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5IVE FOR WOMEN™

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CHIPPEWA VALLEY'S PREMIER WOMEN'S MAGAZINE



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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.



Features

14 Eavesdropping on December

18 Quadding

20 Marlene Ashmore – Staying Focused on the Future

24 Gathering What Remains:
Maintaining Hopeful Holidays for Dementia Patients and Their Caregivers

28 Keeping Up Fashion When Temperatures Fall

30 Starting the New Year in Stride

36 The Power of a Purse

Happy
New Year!
2015

[in every issue]

Editor's Note 06
News from Jen Theisen

Energize 07
Alzheimer's Association

On the Scene 08
Out and About in the Valley

Taking 5ive 10
Meet Women in the Valley

Fab Finds 12
Our Favorite Finds

Foodie Forum 40
Recipes

Quick Fixes 41
By the 5ive Crew

Bookmark 42
Book Review

Rays of Grace 43
By Grace Theisen

Can-Do Decorating 44
Classics Furniture

What's Going On 45
Calendar of Events

Ad Index 46
A List of Advertisers

[also]

Leaving the 16
Empty Calorie World

New Year, New You 22

The Princess Pandemic 32

Simple Home Makeover 34

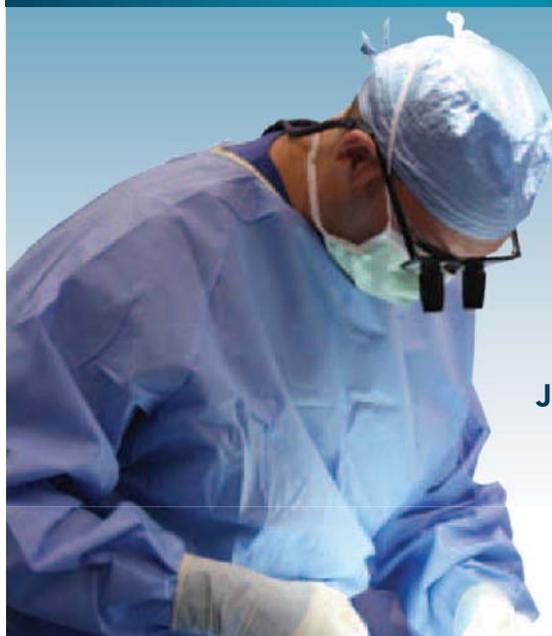
Jingle, Jingle Crazyies 38

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Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.

Helen Keller

Whew! We made it to December, and I am not wearing a stocking cap to bed this year. The Sorels, however, have been well worn already this season. Wisconsin women know how to remain fashion-forward even in bulky boots and big parkas. I am so excited to share our article on how we women can keep cozy and cute in the frozen tundra.

As our adventure in chaos draws to a close, my family and I are officially in the house and settling into a welcomed routine. The

renovation is complete, and I am thrilled to spend the next 30 years getting it organized. I know you will find our tips for getting organized this year helpful. I sure did!

The energy invested in getting my lovely people dressed and organized for this issue's cover shoot was no small feat. Grand visions of preparing the family for a cozy first photo in our new home danced in my head. There would be magic. There would be fun. I imagined the festive smiles on their rosy little faces as I served hot chocolate after the outdoor shoot. Well, there was not a lot of magic and no hot chocolate. But, there was family. In truth, I'm hoping we did not frighten the new neighbors. God bless Jill Chumas-King and her amazing photography. She captured the essence of what I hoped to impart to our readers: We are home, and we are grateful.

We at 5ive are delighted to roll out some wonderful stories and ideas in this Spirit of You issue. Get ready for some practical pointers for getting fit even through the holidays, and find encouragement to recall the true meaning of this blessed season. Learn about some very special Chippewa Valley women. We hope our Friends feature story enlightens and heartens anyone facing the heartache of Alzheimer's disease. This disease is as devastating for the one diagnosed as it is for friends and family. We understand the holiday season may exacerbate the difficulty of Alzheimer's for everyone and sincerely empathize with any and all facing these challenges. We hope this article is a blessing to you.

Ladies, let us embrace the holiday season and new year with a zest for all we do. Let's enjoy our families, laugh until we cry at least once, share a glass of vino or two, enjoy a cup of joe with our girlfriends, or surprise our spouses with a special date. Do exactly what your child wants to do ... even just once. And let's not forget to exercise; mix it up a bit to keep it fun. Take time to give back, and take time for you. This is life! We only go around once, so let's do it up right.

This year, I strive to stretch myself toward positive change and new experience. Won't you join me? The journey continues: faith, family, friends, fitness, and finance.

Jen Theisen
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

5IVE FOR WOMEN™

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On the cover: Jen Theisen and family on the steps of their newly renovated home.
Photo credit: Chumas Photography



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Above: Pooch Party dog costume winners

Above right: Kappy dog dressed as a little devil

Right: Golden Retriever, Sammy (of Operation Sammy), and veteran, Mark. Learn more about the Operation Sammy veterans' program at happytailsdogpark.org.

Below: Treats by Dylan donated all treat proceeds to local pet charities.



Happy Tails Dog Park, Chippewa Falls

On October 11, Chippewa Valley residents partied with their pooches to support the Happy Tails Dog Park. There was a costume contest, microchipping, paw print art, face painting, animal blessing, and many canine-friendly vendors.

Pooch Party in the Park



Photo credit: Pamela Kramer



Paint the Town Pink

Downtown Chippewa Falls
 October 2, 2014
 Sponsored by Chippewa Falls Main Street,
 Marshfield Clinic, the American Cancer
 Society, and over 35 downtown businesses

Top Left: Pleased Paint the Town Pink participants

Bottom Left: Pink Moscato: a perfect pairing at 10% off

Top right: Pink ribbons line downtown Chippewa for breast cancer awareness

Second right: Two lovely ladies help spread the word about the Medicine Shoppe's Pink Ribbon Boutique, "helping women lead fuller lives after breast surgery."

Third right: More proof that pink was prevalent

Bottom right: Educational materials booth by Marshfield Clinic



Taking 5ive with Sylvia Hedberg-Thomas

WRITTEN BY HEATHER ROTHBAUER-WANISH



For Sylvia Hedberg-Thomas, each day is a new day of opportunity, hope, and desire to build a better future. In addition to assisting her husband, Jeff (who is blind), Sylvia works at the Eau Claire YMCA, is a mother to two daughters, and is a three-time cancer survivor. Through resolute faith, family dedication, and a focus on tomorrow, Sylvia is moving forward with an optimistic outlook that defies the odds.

FAITH

Faith defines Sylvia's life. She professes, "Without Jesus, I feel like I would have nothing. My faith is the most important thing in the world to me." And, it would take a woman of strong faith to overcome her colossal obstacles. During her final chemotherapy treatment in May 2011, Sylvia suffered a massive heart attack and was in a medically induced coma for four days. When challenges like these come her way, Sylvia knows to believe in Someone much larger than herself.

FAMILY

Sylvia and Jeff have lived in Eau Claire since 2013. They moved to the area so that Jeff could be closer to the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie. "My husband is attending Stout to complete his degree in vocational rehabilitation," explains Sylvia. "As someone that is blind, he looks forward to assisting others with physical challenges as they try to enter the workforce and move ahead with their lives." Sylvia happily drives her husband to school and works her schedule around his needs. "It's really an honor to be his wife," she says.

Jeff and Sylvia have two daughters: the oldest is married and their youngest, Shila, is 16 years old. Sylvia home-

schools Shila. Sylvia believes, "Families really do need to carve out time to be together," and she is grateful to report, "Our family does spend a lot of time together, whether it is homeschooling for Shila or the three of us traveling to Stout."

FRIENDS

"I do have friends in Florida and Tennessee that I regularly speak to and text," states Sylvia. However, because she has only been in Eau Claire for a year, she has found it challenging to find time to meet and connect with new friends: "I work a lot of crazy hours, and I'm at the YMCA by 4:30 a.m. on weekdays. My availability doesn't necessarily align with the times that others are available." However, Sylvia does plan to allot time to developing and maintain friendships, "I know there are phenomenal people here in Eau Claire, and eventually I will have more time to meet them and cultivate those relationships."

FITNESS

Because Sylvia works at the YMCA, some people mistakenly believe that she can work out all day long, every day. "I work some crazy hours, including early mornings, and then lead a cancer survivor program as a LiveSTRONG® trainer in the afternoon," she explains. "I wasn't able to work out for awhile because of scar tissue from my cancers and problems with some of the treatments." Her training regimen and personal training style is constantly evolving, although Sylvia really enjoys working with those that have experienced a similar cancer journey as her own. To do so, she is currently training for breast cancer survivor certification.

Sylvia knows that most women are lead-

ing demanding lifestyles and can feel like they don't have the time for fitness. Nevertheless, she encourages, "[Women] can always find time. Even if they are watching television, they can utilize the commercial breaks to do jumping jacks, squats, or lunges."

FINANCE

With her husband as a full-time student, Sylvia and her family know about tight financial situations. However, she also feels that finances don't have to rule or define them, "Obviously, we're working on financial goals so that we can move ahead. And, you do need money to live. But, we know that we don't have to be rich to enjoy life, spend time with our family, and develop a life that we can be proud of when we look back." In the near future, her husband hopes to find full-time employment opportunities that are both personally fulfilling and financially bolstering.

It is no surprise that of the five Fs, faith is the most important to Sylvia: "My faith defines my life and is everything to me." Sylvia also knows that as seasons change, so family, friends, fitness, and finance may play larger or smaller roles at different points in time, "Life's a journey that is constantly changing. While our past has been challenging, I still feel blessed and look forward to the future opportunities that will come our way."



