

Living

MAGAZINE

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WELCOME

MY BABY blue Mustang

It was a 1980 Ford Mustang. Baby blue in color. Hatchback. Four-cylinder engine. The car was nothing special, but it was my first car — and it was all mine.

I, of course, pulled the factory stereo out of it and installed a Pioneer cassette deck and Jensen speakers. A guy has to have priorities, after all.

My life savings went into the purchase of that vehicle. Insurance. Gas. Oil changes. All on my dime. I was OK with that, as it was part of my greater independence — and I was the only one with the keys.

The Mustang got me through my college years, despite one unfortunate incident. I am by no means a gearhead, but I had a cracked fuel line, and it seemed easy enough to replace. In the process, some gas leaked out of the old line onto the engine. No big deal, I thought.

I drove the Mustang to a local car wash, and my mother rode along with me. I put some coins in the machine and motioned Mom to drive the car into the wash bay. (I should note that this was the first — and only — time my mother drove any vehicle of mine.) Mom turned the ignition, and I immediately saw flames peeking out of every possible opening in the hood and below the car. I yelled to her to pop the hood. She turned the lights on, applied the parking brake and started the wipers, but the hood remained closed. As I frantically ran to the car, the paint on the hood started bubbling. I opened the driver-side door, popped the hood and put out the fire with the car wash wand I still had in my hand. What was left was a melted mess.

Dad had a friend who was a local mechanic and rewired everything and got my Mustang running again. The mechanic said he did his best on my limited budget, but he wasn't making any promises on how well it would run. And he was right to say that. The best gas mileage I got after the repairs was 4 mpg.

When I graduated from college, I traded the Mustang in on a new vehicle. The dealer put it on the used car lot, and a potential buyer called me and asked about it. "Do not buy that car," I told him. "It caught on fire and only does about 4 mpg." He kept asking questions, so I repeated my comments. I think he still bought the car.

We all learned some lessons after the car fire incident, but my Dad's comments stuck with me the most. "If you ever have a car start on fire again, let it burn."

Thanks for reading. ■



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An Unforgettable **RIDE**

**Residents share the
joy of their first car**

By Rachel Harrington

What kids, strapped into the backseats of their parents' cars, gazing through the gaps between the front seats and watching the road ahead, don't think how great it will be when they are in the driver's seat? And not just any driver's seat, but the seat of their very own car. The power of the machine in their control. The freedom to choose the destination. The total control over the stereo. It's no wonder people's memories of their first auto stay vivid, and the stories remain a thrill to be told.

Karen Hollstein didn't get her own vehicle until she was in college — a 1967 Ford Mustang that was dark moss green in color. She still has the car.

Mustang part of many chapters of life

Karen Hollstein didn't get her own vehicle until she was in college. In 1967, she was a sophomore at the University of Nebraska. Her mother had to drive her the 400 miles to and from college in Lincoln from their hometown of Rushville, Nebraska. When her mother got tired of driving the distance, Karen would occasionally take the train from Alliance, Nebraska, to Lincoln.

"The train was a rough overnight trip," she says.

So, Karen's dad bought her a 1967 Ford Mustang that was dark moss green in color.

"He bought it from a young man who wanted a different model and was willing to part with it. It had very few miles on it. I was warned that it was a very 'fast' car, and that I should watch my speed and drive it only when necessary off campus." Since she then had her own transportation, she was able to get a job off campus.

Karen made many memories with the Mustang during her years in college.

"I did fall asleep driving home after finals once, and I ran off the road," she remembers. "Fortunately, the terrain was flat. It was rural Nebraska, and only some cows witnessed it."

The Mustang went with Karen to graduate school in Denver, Colorado, and to her first job out of college with Pan American airlines in Seattle for a couple of years. Her next chapter was a job transfer to Washington, D.C., and the Mustang carried her there as well.

"I drove my trusty Mustang across the country in five days, through a blizzard in Wyoming, and loaded with all my worldly possessions," she recalls. "The car and I remained there for nine years. It acquired some rust in the humid Virginia climate."

Karen's husband took on the task of repairing minor issues and working on the rust that had developed on the car. Since she worked for the airline, the car sat in many airport parking lots, and she commuted to her job in downtown Washington, D.C., from her home in Virginia in her Mustang. In later years, she and her husband moved back to Nebraska and then Iowa, and her Mustang made the journey with them.

The Mustang still has most of its original



Karen Hollstein's 1967 Ford Mustang has been with her through many chapters of life.



Layth Tabatabai's first car, a viper green VW Beetle, is now part of his car collection.

parts.

"I believe a rusty bumper was replaced in the late 1970s," Karen says.

It was repainted the same original color in the 1990s. All the upholstery remains in good condition, and it "sits in covered retirement" in Karen's Norwalk garage.

A viper green Beetle

Layth Tabatabai was born and raised in Ames. Both of his parents were professors at Iowa State University. In 1975, Volkswagen first started making cars with fuel injected engines and cloth seats. They made a special model called the La Grande series in metallic bronze,



blue and green. Layth's dad was excited about the green one, and he bought it. It was the first new car his dad had ever bought. When Layth turned 18, his dad gifted it to him as his first car and bought himself a 1990 silver BMW convertible.

"Even though he gave it to me, he held on to it all these years," Layth shares. "After I graduated and moved on, the car was still in Ames."

Layth married his wife in 1991, and they welcomed their first child in 1995. He says the Volkswagen wasn't suitable as a family car, and, without the safety features of newer cars, his wife wasn't comfortable riding in it and didn't want their kids to drive it. So, the car sat at his parents' house for a long time.

"I would still go up and drive it a lot even when it was at my parents' house," he says, adding he enjoyed driving his dad around in it.

"There was only one metallic green VW Super Beetle in Ames, and it was mine," Layth says. "It was rear-wheel drive with the engine over the rear wheels, and it had a sunroof. I went everywhere in that car. We'd load it up and have snowball fights in it in the school parking lot. The snowball fights in the parking lot at Ames High School are probably some of my favorite memories with the car."

Layth's dad passed away this year, and he now has the car in his possession.

If he had to choose his favorite aspect about his VW, it would be the color.

"The color name is Viper Green Metallic, and it absolutely suits this VW Super Beetle," he says. "My second favorite aspect of the car is the simplicity of it. VWs were very basic cars. Mine only had an AM radio in it. It had two levers in it. One of them would control the heat on or off, the other would control the heat to your feet or the defroster. If you had a hanger, pliers and duct tape, you could fix just about anything in it."

