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OCTOBER 2023



Living

MAGAZINE

Super FANS

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for their favorite teams

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WELCOME

MAKE way for the Super Fans!

Just admit it. We all know some. Or maybe you are one? Either way, these folks are easy to find.

I am talking about Super Fans, and they stick out like a banana in a bowl of blueberries.

Bumper stickers promoting their teams on their cars aren't enough for Super Fans. They have the personalized plates and the clever number and letter schemes that the rest of us need one of those secret decoder rings to decipher.

Of course, their closets are full of their team-themed shirts, sweatshirts, hats, pajamas, socks, slippers and underwear. You name it, and Super Fans have their team logo on it. And regardless of how worn and tattered those items have become, they never throw them away.

The pre-set stations on the car radios of Super Fans are locked in to sports talk and sports talk only. Don't even think about turning the dial.

They fork out more money on game tickets than they do on groceries, and they are just fine with that.

Super Fans spend countless hours on Twitter or X or whatever you call it just to be the first to know the latest news on trades, injuries or other breaking news about their teams.

And to top it all off, and to show their true commitment, Super Fans spend their hard-earned money having their team mascots or logos permanently tattooed on their skin. And not just one tattoo, either.

I am not a Super Fan. Far from it. I enjoyed participating in sports and coaching, and I do enjoy watching occasional games and sporting activities, but it stops there. Even so, I am greatly entertained by those who are Super Fans. I love their passion, their feistiness, their spirit. And I can look past those fading tattoos.

Does this all sound familiar to you? Well, you don't have to be a Super Fan to enjoy this month's feature story on local residents who are.

Thanks for reading. ■



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Super FANS

Residents share their passion
for their favorite teams

By Chantel Boyd

What's your favorite college team? NFL? NHL? Most of us have been asked similar questions at one time or another. Some people, however, don't need to be asked. The team shirt and hat they are wearing, the banner hanging on their garage door, the bumper stickers on their cars, and the photos of them with their faces painted cheering at the stadium all shout out their affiliations. Those are the people who have crossed that fine line between fan and Super Fan.

Heath Banks has a museum honoring the game of baseball.

Des Moines baseball since the 1880s

Craig Lankford from Norwalk has been collecting Minor League Baseball memorabilia for more than 30 years.

"I've always enjoyed the excitement of baseball, the camaraderie, and personal aspect of Minor League baseball," he says. "My collection consists of items from the 1880s to now and mainly focuses on Des Moines baseball. For the last 30 years, I've grown my collection to an almost unmanageable obsession, as my wife, Lisa, would call it."

Craig's love of baseball began when he was growing up in Michigan.

"My father, Curtis Lankford, was a baseball fan," he says. "He grew up with his father and older brothers taking him to the Tigers games. My father also gave me the same experience at a young age."

Craig's father took him to see the Iowa Oaks (now Iowa Cubs) play at Sec Taylor Stadium.

"For 40 years, I watched games with my father, then my sons," he says.

Craig's favorite memory from his childhood was watching the "Cubbies" have a championship season.

"I met my heroes at the ballpark, old Sec Taylor Stadium. Every home team fan stomped their feet, making the old wooden grandstand vibrate," he says.



Some of the baseball cards Craig Lankford has of the early baseball players of the area.

One funny memory started a tradition. Craig's father was a jokester.

"He asked me if I wanted pickles with my nachos. I was 5 years old, and I said yes. He popped a 'pickle' in my mouth, and I erupted with drool, screaming and yelling. At the same time, the Oaks made a base hit."

Over the years, Craig and his dad continued this tradition of the surprise pickle for each of Craig's four sons (Zach Liter and Tyrus, Tommy and Leo



Craig Lankford has been a fan of local baseball for decades and has collected memorabilia about the history of the game in Des Moines.

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Lankford).

"I got to share my experience again and again with my pop and boys."

Craig has lived in the Des Moines area since 1974. When he was growing up, his dad took him to a handful of games a year.

"When I was 10, my dad took me to a game right behind home plate. It was the best seat in the house," he recalls.

Craig became a Minor League Baseball scorekeeper at the new Principal Park when he was older. The job included a small wage, good seats, a drink and a hotdog; he did that for a few years.

"It was a dream come true for the local boys," he says.

Even when Craig was working fulltime and busy in his career while raising his boys, he still made time to attend a few games a year. He attended games with his dad until 2019.

"I've attended between 400 to 800 at Sec Taylor Stadium and Principal Park. I've only recently crested the 50-year mark and hope to enjoy many more games," he says.

Craig's collection includes some items he has had since he was a child, and even though they have no monetary value, he keeps them for

sentimental reasons.

"These pieces hold a special place in my heart and will remain in my collection regardless of the value," he says.

Craig keeps framed pictures of championships, "tobacco cards" from the late 1800s, and jerseys worn in games.

"I also keep a program and scorecard for each season," he says.

Craig has thousands of pieces in his collection, and he even has a few hundred of Sec Taylor's original newspaper photos, all signed by him on the back.

"I have many autographed baseballs and bats from the 1950s to modern," he says.

One of Craig's more unusual pieces of memorabilia may not be seen in many collections.

"My favorite piece is my original Cubbie bear mascot head," he says.

When Craig was a child, the Iowa Oaks became the Iowa Cubs in 1982 and introduced Cubbie Bear.

"I remember hugging Cubbie. The flood of 1993 ruined the costume, but the water never reached the head," he says. "Now, nearly everyone in my family has worn that head."

Super Fan of the game

Heath Banks has a whole building full of memorabilia and runs a sort of memorabilia museum.

"My great-great-grandfather settled in a small town — no longer here — called Lothrop. He brought his family from Ireland and settled here in 1852. That is why I have such a close tie to this community," he says.

Heath is now preserving Major League Baseball memorabilia in his museum. He says Norwalk residents know him as the guy with the memorabilia museum.

Heath's neighbor Vicki Duff Janssen is impressed.

"My neighbor has built a gorgeous pole barn that is full of professional memorabilia," she says. "He is also a baseball umpire and has an extensive collection."

Heath regularly attends games and recently returned from a trip to see the Angels play. A few weeks prior, he saw the Royals play.

Heath is not loyal to one specific team; he is just a big baseball fan.

"I have some teams that I like more than others but do not root for one team exclusively."



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FEATURE

While a baseball fan since childhood, Heath has only been a Super Fan the last 15 years.

"I grew up collecting baseball cards and playing baseball. I come from a community that has a strong baseball tradition," he says.

His favorite memory is from 2014 when he attended all the Royals home games of the World Series. Then, in 2016, he went to Games 6 and 7 in Cleveland when the Cubs won the World Series. He also attended 2005, 2012 and 2014 All Star Games.

"I have attended more than 200 Major League Baseball games and have been to 23 of the parks," he says.

Heath's favorite memorabilia are his signed and framed jerseys and signed helmets.

In his free time, Heath umpires high school baseball and referees football.

"Next year will be my 30th year umpiring baseball, and, so far, I have umpired 13 state tournaments," he says.

Heath's baseball memories go back to when he played on a Little League team called Churchville with friends and community members.

"We had some really good teams and a lot of



Heath Banks has collected a huge range of baseball memorabilia that he enjoys sharing with others.

success," he says. "Martensdale - St. Mary's has a strong baseball tradition that I got to be a part of in high school where I played in two state tournaments."

Heath has had some unique experiences because of his friends in the umpiring world.

"I got to go to Game 4 of the World Series

in Philly last year," he says.

Heath has also made memories with his brothers through his umpire connections.

"We started a tradition of going to a different park every year," he says. "We have been to Anaheim, Seattle, Milwaukee, and, multiple times, Kansas City."

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FEATURE

Fans and fundraisers

Marty and Lori Polka have been attending Iowa Hawkeyes games for decades. They have been together for 40 years and have been married for 33 years.

One way they share their love of the Hawkeyes is by enjoying a garden with Hawkeyes colors: golden yellow and black.

The Polkas have attended Iowa Hawkeyes games on many occasions and have taken many pictures with the “Hawkeye Elvis” and other fan-favorite personalities who frequent games and tailgates, like Stumpy Ricky Stanzi and Tony Mokieki.

Lori and Marty have taken their kids, Dylan and Courtney, to bowl games in Florida. Their children mean a lot to them, as did their late nephew, whose life was saved at the University of Iowa Children’s Hospital. He eventually graduated from Drake and served in the Army Reserves. Sadly, he was killed in a car accident a few years ago.

