

ALTOONA

FEBRUARY 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

Budding Romance

Couples share how their
relationships bloomed

Meet Jill Brady
EDUCATION

Cuban chicken with salsa fresca
RECIPE

Lenards start new chapter in Altoona
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WELCOME

COURTSHIP communication

I have not been on the dating scene for more than 27 years, and I met my wife at work, so keep those facts in mind as I touch on the subject of how romantic relationships start in today's world.

Like many things in life, courtship processes have changed, but the message is the same. From passing handwritten letters to making phone calls to sending text messages to posting on social media, the way we communicate with those we hope to love has certainly evolved.

Some would say for the better. Some would say for the worse. Regardless, the methods are here to stay... at least for a year or two until a new communication method evolves.

Today, many relationships start with online dating sites. That was considered by many to be weird just a decade or so ago. After all, how could someone possibly start dating someone over a computer screen? My single friends tell me it works incredibly well, regardless of age. I have a feeling that a handwritten letter might still work as well — or, heaven forbid, face-to-face communication!

In this month's feature story, we touch on the subject of dating and relationships and how it all began for some local residents. Whether you are single or in a relationship, you will surely be entertained when learning about how some in the community are managing — or have managed — courtship communication.

Thanks for reading. ■



SHANE GOODMAN

Publisher

515-953-4822, ext. 305

shane@dmcityview.com



Read more of Shane Goodman's columns each weekday morning by subscribing to The Daily Umbrella email newsletter for free at www.thedailyumbrella.com.



Tammy Pearson

Editor

515-953-4822 ext. 302

tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Aaron Burns

Advertising Account Executive

515-953-4822 x307

aaron@iowalivingmagazines.com



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FEATURE

Budding Romance

Couples share how their relationships bloomed

By Lindsey Giardino

Sharon and Jim Omgig met at the Iowa Commission for the Blind. Jim, a talented musician, wrote a song for Sharon shortly after they started dating — something she still cherishes today.

Chaperoned dates. Internet introductions. Holding hands in the movie theater. Long walks along the shore. Dinners for two — at a burger joint or by candlelight. Rollercoaster rides. Snowball fights. Card games or video games. While the way couples spend time together has changed over the years, one similarity remains: Whatever the path romance takes, it is the special moments along the way that nurture a budding romance into a blooming relationship.

Five decades of keeping love alive

Sharon Omvig's first impression of her husband, Jim, was nothing but positive. The couple met at the Iowa Commission for the Blind, where Jim, who is blind, was once a student in its Orientation Center.

Jim also attended Drake University at the time before heading to Loyola Law School and becoming an attorney. He then worked for the National Labor Relations Board in Washington D.C. and New York City for a number of years before returning to Iowa to do what he really wanted to do: work with the blind.

Jim moved back in 1969 and took a role with the Iowa Commission for the Blind, where Sharon was also a staff member. She already knew about Jim's "sterling reputation" and how much the staff loved him and cared about his success.

After first meeting, Sharon and Jim became good friends. Then, one day, a mutual friend on staff at the commission called Sharon and said Jim was coming over for pizza that night and that she should join them.

She did.

"As they say, the rest is history," Sharon says.

Sharon and Jim dated for a few months and "fell madly in love with each other," she adds. Shortly after their relationship began, they decided to get married and flew to Las Vegas to do so.

"They say Las Vegas weddings don't hold up too well, but ours has," Sharon says.

This past month, the Omvigs celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary.

The couple recalls that they initially kept their relationship under wraps at the Iowa Commission for the Blind and surprised the staff when they returned from Las Vegas as a married couple.

"It may not be the love story of the century, but it was the love story that year at the Iowa Commission for the Blind," Sharon jokes.

One of their favorite memories is from when they were dating, and Jim, who is a talented musician, wrote a song for Sharon aptly titled, "Sharon." The sheet music for that song hangs on their bedroom wall still today.

Even after all these years, Sharon says Jim still shows his love and appreciation by giving gifts, flowers and cards, and, more importantly, by making her laugh.

"Jim's quite a romantic guy, so there's no wondering about whether he was going to remember a birthday or an anniversary, because



Jim Omvig wrote this song for Sharon.

he always does," she says.

Jim sums up his and Sharon's 47 years together best.

"We have lived a marvelous life."

A new chapter

Amelia Lenard and her husband, Caleb, a pastor, recently moved to the Altoona area with their baby girl. While they embark on this next chapter of their lives, Amelia recalls the first chapter.

"I was 20, and he was 21 when we started dating, but we had been friends for a couple of years before that," she says. "We both had the

mindset that, if we're going to date, it should be someone we truly thought had marriage potential. Why waste time, right?"

Amelia adds, while they had lots of fun, they spent a lot of intentional time reading marriage books, asking important questions and getting to know each other's personalities, interests and goals. They pursued each other transparently and intentionally from day one, Amelia says. After eight months, they got engaged, and, five months later, they were married.

They were equally intentional about their recent move to Altoona about a month ago.

"We chose Altoona out of all the Des

FEATURE

Moines area because there are a lot of fun things to do here but it still has a slow pace,” Amelia says.

The Lenards enjoy that their neighborhood is quiet with little traffic and that it’s close to parks and other amenities — important factors as their new life chapter focuses on family.

“There are a lot of parks and fun things for kids and pets,” Amelia says, adding they plan on helping with youth sports and other activities that their kids will be involved in.

“We are excited to continue to get to know the community better and grow our family here,” Amelia says.

Love conquers all

It didn’t take long for Janice Flaherty to know her husband, Bill, was “the one.”

Back in the day, Janice worked

with a nurse whose husband was coworkers with Bill, and they set the two up on a blind date.

“When I got home, I said, ‘I think I’m going to marry him,’ ” Janice recalls.

The next day, a dozen roses were sent to her at work.

“I figured maybe he felt that way, too,” she says.

While dating, Janice and Bill would often go to the movies or to the airport to watch the airplanes come and go. They went out often with Bill’s brother and his fiancé at the time. Janice says they didn’t have a lot of money, so they didn’t have many fancy dates, but “we had a good time.”

“We were very much in love right then, and it continued for a lot of years,” she says.

Janice and Bill dated for about three months before deciding to get married. They “kind of eloped” and got married by the



Caleb and Amelia Lenard and their baby girl are starting a new chapter of their lives and are eager to get involved in the community.



