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MAGAZINE

Costume CREATIONS

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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 Ashley Rullestad

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.

Tammy and Shawn Frank enjoy coming up with their own costumes as in the year they dressed in a “Back to the Future” theme.

Hallomonth

Shelby Minnmann goes all out for Halloween — all month long.

“I decided on a whim years ago that I would dress up all 31 days of October and call it Hallomonth,” she says.

Sometimes she chooses characters from movies or shows that she relates to, and sometimes she has friends or family suggest an outfit or costume they like. Minnmann doesn’t like to buy costumes at full price — she prefers thrift pieces. Since costume material isn’t the most comfortable, she likes to make outfits from regular clothes she already owns, then add to them.

“Sometimes, to complete the look, I make a prop. I’ve made Captain America’s shield, Loki’s horned head piece and, my personal favorite, a reverse bear trap from “Saw,” she says. “Some of my favorite looks I’ve created were Voldemort, Scarlet Witch/Wanda Maximoff, Coraline and a social (media) butterfly.”

Though she’d love it if someone did join her in dressing up, she often goes solo. Dressing up might not be their thing, but family and friends love watching her go all out. If the outfit is

comfortable enough, she even wears it to work.

“One year I went as Voldemort, and I did a full face of makeup, used fishnets to replicate snake scales, and I walked to a coffee shop. I asked if the ‘Dark Lord’ could get a discount. The owners were so sweet and played along. I didn’t get a discount, but they agreed I looked great.”

Minnmann has friends that message her on Facebook every October with excitement saying, “I can’t wait to see your costumes.” Her grandma, who doesn’t have social media, has her text a picture every day so she doesn’t miss any.

“It’s just really fun.”

Kid creations

Sarah Ellsworth has three kids: Jaiden, 13; Isaac, 11; and Lizzy, 8. Their costuming adventures started one year when Isaac wanted to be a monster he had imagined and drew his mom a picture of what it looked like, and she made a costume based on his drawing.

“After that, if they ask for something outside the box, we just found a way to make it work. They definitely get involved in the design and



Shelby Minnmann as Mary Poppins during her month of costumes.

the actual crafting, like Isaac helping paint the feet for his Bigfoot costume.”

The kids have chosen several individual and themed costumes through the years.

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Isaac wanted a Freddy Fazbear from “Five Nights at Freddy’s” last year. One year, Jaiden went as Willy Wonka, with Lizzy as an Oompa Loompa, Ellsworth’s husband, Jarrod, as a Wonka Bar, and mom as Veruca Salt.

“The Willy Wonka year, Jaiden was obsessed with Wonka and had the plan to be him all year, says Sarah. “Liz likes to match her older brothers, and they joked about her being an Oompa Loompa. When I showed her the plan, she loved it and even memorized the song so she could be in character.”

The family used the theme for the Trunk or Treat at their school, East Elementary. Ellsworth threw together the Wonka bar costume in less than two hours to surprise Jarrod before the event.

The Bigfoot theme was all Isaac. He had read some books and watched some “documentaries,” and he loved the idea of Bigfoot.

“Again, Lizzy saw a chance to match her older brother and asked me to make her a Bigfoot hunter costume, but we decided to go with enthusiast instead. Making these costumes is probably my favorite thing to do,” Sarah says.

Ellsworth keeps costs down by sourcing materials from local businesses that will throw things away otherwise and shops at craft stores. This year, she is



Jaiden and Lizzy Ellsworth in their Wonka costumes.

making a character named Foxy and will use an old fur duvet cover.

“My husband is so patient with the dining room and living room being taken over for a month with crafting supplies and fur everywhere. But, it is so fun, and I look forward to it every year. And the kids love it, so it is so worth it to me.”



Isaac Ellsworth as Freddy Fazbear.



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FEATURE

Outside the box

Tammy Frank is the creative type, and Halloween gives her a great excuse to get the creative juices flowing.

"I'm all about handmade and DIY projects, and I love taking the outside-the-box approach with costumes," Tammy says.

She and her husband, Shawn, would dress in costumes on occasion, but they began doing so in earnest after moving to Ankeny in 2021 and learning their neighbors throw an annual Halloween party — costumes required. Tammy usually comes up with the idea, and Shawn is a good sport and plays along.

One of their first couple's costumes was Doc and Marty from "Back to the Future." The wig and orange gloves were the only items they had to purchase. Everything else they were able to cobble together from things around the house.