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Rick and Mary Bygd have a passion for many things including each other, their families, traveling, the outdoors, and wine. One thing they especially enjoy is sitting down after work and enjoying a nice glass of wine and good conversation. They dreamed of creating a wine-related business venture. With the help of MANY, their dream becomes a reality in August 2014! Rick and Mary's business philosophy centers on the customer and the community. Most simply, they'd like their customers to enjoy a glass of wine and learn what they like. In addition, they would like The Barrel Room to serve as a resource for wine education and recommendations while they foster positive relationships with the community. Whether you're visiting the theatre, stopping by after work, or looking for an evening out, you'll find excellent customer service and a great wine selection in a historic building in downtown Menomonie. Rick and Mary look forward to meeting you! 320 Main Street E, Menomonie. barrelroomwic.com

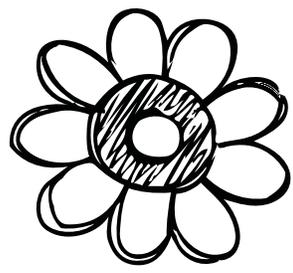


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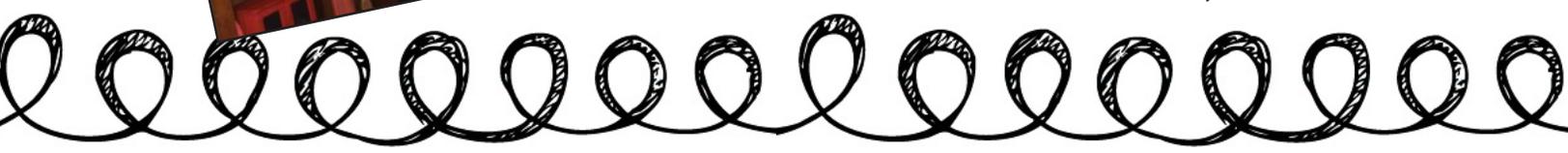
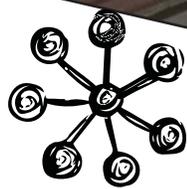
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The new Just Take Time boutique on the west side of Eau Claire recently opened in October. This one-of-a-kind shop features unique, shabby chic, upcycled treasures and handmade items such as hand-painted signs, refurbished furniture, and so much more. Just Take Time is a family business. They love crafting and creating together. Late family member, Kathryn Johnson, used to own Take Time Ceramics—so named because she wanted people to take time out of their busy, everyday lives to do the things they love. Her surviving family members want to bring life and joy back into something their aunt loved so much. 2620 Preston Road, Eau Claire. 715.829.0722



6



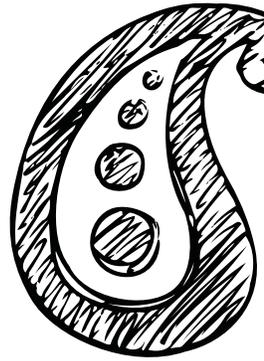


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9

Winter has arrived, and it's time to go sledding!

In Chippewa Falls, Irvine Park has unsupervised sledding opportunities on Flag Hill and near the Jefferson Street entrance. On the other side of Jefferson Street is the Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds. Local residents have been sledding near the walk-in fair entrance for years.

In Eau Claire, kids of all ages love Pinchurst Park! This year, they've purchased a snow groomer and lanemaker to make your tubing/sledding experience even better than previous years. 3523 Delbert Road, Eau Claire. 715.839.4738.

In Dunn County, a dedicated group of volunteers from across the community have worked build the Dunn County Snow Park (at the Dunn County Fairgrounds) so locals can take advantage of winter's outdoor fun and adventures. Main St. E., Menomonie. menomonie-wigov



LOCAL SLEDDING HILLS



Photo credit: Tracy Heidke

10

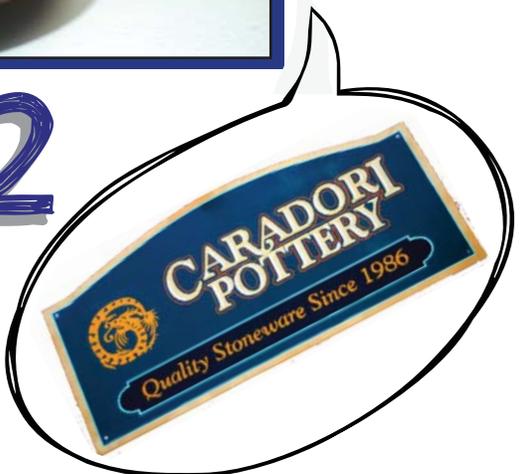


11

Find Caradori Pottery in Eau Claire's historic Shawtown neighborhood, where David Caradori has been crafting "quality stoneware since 1986." Alongside art from a wide range of regional artists and craftspeople, this gallery features Mr. Caradori's wood-fired porcelain, salt-fired stoneware, and reduction gas-fired pottery—in a wide selection from functional to specialty. The detailed craftsmanship and exquisite glazes will amaze you! Commissions accepted. 357 Ferry St., Eau Claire. 715.835.8860. caradori-pottery.com



12





Eavesdropping -ON- DECEMBER

BY VICKI LARKOWSKI

IT IS DECEMBER 1978. Snow blankets my shingled head, but my insides are warm and full with the scents of sugar cookies baking and a freshly cut Scotch pine resting on my living room floor. I am 66 years old, but my new family is young: a four-year-old boy, a seven-year-old girl, their young parents, and a finicky Siamese cat. They found me five months ago. This will be our first Christmas together. As the December days count down, my new family in harmony erects the tree and adorns it with colorful lights and handmade ornaments. Outside, they trim my porch columns with greenery and illuminate my neatly trimmed bushes with glowing bulbs of red, yellow, green, and blue. With shovel and broom, Father keeps my walkway impeccably groomed for bundled up carolers who sing to my neighborhood: *Oh holy night! The stars are brightly shining.* Each week, Mother lights a purple candle and reads to Son and Daughter in anticipation of their Christmas celebration—until finally, she lights the final candle and finishes the story on Christmas Eve.

Like the families I see through the windows of other homes, Mother and Father stay up late on Christmas Eve, readying me (and the gifts) for Christmas morning. And like the other families on my block, Son and Daughter arise much earlier than Mother and Father desire. The pajamaed progenies tiptoe loudly down my stairwell to sneak a peek at their

treasures. From the landing, they can see their bulging knit stockings dangling by threads from my mantle. There's even a pink paper stocking for Cat.

When patience wears thin, Son and Daughter retrieve their sleepy-eyed mother, who has a plan. She preoccupies her elves in the kitchen, preparing Father's coffee, Cheerios®, and orange juice. Papa Bear finally emerges to screams of elation and petitions to "please hurry." He loves his cubs, but he is stalwart. Fueled by Father's second cup of coffee, my family finally retreats to the scene of Santa's sign. They all take their places, oohing and aahing over stocking stuffers and grander gifts. It is a good day. We are all grateful (except for Cat who does not approve of the commotion).

IT IS DECEMBER 1985. For five years, in the days leading up to Christmas, beautiful carols emanated from the stereo speakers and enlivened me with holiday cheer while Mother carefully placed her hand-painted nativity figures prominently near the tree. My family's Advent preparations and treat baking were holiday staples. Christmas pageants brought great anticipation (and a few late night alterations). A younger, more adventurous Siamese cat joined the first. (Cat² repeatedly tested the fortitude of the tree's foundation, providing laughs and screams all around.) A few hamsters came and went; and Guinea Pig has taken their place. (Neither Cat¹ nor Cat² approve.)

But things are different now. Mother is gone and the music has stopped. Father managed to procure a tree, but erecting and decorating it has become a chore. Son and Daughter grumble. Instead of the aroma of holiday baking, the smog

On Christmas morning, Father brews his coffee and offers the leftover milk from his cereal bowl to Cat². And then he prays. He prays for Son, and he prays for Daughter.

IT IS DECEMBER 2012. I am 100 years old. My porch sags, and my bushes have been left to grow wildly—some up to my eaves. Father is still alone. But he is joyful. The half-deaf geezer is rattling my old windows with Christmas carols! *A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices. For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.* He has been whistling and cleaning and filling my kitchen with savory delights.

On Christmas morning, the silver is polished and the dining room table is set. My picture windows glow with welcoming candelabras. Shiny vehicles packed with brightly-wrapped packages roll up my driveway. It is Son! And Daughter! And they have brought Grandson, Daughter-in-Law, Son-in-Law, and Dog¹, Dog², and Dog³. As they burst through my door, Father and I feel alive again! The joy within my walls is so great, I fear my shingles might pop off like fireworks. Father and family share food and gifts and stories under my roof. Grandson regales us with his own tales of Advent candles and holiday plays and family traditions and Christmas trees gone wrong ... and anticipation. All are grateful. And they show it. Father's prayers have been answered. Love and light have returned to fill our dark spaces. *Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we...*

of thick cigarette smoke pollutes my once happy abode. Absent are the purple Advent candles, symbolic nativity figurines, and hopeful storytelling. Old paint curls off of my bare porch columns, and the now overgrown bushes don't bear any lights. Guinea Pig and the Cats have become neglected. Giddy anticipation has crumbled into dread. I am dark and sad.

On Christmas morning, I am not stirred by early risers. Eventually, Folgers® rouses the trio and they stagger to my lifeless living room. Father belches sarcasm as Daughter and Son dump out the stockings they have filled themselves. They open their gifts with effort; none of the packages deliver healing. Disappointment permeates my walls. I hear no sincere *thank you*s.

IT IS DECEMBER 1996. Daughter, Son, Cat¹, and Guinea Pig are gone. I have no decorations—not even a tree. I am alone with Father and Cat². My foundation has settled, and my crumbling walkway is covered in unshoveled snow. Father and I are smoky and dusty and creaky and gray.



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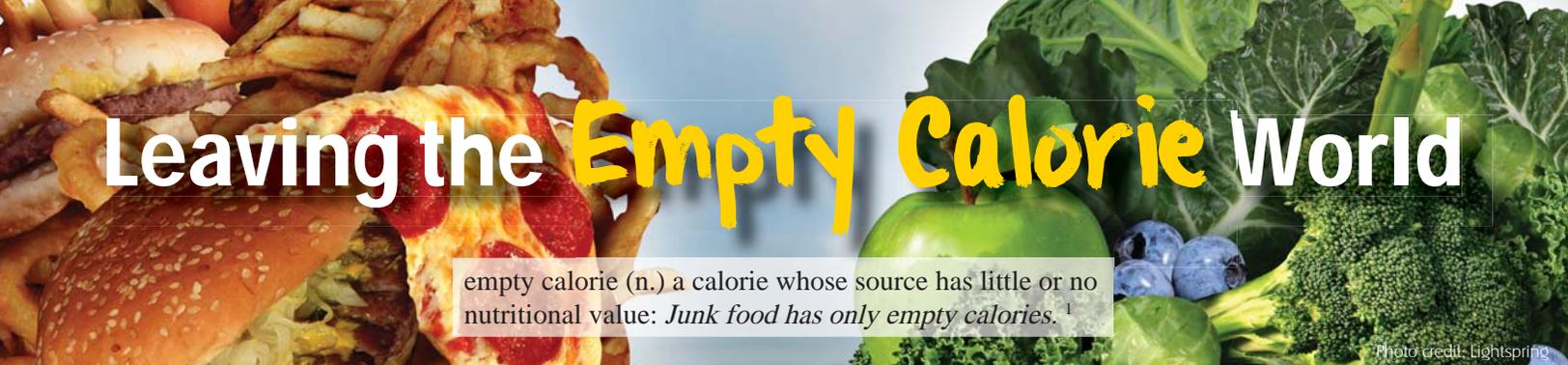
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Leaving the Empty Calorie World

empty calorie (n.) a calorie whose source has little or no nutritional value: *Junk food has only empty calories.*¹

Photo credit: Lightspring

By Karla Roach

This time of year, we tend to pack on a few extra pounds. Halloween is an unofficial kick-off; and one look at my children's plastic jack-o-lantern candy buckets tells me why we are off in the wrong direction more than two months before our New Year's resolutions begin. Over a hundred years ago, packing on weight before the winter season was a matter of survival. The body's intelligence used the stored fat to make it through periods of time when proper nourishment wasn't available. But in today's world, we aren't limited by what we can hunt and gather in our local territory. So, what's going on?

