

Life at Valley View

Valley View Village offers many opportunities for a rich and full life, including spiritual care. Our full time chaplain is available for the spiritual needs of residents, families and staff — always respectful of personal and cultural preferences.



Meet Chaplain Mike



I treasure doing life together, in all of its stages, in the spirit of Christ's love. We offer many classes and groups to help deepen your connection with God:

Prayer Meetings · Bible Studies · Men's Groups · Chapel Services · Personal Prayer and Counseling



Scan the QR code or visit ValleyViewVillage.org

to learn more about this beautiful community.

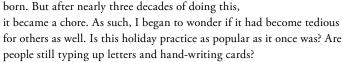


WELCOME

CHRISTMAS card communication

Well, it's that time of year again. Many of us have taken the family photo, updated our address lists, summarized anything and everything that's changed in your lives this year, and, you guessed it, sent out our holiday greeting cards.

I remember when Jolene and I were first married, and we couldn't wait to send out Christmas cards with an update letter. The same was true after each of our three children were born. But after nearly three decades of doing this,



I used to look forward to this time-honored tradition, especially reading about what was new in the lives of friends or family members whom we don't touch base with regularly. But, if I am being honest, I don't think I looked through all the cards and letters in recent years. And if the letter took multiple pages, well, forget it.

Then, something changed. In the past few years, we haven't received as many. In conversations with others, I learned that a growing number of folks are relying on social media sites for the purpose of Christmas communication. Or they gave up in general. Or, maybe, they just took me off their list.

Truth be told, we skipped the entire Christmas card tradition a few years back. We had a hectic few months leading up to the holidays, and we just didn't get it done. Even so, life went on as normal. But, as you might guess, we returned to the task the following year.

So, here we are, and another Christmas season has arrived. We gathered a photo from a recent family get-together and, at least for another year, carried on the tradition of mailing out cards. Also this year, I am relaxing in my easy chair with my slippers on my feet and a cup of cocoa in my hand and reading the cards and letters — at least the first page or so.

Be sure to check out this month's cover story to learn how other residents handled their Christmas communication this year.

Thanks for reading. ■

SHANE GOODMAN

President and Publisher Big Green Umbrella Media shane@dmcityview.com 515-953-4822, ext. 305



515-953-4822 ext. 302 ammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

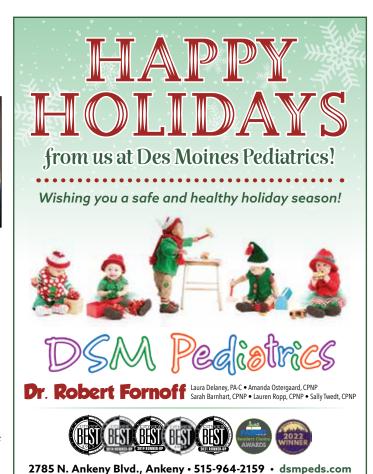
Angela Ossian Advertising Account Executive 515-953-4822 x307 angela@iowalivingmagazines.com















FEATURE

An update, plain and simple

Doris and Roger Henry of Altoona have been sending Christmas cards to their family members ever since they were wed.

"We have been married for 44 years and will celebrate our 45th anniversary in March," says

Roger recently retired after 34 years in the

"While looking for a retirement home, we fell in love with a townhome in Altoona," says

Roger served for five years at Staves United Methodist Church in northeast Des Moines, so the couple was familiar with the area and were drawn to Altoona's small-town feel and friendliness.

"Since retirement, we've enjoyed visiting with family and friends who have also settled in the area," Doris says.

The couple has children near and far. Joshua and Sara Henry and their dog, Smoky, live in Avoca. Jacob Henry and wife April Vlaanderen and 8-year-old son Maxwell live in Iowa City. Elizabeth and husband Joshua Spiker and their children, Alitheia "Ali," 12, Jael, 6, and Elijah, 4, live in Bangkok, Thailand.

Roger and Doris have spent a lot of their time traveling to see relatives, but living in Altoona keeps them close to many relatives, including Doris' sister, mom and brother, who all live in Johnston.

Roger and Doris enjoy many traditions each year as they observe Christmas, including sending Christmas cards and setting out their decorations and nativity scenes. One is extra special.

"My mother made it for me and gave it to us on our first Christmas after we married in 1979," says Doris.

The couple's holiday greeting may stand out in a way that most do not.

"We send an elementary Christmas letter without any decorations or pictures. We purchase colored paper to print them on; it's light green this year."

Roger and Doris keep it plain because they are not sure most people keep greetings, and they want to focus on updating people on their

"Why go to the expense of something fancy when it will be thrown away anyway, right? Plus, when you send just a card, it's difficult to include things about the family they enjoy hearing about," says Doris.

Many family and friends mention months



Doris and Roger Henry enjoy many traditions each year as they observe Christmas, including setting out the nativity scene Doris' mother gave them for their first Christmas together.

later how much they enjoy getting the couple's Christmas letters.

"Roger recently had to get a new address from an old friend, and she responded by saying how much she looks forward to our letters every year," says Doris. "Roger always adds humor to the letters, and everyone mentions that when they see us."

The letters are a team effort.

It usually takes a day for Roger to write it and for Doris to edit and add anything she

"He'll start thinking about it around mid-November and try to finish it before the first of December," says Doris, adding that they enjoy the creative writing process.

"Our favorite part is deciding what others may want to hear about us and adding Roger's humorous comments. And, of course, we hope we'll hear back from everyone we send them out to."

