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NOVEMBER 2025

Living

HOMETOWN

holidays

Residents prepare to
enjoy the festivities.

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MYTH-BUSTING FAMILY LAW TOPICS



By McKenzie Ellis

You hear a lot of misconceptions about family law, since it is a legal area that affects many of our lives. We've put together a list of some of the biggest myths we hear in family law cases here in Iowa and the reality that we see in our cases:

1. Myth: In divorces, everything gets split 50/50.

Reality: Iowa is considered an "equitable distribution" state; meaning that the property and debts must be divided equitably. Equitable is NOT equal. Courts may consider a range of factors to determine what is a fair distribution of assets, including; length of marriage, what the spouses contributed to the assets and debt (both financially and otherwise), the parties' earning capacities and other circumstances such as how much premarital/inherited/gifted property each spouse will be awarded.

2. Myth: Older children/teenagers can choose which parent they want to live with.

Reality: Iowa's guiding factor for custody determinations is always the best interests of the minor child(ren). While the Court may take into consideration a child's preferences, the Court will never be bound by the preferences of a minor child.

3. Myth: My spouse cheated, so I am entitled to everything from the marriage.

Reality: Iowa is considered a "No-fault divorce" state. This means that neither party has to prove wrongdoing to be granted a divorce. Since there is no requirement to prove wrong-doing, adultery done by a spouse cannot be used against a party in a divorce proceeding; but there may be some specific examples where it is relevant.

4. Myth: My partner and I have been together for 7 years. We're common law married!

Reality: In Iowa, couples must meet all of the following factors: A present intent and agreement, by both parties, to be married; Continuous cohabitation without separations; and a public declaration or "holding out" to the public that the parties are spouses. Often times, it is difficult to prove a common law marriage existed; but if it is established, the parties will need a formal divorce proceeding to dissolve the existing marriage.



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WELCOME

GIVE Santa a hug

There he was. An overweight, old man dressed in red with an unkempt beard and a peculiar hat. He was a complete stranger who wanted me to sit on his lap and share my wishes. Creepy? You're darn right! At least he was to this young boy.

Keep in mind that I didn't even want hugs or kisses from my grandmothers, so there was no way on Earth, or anywhere else, that I was going to get close to the man whose real name is Kris Kringle. I would forgo any and all presents before I would share a single word with the guy who now proclaimed himself as Father Christmas.

Santa was welcome to park the sled on our roof and break into our home to leave presents, but that's where our relationship ended. From what I can see today, and from what I remember with our kids, I am not the only one who was uncomfortable with the Christmas tradition of sitting with Santa.

But, we keep doing it. Standing in line. Cameras in hand. Hoping for that memorable keepsake image but instead apologizing to Mr. and Mrs. Claus for a screaming kid who doesn't understand the process.

You have got to love Christmastime traditions. Despite those unsettling Santa Claus memories, I certainly do enjoy the season. The caroling of festive songs. The sleigh rides. The lighting of the Christmas tree. The hot chocolate and candy canes.

Keeping these holiday traditions going takes work by many people, and I am thankful to them for their efforts. With that in mind, I hope you will join me for the wonderful holiday celebrations in the area.

I might even give Santa a hug. Maybe. ■

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HOMETOWN *holidays*

Residents prepare to
enjoy the festivities.

By Rachel Harrington

The calendar page has turned to November and thoughts to the holiday season. A chill is in the air, and the aroma of pies, cookies and turkey dinners waft from the kitchen. Halls are being decked, mantles decorated and mistletoe hung. Indeed, the holiday season is upon us, and how better to celebrate than with family gatherings and hometown festivities?

Home for the Holidays will feature caroling, along with other traditional hometown festivities.



The Indianola Square will transform into a winter wonderland for the Indianola Main Street Home for the Holidays.

Home for the Holidays

Indianola Main Street and City State Bank announce the Indianola Home for the Holidays event Saturday, Nov. 22 from 4-8 p.m. The theme is to capture the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas. Community favorites will be held at the Indianola Square throughout the evening. Highlights include the annual tree lighting, as well as a community choir performance on the steps of the Justice Center.

"We really expanded our character Meet and Greet this year. It was such a hit last year," Erica Roberts shares. Roberts, executive director of Indianola Main Street, says that characters such as beloved princesses and Marvel characters will walk the square and interact with the crowd, and the Incredibles, the Grinch, Frosty and Darth Vader will also be spotted. Several photo opportunities will be available for community enjoyment.

"There will be full vendor participation around the interior of the square," Roberts says. "The community will have the opportunity to purchase handmade goods, favorite Christmas treats, and food from several local food trucks. Local food and eateries will come out as well."

Beloved horse-drawn carriage rides and train rides will be available, as well as gingerbread inflatables.

New to Home for the Holidays this year is local woodcarver Andy Klindt, who will offer

live demonstrations of chainsaw wood carving.

The festive Lighted Parade will start at 7:30 p.m. around the Indianola Square and will be the grand finale of the evening. Organizers hope the parade will have more entries this year.

Roberts sums up her thoughts on the event: "The Indianola Home for the Holidays Celebration is really a time for the community to come together to celebrate the season."

Tour of Homes

Indianola's Homes for the Holidays tour of homes will take place on Dec. 5. It is a one-evening event put on by Integra Electrical. Tickets are \$30 and available at the Integra Electrical office and online at integraelectrical.com.

"The Homes for the Holidays tour is a fundraiser for families in need to help them buy Christmas gifts," Ben Carpenter of Integra Electrical shares. "We'll have about eight to 10 homes in the circuit that will be open for ticket holders to visit. We will have a map participants can follow to get a taste of the 'Hallmark-y' Indianola. There will also be a bowl of chili

for ticket holders to partake in at our office as they make their way through the circuit of homes. Participants can begin anywhere on the circuit and stop at our office anytime. It could be a complete date night for couples. It will be a fun evening."

Homes in the circuit may have festive hors d'oeuvres or treats for those who visit. The goal is not to showcase homes decorated to perfection but to highlight the spirit of the season.

Small Business Saturday

The community is invited to come out and support Indianola's small businesses on Nov. 29.

Breakfast with Santa

The Indianola Community Youth Foundation will offer Breakfast With Santa on Dec. 13 from 8:30-10:30 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church.

"We have done it for about five years," Taylor Litchkey shares. "This is a new location, though, as we typically have 500 people and needed more space."

The freewill donation event will include breakfast, photos with Santa, goodie bags to take home, and entertainment throughout the event. You can find up-to-date details on the ICYF Facebook event page as the event draws closer.