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FEATURE

hospital chaplain in the chapel at Des Moines' Methodist Hospital, where Janice worked as a pediatric nurse. Her brother and his wife stood up with the couple, and, after the vows, they let their family and friends know they were married.

"Everybody said it wouldn't work, but it worked for almost 53 years," Janice says.

While the couple had their fair share of ups and downs, Janice couldn't imagine someone she would have rather spent her life with.

Bill, who has since passed away, was an alcoholic when they married. They had some rough times, but Janice says, "I guess it must have been love underneath because we both never gave up on it."

Bill was sober for the last 37 years of their marriage — something he was very proud of. The couple had three kids and raised them all in the Des Moines home where they lived for 50 years before Janice's recent move to Altoona.

Her advice to others who are dating or in a relationship is this:

"It's not all about you. You have to remember it's them, too. You have to give and take."

Date night dinners

Altoona residents Russ and Beth Blacksmith were initially introduced by a mutual friend shortly after Russ moved back to Iowa from California.

Dating was difficult at first, according to Russ, as he was going to school in Ottumwa while she lived in Indianola. They saw each other when they could, though, and made every second count.

One of Russ' favorite memories from dating his future wife happened during those long-distance days.

"Every time there was a knock on the door of my dorm room, I would jump out of my chair and run to the door," he says. "Sometimes, it was even her."

Russ notes, while there have been hard times throughout the course of their relationship, he and Beth have been willing to put in the work.

"Like anything worth having in life, it took work. A lot of it," Russ says. "We didn't give up when things got hard — we kept working to make it better. We will celebrate our 18th anniversary this year, and there's no one else in the world that I'd rather wake up next to."

One of Russ and Beth's favorite things to do for date nights is to go out for a nice dinner.

"I'm a foodie, so I'm a big fan of experiencing new cuisine," Russ says. "We don't necessarily go to the newest places, just because they're always mega busy. Instead, we try to find the really good spots that are tucked away in some quiet neighborhood."

The couple also tried something new for date night during the pandemic.

"With the onset of lockdowns and quarantines, we found a way to stay in on a date," Russ says. "We started finding shows to watch together, and we would make a meal and enjoy the quiet that we got."

For people who are currently in the midst of dating and potentially searching for their future spouse, Russ shares this:

"Getting to meet my wife before Facebook was created was probably for the best. I can't imagine how difficult and confusing it is to date now. I have friends getting married left and right. I'm even lucky enough to have been asked to officiate some of their ceremonies. For the singles out there, keep living your life. It'll find you when you're ready for it." ■



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FAITH

By Nathan Anenson

BEING present

Do you remember the last quality conversation you had — one without the distraction of a screen? Do you long for a greater sense of connection but wonder why it always seems out of grasp?

According to recent research from Harvard, 36% of Americans feel lonely “frequently” or “almost all the time” or “all the time.” This number skyrockets when it comes to our young people: 61% of those aged 18 to 25 reported high levels of loneliness. Some of you live these stats, and it is incredibly hard. Some of you are in a position to do something about it. Jesus shows us the way.

At one point in Jesus’ life, he meets two sisters, Mary and Martha. We’re told Mary “sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made” (Luke 10:39-40). Notice the contrast of the two sisters. One is sitting at Jesus’ feet listening, being present and really connecting. The other is distracted, running and worried. Physically present, but relationally absent.

When Martha starts complaining about her sister, Jesus responds, “You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed — or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42). Jesus points to a better way. The way of actual presence. Jesus is saying: One thing. Just one thing is needed right now. And that is you being present. It’s not that the other to-dos in life don’t matter, but choose what is better. Choose to be present.

This is what God has done for us. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). God could have stayed in heaven and posted on Instagram to communicate with us. But he didn’t. He showed up. In the flesh. And he lived with us. He was present with people. He lived at a pace that was good for healthy relationships.

Maybe you feel like you live in a world of “Marthas.” People busy, running here and there, and no one has time for you. You feel neglected and rejected. Alone. I want you to know that there’s a God who has made his dwelling among us. A God who says, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” God is present to your needs, your hurts, your tears, your longings, everything you are — God is present. And He’s not distracted. He’s focused on you.

Or maybe you’re the “Martha.” And you hear God saying, slow down. All those distractions are not needed. They aren’t worth it. Come sit by Mary and learn how to be present. Turn off your screens, invite and include, ask good questions.

There’s a lonely world around us. Follow in the way of Jesus and be present to one another. ■



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Information provided by Pastor Nathan Anenson,
Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1701 Eighth St. S.W.,
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RECIPES

A FRESH take on family dinner

(Family Features) If your family gets stuck in a dinner routine rut, it can feel like you're eating the same recipes over and over again.

However, this fresh and unique recipe for Cuban chicken with salsa fresca might inspire you to think outside the culinary box and give your family members the satisfactory flavor they desire at dinnertime. With fresh ingredients and a wholesome flavor, this meal is perfect to add to your menu.

Find more recipes and family dinner ideas at Culinary.net. ■

Cuban chicken with salsa fresca

Servings: 5

- 1 cup grapefruit juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 1/4 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Salsa fresca:

- 1 cup grapefruit segments
- 1/2 jicama, cubed
- 1/2 red onion, chopped
- 3/4 cup grapefruit juice
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped

Directions

- Heat oven to 400 F.
- In large bowl, mix grapefruit juice, oil, garlic powder, cumin, paprika and red pepper until combined. Add chicken to bowl and turn to coat. Refrigerate 30 minutes or longer.
- To make salsa fresca: In medium bowl, mix grapefruit segments, jicama, red onion, grapefruit juice, olive oil, cilantro and jalapeno pepper until combined. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Remove chicken from marinade. Place chicken in baking dish. Bake 25-30 minutes until chicken is cooked through.
- Serve chicken with salsa fresca.






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WHAT IS a durable financial power of attorney?

A durable financial power of attorney is an instrument that allows an individual to designate another to act on his or her behalf. It is a key component to a comprehensive estate plan. But, while a power of attorney is a useful instrument, there are some limitations.



First, a power of attorney is easier to revoke than one would think. In Iowa, a power of attorney may be revoked at any time. To be effective, the person must communicate the intent to revoke; this communication can be oral or written. Therefore, a power of attorney, while a powerful and useful instrument, can be easily revoked based on a single statement. Since there is a lack of formal requirements, this may allow undue influence to affect an

incapacitated individual and persuade the individual to revoke the power of attorney.

