

# Spirit

*fall · winter* | volume three | issue two



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of the Illinois Valley

Stories *of the* Illinois Valley



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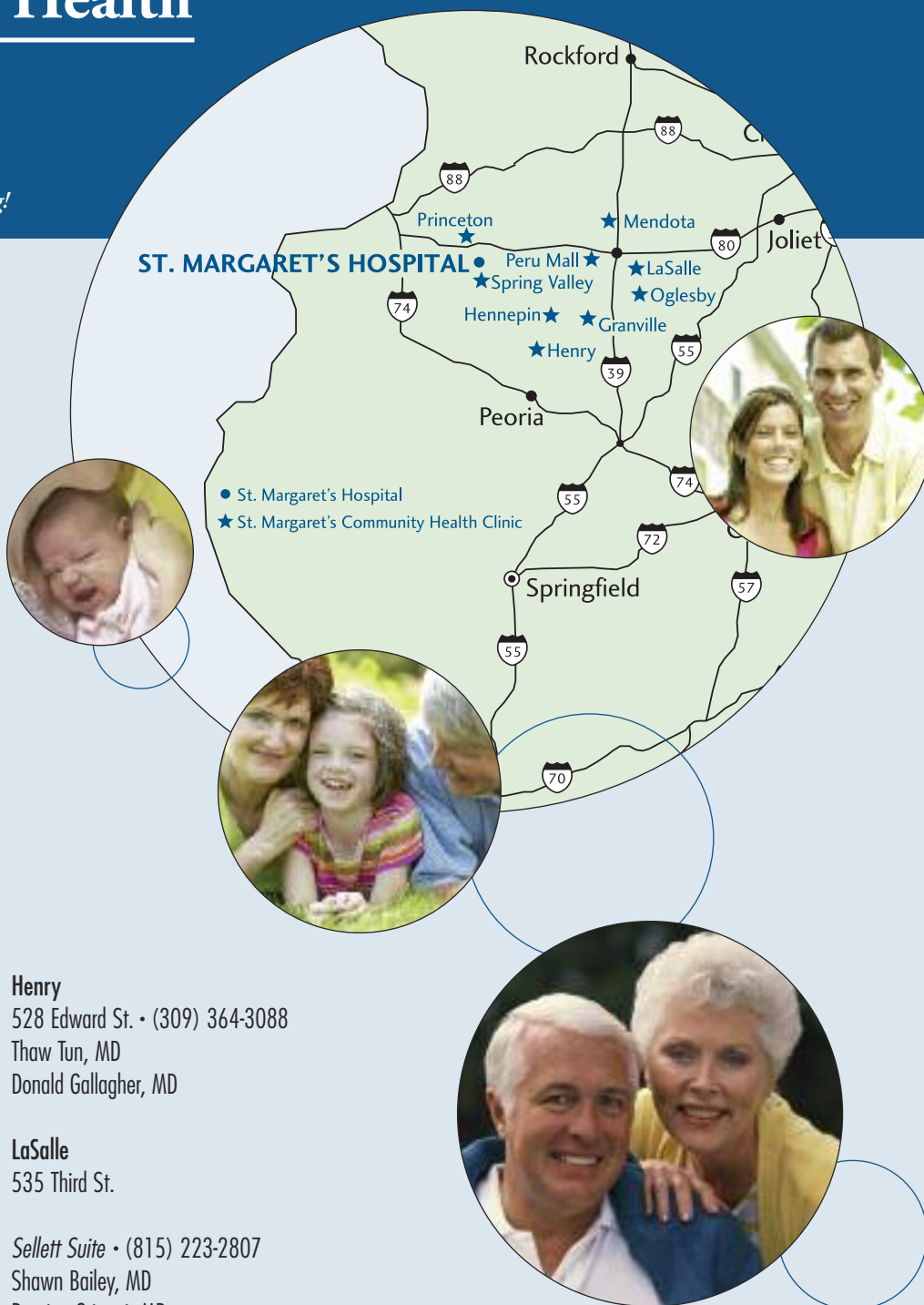
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# Fall Winter Spirit



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# Enjoy Spirit



## *Spirit of Gratitude*

In this season of giving thanks, it's a good time to reflect on the blessings in our lives. Here at St. Margaret's Health, we have much to be grateful for, including the generosity of our community.

Funds raised at the upcoming St. Margaret's Foundation Artisan Showcase will be used to furnish our new Operating Room Suite with innovative technology and equipment used for patients of all ages. Last year's event funded the purchase of a new Fetal Monitoring and Archiving System. In addition, a substantial donation received through the Foundation's "Leave Your Legacy" program has enabled us to purchase new state-of-the-art ultrasound systems. Providing our patients with access to cutting-edge technology is important to us, and we're thankful for the support that helps make that possible.

In this issue of *Spirit*, we'll share stories of those who have found ways to celebrate and nurture their blessings; from a wood turner in tune with his craft to a grateful mother who decided to devote her life to helping other mothers and babies through March of Dimes.

You'll also see that blessings can be found in the most unlikely places, even during the toughest of times—just read the story of a grieving widow who found strength and solace in giving to others during a mission trip.

Good health is also a blessing, and we've included articles about stroke and healthy holiday habits to keep you on track. Enjoy the spirit of the season.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Muntz".

Tim Muntz, *President & CEO*



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# Frame of Mind

Yoga helps artist and frame-shop owner Diane Zera keep her creativity in balance.

Diane Zera can't recall a time when she didn't have an impulse to create. "I liked the fact that it was a way to express myself," she says of her earliest experiences with art. "I enjoyed the quiet time when I'd get to go into my own little world."

Largely self-taught, Diane never pursued a formal art education after high school but says she's taken "about every art class offered" at Illinois Valley Community College. Though she enjoys experimenting with all types of media, from fabric to wood, her forte is pencil, followed by colored pencils and pastels. Her favorite subjects are from the natural world, including landscapes and still life, though she finds inspiration anywhere, from her own garden to images in a magazine. "I always see possibilities in whatever I'm looking at," she says.

These days, she spends much of her time crafting frames for the work of other artists at her Peru framing business, Diane's Frame & Easel. Diane got her start in framing two decades ago when, after a stint as a framer for a local paint store, she decided to launch a home-based business so she could balance work with mothering her young son.

In 2002, she made the move to her current downtown location. "I always dreamed of having an art gallery and framing shop," she explains. In the beginning, she tried to do both, as well as teach on-site art and yoga classes. However, as proprietor and sole employee, she soon found herself overwhelmed and had to cut back on her offerings.

Currently, she focuses on framing, carving out time to create her own artwork, including some works commissioned by customers, and teaching an art class or two when she has a lull in business. Some of her work is on display at the shop and she also offers a selection of prints and posters available for framing.

Diane describes art as a reflection of the artist's personality. "Art is pure self-expression," she says. "Without saying a



word, you can express what's inside you—you're putting part of yourself on paper or canvas."

However, Diane says her hectic schedule sometimes results in what she calls "monkey mind," where she's constantly jumping from one thought to another. For Diane, that is where yoga comes into play. "I know art and yoga don't seem to go together, but they do," she says, explaining

wishes she had more time to paint, her detail-oriented approach to framing consumes much of her time. "I do steal time when I can for my own art," she says, noting that she does have a few pieces in the works, including a mixed media leaf series.

The 12- by 12-inch canvases (see below) feature leaf motifs created with a combination of acrylic paints, tissue paper and some actual



that yoga focuses one to look inward and shut out distractions, which can foster creativity. "Yoga makes me relax," she says. "When I can be calm inside, I can organize my thoughts and focus inward."

Before she began teaching her own classes, she had been working with a local instructor who had been trained in Ashtanga, a vigorous form of yoga that involves synchronizing your breathing as you rapidly move through a series of progressive poses. Now that Diane is no longer teaching yoga, she tries to practice when she can, taking classes at the local YMCA.

Diane initially approached yoga as a path to fitness, but found the benefits were greater than she had anticipated. "I thought it would be a great workout, and it was, but the longer I stuck with it and practiced, I found that a calming inner peace came with it."

One of the things she enjoys about her framing work is that it sometimes provides her with an opportunity to help customers preserve their memories. One poignant piece she recalls was a shadow box that incorporated a hat that a customer had purchased for his wife while he was serving in France during World War II. Along with the hat, he brought in a photo of her wearing it and a piece of period fabric for the background. "It turned out to be a neat display that conveyed a lot of emotion," says Diane.

In most cases, however, customers are seeking framing for artwork. Diane says handling the work of other artists inspires her. Though she

leaves. "I'm changing style a bit," she says. "I used to do tight, controlled, detailed work, but this is more loose and abstract."

Her home provides yet another canvas where her creativity can bloom—since moving in five years ago, she's done extensive work on the garden and the interior, from cleaning up overgrown flower beds to tearing down walls. "I like to work with my hands, whether it's creating art or remodeling my house," she says. "It's all about transformation. When you take something and make something new out of it—that is very gratifying."



At the end of the yoga sessions, the participants say "namaste" which means "the spirit in me salutes the spirit in you."

*A drawing of the Westclox factory appeared in an undated photo book entitled LaSalle and Peru Illustrated. The complex grew to include several attached one-story buildings.*

*(Photo courtesy Northern Illinois University Archives)*



## A Big-Time Operation in a Small Town

# Keeping Time at Westclox

*Cynthia A. Fuener*

The term “company town” often conjures images of overworked, underpaid employees exploited by corporate management. But in Peru, Illinois, a company town for nearly a hundred years, a job at Westclox meant lifelong employment with ample benefits.

The factory’s inauspicious beginning took place in 1885 in the back of Brylski’s, a Peru department store. Charles Stahlberg was living in Waterbury, Connecticut, when he patented his revolutionary idea for clock manufacturing, which called for casting nearly all mechanisms of a clock. Because his invention required a completely new factory system to make all those metal parts, he relocated to Peru where there was an ample supply of nickel and zinc at existing area smelteries. He settled first in the unused space at Brylski’s until a three-story building was completed. Located adjacent to the Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company, the new factory building stood near the supply source of metal ore needed to make the clocks.

Stahlberg quickly attracted employees, and a year after opening, the United Clock Company boasted 25 employees. But production never exceeded 20 clocks per day. Distribution was even more problematic, with the clocks literally being pedaled to local merchants by pushcart.

