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OCTOBER 2025

MAGAZINE

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Halloween garbs.

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WELCOME

HALLOWEEN is not just for kids

If you have not yet decided on a Halloween costume, you might want to hurry up. You can't wear that Elvis costume every year.

Yes, Halloween is near, and it's not just for kids. Most all of us have great memories of trick-or-treating with our siblings and friends, amassing a bag of candy we would struggle to carry.

Choosing a costume as a kid was not high pressure, as I simply wore whatever Mom had for me, which was usually a hand-me-down from my siblings. I really didn't care. As an adult, though, the pressure in choosing a Halloween costume intensified. I could no longer strap on a plastic mask and call it good.

Through the years, Jolene and I had some costume hits and some costume misses. The biggest miss was in our younger years when we dressed as mummies, wearing white long underwear tops and bottoms and covering each other with strips of white bed sheets. It seemed like a great idea — until we had to go to the bathroom.

Another year, we went with a group and dressed as the Gilligan's Island crew. Jolene and I were Mr. and Mrs. Howell. And, yes, I carried the teddy bear.

Speaking of bears, a few years later, we tried Goldilocks and the three bears with another couple. It didn't work. We looked like a little girl and three giant mice.

Jolene and I also did stints as the farmer and the cow, the hunter and the deer, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, and Farrah Fawcett and Michael Jackson.

The best costumes we ever had, though, were when we dressed as the couple that was throwing the party. We pulled that one off twice, to the dismay of the hosts.

I encourage you to get into the Halloween spirit this year. Attend a costume party or event, or just dress up and entertain the kids who are trick-or-treating. And, if you struggle to come up with a costume, well, there is always Elvis.

Happy Halloween, and thanks for reading. ■



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Costume CREATIONS

Residents share how they add their own touches to Halloween garbs.

By Jackie Wilson

When it comes to Halloween, some people like to pull out all the stops. They turn their yards into haunted or cartoon landscapes. They carve pumpkins, bob for apples, and offer the best treats to their trick-or-treaters. And, they put their energy and holiday spirit into making sure their costumes — or their kids' — make others “ooh” and “aah” ... and perhaps shudder.

Shelley Gudorf of West Des Moines made costumes each year for her three sons. She has kept many of the costumes, which are now being worn by her grandkids. Photo by Jackie Wilson



Katie and Eli Allgood won a best costume contest as Mr. and Ms. Pac-Man. Another favorite was Ghostbusters.



Eli and Katie Allgood of West Des Moines, along with their family, enjoy dressing up at Halloween together.

Costume contest winners

From gnomes to corn on the cob, Katie Allgood's unique costumes outfitted the whole family—including their dog.

Allgood's early costume-making began as a child, when she made a scarecrow and a Snap, Crackle, Pop costume.

When she married, she thought it would be fun to put together couple's costumes. She and her husband, Eli, dressed as Mr. and Ms. Pac-Man, which garnered them a best costume prize.

"We won pizza for a year for our costume," she recalls.

After that, her friends expected the couple to wear something creative every year. She happily accepted her friends' challenge.

"I'm a little competitive," she admits.

Their costumes have included being a bunch of grapes, made with green and purple balloons. A Flintstones theme included a car.

When she began having kids, she donned the whole family in costumes. When she was pregnant with her second child, the family dressed as gnomes, which was an easy way to incorporate her baby bump.

"I had a baby three days later," she laughs.

Another year, they dressed as chickens, caterpillars and ears of corn. "I hot-glued hundreds of yellow pompoms on our outfits," she explains.

Allgood discovers ideas after seeing a movie and keeps a running list of ideas on her phone. Pinterest also offers inspiration. Her hot glue gun keeps items together, and she tries to repurpose and reuse elements from previous years. Most of her costumes are made for one use only.

"There's no guarantee of it lasting past one day. It's only made to last one night," she explains.

Her family members—including her husband—are willing to dress in family-themed costumes.

"He's put up with it for the past 11 years," she laughs.

Part of her creativity stems from the business she owns—an event rental and design backdrop company—from which she borrows various props. She hasn't chosen a costume for this year yet.

"I usually spend October narrowing it down, then I'm scrambling to finish it," she says.

Being crafty brings her joy.

"I love anything with a creative outlet. It's fun to see it all come together for the family," Allgood says.

It started with a clown costume

Shelley Gudorf of West Des Moines is a crafty person. She has made scrapbooks, holiday decorations and Halloween costumes throughout the years for her family. Although her three sons are grown, she still has the costumes she made more than 25 years ago.

Gudorf's mother started her passion for homemade costumes. She made a clown costume 60 years ago for Shelley's brother's first Halloween. Then, both she and her sister wore the costume. It was passed on to the next generation with her three kids and her brother's three kids all wearing it. The family had hoped to continue with their grandchildren, but the clown costume was lost in a house fire three years ago.

As a teen, Gudorf and her mother made a KISS bandmember costume. After her marriage, she made her husband a Woody costume from "Toy Story," while she was Bo Peep. Woody had a working pull string on his back that announced, "I have a snake in my boot."

"We came home with a trophy for that costume," she recalls.

When they had kids, Gudorf wanted to continue the tradition of making homemade costumes. Her middle son, Harrison, wanted to be a firefighter. She fashioned a firetruck out of a cardboard box with straps so he could be inside it. The local township's fire station logo was emblazoned on the front. Thanks to Gudorf's habit of saving everything, Harrison's son wore the same costume 25 years later.

When her oldest son, Tyler, wanted to be an astronaut, she made a shiny cardboard rocket ship and an oxygen tank for his back.

"He was so proud to walk around the neighborhood in his costume," she recalls.

One year, with Harrison wearing his firetruck costume, his little brother, Jackson, was his dalmatian puppy.

"The boys loved the attention they got with their costumes," she says.

Another year, Jackson wanted to go as his favorite food, an apple. Gudorf made the apple — complete with a giant worm — as his costume.

