

INDIANOLA

JANUARY 2024

Living

MAGAZINE

Class ACT

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they continue to
expand their horizons
through learning**

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HELP! I ACCIDENTALLY HAD MY FIREARM IN MY LUGGAGE WHEN I WENT THROUGH AIRPORT SECURITY!

It happens. Sometimes law-abiding Iowans fail to carefully check their luggage and accidentally leave their firearm in their carry-on bag. What are the risks? Don't expect Iowa's Constitutional right to bear arms to protect you if you carry your firearm into the airport. Bringing a firearm into an airport terminal is a serious federal offense.

IF SOMEONE BRINGS A FIREARM INTO AN AIRPORT TERMINAL, THEY SHOULD EXPECT:

- **The Firearm Will Be Detected.** Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers screen passengers and belongings at airport security checkpoints. If a firearm is detected, TSA will notify law enforcement.
- **Local Law Enforcement and/or Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Will Investigate.** Expect to be detained, interviewed, and potentially miss your flight.
- **Criminal Charges Will Be Filed.** Expect charges under a City Ordinance. Additionally, bringing a firearm into an airport terminal without proper authorization is a federal offense. You may face federal criminal charges, resulting in fines, imprisonment, or both. The severity of the charges may depend on factors such as your intent, prior offenses, and other circumstances.
- **Civil Penalties May Be Assessed.** In addition to referral for criminal charges, expect federal civil penalties in varying amounts based on the circumstances. The penalties range from \$1,500 to \$5370 for an unloaded firearm to \$3,000-\$10,700 for a loaded firearm in your carry-on bag. A second offense will increase the penalty to \$10,700-\$14,950. Additionally, expect civil penalties if you don't follow TSA requirements in transporting the firearm/ammunition in checked luggage.
- **Loss of the Firearm:** Expect confiscation of your firearm at the Security Checkpoint and to potentially go through legal processes to retrieve it.
- **Loss of TSA PreCheck Status.** TSA PreCheck status suspension can last up to five years for a first offense and may be permanent for serious incidents or repeat offenses.



HOW TO AVOID THE CRIMINAL AND CIVIL IMPLICATIONS:

- **Do the Obvious: Check your bag.** Don't rely on your memory that your firearm and/or ammunition is not in your carry-on bag. It will take moments, will help you avoid missing your flight, and will avoid all other potential headaches.
- **Transport Your Firearm Legally.** You may transport only unloaded firearms as checked baggage in a securely locked, hard-sided container. Declare the firearm and all ammunition when checking in at the ticket counter. Only the passenger must retain the key or lock combination. If traveling internationally, prior to travel check the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website for restrictions.
- **Transport ammunition in checked luggage only.** Ammunition is prohibited in carry-on baggage. Magazines and ammunition clips, whether loaded or empty, must be securely boxed or included within the hard-sided case containing an unloaded firearm. Small arms ammunition (up to .75 caliber and shotgun shells of any caliber) must be boxed in packaging designed for ammunition and may be in the same hard-sided case as the unloaded firearm. Check with your airline for ammunition quantity limits.

Travelers are strongly encouraged to review and follow TSA guidelines regarding the transportation of firearms to avoid both civil penalties and potential legal consequences. Ignorance of the regulations is not typically accepted as a valid defense. Travelers should check for any updates to these laws, which are subject to change as new legislation is enacted. See <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/transporting-firearms-and-ammunition> for information.

IF YOU ARE SOMEONE WHO DID NOT TRANSPORT YOUR FIREARM PROPERLY, NOW FIND YOURSELF FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES AND/OR CIVIL PENALTIES, YOU SHOULD TALK WITH AN ATTORNEY.

Written by Randy Jackson



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WELCOME

WE NEVER stop learning

My father was one of the smartest people I have ever known. He seemed to know a little bit about everything, and if he didn't know about it, he wanted to learn. All of this came from a man who only had a formal education through eighth grade.

As a teenager, Dad started working full time to help care for his family, and then he was off to serve his country in Korea. When out of the military, he married and started his own family. Life moved along quickly, but he never stopped learning.

Meanwhile, Dad continually encouraged me to focus on my education. He supported me to go to college, and he inspired me to continue to learn throughout my life. "Once you have an education," he told me, "nobody can take that away from you." How true.

Most all of us recognize that life's lessons are taught both inside and outside of classrooms, but there is something satisfying about taking a formal class, earning a certificate or completing a degree. It's about having an end goal, finishing something you started, accomplishing a dream. And it doesn't always have to be about getting some initials behind your name.

Mary wanted to learn how to play the guitar, so she signed up for classes at the local community college.

Bob sold his newspaper while in his 50s and decided to go to law school. He continues to be a practicing attorney today.

Lyle retired as the president of a successful company and signed up for culinary classes.

Denny decided to pursue his dream of teaching and took night classes to earn his education degree while continuing in his current job.

And Gladys, well into her retirement years, continued to attend industry conferences and earned her formal sales training certification.

All of these friends of mine saw the value in continuing their education. In this month's cover story, you will discover how others have sought to continue their learning opportunities. I hope their stories will inspire you to expand your knowledge as well.

Have a great month, and thanks for reading. ■



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Class ACT

**Residents share why
they continue to
expand their horizons
through learning**

By Becky Kolosik

You learn something new every day. Sometimes it's by accident, but sometimes it's intentional. Some continue their education out of necessity — to maintain a license, for example — while others enroll to further their career or launch a new one. Still others simply want to learn a new hobby or expand their horizons. Whatever the case, the thirst for knowledge knows no age limit or bounds. And plenty of opportunities — in person and online — are out there to quench it.

Shannon Johnston, a working mom of five, is pursuing her educational and career goals while also showing her children that education is important and that they should always reach higher and dream bigger.

Choosing faith over fear

For Tawnya Hawkins, being a mom has been the greatest gift she could have ever been given. A few years ago, when her oldest daughter would soon be graduating from high school, Hawkins started to see that her role as a mom was quickly shifting.

“There was this realization that I didn’t know who I was outside of my kids,” she says. “I not only began to wonder what I was going to do when my girls were no longer so dependent on me, but also who I was and what my life would look like when that time came.”

Hawkins believes that education is important. After graduating high school, she went to DMACC with a plan to complete an associate’s degree in general studies. She’s the first to admit that she wasn’t very motivated at the time — mostly because she didn’t have a direction she wanted to go career-wise. It was also around that time she met her husband, Rob.

