The Spirit of Fox Cities

Appleton Monthly

October 2026



Healthy Starts Here!

by Angela Halderson

BAGELS!
A HOLE new world of the beloved bagel
Chef Carly

Happy Fall-idays!

Let the cozy commence!

By NATASHA WINKLER

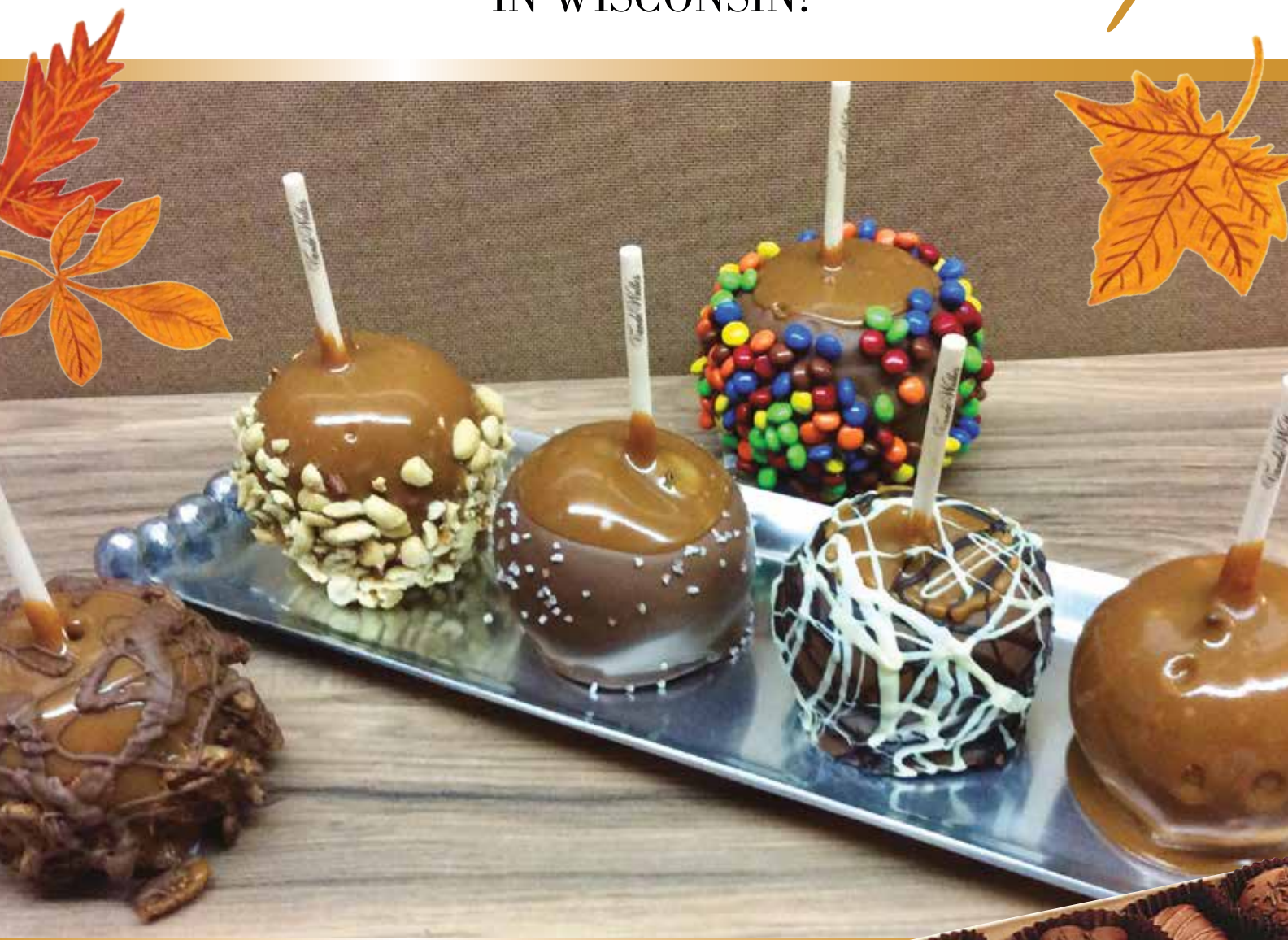


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COVER DESIGN BY RACHELLE HANSEN



FROM THE EDITOR

Let the Gourd Times Roll

WELCOME TO OCTOBER IN THE FOX CITIES — where crisp breezes, warm comforts, and festive traditions come alive under a canopy of color. It's time to swap lemonade for pumpkin spice, jump in the leaves, and delight in the autumn magic that calls for celebration.

This month in **Go!**, it's all about the Fall-idays! Find inspiration for seasonal touches, cozy bonfires, and comforting fall fare from Natasha. Jackie profiles embroidery artist Baylee Manzanares, Katie takes us to Cedar Harbor, and Marissa highlights the season's scariest movies — watch if you dare!

In ***the* 920**, Tim introduces local changemakers: muralist and youth mentor Neo Medina and Julie Krause, executive director of the Appleton Education Foundation. Natasha helps us beat the seasonal blues, and Alyssa explores the business of community involvement.

Chef Carly has a HOLE lotta fun with bagels in **Taste**. Steve Lonsway celebrates 150 years of Briess Malt & Ingredients Co., and I toast to cooler weather with an inviting cup of mulled cider.

In **Life**, Angela gets our fall health off on the right foot, Joel crafts a not-so-spooky hutch, and Tyler delivers a laugh-out-loud Halloween rulebook.

May your mugs be warm, your costumes clever, and your fall days filled with festive fun.

Keep celebrating,

P.S. CHECK OUT OUR NEW FEATURE
LOCAL **PAGE 38-39.**



Sarah Peterson
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Katie Carlson is a seasoned freelance writer with a passion for creating lifestyle and inspirational content. Her experience includes writing blog posts and magazine articles on a variety of topics. When she's not writing, she enjoys spending time with family, running, reading, and cooking.



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



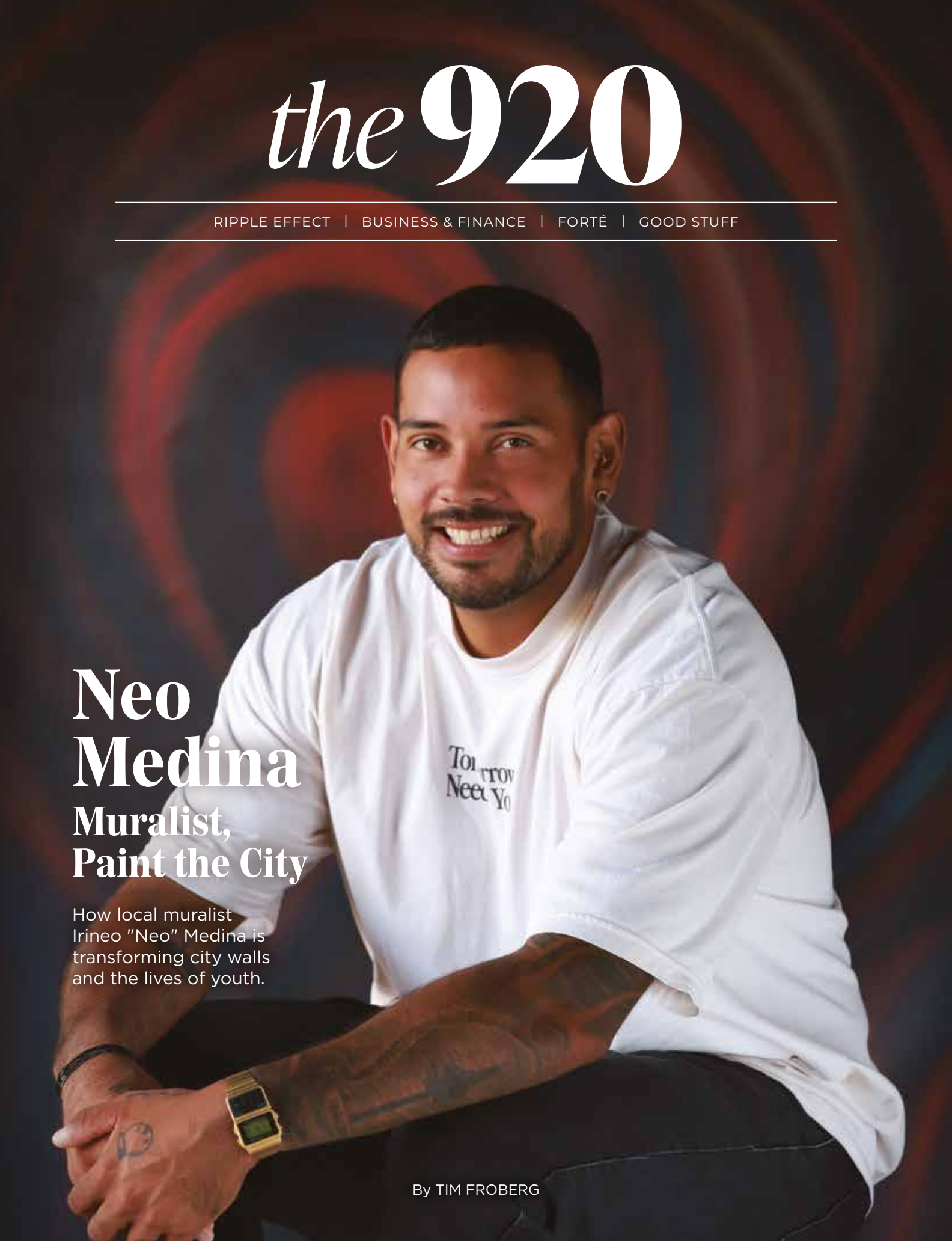
Jim Collar

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

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the 920

RIPPLE EFFECT | BUSINESS & FINANCE | FORTÉ | GOOD STUFF



Neo Medina

Muralist, Paint the City

How local muralist Irineo "Neo" Medina is transforming city walls and the lives of youth.

By TIM FROBERG

THE ART OF INSPIRING YOUTH

LOCAL ARTIST MAKES MAGIC WITH MURALS

By TIM FROBERG



ART HAS NO BOUNDARIES.

It's not limited to framed paintings hanging in indoor galleries or sculptures mounted to bases.

Art can be seen on outdoor walls, reflecting messages of social advocacy, community identity, historical reflection, and cultural storytelling.

Meet Irineo "Neo" Medina: the man behind the murals in the Fox Cities.

The local artist, advocate, and youth mentor has created more than 30 colorful and powerful murals over the past decade across Appleton and Wisconsin. He does roughly five to seven murals each summer and recently completed his annual Paint the City project, where he worked with 20 students from the Appleton Area School District for nearly two weeks to create another spectacular mural that can be seen on the outside walls of Spats Food & Spirits.

It was the fifth year for the community project, which brings young people together and gives them a chance to collaborate with a professional artist while learning about art, teamwork, social issues, and the communities they live in.

Many of the students come from marginalized backgrounds and have not been involved in school-related projects. But Paint the City gives them a sense of accomplishment and belonging.

"It's always a lot of project management," said Medina. "But I love seeing the looks on the faces of the kids and their families when we're finished. To me, that means a lot more than the actual painting. For some of them, Paint the City is one of the big things they have done during their high school careers.

"Seeing them on a public stage being able to hold the power of influence and culture — and to have so many people walk by and see what they've done — is amazing. It's such a cool and profound thing to watch these students become who they really want to be inside."

Paint the City has been recognized and lauded by Gov. Tony Evers and nominated for a Wisconsin Governor's Tourism "Bright Idea" Award.

"I didn't know that we were going to even make it one year," said Medina. "To make it five years and to be recognized on a statewide level is just mind-blowing."







MESSAGING THROUGH MURALS

Medina is a skilled and accomplished artist who holds a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He has experience with traditional canvas art, but finds mural work more satisfying, giving him a platform to deliver messages that reflect on community pride and identity along with social climate and societal needs.

He strives to keep his messages positive, as with his 2026 Paint the City work: a 3,000-square-foot mural of hands layered and clasped together in a rainbow of colors. The mural was designed to thank everyone in the Appleton community who has been involved in the annual project.

"It was unbelievable," said Nick Kapheim, who owns Spats along with his wife, Bri. "Neo is more than just an artist. He's someone who brings people in the community together. Before it started, I didn't really know what we were getting into. But as the project progressed and all the children were around, it was something special to see him lead 20 kids and make a difference in their lives.

"It was awesome. Some of these kids were really interested in art, and some kids were just looking for something to do. At the end, I think everybody really got something out of it."

The importance of diversity and inclusivity is often reflected in Medina's murals, and he doesn't dodge controversial subjects such as racial injustice and inequality. One of Medina's best-known works was a 2020 mural near the intersection of College Avenue and Appleton Street across from Houdini Plaza following the death of George Floyd. The mural was titled *For Us* and addressed the need for unity by showing two hands — overflowing with swatches of different colors — reaching toward a glowing sun.

"I'm incredibly proud that I'm able to provide something of value to the community," Medina said. "I try to make my work reflective of the community around it. It's great to be able to provide opportunities for people to see themselves through that mural and to just have art in their daily lives. Just observing the foot traffic and knowing the mural is going to be a part of people's daily lives means a lot to me."

"I want people to know this is art. This is about their community, and it's free and accessible. They can stop by any time and look at it. I feel incredibly humbled that I can help provide that."

Mural artistry is more challenging than traditional art in many ways. Walls basically serve as the canvas Medina works on and provide far more space to cover. It can be physically demanding and downright grueling.

"I've blown out my right knee twice due to painting," said Medina. "I have no more meniscus in that knee. But I love doing mural art. I've been studying graffiti and street art for decades, and there is a long list of people who have inspired me."

CONNECTING WITH YOUTH

In addition to his mural work, Medina holds down a full-time job with the Appleton Area School District, mentoring high school and elementary school students and advocating for them when necessary. He also runs the Latino clubs at the Appleton high schools.

In 2025, Medina was honored by Insight Publications as one of its 40 Under 40 Award recipients. The award recognizes several of the most innovative and influential young professionals under age 40 making a strong impact in Northeast Wisconsin. Medina also serves on the board of the Trout Museum of Art and was named as one of Wisconsin's 36 most influential Latino leaders in 2024.

"The kids I work with inspire me with their energy and youthfulness," he said. "A lot of times it's easy to write off a teenager as apathetic. But when you get past that teenage wall, there's so much brilliance and radiance.

"I didn't find my voice until I was 20 or 21. So to be able to help give these students the tools, whether it's through art or whatever passion they may have, to find their voice, that's so meaningful to me. A lot of my influence and drive comes from wanting to build future leaders.

"Sometimes when I sit in board meetings, I don't look the part. I'm not a suit-and-tie guy. I've got tattoos. And very seldom are there more than two people of color at these meetings. I ask myself: how can I help so that in 15 years our community leaders look a little different?"

OVERCOMING A TROUBLED YOUTH

Medina understands the challenges, difficulties, and dilemmas that teens face because he dealt with many of them himself. He's very candid and open about the struggles he faced and troubles he experienced while growing up in Sheboygan.

"I had a single mom, and we were pretty poor," he said. "A lot of the influences that were around me weren't so great. My dad lived a lot of his life in Chicago in the Cabrini-Green area in the late '80s, so gang culture was big and prolific. That's the kind of messages that we were inundated with.

"The year I was born, Sheboygan was voted the safest city to raise a family in America. That wasn't the Sheboygan that I experienced. By the time I was 18, my brother had been stabbed three times, and I had been stabbed. My brother almost died.

"A lot of it had to do with families like mine where the parents or elders come from places like Texas or Chicago. They bring with them that lifestyle, and younger folks like myself and my cousins tried to emulate that.

"That's the world I lived in: fighting, drugs, and drinking at a young age."

Medina eventually ran into some serious trouble with the law and was expelled from college for a felony tied to a fight. The felony was eventually expunged, and Medina returned to school and got serious about art.

"It was a huge turning point in my life," he said.

Medina had a pair of professors in the fine arts department at UW-Oshkosh, Jeff Lipschutz and Gail Panske, who took an interest in his considerable talents and encouraged him to pursue art.

"Growing up in Sheboygan, I had never stepped foot into an art museum," he said. "I didn't feel like I belonged and struggled to find a version of myself that meant success. But when I was a kid, I loved to draw and always had an interest in art. I had some great professors that really pushed me, and art became my first-ever voice.