Throughout Roger's many years as a clergyman, the couple has served several churches around Iowa.

"We have been very blessed in making great friends in each," says Doris. "Our former parishioners are very familiar with our children and grandchildren and have participated in the excitement of watching them grow, getting married, the births of each grandchild, and their baptisms."

Doris and Roger believe the adage that the pastor and his family live in a fishbowl, with

everyone knowing almost everything about their lives. And the Christmas cards are an extension of that.

"Our children got used to it quickly, and even though they've had to move around, they have great memories of each church and its people," says Doris.

Times have changed

Barbara Timmins sends out Christmas cards every year on behalf of herself and husband Rob and their daughters, Brett and Kay.

She used to send a lengthy Christmas letter along with either a family photo or her girls school photos. But, times have changed.

"These days, it's usually a traditional card and a short note letting family and friends know what we're up to," she says, adding the updates are not as monumental as they once

"Things don't change as much the older we get."

Even if the updates are not as lengthy, Barbara still includes them and photos each

"I also include a family photo or collage of our family events throughout the year," she says.

Barbara comes from a long line of Christmas card senders.

"I'm currently re-reading my grandma's diaries from the early 1970s, and she mentions a few times about writing out Christmas cards,"

FEATURE

says Barbara.

Barbara's mom, Myrna Agan, mailed her family's cards on Thanksgiving night for years.

"Hers was the first card most people received," says Barbara.

Barbara admits that sending out Christmas greetings takes a huge investment of time and energy.

While some have automated their cards, Barbara continues to add a personal touch.

"I hand address each card these days, as opposed to the address labels I used to do," she says, adding, "My favorite part of sending Christmas cards is receiving Christmas cards."

Barbara updates a mailing list of who she sends cards to, and, if she gets a card from someone she doesn't normally send to, she reciprocates.

"Over our 32 years of marriage, our list has waxed and waned and changed from year to year," she says.

Barbara hopes the people who receive cards from her and her family appreciate hearing from them.

"Maybe it keeps us in their thoughts for the holiday season," she says.

Barbara says she just wants to spread holiday spirit.

"I hope they feel the love that went into the handwritten note and it fills their hearts with love and generosity for the season. I can't make them feel a certain way, but I hope it touches their hearts," she says.

Barbara says she appreciates every card she receives.

"I love that someone has thought of me and sent me greetings for the holiday and an update of what they've been up to over the year," she says.

Though she enjoys the whole tradition, she says she may like the photo part the best.

"I love when they send me a photo of their family to see how much the kids have grown since last year," she says.

Barbara admits that, as things have become more automated, it is still remembering people that matters the most.

"Sometimes it's awkward when you get the cards that have been computer-generated with photos and a signature and a pre-printed label or my name is spelled wrong, but it really is the thought that counts," she says.

Barbara uses a USPS service that not everyone might know about.

"I use the USPS informed delivery service so I can see when I'm getting greetings in the



Lindsay Simmerman has gone from sending parody cards (the one at left is a parody of Calvin Klein print ads) to using candid photos (at right) for her Christmas greetings.

mail, and since I see that in the morning, it makes my heart happy all day," she says.

Traditional or not

Lindsay Simmerman of Altoona sends a holiday greeting each year for Christmas. But these greetings have only sometimes been traditional. In the past, Lindsay sent spoofs featuring her and her pets. One year, she looked stoically into the camera with her cat on her shoulder, sporting a turtleneck with a gray filter over the photo and the caption, "Wishing you peace, love, and the success of a 1990s CK (Calvin Klein) model."

Nowadays, Lindsay is sending fewer nontraditional Christmas cards.

"Now we send collage cards that include us and our pets," she says, referring to herself, her significant other, Jeff Wilkerson, and their three combined pets, Jazzy, Mack and Brock Lee Purrdy.

Lindsay includes candid photos the couple has taken along with a simple saying and signature because she says it more accurately reflects their life.

"This sort of Christmas card seems truer to life as the photos I include are either selfies or non-professional-type pictures taken from our phones," she says. "I appreciate the professional photos, but life is candid. I love reflecting that in our cards."

When she shares her holiday cards, she says the reception is positive.

"People seem to love getting them and look forward to getting them every year," she says.

She spends a couple of days on the greetings.

"It takes at least an afternoon looking for the right photos and then editing them. Then it takes another day to handwrite a short note on each card once printed," she says. "I handwrite each envelope and return address. This process takes longer, but it seems more personal and meaningful."

Lindsay's favorite part about doing this each holiday is the reflection it evokes.

"I love scrolling through pictures from the year. It reminds me of how many memories we made over the past 12 months," she says. "It also reminds me of how fortunate I am to have so many loved ones to send these greetings to. It allows me to quickly greet those I may only connect with during the holidays."

Lindsay says the time-honored tradition of sending Christmas greetings is worth the time and effort.

"It's a simple act to brighten the holidays and tell people how important they are. These cards are something fun to get besides bills during the holidays," she says. ■

City of Altoona • 900 Venbury Drive • Altoona, IA 50009 • 515-967-5136

CITY HALL

900 Venbury Drive

Altoona, IA 50009 Phone: 515-967-5136 FAX: 515-967-0842 Open 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

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Scott Duer 515-418-2227
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Vernon Willey II 515-710-4244

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Fire Chief 515-967-2216

Library Director 515-967-3881 Fax: 515-967-6934

Water Billing 515-967-5136

Building Department/ Code Enforcement 515-967-5138

Building Official 515-967-5138

Planning & Zoning Department 515-967-5136

Public Works Director 515-967-5136

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

City Offices will not be open on the following dates: NEW YEAR'S: 1/1

The Altoona Public Library will not be open on the following dates: NEW YEAR'S: 12/31 and 1/1

*Please note that trash collection is delayed one day the weeks of Christmas and New Year's Day because of the holidays.



