Home for the holidays

Sleep apnea
Living with loss

The Social Scientist

KAREN NELSON

Green Bay | Appleton | Neenah / Menasha | Oshkosh

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women
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Giving a voice to people who are not normally heard is what drives me to wake up and tackle each new day.

– Karen Nelson

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still remember participating in Christmas programs on Christmas Eve as a child, and watching for Santa out the kitchen window. When I had children of my own, Christmas was all about watching them in their church programs, going to see Santa, baking cookies together, decorating the Christmas tree and posing for the dreaded photo Christmas card. Don’t get me started about all the advent calendars around the house and whose turn it was to open each one for 24 days.

Times are a-changing with the kids: I have to get pictures of the girls during the summer for the Christmas card because of college. Now we do the “adult” Christmas Eve church service, and afterwards head out for a Chinese dinner. If we’re lucky, the girls will still play spoons and a couple of other games with us since it’s a holiday. As they keep growing up and away, I think about how fast things keep changing. I wonder which traditions they will carry on and use with their own families someday, and which ones will only stay in my heart as “back then” memories. Whatever it may be, I hope you get to share some traditions with someone you love this Christmas.

Karen Nelson is our cover lady this month, and is such a lovely woman! Her smile is beautiful, and her voice and laugh are infectious. Her role with the City of Appleton in Diversity and Inclusion has been so successful that Green Bay is looking to add the same staff position to their city this coming year. Check Karen’s story out on page 20.

There are lots of great stories inside Women this month! A few are holiday foods, decorating your home, how to get through this season while you are living with a loss, and how the Salvation Army tradition of ringing the bells got started.

I hope you get to Live, Laugh, and Love wherever this holiday takes you! Merry Christmas from all of us at Women magazine!

Leslie Asare, Publisher
Question of the Month

WHAT’S YOUR favorite part of Christmas?

My favorite part about Christmas is the music. I love traditional carols and fresh arrangements on old songs. To me, music is worship!

Emily Schutte, Hobart

I love reading “The Polar Express” to my daughters during the holiday season. It’s a fun and meaningful tradition!

Melissa Yelle, Green Bay

I’ve been trying to spend less money on books, so I check most of mine out from the library and keep track of the ones that are my best of the year. Before the holidays, I try to do some literary matchmaking and gift my favorites. My biggest success was Tana French’s “The Likeness” — it helped me connect with my aunt, who’s a mystery fan, about a genre I don’t normally read.

Emily Bowles, Appleton

I love the Charlie Brown Christmas and the Rudolph movie!

Ellen Van Handel, Little Chute

My favorite part of Christmas is when all the family comes home to get together!

Donna Schmidt, Kaukauna

My favorite part of Christmas is the warm feeling you get inside when sharing cozy fires, holiday movies and good food with family and friends.

Kate Green, Ashwaubenon
The holidays are upon us, and with them comes all the stress we all feel every holiday season. Somehow, we manage it, but it’s not always easy to do. Managing the stress of the holidays is even more challenging for people in recovery for alcoholism or drug addiction, especially if they’re still new in their sobriety.

But there are ways to manage your sobriety during the holiday season – it just may take more of a concerted effort.
COMMUNITY IS KEY

“One of the main things that we teach or encourage at LSS (Lutheran Social Services) is a sense of community, especially in the recovery world,” said Patrick Reilly, a program supervisor for the Addiction and Restorative Justice treatment program at Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. “So, I recommend during the holidays that individuals (continue to be) engaged in whatever outside support meetings or groups that they attend. In most areas, a lot of the outside support groups will increase the meetings that they hold during the holidays. In some places they’ll have a meeting every hour for 24 hours on Christmas and other holidays.”

Not everybody goes to support group meetings. But if you’re traveling to a different city for the holidays, Reilly suggested doing a little research to find when and where there are support meetings you can attend in that area. And even if you don’t attend, you at least know you’re welcome to attend those meetings wherever you go.

A professional in the addiction field at Nova Counseling in Oshkosh who wanted to remain anonymous, but who we’ll call Sandy, said a person in recovery can also reach out to their AA sponsor, support group or whoever is helping them in recovery. “Talk to them before going to a holiday get-together, telling them where you’re going and what your plan is for staying clean and sober at this event. Then give that person a call midway through the event to touch base and tell them how it’s going.”

AN ESCAPE PLAN IS IMPORTANT

It’s important to have an escape plan for get-togethers they may be attending over the holidays, said Reilly. “That means they should have the ability to leave if they feel they need to. That may be coordinating a ride where you can call a friend and ask them to come get you; it might also be driving yourself, if you have that option.”

It’s not necessarily smart to go to the party with someone else because then they must leave when you want to go, and it can ruin their plans. “If you have another type of exit plan, you’re not ruining anyone else’s time,” said Sandy. “But under no circumstances should someone feel obligated to stay or feel like they’re stranded because they don’t have a way out.”

“If they’re honest with themselves, they know what happens to cause them to start feeling uncomfortable. When that happens at holiday gatherings, tell yourself it’s time to go. Just because you’re going to a party or other holiday function, doesn’t mean you have to stay until the end. You just say, ‘Thank you very much. I had a nice time and I appreciate your inviting me, but it’s time for me to go,’ said Sandy. ‘After you leave, make sure you have a place to go to that is safe, like an AA meeting where you can talk about how it went for you. This is all especially important for the person going through their first year of sobriety because these events are all firsts for them.”

Reilly agrees, saying you should also trust your instincts and be open and honest with your family about your sobriety. “If you don’t feel this is a good year to attend the festivities with family or friends and you feel participating might jeopardize your sobriety, don’t attend. It’s okay to be selfish with your sobriety. Usually there’s someone in the family dynamic who will respect and trust your decision. Let them know by saying something like, ‘Hey, I love you all and I appreciate the invite, but I need to focus on myself this holiday and I’m going to work on my recovery.’ All they want is for you to be safe, healthy and happy, rather than using. Or you can attend but bring a sober friend. Most families are going to welcome anybody during the holidays, so ask if your sober friend can come along. That way you kind of have a partner of sorts so you’re not alone; sticking with the LSS idea of community, especially going into the holidays, that will support your recovery.”