A couple years ago, Tammy went as a gumball machine.

"I thrifted the skirt and hot glued the pom-poms to a tank top," she says. "I don't remember what my husband dressed up like,

as I went rouge that year."

In 2023, they went as a crystal ball and magic 8 ball. They constructed a table made of cardboard, and the crystal ball was a foam circle, wire, stuffing, lights and plastic wrap.

"Eating and drinking was a challenge," Tammy jokes.

Last year, they decided to dress up like characters from "Little Shop of Horrors": Seymour and Audrey with a DIY Audrey II plant. Tammy got supplies at Dollar Tree, Home Depot and Hobby Lobby.

Tammy isn't a seamstress, so her tools are a glue gun, other tools when necessary, and then some thrifting to find elements of the costumes.

"I grew up with handmade sewn costumes, and then my son had handmade costumes for the most part," she says. "Sometimes I see something, whether it is online or on a movie, and think 'I can do that,' and then I go down the rabbit hole of researching how and plan my execution. I like to bring creativity and personality to Halloween. Each costume has its own story and playful twist." ■



Tammy Frank and her husband, Shawn, dress up for a Halloween party every year. One year they chose a "Little Shop of Horrors" theme.

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CLOSE to grandkids

Why Geitzenauer calls Ankeny home.

What brought Tamara Geitzenauer to Ankeny after teaching and coaching in northern Iowa for more than 30 years? A business. One of her daughters. Grandkids.

Fifteen years ago, Geitzenauer opened Thrive Nutrition in town after launching a location in Algona. Her daughter, who was already living in Ankeny, encouraged her to open a second store nearby.

"I would come and visit her and her family, and I always loved the vibe," Geitzenauer says. "The people are out walking, biking, jogging or walking their dogs, and it's an upbeat, healthy community."

She was hesitant about the move — having just retired from teaching then opening her first business. The thought of opening a second store seemed a bit much.

"It's like, OK. You want me to sign a lease for a second one? But I did it, and I have not looked back at all," Geitzenauer says. "It's been nothing but absolutely amazing."

Over the years, Geitzenauer has opened two more nutrition clubs in Ankeny with her

business partners, as well as gotten to know many people in the community. She says she has found everyone to be supportive and friendly.

"Coming from a small town, there's a lot of things I love about Ankeny, including that I don't have to leave Ankeny for anything," she says. "Everything is here that, for me, personally, I need."

She appreciates having access to things like the new pickleball courts, the small boutiques, and the many restaurant options.

"There's such a variety here," Geitzenauer says. "Ankeny is a beautiful city."

When she first arrived in town, Geitzenauer lived above her business, which initially felt a bit like dorm life.

After a while, she and her late husband built a house on the north side of town, later selling it with the help of their Realtor daughter. They built another one, where Geitzenauer lived until she got the itch to move to the south side and build her "forever home." Bonus: It is close to her grandkids.

"That's another huge thing for me," she says.



Tamara Geitzenauer has a few reasons for living in Ankeny, not the least of which is being close to her grandkids.

"All of my grandkids do live here, and some of them are close enough to walk over. They're all within five minutes. It's super special." ■

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Check for cancellations

5th Annual Craft and Vendor Fair

Saturday, Oct. 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1100 S.E. Sharon Drive, Ankeny

Come and look for that special gift for someone or treat yourself to a little special something from a variety of vendors. A new feature will be vendor-sponsored prize drawings throughout the event. Also, bring your appetite because lunch will be available for purchase. This event is sponsored by St. Paul's LWML-Women in Mission.

Santa's North Pole Village Craft Sale

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

Prairie Trail Sports Complex, 2250 S.W. Vintage Parkway

The Ankeny Art Center hosts its largest fundraiser of the year. Tickets are \$7 and available at the door.

Heritage Corner to be dedicated

Sunday, Nov. 2, 1:20 p.m.

Ankeny Historical Society, 301 S.W. Third St.

Ankeny Area Historical Society is holding a dedication of Heritage Corner and recognizing nine Ankeny families whose ancestors were pioneers and long-time residents.

ACHS Fall Play: "Rotten Apples"

Nov. 1 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Nov. 2 at 2 p.m.

ACHS, 2220 N.W. State St.

