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JANUARY 2024

Living

MAGAZINE

Class ACT

Residents share why they
continue to expand their
horizons through learning

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RECIPE

Coloring and beer: A winning combination

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8 winter skin care rules for young children



- 1. Turn home temperature down and moisture up.** Hot dry air is hard on skin, sinuses and nasal passages. Turn the furnace down a few degrees and use a vaporizer to add moisture to the air. If using a vaporizer, clean often to prevent growth of bacteria or mold.
- 2. Moisture is not good everywhere.** Wet bums and drooly chins can cause irritation. Use barrier cream, such as diaper cream within the diaper but not on the face.
- 3. Seal the skin following a bath.** Pat, not rub, the skin. While still just a bit wet, add lotion to seal in the moisture.
- 4. Hydrate and eat right.** Drink lots of water and eat foods high in fatty acids such as beans, olive oil, walnuts and winter squash, that help their skin to stay naturally moisturized.
- 5. Teach good habits early.** Add moisturizer to their hands after washing with soap or using hand sanitizer. Encourage the use of lip balms. Have these things readily available, including in backpacks at school.
- 6. Keep baths short.** Hot water causes drying so keep the temperature lukewarm. A quick bath 3 times a week for newborns is plenty.
- 7. Get smart about soap.** Children don't need fragrant soaps. Formulations that are fragrance free are best, or try a soap-free cleanser. Body washes should not need to be scrubbed. Wash gently and pat dry.
- 8. Sunscreen is still needed in winter.** The sun can be harmful no matter what the temperature is outside. And, 85 percent of the sun's rays can be reflected by the snow. Protect young skin with a 30 to 50 SPF baby-safe sunscreen 30 minutes before heading outside.



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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 Lindsey Giardino

You learn something new every day. Sometimes it's by accident, but sometimes it's intentional. Some people 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.

Last May, Lisa England marked a new chapter as she received her master's degree in industrial organizational psychology from Kansas State University.

Following healthcare advancements

Some folks in town may recognize Jennifer Blaylock ARNP as a provider at North Polk Family Medicine.

In addition to her work in primary care, she's currently training to administer Botox to patients who have muscle spasticity (overactive muscles) due to strokes, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries and more.

"There have been many therapeutic advancements with the use of Botox," Blaylock explains. "This allows patients to have more mobility, decreased pain and improved quality of life. I have a passion for following and learning the newest advancements in healthcare to better serve our patients."

Blaylock's training consists of bi-monthly meetings with a representative who specializes in muscles and injection techniques and involves using EMG (electromyography) and muscle stimulation to target specific muscles that are causing the patient's symptoms.

"We also utilize virtual reality



Jennifer Blaylock, ARNP, is a provider at North Polk Family Medicine. She is training to administer Botox to patients who have muscle spasticity due to strokes, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries and more.



Jennifer Blaylock, ARNP, engages in a virtual reality simulation as part of her training.

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simulations to provide life-like scenarios,” she shares. “The training also involves advanced muscle training from professors who specialize in anatomy.”

Blaylock’s new expertise will not only benefit patients who visit the North Polk Family Medicine clinic, but also residents who will live in the On With Life Rehab Center opening in Polk City this spring.

“Being able to provide relief and an increased quality of life to those who have already been through so much in their lives is something that makes all the time and effort worth it,” she says.

Blaylock’s biggest takeaway from her training thus far is how complex the human body really is. She believes if people can understand it more, they can make more advancements and help more people.

“I always enjoy a new challenge and learning new things,” Blaylock says. “One of my favorite quotes is, ‘Become comfortable with being uncomfortable’ — stepping out of our comfort zones and realizing there is so much more to

learn if you try or set your mind to it, even if at first it seems difficult or frustrating. Healthcare is constantly changing, and I have enjoyed learning to adapt and grow with it.”

Degree of help

At the age of 47, Lisa England says she feels her calling and purpose in life are finally coming together.

For more than 15 years, she’s worked in human resources. Last May, she marked a new chapter as she received her master’s degree in industrial organizational psychology from Kansas State University.

With this degree, England is better equipped to “help others, like employers and leaders, be better and do better, to establish a psychologically safe workplace where employees can learn and grow while being themselves.”

Today, she works full-time as a human resources and management adviser for the Iowa League of Cities. She also provides independent consulting on the side.

England shares she has a special place in her

heart for the public sector, as she was an HR director at a county hospital early in her career, as well as an EMT. Within Polk City, she’s served as a volunteer firefighter, too.

“Not only is my passion to improve the workplace, but it is also to help remove the stigma for brain health in employment, specifically for first responders,” England says. “Employers need to take care of those who are taking care of us.”

A path to healing

Amber Smith worked as a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the death care industry for the past decade.

“This path has been rewarding and held a special place in my heart,” she shares. “I decided three years ago that something was missing from my life, and I sought to find it.”

