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NOVEMBER 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

HOMETOWN

holidays

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WELCOME

GIVE Santa a hug

There he was. An overweight, old man dressed in red with an unkept 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 his 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 Jackie Wilson

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?

Santa was on hand for the tree lighting at the Waukeetriangle's WinterFest.

WinterFest at the Triangle

Santa Claus, hot cocoa and the tree lighting — it's the season for holiday merrymaking at Waukee's annual WinterFest celebration.

WinterFest will be Friday, Dec. 5 from 6-8 p.m. at the Triangle in downtown Waukee. The family-friendly event is organized and hosted by Waukee Parks and Recreation in partnership with downtown businesses around the Triangle.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive before 6 p.m., at which time Waukee Mayor Courtney Clarke will light the WinterFest tree and surrounding lights. After the tree lighting, Santa Claus plans on arriving on a fire truck driven by the Waukee Fire Department. Apparently Santa's reindeers are conserving their energy for Christmas Eve, so the firetruck is his current mode of transportation.

The festivities continue among brightly colored lights and holiday decorations. An ice-sculpting demonstration and various games will be offered. A popular snowball drop takes place at 6:30 p.m. at Charter Bank. Kids drop "snowballs" — which are actually ping pong balls — for children to pick up. Then, kids take the balls to Charter Bank in exchange for



The Triangle is lit up for WinterFest.

books.

Santa will be on hand to listen to children's wish lists at the Community Center. Kids can also decorate cookies and make crafts at different indoor and outdoor stations. All ages can enjoy free s'mores, hot chocolate, soup and cider from various businesses.

Local businesses, restaurants, bars and food trucks will also offer dinner, drink specials and various items for purchase.

Heather Behrens, director of marketing and communications for the city of Waukee,

invites all ages to the festival. She recommends folks dress in weather-appropriate layers, as the activities are a mix of indoor and outdoor events.

Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items and new, unwrapped toys or monetary donations to help neighbors in need and drop them off at the Community Center. WayPoint Resources (formerly Waukee Area Christian Services) will then distribute the donations.

Last year's attendance was approximately



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FEATURE



Local business Old Station Craft Meats in Waukee serves free cider during WinterFest.



Volunteers at Veteran's Hall serve hot soup at the 2024 WinterFest.

1,000 people. Behrens says the city has hosted the festival for more than 20 years, and it is an important tradition for Waukee residents.

"Our mayor and city council members deeply value a sense of community," Behrens says. "WinterFest is a place to gather and

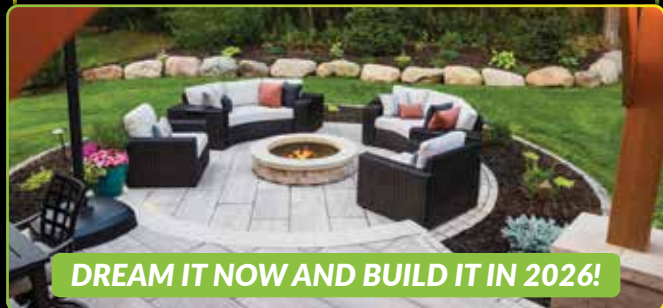
celebrate the season. It's a great chance to see old neighbors and make new friends."

By holding the festival at the downtown Triangle, it offers opportunities for new residents to explore local businesses and to feel at home in Waukee, she says.

"It's a great way to kick off the winter season," she reflects. "It's a heartwarming tradition for our community."

For information on schedules and weather updates, check out the Facebook page or visit <https://waukee.org/WinterFest>.

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FEATURE

Veterans Hall: Warm up and support the military

The Waukee American Legion Post 737 has provided a warm and relaxing environment during the annual WinterFest celebration for several years.

Waukee Veterans Hall is home of the Waukee American Legion, Waukee Legion Riders and the Waukee American Legion Auxiliary. The groups provide soup and hot cocoa, along with chairs and tables.

"Participating in the WinterFest enables the community to meet new friends and enjoy the holiday festivities each year," Jim Allen, Waukee American Legion historian, says. "We are excited to be part of the Waukee community and are looking forward to another great time."

In addition, the Legion is sponsoring local Iowa military families in need during the holidays. The group has provided gifts and meals for the past 16 years for military families during the holidays.

The Legion will have "wish trees" where the public can pick up wish tags to purchase items. Wish trees are located at Mickey's Irish Pub, Merll's Pub and Patio, Norm's Pub and the

Coffeesmith in Waukee.

Additionally, people can donate via Venmo to @ALR-Post737 or write a check to the Waukee American Legion Riders at 410 Sixth St., Waukee, IA 50263. Volunteers are needed to pick up and deliver items as well. To offer assistance, contact John Parcel at alr.waukee.737@gmail.com.

Helping neighbors in need

During the winter months, the community relies on each other to help those in need. As folks are in the giving spirit, assisting with celebrations and giving back to the community are important. One way the community can become involved is by supporting WayPoint Resources.

WayPoint Resources serves Dallas County residents with a food pantry, clothing closet, medical assistance and other resources.

WayPoint also provides holiday dinner boxes and gifts for children, so every family can celebrate the season. People are encouraged to drop off donations of non-perishable food items or new unwrapped toys to the Community Center during the WinterFest.



Volunteers Laura Bloom and Sonia Arnold assist with assembling gifts and holiday boxes for clients at WayPoint Resources. Photo by Jackie Wilson

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INSPECTION & TUNE UP**

FEATURE



Kids walk through the life-size Candyland game at the Waukee Public Library.

In addition, individuals and businesses are encouraged to host a donation drive for food or clothing, adopt a family at Christmas or provide monetary donations.

One fun way to give is to make a donation

in honor of someone special. This is perfect for the person who “has everything.” When donors complete the Dedicate This Donation section on WayPoint’s giving page, they will send an email to the honoree, sharing how their

thoughtful gift is helping fill plates and bring hope to families in need.

To learn more about donating, volunteering or receiving assistance, visit <https://waypoint.care/> and “Turn an empty plate into a blessing shared.”

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Life-size Candyland game

For nearly 70 years, the Candyland game has been played by generations of families. Candyland is an ideal first game for young children who are unable to read by identifying colors to advance game play.

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The Waukee Library is hosting a life-size Candyland game that anyone can play. The library sets up a life-size Candyland game board, where visitors walk through the game as if they are the pieces. Just like in the game, players draw cards and work their way around the path toward the candy castle finish line. Players wander through the different candy-themed landscapes, which include lollipop woods, gumdrop mountain, licorice forest and more.

Eliza Ahrens, Waukee children's librarian, says this is the fifth year the library has hosted the life-size Candyland game. Last year's attendance had 1,847 visitors during the three days. The library chose the activity, as people of all ages are looking for things to do during the winter break period.

"We love Candyland because it's a game that's familiar and accessible for folks of all ages and abilities," Ahrens says.

She says the game has grown throughout the years. Babies up to senior-aged folks attend the event.

"We have had so many families and groups return year after year. I love that it's becoming a winter tradition for our community," she says.

Candyland is open for all ages, to either play the game or walk through the decorations.

This year's Candyland will be open during regular library hours on Dec. 26, 29, 30 and 31.

To accommodate larger groups who may want to secure a time to go through together, registration is required on the morning of Dec. 26. Otherwise, the room is open during regular library hours on a first-come, first-served basis. Several groups will be able to play through at the same time. It takes about 15 minutes to play through the game.

Afternoon and evening game times tend to be less busy. Ahrens says there is no edible candy involved, so there are no worries about allergens. The layout and decorations change and grow every year, and Ahrens says it is worth coming back each year.