Over time, Layth has made a few improvements to the car. But, now that the car is only one of the 27 in his collection, he doesn't drive it often.

"Every decade of my life, I've challenged myself with something," he says. "From age 48 to current, the passion has been cars. I buy them as a train wreck and fix them up."

He says he is fortunate to still have his VW Super Beetle in his collection, though, because they are much more difficult to find now.



Rick Bussanmas bought his fiancé, Donna, her first car, a Chevy Vega, so she would be able to drive to work once they were married.

A special surprise

Both Rick and Donna Bussanmas grew up in Norwalk. They were high school sweethearts and eagerly preparing for their future. Rick was 19 years old and making plans for the life he and Donna were to spend together. In July 1973, when they were engaged to be married the following October, Rick bought Donna a special surprise.

"Donna didn't have any vehicle then, and she was working at Mercy Hospital at the time," Rick shares. "We had both just graduated from DMACC, and I knew she was going to need a way to get to work when we were married. I bought a little Chevy Vega. I surprised her with the car. She didn't know it was coming, so she showed up one day and found it where I had hidden it in her parents' garage. I don't recall what she said to me when she found out it was from me, but I'm sure she cried."

Rick says his family had always been Chevy owners, and that is why he chose the car he did.

"I already had a car myself, but Donna didn't have anything. The Vega was the first car I ever bought myself," he shares. "I got it brand new from Bob Brown Chevrolet from a local car salesman, Jack Lane, who worked there. He was 'old Norwalk' and had lived here forever."

The car cost about \$3,000 brand new. Rick says Vegas were considered "throw-away" cars at the time, but they kept it around for about six or seven years. The Vega was a small, two-door, red coupe with a four-speed.

"It was a sporty little car, but it was basic and only had an AM radio," Rick says. "Those



cars didn't have much in them back in '73, but the Vega worked great for our young new family."

He also commented on how much less it cost to fuel them, as gas was 60 cents a gallon.

The couple has fond memories of the first years of their marriage and welcoming their firstborn son, Scott, and driving him around in their little car. Those are some of their favorite recollections of the car. They put more than 100,000 miles on it before they had to part with it because it began to fall apart.

"I remember when we got rid of it," Rick says. "Donna accidentally shut Scott's fingers in the door, and it was so rusty that it didn't even hurt him. We had to part with it because it was just rusting away from the winter salt. Of course, they didn't build them as good as they do now. If you got 100,000 miles out of them, you were doing good. It was pretty well worn out."

The couple replaced their Vega with a Chevy Celebrity, sticking with their family loyalty to the Chevrolet brand. ■

FINDING your 'One Thing'

There's an old movie from the 1990s called "City Slickers" that stars comedian Billy Crystal and Hollywood Westerns star Jack Palance. Crystal's character, Mitch, and some friends have gone out west from New York City on vacation to be part of an old-fashioned cattle drive. Mitch is having a mid-life crisis, and he's hoping while out west he might find some answers to the meaning of life. He is very surprised to learn that those answers may actually be found in the old cowhand, Curley, who's leading the cattle drive (played by Jack Palance). Curley asks Mitch, "Do you know what the secret to life is?" Mitch answers no, then Curley lifts up his pointer finger and says, "One thing, just one thing." Mitch responds, "What's the one thing?" Curley says, "That's what you've got to figure out."



You have to admit, that's a pretty good question, isn't it? Is there a "secret" to life? If so, can we know what that is? Well, I can say for certain, there is a secret to life, and we do need to know what that secret is, and the good news is, you don't have to figure it out by yourself. God has provided a clear path for all of us in His Word, the Bible, that shows us what that One Thing is that is the secret to life. Now the world will tell us that the One Thing is different for everyone. So, for some people it's a satisfying/successful career. For others, it's family. For some it's finding fulfillment in serving others, or being generous, or just finding how you're wired and doing the best you can to be the best version of you that you can be. While those things have their proper place in life, there can only be one "One Thing" that is the secret to life for everyone, that's why it's called the "One Thing."

In both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, God provides us insight into what the One Thing should be for you and for me. King David, called by God, "a man after my own heart," prayed a prayer to God in Psalm 27:4. Here's what he prayed: "The one thing I ask of the LORD — the thing I seek most — is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple." To David, being in God's presence was his one desire and commitment — his One Thing. He just wanted to be where God was, and He wanted that to be his practice for his whole life. He longed for a lifelong relationship and fellowship with God. David didn't want just a casual glance at who God is, he wanted an ongoing fellowship with the Lord, and he was willing to do whatever it took to have that fellowship.

He wanted to understand God's nature, His holiness, His majesty, His glory. He wanted to experience the character of God in a deep and personal way by experience. Since God inspired David to record this prayer in the Bible, then it seems to reason that what David identified as his One Thing, should also be our One Thing — the thing that matters most in life. Next month, we'll take a look at a New Testament example and the example of Jesus Himself that reveals for us the importance of and necessity of what our One Thing should be in this life. ■

Pastor Rob Jones is the senior pastor of Fellowship Community Church in Norwalk. The church was founded under his leadership in 1995.

Q: Does the size of the goal matter?

A: 'Tis the season for setting goals and trying out better habits. Whether you set resolutions at the beginning of the year or were already working toward a goal, let's use this as a check in. How is it going? If it is going great so far, then keep it up. That is awesome. If it is still a work in progress, that is OK, too. There is no rush to get goals completed, it is just about taking it day by day and trying your best. Right now, think about your goal or resolution. Is it a big goal or a lot of small changes you want to make? Both are completely OK in the long run. Try thinking of making smaller goals that will help you achieve that goal, that way it might not seem as taxing. If you want to change multiple little things, try taking one aspect and working on it and then adding the next thing. Do not try to over complicate it; take it day by day and keep chipping away. Eventually, goals will be achieved, and knowing you put in all of that hard work is a great feeling. Take this year and focus on yourself. I want you to be able to look back this time next year and be like "I did that." Stay consistent, do not over complicate it, and remember, it is all about extending your quality of life. You got this. ■



Information provided by Dani McManus, certified personal trainer/head coach at Anytime Fitness in Norwalk. To submit a question for future articles, contact her at norwalk@anytimefitness.com.

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JOINTLY owned bank accounts

Spouses often have jointly owned bank accounts that allow both spouses to have access to the account. Joint accounts also allow the surviving spouse to become sole account owner when the other spouse passes away.

The availability of joint ownership on bank accounts is not limited to spouses. Jointly owned accounts can become problematic when the owners are a parent and a child. Sometimes, a parent will add an adult child as owner on a bank account to help manage bills, deposits and other transactions. Other times a child is added as joint owner in the hopes that it will simplify transfer of assets when the parent dies by avoiding probate and the need for more complex estate planning.

