, spent his early years working to build up the band's equipment.

"The first five-plus years of the band, we didn't pay ourselves," he said. "We took out every cent and bought equipment with it."

MAKING THAT CONNECTION

Road Trip is a quality cover band that plays primarily rock 'n' roll, but also does country and pop songs.

"We play music that connects with our audience," Doty said. "I've been at this for 35 years, and that has shifted quite a bit. Let's say we play a Led Zeppelin song. Only a small percentage of the audience will know what that is.

"It's not that you can't play any older songs, but our audience knows only some of them. We pick songs we love that, if we present well, we think the audience will love. That's kind of a moving target and can be challenging. The audience has the final vote."

The power of music that Doty experienced at the Def Leppard concert can be felt by the veteran musician at many Road Trip shows.

"We were doing a Chris Stapleton song called White Horse at a show recently in Green Bay," said Doty. "There was a woman sitting in front of me, and I guess it was her favorite because she was singing it right along with us. I could tell the song had meaning for her. To see her express herself like that and have that kind of moment with us, that's what means the most to me."

THEY'VE SEEN IT ALL

What's the most unusual incident the band has experienced in its 35 years?

"There are a ton of strange things that have happened to us," DJ said with a hearty laugh. "I remember playing at a bar in Fond du Lac, and a guy takes a gun out of his pocket and hits another guy over the head with it and knocks him to the ground.

"There were no shots fired, but it was pretty dramatic. We were pretty young at the time and

didn't know what to do, so we kept playing and eventually those guys got dragged out. Our bass player, who had seen everything from start to finish, had to go to court and testify about what exactly happened."

Amy, who has been with the band for 33 years, has countless stories as well.

"We were playing in Madison, and I saw a lady jump off the stage and try and do the splits," she said. "She dislocated her leg and went to the hospital. Then, she came back on crutches and danced for the rest of the show.

"Another time, somebody brought a pig on stage, and it was squealing like crazy. I remember a guy coming up on stage with a really hairy chest that had Road Trip shaved into it. We had a bunch of guys dancing while wearing nothing but Road Trip underwear."

Doty's passion for music is matched only by his strong Christian faith. When he's not setting up or playing gigs, Doty is the head of the men's ministry at Oakbrook Church in Oshkosh, where he teaches Bible study.

"I don't have a ton of interests," Doty said. "I love God, and I love music. That pretty much takes up all of my days."



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1939

The iconic movie *The Wizard of Oz* held its world premiere at the Orpheum Theatre in Green Bay, Wis., on **Aug. 10, 1939**, a full two weeks before opening widely across the U.S.

National S'mores Day is Aug. 10.

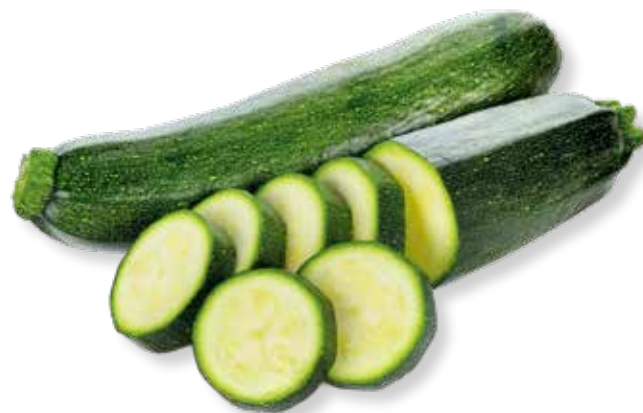


The biggest s'more ever made, weighing **396 pounds including 82 pounds of marshmallows**, was created by chef Stephen Durfee at Dandelion Chocolate Craft Chocolate Experience in San Francisco.



More than **52 million North American households** actively camped in 2025, with nearly half of them booking trips to improve mental well-being.

Named after the giant Great Lakes fish, **August's full Sturgeon Moon** marks a peak summer season when Native Americans caught this vital staple.



Aug. 8 is National Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbor's Porch Day, encouraging gardeners to offload their garden bounty on a neighbor's steps.



Officially known as **evapotranspiration**, "**corn sweat**" intensifies August heat by flooding the air with moisture, which drives up humidity and heat.



August was traditionally known as *Weedmonath*, which translates to "weed month," because of the rapid growth of plants and weeds during summer.

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The **WEIGHT** of a Backpack

By NATASHA WINKLER

There is a distinct, rhythmic hum that takes over most communities every August. You can hear it in the heavy rustle of plastic bags at local storefronts and see it in the determined focus of parents navigating store aisles, reading off their school supply lists. For many, however, this annual ritual is less about excitement and more about endurance — the quiet pressure of managing costs and ensuring their child has what they need to start the year on equal footing.

If we look a little closer at those aisles, there's a quiet undercurrent of anxiety. With the cost of typical school supplies rising significantly faster than overall inflation in recent years, that checklist isn't just a roadmap for academic success; for many Fox Cities families, it represents a stressful financial hurdle — one that has been growing over the years.

When a family cannot afford these basic tools, the need doesn't simply vanish when the first bell rings. Instead, the weight ripples directly onto our educators. According to federal data from the National Center for Education Statistics, 94% of public school teachers pay for classroom supplies out of their own pockets, with independent national surveys estimating that annual out-of-pocket spending averages between \$500 and \$1,000 per educator. When a local classroom lacks necessities like dry-erase markers, pencils, or headphones, local teachers quietly absorb that cost, often dipping into their personal family budgets to ensure no child goes without.

But when the community steps in, a beautiful counter-ripple occurs. Take the Outagamie County Back to School program operating right here in Appleton, which coordinates volunteers and donors to distribute roughly 1,000 fully stocked backpacks to local students every August. Or consider the targeted, direct supply donations organized through the Appleton Area School District Family & Community Engagement Department to keep local classrooms equitable.

The immediate transaction is simple: A child receives the supplies they need. But the secondary ripples expand much further.

First, it lifts a heavy weight off a local parent's shoulders, bringing peace of mind to an already high-stress time of year. Second, it directly protects the paycheck of a local educator who can now spend valuable energy teaching rather than managing resources.

Most importantly, it creates a level playing field on day one. There is a distinct social architecture to the first day of school. Walking into a classroom equipped with the exact same tools as everyone else provides an immediate sense of belonging and dignity. An \$8 box of 24-count colored pencils isn't just art gear; it's an instrument of equity. It ensures a child starts the school year on the exact same starting line as their peers, rather than steps behind.

We often view community charity as a one-way street. In reality, local supply drives function as community stabilizers. Whether you give a cash donation or drop a pack of highlighters or a heavy-duty backpack into a local donation bin, you aren't just handing off items. You are fortifying a classroom, validating a teacher, and telling a local student that their community is actively invested in their potential.

Let's keep making waves.

For specific needs in 2026, families should contact Outagamie County Youth and Family Services directly at 920-832-5161.



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What Banks Are Seeing: Fraud Trends Every Small Business Should Know About

By ANNETH ORTEGA



Fraud continues to evolve, and the tactics used by scammers are becoming increasingly sophisticated. From convincing emails to spoofed phone calls, criminals are finding new ways to target businesses and gain access to sensitive information or funds.

Financial institutions play an important role in helping businesses stay informed about emerging threats. By understanding some of the fraud trends affecting businesses today, owners can take proactive steps to protect their accounts, employees, and operations.

Email Scams are Becoming More Convincing

One of the most common fraud threats facing businesses is business email compromise. Fraudsters may pose as vendors, executives, or trusted contacts and request payments, account changes, or sensitive information.

These messages often appear legitimate and create a sense of urgency. Before sending money or updating payment information, verify requests through a trusted phone number or another established communication method.

Check Fraud Remains a Concern

Although digital payments continue to grow, check fraud remains a challenge for businesses of all sizes. Stolen, altered, and counterfeit checks continue to be used by criminals looking to gain access to funds.

Monitoring account activity, securing outgoing mail, and promptly reporting suspicious transactions can help reduce risk.

Electronic Payment Fraud is Increasing

Electronic payment methods such as ACH transfers and wire transfers offer convenience, but they can also be targets for fraud. Criminals may attempt to redirect payments or convince businesses to send funds to fraudulent accounts.

Before updating vendor information or sending large payments, independently confirm the request with a trusted contact. This simple step can help prevent costly losses.

Phone Scams and Call Spoofing are on the Rise

Another growing concern is call spoofing, where fraudsters manipulate caller ID information to make it appear as though a call is coming from a trusted source, such as a financial institution, government agency, or local business.

These callers often claim there is suspicious account activity or another issue requiring immediate action. Their goal is often to obtain account information, online banking credentials, verification codes, or other sensitive data.

Remember that legitimate financial institutions will not call and ask for passwords or confidential login information. If a call seems suspicious, hang up and contact the organization

directly using a phone number you know is legitimate.

Awareness Is Your Best Defense

Fraud tactics will continue to change as criminals look for new opportunities. While there is no way to eliminate every risk, staying informed and maintaining strong financial practices can significantly reduce a business's exposure.

Business owners should educate employees about common scams, review internal processes, and pay attention to unusual account activity. Working closely with a trusted financial institution can also provide valuable insight into emerging threats and fraud prevention strategies.

Protecting a business isn't just about preventing financial loss; it's about preserving the trust and reputation owners have worked hard to build. By staying vigilant and proactive, small businesses can better navigate today's fraud landscape with confidence.



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



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MACKENZIE MOREY

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Beauty school came early in life for Mackenzie Morey.

As an elementary school student, Morey loved playing with her mom's cosmetics and doing makeup for friends and cousins. She would even practice her makeup skills on mannequin heads.

Morey never lost that interest. She is the owner of 715 Beautify, a salon in downtown Appleton that offers a variety of beauty and skincare services such as makeup, facials, lash extensions, waxing, brow tinting, and brow laminations.

Morey is a state-licensed esthetician and an experienced makeup artist and eyelash technician. The Waupaca native holds a bachelor's degree in communication and media studies from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. She initially worked in social media marketing before going back to school to pursue her passion. She received her diploma from Fox Valley Technical College as an aesthetician, esthetician, and skin care specialist, and is currently a part-time adjunct instructor at FVTC.

Morey's skills have gained statewide attention. *Wisconsin Bride* magazine has selected 715 Beautify as a finalist for "best skincare services" for the past three years.

When she's not busy running her well-regarded business, Morey enjoys family time with her husband, Garret Johnson, and their Shih Tzu-Yorkshire terrier mix, Pepper.

What's unique about your services?

"A lot of the other businesses around the Fox Valley and Wisconsin offer facials that are more of a day spa setup, where you spend your whole day there. My business model is express services for the busy working professionals or busy moms on the go. My facials are 45 minutes, so it's easy to fit in on a lunch break or busy schedule. You don't have to take a whole day off work to take care of yourself."

What do you enjoy about your work?

"I love being a part of women's lives, whether they're treating themselves for a party and getting their lash extensions done or if they've had a stressful day and need to relax with a facial. I do a lot of wedding makeup and love being a part of their special day and making them feel good. I do around 40 weddings per year, and they book out about a year in advance. So I have that client's date on my calendar 12 to 15 months in advance, where I'm thinking about them and talking about it with them. It really does take up the bulk of my calendar."

How big is skin care right now?

"It's become far more prominent. Ten or 15 years ago, makeup was all you had. If you had blemishes or imperfections you wanted to hide from the world, makeup was the only way you could conceal it. Now, there is a lot of science involved, and there is a big focus on your skin's health. You can fix the problem now as opposed to just covering it up."

How different is your industry from the marketing field you started in?

"I feel it goes hand in hand. With my background in social media and marketing, it actually helps me manage my own business advertising-wise. My clients compliment me on my website all the time and tell me how easy it is to find information and book appointments. I really value my business degree and feel it helps me grow my business better than had I just gone to beauty school."

By Tim Froberg,
Photo by Ashley Schmit,
Debbie Daanen Photography



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GOOD STUFF

By SARAH PETERSON



SING ALONG

HEID MUSIC SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Feel the rhythm of summer in the city every Thursday night at Jones Park during the Heid Music Summer Concert Series presented by U.S. Venture. Enjoy a night of free music, cold drinks, food trucks, craft vendors, and community partners. Gather with friends and family and dance along to the sounds of your favorite local bands in the scenic heart of Appleton. August concerts include The Glam Band, Aug. 6; American Platinum, Aug. 13; Ask Your Mother, Aug. 20; and That '90s Band, Aug. 27.

appletondowntown.org/events/heid-music-summer-concert-series



EMPOWER YOUTH

5TH ANNUAL PAINT THE CITY

Paint the City, led by artist Irineo "Neo" Medina of Creative Downtown Appleton, Inc., empowers local high school students as they paint large-scale murals. This year, the painting will take place at Spats Restaurant on College Avenue in Appleton from Aug. 3-14. The program provides art credits, stipends, and a platform to leave a colorful mark on the city. Community donations are greatly appreciated and will help continue to elevate the voices of our youth through art, giving them a spotlight and encouraging them to be changemakers in our community.

facebook.com/events/984919911091268



TAKE A TOUR

NOOKS & CRANNIES

Get a rare look behind the scenes of the Hearthstone Historic House Museum. Guests will visit spaces normally not open to the public and hear interesting stories about the house's restoration. Aug. 12, 13, and 22.

hearthstonemuseum.org/events



FIRE SEAFOOD & STEAKHOUSE

Experience elegant yet relaxed dining inspired by the intimate, moody ambiance of the Prohibition era. Enjoy expertly prepared seafood, exceptional steakhouse favorites, chef-crafted appetizers, seasonal salads, and house-made soups. Located on Eisenhower Drive in Appleton.

fireseafoodsteakhouse.com



GO VINTAGE

FLEA & CRAFT MARKET

Gather friends and spend a day shopping for one-of-a-kind treasures at Antique Up in Kimberly. Browse a variety of local booths filled with vintage, repurposed, shabby-chic, and handmade goods. Food will also be available. Aug. 8 and 29, and Sept. 19, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

facebook.com/AntiqueUpKimberly



SEE & SIP

TROUT MUSEUM HAPPY HOUR

Spend a night out at the Trout Museum of Art in downtown Appleton. Enjoy free access to current exhibits and socialize over rotating deals in The Drinkery every Thursday from 5-7 p.m. Board game nights are held every third Thursday.

troutmuseumart.org/public-events-member-programs

Go!

