

senior review

FREE

October 2025

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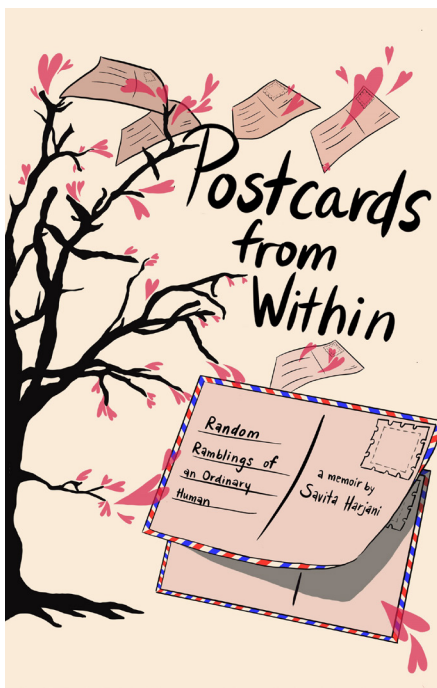
A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Eau Claire

Chippewa Valley Book Festival Hosts Event on the Caregiver Experience

The Chippewa Valley Book Festival is back for its 26th annual celebration of the written word and looks forward to welcoming reading enthusiasts of all interests during the festival running October 21-25, 2025, in downtown Eau Claire.

The festival's 15 events cover a diverse lineup of topics ranging from Dickey Chapelle (a war correspondent) and mid-life transitions to the state of the music industry and mystery writing. There is a book for every reader and a topic for every interest at this year's festival.

This year's lineup also includes an event titled: *Reflections of a Daughter as the Caregiver of Her Mother*. Savita Harjani will share her deeply personal journey as a caregiver—a path that ultimately led to the creation of her powerful book, "Postcards from Within: Random Ramblings of an Ordinary Human". Reflecting on the emotional, practical, and spiritual lessons learned through caregiving, Harjani will reveal how the experience shaped her perspective and her writing.



Through stories both personal and universal, she will explore the idea that caregiving is not just a role, but a shared human experience—one that touches all of us in different ways. Whether you're a current caregiver, have been one, or anticipate taking on that role in the future, this event offers a meaningful opportunity to connect, reflect, and be inspired.









Harjani's event will take place on Saturday, October 25 at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library as part of a full day of book festival author presentations. Attendees need not read the festival books ahead of time, as participants will enjoy the discussion and stories behind the books with no prior knowledge. Author books will be for sale throughout the festival, and each speaker event includes a question and answer segment as well as the opportunity for book signings.

All of the author events at the library are free and open to the public but registration is recommended to ensure adequate space for attendees. In addition, most of the author events will be live-streamed for anyone wanting to participate virtually. Registration is required to access event links. To learn more about the festival or to register for an event, visit: cvbookfest.org/events.

October is breast cancer awareness month



TIPS FOR BREAST CANCER PREVENTION:

<p>Avoid becoming overweight. Avoid gaining weight over time, and try to maintain a body-mass index under 25.</p> 	<p>Eat healthy to avoid tipping the scale. Embrace a diet high in vegetables & fruit and low in sugared drinks, refined carbohydrates & fatty foods.</p> 	<p>Keep physically active. Increased physical activity, even when begun later in life, reduces overall breast-cancer risk.</p> 	<p>Drink little or no alcohol. Women should limit intake to no more than one drink per day, regardless of the type of alcohol.</p> 
<p>Avoid hormone replacement therapy. Menopausal hormone therapy increases risk for breast cancer.</p> 	<p>Don't smoke. Long-term smoking is associated with increased risk of breast cancer in some women.</p> 	<p>Breast-feed your babies for as long as possible. Women who breast-feed their babies for at least a year in total have a reduced risk of developing breast cancer later.</p> 	<p>Get annual mammograms. Regular mammograms are recommended for women aged 40 and older to detect breast cancer early.</p> 

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DEMENTIA
Support Group

September 23rd, October 28th, November 18th | 10am - 11am

Join us for a morning of support with a short presentation and light refreshments. The group will meet at Heritage Oakwood Hills, 3706 Damon Street, Eau Claire, WI.



