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Otter Tail County

Fall
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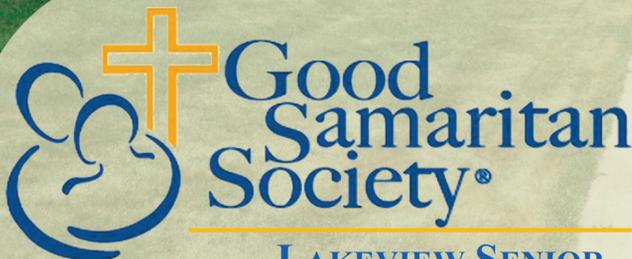


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8 Cover Story: Resilience: Cornerstone Farm

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JERRY BEGLEY

Front cover photo:
Gracie Springer with "kid"

Photo at left:
Stephen Springer describing Waikato® Milking System

OTC

Otter Tail County

6 Otter Tales

Fall 2021

15 The Lakeside Gourmet

BY SANDRA THIMGAN
PHOTOS BY DAN THIMGAN



22 Three Common Questions I Get About Plastic Surgery

BY DR. CHELSEY JOHNSON
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE

24 Travel Destination: Door County, Wisconsin

BY PAM LARSON
PHOTOS BY PAM & LARRY LARSON



16 BERGQUIST HOMESTEAD TURNS 150

STORY & PHOTOS BY REBA GILLIAND
BERGQUIST FAMILY PHOTOS
COURTESY OF JENNIFER ROERS



30 Advertiser Index

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Otter Tales

As you read this, my hope is that you are enjoying the fall colors and the slight chill in the air. It is a great time of the year to be living in the lakes area, for sure. Hopefully, you find some time to take a Sunday car or boat ride to enjoy all that fall scenery around every turn.

My dog Boomer is not happy summer is over. He had way too much fun jumping off the dock and playing with all the other dogs that came to visit him at the lake. You can see in the picture, he just loves being in the water. The cold water coming soon won't stop him from going in. I'm really looking forward to some more duck hunting with him this fall. Maybe I will actually hit something this year to avoid that disappointing look he gives me when I always missed in past years. Wish me luck on that one.

We have another good lineup of stories for this fall issue of *OTC*. First up is the Berquist family farm of Parker's Prairie celebrating its 150th year. With the Homestead Act of 1862, new immigrants came to this area, built a new life and flourished in spite of the many challenges. I always marvel at the tenacity and hard work of early settlers of this area...truly impressive!

We also have just a great story about how a community helped a local farm family overcome a devastating fire. This is a story that reminds me how nice it is to live in this area...good people always being there for their neighbors...a tradition that began long ago with the early settlers. Thankfully,



it continues today...and should make us all very proud to be a part of that tradition.

In line with good traditions, fall is a great time of the year to have a cup of coffee on the deck, take a deep breath of cool air and enjoy the view. So, doctor's orders: get outside and take in the great fall show of Minnesota...it never gets old.

— Ed Pawlenty, *OTC* Publisher



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Resilience: Cornerstone Farm

STORY & PHOTOS BY JERRY BEGLEY

resilience: the capacity to recover quickly from tragedy

3:00 AM, CHRISTMAS EVE, 2020
15 degrees below zero, high winds
Cornerstone Farm, Henning, Minnesota

The Springer family lost 1,000 goats, farm equipment, hay, a large goat facility and their livelihood to a raging fire that took over 100,000 gallons of water from multiple fire departments to extinguish. But they did not lose their determination. Instead, they proudly demonstrated the highest level of resilience.

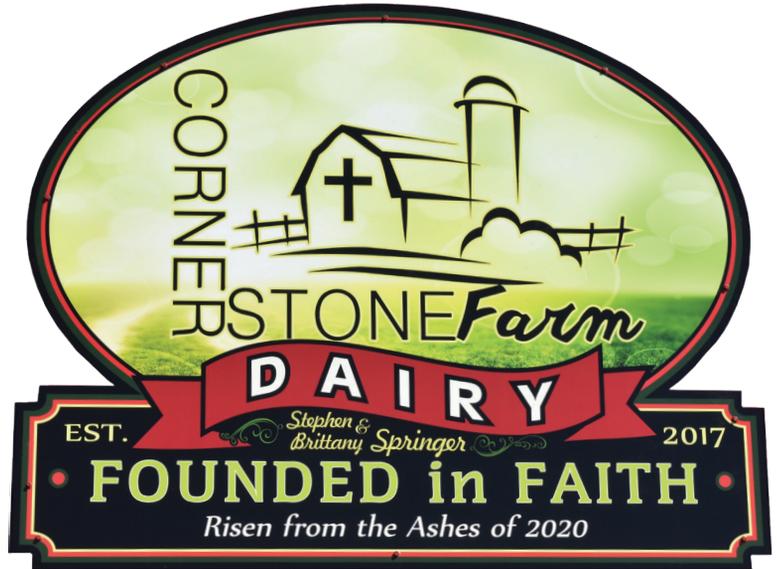
Neighbors and the community responded quickly to support the family of eight. Within a week, fundraising totaled over \$10,000 and grew from there.

Rebounding immediately, the family started planning – not a replacement, but an expansion of their goat herd and milking facility to put Cornerstone Farm back in business. They not only enlarged the goat confinement facility, but have incorporated the latest in technological advances to streamline the operation.

The new structure covers 25,000 square feet, much larger than the original building. It has solar collectors, heated floor in the production area, staff areas and a new, state-of-the-art milking system.

