

Living

MAGAZINE

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The comfort of a savory lasagna
RECIPE



BY DON & CONI

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WELCOME

CELEBRATING my heritage — a wee bit

“My people” celebrated March 17. If you are Irish, chances are you did, too. If you are not Irish, there is still a good chance you celebrated anyway. That seems to be how St. Patrick’s Day works.

I say “my people” in the most affectionate way possible, mostly because I am reasonably confident I am Irish. I am also told I am German. And French. And possibly a little Native American. But, thanks to my mother’s side of the family, Irish is the one that tends to show up the loudest.

Mom and her siblings fit the Irish profile quite well: short in stature, red-haired, light-skinned, Catholic and full of vinegar. And by “full of vinegar,” I mean they had opinions.

Family history backs up my Irish claim. My grandmother’s maiden name was Leonard. Her father, Patrick Leonard, was born near Carlow, Ireland, in 1866. And, if that isn’t enough proof, my grandson — appropriately named Callahan — arrived in 2025 with a head full of red hair. Genetics doesn’t get much clearer than that. Somewhere in Ireland, an ancestor is nodding proudly and probably ordering another potato.

Speaking of potatoes, let’s address a few stereotypes. Do the Irish really love potatoes that much? Is everyone named Mary? Are they obsessed with the weather? Do they enjoy a good fight but still manage to remain friendly afterward? And do they really say “wee” all the time?

I can’t answer all of those questions with scientific certainty, but I can say this: If someone offers me a baked potato, I’m not going to turn it down.

Personally, I enjoy poking a little fun at my Irish roots while also celebrating them. Truth be told, most of us are a mix of several backgrounds anyway. Somewhere in the family tree, there is probably an Irishman, a German, a Frenchman and someone arguing loudly about the weather.

At the end of the day, we probably have more in common than we realize. That’s worth celebrating. Still, there’s nothing wrong with taking a little pride in where you came from — at least a wee bit.

Have a great month and thanks for reading. ■

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Connie Phillips grew up in a children's home, so when she had a family of her own, she wanted to establish a tradition of love, which included many mission trips with her husband.

Celebrating HERITAGE

Residents reflect on the traditions that connect them to home

BEFORE WE GO
A CALL TO MISSIONS



CONNIE PHILLIPS

By Rachel Harrington

Heritage takes many forms — from treasured recipes and holiday traditions to faith and family stories passed down through generations. For some, it is rooted in culture and language; for others, it is something intentionally built over time. Local families share how their unique backgrounds shape the lives they lead today and the legacies they hope to leave behind.

Couple celebrates each other's traditions

Janessa Guardiola was born and raised on the west side of Puerto Rico. Pablo Guardiola's family is originally from Chihuahua, Mexico, though most of his relatives now live in the Denver area. As a blended — though culturally similar — family, the Guardiolas keep both traditions alive in their home through language, food and celebrations.

"My family moved to Grimes from Colorado because the cost of living was lower," Janessa says. "As a result, I could stay home with my then 9-month-old son."

In November 2025, the family relocated to Norwalk, where they now operate La Palma Mexican Taqueria and Catering.

"A big part of what we do is rooted in our heritage — sharing food, traditions and family recipes passed down through generations," Janessa says.

Since moving to Norwalk, the Guardiolas have become active in the community. They are involved at New Life Lutheran Church, where they help lead youth group and children's ministry, and they are passionate about sharing their culture with the next generation.

At home, Janessa and Pablo speak Spanish with their children and use English outside the home so their children can grow up bilingual. Holidays are especially important for honoring their heritage.

"We focus on Puerto Rican food for Christmas Eve and incorporate Mexican traditions by making tamales throughout December to share with friends and family," Janessa says.

Another important celebration is Three Kings Day, or Epiphany, on Jan. 6.

"It's a big deal in Puerto Rico," Janessa says. "On Jan. 5, children gather grass for the camels to commemorate the three kings who visited Jesus, and then they receive gifts."

While traditions are more limited in the United States, Janessa recently introduced the celebration to her Sunday school class.

To honor Pablo's Mexican heritage, the family also prepares traditional meals during Lent.

"We try to make dishes he grew up eating on the Friday before Easter," she says.

Family recipes remain central to their traditions. Janessa recalls her mother-in-law's homemade flour tortillas as a favorite and has learned to make other staples such as salsa, rice



Janessa and Pablo Guardiola celebrate Puerto Rican and Mexican traditions as well as the food of both cultures.

and beans.

On a typical day, the family enjoys a mix of traditional foods, including mofongo — a mashed plantain dish often served with chicken or seafood.

For the Guardiolas, family is at the heart of everything.

"Family is huge. It is literally everything," Janessa says. "We try to visit relatives in Colorado as much as possible, and those in Iowa play a big role in our lives. We help each other with whatever is needed. They are my village."

A heritage of love

As a child, Connie Phillips knew little about her family.

When she was about 2 years old, her mother became seriously ill, and her father placed his seven children in different homes. The three oldest sisters were adopted while her brothers were sent to farms in Iowa. Connie — then known as Colleen — was placed in an orphanage in Des Moines and later transferred to the Des Moines Children's Home, where she lived until age 12.

"I never saw my mother until I was 16, but I didn't know her, and we didn't keep in touch," she says.

Around that time, she changed her name to Connie and met Don Phillips, whom she married at age 18. The couple had four children.

"Growing up, the matrons at the children's

home were kind, and it was a decent place, but it was hard not having people who were mine," she says.

Determined to create a different future, Phillips focused on building a strong family of her own.

At ages 38 and 40, she and her husband experienced a life-changing moment when their 18-year-old son, Michael, shared his faith with them after meeting a pastor in New Orleans.

"It took a few days of conversations, but something changed in me," Phillips says. "I found joy in my faith and learned how to forgive my parents."

Five weeks later, Don also embraced that faith.

Ten years later, the couple joined Wycliffe Bible Translators as part of a support team. Over the next 30 years, they served in 24 countries, assisting translators and sharing their faith.

Though Phillips knows little about her ancestry, she and her husband were intentional about building a legacy of faith.

"I believe all of my children have placed their faith in Jesus," she says.

Don died eight years ago, but Phillips continues to invest in her growing family, which now includes great-great-grandchildren.

"When I was a little girl, I didn't think I was worth much," she says. "Now, I know I am loved, and that is the heritage I want to pass down."

A touch of Norway

In 1889, Lisa Chensvold's great-grandparents immigrated from Norway to the United States in search of a better life.

"They believed it was the land of milk and honey," she says. "Many Norwegians settled in Minnesota and Iowa because the climate was similar to their homeland."

Her great-grandparents entered the country through Castle Garden in New York City. During that process, the family name was Americanized from Tjensvold to Chensvold before they continued to West Union, Iowa.

The family later established a farm in Chester before returning to West Union in 1921. The farm has remained in the family for generations, earning a Century Farm designation in 2021.

Chensvold grew up surrounded by extended family.

