

October 2026

Inspire

Magazine



**Power, Precision
and Progress:
Women Leading
the Way**



Walk-In Mammograms

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Oct. 6–Nov. 3

In honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month,
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OCTOBER 13

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inspired CONTENTS

7

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

8

Literacy for Life: Building a Stronger Community Through Reading

10

Live Longer, Live Better

12

Watertown Regional Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Seth Barudin to Doctors Court Clinic

14

Park Avenue Sports Cafe

16

Shop, Dine, Create, Enjoy, Explore!

18

Homegrown Heart, Lifelong Calling

20

Meatball Sub Egg Roll

21

Dining Out: Iron Ridge Inn

21

InSpire Magazine's Makeover

22

Accounting for Balance

23

Women In Business and Manufacturing 2026

24

EK Celebrates 5 Women for Their Accomplishments Following Recent Company Growth

30

InSpire Magazine's Restaurant Guide

On the Cover:

Phoebe loves the library!



**Seeing patients of all
ages for:**

- Acute illnesses
- Annual exams
- Chronic disease management
- Immunizations
- Integrative medicine
- Pediatric care



Seth Barudin, MD

Now Seeing Patients in Watertown

Watertown Regional Medical Center welcomes Seth Barudin, MD, to the Doctors Court Clinic in Watertown. With more than 20 years of family medicine experience, Dr. Barudin provides comprehensive care for patients of all ages. He believes in building lasting relationships, listening to patients and partnering with them to achieve their health and wellness goals.

Scan to learn more.



**Accepting New Patients.
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"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

Richard Steele

As you look for activities this fall and winter, consider visiting your local library or bookstore. Reading regularly offers significant cognitive benefits, including enhanced brain function, deeper empathy, broader knowledge, and a stronger vocabulary.

The Benefits of Reading

1. Reading helps to develop empathy and foster connections.
2. Reading improves critical thinking skills.
3. Reading builds vocabulary authentically and enhances conversation skills.
4. Reading teaches social skills and allows for "rehearsal" of universal experiences.
5. Reading strengthens cognitive processes.
6. Reading is important because it helps to build background knowledge.
7. Reading can help reduce stress for all ages.
8. Reading can improve sleep.
9. Reading helps to build and maintain memory.
10. Reading strengthens writing skills.
11. Reading also strengthens language and communication skills.
12. Reading builds sturdier problem solving skills.
13. Reading can provide a sense of support and belonging - particularly for those who might feel "on the outside".

www.95percentgroup.com

In the months ahead, we hope you'll pick up a new book or magazine and join us in experiencing the joys and benefits of reading!

Sincerely,

Denise Fitzsimmons

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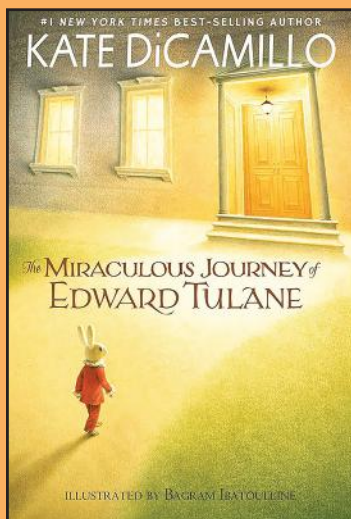
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The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Kate DiCamillo

Reviewed by

Reviewed by Peggy K. Potter, M.L.I.S.

How does a reader choose what to read next? This reader was watching my favorite actor/singer Kim Soo-hyun, in a limited Korean serial, My Love From the Star, Mr. Kim was shown reading, in Korean, this book by American author Kate DiCamillo. Not once but three times he is shown reading The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane. Surely there must be a reason. Ms DiCamillo is an award winning author of Young People's books. I had to read it and perhaps learn why.

At 212 pages this book is not for small children but readers ages 10 to 110 will love this book immensely. It is a tutorial on love. A porcelain rabbit named Edward was adored by ten year old Abilene. Edward knew he was loved but was self-centered and cared only for himself. Then he was lost overboard on an ocean voyage. Laying on the ocean floor the rabbit had a long time to think about what he lost. A fisherman casting his net brings Edward up and starts his long journey of love and loss and excruciating pain of losing love to death. It is a story about why love is important and how rabbits and people must keep going after losing it and not close our hearts. Illustrations by Bagram Ibatoulline add great visuals to the beginning of each chapter.



