

# Living

# Holiday recipes

Residents share the recipes that make the season bright.

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WELCOME

# PORK favor

We dedicated our cover story this month to holiday recipes, and why not? The Christmas season wouldn't be complete without the treasured family foods that pop up this time of year. From the elaborate five-course dinners to a simple cookie, most all of us have some connection with a family favorite.

Jolene's family introduced me to a family tradition they served each Christmas Eve. Her mother would make oyster soup and Spamwiches. Yes, Spamwiches — a holiday ritual for the Poraths. I would have preferred a ribeye, but nobody asked my opinion. So, I ate oyster soup and Spamwiches with Dean and Lois for a few years.

What exactly was this Spamwich, you ask? Well, to the best of my knowledge, it was chopped-up Spam, pickle relish and cheese toasted on half of a hamburger bun in the oven. At least that was the Porath version. I have to admit, it was delicious. The oyster soup? Not so much.

I recognize some of you may have never tried Spam, and for good reason. My friends who grew up on farms said, if they wanted meat, they got the real thing. For us city kids, though, canned meat was an alternative.

When Jolene and I started our own family, we continued the Spamwich tradition with our kids, and we still serve them each Christmas Eve. The oyster soup has been replaced with a choice of potato soup or broccoli cheese soup, thank goodness.

I wrote about this Spam tradition more than a decade ago in this column, and my email in-box was full the next day with favorite Spam recipes from readers. One person even mailed me a Spam coin bank. It was then when I began to understand the Spam-lovers cult. In a conversation with a local Hy-Vee manager about Spam, my eyes were opened even more. Just to put this in perspective, more than 44,000 cans of Spam are produced every hour. Hawaiians alone consume approximately 7 million cans of Spam per year. Barack Obama even admitted he likes it.

Truth be told, I won't be rushing to the grocery store to buy Spam anytime soon, but I will continue to enjoy our Spamwiches on Christmas Eve, and I hope you can enjoy a few of your family favorites, too.

Merry Christmas, and thanks for reading. ■



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# Holiday recipes

Residents share the recipes that make the season bright.

By Rachel Harrington

Favorite dishes are often at the heart of holiday gatherings. Their aromas wafting through the house signal time to join family and friends in celebration, reminiscing and gratitude. Their tastes spark memories and conversation. For many, certain recipes are a holiday must. They are inextricably woven into the fabric of the season, and the festivities wouldn't feel complete without them.

Renee Simmons makes divinity for the holidays and always made a batch just for her mom, who loved the recipe.

DIVINITY

INGREDIENTS

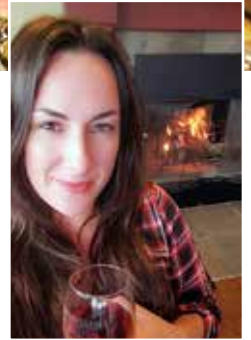
- 2 cups of sugar
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 (7 ounce) jar marshmallow crème
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Food coloring (optional)
- Pecan halves

DIRECTIONS

- Heat sugar and water on the stove until boiling. Continue to boil until it reaches a soft ball stage. In stand mixer, add marshmallow creme. When syrup is done, slowly pour syrup mixture into marshmallow creme and add 1 teaspoon vanilla. Beat until stiff. If you desire to have a different color than white, this is where you would add a few drops of food coloring. I usually use red to make it a light pink.
- Immediately spoon onto waxed paper and press a pecan half on top of each piece. You know it is set up when you can pick it up easily with your fingers and it is no longer sticky.



Megan Haynes continues to gather the family to make her mom's chocolate crinkle cookies during the holidays. She cherishes memories of her mom baking for the holidays.



Divinity

“My mom loved divinity candy, and, every year at Christmas, I made her a batch all her own,” says Renee Simmons. “Sometimes I would make it as well for her birthday in October. I’ve been making divinity for years, and it will continue to be a part of my recipe collection.”

Chocolate crinkle cookies

“Every Christmas, the sweet scent of baking filled our home,” Megan Haynes says. “We’d spend hours in the kitchen, whipping up several batches of chocolate crinkle cookies, along with other classic (and not so classic) treats. These cookies, with their perfectly cracked tops and rich, fudgy centers, were a family favorite. My mom especially loved them. The image of her in the kitchen, flour-dusted and smiling, is a cherished memory, as it was her last holiday baking in the kitchen with family. Now, when I bake chocolate crinkles, it’s more than just a recipe. It’s a way to honor her and keep her spirit alive.”

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## CHOCOLATE CRINKLE COOKIES

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 1 3/4 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/4 cup butter
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup powdered sugar

### DIRECTIONS

- In a 1-quart saucepan, cook and stir chocolate, shortening and butter over low heat until melted. Cool.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease cookie sheets. In a large bowl, combine eggs, granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until combined, scraping side of bowl occasionally.
- Stir in melted chocolate mixture and vanilla. Then gradually stir in flour and cocoa powder.
- Shape dough into 1 1/2-inch balls. Roll balls in 1/4 cup granulated sugar, then in powdered sugar to coat.
- Place balls 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or just until edges are firm and cracks appear slightly moist. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on wire racks. (Cookies will deflate slightly upon cooling.) Makes about 36 cookies.

### HOW TO STORE

- Layer cookies between waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Store at room temperature for up to three days or freeze for up to three months.

## Ham balls

“What makes the ham balls special is I always grind my own ham, and I use the large cookie scoop,” says Deb Hubby. “This way the sauce to meat ratio is much better.”