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The *Senior Review* distributes throughout the Eau Claire area every month.
Advertising: 715-831-0325
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Navigating Medicare: A Simple Guide

By Cole Bruner, President of Buska Retirement Solutions and Buska Wealth Management

Back in the day, Medicare was easy. You turned 65, signed up for Social Security, and—just like that—you were in Medicare too. Many people had retiree health insurance through work, and those who didn't could buy a simple Medicare Supplement Plan. There weren't as many choices, and once you were covered, you didn't have to think about it much.

Today, things look a little different. Fewer employers offer retiree health benefits, medical costs are higher, and there are more options to sort through. If you're turning 65 soon—or planning ahead—you'll want to understand how Medicare works so you can make the right decisions.

Here are the basics, explained simply.

When to Sign Up

Medicare doesn't always happen automatically. Unless you're already getting Social Security, you'll need to enroll yourself. There are a few important timeframes to know:

- **Turning 65:** You can sign up as early as three months before your 65th birthday, and your coverage will start the month you turn 65. You also have up to three months after, but don't wait too long or your coverage could be delayed.
- **Still working at 65:** If you or your spouse are still working and covered by an employer's health plan, you can wait to join Medicare without a penalty. Once that job-based coverage ends, you'll have eight months to enroll. (Tip: COBRA doesn't replace Medicare—you still need to sign up.)
- **Missed the window?** You can enroll between January 1 and March 31 each year, but you might pay a late penalty.

How to Enroll

Go online at SSA.gov, or call 800-772-1213 to sign up through the Social Security Administration or contact a licensed Medicare specialist in your area. If you're enrolling after 65, you may need a form from your employer proving you had coverage.

Your Coverage Choices

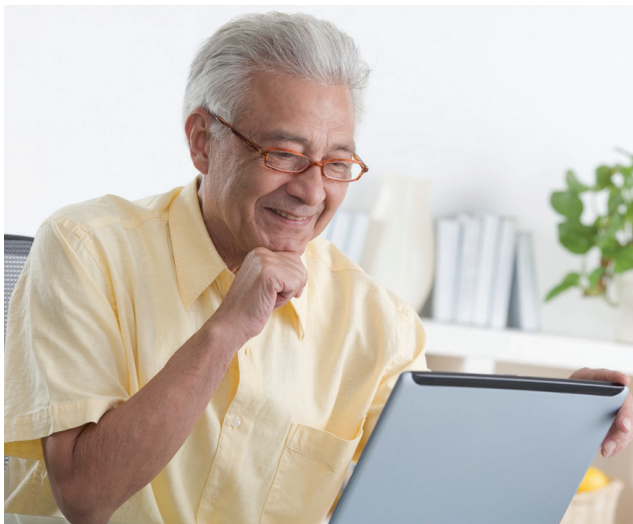
Once you're in Medicare (Parts A and B), you'll need to decide how to handle the rest of your health care costs. You have two main paths:

1. Original Medicare + a Medicare Supplement Plan + a Part D Prescription Drug Plan:

- A Medicare Supplement Plan (also called Medigap) helps cover costs Medicare doesn't pay.
- You'll also need a Part D Prescription Drug Plan. Even if you don't take any medications right now, it's smart to sign up for the lowest-cost plan to avoid late penalties.

2. Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C):

- These all-in-one plans usually include hospital, doctor, and prescription coverage.
- The trade-off is that you'll have a provider network and different out-of-pocket costs, so it's important to review carefully.



You can compare plans at Medicare.gov by entering your ZIP code and (for Part D Prescription Drug Plans) your prescriptions.

