

# Elm Leaves

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE  
OF THE VILLAGE OF ELM GROVE

JULY 2023

Meet RJ's  
Ice Cream

News Flash,  
No Splash

The Mayors'  
Monarch Pledge

THE  
**SUNSET  
PLAYHOUSE:**  
A COMMUNITY SHOWSTOPPER







# JOTS BY JILL

By Jill Emmer | Brookfield

# Summertime Reading

Ahhh July! The heart of summer! Also one of my favorite times to relax and read a great book. This month I enlisted the well-read women of my book club to help share some great summer reading suggestions. Thanks ladies!

**Linda Reich**

*"Remarkably Bright Creatures"* by Shelby Van Pelt - a charming story with unique characters and a giant Pacific octopus as a narrator. One of my favorite reads this year!

**Jess McGurn**

*"Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home In Italy"* by Frances Mayes - a delightful travel and food memoir that will transport you to Italy. Be warned: you will want to buy a ticket to Italy after reading this one!

*"When Life Gives You Peas: The Healing Power of Family, Faith, and Funny People"* by Jeannie Gaffigan - an emotional and funny memoir about fighting cancer by a Christian wife and mom. I cried, laughed out loud and found myself nodding my head through it all.

**Jill Lindert**

*"Every Summer After"* by Carley Fortune - a heartwarming story of grief, memories, and love.

*"Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story"* by Bono - best listened to as an audiobook because it is narrated by the U2 frontman Bono. He takes you on a journey through his life, family, and bandmates via their songs. A huge walk down memory lane for those of us who grew up listening to U2.

**Stef Wade**

*"Must Betray You"* by Ruta Sepetys - a captivating and powerful novel by a beloved author. You will not be able to put this book down. I love all of Ruta Sepetys' books and this one is no exception.

*"Woman on Fire"* by Lisa Barr - This was one of my favorite reads in a while. It has everything! Suspense, mystery, history, romance, friendships, intrigue, betrayal...I could keep going!

**Jill Emmer**

*"The Four Winds"* by Kristin Hannah - this book will open your eyes to the harsh realities of survival, love and motherhood

during the Dust Bowl. Heartbreakingly beautiful.

*"Bravey"* by Alexi Pappas - is inspiring and funny yet heartbreaking at times. Written by an olympic runner and creative thinker, Alexi describes loss, healing, and success in an honest way that feels incredibly relatable. I loved this book and I recommend listening to the audio version that is read by Alexi.

**Kari Tilkens**

*"The Silent Patient"* by Alex Michaelides - a shocking and thrilling story of a famous painter who stops speaking after shooting her husband. My jaw literally dropped!

*"The Moth presents All These Wonders: True Stories About Facing the Unknown"* - a collection of inspiring short stories that will make you believe in the power of storytelling.

**Amy Johnson**

*"Beach Read"* by Emily Henry is a perfect easy summer reading book. It will make you smile and laugh out loud with every page you turn!



Photo of children's book author and book club member Stef Wade by Jill Emmer-Shine On Photos

**Jill Hackney**

*"The Lincoln Highway"* - by Amor Towles. This is a propulsive novel that takes place in 1950 with a rich itinerary made that doesn't go as planned. The characters are well developed and easy to love. I highly recommend this book for your next summer read!

**Sarah Ondrey Johnson**

*"The Finnish Way: Finding Courage, Wellness, and Happiness Through the Power of Sisu."* Discover the Nordic spirit of fortitude and cultivate resilience through habits and rhythms that bring health, grit, and meaning.

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The deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. You may email your thoughts, ideas, and photos to mjberst@bestversionmedia.com

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## Dear Residents,

Do you love summer in Wisconsin as much as I do? I have been thoroughly enjoying every hot day, afternoon thunderstorm, and later-than-normal sunset. I try to take advantage of the season as much as possible!

July has always held a special place in my heart, mainly because the 4th of July holiday is one of my favorites to celebrate. Who doesn't love parades, fireworks, backyard barbecues, and wearing or eating things that are red, white & blue? I sure do!

Besides the holiday festivities, I have found July to be a great month for going to farmers markets, embarking on a road trip, enjoying the great outdoors through swimming, hiking or camping, and trying out new flavors of ice cream and custard.

Speaking of frozen dairy treats, there's a great debate in Wisconsin as to which one is better -- ice cream or custard? I'd love to know! **Send me an email at mjberst@bestversionmedia.com and tell me which you think is better. I am also taking suggestions for new flavors to try!**

But enough about me. This month we are so excited to be featuring Elm Grove's very own Sunset Playhouse! You'll hear from some of the current people involved in the productions as well as a history of the organization and some future plans, too!

