



**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
MONROE COUNTY

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# The Bridge

## PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Hello Everyone,

Summer is almost here. Seems like we can't wait for the warmer weather and just like that it's gone and fall begins! Enjoy the rest of spring and then comes summer! We had a very nice Spring West District meeting. The speakers were very enjoyable and the food was delicious. We were at the Presbyterian Church in West Salem. We Monroe County members picked the lucky table; first ones to eat and five out of eight of us won door prizes. Thank you Bernie and Barb for their committee reports, Bookworms, Membership and Marketing. I gave the president report. In this newsletter is the registration for our Spring Fling on May 14th at the LaGrange Town Hall. Should be a very interesting day. Food, socializing, speaker, and awards! Don't forget to bring your cultural arts project. See you there! Juneau County is having their spring Cabin Fever event on Monday, May 12. You're welcome to join them.

Take care,

Jean

# May 2025

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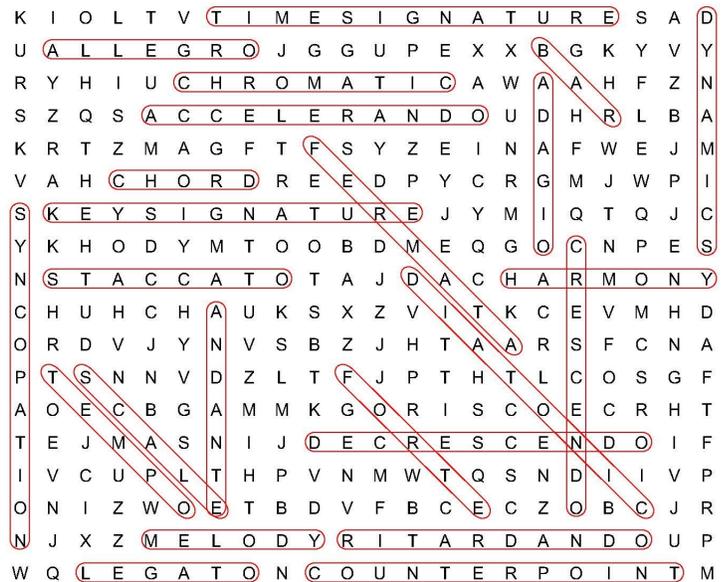
**MONROE COUNTY  
HEALTH & WELL-BEING  
EDUCATOR**  
**April Anderson**  
**608-269-8722**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- May 14 – Spring Fling
- June 5-8 – Sparta Butterfest
- June 7 – Dairy Breakfast
- June 11 – Executive Board

Musical Terms  
Word Search  
ANSWERS



MONROE COUNTY HCE INFORMATION

**2025 Executive Board Members**

President: Jean Boak (372-4354)  
 Vice President: Louise Buchholz (435-6435)  
 Secretary: Sue Baker-Young (633-6457)  
 Treasurer: Bernie Arena (272-3371)

**2025 Educational Program Chairmen**

Cultural Arts: Louise Buchholz (435-6435)  
Family & WI Bookworms: Bernie Arena (272-3371)  
International: Barbara Mueller (372-9077)  
Membership/Marketing: All Members (372-4354)

**For more information please contact:**

Jean Boak, President at (372-4354)

**UW-Extension Office**

**(608)269-8722**

April Anderson, Health & Well-Being/FoodWise Educator  
 april.anderson@wisc.edu

**Newsletter Deadline**

Information for the HCE newsletter is due by the **20<sup>th</sup>** of the month for the following month's newsletter.



## WEST DISTRICT MEETING

### Eight Lucky Members Attend West District Meeting

The West District Spring Meeting was held Monday, April 29, 2025, at the West Salem Presbyterian Church. Eight Monroe County members attended. Five of them went home with door prizes.

Highlights from the committee and officer reports include motions to send \$100.00 to the Nicaragua project to purchase material (in their country) to make the compresses used for burn patients; and to have Judy Hunter spearhead making a new Wisconsin Bookworms quilt to use for promotion in our district. Judy will get the information together. Mary Ann Bays will forward it to each county. Each county will be responsible for their quilt square.

Our West District is responsible for getting speakers for the NVON (National Volunteer Outreach Network) Conference which will be held July 13-16, 2026 in Wisconsin Dells.

Terry Visger, a professional storyteller, gave a great presentation on fresh water mussels (also called clams). She gave a history of the harvesting of them from 1890 to 1900 in the LaCrosse area and up and down the Mississippi River.

She portrayed a “clammer’s” wife as she told the story. Mussels can live 60-100 years. Many of the shells were used for buttons, until the 1940’s when plastic buttons came along.

You can still find shells from mussels in the river, especially where dredging takes place. It is illegal to remove a living mussel from a river bed.

