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IF YOU have a heart...

When our editor talked with me about writing stories on organ transplants, I told her how I once moved a piano. She didn't laugh but instead told me how this was a serious and important subject. She was right about that, and I was insensitive with my reply.

Like most of you reading this, I have not had to deal with organ failure or the need for organ transplants. I am quite thankful for that.

Like many of you reading this, I agreed to be an organ donor when I renewed my driver's license several years ago. I had to pull my license out of my wallet and check it to be sure. You should do so right now, too.

I have some friends who have put great thought into this and how their organs can help others live longer lives. I have other friends who are also organ donors but have not thought about it much at all, having the attitude that they will be dead and don't really care. Regardless of how you feel, those who benefit from your organ donations will be forever grateful, as will their family members and friends.

Mothers will be able to bear children. Fathers will be able to walk their daughters down the wedding aisle. Grandparents will be able to hug their grandkids. And young children can learn to smile, knowing their lives won't likely end anytime soon.

As a regular reader of this magazine, you know we cover a variety of subjects and themes in our cover stories. In the past few months alone, we have written about the benefits of hiring senior employees, dream vacations for local families, ongoing educational opportunities, Christmas card traditions, early risers and more. Some topics have been light-hearted while others have had more serious tones.

As you have likely figured out by now, this month's cover features the stories of local residents and the positive impact of organ donations. I got choked up while reading it, and I found the stories to be incredibly touching. I think you will, too.

If you are not an organ donor, I hope these stories change your mind and have you consider becoming one. We share details on how you can do so, along with the heart-warming stories of local residents who are deeply grateful for those who already have. Be sure to read the story, but grab some tissues first.

Thanks for reading.

SHANE GOODMAN

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





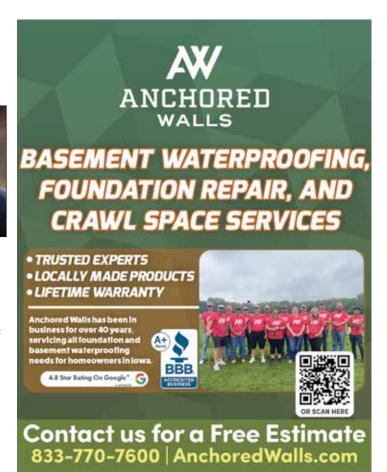








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FEATURE

A gift for a near stranger

On March 9, 2016, Larkin Williams of Winterset donated a kidney to Emily Roush, who has lived in Indianola for eight years. The two are not related but had worked together at a care facility.

Organ donation was something Larkin had been interested in. Still, one day in the break room changed everything for her and solidified her desire to donate the gift of life.

"There was a posting in the break room at work, so I took down the information and called on my break to get the process started," she says.

Emily had a rare neurological disorder that went undiagnosed for more than a year and resulted in kidney damage.

Larkin encourages others to also "share your spare" in reference to having two kidneys.

"Over 100,000 people are waiting for life-saving organ transplants; more than 80% of those need a kidney," says Larkin.

She also wants other would-be donors of kidneys to know they can go on to live a healthy life after donating.

The second most needed organ is the liver, which some people can donate while living. The surgeons only take a portion, and your liver regenerates itself.

"Knowing that you helped someone's mother, father, daughter, son, wife, husband, etc., have a longer life to spend with their loved ones is one of the most fulfilling feelings I have had the pleasure to experience in my life, second only to having my children," Larkin says.

She adds, the most fulfilling moment in her organ donation experience has been to witness Emily go on living a normal life.

"I have seen all the things she's gotten to do since receiving my kidney. She got married five months later, and she has gotten to watch her children grow up," Larkin says.

She has not only given a gift to Emily but to Emily's family as well.

"I have seen her live her life and know that her children have their mom to get them through childhood," Larkin says. "That is the most rewarding part of the whole experience."

The most challenging time for Emily was the recovery.

"The pain was pretty bad but not unbearable," she says. "I didn't bounce back as quickly as I thought my young body would, but I was back to normal after about two months."

The last time Emily had normal kidney function was in 1999. At the time of her kidney transplant from Larkin, she was just 39 years old. Emily spent about nine months on the transplant waiting list. A dozen family members and friends were tested to see if they were a donor match, but none were.

Larkin was practically a stranger at the time of the donation. About three weeks after starting her job at Westview Care Center in Indianola as a CNA, Larkin saw the flyer about Emily in the break room.

"She needed help, and I wanted to help her," says Larkin, who is a mother of two.

Emily almost couldn't believe it.

"I'll fully admit that, if I had been healthy, I don't think I would have donated a kidney," admits Emily, who recovered well after the transplant.

"It was all worth it once I knew she was doing well," says Larkin.

Once coworkers who barely knew each other, Larkin and Emily now share the bond of a lifetime.

April is Donate Life Month, a time to raise organ and tissue donation awareness. Currently, 637 Iowans are on the waiting list.



Larkin Williams, left, donated her kidney to Emily Roush on March 9, 2016.

Daughter gained decades with dad

Chelsea Christensen's family lives in Winterset, and her dad, Ted Nowakowski, is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the longest-surviving heart transplant recipient at 34 years, 8 months and 17 days. Chelsea moved to Winterset in 2010, and her parents moved there shortly before Ted's death in 2018.

"My dad had a heart transplant in 1983 and lived for just under 35 years after his transplant," Chelsea says.

Ted had a notable life, to say the least. He grew up in Dayton, Ohio, and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1967 to 1970 in Vietnam, receiving two Purple Hearts and being honorably discharged. Ted became an art teacher and then principal after college.

Ted married Kathleen, and they had their family: Sarah (Matthew) Kirkland of Winterset, Neil (fiancé Krystal Dominguez) Nowakowski of Murray, and Chelsea (Tate) Christensen of Winterset. Later, he and Kathleen had grandkids. Ted was a loving family man and lived life to the fullest with his heart transplant. He coached Little League and junior and senior high football at Murray, and enjoyed hunting, fishing, college football, sitting by the fire, and reading the paper.

He was 34 when he received his new heart in 1983. He had been diagnosed with idiopathic cardiomyopathy.

"My dad lived to be almost 70," says Chelsea. "It was kind of a miracle my brother and I were born post-transplant because the medicines he was on drastically affected him, so they were told he probably wouldn't have any more kids."

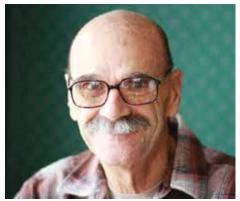
Chelsea is grateful for the anonymous donor who gave her dad the gift of life and who made her birth possible.