“Around eight years ago, we started fundraising out of our trailer for the kids at the hospital. We have raised over \$217,000 for the University of Iowa Children’s Hospital,” says Marty.

About eight couples own a tailgating

trailer that has been dubbed “HawksToGo,” and Marty’s brother pulls the trailer. Out of it, alcoholic shots are handed out next to the trailer.

“No shots are actually sold, and all the fundraising money was raised from freewill donations,” he says.

Tailgating is a big part of Marty and Lori Polka’s lives, and it is a big part of their fandom for the Hawkeyes.

The couple has also traveled to big games, including to Dallas for the women’s basketball championship.

“We went to both games, and it was just unbelievable,” says Marty.

The Polkas also attended the Big Ten Championship games in Indianapolis, where they say the tailgating was epic.

“A film crew was taking video, and the main guy told me it was the craziest tailgating he had ever seen,” says Marty.

Marty and Lori’s shared tailgate trailer has been featured in different media publications throughout its fundraising history for the children’s hospital.

Being involved with the tailgating trailer and fundraising initiative has afforded Marty many opportunities to snag autographs.



Marty and Lori Polka have been attending Hawkeye games for generations, and Marty often wears his custom suits when meeting other fans and friends at the games.

“My favorite memorabilia is my autographed Iowa helmet and the trailer itself being autographed, too,” he says. “The group that owns the trailer has tons of autographs in our possession. Jim Zabel is my favorite.”

Marty’s nickname is Moose, and he is often seen wearing his Hawkeyes big hat helmet with his nickname under the bill. He might also be seen wearing a big golden chain with a Herkey logo pendant or Hawkeye tattoos. At other games, you might see him and his friends wearing Hawkeye suits and attire. No matter the outfit, they are sure to be having fun and raising money for the children’s hospital. ■

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FATHER-SON duo shares passion for sports

Memories, memorabilia and livestreaming

Tyler French and his wife, Catherine “Cat” French of Norwalk, and his dad, Gary French, are big sports fans, and Tyler and Gary share their passion through their sports livestreams.

The legacy of sports fandom started when Gary was a child.

“My family watched and played sports with our parents’ support,” says Gary. “As an adult, I found sports to be my entertainment focus.”

Gary has been a sports fan since childhood but reached the Super Fan level 40 years ago. He is a fan of many different sports and recalls times he has seen living legends perform their given sports.

“I saw Richard Petty in his last race at Phoenix, and I watched Wayne Gretzky play in Phoenix and Las Vegas on back-to-back nights. There have been so many sports events I have seen,” says Gary.

He has seen nearly 200 NFL games, a couple dozen NCAA football games, and around 200 NBA games — and has accumulated many unforgettable memories along the way.

“My favorite memory is not based on a team, and it is a three-way tie. 1. Watching the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. 2. Being there live watching Michael Jordan win his third Championship as the Bulls beat the Phoenix Suns in 1993. 3. Being at the first-ever Arizona Cardinals game in September 1988 on Monday Night Football against the Dallas Cowboys, where I even shook hands with Tom Landry as he was going out to the field.”

Gary has a basement full of memorabilia and says his favorite is his framed picture of the Cardinals’ first home game in Airzona.

“It’s a nice aerial shot with the Goodyear blimp floating overhead. I can even point out where I’m sitting,” he says.

Gary’s son, Tyler, was born into sports fandom, and sports have been prominent in his life.

“The Chiefs have been in my life for nearly 20 years, and I’ve been announcing and covering sports since I was 17 as a senior in high school,” says Tyler.

Tyler became a Chiefs fan since his flag football days as a 9-year-old.

“We went down to Kansas City for a short weekend trip, and I was wearing my Chiefs hat. A waiter told us that a player was at the



Tyler French and his dad, Gary, enjoy lounging around amid their Chiefs gear.

restaurant, and we had him ask if we could meet him. The player turned out to be Jared Allen, who is now a candidate for the Hall of Fame, and he made a 9-year-old kid who stood there in awe of him so happy. To this day, he is still my favorite player ever.”

That event sparked a love of sports in Tyler, and he began dreaming of becoming a sports broadcaster when he was 7 years old.

“I’m lucky to be back at my alma mater as the sports play-by-play announcer nearly 10 years after getting my diploma from Norwalk. It’s a huge dream to be the Voice of the Warriors.”

Tyler and Gary’s broadcasting company is called Pardon My French Media.

“We livestream games for Norwalk, Drake University Hockey, Waukee Lacrosse, Iowa Phoenix, and the Des Moines High School Hockey League.”



Tyler French enjoys being the “Voice of the Warriors” and broadcasting Norwalk High School games.

Tyler’s favorite piece of memorabilia is, of course, his hat signed by Jared Allen.

After the Chiefs’ first championship in 50 years, he and Cat attended the Kansas City Chief’s Super Bowl parade in February 2020.

“Getting to share that experience with my wife on our honeymoon was something I will hold close to my heart,” says Tyler. ■

A LITTLE TLC

Meyers find home with potential.

In fall 2018, Amanda Meyer and her husband, Randall, went house hunting to find something bigger for their growing family.

“We saw quite a few options in town and knew they weren’t a good fit for us,” she shares. “I was ready to go home, as it had been a long day of house shopping, but our Realtor encouraged us to take a look at one more house. I wasn’t impressed with the online pictures, but we gave it a go. Upon walking in, I instantly fell in love with the traditional two-story layout, potential to make it my own and backyard.”

The home had been on the market for a while, and the Meyers soon realized it was because every room needed updating and TLC.

“What I saw as amazing potential, my husband saw as dollar signs,” she says. “But we quickly knew it was the home for us. We agreed to be patient and do updates as we could to make it our own.”

This past year, the couple renovated the main floor into a space they thoroughly enjoy.

“It’s exactly what I pictured in my head that I wanted when we first walked through the home,” Meyer says. “I was able to create a music/sitting room in the front of our home, and that’s now my favorite room in the whole house.”

Another thing the family boasts about the home is the beautiful, spacious backyard with its mature trees and plenty of shade.

Meyer shares that, though she may be biased, they live in the best neighborhood in town.

“Our children love playing outside with friends, riding their bikes up and down the sidewalk, and we have the best neighbors,” she says. “Neighbors who look over our home while we’re away and are always ready to help, whether it be to let our dog out or borrowing a tool.”

For Meyer and her husband, it’s a wonderful feeling living and raising their children in Norwalk.

“Both of us were raised in wonderful small towns in Iowa,” she says. “Our jobs brought us close to Des Moines, but it was important for us to raise our children in a town that felt like what we grew up with. We love Norwalk because it feels like the best of both worlds. We like being close to Des Moines and the opportunities a larger town brings but love



Amanda and Randall Meyer found a house they knew could be the home they wanted for their family with a little TLC. Amanda’s favorite room is a sitting/music room they created at the front of the house.



seeing familiar faces when we shop local, play at the park and as we are out and about at school functions. We feel that sense of community here.”

Meyer adds they value the Norwalk schools.

“Our children have had amazing teachers every year who truly care for them and are passionate about teaching,” she says. “We appreciate the excellent communication given by administrators and teachers who are attentive



to all aspects of our children’s educational journey.”

Meyer enjoys being part of local kiddos’ musical education herself through Music Class for Tots — a business she started in town in 2015 that provides music education classes for children ages birth through preschool.

“I love seeing my little musicians grow each year and then seeing them later on at school concerts and functions,” she says. ■

EVENT raised funds for Maui wildfire victims

Aloha Wind includes Norwalk locals.

On Sunday, Oct. 8, local hula group Aloha Wind hosted “Malama Maui” — a benefit show held at xBk Live in Des Moines to raise money for victims of the Maui wildfires. All proceeds will be donated to the Hawaiian non-profit organization ‘Āina Momona, which then goes directly to victims.

The benefit show was open to all ages and showcased local Hawaiian talent, including Teri Underhill, who served as co-producer for the show. She’s also a performer with Aloha Wind.

For Underhill, Maui is her other home, as she spent many summers there while growing up.

Knowing the devastation the wildfires caused, she set out to do what she could to help.

“My family is there, and I am grieving the loss of a historic city,” says Underhill. “Other Hawaiians in Iowa were also deeply affected with knowing some who lost their homes or even their lives to the unfortunate fires. I knew this wildfire would take years of support from all around the world to even be able to rebuild what once was for those families and thousands affected.”