The WAIKATO® milking system rotary platform imported from New Zealand is the second system installed in the United States and is designed for efficiency. Sixty goats ride on the rotating platform for five minutes while their milk is extracted; 500 goats are processed per hour, two times daily at 5:00 AM and PM.

The milk is piped to stainless steel cooling tanks awaiting delivery to the Stickney Hill Dairy in Rockville, MN. Cornerstone Farm, in partnership with Stickney Hill, adheres to rigorous industry standards to provide a steady supply of high-quality goat milk products for their customers through 6,000 retail outlets nationwide.



There were important milestones during the recovery process. The family welcomed a new daughter, Finley Cecilia, in February. The initial replacement goat herd moved into the new structure by early June, the WAIKATO® system started processing on August 4th. Currently, they have replaced 700 goats with plans for 200 more. Their resolution and hard work restored production within seven months. Their new building sign is very appropriate: "Founded in Faith, Risen from the Ashes of 2020".

Owners Stephen and Brittany were overwhelmed with the community support, so they organized the community thank-you brunch on August 14th to express their gratitude and display their new operation. Community businesses provided assistance.

You may recognize Stephen and Brittany from local food markets. They are committed to producing high-quality food that is healthy, organic and non-GMO for your family. Specialty items may be ordered from their website:

cornerstonefarmmn.com

Enjoy the photo collage on the following pages!



above: Curious goat poses for photographer

left: Feeding time for the Cornerstone Farm goat herd



Springer Family in new milking parlor (under construction)
back, l-r: Stephen, Savannah, Brittany
front, l-r: Peter, Finley, Gracie, Paisley and Amelia

below:
Springer family in front of new facility





24,000-square-foot facility under construction



left: Stephen and Glen Wood, Stickney Hill General Manager, in front of the WAIKATO® milking system rotary platform imported from New Zealand



above: One of Cornerstone farm's stainless steel milk storage tanks



left: milking parlor ready for installation of Waikato® Milking System



Cornerstone Farms produce

Dear Friends,
 We want to extend a HUGE thank you to ALL of our friends and family that have helped us with any aspect of this tragedy. Some of you helped physically, emotionally and/or financially. For this, we will be forever grateful! Your thoughts, well wishes, gift and especially prayers have helped us through these last 8 months of trials, heartaches and challenges. We will never be able to repay your kindness, but we pray BLESSINGS over you and your family!

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Thank You notes displayed at the community brunch

Gracie Springer, photographer's assistant and farm tour guide, shows off one of the "kids"



Volunteers from Stickney Hill preparing cheese for brunch





above: Picnic tables – farm style

left: Friends volunteer to prepare brunch



Volunteers from Stickney Hill ready to serve brunch

Community brunch attendees



Jerry Begley is a retired Regional Director for a telecommunications company. He resides with his wife Diane on Stalker Lake and enjoys all outdoor activities.



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The Lakeside Gourmet

BY SANDRA THIMGAN
PHOTO BY DAN THIMGAN

Sweet Onion Jam — WHAT?

Sweet Onion Jam

- 2 T. olive oil
- 2 T. butter
- 4 cups thinly sliced onions
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 cup red wine or balsamic vinegar

In a large saucepan, heat oil and butter over medium heat until butter melts.

Add onions and cook until softened and caramelized.

Stir in sugars, salt, peppers and bay leaves. Cook, stirring frequently, until the sugars dissolve, about 20 minutes.

Add vinegar and stir well to mix.

Simmer over low heat for 30- 40 minutes, stirring frequently, until mixture combines and thickens.

Remove bay leaves and cool completely.

Store in tightly sealed containers in refrigerator up to 3 weeks or freeze.

Love onions on your burger? How about as an addition to your BLT? Perhaps a topping for a quick pizza with goat cheese as the base?

Your taste buds are in for a sweet surprise when you serve this jam, hot or cold, on any sandwich or as a flavorful side for steaks, burgers, pork or grilled chicken. Also great as an appetizer with crackers and cream cheese.

Start jammin'!



OTC
Ontonagon County

"Sharing recipes is part of our culture, enriching each one of us and binding us together."

Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Daniel.



BERGQUIST HOMESTEAD

URNS 150



STORY & PHOTOS BY REBA GILLIAND
BERGQUIST FAMILY PHOTOS COURTESY OF JENNIFER ROERS

Aerial View of Bergquist Homestead Farm, Established 1871 (Photo courtesy of Jennifer Roers)

The Bergquist Homestead, located just outside Parkers Prairie in Otter Tail County, is celebrating its sesquicentennial year.

Five generations of Bergquists have taken on the challenges and joys of shepherding homesteaded land in Otter Tail County through 150 years of rain and drought; rising and falling farm prices; marriages, births, and deaths; new technologies and techniques; societal, political and cultural changes; and good and bad economies.

This is the story of one Swedish immigrant's legacy that's lived for 150 years.



August and Johanna Bergquist, Swedish Immigrants



Kronoberg County, Sweden (outlined in red)

Swedish Beginnings

It all began in a little village in Kronoberg County in southern Sweden. Today, the area is known, among other things, for its glassworks factories and beautiful glass. In the last half of the 19th Century, however, Sweden's largely agricultural economy was unable to sustain its growing population, and many looked toward America for a better life. Between 1850 and 1910, more than one

million Swedes moved to the United States, mostly to the Midwest with a large population in Minnesota.