In addition, she made a giant spider out of Styrofoam balls and pantyhose. A traffic light — that flashed yellow, red and green — was



Shelley Gudorf made her children's costumes over the years.

also made from a cardboard box. Her favorite was when Jackson was a Lego.

"He was the hit of the Halloween party," Gudorf recalls.

When Harrison was playing the trumpet in school, he wanted to be a military band member. She used a suit jacket for the uniform, then added real medals from his grandfather.

"On his head, he wore a West Point cadet hat I had from a friend who graduated from there," she recalls. "Little did I know at the time, he would be attending the United States Military Academy years later and getting his own cadet hat."

She says friends often came to her for costumes, supplies and advice.

"Friends knew to 'just ask Shelley.' I could copy just about anything. I'm good with a glue gun. A cardboard box is your friend," she says.

Gudorf enjoyed bringing her sons' imaginations to life for them.

"It shows that I cared and listened to what they wanted. I wanted them to be happy. The memories of all those homemade costumes are held dearly by me and my sons," she reflects. "The time and effort I put into it was worth it. They still talk about it."

Creating memories for her daughter

Growing up, Rachel Carano's mom made a lot of crafts and handmade items with her. When Rachel had her own child, she thought she wouldn't have the time to do the same.

Yet, when she was perusing costume ideas for her daughter, she felt "mom pressure" and wanted to offer something unique instead of store bought.

Carano came up with a Care Bear costume when her daughter, Scarlett, was a baby.

"It came on a whim," she recalls. "I remembered my mom doing that with me, and it inspired me."

The next year, she made a dalmatian puppy for her. She ironed on black felt dots and fastened a tail on her leggings. She went as Patch, her favorite character from the "101 Dalmatians" movie.

"It was so simple, fun and unique," she says.

Making the costume gave Carano encouragement to be more creative. Recently, she finished constructing a butterfly habitat. The cage took two weeks to complete with more than 100 hours of work. They purchased

FEATURE

25 caterpillars for the habitat.

"It's a real learning process, which is good for both of us," she says.

Carano also does other creative costumes, including dressing up in pink for breast cancer walks.

"I sometimes put a lot of pressure on myself to figure it out and to be unique," she admits.

The act of creating spurs memories of her mom.

"My grandma sewed my mom and her sister's clothes. They didn't have money to buy clothes," she says.

She wants to create similar memories for her daughter.

"Seeing her facial expressions when we do this is something more than I can buy from a store. Seeing her happy is what I want," Carano reflects. "My daughter is the reason I do everything. There's so much negativity in the world. You just got to find things that make you happy." ■



Rachel Carano's mom made costumes for her while she was growing up so she wanted to do the same for her daughter.

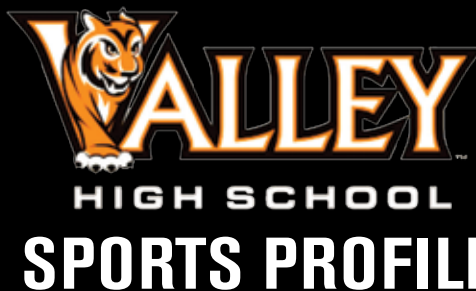


Rachel Carano made a dalmatian puppy costume for her daughter.

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HIDDEN gem of caregiving: adult day services

Caring for a loved one can certainly be rewarding, but balancing work, household responsibilities, and your own well-being can feel overwhelming. The good news: Resources are readily available in the form of adult day services, which can provide meaningful enrichment during the day while easing the stress of caregiving.



What are adult day services? Adult day services offer daytime support and engagement for adults who may need help with daily activities, face safety risks when left alone, or simply benefit from social interaction. Participants can attend daily or just a few times a week. While many participants live with dementia, a memory-challenge diagnosis is not required.

Safety and peace of mind. Safety is a cornerstone of adult day programs. Participants

thrive in secure environments with professional oversight, while families gain confidence knowing their loved one is supported.

One caregiver shared that she found relief when her husband, who was living with dementia, began attending an adult day program. At home, he had begun leaving the stove on and water running. “I was trying to work from home to make sure he was safe, but I couldn’t get anything done. Adult day was a godsend. I finally felt like I could stop worrying 24/7.”

More than “something to do.”

Programming is designed to nourish body, mind and spirit through:

- Social activities that reduce isolation
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Physical and cognitive activities that promote engagement
- Safe spaces where participants can thrive, even with chronic conditions

Why families choose adult day services.

Although adult day services can make a

tremendous difference, many families are unaware they exist. Too often, the services remain a best-kept secret until caregiving stress reaches a breaking point.

Benefits extend to both participants and caregivers. Participants enjoy engagement, connection, and better nutrition. Caregivers experience reduced stress, more time for self-care, and confidence that their loved one is thriving.

Take the first step. If you’re balancing caregiving and searching for peace of mind, consider exploring adult day services in your area. These programs provide the support your loved one deserves — and the breathing room you need to be at your best. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services for older adults — including adult day services in Des Moines and Newton. To learn more, visit wesleylife.org.

HONOR OUR VETERANS

Iowa Living magazines will be saluting veterans in November issues. If you are a veteran who would like to be included, please send a photo (military or current) and the following information:

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Family members submitting on behalf of veterans should include the veteran’s answer to the above question.

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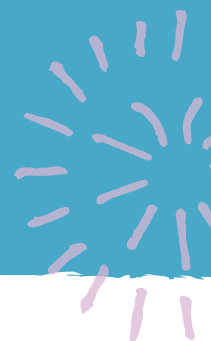
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KEEPING pets safe this fall

What every owner should know

As the leaves change and cooler weather sets in, fall can be one of the best times of year to enjoy life with our pets. Trips to pumpkin patches, football tailgates and cozy evenings at home are just as exciting for our four-legged

companions as they are for us. But this season also brings hidden risks that every pet owner should keep in mind.

