Residents share their thoughts on the tradition of sending Christmas cards

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#### 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,

it became a chore. As such, I began to wonder if it had become tedious for others as well. Is this holiday practice as popular as it once was? Are people still typing up letters and hand-writing cards?

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. 🔳

han

#### SHANE GOODMAN

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# Special DELIVER

Residents share their thoughts on the tradition of sending Christmas cards

#### **By Chantel Boyd**

Those who remember the days before social media, when longdistance phone calls cost money and letter-writing was commonplace, likely remember lining fireplace mantels and shelves with Christmas cards they received. Often containing a thoughtful note or special message, the cards were a cherished piece of communication with family and friends. But, as with many other traditions, the practice of mailing Christmas cards has been usurped by modern technology. Many now depend on email messages, texting or a one-message-for-all post online. When it comes to Christmas cards, the population has fallen into two camps: those who still value giving and receiving them and those who consider the effort — and postage — not worth it.

A photo of Ethan, 8, and Carrie, 5, Karwoski, taken by Destri Andorf, is featured on the family's Christmas photo card.

#### FEATURE

#### **Embracing technology**

Beth Miller and her husband, Nathan, live in Bondurant with their two children, Oliver and Macie, and they are sending out Christmas cards as they have for the five years since moving to Bondurant.

When Beth and Nathan were growing up, photo collage cards were not the norm. Their families sent out traditional cards with updated family photos and Christmas letters inserted.

It wasn't until about a decade ago when online photo websites and apps like Shutterfly became more popular, and Beth opted to make the switch, while still keeping alive the family tradition of sending Christmas greetings.

"I have sent cards off and on since I moved out. But the photo-type cards started when I got married," she says.

Like many newlyweds, Beth wanted to keep her friends and family updated. She and Nathan send out cards after their family photos are done in the fall. They make sure to add a personal touch.

"We usually send a photo card. We also try to write a message on the back with updates," says Beth. "I enjoy Christmas cards because it's



Beth and Nathan Miller send out a photo card each year so friends and family can see how their children, Oliver and Macie, have grown over the course of the year.

a way to share pictures of the kids with friends and family we don't see often. It's also a way for me to update friends and family who don't have social media."

Though Beth has seen a dip in the number of cards her family receives, she says she will

continue with the tradition.

"I have noticed that we do not get as many cards back in the last couple of years, but it is OK," she says.

Beth says making her family Christmas photo cards is an easy task.



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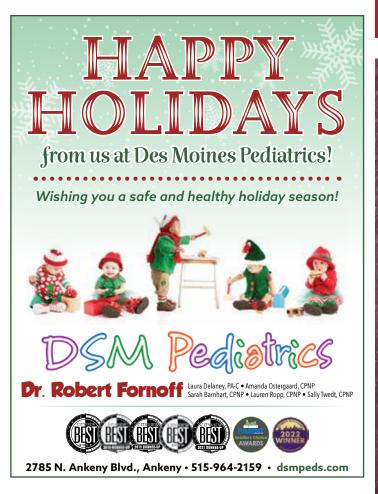
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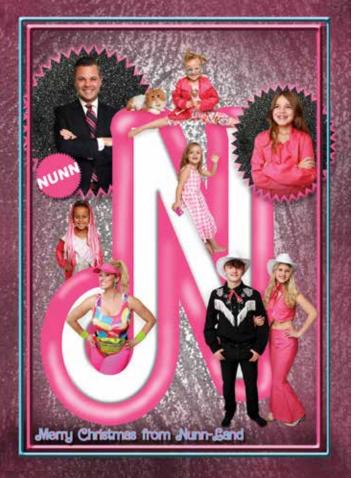


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#### **FEATURE**



This year's holiday card from the Zach and Kelly Nunn family features a "Barbie" movie theme. The family decides on the theme, makes or gathers costumes, and Kelly designs the poster look and takes the photos.

"It doesn't take much time as Shutterfly has several templates to choose from," she says.

As for the cards she receives, Beth says she is grateful for the fun updates from friends and family.

"I always enjoy mail and letters, so seeing what everyone is up to is fun," she says.

#### **Imaginative greetings**

You won't find Zach Nunn and his wife, Kelly, and their six children, Addisyn, 16; Canon, 13; Olympia, 8; Selwyn, 4; Jayna, 4; and Aliya, 3, posed in front of their Christmas tree for their annual Christmas photo. In fact, this year's card features the family in a "Barbie" movie theme. Other cards have ranged in theme from "Star Wars" to "The Addams Family" to "Harry Potter."

Nunn, who serves as Iowa's Third District Congressman, admits, "Our Christmas cards are a little different."

The family enjoys taking a modern and fun approach to their Christmas cards. Kelly does the work preparing for and taking the elaborate photos. She compiles the wardrobes, settings and plots. She then Photoshops the pictures and creates a card reminiscent of a movie theater poster.