Debby Hubby says what sets her ham balls apart is that she grinds her own ham.



## HAM BALLS

### MEATBALL INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds ground ham
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 pound hamburger
- 3/4 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 cup graham crackers, crushed

### SAUCE

- 2 cans tomato sauce
- 3/4 cup vinegar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons mustard

### DIRECTIONS

- Mix all the ham ball ingredients together. Make into balls with a large cookie scoop and place on a 10-inch by 15-inch pan.
- Mix sauce ingredients and pour over meatballs. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.
- Three pounds of meat will make 122 balls using a small scoop and 72 with a 1 1/2 tablespoon scoop.

## Jean's famous dressing

“Both my mother and my mother-in-law were great cooks,” Laura Silverthorn says. “My late mother-in-law, Jean Silverthorn, was a cook for the Earlham School District. Everything she touched tasted like gold. She had a love for real butter, whole milk and cream. Most of her recipes contained these ingredients.

“I will never forget the day I first met her. I was always small growing up. Her first words to me were, ‘You’re no bigger than a minute! How ’bout a piece of pie?’ This was followed by her wonderful laugh. She had such an infectious laugh, and, to this day, I can still hear it. Of



Laura Silverthorn praises the cooking of her late mother-in-law, Jean Silverthorn, who was a cook for the Earlham School District. In honor of her, Laura makes Jean's famous dressing for the holidays.

course, you cannot turn down the offer of pie. This was my introduction to the best food I have ever tasted.

“The funny thing about Jean was that she never wrote amounts down or measured ingredients precisely, but she knew exactly what to add to make her food irresistible. I remember having her sit at my dining table walking me through how to make her famous cinnamon rolls. She would say, ‘Just add a little bit of this or that,’ or ‘Give it a good hard right’ when describing how to punch the dough. The whole time, I was trying to write everything down so I could remember it, and she was laughing that memorable laugh.

“We always had Thanksgiving at Jean's house. Her kitchen was small, and she commanded

## JEAN'S FAMOUS DRESSING

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 sticks butter
- 4 ½ cups chicken broth (made from instant powdered bouillon)
- 4 tablespoons of flour
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 loaf white sandwich bread, cubed
- ½ cup instant onion
- 3 cups celery, finely diced
- 1 small container powdered sage

### DIRECTIONS

- Make the gravy by melting one stick of butter in a medium saucepan. Add flour and cook for one minute. Add milk and instant onion. Add 1 ½ cups chicken broth to the pan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat.
- In a 2-gallon Ziploc bag, add and shake together the bread, celery, and ¾ of the container of sage. Pour into an 11-inch by 15-inch cake pan. Pour the rest of the chicken broth over the bread mixture (it should be very moist).
- Pour the gravy over the top and fold in. Dot the top of the dressing with the remaining butter and sprinkle the remaining sage on top.
- Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours or until brown on top.
- Note: I use the larger pan to keep the butter from spilling over in my oven.

the space. All we had to do was show up and eat. This made her happy. As she got along in years, she had difficulty making the whole meal, so we all started helping. This is where I learned how to make her dressing and pies.

"I have written down many of my mother and mother-in-law's recipes, and family members are always asking me to share them. I am happy to share one of Jean's recipes we had to have each Thanksgiving and Christmas. Jean said, 'Just add some celery and sage,' so I tried to tell you how much to use in the recipe. Of course, if you want to add more or less, you would be cooking like Jean. I miss her so much."



Marilou Harryman says she first had egnog pie more than 30 years ago at her mother-in-law's parents' home. She says she would make it more often if egnog were available year-round.

## Egnog pie

"I first had this pie 30-plus years ago at my mother-in-law's parents' home," Marilou Harryman says. "Since that day, I have made at least one each year (usually more) because they are so easy to make and so delicious. One year, my son even made and sold them when he was in high school. Of course, you can only make them this time of year as this is when egnog is available. I have been known to freeze egnog so we can have them during the year. I often hear people say, 'I don't like egnog.' I say, just try it and you'll be surprised, and, more times than not, they like it." ■

## EGGNOG PIE

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (3.4 ounce) box instant French vanilla pudding
- 2 cups egnog
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 package Dream Whip (I use 2 cups Cool Whip instead)
- 1 graham cracker pie crust
- Nutmeg

### DIRECTIONS

- In a bowl, mix the pudding, egnog and vanilla for several minutes until thick. Then fold in the Dream Whip. Once mixed together well, pour into a graham cracker crust. Add some sprinkles of nutmeg on top and refrigerate.

# FIGHTING for joy on Christmas

Christmas is not automatically a joyous day for everyone. Many of us are overwhelmed with memories and thoughts that bring a great deal of sadness to our hearts. This sadness in our hearts may be related to loved ones who are no longer with us, Christmases in the past that were not pleasant experiences, or other memories that we would rather forget. Whatever the reason might be, Christmas is not always a joyous season for some of us.



How do we fight for joy on Christmas? It is easier said than done, but there is one thing we can do to avoid being the Christmas Scrooge. Here is one simple suggestion.

