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FEBRUARY 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

Budding Romance

Couples share how their
relationships bloomed

Meet Kristen Recher

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Cuban chicken with salsa fresca

RECIPE

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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

Shane



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



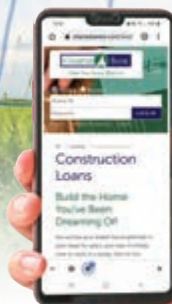
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FEATURE

Matt and Sue Hudson share many interests, and Matt joins Sue in celebrating her Thai heritage and customs.

Budding Romance

Couples share how their relationships bloomed

By Ashley Rullestad

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.



Young love

Christian and Madison Witzel met in 2015 on a dating app. Neither of them were necessarily looking for a serious relationship. Madison was young and hadn't yet been serious about anyone, but their relationship grew quickly.

"We got pregnant with our son just a few months after we started dating, so it was kind of a chaotic start to a relationship," Madison says. "We had to learn things about each other while also growing into a family at the same time."

They learned they liked to cook together and watch movies. Although they were not interested in many of the same things at the start of their relationship, they've grown to enjoy what they didn't used to. Sometimes date night was a simple homemade meal and time to talk at home.

The couple became engaged in 2018 but ended up separating the next year. During their time apart, they realized they truly wanted to be together. In 2020, they started talking about marriage again and were married the next year.

"We had liked the idea of a wedding with family and friends but also really liked the thought of eloping and having something small. We ended up making a super hasty decision in February of 2021, and we planned a two-week wedding. We got married with just our parents and very close friends around us, and it was amazing."

The couple now has three young children, which can make it a challenge to keep a relationship thriving. They credit couples therapy with helping them learn how to better communicate with each other.

"We did not grow up in households that communicated well, so we both had a lot to work on, but, over the years, we've learned how to better communicate and love each other in ways that we both need. Now, we always joke because we love the song 'Fooled Around and Fell In Love' because it's pretty much us and our story."

Couple prepared for times apart

Brooke Tabke and her fiancé, Ariel Grinhaug, are getting married in April; the pair has been together since 2016.

"We started out as platonic friends in 2012. So our courtship has been long and winding, but it's the best love story of my life," Brooke says happily.

The couple met while serving in the Iowa



Christian and Madison Witzel have worked on communicating as a couple, which they say is crucial to their romance growing and continuing. Photo by Todd Rullestad

Army National Guard as combat medics in the 134th Medical Company. They worked together and shared many of the same interests, including sports, the medical field, the outdoors and physical fitness. They remained good friends and coworkers while each were involved in their own separate long-term relationships.

"Then, one beautiful day in 2016, Ariel mustered up the courage to tell me how she felt about me. She was very respectful and waited until we were both single to confess that she had been in love with me for many years."

Unfortunately, Brooke had just taken an Army assignment in Georgia, so she'd be living there for the next year while Ariel stayed in Iowa. Their long-distance romance was nurtured with cards, handwritten letters, flowers, and whirlwind weekends spent hiking, kayaking, or attending concerts and plays together before returning to their daily lives at a distance.

"Sometimes, I would order her a pizza and have it be a surprise delivery to her if I knew she'd had a long work day. Other times, we would FaceTime while binge-watching a favorite Netflix show. It was like being together even when we were miles apart."

Brooke returned to Ankeny in 2018, and



Brooke Tabke and Ariel Grinhaug met while serving in the military so must spend stretches of time away from each other. Regardless, they find ways to nurture their relationship with romantic gestures.

the couple has since spent many days kayaking on Easter Lake, camping in the Black Hills, spending time with family, walking around town with their Aussie, Niko, delivering heartfelt notes written on the bathroom mirror, and exchanging flowers.

They make sure to schedule time each week to be together and talk about anything that needs addressed. They both make a point of

FEATURE

doing romantic things for each other and plan on continuing their courtship after marriage.

“Our careers with the military could put distance between us at any time, so we have to be strong in our friendship, our trust and our love. We are lucky and blessed to have a solid friendship and strong familial support as a foundation to build our marriage on.”