With numerous colorful photo opportunities, it's one of the library's highlights of the year.

"We have such a great time and love seeing so many people come through," Ahrens adds. "We're hoping this will be the sweetest year yet."

For more information, visit <https://waukee.librarycalendar.com/events/month> and put "candyland" in the search feature.

Family Fest in January

Looking for a warm-weather indoor activity for the kids in the middle of winter? The Waukee Parks and Recreation Department has just the cure for the winter blues at their annual FamilyFest event.

FamilyFest is a free event that takes place on Saturday, Jan. 17, at Lutheran Church of Hope, located at 305 N.E. Dartmoor Drive in Waukee. The event runs from 9 a.m. to noon.

Inflatables are featured, while local businesses provide various free activities and games. There will be a robotic demonstration, free cookies and more.

For more information, visit www.waukee.org/472/FamilyFest. ■



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Eric Slaughter

Van Meter

Military branch: Army

Rank: Sergeant/E5

Served: May 2003 to November 2009

"I don't believe the public has a duty to serve veterans. Nothing is owed to us for our service. The public should spend a lot of time supporting veterans, through social events, that can help a veteran reintegrate into the community. So many of us get out of the military and return to places with small or non-existent veteran populations. We often feel lost because we are removed from a deep sense of community and entering the unknown is difficult. The public can help veterans by engaging with them, welcoming them to their communities, and being supportive of their transition back in to civilian life."



Fernando J. Rosado

Wauke

Military branch: U.S. Army

Rank: Sergeant

Served: April 2000 to December 2005

"Honoring those who served our country means committing to consistent, heartfelt actions that truly recognize their sacrifices, rather than limiting respect to a single day. Meaningful ways to show appreciation include inviting a veteran to coffee or a meal to listen and learn about their everyday experiences. Sending handwritten notes provides lasting encouragement. Supporting veteran-owned businesses or hiring veterans, when possible, makes a tangible difference. Volunteering time with organizations like the American Legion, VFW posts, or VA hospitals — whether by assisting with paperwork, providing transportation to appointments, or organizing events — offers direct help. Attending or hosting local veterans events allow people to hear and share their stories with future generations. This Veterans Day, let's go beyond a simple 'Thank you for your service' and embrace sincere actions that remind veterans they are seen, valued and never forgotten."



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

Scott Potter

Waukee

Military branch: U.S. Army and National Guard

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Served: Army - April 1997 to May 1994;

National Guard - May 1994 to September 2017

"The military is a different culture than most civilian jobs; tight bonds are established between soldiers. There are many veterans who are quiet about their service due to feeling like they are just 'doing their job.' The public can best serve veterans by living a life worthy of their service. The Army teaches selfless service. Too often people are making things about themselves instead of helping others or improve the community where they live and work. There is a feeling you get from helping others that can't be put into words."



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Tony Enriquez

Adel; employed at Shottenkirk in Waukee

Military branch: Marines 1997-98; served as a Patriot Guard for five years.

"Home of the free is because of the brave. Each person who goes into the military makes sacrifices. The motto of the Marine Corps is Semper Fidelis, which means 'always faithful.' I spent five years as a Patriot Guard, making sure veterans were peacefully laid to rest. As a Patriot Guard, our motto — 'Mission accomplished' — is important, to pay our last respects."



SCHNEIDER stresses 'better together'

Says it is his mission to give back

Mike Schneider is a man on a mission.

In 2011, Mike Schneider founded — and still leads — 100+ Men on a Mission, a group of local men committed to supporting the Des Moines community and surrounding areas.

When he first learned about this collective philanthropy approach, Schneider discovered that it originated in his hometown of Jackson, Michigan.

“Unbeknownst to me, I knew the lady who started this and went to school with her brother,” he recalls. “One thing led to another, and I was introduced to their cousin who lives in Des Moines. The rest is history.”

100+ Men on a Mission meets quarterly with the goal of hearing from three area nonprofits and then selecting one to receive a collective gift of around \$15,000. The group accomplishes this as members pledge to make their quarterly donations. For the past two years, they have also benefited from a matching gift sponsor, JC Toland Painting.

Each February (the next one on Monday, Feb. 9), the group joins 100+ Women Who Care to host a joint meeting. That combined gift — double their usual — is a tremendous blessing to an unsuspecting nonprofit.

In addition to quarterly meetings, Schneider leads the group's



Travis Gaule, left, and Rob Grove, right, of Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors, present Mike Schneider with the Neighbor Spotlight certificate.

September golf outing, another opportunity to support a local charity. This past September marked the group's fifth annual outing, which grossed around \$40,000, netted about \$30,000, and directed those funds to St. Vincent de Paul of Des Moines.

100+ Men on a Mission also uses the power of group giving to support Socks of Love each November. In addition to their pledged donations, members bring socks that are redistributed to local organizations in need.

“Throughout all of this, I truly believe that we are ‘better together,’” Schneider says.

Outside of the organization he leads, Schneider stays active in the community through the West Des Moines Leadership Academy, where he helps plan alumni events such as the upcoming Day of Kindness in early 2026. He is also a longtime volunteer within the Lutheran Church of Hope network and, for the past 25 years, has joined a handful of like-minded men to minister to youth in their own unique way.

“And by that, I mean, we created a spoof band called ‘n Pink’ in homage to NSYNC and are happy to embarrass ourselves to reach the kids with the Good News,” Schneider says.

In addition, Schneider coaches an adult team at the Kiwanis Miracle League and has been involved with the organization since its inception as a coach, volunteer and board member. His son, Cory, who has special needs, enjoys baseball, and the two have shared this experience year after year.

And when he's “bored,” Schneider can often be found dressed as the Grinch at local events. Next up is a December community celebration in Granger.

“Volunteering at these and other opportunities has always been an important part of the past three-plus decades and likely got its start when I met my now-wife volunteering with the Optimist organization,” he shares. “Our shared desire to work with others has rooted itself in our families, and our two boys model that same passion.”

For Schneider, volunteering is an endless source of fulfillment.

“You can't help but feel so much better about yourself, your life situation or the world around you coming off of a volunteer-high,” he says. “And some of my absolute best and lifelong friends have resulted from my volunteer involvement. These people will literally drop anything to respond to a need of my own or my family, and, for that, I will be forever grateful.” ■

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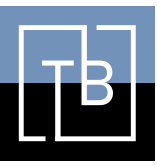
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WAUKEE Northwest band fundraiser

Donate to band for chance to win a car



The Waukee Northwest marching band performs.

Many high school bands use fundraisers as a way to help curb expenses. What if supporting that band offers you a chance to win a new car?

Now you can do both — support Waukee Northwest High School band while getting a chance to win a new car.

Northwest High School Band students are currently selling raffle tickets for a 2026 Chevrolet Trailblazer. Shottenkirk Chevrolet of Waukee is donating the vehicle, and raffle tickets cost \$25 each. It's not a traditional paper raffle; it's a virtual raffle, where tickets are sold online.

Selling online is easier because students don't need to exchange money. People are directed to purchase through a website QR code. Those buying tickets can designate a Waukee Northwest Band member by entering their name on the site to obtain credit. If you don't have a band member's name, credits will be split among band members.

Andrea Webb of Waukee is on the Waukee Northwest Band Parent fundraising committee. She joined as she currently has two kids in band: a senior and an eighth grade student. Last year, the band's car raffle fundraiser raised more than \$20,000 for band students.

Webb says fundraisers assist with costs. Marching band students have expenses, such as travel, uniforms and other trips, which are not covered by the school. Parents appreciate the programs as it means they pay less out of pocket for their students.