**Look up**

One of the first things that must happen is we must lift our eyes beyond our current circumstances and our fickle feelings. One of my favorite Scriptures that helps me to do that is in Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews 12:1-2 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,

despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

To be fair, this passage is written to followers of Jesus. This faith is not truly ours unless we have turned away from our sins and turned to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and received the gift of eternal life. True joy is not found outside of knowing Jesus Christ personally. I love what Burk Parsons says about joy, “Real joy comes from God, who has invaded us, conquered us, and liberated us from eternal death and sadness, who has given us hope and joy because he has poured out his love within our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us. Joy comes from God, not from within. When we look within, we just get sad. We have joy only when we look outside ourselves to Christ. Without Christ, joy is not only hard to find, it’s impossible to find.”

Fighting for joy isn’t always easy, whether it’s Christmas time or any other time, but if you are fixing your eyes on King Jesus, who came down from his throne for you and paved the way from the manger to the cross, you will not lose heart. ■

CJ McMurry is the Founder and Program Director of The Refuge. CJ is a certified biblical counselor with IABC and is a Commissioned Addictions Biblical Counselor with the TAC Network. CJ also serves as an Elder at Redeemer Church in Winterset.

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## BEAUTY

By Annie Wiseman

# WHY is gray hair more wiry?

Do you have gray hair and wonder why it is so coarse and frizzy? Almost like it's a different head of hair? You're not going crazy; it basically is.

As we age, there are structural changes that occur within each hair strand. The protein keratin, which hair is composed of, is influenced by factors such as moisture content, melanin levels (the pigment found in the hair that gives us our hair color), and the overall shape of the follicle. Melanin decreases with age, causing us to lose color, which also causes the strand to lose elasticity, making it more coarse. The aging process affects hair follicle shape, which can lead to changes in the texture of the hair.

Also, with the aging process comes the body's lack of moisture production. The oils the scalp produces runs down the hair shaft, keeping the overall appearance of the hair shiny and smooth. Oil production reduces significantly with age, leaving gray hair feeling dry and brittle. The environment and one's lifestyle also have an effect on the graying process. UV rays, stress and diet can further impact hair health, which exacerbates textural changes in the hair.

So, while gray hair is wiry, frizzy and harder to manage due to the lack of oils and melanin level, your favorite stylist can recommend lots of expert ideas to help fall in love with this hair stage of your life. ■



Information provided by Annie Wiseman, owner of Salon 107 and a licensed cosmetologist with 25 years of experience. 107 John Wayne Drive, Winterset, 515-462-4247, salon107style@gmail.com.

## HEALTH

By Dr. Amanda Queck

# SIMPLE eating hacks for success

(Part 3) 'Tis the season for family, friends and food. Be encouraged that there are a few "hacks" you can consider as you prepare for the festivities that this season brings to help you avoid the cravings and the aftereffects of the eating habits that this season brings. (See hacks 1-3 in previous months).

**Hack No. 4:** Movement is the best "medicine." As a chiropractor, this saying matches my philosophy to a T. There are many benefits of movement (beyond a healthy moving spine). If you move after a meal, it pushes sugar into your muscles instead of your bloodstream (ultimately avoiding that post-meal crash). It doesn't take much movement — you don't have to hit the gym or do an HIIT workout. A simple 10-minute walk or even moving around to do the dishes and clean-up is all it takes to avoid a sugar spike after your meal.

**Hack No. 5:** Stop counting calories. It seems like a great idea to make sure your caloric input is less than your caloric output. But the problem with this method is that not every calorie is created equal. For example, 200 calories of carbs are going to play a greater toll on your health than 200 calories of protein. Instead, focus on the nutritional content of what you are eating. Picture half of your plate being veggies, a quarter protein, and a quarter carbs and fat from the sauces and/or dressings you use to embellish your carbs. ■



Information provided by Dr. Amanda Queck, D.C. Flourish Chiropractic & Wellness, 108 W. Court Ave., Winterset, 515-384-0360, www.flourishchiro.life. Source: Glucose Revolution by Jessie Inchauspé

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# HAPPY holidays

As this year comes to a close, I want to take time to thank all of my clients and crew I work with. There are so many people I come into contact with through the year. Obviously, my clients are at the top of the thank you list. I really enjoy working with people, and, by the time the house closes, I can usually count my clients as new friends. I love seeing them out in the community, getting an update on their lives and hearing about house updates they have done. Every transaction requires a lot of people to make it happen, from loan originators, abstractors, attorneys, pest inspectors, home inspectors, plumbing and HVAC contractors, roofers and, last, but certainly not least, my office manager. I have a great crew I work with, and I appreciate them all.



Looking forward to 2025, I'm excited for the future of Madison County. Our community is poised for continued growth and prosperity, and I look forward to working with old friends and meeting new clients as well.

Thank you for reading my articles, and I will continue to provide real estate tips, tricks and terminologies in the new year. ■

Information provided by Jennifer Stover, 515-480-3389, Madison County Realty, 65 W. Jefferson St., Winterset, jenniferstover@madisoncountyrealty.com. Licensed in Iowa.

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# TOP 5 reasons your check engine light is on

From minor to serious issues, here are a few reasons your check engine light might be on.