"The donor was someone from the Chicago area who passed away in a motorcycle accident," she says. "It's crazy to think that, because of the organ donation, my dad was able to bring my brother and me into this world."

In addition, Ted was able to attend graduations, walk his daughters down the aisle at their weddings, and become a grandpa.

"These were all things we weren't sure would ever happen," Chelsea says. "Dad's best memories were living the slow life in southern Iowa with

FEATURE



Ted Nowakowski, who died in 2018, lived for more than 34 years after his heart transplant. His daughter, Chelsea Christensen, is grateful that her father lived long enough to have her and to be part of his family's lives for those decades.

his loving wife and kids. I think that was always his dream, and he got to live that."

Right before the transplant, Ted's heart was working at about 25% of what a normal heart would be.

"His goal was to see his only daughter's first birthday. There was a six-month wait after being put on the transplant list that was stressful to both him and my mom," says Chelsea. These were pre-cell phone days, so any time they left the house, Chelsea's parents had to notify three people so that they could be tracked down if they got the call that a heart was available.

Though Chelsea's family never knew much about the donor, they did realize that the best day of Ted's family's life was the worst for the donor's family.

"If I met them, I would give them a big hug," she says. "I don't think telling them 'thank you' would be enough. Because of them, I got to experience life. And not just life, but life with a dad."

Chelsea wants to raise transplant donor awareness.

"It is so important," she says. "I love that I got to live because my dad got to. My favorite picture is of him on the swing — it's just him living life."

From recipient to advocate

Cathy Simon is a big proponent of organ transplants, and for good reason. She received a kidney transplant in June of 2023.

"I am active in the National Kidney Foundation. I was in D.C. at the Kidney Summit advocating for kidney-related legislation," she says.

Cathy is passionate about the topic, as she has been a recipient twice in her lifetime.

"My first transplant was 30 years ago from my mom, Susan Anderson," she says. "My second was last June from a deceased donor after I spent two years on dialysis."

Cathy is grateful for donors like her mom and the anonymous donor who have given her the gift of life.

Cathy was first diagnosed with kidney disease when she was 25 years old.

"I was told I would need a kidney transplant sometime shortly," she says.

They found her mother was a match, and Cathy's new kidney provided her with an active life for 30 years.

"I have enjoyed the quality of life that good health allows, including raising a family and working full time," she says.

Cathy's mom, now 83, continues to be in good health, a testament to the fact that a donor can have a healthy life with one kidney.

"My mom has traveled to all seven continents. Donating a kidney at age 53 has not slowed her down," Cathy says.



FEATURE

In 2021, Cathy's renal function began to decline.

"I spent the next two years on dialysis," she says. "During that time, I was fatigued, nauseous, puffy, and uncertain about my future."

Throughout that time of uncertainty, Cathy did not lose hope.

"My faith sustained me through this, as did my incredible husband, Randy, who took on the role of caregiver with courage and compassion," she says.

While Cathy was on dialysis, several loved ones volunteered to be evaluated for donating one of their kidneys to her.

"The gratitude Randy and I feel toward these individuals is indescribable," she says.

Cathy was placed on the wait list for a kidney transplant. The typical wait time can vary, but it is three to five years on average. In early June 2023, Cathy received the call that a kidney was available.

The family of a 40-year-old on life support had made the heart-wrenching decision to withdraw life support and donate the organs.

Cathy and her family felt a range of emotions. "We felt shocked, excitement, fear and

sadness," she says. "My husband and I decided to take the option of the deceased donation. Twenty-four hours later, I had a new, working kidney."

Cathy's quality of life again improved.

"I was freed from dialysis prison," she says. "Now, I have no diet or fluid restrictions. I have the energy to enjoy life and pursue new interests."

Cathy doesn't know the name of her donor or where the donor lived.

"Recently, I wrote a letter to the donor's family. The Iowa Donor Network (IDN) will mail my letter to the family and continue protecting donor and recipient confidentiality. If both parties want to meet, the IDN will arrange it."

The letter was difficult for Cathy to write.

"I don't know if the donor had a spouse or children. But somewhere out there is a momma who is grieving for her child. I hope the family will someday read my letter and gain some comfort from it," she says.

Cathy is grateful for both the gifts of a lifetime she has received.

"The decision they made changed the course of my life," she says. "I will take tender care of

How to become an organ donor

Register with the DMV or register online at the Iowa Donor Network website, www.iowadonornetwork.org.

- 637 lowans are waiting for an organ transplant.
- 103,388 people are on the National Organ Waiting List.
- 16 lowans are waiting for a heart
- 559 lowans are waiting for a kidney
- 347 organs were transplanted in lowa in 2022.

this new kidney, just like my mom's."

The best memory Cathy has made since her most recent transplant was a trip to Washington, D.C., with Randy and their grandson, Ethan.

"Randy and Ethan enjoyed the museums and monuments while I joined the 168 National Kidney Foundation Patient Advocates on Capitol Hill," she says.

For more information, visit www.kidney.org/ advocacy and www.kidney.org. ■







REAL ESTATE By Jennifer Stover

HOME inspections from the seller's side

Often, home inspections focus on the buyer's side of the transaction and items they should look out for during the inspection. However, sellers also need to have good advice from their Realtor during the inspection period. It can be a nerve-wracking position to be in as a homeowner, so here are a few tips to help navigate the process.



1. Trust your Realtor - Your Realtor will help you differentiate between minor and major inspection

findings. They will also help you craft a game plan for any repair requests.

- 2. Allow time Rushing the home inspector isn't going to do you any favors. You should expect the process to take a minimum of two to four hours, depending on the size of the home. It's generally best for the seller to leave during this time.
- 3. Fully operational Make sure that all utilities are on and provide remote controls for any associated equipment such as lights or fans. This will make it easier for the inspector to do their job as quickly as possible.
- **4. Be prepared** Know which items the inspector is looking for: water damage, roof condition, leaking pipes, HVAC age and functionality. These are big ticket items that pose a safety or health issue.

Maintenance of a home is important and the key to a great home inspection.

Information provided by Jennifer Stover, 515-480-3389, Madison County Realty, 65 W. Jefferson St., Winterset, jenniferstover@madisoncountyrealty.com. Licensed in Iowa.