WHAT CAN FAMILY OR FRIENDS DO TO HELP?

Be supportive and understand that it’s going to be difficult for your loved one, especially if they’re new to recovery. Let them know that attending an event is up to them. “Let them know that you love them and want them there over the holidays, but you should understand that they may not be able to attend their gatherings this year, or they may not be able to attend for the entire duration of the party,” said Reilly. “Respect that, and understand it has nothing to do with the family dynamic. Rather it is just that this individual is trying to protect their sobriety.”
When is the last time you experienced a very poor night of sleep? Were you sleepy or irritable the following day?

We can all relate to the physical and emotional effects of a bad night’s sleep. But many Americans live with this as a chronic condition.

According to the American Sleep Apnea Association (ASAA), 22 million Americans suffer from some form of sleep apnea, with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) as the most common presentation of the disorder.

WHAT IS SLEEP APNEA?

“Obstructive sleep apnea is caused by a blockage of the airway, usually when the tongue collapses against the soft palate and the soft palate collapses against the back of the throat during sleep, and the airway is closed.” – American Sleep Apnea Association.
Scientific explanations aside, what does the average patient actually experience?

“Excessive daytime sleepiness is the chief complaint,” said Dr. Gurminder Dhillon, MD, a Prevea Health sleep medicine physician at HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital in Sheboygan. He added that snoring, choking and gasping during sleep – normally observed by a bed partner – are other signs of sleep apnea.

Interestingly, Dr. Dhillon’s patients are usually not aware that
they are waking up throughout the night. He calls these disturbances “micro-arousals” and notes that the concern is usually raised by the person’s bed partner.

Dr. Michael Maguire, MD, agreed: “If you’re falling asleep at times you shouldn’t be, sleep apnea [could be the culprit].” Dr. Maguire is board certified in pulmonology and sleep medicine and is the Medical Director of the ThedaCare Sleep Lab and owner of Fox Valley Pulmonary Medicine.

When one’s muscles relax during sleep, certain types of throat anatomy can cause an obstructed airway. In other words, breathing stops. This leads to snoring, choking and gasping during sleep.

Untreated, sleep apnea can cause high blood pressure, chronic heart failure, atrial fibrillation, stroke and many other cardiovascular problems, according to ASAA. Sleep apnea has also been associated with Type 2 diabetes and depression and has been a factor cited in traffic accidents.

**HOW IS SLEEP APNEA DIAGNOSED?**

Dr. Maguire stated that the first step is to talk with your primary care doctor. He or she can do some screening questions, such as the STOP-bang test. Simply answer “yes” or “no” to the following questions:

- **Snoring:** Do you snore loudly (loud enough to be heard through closed doors)?
- **Tired:** Do you often feel tired, fatigued, or sleepy during the daytime?
- **Observed:** Has anyone observed you stop breathing during your sleep?
- **Pressure:** Do you have or are you being treated for high blood pressure?
- **BMI:** Body Mass Index more than 35?
- **Age:** Over 50 years old?
- **Neck circumference:** Is your neck size, at its widest, greater than 17” if you’re a man or greater than 16” if you’re a woman?
- **Gender:** Are you male?

If the physician determines you could be at risk, he or she may refer you to a sleep specialist such as Drs. Maguire or Dhillon.

The next step is a sleep study. This is usually done in a lab but if you do not have other chronic health conditions, your doctor might recommend a home study.

Dr. Dhillon describes the lab study as a direct observation study. The patient is hooked to electrodes and monitored throughout the various stages of sleep. Home studies consist of a finger monitor to measure oxygen levels, a nasal canula and a belt around the waist or chest to measure respiratory effort.

The results of the sleep study will help the doctor determine a diagnosis. Dr. Dhillon explained that the sleep study will provide an Apnea Hypopnea Index (AHI), which is an average of the number of times one breathes sub-optimally per hour. An index of 5-15 is mild, 15-30 is moderate and 30+ is severe.

**HOW IS SLEEP APNEA TREATED?**

If you’ve ever heard of a device colloquially known as a “sleep apnea machine,” you’ve observed the most common and effective sleep apnea treatment: CPAP therapy.

CPAP stands for Continuous...
Positive Airway Pressure. A CPAP device is a mask covering the nose and potentially the mouth, said Dr. Maguire. It uses gentle air pressure to hold the collapsible part of the throat open. Dr. Dhillon said his patients are often pleasantly surprised at the multitude of mask options now available, which can be adjusted for increased comfort.

After trying CPAP therapy, “They’ll say ‘I never knew I could sleep this well!’” he said with a smile.

Drs. Dhillon and Maguire agreed that CPAP therapy should be tried first. It is not invasive and is the best treatment option for the majority of patients.

Yet, there are other options.

Dr. Dhillon mentioned oral appliances – basically, a glorified mouth-guard – that can be worn at night to bring the jaw forward and minimize collapsed blockages in the airway. Dr. Maguire said that more severe cases can be treated with surgery to remove redundant tissue in the back of the throat.

Dr. Alissa Edwards, DDS of Elite Smiles Dental, is trained in diagnosing and treating sleep apnea. Some patients are not able or willing to continue using CPAP therapy, she said, so her office has had success in offering a device that holds the jaw into a position where the airway isn’t being cut off.

“We’ve had a lot of success getting [AHI] numbers as low as possible,” said Dr. Edwards.

Patients who see another dentist can see Dr. Edwards just for a sleep apnea consultation, if they’d prefer.