Underhill notes the fundraiser featured other Hawaiian Norwalk folks in the show, including Tammy Apana, who performed with the band Feminine Hyjinx. The Momoa family was invited, too.

“A lot of Iowans both love Hawai’i and have vacationed or dreamed



Members of Aloha Wind performed for a fundraiser to help victims of the Maui wildfires. Members are, from left: Dawn Martinez Oropeza, Gwyneth Oswin Bertock, Teri Underhill, Ilima Young-Dunn and Melinda Jenkins-Moore.

of vacationing in Hawai’i. This is the chance to show your support and allyship to a local indigenous culture that is very present here in Iowa,” says Underhill.

Besides raising funds, the event proved to be a good time with Hawaiian chants, hula, music and much more. ■

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In the financial industry, a fiduciary must, by law, act impartially and provide advice that is in their clients' best interest. Choosing a fiduciary can help put you at ease when looking for the right retirement planner. This person should be transparent and thoroughly explain investment options and fees. If you are working with someone who doesn't have a fiduciary duty to you, you have fewer legal options should you discover that your best interests were not served. When interviewing a potential retirement planner, a few questions are, "What's your legal obligation to my investments?" and "What investment services or advice will you be providing me?" It's also a good idea to ask for regulatory documentation on how they handle conflicts of interest and what procedures they have to ensure your best interests are placed before theirs.

Check that your retirement planners are all investment advisors registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. They will uphold the regulatory requirements needed to be financial fiduciaries.



Aside from regulatory requirements, being a fiduciary is necessary to protect the families and individuals they work with.

Some retirement planners have also passed a rigorous certification and training process established by the National Association of Certified Financial Fiduciaries to obtain the Certified Financial Fiduciary designation. While the other financial designations you might see cover the legalities of a fiduciary, there is no other designation that focuses solely on understanding and being the best fiduciary one can be. This training not only puts retirement planners in a better position to help families and individuals plan for retirement, it keeps the critical word "trust" at the forefront of the entire retirement planning process. Obtaining the Certified Financial Fiduciary designation allows retirement planners to apply a wide array of knowledge to your retirement and ensure that all facets of your plan are intentional, customized and transparent.

When planning for retirement, the Latin you may want to live by is "carpe diem." This phrase means to seize the day, enjoy the moment, and worry less about tomorrow. Finding a retirement planner you trust can help you do just that. ■

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IT'S TIME to winterize

Heating and cooling your home with a conventional system (ductless heat pumps are the exception) on average accounts for 43% of your monthly utility bill. To ensure you're not spending a small and unnecessary fortune on your HVAC systems, you should focus on properly winterizing them in the fall.

Here are a few of our priority recommendations for winter prep.

Do have an HVAC inspection

Before you do anything else, you should have all your units inspected by a professional. Without bi-annual HVAC inspections, your units might be in jeopardy of completely breaking the next time you need them. During this process, your HVAC technician will examine all components of the system to make sure they are in good working order and able to handle another colder season. If there are any problems, this is the perfect time to repair them



so that your furnace will keep you and your family warm throughout the upcoming winter months.

Don't forget to check your thermostats

Today's programmable thermostats make it easy to regulate your home's temperature and energy use. If you don't already have a programmable thermostat installed in your house, it would be good to upgrade to one. If you already have a programmable thermostat, check what is programmed in and consider any daily routine changes from the previous year.

For winter, Energy.gov states the ideal thermostat temperature is 68 degrees Fahrenheit when you're at home and suggests lowering it a few degrees while you're away. If you can lower it seven to 10 degrees while you're away during the day for about eight hours, you can save up to 10% a year on your energy bills. There are even smart thermostats that have sensors you can control with your phone and some that learn from your daily habits and adjust the settings accordingly to be more efficient and further maximize energy savings.

Do clean or replace your HVAC filters

If anyone in your home suffers from allergies, it's smart to change your filters at least once a month. From an energy-efficiency standpoint, it's recommended to change them monthly anyway. Even high-quality HVAC units can get extremely dirty from time to time, which is why it's important to clean their air filters regularly. If you're unsure of how to do this, simply ask a professional HVAC repair service, and they can help you out.

Do investigate your options for whole home humidifiers and air sterilizing systems.

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FIRE Safety Month

How your family can practice fire safety

In 2016, there were 3,390 deaths caused by fires alone. More than 14,600 people were injured, and \$10.6 billion were lost in property damage.

How much time would you and your family have to escape your home in this scenario? Five minutes? Four? Think again. According to the American Red Cross, you might have as little as two minutes to evacuate everyone safely. In recognition of Fire Prevention Week, which runs from Sunday, Oct. 9, through Saturday, Oct. 15, here are some things you and your family can do together to reduce the likelihood of fire in your home, as well as how to respond in case of a fire emergency.

Protect your family: smoke detectors. Installing and maintaining smoke detectors is still the most critical step you can take to protect your family from fire death or injury.



- What you already know about smoke detectors. The detector should be no more than 10 years old. You can check the date on the back of the unit. Test the batteries monthly and replace often. Install them in all bedrooms, hallways outside bedrooms, and on each level of your home.

- What you might not know about smoke detectors. There are two types of smoke detectors: photoelectric and ionization. Photoelectric works better with slower, smoldering fires, while the ionization type is more suited to faster, flaming fires. Most experts recommend that you have both in your home.

The escape plan: Make it a game. Take the time to plan an escape route for everyone in the home, designating a “meet up spot” outside. What good is an escape route, though, if no one remembers it? The answer is simple: practice, and make it fun. Kids love games and challenges. Record the time it takes everyone to make it from their beds to the meetup spot and then try to beat the time. The more often you

practice, the more likely your children are to follow the plan rather than freeze in panic.

Additional tips for preventing fire:

- According to the National Fire Protection Association, two out of five home fires begin in the kitchen. Never leave the kitchen when food is cooking, and keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.

- Have your chimneys cleaned regularly, and be careful with portable space heaters. Make sure they are several feet away from drapes, clothing, or anything that could catch fire.

- Never smoke in bed or lying on the sofa.
- Finally, inspect your appliance cords. If any are torn, ripped, or damaged in any way, replace them immediately. If a wire or plug ever feels hot, unplug it. ■

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

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RECIPE

FILL your family's plates with cozy fall meals

(Family Features) Putting away the homework, turning off electronics and spending a little quality time together can help ease everyday stresses. Add a cozy meal packed with tastes you love and you'll have the perfect recipe for an autumn evening with your family.

Cooler days call for comforting flavors the entire family can enjoy at the dinner table like roasted veggies — from sweet potatoes to pumpkin and more — paired with hearty favorites like cheesy pierogies that provide a sense of warmth and coziness. Make this autumn one to remember by creating new meals and memories along the way.

For an extra special celebration with the ones you love in honor of the 15th anniversary of National Pierogy Day, consider a cozy, warming dish like Roasted Sweet Potatoes Brown Butter Pierogies, which is loaded with the flavors of the season. This comforting meal starts with cubed sweet potatoes — a hallmark of fall — along with pierogies tossed in a homemade brown butter sauce. Top with pecans for a nutty crunch and fresh thyme leaves for the final touch on a newfound favorite that'll bring loved ones running to the dinner table.

Find more ways to incorporate fall flavors into your family's everyday menu by visiting MrsTsPierogies.com. ■

Roasted sweet potatoes brown butter pierogies

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 4-5

- 1 bag (1.6 pounds) Mrs. T's Mini Classic Cheddar Pierogies
- 2 cups sweet potato cubes (approximately 1 large or 2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch cubes)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- water
- 1/2 cup pecans
- fresh thyme leaves, for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 F.
- Toss sweet potato cubes in olive oil, salt and pepper, to taste, and spread in even layer on baking sheet. Roast 25-30 minutes, tossing about halfway through, until potatoes are fork tender.



- In medium skillet over medium heat, brown butter 5-10 minutes. Avoid smoking or burning. Remove from heat. Allow to cool about 5 minutes then whisk in balsamic vinegar and lemon juice.
- In large saucepan, bring water to boil. Cook pierogies according to package directions, about 3 minutes. Drain and toss in brown butter sauce.
- Add roasted sweet potatoes and pecans to brown butter pierogies and toss gently to coat.
- Top with fresh thyme leaves.

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SENIORS targeted for cyber crimes

According to data collected in the United States in 2022, adults 60 years and older made up the second highest category of targeted individuals of cyber crimes at more than 88,262. Clearly, our older population is a vulnerable target of cyber criminals. In today's ever-changing technological world, we need to be more vigilant for our older population as well as educate them on the dangers that exist.