Scan the QR code for a link to the Home for the Holidays Tour of Homes information.



The Indianola Community Youth Foundation will offer Breakfast With Santa.



Santa will make an appearance at Holiday Happenings.



St. Thomas Aquinas Cookie Walk and Vendor Fair will feature baked goodies and Santa's helpers.

Festive Pines 5K

The Festive Pines 1K and 5K will take place on Sunday, Dec. 20, in Indianola around the grounds of Walnut Ridge Tree Farm. Both the Pine K (1K walk/run) and the 5K begin at 4:30 p.m. Registration ends Dec. 19, but price goes up after Dec. 5. You must register by Dec. 1 if you would like to receive a shirt and a finisher medal. Register at <https://runscore.runsignup.com/Race/Events/IA/Indianola/MerryPines5K>.

Santa visit

Indianola Hy-Vee will host Santa at its location from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, Dec. 13 and 20, and Sundays, Dec. 14 and 21. On Dec. 18, enjoy Steak Night with the Grinch from 4-8 p.m., and, on Dec. 20, come out and have a big breakfast with Santa from 10 a.m. to noon.

Milo's Small Town Country Christmas

Milo's Small Town Country Christmas event will be on Dec. 6 from 8 a.m. until after dark. Visitors can enjoy horse-drawn carriage rides and pictures with the 7-foot tall Santa Claus after partaking in a delicious breakfast. In the afternoon, vendors and shops will offer their wares and goods, and there will be a festive craft sale. The evening will bring the opportunity for a soup supper and a stroll through a lighted Story Walk in the park. There will also be a live nativity scene, and luminaries will warm and light up Milo with a gentle glow after dark.

Holiday Happenings and Farmers Market

Cortum Farm and Co., 6373 150th Ave., Indianola, invites the public to its Holiday Happenings and Farmers Market Friday, Nov. 21 from 3-7 p.m., and Saturday, Nov. 22 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors will include Red Roaming Acres, The West Farm, Tina's Homemade Goodies, Savor the Rise, In The Ayr, Fulton Family Homestead and Nooches. Find farm-fresh wares and foods, greenery, wreaths, garland, and Fraser and Canan Fir trees. Cortum Farm and Co.'s neighbor, Honey Hollow, will also be open.

Christmas at The Barn

The Barn at Daydream Abode, 11879 G24 Highway, Indianola

Enjoy the most magical time of year. Experience Christmas at the Barn the following dates and times:

- Saturday, Nov. 29, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Friday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Saturday, Dec. 6, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Make your holiday shopping list and check it twice. The Barn is full of curated Christmas and holly jolly home decor, seasonal florals and garlands, cozy apparel, local Iowa goodies and giftables, antiques sourced with love, and endless inspiration. Shop small and make some magical memories in the historic 1800s barn this holiday season.

Local church activities

• **St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church:** STARS (St. Thomas Altar and Rosary Society) will host its annual Cookie Walk and Vendor Fair on Dec. 6 from 8-11 a.m. Visitors will enjoy free admission and be able to purchase festive holiday treats as well as locally handmade gifts from at least 34 vendors. The church will open a holiday café complete with giant cinnamon rolls and cider. As a special treat, Jolly ol' St. Nick will visit the festivities.



• **Grace Church:** Grace Church is hosting a Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 22 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the fellowship area in the church. Everyone is welcome to attend. Additionally, the church will hold a Christmas Eve Service at 6 p.m.

• **Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church:** Community members are invited to join in a Thanksgiving Eve Service at 7 p.m. on Nov. 26. Advent Services will be held every Wednesday night in December at 7 p.m.

• **First Assembly of God Church:** Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 8 p.m.

• **Indianola Church of Christ:** Christmas Eve Service at 5 p.m.

• **New Heights Church:** Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Check with the church in December for the service time.

• **Trinity United Presbyterian Church:** Christmas Eve Service. Check with the church for the service time. ■

PARMESAN garlic focaccia bread is a slice of comfort

This month, I share another recipe from my daughter, Samantha. She loves to make all kinds of bread. Few things make a kitchen feel more welcoming than the aroma of freshly baked bread, and parmesan garlic focaccia delivers that comfort in every bite. Golden and crisp on the outside yet soft and airy inside, this Italian favorite is elevated with the irresistible pairing of roasted garlic and nutty parmesan cheese. It is the kind of bread that feels special but is surprisingly simple to make at home. Serve as a side with soups and pastas, cut into squares for an appetizer board, or enjoy warm right out of the pan. Focaccia is versatile and crowd pleasing. The drizzle of olive oil, a sprinkling of herbs and the cheesy finish give it that bakery-style touch you will love sharing — or keeping all to yourself. Enjoy! ■



Parmesan Garlic Focaccia Bread

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups warm water (about 110°F)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2¼ teaspoons instant yeast (1 packet)
- 4 cups flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs or chopped rosemary
- Flaky sea salt

Directions

- Combine warm water, sugar and yeast. Let sit for 5 minutes until foamy. Add flour and salt. Mix until dough forms. (It will be sticky.) With a mixer, kneed for 5-7 minutes or by hand for 8-10 minutes until smooth. Brush dough with olive oil and cover.
- Let rise 1-1.5 hours in a warm spot until dough has doubled.
- Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil with minced garlic until fragrant (about 1 minute) in a

pan. Keep for later.

- Place dough in greased 9-inch by 13-inch pan. Gently press to corners. Let rest 10 minutes, then stretch. Cover and rise 30-45 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 425 F. With your fingers, dimple the dough all over. Brush with garlic oil. Then sprinkle parmesan cheese, herbs and sea salt on top of dough.
- Bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes in pan, then transfer to wire rack.
- Slice and serve warm. Store bread for two days at room temperature or freeze up to three months.
- **For the best results, follow these additional steps:** Make sure your water is warm (110 F), not hot. For the best texture, let the dough rise completely. Use plenty of oil in your pan, as this will give your bread a crisp crust.



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

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LEGAL

By Ken Winjum

DON'T click away your rights

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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FINDING balance in caregiving

Discover the benefits of adult day services.

Caring for a loved one is deeply meaningful, yet it can also be one of life's greatest challenges. Between work, appointments and home responsibilities, many caregivers find themselves running on empty. Adult day services can help, offering daytime support for loved ones and welcome relief for caregivers.



What are adult day services?