GREAT READS | ARTS & CULTURE | HEALTHWISE | STYLE & FASHION

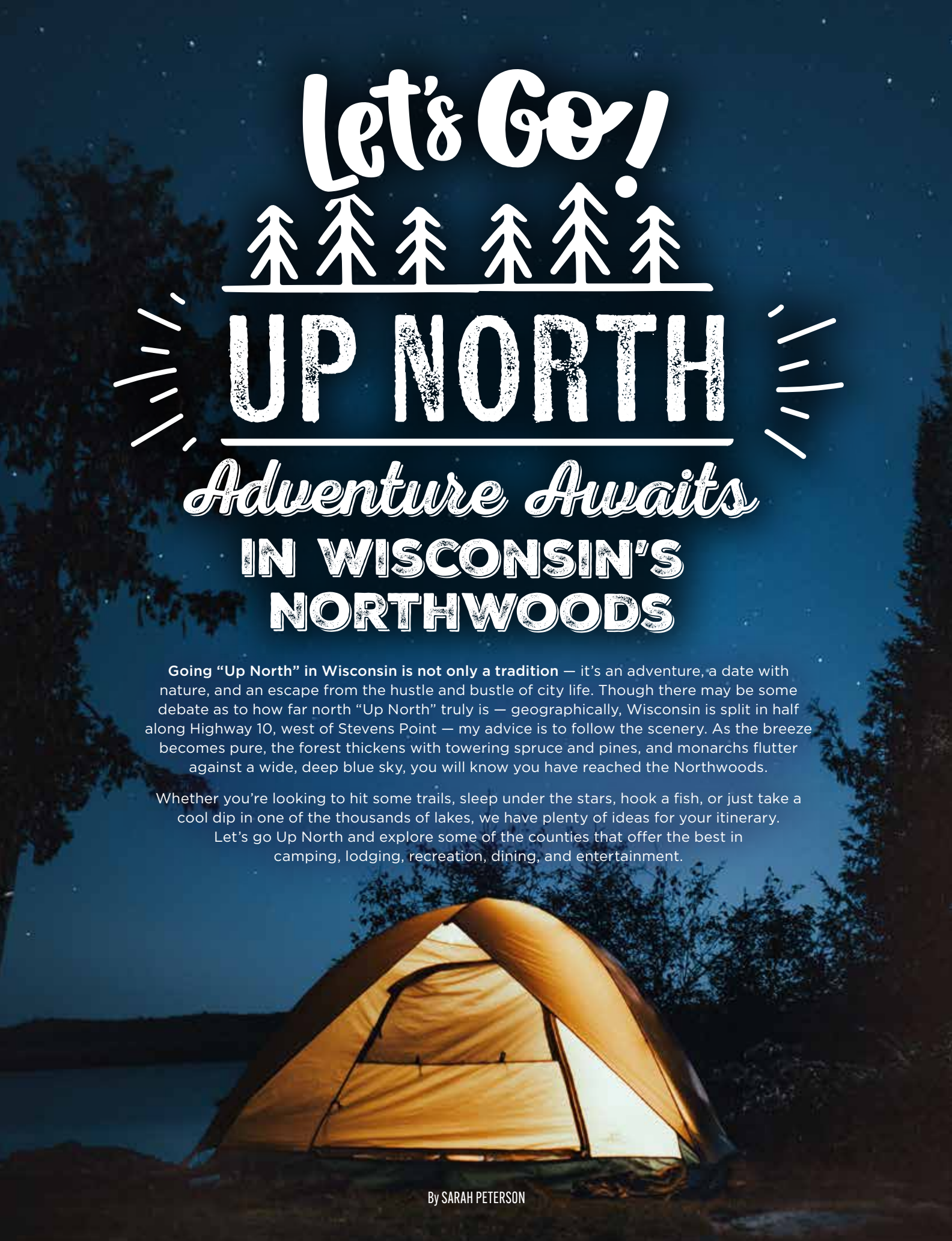


**KAYAK
DOWN THE
WISCONSIN
RIVER**

Let's Go!

*Enjoy outdoor escapes and the
fascinating wonders of the True North
of Wisconsin — your ultimate getaway!*

By SARAH PETERSON



Let's Go!



UP NORTH

Adventure Awaits **IN WISCONSIN'S NORTHWOODS**

Going “Up North” in Wisconsin is not only a tradition — it’s an adventure, a date with nature, and an escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. Though there may be some debate as to how far north “Up North” truly is — geographically, Wisconsin is split in half along Highway 10, west of Stevens Point — my advice is to follow the scenery. As the breeze becomes pure, the forest thickens with towering spruce and pines, and monarchs flutter against a wide, deep blue sky, you will know you have reached the Northwoods.

Whether you’re looking to hit some trails, sleep under the stars, hook a fish, or just take a cool dip in one of the thousands of lakes, we have plenty of ideas for your itinerary.

Let’s go Up North and explore some of the counties that offer the best in camping, lodging, recreation, dining, and entertainment.

By SARAH PETERSON

Oneida County

MINOCQUA, THREE LAKES, RHINELANDER, WOODRUFF

Welcome to Oneida County, the heart of the Northwoods.

Discover a wealth of fun with various resorts, cabins, restaurants, and family attractions. This county is the area's water playground, with more than 3,200 bodies of water near Minocqua and a 20-lake chain in Three Lakes that spans more than 7,000 acres of water and 106 miles of shoreline.



OUTDOOR ESCAPES

- Reserve a site at **Clear Lake Campground** in Woodruff. The campsites are located on the southwest corner of Clear Lake. With unbelievably crystal-clear waters, the lake boasts excellent boating and fishing, and the campground is complete with toilet buildings, showers, and clean drinking water. We also hear the chipmunks are friendly!

wisconsin.goingtocamp.com

- **Three Lakes Campground** is a 49-acre campground right on Big Stone Lake, part of a 28-lake chain, complete with a sandy swimming beach, a boat launch, a playground, a golf course, and a marina.

threelakescampground.com

- **Patricia Lake Campground** is a top-rated destination in Minocqua with a family feel. There are many beautiful units to choose from, including RV rentals. Enjoy pickleball, fishing, swimming, kayak rentals, and campground events.

patricialakecampground.com



PRIME LODGING

- For a dose of the Northwoods with the option of indoor plumbing, check out the cottages at **Indian Shores Resort** in Woodruff or a lodge room at the relaxing **Holiday Acres Resort** in Rhineland.

indian-shores.com, holidayacres.com

- **The Waters of Minocqua** is another great lodging choice featuring the largest waterpark in the Northwoods, complimentary for hotel guests.

thewatersofminocqua.com



Three Lakes Campground



Indian Shores Resort

Oneida County

(continued)



DINING HOTSPOTS

- **The Thirsty Whale** is a lively dining experience located right on the water in Minocqua. They've got good food, cocktails, and games to play while you wait for your meal.
thethirstywhaleofminocquawi.com
- **Ol' Pine Isle** is a hearty community-driven bar in Three Lakes with classic Wisconsin cocktails, beer-battered fish, and waterfront views.
opistl.com
- **Hoggie Doggies** in Woodruff serves Chicago-style hot dogs and ice cream treats, including puppy cones for furry family members.
hoggiedoggies.com



EXCITING EXCURSIONS

- Walk, or fly, up in the trees with **Northwoods Zipline Adventures** of Minocqua, where you can join a guided canopy tour or glide across a zipline.
northwoodszipline.com
- Visit **Wildwood Wildlife Park**, where you can see animals in and outside the exhibits. Get up close while deer and goats roam free, looking for a treat.
wildwoodwildlifepark.com
- While you're in town, catch a free show with the **Min-Aqua Bats**, the longest-running amateur water ski show across the globe. They run all summer long on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.
minaquabats.org



The Thirsty Whale



Hoggie Doggies



Northwoods Zipline Adventures



Vilas County

MANITOWISH WATERS, EAGLE RIVER, BOULDER JUNCTION, LAC DU FLAMBEAU

If you're itching to hit some trails, add Vilas County to your Up North bucket list. Vilas County houses thousands of acres of land open to the public as well as almost 90 recreational trails that accommodate UTVs, ATVs, bikes, and hikers. Don't forget to renew your fishing license before you go, because you can also find some of the best fishing in the country for smallmouth bass, walleye, and musky.



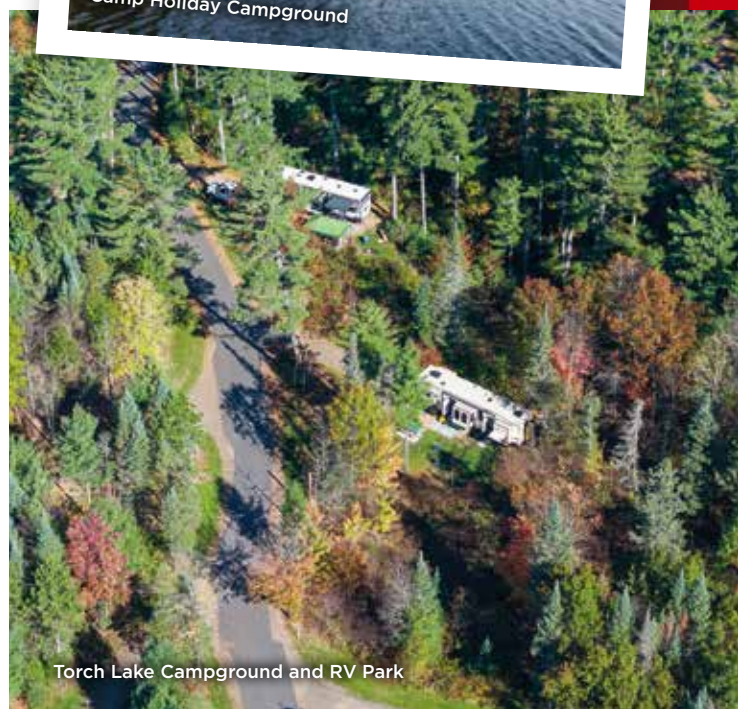
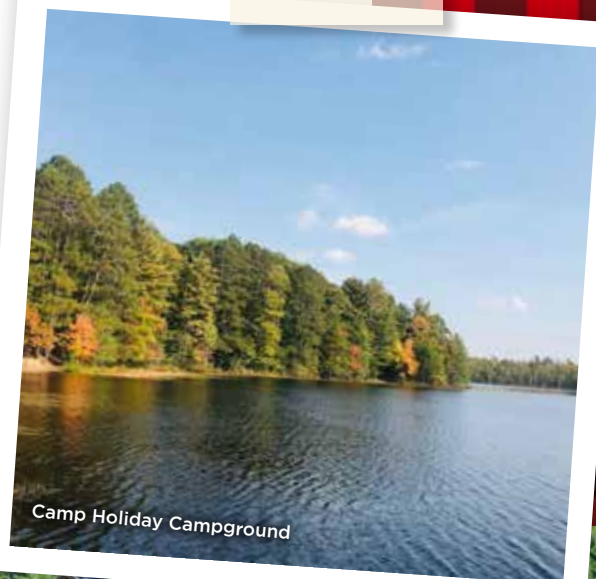
OUTDOOR ESCAPES

- **Hi-Pines Campground** in Eagle River is popular with families, featuring 145 campsites, an Aqua Play Zone, a sandy beach, and lots of fun games to choose from.
hipines.net
- **Camp Holiday Campground** in Boulder Junction offers just about everything you could need, including rental campers, a game room, a playground, a sandy beach with a water trampoline and rowboats, and canoes and kayaks rentals.
camp-holiday.com
- **Torch Lake Campground and RV Park** in Conover offers a sweet spot for nature lovers with campsites just a short walk from the beach and front row for some good old Northwoods sunsets.
vilascountyrec.com/torch-lake



PRIME LODGING

- Choose your cabin at **Pitlik's Sand Beach Resort**, located just 9 miles southwest of Eagle River. There are so many nearby activities, including a classic Northwoods golf course and paved trails for biking and horseback riding.
pitlikresort.com
- **Dillman's Bay Resort** offers an array of lodging options to fit your family's needs. Located in Lac du Flambeau, this resort offers cabins, lake houses, townhouses, and motel rooms.
dillmans.com
- Those looking for a more home-away-from-home experience can rent a house with **Hiller Vacation Homes**. This small community of rentals sits in the quaint town of St. Germain, known well for its quality fishing.
hillervacationhomes.com





Little Bohemia Lodge and Restaurant



Clearview Supper Club



Wildwood Outdoor Adventures & Campground

Vilas County

(continued)



DINING HOTSPOTS

- **J.J.'s House of Dogs** is a cute little diner with indoor and outdoor seating. As the name suggests, their menu offers a variety of dogs, burgers, pizza, and a bunch of yummy sides.
houseofdogs-diner.com
- It's not just a grub stop; it's a must-see exhibit in Manitowish Waters, complete with original bullet holes. **Little Bohemia Lodge and Restaurant** has a rich history featuring an FBI raid on the John Dillinger Gang.
littlebohemiainn.com
- Make a reservation for some fine dining at **Clearview Supper Club's** nostalgic lodge overlooking Big St. Germain Lake.
clearviewsupperclub.com



EXCITING EXCURSIONS

- Stop by **Coontail Adventures** or **River's Edge Adventure Compnay** to rent a bicycle that fits your style and download the Map It Vilas County App to choose from 61 different biking and hiking trails nearby.
coontail.com, riversedgemw.com
- Take the kids to spend an afternoon at **Elmer's Fun Park** in Saint Germain for some go-karting, bumper boats, mini-golf, and batting cages.
elmersfunpark.com
- **Wildwood Outdoor Adventures & Campground** offers fun, self-guided canoe and kayak trips as well as tube floating down the Wisconsin River.
wildwoodoutdooradventures.com



Forest County

**CRANDON, WABENO,
LAONA, MOLE LAKE**

“The Forest of Wisconsin” has over 680,000 acres of woodlands. With much of the county accessible in some way, whether by road or water route, there are opportunities for great hiking, fishing, biking, and hunting. Plus, an honorable mention for Crandon, the home of Crandon International Raceway.



OUTDOOR ESCAPES

- Welcome to Hollywood — **Holly Wood Hill Camping and RV in Crandon**, that is! A family-owned campground with an onsite camp store, live music, food trucks, outdoor bar, and recently added pool.

hollywoodhillcampgroundrv.com

- Settle in for the night with **Richardson Lake Campground** in Wabeno, with campsites surrounded by the beautiful greenery of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Bring your poles as Richardson Lake is known for bass, northern pike, and panfish.

fs.usda.gov/r09/chequamegon-nicolet/recreation



PRIME LODGING

- Bunk up at **Mole Lake Casino & Lodge** and end your long day of outdoor adventure with a little bit of luck on the slots.