Despite Stahlberg’s brilliant inventiveness, he was not a businessman. The company filed for bankruptcy in 1887.

What might otherwise have been a short story in failed entrepreneurship turned into a fabulous success story and a study in the history of American industry. Frederick William Matthiessen, one of the successful owners of the local zinc company, marshaled investors and reorganized the company. He became a majority stockholder, renamed the company Western Clock Company, and almost single-handedly built a company that supported a community with its creation of internationally known products.

Matthiessen compares favorably to titans of industry, and stands out particularly for his benevolent treatment of employees. Long before the government passed laws to ensure decent working conditions, Matthiessen and the board of directors had implemented numerous benefits and incentives. He encouraged camaraderie by providing athletic activities. As early as 1907, a men’s basketball team was organized. When an employee became ill, the company chauffeur drove the worker home. Returning veterans from World War I were rewarded with a job at the plant, and pay reflected their military rank



and foreign service. By that time, the company employed 1,473 people with a payroll of more than \$1 million. Two clocks that quickly became popular —“Big Ben” and “Baby Ben”— were successfully marketed along with the “Sleepmeter” and the “America.”

Employees had ample opportunities for advancement. They could enroll in Machinists Training School or take tool training classes, and study horology (time), math, and slide-rule drawing (drafting) at evening classes held at the factory. Company directors implemented a company fire department and a factory safety committee (two moves that paid off with numerous national safety awards over the life of the company). The Western Clock Company was recognized as a pioneer in the national safety program initiated by the federal government. Oversight of such matters could not have been easy, considering that in 1921 the ever-expanding factory had increased to almost ten acres of floor space.

Long before the phrase factory outlet store became a household term, Westclox (the name shortened to a catchier term by the marketing division in 1918) offered employees lower prices for factory seconds, or what they called “clocks not up to standard.” Big Ben, which retailed for approximately three dollars in 1920, was available to employees for twenty-five cents. Yes, the clocks were defective, but these were clockmakers who were buying them. Any mechanical problem could probably easily be repaired, if needed. Chances are that the less-than-perfect clocks were simply scratched or dented. In any event, the markdowns represented much bigger discounts than what one would generally find at today’s version of a factory store. Further, these sales were available only to employees, a clear benefit of their affiliation with the company.

Over the years, benefits and opportunities only increased. The company installed a bowling alley in the basement of the factory, they offered lunch-hour dances in the cafeteria, and employees could visit

the company nurse in the first-aid station. Eventually Westclox management introduced Christmas parties for the employees’ children, who were showered with substantial gifts presented by Santa.

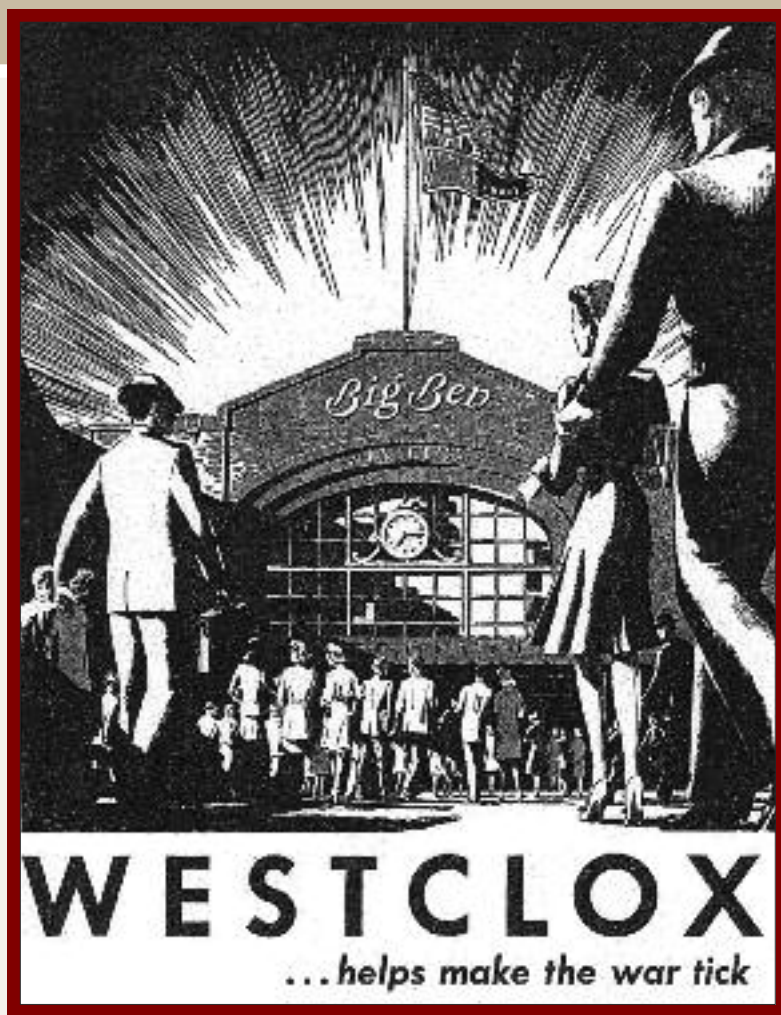


*Company employees ate lunch in the company cafeteria restaurant. Pictured here are the cafeteria employees circa 1900. (Photo courtesy Northern Illinois University Archives)*

While all those gestures were welcomed, it was the big-expense benefits that mattered most to workers. Management developed a housing subdivision—Central Park—north of the factory where employees could buy homes at cost. Unlike other companies that developed employee housing projects, Westclox owners made no financial profit from this venture. Westclox management also implemented a pension plan, provided employees with life insurance, and began a sickness benefit plan—all in the mid-1920s. At the same time work hours were reduced from 47 hours per week to 44½ hours, and eligible employees received vacation pay. Other amenities included the construction of horseshoe courts, an ice-skating rink, tennis courts, and a girls’ dormitory—a boardinghouse established for single female employees during the World War I era. The dormitory closed in 1928.

*As the factory expanded, so did the workforce. The employee population in 1890 was 81; in 1946 the employee roster peaked at 4,000. (Photo courtesy Northern Illinois University Archives)*





*During World War II, the Westclox Peru plant ceased clock production and workers produced war material instead. In this illustration, the Army/Navy flag that flies signifies that the company received the "E" award, an honor bestowed for patriotism. (Photo courtesy Northern Illinois University Archives)*

The majority stockholders shared their wealth. In 1926 Mrs. Eda Matthiessen and Mrs. Adele M. Blow (Matthiessen's daughter) contributed \$400,000 to the LaSalle-Peru High School for a new auditorium (called Matthiessen Auditorium) and for an addition at the school to establish a junior college. One of the earliest such institutions in the country, it opened five years before the first junior college legislation was passed in Illinois.

The future of the small community seemed rock solid. By 1929, the factory employed 3,058 people, and the nearly \$4 million payroll supported families and the other businesses in the area. One dark chapter in the company history, the use of radium for illuminating clock faces, dampened the otherwise rosy outlook. And nobody could anticipate the greatest hardship just around the corner. The Great Depression hit hard nationwide, and Westclox employees felt it, too. Vacation pay and pension payments were suspended, but an unemployment plan was implemented for laid-off workers. Some workers who retained their jobs now found it difficult to get to work—the streetcar lines that brought them in from Utica, DePue,

Spring Valley and Ladd were abandoned in 1930, no doubt due to the Depression, and few people owned their own autos.

With little money to buy necessities, Americans stopped buying clocks. A major commission creating a 42"-high, 300-pound clock for display at the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago provided some work. The economy began to improve slowly in the mid-to-late 1930s, and employees gradually returned to work. Wages increased for the first time in a long time by 1936, and the company disbursed a Christmas bonus of two weeks' salary to everyone employed for more than a year. Generosity extended to retirees as well. One employee who retired in 1936 after fifty years received a parting gift of—no, not a watch—a \$1,000 savings bond.

As America was preparing for war, or at least was aiding those countries fighting Hitler's Germany, Westclox work took on new importance. Since the factory made "timing devices," the war department began to award Westclox contracts for making a different type of timing device—fuzes for bombs. Company records reveal the dramatic shifts at the plant. Employment numbers escalated—even accounting for the ebb and flow of young men entering the military. Employees were required for the first time to wear identification tags, as munitions production became "classified." Company officials cleared advertising photographs for use in catalogs through the War Department to ensure that no sensitive production information could fall into enemy hands. Assembly of clocks was suspended, and Westclox advertised in national publications that it was the patriotic duty of owners of their products to maintain their existing clocks, so that steel and other metals could be used to fight the Germans and the Japanese. The in-house magazine, *Tick Talk*, campaigned heavily against the enemy, and the factory did not close for its annual two-week vacation period. A Radio Code School was offered to employees.

War ordnance production at Westclox flourished. In addition to millions of fuzes, the factory also made parts for other types of munitions that supplied other arsenals across the country. The fuzes ranged from those installed in flare devices that would illuminate the night sky for airplane pilots, to a type that was attached to the nose of a bomb, to a device that was designed for use under water. A study of the dizzying array of lethal uses would have scared off all but the most ferocious of enemies.



At the height of war production, Westclox officials learned of a clock shortage, so the factory began to produce the “Warlarm,” a case-molded paper version that required the use of very little metal. The Warlarm did not carry the Westclox trademark. Company officials also began to negotiate with the Swiss, who had begun to flood the market with timepieces at a time when Westclox was almost wholly devoted to war production. The company’s patriotic duties received national attention. The company received the “Army-Navy E” award, and Coca-Cola Company sponsored a nationally broadcast program at the local high school to honor company employees.

Once the war was behind them, management and staff went back to the business of clock and watch making. The long drought of available timepieces created a great demand, one that management met by beefing up production at home and abroad, in Scotland, Australia, and Mexico. The newer facilities at those locations placed the much-older Peru plant at a disadvantage. One thing that the Peru

plant did efficiently—ordnance production—continued long after World War II. When the company fell victim to a hostile takeover by Talley Industries in 1968, fuzes were still rolling off the assembly lines. But longtime employees sensed that the purchase of the company meant that time was running out. And it did, when Talley executives closed the plant in 1980.

