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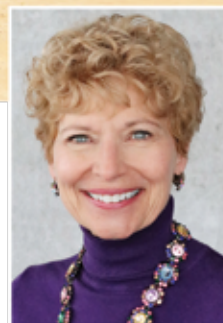


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WELCOME

FOUR reasons to participate in community theatre

Have you thought about getting involved in community theatre? If you want to participate, organizers will surely find a place for you. But what's in it for you personally? How about...

1. You can develop your creative talents.

Community theatre provides a supportive environment for people to explore their creative abilities. Whether you enjoy acting, singing, dancing or working behind the scenes, community theatre has opportunities for you to develop your skills and grow as an artist.

2. You can build confidence and self-esteem. Performing in front of an audience can be nerve-wracking, but it can also be empowering. Participating in community theatre can help build confidence and self-esteem while learning to overcome fears and take risks. Through rehearsals, performances and feedback from peers and mentors, performers gain a sense of pride and accomplishment that carries over into all areas of their lives.

3. You can develop important life skills at any age. Community theatre is more than just a hobby; it is also an opportunity to develop life skills. From time management and teamwork to problem-solving and communication, the skills that performers learn through theatre can help them succeed in many aspects of life. In addition, community theatre provides a sense of belonging that is often difficult to find elsewhere. Performers build lasting friendships with their peers and develop connections with mentors and volunteers who share their passion for the arts.

4. You can make a difference in your community. The arts have the power to bring people together and make a positive impact in the community. By participating in productions, people have the opportunity to inspire, entertain and educate audiences of all ages. Community theatre programs strive to make the arts accessible to all people in the community, regardless of background or financial resources.

Are you inspired enough now to want to get involved? You can start by reading this month's cover story. Then take the leap and reach out to organizers and say, "How can I get started?" You will be glad you did.

Thanks for reading. ■

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Over the years, Michael Howland has played a variety of roles as well as directed plays.

Curtain call

**Residents share their
experiences on stage**

By Chantel Boyd

For many people, public speaking is their worst fear. They recall suffering from butterflies in the stomach or worse before stepping out on the stage for their elementary school programs and the terror of having to speak in front of their peers in high school speech class. For them, the thought of performing before the public in a stage production sounds as appealing as being tarred and feathered. Others actually seek the spotlight, volunteer to memorize lines and create play props, eagerly awaiting the day the curtains are drawn back and the show begins. Some of these people share their reasons why center stage is the place they want to be.

Big hopes

Cori Beauchamp recently moved to Norwalk and is the fall theatre director for Norwalk High School.

"I have been involved in community theatre for many years in the town (Shenandoah) I moved from," she says, adding that she now focuses on directing.

"Last year we did a production of 'Alice in Wonderland,' and this year we will be one of the first high schools to perform the new 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child' production."

Beauchamp first took to the stage in second grade.

"Being able to be someone else on stage and make others smile, laugh, and cry is just so inspirational."

She says she knew someday directing was in her future.

"I wanted to direct shows and help other young actors get to experience all those same things I did. My favorite thing about theatre is seeing the progression of our show."

Beauchamp has big theatre plans for Norwalk.

"I would like to start a community theatre in Norwalk and establish a children's theatre program in the community," she says.

Anyone interested in theatre but nervous about trying it can start with a small part, though Beauchamp notes that "no role is a 'small' role because every role is important."

Beauchamp's mother was a fan from the beginning.

"My mother saw my love for theatre at a young age and watered that love."

Beauchamp's favorite memory of theatre is being involved with "Guys and Dolls."



Cori Beauchamp, the fall theatre director for Norwalk High School, participated in a variety of community theatre productions in Shenandoah before her recent move to Norwalk.

"The director saw something in me and knew I could play the part even when I didn't have the confidence I could," she says.

The memories and friends

Michael Howland lives in Norwalk and is passionate about theatre.

"I have been involved in theater since 2009 in the Des Moines and surrounding areas," he says, adding he has performed in Indianola, Pella, Knoxville, Newton, Urbandale, Jefferson and Ankeny.

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Michael Howland has performed with many community theatre companies.

"I have done 15 plays and musicals at the Des Moines Playhouse."

Though a theatre veteran, Howland is most interested in acting, not directing. However, he has assisted in musicals, helping do vocal rehearsals.

"I have done some music directing. Earlier in my life, I did a lot of directing," he says. "I probably will return to directing someday when my only roles are Santa and Grandpa. I have been trying to seize the day and get as much experience as possible."

Howland's elementary teacher exposed her students to musicals like "Oklahoma," "Annie" and "The Pirates of Penzance," where he became smitten by the stage.

"She let the children try various roles and solos," he says.

His parents also exposed him to the classics: "The Sound of Music," "Mary Poppins," "The Wizard of Oz" and "The Music Man."

"They were more than musicals. They were a family experience," he says.

In high school, Howland's choir director shared the musicals "Les Misérables" and "Phantom of the Opera" with her students.

"I became obsessed," he says. "I loved those two musicals and decided to see what else was out there. I did show choir and plays in high school."

Howland pursued other things during his education and early career.

"I thought that my vocation would not support my investments in the time spent in local theatre," he says.

Then came a day when Howland was determined that there was a way to do both of his passions.

"My career and theater — I was driven to find a way for them to coexist," he says. "My wife is a wonderful actress as well. Now that she

and I are empty nesters, I really hope we can do shows together and audition like fools.

"I absolutely love to sing and to act," he continues. "And the ability to tell stories together is exhilarating. I am naturally a big dreamer. The theatre has allowed me to live out many of my actor/singer dreams locally. I am immensely grateful to have obtained so many of my dream roles through the years."

He still has roles he would like to take on.

"My biggest two dreams would be Valjean in 'Les Misérables' and Edward Bloom in 'Big Fish.'"

Howland likes the community aspect of theatre, too.

"People may not realize that every show you are a part of naturally forms a new family. The cast and crew become their own sort of family," he says. "Everyone is from diverse backgrounds. There are all sorts of gifts and strengths everyone brings to the table."

Howland continues to see new shows and stories that he would like to share with future audiences.

"Theatre is thrilling," he says. "It brings all sorts of unpredictable challenges. An actor could forget a line, a prop could fail, a costume piece could break, or a set could malfunction. The audience can talk back. You just never know what the variable will be, but you keep telling a story."

Theatre also provides an escape, he says.

"Theatre is where you can escape and step into someone else's shoes. It is powerful. It is a challenge to see how you can stand and deliver the emotional journeys of various characters. You get to sing, act, create, bring humor, bring tears."

For would-be thespians, Howland encourages taking a leap of faith.

"I would encourage anyone to step out and give it a shot. And I really encourage people not to give up."

Many theatres offer classes, training and even audition workshops, and Howland suggests those interested take advantage of them.

"The unique thing about the Des Moines metro area is that there are so many theatres," he says.

Howland says his most memorable time in theatre was playing the husband, Dan, in the show "Next To Normal."

"It was the most powerful and emotionally explosive performance I have ever participated in," he says. "The directing team was so supportive; they helped shape me and helped me rise to my potential. It was one of the most fulfilling experiences I have ever had."

"Next To Normal" won Best Musical for the Des Moines Cloris Leachman Theatre Awards (The Cloris Awards).

Howland has also been influenced by his friend, Tim Rose.

"He is essentially a father figure to every last actor, singer, director and crewmember in the area. Tim supports theater like no one else and has become my best friend. He has touched many lives, built us all up, and believes in us. He tells us all the time, 'Go be extraordinary.'"

More than anything, Howland says he is most grateful for the friendships he has made along the way.

"THAT gift is priceless."

From dance to theatre

Lindsay Amundson of Norwalk participated in theatre at school in the West Des Moines Community School District, the Des Moines Playhouse, and the Des Moines Young Artists Theatre.

"I have performed on stage in various plays, musicals and other productions, and I have been an assistant choreographer for a musical," she says, adding that she has been involved in dance since she was young.

"I have done many dance performances as well in which I was a dancer and choreographer," she says.

Dancing piqued Amundson's interest in theatre.

"I started dancing when I was 2 and loved the attention. I thought dressing up in the costumes and performing on stage was fun," she says.

Her parents met while participating in a play and were involved in theatre when they were young adults.

"They got both my brother and I interested in the arts," says Amundson. "We both danced, did commercials and school productions and sang in choir."

In middle school, she auditioned for school productions and participated in summer theatre programs around the Des Moines metro.

"I then met some amazing friends and continued to love the rehearsal process of the shows just as much as the performances," she says.

Amundson also offered up ideas of her own, which turned into choreography opportunities for show choirs, theatre productions, smaller theatre performances and dance companies. She is currently a dance teacher and choreographer for Iowa CATS Dance Company in Clive.

She was a dancer and choreographer with the University of Northern Iowa Orchestral Dance Company from 2019-2023 and assistant

choreographer for “Heathers” with the Des Moines Young Artists Theatre in 2022. She acted in school productions between 2012-2019.

Amundson says she enjoys the entire process — from rehearsal to performances.

“Rehearsals are when all the friendships, silliness and fun happen. The late nights and long days of people having fun, doing what they love and working together to build the show is truly the best part of doing theatre,” she says.

