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NOVEMBER 2023

Living

MAGAZINE

EARLY RISERS

Residents share experiences working
while most others sleep.

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BEFORE the sun shines

I don't get on the road in the wee hours of the day too often, except when I have an early flight at the airport or I am driving out of state. On those 4 a.m. or so travels, I often wonder about the other folks I see driving at that time. Why are they up so early? Where do they work? Where are they going? Are they leaving from home or heading home?

I agree there is something rewarding about getting an early start on the day. It gives me the feeling of having a head start on others. Crossing a few tasks off my list before the sun comes up starts the day off right.

For some folks, though, this isn't a once-in-a-while thing. Their jobs or activities or habits have them rising early every day.

When I was in high school, I worked at a convenience store/gas station. On occasion, I would work the graveyard shift. Even in a small town, this was an exposure to another world. I would see the factory workers heading to their shifts or heading home, filling their tanks with gas and buying a few supplies. I would see the route delivery guys ensuring that milk and bread and soda and beer were in the stores. And I would get to know the late-shift police officers who would stop in. For the most part, it was quiet, which is exactly how most of the folks who choose to work those hours like it.

Getting up early wasn't so easy in my younger years, but it seems to be more challenging to sleep in now, even when I can. I used to laugh at all the retired guys who were at the café before 6 a.m. drinking coffee. It's all starting to make sense now. Even the coffee.

This month's cover story is dedicated to those who truly are early risers. We uncover the when and why and how as we interview these folks who prefer to — or must — get a head start on each day.

See you before the sun shines, and thanks for reading. ■

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EARLY RISERS

Residents share experiences working while most others sleep.

By Jackie Wilson

While most of us are catching our last few Zs before dragging ourselves out of bed, others have long been awake and busy, many of them making it possible for us to get our days off to a good start. After all, someone has to make the donuts, brew the coffee and deliver those energy drinks to the shelves. Others rise and shine to care for the early morning needs of patients in hospitals, residents of care centers and women in labor. The list of those working while we sleep goes on, and some of them share their experiences as early risers in this month's cover story.

Erin Christianson of Waukee gets up early to open up West Side Kids, the daycare she and family members own. Photo by Jackie Wilson

There for parents who work early

Finding daycare is hard enough for those with a nine-to-five job, but those parents who work the early shift can have an even more difficult time finding daycare available early in the morning.

That's why West Side Kids in Waukee was established 18 years ago. The place is co-owned by sisters Erin Christianson and Erika Shepherd and their mom, Cindy Volkes.

Erin explains how the daycare began. Erika worked overnights and noticed not many daycares were available early. So, the two and their mom opened up the daycare to accommodate early drop-offs. The daycare used to be open at 6 a.m. but recently switched to 6:30 a.m. West Side Kids accepts children ages 6 weeks to 10 years and transports students to three different Waukees schools.

Erin works the early shift and gets up around 4:30 a.m. She makes her kids lunches and prepares for the day. She's not the only one adjusting to early hours. She then wakes up her own kids to take them to daycare with her, then onto school.

"When they were little, I'd bring them in their PJ's. Fortunately, we can eat breakfast at the daycare," she explains. "Now that they are getting older, they want to sleep in more."

Her kids get to bed by 8 p.m., and she's in bed shortly after.

"Going to sleep when it's light out, they think it's still time to play," she says.

Her sister takes the middle shift, while her mom closes the place. This is the first year they haven't had a niece, nephew or grandchild at the daycare fulltime, as all attend school.

Erin likes the flexibility of getting off early.

"I can run errands. I've got time off to myself. I hit the grocery store before the kids are out of school," she explains.

As she only lives minutes from West Side Kids, traffic in Waukees is easy.

"If I took the middle shift, it's really packed and lots of traffic at that time," she says.

Following the same routine year after year helps her stay alert.

"You don't have a choice," she says. "There's lots of responsibility, and I'm there for the parents."

When on vacation, Erin says she is ready to



Erin Christianson gets up early so that others who work early can have childcare.

sleep in. For her kids, it's a different situation.

"When you can sleep in, then they want to get up early and vice versa," she laughs.



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A knack for radio

Turn the FM dial to 92.5 KJJY and you'll hear a mix of news, commentary and country music. If it's weekdays before 10 a.m., you'll most likely hear "Big John McCoy" on the airwaves.

For the past 34 years, John McCoy has hosted the morning show, which starts at 5 a.m.

On work mornings, he sets his alarm for 3 a.m. However, it rarely goes off.

"I've been doing it long enough that I usually wake up two to 10 minutes before the alarm goes off."

He's up for an hour before making the 11-minute drive from his home in Waukee to the station.

"I hit all the green lights," John says. "I love getting up when there's nothing happening."

He arrives at the station by 4 a.m.

"Some people can just walk in and start working. I need to be at it, working for an hour. Then I'm ready to hit the floor running."

He's usually in bed by 9:30 p.m.

Occasionally, he hosts promo events for the radio station. One recent karaoke contest, he didn't get to bed until 11 p.m.

"It makes for a short night," he says.

His remedy is to nap for about an hour and a half after he gets home. A benefit is getting off early enough to run errands. Plus, he's home by noon every day.

Once he's off, he has more time for his hobby: a show called "John Eats Cheap," found on YouTube and TikTok. He shares recipes and tips, showing how people can eat inexpensively at home or in public.

John's lifetime career in radio began in high school, when his speech teacher suggested he try radio news for a speech contest.

"I was good," he recalls. "I like doing DJ on the radio. In my senior year of high school, I worked part time at KRNT. Three years later, I started at KJJY. It's pretty much all I've done. I don't have a face for television."

He received his "Big John" nickname due to his size. Another John working at the station was known as "Little John."

"I thought Big John sounded catchier on air," he says.

His drive to work affords him some beautiful views.

"I see a lot of beautiful full moons," he says. "It's a totally different world at 3:45 in the



Big John McCoy of Waukee often wakes up before his alarm goes off at 3 a.m. He's worked as a morning show host and DJ for KJJY for 34 years. He also hosts his own show "John Eats Cheap" on TikTok and YouTube.

morning. Every house is dark. It's so quiet, it's unbelievable."

The hardest part of the early hours is waking up to the sound of a winter storm.

"Freezing rain and howling wind — that's a bummer. It really stinks to go out in that type

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of weather,” he says.

The best part of his job is connecting with folks over the airwaves.

“I love being able to laugh every day and make others laugh. Every day is different, and I don’t know what I’ll be talking about. It’s like being a trapeze artist,” he says. “You never know how things will go.”

Helping others navigate the morning

Getting to work in the mornings is a challenge, especially if you have a long commute and don’t want to waste time in a traffic jam.

That’s where Scott Carpenter of KCCI TV-8 Morning News comes in, offering a roundup of the Des Moines metro’s traffic situation so drivers can find the quickest route.

Scott’s shift starts at 4:30 a.m. and runs until 9 a.m. To accomplish his early arrival, his alarm goes off at 3 a.m. There is no hitting the snooze button in Scott’s morning routine. He checks his e-mail, X and Facebook accounts for any breaking news then is out the door by 3:30 a.m.

The drive from his home in Waukee to the



Scott Carpenter, with wife Sandy, gets up at 3 a.m. to make it to his job as a morning show reporter at KCCI.

television station is light on traffic.

“On Hickman Road, there’s very few cars. You’d think it would be all green lights, but it’s not always the case,” he says.

Once at the station, Scott is researching stories, writing scripts and monitoring the traffic.