Adult day services provide care, structure and connection for adults who need assistance with daily activities, face safety risks when left alone, or simply enjoy being around others. Attendance can range from one day a week to daily participation, depending on family needs. While many participants live with dementia, a diagnosis isn't required.

Safe, engaging and reassuring

Adult day programs are built on safety and engagement. Participants enjoy supervised activities in a secure, welcoming setting, and families gain peace of mind knowing their loved one is thriving.

One daughter shared, "My mom was becoming isolated at home while I tried to balance caring for her and working full-time. Once she started adult day, her mood lifted, and I finally felt like I had some breathing room."

More than "something to do"

Quality adult day programs support the whole person through:

- Social opportunities that encourage connection and purpose
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Cognitive and physical activities that foster well-being
- A caring, secure environment

Why families choose adult day

Many families discover adult day services only after experiencing burnout. But exploring early can prevent insurmountable stress and strengthen relationships. Participants enjoy engagement and connection, while caregivers gain time, balance, and confidence their loved one is cared for.

Take the first step

If you're navigating the challenges of caregiving, consider adult day services in your area. These programs provide the support your loved one deserves as well and the reassurance 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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When it comes to dining, you can still enjoy cooking at home — or choose from multiple restaurants offering chef-prepared meals that residents rave about.

And with a full range of supportive services on-site, you'll have peace of mind knowing that if your needs change after an illness, surgery, or injury, you won't need to relocate or rely on family for care.

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BEST time to move to assisted living is before winter hits

As the weather begins to cool in Des Moines, many older adults and their families face the annual reality of Iowa winters — slippery sidewalks, snowed-in driveways, and the challenges of isolation. These months can be especially difficult for seniors living alone, where one fall or power outage can quickly become an emergency.



But this season doesn't have to bring fear or hardship. Making the move to assisted living before the first snowfall can offer seniors comfort, connection and peace of mind all winter long.

Avoid the dangers of winter at home. Snow and ice pose serious fall risks for older adults. Clearing driveways, salting walkways, and managing home heating systems can be exhausting — or even unsafe. Iowa winters also bring the risk of power outages and frozen pipes. Assisted living communities are built for safety, with: 24/7 maintenance and snow removal, backup generators and temperature-controlled

environments, and emergency response systems and trained staff on-site.

Say goodbye to isolation. Cold weather often makes travel difficult for seniors and their families. In-home visits slow down, and it becomes easy for older adults to feel isolated. This can increase the risk of depression, anxiety and even physical health decline.

At assisted living communities, social engagement is built into everyday life — especially in winter. Residents enjoy: holiday parties and festive seasonal events; movie nights, painting classes, and social hours; on-site fitness programs and wellness checks; and warm spaces to relax and socialize with friends and neighbors. Instead of feeling stuck inside, seniors stay active, engaged and surrounded by peers.

Daily support and healthcare access. With snow-covered roads and unpredictable weather, getting to doctor appointments or pharmacies becomes challenging — or even impossible. Assisted living offers on-site care coordination, visiting healthcare professionals, medication support and wellness checks — so residents receive the care they need without leaving home.

This also brings relief to family members,

knowing their loved one is safe and, if a winter illness does arise, help is just steps away.

Warm meals and cozy living. Forget frozen dinners or navigating slippery parking lots at the grocery store. Residents enjoy three nutritious, chef-prepared meals daily, often with options for dietary needs — all served in a comfortable, social setting. Cozy common areas with fireplaces, activity lounges and reading rooms make cold days something to enjoy.

Make the move before the storms begin. The transition into assisted living is much smoother before winter sets in. Movers are more available, roads are clearer, and seniors can get settled before the holiday season.

Final thoughts. Don't wait until the snow falls. Make the move now and ensure your loved one enjoys a safe, connected and stress-free winter surrounded by warmth and support in Des Moines. ■

Information provided by Ashley Bergman, Addington Place of Des Moines, addingtonplaceofdesmoines.com. Written by Discovery Senior Living, 3461 Bonita Bay Blvd., Suite 100, Bonita Springs, FL 34134.

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GEAR up for winter: your essential tire safety checklist

It's hard to believe November is already here. With the first frost approaching, it is crucial to shift our focus to tire care and safety. Last year's tire education initiative was a success, and we are excited to continue supporting you with practical advice this season.



Simple home tips for tire safety

Even if you don't have a regular courtesy inspection, you can easily keep your family safe this winter with a few simple, at-home checks:

- Check tire age: Look for the DOT four-digit code on your tire's sidewall. The last two digits show the year it was made. Tires should be replaced every 10 years, regardless of tread wear, as the rubber degrades over time.
- Monitor tire pressure monthly: Don't forget your spare tire. Tires can lose up to 1 psi

each month, and this rate increases with leaks or wheel issues.

- Check pressure before long trips: For the most accurate reading, measure when your tires are cool — before driving or after traveling less than three miles at a low speed. If tires are hot, add 4-5 psi to the recommended value or wait until they cool (about three hours).

How to check and adjust pressure

Insert the gauge into the valve stem to note the psi. Compare this to the recommended pressure found in your owner's manual or on a sticker inside the driver's door or gas tank door. Avoid using the number on the tire sidewall. If the pressure is too high, let out air; if too low, add air until it matches the recommended psi.

Why tire care matters

Proper tire inflation helps your tires last longer, dramatically improves your car's grip on the road, and even saves fuel. Just a few minutes each month can make a significant difference in

safety and vehicle performance.

Consider snow tires for heavy weather

For those dealing with heavy snow, it is worth considering dedicated snow tires. Mounting them on a second set of wheels makes swapping easy. December through April works well for most regions. This approach protects your all-season tires while maximizing safety and control in winter conditions.

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Information provided by Chris Werner, owner and lead technician, Werner's Elite Auto, 506 1/2 E. Euclid Ave., Indianola, 515-259-0122, www.wernerseliteauto.com.



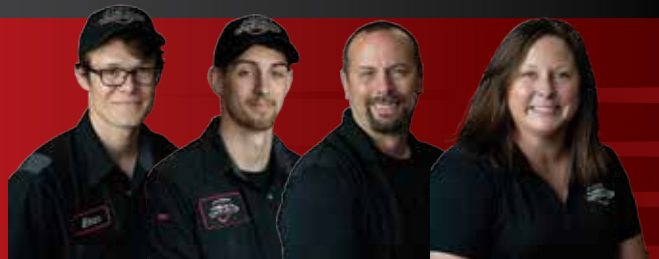
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Mike Hansaker

Indianola

Military branch: U.S. Army/Iowa Air National Guard (U.S. Air Force)

Rank: Chief Master Sergeant

Served: U.S. Army, 1973-1975; Iowa Air National Guard, 1985-2010

"It was my privilege to have had the opportunity to serve this great country. I salute all my fellow veterans."



