

# WQ

## Women's Quarterly

### PROFILES:

**MaineGeneral's  
van Eeghen retires  
after an impactful  
32-year career**

**Sandy Longfellow  
continues to expand  
her horizons**

**Gardiner glass  
artist upcycles  
used glassware  
to create unique  
new pieces**

**2019 Summer Edition**

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*This special advertising supplement was produced by the Kennebec Journal/Morning Sentinel and is published quarterly. The next issue will be in October. The cover features Emilie van Eeghen, MaineGeneral's chief behavioral health officer.*

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# How about learning a few new words?

## Just a Thought

By Terri Hibbard



**L**et me be right up-front with you, dear readers: I'm an old lady who grew up in the 1940s and 50s, which, all things considered, was a terrific time to grow up in Maine. I absorbed the culture and values of the time and they're still pretty-well embedded in me.

Through the years, good music was Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, a little boogie-woogie, Elvis Presley and later, Roy Orbison. When rap arrived on the scene, I hoped it was a flash in the pan and tried to avoid it. Now, I'd give almost anything to see "Hamilton," an all-rap production.

I've kept up with the times, sort of. I have a smartphone, a smart TV (both smarter than me) and a Facebook page.

In my youth, a modicum of good manners and respect for most older adults was a given. In college, when one of the guys did something gross trying to be funny, we women chastised him with a rebuke—"C'mon, Pete. That's rude, crude and socially unacceptable," and Pete apologized.

Now? Hmmmmmm.

I wish I could accept or ignore the social mores of today without whining about the changes that grate on my nerves.

But it's sooooo hard.

For example, I think Hollywood screenwriters, contemporary authors and a whole raft of other people need to brush up on the English language. They've apparently forgotten that there are a gazillion words in our deep and complex language that can perfectly illuminate an entire range of emotions—anger, frustration, surprise, horror, love, sadness, betrayal and all the rest.

If modern writers would stop to consider the multitude of colorful and flavorful English words, they wouldn't have to rely on just one—the F-word—hundreds of times in popular movies and books. Repetition of the same 'ol, same 'ol word used as an adjective, an adverb, a noun, a pronoun, an exclamation . . . is boring and, to many of us, off-putting.

One evening, I watched "A Star is Born," the 2019 version. I wanted to believe it would be as good as the accolades and awards it accumulated. Thankfully I didn't pay to see it—I had requested it through my library.

What a disappointment. Good story, if too-often

told, good acting, enjoyable music. Lousy language. Over and over again, the word that many people find ineffective as well as offensive. After the first dozen times, I tried to tune it out, but it was everywhere, coating nearly every scene in a sheen of blather.

A couple of weeks ago, I actually paid to see "Long Shot" with Charlize Theron and Seth Rogan. Again, a decent, if far-fetched, story with OK actors. They lost me when that word began to sprout. Theron is a beautiful woman—without trash spilling out of her mouth. Rogan came off as slightly gross anyway, especially after a scene of him alone in his room. Argggggghhhhh! I can only guess it was supposed to be funny. It was embarrassing.

When I was young, on those rare occasions when we heard the F-word, we assumed the speaker was either uneducated, dimwitted, just plain sleazy, or all of the above. Gutter language we called it.

I grew up with Hibbards who were topnotch cursers, but they only used appropriate curses in appropriate settings. Colorful and inventive cussing. During a first-class rampage, the variety was amazing yet they stayed away from language that they believed was simply too low to go. Out in public, they left their curses home as a courtesy to others.

My father swore, but taught me early on not to. His teasing me to say a swear word and then slapping me if I did as he told me to, was certainly poor parenting, but effective. It prevented my cursing for a lifetime except during major temperamental explosions.

It's certainly possible to write a great movie without crummy language. I recently watched (for the umpteenth time) "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" – Paul Newman and Robert Redford. Sigh. Fabulous. Classics like "Doctor Zhivago," "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "Grease," "On Golden Pond," "E.T." and more recently movies like "RGB," "Mr. Rogers," "The Post" and "Green Book" all managed to be excellent without spewing profanity.

Check The Great American Read's list of 100 beloved books online. I haven't read every one, but of those I've enjoyed none turned me off with foul language. "Gone with the Wind," "To Kill a Mocking Bird," "Rebecca," "A Prayer for Owen Meanie," "A Separate Peace," and more. Also, books I've read more recently: "All the Light We Cannot See" (the best book I've read in decades), "Becoming" and "The Tender Bar," two terrific memoirs and everything by Monica Wood.

I read somewhere the definition of trashy language: "Profanity ... is ignorance made audible."

Sounds good to me.

Contact Terri at [terrihibbard41@gmail.com](mailto:terrihibbard41@gmail.com)

# MaineGeneral's van Eeghen retires after an impactful 32-year career

*She leaves behind a legacy of support for mental illness, substance use disorder*

BY JOHN D. BEGIN

MaineGeneral Communications Specialist  
Special to Women's Quarterly

Some people find their life's passion on a college campus, in their first job or later in adulthood.

Emilie van Eeghen found hers as a child volunteering at Fountain House in New York City, the first clubhouse dedicated to the recovery of men and women with mental illness.



Contribute photo

Emilie van Eeghen will conclude a 32-year career at MaineGeneral Health later this month when she retires.

That's where her stepfather worked, and the passion he and others exhibited as they provided services to individuals in need deeply inspired her. Eventually it led to a 32-year career working with the same population, as well as those struggling with substance use disorder.

"I knew then that whatever I did in my life, I wanted to care as deeply about it as they did," she said.

Now nearly 67, van Eeghen's work at MaineGeneral Health, which began fresh out of graduate school, will end with her retirement later this month.

As MaineGeneral's chief behavioral health officer, van Eeghen said that while she looks forward to spending more time with her husband, Richard Tory, and her family, she will greatly miss the people with whom she's worked closely and those she and her peers have helped.

The latter group, in particular, is what drew her to the field in 1987, and kept her there during a time when regional services for people with mental illness and substance use disorder evolved from an initial scattering of services into a full continuum of care.

