

Cafe: Goal is to make death a more comfortable topic

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Today, she is a certified death midwife supporting individuals who are dying and their families. She holds seminars, presentations and discussion-based Death Cafes all over the Midwest to educate people about their rights and to help people be more comfortable with death.

From 10-11 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 11 at the Verona Senior Center, Stewart will facilitate the first Death Cafe. This is a series of three, the additional cafes are on Nov. 8 and Dec. 13.

Stewart describes Death Cafes as discussions where small groups of people sit around a table and come together to talk about the sometimes difficult topic. Anyone is welcome to the discussions: People who are dying, who have experienced the death of a loved one or people who have never talked about death.

Stewart uses a game called "Go Wish," similar to "Go Fish," to break the ice. Each card has a topic on it that sparks a conversation.

"What's the most important thing for you to hang on to at the end of life: your dignity, your religion, your mind?" Stewart said as an example.

Stewart has facilitated dozens of Death Cafes and each discussion is different, she said. The group leads the discussion, and Stewart usually sits back and observes. Sometimes people ask things like "does it hurt to die?" Stewart said, and others want to talk about the pragmatic steps to dying such as how to plan a funeral.

The goal of the Death Cafe is to make death a more comfortable topic. By comfortable, Stewart means understanding the outcome of the situation,

knowing what the dying person wants and who is going to carry out their wishes.

Stewart believes by normalizing death, it will be a better experience for everyone.

"It's so much easier for the bereavement period if those plans are already done," she said. "The family can spend time with their loved one at the end and have a beautiful send off."

After people become more comfortable with death, they can be an advocate for themselves, Stewart said. She encourages everyone to know what they want at end of life and tell their families, their community, their church and anyone they can.

She said in American culture, discussions about death are often procrastinated until "the time is right." People feel uncomfortable talking about death, to the point where they just avoid it.

Stewart rhetorically asked, how often does someone in a funeral receiving line say, "I don't know what to say," to the bereaved.

"We spend more time planning a wedding or a birthday party than we do talking about what we want at the end of life," Stewart said.

In her opinion, it is the unknown aspects of dying that makes death such a taboo topic. Often families and individuals don't know their choices, or what to expect. Once people start talking about death, and it becomes less frightening, Stewart said, the dying can then advocate for themselves.

"I am not saying death is always beautiful - hell no," she said. "Death can be sad and scary, but if we normalize death we can have those beautiful moments and experiences that will never happen again."

Help save history

The Verona Area Historical Society's "Bringing Their Stones Home" project is restoring names and identities to the nearly-forgotten asylum and poor house cemetery in Verona, next to Gus' Diner. At 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, people will get to help out during the vsoociety's latest volunteer workday at the cemetery.

From the 1880s to the 1940s, this plot of land became the final resting place for over 400 residents of the then Dane County Asylum and "Poor House." For unknown reasons, all headstones were removed and discarded in the 1950s, said VAHS president Jesse Charles, with 79 of since recovered. "We're putting them back where they belong, based on a historic cemetery map," he wrote in an email to the Press.

People are asked to bring work gloves and a shovel or

If You Go

What: Verona Area Historical Society "Volunteer Day" historic cemetery restoration

When: 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 12

Where: Badger Prairie Health Care Center cemetery, next to Gus' Diner, East Verona Avenue

Info: saveveronahistory@gmail.com

wheelbarrow if they have one. There will be opportunities to dig the small holes for the stones, shovel and move gravel or mulch, and generally help clean up the site.

Email Unified Newspaper Group reporter Scott DeLaruelle at scott.delaruelle@wcinet.com.

Verona Area School District



The 2019 Verona Area High School Homecoming Court is from left, Adam Bexk, Ella Chorlton, Aubrey Dawkins, Gavin Doby, Kimberly Huete-Galeano, Keegan Lindell, Claire Miller, Ronan Montgomery-Taylor, Tamiya Smith, Rory Swanson, Huy Tang, Oscar Xelhua-Puebla. Not pictured: Allison Albert and Navy Blau.

Homecoming theme is Glow Party

The week of Sept. 30, Verona Area School District students and staff are invited to let their school spirit glow.

The theme of Homecoming week is Glow Party.

Dress-up days are each day of the week leading up to the varsity football game at 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4, against Janesville Craig, at Verona Area High School, 300 Richard St.