#### **FEATURE**

"I was a photographer for 15 years, so I set up my portraits with lights and usually photograph each of us individually on a green screen," she says.

Kelly spends around 20 hours getting the outfits, doing the photos and designing the cards each year.

"We take great pride in making our Christmas cards unique and creative yearly," she says.

This has become a family tradition for the Nunns.

"As a family, we discuss ideas about what theme to do, and we all get into it," Kelly says. "Sometimes we have some of our outfits already, and sometimes we make them or go to Goodwill, etc."

Designing the cards once the photos are taken requires a few hours of work.

"I typically spend at least 10 hours working on the cards in Photoshop. It takes a lot of reworking and resizing to perfect it," says Kelly. "I try to make the back of the card match the front theme of the card. We like to include info about our family but keep it short and sweet so it's not too much for people to read. It's usually a few bullet points per family member."

Since the year 2020 was full of unfortunate events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme of the family's card was "A Series of Unfortunate Events."

"If you look closely, you can see the coronavirus in the background, 'canceled,' hurricanes and fires. (There were several hurricanes and wildfires that year, too). It was the year of unfortunate events," Kelly says.

With the Nunns having many people to send Christmas cards to, Kelly has recently given her hand a rest in handwriting labels.

"We send around 300 cards, so that takes several hours, too. However, I have switched to address labels instead of handwriting the addresses," she says.

Though their imaginative Christmas cards take a lot of time and effort, Kelly says it is worth it because people enjoy receiving them.

"Many people comment that they look forward to our card because it is unique and different," she says.

The Nunn children enjoy adding their creativity. Daughter Addisyn, 16, made her outfit for the "Barbie" card this year. "She is



The Nunn family confers on the theme for their annual holiday greeting card and one year decided on The Addams Family theme.

very creative. She has won several awards for her art," says Kelly.

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#### FEATURE

#### Saving time and money

Emily Karwoski, her husband, Matt, and their children Ethan, 8, and Carrie, 5, update their friends and family each year with new photos with their Christmas greetings.

Emily and Matt were wed 25 years ago and have sent out Christmas cards every year since. Emily has sent photos and cards, occasionally adding a letter to update loved ones on their year.

"In the beginning, I would write letters and cut and paste pictures into the Word document... little snippets from the stories I would share. Over time, it evolved to mostly just pictures," she says.

Emily and Matt enjoy the tradition because it connects them to their loved ones.

"We love seeing pictures from friends and family and sharing ours," says Emily.

Even though some people have given up the tradition of sending Christmas letters, photos or cards, Emily says technology has simplified the process.

"In recent years, it's gotten easier to make photo cards — so we just continue to do so," she says.

In their Christmas cards this year, Emily and Matt's children, Ethan and Carrie, are wearing Christmas pajamas, playing together amid Christmas decorations and reading a Christmas book. This year's family pictures were taken by Destri Andorf.

Technology has also had an impact on the annual Christmas family update letter, says Emily.

"I used to spend much more time going through the year and pulling



The Karwoski family's Christmas photo card features parents, kids and pets. Photos by Destri Andorf

out things to write about in a letter," she says. "Now that we share more on social media, I don't worry so much about the updates and simplified it to just pictures and a few words."

Though the time spent on making Christmas greetings is less, the cost has gone up for the cards and postage, Emily says, adding she has found ways to save money.

"The photo cards are more expensive, but I usually order them during a Black Friday or post-Thanksgiving sale," she says. ■

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## **ROOTS** run deep

#### Bondurant farm offers Cibulas a lasting home.

Matt and Betsy Cibula's Bondurant farm gives them everything they dreamed of.

"We wanted to find a place outside of town where we could adventure a little," Betsy shares. "We knew we wanted animals and a farm-like experience. Matt grew up spending a lot of time on my grandparents' farm and wanted our own girls to experience similar types of memories. We also wanted space for an orchard and garden — something we could make our own."

They've done just that on their farm. The couple shares that their favorite part is having their animals, but they also love gardening, picking fruit from their orchard and gathering eggs from their flock of chickens.

"We wouldn't quite consider ourselves homesteaders, but we do enjoy finding ways to use what we have," Betsy says.

Recently, the Cibulas opened their farm — now known as The Little Farm on 46th — to the community.

"It's been so rewarding to see others experience a part of farm life, a less and less expected part of the Des Moines metro," the couple shares. "Neither one of us grew up on farms, and much of what we do has been an experiment and adventure, so it's always exciting to share that part with families within our community, whether it's gathering for goat yoga in the spring, pumpkins in the fall or fresh cut trees around Christmastime."

The couple shares they somewhat stumbled upon the decision to open the farm to the community.

