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APRIL 2023

Living

MAGAZINE

OVERCOMING the FEAR

Residents share how they faced their fears and doubts to reach their goals

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WELCOME

ARE YOU chicken?

Whenever my childhood friends and I wanted to talk our buddy Tommy into doing something, we would simply call him chicken. He would yell back, "I'm not chicken!" and would then proceed to do whatever it was we were trying to talk him into. I wish managing adults was that simple.

Meanwhile, we are all seemingly chicken, at least to some degree.

Musician Jim Stafford sang "I don't like spiders and snakes" in 1974. Who does?

Green Day vocalist and guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong said he wrote the song "Basket Case" in 1994 to cope with his feelings of anxiety and panic.

And heavy metal rockers Metallica made us fear falling asleep with their 1991 hit, "Enter Sandman."

But phobias aren't just fodder for songs. Most all of us, if we are being honest, have something that makes us shiver in our boots.

As a child, I didn't like going into old, unfinished basements by myself. I was especially fearful of my grandparents' "root cellar." There was no way I was going down there alone, at least not until my brother discovered this fear and pushed me down the steps.

My aunt and uncle had a painting of a clown in their house that gave me the creeps. This was long before the movie "It" ever hit the screen. I still don't like clowns, other than Bozo. He is all right.

I don't mind spiders and snakes, but I could do without mice. The phrase "shivering in your boots" reminds me of working on farms as a teenager and having mice run up my legs when I would put my rubber boots on.

Like many of you, I would get the jitters before a sporting competition. "Butterflies in your stomach," they were often called. The more I competed, the less those butterflies fluttered, but they were always there. Still are.

To this day, I don't especially like heights. It is not so much a fear as it is a stomach ache. Either way, it's not pleasant. I love roller coasters, but a Ferris wheel ride makes me nauseous. I don't get it.

In this issue of your Living magazine, we share the stories of local residents, their fears and how they are dealing with them. Some may seem far-fetched while others might strike a chord with you.

Give it a read... unless you are chicken.

Thanks for reading. ■

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OVERCOMING the FEAR

**Residents share how they
faced their fears and
doubts to reach their goals**

By Jackie Wilson

Reaching a goal often requires planning, hard work and determination. Sometimes it also requires courage. When faced with a daunting task, we may find that fear and doubts crop up. For some, those can be difficult — even impossible — to overcome. Others face them head on and meet the challenge. Residents who have accomplished what they thought they couldn't share their stories of perseverance.

Dennis Christy suffered from a paralyzing fear of speaking until he joined Toastmasters. Photo by Jackie Wilson

FEATURE



Jeff Rider, artist at Mainframe Studios, displays various phobias he's painted. Photo by Jackie Wilson

Paralyzing fear

As a young adult, Dennis Christy's job was financing equipment. When people filed bankruptcy, he was required to go the court to explain the case and why he was there. Even before he left the office, his heart pumped in dreaded anticipation. Once he arrived, his ears turned red, his heart jumped wildly, and his voice raised in pitch.

"I was so nervous. It was the most nerve-racking thing I did. I had a paralyzing fear of speaking in front of people," he recalls. "I tried to give a toast at a Christmas party, and when I sat down, I was so nervous I didn't remember what I said."

After going to court, he returned to his office and told his boss how anxious he felt speaking up. His boss suggested he join Toastmasters, a group that teaches public speaking skills.

He considered it, but instead took an adult education class on public speaking. With a project to rehearse and present, he returned the next week to find himself the only student. His

instructor suggested Dennis come to one of his Toastmasters' meetings.

That was more than 35 years ago. He joined several Toastmasters groups, the latest being the Early Risers. Due to dwindling numbers after the pandemic, the group disbanded last year.

At his Toastmasters group, he began practicing speeches little by little. When he worked for various companies, such as Farmer's Insurance and EMC, he attended regional meetings with district managers. One meeting included 100 people in attendance. He glanced at the agenda for the group speakers. His name wasn't there. Then he saw his name at the top of the page as a presenter.

"I asked to beg out. I'd only been in Toastmasters three years," he says.

Then he thought to himself, "Wait. This is why I joined Toastmasters." Back stage, his knees bounced up and down with anticipation. His name wasn't called, and he finally relaxed, thinking they forgot about him.

They ultimately announced Dennis as the last presenter.

"I walked out, put my notes on the lectern and looked up. I realized the fear was gone," he recalls. "It was terrific. On the way home, my manager said I did better than anyone else that day."

Since then, he's given dozens of presentations at meetings and took on leadership roles in Toastmasters. He's acted out roles at meetings, where somebody asked if he did theater performances.

"None of this would have happened if I hadn't spoken up in front of people," he says.

At a memorial service for his father-in-law, he spoke first, spurring on other family members who were hesitant to speak. He's spoken at political caucuses for a group after somebody did a "bad job" speaking about the candidate.

"I went up and spoke for him. They elected me precinct captain. My speaking up got me involved in local politics," he says.

He feels certain that young people who have good communication skills can "go places."

"I went from being deathly afraid with

FEATURE

paralyzing fear to actually enjoying speaking and being a ham at it. I feel comfortable going into a room now and being able to talk about anything," he says.

Artist paints phobias

Are you afraid of a two-inch, eight-legged black spider crawling up your leg? If you're experiencing the heebie jeebies just thinking about it, you're not alone. According to the American Psychiatric Association, arachnophobia, or fear of spiders, is one of the top 10 fears people have. So, if people fear it, why would an artist choose to paint it?

For more than a decade, artist Jeff Rider has examined phobias and fears, painting a series of 200 different phobias, selling a "Phobias" book and paintings as well.

Rider began painting his phobia series more than 10 years ago as a way to put a playful spin on a serious matter. The definition of a phobia is an extreme or irrational fear or an aversion to something.