What she found was a passion for a specific type of medicine, which came from her own pathway to healing. Today, Smith is pursuing a doctor of acupuncture and Chinese medicine degree through the Pacific College of Health

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and Science in Chicago.

"When I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, I wanted to know the why behind the diagnosis that I received," Smith says. "I wanted to dive deep into what lessened the symptoms and how I could help myself. I wanted to feel heard. As I explored various wellness approaches like massage therapy, reflexology, integrative and functional medicine, I found myself increasingly drawn to traditional East Asian medicine. Today, we're at a critical juncture, merging the biomedical system with the rich heritage of traditional medicine."

Smith's journey to this new career path has been a challenging one considering the 700-mile round trip she embarks on each week to take classes on campus and gain hands-on experience during on-campus clinic shifts. As she progresses in her graduate program, she'll also gain off-site experience in hospitals, clinics and designated treatment sites as part of Pacific College's externship program.

Smith's goal is to open her own practice where she can make traditional East Asian medicine more readily available in central

Iowa, emphasizing its seamless integration with various medical approaches to provide comprehensive holistic care. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is thousands of years old and offers multiple therapeutic treatments including acupuncture, herbal medicine, massage and cupping.

Throughout her pursuit, Smith has embodied the quote, "Life is about the journey, not the destination," as her mantra — words that have carried her through on even the most difficult of days on her venture to become a healer. She also feels she's fostered a sense of resilience in her children, showing them that they, too, can do hard things.

Looking to the future, Smith imagines a healthy work-life balance, a sense of fulfillment in making a difference, and connecting with future patients to aid in their healing stories.

"I encourage adults to try new things," Smith shares. "Not only does it help our brain with increased cognitive function, but it increases confidence and creativity, which can lead to personal growth in many aspects of our lives."



After a 10-year career as a funeral director and licensed embalmer, Amber Smith is pursuing a doctor of acupuncture and Chinese medicine degree.

January Garden Calendar!

This time of year most are working on their New Year resolutions, but as a gardener you can get a fresh start to the New Year to ensure that this year's garden is the best ONE yet!

First, you'll want to take the time to clean out pots and sanitize your tools to prevent any diseases or pests from carrying over to the next growing season. Once your tools and containers are clean, it's time to plan out your garden. Seeds of celery, celeriac, sweet Spanish onion, parsley, anise, fibrous rooted begonia, snap-dragon, verbena, geranium, and petunia can be sown indoors now for transplanting outdoors later in the Spring.

It's also a good time to prune most of your deciduous trees and shrubs, continue to feed your compost pile by adding kitchen scraps and seeds that are passed their prime, fill up some bird feeders or hang some suet and watch the array of birds that flock to your yard during these cold and bleak days, and on cold nights close the curtains or blinds between the window and your house plants (NEVER place your house plants between the curtain and the window).

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Never too old

Alexandria Herrel's journey has been as wide-ranging and interesting as it has been heartbreaking.

In 2005, she worked as a preschool teacher. A decade later, as she was going through a divorce, she shifted into the hospitality industry and became a chef.

In 2019, Herrel became a widow with a newborn and two older kids to take care of. This meant that the long hours she worked as a chef weren't feasible anymore. So, she studied at the Gemology Institute of America and Rolex and went into fine jewelry sales.

Then, she and her family moved from California to Iowa, where the same industry wasn't readily available. Instead, she studied finance and was hired at VisionBank of Iowa as a banker.

This past year, though, Herrel realized banking wasn't the right path for the rest of her life. So she made yet another shift and started working at Blank Children's Hospital as a unit clerk in the pediatric unit.

"My life has been anything but how I had it planned out," Herrel says. "At 35, I have major career changes as changes in my life happened in order to fit my family better. You are never too old to learn a new skill or profession." ■



Alexandria Herrel has made a number of career changes and learned new skills as her family's needs have changed.

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COLORING and beer

A winning combination



Megan Jasso and Kate Oltmann met at Fenders to color and drink beer. Photo by Jackie Wilson



Jesse and Josselin Gutierrez and 2-year-old Rodrigo attended coloring night at Fenders. Photo by Jackie Wilson

Visit a local brewery and you might find board games, cards, dice games or a trivia night along with their brews.

Fenders Brewing in Polk City offers all that, plus, once a month, hosts coloring for adults, co-sponsored by the Polk City Community Library.

Fenders began their adult coloring nights in the spring of 2023. It's offered the second Wednesday of the month from 4-9 p.m. In addition, patrons can purchase half-price beer flights.

Don't worry that you might be coloring pages such as snowmen or teddy bears, similar to what a 5-year-old may color. These coloring pages are for adult skills and include sceneries, mosaics, and intricate patterns.

Or, if you're more adventurous, you can take a peek in the "adults only" folder. These pages may include adult language and themes, with references to drinking alcohol. For example, one says, "Life is too short to drink bad beer." However, these "adult only" pages are not provided by the library.

The Polk City Library began its own coloring program in May of 2016 on the third Tuesday of the month.