She also likes reading over scripts and seeing what resonates.

“I think that dissecting a show and finding small details you wouldn’t know about unless you were in the show is such a special part of theatre,” she says. “I like finding little connections and reasons behind characters’ actions, words or staging.”

She encourages others to try performing arts.

“If an aspect of theatre interests you, go for it,” she says. “You will build great relationships and have so much fun.”

People can share their skills whether onstage or backstage, she adds.

“Sometimes, you might want to start small and dip your toes in, which is perfectly OK. The more you try, the more people you will meet, the more you will learn, and the more comfortable you will feel,” she says.

Amundson says her parents were influential in sharing their love of theatre with her and her brother.

“I always enjoyed when they would share stories from shows they were in, play music from their favorite musicals, take us to both professional and community productions, and encourage us to do what we wanted to,” she says.

Her theatre teachers, Nicole Crawford and Stacie Hansen in West Des



Lindsay Amundson is a dancer and choreographer, as well as an actor.

Moines, greatly impacted her ability to perform, Amundson says.

“They always pushed me to do more than I thought possible.”

Megan Helmers also influenced her theatre work.

“I worked with her in high school and on community productions and learned so much from her, both as a choreographer and how to tell stories through movement and as a director and how to run rehearsals, cast a show and bring a show to life.”

It’s the little things that Amundson says stick out in her memories.

“The inside jokes, silly dances, backstage shenanigans, and bonds with others stay with me as my favorite memories,” she says. ■

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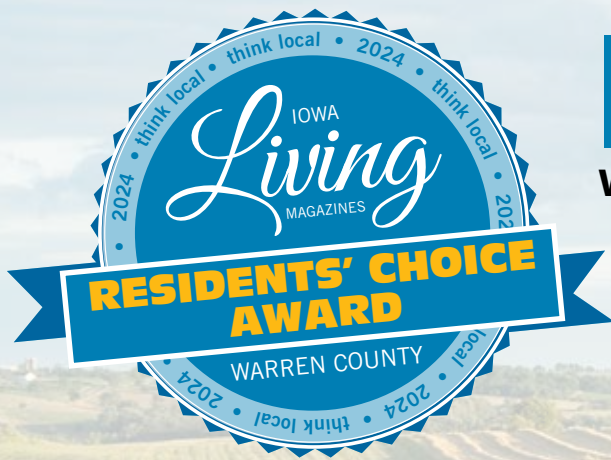
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BENEFITS of respite care for caregivers and seniors with memory loss

Caring for a senior with memory loss due to dementia is a significant responsibility that often takes a toll on a caregiver's physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. The stress and exhaustion associated with caregiving can be overwhelming, contributing to personal health issues. According to AARP, there are approximately 53 million unpaid caregivers in the United States providing care for individuals older than 50. Recognizing the importance of seeking relief is crucial for maintaining caregivers' health and wellbeing.



The lifeline of respite care

Luckily, many senior living and memory care communities are able to provide respite care, which can be a lifeline for primarily caregivers. A respite stay is a short-term stay, ranging from a few days to a few weeks, or even a few months. A respite stay allows caregivers to take a break, attend to other responsibilities, travel or simply recharge.

Benefits for caregivers and families

Respite care offers numerous benefits, for both caregivers and the seniors themselves. These benefits include:

- **Peace of mind:** Knowing that your loved one is in a safe and secure environment receiving quality care allows caregivers to rest, travel or focus on other responsibilities without constant worry.
- **Relaxation:** Caregiving often leaves little time for personal relaxation. Respite care provides the freedom to take a break and engage in self-care.
- **Social interaction:** The isolating nature of caregiving can limit a caregiver's social activities. Respite care offers caregivers the opportunity to reconnect with friends and enjoy social interactions.
- **Revitalization:** A respite stay allows caregivers to recharge, rediscover their passions, and return to their duties with renewed energy.
- **A change of pace:** It provides seniors with a chance to meet new people and break from their daily routines, offering new experiences and activities that can lift their spirits.
- **Exploring community living:** Respite care introduces seniors and their families to the benefits of community living, offering a glimpse into potential long-term living arrangements. If you're looking to "try before you buy," this could be a helpful solution.

Seek respite care options

If you are considering respite care, seek more information from a memory care community. These communities are staffed with professionals dedicated to ensuring that your loved ones receive the care and attention they need during their stay. They provide a safe and supportive environment with specially trained staff equipped to handle daily personal care needs, including bathing, dressing and medication management.

To learn more about memory care respite stays, contact the memory care community nearest you and ask if they provide this option. ■

Information provided by Holly Turner, Executive Director, The Homestead at Holland Farms Senior Living, 2800 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-1888, www.HollandFarmsLiving.com.

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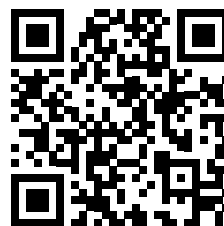
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MEET Chelsea Gambrel

Introducing art students to a variety of materials

Chelsea Gambrel grew up in Saylor Township and attended Saydel schools before graduating from Grand View University. After receiving a degree in art education and visual arts, she attended Eastern Illinois University where she received a master's degree in art education.

Now, Gambrel is in her ninth-year teaching with the Norwalk Community School District. She started her first year at Oviatt Elementary and joined Orchard Hills Elementary as an art teacher when it was built in 2019.

"I love my coworkers," she says. "We have a great team here at Orchard Hills and are able to lean on each other often for support and encouragement. I also appreciate our active parents and community members. We have an awesome PTO."

Gambrel says she likes teaching students in the second and third grades because it is a fun age to teach, her students are still excited to learn, and they like giving hugs.

Her students participate in a variety of projects. Some of her third graders' favorites include robots constructed from cardboard and clay cupcakes. Her third-grade students also enjoy a painted rock project. Students paint one rock, marking that they were part of the Orchard Hills family. The rocks are mounted to a plaque with the year it was created and the class' graduation year. The plaque is then installed as part of a mural.

"We create a variety of projects from year to year," Gambrel says. "My goal is to have my students use a wide range of materials to build media preference and finesse their skills."

When not teaching, Gambrel enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She also enjoys attending country concerts, watching home improvement shows, reading and working toward becoming a better cook. This summer, she is looking forward to traveling, warmer weather and spending time at the pool. ■



Chelsea Gambrel says some of her students' favorite projects are creating cardboard robots and clay cupcakes.

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TRANSFERRING insurance

We all know how stressful moving can be. There's a massive list of tasks to perform. It's no surprise that making new insurance arrangements might not jump out as your first priority. But do yourself a favor: Don't wait. The process isn't as rough as it seems. Below are a few key questions to investigate about moving any insurance. They don't cover everything, but they should get you going in the right direction.



Have you talked to your agent?

If you're happy with your insurance company, give your agent a call. Your agent should be able to tell you whether you'll need to find a new agent and how to transfer your policies to your new address.

What about new insurance or transferring insurance?

Talking with an agent is the best way to find out what you'll need to do to get new insurance or transfer your insurance to your new address. Your agent will also help you understand insurance requirements in your new location.

If you're moving between states, keep in mind that insurance coverage varies across states. For example, in California, due to the high frequency of earthquakes, you need to take special precautions to

make sure your home is safe and secure in case an earthquake occurs. That's not the case in Indiana. Different states also have different auto insurance laws, and if you're moving to a new state, you'll need a new auto insurance policy, plain and simple. Most state laws require you to have homeowner's insurance before you even buy a home.

Are your possessions covered while you're moving?

Depending on how you've chosen to move — hired movers, rental truck, a portable container or DIY in the back of your old Honda — your property may or may not be covered between the time it leaves your home and arrives at its final destination. Some homeowner policies will cover your property everywhere, regardless of whether it's in your home or a moving truck.

Other policies won't cover anything once it's out of your door. So, double check your policy or call your agent. If your insurance policy won't cover your property, you can get coverage through the moving company. By federal law, moving companies have to offer supplemental insurance for your property that will include a set percentage of replacement costs, but you'll need to increase that amount to get full coverage. ■

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SO MANY power surges: Is your AC system protected?

An air conditioning (HVAC) system is a significant investment and an essential part of ensuring year-round comfort. With proper maintenance, an AC unit can last a great deal of time, but, in the case of an electrical storm, an unexpected power surge can take your unit clean out.

In this article, we will explain how power surges can affect your AC unit and how you can protect it from potential damage.

Can a power outage damage an AC unit?

Yes, a power outage from a storm can absolutely damage an AC unit. HVAC systems often have little room for sudden voltage fluctuations, so when a power surge or outage occurs, it can damage compressors, motors, circuit boards and other components within the air conditioner.

If your AC unit fails to turn on after a storm, it may require outright replacement if the electrical damage is bad enough.



What's causing all these surges?

One common cause of power surges for air conditioning systems is a lightning strike during a storm. When lightning strikes near a power line or transformer, it can send a surge of electricity through the electrical grid, potentially damaging the delicate circuitry within your HVAC system. Another cause of power surges is utility grid fluctuations, which occur when there are sudden changes in voltage levels supplied by the electric company. Some other causes are malfunctioning appliances and animal or tree interference.