“Rob was working his civilian job as a police officer and was also in the National Guard,” she explains. “After 9/11, we knew he would likely be deployed at some point, so I decided to put my degree on the back burner to be ready to pursue whatever the future held for us.”

Hawkins worked at a local bank for eight years and eventually felt it was best to stay home with her girls when they were young. She started an in-home daycare to earn extra income. In 2011, as Rob was being deployed for a third time, she decided it would be a good distraction and perfect opportunity to complete that two-year degree at DMACC.

A few years later, when their youngest started school, Hawkins went back to school, too. First she was a part-time associate with Indianola Community School District. In 2016, she took a full-time position as the high school attendance secretary and currently is the activities secretary.

Hawkins remembers just how sad and lost she felt thinking about her role as a mom changing. During that time, Rob reminded her that she had been considering going back to school for her bachelor’s degree.

“He said, ‘Maybe this is your time,’ ” she recalls. “All I could do was think about the reasons why it wasn’t a good idea.”

That’s when her faith stepped in. She started the application process, deciding that, if any roadblocks got in the way, it was a sign that God was telling her this was not the right time.



Tawnya Hawkins says, with the right preparation and planning, going back to school is more attainable than one might think, and she can’t wait to walk across the stage in May and officially become a Liberty University alum.

“Not one single thing stood in my way as I worked through that,” she says, smiling. “The harder I tried to resist, the easier it seemed that God was making it.”

Hawkins was accepted to Liberty University and began classes in May 2022 to pursue a degree in business administration with a minor in digital marketing and advertising. Rob had already completed his master’s degree with Liberty, so she knew they had a rock-solid online program where she could be successful. And, with the military discount, it made it much more affordable.

Hawkins started with one class at a time, but she’s recently amped things up to finish sooner and is taking two classes per term. She says there’s been doubt, fear and all sorts of other feelings that have crept in along the way. Managing not only the expectations of academics, but also carving out time while still working and being a mom has been challenging.

“I set out to make myself uncomfortable, to discover who I was, and to challenge myself,” she says. “Online learning is no joke, and there’s a lot of self-teaching and self-discipline. It has given me confidence and a feeling that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to.”

Hawkins says she likes that Liberty is a Christian university, and having that perspective has helped her grow her faith even more along the journey. When Hawkins travels to Lynchburg, Virginia, in May to walk across the stage and receive her diploma, there will, no doubt, be a celebration.

“My family and friends have been so supportive of me, and I’m incredibly thankful,” she says, smiling. “The most rewarding part has been hearing my own kids tell me how proud they are. I’m setting an example and showing Trysta and Sage that there’s always room to grow and challenge yourself, and no matter your age, you can still do hard things.”

Setting goals as an adult learner

Allysa Enterline is goal oriented by nature. But, when she enrolled in Arizona State University’s online program in October 2019, she didn’t expect it to be quite as difficult as it was. A little more than a month ago, she submitted her last final, breathed a sigh of relief, and knew, without a doubt, that all the long nights were worth it.

“This has been a goal for a really long time, and it took a lot of hard work,” she says. “I

am so thankful to my friends and family who helped me make it to the end.”

Enterline believes education is an investment in yourself. You could say that, since she graduated high school, she has been on a journey of continuous learning no matter where life took her. It all started with a year of community college after high school before she decided to go to massage therapy school and open her own practice.

After three years as a massage therapist, life took Enterline down a different path. She entered the workforce, taking a job that didn't require using any of the skills she had learned up until that point. She also did some traveling. But she maintained a mindset of lifelong learning.

“Whether you are pursuing a formal degree or simply exploring your passions, embracing the mindset that you are a lifelong learner can open up a world of possibilities,” she says.

When Enterline decided to return to school, she was looking for financial help. She happened to read online about Starbucks paying 100% of their employees' tuition for a first bachelor's degree online through Arizona State University. To qualify, employees must work a minimum of 20 hours per week, and the tuition would be paid upfront at registration.

“I could take one class at a time or a full schedule,” Enterline explains. “The flexibility this allowed me as an adult learner was a no brainer, so I applied at Starbucks and got going on my degree as soon as I could.”

She chose a major — community advocacy and social policy — she was interested in and felt aligned with her natural strengths. Her studies were completely online, which made it easier to balance studying and daily life. The online component became even more important when she bought a house, had a baby and COVID hit.

However, being 100% online would present its own unique challenges.

“I hadn't written a paper in quite some time, and math was never my favorite class, so I was pretty nervous going in,” she says. “I used all of the online tutoring resources and Facebook groups as a way to feel connected. I even made a few friends along the way that I got to meet in person at graduation.”

Going to school full time, while working and having a family, is not easy, and Enterline found tools to help stay organized. She used spreadsheets to keep track of due dates and a digital calendar, which she color coded.

Enterline encourages anyone thinking of going back to school to just do it. She says it's important to consider all options when it comes to achieving your goals — traditional or university, online programs, community colleges or vocational schools. Plus, staying motivated is essential.

“Set realistic goals, create a study schedule, and find a support system,” she says. “Finding peers, family members, or mentors who will keep you on track and provide encouragement when needed will ensure your success.”

Slow and steady wins the race

To say that Shannon Johnston is busy would be an understatement. Not only is she a wife, but she is also mom to five and employed full time. She had often thought about going back to school and took a few classes here and there.

“I love learning new things and gaining knowledge in whatever I am doing,” she says. “As my boys got older, and we started talking about college for them, I decided maybe I should lead by example since I didn't finish the degree I started 20 years ago.”

After high school, Johnston had plans to be a nurse. She took nursing through Central Campus, graduated as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) and was studying to be a registered nurse (RN) at Mercy College of Health Sciences. When she and her husband, John (who was a U.S. Marine) got married, they were stationed in Oceanside, California. Unfortunately, she didn't meet California's requirements for an LPN, so she found other work instead.

Over the years, she's dabbled in many different jobs, including administrative work for a hazardous materials consulting firm, in real estate/vacation rentals, and at a medical clinic. When she decided to stay home with her kids, she opened an in-home daycare for several years. Johnston eventually went back to work as a para educator in Indianola and then Norwalk, which led her to an elementary secretary position. In 2020, she landed at Simpson College in an administrative assistant role.