Shottenkirk's general manager, Travis Block, says supporting school and community events is important, as it aligns with their slogan: "Serving the community, employees and customers."

"It's an obligation as a business, not only to work in the community, but to better it," he explains.

Currently the marching band and color guard consists of 117 students. Webb says her son treasures his time as a band member.

"He's really enjoyed and benefitted by being in the band. It's been a great opportunity, and it's character building for band members," she says.

Last year, the band traveled to Ireland and marched in the St. Patrick's Day parade. They generally offer travel trips on alternating years.

In addition to the raffle, band students from both Waukee high schools volunteer their time at the Can Shack, a place where the public can donate their cans for redemption. The Can Shack is located at the Fareway parking lot at 200 S.E. Laurel in Waukee. Proceeds from the cans benefit both the Waukee and Northwest high school bands.

The car raffle winner will be announced at the band's winter concert on Dec. 15 at the Waukee Northwest auditorium. Folks don't need to be present to win. The public is invited to attend the concert.

To learn more about the band and raffle, visit the band's website: northwestbands.org. To purchase a raffle ticket, visit: www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2nd-annual-waukee-northwest-band-parent-organizations-car-raffle or scan this QR code. ■





WAUKEE

Warriors

2025-26 WINTER SCHEDULE

V GIRLS/BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 5	6/15/7:45PM	Johnston	Johnston HS
Dec 9	6/15/7:45PM	SE Polk	Waukee HS
Dec 12	6/15/7:45PM	Ankeny HS	Ankeny HS
Dec 16	6/15/7:45PM	Waukee NW	Waukee NW HS
Dec 19	6/15/7:45PM	Dowling	Waukee HS
Jan 2	6/15/7:45PM	Ankeny Cent.	Ankeny Cent. HS
Jan 6	6/15/7:45PM	WDM Valley	Waukee HS
Jan 9	6/15/7:45PM	Urbandale	Waukee HS
Jan 13	6/15/7:45PM	Johnston	Waukee HS
Jan 20	6/15/7:45PM	Ankeny HS	Waukee HS
Jan 23	6/15/7:45PM	SE Polk	SE Polk HS
Jan 30	6/15/7:45PM	Dowling	Dowling Catholic HS
Feb 3	6/15/7:45PM	Waukee NW	Waukee HS
Feb 6	6/15/7:45PM	Ankeny Cent.	Waukee HS
Feb 10	6/15/7:45PM	Urbandale	Urbandale HS
Feb 13	6/15/7:45PM	WDM Valley	Valley HS

Girls 6:15 PM / Boys 7:45 PM

JV GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 5	See Below	Johnston	Johnston HS
Dec 9	See Below	SE Polk	Waukee HS
Dec 12	See Below	Ankeny HS	Ankeny HS
Dec 16	See Below	Waukee NW	Waukee NW HS
Dec 19	See Below	Dowling	Waukee HS
Jan 2	See Below	Ankeny Cent.	Ankeny Cent. HS
Jan 6	See Below	WDM Valley	Waukee HS
Jan 9	See Below	Urbandale	Waukee HS
Jan 13	See Below	Johnston	Waukee HS
Jan 20	See Below	Ankeny HS	Waukee HS
Jan 23	See Below	SE Polk	Southeast Polk HS
Jan 30	See Below	Dowling	Dowling Catholic HS
Feb 3	See Below	Waukee NW	Waukee HS
Feb 6	See Below	Ankeny Cent.	Waukee HS
Feb 10	See Below	Urbandale	Urbandale HS
Feb 13	See Below	WDM Valley	Valley HS

Boys 10th 4:45 PM / Boys 9th 6:15 PM Girls JV1 4:45 PM / JV2 7:45 PM

V BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 11	7:30PM	Johnston	Johnston HS
Dec 16	7:30PM	Ankeny HS	Ankeny HS
Dec 18	7:30PM	SE Polk	Waukee HS
Jan 6	7:30PM	Dowling	Dowling Catholic HS
Jan 8	7:30PM	Waukee NW	Waukee HS
Jan 15	7:30PM	Ankeny Cent.	Ankeny Cent. HS
Jan 22	7:30PM	Urbandale	Waukee HS
Jan 29	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Waukee HS

V BOYS/GIRLS BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 20 *	3:45PM	Ankeny	Great Escape
Dec 4	3:45PM	Dowling	Warrior Lanes
Dec 18	3:45PM	WDM Valley	Warrior Lanes
Jan 8	3:45PM	Urbandale	Game Day Lanes
Jan 15	3:45PM	SE Polk	Warrior Lanes
Jan 22	3:45PM	Johnston	Game Day Lanes
Jan 27 *	3:30PM	Multiple	Great Escape
Jan 29 **	3:45PM	Ankeny	Great Escape
Feb 12 **	3:30PM	Multiple	Great Escape

Girls Only * / Boys Only**

V BOYS SWIMMING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 4	5:30PM	Ankeny	DMACC - TP Aquatics.
Dec 11	5:30PM	SE Polk	Waukee Natatorium
Dec 16	5:30PM	Johnston	Summit MS
Dec 18	5:30PM	Waukee NW	Waukee Natatorium
Jan 8	5:30PM	WDM Valley	Waukee Natatorium
Jan 15	5:30PM	Dowling	Waukee Natatorium
Jan 24	11:00AM	Multiple	Waukee Natatorium

FOR ALL WARRIORS'S SCHEDULES



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

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NORTHWEST

Wolves

2025-26 WINTER SCHEDULE

V GIRLS/BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 2	6:15/7:45PM	Ankeny Cent.	Waukee NW HS
Dec 5	6:15/7:45PM	Urbandale	Waukee NW HS
Dec 9	6:15/7:45PM	WDM Valley	Valley HS
Dec 12	6:15/7:45PM	Johnston	Waukee NW HS
Dec 16	6:15/7:45PM	Waukee	Waukee NW HS
Dec 19	6:15/7:45PM	SE Polk	Waukee NW HS
Jan 6	TBD	Dowling	Waukee NW HS
Jan 9	6:15/7:45PM	Ankeny HS	Ankeny HS
Jan 13	6:15/7:45PM	Urbandale	Urbandale HS
Jan 16	6:15/7:45PM	Ankeny Cent.	Ankeny Cent. HS
Jan 20	6:15/7:45PM	Johnston	Johnston HS
Jan 23	6:15/7:45PM	WDM Valley	Waukee NW HS
Jan 30	6:15/7:45PM	SE Polk	SE Polk HS
Feb 3	6:15/7:45PM	Waukee	Waukee HS
Feb 10	6:15/7:45PM	Ankeny HS	Waukee NW HS
Feb 13	6:15/7:45PM	Dowling	Dowling Catholic HS

Girls 6:15 PM / Boys 7:45 PM

JV BOYS/GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 2	See Below	Ankeny Cent.	Waukee NW HS
Dec 5	See Below	Urbandale	Waukee NW HS
Dec 9	See Below	WDM Valley	Valley HS
Dec 12	See Below	Johnston	Waukee NW HS
Dec 16	See Below	Waukee	Waukee NW HS
Dec 19	See Below	SE Polk	Waukee NW HS
Jan 6	TBD	Dowling	Waukee NW HS
Jan 9	See Below	Ankeny HS	Ankeny HS
Jan 13	See Below	Urbandale	Urbandale HS
Jan 16	See Below	Ankeny Cent.	Ankeny Cent.
Jan 20	See Below	Johnston	Johnston HS
Jan 23	See Below	WDM Valley	Waukee NW HS
Jan 30	See Below	SE Polk	SE Polk HS
Feb 3	See Below	Waukee	Waukee HS
Feb 10	See Below	Ankeny HS	Waukee NW HS
Feb 13	See Below	Dowling	Dowling Catholic HS

