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VOL 3 | NO 1

5IVE FOR

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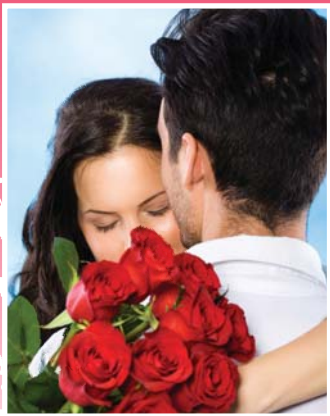
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With an emphasis on equilibrium and personal growth, *Five for Women* encourages the on-the-go gal to pause for self-nurturing through insightful articles and thought-provoking features—supporting the not-so-simple balance between faith, family, friends, fitness, and finance.

At *Five*, we are advocates of healthy priorities and fitness for life, while striving to motivate, energize, and inspire camaraderie of the Chippewa Valley sisterhood.



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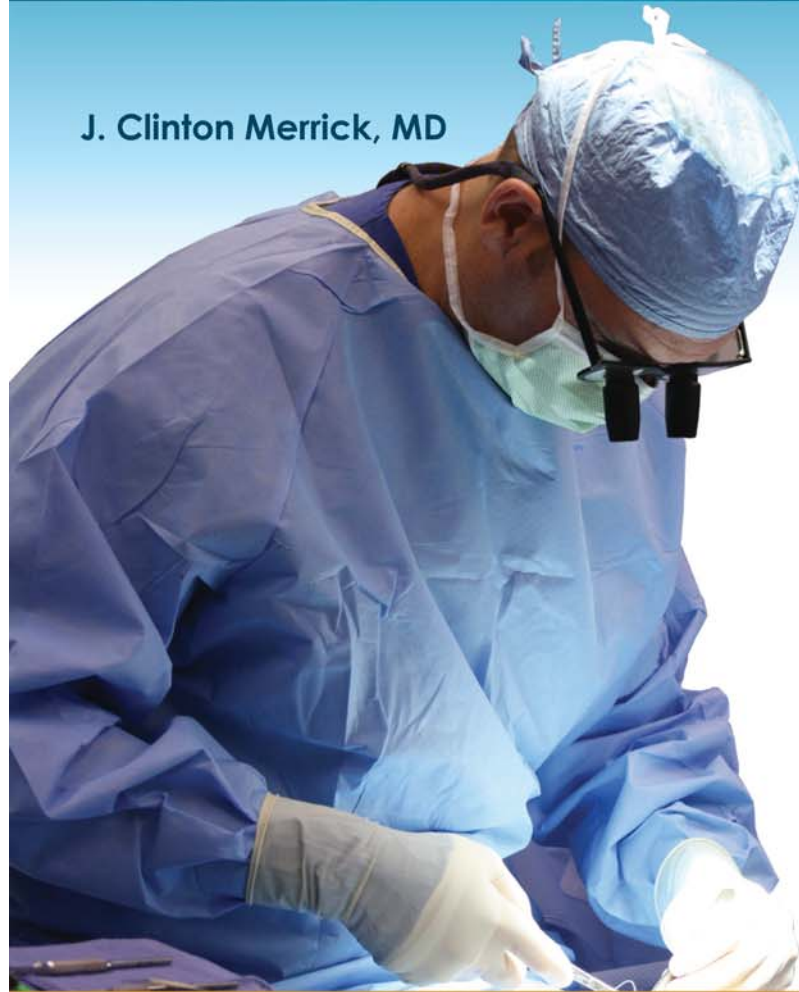
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As I write, I am bundled and enjoying the peace of the newly instituted quiet hour at the Theisen house. As temps have plummeted to negative 45 with wind chill, all five of the kids are under our new roof. Joe is taking a J-term course and needs a quiet place. The house has plenty of space with nooks and crannies, and when the construction is done, I may be hard-pressed to even find the kids. It's likely that quiet hour could be lifted. But for now, our scarce outlets and meager 60 watts of electricity have driven the Theisen clan to a smaller and central portion of the house. I am convinced the placement of the outlets was perfectly logical in the late 1800s. Nevertheless, our current lifestyle has forced us to get creative. Grace and I are starting to feel like it's perfectly normal to blow dry our hair in the kitchen since not one of our bathrooms has

a power source yet. Jon staged a charging station in the library which has resolved some of our issues. I happily tune out the kids' arguments over whose turn it is to charge. Most days, I can find any one of my children lying on the tile floor of the dimly lit room tucked under a blanket waiting for their device to charge.

The furnace is old, the sinks are old, and the floors are old. Asbestos lingers in the basement and every window needs replacement or repair. As I don my stocking cap for bed each night, I realize this 19th century custom was not a fashion statement but a necessity.

Needless to say, once again, there is a lot going on in the Theisen home. I won't pretend it's been all rainbows and butterflies. Surely we'll face more tough moments as we navigate our way through this colossal reconstruction. As difficult as it has been, I know we are exactly where we are meant to be. I'm delighted my kids have space to play, create, or just be and are only a short walk to any of their neighborhood friends. I'm equally thrilled to be able to hop on any of the nearby running trails. I look forward to utilizing them as soon as we get our deep thaw. This old house is our home. Let the reconstruction begin.

This issue is dedicated to the reconstruction of women's lives, both literally and figuratively. We women endure much and continue marching on. We're excited to share stories with you highlighting all the different ways our lives can destruct and reconstruct. Read an interesting piece on a home remodel—something I can definitely relate to. We learn how a women used the heartache of loss to transform her life through running to honor her nephew. You'll be encouraged to pull back and simplify, as you remember to enjoy life; and don't miss out on this issue's mouthwatering winter recipes.

As I remind my kids (and myself) daily, we are on an adventure. I challenge my readers to find adventure in reconstructing that area or areas of your lives you've been just waiting to change. To reconstruct something simply means to build again. What better time than now to build a life that works for you? The journey continues: faith, family, friends, fitness, and finance.

Jen Theisen
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

5IVE FOR WOMEN™

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Zech Galindo, co-owner of Touch of Class INK, chisels a piece for his business during Paint the Town Christmas.

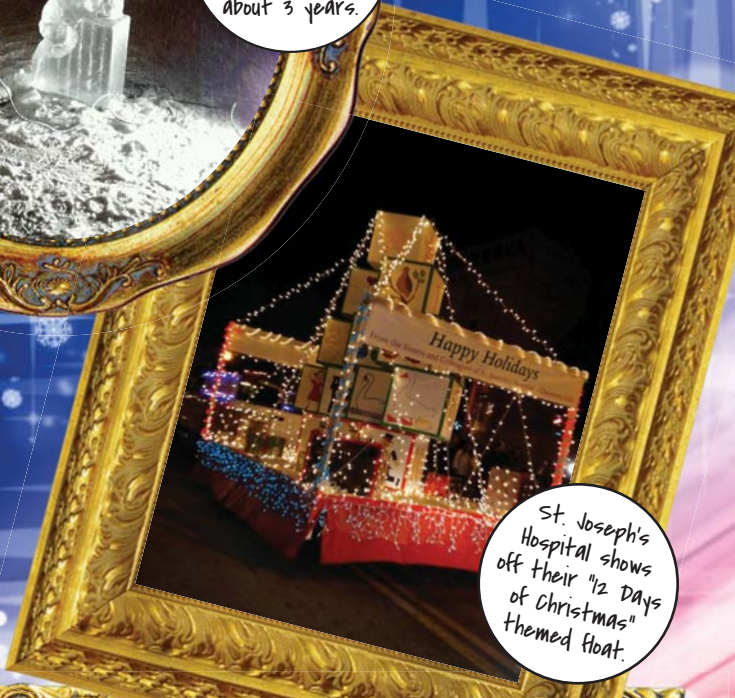


Michelle Childs sculpts stars for The Garage Salon & Spa.



Shawn Corbin, local chainsaw artist, has been carving ice for about 3 years.

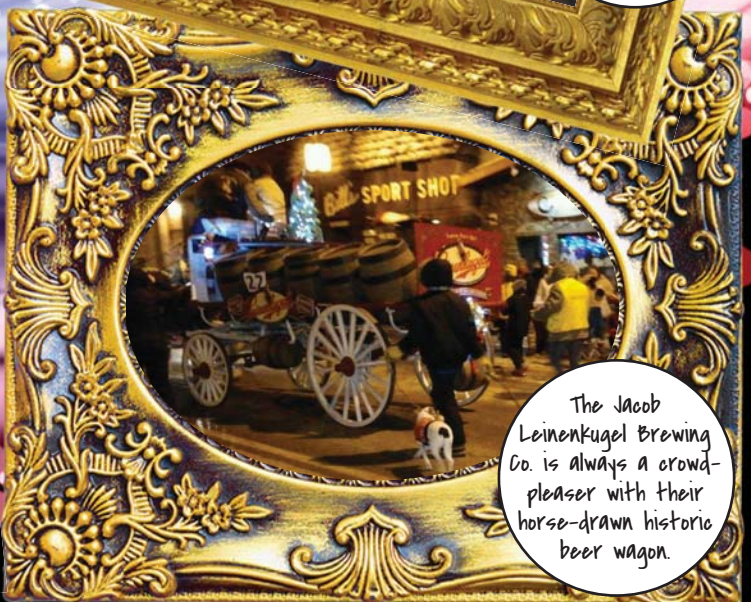
Paint the Town Christmas and 24th Annual Bridge to Wonderland Parade Downtown Chippewa Falls



St. Joseph's Hospital shows off their "12 Days of Christmas" themed float.



Santa Claus waves to the crowd on the final float.



The Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co. is always a crowd-pleaser with their horse-drawn historic beer wagon.