On nights before he works, he is usually in bed by 8 p.m. He closes his room-darkening shades and admits it’s difficult to get to sleep in the summertime.

“I can hear the kids playing across the street,” he says. “And my wife works from home, so I need to be quiet when I get off work

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during the day.”

He stays up for important events and naps occasionally when he gets home.

“The clock seems to fly by in the evening hours. If I’ve stayed out late, I’m behind the eight-ball. I’d rather be a little tired but experiencing life,” he reflects.

Scott knew at an early age he wanted to be on television. He recalls, as a youth in Ohio, listening to the Cincinnati Reds games and announcing them to his family.

“I was 7 years old and had a toy microphone,” he recalls. “I had the luxury of knowing this is what I wanted to do my whole life.”

He first job was reporting sports in Columbus, Georgia, for three years. He joined KCCI in December of 2020.

A perk of his job is being off work before noon.

“I can spend the afternoon golfing,” he says. “I’ve been up so long the whole workday is knocked out. I feel like I get a lot more done in a lot less time than most people.”

Another benefit of rising early is seeing the sunrise.



Scott Carpenter monitors traffic cameras — and sees some amazing sunrises — in his job.

“It’s great to see how Iowa really paints the skies. A beautiful sunrise keeps you going,” he says.

When on vacation or off work, Scott sleeps in until 6:30 a.m., which helps him to recharge his batteries, he says.

He adds, he is fortunate to be able to help

people by providing informative news and traffic reports. But he needs to be disciplined to stay on schedule.

“It’s tough,” he says. “But it’s incredibly rewarding helping others start their day. It’s worth it to make a difference to others every day.” ■

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RECIPE

SWEETEN the holiday season with deliciously creamy desserts

(Family Features) Once the table is cleared and gifts are put away, it's often time for one of the favorite moments of holiday gatherings. The taste (and smell) of those divine desserts you may only make once a year is enough to keep guests hungry even after the main course.

Put a new staple on holiday menus for years to come with this Cran-Raspberry Quinoa Pudding Trifle that combines fresh raspberries, vibrant cranberry sauce, orange juice and orange zest for a unique dessert. Ready in 30 minutes, it can be an easy way to impress everyone at the table with a creamy pudding base inspired by favorite winter flavors.

As a tasty treat that's ideal for just about any occasion, this take on rice pudding is made using Success Boil-in-Bag Tri-Color Quinoa, which offers a heat-safe, BPA-free and FDA-approved bag and is easily prepared in just 10 minutes. Its light, nutty flavor and versatility creates a pudding that's perfect for a wide range of pairings, from satisfying chocoholics or pumpkin-spice fanatics to whipping up a sweet, simple dessert.

Find more sweet holiday recipe inspiration at SuccessRice.com. ■

Cran-raspberry quinoa pudding truffle

Prep time: 25 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Servings: 6

QUINOA PUDDING:

- 2 bags Success Tri-Color Quinoa
- 4 cups almond milk
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

CREAMY YOGURT LAYER:

- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

CRAN-RASPBERRY LAYER:

- 1/2 cup cranberry sauce
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 2 cups fresh raspberries
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 2 cups gluten-free vanilla cookies, chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries

DIRECTIONS

- To make quinoa pudding: Prepare quinoa according to package directions, substituting almond milk for water. Drain, reserving almond milk.
- Remove quinoa from bags and stir into almond milk in saucepan over medium heat. Stir in honey, vanilla and cinnamon. Bring to simmer. Cook, stirring constantly, 5-8 minutes, or until thickened slightly. Refrigerate 45-60 minutes, or until well chilled.
- To make creamy yogurt layer: In large bowl, stir yogurt, honey and vanilla. In separate bowl, beat cream until stiff peaks form. Stir whipped cream into yogurt mixture until blended. Refrigerate until ready to use.
- To make cran-raspberry layer: In medium bowl, stir cranberry sauce, orange juice and orange zest. Gently fold in raspberries.
- To assemble: In 10-cup trifle dish, layer 1/3 quinoa mixture, 2 tablespoons almonds, 1/3 cran-raspberry mixture, 1/3 vanilla cookies and 1/3 yogurt mixture. Repeat layers twice. Garnish with remaining raspberries and almonds.



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WAUKEE

Warriors

2023 WINTER SCHEDULE

VARSITY BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 30, 2023	7:30PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial
Dec 1, 2023	TBD	Iowa City (High)	Xtream Arena
Dec 7, 2023	7:30PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
Dec 9, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Saydel High School
Dec 14, 2023	7:30PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee High School
Dec 16, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest
Dec 21, 2023	7:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic
Jan 4, 2024	7:30PM	Waukee Northwest	Waukee High School
Jan 6, 2024	9:30AM	Multiple Schools	Winterset High School
Jan 9, 2024	7:30PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Jan 11, 2024	7:30PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Jan 12, 2024	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Bettendorf High School
Jan 13, 2024	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Bettendorf High School
Jan 18, 2024	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Waukee High School
Jan 20, 2024	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Jan 25, 2024	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Pella High School

VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 28, 2023	7:45PM	Ankeny High School	Waukee High School
Dec 1, 2023	7:45PM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk
Dec 2, 2023	3:00PM	Linn-Mar	Waukee High School
Dec 5, 2023	7:45PM	Waukee Northwest	Waukee High School
Dec 8, 2023	7:45PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic
Dec 12, 2023	7:45PM	Urbandale	Waukee High School
Dec 15, 2023	7:45PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial
Dec 19, 2023	7:45PM	DM Roosevelt	DM Roosevelt
Dec 21, 2023	7:45PM	Johnston	Waukee High School
Jan 5, 2024	7:45PM	WDM Valley	Waukee High School
Jan 9, 2024	7:45PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee High School
Jan 11, 2024	7:45PM	Ankeny	Ankeny
Jan 16, 2024	7:45PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee High School
Jan 19, 2024	7:45PM	Waukee Northwest	Waukee Northwest
Jan 23, 2024	7:45PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee High School
Jan 26, 2024	7:45PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Jan 27, 2024	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Waukee High School
Jan 30, 2024	7:45PM	Indianola	Waukee High School
Feb 2, 2024	7:45PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Feb 6, 2024	7:45PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School
Feb 13, 2024	7:45PM	Des Moines North	Waukee High School

VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 21, 2023	7:00PM	Washington (CR)	Washington High School
Nov 28, 2023	6:15PM	Ankeny High School	Waukee High School
Dec 1, 2023	6:15PM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk
Dec 2, 2023	1:30PM	Linn-Mar	Waukee High School
Dec 5, 2023	6:15PM	Waukee Northwest	Waukee High School
Dec 8, 2023	6:15PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic
Dec 12, 2023	6:15PM	Urbandale	Waukee High School
Dec 15, 2023	6:15PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial
Dec 21, 2023	6:15PM	Johnston	Waukee High School
Jan 5, 2024	6:15PM	WDM Valley	Waukee High School
Jan 6, 2024	4:30PM	DM Roosevelt	DM Roosevelt
Jan 9, 2024	6:15PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee High School
Jan 11, 2024	6:15PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
Jan 13, 2024	2:30PM	Iowa City Liberty	Iowa City Liberty
Jan 16, 2024	6:15PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee High School
Jan 19, 2024	6:15PM	Waukee Northwest	Waukee Northwest
Jan 23, 2024	6:15PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee High School
Jan 26, 2024	6:15PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Jan 30, 2024	6:15PM	Indianola	Waukee High School
Feb 2, 2024	6:15PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Feb 6, 2024	6:15PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School

