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RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Ankeny/Northern Polk County residents share their favorites

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WELCOME

RESIDENTS choose again

Welcome to our annual compilation of residents' choices in Ankeny/Northern Polk County. We launched this poll to determine the top people, places and events in the area, and the results make for a fun read each year.

We invite residents in the area to vote for their favorites by answering more than 60 questions with open-ended responses. Some other polls rig the results by "suggesting" choices of businesses or requiring them to pay to be on the ballot. That is unethical, in our eyes, as it doesn't give a true snapshot of what the locals really like. Rest assured, these results are 100% organic responses that we received from our online and mail-in ballots.

We have become quite good at polling our readers and sharing results. I have been gathering this type of information for CITYVIEW magazine for many years, and you are likely familiar with the Best Of Des Moines readers' poll and the certificates you see across central Iowa. That poll was the first of its kind in the metro area, and it continues to be the primary source of central Iowans' favorites. Now we know it not only works for Des Moines, but for Ankeny/Northern Polk County as well.

You will likely agree with many of the results, and you will likely disagree with some, too. Hopefully, you took the time to cast your vote. If not, be sure to do so next year. Look to the pages of this magazine for full details as the time draws nearer.

We published the top three vote-getters in each of the categories inside these pages. Be sure to congratulate all the people, places and events that were selected as winners and let them know how much you appreciate them being in Northern Polk County.

As always, thank you for reading, and thank you for voting, too. ■



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FEATURE

RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Ankeny/Northern Polk County residents share their favorites

Another year has rolled around, and it is once again time to check in with local residents about their favorite professionals, businesses, local attractions and more.

The results of the Ankeny/Northern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll have been tallied, and congratulations are in order. Many of last year's favorites return to the top three, but some new ones have also emerged. Regardless, all can truly be proud, for they have earned the respect and loyalty of those who matter most — customers. From favorite restaurant, hair salon, bank, veterinarian, health club, park and more, the people who know — because they live here — have shared their opinions.

When it comes to fixing up — inside or

out — Ankeny businesses have you covered, according to the Residents' Choice Poll. Favorites for helping out around the house include TNT Landscaping & Nursery, Bryant Iowa Heating & Cooling, Tesdell Electric, Premier Plumbing Inc., Nicks Painting Plus, Renomads and more. Other favorites include everything from gymnastics studio, Triad Gymnastics, and health club, Legacy Fitness, to boutique, Real Deals.

Whether you agree or not, these are the views of your friends and neighbors. If you didn't cast your votes, be sure to do so next year. To the top three, great job dazzling your customers. To those striving to be in next year's winner's circle, get in gear now. The competition is fierce.

Main Street Café & Bakery serves up some of area residents' favorites, according to the Residents' Choice Poll. Ryan McCauley is co-owner.



FEATURE

Ankeny/Northern Polk County Residents' Choice for favorite...

(Runners-up in alphabetical order.)

Thrift store

Stuff Etc.

Runners up: Goodwill; The Salvation Army Family Store and Donation Center

Law firm

Lamberti, Gocke & Luetje, PC

Runners up: Mark Gray Law PLC; Takekawa & Green PLLC

Dad/child date spot

B&B Theatres Ankeny 12 & B-Roll Bowling

Runners up: Rising Sun Cafe; Urban Air Adventure Park

Mom/child date spot

Rising Sun Cafe

Runners up: B&B Theatres Ankeny 12 & B-Roll Bowling; Glazed Expressions

Coach

Steve Leach, North Polk Cross Country

Runners up: Bill Capaldo, North Polk Track; Tim TeBrink, North Polk Football

Bank

Luana Savings Bank

Runners up: Grinnell State Bank; Veridian Credit Union

Restaurant

Papa's Pizzeria

Runners up: Main Street Café & Bakery; Rising Sun Cafe

Hair salon

The Cutting Edge Salon

Runners up: Rustic Salon; Salon PC



Gymnastics/tumbling studio

Triad Gymnastics

Runners up: Grace Ballet & Acrobatics Studio; Michelle's School of Dance

Doctor

Dr. Douglas Layton

Runners up: Dr. Melissa Ehm-Pote; Dr. Jason Kopp

Dentist


Dr. Zachery Dow

Runners up: Dr. Chad Lensch; Dr. Brian Miller

Chiropractor

Dr. Christopher Tigges

Runners up: Dr. Kevin Bloyer; Dr. Justin Sands



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FEATURE

Eye doctor

Dr. Traci Friedman

Runners up: Dr. Lisa Domino; Dr. Jesse Kahn

Pastor

Fr. Kenneth Halbur

Runners up: Wendy Musgrave; Mike Van Rees

Health club or gym

Legacy Fitness

Runners up: Anytime Fitness; Fitness World Clubs

Boutique

Real Deals

Runners up: The Funky Zebras Boutique; Meraki Mamas & Co.

School

St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School

Runners up: Ankeny Christian Academy; Big Creek Elementary

Park

Big Creek State Park

Runners up: Jester Park; Ankeny Miracle Park



Bryant Iowa Heating & Cooling, a Residents' Choice favorite, is owned by DuWayne and Cathy McDaniel.

Place for a field trip

Jester Park

Runners up: Ankeny Area Historical Society; Saylorville Lake

Community festival

Polk City Four Seasons Festival

Runners up: Ankeny SummerFest; Fall Fest (Polk City)

Teacher

Katie Jones, North Polk West Elementary

Runners up: Jennifer Boyle, North Polk West Elementary; Kaleena Nowak, St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School

Principal

Misty Hade, St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School

Runners up: Cory Allison, North Polk West Elementary; Jon Richards, North Polk Middle School

Church

St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church

Runners up: Lutheran Church of Hope; Polk City United Methodist Church

Restaurant for dessert

Main Street Café & Bakery

Runners up: the creamery; Rising Sun Cafe



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FEATURE

Restaurant for breakfast

Rising Sun Cafe

Runners up: Main Street Café & Bakery; Sorriso Grille

Restaurant for lunch

Rising Sun Cafe

Runners up: Main Street Café & Bakery; Polk City Nutrition

Restaurant for dinner

Papa's Pizzeria

Runners up: District 36 Wine Bar & Grille; Portofino's Italian Restaurant & Pizza

Car dealership

Karl Chevrolet, Inc.

Runners up: Bob Brown Buick GMC; Dewey Ford

Place for ice cream

the creamery

Runners up: The Outside Scoop; Rising Sun Cafe

Event

Ankeny SummerFest

Runners up: Ankeny Farmer's Market; Polk City Four Seasons Festival

Daycare

Lakes Early Learning Center

Runners up: Primrose School of Ankeny at Prairie Trail; The Treehouse Growing & Learning Center

Physical therapist

Logan Albaugh

Runners up: Dr. Luke Carlson; Stephanie Kelsick

Financial planner

Kyle Matzen

Runners up: Brian Herbel; Mark Triplett

Preschool

Our Lady's Little Learners

Runners up: Ankeny Christian Academy; Primrose School of Ankeny at Prairie Trail

Cleaning company

phClean

Runners up: Molly Maid; Sanela's Cleaning Co.