"I was very lucky," she says. "I saw my grandparents, aunt and uncle every day."

Family traditions, especially during the holidays, remain a strong connection to their Norwegian roots.

"Christmas included rich dishes with butter and sugar," she says. "A special dish was grot — rice baked in milk all day, then topped with butter and sugar."

The family also makes traditional cookies such as krumkake and kringla. Today, those traditions continue, with Chensvold baking cookies alongside her son.

Norwegian customs extend beyond food. The family opens gifts on Christmas Eve, and storytelling remains an important tradition.

"My dad spoke only Norwegian at home and didn't learn English until



Lisa Chensvold celebrates her Norwegian heritage by observing traditions and learning about the culture.

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Lisa Chensvold's grandparents shared their Norwegian heritage and some belongings.

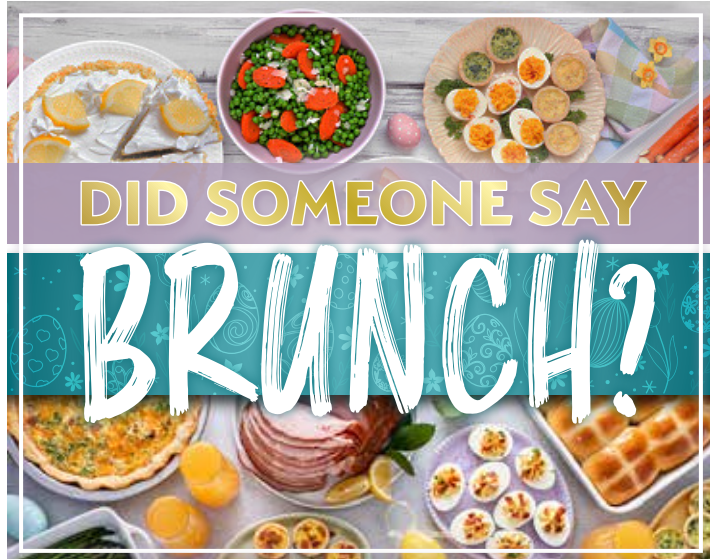
he started school," she says.

Chensvold is now a member of the Daughters of Norway, which meets monthly

in Clive. The group also participates in local cultural events, including a Scandinavian festival in Des Moines and a holiday display at

Principal Park.

"I love that my family kept these traditions alive, even after coming to America," she says. ■



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WHAT IS your Everest?

I picked him up recently at the airport on a Saturday afternoon, and we went and ate lunch together. He was so unassuming, personal and humble. Through a family connection, I had met him briefly once before, and now I couldn't believe I was sitting face-to-face with him, enjoying a long conversation about life, family and what was coming up on the weekend. He had come to Norwalk to speak to various groups at our church and in our morning services. His name is Eric Alexander. He is an accomplished speaker, celebrated author, and his bio is a Who's Who of world-class mountain climbers. He has climbed the highest mountain on six of the seven continents of the world, including Africa's Kilimanjaro, Russia's Mount Elbrus, and the highest of them all, Mt. Everest at over 29,000 feet. But here is what's so phenomenal: He didn't climb those alone. He guided people with disabilities to the top of each of those mountains.



In 2001, Eric guided blind climber Erik Weihenmayer to the top of Mt. Everest. Eric and his team set five world records in the process, including the first blind ascent of Everest. Time magazine featured this event on its cover and called this team the greatest team in history to climb Everest. Eric and his team were invited to the White House by the president to receive a special award for this amazing achievement. But Eric didn't do it for the recognition or the awards. He does it to help those with disabilities go to heights they never would have imagined.

Through the years, Eric has piled up his share of close-calls and near-death experiences. But he refuses to let those experiences keep him from continuing to climb and to take those to the top who wouldn't get there any other way. He is currently making preparations to take a group of disabled veterans to the top of Mt. Vinson, the highest mountain in Antarctica, the last of the seven continents to be conquered.

Obviously, overcoming fear with faith is something Eric has had to do to achieve these accomplishments. Fears and doubts can get the best of us. Just as Eric learned to push through his own fears and doubts — and to assist others in likewise pushing through theirs — we, too, must learn to break through ours and to exercise faith in order to go higher than we thought we could and to take others along on the journey. Eric is adamant that his faith is singularly in Jesus Christ. His faith in Christ has been the foundation and the anchor of his life, without which, he says, he never could have or would have gone to the places he's been and done the things he's done for others.

What is your Mt. Everest? What is it that seems impossible to you? Who are you seeking to bring on the journey who never would move forward without someone helping them along the way? Eric's example of faith and courage and serving others serves as an inspiration for us all. The Bible reminds us in Hebrews 11:6, "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Why not draw near to the Lord in believing faith today? He can help you go where you never thought you would go, and he will use you to bless others in ways you never would have imagined. ■

Pastor Rob Jones is the senior pastor of Fellowship Community Church in Norwalk. The church was founded under his leadership in 1995.

MARKETS don't move in straight lines — volatility is normal

Market volatility is a normal occurrence, but it can be tough to handle when your money is at stake. There's no foolproof way to handle the ups and downs of the market, however, the following tips can help.



Diversification: Diversifying your portfolio is one of the key ways you can help handle market volatility. Asset classes often perform differently under different market conditions; spreading assets across a variety of different investments like stocks, bonds and cash alternatives has the potential to help manage your overall risk.

Time horizon: As the markets go up and down, it's easy to become too focused on day-to-day returns. Instead, keep your eyes on your long-term investing goals. If you still have years to invest, don't overreact to short-term price fluctuations.

Staying disciplined: When the market declines and unrealized losses begin to pile up, you may be tempted to pull out of the market altogether and look for less volatile investments, as the small returns that typically accompany lower-risk investments may seem attractive when higher-risk investments are posting negative returns. Before you change your investment strategy, make sure you are doing it for the right reasons, by aligning decisions with your goals and time horizon.

Dollar cost averaging: With dollar cost averaging, you don't try to "time the market" by buying shares when the price is the lowest. Instead, you invest the same amount of money at regular intervals over time. Although dollar cost averaging doesn't guarantee you a profit or protect against investment loss, over time, a regular fixed dollar investment may result in an average price per share that is lower than the average market price. A workplace savings plan, like a 401(k) plan, in which the same amount is deducted from each paycheck and invested through the plan, is one of the most well-known examples of dollar cost averaging in action.

Portfolio check-up: Review your portfolio at least once a year, more frequently if the market is volatile, or when there have been significant changes in your life. You may need to rebalance your portfolio to bring it back in line with your investment goals and risk tolerance or redesign it so that it better suits your current needs. Don't hesitate to seek guidance when deciding which investment options might make sense for you. ■

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MAYOR'S MOMENT

One of the most important parts of local government is making sure residents have easy access to information and opportunities to stay involved. In Norwalk, we are committed to being open and transparent, and we want to make it as simple as possible for you to stay informed about what's happening in your community.