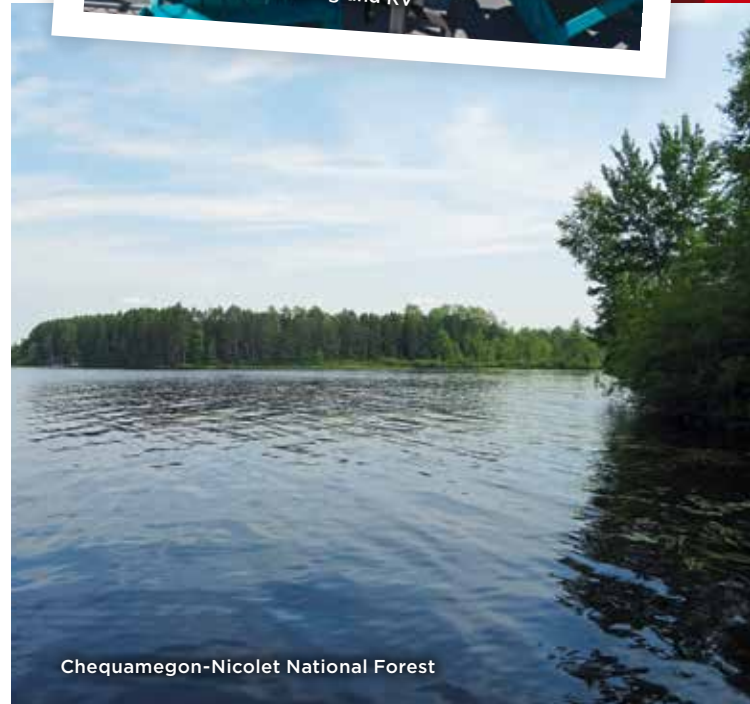
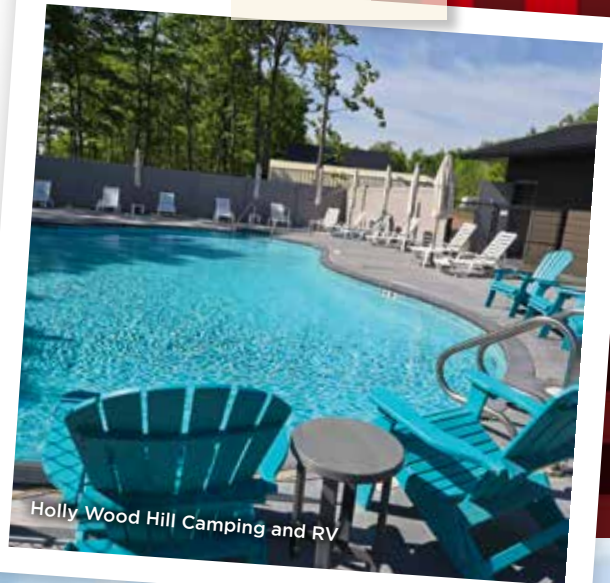
molelakecasino.com

- **Camp 20 Cabins** offers a cozy, rustic retreat with several styles to choose from. Each cabin is fully handcrafted with wood right off the Camp 20 Farm in Laona.

camp20cabins.com

- **Wolf River Rendezvous** in Crandon offers RV sites, cottages, an on-site bar, an event hall, and direct access to the Wolf River.

wolfriverrendezvous.com



Forest County

(continued)



DINING HOTSPOTS

- **Veese's Wild Rose Pub & Grill**, just a few minutes from Richardson Lake Campground, sits on Robert's Lake and serves up warm comfort food, homemade soups, and delectable desserts.
Follow Veese's Wild Rose on Facebook.
- **Palubicki's Eats & Treats** is a fun, old-fashioned drive-in restaurant serving burgers, sides, and ice cream. The prices are pretty old-fashioned, too. They can't be beat!
facebook.com/palubickiseatsntreats
- Friday nights in Wisconsin mean fish fries and old-fashioned cocktails. **Water's Edge Lodge** has all you need for that authentic Up North dining experience. The restaurant sits right on Lake Lucerne and sometimes offers fun water shows.
Follow Water's Edge Lodge on Facebook.



EXCITING EXCURSIONS

- **Crandon International Raceway** has provided three generations of fans with dirt-covered entertainment. The track welcomes more than 60,000 fans and is host to the world's largest off-road races. More than 2,300 grass camping sites are offered in Camp Crandon. Check out the 57th Polaris Crandon World Championship from Sept. 4-6.
crandonoffroad.com
- Hop aboard the **Lumberjack Steam Train** in Laona for a scenic ride along the rails to the Museum of Logging History. See the original Cracker Barrel store, eat at the Choo-Choo Café, and then head back to the station.
lumberjacksteamtrain.com
- Rent an ATV or UTV from **Northwoods PowerSports Adventures** and hit the Forest County Public ATV Trail located on old logging roads.
northwoodsatv-utv.com



Palubicki's Eats & Treats



Crandon International Raceway



Lumberjack Steam Train



Langlade County

ANTIGO, WHITE LAKE, LANGLADE

Besides being known for brats and cheese, Langlade County is also known as the “County of Trails” as it manages more than 130,000 acres of forest for public recreation. Many travel here for quality ATV riding and snowmobiling. In the summer, one of the primary pastimes is heading to nearby White Lake for rafting on the Wolf River.



OUTDOOR ESCAPES

- **Jack Lake Campground**, just north of Antigo, offers numerous options for single-unit campsites or larger group sites. Campground perks include a large beach, sand volleyball courts, grills near the lake, and a nearby disc golf course.
langladeforestryandparks.com

- **Boulder Lake Campground** rests on the shores of Boulder Lake near White Lake. It's the largest campground in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest area and features clear water and a clean beach. Sites fill up fast!
recreation.gov to reserve

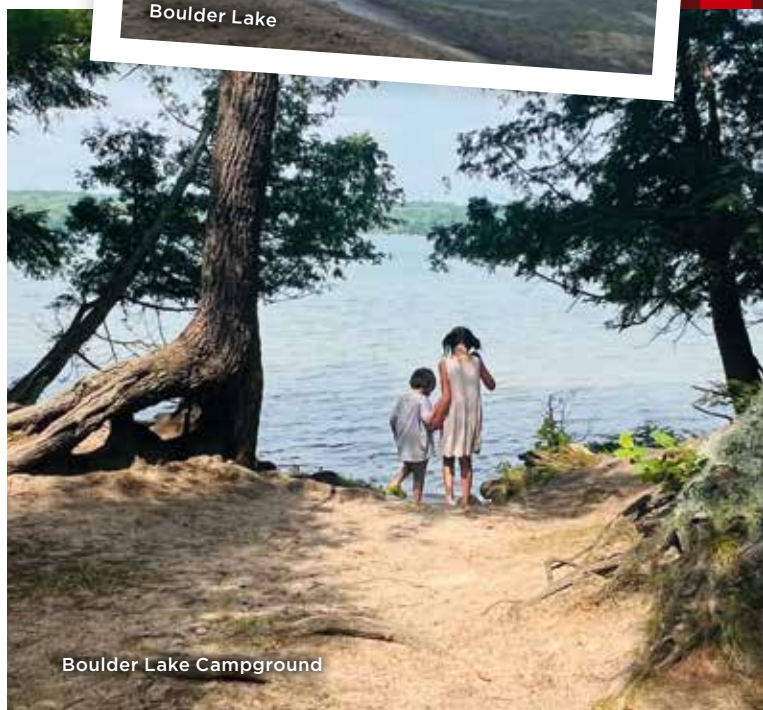


PRIME LODGING

- Enjoy all Post Lake has to offer by renting a cozy cabin at **Sunset View Lakeside Resort & Tavern**. Amenities include a private beach area, sand volleyball, a lakeside tavern, and yard games.
sunsetviewpostlake.com
- **Langlade Inn** of White Lake is a riverside inn, small and simple, but right in the midst of the Northwoods.
N4530 Highway 55, White Lake



Boulder Lake



Boulder Lake Campground



Langlade County - Langlade County Tourism



Sunset View Lakeside Resort & Tavern

Langlade County

(continued)



DINING HOTSPOTS

- Sit down for a hearty meal at the only supper club in Antigo, **Swartzendruber's**, known for its prime rib, seafood, and Friday night fish fry. Located on the south side of town, just west of Hwy 45.
swartzendrubers.com

- **Timber Haven Bar and Grill**, formerly known as the Polar Country Club, lives on as a local legend. Stop in for food and drink specials every day of the week.

Follow Timber Haven Bar and Grill on Facebook



EXCITING EXCURSIONS

- Check out **Shotgun Eddy** near White Lake for white-water rafting on the Wolf River. Various trip lengths and difficulty levels are available.
shotguneddy.com
- Float down the Wolf River on an inflatable tube for a relaxing two- to three-hour adventure — perfect for enjoying the scenery while sharing laughs. **Wolf River Tubing Co.** in White Lake provides rentals for trip.
wolfrivertubingco.com



Shotgun Eddy

LEARN DA "Up North" LINGO

"YOU BETCHA" is an emphatic agreement: "Certainly, you bet!"

"OPE" is a tiny exclamation of surprise. One might say "Ope, sorry!" after bumping into you.

"STOP 'N GO LIGHTS" are also known as traffic lights. Because, well, you stop 'n then go.

"YOUS GUYS" is often used to reference more than one person.

"BUBBLER" is another term for a water drinking fountain.

FISHING IN THE *Northwoods*

There's nothing quite like it. Northern Wisconsin is home to more than 2,500 lakes across six counties and thousands more streams, providing an unparalleled environment of serenity and natural beauty. The only stress you will find here is that of choosing where you want to cast your line. Whether you take to the lake in a boat, make the trek on a kayak, or decide to fish inland — the options are virtually endless.

Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fishing to learn more about seasons, species, and dates.

Fishing Seasons

Wisconsin has many fishing seasons that determine which species you can target, so it's important to identify which seasons you are traveling in.

General Inland Trout (inland lakes and ponds): May 2, 2026 (5 a.m.) - Oct. 15, 2026

Musky Harvest (statewide inland): May 2, 2026 - Dec. 31, 2026

Northern Pike: May 2, 2026 - March 7, 2027

Largemouth Bass Northern Zone Harvest: May 2, 2026 - March 7, 2027

Smallmouth Bass Northern Zone Harvest: June 20, 2026 - March 7, 2027

FLY FISHING FOR TROUT

Northern Wisconsin is overflowing with rivers and streams that are ideal for fishing. Brook trout streams are especially common in the Northwoods. The Wolf River, which begins near Forest County and runs south for 240 miles to Winnebago County, also has an abundance of brook, brown, and rainbow trout.

National Forest lakes in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest are said to provide spectacular fishing opportunities for anglers looking to hook trout, among other species. Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fishing/trout/streammaps for current maps of more than 2,900 trout streams by county.

MUSKY CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Boulder Junction is the self-proclaimed Musky Capital of the World. After a long battle, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued the registered trademark in 1971 for "Boulder Junction, The Musky Capital of the World®." The justification is clear; there are 194 lakes within just 9 miles of the town that the DNR has classified as Class-A musky lakes.

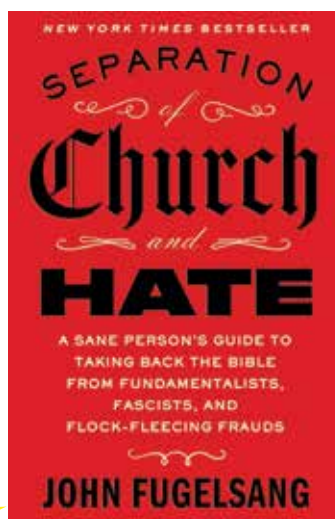


Adapted from a 2023 article by Sam Packard.



Gillian Flynn *Sharp Objects*

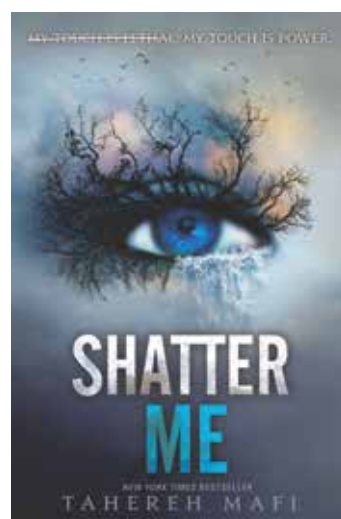
Known to many for her No. 1 *New York Times* bestseller *Gone Girl*, Gillian Flynn's remarkable debut novel, *Sharp Objects*, delivers the same gripping, suspenseful storytelling. The novel follows Camille, a reporter for a struggling newspaper outside Chicago, who returns to her hometown after a second young girl disappears within a year. Confronted by painful memories and the lingering influence of her hometown's former mean girls, Camille hopes to leave quickly. Instead, the missing girl is found murdered, forcing her to remain. Surrounded by a distant mother, a manipulative half-sister, a charismatic detective, and a possible serial killer, Camille must uncover the truth before it consumes her.



John Fugelsang *Separation Between Church and Hate*

Born to a nun and a Franciscan brother, John Fugelsang was raised with religion at the center of his life. As an adult, he reexamines Scripture, using thoughtful interpretation to challenge the rise of Christian nationalism. Written with his trademark wit, compassion, and insight, this engaging nonfiction work balances humor with heartfelt reflection. It will make readers laugh, provoke meaningful questions, and encourage a deeper understanding of faith, politics, and the values at Christianity's core.

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.



Tahereh Mafi *Shatter Me*

I credit *Shatter Me* as the series that reintroduced me to reading. This young adult dystopian novel follows Juliette, a teenager imprisoned for 264 days after an accident beyond her control. Her extraordinary ability, more curse than gift, prevents her from touching another living being without causing excruciating death. As the oppressive Reestablishment struggles to eliminate disease, famine, and rebellion, Juliette is abandoned and forgotten. However, with humanity dwindling and the planet steadily deteriorating, the regime reconsiders her value. Removed from her cell against her will, Juliette is forced to serve as the government's ultimate weapon. Her journey explores survival, identity, resilience, and the search for hope amid impossible circumstances.

Libby Page *This Book Made Me Think of You*

Recently widowed Tilly is stunned to learn her late husband left her a birthday surprise at the local bookshop: 12 carefully chosen books, one for each month of the coming year. As she reads, Tilly discovers comfort, healing, and hope through the stories of others.

Riley Sager *The House Across the Lake*

Perfect for summer, this gripping thriller follows recently widowed actress Casey Fletcher as she retreats to her lake house after a public scandal. When her new neighbor and friend Katherine suddenly disappears, Casey must confront her own struggles and uncover the truth before it is too late.

Gillian McAllister *Caller Unknown*

McAllister delivers full-out dread in this chilling thriller following Simone, a mother whose vacation takes a horrifying turn when her daughter disappears. Left with only a phone and a mysterious voice issuing impossible demands, Simone must do whatever it takes to bring her daughter home.