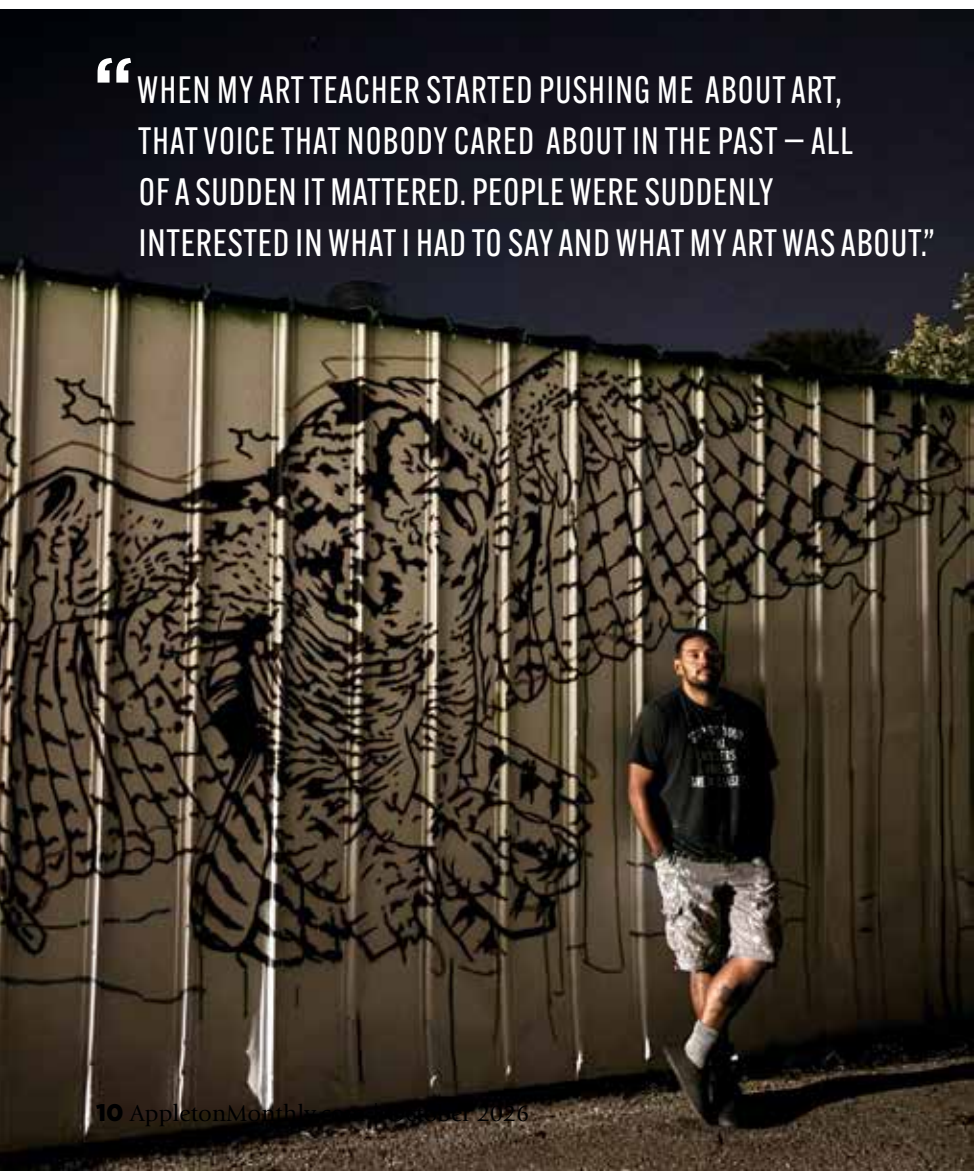
"Previously, I had felt my whole life that my voice didn't matter. I had some really unfortunate experiences with the law, teachers, and authority in general and how they chose to put me down — based on race or my family — that sticks with me.

"When my art teacher started pushing me about art, that voice that nobody cared about in the past — all of a sudden it mattered. People were suddenly interested in what I had to say and what my art was about."

It didn't take long for Medina to realize that he had a passion for art and advocacy.

"My eyes opened up to art," Medina said. "I realized I loved this stuff on skateboards. I loved Chicano-style art with tattoos and the low-rider culture. So I started making art about my experiences as a third-generation Mexican American, and from there it just blossomed. I may not have been the best artist, but I don't think anyone in my class spent as much time in that art building as I did. It's like I lived there."

When he's not involved in an art project or working with young people, Medina enjoys basketball, skateboarding, and spending time with his three children: Jax, 14; Coco, 7; and Vivian, 3. He says his children have been another source of inspiration for his artwork.



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Jack-o'-lanterns originated from Irish myths about a trickster named Stingy Jack. To ward off his wandering spirit, people carved eerie faces into turnips. Immigrants later brought this tradition to the U.S., swapping turnips for native pumpkins.



More than **35 million pounds, or 9 billion individual kernels,** of candy corn are produced each year in the U.S.

The October full moon is most commonly known as the Hunter's Moon, signaling the time of year when animals fatten up for winter, making them much easier for hunters to track.



National Pumpkin Spice Day, celebrated on Oct. 1, honors autumn's favorite cozy flavor — a warm blend of cinnamon, ginger, cloves, allspice, and nutmeg.



Trick-or-treating was paused during World War II because of strict sugar rationing, leading to a drop in commercial candy production.



In 2025, Americans spent an estimated $860 million on pet costumes, with nearly 20% matching their owner's or family's costumes.





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Lighting Up the Dark

The Ripple Effect of Seasonal Moods

By NATASHA WINKLER

As October settles in, every day feels shorter than the last. By the time evening falls, many of us notice a sudden shift in our energy. This isn't just in your head; it is in your body.

When daylight hours drop, our brains produce less serotonin, a chemical that helps us feel happy and calm. At the same time, the brain makes extra melatonin, the hormone that makes us feel sleepy. According to medical experts, this seasonal shift causes seasonal affective disorder (SAD) in about 5% of adults. Millions more experience a milder form known as the "winter blues."

Mental health never stays contained in a single person. When seasonal sadness sets in, our natural reaction is to pull back. We cancel plans with friends, skip evening walks, and stay inside.

This creates a quiet ripple effect across the community. When we isolate ourselves, our families feel the distance. Workplaces lose our creative energy, and local clubs miss out on active volunteers. When many people pull back at once, an entire neighborhood can feel quiet and disconnected.

Proven scientific tools can help us fight back against the dark days:

Catch the morning sun: Spending 20 minutes outside in the morning light helps reset your body's internal clock and improves sleep quality.

Use light therapy: Sitting near a special 10,000-lux light box for 15-30 minutes each morning can trick your brain into releasing serotonin, boosting your mood naturally.

Keep moving: Physical activity, whether walking or exercising indoors, releases endorphins that fight stress.

Maintain social routines: Force yourself to stay in touch with friends and visit local gathering spots, even when you feel like staying on the couch.

Building strong local habits plays an essential role in preserving our collective well-being when daylight wanes. Organizing weekly coffee gatherings, attending indoor craft markets, or joining neighborhood book groups creates dependable touchpoints that prevent isolation before it starts. Shared activities remind us that we are navigating the winter season together.

When community members commit to checking in on vulnerable neighbors or hosting small game nights, they construct a vital safety net of belonging. These simple, recurring human connections nourish our emotional resilience, turning cold, quiet evenings into opportunities for shared comfort, mutual encouragement, and genuine warmth.

When you take active steps to protect your mental health, you trigger a powerful counter-ripple.

Caring for your mind gives you the energy to show up for others. A healthy mood brings warmth into your household, patience into your workplace, and kindness into everyday interactions. By staying connected, you help keep our community vibrant and supportive through the coldest months of the year. We cannot stop the sun from setting early this autumn. But by taking small, intentional steps to care for our mental health, we can keep the light burning bright across our entire community.

By staying connected, you help keep our community vibrant and supportive through the coldest months of the year.





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How Community Involvement Can Help Your Small Business Grow

By ALYSSA JOHNSON



When people choose where to shop, eat, hire, or do business, trust plays a big role. Community involvement gives small businesses a meaningful way to build that trust by being present, helpful, and connected to the people they serve.

The best opportunities are not always the biggest or most visible. Often, the right fit is something your business can support genuinely and consistently, whether that means sponsoring a local event, volunteering as a team, or partnering with an organization whose work matters to your community.

Choose Opportunities That Fit Your Business

It is easy to want to say yes to every sponsorship request, donation ask, or event opportunity, especially when they all support good causes. But the most meaningful involvement usually starts with choosing opportunities that make sense for your business.

Before saying yes, ask yourself: Does this connect with the clients we serve? Is this something our team can genuinely support? Will our involvement be useful, visible, or both? Can we keep showing up beyond one event or donation?

Show Up in Ways People Remember

Writing a check can help, but it is not the only way to be involved. Some of the most memorable efforts are the ones where people can see your business taking part.

A restaurant might donate gift cards to a fundraiser. A contractor could support a school trades program. A retail shop might host a collection drive. A financial business could offer a simple budgeting workshop for a nonprofit or community group. The right idea does not have to be complicated. It just needs to feel connected to what your business already does well.

Start Small and Stay Consistent

Community involvement does not have to mean making a large financial commitment. In many cases, a small but thoughtful effort is easier to maintain and more meaningful than a one-time commitment that stretches your time or budget too far.

Simple ways to begin include:

- Volunteering as a team
- Donating products or services to local fundraisers
- Sponsoring a youth sports team or community event
- Participating in local networking or chamber activities
- Supporting nonprofit initiatives that align with your business values

Choose one or two efforts your business can support well, then look for ways to stay connected throughout the year.

Think Beyond the Event

The event itself is only one part of community involvement; what you do before and after can make the effort feel more personal and lasting.

Share why the cause matters to your business, thank the people who made it possible, invite your team to take part, and look for small ways to keep the relationship going. Those details help turn a single sponsorship or volunteer day into something people remember.

Final Thoughts

Community involvement is most effective when it is thoughtful, manageable, and true to your business.

You do not have to do everything. Start with the opportunities that make sense, show up with care, and build from there.



Alyssa Johnson *holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She is passionate about storytelling, community engagement, and highlighting the people and organizations that make the Fox Cities a great place to live and work.*

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FORTÉ

JULIE KRAUSE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

APPLETON EDUCATION FOUNDATION



Julie Krause entered her college years planning to be a chiropractor.

Students in the Appleton Area School District should be grateful that never happened because Krause's career choice has benefited many of them.

Krause is celebrating her 20th year as executive director of the Appleton Education Foundation. AEF is a nonprofit organization that raises private funds to enrich student learning, provide college scholarships, support school educators, and fund educational programs that typically fall outside the normal school budget.

Since its inception in 1997, the AEF has awarded an amazing $6.2 million in grants and scholarships, including more than $400,000 in 2025. One of them was the largest in the AEF's history: a $95,000 grant to provide sensory regulation toolkits for every K-5 classroom in the Appleton Area School District.

Krause is a Sparta native and a Manitowoc Lutheran High School graduate who holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in health promotion and wellness. Away from the office, Krause enjoys reading, running, boating, and family time with her husband, Ryan; their two daughters, Talia, 22, and Mariah, 19; and their son, Carson, 16.

How gratifying is it to help students and teachers the way your organization does?

"It's a great feeling to have even a small part in making a difference for our Appleton students and teachers. I get to do work that's meaningful. I can see a direct connection between the work I do and the enhanced opportunities in our schools. We're going to celebrate our 30th anniversary in 2027, and we're approaching $7 million in cumulative grants. We're proud of all we've accomplished."

What's the secret to AEF's ability to secure so many amazing grants?

"I think it's having a very solid foundation and doing a lot of little things right over time. Sometimes I think about the early days of the foundation and our founding board members who were putting up their own money to fund the first couple of rounds of grants so they could demonstrate to the community what an education foundation could do. While they were personally funding those immediate needs, they were also investing in the future by raising funds for a large endowment fund that could be a permanent source of funds for these educational projects and programs. That forward thinking has really put us in a spot where we have some real money to give away when teachers need things. We have about 1,100 donors that annually support our work. We live in an awesome and generous community that has been very supportive of our public education system."

What are some examples of clubs and activities that AEF has helped fund?

"There are hundreds. Some are what we call our big idea grants where we're looking for things that are beyond a single classroom or have the potential to be transformational … like the $95,000 grant for the sets of sensory regulation items for each elementary school classroom. We've had some smaller ones that are kind of neat. We helped Ferber Elementary launch a school spirit store to provide lessons in entrepreneurship. We assisted Appleton West in starting a pickleball club, provided access for girls to attend Smart Girls Rock to learn about STEM careers, and helped middle and high school students experience indoor gardening through hydroponics."

By Tim Froberg

Photo by Ashley Schmit, Debbie Daanen Photography

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Saturday, October 31

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GOOD STUFF

By SARAH PETERSON



SIP & CREATE

THE GLASSROOM

A new art-forward cafe is now open on Mason Street in Appleton. The Glassroom combines a relaxing coffee shop atmosphere with hands-on creativity. Enjoy coffee, tea, or other delicious specialty drinks; browse handmade goods and gifts; or join their stained glass and art classes, including full-process courses and quick "Create and Take" sessions. They also host seasonal art workshops for painting, mosaics, and crafts. Beyond creating, they offer expert stained-glass repair for broken suncatchers or lampshades and accept custom commissioned artwork requests.

theglassroomcafe.com



GET SPOOKED!

HAUNTED GOLF CART RIDES

Take part in a fun, family-friendly fall tradition with a chauffeured limo golf cart ride throughout the haunted property of Hickory Hills Country Club in Chilton on Friday and Saturday evenings in October. The ride takes visitors through the golf course and woods, featuring spooky scenes, live actors, and plenty of scares. The experience can be made less scary or more kid-friendly by request. Concessions and drinks are available for purchase while you wait. Call the course directly at 920-849-2912 to lock in a specific time slot. Check their Facebook page for updates.

facebook.com/HHCCHauntedCarts



STOP BY

NEENAH'S ALTA ALLEY

Community collaboration has brought a once-underutilized space in downtown Neenah to life. Alta Alley is officially open and has been transformed into a colorful, welcoming spot to gather, relax, play, and enjoy art.

facebook.com/futureneenah



OPE! NORTH

Ope! Brewing Co. of West Allis has opened its second location, Ope! North, on College Avenue in Appleton. The 2.5-acre craft brewery features award-winning beverages, indoor and outdoor seating, a dog-friendly patio, recreational activities, live music, food trucks, and more.

ope-north.com



GET WILD

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

Local professional wildlife photographer John Van Den Brandt will feature wondrous images from more than 20 years of photography in a free exhibit, In Your Wildest Dreams, at Mulva Cultural Center in DePere, Oct. 21-Dec. 13.

mulvacenter.org/exhibits



PICK A PUMPKIN

CUFF FARMS

Visit Cuff Farms in Hortonville for pick-your-own pumpkins, gourds, and Indian corn. Take a wagon ride to the patch or explore the large free play area with a corn maze and straw slide. Visitors can also enjoy apple cider donuts, ice cream, and more.

cuffarms.com/pumpkins



Happy Fall-idays!

Let the cozy commence!

Celebrate autumn with festive porch decorations, cozy living rooms, and elevated backyard bonfires.

By NATASHA WINKLER



Fall-idays

There is a distinct moment when fall arrives in neighborhoods across the Midwest. You step outside in the morning, see your breath hanging in the air, perhaps a chill on the tip of your nose, and reach for a heavy jacket instead of a light sweatshirt. Windows get shut tight against the chill, the smell of woodsmoke drifts down the block at night, and suddenly every weekend feels like a mini-getaway from a summer that seemingly whisked by.

By NATASHA WINKLER

Autumn isn't just about watching the trees change color. It is found in the small, grounded routines we wait for all year, including those amazing Halloween decorations. But it's also about pulling heavy blankets out of storage, the scent of hot cider and pumpkin spice, and stepping on dry leaves along the sidewalk just to hear the crunch. The fast pace of summer finally slows down, giving us a reason to linger on the back porch, catch up with neighbors, and spend cozy weekends with family. It's almost like a deep sigh of seasonal relaxation.

Taking the time to be present is important in any season, and given that most years we have the opportunity to experience four distinct seasons, finding your niche vibe adds to the enjoyment exponentially. Of course, this time of year is marked by pumpkin spice lattes and yards covered in leaves, but there is an undertone hidden in this transition, ready to engulf your senses. Instead of turning the dial down for the season, let's tune in a little deeper and really embrace this time of year.