Love overseas

Matt Hudson moved to Thailand to teach, and there he met a Thai woman named Sue. She was working at Siam University in Bangkok as a lecturer in the International Business School, and he was teaching in the Hotel and Tourism Management School when some of their classes overlapped and they ended up teaching some shared classes together.

“We were friends, and then he asked me if I wanted to try a taco, and I had never had that before,” Sue laughs. “The only place to get one is in the red light district... so, our first date, it wasn’t the most romantic, but the taco

was good. He was so embarrassed, but we kept dating.”

Sue says they did the “normal” things couples do when they’re dating, like going out with mutual friends, to dinner and movies, or taking day trips. As their relationship bloomed, they would travel to islands like Koh Chang or a resort in Pattaya.

“With him being from the States, we were always on the look out for good restaurants that served Western food in between trips to open air markets to find the best local foods. We really did have a lot in common from our interests in movies to our love of country music. I was raised on Country and Western as my dad is a huge Hank Williams Sr. fan, so, of course, I would be interested in the only guy in Bangkok from Oklahoma wearing a cowboy hat.”

In fact, once they decided to get married, they had a traditional Thai ceremony — but Matt still wore his cowboy boots and hat. The couple has been married for 15 years now.

Ultimately, they decided to move to Iowa seven years ago. They now have three kids. Sue says she likes living in Ankeny, and she’s gotten involved as one of the leaders in the Asian community in Iowa.

“Part of our love story — the reason our life and love work — is because we partner not only as a couple but because he truly shares my culture and helps me keep my culture alive. We do cultural events around town and are showing our kids what it is to be Thai. He’s quiet, but he is the biggest supporter of me.”

For the Hudsons, the key to their relationship is about being actively present in each other’s lives, she says.

“When you work together, raise children together and, of course, live together, that can actually become harder as you tend to take it for granted that you know what is going on since you are together so much. But, you still need to make the effort to check in with your partner to make sure you aren’t letting anything slip through the cracks.”



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Childhood sweethearts

Vicki and Lee Eft have known each other almost their entire lives.

"We grew up as neighbors with two grades between us. I have pictures of my sixth birthday party with Lee at the other end of the table."

Growing up, the two were just a part of the neighborhood gang. All the neighbor kids would hang out in Vicki's yard and play whatever sport was in season — baseball, football or basketball. Her mom said her younger brother would go out and throw a ball in the air and, before it landed, they'd have two teams ready to go.

When Vicki was a sophomore and Lee was a senior, their friends would get together and go to movies. Although they were hanging out together, they weren't dating at that time. Things changed for the worse that Thanksgiving, in 1970, when the crew was all out playing football, and Lee and Vicki both dove on the ball.

"I ended up with a broken ankle. Needless to say, we barely spoke for a year and a half."

But they made up, and when Vicki was a senior and Lee was in college, they started dating when he was home from school. They were together for three years before they married in 1976.

"We always made a point to go to a movie on Friday nights, and we still enjoy several movies a month. Sports has always been a big part of our lives. Lee has always played in many sports, refereeing, umpiring and, now, in our senior years, watching and going to college sports games."

Lee's passion now is golf, and Vicki rides along. They have grown children and one grandchild, but Vicki says a lot has stayed the same.



Vicki and Lee Eft have known each other since childhood — Lee was at Vicki's sixth birthday party — and have been married for decades now.

"Now, as we are nearing our 46th year of marriage, we have joined the Senior Center in Ankeny and are walking circles together there. Nothing has ever changed; he is always several steps ahead of me." ■

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FAITH

By Pastor John Wagner

SHARING is _____

Giving is receiving?

Romans 1:11-12 "For I long to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually comforted by one another's faith, both yours and mine."

Let's start this month's article with a word association game. Sharing is _____ (insert your preferred descriptor). Depending on the day, sharing can feel like an opportunity, a gift, a burden, a necessity, proper or improper, etc. If I were to ask you to say out loud what sharing means to you, what word would you use right now? Did you by chance say something like "mutually helpful"?

I can still remember the emphasis which was placed on sharing when I was a child. Don't forget to share your toys. Sharing helps you make friends. Sharing is a way to express care for others. As kids and adults, I think we often forget how mutually beneficial sharing can be. Sometimes we sense that sharing is transactional rather than relational. We get busy and begin to equate sharing with time spent, time lost, or separating ourselves from something. Or we focus only on what someone else gets because we are afraid any other focus will make us selfish.