One cyber threat to educate our aging population about is the increase in password phishing. This is when a cybercriminal will send out a link to a user's email address asking for their username and password. The recipient may believe this email to be from a credible source such as an IT department or customer support agent. Never give out personal password information to anyone via phone or email. If you are unsure if the source you are speaking to is credible, always reach out to a trusted loved one or the authorities.

Cyber threats are also prevalent on social media. Social media is a common form of communication these days. Websites such as Facebook allow our aging loved ones to stay connected and updated with friends and family. However, cyber criminals can use such platforms to scam our elderly population. Many scams exist on social media, and accounts can be easily hacked. Cyber criminals can appear as profiles of someone you may know and request money. If you are unsure if you are speaking to a real person, ask them a question only someone close to you would know.

Another issue that may become a prevalent cyber threat to our elderly population is the evolution of deep fake technology. This is a type of technology that can be used to emulate a loved one's voice or even image via video or voice chat AI technologies. Ensure your loved ones are truly speaking with who they think they are, especially if someone is claiming to be their family and requesting money be sent in some form.

Keeping our older loved ones safe online is becoming a more difficult challenge every day. We must be aware of new threats as they evolve and the methods in which criminals are targeting our loved ones. Educating our loved ones should be something we prioritize to ensure they remain financially secure. Cyber criminals are looking for the easiest targets, and, often, these targets are individuals older than 60. Let's make it our goal to prevent scams and educate our loved ones. ■

Information provided by Sadie Kuennen, community relations coordinator, Edencrest at the Legacy, 2901 Cedar St., Norwalk, 515-250-2806, welcomelg@edencrestliving.com.

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SCAN NOW!



AN ANCIENT treasure

Last year a somewhat remarkable discovery was made in the Chicago area. The Jones Family was renovating their kitchen and bathroom, which required them to open up a 4- by 6-inch portion of the wall around their toilet paper holder. Now, don't jump to any conclusions here, but what they found isn't what you might expect. Inside the wall was something wrapped up in a towel. You can imagine what they were probably thinking at that moment of discovery.



Expecting the worst, perhaps even some kind of cold case situation, they were surprised when they found a bag with two hamburger wrappers and a remarkably well-preserved order of fries from McDonald's. The imprint on the bag and wrappers indicates they're from the 1950s when hamburgers were 15 cents and fries 10 cents. The family posted photos of their "archaeological find" on social media and have received a lot of media attention. The stir has also resulted in the family learning more about their community's history. Isn't it amazing how one person's trash can, at the right time and place, become another's treasure?

For thousands of years, a treasure of immense value has been hiding in plain sight for all to see. Some have scorned and scoffed at it, and some simply ignored it. Others have done all they could to treat it like trash while others have honored it for the valuable treasure that it is. What is it? It's the Bible. Have you discovered the treasure that is God's Word? The psalmist King David said of the Bible that it is, "more desirable than gold — than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb" (Psalm 19:10). He said again in Psalm 119:72, "Instruction from your lips is better for me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." And, in 119:127, he adds, "Since I love your commands more than gold, even the purest gold, I carefully follow all your precepts..."

The Bible is a treasure infinitely more valuable than any discovery of monetary value that could be found anywhere in the world. So, if you have a Bible, dust it off, open it up, and ask God to guide you to Him as you read it. Let the riches of ancient truth that still bring wisdom for our everyday lives found in the Bible become more valuable to you than all the gold in the world — or even an "ancient" discovery hidden in your bathroom wall. Most of all the Bible tells us how to have peace with God and eternal life with Him in heaven. What could be more valuable than that? Need a Bible? I can help you with that; just let me know. ■

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

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called 'Know Your City' with Norwalk City Manager, Luke Nelson!

Episode Nine: How New Businesses Come to Norwalk, Iowa

On this podcast, Norwalk's City Manager, Luke Nelson, and Economic Development Director, Hollie Zajicek discuss the City's role in commercial development, and how new businesses locate in Norwalk.

If you like this podcast, please subscribe to hear future casts from the City of Norwalk.

When you get a minute, please take the short survey through the link below and let us know what subjects you'd like to hear about most, and which people or departments you'd like to hear from more often.

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Keep Storm Drains Clean

Leaves, grass, or other yard debris should never be blown or placed in the street or near storm drains, ditches, or waterways. This could clog storm sewers or culverts and cause flooding! Also, did you know decaying yard waste uses the oxygen in the water harming aquatic plants and wildlife? It can also cause foul odors and unsightly waterways. Not to mention it is against City Code to place yard waste of any kind in the street.



Please help by doing the following:

- Bag or mulch your yard waste to keep our storm sewer clean and unobstructed
- Learn more about yard waste disposal by visiting WhereItShouldGo.com and searching for “yard waste”
- Don't blow grass or leaves into the street. If it happens, clean up when finished.
- Limit lawn chemicals.
- Pick up pet waste.
- Help clean storm drains in your neighborhood to reduce chances of flooding.

If you have a storm drain in your neighborhood that looks like this, take the initiative and clean it off. You will help yourself and all your neighbors!



Employee spotlight



Robin Leaper, Parks and Recreation Director

Originally from Des Moines, Robin graduated from Dowling High School before attending Northwest Missouri State University. Thereafter, Robin received a Master's Degree in Education from Drake University. While not a Norwalk native, Robin has resided in Norwalk for 21 years. Prior to joining the City of Norwalk Parks and Recreation department, Robin worked for Drake University, Kansas State University and the City of Des Moines Parks & Recreation. Robin became Norwalk's Assistant Parks and Recreation Director in April 2018 and transitioned into the Director role about a year later. Robin is passionate about her work:

“I enjoy providing spaces and activities for people to have fun, create memories and elevate mental and physical health.”

When she isn't working, Robin enjoys spending time with family and all things outdoors!

Norwalk Parks and Recreation 2023 Fall Playbook

Our 2023 Fall Playbook is now available! Adult, Senior and Youth Programming, Family Events, Facility Rentals and more....view it today!



See what happening
at the public library!



TRUNK OR TREAT

October 25, 2023 • 5-7pm

FREE!

McAninch Sports Complex
200 Wright Road, Norwalk

Join us for our NEW Trunk or Treat event! Norwalk city departments, local businesses, and community organizations will be at McAninch Sports Complex with decorated trunks and all your favorite goodies! Enjoy this family-friendly, fun, and safe event and don't forget to wear your Halloween costumes! **This event is FREE and all ages are welcome!!**



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Q: Does blending fruit change its nutritional content?

A: We have talked about this in previous articles, but let me just say it again: Sometimes fitness concepts can be controversial. Some people say one thing and other professionals say another. It can be confusing at times. The nutrition aspect can be the same way, too. I say this because recently there is a misconception going around regarding smoothies. The claim is that eating a banana (or any fruit or vegetable) just plain is more nutritionally beneficial than putting it in a smoothie. Simply said, that blending it up changes the nutritional content of the fruit or vegetable. It is not true at all. There is no difference. The makeup is still the same. Now, if we were talking about juicing, then yes, it can change the nutrition of it. The major difference is that, when it comes to juicing, you often have to peel whatever you are putting in there, and the peel of the fruit or vegetable does contain a good portion of fiber. So yes, you would be taking some of the nutritional benefit out of it. As long as you are not adding a lot of sugars, blending everything into a smoothie is completely OK. Whether it is juicing, drinking a smoothie, or eating it raw, just make sure you are getting those fruits and vegetables in. They are big on vitamins, nutrients and fiber. ■



Information provided by Dani McManus, certified personal trainer/head coach at Anytime Fitness in Norwalk. To submit a question for future articles, contact her at norwalk@anytimefitness.com.

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YOU'VE received an inheritance. Now what?

If you've recently received an inheritance, you will be facing many important decisions. Receiving an inheritance might promote spending without planning, but don't make any hasty decisions. Here are some suggestions that could help you manage your inheritance.



• Identify a team of trusted professionals.

Tax laws can be complicated, so you might want to consult with professionals who are familiar with assets that transfer at death. These professionals may include an attorney, an accountant, and a financial and/or insurance professional.

• **Consider tax consequences.** While you might not owe income taxes on the assets you inherit, your income tax liability may eventually increase, particularly if the assets you inherit generate taxable income. For instance, distributions you receive from inherited tax-qualified plans such as 401(k)s or IRAs will likely increase your taxable income. Also, your inheritance may increase the size of your estate to the point where it could be subject to state and/or federal transfer (estate) taxes at your death. You might need to consider ways to help reduce these potential taxes.