- 1. Loose gas cap.** Check to make sure it is properly secured and that there are no cracks in it.
- 2. Failing oxygen sensor.** If you're experiencing a decline in fuel economy and your check engine light appears, have your oxygen sensor checked.
- 3. Failing catalytic converter.** When your catalytic converter is failing, it could be caused by issues related to other systems that work interdependently with it that have not been addressed.
- 4. Failing mass air flow sensor.** Always have your mass air flow sensor checked when the check engine light comes on. Since many parts of the engine work together, when one part fails, others tend to follow suit.
- 5. Damaged spark plugs or wires.** It's important to keep in mind that these are some of the most common reasons for the check engine light to come on; however, there can be other issues that cause the check engine light to illuminate. Also, a flashing check engine light indicates a major internal failure and requires immediate attention. Regardless, you should not ignore the check engine light. Always check it as soon as possible to ensure the integrity of your vehicle. ■



Information provided by Dawn Lauer, marketing specialist, Quality Car Care, 1012 N. 10th St., Winterset, 515-462-1035. Source: [www.topdriver.com/education-blog/top-5-reasons-your-check-engine-light-is-on/](http://www.topdriver.com/education-blog/top-5-reasons-your-check-engine-light-is-on/)

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# GOING the distance for fellow veterans

Group finds it rewarding to provide transportation to others who have served.

A small group of volunteers is truly going the distance for local veterans in Madison County.

Joan Naylor, Madison

County Veterans Affairs

transportation coordinator,

arranges free rides for local veterans to and from medical appointments through the VA system. Naylor also does some of the volunteer driving, along with Terry McDowell, Gary Davis, Tom Verstraeten and Paul Welch.

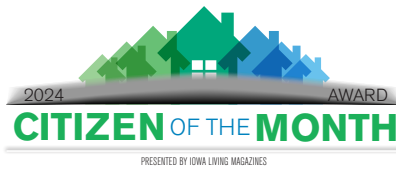
“I’ve been doing this the longest,” McDowell says. “I started doing this in Indianola. I’m 78, and I started doing this when I was 63, since I retired from the post office. I’d heard about it and thought it was a good cause.”

The service began in Madison County after the group acquired a van in 2019.

“The maintenance is all paid for by the VA,” Naylor says. “All we have to do is drive the vets.”

Naylor emphasizes the service is completely free to veterans.

“It’s all free to the vets. Some of them offer to give us some money, but we can’t accept it,” she says.



Tom Verstraeten, Terry McDowell, Joan Naylor and Gary Davis are all veterans, and they enjoy helping other veterans get to appointments.

Naylor says usage of the service fluctuates greatly.

“It varies. Last year, we took 84 people. We’re up to 54 this year. It varies month to month,” Naylor says. “We take them basically wherever their appointment is, as long as it’s VA sanctioned.”

Most of the rides are to and from Des Moines and are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

“Whoever calls first gets that day,” Naylor says.

The van does not have a ramp or lift, so riders must be able to get into and out of the van independently.

“However, we can take a walker or crutches or a cane,” Naylor says.

The drivers point out that they know there are still more veterans who could benefit from the service, so they are striving to get the word out. Naylor speculates on the reluctance of some veterans to use the service.

“A lot of them don’t want to ask for help,” Naylor says. “We tell them it’s free, the service is there, we want to make sure we utilize it so we can keep it.”

The group also is seeking more volunteer drivers and says it’s generally a “best fit” for a retired person, because of the fluctuations in the number of rides requested. All drivers receive training and an initial physical, plus background checks. Drivers 60 and older get an annual physical.

“The physical is paid for by the VA. There’s no money out of the driver’s pocket,” Verstraeten says.

The drivers said the driving routine is not challenging. They simply drive veterans to appointments, wait until the appointment is done, then drive the veteran back home. The most enjoyable part, they say, is conversing with the riders. Naylor shared a favorite story about a WWII veteran.

“When the driver brought him back, the driver said, ‘I want to take him again next time,’ because the rider was so much fun to talk with,” Naylor says.

Anyone interested in learning more about using the service, or about possibly becoming a volunteer driver, is asked to contact Madison County Veterans Affairs at 515-462-4680. ■



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# THE IMPORTANCE of umbrella insurance

**What is umbrella insurance?**

Umbrella insurance is a form of liability insurance that will supplement your basic liability policies, such as your auto, home or renters' insurance. An umbrella liability policy covers a much higher limit and goes above and beyond claims directly relating to your home and auto. The main purpose of your umbrella policy is to protect your assets from an unforeseen event, such as a tragic accident in which you are held responsible for damages or bodily injuries. If another party files a lawsuit against you, your umbrella coverage will pay for the damages you're legally responsible for up to the policy limit.



**Why is umbrella insurance important?**

Your car, house, investments and retirement accounts, as well as your normal checking and savings accounts and even future income, are all considered assets. It is important to know that, if you are sued for a lot of money and do not have enough liability insurance or an umbrella policy to cover those costs, all or your assets are exposed. People typically choose to buy an umbrella policy because they want to prevent the possibility of financial ruin due to one misstep or unforeseen accident. An umbrella policy can provide the protection to prevent such an outcome.

Could this happen to you? Examples of claims paid by an umbrella policy:

**Example 1-** The insured's 18-year-old son was driving the insured's car on a short trip to the store with his girlfriend. He lost control of the car and struck a tree. The insured's son told the police that a vehicle cut him off, but there were no witnesses and no evidence of any impact with another car. His girlfriend, a 19-year-old college student, was hospitalized for more than a month with multiple fractures and internal injuries. She was in a wheelchair but is now able to walk with crutches and continues with physical therapy. She has a right drop foot as a result of the injuries. The insured's personal umbrella policy limit was paid.

**Example 2 -** The insured permitted several of her children and their friends to play paintball in her large backyard. The children were experienced and advised of all the safety rules including the use of headgear at all times. A participant removed her headgear as she was leaving the field in order to better hear someone calling her name. The minor claimant was hit in the eye resulting in a \$475,000 settlement.