I hope you enjoy this issue and that your summer is full of relaxation or adventure, or whatever it is that makes this season most enjoyable for you.

Until August,



MJ Berst | Content Coordinator  
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## FLAVOR PASSPORT

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BY CHEF MICHAEL FEKER

# THE VERSATILE CHICKEN

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## MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I want to talk to you about an ingredient that we consume regularly, the amazing organic chicken. Chicken is the most consumed protein in the world. All cultures use chicken, because it is always available, reasonably priced and versatile.

Chickens have come a long way from 8,000-10,000 years ago when they were domesticated.

The wild red & grey junglefowl are the known ancestor of chickens. Once these birds were domesticated, chickens were introduced to Europe during the 8th century B.C., where they became a significant part of European livestock. Chickens then made their way to Greece, Africa, and Romans in southern Italy.

By understanding their history, we can learn to better appreciate the species. Today, chickens vastly outnumber humans in the world at a rate of 4 to 1! People around the world not only consume chicken but also raise chickens. Backyard chicken owners are more knowledgeable than ever before thanks to new information about chicken diets, behaviors, and needs. Since most chickens are raised for human consumption I feel that our knowledge of their history will lead us to better care for the birds. Improving their diets, housing, and natural medical care will lead to the chickens' purity. I assure you that if we treat our source of food with purity in mind we will benefit greatly from it.

Here is a dish that brings me back to my childhood. I recall my mother making this dish for me, and how the aroma from the sauteing of the turmeric, onion and the tomato paste would fill the house. It is best served with Persian or Indian white Basmati rice & plain greek style yogurt.

Enjoy it!

*Your Chef Michael Feker*



## Persian Chicken & ZUCCHINI STEW

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 chicken thighs bone in & skin on
- 4 oz of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion sliced in half moons
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- 3 cups of chicken broth
- 2 tablespoon of Persian sour grapes  
(this will blow your mind)
- 2 medium zucchini washed & cut lengthwise in half and salted, let rest for 15 minutes before you use.

### DIRECTIONS

- Heat a heavy bottom stew pan that has a lid.
- Meanwhile with the tip of a knife make a very shallow cut on the skin of the chicken
- Rub the skin side of the chicken thighs with half of the olive oil and place skin side down in the heated pan. (trying to render out the fat from the skin)
- Immediately season the side up with salt & pepper
- Turn down the flame to medium low & cover the pan and let cook for 5 minutes. (don't keep peaking I am watching you)
- Then remove the chicken and place on a platter skin side up. Increase flame to medium
- Add the remaining olive oil to the pan, plus your onions, your turmeric, the sour grapes, and cook





GETTING TO KNOW



By MJ Berst | Content Coordinator



*Offering full-service furnishings, decor, lighting and styling for residential and commercial projects, g.home carries everything you need to style your entire space. From dining tables and textiles to sofas and side tables, they bring you a personalized experience where you can work one-on-one with their team members to find the perfect furnishings and home decor for your interior in a comfortable atmosphere.*

**About g. home**

Filling the need of providing a customized experience for customers to purchase furniture for all styles and budgets, g. home opened their Elm Grove location in November of 2014. With the owners' ties to Elm Grove and its centralized location, they knew it would be a great spot to open a business. They opened their Mequon location in November of 2022.

They have designers on staff as well as decades of design under their belts. The owners bring project management experience in both the residential and commercial sectors to the table to make sure their clients stay on time and on budget.

**The g. home Philosophy**

Every customer deserves to have pieces that fit their own personal style while still providing the functionality they are looking for.

As a small, local furniture store they are able to provide personalized attention to their customers and really get to know the unique needs of their space. When they're helping customers select furniture and décor for their space, they're sourcing from hundreds of vendors, meaning you have the opportunity to shop a diverse selection of products that's unique to you.

The team especially enjoys finding pieces and arrangements for clients that are just what they were looking for but had been unable to find elsewhere.

In addition to both g. home locations, check out their nearby Moxie Midwest stores. Moxie Midwest is a men's + women's clothing boutique. The Elm Grove store offers men's + women's clothing and accessories and the Mequon store offers men's clothing and accessories.

**g. home in the Community**

The Elm Grove Woman's Club, Elm Grove Junior Guild, Elm Grove Business Association and Mequon-Thiensville Chamber of Commerce are all organizations g. home is actively involved with.

They have truly enjoyed getting to know their customers through the last several years and take great satisfaction in customers returning year after year for different projects and spaces throughout their homes. By shopping small, you're supporting the community, and they are very grateful for your trust in them and the repeat business you've provided.

