

Living

MAGAZINE

Holiday

recipes

Residents share how to create the foods that make their season bright.



Bluejay Beginnings

EDUCATION

Hot honey chicken and waffle

RECIPE

Rieke and Van Wyk lend a hand as a foster family

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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 shipped a Spam coin bank to me. 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 how to create the foods that make their 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.

Danish kringle is a must-have for Darla Davidson's holidays.

Beef braciolo (beef steak rolls)

“It is a Christmas tradition in my family,”

Joe Sciorrotta says. “My dad’s mother, my grandmother, whom we called Nana, taught me how to make it when I was just a young boy. She always spent a lot of time in the kitchen with me teaching me all of the family traditional recipes, and I’m the only one in the family she did that with, so I am the one who gets to make the tradition live on every year.”



It has been left to Joe Sciorrotta to carry on the holiday tradition of making beef braciolo (beef steak rolls) for his family’s Christmas.

Danish Kringle

Darla Davidson shares her favorite holiday recipe for Danish Kringle.

BEEF BRACIOLE

INGREDIENTS

- 16-20 slices of raw roast beef (same thickness of thick cut bacon)
- 2 pounds 93% ground beef
- Half of a package of bacon, chopped small
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups parmesan cheese
- 1 cup Italian Panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons Italian seasoning
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- In a large bowl, combine everything together except for the sliced steak/beef.
- Lay out wax paper on your countertop or whatever workspace you have. Lay out all the sliced beef and lightly salt and pepper each piece. Then put a strip of the mixture on top of the roast beef and tuck in the corners and roll it up like an egg roll.

- Then tie each roll off with butcher string and brown in a saucepan, lightly oiled.
- Finish cooking in a large pot of your favorite spaghetti or marinara sauce.
- Cook for about 2-3 hours or until tender enough you can cut through with a fork.
- Remove from the sauce and get some kitchen scissors and cut off all the string and cut each braciolo into three pieces and return to the sauce.
- Serve on top of your favorite pasta. Bon appetito!
- **Note:** I use top round beef for slicing, and I ask the butcher to slice it the same thickness as thick cut bacon. I tell them what it is for. I typically have them slice one and show it to me before they slice the rest because sometimes they'll slice it way too thick. It really needs to be thin.

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DANISH KRINGLE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package yeast
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup milk (scaled and cooled)
- 4 eggs, separated (keep the whites)
- 4 cups flour
- 4 tablespoons additional sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup lard
- Brown sugar (3 tablespoons per kringle)
- Powdered sugar and milk for frosting
- Nuts (walnuts or pecans), chopped
- Black raspberry jam/jelly

DIRECTIONS

- Combine yeast, warm water and 1 tablespoon sugar. Combine milk and beaten egg yolks. Put in large bowl with 4 tablespoons additional sugar,

salt, flour and lard. Stir until lard is well distributed. Add above mixtures and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours.

- Divide dough into four parts and roll out as for a pie, rolling dough considerably larger than pie pans. Place in well-greased pie pan with dough overlapping the pans. Beat egg whites until stiff and place a layer of this fluff equally in each pie. Sprinkle each with 3 tablespoons brown sugar then a layer of black raspberry jam/jelly.
- Bring overlapping dough back over fruit towards center. Cover and let rise for 2 hours. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.
- While still warm, frost with powdered sugar icing and sprinkle lightly with ground nuts.
- Cool. Freezes well. Each batch makes four pies. Use pie pans like the ones from Baker's Square. Use 1 large jar of jelly for two pies.

Russian tea Cake

"I worked at Zales Jewelry in the 1960s," Phyllis McIntosh says. "The office manager brought us tea cakes one day, and we scarfed them down. So, he called his wife and asked her to bring us some more, and she did. Now I make them every Christmas, and the family almost fights over them."



Phyllis McIntosh has been making Russian tea cakes for her family's holidays for decades.

RUSSIAN TEA CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 2 1/4 cups flour, sifted
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup finely chopped pecans

DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 400

degrees. Mix the ingredients in order. Form into 1-inch balls. Place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until light brown on the bottom.

- While hot, roll in a bowl of powdered sugar three to four times. Yields 60.