Blame it on empty calories. When most people think of empty calorie foods, they think junk food: cakes, pies, beer, soft drinks, candy, chips, and french fries. But the American diet includes an abundance of nutritionally deficient foods beyond just "junk." So, what's the big deal?

The most obvious answer is weight gain. According to the USDA², solid fats and added sugar can make foods and beverages more appealing while adding a lot of unnecessary calories. If these calories are not burned through physical activity, they will be stored as fat, leading to weight gain. Excess weight and obesity come with a whole host of health issues, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hormone imbalances, and some types of cancer.

But excess weight is just part of the problem. Most Americans are deficient in about 40 nutrients essential to health. It's hard to think that a person who is overweight could be malnourished. But, if your food is nutrient deficient, you could eat a mountain of it and not get the vitamins, minerals, and trace minerals that your body needs to function. For example, magnesium affects bone, muscle, and nerve function. Without it, you may suffer from muscle cramps, abnormal heart rhythm, or seizures. And magnesium works in harmony with calcium and potassium to regulate cells. Low levels of Vitamin D put us at risk for cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis. Low levels of Vitamin D are also related to depression—as are deficiencies in essential fats (e.g., omega 3), serotonin, and selenium. Some junk foods even block the absorption of the few nutrients we are getting!

So, overweight, underweight, or in between, we all need our nutrients!

Choose nutrient dense foods. To nourish our bodies, we need nutrient dense foods: whole, unprocessed vegetables,

fruits, nuts, beans, seeds, turkey, chicken, fish, and a limited amount of grains.

These nutrient dense foods nourish our bodies with the essential vitamins we need to heal, repair, and function properly. Truly nutritious foods contain an alphabet of vitamins including A, C, D, E, and B, along with calcium, iron, potassium, zinc, and so much more.

How do we leave this empty calorie world? Television commercials, grocery ads, and lines of fast food restaurants are at our disposal 24/7. Even the grocery store is fraught with temptation. What stops most of us from changing our habits is the thought of how hard it is to resist. Baby steps are the easiest way to attain the goal. Start by replacing one thing in your diet. If you drink soda, try swapping it out with a glass of lemon water or quality herbal tea. Or if you want "fizz," try club soda with some lemon juice and a few drops of a natural sweetener, such as stevia. If you are dining out, replace your french fries with a vegetable salad. This may be a challenge at first; but once it becomes a habit, it will feel like a way of life.

Holiday survival tip: Plan to eat nutrient dense foods before going to a party. This has become routine for my family. Before events we know will be teeming with empty calorie foods, we like to have "huge salad" meals—spinach, Romaine lettuce, carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, sunflower seeds, hard-boiled eggs, and a small amount of cheese and meat. To keep sugar and calories from creeping into the dressing, we use balsamic vinegar and olive oil. As a mom to five children, I feel better knowing my family has nourished their bodies pre-party.

Don't forget to be your own advocate! When I started my nutrient-rich journey, I felt almost depressed ... until I started researching alternative food options. I love cookies and cakes just like everyone else, and I am not willing to forego them completely. I have found recipes that use nutrient dense ingredients; so, no longer do I feel guilty about having my cake and eating it too!

Convenience will need to be replaced with a little more forethought and prep work. But, the reward will be feeling better inside and out, physically and mentally. When we feel better, we also have more energy to navigate past the temptations of the empty calorie world.

In addition to being a part of the 5ive for Women team, Karla is currently attending the Institute for Integrative Nutrition and will be a certified health coach in 2015. If you have any healthful living questions, feel free to contact her at karla@5iveforwomen.com.

¹ Dictionary.com

² The United States Department of Agriculture, choosemyplate.com

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QUADDING

By Katie Mcky

Quadding is quite popular, as four-wheel ATVs are stable, sturdy, and take you to wonderful places. However, there's a kind of quadding that's wonderfully rare. How rare? Well, you're 52 times more likely to slip and die in your shower and 51 times more likely to become a professional athlete. You are also 25 times more likely to hit a hole in one and 11 times more likely to win an Academy Award than you are to have quadruplets. According to a British study, even with fertility drugs—which account for 80% of all quadruplets—the chance of having quads is 126,730 to one. That rare one happened to a couple in Menomonie, Beth and John Brunstad, who had a two-year old daughter when they received the news of four cakes baking in one oven.

Beth recalls,

I was on fertility medication with both pregnancies. When on medication, you have blood work drawn regularly after your pregnancy is confirmed. I received a call a couple weeks after the confirmation to come in for an ultrasound. So, in early April of 1996, John and I went for the ultrasound, and that's when we found out I was pregnant with quadruplets. As the technician counted off each fetus, I became a little more dumbfounded. When I turned to look at my husband, he had a HUGE grin on his face! The technician had someone else check the ultrasound and confirm four fetuses.

However, the initial road was rocky.

When you have higher-order multiples, you receive your prenatal care from a perinatologist. They told me what to expect during the pregnancy, and most

of it occurred as described. I was on bed rest from week 20. I was hospitalized at week 25 because of severe contractions. I delivered them via a planned Caesarian section at week 32. The delivery went well, but two of the babies did have to go to Neonatal Intensive Care for a couple days because they were not breathing well enough on their

own. The other two went to Special Care nursery, and that's where everyone stayed for about four weeks until they started coming home. Rebecca was 3lb, 1oz; Nicholas was 3lb, 15oz; Abigail was 3lb, 14oz; and Phillip was 3lb, 6oz.

Then there was the overwhelming mechanics of feeding and changing a quartet of babies.

We had LOTS of help the first year. Initially, it was family that would spend a week with us when the kids first came home. Then, it was members of our church. In our society, it's often felt that we need to handle everything on our own, but we couldn't do it all on our own. People wanted to help, and we had to humble ourselves to accept it. I'm so grateful we did, as we made some of the best friendships from the people that wanted to help.

Over time, the quads also helped their parents.

I always wanted them to develop different friendships. There was a time when they were in second grade and Abbie started spending more time with one of Becca's friends. It really bothered me, and we had a discussion about it. Becca informed me that she was really okay with Abbie becoming a friend with this other girl. It reminded me that the kids will usually work it out.

Still, much had to be done in quadruplicate.

It's no surprise and may sound trivial, but almost everything comes in multiples. Purchasing school supplies, filling out forms (You look for ways to cut down on the writing.), learning to drive, senior pictures, and going off to college. To top it off, I've been doing this alone since my husband died unexpectedly four years ago.

However, the quads didn't want too much synchronization in the system.

My kids—both the boys and girls—didn't really want to dress like each other. There were times in the childhood when I chose to do that because it was easier, especially for church, family gatherings, etc. We didn't necessarily have



Photo credit: Jen Schultz, Genesis Photography



the same toys, but lot of different toys; and there were always some issues of sharing like all kids learn to deal with.

And, luckily, they didn't synchronize puberty!

Thankfully it was somewhat spread out and didn't happen all at the same time!

However, they did synchronize at some key events, like the prom.

They all went to prom in some way their junior year. Three of them had dates. It was so much fun to see them all dressed up, AND it was super easy for me because they all accepted invitations to have dinner and pictures at one location; so I didn't have to drive from place to place and get pictures of everyone.

Today, Rebecca, Abigail, Phillip, and Nicholas are 18 and seniors at Menomonie High School.

Rebecca has come to appreciate her rare quadhood:

At first, I didn't like not being able to get away from it. I was always "one of the quads." I'm proud today of being different, but when I was younger I didn't appreciate it as much.

And Abigail likes the social connection:

There is always a person to hang out with. I like that we each have different skills and talents that we share with one other, from making pancakes to writing poetry.

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MARLENE ASHMORE – STAYING FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

By Heather Rothbauer-Wanish

When dreaming about retirement, how many of us picture a relaxing beach with a good book and an exotic drink? While that may be the vision for many of us, some people choose to use their retirement years to reinvent themselves and focus on missions closer to their hearts. Marlene Ashmore, a Menomonie resident, has chosen to maximize her retirement years while impacting others along the way.

Marlene was a special education teacher for 33 years—on an Arizona Indian reservation, in the Madison and Janesville areas, and finally concluding her career at Eau Claire North High School. “My husband worked in school administration, so we moved according to his job opportunities,” explains Marlene. “We raised our two daughters in Menomonie and I absolutely love living in this area.”

Upon retirement in August 2010, Marlene knew that she wanted to stay busy. She chose to focus on those things that she truly enjoyed beyond the schoolhouse. “I’ve always wanted to go into the clothing business; I absolutely love fashion and textiles,” tells Marlene. So, she and her twin sister, Marilyn, decided to start Sand Dollar Designs, making custom clothing for women. Fortunately for the sisters, their husbands both greatly support their endeavors. “We love making people feel good about what they wear and want them to feel like a million bucks. We started a company that allows you to select a washable fabric and create a style that works best for you,” says Marlene.

The sisters offer a one-of-a-kind shopping experience. Marlene describes, “We custom design and produce easy-travel tunics, dresses, and skirts for any occasion. And, our styles fit a wide range of sizes from petite to plus.” Sand Dollar Designs proudly employs three local seamstresses. “I like being able to provide jobs for the community and give people opportunities to utilize their skills,” explains Marlene.

She also works as an employment specialist with Regional Enterprises for Adults and Children, Inc. (Reach). For the past four years, Marlene has worked with Reach to provide employment opportunities for adults with disabilities: “With my work at Reach, I am able to meet with community employers



and organizations that could offer opportunities to Reach clients.” She finds that the employers gain just as much from the experience, “After placing individuals with businesses, the businesses often tell me that the person adds a vibrancy to their workplace, puts smiles on the customers’ faces, and truly brightens up the atmosphere.”

While meeting with local personnel at the job center to discuss job openings for Reach clients, Marlene heard about another community involvement opportunity. Nicolet Welcome Service helps new residents and/or new parents adjust to their new environments. Marlene Ashmore is now the Welcome to Menomonie representative. “After setting an appointment time with a new resident in the Menomonie area, I deliver a welcome packet that contains complimentary items from local businesses,” explains Marlene, adding, “It’s just a nice way to welcome members to our community and get them involved.”