Seasonal toxins: Autumn means more gatherings and seasonal treats. Unfortunately, many popular fall foods — like chocolate, grapes, onions and artificial sweeteners (xylitol) — can be toxic to pets. Even pumpkin spice lattes or sugar-free candies left unattended can lead to serious health issues. While plain, cooked pumpkin can actually be healthy for dogs in small amounts, flavored pies and canned fillings often contain added sugars and spices that should be avoided.



Yard and outdoor dangers: Cooler weather means more yard work — raking leaves, cleaning gutters or prepping gardens. Leaf piles, while fun for kids and pets to jump in, can harbor mold and bacteria that may cause stomach upset if ingested. Fertilizers, rodenticides and antifreeze are also more commonly used in the fall and pose life-threatening dangers. Even a small amount of antifreeze can be fatal to pets, so it's essential to clean up any spills immediately.

Wildlife encounters: As temperatures drop, wild animals become more active in search of food. Encounters with raccoons, skunks and even snakes are more common this time of year. These animals can carry diseases or leave pets with painful bites and scratches. Keeping dogs on a leash and cats indoors reduces the chance of risky encounters.

Holiday preparations: Halloween can be particularly stressful for pets. The constant doorbell ringing, costumes and decorations can cause anxiety. Some pets may bolt through an open door, while others might try to chew on

glow sticks or decorations. If your pet tends to be nervous, consider setting them up in a quiet, secure room with their favorite toy or blanket during trick-or-treating.

When to seek emergency care: Despite every precaution, accidents happen. Signs that your pet may need emergency attention include persistent vomiting, seizures, sudden lethargy, difficulty breathing, or suspected ingestion of a toxin. In these situations, it is better to call your veterinarian or a 24/7 emergency hospital right away rather than “wait and see.”

A season to enjoy: With a little awareness, autumn can be a wonderful time to create lasting memories with your pets. From crisp walks under colorful trees to cozy evenings at home, fall is a reminder of how special the bond with our pets truly is. Staying informed about seasonal hazards ensures those moments remain safe and joyful. ■

Information provided by Sam Patterson, Operations Director, Iowa Veterinary Specialties, 24/7 emergency hospital for pets, 6110 Creston Ave., Des Moines, 515-280-3100.

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LIBRARY

LIBRARY Friends Foundation elects new officers



The West Des Moines Library Friends Foundation Board includes, seated: Heather Martin, Mary Fratianni, Matthew Oberreuter, Bridget Johnson, Brandon Denner, Jennifer Hochberger, Abby Draisey, Lauren Linnenbrink, Savannah Minnick; and, standing: Andrea Solomon, Kathryn Greenfield, Laura Hassebrock, David Couch, Roxanne Nikkel, Deb Guntly, Angie Arthur, Kimber Walter, Ed O'Neill, Jim Rasmussen, Kristine Brick and MacKenzie Tubbs. Absent from the picture are Dan Wakefield, Ellie Wakefield and Laura McCall. Interested in serving on the WDM Library Friends Foundation Board? Send an email to wdmlibraryfriends@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Register at wdmlibrary.org/events

Music with Matt Woods, Saturday, Oct. 11, 2-3 p.m., all ages

Matt Woods is well versed in the many shapes music can take, from traditional delta, hill country and urban electric blues, to gospel, country and folk music. No registration required.

Teen Board Games and Puzzles, Wednesday, Oct. 15, 3-4:30 p.m., grades 6-12

Join us in the Teen Center for some after-school gaming and puzzling. A variety of games and puzzles will be available for use. Participants are welcome to bring games/puzzles of their own. No registration required.

Nevermore: A Night of Poe and Crafts, Tuesday, Oct. 28, 7-8:30 p.m., adults

Join us for a hauntingly creative evening as we celebrate Edgar Allan Poe. As you listen to the rhythmic verses and gothic imagery, you'll craft your own raven-themed necklace or bracelet using provided materials. Registration required.

Halloween Storytime, Wednesday, Oct. 29, 6:30-7 p.m. OR Thursday, Oct. 30 and Friday, Oct. 31, 10:30-11 a.m., ages 2-6 with adult

Put on your favorite costume and join us in the community room for not-too-scary stories and Halloween fun at the library. We'll also show off our costumes with a short parade around the first floor of the library. Registration required. ■

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Information provided by Viktor Vali and Amy Anderson-Vali, owners, 4 Ever Young, 1180 S.E. University Ave., Waukee, 515-304-2324, www.4everyoungantiaging.com

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CITY and school board elections upcoming

City and school board elections are Tuesday, Nov. 4.

The city council is responsible for establishing city ordinances, the city budget and city policies. It decides the laws for the community and how its tax dollars are spent. The mayor acts as the chief executive officer of the city and presides over the city council meetings. Communities with city administrators assign some of the mayor's executive duties to administrators.

School boards set the policies and budget for the school district within the parameters set by the state.

Find your polling place at <https://apps.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>.



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Renee Hardman

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West Des Moines Community School District candidates are:

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Lila Starr
Anadelia Morgan
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PLAN AHEAD

By Sarah Masteller

HAVE the conversation

“We want to talk to the kids first...”

As we meet with folks to address their funeral prearrangements, they often mention that a conversation with their children is something they want to have first, before making any final decisions. That is certainly understandable and something that we encourage. Sometimes finding that “right time” or finding that opportunity when everyone is together can be a challenge.



With-that-said, the holidays are a time that bring families together, and that can be the ideal setting to have that important conversation with everyone. That doesn't mean you are going to bring up this topic as you sit down to the holiday meal, but there can be times around the holidays when people are together that can provide the right moment and setting to broach this topic.

You are doing this because you love your family and because you care about what will be important to them. You ultimately want to make things easier for them. As we head into that time of year, make it a priority to have this important conversation. You will be glad you did. ■

Information provided by Sarah Masteller, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's Southtown Funeral Home, 5400 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines, 515-697-3679.

