

LOWER WISCONSIN RIVER VALLEY SENTINEL

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Spring Green, Wisconsin

WE CARE MORE.

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Spring Green General Store again presents ChamberFest, a celebration of American classical music

Zou Zou Robidoux, ChamberFest Artistic Director

The Spring Green General Store is proud to present ChamberFest, a classical chamber music festival in the heart of the River Valley community. For its second season, ChamberFest will celebrate the Americana and creative history of the Spring Green General Store with *For You and Me: An Exploration of the American String Quartet*. This hour-long chamber music concert will be preceded by a Children's Concert featuring *Llama Glamarama*, a vibrant rhyming story about celebrating our differences.

ChamberFest will take place on August 5th at the Spring Green General Store (137 S Albany St.).

- Saturday, August 5th at 11 AM: *Llama Glamarama in Concert*. Join Jennifer Vosters (APT, Forward Theater) for a reading of Simon James Green's *Llama Glamarama* with a live string trio score featuring works by Scott Joplin, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky,



Photo by Nath Dresser

A view from the 2022 ChamberFest held last year at the Spring Green General Store.

and more! This fun and inclusive concert will invite music lovers of all ages to learn more about the instruments, ask questions about the music, and enjoy the art of storytelling with a live soundtrack.

- Saturday, August 5th at 12 PM: *For You and Me: A Celebration of the American String Quartet*. Beginning and ending with excerpts from Antonín Dvořák's

beloved "American" String Quartet, this hour-long concert will trace the evolution of the string quartet sound in the American musical tradition. Along with the Dvořák, *For You and Me* will feature a variety of string quartets by American composers, including Wynton Marsalis, Philip Glass, and Caroline Shaw.

All ChamberFest events are free with a \$10-\$20 suggested donation.

You can make a tax-deductible donation to ChamberFest through their fiscal receiver, Create Wisconsin, at www.mightycause.com/story/Chamberfest. Cash and check donations will be accepted at all concerts.

Additional details can be found at www.springgreengeneralstore.com/chamberfest/.

ChamberFest is supported in part by grants from River Valley ARTS and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.



Photo by Taylor Scott, Managing Editor

Did you really think we'd let July go by without publishing the ever-elusively hard to take fireworks pictures? The Valley saw fireworks in both Lone Rock, at left, for Lone Rock's Fourth of July Celebration and in Arena, at right at the Yolanda Peterson and Mary Jones Memorial Arena Centennial Celebration in early July.



Photo by Karen Scott

OPINION/EDITORIAL

The (not so) Plain and Simple Correspondent — July 4th Challenge: We Need Immigrants

Katie Green, Columnist

The Glorious Fourth is a time for sober reflection. My immigrant forebears came to this country to escape starvation, some to avoid religious persecution, all with improvement to their situation in mind. Chances are yours did, too. I am grateful that mine took the initiative, boarded ships, and braved the unknown hardships to sail here. Ultimately their coming was bad news for the native peoples, and this country is still dealing with the consequences of the policies of extinction visited upon them. Some of my ancestors were part of the problem, some were on the side of the beleaguered and tried to mitigate the suffering. But even as the First Nation tribes have refused to disappear, so migrants of all kinds have likewise persisted around the edges, hoping to move to the center and be found deserving of a piece of the pie.

Consider the slaves who were imported from Africa against their wishes. Their descendants are here to stay and have slowly, slowly risen, even to the highest offices in the land, although your average African Americans are not accepted fully, in fact are labeled with insulting



Katie Green

stereotypes about their intelligence and habits. Their indisputable contributions by way of labor, their poignant, lively, exuberant music, food, clothing, literature, and language have been gifts that all but the most obtuse and resentful avow. Interestingly, the two current African American Supreme Court Justices have recently conducted open

warfare against each other's opinions regarding an affirmative action case and a free speech/religious freedom case about whether or not a wedding website designer could legally refuse to work with same-sex couples. The acrimonious exchanges between the Justices only proves that there is no unanimity shared by this or any cultural or racial group. We are individuals, not a homogeneous blob. The race card, the gender card, the grudge card— why not assiduously try to rise above categories to extend the compassionate human card? The Constitution needs to be more responsive in favor of protecting those most requiring a helping hand among us.

On my daily walks, now that air quality has improved enough to resume those, I observe how many non-native immigrant plants line the prairie path. I enjoy them all, even the aggressive ones that are in danger of taking over, and would miss them if they were uprooted in the interests of floral purity. I also train my binoculars on the activities in a red tailed hawk nest, admiring the instinctive dedication to a new generation that keeps the hawk couple hustling food for their offspring, repairing the nest day after day during heat, storms, blankets of smoke. So it is with the desperate people crowding our southern borders. What they endure to reach what they hope will become a haven for them and their families, many with small children in tow, is unimaginable. Learning some of the stories that propelled them to flee, I know that in their shoes I would do the same. Why is the gate not opening? Our country needs workers. Most immigrants would make good citizens if given a chance and are notoriously hard workers. The state of Minnesota has passed legislation this year that smooths the way toward employment and participation of immigrants in civic life regardless of legal status. Would that Wisconsin found a thoughtful way to do the same.

In the lead-up to WWII, thousands of European Jews, including Anne Frank's family, were turned away from our shores by the successful lobbying efforts of vocal anti-semites. The ovens of the Nazi death camps awaited the Jews at their forced return. Our own inhumanity

was on display then and continues to be flaunted daily toward all manner of groups, making it discouraging to listen to the news. A friend told me that the Jewish mayor of her town, the first of that faith to hold the office, has received death threats simply because he's a Jew. Anti-semites have attended city council meetings to taunt him and disrupt the proceedings.