The Ankeny Centennial High School Drama Department is producing "Rotten Apples." A group of villains — including the Evil Queen, Wicked Stepmother and the Big Bad Wolf — are locked in a mansion on a dark and stormy night. Their only means of escape is helping Prince Charming figure out the name of a mischievous imp who has his eyes set on a gasp-inducing treasure. As they begin to unravel the mystery before the midnight deadline, the storm knocks out the power in the mansion, and some of the guests get knocked out, too. Will anyone be left to crack the riddle of the imp's name and escape? A fusion of beloved fairy tales and the structure of the movie "Clue," this show is bound to entertain kids and parents alike. Tickets can be purchased online in advance or at the door with cash, check or credit card. All seats are general admission. www.gobound.com/ia/schools/centennial/tickets.

Salute Our Veterans

Sunday, Nov. 2, 2-4 p.m.

Ankeny Area Historical Society, 301 S.W. Third St.

Speakers from the Blue Star Mothers, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum and VA Benefits Agency will be on hand. All servicemen and servicewomen, friends and family are welcome. Refreshments will be served. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated.

Discover Ankeny

Thursday, Nov. 6, 4-7 p.m.

FFA Enrichment Center, 1055 S.W. Prairie Trail Parkway

Discover Ankeny is a yearly event featuring Ankeny Area Chamber organizations, product and service vendors and restaurants. This fun-filled annual vendor fair showcases the best of the community, including local businesses, family-friendly activities, entertainment and more. ■

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TRICKS, treats and pet safety this Halloween

October has always been one of my favorite months (and not just because it's my birthday month). There's something about the changing leaves, crisp fall air, and picking out pumpkins that calls to me. But my favorite part of October? Halloween!



And I know I'm not alone. "Spooky season" is a favorite for many, with costumes, scary movies and the joy and community of trick-or-treating. Our pets, however, may not share the same enthusiasm. For them, Halloween can be stressful and even risky in ways we don't always think about. Here are some things to keep in mind to make the holiday safer for our furry (and feathered) friends:

Candy: A full bag of candy is every child's dream — but a pet's nightmare. Chocolate, raisins and sugar-free gum or candy are toxic, and xylitol (common in sugar-free products)

can cause life-threatening hypoglycemia and liver failure. Even "safe" candies can upset stomachs, and swallowed wrappers may cause blockages. Keep candy bowls out of reach and remind kids that sharing sweets with pets is never a good idea.

Costumes: Pet costume photos are adorable, but not every pet enjoys dressing up. Choose outfits that are comfortable, don't restrict movement, and leave the face uncovered. Start a week or two in advance with treats and praise. And always supervise — because, while a cape makes a dog look like a superhero, it's not so super if it gets chewed or tangled.

The front door: A parade of trick-or-treaters can overwhelm even calm pets. Dogs may bark, rush the door or try to slip outside, and cats can dart out unnoticed. Consider a baby gate for dogs and a quiet, secure room for cats. Pheromone diffusers can help, and your veterinarian can advise if a short-acting anti-anxiety medication is appropriate.

Decorations: Cobwebs, cords, glow sticks and candles may look festive, but curious pets see toys... or snacks. Swap open flames for battery-powered candles and keep décor out of reach. Batteries themselves are especially dangerous if chewed or swallowed.

With a little planning, Halloween can be fun for the whole family — without a late-night trip to the vet. The best treat for your pet is a safe, cozy evening with you.

One last reminder: Don't stop heartworm, flea and tick prevention for fall and winter. Fleas and mosquitoes can survive and reproduce indoors, and ticks become active when temperatures rise above freezing, even with snow on the ground. To keep your pets fully protected, these products should be given monthly, year-round. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Gigler, Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic, 742 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-7387, amandagigler@ankenyanimal.com.

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Dr. Jaime Stearns

- 1. What inspired you to become a veterinarian?**
I've loved animals since childhood, and with my curiosity for science and passion for helping others, veterinary medicine was the perfect fit.
- 2. How long have you been a veterinarian? Where did you go to school?**
I've been practicing for over 10 years. I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees from Colorado State University and my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University.
- 3. Do you have a special area of interest?**
I especially enjoy surgery and wound repair. Helping an animal heal and regain comfort is one of the most rewarding parts of my work.
- 4. What do you love most about the bond between pets and their people?**
The bond between pets and people is genuine and unconditional. It's rewarding to support that connection by helping animals stay healthy and giving families more time together.
- 5. If you weren't a vet, what would you be doing instead?**
I'd likely be an artist. Creativity and illustration have always been a passion of mine.