**Get in Touch**

You can find g. home at 13230 Watertown Plank Rd, Elm Grove, WI 53122 as well as 1515 W Mequon Road, Mequon, WI 53092 or online at <http://www.ghomestore.com> as well as Facebook and Instagram. You can also call them at 262.788.9601.



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NEWS FLASH

# No Splash

By Dr. Heather Dreske, ND



It happened so fast. I didn't hear even a splash. We were so very careful.

These are common statements from family members who lost a child to drowning. Olympian Bode Miller and his wife Morgan tragically lost their four-year-old daughter Emmy at a family friends pool in 2018. Shortly after, they began a public campaign for pediatricians to prioritize education around drowning. In 2019, Morgan sent a heartfelt message to singer Granger Smith after his 4-year-old son River died in their family pool. This April, Smith sent his condolences to NFL player Shaquil Barrett who lost his daughter Arrayah to drowning. This heartbreaking chain of events is a valuable, neon-sign warning: no one is immune. This is not a matter of bad parenting; it is an accidental lack of urgency and tools. Let's change that.

Granger Smith told People magazine, "It's not like the movies...To comprehend that you could lose someone to drowning 20 feet from you doesn't make any sense unless you know that that process works and that it's so silent...There isn't splashing or gurgling or kicking." In young children, this is where the cognitive dissonance takes place. You expect noise and screams. Not silence.

How can we act to avoid it? By implementing the five layers of protection: Barriers and alarms, supervision, water competency, life jackets, and emergency preparation. In private pools, that means not only a gate around the pool but an alarm to show if that is breached. Supervision;

a designated watcher (the home lifeguard). No phone-no distractions just as you would expect of a lifeguard at a public pool. This is especially important at large gatherings as the fun can become a diversion. When in doubt add a life vest, especially one with head support. Know CPR, every second counts. Finally, be aware of the symptoms of dry or secondary drowning. You may not have been aware of water taken in by children playing. Symptoms may present 1-24 hours after swimming. If your child displays coughing, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, chest pain, and/or lethargy after swimming, seek medical attention as any of these can be signs of water in the lungs.

As someone who loves the water; don't fear it - but respect it. For more information resources can be found at American Red Cross.

**Would love your feedback or reader questions.**  
**Email [hkdreske@gmail.com](mailto:hkdreske@gmail.com).**

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very grateful for the opportunity to show our community all of the things we've been up to over the years.

Over the past 64 years, Sunset has benefited from the leadership of wonderful Artistic Directors, including Alan Furlan, Michael Duncan, Mark Salentine and, currently, Nancy Visintainer-Armstrong. In addition to its staff, Sunset has consistently been sustained by a large pool of talented and dedicated volunteers—an essential ingredient to its continued success.

Today, each new season finds this busy community theater producing eight Furlan Auditorium Productions—comedies, mysteries, musicals, and dramas. But many are unaware that it has also become home to three professional series!

The Musical MainStage Concert Series produces six themed concerts, the SideNotes Cabaret Series presents half a dozen top-notch cabarets in the theater's intimate Marla Eichman Studio Theater, and its bug in a rug Children's Theater presents several shows at the Playhouse and throughout the city in outreach programs. Additionally, the Playhouse showcases edgier, more mature fare in its After Sunset offerings.

**BVM:** Wow, it really sounds like you offer something for everyone! Can you tell us a bit more about the structure of the Playhouse? Who works here and how many staff and/or volunteers do you have?

**Playhouse:** The theater's staff consists of an Artistic Director, Education Director, Technical Director, Business Manager/Volunteer Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, Box Office Manager, Box Office and Front of House Associates, Teaching Artists, Theater Technicians, plus Musical MainStage, SideNotes, and After Sunset Producers. In addition, we have a pool of 600 talented and dedicated volunteers working alongside that staff. These volunteers are vital to our existence, and without them, our productions would not be possible.

**BVM:** Wow! 600 volunteers is an impressive number. It's great to know how much the community supports the performing arts. Speaking of performances, can you tell us how you select the shows for each season?