After You're Enrolled

Once you're set up, create an online account at Medicare.gov. This lets you track your claims and costs. Each fall (October 15–December 7), review your Part D Prescription Drug Plan or Medicare Advantage Plan to make sure it's still the best fit for you. Plans and prices change every year.

Medicare may seem confusing at first, but once you've chosen your path, it usually runs smoothly. With the right coverage in place, you can relax knowing your health care is taken care of—and focus on enjoying retirement.

This is not a solicitation for insurance. We are not affiliated with or endorsed by Medicare or any government agency.

Annual Enrollment Period Is Nearly Here

Smart Planning Starts Now!



The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) is just around the corner - running from October 15 to December 7, 2025.

This is the window to make changes to your Medicare coverage, such as:

- Switching from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan
- Moving from a Medicare Advantage plan back to Original Medicare
- Changing from one Medicare Advantage plan to another
- Adding, removing, or changing your Part D Prescription Drug Plan

Appointments fill up fast, and this is not a deadline you want to miss. Secure your spot now to avoid the last-minute rush and make sure you're ready to take full advantage of the options available to you.

Call us today at 715.355.4445 (TTY: 711) to schedule your complimentary consultation with one of our licensed agents.

RetireWithBuska.com

City of Eau Claire Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program

The City of Eau Claire Housing Division is taking applications for its Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. The Rehabilitation Loan Program is Federally funded and offers loans up to \$20,000. This program is for homes in need of repair, not for extensions or cosmetic renovations.

Types of Eligible Work:

- Roof & window replacement
- Plumbing repairs or upgrading
- Accessibility Modifications
- Electrical repairs or upgrading
- Carpentry repairs
- Heating system replacement
- Energy saving repairs
- Siding repairs or replacement

Applicant Eligibility Requirements:

- City of Eau Claire resident
- The assessed value of the property may not exceed \$165,750
- Property must be a minimum of 25 years old
- Owner occupied (at least one year)
- Good credit history
- HUD income guidelines apply: not to exceed 80% of area median income



For eligibility information and application call the Rehab Specialist at (715) 839-8294.

The hearing impaired may contact this office by TDD (715) 839-4943. If there are other specialized needs due to handicap, i.e. sign language interpreter, wheelchair accessibility, reader, please contact this office.

Wine, Women, & Dementia The Documentary

Friday, November 7, 2025

Community Room
Dove Healthcare - West Eau Claire
1405 Truax Blvd
11:15 am - 1:30 pm

Seeking healing and comfort in community, a dementia family caregiver road trips the U.S. to swap caregiver stories of love, humor, and devotion with other dementia caregivers who share this hilariously heartbreaking end-of-life journey.

Wine, Women, & Dementia tells the tale of dementia life through the lens of the family caregivers who strive to accept the beauty and the brutality, the hilarious and the horrific - for themselves and their dementia person.

Watch the Trailer here:

www.winewomenanddementia.com/trailer

AGENDA

11:15 am Lunch

12:00 pm Documentary

1:00 pm Cookies and Connection

Register online at www.adrcevents.org
or call the ADRC at 715-839-4735
by Monday, November 3rd.

If you need respite care options to attend the event, contact the Aging & Disability Resource Center.



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Dusting Off Some Local History: “Devote My Digestive Apparatus”

By Greg Kocken, Archivist, UW-Eau Claire, Kockeng@uwec.edu

At the end of the 19th century people across the country, including right here in the Chippewa Valley, began to realize that the food they ate could be dangerous. Milk, before the development of pasteurization, was sometimes preserved with formaldehyde (the same chemical used to embalm corpses), canned vegetables were kept green with copper sulphate, a toxic metallic salt, and the cleaning product borax was used to make rancid butter edible. In 1885, the Eau Claire Daily Leader ran an article, reprinted from the Chicago Tribune, that questioned the safety of eating fresh fruit. The author of that article examined “fresh raspberries” under a microscope and commented on the “rich and thrifty crop of different fungi,” present on the berries and suggested the fruit should be cooked before consumption. These articles, and emerging scientific evidence, challenged people here and across the nation to question the safety of their food.