One of the benefits of working at Simpson is being able to take classes for free, and that inspired Johnston to take the leap. With her experience as a foster parent for many years and then working with students, she says studying human services felt like a natural fit. The program was a mix of online and in-person classes.

“Right now, I am doing term classes — either one or two terms a year,” she explains.



When Allysa Enterline became a mom, she left Starbucks and finished out her last year at ASU on her own. She says she is thankful for scholarships from The American Legion Auxiliary and Community 1st Credit Union that helped tremendously.

“It's extremely slow, but with five kids and a spouse that works all kinds of hours, it just makes sense.”

Johnston was nervous going back to school simply because she had not taken formal college classes in 20 years. Learning to navigate discussion boards, the class syllabus and other information online has taken some time to get used to, not to mention the accelerated pace and expectations of professors.

“I had no idea about formats for papers and other requirements,” Johnston says. “I've had to do a lot of Google searches or ask other students for help, which slows me down some.”

But Johnston is in it for the long haul, even though it's often hard to find a quiet space or good time to study. Taking it slow and steady works with everything she is juggling in her life right now, she says.

“If I can do it, anyone can,” she says. “I don't think we're ever too old to follow our dreams or passions. Even if I never use my degree, at least I can show my children that I will always thirst for knowledge and adventure, and I won't let my fears or age stop me.” ■

WINTER gardening tasks

Ahhhh...the holidays are over, the garden is put to bed, and the blanket of snow is providing a great backdrop for all those "winter interest" plants you planted last summer (oh, how we are hoping). So, after that long sigh and a hot cup of tea (or coffee or hot chocolate), let's start thinking about the year ahead and what projects we can take care of during this cold dark month to give us some brightness and cheer.



Feeding the bright and cheerful birds outside is something that will make us smile over morning coffee. If you still have your Christmas tree, consider putting it in the backyard, giving our feathered friends a place to huddle and stay warm during the next few months. You can spend a craft day with the kids and make a popcorn (air popped preferred) garland for it. Feeding black sunflower seeds and nut mixtures will give these friends more energy than those mixes that contain mainly millet. Suet and nut/suet mixture blocks will bring clinging woodpeckers and nuthatches to your feeding site. Consider placing your feeders close to shrubs or conifers. This will give birds a safe place to rest and eat, without being in the open.

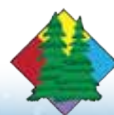
You have been so busy outside all year with your gardens, you have probably forgotten to give your indoor garden the attention it deserves. Now is the time to give some love and care to your house plants. First, they need a bath. Place your house plants in the shower and gently shower them with cool to barely warm water, cleaning off all the dust they have accumulated, giving them freedom to breathe. While you are giving them their shower, inspect for insects and pests. Look for scale, mealy bugs and spider mites. If you find any unwelcome guests, hit your local garden center for products you can apply to take care of them. There are a number of products available, depending on the pests you find.

That beautiful poinsettia you got for Christmas will look good during the gray months ahead with careful watering (never let it set in water). Then, next summer, place it in the garden as an annual or simply send it to the compost bin. Your amaryllis will give you years of pleasure. Keep it as a houseplant for the rest of the winter then put it outside for the summer to store up enough energy to bloom next holiday season.

Now, this year's garden! Now is the time to start thinking about seeds and seed starting. Look through those catalogues (websites) for those seeds you have been thinking about. Order them, and, if you need trays, seed heating pads, or planting kits, be sure to buy now, as you see them (you know about the supply chain concerns).

So, sit back, relax as you take care of the color in your garden (the birds), your indoor garden (those awesome houseplants) and this year's garden (seeds, seeds everywhere) and enjoy what you did in the garden last year and what awesome things are to come. ■

Information provided by Barry Laws, co-owner, Quilted Gardens Nursery and Landscaping, 19635 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-720-3089, www.quiltedgardens.com.



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ABOUT Qualified Charitable Distributions

As we pass through the holiday season, oftentimes families look at charities for giving during the holiday season. Have you ever considered utilizing a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)?

How a QCD works

Generally, distributions from traditional IRAs are subject to federal income tax, unless an exception applies. QCDs, however, are excluded from income and, therefore, won't affect your tax obligation. Moreover, once you reach age 72, a QCD can satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD), which otherwise could substantially increase your taxable income for any given year.

To make a QCD, you would direct your IRA trustee to issue a check made payable to a qualified public charity. You may contribute up to \$100,000 from your IRA; if you're married, your spouse may also contribute up to \$100,000 from his or her IRA.

A QCD must be an otherwise taxable distribution from an IRA. If you've made nondeductible IRA contributions, then each distribution normally carries with it a pro-rata amount of taxable and nontaxable dollars. If you have multiple IRAs, they are aggregated to determine the calculation. With QCDs, the pro-rate rule is ignored, and taxable dollars are treated as distributed first.



QCDs do come with a few caveats:

If you have a checkbook IRA, you may also write a check directly to the charity; however, the contribution will count as a QCD for the year in which it was cashed, not the year it was written. This is particularly worth noting for donations made late in the year.

You can take a QCD from SEP and SIMPLE IRAs, but only if they're "inactive" i.e., have not received any contributions in the same year.

You cannot deduct a QCD as a charitable donation on your federal income tax return.

As of 2019, individuals 70 ½ and older can continue contributing to their IRAs as long as they have earned income (generally, work-related earnings). However, if you make deductible contributions after 70 ½, the amount of any QCD made at any point in the future will be taxable up to the value of those contributions.

Please do note that private foundations, donor-advised funds, supporting organizations (as defined by the IRS), charitable gift annuities, and charitable remainder trusts are ineligible to receive QCDs. ■

Information provided by Andrei J. Murphy. Securities offered through Brokers International Financial Services, LLC, Member SIPC. Brokers International Financial Services, LLC is not an affiliated company. 515-215-7114.

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LEGAL

By Ken Winjum

CAUTION — read before you sign

We have noticed recently that some insurance company adjusters are attempting to settle personal injury claims within days of an accident. This might make sense in a minor accident with no apparent injuries. However, where a significant injury or hospitalization is involved, such a settlement may be premature.



