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@bravamagazine



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Elroy, a bichon frise-poodle mix who belongs to longtime BRAVA contributing photographer Shanna Wolf, was the perfect muse for our gift guides this month, which focus on holiday gift items for babies, dogs and cats.



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BRAVA

MAGAZINE

BUSINESS

PUBLISHER

Barbara Krause
bak@ntmediagroup.com

VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLICATIONS

Becky Peck
bpeck@ntmediagroup.com

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Marni McEntee
marni@bravaenterprises.com

DIGITAL EDITOR

Rachel Werner
rachel@bravaenterprises.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Julia Richards
julia@bravaenterprises.com

ART DIRECTOR

Ann Christianson
annc@bravaenterprises.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jerriann Mullen
jem@ntmediagroup.com

SALES

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & EVENTS

Ashley Duchemin
and@ntmediagroup.com

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR

Julie Schiller
ads@ntmediagroup.com

SALES MANAGER

Dena Frisch
dena@ntmediagroup.com

SALES EXECUTIVE

Deann Hausner
deann@ntmediagroup.com

SALES EXECUTIVE

Gale Hellpap
gale@ntmediagroup.com

SALES EXECUTIVE

Megan Tepe
mbt@ntmediagroup.com

SALES EXECUTIVE

Jody Wisz
jody@ntmediagroup.com

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Q How do I know what type of dental insurance coverage I need?

It is always best to discuss your unique situation and needs with a licensed insurance agent. The agent will help you evaluate your overall dental health and look at plan options that best fit your needs and budget. You can select a plan that covers your two preventive dental visits each year or more comprehensive plans that cover crowns, root canals and bridges.

Another factor to consider is whether to get individual or family coverage. If you have children, their dental health is very important. At age 3 they should begin brushing their teeth with a small amount of fluoride tooth paste (under supervision) and start seeing a dentist on a regular basis. The dentist and hygienist will provide some tips to help make brushing teeth fun. Developing good habits at an early age will benefit your child throughout the rest of their life.

Q What if my employer already offers dental insurance, should I still compare other options?

That would depend on how the plan your employer is offering works for you and your family. Most employer plans provide excellent coverage, but if the plan results in paying a lot of money out-of-pocket, it might make sense to see if you can improve your coverage by adding an individual or family plan. A licensed agent can help you evaluate the cost and benefits to see if it would benefit you.

Q What if I want to keep seeing my current dentist?

Momentum Dental Insurance is owned by the dentists of Dental Health Associates of Madison. They have six clinics in Madison and over 27 dentists to choose from. In addition to the Dental Health Associates clinics, Momentum has a nationwide network that your current dentist may already be participating in.

Q How long does it take to get Momentum Dental Insurance?

You can enroll in a Momentum Dental plan that can start as early as the first of next month. The actual process of enrolling only takes about four minutes on our website www.momentumplans.com.

Q What if I enroll in a plan, but later move or my employer decides to offer coverage?

Momentum, unlike many other carriers does not lock you in to a 12-month contract. If your situation changes after you enroll in one of our plans, just send us an e-mail with the date you want to cancel your coverage. It is just that easy. If you move but are still a Wisconsin resident, you can continue to use your Momentum Dental benefits. Just contact us with your new address and we will provide you a list of providers in your new location.

Q Why should I consider purchasing a dental insurance plan?

Too many people go without dental insurance. Whatever the reason, this is a serious problem. Dental insurance allows you to get the care your teeth need without paying outrageous prices. People without dental insurance often forgo their twice-yearly preventative check-ups to save money. These check-ups are essential in preventing major dental problems from developing and in the long run, can save patients thousands of dollars.

The value of dental insurance goes beyond just maintaining your oral health. With regular dental care, your dentist may also be able to catch signs of diabetes, leukemia, heart disease, oral cancer and other serious diseases before more obvious symptoms appear. For many of these diseases, subtle symptoms appear in the mouth first. Other diseases, such as heart disease, can actually be caused by bacteria that originates in the mouth. Regular professional dental cleanings may prevent a serious disease or catch it early enough for you to receive treatment before it gets worse.



CROSSING DIVIDES

THERE HAS BEEN a lot of ink, and air time, given this year to divisions. Apparently, divisiveness is at an all-time high in the United States—in politics, between men and women, among folks of different ages, races and religions and between rich and poor. It can be so exhausting to think about all the ways we are not alike, instead of, as Maya Angelou famously reminded us, thinking about all the ways we are alike.

At BRAVA in 2018, we've brought to light so many examples of women crossing divides to bring people together. We've spotlighted the many programs offered by the YWCA to bridge disparities in Madison. We launched our first-ever THRIVE After 55 Expo and featured in our pages dozens of "women of a certain age" living robust, active and friend-filled lives.

We highlighted the amazing women who are working to decrease the heartbreaking black infant mortality rate. And we showcased women in business, in the arts and at local nonprofits who are making positive change in their communities, who are healing and building, feeding us and making us laugh.

Highlighting the good—even life affirming—things women do in their lives and for the life of our community has always been the BRAVA way, and we've got no shortage of positive fare to dish out in this edition.

Our cover message isn't just sending out joyous vibes gratuitously. Inside is some really fun stuff, including three whole pages featuring adorable gifts for the "little ones" in our lives: our babies and our cats and dogs. And don't miss the clever pup on P. 64, who is helping teach school kids to realize that those with disabilities are more like us, than unlike.

We interviewed Sandra Gajic, the first woman to take the helm of the city's flagship cultural organization, the Overture Center for the Arts. And don't miss the mouthwatering brunch spread put together by local foodies with no shortage of libations in the mix.

Here's to a happy holiday season for all!

Marni

Marni McEntee
Editor-in-Chief



DON'T MISS | Save the date for the 2019 Well Expo Jan. 25-26 at Monona Terrace. Visit more than 100 booths focusing on wellness, healthy foods and fitness. And don't be shy about wearing your yoga togs all day. Lots of visitors do! *Details at BRAVAmagazine.com.*

WRITERS

KALIE GREENBERG

"THE OPTIMISM OF EDUCATION," P. 63

Kalie is the weekend anchor at NBC 15. She moved to Madison in 2017. You'll often find her exploring the Badger State with her dog Kane.

NICOLE C.W. GRUTER

"A WALK IN THE WOODS," P. 58

Nicole, who holds a master's degree in fine arts, writes, performs and organizes. Wisconsin state parks are a favorite of hers, as is prosciutto wrapped cantaloupe. positivespace.life.

ERIN HUEFFNER

"IN THE HOLE," P. 24

A lifelong Badger fan, Erin earned her bachelor's degree in English and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She loves boating on Lake Mendota.

MOLLY NAGAPPALA

"PROCESS MAKES PERFECT," P. 28

Molly is a writer, a lifelong Wisconsinite, an aspiring world traveler and a recovering bureaucrat. You can find her on Twitter and Instagram @sconniemolly.

KATIE REISER

"PUTTING A FLOOR UNDER THE PELVIC ORGANS," P. 22

Katie resides on the near west side with her family. She works for a trade association and her side hustles are freelance writing and Poshmark.

MEGAN ROESSLER

"FIGURING OUT FATS," P. 20

Megan studied art history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is interested in environmental history, and she makes comics in her spare time.

CANDICE WAGENER

"WHAT'S COOKING?" P. 57

Candice loves writing about great food, unique places and inspiring people. A graduate of the UW Journalism School, she came to Wisconsin from the Chicago area. Follow her on Instagram @candicewagener.

ARTISTS

ASHLEY ANDERSON

GIFT GUIDES, P. 13, 19 AND 55

Ashley has worked in graphic design and illustration for over eight years. She shares her love of fashion at style608.com.

SUNNY FRANTZ

PHOTOS THROUGHOUT

A former BRAVA gal, Sunny uses her marketing, graphic design and styled photography skills to connect small businesses with their ideal audience. Follow her on Instagram @sunny.frantz.

HILLARY SCHAVE

"BREAKING NEW GROUND," P. 42

Hillary is a fun pro photographer who puts her left shoe on first and adores shooting weddings, portraits and boudoir for her studio, Azena Photography. azenaphoto.com.

VALERIE TOBIAS

"PROCESS MAKES PERFECT," P. 28

AND "THE OPTIMISM OF EDUCATION," P. 63
Valerie's interests include cheese, live comedy, bicycling, adventures, talking to strangers and photojournalism. She lives in Madison with her husband and daredevil son.

LISA WILCOX

"CHILD'S PLAY AT THE BLACK EARTH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM," P. 16

Lisa is a natural light photographer specializing in high school senior, family portraits and modern headshots. See her work at lisawilcoxphoto.com.

SHANNA WOLF

PHOTOS THROUGHOUT

Shanna is a freelance photographer specializing in portrait, documentary and interior photography. Her style is simple and bright, and she loves storytelling through still photography. sphotographyandstyling.com.

To read more about our contributors, visit bravamagazine.com

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The image features four hosts of 'The Bobby Bones Show' sitting on a white bench. The background is a light gray with a geometric pattern. On the left, there is a map of Tennessee with a red heart icon. On the right, there is a map of Mississippi with a red heart icon. The text '96.3 STAR COUNTRY #1 FOR NEW COUNTRY' is in the top left, and 'THE BOBBY BONES SHOW' is in a black box on the right. Below the show name, it says 'WEEKDAYS 5AM - 9AM' and '963STARCOUNTRY.COM'.

CONNECT

SOFT AND SQUEEZABLE

Wee ones are the most fun to shop for, even if they end up more interested in playing with the box. Local stores have got you covered with gifts that match adorableness with quality.

STYLED BY ASHLEY ANDERSON AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANNA WOLF



(Clockwise from bottom left) Usborne Very First Words Animals Book, \$7.99; Playthings, Hilldale Mall, Madison. Baby Jack & Co 8x8 crinkle squares, \$12.99, Douglas Baby Cuddle Toys Lil' Snugglers Mini Blanket for Birth and Up, \$14.99; The Next Generation, Stoughton. Plan Toys Sustainable Play Penguin Wheelie 2m+, \$15, Plan Toys Sustainable Play Mosaic Blocks 3+, \$10; Playthings, Hilldale, Madison. The Manhattan Toy Company Winkle Bunny Activity Toy 0+, \$14.99, Robeez 100% Leather Booties 0-6m, \$26; The Next Generation, Stoughton. Joobles Organic Stuffed Animal, \$25.90; fairindigo.com. My Little Rattle and Teether Books, \$6.99; The Next Generation, Stoughton.