And then there are other presumptuous citizens who want to ban books many of us want to read, to fire teachers who feel a moral imperative to reveal the full history of this republic, including the violent, reprehensible things that have happened over the centuries. Again, death threats have been sent to school board members who support the truth-telling instructors. Need I say it, such behavior seriously undermines a democratic society. Whatever happened to freedom of inquiry? How did we arrive at this pass?

In previous columns I've mentioned that my son's church has sponsored eight Afghan families who won the lottery to come to the US after collaborating with the American military in Afghanistan before our troops pulled out. Those families are doing well enough that in the fall the church will sponsor another family, counting on the assistance of the assimilating families already here to show them the ropes. Thousands of Afghans who applied for asylum are still sitting in refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan or are lying low in Afghanistan itself, hoping to escape eventually. President Biden increased the numbers allowed to immigrate, boosting the trickle set during the Trump era, but the administration is now relying increasingly on churches and other private sponsors as funds set aside for resettlement have been depleted. A few nicks in the bloated military budget or a fairer taxation system could easily refill the pot. It's lamentable that the Stingy Party has a stranglehold on all the expenditures that would make us civilized by any definition of the word.

The stance of many Americans — of our nation as an impregnable castle surrounded by a moat filled with crocodiles, drawbridge up -- has damaged the economy and deprived us of the many gifts immigrants could supply if only we

extended an extravagant welcome. The folk song "Lady of the Harbor" sums up my troubled thoughts about the outcomes if current attitudes and practices don't change soon.

The Lady of the Harbor
(Joe Jenks version)

*From far away and distant lands
The tempest-tossed with hopeful ears &
calloused hands
Reach toward the light, the torch held
high,
And cast their gaze upon the lady of the
harbor*

*And she welcomes them with open
arms,
She says "Let my children in",
Oh you lady of the harbor.*

*And so it was with my own kin,
They sailed from Sweden, from France
& Ireland.
Their earthly cares packed in their bags
They cast their gaze upon the lady of
the harbor.*

*Now we're locking down the borders,
we're filling up the jails
And we say they don't belong.
How conveniently do we forget
That we've all come to sing the same
sweet song.*

*But will the dream survive the strain
Will huddled masses have a chance to
learn its refrain?
Or will we fall into our fears and turn
our backs
against the lady of the harbor?*

*Shine on, Shine on
Oh you lady of the harbor.*

(There is also an excellent version by David Crosby)

Katie, who until recently lived in Plain, has been writing for fun and profit since childhood. Self-described as opinionated, she writes in the interests of a more loving, better-functioning world for all. She may be reached at katiuegreen@icloud.com.

ON THE COVER

"Spring Green Preserve State Natural Area"
(2023) Photo by Don Greenwood



Spring Green Preserve State Natural Area. This property, sometimes known as The Wisconsin Desert, is home to numerous rare and endangered species in a variety of biomes. The preserve is owned and maintained by the Wisconsin Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

Main access is available on Angelo Lane via Jones Road, Spring Green.

From the photographer:

"Taken on a hazy morning in early July. Prickly Pear cacti and Lead Plant were in full bloom, and the landscape and sky were reminiscent of the art of Vincent Van Gogh."

—Don Greenwood

Submit your artwork or photography for cover consideration:

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Editor's Column — My experience: Weight loss medications can be life changing (for more than just shedding pounds)

Drugs like Ozempic can be a game-changer for weight loss — it's time we get serious about understanding how. Society must pivot to make these drugs available, accessible and destigmatized.

Nicole Aimone, Editor-in-Chief

I think at this point, we've all heard of, seen articles or discussed the new "fad" of using the diabetes drug, Ozempic, for weight loss. I've heard the opinions that deride this as the "easy path" to a chronic problem that some would suggest we all just diet a little more and fit another walk into the day to fix. However, the reality isn't always so simple and, as someone who has spent the last six months using this drug for weight loss, I want to share my experience, and why the general "we" of society should not write the drug off as a fad or as an easy way out.

I've been taking Wegovy (Ozempic's twin sister and literally the same drug, but approved for use in weight loss) since January of this year, and the process has shocked me in ways I didn't expect. It has changed my outlook on a lifelong problem I've had with weight loss and freed me of

things I didn't know restrained me.

Wegovy is the brand name of the measured weekly injectable of the drug semaglutide — again, the same drug as Ozempic. I'm told that semaglutide works by mimicking the action of gut hormone GLP-1, which is released after you eat, and slows down the time it takes your body to empty the stomach. The result of keeping this hormone activated is people feeling less hungry, feeling full for longer and eating less — which ultimately results in weight loss.

I first heard of Wegovy at a friend's birthday barbeque in August of 2022. A mutual friend casually mentioned a medication she was taking kept her appetite at bay and she had rapidly lost 40 pounds. That sparked my attention and we dove into an excited conversation all about the drug. At the time, it truly sounded like this miracle, a magic bullet for me to lose the weight I had been grappling with for a lifetime.

What my friend shared with me that weekend stuck with me but I brushed it off, assuming my primary care provider would never prescribe it to me and just tell me to try diet and exercise. (Don't even get me started on doctors ignoring



Photo by Nicole Aimone

Pictured is the author's first dose of Wegovy after injection, on January 7.

weight loss struggles in obese patients, that's a conversation for a different day.)

It wasn't until December, after months of trying to count calories and burn off more than I take in, with very minimal results, that I made an appointment to

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