The Tyranny of the To-do List

Reconstructing the Idea of Productivity

By Briana Craig

This is my confession: In 2013, I allowed myself to be enslaved to the urgent. I sold myself down the river of productivity and missed out on a lot of good stuff in order to appease the pressing. I traded important connections and priceless moments to scratch tasks off a list. In 2014, I am reconstructing my to-do list.

I am grateful for the refining fires of 2013, especially the one finally burning this lesson into my head. Over the course of eight years, this problem of “productivity” and perfectionism has been steadily building. In an attempt to stay as far away as possible from the gal of my twenties, I made more lists, got more organized, became more productive, and bought into perfectionism—hook, line, and SINK HER.

My to-do list ruled my life. What started out as an innocent attempt at being organized, morphed into something rather chaotic. I recently completed my first year of nursing on a fast-paced cardiac unit. I allowed the very career I am so blessed with to further exacerbate my compulsion to respond to every matter with urgency.

I love caring for my patients and some days still can't believe the blessing of being entrusted with such tremendous responsibility. Nevertheless, medications must be administered on time, call lights are literally on a timer, heart rhythms must be analyzed, monitored, and reported with absolute accuracy, when a physician phones back we have 30 seconds to pick up before we can expect a dial tone, and we are charged with being the patient's last point of safety. Every order must be scrutinized while we ask ourselves, is this safe and is it appropriate for this patient? In the end, we are responsible for every medication administered and must ensure every intervention, every necessary lab test, and every procedure is completed. A common adage on the floor is “Prioritize. What crisis could mean someone's life? Tend to that one first.” And they're only half-kidding. In all of this, it's imperative to make the time to hold a hand, listen, teach, answer questions, and offer empathy. I was carrying the constant sense of urgency from work into my everyday life.

I knew I reached a new low when I turned down date night after not seeing my husband all week, because my to-do list was too long. Not only did I pass up a fun time promising renewal, I missed out on connection with my husband. Even worse, I more than likely made him feel unimportant in my life. At least, less important than my task list. Realizing this broke my heart.

Something needed to change. I was constantly stressed, forever rushed, and anxiety levels crept to an all-time high. Interestingly, my efficiency was at an all-time low, my wheels spinning faster than ever. I began to resent everything and anything requesting “my” time, even the things I once thor-

oughly enjoyed. I judged myself harshly if the list went unfinished. I was physically and emotionally exhausted all the time. And then it dawned on me—doing too much is as dangerous as doing too little.

To be completely honest, I must admit pride caused me to attempt too much and fear generated the endless lists. Charles E. Hummel discusses the tyranny of the urgent in a small but powerful book with the same title. It will take discipline to not react to every matter in life as if it were urgent. I also understand this endeavor will require abundant grace. Webster defines this kind of grace as “A temporary exemption; a disposition to or an act of kindness, courtesy, or clemency; approval, mercy, pardon, favor.” Amazing grace, indeed.

How will I reject the tyranny of the to-do list in 2014? The practice of extending grace to others and self will be top priority. I will ask myself often, “What will happen if I do not get to this right now or even today?” I will review frequently the difference between urgent and important. Paying the electric bill on time is urgent, while connecting with family is important. The dishes in the sink are neither urgent nor important. I will recognize time is not mine, but a gift. Therefore, I will not become frustrated if my urgent task is interrupted by something important. The daily to-do list will no longer exist, but a weekly list will take its place, allowing for flexibility. In 2014, any to-do list I make will serve me, I will not serve it. The most important list will hang for an entire year on my refrigerator. To Do: Pray, laugh with your husband, call your family, see your girlfriends, encourage someone, do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.

Briana Craig is founder of Forerunner Writing & Editing LLC and an RN from Chippewa Falls, WI currently residing in Michigan. She can be contacted at briana@forerunnerwriting.com.



Taking 5ive with Lisa Stelter Graf

WRITTEN BY HEATHER ROTHBAUER-WANISH

Lisa Stelter Graf has a strong base for all of the 5ive. As a busy wife, mother, business owner, and home mortgage professional with RCU, she has learned to hone in on what is most important in life. And, by doing so, she hopes to gain that balance that every woman strives to achieve on a daily basis.

FAITH

For Lisa, faith means more than going to church every Sunday. “I believe in God and everything He represents. And, I believe in living my life as a generous person.” Most of us know that actions speak louder than words, and Lisa lives her life by always remembering that. In her position as a home mortgage lender, Lisa has helped countless families purchase homes. “I have enjoyed helping people manage their finances and make their dreams a reality.” In addition, Lisa has been involved with many events and causes that support positive initiatives within the community.

FAMILY

Lisa and her husband Mike, a Sergeant with the Eau Claire Police Department, have four children: Lucas (27), Eric (25), David (25), and Joseph (23). Family is an important component in Lisa’s life, and she enjoys spending time with her children and extended family. “We live on Lake Wissota, so we tend to see the kids more in the summer. And, we all enjoy golfing as a hobby. Mike’s parents both live in Eau Claire, so we make it a point to spend as many holidays and special occasion as we can together.” And, for added excitement in her family life, Mike and Lisa recently purchased a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and are looking forward to riding it this spring.

FRIENDS

As with many women, Lisa counts on a close circle of friends for camaraderie, get-togethers, and laughs. “My most important group of friends is my Focus Group—a group of three best girl friends that meets on a regular basis. We all work in the mortgage industry, so we understand the daily challenges and frustrations as they pertain to our careers and being busy.” Because the women have known each other for almost 25 years, there is an instant connection among the friends, resulting in a tight-knit feeling that has seen them through life’s ups and downs.

FITNESS

While Lisa does not belong to a gym, she does make time for fitness in a variety of other ways. “It is very challenging to find time for fitness, something that almost everyone experiences.” She may not have a ‘regular’ fitness routine, but Lisa does find time to golf weekly in the summer. And, at least twice per year, Lisa and Mike make a commitment to take a vacation. She looks forward to spending time with her husband and doing a lot of activities when they are together.

FINANCE

As someone that works with potential homeowners on a daily basis, finance is at the forefront of Lisa’s life. She encourages her clients to live within their means and consistently put money in savings for unexpected expenditures. “My professional expertise includes bringing tough transactions to fruition, and one needs to be analytical to accomplish this.” Lisa has been RCU’s top producer since 2010 and received national recognition for her 2012 loan



production from the Scotsman Guide.

In addition to her busy professional life at RCU, Lisa and her husband own Camille’s Sidewalk Café and Bravo Salon & Spa LLC in Lake Hallie. When she started the businesses, it was the middle of a huge recession. Fortunately, she was able to ask her father to co-sign a business loan that helped the businesses successfully launch. And, Lisa partnered with exceptional people to operate these businesses; this includes Shari Spies at Bravo and Debra Cobb at Camille’s.

Though she is proud of her professional accomplishments and entrepreneurship, Lisa believes that family is the most important thing in life. “My dad, who was our next door neighbor for almost 10 years, recently passed away after a year-long battle with cancer. At the end of last summer, when his illness was progressing rapidly, my family made a conscious effort to have dinner with Grandpa Jim every Sunday. Lucas and Eric took him on his last pontoon ride around his beloved Lake Wissota on September 29; he passed away a month later.”

For Lisa, community involvement and a thriving professional life help to guide her goals. And, although they are both important, it is her family that means the most. “Each person really needs to determine what things are the most important to you, and make those a priority.”

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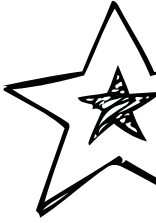
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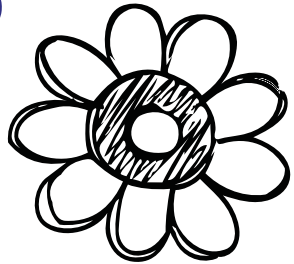
I ran into this fab find when I was supposed to be grabbing wine for guests that had stopped over—the snow was falling and the lights and Good & Sturdy Vintage items were screaming my name. I left with a fabulous sweater and a great new (old) platter. The unique items are organized and will keep you coming back for more. If you love vintage everything, this is a "must do"! 218 Water St., Eau Claire, 715-839-7999



4



5



My friend organized an impromptu holiday gathering the Friday afternoon before Christmas—making Splash Wine Bistro such a wonderful new find! The wine was amazing, and the appetizers were just perfect. Splash has a very welcoming atmosphere. If you are looking for a full meal, this is not a dinner destination. It IS a WINE bar! What a great date night spot with Valentine's Day right around the corner. 416 Water St., Eau Claire, 715-514-3610



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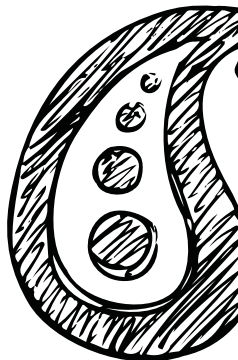


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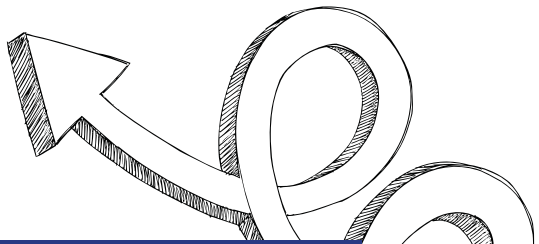


8

Here you will quite possibly experience the best Bloody Mary of your life. And the cheese curds are a Chippewa Falls classic. The Fill Inn Station was established in 1979; it used to be the Blue Diamond Gas Station; if you look closely, you can see some of the historic gas station fixtures. The Fill Inn is a unique experience. So, if you have not yet stopped here, put it on your To Do list!
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What can I say? Ray's is an Eau Claire "must stop." I love this joint—with the best soup you will ever have and fantastic hot beefs. Ray's is a place where you can always find a friend. This is why I love a Wisconsin bar. If you have not been here, make it a "must do" soon.
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Eau Claire, 715-832-3991



12



Reconstructing Alexandra

Growing up in rural Massachusetts, I dreamed of becoming an actress. Starting out in my father's church, and going on to perform in all my school plays, I fell madly in love with the art of performing. As my high school years were coming to an end, I made up my mind; I was going to move to LA to convince Hollywood I was the next big STAR!