The solution: AC unit surge protectors

The most effective way to shield your AC unit from electrical damage is to install a dedicated HVAC surge protector. Like the surge protectors used for computers and TVs, these devices are wired into the electrical supply line and prevent power spikes from reaching your HVAC components. The surge protectors absorb excess voltage, shielding the air handler, condensing unit and other parts from damage.

AC unit surge protectors can be hardwired to the outside unit, the inside unit, or even directly

to the high-efficiency motors that operate using DC voltage.

Given the high costs associated with replacing or repairing AC unit components like high-efficiency motors, compressors and circuit boards, we recommend opting to install an HVAC surge protector.

For those looking to add an extra layer of protection, there are surge protectors that also come with a voltage monitor. This device not only safeguards your HVAC system from power surges but can also shut down the unit if the voltage goes beyond set parameters. This preemptive measure can prevent severe damage from voltage fluctuations and save you from costly repairs or replacements.

It might seem excessive, but consider this: the one-time cost of a surge protector pales in comparison to that of replacing an entire AC unit due to storm damage. ■

If you have questions, or just simply want to speak to the experts about this or other comfort concerns, give us a call. An HVAC expert answers/returns every call, and our expert advice is always free. 515-868-2779 Ext 1 or Dale@TripleAHomeServices.com

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IS GOD listening?

Recently in the news, you probably heard about Sydney Thomas. Thomas was driving her 18-wheeler across a bridge in Louisville when a driver coming toward her veered and struck her truck, causing it to break through the guardrail. Fortunately for Thomas, the tail end of her trailer clung to the top of the bridge, leaving the front end suspended high above the Ohio River below. There, for the next 45 minutes or so, she dangled in the cab of her truck convinced she would never make it out alive. First responders arrived on the scene and eventually pulled her up to safety. Later, one member of the media asked if she was a praying woman, to which she replied that she was and added, "Sometimes you pray and don't think God is listening. But he was that day."



Do you ever feel like poor Sydney Thomas? You might find yourself in a real jam of some sort, and you call out to God for help, but it feels like He isn't listening. Ever been there? Most of us have. So, does that mean the next time you find yourself suspended on the wrong end of something dangling over a world of hurt, you shouldn't reach out to the Lord for a little assistance? I'm going to defer the answer to this question to the writer of Psalm 116.

Apparently, Psalm 116 was written by someone who had endured some sort of near-death experience. He says in verses 3-4, "Death wrapped its ropes around me; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: 'Please, LORD, save me!'" Yikes. This sounds like it was about as bad as hanging over the edge of a bridge in an 18-wheeler. It prompted him to do the same thing Sydney Thomas did — call out to God for help.

Here's what God, by the psalmist, and Sydney Thomas, by her own experience, teach us about God in our times of need. First, God DOES hear our prayers. The psalmist says in verses 1-2, "I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!" That's encouraging to know God has no problem hearing us when we need him. (Need more evidence? Check out Psalm 4:3; 18:6; 145:18.) We also learn that God has the power and the compassion to answer our prayers. Both the psalmist and Sydney Thomas testified that, in spite of their seemingly hopeless situation, God hears us, and He responds in ways only He can to help us in our time of need.

Is God listening? He sure is. Turn to Him no matter how small or how big your need may be. Give Him the opportunity to prove to you that He has both the power and the compassion to answer your prayers no matter how desperate they are, then determine to pray to Him as long as you have breath. ■

Pastor Rob Jones is the senior pastor of Fellowship Community Church in Norwalk. The church was founded under his leadership in 1995.

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DISCOVER Norwalk: Building your dream home

When it comes to finding the perfect place to call home, Norwalk offers unparalleled experience, blending small town living with the natural beauty of Warren County. This community is quickly becoming well sought-after for those looking to build or buy their dream home.



Where community and nature meet

Nestled in a serene setting, Norwalk features spacious lots that provide ample room for your dream home and outdoor living. The broad price range of lots and lot sizes are designed to accommodate a variety of budgets, making it accessible for new homebuyers or those looking to upgrade to a customized new construction home. This prime location offers the perfect balance of suburban plus country landscape with easy access to metro amenities.

The building process: Crafting your ideal home
One of the most exciting aspects of moving to Norwalk is the opportunity to build a custom home. Here's a glimpse into the building process:

- **Selecting a floor plan:** The journey begins with choosing a floor plan that suits your lifestyle. Whether you need a cozy two-bedroom or a sprawling custom home, many builders offer plans and layouts to accommodate your unique design and needs.

- **Choosing a home site:** Next, select a lot that best complements your chosen floor plan and your preferred feel. Consider the orientation, size, location and features of each individual lot.

- **Knowing your budget:** Building a home is a significant investment, and it's essential to establish a realistic budget early on. This includes the cost of the lot, construction expenses, and any upgrades or customizations you desire.

- **Financing your dream:** Many builders partner with reputable local lenders to help you secure financing that suits your financial situation. They guide you through the process, ensuring you understand your options and find

the best rates available and have great products that make the new construction financing process simple.

- **Inventory home option:** For those who prefer a quicker move-in process, many builders in Norwalk also offer a selection of beautifully crafted inventory homes. These homes are built with the same attention to detail and quality as custom-built homes but are ready for immediate occupancy. This option is perfect for buyers who need to relocate quickly or prefer to see exactly what they are purchasing without the wait of the construction process.

Why Norwalk? Choosing to build or buy in Norwalk means investing in a community designed for living well. You can find spacious lots, diverse home designs, and commitment to quality from builders that offer a unique opportunity to create a home that reflects your personal style and needs. ■

Information provided by, RE/MAX Precision, Norwalk, IA, Chris Albright, 515-321-3989, chrisalbright@chrisalbrightrealestate.com, www.precisiondsm.com/locations/norwalk/.



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When it comes to finding the perfect place to call home, Valley View Norwalk offers an unparalleled experience that blends small town living with the natural beauty of Warren County. This community is quickly becoming a sought-after development for those looking to build or buy their dream home.

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LEGAL

By Ken Winjum

ABOUT the hearsay rule

In our daily lives, we naturally recognize that information directly from the source is more reliable than what has been obtained second hand. Consistent with this, the "hearsay rule" has a long history in the common law as it pertains to evidence.



Although the term "hearsay" may be used in casual conversation, it actually has a very specific definition in the law. Iowa Rule of Evidence 5.801 provides that "hearsay" means a statement that:

1. The declarant does not make while testifying at the current trial or hearing; and
2. A party offers into evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement.

Under Iowa Rule of Evidence 5.802, hearsay is not admissible as evidence (unless the Constitution, a statute or Supreme Court rule provide otherwise).

If only it were so simple. As it turns out, there are at least two types of such statements (mostly used in cross examination) which are defined as not being hearsay and numerous exceptions to the rule.

Iowa Rule of Evidence 5.803 contains 24 numbered exceptions to the hearsay rule which apply regardless of whether the declarant is available as a witness. Rule 5.804 contains five additional exceptions if the declarant is unavailable as a witness. Finally, Rule 5.807 contains a "residual exception" which allows hearsay where it is supported by sufficient guarantees of trustworthiness (after considering the totality of the circumstances), and it is more probative on the point for which it is offered than any other evidence the proponent can obtain through reasonable efforts.

Given the complexity of the rule and its exceptions, law school evidence courses devote much attention and time to this subject. A few of the common law exceptions which are adopted by the Iowa Rules of Evidence include:

1. Present sense impression (statement made at time of perceiving something).
2. Excited utterance (relating to startling event while under stress of event).
3. Then-existing mental, emotional, or physical conditions.
4. Statement made for medical diagnosis or treatment.
5. Former testimony.
6. Statement under belief of imminent death (also known as "dying declaration").

Each of these (and the numerous other exceptions) have specific definitions and requirements for them to apply. The Iowa Supreme Court has observed that, in determining whether hearsay is admissible, it looks at the true purpose using an objective finding based on the facts and circumstances developed by the record. *See Hawkins v. Grinnell Regional, 929 N.W.2d 261 (Iowa 2019).*

The "Hearsay Rule" exists to make sure that evidence presented at trial is reliable. Toward that end, as a general rule, the testimony should be made in court so that the witness is subject to cross examination. Of course, many exceptions apply. ■

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

TEACHING financial literacy

Strader helping youth learn valuable tools.

In the year that Brittney Strader has been part of the Norwalk community, she has made it her mission to give back however she can.

This mainly shows up in the form of volunteering for events surrounding financial literacy, as it meshes with her job as a personal banker at Luana Savings Bank in town. She recently volunteered at one of the local elementary schools to teach financial education to fourth-grade students. Strader is also involved with the Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce, as “they provide many opportunities to assist the community in different ways.”

One of her favorite memories so far was teaching the kids at Lakewood Elementary School.

“Seeing how much they enjoyed and were involved in the lessons I taught gave me a feeling of pride to be a small part of helping the future of Norwalk be able to achieve their goals,” she says.

Overall, Strader makes time to volunteer as a way to better get to know her new community.

“I enjoy making connections with the people here who help make Norwalk the place that it is,” she says.

Strader encourages others to step out and volunteer because “everyone benefits from it no matter the side you’re on.”