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CONGRATS!



Nicole Moll, a 2017 BRAVA Woman to Watch and founder of Box of Balloons, has started a new chapter with the publication of a children's book. Moll, whose nonprofit creates birthday party kits for organizations that serve children in need, has just released "Box of Balloons," a book depicting how and why the organization started. Moll says she wrote the book to bring awareness to the organization and its mission and to teach kids the importance of celebrating everyone. Box of Balloons works with school social workers, domestic abuse shelters and organizations such as Porch Light and Head Start to help make sure no child's birthday is forgotten.

SAVE THE DATE



1/25-1/26 | Times Vary

2019 Well Expo

Ramp up your metabolism in the new year with the 2019 Well Expo at Monona Terrace, the only event in the Madison area showcasing local resources for wellness programs, healthy foods, green living, weight loss, beauty and much more! It's the Expo's 10th year, and with over 100 exhibitors, it promises to be the best Expo yet. For schedule and tickets, visit BRAVAmagazine.com.

1/29 | 5:30-8:30 p.m.

2019 Women to Watch Soiree

Meet BRAVA's 2019 Women to Watch, amazing Madison-area women whose work enriches the community every day. Nibble on tasty food, enjoy a beverage and network with like-minded women in the fabulous new DreamBank space downtown.

Details at BRAVAmagazine.com. 🌸

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Karen Carlock, founder of the Black Earth Children's Museum

CONNECT | IN HER SHOES

CHILD'S PLAY AT THE BLACK EARTH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Karen Carlock gives back with thriving nonprofit

BY JULIA RICHARDS

WHOLE TREES LEND the support for a climbing structure where kids can test their bravery crossing a net bridge. A pretend shopping market and a performance stage with costumes and instruments invite interactive play. Each exhibit is designed to provide at least 15 minutes of activity, and with art, science and engineering experiments, there's a strong educational component. That my 4-year-old dove right in and could have stayed for hours attests to the high quality of this children's museum.

It's an unexpected find in Black Earth, population 1,415, and one of only a handful of children's museums across the country in towns under 10,000. To make such a project work in such a small town takes lots of community support.

"We don't have the level of corporate funding that a larger museum will, since we don't have the traffic," says Karen Carlock, who started the museum with her husband. "But we've had a lot of local business support and individual support to be able to get our cool exhibits built and keep running," she adds. Many of the offerings have a regional focus, including a barn, a wigwam and a wetland.

Since opening in June 2017, the Black Earth Children's Museum has grown to 350 memberships. Its first year it hosted 15,000 visitors, mainly from a 50-mile radius including Baraboo, Dodgeville, Sauk City, Verona and Middleton.

The museum now has a full-time operations director in addition to several

PHOTOGRAPHED BY LISA WILCOX

part-time staff. Carlock has never been paid in her role as executive director, and while she plans to stay involved, she's pleased the museum is becoming self-sustaining. "My vision was to start something that would belong to the community. So, with the formation of a nonprofit we have that; it's actually a community-owned resource," she says.

Carlock and her husband met working at Epic Systems. After he sold his spin-off healthcare consulting firm in 2014, they decided to buy a building on Black Earth's Main Street. "I had always had a dream of starting some sort of nonprofit, and it just seemed perfect to use that space to give back to the community," Carlock explains.

On a family road trip with their kids, now ages 5, 4 and 2, they visited a children's museum in Marquette, Michigan, and thought, why not in Black Earth?

Area volunteers helped develop and build the exhibits, which Carlock says adds to the museum's specialness. "It's almost all been handmade by someone local. I really like that. It feels more charming."

The community rallied around the museum in the wake of the late summer flooding, which filled the basement of their building. They reopened in September after cleaning up and replacing the electrical system. While it was an expensive setback, Carlock is grateful the flooding didn't affect any exhibits on the main floor.

So are the area families who are frequent visitors.

"My kids love all of the exhibits and activities," says museum member Kim Siebecker. "As a parent, I am thrilled that my kids have the opportunity to learn and explore in such a creative and interactive space!" 🌸

blackearthchildrensmuseum.org



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To your second question: closing credit cards that you don't use, I think, is generally good practice. Having two to four credit cards total where you do not charge up to the maximum amount seems to have a positive impact on credit scores, and I recommend this practice. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- All the merchant offers to get their credit card to save money can add too many cards to keep track of and also can lower your overall credit score.
- The longer you have a card, the better the impact on your credit rating. So, if you are looking to close a card, you may want to close one you have not had for a long time.
- Calculations by credit rating services are complex and protected. While we know some ways that credit ratings can be impacted positively or negatively, and we help members with that every day at Summit, how much impact any one aspect will have on your own credit score will vary by your own credit history.
- Cutting up a card does not cancel it. You will need to contact the issuer at the number on your card to start the process.

Happy safe shopping!

Kim Sponem is CEO & President, since 2002, of Summit Credit Union, a \$3.2 billion, member-owned financial cooperative with more than 181,000 members. Kim has a passion for empowering people to improve their financial well-being for a richer life.

Ask Kim your money questions at MoneySmarts@SummitCreditUnion.com.

MONEY SMARTS

BY KIM SPONEM

With the risk of fraud when online shopping, I want to make sure I'm being smart. What's better to use, my debit or credit card? Should I close credit cards I no longer use?

I'm a big online shopper. I love the convenience. I like to shop at companies I know about and I make sure I see the lock sign in the address bar verifying it is a secured payment site.

As a reminder, your card can be compromised by using it in person, too, as many merchants store your card information. There certainly have been a lot of merchant breaches of well-known retailers over the years. The unfortunate reality is that merchants are not liable for your lost data, and that can mean less care in protecting it. When someone hacks a merchant site and obtains your credit card information, you and the financial institution that issued the card do the work of reporting fraudulent transactions. In my role as the CEO of one of the largest consumer-owned financial institutions in Wisconsin, I testified in front of a subcommittee, Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit of the House of Representatives, stating that businesses that hold consumer data are not being held to high enough security standards. Higher cyber security standards for merchants would be a step in the right direction.



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FIGURING OUT FATS

A nutritionist's guide

BY MEGAN ROESSLER

THE WORLD OF nutrition can be a tricky place to navigate, especially around the holidays. Even more so when you're trying to consider the amount and type of fat you consume.

Katy Wallace, a Madison naturopathic doctor and nutrition consultant with a background in ecology, explains that there are two main types of fats: saturated and unsaturated. "Found naturally," she says, "both are really healthy." Natural sources of healthy fats include foods like olives, walnuts, flaxseed and grass-fed meats.

It's when fats and oils become processed and hydrogenated that we get into trouble. The problem with manufactured fats—those found in hydrogenated oils such as margarine or highly processed snack food—is that our bodies can't produce the enzyme that breaks them down. "This can accelerate aging and disease," says Wallace.

Similarly, consuming too much Omega-6, a fatty acid found in grains and seeds, can lead to inflammation in the cardiovascular system. To balance this, Wallace says to pay attention to the amount of grains or grain-fed meat that

you're eating, and to balance these with foods rich in Omega-3 such as olives, flaxseed and seafood.

Wallace describes these Omega-3's as anti-inflammatory, adding that, "generally they will help with pain relief such as joint pain, as well as help lower unhealthy cholesterol levels that reflect inflammation."

If we know what to look for, it's fairly easy to apply these tricks to our daily routines. At the market or grocery store, choose foods like olive oil, walnuts, sardines or salmon, and meats and dairy from grass-fed animals.

When out to eat, Wallace recommends keeping an eye out for these same things on the menu. "In Madison we're lucky," she says, "We can typically go to a restaurant and find wild and grass-fed proteins."

Lastly, at parties and other social gatherings where things can get a bit less predictable, she recommends keeping it simple with foods like nuts, quality cheeses, olives, fresh fruits and vegetables, and natural meats for happy and healthy snacking. 🌸



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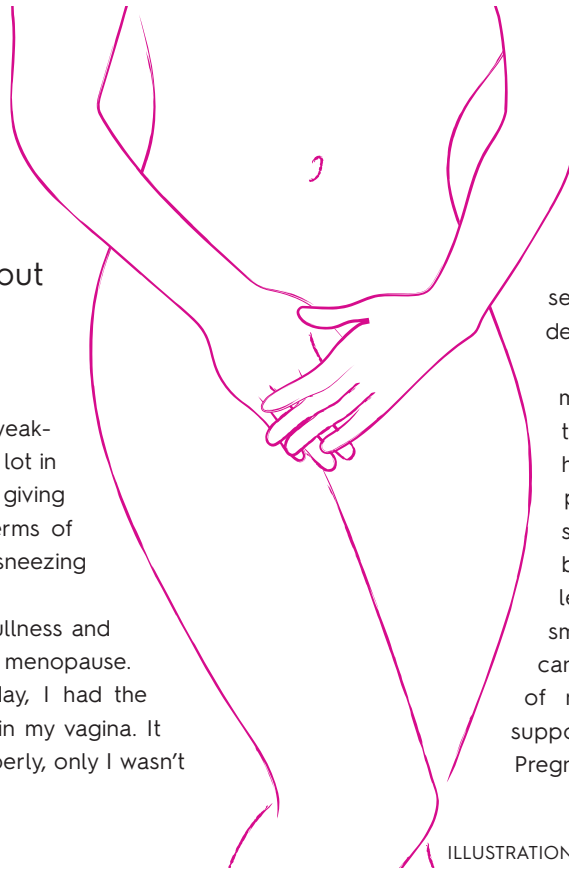
PUTTING A FLOOR UNDER THE PELVIC ORGANS

Demystifying a common, but rarely discussed condition

BY KATIE REISER

COMING FROM A FAMILY of weak-bladdered women, I figured it was my lot in life to pee a little while laughing. After giving birth in 2000, things got worse in terms of “accidents” when laughing, coughing, sneezing or jumping.