I've been meditating a lot on sharing and generosity, particularly as it pertains to faith. One of the greatest gifts we can share with someone else is God's love for them/us. We might use simple words, literally sharing "Hey, God loves you." It could mean sharing a recent experience that has enhanced/challenged your faith. It might be a simple prayer which is offered in silence or a larger conversation with the intent to encourage discipleship and spiritual growth.

In the book of Romans, the writer (Paul) expresses a desire to see someone again — for the purpose of sharing. Don't overlook Paul's acknowledgment that "sharing" will actually benefit both the recipient and the one who shares. Paul infers that, when he shares spiritual wisdom, both parties will be comforted as they grow together in God's love — both parties receiving something in the exchange which began with one person's desire to share.

This was a long setup for my sharing with you today. I implore you to share your faith — today. You just might receive more than you even intended to offer. Share the love that God has revealed to you. Share the change in heart or in mindset that has come from dedicating your life to God. Share kindness or mercy with someone on behalf of God by being a listening ear or helping to solve a problem or meet a need. Then give God thanks that, in this season, you get to share. I'd be willing to bet you'll be encouraged as well. God loves you. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor,
Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church.





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RECIPE

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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COMMUNITY

By Darren Tromblay

SERVING the community

Ankeny PD's CET team formed in 2019.

Community policing is an important tenet to the members of the Ankeny Police Department.

So much so that, in 2016, the department applied for, and was awarded, a C.O.P.S. grant that allowed for it to fund three new positions for a specialized team — the Community Engagement Team (CET) — which still exists to this day.

The Team (CET) is comprised of a sergeant, two officers and two school resource officers (SROs) whose three major focuses are crime free multi-housing, mental health follow-up and community education/outreach.

Sgt. Corey Schneden, a 19-year veteran with the Ankeny PD, has been the team's sergeant since its inception in June of 2019. He credits Lt. Brian Kroska, who was heavily involved in the initial planning stages of the CET and establishing the group's initial goals.

"Our purpose is to provide practical and meaningful engagement with the individuals and communities to build ongoing, permanent relationships for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of the community," Schneden says.

The team has been certified in Crime Free Multi-housing, an international program designed to send information to landlords about calls for service in their buildings on a weekly basis so they understand what is happening on their property. The managers also attend training and are educated on their rights.

Mental health is also a key part of the team's construct, Schneden says.

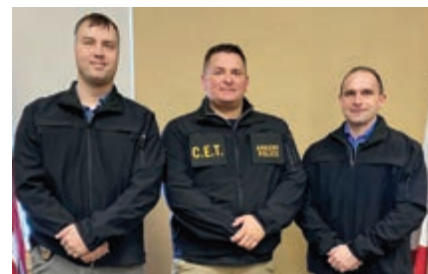
"Every time our officers deal with someone having a mental health crisis, they complete a case, and the case is assigned to our team for follow up," he says. "Officers Walter Reed and Jamie Erie then follow up with these individuals to make sure they are getting the resources they need. We try to build a relationship with these folks and help them with any daily struggles they may face."

The team also attends community events and provides free presentations to local schools, churches, businesses and whomever else may request them. Presentations cover a variety of topics including the department's Violent Intruder Program (VIP); Internet and Texting safety; and illegal drug use, to name just a few.

The team's school resource officers — Kory Miller and Jessamyn McVey — are inside Ankeny high schools daily and attend multiple events after hours.

"Their role is to build relationships with students and staff members in the schools and provide a safe environment for students to learn in on a day-to-day basis," Schneden says. "While enforcement of local and state laws is sometimes called for, it's not the first priority of the SRO. If possible, students are referred to school administration

"Over the years, I have learned the most valuable thing you can give someone is your time, and we try to provide that for those who need it," he says. "In today's day and age, community collaboration is more important than ever, and we are dedicated to maintaining the trust our department has built with our community." ■



Officer Jamie Erie, Sgt. Corey Schneden and Officer Walter Reed are members of the Ankeny Police Department's Community Engagement Team.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Check for cancellations

Community gathering planned

Feb. 20, 3:30-5 p.m.
DMACC Student Center.