Let this special section guide you in making the most of these limited weeks leading into the Midwest winter we all know is right around the corner. Let's take an energetic pause together and fully immerse in this "in-between" by savoring all the special things this time of year brings, because it isn't only about changing leaves and spooky skeletons. Ahead, you will find practical ways to bring the season into your home, simple ideas for getting outdoors before the snow arrives, and warm recipes made for sharing. Grab a toasty drink, a fuzzy blanket, settle in, and let's make the most of October.

Step Up Your Porch Style

Your front entryway is the very first thing neighbors and guests see as they walk up to your home this season. Transforming your porch into an inviting autumn space doesn't require a big budget or hours of hard work. By layering natural textures, warm lighting, and colorful gourds, you can easily create a cozy welcome that lasts all October long.

Mix shapes and colors with pumpkins: Skip the perfectly matched orange pumpkins from the grocery store bin. Instead, look for heirloom varieties with bumpy skin, long twisting stems, and unique colors like sage green, pale cream, and slate blue. Group them on your porch steps in odd numbers; three or five always look best to the eye. Turn the stems in different directions so the setup feels natural, not staged.

Build height with natural textures: Standard porch floor displays can feel flat. Use a small straw bale or a flipped wooden crate as a riser to lift pots off the ground. Set potted chrysanthemums in rich shades of maroon or deep mustard on top of the crate. Tie a bundle of dried cornstalks to your porch posts using thick jute twine, letting the husks flare out naturally at the bottom.

Layer your doormats: Start with a flat-weave indoor-outdoor rug in a buffalo check pattern or a simple dark plaid that extends about 6 inches past a standard coir mat. Place a thick, natural-fiber doormat right on top. This simple base frames your entryway, catches autumn mud, and adds depth before guests even step inside.

Light the path for dark evenings: Since the sun sets earlier each day, soft lighting makes a big difference. Place two or three outdoor metal lanterns of different heights near your front step. Use battery-operated LED pillar candles with built-in daily timers set to turn on around 5 p.m. You get a steady, flickering glow every evening without worrying about open flames or wind.





Cozy Indoor Spaces





Cozy Up the Living Room

As chilly evening winds start to blow outside, your living room naturally becomes the main gathering spot for family and friends. You can make your indoor space feel instantly warmer by swapping light summer accents for heavy knits and deep, earthy tones. A few simple adjustments to your lighting, fabrics, and decor will turn your home into a peaceful retreat from the cold.

Swap fabrics for heavy, warm textures: Put away lightweight linen covers, cotton throws, and bright summer colors. Bring out chunky cable-knit blankets, corduroy pillow covers, and rich velvet accents. Choose colors found right outside your window, like rusty orange, deep forest green, and soft brown. Draping a heavy blanket over the arm of a couch makes the whole room look ready for a chilly evening.

Shift to warm ambient lighting: Overhead lights can feel harsh on long, dark evenings. Turn off the main ceiling fixtures and rely instead on lamps positioned around the room at eye level. Swap out bright white lightbulbs for warm-toned LED bulbs (look for 2,700K on the box). The lower, warmer light instantly relaxes the mood and softens the entire space.

Decorate directly from the yard: You do not need to buy artificial foliage to bring autumn inside. Trim a few sturdy branches with bright maple or oak leaves directly from your yard. Place them in a heavy stoneware jug filled with fresh water to keep them vibrant for a week or two. On your coffee table, set out a low wooden bowl filled with dry pinecones, acorn caps, or small green gourds.

Layer seasonal scents carefully: Scent is one of the fastest ways to change the mood of a home, but it should never feel overwhelming. Use beeswax or soy candles scented with subtle, natural notes like cedarwood, crushed cloves, dried amber, or sweet vanilla. Place one in the entryway and another near the fireplace to create a gentle, welcoming aroma as people walk through the front door.

Upgrade the Backyard Bonfire

When the afternoon sun dips low, October offers some of the best hours of the year to be outdoors. We all know to take advantage of seasonal favorites like corn mazes and pumpkin patches, but let's talk about ways to create your own experiences. You do not need to stand in line at a crowded farm to enjoy the crisp air. Instead, turn your own backyard or patio into a cozy hangout spot once dusk settles.

Build a better fire: Mix a few logs of aromatic wood, like cedar or cherry, into your pit along with regular hardwood. Throw a handful of dry pinecones, dried orange peels, or cinnamon sticks directly onto hot coals to create a sudden burst of flame and fill the yard with a rich, natural scent.

Set up an outdoor blanket station: Keep a clean galvanized metal tub or large woven basket near the back door filled with rolled-up fleece blankets and wool throws. Outdoor fires are much more relaxing when everyone can pull a heavy layer over their laps without having to wander inside to look for one.

Soft perimeter lighting: Turn off bright floodlights that wash out the night sky. Instead, wrap warm patio lights

around deck railings or place solar lanterns into garden beds surrounding the seating area. This soft perimeter lighting keeps the yard safe to walk through while keeping the main focus on the fire.

Keep feet warm: October ground gets cold quickly. Place an outdoor rug under chairs, or keep a small box of thick wool socks near the door for family members who like to linger outside after the fire dies down.

Elevate S'mores

Trade the graham crackers: Step up the basic marshmallow sandwich by swapping standard graham crackers for cinnamon cookies, Dutch stroopwafels, or thin salted butter cookies. Stroopwafels soften when warmed, making a rich treat.

Upgrade the chocolate: Skip standard milk chocolate bars and offer a few different options. Set out bowls with dark chocolate squares, peanut butter cups, or caramel-filled chocolate bars. The heat from a freshly roasted marshmallow melts caramel and peanut butter instantly.

Add fresh fruit and crunch: Sliced crisp apples, fresh berries, or salted pretzel snaps balance the sweet marshmallow and rich chocolate. A thin apple slice pressed inside a s'more adds a refreshing crunch that tastes like autumn in a single bite.

Roasting Tip: *Keep a small bowl of coarse sea salt nearby to sprinkle on top of melted chocolate for a salted-caramel flavor.*

Host a Neighborhood Soup Swap

Keep it simple: Invite four or five neighbors over on a chilly Sunday afternoon. Have each person bring a pot of their favorite homemade soup, stew, or chili, along with a stack of printed recipe cards to share.

Build a toppings bar: As the host, set out a table with small tasting bowls, spoons, and a big tray of fixings. Offer shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, chopped green onions, crispy bacon bits, and toasted pumpkin seeds so everyone can customize their bowls.

Provide the crusty sides: Supply two or three varieties of warm crusty bread, cornbread muffins, and fresh butter. Bread works as a great palate cleanser between sampling different soups and makes the meal feel complete.

Linger and trade: Everyone gets a small mug of each soup to taste while chatting around the kitchen counter or patio. Afterward, set out food containers so guests can trade leftover soup to take home for quick weekday lunches.

Stargaze on October Nights

Take advantage of clear skies: October brings some of the clearest, darkest night skies of the year before winter clouds set in. Download a free star-mapping app on your phone to easily locate major autumn star patterns like Pegasus and Cassiopeia right from your lawn.

Warm up the experience: Fill a heavy thermos with hot spiced tea, warm cider, or cocoa. Grab reclining lawn chairs or lay a thick tarp under heavy blankets to block damp grass, then sit back and enjoy the view.

Dim the lights: Turn off phone screens and indoor lights visible from the yard. Give your eyes fifteen minutes to fully adjust to the dark, and thousands of faint stars and passing satellites become visible in the quiet October sky.

Evening Fires & Gatherings









Tasteful Traditions





Fall changes the way we cook. The grill gets covered for the season, and the oven goes back to work. Cold-cut sandwiches become toasted, and soups are chosen over salads. Kitchens across the Valley start smelling like browned butter, cinnamon, and roasting squash. This is the season for slow meals, warm pans, and making the most of the autumn harvest. So stop by your local orchard, preheat the oven, and enjoy a fall palette of flavors.

The Great October Showdown: Apple vs. Pumpkin

Rustic apple galette: You do not need to master pie crust to make a great dessert. Roll out a sheet of store-bought dough onto a baking tray. Pile sliced apples gently tossed with sugar, lemon juice, cornstarch, cinnamon, ginger, salt, and vanilla in the middle of the dough, leaving a small border. Fold the edges inward over the fruit and bake at 400 degrees F for about 1 hour until golden. It looks handmade, tastes like classic pie, and takes ten minutes to prepare.

Apple & cheddar grilled cheese: Slice crisp apples paper-thin and layer them with sharp cheddar cheese between two thick slices of sourdough bread. Butter the outside of the bread and cook it slowly in a skillet over medium-low heat. Wait until the cheese is fully melted and the bread turns a deep golden brown. The sharp, salty cheese paired with the sweet, crunchy apples makes an ideal lunch on a windy afternoon.

One-bowl pumpkin chocolate chip muffins: Mix one can of plain pumpkin puree (not pie filling) with two eggs, 1/2 cup of vegetable oil, and 1 cup of sugar until smooth. Stir in 2 cups of flour, 1 teaspoon of baking soda, a dash of cinnamon, and a generous handful of chocolate chips. Scoop the batter into a muffin pan and bake at 350 degrees F for 20 minutes. They bake up soft and warm, making a quick morning grab before heading out the door.

Savory pumpkin sage pasta: Pumpkin does not only belong in sweet desserts. Stir 16 ounces of plain pumpkin puree (not pie filling) into warm heavy cream, melted butter, minced garlic, and a pinch of chopped sage. Toss with cooked rigatoni or penne, and top with parmesan cheese. It creates a thick, earthy sauce that turns a simple weeknight dinner into a cozy meal.

Sip & Simmer: Drinks That Warm the House

Slow-cooker spiced cider: Pour a gallon of fresh apple cider into a slow cooker. Drop in three cinnamon sticks, a few whole cloves, and half an orange cut into rounds. Set it on low heat. It warms everyone up after an afternoon outside and keeps a hot drink ready all day.

Stovetop autumn simmer pot: To fill your house with that seasonal scent without baking, fill a small saucepan with water. Add leftover apple peels, orange rinds, a cinnamon stick, and a splash of vanilla. Let it simmer on low heat, topping off the water as needed.

Quick Kitchen Tip: Keep a shallow bowl of squash and apples right on the kitchen counter. They act as a natural seasonal centerpiece until you are ready to cook them.



Celebrate & Savor

Bring Autumn Home

Our homes naturally beckon us indoors more often, becoming the warm, grounding heart of daily life. Preparing your sanctuary for the season is less about grand renovations or spending a fortune, and more about slow, deliberate touches that embrace the shifting amber light, the quiet hum of the evening, and the welcome chill in the air.

With just a few cozy, intentional adjustments, from welcoming displays on the front porch framed by rustic textures to soft, layered fabrics in the living room, you can cultivate an inviting, fireside atmosphere that cradles your family and guests through the golden weeks ahead. That way, when you are done visiting all the best falltime events and activities, a warm, welcoming comfort awaits back at home.

As the days grow shorter and the sun sits lower in the sky, we are reminded of just how fleeting this season really is. Tree-lined streets turn bright orange and gold, morning frost sparkles on the lawn, and the evening air carries that unmistakable scent of wood smoke. It is a brief, beautiful bridge between the busy rush of summer and the long quiet of winter. Calling this time of year the "Fall-idays" isn't just about a calendar date or a single holiday. It is a way of slowing down to notice and celebrate the small, everyday moments that make living here so special.

So take time to step outside and soak it all in. Pull on your favorite heavy sweater, take the scenic route home, and leave room in your week for an unhurried walk through the neighborhood. Step on a pile of dry leaves just to hear the crunch. Let the dinner dishes wait for a few extra minutes while you linger around the fire pit with friends. Autumn always passes by in a flash, but the warmth, comfort, and simple joys we build during these crisp weeks stay with us long through the cold months ahead.

The simplest ideas are often the ones that create the best memories. A hot mug of spiced cider shared on a quiet porch, a tray of elevated s'mores with family, or a peaceful evening spent stargazing under clear October skies can be more than enough to make the month feel like a celebration.

Stitched With Love

Family Inspiration Drives Sweetpea Designs LLC

By JACKIE SANDERS



Embroidery artist and graphic designer Baylee Manzanares was born and raised in Berlin, Wis., where her family ran not one, not two, but three small businesses. She often kept herself busy while her family worked, picking up useful skills from each relative. "I remember drawing on specialty papers at my grandfather's print shop, making 'maracas' out of found objects at my dad's bicycle repair shop, and sewing and woodworking at my other grandparents' furniture repair store," Baylee said. She started creating from the outset and developed a love for a variety of media.

Upon graduating high school, Baylee earned her degree in graphic communications from Moraine Park Technical College. In addition to her embroidery art, she is a full-time graphic designer at 4imprint in Oshkosh. She was introduced to sewing as a child. "My grandma taught me how to sew buttons on fabric and embroider when I was around 8 years old," Baylee told me. "I picked it up again in my early 20s when I had little spending money and wanted to make some Christmas presents on a budget instead of purchasing something for one of my sisters. This was a time in my life where I was struggling creatively and was trying just about everything to get those creative juices flowing again. Once I had started sewing again, the ideas didn't stop, and they still haven't 10 years later."

She went on to tell me, "The rhythmic sewing motion and the sounds of thread hitting stretched canvas are real, tactile, and calming after a day on the computer." With encouragement from her husband, Baylee turned her hobby into a small business, Sweetpea Designs LLC, in 2018, after accruing more embroidery pieces than she could find room for. Her background in the graphic arts has influenced her embroidery work, allowing her to recreate handwriting, architecture, and portraits for keepsakes and commissions.

Carrying on the tradition, Baylee's 2-year-old daughter is already picking up the needle and thread of this centuries-old art form. Baylee said her daughter is already a natural at it — needing very little help. Learning to sew has become a favorite activity to do together. Baylee hopes her daughter will experience growing up in a family business, just as she did as a child with her father and grandparents.

Baylee's family, as you can tell, has been a huge source of inspiration and support. She has already created her dream project: a huge 24-inch hoop for her daughter's nursery. Because of the long wait for their daughter, the piece represents their lives alongside her name.

In addition to creating art, Baylee loves reading. "As is evidenced by my many book-themed pieces," she said. "Oh, and drinking coffee. Have to have the coffee to do the things." Agreed Baylee, agreed!



Follow Baylee over on Instagram @sweetpeadesignsbybaylee or on Facebook at Sweetpea Designs LLC.



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NV NEWVoices Northeast Wisconsin Vocal Artists

Famous Names Come Together for Free Tornado Relief Event in Menasha

By JIM COLLAR



When the tornado touched down in Appleton and tore through the heart of Menasha on July 27, it left behind splintered trees, damaged homes, and shaken spirits. But in the days that followed, the silver lining appeared: Neighbors aided neighbors and friends reached out from near and far, seeking ways to help.

A couple of months have passed, but that spirit remains strong throughout the Fox Cities. It'll take center stage on Oct. 3, when downtown Menasha transforms into a walkable, daylong celebration of the community's resilience.

The public is invited to Rally for the Valley, a community-led event to generate support for the continuing tornado recovery effort. The rally will feature an incredible music lineup and comedy from Charlie Berens while raising money for three local nonprofit organizations. It's free to attend and aims to remind those rebuilding that they are not doing it alone.

The event was an idea of filmmaker and Neenah native Phil Johnston. It gained steam when Berens jumped in to help, along with Garbage drummer and famed record producer Butch Vig.

The premise was simple:

"Get a bunch of good friends together, put on a cool show and show up for a community that's hurting," Johnston said in a press release. "That's still what Rally for the Valley is about."

Johnston has an incredible group of good friends coming in to show their support.

The music lineup is stacked with national names and Wisconsin favorites, including Vig and Duke Erikson of Garbage, Soul Asylum, Fountains of Wayne, Max Collins of Eve 6, Cory Chisel, Freedy Johnston, Lolo, Kami, Rucksack Revolution, and Hang Ten.

But Rally for the Valley isn't simply a concert. It's a rally, a celebration, and an opportunity to show those affected that we have their backs.

Downtown Menasha will also host artists and makers, food and beverage vendors, family-friendly activities, community storytelling, and nonprofits sharing resources.

The event's organizing committee includes musicians, community organizers, and local leaders. They're asking attendees to make financial contributions directly to any of three local nonprofit partners that have addressed different aspects of tornado recovery.

LEAVEN supports emergency and basic needs; Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity focuses on home repair and long-term recovery; and Pillars works to ensure housing stability and shelter for those most affected.

