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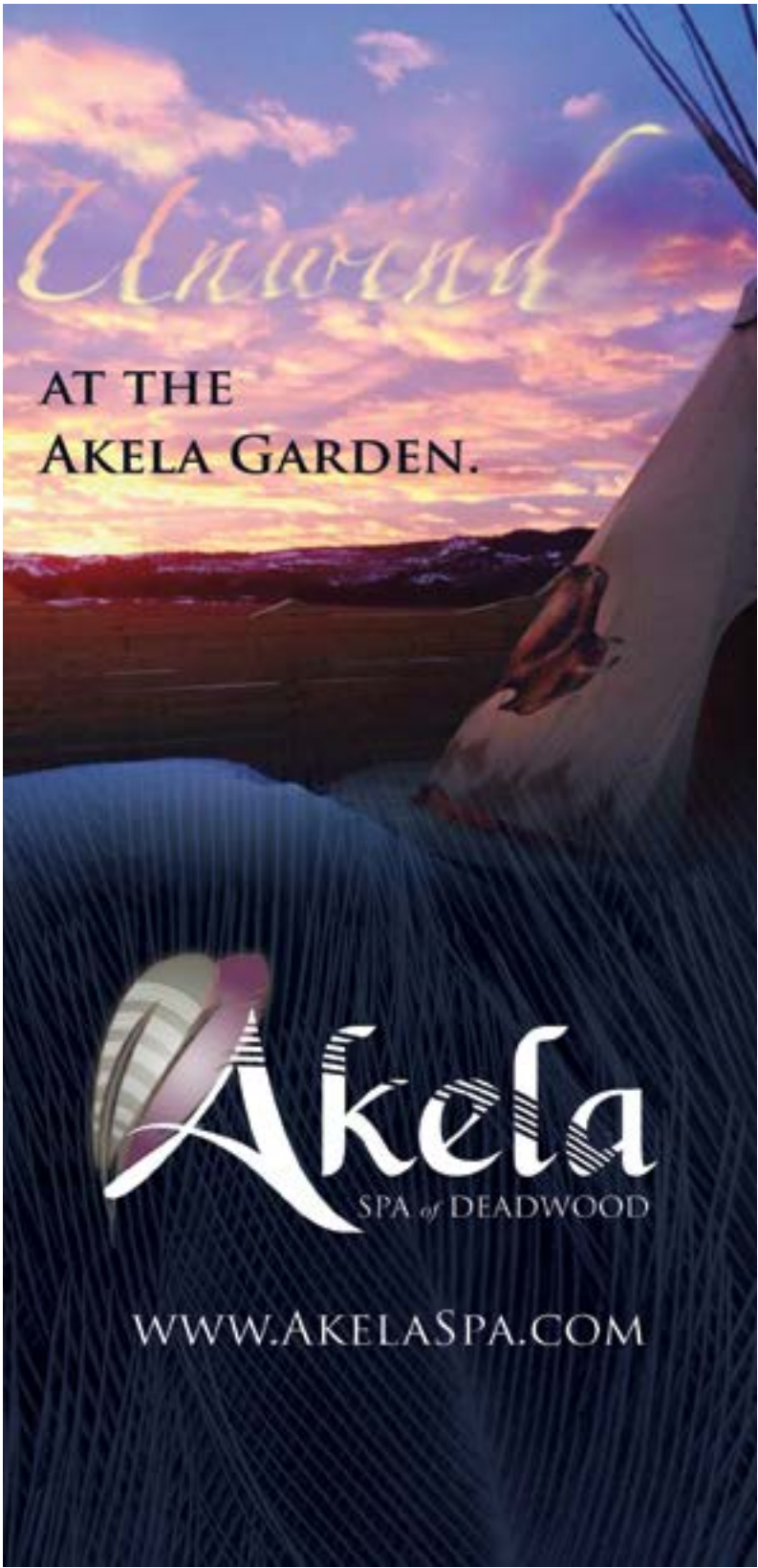


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Inside this Issue

8

Hold Space for Joy
Editor Article



10

Taking the Black Hills
by Storm
Feature



18

Maryann Leanna
Girl Gives Back



22

Do You Want to Go?
Community



28

Beat Burnout
Health & Fitness





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34

Great Expectations
Humor

40
Fashion Finds
Fashion



42

A Star Quilter Is Born
Area Artist

48
Quality Meat, Right
Down the Street
Cuisine



54

You Really Autumn Go...
5 Fun Fall Events
Community



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HOLDING SPACE FOR



“Lots of grandmas like Bingo, but our grandma was arguably the fastest dauber in the West. Not only could she cover her six cards, but she’d reach over and daub yours, too, along with a quick admonishment for you being too slow,” I said, delivering my grandmother’s eulogy and garnering some giggles from the crowd. This was one of several attempts at humor I served up during the speech. While it may seem like an odd thing to do during such a sad occasion, I feel like the tradition of a funeral is not just to grieve together, but also to celebrate the individuality and specialness of the person no longer with us.

I don’t limit making space for joy where you wouldn’t expect to find it to funerals either; it really translates to all scenarios, even negative or sad events. There is always room for happiness, and giving ourselves permission to make room for both sadness and joy in tough situations is part of what gets us through them.

Never has this proven truer to me than in walking the journey through Stage IV colon cancer with my mom. For obvious reasons, this has been one of the hardest times of my life, cringing at my mom, weak and in pain, watching my dad and siblings in emotional distress, along with dealing with my own heartache at the possibility of losing my mother. It’s brutal.

But, there have also been jaw-droppingly beautiful moments, observations, and exchanges. My traditional dad has taken on doing laundry, and cooking, while being ever so loving and sitting by my mom for hours. My mom, when my dad leaves the room, makes sure we are providing him support and asks if he’s eating and sleeping well. And when I came home from the hospital, my brother stopped me and said, “Hey, grab a photo album from the closet.” We spent the evening looking at old photos of my mom and reveling at what a 70s babe she was with her long brown hair and denim outfit, walking through the tall grass of the Black Hills. Bringing my own brand of support, I have been making awkward hospital jokes along the way, like telling the nurse, “We pushed all the buttons, but the I.V. machine just wouldn’t stop beeping.” Making my mom and the nurse giggle. Sometimes humor is the only way to let a little air into the room.

In the midst of all this awfulness, perhaps, we have never been stronger and more loving to each other as a family. This is the beautiful dichotomy of life and why my mom, despite the pain and indignities of severe cancer, fights to stay longer and why I and the rest of my family will arm her with everything we can to do so.

Love one another and don’t forget to make space for joy, always.

Tracy Bernard

(Written before the passing of my mother. In Loving Memory of Mary Abu-Ghazaleh.)