VARSITY GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 28, 2023	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Johnston High School

**As of November 13, 2023 according to cimcentral.org*

VARSITY BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 27, 2023	3:30PM	Ames	Warrior Lanes
Nov 30, 2023	3:30PM	WDM Valley	Warrior Lanes
Dec 2, 2023	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Cardinal Lanes
Dec 7, 2023	3:45PM	Urbandale	Game Day Lanes
Dec 11, 2023	3:00PM	Clarke	
Dec 19, 2023	3:45PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Jan 8, 2024	3:30PM	Greene County	Warrior Lanes
Jan 11, 2024	3:30PM	Southeast Polk	Warrior Lanes
Jan 18, 2024	3:45PM	Ankeny	Great Escape
Jan 25, 2024	3:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Warrior Lanes
Jan 30, 2024	10:00AM	Des Moines Lincoln	Bowlerama Lanes

VARSITY BOYS SWIMMING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 21, 2023	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Trail Point Aquatics Center
Nov 30, 2023	5:30PM	Ankeny	Trail Point Aquatics Center
Dec 7, 2023	5:00PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee YMCA
Dec 9, 2023	11:30PM	Multiple Schools	Holmes Junior High
Dec 12, 2023	5:00PM	Multiple Schools	Southeast Polk
Dec 14, 2023	5:30PM	Johnston Swimming	Summit Middle School
Dec 16, 2023	11:30AM	Multiple Schools	Dowling Catholic
Jan 4, 2024	5:00PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee YMCA
Jan 6, 2024	11:00AM	Multiple Schools	Summit Middle School
	12:00PM	Multiple Schools	Linn-Mar Aquatic Center
Jan 11, 2024	5:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School
Jan 16, 2024	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Atlantic YMCA



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NORTHWEST Wolves

2023 WINTER SCHEDULE

VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 28, 2023	7:45PM	Johnston	Waukee Northwest
Dec 1, 2023	7:45PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School
Dec 2, 2023	1:30PM	Sioux City West	Waukee Northwest
Dec 5, 2023	7:45PM	Waukee	Waukee High School
Dec 8, 2023	7:45PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee Northwest
Dec 12, 2023	7:45PM	Ankeny High School	Waukee Northwest
Dec 16, 2023	11:30AM	Sioux City East	Tyson Events Center
Dec 19, 2023	7:45PM	Urbandale	Waukee Northwest
Jan 2, 2024	7:45PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee Northwest
Jan 5, 2024	7:45PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic
Jan 9, 2024	7:45PM	WDM Valley	Waukee Northwest
Jan 12, 2024	7:45PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Jan 16, 2024	7:45PM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk
Jan 19, 2024	7:45PM	Waukee	Waukee Northwest
Jan 23, 2024	7:45PM	Grand View Christian	Waukee Northwest
Jan 26, 2024	7:45PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
Feb 2, 2024	7:45PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Feb 6, 2024	7:45PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee Northwest
Feb 9, 2024	7:45PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial
Feb 15, 2024	7:45PM	Des Moines Lincoln	Des Moines Lincoln

VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 21, 2023	7:00PM	Des Moines Lincoln	Des Moines Lincoln
Nov 27, 2023	6:30PM	Ames	Ames High School
Nov 28, 2023	6:15PM	Johnston	Waukee Northwest
Dec 1, 2023	6:15PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School
Dec 5, 2023	6:15PM	Waukee	Waukee High School
Dec 8, 2023	6:15PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee Northwest
Dec 12, 2023	6:15PM	Ankeny High School	Waukee Northwest
Dec 19, 2023	6:15PM	Urbandale	Waukee Northwest
Jan 2, 2024	6:15PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee Northwest
Jan 5, 2024	6:15PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic
Jan 9, 2024	6:15PM	WDM Valley	Waukee Northwest
Jan 12, 2024	6:15PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Jan 16, 2024	6:15PM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk
Jan 19, 2024	6:15PM	Waukee	Waukee Northwest
Jan 26, 2024	6:15PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
Jan 27, 2024	1:30PM	Sioux City West	Waukee Northwest
Feb 2, 2024	6:15PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Feb 6, 2024	6:15PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee Northwest
Feb 9, 2024	6:15PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial
Feb 10, 2024	2:30PM	Iowa City	Waukee Northwest

VARSITY BOYS SWIMMING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 21, 2023	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Trail Point Aquatics Center
Nov 30, 2023	5:30PM	Ankeny	Trail Point Aquatics Center
Dec 7, 2023	5:00PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee YMCA
Dec 14, 2023	5:30PM	Johnston Swimming	Summit Middle School
Jan 4, 2024	5:00PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee YMCA
Jan 6, 2024	11:00AM	Multiple Schools	Summit Middle School
	12:00PM	Multiple Schools	Linn-Mar Aquatic Center
Jan 11, 2024	5:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School

VARSITY BOWLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 1, 2022	3:30PM	WDM Valley	Warrior Lanes
Dec 8, 2022	3:30PM	Urbandale	Warrior Lanes
Dec 15, 2022	3:45PM	Southeast Polk	Great Escape
Dec 19, 2022	3:30PM	Johnston	Warrior Lanes
Jan 26, 2023	2:45PM	Dowling Catholic	Val Lanes

VARSITY GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 16, 2023	TBD	Multiple Schools	C-A-M High School
Nov 18, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Nevada High School
Nov 25, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Linn-Mar High School
Nov 28, 2023	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Johnston High School
Nov 30 - Dec 1	TBD	TBA	Xtream Arena
Dec 8-9, 2023	TBD	Council Bluffs	Mid-America Center
Dec 12, 2023	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Dec 16, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	A-D-M, Adel
Dec 19, 2023	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee High School
Jan 5-6, 2024	8:00AM	TBA	La Crosse, WI
Jan 8, 2024	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Ballard High School
Jan 11, 2024	6:00PM	Southeast Polk	Johnston High School
Jan 13, 2024	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest
Jan 16, 2024	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest
Jan 20, 2024	TBD	Colfax-Mingo	Colfax-Mingo

VARSITY BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 1-2, 2023	9:00AM	TBD	Xtream Arena
Dec 7, 2023	7:30PM	Johnston	Waukee Northwest
Dec 8-9, 2023	12:00PM	Council Bluffs	Mid-America Center
Dec 9, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Saydel High School
Dec 12, 2023	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley High School
Dec 16, 2023	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest
Dec 21, 2023	7:30PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee Northwest
Jan 4, 2024	7:30PM	Waukee	Waukee High School
Jan 6, 2024	8:00AM	Multiple Schools	Benton Community
Jan 9, 2024	7:30PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
Jan 11, 2024	5:00PM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Jan 13, 2024	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	CR Jefferson High School
Jan 18, 2024	7:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee Northwest
Jan 20, 2024	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Jan 25, 2024	7:30PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee Northwest



FOR ALL WOLVES'S SCHEDULES

Schedules are subject
to change.