In 2015 I began to feel a strange fullness and pressure in my vagina but blamed it on menopause. After going to the bathroom one day, I had the sensation that something was askew in my vagina. It felt like a tampon was inserted improperly, only I wasn’t using a tampon.



Rather than going to the doctor, I preferred to (mis)diagnose myself online. While Googling, I learned about pelvic organ prolapse. UW Health’s Pelvic Wellness Clinic appeared in my frenzy of Internet searches, so I made an appointment despite being mortified.

My anxiety turned out to be misplaced (like my pelvic organs); the friendly staff assured me they had seen it all. This is because 50 percent of women will experience some type of pelvic floor disorder by age 80. I was incredulous to learn that your bladder, rectum, small bowel, uterus and vagina can drop when the “hammock” of muscles, ligaments and tissues supporting them weakens.

Pregnancy and childbirth are common

ILLUSTRATION BY ANN CHRISTIANSON

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factors but others include smoking, obesity, injury, chronic constipation and chronic coughs.

My affable Urogynecologist, Dr. Dobie Giles, diagnosed me and explained treatments. In a recent conversation he explained why this condition is often shrouded in secrecy and shame. "It's a lack of awareness combined with it being in an area of the body that people feel uncomfortable talking about. Every day I have patients say 1) 'I thought I was the only one' and 2) 'I didn't know there were options.'"

Those options include use of a pessary and vaginal physical therapy.

A pessary is a removable device inserted in the vagina to support its structure, which can mitigate some of the bulging and pressure caused by pelvic organ prolapse. Archaeologists have unearthed ancient pessaries, so clearly this has been an issue for millennia. Currently they are available in all shapes and sizes.

Vaginal physical therapy can also help relieve symptoms including urinary and fecal incontinence. Specially trained physical therapists teach techniques including Kegel exercises and biofeedback to strengthen pelvic floor muscles.

When my pessary and physical therapy didn't give me the results I hoped for, I became increasingly depressed and

frustrated. I met with Giles to discuss surgical options, which include prolapse repair (vaginally or through incisions) and the creation of a bladder sling. He was candid about possible outcomes and I decided it was worth a shot.

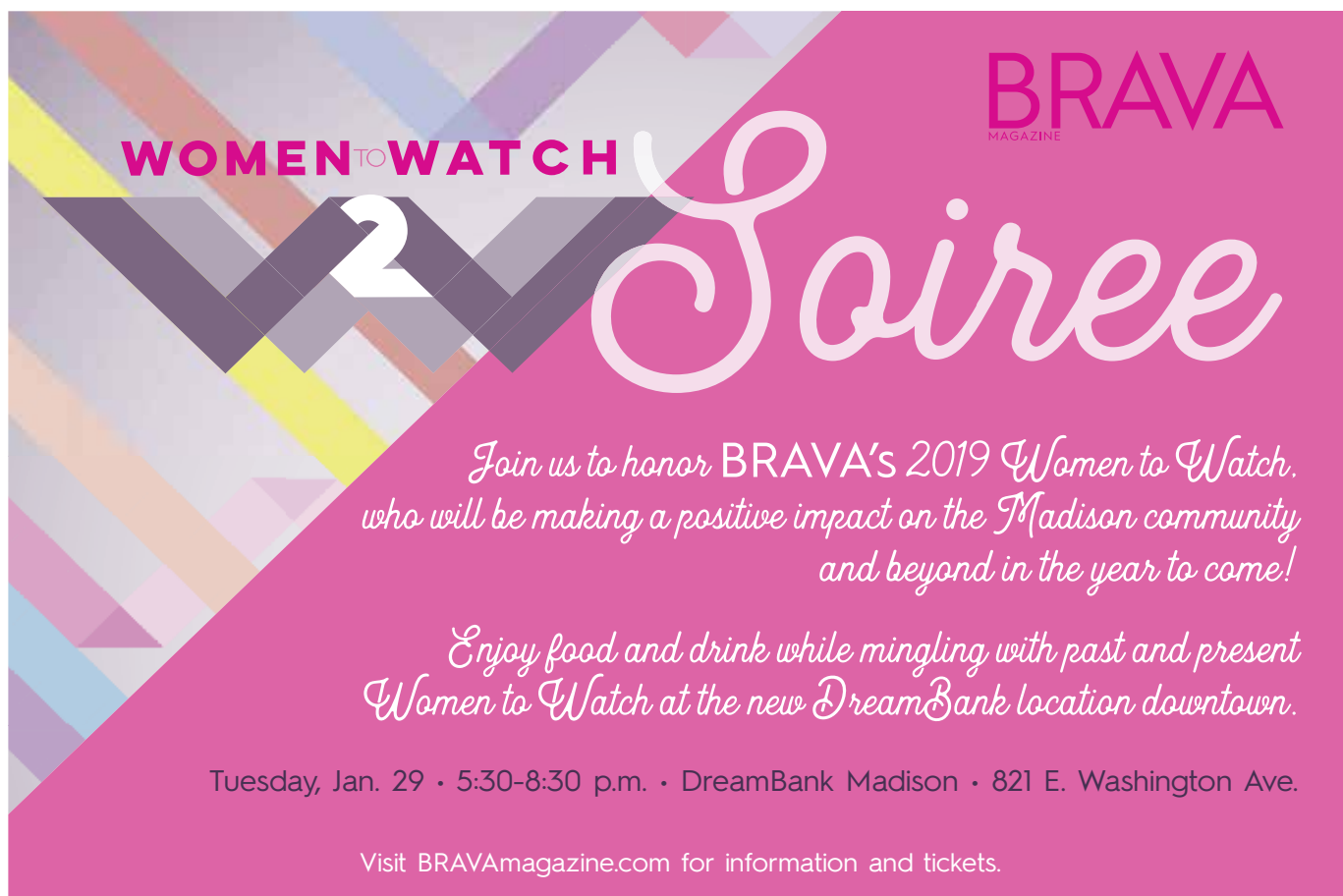
"Every day I have patients say 1) 'I thought I was the only one' and 2) 'I didn't know there were options.'"

—Dr. Dobie Giles

Dr. Giles has a theory about why the topic of pelvic organ prolapse remains taboo, "Right now there is nobody famous who wants to go on TV and say, 'I have this.'" He added, "Even erectile dysfunction has celebrity spokesmen. It would take a very brave person to step forward."

After my surgery in 2016 I knew immediately it was successful. I laughed with friends and for the first time in decades, I didn't have an accident.

If my symptoms sound familiar, don't continue to suffer. As Giles shared, "You're not alone and there are things we can do." 🌸



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IN THE HOLE

How women get into—and can get out of—debt

BY ERIN HUEFFNER

'TIS THE SEASON to rack up credit card debt. With a mortgage, car payments and student loans stacking up, extra holiday spending can tip personal debt over the edge of sustainability. You've probably seen the commercials offering viewers a lifeline: "Call now for a free debt consultation!" "Sick of getting creditor calls? Don't pay them another DIME!" Rather than call that toll-free number, you can turn to some local experts for advice.

It's not always easy (or pleasant) but taking a hard look in your financial mirror can be a place to start. "There are two ways to get out of a financial hole: one is to increase your income, and the other is to cut your spending," says Kevin

McKinley, financial planner and owner of McKinley Money LLC with offices in Eau Claire and Madison. "Pick up a side-hustle or part-time job to get ahold of that debt. Look at your expenses, where every single dollar is going every single month, and track it. Sometimes, people find out they're spending \$400 a month on going out to eat. You can cook at home, and then you can use that money to pay off part of your debt."

"When women get into debt, it tends to be through circumstance," says McKinley. "I see women who are single custodial parents having to take out home equity loans to make ends meet and then falling behind on payments—so it's not always about poor financial decisions."

Student loans are another major reason why people get into debt. The average Class of 2017 graduate has \$39,400 in debt to repay, according to USA Today. And with interest rates on federal student loans set to rise for the second year in a row, it's a real cause for concern. Those student loan payments can add up quickly—especially if a graduate can't find a job that pays enough to keep pace.

"We see issues when people borrow money, go earn a degree, but then don't have gainful employment to bring in the income to pay the debt," says McKinley. "We're told from birth that education is good, and it leads to a better lifestyle, and that's true. But if you're not earning enough to pay the debt off, then it keeps piling up, and it's hard to manage."

But there are smart ways to deal with student loans after graduation. Pay attention to your interest rates and your repayment terms to see if they can be changed.

"The 10-year payment plan is considered the standard, but those payments can be quite high," says Amy Crowe, financial education specialist at Summit Credit Union. "So it's important for anyone with student loan debt to see if they can change their payments to an income-based payment plan. This would lower their payment based on the income they make."

And then there's the gender wage gap. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median weekly earnings for women working full time was \$780 in the second quarter of 2018. That's just 81.3 percent of what men earned during the same time period (\$959 per week). So it's tougher for women to get ahead.

It can be tempting to open a store credit card to stretch a tight budget. "Women are looking for the deal," says Crowe. "We're managing the household and trying to stretch the dollars. And so sometimes it's tempting to open store credit cards to get a special deal. But when you get 20 percent off for opening a credit card, and then you don't pay off your balance, and you have a 21 percent interest rate, you're not getting a deal at all."

The good news is, there are tried-and-true techniques for paying down debt, even on a tight budget. Renae Sigall, branch manager at UW Credit Union, recommends a technique she calls "the snowball effect". "Let's say you have \$500 to pay down your debt each month," she says. "You have five credit cards, and they all have a \$20 minimum payment. Four of your cards get the \$20 minimum, and the rest goes to the one with the highest interest. Once that's paid down, you move to the next"

Another strategy is to create little pools of money to draw from for recurring expenses.

"You can open separate savings accounts for bills you know are coming—like vacations, kids' athletic fees and Christmas shopping," says Crowe. "You put a little in there each month, and then draw from your savings instead of charging it and adding to your debt."

You don't have to figure it all out alone. "Get some advice on how to strategically pay off the debt," says Crowe. "Go to your financial institution, a trusted source that knows you and your situation. They'll work with you on your debt payments." 🌸



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Carrie Waters Schmidt specializes in financial planning for the LGBTQ community, investments that are Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) compliant and helping recent divorcees plan for their new future. In addition to financial planning for individuals and their families she oversees several non-profit and corporate retirement plans.