In 1868, three brothers left their home in Hovmantorp, a small village in Kronoberg, and joined the flood of young men and women to leave Sweden and settle in Minnesota. Johan, 30, the oldest of the three, settled in Willmar; August, 24, settled in Parkers Prairie; and Samuel, the youngest at 13, in Fergus Falls.

The brothers were three of nine children born to Daniel Nikolausson and Ingrid Johansdotter (daughter of Johan), both from small towns in Kronoberg. Little is known of the family, as the brothers changed their last name to Bergquist upon entering the United States and had virtually no contact with their family (or each other) once here. Did they even know their mother died in 1869 shortly after they reached America?

From Sweden to "Land of Opportunity"

The brothers arrived at a time of upheaval in the United States. The Dakota War of 1862, where Dakota warriors attacked and killed hundreds of settlers, must have given immigrants pause about traveling to the Midwest. In 1869, the Civil War and President Abraham Lincoln's assassination was just four years past. Andrew Johnson's presidency was ending with a failed and contentious attempt at reconstruction of the South.

But opportunity flourished as well. The Homestead Act of 1862 signed by President Lincoln gave present and future citizens up to 160 acres of public land – provided they live on it, improve it and pay a small registration fee. Further, the transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, made travel easier and opened the Midwest and West to expansion.

The three Swedish brothers crossed the Atlantic Ocean and half the United States to put down roots in the recently-established state of Minnesota. They had reached their land of opportunity.

Parkers Prairie Pioneer

It is the fifth of Daniel and Ingrid's children, August Nikolausson Bergquist, whose life and progeny is forever intertwined with Parkers Prairie's history and development. The Bergquist Homestead begins with him in 1871.

Upon arriving in Minnesota, August filed for citizenship and completed an application to homestead an allotted 160 acres in Parkers Prairie Township, Otter Tail County. About that time, he married Johanna Sophia Peterson, also born in Hovmantorp.

August had grown up on a small farm just outside Hovmantorp and, as a teenager, worked as a farmhand near there so he knew something of farming. Still, clearing forested land by hand to farm it could not have been easy.

Forested land has its upside, though: felled trees mean logs for building. The original Bergquist house was built of those logs, as was the barn north of the house. August's skill with an axe extended to a house full of furnishings.

August and Johanna built a dairy-farm operation, for which the Bergquist farm has been known for many years. During that time, the two had six children – five daughters and a son.

But there was more to August than the farm and family – he was active in community affairs, serving on the first building committee of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1870.



Swedish Lutheran Cemetery, Parkers Prairie

His service on the Church building committee no doubt reflected his deep religious commitment. Family history describes him: "August was a very devout man. Sunday was a long day at church. Sunday meal was not only a table prayer, but the occasion of an impromptu sermon. No work, no fire crackers, no whistling in the house, no levity. It was the Lord's day – all day."

Upon August's death in 1919, son Ernest inherited The Bergquist Homestead. Johanna had died the year before.

State-of-the-Art Improvements

The Bergquist Homestead continued to thrive under Ernest's management. Born in 1878, Ernest was 41 when he took over the farm. By that time, he and wife Jennie (Peterson) had two babies, Kenneth about 5 years old and Raymond, 1 year.



August and Johanna Bergquist tombstones in Swedish Lutheran Cemetery, Parkers Prairie



Ernest & Jennie Bergquist's tombstone Swedish Lutheran Cemetery

Raymond eventually settled in St. Paul and worked for the Minnesota Highway Department in Communications but remembered those early years on the farm. He wrote: "My earliest recollection of any event that I can tie a date to is my dad, Carl Alf (manager of the lumber yard in Parkers Prairie), and Henry Groty huddled over the round dining room table with a set of blueprints for the new barn."

Raymond goes on to recount in detail the activity involved in building the 34 ft. by 75 ft. barn on the Bergquist Homestead the summer of 1922. As he was only four at the time, the process obviously made an impression.

He describes: hauling gravel "which had to be hauled from the pit on the corner where the 'corduroy road' starts;" the road, "built over a swampy area and trees cut and laid crosswise on the roadbed to provide a somewhat firm base on which dirt and gravel were dumped, hence the name corduroy;" and the making of bricks for the milk house, when "a man by the name of Nelson came with a cement mixer and a machine to form the bricks." He remembers the cupola being hauled home to be mounted in the center of the roof that seemed to be "the biggest thing he had ever seen."

Raymond boasts: "The barn and milk house was the latest 'state of the art.'" Surely, those words were true: the barn had a round roof with a commercially-built ventilating system, "Jamesway" drinking cups, and a manure carrier.

Raymond's father, Ernest, undoubtedly built up the reputation of the dairy operation on the Bergquist Homestead. Like his father before him,

Ernest was civic-minded, serving on the boards of the creamery and Mutual Insurance Company.

Ernest died in 1942 and Kenneth, his oldest son, took over the homestead.

Maintaining Years

Kenneth, the third generation Bergquist, was 28 when he took over the farm. By then, he'd married his sweetheart, Elizabeth Korkowski from Millerville, and they'd had two children, Denis and Elaine. A third child, Richard (Dick), came along that first year living on the farm and, before long, another child was born, Jennifer, the youngest.