I'd like to take a moment to walk through the many ways you can access information, follow City Council discussions, and share your thoughts with your local leaders.

Council Meetings - access to agendas and detailed information

Council meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. (The second meeting in March is typically canceled due to spring break.)

Agendas are posted in advance on the City's website,

giving you time to see what will be discussed before each meeting. Each agenda also includes links to detailed information for every item—this is the same information City Council members review as they prepare for meetings.

Final agendas are posted at least 24 hours before each meeting, both at City Hall and online. By reviewing these materials ahead of time, you can stay informed and better understand the decision being considered.



Tom Phillips,
Mayor

SCAN TO READ THE FULL MAYOR'S MOMENT



2026 SPRING CLEAN UP

Curb Side Pick Up

Who: This services if for *City of Norwalk residential* garbage customers only.

What: Annual curbside pickup of unwanted items. This is your chance to spring clean, BUT make sure you follow the rules!

Where: This is at your curbside, but there will also be a drop off at Public Works for items not accepted at curbside.

When: Last year's split pick up went well so we will be following that format again this year.

Residents typically collected on Tuesdays should have items at the curb by 6 AM on May 11-12.

Residents typically collected on Wednesdays should have items at the curb by 6 AM on May 13-14.

Any questions about what is accepted? Call MWA at 515-244-0021 or visit their website at www.whereshouldgo.com. They have all the answers!

Drop Off Event

*Saturday, May 16 7:00am-Noon
Public Works Facility (2626 North Ave)*

This service is for City of Norwalk residential garbage customers only. Proof of residency required (Photo ID and City water/garbage bill).

Categories that are accepted but not limited to: tire disposal, paper shredding, wood chips and compost, appliance and e-waste disposal, oil and batteries and scrap metal disposal.

Paint and paint cans **are not accepted** at this event.

Call for details about each category for what is acceptable and not accepted.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT!

Rachel Olson, Community Development



Since starting in November 2024 as an Office Assistant in the Community Development office, Rachel has become the unofficial director of first impressions—welcoming residents as they come in to pay water bills, obtain permits, attend meetings, or simply find their way.

What she enjoys most about her role is the variety and the opportunity to work with the public. No two days are the same, and she appreciates the chance to interact with residents and assist with a wide range of needs.

Before joining the City, Rachel worked in the healthcare industry, which provides her with a unique perspective in her current role. She describes her time with Norwalk as eye-opening, especially in understanding how a city operates and delivers services to its residents—highlighting just how much happens behind the scenes.

Outside of work, Rachel enjoys spending time with family and friends, taking advantage of a good happy hour, and dining at authentic Mexican restaurants. Her family includes her husband, Chris; children Sophie and Sawyer; and their beloved dogs, Willie and Reba.

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HEATING & COOLING

By Dale Adams

THE PRACTICAL advantages of mini-split systems



Ductless mini-split systems have become a practical and efficient solution for residential heating and cooling. Homeowners are turning to these systems because they solve problems that conventional ducted systems cannot. A mini-split system uses an outdoor compressor connected to one or more indoor air handlers by a narrow conduit. This small connection replaces bulky ductwork, reducing the energy loss that often occurs in forced-air systems.

Because air does not have to travel through long ducts, the system delivers conditioned air directly to each zone. This enables faster and more precise temperature control. Each indoor unit can operate independently, allowing different rooms to maintain their own distinct temperatures. This type of zoning is especially valuable in homes with uneven sunlight, irregular use, or areas added later, such as enclosed porches, finished basements or garage conversions.

Traditional HVAC systems often heat or cool an entire home to the same temperature, even when some rooms are empty. With mini-splits, only occupied spaces need to be conditioned. This targeted approach reduces energy waste while improving comfort for the people who are actually in the room. Over time, this can lead to noticeable energy savings.

Installation of a ductless system is also far less invasive than installing a central air system. Conventional ductwork typically requires large openings and often necessitates structural modifications in older homes. In contrast, a mini-split typically needs only a small hole through the wall to connect the indoor and outdoor components. That makes it an ideal option for spaces where extending ductwork would be impractical.

The simplicity of installation also means shorter project timelines. Homeowners can often have a system running in a single day, depending on the number of indoor units. For homes with multiple zones, additional air handlers can be added gradually, allowing flexible upgrades as needs change.

Another strength of ductless systems is their efficiency rating. Mini-splits use inverter-driven compressors that adjust speed automatically to meet current demand. Rather than switching completely on and off like conventional systems, the compressor runs steadily at variable speeds. This reduces temperature fluctuations and avoids the surge of energy that comes with frequent cycling.

In addition to energy savings, ductless mini-splits can improve indoor air quality. Since there are no ducts to collect dust, pollen or mold, fewer particles circulate throughout the home. Some models include multi-stage filtration that removes allergens and small airborne contaminants. For households with respiratory concerns, this can significantly improve comfort.

Mini-splits are especially well-suited for homes that lack existing ductwork or where additions and remodels have created uneven heating and cooling. They also suit multi-family buildings and accessory dwelling units that require separate temperature control. Their quiet operation, compact design, and flexible installation make them appealing in both new construction and retrofits.

As energy standards and expectations to shift, ductless mini-split systems represent a modern response to traditional HVAC challenges. They deliver precise control, reliable performance, and energy efficiency. ■

Do you still have questions? Visit www.tripleahomeservices.com for additional information. Dale and Natasha love to answer questions. Give them a call at 515-868-2779.

LOOKING BACK



The April 2011 Norwalk Living magazine featured the story, "My first car: Residents share their stories, advice." The front page photo featured Nicole Bagby and the 2011 Chevy Cruze she received from her dad and step-mom for Christmas. The story also featured J.B. Silvers, whose first car was a 1973 Ford Galaxy; Laura Greiner, whose first vehicle was a 1980 Chevy Chevette; and Dean McIlravy, who had a Ford Model A — for a couple of days. ■

HOLLIE ZAJICEK

***** *****

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HOLLIE ZAJICEK

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GIVING back with purpose

Kingrey finds joy, connection and meaning through volunteer work.

Robin Kingrey is a familiar face at the Norwalk Easter Public Library — not only as a patron, but also as a volunteer.



Her love for libraries, especially the one in her hometown, inspired her to get more involved.

“Helping the staff at the library brings me joy because they do so much for the Norwalk community,” Kingrey says. “The library is a place where all are welcome.”

Some of her favorite volunteer memories include helping at the library’s summer reading kickoff party, Fall Fest and the Howlidays celebration.

“It’s fun to see all the happy faces of all ages,” Kingrey says.

In addition to her work with the Norwalk Easter Public Library, Kingrey occasionally volunteers with NAMA. When her two sons were younger, she also volunteered with Norwalk Community School District and Norwalk Parks and Recreation.

“I enjoyed helping at the schools because I know our teachers need



Jason Siemens of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Robin Kingrey.

and appreciate as much help as they can get,” she says.

Kingrey makes time to volunteer because she believes it is important to serve others without expecting anything in return.