AUTOMOTIVE

By Dawn Lauer

OUT of alignment

While spring brings some wonderful things like warmer temperatures and longer days, it also brings us potholes. Potholes are an unfortunate result of the harsh Iowa winters that take a toll on our roadways and, in turn, on our vehicles. As much as we try to avoid them, you may just accidentally hit a large pothole head on. Doing so may cause more than just a loud thud. It can actually throw off your car's wheel alignment.



Your car being out of alignment might not always be noticeable at first. There are no warning lights or indicators if your alignment is off. However, if you notice your vehicle pulling to the left or right, a vibration in your steering wheel, or that the steering wheel is off-center when driving straight, you should get it into your trusted automotive repair shop to have it checked out.

During an alignment, the technician will inspect three main things: camber — the inward or outward angle of the tire when viewed from the front of the vehicle; toe — the extent to which tires turn inward or outward when viewed from above; and caster — the angle of your steering axis when viewed from the side of your vehicle. Without proper alignment, your tires will wear unevenly, requiring you to replace them prematurely.

Proper wheel alignment is important for your vehicle in many ways, but, most of all, it ensures optimal drivability and safety. ■

Information provided by Dawn Lauer, marketing specialist, Quality Car Care, 1012 N. 10th St., Winterset, 515-462-1035.

WISE decisions with retirement in mind

Certain financial and lifestyle choices may lead you toward a better future.

Some retirees succeed at realizing the life they want; others don't. Fate aside, it isn't merely a matter of investment decisions that makes the difference. There are certain dos and don'ts some less apparent than others — that tend to encourage retirement happiness and comfort.



Retire financially literate. Some retirees don't know how much they don't know. They end their careers with inadequate financial knowledge

and yet feel they can prepare for retirement on their own. They mistake creating a retirement income strategy with the whole of preparing for retirement and gloss over longevity risk, risks to their estate, and potential health care expenses. The more you know, the more your retirement readiness improves.

A goal to retire debt free — or close to debt free. Even if your retirement savings are substantial, you may want to consider reviewing your overall debt situation.1

Retire with purpose. There's a difference between retiring and quitting. Some people can't wait to quit their job at 62 or 65. If only they could escape and just relax and do nothing for a few years, wouldn't that be a nice reward? Relaxation can lead to inertia, however, and inertia can lead to restlessness and even depression. You want to retire to a dream, not away from a problem.

The bottom line? Retirees who know what they want to do - and go out and do it — are positively contributing to their mental health and possibly their physical health as well. If they do something that is not only vital to them, but important to others, their community can benefit as

Retire healthy. Smoking, drinking, overeating, a dearth of physical activity — all these can take a toll on your capacity to live life fully and enjoy retirement. It is never too late to change habits that may lead to

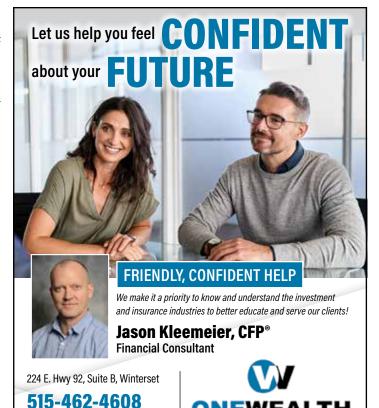
Retire where you feel at home. It could be where you live now; it could be a nearby place where the scenery and people are uplifting. If you find yourself lonely in retirement, then look for ways to connect with people who share your experiences, interests and passions — those who encourage you and welcome you. This social interaction is one of the great, intangible retirement benefits.

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HEALTH By Shelly Stewart-Sandusky, MS, LMFT

LIVING with an anxiety disorder

Anxiety is a common emotion everyone experiences at some point, generally when there is a situation or stressor that warrants an anxious response, after which, unhealthy levels of anxiety will go away as the situation is resolved. Problematic anxiety doesn't go away. People who suffer from anxiety disorders often experience anxiety in a chronic way, resulting in thought patterns and physical symptoms that are a constant part of their life. For instance, racing



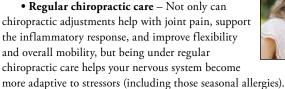
thoughts that can't seem to be stopped or deflected, constant worry or fear of something bad happening, and physical symptoms such as fatigue, muscle tension or nausea, among others. For a person with an anxiety disorder, it can be hard to imagine not having to constantly battle your own mind to be functional throughout the day or to always be worried about something even when there doesn't seem to be a reason to worry. But there are different things you can do to help.

- Therapy can be a helpful way to process through anxiety and learn about coping strategies to better manage it and to learn about triggers and patterns associated with your anxiety.
- Medication management with a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner can be helpful for some people.
- Meditation can help calm the central nervous system and help give your mind a reset that helps alleviate some anxiety. ■

Information provided by Shelly Stewart-Sandusky, MS, LMFT, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

HEALTH By Dr. Amanda Queck **SPRING** into wellness

Spring is in the air. As we transition into longer and warmer days, it is important to think about springtime maintenance for your body. Here are a few tips:





- **Get moving** We like to say that movement is the best medicine. It helps boost natural energy levels, strengthen your muscle tone and, ultimately, allows for better joint mobility.
- Focus on higher nutrients It is easy to get caught up in which foods to avoid or what diet to follow, but what is more important is making sure that your body is getting the nutrients it needs. Focus on eating healthy fats (such as avocados, nuts and seeds), lean proteins and nutritious carbohydrates (such as sweet potatoes, whole grains and legumes).
- Embrace restful moments We thrive best on seven to nine hours of sleep. As you wrap up your day, try to spend at least 30 minutes before bed with no screentime. Try journaling to recap your day or planning for tomorrow so your mind is clear before your head hits the pillow.

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Queck, D.C. Flourish Chiropractic & Wellness, 108 W. Court Ave., Winterset, 515-384-0360, www.flourishchiro.life.

REBUILDING trust God's way

Trust is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as, "To place confidence in or to rely on." Based on that definition, how does confidence and reliance get rebuilt after it's been torn down? In other



words, how is trust restored after it's been broken? These are tough questions that don't always have easy, black-and-white answers. There is a vulnerability and risk involved in trusting others, and, when that trust is broken, relationships change. Rebuilding trust takes time and grace-driven effort, especially when we are committed to doing it God's way.