Why is planning different for same-sex couples? One main difference is the couple's life expectancy; the longer one's life the more money is needed and the longer it needs to last. Women are 10 times as likely to reach age 85 which means it's imperative for a lesbian couple to plan for a longer than average retirement and prepare for the probability of both partners experiencing issues that affect the elderly (such as hip or knee replacements, arthritis, repercussions of a stroke, or mobility issues).

Why consider ESG investments? Many clients have found that investing using ESG factors when investing results in an empowered feeling since it can include companies that are women lead/governed companies, in the green power industry or that promote community involvement. It also allows one to screen out companies like gun manufacturers, companies within the meat industry, or nuclear industry, etc.

Why plan after a divorce? Women are often peacekeepers which can negatively affect their final divorce negotiations. We tend to worry about the effects on our children so we sacrifice our financial security to offset guilt. An example is keeping the family's home. Though innocuous at face-value, it's often a mistake. Homes are illiquid assets and do not appreciate the same as investments. In most cases it's better to replace the home with something less expensive, then pad the bank with a large emergency cash-base. This also frees up money monthly to be used for retirement or college savings contributions.

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PROCESS MAKES PERFECT

Susan Nanning-Sorenson's Kid-Centered Vision

BY MOLLY NAGAPPALA

FOR SUSAN NANNING-SORENSEN, the finished play is not the only thing. She believes her peripatetic childhood as an Air Force brat contributed to "a very open view of the world," which eventually informed a teaching and directing philosophy that emphasizes the importance of process over the end product.

As a young mother and wife, Nanning-Sorenson found a way to be a work-at-home mom by running a small business making and selling dolls. "I'm very artistic and I like to create things, and I've always enjoyed working with fabric and costumes." When the family relocated to Madison for her husband's job, she closed the business and began working with local churches and community theater groups. Before long, she sought to professionalize her directing skills, so she completed her master's degree in fine arts, in acting, at UW-Madison. At that same time Nanning-Sorenson founded First Act Children's Theatre.

And artistic director and director of operations at the chil-



PHOTOGRAPHED BY VALERIE TOBIAS





dren's theatre are not the only hats Nanning-Sorenson wears. She is also a senior instructor at Edgewood College in the Theater Education department and frequently writes her own scripts—original and adapted—for her company to perform. A self-proclaimed former misfit, she also finds joy in drawing a shy child out of his shell or allowing an oddball kid a safe place to learn and express herself creatively.



PHOTO COURTESY FIRST ACT THEATRE

This child development-centered mission is what Nanning-Sorenson believes sets First Act apart from other youth theater companies. "We work together as a team to create something, but the something isn't everything. It's how we get there that's the focus." 🌸

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BY JENNIFER ROSEN HEINZ



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He and a friend twirled in bright green suspended chairs. Before, this area was just a storage closet behind a brown steel door. Designers removed the door and made it into a magical tree-house where kids will retreat with their books for a quiet moment away.

That’s what good design does— it understands how people need to feel and use a space, and it also tells them something about themselves. The underlying message of this design is *you belong here. Get comfortable. You are worthy and special.*

Founded in 1966, the East Madison Community Center is a cornerstone of the Truax neighborhood on the East side. It’s the place where area families, many of whom qualify for government assistance, can access educational and after school programs for their kids, job training programs for adults, healthy meals cooked on site daily, as well as a weekly food pantry.

Before the makeover, the center was in constant use, with little down time for improvements. The entrance was overwhelming— walls covered with flyers for programs and assistance, with no way finding signage. The furniture in its meeting rooms would have been fine for a 1970s hotel conference center, but not for a modern community center meeting the needs of its diverse population.

“This is the fourth DFAD I’ve done,” said Tara Bueddig, a DFAD ambassador and owner of the Happy Home Organizer. “Never before have we had kids literally waiting at the doors, desperately wanting to come in. It was so obvious that this place is their home away from home.”





2018 BY THE NUMBERS

- **\$600,000+** value of money, materials and labor donated by FLOOR360 and partners
- **12,800 sq ft** made over
- **200+** businesses donated time, money, or materials
- **44** volunteers on the design team
- **18** re-designed spaces
- **5,000+** Madison, WI area individuals served every year by East Madison Community Center

HOW IT WORKS

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| JAN | Collect nominations from non-profits |
| APR | Announce makeover recipient |
| MAY to SEP | Begin design team planning and design process, procure materials, volunteers and donations |
| OCT | Makeover, surprise reveal |

Tara was just one of a record forty four designers who participated in the makeover this year. Many of them— like Cathy Driftmier, of Driftmier Design, along with teams of designers from Bella Domicile, Steinhafels, Creative Business Interiors, Cabinet Masters, and Kavanagh Restaurant Supply— return year after year. Others, like Ashley Gries of Casa and Co., jumped right in for the first time.

“When we saw the space, we knew we could help make it shine,” said Bob Tobe, owner of FLOOR360, the main sponsor of Design for a Difference-Madison. “Like many nonprofits, EMCC was doing so much with their limited budget and space.”

The first improvement? “Flooring! Our amazing partners Jaeckle Distributors and Shaw Flooring donated 12,500 feet of new flooring which gave the space a clean, unified, warm look of luxury plank-style vinyl and durable new bathroom tile.”

“The cinderblock walls were really a challenge in this space,” said Angela Skalitzky, FLOOR360 Vice President and Director of Design for a Difference- Madison. “We leaned heavily on our amazing partners at Supreme Structures, who helped make the impossible possible. From adding a concrete ramp to the food pantry, to installing signage, wall decor, and art, they were there with extra muscle and know-how. They were lifesavers.”

With such a large makeover, budget was tight. Madison Elks Lodge #410 sprung into action. The charitable organization entirely funded the mother of all IKEA trips, which

allowed designers to add needed shelving, seating, and storage solutions. Madison College’s Design Program’s 50+ students and instructors jumped in and became master IKEA furniture assemblers. This, too, is the magic of Design for a Difference— everyone pitching in together to get the job done.

Tom Moen, longtime Executive Director of EMCC said, “the makeover far exceeded my expectations. The attention to detail, the clever little touches, the expansion of functional space, and the warm, friendly colors of the upgrades were amazing. Seeing each room was an adventure and for days after the reveal I was still finding new improvements I hadn’t noticed on previous walks throughout the building. I could tell the designers had really paid attention when they interviewed the staff, kids and families about their ideas, likes and dislikes.”

De’Kendrea Stamps, EMCC’s Assistant Director, said she appreciates all of the artwork which warms the walls of the redesigned center. “I feel like the murals capture the diversity of the folks coming into our space. Kids can really see themselves represented. And the adults who come in have found their spaces, too, like the meeting rooms. It’s very clear now that adults have a place here and find programming too.”

Before the makeover, EMCC didn’t have a dedicated space for its First Impressions program, which provides clothing for people who are re-entering the workforce. Thanks to the makeover, they now have a dedicated

room with a changing area. Assistant Director Stamps describes it as looking like a high-end retail men's clothing display. "The men just love it," she added. The an EMCC program participant said, "Just even standing in the doorway is awesome."

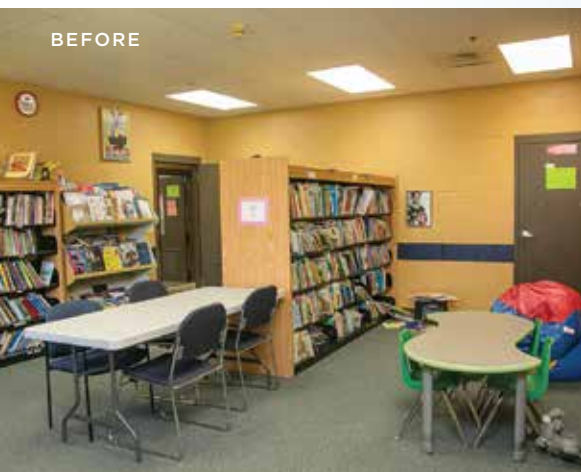
"The makeover far exceeded my expectations. The attention to detail, the clever little touches, the expansion of functional space ... amazing."

Tom Moen

Executive Director, EMCC

"That's what we wanted," said DFAD Designer Laurie Lundgren, of Laurie Lundgren Color & Design, who, along with fellow designers Lori Jolin of Lori Jolin Design, and Dani Frank, of Distinctively Danette, redesigned those spaces. "We wanted their first impression to be hope; for them to feel dignity and respect. Design is our way of speaking from the heart." ■

BEFORE



AFTER



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With over \$600,000 of donated funds, materials, and labor, and 12,800 sq. ft. of redesigned space, you helped make **Design for a Difference 2018 for East Madison Community Center** the largest charity design makeover in the U.S.



DESIGN TEAM: Bob Tobe, Angela Skalitzky, Courtney Wollersheim, Alyssa Trautman, Shelli Soma, Audra Johnson, FLOOR360; Cathy Driftmier, Driftmier Design; Tara Buedding, The Happy Home Organizer; Dan Buedding; Abbey Weiss, Dondi Szombatfalvy, J. Ivory Travis, Tasha Frie, Bella Domicile; Alexandra Wood, Alexandra Wood Design; Ashley Gries, Casa and Co.; Brenda Szarek, Autumn Light Interiors; Chelsea Goeser, Michelle Hackworthy, Sara Hinkel, Zander's Interiors; Crystal Schliefer; Dani Frank, Distinctively Dannette; Erin Lynett, Marling Lumber and Homeworks; Elizabeth

Pieper, American Family; Emili Spencer, Madison College; Jeanne Panucci, Jenn Breunig, Frey Construction; Jennifer Rosen-Heinz; Jessica Feggestad, Madison College; Karen Kavanaugh, Kristi Kavanaugh, Mari Johnson, Kavanaugh Restaurant Supply; Katie Merial, Todd Hultman, Cabinet Masters; Kim Schachte, Lerdahl Business Interiors; Laurie Lundgren, Laurie Lundgren Color & Design; Lori Jolin, Lori Jolin Design; Marissa Martinie; Melissa Keyzers, Creative Business Interiors; Michelle Kahl, Patti Stindt, Debbie Gray, Steinhafels; Michelle Schildgen, Strang; Rowan Childs, Steven Carbin, Iconica

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For more information and before & after photos visit floor360.com/dfad.