"We started it as a way to allow adults to relax and socialize while coloring," says Jamie Noack, library director. "We have a group of regular participants who rarely miss a month. They love getting together to visit."

The library partnered with Fenders to provide the coloring pages, along with gel pens and colored pencils.

"Outreach is so important for libraries, so we love partnering with businesses," says Noack. "So many people still think of libraries as a quiet place to get books. On the contrary, libraries have become community centers."

At Fenders, a handful of folks picked up some pages and colored pencils. Megan Jasso and Kate Oltmann met up for a drink and thought the coloring sounded like fun. The pair giggled while looking through the adults-only folder.

"We haven't seen each other in a long time," says Oltmann. "We've colored and done other



Sarah Mihm, bartender at Fenders, says she enjoys coloring and finds it to be a stress-reliever. Photo by Jackie Wilson

crafts, but thought this was a fun new place to color and have a beer."

Fenders bartender Sarah Mihm says she colors often during work meetings. "I love to color," she says. "It helps me focus. It's a stress reliever. You're creating something." ■

WONKA. Purple. Ferrari. Ducks.

And a great film directed by George Clooney and an awful one starring Eddie Murphy.

Grab another cup of coffee and take a nice long look at the lake, because we have some movies to talk about. Hang on tight. This is a lot to take in, but it will give you an idea of how my holidays were spent.



"Saltburn" (in a limited theatrical release and streaming)

This movie was apparently made to deliberately irritate at least half of its audience every night. It stars Barry Keoghan, who was Oscar-nominated for his performance in "The Banshees of Inisherin" last year, and it was written and directed by Emerald Fennell, who challenged us with "Promising Young Woman" a few years ago. This is a polarizing film that will test many audience members. It is not for the weak of heart. **Grade: B/B+**



"Candy Cane Lane" (streaming on Amazon Prime)

Eddie Murphy continues to embarrass himself in comedies that don't possess a single funny idea or line of dialogue. This movie will save you money because it will likely cause you to cancel Amazon Prime Video. The word abysmal comes to mind. This man simply needs to stop making movies. **Grade: D**

"Eileen" (coming to streaming soon)

Like the best of the old 1950s "tough guy fiction" noir films, "Eileen" is an interesting look at a young woman living a miserable existence working at the prison in a small town. Mom is dead, and dad is a former cop, now just a drunk who is literally drinking himself to death. Eileen's life changes dramatically when



a new woman is hired at the prison. To tell you more might spoil your fun. I liked the movie, but it is challenging at times. **Grade: A-**



"Wonka" (in theaters and doing well)
Timothee Chalamet inherits Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka mantle from Gene Wilder and Johnny Depp, and he does it quite well. Maybe better. It is a different Wonka than the previous over-the-top films, but I liked this one better. Sweet, charming and, of course, twisted, "Wonka" is one of the year's pleasant surprises. **Grade: A**



"The Boys in the Boat" (in theaters)
George Clooney directs this adaptation of the successful book about a small rowing team that ends up competing in the Olympics. I'm leaving out a lot of the story so you can experience it like we did. It is a wonderful movie about a piece of history I was unfamiliar with, and the film was exhilarating and very, very well done. **Grade: A**

"Migration" (in theaters)

From the animation folks who bring us those hilarious Minions movies, "Migration" is a story about a Mallard duck family trying to migrate to Jamaica. To say that it is a crazy trip would be an understatement. I found



"Migration" both fun and funny, but the kids in the packed theater were absolutely loving it. **Grade: B+**



"Anyone But You" (in theaters)

When a couple who meet in a cute way but end up splitting over a misunderstanding end up at a destination wedding together, funny stuff happens. It's not the best movie I saw this holiday season, but it does have some laugh-out-loud raunchiness with the premise. It is a popcorn movie, for sure. **Grade: B**



"Ferrari" (in theaters)

Director Michael Mann delivers another excellent film, this time about legendary auto designer Enzo Ferrari. My two Ford Windstar mini-vans would tell you I'm not a car guy, but this study of a man in crisis (on several levels) is so well done — and the ending so traumatic — I was completely on board. Adam Driver is excellent as Ferrari, and Penelope Cruz is also top-notch as his estranged wife. **Grade: A- ■**

Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986 and can be heard talking movies every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. on KXn0 106.3 with Keith Murphy and Andy Fales. You can also follow him on Twitter @MrMovieDSM.



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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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POLK CITY Kiwanis Seniors of the Month

The Kiwanis Club of Polk City has announced its Seniors of the Month for December are Samantha Nicole Weers, Alyson Marie Burdine and Rebecca Josephine Greene.