However, he doesn't diminish the fact that they are suffered by millions of people. He paints real phobias and frequently makes up a



Jeff Rider has painted a series of 200 phobias; some of which are in his "Phobias" book or on display at Mainframe Studios. Photo by Jackie Wilson



phobia by using a Latin root word, which could be a viable phobia.

"Some artists paint real, scary phobias, but I wanted to make some things up."

Often people who visit his gallery at Mainframe Studios will buy paintings of those things they fear or have overcome.

"I know one guy who sees a snake, and he'll

cry and go into a panic attack."

On the snake phobia painting, Rider painted it as a black silhouette, so it wasn't as scary.

"The person who wanted the painting could actually tolerate the fear, and it wasn't so realistic."

Rider admits to a fear of heights.

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FEATURE

"I had to go up to a tall building to sign papers to buy a new house. My knees and legs were weak when I looked out, but I knew I had to do this in order to get the house."

It's easier to paint phobias rather than feelings, he says.

"A feeling is hard to paint. The fears I have are not necessarily things — they are often situations."

He does recall when he painted a cockroach phobia.

"The only time I ever screamed in my life is when a cockroach flew right at me. I've done subjects I don't like. But I can paint them just fine. Some of my paintings might offend people. I do a few phobias just to get a reaction from Susie (his wife)," he chuckles.

By painting different fears and phobias, it has helped him paint subjects that he's never painted.

"I'd never painted a strawberry before," he says. "I painted a fear of teeth. I know someone who has that fear. Why hasn't a dentist bought that phobia painting yet?"

All his phobia paintings include a cutout photo of a baby from a black and white vintage photo. "Often the babies represent a clean slate and are innocent. Babies are taught to learn something in a certain way," he explains the symbolism.

He completed his 200th phobia — the last one was picturaphobia, a fear of painting — and says he is done with the topic.

"Twelve years of this series is enough. It's on to the next one."



John Hooker of West Des Moines joined Toastmasters to become a better public speaker. Photo submitted

Toastmasters teach skills

As an engineering manager, John Hooker and other engineers often talk to salespeople and customers who aren't engineers. He admits that most engineers are great at their job — but not necessarily at speaking in public.

"Engineering colleges don't teach soft skills," he says. "It's intimidating to get up in front and talk to others."

He's not alone. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 75% of people rank fear of speaking in public as their top fear.

He admitted a fear of speaking in public and "tried too hard" to get over it. He was nervous when he tried to communicate in public.

"It didn't go well. I talk a mile a minute when I'm nervous," he says.

So, he joined Toastmasters 11 years ago. He's currently president of the Toastmasters group that meets at Foster Group in West Des Moines.

When attending Toastmasters, he gives a portion of his work presentation to the group. "I like that you get feedback about your speaking. I can ask if my messages got across effectively, and they give you honest feedback."

At one meeting, members pointed out his reaction when he approached the podium.

"I'd always come up and grab the sides of the podium. I had a gripping fear on the podium," he says. "They helped me to release the hold and became more conscious of my hand gestures."

Attending Toastmasters gives him the courage to talk at his church.

"Whenever someone comes up to a group, asking to speak, most people say no. Or, if they have a question, they'll stare at the ground and not respond," he says. "I have no problem speaking up. It's not a big scary moment for me anymore."

Hooker thinks people fear public speaking because they might look bad.

"People don't want to be looked at as stupid or foolish. Or, they imagine how the audience might react," he explains.

Hooker now feels confident speaking to large crowds.

"I went from being a nervous wreck to speaking confidently at work. I didn't think I'd ever have the opportunity to speak in front of 300 people. Practice makes perfect. I might still be a little afraid, but I still go in and talk to people." ■

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

Residential Tire Drop-Off

Saturday, April 15, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Public Services East Facility, 560 S. 16th St.

The City of West Des Moines, in partnership with Metro Waste Authority, is offering a Residential Scrap Tire Drop-off at the Public Services East Facility. Go to the last driveway on S. 16th Street in the cul-de-sac area of the street. Tires will be accepted at the gate. This tire collection is open to West Des Moines residents only.

- Maximum of five tires per household (no rims)
- No scrap tires generated by any business
- No large semi-trailer, farm or tractor tires
- No solid tires such as lawnmower, forklift or golf car tires
- No tires containing hazardous materials

If you have any questions, call Metro Waste Authority at 515-244-0021 or Public Services at 515-222-3480.

If you're not able to make this free event, you have other options for tire disposal. Metro Waste Authority has year-round drop-off containers at several locations. Visit WhereItShouldGo.com for more information about tire disposal or call 515-244-0021.



The Valley Junction Farmers Market and Music in the Junction

Thursdays, May 4-Sept. 28,
4-8:30 p.m.

Historic Valley Junction, 100-300 blocks of Fifth Street and Railroad Park

The Valley Junction Farmers Market is home to more than 80 weekly vendors selling fresh produce, baked goods, plants and flowers, arts and crafts, and prepared foods. Join your friends and neighbors and enjoy special performances throughout the season. Music starts at 6 p.m. May 4 features The Unfortunate Sons. Others in May are: May 11, Molly Nova and the Hawks; May 18, Black Diamond Loons; May 25, Dick Danger Band.

Stomp Out Stigma Family Event

Saturday, May 6, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Valley Community Center, 4444 Fuller Road

This free family-friendly event helps support WDMCS youth. Founded by Please Pass the Love, Stomp Out Stigma (SOS) originated as a mental health club led by students, empowering them to let everyone know it's OK to not be OK. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people across the nation, and the groups want to ensure students do not struggle in silence but have others to lean on. The West Des Moines Leadership Academy (WDMLA), in partnership with Please Pass the Love, is hosting this event to raise awareness around supporting our youth and raise funds to enhance the wellbeing resources available to students in West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS). The WDMLA is a leadership program of the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit SchooltoThrive/StompOutStigma.wdmcs.org.