*Taking The
Black Hills By
Storm*

Meet Meteorologist, Rhonda Lee

By Heidi Bell Gease

Photos by D&A Photography

honda Lee admits she's a weather geek.

She has a favorite weather event: the Great Flood of 1927 in Mississippi, which she describes as “a collision between weather, politics, and humanity.”

And as chief meteorologist for KOTA-TV, Lee loves when she can casually drop county names from other states into her forecasts (“Definitely a weather nerd move,” she said with a laugh).

It's more than that, though.

“Weather is my life,” said Lee, whose folksy style and entertaining delivery soon endeared her to local viewers after she started here in late 2020. “Everybody experiences weather. And I just want you to know what's coming, so you're safe.”

Ever since childhood, Lee has been fascinated by weather. Relatives grew accustomed to her late-night or early-morning calls warning them of nearby storms.

Lee considers Omaha, Nebraska, one of her home bases. But her parents' jobs with the IRS meant Lee and her younger brothers grew up experiencing weather in several states, from Maryland to Colorado to Texas.

Lee graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in mass communications, just three credits shy of a second major in American ethnic studies. And while she began her career as a news reporter, that was destined to change.

“Every internship I've ever had ended up in the weather center,” she said. “I just went there.”

She finished up her weather training at Mississippi State University, and from there, news and weather jobs took her from Kansas to Tennessee, Louisiana, New York, Texas, and, most recently, Seattle, Washington.

It was in Louisiana that she met her husband Greg Johnson, a Hurricane Katrina survivor. The day of their first date, he told her he had to run 20 miles first.

“I thought he was showing off,” she said. “Turns out he was actually running 20 miles that morning and he was a little late for brunch.”

Johnson was training for a marathon. Lee soon joined him in the sport and now has her sights set on running a half-marathon in Antarctica. (“It’s the dumbest thing I will ever do, but I’m gonna do it,” she admitted. “You only live once.”)

Johnson, a criminal defense attorney, and the couple’s son Louis, 8, are still in the process of moving to Rapid City full-time. Despite the challenges of relocating, Johnson has always supported Lee’s weather career.

“He’s been a trooper,” she said. “And he was with me through my whole hair thing.”

Oh, the hair thing. Lee made national news in November 2012 when she was fired from KTBS 3 News in Shreveport, Louisiana, after responding to a viewer’s social media comment that she should “wear a wig or grow some more hair.”

Lee responded politely on the station’s Facebook page, saying she was sorry the viewer didn’t like her short ethnic hair and explaining that Black hair “doesn’t grow downward. It grows upward.”

“I am very proud of my African American ancestry, which



includes my hair,” she wrote, adding that showing little girls “that being comfortable in the skin and HAIR God gave me is my contribution to society.”

America is not about conforming to one standard, she added, then thanked the man and wished him a great weekend.

The exchange led to Lee losing her job. The station’s official stance was that she had violated their social media policy— a policy Lee didn’t even know existed. Word of her dismissal traveled fast.

“It exploded like overnight,” Lee said. “It was insanity.”

Within days, she was interviewed by CNN and the *Washington Post*, mentioned during Hot Topics on *The View*, flown to Chicago to be on Steve Harvey’s daily talk show, and appeared on several network news stations like MSNBC, whose producers actually redecorated Lee’s Christmas tree before interviewing her in front of it. Michelle Obama, Oprah, and Heidi Klum followed the story. Later, Lee became the subject of theses at Oxford University.

Unfortunately, Lee's experience was not hers alone. Other journalists who embraced "natural hair" met similar roadblocks, struggling to find work in an industry obsessed with appearance.

"I've been turned down for jobs," Lee said, often by Black news directors. One told Lee her hair was "too aggressive" for Sacramento. "It was always, 'You're great Rhonda, but your hair...'. "

That may be changing. In recent years, Lee has seen more Black women wearing braids and afros on TV. And while Lee herself struggled to find work for a time, last fall she found herself with three job offers all at once.

"I chose Rapid City," she said. "To me, Rapid City was the winner from the first email."

Lee loves the beauty of the Black Hills. She loves exploring the area and learning local weather terms. She's working to combine her own style with viewer expectations, vowing, "I will do my best to put the almanac back in the forecast."

And she's been pleasantly surprised by how nice people are. Greg is pleasantly surprised by the Black Hills as well, although "he didn't expect 24 below zero to happen," she said with a laugh. "My son loves it here. Louis has made his home here already."

Lee admits her relatives had concerns about the family moving to an area with few Black residents. But Lee didn't skip a beat.

"Me being 'the only' was not going to be new to me," she said. As a child, Lee and her brother were the only Black

students in their Wichita, Kansas-area, school district. "I remember feeling 'othered' from a very young age."

That sense of isolation didn't come only from classmates. Teachers assumed she had behavioral problems and learning disabilities, which she did not. And she still remembers the sting of not being invited to a birthday party because the friend's parents didn't want her in their home.

"I was a basket case," Lee said, even considering suicide at one point. Transferring to a more diverse school within Wichita city limits changed her life. "I got my confidence back."

Those lived experiences are why she finds the current debate over teaching the in-depth racial history of the United States so disturbing.

"I feel like those efforts are a conscious attempt to erase my experience," Lee said. "I feel like (its



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opponents) are trying to continue a narrative that simply isn't 100% true. We tell our kids all of the time that we have to learn from our mistakes. The USA is a great country, but our sometimes messy collective past will not just magically work itself out. The good and bad should be taught, acknowledged, and studied if we want to move towards a 'more perfect union'."

But she's hopeful for the future. "There is hope for America," she said. "We're getting there."

Meanwhile, her experiences have led her here, now. She's grateful for whatever role she can play in helping raise awareness and inspiring children to be proud of themselves, even through something as simple as how they wear their hair.

And while she knows she has big shoes to fill at KOTA— former chief meteorologist Mike Modrick spent 33 years here— she's ready for the challenge.

"I feel like everything has culminated into this moment, and it's been a wonderful ride," she said, smiling. "At this point, I can't imagine a better existence." BHW





*⚡ I feel like
everything has
culminated into this
moment, and it's
been a wonderful
ride...⚡*

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Jared Narlock is a keynote speaker, author, and talent development coach who teaches leaders how to build highly engaged and accountable teams. He has more than 16 years of experience partnering with C-level executives, Chief Culture Officers, Leaders and HR Professionals. His background encompasses all aspects of Human Resources, with emphasis in organizational development and employee relations. Jared is a former Vice President of Talent Development and TEDx speaker. His writings have been published on Forbes, ATD, and Training Industry.

