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MAGAZINE

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BOND

Local grandparents share why living close to their grandkids is so important to them.

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Friday, March 14 • 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Join us for our **Slice of 'Pi' Tours** as we celebrate Pi Day in a deliciously fun way! Take a tour of our community and discover something new, and best of all you'll get to choose a pie to take home and enjoy. It's the perfect blend of math, history and tasty treats — don't miss out on this sweet celebration!



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Monday, March 17 • 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Come in to discover our **Pot-o'-Gold Hunt** this St. Patrick's Day! Explore our community on a fun-filled tour, where each room will have hidden gold bars for you to find and add to the Pot-o'-Gold in our Discovery Room. Enjoy delicious, green-themed refreshments in our bistro as you search for treasure. Once you've gathered your gold, you'll be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a special prize! Don't miss out on the fun and fortune!

Please RSVP at least four days before our events by calling 515-415-4401 or emailing mrodriguez@copperwoodsl.com.

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WELCOME

A GRANDPA and his grandson

Jolene and I are new to this grandparenting thing. We are only weeks in, but, so far, so good. We had heard how wonderful the experience is from others, but, like most things in life, we didn't fully understand until we began to live it.



Our middle daughter, Samantha, got married a few years ago. She and her husband, Brady, then moved to Arizona. We missed them, and, thankfully, they missed us, too. As they began to talk about starting a family together, they came to the conclusion that they wanted to be close to family again and were moving back to the area.

We were able to see Samantha through the pregnancy process, and we were at the hospital shortly after their son was born. Holding Callahan in my arms for the first time was amazing, and doing so each time since has been as well. No phone call or video call could ever replace that.

I am greatly looking forward to the years ahead, too. Walking. Talking. Birthday parties. Ball games. And whatever he chooses to be involved in. But what I look forward to the most is the time we can spend together, just the two of us. Playing games at the kitchen table. Working on a project together in the garage. Going on boat rides. And just talking about whatever he wants to talk about.

My grandparents had all died by the time I was 5 years old, but I have a few wonderful memories of my Grandpa Lane. I can still envision him. In bib overalls. Sitting in his recliner. Looking at me and thinking how he could make me laugh. He would ask me if I wanted to see a monkey, and, of course, I always did. So I would jump up on his lap, and he would pull out his pocket watch and turn the shiny side over so I could see my reflection. And we both would giggle. I fell for that one repeatedly.

I was fortunate to be able to spend time with my grandpa, albeit not as much as I would have liked. I loved him dearly, and I want to do all I can to be sure my grandson and my future grandchildren will have those same opportunities with me.

This month, we share the stories of grandparents who live nearby their grandchildren and are able to create these types of cherished memories — and maybe see a few monkeys, too.

Thanks for reading. ■

SHANE GOODMAN
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In the list of first place winners from the Iowa Judicial District 5 essay contest printed last month, Edie Lenig's name was not correct. We congratulate her and apologize for the error.



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Angie Williams enjoys time with her great-grandsons Jareem, 6, and Judah, 9.



A Special BOND

Local grandparents share why living close to their grandkids is so important to them.

By Ashley Rullestad

These days, kids often grow up, move away and start families and careers far from where they grew up. Siblings are often scattered across the country and even the globe. Dinners with the extended family is now regulated to the holidays, when those who are able make the trip “back home.” But there is something about grandkids that brings about another family shift. Many young families decide their kids would benefit from having family close by, and many grandparents find retirement is the perfect time for making a move closer to family. Some of those grandparents who live close to their grandkids share what it means to them to form the special bonds that come from time spent together.



Happy in Ankeny

Angie Williams, a native of Chicago, spent years as a consultant traveling and living in the San Francisco Bay Area. At one point, her job required her to travel, and she would often fly to Des Moines as family members began to migrate to the area during the 2000s.

“Each visit included spending time with my children, grandchildren, my brother, nieces and nephews. When one of my great nephews needed a kidney

transplant at 10 years old, my sister, a registered nurse, moved to the area to be closer to her grandchildren. As I continued to visit, I noticed growth in the area and found myself attracted to the Ankeny community.”

Williams liked the short drive to downtown Des Moines and Ames and the activities to enjoy in the community. She says Ankeny possesses an urban feel while offering the comfort of small-town living. She decided to purchase a townhome to have a place to make memories and



Angie Williams moved to Ankeny to be closer to grandkids and great-grandkids.

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spend time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

“I make Sunday dinners. They love my peach cobbler, and we enjoy board and card games. I love attending their school sporting events and Iowa Wolves games. I became an active member of the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce’s Multicultural Task Force, have volunteered in the Ankeny School District and am an alumna of the Ankeny Citizens Police Academy.”

Williams says she is glad to make memories with her own grandkids and great-grandchildren. Her kids were also close to both maternal and paternal grandparents, and they remain close to Williams’ mother, who celebrated her 90th birthday in November.

“The benefits are simple, being close to family. However, the challenge as a working grandparent is not always being available for every event or celebration; however, it is wonderful to be in such close proximity. As I mark 10 years of living in the community, I would say I am clearly a grandparent who has found a place that allows me to spend time with my wonderful grandchildren and watch them and my community grow.”



All of Bill and Renee McClendon’s 10 grandkids live nearby.

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Gulf coast to Midwest

Renee McClendon grew up in South Dakota and raised her kids in northwest Iowa. A job transfer for her husband, Bill, led them to relocate to southern Mississippi in 2006. Meanwhile, their boys settled in central Iowa, and, after COVID hit, they decided to join them.

Now they are near their two sons and their families in Ankeny and one son and his family in Urbandale, with a total of 10 grandkids. Renee says they left the beaches of Mississippi for the blizzards of Iowa to help their kids care for their kids.

“However, what has happened is that our lives have also been greatly enhanced. I loved living in the South, especially the year-round flora, mild temperatures, easy access to beaches. I was a music teacher, and we also loved our church. We had both retired when COVID hit. With all of the uncertainties, it was just too difficult for me to be so far away from family.”

Now, they are happy helping out. Each family has different needs. Sometimes Renee does “Grammy-care” and takes the kids to the library, park, pool or ponds for fishing, or she makes emergency trips for groceries or helps transport kids to activities. She also volunteers at their schools and childcare and other activities, like library, craft and music classes.