"We both worked full time, and, just before the pandemic, Matt stepped away from 15 years of teaching to begin a new chapter," Betsy says. "The gift of a more flexible schedule allowed us to explore some of our interests more intentionally. We knew we wanted to make sure that whatever we did on our little farm, we would get something back in return. We decided to give goats a try, researched the breed and settled on Nigerian dwarf goats, a smaller breed of dairy goats."

The Cibulas now make things like goat milk body butter and soap. They also host events like goat yoga, which was a huge hit this last year.

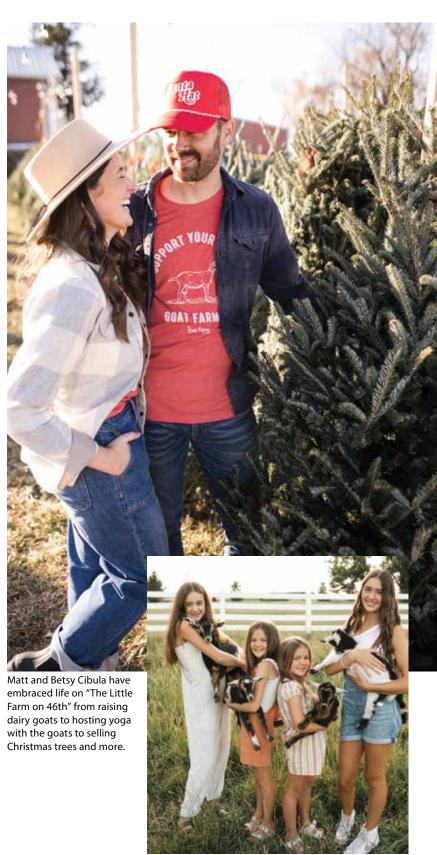
"Our farm really centers around allowing others to take a peek into what we do throughout the year," Betsy says.

She adds that the support from the community has been incredible. They've found that many people and businesses look out for each other.

"We love that about Bondurant," she says.

Betsy shares that, while it seems commonplace to move around every few years and continue looking for the "perfect" community, they've allowed their roots to grow in Bondurant, which has been fulfilling.

"We're so small compared to what most would consider a 'farm,' but our little space has forced us to be creative in how we do things and how we can partner with our community," she says. "We've come to embrace our size and like to say, 'a little goes a long way.' "■



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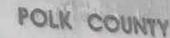
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## NORTH/EAST SIDE HIGHLIGHTS

#### 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 allaccessible 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.











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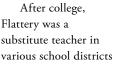
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#### EDUCATION By T.K. West

## **MEET** Megan Flattery

Balancing home and school can be a challenge.

Growing up in a military family, Megan Flattery moved every four years or so. After spending her elementary years on the East Coast, she attended middle school and high school in the Midwest, graduating from Newton Senior High School in 2005 before attending Grand View University where she graduated with a degree in elementary education in 2011.





Megan Flattery says one of the greatest rewards of teaching kindergarten is hearing that the kids enjoy school.

and taught preschool at the Science Center of Iowa before deciding to stay at home with her children. It wasn't until her youngest child started kindergarten that she decided to return to teaching. Now she teaches kindergarten for the Bondurant-Farrar Community School District.

"I really like the support I receive from my kindergarten team, the administration and the families. Bondurant is a very family-oriented district. The district as a whole has been very welcoming, and I feel at home at Morris Elementary," she says.

Flattery says she enjoys working with students at the kindergarten level because every day is an adventure, and there is never a dull moment. She also enjoys being able to be at the beginning of her students' journey through school.

She says the daily small reading groups are among her favorite parts of their schedule. She says it is a nice time to connect and focus on skills that enrich student academics.

"One challenge is having a healthy balance between home and school. I want to show up 100% for my colleagues, students and my own family, which can be overwhelming some days. The best rewards I have received are the positive emails and conversations from families that their child loves coming to school," Flattery says.

This school year, Flattery is most enjoying seeing the growth and development her students make in her classroom. She also is looking forward to strengthening her teaching skills. When not teaching, she enjoys spending time with her family. They enjoy being on the lake and traveling. ■

## News from the BONDURANT-FARRAR COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

December 2023

## 2023: A Yenr To Celebrate! #WeAreBondurantFarrar

Enjoy these fun facts and moments from 2023, highlighting the ways we've achieved so much together this year.