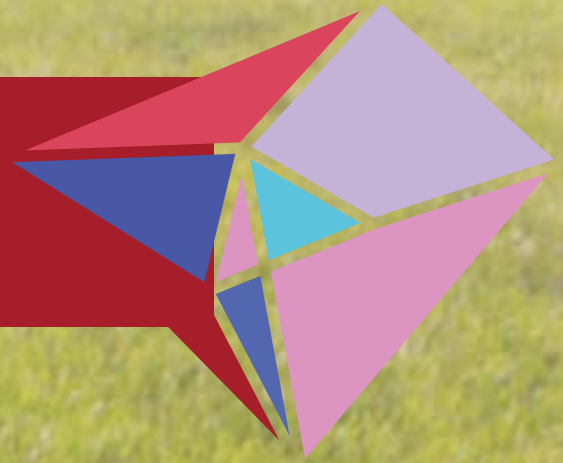


Jared Narlock, MPA SHRM-SCP
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Girl Gives Back

<MARYANN LEANNA>

By Sarah Grassel





Before she became the program manager at the Cornerstone Apartments, Maryann Leanna had already been living a life giving back to the community. Maryann grew up wanting to go into the service but started her family at a young age.

With four kids of her own, as a single mother, Maryann understood the struggle with financial burdens. “I wanted to help people and let them know I had basically been in their shoes and not to give up,” she shares.

Working for detox for ten years and at WAVI as a rural case manager, Maryann went back to school and received her bachelor’s degree in human services. She has also been involved in the Homeless Coalition Point in Time Homeless Count.

WAVI was also something close to her heart. As a survivor of domestic abuse, Maryann would pick up women from surrounding communities and bring them to the shelter. There, she would work with them to get them back on their feet. She was an ear to listen or a resource for housing and employment.

Similarly, Maryann is now a resource for families at the Cornerstone Apartments in Rapid City.

She proudly says, “It is really rewarding to give people a place they can call home again, a fresh start; after they have had so many doors slammed in their faces, we make them feel welcome.”

These homes started out as a transitional living placement when they opened more than ten years ago. In 2010, the switch was made to have the apartments serve as permanent supportive housing. As long as the families and individuals living there follow their set of rules and pay rent, they don’t have to worry about an additional move.

Lighting the World with Joy

For the past five years, Freedom Church has held an angel tree for the kids that live in the Cornerstone Apartments at Christmas time. Maryann specifically recalls these times as some of the most memorable or unique moments.

“I have had kids remember me from when they lived at the apartments,” Maryann says. “They have said they had the best Christmas at the apartments; it brings everyone such joy.”

No matter what challenges Maryann is faced with in her job or her volunteer work through the years, it is all worth it to her. “I truly enjoy the people I work with, especially the kids. The smiles on their faces when they can crawl in a bed and call it theirs— it’s so rewarding,” she smiles.

Now, families that have low income, veterans, or anyone with a disability has a resource to turn to in the community. Maryann says, “I have housed people and worked with them to keep their apartments clean, paying rent, and getting along in a community setting.”

When it boils down to it, Maryann just likes helping people, mostly kids. “They don’t have a choice to end up homeless, so I really have them in mind when the parents are not doing the things they are supposed to be doing to remain housed.”

It’s no doubt that she has had a great impact on those that live there. One of the tenants wrote to the magazine as a way of reaching out and thanking Maryann.

In the letter, the tenant wrote, “I am writing to you in hopes that I may start a spark. My friend and apartment manager is a very unique woman. I’ve known her for eight years, and I’ve seen her grow and do some amazing things. Her name is Maryann Leanna. She’s the manager of Cornerstone Apartments, but she’s so much more than that. She works hard for the people that come through the doors.” BHW



The Cornerstone Rescue Mission

In the early 1980s, Dave and Cheryl Adams set out on a mission to help the homeless in their community and began the Cornerstone Rescue Mission. Through the years, the non-denominational, non-profit organization has helped thousands of individuals. More than 80 percent of their support is funded by individual donors, but they also see assistance from local churches, businesses, foundations, and more. In addition to the apartments, the Cornerstone Rescue Mission holds a diaper drive, runs a thrift store, and encourages stability.

You can volunteer with the organization and make an impact by sponsoring their mission or simply volunteering your time for 30 minutes each week. The fact is that there are more than 65,000 people in Rapid City alone. If each one sacrificed only 30 minutes weekly, that would add up to more than 100 million volunteer hours.



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You could say Damien and Keely Mahony moved here for the Stratobowl. The couple lived in Florida for years, but they came out every September for the Stratobowl Historic Hot Air Balloon Launch.

Her mom and stepdad, Kay and Mark West, both flight instructors, have organized the event each year.

“We finally said, ‘We have to figure out a way to come out and stay’,” Keely says, and in 2015, the Mahonys purchased Black Hills Balloons in Custer.

“We were even married in the Stratobowl,” Keely says. “It’s a special place to us.”

It’s one of the reasons she’s so passionate about continuing a hot air balloon tradition that is on a bucket list for pilots and riders alike. This year’s event will take place Sept. 10-12.

“We put a smile on so many faces and we make so many dreams come true that weekend,” Kay says. “It gets bigger every year, and one of the main reasons we do it is to draw attention to its historic significance.”

The Stratobowl was the location of the first manned balloon to take flight into the stratosphere. In the early 1930s, from the cleared bowl-shaped forest floor just off of Highway 16, the Army Air Corps and the National Geographic Society launched manned balloons to a record 72,395 feet. The Stratobowl was officially on the map.

The most popular view of the bowl is the rim overlook, a half-mile hike from a trail-head off of Highway 16, just west of Black Hills RV Center.

The historic significance, and the quiet, still mornings in September, are the perfect backdrop, says Cory Tomovick.

“For three days in a row, I grab a cup of coffee at 6:30 in the morning and sit to watch this phenomenal event occur,” she says. “The balloons show up, and within 45 minutes, they are all gone.”

Cory and her husband Ken have a good reason to never miss the show: they own the 5 acres of property that the balloons launch from and have worked

A photograph of three hot air balloons floating in a sky filled with soft, orange-tinted clouds at sunset or sunrise. The largest balloon, at the top center, has a yellow upper half and a red lower half. To its left, a second balloon features a blue top section and a checkered pattern of red, yellow, and white below. In the bottom right corner, a third, smaller balloon also displays a checkered pattern of red, yellow, and white. The overall mood is peaceful and adventurous.

Do You Want to Go?

By Kayla Gahagan

hand-in-hand with organizers for more than a decade to make sure pilots have access to the site.

“Some people don’t believe in sharing, but we just believe it’s important to celebrate aviation history,” Cory says. “It’s a big deal that South Dakota is the birthplace of the space age. So we believe that it’s important that, once a year, we open our property to celebrate this monumental event.”



Annually, the event hosts about 10 balloons at sunrise, but up to 15 balloons could take off this year, Kay says.

“It’s just a beautiful place,” she adds. “Oftentimes, we can float around in the bowl before we leave.”