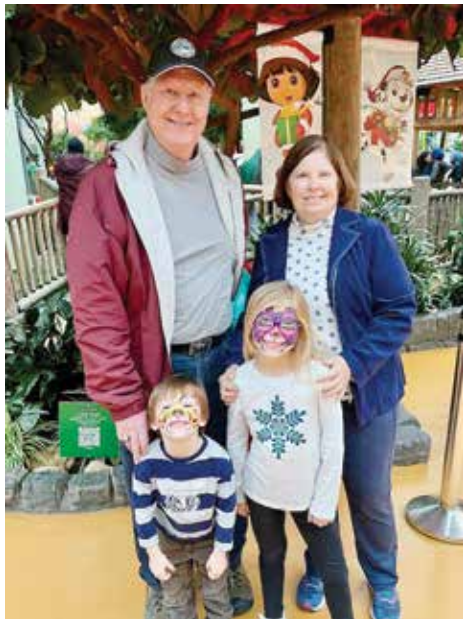
“What I cherish the most is attending the grandkids’ ballgames and music events. My favorite memories are children greeting me with open arms and yelling, ‘Grammy!’ Also, little smiling faces looking out the window when they know I am about to arrive. In the summer, I especially love when they come to the pool at our apartment complex. Moving home to be with my babies is such a gift.”

First time grandparents

Audrey and Bill West were thrilled to become grandparents at age 67. Their daughter, Erica, and son-in-law, Tony, were both raised in Iowa and met at the University of Northern Iowa but had moved to Houston, Texas, to begin their careers. When they were ready to start a family, they decided to relocate to southern Minnesota, a short and easy drive from Ankeny.

“We can travel to their home easily, and we make that drive on a regular basis. Also, Erica and Tony return to Iowa frequently for special events and to stay in touch with friends and loved ones,” Audrey says. “When our grandchildren were born, we were at the hospital within hours of getting the happy phone call.”

Now the grandkids, Arianna and Landon, are 7 and 3. Audrey and Bill haven’t missed any developmental steps, which fly by so quickly. It



Audrey and Bill West enjoy time spent with grandchildren Arianna, 7, and Landon, 3.

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“When the kids stay with us for a week at a time in the summer, we fill the days with fun activities. There is a splash pad a block from our home, which is loads of fun on a hot summer day. We probably have just as much fun watching their reactions as they encounter new experiences.”

— AUDREY WEST

was special watching them learn to crawl, walk, speak and all the other exciting accomplishments, Audrey says. Now, much of their time is spent creating with Play-Doh, doing puzzles, reading books, making art projects, and playing with trucks and dolls. Cooking and baking projects are shared frequently. Grandma and Grandpa are around for birthdays, Halloween and other holidays.

Sometimes they are there for medical reasons such as flu or placing tubes in the ears. They lend a hand when needed for emergency childcare. If the family had stayed in Texas, none of that would have been possible, Audrey

says.

“When the kids stay with us for a week at a time in the summer, we fill the days with fun activities,” she says. “There is a splash pad a block from our home, which is loads of fun on a hot summer day. Also, we have taken them to several parks in Ankeny, the Science Center, Jester Park, Saylorville Lake, The Des Moines Playhouse and the Blank Park Zoo. We probably have just as much fun watching their reactions as they encounter new experiences.”

Since they are so close, they can attend school programs, dance recitals, soccer games, track meets, gymnastics and swimming lessons.



Audrey West loves living close to grandkids Arianna, 7, and Landon, 3.

“How fun to sit in the bleachers and observe all these important moments,” Audrey says. “Being a grandparent is such a wonderful and fulfilling experience. We feel so grateful and fortunate to have these children in our lives.”

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“Tender Years Daycare and Garbage Guys have had a working relationship with Availa Bank ever since they came to the Ankeny area. The support staff at Availa is excellent! They try to answer all my questions, and if they can’t, they go out of their way to find someone who can.” — Paula Eichinger

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By Lily Wasserman

Warners share why living close to their grandkids is so important to them.

Michelle and Randy Warner went from seeing their grandchildren once a month to whenever they want when they moved from Dubuque to Ankeny. While they had lived 21 years in Dubuque, they tackled the housing market to secure a house near their young grandchildren.

They say the move has been worth it.

“(Dubuque) was almost three hours away, and you just miss out on so much, all the cute little things they say and do, all the spontaneous get-togethers, getting together to grill out in the summertime and in the nice weather,” Michelle says.

With retirement, the Warners have more time to attend their grandchildren’s activities, especially as they grow older. With their grandson playing sports in the summer, the Warners are happy to drop everything and go watch him play.

“While you’re busy with life when you’re raising kids, (there is) no hustle and bustle with grandkids,” Michelle says.

The couple has time for spur-of-the-moment family dinners and looking after the grandchildren. They also are happy for the opportunity to see their children now parenting.

“It’s nice when you’re friends with your kids, and you can laugh and just have a really great time together. It’s really rewarding,” Michelle says.

Without having to parent, Randy says their responsibilities with the children are different.

“For me, with our children, I was a parent first and then a friend. With me, with the grandchildren, I’m just a friend,” Randy says.

As their grandchildren grow older, the couple is looking forward to, as Randy says, “growing with them.”

While they’re excited to be with the children through it, they don’t want to rush the journey.

“My mother always said that she thought there were good things about each phase of childhood, that, as children get older, there’s always something really great about each age and stage,” Michelle says, adding she comes from a close-knit family. Now that her grandson is at an age where he’s asking about family stories, she’s excited to pass them on.

“I was talking with our grandson about something last weekend, and he asked me what I looked like when I was little, and I said, ‘Well, Grandma will look up some pictures and show you sometime soon,’ ” Michelle says.

The Warners say that part of the reason they have such a close bond with their grandchildren is their proximity and availability.

“There is nothing like going to the door at their home, and they’re waiting. They’re looking out the window or out the door for us, or else they’re running when we come in and wanting to give us big hugs. That’s the best feeling in the world,” Michelle says. ■



Michelle and Randy Warner are glad they moved from Dubuque to Ankeny so they can participate in their grandchildren’s lives.

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Building offers all the amenities the Rikers enjoy.



Cheryl Ross-Riker and her husband, Bob Riker, enjoy being close to The District in Ankeny and the features of their condo, including the big windows that provide plenty of sunshine and great views for their cats.

Cheryl Ross-Riker and her husband, Bob Riker, are longtime residents of Ankeny and have built a life around enjoying their community.

After relocating from Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1999, the couple quickly found themselves drawn to Ankeny's welcoming atmosphere and budding amenities.

The Rikers moved to Ankeny when Bob accepted a job offer with Snyder & Associates. Their decision to relocate was also influenced by friends who had previously moved to Ankeny and shared glowing recommendations about the area. Bob and Cheryl quickly realized they had found the right place to settle down and have never looked back.

The Rikers chose their current residence in the Collier Building on S.W. Magazine Road for many reasons, but mostly because of yet another recommendation.

"We had neighbors from our prior neighborhood who had moved here and loved it," Ross-Riker says. "We were at the point in our lives we were traveling and desired a home that would free us up to do that."