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HONORING OUR LOCAL VETERANS

ROBERT APLIN

Military branch: U.S. Army **Rank at discharge:** Chief Warrant Officer 3

Deployments: Korea, Germany

How can the public best honor veterans? "Thank us for our service and make donations to veterans programs." — Robert Aplin



CHAD RIEDEMAN

Military branch: United States Marine Corps, Army National Guard

Rank at discharge: USMC-Staff Sergeant, ANG-Second Lieutenant (current)

Deployments: USMC 2012 OEF- Bahrain 2 years

How can the public best honor veterans? "Appreciate the sacrifices that veterans make." — Chad Riedeman



FRANK SCOTT VICTOR

Military branch: U.S. Army **Rank at discharge:** Colonel

Deployments: Hungary in 1998 and Iraq in 2004

How can the public best honor veterans? "Support and volunteer for organizations that support veterans. Also, encourage the next generation to join the military." — Frank Scott Victor



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ALONZO MCNEESE

Military branch: U.S. Army **Rank at discharge:** Sergeant

Deployments: Operation Iraqi Freedom

How can the public best honor veterans? "Saying 'thank you for your service' is most appreciated." — Alonzo McNeese

AMANDA MCNEESE

Military branch: U.S. Army **Rank at discharge:** Specialist

Deployments: Operation Kuwaiti Freedom

How can the public best honor veterans? "Translate skills from the military into the civilian side. So many jobs require going to school again for the same thing on the civilian side or say that it isn't enough experience." — Amanda McNeese



JOHN C. SHOEMAN

Military branch: Navy

Rank at discharge: Fireman Navy

Deployments: Korean War

How can the public best honor veterans? "Tell them, 'Thank you for your service.'" — John C. Shoeman



JAMES GORMAN

Military branch: Air Force and Army

Rank at discharge: Sergeant First Class E7

Served: Thule, Greenland; Tripoli, Libya; Munich and Goppingen, Germany; and Vietnam

How can the public best honor veterans?

"When the plane arrives at the airport, go out to the tarmac to meet them and welcome them home. If you want, you can shake their hand or give them a hug. Whatever you do, it will be welcome." — James Gorman



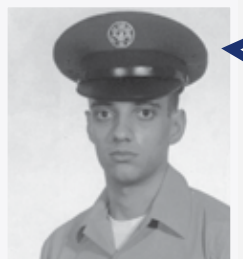
MICHAEL THILGES

Military Branch: U.S. Army

Rank at discharge: Lieutenant Colonel (2005)

Deployments: Iraq, 2004 - 2005; Afghanistan, 2007 - 2008

How can the public best honor veterans? "Simply honor veterans by being a good citizen. Honor the flag, stand quietly for the National Anthem, be charitable to your fellow citizens in need, and do your very best all the time." — Michael Thilges



SALVATORE "SAM" PELLETERI

Military branch: Air Force

Rank at discharge: Sergeant

Deployments: Okinawa, Korea

How can the public best honor veterans? "The public should take care of those that take care of them." — Salvatore "Sam" Pelletteri

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IOWA Living MAGAZINES

THIS is how retirement taxes work

Many people think that retirement automatically means you pay less in taxes. After all, you're no longer being handed a paycheck from an employer, right? The reality is that you are still taking an income. Now, it's from your retirement savings. The key is understanding which accounts are taxable and what you can do to take more control over what you pay in taxes.



Most retirement accounts — including 401(k)s, 403(b)s, SIMPLE IRAs, SEP IRAs, profit-sharing plans, pension plans, and traditional IRAs — are called qualified accounts. Qualified accounts are designed for retirement income; any money saved into these plans can generally be accessed without penalty after age 59 ½. The IRS has allowed money in these accounts to be saved and grow tax-deferred, meaning that federal taxes have been delayed until some point in the future. You will pay federal taxes on the money when you start taking distributions or when the IRS forces you to do so.

Typically, at age 73, you must start taking an annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from a qualified account. This amount is calculated based on your age, amount of money in the account, and life expectancy factor. If you don't take your RMD, you could receive a tax penalty of up to 25% of the RMD amount for that year.

Will your Social Security benefits be taxable? It depends. To avoid being taxed on your Social Security benefits, any income from other sources — such as a job or qualified retirement accounts — must be below the allowed base amount for your filing status, \$32,000 for a couple and \$25,000 for an individual in 2023.

A non-qualified account is funded with money you've already paid taxes on. This could include savings and checking accounts, non-retirement brokerage and investment funds, money market accounts, and CDs. While you have already paid taxes on the money you've put into the account, any growth — including interest earned or dividends paid — will be taxable.

Annuities are another type of account designed to provide income during retirement. Unlike more traditional retirement accounts, not all income from an annuity may be taxable. It depends on various factors, including what type of annuity it is and how it was funded.

Though you will pay taxes in retirement, you have more control than ever before. A retirement planner can help you zoom out and look at the big picture to develop a customized plan to take money from these accounts in a strategic way that could lower your tax bill. ■

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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WHAT IS a revocable trust?

A revocable trust is a flexible estate-planning tool with many benefits. A trust is a legal entity created by a written legal document. It functions similarly to a last will and testament. It names someone to manage

your affairs, provides rules for that asset-management, and sets out how to divide money when you die.

But a trust can do much more than that. Because it is established during your lifetime, you have flexibility and control. Trusts are often used as a means to give money or property to others over time or for limiting disbursements to beneficiaries.

Trusts aren't for everybody, but they have many advantages:



- **Choose who is in charge:** You will likely name yourself as trustee of your trust. You should also name a successor trustee to carry on this role. Upon your death or disability, the successor trustee steps in to fulfill responsibilities as outlined in the trust document. The trust allows you to choose who you want to manage your financial affairs.

- **Continuity in asset management:** A trust is a good way to ensure that your assets will be managed the way you want them to be, even if you aren't able to participate in the decisions. If you become incapacitated, the trust provides a blueprint for paying income and assets to you and your family. The assets in a trust, with clear guidelines on their use by the trustee, guarantees that your loved ones will still have those benefits.

- **Assets are not subject to probate:** A properly-drafted trust will keep the assets in the

trust out of probate. That means they are not administered with court oversight. Staying out of probate court can save a lot of money in costs and fees. This is a huge advantage for many people and often one of the main reasons for creating a revocable trust.

- **Privacy:** If your estate has to be administered through the probate court, your assets will be public record. This can be problematic for people who value their privacy. When your assets are in a trust, then only you, your beneficiaries, and the trustee have access to them.

When you are considering which estate planning tools are right for you, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning ... an attorney you can trust. ■

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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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Waukee WinterFest

Friday, Dec. 1, 6-8 p.m.
Historical Downtown Triangle

Join Santa and Waukee Mayor Courtney Clarke as they light the tree in Triangle Park at 6 p.m. sharp. Visit with Santa in person at the community center afterward while warming up with hot chocolate and cookies. Join the Waukee Downtown Businesses for open houses and activities. Attendees are encouraged to bring a nonperishable food item or a new, unwrapped toy to help support Waukee Area Christian Services.

The Table: free community meal

Nov. 27 and Dec. 18,
5:30-6:30 p.m.
Waukee United Methodist Church, 2075 S.E. LA Grant Parkway

Those in need, financially or just for fellowship, are invited to The Table. Congregation members rotate menus such as lasagna, walking tacos, Maid Rites, and grilled hamburgers/hot dogs.

Tuesday Night Trivia

Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m.
Central Standard Burgers, 1222 S.E. University Ave., Waukee

Come one come all and test out your thinking skills while having a great time. Trivia night is every Tuesday, with featured themed trivia nights once a month. Hosted by Think and Drink Entertainment.