The keys to this growth, van Eeghen said, have been the interpersonal relationships and agency partnerships that served as a foundation on which to build.

"Behavioral health care services have always been insufficient to meet the need, so you have to be

creative. But you also have to think of yourself as a partner in providing comprehensive services along with other agencies," she said. "Collectively, we strove to develop a system of care that shared resources and tried to meet the needs of individuals and family members."

Van Eeghen said services today are broader.

"What we have now is a much more comprehensive array of services, to go along with a much better understanding of mental illness, mental health issues and substance use disorder," she said.

"Behavioral health is about helping people build relationships. Having the opportunity to build relationships in pursuit of meeting people's needs has been the best part of my career. It's been amazing and what I'll miss most."

When someone has dedicated herself to a particular field for many years, it's logical to ask what she would like to be remembered for.

Van Eeghen hopes her legacy will be characterized by a consistent focus on her department's mission and her collaborative efforts with others to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorder.

"Over the years, we've had to make some hard decisions about the way we provide services. There are programs that are critical to the community that at times were financially difficult to operate," she said. "I'm proud of being able to keep my eye on the mission and guide us through those times so we could continue to provide them."

"I also hope I've helped diminish the stigma—both at MaineGeneral and at the statewide level, because it has a devastating effect on people and their families."

In addition to her family, support for the work van Eeghen does has come from the success stories of those whose lives have been changed because of the services they've received.

"I've met people who first connected with us through our needle exchange program. They weren't interested in treatment then; they just needed clean needles," she said. "And now some of them are professionals working in the substance use disorder field," she said.

Van Eeghen also has high regard for people who still are working to find answers.

"I also know people with mental illness who we served who struggle every day and yet go to work and figure out how to develop relationships with people," she said. "You have to admire people for their resiliency in being able to continue on despite these challenges."

## Colleagues laud Emilie van Eeghen for her compassion, leadership and steady demeanor

Emilie van Eeghen, MaineGeneral's chief behavioral health officer, closes out a 32-year career later this month leaving behind a long list of applause from fellow workers.

The impact she has had during her tenure—from her first position with the Kennebec Valley Regional Health Agency to her current role—is best noted by some of those who have worked closely with her during her time at MaineGeneral Health.

*"Emilie is recognized by her peers for her wealth of knowledge and as a great strategist who gets things accomplished. She has persevered in a world that does not value appropriately the treatment of our mentally ill and substance use community members. Yet, for 32 years, she has led a team that has tirelessly advocated for and treated those with mental health and substance use disorders, making our community a better place to live and improving the lives of so many. Emilie's steadfast leadership, calmness and intellectual capabilities will be sorely missed!"*

**Chuck Hays, president and CEO,  
MaineGeneral Health and MaineGeneral Medical Center**

*"Very early in my career at MaineGeneral I realized the importance of having a passion and tenacity for always making decisions based on what is in the best interest of the patient. I learned this by observing Emilie. Her passion was always evident and her tenacity showed, as she always worked hard to increase health care access for those who needed it most."*

**Paul Stein, chief operating officer, MaineGeneral Medical Center**

*"I've had the distinct privilege of knowing and working with Emilie for four decades through our mutual work in behavioral health services in central Maine. She has worked tirelessly to improve access and quality of care to persons with mental health and substance use problems. She challenges us at the clinical level to become more competent and compassionate every day. Her knowledge, creativity and communication with the agencies and players throughout the state is, I believe, unparalleled, and stimulates solutions to many a thorny dilemma."*

*Her legacy at MaineGeneral is certainly one that will live on in those among us whom she has inspired and instructed, and she will be sorely missed and fondly remembered."*

**Bob Crosswell, MD, DLFAPA, medical director,  
MaineGeneral Mental Health and Substance Use Services**

*"Emilie has been a strong advocate for community members seeking mental health and substance use treatment services for her entire career at MaineGeneral Health. She is known for her wisdom, historical knowledge and dedication to behavioral health services throughout the state. Emilie's professionalism, strong leadership, passion for excellence and her respect for those we serve are a model for us all. Personally, I'm grateful for her willingness to mentor me over the past several years!"*

**Shelly King, administrative director,  
Behavioral Health Services, MaineGeneral Health**

# Sandy Longfellow continues to expand her horizons

*Family and greenhouses are her pride and joy*

BY GREG GLYNN

Marshall Communications  
Special to Women's Quarterly

When Sandy Longfellow grew up in Readfield, she thought about growing a family. Little did she know her roots in Maine and passion for gardening would blossom the next town over in Manchester.

After graduating from University of Maine at Augusta, Longfellow was planning to pursue a career as a lab technician working in a doctor's office—but that plan changed when she started picking up her mom at Longfellow's Greenhouses in 1981.

Every day after school or work, she picked up her mother, who worked at Longfellow's as a seasonal worker. It was Longfellow's mom who introduced her to Scott Longfellow, who worked at the greenhouse owned by his parents.

After the pair met, she saw a different future was ahead of her. During the course of one year, she married Longfellow and also became an owner of Longfellow's Greenhouses. This happened quickly in the late 1980s, when Scott Longfellow's parents entered retirement and he purchased the business to keep it in the family.

Around the same time, Sandy and Scott Longfellow's family started to grow. With three young children at home, she became a stay-at-home mom with their three children, William, Evan and Ellie. While initially jumping into the family business when she married Scott, she stepped away from the business to support the children in their younger years. But, as any family business owner knows, it can be hard to ever really step away.

While raising the children, Longfellow was able to do some of the gift buying for the retail store and still be involved in the business; she remembers getting a lot of babysitting support from family.

"The kids grew up here. Longfellow's Greenhouses has always been a part of their life," she recalled. "When they were young, I would sometimes go grab a pizza and bring it back here and they would just go out and play on our bags of soil, so it has always been a part of their life," she said.

As the children entered their teenage



Contributed photo

Sandy Longfellow at work at the family business, Longfellow's Greenhouses.

years, all three worked at the greenhouse and that's where Longfellow said they learned important life lessons and values. She remembers having the confidence to put her daughter, Ellie, behind the cash register for the first time. Just a few months ago, that same Ellie, now 22, is completing her training to become manager of an L.L. Bean retail store.