The couple enjoys the convenience of their lifestyle at the condo, which includes features such as inside mail and package delivery, underground heated parking, a heated pool and pool house, community rooms and a fitness area. The secure entry and high ceilings add to the comfort, and they especially appreciate the large windows, which provide ample natural light for when they read and do puzzles. Their cats appreciate the views, too.

Another key draw for the Rikers is the prime location of the building, especially because it's within walking distance to The District. The central location is ideal, and they're able to easily

access everything Ankeny has to offer, from restaurants to entertainment to shopping.

Ankeny has grown into a city that, according to Ross-Riker, provides everything a big city should but still retains a small-town feel.

"Ankeny now has about anything you would need," she says. "It's a city that is clean and vibrant."

The Rikers also enjoy the many activities and events in town. They like exploring the bike trails, visiting the art center, spending time in Ankeny's Uptown area and much more. They also stay physically active through their participation in different fitness activities. Bob is committed to his CrossFit workouts, and Cheryl participates in aqua fitness classes at the Legacy Fitness Center, just steps away from her condo.

With their deep roots in Ankeny, the Rikers continue to embrace everything the city offers. ■



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Ask your healthcare provider about RSV vaccines for your family.

Source: cdc.gov

The Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library adds approximately 11,000 new items to our collections each year. That sounds like an impressive amount (and it is), but it is a single drop in the ocean of all the available new material that comes out each year.

Some estimates indicate there are more than 200,000 books published in English yearly by mainstream publishers. Another 400,000 titles are self-published, which often have enormous demand, spurred by BookTok and other online reading communities, and have to be considered for acquisition, too. Added to this gargantuan total are all the magazines that are published each year, the entire backlog of print materials from previous years, and materials in other languages.

This means there is an enormous universe of educational and entertainment material out there Ankeny simply cannot afford to buy or have the space to store. But this does not mean Ankeny patrons cannot have access.

There are two services Ankeny patrons can use to obtain the books the library cannot acquire.

The first service, called **Open Access**, is an agreement the vast majority of public libraries in Iowa participate in and is funded through the state. This agreement allows any Ankeny patron to visit other libraries directly, obtain cards and borrowing permissions, and then simply check out books these other libraries own. A nice feature of Open Access is that Ankeny patrons can return other libraries' books at Ankeny Kirkendall, and we will return them to their owning institution promptly and without charge. So, feel free to borrow a book from another metro library and then drop it off at the AKPL.

The other service, called **interlibrary loan (ILL)**, is simply one library borrowing from another library on the patron's behalf. Ankeny Kirkendall is part of state and national networks of lending libraries. We have borrowed books from every state in the union, from academic, public, military, private libraries, and even from the Library of Congress. Through ILL, Ankeny patrons have access to literally millions of books. We also obtain copies of magazine and journal articles and works in other languages. There is no fee for this service. The only limitations are we cannot borrow books less than a year old, as the owning libraries want to prioritize their patrons, AV resources, and one-of-a-kind items like manuscripts, archival materials and local genealogies. In general, however, if it was once in print, we can get it, or at least try. ■

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WHEN IS a good time for Roth conversion?

In life, you often get second chances — and the same is true with investing. To illustrate: You might not have been able to contribute to a Roth IRA during your working years due to your income level, but you may get that opportunity as you near retirement, or even when you are retired — through a Roth conversion.



Why is a Roth IRA desirable for some people?

Here are the key benefits:

- **Tax-free withdrawals** — You put in after-tax dollars to a Roth IRA, so you can withdraw your contributions at any time, free of taxes and penalties. And if you've had your account for at least five years and you're at least 59½, you can also withdraw your earnings free of taxes.
- **No RMDs** — With a traditional IRA, you'll have to start taking withdrawals — called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — when you turn 73, or 75 if you were born in 1960 or later. But there's no RMD requirement with a Roth IRA — you can essentially leave the money intact as long as you like.
- **Tax-free legacy for your heirs** — When your heirs inherit your Roth IRA, they can withdraw the contributions without paying taxes or penalties, and if the account has been open at least five years, they can also withdraw earnings tax free. But even if you were aware of these advantages, you might not have been able to invest in a Roth IRA for much of your life. For one thing, you might have earned too much money — a Roth IRA, unlike a traditional IRA, has income limits. Also, a Roth IRA has only been around since 1998, so, in the previous years, you were limited to a traditional IRA.

As you approach retirement, though, you might start thinking of just how much you'd like to benefit from a Roth IRA. And you can do so by converting your traditional IRA to a Roth. While this sounds simple, there's a major caveat: taxes. You'll be taxed on the amount in pre-tax dollars you contributed to a traditional IRA and then converted to a Roth IRA. (If you have both pre- and after-tax dollars in your traditional IRA, the taxable amount is based on the percentage of pre-tax dollars.)

If you have large amounts in a traditional IRA, the tax bill on conversion can be significant. The key to potentially lowering this tax bill is timing. Generally speaking, the lower your income in a given year, the more favorable it is for you to convert to a Roth IRA. So, for example, if you have already retired, but have not started collecting RMDs, your income may be down. Timing also comes into play with the financial markets. When the market is going through a decline, and the value of your traditional IRA drops, you could convert the same number of shares of the underlying investments and receive a lower tax bill or convert more shares of these investments for what would have been the same tax bill.

Finally, you could lower your tax bill in any given year by stretching out your Roth IRA conversions over several years, rather than doing it all at once. You'll want to consult with your tax advisor before embarking on this conversion — but, if it's appropriate for your situation, you could find that owning a Roth IRA can benefit you and your family for years to come. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information provided by Jakeb C. Bakken, Financial Advisor, 2005 S. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 500, Ankeny, 515-965-6901



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VALENTINE response

Micah 6:8 – “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”



An overly simplified context for this scripture is that God’s people have forgotten about God and the many blessings God has provided them. They are being led by a prophet to consider God’s disappointment, the potential for God’s judgement, and their opportunity to respond.

And... happy Valentine’s Day. (???)

In a time when our community/nation is balancing our love for Cadbury cream eggs with major decisions that impact our future together, what better holiday than Valentine’s Day to offer us a reminder of a path forward. Valentine’s Day is a response. When we love someone, we often “respond” to that feeling with gifts that show them we care. Many of us have felt the joy of knowing that someone cared enough to make us a card, buy us a flower, take us for a walk, or make time to let us know what they feel for us is real. Valentine’s Day isn’t always about romance, and it isn’t a “requirement.” But ignoring those who we care about isn’t good practice for relationship building either.

God’s people have forgotten about Valentine’s Day. They have chosen selfishness, greed and power over responding to God’s love. They have cheated on God, often worshipping other gods instead. They ignore the poor, the widow, the orphan, and behaviors that demonstrate that the relationship they have with God matters — behaviors rooted in justice, mercy and humility.