“It’s a way to give back and get involved in your community,” she says. “It’s also a great way to meet new people and make friends.”

She credits her mother for instilling in her the importance of volunteering. Her mother helped at her elementary school as a homeroom parent and served as her Girl Scout troop leader. She also taught Sunday school and vacation Bible school at their church, and, when Kingrey was old enough, she joined her.

At age 16, Kingrey became a candy striper at a hospital in her hometown of Council Bluffs.

“Growing up helping people gave me a sense of purpose, and, to this day, I get that same satisfaction,” she says. “I believe we are put on this earth to give back, to make someone smile and help improve the lives of others. Don’t we all desire a sense of purpose?” ■

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GRADUATION starts new financial chapter

In Iowa, April brings a sense of renewal. Tractors line the edges of farm fields, greenhouses fill with eager weekend gardeners, and families begin planning summer vacations and long-awaited getaways. It is also a season of milestones — spring formals, prom dances and, of course, upcoming graduations.

Graduation is an exciting achievement, but it also marks the beginning of a new financial chapter. Whether your graduate is heading to college, entering the workforce, or still exploring their next step, now is the ideal time to build strong financial habits that can last a lifetime.

One of the first steps is creating a simple, realistic budget. For many graduates, this is their first time managing money independently, and understanding where it goes is critical. Start by identifying income sources, such as part-time work, family support or scholarships. Then, outline expected expenses like housing, food, transportation and entertainment. This should be viewed as a teaching opportunity rather than a “control” conversation.

Another priority is building an emergency fund. Life is unpredictable, especially during transitions. Setting aside even \$500 to \$1,000 can provide a cushion for unexpected expenses like car repairs, medical bills or last-minute travel. Starting small is what matters most and builds confidence over time.

Credit is another important area to discuss early. Establishing a credit history can be beneficial, but it must be handled responsibly. Opening a starter credit card or becoming an authorized user on a parent’s account can help. Emphasize paying balances in full and on time each month. A practical approach is using the card for one consistent expense, like gas or groceries, and paying it off every cycle.

For those heading to college, understanding education costs is essential. Review tuition, housing, meal plans and additional expenses like books and supplies. If student loans are necessary, take time to understand interest rates and repayment expectations. Encourage students to borrow only what they need and track total debt throughout their academic journey.

Graduates entering the workforce should take full advantage of employer benefits. If a company offers a retirement plan like a 401(k), contributing early — even a small amount — can make a significant difference over time due to compound growth. If there is an employer match, be sure to contribute enough to receive the free money.

Setting short- and long-term financial goals is another key step. Short-term goals might include saving for a car, building an emergency fund or paying off small debts. Long-term goals could involve homeownership or retirement. Writing goals down and revisiting them regularly helps maintain focus and motivation.

Finally, keep the conversation about money open. Financial literacy isn’t often taught in school, so guidance from parents, mentors or advisors can make a big difference. Keeping the process engaging helps build confidence and long-term success.

Graduation is more than a ceremony — it’s a launching point. With thoughtful planning and a few smart financial steps, new grads can move forward with confidence and begin building a strong foundation for their future. ■

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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APRIL IS NATIONAL ORAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH.

At every hygiene appointment, we perform an oral cancer screening. It’s quick, painless, and something many patients don’t even realize is happening, but it’s one of the most important parts of your visit.

Know the risks:

- Tobacco use (smoking or chewing)
- Alcohol consumption
- HPV (increasingly common in younger, non-smoking adults)
- Excessive sun exposure (especially for lip cancer)

Know the signs:

- Mouth sores that last more than 2 weeks
- Red or white patches
- Lumps or thickened areas
- Numbness in the lips or mouth



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Upcoming in Norwalk Living magazine:

Farmers market vendors: Do you enjoy selling your products at local farmers markets? Tell us how you benefit from farmers markets and what tips you can share with others wanting to get involved. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Coffee and Camaraderie

First Tuesdays of the month, 10 a.m. to noon
Norwalk United Methodist Church, 1100 Gordon Ave.

All veterans and service members are invited for a morning of coffee and camaraderie, a morning of connection and community. Whether you're a veteran, active-duty member, spouse or caregiver, everyone is welcome. Enjoy coffee and come together to form new friendships and share stories and experiences.

Welcome to Medicare seminar

Thursday, May 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Getting ready to retire? This free seminar is designed to help introduce you to the different parts of Medicare and offer free unbiased guidance. The Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) provides assistance with understanding Medicare so people make informed decisions. SHIIP Services are free, unbiased and confidential. The seminar covers all parts of Medicare (A through D). Sign up today, call 515-962-5375 by April 28 to RSVP.

Norwalk Easter Public Library Events

1051 North Ave., Norwalk • norwalklibrary.org

Closed all day Friday, May 8 for Staff Development Day

KIDS

- Graphic Novel Book Club: Tuesday, April 14, 4:30 p.m.
- Tinker Club: Monday, April 27, 4:30 p.m.

TWEENS

- Tween Special: Blooming Wall Art: Monday, April 13, 3:45 p.m. Registration required.
- Tween Hangout: Monday, April 20, 3:45 p.m.
- Tween Boba & Books: Tuesday, April 28, 3:45 p.m. Registration required.

TEENS

- Teen Takeover Special: Blooming Wall Art: Thursday, April 16, 3:30 p.m.
- Teen After Hours Dungeons and Dragons: Friday, April 17, 5:30 p.m. Registration required.
- Writer's Open Mic: Tuesday, April 21, 3:30 p.m. Registration required.
- Teen Takeover: Hangout: Thursdays, April 23 and 30, 3:30 p.m.
- Books, Bites and Boba: Tuesday, April 28, 6 p.m.

ADULTS

- Play Create Connect: Tuesdays through April, 1 p.m.
- Booked for the Night: Saturday, April 18, 6:30 p.m. Registration required.
- From Page to Plate Cookbook Club: Nights & Weekends: Tuesday, April 21, 6:30 p.m. Registration required.
- Indie Lens Pop-Up: To Be Announced: Thursday, April 30, 6 p.m. Registration required.
- Get Lit Book Club: The Book Club for Troublesome Women: Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 p.m.

ALL AGES

- Caturdays with Whiskers TNR: Saturday, April 11, 10 a.m.
- Polymer Clay Jewelry: Tuesday, April 14, 6:30 p.m. Registration required.
- Comic Book Bash: Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. ■

HOBBY

CORVETTE enthusiast's dream fulfilled

Givant purchases 2026 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1 with help of Gregg Young Chevrolet.

Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk shares the story of longtime Chevrolet customer and Corvette enthusiast Alan Givant, whose decades-long passion for America's sports car reflects the loyalty, heritage and personal connection that continue to define the Chevrolet brand.



Alan Givant in his new Corvette ZR1

At 84 years old, Givant has been a devoted Chevrolet customer for nearly 50 years. He purchased his first new Corvette in 1976 and has since owned approximately 30 new Corvettes through several Chevrolet dealerships across Iowa. Most recently, he purchased both a 2023 Corvette Stingray and a 2024 Corvette Z06 through Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk, where he has worked closely with Gary Burton, managing partner.