The massive factory still stands on U.S. Route 6, the main east-west thoroughfare through LaSalle-Peru. The stately administration building across the street from the factory main entrance now houses the offices of the Carus Corporation, but the factory is largely vacant. Plans for reuse of the structure are underway, but only time will tell what lies in store for the building that played such a large role in the area’s economic and social history.

*Reprinted with permission from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency*



*Westclox management prided itself in the safety record achieved year after year, a feat accomplished partly by maintaining equipment. The factory floor was also kept clean, as seen in this photo of one of the tooling rooms. (Photo courtesy Northern Illinois University Archives)*





# Brain Attack!

## What You Need to Know About Stroke

In the five minutes or so it takes you to read this article, roughly seven people will suffer a stroke. About 700,000 Americans have a new or recurrent stroke each year, and more than 150,000 of them will die, making stroke the number-three cause of death in the U.S., after heart disease and cancer.

Though the elderly often suffer stroke, it can affect persons of all ages. As obesity rates rise and conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes become more prevalent, many younger people are at risk. Protect yourself by becoming aware of the risk factors and the warning signs.

### Two Types of Stroke

All strokes involve the disruption of blood flow to the brain. There are two types of disruption, which accounts for the difference between the types of stroke.

The most common type of stroke, ischemic stroke, occurs when a blood clot blocks a vessel supplying blood to the brain. Related to this type of stroke are transient ischemic attacks (TIAs), which are often called mini-strokes or warning strokes. A TIA results from the same conditions as an ischemic stroke, but the blood clot tends to resolve itself on its own within a short time. TIAs are strong indicators of a possible major stroke.

About 17 percent of strokes are hemorrhagic, which occurs when a weakened blood vessel bursts and bleeds into the brain. The blood builds up and compresses the brain tissue.

One of the most common symptoms for this type of stroke is the sudden, severe headache. Hemorrhagic strokes are more difficult to treat and are more often fatal.

### Stroke Effects

Because the brain is the command center controlling so many of the body's functions, there can be many different effects, depending on the part of the brain where the stroke occurs. Some common effects include physical impairments, such as paralysis and

vision problems, behavior changes, including depression and memory loss, and communication and swallowing problems.

### Stroke Risk Factors

To reduce your chances of having a stroke, talk to your doctor and assess your lifestyle and environment as well as your background and physical condition. Though there are some risk factors that cannot be controlled, treated or changed, many can. Some of the controllable risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Carotid or other artery disease
- Heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Inactivity and obesity

St. Margaret's Health is part of the OSF Stroke Network, a group of 23 medical facilities in central Illinois that joined forces to offer patients better access to stroke education, treatment and rehabilitation. For more information about stroke, call the American Stroke Association at 888-4-STROKE or visit their website: [www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org).

### Stroke Warning Signs

If one or more of the following symptoms appears suddenly, seek medical attention immediately. The more quickly you act, the better the outcome.

- Numbness, weakness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Confusion or difficulty speaking or understanding speech.
- Impaired vision in one or both eyes.
- Dizziness or loss of balance or coordination.
- Severe headache or unexplained headache (often described as "the worst headache of your life").

### New Treatment for Common Stroke Side Effect

Taking a sip of cool water or enjoying a slice of turkey at a holiday meal is likely something you take for granted—but for some stroke patients, it's difficult or impossible. Dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing, is a common side effect of stroke, affecting between 50 and 75 percent of stroke victims in some manner. The condition also can affect those with neurological disorders, such as Parkinson's Disease, or those with cancers of the head or neck.

This condition not only influences quality of life, as it limits the types of foods and drinks one can ingest, but can also be deadly—some patients with dysphagia are prone to aspiration pneumonia. Moderate to severe dysphagia may require a person to rely on a feeding tube for nourishment and hydration.

A new piece of medical equipment, already being utilized by patients at St. Margaret's Health, is doing much to help patients with dysphagia return to a normal diet. Called VitalStim, the equipment uses a small electrical current, dispersed via four electrodes placed on the neck and/or face, to stimulate the muscles used for swallowing. When used along with conventional exercises, it helps therapists work with patients to strengthen and retrain their muscles to swallow properly.

Kate Hagenbuch, senior speech-language-swallowing therapist at St. Margaret's Hospital, specializes in working with patients dealing with dysphagia. The scope of her practice includes speech and language concerns, but for the past three years, she's been focusing more on swallowing disorders.

Hagenbuch describes previous therapies as "kind of shooting in the dark." In the past, she might have worked with someone several times a week over several months and see the patient progress to a diet of thickened liquids or pureed foods. She is pleased with the VitalStim equipment. "We've been using it since March and have seen amazing results," she says. "I've seen a patient go from a feeding tube to a regular diet in nine 60-minute sessions."





# Natural Beauty

Chris Hunter creates bowls, vases and other vessels that celebrate the distinctive character of wood.

Chris Hunter's nimble fingers can coax a mute block of wood to speak. As he crafts pieces of walnut, locust, mulberry and mahogany into delicate footed goblets, slender curvy vases, rustic bowls and more, he lets the grain of the wood and its natural characteristics guide his designs. "All the art starts with the wood," he explains.

Chris makes wood into vases, goblets, bowls and other vessels. His craft, called wood-turning, marries an age-old technique with modern power tools. A whirling lathe holds and rotates the wood as Chris deftly wields his tools to carve, scrape and gouge it into shape.

Though it might appear his backyard woodpile is destined for the fireplace, the stack of logs is merely awaiting transformation in Chris' woodshop. "Every piece of wood has a special feature," says Chris, who notes that even two blocks of wood from the same tree are unique.

"You can tell by the grain what it will look like inside," he says, pointing to traits in a log and showing how they appear in a turned bowl. As he carves, the scrolls, knots, thorns and graining are sharpened and defined to give a three-dimensional look.

He revels in these imperfections because they give his pieces personality. He admits that sometimes the pieces don't work out the way he expected, so he's learned to "just let it flow, and let God do the work."

His designs range from refined to rustic, including natural-edged bowls, which are popular with customers, who admire their individuality. "They're more rustic — they actually still have the bark on — and people take to that," says Chris.



On the other end of the spectrum are Chris' segmented works, which feature a mosaic banded by angled pieces that are cut and glued individually to achieve a design resembling a woven basket. While other works might take Chris a few hours to complete, segmented pieces can take weeks.

Another passion—for music—prompted Chris' first foray into woodcraft a few years ago. A guitarist since age 8, Chris decided to make his own Fender-style guitar. That soon led to other projects. "Someone asked me, if I could make a guitar why couldn't I make some Adirondack chairs?" recalls Chris. "I'm not master of anything, but I pick things up quickly."

After completing several larger furniture pieces, he tried his hand at bowls, which allowed him to focus on wood turning, an aspect of furniture making that he enjoyed on its own merits. "Every piece I make, I like to see used somehow," he says. "Everything I do, I try to make it something that can be enjoyed."

Like the trees from which he draws inspiration, Chris' woodworking hobby grew, as did the workshop in the basement of his home in LaSalle. The man who owned perhaps one drill and had little interest in tools now can boast two lathes, a router, a band saw, a joiner, a planer, a table saw and a jigsaw.

When he began exhibiting his wares around the Illinois Valley, he discovered that sharing is as fun as selling. "I'm there to meet the people, talk to them and get to know them. It's not about my bowls; it's about us together," he enthuses.

Sometimes, Chris finds it difficult to part with his vessels, especially those to which he's devoted many hours, but he finds joy in knowing they bring pleasure to others. "I like knowing a piece has gone to someone who cares," he says.

During one craft show, he encountered Frank Kobilsek of Mendota, a fellow wood turner who has become a mentor. At first, Chris feared his wares would be compared to those of his more-accomplished friend. "I am still a beginner. There are so many different qualities his work has versus mine. I lean more toward the natural-edged bowls and he has shinier, elegant pieces," he says.

However, he soon realized that there are many different types of artistry, which appeal to many different tastes. "It's like music," says Chris, drawing an analogy to his other hobby. "One guy can come in

and play a song, and you hate it. A different guy can come in and play the same song, and it appeals to you."

Although wood-turning has taught him to appreciate wood's natural scars and quirks, he spends his workday making such imperfections disappear as he repairs furniture at Steinberg's Furniture in Peru. He enjoys that work as well. "I love making a repair unnoticeable," he says. "You take a broken corner and mold a new one, color it and match the grain, and people won't even notice the repair. It's cool to make something like new. And it's neat to know the secrets (to repair) that not everybody knows."

Though he enjoys making music and working with wood, Chris tries to put his family first. He and his wife, Sue, are parents to two young children, Austin, 6, and Brianna, 3. At 29, he's finding that life is a lot like wood-turning. Sometimes the real appeal, beauty and distinctiveness become apparent when you peel away the outer surface and focus on the inner masterpiece. Then you find yourself in a place where work, hobby and family life come together.



**Chris is one of the featured artists at St. Margaret's Artisan Showcase scheduled for November 17 at Celebrations 150. For more information call (815) 664-1329.**



*Bernie Victor and Ray Anderes man the sound board during the concerts.*

# Jamming in the Valley

If you're a music aficionado, you don't have to travel more than an hour to a club in the city for an evening of live entertainment. Right here in the Illinois Valley, you can spend a night grooving to the sounds of a blues guitarist or enjoying the lyricism of a folk singer/songwriter.

One weeknight a month, the back room of popular LaSalle eatery Uptown Grill turns into an intimate music club, Uptown's Playlist Theater, where audiences have enjoyed performances from artists as varied as bluesman Ray Bonneville and folksy rocker Griffin House. Cover charges are usually around \$20 or less, with a discount for buying tickets ahead of time.

Owner Ray Anderes started offering the shows in March 2006. The club's moniker came about because Ray had been known for playing a variety of tunes by off-the-beaten-track artists as background music

in the restaurant. When he first opened the restaurant, he subscribed to a small music programming service from Seattle. "People would constantly ask, 'Who is playing this song?'" says Ray. "I came to realize that this is what my customers were looking for."

Because he enjoys music so much, Ray loves sharing it with others. "I enjoy getting other people hooked on these smaller musicians," he says.

Ray discovers many artists on Miles of Music, an online source for independent music releases. He and longtime friend Bernie Victor, who works as soundman for the club, seek out the performers. The duo, along with another friend, Tom Ptak, has long enjoyed traveling to see live music throughout the region, generally visiting venues within a 200-mile radius.