Elizabeth and Kenneth Bergquist, 4th Generation

Jennifer recalls what it was like growing up on the Bergquist Homestead. She says Denis and Elaine were so much older, it was like there were two families. The dairy operation was huge, plus the farm had pigs and chickens, a big garden and food crops for cattle. She remembers baling hay with her older brother Dick on the hay baler as she drove the tractor. Chores included helping her mother with the gardening, canning and butchering chickens. Everyone worked hard on the Bergquist farm, likely the way of all farm families.

Life on the farm was not all work, though. Jennifer fondly remembers the blend of her father's Swedish and mother's German traditions – such as sauerkraut wrapped in lefsa! Just think blood sausage, rice pudding, bratwurst, Swedish meatballs, lutefisk, krumkake, spätzle and stollen. She says the Christmas Eve meal was lutefisk and shrimp, since meat was out for Catholics.



Kenneth Bergquist Family (l to r) front: Elizabeth, Kenneth back: Jennifer, Denis, Richard, Elaine

Jennifer left the farm upon graduating from high school, but always enjoyed visiting the farm and Parkers Prairie and keeping up with siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews. Not long ago, it was a high school reunion that brought Jennifer back to Parkers Prairie. The trip proved serendipitous.

At the reunion, she ran into Rollie Roers, with whom she'd gone to high school; he'd grown up in Urbank on his family's farm. Over time, a romance blossomed between the two and in 2015 Jennifer and Rolland married!



Rolland (Rollie) and Jennifer (Jenny) marry



Rollie and Jenny Roers at home in Minnetonka

For nearly a quarter century, Jennifer's father, Kenneth, kept up the dairy farm and, in later years, worked in the implement and oil business as well. He retired from farming in 1965 at age 51, and his son Dick took over the Bergquist Homestead. Kenneth passed away at 58, less than a decade after retiring.

Modernization and Transitions

Dick was only 22 when his father retired, and the farm fell to him. He and his new bride, Diane Baumann from Springfield MN, settled into life on the Bergquist Homestead dairy farm. Dick, of course, grew up on the farm and knew what it took to run a dairy operation, but he kept up with the field with agribusiness courses at Alexandria Technical College through the years.

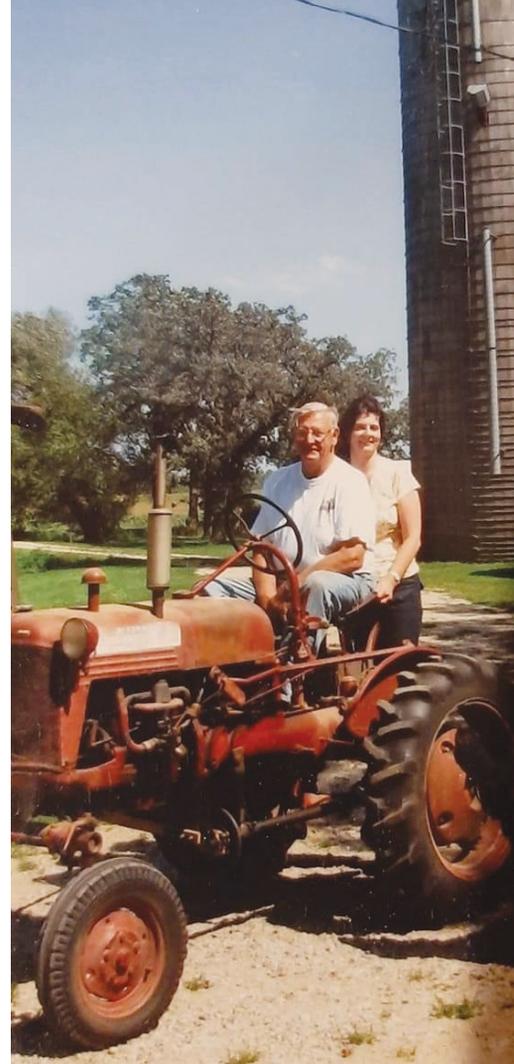
Life was busy juggling farm and family during those early years: daughter Christine (Kris) and son Dirk were born; Dick managed the dairy farm; Diane, with her x-ray and lab tech degree, worked in various hospitals in the area.

About 25 years into dairy farming, Dick was ready for a change. He transitioned from dairy farming to raising crops such as hay and soybeans and, in later years, rented out the farm to others to grow crops.

The transition gave Dick time to pursue other interests. He'd always been active in local affairs, serving on various boards throughout the years, and continued to do so. He was a longtime member of Parkers Prairie Lions Club.

Dick was also something of an entrepreneur. Once free of day-to-day farming, he started several businesses in Parkers Prairie: Northside Mini Storage, Cozy Cup Restaurant, and Park Place Wash & Vac.

Over a century and a half, the Bergquists have not only met the commitment of the Homestead Act of 1862 to live on the land and improve it, they have added to the vitality of the Parkers Prairie community. Dick is certainly an example that.



Dick Bergquist with daughter Kris



Today: 150-Year Bergquist Homestead Farm, Established 1871



Dick Bergquist playing tuba and piano



Dick was a talented musician and from an early age enjoyed entertaining. His sister Jennifer remembers that they would be out baling, and he would have to rush in to change to play tuba that night. He was so good, he placed 1st in the state with a solo.

Fifth Generation Bergquist and Beyond

Sadly, Dick Bergquist passed away unexpectedly earlier this summer, leaving his son Dirk as the 5th Bergquist generation to inherit the homestead. The land is rented, and crops continue to grow. The farm boasts a fine barn, three silos, a new machine shed, and up-to-date machinery.