Samantha Nicole Weers

"My name is Samantha Weers. My parents are Ben and Brenda, and I have two sisters, Sydney and Stella. I have attended North Polk schools all 12 years. My favorite classes in school are in the science department. I have had the amazing opportunity to participate in several activities at the school. I run track and cross country, which has taught me perseverance and determination. I am an extremely active member of the band, being involved in marching band, concert band, pep band, jazz band, pit band, show band, band buddies and band leadership team as the head section leader of my section, the trumpets. Band has allowed me to push myself to be the best musician possible and make close connections with others. Band has also given me the opportunity to participate in honor bands such as Drake Honor Band and the Raccoon River Conference Honor Band for two years. I am involved in the play and speech. I am a member of the National Honor Society and National Spanish Society. I have also received the Gold Honor Roll the last four years as well as been on the DMACC President's list. I volunteer at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church nearly every week. Working on the Big Red Food Truck as well as Brick and Ember Pizza has taught me lessons on responsibility. I am very excited to study biology or life sciences at Iowa State next year."



Alyson Marie Burdine

"Any subject or activity that allows me to be around people and have creative freedom is something I enjoy. All the activities I am involved in are made fun by the people who I get to be around. But also because it allows me to express myself creatively through writing, acting or music. I consider myself lucky to be able to do things I love doing especially with people who I love being around."

Alyson's parents are Megan and Nicholas Burdine and she has one sibling, Aden. Her favorite school subject is English. She is involved in speech, play, musical, concert band, choir, mock trial, pep band and marching band. She has been on the Gold honor roll every year and DMACC Dean's List. After graduation, she plans to attend DMACC for an associate's degree then transfer to an undecided four-year university to get a master's degree in mental health psychology to become a licensed mental health counselor.



Rebecca Josephine Greene

"My name is Rebecca Greene, and I'm from Ankeny. Outside of studying, I spend my time practicing and performing a range of fine arts activities, including the marching band and the winter guard team. Additionally, on Fridays and Tuesdays, I am cheering on our varsity teams or practicing new stunts and cheers with the cheer squad. I spend a lot of time bonding with my teammates by passionately working to better our sports/activities together. Teams aside, I have a personal passion for creating. I enjoy making art, whether it is through colors such as painting, clay in pottery, crafting with embroidery, or writing. I love creativity and originality so I use art to embrace myself."

Rebecca is the daughter of Gabriela Greene and sibling to Veronica Schiltz, Purmon Greene, David Greene, Aaliyah Greene and Aaron Greene. Her favorite school subjects are English and art. She is on the Gold honor roll and a member of Spanish Honor Society and Art Honor Society. After graduation, she says, "I want to major in either psychology or criminal justice and minor in Spanish. I am still deciding which college I want to go to." ■



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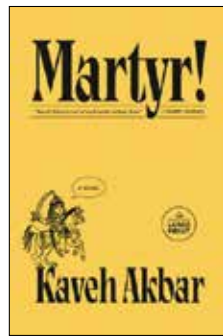
2732 SE Delaware Ave, Ankeny, IA (515) 207-1128

'Martyr!'

There's something special about reading a debut novel. When that author is a beloved poet, however, I get a little worried. Poetry in long form doesn't always translate well, and sometimes substance gets lost in a whirl of words. I shouldn't have worried. Akbar has a true gift in whatever form he chooses to display his craft.

Cyrus is an Iranian immigrant to the U.S. who is struggling with that age-old question, how can I make my life matter? Different voices weave through the narrative, some real, some ghostly, some entirely fictional. Themes of the power of being present, of hope, and, of course, love, surround the disparate chapters and tie them together. Often very funny and more profound than it should be, especially when Cyrus is talking to Lisa Simpson.

At first disjointed and seemingly unconnected, this is a rich and sad and powerful story that ties so many threads together with a bow of magical realism and vibrant longing. The poetry Akbar is known for bleeds into the pages. The writing is stellar, but there's a story here that transcends itself, coalescing around the near universal feeling of being both stuck and untethered at the same. I haven't been this excited about a new author in a long time. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



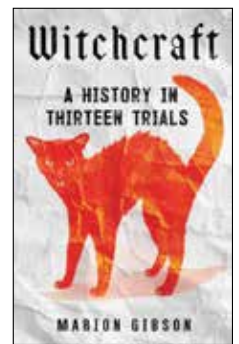
By Kaveh Akbar
1/23/24
352 pages
\$28
Knopf

'Witchcraft: A History in Thirteen Trials'

I was a little surprised when I picked up this book. I expected a scholarly retelling of the famous witch trials in the U.S. and the U.K. from ages long past. I had no idea there were trials in Norway, specifically to accuse and bully indigenous populations. I had some vague notion of witchcraft in historical African countries, but I had no knowledge of the lengths the colonizing British forces would go to control the populace. I should have known better and am so glad I've read this book.

Viewing the history of witchcraft and its political uses through the lens of the legal systems, scholar and expert Marion Gibson tells 13 very different tales of witches all across the globe and what their prosecution, and persecution, says about the times and places they lived. These are engaging, intriguing and often very sad tales that put a misunderstood feature of human history into sharp relief.