Library

Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library

Runner up: Polk City Community Library

Chamber of commerce

Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce

Runner up: Go Polk City Chamber & Economic Development

Camping spot

Cherry Glen

Runners up: Jester Park, Prairie Flower

Children's birthday party spot

Let's Slumber It

Runners up: The Playground for Kids; Urban Air Adventure Park

Photographer

Tracy Marie Photography

Runners up: Monahan Photographic Artists; Nuzum Photo

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FEATURE

Dance studio

Michelle's School of Dance

Runners up: Ashlee's Creative Arts Academy;
Nicole's School of Dance

Place to take your mom and dad

Rising Sun Cafe

Runners up: Big Creek State Park; Papa's Pizzeria

Place to take your kids or grandkids

Rising Sun Cafe

Runners up: Big Creek State Park; Jester Park

Place for auto service

Nelson Automotive

Runners up: Karl Chevrolet, Inc.; Woody's
Auto Repair Service

Place to purchase a gift for a woman

Real Deals

Runners up: Meraki Mamas & Co.; Tweedle
Dee's

Place to purchase a gift for a man

Sportsman's Warehouse

Runners up: Fleet Farm; Menards



A ribbon cutting was held for Carmen's Flowers Uptown and Squeak Balloon & Decor at 516 S.W. Third St. on March 1. Carmen's Flowers is a favorite of residents voting in the Residents' Choice Poll.

Realtor

Susie Sheldahl

Runners up: Catie Jespersen; Barb Wiedenman

Bar or brewery

Fender's Brewing

Runners up: Polk City Pub; Uptown Garage
Brewing Co.

Place for guests to stay

Qube Hotel

Runners up: Courtyard by Marriott; Residence
Inn by Marriott Des Moines Ankeny

Coffee shop

Rising Sun Cafe

Runners up: Porch Light Coffeehouse; Smokey
Row Coffee

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FEATURE

Florist

Carmen's Flowers

Runners up: Flowerama; Hy-Vee Floral

Garden Center

Earl May Garden Center

Runners up: Canoyer Garden Center; Goode Greenhouses

CPA

Eric Wahlstrom

Runners up: Troy Albertson; Jason Ihle

Insurance Agent

Rob Cupp

Runners up: Chris Cullen; Chris Doubleday

Pharmacy

Hy-Vee Pharmacy

Runners up: CVS Pharmacy; Walgreens

Grocery store

Fareway

Runners up: Aldi; Hy-Vee

Pizza

Papa's Pizzeria

Runners up: Leaning Tower of Pizza; Wig and Pen Pizza Pub

Senior living facility

Mill Pond

Runners up: Edencrest at Siena Hills; The Bridges at Ankeny

Home builder

Black Birch Homes and Design

Runners up: J3 Homes; Ridgewood Homes

Home improvement retail store

Menards

Runners up: Ace Hardware; The Home Depot

Home improvement contractor

Renomads

Runners up: 3 Sons Construction; Amazed Construction Services, Inc.

Painting company

Nick's Painting Plus LLC

Runners up: Painting By Jen; Smith Decorating, Inc.

Plumbing company

Premier Plumbing, Inc.

Runners up: Lazer Home Services; Todd's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

Electrician

Tesdell Electric

Runners up: Kline Electric; Whitlatch Electric

Heating and cooling business

Bryant Iowa Heating & Cooling

Runners up: 72 Degrees Comfort Company; Polk County Heating and Cooling

Lawn care business

A+ Lawn & Landscape

Runners up: Terradyne Lawn Service, Inc.; Total Quality Inc.

Landscaping company

TNT Landscaping & Nursery

Runners up: A+ Lawn & Landscape; Rasmussen Lawn Care ■



Thank you for your nomination!

**Runner-up: Favorite Ankeny/
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Winner: Favorite Church

Winner: Favorite Pastor - Fr. Kenneth Halbur



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St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School

Winner: Favorite School

Winner: Favorite Principal - Misty Hade

Runner-Up: Favorite Teacher - Kaleena Nowak



April Offers Bring **May Closings!**



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REAL ESTATE

By Bonnie Christensen

4 FUNKY odors in your house only guests can smell

Stand in your kitchen and take a deep breath. Smell that? From last night's fish to your son's nasty lacrosse pads, you probably can't detect any of your home's rankest odors. You've got nose blindness.

Here are some of the most common nose blindness culprits and how to ban them from your home.



No. 1: Pet funk

There's one easy way to tell if your home smells like pets: Do you have them? Then, yes, unless you're an obsessive cleaner and groomer, your abode has at least some smell. The first step to cleaning up pet smells is cleaning the pets themselves. Bathe and groom them regularly.

Then, vacuum, vacuum, vacuum. If they have a favorite couch or cushion, cover it with a blanket and run it, and the cushion cover, through the wash weekly. Every time you vacuum, start with a hearty sprinkle of baking soda on the carpet.

No. 2: Mustiness

Mustiness is caused by mildew and mold, which your eyeballs can easily detect. Do a careful inspection of your basement, from the darkest corner to the surface of every cardboard box or bookshelf. If you find gray or white splotches anywhere, it's probably mildew. If it's fuzzy, it's mold.

To prevent mildew and mold from returning, consider running a dehumidifier or improving air circulation and sunlight exposure in the affected area if possible.

No. 3: Smelly bedding

Similar to pet odors, knowing if your mattress could smell is easy: Do you have a human body with skin and oils? Do you sleep on it?

But there's an easy fix: Sprinkle baking soda on it, let it sit for an hour or more, and then vacuum up the soda. Add a couple drops of essential oil to the soda (drip directly into the box and shake it well to mix evenly) for a pleasant smell. Bonus: Lavender has been shown to help you sleep.

No. 4: Fridge and freezer grime

It's your fridge and freezer's job to keep your food fresh, but they need a little help staying fresh themselves.

Food bits hang out long after you've tossed the item from which they came. Although you might not notice the odor creep, you may notice your ice starting to taste funny.

To zap odors from your fridge, unplug and empty it and do a thorough cleaning with a mix of hot water and baking soda.

You can sanitize with a solution of one tablespoon bleach and one gallon of water. Let it air out for 15 minutes. Try wiping it down with vinegar for extra odor eliminating, or even leave the door open for a few days. ■

Article by HouseLogic. Information provided by Bonnie Christensen, broker, RE/MAX Precision, 225 N.W. 18th St., Suite 103, Ankeny, 515-971-9973.