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FEATURE

Festive rum fruitcake (rum and curacao)

“I have been living in Bondurant since 2005,” Deb Harwood says. “I am not from Iowa, but my father was born in Omaha and spent his childhood there until his family moved to the east coast. He used to make this recipe when I was little, in the 1960s and 1970s. Depending on our skill levels, we would help him cut up the fruits and nuts. He made it only once a year, around Thanksgiving. He would let it “age” until Christmas, pouring small amounts of rum on the top once a week. We would have some for dessert on Christmas Eve. When I moved to Iowa, I started making the fruitcake for my siblings and their families. Instead of one, large, 7-pound cake, I make it in smaller, 1-pound tube cake pans. Not everyone is a fan, but that’s OK. It is more like an English pudding, being a fruit cake, not a cake with fruit in it. It is especially good with a scoop of ice cream on top.”



Not everyone likes a festive fruitcake, but for Deb Harwood, her family’s festive rum fruitcake (rum and curacao) is family tradition.

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FEATURE

FESTIVE RUM FRUITCAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup rum
- 1 1/2 cups seedless raisins
- 1 cup currants
- 1/2 pound candied orange peel
- 1/2 pound candied lemon peel
- 1/2 pound pineapple
- 1/2 pound candied cherries
- 1/2 pound citron
- 1/2 pound dates
- 1/2 pound almonds
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon mace
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda or baking powder
- 1/4 pound butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup curacao

- Cut candied fruits, dates and almonds into small pieces and combine. Sift 1/2 cup of the flour over the fruit and stir to coat the pieces and prevent them from sticking together. Sift remaining flour with cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, allspice, cloves, salt and soda.
- Cream butter until soft and add brown sugar and granulated sugar. Continue creaming until well blended.
- Beat eggs, add to the butter and sugar mixture. Stir in curacao together with sifted flour and spices. When well-mixed, add this to the fruits, nuts, raisins and mix thoroughly.
- Put batter into a 10-inch tube pan which has been well greased and lined with heavy waxed paper.
- Pour down firmly into the pan to ensure a smooth-textured cake. Bake 3 to 3 1/2 hours, then turn upside down and remove paper. Do not cut for at least 24 hours. Makes a 7-pound cake.

DIRECTIONS

- Pour rum over raisins and currants. Allow to stand for several hours or overnight.

Sugar cookies

“My son, Josh, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in 2018,” Jamie Horton says. “The following year, when he wanted to attend Camp Hertko Hollow, a camp for diabetics, we experienced sticker shock when we saw what the camp fees were. The camp provides almost all the supplies campers need, including insulin, so the fees were justified, just not in our budget that year. Josh wanted to go to camp, so we held garage sales and sold bracelets and ended up being able to send him.

“In the fall of 2019, my sister came up with the idea of selling sugar cookies and kringla (a Norwegian pastry) for Christmas to raise money. For the cookies, we used the recipe our high school home ec class had used every year for their Valentine’s cookie sales. During the month of November, which is Diabetes Awareness Month, we took orders for cookies and kringla. The week before decorating, my mom, sisters and I would take a day off from work to bake kringla. My sister, Janell, always takes a few days off and bakes the cookies for us. Then we’d spend all day Saturday frosting the cookies.

“What started as just our family getting together to decorate Christmas cookies has now turned into anywhere from 15-20 family members and friends joining in. That first year, we sold 63 dozen cookies and 63 dozen kringla, and we made enough money for Josh to go to camp, and we were able to donate enough money to the camp that would cover the fees for one other camper. This year, we sold 62 dozen kringla

SUGAR COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup Crisco
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 tablespoon vanilla
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3 1/2 cups flour

350 degrees. Allow to cool before frosting.

FROSTING

- 1 cup Crisco
- 1 cup margarine
- 2 teaspoons vanilla (we use clear vanilla)
- 8 cups powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup milk

DIRECTIONS

- Cream Crisco and margarine together. Add sugar, eggs and vanilla. Add cream of tartar, baking soda and flour to the creamed mixture.
- Chill for at least an hour. Roll out to 1/4-inch thickness and cut into shapes. Bake 7-10 minutes (adjust as necessary for your oven) at

DIRECTIONS

- Cream Crisco and margarine together.
- Add vanilla and mix.
- Gradually add powdered sugar and mix well.
- Add milk and beat until light and fluffy. (You can add milk to get the right consistency if it's too thick.)



To raise money to send her son to a camp for kids with diabetes, Jamie Horton, family and friends baked sugar cookies and kringle. The operation has grown so much that the money raised last year paid for four additional kids to go to camp.

(but baked 95 dozen) and 152 dozen cookies (but decorated 180 dozen). Between the cookie and kringle sales, and several friends who wanted to donate money without purchasing, we have made enough money to send Josh to camp and sponsor four other campers, including Josh's classmate, Scotlyn, who joined us with her mom and aunt to decorate this year.