BEAUTY WITH A PURPOSE

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SUNNY FRANTZ

THESE HANDMADE WOVEN baskets add color to any space, and what's even more beautiful is the story behind them. They're crocheted by women in Kenya working to support their own daughters' education. The yarn is donated by the nonprofit organization Merry-Go-Strong, founded by UW-Madison professor Lesley Sager. The organization returns twice a year to purchase the baskets from the women, who have become more respected in their communities because of this new income. Each basket is unique and takes about a month to make. Their beauty, however, is timeless. —Julia Richards 🌸



Baskets are 8-10 inches high and 10-12 inches wide and sell for \$40-\$60. Find them locally at Convivio, Ubuntu Trade and the Chazen Museum Store. Sager also offers trunk shows and sells the baskets directly. Email her at lesley.merrygostrong@gmail.com

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PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANNA WOLF



THE FIRE IS SO DELIGHTFUL

SAY GOODBYE to your wood burning fireplace and hello to gas-fueled versions. Cleaner from the get-go and easier to ignite, gas fireplaces are evolving into minimalist, contemporary show pieces. Some designs even make use of floor-to-ceiling surrounds that help highlight the expanse of the room. That ought to light anybody's fire. *—Marni McEntee* ✨

Top left: Linear Fireplace with Powder Coated Steel Surround; DeNoble Builders and Hooper Corporation. Top right: Linear Fireplace with Floor to Ceiling Ceramic Surround; Leader's Custom Homes with Fireside Hearth and Home and CTW Abbey Carpet & Floor. Bottom: Large Portrait Fireplace with Chevron Tile Surround; North Pointe Construction and United Brick and Fireplace.





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QUIET DOWN the holiday roar with simple ornaments that evoke the hush that comes after a snowstorm. A little glass, a little greenery and you've got a stunning and serene nod to the season, whether it's a glass bottle candle stick holder or custom ornament. —Marni McEntee 🌸

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANNA WOLF

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BREAKING NEW GROUND

Overture CEO Sandra Gajic's Fresh Perspective



By Rachel Werner
Photographed by Hillary Schave

OVERTURE



The changing of the guard in any setting can be noteworthy—especially in the case of new Overture Center for the Arts President and CEO Sandra Gajic.

Gajic is the first woman and immigrant to take the helm of Wisconsin's most influential and largest arts nonprofit, where she'll oversee the center's 10 resident companies and its offerings of almost 600,000 educational experiences and live performances each year.

The center's board conducted an international search to fill the position vacated by Ted DeDee, who retired earlier this year.

career. "My appreciation definitely deepened as I saw and experienced more and more — but the basic notion of how artistic expression changes, influences and connects us as humans anywhere in the world has remained the same."

Gajic's understanding of how to expand both Overture's reach and its financial footing may be derived from not coming from a place of privilege herself. "Life was not always easy. I started off having to work two to three jobs, and taught piano for years as a secondary source of income." One lesson she learned, she says, is that "it's not easy being a strong woman." She proudly labels her-

"I love change, welcome change and initiate change."

"We had asked the search firm we hired to think outside the 'normal box' and consider people of color and women as well as men who have typically held these roles across the country," reveals Overture Board of Directors Chair Betty Harris Custer. "Sandra was quickly seen as a person of great capabilities and experience. But it was her worldly background, personal life story and her work with the indigenous people in Vancouver that reflected a desire to have the arts be more expansive and inclusive for all, regardless of economic standing, which fit well with our current diversity and inclusion work."

And Gajic's resume is impressive. A Canadian national, she's held senior management positions with such organizations as the Edmonton Opera and Vancouver Civic Theaters. Born in Split, Croatia, and educated at the University of Belgrade, Gajic relocated her young family to Liberia when the former Yugoslavia erupted in civil war. After several years in Africa, they migrated to England and eventually Canada, where she would help the first 'purpose-built' opera house be financed and built during her time as operations manager for the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto.

"I love change, welcome change and initiate change," Gajic says about the evolution of her

self a "fearless leader and trailblazer" committed to making the city's arts scene more relevant and accessible to a broader audience base.

"Yes, I have a vision, but 'the village' needs to come together to build it," Gajic says. "I believe that this is a fair expectation as I do start from what is a common thread in all societies—that access to sharing and co-creating artistic experiences is a fundamental human need and right. It's our responsibility to both be the stage for local talent as well as bring the best in the world to Madison."

Her desire to be connected to—and fuel—a vibrant art community runs deep. She was trained as a classical musician and has fed a love for opera, poetry and literature throughout her travels. She considers Belgian-born, American writer Marguerite Yourcenar as a personal muse. She hopes to uncover hidden gems of this magnitude in terms of artistic talent and collaboration here.

"One of her (Yourcenar) books, 'Memoirs of Hadrian,' has been one of my most beloved for many, many years," she says. "A quote I treasure is: 'Our great mistake is to try to exact from each person virtues which he does not possess, and to neglect the cultivation of those which he has.'" Thus, like her muse, Gajic's many talents will be put to use, sowing the seeds of authenticity and creativity in the years ahead. 🌸

A top-down view of a festive holiday brunch gathering. Several hands are visible, holding clear glasses filled with a golden liquid, likely champagne or sparkling wine. One hand in the center holds a glass containing a skewer with a cube of cheese, a slice of tomato, and a piece of bread, along with a sprig of rosemary. The background is filled with various holiday-themed foods, including what appears to be a chocolate cake, a bowl of fruit, and other dishes. The overall atmosphere is celebratory and social.

Boozy Brunch.

*Eat, drink and be merry
to your heart's content
this holiday season—
and preferably start the
party before noon.*



BY RACHEL WERNER

Styled by Ann Christianson and Sunny Frantz

Photographed by Sunny Frantz

Drunken Steak and Egg Tacos by Otehlia Cassidy

Cheese and Charcuterie Board by Alice Choi

Holiday Cake by Shawn Bolduc

Ponche Crema Venezolano by Sujhey Beisser

Floral Design by Rooted Floral Company

Seasonal Pastries by Bloom Bake Shop

Shot on location at Industrious Madison





Foodie Magic

Alice Choi's fondness for all things cheese and charcuterie ripened after moving to Wisconsin. Here's what you'll need to assemble an Instagram-worthy spread like her's:



Cheese: Use a variety of different cheeses (sharp, mild, earthy) in various textures, forms and colors. Choi's fave Wisconsin cheesemakers are Sartori and Roth.

Charcuterie: She recommends incorporating prosciutto, salami and Soppressata by folding and slicing in assorted shapes.

Fruit: Dried, fresh—or what's in season.

Crackers: Variety is key.

Nuts: Almonds, candied walnuts, pecans and Marcona almonds.

Pickled Foods: Add interesting pickled vegetables like cornichons (pickled French gherkins), beets and asparagus.

Olives: Green and black varieties.

Jams or Preserves: Make sweet accompaniments.

Platter: Serve on a board or large platter. Choi prefers large wood boards like the one featured here from Rescued Woodworks, a local company that uses rescued, urban wood. hipfoodiemom.com.

Don't miss BRAVA's Entrée on Choi on P. 57

Ingredients:

¾ cup granulated sugar
3 large egg whites
Pinch of Cream of Tartar
(optional)
1 teaspoon vanilla (or any
other flavoring)

Directions:

Step 1. Combine egg whites, sugar and Cream of Tartar in a heatproof bowl from a stand mixer, then whisk to combine.

Step 2. Create a double boiler by filling a pot with about 2 inches of water and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Place the bowl with the egg white mixture on top of the pot. (Do not let the pot touch the simmering water.)

Step 3. Heat the egg white mixture until all of the sugar has dissolved at approximately 160 degrees, mixing occasionally.

Step 4. Return the bowl to the stand mixer and using the whisk attachment, gradually stir on high speed for about 5 minutes until shiny, medium-stiff peaks form.

Step 5. Add your flavoring at the last second and briefly whisk to incorporate.

Step 6. Now the meringue can be used on top of a pie and torched for that perfect rustic effect.

Step 7. Try adding a teaspoon of bourbon or a fave liquor for added holiday spirit! forkncake.com.

Perfect Meringue!

Whether piled sky-high atop a pie or cake, this simple meringue makes for a festive treat.



Ingredients:

1 pound thin sliced beef
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 teaspoons ground guajillo chile pepper
1 large garlic clove (crushed)

1 ripe plantain (fried)
12 eggs
⅓ cup Mezcal
½ of a lime

Directions:

Step 1. Heat a generous layer of canola oil in a pan to medium high. Peel and slice the plantain into ¼ inch slices. Fry in single layer until golden on each side. **Step 2.** Mix together adobo sauce: ½ cup water, 1½ teaspoons achiote (powder or paste) and 3-4 tablespoons brown sugar. Set aside. Put Mezcal in a measuring cup. **Step 3.** Heat a non-reactive pan with a few drops of canola oil to medium heat. Coat beef with spices and garlic, rubbing to mix evenly on slices before cooking in a single layer and heating on each side until brown. Once cool, slice into strips. **Step 4.** After the beef is cooked, heat pan to medium-low and quickly pour in the Mezcal. Stir to scrape any meat off the pan for about 30 seconds, then add the adobo mixture, stirring for an additional one or two minutes. **Step 5.** As the sauce bubbles and thickens, add lime juice and stir again. Test for sweetness and adjust sugar and lime juice accordingly. Remove the sauce from heat once desired consistency is reached. **Step 6.** Assemble by placing beef strips on warmed corn tortillas. Add a few pieces of plantain, avocado slices (if desired) and drizzle with sauce. Garnish with cilantro, pepper and a squeeze of lime. Serve with fried or scrambled eggs. Enjoy! *madisoneatsfoodtours.com*.

Drunken Steak & Egg Tacos

Savor Madison Eats Food Tours
founder Otehlia Cassidy's crowd-
pleasing brunch entrée
Steak and Egg
Borrachos.