Finally, many patients may wonder if sleep apnea treatments are covered by insurance. All three doctors answered in the affirmative: The majority of insurance companies are receptive to providing coverage for sleep apnea treatments. Dr. Dhillon stated that CPAP therapy often needs to be at least attempted, first, in order for insurance to cover alternative treatments, since it is the most common and effective treatment available.

“In general, insurance gets aggressive!” said Dr. Maguire. “They’d rather pay for this vs. a heart attack or stroke.”

CONCLUSION

A good night’s sleep affects one’s entire life. If you or your partner have concerns about your quality of sleep, it does not hurt to see a doctor.

“You don’t know until you get tested,” said Dr. Edwards.

And as Dr. Maguire says, “We spend a third of our lives sleeping. It should be good!”
Julie Klarkowski has traditionally given her coworkers in the Green Bay School District a little something for Christmas. A few years ago, she asked her sister Debby, who makes soap, to help her make some to give them each a bar. “Well, Debby and I are both a little OCD. So, a few bars of soap turned into us having about 400 bars of soap; and months later we had about 40 different products that we were selling.”
They joked to themselves that they should start a company and call it Potty Mouth Sisters because when growing up their dad always threatened with putting a bar of soap in their mouth if they swore, as so many parents did.

Hence, Potty Mouth Sisters Soap Co., LLC was born. But it wasn’t long before the sisters had not only made some 400 bars of soap, but they were making and selling a product line of about 40 different products. Not wanting to be recognized as “just a soap company,” they changed the name to Potty Mouth Sisters, LLC.

“Our grandma grew herbs and had a lot of remedies. And after she passed away, my sister found an old recipe book with some herbal remedies in it,” said Debby (whose last name is also Klarkowski – they are two sisters married to two brothers!). “So, we were able to use some of her really old family recipes for some of our products. I guess we had an interest in the herbal part of it because of her, especially since we used to always help her tend her gardens and things like that.”

“One thing led to another with the business. First it was homemade, natural soap; now we make pain-healing salves and lotions, shampoo bars, hand and body lotions, candles, deodorants, menopause spray, lip balm and we sell CBD oil,” said Debby. “All of our products have hemp oil in them, and everything is all-natural.”

The sisters are passionate about helping people, especially women, by providing natural products as an alternative to prescription drugs and a way to get relief naturally.

**CBD IS ALL THE RAGE – BUT BUYER BEWARE!**

CBD is a chemical that occurs naturally in cannabis plants. It is not a psychoactive chemical, and it is legal in Wisconsin. And it doesn’t take an eagle eye to see that practically everyone is selling CBD in Wisconsin. But is it pure CBD? Not by a long shot, said Debby. “There’s a lot of charlatans out there selling CBD, but quite often it’s not true CBD.”

The women have developed a close relationship with a hemp grower in Colorado who has educated them extensively about CBD: how it’s grown, extracted and tested. The CBD Potty Mouth sells is third-party tested by a chemist at an independent lab. It is tested for the amount of CBD contained in the bottles, the amount of THC to make sure it’s not illegal, and to ensure that it’s free from pesticides, herbicides, mold and mildew. When they receive the test results, they decide whether they want to purchase it, which they always do as they have come to trust this particular grower.

“When we travel to do shows, we always take our test results with us because we want to show people that what we are selling is truly what’s on the label,” said Debby. “So what people are getting is honestly what they’re paying for.”

Debby said people should be leery about buying CBD from just anybody. “A lot of what’s being sold is hemp oil. Hemp oil is not CBD. Hemp oil is a by-product of the hemp plant, but it is certainly not CBD.”

The sisters recommend that
anyone buying CBD ask the seller to show them their third-party test results. “Because the CBD industry is not FDA-regulated, anybody can put anything on their label. They can say it’s third-party tested, but you should always make sure you ask to see the results,” cautioned Julie. “Any reputable seller of quality CBD will have the test results and gladly share them with you.”

**CBD CAN BE USED FOR PRACTICALLY ANYTHING**

According to Julie, CBD is used for all kinds of pain and other ailments. It’s also used by some for bipolar disorders and attention-deficit disorders. For herself, she’s been able to get off high-blood pressure medication and thyroid medication using CBD oil. “I’ve replaced those prescriptions with CBD, and I feel better,” she said. Debby, too, had gotten off her medication.

CBD has become the catalyst for their business, accounting for about 50 percent of their overall sales, Debby said. “Once they get the CBD, the next things they try are some of our natural remedies. We have a hemp pain salve that is used for sore joints; we have a si-
nus salve that is used for sinus headaches.”

“We both have fulltime jobs, but the reason we do this is because we truly want to help people heal themselves and educate them on the power of herbs and being organic, using alternative medicines as opposed to always going with the traditional pharmaceutical line,” said Debby. “We have a lot of clients who were once opioid-addicted and are now coming for CBD. It’s really rewarding when people have been on opioids for a while and they come back after four to six months and tell us they’ve kicked their habit.”

YOU’VE GOT TO HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR

“We both have an excellent sense of humor and we use that humor in our business to help sell our products,” said Debby. “Customers are drawn to our sense of humor and our down-to-earth sales ‘technique.’ We’re not power-selling to anybody.”

Though the women each still maintain fulltime jobs with the Green Bay school district, they still manage to do about 35 to 40 craft, trade, and health and wellness shows a year, and do everything in the business themselves, from designing packaging to developing their website (www.pottymouthsisisters.com). They do get some assistance from family members; even their grandchildren have been known to put labels on the bottles.

They don’t have a brick and mortar store, but their online store (website) accounts for about 50 percent of their business and the rest is derived from shows they do and word-of-mouth advertising. They currently have clients in about 25 states with more to come in the coming year.