Second, while a power of attorney is not subject to a court's approval or rejection, a power of attorney can be challenged, and a court can revoke the instrument. One who is challenging a power of attorney often will allege that the agent abused the authority in some manner. The challenger can then seek revocation of the power of attorney.

Third, some states refuse to recognize an out-of-state power of attorney. We have had clients attempt to use a valid Iowa document in another state, only to be told that it doesn't comply with that state's requirements.

Finally, certain Federal agencies will not accept a power of attorney. For example, the Social Security Administration will not accept a power of attorney for Social Security purposes. Other agencies, like the Veterans Administration, may only recognize a specific

type of power of attorney.

One solution for this issue is obtaining a guardianship. A guardianship appoints a guardian to be responsible for an individual's needs. The guardian is allowed to make decisions regarding the individual's medical treatment, educational or vocational services, and personal care. Unlike a power of attorney, federal agencies will accept a guardianship.

Determining the best option for your unique situation may seem difficult. However, an experienced attorney can analyze your situation, explain all available options, weigh the benefits of each option, and ultimately assist with the implementation of a plan for when you become incapacitated or legally incompetent. ■

Information provided by Gail Barnett, attorney for Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com

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ADULT PROGRAMMING

• **Senior Set: Splat Studio.** Tuesdays, March 1 and April 5, 1-3 p.m. Anyone age 60-plus is invited to join us for acrylic painting. We'll have all the supplies, you bring your friends. Registration required.

• **Adult Splat Studio.** Fridays, March 4 and April 8, 6-8 p.m. If you have a desire to dabble in acrylics, we've got an adult art studio for you. We'll bring the supplies; you bring the inner artist. No cost to attend, but space is limited. Registration required.

• **Adult Coloring at Brightside Aleworks.** Thursdays, March 31 and April 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Join us at Brightside Aleworks (480 Center Place in Altoona) for a fun night of coloring. We will bring the art supplies; you bring your friends and money for drinks. No registration required.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

• **Homeschool Stories & Snacks.** Thursday, March 3, from 2-3 p.m. Come snack, color and socialize while listening to stories. We'll be highlighting some picture books and the first chapter of several new books. For grades K-3. Registration required.

• **Candy Factory Escape Room.** Saturday, March 12. Can you find the secret chocolate recipe? You and your team will have 30 minutes to complete our spring break escape room. For grades 4-6. Sign up for a time slot when registering.

• **Be Creative.** Monday, March 14, from 10-11 a.m. Join us for a relaxing art time for kids. Use our supplies to make your next creation. This is a drop-in event for ages 3-12. No registration required.

TEEN PROGRAMMING

• **The UnProgram.** Thursday, March 3, from 5-6 p.m. No plans, no projects, no goals: the UnProgram is all about you. Wanna play a game? We've got those. Need a change of scenery while doing homework? Come on in. Have a story or poem you wrote? Share it. Come hang out, have some snacks, and unwind. For grades 7-12.

• **Oreo Tasting Party.** Monday, March 7, from 5-6 p.m. Come taste-test all the flavors we could find and rate your faves! For grades 7-12. Registration required.

• **Teen Try It: Crochet.** Saturday, March 26, from 2-3:30 p.m. March is National Crochet Month. Come learn the chain stitch and leave with some new shoelaces. For grades 7-12. Registration required. ■

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CITY administrator retires after 25 years

Altoona City Administrator Jeff Mark announced his retirement after 25 years with the City of Altoona. He retired Jan. 28.

Mark has been the city administrator since October of 1996. He is currently the longest serving city administrator or manager in the Des Moines metro area. He is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa where he earned a degree in public administration. He went on to receive an MPA degree from Drake University. Prior to working for the City of Altoona, he worked at Warren County and the City of Indianola.

In his 25 years, the City of Altoona has experienced a growth in population from 7,800 to nearly 20,000 residents. Altoona has also gained tremendous commercial growth during his tenure. Facebook, Bass Pro Shops, The Outlets of Des Moines and the Prairie Crossing Shopping Center are among the most notable. Along with the continued growth of Prairie Meadows and Adventureland, Altoona has established itself as the "Entertainment Capital of Iowa."

Jeff Mark has also had the opportunity to oversee the development of Altoona's City Campus, which has located all of the City's facilities in the same area. With the recent completion of the new City Hall/Police Station, he has been involved with the construction of nearly all of the City's public buildings. These would include: the Library, Water Plant #3, the Aquatics Park, the Fire Station, the expansion of Altoona's recreation center, Spring Creek Sports Complex, Spring Creek Subdivision, the Townsend Community Center, Burget Park, and, most recently, Terrace Hills Golf Course. He also paved the way in infrastructure including a new water treatment plant, joining WRA, western sanitary sewer system, and major First Avenue North and South

improvements. All of these contribute to a better standard of living for Altoona residents.

Mark introduced the concept of long-range planning, five-year CIP, and staffing needs, including succession planning.

When asked what he is most proud of, however, he says, "It is the relationships with the residents, the business community, elected officials, and, most importantly, our great staff."

Over the years, he has epitomized the definition of leadership, with great judgement, fair-mindedness, and unwavering commitment to the City of Altoona community. Mayor Dean O'Connor speaks highly of Mark, "After 25 years of service with the City of Altoona, it goes without saying, Jeff Mark has had an enormous impact on the city. Altoona is where it is today because of Jeff's commitment, integrity and leadership."

While Mark is honored to work for a City that has had tremendous growth and of having earned the Manager of the Year award in 2010 and the Municipal Management Institute Joe Lukehart Professional Service award in 2013, he is quick to point out that the successes Altoona has enjoyed are the result of teamwork. It has been through the collaborative efforts of the entire community that these accomplishments have occurred. He acknowledges that the forward thinking mayors and city councils have set the goals and a professional staff working with the business community has resulted in Altoona being the great city it is today.

Upon retirement, he says he plans to spend more time with his family and enjoy life while traveling with his wife, Jeanne.

Mayor O'Connor adds, "Jeff has truly put the City in a position for continued success. I want to personally congratulate him on a wonderful career and his retirement." ■

SPIRIT of Chandy Scholarship offered

For the ninth year, Bank Iowa is offering graduating high school seniors in the Des Moines area an opportunity to apply for the Spirit of Chandy Scholarship. Bank Iowa annually awards up to 20 \$500 scholarships to commendable high school students across the state.