- We cheered on 170+ graduating seniors in May, with a graduation rate of 96.7%.
- We welcomed 180+ kindergarteners in August and are currently home to 2,775+ Bluejay students.
- We teamed up for exciting new partnerships, internships, and positions, with the goal being that each Bluejay graduates with a plan for their career and the educational experiences to support that choice.
- We're all about celebrating strong character and hard work! We threw numerous assemblies and recognized stellar students every month across our five schools.
- Learning is fun and exciting with a continued focus on innovation, STEM integration, and a 1:1 digital learning environment in grades 1-12.
- Thanks to our amazing community, our recent bond referendum passed with flying colors! We're able to continue providing top-notch educational experiences for Bluejay students through your support.
- In November, we said farewell and showed our appreciation to two outgoing board members and welcomed two new members. Our board is all about supporting students, staff, and our community, and we're grateful for their time, talents, and dedication.
- We added over 20 outstanding educators to our team in August, bringing our total to over 400 awesome Bluejay staff members.
- The summer of 2023 was a blast with over 20 school camps offered and 330+ students joining in on the fun.
- Our 7-12 activities and fine arts programs earned local and statewide awards! With 25+ programs and 1,700+ participants, we're as proud as we can be. Go Bluejays!
- We're fortunate to employ an amazing support staff! In a typical school day, an average of 1,705 student lunches are served and over 1,200 students are safely transported to and from school.

And that's just a glimpse of our 2023. We're buzzing with excitement for all that's in store for 2024!

Happy New Year, Bluejays!

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#### SENIOR By Stephanie Proper

## 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-faith-based and faithbased 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-onone 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 faith-based 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.



## December 2023

#### 'TIS THE SEASON FOR WINTER YARD WASTE COLLECTION

nnd

Mark your calendar for January 3 and January 10 for the winter yard waste season. Purchase a \$1.50 yard waste sticker at City Hall to dispose of live trees. Have leftover lawn clippings? You can put those on the curb during winter collection also.

#### SURVEY ALERT!

Everyone is encouraged to fill out the Parks, Trails, and Greenway Master Plan Survey. It covers various topics, including residents' favorite parks in Bondurant, opinions on trail expansion and connectivity, and thoughts on potential enhancements or additions to existing parks and trails. Find details on the City's website and social media feeds.

#### WHAT IS A SNOW ORDINANCE?

Are you new to Bondurant or need a refresher on the Bondurant Snow and Ice Control Policy? You are able to find all the information on the city's website. A snow ordinance requires all cars to be removed from public streets anytime there are more than two inches of snowfall. Snow ordinance details are typically published on the City's website and social media accounts. A press release is also sent to local news outlets.

#### CITY PARK IMPROVEMENTS ARE UNDERWAY!

Your patience, understanding, and continued support of this enhancement are appreciated. There has been a great amount of public input into this project. This is what the community has asked for, and we assure you the improvements will be spectacular. Visit the following website for more information: www.cityofbondurant.com/projects/pages/bondurant-citypark-renovation. It is time to sign up for project notifications, and, as updates are released, you will be the first to learn about them. Sign up at www.cityofbondurant.com/subscribe.

#### SEEKING MOVIES IN THE PARK SPONSORS.

The first movie to sponsor will be hosted on Sunday, June 16 in celebration of Father's Day. YOU can be the reason many make unforgettable experiences in 2024. We're screening Walt Disney's *The Game Plan* for all the sweet daddy/kiddo duos out there. It's the perfect way to celebrate summer with a FUN outing! Be a part of this magical evening by sponsoring the movie with a \$500 donation, which will cover the required licensing through SWANK. Call 515-630-6982 if interested.

#### **EVENTS:**

#### CITY HALL'S UPCOMING OFFICE CLOSURES

City Hall will close at noon on December 31 for the New Year's holiday and remain closed on January 1 reopening on January 2. Trash and recycling are not affected by the New Year's holiday.

#### **CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT**

Bondurant men and women would come together to play this classic card game. Register to participate in the tournament on **Sunday, January 7** at Reclaimed Rails Brewing Co. Check in will be at 12:30 PM and the game begins promptly at 1:00 PM. It costs \$5 per player. Bring your cards and boards with you. 1st place earns 55% of the pot, the runner-up earns 25% of the pot and the third in the running gets 20% of the pot.

Registration deadline is December 29 at 12pm.

#### **CONNECT WITH US...**

Did you know that our city entities have 11 social media sites offering information about what is happening in the city? Make sure you follow us! Also, a city and library newsletter can be sent to your email. Remember that the Bondurant Living Magazine publishes a City-specific spread sent to every resident's mailbox.

#### 8TH ANNUAL CHOWDER WINTER RIDE

Our town is all about traditions - the 8th Annual Chowder Winter Ride is just around the corner! Are you brave enough to try it? **Saturday, February 10**, check in at Reclaimed Rails Brewing Co. at 10 AM before the ride starts at 10:45 am.

#### **ENGAGE WITH US...**

Have you wanted to attend a public meeting at City Hall but needed to know when the meetings were or how to conduct yourself during a public meeting? Guides are being developed to help you. Find them on the City's website.

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

## **CITYVIEW'S WINTER EVENT IS BACK!**

# AN INTERACTIVE WINTER PUB CRAWL IN VALLEY JUNCTION

## SATURDAY, JAN. 20 • 1-4 P.M. BREAK THE WINTER BLUES, GET OUT AND HAVE FUN ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON IN VALLEY JUNCTION!