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QUESTIONS to ask your financial advisor

You should always be able to ask as many questions as you would like when working with your financial advisor. So, before you have your annual review, think about what you'd like to ask.



Here are some suggestions:

- **Are my goals still realistic?** When you began working with your financial advisor, you may have articulated several financial goals — such as paying for most of your children's college education, or retiring at age 55, or traveling internationally every year during retirement. In fact, you could have many different goals for which you're saving and investing. When you meet with your financial advisor, ask whether you're still on track toward meeting these goals. If you aren't, you may need to adjust your strategies. The same is true if your goals have changed. You and your financial advisor can build a strategy for new or different goals, such as emergency cash needs, adequate insurance protection or estate planning.

- **Am I taking on too much — or too little — risk?** Put market declines in perspective. The financial markets always fluctuate, and these movements will affect the value of your investment portfolio. Suppose you watch the markets every day and track their impact on your investments. You fret over their value and wonder whether you're taking on too much investment risk for your comfort level. Conversely, if, during an extended period of market gains, your portfolio appears to be lagging, you might feel that you should invest more aggressively, which entails greater risk. In any case, it's important to consult with your financial advisor to determine your risk tolerance and use it as a guideline for making investment choices.

- **How will changes in my life affect my investment strategy?** Your life is not static. Over the years, you may experience any number of major events, such as marriage, death of a spouse, birth of children or grandchildren, changing jobs or illness leading to early retirement. You and your financial advisor will want to discuss these types of changes, because they can affect your long-term goals and investment decisions.

- **How are external forces affecting my investment portfolio?** Your investment strategy should be based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon — and you may need to adjust it from time to time. But should you make changes based on outside forces — like interest rate movements, political events, inflation, new tax legislation or news affecting industries where you're heavily invested? In general, it's better not to make long-term investment decisions based on short-term news. Yet, talk with your financial advisor to make sure your investment portfolio and spending strategy are not out of alignment with relevant external factors.

By making these and other inquiries, you can stay informed about your overall investment picture and what moves, if any, you should make to keep advancing toward your goals. A financial advisor can provide you with valuable guidance — so take advantage of it. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Member SIPC. Information provided by Brandt R. Hockman, CFP®, AAMS®, CRPC™, Financial Advisor, 1610 S.W. Main St., Suite 206, Ankeny, 515-446-2193.

FAITH expressed

James 2:17 - "So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself."

Over the last two months, I've written about what the word "faith" means to me, how someone might ask for God to help them believe, and how you might come to trust that God really loves you. At the end of last month's article, I wrote this: "What comes next is our opportunity to show others what it feels like to be loved... by loving them as well."



In the scripture I shared above, James answers a question he posed. What good it is to have faith without actions that express what we believe? We believe James shares this because it doesn't make sense to him to say we have faith in God without doing what God asks. So, what does God ask of us?

In response to God's great gift of love, God asks that we love God in return and that we love our neighbors as ourselves.

Having "faith" is where we begin, but learning to express our faith is the next step and becomes evidence that God's love has transformed us. I didn't do anything to deserve God's love, and, still, by grace, God's love has healed me, forgiven me, given me joy and changed the direction of my life. I think James is suggesting that I might be tempted to accept God's love for me without allowing it to fully transform me into a conduit of God's love — for others. How often have we said we "believe" in something but lacked the conviction to act upon that which we believe? This piece of scripture from James' letter reminds us that, if we don't act upon it, our faith isn't as alive as it is intended to be.

Do you see someone hungry? You could just say to them "God loves you" as you walk past, or you can share those words with them as you get them something to eat. Do you observe anyone thirsty, tired, lonely, weary, lost or afraid? You can share with them that God hasn't forgotten them while you sit with them, pay attention to them, or help them... loving them as you have been loved.

My "faith" has allowed me to learn that God's love for me is more than words on a page. If we want our neighbor to know about the love God offers them, perhaps the best way to share it is by showing them through our actions. Anyone can say they believe in anything. The expression of our belief allows others to see the reality of our faith. I love others because God loves me.