There are many passages of Scripture that deal with this matter, but one of my favorites is found in Matthew 18:21-22: "Then Peter came up to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as

seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

The context of Matthew 18 has Jesus teaching his disciples about humility, being serious about killing sin, compassion for the lost, how to respond when sinned against, and how Jesus really shocks Peter with this response. It seems that Peter might be patting himself on the back when asking Jesus if forgiving his brother seven times is sufficient. Jesus' response would have been like a slap in the face to Peter. Jesus has a way of taking things to the next level and exposing our hearts. Many times, we don't want to go the extra mile when it comes to forgiving others when we've been wounded, and doing it over and over is extremely difficult.

We are not called to be door mats and let people constantly run over us, but we are called to forgive. Withholding forgiveness from others is essentially us "playing God." That never goes well. Forgiving others doesn't always lead to full reconciliation right away. Rebuilding trust takes time, and there is wisdom in being cautious with certain relationships where trust has been broken.

I'll end with Paul's words in Colossians 3:12-13: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

There is no better way than rebuilding trust God's way and remembering how much we've been forgiven. Looking to Jesus and His finished work on the cross only helps us in difficult seasons where trust has been broken.

CJ McMurry is the founder and program director of The Refuge and serves as an elder at Redeemer Church. CJ is a Commissioned Addictions Biblical Counselor by The Addiction Connection.



TEACHERS' SUBTITLES. Another Frankenstein. More Spider-Verse. And laugh-out-loud moments.

If you have not been to the movies lately, you've missed some good films. Some of these will still be in theaters, but others might be close to streaming. Keep this article handy to remind you to look for them.



"The Teachers' Lounge"

I knew nothing about this movie going in and have praised it ever since that day. It is nominated for Best International Film (formerly known as Best Foreign Film). It is in German with subtitles. By the way, contrary to public opinion, no one has ever been injured by a subtitle. The movie is about a teacher in a German school who discovers a co-worker is responsible for thefts in the teachers' lounge. When she confronts her, you know what hits the fan. And, of course, the person denies the accusation, and it becomes a "she said/she said" battle with the accuser being the one who is persecuted. It is a powerful film and a powerful statement on the world we live in. One of the best films I saw last year. Grade: A



"Lisa Frankenstein"

I drove across Des Moines from the southside Fleur Cinema to Waukee and The Palms Theatres to see the second movie of the day, a modern twist on the Frankenstein story. My expectations were low, but the film managed to surprise me. It was entertaining and, at times, charming. A high school girl hanging out with a guy who literally pulled himself from his grave during a lightning storm is a unique story, but Diablo Cody, who wrote the great movie "Juno" back in 2007, shows that she still has the chops to write a funny and clever film. Grade: C+



"The Zone of Interest"

"The Teachers' Lounge" was intense and powerful, but this look at the people living in an opulent home next to the notorious Auschwitz prison camp ranks close. It's an oddly made film, giving us scene after scene of their everyday life with little formal storytelling. It is a story that is difficult to believe. The screams and gunshots were completely ignored as if they didn't happen. Tough to sit through, but a fascinating tale. Grade: A-



"Madame Web"

Dakota Johnson from the "Shades of Grey" films joins the Marvel Universe as a fringe character in the Spider-Verse in an effort from the Sony company to continue to milk the Spider-Man deal they signed years ago with Marvel Comics. The film has been universally trashed, and Johnson has been excoriated. My grown son and I went to this with low expectations, and we both enjoyed it. Not sure what people were expecting. Grade: C+



"Bob Marley: One Love"

My knowledge of Bob Marley is limited. I know a couple of his songs, but the depth of his political activism and his dogged artistic drive were surprising to me. The movie is well made, but I really could have used subtitles as the accents, though accurate, were difficult to understand. It is a good movie that I will rewatch at home with subtitles and will probably appreciate it even more. Grade: B+



"Drive-Away Dolls"

Director/writer Joel Coen (of the Coen brothers) gives us a raunchy and profane story of two women on a road-trip in a car with a unique present in the trunk. The movie and the language never hold back, which produces a mixture of shock and "laugh-out-loud" moments. One of the craziest movies I've seen in a while, and it is sure to offend many. Grade: C



"Dune: Part 2"

One of the movies I was most looking forward to this year. Director Denis Villeneuve and a tremendous returning cast deliver a super-long (2:45) sequel that, in my opinion, brings up more questions than answers. I loved the first film, but this sequel was long and confusing. Word to the wise — if you are going to see this film, do yourself a favor and drive to Waukee and see it in the IMAX theatre. Visually stunning! Grade: B- ■

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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'An Education in Malice'

Is it weird that I wish I had been sent away to boarding school? I've read so many books about people having strange and fantastic adventures when sent to some gothic revival mansion in the deep woods, I feel like I missed something important at my run-of-the-mill school. At least I have the wildly popular dark academia genre to help me cope with my dull youth.

Laura Sheridan leaves her stifling childhood behind to attend a prestigious and secretive writing program at a mysterious east coast college. The normally introverted and awkward Laura soon finds herself drawn to Carmilla, a darkly beautiful and brilliant classmate she despises, at first. Both young women are soon caught under the spell of an enigmatic poetry professor who revels in their rivalry and encourages their adoration. The enemies quickly become something more intense as political and supernatural mysteries twist and turn their youthful naivete into something darker.

Lush, haunting and perfectly paced, this is a beautiful and unsettling story that wasn't nearly long enough. I recommend this to anyone who needs a little passion and intrigue in their life, or if your memories of school are as boring as mine. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich

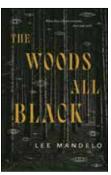


By S.T. Gibson 2/13/24 352 pages \$18.99 Orbit

'The Woods All Black'

Appalachian horror is having a moment, and I am loving every second. There are threads of Shirley Jackson, William Faulkner and even Stephen King woven into this tale of a community gone bad. This twisted, dark novella is full of monsters most, but not all, of them human.

It's the 1920s, and the frontier nursing service sends Leslie, a war-weary nurse, to Spar Creek to provide the backwater with the standard medical care they desperately need. Upon arrival, he finds a town on the verge of horrific violence in the name of religion. Acting quickly and with no regard for the horrors that await him, he tries to save a child with the unfortunate affliction of being different.



By Lee Mandelo 3/19/24 180 pages \$19.99 **Tordotcom**

This is an unrelenting, high-speed thriller with a cast of complex characters who are still living in my brain. For a story set more than 100 years ago, it feels startlingly modern and serves not just as a cautionary tale but a grisly reminder of both the cost and value of being yourself, social pressure be damned. ■

- Review by Julie Goodrich

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WOMEN'S Giving Circle: Doing more together

Contributions exceed a quarter of a million dollars.