Through his efforts, Dr. Harvey Wiley would eventually become the first commissioner of what we now know as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In the late 1800s, Dr. Harvey Wiley, long concerned about preservatives and other additives, began a crusade to improve the safety and quality of the food we eat. In 1902, with support from the U.S. Congress, he created the “poison squad.” This group of volunteers was organized into two sub-groups, one group was fed a healthy, nutritious meal and the other group was fed the same meal laced with small amounts of poison. The experiment began without much notice until a journalist in Washington, D.C. became intrigued and began investigating. Eventually, exploits of the “poison squad” became front page news here in the Chippewa Valley and across the United States. A November 5, 1903, article published in The Eau Claire Leader relayed the oath that “poison squad” participants took to “devote my digestive apparatus as a volunteer... unless sickness or death shall cause me to desert.”

Critics argued that Dr. Wiley was engaged in “yellow chemistry” by sensationalizing the dangers of food. These criticisms also appeared in local newspapers, but despite these criticisms Dr. Wiley largely prevailed in reforming America’s food supply. Wiley raised the public consciousness about the dangers of additives in our foods.

When the U.S. congress debated the pure food laws of the early 20th century people in the Chippewa Valley took notice. Writing to the Eau Claire Leader, O. T. Southworth noted inaction in Wisconsin arguing, “Give the public protection, compelling manufacturers and producers to label their products in accordance with the contents of the packages. Let the public rise up and demand the passage of national pure food laws...” A series of pure food laws would pass in the early 1900s leading to new labeling requirements and championing a scientific approach to better understanding our food supply. These laws helped bring clarity to consumers across the United States and put safer food on dinner tables across the Chippewa Valley.



With the public increasingly conscious about food additives, advertisement appearing in local newspapers, such as this one for Royal Baking Powder, began to emphasize the purity of their products.

Is there a local history mystery or topic you want to know more about? Do you have a suggestion for an upcoming column of “Dusting Off?” Please contact Greg at the UW-Eau Claire archives. He would love to hear from you.



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Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild

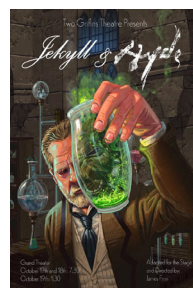
PERFORMANCE ANXIETY THEATRE

PRESENTS *Waiting Room*

Written and directed by local
playwright Reid Sollberger, the story
revolves around a group of people in an
Eau Claire hospital waiting room and
their experiences of love, loss and faith.



7:30PM, OCTOBER 3-4 1:30PM, OCTOBER 5
GRAND THEATRE TICKETS AT THE DOOR: \$20



TWO GRIFFINS THEATRE

PRESENTS *Jekyll/Hyde*

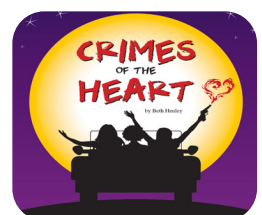
The classic horror tale as you've never seen it be-
fore. TGT's provocative adaptation of *Jekyll/Hyde*
weaves a lurid mindscape amidst not one, but two
nightmares that twist the darkness further than
can possibly be imagined.

7:30PM, OCTOBER 17-18 1:30PM, OCTOBER 19
GRAND THEATRE TICKETS AT THE DOOR: \$20

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of shooting her husband. Equal parts heartache
and hilarity, this Pulitzer Prize winning play
celebrates the importance of family.