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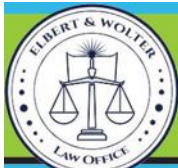
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Literacy for Life: Building a Stronger Community Through Reading

By Sarah Cournoyer, Library Director



Literacy is far more than the ability to read and write. It is a foundational skill that influences educational success, economic opportunity, health outcomes and wellbeing throughout a person's lifespan.

While literacy is often associated with childhood education, many adults also face challenges. Wisconsin Literacy reports that one in seven Wisconsin adults struggles with low literacy skills, nearly one in four has limited math skills, and about 1.5 million Wisconsin residents need support building these skills.

Early Literacy Creates Lifelong Benefits

Literacy begins long before a child enters school. Reading, talking, singing, and playing with babies and young children builds language development, communication skills, and school readiness.

The Beaver Dam Community Library supports these early learning experiences. In 2025, the library offered 118 programs for youth from birth through age 18, serving 3,189 participants. More than 125,000 physical items were checked out, and youth materials made up 40% of total circulation.

Children who develop strong literacy skills are more likely to succeed academically, graduate from high school, and pursue career training or higher education.

Literacy and Health Go Hand in Hand

Researchers recognize literacy as an important influence on health and wellbeing.

The Yale Child Study Center and Scholastic Collaborative for Child & Family Resilience report *Reading for Life: The Impact of Youth Literacy on Health Outcomes* found that literacy affects not only educational achievement but also physical health, mental health, and health literacy. People need literacy skills to understand medical information, follow treatment plans, evaluate health information, and make informed decisions about their wellbeing.

As the report's central finding suggests, reading makes us healthier, both physically and mentally.

Building Strong Families Through Literacy

The benefits of literacy go beyond individual readers. Family literacy strengthens relationships while helping

children develop language and communication skills.

Parents who read regularly with their children improve school readiness and foster a lifelong love of learning. Shared reading also builds trust and emotional connection.

This is one reason libraries are essential community hubs. They can play a unique role in supporting parents and caregivers as their children's first teachers.

Literacy Builds Resilience and Opportunity

Literacy builds confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills and helps people navigate an increasingly complex workforce that requires continuous learning and adaptation.

Libraries support this through free access to books, technology, educational resources, and community connections, serving learners from early childhood through adulthood. Higher literacy levels are linked to better job opportunities, greater economic stability, increased civic engagement, and stronger communities.

Investing in the Future

For Beaver Dam and communities across Dodge County, literacy is an investment in long-term community success. Through programs, collections, partnerships, and family-centered learning opportunities, the Beaver Dam Community Library helps residents build skills that support education, health, employment, and meaningful community participation.

Literacy changes lives, and everyone has a role to play. Whether you read with a child, volunteer your time, support a local literacy initiative, or make reading part of your daily routine, you are helping create stronger families, healthier residents, and a brighter future for our community.

Edward Jones

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Live Longer, Live Better



By Dr. Stephanie Tyjeski

Let's be honest: most of us would like to live a long life—but preferably not one that requires 17 medications, three walkers, and a daily argument with our knees.

Longevity isn't simply about adding more birthdays to the calendar. **The goal is to add more good years to your life—years when you can move, think, laugh, travel, play with your grandchildren, chase your dreams, and get up from the couch without making a sound that resembles a wounded animal.**

The good news? You don't have to wait for a miracle pill or discover the Fountain of Youth. Some of the most powerful longevity strategies are things you can start today.

1. MOVE YOUR BODY—BEFORE IT FILES A COMPLAINT

Your body is designed to move, not spend eight hours in a chair followed by four hours on the couch recovering from sitting in the chair. Regular physical activity helps support your heart, muscles, bones, brain, balance, metabolism, and independence as you age. And you don't have to become a marathon runner. Walking, strength training, stretching, gardening, dancing, biking, swimming, or playing with the kids all count.

Today's challenge: Take a 20–30 minute walk. Then do a few simple strength exercises. Your future self will thank you—and you might even be able to get off the floor without needing a rescue team.

2. EAT FOOD THAT LOVES YOU BACK

Remember the story of **The Three Little Pigs**? One built his house out of straw, one used sticks, and the smart pig built his out of bricks. When the big, bad wolf came huffing and puffing, only one house had the foundation to stand strong.