Depending on wind, balloons can head toward Hermosa, following Highway 44, and sometimes down through Spring Creek Canyon for a fresh viewpoint of wildlife and wilderness, she says.

“Sometimes it’s just kind of like a flume when the wind flows and it spits us out near Reptile Gardens,” she adds. “Each flight is different and each flight is beautiful.”

West, who took her first hot air balloon ride in the San Joaquin Valley in California in the mid-1980s, loves that people come to watch the balloons take off at the Stratobowl.

“We appreciate them being there and love seeing them,” she says.

“The event would not be possible without the Tomovick’s generosity,” Kay says.

Cory says Keely and her family bring in the best pilots, and for good reason.

“It’s a tricky place to navigate a balloon,” she admits. “It’s surrounded by the rim of rocks and it’s all dependent on the wind moving through there. A pilot better know how to navigate. If we weren’t completely sure they know what they are doing, we wouldn’t do it.”

The Department of the Interior has the required documents to designate the Stratobowl as a National Historic Landmark, something Cory would love to see.

Until then, she welcomes the weekend each year that brings spectators and the vibrant colored vessels to fill the sky of her backyard. She has been a passenger aboard one of the balloons several times and it never gets old.

“It’s always such a thrill,” she says. “And when you see one of those balloons go up, it really defies what we should be able to do. It’s a reminder

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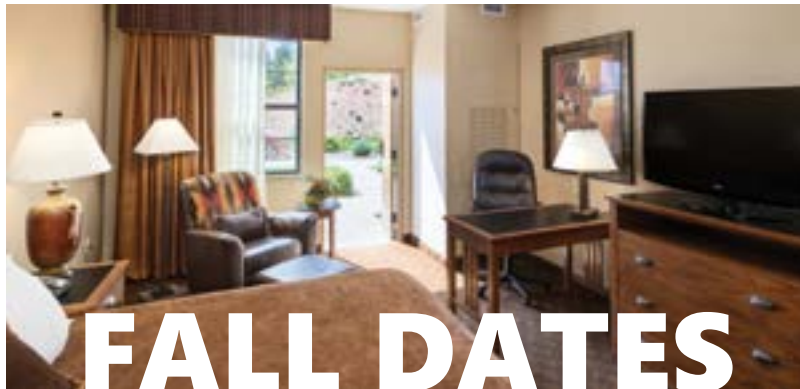
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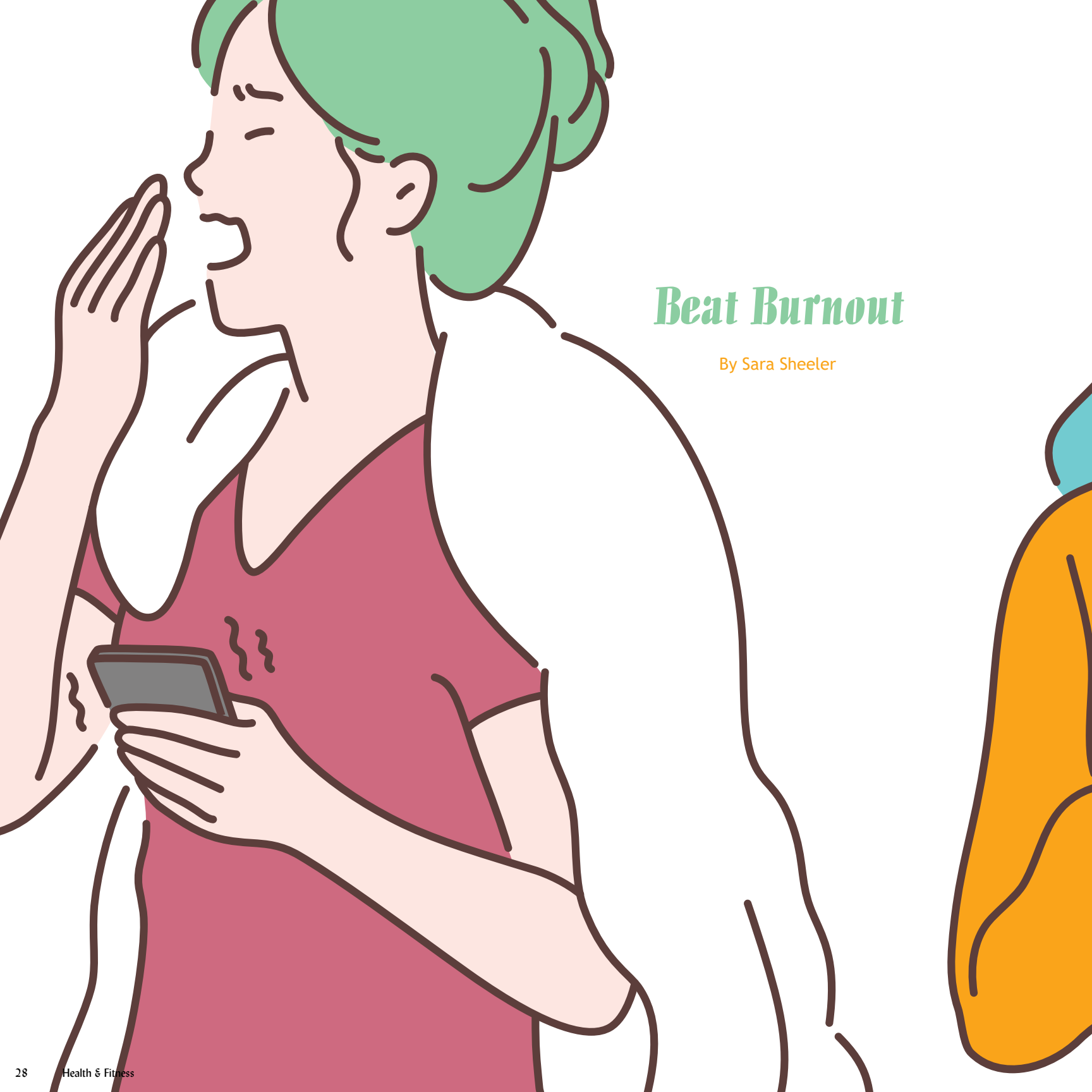
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Beat Burnout