She adds, “It gives you a different perspective and lets you connect personally with others who you may not have otherwise crossed paths with.”

For Strader, the past year in Norwalk has been nothing but wonderful. She plans to spend many more years here, too.

“I have grown and made connections with people of many different backgrounds and paths,” she says. “I will continue to volunteer and do my part to help the growing city of Norwalk.” ■



Brittney Strader enjoys teaching financial literacy to elementary students.



Jason Siemens, Edward Jones, presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Brittney Strader.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

Rolling for Freedom 5K Fun Run/Walk

Saturday, June 15, 9 a.m.
Banner Lakes at Summerset
State Park

The Warren County Leadership Institute Class of 2024 will be hosting this event to raise funds to purchase an all-terrain motorized wheelchair for Warren County Conservation. This wheelchair will empower people of all abilities to explore nature freely without limitations. Learn more and register at www.wcedc.com/rolling-for-freedom-5k.



Celebrate Norwalk July 4

Norwalk Hometown Pride is organizing a Fourth of July parade which will start at 10 a.m. The Fourth of July fireworks will be at dusk.

Moonlight Movie Nights

Saturdays, July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13, starting at sunset

McAninch Sports Complex

The Park and Recreation Department will host Moonlight Movie Nights. Grab a blanket or chair and join in. Warrior Eats concessions will have snacks and drinks for purchase. Movies will be, July 12, "Elemental"; Aug. 9, "Trolls Band Together"; and Sept. 13, "Coco."

Norwalk Farmers Market

Fridays through Oct. 11

Norwalk Christian Church parking lot, 701 Main St.

Norwalk's Farmers Market offers locally grown fruit and vegetables, baked goods, meat, eggs, honey, fresh flowers and crafts.

Iowa Master Conservationist Program

Thursdays, Aug. 22-Oct. 3, 6:30-8 p.m.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will offer the Iowa Master Conservationist Program at the Warren County Extension Office and various Warren County locations, providing participants with hands-on interaction with the diversity of the state's natural resources. The program teaches about Iowa's natural ecosystems and the diversity of conservation challenges and opportunities that exist in the region. Graduates of the course learn to make informed choices for leading and educating others to improve conservation in Iowa.

The program consists of approximately 12 hours of online curriculum and seven face-to-face meetings. Registration for the course is \$75 and is due at the time of registration. To register, contact the ISU Extension and Outreach Warren County office at 515-961-6237 or bccot@iastate.edu. The deadline to register is Friday, Aug. 2, with a maximum of 15 participants.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Indianola Car Show, Tractor Show and Swap Meet

Aug. 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Warren County Fairgrounds, Highway 92, Indianola

The Two-Lane Cruisers of Iowa is hosting this event. To enter or for more information, call Curtis or Cliff, 515-577-2279 or 515-419-3824.

Gardens Galore in 2024

Saturday, June 22,
9 a.m. to 2 p.m. rain or shine

Tour Indianola-area gardens and visit with Master Gardeners who will be present at each. Tickets are \$10 with proceeds to benefit horticultural programs in Warren County. Tickets are available the day of the event at the ISU Extension and Outreach office, 200 W. Second Ave., Indianola.



CITYVIEW's Summer Stir - Downtown

Friday, June 21, 5-9 p.m.

Court Avenue District, Des Moines

CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail party is back in downtown Des Moines. Sample many of summer's finest drinks at some of the area's best bars and restaurants. Try 10 different drinks for only \$25 with your online order (\$30 at the door). For more information and for tickets, visit <https://summerstirs.dmcityview.com>. ■



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GRANTS awarded to 23 local nonprofits

The Warren County Philanthropic Partnership was tasked with allocating \$110,842.23 this year among an array of 55 applicants that requested a combined \$426,290.86 to fund their visionary projects. The Partnership announced 23 projects were selected from all over Warren County to receive funding.

Norwalk Park and Recreation received the 2024 High Impact Grant of \$25,000 for the Norwalk Central Park project. This \$5 million park will feature an amphitheater for cultural events and performances, a bike park featuring a pump track, and an ice and roller rink for winter and summer sports of all ages and abilities. A unique component of the park that is funded by this grant will be the NorWalk of Fame. This attraction will feature first-in-Iowa hologram technology highlighting famous individuals who have a direct connection to the area.

Community Grant award recipients that received \$1,000 to \$5,000 to help with their impactful projects are:

- Indianola Fire Department
- HEAL House of Iowa
- Short Years Partnership
- Indianola Firefighter's Association
- City of Milo
- Indianola Public Library
- Women of Norwalk
- City Of Carlisle
- Norwalk Area Ministerial Association
- Kiya Koda Humane Society
- City of Hartford — Fire Department



Representatives of the Warren County Philanthropic Partnership presented the 2024 High Impact Grant of \$25,000 to Norwalk Mayor Tom Phillips for the Norwalk Central Park project.

- Iowa College Access Network
- Middle River Friends Church — CCA Food Pantry
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Inc.
- Indianola Community Youth Foundation
- Jesse J Sanctuary Foundation
- Simpson College
- Indianola Police Department
- City of Norwalk — Fire Department
- Carlisle Area Historical Society
- Milo Hometown Pride ■

WC LEADERSHIP Institute holds graduation

The 2024 Warren County Leadership Institute wrapped up in April with a graduation dinner at The Village. Sixteen class members strong, the participants experienced topics ranging from finding your strengths, project management, people building skills, personal

finance, LEAN Manufacturing practices, educational system, government systems, economic development, change leadership and more.

Members of the WCLI Class of 2024 are: Deb Allison - Nationwide; Denny Caraveo - City of Carlisle; Miranda Chadwick - City of Indianola; Ruthie Duey - Peoples Bank; Mark Estes - Greater Iowa Credit Union; Kate Haverland - Hotel Pommier; Holly Lancaster - AssuredPartners; Ben Lewiston - City of Norwalk Police Department; Alysha Martin

Rolling for Freedom 5K Fun Run/Walk

Saturday, June 15, 9 a.m.

Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park

The goal of Rolling for Freedom is to raise funds to purchase an all-terrain motorized wheelchair for Warren County Conservation. This wheelchair will empower people of all abilities to explore nature freely without limitations.

Learn more and register at www.wcdc.com/rolling-for-freedom-5k.



- Peoples Bank; Molly Slocum - Indianola Pizza Ranch; Chuck Smith - Capital City Fruit; Sean Stacy - Peoples Bank; Barb VanGorder - Capital City Fruit; Vicki Vivone - Warren County Auditor; Ray Walker - City of Carlisle; Josh Wolett - Warren County.

The WCLI Class of 2024 is still hard at work preparing for their class project, the Rolling For Freedom 5k on June 15 to raise money for the purchase an electric all terrain wheelchair for the Annette Nature Center. ■



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MAYORS MOMENT

In 2023, the Iowa House and Senate passed some legislation, House File 718 (HF718), that significantly impacted the City of Norwalk.

HF718 is better known as a property tax reduction bill by the Iowa Legislature. As the bill is written, if a community grows over three percent but under six percent, then revenue growth is reduced by two percent. But if a community grows over six percent, then revenue growth is reduced by three percent. Presently, Norwalk grows over six percent per year, which means our revenue growth is reduced by three percent, or approximately \$200,000 per year. The overall cumulative impact on the City of Norwalk over the next five years is more than \$2,000,000.

This may sound like a three percent reduction in your property taxes, but since the majority of your property taxes are levied by the local school district, which is held harmless by HF718, your overall property tax bill isn't going to be reduced by much. For the past eight years, Norwalk has kept property tax increases at or lower than the inflation rate, which means we've reduced our levy for the past eight years. Because of the passing of HF718, the City Council decided to keep the 2024 levy even with 2023, so we can try to mitigate the effects of HF718. While we appreciate the State Legislature's desire to lower property taxes, the challenge is when people start seeing the actual impact HF718 has at the local level. Suddenly, that reduction doesn't make much sense when you consider what you lose.

What HF718 does is it takes local decision making out of the hands of local decision makers. If we were to hear from residents that you'd like us to move forward with a specific project/service, or that you'd like us to increase public safety, your local decision makers (Norwalk City Council) are no longer able to make decisions to increase revenue to pay for that special service/project you want or need. HF718 inhibits the City's ability to increase revenue.

An additional flaw in the legislation allows a city that grows at 2.9% to not be impacted by this bill and can increase their revenue by 2.9%. However, if that community grew at 3.1%, their growth is reduced by two percent, so they can only increase their revenue by 1.1%.

The effect HF718 has on your local government is pretty significant. A large portion of our revenue is spent on providing Police, Fire and EMS services to you, our property tax payers. The Norwalk City Council does not want to reduce services to our residents, which means we need to look elsewhere for savings. The following are five areas in which we have already reduced spending to save money.

1. We drew on the Library Trust Fund to hire a library employee to provide expanded services requested by library patrons. Rather than move monies from our general fund to pay for the new employee, the Library had to use trust fund dollars to hire the new employee.
2. Pine Needle Park, located in Timber View, continues to be green space rather than a park with amenities. Council would like to be able to add some improvements to this park, such as a playground, but we've had to delay them due to HF718.