Your body works much the same way. **You can't build a strong, healthy body with a “straw-and-sticks” diet and expect it to withstand everything life throws at it.**

Your body is constantly rebuilding itself from the materials you provide. If your diet consists mostly of ultra-processed foods, sugary drinks, and things that come in bags with cartoon characters on them, you're giving your body the nutritional equivalent of a straw house.

Today's Challenge: Choose one protein, one carbohydrate high in fiber, and one healthy fat for your

meals. Build your body with the “bricks” of good nutrition: vegetables, fruits, quality proteins, whole grains, healthy fats, nuts, seeds, and plenty of water. You don't need a perfect diet—you need a **solid foundation of good choices made consistently.**

3. BUILD AND PROTECT YOUR MUSCLE

Muscle isn't just for people who want to look good in a tank top. As we age, maintaining strength becomes increasingly important for balance, mobility, metabolism, and independence.

Being strong enough to get off the floor, carry groceries, climb stairs, pick up a grandchild, or open that stubborn pickle jar is a pretty good investment in your future.

Today's Challenge: Add some resistance training. Dumbbells, resistance bands, bodyweight exercises, or even squats and wall push-ups can get you started. Remember: **strong is a longevity strategy.**

4. SLEEP LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT—BECAUSE IT KIND OF DOES

Sleep isn't laziness. It's maintenance.

During quality sleep, your body and brain get valuable time to recover and recharge. Chronic sleep deprivation can affect mood, metabolism, immune function, cardiovascular health, and cognitive performance.

Aim for a consistent sleep schedule and create an environment that encourages rest. Put the phone down, turn off the television, and stop scrolling through videos of people renovating kitchens you'll never own.

Tonight's Challenge: Give yourself permission to go to bed earlier.

5. INVEST IN PEOPLE, PURPOSE, AND JOY

Here's the part that often gets overlooked: **longevity isn't just about keeping your heart beating. It's about having a life worth sticking around for.**

Strong relationships, meaningful activities, laughter, community, faith, hobbies, and having a reason to get out of bed can all contribute to a healthier, more fulfilling life.

Today's Challenge: Call a friend. Have dinner with your family. Join a group. Take the trip. Learn something new. Laugh until your stomach hurts. Don't wait until retirement to start enjoying yourself. Because what good is living to

100 if you spend the last 30 years saying, "Well, at least I made it to 100"?

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

We shouldn't simply ask, "**How long can I live?**" A better question is: "**How long can I live well?**" The goal of longevity isn't merely to increase your lifespan. It's to increase your **healthspan**—the number of years you remain healthy, active, independent, and engaged with life. So don't wait for January 1. Don't wait until Monday. Don't wait until you lose 20 pounds, retire, have more money, or finally organize the garage. **Start today.** Take a walk. Eat something nutritious. Lift something heavy. Go to bed on time. Call someone you love. You may not be able to control exactly how many years you get—but you can do a lot to make the years you have **healthier, stronger, more meaningful, and a whole lot more fun.** Not sure where to start or what to add to your lifestyle? Give our office a call, 920-885-3020. Our doctors can't wait to get you started on your health journey.

Join me at our FREE Wellness Class where we'll dive deeper into what can increase and decrease our longevity and how to achieve quality over quantity. All class attendees receive a free InBody scan to give you insight into your health including your metabolism. **Please join us at our Beaver Dam location for this FREE class on Tuesday, October 13th at 5:30pm.** Invite your friends, family, neighbors, and anyone who supports your health. You do not need to be a patient to attend.

Yours in Health,
Dr. Stephanie Tyjeski

Dr. Stephanie graduated in December 2016 with her Doctorate in Chiropractic at Logan University. She continued on at Logan University to receive her Masters in Nutrition and Human Performance. She is also certified as a Digestive Health Professional through the Loomis Enzyme Institute. She currently works at Tyjeski Family Chiropractic and Wellness Center where she offers personalized nutritional counseling.

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Watertown Regional Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Seth Barudin to Doctors Court Clinic



Watertown Regional Medical Center is pleased to welcome Seth Barudin, MD, to the Doctors Court Clinic in Watertown. Dr. Barudin joins a primary care team at Doctors Court also consisting of Nurse Practitioner Casey Brown and Physician Assistant June Suwanabol. He is accepting new patients.

Dr. Barudin is a family medicine physician with more than 20 years of experience caring for patients and families in the Beaver Dam community. He provides comprehensive care for patients of all ages, from newborns to older adults, and treats a wide range of acute illnesses and chronic conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, and mental health concerns.