## FOR \$25 TICKET PRICE," YOU GET 10 TICKETS TO SAMPLE WINTER SPECIALTY DRINKS!



## **RECIPE** 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
- 4 large egg
- 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 3/4 full.
- Bake until puffed high and cooked through, 45-50 minutes.
- To make cranberry butter: In medium bowl, mix butter, cranberry sauce and salt until well combined.
- Remove popovers from oven and serve with cranberry butter.





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#### **NEWS BRIEF**

## FRESH dinner rolls

Chef Ryan Binney (center), who leads the DMACC Baking and Pastry Arts Program at the College's Newton Campus, is flanked by current DMACC Baking and Pastry Arts students (left to right) Christina Oakley of Des Moines, Cruz Castruita of Des Moines, Carter Bixby of Norwalk, and Pari McCaslin of Bondurant, a graduate of the Bondurant-Farrar Community School District, during order pick-up for the program's Fourth Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Roll Fundraiser. Students who complete the Iowa Culinary Institute® (ici®) at DMACC's Baking and Pastry Arts diploma program, which launched in 2020 and is offered exclusively at the DMACC Newton Campus, graduate as skilled baking artisans who are prepared to begin working or to continue on to earn a two-year culinary degree. The one-year program accepts new students every fall. To learn more, visit baking.dmacc.edu. Photo courtesy of Lisa Schmitz for DMACC. ■



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Call me, Jolene Goodman, on my cell at 515-326-0082. LET'S GET TOGETHER FOR A CUP OF COFFEE. MY TREAT.

#### COMMUNITY

## **NEW** mural unveiled at trailhead



A new nature-inspired mural by artist Drew Etienne was unveiled by the city of Bondurant at the Bondurant Emergency Services Building at the Bondurant Regional Trailhead on Monday, Dec. 18. The mural is on the south side of the building, facing the trailhead.

The Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) at the University of Iowa selected the city of Bondurant as one of two community partners for the 2023-24 academic year. Through this unique partnership, more than 100 faculty and students will collaborate with Bondurant officials to complete 15 community projects, ranging from museum studies to engineering to law. Through this process, Drew Etienne was selected to design a mural for the Bondurant Emergency Services building which is along the Chichaqua Valley Trail. Community input was offered during the Sept. 28, 2023, Bondurant Parks and Recreation Board meeting allowing public comment.

Drew Etienne, an accomplished artist with a master of fine arts degree from the University of Iowa, has intricately designed a mural that encapsulates the beauty of Iowa's natural landscape across all four seasons. The mural is intended to create a harmonious connection between the built environment and nature, fitting seamlessly into the current Bondurant Emergency Services Building, which is the site of the future Parks and Recreation Facility.

The unveiling ceremony marks the culmination of meticulous planning and design. Etienne's vision makes use of four distinct panels to showcase the changing seasons in Iowa — from the vibrant hues of autumn to the serene beauty of winter, the renewal of spring, and the warmth of summer.

Central to the mural's theme are native birds of Iowa, including the



redstart, the iconic blue jay paying homage to the Bondurant-Farrar blue jays, the elegant ruby-throated hummingbird, and the state bird of Iowa, the goldfinch. This avian focus not only highlights the rich diversity of Iowa's wildlife but also adds a local touch to the artwork.

As the Bondurant Emergency Services Building undergoes its transformation into a future Parks and Recreation Facility, the mural's seasonal motif and connection to Iowa's natural environment are expected to complement and enhance the surrounding space. The artwork will find its permanent home as the facility houses the parks and recreation offices, serving as a source of inspiration and appreciation for the community.

To learn more about artist Drew Etienne and explore his portfolio, visit http://drewetienne.com/. ■

#### **EVENTS IN THE AREA**

Be sure to check for cancelations.



Winter Chowder Ride Saturday, Feb. 10, 10:45 a.m. Check in at 10 a.m. Reclaimed Rails Brewing Co., 101 Main St. S.E., Bondurant

Enjoy a free, easy winter ride from Bondurant to Berwick and back on the Chichaqua Valley Trail (approximately 10 miles). Make sure to stop by Berwick Congregational Church to warm up. After the ride, savor a chowder lunch at Founders Irish Pub or partake in some chili at Reclaimed Rails. Lunch is free. You can enter to win a prize by submitting a selfie with the tag #2024ChowderRide (make sure the post is public). Provided by Bondurant Parks and Recreation. Registration link available at https://www. cityofbondurant.com/home/events/63141.