Those who've experienced difficulties are encouraged to take advantage of the available support and to enjoy the performances. The event is offering complimentary $10 meal vouchers to those directly impacted and experiencing financial hardship as a result.

While admission is free, organizers encourage those planning to attend to RSVP at rallyforthevalleywi.com. The site also includes the schedule, donation links, a place for residents to share their stories, and more.

After experiencing such devastation, it's an important opportunity to come together.

The community's strength is worth celebrating, and the depth of the entertainment lineup highlights just how deep the support runs for those who experienced losses.

We've been reminded once again that community shines brightest in the darkest of moments.

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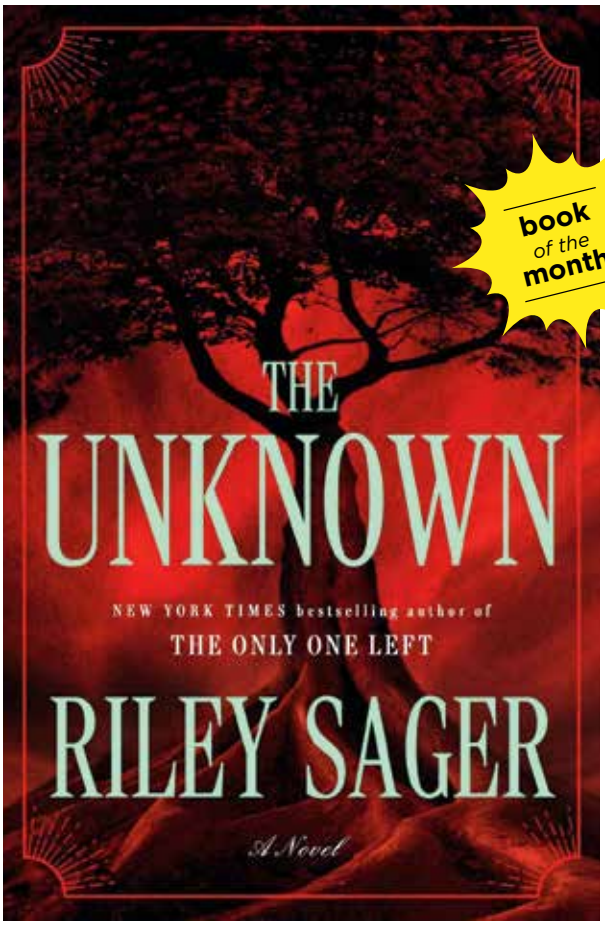
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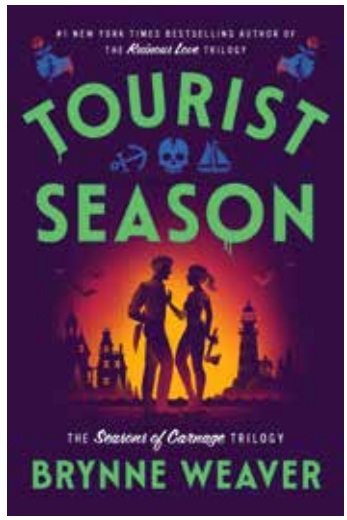
Riley Sager
The Unknown

When Riley Sager announced his new book, *The Unknown*, back in January, I preordered it faster than I have ever preordered a book before. Sager returns with his signature wit, suspense, and jaw-dropping twists in this thrilling story about an actress traveling to a notoriously haunted island for a character study. Marin is virtually unknown in Hollywood until she unexpectedly lands the lead role in a major motion picture. The young, eccentric director recommends that she and the star-studded cast travel to New Avalon and live like the women they're portraying. Cut off from society, Marin must rely on her instincts as her coworkers mysteriously begin to disappear.



Lucy Score
Fall into Temptation

Fall Into Temptation, the second book in the Blue Moon series, follows Gianna Decker, a newcomer to the small town who isn't looking for love. That changes when she meets her handsome landlord, Beckett Pierce, who is also the town mayor and her father's girlfriend's favorite son. With so many connections between them, avoiding each other seems nearly impossible. Their chemistry, spice, and an adorably rural setting make this novel an instant must-read!



Brynne Weaver
Tourist Season

Brynne Weaver has done it again. The queen of dark rom-coms returns with the first installment of a new trilogy with *Tourist Season*. Harper Sterling hates outsiders, despite living in Cape Carnage — the tourist town of all tourist towns. She spends her days fertilizing her flowerbeds with *particularly* troubling visitors. But when Nolan Rhodes shows up, intent on hunting down the person who'd killed his brother in a hit-and-run, all of Harper's murderous plans get uprooted. Soon the two find themselves forming an unlikely partnership as they work to stop a true-crime fanatic from unearthing their very bloody secrets.

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.*

V.E. Schwab
The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue

Addie LaRue has spent centuries being forgotten. In 1714, she struck a deal that allowed her to live forever. But immortality has a price: everyone she meets forgets her. She lives alone, traveling the world, until she meets a man who remembers her name.

Jeneva Rose
Home Is Where the Bodies Are

When estranged siblings Beth, Nicole, and Michael reunite after their parents' passing, they begin sorting through their belongings. They discover an old VHS tape showing their father covered in blood, while their mother helps him hide a body. Suddenly, everything they knew changes.

Crave
Tracy Wolff

After her parents' death, Grace moves to Alaska to attend Katmere Academy, which is run by her uncle. She soon realizes that there are monsters walking among her — vampires, werewolves, and dragons posing as everyday humans. But surviving her new school may be harder than she ever imagined.



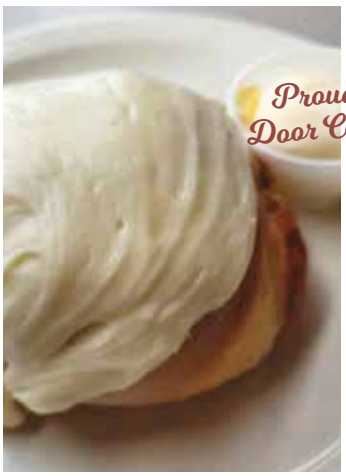
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THE GOOD GIFT GUIDE

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'Tis the season... as Appleton Monthly Magazine presents its annual **Holiday Gift Guide Issue.** Timely and far-reaching, this special holiday issue will showcase your products and goods being offered during this season of gift-giving for family and friends.

PLUS! We have hand-picked a variety of gifts that are sure to please everyone this holiday season. Gift cards are great stocking stuffers! **Join us at Appleton Monthly as we celebrate the holidays!**

AD DEADLINE IS MONDAY, OCTOBER 12TH

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

Appleton Monthly

Out AND about

TOP 10 REASONS TO FILL UP YOUR CALENDAR THIS MONTH

By SARAH PETERSON



1. FALL SHOP, SIP & STROLL WINE WALK

Spend a relaxing evening in downtown Appleton. Shop, sample wine, and enjoy prizes and fun activities with local retailers. All participants will receive a commemorative wine glass and a swag bag filled with goodies from participating retailers and sponsors! ***Oct. 1, 5-8 p.m.***

appletondowntown.org/events/shop-sip-stroll-wine-walk

2. HOWL-O-WEEN

Get festive with your dog at Howl-o-ween, featuring a canine costume contest, fall-themed games, and trick-or-treat activities. Owners must provide dog vaccination records to the office before the event. Register with Neenah Parks and Recreation. ***Oct. 3, 9-10:30 a.m. at Neenah Dog Park.***

futureneenah.org/event/howl-o-ween

3. RALLY FOR THE VALLEY

Take part in a free, community-led event bringing the Fox Cities together for a day of music, comedy, storytelling and giving — all in support of our community's ongoing recovery from the July 27 tornado. ***Oct. 3 in downtown Menasha.***

rallyforthevalleywi.com

4. FALL FESTIVAL WEEKENDS

Visit Schmalz Acres for not one but two weekends of fall family fun! Experience gourd tunnels and archways, live music, festive food, and local vendors. ***Oct. 3-4 and Oct. 10-11 in Kaukauna.***

facebook.com/Sprangers2025/events

5. SOUP WALK

Kick off the cozy fall season with the annual Downtown Appleton Soup Walk. Stroll down College Avenue and savor samples of delicious soups from participating businesses. Tickets required. ***Oct. 10, 1-4:30 p.m.***

appletondowntown.org/events/soup-walk

6. GLOW IN THE PARK

The seventh annual Glow in the Park features family-friendly Halloween magic with a high-energy dance party, trackless rides, food trucks, carnival games, and a scavenger hunt for all ages. Registration required. ***Oct. 16, 5:30-8 p.m. at Pierce Park in Appleton.***

parks.appletonwi.gov/programs_events/glow_in_the_park.php

7. TRUNK OR TREAT WELLNESS FESTIVAL

Celebrate Halloween the healthy way at the Motherhood Alliance Trunk or Treat Wellness Festival. Enjoy allergy-friendly treats, creative trunks, local wellness pros, food trucks, giveaways, and lots of family fun. ***Oct. 17, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Fox Valley Technical College north parking lot.***

facebook.com/events/826280810474688

8. HALLOWEEN ECLECTIC MARKET

Throw on your favorite costume, grab a drink, and shop a curated selection of spooky artists and makers including, BlueWitch, Feather Forge Pottery, Jelly-DonutCrafts, Ooky Oddities, StickerBun, The Flora Shelves, The Rolling Root, Wicked Waxes, and many more! ***Oct. 17, 12-5 p.m. at Appleton Beer Factory.***

facebook.com/EclecticMarketAppleton

9. ROMP IN THE SWAMP

Join the 33rd annual Romp in the Swamp, a family-friendly autumn festival featuring hayrides, a prairie maze, costume contests, and trick-or-treating. Proceeds support community education and conservation missions. ***Oct. 17, 2-7 p.m. at Bubolz Nature Preserve.***

bubolzpreserve.org/bubolz-events/romp-in-the-swamp

10. HALLOWEEN AT THE CASTLE

Visit the History Museum at the Castle for a day of spooky science. Learn about the plants and animals of Halloween, touch real skeletons, 'dissect' a pumpkin, and learn about bat biology. This event is free with museum admission, and kids in costume get 50% off. ***Oct. 24, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.***

myhistorymuseum.org/event/halloween-at-the-castle

WHY TAKING KIDS TO SEE LIVE THEATER MATTERS



In a world where screens and advertising compete for our children's attention, finding experiences that captivate their imaginations can feel like pumping quarters into an unwinnable video game (with yet another screen). But taking your child to see a live theater performance, according to Appleton parent Andy McNamara, is not like that.

"There's a lot of nonsense and distractions in what our kids see, but the theater offers something genuinely exciting," he explains. "It really keeps their focus. It's a chance for them to get lost in a great story, stunning sets or world-class acting right in front of their eyes. We've found it to be an experience that stays with them far longer than any screen ever could."

Making an Event of It

Introducing the next generation to the arts isn't something that needs to wait until they know what they might like. "Our son, Beckitt, is 9 and a half now, but we started bringing him to (the) Fox Cities P.A.C. when he was still in a stroller, just checking out events in the main lobby," Andy remembers. "It was something we were eager to introduce him to as he grew, and now we make every visit a big event in our family."

Sparking Creativity and Conversation

Apart from the action onstage, Andy and wife April have noticed that some of the most noteworthy takeaways only reveal themselves after they've left the theater. They recall a performance of Disney's *The Lion King*, where Beckitt was visibly shaken by Mufasa's death scene, which opened up a thoughtful discussion about the story's depth.

"It eased us into a bigger conversation in a pretty organic way," Andy recalls. "And it led to other conversations too, about different styles of storytelling, the practice and preparation that goes into theater, and how professionals plan ahead to keep things safe."

Creating Positive Impact on Mental Health

Laura Griffin of Appleton is a retired licensed marriage and family therapist. In her 35 years serving the mental health needs of our community, she saw a common, powerful thread between kids and the arts.

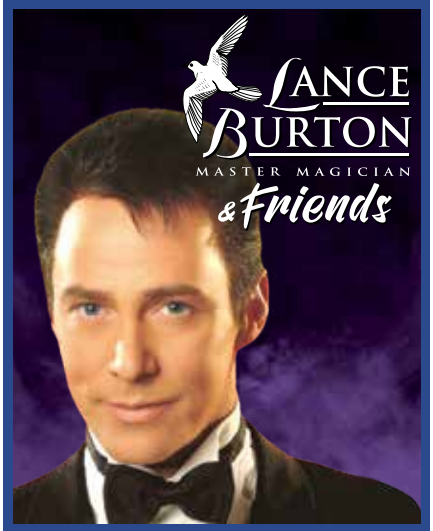
"Throughout my years of practice in behavioral health, one method and intervention I could often count on when working with kids was to use music and visual arts to break through," she remembers. "Much like drawing can do, taking them to see a performance, getting them involved and captivated by singing or dancing or storytelling, makes it easier for them to share their own thoughts and feelings."

Setting a Family Date to the Theater

The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center offers numerous titles throughout the year that are ideal for a parent or grandparent hoping to make a memory with the young theatergoer in their life. From magic to comedy to feats of athleticism, there is something for everyone during the 2026-27 Season. And as for Andy, April and Beckitt — well, you might find them a few seats over.

"We're incredibly lucky to have a venue that brings top-tier, family-friendly productions right to our backyard," Andy says. "And if you're on the fence about whether to take your kids to the theater, I just say, 'Take the leap.'"

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OCT. 30
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NOV. 15
4:00 P.M.

See the full season lineup at foxcitiespac.com

BOLDT Arts Alive! Series
MENASHA SPOTLIGHT SERIES

FALL IN LOVE WITH FALL













By PHYLLIS COLLAR

As temperatures drop and days get shorter, it's easy to feel a bittersweet nostalgia — but autumn in the Fox Cities brings a fresh wave of positive change and natural beauty. It's the perfect excuse to swap sandals for cozy sweaters. This season is resplendent with color, making it the ultimate opportunity to refresh your wardrobe. Walking through downtown Appleton right now feels like stepping into a living lookbook, with shop windows displaying a gorgeous palette of rich earth tones.

The biggest trend forecast for this season centers on a general abundance of chocolate browns, deep burgundies, and olive hues. These sophisticated shades are taking over everything from outerwear and clothing to accessories and home decor. According to the runways, autumn style boils down to effortless layering, relaxed silhouettes, Art Deco detailing, pleated skirts, and classic outerwear reimagined with a modern twist.

Statement outerwear is also having a major moment. Funnel-neck raincoats, dramatic capes, rugged anoraks, and classic leather jackets are taking center stage once again. To complete the look, footwear is shifting toward practical luxury with low kitten heels, classic ballet flats, and retro sneakers.

If you want to update your closet, local favorites have you covered:

Lillians of Appleton is the go-to spot for boxy button-downs, wide-leg jeans, and statement outerwear dominating the fall fashion scene.

lilliansofappleton.com

Olive & Rose Boutique is perfect for comfortable but contemporary, trend-forward apparel, including tailored dresses and structured shirts — a stylish nod to Harry Styles.

shopoliveandrose.com

Beatnik Bettys Resale Butik has a brilliant blend of vintage and modern aesthetics, offering classics like plush cashmere sweaters, double-breasted blazers, dropped waists, and silky slip dresses that give a subtle wink to *The Great Gatsby*. Each piece is one of a kind, so shop quickly!

beatnikbettys.com

Sugar Rushlow Boutique is the ultimate destination for statement gold accessories, cozy sweaters in every fall color, and perfect finishing touches such as purses, fragrances, and hats.

sugarrushlow.com

Chandelier Boutique offers high end, new and gently used clothing, shoes, purses, and its own line of jewelry, accessories, and sunglasses.

Follow Chandelier Boutique on Facebook.

Whether you are styling yourself or your family, this season offers endless inspiration to get you excited for the crisp weather ahead. Go ahead and fall in love with autumn!