By Sara Sheeler





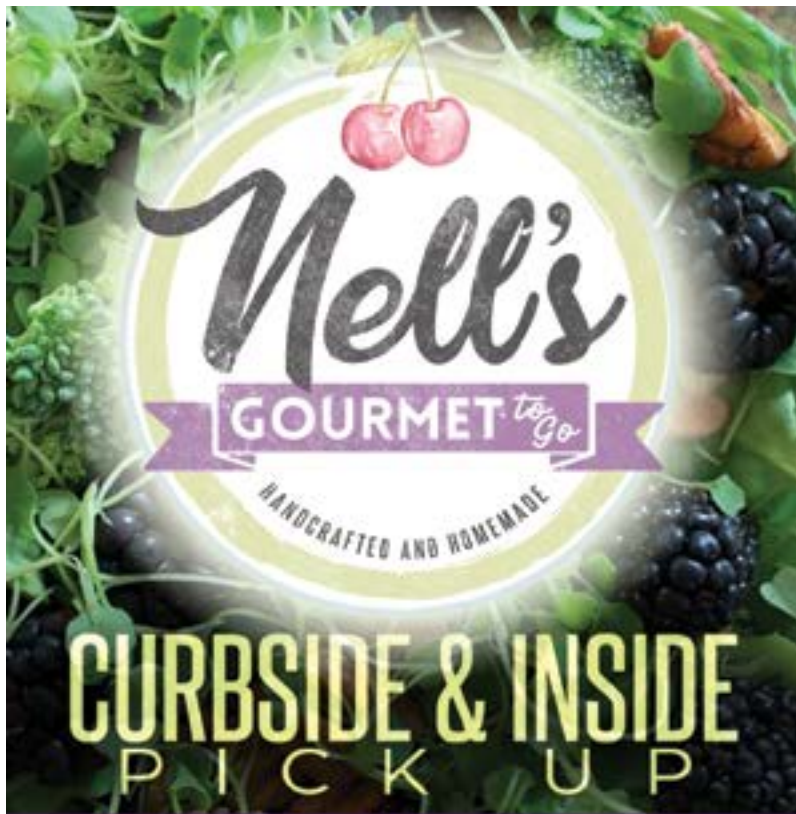
One day last month, I finished up the work day at my desk and noticed I felt...off.

My head felt full but empty, as if I had stuffed a bunch of dirty laundry in my skull that was now just taking up space and crowding out all my thoughts. I had tension in my chest. I was bummed and irritable, even though there was nothing obviously wrong in my life. Normally a regular patron of the Sturgis Community Center, I had little energy for and even less interest in the gym. At that moment (and for the entire two weeks prior, I suddenly realized), Instagram, the couch, and an entire box of Cheez-Its sounded much more appealing.

I was burned out – at least, I think I was. Either way, it got me thinking. What do we know about burnout? How does burnout manifest in our lives? And what can we do to keep it at bay?

What Is Burnout?

The American Psychological Association defines burnout as “physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance, and negative attitudes toward oneself and others.” Burnout is exhaustion on overdrive that comes after a period of prolonged and excessive stress, and it leaves you feeling drained, overwhelmed, and uninspired.



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We most often hear about burnout in relation to work, but it can show up in places outside the office, too, including your social life and home life. Your physical health takes a hit from burnout, too, since persistent stress can run down your nervous system and immune system.

Burnout | What It Looks Like, What It Feels Like

All of us feel exhausted some of the time. Some of us feel exhausted all the time. If the latter sounds like you—and if there's no other clear reason or medical condition that could explain how you're feeling, you could be dealing with burnout. These are some leading physical, behavioral, and emotional signs to look out for:

- Feeling super tired or low in energy
- Getting sick frequently
- Changes in your sleeping or eating habits
- Frequent headaches and muscle aches
- Feeling helpless, hopeless, or trapped
- Feeling detached or alone
- Difficulty concentrating
- Decreased motivation to fulfill your typical duties or responsibilities
- Feeling like a failure and lacking any sense of accomplishment
- Excessive self-doubt
- Feeling increasingly cynical, irritable, or negative
- Withdrawing from others
- Procrastinating

Ending Burnout / 4 Things You Can Do Now

Let's face it. If you aren't getting the support you need and if your plate is simply too full, then no amount of meditation, journaling, or exercise will be enough to prevent burnout. Indeed, burnout often causes our most well-practiced self-care routines to come to a screeching halt. So, then what?

This is not to suggest that a self-care routine won't help, especially if it's a routine full of activities you enjoy and not just things you think you "should" do. I just mean that self-care routines can only take you so far. Here are four other things I'm doing to keep burnout at bay:

1 Practice Saying No

Saying no to things that just aren't right for us is a net-positive habit that can prevent us from taking on more than we can handle. It also ensures we can give our best efforts to the things we do commit to— a win-win for us, our clients, our colleagues, and our loved ones.

One thing that's helping me say "No, thank you" more often is thinking with an abundance mindset. Just because I might say "no" to this opportunity now doesn't mean another opportunity won't come along.

Another thing that helps? Knowing that "No" is a complete sentence. You can be polite and gracious



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without always having to justify your decision to decline an invitation or request.

So, say “no” this week. Drop the scarcity mindset. Forget the FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out). Watch yourself for martyrdom and see yourself as someone worth standing up for.

2 Practice Asking for Help

If you’re struggling, let someone know. Ask for help at home and work. Lean on friends for social support. Be as specific as possible about what you need help with.

Asking for help requires a lot of sophisticated skills like being able to communicate clearly, setting boundaries, and paying attention to what your body’s telling you (since we often feel our emotions before we can identify and name them). If this is hard for you, consider working with a mental health professional. He or she can help you not only learn better coping strategies but also rule out other underlying conditions like depression or an anxiety disorder.

3 Pass on the Evening Cocktail

If burnout is like a slow-burning fire gradually taking over your nervous system, just imagine what will happen when you throw alcohol on it.

Though it’s a common crutch people lean on when feeling stressed, alcohol can exacerbate burnout symptoms by disrupting sleep, impairing judgment, and increasing anxiety. And by “rewarding” ourselves with a glass of wine every time we’re feeling stressed, we’re only reinforcing a habit that could have negative repercussions in the long run.

So, save your cocktails for when you’re feeling more balanced, and use burnout as an invitation (albeit an uncomfortable one) to take an alcohol vacation.





4 Play

Play doesn't stop being important once we enter adulthood. And while it might seem counterintuitive, making time for leisure activities can actually help you be more productive and more engaged when it's time to work.

Play doesn't look the same for everyone, so figure out what it looks like for you and enjoy. Fortunately for us, it's not hard to find a way to relax and unwind in a beautiful place like the Black Hills. BHW



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Great Expectations

By Dorothy Rosby





*M*any years ago, I wrote a column with the prophetic title “Someday When I’m Quarantined” in which I bragged about all the projects I’d complete if I were ever under house arrest or quarantined or for some other reason unable to leave home. I didn’t consider any of those likely, so it seemed safe to tell my readers it was only my hectic life that was preventing me from organizing my file cabinets and writing a screenplay. And I almost believed it myself—until I spent a year sheltering in place.

I think, in 2020, a lot of us learned it wasn’t our full social calendar that was keeping us from cleaning out the garage and taking up the harp. It’s not that we weren’t busy, though. It’s just that the way we spent the unexpected windfall of time at home was not the way we thought we’d spend it.