"We are excited to welcome Dr. Barudin to our Doctors Court team," said Gina Novotny, Executive Director of Physician Services. "His extensive experience in family medicine, commitment to building lasting relationships with patients, and focus on whole-person care make him a wonderful addition to our primary care team. We look forward to having him serve patients and families in the Watertown community."

Dr. Barudin believes in building lasting relationships with patients and partnering with them to support their long-term health and well-being. He takes time to listen, understand each patient's needs, and help them make informed health decisions. He also has a special interest in integrative medicine, using evidence-based approaches to promote overall wellness.

"I'm excited to join Watertown Regional Medical Center and have the opportunity to care for patients in the Watertown community," said Dr. Seth Barudin. "Family medicine is about building relationships and getting to know patients over time. I look forward to partnering with patients and their families to help them achieve their health and wellness goals."

Located at 1507 Doctors Court in Watertown, adjacent to Riverside Middle School, the Doctors Court Clinic offers a variety of services including annual physical exams, chronic disease management, immunizations, same-day acute care visits, and in-house lab and x-ray services. The clinic provides accessible care with appointments available in the morning, afternoon, and evening.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Barudin, call 920.261.4111 or visit watertownregional.com to learn more about primary care services and to find a provider.

About Watertown Regional Medical Center

Watertown Regional Medical Center (WRMC) has been providing the residents of Dodge and Jefferson counties in southeast Wisconsin with excellent healthcare for over 115 years. By placing patients' needs first, services have grown to include Emergency, Primary Care, Women's Health, Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Heart and Vascular, Neurology, Pulmonology, Ophthalmology, and many others. Watertown Regional Medical Center is a joint venture between the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation and LifePointHealth. For more information and to see a complete list of the services offered, visit WatertownRegional.com.

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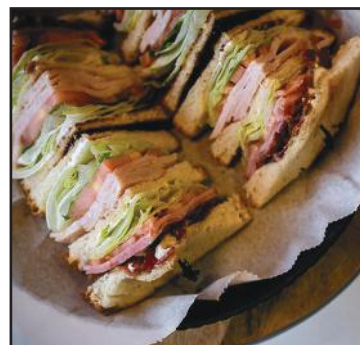
I was inspired by my family and their work ethic, which created the desire to build something of our own.

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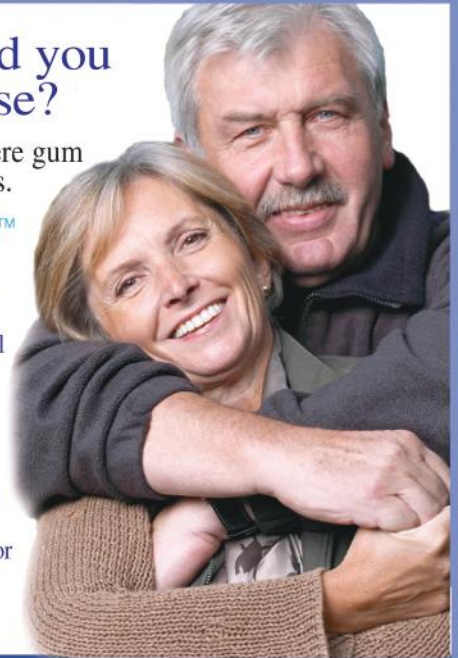
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Events

October - December

October

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Choose a one-day or two-day investigation, but for the full experience, start Friday and make a weekend of it! The longer you investigate, the more time you'll have to gather clues, question characters and build your case. Be sure to check in by Noon Saturday, when the Coroner's Report reveals a major clue that could change everything. Then gather with your fellow detectives on Saturday for the Final Reveal and find out if you cracked the case.

All ages and experience levels are welcome.

30 - Kickoff to Fall Downtown Fest

Boo, Scoot & Boogie Parade & Glow Dance Party and Monster Bar Crawl (21+)

31 - Fall Downtown Fest

Casket Races, Kids Games & Activities, Trick or Treat, Costume Contests and, Creepy Doll Contests, Grand Procession & Much More!

November

13 - 27 - Holiday Hustle Shopping Event

Shop Early, Shop Local, Get Rewards - Downtown Beaver Dam

November 21st - DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY MAGIC

Event- Story time with Santa, vote on the best holiday window display, carolers, refreshments, and extended shopping hours.