America Wingo

"Indianola knew me as America Fusco, class of 2000, daughter of Chris Fusco, Eileen Fusco (bonus-mom), and Teresa Jordan (mom)."

Currently, South Pittsburg, Tennessee

Military branch: U.S. Navy

Rank: E-7, Chief Petty Officer

Served: On and off between June 6, 2000- April 1, 2025

"I joined the Navy right before my senior year of high school and left for bootcamp in June 2000. I've held three different jobs (rates) and traveled all over the world. I've seen places and done things that most people can only dream of. I've made lasting friendships and memories. I've sang the 'National Anthem' dozens of times at major events and have enjoyed the 25-year journey. I highly encourage anyone that's able and qualified to serve their country. Even through all the ups and downs and missed family events, I'm still thankful, honored and proud to have served."



Alex Michael

From Indianola, currently held up in Newport, Rhode Island, and most likely heading to Norfolk, Virginia

Military branch: Navy

Rank: E-6

Served: March 2025 to current

"So far, my experience of the military is that there are a lot of strange things that happen. As a future officer, it is my goal to keep in touch with my blue-collar roots so that I can connect with the sailors under my command and bridge the gap between top-level decisions and work-level understanding."



What would you like others to know about serving your country?

Christopher Harrington, II

Indianola

Military branch: U.S. Army

Rank: E-4

Served: 2004 - 2009

"It was an honor to serve with so many people from all walks of life, and the experience instilled in me a deeper sense of patriotism, loyalty and devotion to finishing the mission. I think most people would benefit from at least serving one term in the military as it instills discipline, camaraderie, and skills that will be useful throughout your life."



Tucker J. Lee

(Pictured with his wife, Bethany)

Indianola

Military branch: U.S. Air Force

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Served: 2019-present.

Currently stationed at Moody AFB, Valdosta, Georgia

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Check for cancellations



Upcoming in Indianola Living magazine:

Handmade gifts: If you have made or received a cherished handmade gift, we would like to share your story for the December issue. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Football parties: Do you have a tradition of holding a Super Bowl party? Share your party plans, recipes and other ideas! Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to share your story!

Free Community Meal

Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Lighthouse Community Center, 109 W. Boston Ave., Indianola

Free home-cooked meal every Tuesday. Everyone is welcome. Come and enjoy food and fellowship with individuals and organizations in the community.

Warren County Economic Impact Awards and Celebration

Tuesday, Dec. 2, 5-7:30 p.m.

Wilson's Orchard and Farm, 3201 15th Ave., Cumming

The 2025 Warren County Economic Impact Awards and Celebration will be taking a fresh approach. Rather than focusing solely on awards, organizers are making this an evening-long celebration of all the incredible successes across Warren County — businesses, communities and individuals who make the county shine. Everyone in Warren County is invited. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, a drink ticket, networking and celebrating achievements from across Warren County. Awards will be presented to Business of the Year, Top Business in a Community Under 3,000 population, Innovation of the Year, New Business of the Year, Woman-Owned Business of the Year and Warren County Developer of the Year. Register online by following the QR code.



'Little Shop of Horrors'

Friday, Nov. 14, and Saturday, Nov. 15, at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 16 at 2 p.m.

Blank Performing Arts Center, Simpson College, 523 N. D. St., Indianola

The delightfully dark and wildly entertaining musical "Little Shop of Horrors" blends doo-wop, Motown and rock-and-roll to tell the quirky tale of Seymour, a meek floral assistant who discovers a strange plant with a secret thirst for human blood. As the plant grows, so does Seymour's fame — but at a horrifying cost. With catchy songs, eccentric characters, and a touch of horror-comedy, "Little Shop of Horrors" has become a beloved staple of American musical theatre. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors, and \$12 for non-Simpson students and group tickets (10 or more tickets) at <https://events.humanitix.com/host/simpson-productions>. ■

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GARDEN tasks to finish before the holidays

Ring in the holidays. But, before we get to the holidays, there are some tasks in the garden that need to be finished. With the dry conditions this fall, continue watering all your newly planted trees, shrubs and, especially, conifers (they transpire all winter long) until the ground freezes. Consider wrapping newly planted evergreens in windy spots to prevent wind burn, and, if your garden is prone to deer visits, be sure to protect trees and shrubs with wire or repellent. If the ground is not frozen, consider putting a few more spring bulbs (daffodils, tulips and other spring beauties) in your gardens.

With Thanksgiving only a few weeks away, now is the time to think about winter, snow and Christmas. For many of us, holiday decorating begins with the Christmas tree. Visiting a local tree grower to choose the perfect tree becomes a family tradition. Some have an option to choose and cut your tree, and several also have already cut fresh trees to choose from, and these are usually just as fresh since a farm or nursery's reputation is on the line. The tree will last a month or more, but the memories will last a lifetime.

Fresh made wreaths, bundles of greens, fresh garland or roping can be placed around your front door, adding a festive feel to your entrance. Try not to place your wreath between a storm door and the front door. The sun will bake it, and it will not last as long. Greens can be arranged in porch pots using sand or pea gravel to add stability. Add some red twig dogwood branches, some festive ornamental picks and a bow. Wrap your door, railings or columns with evergreen roping, and add lights and bows to make it more festive. Remember these festive elements should not be used indoors because they dry out and become fire hazards. Your freshest wreaths and greens will come from local tree farms and nurseries, which often cut fresh from their own trees to make them.

And don't forget the favorite holiday flowers: amaryllis, Christmas cactus and poinsettia. Now is the time to plant your amaryllis bulbs. They usually begin blooming six weeks after planting. Festively planted amaryllis make great gifts for friends and family. Christmas cactus will add a festive feel to your home and become a family heirloom, often passed down from generation to generation. Don't overwater and keep out of drafts. Poinsettias will bring color to your home for the holidays and through winter. Often they are sold with a pot cover. When watering, be sure to empty any water that collects in the wrap after an hour to keep them from being over watered.

Visit one of the many holiday events to get ideas, gifts and décor for the season. Just a few of many events are the Indianola Home for the Holidays, New Virginia Country Christmas Market, Des Moines Winter Farmers Market, Des Moines ChristkindlmarketDSM and Milo Small Town Country Christmas. Check dates and times online or through local media.