Homecoming festivities will also include a pep rally at the high school for students, a parade along Main Street and West Verona Avenue at 4:10 p.m. and a Homecoming dance for high school students on Saturday.

The dress-up days for the week include Pajama Day on Monday, Neon Day on Tuesday and Tourist Day on Wednesday. Thursday is class colors, where each high school grade wears a different color, and Friday is school spirit, where everyone is encouraged to wear orange and black.

The dance Saturday night is \$10. The grand march of Homecoming royalty will take place at 9:30 p.m. The Homecoming court comprises Adam Bexk, Ella Chorlton, Aubrey Dawkins,

Dress up day themes (all VASD students invited to participate)

- **Monday:** Pajama Day
- **Tuesday:** Neon Day
- **Wednesday:** Tourist Day
- **Thursday:** Class colors (Freshmen = green, Sophomores = red, Juniors = Blue, Seniors = White, Faculty can dress in college apparel or their high school apparel).
- **Friday:** School colors (black and orange)

Calendar of events

- Friday, Oct. 4**
- **2:45-3:42 p.m.,** Pep rally (high school students only), Main Gym
 - **4:10-5:15 p.m.,** Homecoming parade, North Main Street south of high school, West Verona Avenue, West Lawn Avenue
 - **7 p.m.,** Varsity football game vs. Janesville Craig, Verona Area High School
- Saturday, Oct. 5**
- **8-11 p.m.,** Homecoming dance: Glow Party (high school students only), Main Gym
 - **9:30 p.m.,** Grand march of homecoming royalty

Gavin Doby, Kimberly Huete-Galeano, Keegan Lindell, Claire Miller, Ronan Montgomery-Taylor, Tamiya Smith, Rory Swanson, Huy Tang, Oscar Xelhua-Puebla, Allison Albert and Navy Blau.

For information about Homecoming activities, visit verona.k12.wi.us.

Email reporter Kimberly Wethal at kimberly.wethal@wcinet.com and follow her on Twitter @kimberly_wethal.

VACT to put on 'Young Frankenstein' next weekend

A comedy of monstrous proportions will take over the Verona Area Performing Arts Center next weekend.

From Oct. 10-13, Verona Area Community Theater will perform "Young Frankenstein," an adaptation of the 1974 Mel Brooks movie starring Milwaukee native Gene Wilder.

Performances are set for 7:30 p.m. Oct. 10-12 and at 2 p.m. Oct. 12-13 at the Performing Arts Center, located at 300 Richard St.

General admission tickets for the show are \$17, and are \$12 for K-12 students and seniors 65 and older.

The plot follows Frederick Frankenstein, who journeys to Transylvania to take care of the estate of his infamous grandfather, Victor Frankenstein. After some encouragement, Frederick creates a monster that rivals his grandfather's, and panic and hilarity follows when the monster gets loose.

The show is not suitable for all ages, according to a

If You Go

What: Verona Area Community Theater's "Young Frankenstein"

When: 7:30 p.m. Oct. 10-12; 2 p.m. Oct. 12-13

Where: Verona Area Performing Arts Center, 300 Richard St.

Cost: \$17 for general admission; \$12 for K-12 students and seniors 65 and older

Info: vact.org

news release from VACT, and contains adult language and adult themes and humor.

The production features 30 performers from Verona and surrounding communities, the release states. Kaleb Stumbaugh will portray Frederick Frankenstein and Kait Wiemann will play Inga, both of whom are newcomers to VACT.

Riley Custer and Aubrey Bower play supporting



From left, Frederick Frankenstein (Kaleb Stumbaugh), Inga (Kait Wiemann), Frau Blucher (Aubrey Bower) and Igor (Riley Custer) inspect the new monster (Mike Brady) Frankenstein created. The show "Young Frankenstein" will run Oct. 10-13 at the Verona Area Performing Arts Center, 300 Richard St.

roles as the Igor and Frau Blucher, respectively. Mike Brady will play the monster, Danielle Slusser is the character of Elizabeth Benning and Bill Owens will portray the role of Inspector Kemp.

The show is being directed by Dusty Smith. Smith is joined by Dale Nickels as the producer, Adam Shelton as the music director, Alyssa

Dvorak as the choreographer, Marsha Heuer as the tap choreographer and Alex Rosenbaum as the stage manager.

For more information, visit vact.org. Email reporter Kimberly Wethal at kimberly.wethal@wcinet.com and follow her on Twitter @kimberly_wethal.

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