In this world of downloadable apps, e-signatures and digital communication, it is possible that a person may unwittingly agree to a settlement before becoming aware of the seriousness of his or her medical condition or the rights being given up. It seems we are conditioned to agree to long document forms without ever reading the words contained in them.

In this environment, it is the liability insurance adjuster's goal to obtain a signed release of the company's insured party in exchange for a payment to the injured party as quickly as possible. For the sake of "convenience," such releases are often presented digitally, whereby a simple "click" can extinguish an injured party's claim.

One should be very careful before ever agreeing to accept payment from an insurance company that promises to pay for an injury shortly after an accident. By accepting such payment, the injured party will have essentially settled the case and closed off any opportunity for full compensation. Unfortunately, it may be difficult to "undo" a misinformed acceptance of an early settlement proposal.

Iowa Code Chapter 507B contains specific rules concerning how insurance companies are to fairly settle claims. For example, an unfair claim settlement practice may include "not attempting in good faith to effectuate prompt, fair, and equitable settlements of claims in which liability has become reasonably clear." The focus of the statute is on whether the company is in violation with such frequency as to indicate a general business practice. Enforcement is handled by the Insurance Commissioner.

In *Bates v. Allied*, 467 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1991), the Supreme Court of Iowa held that 507B does not create a private cause of action against an insurance company that commits an unfair claim settlement practice. The court explained that, while an insurer has a fiduciary relationship with its insured, it has an adversarial relationship with a third-party claimant. Therefore, a tort victim, as a third-party claimant, cannot compel a tortfeasor's insurer to negotiate and settle a claim in good faith anymore than he could compel the tortfeasor to do so himself.

Conclusion: It should be understood that the insurance company for the at-fault party has an adversarial relationship with the injured person. It is crucial for an injured person to read and understand all documents sent by an insurance company before signing or "clicking" agreement to the terms. ■

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

CHOOSING a trustee for your trust

Over the last two months, we have touched on the use of trusts as part of an estate plan. As mentioned previously, the role of a trustee is to manage the assets of a trust. Most people choose to be the initial trustee of their own trust. That means they will manage all the assets owned by their trust as long as they are able to do so. However, all trusts also have a successor trustee. Most often, the successor trustee becomes the manager of the trust's assets when the initial trustee either becomes incapacitated or passes away.

The successor trustee has a vital role in an estate plan because that trustee steps into the shoes of the grantor (creator) of the trust to manage the trust assets. The successor trustee must be able to manage investments, make distributions to beneficiaries, file tax returns, and maintain accountings, among other important duties. Often, these are not easy



tasks and selecting the appropriate trustee to carry them out is very important in the estate planning process.

Grantors sometimes designate a family member to serve as successor trustee. At other times, it may be appropriate to name a corporate trustee, such as a bank trust department, to serve as successor trustee. When deciding who to name as trustee, there are several important issues to consider. For example, a corporate trustee has the advantage of looking at each situation objectively. In contrast, a family member may be more inclined to make important decisions based on emotion.

Another issue to consider is the time involved in serving as trustee and how much experience is necessary. Often a family member may not have served as trustee before and lacks experience in handling trustee duties. A corporate trustee, on the other hand, is in a unique position of having experience and dedicated time to serve as trustee.

It is also important to consider timeframes when selecting a trustee. A family member

may well be capable of serving as successor trustee today, but years later may not be as well suited for the task. A corporate trustee, however, provides the continuity necessary to ensure effective management of the trust for generations.

Selecting a corporate trustee does come with a cost. Corporate trustees do charge a fee for their services. However, many grantors and beneficiaries find the benefits of proper trust and investment management far outweigh the costs. ■

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

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Tunes & Treats:

Brian Herrin

Tuesday, Jan. 16, 1 p.m.
Indianola Activity Center,
2204 W. Second Ave.,
Indianola

Brian Herrin is a classically trained singer-songwriter who has shared the stage with The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Tonic, Carly Rae Jepsen and Cloverton. Free concert with dessert.

Afternoon Adventures: Lewis & Clark in Iowa

Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1 p.m.
Indianola Activity Center,
2204 W. Second Ave.,
Indianola

When France sold the Louisiana Purchase to the United States in 1803, President Thomas Jefferson tasked Meriweather Lewis with exploring it. In this program, you'll meet some of the characters who made the two-year journey along with Lewis and William Clark. Presenter Donald Shurr is a trained keelboat pilot and reenactor whose program is funded by Humanities Iowa, a private non-profit state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Family Fun Night

Saturday, Jan. 27, 6-8 p.m.
Indianola Wellness Campus, 306 E. Scenic Valley Ave., Indianola

Enjoy an active night of fun as a family, with laser tag, nerf wars and giant trike races. Bring your swimsuits and towels for swimming, kayaking and stand-up paddle boards. For ages 5 and older with an adult. Registration deadline is Monday, Jan. 23. To register, call 515-961-9420 or visit www.indianolaiowa.gov/PRregister.



Afternoon Adventures: Iowa's Wild Weather

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 1 p.m.
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave.,
Indianola

Iowa experiences a myriad of weather extremes every year, sometimes in the same week, and in some cases during the same day. KCCI Meteorologist Trey Fulbright will explain the science behind Iowa's weather extremes and how you can be better prepared for them.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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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 hockey-themed 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. ■



Welcome to Medicare Seminar

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 5:30-7 p.m.

Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Volunteers with the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) offer this free seminar for persons approaching age 65. Learn about Medicare Part A and Part B, Medicare Supplements, Medicare Advantage and Part D drug plans. RSVP required; call 515-962-5375.

Think Spring Gardening Seminar

Feb. 24, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hubbell Hall at the Kent Campus Center on the Simpson College campus

Join more than 100 garden enthusiasts to listen to inspiring speakers, win door prizes, enjoy shopping with vendors and enjoy a catered lunch. Master Gardeners earn four CEU credits for attending.

Featured speakers include Jessica Lancial (Mushrooms), Dan Fillius (Getting the Dirt on Soil), Ajay Nair (Vegetable Gardening) and Emma Hanigan (Replacing Ash, Planning for Future Forest). Doors open at 8:30 a.m. Parking is available in the lot adjacent to the building and on nearby streets.

Warren County Master Gardeners host this fun event to raise funds to provide the educational seminar as well as provide grants and educational opportunities to non-profit organizations.