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How 5 types of retirement income are taxed

Not all retirement income is taxed the same by the federal government. Understanding retirement taxes can help you decide where to take income from first (or last) to maximize your retirement savings.

Traditional IRAs and 401(k)s are tax-deferred accounts, meaning you've never paid taxes on the money. When you start taking withdrawals from these accounts, you will pay federal income tax at ordinary income tax rates. There's a 10% penalty for payouts before age 59 ½, but you can't delay withdrawals forever. The IRS sets the required minimum distribution age (RMD) and tells you how much you must take (based on life expectancy). Currently, RMDs kick in at age 73. Unfortunately, distributions can come with a big tax bill.

A powerful, tax-free option is the Roth IRA and Roth 401(k). Qualified distributions are tax-free. You must have held the Roth IRA account for at least five years and be 59 ½ or older to withdraw gains without a 10% penalty. These tax-free withdrawals apply to money deposited into a Roth IRA or money converted from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. Roth 401(k) withdrawals are tax-free as long as five



years have passed since your first contribution. Currently, RMDs do apply to the Roth 401(k). New legislation eliminates RMDs on Roth 401(k)s starting in 2024.

If you sell stocks, bonds, or mutual funds you've held for over a year, the proceeds are taxed at a long-term capital gains rate of 0%, 15%, or 20%. The higher your income, the more capital gains taxes you pay. For 2023, you may qualify for the 0% long-term capital gains rate with a taxable income of \$44,625 or less (\$89,250 for those married filing jointly). The 20% rate applies to single filers with a taxable income of \$492,301 or more (\$553,850 married filing jointly).

Provisional income determines how much tax you pay on your Social Security benefit. Some Social Security beneficiaries will pay nothing, while others may have to pay federal income tax on up to 85% of their benefit. Provisional income is determined by adding your adjusted gross income plus 50% of your Social Security benefit plus any tax-exempt income you received for the year.

Tax laws and retirement rules are constantly changing. It's important to work with a trusted CPA who can help you play by the rules and a retirement planner who can help you develop a long-term tax plan that lowers your tax bill so you can spend more money on all the fun things in retirement.

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006.

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



Spring Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, April 22, 7-11 a.m.
Ankeny First United Methodist Church, 206 S.W. Walnut St.

Enjoy the Ankeny Lions Club's Spring Pancake Breakfast for a freewill donation.



Mother's Day Paint and Sip

May 14, noon to 2 p.m.
Uptown Garage Brewing, 305 S.W. Walnut St., Ankeny

Join the Ankeny Art Center at Uptown Garage Brewing for a Mother's Day Paint and Sip Event. The \$35 fee includes all materials and step-by-step instructions. Beverages will be available for purchase.

Broasted Chicken Dinner

Sunday, April 23, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Ankeny Legion Post 42, 521 S.W. Third St.

Come join the Ankeny Albaugh-McGovern Legion Post 42 for a delicious broasted chicken dinner. The Ankeny Legion Auxiliary will also be having a bake sale. This fundraiser will be used to help support the youth and veteran programs sponsored by the Legion Post. Dine in at the Legion Hall or carry out available. Catered by Staley's Food Service. Cost is \$15 for adults, \$7 for children ages 4-12. Children 3 and younger are free.

Annual Ice Cream Social

Sunday, June 25, 2-4 p.m.
Ankeny Area Historical Society, 301 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

What better way to celebrate summer than by attending the Ankeny Area Historical Society's annual ice cream social with your friends? Homemade pies, cakes and brownies. A freewill donation is accepted.



Art Supply Garage Sale

May 4
Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

The Ankeny Art Center is holding its seventh annual Art Supply Garage Sale. This fundraiser is a great way for the art community to come and grab some new or gently used art supplies at a huge discount — all while supporting the Ankeny Art Center.

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Gary's Ride

Waukee Raccoon River Valley Trailhead
Saturday, May 20

Gary's Ride is a fundraiser for MercyOne Richard Deming Cancer Center for terminal brain cancer patients. Riders and non-riders are invited to the celebration at The Handlebar Restaurant in Dallas Center. It will feature great food and entertainment for the whole family. For more information and to register, visit garysrideiowa.org.



Food and Fun

Various dates
Middlebrook Mercantile, 4125 Cumming Ave., Cumming

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

- 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. ■



NEWS BRIEFS

MOCK Trial champions

Ankeny High School team captures state championship.

A high school team from Ankeny walked away with the state championship trophy at this year's High School Mock Trial tournament. The Ankeny team outperformed a Cedar Rapids team called Robins Mock Trial to take the top honors March 29. Ankeny High School is the state champion and will represent the state in May in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the National High School Mock Trial championship.

Ankeny High School (BGH) defeated Robins Mock Trial (AEJ) in the final competition. Ankeny advanced with a victory over Johnston High School (HMY) in the semi-finals, while Robins prevailed over Dowling Catholic High School (AMR) in the other semi-final round. A total of 98 teams from across the state participated.

The conclusion of the 2023 state tournament marked 41 years that Iowa has had a high school mock trial program, according to John Wheeler, director of the Center for Law and Civic Education at The Iowa State Bar Association. The center sponsors the mock trial program in conjunction with the ISBA's Young Lawyers Division.

In addition to the team awards, 10 students were selected from across the 32 teams as outstanding attorneys. Twelve students were selected as outstanding witnesses. Presley Drew of Ankeny was an outstanding witness. In addition to the above recognitions, Ankeny High School (BGH) and Dallas Center-Grimes High School (FQO) received the Judge Anthony Critelli Award for sportsmanship, civility and courtroom decorum. ■

IBA presents student athlete awards

Winners receive \$1,000 scholarship to college of their choice.

Five Iowa high school seniors received a 2023 Iowa Bankers Association Student Athlete Achievement Award during the Iowa High School Girls Basketball State Tournament on March 3-4 in Des Moines. One student from each class was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the IBA to the college of her choice. Averi Porter, Ankeny Centennial High School, was honored in Class 5A.

Scholarship recipients are selected each year based on their academic performance, athletic participation, leadership skills and community involvement.

For three decades, the IBA has sponsored the Student Athlete Achievement Award program, which has grown to honor student athletes in football, boys and girls wrestling and boys and girls basketball. The IBA has awarded more than \$300,000 in scholarships since the program began. ■

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FAITH

By Pastor John Wagner

SO many stores...

Faith opportunities abound.

When my family first moved to Ankeny, I remember there were just a few grocery stores in town. People often had their favorite store and would suggest that the place they shopped was the “better place” due to a number of desirable factors: price, selection, quality, proximity, etc. If you really liked a certain store, Ankeny was small enough that driving clear across town wasn’t too big of a deal, especially to get that donut made just the way you liked it.