God’s response? Through the prophet, God reminds the people that they already know how to make things right. Right before the scripture at the top of this article, the prophet rhetorically asks if God’s people should bring extravagant Valentine’s day-like gifts in order to please God. But then the prophet quickly speaks for God, reminding the people that what God wants from them is to repent and once again become concerned with justice, mercy and honoring God in humility.

I humbly suggest that the preceding two paragraphs were true in the time of Micah and are also true in our time today. My Valentine’s day response is to repent. Because I am grateful for God’s love, I want to respond. I want to feed the poor, not my ego. I want to show mercy, for certainly it has been shown to me. I want justice to be known, even in places where I can’t imagine how justice could work.

As Valentine’s Day becomes another holiday in the rearview mirror, our response can continue. Less of me, more of God. I pray that words like justice, mercy and humility become actions that lead to Holy unity between us. If the holiday really is/was about responding to those who love us and letting them know we care, then this is my response — justice, mercy and humility. May God’s love be known to you and may others experience real justice and mercy through the love you humbly offer to God. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor, Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church, john.wagner@ankenyfirst.org.



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PROESCH crowned USA National Miss Iowa Teen

Though relatively new to the pageant scene, Ankeny teen finds success.

When Sophia Proesch of Ankeny was named USA National Miss Iowa Teen on Jan. 12, her first reaction was one of excitement. And shock.

“A few of my friends were crying, and it was definitely a memorable moment seeing them all so proud of me and the way they all supported me,” she says. “I remember, at one point when I was on stage and found my dad in the audience, I snuck him a wink. He isn’t always able to come to all my events, as he works very hard at his job, so I was thrilled to see him in the audience.”

The accomplishment was made all the more special by the fact that Proesch, 16, had been competing in pageants for a year. In short, she had only know that world existed for a short time.

“I had never really been aware that there were pageants held in Ankeny because I didn’t know or have any prior connections to someone that competed in pageants,” she says. “One day, I received a letter from National American Miss, the first pageant I competed in, where I was informed I had been nominated to participate in the state pageant. I was excited for the opportunity, as I have always been active in trying new activities such as dance, show choir, tennis, volleyball and more.”

The pageant, which was held in Des Moines at the Sheraton Hotel Jan. 10-12, featured three areas of competition: interview, fashion/runway and formal wear. Proesch, the daughter of Nicole and Keith Proesch, was nervous, but prepared.

“When you get in the interview room, you are escorted to a podium facing the judges where you are asked questions about yourself and your platform,” she says. “A big part of pageantry is using your title to represent a meaningful cause and better the community. The cause I chose was overcoming OCD, as it was something I struggled heavily with a few years back. It was important to me that I advocate for others that are struggling.”

The countless hours walking patterns in high heels and participating in practice interviews with friends and family leading up to the event paid off. She won.

Title aside, Proesch says her favorite part was meeting so many people.

“I also got to take home a crown alongside some amazing girls who I couldn’t be prouder of,” she says. “I am unbelievably excited



Sophia Proesch of Ankeny was named USA National Miss Iowa Teen on Jan. 12.

to get the opportunity to head to Nationals alongside these girls.”

The national pageant will take place later this year, and securing sponsors for it and preparing for the competition itself will be a big undertaking, Proesch says.

“But I am looking forward to the challenge.” ■

HOT WHEELS collector turned racecar driver

White goes from the stands to the driver's seat.

Mike White still has a few of the Hot Wheels he received when he was 6, which is when the toys first came out, and has been collecting them ever since. His collection lines his garage walls, where his family keeps their vehicles protected from the winter elements.

"A guy's most expensive hobby starts with a 97-cent toy when he was younger. That's very true," he says, adding that, at the time, had hadn't dreamed he'd one day be racing pickup trucks.

"Cars have always been something cool in our family," Mike says.

He remembers his dad taking him to see cars that were lined up on Merle Hay Road.

"Everybody at night would just park out there with their cars and lawn chairs and coolers. We would look at the cars and talk to people," he says.

He first thought about racing after watching the Twilight Autocross event at Goodguys with his wife, Jodi. The sky was just starting to get dark when it started.

"That was so cool because the rotors just get red hot and sparks are coming off the brakes when they are out there in the dark racing. I told my wife 'This is really cool.'"

They returned the next day, and Mike was hooked.

"I'm like, 'Wow, I really want to do this.'"

He was in the stands discussing with his friend what car he could get to start racing. He was thinking of racing a Camaro, but they were too expensive.

"Why don't you just do it with the truck? You've already got the truck," Jodi said.

Mike had recently bought back his stepson Bo's 1970 Chevrolet C10 pickup. Bo had the truck in high school but had sold when in his early 20s. When the new owner put it up for sale, Mike bought it back to save it for Bo. He had made it drivable again, but it had just been sitting in



Mike White rebuilt his 1970 Chevrolet C10 pickup truck in 2017 and began racing autocross in 2018. Photo by Deborah Mikelson

their garage. Mike asked Bo if he could use the truck for racing, and Bo agreed.

Mike got busy in 2017 preparing the truck for racing. In 2018 he was ready and took it to Goodguys to race autocross.

"I race it in the autocross with the local chapter DMVR (Des Moines Valley Region)," Mike says.

In autocross, each driver takes on the course one at a time and the winner is determined by time and other factors.

"In 2023, I got fourth at the Goodguys, and then they have you do a shootout where the top four from each class does a shootout, and I got second place in the shootout. In 2024, I got second in the truck class and second in the shootout again," Mike says.

Last year, his friend Justen Anderson added a fiberglass scoop on the hood of the truck.

"He actually grafted this fiberglass scoop onto my hood," Mike says. "I've always wanted something like that."

Another friend, Frosty Harrington, painted a caricature of Justen under the hood and had fun showing it to him a year later.

"Each year, I do a little bit, something different to it. It's kind of a budget build," Mike says. "That's why it's called Project Z10, so I could combine Z28 and a pickup together type of thing."

Mike's wife, Jodi, says a friend told her that Mike is "just like a little kid, he has so much fun."

"He's always smiling ear to ear," she adds. ■



Mike White competes in autocross racing in his 1970 Chevrolet C10 pickup truck at the Iowa Region Hawkeye Tech Transportation Center in Waterloo in June 2024. Photo by Nick Wissenberg



Mike White still has his first car, a yellow 1968 Camaro Convertible, which his sister owned when it was brand new and gave to him when he was 16. Lining the walls is his Hot Wheels collection. Photo by Deborah Mikelson

PLANNING a trip?

Do you travel out of state or out of the country, whether to visit family, to go on a vacation or to escape the Iowa winters?

Being a funeral home, we know there are times when a death occurs away from home. It happens more often than people would probably expect.