What we thought we’d do if we had more time at home: Cook more nutritious meals, meditate, and exercise daily.

What we actually did when we had more time at home: Baked coffee cake, pies, and muffins, then lounged on the couch eating while watching exercise videos on YouTube.

What we thought we’d do: Catch up on the stack of mending that’s been mounting in the back of our closet since the Clinton Administration.

What we did: Decided not to bother mending clothes that no longer fit.

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What we thought we'd do: Take time to pamper ourselves. Light some candles, put on relaxing music, and take frequent long, hot bubble baths.

What we did: Gave up trying to keep the family out of the bathroom and binge watched *Hallmark Mystery* movies instead.

What we thought we'd do: Clean our house from top to bottom. Focus on those spots that rarely get our attention, including every closet, every cupboard, and under every bed, even if we had to use a flashlight and spelunking gear to do it.

What we did: Purchased the maximum number of disinfectant cleaning products the grocery store allowed, then cleared a spot in the garage to store them all. And by clearing a spot in the garage, I mean we parked outside.

What we thought we'd do: Go through all our old shoe boxes of ancient photographs, label the photos, and finally put them into albums. Organize all our digital photos into files on our computer and back up the files to the cloud.

What we did: Took pictures of every pan of brownies, cookies, and seven layer bars we baked and posted them on Facebook and Instagram.

What we thought we'd do: Spend more time reading, both for pleasure and for edification.

What we did: Spent many hours on the internet researching whether disinfectant cleaning products expire and trying to determine what the seven layers in a seven layer bar are.

What we thought we'd do: Write thank you notes to teachers and mentors who have helped us along the way.

What we did: Hoped none of our teachers and mentors saw what we retweeted on Twitter.

What we thought we'd do: Enjoy more time with our family. Play board games, have movie nights, and spend time in meaningful conversations.

What we did: Wondered when family members started chewing so loudly.

What we thought we'd do: Sort through everything in the house and give away or dispose of everything we no longer need or want.

What we did: Realized it's impossible to give away unneeded items when family is social distancing with us.

What we thought we'd do: Dust off the piano or that old guitar and start practicing daily.

What we did: Sang "Happy Birthday" every time we washed our hands until our spouse reminded us it isn't necessary to sing it out loud.



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What we thought we'd do: Learn a new skill like quilting, calligraphy, or wine making—maybe all three!

What we did: Learned to cut our own hair. Not really.

What we thought we'd do: Learn to use all the features on our cellphone and all the options on our microwaves. Finally master the trick for printing on both sides of the paper with our printer.

What we did: Learned how to mute ourselves during Zoom meetings.

What we thought we'd do: Paint the living room, wallpaper the bedrooms, and finally get to work on that unfinished basement.

What we did: Created a virtual background so no one else at our Zoom meetings would know we didn't use the extra time we had at home to clean our office. And now that we're vaccinated, we won't have time to. **BHW**

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A Star Quilter Is Born

Q&A with Muffa Keller

Photos By Riley Winter Photography

“Growing up with six brothers and one sister, I watched my mother, Clarice Bender, sew and repair our clothing,” recalls 54-year-old Darlyn “Muffa” Keller of Rapid City, South Dakota. “I remember when I was 6 years old, my mom purchased me a little toy Singer sewing machine.” She also learned a bit about sewing during Home Economics at Mobridge High School. But her first real sewing escapade started in the 1990s when she would sew Halloween costumes, mainly witch, rodeo clown, princess, and even a cowboy spider for her children. Upon retiring from Rapid City Regional Hospital in 2014, she purchased a Brother sewing and embroidery machine, beginning a more serious practice that led to attending the International Quilt Festival in Houston, TX, in 2018. While there, she purchased a Juki sewing machine and bought her very first Gammill Longarm quilting machine. From there, a quilter was born!

How did you master quilting?

I belong to the Black Hills Quilting Guild, along with several Facebook quilting and Instagram groups. I also attend sewing and quilting camps and retreats all over the USA where I continue to learn and gain fresh ideas and make lifelong friendships. Quilting is truly a passion for me. My children often chuckle when they call me and ask me what I am doing, to which I will reply I am either in Sewing Room One or Sewing Room Two. It gives me great pleasure when I post a project I am working on to my family group chat, and my children try to claim it before others do.

Do you use any special techniques or fabric types?

I always use the highest quality cotton fabric. I want my quilts to be loved and used for many years. Ninety percent of my fabric is bought locally.



As an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, what is the special meaning or purpose of star quilts in Native American culture?