The scholarship is a tribute to Bank Iowa co-founder Harry Barr's daughter, Chandy Barr Clanton, who passed away in 2009 at the age of 36 while piloting her aerobatic plane during a training flight. Clanton was a successful businesswoman, competitive athlete, talented pilot and a beloved mother of two sons.

"Chandy's zest for life and her drive to be the very best is a great example for students, especially to high school seniors looking to take the next step in their education," said Bank Iowa President and CEO Jim Plagge. "Bank Iowa is honored to provide Iowa students with an opportunity to get to learn about Chandy through her work and passions, as well as support to students across the state."

The application deadline is March 25, and recipients will be announced in May. To apply for the scholarship, visit <https://www.bankiowa.bank/about-us/spirit-of-chandy-scholarship>. ■

MORTGAGE company spreads holiday cheer

Through 25 years of serving families across the Midwest, a local mortgage company has recognized the "most wonderful time of the year" can also be one of the most stressful — especially for families struggling with job loss, a death in the family, military deployment, a health crisis, etc.

"Many local families are facing a variety of hardships, which can feel magnified this time of year," says Chuck West, president of Midwest Family Lending. "Although we would love to do more, we hope a little support will ease the burden for these families — especially during this season."

The Urbandale-based team wanted to make the Christmas season a bit brighter for at least a few by donating to more than a dozen local families in need throughout the 12 Days of Christmas. They reached out to local schools, hospitals, churches, ministerial associations and other community groups to identify families in need of support and a little hope in the second year of the company's #SpreadCheer project.

Recipients of the #SpreadCheer campaign included an Altoona single mom of three who's had a "rocky" year. To learn more about their individual stories, visit the Midwest Family Lending's blog online.

"We find each year these families help us more than we help them," West says. "They continue to provide an increased understanding and appreciation for the incredible strength and perseverance of our neighbors and communities in which we live." ■

THE COST of long-term care

Everything keeps getting more expensive, and healthcare is no exception. Healthcare costs in the United States increase more than 4% every year. In the 1970s, the average American spent about \$350 per person each year on healthcare. Compared to 2019, which averaged around \$11,500 per person, that is quite a jump. Unfortunately, the amount we spend on healthcare doesn't just grow with inflation, it also grows as we age, as we often need more doctors' visits and more assistance the older we get.



Seven out of ten people will need long-term care services in their lifetime, and 56% of the population believe that Medicare will cover the cost of long-term care. It doesn't. Medicare Part A covers short-term skilled stays at a skilled nursing facility. For example, if you are in the hospital, they may suggest skilled care for recovery before going home. Twenty-four-hour nursing care or long-term care is paid for privately, with long-term care insurance, or by Medicaid. You can expect to pay around \$150 per month for long-term care insurance. There are variables with this, including when you start paying for your policy, how old you are, etc. Medicaid, in regards to long-term care coverage, is available if the person who is needing additional care has less than approximately \$2,000 in assets.

The average monthly cost of long-term care in the United States is approximately \$8,800 per month. That is a lot of money, but let's break down that cost. While in long-term care you receive 24-hour-a-day care, approximately 30 days each month, which equals \$12.22 per hour. Think about that for a minute. \$12.22 per hour is supposed to cover the cost of staff wages (nurses, certified nursing assistants, laundry, housekeeping, dietary, maintenance, activities, and more), nursing supplies needed to provide care, linens, cleaning supplies, entertainment supplies, and more. There is also the cost of the building itself, water, heat, electricity, routine maintenance, and more. On top of that, Medicaid reimburses long-term care communities less than \$12.22 per hour. For this reason, most long-term care communities must find a balance between Medicaid and private pay room availability.

My advice is to prepare. If we are lucky, we will live a long, rewarding life. That life could lead to someday needing long-term care. Planning ahead will give you more options and greater freedom of choice when it comes to selecting a long-term care community. Reach out to a financial planner or elder law attorney to see what you can start today to help with your future health care costs. ■

Information provided by Stephanie Proper, Executive Director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.

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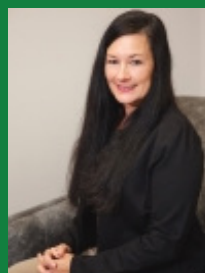
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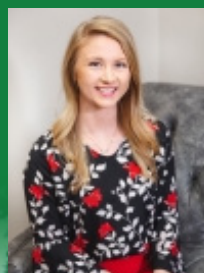
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MEET Jill Brady

Enjoys seeing her students grow in their language skills.

Growing up on her parents' Christmas tree farm, Jill Brady has lived in the Polk County area her entire life. She says she enjoys being outside in nature, spending time with her family, and interacting with the community during the holidays. After graduating college with a degree in microbiology, she worked in the pharmaceutical industry for several years before turning her attention to education when her children entered the Southeast Polk Community School District.

"The Southeast Polk school district has always been home to me. I have always taken pride in our school and am thankful that my daughters and I were able to graduate from here. The school system has changed drastically since I attended, but the core values remain the same," Brady says.

Brady has since returned to school to obtain a master's degree in elementary education and English as a second language. When she first entered the school system, she says she became involved with a new family from Croatia because her daughter had become best friends with their daughter. She says she enjoyed learning about a new culture but watched as they all struggled to communicate in a different language.

"I soon realized that I wanted to help students who were new to English become successful. I also realized how much fun it is to learn about other cultures from around the world. I still learn something new every day and enjoy hearing the experiences of my students," she says.

Today, as an English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) educator for the Southeast Polk Community School District, Brady's core belief is that learning can and should be fun. In her classroom, students concentrate on learning new vocabulary through fun activities using Realia, books and visuals. They also participate in Skittle math, develop writing skills using engaging and amusing writing prompts, and have positive incentive sticker charts to help work towards personal goals.

"I consider myself lucky in that I see rewards daily with my students. I see them grow, learn new vocabulary, make new friends, and get acclimated into the community. The look on a student's face as they grasp a concept or idea is priceless and makes my heart happy. I especially love when students graduate and come back to visit me, and I get to see how far they have come in their careers and life," she says. ■



Jill Brady enjoys learning about other cultures and wants to help others learn English.

SHORT-TERM rehabilitation

How to choose the best program for you

Do you know what short-term rehabilitation is? If your answer is "no," you're not alone.