Now, Givant's lifelong passion is coming full circle with the opportunity to purchase a 2026 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1, a dream that once seemed nearly out of reach.

In late 2025, Givant shared a heartfelt letter with Chevrolet North Central Region Zone Manager Cliff Forsythe, expressing his appreciation for the brand and his hope of experiencing one more new Corvette while he was still able to fully enjoy it. After receiving the letter, Forsythe personally reached out to Givant, and the two shared a meaningful conversation about Alan's lifelong connection to Chevrolet and Corvette.

During that conversation, Forsythe explained that demand for the Corvette ZR1 continues to exceed supply, making allocation especially challenging. He noted that availability for Alan's order could take time given the tremendous demand. Givant appreciated the personal response and understood the challenge, even believing for a time that his dream might not happen.

But, shortly thereafter, Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk was able to earn a ZR1 allocation, helping make that dream come true.

"For Alan, this is about much more than a car," said Gary Burton, managing partner of Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk. "This is about a lifetime of memories, a true passion for Corvette, and the kind of relationship that makes this business so meaningful. Alan has been part of the Chevrolet family for decades, and we are honored to be part of his journey.

"Alan's story is one that stays with you," Burton added. "He has loved Chevrolet and Corvette for nearly 50 years, and we are grateful for the personal outreach and encouragement he received along the way. Sometimes dreams really do come true."

Givant's story stands as a testament to the enduring impact of the Corvette brand and the relationships built between customers, dealerships and the people behind the Chevrolet experience. For Gregg Young Chevrolet of Norwalk, it is also a reflection of the dealership's commitment to treating every customer like family, whether they are buying their first vehicle or pursuing a dream decades in the making. ■

GETTING homeowner's insurance with a mortgage

When you finance your home, you will have to repay the loan to the bank over a period of years.

During this time, the bank has an investment in the property. So, if something happens to your home, you are not the only party that might lose out financially. Your lender will also still expect to be repaid their mortgage, even if a tornado were to destroy your home. Your need for homeowner's insurance is critical.

Most mortgage lenders require property owners to purchase homeowner's insurance. At this time, you must carry coverage that meets the lender's expectations. Usually, they will institute a replacement cost value (RCV) dwelling coverage requirement on the property.



Replacement cost value coverage

An RCV homeowner's insurance policy insures your dwelling based on the price it will cost to rebuild at today's rates. Replacement cost value is not the sticker price that you paid for the dwelling and the rest of the property. Instead, it is the value of the house itself, which is different from the price of the property, even though it is the most substantial part of your property value in most cases.

The benefit of RCV coverage is you will be able to repair or rebuild a damaged home to exactly the way it was before the loss occurred. However, the drawback is that you will need to periodically clarify with your agent that your coverage is still adequate, given that construction and replacement costs often change.

Actual cash value coverage

An alternative to RCV coverage is actual cash value (ACV) insurance, which is both

exceedingly rare and inadequate for use in dwelling insurance. If the value of your dwelling decreases over time, such as due to age, then an ACV policy will only pay based on the value of the house at the time of the loss. This is far from adequate when it comes to building an entirely new home or to making extensive repairs. These policies are seldom offered to consumers today.

Once your lender tells you what type of coverage they require, your insurance agent will be able to help you design the right benefits. RCV policies are by far the best coverage to carry, and your agent can ensure that you receive the right balance of benefits for your needs. ■

Lane Insurance would be happy to help examine your risks and suggest the best coverages for you and your family. Feel free to request a quote online at laneinsurance.com or give us a call at 515-981-4614. Information provided by Mike Lane, Lane Insurance Agency Inc., 1225 Sunset Drive, Norwalk.



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FROM CONCEPT to reality

Robotics teams learn from successes and failures.



Robotics team 12783

The Norwalk Robotics Program began in 2017 during the FIRST Tech Challenge season featuring the game Relic Recovery. At the time, the program consisted of one team, known as 12783, or the Norwalk RoboWarriors Purple. In 2019, the program expanded to include Team 14568, or Norwalk RoboWarriors Gold.

Team 12783 currently consists of nine students in grades 10-12, while Team 14568 has 13 students in grades 8 and 9. According to the program, Team 12783 ranks ninth in the state, while Team 14568 ranks 35th. Team 12783 was also recently selected by the governor's office and the Iowa Department of Education to represent Iowa at the inaugural United States Governor's Cup in Washington, D.C.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of working with the robotics team is seeing students develop confidence and problem-solving skills," varsity team captain Miranda Lamb says. "Robotics allows students to take an idea from concept to reality. They design, build, program and improve a robot over the course of the season, learning from both successes and failures."

The Norwalk Robotics Program is designed to be accessible and inclusive, meaning any student in grades 8-12 can participate. Teams typically meet twice a week, though students often schedule additional meetings during the competition season to refine robots and prepare for events.

Each season begins with a five-week orientation period for new members to learn the basics of robotics, engineering design, programming and teamwork before the official competition season begins. The FIRST Tech Challenge also presents a new engineering challenge in which students must design and build a robot capable of completing complex tasks in a competitive game environment. Together, teams develop custom mechanisms, software and engineering portfolios documenting their work.

"I like how our team allows you to pick what you want to do," Norwalk senior Izzy Konkol says. "I chose coding, and, by my second season, I was able to code because I knew that was what I wanted to do for my future."

Beyond designing the robot itself, students in the Norwalk program also participate in outreach and mentorship. Members have helped start and mentor two FIRST LEGO League teams, allowing them to share their knowledge while inspiring the next generation of students.

"My favorite part has been seeing how each student matures and gains self-confidence the longer they are on the team," Norwalk robotics



Robotics team 14568



Team 12783 was recently selected by the governor's office and the Iowa Department of Education to represent Iowa at the inaugural United States Governor's Cup in Washington, D.C.

coach Nicci Lamb says. "Our team motto is 'More Than Robots,' which refers to the fact that we do many things outside of just building robots."

Looking ahead, the goal of the Norwalk Robotics Program is to continue to grow and expand opportunities for students. This includes strengthening outreach efforts, mentoring younger robotics teams and continuing to compete at a high level. The program aims to inspire students to explore STEM fields and develop skills that will benefit them long after graduation. ■

THE SPRING tune-up

Prepping for seasonal travel

Winter is officially in the rearview mirror. If you have been navigating an Iowan winter, your vehicle has likely spent the last few months fighting for its life against road salt, potholes and freezing cold. It's time to ditch



the "winter beater" energy and prepare your ride for car peak season. Here is how to transition from survival mode to show-room ready:

1. The rubber swap and pressure check. If you've been rocking winter tires, swap them for your sticky summer sets immediately. Winter compounds turn into greasy marshmallows in the heat. While you're at it, check your PSI — cold air shrinks, warm air expands. Don't let a "low tire" light ruin your stance.