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Appleton
Monthly

Drawing Connections

THE ART OF CROSSING REALMS

By JACKIE SANDERS



Follow Kevin on Instagram @kev_mcg and Appleton Drawing Club @appletondrawingclub

Kevin McGillivray is an artist, writer, and educator with a penchant for music. Located in Appleton, his focus as an artist is on observational drawing and painting in a variety of subjects, including portraiture and landscape. His main tools of choice are eclectic: charcoal, sanguine, pastels, slate, marble, wood panels, and oil paint. How do these discordant materials work together, you might ask? Kevin has been experimenting with drawing on slate and stone, the size and texture of which vary greatly. He said, *"I like the sense of disruption, contrast, and rupture, that a painting or drawing can disrupt a surface or a place and be a presence that creates a way for enchantment to sneak in."*

When speaking of his early memories of creating and inspiration, Kevin recalled his trips to museums and looking through *Dungeons & Dragons* manuals. This represents an interesting combination of classical fine art and fantasy art, the influence of which is prevalent in his current work. "Growing up, painting and drawing was part of daily life as my mom is a prolific watercolor artist and teacher," Kevin said. "Every free surface and wall was used for paintings or art material storage, and that's a habit I've inherited. The



kitchen table was used as a studio for the constant production of paintings. I was never short on my own art supplies and books, and when I had art classes I would try to apply whatever I learned to some kind of fantasy drawing."

He added, "My most persistent early fascination in art, however, was fantasy illustration. I loved the art in manuals for games like *Dungeons & Dragons*, the

pencil sketches of swords and armor, the representations of monsters and characters that had the potential to spring to life in the game. I loved the possibilities they suggested, the sense of a world that could be created or explored."

Kevin attended St. Norbert College in De Pere for music but quickly became enamored with the art department. He studied under John Gordon, whose teaching had a profound effect on Kevin. He and John became close friends through his mentorship. Kevin said of his time with John, "John's teaching approach was rigorous and strategic, and he emphasized working from life rather than imagination for the purpose of study and developing drawing fluency. His teaching gave me the structure, experience, and encouragement I needed to connect the dots between all those elements of drawing I had tried to understand through trial and error."

Kevin is not only an accomplished artist but also shares his knowledge through teaching. Looking for a drawing group to join when he moved to Appleton in 2023, he had difficulty finding what he wanted, so he decided to create his own. With support and encouragement from the amazing folks over at the Photo Opp — John Adams especially — he began the Appleton Drawing Club. Starting with sessions at Photo Opp, two years later he has also held classes at the Trout Museum of Art and the Richeson School of Art and Gallery.





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Locally family-owned & operated*

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Come spend the day with us! Pick your own apples from more than 30 delicious varieties, then treat yourself to one of our world-famous caramel apples.

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sharkysorchard

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Happening now through August

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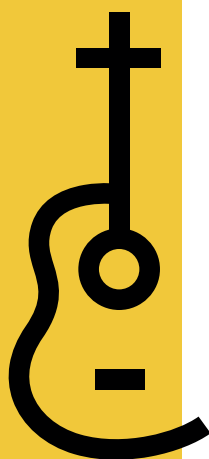
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For more information or to see the schedule, visit voicesofpeacemusic.net/gospel-fest.

Hilbert's Gospel Fest

Enters Third Decade of Music, Camaraderie

By JIM COLLAR

If you were to mention a free music festival with bands from across the country, many in the Fox Cities would think of Mile of Music. The first thought when bringing up a local Christian music festival would be Oshkosh's Lifest.

Yet another music festival checks all of those boxes and has become an important part of summer for the Hilbert community and its many attendees.

The 21st annual Gospel Fest will fill Hilbert Civic Park with joyful sounds Aug. 21-22. Featuring country, bluegrass, and Southern gospel music, it will include 15 bands and vocal performers from 10 states.

It's a labor of love for Bud and Carolyn McAtee, who serve as both founding organizers and performers. Along with keyboardist Ruth Franz and others, they make up the Southern gospel group Voices of Peace. Gospel Fest has since become a joint endeavor with Peace Evangelical and Reformed Church in Potter.

It's Wisconsin's biggest Southern gospel festival, and Carolyn said she has had no difficulty filling the schedule.

"We probably get six bands every year that contact us for an open spot, and we tell them that we'll put them on the list," Carolyn said. "We like to switch out a couple bands each year to stay fresh, but all our performers love coming back. It's very much like a family reunion."

The McAtees got the idea to bring an event to our region after participating in a similar festival in Floyd, Iowa. Carolyn estimates their annual attendance at 2,000 to 3,000 across both days.

Bud said the festival has a strong local draw, but it has also become a vacation spot for Southern gospel fans from all over Wisconsin and well beyond. There is a strong sense of camaraderie, and the event has become known for all the great talent.

"We have groups who have been on the charts and travel the world with their music," he said.

The couple stressed that while Christian, it's a festival that welcomes everyone.

Bud recalled a group that came over from a nearby tavern one year and carried on with an intent to be disruptive. Amazingly, that very same group returned for the second day — to respectfully listen and enjoy.

They chuckled when recalling another individual who said the festival was the best thing to happen to Hilbert, though using language that Bud wasn't comfortable repeating, nor could be used in this publication.

They were happy to hear it.

"We try to reach everyone," Bud said, "Both the churchgoer and the non-churchgoer."

Festivities will take place from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday. Attendees are encouraged to bring their lawn chairs, but asked to leave the coolers at home.

Refreshments will be available at the park. They'll also have a Friday fish fry and burgers and brats on both days. While there is no admission cost, freewill offerings will be taken to meet performers' travel expenses.





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The Local



By NATASHA WINKLER

As the final notes of Mile of Music 2026 drift away, that familiar buzz doesn't just disappear into the humid night. For those four days, our downtown isn't just a city; it is a living, breathing symphony.

Tens of thousands fill the streets, discovering hundreds of artists, while local businesses shine in the spotlight of what has become the Midwest's best-kept cultural secret. The event recently made Forbes' list of "Underrated Music Festivals."

But here's the thing: the arts and music energy we see today didn't just pop up out of nowhere. It's the result of decades of hard work by our neighbors, family-owned shops, and a community that decided long ago that art belongs to everyone.

the Trout Museum of Art opened its gorgeous new home at 325 E. College Ave. They want every one of us to feel welcome, so they made admission free for all of 2026, proving that local art culture here isn't just for a few, it's for everyone.

You also can't walk a block without seeing the work of Appleton Downtown Inc. and Creative Downtown Appleton. They've spent years turning our everyday streets into a canvas through some of our favorite local traditions:

- **Our mural programs:** Turning old brick walls into the stories of our community.
- **Light the Night Market:** Where we shop, listen to music, and see our city glow.
- **Avenue of Ice:** Reminding us that we stay creative even when it's below zero outside.

How Local Roots Sparked Downtown Appleton's Arts and Music Renaissance

1948-1957 | Establishing Roots
Heid Music is founded and moves to College Avenue, anchoring downtown music education.

2002 | A \$45 Million Milestone
The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center sends a signal to the world: Appleton is an entertainment destination.



Our Neighbors Who Started It All

To really understand how we got here, we have to look back at the people who stayed and built something when downtown looked a lot different from what it does now.

Back in 1948, Peter “Duke” Heid, a veteran who played in the Army Band, founded **Heid Music**. By 1957, they settled into 308 E. College Ave., and they’ve been there ever since. For three generations, they haven’t just sold instruments; they’ve taught our kids how to play and given the Fox Cities the tools to find their own voice. They have nurtured our local talent from the very beginning.

Then came the turn of the century, and something incredible happened.

In November 2002, the **Fox Cities Performing Arts Center** opened its doors.

What’s amazing isn’t just the \$45 million it cost, but that every penny was raised by us — more than 2,700 residents and businesses chipping in to build a world-class home for the arts. When Thrivent Financial Hall opened, it was a signal to the world: Appleton is a destination.

The Musical Spark

When the first **Mile of Music** kicked off in 2013, it wasn’t starting from scratch; it was more like lighting a match in a room already filled with kindling. It showed us exactly how music, art, and local businesses can work together for exponential effects.

Over the last 13 years, we’ve watched our favorite coffee shops, bars, and boutiques become part of the show. They don’t just watch the crowds; they turn their stores into stages. It’s a beautiful partnership where our business owners and our artists share the same dream for what Appleton can be.

A City Transformed

While the music was playing, our visual arts scene was making its own history. The biggest leap happened in October 2025, when

We even saw that spirit move down to the river when **The Draw** opened in 2015 over at 800 S. Lawe St., taking a historic paper mill office and filling it with fresh artistic life. It continues to be welcoming and encouraging for small businesses, artists, creatives, and anyone looking for a beautiful space.

Where We Stand Today

As we move through 2026, we’re living in a town that is a masterclass in how to grow together. What started with local visionaries decades ago has become a thriving, year-round home for creativity. Looking ahead, the future of our creative community feels brighter than ever. We aren’t just celebrating the history that’s been built; we are actively inviting the next generation of creators to join.

With new support systems like the **Jewelers Mutual Impact Fund**, which focuses on arts-driven community progression, and local grants designed to help artists plant roots right here in the Fox Cities, we are ensuring that Appleton remains a beacon for talent. This isn’t just growth; it’s a promise that our downtown will continue to be a place where new voices are heard, new stories are painted, and our collective spark never fades.

Photo credit: Mile of Music 2023 featuring Mom Rock.

2013 | Mile of Music Debut
The inaugural festival launches, focusing exclusively on 100% original music.

2015 | Expanding the Footprint
The Draw opens on Lawe St., bringing creative spaces to the riverfront.

2025 | The Trout Museum of Art
A state-of-the-art facility and community space opens on College Ave.

2026 | A Realized Creative Economy
Appleton continues to foster a fully interconnected, year-round economy driven by the arts.



Do Blueberries Lose Their Benefits With Milk?

By ANGELA HALDERSON

Adding blueberries to yogurt or a morning smoothie is an easy way to boost nutrition with fiber, vitamins, protein, and antioxidants. Blueberries are especially rich in polyphenols called anthocyanins, which have been linked to reduced inflammation, improved heart health, better brain function, and protection against oxidative stress. But research suggests that pairing blueberries with dairy milk may reduce how well your body absorbs some of those beneficial compounds.

A study published in the journal *Free Radical Biology & Medicine* found that participants who consumed blueberries with whole milk had significantly lower antioxidant activity in their blood compared with those who ate blueberries with water. Researchers also observed reduced absorption of certain polyphenols, including caffeic acid. While the blueberries still contained these beneficial compounds, the body's ability to utilize them appeared to be diminished when consumed with milk.

Why Does This Happen?

Milk contains proteins — especially casein — that can bind to polyphenols, the antioxidant compounds found in blueberries. When this occurs, some polyphenols may become less bioavailable, meaning your body may absorb and use fewer of them. Scientists believe these protein-polyphenol complexes may make it more difficult for the antioxidants to be released and absorbed during digestion.

However, the research isn't entirely consistent. Some studies report reduced antioxidant activity with dairy, while others show little or no effect. The impact appears to depend on the specific type of polyphenol, the dairy product being consumed, and the overall composition of the meal. More research is needed to fully understand these interactions and determine whether they have meaningful long-term health effects.

Is Plant-Based Milk a Better Choice?

If maximizing antioxidant absorption is your goal, plant-based milks such as unsweetened almond, soy, oat, or coconut milk may be a good alternative. Because they contain different proteins than dairy milk, they appear less likely to interfere with polyphenol absorption. Emerging research also suggests some plant-based beverages may help maintain polyphenol stability during digestion.

If you use a dairy-based protein powder, remember it also contains casein and/or whey, which may have similar interactions.

Practical Takeaway

A blueberry smoothie made with dairy isn't unhealthy — it still provides fiber, vitamins, minerals, and protein. But if your goal is to maximize the antioxidant benefits of blueberries, consider using a plant-based milk or enjoy your blueberries separately from dairy.

Nutrition isn't about perfect food combinations. It's about creating eating patterns that support your health over time, and sometimes the healthiest meal is simply the one you'll consistently enjoy.



Serafini M, et al. *Free Radical Biology & Medicine*. 2009;46(6):769-774.
Zheng B, Zhou H, McClements DJ. *Foods*. 2023;1

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

Out AND about

TOP 10 REASONS TO FILL UP YOUR CALENDAR THIS MONTH

By SARAH PETERSON

1. 11TH ANNUAL PORCHAPALOOZA

Stroll the 800 blocks of Broad, First, and Second streets of Menasha's Jefferson Park neighborhood for a unique event where residents host local musicians on their porches. Enjoy perfect harmonies, neighborhood vibes, and views of Lake Winnebago. *Aug. 4, 6–8 p.m.*

facebook.com/events/1037453528709064
[events/1037453528709064](https://facebook.com/events/1037453528709064)

3. BARRELS & BBQ

Stop by Genesis Impact Sports in Appleton for Barrels & BBQ, featuring a barbecue competition, food trucks, safety demonstrations, vendors, sporting experiences, raffles, and entertainment. The event is dedicated to educating, preventing, and intervening against human trafficking. *Aug. 8, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.*

genesisimpactsports.com/barrels-bbq

5. WISCONSIN FIREWORKS FESTIVAL

Prepare to be awed at the most explosive event of the year where firework enthusiasts from around the world showcase their skills and passion for pyrotechnics. Enjoy expertly timed, highly choreographed shows presented by the Pyrotechnics Guild International. Tickets required. *Aug. 8, 12, and 14 at Wisconsin International Raceway*

pgi.org/shows

7. ROCK CANCER

The Spierings Cancer Foundation holds a daylong celebration with a variety of activities, including the I CAN-SUR FIVE 5K walk, food, drink, a large dedication screen, children's activities, raffles, a dunk tank, and live music. *Aug. 15 at Doyle Park in Little Chute.*

spieringscancerfoundation.org/rock-cancer/rc2026

9. LIGHT THE NIGHT MARKET

It's once again time to illuminate downtown Appleton with this enchanting open-air event featuring food trucks, arts and crafts, vendors, hands-on activities, mesmerizing street performers, and lively music. *Aug. 28, 5–10 p.m.*

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

2. SUMMER IN THE PARK — FLIGHT NIGHT

Enjoy a free, family-friendly event featuring local hot air balloons and their pilots, crafts, bounce houses, popcorn, and train rides. Weather permitting, the balloons will be inflated and will launch. *Aug. 5, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Darboy Community Park.*

darboykiwanis.org/upcoming-events

4. GLASS ARTS FESTIVAL

Experience the nation's only outdoor all-glass art event featuring local and regional artists with glass art for sale, children's activities, live music, food, beverages, glass-blowing demonstrations, and new gallery exhibitions. Admission is free. *Aug. 8, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. at Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass.*

bmmglass.com/glass-arts-festival

6. MONARCHS & MARGARITAS

Wind down and celebrate the peak of summer with *Monarchs & Margaritas!* Enjoy house-made margaritas and light snacks as you relax on the scenic Sedge Meadow Plaza, surrounded by native prairie blooms and the sounds of summer. *Tickets are \$25. Aug. 13 from 6–8 p.m. at Bubolz Nature Preserve.*

bubolzpreserve.org/bubolz-events

8. FOX VALLEY FLIGHT FEST

Celebrate the exciting world of recreational aviation at EAA Chapter 41's annual fly-in event. This year's event will feature many aircraft on display, airplane rides, drones, flight simulator demonstrations, food, music, raffles, and more. Attendees can fly in or drive in. *Aug. 22, 8 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Appleton International Airport.*

chapters.eaa.org/ea41/fox-valley-flight-fest

10. FOOD TRUCK FEST

Experience the ultimate summer evenings at Poplar Hall's final Food Truck Fest of the summer, featuring a diverse selection of food trucks with mouthwatering dishes, live music, and scenic riverside views with friends and family. *Aug. 26, 4–8 p.m.*

popshall.com/events



Back-to-School Style

WHY KIDS SHOULDN'T HAVE ALL THE FUN

By PHYLIS COLLAR

Word on the street is that back-to-school style isn't just for kids — adults and teens alike can embrace the opportunity to try new trends and freshen their wardrobes. This year's style is a playful mix of personal versatility and comfort — it's cozy staples and distinctive vintage, dramatic, or sporty elements.