The Madison County Women's Giving Circle is a local organization that came about from a realization that a group could do more together than separately, and it appears they have achieved that, since they've given out more than a quarter of a million dollars to local causes.

Six members of the group — Bobbie Kennedy, Peggy Sullivan, Laura Bertelson, Kristie Hirschman, Lindsay Baessler and

Jacque Mohs — met to share the history and purpose behind their involvement.

The group meets once every quarter, and each member is asked to give \$50 per meeting. Those in attendance at the quarterly meetings hear brief presentations by a few local charitable organizations, and the members vote on which charitable group will receive all of the collected money, which is generally around \$5,500 to \$6,000. The meetings are kept to no more than an hour, since the group aims to respect everyone's time. And although attendance at the quarterly meetings is encouraged, it is not required.

Mohs recalled how the group began more than a decade ago.

"I really think this organization was the brainchild of Pat Nelson," says Mohs. "She had heard about a similar organization, and she sent out an email to about 10 to 15 people she knew to see if they might be interested. Then we ended up forming a small group in 2011 for a planning meeting. Since the group started in 2011, as of ending 2023, the group has collected and distributed \$252,953. Last year alone was \$25,722, with 130 members."

Peggy Sullivan says her membership in the group has been an eyeopener.

"I didn't realize all the needs. And once you start seeing the people presenting, you're just blown away with all the needs," she says.

One noteworthy need that the Women's Giving Circle helped meet relates to the tornado that impacted Winterset in March of 2022.

"We did First Responder counseling after the tornado. We paid for counseling because there were many of them that were struggling," says Mohs.

The group welcomes new members. There is no requirement to live in the county. Any interested women are encouraged to contact a member with any questions. The current roster is around 130 members, and the goal is to exceed 150.

Bobbie Kennedy says her membership in the group has been

Do you know a citizen who deserves recognition? Nominate him or her at tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.



Felicia Weeks and Brittany Hilsabeck of Scot Clark Farm Bureau present the Citizen of the Month certificate to the Madison County Women's Giving Circle board members: Jacque Mohs, Bobbi Kennedy, Peggy Sullivan, Kristie Hirschman and Laura Bertelson. Not pictured is Lindsay Bessler.

personally fulfilling.

"You can always do a little bit on your own, but if you get likeminded people and push toward a common goal, all of a sudden, it can make a meaningful difference in the lives of the families and people, and even us as members," she says. "You feel really good about being part of the group and the difference you've made."



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations



Building Better Birders Workshop

April 19 and April 20 Madison County ISU Extension Office unless otherwise noted

This free Madison County Conservation workshop includes a variety of sessions, and participants can choose to attend as many as they want. No registration required. Call 515-462-3536 for more detailed directions to workshop locations. Sessions are:

- April 19, 5-6:30 p.m., Wetland Birds of Iowa; 7-8:30 p.m., Birding, Internationally.
- April 20, 6-9 a.m., Waterfowl Watch at Jensen Marsh; 10-11:30 a.m., Shorebirds of Iowa; 1-2:30 p.m., Grassland Birds of Iowa; 3-4:30 p.m., Common Feeder Birds of Iowa; 5-6:30 p.m., Warblers of Iowa.

Winterset Public Library events

123 N. Second St.

- Friday, April 5, 1-5 p.m., Acoustic Jam Circle. All ages are welcome to strum, pick, fiddle, sing along, or just listen the first Friday of each month.
- Monday, April 8, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Solar **Eclipse Activities**
- Mondays, Game On! Recommended for ages 10 and older. Enjoy Xbox 360, Wii, Ninetendo Switch and board games. Occasional food project or craft included. No registration required.



- Tuesdays, 1:30-4 p.m., Adult Game Day, for ages 19 and older. Join for some laughs and fun competition. Many games to choose from or bring your own favorites. Snacks are welcome. No registration required.
- Wednesday, April 10, 6-8 p.m., Snowdrops in Winter Watercolor Class. Note: A latex painting supply will be used during class. Class size is limited. For adults, ages 19 and older. Call the library to register, 515-462-1731.
- Friday, April 12, 6:30-8 p.m., Zen Stone Painting. Join for an evening of stone painting and relaxation. All supplies provided. Register by calling 515-462-1731.
- Monday, April 15, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Plant. Grow. Fly. The Blank Park Zoo. Learn why the Zoo cares about pollinators and the importance pollinators play in our ecosystem. This program is designed to encourage and educate from the perspective that no effort is too small and that each and every one of us can do our part to help pollinators thrive simply by planting pollinator-friendly plants.

Tending Iowa's Land: Pathways to a Sustainable Future **Madison County edition**

Session 1: April 21, 3-5 p.m., Pammel Park Lodge with Dr. Jim Pease Session 2: June 2, 3-5 p.m., 1157 Prairieview Ave., Winterset, with Kathy Woida

The Madison County Foundation for Environmental Education will be hosting four community discussions around the book, "Tending Iowa's Land," edited by Cornelia F. Mutel. In a straightforward and friendly style, lowa's premier scientists consider what has happened to our land and outline viable solutions that benefit agriculture as well as our human and wildlife residents. Each discussion will feature a contributing author from the book. The events are free, and no registration required. Each event will conclude with an optional hike. Refreshments will be provided by Winterset Veterinary Center. The last two sessions TBA.

Wild Lights Festival

April 5 - May 27, 7:30-10:30 p.m. Blank Park Zoo, 7401 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines

blankparkzoo.com/events/ calendar/wild-lights-festival

The Blank Park Zoo's Wild Lights Festival returns. Visitors can view more than 50 hand-crafted creations that light up the zoo. The illuminated Asian mythical creatures create plenty of photo opportunities for families.





EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations

Painted Dog Conservation in Zimbabwe with Dr. Greg Rasmussen

Thursday, May 2, 6-7:30 p.m.

Winterset Public Library

Madison County Conservation Board presents Dr. Greg Rasmussen, a 2023 Indianapolis Prize nominee and wildlife conservationist who has studied the critically endangered painted dog for more than 30 years, one of the longest studies of the species ever conducted. Working in Zimbabwe, he is the founder of Painted Dog Research Trust, whose mission is to both continue with research into the species and build for the future of conservation by meaningfully incorporating Zimbabwean students to develop local capacity and tomorrow's conservationists.