Ingredients: *(Makes 8-10 servings)*

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 egg yolks | 1 ½ cups light rum |
| 1 packet Spanish flan | 1 tablespoon vanilla extract |
| ½ gallon milk | 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg |
| 1 cup almond milk | |
| 1 can condensed milk | |

Directions:

Step 1: In a medium sauce pan, add egg yolks, flan powder, vanilla extract, nutmeg and two cups of milk. **Step 2:** Place the pan over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until it thickens (about five minutes). Stir continuously to avoid the mixture curdling. Let cool slightly. **Step 3:** In a blender, mix condensed milk, almond milk and rum. **Step 4:** Add the egg mixture, and blend again, until creamy. **Step 5:** Transfer to a big bowl and whisk in the remaining milk. Consistency should be smooth and creamy. **Step 6:** Strain any lumps using a fine mesh. Transfer to a serving jar or glass bottle with a lid and refrigerate. **Step 7:** Shake or stir before serving over ice in tumblers with a sprinkle of nutmeg. ¡Salud! fivesensespalate.com.

New Year's Toast

Cap off 2018 with a cup of Venezuelan eggnog courtesy of Five Senses Palate blogger and personal chef Sujhey Beisser.





Accoutrements

For those feeling rushed to pull off a party in a pinch, let Bloom Bake Shop save the day. Their pastry case is stocked through month's end with apple turnovers, pumpkin pop tarts, seasonal galettes and plenty of treats rocking a maple or peppermint glaze. Also consider taking a few Bloody Marys a la carte to create for your guests using Bloom's house made Bloody Mary mix, morsels of gouda, pickled red onion and pickled carrot on a garnish stick—plus the sweet potato doughnut half nestled next to a sprig of rosemary for a final flourish. bloombakeshop.com. 🌿



Sugar 'n Spice

Live Your Values

Zeroing in on the important things in life

BY JULIA RICHARDS

ILLUSTRATION BY ANN CHRISTIANSON

If she looked at her life on paper, Gail Coover could check all the “right” boxes, but she was still unhappy. “I didn’t know how to break through a wall I’d set up for myself,” she says. She sought the help of life coach Sharon Barbour and met with her monthly for a year.

To help clients see where they’re stuck, Barbour often helps them identify and then clarify values—the essence of who we are. Honoring our values is crucial in determining what’s good in our lives. They serve as a compass, pointing out what it means to be true to oneself.

Someone might say they value travel, for example, explains Barbour, but what it is about travel may be different for different people. “How I look at values, and a lot of coaches hold values, are more essences, energies, qualities that when you experience them you feel more alive. You feel more like yourself,” she says.

Coover knew that creative self-expression was important to her, but needed to give herself permission to prioritize this value. After working with Barbour, she’s learned to let her gut feelings guide her decisions, rather than other’s expectations.

Barbour asked Coover questions that helped her understand her emotions and how they felt in her body. “My physical expressions of fear and insecurity were really the block,” says Coover, who works to increase diversity in science and technology fields at the University of Wisconsin. “What I’ve found most helpful is to notice where the feeling is in my body and to accept that.”

Because she’s being true to herself, she’s able to connect with the people in her life more authentically, she says. “It’s a shift away from being oriented toward getting things ‘right’ and more being oriented toward who am I in this moment.”

Now, Coover says, she doesn’t use the word “should” in thinking about her life.

As the new year approaches, it’s the perfect time to think about what our core values are and how to more fully live them. Barbour shares some suggestions for how to get there.

*** To identify what you value,** try asking yourself, “When was a time you felt most alive?” Dig into what it was about that time that made you feel that way. Ask, “What do you really need in life to feel fulfilled?” Or try asking, “What makes you so frustrated and mad?” Barbour explains, “That’s the values being stomped on.”

*** Hone in on your core values.** Barbour suggests writing your own definition for each value, breaking out the colored pencils and writing them in creative ways to put up in a place you’ll see often, or even making a collage of images.

*** Now bring your values to life:** Notice opportunities throughout the day to invite your core values in. Consider where you’d like them to show up more in your life. Take actions big or small to live these values. For example, if you value connection and community, volunteer to help a neighbor or local school.

By honoring those values, Barbour says, life will be more fulfilling. ✨





CORE
VALUES

COMMUNITY

FAMILY

ACTIVITY

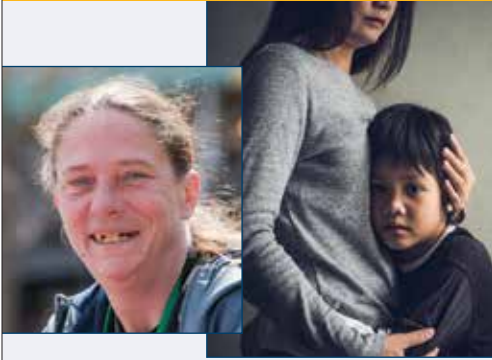
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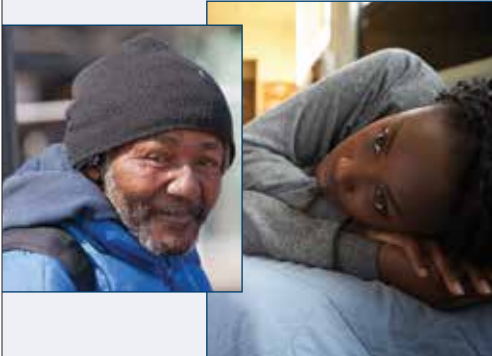


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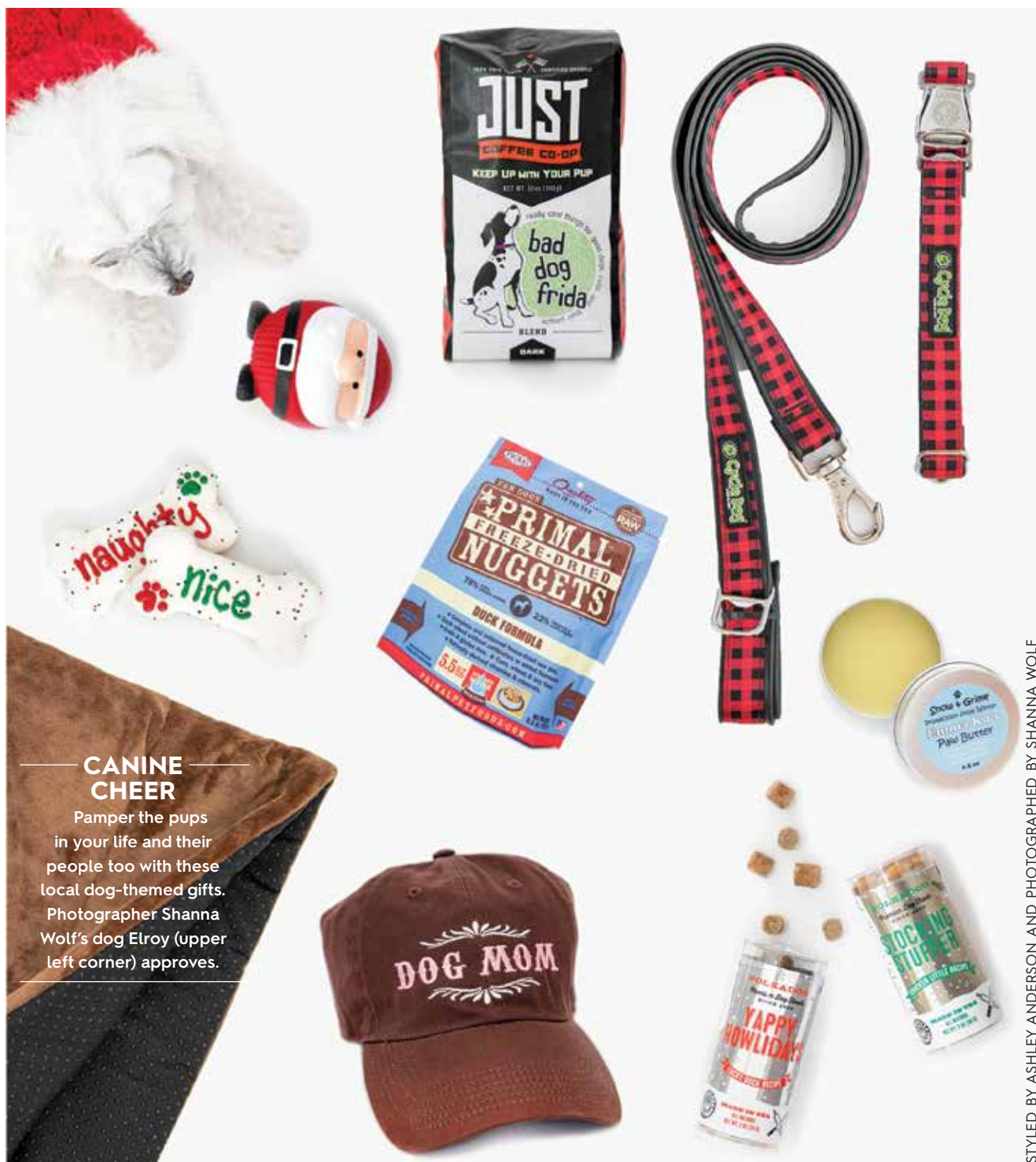
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GO+DO



STYLED BY ASHLEY ANDERSON AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANNA WOLF

Clockwise from top: Just Coffee Co-op Bad Dog Frida Blend, \$11.99, Cycle Dog Red Plaid Leash, \$25, Cycle Dog Red Plaid Collar, \$25, Snow+Grime Emma Ko's Paw Butter, \$12.50, Polka Dog All Natural Small Dog Treats, \$6.99, DOG MOM Cap, \$21.99; Bad Dog Frida, Madison. K+H Pet Products Self-Warming Crate Pad in Brown, \$29.99, Holiday Dog Cookies, \$8.99; Tabby & Jacks, Stoughton. Santa Ruff-Tex HuggieHounds, \$14.99; Bad Dog Frida, Madison. Center: Primal Freeze-Dried Nuggets Duck Formula, \$16.99; Tabby & Jacks, Stoughton.



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GO+DO | ENTREE

WHAT'S COOKIN'?