• **How you receive your inheritance makes a difference:** Your inheritance may be received through a trust, in which case you'll receive distributions according to the terms of the trust. You might not have total control over your inheritance as you would if you inherited the assets outright. If you inherit assets through a trust, it's important that you familiarize yourself with the trust document and the terms under which you are to receive trust distributions.

• **Develop a financial plan.** Consider your future needs and how long you want your wealth to last. It's a good idea to take some time after inheriting money to formulate a financial plan. You'll want to consider your current lifestyle and your future needs, then formulate a financial strategy to meet short- and long-term goals.

• **Evaluate your estate plan.** Depending on the value of your inheritance, it may be appropriate to re-evaluate your estate plan. Estate planning involves conserving your money and putting it to work so that it best fulfills your goals. It also means helping reduce your exposure to potential taxes and possibly creating a comfortable financial future for your family and other intended beneficiaries. ■

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

UNDERSTANDING caregiver burnout

Caregiving is a role often characterized by compassion and selflessness. However, when tasked with providing care for someone else, an alarming phenomenon can often appear: caregiver burnout. Burnout affects millions of caregivers worldwide. In particular, caregivers of those suffering from dementia face unique challenges. Understanding and addressing caregiver burnout, especially in the context of dementia care, is imperative.



Caregiver burnout is a state of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion that emerges when the demands of caregiving outpace the caregiver's ability to cope. Caregivers of those with dementia confront numerous stressors that contribute to burnout. The progressive nature of dementia means that caregivers often witness their loved ones experiencing cognitive decline, memory loss and personality changes. These shifts can be emotionally wrenching, creating a constant state of grief and loss. Sleep deprivation, isolation and a lack of personal time, among other issues, can lead to the diminished physical and mental health of the caregiver. It's typical for caregivers to focus their energy on their loved ones and neglect their own wellbeing.

Caregivers experiencing burnout may display signs such as increased irritability, a sense of hopelessness, withdrawal from social activities, and physical ailments like headaches or digestive issues. By acknowledging that these symptoms could be a sign of burnout, caregivers must take proactive steps to mitigate burnout and prioritize their own health.

Support systems play a vital role in battling caregiver burnout. Families, friends, professional networks and local resources such as a memory care community can provide emotional support, respite care, and advice on navigating the challenges of caregiving. For caregivers of individuals with dementia, seeking out local support groups or online communities can offer a safe space to share experiences, gain insights, and find support.

Respite care, another valuable resource, grants a caregiver temporary relief by providing someone else to look after their loved one. This break can be essential for caregivers to recharge, engage in self-care, and tend to their personal needs. Professional caregivers or specialized communities equipped to manage the unique requirements of someone with dementia can provide a well-deserved pause for primary caregivers.

Caregiver burnout is a critical concern that should not be ignored. If you are a caregiver and experiencing the signs of burnout, contact your closest memory care community to see if they can provide resources to help support you. Whether it's respite care, free education or even just a listening ear, memory care communities can be a supportive resource. ■

Information provided by Katie Salinas, Memory Care Manager, The Homestead at Holland Farms Senior Living, 2800 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-1888, www.HollandFarmsLiving.com.

Cheers for Two Years!

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*Restrictions apply; visit website for details.



EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

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

Clothing and Sports Swap

Donation drop off, Friday, Oct. 20; shopping, Saturday, Oct. 21
St. John's Catholic Church, 720 Orchard Hills Drive, Norwalk

Do you have gently used clothing or sports gear that needs a new home? Has your child already outgrown the back-to-school clothes you bought in August? Women of Norwalk (WON) is hosting a Clothing and Sports Swap. The event will take place at St. John's Catholic Church in Norwalk. Donation drop-off time is from 5-6:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 20. This free shopping event will be held from 8-10 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 21. All are welcome to attend. WON is requesting clean, gently used clothing from newborn to adult and winter gear sorted by size and gender. Sporting good donations will be accepted as well. Examples include Norwalk gear, cleats, uniforms, balls, shin guards, singlets, leotards, dance shoes, etc.



Tree planting workshop

Saturday, Oct. 14, 9-11 a.m.
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Dr. Jeff Iles will be teaching the fundamentals of proper tree planting at this Warren County Extension workshop. Techniques learned will help ensure longevity of your trees. This will be a hands-on workshop taking place outdoors, so dress for the weather. This workshop is free, but registration is required. Register by contacting Bethany at bcecot@iastate.edu or by calling 515-961-6237.



Master Gardeners mini-grants

Apply by Nov. 30

Warren County Master Gardeners (WCMG) announces the offering of mini-grants to provide financial, and possibly volunteer assistance, for gardening and landscape beautification projects throughout Warren County. Qualified applicants are not-for-profit organizations such as service or youth groups within Warren County. Projects may include, but are not limited to, community flower and vegetable gardens or classroom projects. Grants up to \$500 will be awarded. Go to the Warren County Master Gardener website www.extension.iastate.edu/warren/master-gardener-program to access the application and contact information. Completed applications must be submitted by Nov. 30 with notification to successful applicant(s) the week of Jan. 15.

HONOR OUR VETERANS

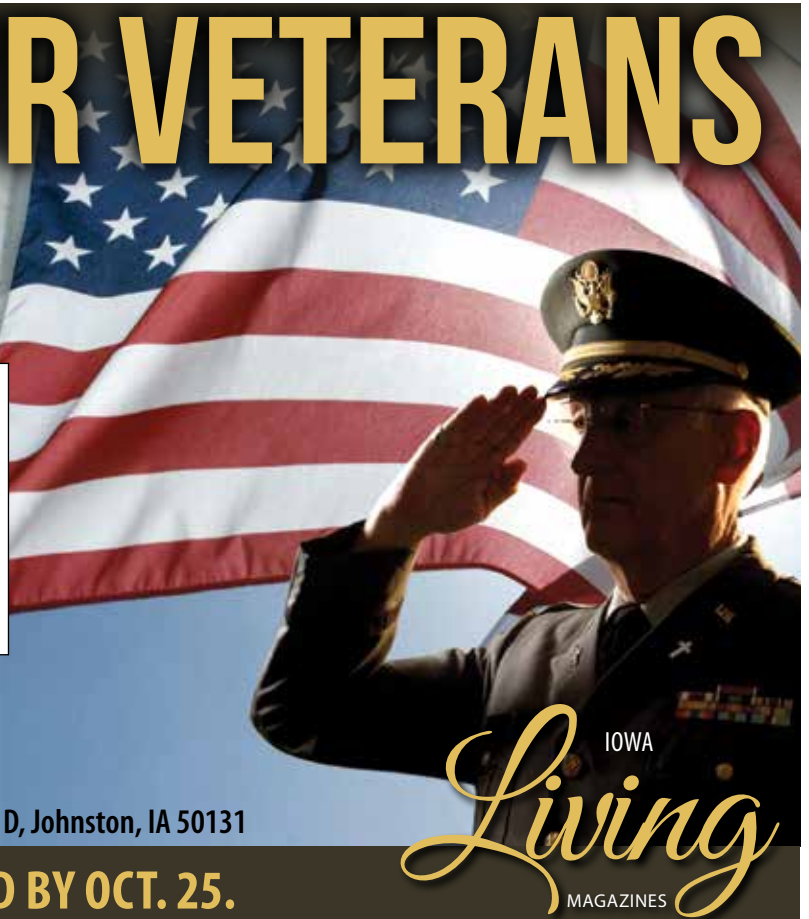
Iowa Living magazines will be saluting veterans in November issues. If you are a veteran who would like to be included, please send a photo (military or current) and the following information:

NAME:
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QUOTE: Please answer the question,
"How can the public best honor veterans?"

Family members submitting on behalf of veterans should include the veteran's answer to the above question.

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SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCT. 25.



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Check for cancellations

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

Medicare open enrollment

Each year, everyone on Medicare can join, switch or drop their drug plan during the annual Open Enrollment Period, Oct. 15 - Dec. 7, with changes taking effect Jan. 1. If you do not make a change, your current plan continues. Prior to this annual enrollment period, your drug plan will send a formulary of 2024 changes compared to 2023 costs. However, a comparison to all available options could result in improved coverage and savings. Medicare Plan Finder at <https://www.medicare.gov> is the online tool for comparing Part D and Medicare Advantage plans. Entering your prescription medications, available plans are sorted with detailed information regarding coverage, cost, deductibles, coverage gaps (donut hole), pharmacy options, restrictions, and considerably more. If this sounds complicated, it can be, and you are not alone. Warren County SHIP/SMP volunteer counselors can help. Call and make an appointment for a drug plan comparison at 515-962-5375. For more information, visit <https://ship.iowa.gov>. SHIP/SMP volunteer counselors are available year-round.