Iowa Trail Run Series

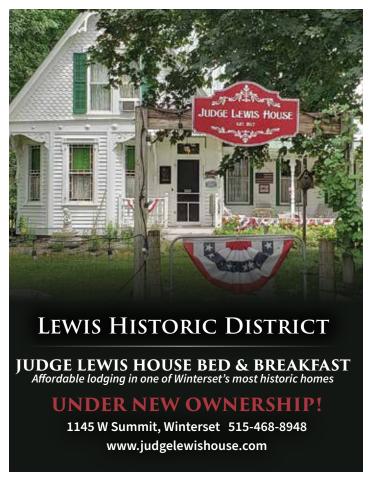
April 6 and April 13 **Different locations** iowatrailruns.com

The Iowa Trail Run Series is back for 2024. Races April 6 will be at Center Trail Des Moines with a 4-mile and 8-mile race. The Iowa Trail Run Series continues with a 5K, 10K and half-marathon at the Sugar Bottom trail in Solon on April 13.

Madison County Conservation Summer camps

For information and to register for summer camps, visit www. mycountyparks.com/County/Madison/Events.aspx. Camps include:

- June 5-6: Prehistoric Pammel, ages 5-7, explore fossils and prehistoric secrets in Pammel Park.
 - June 12-13: Overnight Survival Camp, boys 8-13, Pammel State Park.
 - June 12-13: Overnight Survival Camp, girls 8-13, Pammel State Park.
- June 19-20: Nature. It's all about connections, ages 5-7, Pammel State Park.
 - June 21: Full Moon Float, all ages, kids with adult, Pammel State Park.
- June 26-27: Kids Vs. Parents, battle for the title of Wild Champion, for families, Pammel State Park.
- July 9-10: Spiders, Snakes and Sasquatch, ages 8-12, uncover the secrets of the feared creatures of Pammel State Park.
- July 11-12: Water Wonderers, ages 8-12, discover the aquatic marvels at Fellowship Forest, Pammel State Park.
- July 16: Camp Classics, ages 5-7, prepare for a day of hiking, creek stomping and s'mores galore, Pammel State Park.
- July 25-26: Predators and Planets, ages 8-12, explore the fascinating world of Pammel Park's predators and discover the Milky Way through a telescope.
- July 30: Water Rescue Session 1, ages 8-12, learn comprehensive canoeing essentials to equip participants to handle unexpected challenges on the water, Pammel State Park.
- July 31: Water Rescue Session 2, ages 8-12, learn comprehensive canoeing essentials to equip participants to handle unexpected challenges on the water, Pammel State Park.





EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations



Elks Spring Style Show Fundraiser

Saturday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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

Go shopping and enjoy lunch at the Elks Spring Style Show Fundraiser. Many fabulous vendors and terrific door prizes are included. Cost is \$15 for admission and funds benefit the Elks' veterans projects. Fashion show starts at 11 a.m. with shopping and lunch to follow. A 50/50 raffle will also be held. Must be present to win prizes.



You Can Grow Orchids

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Canoyer Garden Center, 3355 S.E. Gateway Drive, Grimes

The Central Iowa Orchid Society is hosting an orchid event, with an orchid display, culture information, orchid sale and orchid clinic in which experts will answer questions about your troubled orchid and even help to repot it. Follow them on: Central lowa Orchid Society Facebook page.

Events at The Brenton Arboretum

Various dates

The Brenton Arboretum, 25141 260th St., **Dallas Center**

For more information or to register, visit www. TheBrentonArboretum.org/events.

- April 18, Nature Club, varying times. Register by
- April 21, noon to 3 p.m., Earth Day Celebrations; 1-3 p.m., Exploratory Beekeeping.
 - April 27, 7 a.m., Birds & Bagels.



Tori's Angels 'Spreading Our Wings'

April 11, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Stine Barn, 4000 Turnberry Drive, West Des Moines torisangels.org

The Tori's Angels Foundation has helped more than 145 kids with lifethreatening medical challenges until their 19th birthday. This fundraising event includes cocktails and hors d'oeuvres; live and silent auctions including Chicago Cubs tickets / hotel/field passes package, Chiefs and Packers tickets, bourbon and wine baskets and travel packages; and an opportunity to meet some of the kids and families who have been assisted.

Saturday Music at the Winery

Various dates, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Covered Bridges Winery, 2207 170th Trail, Winterset coveredbridgeswinery.com

- April 6, Gina Gedler & The Boys, \$5 cover charge.
- April 13, Thankful Jazz Trio, \$5 cover charge.
- April 27, Weary Ramblers, visit coveredbridgeswinery.com for tickets for this special event.
- May 4, Ducharme-Jones full band, \$5 cover charge.
- May 11, Matt Terronez Quartet, \$5 cover charge.

4K for 4-H

Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m. Packet pickup April 12 Madison County Fairgrounds

Madison County 4-H Youth Council is holding a 4K Run & Walk with prizes awarded to age group winners. Registration is \$20. For more information and registration link, visit www.facebook.com/ madisoncounty4HIowa/.



Sunday Wine Down

April 14, 2-4 p.m. Covered Bridges Winery, 2207 170th Trail, Winterset coveredbridgeswinery.com

Corbett Reeves will perform. There is no cover charge.



Spring Gallery Night April 19

Historic Valley Junction, 137 Fifth St., West Des Moines valleyjunction.com

Spring Gallery Night in Historic Valley Junction showcases artwork by regional, national and international artists. From original artwork, custom jewelry, ceramics, glass, furniture, folk art, fine art reproductions and much more.



Drake Relays

April 24-27

Drake Stadium, 2719 Forest Ave., Des Moines godrakebulldogs.com

The Drake Relays draw premier track and field athletes from around the country and some of the best in-state high school track athletes to Des Moines.

EDUCATION By T.K. West

MEET Josh Jeffs

Career change provides way to give back to his hometown.

Josh Jeffs has lived in the Winterset community for the majority of his life. After graduating from Winterset High School in 1992, he attended Iowa State University but eventually left school to work full time for a local civil engineering company. Then, in 2019, Jeffs decided to return to college because it was important to him to finish what he had started years ago. He enrolled at DMACC where he earned an associate's degree and made the big decision to pursue a bachelor's degree in education at Simpson College, where he graduated in 2022.



Josh Jeffs, a graduate of Winterset High School in 1992, now teaches at the Winterset Middle School.

Now, Jeffs has returned to his alma mater where he teaches sixth grade for the Winterset Middle School. He had hoped to teach with the Winterset district because he has a lot of pride in his hometown, and being a part of its education system is a way for him to give back to his community.