After reflecting that smaller venues made the musical experience more enjoyable, Ray decided to give it a go at his own location. "I'd



much rather pay \$10 to see somebody that's a little different than to pay 10 times as much and have everything you do be such a struggle," he says, noting the hassles that go along with larger venues, from travel time to the length of the beer or bathroom line.

Ray has found that many artists are willing to stop in LaSalle for a weeknight concert as they move between other venues. "In order to get the quality and the entertainment that we do, I think it would be pretty hard to do it on a Friday or Saturday night because artists can make a lot more playing in larger venues, larger cities," he says.

Sometimes he contacts artists directly, but he often works with agencies to book acts from all over the country. He and Bernie also research performers on the Internet, on sites like Pollstar.com, which offers concert listings and tour information via a database searchable by artist, venue and city.

The shows have attracted a following of core patrons, about 40 or 50, who attend every show, eager to hear new or new-to-them artists in a club setting. As one enthusiast says, "It's an intimate, beautiful setting with really great sound. You are so close you can see the technical parts of the performance."

The performers also seem to like the smaller setting, where they have an opportunity to interact with the audience members, who are generally attentive and respectful. "If you're an artist, imagine playing these huge places or whatever where people are drunk and noisy and you can't even hear yourself . . . and then you come here and people are appreciative," says Ray, who notes that performers often recommend the Uptown to their colleagues, which is how he has come to book a few of the acts, including David Lindley, who has worked with guitar great Ry Cooder and accompanied Jackson Browne, among others.

The shows start at 7:30 p.m. and run until about 10 p.m., which works well for patrons and performers alike. "Everybody here has to go to work the next morning, so you can see this and be home at 10 or 10:30," explains Bernie.

Ray finds it difficult to pick a favorite among the acts who have played on the Uptown stage, but says he especially enjoyed Carrie Rodriguez, a singer/songwriter/violinist, and Chip Taylor. "I thought that was magic," he says of the performance.

He has been thinking of expanding the back room to provide more space for the popular shows, but that's still on the drawing board.

Though the shows basically just break even, that doesn't bother Ray, who says he's not in it for the money. As a music lover, he says he enjoys the chance to hang out with the musicians. "The payoff is after the show," he says. "The discussions – they're so great to sit and have a drink with and talk with."

Upcoming shows include Grammy-winning bluesman John Hammond on November 8. For more information, follow the links on the restaurant website: [www.uptowngrill.com](http://www.uptowngrill.com).

### Uptown's Playlist Theater has hosted a varied selection of artists. Here's a listing of the shows to date:

Ray Bonneville	The Everybodyfields
Bo Ramsey	Terry Evans
Pieta Brown	Griffin House with the Sons of William
Tim Easton	Tim Easton & Carrie Rodriguez
Kelly Pardekooper	David Lindley
Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez	Ramsey Midwood
Griffin House	Chris Knight
Dave Moore	Fred Eaglesmith
Bo Ramsey and the Stranger Blues Band	Karen Savoca with Pete Heitzman
Mary Gauthier	
Fred Eaglesmith	
Ray Bonneville	

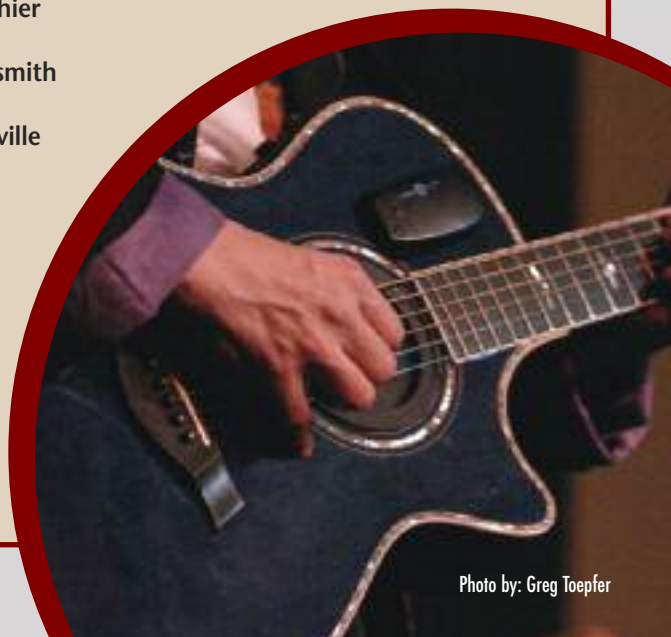


Photo by: Greg Toepfer





# Dishing It Up

The Uptown Grill's creative, casual fare has tempted Illinois Valley taste buds for more than two decades.

About 22 years ago, restaurateur Ray Anderes decided LaSalle could use a casual eatery that served food with a flair—thus the Uptown Grill was born.

“We really didn’t have a casual restaurant around here,” recalls Ray. “Everything was either chicken and ravioli or fine dining.”

He aimed for originality when putting together the restaurant’s first menu, which included items such as the stuffed chicken breast and steamed vegetables. These days, the Uptown’s menus are available online, with daily specials highlighted.

When describing the current menu, Ray says, “We try to keep the ‘casual’ aspect of it, where you would feel comfortable coming in on a Saturday night getting a burger, if that’s what you were looking for—but, if you want something that’s a little different or nicer, we try to fit that bill as well.”

Ray grew up in the restaurant business. His father, Victor, was the cook for St. Margaret’s Hospital from 1963 to 1966. He was known for his catering skills at staff parties, including the creation of intricate ice sculptures. The family moved away for a time, but after they returned to the area, Victor opened the Red Door on Water Street in Peru.

When Ray first opened the Uptown in the former JC Penney store on First Street in LaSalle, he also owned another restaurant, The Cove, situated on the Illinois River between Ottawa and Utica. He stuck with it for about three years, but found it too difficult to keep up with both businesses, since he couldn’t be in two places at one time. He decided to sell The Cove and focus all his attention on the Uptown.

As the business took off, Ray was eyeing the property next door, the old Woolworth’s building, where it seemed like there was room for expansion. In 1996, he moved the restaurant there.

The dining room features the interplay of rich wood tones and warm golden walls. Ray's wife, Rita, and her sister did the decorating, pulling ideas from magazines together to create a cozy, inviting environment. The Uptown also boasts banquet facilities for up to 100, and a screened patio is available for outdoor dining during the warmer months.

Though the restaurant business can be very competitive and independent places like Ray's are up against chains or franchises, the Uptown has found success by creating its own niche and building a loyal customer base. Treating customers well is important to Ray, and he's trained his staff to put people at ease by being friendly and accessible. The staff has also learned to respond to customers' inquiries about the music—Ray's playlist is known for its variety and originality.

About 30 to 40 percent of the clientele are tourists, many guided to the eatery by signage on the interstate; the rest is repeat business, says Ray, who has found that "a little tweak here and there" keeps people coming back for more. One of those tweaks was deciding to use the banquet room to stage concerts.

Ray says he truly enjoys his work because it gives him the freedom of self-expression. "The only thing I have ever done is work in the restaurant business," he says. "I don't know if I could work for

someone else, and having the chance to also combine it with my love of music is icing on the cake. It's my hobby back there . . . just being able to express some creativity all the time."

He relishes being his own boss, even though it means he's on call at all hours and has to juggle multiple duties. "In an average day, I might do computer programming, I might be back behind the line cooking, I might wash dishes, I might be out in the dining room," he says. "I couldn't do the same thing all day long, not in a million years."

Ray and Rita have been married for 27 years and they are the parents of three children; Ryan, 26, Reid, 25, and Renee, 23. When he's not working at the restaurant, exploring the regional music scene or spending time with family, Ray enjoys skiing, kayaking, running and curling. "I've kind of got something for every season," he says.

As for the future, he hopes to stay in the business for years to come, and perhaps one day pass the reins to one of his children or a long-time employee. Even then, he says, he would still like to keep a hand in things at the Uptown. "I really would love to have it continue, and continue with some of my tastes or direction involved," he says.

Reflecting on what he hopes customers remember about his restaurant, he says he hopes they see it as a friendly, casual place with great service, unique food and a community atmosphere.







# A Season of Gratitude

“The unthankful heart... discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!”

—Henry Ward Beecher







# Community Calendar of Events

## FINE ARTS

### Stage 212 Theatre Productions

February – *Once Upon a Mattress*

April – *Our Town*

### Uptown's Playlist Theater

Nov. 8 – *John Hammond*

*Uptown Bar & Grill, LaSalle*

(815) 224-4545

### Movies at the Mansion

Dec. 15

*Hegeler Carus Mansion, LaSalle*

(815) 224-5891

### Fine Art and Craft Show

Dec. 1

*K.C. Hall, Utica*

(815) 539-3767

## OUTDOOR FUN

### Tri-Park Trolley Tour

Oct. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-28

Noon and 2 p.m.

*Starved Rock State Park, Utica*

(815) 220-7386

### Trolley Fall Colors Tour

Oct. 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29

*Starved Rock State Park, Utica*

For more information or to purchase tickets,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext.386.

### Canal Connection 10K Race

Nov. 4

*I&M Canal Towpath, Utica*

(815) 223-8988

### 29th Annual Oglesby

### Turkey Trot Three-Mile Run

Nov. 22

*Oglesby*

(815) 223-7922

## PARADES

### Veterans' Day Parade

Nov. 10 – *Peru*

### Christmas Parades

Nov. 23 – *Ottawa*

Nov. 25 – *Oglesby*

Dec. 1 – *Peru*

Dec. 1 – *Princeton*

Dec. 1 – *Streator*

### Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade

Dec. 8 – *Peru*

## FESTIVALS

### Nouveau Wine Festival

Nov. 16-18

*Utica*

For more information, call August Hill Winery,  
(815) 667-5211.

### Ottawa Festival of Lights Ceremony

Nov. 23

*Ottawa*

(888) OTTAWA-IL

### Festival of Trees and Children's Fest

Nov. 30, Dec. 1

*Princeton*

(815) 875-2631





## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Christmas in the Valley

Nov. 10  
Downtown Spring Valley  
(815) 664-4221

### Christmas in the Village

Nov. 23-24  
Downtown Utica  
(815) 667-4111

### North Pole Evening Express to Weber House

Nov. 24, 30  
Dec. 7, 14, 21  
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica, and  
Weber House and Garden, Streator  
For more information,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext. 386.