NOT YET READY FOR SHARK TANK

While you may be thinking this business venture is perfect for Shark Tank, they have already been approached by the popular ABC show. At that time, they were not ready to do high-volume production. Their ultimate goal is to get production equipment to produce large volumes of products, but they weren’t at that point when the TV program approached them a year ago. “We went into panic mode,” Debby said. They’re not dismissing that idea for the future though. But there are other things they’re working on first. They are exploring the possibility of running a wholesale business, and they’re trying to triple their sales this year yet. To do that, they are considering getting some free assistance from SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) and are also applying for the Green Bay Packers Mentor/Protégé program.

“Our No. 1 goal is to help others, and have a good time doing it,” Debby said. “We have enjoyed the journey so far and we want to continue to enjoy the journey.”

Owners and sisters, Debby and Julie Klarkowski.
With such a huge emphasis placed on traditions and spending time with loved ones, the holidays can be beyond difficult for individuals coping with loss and grief. “It is important to first acknowledge that the holidays will be different following a loss, and likely will be difficult,” said Katie Huskey, LCSW, owner and provider at Purple Lotus Counseling, LLC. “Denying this reality will lead to guilt, shame and likely more difficulty. It is OK to acknowledge where you’re at.”
Wichmann Funeral President Daniel Densow agreed and shared these words from Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., available on Wichmann’s website: “Since love does not end with death, holidays may result in a renewed sense of personal grief — a feeling of loss unlike that experienced in the routine of daily living. Society encourages you to join in the holiday spirit, but all around you the sounds, sights and smells trigger memories of the one you love who has died,” explained Wolfelt.

“At the same time, remember that it is OK to experience happiness and joy,” Huskey advised. “This in no way diminishes the love you have for the person you’re missing. Guilt implies we have done something wrong, and embracing joy isn’t wrong.”

HOW TO COPE (AND WHY SOMETIMES YOU DON’T NEED TO)

“Make a plan and stick to it,” said Huskey. “Decide where you want to hold the holiday celebrations. It may be important and cathartic for you to hold the holidays just like before the loss. It may also be important for you to change things up. There is no right or wrong answer, just make sure to make a conscious decision.”

Huskey also offered some straightforward strategies to help people navigate social situations:

• Say no! It is OK to say no to holiday parties, events and gatherings. This doesn’t make you a bad person, friend, family member, etc. This means you’re taking care of yourself. This is not only okay — it’s healthy!
• Ignore people who tell you what you “should” or “shouldn’t” do during the holidays. It is vital that you listen to yourself and trust that you’re doing what is best for you. Communicate with family and friends what works for you and stick to that. Setting boundaries while navigating this difficult time is vital.
• Be cautious around alcohol. This can be a slippery slope while we are grieving and celebrating holidays. If a party is getting out of hand with the drinking, it’s OK to head home.
• Stay off social media if this helps you. It can be challenging to engage or watch others post about their holiday celebrations while you’re grieving. It’s OK to put down the social media for a bit.

“You may already feel stressed, so don’t overextend yourself. Avoid isolating yourself, but be sure to recognize the need to have special time for yourself,” suggested Wolfelt.

“Realize also that merely ‘keeping busy’ won’t distract you from your grief,” continued Wolfelt, “but may actually increase stress and postpone the need to talk out thoughts and feelings related to your grief.”

KNOW WHAT FEEDS YOU

“Do something for YOU,” said Huskey. “No, this isn’t selfish. We cannot pour from an empty cup. Find ways during this time to recharge and refuel. Take some quiet time for yourself. Journal, meditate, listen to music or a podcast.”
One responsibility you may want to think about as you age is to take the time to conduct will and estate research and planning. You might be putting it off because you’re unsure of what it all entails or where to start the process.

Know that it’s an important step to take as you think about your future and your loved ones. The last situation you want is to leave it up to someone else and not have any control over what happens to your assets that you’ve worked so hard for over the years. Learn more about the topic so you’re prepared to tackle will and estate planning when the time is right for you.

WHAT IS IT?

Estate planning is personalized to a person’s specific needs and wishes. It’s about having control over where your assets go when you pass away...
and who is in charge of them. Keep in mind that will and estate planning isn’t just for the rich. An estate is simply all of your property and your property rights. When you pass, these continue to live on and must be allocated to someone else. Therefore, how your property is managed and distributed depends upon whether or not you have a will when you die (testate) or you don’t (intestate).

THE IMPORTANCE OF IT

The most important part is making sure your end-of-life wishes are met, such as proper distribution of your assets. It makes the life of those around you who you care about a lot easier when your wishes are documented and carried out as you desire. Your family may have specialized needs or a unique situation, so in this case it’s even more critical that you have a plan in place for when you die.

Attorney Christina Peterson with Hanaway Ross Law Firm in Green Bay recommends, “Consult with an attorney because every family is different in their specific estate planning needs. You should also talk to your financial advisor about your will and estate planning to ensure your beneficiary designations are consistent with your estate plan. Properly planning your estate can save your family time and money in the handling of your final affairs.” She adds, “You should also have someone in place to manage your finances or health care if you become incapacitated.” This is called power of attorney for your health care needs and durable power of attorney for your financial needs.

WHERE TO START

Your next question may be where do I start? Generally speaking, you’d call up an attorney and say you need estate planning assistance. Next, you’re asked to complete a worksheet to gather essential information about your situation. You’d then schedule a consultation where you go in and talk about your circumstances and your goals. The attorney then makes recommendations about how they believe you should proceed. Finally, they then draft up the agreed-upon documents and mail them to you so you can review them from home. Your attorney will answer any questions you have and then you’d come back into the office to sign the documents.

HOW TO MAKE CHANGES

Most estate planning documents can have changes made to them. The reasons you’d come in to make modifications are because there’s a change in your family such as a birth, death or divorce. Additionally, maybe your children are getting older or you want to change the people you’ve appointed for different roles. Once you know you need to make changes, you’d schedule a time to go into your attorney’s office and discuss the type of change to determine if you need to redo a document or add an amendment to a current one.