Naming a child or other relative as joint owner can have advantages. However, it is important to consider the potential disadvantages in doing so as well. Unfortunately, attorneys and banks come across far too many situations in which a child named joint owner of a parent's bank account has taken funds for personal use. The original intent of the parent may have been for the child listed as joint owner to help pay bills or deposit checks into the account. If the child decides to take money for his or her own use, contrary to the parent's wishes, there is nothing stopping the child from doing so. Quickly, the joint bank account can turn from a situation of convenience for the parent to one of exploitation.

Another unpleasant, but all too common, potential disadvantage of joint bank accounts involves accidental disinheritance. Let's assume an elderly widow decides to add one of her three daughters as joint owner of her primary bank account. The mother's intent may be for the account to transition quickly and easily when the mother passes away and hopes that the daughter will divide the funds equally amongst all siblings. However, the daughter named joint owner is not legally required to do so. Even if the mother has a will directing all assets to be equally divided amongst the daughters, the joint account is not subject to the directives of the will. The siblings who were not named joint owner could receive nothing from the account, despite the well-intentioned mother.

While joint bank accounts certainly have their advantages, caution should be used before a joint bank account is utilized as a substitute for sound and thorough estate planning. ■

For more information, please contact Nathaniel Tagtow with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. Member FDIC. (FDIC insurance covers funds in deposit accounts, including checking and savings accounts, money market deposit accounts and certificates of deposit (CDs). FDIC insurance does not cover other financial products and services that insured banks may offer, such as stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, life insurance policies). City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. The information presented here is not specific to any individual's personal circumstances and the information may change at any time and without notice.



Protect Your Loved Ones from RSV

RSV is a common respiratory virus, which peaks in the winter months.

RSV can be dangerous for infants and older adults. These age groups are more likely to be hospitalized from RSV.

Talk to your family's healthcare providers about RSV prevention.



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TIPS for communicating with someone with dementia



Communicating with a person with dementia can be challenging, but it is also an opportunity to connect and provide support. Here are several practical tips to make your conversations more meaningful and effective.

• **Starting the conversation:** Before you begin, gain the person's full attention. Sit at their eye level so they can see and hear you clearly. Open body language and a relaxed posture can help set a positive tone.

Have a topic in mind but remember to also be flexible. If they seem interested in something in their surroundings, like a photo or an object, let that guide your conversation and take their lead.

• **Listening:** Active listening is key. Show that you are engaged through eye contact, nodding and verbal affirmations. If you don't understand something, gently ask them to repeat or rephrase it.

Pay attention to non-verbal cues like facial expressions or body language, as these can reveal emotions the person might struggle to express. If they are having trouble finding words, offer encouragement rather than rushing to complete their thoughts. Sometimes, asking them to describe or point to an object can help.

• **Supporting expression:** Patience is crucial. Give the person time to process what you've said and to respond. Avoid interrupting, even if you're trying to help them find a word, as this can disrupt their flow of thought. When emotions run high, whether from frustration or sadness, allow them the space to express their feelings. Simply listening and being present can be incredibly supportive.

• **Communicating effectively:** Speak clearly and calmly, using short, simple sentences. Avoid talking down to the person — treat them with respect and kindness. Instead of rapid-fire questions, aim for a conversational tone. Include them in discussions, especially when others are present, to reinforce their sense of value and identity.

• **Non-verbal communication:** Body language plays a significant role. Sit or stand where they can easily see and hear you and maintain good eye contact. Encourage interaction by pointing to objects or photos relevant to the conversation.

• **Ask questions:** Ask straightforward questions and offer limited options, such as "Would you like tea or coffee?" Simpler choices are less likely to overwhelm someone with dementia.

• **Overcoming misunderstandings:** If the person doesn't understand, try rephrasing or breaking down your message into smaller parts. Use humor when appropriate — shared laughter can ease tension and foster connection.

With patience, empathy, and these strategies above, you can foster meaningful communication with your loved one, enriching both your relationship and the person's quality of life.

To learn more about dementia communication, reach out to your closest memory care community. Their expertly trained staff can help you learn more about dementia and offer advice and support, such as regular support groups and educational events that can help you learn more. ■

Information provided by Katie Salinas, Memory Care Manager, The Homestead at Holland Farms Senior Living, 2800 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-1888, www.HollandFarmsLiving.com.

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MEET Dyann Vilez

Teaching students to use the library and technology

Although she was born and raised in North Dakota, Dyann Vilez has been living in Iowa for 33 years. After receiving her undergraduate degree from Upper Iowa University and her master's from the University of Northern Iowa, Vilez came to the Norwalk Community School District. She was looking for her first job, and the librarian and technology position sounded like a good fit. Now, Vilez has entered her 17th year teaching with the district. She is the librarian and technology teacher at Orchard Hills Elementary School.



Dyann Vilez is the librarian and technology teacher at Orchard Hills Elementary School.

"I like working for Norwalk Community School District because, from the start, it just felt like home. I immediately liked the staff and administration. Although it is a growing district, it still feels like a small town. The administrators in my building are so supportive and will always help with anything I might need," Vilez says.

Vilez says she likes working with second- and third-grade students because they are still curious and soak up everything around them. As part of the specials rotation, Vilez typically has five classes a day. Her students participate in library book returns and learn about different library topics, such as book care, genres, and finding a "just right book." During the technology day, Vilez' students bring their Chromebooks to class to learn about signing onto a computer, being safe online, use of Google Docs and Slides, and what it means to be a good digital citizen.

"We have a real opportunity to make a positive impact on these kids. I try to instill a love of reading while they are young, and hopefully they carry that with them throughout their lives," she says.

A few years ago, the library and technology program was fortunate to receive a book vending machine. During the year, students have the opportunity to participate in different reading challenges. When the challenge is complete, students receive a coin to put in the vending machine and get to choose a book to keep.

"It has been so rewarding to see the kids get excited about reading and the joy a new book brings them," Vilez says, "One of the biggest rewards I get is to see a student light up when they find a series of books they like. They will be so excited about a new release they have been waiting for."

During the remainder of the school year, Vilez is looking forward to teaching her students about the research process. She says her students can do amazing things when given the opportunity and that it is fun to see what they can do with a little guidance and freedom to be creative. ■

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PREP your winter emergency weather kit

You are probably familiar with emergency kits, but have you ever considered packing a shovel in your trunk or hauling around a bag of cat litter?