WELLNESS

By Mary Doherty, LISW

NORMALIZING struggles

I have joined multiple groups on Facebook as a way to promote business, connect with someone looking for therapy and to see what services are needed within the community. Something I have noticed in these groups is that, when someone wants to post about an issue they are struggling with, they post anonymously, as do the responders who are sharing similar struggles. While we have come far in normalizing mental health and similar struggles in life, we are still in an era where we feel we cannot own the struggles we are experiencing. Someone in one of these chats noticed this, commenting, “Why do we all feel the need to post anonymously when discussing this topic?”



This stuck out to me. Why do we still feel the need to be anonymous when it comes to our struggles in life, even when others are agreeing with us and are feeling similarly? There was a saying my teachers said often, “If you have a question, odds are there are seven other people in the room with the same, or similar, question.” If no one asks the question, then multiple people are left with questions. If no one is willing to start the conversations, then everyone is left wondering, “Am I the only one who feels this way?” The answer is simple. No. So, now I challenge you: How can you normalize this conversation with those around you? ■

Information provide by Mary Doherty, LISW, Renewed Strength Counseling, 2910 Westown Parkway, Suite 314, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-809-2419.

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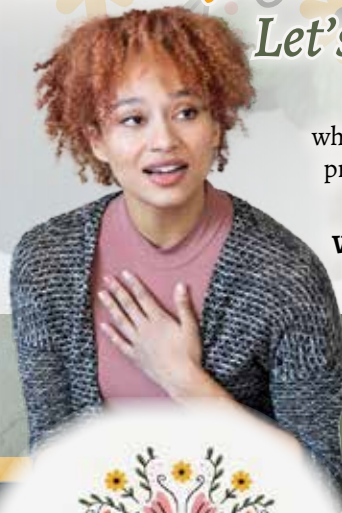
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CREAMY tomato soup is rich with sun-ripened flavor

There is something special about cooking with ingredients grown from your own backyard. Recently, I was watching our grandson at my daughter and son-in-law's house. He and I ventured outside to check on their garden and discovered a bumper crop of tomatoes.



Since the weather was cool, I decided that a batch of tomato soup for dinner would serve the harvest well. Our grandson, just 8 months old, is already a curious observer in the kitchen. He keeps me company from his high chair, happily armed with a dozen measuring cups to toss and a few snacks to keep him content. This creamy tomato soup, made with an abundance of fresh-picked tomatoes and a blend of herbs, is rich with sun-ripened flavor. Paired with a golden, melty grilled cheese on homemade sourdough, it was the perfect fall dinner — simple, cozy and made even sweeter by sharing it together with my grandson. ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.

Creamy tomato soup

Total time: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 2 pounds fresh tomatoes (about 6 large), blanched, skins off and chopped
- 2 cups chicken broth (low sodium preferred)
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 -3/4 cup heavy (whipping) cream
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Salt and pepper, basil, oregano — more of everything than you think
- Pinch of rosemary
- Fresh basil or parsley (optional, for garnish)

Directions

- Heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for about 5 minutes until soft.
- Add garlic and cook all for 2 more minutes.
- Add tomatoes and cook for 10 minutes.



- Add chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, uncovered. Stir occasionally.
- Blend until smooth by using an immersion blender and scooping the mixture into a traditional blender. Return soup to the pan.
- Add whipping cream and honey and stir. Season with salt, pepper, basil, oregano and other herbs of choice.
- Simmer for 5 more minutes.
- Serve immediately. Garnish with fresh basil or parsley. This pairs well with a grilled cheese sandwich on sourdough bread. Enjoy!

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DES MOINES Children's Museum announces new location and expansion

The Des Moines Children's Museum (DSMCM) announced it will relocate from Valley West Mall to its new location at 1200 12th St. in West Des Moines in spring 2026.

The move represents a major milestone for the nonprofit, which has operated inside the mall since 2017. The new venue, located at the former site of the Des Moines Golf and Country Club, will provide expanded space for new and enhanced exhibits, as well as long-term stability for the community-focused museum, which currently serves more than 69,000 visitors annually.

The new facility offers more than 13,000 square feet on the main level, a similarly sized lower level and more than seven acres of outdoor space. Renovations will begin after the purchase is finalized this fall, with the museum planning to open to the public in spring 2026.

To support the redevelopment project, DSMCM has launched the "From Love to Legacy" capital campaign, co-chaired by community leaders Carolyn Ruan and Brittainy Lauridsen. The campaign has already secured more than \$2.3 million toward its \$3.5 million goal. Funds will be used to purchase and renovate the building, create new interactive exhibits, and expand programming for families across Central Iowa.

"We are thrilled to announce this exciting chapter in the museum's future," says Julie Burtnette, DSMCM executive director and co-founder. "Our community's support has fueled this growth, and now we are turning that love into a legacy for future generations."

Valley West Mall has served as the museum's home for the past seven years, but securing a permanent home was always a goal for the organization. The site's impending redevelopment prompted the transition. At this time, the museum plans to continue to serve the community and remain open at the current site. ■

HUBBELL'S annual golf outing raises \$69,000 for three organizations

Hubbell Realty Company has announced the 2025 Hubbell Extreme Charity Golf Classic, sponsored by Plumb Supply & Kohler Co., and the organizations that will benefit from the proceeds. This year, the Alzheimer's Association Iowa Chapter, Easterseals Iowa and On With Life will split the \$69,000 record-breaking proceeds, with \$23,000 going to each.

Each year, hundreds of trade partners, community members and associates come together for a full day of golf at Woodland Hills Golf Course, Central Iowa's No. 1 rated golf course.

"The money raised for the Alzheimer's Association will help fund local resources like support groups, education programs and our 24/7 Helpline, our statewide advocacy efforts, as well as research to help find future treatments and ultimately a cure," said Doug Bickford, executive director for the Alzheimer's Association Iowa Chapter.