We tend to want to believe that nothing like this can happen to us. There are many examples of unforeseen events and tragic accidents where an umbrella policy would provide the needed protection. Talk to your agent today about making a small investment to protect your assets. ■

Information provided by Eric Johnson, IFG Insurance, 224 E. Highway 92, Suite B, Winterset, 515-462-4553.

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The Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP) begins **October 15** and ends **December 7**.

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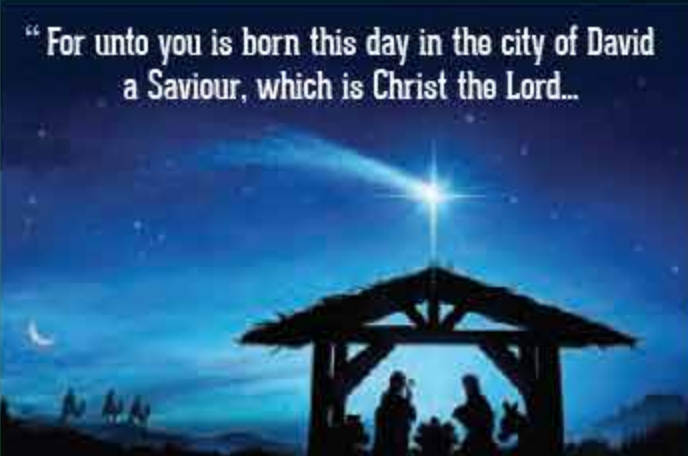
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# BUILDING a dream life

Randalls build custom home on scenic property.

La Rae Randall says she fell in love with Winterset during a visit to the iconic Hogback Covered Bridge, when she also experienced the charm of the town square. That visit planted a seed, and, years later, it blossomed into her dream home in Madison County’s scenic landscape.

“When my husband and I were deciding where to live, we found the most beautiful land for sale in the area,” Randall says. “We purchased our land in 2021, started building in 2023, and, finally, Chris and I moved into our new home late August 2024.”

The Randalls’ home is the realization of a shared vision and years of dreaming.

“We had been looking at a few different properties around Des Moines that were beautiful but just not quite right,” she explains. “When we visited the land that would be ours, we instantly fell in love. We were super picky about what we wanted for our land and home, and nothing on the real estate market came close to our dreams until we found this gorgeous cow pasture with hills and trees and the perfect western view. We bought it knowing we would build our dream home here.”

Today, their custom-designed house is as unique as they are.

“Our house has a lot of personality, just like my husband and I,” Randall says.

They designed it together, combining their needs and desires, and partnered with local contractor Josh Hargin of Complete Construction to bring their home to life.

Today, the couple spends most of their time in the great room and observatory, as well as their “dreamy” library.

“We truly love every single inch of our home because of the design we dreamed up together and the work that was done for us,” Randall says.

One of the most magical things about their location is the drive to and from town.

“The hills, the curves, the trees, the horses and cows dotting the fields, it feels like I’m living in a movie here,” Randall says.

Winterset’s community and character are just as captivating to Randall, who likes how “pretty” and “quaint” the town is.

“It feels like Stars Hollow. Mayberry. A Hallmark movie,” she says. “A town with



La Rae and Chris Randall found the unique property they had been looking for and built their house to suit their desires in a home.



hippies and cowboys. Fresh local food, farm stands, great places to eat, beauty to behold. Truly one of the most magical places in Iowa.”

Although Randall and her husband have only recently moved, they’re eager to embrace all Winterset offers. The Covered Bridge Festival left a strong impression, and they’re

looking forward to exploring more of the area parks and participating in community events.

“I am so thankful for all the people who work hard on events and upkeep of the area for creating such a warm, fun, delightful vibe here in town,” she says. “It truly makes this place special.” ■



# MEET Abigail Williams

Finds joy and purpose in teaching

Over the past seven years, Abigail Williams has dedicated her career to helping students in special education thrive at Winterset Junior High School.

Her passion for teaching began during high school when she participated in a class called “PE with Peers,” designed to include students with disabilities in physical education alongside high school mentors.

“I found this to be so rewarding to see how excited and happy those students were each day,” Williams recalls. “I knew instantly I wanted to get into the realm of teaching special education.”

This inspiration led her to William Penn University, where she earned her degree in 2017. Shortly after, she began her role at Winterset Junior High, where she has taught special education ever since.

While Williams does find teaching rewarding, it does come with its challenges, particularly knowing something may work one day but not the next.

“Constantly trying new techniques and innovative ways to engage students with their learning, but also trying to break the ‘I can’t’ mindset, is a tough cycle to go through,” she says. “But the more positive days outweigh the bad days. And knowing that each and every day, when I come to work, I get to impact so many students and their education makes it all worth it.”

Seeing her students achieve their goals is the most fulfilling part of her work, especially when her students get to discontinue services because they’ve met the goals on their IEPs.

Williams treasures the connections she builds with her students, many of whom leave a lasting impact. One of her favorite memories highlights the deep relationships she forms.

“A student I had in my very first year teaching eighth grade came back on his last day of his senior year to ask me for my Snapchat account,” she says. “He said, ‘Mrs. Williams, you told me if I make it through high school and graduate, you would give me your Snapchat once I get my diploma.’ By golly, he did, and those stories make all the hardships of this career worth it — to notice and see the impact you make each and every day on these students.”