The Compost It! program's winter collection will occur on your regular collection day Jan. 2 and 3, 2024 (delayed one day this week due to the holiday) and Jan. 8 and 9, 2024. Live Christmas tree pick-up is included during this time. Just set your tree out before 6 AM on your regular collection day with one Compost It! sticker attached. When you set it at the curb, the sticker is the only decoration your tree can have. All ornaments, lights, and wires need to be removed. Wreaths and garlands are not accepted.

WINTER TRASH & RECYCLING CART PLACEMENT

Please remember that your garbage and recycling carts must be accessible 18 inches from the curb. Your clean driveway approach may be the best option during heavy snow times.

Please do NOT place your cart on city streets. City snowplows cannot clear snow properly when carts are placed on city streets. This is especially true in cul-de-sacs which are impossible to plow when carts are placed in the road.

POND SAFETY

Please limit your winter recreation at city ponds to fishing from the shore. Ice skating is permitted at the rink the Iowa Wild sponsors and sets up at Ironwood Park. Please see the city's website or social media accounts for the latest skating season announcement and rink information.

CITY TRAILS IN WINTER

The City of Altoona does clear the snow off of the trails during winter. However, we do not treat the trails with salt or sand. The trails are cleared last, following the city facilities' sidewalks and parking lots. Please enjoy the trails but be cautious of the weather conditions.

HOME IMPROVEMENT ASSISTANCE

Funding is available for Altoona homeowners to participate in the Metro Home Improvement Program. This program is administered through the City of West Des Moines, and funded by local communities and the Polk Count Housing Trust Fund. It provides funding for eligible homeowners to fix code violations in their home or fund other home repairs. To learn more or to apply, visit the City of West Des Moines' website by scanning the QR code in this newsletter.



WE NEED YOUR EYES!

The City of Altoona relies on our residents to let staff know of safety concerns created by weather conditions, snow removal operations, water main breaks, potholes, etc. If you have a concern, please visit our website to fill out a concern form or contact City Hall at 967-5136 (Monday—Friday; 8am—4:30pm) or 710-7449 (during off hours and weekends).



Wishing you a happy holiday season from the City of Altoona!





Leading the Way

Serving a diverse Central Iowa community, Polk County is among the nation's most innovative public institutions. We bring together creative leaders, collaborative organizations and key resources to empower our communities and make life better for all people in Polk County.

















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515-286-3160

515-286-3200 DIVERSITY, EQUITY INCLUISON, ACCESSIBILITY 515-286-3624

LAW ENFORGMENT 515-286-3160 (NON EMERGENCY) 515-286-3306 /BOATS/SNOWMOBILE

515-286-3670



NORTH/EAST SIDE HIGHLIGHTS

Polk County Celebrates Four Mile Elementary Playground Ribbon Cutting

The start of the school year brought with it a new state-of-the-art playground for students at Four Mile elementary in Pleasant Hill. A ribbon cutting was held for an excited student population at the new facility. Funding from Polk County and Prairie Meadows helped the Southeast Polk school district pay for the new all-accessible playground equipment and surfacing.



Mediacom Community Stadium Opens with Funding Assistance from Polk County

The growing Drake University area added another feature to benefit the community with the opening of the Mediacom Community Stadium. A ribbon cutting was held in October featuring Des Moines Public Schools, Drake University, Polk County and other funders who helped make the project possible.

The new \$24 million stadium will be home to Drake Soccer as well as serve as the home field for Roosevelt, Lincoln, Hoover and North High Schools.



River Clean-Ups Held to Promote River & Stream Water Quality and Safety

More than 62,000 pounds of trash were removed from local waterways this summer thanks to volunteers participating in multiple clean-up days as part of the Iowa Rivers Revival Service Squad clean-up program. Polk County is spending \$250,000 for the 3-year, volunteer clean-up effort. The service squad, organized by Iowa Rivers Revival, will help clean 250 miles of shorelines in Polk County, including the Four Mile watershed between Ankeny and Pleasant Hill. Be on the lookout for more volunteer efforts next year.



Renovated Field at Doanes Park in Pleasant Hill Benefits S.E. Polk Little League

The summer season got off to a good start for Southeast Polk Little League thanks to some help from Polk County.

A Community Development Grant helped fund resurfacing of the infield at one of the baseball fields at Doanes Park in Pleasant Hill. The league has grown in popularity as it has added more than 200 players since 2014. A trend that is certain to continue with this new updated facility.



DECADES in Altoona

Wingfield appreciates the community feel.

Sonya Wingfield has lived in Altoona for more than a couple of decades.

She moved to town in April of 2000 and has lived in the same home ever since.

"I chose Altoona because I grew up in east Des Moines, and my family lives in this area, too," she shares. "I love the location of my home because I live on one of the many trails in Altoona."

Wingfield also enjoys that she's within walking distance of the Altoona Public Library, the Altoona Campus, the public swimming pool and HyVee, the grocery store she frequents.

"I love the fact that Altoona has a small-town feel with big amenities like Adventureland and Prairie

Meadows," she says.

Wingfield adds that not only has she lived in Altoona for a long time, she's also worked in town for most of her financial career. Most recently, she works from home as a mortgage loan officer.