**Playhouse:** Every year the Artistic Director assembles a play selection committee to consider the upcoming season. After lengthy discussions about possible scripts, including their availability, the Artistic Director applies for the rights to selected productions. Only

## CENTER STAGE WITH

# The Sunset Playhouse

By MJ Berst | Content Coordinator | Photos by Jill Emmer | Shine On Photos

*Nestled in the heart of Elm Grove, Sunset Playhouse was the first theater in Wisconsin to be constructed entirely by a group of community members—the Elm Grove Players. Fifty-two motivated couples raised the funds and purchased a parcel of land from the Sisters of St. Mary where the Playhouse stands today.*

*In February of 1959, excavation began, and a celebration complete with Broadway star Mary Martin cutting a cake in the shape of the future theater took place. The Playhouse has undergone several major renovations since its humble beginnings, the last one taking place in 1999, which added a studio theater, a large rehearsal hall, dressing rooms,*

*a catering kitchen, and a brand new lobby.*

*Today, Best Version Media had the opportunity to interview some of the members of the Sunset Playhouse and learn a little more about the history, how they operate today, and how you can get involved with this wonderful organization.*

**Best Version Media:** Hello! Thank you again for taking the time to tell us about the Sunset Playhouse. Could you expand on the history of the Playhouse and some of the key “Players” (see what we did there?) along the way?

**Sunset Playhouse:** First, thank YOU for taking the time to highlight this organization. We're





**NANCY VISINTAINER-ARMSTRONG**

then does each new season start to take shape. We hold 36 productions each year, more than any other theater, of any size, in the Milwaukee/Wisconsin area. This summer, we are opening two productions of Disney's THE LITTLE MERMAID. The adult version runs July 13-August 6, 2023 and the junior version (suitable for our younger patrons) runs August 11-13, 2023.



**ERIKA NAVIN**

We have a mix of both amateur (Furlan Auditorium and After Sunset Productions) and professional performances (Musical MainStage Concert Series, SideNotes Cabarets, and bug in a rug Children's Theater) as well as our School for the Arts student performances.

Outside of our regularly scheduled performances, the Playhouse's School for the Arts offers a wide variety of classes and



**BROOKE OLSON**

performance opportunities for children and young adults. Students from all over Milwaukee and Waukesha counties attend classes and perform in our children's shows.

**BVM:** Wow, there is so much variety here. Can you tell us a little more about the people in these photos and what they love about being a part of the Playhouse?

*Elm Leaves would like to thank Double Boldt Real Estate for sponsoring this month's feature*



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**Playhouse:** I'm Nancy Visintainer-Armstrong, Artistic Director. I'm from Wauwatosa and I've been with the Playhouse for 9 years. My favorite performance/involvement with Sunset has been choreographing THE ADDAMS FAMILY. I love each step in the process of creating a show, from the initial selection of a play or musical, to putting the production team together, to the auditions and rehearsals, to the excitement of an opening night, through successful performances, and the bittersweet closing night. It never gets old.

I'm Erika Navin, Director of Education. I'm originally from Rockford, IL and now reside in Franklin, WI. I've been with Sunset Playhouse for 17 years. I love what theater does for people of all ages, specifically students. Theater teaches empathy, time management, patience, builds self esteem, enhances collaborative skills, and stretches the skills of imagination. I also love that theater is the most comprehensive art form, it combines all other forms of art, including music, dance, and visual art. And at the end of the day, theater is fun!

I'm Brooke Olson, Production and Membership Coordinator as well as Office Manager. I'm from Oconomowoc and I've been with the Playhouse for 2 years. I love that theater brings people together whose paths might not otherwise cross. Theater has a history and tradition of being very inclusive and fun for everyone, whether on stage or behind the scenes. We are all here because it's a fun, creative outlet and a nurturing environment.

**BVM:** Thank you all for sharing. Like any organization, you probably face challenges and opportunities for growth. Can you tell us some of the things you've overcome recently?

**Playhouse:** Sunset, along with every other theater, faced closure during Covid from April



of 2019 through August of 2021. The good news was that during that time we were able to make many improvements within the Playhouse, including remodeling the light and sound booths; updating and painting the lobby, dressing rooms, and rehearsal space; building an on-stage orchestra loft and second dressing room; redoing the stage floor; cleaning and organizing our costume loft, prop room, and furniture room; and many other projects which kept our staff employed and greatly improved Sunset for our September, 2021 reopening. We are now faced with the challenge of getting our pre-Covid patrons to return to Sunset which, fortunately, began to happen during this last season.

**BVM:** It's great to see businesses turn around after the pandemic. Last questions: What message would you like to share with the community?

**Playhouse:** During the past five years we have held annual Erase-the-Mortgage fundraising campaigns. In the fall of 2022, the Playhouse successfully paid off its mortgage (for the second time) and now owns the building free



and clear - a huge accomplishment which would not have been possible without community support.

Our motto, "Entertainment begins at Sunset", says it all. While we have stood proudly in our little corner of Elm Grove for more than six decades, many in the community have never ventured inside our doors. If you enjoy theater, concerts, cabarets, or children's theater, you'll find them at the Playhouse. Many of our shows include the same performers who appear in Milwaukee's downtown venues but Sunset is able to offer more affordable ticket prices and free parking!

