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SEEN IN JOHNSTON



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JOHNSTON CHAMBER TREE JINGLE CONTEST: Shop locally and vote for your favorite tree in the Johnston Chamber Tree Jingle Contest. Participating chamber members have decorated trees and have instructions for how the public can vote through Dec. 24. Pictured are Tanner Sink and Admir Kustura from Bank Iowa.

JOHNSTON WEATHER FORECAST

WED. HIGH 32 | LOW 24
Breezy in the morning; cloudy



THURS. HIGH 44 | LOW 15
Mostly sunny; becoming windier



FRI. HIGH 28 | LOW 14
Mostly cloudy and colder



SAT. HIGH 25 | LOW 9
Mostly sunny



SUN. HIGH 28 | LOW 21
Plenty of sunshine



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

MEANINGS BEHIND CHRISTMAS LYRICS

I love holiday songs. The instruments. The lyrics. The artists. All of it. Well, most all of it. I could do without any songs from Mariah Carey or Alvin and the Chipmunks, but you get the idea. If you haven't seen the December issue of CITYVIEW magazine, be sure to check it out, as we share our 25 favorite Christmas songs as our cover story. I am sometimes baffled, though, at the lyrics in many of the classic holiday songs I cherish. Traditions from days gone by? Words we no longer use? Check these out.

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire. I'm not sure I even know what chestnuts are, much less how to roast them. Even so, I learned that chestnuts were synonymous with Christmas in America even before Nat King Cole's song hit the airwaves. They were one of the most popular ingredients in American dishes throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, as the eastern seaboard was covered in chestnut trees until a blight caused them to go almost extinct. For more than a century, chestnuts roasting over an open fire was the smell of

Christmas. Needless to say, that tradition has ended.

A corncob pipe. Corncob pipes were invented by the Tibbe family in Missouri and became popularized by Gen. Douglas MacArthur. I have never smoked one, or even seen one, but that old corncob pipe continues to be part of our pal Frosty The Snowman with his button nose and two eyes made out of coal.

On a one-horse open sleigh. Sleigh rides, although not so common today, still spark nostalgia. The ones we do tend to see now are large and majestic and beautiful, much like the horses that pull them. The old one-horse sleighs, though, appear to be small, tippy and bumpy, not ideal for dashing through the snow.

Bells on bobtail. Back in the day, bobbing a horse's tail involving cutting the tail or tying it back so it looked shorter. Shorter hair on a horse's tail was supposed to keep it from waving in the driver's face, which makes sense.



Meanwhile, those bells placed on bobtail jingled in the Christmas spirit.

Four calling birds. In the original published version of "The 12 Days of Christmas," it's "four colly birds" not "four calling birds." In England, at the time, "colly birds" was a name given to blackbirds, and what says Christmas like blackbirds?

And finally, a pudding made of pig. "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" may not be a beloved holiday classic for all, but it is well known. The reference to a pudding made of pig, though, throws me off. This is not the pudding that was peddled by Bill Cosby. No, this pudding is black pudding, a type of blood sausage.

Sometimes, it is better not to know the meaning and just jingle all the way!

Have a great week, and thanks for reading. ■

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Living Weekly

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MAYOR'S 11TH ANNUAL RUN FOR FOOD

Mayor Paula Dierenfeld is again embarking on her journey to Run for Food. This year, her goal for the community is to log 2,500 miles. Donations for the Johnston Partnership will be accepted until Dec. 30 to ensure families have a joyous holiday season.

Mayor Dierenfeld has pledged to run one mile for every bag of food or \$10 donated to the Johnston Partnership for a Healthy Community. Over the years, the community's response has been incredible, with an outpouring of food and monetary contributions. More than \$81,130 has been raised through this annual initiative. In 2023, Mayor Dierenfeld covered an impressive 2,328 miles, finishing her last mile on Friday, Nov. 15, 2024.

Donations are more important than ever to support families in need. When the pantry opened in 1999, it served approximately 343 people per month. By October 2024, that number had risen to around 2,700 people. This exponential growth in need highlights the importance of your support — not only to help the mayor reach her goals but also to assist families in need.

Donations can be made in the following ways:

- **Online:** Visit <https://johnstonpartnership.org/donate/> to give a monetary donation.
- **Venmo:** @johnstonpartnership
- **Drop-off:** Drop off monetary or food donations to the Johnston Partnership on Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. ■

SUPPORT THE BLUE DRAGON PROGRAM

The Blue Dragon Program is holding a special holiday shopping event. The event pairs officers with less fortunate children or those who have faced tragic experiences, allowing them to enjoy a memorable shopping spree at Grimes Walmart. Your participation can help create unforgettable memories for these children.