Hauling that shovel could come in handy if your car ever lands in a ditch, and having that cat litter on standby could offer the much-needed traction. Consider the following information before you take your next road trip or family vacation.

Better safe than sorry

Winter weather can turn a routine trip into a dangerous situation, but being prepared can make the difference between life and death when facing hypothermia. No one plans to be marooned roadside, but with severe weather looming, it's always a possibility. Be ready for

Jack Frost with a winter emergency weather kit.

Consider the basics

First aid kit: cell phone and car charger, flashlight with new batteries, candle with matches or lighter, ice scraper and snowbrush, shovel, hazard sign or brightly colored flag, cat litter or sand, bottled water and non-perishable food items, warm clothing, winter boots and gloves, blanket and battery jump pack or jumper cables.

If you happen to live in a rural area or plan on taking a more extended trip, you may want to consider adding a few extra items to your kit. Adding these items can better prepare you for an emergency.

Add-on items: flares or emergency strobes, light sticks, hand warmers, toilet paper, basic tool kit, tire chains/tow ropes.

In the case of highway accidents or ice storms, motorists get stranded in groups.

Ensure you have enough supplies for you and your family and pack a little extra to help the other stranded travelers.

You can also buy ready-made kits in stores and online. Make sure whatever you buy includes the basics, such as jumper cables, first aid and ice scrapers. To ensure your emergency kit is working and up to date, you should update your emergency kit at least twice a year. This could be to replenish your non-perishable food supply or to ensure your batteries and battery jump pack have enough energy to get you through a tough situation.

For more tips, you can visit the Lane Insurance Facebook page. ■

Lane Insurance would be happy to help examine your risks and suggest the best coverages for you and your family. Feel free to request a quote online at laneinsurance.com or give us a call at 515-981-4614. Information provided by Mike Lane, Lane Insurance Agency Inc., 1225 Sunset Drive, Norwalk.

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MIKE LANE

REMODELING or building an addition?

Don't forget about your HVAC.

If your home no longer works for you — for whatever reason — you generally have two choices: sell or renovate. Interest rates have a lot of homeowners staying put and updating versus buying a new home. With increased property values in recent years, many individuals are taking advantage of their home equity and upgrading their current homes. If you're considering this possibility, be sure to take your home's HVAC options into strong consideration to avoid costly and uncomfortable mistakes.



Adding a new space to your house can be an exciting project. Besides budgeting, setting a timeline for your project, and deciding on décor options for the new space, you need to consider which HVAC setup will suit the new addition. Deciding on heating and cooling options is necessary because expanding your house increases your home's heating and cooling needs. Different HVAC options suit different types of additions. Therefore, before you settle on a heating and cooling system for a home addition, you must consider what purpose the new space will serve. HVAC technicians can advise you on the best way to heat and cool an addition based on its purpose. Let's explore the best ways to heat and cool a home addition.

System extension: If your current HVAC system has enough capacity, extending it may be a solution. You and your HVAC contractor can assess your equipment to determine its suitability. The two most important considerations are the energy efficiency of the new addition, its size, and its distance from the existing ductwork.

System replacement
When your existing HVAC system is old, requires frequent repairs, or is inefficient, consider replacing it with a new system that's capable of conditioning your existing home and the new addition. Newer equipment offers greater energy efficiency, which helps offset the costs associated with the upgrade.

Separate system
One of the safest and most energy efficient HVAC solutions for a new addition is to install a ductless mini split heat pump. These devices both heat and cool and operate independently from a central system. The mini split uses an outdoor condenser that can support multiple indoor air handlers as needed. A mini split is cost effective and incredibly energy efficient because it doesn't use ducts to deliver the conditioned air. You can turn the system off when you're not using the space. They run quietly and safely since they do not require a combustion fuel to supply heat and won't require any venting for exhaust gases. ■

If you have questions, or just simply want to speak to the experts about this or other comfort concerns, give Triple A Home Services a call. An HVAC expert answers/returns every call, and our expert advice is always free. 515-868-2779 Ext 1 or Dale@TripleAHomeServices.com

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MAYOR'S MOMENT

2028 VISION UPDATE

In 2018, Council, staff and I met and created our 2028 Vision strategic plan. Over the past six years, we've published several updates, communicating the nine goals listed in the vision, in Norwalk Living, Norwalk Town and County News and on our social media channels. As we kick off 2025, I thought this would be the perfect time to update you on our progress.

The following are the nine goals in our 2028 Vision strategic plan and the progress we've made to date.

Goal #1 - Tight Knit, Friendly Neighborhoods - The City was instrumental in the creation of the Norwalk Hometown Pride community group. Hometown Pride has organized and runs Front Porch Norwalk, Norwalk Music Fest and our Independence Day parade, just to list a few.

Goal #2 - Safest City in Iowa - The City of Norwalk has continually been listed as being one of the safest cities in Iowa. In fact, our citizen survey shows that the main reason people are moving to Norwalk is because it is a safe city.

Goal #3 - Trails - The city developed our Greenways Master plan and a connection to the Great Western Trail has been constructed and completed.

Goal #4 - Full Service Recreation Complex - With the creation of Norwalk Central, we have a public/private partnership that provides access to both outdoor and indoor recreational facilities.

Goal #5 - Town Center Development - Norwalk Central is a major development in our City. Not only do we now have the Gregg Young Sports Campus, but we also have added Kwik Star, the Fairfield Inn and Suites, the Sportsplex plaza (which includes Mulletts, TPH Sports, Pin High Golf, ReMax Precision, and Vivid Life Spa) and Norwalk Central Retail (which includes Cooper's Central Table and Cocktails). The area also has trails that make it a walkable space. In addition to the businesses listed above, NutriSmoothie Cafe and Sports Nutrition Affiliates is being constructed, as well as a TRU by Hilton hotel.

Goal #6 - Vibrant Downtown - In our downtown area, there have been improvements to the intersection of North Ave. and Main St. In addition to these improvements, the City has provided grant money to businesses located in this area to improve their outdoor facades. The city also continues to make improvements to the infrastructure within our Founder's District (located south of downtown).

Goal #7 - Mixed Use Developments - The City Council has studied several of these types of developments and have updated the City Code to provide a framework for a mixed use development. While the framework is there, we haven't had a developer interested in this type of development yet.

Goal #8 - 30% Property Tax Revenue from Commercial - We've had a 72% increase in commercial and industrial valuation in the past seven years, adding \$90,000,000 in new taxable value. Commercial and Industrial properties are taxed at 90%, while residential properties are only taxed at approximately 50%. In order for us to meet this goal, we need to continue growing our commercial and industrial tax base to fill the gap in the cost of residential services.