Our community has grown quickly, so it is no surprise that many more grocery stores have opened to provide for our community and compete for our patronage.

Just a few days ago, I sat down for lunch with a number of other pastors who work in Ankeny. As Ankeny has grown, so, too, have the number of churches. Even as more churches open, Ankeny is small enough that driving clear across town isn’t too big of a deal, especially to find that pastor who gives a nice (short) sermon each week.

While not every Ankeny church was represented at this lunch meeting, I was overwhelmed by the generous spirit present and lack of competition for “patronage.” Over and over, I heard pastors praying for all of Ankeny with the hope that more people would come to experience God’s love — at any church.

At my table, a new pastor in our community was welcomed. Borrowing grocery store language, it was almost as if I could hear these pastors say to one another, “I know we are all offering bread to the community. But we are not as concerned about where they decide to buy bread as we are that people all know bread is available. So welcome grocery store #437! We need you in Ankeny!”

Does each grocery store in Ankeny sell different kinds of bread? I think so. Does each church in Ankeny have different ways they connect with God and share God’s love? I think so. But I left this short lunch meeting with both a greater appreciation for the diversity of religious expression in our community and a renewed desire to welcome any and all toward God’s love.

Yes, I am a pastor at a specific church. No, I don’t think the church I serve is the only way to worship, connect or respond to God’s call. But yes, I am thrilled to remind you this month that, if you have been looking to share a space with people who are also deeply committed to loving God and loving people, Ankeny has so many churches waiting to welcome you. If I may be so bold — on behalf of faith leaders in Ankeny — you are loved. God loves you. If you haven’t ever visited a church in our community, stop by one of them this week and know they’ve probably been praying you would come.

God loves you. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor,
Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church.

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 it is 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 to pay attention to investing in high-efficiency 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.

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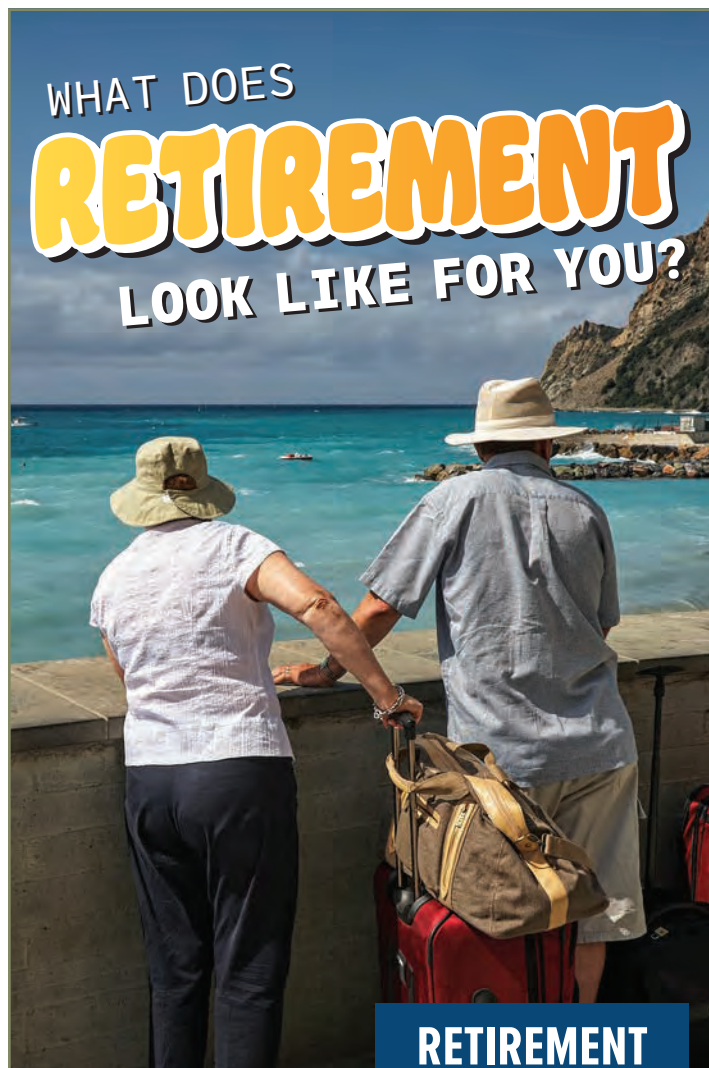
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HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

HOSPICE services — the earlier, the better

Because Matt had just been diagnosed with cancer, he and his wife, Caryn, were stunned when Matt's oncologist began talking about the benefits of hospice services.

"We knew Matt's cancer was stage 4 and the outlook wasn't good, but the medical team agreed that we were looking at several months, maybe a year, even, and we thought hospice care was for people about to die," Caryn recalls. "But the doctor explained that Matt could benefit from hospice earlier, so we decided to look into it."

The result of their research was a relationship that spanned not just the nine remaining months of Matt's life, but beyond; Caryn and her children are part of a bereavement group that's operated by the hospice provider, and Caryn has made friends with other widows who are also adjusting to being alone.

"Not only did being part of hospice bring Matt tremendous comfort, but the hospice team helped — and continues to help — everyone who loved Matt," Caryn says. "I tell anyone who will listen: If someone you care about is sick and is not going to get better, don't wait to contact hospice."

Ideally, hospice services can and should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for services, enabling an individual to live life in comfort for the days, weeks or months that remain in their life. And the earlier hospice services are started, the more they can — as in Matt's case — benefit the person who is ill as well as the whole family.

"As the weeks went on and Matt began to feel weaker, we were pleased to learn that, because he was on hospice, we would get a hospital bed brought to the house, and that he would receive pet therapy and all kinds of things he really enjoyed," Caryn says. "It's ironic to think about this now, but Matt was probably happier during those early weeks and months of hospice than he had been for a long time."

"And, as the end was near, the hospice team made sure he wasn't in pain. We were able to be with him and hold his hand and tell stories. Even in his last couple of days, he would smile when the kids and I would share memories. It was a very relaxing time — not at all like I had envisioned when we first found out he was so sick."

If you and your family are faced with the need to make a decision around hospice care, know that making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult — but once you've taken that first step, having care in place can make your loved one's last weeks and months more relaxed and meaningful for all. ■

Ward Phillips is vice president of market strategy and business development for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice services, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.





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Ramsey Park, Redwood Falls

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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A FORTUITOUS bike ride

RAGBRAI, a storm and a purple bikini... and the rest is history for Medinas.

Jose Medina met his now-wife, Donna, during RAGBRAI 22 years ago.

"I was riding into town, and it was a really hot day, and I remember riding in and looking off to my right, and there was a woman in a purple bikini laying out in the backyard," Jose says. "Later that night, I went to the Surf Ballroom, and that same girl was standing by the dance floor."