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History Camp

Various dates

Explore crafts, games and skills from times gone by, including paper-making, fire-starting, archery, fishing and more for ages 9-13. To register, go to www.wdm.iowa.gov/government/parks-recreation. Cost is \$100/camper. Camps are June 12-16, July 10-14, Aug. 14-18.

Schoolhouse Storytime

Beginning June 13, second and fourth Tuesday from
10:30-11:30 a.m.

Bennett School Museum, 4001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

This event is geared for pre-K, kindergarten and first grade students to enjoy an hour of stories, games, music and fun, with a historical element. While the program is geared towards younger students, all ages are welcome. Registration is not required, and there is no charge, but free-will donations are gratefully accepted. Parents must stay with their child(ren) during this storytime, and do not bring food or drink. Dates are June 13, June 27, July 11, July 25, Aug. 15, Aug. 29, Sept. 12, Sept. 26.

Jordan House Museum tours

Daily

Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Walk in the footsteps of history at the historic Jordan House Museum, the home of the Jordan family and the only Underground Railroad stop open to the public weekly. Learn about the history of West Des Moines, beginning with rocks and fossils, through the indigenous peoples, early settlers and the development of railroads and Valley Junction. For more information, visit www.wdmhs.org/visit.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations



April at Covered Bridges Winery

Various dates

Covered Bridges Winery, 2207 170th Trail, Winterset

- April 16: Spring Roll Class 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., \$65 per person. Tickets must be purchased in advance at coveredbridges-winery.square.site/product/spring-roll-class-april-16-2023-11-30am-1pm/318.
- April 16: Dustin Farrow Live Music, 2-4 p.m., no cover charge.
- April 29: RetroSpect live music 6:30-9:30 p.m., \$5 cover charge per person



Planned Parenthood Book Sale

April 20-24

4-H Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds

The Planned Parenthood Book Sale is one of the largest single charitable events run exclusively by volunteers, not only in the state of Iowa, but in the country. All proceeds support sex education programs in Iowa. Shoppers come from across the Midwest for bargain prices on thousands of used and collectible books, plus records, CDs, DVDs, games, puzzles and artwork.

Hours are Thursday, 3-9 p.m., \$20 admission; Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., free admission; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., free admission; Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., free admission and 50% off all items; and Monday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., free admission with 75% off all items.



Food and Fun

Various dates

Middlebrook Mercantile, 4125 Cumming Ave., Cumming

Register for events at Cumming, IA Middlebrook Mercantile Events | Eventbrite

- April 15: David Watson Performs, 5-8 p.m.
- April 21: Mule Performs, Two 'Ol Chefs Food Truck, 5-8 p.m.
- April 24: Dried Floral Workshop, 6-7:30 p.m.
- April 28: Emmett Sheehan Performs, Pho Wheels Food Truck, 5-8 p.m.

The Poppet Show Featuring Barbershop Chorus

April 29, 3 p.m.

First Baptist Church, 8250 N.W. 62nd Ave., Johnston

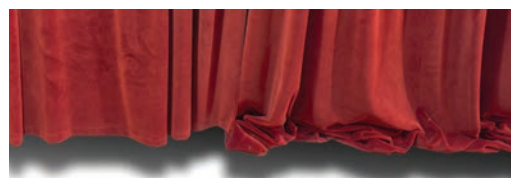
The Harmony Delegation Barbershop chorus will be holding its 76th anniversary spring performance. This year's spring show is a parody of "The Muppet Show" they call "The Poppet Show." Skits and music will be a zany spectacle of actors and choir members for a fun-filled afternoon of Barbershop music. Tickets are \$20/adult, \$15/student (through college), 5 and younger free. They can be purchased online at harmonydelegation.com or at the door.

Spring Fashion Gala

Friday, April 21, 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 22, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Black Box Theatre, Building 5 Student Center, DMACC Ankeny Campus

The DMACC Fashion Institute (DFI) announced its Ninth Annual Spring Fashion Gala: FUNHAUS, which will feature a mysterious journey into the dark and moody depths of the human psyche as created, planned and produced by DMACC Fashion students. The theme of this year's Gala explores the concept of a strange, haunted circus runway, where models emerge for an eerie, once-in-a-lifetime performance to showcase student designs. The runway show will consist of four unique scenes: Avant Garde, Cut & Sewn, Upcycled and Styled. General admission tickets are \$15 each, and student admission tickets are available for \$10. Tickets can be purchased online now at fashiongala.dmaccc.edu. Appetizers and drinks will be available before each show, along with a silent auction. Proceeds from the silent auction will help fund resources for DMACC Fashion students. ■



Disney's 'The Lion King'

Through April 16

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

More than 100 million people have experienced the wonder of Disney's "The Lion King," winner of six Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Stunning visuals combined with iconic music make this a show that shouldn't be missed. Tickets at dmpa.org.



Wild Lights Festival

Wednesday to Sunday evenings

Blank Park Zoo, 7401 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines

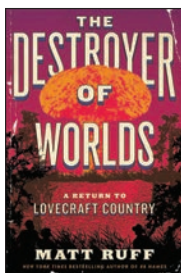
The Wild Lights Festival returns to Blank Park Zoo with 50 handcrafted, larger-than-life, illuminated animal-shaped Asian lanterns. Presented in partnership with Tianyu Arts & Culture, this year's festival will include a 75-foot-long sunflower tunnel, giant 33-foot-wide octopus, and more animals and mythical creatures. The festival runs 7:30-10 p.m. on Wednesday to Sunday evenings, plus Memorial Day, through May 29. Tickets are \$19-\$25 and may be purchased at www.blankparkzoo.com/wildlights.