"I have had the pleasure of building relationships with local Realtors and new homebuyers in this community," she says.

Her roots in Altoona run even deeper as both her children graduated from Southeast Polk. There, her son was on the drumline and her daughter was a cheerleader.

Wingfield is also active with the business community in Altoona as she's been a member of the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce throughout her career.



Sonya Wingfield, center, pictured with her son, Tony, his wife, Natalie, and her two grandkids, has strong ties to the Altoona community professionally and personally.

LIBRARY

ALTOONA Public Library news

Adult programming - Ages 18 and older

Puzzle and Game Swap, Saturday, Jan. 6 from 1-4 p.m. Are your puzzles and games becoming ho-hum? Swap them out. For every item you bring, receive a voucher to choose one new to you. If a puzzle is missing more than three pieces, please do not swap. If there are one to two pieces missing, please mark the box. Drop off is during regular library hours Dec. 29 through Jan. 5, swaps for voucher holders run 1-3 p.m. From 3-4 p.m., the general public is welcome to visit, receive two vouchers and choose items. Adults 18 and older. Registration required.

Self-Defense Basics, Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 6-8 p.m. Join us as Officer Blaine Shutts from the Altoona Police Department walks through the basics of self-defense and how to best protect ourselves in everyday life. Adults 18 and older. Registration required.

Explore VR, Tuesday, Jan. 23 from 6:30-8 p.m. Have you ever wanted to experience the wonders of virtual reality? Come test our brandnew Oculus Quest VR headsets. We'll have games and more to explore. Adults 18 and older. Registration required.

Children's Programming

LEGO Club, Tuesday, Jan. 9 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. or Wednesday, Jan. 31 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Come to the library to build a LEGO masterpiece. We will supply the LEGOs; you bring the creativity. Grades K-6. Registration required.

After School BINGO, Wednesday, Jan. 10 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Stop by the library to play BINGO and win books or other cool prizes. Grades K-6. No registration required.

Crafternoon, Thursday, Jan. 18 from 4-5 p.m. Stop by the Children's Room to make a quick craft. Available while supplies last. Grades PreK-6. No registration required.

Teen Programming

Winter Spa-ctacular, Monday, Jan. 8 from 6-7 p.m. Beat the winter blahs and treat yourself to a new handmade lip balm, bath fizzies, and sugar scrubs. Grades 6-12. Registration required.

Oops, I Arted, Thursday, Jan. 18 from 6-7 p.m. Everybody arts, so come art with friends. This month, we'll tackle hand lettering, how it's different from calligraphy, and how you can use it in art. Then we'll use our new skills to design a bookmark. Grades 6-12. Registration required.

Bluey Minute to Win It, Monday, Jan. 29 from 6-7 p.m. For real life, test your skills in games like Nice Parking Spot, Keepy Uppy, I Spilled Mah Beans, and Wackadoo! Grades 6-12. Registration required.

To find a complete list of events and to register, visit our website at altoonalibrary.com and click on the Upcoming Events tab.



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Contact Jolene Goodman, sales manager, at jolene@iowalivingmagazines.com

A NEW start for relationships

How are your relationships these days? Think about it, because relationships matter. A Harvard study that followed individuals for almost 80 years revealed that embracing community helps us live longer and be happier. It was found that, "Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives. Those ties protect people from life's discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes."



Relationships matter. And, so, naturally, we desire better relationships with our spouse, kids, parents, friends and co-workers. Why then are relationships so hard? Why do some people seem to have advanced degrees in "getting under your skin" and professional skills in "driving you crazy"? Why is it so hard to be present and patient?

Relationships are complicated because they involve two flawed people: two people who have been hurt, who want things their own way, and who have learned unhealthy ways of relating.

For better or worse, we primarily learn how to relate to others within the context of our family of origin. We subconsciously learn what to do with feelings, how to handle conflict, and what to do with anger and disappointment from the environment around us. Through those growing up years, we learn some great things and some not-so-great things about relationships.

When we begin to follow Jesus, we become part of a new family — the Family of God. And it is within that new family that Jesus helps us unlearn unhealthy patterns of relationship and He grows within us new ways of relating to each other.

When you look at Jesus' core teaching, you'll find Him again and again retraining his followers how to have healthy, life-giving relationships. He instructs his followers about conflict resolution, dealing with anger, setting healthy boundaries, and loving those who think differently than you. Jesus knew what we know: relationships matter and relationships can be hard.

I have heard it said, "Jesus may be in your heart, but grandpa is in your bones." In other words, just because you trust and follow Jesus, doesn't mean you automatically forget those ways of relationship you learned growing up. Thus, as we follow Jesus, we need Him to set us free from unhealthy patterns and train us in new ways of relationships.

If you want better relationships, come to Jesus. Study His teaching, ask for forgiveness, get involved in a church, invite Him to lead you. Jesus is the best teacher and the One who can rescue you from your past. Jesus cares deeply about your relationships and wants to give you hope, peace and a new start.

Information provided by Pastor Nathan Anenson, Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1701 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-4818.





MAKE 'eggstra' special holiday memories

(Family Features) Creating memorable moments and special meals with friends and family during the holiday season doesn't have to be overwhelming. While these festivities are often a favorite moment each year, the planning and preparation can be a bear for hosts. To help take some stress out of hosting duties, start with what you likely already have on hand, like eggs.

Whether it's served as an appetizer or light dessert, this savorywith-a-touch-of-sweet recipe can become part of your family's most cherished traditions, made possible by eggs. Remember, all it takes is the egg carton already in the refrigerator to be the "host or hostess with the most-est" and make memories with those who matter most.