Boys 10th 4:45 PM / 9th 6:15 PM Girls JV1 4:45 PM / JV2 7:45 PM

V BOYS SWIMMING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 4	5:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley HS
Dec 11	5:30PM	Johnston	Waukee NW HS
Dec 16	5:30PM	Dowling	Dowling Catholic HS
Dec 18	5:30PM	Waukee	Waukee Natatorium
Jan 6	5:30PM	SE Polk	SE Polk HS
Jan 15	5:30PM	Ankeny	Waukee NW HS
Jan 24	11:00AM	Multiple	Waukee Natatorium

V BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 4	7:30PM	Ankeny Cent.	Waukee NW HS
Dec 11	7:30PM	Urbandale	Urbandale HS
Dec 16	7:30PM	Johnston	Waukee NW HS
Dec 18	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley HS
Jan 6	7:30PM	SE Polk	Waukee NW HS
Jan 8	7:30PM	Waukee	Waukee HS
Jan 20 *	5:30PM	Multiple	Waukee NW HS
Jan 22	7:30PM	Ankeny HS	Ankeny HS
Jan 29	7:30PM	Dowling	Waukee NW HS

Girls Only * Boys Only**

V BOYS/GIRLS BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 20 *	3:45PM	Ankeny	Great Escape
Dec 4	3:45PM	Dowling	Warrior Lanes
Dec 18	3:45PM	WDM Valley	Warrior Lanes
Jan 8	3:45PM	Urbandale	Game Day Lanes
Jan 15	3:45PM	SE Polk	Warrior Lanes
Jan 22	3:45PM	Johnston	Game Day Lanes
Jan 27 *	3:30PM	Multiple	Great Escape
Jan 29 **	3:45PM	Ankeny	Great Escape
Feb 12 **	3:30PM	Multiple	Great Escape

Girls Only * / Boys Only**

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**FOR ALL
WOLVES'S
SCHEDULES**



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Be sure to check for cancellations.

Coming up in the Waukee 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.

Waukee Public Library events

950 Warrior Lane

Most events require advanced registration and can be viewed at waukee.librarycalendar.com/events.

• **Art Gallery Exhibit: "Look Inside Violet Falls," Nov. 2-30**, David Johnston

• **Kids Craft Gifts, Friday, Dec. 5**, 4 p.m., and **Saturday, Dec. 6**, 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Get in the gift-giving spirit. Kids are invited to use their creativity to complete two craft activities. A gift-wrapping station will be available if they want to package their creations to give to someone special. A grown-up should plan to stay with children during this event. For kids 3-11 years. Registration is required.

• **Teen Super Sunday, Sunday, Dec. 14**, 1:30 p.m. Frost, sprinkle and show off your skills in a cookie decorating showdown. Compete in a fun and friendly cookie decorating contest with prizes and plenty of delicious fun. After you enjoy your own sweet treat, make a baked goods in a jar kit to take home. A gift-wrapping station will be available if you want to package your creation as a gift for someone special. For students in grades 6-12. Registration is required.

• **DIY Bath & Body Gifts for Adults, Tuesday, Dec. 16**, 6 p.m. Come unwind with a hands-on evening of spa-inspired crafts. Relax, create and take home your very own self-care items. Keep them for yourself or give them as gifts. For adults ages 18 and older. Registration is requested.

• **Life-size Candyland, Dec. 26, 29 and 30**, 9:30 a.m. to 30 minutes to close. Get ready for giant candy fun. The library's front room will be transformed to a life-size Candyland game board, and you may even meet some of your favorite game characters. For family and friend groups of all ages. Registration required for attendance on the morning of Dec. 26. All other dates and times will be first-come, first-served, with a limit of three groups at a time. All ages welcome.

WinterFest

Friday, Dec. 5
Downtown Triangle

Bring on the holiday cheer with your friends, family and neighbors at Waukee's free, annual WinterFest celebration held at the Downtown Triangle. Enjoy warm holiday treats, games and activities, a visit with Santa, tree lighting and much more. See the cover story for more details and visit www.waukee.org/476/WinterFest.

Holiday Shopping Extravaganza

Saturday Nov. 22, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Union Park United Methodist Church, 2305 E. 12th St., Des Moines

The Extravaganza features many crafters with a variety of creative items that are perfect for the holidays. Free admission. Close-up parking and lunch available to purchase.



The Christkindlmarket

Dec. 4-7 and Dec. 11-14
Principal Park, 1 Line Drive,
Des Moines

Experience a German-inspired Christmas Market. Enjoy the sights, sounds, smells and flavors of the holidays as you participate in a 750-year-old tradition. Shop regional vendors selling old-world, hand-crafted products from wooden vendor stalls; enjoy lively performances in Yuletide Hall; participate in children's activities; sip Glühwein (warm, mulled wine); and savor European beer. More information available at www.christkindlmarketdsm.com.

Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus

Sunday, Dec. 14, 8 a.m. to noon
West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus will be giving out goody bags, talking with children and providing photo opportunities. The breakfast buffet includes biscuits and gravy, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and, of course all-you-can-eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee. Enjoy a Bloody Mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Serving is from 8 a.m. till noon. Cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and younger. There will also be a Christmas bake sale. The Elks hold a breakfast the second Sunday of the month. Proceeds support the Elks' Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities, veterans and community charities.

Bowling family fun

Various dates
Warrior Lanes, 190 S.E. Laurel St.,
Waukee

Warrior Lanes holds a variety of family-fun events. The glow-in-the-dark bowling includes a one-topping pizza and pitcher of soda for up to five bowlers. For more information and booking, visit <https://warriorlanes.com/specials/>. All are on Sundays from noon to 1:30 p.m. with registration deadline at 6 p.m. two days prior.

Dec. 14, Ugly Holiday Sweater Party. A special Countdown to Noon Year's Eve event is Wednesday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Tinseltown in the Park

Nov. 22 - Dec. 20
Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

Mark your calendars for Tinseltown in the Park, featuring live Christmas tree sales, biergarten specials, food trucks, entertainers, unique visits from holiday A-listers, photo opportunities, and more to celebrate the holiday season in the park. Visit www.waterworkspark.org/tinseltown-in-water-works-park/ for schedule of events.



Be sure to check for cancelations.



Holiday Promenade

Various dates, 5-8 p.m.
Historic East Village

Enjoy extended hours at local shops and restaurants, special promotions and pop-up experiences, live music and entertainment, visits from Santa and other holiday characters and free trolley rides throughout the neighborhood.

- Dec. 5: Winefest's Vino at Promenade with free wine samples.
- Dec. 12: Ugly Sweater Contest across East Village businesses.
- Dec. 19: Drone Show with Santa Claus.

Visit eastvillagedesmoines.com/promenade for the latest event updates and details.



Jingle in the Junction

Thursdays, Dec. 4, 11 and 18,
5-8 p.m.
5th Street Main Street District,
West Des Moines

Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts at locally owned small businesses. Dine and drink at local restaurants and bars. Enjoy free horse-drawn trolley rides, visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus in Old City Hall, and watch live ice carving demonstrations. Food and treat vendors will be available. Free admission and family-friendly programming on all dates. Free parking is available in the 886 spaces located off Fourth and Sixth streets. Weekly rotating features include live reindeer and specialty performers. See the full event schedule at <https://valleyjunction.com/upcoming-events/>.