"Back to school" brings to mind outfits and accessories needed for a successful start.

Mastering these runway styles is easier than you think when you shop local.



Hunter Bell

Perhaps a new cardigan is in order — that tried-and-true sweater you grab when the temp goes down with the sunlight. *Lillian's* on College Avenue is a sure bet when it comes to finding some fall favorites.

Perhaps a classic vintage cashmere is your vibe. Add a fun pair of relaxed, fluid bottoms. Playing with textures such as corduroy and prints, or emboldened

with color, loose-fitting pants are back, and stores such as *Beatnik Betty's* and *Wild Goose Exchange* will have both guys and girls covered.

Now, if streetwear and sports are more your passion, local shops like *DVSN 1* and *Fanzone* have your back. No better time than August to start thinking about football around here, right?

Crocs will once again be popular footwear so, I suspect back-to-school shopping may entail a trip to the *Fox River Mall* or a special online package. Vintage sneakers and cowboy boots are more your speed? Look no further than the vintage shops mentioned above for some interesting choices.



BCBGMaxAzria

Jewelry style favors bold, "wearable art" pieces over minimalist designs. Of course, jewelry and accessories are



Cyrus Veyssi - Crocs



Rabanne

aplenty at chic downtown Appleton shops like *Olive & Rose Boutique*.

And we all know that back-to-school season is also the perfect time to get on the teacher's good side. I have often favored *Blue Moon Emporium* for gifts such as jewelry, textiles, and decor. More recently, *Fox Valley Artisan Market* seems to be replete with items of this ilk as well as holistic products for a clean start to the school

year. A new tote, or fall-inspired fashion from *Bill Paul Limited*, or a gift card to *Acoca Cafe* are perfect ideas for welcome-back or year-round gifts.

After that first bell rings, treat yourself to a well-deserved day of pampering. Pop in for some wine and cheese at *The Cheese Table* in Neenah, take home a new statement piece from *Tennie's Jewelry*, or indulge in beauty services at *715 Beautify*.



Chanel



Insomnia Cookies

Don't forget to pick up some after-school (or after-shopping) treats from *Great American Cookies*, or some late-night study fuel from *Insomnia Cookies*.

So many choices, so much time! See you out there, Appleton!

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

BY: SARAH PETERSON

Send your photo submissions to: editor@appletonmonthly.com



Tilly, an avid cat lover, shares some feline-approved treats with friendly neighborhood cat Skittle. **Adopt a pet at foxvalleypets.org.**



Best-friend golden retriever sisters Laney, 6, and Mazey, 10, **touch paws in a sweet display of canine affection.**

Credit: Owners Lori and Tom York.



Rick and Jessie of Menasha **enjoy a festive Fourth with their mother and daughter Bernedoodles, Elsie and Gretta.**



Nic and Milissa Bethe celebrate **Independence Day 250 at the Downtown Appleton Farm Market.**



The Ermers family **looks festive as they await the Flag Day parade in Downtown Appleton.**



Season, Abigail, and Arianna **pose in colorful traditional Hmong clothing on Flag Day in Appleton.**

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ASK TAMMI

Got questions for Tammi?



ASK TAMMI: My husband and I were invited to two weddings on the same day. How do we choose which one to attend?
— *Lisa S.*

DEAR LISA: This is difficult and will depend on a few things. If the weddings are in the same city, you could split your time and try to attend each event. If that is not a possibility, your decision could depend on several factors, including family connections to the wedding party, your personal relationships to the bride and groom, or whether you have a broader network of friends at the event. Regardless of your decision, it is important to honestly explain to the hosts of the wedding you do not attend, why you aren't available ... and be generous with a gift.



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



ASK TAMMI: We were invited to a friend's cabin for the weekend. We love spending time with them; however, they will not allow us to contribute anything. They purchase and prepare all the food and provide all the beverages. We feel like we should help out. How can we do more? — *Jay B.*

DEAR JAY: You have some really nice friends! Well, as a frequent host myself, I understand your friends' desire to have a plan for the weekend. If you have offered assistance and they don't want any, you should be grateful and just enjoy the visit. If you'd like to do more, I recommend giving them a gift card for their favorite restaurant as a thank-you.



ASK TAMMI: We share a lake home with our family, my two sisters, and my parents. For the most part, it goes very well when we are all there together. However, I have recently noticed that my parents are getting more demanding about what we do and how we do things when we are there. How can I ask them not to be so controlling? — *Kerry G.*

DEAR KERRY: Sharing space with family can be tricky. One suggestion might be to occasionally spend time with just your family at the cabin so that you have more say in what you do and where you spend your time. For a long-term solution, I think the best approach is to call a family meeting and have an open discussion about what you think needs to change, so that everyone can enjoy time in harmony at the cabin you are all blessed to own.

Colorado

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

The Perfect Spot for Nature Lovers

By TIM FROBERG

The Rockies rock.

That was my conclusion following a week's stay in the Colorado Springs area.

I'm an avid downhill skier who has never navigated the slopes out west, so Colorado seemed like an ideal vacation destination.

And it was. The only curveball was that my wife and I made our trip smack-dab in the middle of a hot Colorado summer.

Tim with Jasper at
Seven Bridges Trail.



On Top of the World

Pikes Peak

Colorado Spring — the state's second-largest city with a population of 499,000 — was our home base and gave us the complete Colorado experience with all the sights and activities we needed.

Wherever you go in the Colorado Springs area, the Rockies follow you. They're always in the background, an unobstructed, dominant, mountainous presence and constant backdrop to the city skyline. Colorado Springs is a midsize city, so there is traffic congestion and an urban feel to parts of it. But it's also a connecting link to the great outdoors. Everything John Denver told us in *Rocky Mountain High* — endless hiking trails, rippling streams, gorgeous parks, and picturesque natural beauty — is just a short drive away.

Colorado Springs is home to the prestigious United States Air Force Academy, which offers free daily tours. It is located at the eastern edge of the southern Rocky Mountains and sits 6,035 feet above sea level.

Pikes Peak is a prominent part of the Rocky Mountains that is impossible to miss in Colorado Springs. With an elevation of 14,115 feet, Pikes Peak could hide a family of Godzillas. It has been called America's Mountain and inspired the song *America the Beautiful*.

Pikes Peak is one of our nation's most iconic and accessible mountain peaks and is a must-see venue on your Colorado Springs checklist.

Visitors flock to Pikes Peak daily to take in its breathtaking views at the summit, which can be accessed by car, bus, train, bicycle, or foot. The latter option is for the ambitious hiker willing to tackle the 19-mile trek to the top. Many folks choose to drive the scenic Pikes Peak Highway, and it's a beautiful journey with sweeping views and plenty of spots for photo ops. But all drivers should be warned that it is a winding road with hairpin turns.

We took the easy way out, traveling to the summit via the Broadmoor Manitou and Pikes Peak Cog Railway, which has a long history dating back to 1891. It was a smooth, scenic train ride that took us through steep canyons decorated with endless aspen trees, clear lakes, enormous boulders, and dazzling rock formations.

The train ride to the summit takes roughly 70 minutes, and it's not lonely at the top where armies of tourists gather each day. Train passengers are given about 40 minutes to take in the extraordinary view and snap photos. Pikes Peak provides one of the most spectacular views I've ever seen and must be experienced if you're anywhere near Colorado Springs.

Just make sure to bring a jacket because it's about 35 degrees colder at the summit. Oh, and have a doughnut or two. Doughnut consumption is a part of the Pikes Peak experience. There is a busy doughnut shop for tourists at the summit that bakes these fresh goodies, using a special recipe engineered for the thin air and high altitude. Homer Simpson would love Pikes Peak.

As much as I loved Pikes Peak, my favorite stop in Colorado Springs was Garden of the Gods: a free public park and a registered national landmark located just 5 miles northwest of downtown.

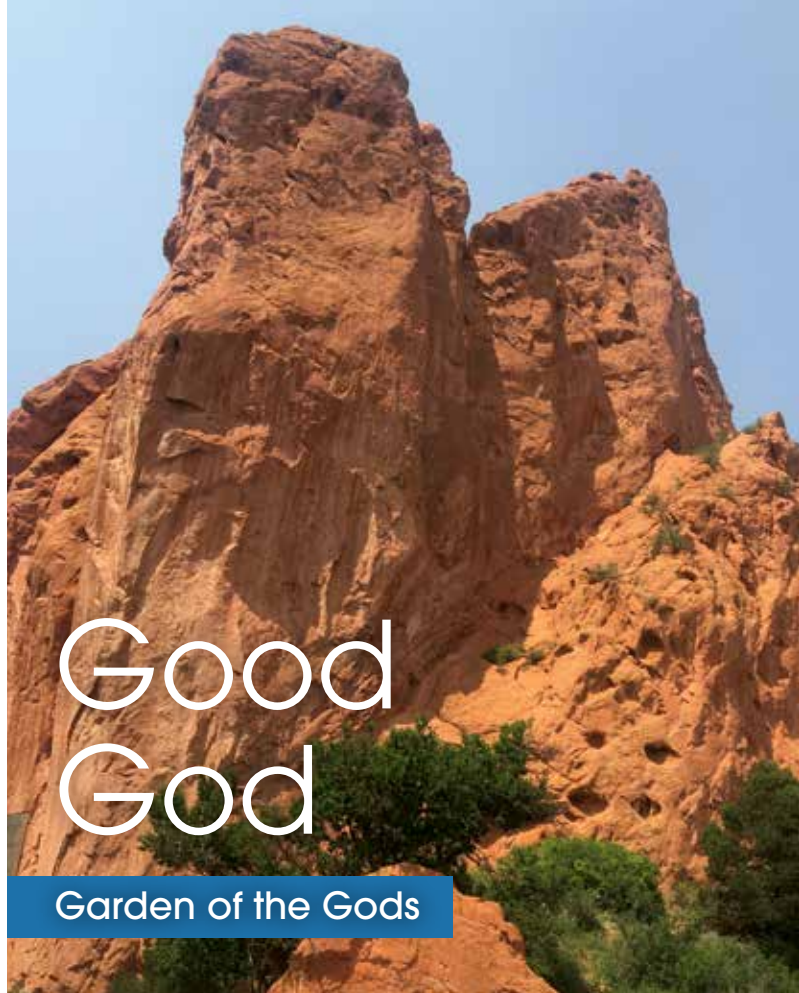
Garden of the Gods was given to the city of Colorado Springs in 1909 by the family of railroad magnate Charles Elliot Perkins on the condition that it would always be free to the public. It may be the most spectacular city park you will ever see.

“Wow” is the word you will repeat multiple times during your visit to Garden of the Gods.

It is a feast for the eyes, a spacious 1,341 acres, a stunning park known for its towering red rock formations shaped by millions of years of geological forces.

Kissing Camels, a distinctive rock formation named for what looks like two camels smooching, is one of the Garden of the Gods’ most iconic sights. Others are the Tower of Babel, an enormous 300-foot sandstone formation, and Balanced Rock, a huge sandstone rock balanced on a small base, which is a perfect place to pull your vehicle over for a photo or six.

Garden of the Gods offers more than 21 miles of well-maintained, kid- and dog-friendly trails that range in difficulty from easy walks to rugged hikes. Visitors can actually see the park without leaving the car by taking the 5.6-mile looping paved trail, but I highly recommend exploring much of this amazingly beautiful park on foot.



Good God

Garden of the Gods



Kicking It Up a Notch

Manitou Incline

Hiking is the No. 1 outdoor activity in Colorado, mainly because the scenery is so incredible that it almost makes you forget you are actually burning calories. If you’re feeling ambitious and are confident in your fitness level, the Manitou Incline will give you an unforgettable hiking memory.

Located in Manitou Springs on the east slope of the Rockies and a short drive from Colorado Springs, the Manitou Incline is one of the most challenging hiking trails I’ve encountered. It is a monstrous elevated hiking trail that you climb by taking a whopping 2,774 railroad-tie steps to the summit, which overlooks the city at an elevation of 2,011 feet.

Have you ever tried walking nearly 2,800 ascending steps and every one of them gets a little harder on a 90-degree Colorado afternoon?

The Manitou Incline is not a stairway to heaven. It’s tough. Many folks can’t meet the challenge and turn back. People have actually died on this rugged trail. It takes roughly 90-120 minutes for the average hiker to climb, and even the fittest individuals need to take breaks along the way.

The Incline is punishing and humbling. We saw young, trim athletic types gasping for air as we neared the summit, which made my wife and me feel better because we were gassed. We finally staggered to the top of Mount Manitou after a draining 90-minute climb, and it felt like we had run a marathon. If I had a football, I would have spiked it. We didn’t get a doughnut like at Pikes Peak, but we were rewarded with a sense of accomplishment. Homer Simpson would have hated the Manitou Incline.

Another popular hiking attraction we explored — and a dazzling one at that — is the Seven Bridges Trail. It's a gorgeous nature path in North Cheyenne Cañon Park that takes you through a heavily forested area with streams and across seven wooden bridges.

It usually takes 2-3.5 hours to complete the 3.7-mile round trip featuring Colorado's natural outdoor beauty.

Want to check out some spectacular waterfalls? We did, so we visited Seven Falls Park in Colorado Springs, where we climbed a mere 224 steps — a walk in the park compared to the Manitou Incline — alongside a 181-foot waterfall to reach the hiking trails.

We also visited Royal Gorge, an enormous 1,280-foot-deep canyon, and the Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum, just outside of Colorado Springs. Both were well worth the visit.

Royal Gorge is a major attraction allowing you to cross one of the world's highest suspension bridges, 956 feet above the Arkansas River. It also offers a stunning gondola ride and a sky coaster.

The Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum is an interesting indoor-outdoor exhibit of ancient red sandstone architecture, allowing you to wander through 40 rooms and structures built more than 700 years ago by the Pueblo Native American tribe.