Short-term rehabilitation — sometimes known as skilled rehabilitation — is something many people require when they're discharged from a hospital stay but not yet ready to go home. It's a professional service designed to help you get well and go home as quickly as possible.

It's most common for a person to need short-term rehabilitation after he or she has surgery or has had a prolonged illness, especially one that has resulted in a decrease in function. Individuals don't always plan for this need, and, when faced with choices of places that provide short-term rehabilitation, they're not familiar enough with them to make an informed decision.

If you're looking for a place to rehabilitate, here are some suggestions:

- Choose a program that includes physical, occupational and speech therapy to cover a variety of needs. You won't want to get settled then have to move when you learn the center doesn't offer the help you require.
- As they say, "The proof is in the pudding." Do yourself a favor and choose a program that's been operational for many years and has the experience to handle a variety of scenarios.
- Ask for outcomes. The program should be able to provide you with re-hospitalization rates, survey results and other benchmarks.
- Select a program that offers a network of services to keep you well after you return home. Those can include outpatient therapy, home health services or both.
- Look for a program with an onsite health center. In the event that you require additional medical services while you're rehabilitating, onsite health services can address your needs quickly and thoroughly.
- You'll also want to be aware that short-term rehabilitation is usually covered by insurance. And, for most people, short-term rehab doesn't take long; typical stays range from several days to a few weeks.

If a doctor recommends you spend some time in short-term rehabilitation, don't be scared or nervous; ask to see all your available options. Ask all the questions you need to ask. Then, do your homework to select the program that makes the most sense for you. ■

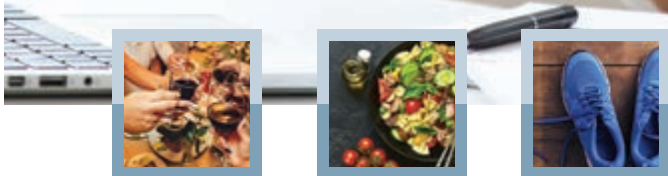
Ward Phillips is Senior Director of Sales for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of home-based services for older adults in addition to 55-and-older community living in Iowa and Illinois. Call or text Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn about home health care, non-medical in-home services, hospice care, meal delivery, and much more!





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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

A GIFT of love

One of the first questions you will be asked when a death occurs is, "What funeral home/cemetery do you wish to use?" You may or may not know the facilities your loved one would have chosen — perhaps other family members have used a certain funeral home or cemetery. But, have arrangements been made with the funeral home? Have spaces been purchased in the cemetery of choice?



As you consider your future burial needs, please share your wishes with family members so there will be no question when faced with the grief of your passing. What a gift of love to your family if arrangements have been pre-determined and paid in advance.

Another decision which will need to be made is the type of service you want: 1) traditional funeral at the funeral home; 2) a service held at your place of worship; 3) a graveside service at the cemetery; 4) a celebration of life at a favorite gathering place (park, restaurant, lodge); etc.

These decisions may be made in advance and will take a huge burden off of your family. There are numerous difficult decisions to be made at the time of death — but it doesn't have to be so.

Give your family a gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs now. ■

Information provided by Jan Shawver, Family Services Representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.

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CREDIT COUNSELING

By Tom Coates

THE FAIR Debt Collection Practices Act

There is a federal law that protects consumers from abusive collection practices. That is the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. If you feel threatened by collectors calling for payment, you need to be aware of your rights. Third-party collectors are not allowed to use foul language nor misleading information in order to collect on a debt. Collectors also cannot call you late at night or pursue you for a debt you do not owe. Debt collectors must be truthful, and they cannot misrepresent the amount of the debt, whether it's past the statute of limitations, or the legal consequences for not paying the debt.



Unfair practices that are also prohibited are soliciting post-dated checks for use as a future threat, threatening to deposit post-dated checks before the intended payment date, or threatening to take property if it's not allowed. If your rights are violated, you can file a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Make sure to keep records of all the correspondence. If you know the debt is valid, then be honest about what you can afford to pay. Be firm that you understand your rights, and you would like to make payment arrangements. If you are struggling with overwhelming amounts of unsecured debts, reach out to a local non-profit credit counseling agency for help. ■

Information provided by Tom Coates, Consumer Credit of Des Moines, 6129 S.W. 63rd St., Des Moines, IA 50321, 515-287-6428.

HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain

HOW CAN regular chiropractic care lower your risk of cardiovascular disease?

The central nervous system controls all of the systems of our body including our circulatory system, which is responsible for heart and blood vessel function. The heart and blood vessels are connected to the central nervous system by millions of tiny nerves. These nerves control heart rate and blood pressure. Chiropractic adjustments restore the central nervous system to the optimal state of health by removing interferences which block the messages being sent between the brain and the body.

Heart health benefits of chiropractic care

- **Lowers blood pressure:** Studies show a significant improvement in blood pressure following chiropractic adjustments. Evidence points to a 17/10 reduction in blood pressure.
- **Improves nerve function of the heart:** This is called the autonomic tone, and it impacts the heart, lungs, gastrointestinal tract, kidneys, bladder, sex organs, and almost every other part of the body.
- **Decreases blood markers of inflammation:** The higher your inflammation, the greater your risk of cardiovascular events. Chiropractic adjustments and a healthy lifestyle lower your inflammation.
- **Improves heart rate variability:** The greater your heart rate moves up and down, the longer you will live. This is called heart rate variability (HRV). Chiropractic restores HRV to healthy levels. HRV is measured as part of a thorough chiropractic exam.
- **Improves lung function:** Poor lung function is linked to heart failure. Evidence points to chiropractic being effective in patients with breathing issues. When breathing is optimized, the heart will have increased function. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

HEALTH

By Ariel Meaney

HEALTHY boundaries make healthy individuals

During a time when many of us focus on others and their needs, how can we focus on ourselves and maintain a healthy balance within a relationship? Understanding what our own healthy boundaries are could be how we start our self-discovery and reflection. Within our reflection on our life, we can begin to list what we feel we can or cannot balance in our life currently. Other things that may go on this list are what we can and cannot control. Making this list of reflection upon our life will help to define what our boundaries can start to look like.



Being able to have open communication with your significant other about your boundaries is another way to uphold your own wellbeing and sense of self within the relationship. Finding the healthy balance of compromise for each person within the relationship is essential to helping make the relationship long-lasting and respectful.