'The Destroyer of Worlds'

The juxtaposition of sci-fi, the horrors of racism, and the twisted nature of HP Lovecraft's legacy make for some absolutely riveting fiction. So much is said between the lines of this sequel to the genre-bending "Lovecraft Country," it's like reading two stories at once, which makes perfect sense if you've read the first book. There's always two (or more) worlds: the one we see and the one we feel, just below the surface.

Atticus experienced the world behind the world in vivid, mind-melting fashion in the last book, and now he's setting off to come to terms with what he found — and with himself on a road trip to understand his roots. Others among his friends and family are also seeking understanding, hope and power amidst the ruins of what they've found on the other side of reality. Disparate narratives between the characters wind through a variety of horrors — mundane and magical — into an explosive ending that left me aching for the next book in the series.

I loved these characters so much the first time, I was delighted to find them just as enthralling a second time around. The strange and addictive mix of horror and history captured me immediately, and I finished this in one sitting. Fingers crossed we can get a second season of the show as well. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Matt Ruff
2/21/23
305 pages
\$30
Harper

'Madame Restell: The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Old New York's Most Fabulous, Fearless, and Infamous Abortionist'

The fact that Ann Trow isn't a well-known feminist heroine is a travesty. Thankfully, Jennifer Wright is here with an extensively researched, compulsively readable account of this singularly fascinating woman and her extraordinary legacy that still affects so much of the country even today.

Madame Restell, as she titled herself, was a self-made millionaire and single mother who once possessed enormous fame and social power due to helping women of all social circles get access to medical care in 1800s New York City. This includes teaching herself to perform abortions and loudly leading the charge for women's rights when those in power decided to strip her of her influence. It's such a shame so few know of her, but I don't think it would be a surprise to learn why. Misogyny is a tale as old as time, after all.

Lost to history by the concerted efforts of power-hungry, sexist men, this remarkable woman is finally receiving her due in this fast-paced, whirlwind of a book. This book is more than a retrospective on the life of a forgotten heroine; it's a telling account of how women's health became both a commodity and a tool of oppression. Highly recommended for anyone with an eye on today's politics and wonders how we got here. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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INFLATION and your money

"If the current annual inflation rate is 7.9%, why do my bills seem like they're 10% higher than last year?"¹

Many of us ask ourselves that question, and it illustrates the importance of understanding how inflation is reported and how it can affect investments.

• **What is inflation?** Inflation is defined as an upward movement in the average level of prices. Each month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics releases a report called the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to track these fluctuations. It was developed from detailed expenditure information provided by families and individuals on purchases made in the following categories: food and beverages, housing, apparel, transportation, medical care, recreation, education and communication, and other groups and services.²



• **How applicable is the Consumer Price Index?** While it's the commonly used indicator of inflation, the CPI has come under scrutiny. For example, the CPI rose 7.9% for the 12 months ending in February 2022. However, a closer look at the report shows movement in prices on a more detailed level. Energy prices, for example, rose 25.6% during those 12 months.¹

• **Are investments affected by inflation?** They sure are. As inflation rises and falls, three notable effects are observed.

First, inflation reduces the real rate of return on investments. So, if an investment earned 6% for a 12-month period and inflation averaged 1.5% over that time, the investment's real rate of return would have been 4.5%. If taxes are considered, the real rate of return may be reduced even further.³

Second, inflation puts purchasing power at risk. When prices rise, a fixed amount of money has the power to purchase fewer and fewer goods.

Third, inflation can influence the actions of the Federal Reserve. If the Fed wants to control

inflation, it has various methods for reducing the amount of money in circulation. Hypothetically, a smaller supply of money would lead to less spending, which may lead to lower prices and lower inflation.

• **Empower yourself with a trusted professional.** When inflation is low, it's easy to overlook how rising prices are affecting a household budget. On the other hand, when inflation is high, it may be tempting to make more sweeping changes in response to increasing prices. The best approach may be to reach out to your financial professional to help you develop a sound investment strategy that takes both possible scenarios into account. ■

Information provided by Andrei J. Murphy. Securities and investment advisory services offered through Brokers International Financial Services, LLC. Member SIPC. Brokers International Financial Services, LLC and Retirement Solutions of Iowa, LLC are not affiliated companies. 515-215-7114. All investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal, and there is no guarantee that any investment strategy will be successful. 1. USInflationCalculator.com, 2022. 2. BLS.gov, 2022. 3. This is a hypothetical example used for illustrative purposes only. It is not representative of any specific investment or combination of investments. Past performance does not guarantee future results.



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WEST DES MOINES Public Library news

Have you explored the WDM Library 24-hour kiosk?

For a little more than two years, we have been proud to host a self-service library kiosk located behind the Valley Junction Activity Center. The 235-item vending-style machine allows patrons to browse, select, check out and return library materials 24 hours a day. In order to use the kiosk, you must have a West Des Moines Public Library card in good standing.

April 2023 event highlights

See our full event calendar at wdmlibrary.org/events.

Genealogy Basics with Kevin Spire

Monday, April 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (Adults)

This presentation will provide an overview and guidance in researching your genealogy project. We'll look at the essential research records, common problems and review paper versus computer organization. No registration required.

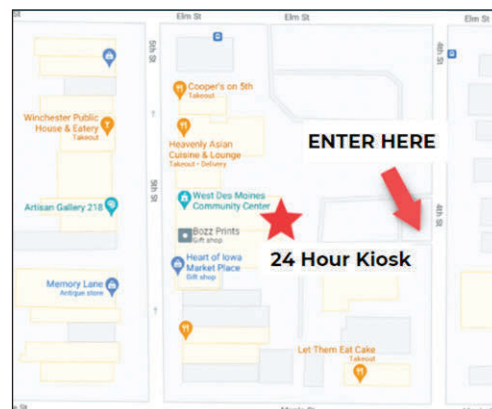
After School Adventures: Lego Club!