7:30PM, NOVEMBER 6-8, 13-15 1:30PM, NOVEMBER 9 & 16
GRAND THEATRE TICKETS: \$28 CVTG.ORG OR 715-832-7529

Embracing the Beauty of Seasonal Changes

By Carl A. Trapani, MA, MS, LPC, Chippewa Manor Campus Chaplain

As summer fades and we head into autumn, we are reminded of the passing of time and the continual change of seasons. With each change, we witness the rhythmic dance of nature—spring’s bloom, summer’s vigor, autumn’s tapestry, and winter’s quietude. For those of us in our golden years, each season offers wisdom from memories of days gone by.

Each season carries its own personality, much like us! In spring, for instance, everything wakes up from winter’s slumber, reminding us that growth is possible at any age. One of the advantages of being a seasoned citizen is recognizing that life rarely follows a linear path—much like the unpredictable weather of early spring. One moment it’s sunny, and the next, a surprise snowfall.

We’ve all had our share of unexpected surprises in life, haven’t we? When a long-lost friend suddenly reconnects, or we hear of the success of our children or grandchildren we feel a sense of warmth in our hearts. The feeling is just like seeing daffodils conquering the final days of winter by blooming defiantly in patches of snow.

Summer bursts onto the scene with its welcome warmth. It seems there is more laughter in the summertime – probably because we are outside more and can hear it. Do you remember your own childhood joys of summer? Playing tag until the sun dipped beyond the horizon and then catching fireflies and putting them in jars to be kept as night lights? Remember savoring ice cream treats that melted faster than you could devour them? Those memories can still make us smile. Hosting barbecues, sharing stories around the fire, or creating new adventures can help us embrace the essence of summer days. As we gather with loved ones, don’t forget the humor found in mischief—like forgetting to add the secret ingredient in grandma’s famous potato salad. After all, nothing bonds families quite like a little kitchen mishap!

Then there's autumn. Autumn provides us time for reflection as the leaves turn golden and fall gently to the ground. It symbolizes the beauty of letting go and the wisdom that comes from embracing change. This season encourages us to ponder our battles, victories, and the legacy we wish to leave behind. Remember to share your life’s stories with those you love. If the kids call you a “classic,” just respond with humor that a classic is something really special - like a great book, painting or fine wine - you keep getting better with age. By Thanksgiving, try to organize a family gathering where you can share your life lessons over a meal made for memories. It’s a beautiful way to blend the history of your life with the warmth of family unity. Lastly, winter comes with a blizzard’s blast or quiet chill that turns our breath into puffs of steam. As a snowy blanket covers the landscape

in its cold white embrace, it reminds us of the need for rest and stillness amidst life’s chaos. Winter offers us a time for reflection and gratitude. Winter can bring about a shift in perspective, urging us to lean into faith—whether it’s faith in family, friends, or something greater. Embrace the quiet winter moments to reflect on past joys, lost loved ones, and what tomorrow may bring.



So, as the seasons change and we transition through life’s stages, let’s laugh heartily, share our wisdom, and nurture our faith. Build memories with family and friends and embrace the moments—big and small. Remember, life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.

Here’s to celebrating each season for the special beauty that each phase brings! After all, at 50 and beyond, life is just getting started, and we owe it to ourselves to savor every single moment. Every day is a gift.

Carl Trapani, MA, MS, LPC serves as campus Chaplain at Chippewa Manor. He has more than 50 years of pastoral service and professional counseling experience. For more information please call (715) 723-4437 or email him at carl.trapani@chippewamanor.com.

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Navigating Medicare at 65: A Guide for Eau Claire Area Residents

by Jeff Sauter, Mediqwest

Turning 65 is a milestone - and for many around our area, it also marks the start of a new chapter in health coverage. Medicare, the federal health insurance program for people 65 and older, can feel complex. Understanding your options before your birthday can help you make confident, cost-effective choices.

Enrollment Timing Matters

Your **Initial Enrollment Period** for Medicare is a seven-month window: three months before your 65th birthday, your birthday month, and three months after.

If you're still working and have employer coverage, you may be able to delay certain parts without penalty- but it's important to confirm the rules with your employer, Medicare, or a Medicare Licensed Agent.