WHAT IF YOU DO NOTHING?

If you don’t have a will when you die then you’re putting the decision-making power in the hands of the state. In this case it’s called probate, where the court handles disposing of your assets. It’s also important to note that anything that has a beneficiary designation — i.e. 401(k), life insurance, real estate — overrides a will.

With that, Attorney Jon Fischer with McCarty Law LLP in Appleton shares the importance of taking action. He says, “A huge favor that each parent can do for their kids is to talk about what they want their end-of-life decisions to be — i.e. what type of care they want to receive.” Jon adds, “These are conversations that can and should change over the years. For example, you may feel one way about a situation when you’re 50 and likely differently about it when you’re 85. If your parents have told you what they want to happen when they die, it gives the kids a wonderful sense of relief of not having to make the tough decisions. Instead of carrying any burden, they’re simply carrying out the parent’s decisions.” Have these talks about what you would want to have happen so your kids aren’t stuck thinking about if they made the right decision and can be at peace. The Fox Valley End of Life Care Coalition give classes and lead discussions about how to talk with your children on these difficult topics.

CONCLUSION

You should now feel more equipped and prepared to handle your will and estate planning. This way you can feel more secure and self-assured that after you pass, your assets and loved ones will be taken care of as you wish. Take your time and think through these important decisions ahead of time so you’re ready to move forward and start the process with confidence.
Karen Nelson knows that a lot of her peers tend to stress the emotional side of things when advocating for increased diversity. As the Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator for the City of Appleton, that's not how she approaches things. To Nelson, everything boils down to facts and data.
“I guess I’m left brained in a right-brained world,” she said. “I always have an analytical lens, which is unusual in my work. My driving force is to make things as research-based as possible. I can stand my ground when making an argument while being less emotional and more fact-based.”

Nelson took the job as Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator in July of 2017.

**DIGNITY & RESPECT**

She hit the ground running by launching the Dignity & Respect Campaign in 2018. The campaign is an opportunity for community members to “reinforce their commitment to creating environments for all to work, live, learn and play — with all of our differences,” according to the program’s website. It is a local emphasis on a national campaign that offers simple, but
effective, ways to encourage kindness and acceptance.

Part of the program includes taking an online pledge to exhibit strength and dignity in the community. At the campaign’s launch party in 2018, 113 people took the pledge. Since that time, more than 2,500 worship leaders, neighbors, employees and community members have signed on.

In 2019, Nelson introduced the 2.0 version, which she called “A Deeper Dive: Truth & Reconciliation,” which has focused on igniting community-wide dialogues surrounding inclusion.

As 2020 approaches, Nelson is gearing up to introduce version 3.0, which will emphasize racial equity.

“Conversations around race are difficult and can be uncomfortable to some, but we are all-in and committed to the task of working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all in The City of Appleton,” she said.

A VOICE FOR ALL

Nelson’s role isn’t specific to racial inclusion.

“Giving a voice to people who are not normally heard is what drives me to wake up and tackle each new day,” Nelson said. “I like to tell people sometimes I feel like the mother of 11 children. There are 11 federally protected classes of inclusion in our society. I work doubly hard to not lean to one affinity group, but to advocate for each 11 of my ‘children.’”

Nelson’s workday isn’t a traditional 9-5 gig. She’s up at 4 a.m. to pray, listen to gospel and R&B radio and gear up for a day that’s often filled with meetings around the city. She also attends the majority of Appleton’s cultural events.

While she loves to participate in the various celebrations and festivals, it also leaves less time to unwind with her husband and high school sweetheart Stanford.

“So much of my community work is done on evenings and weekends. So we don’t necessarily have a lot of couple time then,” Nelson said. “But he comes with me to a lot of the community events. We do couple stuff when we get away traveling.”

The Nelsons have two grown children: 32-year-old daughter Sable is an attorney in Richmond, Virginia. Son Stanford II, 26, works in IT in Milwaukee.

SCIENTIFIC ROOTS

While today she’s a regional expert on diversity and inclusion, she started off her career as a chemist.

She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from Bennett College in North Carolina and was one of the few graduates who had a job offer directly after graduation. She moved from a chemist into a formulator before switching directions and entering marketing for products like hair care, breast implants and X-ray accessories.

“You could say I have gone from being a chemist to a social scientist creating a more cohesive community,” she said.

Despite her love of scientific research, she increasingly found herself drawn to social justice causes.
“It’s the foundation of my childhood with my parents,” Nelson said. “I come from a very conservative Christian background. The only real activism that we got to actively participate in with my parents’ blessing was the Martin Luther King Jr. nonviolent approach. We never were the Malcolm X “by all means necessary” direction. That was fundamental to shaping me through my life. I credit my parents for channeling our social justice.”

Nelson was a member of the NAACP Youth Division, where she learned the nonviolent responses to violence.

“Our mentors taught us the mental aspect when
you’re facing verbal or physical attacks: Keep your composure, keep your wits about you,” Nelson said. “It’s just as relevant now as it was 100 years ago.”

MODEL INITIATIVE
Nelson’s work is gaining fans throughout the region. While Appleton has had a diversity coordinator for 22 years (more recently it added the inclusion tag), it is thanks to Nelson’s leadership that the City of Green Bay is now following suit. In November, the Green Bay City Council passed its 2020 budget, including for the first time a diversity and inclusion position.

“Diversity and inclusion at this time is even more needed than ever,” Nelson said. “Take a look at the environment in our country. We see it here in Appleton and it’s more progressive than other places in the state and nation. Here in Appleton we want to be intention-
al about changing the narrative about diversity and inclusion. We want to be moving toward a place where we can all be accepted for all our differences.”

She said the conversation about how to accomplish true diversity is an evolving one.