Fall Family Photos



Contact us about our studio 'Fall Mini' Sessions ~ Starting at $350



30 Minute Session -
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DebbieDaanen PHOTOGRAPHY

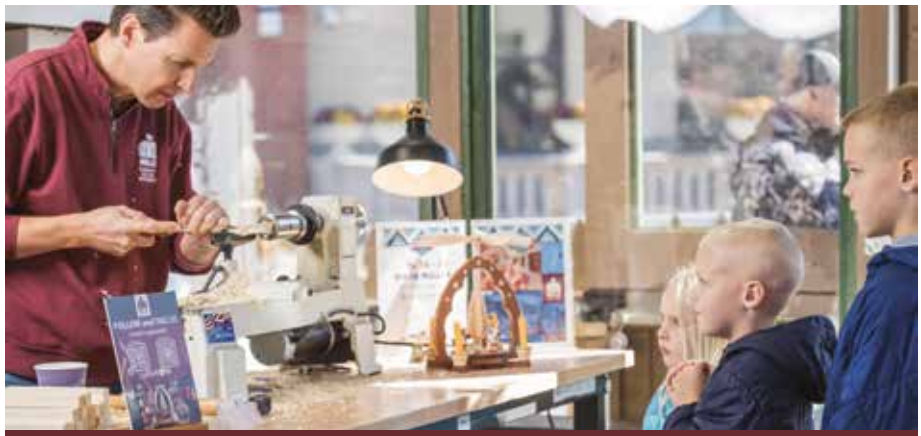
Image Makers: Debbie Daanen & Ashley Schmit

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Ringo Müller Visit & Live Demonstration
Oct. 23, 1pm–6pm | Oct. 24, 10am–2pm





We are honored to be hosting a visit by **Master Certified Wood Turner, Ringo Müller**, from Seiffen, Saxony, Germany. Ringo will be demonstrating the art of wood turning, creating small wooden trees, as used on many of the products that they produce in the Erzgebirge.

This fourth generation artisan creates his Christmas Pyramids, Candle Arches, Music boxes, Nutcrackers and Smokers.

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By NATASHA WINKLER

The Magic of the Twilight Walk

A quiet transformation happens across our neighborhoods every fall right around 4 or 5 o'clock. As daylight slips away early, our daily habits have an opportunity to pause for just a moment. Instead of immediately retreating indoors, many people step onto the pavement. The neighborhood sidewalk becomes a shared evening living room, and the simple act of taking a dusk walk turns into one of our richest community traditions.

In midsummer, outdoor life can feel fragmented. People often disappear into fenced backyards, head out to distant weekend events, or rush from air-conditioned cars straight inside. But autumn twilight brings us all an opportunity to head out onto the public sidewalk at the exact same hour. As the streetlamps hum to life along our residential blocks, our streets transform into spaces of genuine human connection, even if it is just a head nod or a gentle wave.

The true heart of these autumn walks isn't only found in the changing views and falling

Historic Streets: Old Third Ward & City Park Loops

If you prefer architectural charm and neighborhood warmth, few routes rival a loop through the Old Third Ward or the City Park Historic District in Appleton. Here, wide concrete sidewalks are framed by mature oaks and maples that form a fiery tunnel overhead. As dusk settles, warm light spills from wraparound porches, illuminating harvest displays of heirloom pumpkins and cornstalks. The human scale of these older neighborhoods, built long before cars dominated our commutes, makes them naturally inviting for pedestrians of all ages.

The Open Vista: The Trestle Trail

Just a short drive south in Fox Crossing, the Friendship State Trail bridge, known locally as the Trestle Trail, provides a completely different twilight experience. Stretching 1,600 feet across Little Lake Butte des Morts, it is the longest pedestrian trestle bridge in Wisconsin. Walking out over the water at dusk offers an unobstructed, 360-degree view of the autumn sky as it shifts from amber to deep violet. It is a popular gathering spot where fishermen,



temperatures, but in the simple, deliberate power of indirect connection.

When you pass a neighbor, whether a lifelong friend or a complete stranger, on a narrow sidewalk, there is a momentary, unspoken pause.

Often you look up, make direct eye contact, and exchange a friendly nod or a soft "good evening." In that split second, the invisible walls that usually separate us dissolve. That brief eye-to-eye recognition carries a clear message: I see you. We share this block. We are in this seasonal shift together.

Sociologists call these moments "micro-affirmations," the tiny, everyday interactions that remind us we belong to a real community. Seeing a neighbor leaning against a driveway fence, a fellow walker stepping aside with their dog, or a family pausing at their front gate creates an informal safety net. It breathes life into our most intimate public spaces: our neighborhoods. When we look each other in the eye in the fading light, we transform a row of house numbers into an active, supportive community.

Mapping the Local Twilight Routes

While a walk around your own block is the easiest place to start, Appleton and the surrounding Fox Cities are crisscrossed with incredible paths designed specifically for autumn exploration. As the early evening light hits the Fox Valley, a few key local routes offer front-row seats to the magic of the season. While I only mention a few here, a full list including an interactive map can be found at parks.appletonwi.gov/parks_trails/index.php.

The Riverfront Rhythm: Newberry Trail

For those who love the sound of moving water alongside autumn foliage, the Newberry Trail offers one of the best twilight stretches in the city. Winding along the south bank of the Fox River from Telulah Park toward downtown Appleton, this paved path connects our industrial history with natural beauty. In the late afternoon, the low sun hits the water, reflecting golden light against the historic paper mill brickwork and the changing canopy above. Walking this stretch at dusk offers a quiet, grounding look at the river that built our city. joggers, and evening strollers naturally cross paths under the glow of the bridge lights.

Quiet Woods: Veterans Memorial Park

For a more serene, nature-focused stroll without leaving city limits, the winding trail network at Veterans Memorial Park in Appleton provides a peaceful escape. Paved and crushed-limestone paths loop around the central pond and through wooded pockets. At twilight, the park slows down, offering a quiet space where you can hear the crunch of leaves underfoot and catch the cool breeze moving through the trees before heading home.

A Mindful Reset for Body and Mind

Beyond the social benefits and beautiful views, these twilight strolls offer a necessary mental reset. Modern life increasingly demands that we spend our days staring at bright screens, responding to notifications, and rushing through tightly packed schedules. By the time late afternoon arrives, our minds are often exhausted, even if our bodies have been sitting still all day.

Stepping outside into the crisp October air forces a gentle pause. The physical mechanics of walking, the steady, rhythmic movement of footsteps on pavement, help lower stress levels and clear mental fog. Breathing in the cool air and watching the evening sky transition provides a sensory transition between the demands of the workday and the restful space of home. It costs nothing, requires no special equipment, and is accessible to almost everyone.

Reclaiming the Evening

As winter approaches and the daylight continues to shrink, resist the urge to pull down the shades the moment the sun drops. Our instinct might be to retreat inside, but choosing to step out into the autumn air connects us to the living rhythm of our city.

Put on a warm sweater, step out onto your front walkway or head to a local trail, and keep your head up. Offer a warm glance and a nod to the person walking toward you. In the dimming hours of October, that simple moment of eye contact and that shared appreciation for our local paths might just be the warmest thing on the street.

Smile!

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



Trent Tetzlaff and his adorable son, Jordy, along with their pups Griffin and Onslow, **get ready to cheer on the green and gold!**



Staff from Badger Elementary School attend the **Welcome Back event at The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center.**

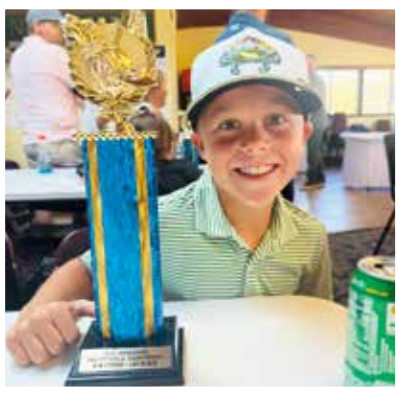
Photo by Appleton Area School District.



Bo, Marisa, and Micah Karll attend the 25th annual **Packers Family Night.**



Ean and Isaiah enjoy an ice cream treat after **attending a Milwaukee Brewers game.**



Hank Behlmer shows off his first-place trophy from the **parent-child golf tournament at Winagamie Golf Course.**



Appleton East dance and cheer teams **kick off the football season with high energy!**

Photo by Appleton East Dance

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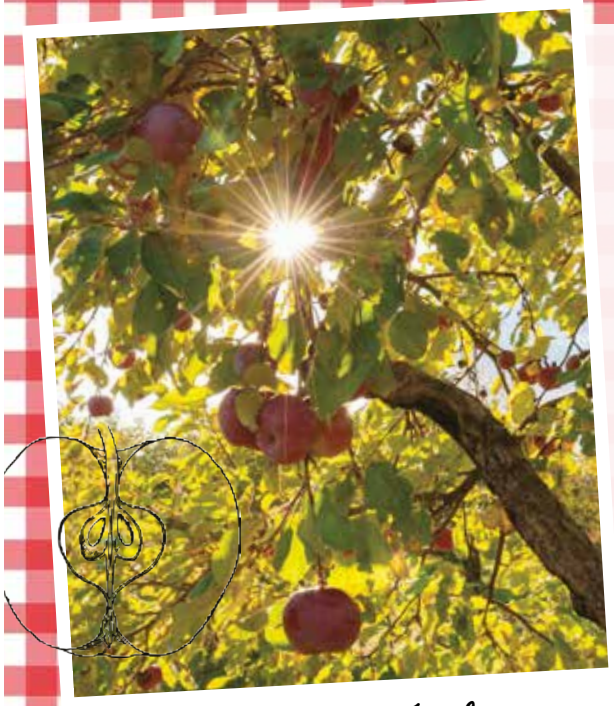
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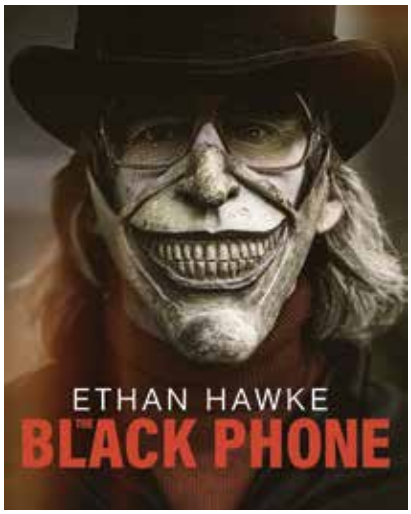
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THE BLACK PHONE

(HORROR 2021)

STARRING: MASON THAMES (FINNEY) & ETHAN HAWKE (THE GRABBER)



Thirteen-year-old Finney is abducted by a masked killer known as "The Grabber." He is locked in a sound-proof basement with a bed, a toilet, and a phone with no power. Left all alone, he is scared that he isn't going to ever see the outside world again. All of a sudden, the phone with no power rings. Hesitant at first, Finney picks up after a few rings. It's the voice of the Grabber's last victim, and he is determined to help Finney so he doesn't face the same fate. A shimmer of hope comes across Finney's face. Maybe with the help of the victims' spirits, he will be the first to escape.

THE LAST HOUSE

(HORROR/SCI-FI 2026)

STARRING: GRETA LEE (ANN) & WAGNER MOURA (JASON)



If you were stuck in your house with only what you have right now, how long could you survive? For this family of four, that's exactly what they are about to find out. On a random rainy day, they find themselves with no way out of their house. The doors won't open, the windows are stuck, and whenever they try to break down a wall, the rain creates a protective barrier that keeps them from leaving. They discover they aren't the only ones, but see that all their neighbors are also stuck inside. Days turn into weeks, and weeks turn into months. How long will they be able to survive with only what they have in their house, and what kind of sorcery is keeping them in?

COUNTDOWN

(HORROR/SUSPENSE 2019)

STARRING: ELIZABETH LAIL (QUINN)

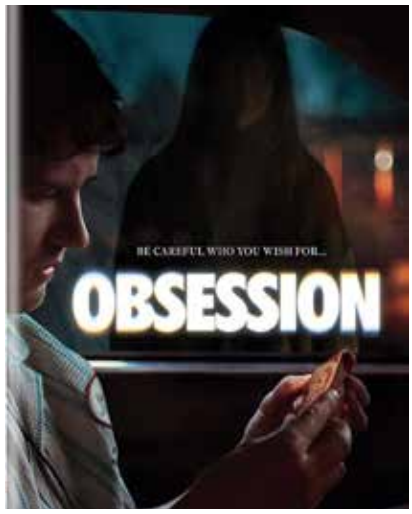


Ever wonder when you are going to die? A new app called Countdown tells you when you will take your last breath. Quinn, being a nonbeliever in the app, breaks under peer pressure and downloads it. While many others who downloaded the app still have years to live, she gets only three days. Still believing it is fake, she doesn't think much about it — that is, until she is stalked by a domestic demon. Now every second counts if she is going to save her life before the timer counts down to zero.

OBSESSION

(HORROR 2026)

STARRING: MICHAEL JOHNSTON (BEAR) & INDE NAVARRETTE (NIKKI)



Bear has a secret crush on his friend Nikki but is too timid to tell her. Instead, he makes a wish on a super-natural One Wish Willow that is said to grant anyone only one wish. Not thinking that it will actually work, he wishes Nikki loved him more than anything in the world. To his surprise, the wish comes true, and everything he ever wanted falls right into his lap. However, his wish ends up being taken to the extreme, and now Nikki is starting to scare him and act completely out of the ordinary.

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

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ASK TAMMI

Got questions for Tammi?

ASK TAMMI: About 15 years ago, I had a falling out with one of my best friends. It was over nothing — at least that's what it seems like now. We have recently started texting each other. She has invited me to meet up with her when I travel to the area. I am worried too much time has passed for us to get together. How should I handle this situation? — ***Peggy L.***

DEAR PEGGY: You may have needed this time apart to move past whatever caused the divide. I see no reason why you shouldn't connect with her in person. However, try not to expect too much from this meeting. It's been a long time, and it might take time to reconnect to the level your friendship was years ago. Hopefully, the negative parts of the past will stay in the past, and you can start a fresh relationship with an old friend. I wish you the best of luck.



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



ASK TAMMI: We are invited to a wedding this fall. The invitation lays out very long, specific details on how guests are expected to dress, down to the color of clothes. I really want to attend, but I feel they are taking the instructions a bit too far. What should I do? — ***Lucy B.***

DEAR LUCY: Well, you can always decline the invitation. We have to assume the bride has a good reason for her specific requests. Although I do think weddings in general have gotten a little extravagant (destination bridal showers, traveling to Europe for bachelor parties, themes that require special clothing, etc.), it is a big day for the couple. They get to determine how they want to remember it for the rest of their lives. My best advice is to decide whether you want to accept the invitation, and then to be happy with that decision. If you decide to attend, follow the invitation specifics.

ASK TAMMI: The holidays are just around the corner. How can I keep my spending to a reasonable amount? — ***Parker C.***

DEAR PARKER: You need to start planning now. It is as simple as that! Make a list of everyone you plan to buy a gift for, and decide how much you want to spend on each person. If the total is more than you budgeted, find the best areas to cut back. Purchase your gifts early so you can more easily find what you want and hopefully avoid impulse purchases later in the season. I have found that one of the most appreciated gifts I give is my time: baking something for a friend, sharing coffee or lunch, or doing an activity we both enjoy.







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Shop for Hidden Treasures

Neighborhood Gem Offers Beauty and Charm

By KATIE CARLSON

Lisa Gavronski and her husband have been running the Appleton shop, Cedar Harbor, for more than a decade. After working in the corporate world, Lisa decided it was time to simplify and took a leap of faith to open the now-thriving neighborhood business. For her, it doesn't feel like work — it is her true passion.

The shop has evolved into an eclectic mix of old and new, offering local art, reclaimed pieces, carefully selected home goods, one-of-a-kind handmade items, and thoughtful gifts. Tucked away in a residential neighborhood, the historic building once served as a local meat market. The storefront welcomes visitors with its small-town vibes, and the interior is warm and homey. Customers can enjoy browsing through endless treasures in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

Lisa's creativity shines in her regular shop refreshes — curating displays and introducing new items. She also creates many of the items herself. With the arrival of fall, shoppers can expect to find unique seasonal and Halloween signs and decor, lifelike florals and greenery, the ever-popular wooden DCUK ducks, scented candles, eye-catching paintings, and many pieces in beautiful fall colors.

Cedar Harbor
611 N. Morrison St., Appleton
cedarharborwi.com





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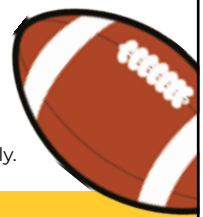
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DON'T GET SPOOKED BY SCARY SPORTS POSSIBILITIES

By TIM FROBERG

October has arrived, and with it comes gorgeous sunsets, beautiful fall leaves, and TERROR!!

That's right, terror. We celebrate Halloween this month, and it's a fun, spooky season where we dress in costumes, trek slowly through (fake) haunted houses, tell ghost stories, and do our best to scare the daylights out of friends and family.

Yes, there is a lot of scary stuff out there, especially in the sports world. Here's what scares me the most.