What people do not always realize is that it can be difficult to get a person transported back home — and there can be unexpected expenses.

While the funeral home does everything it can to make these situations as seamless as possible and to keep extra expenses at a minimum, there can still be some challenges.

Fortunately, there is an affordable solution that can provide a tremendous amount of peace of mind to those who frequently travel.

Travel plans offered through a funeral home can be very affordable (usually a modest one-time payment), and they can help ensure that, if the inevitable happens away from home, everything will be covered to bring the loved one back home to where services will be provided.

If you are a traveler — or plan to become one in your retirement years — then visit with your funeral provider of choice and ask if they offer a travel plan.

As we often like to say, you will be glad you did. ■



Information provided by Kathy Dunbar, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's on Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681

ANKENY After Prom

Community comes together to offer a fun, safe experience for Ankeny teens.



After Prom attendees enjoy food, games, prizes and fun.

Ankeny After Prom is a parent-run, community-sponsored event with a mission to provide the students of Ankeny High School and Ankeny Centennial High School with a night of safe, entertaining activities that reflect the community spirit of caring and fun on the evening of prom.

Each school has different prom dates, so each has its own After Prom event. However, the After Prom Organization, which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, works together to gather community support and resources for both events.

“I believe Ankeny After Prom started back in the early 1990s and has been going every year since,” says member Cherish Taylor. “I have a picture of myself at the 1992 event.”

After Prom is completely run by parent volunteers and is not a school-sponsored event, but students from AHS and ACHS and their registered prom guests can attend. It takes about six months to plan, and the planning committee consists of about 30-40 parents. More than 400 parent volunteers run the events the night of After Prom.

The event is completely free for students and includes food from approximately 60 different Ankeny restaurants, inflatables, air brush tattoos, caricature artists, casino games, silent disco, comedic hypnotist, ping pong, 9-square, and more.

Students also have the opportunity to win both small and large raffle prizes. Last year, the organization was able to provide more than 150 prizes. The grand prize is a free used car from Karl Chevrolet.

“This is obviously a huge draw for the kids to attend. Karl Chevrolet sends an employee to draw the winner at 4:30 a.m. It’s the very last event of the evening and so much fun.”

Taylor says the committee wants to increase awareness of this long-standing Ankeny tradition and to recognize the community for its support.

“Businesses big and small play a huge part in After Prom, and we simply would not be able to provide this great event without them. From their financial support through donations or fundraisers or their gifts of product and time, it is all so important and the reason we have been able to continue providing this event for more than 30 years.”

For more information about getting involved or donating to the event, visit Ankeny High After Prom or Ankeny Centennial High School After Prom on Facebook or Venmo @ankenyafterprom. ■

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BUBBLY PAWS opens in Ankeny

Bubbly Paws, the innovative self-service dog wash and full-service grooming franchise, announced the grand opening of its newest location — and the first in Iowa — on Jan. 17 in the heart of Ankeny at 2410 S.W. White Birch Drive, Suite 105. This new facility offers a fun, stress-free experience for pet owners and their furry friends.

The Ankeny location is owned by local couple Randy Larsen and Leslie Shipp. Randy, a former radio professional, decided to “go to the dogs” and bring Bubbly Paws to Iowa after a broadcasting career. His wife, Leslie, a former journalism teacher at Johnston High School, is excited to embark on this new adventure with her husband.

“We are beyond excited to bring Bubbly Paws to Ankeny,” Randy Larsen said. “Our goal is to provide a clean, welcoming and fun environment for dog lovers in the community. Whether you’re here for a quick self-service wash or a full grooming session, we want to make it a tail-wagging experience for everyone.” ■

SOFTBALL tourney raises mental health awareness

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and the Ankeny Girls Softball Association (AGSA) is putting on the “You Matter Ankeny Classic for Mental Health — More Than Just Softball.” The event is May 9-11 at the Prairie Ridge Sports Complex and will include the 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12U age C-division teams.

This cause means a great deal to Tournament Director Justin Bogers. “As a tournament director, board member and coach within the world of youth softball, I feel it is important to shine a light on the mental health challenges experienced by young athletes. Nearly everyone will experience some level of mental health challenge in their lifetime, while one in four will be diagnosed with a clinical mental illness. I hope that this tournament, with its focus, introduction and inclusion of local resources and direct charitable contribution to a local nonprofit focusing on mental health services, will shine a light in the darkness and remind everyone that softball is more than just a sport.”

On top of competitive tournament softball play, The You Matter Ankeny Classic will include:

- A You Matter Champion award given to the team displaying the greatest in-tournament sportsmanship.

- Connections to local resources available at the tournament to learn more about services in the area and programs they offer in support of mental health and wellness.

- A percentage of merchandise sales will be provided to a local non-profit organization dedicated to mental health support and suicide prevention efforts. The 2025 recipient is Mindspring.

The You Matter Ankeny Classic for Mental Health is actively seeking teams in each division. AGSA is seeking event sponsors, including a signature sponsor that will be recognized on the tournament medals and other promotional items.

For more information or to register, visit <https://iafastpitch.ussa.com/event/ankeny-classic-ii-4/>. ■

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Check for cancellations

Upcoming in Ankeny Living magazine:

Foreign Exchange Students: Have you hosted a foreign exchange student in the past or are hosting one this year? Tell us about sharing your home and culture with a student from abroad and what you learned from the experience. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to be included in the April issue.



Broasted Chicken Dinner fundraiser

Sunday, April 27,
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Ankeny Legion Post 42,
521 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

The public is invited to join the Ankeny Albaugh-Govern Legion Post 42 for a broasted chicken dinner. The Ankeny Legion Auxiliary will also be having a bake sale. The fundraiser supports the youth and veteran programs sponsored by the Legion Post. Dine in and carry out available. The meal is catered by Staley's Food Service. Cost is \$15 for adults, \$7 for children 4-12, free for children 3 and younger. Cash or checks only; no credit cards.

Neighbor to Neighbor-free meal

Feb. 23, doors open at 4 p.m., serving at 5 p.m.
St. Anne's Episcopal Church,
2110 W. First St.

This month, the meal will feature hot beef sandwich. No one is required or expected to be a member of St. Anne's. The meals are free and are followed by seven hands of free bingo. There are small prizes for six hands and a \$15 gift card for the last hand. Freewill donations are accepted but not required or expected.

Ankeny Art Center Classes and Workshops

Various dates
The Ankeny Art Center,
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Registration is open for spring classes and workshops at the Ankeny Art Center. Youth classes are offered Saturdays, April 5-26, and include Grades K-4 Pottery Sculpture, Grades K-4 Art Exploration, Grades 5-8 Pottery Wheel and Grades 5-8 Painting.