Evan, age 27, works for the USDA in Augusta, but can be found at the greenhouse during the busiest parts of the year helping in whatever way he can.

Meanwhile, their oldest son, Will, remains very much involved in the business and can be found helping customers or working the phones from behind his desk, placing orders and coordinating deliveries.

Longfellow and her husband feel very fortunate to have worked with their children, even at one point having all three working at the greenhouse.

"They started working here and they were watching and learning along the way,"

she said. "I would like to think that having watched Scott and I put so much time into the business for all these years, that they have all developed into good workers with a good work ethic; they're not afraid of hard work."

As her children became adults, Longfellow had more time to dive deeper into the business. She took the lead role in implementing a new point-of-sale system and handling the IT (Information Technology) needs around the greenhouses. There isn't much she hasn't done. She's like a utility player in baseball, having worked from a long list of jobs from being a buyer and setting up retail displays to helping customers and working at the register.

Especially in the spring, Longfellow works directly with customers.

"I really enjoy connecting with our customers—especially on weekends, I am right out there on the floor and working with the customers. It's important to me because we've got our family picture on the wall and they

can put a name with a face," she said.

Those customers just keep on coming. This year, the locally-owned greenhouses had a record day for sales in May.

But it's not the sales that drive Longfellow. "It's wonderful working with enthusiastic customers," she said. "I think we are so lucky because people come here because they want to and you can see how much joy plants give them, especially this spring when the weather was so terrible, and it was like a reprieve."

The Longfellow family really loves what they do. Together on vacations, they will often tour other gardening centers, as far away as North Carolina, to get good ideas. Admittedly, Longfellow said it can be hard to not talk about business when they are home.

"I would say when the kids were younger, they probably thought we talked too much about the business at home, but now the tables have turned; they share ideas and have a lot to add—they all have really good suggestions. Sometimes though, as a family, we just say, 'let's talk about the Patriots or the Red Sox,' because occasionally you just need a mental break."

Like any good businesswoman, she is always thinking ahead about what is next for Longfellow's.

"Definitely trying to keep up with technology and social media is going to be an important part of that and we're always trying to develop Longfellow's into the best greenhouse it can be."

The business is currently working on its website and improvements to its apps (applications). Longfellow's Greenhouses has a very popular Facebook page and Instagram account that has many images of its latest products and gift ideas, as well as flowers and plants. Longfellow's also hosts a variety of social events, craft shows and children's festivals that have attracted a younger generation of gardeners.

"We have attracted new customers and continue to attract new employees that have a passion for gardening," Longfellow said. "We are always looking at ways to make our business run better and, most importantly, continue to make it a happy place for our customers and a place they want to come visit. That's our future."

# Gardiner glass artist upcycles used glassware to create unique new pieces

BY WANDA CURTIS  
Correspondent

**M**aine glass artist Luiza Brown first became interested in working with glass after a friend gave her a fused glass pendant necklace about 15 years ago.

Brown started working with glass beads and making jewelry. She later got involved in slumping, which is a process by which glass bottles and jars are flattened in a kiln at high temperatures and then made into other objects.

Brown said that she has made cheese trays for her husband's catering business, spoon rests, small dishes and pendants using the slumping technique. She enjoys taking old, discarded bottles, Mason jars and other glass containers and making them into something useable.

Glass art is a very popular art form today. In addition to naturally-occurring glass, manufactured glass is now available in a multitude of shapes, sizes and colors. Some of the current techniques used to produce glass art forms include blowing, fusing, slumping, hot-sculpting and cold-working.

According to the Corning Museum of Glass website at [www.cmog.org/collection/galleries/glass-in-america](http://www.cmog.org/collection/galleries/glass-in-america), glassmaking was America's first industry. The authors of that website report that the early colonists who settled in Jamestown, Virginia established a glass workshop in 1608. The colonists had anticipated a booming business because there was an abundance of sand on the James River beaches and there was plenty of wood nearby to fuel the furnaces.

Brown found the process intriguing.

"I was introduced to fused glass in 2004 and soon developed a love for the magic that happens when glass and heat combine," Brown said. "Since then I have expanded my work to include slumping and molding. I work a lot with bottles, upcycling them into new forms and uses."

Brown sometimes does custom work. She has made jewelry for wedding parties, wall hangings for birthday or Christmas gifts, map magnets and wall pieces. She said that she also is able to take a sentimental piece of glass and turn it into another form for those who request it.

Many of the bottles and Mason jars that Brown converts into other forms come from yard sales and bazaars. She said that she also cleans out barns and finds interesting pieces of glassware there.

Brown said that one of her favorite projects is rescuing discarded dishware and turning it into

**"I was introduced to fused glass in 2004 and soon developed a love for the magic that happens when glass and heat combine."**

**LUIZA BROWN**

bird baths and bird feeders at her Kennebec River Glass Works studio located at 39 Washington Avenue in Gardiner. She also makes garden ornaments and enjoys making wall hangings with sea glass.

## DECADES OF HISTORY

The Wikipedia account [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamestown\\_Glasshouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamestown_Glasshouse) states that a number of small furnaces were built in the Jamestown area and a small group of glassblowers and laborers cut down hardwood trees to fuel the furnaces. The glassblowers and laborers collected ash, sand, crushed oyster shells and burned seaweed. However, the account states that it sometimes took as long as two weeks to reach the 2,300 degrees necessary to melt the basic ingredients for making glass. So glassblowing only occurred five or six days each month because of the amount of preparation time required.

Severe weather and difficult economic conditions eventually caused the Jamestown glasshouse to close. So the colonists continued to import glass windows, table glass and bottles from England. A second group of colonists later attempted to reopen and operate the Jamestown glasshouse, but their efforts to establish a thriving business also failed due to the many hardships they faced at that time.

Today, Jamestown is home to a modern glasshouse building and workshop. The furnace has been replaced with a much larger one that uses natural gas for fuel. Local glass artists make glass there and share the history of glassblowing at Jamestown.