Ticket prices are \$50. Registration closes on Jan. 31. Go to <https://go.iastate.edu/KBW2WW> to register. For more information, contact Bethany with the ISU Extension office at 515-961-6237 or bcecot@iastate.edu.

People's Bank Indoor Play Date

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. to noon

Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

Children ages 1 year through preschool are invited to burn off some energy at the playground on Wednesday mornings. From a bounce house to riding toys, blocks, crafts and occasional special guests, this program is free. All children must be accompanied and supervised by an adult throughout the morning.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Check for cancellations

Theater and dance

Actors, Inc. - Ames Community Theater

120 Abraham Drive, Ames

actorsinc.org

• Jan. 25-27, Feb. 2-4: "Holmes & Watson"

Des Moines Performing Arts

Des Moines Civic Center,

221 Walnut St., Des Moines

dmpa.org

• Jan. 12-14: "STOMP"

• Jan. 23-28: "Mamma Mia!"

• Jan. 27: Havana Hop

Stephens Auditorium

1900 Center Drive, Ames

center.iastate.edu/events

• Jan. 30: "Jesus Christ Superstar"

Music

Hoyt Sherman Place

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines

hoytsherman.org

• Jan. 12: Big Head Todd and the

Monsters at 7:30 p.m.

Wells Fargo Arena

223 Center St., Des Moines

iowaeventscenter.com

• Jan. 25: Disturbed - Take Back Your Life

tour with Falling In Reverse and Plush

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.



Square Dance Lessons

Sunday nights starting Jan. 14, 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. ■

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HONOR, respect, authority and integrity

Magruder's badge collection holds a storied history.

Don Magruder has a great respect for those who wear badges in service of law, fire and transportation entities and the brave sacrifices they make each and every day.

"From the time I was a little boy, I always wanted to be a police officer," he says.

But his first career took him into the aerospace industry working on aircraft and spacecraft/missiles, which he enjoyed for many years. Then, in 1973, his path took a turn, and he ventured into managing and directing employee assistance programs.

In the late 1980s, while living in the St. Louis area, Magruder's childhood dream of becoming a police officer was finally realized.

"I found out about reserve police officers, and, in 1987, after completing an abbreviated academy, I was commissioned as a reserve officer," he explains. "As reserve officers at that time in St. Louis County, we worked part-time, had full police powers and were entirely volunteer."

Magruder became interested in the stories and history of law enforcement badges and soon began to build a large collection of reserve badges from cities and states all over the country.

About five years ago, as Magruder and his late wife, Becky, were preparing to move to Indianola, he sold the reserve collection.

"I wasn't going to collect any more, but then I went to the National Police Collectors Show in Reno," he says, laughing. "I planned on buying 'a few' badges, but you can see what that has grown into."

Magruder now has an extensive collection of pre-1900 police badges. The oldest — an 1811 Captain of the Watch badge from Philadelphia — is considered rare because police badges didn't start making much of an appearance in the U.S. until around 1840.

He mostly has first and second issue badges from major cities in the U.S. He acquires them from other collectors as well as at national and regional shows. Determining their value depends on how rare the badge is, how old, its condition, and where it's from.

Magruder has earned many awards and accolades over the years. As a brand-new collector in 2005, his reserve collection took home Best Overall Display. His pre-1900 collection has earned multiple awards, including a recent Best Badge honor at the 2023 National Police Collectors Show.

Magruder's home is filled with other collections, too. From pottery



Don Magruder's collection gives a rare and unique view behind the badge, including the storied history of law enforcement officers and the cities they served.



and paintings to antique family pieces and more, each tells a story or reminds him of people who brought love and meaning to his life.

Will his badge collection continue to grow? Magruder says that depends on whether he comes across more first or second issues from major U.S. cities.

"I've also thought about whether or not it's time to retire and sell," he continues. "The 2024 national show is in the Quad Cities in May, so maybe I'll decide by then." ■

THE DIAPHRAGM: digestion, balance, reduction of pain, heart health and proper breathing

How does the diaphragm help with all of these conditions? Let's look at the anatomy and function of the diaphragm to understand how acupuncture, chiropractic, stretching, yoga, meditation and breathing exercises can help.



and the vagus nerve are all regulated by the function of the diaphragm. The aorta (large artery carrying blood from the heart) actually runs directly behind the diaphragm in a special opening. You can see what an important muscle the diaphragm is to our breathing and more specifically other functions of the body.

Chiropractic care can help with breathing by adjusting and relaxing the diaphragm, with back pain by adjusting the spine to release the diaphragm and muscles that connect to the pelvis and ribs. Chiropractic adjustments can also help with improving digestion that may be affecting the diaphragm. Adjustments can regulate the nervous system, including the vagus nerve, to relax the diaphragm.

Asian Medicine and acupuncture can help by treating underlying conditions that relate to the diaphragm. Acupuncture can relax muscles, treat stress, reduce pain and increase function of organs such as the lung, digestion, liver, spleen,

kidney and adrenals. Acupuncture can also help with calming and regulating the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

Yoga, Qi Gong, Tai Qi and stretching all have the ability to stretch the muscles connecting near the diaphragm area, stretching the diaphragm muscle, and increasing flexibility in the areas where the diaphragm connects to other structures. Yoga and Qi Gong specifically work on breathing practices that teach a person to fill their lungs with air, hold and release. Breathing practices help to increase oxygen in the body, release carbon dioxide, and reset the nervous system. Recent research is showing the role of breathwork and how it contributes to reducing anxiety, mild depression and pain.

How healthy is your diaphragm? ■

Information provided by Dr. Renee Dalrymple, LAc, SEED Meditation Instructor, Soaring Crane Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, 14849 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-808-1548, call or text.

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NEW YEAR, new hearing, new you

In 2023, the most popular resolution in America was to “live healthier,” followed by enhancing “personal improvement or happiness.”¹ If these goals resonate with you, there’s an ideal way for you to accomplish both: improve your hearing.



Stay healthy with optimal hearing

When it comes to your overall wellbeing, ensuring you can hear well is just as important as engaging in regular exercise, getting a good night’s rest and eating balanced meals. Studies have shown that people with untreated hearing loss are at a greater risk of conditions that can influence their physical, mental and emotional health, including falls,² cognitive decline³ and

depression.⁴

Having any of these conditions can significantly impact your quality of life. Fortunately, treating hearing loss can make all the difference, helping you stay healthy. Research shows that people who wear hearing devices experience improved balance,⁵ slow their rate of cognitive decline⁶ and report improvements in their mental health.⁷

Find more happiness by hearing your best

What brings you joy? For many people, connections with friends and family are at the top of their list. Good relationships make navigating life’s ups and downs easier while also providing meaning and purpose to your days.