### Holiday Progressive Dinner

Nov. 25  
Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23  
Various Illinois Valley Area Restaurants  
For more information,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext. 386.

### Christmas Walk

Dec. 1  
Downtown Peru  
(815) 223-0061

### Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 15  
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica  
For more information,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext. 386.

## MORE FUN

### All About Ghosts Trolley Tour

Oct. 27-28  
Starved Rock State Park, Utica  
For information or tickets,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext. 386.

### Sandwich Antiques Market

Oct. 28  
Sandwich Fairgrounds, Sandwich  
(815) 786-3337

### Family Halloween Party

Oct. 28  
Camp Tuckabatchee, Ottawa  
(815) 433-2984

### March of Dimes Chef's Auction

Nov. 1  
Celebrations 150, LaSalle  
Call (815) 223-3211 for reservations.

### Light Up Streator

Nov. 24  
Streator City Park, Streator  
(815) 673-1708

### Marseilles Holiday Lights in the Park

Dec. 1  
Knudson Park, Marseilles  
(815) 228-0238

### Christmas at Weber's

Dec. 1-31  
Weber House and Garden, Streator  
(815) 672-8327

### New Year's Eve "Under the Stars" Party Package

Dec. 31  
Starved Rock State Park Great Hall  
and Back Door Lounge, Utica  
For more information,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext. 386.

### New Year's Eve "Under the Stars" Overnight Party

Dec. 31  
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica  
For more information,  
call (800) 868-7625, ext. 386.

### Have a Heart 2008 Dance

Mar. 29  
Sponsored by the American Red Cross  
For more information, call (815) 223-0922.



# Healthful Holidays

The span between Thanksgiving dinner and Super Bowl Sunday at the end of January may seem like a marathon of overindulgence, but, with a little planning, you can enjoy the festivities and not deck yourself with excess poundage!

Marilyn Csernus, MS, RD, clinical dietician at St. Margaret's Hospital, offers the following helpful hints to a healthy holiday season:

- 1. Set realistic goals.** During this time of year, whether it's at home, in the workplace or during a social event, there are going to be extra goodies around. "Go into the holidays with a realistic plan," says Csernus, who advocates moderation, saying that those who adopt the all-or-nothing approach to holiday eating are headed for trouble. A realistic plan might be to maintain your current weight, incorporate healthy meals or keep up a fitness program.
- 2. Fit in fitness.** "Thanksgiving arrives and people tend to think, 'well, it's going to be a busy time of year and I'll just put everything on hold until January 1,'" says Csernus. Instead, she advises doing what you can. If you can't do your typical 30- to 40-minute workout on days when your time is squeezed, do 10 or 15 minutes. Find creative ways to fit in exercise. When you're doing your Christmas shopping, for example, walk a few extra laps around the mall or take the stairs instead of the escalator. "It's all about building activity into your day," says Csernus.
- 3. Plan for parties.** If you are going to a big dinner or work party—don't go hungry or "save up" so you can eat more, says Csernus. That will likely set you up to overdo. Eat breakfast, a light lunch, and then have a small snack, like a low-fat yogurt, light string cheese or a handful of nuts, and water before you go.



**4. Be selective.** “If you are going to indulge, make it on foods that are your favorites or ones you will not be able to have until next Christmas,” says Csernus. Scan the buffet and choose the foods that are at the top of your list. Take small servings of your favorites and fill the rest of your plate with healthy choices, such as shrimp, fresh fruit or vegetables.

**5. Limit alcohol.** Watch your consumption of alcoholic beverages—not only are some holiday drinks, like eggnog, loaded with calories equivalent to a full meal, alcohol can loosen your inhibitions when it comes to overeating, just as it does for other things. Csernus suggests limiting yourself to two drinks and sipping water or another calorie-free beverage between drinks.

**6. Know your triggers.** Remember the acronym HALT, which stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired. The latter three are all common triggers for emotional eating. Don’t handle your emotions with food; you will just be more frustrated with yourself because you overate. Find something to address those emotions. Call a friend or go for a walk. “Find something that is fun and that you enjoy,” says Csernus. “Even if you are tired, take a walk—you may find that moving will boost your energy.”

**7. Offer healthy alternatives.** If you’re invited to a potluck, bring something healthy that fits into your eating plan. Think about ways to trim old favorites. It may be as simple as swapping sour cream for plain yogurt. “Little things make a big difference,” says Csernus, adding that many substitutions don’t really change the quality of a dish. “It might not taste quite as rich, but it is usually not noticeable.”

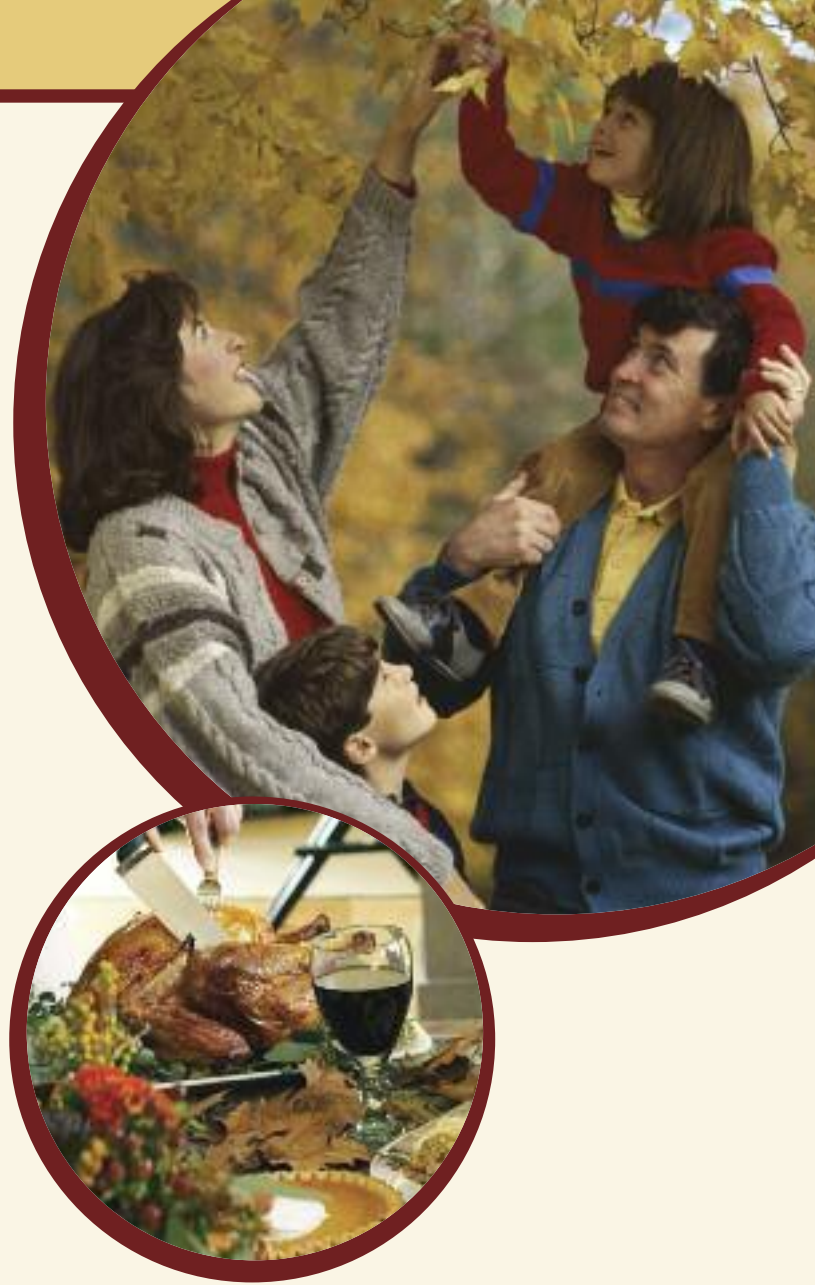
**8. Take the focus off food.** Even though holiday meals are tied so much to tradition and we tend to plan the whole day around eating, keep in mind what the season is really all about—celebrating our faith and spending time with those we care about.

**9. Start new traditions.** Take a family walk or start a new tradition, like a basketball game (T-U-R-K-E-Y, anyone?), a ping pong competition, a Twister tournament or a family dance-off. Making

activity part of your tradition is a good way to help the younger generation develop healthy habits.

**10. Catch some ZZZ.** Don’t forget to get a good night’s sleep. The better rested you are, the more energy you will have to think about eating healthy and exercising.

The bottom line, says Csernus, is to have control over eating instead of letting it control you. “Look to the future and reflect on the past. Think how good you will feel if you maintain your weight and stick with your fitness plan. It’s not about deprivation or overindulgence; it should be a happy medium.”





Lori Christopherson reviews plans for the March of Dimes' newest fundraiser - The Artini Fest



# Role of a Lifetime

Playing a part in ensuring the health of babies has been a rewarding career for local actress Lori Christopherson.

Lori Christopherson's involvement with the Illinois Valley March of Dimes organization began with a crisis, a prayer and a quickly forgotten promise.

In 1979, the first-time mother-to-be was facing complications in her pregnancy that required weeks of bed rest and an emergency Cesarean section.

"I was so afraid for my baby that I prayed if he would just be okay, I would help do something to help other babies," she recalls.

After giving birth to a healthy son, Joshua, she found the pressures and joys of raising him swept the promise from her mind. But four years later, a fried chicken-eating contest, of all things, reminded her of her earlier vow. Being recruited as a judge for a March of Dimes fundraiser was anything but a "fowl" experience. "I had a great time," she remembers.

After that, she became a dedicated participant in the organization's annual WalkAmerica fundraiser, but she really stepped up her involvement in 1983, when she took a job as administrator for the local chapter. Since then, folks throughout the area have come to think of Lori Christopherson and the March of Dimes as synonymous—her tireless devotion to the cause of healthy babies has never wavered. Today, as director of the organization's Heartland Division, she oversees a chapter that covers 20 counties.

As her career grew, so did her family, with two more sons, Tony and Stephen, now 19 and 16. She's now a grandmother as well, which has given her new perspective on her work. Before her first grandson, Jordan, was born, doctors at St. Margaret's Hospital observed, via ultrasound, that his intestines were growing outside his body. He was rushed to surgery immediately after birth to repair the problem, and today, he's an active 10-year-old who enjoys playing baseball.