He asked her to dance, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"We just hit it off right away, and everyone was asking us how long we'd been dancing together," Jose says. "And I was like, 'About 15 minutes.'"

Jose is serious about his bike riding though, so he called it an early night and headed back to camp to get some rest before the next big day of riding. The weather had other ideas though, and there were tornado warnings in Clear Lake that night. Riders were evacuated from camp and taken to a bus barn for shelter. It was at that time that Donna drove out to camp to try to find Jose and offer him and his friends a place to shelter at her place. Police turned her away.

He had given her his card earlier that night, so she called his home number knowing he wouldn't get the message until later, but letting him know she hoped he was safe and had a good time finishing RAGBRAI.

"I called her up after the fact and asked her to come down. I was living in Des Moines, and she started visiting. She was working in Mason City at the time, and she moved down and took a job at Mercy in Des Moines. We've been together for 22 years and married now for 15 years."

This year, Jose will ride his 33rd RAGBRAI. Donna has never caught the bike bug, so she doesn't ride with him, but she used to help him set up camp in the earlier days. Now, he uses a charter that helps him with all the mundane and roughing it parts of the journey.

A lot has changed in the last three decades of riding. In fact, it was during one of his early rides that Jose saw his first cell phone in person.

"I got into camp, and this girl came in and told someone, 'You gotta find a pay phone because your mom was in an accident,' and this guy from California said he's got a phone in his duffel bag, and he came out with this brick thing. Then he said, 'I don't have any reception.' He climbed up high on a truck, and we got the girl up there and she started talking, and our mouths dropped because we'd never even seen one."

This RAGBRAI will go through Ankeny, and it's quite possible it might go right by Jose's house. He's sure that, when it does, Donna will be there waving him on. ■



Jose and Donna Medina met during RAGBRAI 22 years ago.



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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

INVESTMENT

By Kent Patterson

DO YOU have enough emergency savings?



Many people would agree that preparation is the key to success in many areas of life. Yet, when it comes to being ready for a financial emergency, a sizable percentage of Americans are feeling distinctly unprepared — and that can lead to problems.

Consider these survey findings from financial services provider Edward Jones and Morning Consult:

- Nearly two in five Americans expect that their emergency savings would last no more than a month.
- Less than 40 percent of respondents consider their emergency savings account to be fully funded.

It's important to have adequate emergency savings for two key reasons. First, when an unexpected financial need arises, such as a major home or car repair, you may well have to act quickly. And, second, if you don't have the funds readily available to meet this sudden need, you may be forced to dip into your long-term investments, including your IRA and 401(k). This typically isn't a good move, as taking money early from these accounts could lead to both taxes and penalties. And even more important, you'd be taking away resources from accounts you will almost certainly need to help provide income for a retirement that could last two, or even three, decades.

So, if you want to be financially prepared for emergencies, how much money should you have available? There's no one right answer for everyone, but generally speaking, it's a good idea to keep three to six months' worth of living expenses — or a full year's worth, if you're retired — in a liquid, low-risk account that's separate from the financial accounts you might use for everyday spending.

Of course, given the high cost of living, it's not necessarily easy to put away several months of living expenses — at least, not all at once. That's why you might want to have a certain amount automatically moved each month from your checking or savings account into the account you've designated for emergency needs. And when you get a financial "windfall," such as a year-end bonus at work or a tax refund, you might want to use part of this money for your emergency fund, too. You can also use these sources to replenish your emergency fund if you deplete some or all of it.

Here's something else to remember about an emergency fund: Keep it for emergencies. As mentioned above, you should hold this fund apart from accounts that you draw on for daily expenses — but you'll also want to avoid the temptation to use the money for other things, such as investment opportunities that may come your way. That's not to say you shouldn't be prepared for these opportunities, but you can do so by keeping some cash or cash equivalents within your portfolio. And, as an additional benefit, the presence of cash can potentially help reduce the impact of market volatility on a portfolio that's otherwise heavily weighted toward stocks.

Building and maintaining an emergency fund should be an essential part of your overall financial strategy — so, if you haven't started one yet, there's no time like the present. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information provided by Kent Patterson, 2005 S. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 500, Ankeny, 515-965-9601.

KEEP your estate plan updated

In our practice, we see many clients who have an outdated estate plan. Even if you have a will and powers of attorney, they may not meet your current needs. Here are three problems to watch out for:

You named the wrong executor or trustee

Your executor or trustee should be someone you trust. Outdated estate plans often name fiduciaries or successor fiduciaries who are no longer suited for the position. An executor named years earlier may be too old or may have died. A trustee who will be in charge of managing assets may no longer be close to the family. A guardian may not be necessary if your children are no longer minors.

Your children are older

When your children are young, your primary goal is to name a guardian to help raise them and provide a structure (often by trust) for management of money. If your child is now an adult, these concerns may no longer be relevant.

Perhaps your children will now take over the role of executor or trustee. Or, if your child isn't financially responsible, maybe you want



to extend that trust to provide continuing oversight of assets. You may have new issues arise as well, such as preserving an inheritance for grandchildren or protecting it from divorce.

Your medical authority is defective

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was passed in 1996 to establish national standards for protecting the confidentiality of medical records. As a general rule, your powers of attorney — medical directives, living wills and durable financial powers of attorney — should contain stipulations waiving HIPAA protections so that your agent can communicate with your physician about your care.

These provisions ensure your doctor can share important information about you so that your agent can make informed health care decisions. Without these protections, doctors may be unwilling to share medical information. If your powers of attorney are old enough, they may not even reference HIPAA.

It is important to review your estate planning documents every so often due to ever-changing tax laws and major life events. You should consider revisiting your plan every three to five years. Life can change, and it is vital to meet with your attorney to avoid potential pitfalls. ■

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 Dr. Katrina Smith, MD FAAD

SUN-INDUCED skin discoloration

Spring is here. Now we all head outdoors to enjoy the sun and warmer weather. However, sun exposure may cause some people to develop uneven dark areas on their skin. Melasma is a common condition that appears as darker patches of skin discoloration. It is more common in women with medium to darker skin tones but may also occur in men and typically appears on the cheeks, forehead and upper lip.

Melasma is not a dangerous condition, and many people will choose not to treat it or simply camouflage it with makeup. It tends to flare during pregnancy or with the use of oral birth control pills. Sometimes it improves spontaneously after pregnancy. Topical treatments include mineral sunscreen, hydroquinones, corticosteroids and tretinoin. Creams with vitamin C and kojic acid are gentler treatment options. Stubborn melasma may respond to procedures such as chemical peels, microneedling and laser/light treatments. A newer option is topical or oral tranexamic acid. For people with melasma, dermatologists recommend wearing sunscreen that contains zinc oxide, titanium dioxide or iron oxide.