Discover more benefits and recipes that go beyond eggspectations at IncredibleEgg.org/invaluableegg. ■

Popovers with cranberry butter

Recipe courtesy of Shereen Pavlides (@ CookingwithShereen) on behalf of the American Egg Board Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 45-50 minutes Yield: 6 popovers

POPOVERS:

- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 1/3 cups whole milk
- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons avocado or vegetable oil
- nonstick cooking spray

CRANBERRY BUTTER:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons cranberry sauce
- 1 pinch salt
- To make popovers: In large bowl, whisk flour, salt, milk and eggs until silky smooth. Add oil and whisk to combine. Transfer to pourable pitcher, cover and refrigerate at least six hours, or overnight.
- Heat oven to 375 F.
- Place 6-cup popover pan in oven 10 minutes.



- · Remove pan and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Stir batter, divide and pour into cups, filling each
- Bake until puffed high and cooked through, 45-50
- To make cranberry butter: In medium bowl, mix butter, cranberry sauce and salt until well
- Remove popovers from oven and serve with cranberry butter.



Frequently clean

and disinfect objects

and surfaces

A CENTURY OF CARING CALL FOR A SAME-DAY APPOINTMENT OR GO TO URGENT CARE FOR: Vomiting or diarrhea · Fever or flu-like symptoms · Rash or other skin irritations CALL TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR PROVIDER FOR: Runny nose · Cough or colds · Sore throat · Shots and vaccinations Scan the QR to

> find our urgent and primary care

locations and hours.

Cough or sneeze

into your elbow.

NOT your hand.

Stay home when

you're feeling ill.

BUY before selling or sell before buying?

What to consider when purchasing your next home

Are you growing out of your current home or looking to downsize? If so, you're probably wondering whether to sell your current home before or after you buy your new home.



There are pros and cons to consider for both options before deciding which is best for you. These include:

- · Your financial situation and financing options
 - · Current housing market conditions
 - Your appetite for risk

Buying before selling

Here are a few options to keep in mind to help balance the sale of your current home and the closing of your new home:

• Include a contingency clause in your agreement with the seller. This will require that, for your offer to close, your current home must sell. This is also called a "subject to sale" agreement. With this agreement, you run the risk of another buyer swooping in ready to buy the home with no contingency.

- Own both homes at the same time. If you have the funds to finance the down payment of a new home while also meeting payments on your current home until it sells, owning both for a short time may be the best route.
- Get a bridge loan. Bridge loans are secured by the equity you have in your current home and can help pay off your mortgage, pay for closing costs and put a down payment on your new home. Once your home is sold, the loan is paid off from the net proceeds from the sale. Work with your lender to learn if you qualify for a bridge loan.

Selling before buying

Many homeowners sell their homes before buying a new one. There are several advantages to this approach:

• Selling first often provides buyers with the

cash they need for a down payment on their new

- There's no risk of having to make two house payments for a period of time.
- Financing the new home is often less complicated when the home buyer doesn't have an existing mortgage.

Work with a knowledgeable lender

No matter which route you choose, it's important you work with a knowledgeable lender who can demonstrate which options are best for you and your situation. Understanding the housing market and your options upfront will lead to a smoother process for everyone involved. It will make the process of selling your home and buying a new one much less stressful and more fun, as it should be.

Information provided by Lori Slings, Bankers Trust, NMLS ID: 406021, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-245-5624, Islings@bankerstrust.com, BankersTrust. com/LSlings, Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.



Your Mortgage Professional

For 105+ years, customers have counted on Bankers Trust to help meet their financial needs. The Bankers Trust mortgage team has a variety of loan products to meet your needs, including:

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- Rehab loans

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Lori Slings

VP, Mortgage Loan Originator NMLS ID#: 406021 3820 8th St. SW, Altoona LSlings@BankersTrust.com

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BANKING | LENDING | WEALTH MANAGEMENT





EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations.

Iowa State Fair Flea Market

Jan. 6-7

3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines www.iowastatefairgrounds.org/ event-calendar

Find all sorts of goods from antiques, home decor, jewelry and everything in between. This flea market is held each month from January to June and September to December at the Varied Industries Building.

Miracle on 86th Street

Through Jan. 8 Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park, 3600 86th St., Urbandale

Bundle up this winter and stroll through the Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park. The park features a large custom-built train, largerthan-life ornamental displays, an ice-skating rink, and holiday-themed events. The park is lit with more than 50,000 holiday lights and special events will be held there all season

Square Dance Lessons

Sunday nights starting Jan. 4, 6:30 p.m.

Douglas Avenue Presbyterian Church, 4601 Douglas Ave., **Des Moines**

www.ankenysquares.com

Ankeny Square Dance Club is sponsoring Square Dance Lessons. Cost is \$20 per person for the entire session, accepted at the third lesson. Attend with or without a dance partner. You'll learn the calls, one call at a time, taught by a caller (instructor)



and volunteers. For more information, call Sandy Townsend, 515-291-2624.

The Winter Wonderpalace

Raccoon River Nature Lodge, 2202 Park Drive, West Des Moines

The ninth installment of The Winter Wonderpalace allows you to take your little one on a magic winter adventure, where they get the chance to meet four storybook characters inside the Raccoon River Nature Lodge.



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 waukee.org/familyfest.



EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations.