Middlebrook Mercantile events

4125 Cumming Ave., Cumming

• **Saturday, Oct. 21:** Jeff Banks performs and General Lee food truck, 5-8 p.m.

• **Sunday, Oct. 22:** Nola Trio, 2-5 p.m.

• **Tuesday, Oct. 24:** Pumpkin carving contest and themed drinks, 7 p.m.

Registration required at www.eventbrite.com/e/711413586187?aff=oddtcreator

• **Saturday, Oct. 28:** Sara Routh performs and Harrington's Dining Car food truck, 5-8 p.m.

• **Sunday, Oct. 29:** Kiersten Conway with John Krantz Duo, 2-5 p.m.

• **Tuesday, Oct. 31:** Halloween Charcuterie Workshop and Wine, 6:30-8 p.m. Registration required at www.eventbrite.com/e/halloween-charcuterie-workshop-tickets-722916551867?aff=oddtcreator.



Madison County Covered Bridge Festival

Oct. 14-15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Madison County Covered Bridge Festival features family fun, including parade and tours of the namesake bridges. Vendors, demonstrations, kids zone, live entertainment, car show, quilt show, Madison County Historical Complex tours, and much more are sure to please crowds. Festival admission is \$3 or two for \$5 and free for children younger than 11. For more information, visit www.madisoncounty.com/covered-bridge-festival-2/. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

BREWER to play for Hawkeyes

Carly Brewer, a softball player for Norwalk High School and the Lady Magic, a travel ball team out of California, recently announced her verbal commitment to Coach Renee Luers-Gillispie and the University of Iowa softball program after a short recruiting process.

The University of Iowa checked all the boxes for Brewer and allows her to stay home to represent the state of Iowa, said Lester Brewer, Carly's father. Coach Gillispie and the entire Iowa staff made Carly feel right at home and left no doubts in her mind that she wanted to join the Hawkeye family. The University has a strong dental program along with the opportunity to play Division I Power 5 softball in the Big Ten, he said.

Brewer is an Extra Inning Softball "Extra Elite 100" national prospect. The pitcher attended several D1 Elite Prospect camps over the last year including Oklahoma, LSU and Oregon.

"I'm excited to announce I have decided to further my academic and athletic career at the University of Iowa," said Carly. "I have been dreaming of playing Division I softball my entire life. To finally have the opportunity to represent the State of Iowa is unbelievable. I would like to thank Coach Gillispie and the Iowa staff for giving me the opportunity to join the Hawkeye family. Thank you to Coach Darren Dubsky, Steve Walling, Jay Kyne, Ryan Smith and all my teammates along the way for developing me into the player I am today. Thank you to my family for all the sacrifices and support over the years. It's an honor to be a Hawkeye." ■



LEAD DSM introduces class of 2024

Lead DSM announces participants in the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) Class of 2024. The Youth Leadership Initiative provides high school students with hands-on experiences that help them become better leaders for their schools and communities. At the conclusion of the program, students will: value community involvement; demonstrate professional skills and an understanding of career opportunities; demonstrate the five practices of exemplary leadership; and have developed lifelong relationships with peers, mentors, and community members.

The Youth Leadership Initiative Class of 2024 includes 37 students from 19 public and private schools from across Greater Des Moines, including Emma Sizemore, Norwalk Community High School.

Students will meet twice a month to discuss issues and opportunities in our region and fine-tune their leadership skills. Participation in the YLI program is tuition-free for all students, thanks to sponsors, led by presenting sponsor, Principal. ■

WINTERIZE your lawn this fall for improved health

Fall winterization of your lawn involves a heavy feeding of fertilizer, at the appropriate time, that maximizes the naturally occurring process that every lawn goes through each fall. In fact, this application of fertilizer does the most to directly benefit your lawn compared to others made when your grass is actively growing earlier in the season. If you could only fertilize once a year, this would be the time.

When is the best time to make your last application of fertilizer? As a homeowner, you all have experienced that time of year when the growth of your lawn slows down in the fall, and you no longer have to mow. Although the growth of your grass has stopped, your lawn is still green and producing energy. The energy being produced is directed towards increased food reserves being stored in the roots of your lawn. This is a naturally occurring process that all perennial plants go through each fall. Increased food storage in your grass plants' root system results in benefits you'll see next year. This would include earlier spring green up, increased plant drought and disease resistance, and a healthy, thicker lawn.

If you want a better lawn next year, talk to your lawn care professional and schedule a late fall application of fertilizer. ■

Information provided by Kevin Johnson, All American Turf Beauty, 311 DeSoto Road, Van Meter, 515-996-2261.



READING Support Team helps struggling students



Members of Norwalk Community School District's Reading Support Team, Mary Anne Kessler, Maria Hinders, Jeny Schoenhard, Jaclyn Brown, Bethany Watts and Abby Schmailzl, are passionate about teaching students to read and helping them develop reading skills. Their goal is to provide extra reading help and instruction for struggling readers. This instruction is specialized and provided through small group work that takes place during independent work times so that students don't miss core instruction.

As a reading support teacher at Oviatt Elementary, Schmailzl enjoys helping the youngest students develop into confident readers. Last spring, the Norwalk School Board also approved funding for an additional reading support teacher. This year, the group welcomed Brown to the team.

"The amount of growth our students make from the beginning of kindergarten to the end of first grade is very exciting to be part of," Schmailzl says. "It is very rewarding getting to celebrate student success with their peers and their families."

At Orchard Hills, students read with reading buddies in the morning as part of the Leader In Me Program. Kessler and Hinders also set up reading challenges for winter, spring and summer breaks. These challenges include rewards to encourage students and families to continue practicing.

"Orchard Hills serves the grades where students move from learning how to read to reading to learn other topics. It is a great feeling to see students find something they want to read and knowing you have helped them build the skills to do it successfully," Kessler says.

Lakewood Elementary also focuses on the Leader in Me Habits of Learning where students not only develop and plan a variety of ways to take ownership of the classroom but also their own learning.

"So far, I think that, out of all my teaching positions, being a reading teacher has been my favorite because I can share my passion for reading and encourage students to grow into their own," Schoenhard says.

With each school year, Watts says she is more confident in the support she is providing students and the data she is using to identify students needing support. She has also involved ELA teachers and is looking forward to continuing this collaborative culture. One activity Watts' students enjoy most is reader's theater. For this activity, students get into character and read something fun.

"The reward for me is seeing my students gain confidence throughout the year. As we practice different skills, students get a better understanding of the expectations for that skill and are able to demonstrate their understanding with more proficiency," Watts says.

"Learning to read is a huge milestone in a child's life. One of the best ways to keep up the momentum toward hitting those reading goals is to get your children excited to read outside of class. When children love to read, they can learn anything," Schoenhard says. ■

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RECENT FAQs in real estate

Occasionally, I like to share certain questions that clients ask, because I am sure there are others who are wondering about these same things. Here are a few questions that have repeatedly come up lately.

“Wouldn’t it be better if we waited to buy and let prices come down?”

This question is based on the assumption that prices will come down. In the latest quarterly Home Price Expectation Survey (HPES), where Pulsenomics polled more than 100 economists, home prices are projected to go up each of the next five years. If this holds true, it would be better to own real estate now and take advantage of those gains.

“I found my dream house, but interest rates are too high right now. Should I pass on this opportunity?”

If, in fact, this is your dream house, you may only have this chance to purchase it. Interest rates fluctuate with economic conditions. Some people say that you marry your home, but you are dating your mortgage interest rate. If you can afford the home now, it would be best to purchase it now and refinance it if mortgage interest rates ever ease.

I would also point out that the statement, “Interest rates are too



high,” is not entirely true. Although rates have recently surged, Freddie Mac has been tracking rates of 30-year mortgages since April 1971, and the current rate is still at or below the median rate of 7.41%.

“We like the house, but what if it has a problem that we didn’t see?”