Marlene’s husband also enjoys collaboration with unique businesses and organizations. “My husband is now retired as well, but he is still ‘working’ through a consulting business,” tells Marlene. “We both want people to have happy, productive lives.” Whether it’s called “reinventing yourself after retirement” or “reinvigorating your passions,” Marlene Ashmore definitely has it covered.

And Marlene reveals no signs of slowing down anytime soon, “It’s a choice for me to keep busy; my schedule is flexible, and all areas of my life are proving to be collaborative ... I do this for my own personal well-being and to feel like I’m making a difference. I need the social contact with others and hope that I can impact their lives with some of my endeavors.”

She chose to focus on those things that she truly enjoyed beyond the schoolhouse.

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New Year, New You

Sadly, transformation is tricky. It's because we're hardwired for the status quo, which is why the hoarder continues to hoard up to her ceilings. It's why a woman tangled up with an abuser, when she finally manages to free herself, too often locates another abuser. *What we do might be bad for us, but at least it's familiar.* Thus, many New Year's resolutions fail.

If you want a new you, recognize your limitations. The more change we foist upon ourselves, the more likely we are to regress. For example, if you want to lose weight, denying yourself this goody and that goody will likely overwhelm you. Your consequent, multiple cravings collapse your great expectations. It's better to *have good and modest expectations, to incrementally and slowly attain the new you.*

Instead of giving up sweets, give up a single sweet that's easiest to forego. For example, you might like pie but love cake. So, pass on pie. Live sans pie for months and months until it becomes your new normal, your new status quo. Then begin passing on something else. *It's not a diet. It's incremental adapting.* Also, use the research to your advantage. For example, scientists have found that increasing your protein intake can decrease your desire for sweets. Take your cue from the meat-loving men in your life who don't share your sugar cravings.

Incremental adapting doesn't just apply to food. Your current self might be overwhelmed by undone tasks. The undone work produces stress. According to the Mayo Clinic, stress can lead to overeating, sleep problems, and fatigue—all of which can produce additional stress. However, instead of attempting to resolve everything and thus failing, *target one area or another.* In short, do one thing at a time, but do it now.

Yes, the research shows that women multi-task better than men. However, the research also shows that *single-tasking delivers better outcomes than multi-tasking.* So, do one thing at a time, but begin lickety-split. Prioritizing helps. For example, begin each day by selecting the three tasks you'll achieve that day. Write them down. Better yet, let your first task be hanging a whiteboard. *Write your three tasks on that board* as an open reminder of what you'll achieve that day. Become a task completion junkie.

Also, *invest time in considering the outcomes* of change. For example, you might be a person who's perpetually late. Dangle the consequences of affecting change in front of you like a candied carrot, such as having your boss seeing

It's better to have good and modest expectations, to incrementally and slowly attain the new you.

you as reliable or your friends and colleagues trusting you as a person respectful of their time. You also get to go to work with less stress. Long term, less stress means a happier, healthier life.

As you separate your day into a string of tasks, each getting your full attention, let one of your tasks be *reshaping your environment* to support single task completion. For example, a momentum killer when confronting a major task is locating the tools to complete your task. So after you hang the whiteboard, let your second task be finding *a place for EVERYTHING.* This means no junk drawers. When it comes to organization, "miscellaneous" is a dirty word. Everything deserves its own home, such as a three-ring binder for all instruction manuals.

Space isn't just a luxury; it's also calming.

Finding a place for everything doesn't mean you save everything. Watch any show about hoarding. If you find yourself saying the same things hoarders say to justify saving something, be very afraid. Then pitch.

Also, *beware of bargains.* When stores close out items, they're doing so because they want to rid themselves of superfluous stock. When you stock up on those items, you're paying to store the store's superfluous stock. Plus, there's a psychic strain as well as a financial strain. If you've ever visited a spa, you likely noticed the nothingness. There's a lot of empty space with very few lovely items. *Space isn't just luxury; it's also calming.* Plus, fewer items mean less to dust.

Rather than hoard, *repurpose* right away. For example, ribbon from Christmas gifts can be used to bundle sheet sets. Shoeboxes and bank check boxes can become drawer and closet dividers.

Also, *think outside of the box.* Those hanging, three-tiered metal baskets work as well in closets as kitchens. Hang a corkboard inside your closet and attach extra buttons to that. You can use the same zip lock bags you use for food to group—and thereby tame—the thicket of medicines in your bathroom. A desktop organizer works wonders in your bathroom. A lingerie bag can gather bathtub toys. A pillbox will organize your jewelry when traveling.

Lastly, remember that organizing isn't something that happens once. Every seven days or so, let one of your three daily tasks be *"Tweak organization."*

Katie Mcky is an author/educator who lives in Eau Claire and visits scores of schools every year, performing and teaching writing (katiemcky.com). In the summer, she retreats to the cultivated tranquility of her garden and the wild tranquility of the Canadian wilderness.



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Gathering What Remains

Maintaining Hopeful Holidays for Dementia Patients and Their Caregivers

By Katie McKy

THE HOLIDAYS ARE POIGNANT because of our gatherings. Families gather and, in turn, memories are gathered. Stories are told—stories of when we were younger, braver or more cautious, impetuous or reserved. Such stories stir our emotions and tickle our funny bones; but for some families, there are beloved brothers and mothers, sisters and spouses unstirred by such stories, due to Alzheimer's and related dementias. What are holiday gatherings like in such families? How do caregivers cope? Perhaps, most importantly, how can we best care for those afflicted and their caregivers?

Lisa Wells, MA, CDP, is a dementia care specialist at the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County. For 26 years (12 at the Resource Center), she has cared for loved ones with the disease, supported family caregivers, and fostered dementia-friendly communities.

Caring for your self is a prerequisite for caring for others. Wells explains via an analogy.

On the airplane, the flight attendant explains how to use the oxygen mask. She expresses the importance of putting the mask on yourself first and then on your children or the person next to you if they are having trouble. Without taking the oxygen first, how can we care for our loved ones?

However, self-care can become even more problematic during the holidays.

Holidays can certainly be stressful for families living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The holidays can mean schedule changes, festivities, visits from extended families, and more. When making holiday plans, it is important to adjust expectations, be selective in invitations you may accept, and include the person with dementia in a task or job they can do. Also when making plans, depending on the stage in the person's disease, you may need to explain to family and friends prior to the event that "Mom has dementia. Sometimes she eats with her fingers." Doing so may help alleviate some anxiety. Most importantly, ask for help!

Surprisingly, the holidays can also help.

I worked in skilled nursing facilities on Alzheimer's units for 14 years and the holidays were my favorite time of year with the residents. The power of music is

amazing! Some residents may have lost much of their ability to speak or carry on a conversation, but when the activity director would sit down at the piano and play Christmas carols, the residents could sing every word. This ability to speak and have conversation would continue after the music would stop for a short time. Hot chocolate and reminiscing about traditions would spark some great conversation. It is important for caregivers to remember that people with dementia may lose many things, but their emotional memories remain until end of life.

For Kathy Jasper, who does medical diagnosis coding at St. Joseph's Hospital Home Health and Hospice, it was the holidays that suggested the onset of Alzheimer's in Mary, her sister.

We would be talking about the holidays, and Mary would get upset asking why we didn't tell her about our holiday plans, even though we had. It started as little things like that. Since our dad had Alzheimer's and died after aspirating, we used to kid each other when we would forget something that we would be next. We sure didn't think it would be Mary, as she was a speech therapist with a master's degree, always reading and doing crossword puzzles. Then she started losing clients at work; so her hours were cut eventually, and she was let go because of memory issues.

Mary is still part of the holidays.

We have a big family Thanksgiving, usually around 100 people. I will pick Mary up that morning and take her to Mom's and we will peel 50 pounds of potatoes. She might only peel one, but that's okay.

And how can we care for the caregiver?

Don't expect caregivers to prepare the meal and have everyone over. Don't ask them to take the loved one out, as familiar surroundings make it more relaxed.

For Jasper, the holidays are bittersweet.

Holidays bring memories for us with no regrets or hope, but when you get that smile or an out of the blue memory, it's all worth it.

Another area pair contending with Alzheimer's are Carla and Jack [pseud.]. Carla was a teacher and administrator

The 'up' side of the holidays is that they are rooted in tradition, and familiarity is the friend of someone who is struggling with Alzheimer's.

who retired to care for her husband at home. Not only did caretaking become her primary task, but so did all the jobs her husband used to do, such as caring for the car. Uncertainty is the only certainty.

Jack still knows our family, still expresses his love, is still mobile, still dresses, feeds, and cares for his personal needs; but if the disease progresses according to a typical pattern, then these skills will also be eventually lost. We don't know how long he will keep these skills ... the disease progresses at very different rates in different people. We may see 20 more holidays together or this could be our last. A friend of mine—whose husband was at the same stage that Jack is now seven months ago—buried her husband last week.

The treasured rhythms and traditions of holidays can highlight how much has been lost.

The hardest part of the holidays or any day is that I have lost my partner, my lover, and my confidant. The person I knew is gone. I am living with a guy who I still love, but whose developmental level and reasoning skills are those of a five or six year old. There are moments when I see and enjoy glimmers of who Jack was, but they are short-lived. The hardest holiday was two years ago when Jack, who had always cooked the turkey and taken charge of the meal, was not able to cook. In fact, the day became so overwhelming for him that he spent much of it in bed instead of with the family. The hardest part of the holidays is realizing that Jack no longer initiates the traditions or the activities. At his best, he can participate minimally.

Carla still manages to extract some light from loss.

Joy comes from our faith in Jesus. We know that Heaven is our final destination and that there is a brighter day ahead. Daily joys come from celebrating the moments. If there is a bright side of Alzheimer's, it is that it forces one to distill what is really important and teaches one to truly celebrate and cherish the moments. I no longer take for granted the times he says, "I love you," and each time I wonder if this will be the last time that I hear those words from him. I am thrilled that he still knows me and our children, grandchildren, and close friends.

And holiday traditions can work like roots for memory-impaired people.

Jack still holds onto long-time memories. In fact, the past is actually more clear and real to him than the present or recent memories. He is beginning to struggle



with details of the past, but I know his "stories" and help him fill in the details. The "up" side of the holidays is that they are rooted in tradition, and familiarity is the friend of someone who is struggling with Alzheimer's. Priorities change from career, possessions, and activities to simply spending time with people we care about. Each smile becomes something that is celebrated and cherished. We are prioritizing our time to reconnect with long held friends and family.

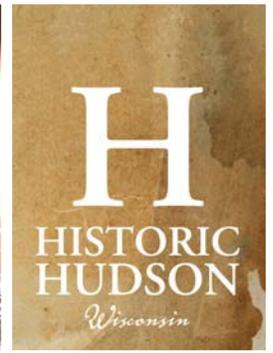
If you are friends or family of someone with Alzheimer's, how can you give the best gift, that of supporting a caregiver and becoming a caregiver?