Writing about this is easy... Maybe it's just a coincidence that, as I type this article, volunteers just outside my office at church are preparing to serve a free meal to anyone who is hungry. Or, maybe it's time to stop "writing" and start "loving." God loves you. I'm going to try even harder to express my faith in such a way that you'll believe me when I say it. ■

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



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LIBRARY

By Library Staff

FILMS, fun and festivities

When the wind gets crisper and the leaves loosen their grip on their branches, it's time to wear some wool sweaters and face a fall full of frights. Soon, we will see porches packed with pumpkins and super-sized skeletons looming over front yards as the spooky season commences. And, what better place for fall fun than the library?

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Friday and Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: 1-5 p.m.

Spooky film ideas. You can create your own horror movie marathon with our tremendous selection of DVDs and Blu-rays. Pick up a copy of classics, such as "The Shining," "The Thing," "Poltergeist" and, of course, "Halloween." If you are interested in more recent releases, we have "Bring Her Back," "Final Destination: Bloodlines," "Heretic" and the latest "Nosferatu" film.

Friends of the Ankeny Library Halloween Bingo, Oct. 18 at 6 p.m. Support the library with some family fun. The Friends of the Ankeny Library will be hosting a Halloween bingo fundraiser for all ages at the library. It will consist of five rounds of bingo, and it's only \$5 per card. You will also receive an additional "free" space if you wear a Halloween costume. Not only will you have a great time, it will help raise money for the Friends, who help support the library in numerous and valuable ways. ■



A grateful nation thanks its veterans for their service and sacrifices each **NOVEMBER** in honor of Veterans Day. We would like to recognize some of these local heroes in the November issue of Ankeny Living magazine. **Your business can be a part of this special salute pages with the purchase of a supporting ad.**



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ICING on the cake

Roberts places third in national FCCLA competition.

Some folks just have “it” when it comes to the kitchen. Ankeny’s own Emma Roberts is one of them.

Roberts, 16, recently won third place in the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Nationals competition July 6-7 in Orlando, Florida, competing in the baking and cake decorating sections.

To compete, one has to be within the top three participants in their specified event. The events allowed to go to Nationals are called STAR events.

In baking and pastry, competitors had two hours and 45 minutes in which to make 12 lemon poppyseed muffins, 12 cutout sugar cookies in two shapes, six small Paris-Brest pastries, and decorate a cake based on specific style and piping technique while using a specific message on the cake in cursive. As in real life, competitors had to clean up their spaces as well.

“We had to compete in groups of 18,” Roberts says. “One group went in the morning and a different one on Sunday and Monday afternoons. We were notified who made it into the top 10 qualifiers on Tuesday night.”

The top three in each category received knife sets.

There were 68 other competitors in the Baking and Pastry event from other states across the country.

Roberts, a junior at Ankeny High School, has been taking Food Prep classes and received first place in a baking and cake decorating regional competition in Cedar Rapids, testing her culinary skills against other students from across the nation. She was a member of the FCCLA chapter that was started during the 2024-25 school year at Ankeny High School and is currently president of the club for the 2025-26 school year.

Roberts has been a constant in the kitchen since she can remember, helping her mother, Amy, make cookies and other items during the holidays or their family specialty — chocolate chip cookies — throughout the year. Along the way, Roberts began experimenting with recipes and making a variety of items on her own such as muffins, cookies, cakes and other pastries, some to sample at home and others to sell online. She’s made many cakes, cupcakes or treats for family birthdays and celebrations, Amy added, and is planning to create a Facebook page to start taking online orders soon.

“She sees herself owning her own bakery one day where she can make her own breads, cakes, cupcakes and French pastries,” her mother says. “She would also like to have part of her store be gluten free.” ■



Emma Roberts of Ankeny took third place in the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Nationals competition July 6-7 in Orlando, Florida.



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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.

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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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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.

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.

To find your polling location, visit: <https://apps.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>.