Adult classes include beginner classes Drawing Basics, Watercolor Basics and Pottery Basics; intermediate/advanced classes are Acrylic II, Watercolor II, Watercolor III, Pottery II and Pottery Studio. For more information and to register, visit www.ankenyardcenter.org.



Free Genealogy Class

March 15, 1 p.m.
Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library,
1250 S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

Ready to dig into your family's history? The Ankeny Genealogy Chapter is here to help. The group is offering a beginning genealogy course. A 14-page handout will be a great resource to start your journey. Topics include: How to Get Started, Organizing Your Finds, Computer Software, Available Records, Genealogy Websites, and the 14 rules you will need to keep in mind as you do your research. The public is welcome. For more information, email horrocksgen@gmail.com.



Ankeny Art Center Arts Festival

Saturday, May 17
Uptown Ankeny and The Ankeny Art Center,
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

On May 17, the Ankeny Art Center and Uptown Ankeny will host the Ankeny Art Center Arts Festival. The festival will transform several streets of Ankeny's Historic Uptown into a vibrant celebration of creativity and artistic expression. It will feature more than 50 fine art vendors, live music, the uptown train, food trucks and activities for kids.

Champagne and Dreams

April 3, 6-9:30 p.m.
Toast, 1345 S.W. Park Square Drive, Ankeny

This event was created to raise money to grant a wish for one (and more in the future) child with a physical, mental or financial need. Children are nominated through an online application process, and the Wiedeman Family Foundation Board of Directors selects the child and determines the wish to grant. Champagne and Dreams draws almost 500 community members yearly who are willing to open their hearts to make a difference in a child's life. The first event was held in 2022, and organizers hope to grow the event every year. Nominations are due March 2 by 11:59 p.m. and can be made at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScjsCZFoZfcsFWgZffLmHUMcvPCrMpuCaVjPit3v0dCeJw8NA/viewform> or by scanning this QR code.



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Check for cancellations

Legislative Update

Friday, March 7,
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Ankeny Kirkendall Public
Library, 1210 N.W. Prairie
Ridge Drive

The Legislative Update is sponsored by the Ankeny Chamber. Chamber members and the community are invited to join the Iowa state senator, Iowa House representatives, and Polk County supervisor in timely updates. There is no registration required for this event.



Family art activity
Saturday, March 22, 12:30-4 p.m.
The Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

The public is invited to a family-friendly art activity perfect for all ages 5 and older. Paint your own ceramic bowl for just \$15 per bowl (\$12 for members). Registration is required. Plan your time accordingly, as the event closes at 4 p.m. Most participants spend about an hour painting their bowl. Find information and registration link at www.ankenyardcenter.org.



Black History Trivia Night and Community Social

Friday, Feb. 21, 6-9 p.m.
Briarwood Golf Club, 3405 N.E. Trilein Drive, Ankeny

Enjoy trivia, prizes and networking at this family-friendly event hosted by the Multicultural Taskforce of the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.



Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Pre-Party and Parade

March 15 and March 17

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is back with its St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Join them on Saturday, March 15, from 2-6 p.m. at The Shop DSM, 901 Cherry St., Des Moines, for a Pre-Paddy Party, featuring live music from Black Dirt Ramblers, a food truck and cash bar for an at-will donation. The parade is on Monday, March 17, and begins at noon. Participants will proceed from E. First Street, west on Grand Avenue to Eighth Street, with the parade officially ending at Eighth and Grand Avenue. The after party will be in the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel. Visit www.friendlysonsiowa.com for more information. ■

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Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2025 Ankeny and Northern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish April issues of Ankeny and North Polk magazines. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

HURRY! POLL CLOSES MARCH 1, 2025.

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll. One vote per resident, please.

SCAN HERE TO VOTE TODAY!



FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot
- Coach
- Teacher

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Florist

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Child's Birthday Party
- Golf Course

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Chiropractic Office
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym
- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Alternative Health Care
- Weight Loss Clinic
- Medical Spa
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics and/or Tumbling Studio
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- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Contractor/Construction Services/Remodeling
- Cleaning Company
- Painting Company
- Home Builder

HOW TO spot AI spoofs

Protecting yourself and staying ahead of Artificial Intelligence (AI) scammers is more important than ever. As technology advances, AI has become increasingly sophisticated, making it harder to detect and avoid.

What is an AI spoof? Scammers use generative AI to impersonate your family, friends, banks, government entities, etc. via phone and video calls to ask you for money and personal information.

To help you stay safe, we've compiled six tips to better protect yourself from AI spoofing.

- **Use multifactor authentication.** With multifactor, you'll use two identifying factors to get into your account, for example a password and a text to your phone. A scammer would need access to both of these to get access to your account. Do not share the passwords or any security codes sent to your phone with anyone.

- **Research before you invest in anything.** All investments involve risk, so you should not trust anyone who offers a "sure bet." Do not send money to someone you met online or via apps, and don't make investments based on their advice.



Mindy Selix



Yvonne Silvers

- **Use stronger passwords.** Follow and exceed the strength requirements with symbols, numbers, etc. Try not to reuse the same password for multiple accounts. Consider setting up a family password among your immediate family members that can be used to verify who you are speaking to.

- **Enable updates.** Make sure you have enabled auto updates on your apps and phone. This will ensure security patches are in place, making it more difficult for scammers to hack your accounts and device. If you are unsure about the validity of an app, do not download it.

- **Verify information.** If you're talking with someone on video chats or phone calls, make sure it's them by verifying the phone number with the one you already have. Remember, even video chats and online trading platforms that appear real can be fake.

- **Slow down.** Don't let scammers catch you off guard with their false sense of urgency. Take a deep breath and slow down. You do not need to act immediately.

Remember, if something feels off, it probably is. AI spoofing tactics are designed to seem convincing, so trust your instincts and stay cautious. ■

Information provided by Mindy Selix, 515-222-2017, mselix@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571223 and Yvonne Silvers, 515-222-2005, ysilvers@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571224, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd. Ankeny.

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Lori Silings
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NO BETTER Valentine gift than well-being at home



Stephanie, 70, has lived in her townhome in Urbandale for nearly 30 years and hopes to remain there, but her two sons are worried. Stephanie is healthy, but if she were to need assistance at some point, her sons can't always provide immediate help, as one lives out of state and the other travels for work.

Stephanie's sons' concerns are reasonable; staying in our homes independently as we age is not always possible. Health challenges can make living independently ill-advised, and full-time assistance at home is expensive.

So, you may be asking yourself, on your own behalf or on behalf of someone you love: "If moving into a community for older adults is not a desired option and there are concerns about health or independence issues, what can I do?"

Consider a continuing care at home (CC@H) membership. Usually administered by an organization that serves older adults, a CC@H program is designed to help people proactively focus on their health at home while planning for potential services and care down the road.