If you have melasma, see a board-certified dermatologist who can distinguish this from other medical conditions and provide you with the best treatment plan. ■

Information provided by Dr. Katrina Smith, MD FAAD, co-owner, Iowa Dermatology Consultants, 2675 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suites 101/103, Ankeny, 515-348-4097.



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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.

WELLNESS

By Alex Townsend, BSN, RN

SUPPLEMENTING NAD: A fountain of youth

NAD+ has become extremely popular among the health and wellness community amid the rise of Long COVID cases and the popularity of IV nutrient therapy. Its numerous benefits are able to aid any individual, regardless of their health needs. NAD+ (Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide) is essential for all cells and is derived from vitamin B3, also known as Niacin. NAD+ is involved in numerous metabolic processes in the body that regulate aging, energy production, neurologic and cognitive function. Low levels of NAD+ are associated with many of the ailments associated with aging, making NAD+ a potent anti-aging therapy. NAD+ resides in the mitochondria of the cell, playing an essential role in energy production and expenditure. NAD+ is known to help increase stress resistance, improve athletic performance and maintain muscle mass. As NAD+ improves stress responses and cognitive function, it has been shown to aid individuals suffering from anxiety/depression, traumatic head injuries, substance abuse recovery, and improve "brain fog" most recently seen in COVID cases. NAD+ can be supplemented orally, injected intramuscularly, or administered via IV infusion. Start supplementing NAD+ today to drink from the fountain of youth. ■



Information provided by Alex Townsend, BSN, RN, assistant clinic director, IV Nutrition, 2405 S.W. White Birch Drive, Suite 105, Ankeny, 515-686-8400. www.ivnutrition.com

HEALTH

By Dr. Jesse Kahnk, OD

ADVANCEMENTS in eye care

I was talking with a patient recently about the pace of advancement in eye care since I started practicing in Ankeny almost 10 years ago. It's incredible to go through my old optometry school notes and see how much the standard of care at that time feels so outdated and insufficient now.

In the last December edition of this magazine, only a few months ago, I wrote about some new prospective medications for macular degeneration. Well, one of the medications is now on the market and more are on the way. There's seemingly a new medication trial report for me to look at every week.

Due to advancements in the last few years, we now have medications that can regrow corneal nerves, help you see without glasses, raise your eyelids, and even a nasal spray that can treat dry eyes.

The first intraocular lens implant for cataract surgery was performed at the end of 1949. Since that time, we now have implants that have bifocal and even trifocal correction, as well as implants that can correct astigmatism. All this means more and more cataract patients are less reliant on glasses after surgery than ever before.

It's an exciting time for me, professionally, that I'm able to solve so many more of my patients' vision and eye problems than ever before. I'm also excited for what is still to come and what I'll be able to address in the future. ■



Information provided by Dr. Jesse Kahnk, OD, Prairie View Eyecare, 1345 S.W. Park Square Drive, Suite 106, Ankeny. 515-305-2922.

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WELLNESS

By Christopher M. Renze, D.C.

CHIROPRACTORS can provide relief

Although chiropractors treat more than back pain, many patients visit chiropractors looking for relief from this pervasive condition. In fact, 31 million Americans experience low-back pain at any given time.

Interesting facts

- Half of all working Americans report having back pain each year.
 - Back pain is one of the most common reasons for missed work.
- In fact, back pain is the second most common reason for doctors' visits, outnumbered only by upper-respiratory infections.
- Most back-pain cases are mechanical or non-organic in nature — not caused by serious conditions such as inflammatory arthritis, infection, fracture or cancer.

Causes

The back is a complicated structure of bones, joints, ligaments and muscles. One can sprain ligaments, strain muscles, rupture discs and irritate joints, all of which can lead to back pain. While sports injuries and accidents can cause back pain, sometimes the simplest movements — for example, picking up a pencil from the floor — can have painful results. In addition, arthritis, poor posture, obesity and psychological stress can cause or complicate back pain.

Manipulation as treatment

Used primarily by doctors of chiropractic, manipulation has been largely ignored by most other health-care providers until recently. Today, with growing emphasis on treatment and cost effectiveness, manipulation is receiving more widespread attention.

Chiropractic spinal manipulation is a safe and effective treatment. It reduces pain, decreases medication use, rapidly advances rehabilitation, and requires very few passive treatments, such as bed rest.

In fact, after an extensive study of all currently available treatment options for low-back pain, the federal government's Agency for Health Care Policy and Research recommended that low-back pain sufferers choose the most conservative care first. It recommended spinal manipulation as the only safe, effective and drugless form of initial professional treatment for acute low-back problems in adults.

Prevention

- Maintain a healthy diet and weight.
 - Remain active — movement nourishes discs and joints.
 - Avoid prolonged inactivity.
 - Warm up or stretch before physical activities.
 - Maintain proper posture and be sure your computer workstation is ergonomically correct.
 - Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.
 - Sleep on a medium-firm mattress to minimize any curve in your spine.
 - Lift with your knees, keep the object close to your body, and do not twist when lifting.
 - Quit smoking. Smoking impairs blood flow, resulting in oxygen and nutrient deprivation to spinal tissues.
- If you or someone you know is suffering from back pain and have not found the relief for which you are looking, contact your chiropractor. They may be able to help you. ■

Our office is the only office in Central Iowa offering FDA-cleared SpineMed Decompression. If you or someone you know is suffering from back or neck pain and have not found the relief for which you are looking, please contact our office. We may be able to help. Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit www.renzechiro.com or call the office at 515-965-3844.

LIBRARY warm weather reads for all ages

Are you ready for a reading refresh as the weather warms up? If you're like me, you probably find that particular books really hit the spot during spring and summer. If you're looking for a great read for yourself, your friend or a family member, let me suggest a few perfect reads for this time of year.

Picture books

"And Then Comes Summer" by Tom Brenner, illustrated by Jaime Kim: This book takes me back to the days of being a kid during summertime, and the illustrations perfectly evoke the feeling of summer.

"Spring Stinks" by Ryan T. Higgins: From one of my favorite humorous author/illustrators comes a charming story about the wonders of spring and a grumpy bear who just doesn't smell it. A giggle-filled read.

"Dude!" by Aaron Reynolds, illustrated by Dan Santat: A platypus and a beaver are ready for a day of surfing, but the appearance of a shark was more than they expected. This delightful book features just one word but still tells a cute story of friendship and fun.

Juvenile

"Shirley & Jamila Save Their Summer" by Gillian Goerz: A Holmes and Watson retelling and a graphic novel? Count me in! I love seeing how 10-year-old Shirley and Jamila meet and become friends while solving mysteries in their neighborhood.