CITYVIEW's Fire and Ice

Jan. 20

Historic Valley Junction, 137 Fifth St., West Des Moines fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com

Fire and Ice is a hockeythemed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues. With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area.



Living Well Classes: Overcoming Anxiety or Depression

Orientation: Thursday, Jan. 18, 7 p.m. Ankeny First United Methodist Church Christian Life Center, 710 N.E. 36th St., Ankeny

Two separate Living Well Classes: Overcoming Anxiety or Depression will be held for eight weeks, Thursdays, Jan. 25 through March 14 from 7-8:30 p.m. Classes are confidential and supportive. For information, call Jim White at 515-313-3701 or email jcjlwhite@live.com.



HOLIDAY LIGHTS

- Jolly Holiday Lights, Adventureland Park, 3300 Adventureland Drive, Altoona, www.jollyholidaylights.org
- Gingerbread Lane, S.E. Richland Court, Ankeny, Facebook: Gingerbread Lane Ankeny, IA
- Prairie Ridge Church, 825 N.W. 36th St., Ankeny, www.ridgelife.org
- Winter Wonderlights, Uptown Ankeny, 715 W. First St., Ankeny, www.uptownankeny.org
- Winter Wonderscape, Reiman Gardens, 1407 University Blvd., Ames, www.reimangardens.com
- Beaverdale, Ashby and Wallace avenues near Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, www.beaverdale.org
- Dogtown Lights, University Avenue between 23rd and 25th streets in Des Moines' Drake neighborhood, Facebook @ Dogtown Business and **Entertainment District**
- First Church of the Open Bible, 2200 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, www.firstchurch.org
- Miracle on 86th Street, 3600 86th St., Urbandale, www.urbandale.org
- Santa's Rock N Lights, Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale, www.santasrocknlights.com
- Historic Valley Junction, Fifth Street, West Des Moines, www.valleyjunction.com
- Lights in the Heights, Franklin Avenue, Marylynn Drive, 72nd Street, and other streets in Windsor Heights, www.windsorheightsfoundation.org ■

NEWS BRIEF

POINSETTIA purchase



Rylie Pardekooper, a DMACC criminal justice student from Altoona, holds a specialty poinsettia that caught her eye during the DMACC Horticulture Club's Annual Poinsettia Sale on Nov. 16 in the Building 5 Student Center at the DMACC Ankeny Campus. Students in the DMACC Horticulture Club raised approximately 300 poinsettia plants for this year's two-day sale, including seven different cultivated varieties. Photo courtesy of Lisa Schmitz for DMACC. ■



BONDURANT-FARRAR

Join our team as a Special **Education Paraeducator!**

Immediate Openings Available:

Our school district is seeking dedicated individuals to serve as Special Education Paraeducators. This is your opportunity to be a part of a supportive team and positively impact the educational journey of students who need it the most.

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- Support students with diverse learning needs
- Provide classroom and one-on-one assistance
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- Collaborate with teachers and other professionals

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- Schedule aligns with student academic calendar
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Bondurant, IA 50035 Phone: 515-967-7819

Online: www.bfschools.org/careers

EDUCATION By T.K. West

MEET Jake Bartels

Supporting students and staff in his role as principal.

Jake Bartels graduated from Southeast Polk High School in 1996 before attending the University of Northern Iowa where he majored in social studies education. He began teaching in 2002 at Van Meter. After three years there, he accepted a position teaching social studies at Southeast Polk High School. He says he decided to return to his alma mater because he was excited to teach in the same community and school where he grew up.



Jake Bartels is the principal of Runnells Elementary School.

coached football

Bartels also

and track before becoming the associate principal and activities director of the junior high school in 2015. In the summer of 2023, he was hired as the principal of Runnells Elementary School.

"I love the support that our community provides to our schools. I also love working in the same district as my wife, Christy (she is a teacher librarian at Delaware, Four Mile and Altoona elementaries), as well as the district that my children attend," Bartels says. "There is something special about living and working in the community that you live in."

For Bartels, a typical day usually begins between 7 and 7:15 a.m. Many mornings he attends various meetings starting at 8 a.m., but once the students arrive, he likes to be outside to greet them as they get off the bus and as parents drop them off. During the school day, he tries to support teachers and students by helping in any way he can, including with lunch duty, getting outside during recess and more. He concludes his day by helping with parent pickup or bus duty followed by working in his office.

"We have the best staff, students and parents that really make my job fun and exciting every day," Bartels says. "The biggest reward is seeing students succeed both academically and socially at school."

When not teaching, Bartels' favorite thing to do is spend time with his family. They can often be found cheering on the Rams or attending his children's sporting events. They can also be found working on their acreage in Runnells.

CITYVIEW'S WINTER EVENT IS BACK!



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By Dr. Kari Swain

SUPPORT your natural detoxification system

As we think about a new year, many people make resolutions involving their health. We are also bombarded with advertising for detoxes and cleanses. Many of these products are filled with unhealthy ingredients and chemicals, require harmful restriction of nutrient intake, and damage our body's innate digestion process. While these types of products are not the answer, detoxification is an essential process for optimal health and body function.

Toxins can contribute to a wide range of conditions, including stuffy head, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, gastrointestinal problems, cravings and weight gain, reduced mental clarity and low libido. To detox safely and effectively, try these things to support your body's natural detoxification system: sweat, hydrate, eliminate alcohol, and cut out sugar and processed foods. Also:

- Get adjusted. Specific spinal adjustments remove interferences to the nervous system and support optimal functioning of the whole body.
- Do a healthy cleanse. A quality detoxification program will support your major organ systems with vitamins, minerals and other nutrients and should be focused on purifying, nourishing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, not just rapid, short-term weight loss. A program that allows you to eat whole foods, specifically a wide range of fruits and vegetables, is safe and helps give your body the energy it needs to stimulate the digestive organs. You should consult a health practitioner before beginning any type of detoxification program.