Finally, Sunset is always looking for new volunteers of all skill levels. The opportunities are endless, from assisting in the construction of sets, to sewing costumes, to performing office work, to ushering. In other words, if you want to get involved, you will be welcomed with open arms! Come check us out!

**BVM:** Thank you again for sharing all of this great information about the Sunset Playhouse! To learn more about upcoming productions or how to get involved, visit them online at <https://sunsetplayhouse.com>.



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# MOTHER'S DAY OUT PRESCHOOL Helps Our Community in So Many Ways

By Nicci Sternitzky and the Elm Grove Beautification Committee | Courtesy of Mother's Day Out (MDO) preschool, lead by Tracey Magyar

The soil just outside the front doors to Mother's Day Out preschool is being worked in preparation for those beautiful yellow, black, and white striped caterpillars that have captivated all of us by metamorphizing into the beloved orange and black monarch. For many of us, one of our fondest memories of school is observing monarch butterflies in the classroom and learning about metamorphosis as these remarkable creatures transformed from caterpillars to butterflies right in front of our eyes.

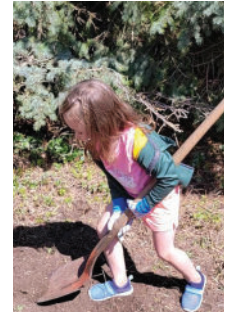
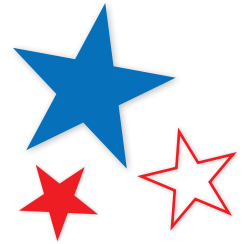
This spring, Elm Grove took the Mayors' Monarch Pledge for the first time. This program began in 2015 to help municipalities in Canada, the US, and Mexico engage in monarch conservation. The program has three levels of attainment: signatories commit to 3 actions, leadership circle commit to 8 actions, and champions circle commit to 24 actions. There have been over 600 communities that have taken the pledge, but only 8 that have earned the highest distinction. Elm Grove aims to become only the 9th in the country to do so.

Mother's Day Out (MDO) preschool, lead by Tracey Magyar, has committed to helping Elm Grove attain this honor by incorporating a monarch curriculum into their teaching AND installing a monarch garden. Tracy, her staff, her students, and Jim, the building's maintenance custodian have already set to work removing three aggressive non-native ground covers from a planting bed in order to fill it with milkweed and nectar sources suited to the beloved IUCN Red List monarch species.

The curriculum offered by the National Wildlife Federation is age based and covers topics from preschool to high school. The students at MDO will use the curriculum to learn observation in the garden, color mixing, and the monarch life cycle. Learning about monarchs at a young age will hopefully instill a sense of awe that will continue and help combat the 85% decline in numbers since the mid-1990's.

If you would like to be involved in helping Elm Grove achieve the Monarch Champions Circle, please reach out to the [Beautification Committee at Beautification@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:Beautification@elmgrovewi.org). There is something for every person in our community to do to help us attain this coveted and worthwhile goal so that future generations can be as inspired by the beloved monarch butterfly and its beauty as we all have been since childhood.

The committee would love to help mentor all of our Elm Grove schools through the process of setting up their very own monarch garden.





Photography by Jill Emmer



612-396-4324

Brookfield, WI

ShineOnPhotos.com



@photographybyjillemmer

# HOW ABOUT A SELF-CARE STAYCATION? FROGS, FARMERS MARKETS, FIRE PITS AND MORE

By Leslie J. O'Connell, ACC | Executive Coach



He startled me... about six feet in front of me on the walking path. Stout and steadfast. Looking at me curiously. Big eyes. A low guttural sound palpating. The biggest frog I had seen in months. Seeing him made me smile.

Even though I walk this path frequently, I don't always pay attention. If I had had ear buds in listening to a podcast or music, I would have walked right by without noticing.

How many countless things we miss because we're not present. We get caught up in our own little world. We're so rarely in the moment.

Now in the heart of summer, how about taking a little time for a self-care staycation? Take a break from the relentless doing - to just be. Refill your cup. Instead of being so intent on getting the next "to do" done, be intentional about renewing you. Pause to be a human being, not a human doing.

Here are some idea starters, whether you have just a few minutes or a few hours.