Brown displays her creations by appointment at her Gardiner studio, at craft fairs and also between May 21 and Oct. 21 at Boothbay Harbor Artisans, located at 2 Wharf Street in Boothbay Harbor.

In addition to her retail business, Brown teaches glassmaking classes for adults and children. A class schedule can be found on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MEupcycle/](http://www.facebook.com/MEupcycle/) or by emailing [luiza@kennebecriverglassworks.com](mailto:luiza@kennebecriverglassworks.com).



*Contributed photos*

Maine glass artist Luiza Brown displays her glass creations at craft fairs throughout the state of Maine. Brown rescues discarded dishware and makes bird baths, bird feeders and garden décor. These kiln slumped mason jar wall pockets were made in Luiza's Kennebec River Glass Works studio in Gardiner.

# Award-winning Carrot Mushroom Loaf: a cool recipe for a hot meal

BY NANCY P. MCGINNIS  
*Correspondent*

Summer salads are dandy, but once in a while, even in the summer, it's nice to have a hearty, substantial meal. But who wants to spend a hot summer day preparing that meal in an even hotter kitchen?

Here's a solution: a perfect make-ahead

dish that takes a little time but comes together easily, and tastes just as good or better when made in advance and reheated briefly in the microwave. (You don't have to admit that they are!)

Unlike commercial alternatives, this recipe allows you the satisfaction of creating your own "convenience food" using fresh, real ingredients and no preservatives.

And, I've discovered that substituting

individual baking dishes for the traditional meatloaf loaf pan makes for easy portioning, storing and serving ... not to mention creating more of that delectable, crunchy crust to go 'round. What's more, this remarkably meaty-textured vegetarian loaf makes a filling but not heavy summertime meal, one that we've dubbed award-winning, as it is welcomed equally by carnivores and herbivores alike in my family. It's kid-friendly

(a good way to get them to eat their veggies) and also perfect for small families or single diners.

Prepare these loaves early in the day, while it's still cool, or keep them in mind for a rainy summer day project.

Serve the loaves plain or with ketchup or other condiments of your choice, with a tossed green salad for a simple supper; or corn on the cob or hand cut fries, if you like.

## YUMMY CARROT MUSHROOM LOAF

*Adapted from the Moosewood Restaurant Cookbook recipe.*

*Makes six or eight individual servings. Ingredient quantities listed are approximate.*

½ cup walnuts, coarsely chopped  
1 large onion, minced  
2 large cloves garlic  
1 Tablespoon butter  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
One lb. white button or baby bella mushrooms, chopped  
1 ½ teaspoons Pepperman spice blend, or salt and pepper, to taste  
1 teaspoon each dried basil, thyme and dill (or a small handful of the fresh versions, crushed and finely minced)  
About six carrots, (approx 1 ½ lbs.) scrubbed and grated or finely chopped  
2 or 3 eggs, well beaten

The following ingredients are divided:  
2 cups coarse whole grain bread crumbs  
1-2 packed cups cheddar cheese, grated

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large frying pan over medium heat, dry toast the walnuts, watching carefully and stirring frequently as needed, just until they are slightly golden and fragrant.

Remove walnuts from pan and set aside to cool.

In the same pan, still on medium heat, crush the garlic into the olive oil and butter as it melts.

Quickly, before the garlic turns brown and bitter, add the chopped onion into the pan, and stir to combine all ingredients.

After two or three minutes, when they start

to soften, add the mushrooms, herbs and spices to the pan.

Continue sautéing for an additional five minutes before adding the carrots and letting the mixture sauté for another five minutes.

Remove the mixture from the heat. Add the beaten eggs, folding gently to combine.

Setting aside half the cheese and bread crumbs, gently stir in the remainder, along with the toasted walnuts. Taste and correct seasonings, as desired.

Scoop the mixture into freezer, microwave- and oven-proof ceramic ramekins or glass

baking dishes, filling each one about ¾ full. Combine the remaining reserved bread crumbs and cheese, and scatter the mixture, evenly divided, over the individual dishes.

Cover each with a square of aluminum foil, and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake an additional 5-10 minutes, until the tops are nicely browned.

Allow the loaves to cool slightly in their dishes on a wire rack so that they can be removed easily for plating by running a butter knife around the edge.

If not to be served immediately, the loaves

can be stored in their baking dishes in the freezer.

Pop the dishes into appropriately sized zipper-closure freezer bags, dated and labeled, for a future meal. They can be removed as needed from the freezer, and thawed in the bag(s) on the counter for 15 minutes. Then remove the dishes from the freezer bags and microwave the loaves for 1-2 minutes until heated through. Slide a butter knife around the edges to remove each loaf from its original baking dish onto a dinner plate for serving.



**“When we invest in women and girls,  
we are investing in the people who  
invest in everyone else.”**

**MELINDA GATES**

# Wise Words *from* Wise Women

BY TERRI HIBBARD



**M**elinda Gates has every right to kick back and enjoy her fabulous home (estate, mansion, all of that and more), her three children and the billions of dollars that she and her husband, Bill Gates, have accumulated thanks to their work at Microsoft.

Yet for the last 20 years or so, she has traveled the world to meet, talk with and sometimes live with some of the poorest, most unaccomplished and uneducated people on earth.

According to a 2017 interview with AARP, Melinda Gates said it all started like this:

“In the fall of 1993, when I was 29, Bill and I made our first visit to Africa. We were recently engaged and had decided to go on a safari to celebrate . . . But what was most memorable about that trip wasn’t the savanna; it was the people we met.

“Our time in East Africa was my first real encounter with extreme poverty. It was both eye-opening and heartbreaking. I have vivid memories of watching women walking down the street, babies on their backs, and wondering what their lives were like. What did they hope for and worry about? What were the barriers keeping them trapped in poverty?”

Melinda Gates is a well-educated woman who went to Catholic schools, earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science and economics at Duke University and an MBA from Duke’s Fuqua School of Business in 1987.