“Inclusion has evolved over the years. Previously, it was just about getting diversity. Now the ‘inclusion’ part is getting to be a part of the party,” she said. “Diversity is being asked to come to the party. But what’s the fun if you’re standing along the wall and nobody’s asking you to dance. Inclusion is being asked to dance, not just be a fly on the wall.”

It is that spirit of leadership that drives Nelson.

“We’ve been approached by Oshkosh, Menasha, Sun Prairie and Sheboygan to launch regional efforts to
Karen Nelson

Full Name: Karen Nelson

Age: 61

City: Appleton

Title and company: Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator for the City of Appleton

Professional organizations or groups: Member of the Board of Directors for The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center and Celebrate Diversity Fox Cities as well as a member of the Fox Cities Chief Diversity Officers Collaborative; Member of Fox Valley-SHRM; League of Women Voters-Appleton; NAAAH-R-Milwaukee and Diamond Life Member Delta Sigma Theta International Public Service Sorority, Inc.

Education details (degree and school): B.S. in chemistry from Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina

Executive MBA degree from the Lubar School of Business at UW-Milwaukee

Who is in your immediate family? Husband Stanford, two adult children: Sable and Stanford II.

Hobbies? Reading, traveling, sewing and fashion design (Back in the day I was the first black Miss Charleston-Optimist Club!)

Favorite local restaurants? I eat out a lot, so I have many: Cozzy Corner is No. 1, followed by Jerk Joint, Bowl 91, The Big Pot & Grill and Wilder’s Bistro!

What is something few people know about you? I collect elephants!

What do you do for exercise? Appleton Parks & Rec’s ZUMBA!

Favorite book? Professionally it’s “Diversity Managers: Angels of Mercy or Barbarians at the Gate” by Dr. Shelton Goode. I’m analytical, so this book appeals to me because it’s based on extensive research and practical experience. Personally, it’s “Becoming” by Michelle Obama because it’s full of messages of daily renewal that hope springs eternal so we can become whatever and whoever we want to be — the sky’s the limit!

Favorite movie? “The Notebook,” because I’m a hopeless romantic. My husband and I have watched it together at least 10 times, because there’s so much similarity to our love story!

Dream vacation? Although I’m well-travelled from Canada to Mexico, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Hong Kong, I have yet to visit Hawaii. I believe that would be a dream vacation, followed by Paris, Italy, Germany, Africa and Ireland — also on my bucket list!

Do you have any pets? We have 3 dogs: RuffHouse (full breed German Shepherd), FattyWatty (German Shepherd and Labrador Retriever mix) and Miss Rita (a mixed-breed rescue).
understand our process and our journey,” Nelson said. “We tell them ‘let us tell you our story,’ but this is not cookie-cutter work. Don’t look at the City of Appleton as a road map. Every municipality is going to be different. Build off of what you have in your community. Every community’s journey will be different but make it your own journey.”

Just as the diversity and inclusion programs look to history for guidance, so does Nelson. One of her key role models is her mother, Kathleen Ferguson, who defied all odds and earned her master’s degree in the segregated South before Karen was even born. She also looks to the words of the first black woman to travel in space aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour, Dr. Mae Jemison, who said, “Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.”

Nelson hopes that the younger generations look to her and her peers for inspiration in the future.

“I can see that happening right now. Little girls, my own daughter, look up to me,” she said. “I don’t do it for that reason, but it does warm my heart when I see that gratefulness and appreciation.”

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In the blink of an eye, the holiday season is here again. While some seemingly have everything done months in advance, others scramble to get it all finished in time. Instead of making it time-intensive and stressful this year, here are a few ideas to inspire and refresh your home for the holidays.
UNDERSTATED IS IN

Fresh greenery invokes a feeling or spirit of the season, rather than going all out with tinsel and trinkets. Tina Lutz of The Wreath Factory is seeing the trend of using natural materials throughout the home this year. “Homemade wreaths, garlands and front porch decor are all in style right now,” she said. Classes to assemble wreaths and other adornments are offered at local florists, and can be a fun way to put a personal touch into holiday decorating.

Nothing beats the fresh smell of a cedar garland, and the rich color and texture adds natural beauty in an almost effortless way. Another way to add personalization is to use clothespins to clip family photos or Christmas cards from past years.

REFRESH AND REPURPOSE

A small change can make a big difference. Adding floral or berry picks to the Christmas tree creates an entirely new look. It also saves time and expense. “Sometimes, a little goes a long way. Changing out one or two elements can help with a holiday refresh, rather than going out and buying a completely new look.” said Lutz. New ribbon, dried orange, or popcorn and cranberry garlands all add a new look without breaking the bank.

There are many ideas online to upcycle household items into holiday decor as well. Cookie cutters can be made into ornaments, mason jars can be turned into luminaries, or create winter terrariums out of almost anything.

COLOR THEORY

Traditional colors are still popular, but other colors are making a stronger appearance this year as well. Non-traditional colors like blue, and even color combinations of pink and turquoise are being used in lieu of traditional red and green. Even black and white can be a classic style to try out for the holidays.

Mixing metals with retro elements of gold is trending this year, and falls in line with the idea of repurposing items you may already have. Decor that is wintery, but not specific to Christmas, is definitely on-trend.

CHECK PLEASE

Diane Gerhard of Homestead Decor has years of experience decorating for all seasons: “This year, buffalo plaid is still everywhere. From patterned Christmas ornaments to aprons and throw blankets, everyone is still reaching for this traditional plaid to enhance their holiday home.” Plaid not only gives your home a warm and cozy feel, but it’s also a surefire gift for any gift exchanges you may have. It’s universally appealing, and can be used through all winter months.

SCENTS OF THE SEASON

In addition to creating atmosphere, candles are an easy way to tie holiday decorating together. “Don’t overlook holiday scents when it comes to home decor,” said Gerhard. “Candles in a Christmas tree pine scent or cinnamon helps create a feeling of nostalgia, and add that finishing touch.”