Family Bowling Fun

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

Family Fun events are planned at Warrior Lanes, with glow-in-the-dark bowling, "Mom-approved" music and black lights. Cost per lane includes 90 minutes of bowling, shoe rental, a large one-topping pizza and pitcher of soda for up to five guests per lane. Sunday, Dec. 10, noon to 1:30 p.m., is Ugly Sweater Party (deadline is Dec. 8); and Sunday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., is Countdown to Noon Year's Eve (deadline Dec. 29). Reservations can be made at warriorlanes.com/family-glow-reservations.

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Waukee Family Fest

Saturday, Jan. 20, 9 a.m. to noon

Lutheran Church of Hope - Waukee

This free, family-friendly event will help kids burn off some cabin fever energy. Check out Waukee area businesses, enjoy games and prizes and jump on inflatables. To become a vendor, visit waukeee.org/familyfest.

Live Music Wednesdays

Nov. 29

Historic East Village, AC Hotel, 401 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines therepublicongrand.com

Catch live music performances every Wednesday through December for free from 6-8 p.m. Performing Nov. 29 is Brian Herrin.

Festival of Trees and Lights

Nov. 24-26

Iowa Events Center, 833 Fifth Ave., Des Moines
<https://unitypoint.org/giving/blank-childrens-hospital-foundation/ways-to-give/events/festival-of-trees-and-lights>

Experience expertly decorated trees, local music, dance groups and a visit from Santa himself, all in the name of supporting Blank Children's Hospital. From 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.



Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus

Dec. 10, 8 a.m. to noon

West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Special guests, Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, will be giving out goody bags, talking with the children and providing photo opportunities. There will also be a Christmas Bake Sale. Breakfast buffet includes: biscuits and gravy, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and all you can eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee. Enjoy a bloody mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and younger. Breakfast is served the second Sunday of each month. Proceeds support the Elks Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities and community charities. ■



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NOVEMBER 2023

DATES TO KNOW

- **Snacks & Facts**
Dec. 1 at 11 a.m.
Waukee Community Center
- **WinterFest**
Dec. 1, 6-8 p.m.
Downtown Triangle
- **City Council Meetings**
Dec. 4 & 18 at 5:30 p.m.
City Hall and Zoom (See info at Waukee.org)
- **Movie Matinee**
Dec. 14 at 10 a.m.
Waukee Public Library
- **Life-Size Candyland**
Dec. 27-28, Jan. 2
Waukee Public Library
(Registration required for Dec. 27)
- **City Buildings Holiday Closure**
Dec. 25-26
No trash collection Dec. 25; pick-up delayed one day that week
- **Library Holiday Closure**
Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31, Jan. 1

Scan the code to read more about City services.



Heating Your Home This Winter

Prepare for Natural Gas Bills

As temperatures drop, plan for natural gas bills. In addition to market factors, monthly utility bills are affected by weather trends. In continued periods of very low temperatures, your home will use more natural gas to maintain your desired temperature.

Here are a few things you can do to lower usage and manage your utility costs:

- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. A programmable thermostat can be set to lower the temperature at night or when you're away from home.
- Locate and seal any leaks from your air ducts. Use weather stripping to help seal leaky windows and doors.
- Close your drapes at night to reduce heat loss up to 10%.
- Visit Waukee.org/EnergyTips for more steps you can take to help reduce energy use.
- Sign up for Budget Billing, a free program which stabilizes utility charges that vary by changing seasons and different energy usage patterns. If you have been at your address for a year or more, call 515-978-5502 to sign up.

If you're struggling with energy bills, there are utility assistance programs for those who qualify, including the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), City-arranged payment plans and Waukee Area Christian Services assistance. Visit Waukee.org/EnergyAssist or call 515-978-5502 for more information.

Heat Your Home Safely

Installing carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in your home can provide an early warning of a leak. If you smell gas (rotten egg odor), call the utility's emergency number at 515-249-1212. If the smell is overpowering, leave the house immediately and call 911. Early stages of CO poisoning can include dizziness, flu-like symptoms, fatigue and severe headache. If you suspect CO poisoning or a detector alarm sounds, leave the house immediately. Seek medical attention if ill.



Waukee
THE KEY TO GOOD LIVING



What Would You Like to See in an Aquatic Center?

The City of Waukee is exploring possible development of a new outdoor aquatic center. If you haven't shared your thoughts through the online survey, please complete it by November 30. Your feedback will be used in a feasibility study to understand the level of support for this potential project and develop design concepts that would fit community needs now and into the future. Scan the QR code to take the survey.



Get Festive with WinterFest

The Downtown Triangle will be full of holiday cheer at WinterFest on Friday, Dec. 1 from 6-8 p.m. See Santa and Mayor Clarke light the WinterFest Tree at 6 p.m. sharp. Then play games, meet Santa, watch live ice sculpting and more. Donations of non-perishable food items or new, unwrapped toys will be collected at the Community Center to help neighbors in need. Visit Waukee.org/WinterFest for a full list of fun activities.



Queue your favorite holiday songs and grab a thermos of hot chocolate for a tour of finalists in the Waukee Holiday Lights Contest from Dec. 1-17. On Dec. 1, go to Waukee.org to download the map and vote for your favorite display.

Sign Up for Snow Ordinance Alerts

If snow is forecast for Waukee, the City will implement the snow ordinance and emergency parking ban. During this time, all public street parking is prohibited so that plows can clear City streets of snow quickly and safely. Parking bans are shared at Waukee.org, through City of Waukee social media and via Nixle. Sign up for alerts at Nixle.com or by texting "50263" to 888-777.



Youth Basketball, Girls Volleyball & Girls Softball Registration

Registration closes on Nov. 30 for youth basketball leagues (grades K-3) and Dec. 1 for girls volleyball (grades 4-7). Online registration opens Dec. 1 for girls recreational softball (grades K-7). The season will run from mid-April to early June. Register participants for the grade they are in for the 2023-2024 school year. Find more information and register for these Waukee Parks & Recreation leagues at Waukee.org/Registration.



Winter Bingo with the Waukee Public Library

The Library invites you to "Drift Into a Good Book" and participate in their Winter Bingo Challenge through Jan. 31. Play a bingo card full of activities for up to two chances to win the grand prize for your age group. Complete five activities in a row to collect a lip balm. Finish all 25 activities to earn a Winter Bingo Black Out penguin hot/cold pack. Sign up at WaukeePublicLibrary.org/Winter or in person at the Library.



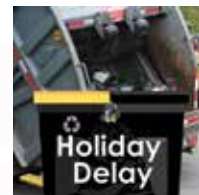
Citizens Academy with the Police Department

Waukee Police Department will host a free Citizens Academy on Thursday evenings from Feb. 22 to Apr. 25, 2024 to give 20 members of the public hands-on, working knowledge of the Waukee PD. Applications open Dec. 1. Learn more and apply at Waukee.org/CitizensAcademy.



Holiday Closures & Trash Pick-up Delay

All City of Waukee offices will be closed Dec. 25-26. There will be no garbage or recycling pick-up on Monday, Dec. 25. Collection will run on a Tuesday through Saturday schedule, so your regular pick-up will be delayed by one day.



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The **ONLY** poll mailed to residential households. **VOTE NOW!**



IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Dallas County?

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

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2023 Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish January in Waukee, and February in Adel and West Des Moines - Jordan Creek editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

HURRY! POLL CLOSES DEC. 8, 2023.

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll. One vote per resident, please.

SCAN HERE TO
VOTE TODAY!



FOOD AND DRINK

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

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot

SHOPPING

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

ENTERTAINMENT

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- CBD Store
- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics/Tumbling Studio

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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

MEET veteran Amanda McNeese

Three generations of veterans

Amanda McNeese of Waukee says she was proud to serve her country as a member of the U.S. Army. She decided to enlist since both her father and grandfather served in two different wars.