Have a great Holiday season and be sure to buy local. Everything in this article is going to be available at a local Christmas tree farm, nursery or event. ■



Information provided by Barry Laws, co-owner, Quilted Gardens Nursery and Landscaping, 19635 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-720-3089, www.quiltedgardens.com.



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HEARING aids help seniors feel less isolated

Do you have hearing loss and want to stay better connected to others as you age? A new study published in JAMA Internal Medicine says wearing hearing aids can help.

The study's results showed that people with hearing aids kept an average of one additional person in their social network over three years compared to those who received healthy aging tips but no hearing aids.¹



About the study

Researchers followed almost 1,000 adults age 70-84 with hearing loss for three years. Half were given hearing aids, along with personalized instruction and counseling from an audiologist. The other half received healthy aging advice, including tips on how to best communicate with providers and ways to exercise.

To assess the participants' social isolation, researchers examined the variety and size of their social networks and how often they spent time with other people.

Although all participants reported feeling about the same level of loneliness at the start of the study, loneliness scores had improved slightly in the group who wore hearing aids by the end. The ones who didn't wear them had slightly worse loneliness scores.

Combating the loneliness epidemic

Loneliness and social isolation among seniors are common: A third of them say they are lonely, and more than 25% admit they have little to no contact with other people.¹

While it can be easy to brush off loneliness as no big deal, former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a report in 2023 stating that Americans were experiencing an epidemic of loneliness and isolation, increasing one's risk of health issues like stroke, dementia and heart disease.²

However, studies like the one recently published in JAMA Internal Medicine offer a ray of hope.

"Our findings add to evidence that helping aging patients hear better can also enrich their social lives and boost their mental and physical well-being," said Lead Researcher Nicholas Reed.¹

If you think you can benefit from hearing aids, call to schedule a hearing evaluation with your local audiologist today. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, www.IowaHearingCenter.com. 1. Thompson, D. (2025). Hearing aids effectively combat seniors' loneliness, study says. UPI. https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2025/05/13/hearing-aids-loneliness-study/1201747154793/. 2. Summers, J et al. (2023). America has a loneliness epidemic. Here are 6 steps to address it. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/02/1173418268/loneliness-connection-mental-health-dementia-surgeon-general>



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ACUPUNCTURE: Bridging ancient wisdom and modern science in preventive medicine

Acupuncture, a central modality in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), is increasingly recognized for its preventive potential. Rather than waiting for disease to manifest,

acupuncture aims to maintain physiological balance, strengthen the body's defenses, and address subtle health issues before they escalate.

TCM views health as a dynamic balance of Qi (vital energy), blood and organ systems. Stress, poor lifestyle or environmental factors will create imbalances and can lead to illness. Preventive acupuncture seeks to restore harmony early, often before symptoms appear. Monthly or seasonal treatments allow practitioners to detect subtle changes in pulse, tongue, mood and movement, which are early indicators of imbalance.

One of the TCM theories often used in preventive acupuncture practices is the Five



Element theory, which links organ systems to seasonal cycles. For example:

- Spring (Liver): Focus on detoxification and emotional regulation
- Summer (Heart): Support circulation and mental clarity
- Late Summer (Spleen): Support digestion and nutritional intake
- Autumn (Lungs): Strengthen immunity and respiratory health
- Winter (Kidneys): Nourish vitality and hormonal balance

Modern research is beginning to validate acupuncture's preventive benefits using objective measuring tools:

- Immune modulation: A 2021 study in *Frontiers in Immunology* found that acupuncture enhances immune function by increasing natural killer cell activity and regulating cytokine levels.
- Stress and HPA axis regulation: Chronic stress disrupts the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, contributing to numerous diseases. Acupuncture has been shown to normalize cortisol levels and reduce sympathetic

nervous system overactivity, promoting resilience.

- Migraine prevention: A 2020 Cochrane review concluded that acupuncture is at least as effective as prophylactic drugs for preventing migraines, with fewer side effects.

- Sleep quality: A meta-analysis in *Sleep Medicine Reviews* (2022) reported that acupuncture improves sleep onset, duration and efficiency, especially in patients with insomnia linked to anxiety or pain.

- Cardiovascular health: Studies suggest acupuncture may help regulate blood pressure, reduce inflammation and improve heart rate variability — markers associated with cardiovascular risk.

Preventive acupuncture is often integrated into wellness plans for chronic disease management, workplace wellness, women's health and athletic recovery. ■

Information provided by Dr. Renee Dalrymple, LAc, SEED Meditation Instructor, Soaring Crane Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, 14849 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-962-9093, call or text.

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For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. - Ephesians 2:10

FAITH

By Tom Vanderbilt

THE POWER of giving thanks

"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." —Psalm 107:1

In a world that moves fast and demands more each day, taking a moment to give thanks can feel like a luxury. But gratitude is more than good manners — it is a powerful tool for mental well-being, connection and perspective.

Giving thanks grounds us. It helps us shift focus from what is missing to what God has already given to us. Whether it is a heartfelt "thank you" to a colleague, a handwritten note to a friend, or a quiet moment of reflection at the end of a long day, these simple acts turn us to God.

Research shows that people who regularly practice gratitude experience lower stress, better sleep and stronger relationships. It is not about ignoring hardship, but about balancing challenges with recognition of the good — even if it's just a warm cup of coffee or a kind smile.

This season, let us make gratitude a habit, not just a holiday tradition. Start small. Keep a journal. Tell people they matter. Say thank you — and mean it.

In giving thanks, we don't just acknowledge others; we enrich our own lives, because the more we appreciate, the more we see there is to appreciate.

Gratitude isn't just polite. It's powerful. ■



Article provided by Pastor Tom Vanderbilt, Mount Calvary Church, Indianola.



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WELLNESS

By Jen Penisten

WHAT IS ultrasonic cavitation?

Ultrasonic cavitation is a safe and effective treatment that helps reduce stubborn fat and smooth the body's contours with no surgery or downtime required.

This non-invasive procedure uses low-frequency ultrasound waves to target and break down fat cells beneath the skin. The body then naturally eliminates these cells through the lymphatic system over time, revealing a slimmer, more sculpted appearance. Lymphatic drainage is usually performed at the appointment, and this process can be done at home through gentle massage to the target area.

Benefits Include: non-surgical, targeted fat reduction with zero recovery time; improved body contours in areas like the abdomen, thighs, arms, and flanks; reduction in cellulite and smoother skin texture; quick, comfortable treatments that include lymphatic drainage and radiofrequency skin tightening.