Wednesday, April 19, 3:45-4:30 p.m. (Ages 5-12)

Join us in the Community Room after school to embark on an adventure. Sign up this month and participate in a vehicular building challenge using everyone's favorite interlocking brick system. Registration required.



The 24-Hour Library Kiosk is located at 217 Fifth St., West Des Moines. Enter via the Fourth Street parking lot.



Gardening with Native Prairie Plants

Saturday, April 22, 1-2:30 p.m. (Adults)

This program will highlight how adding hardy, low-maintenance native plants in our yards can add curb appeal and attract pollinators while benefiting the environment. Native seed packets will be available to take home. No registration required.

Remembering the Apron

Thursday, April 27, 1-2:30 p.m. (Adults)

Presenter Sheila Craig will take a nostalgic look at the apron in an interactive, hands-on program. Attendees will look at the fabrics and trims, the styles and uses of aprons and will have the opportunity to see about 100 of her 400 aprons. No registration required.

Songkran: New Year in Thailand

Thursday, April 27, 6-7 p.m. (All ages)

Songkran is Thailand's most famous festival. This "water splashing" festival marks the beginning of the traditional Thai New Year and is an important event on the Buddhist calendar. This session will be presented by Suthiphon "Sue" Hudson on behalf of CultureAll. No registration required. ■

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RECIPE

PRODUCE shopping on a budget

5 strategies to save on fresh fruits and veggies

(Family Features) Cooking meals that bring your loved ones joy is often objective No. 1, but creating those flavorful favorites on an appropriate budget is an important aspect of well-rounded, family-friendly recipes. A few simple steps, like developing good grocery shopping habits, can put smiles on hungry faces without leaving a dent in your finances.

Consider these tips from the experts at Healthy Family Project along with its produce partners, which are on their 2023 Mission for Nutrition to improve access to fresh produce that's essential in alleviating many public health and personal wellness challenges. This year's partners are striving to be part of the improvement efforts by donating funds to increase the accessibility to fruits and vegetables in schools through the Foundation for Fresh Produce.

Make a list (and stick to it): When buying fresh produce, remember some items have a shorter shelf life. Limiting purchases to items on your list can help lower grocery

spending while alleviating food waste.

Buy local: Transportation cost is one of the biggest factors in the price of produce, meaning buying local, when possible, can help reduce your total at checkout.

Stock up on seasonal produce: Although you can generally find any produce item at any time of year, this isn't always an affordable practice. Knowing when your favorite fruits and veggies are in-season can save you money and allow you to use the freshest ingredients in family breakfasts like protein-packed sausage breakfast muffins and savory english muffins.

Know your produce department: The front or feature table of the produce department often offers the best deals. Don't forget to look at the end caps on each produce aisle, which sometimes display seasonal items.

Find more grocery savings strategies and family-friendly recipes at HealthyFamilyProject.com. ■

Savory English muffins

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project



- English muffins
- guacamole
- cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon light cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon crumbled turkey sausage, sauteed
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon basil, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon balsamic glaze
- Toast English muffins and top with desired combinations of toppings, such as: guacamole, tomatoes and cilantro; cream cheese, tomatoes and turkey sausage; or egg, tomatoes, basil and balsamic glaze.



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DAVIS teaches English language learners

Helping refugees and immigrants overcome barriers



Sue Davis volunteers with West Des Moines Human Services to help adults learn English.



Sue Davis is a lifeline for refugees, immigrants and non-English speakers needing to learn the language. She teaches an ELL (English Language Learners) class in West Des Moines.

Davis formerly taught high school French, Spanish and German classes at a variety of schools in Colorado and Nevada, as well as Cedar Rapids and Des Moines schools.

After she retired from teaching, her church started a program to help adult students learn English. They eventually partnered with the West Des Moines Human Services (WDMHS), where she volunteers twice a week.

Adult students range from age 20 to those in their 70s. Countries include Afghanistan, China, El Salvador, Arabic nations and more. She says it's challenging to tackle a lesson plan which fits all ages and languages. The best way she accomplishes that is through pictures.

"We use a lot of visuals. Google Images are

my friend. The pictures help teach vocabulary and initiate conversations," she says.

WDMHS provides a useful textbook series, which includes four levels of learning English. Students take a placement test to ensure they are taking the correct level.

During class, volunteers take students in small groups to practice conversations.

"Small groups are critical," she explains. "If they were just talking to me, that's not as much practice."

Davis feels the program is successful because of what WDMHS offers.

"Students are given free books, free transportation and free childcare. It helps to remove the barriers to immigrants who can't afford books or childcare."

Students who have been illiterate in their own language have an additional barrier to overcome. Sue frequently helps outside the classroom. She's assisted a student in setting

up his apartment. She's attended a swearing in ceremony for a Vietnamese student who passed their citizenship test.

Students often bring her food from their cultures.

"We talk a lot about celebrations and customs. Some are surprised at how much we are all alike," she says. "American culture permeates the world."

Sue enjoys teaching adults.

"Adults are motivated, and they realize the importance of learning and understand how those connections can advance their work. Adult learners aren't required to stay. If they're not learning, they'll vote with their feet and leave class."

Sue feels a sense of accomplishment when students understand and learn the language.

"They feel comfortable. I give them a chance to feel success and meet them right where they're at," she says. ■



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3 KEY documents in an estate plan

You should ensure that you have a full slate of basic estate planning documents in place. These documents exist in the event of your death or incapacitation and provide your family instructions as to how to proceed. Here are the three key documents in constructing an effective estate plan.



Durable financial power of attorney

In the event you become incapable of making financial decisions, a durable power of attorney allows someone you trust to sign documents and manage your assets. You can give someone a limited power of attorney that limits the authority to specific transactions, but a durable power of attorney that covers all transactions gives you a trusted ally available to handle your affairs regardless of what lies ahead.