If you're an adventurous person not afraid to kick it up a notch, ziplining might fit your need for speed and desire to play Superman, because you are literally flying through the air. Several businesses in the Colorado Springs area offer ziplining packages. The one I purchased gave me an unforgettable, slingshot-type ride across a portion of Cheyenne Canyon. It felt like I was leaping off the Rocky Mountains and proved to be the most terrifying and exhilarating zipline ride I've ever taken.

Tourists visit Colorado for the outdoor scenery and adventure, but the food is quite good, too. No trip to Colorado Springs is complete without stopping by Rudy's County Store and Bar-B-Q: a casual, no-frills joint where you will find some of the best barbecue on the planet.

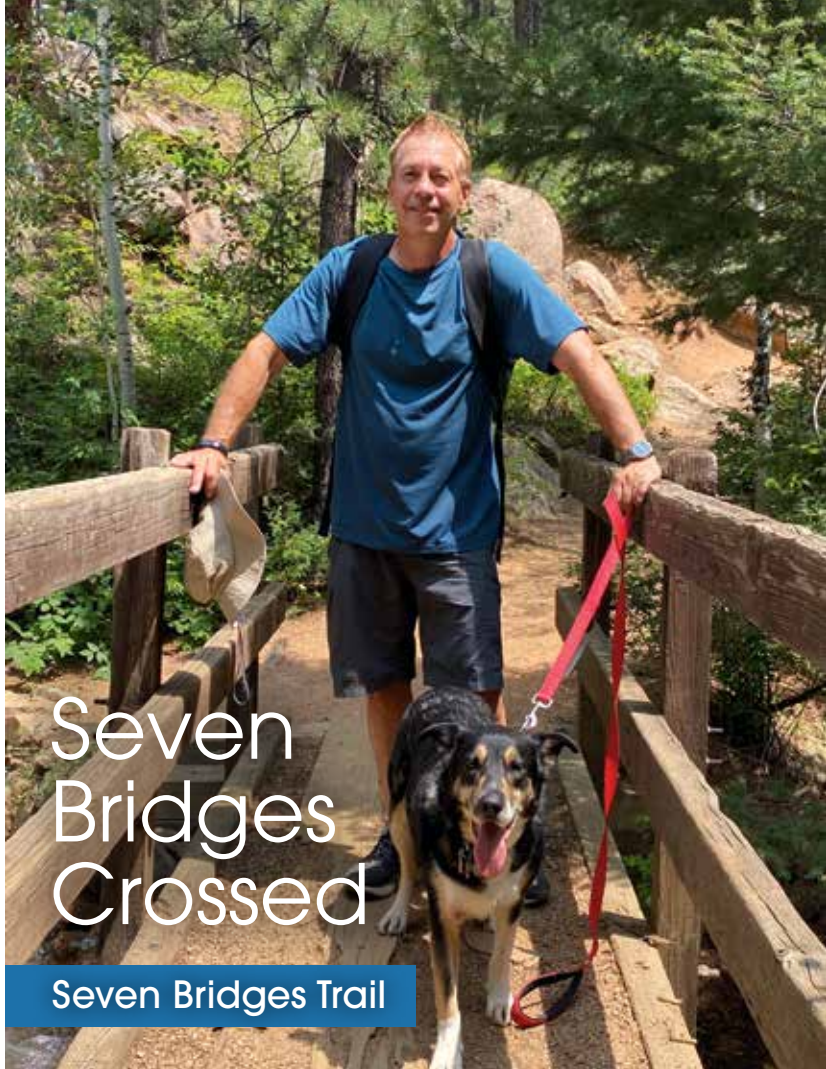
T-Byrds Tacos & Tequila and Phantom Canyon Brewing Company, housed in a historic landmark building, were two more of our favorite culinary spots in Colorado Springs.

The people we met were laid-back, friendly, and active folks who were taking full advantage of living in nature's playground.

Colorado Springs is a terrific place to visit, especially for those who appreciate the beauty of nature. Our Colorado adventure turned out to be far more relaxing and less chaotic than what Lloyd and Harry experienced in the screwball comedy *Dumb and Dumber*.

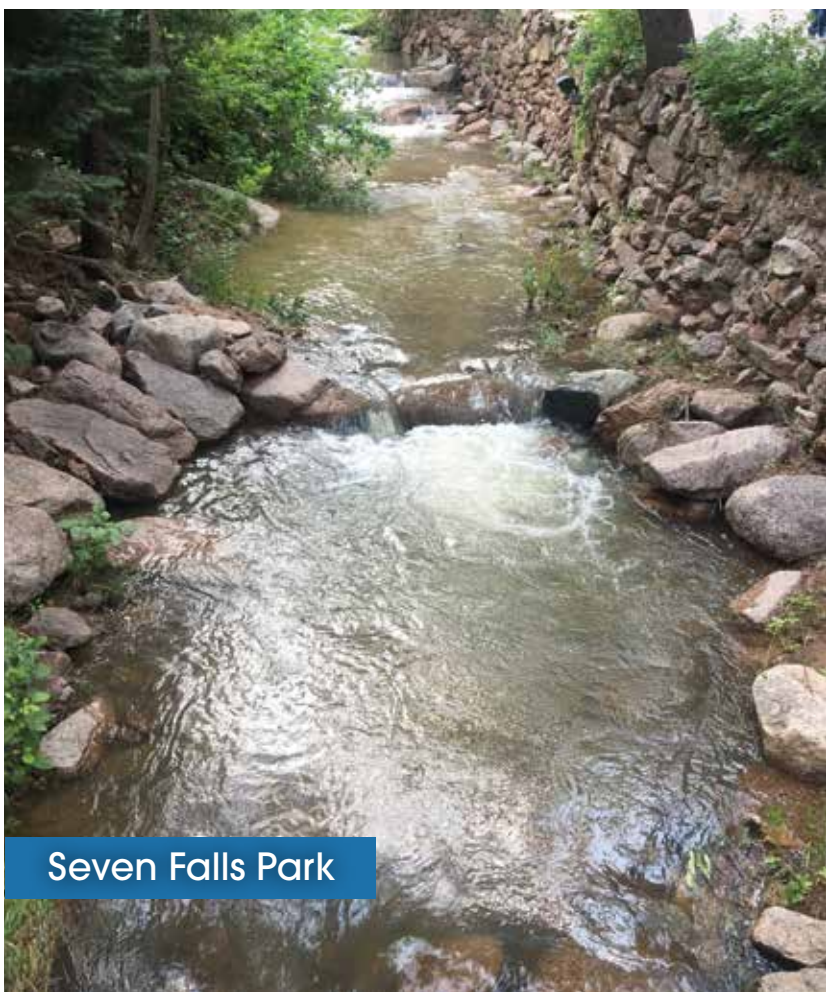
And it turns out that John Denver really wasn't full of it in his praise of the Rocky Mountains, like Lloyd exclaimed in one of the movie's funniest scenes.

John Denver was spot on.



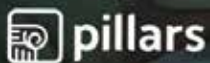
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PACKERS DODGED A DRAFT-DAY BULLET WITH ARNOLD

By TIM FROBERG

August rants and raves while wondering what William “Refrigerator” Perry is up to.

Packers fans claim their team never catches a break. That’s not true — at least with the curious case of Terrion Arnold. The former Detroit Lions cornerback, who faces multiple criminal charges, including kidnapping and armed robbery, was coveted by Green Bay in the 2024 NFL draft. The cornerback-needy Packers were reportedly interested in selecting Arnold with the 25th overall pick, only to see the Lions trade up and snag him at 24.

What’s interesting is that Arnold was considered to be a respectful, high-character guy before the draft. Arnold struggled during his two years in Detroit and didn’t make any friends in Wisconsin — or show much maturity — by claiming that he cried the night before the draft because he believed he was headed to Green Bay. Arnold repeated those ill-advised comments on stage at the 2025 draft in Green Bay, drawing boos from the Lambeau crowd.

With Arnold off the board, Green Bay spent the 25th pick on offensive lineman Jordan Morgan, who has a chance to become a long-term bodyguard for Jordan Love. Imagine the public relations disaster the Packers would face if Arnold ended up in Green Bay, where Josh Jacobs has also experienced legal issues.

If you have ever wondered what it’s like to try to swat a Jacob Misorowski fastball, consider this: Neuroscientists say a baseball traveling 100 mph covers the distance from the mound to home plate in 375-400 milliseconds. That’s roughly the same time (300-400 milliseconds) it takes to blink an eye. Experts conclude that the average person has about a 1% chance of making contact with a triple-digit pitch thrown by the likes of the “Miz.”

Misorowski has kept his ego in check while developing into one of MLB’s best pitchers. Pat Murphy has playfully compared him to Forrest Gump, finding parallels in simplicity, naivety, and an ability to achieve big things without overthinking. Misorowski has found the comparison hilarious. Earlier this

season, he took to Instagram to post an AI-generated image of his face on Gump’s body. I doubt that the “Miz” will ever be a shrimp boat captain, a White House regular, or run across the country for no particular reason. But like Forrest, he’s going to be a “gazillionaire.”

Successful deer hunters know that it takes patience to bag a buck. Milwaukee Bucks fans will need plenty of that character trait following the blockbuster trade of Giannis Antetokounmpo to Miami.

With Giannis’ injury history and advancing age, the Bucks weren’t wrong to trade the franchise icon. The return was solid,

but unfortunately, it sets up a teardown: a major rebuild that won’t have opponents fearing the deer for at least a few years.

Tyler Herro and Jaime Jaquez Jr. are the most accomplished players of the four sent to Milwaukee, along with multiple high draft picks. Both are legit scorers who can provide immediate help. However, both have expiring contracts, and the Bucks need to make important decisions on the two veterans, which may ultimately determine the winner of the trade.

I love the ceilings of Kel’el Ware, Kasparas Jakucionis, and Nate Ament. Ware is a promising 7-footer with the skills to develop into a quality big man, while the slick-passing Jakucionis may be the sleeper of the group. Ament was acquired with

Miami’s 13th overall pick and is an athletic freak out of the Giannis mold, but doesn’t look strong enough to take out the garbage right now.

Milwaukee could have avoided a rebuild by accepting Boston’s offer of perennial All-Star Jaylen Brown, along with a pair of No. 1s. However, Milwaukee is trying to build a new culture, and it’s tough to do that with big personalities like Brown, who wore out his welcome in Boston and didn’t seem eager to land in Milwaukee. The Knicks proved that you don’t need superstars — just a full arsenal of good players — to win championships, and the Bucks appear to be embracing that model.



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



Taste

CHEF'S TABLE | FAB FAVES | CARLY'S PASTRIES | EATING & DRINKING

PRIME STEER Supper Club

Savor sizzling steaks, fresh seafood, handcrafted cocktails, and unforgettable dining in a classic supper club atmosphere.

By JENNI EICKELBERG

Prime STEER SUPPER CLUB

A CLASSIC RETURNING TO ITS ROOTS

By JENNI EICKELBERG



There's a quiet shift happening in Wisconsin's supper club scene: younger diners are coming back. At the Prime Steer in Kaukauna, Gary and Karen Natrop have been seeing a younger crowd choosing supper clubs again — often right alongside the longtime regulars who have been coming for decades. Karen believes it's because many of them grew up visiting supper clubs like this with their families. And at the Prime Steer, you can feel that tradition coming back.

The Prime Steer has been part of the Kaukauna community since 1954, and its story is deeply rooted in family. Gary Natrop grew up in the restaurant business — bussing tables as a kid, cooking by age 16, and learning every corner of the business. His parents owned and operated the Prime Steer for 12 years after purchasing it in 1983. Gary took over ownership in 1995. The restaurant was under different management for a few years, but in 2023, he got it back and began restoring the style and standards people missed. "People are excited that Gary is back cooking," Karen said. "The word is spreading."

Gary brings nearly 40 years of cooking experience, and it shows in the food. The menu focuses on steaks and seafood — prime rib, pork, chicken, sandwiches, and a full children's menu. Their bar is known for its delicious old fashioned cocktails and hand-stirred ice cream drinks, a Wisconsin touch that never seems to go out of style. It's the kind of place where you settle in, take your time, and enjoy the rhythm of a true supper-club environment. Keeping it close to home, the menu features a signature dish from each family member.



During our visit, we ordered the 6-ounce tenderloin, which arrived beautifully seared and melted in your mouth. The grilled chicken breast was the most tender I've ever had. The salmon was another standout — freshly grilled,

flaky, and served over a warm bed of wild rice. All of their main entrees are homemade, and you can taste that extra care in the seasoning, the textures, and the way each dish feels thoughtfully prepared. It's the kind of cooking that brings people back.

That homemade approach carries through the rest of the menu. The coleslaw, tartar sauce, soups, and some of the dressings are made in-house. It's a small detail, but it adds a sense of comfort and familiarity. All steaks are hand-cut.



Gary's kids grew up helping at the restaurant. Both sons currently help with cooking, and his daughter is a waitress. Karen herself worked at a supper club when she was in high school. Today, she helps with managing, office work, working as hostess, and filling in as a bartender or waitress as needed.

What stands out most is the sense of community. Some customers come in two or three times a week. "You get to know them, and they get to be like family," Gary said. The dining room has that classic supper-club feel — dim lighting, a relaxed pace, and a comfort that encourages people to stay a little longer. It's the kind of place where conversations stretch out, and familiar faces stop by to say hello. Gary and Karen said their employees have become close friends, and they're devoted to providing great service with a smile.

With Gary back in the kitchen and younger diners rediscovering the supper club experience, this long-time favorite feels refreshed — rooted in history, but ready for a new generation.

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Chef Carly's Amish-Style Potato Salad

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

This potato salad recipe was one of my favorites to make at work when I was the chef at a senior living apartment complex. We served it with homemade gumbo for Mardi Gras, which is an amazing combination if you haven't tried it! While it's far from Mardi Gras, August is just as good a time to make potato salad. This one is slightly sweet and tangy, with just the right amount of seasoning. I hope it becomes a new favorite for you, too!

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds baby new potatoes
Two ribs of celery, diced
Two scallions, sliced
Three hard-boiled eggs, diced
1/4 cup white or red onion, finely diced or minced
1 cup mayonnaise
2 1/4 teaspoons sugar
3/4 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder
1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1/4 teaspoon dried parsley
1/8 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon yellow mustard

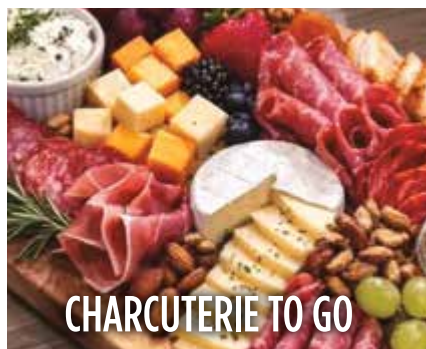
Directions:

Boil the potatoes until fork-tender and cool completely. Dice potatoes and place in a large bowl. Add all remaining ingredients and stir until well mixed. To get the classic store-bought potato salad texture, use a potato masher or a gloved hand, and mash the salad until some of the potatoes start breaking down and mixing with the dressing. Stop when you reach your desired texture. Chill and enjoy!