When Amanda told her dad, who served in the Vietnam War, that she was considering joining the service, he said, "You can't do that."

A defiant Amanda replied, "Watch me," and she joined anyway. As a high school senior, she completed drill on weekends and entered basic training after graduation. She was deployed to Kuwait and served for eight years.

When she returned home, she and her dad talked about their different military experiences.

"We were in a 'cushy' area in Kuwait. My dad didn't have the same experience in Vietnam. It was hard for him. He saw friends die right before him. It was in an era that he didn't talk about it," she says.

Her grandpa, who was drafted and served in the Korean War, didn't share his service experience.

"I knew he was proud of me," she says.

Amanda's husband, Alonzo, a sergeant, was stationed in Iraq. The pair had only dated for nine months before she learned she was to be deployed to Kuwait.

"I joked to him that we should get married before I was deployed. He said, 'I will if you want to.' That was 21 years ago."

When Amanda returned from Kuwait, Alonzo was on his way to Iraq.

"We happened to see each other on the same floor," she recalls.

During her service, she enjoyed traveling to different countries, including Japan, Kuwait and Germany. She was trained as an intelligence engineer. When she returned to the U.S., her family was relieved to have her back home.

She says women are still in the minority in the service. Regardless of gender, the Army was tough.

"I'm not your typical girly-girl worrying about breaking my nails. I fit in with the guys, so it wasn't too hard. You have to have thick skin to be around guys," she recalls.

She says being in the service makes her appreciate the little things in



Amanda McNeese and her husband, Alonzo, met while serving in the Army.



Amanda McNeese is a third-generation member of the service. Both her father and grandfather served before her.

life. She currently works as a dental assistant, however, she experienced difficulty getting a job.

"People say they hire military, but, for some, it's a misconception," she says. "I had to go through the same thing as other job hunters."

The biggest life lesson she learned is to be flexible.

"Military is a lot of hurrying up and waiting," she reflects. "I've learned to be flexible, and, whatever happens, happens." ■

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SHOE, sock donations

Bruce Huckfeldt donates to shelter, veterans.

As a long-time runner who has run thousands of miles, Bruce Huckfeldt goes through a lot of tennis shoes. He also knows the importance of having good everyday shoes. Yet many people do not own a good pair of shoes.

So, Huckfeldt began collecting footwear for homeless shelters and those in need.

This year, he presented 620 pairs of shoes to Central Iowa Shelters & Services, a Des Moines homeless shelter with a food pantry and clothing closet.

Two years ago, Huckfeldt began collecting shoes and donated 300 pairs. Last year, he donated 400 pairs and reached out to Bombas, a sock manufacturer that donates one pair of socks for every pair purchased. Bombas then donated 250 pairs of socks, which arrived after the shoe drive. This year, he requested more socks and Bombas gave him 500 pairs.

Huckfeldt promoted the shoe drive through social media channels and set up donation boxes at Waukee B-Bops, Waukee YMCA and Fitness



Scott Victor of Edward Jones presents the Good Neighbor Certificate to Bruce Huckfeldt with Carley Yoder also present.

Sports.

In previous years, he donated shoes locally to the Dallas County Clothing Closet. However, they didn't have enough room for this year's haul.

"Central Iowa Shelter was over the moon with our shoe donations. They only had about 20 pairs left in their inventory," he says.

Huckfeldt is a "giver." He's known around Waukee as the man who carries an American flag when he runs.

"I carry the flag for those who can't carry anymore. I carry for those veterans in wheelchairs and those who were injured in the war," he explains.

In addition, he's raised more than \$20,000 through his running and charity events, which benefit two veterans organizations: The Wounded Warriors and Mission 22 for veteran suicide prevention programs and awareness.

Although Bruce is not a veteran, he has a passion for those who serve.

"I couldn't get into the military due to a medical issue," he recalls.

"This is the next best thing — to raise money for veterans."

He plans other running and charity events and is eager to help others.

"That's what life is all about. We're only on this planet for a short time. I've been taught to put others first," he explains. "It's a good way to show my kids what kindness and love is. I was raised to do what's right. This is the best way to show that."

For more information about helping veterans, visit Bruce's website at www.road2gold.net. ■


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SENIOR

By Brooke Baker

TIPS for supporting caregivers

As a caregiver for seniors, taking care of someone can be a challenging and sometimes isolating experience. Here are eight ways you can support your friend who is a caregiver:



1. Offer to help with specific tasks such as cooking a meal, running errands, or providing respite care for the person they're caring for.
2. Listen to them and let them vent about their frustrations and challenges.
3. Offer words of encouragement and remind them that their efforts are making a difference.
4. Ask how they're doing and genuinely listen to their response.
5. Respect their boundaries and be mindful of their time constraints.
6. Validate their feelings and let them know that it's OK to feel overwhelmed or stressed.
7. Educate yourself about their caregiving situation and offer helpful resources or support groups.
8. Offer to spend time with them doing something enjoyable and unrelated to caregiving. Consider offering to take a senior out for a shopping trip or to the park for some fresh air.

Some options for caregivers include: adult day care, home healthcare and a senior center. Remember, if you run out of bright ideas, a hug or a smile can brighten up a person's day without saying a word. ■

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

HEALTH

By Dr. Tara Federly

ALLERGIC to the holidays?

The holiday season is meant to be a joyous time of the year, but, for some, their Christmas tree can cause non-stop sneezing or coughing. Most would believe this is an allergic reaction to the pine tree itself, but, in reality, the reaction is to microscopic mold spores on the tree. Even artificial trees can cause allergy symptoms for some. Artificial trees have more dust and can also have mold spores if stored in a damp basement.



So, what is the solution to keep the holidays cheerful and bright? If you have trouble with allergies around your Christmas tree, here are a few simple things you can do next year. If you have a real tree, make sure to shake the tree outside to remove as much debris as possible or use a leaf blower to blow off debris. It may also help to wipe around the tree trunk with a solution of one part bleach to 20 parts lukewarm water to remove mold spores. For others, an artificial tree may be the way to go, but make sure to store the tree in a sealed plastic bag in a dry spot. Breathe easy and enjoy the holidays. ■

Information provided by Dr. Tara Federly, Cornerstone Pediatrics & Family Allergy, 6800 Lake Drive, Suite 260, West Des Moines, www.cornerstonepfa.com.

ABOUT wisdom teeth

Do you ever wonder why your last molars that usually come in during adolescence are called “wisdom teeth”? They are termed this because these teeth typically erupt in the mouth when we are at a more mature age, between the ages of 17 and 25. Panoramic X-rays can show early development of them by ages 6 or 7, with some people having all four or some with none at all.

Depending on the position, wisdom teeth can damage the side of the root or crown of the adjacent tooth or cause severe gum inflammation and possible swelling. Some impacted third molars can form a cyst (a fluid-filled sac) that can put pressure on surrounding teeth. Third molars partially covered by gum tissue can allow food to trap underneath the flap of tissue, causing redness, swelling and significant discomfort. Some people fear that wisdom teeth will cause crowding, especially after braces. Although research has shown that third molars have not had a major contribution to crowding, it is important to determine if there is space available for them to erupt and be functional. When evaluating wisdom tooth extraction, there are many factors to take into consideration such as decay development, adjacent tooth damage, cyst formation, gum swelling or infection. Consult with your dentist or oral surgeon to make the best decision for you. ■



Information provided by Dr. Jason Brown DDS, Timberline Family Dental, 515-644-2264, 2153 S.E. LA Grant Parkway, Waukee. Information gathered from mouthhealthy.org by ADA.