Last will and testament

Most people know what a will is, but less than 40% of Americans have one. While it is difficult to contemplate your own mortality, it can be just as painful to think of leaving a mess for your heirs if you are no longer here. A will appoints an executor — the person who will manage your

affairs — and outlines a plan for the distribution of your assets.

A will can provide comfort to the person creating it, especially if you have children who are unable to handle or manage money. Avoiding the creation of a will can cause untold problems; if you don't take the time to create one, the State of Iowa will simply distribute your assets for you — and not necessarily in the same way you want.

Medical directives

A healthcare POA is in place for a designated representative to be able to communicate your wishes to medical professionals if you are unable. These documents also include instructions as to whether or not you want to have life-saving measures performed. Creation of healthcare directives removes the need for your family members to make heart-wrenching decisions for you, which can be especially concerning if those decisions wouldn't necessarily match your own.

It's not easy to think about death, much less plan for it, but the true focus of estate planning is taking care of yourself today and your loved ones in the future. Schedule an appointment with an experienced estate planning attorney to make sure your plan is in place. ■

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

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HEALTH By Ashley Powell

ADAPTOGENIC mushrooms

Have you heard of adaptogenic mushrooms? These mushrooms help your body adapt to physical and biological stressors; they reduce the negative effects of stress on the body. They are not “magic” mushrooms and do not alter perception.



Some of the most common adaptogenic mushrooms include lion's mane, cordyceps, chaga, reishi and turkey tail. Each mushroom offers a different benefit. For example, lion's mane has been shown to reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms and improve cognitive and brain health. Cordyceps can support the reduction of fatigue, work to improve the availability of oxygen in the blood, and support cardiac function and respiratory health. Research suggests that chaga aids in inflammation reduction and provides immune support. Other studies show that reishi promotes relaxation as well as blood pressure and cholesterol management. Lastly, turkey tail is a powerful antioxidant.

Incorporating adaptogenic mushrooms into your life on a daily basis is key to maximizing all of these potential benefits. New users may need up to three weeks to notice the benefits. As with all supplements, it's important to talk to your doctor if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a condition such as low blood pressure.

Stop in a local store to talk to a certified hemp consultant to see how adaptogenic mushrooms can support you and your loved ones. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., #106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251 and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., #3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. References: Cordyceps as an Herbal Drug - www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92758; Therapeutic Potential of *Hericium erinaceus* for Depressive Disorder - www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6982118.

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HEALTH By Sheryl Frye

GROUNDING techniques

Sometimes in our busy lives, we have trouble being present in the moment. We are thinking about things we need to get done, remembering the past or just experiencing anxious thoughts. Grounding techniques can help us create some distance from our distressing thoughts to help us become more present in the moment. These techniques use our five senses to help us regain our perspective. Grounding techniques — such as breathing deeply or listening to your surroundings — are often simple and can be utilized in any situation. Other physical grounding techniques include taking a walk, holding a piece of ice or savoring a scent like tea. Grounding techniques can also include mental tasks to help us with distraction. Thinking about silly jokes, reciting a poem or song and counting backward from 100 are examples of grounding mental techniques. Sometimes, soothing techniques can help in times of high distress. We can use our imagination to ground us by picturing someone we love or visualizing our favorite places. Playing with our pets and engaging in favorite activities like crafts can also help us create feelings of wellbeing during periods of high stress. Identifying techniques to stop us from getting lost in our distressing thoughts can give us the tools to create more joy in our daily lives. ■



Reference: www.healthline.com. Information provided by Sheryl Frye, LISW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 2675 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 105, Ankeny, frye@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

MEET Carly Stahn

From a family of educators

With parents as educators, Carly Stahn knew she'd pursue a career in education.

She now teaches fourth grade at Waukee Maple Grove Elementary in West Des Moines. She's in her 21st year of teaching and taught for 12 years at Western Hills in West Des Moines.

While Carly was growing up, her mom, Mary Brooks, was an English and drama teacher at Indian Hills Junior High. Carly recalls the junior high students taking care of her.

"I'd see her arranging her desk and checking papers. I was always around the school," she says.

Her dad, John Curtin, taught and coached at Simpson College for 35 years. Her stepdad, Robert Brooks, was principal at Valley High School. Robert helped her design an independent study program for beginning teachers along with current National Education Association (NEA) President Mike Beranek, which helped with her training.

She says she chose to teach fourth and fifth grades because she finds the age is easy to connect with.

"They are at an interesting age between learning and how to apply what they've learned. They're getting to be like 'little humans.' They are more self-guided and start to take ownership of their learning."

One of the kids' favorite activities is a Friday dance party. Students put in song requests and dance at the end of the week.

Since she attended Valley High School with her stepdad as a principal, she has received a lot of advice from him throughout her career.

"My stepdad said students are your legacy. The time spent with me and their work is my legacy. After he passed away, many people told us about how he impacted them. You never know when you'll make a difference," she reflects.

Her mom retired and also takes interest in her classroom and volunteers.

"I love having visits with her in the classroom."

After years of teaching, she now has former students return to visit as adults.

"They've gotten married and some former students are now colleagues. Those 180 days might not seem like a lot. But it stays with me — watching them grow and become who they are supposed to be is gratifying."

Carly says she, as well as other teachers, get into the profession for one reason.

"Nobody goes into teaching other than for their love of children and that's their passion," she explains. "Teachers have the desire to do good. Teachers are selfless givers and go above and beyond. That's who we are." ■



Carly Stahn, along with her educator mom and stepdad, Mary and Robert Brooks, when she attended Valley High School.

6 BENEFITS of adult day centers

Attention caregivers. Here are the top six reasons why we love adult day centers.

1. Promotes social interaction. This can be a place to make new friends and reduce isolation by socializing with others.

2. Physical and cognitive stimulation. Everyday activities are offered to challenge participants' motor skills as well as their cognitive abilities. Activities range from Zumba to gardening.