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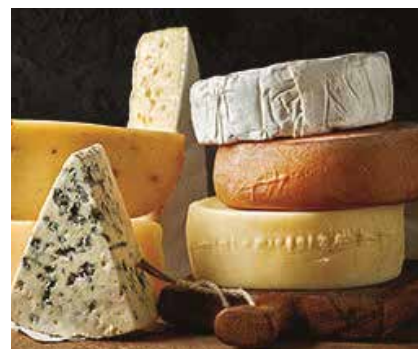
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Fab Faves

Though its origins date back to 10th-century Egypt, lemonade has been popular in the United States since George Washington's presidency, when it was often mixed with dry white wine and orange juice. The first published lemonade recipe in the United States appeared in the historic 1824 cookbook *The Virginia House-Wife* and included whipped egg whites to give it a frothy texture. Pink lemonade was said to have been created in the late 19th century when circus promoter Henry Allott accidentally dropped red cinnamon candies into a tub of traditional lemonade. During the hot summer months, a glass of ice-cold lemonade provides not only sweet refreshment but a nostalgic nod to simpler times.

Ingredients:

1 cup sugar (can reduce to 3/4 cup)
1 cup water (for the simple syrup)
1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 to 3 cups cold water, to dilute

Directions:

Place the sugar and water in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Stir so the sugar dissolves completely and remove from heat.

While the water is heating for the simple syrup, juice the lemons. Depending on the size of the lemons, four to six of them should be enough for 1 cup of juice.

Pour the juice and the simple syrup sugar water into a serving pitcher. Add 2-3 cups of cold water and taste. Add more water if you would like it to be more diluted (though note that when you add ice, it will melt and naturally dilute the lemonade). If the lemonade is a little sweet for your taste, add a little more straight lemon juice.

Refrigerate for 30-40 minutes. Serve with ice and sliced lemons.

Classic Lemonade

Skip the powdered mix and try this simple and refreshing homemade recipe instead.

By SARAH PETERSON



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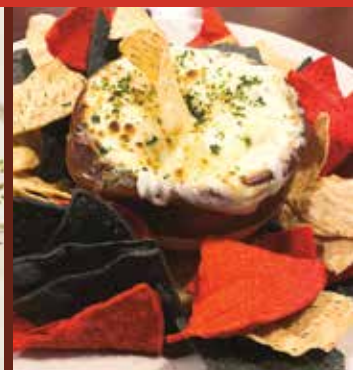
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The older I get, the more I lean on speedy recipes. Somehow, there's less and less time in the day, but I still want something delicious! This recipe is just that, as it skips all the work of scooping out individual cookies. The dough comes together in minutes, and you might even beat the oven preheating. And the best part is, this cookie cake looks like you put a lot more work into it than you did. Pro tip: Use store-bought icing to really speed things up!

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

Chocolate Chip Cookie Cake

Ingredients:

3/4 cup unsalted butter,
room temperature
3/4 cup dark brown sugar, packed
1/2 cup sugar
Two eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla bean paste
2 1/3 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
Pinch of kosher salt
2 cups chocolate chips

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line the bottom of a 10-inch springform pan with parchment paper. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream the butter, sugars, and vanilla bean paste until fluffy. Add the eggs and mix until well combined. Add the flour, baking soda, and salt. Mix until almost combined. Add the chocolate chips while there are still bits of flour to be worked in. Stir until just incorporated.

Transfer the cookie dough to the lined springform pan. Press evenly into the bottom of the pan.

Bake for 22-25 minutes. The center should be just slightly underdone and look a bit shiny.

Remove from the oven and cool for 10 minutes, then remove the sides of the springform pan. Let cool completely. Decorate with your favorite buttercream frosting and enjoy!

DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK

By STEVE LONSWAY

Many people are quick to judge a beer based on the color alone. Often times, it is assumed that a dark beer has a higher alcohol content or such a heavy body and big mouthfeel that they rarely venture past the known lighter styles that they have become accustomed to. Well, I am here to shed light on these darkened brews.

Malted barley comes in several different levels of Lovibond. Degrees Lovibond is one method for a brewer to anticipate the final color of the beer they are brewing. The higher the degree of Lovibond, the darker or more roasted the malts are. For instance, stouts and porters are often brewed with roasted barley, black patent, or chocolate malts that range from 200-650 degrees Lovibond, whereas a light brew is made with base malts that are typically below 5 degrees Lovibond. Introduce a midrange caramel malt at 60-80 degrees Lovibond and the result will be an amber-colored brew. The scale was invented in the 1880s by a gentleman named Joseph Lovibond and was further advanced in 1896 with the invention of the tintometer. A tintometer is a device that allows the user to compare a sample to a known color slide that has a predetermined Lovibond number. It may also be used in the petroleum, food, and water industries. Another standard unit of measure for the brewing and malting industries is Standard Reference Method, or SRM. They are closely related, but the Lovibond scale is predominantly aimed at measuring the color of solids, and the SRM scale is more suited for liquids.

Trained brewers are able to use these tools to their advantage and will add a fraction of darker malts into a lighter style to create a light beer with a dark appearance. There are also darker or higher degrees of Lovibond malts that don't offer fermentable sugars because they are basically roasted out. Using them contributes to the darker appearance and flavor without driving up the alcohol concentration.

Dark lagers, schwarzbiers, or dunkels are prime examples. All of these styles have a lighter body and crisp mouthfeel, but they will appear dark or black. Classic examples are Ayinger Bavarian Dark Lager (Germany); Sapporo Premium Black, which is contract brewed by City Brewery in La Crosse; Modelo Negra (Mexico); East Side Dark from Lakefront Brewery in Milwaukee; or the ultra-local McFleshman's Night Pirate, and Vault 202's Czech dark lager, Petr, in Appleton.

Conversely, plenty of dark beers absolutely fit the bill of a heavy-bodied, high-alcohol beer. Some examples include Surly Darkness Russian Imperial Stout (Minnesota); Bell's Expedition Stout (Michigan); Founders Kentucky Breakfast Stout (Michigan); Central Waters Mudpuppy Porter (Amherst); and Stone Arch's Malted Milk Ball Doppel Bock (Appleton).

So the moral of this story is: Never judge a book by its cover and never judge a brew on its color. 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.



Bourbon Peach Smash

The Bourbon Peach Smash combines sweet, muddled fruit with the rich, caramel notes of bourbon for a refreshing, aromatic experience. Perfect for summer gatherings, this cocktail is as visually appealing as it is delicious, especially when garnished with fresh peach slices and mint.

DRINK



INGREDIENTS

- 2 ounces bourbon
- 1 1/2 fresh peaches, pitted and sliced
- 3/4 ounce simple syrup
- 3/4 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Chilled seltzer or ginger beer (optional)
- Six to eight fresh mint leaves
- Extra peach slices and a sprig of fresh mint for garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a cocktail shaker, muddle the peach slices and fresh mint leaves with the simple syrup to release their juices.

Pour in the bourbon and lemon juice, then fill the shaker with ice. Shake vigorously for 15 seconds.

Strain the mixture into a rocks glass filled with crushed ice.

Top it off with a splash of chilled seltzer or ginger beer (optional).

Garnish with a fresh peach slice and a mint sprig.

GRAPEVINE

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Life

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Red Alert

By JOHN VAN DEN BRANDT



Seeing Red

The Northern Cardinal

Story and Photography by
JOHN VAN DEN BRANDT



Cardinals, with their brilliant scarlet feathers, striking black masks, and melodic calls, are a delightful addition to any backyard. If you want to attract these beautiful birds to your home, there are several simple steps you can take to create an inviting habitat.

First, offer black oil sunflower seeds — cardinals' absolute favorite treat. Keeping your feeder well-stocked will quickly make your yard a top cardinal destination. Because they are primarily ground feeders, cardinals prefer flat tray feeders placed low to the ground, although they will happily adapt to any feeder that provides their beloved sunflower seeds.

Next, place your feeder near dense, low-growing shrubs. These plants serve as both shelter from predators and ideal nesting spots. The thick foliage also attracts insects that supplement the cardinals' diet. Adding a birdbath or water feature is another excellent way to entice them and other backyard visitors.

By combining food, shelter, and water, you'll transform your yard into an irresistible cardinal haven, ensuring that these vibrant birds return again and again.

1 Perched proudly on his elevated branch, the male cardinal's brilliant red plumage glows in the sunlight, making him an unmistakable sight. His vivid coloration comes from carotenoid pigments absorbed from the berries and fruits in his diet, a natural reflection of his health and foraging success. The deeper and more radiant the red, the more effectively he can signal his vitality and strength to potential mates, conveying that he is a desirable partner capable of producing healthy offspring. This dazzling display not only enhances his chances of breeding success but also helps him establish dominance in his territory, warning rival males to keep their distance. In this way, the cardinal's vivid feathers are more than a visual delight — they're a key factor in his survival and reproductive strategy.



2 Many people believe that cardinals offer a reassuring link to their departed loved ones, acting as gentle messengers from the beyond. Spotting a cardinal is often seen as a heartening sign that a lost loved one is close, quietly watching over them. A familiar saying goes, "Cardinals appear when angels are near." Whether this belief is valid or simply a comforting notion, finding peace in nature is always a beautiful thing.

3 The cardinal's name was coined by early European settlers who were struck by the vibrant red feathers that stood out vividly against the natural landscape, reminding them of the scarlet robes and hats of the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. Over time, the bird became an iconic figure in the regions it inhabited, often admired for its striking color and cheerful presence. Its name not only reflects its visual resemblance to the church officials but also serves as a testament to the cultural influences of the early Europeans who cataloged and named (or renamed) much of the local wildlife.

4 Cardinals are a familiar sight in many regions, yet capturing truly exceptional photographs of these striking birds requires uncommon patience and thoughtful preparation. Achieving a soft, dreamy green background begins with careful planning: The surrounding foliage should be positioned far enough in the distance so it renders as a smooth, featureless wash in the final image. Shooting from a low vantage point provides a natural, intimate perspective of the bird in its environment. Equally critical is gentle, diffused lighting — free of harsh highlights or deep shadows — to bring out the cardinal's brilliant plumage without distraction. Ultimately, success comes from quiet persistence; hours of patient observation in a well-placed blind rewarded me with this carefully composed image.



5 A recent poll sought to determine America's choices for "best-looking" birds. The cardinal garnered a spot near the top of the list. Perhaps that's why it is so popular as a mascot for sports teams like pro baseball's St. Louis Cardinals or football's Arizona Cardinals. Major collegiate sports programs like Stanford and Louisville also feature the cardinal as their mascot. In further evidence of its popularity, the cardinal is the state bird of seven states: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia.



6 In the spring and early summer, cardinals aggressively attack their reflections in windows, car mirrors, and shiny metal in a frantic effort to protect their breeding territory from a perceived invader, pecking and crashing into the glass for hours. This image was taken outside the nesting season, and the bird seemed oblivious to its own nearly perfect reflection.

7 In most bird species, it is typically the male who sings. However, female cardinals are a fascinating exception to this rule. They often use their songs to communicate with their mates, conveying needs such as requesting food or alerting them to potential intruders within their shared territory. Cardinals form strong pair bonds and mate for life. Despite their beauty and resilience, the average life-span of a cardinal is only three to five years. Their major causes of mortality include predation from larger animals, various diseases, accidental collisions with vehicles or windows, and the ever-present risk of starvation. Their unique behavior and life cycle highlight both the fragility and the remarkable adaptability of these beloved songbirds.



John Van Den Brandt is a professional wildlife photographer and owner of Wild Wind Images LLC (wildwindimages.com). His wildlife images have appeared in numerous articles, websites, textbooks, and ads. John's framed fine-art prints grace the walls of homes and businesses across the country. His calendars have sold more than 100,000 copies. Van Den Brandt makes his home in Appleton with his wife, Jean, his "field assistant, muse, and co-conspirator in plotting an adventurous life."

Coffee Table Design

By JOEL LAPER

If you're looking for simple ways to refresh your living space, start with your coffee table – a spot that often gets overlooked. Whether it's piled with magazines and clutter or left bare, with a little boost, it can easily be transformed into a stylish centerpiece. In this article, you'll find inspiration and practical tips to help make your coffee table both functional and visually appealing.

Coffee tables are an essential piece of furniture in living rooms, family rooms, or spaces with a sitting area. Because homeowners' needs vary, coffee tables come in many sizes, shapes, and materials. Many models include storage, shelving, or adjustable heights. Here are some simple tips to effectively design, decorate, and use this versatile piece.

SIZE: Coffee tables in general should be about two-thirds the length of your couch. If your couch is 90 inches, your table should be around 60 inches long. You don't have to be exact. Anywhere from 50-75% of your couch length will work.

HEIGHT: A coffee table should be about the same height as your seating cushions, or an inch or two shorter. The average height of a couch's seating is 17-19 inches, so a 16- to 18-inch table usually feels right.

SCALE: With smaller tables, use smaller items. Larger tables can visually support larger objects.

SPACING: Don't place things too far apart. Mix different decor elements to create interest without overcrowding the table.

TRAYS: Displaying distinctive items like vases, candles, flowers, or rechargeable lights on a tray is an inventive way to highlight them. Trays also help keep these objects organized and together. You can opt for mirrored trays that bounce light around, or pick trays crafted from wood, rattan, or stone.

STORAGE BOXES: Decorative storage boxes can hide remote controls or coasters, keeping them out of sight, but close when needed. Box decor can reflect your personality and interests.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES: Coffee table books and curated magazines can spark conversations and highlight your interests while adding visual appeal. Creating a personal book with services like Shutterfly adds a unique, welcoming touch. Sharing a vacation photo book, for example, lets guests connect with your experiences and makes your home feel warm and inviting.

By thoughtfully blending style and function, your coffee table can become the centerpiece of your living space, reflecting both your practical needs and unique personality. Whether you opt for vibrant greenery, meaningful keepsakes, or curated reading material, these thoughtful details help transform your table from a simple surface into a welcoming focal point. The best coffee table arrangement is one that feels right to you and enhances the comfort and beauty of your home.



A trio of art glass reflects in a mirrored tray next to a stack of books and decor from travels. *Photo by Joel Laper.*

Feeling Overwhelmed?

Tips for a Quick Reset

By KATIE CARLSON

There are times when your schedule is full, the glass is half empty, and all you want to do is take a nap. These are the exact moments when it's essential to step back and reevaluate your current plan of attack and approach to your daily life.

If you overdo it regularly, your energy and motivation will likely decrease, and you might experience a dip in your mood. Now is the perfect opportunity to stop and check in with yourself. If you notice you've been feeling overwhelmed lately, here are some tips for a quick reset.