Cribbage Tournament Sunday, Jan. 7, 12:30 p.m. check in. Play starts at 1 p.m. Registration deadline is noon on Dec. 29

Reclaimed Rails Brewing Co., 101 Main St. S.E., Bondurant

This is a Bondurant tradition that dates back many years. Join in for \$5 per player. Play lasts up to three hours. Limited to 40 players. First place wins 55%, second gets 25%, and third receives 20% of the pot. Traditionally, they are provided, but bring your cards and board. Check in at 12:30 p.m., games start at 1 p.m. Bondurant Parks and Recreation staff will facilitate the tournament and keep track of wins. Facebook Event Page is https://fb.me/e/6rGRcFV64.



#### **Registration open for** Little League baseball and softball

Registration for Little League baseball and softball season is online only. Register at www. Bondurantlittleleague.org. Registrations by Jan. 25 are \$20 off. Deadline to register for the 2024 season is Feb. 15. Payment is due at registration.

Coaches and volunteers are needed. If you're interested in volunteer opportunities, contact president@ bondurantlittleleague.org or info@ bondurantlittleleague.org.

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Bondurant *Living* magazine 24

#### **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/eventcalendar

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.





#### 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.

#### **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. ■





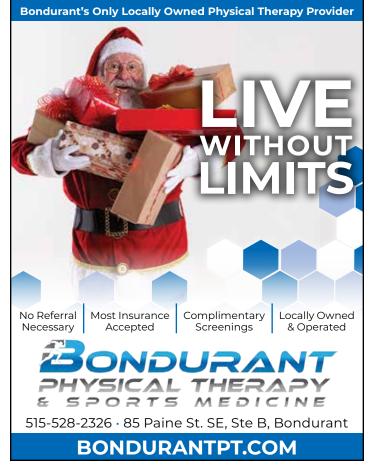
'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the town, eighty percent of the men were still wandering around. With money in their pockets and a glaze in their eyes, they were in search of the great surprise. Rubies & Emeralds, Diamonds & Gold, these are the gifts that never grow old. Where, oh where, can that solution be? Right down the street at *Dave's Jewelry*.

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#### HEALTH By Dr. Steven Neville

## TREATING dry mouth

Dry mouth is a common problem dental professionals hear about every day from patients. Dry mouth can make it hard for you to swallow, cause bad breath, and contribute to cavities. These are a few of the many factors that lead to dry mouth: medications, Sjogren's syndrom, diabetes, uncontrolled high blood pressure and dehydration.



If you think medication could be causing your dry mouth, talk to your physician before stopping any medication.

You can treat dry mouth at home by chewing sugarless gum to stimulate salivary flow, avoid caffeinated drinks, and always carry water with you.

A dental professional may recommend that you incorporate more fluoride into your routine to help combat cavities. Also, having a dry mouth can leave you more susceptible to oral infections and fungus, so an oral rinse can be prescribed. Next time you visit the dentist, let us know if you have dry mouth so that, together, we can create a treatment plan just for you.

Information provided by Dr. Steven Neville, Bondurant Family Dentistry, 100 Second St. N.E., Bondurant, 515-967-4002.

#### HEALTH

#### By Dr. Emily Hogle

## **PROTECT** your Achilles

The Achilles tendon can be susceptible to injuries that can hinder mobility and cause discomfort of the lower leg and foot. To help limit Achilles tendon-related issues, incorporating a few preventive measures into your routine can make a difference.



Begin with a thorough warm up before any physical activity. Dynamic stretches and gentle exercises prepare the Achilles tendon for the demands of movement. Strengthening exercises targeting the

calf muscles are equally important. These exercises contribute to the overall resilience of the Achilles complex.

Footwear matters. Ensure that your shoes provide proper support and cushioning, especially during activities that exert pressure on the Achilles tendon. Choose footwear tailored to the specific demands of your chosen exercise, whether it's running, sports or casual walking.

Diversify your exercise routine. Engage in cross training to distribute the workload across different muscle groups, preventing overuse of the Achilles tendon. Listen to your body, allowing sufficient rest between intense workouts to avoid strain and potential injuries.

To recap: Adding a thorough warm up, stretching exercises, strengthening exercises, wearing proper footwear, and diversifying your exercise routine can help prevent Achilles tendon injuries. If you have any questions or have issues with your feet/ankles, contact your physical therapist. ■

Information provided by Dr. Emily Hogle, PT, Bondurant Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine, 85 Paine St. S.E., Suite B, Bondurant, 515-528-2326.

#### 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 uncertainty.



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.

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HEALTH By Dr. Kari Swain **SUPPORT** your natural detoxification system

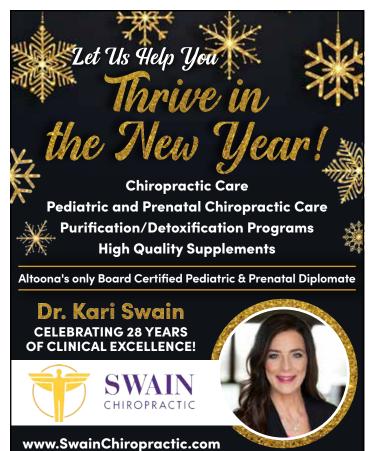
As we think about a new year, many people make resolutions involving their health. We are also bombarded with advertising for detoxes and cleanses. Many of these products are filled with unhealthy ingredients and chemicals, require harmful restriction of nutrient intake, and damage our body's innate 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.