"This fundraiser is a true labor of love. We're all exhausted for days once we're done, but my heart is always so full. Not only do we get to carry on this tradition for a good cause, but the Valentine's cookie recipe from high school over 30 years ago has become one that my kids will have fond memories of and will hopefully pass on to their families." ■

By Scott Eriksen

WHERE has the year gone?

I started the year by encouraging you with, "Don't put it off another year." So, my question to you now is, "Is it still on your to-do list?"



It may be getting that will in place, or cleaning out that closet, or perhaps it is getting your funeral prearrangements in place so that your final arrangements will not be a burden to your family and loved ones at a time that will be very emotional and stressful.

We hear it all the time: "I am so glad to have this taken care of."

Planning your final arrangements begins with a simple conversation and can be a pleasant process. Planning ahead allows you time to give the thoughtful consideration that these important decisions deserve, and it allows time to visit with other family members to find out what will be important to them.

There are many options to think about when addressing your final arrangements, and there are even prepayment options available to those who wish to have their final financial obligations handled in advance.

An advanced planning consultant can walk you through these choices and options.

End the year by crossing one more item off your "to-do" list. Reach out to your funeral home of choice and schedule a meeting to start the conversation. You will be glad you did. ■

Information provided by Scott Eriksen, Director of Hamilton's Advanced Planning, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-697-3670, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com.

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The Polk County Board of Supervisors formally inaugurated the Life Services Center with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting event. This new facility represents an innovative approach to addressing the challenges faced by individuals facing addiction and mental health crisis. The establishment of the Life Services Center is a collaborative effort involving Polk County, the City of Des Moines, Broadlawns Medical Center, and St. Vincent de Paul. The Life Services Center will function as a secure environment where individuals in need of treatment can receive necessary care. The Life Services Center, located at 1914 Carpenter Ave. in Des Moines, is housed in a completely renovated building owned by Polk County. The City of Des Moines will split the operational costs of the facility 50/50 with Polk County. St. Vincent De Paul will provide case management personnel, while Broadlawns Medical Center will offer treatment services for individuals with addiction and mental health issues.



Polk County Sponsors On With Life 'Extreme Build'

Polk County was proud to participate in the construction of the On With Life two new family homes in Ankeny! These beautiful residences, part of Hubbell Realty Company 'Extreme Build' Homes of Hope initiative, were partially funded by a Polk County community development grant. These new homes will offer families a safe and peaceful retreat while supporting their loved ones receiving care at the On With Life campus. Together, we're building a brighter future for our community!

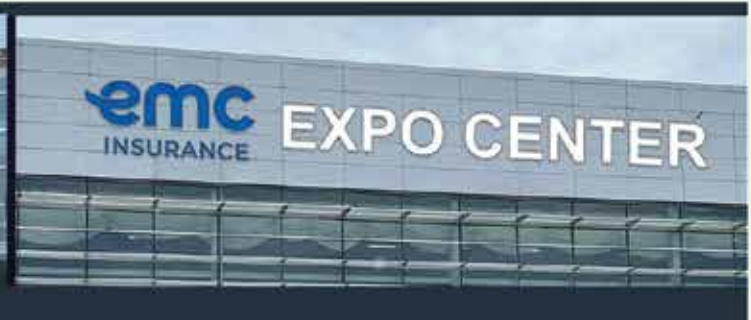


Polk County Helps Fund New Youth Mentoring Center

Polk County helped fund the renovation of a new Youth Mentoring Center for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa. Spanning an impressive 10,500 square feet, the building will feature dedicated mentoring and community spaces, as well as serve as the new headquarters for staff. This state-of-the-art facility will empower the organization to meet the growing demand for mentorship, providing both "Bigs" and "Littles" a vibrant environment to cultivate meaningful mentoring relationships. Additionally, this space will enable corporate volunteer groups to witness firsthand the profound impact that Big Brothers Big Sisters has on our community, fostering stronger partnerships and engagement.



Iowa Events Center Naming Rights



Two esteemed local companies are set to elevate a cherished downtown destination. Polk County's Iowa Events Center will soon feature new names for two of its key facilities within the entertainment complex. The Wells Fargo Arena will be rebranded as the Casey's Center, while Hy-Vee Hall will transform into the EMC Expo Center. Both naming rights partnerships will commence in 2025, marking the beginning of a decade-long collaboration between Polk County and Oak View Group, the operators of the Iowa Events Center and these two new corporate partners. Polk County is thrilled that these respected local brands will contribute to the ongoing success and vibrant future of the Iowa Events Center.

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 that's sure to please with a crispy rice 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 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.