Make sure you discuss this with your real estate agent, but most offers written by a Realtor in Central Iowa have a contingency allowing you a specific period of time after the acceptance of the offer to do a thorough inspection. Once the inspection is complete, and before the inspection period has expired, you will have an opportunity to negotiate with the seller on any concerns you have. If you are not able to agree on terms with the seller, the offer can become null and void with no consequences to you.

This contingency allows you to make an offer on a property and get it under contract based on the fact that you like it, but it also gives you time after your offer is accepted to make sure there aren’t any hidden structural, mechanical, or safety issues that are concerning to you. One important thing I would like to point out about these inspections is that they are not intended to require that a seller bring an older home up to current codes or fix every issue that is brought up in the inspection. ■

Information provided by Jon Niemeyer, owner, EXIT Realty North Star, 1039 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-5131, Jon.Niemeyer@exitrealtynorthstar.com.

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COMORBIDITIES of hearing loss

What is a comorbidity?

A comorbidity is two or more diseases or medical conditions occurring at the same time. Hearing loss often occurs simultaneously with other diseases and medical conditions, including cancer, cardiovascular (heart) disease, diabetes, kidney disease, tinnitus, cognitive decline, depression and falls.



Risk factors of hearing loss

These conditions increase your risk of developing or worsening hearing loss.

- **Cancer.** Hearing loss can be a side effect of chemotherapy and radiation treatments (Landier, 2016). Hearing loss occurs in 40-80% of individuals treated with cisplatin, a chemotherapy drug (Paken et al., 2016).
- **Heart disease.** Cardiovascular risk factors and disease are associated with greater hearing loss and a faster rate of hearing deterioration

(Friedland et al., 2009). Hearing loss occurs 54% more often in individuals with heart disease (Harvard University).

- **Diabetes.** Individuals with diabetes have an increased occurrence of hearing loss, regardless of age, and may be at risk for developing sudden hearing loss (Horikawa et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2012). Hearing loss is twice as common in adults with diabetes (Bainbridge et al., 2008).

- **Kidney disease.** Hearing loss is common among older adults with chronic kidney disease (Vilayur et al., 2010). Hearing loss occurs 28-77% more often in individuals with chronic kidney disease (Meena et al., 2012; Bazzi et al., 1995).

Consequences of hearing loss

Hearing loss increases the risk of developing or worsening these conditions.

- **Tinnitus.** Hearing loss is strongly associated with tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Approximately 90% of individuals who report tinnitus also experience hearing loss (NASEM,

2016).

- **Cognitive decline.** Hearing loss is linked with cognitive decline and is more common in older adults with dementia or Alzheimer's disease than in older adults without memory issues (Jayakody et al., 2018; Uhlmann et al., 1989). Hearing loss accelerates cognitive decline, increasing the risk of dementia (Lin et al., 2013).

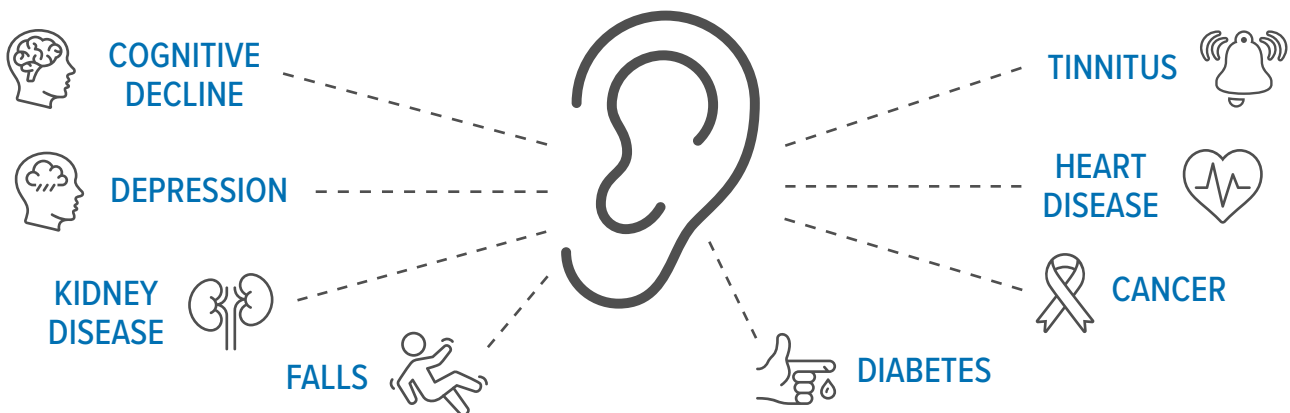
- **Depression.** Adults with hearing loss have an increased risk for depression (Li et al., 2014). Older adults with hearing loss have a 47% higher risk of depression (Lawrence et al., 2020).

- **Falls.** Older adults with mild hearing loss are three times more likely to experience a fall. As the severity of hearing loss increases, the risk of falls also increases (Lin & Ferrucci, 2012).

To help manage your health and hearing, contact your local audiologist. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990. References for this article are available at www.iowahearingcenter.com.

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WELLNESS

By Jen Penisten

DIASTASIS recti

Diastasis recti is the separation of the abdominal muscles due to abdominal wall weakness. This is common after pregnancy, with up to 60% of postpartum people experiencing it in the first eight weeks after delivery and 40% still having diastasis recti six months after delivery and beyond. This can make the abdomen look like there is still a pregnancy, cause emotional distress, and crush self-confidence. It can even lead to other physical issues such as difficulty lifting, pain during sex, low back/hip/pelvic pain, abdominal weakness, poor posture and/or stress incontinence.

You may have a bulge in your midsection, soft tissue around your belly button, or a bulge when you engage your muscles when you are doing a sit-up, stand up, or get out of bed.

Surgery can be an option. Physical therapy, a personal trainer who specializes in this area, or a non-invasive, fast result machine like EmSculpt can help. EmSculpt has helped many patients bring their diastasis recti together by stimulating the muscles to do an equivalent of 36,000 crunches in 30 minutes with a recommended four sessions one week apart.

Schedule a free consultation or talk to your healthcare provider about what is best for you. ■

Information provided by Jen Penisten, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1016 Main St., Norwalk, 515-537-6590, www.vividlifespaspa.com.



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HEALTH

By Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh

Q: What is text neck?

A: With our continual use of technology in today's world, there is a new phenomenon called text neck. This is a condition in which the continual use of technology causes neck pain, discomfort and, eventually, results in injury. It stems from the way in which people hold their heads and necks when using their phones, hence the name "text neck."

What are the symptoms? If you suspect that you may have text neck, look for the following symptoms: increasing occurrences of headaches, neck pain, pain in the shoulders, pain in the upper back, and even a slight curving of the spine.

Solutions: There are many solutions for this type of pain. For starters, you can always curb your technology use. With our modern world, this is probably unlikely. It can also be helpful to perform neck stretches throughout the day to release tension and pain. Another great solution is to get chiropractic care. Since text neck often causes actual curvature and misalignments of the spine, chiropractic care can help. A chiropractor can use spinal manipulation to properly align the spine and keep it healthier and pain free. ■



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

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HEALTH

By Dr. Elizabeth Fleck

NATIONAL Dental Hygiene Month

October is National Dental Hygiene Month. To celebrate, I wanted to review the basics of a good oral hygiene routine and ways to make sure you're putting your best smile forward.

Most people know the guidelines are to brush twice a day and floss once per day. But, are you doing it right? Each time you brush, you should be brushing a full two minutes. If you're not sure how long you're brushing, time yourself. I bet you're not in there long enough. Use a fluoride toothpaste, brush all surfaces of your teeth, angle the brush toward the gumline and use small circular motions. It's important to avoid heavy back and forth scrubbing as this can be damaging to the gums. Don't forget the tongue. Brushing your tongue is good; getting a tongue scraper is better. Often a source of bad breath, you'll be amazed what comes off of there.

As far as flossing goes, you should ease the floss between the teeth (don't floss or snap it between, hurting your gums). It's important to form a C shape around the side of each tooth and hug the tooth up and down into the gums to effectively clean between the teeth. String floss is the most effective; however, any flossing is better than no flossing at all. Whether it is traditional floss, floss picks, or waterpicks, cleaning in between the teeth will often prevent decay and improve gum health.

Mouthwash can be the icing on the cake of a good oral care routine but should not be a substitute for the physical removal of plaque in the mouth. ■

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



KEEP EYE SAFETY IN MIND

Halloween contact lenses are fun but can lead to serious health issues.

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HEALTH

By Dr. Jonathan P. Anderson, OD

Q: What determines my eye color?