The Basics: What Medicare Covers

Medicare is divided into four parts:

- **Part A (Hospital Insurance)**- Covers inpatient hospital stays, skilled nursing facility care, hospice, and some home health care. Most people do not pay a premium for Part A if they've worked and paid Medicare taxes for at least 10 years.
- **Part B (Medical Insurance)** - Covers doctor visits, outpatient care, preventive services, and some medical equipment. Part B has a monthly premium, which can vary based on income.
- **Part C (Medicare Advantage)**- Offered by private insurers, these plans bundle Parts A and B, often with extra benefits like dental, vision, hearing, and prescription drug coverage. Eau Claire County will have 4 companies representing about 25 Medicare Advantage plans in 2025.
- **Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage)**-Standalone plans that help cover medication costs.

Eau Claire-Specific Considerations

- **Medicare Advantage Options** - Eau Claire County's 2025 plans vary in premiums, provider networks, and out-of-pocket maximums. PPO plans offer flexibility to see out-of-network providers at a higher cost, while HMO-POS plans blend network savings with some out-of-network access.
- **Medigap (Supplemental Insurance)**-Wisconsin's Medigap policies are standardized differently than in most states, offering a "base" plan with optional riders. These plans help fill in gaps in coverage and pay costs not covered by Original Medicare, such as deductibles and coinsurance.
- **Local Support** - Licensed Insurance Agents are available at **zero cost** to you. Additionally, the Wisconsin Medigap Helpline (18002421060) and the Part D & Prescription Drug Helpline (18556772783) offer free guidance.

Common Questions from New Beneficiaries

- **Will my doctor accept my plan?** Most often if your Dr accepts Medicare your Medigap plan will be accepted. If considering an Advantage plan always confirm with your provider's office or Agent before enrolling.
- **Can I change my plan later?** Yes, although the rules are different for Medigap plans, change is a possibility-Advantage plans can be changed yearly during the Annual Enrollment Period (Oct. 15-Dec. 7) or under certain special circumstances.

Steps to Take Before You Turn 65

1. **Review your current health needs**
- medications, specialists, and anticipated procedures.
2. **Speak with a licensed Agent** to help you navigate the Medicare landscape. Agents are not allowed to charge for their services as per Medicare rules.
3. **Compare plan options** using Medicare's Plan Finder local counseling services or speaking with a local independent agent familiar with many of the local plan options
4. **Ask questions early** of experienced local resources. Although friends are helpful their advice can add confusion to an already complex process.



Bottom line: Medicare does not have to be overwhelming. By starting your research early, understanding Eau Claire's plan options, and using a free local Independent Insurance Agent or other counseling resources, you can step into this next stage of coverage with clarity and confidence.



Discounted Well Water Testing

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6TH - THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16TH

BEST OFFER

Homeowners PREMIUM Bundle

\$100 SAVE 33%
NORMAL PRICE \$150

Bundle includes bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, copper, manganese, lead, iron, hardness, aluminum, antimony, barium, beryllium, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, nickel, potassium, selenium, sodium, silver, thallium, and zinc testing. Recommended for any private well user, especially if you haven't tested for metals in the last 5 years.

Bacteria & Nitrate Bundle

\$34 SAVE 32%
NORMAL PRICE \$50

Bundle includes bacteria and nitrate testing. Recommended for all private well users with private wells annually. *Nitrate and bacteria tests can also be purchased separately



We recommend testing your well water every 15 months (and every 5 years for metals) to make sure your drinking water is safe for you and your family.

Testing is as easy as 1-2-3!
1. Pick up a sample kit at the Health Department (720 2nd Ave., Eau Claire)
2. Fill it up at your home following instructions.
3. Return the sample and payment to the Health Department between October 6th-16th for discounted testing. Results will be emailed/mailed.