Dirk (right) with his children
l-r: Chantell, Levi and Callista

The house has been enlarged and modernized. Dirk, a talented diesel mechanic and hard worker, will continue to live in the house and manage the farm.

Like most of the Bergquist men, he is following the civic-minded example of his father – Dirk is the current president of the Parkers Prairie Lions.

The 6th generation is already at hand. Dirk has three grown children, twins Levi and Callista, who live on the farm with him, and a daughter, Chantell, an attorney in St. Paul.

The Bergquist Homestead, now in its 150th year, awaits its next chapter.

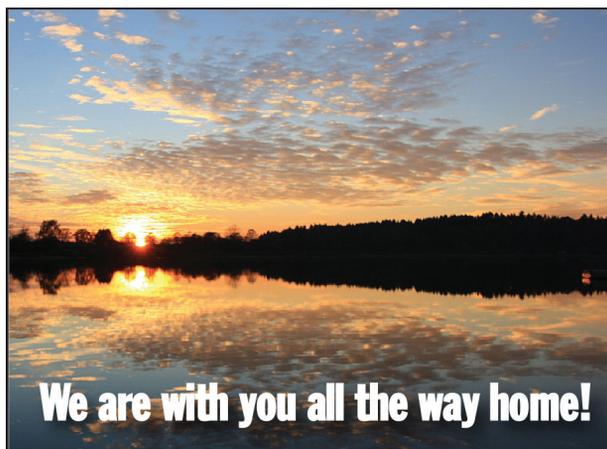


Many thanks to Jennifer and Rolland Roers for their generosity in sharing time, photos and family history!



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Three Common Questions I Get About Plastic Surgery

BY DR. CHELSEY JOHNSON

Plastic Surgeon, Lake Region Healthcare

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE

I'm Chelsey Johnson, the new plastic aesthetic and reconstructive surgeon at Lake Region Healthcare in Fergus Falls. I'm originally from Fargo, North Dakota, so I am very familiar with this region and I love it. My husband, Sean, and I are so excited to be part of the Fergus Falls area community.

It's natural to have a lot of questions about plastic surgery, so I'd like to share three of the most important questions I've received over the past few years.

1. What does a plastic surgeon do?

When people think of a plastic surgeon, they usually think of someone who does aesthetic procedures like facelifts, breast augmentation and tummy tucks. Those are amazing, but we do so much more than that, including reconstruction after trauma or surgery.

When I was going through my rotations in medical school, some of my first experiences included doing a mastectomy and breast reconstruction for a breast cancer patient, and doing a cleft lip repair on a baby.

Aesthetic procedures and reconstructive procedures allow a plastic surgeon to make a real difference in someone's life.

2. Will I look natural after a plastic surgery procedure?

This is the question I probably get the most. Gone are the days of the really pulled and fully augmented and in-your-face plastic surgery. Instead, we always aim for a natural, beautiful look, no matter the procedure.

3. What if someone is thinking about plastic surgery, what are the steps to take?

- You have to know why you're thinking about this. And it needs to be all about you—because it's your body. It can't be about what anyone else has been telling you or anything else that you think other people would prefer.
- The decision is also about health. Plastic surgery is surgery; there are still risks, so you have to be at the tip-top of your health game. I need to provide the absolute best care possible not only to get the best outcome, but also so that you have the best recovery. So being in good health or having any medical issues well controlled is important.
- I recommend a consultation. It's important to me to really get to know my patients and to make sure we're both on the same page and talking the same language.

What I hope to bring to the Fergus Falls region

I will be working alongside the general surgeons and dermatologist at Lake Region Healthcare. I am hoping to not only provide comprehensive care, but also very convenient care. I will also have a close relationship with the Lake Region Healthcare Cancer Center & Research Center so that we can provide reconstructive services to patients right here in Fergus Falls. I will also be available to help with any traumatic injuries.



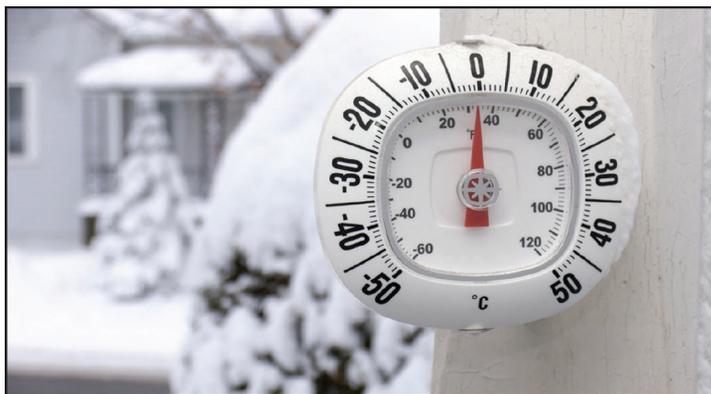
Dr. Johnson

A passion of mine is reconstructive surgery after massive weight loss. It's very frustrating for people who've done the hard work of losing weight to have excess saggy skin. It is so rewarding to help someone look as good on the outside as they feel on the inside.

I hope to provide this region with a full range of cosmetic and reconstructive services, so that people who live here don't need to travel to have access to exceptional plastic surgery procedures.

About Dr. Johnson:

Dr. Chelsey Johnson graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Arizona. While in medical school she was the coordinator of the volunteer clinic that provided healthcare to victims of domestic violence and became a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha honor society. She spent a research year at Stanford University studying craniofacial sutures and the effects of surgical intervention and manipulation on skeletal growth. She did her residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the #1 plastic surgery residency center in the United States.