The ACL injury Micah Parsons is dealing with. It will be devastating for the Packers if Parsons isn't Parsons upon his eventual return and further proof that this franchise has been cursed. As much as they need Parsons in their lineup, the Packers must be extremely careful to avoid a David Bakhtiari repeat.



I'm at the starting line of the Indianapolis 500, revving up my engine, eyeing my opponents and driving my 2021 Subaru Forester.

The rebuilding task ahead for the Milwaukee Bucks: I'm not saying that trading Giannis was a terrible move, but man, this is going to take time. There are so many moving parts and so much youth. How is this team going to learn how to win when it's just learning how to shave?

Jacob Misiorowski being linked to the dreaded words "Tommy John." That would make all Milwaukee Brewers fans Miz-er-able.

Caleb Williams. He scares the heck out of me, especially when he has the ball in his hands at crunch time against the Packers.

The possibility that Jordan Morgan can't handle the left tackle spot and a freeway opens to Jordan Love.

Any injury to Love. As a Packers fan, you either believe in Love, or you don't. I'm a believer and feel he's capable of taking his team deep into the postseason. Things could get dicey in Titletown without Love or Malik Willis under center.

The future of Major League Baseball. With the collective bargaining agreement expiring after this season, there will almost certainly be a strike in 2027. The owners want a desperately needed salary cap, and a strong players' union wants no part of that. This will get ugly and then uglier. If there is an actual 2027 season, that will be a win for the fans.

Tarik Skubal's future contract. Skubal wants to become the first pitcher in baseball to land a contract worth $400 million or more, and he'll likely get it. Don't get me wrong. Skubal is a fine pitcher. But the guy will be 30 years old next season, had arthroscopic elbow surgery earlier this year, has shown diminished fastball velocity, and seldom pitches over six innings in starts.

It's 2035, and flag football has replaced tackle football in the NFL. Rules include penalties for breathing within 10 yards of the quarterback and pass interference for contesting any ball in the air.

It's 2040, and pickleball has surpassed football as America's most-watched sport. The Super Bowl has been replaced by the Super Pickle.

I find myself in a *Twilight Zone*-type loop where I'm forced to repeatedly watch Brandon Bostick botch the onside kick in the 2014 NFC Championship Game.

Giannis celebrates his 40th birthday by leading Miami to its ninth straight NBA title.

The Packers' logic in allowing kicker Brandon McManus to collect a $1 million roster bonus in early March, only to release him less than two months later.

The current state of college sports. Is any high-level sports organization more screwed right now than the NCAA? It's supposed to be amateur, but who exactly is running college sports right now? The Los Angeles Dodgers? Heck, the Wild, Wild West was pretty tame stuff compared to the powerless NCAA, which hasn't been able to control Name-Image-Likeness and the transfer portal, leading to a serious lack of stability and structure in major sports. I don't hate the fact that athletes are getting paid, but aren't they also getting a free college education with a price tag of well over $100,000?



***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

FAB FAVES | CARLY'S PASTRIES | BEER & BREWING | EATING & DRINKING

HOLE LOTTA Bagel love 'em Recipes

Five delicious sweet and savory ways to transform a simple bagel into a tasty masterpiece.

By CARLY CERNIGLIA

A HOLE Lotta Bagels



By CARLY CERNIGLIA

Bagels are beloved for their versatility and satisfyingly chewy texture, making them a staple for any meal. From classic combinations like smoked salmon and cream cheese to seasonal twists like a pumpkin bagel with honey walnut cream cheese, we're rolling out five delicious ways to serve a bagel! This lineup features both sweet and savory options, each bringing a unique spin to the table. If you've never tried making your own bagel sandwich, now is the perfect time to have a HOLE lotta fun with toppings. Discover how a simple bagel can become the centerpiece of a hearty breakfast, a quick lunch, or even a showstopping alternative to a traditional dinner.



BAGELS

SMOKED SALMON EVERYTHING BAGEL

This Smoked Salmon Everything Bagel is the most showstopping of them all with its gorgeous cold-smoked salmon, bright red onions, and a smattering of fresh green dill sprigs. The bold flavors and rich colors make every bite as stunning as it is delicious.





Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

One everything bagel

2 ounces cold-smoked salmon

4 tablespoons cream cheese

4 slices fresh tomato

Sliced red onion

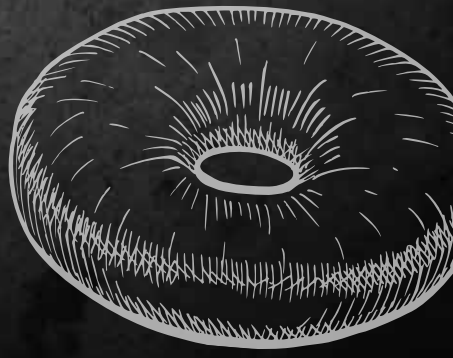
Fresh dill sprigs

Capers

Everything bagel seasoning

Directions:

Slice the bagel in half lengthwise and lightly toast. On the sliced side of each half, spread 2 tablespoons of cream cheese. Then top each half with 1 ounce of smoked salmon, two tomato slices, red onion, dill, and capers. Sprinkle with everything bagel seasoning. Enjoy!



THE ULTIMATE BREAKFAST BAGEL

Looking for something a bit more hearty? The Ultimate Breakfast Bagel is where it's at! Perfect for getting your day off to a good start, the sunny-side-up egg breaks deliciously over the whole thing, creating a sandwich you won't want to put down!

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

One plain bagel

2 tablespoons goat cream cheese (or fresh chèvre)

2 slices fresh tomato

Balsamic glaze

1 tablespoon pesto

Salt and pepper to taste

One egg, sunny-side up

Directions:

Slice the bagel in half lengthwise and lightly toast. On the sliced side of the bottom half of the bagel, spread pesto and goat cream cheese. Top with tomato slices, salt, and pepper. Cook your egg sunny-side up and place it on top of the tomato. Drizzle with balsamic glaze. Add the top half of the bagel and enjoy!





PROSCIUTTO & GRUYERE EGG-IN-A-HOLE BAGEL

While we're cracking eggs, why not try the Prosciutto and Gruyere Egg-in-a-Hole Bagel? Four ingredients were never so delicious! The runny yolk, melted cheese, and salty prosciutto tucked inside a toasted bagel make this recipe an instant favorite for any meal.

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

One poppy seed bagel

2 slices Gruyère cheese

2-4 slices prosciutto

Two eggs

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Slice the bagel in half lengthwise and place it sliced-side down on a Silpat-lined baking sheet. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Place a slice of cheese over each bagel hole. Layer two slices of prosciutto on top of the cheese and press down to make little wells for the eggs. Crack an egg into each well. Sprinkle it with salt and pepper. Bake for 12-18 minutes, until the egg is done to your liking. Enjoy!

BAGEL FACT

THE HOLE: THE CENTER HOLE INCREASES THE SURFACE AREA, ALLOWING THE DOUGH TO COOK EVENLY AND FORM A BETTER CRUST.





PUMPKIN BAGEL WITH HONEY WALNUT CREAM CHEESE

Nothing welcomes fall like this Pumpkin Bagel with Honey Walnut Cream Cheese. Homemade candied walnuts are the perfect addition to this sweet sandwich. The honey walnut cream cheese also pairs well with cinnamon raisin, plain, or strawberry bagels!

Makes enough for at least 4 bagels

Ingredients:

For the honey walnut cream cheese:

8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature

1/4 cup honey

1/2 cup candied walnut pieces

For the candied walnuts:

16 ounces walnut pieces

One egg white

1 tablespoon vanilla paste

1/2 cup sugar

2 teaspoons cinnamon

Pumpkin bagels

Directions:

For the candied walnuts:

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk egg white until light and foamy. Whisk in sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla paste. Stir in walnuts until evenly coated. Pour onto an ungreased baking sheet and spread out evenly. Bake for 15 minutes. Stir. Bake an additional 15-20 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until walnuts are dry. Remove from the oven and let cool completely. Transfer to an airtight container and store at room temperature for up to two weeks.

For the honey walnut cream cheese:

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add honey and mix until incorporated. Add candied walnut pieces and stir.

Spread on a toasted pumpkin bagel half, and top with more candied walnuts and a drizzle of honey. Enjoy!

DELICIOUS





REUBEN BAGEL

Rounding out our lineup is the Reuben Bagel: a circular twist on the classic Reuben sandwich. Filled with the trending chopped bagel cream cheese and loaded with corned beef and a zippy mustard kraut, this pumpernickel bagel is irresistible!

Makes 4 bagels

Ingredients:

Four pumpernickel bagels

For the Reuben cream cheese:

8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature

1 teaspoon ketchup

1 teaspoon pickle relish

1/4 teaspoon onion powder

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 cup Swiss cheese, minced (about 4 slices)

2 cups corned beef, minced (about 1/2 pound)

For the mustard kraut:

1 cup well-drained sauerkraut

4 tablespoons spicy brown mustard

Directions:

For the Reuben cream cheese:

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add ketchup, relish, onion powder, garlic powder, and black pepper, and mix until combined. Stir in Swiss cheese and corned beef. Set aside.

For the bagel:

In a small bowl, stir together mustard and kraut. Set aside.

Warm the pumpernickel bagels, then slice in half lengthwise. Add a generous layer of Reuben cream cheese to the sliced side of the bottom halves. Top each with mustard kraut. Top with the remaining bagel halves. Enjoy!

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Fab Faves



Mulled Cider

Cozy up with a classic, comforting cup of traditional mulled cider.

By SARAH PETERSON

Nothing captures the cozy magic of fall quite like a warm mug of mulled cider. This comforting tradition dates back to ancient Britain, where it evolved from "wassail" — a spiced, heated ale or cider shared during cool-weather gatherings to toast good health and fruitful harvests. As autumn leaves turn, brewing a batch fills the home with the rich, inviting aroma of cinnamon, cloves, and citrus. Its enduring charm lies in this sensory ritual, offering a slow, nostalgic transition into the colder months and instantly bringing people together.

Makes 16 servings

Ingredients:

One gallon fresh apple cider

One large orange, sliced into rounds

Four whole cinnamon sticks

1 tablespoon whole cloves

1 tablespoon whole allspice berries

Three whole star anise pods

2 tablespoons pure maple syrup or
packed brown sugar (optional, for extra sweetness)

Directions:

Pour the apple cider into a large stockpot or Dutch oven. Add the orange slices, cinnamon sticks, cloves, allspice, and star anise.

Place the pot over medium heat and bring it to a very gentle simmer. Do not let it boil, as boiling can make the cider cloudy and alter the flavor.

Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let everything steep for 20-30 minutes so the spices can fully infuse. Taste the cider and stir in the maple syrup or brown sugar if desired. Turn off the heat, strain out the fruit and whole spices, and ladle the warm drink into mugs.

To Store:

Let the strained cider cool to room temperature, then pour into an airtight container or pitcher. Store in the refrigerator for 5-7 days.

To reheat, pour a single serving into a microwave-safe mug and heat on high for 60-90 seconds. For a larger batch, heat in a saucepan over low heat for 10-15 minutes or until hot, being sure not to let it boil.

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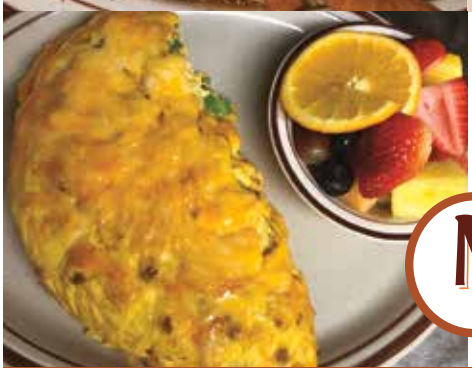
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Magical Pumpkin Bars

By CARLY CERNIGLIA



These delicious Magical Pumpkin Bars are the perfect dessert for fall and spooky season! The cinnamon cookie crust, smooth pumpkin filling, and caramelized sweetened condensed milk meld together to create pure magic in every bite.

Ingredients:

For the crust:

1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
2/3 cup light brown sugar
2 pinches of salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 cups flour

For the filling:

2 cups pumpkin pie filling
14 ounces sweetened condensed milk

1 cup butterscotch chips
1 cup toffee bits
2 cups pecans

Directions:

Line a 9-by-13-inch sheet pan with foil. Spray with non-stick cooking spray. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream butter, sugar, salt, and cinnamon until fluffy. Mix in flour until combined. Spread evenly over the sheet pan, pressing down evenly. Bake for 18 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oven.

Spread 2 cups of pumpkin pie filling evenly over the baked crust. Pour the sweetened condensed milk evenly over the pumpkin pie filling, avoiding the edges. In a medium bowl, mix butterscotch chips, toffee bits, and pecans. Sprinkle mixture evenly over the sweetened condensed milk. Gently pat down.

Tip: *You don't want the sweetened condensed milk to spillover and make a mess in your oven! If it is too close to the edge of the pan, you can tilt up the edges of your tinfoil to help hold it in.*

Bake for 34-40 minutes until sweetened condensed milk is golden and bubbling. Remove from the oven and let cool completely. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Cut into bars. Store leftovers in the refrigerator. Enjoy!

Where Does Malt Come From?

By STEVE LONSWAY

October is a beautiful time in Wisconsin. The trees turn glorious colors, the fallen leaves crunch and crackle under your feet, the air cools, and the Oktoberfest-style beers are abundant.

Oktoberfest beers are very popular, and one of the four ingredients that is influential in this style is barley malt. But where does malt come from?

Barley is grown in many parts of the world, and the portions intended for the beer industry are brought to malt houses that scientifically, yet naturally, manipulate the grain so a brewer can use it to make beer. As a craft brewer myself, I am very fortunate to have one of the most craft-influential malt houses right in our backyard.

150 years ago, a Czechoslovakian man named Ignatius Briess built a malthouse in his homeland to process grain for the brewing industry and exported his products to other countries. He quickly gained a strong reputation for producing quality malts throughout the world. By 1894, the company transitioned to Rudolf Briess, who continued the family traditions but also added ingredients for the baking industry.

Meanwhile, in Chilton, a group of businessmen built the Chilton Malting Company, which created jobs and gave local farmers a place to sell their barley.

In the 1930s, the third generation of Briess maltsters, Eric Briess, immigrated to the United States with the intention of strengthening the family business in a more stable economy. In the 1950s, he began a relationship with the Chilton Malting Company and implemented improvements that increased capacity and expanded the mix of products. The next decade was dedicated to adding equipment and increasing capacity. In 1971, after Eric passed away, the company transitioned to the fourth generation, Roger Briess. Roger's vision focused on American craft beer growth rather than relying on exports. In 1978, the family acquired Chilton Malting Company and renamed it Briess Malting Company. The 1980s and 1990s focused primarily on product innovation and capacity growth. This was established with the acquisition of a malting facility in Waterloo, Wis. Unfortunately, Roger passed away in 2001. His wife, Monica, took the lead. The company continued to focus on new product development and acquisitions, including an elevator and seed plant in Wyoming. This allowed them to solidify their barley supply. In 2014, they acquired the old Budweiser malting facility in Manitowoc, which allowed them to drastically increase production and continue their path of market innovations. In 2021, Craig Briess was named the company's CEO and officially became the fifth-generation maltster.

Today the legacy continues. Briess Malt & Ingredients Company is a revolutionary company that not only withstood the rapid growth of the craft brewing industry, but was a key contributor to its path of success.

Congratulations for 150 years to a great craft beer partner; I raise my pint…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.*



Photo: brewingwithbriess.com

Monster Mash Martini

Get ready to thrill your guests with this frightful Monster Mash Martini, a delightfully spooky cocktail perfect for any Halloween gathering. This eerie drink features icy, tart green apple contrasted by a sweet, dripping "bloody" rim and creepy gummy eyeball garnishes. Drink if you dare!



DRINK

By SARAH PETERSON

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 ounces vodka or gin
1/3 ounce sour apple schnapps
2 ounces sweet-and-sour mix
Crushed ice

For bloody rim and garnish:

3 tablespoons corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon red food coloring
Gummy eyeballs
Cocktail picks

DIRECTIONS

Mix the corn syrup and red food coloring on a shallow plate. Dip the rim of your martini glass into the mixture, then turn the glass right side up and let the red syrup slowly drip down the sides.

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add the vodka, sour apple schnapps, and sweet-and-sour mix.

Shake vigorously until chilled. Carefully strain the green liquid into your prepared martini glass over crushed ice.