## SELF-CARE STAYCATION

- **See a sunrise.** Step outside and inhale deeply. There's something magical about taking in the fresh air of a new day.
- **Treat your feet.** Wear flip-flops - or at least your favorite sandals. It's an attitude.
- **Walk in the sand.** Feel the grains between your toes. No need to go to Lake Michigan. Check out sandy beaches at Fox Brook Park in Brookfield, Lakefront Park in Pewaukee, or Minooka Park in Waukesha.
- **Visit a farmers market.** Intentionally seek out a vegetable, herb, or fruit that you've never tried.
- **Chalk a walk.** Draw with chalk on the sidewalk. Write a favorite quote to inspire the next person who passes by.
- **Color.** No one is too old.
- **Escape.** Read that book or magazine that's been gathering dust next to your bed.
- **Daydream.** Lay on a hammock and just gaze at the sky. Imagine what shapes the clouds are making. A dog? Elephant? A smiling face?
- **Just sit.** Find a favorite bench or Adirondack chair. Just sit and breathe. Notice your breath going in and out. That's it.
- **Discover after dark.** Go outside after nightfall. What do you hear? Perhaps an undercurrent of crickets, murmur of frogs, or hoot of an owl. Look for fireflies.
- **Relax by the firepit.** Feel the warmth. Has something been nagging you? Write it on a piece of paper, crumple it up, and toss it into the flames. It's a surprising relief.

What speaks to you? Refill your cup so that you can show up at your best - for yourself and all those who count on you.

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# SUMMER FUN

## AT THE ELM GROVE LIBRARY

By Noah Weckwerth | Adult Services Coordinator  
Elm Grove Public Library

### Coming to the Elm Grove Library in July: Andrea & Julia Bartz, In Conversation

*The event will take place Thursday, July 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the lower level of the library.*

Two New York Times bestselling authors (and sisters) share the stage for the first time, to discuss two of the most celebrated books of 2023. In conjunction with Boswell Book Company, the Elm Grove Library welcomes Andrea Bartz, author of *The Spare Room* (releasing June 20) and Julia Bartz, author of *The Writing Retreat*, for an evening of conversation about their works, their writing journeys, and their local roots.

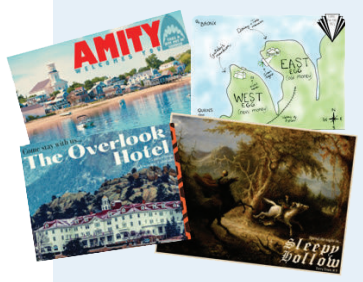
This event is free to attend. Books will be available for sale and a signing will follow. Advance registration is appreciated at [elmgrovelibrary.org](http://elmgrovelibrary.org).

Andrea Bartz is a Brooklyn-based journalist and the New York Times bestselling author of *We Were Never Here*, *The Lost Night*, and *The Herd*. Her work has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Marie Claire*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Women's Health*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Redbook*, *Elle*, and many other outlets, and she's held editorial positions at *Glamour*, *Psychology Today*, and *Self*, among other publications.

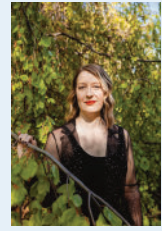
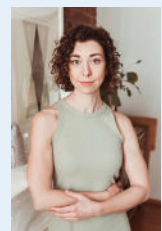
Julia Bartz is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Writing Retreat*, a practicing therapist, and a creative coach. Her fiction writing has appeared in *The South Dakota Review*, *InDigest Magazine*, and more. Julia lives in Brooklyn, NY.

### Library Adult Summer Reading Program

*Postcards are back by popular demand!* To participate, visit the library and pick up a postcard (with all new designs for 2023). For every book you read, place a stamp on your postcard (stamps are available at the library). Three stamps equals one entry. There's no entry limit, so read as much as you can!



**Post your stamped cards in the prize box of your choice at the library. Entry Deadline is August 12. Sponsored by the Friends of the Elm Grove Library. Bon voyage!**



## ELMBROOK HUMANE SOCIETY

# Summer 2023 – City of Brookfield

By Becky Tetzlaff | Director of Special Projects | Elmbrook Humane Society

### Elmbrook Humane Society is under construction!

Our building has served us well over the past 19 years, allowing us to help thousands of animals in need and serve as a valuable resource to our community. Our programs and operations have grown significantly since 2004; helping more animals and more people every year. With this, a great need to reconfigure our current space has been increasingly apparent. We were limited with the class sizes of our training and education programs due to space and lacked the appropriate office space to accommodate our growing staff team. This was part of phase one of our renovation; the front portion of our building which was completed in April. The second phase of our renovation includes our adoption floor and surgical suite. The functionality and experience for both animals and people remained a top priority throughout the planning process. The shelter setting can be a stressful place for animals, we want to minimize that as much as possible by giving the dogs up for adoption their own suites instead of side-by-side kennels. Our cats were once housed in different rooms all throughout the shelter, but after completion of phase two of renovation, they will all be in one space, equipped with a door to limit the ruckus of daily operations. Our small animals will be in their own sound dampened room, too. We will be adding a dental suite to our surgical space as well, allowing us to do in house dentals and limit the transport stress for shelter pets.