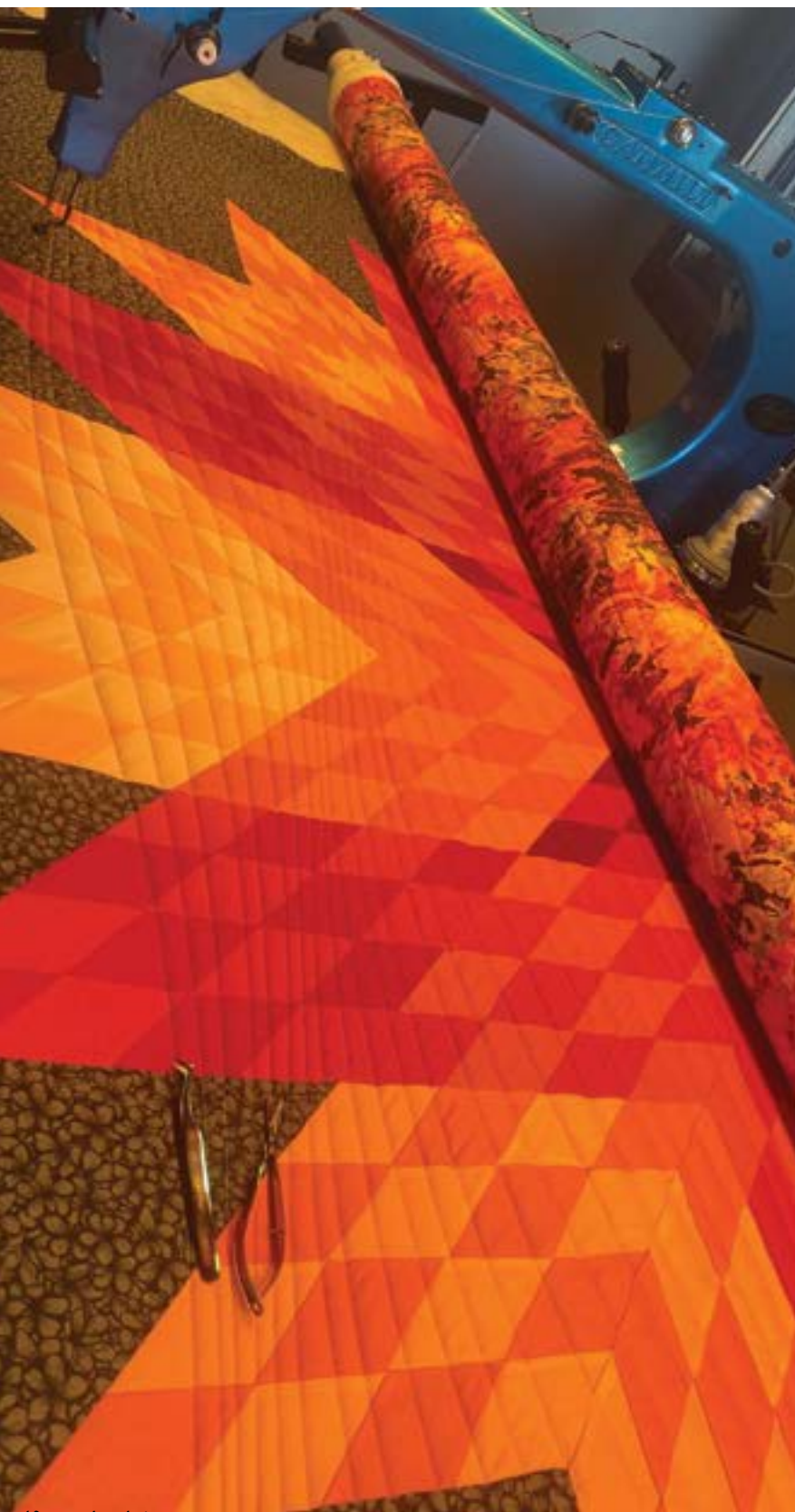
A star quilt pattern is made of small diamonds pieced together in eight sections. These sections join to create the eight-point star. The pattern of the star quilt is inspired by the Morning Star. The Morning Star is the last and brightest star in the eastern horizon before dawn. It was believed the Morning Star represented the way the spirits came to earth and served as a link between the living and those who have passed. Historically, star patterns were created with plant dyes and adorned buffalo hides and tipis. When missionaries arrived in the mid-to-late 1800s, they introduced textiles and sewing to Native American women and the star quilt was born.

The star quilt's tradition of honor grew as the quilts were draped around the shoulders of Lakota warriors and hunters when they returned from battle, a successful hunt, or at the start of Hanǵlečeya – Vision Quests. It was also presented at funerals to honor loved ones on their final journey.

Today, star quilts are one of the most valued gifts of the Lakota (Sioux) people and are still draped over the shoulders of the recipient to symbolize protection on their journey through life.

Star quilts may be used as banners in schools for graduations and other school functions, as altar cloths in churches or placed on top of sweat lodges, to mark momentous life events such as a wedding or a child's





birth, or as a gesture of sympathy to a family honoring the passing of a loved one

Generosity is an important virtue among the beliefs and traditions of the Lakota (Sioux) people. The image of a star quilt serves as a reminder of the significance and honor that comes from giving to others.

How long does a typical project take you?

Depending on the size and design of the star quilt ordered, I can complete a star quilt in one to two weeks.

What tips or advice do you have for other aspiring quilters?

The advice I would give to other aspiring quilters is to join quilting groups either on Facebook or Instagram, take a class with your local dealer/quilt shop, and get all the education you can. Quilters are the most fun and jolly people I know. But, be forewarned; quilting is highly addictive.

What quilters, elders, or other artists have inspired you?

My mother has inspired me the most. She has made each of her 8 children a star quilt. She also made her 13 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren personalized baby star quilts and queen-size star quilts upon graduation from high school. She has also made baby star quilts for her nieces and nephews. The quilts are priceless and will be treasured forever!

How can people find you?

I pour my heart and soul in the creation of all my quilts in the hopes that they will be loved and cherished for years to come. In addition to making star quilts, I love to make Native American-inspired design quilts; I'm also involved with the Wounded Warrior Project making Quilts of Valor. If you would be interested in seeing more of my quilts, or are interested in ordering or purchasing a Native American made star quilt, I can be reached at muffakeller@yahoo.com, or I can be found on Instagram @muffakeller. [BHW](#)



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Quality Meat, Right Down the Street

If you could choose your last meal while on Earth, what would you choose? A great majority of Midwesterners would answer with a meal that includes a juicy steak. Most of the time, the best steaks are the ones that are cooked professionally in a restaurant. However, that doesn't need to be the case. In South Dakota, we have access to some of the best beef that is right down the street at your local butcher shop. Even if you have access to the best beef, though, you must know how to correctly cook it.



Besides the natural flavor of the beef, your steak will need to be seasoned and cooked correctly, as this will have a significant impact on the outcome of your meal. “A great-tasting steak needs salt and searing to bring out the best of the beef,” says Carl Kimmerle of LemmonMade Meats in Lemmon.

Why salt? Meat consists of water, lean protein, and fat. When you introduce salt, it binds the water, protein, and fat together to enhance the natural flavor. Salt not only enhances the flavor, but it also assists in retaining internal moisture and fat to ensure you get a juicy steak. Once you liberally sprinkle your favorite salt and seasoning on both sides of the meat, allow the meat to get to room temperature and soak in the salt.

Allowing the steak to get to room temperature, prior to cooking it is an important step. When you allow a steak to get to room temperature it does two things; first, it reduces the shock of a hot sear. Meat undergoes a contraction shock when it is applied to heat and the muscle fibers tense up, which in turn creates a tough steak. The second thing a warmer piece of meat does is reduces the likelihood of uneven cooking. “When you take your steak out of the fridge to let it warm up, make sure it is in an area that is not accessible to flies, kids, or pets. I’ve lost a few really great steaks to a dog,” Carl says, laughing.



Now that you have your steak prepped, the only thing left to do is cook it. This is another important step that can be the deciding factor between a good steak and a great steak. Most of the steak’s flavor comes as a result of the Maillard reaction, which is caused when amino acids and/or sugar are exposed to heat more than 280 degrees Fahrenheit. The Maillard reaction is what changes bread into toast, potatoes into fries, and beef into steak. The reaction does not begin until 280 degrees, and if the temperature is higher, the reaction will be faster.

“The key to getting to the perfect sear (Maillard reaction) is to have the temperature set to the maximum heat possible without the Maillard reaction occurring too quickly,” says Carl. Although this take some practice, a good indication of the correct temperature is the occurrence of smoke. When you see smoke, it is the amino acids and/or sugar

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burning, which is an indicator that the Maillard reaction is occurring.