After one year of college per my parents' request, I packed up my Toyota Corolla and headed out West in search of my dreams.

Nineteen years old without a single friend in that town, I began to wade through the waves of a massive ocean. I became obsessed with succeeding as an actor, so much so that I gave up every other talent I had possessed.

Quickly I fell into a rut and began doing the same thing over and over expecting different results. Getting a job as a waitress to support myself, running to auditions every day with desperation in my eyes, begging the casting director to pick me. Disappointment washing over me at every turn because I couldn't work hard enough for someone else to choose me.

Ten years went by before I even realized it, and I woke up one morning with a sea of emotions wondering if I was truly happy waiting for someone else to hand me my dreams. Was I willing to wait another ten years for someone else to choose me? That morning it dawned on me that I could choose myself, I could start creating my own projects. It was time for me to take charge of my destiny and change the course of my story. I was done watching myself sit back as others dictated my path in life. No longer was I going to fall victim of believing that I had no control over my future.

As I struggled to find a new direction in Los Angeles, and in an attempt to break free from my old habits, I partnered with a friend to produce a play. It was the first step in taking charge of creating my future. And even though the play was a success, I still felt stuck in Los Angeles with an empty heart. Something was missing and I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was. I felt like it was time for a change.

I began to pray fervently, giving God the desires of my heart, and asking him for guidance. Within a month, I lost my job and apartment and felt fully convicted that God was calling me to move. Trusting in Him I packed my bags yet again, tens years from the date I had so bravely arrived in the city of lights, I watched as they grew dim in the rearview mirror, the



highway stretched before me. And to my amazing surprise I felt myself crumbling in the best way. Freedom washed over me, and a new hope was on the horizon.

Albuquerque, New Mexico was the new Hollywood, I heard it a "buzz" throughout my community, and I believed if I could just start over in a new place with a new outlook I could do great things. And boy was I right. First I let go of all my old ways of thinking. I even got a totally different job, I became a companion to elderly people, and spent a lot of time alone reflecting on my past choices and envisioning my new ones. My heart was open to whatever God wanted to do with my life, letting go of my own desires and releasing my life into His amazing care.



Once I did that God gave me my life back ten fold. I quickly tapped into the film-making community in New Mexico and began meeting like-minded people who wanted to create projects with me. I even met my now husband on a set of a short film. My dream of having a partner in life and a partner in creating came true. And just a few short years after turning my life upside down, I became the owner of two production companies, my life full and rich, while I was making my own dreams come true. No longer waiting for other people to pick me, I was able to pick myself and I have never looked back.

For me, feeling stuck in life was the most devastating emotion. It led me into a downward spiral of depression and hopelessness. If I feel this way, I'm sure there are millions of other women out there struggling with this same path. The incredible truth is that we have the power and ability to change our circumstances at any time, even if that means moving out of our comfort zones to experience a new rich way of living. Jumping into the unknown can be daunting, but if you are unhappy, the only person who can change it is

you. There is no time like the present to make the adjustments that will secure the future of your heart's desire. We have but one precious life, why spend it doing anything we despise or dread? It is never too late to take the leap of faith and begin again in a new way. Every morning is a new day and a new chance to go after the things you have always wanted. And if you fail, who cares, get up and try again.

Sometimes in order to construct the life you have always dreamed of, you must deconstruct the old one.

Alexandra Boylan began her acting career in Boston, MA, where she was born and raised. She developed that career in Los Angeles and eventually created her own production company, MirrorTree Productions (mirrortree-productions.com). For her extensive list of credits, visit imdb.com/name/nm0102153/, and for her live action movie game app, visit yourperfectadventure.com

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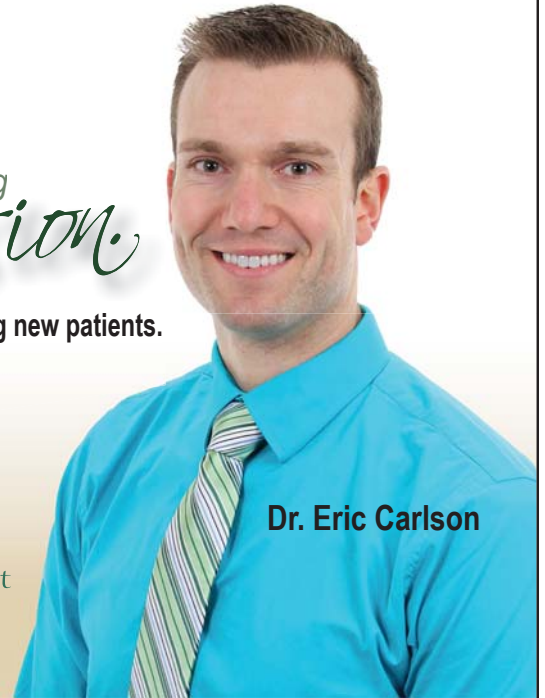
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Mail Order Bride

...Not What It Used To Be!

Remember the good ole days when men out West would order up a bride to share the new frontier? Back then, a man would take a good hardy woman for his wife who was ready for cooking, cleaning, and birthing. Neither men nor women were concerned about flat tummies, perky breasts, age-defying makeup, and thin thighs. Although women had rougher lives, they just seemed to be more honest lives in many ways. However, nothing stays the same; the lives of women have been changing regularly since the beginning of time.

In biblical days, some women were considered property, while others were tough and courageous. Queen Esther was noted for her beauty and bravery. The Renaissance brought us famous artists who drew and painted voluptuous images of women—and fleshy women at that. The late nineteenth century provided us with the men and women who fought for the right of women to vote! The election year in 1920 was the FIRST time women were allowed to vote throughout the entire United States. The twentieth century came along, and we were introduced to Rosie the Riveter during World War II. Women entered the work force while running their entire households while their husbands were at war. The fifties brought us images of women working in their kitchens with the newest mixers, toasters, ovens, and refrigerators. The sixties and seventies rolled out, revolutionizing a woman's place in the world. No longer were we property or written off as hysterical, silly, mindless, baby-producing cooks. We grew into responsible roles in the job market, we began to have our own cars and take our own trips, and our family lives changed when divorce became “no fault.”

There is so much more that has happened to women and so much that will continue. (I will save my soapbox voice—on

things like including girls in sports and clubs that traditionally belonged to boys or men—for another time.) The point is that women have a beautiful and specific role. We are the womb of the world. We originated from Adam's side; but from that moment forward, women brought forth life. We are incredible creatures, God's daughters. So, why do we allow our femaleness and form to be distorted, graphically manipulated, or publicly exposed in disrespectful ways? We have come so far from being mail-order property, yet...

I don't watch much TV; but one day as I was watching an afternoon program, a Hanes commercial came on, marketing their colorful panties on real live women: close-ups right to the...yeah...well you know, a television screen full of bellybutton, hip, and pantie. I found myself shaking my head and thinking, “Noooooo!” I was thoroughly upset and went right to the Hanes Facebook page, posting my disgust of their commercial. What possible marketing reason did they have to promote their newest style of Hanes panties with that type of imagery? I scrolled the Hanes Facebook page and was disappointed that I did not see more voices of outcry. I wondered, “Why not?”

To be aware of what today's young people are exposed to, I have watched both of *The Hunger Games* movies. And, although I feel disappointment that Hollywood is making films wherein young people must kill each other to survive and provide food for their villages, I do admire Jennifer Lawrence. Clearly, she is currently a popular commodity because of *The Hunger Games* series. Jennifer is such a beautiful example of a young woman. She looks healthy, her skin radiant, her body toned, her hair shimmers. Nope, not good enough. Recently, I read that *Flair* magazine chose to tweak Jennifer's body for their cover. I guess someone felt her natural body wasn't “optimum.” They slimmed her down, gave her hair more volume, heightened her cheekbones, and Photoshopped her fingers. Are you kidding me? Why? Even she has made it known that she does not agree with these “fix up” tactics.

And seriously! The first time I watched a news report of Miley Cyrus dancing on-stage with Robin Thicke (someone else's husband AND dad) at the MTV Music Awards, I sat there with my mouth hanging open. “Whaaaaaat???” Why would we allow such things on public media? Young girls (including my granddaughter) used to idolize Hannah Montana, a sweet teen girl. As I watched, I was praying these girls no longer find Miley



appealing in any way. Where is her father, is he not in disagreement with her lewd behavior? Do I identify with this 30-year-old woman? No. I am disturbed and offended. I have nothing in common with her except that we are both females. Actually, I resent and feel embarrassed that she is using our beautiful womanly image to entice, excite, and tease. For what possible reason is she flaunting herself to this degree? Have women submitted to extreme sensationalism in order to be noticed, to be wanted and popular, to be on the front page? It has been creeping up on us...Cher, Madonna....