Goal #9 - Increase in Quality Jobs - The increase in commercial and industrial businesses in Norwalk has provided a variety of new, high quality jobs. While we have seen a significant increase in quality jobs, we will continue to work to bring in more of these jobs. We want Norwalk to be the community where people can live, work and play.

I'm pleased to share that over the past six years, we've completed over 90% of the work associated with the goals in our 2028 Vision strategic plan. I truly believe great things can happen when you have clear goals and a great staff.

The Council and I met in November and have decided that instead of trying to complete the last little bit of our 2028 Vision goals over the next four years, we instead came up with "Envision 2035 - A Pathway to Norwalk's Future". This is our new 10-year strategic plan. We have six new goals that will be presented to the City Council and officially adopted in January. Following the January City Council meeting, I will be able to provide you with additional updates and next steps.



Tom Phillips, Mayor

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT!

Jonny Bright, Fire Department



I attended and graduated from Norwalk High School. In April 2023, I started as an intern with the Fire Department and was then hired as a part-time Firefighter/EMT in July 2023. One of the things I enjoy most about being a firefighter for the City of Norwalk is the opportunity to serve my community and make a difference in people's lives. Every day is different, and I love the sense of teamwork and camaraderie that comes with working alongside these dedicated crews. There's a unique feeling in knowing that our efforts directly contribute to helping people, protecting property, and supporting individuals and their families during some of their most challenging moments.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, being outdoors, and working out. I have the most amazing, supportive, and beautiful Wife, Hailey, whom I married in June of this year! And we share our pup named Lily.

Some interesting facts about me: I am a Christian. I currently serve as a Staff Sergeant in the Iowa Air National Guard. I am convinced a McDonald's McChicken with extra mayo can cure sadness. Firefighters are way cooler than cops!



NEPL TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER

January 30th, 5:30-8:30pm at Pyra Pizzeria

- Teams of four (can register as two, and will be paired with another group of two)
- Win prizes for winning, best team name, and more!
- Additional games and fundraisers

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JANUARY 2025

City of Norwalk, Iowa - City Hall @NorwalkCH NorwalkIACityHall

Family Bingo Night

Program days/times: February 2, 5:00 - 7:00 pm **Location:** St. John the Apostle Catholic Church
Cost: \$.50/card or 3 cards for \$1.00 **NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Join us for a good time with bingo fun and tasty treats. Bring snacks to share with all and we will provide the beverage. All ages are invited to participate. Bingo callers will be the Norwalk Lions Club Members.

Daddy and Me Dance

The Park and Recreation Department will host the social event of the year, an evening filled with dancing and fun. Dads, parents, relatives, guardians and/or role models are invited to bring their daughter(s) to the Daddy & Me Dance and enjoy light snacks, dessert, photobooth opportunities and lots of memories. All ages are welcome!

Registration times: December 30, 2024 - February 1, 2025 @ 6:45 pm
Program day/time: Saturday, February 1, 2025, 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Cost: \$15.00 resident per person/ \$17.25 non-resident per person
Location: St. John the Apostle Catholic Church, Norwalk



PBS Steam Trailer

January 11th & January 20th, 1:30-4:30 pm

IOWA PBS Education's trailer full of interactive, hands-on STEAM-based activities will be visiting the library January 8th-22nd. In addition to the two times listed, the activities and equipment will be available at Maker Wednesday, Homeschool Meetup, and Play Cafe during the trailer's visit. Kids of all ages are invited to play and learn.

Jigsaw Puzzle Competition*

January 18th, All Ages 1-3 pm or Adults Only 6-8 pm

Teams compete to complete their 500-piece jigsaw puzzle before the buzzer sounds! New challenges & sabotages added to bring this competition to the next level. *Registration strongly preferred; register online or call the library starting January 4.

Cozy Sit & Stitch*

January 23rd & February 20th, 6:30-8 pm

Join us for a cozy night of stitching! We'll have a small fiber-based craft to complete or you can bring your own project to work on. Cozy refreshments provided. *Registration preferred, but not required. Register online or call the library.

Five Basic Principles for Getting (and Staying!) Organized*

January 29th, 6-7 pm

Professional organizers Marie Limpert & Annmarie Brogan of Organize Me! of NY, LLC, will teach you their basic principles, answer questions, & provide solutions to common challenges that get people stuck. Their fun-loving & non-judgemental approach makes everyone feel at ease & helps them realize they are not alone! A short Q&A session will follow the virtual presentation. *Registration is required; register online or call the library.

Axolotl Drop-In Party

February 1st, 1-2:30 pm

Celebrate National Axolotl Day at the library with themed crafts and activities for all ages/families. Embrace your love of all-things-axolotl with like-minded folks.

Chairish the Library 2025 - Save the Date!

We're excited to announce the Chairish 2025 fundraiser will be Friday, April 11. Mark your calendar so you don't miss out on the auction of creatively enhanced chairs and tables given new life by local artists, delicious food and beverages, and some surprises all to benefit the Norwalk Easter Public Library. Follow Norwalk Easter Public Library Foundation on Facebook for updates on tickets and details.

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LEGAL By Ken Winjum

IMPORTANT: Please read before signing

We have noticed recently that some insurance company adjusters are attempting to settle personal injury claims within days of an accident. This might make sense in a minor accident with no apparent injuries. However, where a significant injury or hospitalization is involved, such a settlement may be premature.



In this world of downloadable apps, e-signatures and digital communication, it is possible that a person may unwittingly agree to a settlement before becoming aware of the seriousness of his or her medical condition or the rights being given up. It seems we are conditioned to agree to long document forms without ever reading the words contained in them.

In this environment, it is the liability insurance adjuster's goal to obtain a signed release of the company's insured party in exchange for a payment to the injured party as quickly as possible. For the sake of "convenience," such releases are often presented digitally, whereby a simple "click" can extinguish an injured party's claim.

One should be very careful before ever agreeing to accept payment from an insurance company that promises to pay for an injury shortly after an accident. By accepting such payment, the injured party will have essentially settled the case and closed off any opportunity for full compensation. Unfortunately, it may be difficult to "undo" a misinformed acceptance of an early settlement proposal.

Iowa Code Chapter 507B contains specific rules concerning how insurance companies are to fairly settle claims. For example, an unfair claim settlement practice may include "not attempting in good faith to effectuate prompt, fair, and equitable settlements of claims in which liability has become reasonably clear." The focus of the statute is on whether the company is in violation with such frequency as to indicate a general business practice. Enforcement is handled by the Insurance Commissioner.