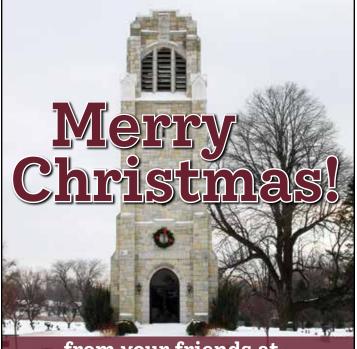
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Dr. Amanda Korth

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## HEALTH

By Dr. Amanda Korth

## **PRODUCING** more tears

## Q: I can't put drops in my eyes, am I cursed to always have dry eyes?

A: Dry eyes can be caused by having the wrong type of tears or not enough tears. They can often overlap and occur at the same time, making them extra difficult to get under control. Last month, we discussed light therapy for the wrong type of tears but what do you do if you don't have enough tears?



Not having enough tears can be caused by something as being dehydrated or being outside on a very windy day. This is what the latest medication for dry eyes can help treat. The intriguing part is it's a nasal spray. It's not to be sprayed into your sinuses, but it is sprayed on your nasal wall to stimulate the nerve that helps you produce more tears.

Another option to treat not having enough tears is punctal plugs where we keep your normal tears of your eye longer by decreasing the drainage for years by about 50%. I personally prefer to place the extended dissolving style of plugs as I like the drains for the eyes to be flushed two to three times per year.

Let us diagnose what type of dryness you have and come up with a plan on how to get to the core problem.  $\blacksquare$ 

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Korth, Prairie Vision Center of Bondurant, 87 Paine St. S.E., Suite 3, Bondurant, 515-267-7908.

## **BEFORE YOU GO** By Tosha Edmundson **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.

#### LIBRARY **By Chantel Phipps-Bucklin ADULTS** just want to have fun



Start the year off right by enjoying free programs at the Bondurant Community Library.

From low impact exercise classes to craft night, the library will be offering a variety of different programs for adults in the Bondurant community.

• Fit For Life! is an exercise program that is for everyone. Enjoy low impact strength, stretching and balancing exercises that only require lightweight dumbbells, an exercise band, a sturdy chair and water. There is no age requirement to join every Monday and Thursday morning at 8:30 am.

• Adult craft night is the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. Most supplies are provided so all you need to bring is yourself. Registration is required. If you would like to get notified as soon as registration opens, you can follow the library on Eventbrite. The events are also shared on our Facebook page.

• The library has TWO book discussion groups. On the second Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m., we get together to discuss our book of the month. On Jan. 9, we will be discussing "The Woman in the Library" by Sulari Gentill. The library has copies in regular print, large print and audio. Pick yours up today. Can't join us in person? We offer the opportunity to join via Zoom as well.

The library's second book discussion group is a little less formal and meets at Reclaimed Rails on the third Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. This group does not have a specific book to read each month. It is an opportunity for you to try craft beer, get some Mexican food and talk about any books that you have read recently. If you loved it or hated it, we want you to share. Just be prepared to leave with more books added to your "want to read" list.

• Want to learn how to keep your information safe in 2024? Come to the library on Thursday, Jan. 11 at 5:30 p.m. to hear how you can do this from a security specialist.

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## WHATEVER THE REASON WHATEVER THE SEASON





"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

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## FAITH By Mark Spencer CHRISTMAS treasure

As we unpack the twinkling lights, dust off cherished ornaments, and wrap presents with care, there's a deeper treasure that often gleams brighter than the tinsel on our trees — the treasure of the Christmas story itself.



In the midst of the holiday hustle, it's easy to get caught up in the glittering chaos of the season. Yet, let's take a moment to unwrap the true gem of Christmas — the story of a humble birth that

eternally altered the course of human history. In the little town of Bethlehem, the promised Messiah was born, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. As we reflect on this miraculous event, the words of Isaiah 9:6 come to life: "For to us, a child is born, to us, a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

This extraordinary event is not just a tale to be recounted but a treasure that transforms our lives. The Christmas story is a narrative of hope, love and divine intervention. It's a reminder that, in the quiet corners of our lives, within the ordinary, extraordinary things can happen.

This season invites us to ponder the timeless truths found in the biblical narrative. It's a call to revisit the familiar passages that tell of a God who loved the world so much that He sent His only Son. As we gather with loved ones, exchange gifts, and share in the warmth of festive meals, let's not forget the ultimate gift — the gift of salvation offered through Christ's birth.