Tom Phillips, Mayor

3. We have begun implementing higher fees for large water meters. While our residents are not affected by this, the companies/businesses (who also pay property taxes) that employ some of our residents have been affected.
4. We are in the early stages of amending the City Code to stop the service of animal control. This includes ending the service of picking up stray dogs and those running loose.
5. We have already reduced Norwalk's Fire and EMS Service Area. We are no longer serving Lee Township in Madison County, nor Spring Hill in Warren County. We informed Cumming that their service would be terminated but they made the decision to raise revenue to pay for ongoing services. We are now discussing the possibility of reducing our service area to only the city limits of Norwalk and Cumming. This would impact those who live in Linn Township.

As the City of Norwalk continues to feel the effects of HF718, we'll need to continue looking for additional ways to reduce expenses to match the reduction in revenue. We have some very tough decisions ahead of us. While the City Council and I do not necessarily want to reduce any of the following, the State Legislature has tied our hands. As of right now, everything is on the table for reduction, including the following six items.

1. Temporarily reduce or eliminate funding for non-essential services that require financial resources. This would include the funding that provides this magazine to you, the funding for organizations that assist Norwalk residents such as HIRTA, the Chamber of Commerce, and Norwalk Hometown Pride. It could also include reducing the funding for the Independence Day fireworks show.
2. Reduce park maintenance and upkeep, such as mowing, landscaping and infrastructure repairs. We would only focus on maintaining safety standards.
3. Recreational programs from Parks and Rec could potentially be cut back or eliminated.
4. The Library could save by reducing their operating hours, only serving Norwalk residents and prioritizing digital resources and online services.
5. Street lighting could be reduced in numbers for low-traffic or residential areas.
6. Public Safety staffing levels could be adjusted. We could delay hiring new staff, reduce our service area and possibly start charging for mutual aid services.
7. All fees and services could see significant increases whereby users of a particular service begin to bear the full cost of such services (i.e. ambulance/EMS, building permits, Parks and Rec, etc.)

I know I shared a lot of facts and figures and information above, but I want to be clear and transparent with residents. The City Council and I strongly believe that decisions that affect our local budget should be made locally, based on the feedback and input from our residents. The decisions necessary to make cuts in the above areas are due to revenue reductions legislated by the State government. The Norwalk City Council and I don't want to have to make these cuts, but reductions in spending decisions are being forced upon us due to revenue decisions that are out of the City's control.

State Legislators tell us they hear from their constituents that they want their property taxes reduced. Unfortunately, the way the Legislators made this happen was at the expense of community services. I strongly encourage you, if you don't like the results of the service cuts, please contact your State Legislators and share your concerns. Not sure who your State Legislator is? You can easily find out with a quick internet search — "Who is my state legislator Iowa."



Employee Spotlight

Jean Strable, Library Director

I was born in DSM, growing up on a farm outside of Chariton until my parents purchased a small motel in Chadron, NE. Our house was part of the motel. It was an interesting way to grow up and I learned a lot about customer service and working with all kinds of people.

I graduated from Chadron State College with a double major in Library Media and English: Mass Media. I received my Master's of Library and Information Science from the University of Missouri - Columbia.

I started as Library Director in Norwalk in March 2020. It was the start of the pandemic, so my first big decision was to close the library indefinitely as all of the City buildings were being closed...and I hadn't even met more than a handful of my staff! Prior to Norwalk, I was the Director at the Winterset Public Library. I have also worked at libraries in Fort Collins, CO, Dubuque, and Tyler, TX.

When I was a junior in high school, I knew I wanted to have a job bringing people and books together. I have been fortunate to work in and visit libraries across the U.S. Norwalk is growing quickly and has so many possibilities and opportunities. I enjoy working in the library because it is gratifying to see how people can find what they need in a library. A typical visit will find people using libraries traditionally – to check out books or attend a storytime or participate in a book discussion. People are surprised and delighted to find their library offers so much more – exercise programs; notary services; faxing/scanning/printing; borrowing unusual items like board games, jigsaw puzzles, or a sewing machine; crafting classes; or grabbing something from the Community Fridge. Some of my favorite interactions are watching people get together to share their stories and thoughts. I get to see young children practice social skills of sharing toys and taking turns. I get to see families new to Norwalk meet others and set up playdates. I know several seniors who get together at library-sponsored events and have formed friendships beyond our walls. I watch our staff help people with their phones and tablets so they can connect with the digital world. It is pretty special to be a part of the transformative impact libraries have on a community!

Outside of the library I enjoy traveling, books & audiobooks (of course!), birdwatching, gardening, baseball and cross-stitching. I also collect pop-up books and have nearly 350 in my collection! My blended family includes: husband Dan, 5 adult children, 11 grandchildren and 1 great-granddaughter.



Moonlight Movie Night

The Parks and Recreation Department will host Moonlight Movie Night at McAninch Sports Complex this Summer. Grab a blanket or chairs and join us for a Movie under the moonlight! Warrior Eats concession stand will be open with for the event with a limited menu for your snack and drink needs. **No registration required!**

Program days/times: Friday evenings
June 7, 2024 - Migration
July 12, 2024 - Elemental
August 9, 2024 - Trolls Band Together
September 13, 2024 - Coco

Start time: Sunset at McAninch Sports Complex



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Homeowners Guide to Sustainable Lawns: *Fertilization: Adding Nutrients*



We like the look of green turf grass in our yards: lawns need periodic fertilization in the spring and fall to provide the necessary nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. It is best to determine the fertility of the soil beneath the turf in your lawn before fertilizing. Adding too much fertilizer can run off the landscape and drain to local storm sewers that drain directly to local streams, lakes, and ponds.



Whether you DIY or hire a lawncare company, have the soils in your lawn sampled and tested to determine fertility levels. Most soils in Iowa have adequate amounts of phosphorus so no need to add more. Excess nutrients drain into local waterways and causes algal blooms that impact aquatic life. Several labs in Iowa will analyze samples for a low fee. Follow guidance by ISU extension.



Fertilizer bags have three numbers on their labels (pictured left) in a # - # - # format. These numbers are the percentage of the three primary nutrients in the fertilizer. The first of these numbers is the amount of Nitrogen, followed by Phosphorus, and Potassium. As stated above, Iowa soils are rich in Phosphorus, so look for fertilizers with a 0 for the middle number. Sweep excess from street, sidewalk, and driveway back onto lawn.

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HOW-TO

GUIDE

HOW TO CHOOSE A VETERINARIAN

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

First and foremost, ensure that the veterinarian is properly qualified. Look for credentials such as membership in professional organizations like the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and Iowa Veterinary Medical Organization (IVMA). Experience is also helpful; a veterinarian with several years in practice is likely to have encountered a wide range of health issues and developed expertise in various areas.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Some pets may require specialized care. If your pet has specific health needs, such as a chronic condition or a breed-specific issue, finding a veterinarian with specialized training or experience in that area can be beneficial. Many vets pursue additional certifications in areas such as surgery, dermatology, dentistry, or exotic animal care, which can be valuable depending on your pet's needs. Many hospital teams have training in fear-free practice and cat-friendly handling.

SERVICES OFFERED

Consider the range of services provided by the veterinary clinic. Comprehensive services, including preventive care, diagnostics, surgery and advanced imaging, are advantageous. Some clinics also offer boarding and nutritional counseling. Choosing a veterinarian who can address all aspects of your pet's health under one roof is helpful.

LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The clinic's location is an important factor for convenience and emergency situations. Ideally, the clinic should be within a reasonable distance from your home. Check the clinic's hours of operation to ensure they align with your schedule. Some clinics offer extended hours or urgent care services, which can be crucial for unforeseen health issues.

PERSONAL COMFORT AND COMMUNICATION

Your comfort level with the veterinary office is essential. During the initial visit, observe how the veterinarian and the team interact with

your pet and address your concerns. A good veterinarian should be patient, approachable, and willing to explain diagnoses and treatment options clearly.

FACILITY CLEANLINESS AND STAFF PROFESSIONALISM

The condition of the veterinary clinic can reflect the quality of care. A clean, well-organized facility is a positive sign. Additionally, the professionalism and friendliness of the staff are important as they can be liaisons and helpful resources in your pet's care.

COST AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

While many wish to compare the costs of veterinary care, apples-to-apples comparisons are rare. Instead of understanding the clinic's pricing structure, ensure cost estimates are provided before treatment is initiated. Inquire if the clinic offers payment plans, pet insurance acceptance, or preventative care packages that can make veterinary care more affordable. ■



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HOW TO CHOOSE A FINANCIAL ADVISOR

Working with a professional financial advisor could be the best investment you'll ever make. The best planners can help you meet your financial goals now and in the future. An advisor can bring their experiences and objective perspective to advise you on how best to save, invest and spend your money. They can also suggest avenues of money management. Some investments help lower your tax liability. Also they can help guide you through uncertain financial times.

To find a reliable financial advisor, start by asking your friends and family for suggestions. Research online for advisors in your area. Searching a potential advisor using brokercheck.finra.org will list any disclosures and the advisor's work history. Remember to research each advisor with an eye toward your own situation and goals. Once you have a list of possible advisors, set a time to meet, and see if the fit is right for you.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Financial products can contribute to your wellbeing and peace of mind. Some common investments are CDs, bonds, mutual funds, stocks and commodities. Weighing risk is essential.