Reflecting on the prenatal medical crisis that touched her family,

she says it was a reaffirmation of the importance of raising funds for medical advances to detect or treat pregnancy complications. Rather than being a discouraging experience, she says, "It only says to me that is why we continue what we do."

A theater major who traded her dreams of a professional acting career for marriage and motherhood, Lori found the community stage to be an outlet for her talents. For 20 years, she played roles from chorus girl and dancer to leads as well as producing and directing (at Stage 212). She captivated local audiences as such diverse characters as Sister Robert Anne in *Nunsense 1-4*, Betty Rizzo in *Grease*, and Anita in *West Side Story*. She's most proud of her performance as Eva Peron in *Evita*, which won rave reviews. "That role was all-consuming and physically demanding," she says, noting that portraying the character's rise from poverty to power was a challenge.

That has been her last role to date. These days, she is content to let her cause take center stage, but her ease in front of an audience has helped her in her work, especially when the organization sponsors such community events as the Chef's Auction and Artini Fest.

In the fundraising world, Lori says, it often seems "the more you do, the more you need next year," and, fervor flagging, personnel move in and out through revolving doors. But Lori remains committed. For her, selling folks on supporting the March of Dimes is more than just a job. "What I sell. . . you can't feel that way about selling paper," she says, her voice choked with emotion.

That's not to say the task is easy; each year requires fresh ideas and new energy to generate the increasing amount of money needed to cover equipment and program costs, she says. As an example, she points to the organization's signature event, WalkAmerica, which was started in 1970. The oldest walking event in the country, it has shrunk from 18 miles to 3, and participants no longer collect pledges

for their distances. Lori says that she and the volunteers try to incorporate new ideas each year. “We have to reinvent it or it becomes old, boring, stagnant, and people won’t come back,” she says. “You have to pull that energy up from within.”

Energy is coming from without as well—in recent years, Lori has seen volunteers assume a greater role and take ownership in the organization. “I take a lot of pride in building the organization to where it’s at and sharing it,” she says. “The fun thing is, it’s not mine anymore.”

Key to the March of Dimes’ success is the participation of ambassador families, families dealing with a birth defect who volunteer to share their stories and inspire others to give.

These families, and others helped by the organization, keep Lori motivated. She notes that, while all of the ambassador families have different stories of heartbreak and inspiration, they seem to have one thing in common. “What I’ve seen in every case is that each child is a blessing to its parents,” she says. “A birth defect will become a lifelong disability, and you see families that have these significant challenges, but it gives you a sense that every child is important.”

As a parent and grandparent, she’s thankful for her own blessings.

“I get so much joy and fulfillment out of watching my children succeed,” she says. “I get more satisfaction from that than being on stage myself. My priorities evolve as I get older. It’s not so much about me as about my kids.”

At the moment, she is referring to her own family, but the statement could also apply to her March of Dimes career. It’s not so much about Lori as about all her kids.

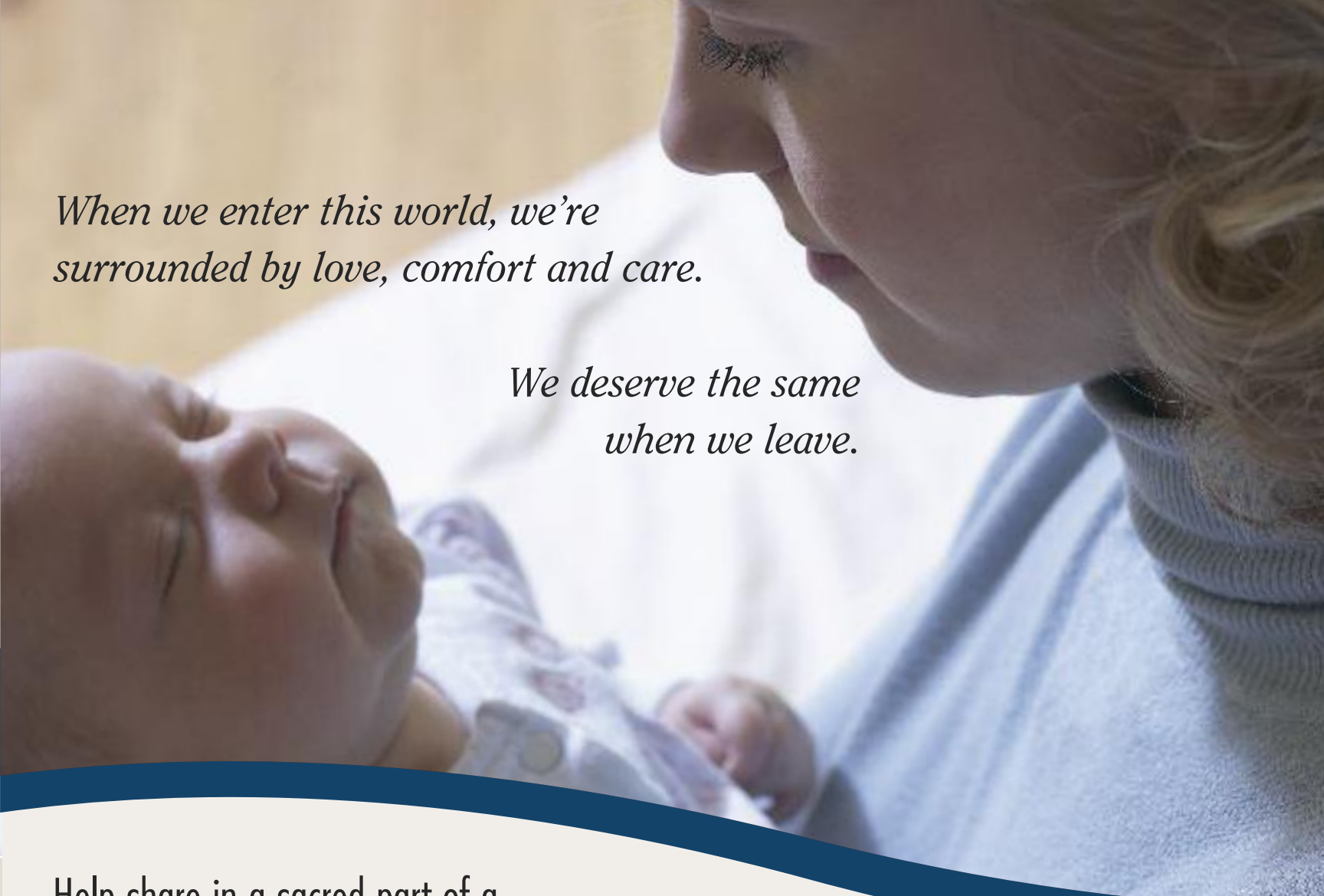


The March of Dimes got its start in 1938 with efforts to care for polio victims and develop a vaccine against the disease. Today, the organization’s efforts focus on preventing premature birth, birth defects and infant mortality. In Illinois, 90 cents of every dollar raised by the March of Dimes goes into research, education, advocacy and community service programs. For more information on how to help, call the Heartland Division at (815) 223-3221.

Source: [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)







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*We deserve the same  
when we leave.*

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St. Margaret's Hospice Supervisor  
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**St. Margaret's Health**

St. Margaret's Hospital

*SMP Health System*

# **VOLUNTEER**

# Fulfilling His Promise

Taking her late husband's place on a mission trip to hurricane-ravaged Mississippi helped Karen Swain begin to heal.



Throughout his life, Tom Swain believed in helping others and enjoyed volunteering with many local groups, from Illinois Valley Animal Rescue to the St. Margaret's Hospital Skilled Nursing Unit. "He served God first, then his family, placing himself last," recalls his wife, Karen Swain, laboratory director at St. Margaret's Hospital. "If anyone had a need, he would try to help."

Even as he battled myelodysplastic syndrome (a condition where the bone marrow fails to produce enough blood cells) and, eventually, leukemia, he signed up for a mission trip to help rebuild a Mississippi home destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The trip was scheduled for early March 2007, but Tom passed away on February 4.

Although she was struggling through her own hurricane of grief, Karen committed to go in his place. "It was a difficult decision—it was only one month since he had passed," she says, but she felt that God was calling her to make the trip and trusted that He would see her through.

Her choice proved to be the right one—not only did she help others in need, the experience started her on the road to healing. "It got me back on my feet fast and gave me so much peace," she says. "When we step out through the Lord, He blesses us tenfold back."

Tom and Karen's story begins more than four decades ago. The

couple met when Karen, an El Paso native, was home from college, waiting tables at the local Kiwanis Club. Tom was working as a music teacher at El Paso High School and was a club member. The two hit it off and they struck up a friendship that eventually turned to romance. "He was sure he was going to marry me, right from the beginning," she recalls.

His hunch was correct—the pair enjoyed 42 years of marriage and raised two sons, Brian, 39, who lives in Bloomington, and Derek, 34, who lives in Mesa, Arizona, with his wife, Kristen, and children Aiden, 4, and Ava, 18 months.

Though his life's work was as a music teacher and he taught instrumental music at the high school level for 26 years, Tom was also gifted at building and repairing things. "My husband was very talented with his hands—he could do anything with wood and tools," says Karen.

The couple also shared a strong faith that helped them face Tom's diagnosis in July 2006. "We never thought of it as an illness—just this is what God has in our path and we need to live every day to the fullest," says Karen.

After undergoing chemotherapy, Tom began to feel better. It was during that time that he signed up for a United Methodist





Committee on Relief mission trip through the couple's church, Grace United Methodist in LaSalle.

Unfortunately, God had other plans for Tom. "It was quick in the end, but he was at peace," says Karen. "He was delighted to go to heaven."

Barely a month later, Karen set out with eight other women from her church, meeting up with other volunteers from the northern Illinois region before heading to Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

When Karen arrived in Ocean Springs, she was surprised at the amount of work still needed in the area, nearly two years after the storm. "I was amazed that there was still so much devastation," she says. "A lot of people are still living in trailers."

At the beginning of the mission, Karen was unsure just how she'd be of service. Though she'd always dreamed of doing mission work, she pictured her role as a counselor or medical worker. After all, she says, Tom was the one who felt at home with a hammer in his hand. "They thought they were getting someone handy, but they got me instead," she says.