The Christmas story is not confined to the pages of ancient scripture; it echoes through the ages, touching our lives today. It's a living treasure that invites us to embrace the message of peace on earth and goodwill toward all. In a world that often feels chaotic, the Christmas story provides a foundation of stability and a promise of everlasting peace.

As we trim our trees and decorate our homes, may we also warm our hearts with the enduring truths of the Christmas narrative. Let the love, joy and hope found in the birth of Jesus Christ be the brightest ornaments in our lives, reflecting a light that drives away the darkness around us.

This Christmas, let's unwrap the true treasures — the timeless message of God's love and the hope that arrived in a manger. Let's savor the profound beauty of the Christmas story and let its transformative power fuel our celebrations. May the essence of Christmas become an integral part of our traditions, weaving a pattern of faith, love and lasting joy. ■

Information provided by Mark Spencer, lead pastor, First Family Church Bondurant, mspencer@ffcblife.com, 515-587-5930.

#### CHAMBER By Shelby Hagan

## **VISION** and expectations for the coming year

Hello, Bondurant community. It is with immense honor and enthusiasm that I introduce myself as the newly appointed president of the Bondurant Chamber. I am privileged to have the opportunity to serve you and our dynamic community in this capacity.



As we embark on this journey together, I wanted to take a moment to share my vision and set forth the expectations for the coming year.

• Community-centric approach: My primary focus as president is to ensure that our chamber remains deeply rooted in the needs and aspirations of our community members. I am committed to fostering an inclusive environment that encourages dialogue, collaboration and mutual support among businesses, organizations and residents alike.

• Transparent communication: Open and effective communication is the cornerstone of any successful community. I pledge to keep you informed about chamber initiatives, events and opportunities through regular updates, newsletters and interactive forums. Your feedback and input will always be valued and encouraged.

• Advocacy for growth: A thriving business community is a catalyst for overall community prosperity. I will actively champion policies and initiatives that promote a conducive environment for businesses to flourish. This includes advocating for infrastructure improvements, access to resources, and policies that support economic development.

• Educational empowerment: Knowledge is the key to progress. To this end, I am committed to expanding our educational programs and workshops. These initiatives will equip our members with the skills, insights and tools needed to navigate the challenges and opportunities of today's rapidly evolving business landscape.

• Collaborative partnerships: Success is seldom achieved in isolation. I will work diligently to forge strategic partnerships with local organizations, governmental bodies and neighboring chambers. Together, we can leverage our collective resources and expertise for the betterment of our community.

• Engaging events and initiatives: Vibrant events and initiatives are the heartbeat of any dynamic community. Over the coming year, you can expect a diverse range of activities designed to facilitate networking, celebrate achievements, and foster a sense of belonging among our members.

I am genuinely excited about the potential and possibilities that lie ahead. Your involvement and support will be instrumental in realizing our collective vision for a prosperous and thriving community.

I am always eager to hear your thoughts, ideas and concerns. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time. Together, we will make this year a memorable and transformative one for the Bondurant Chamber and the community it serves.

Information provided by Shelby Hagan, Bondurant Chamber board president.



Bondurant Chamber of Commerce

## **OUT & ABOUT MEN'S CLUB Breakfast**

Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast was held at the Bondurant Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



George Oluson and Bob Gulling



Ben Bombela and Dale Wheeler



Sean Soyer, Brandon Rohlfsen and Bill Derickson



Tim Lundeen and Mayor Doug Elrod



Cathy Hanson, Charlotte Nelson and Brad Lackey



Dennis Alshouse and Mike Wiskus



Rich Frey and Jim Hall



Jeff Hanson, R.J. and Rylee Nelson



John Alshouse and George Hall



Leon Melton



Leonard Roovaart and Al Ihde

#### **OUT & ABOUT**



Nathan Anenson at the Bondurant Chamber's Cocktails and Conversation Dec. 14.



Ben and Kathy Fuller at the Bondurant Chamber's Cocktails and Conversation Dec. 14.



Kaylin Von Ahnen at the Bondurant Chamber's Cocktails and Conversation Dec. 14.



Lily Olson at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Ted Hall at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Kady Mantz at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Nicole Noble and Brielle at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Debbie Cochran, Sheena Cochran-Foster and Brayton Foster at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Anne Varner and Jack at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Bruce Cordes and Debbie Cochran at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Forrest Harmsen and Don Propst at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Ronni Williams at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Keith Varner and Sawyer at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.



Tiffany Tully and Ryder at the Bondurant Men's Club Breakfast held at the Legion Hall on Dec. 16.

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

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- 1. Quality Real Estate decisions can be made regardless the interest rate.
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- 3. Home prices continue to appreciate. Marry the home not the interest rate.
- 4. Shopping with a local lender helps you navigate affordability.
- 5. Call The PCA team that has been in the market mix for the past 20 years.

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