Untreated hearing loss can make it harder to keep the bonds with your loved ones strong. You may find it difficult to participate in conversations and feel close to the important

people in your life. Hearing loss treatment can help. According to one large study, patients who wore hearing devices reported significant improvements in their social lives, self-confidence and relationships.⁸

Start 2024 off right

Ready to make this year one of your best ones yet? Get a test to check the current status of your hearing. Since hearing loss occurs gradually, it can be easy to overlook subtle changes. Finding and treating any loss as soon as possible can help you reach your goal of living a happier, healthier life — and that’s a resolution worth keeping. ■

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



Better hearing is better living.
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HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

THC content and benefits of hemp

Scientifically, there's not much difference between hemp and marijuana. It's really the law that separates the two. According to the law, hemp is the strain of the cannabis sativa plant that contains .3% or less of THC by dry weight. Marijuana typically contains 5-30% THC. The cannabis industry has flourished in states where marijuana is illegal due to the 2018 Farm Bill that legalized industrial hemp. The seeds and oil from hemp are rich in protein, fiber and magnesium. They also contain high levels of Omega-3, which contribute to relief from symptoms of discomfort and improve heart and skin health. Besides its wellness effects, fibers from hemp stalk are extremely strong and have been used for clothing, construction and food supply. Hemp cultivation is more environmentally friendly versus crops such as flax and cotton. It grows more quickly and under a wider array of conditions. It can absorb carbon from the air and transform it into plant materials, and it can decontaminate soil by absorbing harmful heavy metals and turning them into harmless plant matter. Since THC is so popular, the spotlight on marijuana plants seems brighter. Fortunately, hemp can provide many of the same benefits. Ask your local cannabis retailer for more information, and you're likely to discover how going heavy on the hemp will get you the results you're looking for. ■



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.

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HEALTH

By Paul Guerdet

THE JOYS of novelty

We're hitting that time of year when the temperature drops and we all start to settle in for winter. It's easy this time of year to fall into routines and go on autopilot from day to day. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but, after a while, we do have to be careful with how routine can affect our mood. After a while, having the same daily routine can dull our mood and leave us more susceptible to the winter blues. If you find yourself feeling this way, it may be time to add a bit of novelty to your life.



When I talk about ways to add novelty into your life, it's important not to overthink it, something many of us are guilty of. Adding novelty to your day-to-day life just means to try something new, something different. Novelty could be something as simple as taking a different way to or from work or going to a new restaurant or coffee shop that you've been wanting to check out. Small changes to our daily pattern can allow us to have new experiences, which our brains tend to crave and help us to stave off those winter blues. ■

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

TESTOSTERONE... for women?

Testosterone has become a hot topic in female hormonal health discussions. While it is well known that testosterone is the dominant male sex hormone, it is a very important hormone for females, especially during the menopausal years. Signs of deficiency can include decreased libido, weight gain, loss of muscle mass, hair loss, night sweats, mood swings, brain fog, anxiousness, hot flashes, vaginal dryness and depression. These can range from mild to severe and last months to years.



Testosterone replacement can help these symptoms, and sometimes women can feel a difference within days. There are many routes this can be done, but testosterone pellets placed under the skin have gained a lot of traction due to the slow, steady release of hormone, low side effect profile, no necessity to remember a daily medication, and good relief of symptoms.

Many women see an improvement in energy, mental acuity, weight, muscle tone, libido and mood. It is important to have a conversation with your healthcare provider to see if this is a good option for you. Relief is on the way. ■

Information provided by Jen Penisten, MSN, RN, NP-C, CEO/owner, Vivid Life Spa, 1016 Main St., Norwalk, 515-850-7848, www.vividlifespas.com.

INSURANCE

By Mike Richey

IS EVERYONE living in your home covered?

In general, a homeowners or renters insurance policy will cover named insureds as well as additional household members who are related to a named insured by blood, marriage or adoption. The named insured is sometimes referred to as the policy owner or policyholder. There are typically one or two named insureds listed on a homeowners or renters policy.



A typical homeowners or renters insurance policy does not cover a household member who is not a named insured or related to a named insured. For example, if Tom and Julie are an unmarried couple who live together, but Tom is the only named insured, then Julie is probably not covered. In this scenario, Tom and Julie should consult with their insurance agent on the best way to get her covered. Julie wouldn't want to find herself without coverage if her belongings were to be lost in a fire or tornado or if someone were to sue her for damages.

If you suspect that someone living in your household may not be covered under your homeowners or renters policy, talk to your insurance agent today. ■

Information provided by Mike Richey Agency Inc., American Family Insurance, 204 E. Detroit Ave., Indianola, 515-961-8889, mrichey@amfam.com.

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WHAT God is really like

Have you ever looked at a famous musician and said, "I wonder what he's like in real life?" Or maybe you've seen a well-known actress and thought, "She seems like she wouldn't be very nice to meet in person." One thing that I often read about online is how certain celebrities turn out to be much different in person than they appear to be on screen. Some who people think would be nice turn out to be jerks. And others, who seem like they would be rude, turn out to be the most giving.

When Jesus is born, the world gets to meet Him "in person." He comes to our world to show us what He's really like. Through His calling disciples, healing the sick, and teaching, Jesus shows us what God is really like "in person."

The traditional church calls this time after Christmas "Epiphany" because it's a time when we focus on how God reveals Himself to us, a time when we see what God is really like "in person." I invite you to join us and see for yourself. ■

Article provided by Pastor Tom Vanderbilt, Mount Calvary Church, Indianola.



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SUNDAY SERVICES: 8AM & 10:30AM

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. - Ephesians 2:10

KEEPING Indianola beautiful

Hometown Pride brings the community together.

As a part of a thriving and growing city, one of the best things you can do is take an active role in your community.

Mellisa Sones, current chair of Indianola Hometown Pride, couldn't agree more. That's why she's excited about the work the committee, which was formed in 2016 as part of a statewide Keep Iowa Beautiful initiative, has done and continues to do.