Williams is originally from Norwalk, but Winterset quickly became home for her and her husband, Cole, who also works at the junior high as an associate but is in the process of finishing his education degree to become a teacher.

In addition to teaching, Williams stays busy coaching the high school softball team, supporting the high school basketball games her husband helps coach, and enjoying time with family and friends. ■



Abigail Williams finds it rewarding to teach special education at Winterset Junior High School.

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# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com)

Be sure to check for cancelations

## Upcoming in Winterset Living magazine:

**First cars:** Do you remember your first car? Do you have a photo of yourself with it? Or maybe you still own it? We want to hear your stories. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) by Dec. 10 to be included in the January issue.

**Grandparents who enjoy living near their grandchildren:** Share why you enjoy living near your grandchildren and how you spend time together. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) by Jan. 10 to be included in the February issue.

## Women's Giving Circle meeting

Thursday, Dec. 5, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

206 S. Fourth Ave., Winterset

The Madison County Women's Giving Circle's fourth quarter Holiday Potluck/Party will be Dec. 5. There will not be a business meeting. This is a social event. Bring your \$50 (or more) check for your annual donation to the group's Community Foundation account. You are also encouraged to bring a snack, side, dessert, etc., to share at the potluck. Feel free to invite potential members to learn more about the organization.

Madison County Women's Giving Circle's 2025 quarterly meetings will be March 25, June 24 and Sept. 23 in Union State Bank's Community Room, 611 West Highway 92, Winterset. The date and location for the 2025 Holiday Party/Potluck will be decided and announced next fall. The no-more-than-an-hour quarterly meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. Arrive at 5:30 p.m. if you wish to socialize before the meeting.

Local charitable 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofits or other qualifying tax-exempt organizations that wish to present information about their projects for supporting women and children in Madison County should arrive by 6:15 p.m. to register to present. Each applicant is asked to provide a brief description of their project, their tax-exempt status, plus an email address and telephone number where they may be reached. Three organizations will be selected (by drawing) to present at the meeting and each will be allocated four minutes to present and four minutes to answer members' questions. One nonprofit will be selected by vote after the presentations to receive the quarter's donations. If more than three nonprofits wish to present, the rest will each have two minutes to talk about their project.



## "The Nutcracker"

Dec. 6-8

The Iowa Theater

Winterset Ballet and Dance Studio is presenting "The Nutcracker." Performances are Friday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 7 at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

## Holiday Hullabaloo

Through Dec. 29

Horizon Events Center,  
10320 Hickman Road,  
Clive

The 2024 Holiday Hullabaloo is an immersive, family-friendly holiday experience that will surprise and delight guests this holiday season. Enjoy a variety of activities, entertainment and festivities that will allow you to create some fun holiday hullabaloo and memories. [www.holidayhullabaloo.com](http://www.holidayhullabaloo.com)



## Holiday Promenade

Fridays through Dec. 20

Historic East Village

The Greater Des Moines Partnership and the Historic East Village Neighborhood Association will spread holiday cheer during the Holiday Promenade, an exciting, free celebration full of holiday-themed activities, entertainment, shopping and family-friendly fun. A number of activities will be scheduled throughout the five Fridays including tree lighting, a scavenger hunt, ice skating and more. During the Holiday Promenade dates, Historic East Village retailers are encouraged to remain open until 8 p.m. while restaurants and attractions are open later.

## Des Moines Concert

### Handbells Winter Concerts

Various dates and locations

Des Moines Concert Handbells will present three winter concerts with a variety of music. Bring your family and friends. Concerts are at Trinity United Presbyterian Church, 200 S. Howard St., Indianola, on Dec. 7 at 4 p.m.; Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 8301 Aurora Ave., Urbandale, on Dec.13 at 7 p.m.; and at Plymouth United Church of Christ, 4126 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, on Dec. 14 at 3 p.m. A freewill donation will be accepted.



## Christmas Open House

Sunday, Dec. 8, 2-4 p.m.

Olmsted-Urban House, 4010 70th St., Urbandale

Enjoy a Christmas Open House at the Urbandale Historical Society's Olmsted/ Urban House. A variety of activities will be held at the decorated house.

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## Jingle in the Junction

Dec. 5, Dec. 12, Dec. 19, 5-8 p.m.  
Valley Junction

The holiday season is in Valley Junction as many businesses extend their hours on Thursday nights to give you more time to find the perfect holiday gift, enjoy dinner, and enjoy three blocks of free entertainment on 5th Street under the glow of more than 100,000 holiday lights. Enjoy free horse-drawn trolley rides, ice carvings, photo op, a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at 6 p.m. in front of the West Des Moines Fire Administration Headquarters at 318 Fifth St, rotating entertainers, live reindeer, carolers, and Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Historic Valley Junction Foundation office from 6-8 p.m.



## Home for the Holidays

Saturday, Dec. 7, 1-3 p.m.  
Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, and Bennett School Museum, 4001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Admire the beautiful and unique decorations at the historic Jordan House Museum, vote on your favorite theme and have fun with family-friendly crafts at the Bennett School Museum. Both museums will be open for tours from 1-3 p.m. with special holiday fun for all. Tickets available the day of, or reserve your tickets at <https://westdesmoineshistoricalsociety.ticketspice.com/home-for-the-holidays>.