Have we allowed what used to be an acceptance of our natural bodies—whether fleshy, plump, thin, short, tall, or pear-shaped—to now be a *male order*? My intent here is not to single out or bash men. I am asking, for whose benefit or amusement are women being “distorted”, especially at a time when anorexia and bulimia are prevalent among our young girls? And can someone please tell me why mannequins in retail stores have obvious “breast petals” protruding from beneath the fabric? Why are we allowing such infractions on our beautiful selves? We cannot compete with computer graphics, airbrushing, and modifications. Those images are not real... we are. What messages are women sending out who dress half naked or with explicitly sensual clothing for public display? I encourage you to take the time to voice your compliments for well-deserved attention and respect of women; and I strongly encourage you to take a stand—let magazines, retailers, and internet companies know how you feel about the negative attention, display, and disrespect of women. Silence is often taken as agreement. Let’s just be us, ladies. Let it be okay to be a good, hardy, beautiful, *natural* woman or bride.

Valentine’s Day is coming up. Love who you are. Spend time with someone who loves you for who you are. Love others, spread it around! We needn’t

fall victim to the “be perfect” marketing scams and computer “Barbies.” Let us be more honest with each other, accepting our unique and precious selves. Guard your heart; place it where it can swell with happiness and delight. Eat chocolate, put on your favorite outfit, know God made you just the way you are, take care of the temple He gave you, and give thanks for His Son that loved us so much He went to the cross.

Dori Pulse and her husband, Bob, live in Eau Claire. She is a speaker and freelance writer, and her book Everything Changed When I Said ‘I Do’ is in the publishing process. She has been married, divorced, and remarried, becoming a stepmom in 1998. Dori developed Stepfamily Rx Prescriptions for Stepliving seminars. Find her blog at stepfamilyrx.com.



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RUT STUCK?

Connecting with Kids Outside the Ruts of Routine

By Katie Mcky

Remember how long a summer day could stretch when we were young? They seemed longer because we weren't yet in the ruts of routine. Routines seem to accelerate time, which can be a good thing when at work, but a bad thing when routines whoosh away our children's childhoods. Getting out of the deep ruts of routine is surprisingly easy. Here are activities to remove the entire family from ruts:

When They're Wee

- **Play away.** My mother baked banana nut bread and simmered cocoa when it was cold, but the thing we loved most was when *she* came outside to play. It was rare, yet it rocked our worlds. So, go get grass stains on your knees or some snow up your sleeves. Be a kid for your kids!

- **Let them be big.** Many children's games are rehearsal for adulthood. Just as they love when we mimic them, they love to mimic us. Invite them to garden with you. Bake together. Cook dinner together; make sure earned credit is given at the dinner table.

- **Step into a story.** Immersion storytelling is the best. At a park, in the family room, or in the backyard, act out a well-known story. You even can do this in the car.

- **A maze.** Make a maze out of chairs, sofas, sheets, and boxes. You can even plump it with peril, such as morphing into a mythological Minotaur or nixing the lights for even more fun. Making the maze requires creativity (which is good) and teamwork (which is even better).

- **The drive of perpetual peril.** For fun on the run, as you drive to piano lessons or soccer practice, pretend that the bicyclist is a velociraptor or that fast food franchise is an erupting volcano.

- **Camp in the backyard.** (Dad can be the ghost.)

- **Camp in the basement.** Jimmy Buffet wrote, "Changes in Latitudes, Changes

in Attitudes." Hold a slumber party in the basement, and you'll see that with changes in *altitudes*, there are also changes in attitudes.

- **Visit a fire station.** Call and see if they permit

visits. Many do!

- **Four square tournament.** Chalk + Balls + Invitations to the neighborhood kids

- **Pillow fight.** Lay some ground rules, and swing away!

- **Lemonade stand.** Kick-start their capitalism, and have some fun.

- **Yard sale.** Decluttering! Teamwork! Pocket change!

- **Create a cartoon character.** Draw and explain his home, her friends, his personality, and her powers and skills.

- **Treasure hunt.** Hide some cookies. Then tell a tale of how the Chocolate Chip Pirates lived in your house long ago and hid their booty somewhere in your house. Treasure map is optional. Fun is not.

- **Become the wild hair clan.** One ounce of gel + One ounce of mousse = Ten tons of fun! Do each other's hair. Take pics. Post on Facebook!

- **Make your own popsicles.** Check online for recipes and a variety of how-tos!

- **Make a music video.** Post it on YouTube. Brace yourself if you allow comments. YouTube is wilder than the Wild West ever was.

- **Random act of kindness.** Give an utterly unexpected gift to anyone. It's never too early to learn this.

- **Write to someone famous.** Google "celebrity fan mail addresses," hone those letter-writing skills, and be surprised at who replies!

- **Make slime.** Google "make slime" for the recipe. Kids love it (but have a rule that, when inside, slime must be in a container).

- **Paint the soles of each other's feet.** It puts you in close proximity, which is cozy-cool, and then there's the surprise of seeing what someone painted on your feet.

Teens too!

- **Meet them where they are.**

Just as little kids like when you play their games, so do teens; so here and there, play a video game with them. Sure, it's not your thing, but it's their thing. You might even enjoy battling dragons,



zombies, and zombie dragons.

- **Write your bucket lists and share them.** Gain some insight. See your son's dreams. Let your daughter see your dreams.

- **Go retro and bowl!**

- **Cookie poker.** Many kids consider card playing to be fun. Gambling with goodies ratchets up the fun a few notches.

- **Bocce ball.** It's inexpensive fun that can be played in your yard, a park, or even a street.

- **Minute to win it.** Collectively create challenges with common components. For example, who can create the tallest structure using playing cards (bending allowed)?

- **Old timey fun!** Play Capture the Flag. Running! Teamwork! Strategy!

- **Eau Claire River.** Who says the floating fun is just for college kids? Life jackets not optional.

- **Paintball.** Bring your own equipment or rent. At Battlefield Paintball, pick your

paintball field—such as Destroyed city or D-Day. You may also pick a game—like Alien Invasion or Capture the Flag. Stripped cars and rubble provide cover or obstacles, depending upon whether you're the target or squeezing the trigger. The Battle for Wake Island comes with a Nerf bazooka, a Nerf mortar, and even an armored car. Beans and burgers await at the end of the battle.

- **Visit a college.** Plant the seed.

- **Visit the Davies Center.** It cost \$49 million, and it looks it. It's fun to wit-

ness from end to end. Don't miss the aquarium; out front, the resurrected creek (which had been buried) is back and babbling again!

- **Geocaching.** There are good apps for iPhone and Android.

- **Frisbee® golf.** Locally, check out Tower Ridge Park and Mount Simon Park. According to the Disc Golf Course Review site, four of the top eleven Frisbee golf courses in the United States are in Wisconsin, and one is in Minnesota. Road trip!



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Why School Choice? What is the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?

The recent expansion of School Choice in Wisconsin has raised many questions about the program. Why is it important? Who can apply? How does the program affect our area schools?

Let's start with what many Wisconsin parents commonly know to be true—Wisconsin's strength is cultivated in our schools—all of our schools: public, private, and religious. Wherever they are educated, students should have effective, motivating, and challenging schools and teachers. Options for getting back to the basics are key.

What is the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?

The new Wisconsin Parental Choice Program allows parents to decide where their children will be educated, it gives parents the ability to direct their tax dollars to the schools of their choice, and it gives teachers and schools the ability to innovate and improve in response to parental demand. If a Wisconsin family is within the income guidelines—at or below 185% of the federal poverty level—that parent can apply to send his/her student to a Choice school for FREE.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limits are shown here. For each additional family member over the age of 6, add \$7,541.

| Family Size | Single Family | Married Family |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | \$21,554 | |
| 2 | \$29,095 | |
| 3 | \$36,636 | \$43,636 |
| 4 | \$44,177 | \$51,177 |
| 5 | \$51,718 | \$58,718 |
| 6 | \$59,259 | \$66,259 |

The program does have a student enrollment cap—500 students in the first year of the program (this current school year) and 1,000 students in the 2014-15 school year—meaning that not everyone who meets the income requirements is necessarily allowed to participate. The state of Wisconsin randomly selects all applicants.

It Offers Choice and Equality.

Catholic schools across the nation and local schools like Regis Catholic Schools have year after year demonstrated higher reading achievement, higher high school graduation rates, and higher persistence in college. For the past five years, Regis High School students have exceeded local/state/national ACT score averages, with almost all of the students taking the exam each year. Many parents, howev-

er, are seeking more than just academic success. They are seeking a unique culture that forms the whole child—intellectually, behaviorally, and spiritually—offered by private and religious schools.

It Saves Wisconsin Money.

Opponents of the Parental Choice Program often claim that school choice takes away money from the local public schools. However, the program is extremely financially accountable and actually saves Wisconsin taxpayers money.

The average Wisconsin public school per-pupil cost is over \$11,000 per school year. The maximum voucher amount to be paid to schools in the 2014-15 school year on behalf of parents is \$7,410 per pupil for K-8 and \$7,856 per pupil for 9-12.