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Travel Destinations:

Door County, Wisconsin

BY PAM LARSON

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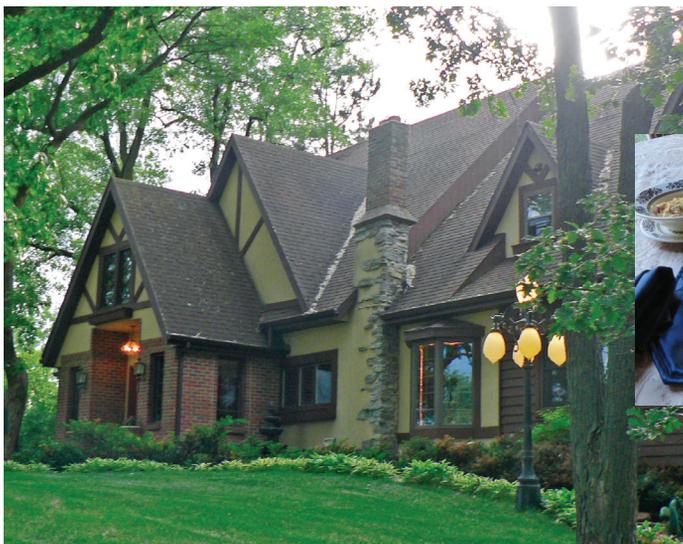
View from top of Cana Island Light tower

If you're dreaming of a trip to the ocean but don't want to travel that far, the "Cape Cod of the Midwest" is nearby in **Door County**, Wisconsin. More than 300 miles of shoreline along Green Bay and Lake Michigan dotted with boats, lighthouses and quaint buildings draw comparisons to the popular East Coast getaway. The county is a 70-mile-long peninsula, with multiple state and county parks for hiking, camping, kayaking and more. At one time, Door County had 13 lighthouses, more than any other county in the United States.

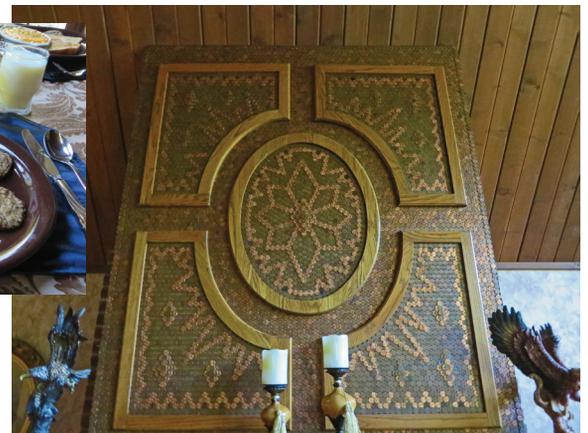
As with many trips, the journey is part of the experience. We stopped at the lovely **Otter Creek Inn Bed and Breakfast** near Eau Claire, which had a delightful setting, a sumptuous breakfast and a fireplace that was entirely covered with pennies!

On the way to Door County, we passed through Shawano County, the **Barn Quilt Capital of Wisconsin**. A local writer/photographer had seen barn quilts during his travels and, in 2010, proposed that local 4-H clubs paint the quilts as a project to encourage preservation of historic old barns, promote county tourism and provide service project opportunities. Over the course of about five years, more than 300 eight-foot-square quilt blocks were created by Jim Leuenberger and his wife, along with 15 4-H Clubs and two FFA Chapters. The barn owners met to pick out the colors and patterns for their quilt block.

Although not quite in Door County, Green Bay has a lovely pair of range lights. The **Grassy Island Range Lights** were completed in 1872 to guide ships to the entrance of the Fox River. However, in order to accommodate large ships, the channel had to be dredged almost every year. In 1966, the Army Corps of Engineers planned to widen the channel,



*Otter Creek Inn
Bed & Breakfast*



which would remove the land on which the lights stood. The lights were moved to yacht club property and were relocated again in 1998 to the break-wall and underwent several years of restoration, including installation of replica sixth-order Fresnel lenses.

Folklore regarding the possible origin of the name *Door County* points to *Death's Door* as the inspiration – that chillingly and appropriately-named strait between the northernmost tip of the Door peninsula and Washington Island. The treachery of Death's Door for Native American tribes, ships, sailors, merchants and pirates is well documented, with the strait's massive choppy waves, hidden underwater rocks and unpredictable weather claiming the lives of many. As passage through the waters became safer, the name was shortened to the friendlier Door County.

Like many of the areas around the Great Lakes, Sturgeon Bay was prosperous initially due to the logging of its surrounding forests. However, prosperity was short-lived because of widespread clear-cutting, and Sturgeon Bay eventually saw shipbuilding replace logging as the cornerstone of its economy. **Sherwood Point Lighthouse** history began with the growth of Sturgeon Bay as a port. Sturgeon Bay was a popular warm weather port, but it couldn't have a long port season because Green Bay iced over in the winter. So the Sturgeon Bay Canal was built, beginning the life of the lighthouse.