The span of time and the implications of "othering" take us right up to modern times and the new ways in which people are ostracized and shunned. This is an important book for scholarship, but equally applicable to our lives now, and the struggles of women and minorities everywhere. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Marion Gibson
1/16/24
320 pages
\$28
Scribner

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



IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Ankeny and Northern Polk County?

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

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2024 Ankeny and Northern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish April issues of Ankeny and North Polk magazines. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

HURRY! POLL CLOSES MARCH 4, 2024.

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

SCAN HERE TO VOTE TODAY!



FOOD AND DRINK

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

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

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

SHOPPING

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

ENTERTAINMENT

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

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

HEALTH/BEAUTY

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

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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

CITYVIEW'S WINTER EVENT IS BACK!

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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.

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POLK CITY Community Library news

K-5th Comets Kids Club, Monday, Feb 5, 4-4:45 p.m. Join for a special themed Valentines snack and craft. Registration is required.

Wednesday Book Club, "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison, Wednesday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m. The chronicle of the tragic lives of a poor black family in 1940s America. Every night, Pecola, unlovely and unloved, prays for blue eyes like those of her white schoolfellows.

Babble and Brew, Thursday, Feb. 8, 10 a.m. Longing for grown-up conversation? We will have coffee for you and exciting, age-appropriate toys for the kiddos.

Soaking It Up: What a Rain Garden Can Do For You, Thursday, Feb. 8, 6 p.m. Hear from a representative from Polk County Public Works on the hows and whys of rain gardens: a yard feature that can absorb rain runoff that might otherwise run into streets and storm drains. After, hear from Polk City's City Manager's office on funding opportunities to help offset the cost of starting a rain garden.

Hot Cocoa Spoons, Monday, Feb. 12, 6 p.m. Come make a yummy gift for yourself or someone you love at this DIY food program. We'll make stirring spoons to flavor and decorate your hot chocolate with candy melts and sprinkles. Ages 17 and older, registration required.

STEM Book Club (K-fifth grade), Tuesday, Feb. 13, 4 p.m. We will read the book "The Love Letter" by Anika Aldamuy Denise then create a Valentine's love letter of our own that lights up using circuits. Registration required.

Adult Coloring at Fender's Brewing, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 5-7 p.m. Join us for a relaxing evening of coloring. Colored pencils and gel pens will

be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own. Ages 17 and older.

Music and Movement, Thursday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m. Come shimmy and shake with your child. Dance and sing while building pre-reading skills with rhythm and rhyme.

Adult DIY Candle Painting, Thursday, Feb. 15, 6 p.m. Create your own custom candle by painting on one with melted wax! Ages 17 and older. RSVP at www.polkcitylibrary.org.

Monday Book Club, "The Measure" by Nikki Erlick, Monday, Feb. 19, 2 p.m. It seems like any other day. You wake up, pour a cup of coffee, and head out. But today, when you open your front door, waiting for you is a small wooden box. This box holds your fate inside: the answer to the exact number of years you will live.

Adult Crafternoon Scented Handwarmers, Monday, Feb. 20, 1 p.m. Spring is on its way, but it's not here yet. If your hands are still feeling chilly, come craft your own scented hand warmers. Ages 17 and older. RSVP at www.polkcitylibrary.org.

Adult Coloring, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 5-7 p.m. Join us for a relaxing evening of coloring. Colored pencils and gel pens will be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own. Ages 17 and older.

Messy Munchkins, Thursday, Feb. 22, 10-10:45 a.m. Does your toddler or preschooler always make a mess? It is actually a great way for them to learn. Visit us and let your child explore sensory tables we will put out. Have your child wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty.

D.I.Y. Teen Craft-Paint Your Own Canvas Bag, Thursday, Feb. 22, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Teens will love drawing with paint pens to create their own unique canvas zipper bags to stash their stuff in. Registration required.

Kids Coloring & Movie, Friday, Feb. 23. Come relax with some coloring while watching a movie.

Story Time Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 a.m. Join us at the library for stories, songs and an activity or craft. Choose the day that works best for you. Register online at our website for one of the programs each week. Every story can be logged in our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, too.

Chair Yoga, Mondays, 9 a.m. Join Rachel Snyder via Zoom. We will be broadcasting the class on the big screen in the library or you can join us from home. Chair yoga is a gentle practice in which postures are performed while seated and/or with the support of a chair. No experience is necessary. Gentle strength training may also be incorporated into the practice. Props such as hand weights, resistance bands and a yoga block may be helpful if desired, but not necessary. The Zoom link can be found on our online catalog at polkcitylibrary.org.

Geri-Fit® Strength Training Workouts, Tuesdays at 9 a.m. Strength Training workouts that work for all ages and fitness levels, Geri-Fit is challenging, effective and safe to do. The Geri-Fit® program requires a set of light dumbbell weights, a sturdy chair and water to drink during the workout. Ages 50 and older. Stretch bands are available upon request. If you would like to participate from home via Zoom, please let the library know ahead of time so we can email you the link.