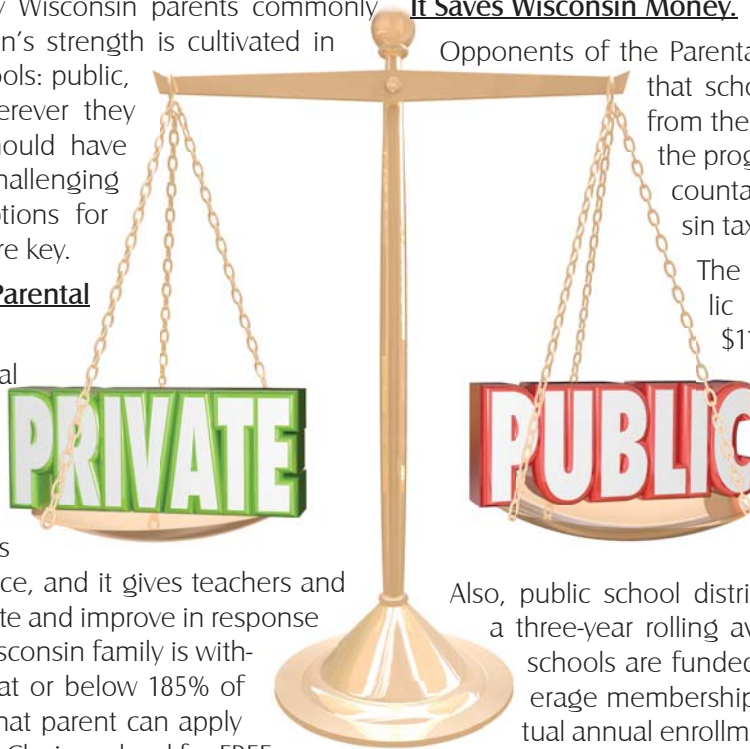
Also, public school districts receive funding based on a three-year rolling average. This is because public schools are funded based on their three-year average membership numbers rather than their actual annual enrollment. Specifically, the number of pupils for which the district receives funding is based on the average of a district's third Friday count membership in the current year and the previous two years. This means that after a student leaves, the public school receives partial funding for a student that it no longer educates for up to three years after the student leaves the district. This is not the case for private schools—if a student in the Parental Choice Program leaves a private school, funding for that student stops the semester the student leaves.

Why School Choice?

Wisconsin recognizes the exceptional contribution private and religious schools make in the forming of thoughtful, responsible, and well-rounded students.

Many parents decide to enter their children into the voucher programs because they want to be empowered in their children's education. This empowerment can take many forms: parents may be seeking a safer environment; they may want to send their children to a private school with a great reputation for better test scores and results than their public school; they may want their children to have a religious education or one centered around certain values but are unable to afford private school tuition.

Whatever the reason, parents who participate in the voucher programs want to be empowered to take active roles in their children's education—they want to send their children to a school best suited for them, not one that is designated to



them simply because of where they are located geographically.

What Local Private Schools are Participating?

In the Chippewa Valley, two private schools are participating: Regis Catholic Schools and McDonell Area Catholic Schools. Both are Kindergarten through 12th grade school systems.

Registration for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program opens on February 1st, and there is a strict deadline of April 17th, 2014 for the necessary materials to be turned in to the schools. Parents must complete the online student application at <http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp>.

For more information, go to Regis Catholic Schools website: www.regiscatholicschools.com
McDonell Area Catholic Schools website: www.macs.k12.wi.us
School Choice Wisconsin website: www.schoolchoicewi.org

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Remodeling - A Unique Homeowner Experience

By Heather Rothbauer-Wanish

Remodeling can be a stressful, challenging, and interesting time for any homeowner. However, the process can also be invigorating, creative, and innovative. For a successful remodeling project to occur, homeowners need to consider many items, including planning, budgets, and working with an established builder. In fact, the remodeling experience can represent a rebirth of sorts—a rebirth of a new and inviting living space.

Eau Claire homeowner Pam Craker, owner of My Friends Place Spa Salon, recently experienced the challenges and excitement of remodeling. After living in their home for 12 years, Pam and her husband decided to add a four-season room and a large deck. “We wanted a room that made us feel as if we were still at our cabin,” Pam explains.

She hired Pawlak Construction to complete the project. Pam advises people “to always check out the builder you are planning to use. We personally knew our builder already, so that made the decision much easier.” She adds, “Our new room has become our no-TV room. I just love to go in there and turn the fireplace on, read the newspaper, drink my coffee, and take a nap.” The project was a success for the Craker household, and Pam would definitely consider adding-on again in the future.

Lance Brunkow, owner of Brunkow Builders, Inc. in Eau Claire, works on approximately a dozen major remodeling projects each year, along with a dozen smaller projects. Brunkow is familiar with the challenges and triumphs of remodeling a home, “Planning is crucial to a smooth and well-managed project. If most decisions are made ahead of time and all materials are selected and ordered in advance, the contractor should be able to schedule the project in a very efficient and timely manner.”

While the builder-homeowner relationship is important during new home building, it can be even more critical during a remodeling project. “A homeowner needs to feel comfortable with the builder, especially during a remodeling project, because much of the work takes place in the home while they are living there,” says Brunkow, “The owner should find a builder they like personally, can communicate with, and can establish a sense of trust throughout the process.”

Local construction professional Randy Tews, owner of R. Tews Construction and Design, Inc., agrees with Brunkow, emphasizing the importance of the client-builder relationship. This includes hiring someone with experience. Tews recommends “hiring a company that has the experience needed and not a family friend. Remodeling your home is one of the largest investments you will make in your life and you should be certain about the professional

you hire. And, the relationship between the homeowner and the builder is what makes the experience an enjoyable one.”

Kerry Kincaid, a recent client of R. Tews Construction and Design, Inc., also emphasizes the importance of the builder during the remodeling process, “We recently tore down a deck and replaced it with a full basement and great room. Before we decided on a builder, we asked friends for referrals and visited homes where remodeling had occurred.” Not only was the relationship with the builder a key component, but Kerry feels that it is necessary to develop rapport with all of the workers. “When you remodel, you will have people you don’t know in your house all of the time. You have to trust them and realize they are just trying to complete their jobs,” she explains.

Because the Kincaids have remodeled many times, Kerry has advice for those seeking to add-on to their homes or revamp a particular room, “First, be patient with the project. It will most likely take longer and cost more than you think. In addition, homeowners should have a good picture of what they want and stand solid with your ideas. Builders oftentimes have ideas of their own, but, ultimately, this is your home.” She further advises to “keep an area of your home that is untouched by the remodeling. Keep this area extremely clean and neat; this will help alleviate stress involved with the remodeling project.”

Seeking advice from others before any upcoming remodeling projects is an important key to success. And, according to Brunkow, if you have a deadline looming, be sure to contact the builder well in advance to ensure the project is not rushed and all parties will be happy and satisfied with the project completion. While she will be happy when her current remodeling project is completely finished, Kincaid hopes to undertake smaller projects in the future, “I really see remodeling as a creative outlet that helps shape your living space.”



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THE **value** OF A SETBACK

Written by Amy Annis

Shifting gears has been a theme in my life the last five years. I've had some major life events—some that I invited and one that was a staggering setback (cancer). Even upon reflection, I still maintain that I barreled through cancer thanks to the support of a rocking posse of friends and family, great medical care, my yoga mat, and sheer orneriness. Here's a synopsis of my path: girl wakes up one morning to cancer, girl kicks cancer's ass, and then girl goes on to create a yoga business that affords her the opportunity to do what she loves every day. Sounds pretty shiny.

And yet, the idea of writing this piece stirred a soup chock full of self-doubt. It took me quite a while to take pen to paper. Here's why:

- I haven't written in a while, and I'm rusty.
- I've temporarily lost focus on the life that I am trying to manifest. I do this once in a while. (I think my focus fell through the cracks of the gym floor when I was attending the one billionth Christmas event for one of my kids this season.)
- The recurring brain chatter of "I'm really not qualified to write a piece on life reconstruction."

I *do* still sweat the small stuff.

Letting my ideas simmer through the holidays, coherent words about life reconstruction slowly formed a collection. Yet, when finally I had a few minutes to sit down and write... nothing. Maybe a cliché or two. Yuck. I had a headache.

Exasperated, I went out for lunch with my husband and told him what I was trying to accomplish. Ted doesn't mince words, and sometimes that's a good thing. His words: "From an outsider's perspective it looks really great, Aim; but nobody really has it all together. You did reconstruct your life, but you still have to maintain and do the hard work. Life switches gears, and you and everyone else will always have punches to roll with."

In reality, it's not about reconstructing anymore. It's about reality-facing, perception-softening, and some truth-serum-sucking.

So, here's the unglossed version. Waking up to cancer in 2009 was a **big** setback. Emotionally, financially, and physically. And although I've written many times about the experience and the lessons learned, I don't know if I have ever written about the recurring fears, the messiness of trying to rebuild, and the mistakes I made along the way. Adversity isn't as interesting as triumph. But it was that ugly diagnosis that forced me to pull up my big girl pants and get resilient. So weirdly enough, I'm grateful for the diagnosis. It was that monstrous setback that made a no-bullshit rebuild such a critical component to my healing. I got focused - fast - and decided that post-

cancer Amy was going to make a dent.

Here are my theories on how to rebuild. It is my sincere prayer that many of you don't need a cancer springboard to propel you forward—just an "I'm ready to kick start a great new life" springboard. 2014 is a great place to start.

1 Define what you wish to accomplish. Write it down so you can refer to it again and again (with big chunky letters and a pretty colored pen). It sounds simplistic, but do what you love. It's not magic or froufrou new age spirituality. If you can find what you are supposed to be doing and then do it, the happiness will come.

2 Start planning, and be prepared to restart again and again. Take a few steps forward, and don't be surprised when you have to take a few steps back. Push harder. Incorporate your left and right brain, your raw emotion, and a healthy respect for benefitting your community and world.

3 Embrace the setbacks or at least be prepared to embrace them. Receive them as messages from the universe. I already mentioned the messiness of rebuilding; I would be remiss if I didn't confess to hurt feelings, missing out on important moments of my children, and piling loads of expectations upon my husband in order to make my dreams happen. I often had to step back in those situations and reexamine my priorities. Some of my ideas are crumpled at the bottom of my wastebasket. But my big picture still remains. Don't lose the big picture. Refer back to item #1.