But she quickly found herself thrust into a new role—part of a work crew rebuilding a home for a family who had been living on their property in a two-room FEMA trailer. A previous crew had

completed the tear-out and put up new drywall. Karen's crew was to do the finishing work.

The group's lodging was an Army barracks and their dining hall the local Methodist church. Each day began and ended with a prayer service and the crew was on the job site from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Karen says the work team quickly grew close and, on the second day, she decided to share her story with the other team members. She was buoyed by their kind words, hugs and prayers. "I think they might have known it already, but had not let on," she says. "They made me laugh again. I felt at home and really alive."

The two men who led the work group encouraged Karen to push the limits of her experience. Her earliest effort was picking up a small hammer to pound in nails on window trim. "I said, 'Lord, show me how to do this,'" she says, recalling her initial qualms about stepping beyond her comfort zone.

She soon was assigned more challenging jobs, including installing a toilet. She felt a sense of achievement when the installation went smoothly and moved on to other projects, including installing flooring, setting a vanity and even trying her hand at some electrical work.

In addition to the support of her team members, something else



kept her going—Tom himself. “I very much felt Tom’s presence during the week,” she says. “I felt he was cheering me on, especially through the guys who were the leaders.”

By the end of the week, the home was finished enough that the family, a woman, her fiancé and her granddaughter, could move in. “It really ended up cute,” says Karen. “I think it gave them hope when they saw the progress. They were smiling and laughing.”

In addition to the warm feeling that comes from helping others, Karen gained self-assurance, something she sees even more clearly now that she’s returned home. In the past, Tom had always handled the household repairs, but the mission trip helped Karen realize that she was capable of keeping things running. “I feel more confident with fixing things around my own home,” she says. “The Lord had a purpose here. He wanted to show me how I could take care of myself.”

Since the trip, Karen has helped out with local ministries and has shared her inspiring story during several church services, which is difficult, but spiritually rewarding. “I try to tell the story as much as I can,” she says. “It may help someone who needs help now or someone who will need it down the road.”

Karen and Tom shared a devotion to reading and meditating on Scripture daily, both jotting down notes in the margins of their Bibles and underlining favorite passages. Since his death, looking through Tom’s Bible has provided a comforting connection for her. Someday, she plans to leave these special heirlooms to their sons.

She says that Tom was determined to live his life according to God’s will and make the most out of every moment. “People saw the delight of the Lord in him,” she says. “He died so alive.”

Karen tries to live her life in the same way. After 40 years on the job, she sees retirement on the horizon and hopes that will include more mission work, either in the United States or abroad. “Yes, God had a plan for Tom and me. Now Tom has finished his labor on earth and he has a whole new page to walk through,” says Karen. “So do I, and who knows what the Lord has in store for me. I look forward to seeing what the Lord will put in my path.”







# When You Can't Swallow

An estimated 15 million Americans are afflicted with dysphagia, a condition that causes discomfort or difficulty swallowing.

*At its most severe—when patients entirely lose their ability to eat—dysphagia can profoundly disrupt a life. It is common among stroke survivors, patients with Parkinson's disease, and patients with head and neck cancer. An estimated half of all nursing home residents suffer from this condition.*

St. Margaret's Center for Physical Rehab announces a new, non-invasive treatment:

## VitalStim Therapy

An exciting new therapy, proven and painless

The first proven treatment for dysphagia, it's the only dysphagia therapy backed by compelling clinical data and cleared by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

- Based on clinical electrical stimulation
- Proven safe
- Faster, more-effective results

## Revive a Simple Pleasure

Once again you can share the enjoyment of eating with family and friends. For more information on how VitalStim can restore the quality of your life, contact St. Margaret's Center for Physical Rehab.



**St. Margaret's Health**

Center for Physical Rehab

*SMP Health System*

(815) 223-8600

1400 Midtown Road and Rt. 251, Peru, Illinois



# A Well-Designed Life

**From jewelry maker and decorator to wife and mother, Ginger Ludford embraces her many vocations with gusto.**

On any given day, you might find Ginger Ludford selecting furnishings for an interior design client, stringing together an intricately beaded bracelet, drumming up support for a hospital fundraiser, or just hanging out with her four children. This interior designer, jewelry maker, volunteer, wife and mother enjoys her on-the-go life to the fullest.

Ginger has always had an artistic bent, perhaps the byproduct of her upbringing. “I have always loved art and drawing,” she explains. “Growing up, my family used to paint the windows of the house with Christmas scenes during the holidays. We would always try to outdo each other!”

The McHenry, Illinois, native also had a flair for decorating that started at a young age: “When I was younger, I would look at everyone’s homes and figure out how I would change each room to make it better,” she says. “It became natural after a good training.”

Ginger earned a degree in housing and environmental design, with minors in art and industrial technology, at Illinois State University. In addition to an education, ISU provided her with a spouse—during her days on campus, she met her future husband, Dr. David Ludford, a pre-med student.

Ginger started her career at a Palatine, Illinois, design firm, where she designed interiors for extremely high-end homes. From there, she became a junior designer for a top architectural firm in Chicago. After she and Dave married, they returned to the Illinois Valley, so Dave could take over his father’s optometry practice. For a time, Ginger worked for Designing Women in Ottawa, but she soon decided to launch her own business, Ludford Designs, as a design consultant.



After opening up shop, her first big project was designing her husband's newly acquired office. That proved to be a springboard to more work, as patients visiting the office inquired about the design. A one-time advertisement in a special "Women in Business" section of the News Tribune also helped jump-start the fledgling venture.

Ginger designs interiors for both commercial and residential properties, from one room to a whole house. She says much of her work involves interior space planning, kitchen lighting planning, and electrical planning, as well as helping clients select colors and décor. "A lot of people already know what they want," she says. "They just need another voice to say 'you are doing great.'" Committed to her craft, Ginger will search online or travel out of town, to places such as the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, to find just the right item for a client.

Ginger's experience and talent are evident—her work can be seen at several Illinois Valley businesses, including Senica's Oak Ridge Clubhouse, Eye Care Professionals, Hartauer Insurance and Marty Chiropractic, to name a few.

In addition to her flair for designing beautifully appointed rooms, Ginger has a talent for crafting one-of-a-kind jewelry, which led to her second business venture—"Wicked Gems." "Making jewelry enables me to use my creative fire on a daily basis," she says.

Ginger's interest in jewelry design was piqued by watching a jeweler make a beaded bracelet. She decided that she had the skills and expertise to make something similar on her own. "I don't like to just string regular beads on string," she says. "I like to manipulate them and make them do something different."

In her quest for something different, she began to search online for tools, beads and other unique materials to incorporate into her own personal jewelry. Ginger now sells her creations at local fairs and festivals, such as Utica's Burgoon Festival, and at the gift shop of the Hegeler Carus Mansion in LaSalle. She also fulfills custom orders and is available for at-home jewelry parties.

She sees unlimited possibilities for her jewelry designs. In the future, she says, she would like to return to the art of metalsmithing, which she used to do in college. "I would like to incorporate that into the beading, and eventually learn glassblowing in order to make my own beads," she says.

When she is not designing abodes or adornments, Ginger gives back to the community as an active member of St. Margaret's Foundation Board. One of her responsibilities is to recruit local artists to take part in the Foundation's Annual Artisan Showcase.

The task involves scouring art festivals and other events to find talented individuals who would like to participate in the fundraiser. At the event, artists are provided with a booth to showcase and sell their work. These artists also donate pieces of artwork, which are auctioned that evening, with the proceeds benefiting the Foundation. Foundation activities such as these help St. Margaret's Health to fund community education, remodeling and expansion of current facilities, and the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment to maintain the delivery of high-quality healthcare. This year, Ginger herself is donating 60 of her own specialty bracelets to the auction. "My husband and I had all our babies at St. Margaret's," she says. "Now I will do anything I can to help the hospital."

Ginger also enjoys spending quality time with her family. She especially relishes days with her four children—Chase, 8; Seth, 6; Reese, 4; and Renn, 3. "A lot of people love when their kids go to school, but I love having them home. I love spending time with them and bonding. They are great little people!" she says.

Being in control of her own businesses gives her the flexibility to plan around her family and other events. She handles the complexity of her life by being organized and refraining from overbooking herself. Ginger explains she used to fret about not having enough time to fit everything in, but says that it all seems to work out. "It just happens," she says. "I love the chaos. I'm a person who is not afraid of being busy or trying new adventures."





*Members of the  
Waltham Curling Club  
from left to right: Mary Lou Schomas,  
Alan "Slim" Wilson, Nate Beer, Twila Yednock*

# Slip and Slide

An Olympic sport is being played just a stone's throw away at the Waltham Curling Club in Triumph.

Perhaps you cheered the United States men's curling team to victory as they took the bronze medal in the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, or maybe you've never heard of the sport—but you may be surprised to learn folks in Triumph have been “throwing stones” for more than a century at the Waltham Curling Club.

The strategy of curling can be a bit, well, slippery to grasp. Explaining the basics of the sport merely scratches the surface: In turn, each of four teammates on the two competing teams “throws” (slides) two stones that look like weighty granite teakettles down a lane made of a pebbly sheet of ice, aiming for the center of a set of circles. The stone has to travel with just enough curve, or “curl,” to glide to the right spot, sliding between the opposing team's stones or knocking them completely out of play.

However, as experienced curlers know, the best intentions can go awry. A shot can be overthrown or underthrown. Ice conditions can be misjudged. The team strategist, known as a “skip,” can make a bad call. And that's not even taking into account that you have four opponents just as intent on scoring as you are. It's that very thrill that keeps devoted curlers coming back for more.

“You're on ice—it's a slippery surface and a lot of things can happen,” says Mary Lou Schomas of Ottawa, who is descended from a long line of curlers, as is her brother Alan Wilson of Utica. “All the way along, something can go wrong with the shot that ruins it,” adds Wilson.

Schomas and Wilson were among several Waltham Curling Club members who recently gathered at the curling club to discuss their sport, which dates back to 16th-century Scotland. The name is derived not from the movement of the stones, but from the Scottish “curr,” which means low rumble—the sound the stones make as they travel across the icy surface.

“The ice isn't perfectly flat, and the speed changes as the game goes on,” says Nate Beer of Marseilles, who has curled for nine years. “Some shots curl more. If you're not the most talented team, sometimes (a win is based on) whichever skip figures out the ice.”