Business interests excavated a canal between Lake Michigan and Green Bay to shorten the shipping route. This canal greatly increased shipping traffic, necessitating the directional aid of a lighthouse. The Sherwood Point Lighthouse is known for its uncharacteristic red brick, instead of the usual limestone or cream-colored brick, and for its double distinction of being both the last Door County lighthouse to be automated and the last manned



Grassy Island Range Lights in Green Bay, WI



Dame's Rocket plants along the roadway



A few barn quilts



Sherwood Point Lighthouse, today off-limits to the public, is used by the U.S. Coast Guard for rest & relaxation

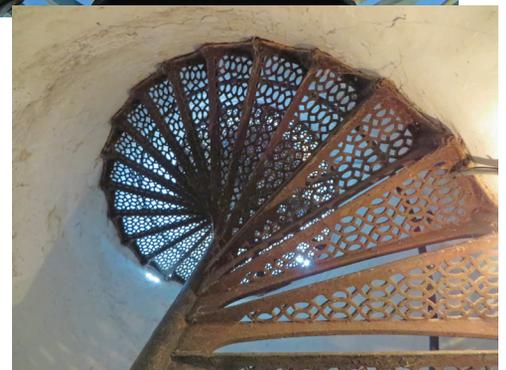
lighthouse on the Great Lakes. Decreasing budgets and improved electronic navigational aids in the 1970s forced the Coast Guard to automate many of the Great Lakes lights and use the manpower elsewhere. In 1983, 100 years after starting operation, the lighthouse was fully automated. Today, the Sherwood Point Lighthouse and grounds are off-limits to the public, with the lighthouse quarters being utilized by the U.S. Coast Guard for rest and recreation.

It may seem strange to have a Coast Guard Station in the middle of the continent, but there are about 30 active duty and reserve members who provide search and rescue assistance, law enforcement, ice rescue operations and protection to critical infrastructure at the **Sturgeon Bay Station** (below). The U.S. government completed the station in 1886 and continues operations there. One notable rescue occurred on October 10, 1895, when the two-masted schooner *OTTER* went aground in Whitefish Bay, lying one quarter of a mile from shore and flying a signal of distress. From Sturgeon Bay, the life savers and their equipment were transported 12 miles north by horse and wagon. The rescuers brought the six imperiled people safely to shore shortly before the schooner fell to pieces and was a total loss.



The **Cana Island Lighthouse** (above) is possibly Door County's most iconic and photographed light. When the lighthouse was originally constructed from Milwaukee cream city brick in 1869, it was the tallest brick structure in Door County. In the early 1900s, the brick was encased in protective steel cladding. Today, thousands of visitors climb the narrow spiral staircase for a birds-eye view of the area. The 102 steps of the tower bring visitors to the watch deck. Just above the watch deck is the third-order Fresnel lens that was hand-crafted in France. Finally, you can climb through the narrow hatchway to reach the outside gallery deck. The light has been in continuous use since it was first lit, making it one of the few lighthouses in the U.S. whose original lens is still functioning as an active navigational aid.

Cana Island Fresnel lens (right) and tower steps (lower right)



More than 100 years ago, the horizon was dotted with the billowing white sails of schooners, but now visitors are treated to an unbroken Lake Michigan vista and a stunning look at Moonlight Bay and the peninsula. The causeway to the island can sometimes be covered with water, depending on water levels and the change in tide.

While Cape Cod is known for clambakes and lobster, Door County's "**Fish Boil**" is as entertaining as it is delicious. Earl the Boilmaster regaled us with fishermen tales and anecdotes while he added salt, potatoes, onions and fresh Lake Michigan whitefish to the boiling pot of water. When the oils from the whitefish rose to the top of the kettle, kerosene was added to the flames creating the "boil over," spilling the fish oils over the side and signaling with a flare that the catch was ready to serve. Quite the show!

Scenes from the Fish Boil



Island Clipper (below)

Shoreline along boat tour (right)

We timed our trip to coincide with a **Lighthouse Festival** in Door County. For events like these, there are often special tours of remote lighthouses. We booked a seven-hour boat tour to see several lights, some that have been abandoned and neglected.



Poverty Island Lighthouse

The **Poverty Island Lighthouse** was finished in 1875 to aid the increase in iron ore traffic through the narrow shipping passage to Escanaba near the southern shore of Poverty Island. A fog signal station was constructed in 1885, and an iron oil house and docks were completed by 1894. The light was automated in 1957 and the buildings were abandoned. After another light was installed in a skeletal steel tower nearby in 1976, the light was deactivated. The structures remain abandoned, and in 2011 it was declared to be one of America's most endangered lighthouses by *Lighthouse Digest*.

Another island that vessels were forced to navigate around was St. Martin Island. Underwater shoals extend for over a mile past the island surface, creating dangerous conditions for ore boats heading to the open waters of Lake Michigan. Construction of the **St. Martin Island Light** (right) was completed in





Plum Island Life-saving Station

1904, with steam whistles added the next year. This light tower is the only example in the U.S. of a pure exoskeletal tower on the Great Lakes. Painted white, the hexagonal tower is made of iron plates, which are supported by six exterior steel posts that have latticed buttresses. Around 1939, the station was electrified, automating the light and the fog signal. The structures then were boarded up and abandoned. Today, the island is privately owned and the land around the lighthouse is controlled by a Native American tribe.

In spite of several lighthouses and navigational aids around Door County, there were still so many wrecks in the area that the *United States Lifesaving Service* (later the U.S. Coast Guard) built and operated a Life Saving Station on Plum Island to watch for mariners



Boynton Chapel (above) and interior view (left)

in distress. Located in the middle of the Death's Door Passage, the 1896 structure is historically significant because it is the only Duluth-style station still standing on the Great Lakes. A four-story lookout tower is the most notable part of the maritime edifice. In 1990, the Coast Guard abandoned the station and moved the crew to nearby Washington Island. The land is now part of the **Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge** and the *Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands* are working to restore the building.