Ankeny city candidates

Mayor

Bobbi Bentz

Two City Council At-Large

Dustin Graber

Joseph Herst

Justin Hollinrake

Joe Ruddy

One City Council At-Large to fill a vacancy

Matt Davis

Greg Romans

Ankeny Community School Board

Three School Director Seats

Joy Burk

Roxanne Petersen

Julian Rachu

Jeff Schumacher

Ankeny Community School District

Public Measure Letter AN

Shall The Following Public Measure Be Adopted? Shall the Board of Directors of the Ankeny Community School District in the County of Polk, State of Iowa, be authorized to contract indebtedness and issue General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$130,000,000 to provide funds to build, furnish and equip an innovative secondary education facility on its Northview Middle School campus, with related site improvements; to build, furnish, and equip athletic performance center and fine arts additions to its existing high school facilities, including related remodeling and site improvements; to remodel, repair, improve, furnish and equip its existing high school facilities to increase student capacity, including additional science classrooms, improvements to the baseball/softball facilities, improvements to Ankeny stadium; and to improve the above sites? ■

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ARE THE foods you're eating making you sick?

Have you ever noticed symptoms such as joint or muscle pain, fatigue, headaches or lack of energy that you cannot correlate to anything in your normal daily living? About 60% of all undiagnosed symptoms may be due to food allergies, according to James Breneman, MD, the former chairman of the American College of Allergy and Immunology.

We are all familiar with rapid acting food allergies such as those caused by peanuts or shellfish. If you have that type of allergy, you likely know about it already. Testing for rapid acting food allergies focuses on measuring an antibody called IgE circulating in the blood stream. However, some reactions are delayed or occur more slowly. In order to evaluate for these types of delayed reactions, an antibody called IgG4 is measured. An elevation in an IgG4 response to foods can cause symptoms including, but not limited to, joint or muscle pain, chronic low back pain, bedwetting, recurrent bladder or upper respiratory infections, chronic headaches, fatigue, hives, eczema, psoriasis, canker sores, ulcerative colitis, gallbladder attacks, heartburn and indigestion. Since IgG4 reactions often occur hours or days after particular foods are consumed, correlating symptoms to a cause can be extremely difficult. The reactions can be subtle or severe and may lead to long-term symptoms and chronic degenerative conditions.

A procedure called the FoodSafe Allergy Test can measure for IgG4 antibody levels. The FoodSafe Allergy Test is a quick and easy way to test individuals for 190 common food allergies. It is a simple blood spot test performed in the office that requires only a small amount of blood taken from a finger prick. The sample is then overnighted to the lab where the blood is analyzed. The results arrive in approximately two weeks and will include scores on each of the 95 foods and whether those foods are in the low, moderate or avoid category. A food plan rotation is also provided by the lab to offer suggestions on diet modification. This information can then be used to prevent and possibly correct digestive complaints and other symptoms of adverse food reactions.

If you or someone you know is suffering from food allergies or unexplained pain and have not found the relief for which you are looking, 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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LEGACY is more than a will

What we leave behind through who we are.

We tend to think of legacy as something we leave behind when we're gone — the material possessions that supposedly carry on our will — things such as a house, a savings account or a well-written will.



Those things matter, but most people won't be remembered for their possessions. They will be remembered for the way they lived.

All of us, to some extent, are building up our legacy, whether we realize it or not. It shows up in how we respond to hardship, how we treat people who cannot repay us, and in the words we choose when no one else is listening. Legacy is not built in one big moment. It is built quietly, over time.

Some people are remembered for what they built or accomplished. However, people are

remembered more for the ones who leave the deepest mark through their kindness, their consistency, and their quiet example. That kind of legacy carries on. It shows up in the way your kids treat others, in the stories your grandkids tell, or in the way someone else makes a decision because of something you once said or did.

I've talked with many older adults who wonder whether their life has made a difference. They may no longer be working or providing for a family in the way they once did, but I see something else. I see the steady hands that carried others through loss. I see the quiet strength that held a family together. I see the small, everyday faithfulness that few ever noticed but that mattered more than they know. Even if your story feels unfinished or marked by regret, legacy is still a choice you can make. It does not depend on a perfect past. It starts now with how you show up, how you speak, how you forgive. Even a simple offer of reconciliation unreciprocated can become part of the story you

leave behind.

You do not have to be wealthy or well-known to leave something meaningful behind. You simply have to be intentional. A legacy can be as simple as offering encouragement when it is needed most, forgiving when it is hard, or showing up for someone when no one else does.

As we move into a season of family, gratitude and reflection, this is a good time to ask not "What am I passing on?" but rather, "What will people remember about who I was?" We were not created just to build something for ourselves. We were made to shape the lives around us. And, sometimes, the most lasting thing we leave behind is not what we gave, but how we loved those around us. ■

Information provided by Erik Ofloy, Sales and Marketing Director at CopperWood at Prairie Trail, 2855 S.W. Vintage Parkway, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-425-3262, eofloy@copperwoodsl.com.