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

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HEALTH

By Jacob Dickey

MANAGING holiday emotions

Like clockwork, we once again find ourselves in the thick of the holiday season. It's no secret that this time of year is meant to be filled with joy and thankfulness, but often left unsaid is the anxiety and fog that arrives with expectation and

We are currently in a loneliness epidemic. Knowing what those around us are working through is hard unless we reach out. While it can be stressful, don't be afraid to call someone or seek a connection.

Here are some useful tools to remember when interacting with stressors (people) this year:

- **Breathing** Collect your thoughts, control your reactions.
- Distancing Seek out another room, go for a walk.
- Communication Speak up when in need.
- Exit strategy Come with a plan for a quick exit.

It's important to remember there is no perfect Christmas or Kwanzaa. There is no perfect Hanukkah, Winter Solstice, Thanksgiving, or New Year Celebration. All we can do is make the best of our situations and laugh off the rest as we work towards tomorrow.

Information provided by Jacob Dickey, intern, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, dickey@ sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

GRIEF during the holidays

The holidays are in full swing, and, for many, this is a season of joyful gathering with friends and family. As many are enjoying the togetherness of the holidays, just as many find the holidays to be filled with stress, pain and loss. If you are in the second category, please know you are not alone. You don't need to pretend to love this season, and it is OK to feel sadness and longing for a different circumstance

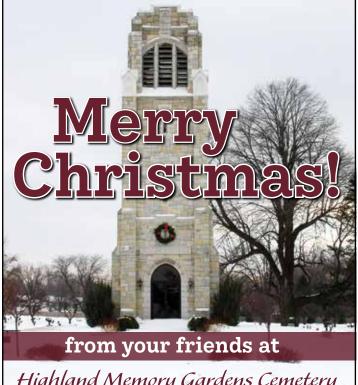


when the world is loud with celebration. If you are grieving the loss of someone you love this season, here are a few things that may help.

- Let go of expectations. Allow yourself to do what brings comfort and nourishes you, which might not necessarily be what has always been done - or what you think has to be done.
- Seek a balance between times of quiet and times with others solitude is good and healthy; isolation is not.
- Allow yourself to connect with others who are hurting. Sharing your sorrow with others who understand can bring comfort and peace.
- Choose generosity and serving others. Helping others heals both the giver and the receiver.

May healing, hope and peace be yours through this holiday season. Give your family the gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs in advance. ■

Information provided by Tosha Edmundson, Family Services Representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.



Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery

One NE 60th Avenue, Des Moines, IA, 50313 Located on 2nd Avenue, 1 mile north of I-35/80 515-289-2230 | www.highlandmemorygardens.com

By Ashley Powell

ELEVATE your wellness

Unlock the full potential of CBD and THC with the revolutionary

water-soluble format. This cutting-edge delivery system maximizes bioavailability, ensuring rapid absorption and heightened effectiveness. Unlike traditional methods, water-soluble cannabinoids offer a more efficient way for the body to absorb these compounds, leading to enhanced therapeutic benefits. CBD, known for its non-psychoactive properties, delivers holistic relief from various conditions such as chronic pain, inflammation and anxiety. When



combined with THC, the psychoactive counterpart, the duo can create a synergistic effect known as the "entourage effect." This collaboration can provide a more comprehensive range of therapeutic benefits, catering to a broader spectrum of wellness needs. The water-soluble formulation takes these advantages a step further, offering a convenient and potent solution. It allows for precise dosing, making it easier to customize and control intake. Moreover, the quicker onset of action ensures faster relief, making it an ideal choice for those seeking immediate results. Additionally, the watersoluble format eliminates the need for carriers like oils or fats, enhancing the product's versatility. Experience a holistic approach that combines efficiency, precision and the powerful benefits of cannabinoids.

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. Sources: Cannabidiol and Cannabidiol Metabolites: Pharmacokinetics, Interaction with Food, and Influence on Liver Function. Nutrients 2022, 14, 2152. https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14102152



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THE BENEFITS of a faith-based community

What are the benefits of your spiritual health and wellness? Spiritual wellness can be just as important to our minds and bodies as physical and social wellness. Spiritual wellness can reduce anxiety, stress and depression as well as create an ability to respond well to life changes. In addition, spiritual care offers opportunities to form new friendships and bonds. The spiritual care that senior living communities provide is an important aspect to consider when looking for a community.



Many senior living communities, both non-faithbased and faith-based organizations, offer amenities such as restaurant-style dining, socialization opportunities, and quality care assistance with activities of daily living. Unlike non-faith-based senior living communities, faithbased communities also tend to the spiritual needs of their residents. Faith-based senior care communities differ by offering religious support and spiritual care. Many provide an onsite chaplain that offers one-on-one spiritual care services, weekly church services, bible studies, prayer meetings, hymn sings and so much more. The chaplain can also help families when they need someone to talk with and confide in - not to mention how much of an asset chaplains are to the entire staff working alongside these residents and their families.

When spiritual care is valued as an important part of daily living, the community is caring for the emotional wellbeing of not only their residents, but of the community as a whole. Spiritual care is a vital part of creating wholeness and healing. Our inner strength and mentality can promote and propel our physical strength and overall health.