Some products will be better for your portfolio than others. An experienced financial advisor can customize a portfolio especially for you. The financial advisor should also understand how much risk you want to take.

FEES OR COMMISSIONS

Inquire about how your advisor is paid for their services. Make sure you understand the fees you are paying and that you are only paying for services you're actually using. Typically accounts are either fee based or commission based. A fee-based account charges a monthly fee based upon the value of your account. In a fee-based account, you are able to make changes in the account without additional expenses. A commission-based account only charges a fee if, and when, a trade is placed. The commission may be at the front end or back end for both the buy and sell depending upon the product.

Once everything has been completed to your satisfaction, you can choose a financial advisor. They will partner with you to reach your goals, whether it's retirement, emergency savings, a vacation home, or another goal that you have. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A MINI-STORAGE UNIT

Choosing a mini-storage unit can be a straightforward process if you consider the right factors to meet your storage needs.

ASSESS YOUR STORAGE NEEDS

• **Inventory your items:** Make a detailed list of everything you plan to store. This will help you determine the size of the unit you need. Consider whether you'll be storing large furniture, boxes of various sizes or smaller items.

• **Size matters:** Storage units come in various sizes, typically ranging from 5 feet by 5 feet to 10 feet by 30 feet. A 5-foot by 5-foot unit is suitable for small items and boxes, while larger units can accommodate the contents of an entire house. Choosing the right size prevents you from overpaying for unused space or cramming your items into a unit that is too small.

LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

• **Proximity:** Choose a storage facility that is conveniently located. If you need frequent access to your belongings, a nearby facility is ideal. For long-term storage, a facility further away might be acceptable if it offers better

rates.

• **Access hours:** Check the facility's access hours. Some offer 24/7 access, while others have restricted hours. Ensure the access hours align with your schedule to avoid inconvenience.

SECURITY FEATURES

Look for facilities with strong security features, including surveillance cameras, gated access and on-site staff. Well-lit areas and secure locks are also important. Ask about their policies on access control to ensure only authorized individuals can enter the premises.

CLIMATE CONTROL

If you're storing sensitive items like electronics, documents or antiques, consider a climate-controlled unit. These units maintain a stable environment, protecting your belongings from extreme temperatures and humidity.

VEHICLES

When choosing a mini storage unit for RVs, boats, cars or campers, several factors should guide your decision. First, consider the size and type of storage needed, ensuring the unit or

parking space can accommodate the vehicle's dimensions. Accessibility is crucial; opt for facilities with wide driveways, ample turning space, and convenient access hours that fit your schedule.

FACILITY CONDITION AND AMENITIES

• **Cleanliness and maintenance:** Visit the facility to assess its cleanliness and overall condition. A well-maintained facility indicates good management and reduces the risk of pests and other issues.

• **Additional amenities:** Some storage facilities offer extra services like moving supplies, truck rentals and on-site assistance. These can add convenience and value to your storage experience.

CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Pay attention to feedback on customer service, facility conditions and overall satisfaction. Reviews can provide insights that you might not get from a site visit alone.

By considering these factors, you can choose a mini-storage unit that best suits your needs, ensuring your belongings are safe, accessible and well-preserved. ■

NOW OPEN

Titan Storage Norwalk is a 33k SF mini-storage facility. The facility features several amenities including a fully fenced perimeter, controlled access gate, customizable sizes and a comprehensive video surveillance system. Titan Storage Norwalk is a much-needed addition to the town to fill current storage needs, and as the town continues to grow.

TITAN STORAGE NORWALK

is a 33k SF mini-storage facility. The facility features several amenities including a fully fenced perimeter, controlled access gate, customizable sizes and a comprehensive

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HOW TO CHOOSE A NEW CAR DEALER

Choosing a new car dealer is almost as important as choosing the car itself. You've probably invested some time into the make and model of car you want, but maybe not so much time, if any, thinking about the dealer.

There's usually no shortage of dealers who carry many of the popular models, so one may seem just as good as the other. Not true.

Pick the wrong dealer and you could get stuck with a lemon or unfair financing terms. A good dealer, however, will make the car buying process a transparent breeze and offer excellent after-purchase support.

Here are some things to think about if you're in the market for a new car.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CAR

The first thing you need to figure out is what type of automobile you're looking to buy. This will help you narrow down brands and pick your best option. Large families may

need an SUV or van to fit everyone into the vehicle. But college students buying their first car would probably be happy with a compact car. The savings on gas will help ease your finances while you are in school.

Along with the car model, there are numerous options to consider. You might get a car with a navigation system, moon roof, GPS and satellite radio, just to name a few. Many of these amenities are now standard, but some involve extra costs.

If you have to commute long distances, think about purchasing a smaller car with a good MPG (miles per gallon) rating. Hybrid cars can help you save money on gas. Anyone in a cold climate might look at various vehicles with either all-wheel or front-wheel drive.

CHOOSE THE DEALER

Once you have settled on a car model, check into area car dealers. Finding several dealers who sell the brand of car you want

is usually best. The competition for your business will help you negotiate the total cost of your car.

Make sure to look for current discounts on the car you want. During specific times of the year, you might be able to get a great deal on a new car. It is particularly true during year-end sales.

Of course, you should test drive a car before purchasing it.

When you begin your negotiations, remember that price isn't everything. Service should play a role as well. You are building a long-term relationship with this dealer and manufacturer. It is not worth getting a less-than-satisfactory experience just to save a few dollars.

Make sure you feel comfortable with the dealership. Buying a car is an expensive, long-term commitment. It is always better to find a car salesperson who is informative and friendly. It will make your transaction as simple and comfortable as possible. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A TREE SERVICE

Trimming or removing trees from your property is difficult work, not something you'd want to attempt yourself. Making sure your trees are healthy while avoiding property damage requires employing a professional tree service. Follow these tips to find a qualified, professional tree service in your area:

• **Ask friends, family and neighbors.**

You may know someone who has used a tree service in the past. They can tell you who does the best work.

• **Contact at least three tree services.**

Inform them of the situation and request a site inspection. It gives you the opportunity to ask about issues and get a feel for the experience and expertise of each company. Take notes so you can compare your results afterward.

• **Find out how long each company has been in business, their experiences, references and whether they are licensed and insured.** Check with the Better Business Bureau for outstanding

complaints. Even reliable companies may have a few problems. It is how they resolve the issue that counts.

• **Request estimates.** These figures can vary widely. Some companies are better equipped for certain jobs, so they can offer more competitive pricing. Other companies are slow or may be trying to "fill-in" appointment slots with smaller jobs just to keep their crews busy. Don't choose a company strictly by cost. Tree work is dangerous. Proper equipment, well-trained employees and insurance create high operating costs. It is worth paying more for peace of mind and excellent service.

• **Look at a copy of their insurance policy.** Coverage should include personal liability, property damage coverage, workers' compensation and damaged vehicles or home coverage.

• **Inspect their previous work by looking at their portfolio.** Each tree service company has a work style. Verify that it suits your needs. Photos of past work

might also be on their website.

• **Get a detailed written estimate of any work to be performed before signing a contract.** Responsible companies will provide detailed descriptions, along with the time and cost for your records. This estimate should also offer information about cleanup expectations. Are logs to be cut up or left for firewood? Will the company haul everything away or leave it for you to manage? Will leaves and twigs be raked up or run through a chipper? If they are removing an entire tree, what will happen to the stump?

• **Verify the workers wear proper safety gear.** They should be wearing helmets at all times. In addition, they should use face shields or protective glasses and steeltoe boots. The person who climbs the tree should have arborist climbing ropes, specialized safety and climbing gear, the proper saddle, helmet and safety glasses. ■

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HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT BRAIN HEALTH

Talking to kids about brain health can be a bit tricky, but it's incredibly important. Just like we teach kids to take care of their bodies by eating veggies and brushing their teeth, we must help them take care of their minds, too. Here's how you can do it in a friendly way that kids can understand:

STEP 1: PICK THE RIGHT TIME

Find a time when you and the child are feeling relaxed. Maybe after a game or during a quiet moment. This helps make sure you both have the time to talk and listen.

STEP 2: KEEP IT SIMPLE

Use words that are easy to understand. Instead of saying "mental health," you might say "feeling good inside your head" or "your heart feeling happy." Explain that, just like our bodies can get sick with a cold, sometimes our feelings and thoughts can get hurt and need help, too.

STEP 3: BE OPEN AND HONEST

Share your feelings. Say something like,

"You know, sometimes I feel sad, too, and it's alright. It's just like when you scrape your knee — you need to take care of it."

STEP 4: LISTEN AND ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Let the kids ask anything. They might have questions like "What is anxiety?" or "Why does my friend see a therapist?" Answer them the best you can, and, if you don't know, it's OK to say, "I'm not sure, but let's find out together."

STEP 5: TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

Teach kids that all feelings are OK. Whether they're happy, sad or mad, it's part of being human. Talking about feelings is like letting air out of a too-full balloon. It can make things feel better.