Shop and Dine Along The Peppermint Trail

Saturday, Dec. 13

The Avenues of Ingersoll and Grand

Celebrate the season with your favorite local businesses on The Avenues of Ingersoll & Grand and the Roosevelt Cultural District. The Peppermint Trail, presented by Veridian Credit Union, returns with shopping and dining specials happening all day at local shops and restaurants, plus a line-up of holiday festivities, including trolley rides, ice carving, photos with Santa, carolers and more. The "Bee-Merry-Line" trolley will travel on a loop from noon to 4 p.m. with multiple stops along Ingersoll Avenue and at the Shops At Roosevelt. See a route map on the event website, as well as list of businesses' specials and times for special activities. www.theavenuesdsm.com/peppermint-trail

Entirely Kids Day: Together

Saturday, Nov. 29, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave.,
Des Moines

Celebrate the joy of creating and connecting at Entirely Kids Day: Together at the Des Moines Art Center. Inspired by "Manuel Álvarez Bravo: Collaborations," an exhibition surrounding collaborative photography, and the vibrant portraits of "Aliza Nisenbaum: Día de los Muertos," this free, family-friendly event invites kids and their families to explore how art brings people together.

Enjoy a day of hands-on art making, playful movement, and gallery activities — including special collaborations with Pied Piper Studios and Seedlings Children's Theater. Discover what's possible when we create side by side in this celebration of art, connection, and community. For information, visit <https://desmoinesartcenter.org/event/entirely-kids-day-together/>.

Stories With St. Nicholas

Sunday, Dec. 14, 4-8 p.m.
Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg
Parkway, Des Moines

Immerse yourself in a special presentation from St. Nicholas and his reindeer, along with the Top Hat Carolers. St Nicholas will read "Twas the Night Before Christmas" along with a reading of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" from none other than the Grinch himself.



Des Moines Community Orchestra Concerts

• **Sing Messiah!: Sunday, Dec. 7, 2 p.m.**, Grace United Methodist Church, 3700 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Dr. Marion Scott

• **Winter Concert: Sunday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m.**, Staplin Performing Arts Center, 3650 Woodland Ave., West Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Joshua Barlage, Featured Soloist: Curtis Barr, Cello

• **Spring Concert: Sunday, May 10, 2 p.m.**, Drake University Sheslow Auditorium, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Kara Mather Des Moines Community Orchestra, Featured Soloist: Dr. Kevin Allemagne, Clarinet



Visit St. Nicholas

Sunday, Nov. 30, 1-5 p.m.
Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

St. Nicholas returns to the park along with live reindeer. You'll have the chance to visit with him and interact with his top performers, brought to you by Iowa Reindeer Rental. The Top Hat Carolers and holiday craft and food vendors will be ready to greet you in the 104.1 EZ-FM Warming Hut. ■



City of Waukee Bulletin NOVEMBER 2025

Find more information on City services,
programs and events at Waukee.org

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[TheCityofWaukee](https://www.youtube.com/TheCityofWaukee)

Waukee.org



Waukee City Hall
230 W. Hickman Rd.
515-978-7900



Waukee has plenty of fun activities to help you keep the winter blues away. Here are a few to get you started.

1. **The Downtown Triangle will be full of holiday cheer at WinterFest** on Friday, December 5 from 6-8 p.m. We light the WinterFest Tree at 6 p.m. sharp. Then play games, meet Santa, watch live ice sculpting and more. Donations of non-perishable food items or new, unwrapped toys will be collected to help neighbors in need. Visit Waukee.org/WinterFest for the schedule.
2. **The Library invites you to "Hop into Reading"** in their Winter Bingo Challenge through January 31. Play a bingo card full of activities for up to two chances to win the grand prize for your age group. Sign up at WaukeePublicLibrary.org/Winter or in person at the Library.
3. **When the snow comes, head to the sledding hill in Warrior Park** near the water tower. It's specifically engineered for sledding fun. Or strap on your skates at the outdoor ice rink in Grant Park when temperatures are cold enough. Get the dates and hours at Waukee.org/IceRink.
4. **Waukee Parks and Recreation has a variety of programs**, classes and leagues for all ages at Waukee.org/Registration. Holiday tip: they make great gifts for family and friends!
 - Cheer in person when the Minnesota Wild face the Ottawa Senators in St. Paul on December 13. Children can go on the day trip when accompanied by their adult. Register by November 30.
 - Online registration opens December 1 for Girls Recreational Softball (grades K-7), which runs mid-April to early June.
 - Kids can have tons of curated fun while you enjoy a date night with Parents Night Out by Camp Brainiac on December 12, January 16 or February 27 for grades K-5.
 - Learn fun tricks to dazzle family and friends from professional magician Lee Cole at Magicclass on December 29 for ages 6-15.
 - Sharpen artistic skills with Sunflower Fine Art. Options for Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays for budding artists ages 6-18.

**Dates
to Know**

City Council Meetings

December 1 and 15 at 5:30 p.m.
City Hall and Zoom
Waukee.org/CityCouncil

Finance 101

December 9, 5-6 p.m.
Waukee Public Library
Register at WaukeePublicLibrary.org



Get Ready for Winter

If snow is forecast for Waukee, the City will activate the snow ordinance and emergency parking ban. During this time, parking on public streets is not allowed so that plows can clear City

streets of snow quickly and safely. Parking bans are shared at Waukee.org, through City of Waukee social media and alerts from Alert Iowa. Find the sign-up instructions at Waukee.org/Connect.



New Holiday Recycling Options

As you clean out after the holidays, use our free drop sites to safely recycle potentially hazardous items. Through January 30, drop off old or broken strands of lights in the free collection box at Waukee Public Library. LED,

classic, plastic, and glass bulbs as well as net, icicle and battery-powered lights are accepted. Keep them loose when you drop them in the collection box. The lithium-ion batteries found in computers, phones, toys, e-scooters and more can cause fires in garbage cans and landfills. Put them in the free dropbox at City Hall, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. or the Waukee Public Library during regular hours. You can also bring household batteries (like AA, AAA, 9V and button types), tool batteries and small electronics like phones or tablets. Cords are accepted too. Metro Waste Authority will take care of the rest!



Holiday Closures & Trash Delay

All City of Waukee offices will be closed December 24-25. There will be no garbage or recycling pick-up on Thursday, December 25. If your regular pick-up day is Thursday or Friday, it will

be delayed by one day for a Friday through Saturday schedule. Curbside Christmas tree pick-up for live trees will be Mondays, January 5 and January 12.



Utilities for Snowbirds

If you plan to leave Waukee for at least three consecutive months, you can have your water service disconnected during the time you are gone. There is a reconnection fee upon return, but it is a reduced rate for snowbirds. If you

are a City of Waukee garbage customer, you may also request garbage services be suspended, but you will still pay the monthly landfill fee. Visit Waukee.org/Snowbird to learn more.



Be a Part of Operation Wish List

The Waukee Police Department is preparing to help local families during the holidays. They will provide gifts and essentials to children in need through Operation Wish List. You can help by donating money to support

these efforts. Cash or checks can be sent or delivered to: Waukee Police Department, 815 NW 20th Street, Waukee, IA 50263.



Learn to Craft or DIY

Creativebug is an online learning platform with hundreds of instructional videos on arts, crafts and DIY projects. Learn techniques in painting, knitting, sewing, paper crafting and more from professional artists and crafters. New

classes are added regularly, and users can follow along at their own pace. Best of all, this is a free resource with your Waukee Public Library card. Get the link at WaukeePublicLibrary.org.



DANCE, PICKLEBALL AND KARATE, OH MY!

Sign up for winter programs at Waukee.org/Registration.