4 Self message the positive. Oh wow, this is big. Don't allow self-doubt to creep in, and definitely don't speak it out loud. Do this for yourself, and by the way, do it for your kids! Science teaches us that negative messages ("I'm overweight," "I'm not good enough") are gateways to poor self-esteem and mismanaged behaviors. We all get frustrated with ourselves, and messages in our brains get mistranslated; if we can create a positive self-image within ourselves, others will see that same light. P.S. on this one: Don't be reluctant to look for support or therapy on this rebuild. Realize that character building sometimes requires support.

5 Be stubborn. Once you have established your goals, don't give up. Build an armor of resilience, and if it begins to melt from an attack of self-doubt, pull out the superhero cape. Eventually, you will plow through.

6 Finally, be strong enough to experience a setback, but human enough to not pretend that you can always master it. File it away as a lesson learned, and embrace the vulnerability it creates within you. It's that human quality, which we all possess, that is a very strong launching pad to reconstructing our lives. Ironically, we have that crazy-assed setback to thank for it.



WHAT'S IN MY FREEZER?? ...PUMPKIN!!

Written by Kathy Jasper

I know you're thinking pumpkin is used mostly in the fall; but if you put some in the freezer last October, it's time to start using it. If every time you dig in the freezer, you see a bag of pumpkin and think, "I should make a pumpkin bread" or "pumpkin bars sound good," stop looking at it, pull out a bag, and let it thaw.

This recipe for Pumpkin Soup is thick, warm, quick, easy, and feels so good on a cold winter night. It also could be made with squash or even canned pumpkin. Give it a try, and if you run into trouble, remember I'll always be there to help (whether face-to-face or on the *5ive for Women* Facebook page).

Pumpkin Soup

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 Tbsp canola oil | ¼ tsp each salt & pepper |
| 1 small onion, finely chopped | 1 12 oz can evaporated milk |
| 1 tsp minced garlic | 2 cups chicken broth |
| 1 tsp curry powder | 2 cups pumpkin (squeeze out some of the extra water after thawing) |
| 1 tsp cumin | |

Heat oil and sauté onion until soft, 3 minutes. Add garlic; cook 1 minute. Stir in all spices and cook 1 minute more. Whisk in the broth and pumpkin, reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes. Add milk, and simmer 2 more minutes. Enjoy!



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By Katie Mcky

In "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Robert Frost wrote, "But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep."

Frost never knew Dee Cajiuat of Yucaipa, CA; but Frost's lines fit Dee like leggings, as Dee made a promise she'd have to keep. At first, it was a casual promise, made without foundation, much like building a house on mud rather than cement. It happened when Dee, a 2nd grade teacher, was hosting Joshua Cajiuat, her nephew. Joshua, a runner, wanted his aunt to run with him, but Dee weighed 218 pounds on a 5'2" frame. Dee recalls, "I promised him that I'd run with him one day in the near future, but I didn't really mean it. I was too heavy."

Joshua returned to Alabama with his aunt's promise unkept. Then, on November 30, 2009, the bottom fell out of both their worlds.

"Josh had a car accident and suffered a traumatic brain injury with multiple broken bones. He was in a coma for about four weeks. I kept returning to the promise that I'd lost my chance to keep. I felt very helpless about his accident. The one thing I could do was to pray and to get other people to pray."

But how could Dee get people to pray beyond those she already knew? One way was to run.

"The 'back of the pack people' run with stories. The people at the front are mostly running for times. We're not 'runners at the back' as much as people who want to do something for other people, in memory of them or to honor someone."

So, Dee ran, as best she could.

"I put his picture on my chest and ran 5K. Well, I didn't actually run. I couldn't. So, I walked. It took 55 minutes, but in my heart and head, I was running. People saw his picture and asked, 'What's your story?' I told them, and they joined the praying; so I kept entering events."

Next up was a half marathon, and Dee was determined to run in more than just her "heart and head." Knowing a trial awaited her, she started exercising.

"I went to the gym because I knew I would die running 13.1 miles if I didn't exercise. So, I worked out to survive the running."

And this time, she managed some actual running.

Promises to Keep and Miles to Go

"I ran the first six miles of the Dallas half marathon. I weighed 200 pounds at that point. It took me 3 hours and 37 minutes. I had a t-shirt made with Joshua's photo."

And Dee kept running.

People kept saying, "Tell me your story. Tell me your story." "I told them to go on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=QThA4lu2Znk) and look up his name, and that really affected them. So, I thought, 'I have to keep going. I can't give up.'"

And she wasn't the only

one who couldn't quit.

"Some of the other runners said, 'I only was going to run this event one time, but now that I saw what he's going through, I'm ashamed to just do it once. I'm going to keep running.'"

At this point, Joshua was in a wheelchair and his intellectual faculties were limited, so his aunt kept running for the nephew who couldn't run.

"People told me, 'Dee, you should run a marathon.' I said, 'I can't. It's too hard.'"

She's since run 12 marathons, as well as 49 half marathons.

"Then someone challenged me to run a 100-miler. I had lost about 50 pounds, but hit a plateau. Reality hit that I would be running *a hundred miles*; so I got rid of sugar, flour, rice, and even fruit. I ate dark green, raw vegetables and as much protein as I wanted. I lost another 30 pounds. Just last Saturday, I bought a size 8 pair of pants, and I haven't worn that size for 40 years."

However, she still had a hundred miles to run, and she was 51 years old.

"When I ran, I never thought about quitting. We were running for cancer research and for college tuition for cancer survivors, so I kept thinking about all those kids. There were pictures all along the trail of kids who have cancer. Some didn't make it and were only four or five. They endured things I can't fathom; so each hour, I prayed for a particular person. The first mile, I prayed for Joshua. The second, I prayed that I'd finish. Then I'd pray for the children in the photos." (Watch Dee cross the finish line: <http://vimeo.com/83320056>)

As the miles have accumulated, so have Joshua's supporters.

"I started with 100 friends on Facebook. Now I have 900, and nearly all the new ones are runners who pray for Joshua."



And Dee's impact kept rippling outward.

"I eat three meals with three snacks. My class had seen my transformation and when we had a party right before Christmas vacation, they gave up sweets because I gave up sweets. We had veggie plates instead! The cafeteria lady says my class eats more vegetables than any other class. They're running, too, trying to get a hundred miles in before the end of the school year. They're at mile 32."



After hundreds of miles and Joshua's journey from a crash to a coma to a runner again, his aunt is ready to keep her promise.

"In March, Joshua is going to Modesto, CA to run a half marathon, and I'll keep my promise and run with him. I always said I would stop running once I ran with him, but there are so many people who've been inspired by his story that I don't feel I can stop."

And what will Dee be thinking as she stands beside her nephew at the starting line?

"I know that I will be overwhelmed because this moment is something that I've looked forward to for many, many miles. Joshua may have had the accident, but that accident SAVED my life. I was morbidly obese and was in a downward spiral, healthwise. On that day, I know I will feel blessed to have two lives saved and changed: Joshua's and mine."







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Just Don't

Ten Nifty Ways to Look Better, Feel Better, or Save Money

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions tend to fail because the enormity of the change overwhelms us. Great change is akin to navigating a rocky lake...in a gale...at night...without lights. You can mediate change by moderating it. Here are ten possible changes. Don't attempt all ten. That'll put you in the rockin' boat amidst the rocks. Select one and run with it!

1. Don't down soda. You'll save some money, plus you'll give your body the water it needs. About 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated. Our brains are 85% water. Lean muscle is 70% water. Want them to work well? Consider that even moderate dehydration can slow your metabolism by 3%. Three percent of a woman's daily average caloric expenditure is a Pepperidge Farm® Chocolate Chunk Pecan cookie! You'll also save your teeth. One study compares the dental damage done by drinking soda to using meth. Soda is acidic. Acid eats enamel. Once enamel is gone, it's gone forever.

2. Don't *perpetually* apologize. John Wayne said, "Never apologize, mister, it's a sign of weakness." Well, Wayne was wrong. It takes true grit to apologize. However, if you bump into another woman while shopping and you both trip over yourselves apologizing, you're frittering an apology. A well-placed apology is an act of grace. Perpetually apologizing for things we don't control is a waste.

3. Don't take elevators *up*. Dr. Harvey Simon, associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, reports that taking care of a two- or three-story home is one reason American women outlive their husbands by an average of more than five years. Well, there are lots of stairs out there. And given that women lose muscle faster than men as we age, it's even more important that we insert exercise into our daily routines. Running up stairs is better. Running up stairs every other step is best. Wearing a weighted vest is better than best. This doesn't mean you should never take an elevator. For safety reasons, feel free to take elevators down.

4. Don't jibber-jabber. When communicating, don't expect others to be your only listeners. Listen to yourself, too. When you begin repeating, you're just past the point at which you should have ended. Others will listen more if you say less.

5. Don't work like a marathon runner. Do work like a sprinter. We can focus for only 8-10 minutes before our attentions start to fray; so pay attention to the clock, and reboot your brain every 8-15 minutes. Reboot by moving. Walk across the room. Get a drink... of water! Work in bursts, buttressed by breaks.

6. Don't nap too long. If you want to be refreshed, keep your naps short. Nap for just ten minutes, and you'll awake smarter, perkier, and more aware. Nap for thirty minutes and you'll awake in a state of sleep inertia, which means you'll be groggy and sluggish. It'll be like working in molasses. Also, the best time to nap is mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Nap too late and you'll interfere with your body's circadian rhythm, which means you might be counting sheep instead of enjoying sleep.