"Ellie Engineer" by Jackson Pearce: I love Ellie and her love of building things. When she decides to build the perfect doghouse as a present, she'll have to overcome the boys-vs-girls attitude of the neighborhood to find the help she needs.

"Wretched Waterpark" by Kiersten White: This series is perfect for Lemony Snicket fans. The Sinister-Winterbottom siblings are mysteriously sent to stay with their aunt while their parents are gone, though none of them know where. And how does the strange waterpark nearby fit into the mystery?

Young adult

"Unclaimed Baggage" by Jen Doll: Told from three perspectives, the story follows Doris, Nell and Grant as they find friendship and more while spending their summer working at a store that sells items that were lost and unclaimed during airline travel.

"The Summer of Jordi Perez (and the Best Burger in Los Angeles)" by Amy Spalding: The ultimate beach read. Plus-sized fashionista Abby lands a dream internship for the summer but finds herself falling for (and competing against) her fellow intern for a permanent job.

"Love Is a Revolution" by Renée Watson: Nala is looking forward to a low-key summer, but when she meets and falls for activist Tye, she finds herself telling a few fibs to impress him. Can Nala keep up the façade or will she let her true self show?

Adult

"Evil Under the Sun" by Agatha Christie: No time is the wrong time for a mystery, and the vacation setting of this Poirot case is perfect summer reading. In true Christie fashion, this book features an intriguing cast of characters, the murder of a beautiful actress, and a brilliantly twisty reveal of how it was all done.

"The Invisible Husband of Frick Island" by Colleen Oakley: Struggling journalist Anders is sent to tiny and remote Frick Island to write a fluff piece but discovers a different story instead. Tom Parrish died when his boat capsized, and his wife, Piper, has been carrying on as if Tom is still around. ■

PREPARE for the inevitable

Benjamin Franklin said, "But in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

You have already (or should have) cared for the "taxes" part of that statement. Have you cared for the "death" part?

I cannot express more emphatically the importance of pre-arranging for your future funeral/burial needs. You might be thinking, "I have plenty of time to think about that." Scan the obituaries listed on any of the local funeral homes' websites, and you will be surprised at how many "young 'uns" there are — age 50 and younger. Death is no respecter of affluence, prominence or age. It may call anyone when least expected.

Just like planning for a "rainy day" or your retirement, pre-arranging for your funeral/burial needs is a good financial decision. Funeral/burial costs are rising every year. It is to your advantage to make pre-arrangements for your future needs now, which will lock in today's rates for tomorrow's needs.

Where do you begin? Contact the funeral home and/or cemetery of your choice to discuss your many options.

Wondering what to do with this year's tax refund? Consider caring for the other "certainty" of which Ben spoke.

Give your family a gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs now. ■

Information provided by Jan Shawver, family services representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.



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CHURCHES host special needs egg hunt

Accommodations allow inclusivity.



Four churches joined efforts to provide an Easter egg hunt for children with special needs.

On April 2, four area churches partnered for the second year to provide an ecumenical special needs Easter egg hunt. The Ridge, Lutheran Church of Hope, Ankeny First United Methodist Church and Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church offered the event for kids up to age 10 to participate in Easter festivities in a safe, inclusive, Christian setting.

The idea started in February 2022 when Mary Sankey, coordinator for special needs faith formation at Our Lady's, reached out to the other churches.

"I was looking for a way to engage Ankeny families following the pandemic and felt an Easter egg hunt was the perfect opportunity to come together. I admire the disability ministries provided by the other Ankeny churches, and, rather than compete, we united in our ministries."

The churches each provided 300 filled eggs for the event. Sara Pullen from The Ridge contacted Ankeny schools and found

Lauren Mills, an ASL interpreter, to sign at the event. Marcie Mulford from Ankeny First United Methodist contacted the public library and provided all the beeping and special accommodation eggs. Christy Schmahl and Kaitlyn Norgaard from Lutheran Church of Hope provided all the advertisements and games, and Sankey coordinated the volunteers. The event was held at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church.

The event was an opportunity for children with disabilities and their siblings to participate in Easter festivities at their own pace. Special accommodations were taken into consideration to include an ASL interpreter, beeping eggs for the visually impaired, and a special accommodation hunting area for children with walkers.

"Ankeny is built on community," Sankey says. "In a world of division, we wanted to bring people together. This is what God and Easter are all about. Many of these families already



The event included other activities as well for the children.

lean on each other for support. We can learn from their example." ■

HOW TO better support someone with dementia

The need for socialization varies for everyone. Some people get energy by being surrounded by people, while others relish in frequent periods of solitude to

replenish and may be overwhelmed with too much commotion. Either way, everyone needs relationships to live a fulfilling life. Unfortunately, with the changing brain chemistry due to dementia, maintaining these relationships can often present a challenge.

In the early stages of dementia, a person may begin to feel as though their friends and family may have forgotten about them. This may be for several different reasons. Maybe the person was invited to an outing but has forgotten, maybe the person living



with dementia begins to do certain things that make the friend feel uncomfortable so they start to avoid contact, or maybe a friend thinks that the friendship no longer matters to that person after diagnosis.

Whatever the reason may be, it comes at a period of time when connections are vitally important. So, what can be done?

As a friend:

- Be persistent with your invitations. Rephrase the way you ask. Instead of yes/no invitations, offer a scenario instead stating you would love their company.
- Consider increasing your own knowledge and skills to interact with their changing abilities.

As a caregiver:

- Help arrange social gatherings and attend them together.
- Accompany on outings such as grocery

shopping or to the park.

- Keep track of social activities to help learn and understand what may cause distress vs. what causes happiness; increase time spent on the latter.

It is important to note: When you cannot be readily available to your loved one or you believe additional support is needed, leaning on help from trained caregivers can make a world of difference.

During the dementia experience, many people need guidance and support to maintain and nurture these essential connections. As you think about the changing social abilities of your loved one, it is important to be creative and be as inclusive as possible. Connection is key. ■

Information provided by Jeff Raines, owner, Senior Helpers, 2301 W. First St., Ankeny, 515-964-7297.

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MANY events in the works

The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce appreciates the partnership it has with the Ankeny Community School District, Ankeny Christian Academy, St. Luke's School and DMACC. We are fortunate to have a top-notch school system and community college right in our backyard. Ankeny Celebrates Education is an event hosted by the chamber to celebrate our educators and support staff. This year, on May 16, we will have the privilege of hosting more than 400 educators from all four schools in our community. If you are able to help with a prize donation, please reach out to Zoe Schmitz at zschmitz@ankeny.org. Thank you to Karl Chevrolet for being our presenting partner.



We have scholarship opportunities that graduating seniors and adult learners can apply for. Both the Chamber and the Renee Murphy Scholarship applications can be found on our website at Ankeny.org/scholarships. The deadline to apply is April 24, and we have more than \$7,000 to give away. We will join both Senior Spotlight Nights to award these scholarships to the graduates.