After graduation, she worked at Microsoft as a marketing manager and later was appointed general manager of information products – a remarkable achievement for a woman in technology in the 1990s.

Although the couple had already decided

that they would eventually give away most of their money by the time of the African trip, there was, as yet, no plan. Seeing people in desperate circumstances with no hope of escaping, fed a need to do something, something that could actually make a difference. This desire led to the launching of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2000.

The first page at [gatesfoundation.org](http://gatesfoundation.org) says it all:

**ALL LIVES HAVE EQUAL VALUE.** We are impatient optimists working to reduce inequality.

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, the focus is on improving health and providing the kind of tools that can lift people out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, foundation efforts are on ensuring that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to opportunities needed to succeed in school and in life.

With a woman at the forefront of a foundation that, from the beginning through 2018, has given \$50.1 billion in grants, it’s no surprise that much emphasis is on empowering women. It may be surprising, however, that as a Catholic she sees contraceptives alongside vaccines as “one of the greatest lifesaving innovations in history.”

In an essay she published in *Fortune*, she wrote “It’s no accident that my three kids were born three years apart—or that I didn’t have my first child until I’d finished graduate school and devoted a decade to my career at Microsoft. My family, my career, my life as I know it are all the direct



*Photos courtesy of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

Melinda Gates in Uttar Pradesh, India.

result of contraceptives.”

Having been in the workplace as a wife and mother, Melinda Gates, despite her wealth, also understands how unpaid labor such as cooking, cleaning, caring for children and elderly parents keeps women from the education and work experience that can lead to achievement and financial stability.

In the poorest countries and in America, Melinda Gates has seen that such burdens disproportionately placed on women

limit not just a woman’s future but her children’s.

In her book “The Moment of Lift,” published in 2019 she shares stories of “people who have given focus and urgency to my life. I want all of us to see ways we can lift women up where we live.”

The book threads together personal stories from women she has come to know around the world, such stories shoring up her belief that “When we lift up women, we lift up all of humanity.”



# Lifecycle Women's Health integrates women's health care

*The practice in Readfield is accepting new patients*

*Special to Women's Quarterly*

**L**ifecycle Women's Health in Readfield is now open to provide integrative health care to women across the lifespan. The services offered at Lifecycle Women's Health include well body care, such as annual exams and preventive screenings, as well as care for sexual health concerns, family planning, pelvic health and mid-life/menopausal care.

After 30 years of practice as a women's health nurse practitioner and a certified nurse midwife, Susan Kamin, CNM, MSN, MPH, created Lifecycle Women's Health not only to provide comprehensive health care to women, but to also help people find pleasure, knowledge and empowerment in their bodies as they go through all life's transitions.

Susan describes herself as a health care provider who likes to delve into issues that many people feel are challenging to bring up in a health care setting. She recognizes four equal pillars that lead to optimal health: physical, emotional, spiritual and sexual. When they are all attended to, people can live their lives to the fullest.

Normal life events such as puberty, menopause and sexual expression are often taboo topics for many. However, dismissing these health issues and viewing them from a lens of shame and pathology, instead of honoring them as opportunities, can lead to poorer quality of life and worse health outcomes.

By using an integrated approach to health care with an emphasis on nutrition, movement and stress reduction, along with com-

**By using an integrated approach to health care with an emphasis on nutrition, movement and stress reduction, along with complementary as well as medical treatments as needed, all life events are respected as equally important to a person's health.**

plementary as well as medical treatments as needed, all life events are respected as equally important to a person's health.

Susan is so happy to be offering this philosophy of care in a non-rushed, comfortable setting at the Big White Barn.

New patients are now being accepted for women-focused primary care, sexual health counseling and reproductive care. Many commercial insurances are accepted, as well as Maine Care and Medicare. The office is located at 169 South Road in Readfield in the Big White Barn, where women can find other complementary health services as well. To find out more information about Lifecycle Women's Health, visit website at [www.lifecyclewomenshealth.com](http://www.lifecyclewomenshealth.com), visit the Facebook page, send an email to [susan@lifecyclewomenshealth.com](mailto:susan@lifecyclewomenshealth.com), or call 207-835-1720. Kamin will have evening and early morning office hours available to accommodate clients.



*Contributed photo*  
Susan Kamin, CNM, MSN, MPH, created Lifecycle Women's Health not only to provide comprehensive health care to women, but to also help people find pleasure, knowledge and empowerment in their bodies as they go through all life's transitions.

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# Finding peace, weeding the garden

## Creating A Life

by Susan Varney

**M**y neighbors are out riding around yards of lawn, fouling the air with gas fumes and noise. I'm out weeding to get rid of things growing where they are not wanted . . . immigrants of the winds, bird droppings and flowing water. Some get transplanted to places where they can flourish and bloom, some get yanked and thrown on the compost heap, some get potted up and given to friends.

Working in the garden is a creative pursuit giving oneself time to contemplate the state of the world as well as the garden. You fight woodchucks, deer and the neighborhood cats who choose the seed-planted beds to defecate in and stir into piles. Slugs and beetles take their toll. The old garden wisdom tells us plant one for the blackbird, one for the mouse, one to rot and one to grow.

What to leave and what to pull? That is the question. We live in a temperate jungle here in Maine. Often the weeds do better than the veggies— so why not eat weeds? Pigweed or wild spinach are among my favorites, as are dandelion greens and blossoms, mustard, stinging nettles, milkweed tips, amaranth or red root, chickweed and purslane. They often are allowed to grow in or near the garden plot. That's so much better than trying to eradicate them with poisons that kill the birds and bees and, eventually, us. Also they give predators a choice of tasty morsels.

Once upon a time I would have made perfect rows with plants the suggested distance from each other—that was when I had plenty of room. But now I have a front yard shared with a pear tree, butternut tree, cherry tree, cedar bush and yew hedge.

The raised beds started out with violets and Johnny-jump-ups coming up around the edges, then herbs, such as thyme, chives, mint, walking onions and borage, were added and started spreading.