"I love the sense of community I feel within the entire working staff of our school district. It can be a bit overwhelming at times for a firstyear teacher, but the support I have received from other teachers and administrators has always been positive and encouraging," Jeffs says.

Jeffs enjoys teaching sixth-graders because it is a fun and interesting age to teach. He also sees so much potential in his students and enjoys the challenge of making that vision more clear for them.

His students have been learning about the writing process and writing for different purposes. For example, during the holiday season, students wrote an argumentative essay on which "old-school" Christmas toy was the best. Toys such as Lincoln Logs, Tinker Toys, marbles, dominoes, Lite Brights, and even a toy cash register were set up in stations around the classroom. Students were then given 10-15 minutes at each station to interact with the toys and gather background information for their essays.

For Veterans Day, students wrote thank you letters to active service members. Later, in February, his students wrote thank you notes after touring Simpson College, which gave them a chance to express their gratitude in a different way.

"It's always rewarding when a student begins to understand new concepts and strategies academically, but I personally enjoy the moments when students are laughing and collaborating with each other as they continue developing their social skills while learning," Jeffs says.

During the remainder of the school year, Jeffs is looking forward to his students finishing strong and helping them prepare for the big jump to junior high school next year. When not teaching, he enjoys spending time with family and friends. He also enjoys attending local sporting events and can usually be found at a Winterset event cheering on the Huskies. ■

BEAUTY By Annie Wiseman

DO WE really need a trim every 6 weeks?

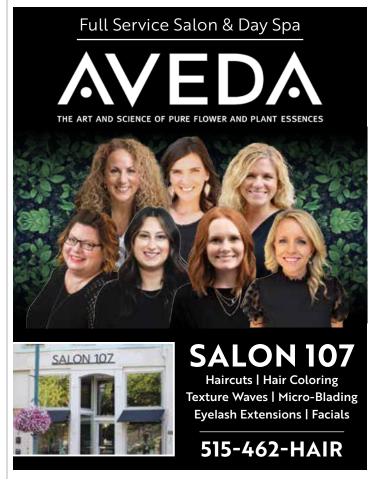
The purpose of regular trims is to keep the ends of the hair healthy so we can grow it, color it and style it. If we don't get regular trims, the hair splits and can break off, leaving the ends straggly looking. It's actually important to trim your hair while you are growing it out for length. I tell people that getting a trim is equal to filing your fingernails. When one files their nails, they don't lose length, it only makes the nail smooth. If you



didn't file your nails ever, they'd snag on things and tear off, making it impossible for the nails to grow long and strong.

It's similar with our hair. Little trims keep the hair strong and ready to withstand abuse so it can grow long. Fine-haired people need a nice, blunt edge to maximize fullness. Their hair is more easily susceptible to breakage, thus needing frequent trims. For thick-haired people, hair grows out of its shape due to the bulk and volume they have. Frequent trims (and thinning out) keep their hair under control, making it easier to manage. Give your favorite stylist a call today; your everyday look insists.

Information provided by Annie Wiseman, owner of Salon 107 and a licensed cosmetologist with 25 years of experience. 107 John Wayne Drive, Winterset, 515-462-4247, salon107style@gmail.com.



PUT a traditional spin on Cinco de Mayo

(Family Features) Whether Cinco de Mayo means an opportunity to celebrate your family's heritage or it's simply an excuse to gather with the ones you love, every holiday truly is about the same thing: special moments together.

Take this year's festivities the traditional route with recipes that combine familiar favorites with ingredients you normally may not use otherwise, such as cactus. This Mexican Cactus Pork Stew makes Cinco de Mavo a cinch with the use of a Dutch oven.

Visit Culinary.net to find more family-friendly recipes perfect for celebrating holidays throughout the year.

Mexican cactus pork stew

- 1 pound pork shoulder (leftover or fresh)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- · 3 cups beef broth
- 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) mild chili beans
- 1 cup chopped cactus (nopales)
- · 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 green onions, chopped, for garnish
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro, for garnish
- If using fresh pork, in Dutch oven, cube and brown it with onion and jalapeno pepper. If using leftover pork, reheat in Dutch oven with onion and jalapeno pepper.
- · Add beef broth, diced tomatoes, chili beans, cactus, garlic powder, smoked paprika, cayenne pepper and salt and pepper, to taste.
- Simmer 25 minutes then garnish with green onions and cilantro.





A NEIGHBORHOOD with team pride

Residents show off their fandom with flags.



Neighbors on West Court Avenue show their team spirit by flying flags of their favorites.

West Court Avenue knows how to do game day right.

On any given college football Saturday (or even NFL Thursdays, Sundays or Mondays), residents on the street put out their favorite team flags.

The tradition started around the time Dennis Shaw moved to the neighborhood in 2016. He and other neighbors have a flag hole installed by the Winterset Optimist Club, which puts out American flags on patriotic holidays. Most days of the year, though, the holes are empty.

So, Shaw, who's a big sports fan, and his neighbors thought, "Why not use it throughout the year by displaying team flags?"

Today, about 10 homeowners on West Court Avenue share their team pride by putting out feather flags on game day. Teams represented range from the Kansas City Chiefs to the Iowa State Cyclones, Iowa Hawkeyes, Tampa Bay Buccaneers and more.

"You name it, it's out there on game days," Shaw says.

It's fun to see everyone putting out their flags on football Saturday mornings, he adds.

"We hoot and holler at each other," Shaw says. "We give each other thumbs up or thumbs down. We just have a good time with it."

One of Shaw's favorite memories is from a few years back when the Chiefs played the Buccaneers in the Super Bowl. One neighbor is a big Tampa Bay fan while another is a Kansas City fan, so, of course, there was some friendly smack talk going on in the neighborhood. One neighbor even has three flag holes in his yard because his family members support different teams.

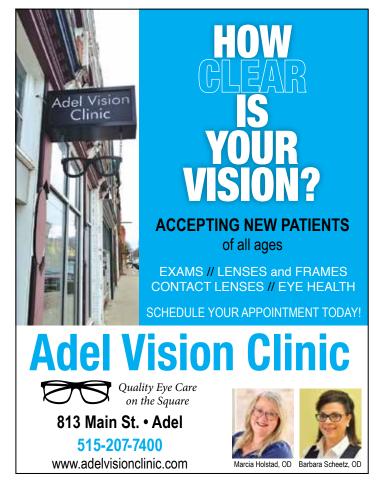
"It builds camaraderie in our neighborhood," Shaw says. "We have a good time with it and take a lot of pride in our neighborhood."