27 through January 4

Rotary Lights Display - Free Holiday Light Display at Swan City Park.

28 - "Get Caught Shopping Small" Beaver Dam

Businesses - Chance to win prizes when you shop small.

December

5 - Santa's Hometown Holiday Adventure

A day full of family-friendly activities, holiday characters meet and greets and Santa!

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Homegrown Heart, Lifelong Calling

By Ami Mantych, APNP
Marshfield Medical Center–Beaver Dam

Some people spend their careers searching for where they belong. For me, that place has always been right here in Dodge County.

This community is home. It's where I began my healthcare journey more than 18 years ago as a registered nurse, where I built my career, and where I've had the privilege of caring for generations of patients and families. Now, as I begin a new chapter as a family nurse practitioner with the Marshfield Medical Center-Beaver Dam clinic in Columbus, I'm honored to continue serving the community that has given so much to me.

My decision to enter healthcare was driven by a simple but powerful desire: to help people through some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. Early in my career, working in the emergency department taught me the importance of compassionate, patient-centered care and the difference it can make for individuals and families facing uncertainty.

Throughout the years, I found tremendous fulfillment in educating patients, supporting their families, advocating for their needs, and helping them navigate complex health concerns. Those experiences inspired me to continue my education and earn my Master of Science in Nursing, ultimately becoming a Family Nurse Practitioner.

While I loved the fast-paced nature of emergency medicine and the leadership opportunities I experienced as a shift administrator, I realized I wanted to do more than treat an immediate health concern. I wanted the opportunity to build lasting relationships with patients, focus on prevention and wellness, and help people stay healthy long before a medical issue becomes a crisis.

That is what drew me to family medicine.

As a primary care provider, I care for patients across the lifespan, from children and adolescents to adults and older adults. Whether someone comes to see me for preventive care, management of chronic conditions such as diabetes or hypertension, women's health concerns, mental health support, substance use disorder treatment, or an acute illness, my goal is the same: to be a trusted partner in their healthcare journey.

I am especially passionate about prevention, health education, and helping patients improve their overall quality of life. Sometimes that means helping someone manage a chronic disease. Other times it means supporting lifestyle changes, identifying a new diagnosis, or simply creating a space where patients feel heard, respected, and understood.

My approach to care is rooted in trust and partnership. I believe healthcare works best when patients and providers work together toward common goals. I strive to listen carefully, provide clear education, and empower patients to make informed decisions about their health. Every treatment plan should be individualized, evidence-based, and centered on the unique needs of the person sitting in front of me.

If a patient were recommending me to a friend, I would hope they would say that I genuinely care, listen without judgment, explain things in a way they can understand, and take the time to address their concerns. Feeling comfortable and confident in your healthcare provider is important, and I want every patient to feel respected and valued.

One area that is especially meaningful to me is supporting survivors of sexual assault. As a trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE RN), I understand how important compassionate follow-up care can be and hope to continue supporting patients through that journey whenever possible.

Equally important to me is caring for patients close to home. Rural healthcare matters. People deserve access to high-quality care without having to travel long distances, and I appreciate the opportunity to build strong relationships not only with patients and their families, but also with colleagues throughout our community. Together,

we can make a lasting difference in the health and wellbeing of the region we all call home.

Joining Marshfield Clinic Health System in this new role felt like a natural fit. The organization has been my professional home throughout much of my nursing career, and I have always admired its commitment to providing exceptional patient-centered care, particularly in rural communities. Continuing to serve the people of Dodge County while growing as a provider is an opportunity I am grateful to have.

Outside of medicine, my greatest joy is my family. My husband, Brandon, and I have been together for more than 14 years and married for 11. We have three wonderful children—Gage, Natali, and Averi—and two beloved dogs, Mason, a retired police K-9, and Mika, our energetic Labrador retriever.

When we're not working, you'll often find us camping, traveling, enjoying the outdoors, or spending time together making memories. I also enjoy riding motorcycles, decorating cakes, and supporting community events. Those experiences help me maintain balance and remind me daily of the importance of family, connection, and service.

As I begin this new role, my hope is to create a welcoming environment where patients feel comfortable asking questions, sharing concerns, and actively participating in their care. Healthcare can sometimes feel overwhelming, but no one should have to navigate it alone.