Then the daisies, black-eyed Susans, forget-me-nots and Queen Anne's lace moved in. Oh my, it makes for a hodge-podge of color and texture dancing around the seedlings of kale, cabbage, zucchini, pole beans, lettuces and tomatoes, and I love it.

Early in the season, before much of the garden is planted, I gather my spring tonic, dandelion greens, such a welcome relief from winter cold short days. Then the violets—the leaves can be used in salads or pesto. Flannery, my little terrier mutt, loves to eat the violet blossoms, and one year

there were so many blooms I made violet blossom jam. Yummy but a lot of work for a small yield. This year it's rose petal jam and lilac coconut pancakes!

Gardens are wild places welcoming the good and the bad: the mint that wants to take over, the butternut trees that sprout from nuts missed by the squirrels, wild flower seedlings, perennial herbs and asparagus.

Tilling the beds by hand, one gets to choose what stays and what goes, and it's a time of looking for cutworms and earth worms— getting rid of the first and welcoming the latter. It is not a tame monochromatic monoculture, but a tumultuous place of diversity, weeds and wonder, some years overrun with borage or pigweed. Then there are other years when the chocolate mint races for the neighbor's lawn or the bee balm segues to the rose and asparagus, while the southernwood and hyssops embrace under the peach tree.

Gardens are extensions of our souls, sharing overtly who we are, sharing space with the favored weeds and veggies, herbs and flowers. As I age, I am thankful that the garden is small and choices have to be made about what is allowed, what is most important. It is more than a mere roadside attraction, and definitely not a lawn.

There is a table and two chairs in the garden for sitting and taking a breather, or visiting with a neighbor, or just listening to the birds. It's a place to rest the back, contemplate world affairs, decide what to do next, pat the dog, drink tea and listen to an audio book.

Gardening is creating art in three dimensions—for the eyes, the soul and the pallet. Having a garden is like having a library filled with favorite books and films. Music and words for the eyes. Gardens tell stories of peasants and princes, of healers and the healed, of hunger and thirst being sated, of breezes, rainbows and flowing rivers, of families and friends gathered for birthdays, holidays and the visitation of angels.

I really don't mind people mowing their lawns. Really, I like lawns if you don't have the time, money or desire to do something more creative with the space. But there are days when I want to see those lawns skeletonized by piranhas when it is so dry they are sending clouds of dust up behind the mower.

Sitting in the garden with a dirty vodka martini (shaken not stirred) and a 6-pound terrier mutt, I send thanks to the universe for this garden, sunshine and river. Gardens are great places to get in touch with what is important.



Susan Varney photos

A raised bed in the garden contains violets, zucchini, chives, garlic and black-eyed Susans not yet in bloom.

### RHUBARB HONEY-MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE

#### INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup honey  
1 cup water  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup red wine vinegar  
2 cup diced rhubarb  
1 teaspoon dijon mustard  
Zest of 1 lemon  
Salt and pepper  
Poppy seeds

- In saucepan, heat honey and water over medium heat.
- When mix starts to boil, add rhubarb. Boil 5 minutes.
- Add 1/4 cup red wine vinegar and zest of lemon.
- Simmer 10 minutes.
- Remove from heat and let cool a few minutes.
- Add olive oil, mustard, salt and pepper.
- Thin with water if too thick. Strain.
- Serve warm or cold over greens.



Spring salad of French sorrel, dandelion leaves, fiddleheads and asparagus, violet leaves and blooms, chocolate mint leaves, bee balm leaves, ajuga leaves with grated carrot and alfalfa sprouts. Add fruit and cheese if desired. Dressed with homemade Rhubarb Honey Mustard Vinaigrette.

## Games that can challenge the brain

Games are as popular as ever. For evidence of that, one need look no further than his or her own smartphone. The number of hours people spend playing games on their smartphones might surprise even the most ardent players.

According to the mobile research firm Apptopia, between May and July of 2018, mobile users spent a whopping 3.38 billion hours playing the wildly popular strategy game "Clash of Clans," making it the most popular smartphone game in the world during that time period.

Games might be seen as a way to unwind, but some games can potentially do more than merely provide a way to escape the daily grind. Brain teasers, riddles and crossword puzzles are just some of the types of games that can help people engage and challenge their brains while still providing a bit of escapism.

**BrainHQ:** According to Posit Science, which created the system, BrainHQ ([www.aarp.brainhq.com](http://www.aarp.brainhq.com)) is a system of training the brain that was developed by neuroscientists and other brain experts. The BrainHQ platform includes various brain training exercises with hundreds of levels that can help people improve their brain function, including memory and retention.

**Writing in the Stars:** Similar to a crossword puzzle, this game provides a list of nine words to users, who must then find the six words that connect to form a six-point star before they can move on to the next level. Available at [www.happy-neuron.com](http://www.happy-neuron.com), Writing in the Stars aims to help users improve their logical reasoning.

**Private Eye:** With a goal of helping users improve their focused attention and concentration, Private Eye ([www.happy-neuron.com](http://www.happy-neuron.com)) asks players to peruse a grid full of intricate layers and symbols in an effort to find the item that does not belong.

**Braingle:** With more than 200,000 members, Braingle ([www.braingle.com](http://www.braingle.com)) is a popular online community where users can go to access brain teasers, trivia quizzes, IQ tests, and more. Users even rank the games, allowing novices to find games that might help them hone certain skills or ease their way into challenging their brains with games.

Millions of people across the globe play games every day. Though players often play games to have fun, they might be helping their brains without even knowing it.

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# “Why we sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams”

AUTHOR MATTHEW WALKER, PHD

## BookTalk

by Nancy P. McGinnis

**S**even to nine hours every night. Non-negotiable. So says sleep scientist Matthew Walker, PhD, author of “Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams.”

A good night’s sleep, he asserts, provides “an abundant constellation of benefits that service both our brains and our bodies,” enhancing our ability to learn and make logical decisions and choices. By re-calibrating our emotional brain circuits, regular sleep allows us to better navigate social and psychological challenges during our waking hours.