Implementing self-care, utilizing a support system, and using coping skills are all important factors in maintaining a healthy individual. When we utilize our coping skills, as well as healthy boundaries within our professional and personal lives, we can feel more at peace. ■

Information provided by Ariel Meaney, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, IA 50322, 515-528-8135, meaney@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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UNDERSTANDING risk factors the key to preventing heart disease

February is Heart Month, a time to increase your awareness of cardiovascular disease.

And, for most Iowans, increasing awareness starts with a clear understanding of the risk factors associated with

the disease. Knowing your risk is the first step in prevention. Common risk factors include: age, family history, cholesterol, blood pressure, smoking, diabetes and obesity.

- **Age:** Men are at increased risk for heart disease after age 45. A woman's risk goes up at age 55 or if she has experienced menopause. We tend to overlook the simple fact that our risk for heart disease goes up as we grow older. By the time you hit 40, you should be actively aware of your risks and ready to take action.

- **Family history:** Studies suggest family history may play a role in heart disease, particularly when diagnosed in younger people over successive generations. We're most



concerned about family history when a parent or sibling has early heart disease — before age 45 for men or age 55 for women.

- **Cholesterol:** The body makes all the cholesterol it needs, so any you add through your diet is “extra.” The extra cholesterol forms plaques that can accumulate in the coronary arteries, eventually causing chest pain or a heart attack.

Total cholesterol should be less than 200 mg/dl. Levels of LDL or “bad” cholesterol should be as low as possible, while levels of HDL or “good” cholesterol should be high.

- **Blood pressure:** Blood pressure should be 120/80 or lower. High blood pressure means your heart has to work harder than normal. Left untreated, the condition can weaken artery walls. Adults and children should have their blood pressure measured each year.

- **Smoking:** Smoking contributes to plaque formation in the arteries, which may, in turn, lead to a heart attack or stroke. If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do for your overall health.

- **Diabetes:** Nearly two-thirds of people with diabetes die of cardiovascular disease. Patients with diabetes should carefully monitor and control their condition, as well as their other risk factors for heart disease.

- **Obesity:** Obesity makes the heart work harder, increasing your risk for heart disease. In many cases, it also indicates a sedentary lifestyle and a low HDL level.

Try to get as much physical activity as possible and eat a heart-healthy diet to maintain a healthy weight.

Heart disease prevention is critical. It should begin early in life. Start with an assessment of your risk factors. Then develop a plan with your health care team you can follow to maintain a low risk for heart attack. ■

Information provided by Eric Martin, MD, board-certified cardiologist specializing in prevention and wellness at MercyOne Iowa Heart Center, 5880 University Ave., West Des Moines, 515-633-3600, iowaheart.com.

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PURCHASING timeline

Purchasing timeline:

1. Determine what you can afford. 2. Find a real estate agent. 3. Find a house and negotiate contract terms. 4. Shop for your loan; compare multiple cost estimates. 5. Choose best loan for you. 6. Mortgage originator processes your loan. 7. Have house inspected. 8. Shop for other service providers. 9. Loan is approved. 10. Get insurances and do a final walk through. 11. Go to your closing. 12. Move in.



Role of an attorney in a purchase transaction

Before signing a sales agreement, consider asking an attorney to review it and tell you if it protects your interests. When choosing an attorney, you should shop around and ask what services will be performed and whether the attorney is experienced in representing homebuyers. You may also wish to ask the attorney whether the attorney will represent anyone other than you in the transaction. In some areas, an attorney

will act as a settlement agent to handle your settlement.

Terms of the sales agreement

Before you sign a sales agreement, here are some important points to consider. While the real estate broker will probably give you a preprinted form of the sales agreement, many terms are negotiable, so you may make changes to the agreement. The seller must agree to every change you make in order for such changes to be incorporated into the sales agreement. For most, the sales price is the most important term. Make sure you know what the sales price includes, such as appliances. Here are other important terms:

- **Mortgage clause:** The mortgage clause will state whether your deposit will be refunded if the sale is cancelled because you are unable to get a mortgage loan. Your agreement could allow the purchase to be canceled if you cannot obtain mortgage financing at or below a specific interest rate or through a specific loan program.

- **Settlement costs:** You can negotiate which settlement costs will be paid by the seller. The

seller may contribute a lump sum amount or may agree to pay for specific items on your behalf.

- **Inspections:** Most buyers prefer to pay for inspections, so the inspector is working for them, not the seller. You may want to include in your sales agreement the ability to cancel the agreement or renegotiate for a lower sales price or for needed repairs if you are not satisfied with the inspection results.

- **Sharing of expenses:** Negotiate with the seller about how expenses related to the property such as taxes, water and sewer charges, condominium fees and utility bills are to be divided on the date of settlement. Unless you agree otherwise, you should only be responsible for the portion of these expenses owed after the date of sale. ■

Information obtained from Bankers Trust's Shopping for Your Home Loan Settlement Cost Booklet for this article. Information provided by Lori Slings, Bankers Trust, NMLS ID: 406021, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, Iowa 50009, 515-245-5624, LSlings@bankerstrust.com, BankersTrust.com/LSlings, Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Bruce & Parks Feb. 26, 8-11:55 p.m. Prairie Meadows

Bruce & Parks will perform their rock-tinged country covers and original music at the Finish Line Show Lounge. Must be 21 or older to attend this free show.

Za-Ga-Zig Pork Loin Dinner March 4, 5-7 p.m. Za-Ga-Zig Shrine Temple

Enjoy a great home-cooked meal. All proceeds support the Za-Ga-Zig Shrine Antique Tractors.



Richard Arndt March 5, 9-11:55 p.m. Hawk Heaven Tavern

Enjoy a concert by local favorite Richard Arndt.



Trivia Night March 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Brightside Aleworks

Trivia Night is coming back. Test your knowledge and have some fun.



'James and the Giant Peach Jr' on stage

CAP Theatre will present "James and the Giant Peach Jr" on its Mainstage. Performances for families of all ages are now through March 6, Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are available via the CAP Theatre website: captheatre.org for \$10 for youth ages 3-18 and \$16 for adults.

When James is sent by his conniving aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, he discovers a magic potion that grows a tremendous peach, rolls into the ocean and launches a journey of enormous proportions. James befriends a collection of singing insects that ride the giant piece of fruit across the ocean, facing hunger, sharks and plenty of disagreements along the way.