Crafty Saturdays (all ages)

December 13, 10-11 a.m.
Waukee Public Library
WaukeePublicLibrary.org

City Buildings and Library Closed

December 24-25
No trash collection on December 25

Life-Size Candyland

December 26, 29, 30 and 31
Waukee Public Library
Register at WaukeePublicLibrary.org

MEET Kayla Johnson

Enjoys the curiosity and wonder of second graders

Kayla Johnson earned her teaching degree in elementary education from Sterling College while she was a stay-at-home mom raising her five children. Johnson currently lives in Ankeny and has spent the last four years as a substitute teacher at the Ankeny Community School District while earning her degree. During her time with the Ankeny district, Johnson gained experience in a wide range of grade levels and classroom environments.

Now, Johnson has entered her first year working with the Waukee Community School District where she currently teaches second grade at Walnut Hills Elementary School. One thing Johnson loves most about joining the district is that every first-year teacher is paired with an instructional mentor.

“This is my first year teaching in the Waukee School District, and from the moment I stepped in, it felt like a place where teachers are genuinely supported and valued,” Johnson says. “My mentor, Nicki, has been an incredible blessing. She has helped me feel at home, encouraged me, answered my endless questions, and supported me in growing into my role with confidence. I truly believe every first-year teacher deserves a Nicki.”

Johnson likes working with students in the second grade because they are full of curiosity and wonder. She says that her students are more independent while still having that spark of joy and excitement for learning. Johnson not only enjoys helping her students grow academically but also helping them grow in their confidence, character and relationships with others. In her classroom, Johnson’s students learn through engaging and interactive experiences. These experiences include collaborative problem solving through illustrative mathematics and daily community building, leadership practice and kindness routines.

“We work hard, we learn together, and we make space to become the best versions of ourself and to be a good friend,” Johnson says.

Although, as an educator, Johnson faces challenges such as wanting to meet every need all at once, she says the rewards of teaching are profound. She experiences these rewards when she witnesses the moment something “clicks” for a student, the kindness shared between classmates, and watching a student grow into themselves.

This school year, Johnson is most looking forward to continuing to build relationships with her students, their families and the staff at Walnut Hills Elementary School. She hopes that each of the students in her classroom leaves knowing they are cared for, capable and valued. ■



Kayla Johnson, a first-year teacher, teaches second grade at Walnut Hills Elementary School.



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You're
Invited!

Santa

Visits Luana Savings Bank

Clive Branch

Saturday, Dec. 13

9 - 11 am

Luana Savings Bank (Clive Lobby)

16390 Holcomb Court, Clive, IA 50325

Santa is visiting Luana Savings Bank! All children are welcome to meet Santa in the bank lobby and tell him what they would like for Christmas this year. There will be refreshments, treats, and gift bags for kids (as supplies last). We hope to see you!

This is a free event and open to the public.

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Find our event on our Facebook page
fb.com/luanasavingsbank

**Santa is visiting all locations.
View our website for full details.**

ESTATE planning after divorce

Divorce is never easy. Even the most amicable separation has many emotional elements and practical problems. One of the last things you think about is your estate planning. But, after a divorce, you should update your estate plan.



Your last will and testament or revocable trust nominates someone to settle your estate, provides how assets should be distributed, and nominates a guardian for minor children. You may have other estate-planning concerns, like long-term management of assets through a trust or provisions for children with special needs.

In Iowa, divorce generally revokes all provisions in favor of an ex-spouse. The ex-spouse will not inherit through your will or trust. Iowa law also automatically voids

beneficiary designations on retirement accounts, life insurance, and other investments.

However, this may mean that your assets will pass to a secondary beneficiary or to your estate. If the beneficiary is cancelled, you should update beneficiary designations. This will prevent the asset holder from mistakenly sending benefits to your ex-spouse. For annuities, if the payments have irrevocably commenced, they will continue to be distributed to the former spouse.

If your spouse is listed as your agent under a financial power of attorney, the agency terminates as soon as the divorce action is filed. For a health care directive, the spouse's authority is revoked upon the entry of the divorce decree. Your spouse will still be your health care proxy during the divorce proceedings.

Even though the law automatically puts some protections in place, you still need to

update your estate planning. You should make changes in your powers of attorney as soon as possible, so that you don't give financial authority or medical decision-making rights to your soon-to-be former partner.

If you want assets to pass directly to a beneficiary, and not into your estate, you should designate a new beneficiary. Joint tenancy property should be addressed. So should guardianship of minor children. Even if your ex-spouse would be the custodial parent if you die, you may want to put someone else in charge of the money you leave to your children.

Consult with an experienced attorney to discuss how your divorce changes your estate plan. Drafting new documents to reflect your wishes will give you peace of mind as you start a new chapter in your life. ■

Information provided by Ross Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.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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THE COSTS of distracted driving

Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of accidents on Iowa roads and a major factor behind rising auto insurance claims. Whether it is a quick text, a navigation adjustment, or a phone call, even a moment of inattention can lead to costly — and sometimes tragic — consequences. Recognizing this risk, Iowa has enacted a new “hands-free” driving law designed to keep drivers focused on the road ahead.



Effective July 1, 2025, it's now illegal for Iowa drivers to hold or manually operate a cell phone or other electronic device while driving. Calls, texts and navigation can still be used, but only if the device is in a mounted position and operated through voice command or Bluetooth. Warnings will be issued initially, but, beginning Jan. 1, 2026, violators will face fines starting around \$100. More serious penalties apply if distracted driving results in injury or death.

From an insurance standpoint, this law couldn't come at a better time. Auto insurers have seen a sharp increase in claims related to distracted driving over the past decade. Even a minor fender bender caused by glancing at a phone can drive up claim frequency and, in turn, statewide insurance rates. When drivers pay attention, everyone benefits — fewer accidents mean fewer claims and more stable premiums.

Beyond avoiding fines and higher rates, safe driving protects your financial well-being in other ways. Accidents tied to phone use can lead to at-fault designations on your record, surcharges or even non-renewal from your insurance carrier. It is worth remembering that your policy doesn't just protect your car — it protects your liability if someone else is injured. One moment of distraction can put both your safety and your assets at risk.

According to national studies, drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in a crash serious enough to cause injury. The average cost of a distracted driving claim now exceeds \$20,000, and major injury accidents can quickly climb past \$100,000 once medical and legal costs are included. These figures underline how vital it is to stay alert and undistracted behind the wheel.

Here are a few practical tips:

- Mount your phone at eye level and use hands-free or voice-activated features.
- Set your route and playlist before driving.
- Use your phone's “Do Not Disturb While Driving” mode.
- Encourage family members — especially teens — to lead by example.

Staying focused on the road doesn't just keep you safe — it helps protect everyone's financial future and ensures that Iowa's roads are safer for all. ■

Information provided by Chase VanWerden, IFG Insurance, 520 Walnut St., Waukeez, 515-987-9598. Credit: Auto-Owners Blog



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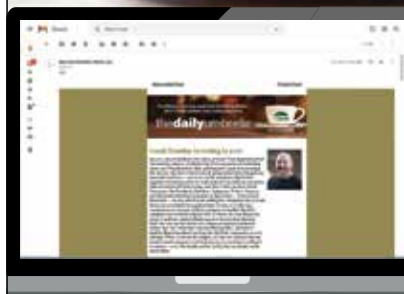
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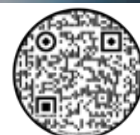
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SENIOR

By Jay Heaton

BEAT those winter blues back

As the days grow inevitably shorter and the temperatures drop lower, winter can sometimes feel long and lonely. But with a few simple habits, you can keep your spirits bright and make this season truly enjoyable.

Staying active is one of the best ways to lift your mood. Try joining a fitness class, taking a morning walk, or gathering friends for a fun group activity. Movement keeps both your body and mind energized during these colder months.