Shift Your Attention with a Movement Break

It's always a good idea to move your body, especially when you've been sitting for an extended period or when you are feeling anxious. One way to shift your attention and boost your energy levels is to take a brief movement break. This can include getting outside for a stroll around the block or stretching and walking around the room. It gets the blood flowing and allows you to reset. It can be especially helpful if you find yourself ruminating on the same thoughts or overthinking a particular topic.

Nourish Your Body

Another tip to help you quickly reset if you are feeling overwhelmed is to nourish your body. Often, you feel a certain way because you are tired, hungry, thirsty, or all three. Make sure that you aren't skipping meals or choosing unhealthy options because you are busy or always on the go. Plan and make sure that you nourish your mind and body with the right foods. Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration, which can magnify any stress or fatigue you are experiencing.

Reduce Mental Clutter

A quick, simple way to reduce mental clutter is to perform a grounding exercise. Practice mindfulness by getting out in nature or doing some box breathing. It's also helpful to declutter your environment to gain mental clarity. Tidy up your immediate surroundings as well as your desktop screen and files. You may not realize it, but being on your phone all the time can cause racing thoughts and clutter your mind. It's a good practice to take breaks from your devices throughout the day and limit screen time as best as you can to reduce mental fatigue.

Have a Reasonable Task List and Prioritize

Thrive and feel less overwhelmed by writing down what needs to get done and prioritizing your tasks. This will get

whatever is floating around in your head down on paper and allow you to clearly see what needs to be addressed now and what can wait. Free up mental space by journaling about what's overwhelming you and making a manageable list of daily to-dos. Being able to prioritize what's most important will keep you on track and instantly reduce stress and anxiety. As you get to work and tackle your responsibilities, eliminate distractions and focus on one task at a time.



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Defining Who We Are

By DR. JIM ZIEGLER

I think it is important that every person evaluate their life and determine just who they are and what they stand for. This is something determined by many things. There are often simply genetic and inherent factors that play a role. Perhaps more importantly, there are extrinsic factors that occur throughout our lives that shape us into the people we are. The job or profession we choose makes a huge impact on who we are. Being an athlete can determine a lot about who a person is. Many other things, such as religion, lifestyle, family, friends, and hobbies, can all play an important role in determining who we are.

The definition of who we are is something that also changes and evolves during the different stages of our lives. An elderly person is likely to be a different person than they were at middle age, as a young person, and certainly as a child (not always, though). That is to be expected as life continues to shape us over the years.



From experience, I also know how much our relationship with animals can influence us. Admittedly, this can be positive or negative. Not everyone is meant to be an animal lover. Those who realize it and just do not go down that path do fine. Those who don't realize it and try to include animals in their life often have the relationship fail, and both parties can be damaged in the process. For those of us who

truly love animals and are willing to accept them for what they are, including their good traits and their flaws, an incredible bond can form that can be transforming and very much become a part of who we are. Every pet that I have had over my life has changed me and helped me grow in some capacity. Even the memories of those long-gone pets influence who I am today.

And it is not only the animals that live with us. A general appreciation of the world of animals is so very enriching. Seeing an eagle soaring never gets old. White-tailed deer are always beautiful to see. Hearing owls and coyotes at night can be haunting and beautiful at the same time. There is something very soothing about seeing cattle grazing in a field. Animals in general can do so much for us and shape us in ways that could never happen in their absence.

Who are we? It is a complicated question. Loving animals and sharing our lives with them makes the question a bit less so.

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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Dr. Pepper

Dr. Pepper is a 2-year-old mixed breed. He is a shy dog that is still learning about the world around him and how good it can be! He would benefit from a confident canine friend in his adoptive home to help show him the ropes.



Wallen

Wallen is a 3-and-a-half-year-old mastiff mix. He is bashful and needs time to warm up to new friends, but he is affectionate once comfortable. He would benefit from a gentle and patient guardian who will give him the time he needs to blossom.



Little Man

Little Man is a 12-year-old neutered male. Don't let the name fool you; Little Man is a whole lot of cat to love! He is a quiet, reserved fellow who prefers to take life at a slower pace. He is on a prescription kidney diet to maintain optimum health.



Hartford

Hartford is a 4-year-old spayed female and is everything you could ever want in a kitty: affectionate, cuddly, chatty, and an adorable snaggletooth! Hartford prefers to have all the attention for herself and needs to be your only cat — we promise she is the only one you will ever need!

It's All About Flowers

By HOLLY BOETTCHER

Why is it that flowers lift our spirits and make us smile? Research has proven that being around plants significantly lowers stress, reduces anxiety, and improves overall mood.

Having flowers in your yard or gardens does not need to be a lot of work. The easiest way to enjoy them is to have either containers or hanging baskets on your porch or patio.

I have a few simple steps to keep these planters looking great all season.

Assess Your Space

When purchasing hanging baskets or containers, or designing your own, it is important to study the lighting where you will place them. Pay attention to different times of day and decide whether the space gets:

- **Full sun:** six or more hours of direct light.
- **Part sun or part shade:** three to six hours.
- **Full shade:** less than three hours.

Read the Labels

This is so important. If you don't give them what they need, they will not perform well and may even die off.

Proper Watering

As your plants mature, their root systems require adequate watering. Most containers and hanging baskets need to be watered every day. I water mine until there is water dripping out the bottoms of the baskets.

Are you Creating your Own or Purchasing Them?

If you are planting your baskets or containers rather than purchasing them, consider the "thriller, filler, spiller" method.

Find a plant that is as sexy as can be and a stand-alone in your planting. Examples are gaura, salvia, or Baby Tut grass. Now look for fillers such as colorful Wave petunias. Finish off with a trailing plant, such as a sweet potato vine, to connect and anchor your container or basket to the ground. All you need is some imagination here!

Give Them Nutrition

When you water your plants every day, you are actually flushing out all the nutrients. For this reason, I give my baskets and containers a weekly dose of water-soluble Miracle-Gro. This is the best way to replace the nutrients that you have washed away.

Deadheading for You and Them

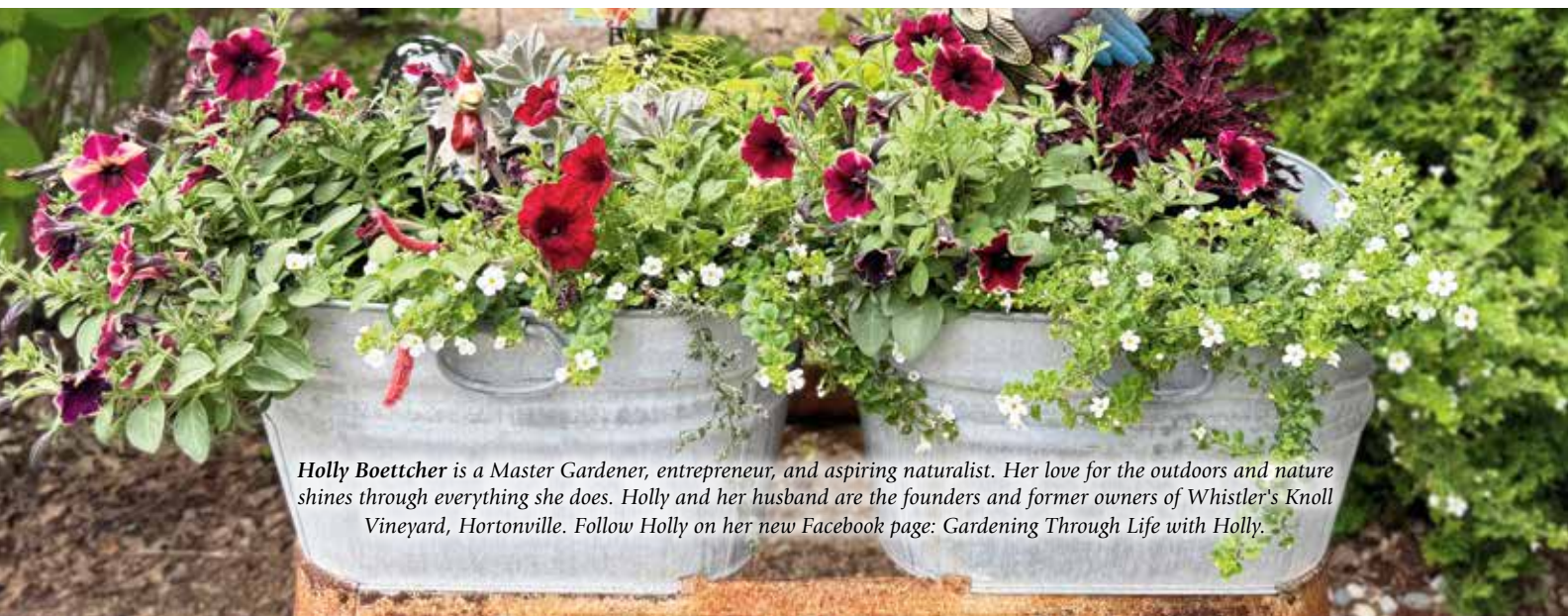
As I water each day, I take some time to deadhead the spent blossoms. This is a great way for you to relax while helping your plants utilize their energy to produce some new blossoms. Take some time to properly prune plants that are getting out of control, such as coleus. They look best if you give them an occasional haircut.

Check for Pests and Disease

Watch for pests that need to be kept under control. I like to use organic products such as neem oil. It not only eradicates many insects but also keeps fungus at bay, such as powdery mildew on garden phlox or clematis vines. Insects such as lily beetles or Japanese beetles also respond quite well to a dose of neem oil to get them under control.

Make it Last

We love summer, and it's not too late to score some plants at your favorite garden center. Happy gardening!



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 and former owners of Whistler's Knoll Vineyard, Hortonville. Follow Holly on her new Facebook page: Gardening Through Life with Holly.

LOOKING BACK ON 10 YEARS OF ONE MORE THING

The first article I ever submitted for this humble publication was in just the fourth issue, a forgettable little number in which I defended cover bands against the judgment of four-flushing wiseacres like myself. That was July 2016. In the decade since, my fat face has been on the back page of every issue but one, and I'm pretty proud of that fact. It's among the longest relationships I've ever had.

In my time writing this column, I've received over 1,200 emails from readers (I counted), almost all of them friendly. (A notable exception: a reader once accused me of murdering my cat after an article where I wasn't exactly somber at his demise. Dear reader — I guess we'll never know!) Over 300 of those emails were requesting a soup recipe I once mentioned in an article; each person got a response, and probably 75% sent me a picture of their Cheesyburger Stew afterward.

I don't tell you this to pat myself on the back; I tell you this because I love reading those messages more than just about anything. They sincerely make my day. And in the last three or so years, I've noticed that the themes of the messages themselves have changed. Initially, most letters were specific to that month's article in a "great read about coleslaw" or "you murdered your cat" fashion; lately, they've largely been more of the "I've enjoyed reading your articles over the years" variety. And that evolution is a really meaningful one to me.

I've grown up with this article in a way. That first issue was published three months before my wife and I were married. In the years since, I've written about the Pyrrhic joys of

in print. All it took was a letter or two from readers who could relate to put any misgivings to rest. It's been worth it for that reason alone.

There were a few years where this little article was about the only creative thing I was doing, and maybe that's why it has come to mean so much to me. A handful of readers even write to me regularly just to check in; some of them I have never and likely will never meet personally, but we'd probably hug if we did. And there's a cashier at an area Festival who now knows my wife and kids by name, asks about them each time I'm in her checkout, and brags that she knows my life story solely from this page. She'll likely be tickled to read this.

All of this is to say, I'm grateful. I grew up in an era of small-town columnists whose articles became part of readers' lives incrementally, and I love knowing that for a certain soup-loving segment of the Fox Valley, this article has done that. So thank you for the last 10 years, for reading, and for caring about this magazine.

I didn't kill my cat.



ONE MORE THING

By TYLER SJOSTROM

homeownership, having kids and being a dad, seeing your parents age, and settling into my "Saturday is for bagels and Costco" era. I've written about my various struggles as well, and I'll admit to having some real reservations at the time about putting those things



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

Is Live Music the Key to **UNLOCKING OUR MEMORIES?**

We all have that one song. You hear the first three notes, and suddenly you aren't sitting in traffic anymore. You're 17 again, windows rolled down, feeling the heat and humidity of a summer night decades ago.

It's common to be transported in this way, and that's because music holds a uniquely powerful grip on our brains. Unlike flipping through an old photo album or wearing an old shirt, music doesn't just remind us of the past — it dramatically drags us back into it.



"Music, especially live, is an extraordinarily powerful trigger for emotion and memory," says Brian Pertl, Director of the Lamont School of Music at

the University of Denver and former longtime Dean of the Lawrence Conservatory of Music. "When you are listening to live music, you are listening with much more than your ears. The vibrations hit you from all sides; you are encoding the experience with every fiber of your body."

Because music leaves a full-body, multisensory imprint, our brains archive it differently than standard memories. Pertl describes it as a form of visceral time travel: "You can vividly recall exactly where you were, who you were with, how it felt."

While standard nostalgia triggers a general, warm fondness for yesteryear, certain musical experiences can completely alter your sense of time, bringing back specific feelings so vividly it sends shivers up your spine.

This deep connection to our personal histories is what drives our collective obsession with live performances — even (or maybe especially) when the original artists are no longer touring. The phenomenon of the tribute performance, which took root in the 1960s, fills a deeply human void.

"The power of experiencing the music one loves in a live setting is an embodied experience that recordings simply cannot duplicate," Pertl notes. "Fans get to experience a live version of their favorite groups, many of whom haven't performed for decades."

During the 2026-27 Season, the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center is tapping directly into this collective memory bank with a lineup designed to explore the intersection of sound, time, and nostalgia.

The journey begins with *The Carpenters Songbook: A Live Celebration* (Sept. 29), a painstakingly faithful celebration of the unforgettable, bittersweet pop hits that set the backdrop for the 1970s. The time travel Pertl describes will continue with the Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra collaboration *Symphony Rocks* (Nov. 14), where massive, orchestral arrangements breathe new life into classic rock anthems we all know by heart.

In the spring, this exploration of musical history deepens. The pairing of the Lawrence University Jazz Ensemble (Feb. 5, 2027) and Branford Marsalis & Dianne Reeves Celebrate John Coltrane (April 17, 2027) honors the foundational jazz that has shaped generations of musicians and listeners alike. And on April 24, 2027, patrons will experience a performance that explicitly tackles the "music is a time machine" phenomenon: *Cantus - Wanting Memories*. The low-voice ensemble's performance, with special guest On a Positive Note Chorus, moves past simple nostalgia to dive headfirst into how specific songs preserve our shared humanity and unearth pieces of ourselves we thought were lost.

Ultimately, entering a theater for a live musical performance isn't just an avenue for entertainment. It's an opportunity to lean into what Pertl calls the "magical qualities of music" — an invitation to sit between the speakers, feel the vibrations, and remember exactly who we are.



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