"Easterseals has big goals for our campus and summer programs to continue expanding to benefit Iowans who rely on our services. Thanks to events like this, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of over 3,000 Iowans each year by providing essential services to children and adults with disabilities and their families," said Sherri Nielsen, executive director, Easterseals Iowa.

"We are so fortunate to continue our wonderful partnership with Hubbell Realty Company," said Jean Shelton, On With Life CEO. "Their commitment to our mission and the individuals we serve means the world to us. We are incredibly grateful to be a beneficiary of this special event and truly appreciate the generosity and heart behind it."

The Hubbell Extreme Charity Golf Classic has been a staple philanthropic event held every year outside of years Hubbell participates in the Hubbell Extreme Build. Since 2011, Hubbell has supported a vast array of organizations including, but not limited to: ICON Water Trails, Polk County Housing Trust Fund, Community Youth Concepts, Puppy Jake, The YMCA of Greater Des Moines, and many more. ■

PEO welcomes state treasurer

PEO State Treasurer Jennifer Stalder visited PEO Chapter KT at its August meeting at Nancy Ball's Clive home. Jennifer, in her conversational style at her official state officer visit to this chapter organized in 1956, shared information about the responsibilities and duties of each office and fielded questions from members at their meeting.

As a legacy of PEO members is to uplift and support women, Chapter KT contributes to the philanthropic endeavors of Cortey College, International Peace, STAR Scholarships, Educational Loan Program, Sarah Porter Beckwith Friendship Fund, Dorothy's House, College Student Remembrance gift package and Goodwill Food Pantry.

Chapter members participate in a pre-meeting social hour and book club. Chapter KT members outreach their support to area PEO chapter events in Ankeny and Panora. PEO Chapter KT members reside in Clive, West Des Moines, Urbandale, Johnston, Des Moines, Ankeny and Indianola.

Contact membership chair Mary Richards at mrichards@netins.net or co-chair Mary Hunter at mary.hunter@dmgoodwill.org for information about PEO Chapter KT. ■



Front: Jennifer Stalder, Tamara Kenworthy, Dianne Chadwick and Mary Richards. Back: Mary Hunter, Nancy Ball, Cindy Carlson, Melanie Hopke, Lisa Northup, Aimee Fisher, Amanda Muller Pfeffer, Denise Harlan, Teresa Shaw and Jeanne Mullenbach. Inset: Megan Ball.

BURCH offers support as patient partner

Gives back to Can Do Cancer after her cancer journey.



Can Do Cancer volunteers provided yard work for those battling breast cancer.

Gretchen Burch of West Des Moines went through a tough time as she battled breast cancer. Diagnosed in 2017, the stage three invasive cancer meant figuring out how to navigate doctors and treatment — and still have a home life.

When her oncology nurse suggested a visit by a Can Do Cancer advocate, Burch agreed.

"I had no roadmap and felt like I needed any help that I could get," she recalls.

A patient partner from Can Do Cancer is also a breast cancer survivor. Partners are available to answer questions and provide support throughout a woman's breast cancer journey. It was a difficult time, as she was left to bridge the gap by herself. There were a lot of unknowns as to how her family and work life would be affected.

"Not every woman loses her hair or has the same experience. You might not even look sick," she explains.

Burch says women are often known to put others first and their needs last.

"Some patients feel like they have to put on a face to be the perfect wife, the perfect mom and the perfect employee. It's hard for a lot of women to take care of themselves. It's OK, but you don't have to be everything to everybody all the time," she says.

While going through her cancer treatment, she was given restaurant and house cleaning gift cards, which she found especially helpful.

"The gift cards helped to feed my family, and I didn't have to think about getting dinner on the table," she says.

Burch finished her treatment in 2018 and, shortly after that, became a patient partner for Can Do Cancer to assist other women with their cancer diagnosis.

"That organization gave so much to me," she explains. "Nothing was

asked of me. I was so thankful and grateful for their help."

With a feeling of gratitude, she wanted to give back to others who shared similar situations.

"I remember that hopeless feeling of not knowing what to do. If I can help make a difference for someone else, I want to do that," Burch says.

Earlier this year, she and her employer organized a service week. Her employer chose Can Do Cancer and identified breast cancer patients who needed yardwork done.

"It was fantastic. They were happy to have something off their plate. It was fulfilling for us to do that for them," she reflects.

Since her cancer diagnosis, Burch says it's become a "full circle moment."

"I went through treatment, and, now, I can empathize with others. It's therapeutic for both patients and survivors," she says.

Despite going through cancer treatment, she's happy for her experience.

"Everyone has struggles, and, if I can benefit someone, it makes me happy. It's almost justifying why I ever went through it," Burch reflects. "I don't look at this (volunteering) as a job. It's who I am and what I do."

Can Do Cancer hosts a trivia night on Oct. 18 to raise funds to assist women diagnosed with breast cancer. To donate or for more info, visit: www.candocancer.org. ■



Gretchen Burch found Can Do Cancer supportive during her cancer journey and now gives back by serving as a patient partner for others.



IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Dallas County?

We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition.

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2025 Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish January in Waukee, and February in Adel and West Des Moines - Jordan Creek editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

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HURRY! POLL CLOSES DEC. 19, 2025

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

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
- Catering Company
- 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

SHOPPING

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Mental Health Service
- Chiropractic Office
- Audiologist/Hearing Clinic
- Vision Care

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Health Club or Gym
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- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics/Tumbling Studio

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- Landscaping Company
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- Electrical Business
- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Builder/Remodeling
- Outdoor Lawn Equipment Store
- Pest Control

Yoga in the Park

Saturday, Oct. 11, 9-10 a.m.
Railroad Park Stage, 425 Railroad Ave., West Des Moines

Yoga in the Park offers a unique blend of tranquility and community, set against the backdrop of Historic Valley Junction. Led by local yoga instructor Lindsay Bordwell, each session is designed to harmonize your energy and enhance your practice, whether you're a beginner or a seasoned yogi. Share this journey with like-minded individuals, creating bonds that transcend the mat.