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UPCOMING EVENTS:



CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT

JANUARY 12, 2025
12:30PM CHECK-IN

\$5/person
 Reclaimed Rails Brewing Co
 Register at
www.CityofBondurant.com






CHOWDER RIDE

FEB. 22, 2025

Bike Ride from Bondurant to Berwick!








Details


Grant Writing Workshop

01.15.2025
At 6:00pm

Bondurant non-profit organizations are invited to sharpen their skills!




HOLIDAY CLOSURES:

The City of Bondurant will be closing early for the **New Years Holiday** on Dec. 31st, 2024 at 12pm and will be closed on Jan. 1st, 2025 for **New Year's Day**. The City will also be closed on January 15, 2025 for **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**.

CONNECT WITH US...

Did you know that our city entities have 11 social media sites offering information about what is happening in the city? Make sure you follow us! Also, a city and library newsletter can be sent to your email. Remember that the Bondurant Living Magazine publishes a City-specific spread sent to every resident's mailbox.

ENGAGE WITH US...

Have you wanted to attend a public meeting at City Hall but needed to know when the meetings were or how to conduct yourself during a public meeting? Guides are being developed to help you. Find them on the City's website.

BLUEJAY Beginnings serves ages 3-4

Registration period upcoming Jan. 13 - Feb. 28.

The Bluejay Beginnings program began in the fall of 1992 and was originally located in Anderson Elementary School. In 2019, an addition was built onto Morris Elementary School, where the program has been located since.



The Morris Elementary Bluejay Beginnings team

Students in Bluejay Beginnings have the opportunity to participate in numerous activities including a visit to Howell's pumpkin patch, Donuts with Grownups, Preschool Family Fun Night, a Blank Park Zoo visitor, End-Of-The-Year Ice Cream Social, Science Fridays, and guest readers.

This year's program offers two morning and one afternoon class for 3 year olds and two morning and three afternoon classes for 4 year olds. The program is open to students in the Bondurant-Farrar Community School District.

"I really enjoy working with our families and staff. Our staff provides our students with a wonderful beginning to their school career. It is especially fun to watch the students grow and change throughout their time at Morris Elementary," Preschool Director Carrie Ratliff says.

Space is limited, so registration for Bluejay Beginnings Preschool involves a lottery. To enter the lottery, parents and guardians must submit the necessary information to the district registrar on the school's website before the deadline. This places their child on the list for a possible spot in the program.

Once accepted, parents have approximately two weeks to complete their child's official registration online in order to hold their child's spot. Students who participate in the 3-year-old preschool program are also guaranteed a spot in the 4-year-old program if applied to on time. Special education, at-risk students, and low-income families who apply and qualify for ECI grant funding are given priority placement into the program.

"I enjoy being the students' first school experience and seeing how much they grow during their preschool year. It's fun to see returning families year after year," preschool educator Ms. Courtney says.

The Bluejay Beginnings preschool team has spent many years working together, including their para-educators, who have more than 20 years of preschool experience. The program's four preschool educators have degrees in early childhood and special education, with two of the teachers having master's degrees in early childhood education. The classroom para-educators and several of the one-on-one para-educators also have their para educator license and substitute license.

Those interested in entering the upcoming lottery for the Bluejay Beginnings program must submit the application between Jan. 13 and Feb. 28. Slots will be filled in March and families will be notified before spring break. ■

Happy Holidays



CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAM!



Felicia Collison/Jill Sullivan, owners & Lindsay Schaper, director.

Our discovery center program offers a series of activities devoted to the physical, emotional and social development of children!

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www.thebondurantbirdsnest.com

News from the

BONDURANT-FARRAR

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

December 2024

Start the New Year as a Bluejay: **WE'RE HIRING!**

Join our school community and make a difference in students' lives by supporting their growth and success. We're currently looking for individuals to fill key roles in our district, including:

PARAEDUCATORS

Support Bluejay students by providing classroom and one-on-one assistance.

HOURS: Schedule aligns with student calendar
7:45 AM - 3:45 PM (Tuesday - Friday)
7:45 AM - 2:15 PM (Monday Only)

PAY: Special education paraeducators start at \$16.75 per hour.

K-12 OPENINGS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

BUS DRIVERS

Help ensure Bluejay students arrive safely to and from school each day.

HOURS: 6:45 AM - 8:15 AM (Monday - Friday AM)
2:45 PM - 4:15 PM (Tuesday - Friday PM)
1:15 PM - 2:45 PM (Monday Only PM)

PAY: Starting at \$25 per hour, \$1,000 signing bonus for new team members.