- **How you can contribute:** Your support is invaluable, and there are two easy ways to make a difference:
 - **Traditional giving:** Send or drop off your monetary donation to the Johnston Police Department, Attn: Blue Dragon Program, 6373 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, IA 50131. (Checks should be made payable to the Johnston Police Officers Association.)
 - **Online contribution:** Embrace the convenience of online giving by donating through Donor Box at <https://donorbox.org/blue-dragon>.

If you have questions or need help with donations, contact Sgt. Grandon at 515-278-2345. Your generosity helps create cherished moments and ignites the warmth of the holiday spirit for those who need it most. ■

COMMUNITY GREETINGS

Johnston Community Greetings would like to welcome anyone new to Johnston with a welcome bag including discounts at local businesses and city information. Contact Missy Shepherd by phone, text or email at 515-991-5014 or mshepherdgreetings@gmail.com. ■

GIVING TREE BENEFITS ANIMALS

Woof Pack Resort and Spa is sponsoring a Giving Tree to benefit Hope Animal Rescue of Iowa the entire month of December. Stop by the resort to grab an ornament to donate to Hope or give us a call to donate. The resort address is 5700 West Parkway in Johnston. For information, contact 515-416-4255 or info@woofpackresort.com. ■

LOOKING FOR EVENT OR MEETING SPACE?

The Johnston Lions Club is here to make your next event unforgettable. Whether you're planning a business meeting, family gathering or special celebration, the Lions have the space for you. Join them on Sunday, Jan. 19 to learn more about renting the club's venue. Explore the space, get all your questions answered, and see how they can help make your event a success. For more information, email venueclub@gmail.com. ■

JOHNSTON CHAMBER TREE JINGLE CONTEST

Shop locally and vote for your favorite tree in the Johnston Chamber Tree Jingle Contest. Participating chamber members have decorated trees and have instructions for how the public can vote through Dec. 24.



Heather Lesley at Woof Pack Resort & Spa



Julia Bradshaw at Styled by JJ



Michael Tiffany and Eric Herrmann at Herrmann Family Chiropractic



Paula Bierle at Purple Poppy Boutique

JOHNSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

School's Out! On Dec. 23, 30 and 31, JPL's Teen Space will have extended hours so kids in grades 6 and up can hang out at the library. On Dec. 23 and 30, a Shrinky Dinky, Cocoa Drinky Movie Jamboree will be held from 1-3 p.m. Teens can ring in New Year's Eve at the Pokemon Club: Legendary New Year's Eve Party at 1 p.m. on Dec. 31.

Do you have a teen in grades 8-12 looking to make a difference in the community? If so, the new VolunTEEN program at JPL may be the perfect opportunity to do so. On the second and third Saturdays of each month, from 2-5 p.m., teens can help prepare materials for youth activities and complete other needed tasks in the library. Interested teens can register to receive email reminders about upcoming volunteer times and opportunities at the library, or they can just drop in on a VolunTEEN Saturday and volunteer.

The Johnston Public Library is located at 6700 Merle Hay Road, Johnston. More information about all events and resources at Johnston Public Library can be found online at www.johnstonlibrary.com or by calling the library at 515-278-5233.



NORTHPOINT CHURCH ANNOUNCES NEW COMMUNITY CENTER

NorthPoint Church announces that construction is beginning to renovate its existing building into a community center. The project is part of NorthPoint's Cultivate Initiative and includes two phases. Phase one is a 9,000-square-foot addition to the east end of the church's building. It will house a childcare center operated by Pathways Learning Academy. This is expected to open in fall 2025.

Phase two includes remodeling the interior of North Point to become a community center that includes a cafe, indoor playscape, pickleball courts and a volleyball court, meeting rooms, and seating for small gatherings. Phase two is expected to be completed by November 2025. Money to complete the \$7 million project is being raised internally over the next two years.

NorthPoint leaders believe turning the current building into a community center that can be utilized seven days a week and providing the community with another childcare option is the best way to utilize its resources and reach those in the larger community. NorthPoint envisions the space as a hub to help meet community needs with tutoring programs, helping refugees, supporting foster care and adoption families, providing a safe space for nearby students to hang out, and working with community groups to address food insecurity in the area. ■

BACKPOCKET OFFERS EVENTS

The public is invited to a variety of events coming up at Backpocket, 6205 Merle Hay Road, Johnston.