Most clients describe the experience as relaxing and notice visible improvements almost immediately or after just a few sessions. For best results, maintaining hydration, healthy diet and getting plenty of sleep is recommended to support the body's natural fat loss and metabolic processes.

Ultrasonic cavitation is ideal for individuals near their target weight who want to refine their shape and address areas that resist diet and exercise. While not a weight-loss method, it's an excellent option for enhancing body tone, small areas of stubborn fat and overall confidence. ■



Information provided by Jen Penisten, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1951 E. 18th St., Suite 105, Norwalk, 515-850-7848, vividlifespa.com.

A PLACE to call its own

Capital campaign ongoing for Carousel Theatre of Indianola

Randy Stone remembers it well. 1975. Junior high. “Music Man” — and The Carousel Theatre of Indianola.

All those years and changes ago.

Fortunately for the community, the community theatre has remained one of the constants through that time, as has Stone, who returned to Indianola more than three decades ago and currently sits as the board president.

But through those more than 60 years of existence, the theatre has never had a place to call its own. If Stone and others have their way, that will soon be changing.

Stone, the Carousel’s 10 board members, and many others, have initiated a capital campaign to, once and for all, give the theatre a space of its own on the Indianola Square.

“Carousel has never had a place of our own, and, in recent years, it has become more and more difficult to find places to perform,” Stone says. “There is a lot of extra time and expenses involved with moving equipment and renting storage space.”



The Carousel Theatre cast of “Almost, Maine” performed Nov. 6-9 at First United Methodist Church in Indianola.

The goal is a large, but necessary one.

“Our ultimate goal is \$500,000, that we would like to have by the end of 2026,” Stone says. “(So far) we’ve raised more than \$90,000 and more than \$140,000 in pledges.”

The Carousel Theatre’s latest performance was “Almost, Maine,” by John Ciarani, Nov. 6-9 at the First United Methodist Church in Indianola. “Almost, Maine” is a romantic comedy composed of nine short vignettes, all set in the fictional, remote town of Almost,

Maine, on a cold, clear, moonlit winter night.

Stone says a thriving community like Indianola deserves a thriving arts community.

“Carousel is known for its quality productions, but to continue that tradition, Carousel really needs a permanent location. We love Indianola and are proud to be a part of its cultural community.”

Find out more information or donate to the capital campaign by visiting www.carouseltheatre.org. ■

FAIR planning is year-round work

Reynolds juggles many tasks months before opening day.

Each year in August, the Warren County Fair magically starts. It seems simple. Animals arrive, dogs perform, horses compete, 4H projects are put on display, rides arrive and are assembled, and food is abundant. But how does it all come together?

Jo Reynolds is the backbone of the fair. Taking over for her dad about 26 years ago, she plans and organizes every detail, and, with the help of the fair board and volunteers, the fair comes to life.

Jo has been on numerous boards and participates in many fair associations at the local, state, national and international level, and those roles have allowed her to visit multiple county fairs all over the world.

The Warren County Fair prides itself on not having an admission or parking fee. This happens thanks to sponsors. Allowing attendees to visit without a fee means local people come to the fair during their lunch hour to eat and take a brief walk, and parents can bring their kids for just an hour or two multiple times during the fair. Three to four busloads of daycare/preschool kids usually visit.

But the fair doesn’t just “happen.” On a recent day, Jo was busy writing acknowledgements to the donors of the new and renovated barns. She had two large “to do” pages hanging on the wall, and her conference room table was covered in organized chaos as she worked through details for the 2026 fair. Everything from parking (having a drone fly over to assess traffic patterns), searching out entertainment and getting contracts signed, emergency management plans, revamping scale tickets, ordering supplies, finding livestock and other judges, ordering and sorting ribbons, finding

ways to make the grandstand safer, and responding the phone calls takes up her time now — 10 months before the fair even starts.

Jo is also responsible for completing financial reports that are required under the Code of Iowa to be sent to the state. Updating the Fairbook (every detail for fair operations), keeping the computer system updated and making sure every stage has acts booked to entertain the crowds are mind boggling.

As time gets closer, she will be finalizing details, arranging for inspections and educating volunteers.

“I’m a problem solver,” Jo says. “The best thing about this job is, if something doesn’t work like we thought it would, we have a chance to do it over the next year.”

Listening to attendees’ thoughts — good and bad — help enrich future fairs. For example, adding a drop-off location for people who are mobility challenged and transporting them via a golf cart to their desired location (usually the show ring) allows multiple generations to enjoy the fair.

With family farms slowly dying, Jo is rooted in ensuring the people of Warren County understand where their food comes from. ■



Jo Reynolds is already busy organizing the details of the 2026 Warren County Fair.

FINISH the year strong

Consider these tax moves

As 2025 nears a close, now is the ideal time to review your tax strategy and find potential opportunities. The steps you take before the end of the year might help you reduce your tax bill. Here are some ideas to consider.



- **Save now, have more later:** If you're participating in an employer-sponsored 401(k) or 403(b) plan, think about contributing the full pre-tax amount allowed to your retirement accounts by the end of the year. For 2025, the annual limit is \$23,500 (\$31,000 if you're age 50 to 59 or 64 and older; \$34,750 if you turn age 60, 61, 62 or 63 during the year). If you have a traditional or Roth IRA, you can contribute up to \$7,000 for 2025, \$8,000 if you're age 50 or older.¹ Traditional IRA contributions may be deductible, but Roth contributions are not.

- **Hold on for better rates:** Holding your investments longer may help reduce your tax

bill. If you have stocks or other assets that have appreciated in value, keeping the asset for more than a year means you are typically subject to long-term rates of 0%, 15%, or 20% on any capital gains from a sale (based on your income tax bracket). If you sell the asset earlier than this, your gains are generally taxed at ordinary income tax rates, which may be higher.

- **Harvest your losses:** If you experience capital losses on securities and no longer want to hold the securities in your portfolio, consider selling these underperformers to offset gains from other investments. Losses above the amount of your gains can offset up to \$3,000 of ordinary income (\$1,500 if your filing status is married filing separately). Unused losses can be carried forward to future years. Watch out for the wash-sale rule, which precludes taking a capital loss deduction if you repurchase the same investment within 30 days before or after selling it.