7. Don't fret the small stuff. Long after we're gone, the dust will keep falling and the dust bunnies beneath our beds will keep multiplying, as bunnies do. Fretting about particles of dust produces stress and stress produces headaches, upset stomachs, elevated blood pressure, chest pain, problems sleeping, and that's just the relatively tame stuff. Stress can also negatively affect heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, arthritis, and depression. The collective cost of America's stress? \$300 billion. So, don't worry. Be happy!

8. Don't think the choice parking spot is the one closest to the handicapped spots. The choice spots are where the employees park. Plus, they're always open!

9. Don't think that light bulbs are equal. You can burn *one* LED bulb for 8 hours a day for 17 years for 60 bucks. It would take a half a dozen incandescent bulbs and \$620 of electricity to do the same work as that one LED bulb.

10. Don't think you're too old a dog to learn a new trick. Sure, it's harder to learn French or violin when you're 35 instead of 5, but it's possible. Learning new tricks can even reduce the chance of Alzheimer's. What else helps? Climbing stairs, parking with the employees, not fretting about dust bunnies, and naps!

Katie is an Eau Claire native who, after being away in Arizona for 8 years to practice physical therapy and experience the Southwest's healing arts, recently returned to Wisconsin to be closer to her family. She now shares her awareness and expertise through her new business, Goodness! Home Therapy Tools.



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Life Changes: How Can You Be Ready?

Have you planned for the inevitable changes in your life? Do you believe it's possible to do so? Don't put off learning about your financial situation, putting estate plans and wills in place, and making sure you are protecting what's important to you—no matter what your age or income. It is actually possible to plan for life changes by using a simple, yet profound, system called DOS, simply explained as: Dangers, Opportunities, and Strengths. Dangers are defined in this sense as the possibility of losing what is important to us. Opportunities can be described as our excitement for new things or experiences. Strengths are the capabilities and resources that we already possess.

Dangers. Sometimes people put off financial and estate planning because of fear. This can be caused by not wanting to face the possibility or thought of dangers that exist in everyone's life. Maybe it's the fear of the anticipated complexity of learning about finances, insurance, and planning. The fear could be that an individual isn't "ready" to plan because certain financial goals haven't been achieved. Rise above these fears and realize that by facing the fears, you turn them into motivators to help put a plan in place to protect everything important to you, from loved ones to possessions.

Opportunities. Opportunities, like dangers, are all around us and include happy events such as marriage, starting a new business, growing your family, starting a new job or career, moving to a new area, or even making a new friend. These opportunities can help us look at the future differently and see the need to make a plan to make the most of these wonderful things and protect them.

Strengths. Our unique strengths and resources can be put to work to not only help plan for and protect against inevitable dangers, but to put ourselves in the best position to take advantage of happy opportunities in life as well.

Nobody really wants to think about the bad things that can happen, but we all know individuals who have been affected by lack of planning or good planning. We've heard of families who fall on hard times when a tragic accident takes the life of an uninsured parent. We've also heard of a widow or widower who was able to keep their standard of living because of proper insurance. While the money can't bring a loved one back, it can surely lessen the other life stresses on grieving family members. We've all heard of people who have saved systematically for retirement and alternately sad stories of very elderly people forced to work simply to cover the most basic everyday expenses. It is within our power **now** to take steps to ensure that those life changes—such as retirement, divorce, loss of a job, a disability, death of a loved one, or long term care—can more easily be dealt with. Strive for progress, not perfection.

Paul Woita of Woita Planning is a native of Rhineland, WI and has resided in Eau Claire since 1977 with his wife, Cathie. Paul has over 30 years of experience in the financial services industry and is passionate about working with his clients to help ensure they reach their personal and financial goals. He enjoys empowering people through teaching and helping to take the mystery and fear out of what can be complicated subjects related to financial planning and insurance.



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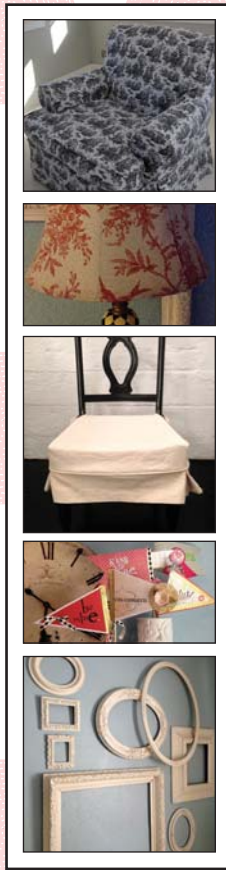
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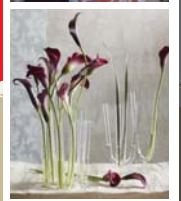
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FOODIE FORUM



A Remodeling of the Sandwich

Happy New Year to all. A new year brings new ideas, so I want to share a couple of recipes new and old. I got the idea for lettuce wraps from my friend, Susie, at a birthday celebration and began researching different recipes. There are so many variations, plus they are family and lunch box friendly. I serve these wraps with an old favorite recipe of mine that I originally got from my mother-in-law, but have “remodeled” with a timesaving step. Please share your favorite wrap recipes on our Facebook page.

Bon Appetit,
Lanette

Lanette Hesse lives with her husband and three children in the Eau Claire area. When she is not computer consulting, volunteering or enjoying outdoor activities, she loves to be in the kitchen cooking for her family and friends.

Chicken Lettuce Wraps Serves 4

- 1 head Bibb or Boston lettuce
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated (or from a tube)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2½ cups chicken, diced
- ½ cup mushrooms, chopped
- ½ cup water chestnuts, chopped
- ¼ cup green onions, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon dried red pepper flakes
- 1/8 cup soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- chopped cashews
- cilantro

Rinse and separate lettuce into cups, and chill. Heat the oil in a wok or skillet. To the hot oil, add ginger and garlic, stirring for about a minute. Add chicken, and stir-fry 1 minute. Add mushrooms, water chestnuts, green onions, red pepper flakes, soy sauce, and sugar. Cook for 15 minutes. Stir in the sesame oil. Serve on lettuce bowls, garnishing with cashews and cilantro. Enjoy with your favorite sweet chili sauce (ours is from Trader Joe’s).

Asian Slaw Serves 4

For salad base:

- 1 bag of cabbage salad blend (such as Dole® Chopped Asian Blend)
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped (unless your cabbage bag already contains green onions)
- ½ stick butter, melted
- 1 package Ramen noodles, crumbled
- 1/8 cup sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ cup slivered almonds

For dressing:

- 1/8 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce

Mix green onions with salad mix. Set aside. In a microwave safe bowl, mix butter with Ramen noodles, sesame seeds, sugar, and almonds. Heat in microwave, checking often until brown. Cool on paper towel. In another bowl, whisk dressing ingredients. Combine all three only when ready to serve.



Quick fixes

by the five Crew



Carlson Liquid Fish Oil

Fish oil is so beneficial for our health. After a few months of taking it, my son's horrible eczema outbreaks cleared right up! Research studies show that fish oil with a high content of Omega 3 DHA and EPA fatty acids has numerous benefits for people with eczema. To prevent an aftertaste, try the lemon-flavored oil, and keep it refrigerated.

Waxed Floss Picks

Skip wooden toothpicks. For flossing on-the-go, keep a small bag of waxed floss picks in the glove box, and voila: confident, flawless smile!



Baking Soda

Most of us already know that it can soothe bee stings and reduce fridge/freezer odors. Baking soda is also an inexpensive and toxin-free way to scrub countertops, sinks, and showers. Add 1/2 cup to a bath for softer skin. And when it's washed down the drain, baking soda continues to freshen there, too.

Bath & Body Works® Candles

Not all candles are created equal. Bath & Body Works candles are made with superior fragrance oils, an exclusive wax blend, and lead-free wicks. The result is amazing fragrance that fills the air for hours!



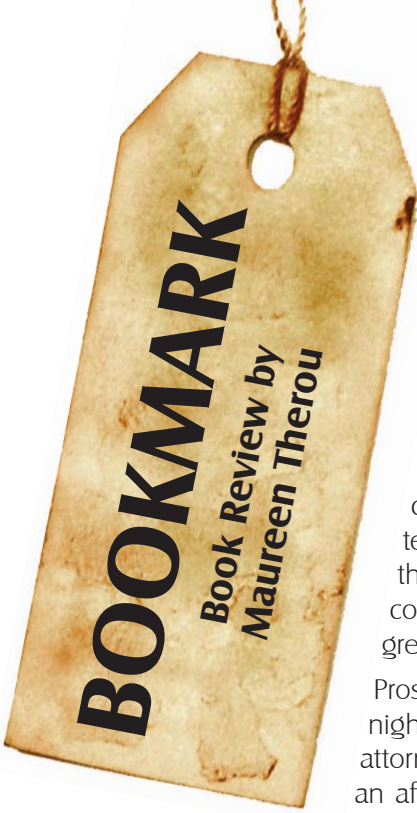
Car Kit: Cat Litter

This time of year, slippery roads are a given. Include a small container of cat litter in the trunk (with the winter car kit) to add traction to wheels stuck in ice or snow.



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Presumed Innocent

By Scott Turow

If you like a good legal thriller this is the tale for you. It grips you from the first page and doesn't let go until long after you have finished the book. It is extremely suspenseful and compelling. It holds your attention because of the reality of the world he has created. It is considered to be 7th in a list of 25 greatest law novels ever.

Prosecutor Rusty Sabich enters a nightmare world when Carolyn, an attorney with whom he was having an affair, is found raped and strangled.

He stands accused.