Alice Choi's Rise to Foodie Fame

BY CANDICE WAGENER

ALTHOUGH MADISON IS FLUSH with culinary talent, foodie celebs still predominantly dwell in bigger cities. Food bloggers are no exception, unless it's Hip Foodie Mom Alice Choi, currently earning an international following by highlighting the Midwest's edible delights.



PRODUCT

Scroll through Choi's digital channels and there's no question she is a dedicated blogger and recipe developer. Favorites like kimchi fried rice, one-pot beef stroganoff and seafood pasta are easy weeknight meals for families. Drool-worthy chocolate chip cookies, banana bread and an entire page of brownie recipes get her followers baking. She also highlights products and appliances that are key to cooking success. And Choi uses Instagram to rave about local restaurants.

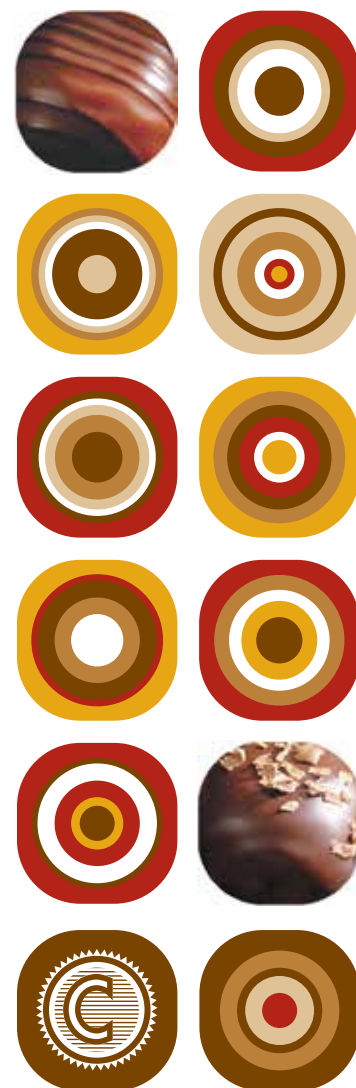
PASSION

Being a parent was Choi's biggest motivator for learning more about the art of cooking and the ingredients her children were eating. Friends and family encouraged her to start a food blog, which went viral, eventually allowing her to quit her marketing job and a three-hour commute in Seattle before moving to Madison five years ago. "Once I discovered there was a food scene here, I was much happier," says Choi, adding that she loves how approachable area chefs have been.

PHILOSOPHY

Choi truly enjoys what she's doing and has quickly taken on the Midwestern trait of being incredibly approachable, personally responding to every comment on her Instagram feed and sharing posts from followers when they've made her recipes. She believes in using a 100 percent positive approach, and anyone who has viewed her videos, stories or posts can see that shining through. We can't wait to see what she does next. 🌸

For more information, visit hipfoodiemom.com.



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A WALK IN THE WOODS

Snowshoeing is an easy way to get outside in winter

BY NICOLE GRUTER



MY FIRST TIME SNOWSHOEING, a friend and I got lost in Wisconsin's Chequamegon National Forest for the better part of five hours. Wearing traditional wood and rawhide snowshoes, we took turns falling over into the deep snow as eagles circled above us, seemingly scoping out their next meal. Accepting that our internal compass was broken, we reluctantly backtracked on our shoe prints, the quick sunset threatening to eclipse our next step. When we finally got back to the cabin, the owner of the land greeted us with a relieved, but memorably stern, "I was just about to come looking for you."

Despite this not entirely successful first snowshoeing experience I became an avid fan. It keeps you active in winter, gets you outside, and best of all, you can snowshoe just about anywhere you can walk, making the possibilities endless.



With an array of modern metal frame designs available now, comfortable options suit a range of needs. The bindings are adjustable, allowing use of anything from Gore-Tex runners to Sorrel boots. If you're craving a faster pace, running snowshoes are created with a smaller, lighter platform with crampons that bite the snow's surface, more so than floating on top, providing greater traction.

Mary Lane, a snowshoe enthusiast and Rutabaga salesperson, encourages people to use poles along with their snowshoes. "They help with more difficult terrain, plus they increase your cardiovascular workout," she says. Snowshoeing can burn more calories than skiing!

There are basically no rules to snowshoeing, but Lane mentions one big snow faux pas: avoid walking on groomed ski trails. Skiers pay for groomed trails, and one tromp from a snowshoe can ruin it for them.

Other signs to watch out for, like those at UW Arboretum, are there to protect animal habitat. Lane stresses, "You may be having a blast, but you might be collapsing the tunnels of animals that live under the snow; there are sensitive places in the arboretum that say 'please do not walk here.'"

Newbies might want to first try flat terrain such as area golf courses (heads up, Odana is cross-country skiing only). Snowshoeing on the lakes is uniquely serene, just be sure to avoid

areas where current is flowing, such as Frostwoods Park or Yahara Bay. The Ice Age Trail cutting through Verona and Middleton also provides easy to moderate trails.

For a day trip, Blue Mounds State Park "is popular because the topography is challenging, hilly and diverse. It's often what people are looking for," according to Park Ranger Brian Yanke. The park offers 15 miles of snowshoeing trails, some of which are advanced and rather remote.

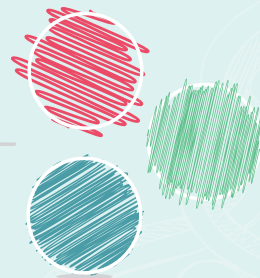
Further north yet, Chippewa Moraine State Recreational Area near New Auburn encompasses part of the Ice Age Trail that loops through glacial lakes, restoration prairie land and old growth forest. The park also features an interpretive center where you can warm up while learning more about the spectacularly scenic area. Snowshoes are available to borrow with a suggested donation.

Rutabaga offers 24-hour or multiple day rental of recreational snowshoe kits which include trekking poles and shoes with simple crampons meant for rolling or flat terrain. Lane warns that rentals sell out for candlelight walks but can be reserved in advance. These walks tend to be crowded, but are lots of magical fun, often offering hot cocoa or cider. ❄️

Check the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website for details about candlelight hikes and many more state parks events. dnr.wi.gov/Calendar/Events/Parks/.

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DECEMBER



PERFORMING ARTS

12/1 - 12/15 | Times Vary

"AFTER THE REVOLUTION"

The brilliant, promising Emma Joseph proudly devotes her life to prisoner support in memory of her blacklisted grandfather, Joseph. But when history reveals a shocking truth about Joseph's crimes, the entire family is forced to confront questions of honesty and allegiance. *Bartell Theatre, Madison. krasstheatre.com.*

12/1 | Times Vary

DOLCE STIL NOVO

Li Chiao-Ping Dance brings together the work of five acclaimed artists in this multidisciplinary performance that puts women at the center of the stage. *Madison Masonic Center Auditorium, Madison. lcpdance.org.*

12/4 | Times Vary

"NOWHERE FOR POLAR BEAR"

A lonely polar bear sets out to discover a solution for global warming. *Diane Ballweg Theatre, Edgewood, Madison. theatre.edgewood.edu.*

12/6 - 12/16 | Times Vary

"SOUVENIR: A FANTASIA ON THE LIFE OF FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS"

The story of one of opera's most unforgettable stars is brought to life by American Players Theater fave and Madison native Sarah Day as Florence Foster Jenkins, a woman whose generosity and love of opera was only matched by her own delusions of vocal grandeur. *Overture Center, Madison. fourseasonstheatre.com.*

12/7 | 7 p.m.

MESSIAH

Sarah Lawrence, Johanna Bronk, Gene Stenger, Peter Van de Graaff and the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra Chorus perform Handel's most well-known work. *Blackhawk Church, Madison. wisconsinchamberorchestra.org.*

12/8 | 7:30 p.m.

LISE DE LA SALLE AND CHRISTIAN-PIERRE LA MARCA

French musicians Christian-Pierre La Marca, cello, and Lise de la Salle, piano, discover the musical relationship between Paris and Moscow through works by Rachmaninov and Fauré. *Wisconsin Union Theater, Madison. union.wisc.edu.*



PHOTO COURTESY SHINE ON MADISON

12/8 - 12/23 | Times Vary

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

Children's Theater of Madison's grandest production of the year features David Daniel from American Players Theater as the infamous Mister Scrooge. *Overture Center, Madison. ctmtheater.org.*

12/8 - 12/26 | Times Vary

"THE NUTCRACKER"

Madison Ballet rings in the holiday season with this timeless story filled with some of literature's most treasured characters combined with the athleticism and romance of classical ballet, set to Tchaikovsky's familiar score played live by the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. *Overture Center, Madison. madisonballet.org.*

ENTERTAINMENT

12/2 | 3 p.m.

CAROLING IN THE CAVE - OLD BEFANA

See the cave illuminated by candlelight and help raise money for local charities while enjoying the amazing acoustics as Ken Lonquist brings his musical celebration of peace, hope and goodwill. *Cave of the Mounds, Blue Mounds. caveofthemounds.com.*

12/7 | 7:30 p.m.

MANITOWOC MINUTE'S CHARLIE BERENS: OH MY GOSH!

Comedian and Emmy-winning journalist Charlie Berens is also the creator and star of the Manitowoc Minute, a viral video series he transformed into an hour-long variety show. *Wisconsin Union Theater, Madison. union.wisc.edu.*

12/8 | 6 p.m.

DINNER DETECTIVE MURDER MYSTERY SHOW

Take part in an award-winning, interactive, comedic murder mystery dinner show. And at the end of the night, prizes are awarded to the "Top Sleuth" who solves the crime. *DoubleTree by Hilton, Madison. thedinnerdetective.com/madison.*

12/21 - 12/30 | Times Vary

"STAR WARS: THE PANTO STRIKES BACK"

Journey to a galaxy far, far away...and discover slapstick humor, corny jokes, and silly song parodies! *Bartell Theatre, Madison. mercuryplayerstheatre.com.*

12/31 | 8 p.m.

"BALL DROP BLITZ 5"

Witness the theatrical byproduct of a group of writers, directors and actors picking names and writing challenges out of a hat one night before the performance. *Bartell Theatre, Madison.* bartelltheatre.org.

FAMILY

12/1 – 12/30 | 5:30 p.m.