**SEASONED DRIVERS WELCOME,
TRAINING PROVIDED FOR BEGINNERS**



SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

We're always in need of substitute teachers to provide short-term support in the classroom.

HOURS: Work around your schedule with half or full day substitute assignments.

PAY: \$70 half day, \$140 full day

APPLY TODAY: There's a place for you on our team.

ONLINE: www.bfschools.org/careers

PHONE: 515-967-7819

EMAIL: hr@bfschools.org

Contact Us:

Bondurant-Farrar District Office
300 Garfield Street SW
Bondurant, IA 50035
Phone: 515-967-7819
Online: www.bfschools.org/contactus



Stay Connected:

Facebook: @BFDistrict
Twitter: @BF_District
YouTube: @Bondurant-FarrarCSD
Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/bfcsd/albums
Newsletters: www.bfschools.org/subscribe

ECE / AA

JOIN OUR FAMILY

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’ John 8:12

Hoping your Christmas is filled with blessings and joy!

Biblical teaching. Genuine people. Spreading truth.

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515-587-5930

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BONDURANT, IA 50035

WWW.BFEDCHURCH.ORG

THE LIGHT has dawned



I still remember decorating for Christmas as a kid. It was a family affair — everyone was involved, and each person played a part. My dad and I would move the furniture to make room for the tree, and then the decorations would come out. Most were placed just as they had been the year before, though, occasionally, we’d switch things up. It took hours to get everything just right — hanging ornaments, stringing lights and placing the star at the top of the tree.

But for me, the best part came at the very end. Once all the decorating was finished and night had fallen, we’d turn off every light in the house. In the cold, quiet darkness, one of us would plug in the Christmas tree.

The moment the lights came on felt magical. The soft glow illuminated the ornaments, and shimmering reflections danced across the room. The star’s light cast intricate patterns on the ceiling. It was amazing. We would just stand there, smiling and soaking it all in. Those lights transformed the tree from a simple collection of plastic branches and ornaments into something beautiful, warm and alive.

But then came bedtime, and it was time to unplug the tree. The transformation reversed. The lights faded, and the room returned to darkness. The tree, which had sparkled with life and beauty, now looked lifeless — like a bland, artificial heap sitting in the corner of the room.

The world Jesus entered into was much like that darkened living room — cold, lifeless and mired in sin. But Jesus brought light and life to a world longing for hope.

Jesus declared in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Light brings hope. Studies have shown that people living in cloudy, dreary climates are more prone to depression. In the same way, Jesus’ light lifts our spirits and fills us with joy.

Light also illuminates truth. If you’ve ever stumbled through a pitch-black room, you know how disorienting it can be. Even the smallest light can guide us in the darkest places.

As we admire the beautiful lights this Christmas season, let’s remember that God loved us so much He didn’t leave us to wander in a cold, dark world. Instead, He sent His light — Jesus — into the world. The glowing Christmas lights we enjoy are a reminder of the light and hope He brings.

Have you seen the light?
Merry Christmas! ■

Information provided by Mark Spencer, lead pastor, First Family Church Bondurant, mspencer@ffcblife.com, 515-587-5930.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Upcoming in Bondurant Living magazine:

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 by Feb. 1 to be included in the February issue.

Registration for baseball and softball season open

Registration for the 2025 baseball and softball season is open. Registration is online only at: www.bondurantlittleleague.org. Deadline to register for 2025 season is Feb. 15. Payment is due at registration. Coaches and volunteers are always needed. If you're interested in volunteer opportunities, contact president@bondurantlittleleague.org or info@bondurantlittleleague.org



New Years Eve With the Shriners

Dec. 31, 6:30 p.m. - Jan. 1, 1 a.m.
1100 Shriners Parkway, Altoona

Enjoy two live bands. Gilded Cage will start the night off and the Mojitos will play the last part of the evening. Cost is \$40 per person or \$70 per couple. Admission includes free keg beer, pop, well drinks and coffee, as well as party favors and a full breakfast buffet after midnight.



Rams Swim Club meet

Jan. 4 and 5
Southeast Polk

The public is invited to the Rams Swim Club meet, and volunteers are needed for the event and set up on Friday, Jan. 3. Silver cord hours are available for students who need them. People can find Rams Swim Club on Facebook or they can email secretary@ramsswimmingia.com or Info@ramsswimmingia.com for more information. Their website is gomotionapp.com/team/iarsc/page/home

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 <https://fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com/>. ■



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Happy holidays from the Bondurant Animal Clinic

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FOSTERING a future

Rieke and Van Wyk lend a hand as a foster family.

While they've only been involved for two years thus far, the rewards of foster parenting have far exceeded anything that Michael Rieke and Nicola Van Wyk of Bondurant could have hoped.