- **Elf and Friends Guided Paint Night**, Dec. 17, 6 p.m., \$55. www.makeitartfull.com/event-details/elf-and-friends-guided-painting-trio. Get in the holiday spirit and create you own home decor inspired by a classic Christmas movie.

- **Family Fun New Year's Eve** is Dec. 31, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and features face-painting, a photo booth with props, a DIY party hat making station, a balloon drop and sparkling cider toast at 2 p.m., food and drink specials, and more. ■

JOHNSTON PARTNERSHIP ENCOURAGES DONATIONS

The Johnston Partnership provides food and personal hygiene products to those in need, as well as children's seasonal clothing. Almost 600 families are being served per month, so the need is high. Donations can be dropped off at 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite C, Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m., and on Thursdays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Every third week of the month, they collect for the Friday food bag program that serves food insecure students at all nine Johnston schools. Currently they pack 220 food bags each week to go home with students. They can use fruit cups, macaroni and cheese, Ramen noodles, granola bars, individual shelf-stable milk and individual peanut butter. ■

AKC MARKETING COLLECTING ITEMS FOR JOHNSTON PARTNERSHIP

AKC Marketing, 8961 Thomas Ave. in Johnston, is holding its Holiday Drop Off. 'Tis the season for giving — and they are offering awesome incentives to sweeten the deal. This year, our Holiday Drop-Off is benefiting the Johnston Partnership. Drop-off dates are weekdays through Dec. 20, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring a gently used children's coat, new socks, new underwear, unopened diapers, unexpired baby formula or any other non-food items from the Johnston Partnership's wants list and get a Stanley-style cup or a coozie while supplies last. The partnership is in specific need right now for feminine products (specifically pads), bars of soap and toothpaste. ■

WINTER CURBSIDE YARD WASTE COLLECTION

The Compost It! winter collection in Johnston will be on Dec. 30 and 31 and Jan. 6 and 7, corresponding with your regular trash collection day. This is a great time to dispose of brush, leaves, lawn clippings, garden waste and live holiday trees. ■

STAY UP TO DATE WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN JOHNSTON!
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EVENTS IN THE AREAEMAIL YOUR EVENT INFORMATION TO
TAMMY@IOWALIVINGMAGAZINES.COM**PLAYHOUSE CLASSES OFFERED**

The Des Moines Playhouse offers classes year-round for ages 4 through adult. New this winter is an audition workshop for teens and adults. Registration is now open for winter, winter break, spring break and spring classes with summer camps posting in mid-January. Scholarships are available through the Jeanne Hopson Angel Fund. For class descriptions, registrations and more information, visit dmplayhouse.com/education/classes-and-camps.

The Audition Workshop Series for ages 14 through adult will be led by Playhouse artistic director Katy Merriman. Held each Saturday in February, sessions will focus on song selection, cold reads, dance auditions with “Waitress” choreographer Kent Zimmerman, and a master class with area directors. Students can sign up for one, two, three or all four sessions.

Winter break features a play in four days for students in grades 2-7 while younger students will bring folk tales from around the world to life. Teens can work alongside Playhouse professionals to learn basic stage carpentry, painting, sewing, lighting design and sound design. Winter break sessions are Dec. 23, 27, 30 and 31.

Winter classes start Jan. 4 with creative drama, creative characters, and more for pre-K through grade 9. Spring classes, starting March 29 are focused on musical theatre for pre-K through grade 7.

Spring break finds students in grades 5-8 learning “Seussical Kids,” a 35-minute version of the popular Broadway musical, with performances at the end of the week. Students in grades 3-4 will rehearse and perform a play while younger students will use favorite books to create scenes to share.

For more information on Playhouse educational offerings, contact Robin Spahr,

Playhouse education director, at rspahr@dmplayhouse.com, 515-974-5365.