2. The great salt exorcism. Road salt is the natural enemy of steel. By this time of year, Iowans have had plenty of it. Give your car a

forensic-level wash. Focus on the undercarriage and wheel wells where salt hides and brews rust. Finish with a high-quality wax to make that paint pop under the spring sun.

3. Breathe easy: filters and fluids. Your engine and cabin filters are likely packed with winter road grit and salt dust. Swap them out so your turbo can breathe unrestricted and your interior doesn't smell like a damp locker room. Top off your fluids — especially that wiper juice — because spring showers bring... well, lots of mud and bug splatter.

4. Vitals: belts, brakes, batteries and blades. Cold weather makes rubber brittle. Inspect your belts and hoses for cracks before they decide to leave you stranded on the highway. Test your battery; winter takes a massive toll on cranking amps. Check those pads and rotors — salt and moisture can cause seizing or uneven wear. Finally, wiper blades. If they are streaking, squeaking or "chattering," replace them immediately.

5. The emergency kit refresh. It is time

to reorganize. Swap the heavy blankets and ice scrapers for sunscreen and bug spray. Keep the jumper cables and a flashlight but ensure you are ready for a spontaneous mountain run or a beach day.

Keep it boosted, keep it clean, and keep it off the flatbed. If you are unsure about what your vehicle needs to bring its maintenance up to date, hit up your local specialist service bay. They know your vehicle best.

Pro-Tip: Imports often have specific service intervals and specialized fluids that "general" shops might miss. If you are unsure about your DSG service, VANOS health, or timing belt tension, hit up your local specialist service bay. They know your vehicle's quirks better than you know your own redline.

Keep it boosted, keep it clean and keep it on the pavement. ■

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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WHY SHOULD I write my obituary?

We all look at them. They help honor the memory of the person who died, and they serve as a notice of the death itself. Writing an obituary is essentially writing a life narrative. You have lived a lot of life, and there is no better way to get a zoomed-out view of yourself and your life than to write your own obituary. It is a life review.



It is an opportunity to identify details that make you proud, and you may even uncover areas of your life that you realize are unfinished. This can offer you an opportunity to reroute paths that may have led you astray from those accomplishments.

Some questions that can help you as you get started with this activity include:

- Are there specific things I want my family and friends to remember about me?
- What are the most important roles I have played in life?
- Is there any advice or guidance I want to pass along to others?
- What are my most important accomplishments, and what am I most proud of?

Advanced funeral planning is ultimately about making things easier for those you love. Writing your own obituary is a simple, but meaningful way to help accomplish this. ■

Information provided by Robert Christensen, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 515-697-3671

AT-HOME CARE services can help individuals remain in their homes longer

For many people, home represents stability, comfort and a lifetime of memories. Surveys consistently show most older adults prefer to remain in their homes as they age rather than move to a new living environment.



Yet remaining at home can present challenges for individuals and their families. Caregiving responsibilities often fall to family members who must balance work, household duties and personal commitments. This can create stress, exhaustion and, sometimes, discord.

At-home care services are increasingly used to help address those challenges. By assisting with daily activities and companionship, these services can help individuals maintain independence while lightening the load for family caregivers.

Supporting independence. Families sometimes hesitate to seek outside help because they worry it may adversely impact a loved one's independence. In many cases, the opposite can be true. When individuals receive assistance with everyday tasks, such as household chores, personal care, or transportation, they may be able to remain safely in their homes for a longer time. Professional caregivers can also provide support in a way that allows individuals to maintain privacy and autonomy while still receiving help when needed. Regular assistance also can add structure and predictability to daily life, helping both individuals and their families establish more manageable routines.

Reducing the risk of injuries. Health concerns such as mobility limitations, chronic pain, vision issues and osteoporosis can increase the risk of falls among aging adults. Falls remain one of the leading causes of injury and disability for older individuals. At-home care providers often help decrease that risk by assisting with activities that might otherwise be physically demanding, such as bathing, cleaning or navigating stairs. Some organizations also offer home safety assessments that identify potential hazards and recommend changes that can improve safety.

Encouraging physical and social activity. Remaining active both physically and socially is an important factor in overall well-being. Individuals who rely heavily on family members for transportation or care may become isolated over time. At-home support can help address this by providing companionship and helping individuals stay engaged in everyday activities. Caregivers may assist with outings, walks, hobbies, or other routines that encourage movement and social interaction. Even small activities such as walking a dog or spending time outdoors can help individuals maintain a sense of normalcy and independence.

Supporting family caregivers. Providing care for a loved one can be emotionally meaningful but also physically and mentally demanding. Introducing professional support can help restore balance. With some caregiving responsibilities shared, family members may experience less stress and have more time for work, personal health and meaningful time with their loved one. ■

Stacey Miller is executive director of WesleyLife at Home, which offers a broad network of services, including medical and non-medical at-home care. Visit wesleylife.org or call 515- 978-2777.

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The Village is growing in beautiful and exciting ways! We're making room for more, offering:

- 28 new independent living apartments – and reservations are currently being accepted with the remaining inventory limited!
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- Enhanced dining venues
- Upgraded outdoor amenities
- Revamped wellness area with weight gym and yoga room
- More "pampering" services with an improved hair salon that can also offer manicures, pedicures and massage
- Renovation to our long-term care households that includes all private suites and private half baths
- A refresh to our current Aspen independent living building common areas

Explore The Village at an upcoming event.

Night at the Opera:

Friday, April 24 at 5 p.m.

Featuring a variety of music from the Des Moines Metro Opera, a delightful evening of entertainment beckons. After the music, mingle over delicious refreshments.

To RSVP, contact Amber at (515) 961-0878 or amcdonald@wesleylife.org.



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WELLNESS By Jen Penisten-Clark

INNOVATIVE aesthetic and wellness technologies

Non-invasive aesthetic and wellness technologies have become increasingly popular for people seeking effective results without surgery or downtime. Three innovative treatments leading this trend are Emface, Emsculpt, and Emsella, each designed to target different areas of the body while improving both appearance and overall wellness.



Emface is a revolutionary facial treatment that combines radiofrequency energy with electromagnetic muscle stimulation to rejuvenate the face. The treatment works by heating the skin to stimulate collagen production while simultaneously strengthening facial muscles through gentle contractions. This dual action helps lift the cheeks, brow, and jawline while smoothing fine lines.

Emsculpt focuses on body contouring and muscle strengthening. Using high-intensity focused electromagnetic technology, the device stimulates powerful muscle contractions that are far more intense than what can be achieved through traditional exercise. These contractions help build muscle and reduce fat in areas such as the abdomen, buttocks, arms, and thighs.

Emsella is designed to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, which play an important role in bladder control and core stability. The treatment uses electromagnetic energy to stimulate thousands of pelvic floor contractions during a single session, similar to performing Kegel exercises. ■

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

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HEALTH By Dr. Elizabeth Fleck

WHY bleeding gums are a warning sign you shouldn't ignore

As a dentist, one of the things we evaluate at routine cleaning appointments is the health of the gingiva (gum tissue) surrounding the teeth. Some people think a little bleeding when brushing is normal, but, no — bleeding gums are not normal.