An interesting stop in Door County is the **Boynton Chapel**, a small wooden church built in the style of the late 12th-century Norwegian *stavekirke*. Handcrafted and designed by Winifred and Donald Boynton between 1939 and 1947 on the grounds of their summer residence, the chapel is fashioned after the Garmo stave church at Maihaugen in Lillehammer, Norway. A popular site for weddings and a favorite tourist stop, the chapel contains 41 hand-painted frescoes and numerous exceptionally fine carved-wood furnishings.

When they were built, the **Bailey's Harbor Range Lights** were an effective method to keep ships off the treacherous reefs and shallows at the entrance to Bailey's Harbor. The concept is a little different from a single beacon flashing a warning. From the water, a sailor got "on range" by vertically aligning the white light in the Upper Range Light with the Lower Range Light's red beacon. The keeper lived on-site in the rear light, which was a 1½-story structure with a cupola housing the white light.

The front range light was simply a 12-foot tall building, in the shape of an eight-foot square, with small windows in the front and back. Both windows displayed a fixed red light. The lake side





Sunset on Lake Michigan



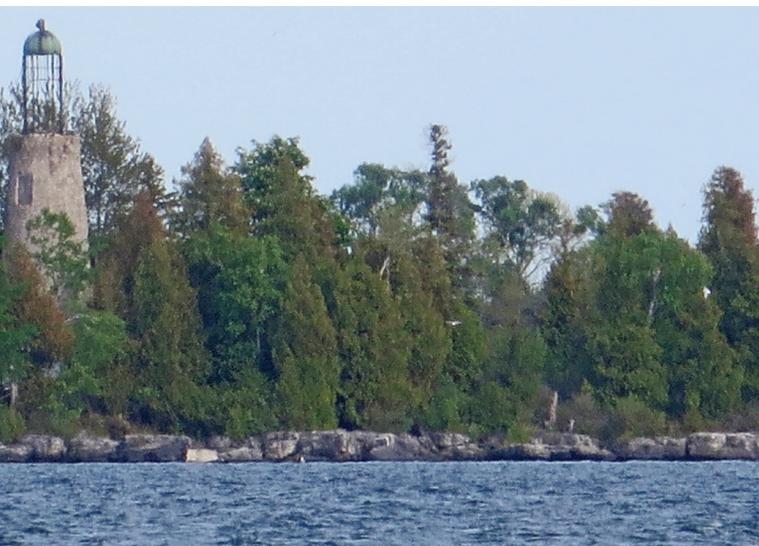
Bailey's Harbor Rear Range Light (above) & Front Range Light (right)

was for mariners' use, while the northern-facing window allowed the keeper to ensure the light did not go out. When range lights were in use, a mariner could tell they were on track when the two lights appeared to be on top of one another, white on top and red on bottom. If they appeared any other way, then the mariner was off track and could be in danger.

The Range Lights replaced the short-lived "Birdcage Lighthouse," or **Old Bailey's Harbor Light**, which was not very efficient as a beacon. The 52-foot-tall lighthouse was built out of rubble stone from a local quarry and topped off with a rare bird-cage style lantern room. Bird-cage style lantern rooms were very rare on lighthouses, and this is one of only three remaining.

Just like Cape Cod, **Door County Peninsula** has a sunrise side and a sunset side. Both have water on three sides and one can't see to the other side. According to the *International Association for Great Lakes Research*, Lake Michigan is the world's 5th-largest fresh water lake by volume.

Why not take the opportunity to enjoy an ocean-like vacation in Wisconsin, without the long trip?



Old Bailey's Harbor "bird cage" Lighthouse



Pam Larson, a retired school librarian, lives in Fergus Falls with her husband Larry. They love traveling near and far, but there is 'no place like home' in Minnesota!



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Auto Repair & Lube

Fergus Fast Lane.....21

Book, Office Supply & Technology

Victor Lundeen's.....7

Building & Construction

Everts Lumber.....14

Hilltop Lumber.....inside back cover

Clothing & Accessories

Cora's Closet.....7

Dot & Minnie's.....13

Concrete & Coatings

K&M Coatings.....14

Financial Services

Edward Jones.....3

Floor Coverings

Selands.....3

Food & Specialty Markets

Service Food Market.....3

The Market.....6

Funeral Homes

Olson Funeral Home.....13



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Lakeland Mental Health Center

.....inside back cover

Lake Region HealthCare.....back cover

Tri-County Health Care

.....inside front cover

Insulation

Tri-County Foam.....14

Insurance

Tim Bakken & Associates.....21

Picture Framing

Beyond the Mitred Corners.....13

Print Services

Midwest Printing.....21

Property Services

Property Minders MN

.....inside front cover

Real Estate

Boll Realty.....6

Century 21.....30

Keller Williams.....3

Weichert-Paulson.....21

Retirement/Assisted Living/Elder Care

Lakeside Living.....4

PioneerCare.....7

Sanitation Services

Steve's Sanitation.....14

Service Organizations

United Way Fergus Falls.....13

Services

Lake Region Electric Coop

.....inside back cover

Otter Tail Power.....23

Storage Facilities

AA Secure Storage.....23

Tractors & Power Equipment

Alex Power Equipment.....30

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