All the while, we have remained open for adoptions and to continue to serve our community. Complete with a new logo, Elmbrook Humane Society will be the same personal and compassionate organization you've always known, but with better capabilities to care for unwanted pets, adopters, and our community.

The second and final phase of renovation is anticipated to be completed in September of this year. At that time, we will be thrilled to fully open and welcome you to view all our adoptable animals during viewing times without an appointment - something we haven't been able to do in 3 years! Appointments will still be required to meet with adoptable animals as we have found that this gives you better one on one attention from our staff team to ensure lifelong matches between families and their new companions.

*None of this is possible, however, without the financial support of our community as we seek to raise \$800,000 to fund this renovation through a capital campaign. If you are interested in supporting, please reach out to Anita Alfaro at [Anita@ebhs.org](mailto:Anita@ebhs.org) or Natalie Hoskins at [natalie@ebhs.org](mailto:natalie@ebhs.org) or by calling 262-782-9261.*

**You can learn more about Elmbrook Humane Society, our programs and services, our adoptable pets, and our renovation by visiting our website - [www.ebhs.org](http://www.ebhs.org). While we are always here to serve you, we look forward to welcoming you back to our humane society post renovation and show you what we've done with the place. **Thanks to your support!****



MEET

# RJ'S ICE CREAM

By MJ Berst | Content Coordinator

Nicole Breest might be a serial entrepreneur, but her love of business and community has certainly reaped some “sweet” rewards. Now the owner of RJ’s Ice Cream in Elm Grove, she provides a safe place for kids and families to enjoy snacks and treats together.

**ABOUT NICOLE**

Nicole has worn many hats over the years. Before she had children, she was a Benefits Administrator for pension plans at a human resources firm. Once she had her kids, she was a stay-at-home-mom for many years. Once her children got older, she wanted to get back to the workforce and she landed her dream job as Operations Coordinator for a local company. Her position was eliminated during the Covid-19 pandemic, and although it was a big shock to Nicole, she took the loss in stride, and decided to turn a bad situation into a positive one.

“I left my 9-5 to work 24/7 - in a good way,” she jokes. But it turns out not only does she enjoy the challenges that come with being your own boss, she thrives at it. “I’m always thinking of new processes and how to be more efficient,” Nicole says. She has an innate business sense and has the ability to work with all sorts of people.

While she attended Mount Mary and graduated with a Fine Arts degree, she has her Food Manager license which required taking classes and passing a proctored exam. She now uses those skills daily. “I am very hands-on,” Nicole says. “Whether it’s working with customers, interviewing and hiring employees, running payroll, doing all administrative tasks, or ordering and doing inventory, I touch every component of the business. It’s tough, but it’s also very rewarding.”

She’s also not a complete stranger to running a business, particularly one that revolves around food. Previously, she owned an old-fashioned Popcorn Wagon that was located in the Village of Wauwatosa, which ran for four summer seasons. “It was a great time and so much fun. RJ’s is similar but on a larger scale,” she states.

**ABOUT RJ'S ICE CREAM**

When Nicole’s friend saw that RJ’s was for sale, she told Nicole, “You should buy it.” After careful consideration, she knew it was the right decision for her. She talked to the previous owner almost on a weekly basis, who eventually told Nicole someone else was interested in it. This lit



a fire under Nicole, and she knew she had to buy the business. “I certainly did not want to see RJ’s close after 35+ years in business as our little gem in our great village,” she says.

Located off Watertown Plank Rd., RJ’s offers as many local products as possible, “We sell Cedar Crest Ice Cream, Sprecher sodas and Calypso drinks,” Nicole says. While they’re known for their ice cream and have a variety of sundaes, shakes, malts (and more!) they also serve hot pretzel bites with cheese and Dr. Smoothie 100% fruit smoothies. They also sell novelty candy, gift baskets, gift cards, and scoop and slush cards.

**WHAT MAKES RJ'S DIFFERENT**

“We have products that are named after and created by some of our customers!” Nicole exclaims. “For example, we have a drink called “The Meser” that’s made with all of the slushie flavors and gummy bears.”

RJ’s also offers a great learning environment for kids. They’re able to learn how to budget the money that they have (or that their parents give them) and figure out what they can afford. They start to grasp the basics that certain things cost certain prices and that they can mix and match smaller items or make one, larger purchase.