STEP 6: SHARE WAYS TO FEEL BETTER

Talk together about things they can do to improve their mood. Taking a walk, drawing, playing outside, or talking to

someone they trust can help. Remind them that it's brave to ask for help.

STEP 7: BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL

Show kids that taking care of your brain health is just as important as physical health. Do things like taking deep breaths when you're stressed or laughing when something's funny. When they see you doing these things, they'll learn to do them, too.

STEP 8: KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Don't let this be a one-time chat. Keep talking about brain health regularly. Have frequent check-ins — "How are you feeling today?"

Remember, talking about mental health with kids doesn't have to be a big deal. It's about helping them understand that their minds need love and care, just like the rest of them. By doing this, you're helping them grow healthy and strong — inside and out. ■



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EARL Barker — the memories of a pioneer

At the museum research library, we have several biographies and autobiographies. One of these was written by Earl Barker. The Barkers were an early Warren County pioneer family. A delightful, popular park south of A&W in Indianola was named after this family. Earl Barker's autobiography contains many interesting accounts of childhood experiences.

Until he was about 2 years old, like other boys, he wore dresses. When dressed in "big boy" pants for the first time, he was mad and ran out on the porch before discovering there were pockets in the pants, which improved his attitude. He probably doesn't remember his first pair of pants, but imagine him being the victim of frequent teasing over the years about his first reaction to wearing pants.

Another memory from Earl's elementary school years was from the school playground. His brother John depended on him for protection from the older boys, some of whom delighted in knocking down any little fellows who got in their way. One time, two of the older boys "got a long limb off a tree and with one of them on each end started across the playground, knocking all down that did not get out of the way." It sounds like bullying is nothing new.

Earl's father was engaged in a variety of business adventures during his lifetime. One of the more unusual ventures involved the Emery Harris Store fire in Des Moines. His dad bought the whole stock of dry goods, which were now wet goods after the fire, and hauled them to Indianola. He proceeded to scatter hundreds of bolts of wet and scorched fabric over three acres of land (where the cemetery is now located) to dry and be sold.

Earl fondly recalled "the ice harvest every winter, with dozens of teams hauling on bob-sleds to fill the big ice house of Will & Jess Demory's Hotel, our creamery factory, and A.W. Barker's meat market for summer refrigeration." He also tells how Jack Moore, who was totally blind, and his wife went fishing so much. "He could always tell by feel when it was the right time to pull the fish out, as he used no bobber cork."

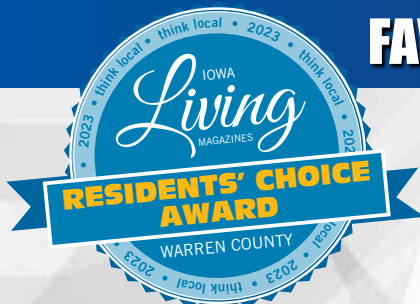
Horses were a big part of Earl's life. He wrote about his faithful old team of gray mares, Pet and Topsey, born in 1920. They "helped put in every crop until 1948 when Topsey was sold. Pet was the most intelligent and kindest disposition of any horse I ever owned and lived there until she died in 1950 at the age of 30 years. No matter what kind of work she was doing, be it planting corn, loading saw logs or whatever, she always knew exactly how to do it."

In 1931, Earl was offered a job surveying for the Army Corp of Engineers on the Red Rock Dam project. He had been recommended for the job because of his record of two years' work in Marion County as chief on survey for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Within a week, he had organized a five-man party, gathered them at the courthouse community room where they all successfully took a qualifying examination. This job lasted two years and consisted mostly of setting lines and control points for mapping purposes.

These are only a few of the captivating memories in Earl Barker's autobiography. If you are interested in reading more, visit the Warren County Historical Library on any Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., or Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon. ■

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EXPECTING an inheritance?

Here is what you should consider

Inheriting assets can be a blessing at an emotionally challenging point in your life. Here are key considerations to navigate this process:



1. Understanding the assets: First, identify and understand the nature of the inherited assets. They might include cash, real estate, stocks, bonds, retirement accounts and personal property. Each asset type has different implications for management and taxes.

2. Tax implications: Inherited assets often come with tax considerations. For example, in the U.S., inherited property generally receives a “step-up” in basis, meaning the property’s value is adjusted to its market value at the decedent’s date of death, potentially reducing capital gains tax if sold. However, some retirement accounts like IRAs or 401(k)s are subject to income tax upon distribution. It is important to consult your financial or tax advisor to understand these implications and optimize tax strategies.

3. Probate process: Assets not held in a trust may need to go through probate, a legal process for settling an estate. Probate can be time-consuming and expensive, so understanding whether the assets are subject to this process is important. Trusts are often used as an estate planning tool. Trusts are used to bypass probate, providing quicker access to assets.

4. Debt and liabilities: Inheriting debt is less common, but it’s important to determine if the estate has outstanding debts. Creditors are typically paid from the estate’s assets before distribution to heirs, potentially reducing the inheritance.

5. Investment decisions: Inherited investments require careful consideration. Your advisor can help evaluate whether to keep, sell, or reinvest based on your financial goals and market conditions. Your inherited assets can work in tandem with your overall investment strategy to help meet your goals.

6. Emotional considerations: Inheriting personal property or real estate with sentimental value can be emotionally challenging. Balancing the emotional attachment with practical decisions is key. Sometimes, holding on to an asset may not be financially feasible or practical.

7. Legal and financial advice: A team of estate attorneys and financial planners can provide guidance tailored to your situation and assist you in navigating the legal complexities, tax planning, and financial management to make the most of the inheritance.

Inheriting assets involves a multifaceted approach, combining emotional and practical considerations. Properly managing inherited assets can secure your financial future and honor the legacy of the benefactor. ■

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

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NORWALK COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2024

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2024!



Norwalk School Board Members Michelle Kelly, Justin Fletcher, Brian Rausch and Kate Baldwin stand with Superintendent Shawn Holloway and the 2024 Norwalk Wall of Fame Inductees Tony Spencer, Alex Dorr and Tom McLaughlin



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RECIPE

SCRUMPTIOUS ways to simplify springtime meals

(Family Features) From everyday weeknight dinners to picnics in the park, warmer weather and longer days mean families want to spend more time together and less time in the kitchen. This spring, look for kitchen hacks that can make fresh and healthy weeknight seasonal recipes a cinch.

Skipping complicated prep work is the first step toward simplifying springtime meals. Rather than recipes that call for a lot of prep or cooking time, consider easy dishes that require only a handful of steps and use everyday ingredients you may already have in your pantry, fridge or freezer.

For example, these shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers with lemon and thyme can let you put a little spring in your weeknight dinners. Grilled skewers keep the whole family happy and come together in less than 30 minutes, making them perfect for quick and healthy meals without the hassle. The versatility of potatoes means you can grill them, and this version calls for a 5-minute microwave steam first to cut down on grill time.

To find more ways to savor springtime meals outdoors with your family, visit littlepotatoes.com. ■

Shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

- 1 pound bagged Little Potatoes
- 1 bunch broccoli
- 12 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 1/2 lemons, juice only
- 3 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- In large, microwave-safe bowl, microwave potatoes on high 5 minutes.
- Chop broccoli into large pieces.
- Add broccoli and shrimp to bowl once potatoes are steamed.
- Add lemon juice, thyme and olive oil; evenly coat potatoes, shrimp and broccoli. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- Build skewers and grill 10-15 minutes on medium-high heat, until shrimp is cooked through.



NEWS BRIEFS

MITCHELL publishes book

A.J. Mitchell of Norwalk announces the release of his first book, "The Prince of the Dead."

Mitchell is a first time, self publishing author. He has spent the last four years learning about the writing process and developing different skills in the publishing trade. He has a passion for storytelling but has only recently committed to putting his ideas in writing for others to read.

"The Prince of the Dead" is a young adult, epic fantasy novel about a boy named Ronan, who is working for a criminal underground. When his life is threatened while on a scavenging mission, a strange power awakens within him. He gains the ability to see and command the spirits of the dead. The story follows Ronan as he becomes intertwined in an imperial plot to unleash an unprecedented chaotic elemental energy into the world. He must rely on his mysterious new ability to put a stop to the devastating plan.

The book is now available through Amazon. ■



LEAD DSM announces YLI graduates

Lead DSM announces the graduation of the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) Class of 2024, which includes 33 student leaders from 18 central Iowa high schools, including Emma Sizemore, Norwalk Community High School.

The Youth Leadership Initiative provides high school students with leadership experiences and community connections that enhance confidence and encourage involvement in all levels of community life.

Students met once per month from September 2023 through April 2024 to explore topics on leadership, while learning about regional opportunities and issues. "We challenge YLI students to use their enhanced leadership skills to find new ways to impact the community, putting into practice our vision of a thriving community for all," said Kelly Royal, program manager for YLI. ■

WORLD Elder Abuse Awareness Day

As societies around the globe grow older, the issue of elder abuse is becoming increasingly prominent. Every year, on June 15, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by the elderly and the importance of safeguarding their rights and dignity. This day not only raises awareness but also calls for action to combat this disturbing phenomenon.