Continue to include and invite us to holiday gatherings, but understand if we cannot come or need to leave early. Our activities now need to be adjusted to the kind of day that Jack is having. When we invite you, offer to bring something. Offer to take Jack out for coffee or a drive so I can have some personal time and so Jack can have some time apart from me. Ask if there is something specific that we need or a task that we need help with. I am so grateful for the guy who asked if our lawnmower needed an oil change before winter.

In short, simply connect.

I have learned that the important things in life are not things. The important things are relationships ... with God, with family, and with friends.





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Keeping Up Fashion

when temperatures fall

By Heather Rothbauer-Wanish

When the cold months blow in, Wisconsinites dig out their dormant wardrobes: large winter jackets, bulky sweaters, and layers-upon-layers in black and brown tones. Fashion can get lost with the balmy days. However, local style professionals offer fantastic advice—promoting fashion-forward looks practical enough to vanquish Jack Frost, Mother Nature, and Old Man Winter.

Comfort stylist Judy Foust fell in love with Jockey Person to Person®'s clothing and concept after attending her first in-home event,

The motto of "Where Comfort Meets Style" was truly evident in every item I tried on and purchased. As a Comfort Stylist, I've been with the company for two years now. Jockey Person to Person has made a firm commitment to providing stylish, high-quality professional and casual fashions for women from sizes XXS to XXXL. Our promise is to make every woman we help look and feel both beautiful and comfortable. I love to see women of all ages and sizes light up when they try on these beautiful clothes.

However, with shorter days, dropping temperatures, whirling winds, and piling snow, it's easy to bury ourselves in shapeless, functional-only apparel. Fortunately, Jockey Person to Person features stylish outer protection from Wisconsin's harsh winter weather. Foust explains,

We truly believe in the concept of layering, adding textures, interesting cuts, and accessories in wonderfully uplifting colors and flattering patterns.

To add pizzazz to outfits, she recommends adding **jewelry**, a **beautiful scarf**, or a **stylish belt**.

Mickey Judkins, CEO, features high-quality, well-designed clothing at Details and detailsdirect.com,

Details offers an eclectic mix of well-known, popular designers [as well as] new, innovative designers that are relatively unknown. We search the marketplace to find up-and-coming designers before they are famous, and this allows us to bring unique

fashions and great value to the Chippewa Valley.

Judkins recommends **layering** to transition your wardrobe throughout the seasons,

*We carry a wide selection of **cashmere sweaters** that provide fashion and warmth. **Scarves** and **featherweight cashmere ponchos** are fantastic accessories to layer year-round, and they introduce new color. In addition, a **leather jacket** is a great wardrobe builder that can be worn as outerwear during the spring through fall and layered as a blazer replacement in the winter.*

Tanya Telisak Berg, owner of Mainstream Boutique in Eau Claire and co-owner of Mainstream Boutique in Madison, believes this time of year can be exciting when it comes to fashion,

***Oversized sweaters, tunics, leggings, scarves, hats, and boots** can give us complete looks that keep us warm and cute.*

And each year brings must-have accessories for the season. Telisak Berg explains,

*This year, scarves are a wonderful accessory—the **more scarves, the better**. Women often use scarves to add the finishing touch to their outfits.*

No matter the season, there are always **classic pieces** that can be worn throughout the year. For Telisak Berg, denim delivers,

*A **great pair of jeans** is a must-have piece. This doesn't mean you have to spend hundreds of dollars. Find a pair that fits well and find ways to make them versatile.*

Judkins advice?

*I would invest in a **fabulous fitting trouser, jackets, and a cashmere sweater**. I always recommend buying fewer items of higher quality that you can mix and match in a variety of ways.*

Foust's classic pieces include **black pants**, a **black jacket** cut with great style, and a **go-to-dress** suitable for a variety of oc-



casions. She recommends enhancing winter wardrobes with bright and vibrant colors,

*I absolutely love the **deep burnt oranges** and **vivid jewel tones of turquoise and jade**. You can also use **patterns** to spice up an outfit. Don't be afraid to add a "touch of surprise" to whatever you're wearing.*

Judkins agrees,

*We are seeing **winter whites** and **cobalt blues** across the board this season. **Sunshine yellow** is emerging as a fun pop of color. These clear colors are so refreshing against our winter skies.*



What are this year's **trends** for women?

Judkins answers,

***Ponchos** are the number one trend this fall and will continue to grow. In addition, **faux leather** is huge, including **leggings** and **accents on blazers**. There have been some great developments in the quality of faux leather, which makes the leather trend more accessible and easier on your pocketbook.*

Telisak Berg recommends boots as a fashion statement for the winter,

*Boots are always spot-on, but don't feel like **high boots** are your only option. **Low/ankle boots** are hot; you can cuff your jeans over the top, tuck them in, or pull them over.*



Foust encourages women to try a **tunic** and **longer shirt** with **leggings** rather than traditional pants,

Regardless of your height, size, or age, leggings deliver an attractive look and comfortable feeling for every woman.

Shopping for new fashions can be challenging, fun, and exciting—all at the same time. Judkins says,

*Remember that **less is more**. Build your wardrobe on quality transitional pieces that will last you for years. Buy quality and well-fitting basics.*

Telisak Berg adds,

Never leave a store with an item you are unsure of because it will just sit in your closet. The key is to wear what you feel confident in because it will show.

So this year, don't hibernate for winter; ignite your style!

Heather Rothbauer-Wanish owns Feather Communications (feather-communications.com) where she provides freelance writing, communication workshops, training services, and resumé/cover letter assistance. She enjoys researching new topics, interviewing people, and composing articles. In addition, Heather teaches business courses at several western Wisconsin colleges.



Starting the New Year in Stride

Indoors or outdoors, jump into January with winter workouts

By Erica Lynn

It's that time of year when fitness hurtles to the forefront of our minds as one of the top New Year's resolutions. Motivation, however, doesn't always follow with such enthusiasm. Between snow and ice, frigid winter temperatures, and gloomy days, leaving the comfort of home to exercise often feels like a mountain of a task. We *can* attain our 2015 fitness goals with the right mindset, a strong support system, and enjoyable workout activities.

Hit the gym

If you prefer indoor exercise over Wisconsin's wintry elements, fitness facilities offer a variety of amenities and services to keep your motivation high. Casey Wick of Gold's Gym of Eau Claire recommends participating in a variety of gym activities, "Instead of using the same piece of equipment each visit, try to include a group class, too." As a personal trainer, Wick also uses technology to help inspire her clients to follow their workout schedules: "I use social media and texting to motivate my clients."

Set up for success

Wick sees three common causes for falling short of fitness goals:

- Not making use of all of the gym's offerings
- Not setting up gym time as a daily scheduled appointment
- Not seeing quick results toward fitness goals

It's important for new gym members to feel comfortable. "We have a lot of specific rooms for various types of members. We have an active aging room, a ladies-only room, and smaller private rooms," tells Wick, adding that they also have new member orientation to help people become familiar with the facility.

She believes that social support can go a long way, too, "Having someone in your family keeping you accountable is huge." You can also turn to fellow gym members who may have similar goals for support.

Take fitness outdoors

Another way to stay fitness focused is by diversifying workout routines outdoors. Pick a winter activity you like. There are many to choose from: snowshoeing, skiing, ice skating, sledding, or even a brisk outdoor walk or run (on sidewalks clear of snow and ice, of course).

Cross-country skiing keeps many Wisconsinites active during the cold weather months. The Eau Claire Ski Striders club supports and promotes cross-country skiing in the Chippewa Valley. Karen Possley of Eau Claire Ski Striders shares, "The club has people of all levels; there are people who have raced and skied seriously and kids putting skis on for the first time."

Possley created a ski/yoga event that begins with a cross-country ski lesson followed by a yoga lesson at The Yoga Center of Eau Claire. The yoga lesson focuses on muscle stretching and balance poses that help with skiing.

Layer up

Winter weather can be harsh; but with the right preparation, outdoor activities can be more comfortable. "Last winter was brutal; but three to four times a week, I bundled up and went out," reveals Possley, who adds that hand warmers and base layers are quite helpful.



Always heed the National Weather Service's winter weather advisories, watches, and warnings. In the event of inclement weather, it is best to exercise safely indoors. Completing a fitness DVD in your living room counts as sticking to your exercise routine, too!

Erica Lynn is a freelance writer focused on telling women's lifestyle stories that inform, inspire, and engage readers. Follow her on Twitter at @elmtreeewriting.

EAU CLAIRE SKI STRIDERS EVENTS

The Eau Claire Ski Striders organize events throughout the ski season, including

- ❄ Wax clinic and skier social on December 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Tower Ridge Chalet
- ❄ Adult lessons on February 2 & 9 following the Kickin' Kids meeting at Tower Ridge Ski Area
- ❄ Annual meeting on February 27 at 5:30 p.m. at Tower Ridge Chalet

For complete event details along with more information about the Eau Claire Striders, visit eauclaireskistriders.org.



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THE PRINCESS PANDEMIC

HARNESSING THE BENEFITS OF THE PRINCESS CULTURE

By K.C. Powers

Girls are good at singing, dancing, four-wheeling, golfing, being fancy, cooking, hula-hooping around their necks, being smart, picking flowers for grandmothers (because boys never trim the ends), and, finally, whatever they put their minds to. Or at least that's what I heard when I got to talk to some very intuitive young girls.

We live in a world of pink and princess power pandemonium: Everywhere you look it's Elsa this, Cinderella that. Critics worry that exposing developing adolescents to this hyper-specific genre causes low self-esteem, false expectations of love, and body issues. However, if you look closer and talk to the girls consuming this media, they know much more than you might think. Critics severely underestimate today's girls by presuming that these are the cynicisms girls pick up on.

Meet Maria, age eight. She loves Princess Anastasia, not because she has riches, good looks, or a slim waist, but because Anastasia has a pet bat. Lilian, age seven, would like to be Princess Aurora, not because Aurora is saved by a man, wears pink dresses, or goes to a ball, but because when you are Sleeping Beauty you get to take long naps. Sophie, age 11, would like to be Rapunzel because "she's adventurous, fun, follows her dreams, and will sacrifice herself and her own happiness for others." Impressive.

Of course, princess obsession isn't a new fad; fairy tales have existed for thousands of years. The Grimm brothers were not the first people to come up with the idea of "once upon a time." Yet, looking back at their traditional fairy tales, you see that ... well, let's just say that Little Red Riding Hood didn't always end with Red skipping out of Grannie's house.