In most cases, bleeding gums are an early sign of gingivitis, a mild form of gum disease caused by plaque buildup along the gumline. When plaque isn't removed through proper brushing and flossing, it irritates the gums, leading to inflammation, redness and bleeding.

The good news? Gingivitis is reversible. With consistent oral hygiene and regular dental cleanings, your gums can return to a healthy state. However, if left untreated, gingivitis can progress into periodontitis, a more serious condition that can result in gum recession, bone loss and even tooth loss.

Think of bleeding gums as your body's way of signaling that something isn't right. Healthy gums should be firm, pink and should not bleed during brushing or flossing.

If you notice bleeding, don't ignore it or brush less aggressively — in fact, maintaining good oral hygiene is exactly what your gums need. Brush twice daily, floss regularly, and schedule routine dental visits.

Your gums are the foundation of your oral health. Taking care of them today can prevent bigger problems tomorrow. ■

Information provided by Dr. Elizabeth Fleck, Norwalk Family Dentistry, 1101 Chatham Ave., Suite A, Norwalk, 515-256-9000, www.norwalkfamilydentistry.com.

Q: My thyroid doesn't work right. Can that affect my eyes?

A: The thyroid gland plays an important role in regulating metabolism, and disorders such as hyperthyroidism (overactive) and hypothyroidism (underactive) can significantly affect the eyes. These conditions alter hormone levels, which can influence tissues around the eyes and visual function.

In hyperthyroidism, especially when associated with Graves disease, patients may develop a condition known as thyroid eye disease. This occurs when the immune system attacks tissues around the eyes, causing inflammation and swelling. Common symptoms include bulging eyes, eyelid retraction, redness, dryness, double vision and sensitivity to light. In severe cases, swelling can compress the optic nerve and threaten vision if not treated promptly.

Hypothyroidism can also affect the eyes, although the symptoms are generally less dramatic. Reduced thyroid hormone levels may lead to puffiness around the eyes, drooping eyelids, dry eyes and slowed eye movements. Some patients experience blurred vision due to changes in tear production and ocular surface health. Fluid retention in the tissues around the eyes may also cause a swollen or tired appearance.

Treatments may include medications to control thyroid hormone levels, lubricating eye drops, or specialized care from an eye care provider when eye involvement is significant. ■



Information provided by Jonathan Anderson, O.D. of Optometric Associates of Warren County, P.C., 1228 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-0224.

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GARDENING without the ache

Spring gardening brings pure joy — digging in the dirt, planting flowers and watching your yard bloom. But repetitive motions like digging, weeding and lifting can quickly lead to back strain, sore knees, tight shoulders or elbow pain that slows you down and steals your favorite hobby. Radial Shockwave Therapy has helped many green-thumbed patients stay active in their gardens.

Prevention tips: Bend at your knees, not your waist. Use thick knee pads or a low gardening stool to protect your joints. Choose ergonomic tools with padded grips to reduce hand, wrist and elbow stress. Take stretch breaks every 20 minutes and alternate between tasks. Wear supportive shoes with good arch support to prevent heel pain.

Common injuries such as tennis elbow, rotator cuff strain, low back pain, knee arthritis, Achilles tendinosis, and plantar fasciitis often develop from these repetitive gardening movements. That's exactly where cutting-edge Radial Shockwave Therapy makes a real difference.

This quick, non-invasive treatment uses powerful acoustic waves to penetrate deep into painful tissues, breaking down scar tissue, boosting blood flow, melting inflammation and triggering your body's natural repair process. Many patients notice significant relief and improved mobility after just one 5- to 10-minute session, with benefits that continue building over time and no downtime required. ■



Information provided by Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh, Norwalk Chiropractic, 1300 Sunset Drive, 515-981-9208, www.norwalk-chiropractic.com. Norwalk Chiropractic is a provider with most major insurance companies.

5 BENEFITS OF SHOCKWAVE THERAPY

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TAX TIPS for people with hearing loss

If you have hearing loss, you may qualify for special tax deductions for hearing-care-related expenses that can help reduce your overall tax burden — and keep more money in your pocket.



Enlisting the help of an accountant to determine your eligibility is always a good idea, but here's some general information about the IRS tax deductions that everyone with hearing loss should be aware of.

How much can I claim?

If you itemize deductions instead of using the standard deduction, you can claim uninsured medical and dental costs, including those pertaining to hearing health care, as a tax-deductible expense.

However, your overall uninsured medical and dental expenses must collectively total more than 7.5% of your adjusted gross income

(AGI) for you to claim them as an itemized deduction. For example, if your AGI is \$60,000, 7.5% of that amount is \$4,500. If your qualifying medical expenses are \$4,500 or less, you are not permitted to deduct them. If your expenses exceed that amount (for example, they're \$7,000), you may deduct the amount over 7.5%, which is \$2,500 ($\$7,000 - \$4,500 = \$2,500$).

What expenses can I claim as a deduction?

Uninsured hearing health costs you can claim as a medical expense may include payments for: hearing aids, batteries, repairs and maintenance; telephone equipment, including captioned phones, phones with special ringers and teleprinters, as well as their repair costs; TVs and related accessories that provide captioning and amplify sound, as well as their repair costs; improvements to your home for special burglar alarms, smoke detectors and doorbells; and transportation to and from hearing health appointments.

Are hearing device donations tax deductible?

Yes, but only if you itemize deductions rather than taking the standard deduction. You can claim a deduction for the fair market value of any hearing device you donated during the previous tax year.

Help your hearing and your budget

Hearing better is priceless. It can enhance communication skills, improve relationships and allow you to rediscover your zest for life. For people with hearing loss who don't have insurance that covers hearing devices or accessories, tax deductions can make their hearing health costs more manageable.

If you're struggling to hear, don't put off getting help for any reason — financial or otherwise. Schedule a hearing evaluation today. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, www.iowahearingcenter.com.



Did You Know?

From hearing aids to evaluations, some hearing care expenses may qualify for tax deductions.

Hear Better. Save More at Tax Time.

Call (515) 416-5990 to schedule an appointment today!




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THE COMFORT of a savory lasagna

There are few things in life more comforting than a warm kitchen filled with the savory aroma of lasagna baking in the oven — any time of the year. It is the kind of smell that draws everyone in, pulling family members from each corner of the house to ask, “Is it ready yet?”



This hearty lasagna has become a true family favorite in our home. With rich layers of seasoned meat, creamy ricotta, tender pasta and plenty of melted cheese (I suggest adding more than what this recipe calls for), it is the ultimate comfort food. Lasagna is more than just dinner — it is a tradition. This dish has even been selected as our dinner for Christmas and Thanksgiving many years, as it truly is a treasured recipe — and the leftovers taste even better the next day. This recipe represents the simple joy in sharing something homemade and delicious with the people you love. I need to warn you, though, the sauce takes some time to cook, but it is well worth the wait. Enjoy!