Paige Wardell joined IHP in early 2022. She likes that the group focuses on providing unique events that highlight what the town can offer those who live here.

"It brings so many positive attributes to the community," Wardell says. "When friends and neighbors support the Hometown Pride committee, it opens the door for many future events for people of all ages."

The committee has worked on projects that help connect residents, businesses and community organizations. They've also collaborated with other groups, taking on supportive roles when volunteers are needed. Projects include, but are not limited to:

- **Yard of the Month** – criteria for nominations includes lawn, landscaping, flower beds and overall esthetics in compliance with city ordinances.
- **Celebrate Warren County Parade** – IHP helped grow the parade to 100 entrants from all over Warren County in 2023 and introduced a Quiet Zone for those who are sensitive to lights and sounds.
- **Light Up Indianola/Holiday Lanes** – In 2023, ten neighborhoods participated with a combined total of more than 200 homes decorated. IHP also assisted with the Home for the Holidays Lighted Parade and was a Magical Nights of Lights sponsor.
- Another major project, **Wonder on Buxton**, has been made possible thanks to two major grants: \$5,000 from the Warren County Economic Development Corporation Philanthropic Partnership and \$73,300 from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. It will include sculptural installations and improvements to a two-block corridor along Buxton Street from Simpson campus to the Square, creating a vibrant area that invites visitors and celebrates Indianola's cultural identity. The project made significant progress last year in the design phase, which included holding a public engagement session to gather feedback/vision from residents on art that will be placed. A final artist selection has been made and will soon be presented to the city council.

Committee member Jessica Schneider likes what IHP brings to the community.

"The family-oriented events such as parades and holiday lights are the best," she says. "I know how much these activities mean to my own children and, to personally contribute, whether as the organizer or a volunteer for another organization, is both fun and rewarding."

Indianola Hometown Pride includes 11 to 15 appointed members and is a fun way to meet people while giving back to the community. Anyone living within a 2-mile radius of city limits can be considered for appointment, and anyone can volunteer. Apply by going to the Boards and Commissions tab on the City of Indianola website, reach out via Facebook Messenger, or email ihometownpride@gmail.com. ■



Indianola Hometown Pride committee volunteers are all smiles at the Home for the Holidays Lighted Parade in 2022. From left: Jessica Schneider, Mellisa Sones and Heidi Levine.

SET the menu for a successful year

(Family Features) If your goals for 2024 include a healthier lifestyle and added nutrition, your mission is likely to start with a refreshed menu. Add a few newfound favorites to this year's rotation like wraps, salads and smoothies to power each day and propel yourself toward wellness success.

Planning and executing a more nutritious menu can often be thwarted by lunchtime cravings or busy weeknights that leave little time to cook at home. Rather than giving in to those takeout temptations, turn to easy recipes you can create yourself with just a few simple, on-hand ingredients.

Grab tortillas out of the pantry and a few favorites from the refrigerator to make these BLT wraps with avocado spread, which are perfect for meal-prepping weekday lunches or whipping up at a moment's notice for a family dinner. Bacon, a nearly unanimous favorite, teams up with a homemade avocado spread, lettuce and tomatoes for fresh taste without the hassle.

For a satisfying meal without leaving behind health goals, serve with a hearty salad or Spanish rice and banana peppers on the side. ■

BLT wraps with avocado spread

Servings: 4

- 8 slices bacon
- 1 avocado, peeled and pitted
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 lime, juice only
- 1/2 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 flour tortillas
- 4 large red leaf lettuce leaves
- 2 large tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- Spanish rice (optional)
- banana peppers (optional)

Directions

- In large skillet, cook bacon until crispy. Drain on plate lined with paper towels. Set aside.
- In medium bowl, mash avocado, sour cream, lime juice, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce and salt with fork until combined and smooth.
- Spread thin layer of avocado mixture over tortillas. Layer with lettuce leaves, tomatoes and bacon. Fold sides up and roll.
- Serve with Spanish rice and banana peppers, if desired.



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LET'S GET TOGETHER FOR A CUP OF COFFEE. MY TREAT.

WCEDC celebrates business excellence at annual Economic Impact Awards event

Warren County is abuzz with pride following the prestigious Economic Impact Awards ceremony held at Simpson College's Principal Blackbox Theater on Nov. 9. The event honored the remarkable contributions of local businesses to the county's economic vitality.

2023 Warren County Business of the Year was awarded to Michael Foods of Norwalk. Country Propane in Milo won Top Business in a Small Community. Owners Liz and Terry Davis accepted the honor. Crystal Inman, owner of Sticks & Balls Indoor Golf and Bar, was awarded the Woman Owned Business of the Year honor. Murphy Tower in Hartford/Carlisle was named the recipient of the Innovation of the Year Award. Stacie LoVan from the Greater Des Moines Partnership took to the podium to recognize Williams Machine Shop in Lacona as the Industrial/Manufacturer/Producer of the Year. Racheal Thompson, owner of Morning Glory Coffee, was presented the New Business of the Year Award.

Supervisor Darren Heater, chairman of the Warren County Board of Supervisors, shared Warren County news and updates with the crowd.



Michael Foods Plant Manager Tod Kinker receives the 2024 Warren County Business of the Year award from Eric and Leslie Held (left), owners of Bob's Custom Trophies and award sponsor, alongside Rachel Fusco (right), WCEDC executive director.



Terry and Liz Davis with Country Propane in Milo won Top Business in a Small Community in the 2023 Warren County Economic Impact Awards. Katie Lord (left) with MidAmerican Energy presented the award and was joined by WCEDC Executive Director Rachel Fusco (right).



Racheal Thompson, owner of Morning Glory Coffee in Carlisle, accepts the New Business of the Year award. Deven Markley (left), city administrator for the city of Carlisle, presented the nominees and was joined by WCEDC Executive Director Rachel Fusco (right) to present the award.



Jay Byers (left), president of Simpson College, presented the Women-Owned Business Award to owner Crystal Inman (center) of Sticks and Balls Indoor Golf and Bar with Rachel Fusco (right), WCEDC executive director.

OTHER WCEDC UPDATES

New office location

The Warren County Economic Development Corporation (WCEDC) office has moved to a new location. As of Jan. 3, WCEDC is located at 110 N. Howard St. in Indianola, on the east side of the Square.