Ankeny Community Network is hosting a Community Gathering. The public is invited to attend.

Ankeny Art Center K-12 North Polk Show

Show: Feb. 22-March 16
Reception: Thursday, Feb. 24, 5-7 p.m.

The Ankeny Art Center,
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

The Ankeny Art Center is exhibiting the artwork of K-12 North Polk students. Masks are required at the K-12 Show reception, and, due to this, no food or drink will be served to minimize exposure.



Winter Classes

Underway
Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

The Ankeny Art Center offers classes in pottery, watercolor, drawing and more. See a list of adult classes at <https://ankenartcenter.com/adult> and the list of K-8 classes at <https://ankenartcenter.com/k8-school-year>.

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 www.desmoinesartcenter.org.

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>.

Chamber's Annual Dinner Celebration

Thursday, Feb. 24, 5:30-9 p.m.
FFA Enrichment Center, 1055 S.W. Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny

The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner celebrates the Chamber's past year, announces exciting new focuses for the upcoming year and honors the Outstanding Citizen of the Year, Small Business Person of the Year, Ambassador of the Year, and Ankeny Young Professional of the Year. Price per ticket of \$125 includes one drink ticket (beer and wine) and two bottles of wine, provided by WineStyles, per table during dinner. The event is open to all Chamber members and their staff. Payment must be prepaid and may be made by cash, check or credit card. No refunds will be issued. For registration or more information, contact the Chamber at 515-964-0685 or abollinger@anken.org.

Team Trivia Fundraiser

Saturday, March 26, 7:30 p.m.
Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library,
1250 S.W. District Drive

Form a group of four or eight and join a night of friendly competition in support of your local library. After a break in 2020 and 2021, the Friends of the Ankeny Library are again hosting their annual team trivia event. This event has historically been the group's single biggest fundraiser of the year, inviting participation from more than 180 area residents and helping support and promote programs and services at the library. Door prizes, a silent auction and snacks/drinks are planned. Pre-registration is required. The cost is \$25/person (\$100 for a table of four; \$200 for a table of eight). Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-team-trivia-night-tickets-240223032557>.



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>

St. Patrick's Day parade

Thursday, March 17, noon
Downtown Des Moines

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are staging their annual parade in downtown Des Moines, beginning at noon, starting at 15th Street and Grand

Avenue, heading east to Eighth Street. New this year is a Block Party at 13th and Grand, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Your \$5 admission gets you access to watch the parade, food trucks, live music, a beer tent and more. More information is available at www.friendlysonsiowa.com.



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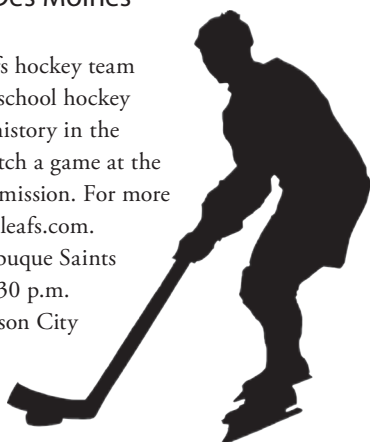
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Des Moines Oak Leafs Hockey

MidAmerican Energy Company RecPlex,
6500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
Various dates

The Des Moines Oak Leafs hockey team features some of the best high school hockey players in the state and a rich history in the metro dating back to 1961. Catch a game at the team's new home rink. Free admission. For more information, visit www.dmoakleafs.com.

- Saturday, Feb. 19 vs. Dubuque Saints - JV at 4:30 p.m., Varsity at 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 26 vs. Mason City Mohawks - JV at 4:30 p.m., Varsity at 6:30 p.m.

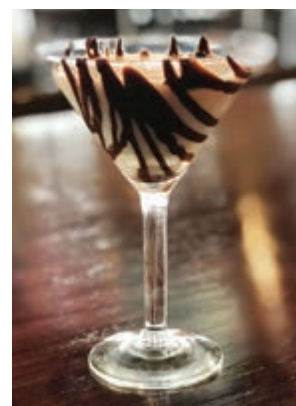


CITYVIEW Chocolate Walk

Friday, Feb. 25, 5-9 p.m.