Elder abuse takes various forms, including physical, emotional, financial and even sexual abuse. It can occur in diverse settings, from private homes to institutional care facilities, and is often perpetrated by family members, caregivers or those in positions of trust. The victims, already vulnerable due to age-related frailties, are left traumatized, isolated and deprived of their fundamental rights.

One of the most insidious aspects of elder abuse is its hidden nature. Many cases go unreported due to factors such as fear, shame or the dependence of the victim on the abuser for care or financial support. This underreporting exacerbates the problem, making it difficult for authorities to intervene effectively.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the risk of elder abuse. Lockdowns and social distancing measures have increased isolation among the elderly, making them more susceptible to mistreatment.

To address elder abuse comprehensively, concerted efforts are required at multiple levels. Governments must enact and enforce robust laws to protect the rights of older adults and punish perpetrators. Furthermore, investment in social services, including elder abuse hotlines, counseling and legal assistance, is crucial to provide support to victims and prevent future occurrences.

Community involvement is equally vital in tackling elder abuse. By fostering a culture of respect for the elderly and promoting awareness about their rights, communities can create a protective environment where abuse is not tolerated. Education initiatives targeting both older adults and caregivers can empower individuals to recognize signs of abuse and seek help.

Additionally, healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing elder abuse. Training programs should be implemented to equip medical personnel with the skills to detect signs of abuse during routine check-ups and provide appropriate interventions. Collaboration between healthcare providers, social services, law enforcement, and advocacy groups is essential for a coordinated response to elder abuse cases.

As we observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to promoting the wellbeing and dignity of older adults. By shining a light on this often-overlooked issue and taking concrete actions to prevent and address elder abuse, we can create a world where older individuals are respected, protected and able to age with dignity and security. ■

Information provided by Jjuan Hakeem, Edencrest at the Legacy, 2901 Cedar St., Norwalk, 515- 220-2952, welcomelg@edencrestliving.com.

GRIEF 101 with Buffy: Get physical

Grief is the natural and normal reaction we have after someone has died. One fact that some people are not aware of is that we experience grief within our bodies, so finding ways to physically release it is a great way to express some of our most intense emotions.

What physical activities do you enjoy?

Do you prefer being in nature? Go for a walk or run on a trail. Gardening is also a great way to be active outside.

Do you enjoy dancing? Take a class (online or in-person), or else put on some tunes and dance in your home.

Do you want to take it easy on your joints? Try swimming, water aerobics, chair yoga, or stretch classes.

Do you feel limited with time or other resources? Cleaning, cooking, and other household chores keep us moving.

Do you feel worried about where to start? No worries. Many fitness organizations have variety of classes dedicated to specific age groups and levels.

There are so many different ways we can move in the world. Think about what you enjoy or pick a new activity to try. Movement helps us burn energy, release feelings, and increase our sense of control in the world. Make a list of some activities you would like to try and then start getting physical. ■



Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666.

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Hearing aids are no longer just tools for improving your hearing ability. They're now multifunctional devices designed to elevate your wellbeing.

Interested in trying the latest devices for yourself? Call your audiologist today to schedule an appointment. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, www.iowahearingcenter.com.



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Information provided by Chelsea Taggart, L.E., Vivid Life Spa, 1016 Main St., Norwalk. Call 515-850-7848. Living-vivid.com/life-spa.

BYE bye binky

Most parents know it's important to wean their child from their beloved binky, but we get a lot of questions on why, when, and how?

Why? Frequent and prolonged pacifier use can affect the way the child's teeth bite together as well as how the jaw grows and develops. This can mean extra years and expense in braces down the road and sometimes can even cause irreversible damage to jaw development.

When? It is recommended to start restricting pacifier use by the time your baby turns 1 and be completely weaned by 3 years old. It is best (and often, easier) to wean a child from the binky as early as possible.

How? Many parents initially limit use to bedtime only. Some parents use a countdown method and trim the end of the binky, one snip every day (or week) until gone. Many times, the inability to create a suction will cause the child to lose interest on their own. Another strategy is to go to the toy store and let the child select a toy to "trade in" their binky for. Other parents have had luck with a "Bye Bye Binky" party or a night when the Binky Fairy will pick it up to "take to a baby that needs it more." Whatever method you choose, once you elect to ditch the binky, make sure all caregivers are on board and stick with it. ■



Information provided by Dr. Elizabeth Fleck, Norwalk Family Dentistry, 1101 Chatham Ave., Suite A, Norwalk, 515-256-9000, www.norwalkfamilydentistry.com.

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HEALTH

By Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh

IS SPINAL decompression therapy right for me?

Spinal decompression therapy (SDT) involves stretching the spine using a motorized traction table with the goal of relieving low back pain and/or leg pain by promoting an optimal healing environment for bulging, degenerated and/or herniated discs. This procedure is also known as nonsurgical decompression therapy. SDT creates a negative intradiscal pressure to promote retraction or repositioning of the herniated or bulging disc and causes an influx of healing nutrients and other substances into the disc.



During SDT for low back pain, the patient remains clothed and lies on a motorized table. The upper part of the table remains in a fixed position while the lower part, to which the patient is harnessed, slides back and forth to provide the traction and relaxation. The patient shouldn't feel pain, although they should feel stretching in the spine.

Decompression therapy typically consists of a series of 15 to 30 treatments, lasting 30 minutes each, over a four- to 16-week period. Call your chiropractor for cost and information. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh, Norwalk Chiropractic, 1300 Sunset Drive, 515-981-9208, www.norwalk-chiropractic.com. Norwalk Chiropractic is a provider with most major insurance companies.

HEALTH

By Dr. Jonathan P. Anderson, O.D.

WHAT determines my eye color?

A person's eye color results from pigmentation of a structure called the iris, which surrounds the pupil and helps control how much light can enter the eye. Iris color can range from very light blue to dark brown. Most eye color is categorized as blue, green/hazel or brown. Brown is the most frequent eye color worldwide. Blue and green eyes are found almost exclusively among people that have some European ancestry.



Eye color is directly related to the amount and quality of melanin in the front layers of the iris. People with brown eyes have a large amount of melanin in the iris, while people with blue eyes have much less of this pigment.

Many babies are born with blue eyes that can darken in the first three years of life. Children can have completely different eye color than either parent, depending on the gene that expresses for them. If both parents have brown, it is most likely their children will also have brown eyes. The darker colors tend to dominate, so brown tends to win over green and blue. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jonathan P. Anderson, O.D., Optometric Associates-Norwalk, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite A, Norwalk, 515-981-5388.

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INVESTING in professional development

When it comes to investing in your professional development, finding opportunities can be challenging yet essential to career growth and success. The chamber is a great resource for those looking



to gain leadership experience, engage with their community, serve on committees, network with others (including community and business leaders), and learn about a range of business-focused topics. In addition to joining your local chamber, here are some of my favorite ways to invest in yourself professionally.

• **Join a group or committee:** Being part of professional groups or committees is an excellent way to expand your network and gain valuable experiences. Young Professionals groups, alumni associations, non-profit organizations and local breakfast clubs often provide platforms to connect with like-minded individuals and potential mentors.

• **Attend events and workshops:** Getting

out of the office to attend industry shows, workshops and seminars can expose you to the latest trends and best practices in your field. I recommend the annual Leadership Institute through Warren County Economic Development. This eight-session series covers topics like project management, fundraising and DEI and is taught by local leaders who are familiar with the unique strengths and challenges of our community.

• **Invest time in webinars and podcasts:**

In addition to attending workshops and events, consider exploring webinars and podcasts related to your industry or areas of interest. These resources often feature experts sharing valuable insights, tips and strategies.

• **Establish a mentorship:** Having a mentor can be invaluable for your professional growth. They can offer guidance, insights and career advice based on their own experiences. Finding a mentor among your colleagues, bosses, coaches, or admired professionals can provide you with personalized support on your career journey.

• **Read:** Books and online resources are treasure troves of knowledge. Seek out books, articles and online recommendations related to your industry or areas of interest.

• **Attend networking events:** Build connections with other professionals through networking events and conferences. This can lead to new opportunities, provide valuable insights into industries outside your own, and help you build a referral base.

• **Set goals:** Regularly take time to reflect on your career goals and progress. Set specific and measurable objectives for your professional development and track your achievements. Seek out constructive criticism from your peers and superiors to help you identify areas for improvement.

If you are interested in learning how the chamber can help you reach your goals, email me at info@norwalkchamber.org. ■

Information provided by Lauren Ebensteiner, executive director, Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce.

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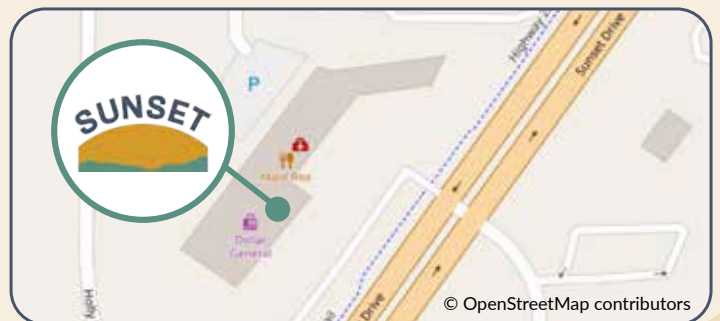
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