Ladies' Wednesday Coffee. Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Ladies, join us for coffee and conversation.

Sit N' Stitch. Thursdays, 6-8 p.m. Bring your current project and join us for stitching and conversation.

Men's Friday Coffee. Fridays, 10 a.m. to noon. Gentlemen, drop in for coffee and conversation. Enjoy spending time and having a few laughs or interesting discussions with other men from around the area. ■

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WHAT IS my Medicare going to cost?

Will your income two years ago change your Medicare premium? How about your IRMAA calculation? Hmm... Not familiar with that anacronym? Let's start there. IRMAA stands for Income-Related Medicare Adjusted Amount. This series of letters has to do with what you will pay for your Medicare Part B premium. Now, it may seem that, if you paid into Medicare your whole life, your premium should cost the same as your neighbor's. This is not a safe assumption. In fact, a lifetime of saving for retirement could mean your monthly health insurance premiums are higher than others. I will use a simple example to illustrate this.



Let's assume that John is turning 65 this year and will elect Medicare also. (For the purpose of this example, these numbers happened two years ago.) John made \$70,000 on his W-2 income from employment, and he decided to sell his cabin in northern Minnesota the same year. (He hadn't been there much in the last few years, and he couldn't turn down a great offer.) It sold for \$150,000 more than he purchased it 15 years ago. Therefore, John's adjusted gross income in 2021 was \$220,000.

Here is the challenge: Medicare premiums. Why would thinking about Medicare premiums be the issue here when it happened two years before he turned 65? Medicare determines premiums based on your Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI). When assessing premiums, Medicare does not allow itemized deductions (even if John had a lot of expenses necessary to fix up the cabin before he sold this investment property).

In 2023, this year, John would have paid:

- \$527.50 a month for Medicare Part B (\$6,330 for the year), and
- \$70 a month for Medicare Part D (\$840 for the year)

If John had not sold the cabin in 2021, his 2023 Medicare premiums would have totaled \$1,979 (\$164.90 x 12) versus \$7,170. For John, his IRMAA created an extra annual tax of \$5,191. Again, when most of his neighbors may be paying a lower premium this year, his will be higher for one year.

There are a lot of examples of this that many near retirees and retired individuals are not aware of, for example:

- ROTH IRA conversions of too much or in the wrong year
- Spending your 401K at higher levels in the first couple years of retirement, as is the pattern for the newly retired
- Opportuning on cap gains when the market may be taking a drop (selling high)
- What about increased donations thinking you would itemize the charitable gift
- What if you needed to use your retirement to assist with necessary medical expenses

So, what is the takeaway? There are so many things to consider when retiring, and many people don't go looking for assistance on these issues until months before retirement. Whether right or wrong, most of us don't think about these choices that were made two to three years ago. Don't forget to keep your financial adviser involved in your financial decisions and consider involving one a decade before the big day. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 6165 N.W. 86th St., Johnston, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, 515-727-1701, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

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Cheers to a New Year!

As the calendar turns the page, we wish you the very best in the year ahead.



Kyle Matzen, AAMS™

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RECIPE

MORE fresh flavors for the New Year

Roasted cauliflower and potato spinach salad

Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 40 minutes
Servings: 4

- 1 small head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1 pound fingerling potatoes, quartered
- 1 package (8 ounces) Fresh Express French Blue Cheese Salad Kit



Directions

- Heat oven to 425 F.
- In large bowl, toss cauliflower florets with 2 tablespoons olive oil. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning and 1/4 teaspoon salt; mix well. Arrange in single layer on sheet pan.
- Bake cauliflower 30-40 minutes, tossing once halfway through, until tender and lightly charred. Cool.
- In bowl, toss potatoes with remaining olive oil. Sprinkle with remaining Italian seasoning and salt; mix well. Arrange in single layer on sheet pan.
- Bake potatoes 20 minutes until tender and lightly browned. Cool.
- Place greens from salad kit in large bowl; add roasted vegetables. Drizzle with dressing from salad kit; mix well. Top with croutons and blue cheese from salad kit.

Strawberry oatmeal smoothie



- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1 banana
- 14 frozen strawberries
- 1 cup soy milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

- In blender, grind oats. Add banana, strawberries, soy milk, sugar and vanilla extract then blend until smooth. Pour into glass or to-go container and serve.

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NEAR to so much

Proximity to metro and parks is big draw for the Boelts family.



Tim and Sarah Boelts enjoy living in Polk City and being near the many recreational opportunities available for their family.

For Tim and Sarah Boelts, Polk City was a big draw because they wanted to live in a small town close to Des Moines.

The couple moved to town in 2012 after finding the perfect home for their family on East Pine Ridge Drive.

“We loved the house, the layout and the landscape,” Sarah Boelts says. “We love the pine trees in the backyard, the hardwood floors, the big kitchen and the woodwork. Tim enjoys his workshop in the basement where he paints, builds models and does woodworking.”