Being a part of a faith-based community also offers the opportunity to build relationships with new neighbors and friends in the community who share similar beliefs. Spiritual care being onsite at a senior living community enables older adults to maintain a similar worship pattern and religious traditions they have experienced throughout their lives without having to drive anywhere or step foot off their community campus. Living in a community in which you share similar values can create a sense of familiarity and peace, which is beneficial with the stress that can come with the transition of aging and moving to a new home.

When you choose a faith-based community with a faith-based mission, you know the care you receive will keep spirituality in mind. Having a care team in place that understands and is willing to support your faithbased decisions can help you age successfully. And aging successfully is what we all want for everyone.

Information provided by Stephanie Proper, executive director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.

REFLECTING on a year of learning

This year has been nothing less than an incredible learning experience for me. I rarely give public speeches — and even less often am I asked to write something for publication.

This was all new to me... and where I'm comfortable leading a team in an industry I understand, this job asked that I take a deep dive into what a chamber of commerce truly holds as its purpose. We know the basic premise, and we



have a mission statement, but I wanted to know more. This is how it works and where we ended up:

We work to define our purpose for the coming year in our annual board retreat, where the incoming chamber president leads the incoming board of directors in a discussion about our general direction and specific goals. In 2023, we cleaned up some language in our charter, evaluated our current educational offerings, supported our staff in the most meaningful ways, ensured the financial viability of the Chamber continues to be strong, helped with the Olde Town revitalization effort, and strengthened the relationship between the chamber and city of Altoona staff and council.

As a chamber, we decided in May that it might be beneficial to learn more about some of the organizations in our communities that are providing needed services. The idea was, as a business organization, how can we most positively impact our community and thereby create a reciprocal positive effect for the businesses therein?

First, we visited Caring Hands Outreach in Altoona, an absolutely incredible organization and a masterclass in how to effectively run a business that provides community-based services. Their impact on our community is tremendously positive and lifts up our neighbors who struggle to afford some basic necessities/comforts.

We visited Starts Right Here, a small charter school for kids who have fallen out of the public school system. It helps kids find a home/ family/community for the education they need to achieve success in their lives. Many of them come from almost impossible situations much like the visionary Will Keeps, who started the school.

So, what does a chamber of commerce get from something like this? I think it's pretty simple. We're a community service organization, too. We are a business community, working together to raise up our members and help them find the greatest success possible. What better way to do that than know your community? We want to understand our leaders and help them succeed. We want to know the members of our community and provide them with needed services. We want to be aware of the struggles in our community and help to find solutions.

The 2022 and 2023 board of directors meetings have been great personal experiences for me. I told my wife, it's just me walking into a room full of people I look up to and have great respect for. I can't believe I was ever asked to lead such an amazing group of people.

Best regards to all and thank you for a wonderful year. ■

Information provided by Jared Vincent, 2023 Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce president, owner of Insurance Station, Inc.



OUT & ABOUT



A grand opening and ribbon cutting was held at the Edward Jones office of Lori Baldwin, financial advisor, on Dec. 11.



Betty Akers and Sarah Lindeman at the grand opening and ribbon cutting at the Edward Jones office of Lori Baldwin on Dec. 11.



Sue Morrison and Suzanne Runyon at the grand opening and ribbon cutting at the Edward Jones office of Lori Baldwin on Dec. 11.



Suzanne Runyon and Lori Baldwin at the grand opening and ribbon cutting at the Edward Jones office of Lori Baldwin on Dec. 11.



Lynda Gibson and Kristi Schmidt at the grand opening and ribbon cutting at the Edward Jones office of Lori Baldwin on Dec. 11.



Nina Clausen at the grand opening and ribbon cutting at the Edward Jones office of Lori Baldwin on Dec. 11.



Dr. Chris Reil and Dr. Jake Campbell at Perk Before Work hosted by SkinFusion FX on Dec. 5.



Angela Jones and Kyle Lee at Perk Before Work hosted by SkinFusion FX on Dec. 5.



Jacie Mitchell and Nikki Morgan at Perk Before Work hosted by SkinFusion FX on Dec. 5.



Charlotte DePew, Mark Vander Tuig and Carson Odle at Perk Before Work hosted by SkinFusion FX on Dec. 5.



Linda Lawson and Dr. Chris Reil at Perk Before Work hosted by SkinFusion FX on Dec. 5.

OUT & ABOUT



Graber Carroll and Aly Carroll at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



Jace Carroll, Solomon Jones, Sully Jones and Graber Carroll at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



Dennis and Pennie Carroll with grandkids: Jagger, Andrés, Willow, Jace and Graber at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



The Pennie Carroll and Associates team at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



Camryn Ruddy and June Sweeney at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



Zach and Vancy Laird with their kids at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



Vancy Laird, Lovelyn Laird and Lexy Baldwin at the Pennie Carroll and Associates annual Gingerbread House event.



Mary Simon and Twila Sheves at the Altoona Noon Networking Nov. 21 at Hy-Vee Grille.



Christine Clark and Stockton Harter at the Altoona Noon Networking Nov. 21 at Hy-Vee Grille.



Kelsey Redmond and Mark Vander Tuig at the Altoona Noon Networking Nov. 21 at Hy-Vee Grille.



Tim Guiter, Jake Campbell and Rick Kroger at the Altoona Noon Networking Nov. 21 at Hy-Vee Grille.



Kyle Lee and Carson Odle at the Altoona Noon Networking Nov. 21 at Hy-Vee Grille.

CLASSIFIEDS

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