3. Creates routine. Seniors with dementia benefit from a structured daily routine, which is known to reduce anxiety.

4. Alleviates boredom. When someone with memory loss is homebound or isolated, they tend to forget the activities they once enjoyed. Adult day care centers help re-engage our loved ones.

5. Delay moving to a long-term facility. Another goal of adult day centers is to keep our loved one's cognitive ability as high as we can for as long as possible. With adult day centers costing just a fraction of what a long-term facility costs, there is an economic advantage as well.

6. Reduce stress for caregivers. Knowing your loved one is in a safe and secure environment can give caregivers peace of mind while at work, shopping etc. Caregivers need time to themselves to be re-energized. Much needed respite will help reduce caregiver burnout and restore joy and energy. ■



Information provided by Brooke Baker, Grace Estates, 801 N.E. Venture Drive, Waukee, 516-518-0977, www.graceestatesadc.com.

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ENROLL TODAY!

BRUSHING secrets revealed

1. Before bed is best.

Hopefully, you have heard that it is recommended to brush your teeth twice daily. However, just because it's recommended doesn't necessarily mean it is happening. If you or your child are struggling to brush twice a day, I have some great news to share. If you are only able to brush one time a day, the most important time is right before bedtime. While we are sleeping, our body decreases saliva production and tongue movement significantly. This means the food or plaque left on our teeth will stay there all night long, potentially damaging the teeth.

2. Brushing is team work. Children are not born with the dexterity it takes to properly brush their teeth. It is recommended that parents brush their child's teeth until they can



sign their name in cursive. If they do not have the hand skills to effectively use a pencil, they probably won't do well with a toothbrush either. Forming good habits is an important part of brushing. Having your child attempt to brush their teeth before you "inspect" or add an "extra polish" can help improve their dexterity and add a fun team work element to daily brushing. It really depends on the child; however, you may need to help your child brush up through age 8 or later.

3. Toothpaste — less is more. Almost everyone uses too much toothpaste. Toothpaste commercials have trained us to cover the entire brush head with paste, and this is just way too much. Adults are recommended to only use a "pea size" amount of paste while children should use half that amount. A child must be capable of spitting excess paste out instead of swallowing it while brushing or should just use a wet toothbrush without paste. Bonus

secret: How you brush is much more important than what paste you brush with. By following these guidelines, you won't have to purchase toothpaste as often, and you won't have to worry about your child accidentally swallowing too much paste.

4. Don't brush after you barf. Sorry, that wasn't the most eloquent way to discuss the next secret, but it does hit the point perfectly. Whether it's morning sickness or the good old stomach flu, most of us feel the need to brush right after vomiting. Vomit by nature is very acidic, which can be damaging to the teeth. By brushing right away after, especially when adding toothpaste to the brush, you actually will spread the acid across all surfaces of your teeth and can wear them away. ■

Information provided by Dr. James Stork, DDS, MS, Stork Orthodontics, 4090 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, 515-705-0644.

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THE NEWS, stress and your finances

Today, the typical consumer is exposed to more news and information than at any other time in history. A recent survey about stress indicated 95% of Americans “try to keep up with the news daily” and 56% said that doing so “causes them stress.” Even more interesting is that 72% believe “the media blows things out of proportion.” I think we can all relate to these statistics in one way or another. More and more Americans are turning to different social media outlets for a regular source of news which increases the frequency of information. As of late, a lot of the financial news has centered around inflation, interest rates, and the more recent collapse of several banks. While it is important to have an awareness of the news and current events in life, it can also be something that has a negative impact on your health. Many times, all of this information leaves you with the feeling you might be missing out and that you should take some sort of action. Our experience has been that doing so generally detracts from your overall investment experience, is stressful, and likely compounds the problem you are trying to avoid.



In our article from last month, we wrote about why one should consider having a financial plan and the pieces that should be integrated into a successful plan. Your plan should include your individual goals and personal financial situation. It should include guardrails to help you stay on track that are reviewed frequently to calibrate on changes in your situation. In times like these, it becomes the backbone for sound financial decisions and provides peace of mind about those decisions. Your plan will have already taken into account any scenario and will be your GPS for the long-term, allowing you to enjoy the journey without worrying about the day-to-day.

Working with a local financial advisor ensures that you are working with someone who has the education and experience necessary to develop the right plan for you. Take the first step in building a news-resistant plan today by reaching out. ■

Information provided by Michael Jiskoot, Valiant Wealth, 3408 Woodland Ave., Suite 204, West Des Moines, 515-223-6068. Sources: Stress: www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2017/11/lowest-point; Social Media Usage: www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2021/09/20/news-consumption-across-social-media-in-2021.

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By Scott Bontrager

CONSIDERATIONS when replacing equipment

The transitions between seasons can be the ideal time to replace your equipment that struggled the previous season. With that being said, the process can be a bit overwhelming. Which brand should I buy? Which model do I choose? These are just a few things to think about, but let's discuss the most common questions about the process.



• **Choosing a company:** Choosing the right company is the single most important factor as they are not only supplying the equipment but installing it. All of your faith goes into this company and trusting they provide the correct options for your family's home comfort and budget. A good contractor will be licensed, have referrals and evaluate your current system and, most importantly, listen to your needs.

• **Choosing the equipment size:** If you have an older home, it more than likely does not have the correct sized equipment — often oversized. Oversized equipment can cause numerous problems like cycling too frequently and causing uneven heating and cooling. On the other hand, undersized equipment has issues as well, such as running constantly, increased utility bills and also uneven temperatures. It's critical to have the correct sized equipment, and an HVAC professional will be able to calculate this for you.