I look forward to building lasting relationships, supporting healthier lives, and serving the community that has supported me throughout my career. For me, there is no greater honor than caring for my neighbors, friends, and families right here in Dodge County — exactly where I belong.

To learn more or to make an appointment with Ami Mantych, call 920-350-0235.



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Meatball Sub Egg Rolls



Ingredients

1 large egg
 1 lb. ground beef
 1/4 yellow onion, finely chopped
 1 1/4 oz. finely shredded Parmesan (about 1/2 c.)
 1 1/4 oz. finely shredded provolone (about 1/3 c.)
 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 2 Tbsp. Italian-seasoned bread crumbs
 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh oregano
 1 tsp. kosher salt
 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
 1 1/2 cups store-bought or homemade marinara sauce, divided
 9 egg roll wrappers
 2 cups shredded low-moisture mozzarella
 Neutral oil, for frying (about 6 c.)

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°. Line a baking sheet with parchment. In a medium bowl, lightly beat egg. Add beef, onion, parmesan, provolone, garlic, parsley, bread crumbs, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper. Gently mix to combine.

Portion out 1/2-ounce balls (about 2 teaspoons) of beef mixture (you should have about 36 total). Arrange balls on prepared sheet.

Bake meatballs until browned, about 10 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes.

Transfer meatballs to a large bowl. Add 1/2 cup marinara sauce and toss to coat.

With one corner of an egg roll wrapper facing you, sprinkle 1/4 cup mozzarella into the center of the wrapper, then arrange 4 meatballs on top, leaving a 1" border. Brush edges of wrapper with water, fold bottom corner up and over filling, then fold in the sides. Tightly tucking as you go, finish rolling wrapper away from you. Repeat with remaining filling and wrappers.

Into a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot fitted with a deep-fry thermometer, pour oil to a depth of about 2 1/2". Heat oil over medium-high heat until thermometer registers 350°.

Fry egg rolls, turning occasionally, until golden brown and crispy, 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack set inside a baking sheet to drain.

Arrange egg rolls on a platter. Serve with remaining 1 cup marinara sauce alongside.



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INSPIRE MAGAZINE'S makeover



Hanna is modeling two very cute wigs to choose from. The first one is a short pixie cut with a full mono top and a lace front. Or she can wear her longer choppy layered style with texture waves and wispy bangs! Hanna came to me because of receiving treatments and losing her hair. She looks Beautiful in both of her wigs!

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Accounting for Balance

By Faith Smith

WOMEN
IN BUSINESS &
MANUFACTURING
2026



From left to right: Angela Kearns, Vanessa Bastian, Sharon Pluim, Sylvia Vander Galien, Emma Vander Galien, Faith Smith

Sharon Pluim's interest in accounting began in high school when her first accounting class led to the discovery that she enjoyed working with numbers. Debits and credits came naturally for her. She states that, "Science was never my strong suit so accounting was my choice." Her interest in accounting led to attending UW-Green Bay. "I loved the feel of a smaller college, and they had a good accounting program. Classes were small so knowing the professors personally was a plus," she says about her college choice. While in school she secured a part-time accounting position located in Algoma. "I really enjoyed learning about payroll and other facets of accounting. Hands-on experience was very helpful in preparing me for my first job." Her first

full-time position outside of college was at the Wisconsin Department of Justice. She discovered that, "It was a good job but wasn't a good long term fit as I wanted to be involved in a wide variety of accounting versus a narrow."

She has found that wide scope of work at Sam's Well Drilling, Inc., a water well drilling company in Randolph. Sharon Pluim began her career at Sam's in early 2003. She has been heavily involved in the parent business of Sam's Well Drilling and its other entities. These include Drillworx, Nest Equipment, and Sam's Crane Service & Rental. Drillworx supplies wholesale materials for water well drilling and horizontal directional drilling throughout the country. Nest Equipment offers drill rig repair and new equipment sales. Sam's Crane Service & Rentals serves companies exactly as the name suggests by providing crane work and equipment rental to contractors. These companies have branched out of Wisconsin and have locations throughout the United States. Sharon offers a steady hand that keeps these companies moving forward without losing sight of the fact that at the end of the day the books still need to balance.