If you're interested in looking into such a program, make sure to ask specifically what it includes. A reputable CC@H program not only will offer services to enhance your well-being so you can remain independent longer; it will also help fund future long-term care needs.

Here are some questions you'll want to consider asking before you join a program:

- **Does the program feature personal support?** Studies show people who embark on a life-enriching program or activity will be more likely to succeed with encouragement from a trusted adviser, advocate, or coach.
- **Does it include care costs?** A solid program will help pay for your care, if it's needed, whether through home healthcare or services in a community later on.
- **How long has the organization that's backing the program been in business, and what's its reputation?** Even if the program itself does offer all the services you're looking for, make sure you're comfortable with the organization itself. A reputable provider will have longevity and solid outcomes behind it.

Not all continuing care at home programs are created equal! If a specific one appeals to you, make sure it meets both your current and future needs and provides you with peace of mind. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services, including WellAhead — A WesleyLife Well-Being Experience, a CC@H offering. To learn more, visit wesleylife.org/wellahead.

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TACKLE wellness goals by adding a touch of green

Better-for-you recipes inspired by savory salad kits

(Family Features) Around the start of a new year, many people are setting their wellness intentions, from incorporating a variety of greens into meals to boosting daily step goals, drinking more water and practicing gratitude.

As part of the journey, it's important to rethink nutrition and your recipe repertoire to include better-for-you meals. For example, you can satisfy seafood cravings while getting your protein fix with Italian Crusted Salmon with Creamy Truffle Caesar Salad. This one-pan solution is paired with a Fresh Express Twisted Creamy Truffle Caesar Chopped Salad Kit, inspired by high-end dining experiences with flavors that transport you to the finest restaurants around the world.

The kit allows you to indulge in crunchy garlic brioche croutons paired with garden fresh crispy romaine lettuce, delicate sprinkles of truffle Parmesan cheese shreds and creamy dressing, transforming every bite into a sensation to be savored.

Visit freshexpress.com to discover more than 380 fresh recipes and find a store near you. ■

Italian crusted salmon with creamy truffle Caesar salad

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 2

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons chopped, fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons panko breadcrumbs
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 salmon fillets
- nonstick cooking spray
- 1 bag (9.3 ounces) Fresh Express Twisted Creamy Truffle Caesar Chopped Kit Salad
- 2 lemon wedges (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 425 F. Line sheet pan with parchment paper.
- In small bowl, combine garlic, lemon juice,



rosemary, honey and salt. In another small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, walnuts and olive oil.

- Place salmon on prepared sheet pan. Spread mustard mixture over fish; sprinkle with panko mixture, pressing to adhere. Lightly coat with nonstick cooking spray.
- Bake 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork.
- Place greens from salad kit in large bowl. Drizzle with dressing; mix well.
- Evenly divide salad among two plates. Top with salmon. Serve each with lemon wedge, if desired.

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GOOD news for estate planning

Are you worried about your family paying taxes when you die? There is some good news that can affect your estate planning.



Every estate is liable for a few different kinds of tax. Whether it is federal estate tax, income tax, inheritance tax or capital gains tax, your heirs may be writing checks to the government. Iowa was one of six states that had inheritance tax. But Iowa has now phased out its inheritance tax law with a complete exemption effective Jan. 1, 2025.

In general, inheritance isn't taxed as income; you won't pay income tax on a bequest. But when you inherit money or property from someone, you potentially owe tax to the state of Iowa. Some beneficiaries have always been exempt: a spouse, children,

stepchildren, grandchildren, and parents all have a 100% exemption from inheritance tax.

Other beneficiaries previously had no exemption, like siblings, sons- or daughters-in-law, nieces and nephews, and friends. The tax rate could be as much as 15%. For this reason, some clients avoided leaving money to individuals because of the negative tax implications.

Legislation changed this in 2021 by phasing out the inheritance tax. For deaths occurring in 2021, the tax rate was reduced by 20%. The rate continued to be reduced by 20% each subsequent year until Jan. 1, 2025, when the exclusion became 100%.

Now, no inheritance tax will be owed for individuals dying after Jan. 1, 2025, regardless of the relationship of the beneficiary.

Inheritance tax is still in effect — at the reduced rates — for deaths prior to 2025. The phase-out was not retroactive.

This change to the law presents an estate-planning opportunity for many clients. Clients can include a sibling or beloved son-in-law or daughter-in-law in their will or trust without worrying that the State of Iowa will take some of the inheritance. Nieces and nephews are now viable beneficiaries, without the risk of having tax imposed.

Your legacy to your loved ones can now be more inclusive. Many clients are now looking at their options for revising and updating their estate planning documents. If you have a Last Will and Testament or a revocable trust and would like to include new beneficiaries, make sure that you contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning and who understands the new tax laws. ■

Information provided by Ross Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com.

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WELLNESS

By Teresa Sieck

DERMAL fillers

Dermal fillers are used to help diminish facial lines and restore volume and fullness in the face. Many fillers stimulate collagen production to help restore structure to the area treated. Dermal filler can add volume to thin lips, enhance cheeks or the chin, enhance shallow spots, smooth creases and wrinkles and create a more youthful appearance.

Many of the most popular injectable dermal fillers are made of hyaluronic acid. Hyaluronic acid is a natural substance found in your body. It can be found in skin tissue, soft connective tissues, in the fluid surrounding your eyes, in some cartilage and joint fluids.

As we age, we lose subcutaneous fat in our faces. This causes the facial muscles to be closer to the skin's surface. The facial muscles then pull on the skin, causing smile lines and crow's feet. Facial skin also stretches, adding to the loss of facial volume. To soften and smooth wrinkles and fine lines and restore volume loss from subcutaneous fat loss, dermal fillers are used to regain youthfulness.

Many factors affect the facial skin including sun exposure, lifestyle and genetics. It is always recommended that you use medical grade sunscreen and skin care products.

Consult a medical professional to see if dermal filler is right 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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HEALTH

By Dr. Todd Pietig

SLOWING down nearsightedness

Myopia, also known as being nearsighted, is on the rise and has become a worldwide epidemic. Today, around 40% of people in the U.S. are nearsighted compared to 20% only 30 years ago. One reason nearsightedness is on the rise is the increase in the amount of time people spend looking up close. Kids are especially affected as they are now spending less time outdoors and more time indoors and on devices. Digital devices have become common among children for education and entertainment at a young age.

On a positive note, studies have shown that outdoor time has some protective benefits in preventing myopia, and getting at least two hours of outdoor time daily is recommended. Other beneficial lifestyle modifications include taking a break after 30 minutes of near work and increasing the distance between you and your screen. Clinically, there are three options that can slow down nearsightedness by around 50%, and they are ortho k contact lenses, atropine eye drops, and MiSight soft contact lenses.