 Questions? Call Us At 715-839-4718

A Little About Posture by Judy Soborowicz, Active Health Chiropractic

Feeling somewhat frustrated and guilty about being unable to maintain good posture? We have all experienced postural excellence, attainable for mere moments at a time! Having aligned head over shoulders, relaxed, slightly back over shoulders, a neutral spine, and evenly distributed body weight—fleeting postural bliss. Stress, trauma, and toxins alert and effect posture and balance and our nerve systems ability to ensure our dynamic balance is maintained in all conditions.

Posture is taught and thought of as a static state against gravity, however, our body is a constantly moving dynamic process that keeps us stable in gravity and rapidly changing environmental conditions. Healthy posture requires optimal unconscious and continual relaying communication between our nerve system and movable body parts. Zones of our nerve system that continually feed into our brain to allow coordination of posture are found in the:

- eyes (view surroundings)
- ears (quick changing head position, as in rotating or stopping)
- joints, muscles, fascia, skin, feet (positional sensors)
- jaw (head and neck position)

The way we hold our body while sitting, standing and moving involves the alignment of our spine, head and limbs. We are not designed to maintain posture through conscious attention! Sensory

signals continually inform specific areas of the brain about both external and internal conditions related to posture and balance and hold the key for adapting movement instantly. No matter what happens in our external environment, when the internal communication has our body on alert, posture is affected.



Compensations and alterations of signals reaching our brain may be caused by injuries (old or new), sprain/ strain / weak/ injured muscles or joints, jaw clenching, chemical trauma, or stress. Our many joints and muscles allow for great flexibility and the nerve system allows for great adaptability. We compensate and replicate postural stability so well that hidden loss of function may not be immediately obvious. If bad information from the alert body is allowed to continually signal the brain, alterations in postural stability and balance progress.

As an example, imagine walking on a boot cast after an injury or surgery. Walking with the boot, along with the underlying injury, creates a non-avoidable dynamic postural dysfunction, the body is on alert. Ideally functional movement is restored once the boot is removed, but often the area of protection is retained, an alert adaptation of movement. The inevitable effects on stability and posture become known over time. The appearance of changes in athletic performance, poor balance, chronic repeated sprains, strains, tendonitis, reduced mobility, headache, poor posture, weakness, fatigue, and arthritis can result. Prolonged impairment of balance and posture over time, can result in the need for pain/arthritis medications, surgical repair, and mobility aids.

The importance of postural stability to our long-term health, balance and physical performance cannot be overstated. All exercise we do, from sitting at a computer working, to yoga class either enhance dynamic posture or strengthen compensation patterns. The chiropractic approach prioritizes our efficient nerve system, releasing alert areas in our body and improving our postural stability and balance. Specific adjustments restore nerve flow reducing body stress where compensations, or alterations of sensory input to the brain have occurred. Chiropractic is the original approach for optimal dynamic whole-body stability, balance and posture.



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Live, Laugh, Love with Linda: A Breast Cancer Story

By Kristi Gay, freelance writer

In honor of October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, this is a story about my aunt Linda Olson, the most vivacious, hilarious, creative, generous, and crazy (in all the best ways) woman who was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 49, and lived, laughed, and loved with cancer for the next 15 years, passing in October 2013, one day after a joyful day with her grandsons riding motorized Jeeps, squealing and laughing, in the backyard. This is a story of how your attitude, not life's challenges, is what creates your happiness.

Linda Olsen grew up in Cornell, WI, and married her high school sweetheart, Dean, before having two kids that grew up in the Altoona School District: Kelly and Jade. She taught elementary school in Altoona for 30 years, with many of her schoolkids still calling her "My Favorite Teacher Ever" as they filed into her funeral. Some of my earliest memories of Linda were us decorating her bulletin boards at the end of summer, or organizing her classroom, of which my favorite part was the "Brain Food" bucket of candy that she made available before a particularly difficult test or assignment for the ten-year olds.