A balanced diet and regular exercise alone may not suffice to maintain good health, he continues. Sleep is the essential third element in the trinity— he dubs it a “remarkable Swiss Army knife of health and wellness.”

How? Sleeping less than six or seven hours a night, according to Walker, can have a devastating, lasting impact on your immune system, and increase the risk for Alzheimer’s, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke and congestive heart failure. He cites research showing sleep disruption or deprivation contributes to major psychiatric conditions such as depression, anxiety and suicidality. “The shorter your sleep, the shorter your lifespan.”

Yet, Walker informs us, the majority —two thirds—of adults in industrialized nations fail to obtain the recommended eight hours of nightly sleep.

If only they read this book, that statistic would swing in the opposite direction.

Sleep, Walker writes, is like eating, drinking and reproducing a basic functional drive of living creatures, but “infinitely more complex, profoundly more interesting, and alarmingly more health-relevant” than the other three, he claims. He presented a TED talk entitled, “Sleep is your Superpower.”



“Why We Sleep” serves as an informative read for the casually curious—Walker describes himself as a scientist who started out as an “accidental sleep researcher” —but is potentially life changing for anyone who identifies with the anecdotes and scenarios that Walker shares.

The book is divided into four major sections, the first demystifying sleep, the second a “wake up” call to the dangers of not getting enough of it. Part three delves into the science of dreams, and finally, the fourth addresses sleep disorders, including insomnia, and lastly the book provides a “road map of ideas that can reconnect humanity with sleep.” It concludes with an appendix comprising 12 practical tips for

achieving healthy sleep.

Though the research is included to validate his claims, Walker excels at conveying complex ideas into understandable, everyday terms. While his concerns are evidence-based, and alarming, Walker’s style is conversational and very readable. He invites readers to read the book in whole or in part, and the sections in any order, from the perspective of a particular question or interest, perhaps.

Take caffeine, for example. Many of us down a daily cup or two of coffee without a second thought... unless we’ve read

More SLEEP, PAGE 13



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## Sleep

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

“Why We Sleep.”

Caffeine is actually a psychoactive stimulant, “the most widely used and abused in the world,” Walker writes that it mutes the effect of adenosine. The latter is a natural substance that gradually accumulates in the brain, making you feel sleepy.

Walker cautions that “decaffeinated does not mean non-caffeinated. One cup of decaf usually contains 15 to 30% of the dose of a regular cup of coffee—which is far from caffeine free.

What’s more, caffeine remains in the system for longer than most of us imagine.

And it’s not found in coffee alone. It’s often present in weight loss drugs and pain relievers, certain teas, energy drinks, dark chocolate, even ice cream. It’s “the only addictive substance that we readily give to our children and teens,” writes Walker.

Walker cites NASA research in the 1980s, in which scientists exposed spiders to different drugs, including LSD, “speed” (amphetamines), marijuana, and caffeine, and then observed the webs that they constructed. He noted the differences in a caffeine graphic.

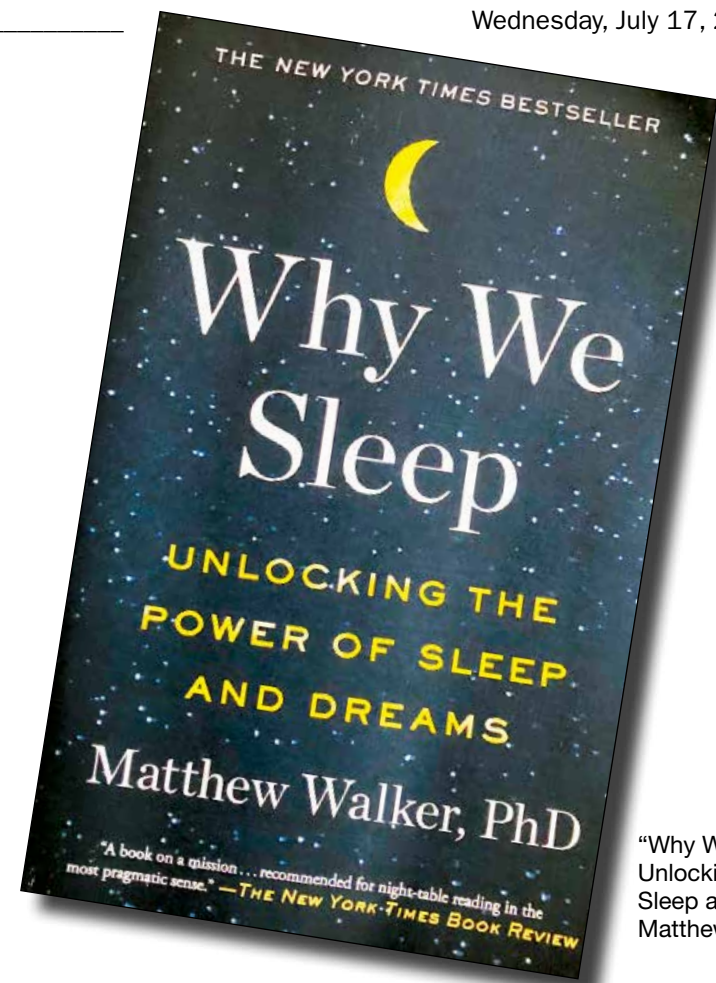
“Why We Sleep” examines a host of other

sleep-related topics, such as the impact of indulging in an alcohol nightcap or pulling an all-nighter, whether we really can “make up for lost sleep,” the pros and cons of hitting the snooze button, the risks associated with starting the school day too early, the impact of prescription sleeping pills or non-drug therapies, as well as how to minimize jet lag, or maximize the efficiency of a influenza or hepatitis vaccine.

The section on sleep cycles, particularly REM sleep when dreams occur, is intriguing. Walker shows how sleep quality is fundamentally intertwined with dreams—and makes a compelling case for appreciating REM sleep, since it is linked to emotional intelligence and creativity. REM sleep affords us the chance to sort, organize, connect and weave together the emotions and challenges and learning of the day.