Grant application cycle begins Jan. 15

The 2024 Warren County Philanthropic Partnership (WCPP) grant cycle will open to applications Jan. 15. Since its inception, WCPP has awarded more than \$1 million to nonprofit organizations in Warren County for community betterment projects. From providing equipment to area police and fire departments to improving education and arts and entertainment, WCPP has responsibly distributed Iowa's County Endowment Fund to worthy projects impacting the entire county. Watch for updates at www.warrencountyp.org. ■

HAT and Glove Drive

Ellis Law Firm held its annual Hat and Glove Drive on Dec. 7.



Kevin Peterson, Dalton Strange, Osiris Steeples, Luke Peterson, Ben Deitenbeck, Don Strange and Dawson Strange



Sophie Lindquist and Molly Heffron



Shelby Fitzpatrick and Ryan Grabau



Mike and Eileen May



Kurt and Barb Wells



Bailee Ellis and Keegen Reeves



Dean and Jan Shin



Todd Vickroy and Alex Berry



Kelly Green, Sara Foster, Rhonda Green and Jo Vesey



Ellis Law Firm staff

OUT & ABOUT



A ribbon cutting was held for Pipsy's Wee Care and Preschool LLC on Dec. 27.



Sam Nielsen and Tiffanie Money at the ribbon cutting held for Pipsy's Wee Care and Preschool LLC on Dec. 27.



Amanda Livingston and Adalia Joan at the ribbon cutting held for Pipsy's Wee Care and Preschool LLC on Dec. 27.



Paula Shaw, Kristy Brouiloet and Haley Swanson at the ribbon cutting held for Pipsy's Wee Care and Preschool LLC on Dec. 27.



Taylor Jennings, Norah Hasenwinkel and Lisa Anderson at the ribbon cutting held for Pipsy's Wee Care and Preschool LLC on Dec. 27.



The staff at the ribbon cutting held for Pipsy's Wee Care and Preschool LLC on Dec. 27.



Sue Cretors and Julie Coffey at work at Fareway on Dec. 27.



Alex Boden at work at Fareway on Dec. 27.



Brian Hogue and Nick Brangers at work at Fareway on Dec. 27.



Kinnick Werling at work at Fareway on Dec. 27.

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TOOLS of the trade

SkillsUSA offers hands-on learning experiences.



Justin Hagans hopes to show students that trades are time-tested, well-paid and guaranteed career options desperately needed in our community and beyond. Pictured at state Skills USA competition are Sam Phipps, Max Minks, Braden McKasson, Owen Cambron and Charlie Radosevich.

Justin Hagans grew up in small-town southeast Iowa on a farm working with his hands. That experience no doubt shaped his career goals.

"I knew I wanted to go to college, and I liked working with my hands, so teaching industrial technology made sense," he explains. "After earning my degree from William Penn University, I landed here in Indianola, and the administration has given me the opportunity and resources to start from scratch and create the best program possible."

Hagans' classes are not like traditional classes. He only teaches real-world skills that can be used in a career or skills all homeowners should know. His students also get to see and experience the wealth of opportunities they have in the community.

Indianola High School has been involved with the SkillsUSA National Organization for the last three years. The state of Iowa requires industrial technology programs to have a CTSO (Career and Technical Student Organization), so SkillsUSA is similar to FFA.

"It is student run and separate from the industrial technology program," says Hagans. "Not all students who take my classes are in Skills, but it is offered to them."

Indianola High School SkillsUSA student president Jessica Reeves says she appreciates the opportunity to try new things and hands-on experiences.

"I'm always learning something new I can apply to my life, whether it's fixing up a house or choosing a career inside the trades," she says.

SkillsUSA caters to a variety of student interests from carpentry to quiz bowls. The program holds the students to high levels of safety and professionalism. At the practical competitions, it is not just about swinging hammers, but rather how to be safe, how to run a job site and more.

Hagans says he is grateful for support from the community. Local businesses donate monetarily to the program, and some also come into his classroom to teach various topics. For example, the class partners with Miller Mechanical/Electric for an electrical unit as well as HVAC and plumbing. Hagans has three former students who went through those units now working for Miller.

He also has an advisory council made up of several local professionals from Vice Construction, Miller, Downing and Shive Hattery.

Hagans says he hopes for his class to compete and win a state competition in a practical category like carpentry or in the near future. However, whether or not they win, his main goal is to prepare students for a job in the trades. And, he's doing just that, according to another student Skills USA leader.

"I like how SkillsUSA lets us try out all of the different trades so we can get an idea of what we want to do after high school," says Owen Cambron. ■

WHAT YOU need to hear

It would have been tempting for Paul to wonder how it had come to this. Unjustly imprisoned, he's even abandoned by some of those closest to him. The conditions in his dark, cramped cell are deplorable, so much so that, in his letter to a protégé, he asks for him to bring the cloak Paul had left behind before winter approaches. Self-pity is so easy in the midst of suffering, isn't it? We mentally create and replay a list of the things we should have done differently, carrying a burden of regret. Or we camp out on a mound of reasons why we deserve better.



Writing in the Bible book 2 Timothy, the apostle Paul does neither. This is the last book he is to write, and he seems to know it won't be terribly long before he faces execution. You learn a lot about what a person truly believes when you see them lose everything and face catastrophe. What would someone learn about you in such circumstances? What do you hope they would see in you?

For Paul, two themes stand out strong in this letter. First, suffering for people of faith is to be expected. He doesn't endlessly question it or wish he could run away from it. He courageously acknowledges it and points his readers to this reality. He doesn't jump to the erroneous conclusion that his faith must somehow be broken because he's suffering. Instead, he tells his readers to expect it.

And his second resounding theme, even when facing death, is our need to cling to Truth. Never are we more prone to turn from it than when we're in the cold, dark, cramped cells of our suffering. As Paul warns us in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, it's then that people are most apt to seek out "teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths." Why? Because the lie feels comforting. But it is still a lie. The lyrics of a song from years ago have stayed with me all this time. "The trouble with the truth is it's just what I need to hear."

Now would be a good time for any of us to read this short New Testament book. It's only roughly three times the size of the article you just read and with a wealth of truth you need to hear. ■

Information provided by Kevin Mayer, New Heights Church, 200 E. First Ave., Indianola, 515-442-5111.

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