“The ice might not do the same even from one night to the next,” agrees Twila Yednock of Ottawa, who has curled for 29 years. “Every shot is different, and there's always something you've never seen. We learn what the ice does by watching each shot. When (the other team throws), you learn from what that throw does.”

A skip's biggest weapon, says Beer, is his memory for how the ice has taken each shot. A competitor's biggest asset, says Yednock, is consistency.

There's something else that can affect the outcome of a throw—two of the players accompany the rock, using special flat-bottomed “brooms” to rapidly sweep the ice's surface in the stone's path. The



aggressive motion momentarily melts the ice, lessening the friction and allowing the stone to travel further. “Sweeping makes the ice faster, creating less friction for the rock, keeping it traveling farther and faster. Good sweepers can carry a rock 10 feet farther than if the ice wasn’t swept,” notes Wilson.

With its nail-biting intensity, skilled athletes, intricate strategy and novelty factor (it debuted as a medal event in 1998), curling captivated American audiences during television coverage of the 2002 and 2006 Winter Olympics.

The Olympics coverage kept Rachel Puckett of Streator glued to her TV, but the area native never imagined such a sport was played in her backyard, until a co-worker introduced her to the Waltham Curling Club. That was five years ago, and she’s been curling ever since.

“I went to an open house, and I was hooked,” says Puckett. “It’s fun, competitive and different from anything else I’ve ever done.”

When people discovered a genuine Olympic sport in LaSalle County, they flocked to the club’s 2006 open houses. Though the club has been around for 125 years – the last 67 housed in a frame structure squatting in the shadow of a Triumph grain elevator – it’s still a mystery to many.

To lessen the intrigue, the club recently opened the rink to rentals by groups and organizations, and weekend dates filled up quickly. The public is welcome to watch the nightly league contests from the gallery during the season, which runs November through March, or become active dues-paying members, says club president R.E. Larkin of Earlville.

Members hail from Waltham Township, Marseilles, Ottawa, Streator and even as far away as Arlington Heights. Three of the four curling clubs in the state are located in the Chicagoland area, but dues and fees are higher there.

Novices are surprised to find the sport doesn’t require ice skates, but special shoes that allow competitors to scoot across the icy surface. Any curler can tell you that they can actually run on ice, logging about two miles in a single match.

Newcomers also are astonished by the distance to the target, says Beer. The “sheets,” as the lanes are called, are 146 feet long, 126 feet of which is in play. Once a newcomer tries a shot themselves, their next discovery is “it’s not as easy as it looked on TV!”

The Waltham Curling Club got its start when Scottish immigrants who settled in the township began playing their favorite winter sport on farm ponds, using corn brooms and wooden stones filled with lead and banded by iron. By 1940, the Waltham rink offered an indoor arena not subject to the caprices of weather. Members volunteered their labor, notes were issued and advertising space in the building helped foot the \$2,800 construction cost. By 1953, the curling club had been outfitted with plumbing and refrigeration capabilities.

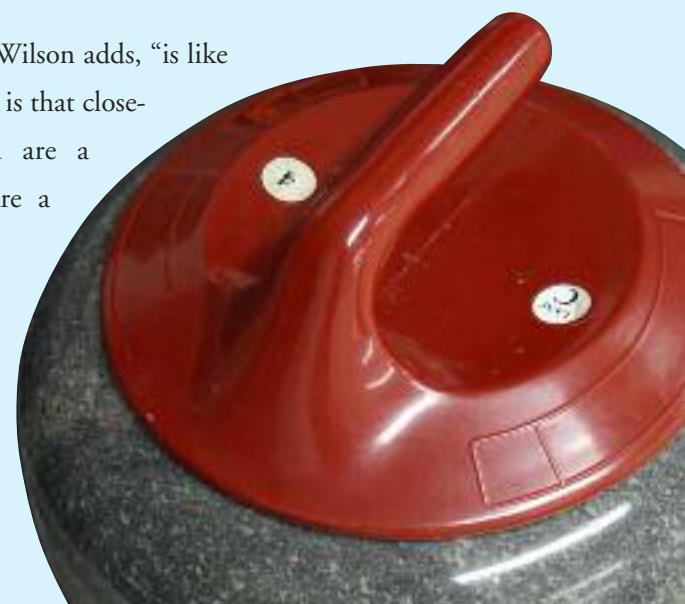
The founders passed their love and skill down to succeeding generations. Wilson once counted 85 members of his family who curled during their lifetimes. “My dad was exceptional at curling,” he says. “I don’t think I ever beat him even when I was in my 40s and he was in his 70s. He was just good. He could read the ice, and play any shot. He didn’t appear to have any nerves.”

Wilson’s father even presented his young son-in-law, Ron Schomas, with a club membership as a wedding present. Schomas wasn’t sure whether the gift meant he’d been unconditionally accepted into the family – but the union, and the curling, has continued for 44 years.

The nice thing about the sport is that it can be enjoyed by folks of many ages. Alan and Mary Lou’s mother continued to curl into her 90s. Maurice Olson, at 84, has curled for 60 years. “Age does matter,” he says, but “not seriously. As long as you are physically able, you can curl.”

Friendships among members of distant clubs are forged during tournaments, called bonspiels, throughout the state, region, country or world. Food and festivities accompany the contests on the ice. “Curling may not be the most important thing you’re doing there,” Yednock says.

“Curling,” Wilson adds, “is like a fraternity. It is that close-knit. If you are a curler, you are a curler.”



# St. Margaret's Hospital Events



## SCREENINGS/CLINICS

### 2007/08 Public Flu Shot Schedule

Flu shots will be available beginning late October through November at various locations throughout the Illinois Valley. For more information, call (815) 664-1613.

### Cholesterol Screenings

- St. Margaret's First Floor Outpatient Clinic:  
Second Wednesday of every month, 7-9 a.m.  
Second Saturday in October, January, April and July, 7-9 a.m.
- Hennepin Clinic: Monday, Dec. 10, 7:30-9 a.m.

### Free Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar Screenings (every month unless otherwise indicated)

- DePue NOA, second Tuesday, 8:30-9:30 a.m.
- Hennepin Bank, first Thursday, 8:30-10 a.m.
- Liberty Village, second Thursday, 9-10 a.m.
- YMCA, fourth Tuesday, 8-10 a.m.
- Peru Mall, third Wednesday, January-October, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Oglesby Library, third Thursday of odd months, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- St. Margaret's First Floor Outpatient Clinic, first Wednesday of odd months, 7-9 a.m.

## CLASSES

*(All classes are held in St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room, unless otherwise noted.)*

### Babysitting Clinic

Friday, Dec. 28, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

### Diabetes Education Classes

Classes meet once a week for four weeks. Different topics will be covered each week. Classes will be held on Nov. 5, 12, 19 and 26 and on January 7, 14, 21 and 28

**Week 1:** "Overview of Diabetes, Complications and Monitoring," presented by Pat Schummer, RN, MS

**Week 2:** "Nutrition and Diet," presented by Marilyn Csernus, MS, RD, LDN

**Week 3:** "Medications," presented by St. Margaret's staff pharmacist, and "Stress Management," presented by Jan Seaborn, LSW

**Week 4:** "Exercise and Activity," presented by Candy Ference, Exercise Specialist, and "Foot, Skin and Oral Care," presented by Pat Schummer, RN, MS

To register for classes, call (815) 664-1613.

## CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

- **Prenatal/Lamaze Classes:** Classes meet for four consecutive weeks and start on Nov. 5. they are held in the St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room, from 6:30-9:30 p.m.
- **Sibling Classes** (for 3-8 year-olds preparing to welcome a new baby into the family): Classes will be held on Saturday, Dec. 1, 10:00 a.m. in Room 309, St. Margaret's Hospital.
- **ABC Prenatal Classes** (for pregnant women in their first and second trimester of their pregnancy): Classes will be held on Monday, Dec. 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room.

To register for all childbirth preparation programs, call St. Margaret's Family Birthing Centre at (815) 664-1345 or (815) 223-5346, ext. 1345.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

*(All support groups meet in St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room, unless otherwise noted.)*

### Alzheimer's Support Group "Care Partners"

Second Tuesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.

### Behavior Disorders Support Group

Second Tuesday of each month, 6:30-8 p.m.

### Grief Support Group

Third Tuesday of each month, 1-2 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.

### Parkinson's Support Group

First Monday of each month, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

### Rebound (Breast Cancer Support)

Third Monday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

### Turning Point (HIV/AIDS Support Group)

Third Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m.

Location not disclosed for confidentiality purposes. For more information, please call 815-664-1613.

### Visions (Blind and Visually Impaired Support Group)

First and Third Thursdays of each month, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### St. Margaret's Women's Expo: Think Pink

Oct. 23, 6:00 p.m.

Peru Eagles Lodge

Call (815) 664-1613 for more information.

### Gift Shop Appreciation & Bake Sale

Tuesday, Nov. 6

St. Margaret's Upper Lobby

### Girl Talk

Thursday, Nov. 29

St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room

Call (815) 664-1613 for more information.

### American Red Cross Bloodmobile

Tuesday, Nov. 13, 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 8, 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room

### St. Margaret's Foundation Artisan Showcase

Saturday, Nov. 17

Celebrations 150 in Utica

All proceeds from this event will assist in purchasing capital equipment items for the Hospital.

Call (815) 664-1329 for more information.

### Nut & Candy Sale

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Margaret's Lower Lobby





# St. Margaret's Foundation Annual Artisan Showcase

Celebrations 150, Utica, Illinois

Saturday, November 17, 2007

Preview original fine art, sample local award-winning wine and hors d'oeuvres while listening to the sounds of Straight Ahead Jazz Quintet.

Event Begins: 6:00 P.M. - Oral Auction: 9:00 P.M.

Donation: \$75.00 per person

R.S.V.P.: (815) 664-1329

The proceeds from this evening will be used to assist St. Margaret's in the purchase of surgical equipment for the new Operating Room Suite.

# Spirit

Stories *of the* Illinois Valley

*fall • winter* | volume three | issue two



Cover: Ryan, Rita & Ray Anderes of Uptown Grill  
Back Cover: Music at the Uptown Grill



**St. Margaret's Health**

*SMP Health System*