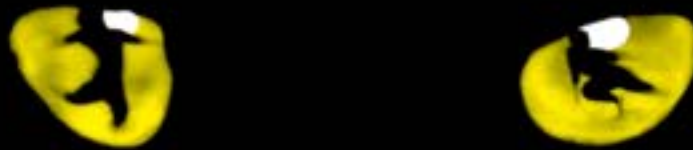
When chasing the Maillard reaction, an important thing to remember is that you don't want to lose too much fat or water. This is what will make your steak juicy and tender.

The next thing you must choose is what you are cooking your meat with. "Steaks can be cooked on just about anything that will get hot enough. However, it is ideal to choose something that will have an even distribution of heat, so your entire steak will be cooked through evenly," Carl says. A great option is a charcoal grill or even a cast iron skillet on a stove top.

The key to a great steak is to get a nice salt penetration, a crunchy sear on the outside, and leaving the natural water and fat within the meat. With enough practice, you will never have to leave your home to enjoy a juicy steak. **BHW**



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You Really Autumn Go... 5 Fun Fall Events

By Danielle Beadle



While the final dog days of summer are still wagging, crisp air, changing leaves, and savory fall spices are just around the corner. Roughly 30% of Americans favor autumn as their season of choice. If you are one of them, grab those UGG boots and your pumpkin spice latte and plan for these fun fall pastimes in the Black Hills.

Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup

Every year, cowboys and cowgirls round up the Custer State Park herd made up of approximately 1,300 buffalo. This roundup is to ensure the maintenance of a strong and healthy herd. After the buffalo are safely rounded up, the cowboys and cowgirls run health checks, brand, and sort the buffalo. Not only is this a critical management tool, but the roundup is also a remarkable sight to see.

September 24, 2021

Deadwood Jam 2021

The Deadwood Jam is a live-music festival JAM-packed with bands from an assortment of genres. You are guaranteed a rockin' good time taking in the tunes at Outlaw Square on Main Street of Deadwood. And as if this event couldn't get any better, they are offering free admission this year!

September 17-18, 2021

Hops & Hogs: Craft Beer Fest

Are you a craft beer enthusiast? How about bacon? This event does both! Enjoy craft beer paired with samples of unique bacon dishes while visiting downtown Deadwood.

September 24-25, 2021

Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival

Head down to Main Street Square in Rapid City to see the city's largest pumpkins. For the past twelve years, Rapid City has hosted this fun fall festival that includes a giant pumpkin weigh-off, vendors, a kid's zone, & more!

September 25, 2021

Deadweird

Some people love fall because of Halloween. If you are one of those people, you will enjoy Deadwood on Halloween weekend. Deadweird is hosted every year and includes dressing up, live bands, dancing, and prizes. Start planning your costume now!

October 29-30, 2021

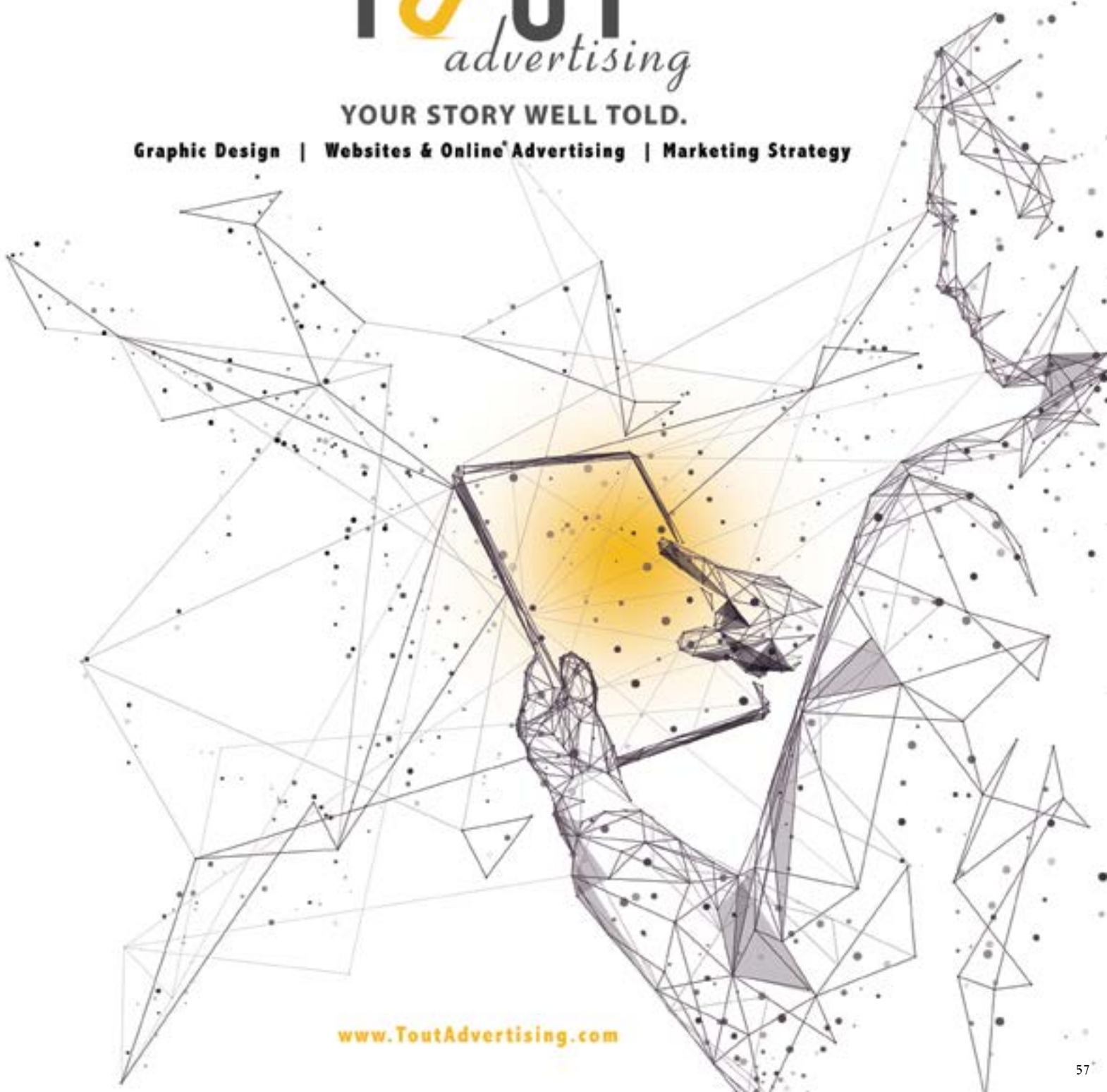


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The Black Hills has so many fun events to look forward to in the fall. However, if you aren't much of an event-goer, you can still head out on the trails and enjoy the crisp air and colorful trees. You are sure to enjoy yourself this fall here in the Hills, no matter what you are doing. BHW

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