The purpose of scaring young children into behaving is scarce among today's tales. Today's fairy tales have become synonymous with the creations of Walt Disney® and similar cartoon princess creators. Now, exposure to the truly grim fairy tales is rare. After a few hundred years of the Brothers-Grimm-type horror stories disguised as children's tales, along came Disney's traditional-role early films. Most recently, we've experienced the modern tales that coincide with the early-1990s girl power movement. Tales have evolved from fright to friendship, helping others, communication, and—surprisingly the most controversial—love.

Love: the most important human experience; wars have been started over the excess and lack of it. People do all kinds of crazy things when they don't feel loved, important, or a sense of belonging. Critics claim that the romanticized nature of princesses in today's cartoons will produce women who cannot decipher true, lasting love from fleeting lust. Have more faith.

I can't recall where one of these story's male protagonist has

even once been demeaning or made negative comments or actions toward his female counterpart. It's only adults who make the connection between Prince Charming saving the princess from the dragon and a life of misery, barefoot and pregnant, massaging her husband's feet. Children don't see a world of domestic disputes after the credits roll.

So what about our girls when they are grown up? Where do they turn when they search for the "love" that they grew up on? The hour and a half modern day fairy tale movie or the culture as a whole? Why not focus on the garbage that is cluttering our lives: reality dating TV, scandalous advertisements, and a no-commitment culture?

Frankly, the young girls I got to hang out with are too busy to care. Evelyn, age five, is going to be a doctor when she grows up. And Lily, also age five, has her hands full with a baby brother, Miles, and eating ice cream.

But what happens when your daughter is "swallowed" by Cinderella? Most children do go through phases of "obsession."

As with any media obsession, conversation is the combatant. Raising media-literate daughters calls for prodding questions that will help them to think critically.

We need, as a culture and a society, to reevaluate our senses. We need to look at our own media literacy: Do we communicate with our children about

fairy tales? Do we reassure them that this is not how things happen in real life, while at the same time making it a positive experience? What good things in these stories do we see in real life? Team building, proper communication, and the rules of friendship? If we constantly look at life in a negative light, our children will learn to see only the negative, too.

After all, the girls I met agreed that "happily ever after" is all about love and the occasional dance.

So what do the girls who were raised on princess culture look like when they grow up into queens? Being smack dab in the middle of Generation Y, I can tell you.

Andrea went to a Disney theme park every summer growing up. She currently has an unconditionally loving boyfriend and two cats named (appropriately) Meeko and Raja. She graduated from UW-La Crosse with a degree in mathematics and now is a manager at a financial institution.

Sarah still knows every word to "Kiss the Girl." She teaches underprivileged children. Every day, she juggles the joys and struggles of parenting two well rounded children. She lives in her own castle with her own Prince Eric (yes, his name is

“Critics claim that the romanticized nature of princesses in today's cartoons will produce women who cannot decipher true, lasting love from fleeting lust. Have more faith.”



really Eric) and would give the shirt off her back for anyone in need.

Bree could never decide what princess she liked best. From Snow White to Pocahontas, there were just too many choices. Now, she spends her days copywriting for the student newspaper and getting into political debates; she is only a couple of semesters and a few résumés away from being the next *New York Times* syndicated columnist.

So if this is what the product of the princess pandemic looks like, I'll skip the vaccine. Bring it on.

K.C. Powers is a media literacy advocate, writer, blogger, and self-taught photographer who resides in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, with her fellow writer husband, Caleb. She's a proud meowmie of two happy, healthy kitties and spends her free time trying to find more wall space in her tiny apartment for more bookshelves.



Simple HOME MAKEOVER

Home organization through decluttering, donating, and decorating

By Erica Lynn

Kitchens, bathrooms, home offices—not one room is immune to clutter. Many people strive for a decluttered and beautifully decorated home, but they often feel too overwhelmed by the associated tasks to accomplish these goals. Even simply getting started can be a challenge.

Yet, attaining an organized home that reflects your taste and personality doesn't need to be daunting or expensive! By planning and setting small achievable goals, your home makeover journey can be pleasant and rewarding.

Decluttering decisions

"Doing any type of organizing involves decision making," shares Nancy Rothwell of Straighten-Up Organizing in Eau Claire. For Rothwell, decluttering decision making falls into three categories:

- Keep
- Throw away
- Donate

If you are indecisive about which items to keep, Rothwell advises, "A tactic I often use with clients is to have them pretend they are moving, and determine if the item would be worth moving."

It can be difficult to know where to start when facing an entire home that needs to be organized. Consider beginning in the rooms that need the most work. "The most cluttered rooms in the home are usually the kitchen and the bedrooms," says Rothwell, adding, "When organizing a room, start by putting like things together." For example, if your makeup is scattered in various drawers or cabinets in your bathroom, begin by bringing it all together.

Have you ever thought that items in your bedroom or kitchen might belong in other places? Rothwell's strategy: "Organize a home much like a store by not keeping things in rooms that aren't related to that room."

The right tools

When it comes to home organization, containers and tools abound. Rothwell keeps it simple with her go-to items: "My primary organization tools are clear bins and a label maker ... I recommend clear bins over dark bins because people have a tendency to place things that don't belong in dark bins over time."

Once the initial task of decluttering is done, it's time to focus on maintaining. Rothwell explains, "The long term goal is to always put things where they belong and know exactly where everything goes."

Family focus

An organized home won't remain that way unless all members of the household are committed to keeping everything in its place. Initially, it can be difficult to motivate family members; however, Rothwell has found that once things are organized, family members are more apt to get on board.

Children are able to help, too. "Getting kids involved early on works best; kids like knowing where to find things," tells Rothwell.

Donate for a cause

After identifying donation items, you may be wondering about next steps. Which of the items will be accepted? Does the donation facility have a preparation procedure? Laura Sackmann of Bethesda Resale Shop in Eau Claire answers, "Our shop will take anything from books and clothing to furniture and household goods such as small appliances." Just place items in boxes or plastic bags and drop them off at the store. A store employee will help unload the items from your vehicle and provide a donation receipt. If you have a donation item deemed unsellable, they will recycle it for you. The items you donate to Bethesda Resale Shop will help fund services that benefit people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

There are many organizations that gladly accept unwanted goods. Once you've chosen an organization with a mission you would like to support, check with them regarding their individual policies.

Your style in design

The boxes have been packed and donated or discarded. The drawers, shelves, and cupboards are in order. Now it is time to refresh your space with thoughtful design that reflects who you are. "Home is an extension of yourself," says Alecia Plaetz of Gray Area Interiors in Eau Claire. "I suggest beginning by looking to your own closet to look at your clothes and see what colors you like." Then incorporate those colors into the design of your rooms.

Interior design doesn't need to be expensive. Plaetz loves to help clients feel like they are going shopping in their own home. Rearranging furniture can both improve use of room space and make that room feel more welcoming. For Plaetz, interior design means creating a functional space for the people that live, work, and play there.

Enhance your space by setting goals to declutter, donate, and decorate in 2015.



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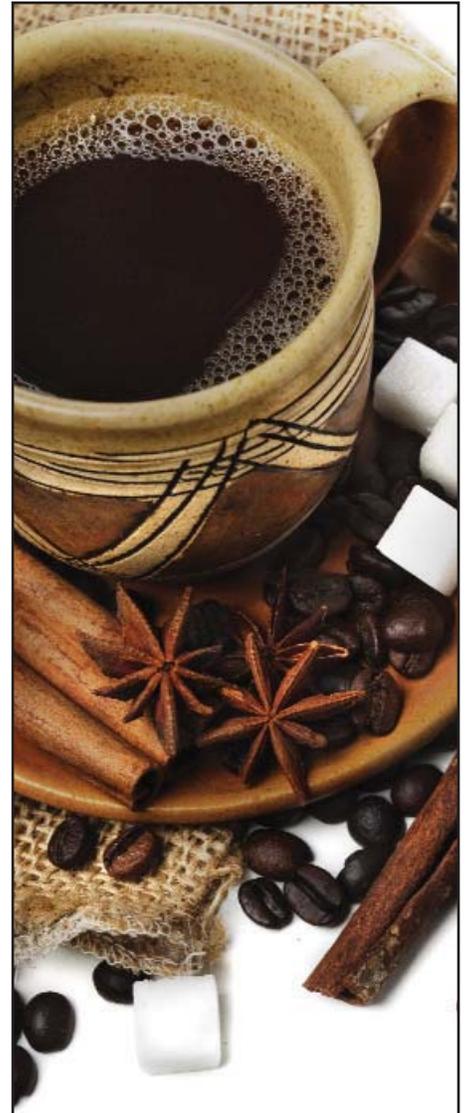


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Jingle, Jingle CRAZIES

By Carol Idso Eling

I love Christmas. The anticipation of the celebration of the birth of Christ and the beauty and wonder of the season are exhilarating. Jingle bells, snow, and sparkle fill the air, alongside sighs and groans of “so much work and hype” and “is it really that time of year again?” Are you hoping that this season will be less crazy? Are you telling yourself, “This year, I will spend less,” “I am going to focus on the real meaning of Christmas,” “I won’t eat as much,” “I am going to be more organized,” etc.? If so, you are not alone.

From my years as a single parent, I have found that the best way to get through any holiday season is by engaging four behaviors: reality check, daily devotion, weekly family meetings, and self-care. For several years, I was overwhelmed, exhausted, and felt like I was running from event to event while shopping and cooking in between. By the time Christmas came, I was exhausted. When the credit card bill came, it was, “Really? I spent all of that? I don’t even remember.” This is when the four behaviors emerged for my family, and our Christmas experience transformed into a less crazy, more loving season.

These are the four behaviors that I now keep in the forefront of my mind each Christmas. I hope these habits can help you, too.

1 Reality check

Remember that the season is about the *celebration* of the birth of Jesus Christ, an incredible gift (II Cor. 9:15). Relish in that for a moment. Then remember that all good celebrations take planning and work. And who does most of the work? The mothers! Don’t whine about it; just get to work, delegate, breathe, and make a plan.

2 Daily devotion

Take 10 minutes or longer to be quiet and read a devotion. (I like to make this easy by using an advent devotional book or materials from my church.) Make time for this, as it is important and needed for peace and focus.

3 Weekly family meeting

Whether you are a retired couple, a working couple with or without children, or a single person with or without children, a weekly family meeting discussing budget, calendar and schedules, volunteer opportunities, and family downtime is crucial to preventing jingle, jingle crazies.

- Prayer. Start and end the meeting with a short simple prayer. (I like “Father in heaven, keep us focused on the precious gift of your son, Jesus Christ, while we plan our holiday season.”)
- Budget. For peace of mind during and after the holidays, it is essential to identify your budget allowance for spending. Include budget items of food, gift giving, decorations, cloth-

ing, travel, parties, cooking, donations, miscellaneous, etc.