A new event coming to the Chamber is our Ankeny Bus Tour, presented by Danielle Seifert Real Estate Professional Group-RE/MAX Concepts. This is a great way for you to hear the history of Ankeny and hear what Ankeny's future looks like. Those participating will also have the unique opportunity to take a 30-minute tour of Kreg Tool, Accumold and a residential neighborhood. Go to Ankeny.org to register for the tour.

The Grand Parade, presented by John Deere Des Moines Works, is now accepting registrations for floats and entries. With the theme "Ready Set Play," you can design your float with any fun game design. Maybe Pac Man is being chased by a ghost, Mario is saving the Princess, or you are playing a game of Go Fish. The creative opportunities are endless. We had to make some changes to the route due to 18th Street road construction, but we are still planning for just under 2 miles of music, dancing and just plain fun. Don't forget to say hi to our judges as you pass through Uptown on Cherry Street. Make sure you are following us on our social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. This is where you can find the most up-to-date information on band announcements, schedule, parade registration, Friday Family Fun events and more. You can also go to ankenysummerfest.com and get all the information as well.

There is a lot going on at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce, and we want to thank all our members, volunteers, partners and the community for your continued support. Make sure to follow us on social media to stay up to date on future events. ■

Information provided by Melisa Cox, president/CEO, Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.

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April Lattes & Leads

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ANKENY Wrestling Club excels

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Ankeny Wrestling Club's high school club night gathered the program's wrestlers for a photo.

Looking back on this past wrestling season, the Ankeny Wrestling Club has a lot to be proud of.

The club, which is open to kids in the Ankeny community from kindergarten through eighth grade, runs five different practice rooms during the folkstyle season (October through March). For the 2022-2023 season, more than 250 wrestlers were registered.

The season wrapped up this past March with the statewide AAU tournaments. Wrestlers from the Ankeny Wrestling Club competed at Iowa AAU Super Pee Wee, Iowa AAU Kids State, Iowa AAU Girls State, and Iowa AAU Girls Junior and Senior High State.

The club finished the season with 60 state qualifiers, 14 state place winners and two state champions, including kindergartner Lincoln Shafer and third/fourth-grade competitor Evan Staples. Wrestlers also finished 10th overall at Iowa AAU Super Pee Wee.

The coaching staff for the Ankeny Wrestling Club is accomplished in their own right.

Head coach Anthony Smith runs the practice room for grades 5-8. Smith, who is originally from Prairieville, Louisiana, was a three-time state place winner, as well as a varsity letter winner for Luther College in Decorah. He just wrapped up his sixth year of volunteering for the Ankeny High School wrestling program, too.

This past year, Alli Ragan ran the Ankeny Wrestling Club girls' practice room. Ragan is a two-time World Silver Medalist and six-time World Team Member for Team USA.

This spring, Ragan is coaching the club's freestyle practices, which began the week after spring break and runs for 10 weeks. Practices are open to boy and girl wrestlers in the Ankeny community who want to take their wrestling to the next level.

Heather Stephenson, sponsorship director for the Ankeny Wrestling Club, says, as the Ankeny community continues to grow, so too will the club.

"The Ankeny Wrestling Club will also continue to support the growth of girls wrestling," she adds. "The club will continue to develop youth wrestlers who will grow up to wrestle in our high school wrestling programs."

Stephenson explains that the club is a 501(c)3 run by passionate volunteers like herself. All donations are tax deductible and allow club leaders to focus their energy on promoting and growing the sport of wrestling in the community.

"The Ankeny Wrestling Club has fantastic support from all three high school wrestling programs and the Ankeny Community School District," Stephenson says. "Wrestlers from the Hawks, Jags and Ankeny Girls Wrestling all volunteer to help run our two local tournaments and spend time developing our youth wrestlers in our practice rooms. The relationship with Community Education allows the Ankeny Wrestling Club to run an affordable program for the Ankeny community."

If you would like to join the Ankeny Wrestling Club or make a donation, visit www.ankenywrestlingclub.com. ■



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OUT & ABOUT



A ribbon cutting was held for Human Capital Strategies & Solutions at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce office on March 24.



A ribbon cutting was held for Enchanted Mystical Boutique at 729 N. Ankeny Blvd. on March 15.



A ribbon cutting was held for the expansion of Magee's Irish Pub & Eatery and The King's Head Irish Kitchen & Wine Cellar at 1610 S.W. Main St., on March 30.



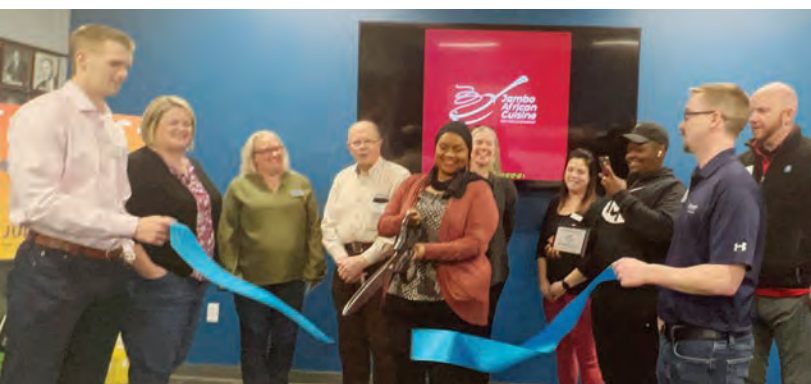
A ribbon cutting was held for Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Education Center at 2501 S.E. Creekview Drive on April 1.



A ribbon cutting was held for Rustic Swan at 423 S. Ankeny Blvd., on April 6.



A ribbon cutting was held for Forefront Dermatology at 2785 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 24, on March 23.



A ribbon cutting was held for Jambo African Cuisine at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce office on March 27.



Staff of Lamberti, Gocke & Luetje, PC with their Residents' Choice certificate.

RESIDENTS' Choice

Certificates were presented to those selected as "favorites" in the Residents' Choice Poll.



Diane Hamilton, Tammy Larson and Jason Ihle, Jason D. Ihle, CPA PLLC



Lois O'Donnell and JoAnn Adamson, Ankeny Area Historical Society Museum



Amy Kinney, Let's Slumber It



Shawn Edwards, A+ Lawn & Landscape



Amy Greek, The Playground for Kids



Tracy Smith, Tracy Marie Photography



Misty Hade, Fr. Kenneth Halbur and Kaleena Nowak, St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School and St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church



Staff and students of Our Lady's Little Learners



Rachel Bell Eckhardt, Dr. Jesse Kahnk and Maria Cresta, Prairie View Eyecare



Staff of The Bridges at Ankeny

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