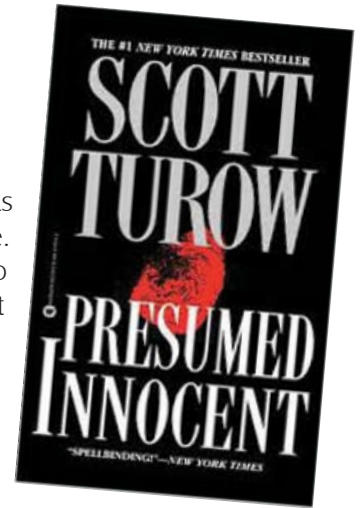
There is political intrigue, legal maneuvering and an unexplained payoff at the end.

Between the covers of Presumed Innocent Turow jumbles good with bad, juggles wrong with right and shows the

reader that the law can be as much about politics as justice. Rusty's lawyer Sandy Stern, who has been his frequent opponent throughout his career, is charismatic and as honorable as Atticus Finch.

Open the cover, sit back and enjoy the journey.

There are over 9 million copies in print from this master of the genre.



About the Author

Scott Turow was born in Chicago, in 1949, to a family of Russian Jewish descent. He went to Amherst College and then on to Harvard Law School. After his degree he became an assistant U.S. Attorney in Chicago where he prosecuted several high profile corruption cases.

After leaving the U.S. Attorney's office he became a novelist. Presumed Innocent was his first novel written in 1987.

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RAYS OF GRACE XV

WRITTEN BY GRACE THEISEN

THIS OLD HOUSE

Well, we moved recently. And I'll have to admit, I've been a little bit spoiled in my life by modern conveniences. The house that I grew up in until now was built in 2005. Our old house was always warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The windows that went up and down. And the lights turned on when you flipped the switch. Let's just say, that our "new" house isn't exactly "new." Our new house was actually built in the 1800's. (That's even older than my dad.) I don't think they had furnaces in the 1800's. We have a thing called a boiler. It is about as big as a small car. And if it were a car, I think it would need to have some work done. Our boiler sends hot water clanging through radiators throughout the house. It is loud enough to wake you up at night! The windows are nice but don't work, and the glass is all blurry. Somehow, parents think that blurry glass is "classic" and "vintage." I thought that the idea of glass was that you can see through it. It just looks blurry to me. And oh yeah, we now

have "knob and tube," electricity. The knobs and tubes have never heard of I-Phones. Under knob and tube, we can't dry our hair if the coffee maker is running. And microwave...not happening. So here I am, happy to be in my "new" house. A house where the heat only comes on when it wants to, where the wind comes through the windows I can't see through, and a house where the lights dim when I turn on the TV. But I still have my family. And we are all together. Here we are. One big happy family sitting in the dark, snuggling together under a pile of blankets (to stay warm), and dining on cold food next to our microwave oven that can't be plugged in because it will blow a fuse. Lovely. I'm happy to be home.



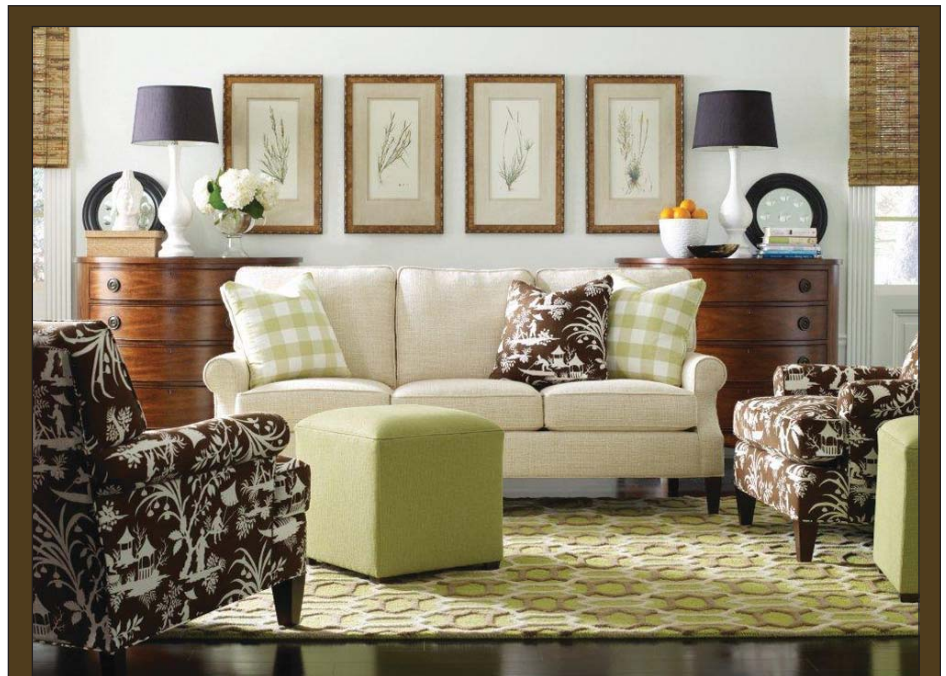
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What's Going On Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY

February 7-8th - Banbury Art Crawl - Friday, 3-9pm and Saturday, 9am-3pm. An exciting two-day event with artists, businesses, musicians, food, and dancers gathering to appreciate the arts. Location: Bldg 13F. Volunteers will direct traffic; ample parking. For more information, contact info@banburycrawl.org.

February 8th - Mardi Gras Gala and Raffle - 6pm-midnight. Couples event package includes raffle ticket (1 in 500 chance to win BIG cash prizes), New Orleans style dinner for two, unlimited drinks, and play money for casino games. Single event packages available, along with dinner-only and raffle-ticket-only packages. All proceeds benefit McDonell Area Catholic Schools students. McDonell High School, Chippewa Falls. Tickets on sale now. 715-723-0538

February 8th - Green Oasis Gardens Craft Fair - 9am-4pm. Cure cabin fever the Oasis way. Get out of the house on Saturday, February 8th for the Cabin Fever Craft Fair. A warm greenhouse awaits full of local artisans and crafters, free refreshments, and one-day-only sales. Green Oasis Gardens, 1403 122nd St., Chippewa Falls

February 14th - Jazz and Wine at the Mabel - 6-8:30pm. This "pay what you will" monthly concert series features local performers and an array of musical styles. Doors open at 6pm; music begins at 7pm. This event is free, but reservations are requested, as seating is limited. Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts (mabeltainter.org)

February 14th - Valentines Jazz Jam - 7-10pm. The annual big band dance is put on by the Chi-Hi Jazz Department of the Chippewa Falls Senior High School as a fundraiser for the Chippewa Falls Music Association. The dance features classic and modern big band music with the Chi-Hi student and alumni jazz ensembles and guests. Heyde Center for the Arts, 3 High St., Chippewa Falls. Adults \$6, Youth \$4

February 15th - Michael Perry: Stories from the Middle of Nowhere - 7:30pm. A hearty welcome back to Michael Perry - a New York Times best-selling author, humorist, singer/songwriter, and amateur pig farmer. Perry backtracks through his books and back-stories in a humorous monologue drawing on the idea that sometimes the middle of nowhere is the best place to be. Heyde Center for the Arts, 3 High St., Chippewa Falls. Adults \$13, Seniors \$11, Youth \$7

February 21-23rd - Home & Garden Show - Friday, 1-8pm; Saturday, 9am-5pm; Sunday, 10am-4pm. Chippewa Valley Homebuilders Association presents the 36th Annual Home & Garden Show. Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center, 3456 Craig Rd., Eau Claire. Pre-sale tickets are \$6/one-day pass and \$10/weekend pass. Tickets available at the door for \$8/one-day pass and \$12/weekend pass. For more information, call 715-835-2526.

MARCH

March 7th - Jazz and Wine at the Mabel - 6-8:30pm. March's "pay what you will" monthly concert series will feature Martha Gingras and Mark Pruett. Doors open at 6pm; music begins at 7pm. This event is free, but reservations are requested, as seating is limited. Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts, Menomonie (mabeltainter.org)

March 8th - Learn the Art of Beekeeping - 9am-4pm. If you have heard about the pollinator shortage and want to make a difference, then become a backyard beekeeper. This informative class teaches the basics to get started. Bring a sack lunch, and wear a hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants. Beaver Creek Reserve, Wise Nature Center, Fall Creek. Registration and full payment required by Feb. 28th. Friends \$40, Nonmembers \$45

March 8th - Comedian Tim Halstrom - 6:30-8pm. Menomonie's own Tim Halstrom has appeared on the Late Show with David Letterman and Comedy Central's Live at Gotham. He's been heard on WI Public Radio and the Bob and Tom Radio Show. Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts, Menomonie. Tickets available at mabeltainter.org

March 13th - Christ Lutheran School's Spring Spaghetti Dinner - 4-7pm. Menu: Spaghetti featuring Grandma Judy's Secret Sauce, Tossed Salad (for dine-in only), Garlic Breadsticks, Corn, and dessert. Dine-in, or call ahead for drive-thru pick-up. 715-723-3697. Christ Lutheran Church, 467 E. Colome St., Chippewa Falls. \$7 suggested donation

March 22nd - McDonell High Craft Show - 9am-3pm at McDonell High School, Chippewa Falls. For more info, call 715-723-9126 or contact Jean at 715-720-1544 or jeanmarie65@charter.net.

March 22nd - 30th Chi Hi Craft Show - 9am-3pm. Uncommon crafts, expertly handmade. Chippewa Falls Senior High School. For more information, contact Pam at 715-723-6633 or weyandt6@gmail.com.

March 27th - Gold Town Showdown Dinner and Show - 6pm (with cash bar available at 5:30pm). Along with musical comedy, enjoy slow-cooked charcoal chicken and smoked beef brisket, baby red potatoes, cowboy beans, coleslaw, and cornbread with honey butter. Come hungry! Heyde Center for the Arts, 3 South High St., Chippewa Falls. \$28/person includes dinner and show

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