Shaw shares that the neighborhood is very supportive of the Optimist flags, so when those are out on holidays, they don't impede. Aside from sports flags, Shaw also puts up flags for special occasions, like a recent

Ultimately, Shaw feels displaying team flags builds discussion

opportunities.

"Sports can bring people together and be great conversation starters among neighbors," he says. ■







INSURANCE By Eric Johnson

TORNADO safety tips

The severe storm season seems to be starting earlier and earlier. Here are some tips to help prepare you and your family for severe weather, including tornados.

While we rely heavily on technology and weather alerts today, there are some signs that Mother Nature provides before a tornado. They are: green sky/clouds, hail, flying debris, low-lying cloud with a rotation, stillness and quiet, and the sound of a freight train coming toward your neighborhood.



Before the storm

Be prepared. Tornadoes can strike at any time with or without warning. Make sure your family knows your plan of action if a tornado warning is issued for your community. Some things to consider include discussing the best place to take shelter in your home, the difference between watches and warnings, the county you reside in, steps you will take during and after the storm, and creating a safety kit.

Practice, practice, practice. Being prepared for a tornado is just the first step in keeping your family safe. If you don't practice the steps you put in place, panic and injury could occur.

Protect important information. Consider storing important information in your safe, storm shelter, safety deposit box at your local bank or electronically. Important information could include your policy, loan/mortgage papers, medical information (i.e., allergies, regular medications, or a brief medical history), important telephone numbers, a personal home inventory, birth certificates and social security cards.

During the storm

- If your home has a basement, seek shelter there immediately. If there's a sturdy object in your basement, like a workbench or pool table, crawl under it to protect yourself from falling objects. If your basement has windows, consider a place away from the windows.
- If your home doesn't have a basement, seek shelter immediately in an interior room like a closet or bathroom.
- If you live in a mobile home or are camping in a camper, consider finding a designated safety shelter.
- If you are driving, seek shelter immediately or drive away from the tornado at a right 90-degree angle because tornadoes usually travel from west to east. Also, parking under an overpass will not protect you from a tornado. Find a ditch, culvert, or other low-lying area and cover your head. Be cautious of water flow if lying in a ditch or culvert.
- If you live in a dormitory or apartment building, find safety at the lowest place you can access and the most interior part of the building. Use stairwells to get there and, like fires, avoid the elevator.

Information provided by Eric Johnson, Johnson Insurance, 224 E. Highway 92, Suite B, Winterset, 515-462-4553.

LONG-TERM care insurance

As healthcare costs are escalating and the population is aging rapidly, long-term care insurance has emerged as a critical financial tool to mitigate the expenses associated with extended medical care needs. This



comprehensive guide aims to shed light on what long-term care insurance entails, its importance, how it works, and factors to consider when choosing a policy.

Long-term care insurance is a type of insurance designed to cover the costs associated with extended care services beyond what traditional health insurance or Medicare covers. It primarily includes assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing and eating, as well as services provided in a variety of settings such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities or in-home care.

As people age, the likelihood of needing long-term care increases. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about 70% of people turning 65 can expect to use some form of long-term care during their lives. Without insurance coverage, these expenses can quickly deplete savings and jeopardize financial security, potentially burdening family members.

Long-term care insurance policies vary widely in coverage, cost and eligibility criteria. Typically, policyholders pay premiums either monthly or annually in exchange for coverage. When the insured individual requires long-term care, they can access benefits according to the terms outlined in their policy.

Before binding your long-term care policy, it is important to consider the following factors.

- Coverage options: Policies may differ in the types of care covered, such as nursing home care, assisted living or in-home care. Understanding what services are included and excluded is crucial.
- Benefit amount and duration: Policies have limits on the maximum benefit amount and duration of coverage. Consider factors like inflation protection and whether the benefit is paid for a set number of years or for life.
- Elimination period: This refers to the waiting period before benefits kick in. A longer

elimination period typically results in lower premiums.

- Premiums and affordability: Evaluate the affordability of premiums over the long term, considering potential increases as you age.
- Provider reputation and financial stability: Research the insurance company's reputation, financial stability, and history of rate increases or claims denials.
- Health qualifications: Insurers may require medical underwriting to determine eligibility. Pre-existing conditions could affect coverage or premiums.

Long-term care insurance offers a vital financial safety net for individuals facing the prospect of needing extended care services in the future. It is important to begin considering long-term care insurance as early as possible, even if you don't need it yet. The sooner you get it, the lower the cost. Understanding the nuances of different policies and assessing personal needs and financial capabilities are crucial steps in making informed decisions about long-term care insurance. ■

Information provided by Autumn Davis, administrator, Azria Health, Winterset, 515-462-1711.





A ribbon cutting was held March 15 for Rena Kiwi Treats.



Jen Carlson, Robin Dick and Shay Carlson at the chunky blanket class held at Madison County Winery on March 16.



Janet Haynes and Leslie Allen at the March 15 ribbon cutting for Rena Kiwi Treats.



Loiwanda Case and Shaun Kniep at the chunky blanket class held at Madison County Winery on March 16.



Nancy Calvert and Mary Beth Morrow at the chunky blanket class held at Madison County Winery on March 16.



Jillian Kniep and Donetta Phelps at the chunky blanket class held at Madison County Winery on March 16.



Melissa White and Sara Lambert at the chunky blanket class held at Madison County Winery on March 16.



Annette Brummel and Megan Toney at the chunky blanket class held at Madison County Winery on March 16.



Laura Luckinbill and Michelle McNamara at the chamber coffee held at the American Legion on March 15.



Donna Jackson and Melissa Callstrom at the chamber coffee held at the American Legion on March 15.

OUT & ABOUT

CHAMBER Coffee

The chamber coffee was held at the American Legion on March 15.



Peter Loiler, Lance Queck and Jeff Longman



Ray Dawson, Phil Macumber and Jon Stetzel



Jason Kems, Ed Nelson, Terrie Nelson and Terry Houseman



Debbie Field and Elaine Ware



Michaela Allsup and Jami Mccuddin



Maria Forgy and Terri Kuhns



Rachel Eller and Toni Tindle



Wayne Martens, Commander of the Legion Jason Kems and Nicole Kems



Jessie Lowry and Tami Garrison



Amara Huffine and Jacob Larson



Shanna Lacy and Autumn Davis

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FINANCIAL

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