One person that has worked closely with Sharon during her career at Sam's, is the president of the company, Jim Vander Galien. "When she started at Sam's she stressed the importance of balance, and I didn't want to listen," he states. He reflected that he has grown to appreciate the necessity of balance in business during his years working with her. He says, "the growth of our company was based on a lot of things and employees, but we would not be in the position we are in without her on staff. She challenged me in lean

years and tempered enthusiasm in years of growth to reach balance. As a company we are recognized on a national level because of her contributions." Sharon encourages fiscal responsibility with a fierceness that has influenced employees and owners.

Her role at the Sam's Well Drilling family of businesses involves more than the typical accounting position. She oversees the accounts receivable, but also participates in other areas such as human resources, inventory monitoring, and office management. She even assists with the water testing lab although she stated that science is not a strength of hers. "She is always willing to step out of her comfort zone for the betterment of the company," Jim says of her lab participation.

For those that work with Sharon on the daily (myself included), her personality and knowledge have contributed to our growth, as well. It isn't uncommon for the phrase "let's go ask Sharon" to be stated in the Randolph office. She will have an answer for us whether the question is related to accounting or not. She usually has something clever to say about it too. Some of our favorite quotes from Sharon are, "haste makes waste," "nothing worth it is easy," or "mistakes are good; that is how we learn." The last one is good to hear for those of us that struggle with numbers.

When asked what advice she has for the next generation she says, "I would encourage younger people to pursue the career if they find that they have a knack for numbers and good old debits and credits." The pull of interest in numbers could lead to a lifelong career in nearly any industry. Sharon did not begin her career with interest in water wells or drill tooling, but accounting led her here. The involvement with different facets of the business and the constant changes in technology is challenging, but that has not deterred her either. Despite this she says, "My current position as Sam's Well Drilling has been my favorite job of all."

Sharon's dedication to her job does not mean she is all business. She is known for her love of golf and spends many summer days on the course. She also enjoys traveling, bowling, reading, and spending time with family and friends. Even outside of work she's able to achieve balance by putting aside the demands of a busy workplace to spend time with those around her.



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EK Celebrates 5 Women for Their Accomplishments Following Recent Company Growth

By Lily Walker

October is manufacturing month, and EK, a Fall River-based manufacturer of power products and contract manufacturing solutions, is celebrating five women who have been nominated for Empowering Women in Industry Awards. As a fully integrated metal fabricator, EK serves customers across the United States spanning agriculture, aerospace, transportation, power generation, and more with their seven facilities in Fall River and Madison, spanning 800,000 square feet, but its mission is bigger than just manufacturing. At EK, they strive to provide a family-centric, team-based culture in the workplace, where personal growth is cultivated and encouraged.

"EK has welcomed a growing number of women to our Fall River and Madison locations," said Christine Lindner, Marketing Manager at EK. "It's so empowering that EK recognizes the strengths and skills women bring to manufacturing whether their role is working with customers, vendors or on the floor to craft a quality product."

Kaelene Lohneis, who was nominated for Tradeswoman of the Year, Engineering Leader of the Year, and Mentor of the Year, embodies

the mission of EK as a whole. She started at the company as a youth apprentice and has worked her way towards a role in leadership as a welding supervisor.

When it comes to getting promoted at EK, being a team player and having a positive, motivated outlook can get an employee far. Aligning with the company's values is important, since employees work very closely with their colleagues in order to create the best possible product in a timely manner.

The recent growth of EK has shown how true teamwork and development from within can allow not only the company to be successful, but give space for individuals to shine and learn new skills. Emily Weinberger - nominated for Leadership in STEM/STEAM, Leadership in Manufacturing, and Leadership in Reliability and Operations - started at EK in the Human Resource Department, and has recently been promoted to Assembly Manager following the expansion of EK after their purchase of three new facilities in Fall River this past summer.

"Continued growth for EK also means continued growth for all the people involved as well," Weinberger said. "As we continue to grow, we're going to need more people to grow along with us."

Leah Drew, nominee for Leadership in Reliability and Operations, was also recently promoted to process engineer. Embracing the growth of the company and taking the opportunity to learn new roles is something that EK consistently rewards their employees for, and Drew's hard work has been seen by her colleagues who nominated her for this award.

"One thing that I think EK does very well is not only just waiting for that person to apply for that next role, but going to that person in their current role and saying, 'Hey, I think you would be a great fit for this next opportunity,'" said Melissa Burkhardt, a project manager at EK.