ZOO LIGHTS

Thousands of lights transform the zoo into a winter wonderland meant to be strolled through while sipping a warm beverage and browsing the holiday market featuring unique local vendors each week. *Henry Vilas Zoo, Madison.* vilaszoo.org.

12/9 | 1 p.m.

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY

Celebrate the season at this 32nd annual holiday party with popcorn balls, hot chocolate, face painting and an inflatable playground. *Fitchburg Community Center, Fitchburg.* fitchburgchamber.com.

12/14 – 12/16 | Times Vary

"THE LITTLE MATCHSTICK GIRL"

Central Midwest Ballet Academy's rendition of this Hans Christian Andersen classic retells through dance the Little Matchstick Girl's Christmas Eve adventure. *Bartell Theatre, Madison.* cmballet.org.

12/15 | Times Vary

"KIDS IN THE ROTUNDA- PINT SIZE POLKAS"

Six-time polka hall of fame award winning accordion player Mike Schneider proudly presents his Pint Size Polkas program plus family-friendly comedy and magic. *Overture Center, Madison.* overture.org.

12/29 | 9:30 a.m.

FAMILY NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

Come ring in the New Year, DreamBank style. Bring the kiddos for a fun morning of crafts and celebrate the new year in a creative and fun way! *DreamBank, Madison.* dreamfearlessly.com/dreambank/events/.

JAUNT

12/1 – 12/9 | 10 a.m.

OLD WORLD CHRISTMAS MARKET

Enjoy a steaming mug of spiced wine and munch on warm sugared almonds while leisurely shopping from vendors selling their unique and festive wares from around the world. *Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake.* christmasmarketatosthoff.com.

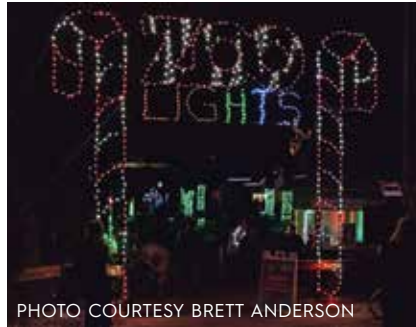


PHOTO COURTESY BRETT ANDERSON

12/1 & 12/8 | Times Vary

TALIESIN WINTER FESTIVAL

Take a one-hour tour around the exterior of the Taliesin estate in a wagon ride. After your tour, Tan-y-Deri will be open for warm, seasonal beverages and sweet treats. *Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center, Spring Green.* taliesinpreservation.org.

12/8 | 1 p.m.

HOARD HISTORICAL MUSEUM HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Featuring holiday music and decorations, craft activities, refreshments, seasonal displays of vintage toys and quilts, and a Gingerbread House Contest. *Hoard Historical Museum, Fort Atkinson.* hoardmuseum.org.

12/13 | 6 p.m.

MUTTS & MARTINIS

Enjoy a lively night of specialty martinis, appetizers, raffle prizes and live music all in support of the Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin. *Beloit Club, Beloit.* petsgohome.org.

12/29 | 10 a.m.

MONTHLY CUPPING AT KICKAPOO COFFEE

Expand your coffee knowledge with a tour of Kickapoo Coffee Roastery including tastings. From aeropress to vacuum pot find out what makes really great coffee from a company that values fairness to farmers. *Food Enterprise Center, Viroqua.* kickapoocoffee.com.

SAVOR

12/7 | 6 p.m.

A CULINARY EXCURSION TO PIEDMONT, ITALY

Savor five courses and five wines while getting to know this unique region of Italy. *vomFASS, Madison.* madison.vomfassusa.com.

12/15 | 1 p.m.

THE ART OF CRAFTING HERBAL TONICS AND ELIXIRS FOR WINTER HEALTH

Join herbalist Linda Convoys as she demos how to transform herbs into tonics and elixirs that help to build health as well as relieve symptoms from common winter ailments. *Lakeview Library, Madison.* madisonpubliclibrary.org.

12/15 – 12/16 | Times Vary

CHEF DAN FOX LIVE AT BATTLE OF THE CHOCOLATES

Watch Madison chef-turned-pork-farmer Dan Fox cook up an amazing mole recipe that you can learn to make at home during this free, live cooking demonstration. Sample the dish, buy the pork and get the recipe to take home. *Metcalfe's Market-Hilldale, Madison.* shopmetcalfes.com.

12/15 – 12/16 | Times Vary

HOLIDAY TEA

Enjoy a traditional English-style afternoon tea complete with currant scones, finger sandwiches, delicious desserts and more. *The Edgewater Hotel, Madison.* theedgewater.com/events.

12/29 | 2 p.m.

BITTERS BOOT CAMP

Taste a flight of Old Fashioneds, traditional supper club snacks and learn all there is to know about bitters. *Avenue Club and the Bubble Up Bar, Madison.* avenueclubmadison.com.

THRIVE

12/7 | 12 p.m.

WELLNESS TALKS: STAYING HEALTHY DURING WINTER

Learn to support your immune system utilizing concepts from Traditional Chinese Medicine, exercise, nutrition and modern science. *Monona Terrace, Madison.* communityevents.mononaterrace.com.

12/7 – 12/8 | Times Vary

GOOD DAY MARKET HOLIDAY EDITION

Shop well-made home and lifestyle goods and buy directly from local artisans at this highly curated maker event. *Masonic Center, Madison.* gooddaymarket.net.

12/8 | 8 a.m.

JINGLE BELL RUN 5K

Don your favorite holiday costume or ugly sweater with bells as you jingle past the competition to benefit the Arthritis Foundation. Run, walk, or jingle all the way to the finish line. *Verona Area High School, Verona.* jbr.org/madison.



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GO+DO | EVENTS

12/11 | 6 p.m.

HOW THE THYROID GLAND WORKS

Katy Wallace, Traditional Naturopath of Human Nature, explains how minerals and diet support the thyroid gland. *Willy Street Co-op West, Middleton. willystreetcoop.*

12/13 | 6:15 p.m.

DREAM BIG: COME SIT BY ME – THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION WITH ANN GARVIN

Explore with health professional, professor and author Ann Garvin what extroverts know that can help introverts, and learn how to bridge the gap between being alone and finding someone you click with. *DreamBank, Madison. dreamfearlessly.com/dreambank/events/.*

12/15 | 10 a.m.

THE MINI CRAFTY FAIR

Buy handmade items directly from their makers at this event that gathers artists from across Wisconsin and surrounding states. *Goodman Community Center, Madison. thecraftyfair.com.*



12/20 | 6:15 p.m.

DREAM BIG: FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY WITH LAURA GMEINDER

During this high energy presentation, coaching maven Laura Gmeinder shares specific steps to embracing fear, learning from it, taming thoughts and using what fear is telling you to take inspired action. Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right! *DreamBank, Madison. dreamfearlessly.com/dreambank/events/.*

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THE OPTIMISM OF EDUCATION

The Literacy Network's Enlightening Mission

BY KALIE GREENBERG, NBC15 ANCHOR

PHOTOGRAPHED BY VALERIE TOBIAS

MANY OF US may not even remember learning to read and write, or think much about how the ability to do so makes life easier for us every day.

But for those who struggle with low literacy—which includes 1 in 7 Dane County residents—the inability to read and write eliminates many opportunities, such as stable employment and keeping pace with our modern tech-based world.

Enter the Literacy Network of Dane County, which helps 1,000 county

Autumn Jackson, the network's senior director of ESL classes. "It provides you with a lot of hope."

Some 67 percent of learners and 70 percent of the Literacy Network's 900 volunteers are women.

"It's one of few places in Madison where people from different communities, within our community, come together in a very meaningful way," says Jennifer Peterson, senior director of tutoring.

The Literacy Network offers classes,

"It's one of few places in Madison where people from different communities, within our community, come together in a very meaningful way."

—Jennifer Peterson

residents each year learn to read and write. The network, founded in 1974, has doubled in size in the last decade.

The organization teaches literacy, as well as the computer and speaking skills needed for a modern economy. The learners are often immigrants and refugees.

"People who have overcome a lot of barriers in life decide 'I'm going to dedicate two-to-three hours a week to education because this is important,' says

and volunteers also work with learners one-on-one. It creates individualized lesson plans for each learner, based on what they need to know, such as communicating with their child's teacher, or creating a resume.

"We serve people who may be facing fears in their life...it's good to have the optimism of education," Jackson says.

Adult education isn't often a trending topic, Jackson says, but support for the network's mission continues to grow. Last



Autumn Jackson
and Jennifer Peterson

year, the network boosted the amount of time learners spent in class by an average of 10 hours. The organization is always looking for volunteers, Peterson says.

"A beautiful relationship can come out of it," she says. 🌸

For more information about the Literacy Network, go to litnetwork.org

DECEMBER NONPROFIT EVENTS

12/1 | 8 a.m.

FAIR TRADE HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

Support equitable exchange by purchasing from vendors and retailers committed to fighting poverty and abolishing human trafficking through fairer wages. All organizations adhere to the World Fair Trade Organization's principles. Monona Terrace, Madison. fairtrademadison.org.

12/3 | 5 p.m.

100+ WOMEN WHO CARE MEETING

Make a difference by helping decide the recipient of a \$10,000—or more—grant for charity. Also enjoy a night of celebration for 100+ Women Who Care and the positive impact the sisterhood has on the community. The Radisson Madison Hotel, Madison. 100wwcmadison.org.

12/16 | Times Vary

DOWNTOWN MADISON COOKIE WALK

The Downtown Madison Cookie Walk is an excellent way to celebrate the season and finish your holiday shopping while sampling sweets at over 20 stops and activity areas. All proceeds benefiting the Madison Ballet. Downtown Madison, visitdowntownmadison.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY ASPCA

TOP DOG | Meet Noah. This 3-year-old cockapoo from Mineral Point was born without eyes and disabled back legs, but he's doing important work in local classrooms, teaching kids to be empathetic. He travels in a custom-made wheelchair with his owner, Lisa Edge, to talk to students about not bullying or judging based on looks or disabilities. For overcoming his own severe handicaps to teach kids valuable lessons, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals named Noah its 2018 Dog of the Year. Aspca.org. 🌸



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Photo by Shanna Wolf

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