The Bondurant family, which also includes Skyelynn Van Wyk, 15, has not only reached out a helping hand to others, they've also learned about themselves in the process. And that's a good thing.

"Being a foster parent has been an incredibly rewarding experience; it's amazing to see these children thrive, all while supporting their parents, when it's safe to do so," Van Wyk says. "For us, it has been a journey of personal growth, learning more about ourselves and how to work together as a family. Our focus has always been on ensuring the children feel supported and have the stability they need during what can often be an unstable time in their lives.

"The experience isn't without its frustrations, especially when working within a broken foster care system. Despite these challenges, the rewards far outweigh the difficulties," she says.

Emily Easton, a recruitment and retention coordinator at Four Oaks Family Connections, which partners with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to recruit, license, train and provide ongoing support to foster, kinship and adoptive families throughout the state of Iowa, was there from the start of the process, which began with the simple filling out of an online inquiry form on the Four Oaks website. This led to an invitation to complete an online orientation for prospective foster and adoptive parents. Following the orientation, the couple was given a schedule for the required 11-week training classes, which were held once a week for three hours.

In addition to the training classes, the couple completed CPR/First Aid training, Mandatory Reporter training, and a medication management and universal precautions booklet.

"We also underwent a background check and fingerprinting," Van Wyk says. "As part of the process, a Four Oaks caseworker conducted a home study and interviews to assess our readiness. Once we completed the training, Four Oaks submitted all the necessary materials to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (IHHS) for final approval.

Start to finish, the process took about eight months, she says.

Van Wyk says that recognizing and being honest about their own limitations was especially important during this crucial time period.

"While it can be difficult, it's OK to say no to a placement if it doesn't feel like the right fit for your family's needs and wellbeing," she says. "Prioritizing what works for you ensures both the placement and your family can thrive. Even if you're not fully ready to bring a child into your home full time right now, it's important to start the process. There is a significant need for respite families, and by beginning the journey, you can make a meaningful difference. It's also important to recognize that you will form attachments to the children you care for, and that's a



Nicola Van Wyk, Skyelynn Van Wyk and Michael Rieke of Bondurant have been a foster family for two years.

positive thing. These children deserve to have someone in their life who is invested in them, who loves and cares for them enough to form that bond."

Anyone wanting to learn more about foster care can attend one of the organization's virtual orientations held each Sunday and Wednesday nights. Instructions to register for orientation and a step-by-step look at the licensing process can be found at <https://iowafosterandadoption.org/how-to-get-started/>. ■

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HEALTH By Nikki Morgan

SEMAGLUTIDE benefits



Semaglutide, originally developed as a treatment for type 2 diabetes, has gained widespread attention for its remarkable benefits in weight loss and overall metabolic health. As a GLP-1 receptor agonist, semaglutide works by mimicking the action of a natural hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1, which helps regulate blood sugar levels, suppress appetite and improve insulin sensitivity.

One of the primary advantages of semaglutide is its effectiveness in promoting weight loss. Studies have shown that patients using semaglutide as part of a comprehensive weight management plan can experience significant reductions in body weight — often around 15% or more. This makes it one of the most effective medications for weight loss available today. It achieves this by reducing appetite and slowing gastric emptying, helping people feel fuller for longer.

In addition to its weight-loss benefits, semaglutide helps manage blood glucose levels, making it an essential therapy for individuals with type 2 diabetes. By improving insulin secretion and reducing liver glucose production, semaglutide helps stabilize blood sugar, leading to better long-term diabetes control.

Beyond these core benefits, semaglutide has shown promise in reducing the risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and strokes, in people with type 2 diabetes. The medication's impact on weight loss, blood sugar regulation, and heart health offers a multifaceted approach to improving overall wellbeing and quality of life for individuals struggling with obesity and diabetes. ■

Information provided by Nikki Morgan, DNP, ARNP, SkinFusion FX, 410 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-0587, www.skinfusionfx.com, nikki.skinfusionfx@gmail.com



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HEALTH By Dr. Steven Neville

BAD BREATH? Brush your tongue



Have you experienced bad breath? Have you thought, “Oh man, I need to brush my teeth to get rid of this bad breath,” or “Does anyone have a mint or gum?” Have you ever thought about what causes bad breath? Bad breath, also known as halitosis, can come from food and drinks, poor dental hygiene, tobacco use, medical conditions or the tongue. The tongue has a rough surface with peaks and grooves — the perfect place for bacteria to settle and live. The bacteria on your tongue, when not brushed daily, can be a cause of bad breath. After brushing and flossing, brush your tongue with your toothbrush and a small amount of toothpaste. Using a toothbrush or a tongue scraper, move the brush from the back of your tongue to the front, rinse the brush, and repeat four to five times. Next time you notice the coffee breath or the bad morning breath, try brushing your tongue. ■

Information provided by Dr. Steven Neville, Bondurant Family Dentistry, 100 Second St. N.E., Bondurant, 515-967-4002.