TAKING a pause

It feels odd to acknowledge that we're already in the fall, and it feels even odder to admit that the holidays will be here before we know it. For some of us, the holidays involve a lot of planning and social interaction. For others, they can bring feelings of isolation and loss. Either way, the holidays tend to bring a lot of stress and anxiety. The arrival of fall is the perfect time to stop, take a breath, and pause.

We all tend to hit pause in our own way. For some, taking a pause might mean going for a walk and checking out the leaves or their neighbors' decorations. For others, taking a pause might be watching your favorite scary movie. Regardless of how we choose to hit pause, what's important is that we make the conscious effort to actually pause and attempt to slow ourselves down.

We live in an unfortunately high-paced society that puts more emphasis on deadlines and due dates than it does on our wellbeing. If we want to slow down, we must consciously choose to do so. We must choose to make ourselves a priority in our own lives, if only for a moment. ■



Information provided by Paul Guerdet, LISW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, guerdet@sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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ROOM at the table — or nearby

Anderson continues tradition of opening her home to others for Thanksgiving.

Waukee resident Candy Anderson remembers the year her mom opened Thanksgiving dinner to more than just their family.

“It was just me and my parents, so my mom said, ‘Well, why don’t we just invite everybody over?’” Anderson says. “So, we invited all of my friends and their families, and people she knew, and anybody who didn’t have a place to go for Thanksgiving to come over and share a meal.”

Anderson now carries on the tradition herself.

Every Thanksgiving, she opens her door and offers anyone a seat at her table. The size of the gathering varies year to year, but she has been able to welcome and serve more than 30.

“We never tell somebody they can’t come because there’s not a chair,” Anderson explains. “We may tell them to bring a chair, and we’ve had to use lawn chairs and whatever else we can find.”

Anderson and her husband, Mike, have a core group of about eight friends who help plan and attend each year’s dinner. Some of them will come early enough on Thanksgiving morning to help ensure dinner is ready. These friends extend the Andersons’ invitation to their own family and friends.

“People bring friends,” Anderson says. “We didn’t know them when they came, but now they’re friends because they came with friends.”

When the couple lived at the Attivo Trail apartment building, they would post signs around the building, encouraging complete strangers to attend — and they did. While at Attivo, they tried to use the building’s clubhouse to fit everybody. However, in the years they were not able to use the space, they managed to fit everybody in their 1,100-square-foot apartment. One year, they crammed 24 people in their apartment. To accommodate, they used their couch as seating and moved excess furniture to the patio.

“I would tell people to never say their place is too small because you can fit people in. You can always make room,” says Anderson.

Nowadays, the couple has a little more room to work with in their Waukee home.



Mike and Candy Anderson open their doors to anyone on Thanksgiving day.



The table is set for Thanksgiving.

The food preparation begins as early as the beginning of November. Anderson begins by ordering the biggest turkey she can get. Then, she makes a list of everything she is going to prepare. Groceries are purchased in batches to avoid one “ginormous bill.” Anything she can make or do ahead of time, she will.

The Andersons have never run out of food; although, they have been close. Typically, there is enough for another annual tradition: Black Friday leftovers. The family hosts a smaller group of friends and family and each takes their turn running their leftovers through the microwave.

As a host, Anderson offers a few words of advice to anyone who is a guest on Thanksgiving.

“It’s always nice to bring something, maybe just a bottle of wine,” she says. “The more things people bring, the more there is to enjoy. Bring something that means something to you — a tradition.

“Thanksgiving, to me, is a time of harvest celebration,” she continues. “It’s a time to bring friends and family together and just enjoy each other and be thankful for what we have.” ■

A COZY winter with the library

Together is a wonderful thing to be during the cold winter months. If you're looking for something to do inside, look no further. The Waukee Public Library is hosting events for kids, teens and adults all winter long. Most events require registration. Looking for something to do from the comfort of your home? Check out the many online resources, free with a library card at waukeepubliclibrary.org/online-library.

• **Kids Craft Gifts**, Dec. 1 and 2, various times: Get in the gift-giving spirit. Kids are invited to use their creativity to complete two craft activities. A gift-wrapping station will be available if they want to package their creations to give to someone special. An adult should plan to stay with children during this event. Recommended for children ages 3-11 years old. Limit of one session per child. Registration required.

• **Hygge Holiday Party**, Saturday, Dec. 9, 12:45-3:45 p.m.: Come dressed in your PJs or favorite comfy clothes for a cozy afternoon of crafts, snacks and self-care. Snack on comfort

desserts and enjoy a hot cocoa bar. While "The Holiday" plays in the background, you'll make no-sew fleece blankets and a peppermint mocha sugar scrub. As the afternoon ends, enjoy a soothing Sound Bath by Hannah Rush. Registration required.

• **Teen Snacks & Crafts**, Saturday, Dec. 9, 10 a.m.: Get snacky and crafty or just hang out with friends. Coloring and craft supplies will be provided for tweens and teens to be creative. Snacks and a structured activity will be provided, but students will also have the option to color or craft what they wish from the available supplies. December's craft will be DIY sugar scrub. For students in grades 6-12. Registration required.

• **Life-Size Candyland**, Dec. 27, 28, 29, and Jan. 2: Get ready for giant candy fun. The library's program room will be transformed into a life-size Candyland game board, and you may even meet some of your favorite game characters. Registration required on Dec. 27, and first-come first-served the other dates.

• **Creativebug Online Craft Videos**: Grab

some friends and supplies and watch a class on Creativebug. This free online resource is filled with thousands of award-winning classes to help you make something beautiful. It also provides tips, tricks, patterns, templates and recipes for any and all creative adventures.

• **Winter Bingo Challenge: Drift Into a Good Book**: Last but certainly not least, the Library's Winter Bingo Challenge continues. Work to complete a bingo (or black out bingo) for your chance to win prizes. This challenge is open to all ages and is sure to speed up those long winter nights. Visit waukeepubliclibrary.org/winter to see prizes and register.

• **Art Gallery Exhibit: "Patterns,"** Dec. 1-27, Troy Richard Thomas

Upcoming holiday closures: Sunday, Dec. 24, Monday, Dec. 25, Tuesday, Dec. 26 and Sunday, Dec. 31.

To find out more about the Waukee Public Library, visit waukeepubliclibrary.org or contact the library at askme@waukee.org or 515-978-7944. ■

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MEET Nikki Snyder

Early childhood / special education teacher at Vince Meyer Learning Center

What's the one thing you would like people to know about being an early childhood / special education teacher that they may not realize?

"We see our classrooms as learning environments where students can gain new skills and knowledge in a natural meaningful way. The approach we use not only helps students with special needs thrive, but it also fosters an inclusive and supportive atmosphere that benefits all the children. We recognize that learning doesn't just happen during large and small groups. It's a continuous process that is a part of every moment of a child's day."

What was your first day as an instructor like?

"Pure excitement. This was my second career, and I could not wait to finally have a class of my own, to create a little family within the school. It was a day of controlled chaos, and I will never forget that class for all they taught me."

One thing you've learned in the past seven days?

"Having a sick child away at college is more stressful than having a sick child at home. The bigger they get, the more you worry."

If you could have a super power, what would it be and why?

"To be sure that everyone knows how special and loved they are. I guess I would like to be able to spread joy. Is that a superpower?"