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WHAT ARE the benefits of a trust?

A revocable trust is an estate planning document that holds and controls your assets under your direction. It is a legal document that names a trustee administer assets and provides instructions to the trustee on how to manage and disburse funds. It also names specific beneficiaries and determines how and when they should receive payments. A revocable trust is an important part of your estate planning strategy, and it has a lot of benefits.



Trusts allow you to control your wealth if you become disabled or incapacitated. Having the assets in a trust, with instructions to another person to distribute funds, ensures that you and your loved ones will still have those benefits even if you are not there to provide them mentally or physically.

Trusts also protect your legacy. A properly constructed trust can protect your assets from your heirs' creditors or even from the irresponsible ways of the beneficiaries themselves. If you have children with special needs, a trust can manage assets in a way that guarantees the preservation of benefits like Medicaid and Social Security Disability.

Trusts allow you to choose who will manage your affairs. You will

most likely act as the trustee of your own trust. But you should name a successor trustee to continue the role in the event of your incapacity or death. The successor trustee will follow the instructions in the trust document and continue the management of your assets.

Trusts are often used as a means to transfer inheritance to others over time, or to protect assets for an individual with special needs. But the most common use of a trust is to avoid probate. Probate is the court-supervised settling of an estate after death. Probate can take a year or more to complete and can cost thousands in court-awarded fees.

A well-drafted and correctly funded trust will continue after your death and will avoid probate. Assets in the trust are distributed according to the instructions in your trust, instead of being subject to court control. It can provide privacy and efficiency in the settlement of your estate.

Trusts are not for everybody. But, for those who want to protect their assets, avoid probate, and ensure a smooth transition of inheritance, consult with an experienced attorney to see if trust planning is right for you. ■

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

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WHAT IS a Qualified Charitable Distribution?

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) are a tax strategy for individuals with Traditional IRAs.

Instead of taking a taxable IRA distribution, such as a required minimum distribution (RMD), eligible IRA owners or beneficiaries can request to have funds directly transferred from an IRA to a qualified charity. Because the money goes straight from the IRA to a charity, it does not count as taxable income.



Key benefits:

- **Reduce taxable income** – The donated amount doesn't count as income, which can lower your overall tax bracket. Unlike a normal IRA withdrawal, a QCD isn't included in your gross income. Your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) stays lower, which can help you qualify for tax credits and deductions that phase out at a higher income level.

- **Count toward Required Minimum**

Distribution (RMD) – If you're 73 or older, QCDs can satisfy part or all of your RMD. This can be useful if you don't need the extra income and want to avoid a tax burden.

- **Avoid impact on deductions/credits** – Since it's excluded from income, you may avoid triggering Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) surcharges, which can significantly increase Medicare Part B and D premiums.

- **No itemizing needed** – You can get the tax break even if you take the standard deduction.

- **Support charities directly** – QCDs provide immediate, tax-efficient support to your favorite causes.

Example: Say you withdraw \$10,000 from your IRA to donate to charity. If you take the standard deduction (as many retirees do), you cannot deduct the gift and will pay tax on the \$10,000 withdrawal. With a QCD, that same \$10,000 goes directly to charity tax-free, saving as much as \$2,200 in federal taxes if you are in the 22% bracket.

Rules:

- Must be 70 ½ or older and have a Traditional IRA.

- Limit is up to \$100,000 per year per person (married couples can do \$200,000 if both qualify).

- You must make an election and instruct the IRA custodian or trustee to distribute funds directly from your IRA to the charity; you cannot withdraw the money yourself first.

- The charity must be a qualified 501(c)(3) organization.

- QCDs must be completed by Dec. 31 to count for that tax year.

As the year-end approaches, talk with your financial advisor and tax professional so they have enough time to make any changes before the Dec. 31 deadline. This also helps you to confirm alignment with your overall retirement giving plan. ■

Information provided by Rebecca Moomey, VP, Senior Private Banker, Bankers Trust, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny.



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Food is a connector. Throughout history, people have gathered around tables to share meals with family, friends, colleagues, clients and, occasionally, strangers for various occasions such as celebrations, holidays, meetings and ceremonies. Local restaurants provide you far more than meals; they are the gathering spaces where stories are shared, relationships are grown and communities are strengthened.