In *Bates v. Allied*, 467 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1991), the Supreme Court of Iowa held that 507B does not create a private cause of action against an insurance company that commits an unfair claim settlement practice. The court explained that, while an insurer has a fiduciary relationship with its insured, it has an adversarial relationship with a third-party claimant. Therefore, a tort victim, as a third-party claimant, cannot compel a tortfeasor's insurer to negotiate and settle a claim in good faith any more than he could compel the tortfeasor to do so himself.

Conclusion: It should be understood that the insurance company for the at-fault party has an adversarial relationship with the injured person. It is crucial for an injured person to read and understand all documents sent by an insurance company before signing or "clicking" agreement to the terms. ■

Information provided by Ken Winjum, The Winjum Law Firm, P.L.C., 1220 Sunset Drive., Suite 103, Norwalk, 515-981-5220, www.winjumlaw.com.

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USING passions for good

Repp puts gardening skills to use.

When Crystal Repp moved to the Norwalk area in 2021 from Altoona, where she grew up, she quickly became a member of the Ackworth Garden Club. This group meets monthly and helps maintain gardens in Norwalk, Indianola and Carlisle.

“It’s a great way to feel like you’re making things better for everyone in these communities,” Repp says.

Right away, she was able to build friendships while doing what she loves — gardening.

“The club has also allowed me to meet so many amazing people,” Repp says. “Since I am new to the area, it has been a wonderful experience.”

One of her favorite parts of being with the Ackworth Garden Club is working at Brownie Park alongside other volunteers, who are both fun to be around and hardworking gardeners themselves.

“Everyone takes time out of their day to make the park an amazing space for everyone to enjoy,” Repp says.

A standout memory for Repp was helping with the Backyard Gardener Tour held in Brownie Park.

“We were there all day and met a lot of great people,” she says. “Answering questions about the plants and the park was a lot of fun.”

This past year, Repp also started serving as a Warren County Master Gardener.

“I love gardening and flowers,” Repp says. “I love to landscape and create outside spaces. Some of my favorite days involve digging in the dirt.”

In addition to hands-on projects involving plants and flowers, the Ackworth Garden Club coordinates educational activities for kids in the community. This includes events like Autumn Fest, which features speakers from around the area.

Repp finds joy in volunteering not only because she loves being outside and working with plants but also because it helps her connect with others.

“I enjoy creating spaces and watching them grow,” she says. “Even though it can be hard work, it’s nice to be involved with a group of people who love the same things you do. We talk a lot while working. We are able to get to know each other and learn a few things along the way.”

Repp encourages others to consider volunteering as a way to meet like-minded people.

“Being part of a community is a great thing,” she says. “It’s fun to chat and get to know others in the community. It’s nice to be around others that you can always learn something from.” ■



Jason Siemens of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Crystal Repp.

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Check for cancellations

Upcoming in Norwalk 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 Jan. 17 to be included in the February issue.



Coffee and Camaraderie

First Tuesdays of the month, 10 a.m. to noon
Norwalk United Methodist Church, 1100 Gordon Ave.

Calling all veterans and service members: Join us for a morning of coffee and camaraderie, a morning of connection and community. Whether you're a veteran, active-duty member, spouse or caregiver, everyone is welcome. Join us for coffee and come together to form new friendships, share stories and experiences, and enjoy the camaraderie.

Creating and expanding your small food processing business

Thursday, Jan. 30

Two Iowa State University Extension experts will present topics important to small Iowa food processors. Presentation information will include: 1. Starting a small food processing business in your home/farm. Learn about Iowa's cottage/home-based food law and how it supports building small businesses from your home. 2. When creating processed foods to sell to the public, what is essential to have on your food label to meet the current Iowa law. 3. Food safety discussion covering topics such as the importance of food safety; proper food handling practices; cleanliness and sanitation; pest control measures; and common food safety hazards and prevention. In addition to this program, from 5:30-6 p.m., 4- to 15-minute slots will be open to meet with our experts. Penny Brown Huber is the Iowa food business specialist, and her role is to work entirely with small Iowa food processors, assisting them in building their businesses. Daniela Lopez is a food safety specialist working for Iowa State University Human Sciences. Register online at <https://form.jotform.com/243124744804050>.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Playhouse classes offered

Various dates

The Des Moines Playhouse, 831 42nd St. Des Moines

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, 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 dmpplayhouse.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.

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@dmpplayhouse.com, 515-974-5365.



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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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HEALTH

By Dr. Jonathan P. Anderson, O.D.

HOW DO eyes get their color?

The iris is the colored part of the eye. It is a sphincter muscle that will constrict or dilate depending on the surrounding light. The back part of the iris that is not seen has a dark brown pigment. The front layer of the iris (called the stroma) is what makes the eye appear green, brown, blue or hazel. Melanin, the pigment that gives our skin color, is what colors a brown eye. The more melanin present, the darker the eye.



People with blue eyes have no pigment in the stroma. This causes some of the fibers of the stroma to scatter and absorb some of the longer wavelengths of light that come in. More blue light gets reflected out, and the eye appears blue. For people with green or hazel eyes, the iris contains light brown pigment. The light brown pigment interacts with the blue light, and the eye can look green or speckled. The American Academy of Ophthalmology surveyed 2,000 Americans. The breakdown of eye color in the U.S. is 45% brown, 27% blue, 18% hazel, 9% green. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jonathan Anderson, O.D., Optometric Associates of Warren County, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite A, Norwalk, 515-981-0224.

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HEALTH

By Dr. Donna Grant

THE IMPORTANCE of fluoridated drinking water

Fluoridated drinking water has been one of the greatest public health advancements of the past century, dramatically reducing tooth decay rates since its introduction. Communities with fluoridated water have seen up to 25% fewer cavities, benefitting millions by improving oral health and reducing costly dental treatments.



In today's world, where diets are often rich in starchy, high-carb, cavity-causing foods, fluoride's role is more critical than ever. These foods break down into sugars that feed harmful bacteria in the mouth, leading to acid production and enamel erosion. Fluoride helps counteract this by strengthening tooth enamel and making it more resistant to decay.

Despite its proven benefits, some question the safety of fluoride in drinking water. It's important to note that fluoride levels in public water are carefully regulated to ensure safety. Decades of research confirm that the optimal levels used are not only safe but also effective in strengthening enamel and preventing cavities.