Based on Roald Dahl's book of the same name, "James and the Giant Peach" is a whimsical and magical journey of one boy out to change his life and find a real family.

'The Magic Flute'

March 5-6
Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

Des Moines Metro Opera's 50th Season begins with a family-friendly production of "The Magic Flute" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the Des Moines Civic Center.

Mandalas & Henna art class Sunday, March 13, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Principal Studio 5, Des Moines Art Center, 5700 Grand Ave.

Explore traditional mandala and henna patterns while learning about the history of art in India. From medieval times to the present day, students will be exposed to examples of traditional mandala and henna patterns, rangoli, lettering and paintings. Tuition is \$30 (\$24 for members), and the material fee is \$25. To register, visit <https://my.desmoinesartcenter.org/12466/12468>.



Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival

Saturday, Feb. 26
Horizon Events Center in Clive

After a year off, the bacon fellowship will resume, according to the Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival's website. The \$50 general admission ticket includes live entertainment, 12 bacon-inspired dishes, one beverage and all the bacon you can eat. The theme will be "Bacon Gras" and feature bacon-infused Cajun dishes along with: Bacon Bourbon Street – Mardi Gras Beads, street performers, local musical acts, pro wrestling, Iowa's top pop-punk group The Eugene Levy Band, Silent Club Sizzle, main-stage music from Tyler Richton & The High Bank Boys, Not Quite Brothers and BYOBrass, and you won't want to miss the popular bacon-eating contest at 3 p.m. Tickets for the event will be limited to 5,000. For more information, visit blueribbonbaconfestival.com.

DMACC West's ciLive!

March 9-10, virtual and open to the public

In its 13th year, this year's theme for DMACC West's ciLive! (Celebrate! Innovation) is "Go Boldly" and focuses on innovation, imagination and inspiration through storytelling. It features 12 well-known thought leaders, entertainers and entrepreneurs. The event is free. Speakers include Dr. Talithia Williams, host of "NOVA Wonders" on PBS, and actor John de Lancie, of "Star Trek, Breaking Bad." A concert by country musician and songwriter George Ducas concludes the series on March 10 at 1:30 p.m. For more information about ciWeek, visit: <https://dmacc.edu/ciweek/Pages/welcome.aspx>

Register for Des Moines Art Center camps

Camps run June 6-Aug. 12

Des Moines Art Center, 5700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Register now for summer camp at the Art Center. The themed classes are anything but ordinary. From Art Around the World to Under the Sea, there is a creative outlet for all interests. Week-long summer art camps run from June 6 through Aug. 12 and are available for youth ages 5-15. Extended care and supervised lunch can be purchased for an additional fee. Some scholarships are available. For more information and to register, visit <https://desmoinesartcenter.org/classes/find/?class-category=summer-camps&age-group=&class-type=#class-list>



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515-967-5136

ALTOONA'S 2022 RESIDENTIAL TREE PROGRAM

In recognition of Arbor Day, the City of Altoona will be selling a limited supply of trees to residents - limit two per household. The trees being offered include Bur Oak, Butterflies Magnolia, Perfect Purple Crabapple, Red Horsechestnut. The trees will be 3/4" to 1" caliper in a seven and 10 gallon pot and are for sale for only \$30 per tree. Pre-sale of the trees will begin March 1, 8:00 a.m. at Altoona City Hall, 900 Venbury Dr. SW Suite A.

Trees will be available for pick up at our new location, the Altoona Aquatic Center parking lot at 1200 Venbury Dr. on Saturday April 23, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Sponsored by the City of Altoona and Iowa Native Trees and Shrubs and Gerdes Nursery INC. NO GUARANTEE



METRO WASTE AUTHORITY ANNUAL RENEWAL INFORMATION

Already have a Compost It! cart? Cost for collection is \$105 per year (paid at City Hall) or \$106 per year (paid online). Renewal stickers will be mailed ahead of the start of yard waste collection April 4, 2022.

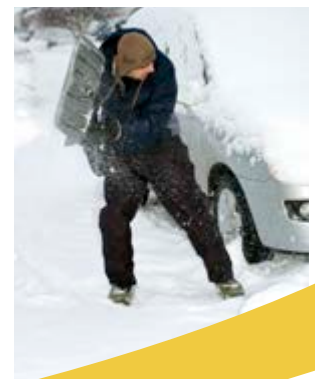
Renew your sticker online today at mwatoday.com. Stickers are also available at Altoona City Hall if you would prefer to come in person and get your sticker. Another option for you is to put a check/cash in the drop box with it noted that it is for the 2022 Compost It Sticker and we will mail it to you. City Hall hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

If you or someone you know would like to begin this program, please have them reach out to jphelps@altoona-iowa.com.



EMERGENCY ACCESS

Maintain your sidewalks and driveway of snow and ice. If you do require an emergency response, a cleared approach to your door will be the safest route for the emergency responders and you. Maintain your outdoor lights to illuminate your numerical house numbers. If you call "911" for an emergency response, turn on your lights on to make it easier and faster for responders to find your home.



ALTOONA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Annual Awards Dinner

SATURDAY 2 APRIL

6PM COCKTAILS & SILENT AUCTION
7PM DINNER
TERRACE HILLS GOLF COURSE EVENTS CENTER

\$60 Single Ticket | \$440 Full Table

RSVP: Online at www.altoonachamber.org/events
or email maaikehendrikson@altoonachamber.org by March 18th
Theme: Black & White | Attire: Cocktail
Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.

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POSEY & JETT'S WELLNESS BOUTIQUE
STEMS FLOWER SHOP, LLC
INSIDE OUT CHIROPRACTIC
TERRACE HILLS GOLF COURSE

CHAMBER By Josh Dunwoody

PUTTING the 'You' in community

If there is one lesson we have all learned over the past couple of years, it is how much we all need relationships. Even the most ardent introverts among us found out just how draining isolation can be. And Zoom, well, it works, but let's just say Zoom fatigue is a real thing, and we all know you're wearing pajama bottoms. Kidding aside, all that isolation takes a real toll on our wellbeing, our relationships, and even on our community. After all, community is relationship at scale. So, as we look forward to warmer weather and hopefully leaving this sense of uncertainty and isolation far behind, how do you fit into the picture of building our community? There are many options for you to plug in, get involved, and create new relationships this year.