- Calendar. Choose your holiday events, and mark them on family and personal calendars. Include school, church, work, neighborhood, and volunteer activities.
- Downtime. Schedule family time for decorating, snowman building, baking, favorite holiday movies, sledding, reading, games, cooking, etc.

4 Self Care

- Start each day with a large glass of water, and continue all day.
- Wash hands frequently. Cough in your elbow and keep your hands away from your face.
- Exercise. Continue or start. Get outside every day. Dress for the weather.
- Limit alcohol. It impairs judgment, mood, and plans—and it also increases caloric intake.
- Limit calories. Drink a large glass of water before a party. Be very choosy ... our bodies are not garbage cans.
- Breathe. Take notice of your breathing while driving, working, and at parties. Do you feel your rib cage expand when take a deep breath?
- Maintain proper nutrition. Do not skip meals for a party later. Eat small frequent meals with protein and vegetable snacks. Increase fiber, fresh fruit, and fresh or frozen vegetables. Stay out of break room at work.
- Sleep. Get 7-8 hours a night.

Try out a few of these ideas. Hopefully they’ll prevent you from having too many “Jingle, Jingle CRAZY” moments, too. Wishing you the most loving and jingle, jingle FUN Christmas season!

Carol Idso Eling has been a nurse practitioner since 1998 and works at Willow Creek Women’s Clinic in Eau Claire (willowcreekclinic.com). She is married and the mother of three children. Carol can be reached at info@willowcreekclinic.com.





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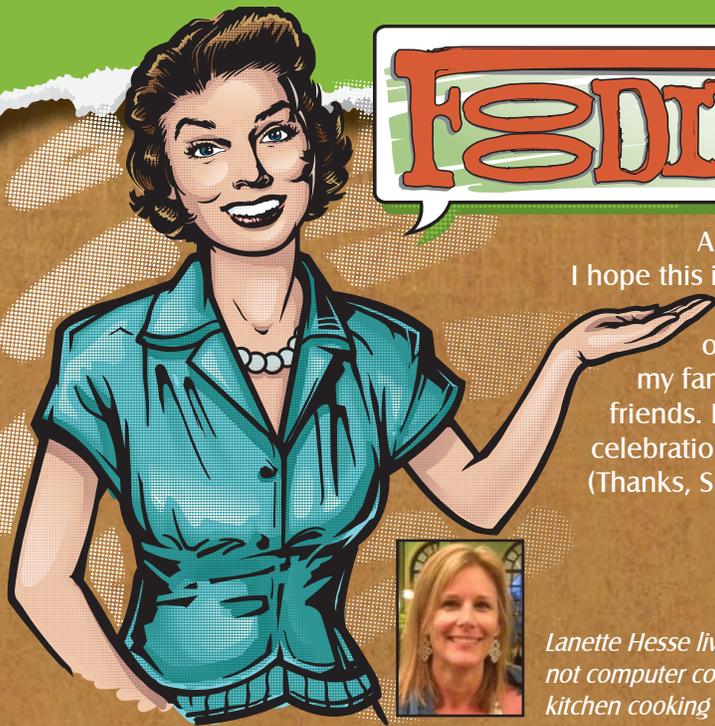


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FODIE FORUM



A merry Christmas season and happy New Year to all, I hope this installment finds you enjoying time with loved ones. Although this time of year can be very stressful, for me, I can't think of a better place to be than in the kitchen baking cookies with my family or preparing appetizers or meals to share with family and friends. I like to serve this frittata at our annual Bible study Christmas celebration, and I acquired the coffee cake recipe from my friend Sue. (Thanks, Sue!) I hope you enjoy! Please share your favorite holiday and winter 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.

MINI FRITTATAS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1/2 cup finely chopped onion | 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme |
| 2/3 cup chopped ham | 1/8 teaspoon black pepper |
| 1/3 cup shredded cheddar cheese | 4 large egg whites |
| 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives | 1 large egg |

Preheat oven to 350°. In fry pan, sauté onions in cooking spray for 2 minutes. Add ham, and sauté for another 3 minutes. Remove from heat; cool 5 minutes. To a large bowl, gently whisk cheese, chives, thyme, pepper, and eggs. Stir in ham and onion mixture. Spray 24 mini muffin cups, and spoon frittata mixture into each cup. Bake 20 minutes or until set.

CRANBERRY COFFEE CAKE

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 1/2 cups flour | 2 cups fresh cranberries |
| 1 1/2 cups sugar | 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 1 stick butter, melted | 1 teaspoon almond extract |
| 2 eggs, beaten | 2/3 cup sliced almonds |

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9-inch springform pan. Combine flour and sugar; cut in the butter. Set aside 1 cup of this mixture for topping. To the remaining mixture, add the eggs, cranberries, salt, and almond extract. Mix well. Spread over bottom and up the sides of the pan. Sprinkle the reserved topping mixture and almonds over the top. Bake for 40 minutes.



tips & tricks by Luke

To add extra flavor, apply a glaze to the ham during the last 30 minutes of the cooking time. Roasting at a lower oven temperature (NEVER roast meat below 200°F) will result in meat that is more flavorful and moist. It will take longer to cook but the results will be worth the wait. Do not use sharp utensils that may pierce the ham when trying to turn it because piercing allows valuable juices to escape. Use other utensils, such as wooden spoons and spatulas, for handling the ham.

Quick fixes

by the five crew



Copyright: Jeffrey B. Banke

Oral Health Fix: Hydrogen Peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) is a great, inexpensive way to prevent gingivitis, gum disease, and bad breath. All of those things are caused by germs, and hydrogen peroxide kills germs—plus it whitens teeth, too! To keep toothbrushes germ-free, rinse them with H₂O₂ or store them in a cup with the bristles submerged in H₂O₂. A quick swish of H₂O₂ over gums, tongue, and teeth will kill germs already hiding in your mouth. (Never swallow hydrogen peroxide.) Over time, your clean pearly whites will develop an extra white glow. Think of how much money you can save on dentist bills and expensive teeth-whitening products!

Cold & Flu Season Fix: C+ Biofizz™

Vitamin C is a key vitamin and antioxidant that our bodies use to keep us strong and healthy in multiple ways. Whether you're supplementing day to day or whether you want to stay healthy through winter's cold and flu season, Designs for Health® C+ Biofizz is a great way to get some vitamin C. Mixed with water, it is effervescent, orange-flavored, deliciousness. It also has quercetin, hesperidin, and rutin (all natural bioflavonoids found in citrus fruits). Bonus: this supplement is wheat free, gluten free, soy free, yeast free, egg free, dairy free, corn free, artificial color free, sugar free, and artificial preservative free! Designsforhealth.com (also available on amazon.com)



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Sick and tired of the ends popping off of your rubber spatulas? Worried about food or water getting in the space between the scraper and the handle? Silicone Mastrad spatulas are all one piece! They're also durable, heat resistant, non-porous, food safe, and dishwasher safe. Mastradus (also available at amazon.com and many kitchen stores)



Organization Fix: Shoe Basket

Through the years, I've tried hard to keep shoes organized: floor stackers, hanging stackers, over-the-door stackers, cubbyholes. But shoes would still pile up. And then I realized I was making it too complicated. Behold, shoe baskets! In closets and entryways, shoe baskets get used because they're so easy. And that means no more tripping over stray shoes.



Copyright: Photobac



Fitness Fix: MyFitnessPal

MyFitnessPal is an online calorie counter and fitness tracker. You can use their website (myfitnesspal.com) or the iPhone app—perfect for tracking at home or on-the-go. Track your progress with friends or keep your info private. Tailor your goals to fit your plan. It's never been easier to stay on track. *Pomag.com* awarded the MyFitnessPal iPhone app five stars (an "outstanding") and their Editor's Choice designation. (Read more at <http://tinypurl.com/pomag-myfitnesspal>.)

Beauty Fix: Finishing Touch™ Lumina Hair Remover

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The Husband's Secret

By Liane Moriarty

I had not heard of *The Husband's Secret* until a friend (who had read it for her book club) recommended it to me. I enjoyed every word!

Imagine that your husband has written you a letter to be opened only after his death. Imagine that the letter contains a deep, dark secret—bad enough to destroy the life you've built together, but also the lives of others. Then imagine finding and reading that letter while your husband is still alive.

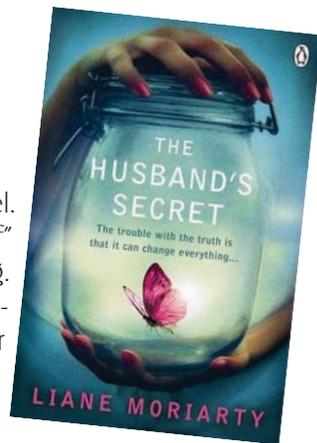
The Husband's Secret tells three stories of three different women and three families. The connection of the three families comes forth as the stories are told over seven crucial days in their lives, beginning on a Monday and ending on Easter Sunday.

When secrets are revealed, the characters must reassess their relationships with those to whom they are closest. As the three women confront their past and make tough decisions about their futures, their fates collide in surprising and unexpected ways.

Many threads emerge in the novel. Grief and guilt abound, and "what if" takes on an entirely new meaning. Insecurity and how it affects the decisions we make in life is yet another threaded theme.

Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, Moriarty uses humor throughout the novel, offsetting the darkness of the tale. She presents a moving portrait of the meaning of love, both marital and familial, and how life can hinge on a decision made in haste. As Moriarty states in the novel, "anyone can fall in love—falling in love is easy. It was holding on that was tricky."

Filled with humor and suspense, this story is a thought provoking, page turning, must read!



About the Author:

Liane Moriarty lives in Sydney, Australia, with her husband and two children. *Kirkus Reviews* called her "an edgier, more provocative and bolder successor to Maeve Binchy." Moriarty has written several other books—*Three Wishes*, *The Last Anniversary*, *What Alice Forgot*, and *The Hypnotist's Love Story*. She also has written the *Nicola Berry* series for children.