Removing fluoride from drinking water would be a step backward, exposing communities to higher rates of tooth decay and oral health disparities. Fluoridation remains a simple, cost-effective way to improve dental health for everyone, regardless of age or socioeconomic status. It's a small measure with an enormous impact on public health. ■

Information provided by Dr. Elizabeth Fleck, Norwalk Family Dentistry, 1101 Chatham Ave., Suite A, Norwalk, 515-256-9000, www.norwalkfamilydentistry.com.

HAVE YOU been injured?

Many people take driving for granted, especially if they have been doing it for a long time. However, about one in four drivers will be involved in an auto accident within five years.

After an accident, your body may be flooded with adrenaline, hindering your ability to process the situation around you fully. This can lead to irrational judgments. Many individuals who are not seriously injured right after the accident believe they are "OK." However, as weeks and months go by, their bodies may heal incorrectly, resulting in permanent injuries. Common symptoms that may develop include neck pain, headaches, tingling and numbness in the hands, lower back pain, and pain radiating down the leg. Because these symptoms can progress gradually, patients often fail to link them back to the accident.

Fortunately, most people involved in an accident have Medical Payment Coverage (Med Pay) ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 as part of their auto insurance. Med Pay functions like health insurance, helping cover treatment costs without affecting your insurance rates.

According to a study by Woodward, 93% of patients with chronic whiplash injuries experienced significant improvement following chiropractic care. Conventional medical treatments are often ineffective for established whiplash injuries. If you've been in an accident, call your chiropractor to schedule a consultation. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh, Norwalk Chiropractic, 1300 Sunset Drive, 515-981-9208, www.norwalk-chiropractic.com. Norwalk Chiropractic is a provider with most major insurance companies.




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WHAT ARE dermal fillers?

Dermal fillers have revolutionized the field of cosmetic services, offering a non-surgical solution to address various signs of aging and providing a natural, refreshed look. These injectable treatments are typically composed of hyaluronic acid, which naturally occurs in the body, making them safe and effective for a wide range of individuals. One of the primary benefits of dermal fillers is their ability to smooth fine lines and wrinkles and enhance volume in others. Common areas are lips, around the mouth, jawline, under the eyes, cheeks and chin. For those looking to enhance facial features, fillers can create a more harmonious and balanced appearance.

The procedure itself is quick, often completed in under an hour, with minimal discomfort and little to no downtime. Results are immediate and can last from six months to more than a year. Moreover, dermal fillers are customizable, allowing practitioners to tailor the treatment to each patient's unique needs and aesthetic goals. As a cost-effective and minimally invasive option, dermal fillers provide a boost in confidence without the risks or recovery associated with surgery. A natural look is a concern for many clients, so finding a provider you trust, having a thorough consultation, and having a plan you are comfortable with is key to making sure your look is "you." For individuals seeking a refreshed, youthful look, dermal fillers offer an excellent solution with proven results. ■

Information provided by Jen Penisten, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1016 Main St., Norwalk, 515-850-7848, lvin-vivid.com/life-spa



Fillers

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HAPPINESS from hearing devices

Many scientific studies in the past have confirmed the negative impacts associated with hearing loss: depression, anxiety and social isolation. On the bright side, research shows hearing solutions can bring positive benefits, improving overall well-being.

A study conducted by the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) supplies overwhelming data about how much of a difference hearing devices can make.¹

The study surveyed more than 2,000 hearing-loss patients who use devices to enhance their sense of sound. Of the sample group, 82% of patients indicated they would recommend hearing devices to their friends, and 70% reported an improved ability to communicate. The data also showed more than four out of five people who use a device to hear better are satisfied with their solution.

“This survey clearly reveals how dramatically people’s lives can improve with the use of hearing devices,” BHI Executive Director Sergei Kochkin, Ph.D., said. “In this comprehensive study of more than 2,000 hearing device users, we looked at 14 specific quality-of-life issues and found today’s hearing devices are a tremendous asset to people with even mild hearing loss who want to remain active and



socially engaged throughout their lives.”

The study also concluded up to a third of patients saw improvements in their romance, sense of humor and mental, emotional and physical health. Further, roughly 40% noted improvements in their sense of safety, self-confidence, feelings about self, sense of independence and work relationships.

These results are the most significant of their kind because they show a clear potential solution to many of the draining feelings patients with hearing loss suffer. Many positive responses are attributed to technological advances that have led to smaller and less visible hearing devices, resulting in decreased societal stigma associated with wearing devices in daily life.

New devices are more intelligent and offer many improvements over older generation models. BHI’s Kochkin believes the first step to preserving your future enjoyment in life is to make an appointment with a hearing health professional and get your hearing checked. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990. 1 The Hearing Review. (2011). BHI Survey: Hearing Aids Help Majority of Users to Regain Quality of Life. <https://www.hearingreview.com/hearing-products/hearing-aids/bhi-survey-hearing-aids-help-majority-of-users-to-regain-quality-of-life>

Ready to see how hearing aids can improve your life?

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www.IowaHearingCenter.com



Kelly Cook, Au.D., CCC-A
Doctor of Audiology

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COZY, comforting recipes to take on the cold

(Family Features) If blustery conditions are giving you the blues, come inside from the cold for a winter warmup in the comfort of your own kitchen. Cold-weather favorites that are baked, roasted or slow cooked are usually equal parts easy, delicious and filling, making them perfect solutions for chilly, snowy days.

Add a bit of comfort to your weeknight menu with this Loaded Chicken Bake that's ready in about half an hour. A short list of ingredients and allowing your oven to do most of the work for you mean it's ideal for saving time (and money at the grocery store) while still satisfying winter appetites.

Serving as the hearty base is READ German Potato Salad, made with thinly sliced potatoes and bacon in a traditional sweet-piquant dressing. While it's delicious when served chilled, heated or at room temperature on its own, it can also be the star of the show in family meals.

Find more favorite wintertime recipes by visiting READSalads.com and AuntNellies.com. ■

Loaded chicken bake

Recipe courtesy of Hungry In LA

Prep time: 20 minutes | **Cook time:** 15 minutes

Servings: 8

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) READ German Potato Salad
- 4 cups shredded rotisserie chicken or other cooked chicken
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon finely ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup crumbled, cooked bacon
- French fried onions (optional), plus additional for serving (optional), divided

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 375 F.
- Lightly coat 9-by-13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
- Spread German potato salad evenly in dish. Top evenly with chicken.
- In small bowl, stir heavy cream, salt and pepper. Pour mixture over chicken.
- Sprinkle with cheese, bacon and onions, if desired.
- Bake 15 minutes, or until casserole is bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes.
- Top with additional onions, if desired.