What is the cutest thing you've seen in class?

"My class was super good at giving hugs. They were so good I would often have the whole class deciding they needed a hug at the same time, usually in the middle of a book. We decided that we would make a visual to let them know when hugs were closed and open. It was such a fun problem to have."

One thing about you that might surprise people:

"I worked in long-term care for 15 years. I started in the activity department at 16, and, after college, I held various positions including dementia unit coordinator and social worker."

What is it about teaching that gives you the most joy?

"When I see the reaction on a child's face when they are able to do something that they thought they could not do and likewise when a parent witnesses their student being successful and they share that joy with you. You can't describe that feeling."

You can have a two-hour dinner with any person, alive or otherwise. Who would that be and why?

"Right now it would be my parents. They live in Florida, and I would love to share a meal with them and share all the excitement that this fall has brought with my children. Two of my children are up at Iowa State, one is currently harvesting in northeast Iowa, and my oldest is pursuing his career as a graphic designer. I would also love to share the beautiful changing of the leaves and cool fresh air with them. It would be great to also give them a hug." ■



Nikki Snyder teaches special education at the Vince Meyer Learning Center.

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RACCOON River Valley Trail permit to be discontinued

The Raccoon River Valley Trail (RRVT) will no longer require the purchase of a permit in order to utilize the trail starting in 2024.

Central Iowa is fortunate to have an extensive network of beautiful paved trails. Dallas, Guthrie and Greene county conservation boards hope to welcome more visitors to the Raccoon River Valley Trail (RRVT) from all over the region as these trails become increasingly connected. With that in mind, the RRVT will no longer require a trail permit starting in 2024. This change will eliminate barriers to access, align policy with other trails in the area, and reduce confusion for people arriving on the RRVT from connected trails.

For large trail events, however, a special trail event permit is still required. Contact the specific county conservation board involved for information about that process.

Annual trail permits have been a popular holiday gift for cyclists in the past. If you would like to continue in a similar tradition, please consider donating to support your local county trails. Visit dallascounty.seamlessdocs.com/f/DCCBDDonation to support the trails of Dallas County. ■

DALLAS County receives funds for trails

The Iowa Transportation Commission has approved \$2,753,115 for seven State Recreational Trails Program projects, including \$675,000 for the Raccoon River Valley Trail to High Trestle Trail extension in Dallas County.

The State Recreational Trails Program was created in 1988 with the purpose of developing and maintaining recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized trail users. This funding is available to cities, counties, state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations through an annual application-based program. Phase VI of the Raccoon River Valley Trail to High Trestle Trail Connector is the final phase of the nine-mile connector project. It includes paving the last two-mile section of the trail from the city of Bouton east to Quinlan Avenue. Funding is now secured to complete the project, and it is scheduled to be completed in 2024.

Conservation Director Mike Wallace says, "We are excited to move into this final phase of the project, which would not be possible without public funding as well as many private donations. We are so grateful for the support from our communities. Connecting these two renowned trails of Central Iowa has been a goal for many years, and it is a huge success to have the funds for its completion in 2024. ■

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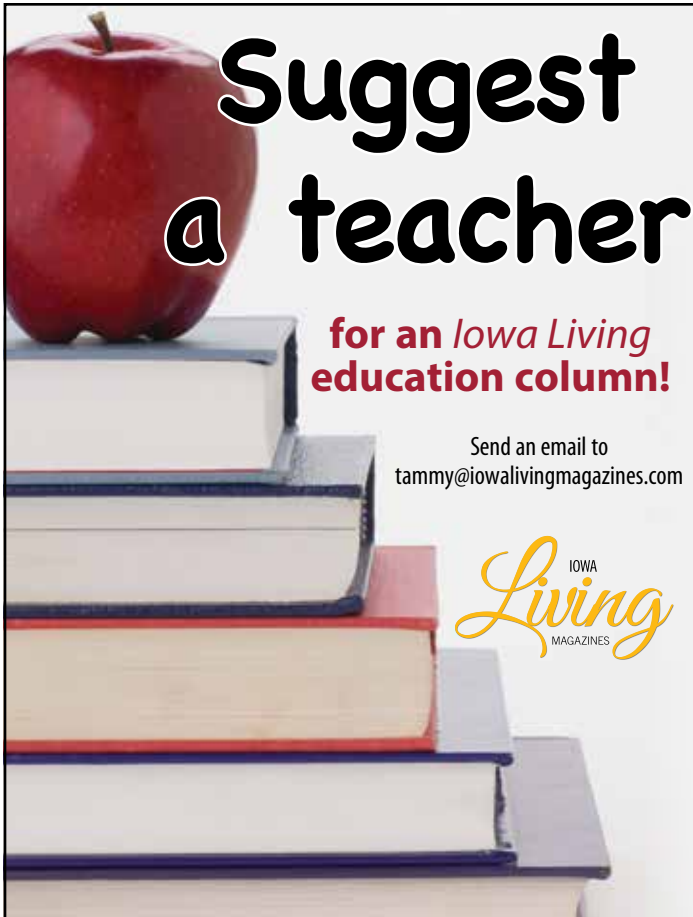
HOLMES Murphy Foundation contributes \$100,000

Holmes Murphy is excited to announce its \$100,000 in philanthropic contributions to 25 different non-profit organizations through the Holmes Murphy Foundation Community Footprints Program.

“Our goal at Holmes Murphy will always be to make a difference at work, home and in our communities,” said Dan Keough, Holmes Murphy Chairman and CEO. “We believe in supporting organizations that are authentic and that will help us sustain a culture where every person is supported to reach their fullest ability. We also believe we all play a role in living out our unique potential and purpose and caring for those around us, and we’re honored to help these organizations light the way for change and offer a brighter future for all.”

The Holmes Murphy Foundation Community Footprints Program allows employees to select 501(c)(3) or non-profit organizations in their specific geographical locations that align with the Holmes Murphy Foundation giving pillars of Safety, Health, and Wellbeing; Youth Opportunities; Arts & Culture; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

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OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON cutting

Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting at Remodelworks on Nov. 11.



Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting at Remodelworks on Nov. 11.



Chris Juhl, Larry Lyon and Lori Lyon



Rob Grove, Kelly Troxel and Amber Rhoads



Scott Victor and Travis Gaule



Kristin Salge and Meghan West



Jon and Jan West



Jose Zaragoza, David Badic, Zane West-Dolic and Travis McCarthy



Erna Morain and Mersud Dolic



Gina Campos and Jane Angstman at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Vibrant Music Hall on Oct. 26.



Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Vibrant Music Hall on Oct. 26.



Harry and Paula Coin at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Vibrant Music Hall on Oct. 26.



Haleigh Biancalana and Kelly Troxel at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Vibrant Music Hall on Oct. 26.



Rob and Cindy Grove at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Vibrant Music Hall on Oct. 26.



Adam Doll, Brandi Bever and Noah Graham at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce First Responders Appreciation Breakfast on Oct. 27.



Scott Cunningham, Jeff Mellencamp and Nick Gilchrist at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce First Responders Appreciation Breakfast on Oct. 27.



Rob Grove and Alicia Scott at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce First Responders Appreciation Breakfast on Oct. 27.



Dan Eslick and Justin Stoltenberg at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce First Responders Appreciation Breakfast on Oct. 27.



Austin Gibbs, Nick Gilchrist, Chief Chad McCluskey and Pat Quaid at the Waukeew Area Chamber of Commerce First Responders Appreciation Breakfast on Oct. 27.

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