Especially interesting were the pearls found inside some of the shells. Certain shell types made a particular color of pearl. It was a great presentation.

Marty Landry did a chair yoga demo in the afternoon. Everyone learned some great moves and certainly got motivated to “get moving”.

A delicious lunch was served by the church ladies.

It made for an exciting and enjoyable day.

- - Bernie Arena



## COMMUNITY PROJECT

Our Community Project continues until June. We could still use some kitchen wash cloths, towels, and hand towels-hanging. I intend to bring what we already have to Spring Fling. The Sparta group finally met after 2 snow days to make Sympathy cards. Hurray!!! The tub is getting full. Thank you everyone who has helped.

- - Louise Buchholz



## FINAL REMINDER

To those doing a craft to be judged at Spring Fling. The date is May 14 Entries should be in place by the beginning of the meeting. Attached to the item should be a paper with your name and the category and class on it. The sample is in the Feb. Newsletter. I will have some extras there.

- - Louise Buchholz



## TOMAH KM DOETTES NEWS

Our Tomah group of seven members brought 18 items for our local food pantry. We collected \$10 from each member for the Bakeless Bake Sale and \$15 from each member attending the West District Meeting. We should think about increasing the scholarship amount; it has been the same amount, \$250, for many years. We'll talk to Mary Cook about this. Our May meeting will be the Spring Fling on May 14. The speaker will share information about native pollinators. Registration info is in this newsletter. I shared information about the importance of beans in our diet. I brought roasted chickpeas. Remember: Dorothy and Jean, St Clair Mission May 20. Tomah rummage and brat sale May 3 and 10th. See you May 14th at LaGrange Town Hall.

- - Barbara Mueller



## CARING &amp; SHARING



Well folks, I am really behind writing this on May 1, 2025. So sorry . Happy May Day to you all.

The flowers are starting to bloom. We got plenty of rain for them. I am excited about the flowers and starting a small garden. Are any of you going to plant a few things? I know I want to have tomatoes, they are so good.

Kay's son needs prayers...He has something on his lung and now has an infection in his lung too. Last I heard Jean's husband is still in the Veteran's home. She goes to see him every day. I think they both need prayers. Sue Dumas is in Morrow Home. Not doing the best. Miss her brightness. So we sure do need to pray for her too. My prayer list keeps getting longer all the time.

I have a very bad knee...Was getting shots in it for over a year, but the shots no longer work...So I have a consultation appointment with the surgeon on May 6. I am not looking forward to being laid up for 4-6 weeks, but it needs to be done. I hope he waits until after May 9, as that is my birthday. Don't want to be in the hospital then. A now Jim is having hip trouble. Getting older is so fun.

I am happy the snow is gone, and none comes back for a long while. I finally put my winter coat away. Lets hope it stays there. Do any of you have flowers blooming? We do and it is exciting to see them. So many pretty colors. We are so blessed we have not had bad storms, floods, fires, tornadoes, etc. in this area.

Thank you for the empty pill bottles for Nicaragua. I appreciate your thoughtfulness. I can always use more to send. They tell me if you put them in the freezer, the labels will come right off.

Do you want Rhubarb recipes? I have a few and that time will be coming soon. I chop them up and put them in the freezer.

Rhubarb jelly...5 cups cut up rhubarb, 5 cups sugar...cook till mushy, add 1 small Raspberry Jello & 1 pkg. Red Kool-aid. Put in jars and freeze or refrigerate.

3 Bean Salad...1 cup sugar, 1 cup vinegar, 1/2 cup water, 1 onion sliced VERY THIN, 1 can green beans, drained, 1 can yellow beans, drained, and 1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed. 2 T. oil. Mix together and let stand overnight in the fridge.

Remember I love you all. --Alyce





SPRING FLING REGISTRATION

Monroe County Association for Home & Community Education



Spring Fling, Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Lagrange Town Hall—22731 Flint Ave., Tomah, WI

Theme: Spring into Summer

9:00 a.m. Registration and refreshments

Sign in cultural arts entries

9:30 a.m. Welcome/Homemaker’s Creed/Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Business Meeting—Jean Boak presiding

Officer reports

Committee reports

Unfinished business

New business



10:30 a.m. Lisa Yourell- Lisa is a local artist from the Sparta area. She works in pen and ink, block print, and water color. Now her main focus is native plants and the creatures who depend on them. They need someone to draw attention to them and speak for them and Lisa feels drawn to do so.

11:30 a.m. Lunch—Chicken salad croissant sandwiches/salads/bars

Awards/Adjournment/Door Prizes

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ X \$15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed)

Make checks payable to Monroe County HCE.

Mail to Bernie Arena, 4261 Basswood Road, Sparta, WI 54656.

Email: bernadine.arena@gmail.com or 608-272-3371

Registration deadline is May 10, 2025 (Registration is transferable but not refundable.)