For Burkhardt, 2026 is not the first year that she's been nominated for the Empowering Women in Industry Awards, but the second. She is nominated this year for Tradeswoman of the Year, Leadership in STEM/STEAM, and Leadership in Manufacturing. Burkhardt embodies the spirit of the Empowering Women in Industry Awards, both through her work at EK and what she chooses to do for the culture of the trades industry in her free time.

Burkhardt formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization almost two years ago called Next Generation Trades, which helps rural school districts in Wisconsin with the costs of technology education programs. She coordinates with industry leaders so that tradespeople can do class presentations. Her goal is to make sure that the next generation of children in rural areas know that there are options other than typical four-year colleges.

Her advocacy for the trades doesn't end there. This year, Burkhardt is going to be a keynote speaker at the Women in Manufacturing Summit in Las Vegas. Her speech will surround the cost of a joke to the culture of a manufacturing facility. She emphasized how EK itself provides a safe space for everyone working there.

"Coming into the industry wasn't really intimidating for me, but seeing how intimidating it is for other women has really driven my passion to try to advocate as much as I can for inclusion in this space and just promote the spaces that we do have here," Burkhardt said.

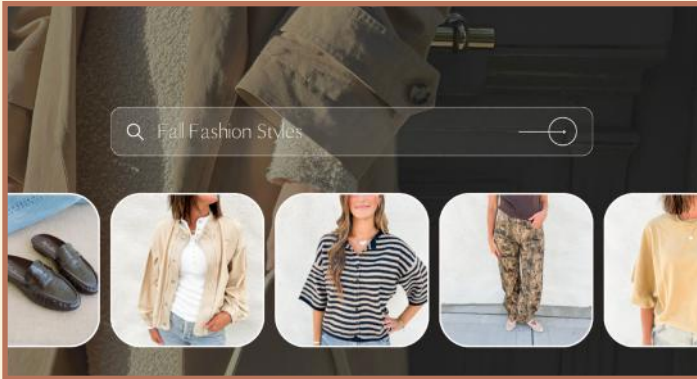
The women at EK Machine have worked tirelessly to be a part of the company's growth and to help it along. Dani Geiger, a human resource generalist at EK and nominee for Mentor of the Year, works hard through the apprenticeship program at EK not only to expose future generations to the positive trades environment that EK cultivates, but to get the next generation of hires onto the right path to be successful at the company.

The Empowering Women in Industry Awards will be held in New Orleans from Sept. 30 to Oct. 1, and the winners of each category will be announced at the ceremony. For more information about EK, visit www.ekmachine.com.

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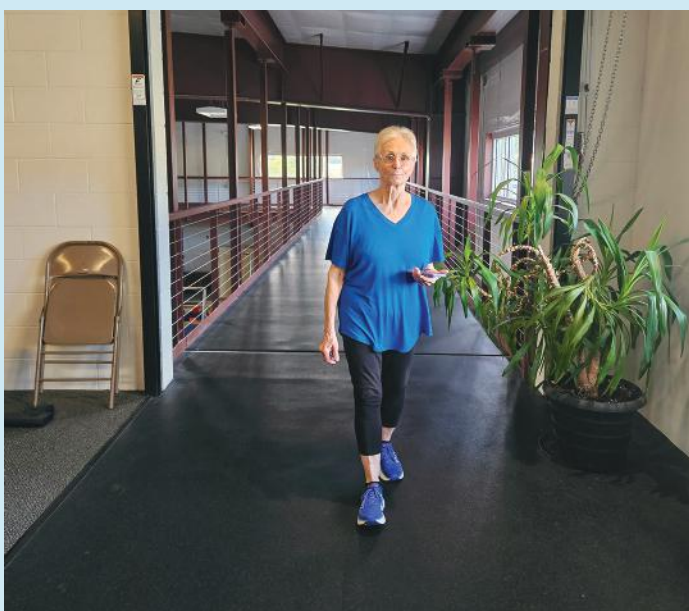
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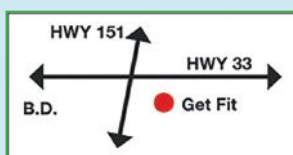
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InSpire Magazine's Restaurant Guide

Beaver Dam County Club

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N10575 Chief Kuno Trail - Fox Lake (920) 928-3470
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118 Lake Street, Hustisford - (920) 349.3400
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- Jacob Wochna, DO, Orthopedics, Joint Replacement Surgery
- Nicole Larsen, MD, Psychiatry
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