The location of the Boelts’ home also provides easy access to outdoor recreation at places like Saylorville Lake, Big Creek State Park and Jester Park.

“We like the easy bike ride to the Square,” Boelts says. “It’s

also a safe and quiet neighborhood close to the bike path.”

The Boelts family also appreciates the thing about Polk City that brought them to the community in the first place.

“We like the small-town feel since we are both from small towns in north central Iowa,” she says. “We enjoy the festivals on the Square and spending time at Big Creek Beach.”

The family is active in the community as well, with Boelts serving as co-leader of a third grade Brownie Girl Scout troop since 2021, which their daughter, Elena, is in. She also coached softball for Polk City Little League this last spring.

Ultimately, Polk City is a community that has provided the Boelts family with the home and feel they were looking for. ■

Be sure to check for cancellations.

North Polk student art exhibited

Reception date: Feb. 9, 5-7 p.m.
The Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

The Ankeny Art Center's annual K-12 art exhibits have been part of an extended outreach program for more than two decades. With the goal of introducing students to the gallery setting, center officials "hope to bring about individual self-worth within the community, increase community involvement, and promote culture and diversity. Through seeing their art on a gallery wall, we hope to bring insight to the students about becoming an exhibiting artist in the future." The center exhibits student art from the Ankeny, Bondurant-Farrar and North Polk community school districts. Receptions include drinks and cookies and are free and open to the public. Works will be on display and available for viewing during the Ankeny Art Center's open hours.

Museum open

Urbandale Historical Society, 4010 70th St.

The Olmsted-Urban House will be open for viewing the second Sunday of each month 2-4 p.m. for viewing. The Historical Society will also hold monthly programs at the Urbandale Library the first Sunday of each month at 2 p.m. The topic for Feb. 11 is TBA. March 10, the topic is the Urbandale Fire Department presented by Jerry Holt.

Theater and dance

Actors, Inc. - Ames Community Theater

120 Abraham Drive, Ames
actorsinc.org

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

ANKENY COMMUNITY THEATRE

1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny
ankenycommunitytheatre.com

• Feb. 9-18: "The Odd Couple, Female Version"

CLASS ACT PRODUCTIONS

201 First Ave. S., Altoona
captheatre.org

• Feb. 16-18, 23-25, March 1-3: "The Music Man Jr."

Des Moines Performing Arts

Des Moines Civic Center,
221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

• Jan. 23-28: "Mamma Mia!"

• Jan. 27: Havana Hop

Stephens Auditorium

1900 Center Drive, Ames
center.iastate.edu/events

• Jan. 30: "Jesus Christ Superstar"

DES MOINES COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE

831 42nd St., Des Moines
dmplayhouse.com

• Feb. 2-18: "Our Town"

SIMPSON COLLEGE

513 N D St., Indianola
simpson.edu/academics/departments/departments-theatre-arts

• Feb. 16-18: "The Telephone & The Medium"

STEPHENS AUDITORIUM

1900 Center Drive, Ames
center.iastate.edu/events

• Jan. 30: "Jesus Christ Superstar"

• Feb. 2-3: Barjché

• Feb. 8: Langston Hughes Project

• Feb. 29 through March 3: "Always Plenty of Light at the Starlight All Night Dinner"

TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines

tallgrasstheatre.org

• Feb. 2-18: "Equus"



Waukee Family Fest

Saturday, Jan. 20, 9 a.m. to noon
Lutheran Church of Hope - Waukee

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



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.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Music

DES MOINES CIVIC CENTER

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

dmpa.org

- Feb. 23-24: Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix™ in concert

DES MOINES SYMPHONY

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

dmsymphony.org

- Feb. 3-4: Discover Groundbreaking Innovation

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines

hoytsherman.org

- Feb. 6: Hélène Grimaud: Lauridsen Great Pianist Series at 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 9: Nickel Creek at 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 23: Postmodern Jukebox at 8 p.m.
- Feb. 24: Marty Stuart and his Fabulous Superlatives at 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 29: Cat Power sings Dylan: The 1966 Royal Albert Hall concert at 7:30 p.m.

WELLS FARGO ARENA

Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines

iowaeventscenter.com

- Jan. 25: Disturbed - Take Back Your Life tour with Falling In Reverse and Plush
- Feb. 2: WINTER JAM 2024