Pierce two gummy eyeballs with your cocktail picks and rest them across the rim or place them directly inside the glass.

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EAT

Downtown Appleton's newest pizzeria, Tomaso's, brings its legendary Cedarburg pizza tradition and welcoming atmosphere to Washington Street near Fox Commons. Celebrated for its thin-crust and Chicago-style deep-dish pizzas — featuring cheese beneath the toppings — Tomaso's uses only the freshest ingredients. Their secret-recipe sauce, made exclusively in Cedarburg and shipped directly to Appleton, protects the restaurant's storied legacy. Beyond pizza, guests can enjoy a full bar, convenient lunch specials, and a range of other menu offerings including fresh salads, sandwiches, pastas, appetizers, and desserts. With options for dine-in, carryout, and par-baked or frozen pizzas to enjoy at home, Tomaso's delivers bold flavors and classic Wisconsin quality in every bite.

Life

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Healthy Starts Here!

Discover how small, realistic changes in diet, movement, and sleep can jumpstart a healthy lifestyle.

By ANGELA HALDERSON

Healthy Starts Here

By ANGELA HALDERSON

What if becoming healthier didn't require a complete overhaul of your life?

What if it started with a few simple choices you could make today — what you put on your plate, how you move your body, when you go to bed, and what you keep in your kitchen? We are constantly bombarded with messages about the newest diet, supplement, or wellness trend, making healthy living seem complicated or even unattainable. Good health isn't built on perfection. It starts with the everyday choices that nourish your body, support your mind, and fit into your real life. Let's look at a few foundational places where health really starts.

What Does "Healthy" Really Mean?

We use the word healthy all the time: that looks healthy, it says "healthy" on the box, she looks healthy — but what does healthy actually mean? Being healthy doesn't look the same for everyone, and you can't determine it by a number on the scale, a clothing size, or how someone or something looks.

A smaller body isn't automatically healthier, just as a larger body isn't automatically unhealthy. Someone can appear fit while struggling with high blood pressure, high blood sugar, poor sleep, or chronic stress. Likewise, someone may be working toward better health without their appearance changing at all.

Health is much more than what we see on the outside. It encompasses how well your body functions, how you feel physically and mentally, how well you recover from daily demands, and your ability to participate in the things that matter to you.

And because we are all different, health will look different for each of us.

Your age, genetics, physical abilities, lifestyle, environment, sleep patterns, stress levels, medical history, medications, and nutritional needs all influence what your body requires to function at its best. What supports one person's health may not be appropriate — or even realistic — for someone else.

Our nutritional needs also change throughout our lives. The foods and habits that supported you in your 20s may not be what your body needs in your 40s, 50s, or beyond. Pregnancy, menopause, aging, illness, medications, and other life circumstances can all change what your body needs.

Even our lifestyles and circumstances play a role. Shift workers have different sleep patterns and nutritional needs than someone who works a traditional daytime schedule. Someone taking a GLP-1 medication for weight management also needs specialized nutritional support to ensure they are consuming enough protein, fiber, fluids, and essential nutrients. If you've been told to prepare meals (but can't cook), work out six days at the gym (while juggling work and childcare), or follow a strict sleep schedule to improve your health, it may not be sustainable, and making a healthy change can feel impossible.

Instead of scrolling through the internet and listening to people tell you what they do to be "healthy," it may be more helpful to ask, "What does healthy look like for me right now?"

Achieving health isn't about achieving perfection. It's about understanding your individual needs and making choices that support your body, your circumstances, and the life you want to live.



Healthy Starts in the Kitchen

One of the simplest places to begin improving your health is in your kitchen. Everyone has to eat; food is medicine, so let's make sure you are eating the right type of medicine. Not only is food medicine, but I also like to think of it as information. Put the right type of information into your body, and your body will act accordingly. You don't need a complicated diet, expensive "superfoods" (hint: there is no such thing as a "superfood"; it is just a marketing term used to influence you to buy things), or a counter full of supplements. Start by building meals around nutrient-dense, minimally processed foods that provide your body with the protein, fiber, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and fluids it needs.

Prioritize Protein

Protein is an essential building block for muscle, bones, enzymes, hormones, immune function, and many other bodily processes. Protein tells the body to be strong, build muscle, and lose weight. Protein has very little to no impact on blood sugar (more on that later). If you want to be healthy, make sure you eat enough protein. A general protein target of 1.2-1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight per day can be used for someone who is height-to-weight proportionate. If you want to know how much protein is adequate for you and your personal needs, reach out to Strong Meridian, because, yes … you got it, everyone's needs are a bit different.



Lean proteins include chicken, turkey, fish and seafood, eggs, lean beef, and lean pork. Plant-based options include beans, lentils, peas, tofu, tempeh, nuts, seeds, and other legumes. Have protein at every meal.

Make Vegetables the Foundation

Vegetables provide fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Non-starchy vegetables should take up half your plate at meals. Some choices are broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, green beans, zucchini, mushrooms, peppers, cucumbers, leafy greens, cabbage, and tomatoes.

Don't feel like vegetables have to mean a boring salad. Roast them with olive oil and herbs, add them to soups and stir-fries, sauté them with eggs, or keep washed and chopped vegetables available for quick meals. I like to prepare a large batch all at once and just reheat as needed throughout the week to save time.

Don't Forget Healthy Fats

Fat is essential for a healthy diet. It provides energy, supports cell membranes and hormone production, and helps your body absorb fat-soluble vitamins. Fat tells our body to be full and satiated. Fats also have no effect on blood sugar, so they don't signal the body to gain weight. (Yes, any foods eaten in excess will cause weight gain, so watch your portions.)

Healthy fats can easily be incorporated into meals through foods such as avocados, olives, olive oil, nuts, seeds, eggs, dairy, and omega-3-rich fish such as salmon, sardines, and trout.

Choose Whole, Minimally Processed Foods

You don't have to eliminate every packaged food from your diet to be healthy. Frozen vegetables, canned beans, plain yogurt, canned tuna, and other convenient foods like jerky, protein bars, and whole-grain crackers can absolutely be part of a healthy diet.

The bigger goal is to make whole, minimally processed foods the foundation of your meals while reducing your reliance on highly processed foods that are often high in added sugars, refined carbohydrates, sodium, and other ingredients that lead to weight gain, high blood sugar, and illness.

Stay Hydrated

Hydration is another simple place to start. Water supports virtually every system in the body, including digestion, circulation, temperature regulation, detoxification, and physical performance. To burn fat, the body needs water. To calculate your water needs, divide your current weight in pounds by two. This is approximately how many ounces of water a person needs in a day. Kidney disease, congestive heart failure, and other health concerns change these needs.

Keep a water bottle nearby and remember that your fluid needs can change with activity, weather, illness, and other individual factors. If your water contains caffeine, it is not hydrating.

Why Blood Sugar
Matters

Blood sugar is so much more than a number on a lab report. Glucose is one of the body's primary energy sources. When blood sugar is well regulated, it supports consistent energy, focus, and mood throughout the day.

When blood sugar rises quickly and then falls, people can experience fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, or increased hunger. This can contribute to snacking, midday fatigue, and feeling "hangry." When this cycle continues long enough, it leads to prediabetes and weight gain.

Blood Sugar and Long-Term Health

People want to watch blood sugar for long-term health. Chronically elevated blood glucose and insulin resistance are associated with metabolic problems, including prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, elevated triglycerides, and other health complications. Starchy foods and sugar tell the body to gain weight. They do this by causing insulin to be released into the bloodstream. This insulin then stores those starches and sugars to be used later for energy. In excess, that means they are stored as fat. Because starches and sugary foods and beverages are broken down quickly in the body and used for energy quickly, they also signal the body to eat more. This leads to food noise and cravings.

Snacks and meals filled with breads, potatoes, pastas, granola bars, cereal bars, chips, sugary cereals, refined grains, and sugary beverages can make the body unfocused, contribute to weight gain, and increase food cravings. Ultimately, this leads to poor health. It is not about cutting sugar or starchy foods from the diet; it is about the correct portion on the plate. One-third cup of rice, pasta, or other grains is one serving. One piece of bread is one serving. Half a hamburger bun is one serving. One-fourth of a baked potato is a serving. The correct portion is one at each meal if you are still hungry. How many servings a day are you having?

Healthy Starts With
Movement

Our bodies were designed to move. Regular physical activity supports much more than weight management — it helps maintain muscle and bone, supports cardiovascular health, helps regulate blood sugar, supports mood and mental health, and can help us maintain independence as we age.

The current recommendation for adults is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, along with muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week. More activity can provide additional health benefits, but you don't have to accomplish it all at once, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



A simple approach is to begin with two days of strength training, followed by regular cardiovascular movement throughout the week. Strength training is important as we age because maintaining muscle mass supports strength, metabolism, balance, and everyday function. Cardio can include walking, biking, swimming, dancing, hiking, jogging, or anything else that gets your heart rate up.

This can look different for everyone.

For someone who is already active, it might mean strength training three days a week, running or cycling several days, and adding walks throughout the day. For a busy parent, it might look like two 30-minute strength workouts at home, a brisk 20-minute walk during lunch, or including the kids on a weekend hike. Someone who works at a desk could start with a 10-minute walk after meals or take the stairs more for both cardio and weight resistance. An older adult or someone with physical limitations may focus on chair exercises, resistance bands, water exercise, balance work, or short walks based on their abilities.

The goal isn't to exercise as punishment for what you ate. Movement is a way to care for your body, build strength, support your health, and help you continue doing the things you love. You don't have to complete a perfect workout to benefit from movement. Ten minutes of walking counts. Taking the stairs counts. Gardening, dancing in your kitchen, playing with your children, or walking the dog counts. Being consistent helps improve your health.

Healthy Starts With Sleep

Sleep is one of the most overlooked pieces of good health. We often treat it as optional — something to sacrifice when work gets busy, the kids need us, or there simply aren't enough hours in the day. But sleep is when the body gets an opportunity to repair and restore.

Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night, although individual needs vary. Quality matters, too. Sleeping for eight hours doesn't necessarily mean you are getting restorative sleep. If you frequently wake up, struggle to fall asleep, or wake up feeling exhausted, your body may not be repairing or restoring itself for the next day.



Poor sleep can affect nearly every aspect of health. It can leave you tired and unfocused during the day, make it harder to regulate emotions, increase hunger and cravings, and interfere with blood sugar regulation. Over time, consistently inadequate sleep is associated with an increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other health problems.

One of the best places to start is sleep hygiene — the habits and environment surrounding your sleep.

Create a Consistent Sleep Schedule

Try to go to bed and wake up at approximately the same time each day, including weekends. A consistent schedule helps reinforce your body's natural circadian rhythm and can make falling asleep easier.

Create a Wind-Down Routine

Your body needs time to transition from the day's activity into sleep. Begin winding down 30-60 minutes before bed. Dim the lights, put away work, take a warm shower or bath, read a book, stretch, journal, or practice a few minutes of deep breathing.

Be Mindful of Caffeine and Alcohol

Caffeine can remain in your system for hours, so consider limiting coffee, energy drinks, and other caffeinated beverages later in the day. While alcohol may make you feel sleepy initially, it can interfere with sleep quality and cause more fragmented sleep later in the night.

Make Your Bedroom Sleep-Friendly

Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet. Consider blackout curtains, an eye mask, earplugs, or a white-noise machine if needed. Your bed should be associated with sleep and rest rather than work, television, or scrolling on your phone.

Get Daytime Light and Movement

Sleep hygiene actually begins during the day. Getting natural light in the morning helps regulate your circadian rhythm, while regular physical activity can support better sleep. Try getting outside early in the day and incorporating movement into your daily routine.

And don't underestimate your phone's impact. Scrolling through social media or checking emails right before bed can keep your mind stimulated when it should be slowing down. Permit yourself to disconnect.

You don't have to create a perfect bedtime routine. Start with one or two changes. Going to bed 30 minutes earlier, keeping a consistent wake time, or putting your phone away before bed can be a meaningful place to start.

Start With
One Small Goal

Healthy living doesn't require you to change everything at once. In fact, trying to overhaul your diet, exercise routine, sleep schedule, and entire lifestyle overnight can leave you overwhelmed and more likely to give up.

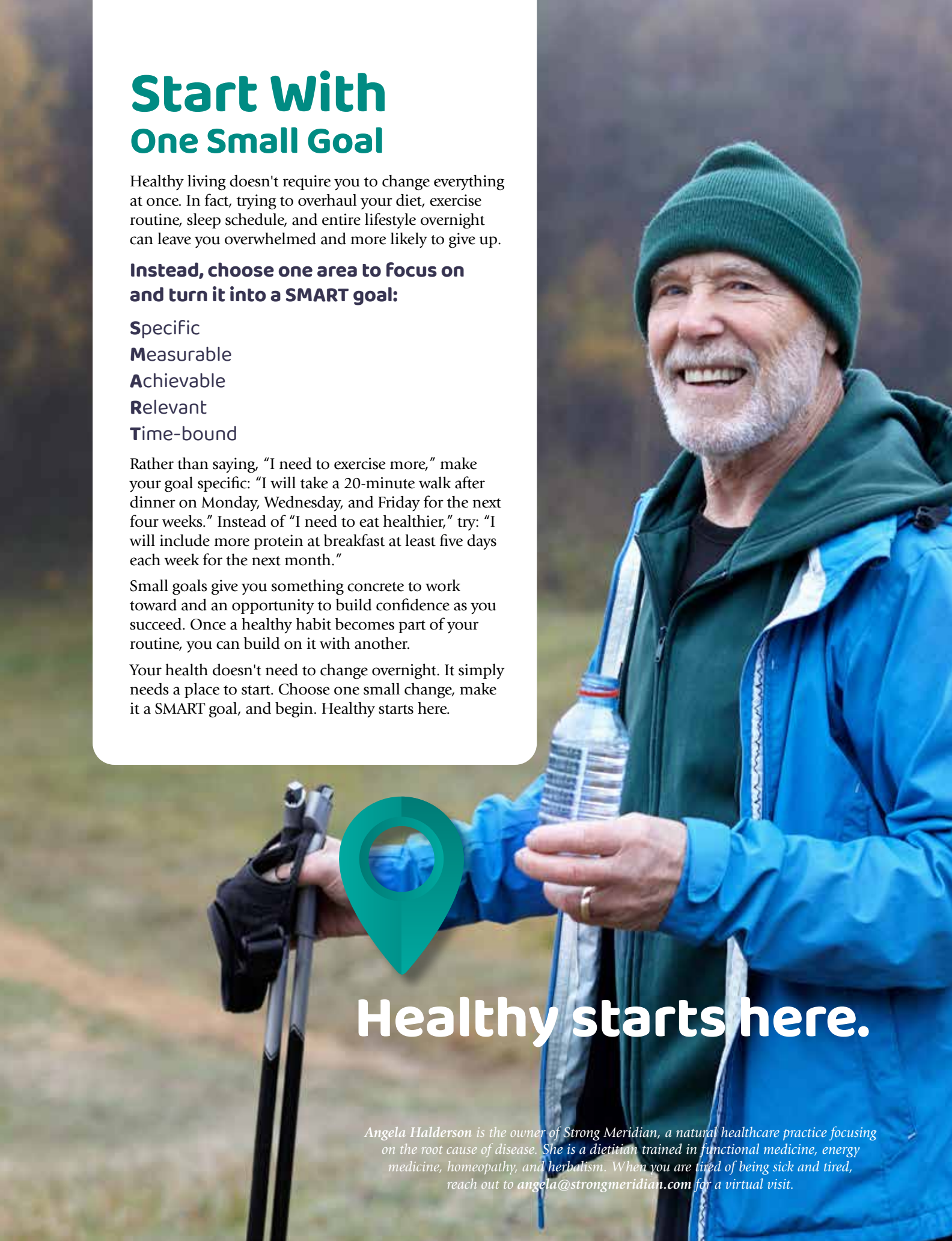
Instead, choose one area to focus on and turn it into a SMART goal:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-bound

Rather than saying, "I need to exercise more," make your goal specific: "I will take a 20-minute walk after dinner on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for the next four weeks." Instead of "I need to eat healthier," try: "I will include more protein at breakfast at least five days each week for the next month."

Small goals give you something concrete to work toward and an opportunity to build confidence as you succeed. Once a healthy habit becomes part of your routine, you can build on it with another.

Your health doesn't need to change overnight. It simply needs a place to start. Choose one small change, make it a SMART goal, and begin. Healthy starts here.