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

Lasagna

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground hamburger
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, divided
- 1 28-ounce can whole tomatoes, undrained and chopped
- 1 14.5-ounce can Italian-styled stewed tomatoes, undrained and chopped
- 1 six-ounce tomato paste
- 1 eight-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Water to boil noodles
- 12 uncooked lasagna noodles
- 1 large egg white, beaten
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 15-ounce carton fat-free ricotta
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

DIRECTIONS:

- Brown hamburger and drain grease. Set aside. In the same pan, coat with cooking spray, sauté onion and garlic

- for 5 minutes. Add beef back in. Add 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped whole tomatoes and next six ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Uncover and simmer for 15 minutes. Set aside.
- Boil water and cook noodles for 12 minutes or until “al dente.” Drain and set aside.
- Preheat oven to 350 F. In another bowl, combine 2 tablespoons parsley, egg white, cottage cheese, parmesan cheese and ricotta cheese.
- Spray a 9-inch by 13-inch pan with cooking spray and spread 1 cup tomato/beef mixture on the bottom of the pan. Place 3 noodles on tomato/beef mixture, top with half of cottage cheese mix, then 2 cups of tomato/beef mixture, and 2/3 cup of mozzarella. Repeat. Place another layer of noodles on top, then spread with remaining tomato/beef mixture.
- Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour. Then, sprinkle with 2/3 cup of provolone and bake uncovered for another 10 minutes. Take out of oven and let rest for 10 minutes. ■

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DOG bite laws: What every owner should know



Our canine companions can add a great deal of joy to our lives. Dogs have been with us from the beginning of civilization and are often considered “part of the family.” Unfortunately, sometimes they can get out of control and cause harm to others. Because of this, Iowa has long recognized liability on the part of the owner for damages.

Iowa Code Chapter 351.28 provides in part: “The owner of a dog shall be liable to an injured party for all damages done by the dog when the dog is caught in the action of worrying, maiming or killing a domestic animal, or the dog is attacking or attempting to bite a person, except when the party damaged is doing an unlawful act directly contributing to the injury.”

This law is a “strict liability” statute, which attaches liability to the owner regardless of whether the owner is negligent or not. As indicated, the only exception is when the person injured is committing an unlawful act.

In a case involving a dog groomer who was bitten by a dog and sued for damages, the owners asserted that the dog groomer had assumed the care, custody and control of the dog, was negligent and assumed the risk of her injuries. The Iowa Supreme Court said that the dog bite statute only allows the owner a defense when the injured party is doing an unlawful act. Therefore, the dog groomer could proceed with her case, and the defenses raised by the owner were not available. *Sec Collins v. Kenealy, 492 N.W.2d 679 (Iowa 1992).*

The dog bite statute has existed since 1913 and is well settled law. In a favorite quote from a 1919 case, the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Moyer, 186 Iowa 1322, 171 NW 297 (1919)* observed: Thus the law says to the dog: “Don’t attack or attempt to bite a good man. If you do, the penalty is death, and your master must respond in damages for the consequences of your act. You may, however, attack and bite a bad man caught in the doing of an unlawful act, tear him to pieces, chew him up, and the law approves your act.”

This particular case had that the owner of a dog that had simply knocked the plaintiff down but was not attacking was not liable for damages.

Conclusion: Dog owners should realize they can be liable for their dog’s behavior whether they were negligent or not. Mose homeowner’s or renter’s insurance policies provide coverages for damages caused by dogs. However, in many cases, certain breeds may be excluded. ■

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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Ken’s compassion and knowledge was clear right away. I was extremely pleased with the outcome of my case.” -Jane C.

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OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON

Cutting

Norwalk Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting on March 16 for Culver's Restaurant.



Norwalk Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting on March 16 for Culver's Restaurant.



Dan Obley and Erica Orozco



Melissa Woods and Kelsey Porter



Osiris and Aggie Gomez



Jean Strable, Jim Lane, Tim Klinker and Mayor Tom Phillips



Jacoby Schubert, Aythan Ellis, Kam Rutledge and Alexa Morrison



Madonna Abbott, Tia Hancock and Todd Hanson



Alaina Lancaster, Julianne Bethards and Brianne Bethards

RIBBON Cutting

Norwalk Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting on March 16 for Culver's Restaurant.



John Schmidt and Dan Obley



Jose Gomez, Melissa Telles and Genevieve



Kris Laufer, Chatel Fox and Gabriel Bailey



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Mel Guanci and Melissa Woods



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BOND REFERENDUM 2026

AN INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION & THE FUTURE OF NORWALK



Norwalk is a growing community and a regional leader in education with students classified by the Iowa Department of Education as “**high performing**.” Our School Board and administration are working to identify fiscally responsible, long-term solutions for our facility needs, rather than relying on costly temporary options.

Total K-12 enrollment at Norwalk CSD has increased **more than 38%** since 2010-11 (+951 students), and our current student population of 3,442 is projected to approach 4,000 students by 2035-36.

- **Oviatt Elementary** currently houses preschool students (three classrooms) and will be home to the new transitional kindergarten (TK) program in 2026-27. Expectations are for Oviatt to face capacity issues by 2031, and all existing elementary schools are projected to have enrollments of 600-650 students by 2035-36.
- **Norwalk Middle School** is expected to have capacity pressures by 2035-36, with total enrollment at the secondary campus projected to reach 2,073 students by then.

In addition to addressing future space needs, our district must replace aging HVAC systems in multiple schools and secure a permanent home for our growing Transportation Department and fleet in the coming years.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

On Tuesday, November 3, 2026, Norwalk CSD residents will vote on a **\$65 million general obligation bond issue**.

About 65% of the bond proceeds will be used to build a **new elementary school** for grades 3-4 with a capacity of 750 students. The school would open in 2031-32.

- The new school will have a ripple effect across all levels by allowing 6th grade to transition out of the middle school and relieve future space constraints.
- Oviatt Elementary: PK/TK/K; Orchard Hills Elementary: Grades 1-2; New Elementary: 3-4; Lakewood Elementary: 5-6; Norwalk Middle School: 7-8; Norwalk High School: 9-12

AN APPROVED BOND ISSUE WILL...

- Not increase property tax rates.
- Position Norwalk CSD to accommodate future growth with a new **\$42.5 million** elementary school and new grade configurations.
- Provide **\$10 million** to build a new Transportation Building to replace the facility we share with the City of Norwalk under an agreement expiring in August 2029.
- Fund **\$5.5 million** of HVAC upgrades at Oviatt Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, and Norwalk Middle School.
- Bolster safety and security at multiple campuses with door and window safety film, weapons detection software, floor-anchored barricades, and new security cameras.
- Support athletic facilities, including indoor hitting and pitching facilities at the baseball and softball complex, and a practice turf field for multiple activities.





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