POP N’ JOLLY: A HOLIDAY SHOW FOR ALL GENERATIONS**Monday, Dec. 23, 6:30 p.m.****Temple Theater, 1011 Locust St., Des Moines**

Join Wagner Summer Theater for its first annual holiday family-friendly event, Pop n’ Jolly. Come enjoy fun and laughs with some of the area’s top musicians. Grab the crew and take fun photos with Santa and partake in a holiday singalong. The evening will include holiday classics by Dave Wagner and his special guests including two-time Cloris Award winner Julie Larson and national opera vocalist Craig Irvin. Also featured will be a selection of everyone’s favorite holiday songs performed by the Wagner Summer Theater Youth Vocal Group. Signature cocktails, mocktails and hot cocoa will be available for purchase. Tickets are available through Des Moines Performing Arts, www.desmoinesperformingarts.org. For more information, visit www.wagnersummertheater.com.

CITYVIEW’S FIRE AND ICE**Saturday, Jan. 18, 1-4 p.m.****Historic Valley Junction Foundation,
137 Fifth St., West Des Moines**

Join CITYVIEW’s Fire and Ice, an interactive winter pub crawl in Historic Valley Junction. Fire and Ice is a hockey-themed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues. With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. For tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-cityview-fire-ice-a-winter-pub-crawl-tickets-1079964535999. ■

RECIPE

A SWEET, SAVORY, SIMPLE HOLIDAY SIDE DISH

(*Culinary.net*) No matter what your main course looks like at the holidays, this Asparagus with Cranberry Sauce offers a sweet yet savory complement. Plus, the surprise pop of flavor and color are perfect for a festive tablescape. ■

ASPARAGUS WITH CRANBERRY SAUCE

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound bacon
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 bunch fresh asparagus
- 1 can (14 ounces) whole cranberry sauce
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Directions:

Using kitchen shears, cut bacon into pieces then fry in skillet. Drain and set aside.

In same skillet, add butter and garlic powder. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Saute asparagus then add bacon back to pan.

In saucepan over medium heat, heat cranberry sauce, brown sugar and balsamic vinegar.

Place asparagus on platter and pour sauce on top.



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WINTER COATS NEEDED

The Johnston Partnership provides food and personal hygiene products to those in need, as well as children's seasonal clothing. The Partnership has been extremely busy and has already distributed more than 850 winter coats. Many more are needed to make it through the cold months and keep all of our neighbors warm. With the drastic weather change, the largest current need is winter coats of any size (baby through adult) in good or new condition. The Partnership has worked through its storage and are putting out whatever comes in, and they are going quickly. The goal is to provide one coat per client per year.

Donations can be dropped off at 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite C, Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m., and on Thursdays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Every third week of the month, they collect for the Friday food bag program that serves food insecure students at all nine Johnston schools. Currently they pack 220 food bags each week to go home with students. They can use fruit cups, macaroni and cheese, Ramen noodles, granola bars, individual shelf-stable milk and individual peanut butter. ■

JOHNSTON AWARDED PUBLIC ART GRANT FROM BRAVO GREATER DES MOINES

Johnston has been awarded a \$26,250 Public Art Grant from Bravo Greater Des Moines. This funding will enhance public art initiatives and support the development of a strategic public art plan for the city.

"The City of Johnston views public art as a bridge between residents and the distinctive natural environment," said Economic Development Director Josh Laraby. "This initiative will also highlight and reinforce the importance of the arts within Johnston Public Schools while playing a crucial role in economic development by making Johnston a more attractive destination for tourism and investment."

The funds will enable collaboration with a consultant who will guide the city and the broader community through a public process leading to the creation of the Public Art Plan. Establishing a more comprehensive plan will align with an update to the citywide streetscape design guidelines. This alignment will allow for the early integration of cultural themes and public art into infrastructure projects throughout Johnston.

The entire process is expected to take approximately nine to 12 months. The resulting Public Art Plan will serve as a broad framework — similar to a strategic plan — offering general guidelines for future public art initiatives rather than focusing exclusively on the selection of specific artworks. This process will support the city's vision for future public art while remaining pragmatic, ensuring that Johnston and its partners can realize this vision in the coming decades. ■

CLASSIFIED ADS

LOOKING TO BUY VINYL RECORDS:

Paying cash for 60's-90's rock and jazz and blues. Please call Brian at 515-326-5033.

WANTED: Stereo & electronic radio stuff receivers speakers guitar amp etc. Any age or condition is OK. Call 515-238-3343.

BICYCLES WANTED: Any condition is ok. For parts or repair. Will pick them up. Phone 515-238-3343.

WANTED: Electronics, stereo receivers, guitar or amps, speakers, radios, etc. Any age or condition for parts or repair. Call 515-445-6023.

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