- **Give more, pay less tax with CSB Donor Advised Funds or a QCD:** If you itemize deductions on your federal income tax

return, our CSB Donor Advised funds allow you to deduct contributions, but the deduction is limited to 20-50% of your adjusted gross income, depending on the type of property you give and the type of organization to which you contribute. Gifting non-cash, appreciated assets can boost the benefit of the gift, but may also limit the annual amount you can give. If you are over age 70.5, you can avoid paying taxes on pre-tax IRA distributions by directing distributions straight to charity — including your RMD if you are in your required minimum distribution years. ■

For more information, please contact Kourtne Klocko with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax and/or legal professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

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V. BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
12/2	7:45 PM	Ottumwa	Ottumwa HS Gym
12/5	7:30 PM	Newton	Indianola HS
12/11	7:45 PM	Ames	Indianola HS
12/12	7:30 PM	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa HS
12/15	7:45 PM	DSM Linc.	Linc. HS Roundhouse
12/19	7:30 PM	Norwalk	Norwalk HS NPECC
1/5	7:30 PM	Carlisle	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/9	7:30 PM	DCG	Indianola HS
1/13	7:30 PM	Pella	Pella HS Gym
1/16	7:30 PM	Pella Christian	Pella Christian HS
1/23	7:30 PM	Newton	Newton HS U. Gym
1/26	7:45 PM	SEP	SEP HS Gym
1/27	7:30 PM	Oskaloosa	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/30	7:30 PM	Norwalk	Indianola HS N. Gym
2/3	7:30 PM	ADM	ADM HS N. Gym
2/6	7:30 PM	DCG	DCG HS Meadows Gym
2/10	7:30 PM	Pella	Indianola HS N. Gym
2/12	7:30 PM	Pella Christian	Indianola HS N. Gym
2/13	7:30 PM	DSM Christian	DSMC School Gym
2/17	7:30 PM	DSM East	Indianola HS N. Gym
2/19	7:30 PM	BD-Farrar	BD-Farrar HS

V. GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
11/24	7:30 PM	Urbandale	Indianola HS N. Gym
12/2	6:15 PM	Ottumwa	Ottumwa HS Gym
12/4	7:30 PM	DSM Roosevelt	Indianola HS N. Gym
12/5	6:00 PM	Newton	Indianola HS
12/11	6:15 PM	Ames	Indianola HS
12/12	6:00 PM	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa HS
12/15	6:15 PM	DSM Linc.	Linc. HS
12/19	6:00 PM	Norwalk	Norwalk HS NPECC
1/5	6:00 PM	Carlisle	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/9	6:00 PM	DCG	Indianola HS
1/13	6:00 PM	Pella	Pella HS Gym
1/16	6:00 PM	Pella Christian	Pella Christian HS
1/19	7:15 PM	BD-Farrar	BD-Farrar HS
1/23	6:00 PM	Newton	Newton HS U. Gym
1/26	6:15 PM	SEP	SEP HS Gym
1/27	6:00 PM	Oskaloosa	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/30	6:00 PM	Norwalk	Indianola HS N. Gym
2/3	6:00 PM	ADM	ADM HS N. Gym
2/6	6:00 PM	DCG	DCG HS Meadows Gym
2/10	6:00 PM	Pella	Indianola HS N. Gym
2/12	6:00 PM	Pella Christian	Indianola HS N. Gym

V. BOYS BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
11/25	3:00 PM	DSM North	Game Day Lanes
12/2	3:00 PM	DSM East	Bowlerama
12/8	3:00 PM	Johnston	Bowlerama
12/16	3:00 PM	DSM Roosevelt	Bowlerama
12/19	3:15 PM	Waterloo East	Cadillac XBC
1/8	3:00 PM	DSM Hoover	Game Day Lanes
1/13	2:00 PM	Triangular	Bowlerama
1/19	3:30 PM	Urbandale	Game Day Lanes
1/20	3:00 PM	Ottumwa	Bowlerama
1/21	10:00 AM	Bakers Inv.	Bowlerama
2/4	3:00 PM	Mason City	Bowlerama
2/9	10:00 AM	IAC Conf.	Family Bowling Center

V. GIRLS BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
11/12	3:00 PM	Mason City	Bowlerama
11/25	3:00 PM	DSM North	Game Day Lanes
12/2	3:00 PM	DSM East	Bowlerama
12/8	3:00 PM	Johnston	Bowlerama
12/16	3:00 PM	DSM Roosevelt	Bowlerama
12/19	3:15 PM	Waterloo East	Cadillac XBC
1/8	3:00 PM	DSM Hoover	Game Day Lanes
1/13	2:00 PM	L.M.N Tri.	Bowlerama
1/19	3:30 PM	Urbandale	Game Day Lanes
1/20	3:00 PM	Ottumwa	Bowlerama
1/21	10:00 AM	Bakers Inv.	Bowlerama
1/26	10:00 AM	IAC Girls Conf.	Family Bowling Center

V. BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
12/4	6:30 PM	Newton	Newton HS
12/6	11:00 AM	Bob Murphy Inv.	V Del. HS U. Gym
12/11	7:30 PM	DCG	DCG HS Meadows Gym
12/13	10:00 AM	Baltzley Inv.	Johnston HS
12/19	9:00 AM	2025 Battle/Waterloo	
12/20	9:00 AM	2025 Battle/Waterloo	
1/3	9:30 AM	Valley Duals	Valley HS Fieldhouse
1/8	5:30 PM	Pella	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/10	10:00 AM	Mendenhall Inv.	Ames HS
1/17	9:30 AM	Bob Sharp Inv.	Ankeny HS
1/22	5:30 PM	Norwalk	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/22	7:00 PM	Norwalk	Indianola HS
1/23	8:00 AM	Winnetonka T.	Winnetonka HS
1/24	8:00 AM	Winnetonka T.	Winnetonka HS
1/24	9:30 AM	I-35 R.runners T. I-35 HS	
1/31	10:00 AM	L. Hawk. Conf. T. Indianola HS N. Gym	

V. GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
11/22	8:00 AM	North Metro	Urbandale HS S. Gym
12/4	5:30 PM	Newton HS	Newton HS U. Gym
12/6	9:00 AM	Cardinal Classic	Newton HS L. Gym
12/11	6:30 PM	DCG	Meadows Main Gym
12/13	9:00 AM	Ankeny V/JV T.	Northview MS S. Gym
12/20	9:00 AM	Warhorse Inv. T.	Chariton HS
1/8	5:30 PM	Nevada Dual T.	Nevada HS
1/10	10:00 AM	Carlisle	Carlisle HS WAC
1/16	4:30 PM	Bob Sharp Inv.	Ankeny HS
1/17	9:30 AM	Pella Inv.	Pella HS
1/22	5:30 PM	Norwalk	Indianola HS N. Gym
1/24	10:00 AM	I-35 R. Gray T.	I-35 HS



FOR ALL
SPORTS
SCHEDULES



Schedules are subject to change. Scan for most up-to-date schedules.