“We are a small mom & pop shop,” Nicole states. “We love that we know many of our customers by name - and they know us, too! We also think it’s great that so many of our employees are local kids and are well-connected in the community.”

Speaking of those kids - RJ’s is proud to be able to hire young adults who haven’t worked anywhere else before. “They’re able to gain a plethora of experiences,” Nicole states. “They learn about being on time, employer expectations, handling money, how to interact with different kinds of customers, how to provide excellent customer service, and so much more!”

The business is also heavily invested in the community. “We donate gift baskets and gift cards to local schools and organizations,” Nicole says. She has also been asked to speak to the students for Career Day and Pilgrim Park Middle School and the What Employers Look for When Hiring Employees event. They’ve also participated in Walk the Plank which is sponsored by local businesses and the EGBA where kids are able to trick-or-treat at their branded tent.

**RJ'S MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY**

While this will be Nicole’s third season at RJ’s, it has been in Elm Grove Village since 1986. They plan to continue providing a place that creates quality time for families, filled with fun family activities that is a safe environment for kids.

“Please support our small, women-owned business so we can keep it going in our community!” Nicole exclaims. “And please come enjoy our indoor or outdoor seating, our monthly live music, and some great sweets and treats.”

*RJ’s Ice Cream is located at 13408 W Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove WI 53122.*

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# CHEESY BACON RANCH

## POTATO SALAD

By MJ Berst | Content Coordinator

Bring the perfect side dish to your 4th of July bash. Bacon makes everything better, and this loaded baked potato salad with creamy ranch dressing is sure to be a hit! The best part? It's super simple to whip together.

### The Ingredients

- 2 lbs small red potatoes (cut into 1-inch chunks)
- 3/4 cup Hidden Valley® Ranch Dressing
- 1.5 cups shredded cheese (I like cheddar, but feel free to experiment)
- 1/2 lb of bacon cooked crispy, then crumbled
- 1/4 cup green onions (chopped)
- Salt & pepper (to taste)

### The Instructions

Add potatoes to a pot and fill with enough water to immerse them in about 2-inches. Bring potatoes to a boil over medium-high heat then reduce heat to medium and allow to boil until potatoes are fully tender, roughly 10 minutes.

Once potatoes are done, carefully pour them into a colander to drain, then set them aside to cool.

While potatoes are cooling, cook your bacon until crispy. Once done, drain, pat dry and crumble into tiny pieces

Pour cooled potatoes into a large mixing bowl. Add in ranch, cheddar, bacon and green onions. Gently stir and/or toss to coat.

Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately or cover and chill up to 1 day. Pro tip: If you want the bacon to be crisp, wait to add it until ready to serve. Enjoy!



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### Student Athlete Spotlight



**CHRISTIAN KINNEY**  
*Brookfield Central*

Soccer (Midfield)

**Favorite Quote:** "Do or do not, there is no try." - Yoda

**Favorite Food:** Chipotle bowls

**Pre-game Song:** *Opposite of Adults* - Chiddy Bang.

**Sport Highlight:** Jr. season qualifying for State. We hoped to bring home a golden ball, but fell short in the semi-finals.

**Recognitions & Activities:** Senior Captain, 2X 2nd Team GMC All-Conference, 2X Scholar Athlete All-Conference, Key Club, Blue Crew, Fellow Christian Athletes

**Fun Fact:** Celiac disease has been part of my life and shaped me into who I am today.

**Next Plans:** Attending Marquette University to major in marketing with an emphasis on finance. I plan to participate in club soccer.

## MEET THESE THREE

# DARLING DACHSHUNDS

By MJ Berst | Pet Lover

They may be tiny, but they are making a mighty impact on their loving family!

Meet Nora, Eleanor, and Doug -- a trio of miniature pure-bred dachshunds.

Nora is only one, but she is wise beyond her years! This old soul is loving, patient and kind. A pup with the perfect temperament and demeanor.

Doug is actually Nora's son! In November, Nora gave birth to 6 beautiful puppies. Doug is a rare patch dapple and Nora's grandma was the only other patch dapple Nora's breeder has ever seen.

Eleanor is Doug's new friend, and the goal is to mate them sometime next spring, so keep an eye out for even more adorable puppies in 2024!

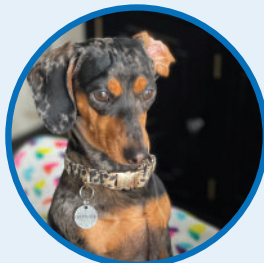
They are all one big happy family, and their favorite thing to do, besides go for walks and eat treats, is snuggle up together.



DOUG



ELEANOR



NORA



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