Connections are just as important. Meet up with neighbors for coffee, attend community events, or join a club or hobby group. A friendly chat or shared laugh can make even the grayest day feel lighter.

Make your home a cozy retreat by adding soft blankets, warm lighting and meaningful touches like family photos or cheerful décor. These small comforts can make a big difference.

Keep your mind engaged with hobbies that bring you joy. Things like painting, puzzles, knitting or reading can help. If the weather allows, bundle up for a short walk outside; fresh air and sunshine are natural mood boosters.

Finally, consider volunteering or helping a neighbor. Acts of kindness bring a sense of purpose and connection that warms the heart. This winter, stay active, stay connected and surround yourself with positivity. You'll find plenty of joy even on the coldest days. ■



Information provided by Jay Heaton, leasing counselor, Attivo Trail Waukee, 835 N.E. Boston Parkway, Waukee, www.attivotrail.com.

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WELLNESS

By Mary Doherty, LISW

CONNECTING with your body

Fall in Iowa. It is typically a whirlwind, ranging in temperatures and storms. As we are in fall and entering winter (I know, I said it), we start to lose our connection with nature. When it is getting dark earlier and earlier, it is challenging to get out and really enjoy the outside. Seasonal Depression might be creeping in, maybe a lack of motivation in doing things outside of work. Here is a challenge for you: connecting with your body again.

Wherever you are right now in this moment, wiggle your toes. What can you feel? Check in with your shoulders. How do they feel? Pull your shoulders up like you are shrugging, take a deep breath in, then, when you breathe out, release your shoulders back down. Now take one more deep breath, but leave your shoulders down.

I have a challenge for you this month: Do a check-in with your body daily. It can be 30 seconds where you intentionally check in with how you feel in your body. Not sure? Go back through these exercises. It can be while you are lying in bed, sitting on the couch, at work or in the car. This check in can help bring awareness when your body is showing signs of stress or even sickness. We are always on the go and sometimes forget how important it is to check in with our bodies. ■



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

HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

NEW to hemp?

Here's what you need to know

If you've been hearing more about hemp wellness lately, there's a good reason. Hemp-derived products containing cannabinoids like CBD, CBG and even low-dose THC are becoming popular for people looking to support stress, sleep, mood and more — naturally.

These products interact with the body's endocannabinoid system, which plays a role in regulating things like sleep cycles, pain response and emotional balance. When supported, many people feel and function better.

Hemp wellness products come in a variety of beginner-friendly options, including gummies, water solubles, topicals and seltzers. Dosing is controlled and consistent, and many blends are formulated for specific needs like relaxation, recovery or rest.

As interest grows, more people are turning to local hemp consultants for guidance instead of guessing with unregulated online products. In-store experts can help you understand what is in each formula, how it works and what to expect — making the process feel simple and supportive.

Whether you're feeling holiday stress creeping in or just looking for more natural balance this season, hemp-based support is worth exploring. You don't need a prescription, and products are federally legal under the 2018 Farm Bill.

If you're new to hemp or unsure where to start, stop in and talk to a certified hemp consultant. No pressure, just support. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036.



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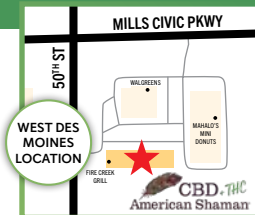
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WELLNESS

By Lauren Conway and Traci Frantzen

SKINCARE for fall and winter

The transition from summer to fall and winter presents unique challenges for skin health, often leading to dryness, dullness and uneven texture due to colder temperatures, lower humidity and indoor heating. To combat these effects, a proactive skincare approach incorporating professional treatments and a consistent at-home regimen is crucial.

HydraFacials and dermaplaning are highly effective treatments for maintaining radiant skin during the colder months, often yielding superior results when combined. A HydraFacial is a multi-step, non-invasive procedure that cleanses, exfoliates, extracts impurities and hydrates the skin using patented Vortex-Fusion technology. It infuses the skin with hyaluronic acid, antioxidants and peptides, addressing concerns like fine lines, wrinkles and hyperpigmentation, and is suitable for all skin types. Dermaplaning is a physical exfoliation technique that uses a sterile scalpel to gently remove dead skin cells and peach fuzz (vellus hair) from the skin's surface. This process immediately brightens the complexion, smooths skin texture, and enhances the absorption of skincare products.

When these two treatments are combined, dermaplaning acts as an excellent preparatory step, creating a smooth canvas that allows the HydraFacial's serums and hydrating agents to penetrate more deeply and effectively. Regular monthly treatments are recommended to maintain optimal results. ■

Information provided by Lauren Conway and Traci Frantzen, estheticians, 4 Ever Young, 1180 S.E. University Ave., Waukee, 515-304-2324, www.4everyyoungantiaging.com



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HEADING south for the winter or traveling for the holidays?

Are you traveling over the holidays to visit family? Are you a snowbird, and will you be heading south for the winter?

Have you ever thought about what you would do if something unfortunate happened during the time while you were away and you needed the services of a funeral home?

We don't like to think about these things, but, the truth is, they can happen. And when they do, having a plan in place can make a world of difference.

Perhaps a Travel Plan is something for you to consider — a plan that would take care of everything and bring your loved one back home, if such an unfortunate situation occurred.

These plans can be very cost effective and provide a great deal of peace of mind for those traveling or heading to their winter retreat.

Visit with your funeral home of choice and ask them if they offer a Travel Plan.

Better to have a plan in place and not need it than to wish you had done something to prepare. ■

Information provided by Dave Cortner, Hamilton's on Westtown Parkway, 3601 Westtown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681.



EXPLORE what's new and join the winter fun

This winter, the Waukee Public Library is your destination for ways to make the season brighter and more enjoyable. From convenient battery drop-offs and holiday lights recycling to the exciting Winter Bingo Challenge, there are activities for every member of the family. Explore, create and give back to the community while making this winter season memorable.

A safe and easy way to dispose of batteries. The Waukee Public Library is excited to announce that a new battery drop-off container is now available for community use. This convenient on-site option provides residents with a free, simple and safe way to dispose of household batteries and small rechargeable electronics while helping reduce hazardous waste and supporting Waukee's environmental responsibility.

- Accepted items: Household batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, 9V and button batteries); power tool batteries; laptops, tablets, cell phones and other small rechargeable electronics.

Holiday lights recycling at the library. Whether you're decking the halls or packing away decorations, the Waukee Public Library is here to help you recycle old or broken holiday lights responsibly. This season, we're partnering with Metro Waste Authority to offer an easy holiday lights drop-off for the community.

Through Jan. 30, residents can bring holiday lights to the collection box located at the library entrance. All lights will be safely recycled at Metro Waste Authority's Metro Hazardous Waste Drop-Off.

What you can drop off: LED, classic, plastic and glass bulbs; net, icicle and battery-powered lights. Please keep lights loose when placing them in the collection box.

Winter Bingo Challenge: Join the Fun! Have you joined the fun yet? This winter, turn chilly days into exciting adventures with the Library's Winter Bingo Challenge. Running through Jan. 31, the program invites kids, teens and adults to complete a variety of activities from reading and creative projects to library adventures while earning prizes along the way. Each age group has its own grand prize so the whole family can participate.

Register online at waukeepubliclibrary.org/winter or stop by the library to pick up your bingo card. Make this winter your most adventurous reading season yet.

Learn more about the library and sign up for a card at waukeepubliclibrary.org or contact them at askme@waukee.org or 515-978-7944. ■

Waukee Public Library

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INVESTMENT

By Daniel Rundahl

DON'T forget draw-down requirements



This time of year can bring plenty of change, whether it is the leaves on the trees, the seasonal sports schedules, or the considerations for who brings the turkey and eggnog. With all the hustle and bustle of the upcoming holiday season, you may not be focusing on the required draw down of some of your life savings.

Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs) were created in 1974, and Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) were required from the very beginning. RMDs are the minimum amounts that U.S. tax law requires one to withdraw annually from traditional IRAs and employer-sponsored retirement plans. The purpose of RMD rules is to ensure that people do not accumulate retirement accounts, defer taxation, and leave these funds as an inheritance. RMDs force the holder to withdraw at least some of the funds as taxable distributions while they are still alive.

The rules apply to all employer-sponsored retirement plans, including profit-sharing plans, 401K, 403(b), and 457(b) plans. The RMD rules also apply to traditional IRAs and IRA-based plans such as SEPs, SARSEPs and SIMPLE IRAs.

The age to start taking RMDs has changed over time. The current age to begin taking RMDs is 73 as of 2023, according to the SECURE 2.0 Act, which was an increase from the previous age of 72. For those of us born after 1960, we need to consider RMDs at age 75. Individuals are generally required to start taking withdrawals from their retirement accounts by April 1 of the year following the year they reach the required age.

There are penalties for failing to take RMDs or not taking a large enough distribution. The penalty is an excise tax of 25% of the amount not distributed as required, or 10% if the RMD is corrected within two years.

To some people, this requirement will not be as great of an issue if you are already drawing retirement needs regularly from your pre-tax savings; to others, it may cause an increase in taxable income that was not expected or needed.

This time of year, look at this future obligation. Maybe your required distribution is two to three years from now and you have room in your current tax bracket to explore other options. Many individuals consider ROTH IRA conversions to reduce the requirements at age 73. Others consider changing their annual tithing and donation expectations to have them come straight from the RMD qualified investments and go to the charities and churches of choice. Some may initiate a gifting effort to send this money in the direction of a loved one.

When it comes to retirement, you have worked hard the last 30-40 years. You have raised your family, given everything you can to save for your golden years, and now it is time for you to be able to live more like every day is a Saturday.

This time of year, let us be thankful. Let us take pause to thank those who have served to provide for the rights that we hold so dear. Let us embrace the spirit of family and friends. Don't forget to reach out to your financial advisor to get some of these end of year "requirements" in order so there are no surprises and you can walk into the New Year with a fresh start. Happy Thanksgiving. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 8230 Hickman Road, Suite 300, Clive, 515-727-1701, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.



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AMERICAN Legion Auxiliary

Veterans benefit from American Legion membership.

Mary Sebben is passionate about serving and helping America's veterans, military members and their families obtain assistance. She is asking for veterans and military personnel living in Dallas County and the Waukee area to consider joining the local American Legion Post 737 and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 737.

Sebben is the membership chairman for the Waukee Unit of the American Legion Auxiliary. She has served in various leadership roles in Dallas County and is chairman for the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation committee for the Sixth District of the Iowa American Legion Auxiliary. She's a dedicated volunteer for the Veterans Administration Voluntary Services of Central Iowa.

Sebben joined the American Legion Auxiliary 20 years ago. Her husband, Jerry, served in the Air Force in the Vietnam War, as well as the Air National Guard.

"I have great respect for what he and other veterans did for us," she reflects.

The American Legion was established by the members of the American Expeditionary Forces upon their return from World War I. The veterans' organization has been in existence more than 100 years with approximately 1.6 million members.

Today, the American Legion serves veterans by traveling to Washington D.C., advocating for legislation to improve veterans' benefits and assure their future wellbeing. The Legion also mentors youth through the Boys State program. Veterans and military personnel who join the American Legion may join the Legion Riders program.

The American Legion Auxiliary was organized in 1920 and has served veterans, military and their families for more than 100 years. The Auxiliary's mission is to foster patriotism through service, education and community involvement. It is the largest patriotic service organization with nearly one million members.

The American Legion Auxiliary participates in projects such as helping fund veteran Honor Flights, providing care packages for deployed military, mentoring youth through the Girls State program and providing baby gift baskets to the Women's Clinic at the Des Moines VAMC.

Last year, the Waukee American Legion



American Legion Auxiliary donates books to the Women's Clinic at the Des Moines VA Medical Center. From left, Sharon Anderson and Mary Sebben.

Auxiliary Unit organized a backpack giveaway for Waukee Elementary Schools, adopted military families and provided them with Christmas gifts and donated birthday party kits. They donated clothing at the Des Moines Standdown, an organization benefitting homeless individuals, families and veterans. They participated in the Waukee Farmers Market, selling grilled food as a fundraiser.

Once a veteran and/or military personnel joins The American Legion, then certain members of their family can join the American Legion Auxiliary. These organizations, with the help of their annual membership dues, can continue the goals of promoting patriotism,

strong national security, strong national defense as well as promoting community service.

"We do whatever we can to make life better for the veterans and military. They've sacrificed so much for our freedom. They've given up their careers and time away from their families," she says. "We want to show our appreciation to them and help in any possible way."

For more information about membership in the American Legion Post 737 in Waukee, contact Nick Nichols at 515-851-1376 or email nenichols@mac.com. For information on the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 737, contact Mary Sebben at 515-250-1363 or email mlsebben@aol.com. ■

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.



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

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

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

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- Nonprofit
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- Park
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- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Liquor Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Bakery
- Florist

ENTERTAINMENT

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

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

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Financial Planner
- Law Firm
- Accounting Firm
- Veterinarian
- Dog Groomer
- Pet Care
- Lawn Care Business
- Landscaping Company
- Heating and Cooling Business
- Electrical Business
- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Builder/Remodeling
- Outdoor Lawn Equipment Store
- Pest Control

FIRST Responder Breakfast

First Responder
Appreciation Breakfast was
held Nov. 10 at the Waukee
United Methodist Church.



James Marek, Harrison Danhauer, Marie Vanderwilt,
Conlen Parmelee, Nathan Wise and Gavin Boyle



Becky Vandermark, Ryan Bowers, Josh Minikus,
Sgt. Neil Lemke and State Senator Sarah Trone
Garriott.



Fire Chief Clint Robinson, Rob Grove and
Chris Crone



Wyatt Westberg, Drew Stever and Jalen Wyld



Abbey Christensen and Hailey Benson



Scott Cunningham, Chaplain Pat Quaid and
Jeff Mellencamp



Lynn Harder, Brett Braafhart and Jessica Mitchell



Matt Heasley and Kody Olsen



Don Frazer, State Senator Sarah Trone
Garriott, Wendy Marsh and Aly Davis



Zach VanderPloeg, Chief Chad McCluskey and
Don Frazer



Cindy Miller, Doyle Miller, Bannen Davis and
Jim Kraus

OUT & ABOUT

20TH Anniversary

Waypoint Resources 20th Anniversary Celebration was held Oct. 5.



Waypoint crew



Cindy and Rob Grove



Michael and Amy Schrodtt



Don Frazer and Travis Gaule



Sue and Mike Green



Heather Van Leeuwen, Suzy LeGrant and Jen Beyers



Bruce Montis and Judy Klever



Jim and Vicky Barr



Jon Eichhorn and Zach Vander Ploeg



Julie Cornelius and Roxanna Ketelsen

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Get a break on your taxes! Donate your car, truck, or SUV to assist the blind and visually impaired. Arrange a swift, no-cost vehicle pickup and secure a generous tax credit for 2025. Call Heritage for the Blind Today at 1-855 977-7030 today! (mcn)

Donate your car, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a FAST, FREE vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-888-429-2331 today! (mcn)

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