

*Jessica*

# First Fridays *Plus*

## Downtown Racine's popular First Fridays adds more Fridays — and even a Thursday — to this season

LEE B. ROBERTS  
lroberts@journaltimes.com

**B**aseball isn't the only pastime to open its season this week. Downtown merchants will kick off First Fridays 2014 season from 4 to 9 p.m. on Friday, April 4, with plenty of shopping and dining specials, live music, free activities and more.

And this Friday's event will be followed by a summer full of special Friday afternoons/evenings, with bonus events offered in June, July and August.

Because summertime First Fridays have been so well attended — by both year-round residents and seasonal boaters — organizers have decided to host similar events on the third Fridays of June (20th), July (18th) and August (15th) — according to Mary Osterman, First Fridays chairwoman and owner of Copacetic, 409 Main St.

Like many traditional First Fridays, the third Friday events will feature a Monument Square beer garden; live music on the square and at Crosswalk and Paul Harris parks; and a variety of specials offered in shops and restaurants, Osterman said. The general idea is to give everyone more chances to celebrate the weekend's arrival.

"Everyone needs an extra Friday," Osterman said, noting that First Fridays organizers are working with the Downtown Racine Corp. in presenting the third Fridays events.

### Music, wine and PEEPS!

In the meantime, April's First Friday will launch the 10th year of the popular Downtown party, which readers have chosen as "Best Free Entertainment" in the Journal Times' Best of Racine County contest for several years running.

Attendees can find some of Friday's free entertainment at the Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St., which offers free admission

### If You Go

**WHAT:** First Fridays

**WHEN:** 4 to 9 p.m. on the first Friday of each month April through December (except in July, when the event will be held on Thursday, July 3, because of the July 4 holiday). Three bonus Friday events will be held June 20, July 18 and Aug. 15.

**WHERE:** Downtown Racine, in more than 40 participating shops, galleries, pubs, restaurants and museums. May through September First Fridays will also offer the Jean's Jazz Oasis beer garden on Monument Square, along with outdoor live music.

**COST:** Admission is free

**INFO:** Go to [www.facebook.com/pages/First-Fridays-Downtown-Racine/126938140712993](http://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Fridays-Downtown-Racine/126938140712993) or [www.firstfridaysracine.com](http://www.firstfridaysracine.com)

on every First Friday, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Visitors of all ages are invited to make their own PEEPS creation during RAM's Free Family Hands-on Art Activity from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday. They can also enter their creations in the museum's 5th annual International PEEPS Art Competition (the deadline is 4 p.m. April 6), if they so choose.

At 7 p.m., RAM visitors can join artist Martha Glowacki, whose work is exhibited in the museum's Windows on Fifth Gallery, for a pantograph demonstration. The pantograph — a 21st century drawing machine — will be used to create a digital version of a photograph from the 1870s. For more about these RAM programs, go to [www.ramart.org](http://www.ramart.org).

First Fridays' live music will be offered indoors until May (May will also mark the return of Jean's Jazz Oasis beer garden on Monument Square). And, on April 4, it can be heard for free at Henry & Wanda's, 501 Sixth St., where Kenosha's Real Deal band

([www.realdealkenosha.com](http://www.realdealkenosha.com)) will play, and at the Pink Magnolia, 240 Main St., where Duosonic ([www.facebook.com/duosonicduo](http://www.facebook.com/duosonicduo)) will perform. Music runs from 8 p.m. to midnight at both establishments. Both are also offering seasonal drink and dinner specials throughout the evening.

Free wine tasting will be offered at Uncorkt, 240 Main St., from 6 to 8 p.m. And, if it is a taste of springtime you are after, head over to Photographic Design Gallery, 411 Sixth St., where photographers Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck are showing their "Birds & Blooms: Bursting into Spring" exhibit. Main Street's Humble Home shop will also celebrate spring's arrival with its latest line of yard and garden items, plus goodies served from 5 to 9 p.m.

At Divino Gelato Cafe, 245 Main St., First Friday offerings include a "spoonful of heaven," in the form of artisan gelato, made on site. Don't forget, too, to venture further west on Sixth Street, for businesses such as Pepi's Deli and I ov thee Dragon Tattoo and Body Piercing Studio & Gallery, which are also part of the party, Osterman said. Wisconsin and College avenues host First Friday activities, too, at venues including Hot Shop Glass, where glass blowing demonstrations will be given from 5 to 8:30 p.m. ([www.hotshopglass.com](http://www.hotshopglass.com)), and My Wicked Way, which will offer an evening of acoustic music for all ages (check Facebook for details).

### Follow the flags

Those are just some of the nearly 50 Downtown businesses which support and participate in First Fridays. A complete list can be found at [www.firstfridaysracine.com](http://www.firstfridaysracine.com). And during the event, those businesses will be marked with brightly colored "First Friday" flags.

By following the flags, visitors can



## SHOWS

# Penguin Players present spring song, dance and comedy gala

**RACINE** — The Penguin Players spring song, dance and comedy gala will be staged in six performances April 4-13 at the Eagles Club, 319 Hamilton St. The cast of 40 singers and dancers will present "Big Sound City" for this year's show.

The show includes toe-tapping, hand-clapping blends of music, comedy and dance featuring songs like "Do You Hear the People Sing," "Fascinating Rhythm," "Black or White," "Bossa Nova Baby," "New Girl in Town," "Bad Moon Rising," "Hopelessly Devoted to You," "Fugue for Tinhorns," "Scarborough Fair," "Everyday People," "It's De-Lovely" and "Puttin' On the Ritz."

Making a special singing appearance at

the April 12 show is Russ Epps, a former Racinian and original member of the Penguin Players. The Academy Performing Arts Company Troupe will also be among the seasoned performers appearing in the musical extravaganza.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 3 p.m. Sundays. Seating is on a first-come basis. Doors open 45 minutes early. Beverage, snack and waitress service is provided at each production.

Tickets cost \$8 in advance and \$9 at the door. Advance tickets are available at Academy of Dance, Eagles Club, George's Tavern, Grapes 2 Glass, Hugs & Kisses, Magic Scissors Beauty Studio, Nelson's Variety Stores and Sew 'N Save of Racine.

# 'Away from the Mirror' student dance concert at Carthage College

**KENOSHA** — The fifth annual student dance concert "Away From the Mirror!" will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 5, and 3 p.m. Sunday, April 6, in Wartburg Auditorium at Carthage College, 2001 Alford Park Drive.

The presentation will feature new dance works created by Carthage's emerging choreographers, each sharing their inspirations through dance in a less formal revelation of the dance making process.

The program will culminate from a series of feedback showings through which works are presented as drafts at different stages of development. This year, the concert will feature choreographers and performers engaged in their craft as they develop their works from the studio to the stage.

Tickets cost \$12, \$8 for students and senior citizens. To order tickets, call 262-551-6661 or send email to [theatretickets@carthage.edu](mailto:theatretickets@carthage.edu).

# FRIDAYS / 2014 season

*From Page 2*

experience the great diversity of products, food, entertainment and ideas that Downtown offers, Osterman said.

"You can find a huge variety of things down here, from world class art to items made right here in Wisconsin," she said.

The whole First Fridays experience is not

only a lot of fun, but a good opportunity to get to know area business owners and learn more about their products, Osterman said.

"Most of the time when you come to a Downtown store you will find the owner working there," she said. "And, you'll get no better service than you do when dealing with the owner/operator of a business."

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