“Think of REM sleep like an Internet service provider that populates new neighborhoods of the brain with vast networks of fiber optic cables,” he writes. Using these inaugural bolts of electricity, REM sleep then activate their high-speed functioning. Super power, indeed.

By contrast, “Wakefulness is low level brain damage,” Walker asserts. It would be hard to read “Why We Sleep” and not adopt his philosophy about aiming for a solid, consistent eight hours a night.



“Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams.” by Matthew Walker, PhD.

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## What is forest bathing?

The mood-boosting feeling of rejuvenation many people experience while spending time in nature is not in their heads. In fact, researchers in parts of Asia have long since studied and documented the benefits of spending time in nature.

Developed in Japan in the 1980s, the practice of Shinrin-yoku, often referred to as “forest bathing,” has become a part of Japanese medicine. According to *Shinrin-yoku.org*, the premise behind forest bathing is that spending time in nature via a relaxing walk can prove calming, rejuvenating and restorative.

The benefits of spending time in nature have long been suspected, but only recently has scientific research begun to indicate just how beneficial such time can be. In 2018, researchers from the University of East Anglia released a report indicating some eye-opening benefits of living close to nature and spending time outside. In the report, researchers linked exposure to greenspace with a lower risk of type 2

diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature death, preterm birth, stress and high blood pressure. In addition to those benefits, *Shinrin-yoku.org* notes that research indicates forest bathing can improve mood; increase one’s ability to focus, even among children diagnosed with ADHD; accelerate recovery from injury or illness; and improve sleep.

The approach to forest bathing promoted by *Shinrin-yoku.org* combines leisurely walks on paths under a forest canopy with guided activities. Such activities are designed to open the senses, help people hone their intuition and experience the forest as they never had before. Mindfulness meditation practices also may be included in a forest bathing session.

Men and women interested in learning more about the benefits of forest bathing can contact their physicians to discuss the role nature can play in improving their overall health. More information is available at [www.shinrin-yoku.org](http://www.shinrin-yoku.org).

## How parents can create time together

Starting a family often requires changing routines. Very often homes become child-centric as activities revolve around the kids. While it is important to be supportive of youth, it’s also essential for parents to stake out some alone time so they can enjoy life together.

Marital therapists often state that the first year after a first child is born is the biggest threat to a couple’s relationship. Therapists often point out the need for parents to work hard to balance their priorities in order to maintain the family unit, and that means making more time for themselves apart from the kids.

Parents need time now and then to remember that they’re not just parents but also husband, wife, friend, coworkers and more. Here are some ways that parents can accomplish just that.

- **Embrace the date night.** Schedule times to be alone with your spouse. The problem with parents not getting enough “me” time is profound enough that the government in Norway, in response to rising divorce rates, issued a plea for parents to embrace “date nights” more frequently. Spontaneous nights away are nice, but even scheduled dates can fit the bill.
  - **Spend time at home.** Enforce bed times and routines so you can enjoy unencumbered time together. If the kids are bound to sabotage these efforts, call in a favor from a friend or relative to distract the kids elsewhere in the home while you can recharge together.
  - **Draw a line.** There is a fine line between being an engaged parent and being too heavily involved. Be supportive of kids without doing all the work for them or feeling the need to consistently be involved in every detail of their lives. This will free up time and brain power to engage in things with a spouse.
  - **Perform activities together.** If date night doesn’t fit in the budget, find less expensive ways to spend time away from the kids. Adolescents may be able to stay home for an hour alone, and you can take a walk around the neighborhood, go for a scenic car ride or even just make a trip to the supermarket together.
- Making a conscious effort to enjoy adult time can improve relationships with spouses, which can have positive, trickle-down effects on family life.





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# Explore these relaxing hobbies

**S**tress is a part of many people's daily lives. A recent survey from the American Psychological Association found that 44 percent of Americans feel their stress levels have increased over the past five years. Children also are struggling, with almost a one-third reporting that they have experienced a health symptom associated with stress, such as stomach aches, trouble sleeping and headaches.

Calming activities that can tone down the body's stress responses are great ways to alleviate stress. Summertime is an ideal time of the year to embrace relaxing activities because the hustle and bustle of everyday life tends to slow down during the summer, when kids are out of school and vacations are on the docket. These hobbies and other interests can help tame stress by promoting calm.

- **Listen to and/or play music.** Music can be energizing or calming, depending on which music you choose. Researchers at Stanford University found that rhythmic music may have therapeutic effects for treating a range of neurological conditions, as it stimulates the brain and can perhaps change how it functions. Familiar melodies and gentle music can reduce the level of the stress hormone cortisol.

- **Gardening.** Gardening lets a person tend to living things while getting some fresh air. Both the sunlight and the

activity itself can be soothing and have a positive effect on mood. A study from the Journal of Health Psychology found that gardening, like listening to music, lowers cortisol levels.

- **Grab a good book.** Taking the time to unwind and read can help ease tension in the muscles, lower one's heart rate and induce calm. Research from the consultancy Mindlab International at the University of Sussex found reading reduced stress levels by 68 percent.

- **Start painting or crafting.** Engaging in a creative hobby sharpens the mind and improves focus. You may also want to try focusing emotions onto the canvas to help release tension. A 2014 study published in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy found that 81.5 percent of respondents with depression reported feeling happy after knitting.

- **Take a dance class.** A form of art and music, dancing can promote well-being through exercise and expansion of creative ability. It also can be good for the mind. A study from Swedish researchers that was published in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine found that a dancing intervention program, twice weekly for eight months, helped teenage girls struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, and other problems.

Many relaxing activities can tame stress, and these activities can be perfect for lazy summer days.



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Dr. Carr, a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist, graduated from University of Vermont College of Medicine and completed her obstetrics & gynecology residency at Maine Medical Center and fellowship at the University of New Mexico.


Ms. Christensen, a certified nurse-midwife, received her master's degree in nursing and midwifery from the University of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Lundman, a certified nurse-midwife, received her master's degree in nursing and midwifery from Yale University School of Nursing.

Ms. Zaccaria, a certified nurse-midwife, received her master's degree in midwifery from Frontier Nursing University.

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