West Glen Town Center, 5465 Mills Civic Parkway,
West Des Moines

Like chocolate? Like chocolate drinks? They you'll love this event. CITYVIEW and West Glen Town Center once again present the Chocolate Walk. For a ticket price of \$20 (\$30 at the door), attendees will receive 10 drink tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails at participating venues. Attendees will also be provided tickets for chocolate dessert samples at participating retail stores. Find the registration link at <https://chocolatwalk.dmcityview.com>.



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.



Various shows

February dates

Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501
Woodland Ave., Des Moines

A variety of performances are on tap for February at Hoyt Sherman Place. For details, visit www.hoyts Sherman.org.

- Feb. 18: "The Mavericks: 'En Español' World Tour" at 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 24: "Ashley McBryde - This Town Talks Tour" at 8 p.m.



'The Magic Flute'

March 5-6

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

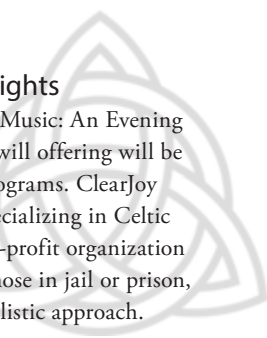
Des Moines Metro Opera's 50th Season begins with a family-friendly production of "The Magic Flute" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the Des Moines Civic Center.

An Evening of Celtic Music

March 12, 7 p.m.

Windsor Presbyterian Church,
6301 University Ave., Windsor Heights

Crossroads of Iowa presents "ClearJoy Music: An Evening of Celtic Music." Admission is free. A freewill offering will be accepted to support Crossroads of Iowa programs. ClearJoy is a musical collaboration of two sisters specializing in Celtic and Scottish music. Crossroads is a not-for-profit organization offering programs for women, including those in jail or prison, with a focus on mental wellness using a holistic approach.



Jurassic Quest

Friday and Saturday, March 11-12, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.;
Sunday, March 13, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines

Tickets are available online at <https://www.jurassicquest.com/events/des-moines-ia> and cost \$22 for kids and adults and \$19 for seniors. Ticket for unlimited rides for kids is \$36, which includes entry. General admission includes live shows, arts and crafts activities, dinosaur and marine exhibits. Tickets for individual and premium activities will be available on-site (from \$6). Off peak hours are weekdays (all day) and weekends after 3 p.m. Free entry for children younger than 2.



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HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

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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ORGANIZE your home in a month in less than an hour a day

Follow these steps, spending less than an hour a day (sometimes just a few minutes), to a better organized home:



1. **Create a go-away box.** Put in it anything you're planning to donate (or give to a friend or take to recycle) and keep it by the door so you can easily grab it when you're leaving.
2. **Deal with the decorations.** Hallelujah — the holidays are over. When you're putting away your décor, donate anything you didn't bring out last season and separate decorations by holiday.
3. **Pare down your utensils.** You've accumulated several dozen kitchen utensils in your culinary career: can openers, microplanes, four wine openers (what?). Cut back the collection and use drawer dividers to keep the rest in order.
4. **Reconfigure your pots and pans.** Donate the pots and pans you hardly use and install cupboard organizers to help manage the rest.
5. **Downsize your kitchen gadgets.** You had noble intentions when you purchased that spiralizer. (Zucchini noodles every night, right?) Give those space hogs to someone else with lofty dreams.
6. **Sort your food storage containers.** No singles allowed. Toss any tops or bottoms that have no mates.
7. **Deal with your cables.** With a Roku, PlayStation, DVD player, and cable box, it's no surprise your entertainment center is a mess. Use bread tags or cable ties to create ID tags for each plug and bundle the clutter with Velcro strips.
8. **Corral your accessories.** Belts, scarves, purses, hats — all the accessories that don't have a drawer or spot in the closet can end up everywhere. Buy an accessories hanger or install a simple series of hooks to give your wardrobe's smallest members a home.
9. **Purge under the bed.** Under-bed storage is ideal for out-of-season clothing. But when out-of-season becomes out-of-sight and out-of-mind, clear out those clothes you'll never wear again from this precious storage space.
10. **Get rid of mystery electronics.** You've got a drawer where black mystery cords, chargers, and oddball electronic bits go to die. Free up that drawer for better uses or at least get rid of the items you know for sure are "dead."
11. **Reduce your towels and linens.** There are the towels you use — and the stack of towels you never use. Donate them to the animal shelter.
12. **Organize your junk drawer for good.** There's no shame in a junk drawer, but why not organize it? Dump the whole thing on one surface and sort everything into piles. Use drawer dividers to keep each pile in its own space. ■