Jordan House Tours

Fridays and Sundays, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Weekly guided tours are offered at the Jordan House. The cut off for purchasing tickets is noon Thursday for Friday tours and noon Friday for Sunday tours. If you have missed that cutoff, call 515-225-1286 to find out if walk-up tickets are available. To reserve a ticket, see the schedule and links at www.wdmhs.org/openhousevisit/. All tours will be guided by a docent. Arrive at the Jordan House Museum at least 10 minutes before the tour begins. The tour will involve taking stairs to the basement and the second floor, as well as walking and standing for at least one hour. If you have a group of eight or more, call to schedule a private tour.

Jordan House Heritage Jubilee

Saturday, Oct. 11, 1-4 p.m.
Historic Jordan House, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Step back in time at the Jordan House Heritage Jubilee. Enjoy a good, old-fashioned party at the historic Jordan House to celebrate its 175th anniversary. Find out more at www.wdmhs.org/jordan-house-heritage-jubilee. Consider joining the 175 club by giving \$175 (or more) this year to help keep history alive. Donate at www.wdmhs.org/online-donation.

Family-friendly fun includes making apple cider on antique presses, creating heritage crafts and playing historic games, live music by The Weary Ramblers, learning about the history of the indigenous people who were once in West Des Moines, learning about the exciting progress at Legacy Woods, historical reenactments, practicing a variety of pioneer skills and much more.

Edgewater Holiday Mart

Nov. 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
9225 Cascade Ave., West Des Moines

Local artists and vendors offering their personal creations — carved Santas, wine bottle stoppers, wooden pens and toys, kaleidoscopes, goodie boxes, paintings, paper quilling, linoleum block prints, blown and fused glass, photographs, cards, fiber arts, pottery and ceramics, clocks, jewelry, decorated felt bags, quilted bags, cutting boards, woven baskets, embroidered dish towels, knitted socks, crocheted animals, painted rocks, goat soaps and lotions, breads, fudge and peanut brittle, honey, vanilla, gourmet popcorn and nuts, jams and jellies, and baked goods.

Camp-Er Treat

Saturday, Oct. 11, 5-9 p.m.
Timberline Campground, 31635 Ashworth Road, Waukee

Enjoy trolley rides, toddler area, costume recognition, food, treats, Jeff E Popcorn, Sugar & Spin Glow Up Cotton Candy and more. See more information at <https://bit.ly/3UvdCV5>.

Leprechaun Bags Tournament

Saturday, Oct. 11, 11 a.m.
Sully's Irish Pub, 860 First St., West Des Moines

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Central Iowa present the Leprechaun Bags Tournament. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Play starts at noon. \$30 per two-person team. Cash payouts for top three teams. Visit www.friendlysonsiowa.com for details.



The Iowa Files: A History Series

Various dates, 3 p.m.
Community Room of the West Des Moines Public Library, 4000 Mills Civic Parkway

The Iowa Files, an educational history lecture series, returns for its seventh year in 2025/2026. This joint West Des Moines Historical Society and West Des Moines Public Library program is free and open to the public, thanks to the generosity of West Des Moines Historical Society members, Bravo Greater Des Moines and the Friends Foundation of the West Des Moines Library. All programs are streamed on the WDMHS Facebook page and YouTube channel.

• **Oct. 19: The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument.** The State of Iowa erected the 135-foot tall Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, funded partially by refunded war taxes, to commemorate Iowans who fought during the Civil War. Michael Swanger, publisher of the Iowa History Journal, will talk about this much-photographed monument and share the stories of the four Civil War generals from Iowa who are featured on the sculpture.

• **Nov. 16: Over the Hill to the Poor Farm.** Poor farms were residential institutions, often operated by counties, that provided basic social services and housing for the poor, disabled and elderly during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Gayla Harkin was a long time administrator of the poor farm in Boone, and will share her stories about the programs and residents.

• **Jan. 11: Iowans in Andersonville Prison.** Andersonville Prison (also known as Camp Sumter), was a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp during the final 14 months of the American Civil War. The prison was overcrowded to four times its capacity and had an inadequate water supply, inadequate food and unsanitary conditions. Historian, teacher and all around fascinating storyteller Kent Halstad will share the stories of the Iowans who experienced Andersonville.

• **Feb. 15: Ako Abdul-Samad; A Life Working for Justice.** Ako Abdul-Samad has served the community in numerous capacities as an elected official, mediator and community organizer. Ako will share his thoughts on the state of equality and the fight against systemic poverty and racial injustice and his life-long commitment to the power of dialog to make positive change.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

Halloween Events

Check websites for admission charges.

Apple and Pumpkin Festival

Oct. 11-12, 18-19, 25-26 • Wills Family Orchard, 33130 Panther Creek Road, Adel • www.willsfamilyorchard.com

Wagon rides, corn maze, corn pool and, of course, apple and pumpkin picking. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

The Haunted Hall of Tortured, Twisted Terrors

Fridays and Saturdays, Oct. 10-25, 6-9 p.m. • Timberline Campground, 31635 Ashworth Road, Waukee

Get your Halloween fright at the Haunted Hall of Tortured, Twisted Terrors. Cost is \$5 per person. The public is invited. See more information at <https://bit.ly/3UvdCV5>.

Phantom Fall Festival

Every weekend through Oct. 26 • 3200 Adventureland Drive, Altoona • www.adventurelandresort.com/discover-adventureland-resort/Phantom-Fall-Fest

Adventureland hosts its fall festival with several haunted houses, ghosts, ghouls, goblins and more.