# Scavenger Hunt



Go on a walk and see how many items you can find for each letter of the alphabet. For instance, your B might be a bridge, and your T might be a train. Enjoy the weather and have fun!

A \_\_\_\_\_

N \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

O \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

P \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

Q \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

R \_\_\_\_\_

F \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

G \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_

H \_\_\_\_\_

U \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_

V \_\_\_\_\_

J \_\_\_\_\_

W \_\_\_\_\_

K \_\_\_\_\_

X \_\_\_\_\_

L \_\_\_\_\_

Y \_\_\_\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_

Z \_\_\_\_\_

May 2025



The Bridge

## Mental Wellness Fair



Thursday, May 15, 2025 from 2 - 6 p.m.  
at Mueller Square in Sparta



**3-5 PM**

PET THERAPY AT THE SQUARE  
With Coulee Region Humane Society

**3 PM**

LIVED EXPERIENCE SPEECH  
From Mike Murray



**KIDS CORNER AT SPARTA  
FREE LIBRARY PARKING LOT!**  
With face painting, bounce house,  
& more fun!

Monroe County  
Suicide  
Prevention  
Taskforce



Learn more at  
<https://bit.ly/MCSPTF>

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month



# 10 JOURNAL PROMPTS TO SPARK SELF-REFLECTION



Instead of trying to fix or improve things, what are three things about yourself or your life that you can decide to accept exactly as they are? How does this shift your stress level?

What's something you do that makes you feel bad about yourself (procrastination, overthinking, isolation, etc.)? Now, think about what the complete opposite action is. What would happen if you tried it for a day?

Not everyone has an easy time being positive, and it can be especially hard if you're already not feeling in a great place mentally. So, rather than listing things you're thankful for, jot down some things you don't have... and are glad you don't have or have to deal with! Was this an easier way for you to think? Does this help you see things differently?

When was a time when you felt completely recharged and refreshed? What were you doing? Who were you with (or were you alone)? Are there little things about that time that you can bring into your life more often?

If you had the chance to adjust three things about the upcoming day to make it great, what would they be? What are the reasons for your choices? What steps can you take now to make them a reality tomorrow?

Write down five cool things you've already done that made you feel happy or peaceful—or, in other words, things you've already knocked off your "bucket list." What was it about these things that made you feel good, and how can you work that into your day-to-day life?

For every bad thing happening in the world right now, people are out there working to make things better. Now, challenge yourself to find at least one positive effort, breakthrough, or solution happening around something that upsets you.

We can usually think of things we want to change in our lives pretty easily, and sometimes, they feel too big to take on. It's important to remind ourselves that we can do difficult things. What's something you used to struggle with that you don't struggle with anymore? Have you rewarded yourself for your success? If not, what can you do to celebrate?

We all feel stuck sometimes. What is one aspect of your life that feels like you're running in place? Is there something that you're waiting to happen to change things? What's one small action you can take—no matter how insignificant—that could open a path forward?

Think of a time when someone's kindness, courage, or optimism gave you hope... now flip it: What if you were already someone else's sign of hope without realizing it? What do you think you did to inspire that person?

Learn more and get free resources at [mhanational.org](https://mhanational.org)

# Meaningful May 2025

MONDAY



5 Let someone know how much they mean to you and why

12 Listen to a favourite piece of music and remember what it means to you

19 Reflect on what makes you feel valued and purposeful

26 Remember an event in your life that was really meaningful



TUESDAY



6 Look for people doing good and reasons to be cheerful

13 Find out about the values or traditions of another culture

20 Share photos of 3 things you find meaningful or memorable

27 Focus on how your actions make a difference for others

WEDNESDAY



7 Make a list of what matters most to you and why

14 Get outside and notice the beauty in nature

21 Look up at the sky. Remember we are all part of something bigger

28 Do something special and revisit it in your memory tonight

THURSDAY



1 Do something kind for someone you really care about

8 Set yourself a kindness mission to help others today

15 Do something to contribute to your local community

22 Find a way to help a project or charity you care about

29 Today do something to care for the natural world

FRIDAY

2 Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do

9 What values are important to you? Find ways to use them today

16 Show your gratitude to people who are helping to make things better

23 Recall three things you've done that you are proud of

30 Share a quote you find inspiring to give others a boost



SATURDAY

3 Take a step towards an important goal, however small

10 Be grateful for the little things, even in difficult times

17 Find a way to make what you do today meaningful

24 Make choices that have a positive impact for others today

31 Find three reasons to be hopeful about the future

SUNDAY

4 Send your friend a photo from a time you enjoyed together

11 Look around for things that bring you a sense of awe and wonder

18 Send a hand-written note to someone you care about

25 Ask someone else what matters most to them and why



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together