NON-ABLATIVE laser

What is it, and what does it do?

Fractionated non-ablative lasers use light at certain wavelengths to create microscopic holes in the skin, triggering our body's natural wound-healing process to stimulate collagen production in the treated area(s). Collagen is a vital element within the body that aids in elasticity of the skin. The laser works by heating the deeper layers of skin without damaging the surface. These treatments promote much needed new cell growth and give you glowing soft skin.



Non-ablative laser treatment can improve skin tone and texture, reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, decrease pore size and treat sun damage as well as treat other skin conditions such as melasma.

Non-ablative laser treatments are ideal for patients who want to delay the appearance of aging or those looking to maintain beautiful skin or get their skin back to a more youthful state.

No need to take off work. There is little to no downtime for these treatments. The only thing your co-workers will start to notice is your beautiful skin.

Non-ablative lasers can be used year-round and are suitable for all skin types including melanin-rich skin. Check with a licensed medical provider to see if they have a laser that is suitable for you. ■

Information provided by Teresa Sieck MPAS, PA-C, PhD, Luxe Medical Spa and Aesthetics, 88 Paine Circle S.E., Suite 7, Bondurant, 515-630-8637, www.luxemedicalspa.net.

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BUILDING intentional habits

Long-term health changes start with building intentional habits. Fancy diet plans, expensive workout programs, and that product your favorite Instagram influencer is selling are not the key to achieving optimal health. Getting back to the basics is where you create lasting health. The beginning of a new year calls people to cultivate change and set health goals. Let this be the year that you build healthy habits to transform your life and maintain it for life.

Hydrate. Drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily. Water aids the body in bringing nutrients to cells, getting rid of waste, protecting joints and organs, and optimizing brain performance.

Sleep. Sleep is how your body and brain repair and restore. Eight hours of quality sleep is essential for maintaining long-term health.

Move. Health declines with lack of movement. If you are not currently exercising, start with walking. While it sounds simple, walking packs massive health benefits.

Eat to live. Food is fuel. Prioritize protein along with a rainbow of vegetables and fruit. Limit grains, sugar and dairy. Eliminate inflammatory seed oils and processed foods. Focus on whole foods and real ingredients.

Reduce stress. Releasing stress is essential for the body to achieve a state of rest, to restore, and to heal. Making time to intentionally rest is critical. Find stress relief activities like exercise, yoga, deep breathing and meditation techniques that suit you, and make them part of your routine to help you stick with it long term.

Support your nervous system. Chiropractic adjustments help the nervous system reduce sympathetic dominance, fight or flight, and return to a parasympathetic, rest and restore, state of ease and healing. Adjustments remove interference to the nervous system and enhance your body's ability to self-regulate and self-heal. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

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TIPS to stay healthy for the holidays

The holidays are upon us. The holiday season is often associated with busyness and excess. Our to-do list gets longer and longer, our stress levels surge, and the availability of yummy, albeit unhealthy, treats increases significantly. Unfortunately, the holidays have health risks, and staying mentally and physically healthy can be especially challenging this time of year. Here are a few tips to help you stay happy and healthy this holiday season.



Stay hydrated. As we age, it is increasingly important that we stay hydrated. Keep a glass of water easily accessible in your home. Bring a bottle of water with you when you are out holiday shopping or running errands. Get into the habit of always having a drink of water close by.

Drink alcohol in moderation or enjoy alcohol-free drinks. The holiday season is a great time to celebrate and have fun. However, a lot of medications that seniors take can have adverse side effects when consuming alcohol. Before celebrating with an alcoholic beverage, check with your doctor to ensure alcohol will not interfere with your medications or enjoy a mocktail.

Meet at an accessible home or location. If an older family member or friend is attending a holiday gathering, make sure that the location is safe and accessible. If there are a lot of steps to navigate to enter the

home, having someone with a more accessible home host would be an option. Also, look for potential hazards. For example, an area rug is a trip hazard to those walking with a walker or a cane.