• **Choosing high efficiency:** Your HVAC system is the most power-sucking equipment in your entire home. This is reason enough alone to pay attention to investing in high-efficient equipment when reducing your utility bills is important. A high-efficient system runs on less energy, provides better air quality, is less noisy and has fewer repair costs because it's running more efficiently and has less wear and tear on the equipment. It's a no-brainer.

• **Choosing a maintenance plan:** Do I really need a maintenance plan on a brand-new HVAC system? Yes! All manufacturers require that the equipment is properly maintained, which in turn provides the longest life, reliability and efficiency. Want a simple comparison? If you purchase a brand new car, do you stop buying windshield wipers, inflating the tires and getting oil changes?

You may be in a situation where only your furnace or air conditioner is failing and you don't necessarily need the entire system to be replaced. If this is the case, don't count out replacing the entire system just based on current failures. With the current rebates being offered on upgrading to more energy-efficient equipment, it could possibly be a better investment to take action on the full system now. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.

BRADY, Magic Mike, Maurice, Jesus and a Cocaine Bear

"Knock at the Cabin" (*might be still in theaters*)



From the mind of M. Night Shyamalan comes the tale of two married men in the woods on a holiday with their young daughter. While the daughter plays in the area, she is approached by a stranger who insists on meeting with her dads. The stranger has two other companions, and they've come to tell these two men that one of them has to die or the whole planet will collapse. Nothing like a light apocalyptic thriller to get your attention. If you want to see this movie, the less I tell you, the better. I will tell you that it was better than expected and had some really interesting and creepy moments. **Grade: B+**

"80 for Brady" (*in theaters*)



I probably don't need to tell you that I was way outnumbered in this theater. We took my mother-in-law to see this "based on a true story" movie about four senior-citizen women (Jane Fonda, Sally Field, Rita Moreno and Lily Tomlin) who've become great NFL fans and, more specifically, Tom Brady fans. Crazy hijinks ensue with a few tender moments as well. It wasn't as bad as I expected it to be. **Grade: B**

"Magic Mike's Last Dance" (*in theaters*)



A writhing and pounding Channing Tatum, after a \$6,000 dance for Salma Hayek's character, is enticed to move to Europe to put

on a show based on his years in the male dance business. We did not take my mother-in-law to this one. I was surprised to find it entertaining, and the dancing is truly incredible. I was happy I saw it. Call it a guilty pleasure. **Grade: B**

"The Amazing Maurice"



A charming animated film about a cat and a town overrun with mice. The animation was refreshingly different, and the voice work was strong. You might have to look for this one, but the kids will love it. **Grade: B (for parents); B+ (for kids)**

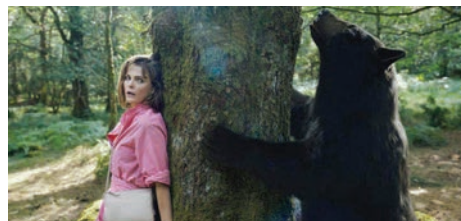
"Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" (*in theaters*)



The first two Ant-Man films were mildly entertaining. This one is a special effects mess. With a cast that includes Michelle Pfeiffer, Michael Douglas, Paul Rudd and Evangeline Lilly, this could have been special. All of these actors do their best to rise above this mandatory Marvel sequel and the now-annoying 30- to 40-minute final special effects fight scene extravaganza. The box office totals dropped 70% from the first to the second weekend. A wasted cast and opportunity. **Grade: C-**

"Cocaine Bear" (*in theaters*)

If you've seen the trailers for this movie, and it



looks good to you, you should see it. Director Elizabeth Banks delivers a raucous, crude, violent and, oftentimes, very funny movie. The cast is way better than the movie, but I have to admit that it does have its moments, though not for the faint of heart. **Grade: C+**

"Jesus Revolution" (*in theaters*)



Set in the 1970s, this movie is based on a true story about a pastor struggling to keep his flock when a group of Jesus-loving hippies lands in his church. Since it is the 1970s, we get all kinds of flower power, drugs and crazy wardrobe. Kelsey Grammer is effective as the pastor who embraces this group of hippies at the risk of losing his church. "Jesus Revolution" has a story to tell and tells it very well. **Grade: B**

"Creed III" (*in theaters*)



Michael B. Jordan stars and directs "Creed III," perhaps the final Rocky chapter? No sign of Stallone in the movie this time. Apollo Creed's son, Adonis, discovers a long-lost friend is back in town from a stint in prison, and he is eager to make up for lost time. This means returning to the boxing ring. I think we all know where this is headed. "Creed III" is a fun revisit with this group of characters, but it is far from a great film. This franchise has served us well, but it might be time to fade to black. The Rocky franchise is iconic (maybe not "Rocky III"), but it is running out of gas. **Grade: B- ■**

Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986 and can be heard talking movies every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. on KXn0 106.3 with Keith Murphy and Andy Fales. You can also follow him on Twitter @MrMovieDSM.

OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

West Des Moines Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Fareway of West Des Moines Feb. 28.



West Des Moines Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Fareway of West Des Moines Feb. 28.



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Dan Hartzeler, Dan Reed and Chad Rone



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Tommy Williams and Cory Meiners



Michael, Sarah and Bob Bastron



Ruth Ebke and Connie Blodgett

OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

West Des Moines Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Pulse Dance Fitness Studio, 6920 EP True Parkway, Suite 115, on Feb. 24.



West Des Moines Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Pulse Dance Fitness Studio, 6920 EP True Parkway, Suite 115, on Feb. 24.



Mikaela and Alex Stagnone and children Isabella and Gianna



Mikaela Stagnone and Melanie Mackey



Holly Lawson and Cassi Remele



Kelsey Chaves White and Curtis Marouelli



Frank Hanson and Dominic Bottenfield



Catherine Monachino, baby Cecilia and Brooke Koch



Marty Barkley, Josh Coughlin and Jeff Rogers



Nicole McBride and Doug Pfeil



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