## Holiday Ho Ho Home Tour

Dec. 7, 5:30-9:30 p.m.  
Around Ankeny

Tour several Ankeny homes decked out for the holidays. Each features its own unique decorations, style and appetizers. All donations benefit the Wiedenman Family Foundation, which was formed to undertake projects that will enhance Ankeny and the surrounding community. Tickets are \$25. For tickets, visit [www.hohohometour.org/event-details/tickets](http://www.hohohometour.org/event-details/tickets).



## Christkindlmarket

Dec. 5-8  
Principal Park, 1 Line Drive,  
Des Moines

Christkindlmarket features regional vendors selling old-world, hand-crafted products from wooden vendor stalls, lively performances of polka music, traditional dance and choirs in Yuletide Hall; children's activities; Glühwein (warm, mulled wine) and European beer. [www.christkindlmarketsm.com](http://www.christkindlmarketsm.com)

## Glenn Miller Orchestra

Dec. 22, 7 p.m.  
Hoyt Sherman Place,  
1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines  
[hoytsherman.org](http://hoytsherman.org)

Enjoy "In the Christmas Mood" with the Glenn Miller Orchestra at the iconic Hoyt Sherman Place.

## Central Iowa Wind Ensemble

Dec. 15, 3 p.m.  
Staplin Performing Arts Center at  
Valley High School, 3650 Woodland  
Ave., West Des Moines

The Central Iowa Wind Ensemble (CIWE) welcomes audiences to its new performance home for a heartwarming holiday concert. In addition to celebrating the season through music, CIWE is honored to partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Central Iowa to bring the joy of music to youth across the community. For tickets, visit [www.ciwe.org/deck-the-halls-dsm](http://www.ciwe.org/deck-the-halls-dsm).

## Family Christmas at Living History Farms

Saturday, Dec. 7, noon to 3 p.m.  
11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale

Hear the sounds, see the sights, and smell the smells of a 19th-century Christmas. Enjoy carolers, old fashioned demonstrations, a craft, stories, and a visit with old St. Nick. Tickets are \$9 for ages 2 and older (\$8 for members). Buildings are heated. Bundle up for wagon rides. Tickets are available at <https://marketplace.lhf.org/Events.aspx>. [www.lhf.org](http://www.lhf.org)



## Des Moines Community Orchestra concerts

The Des Moines Community Orchestra has announced its concert dates for the 2024/2025 concert season. Admission is free. Concerts start at 2 p.m. with pre-concert talks at 1 p.m. For more information, visit [desmoinescommunityorchestra.org](http://desmoinescommunityorchestra.org). Concerts are:

- Sunday, Dec. 8, Celebrate & Sing Handel's Messiah, Grace United Methodist Church.
- Sunday, Feb. 23, Winter Concert and Past Audience Favorites, Sheslow Auditorium.
- Sunday, May 11, Spring Concert, Carl's Favorite Finales, Sheslow Auditorium. ■

# CHAMBER annual awards banquet upcoming

The Madison County Chamber of Commerce and its board of directors invite the public to the chamber's Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet on Thursday, Jan. 30. Nominations are currently being accepted for the annual awards.

The public is encouraged to nominate businesses in the following categories:

• **Business improvement:** Nominate a business that has done wonders and has grown and improved its customer services, products, and/or services. Past recipients include Winterset Community School District, The Iowa Theater, Covered Bridges Winery, The Drift and Fall Crawl.

• **Business of the Year:** Nominate a business that goes out of its way to deliver high-quality products, services and customer service. Past recipients include Petite Cafe.

• **Volunteer of the Year:** Did you notice a volunteer going above and beyond to make Madison County a better place to work, live, play and conduct business? Take a moment to recognize their hard work. Past recipients include Julie Feier, Dan Noack, Jen Frease, Jon Stetzel and Christ Nolte.

• **Citizen of the Year:** Nominate an individual who has gone above and beyond to improve the lives of those in our county. Past recipients include Brenda Hollingsworth and Marianne Fons, the first responders of the 2022 March 5 tornado, and Jon and Megan Barrett.

• **Non-profit of the Year:** Do you know a non-profit that has supported our community? Nominate them today. Past recipients are C.R.I.S.P. and Winterset Rotary.

• **New Member Award:** Do you know a

chamber member (who has been a member for at least three months) who has flourished and made Madison County a better place? Beans & Beignets, Flourish Chiropractic and Spotlight Dance Legacy have received this award.

• **Customer Service Award:** Is there a business or person that always makes you feel special? Nominate them today. Catherine Stetzel, the Iowa Theater and Nicole Kems have been past recipients of this award.

• **Jim and Pat Nelson Legacy Award:** Do you know a business or a person who has created a lasting legacy in the Madison County Community? Nominate them today. Dave and Judy Trask, Jim and Pat Nelson, and Linda Griffith-Smith have received this award.

To submit a nomination, visit <https://groupdynamic.wufoo.com/forms/rvo0q1y02ow58d/>. ■

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## INVESTMENT

By Jason Kleemeier

# MANAGING money as a couple

### What are the keys to grow wealthy together?

When you marry or simply share a household with someone, your financial life changes — and your approach to managing your money may change as well. The good news is that it is usually not so difficult.



At some point, you will have to ask yourselves some money questions — questions that pertain not only to your shared finances but also to your individual finances. Waiting too long to ask (or answer) those questions might carry a price. In the 2024 Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of BMO, 34% of couples view money as a source of conflict in their relationship.<sup>1</sup>

First off, how will you set priorities? One of your first priorities should be simply setting aside money that may help you build an emergency fund. But there are other questions to ask. Should you open joint accounts? Should you jointly title assets?