Ortho-k is a hard contact lens you wear while you sleep. This option has the added benefit of allowing you to see clearly without glasses or contacts during the day because it flattens the cornea. Atropine drops are low dose eye drops that are put in every evening before bed and can be combined with the other options. The third option, MiSight contact lenses, are similar to the soft contacts many people currently wear, but with the benefit of slowing down nearsightedness due to their multifocal design. ■

Information provided by Dr. Todd Pietig, Ankeny Family Vision Center, 311 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-1671.



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WHAT IS sciatica?

Sciatica describes persistent pain felt along the course of the sciatic nerve, which runs from the lower back, down through the buttock, and into the lower leg. The sciatic nerve is the longest and widest nerve in the body. It controls the muscles of the lower legs and provides sensation to the thighs, legs and feet.

Although sciatica is relatively common, the true meaning of the term is often misunderstood. Sciatica is actually a term that describes a set of symptoms — not a diagnosis. Sciatica can be the result of multiple underlying conditions.

Sciatica occurs most frequently in people age 30 to 50. Most often, it develops as a result of general wear and tear on the structures of the lower spine, not as a result of injury.

Symptoms

The most common symptom associated with sciatica is pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, from the lower back and down one leg; however, symptoms can vary widely depending on where the sciatic nerve is affected. Some may experience a mild tingling, a dull ache, or even a burning sensation, typically in one leg or foot. Muscle weakness may also be present in the affected leg or foot.

Pain from sciatica often begins slowly, gradually intensifying over time. In addition, the pain can worsen after sneezing, coughing, bending, other sudden movements or prolonged sitting.

Diagnosis

Your chiropractor will begin by taking a complete patient history. You'll be asked to describe your pain, explain when it began, and indicate what activities lessen or intensify it. Forming a diagnosis will also require an exam, in which the doctor will pay special attention to your spine and legs. You may be asked to perform some basic activities that will test your sensory and muscle strength, as well as your reflexes.

Treatment options

For most people, sciatica responds very well to conservative care, including chiropractic. Keeping in mind that sciatica is a symptom and not a stand-alone medical condition, treatment plans will often vary depending on the underlying cause of the problem.

Chiropractic offers a noninvasive (nonsurgical), drug-free treatment option. The goal of chiropractic care is to restore spinal movement, thereby improving function while decreasing pain and inflammation. Depending on the cause of the sciatica, a chiropractic treatment plan may cover several different treatment methods, including but not limited to spinal adjustments, ice/heat therapy, ultrasound, TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation), traction and rehabilitative exercises.

Prevention

Consider these suggestions to help protect your back and improve your spinal health: Maintain a healthy diet and weight. Exercise regularly. Maintain proper posture. Avoid prolonged inactivity or bed rest. If you smoke, seek help to quit. Use good body mechanics when lifting.

If you or someone you know is suffering from sciatica, please consider chiropractic. They may be able to help. ■

Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit www.renzechiro.com or call the office at 965-3844.



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NEW YEAR'S resolution?



Is January the only time you reset, get healthy, create a wish list or set goals?

We are focused on the overall health of the chamber in 2025, focusing on several facets to ensure our membership receives the greatest ROI possible. Teamwork, leadership and policy are at the forefront, and we are grateful for our chamber team that truly believes in making Ankeny the best place for our members to live, work and play. Let's take an inside peek at some simple health tips from each of your chamber crew.

Sharlyn: Set a consistent bedtime for optimal sleep. We all need a good night's rest.

Jamie: Dance. Anywhere, anytime, and whenever you feel like it. It is not only good for your body, but also good for your soul.

Diane: Practice mindfulness and live in the moment.

Mackenzie: Be consistent. Big changes usually require breaking everything into small, manageable steps you can repeatedly do.

Trent: Stop, think, breathe and be positive. A healthy mind builds a healthy body.

We have an amazing team here at the chamber, and, if you haven't yet met them, please stop into our office and say hi.

As we celebrated the Martin Luther King Day of Service with a proclamation by Ankeny Mayor Bentz here at the chamber, we were reminded how the work of many amazing people accomplished great things and how the continued investment in vision will benefit everyone. We appreciate the work of our chamber members and community organizations that continue to do good for others.

Sometimes the big goal can be overwhelming, and, as interim CEO, I found Martin Luther King's words ring clear and true: "You don't have to see the whole staircase; just take the first step." Our board continues to provide leadership and guidance for 2025. As it searches for our new CEO, we are excited for what this will mean for our organization and, most importantly, for our members. As we move forward, we have been able to revisit our mission, and we can't wait to hear from future CEO applicants as to their creative vision in continuing to support one of the fastest growing chambers in one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. We are moving forward, and we will keep our members apprised as this develops.

Lastly, we are working to develop new policies and procedures along with revisiting and polishing our existing policies and procedures to ensure that all our processes are transparent and adhere to best practices. We have a unique opportunity to simultaneously work on this while we are executing our search for the new CEO. This will ensure that vision, policy and procedures are in sync for 2025 and beyond.

Please reach out if you have any questions. We appreciate your continued support and wish everyone a healthy 2025! ■

Information provided by Trent Murphy, Interim Chamber CEO, Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.





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Alexa Middleton and Mackenzie Cowden



Brandon Converse and Josh Craighead



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Business After Hours was sponsored by IV Nutrition Ankeny on Jan. 9.



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Stacey McDonald, Melisha Pals and San Boonyothayan



Aaron Burns, Jonah Youhana and Jason Burns



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OUT & ABOUT



Kaarin and Luke Reese at the ribbon cutting for Reese Builders Jan. 30.



Stacey McDonald, Brandon Hebron and Brian Thammathay at the ribbon cutting for Reese Builders Jan. 30.



Patrick Tape Fleming and Tim Fletchall at the ribbon cutting for Reese Builders Jan. 30.



Sierra McGinnis and Abbie Cross at the ribbon cutting for Reese Builders Jan. 30.



A ribbon cutting was held for Reese Builders, 5751 N.E. 22nd St., No. 406, Des Moines, on Jan. 30.



Ken Payne, Kelli Anderson, Shevaughn Moore and Nicole Proesch at the ribbon cutting for DMOS Orthopaedic Centers.



A ribbon cutting was held for DMOS Orthopaedic Centers, 350 N.E. 36th St., on Jan. 16.



Rich Green and Nick Honkamp at the ribbon cutting for DMOS Orthopaedic Centers.



Emilie Vanske and Grant Jacobson at the ribbon cutting for DMOS Orthopaedic Centers.



Laurie Cozad, Frank Lona and Leigh Van Kley at the ribbon cutting for DMOS Orthopaedic Centers.

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