Civic organizations

Altoona has many great civic organizations that offer excellent opportunities to meet new people, build new skills, and serve your local community. From the Rotary Club to the Chamber of Commerce to the newly formed Altoona Arts and Culture Commission, there is no shortage of ways to get involved close to home.

Community events

The summer calendar is already filling up with great community celebrations like Altoona Palooza and the Farm to Table dinner. However, these events don't occur on their own. They often take months of planning by dedicated citizens who give their time to add these vital layers to our civic life. Volunteering to plan and put on community events is another great way to meet new people and serve without the long-term commitment of a more formal organization.

Informal gatherings

Want to meet new people in the community but don't have time to add another commitment to your plate? No problem. Our many local bars and restaurants offer everything from trivia nights to live entertainment throughout the year. Several neighborhoods in Altoona bring in food trucks throughout the summer or plan block parties as a great way to meet your neighbors. Don't have one in your neighborhood? Be the first to get one going.

Part of the magic of Altoona is our shared sense of small-town community even as we continue to expand and grow. Keeping this sense of community requires people to get out and get involved. People like you. Whether you are new in town, have been afraid to step out of your comfort zone, or just haven't had the time, challenge yourself to pick one new thing to get involved in this year.

After all, we can't spell community without YOU! ■

Information provided by Josh Dunwoody,
2022 Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce President.

OUT & ABOUT



Kathy Rodriguez, Kerry Reeves, Angie Schaffer and Lyra Bristow from Empress Threads at CITYVIEW's Best Of Des Moines award ceremony on Feb. 1.



Nathan Deutmeyer, Nicole Berger, Chris Beach and Jay Mathes from Edencrest at CITYVIEW's Best Of Des Moines award ceremony on Feb. 1.



Ashley and Megan Hartman from Central Iowa Vapors at CITYVIEW's Best Of Des Moines award ceremony on Feb. 1.



Kassandra Trenary, Matthew Rauhen and Marissa Glendy from Wolfe Eye Clinic at CITYVIEW's Best Of Des Moines award ceremony on Feb. 1.



Twila Shreves and Joe Tollari at the Chamber's Noon Networking at Perkins Restaurant & Bakery on Jan. 18.



Ashley Powell and Maaike Hendrikson at the Chamber's Noon Networking at Perkins Restaurant & Bakery on Jan. 18.



Melissa Horton and Bill Gustoff at the Chamber's Noon Networking at Perkins Restaurant & Bakery on Jan. 18.



Kyle Lee and Rick Kroeger at the Chamber's Noon Networking at Perkins Restaurant & Bakery on Jan. 18.



Sheena Cochran-Foster was voted a favorite in the Eastern Polk County Residents' Choice poll.



Jesse Perez with Snyder Landscaping and Lawn Care was voted a favorite in the Eastern Polk County Residents' Choice poll.



Class Act Productions, with its CAP Theatre, was voted a favorite place for a field trip and a favorite nonprofit. Front row: Jodi Hulbert, Katie Murphy, Becky Meredith, Jami Harvey, Karmen Jorgensen; back row: Josh Brown, Erin Hogan, Kailan Wing and John Nau.

OUT & ABOUT



Mark Miller and Jeff Mark at the retirement reception held for City Administrator Jeff Mark on Jan. 27.



Jeanne Mark and Kris Penquite at the retirement reception held for City Administrator Jeff Mark on Jan. 27.



Brent Cashatt and Rocky Sposato at the retirement reception held for City Administrator Jeff Mark on Jan. 27.



Phyllis Murphy and David Porter at the retirement reception held for City Administrator Jeff Mark on Jan. 27.



Steve Moyna, John Shaw, Chris Rineheart and Tim Van Wyck at the retirement reception held for City Administrator Jeff Mark on Jan. 27.



Brad Deets, Tim Moerman and Alex Lynch at the retirement reception held for City Administrator Jeff Mark on Jan. 27.



A ribbon cutting was held for Timmins, Jacobsen & Strawhacker, LLP at 160 Adventureland Dr., Suite H, on Jan. 20.



Jenny Moats, Tonia Johnson and Cheryl Timmins at the ribbon cutting for Timmins, Jacobsen & Strawhacker, LLP on Jan. 20.



Darlene Danielson and Megan Kragicek at the ribbon cutting for Timmins, Jacobsen & Strawhacker, LLP on Jan. 20.



Linda Harris, Twila Shreves and Lori Rhodes at the ribbon cutting for Timmins, Jacobsen & Strawhacker, LLP on Jan. 20.



Emily Brown, Sandy Enos, Tim McEntee and Chris Neeley at the ribbon cutting for Timmins, Jacobsen & Strawhacker, LLP on Jan. 20.

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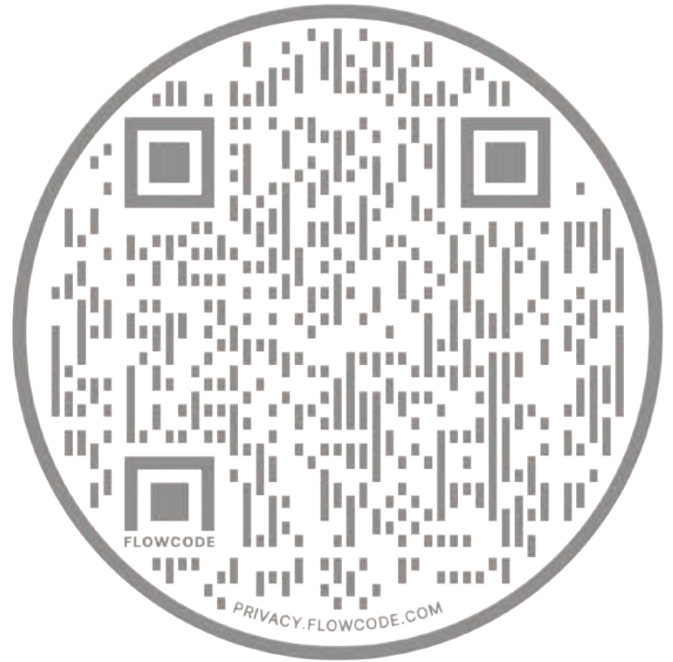


Nathan Deutmeyer
welcometuscany@edencrestliving.com

1600 8th Street SE, Altoona | www.edencresttuscany.com

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