Take breaks and rest. Many people travel during the holidays. Whether the trip is out of state or an hour away, it is important to make time to rest when you arrive. Plan on departing early so you arrive at your destination with enough time before the gathering or shopping trip to rest and recuperate. If you are planning a full day of shopping in the hustle and bustle of the season, set aside time to sit at a coffee shop or restaurant for some quiet time and relaxation midday.

The holidays come with health risks. Research has shown there are elevated rates of cardiovascular events and mortality over the December holiday. In the United States, 4.2% more people pass away from cardiac events between Dec. 25 and Jan. 7. One way to try to stay healthy and heart-conscious is to find balance in your diet. If you know you are going to have a large dinner, eat a healthy but smaller lunch. Enjoy a few cookies, but keep your cookie intake to single digits.

With a few precautionary measures in place, you and your older loved ones can stay healthy and still have fun and enjoy holiday traditions with friends and families. ■




Information provided by Stephanie Proper, executive director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.



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Contact Dave Zahn at 515-299-1731 or Dave.Zahn@CassiaLife.org
 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, IA 50317 | ValleyViewVillage.org



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Merry Christmas from

BONDURANT
Living
MAGAZINE



2024 year in review

2024 has been a transformative year for the Bondurant Chamber of Commerce, marked by fresh initiatives, new leadership and deeper community ties.



Rebranding for the future

One of our major achievements was a complete rebranding that gave the Chamber a modern look aligned with Bondurant’s growth. Our updated brand better reflects our role as a vital community hub and our commitment to supporting local businesses and fostering development.

Welcoming Joni Hutchinson as executive director

This year, we welcomed Joni Hutchinson as our new executive director. Joni’s vision and expertise have been invaluable as we expand our services and outreach. Her leadership has already enhanced our engagement with members and strengthened the Chamber’s impact across Bondurant.

Successful, well-attended events

We held a series of successful events that brought businesses and community members together to network, learn and collaborate. Highlights included our East Polk Legislative Breakfast and regular mixers, all of which received enthusiastic attendance and strengthened community bonds. The energy and participation in these events reflect the growing connections in our business community.

Absorbing Bondurant Development Inc.

In a significant strategic move, we integrated Bondurant Development Inc. under the Chamber’s umbrella. This unification allows us to streamline resources and support economic growth more efficiently, creating a single, stronger entity focused on sustainable development in Bondurant. This merger positions us as the central hub for economic and community development.

Enhancing business connections

We are thrilled to introduce our new Business Connecting initiative, designed to create even more opportunities for our members in the coming year. This program aims to help members find partners, share insights, and collaborate on growth opportunities. We believe in the power of collaboration and take pride in fostering an environment where our members can work together. By emphasizing connection and partnership, we’re strengthening the Chamber’s role as a vital resource for the local business community.

Looking ahead

As we reflect on 2024, we are excited to carry this momentum forward. With our renewed brand, strengthened leadership, and united mission, the Chamber is well-positioned to serve Bondurant’s growing community and support our local businesses in 2025 and beyond. Thank you to our members, partners and community for making this year a success. ■

Information provided by Shelby Hagan, the 2024 President of the Bondurant Chamber of Commerce.

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Business Connecting

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Trust Point, CPA

Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025
Time: 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM
Location: Bondurant Community Library
Email director@bondurantchamber.com for more information.

View our Business Directory

BONDURANT
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.BondurantChamber.com

WINTER Market

Winter Market & Vendor Fair, part of the Merry & Bright Celebration, Dec. 8 at the Bondurant Junior High School



Janet Lohner, Peyton Carpenter, Jennifer Bishop, Paisley and Heather Carpenter



Debbie Wolf



Krystal Strom and Connie Simonsen



Allison Watson and Lauren Watson



Maddy Lamberti and Amy Lamberti



Mike, Raela, Cia and Hasi Tenckinck



Paige Wagner and Adelyn Hafele



Haylee Sherman and Bobbie Sherman



Lisa Cassady



JoAnn Chapman



Kim Weeks

OUT & ABOUT



Emily and Jeff Linacre at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



Debbie Davis at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



Bella Burriola-Smith and Tina Burriola at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



Megan Hale at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



Deana Mahedy, Alisa Onley and Dave Mahedy at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



Lori Bowman at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



A grand opening was held at the new city park playground and basketball court on Dec. 2.



Katie Keuning and Donna Schaner at the Winter Market and Vendor Fair on Dec. 8.



John Horton, Marketa Oliver and Mayor Doug Elrod at the new city park grand opening on Dec. 2.



Zach and Amanda Svoboda at the new city park grand opening on Dec. 2.



Nic Robinson, Dennis Lyman, Emily Karwoski and Kyle Lee at the new city park grand opening on Dec. 2.

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