Family Halloween at Living History Farms

Oct. 17-19 and 24-26 • 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale
www.lhf.org/event/halloween

Scarecrow Festival

Through Nov. 2 • Center Grove Orchard, 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge • www.centergroveorchard.com

A farm-wide celebration filled with colorful displays, playful scarecrows, and the warm spirit of the season.

Archives Across America: Unlocking Genealogy Resources

Saturday, Oct. 18, 9 a.m.

Iowa Genealogical Society Library, 628 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines

The Iowa Genealogical Society will host this one-day conference at the IGS Library and via Zoom. Featured speaker Tina Beard will present on the Library of Congress, the National Personnel Records Center, the U.S. National Archives, and Midwest repositories. Registration is \$70 for members and \$90 for non-members. Details at www.iowagenealogy.org.

Madison County Covered Bridges Festival

Oct. 11-12

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www.exploremadisoncounty.com

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CHANGES to Social Security

Social Security provides retirement benefits, aid for dependent children and insurance for disabled and unemployed individuals.

Today, Social Security benefits represent, on average, almost a third of retirees' income. Nearly 90% of Americans aged 65 or older receive some type of Social Security benefit.

Changes to Social Security implemented in 2025:

1. Social Security recipients received a 2.5% increase in payments for 2025. The Social Security Administration (SSA) attempts to match benefits to inflation.

2. The maximum taxable earnings limit rose to \$176,100 (from \$168,600 in 2024). Earnings above this limit are not taxed. Workers' Social Security tax remains at 6.2%.

3. Earning limits increased. Social Security recipients who work will find their benefits temporarily reduced.

As the SSA makes annual changes to the



program, it's important to stay updated on these changes.

Here are four important facts you should know about your Social Security benefits:

1. Your benefit amount depends on your retirement age. Your benefit amount varies depending on when you apply for benefits. You may file to claim benefits before your full retirement age.

2. You may work and collect Social Security benefits. The SSA acquires information, such as your bank account and routing numbers, from you during the initial application process. You're required to provide the SSA with outside earnings estimates for the upcoming year.

3. Your Social Security benefits are subject to income tax. You may still have to pay taxes on your Social Security benefits. However, taxes are capped at 85% of benefits. The SSA requires a recipient to pay taxes if they file returns as an individual and their combined income is more than \$25,000.

4. Married couples get spousal and survivor benefits. Your current marital status doesn't affect your eligibility for Social Security benefits.

If you've worked for at least 10 years and earned at least 40 work credits, you can receive benefits.

The SSA doesn't penalize married couples or restrict their benefits. Spouses receive benefits based on their own work histories. If you're eligible to receive one of two benefits, you will receive the higher one. Lower-paid spouses are eligible for either benefits based on their own work histories or spousal benefits based on their partners' records. Lower-paid spouses are eligible to receive up to half their partner's benefits.

Divorced spouses who were married for at least 10 years are eligible for higher benefits based on the records of their partners. Divorce decrees relinquishing one's rights to a former partner's benefits are not binding.

Widowed Social Security recipients are eligible to receive widow benefits. Widows may receive between 71.5 and 100% of their spouse's benefits, depending on their specific circumstances. ■

Information provided by Travis Gaule, founding partner/financial advisor, Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors, 4090 Westown Parkway, Suite 108, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-207-4346.

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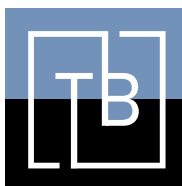
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WHAT IS a trust protector?

A trust is a fantastic estate planning tool for managing assets and ensuring that your family is cared for after you die. If you are concerned about changes to the law or family dynamics in the future, you may want to consider naming a trust protector.



You can change a trust while you are alive to adapt to evolving circumstances. But after you die, your trust becomes irrevocable. A trust protector can ensure the trust continues to reflect your original goals and wishes.

A trust protector is a third party who is given the authority to interpret and modify the terms of a trust to comply with your initial intent. The trust protector has the ability to change parts of the trust document, give instructions to the trustee, and monitor the use of trust assets.

A trust protector is different from the trustee. A trustee has a fiduciary duty to follow the directions outlined in the trust. As fiduciaries, trustees are strictly bound by the terms of the trust and are required to carry out the terms exactly as written. A trust protector doesn't owe a duty to the beneficiary; the trust protector is in place to extend your oversight after death.

Trust protectors can monitor the trustee's actions to ensure they are managing the trust correctly. They can intervene if a trustee engages in misconduct, removing and replacing the trustee to protect trust assets.

A trust protector can help safeguard inheritance from creditors, lawsuits, or divorce. A trust protector can adjust trust provisions to adapt to changes in the law, such as Medicaid rules or federal estate tax updates.

A trust protector can interpret trust provisions to react to unforeseen changes

in beneficiaries' lives — such special needs requirements — that were not anticipated when the trust was established. Benefit programs like Title XIX and Social Security change frequently and a trust protector can help respond to new laws.

A trust protector can act as a liaison between a corporate fiduciary trustee (like a bank) and the beneficiaries. A trust protector can be your voice, telling the trustee what the beneficiary needs.

A trust protector can prevent or solve a multitude of problems. To save money, preserve your assets, and prevent family conflict, consult with an attorney to see if your trust needs a trust protector. ■

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

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FULTON helps Treasure Trunk Theatre

Playhouse outreach program made possible by international grant.

As a retired elementary teacher, Robin Fulton feels blessed to be part of several central Iowa groups as a volunteer, including the Des Moines Playhouse, for which she recently helped secure a fine arts grant.

In fact, this is the project Fulton is most proud of right now — one that grew out of her 31 years as a master teacher in the education department at the Playhouse.

In April 2023, the Playhouse was awarded an international grant from ADK to launch Treasure Trunk Theatre (TTT), a program designed to teach 200 children at the four main preschool centers in Des Moines Public Schools and bring performances to all the children at those centers.

Beyond writing lesson plans and teaching with support from the Playhouse, Fulton also organized and recruited volunteers to assist with classes and shows.