MORE JANUARY EVENTS

- **Jan. 20: Candlelight: A Tribute to Queen and more** at World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, 100 Locust St., Des Moines; feverup.com/m/138464
- **Jan. 27: Demetri Martin: The Joke Machine Tour** at Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events
- **Jan. 30 through Feb. 1: Iowa Ag Expo** at Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; iowaeventscenter.com/wells-fargo-arena
- **Feb. 2: Kathy Griffin: My Life on the PTSD-list.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events
- **Feb. 3: The Snow Ball.** Science Center of Iowa, 401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway; DSM.city/SnowBall
- **Feb. 10: Winter Blues Fest 2024.** Downtown Des Moines Marriott, 700 Grand Ave., Des Moines; cibs.org
- **Feb. 10: The Fur Ride.** Put on the fake fur and ride around town. Starting at Ricochet and ending at Big Grove Brewery, 400 Locust St., Suite 105, Des Moines; aboveandbeyondcancer.org
- **Feb. 10-18: Iowa Beef Expo.** Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; iowastatefairgrounds.org
- **Feb. 11: Chinese New Year.** Jester Park Nature Center, 12130 N.W. 128th St., Granger; jesterparknaturecenter.com
- **Feb. 14-17: 2024 IHSA State Wrestling Tournament.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines; iahsaa.org/wrestling
- **Feb. 17: Ari Shaffir: The Wrong Side of History Tour.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events
- **Feb. 17: Prepare to be amazed by the The Peking Acrobats.** 11 a.m. at the Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; dmpa.org
- **Feb. 27 through March 3: Les Misérables,** one of the world's most popular musicals. Starting at various times at the Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; dmpa.org
- **Feb. 28: Coldest Night of the Year Fun Run/Walk.** Held by Central Iowa Shelter and Services at Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines; centraliowashelter.org
- **Feb. 29: Greensky Bluegrass.** Val Air Ballroom. 301 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines; firstfleetconcerts.com/events ■

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	Saturday: 4:00 pm	Saturday,
	Sunday: 9:00 am	3:00 pm — 3:30 pm

www.dmall Saints.org

2nd Ave south to 54th Ave, then east to 3rd St
3rd St south to 52nd Ave, then east to the church



Olivia Tebben, owner of Little Lion Eclectics, at Light up Polk City on Dec. 1.



The Grinch and kids playing at Susie Sheldahl, Realty ONE Group Impact office at Light Up Polk City on Dec. 1.



Liam Olson and Cam Robertson, North Polk fifth-grade band members, at Light Up Polk City on Dec. 1.



Susie Sheldahl and Nan Boland with the Polk City Community Foundation presented a check to Roxanna Currie, representing the Big Creek Historical Society, on Dec. 26.



Alysia Olson and Nan Boland at The Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City on Nov. 8.



Larry and Rob Cupp at The Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City on Nov. 8.



Jeremy Siepker and Chelsea Huisman at The Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City on Nov. 8.



Logan Albaugh and Rose Taylor at The Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City on Nov. 8.



Brian Nelson and Wendy Musgrave at The Polk City Chamber of Commerce lunch at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City on Nov. 8.

CLASSIFIEDS

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VARSITY Basketball

North Polk Girls Varsity
basketball vs. ADM in
Adel on Dec. 12



Emily Gibbons and Ava Ferguson-Sampson



Meredith Whitted and Lola Austin



Carolyn Von Der Eldern, Olivia Nefzger, Rebecca Greene



Elinor Austin, Jamie McKnight



Campbell Schultz



Lauren Ausborn



Abby Tuttle



Fayth Sullivan



Jada Podey



Kaylee Koudelka



Greta Dillinger



Becca Aagard



THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

JANUARY 2024

NORTH POLK HOSTS FIRST-EVER GIRLS WRESTLING MEET

On January 4th, 2024, North Polk High School marked a historic milestone by hosting its first-ever girls wrestling meet. The school is currently in a cooperative agreement to send our five High School Girls Wrestlers to compete with the Ankeny Girls Wrestling team (AGW).



The meet showcased a competitive quad, featuring AGW in spirited matches against Algona, Winterset, and West Marshall.

The atmosphere was charged with excitement as these talented athletes demonstrated their skills on the mat. Girls Wrestling has earned its place as the 11th sport sanctioned by the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU), following in the footsteps of bowling, which was added in 2007. Iowa, as the 34th state association to sanction girls' wrestling, is embracing this progressive move in female sports.



This decision was solidified when the IGHSAU Board of Directors unanimously voted to sanction girls wrestling in January 2022. The first IGHSAU-sanctioned girls wrestling season took place during the 2022-23 school year. We look forward to watching this program continue to build.

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

Preschool sign-ups for the 2024-2025 school year are here! If you or someone you know needs to get their youngest learners signed up for next fall, now is the time.

Preschool Sign-Ups/Registration for the 2024-25 school year is open on our school registration page on our website on January 17th, 2024. Detailed instructions on the sign-up/registration process will be available at that time. Please continue to check our school registration site for any updates.

The registration period will be in full swing until February 7th, 2024. Be sure to complete the process by this date to secure your child's place. After February 7th, inquiries will be added to a waiting list, subject to availability.



NPCSD HIRING IN THE NEW YEAR!

Join our team of dedicated professionals! We're continually on the lookout for exceptional individuals to fill various positions, such as paraeducators, substitute teachers, bus drivers, and nutrition staff. If you're passionate about making a difference in education and contributing to our community, we want to hear from you. Apply now and become an integral part of our team, dedicated to helping students thrive. Visit northpolk.org/careers to start your journey with us today!

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