V. BOYS SWIMMING*

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
* 11/8	12:00 PM	(G) Waukee Reg. WCSD Natatorium	
12/2	5:30 PM	Newton	Newton YMCA
12/6	10:00 AM	Newton Inv.	Newton YMCA
12/11	5:30 PM	Ottumwa	Beach Ottumwa
12/13	11:00 AM	Grinnell Tigers	G. College Natatorium
12/16	5:00 PM	Larry White Inv.	SEP HS Swimming Pool
1/3	11:00 AM	-	DM East HS Pool
1/8	5:30 PM	Centerville	Ind. Wellness Campus
1/13	5:30 PM	DSM East	DM East HS Pool
1/22	5:30 PM	Inv.	Ind. Wellness Campus
1/27	5:30 PM	Marshalltown	Marshalltown HS Pool

* - Girls Swim (Last event of the season.)

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WOMEN'S Mentoring

The Warren County Women's Mentoring Event was held Sept. 25 at Wilson's Orchard & Farm, hosted by Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce, Indianola Chamber and Carlisle Chamber of Commerce.



Katie Onset and Jennifer Jensen



Lucinda Sperry and Mallory Wells



Akosua Wiafe and Camryn Huyser



Aubrey Secrest and Abby Beckman



Tara Paul and Amanda Kennedy



Metinka Slater and Mary Torpy



Rahne Onstot and Ashlee Johannes



Dani McManus and Alexis Little



Amy Feser, Maggie Lewis and McKenzie Strenke



Vonnie Potter, Lisa Evan and Mel Guanci

OUT & ABOUT



Rheanne Kinney, Geri Seiberling and Haley Swanson



Jill Patava, Heather Monaghan, Jeneca Miller and Julia Bourg



Delaney Steeve



Lisa Evan



Abby Bylander



Marechen Clark



Amy Feser and Maggie Lewis



Danie Thomas and Melissa Peterson



Rachel Hendricks and Bailee Watson



Leslie Merriman and Emily Manley



Abbie Loyd and Amanda Zwanziger



Paula Chew and Christi Olson

MEET Jacob Smith

Making a difference in the lives of future agriculturists.

Growing up, Jacob Smith was an active member of the Sherman Sunbeams 4-H Club and the Newton FFA Chapter, holding leadership positions as both the chapter sentinel and president.

"Being involved in FFA as well as my family's registered cattle and row crop operation in Newton helped shape my passion for agriculture," he says. "I always knew I wanted a career in that field."

Smith considered studying agricultural engineering, but, as he started taking more agriculture courses in high school, his interest shifted. By his junior year, he discovered his true passion — agricultural education and FFA — thanks in part to the encouragement of his ag ed/FFA instructor, James Horn. He chose Northwest Missouri State University to earn his degree in agricultural education with an interest in animal science.

Smith has been the ag ed teacher and FFA advisor at Indianola High School since 2022. He shares his love of agriculture while helping students discover their own strengths and opportunities within the industry.

"FFA provides the perfect platform for that," he says. "It gives students real-world skills, leadership experiences, and a sense of belonging that lasts well beyond high school."

The Indianola FFA chapter has around 125 members and continues to grow. Throughout the school year, there are roughly 175 different students who take at least one ag class.

FFA provides students with a wide range of opportunities such as participating in Leadership Development Events and Career Development Events that help build communication, teamwork and technical agricultural skills. Beyond competitions, students can explore Supervised Agricultural Experience projects that align with their personal interests and career goals.

"For students who don't come from an agricultural background, FFA builds confidence, leadership and life skills by helping them prepare for success in their future career, no matter the path they choose," explains Smith.

Smith's FFA experience shaped much of who he is today. He encourages his students to get involved, step out of their comfort zones and build relationships and friendships. He also knows that some of the best learning (and the greatest impacts) are often cultivated outside the classroom when they travel to contests, conferences or hands-on learning events.

Smith is excited for the future of Indianola FFA and the new program that encourages students to reach beyond earning their Iowa FFA Degree and going for the American FFA Degree.

"I earned both of these and know the opportunities this opens up for students' futures," Smith says. "We're fortunate to have an active FFA alumni group and generous community members like Brad and Rhonda Ross, who are making this possible." ■



Indianola ag ed teacher and FFA advisor Jacob Smith says every success, big or small, reminds him why he chose to teach agriculture: to help students grow, lead and find their place in an industry that truly matters.

THANKFUL for the One

There's always that nag in our minds. Amid a season where we're encouraged to focus on being thankful for what we have — a worthwhile endeavor, for sure — there's often the distracting negative thought we try to ignore. "Yeah, but my life is a wreck." "Yeah, but the world is spinning out of control." It's easy to lose our gratitude.

Where can you turn for a sense of peace and security in a chaotic world? God knows we face such things throughout our lives and has given us the following words from Psalm 18. As we read it, we need to remember that this psalm was written by David "on the day the Lord rescued him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul," who was repeatedly trying to kill David. Did you get that? His life was in constant danger, yet he writes:

Psalms 18:1-3

I love You, Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock,
my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my mountain where I seek refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold.
I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and I was saved from my enemies.

What I think is noteworthy for us is how many ways David describes God. Strength, Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Mountain, Shield, Horn (denoting power), Stronghold. David is telling us that, in God are all the things we need and so much more. Are you in need of strength? Let God be your strength. Does the world feel to you like unstable ground made of shifting sands? Let God be your rock, an immovable foundation.

But an important line of this passage is near the end: "Who is worthy of praise." David says he calls out to God precisely because God is worthy of David's praise (and ours). God isn't a vending machine dispensing strength and stability and protection and so on like they are some sort of commodity we can purchase. God IS those things because of who God is. And that's why David can call on God.

Is this the God you know? Every week in this community, there are groups of folks getting together to praise this God, to hear from the words God has revealed to people. If you don't know this God, turn to the Scriptures and join with the people of God in worship this week. ■



Information provided by Kevin Mayer, New Heights Church, 200 E. First Ave., Indianola, 515-442-5111.

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