Scents are also linked to memories, more so than any other of the five senses. The smell of freshly baked cookies may bring back wonderful memories of the past, and make your home feel complete.

TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS, MODERN TWIST

Candles give a Christmas tree an old-fashioned feel, but are now available in a safe strand of lights. Flameless candles can also be used in windows to create a vintage vibe. Wooden items such as soda crates or boxes can add an old-world feeling to just about any area of the home. Add fresh greenery, or bottle brush trees to create a festive look that can easily be switched out after the holidays are over. Making small changes to existing items saves time and effort – two things always in short supply during this time of year.

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

As much as it may seem otherwise, this time of year isn’t about perfection. It’s about enjoying time with family, friends and slowing down amidst the chaos. While there are endless events to attend, places to go and people to see, taking the time for those few meaningful connections will create lasting positive memories. Have a happy and safe holiday!
December is synonymous with delicious food! Let’s explore what local chefs and families are preparing for their holiday tables.

TRADITION MEETS TREND

Peter Kuenzi, chef and owner of Zuppa’s in Neenah, loads his menu with decadent foods such as oyster stew, crown roast and lobster mac and cheese. This time of year, he said people gravitate towards preparing special meals that bring people together.

“I think everybody has a tradition in their family,” he said, adding that foods such as fruitcakes, bread pudding and bacon-wrapped water chestnuts...
nuts are often prepared by area families.

The Marq’s schedule is chock full of corporate events, large and small, throughout the holiday season. According to Roberta McMILLAN, Special Events Manager at The Marq, area companies are often looking for something nice to do for their employees this time of year.

Terry Thetford, General Manager at The Marq, has noticed many companies looking for finger foods and buffets during the holidays. Rich dishes such as broasted chicken and holiday hams are also popular, as are cranberry accents and Door County cherries. With the shortened holiday window for parties, many companies are extending the celebration by hosting their parties in January or February.

Chanda Foley is a local chef and caterer who made an appearance on Food Network’s “Cooks vs. Cons” and is currently the café leader and caterer at Grounded Café in Green Bay. She has noticed a trend towards carb-conscious dishes. For example, a stuffing dish could be prepared with quinoa replacing the bread for a guilt-free indulgence.

Charcuterie boards are also trending. Chanda has seen these served during many events. A charcuterie board is a platter of meats, cheese, preserves, pressed fruit, dried fruit, nuts and berries. Try arranging one like a Christmas tree to spruce up your holiday table!

The holidays are also a perfect opportunity to try something new. Peter has noticed that TV cooking shows, Pinterest and food magazines inspire people to experiment with new dishes. With a few taps on your phone or TV, endless options are available for even the most hesitant home cook.

De Pere resident Heather Nelson is no stranger to trying new things. Every year, her family gets together and samples special holiday cocktails. Last year, a cranberry Moscow mule was a big hit.

“I used to be a total scrooge about the holidays!” she said. “All the stress just wore me down. But a couple years ago, the adults in my family agreed...
to stop exchanging gifts. Now, my family comes to my house for Christmas Eve and we plan special meals for Christmas Eve and Day – one of which is always a nice steak dinner! We eat and drink well, play card and dice games, and spend our time just enjoying each other. Now, I’m not such a scrooge!"

**SEASONAL SELECTIONS**

The menu at Zuppa’s reflects an appreciation for seasonality. Peter prepares a special Brussels sprouts dish with caramelized onions and pancetta, with walnuts added after the sprouts are roasted. Potato gratin, served with leeks and gorgonzola cheese, is another favorite.

Other root vegetables that make a colorful appearance this time of year include beets, rutabagas, turnips, potatoes, sweet potatoes and carrots. Peter recommends roasting, steaming or cooking these veggies in butter for a scrumptious side.

“You want to capitalize on what’s being harvested right now,” agreed Chanda. Her play on Brussels sprouts is as an appetizer, shaved and served with bacon and blue cheese.

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**MICHELLE HAYES’ POTATO SOUP**

- Cook 6 ounces of chopped bacon in a large pot. Remove from pot, leaving 1 tablespoon excess oil.
- Cook 1 pound hot Italian sausage, breaking it into chunks. Remove from pot.
- Cook 1 finely diced onion 5 minutes, then add 10 cloves of minced garlic. Cook for 1 more minute.
- Add 4 cups of chicken broth and 6 cups of water, bring to a boil.
- Add 5 peeled and chopped russet potatoes, cook 13-14 minutes.
- Add 1 bundle of chopped kale and cooked sausage, bring to a light boil.
- Stir in 1 cup whipping cream, bring to a boil.
- Season with salt and black pepper.
- Garnish with bacon and grated parmesan before serving.

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HEATHER NELSON’S CRANBERRY MOSCOW MULE
- Place 1 cup crushed ice into a copper mug
- Add 4 ounces ginger beer, 4 ounces cranberry juice cocktail, 2 ounces of dark rum or vodka, and 1 tablespoon lime juice
- Shake well and garnish with a lime wedge, cranberries or fresh mint leaves

Appleton resident Michelle Hayes has a family tradition that starts with the ultimate comfort food: potatoes. Her family prepares a savory potato soup to eat after the Christmas Eve church service but before opening gifts. It’s a yummy dish that fortifies the family for all the fun of Christmas night.

“After our gift-opening, we all sit at the table again and have shrimp, meatballs, pigs in a blanket, sausage and crackers, homemade cookies and candy!” she shared.

DELECTABLE DESSERTS
Speaking of cookies and candy, rich desserts are a staple of the holiday season. Chocolate treats, Christmas cookies, pies, and Yule logs all make tasty temptations this time of year.