A: A person's eye color results from pigmentation of a structure called the iris, which surrounds the pupil and helps control how much light can enter the eye. Iris color can range from very light blue to dark brown. Most eye color is categorized as blue, green/hazel or brown. Brown is the most frequent eye color worldwide. Blue and green eyes are found almost exclusively among people that have some European ancestry.

Eye color is directly related to the amount and quality of melanin in the front layers of the iris. People with brown eyes have a large amount of melanin in the iris, while people with blue eyes have much less of this pigment.

Many babies are born with blue eyes that can darken in the first three years of life. Children can have a completely different eye color than either parent, depending on the gene that expresses for them. If both parents have brown, it is most likely their children will also have brown eyes. The darker colors tend to dominate, so brown tends to win over green and blue. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jonathan P. Anderson, OD, Optometric Associates, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite A, Norwalk, 515-981-0224.



HEALTH benefits of cannabinoids

Let's explore the origins of two well-known compounds, CBD and THC, and shine a light on CBGA (cannabigerolic acid), the "parent" of all cannabinoids. We can extract CBD, THC and other compounds from CBGA using specific methods.

CBGA is getting attention for its potential in fighting heart disease. It does this by blocking an enzyme called adolose reductase, which is linked to oxidative stress and heart problems. Moreover, CBGA has shown promise in battling colon cancer cells and stopping the growth of polyps that could turn into carcinomas.


Another important compound is CBDA (cannabidiolic acid). It helps by regulating serotonin levels in our bodies, which affect functions like digestion and emotions. CBDA is helpful for reducing nausea and vomiting, especially in cancer patients dealing with high stress. It also acts as an anticonvulsant, helping to prevent and lessen seizures. CBDA interacts with receptors in a way similar to medications called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), which could potentially be helpful for people dealing with depression. Interestingly, CBDA's structure is similar to that of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), making it a potent pain reliever. ■

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: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33964342/> and <https://jpet.aspetjournals.org/content/376/2/204#sec-7>





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EMOTIONAL validation makes or breaks relationships

Emotional validation is a critical skill for healthy relationships. To validate someone's emotions is to communicate the understandability or reasonableness of their feelings. This is not the same as agreeing with the person's stance, and, in fact, this skill becomes all the more important when the feelings of the person you are acknowledging are different from your own. For example, I find coffee disgusting, but, for all the coffee lovers out there, I respect that, to you, it is an invigorating brew in which you find genuine satisfaction. The alternatives to validation include the assertion of one's own perspective (e.g. coffee is gross) or attempts to change a person's feelings (e.g. arguing tea is the superior hot, bitter beverage). These alternatives become problematic when responding to the emotions of others because they imply there is something wrong with the way they feel, since you are either unwilling to relate to their feelings or suggesting they should be different. Instead, practicing validation communicates empathy and respect for differences, which are crucial for navigating conflict. While the coffee example is a mundane way to demonstrate validation, one can easily imagine an emotionally charged interaction in which one person expresses an important feeling, and validation is the only thing that would make them feel seen and cared for. ■



Information provided by Elijah Evans, TLMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, evans@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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LEGAL

By Ken Winjum

DRAM shop liability and social hosts

A good time may go too far. As we know, intoxicated individuals can cause all kinds of mayhem including property damage, violence, injuries and more. Although it is generally recognized that the intoxicated person is responsible for his or her actions, there are occasions when a third party who served the individual can be liable for damages. These instances are addressed in the Iowa Dram Shop Act.



The Iowa Supreme Court has observed that the dram shop act created liability where none existed at common law. The dram shop act is found at Iowa Code Chapter 123.92.

Licensees and permittees. Simply stated, Iowa Code 123.92(1) (a) provides that a third party who is injured by an intoxicated person has a right of action for damages against any licensee or permittee who sold or served any alcoholic beverage directly to the intoxicated person, provided that the person was visibly intoxicated at the time of the sale or service.

Notice requirement. Iowa Code 123.93 requires an injured person give written notice to the licensee or permittee (or insurance carrier) within six months, including details about the incident. The Iowa Supreme Court has upheld this requirement for filing an action.

Social hosts. A different rule applies to “social hosts.” Iowa Code Chapter 123.49 provides that a person shall not sell, dispense, or give to an intoxicated person, or one simulating intoxication, any alcoholic beverage. However, 123.49(a) provides that for those not required to hold a license or permit who dispenses or gives an alcoholic beverage in violation of this subsection is not civilly liable to an injured person as a result of intoxication by the consumer of the alcoholic beverage. The code provision adds that it is the consumption, rather than the serving of alcoholic beverages which is the proximate cause of injury inflicted by the intoxicated person.

Exception: underage drinking. Although the law gives fairly broad immunity to social hosts, there appears to be an exception for providing alcohol to minors. Iowa Code 123.02(3)(a) provides that a person injured by an intoxicated person who is under legal age has a right of action for damages against a person who is not a licensee and who dispensed or gave any alcoholic beverage to the intoxicated underage person. For liability to exist, it is required that the person who provided the alcohol knew or should have known the underage person was intoxicated or would become intoxicated.

The dram shop law reflects our commonly held values that innocent persons should be protected from intoxicated offenders. However, persons who host social events should not be responsible for actions of their visitors. The law also incorporates society’s disapproval of providing alcohol to minors. ■

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

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SUPPORTING local restaurants helps community

"Support local restaurants. Eat local. If you are dining out, dine in town." The late Judy Corcoran made this plea during a speech at our awards banquet in January, and her words have stuck with me. My job is to do everything I



can to support local businesses, so Judy's plea is also mine. When choosing catering for an event or a spot to host a coffee or lunch meeting, I always look to the chamber's list of member-owned businesses first. Outside of work, I enjoy frequenting these same businesses with my family and love seeing the familiar faces of the staff and other patrons.

Supporting local restaurants isn't just about enjoying a meal. These establishments are more than just places to eat. They are hubs for social connection where people from the community gather to share good food and company. Winn's Pizza and Steakhouse is a great example of this. Their motto, "Enter as Strangers, Leave as

Friends," is proudly painted on their wall, and it's a spot in town that you can almost guarantee you'll see a familiar face every time you visit. This sense of community is essential for building a strong local identity and promoting a feeling of belonging.

The incredible owners and staff of our local restaurants are deeply embedded in the community. They build relationships with their customers that go above and beyond mere transactions. Several of our local businesses participate in a food rescue program that donates food, which would otherwise be thrown out, to Norwalk families in need. As a chamber, we've been proud to partner with local restaurant owners to cater various meals, including our annual luncheon for the school's newest teachers.

Another significant advantage of supporting local restaurants is the economic impact it has on the community. Our local restaurants are primarily small and independently owned, and they generate revenue that stays within our community. They create jobs ranging from

cooks and servers to managers and support staff, offering opportunities for residents and contributing to a lower unemployment rate.

Local restaurants often prioritize using fresh, locally sourced ingredients, which directly impacts the quality of their dishes and menu options. One example is Pyra Pizzeria, which uses Graziano Brothers sausage from Des Moines. Patrons can enjoy a more unique dining experience from our local restaurants compared to bigger (or chain) restaurants in the metro.

You can feel good knowing that, when you choose to dine locally, you're actively participating in the economic prosperity of our community and likely helping a local entrepreneur and their family live out their dream. I encourage you to check out the chamber website (www.norwalkchamber.org) to find a list of chamber member owned restaurants and businesses next time you're making plans to dine out. ■

Information provided by Lauren Ebensteiner, executive director, Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce.

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OUT & ABOUT

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Norwalk Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Elite Eye Care on Aug. 8.



Norwalk Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Elite Eye Care on Aug. 8.



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Dr. Gabriella Magee, OD; Dr. Lis Asman, OD; Travis Stanley and Lauren Ebensteiner



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Chief Greg Staples, Lauren Ebensteiner and DJ Magee



Trevor Walsh and Brynn Collins



Lorie Williamson and Dr. Gabrielle Magee, OD



Felicia Carpenter and Julia Wiezer



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INSPIRE HER

The InspireHER event was held at Red Acre Barn on Sept. 28 hosted by Indianola, Norwalk and Carlisle chambers of commerce.



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Megan Farley and Heather Soyer



Amanda Kennedy and Gretchen Schrock



Katharine Haverland, Amanda Zwanziger and Jill Williams



Nicole Duncan-Lutheran, Kim Bassett and Dani McManus



Beth Meyer and Alicia Benson



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