When you choose to dine at a locally owned restaurant, you are contributing to more than just an individual business. You are helping to sustain local jobs, encouraging entrepreneurship and keeping money circulating within our community. Independent food businesses hire local workers and invest in our city's future. Every dollar spent locally is a vote for the growth and support of Ankeny, showcasing its unique flavors and traditions.

Local eateries reflect the distinct tastes, cultures and values of their communities. They respond to local needs, build regional menus, and create experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere. Supporting them means you are protecting the vibrancy and diversity that sets your community apart.

It's a way to ensure that downtowns remain alive, that neighborhoods retain their charm, and that the next generation will continue to keep adding more businesses to the community and foster the same hometown pride as the one before it.

Ankeny offers an impressive variety of locally owned dining establishments. The diverse range of restaurants allows residents and visitors to experience global cuisine, from traditional American diners and hometown pizzerias to sushi bars, Chinese buffets, Mexican cantinas, and Irish pubs. Additionally, the city features numerous bakeries and sweet shops, enhancing the culinary options.

A simple lunch meeting can spark new professional ventures, just as a family dinner can instill lifelong memories. Casual gatherings at a favorite eatery are where friendships are born and ideas are exchanged. The act of sharing a meal, whether with colleagues or loved ones, mirrors the mission of the Chamber: bringing people together, encouraging collaboration and strengthening bonds.

As you consider where your next meal will come from, remember that every choice carries the potential to build up your community. Supporting local food businesses strengthens Ankeny's economy, cheering for your neighbors and the people who make your town unique. By buying local, you help ensure that the chamber's mission of unity is realized, plate by plate and conversation by conversation.

Come learn more about local businesses at Discover Ankeny on Nov. 6, 4-7 pm at the FFA Enrichment Center on DMACC Campus. Bring your family and friends to enjoy an evening of connection, discovery and community pride while supporting the businesses that help Ankeny thrive. ■

Information provided by Trevor J. Perez, Director of Operations, Magee's Irish Pub & Eatery, 1610 S.W. Main St., Ankeny, 515-289-3747.



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View Our Calendar for All Events & Details

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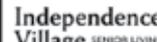















OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Team Midwest Paint on Sept. 9.



Team Midwest Paint LLC, 5741 N.E. 22nd St., Suite 204



Ben Nading and Stacy Nading



Kevin Constanza, Luis Quiroz, Jessica Mines, Ben Nading, Itzama Ayala, Antonio Ayala and Christian Rodriguez



Andy Robinson, Jamie Anderson and Harley Leeps



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OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for The Entrepreneur's Source on Sept. 19.



Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for The Entrepreneur's Source on Sept. 19.



Crystal Wright and Joe Bethel



Mike Comer, Matt May, Megan May and Luanne Comer



Becki Scouten and Shevaughn Moore

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Sunday Morning Service 10:30am

Wednesday Bible Class 6:00pm

Saturday Prayer Meeting 11:00am
on the First of the Month

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Joshua 1:9 kjv

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515-709-0687 | 6864 NE 14th Street, Suite #3, Ankeny, IA | www.houseofrefugechurch.org

ON With Life

On With Life held its annual fundraising and recognition event at the FFA Enrichment Center on Sept. 26.



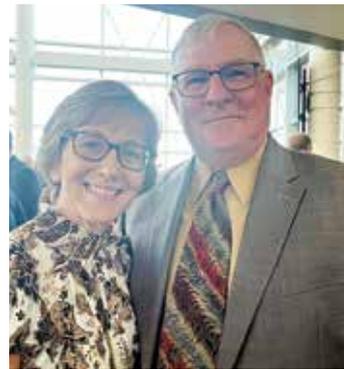
Drew Conley, Abby Conley, Dana Conley and Renee Conley



Ross Larson and Kate Benson Larson



Donna Walter and Chad Walter



Robin and Todd Misel



Dr. Paul Dayton and Dr. Mindi Dayton



Sonni Ricklefs and Samantha Williams

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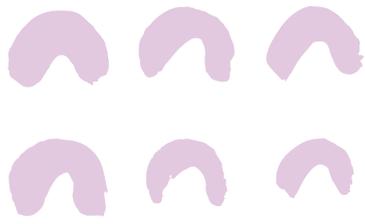
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