Healthy starts here.

*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.*

A Not-So-Spooky Halloween

By JOEL LAPER





It takes just one cool day with a little breeze in the air, and I start thinking about fall. With decorating and design, I've always had to be at least one season ahead of the game.

Planning for holidays and the changing seasons keeps me creative and organized. An admitted shopaholic, I am continuously looking for new, trending merchandise. I like to search through any remaining postseason decor that I can find useful for next year, while still trying to keep a handle on what I've purchased. With fall and Christmas so close together, I am often planning for both at the same time.



This year, while sipping my pumpkin brew, I decided to decorate a vintage hutch that I painted and distressed. Using mostly neutrals, I created a not-so-spooky Halloween/fall vignette using painted faux pumpkins, fall foliage, silver "potion" jars, black ravens, and a fancy skull for good measure.

Foam pumpkins are a great fall design idea. You can customize them by painting them in whatever color scheme you desire. You don't have to limit yourself to traditional orange. I painted the pumpkin in this display ivory. After carving a hole in the top, I inserted some floral foam and designed this cute fall arrangement using fall flowers, twigs, and pinecones.

This little hutch could be decorated and used in so many ways. In addition to an interior holiday display, you could place it on a front or back porch and decorate it with fall mums, or use it as a planting station. Reimagining a space or a piece of furniture like this and decorating it for the changing seasons is a great way to get dual purpose from it. Changing the color by painting can take a piece from overly formal to quaint and relaxed, especially this time of year when we all love to decorate for the seasons.

Images designed and photographed by Joel Laper.

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Reset Your Home *(And Life)* for Fall

By KATIE CARLSON

Fall, autumn, harvest time — whatever you prefer to call it — I think we can all agree that it's a wonderful season. It's a time of year that brings falling leaves, crisp air, everything and anything pumpkin, football, and relaxed gatherings with friends and family.

You want your home to feel cozy and warm while you celebrate fall. This time of year often brings a need for a good cleaning and an overall refresh — not just for your living space, but for your routines as well. You likely have new school schedules, changes at work, or simply need a reset after summer. While new decor is part of the conversation, editing your space and your routines matters, too. Here are some simple tips and inspiring ideas to help you transform your home, and your life, for fall.



Edit & Organize

When considering a home reset, don't limit it to simply changing seasonal decor. Instead, focus on editing your rooms and organizing your belongings. Take a look around and decide what no longer serves you or your home and is simply taking up space. Some items can be put away for this season, and others can be incorporated into the next. Rethinking storage options can also help. Cleaning and organizing keep your space — and your mind — free of clutter.



Incorporate Fall Colors

Fall is not only marked by the cooler air, pumpkin spice lattes, and the task of raking leaves, but also by its colors. Instead of relying on beiges alone, switch it up with patterns and rich neutrals. Some of the hottest fall colors for 2026 are chocolate brown, olive, terracotta, smoky violet, navy, and warm yellow. Bringing natural elements indoors can also add color and texture. Not everything needs to match. Layering patterns, colors, and textures can add dimension and personality to your space.

Improve Routines & Leisure Time

When changing or updating your home this season, also keep in mind that you're adjusting to a new routine. School has started, maybe you're working more, and you likely have new activities, earlier bedtimes, and more weekends at home. Take this opportunity to update your space to accommodate these new routines. Create a dedicated drop zone for outerwear, school papers, and work items. An inviting home office may allow for a more flexible work schedule. Designing a cozy reading nook or new entertainment space can make extra time at home enjoyable, and a bedroom refresh can help promote better sleep.

Illuminate, Illuminate, Illuminate

The days are getting shorter, and there is less daylight to enjoy. While this can be frustrating, it is also an opportunity to illuminate your home from the inside. Supplemental lighting can add warmth and ambiance to your space. While candles are a nice touch, they are not your only option. Floor lamps placed strategically throughout your rooms provide soft, ambient lighting, while traditional reading lamps offer direct light for specific tasks. Replace outdated fixtures, and consider using table lamps instead of bright, overhead lighting for a warmer feel. Dimmer switches and under-cabinet lighting can be helpful in your kitchen or dining room.

Ensure a Functional Kitchen for Fall Cooking

Fall is the perfect season to cook delicious recipes and soups. Reset your kitchen by considering both design and lifestyle.



You want your kitchen to function optimally in the fall, especially if you'll be spending more time preparing meals and baked goods. The goal is to have your kitchen work for you and not make cooking harder than it needs to be. Decide what belongs on the counter and what you can remove or store away. Invest in organizational solutions such as drawer dividers or labeled bins. Consider setting up a cozy breakfast nook where you can enjoy meals together. In addition, clean and organize your pantry. Wipe down the shelves, remove expired items, and restock with essentials for fall cooking.

Boost Curb Appeal & Tidy the Yard

You can also reset your home by boosting the curb appeal and giving yourself and your neighbors something lovely to look at. Mums set the perfect tone for autumn and add color to your porch, patio, or garden. Power-wash your driveway and walkways, and remove leftover summer debris. Trim your greenery and decorate your front door and porch not only with pumpkins, but also with pinecones, seasonal wreaths, or a fresh fall welcome mat. Update exterior lighting or add a cozy touch with LED candle lanterns. As for the garden, remember this is a time for preparation and transition. Choose plants that can thrive in cooler weather.



Embrace Coziness & Dress for the Season

Instead of focusing solely on seasonal decor, consider dressing your house for the season, much like changing your own wardrobe. It's not only about switching the color palette, but also about changing the feel of your space. For example, thicker area rugs, heavier throws, warmer bedding, and textured curtains can make living rooms or bedrooms feel cozier. New towels or table linens can spice up your bathroom or kitchen. You don't need to renovate an entire space to make a difference. Removing, rearranging, organizing, and layering can transform your spaces — and your routines — for a more enjoyable fall.

Making a Difference

By DR. JIM ZIEGLER

In the course of a year, I perform roughly 2,000 surgical procedures. The vast majority of these are spay and neuter surgeries, and most of those are for humane societies or other animal rescue organizations.

Recently, someone asked me if I felt like I was making a difference with all the work that I do. My immediate answer was, "No, I am not making a difference at all. The amount of work that I do is insignificant."

That is certainly true in the big picture. The big picture is very big, and no one person can make an impact that has any real significance. I have always said that even if every veterinarian in the country could spay and neuter cats and dogs all day every day, we still would not be able to control the excess unneeded litters of puppies and kittens — kind of a depressing fact.



One must look beyond the big picture, though, and focus instead on the smaller world that surrounds us every day. There is no doubt that a huge difference can be made by serving the smaller communities we live in. For many people, simply finding access to affordable spay or neuter surgery is the determining factor in whether they can keep a pet or not. Providing basic care, such as vaccinations, treating an ear or skin infection, treating a digestive upset, etc., can mean the world to a pet owner. Most of the time, a simple act of help can be the most appreciated. No one cares if you are trying to change the world if they themselves are unable to get help.

Early in my career, I received advice from an older veterinarian. He told me that I would not enjoy my profession unless I found satisfaction in accomplishing simple things. As a young doctor, I aspired to do big and great things. After so many years in practice, I realized that he was correct. Making a difference is most often not much more than simply lending a hand to someone in need.

__Dr. Jim Ziegler__ has been a veterinarian for 40 years. He lives and works in Waupaca County, where he primarily works with humane societies and other animal rescue organizations. He also independently helps pet owners in need of lower-cost veterinary care.

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Silas

Silas is a handsome, 5-year-old neutered male who has been waiting patiently for his perfect match. He is seeking a quiet and cozy home. He bonds closely with those he is comfortable with.



Little Man

Little Man is a neutered male senior kitty. He is 12 years old. This social guy is practically a feline shadow. He loves following his human around, rubbing against their legs for attention, and curling up for nightly snuggles in bed.

Bringing Outside Plants Inside for Winter

By HOLLY BOETTCHER

Where did the summer go? It seems like gardening season just began, and now it's already winding down. As I look for ways to keep up my gardening spirit, I turn to plants I can dig up and bring indoors, along with all my houseplants that enjoyed summer thriving on my patio.

As I decide what to save, I carefully inspect for insects or disease. Never bring in plants that aren't completely free of infestation. If needed, some insecticidal soap spray or neem oil should take care of any mild episodes.

Most plants will do best in a bright, indirect light, so assess your indoor spaces. If you have pets, don't forget to double-check a plant's safety to eliminate the risk of accidental poisoning. A great resource for pet-friendly plants is aspca.org/pet-care.

My first choice is to dig up some of my herbs. The lettuce leaf basil I started from seed in March has grown tremendously and now has delicate, crinkly leaves. The basil has made it into caprese salads and homemade pesto all summer. Of course, I will grab my shovel, dig it up, and transplant it into a clay pot. It doesn't like to be overwatered, so I will find a sunny spot in one of my south-facing windows.

Next is the rosemary plant with fuzzy, fragrant, needle-like leaves. It is fuss-free if you do not give it too much water. I have learned by trial and error that planting it in cactus soil helps it last all winter, and I can bring it back outdoors in spring.

Sage is another herb that does well inside. Who can resist velvety, pale green, downy leaves? It will brighten up any dish in midwinter.

And how about moving the potted mint inside for the winter? This one is super easy to care for, and there is nothing like a sprig of mint in your cup of hot tea or a mojito to share with friends. (Reminder: This is one herb you should never plant in the ground because it will take over your entire garden.)

Now I assess my tropicals. The hibiscus tree that I purchased this spring is blooming profusely, and I just can't bear to let it succumb to winter. What can I do? I move it into my garage for a week or two to transition it from outside into my home. I've learned that when you move them directly inside, they tend to drop leaves and make quite a mess until they acclimate. The most important part with hibiscus is not to overwater. A light watering once a week will keep it looking beautiful all winter. In early spring, I will begin fertilizing it to encourage blossoming.

Whatever you bring indoors, these green plants will help brighten your home and lift your spirits throughout the winter ahead!







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.*

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF HALLOWEEN

A few months ago, my 7-year-old son was breaking down the pros and cons of each season. "I think I like fall best. Winter is cold, spring is wet, and summer has bees. But fall isn't as cold, the bees go away *(Ed. note: You sure about that?)*, and best of all, it has Halloween." Pretty convincing arguments, really.

If I'm ranking holidays, I place Halloween second, behind Christmas and just ahead of the first weekend of March Madness. With its lengthy lead-up, satisfying payoff, and plentiful dedicated media to enjoy in between, it's basically a perfect holiday. In an unrelated story, advertising works on me.

But there are ways to do Halloween right, and there are ways to do it Hallowrong. Let's dig in.

1. No inflatable costumes. Yes, they look harmlessly silly on the packaging. But learn from my experience: They are a living nightmare when you must maneuver your puffy child through a crowd, or when he has a bladder the size of a Milk Dud.

2. It's good to be known on your block for giving out king-size candy bars. This goodwill actually carries well into the future, virtually guaranteeing regular door-knocks when those same kids are doing school fundraisers. Almond Joy has the opposite effect, if you were wondering.

3. *Monster Mash* isn't the only Halloween song, and definitely not the best. Give me Warren Zevon's *Werewolves of London*, Oingo Boingo's *Dead Man's Party*, or — my personal favorite — The Cramps' *Goo Goo Muck*.

4. Get your dog a costume. Don't let the fun police tell you he's miserable, even if they're probably right.



ONE MORE THING

By TYLER SJOSTROM

5. If you're going to make a sequel to *Hocus Pocus*, it had better be incredible. Otherwise just don't make it. This is mostly a commandment for Bette Midler.

6. For my money, a good "punny" costume can't be beat. You could wear a shirt saying "LIFE" and hand out lemons. Or wear a foam #1 finger and a shirt saying "Go Ceiling!" (If you use either of these, please send me a photo.)

7. The Dad Tax (and its cousin, The Mama Levy) is your Samhain-given right. You spent untold hours an dollars on their costumes. You pulled them up and down sidewalks all over town in a wagon with a big foam finger on one hand. You'll probably yawn through *Hocus Pocus 2* when you get home. By all means, take your earnings in Airheads and peanut butter cups.

8. Follow the Porch Light Protocol. We get it, not everyone wants a dog dressed like a Tootsie Roll watering their mums. If the light is off, we will honor the code.

9. A sharp knife actually is more dangerous than a dull one. This is a rule about pumpkin carving.

10. But always, always carve the pumpkins. Last Halloween, my son and I bellied up for a carving contest in Door County next to a widower mourning his wife of 55 years. As he helped us strategize, you could tell he just liked sitting next to a father and son doing something memorable together. I hope he's doing well, wherever he is.

He was definitely a king-size candy bar type, who everyone always remembers.



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

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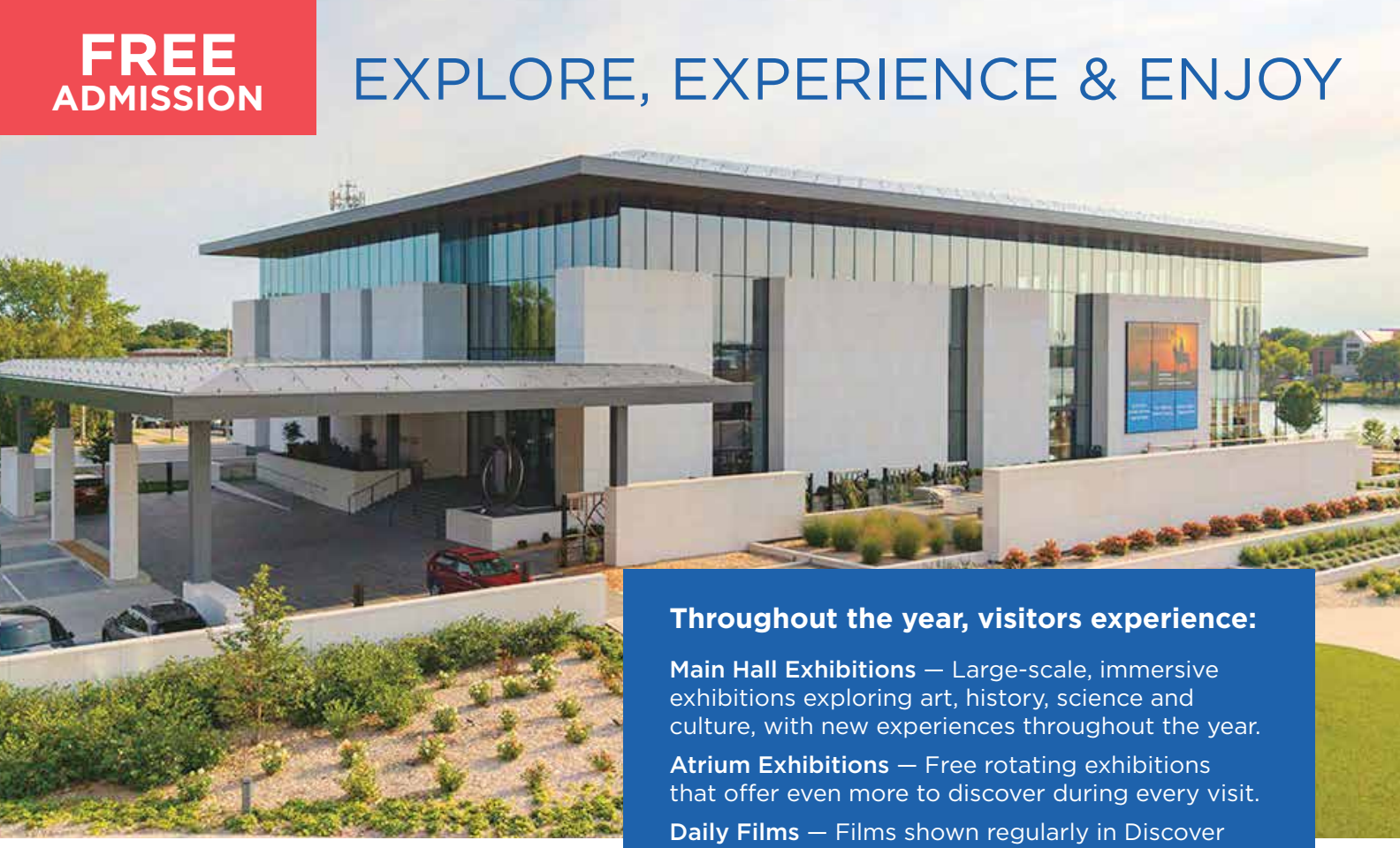
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