Happy New Year!

New Year's Resolutions

- 1: Dental Check-up
- 2: Brush 2x a day
- 3: Floss every day

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MARKETING TIPS to start your year strong

As we welcome the new year, it's the perfect time to set the tone for a successful quarter. To make sure your marketing efforts kick off strong and set you up for sustained success, here are three impactful tips that will help you hit the ground running.



1. Refine your target audience and messaging

One of the first steps to ensure a strong start is to revisit your target audience. As trends evolve and customer preferences shift, it's crucial to ensure your messaging is aligned with your audience's current needs and interests. Take time to analyze your past campaigns, customer feedback, and industry trends to better understand what resonates with your audience. Once you've done this, refine your messaging so it speaks directly to the challenges and desires of your ideal clients. This ensures that your marketing isn't just reaching people — it's reaching the right people.

2. Leverage content marketing and thought leadership

Content marketing continues to be a powerful tool in driving engagement and building credibility. Start the year by planning out your content strategy, with a focus on value-driven content that showcases your expertise. Consider writing blog posts, creating video tutorials, or sharing insightful social media posts that address common pain points or questions in your industry. By positioning yourself as a thought leader, you not only attract new customers but also deepen relationships with your existing audience. In Q1, prioritize content that provides actionable advice and practical insights to make an immediate impact.

3. Optimize your digital presence

In the fast-paced digital world, staying visible is key. Ensure your website, social media profiles, and online ads are optimized for maximum performance. This includes making sure your website is mobile friendly, your SEO strategy is up to date, and your social media profiles reflect your brand's latest offerings and values.

Additionally, review your digital advertising campaigns and adjust targeting to ensure you're reaching the right audience with the right message. The goal is to create a seamless and engaging experience that keeps your business top-of-mind for potential customers.

By following these three tips — refining your target audience, leveraging content marketing, and optimizing your digital presence — you'll set yourself up for a productive and successful Q1.

These strategies aren't just about short-term gains; they lay the groundwork for long-term growth and sustainability. As you refine your approach, you'll develop deeper connections with your audience, generate more qualified leads, and increase your brand's visibility across multiple channels.

The start of a new year offers an opportunity to reset and refocus. Don't wait for success to come to you — take charge of your marketing and set the stage for a year filled with growth, engagement and success. ■

Information provided by Mel Guanci, Executive Director, Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce.

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Why Become a Member?

- ✔ Bring Awareness to Your Business
- ✔ Connect with Local Professionals
- ✔ Opportunities to Support Your Community
- ✔ Referrals from the Chamber Business Directory
- ✔ Professional Development





Connect with the
Norwalk Area
Chamber and
Join Today!

PHOTOS with Santa

Family Pet Veterinary Centers held their Annual Pet Photos with Santa event on Dec. 7.



The staff of Family Pet Veterinary Centers held their Annual Pet Photos with Santa event on Dec. 7.



Sam Cummings, Tanner, Wayne, Santa, Buster and Devon Donato



Santa and Daphne



Santa and Ricco



Santa and Fancy



Santa and Moose



Santa and Sadie



Santa and Remi



Santa and Butters



Santa and Leah



Santa and Elvira



Santa and Bahamutt



Santa and Jack

OUT & ABOUT

LIVE

Nativity

Synchronized Lights and Live Nativity were presented at Fellowship Community Church on Dec. 15.



The Live Nativity



Donnis Blake and Diane Folkers



Jan Padavic, Michelle Thorne and Shelley Sheriff



Isabel and Jill George



Isabel George, Forrest Parsons and Amanda Tiller



Rachelle and Jessica Parsons and Janet Tracy



Jenn Kerr and Jordan Tuttle



Joe Klinefelter and Lavon, Leland and Lorelei Caspian



Amy Lofflin and Lisa Jones



Rob Jones and Jonathan Martin



FALL SEMESTER ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

WRAP!

CONGRATULATIONS, WARRIORS!

NORWALK COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

Boys Cross Country won their first 4A district championship at Marshalltown and finished 5th at the State Meet in Class 4A.



Aksel Beedon (10), Corbin Oswald (12), Teegan Kralik (11), Tony Anania (12), Grant Wallace (12), Henry Groos (12), and Sam Parker (11) ran at the state meet.

Norwalk student Mallory Betts (10) qualified for the Girls State Swim Meet as part of Norwalk's shared program with Des Moines Lincoln in the Medley Relay.



Olive DeRocher (9), Gabby Drymon (9) & Gracie Wetzeler (9) qualified for the Girls State Cross Country Meet.



Norwalk Football wins Class 4A District 6 Championship and qualified for the Class 4A Football Playoffs and hosted Xavier in the first round.



Earning Class 4A All State recognition for the Warriors was Eli Robbins (11, 1st Team WR), Kolton Borcharding-Johnson (12, 1st Team DL), Luke Brewer (10, 2nd Team WR), Harrison Tripp (12, 2nd Team Punter).

Norwalk Volleyball sets a school record for wins in a season with 29 wins.



Elle Hatlevig (9) was named third team all state in Class 4A by the IGCA.

Norwalk wins the Bill Van Horn Trophy as All Sports Champion for the 2023-2024 School Year for the Little Hawkeye Conference.



NDT placed 3rd at state in Hip Hop, 3rd in Pom, and 6th in Jazz. NDT also were crowned DTU Regional Grand Champions this fall.



Soloists at state were Jordy Norman (9th Place), Abbie Klunder (6th Place), Elsie Johnston (3rd Place).

Grady Sigrist (12) qualifies for the Boys State Golf Tournament.



Norwalk Marching Band Finishing in 3rd Place at Linn-Mar Invitational, four points out of 1st place.



Eli Geisler (11), performs as Harry Potter, in the fall school play Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.



Cheerleaders cheer on the Warriors throughout the football season.



Faith Leonard (12), Carson Menke (11), Lydia Krueger (12), Ellie Prier (10), and Emma Sizemore (12) received All State recognition for Band, and Addy Bailey (12) received All State recognition for Choir.



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Fellowship

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**New Year, New Routine?
Join Us As We Seek The Lord In 2025!**



• **SUNDAYS 8:30 & 10:30 AM** •

Fellowship Community Church believes in creating a space where people can engage in life-giving community, have authentic encounters with Christ, discover their gifts, and use them for God's glory. You're invited to join us on our mission to disciple all peoples for the sake of His name!

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What's your "One Thing?"

Learn how to find it by turning to this month's Norwalk Living Faith Column by Senior Pastor Rob Jones

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