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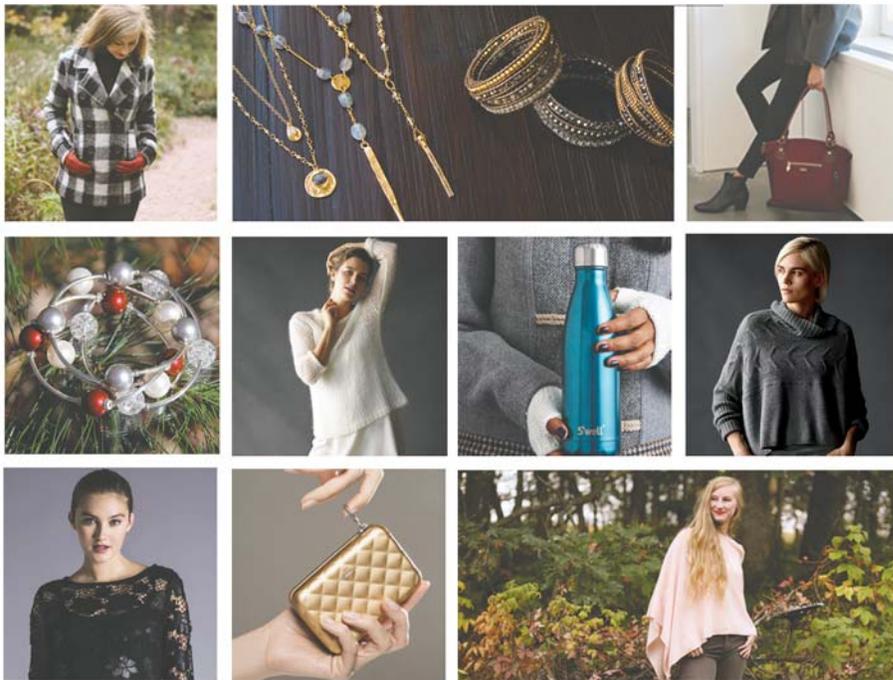
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RAYS OF GRACE XX

WRITTEN BY GRACE THEISEN

A LASTING HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season is my favorite time of year. And I have a special way of enjoying the holidays all year long. All you need to do is make a batch of shrimp bisque. Allow me to explain.

My mom is a great cook. Soups are among her specialties. She makes a tasty leek soup. Everyone loves her potato chowder. And thanks to one of her best friends, she has a special recipe for shrimp bisque. Put simply, the bisque is to die for.

So, when we go to my grandpa's house for Christmas Eve, my mom usually brings her soups. And one year, it was shrimp bisque. She makes enough for 20 people plus enough to bring home for leftovers.

Well, Mom put the leftover soup on the floor in the back seat—pretty much the same place my brother Joe and I decided to get into a little pushing match. That is when Joe kicked over the shrimp bisque. My mom knew right away. Shrimp bisque is very good, but it has a distinct

aroma. Even though the whole thing was totally Joe's fault, my parents made both of us clean it up.

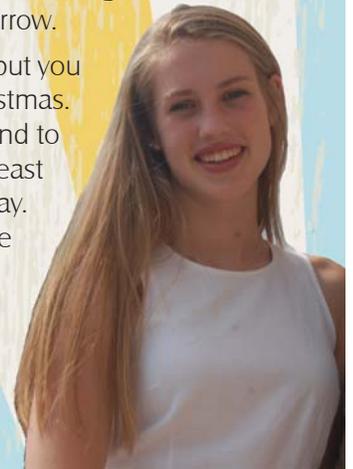
It was late on Christmas Eve, and Joe and I were cold and tired. Then we saw our dad's shop vacuum. Our mom must have heard the vacuum, but she did not yell. She told us to clean out the car and get to bed, then clean out dad's vacuum tomorrow.

Well, we cleaned out the car, but you know how busy it gets on Christmas.

Although we did not get around to cleaning out the vacuum, at least it froze and the smell went away.

Everyone was happy ... until the spring thaw.

Remember how I said I have a way of enjoying the holidays all year long?!



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What's Going On Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 2014

Throughout December – Chippewa Falls Christmas Village – Daily 7 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Come and see this impressive display of Christmas scenes reminiscent of the Victorian era: local historical replicas along with a dazzling display of over 60,000 lights. Established in 1987, the Christmas Village has grown into an independent project of great size involving individuals, businesses, volunteer organizations, and city government. Irvine Park, Bridgewater Ave., Chippewa Falls. 715.723.0051

December 2, 4, 9-11, 16-18 – Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides – Every hour from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Enjoy a relaxing ride through the beautiful Irvine Park Christmas Village and downtown Chippewa Falls! Tickets go fast and are available at the Gordy's County Market Service Center (downtown Chippewa Falls location only). 111 W. Columbia St., Chippewa Falls. chippewafallsmainst.org/Horse-Drawn-Wagon-Rides.html

December 4 & 11 – Winter Wreath Workshop – 5 p.m. Design your own winter wreath this Christmas season. Create a wreath, thinking outside the traditional "red bow." Class will start with a base wreath and go over different ways to "spruce" it up. Down to Earth Garden Center, 6025 Arndt Ln., Eau Claire. Cost: \$40/wreath. 715.833.1234 dwntoearth.com

December 6 – Bridge to Wonderland Parade – 6 p.m. Come celebrate the 25th year of this exciting annual parade! Over 50 illuminated and musical floats, walking units, and horse drawn wagons will light up the winter sky. Downtown Chippewa Falls. chippewafallsmainst.org/Bridge-to-Wonderland.php

December 11 – Menomonie WinterDaze & Parade – 4-7 p.m. Visit with Santa & his reindeer and sip hot chocolate from 4-6 p.m. in the UW-Stout Clocktower Plaza. Enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride down Main Street from 4-6 p.m. And watch the light parade down Main Street beginning at 6:30 p.m. After the parade, view the dazzling fireworks display over Lake Menomin! Menomonie. mainstreetmenomonie.org/winterdazeparade

December 19 – Lessons and Carols 2014: A Christmas Lullaby – 7:30 p.m. Delight in the sounds of the Master Singers as they perform their 22nd annual Christmas concert. First Congregational UCC, Eau Claire. For details and ticket information, visit themastersingers.net.

December 31 – RCU New Year's Eve Event – 5-9 p.m. Family-friendly DJ entertainment, games, prizes, inflatables, limo rides, snacks, special appearance by Savin' Sammy, and a HUGE balloon drop! Concessions available. \$5/person, kids under 3 are free. Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center, 3456 Craig Rd, Eau Claire. rcu.org

JANUARY 2015

January 7, 14, 21, 28 – Chippewa Valley Habitat for Humanity Women's Night – 6-8:30 p.m. EVERY Wednesday. Help build or renovate homes for community families in need. Women interested in volunteering should email info@cvh4h.org to sign up. cvh4h.org

January 10 – Eau Claire Winter Farmers Market – 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month through April. Buy local. Buy Wisconsin. Great monthly opportunity to purchase high quality local vegetables, meat, dairy, and other farm products direct from the farmers. L.E. Phillips Senior Center, 1616 Bellinger St., Eau Claire. ecdowntownfarmersmarket.com

January 8-10, 15-18 – Over the Tavern – Travel back to the 1950s to meet the Pazinskis: Mom, Dad, Eddie, Annie, Georgie, and 12-year-old Rudy, who announces that instead of being confirmed, he'd rather shop around for a more "fun" religion. This comedy/drama is both sentimental and hilarious. The Grand Theatre, 102 W. Grand Ave., Eau Claire. \$20 Adults, \$18 Seniors, \$10 Youth/Students. For details and show times, visit cvtg.org.

January 8, 14, 23, 28 – Wine & Whimsy – 6-8:30 p.m. Eau Claire's paint and wine experience: a 2½-hour workshop with friends in front of a canvas with a glass of wine. An instructor will guide you through painting your very own masterpiece. Everything you need is provided to create a work of art, and you take your painting home at the end of the night. Eau Claire Regional Arts Center, 316 Eau Claire St., Eau Claire. \$35 admission includes a glass of wine and light munchies. For tickets and info, call 715.832.ARTS (2787) or visit eauclairearts.com.

January 31 – Candlelight Ski Night – 5-8 p.m. Lighted ski, snowshoe, and walking trails. Cross-country ski a one or two mile trail through a winter wonderland illuminated by glowing candles. For non-skiers, a .75 mile lighted trail is available for hiking and snowshoeing. Weather permitting. Sponsored by the Friends of Lake Wissota State Park. Lake Wissota State Park, 18127 County Highway O, Chippewa Falls. State Park admission fee required. To reserve snowshoes or for information, call 715.382.4574.

January 31 – Rock Sirenz – 7:30-9 p.m. What happens when you take an amazing rock band and add three female songbirds standing on the shoulders of the rock goddesses who came before them? You get Rock Sirenz. Join these incredible women as they celebrate the greatest female rockers throughout history, featuring songs from Cher, Beyoncé, Whitney, Pink, Adele, Madonna, Evanescence, and more! Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts, 205 Main St. E., Menomonie. For tickets, call 715.235.0001 or visit mabeltainter.org.

index of advertisers

4:30 AM Coffeehouse	37
Absolutely Taylor Maid	19
Advanced Massage Therapies.....	27
Aging & Disability Resource Center	39
Badgerland Printing USA.....	39
B-Framed Galleries	27
Bloomer Ford.....	35
Classics Furniture Studio	43
Chippewa Valley Vein Center	27
Christman Dental	35
Details Fine Apparel & Accessories	42
Dove Healthcare.....	11
Holiday Inn Eau Claire	21
House Blend Lighting + Design	35
Hudson Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism.....	26
Just Local Foods Cooperative	39
Kristo Orthodontic Specialists.....	7
LaGranders Cheese	35
Lake Hallie Memory Care	17
Lasker Jewelers.....	11
Mega Co-op.....	Inside Front Cover
Merrick Plastic & Hand Surgery.....	5
Merry Maids	21
Northwoods Family Eyecare	43
OakLeaf Surgical Hospital	17
Pederson-Volker Funeral Chapel & Cremation Services.....	44
Peoples Bank Midwest / PBM	19
Red Flint Rock and Stone.....	3
Regis Catholic Schools	23
Regis Court Dental Associates	3
RCU / Royal Credit Union	Back Cover
Sacred Heart Obstetrics & Gynecology	47
Smiles in Motion	7
Southside Medical Clinic.....	17
State Farm - Jeff Flaig, agent	42
St. Joseph's Hospital.....	15
Tangled Up In Hue	44
The Garage.....	21
The Medicine Shoppe	31
Toyceen Motors.....	37
Weld, Riley, Prenn & Ricci SC.....	37
Western Wisconsin Urology	19

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Please join us for this FREE Event

The Healing Sounds of Christmas

UWEC Davies Center

Sunday, December 14

1:30pm

.....

Music can touch your hearts, lift you when you are low and inspire us all to live richer, more fulfilling lives. Join us to hear local musicians share their ministry of music at this free Christmas concert.

Registration is required for this FREE event. Call **715-717-6028**.



**Donations to the food pantry appreciated.*



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The Christmas season is a special time to remember our loved ones. The Volunteer Partners of HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital invite you to join us for the lighting of the trees to honor and memorialize loved ones.

29th Annual Lighting Ceremony

Sunday, December 7

5:30 p.m.

Sacred Heart Hospital Chapel
(with tree lighting to follow.)

Refreshments will be served in the lobby starting at 4:45 p.m.



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