How much will you spend and save? Budgeting can help you arrive at your answer. A simple budget, an elaborate budget, or any attempt at a budget can prove more informative than none at all. A thorough, line-item budget may seem a little over the top, but what you learn from it may be truly eye-opening.

How often will you check up on your financial progress? When finances affect two people rather than one, credit card statements and bank balances become more important. Checking in on these details once a month (or at least once a quarter) can keep you both informed, so that neither one of you has misconceptions about household finances or assets. Arguments can start when money misunderstandings are upended by reality.

What degree of independence do you want to maintain? Do you want to keep some money separate? Some spouses need individual financial “space” of their own. There is nothing wrong with this approach.

Can you be businesslike about your finances? Spouses who are inattentive or nonchalant about financial matters may encounter more financial trouble than they anticipate. So, watch where your money goes, and think about ways to pay yourselves first rather than your creditors. Set shared short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives, and strive to attain them.

Communication is key to all this. Watching your progress together may well have benefits beyond the financial, so a regular conversation should be a goal. ■

1. ipsos.com, February 9, 2024. This material was prepared by MarketingPro, Inc., and does not necessarily represent the views of the presenting party, nor their affiliates. This information has been derived from sources believed to be accurate. Please note - investing involves risk, and past performance is no guarantee of future results. The publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. If assistance is needed, the reader is advised to engage the services of a competent professional. This information should not be construed as investment, tax or legal advice and may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any Federal tax penalty. This is neither a solicitation nor recommendation to purchase or sell any investment or insurance product or service, and should not be relied upon as such. All indices are unmanaged and are not illustrative of any particular investment.

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# QUICK, comforting ways to warm up winter in minutes

*(Family Features)* After a day battling the cold and fighting the wind, a comforting meal made at home is often just what you crave. Turn those blustery winter conditions into warm, cozy evenings with favorite recipes that offer not only convenience but provide a little kick of spice.

For a quick and delightful meal that's equal parts comforting and unique, try this hot honey chicken and waffle loaded with sweet and spicy flavor, topped with chicken and drizzled with honey. It's a treat that truly satisfies from the inside out in just seven minutes.

The crispness of the gluten-free rice waffle is made possible by Minute Rice's Hot Honey Chicken Seasoned Rice Cup that entices taste buds with a sweet and mildly spicy contrast and playful presentation. Ready in as little as 60 seconds, the rice cup ensures convenience and distinct seasoning, making each waffle perfectly flavored and offering a satisfying crunch with every bite.

Whether you're shaking up your breakfast routine or enjoying a fun and easy dinner, it can be taken to new heights with the combination of honey and a sprinkle of powdered sugar for delicious decadence.

Visit [MinuteRice.com](http://MinuteRice.com) to find more family-friendly ways to warm up mealtimes all winter long. ■

## Hot honey chicken and waffle

Prep time: 2 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Servings: 1

- 1 Minute Hot Honey Chicken Seasoned Rice Cup
- 1 egg
- nonstick cooking spray
- 2 chicken tenders, cooked
- 2 tablespoons honey, for garnish
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar, for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat mini waffle maker. Heat rice according to package directions.
- In medium mixing bowl, combine rice and egg. Mix well.
- Spoon rice mixture into waffle maker. Cook until light goes off.
- Place waffle on plate with cooked chicken tenders on top.
- Drizzle with honey, sprinkle powdered sugar on top and serve.



## Buffalo cauliflower casserole

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Servings: 6

- 2 cups Minute Jasmine Rice
- 1 package (8 ounces) plain cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup Buffalo hot sauce
- 4 cups frozen cauliflower florets, blanched and cooled
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/3 cup finely crumbled blue cheese
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 F. Prepare rice according to package directions. Transfer to greased 8-by-8-inch baking dish.
- In medium bowl, stir cream cheese and hot sauce. Add cauliflower, cheddar cheese, salt and pepper; toss to combine. Spoon over rice. Sprinkle with blue cheese.
- Bake 25-30 minutes until golden brown and bubbly. Sprinkle with green onions.
- Tips: Substitute goat cheese or feta for blue cheese, if desired. Meat lovers can serve as a side dish to seared chicken or beef.



# COCOA Crawl

The Cocoa Crawl was held on the Winterset Square Nov. 23.



Graysen and Emmalyn Kuhns and Maddy and Terri Nordstrom



Angel Kahaly



Lauri Duff and Jennifer Kraai



Elise, Rachel and Ella Cole



Janna and Christine Bowser



Debbie Field and Erin Harman



Noah, Keely, Steve and Ela Sloan



Caroline and Melissa Bentley and Anna Claire Smelley



Ellie Molln and Miranda Podoll



Betsy and Brigham Snyder and Cindy Frank



Chad and Drake Nordstrom



# TRICK- Or-Treat

Trick-or-treat on the Square was held Oct. 31.



Triston Pittman, Amelia Kitelinger and Natalie Pittman



Trump and Biden duking it out



Linley, Tasha, Lexton and Lincoln Booth



Brian, Rhett and Morgan Nuenkirk



Lindsay, Aylin, Drew, Eden, Brendan, Declan and Cohen Barden



Aubrie Lehman and Roxy Smith



Gavyn Young and Skylar Green



Garrett and Laura Barringer



Stop clown Stephanie



Shawn Honnold



Melissa Kiburz



Stacey and Harmony Howard

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