What was supposed to run only from November through January expanded when Fulton returned in April 2024 to add 16 3-year-old classes to the 10 4-year-old classes TTT was already offering.

“That experience really made an impact on these children and their teachers as we created art together through puppetry, storytelling and music,” Fulton explains. “The 75 languages these little actors



Ryan Mehalovich, Edward Jones, presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Robin Fulton.

spoke at home turned out to not be barriers at all as we created theatre communities.”

Since getting started, Fulton has continued writing grant proposals, planning lessons, recruiting volunteers and acting in performances as TTT begins its third year this fall through grants and private donations. Excitingly, the program has been asked to expand to all 34 classes.

For her contributions to TTT, Fulton was named Volunteer of the Year at the Playhouse in 2024.

Her service doesn't stop there. Fulton has served as secretary and historian for ADK and has been a member of the Des Moines Area Retired School Personnel Association since retiring from Des Moines Public Schools in 2016 as a special education teacher.

At Sacred Heart Church and St. Francis of Assisi in West Des Moines, she has taught religious education, vacation Bible school and served on retreat formation teams. This year, she also served as president of Sacred Heart's Women's Guild. Fulton is a Polk County Master Gardener and started a school garden at Madison Elementary in 2019, in addition to volunteering with the gardens at the Jordan House.

She is a founding board member of Mary's Helping Hands, a former drive coordinator and now speaks to churches and organizations about its mission. She was invited to present to the Des Moines Women's Club about Mary's Helping Hands when she was honored as a Woman Who Makes a Difference in January 2024, after which she became a member.

For 17 years, Fulton has also co-led Knit 1 Purl 2, a crafting group from Our Lady's Immaculate Heart that makes items for monthly charities. She is also part of the Prayer Shawl group at Sacred Heart.

For Fulton, giving back comes naturally. Her parents were influential role models and both volunteered at their churches.

“Also, going to Catholic grade school and high schools, being of service was something that was really encouraged as part of living our faith,” she says. “In college, I tutored children in a migrant community weekly as well as started a preschool religious education program. Having the time to volunteer, especially in retirement, gives me purpose to my days, knowing that, with each day I'm given, there are more opportunities to be of service.” ■

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FRIESEN'S kaleidoscopes

Edgewater Holiday Mart features variety of handmade items.



Bob Friesen's hobby of creating woodworking pieces began as a young adult. In 1943, he learned to use a lathe, which is a machine used to shape wood.

Now, at age 95, Friesen continues to use the lathe, plus he learned how to make stained glass artwork. He's combined the two to make wooden kaleidoscopes. His artwork will be on sale at the Edgewater Holiday Mart on Nov. 1.

Friesen's first wood item was a cribbage truck, in which the cribbage board is encased on a wooden truck. His wife, Pattie, also made various crafts, and Friesen was eager to help her with her own projects.

"She told me to get my own project," he recalls.

He was intrigued with the stained glass in churches growing up and noticed an adult education class offering stained glass courses.

Friesen began making hanging pieces, sun catchers and lamp shades. Then he thought he could meld the two hobbies of woodworking and stained glass by making kaleidoscopes.

The couple attended craft fairs across the Midwest selling their items. Part of the reason for the travel is he could purchase stained glass from various wholesalers out of town.

He had a studio in his home until about nine years ago. A house fire displaced the couple, and they moved to Edgewater in West Des Moines.

"It changed our lifestyle real quick," he



Bob Friesen enjoys woodworking and making stained-glass art. He combines his two passions by making unique kaleidoscopes.

recalls.

At Edgewater, he provided a lathe for the small woodworking shop available for residents. His spare bedroom is now the stained glass studio. He makes items on his own schedule.

"I do it when I feel like working. If I want to watch 'M*A*S*H' instead, I'll do that," he explains.



This is the fourth Edgewater Holiday Mart. Last year, more than 800 shoppers attended the event. Edgewater Holiday Mart organizer and volunteer manager Judy Winkelpleck says guests purchase many gifts, as it's their favorite holiday show.

"Our show emphasizes offering a diversity of gift items in a welcoming and friendly environment. Our artists and vendors are creative, offering items rarely seen at other shows."

Edgewater Holiday Mart

Nov. 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

9225 Cascade Ave., West Des Moines
In addition to Friesen's kaleidoscopes and stained-glass pieces, the Edgewater Holiday Mart includes art, crafts, photographs, decorated bags, glass art, crocheted animals, candy, baked goods and more.

He says the "fun" hobby keeps his mind and body active.

"It makes you stay young," he reflects. "It's better than sitting around, twiddling your thumbs." ■

RUSH Hour

West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Rush Hour was hosted by First National Bank on Sept. 18.



Julie Burtnette, Timothy Tigges, Poonwantie Tigges, Makaella Mitchell and Michael Leabo



Megan Farley and Tom Florian



David Melling Jr. and Jarret Mulholland



Mady Arndt and Matt Davidson



Susan Sandhom-Petersen and Ruth Ebke



Connie Blodgett, Reonna Snyder and Allison Barnes



Connor Hehli and Kelly Barrick



Rich and Barb Heki



Tim Fitzgibbon, Shelly Feldmann and Brian Sines



Charity Baird, Everett Mullican and Tricia Evan

OUT & ABOUT

STRAIGHT Talk

The Straight Talk Senior Living Series was held at West 48 Conference Center on Sept. 25.



Sheila Brown and Rose Jones



Jan Lehrkamp and Shirley Engel



Faith Sherman and Pat McGill



Jeff Muller and Ron Taylor



Mallory Wentland and Vicki Manaco



Donna Kathman and Dianna Eckard



Mary Cosimo and Judy O'Keefe



Ryan Jennings and Susan Miller



Donna and David Dose



Deb Anderson and Dave Koester



Dave Zahn and Dawson Peters

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(mcn)

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