

Grabbing life by the ovaries
(and camera, pen and microphone)

Kathleen Slattery-Moschkau

By Amanda N. Wegner

It is said that people form opinions of one another within three seconds of meeting for the first time. Walking into Kathleen Slattery-Moschkau's sunlight-filled office, I've already made up my mind: This is going to be fun.

And ... action!

Kathleen is the Madison woman who brought the world *Side Effects*, the little movie that took on big pharma in a fun and informative way. Filmed right in our communal backyard and starring *Grey's Anatomy's* Katherine Heigl, Kathleen wrote and directed this independent flick that is loosely based on her former life as a legal drug pusher, pharmaceutical sales rep.

A self-proclaimed "closet writer," this Ladysmith native with a degree in political science from UW-Madison says that during college, a career in film never occurred to her.

"I've always had a love of film, but I never took any classes," says Kathleen. "In college, I had specific goals; I wanted to get out and get on with my life. But once you get into the real world, you start to open up, you start hearing yourself."

Kathleen's path today is a direct effect of that.

"When I finally walked away, I thought, 'People need to know this,'" Kathleen says of her experience as a pharmaceutical rep, which she kept notes on. "I thought that if I could take this to the public and the medical community, they could make better informed decisions. This was my way of shining the light."

The movie was filmed at locations throughout Dane County in 2004 over the short course of 16 days. Originally released in theaters in 2005, *Side Effects* just became available for sale in stores at the end of March.

On air

While jumping hoops in the media circus following the initial release of *Side Effects*,

Kathleen began to notice something; her interviewers didn't just want the hard-core pharma and health talk. They wanted the fun and fluff, too. "Recognizing a hunger for good information delivered in an entertaining way and the need for some estrogen on the airwaves," Kathleen launched her weekly radio show, *The Kathleen Show*, in 2006.

"The interviews would start out very serious, and invariably, I'd get questions like what it was like to work with Katherine Heigl," says Kathleen. "It was obvious they were hungry for the serious and the entertaining."

In an industry dominated by males and lots of droning political talk, Kathleen has tagged her show: "Grabbing life by the ovaries." She offers a fresh female perspective to the airwaves as she covers life, health and movies each week, bringing on nationally recognized guests, including renowned poet Maya Angelou, Dr. Dean Ornish, pediatrician Dr. Bob Sears, yogi Rodney Yee and more. She does much of the planning, research and question development herself, so her conversations are "smart and inspired, not contrived."

Keep it rolling

Following *Side Effects*, Kathleen produced the documentary *Money Talks: Profits Before Patient Safety*, named one of the top 15 most notable films of 2008 by the American Library Association. For her, the documentary was an opportunity to take a more comprehensive, academic approach to the topic of pharmaceutical marketing tactics.

And if that weren't enough, she's a wife and mother, owns a couple businesses, is a featured blogger on Huffington Post, is working on another script, learning how to edit video and more.

And she takes it all in stride, with enthusiasm and an enviable lightness. And by knowing and being true to herself.

"This business is so complicated," says Kathleen, who during the height of *Side*

Effects' media blitz would pray for two to three hours of sleep at a time. "The ups and downs are so momentous it's like whiplash."

So she's learned to keep an even keel and roll with the punches. People often assume she's an excellent multi-tasker, but Kathleen prefers to work in blocks of time, fully dedicating herself to one thing at a time.

"When I'm with my kids, I'm with my kids. When I'm working on a script, I'm only working on a script. It's the only way that works for me to achieve a higher quality than if I was trying to do three things at once."

Grab on

In Kathleen's chic office overlooking Willy Street, I'm hugging the corner of an equally chic couch, taking frantic notes as she sits across from me, her bright, barefoot toes resting in the shag rug. Kathleen has an infectious smile, is easy to talk with and often spins my questions back to me; it's like catching up with an old friend ... or talking with someone who's got her own radio show. When she wraps up her rambling yet revealing answer to my first inquiry, I glance down at the questions I had prepared; next is "Grabbing ovaries?" scrawled out with a fat question mark.

I quickly realize I already have the answer to this one.

Initially, I didn't get the reference. But in just a few minutes of talking, I understand that here is a woman who has, and pardon the many clichés, taken the wheel, the bull by the horns, grabbed life by the ovaries, all while staying down to earth and true to herself.

It's a tagline that suits her well.



Amanda N. Wegner, *amandawegner.com*, is a freelance writer and editor in Madison who wants an equally provocative tagline.



Three ways to get The Kathleen Show

- Catch the show Sundays at 10 a.m. on WTDY 1670 AM
- Go to www.thekathleenshow.com and stream online
- Go to www.thekathleenshow.com, sign up for the podcast or RSS feed and get Kathleen on your iPod.

And keep up-to-date on what Kathleen thinks is cool, as well as other musings, by following her on Twitter (username: KathleenShow) or by checking out her blog, accessible through her web site.