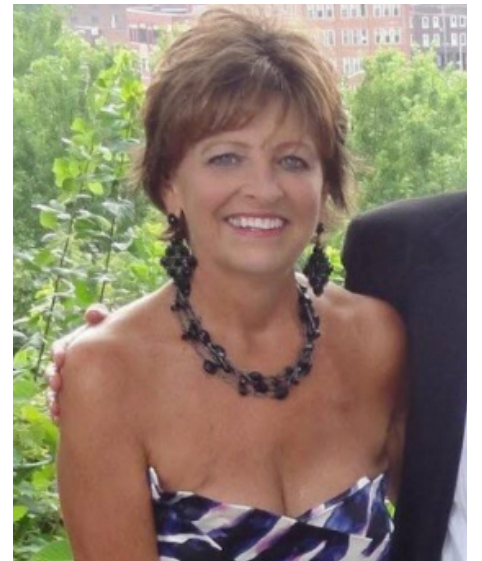
Throughout her entire time of living with cancer, she lived, laughed, and loved harder than anyone could without a diagnosis, never knowing how long she'd see her kids and grandkids grow up. She was the bald-headed mascot (usually covered with glitter) to her granddaughter's D1 college basketball team in Illinois, with the entire team lining up for hugs after games. I'll never forget the time when we were at a Minneapolis holiday parade getting a drink at a bar. She had glitter on her bald head and was wearing reindeer antlers, and the male bartender jokingly saying something like "aren't you going to give me a TIP", and she reached into her empty bra after her mastectomy, pulled out the little beanbag they had given her to fill her bra on one side, and said "YOU WANT A TIT??" before roaring with laughter.

Her ease at spreading love was something to write books about. I remember once she met someone in a public bathroom, started talking, and an hour later they were crying together, hugging, and had created an instant connection and support through difficult times, with a complete stranger that most people wouldn't even acknowledge in passing. When my own daughters were probably 4 and 6, prime princess age, she would send "care packages" in the mail, to her GRAND-NIECES, filled to the brim with crowns, princess dresses and skirts, little purses, kid makeup, for no reason at all other than to make their day. She led her two sisters and herself, a trio who named themselves "The Dunks", and who would show up to all sporting events in full costume, to be the loudest cheering section for either the athlete or coach, whoever it was she was there to support. She didn't have the ability to be embarrassed. And she never complained about her cancer diagnosis or all the setbacks that came with 15 years of living through chemo, radiation, hair loss, weight

loss, and surgeries. She would always just look ahead to "whatever is next" from a research or treatment option, sometimes would disappear to lie down briefly, but with her bright blue eyes and huge smile would return shortly to not only take part in the fun, but CREATE IT.

For a couple years after she passed, many of us (her daughter, granddaughter, teacher besties, nieces) did the Susan G Komen Breast Cancer 3Day walk, raising over \$30,000 toward breast cancer research, walking 60 miles over the course of three days, and of course living in her honor with full matching breast-related costumes each day. If there was ever a person who got the most out of life, who lived life to the fullest every single day, who brought the energy and fun to whichever room she entered, and who fully embodied the "Live, Laugh, Love" saying on signs at Hobby Lobby, it was Linda Olson.

So the takeaways of this story are: breast cancer can be awful, so do your self-checks monthly, get your mammograms and follow-ups, and if God forbid you are ever diagnosed with breast cancer, live, laugh, and love like Linda, through whatever challenges life gives you, never letting the smile or energy leave until the very last hour.



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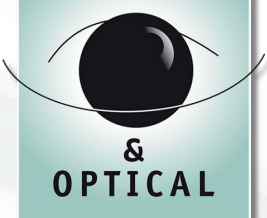


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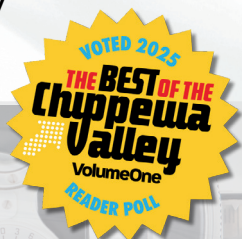
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