Bite-sized desserts are a hit right now, according to Chanda. People feel less guilty when eating miniature versions of their favorites. Whether it’s mini cupcakes, tiny Bundt cakes or individually prepared trifles, parties and gatherings are just a bit more special when mini desserts are on the menu.

Looking for your dessert to pull double duty? Try making it into your table centerpiece! A trifle in a glass dish prepared with angel food cake and fresh fruit – or ganache and Oreo crumbles, if you’re feeling more decadent – would make the perfect edible décor.

This time of year, put aside the stress and guilt and focus on your friends and family. The holidays are the perfect chance to share love – including the love of food!
Life Celebration was an event held by the Community Benefit Tree on Nov. 12 at the Grand Meridian in Appleton.

Sue Lamers, Chuck and Peter Towns

Cory Smrecek and Kristy Piechecki

Theresa Caputo was at the Fox Cities PAC on Nov. 20 in Appleton.

Emily and Chris Feavel

Bill and LeAnne Huber

Mo Parent, Jody Pankratz and Elizabeth Kremar

Mary Foate, Rochelle Andrew and Kimberly Hoyle

Dewey Seidler, Betty Riley and Kim Seidler

Olivia Asare, Kim Fenske and Isabella Asare

Julie Phillips, Paula Mayer, Debbie Maier and Cheri Sprangers

Olivia Holz and Angela Haufschild
It’s that time of year again when the iconic Salvation Army Red Kettles make their way out in the community, and the sound of bells ringing becomes a part of the backdrop of holiday shopping. As you exit the store, you reach into your pocket and drop your change into the kettle as you pass. It has likely been an auto-response that you have completed year after year, but have you ever stopped to wonder how this tradition started and what happens to the money that makes its way into the red kettles?

According to The Salvation Army USA, the concept of collecting money from the public started in 1891, when Salvation Army Captain Joseph McFee was concerned that so many poor people in San Francisco were going hungry. That holiday season, he sought to provide a free Christmas dinner for the poor and remembered in his past as a sailor in England, seeing a large, iron kettle on the dock at the boat landing into which passersby tossed coins to help the poor.

Captain McFee placed a similar pot at the Ferry Landing in San Francisco. Beside the pot, he placed a sign that read, “Keep the Pot Boiling.” He soon had the money to provide Christmas dinner for those in need. By 1901 Captain McFee’s idea had spread across the country to the east coast, and today the Christmas tradition of putting kettles out to collect money for those in need has spread worldwide.

Locally, money collected in the red kettles goes far beyond providing one meal. In the Greater Green Bay area, the Christmas Campaign is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the organization that assisted 12,384 individuals in 2018 with programs and services that provided hope for those in need.

Donations to the red kettles get used almost immediately. Examples of where funding is used include the noon lunch program that served over 33,000 hot meals, the food pantry that distributed 9,822 bags of groceries, and the transitional housing program that moved 32 families from homelessness to self-sufficiency. A broader array of services includes senior programs, clothing vouchers, youth camp and Kroc scholarships.

For The Salvation Army, “Doing the Most Good” relies on the work of thousands of volunteers. To help carry on the more than 100-year-old tradition of collecting money in kettles, visit registertoring.org or call 920-884-3077 to sign up for your shift today. □
Hawker stands and street food stalls in Singapore and Malaysia are world-renowned for their curried noodles, hearty soups and savory-stuffed pancakes called murtabak meant to be eaten “in hand.” Middle Eastern in origin, murtabak derives its name from the Arabic term for “folded.” It is made with dough wrapped around a mixture that’s typically made of ground meat (often lamb), onion and egg, and seasoned with garlic, curry powder and chili peppers. It can be compared to a South American empanada. For convenience, in this recipe the meat mixture is “stuffed” in whole-wheat tortillas instead of homemade dough. Serve with chutney.

### Asian-style beef burritos

Recipe courtesy of eatright.org.

**Recipe courtesy of eatright.org.**

**Rebecca Clyde, MS, RDN, CD**

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- 1 medium yellow onion, halved and sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated peeled ginger root
- 1 pound ground lean beef* 
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly-ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 large egg whites, slightly beaten
- 2 medium green onions, chopped
- 1 small chile pepper, seeded and sliced**
- 3 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 6 (10-inch) burrito-style white or whole-wheat tortillas

### Nutrition Analysis (per serving)

Serves 6.

Calories: 450; Calories from fat: 160; Total fat: 18g; Saturated fat: 4g; Trans fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 120mg; Sodium: 570mg; Total carbohydrate: 44g; Dietary fiber: 3g; Sugars: 1g; Protein: 26g

Recipe courtesy of eatright.org.

**Rebecca Clyde, MS, RDN, CD**

### Directions

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and ginger root; cook and stir, 4 to 5 minutes, until the onion is soft and translucent.

Add the beef, curry powder, salt and black pepper. Cook and stir, about 5 minutes, until the meat is browned and cooked through. Remove from the heat. Cool slightly.

Add the eggs, egg whites, green onions, chile pepper and cilantro; blend well.

To make each stuffed pancake, place one tortilla on a flat surface. Place about ½ cup of the beef mixture in the center of the tortilla, spreading the mixture into a 4½ x 4½-inch square. Fold the tortilla into a package by folding the top, bottom and sides to enclose the beef filling.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil on medium heat, on the nonstick skillet or on a stovetop grill. Carefully place each pancake in the skillet; cook for 5 minutes on each side until the filling is cooked inside and the outside is golden brown. You may need to cook the pancakes in batches, depending on the size of the skillet or grill surface. (Or, if you prefer, bake the murtabak in the oven).

**Cooking Notes**

*Substitute ground lamb or chicken for beef.

**The pepper may be mild to medium-spicy hot, depending on personal preference.

Stuffed pancakes, or murtabak, also can be made ahead, refrigerated or frozen, and reheated in the oven at 350°F.

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Who is Karen Nelson’s boss?

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