Article by Jamie Weibe, HouseLogic. Information provided by Bonnie Christensen, Broker, RE/MAX Precision, 107 E. First St., Ankeny, 515-971-9973.

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

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2022 Ankeny/Northern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish in our Ankeny and North Polk editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between. **Mail in this paper ballot or vote online at the link below by March 4, 2022.**

One vote per resident, please.

See rules and vote online at
www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll.

1. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Thrift Store
2. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Law Firm
3. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Dad/Child Date Spot
4. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Mom/Child Date Spot
5. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Coach
6. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Bank
7. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant
8. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Hair Salon
9. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Gymnastics Studio
10. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Doctor (person)
11. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Dentist (person)
12. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Chiropractor (person)
13. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Eye Doctor (person)
14. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Pastor (person)
15. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Health Club or Gym
16. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Boutique
17. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. School

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18. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Park
19. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for a Field Trip
20. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Community Festival
21. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Teacher
22. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Principal
23. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Church
24. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Dessert
25. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Breakfast
26. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Lunch
27. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Dinner
28. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Car Dealership
29. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for Ice Cream
30. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Event
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32. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Physical Therapy
33. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Financial Planner
34. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Preschool
35. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Cleaning Company
36. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Library
37. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Chamber of Commerce
38. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Camping Spot
39. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Children's Birthday Party Spot
40. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Photographer
41. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Dance Studio
42. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
43. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
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47. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Realtor (person)
48. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Bar or Brewery
49. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for Guests to Stay
50. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Coffee Shop
51. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Florist
52. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Garden Center
53. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. CPA (person)
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A SPECIAL approach

Barber sets aside time for kids with sensory challenges.

When it comes to caring for children with special needs, their parents know that extra patience is often a requirement. And, when it comes to haircuts, which are out of the day-to-day routine, that can be particularly true.

Ankeny Cutz & Barbershop wants to help ease the stress by reserving the first Monday of each month starting this March for sensory-inclusive haircuts for children.

“We want to do our part to help the parents that we see in our barbershop that are so great with their children with special needs,” said Ankeny Cutz owner Darnell Loatman. “We definitely want to make it easier for the child and for the families who have kids with autism or sensory difficulties.”

When researching about providing this service, Loatman says he did not find any other shops or salons in the state offering this type of individual attention for children with sensory challenges, and, in fact, only found similar services in a few locations in the U.S.

Ankeny Cutz will be assisted with providing “Sensory Cutz” haircuts by Tara Patterson of The Beauty Shoppe salon in Ankeny and a few other barbers.

Donations by the public of sensory toys such as fidgets, child-sized headphones, and tablets (with or without cases) are being collected for the children to use during their appointments.

Local high school students, especially those interested in careers in nursing or teaching, can volunteer to help with the children while at the same time earning silver cord credit hours.

A confidential sensory preferences questionnaire for the parent or guardian to complete will be kept on file, and it will allow the barbers and stylists to understand and provide for each child’s individual needs.

Appointments will be longer time slots than usual to take into account the additional time needed to complete the haircuts.

Loatman is founder and CEO of the 501(c)3 nonprofit FOCUS, Inc., that creates opportunities to teach youth responsibility, teamwork, and financial stability to be successful leaders among family and friends as well as in the community. ■



Darnell Loatman provides a different approach when it comes to haircuts for kids with special needs.

IS IT TIME to buy a new furnace?

Are you thinking of replacing your old furnace? There are many options to consider, and searching for the right one can be a tedious and confusing task, especially if you're a first-time buyer. To help you get started, there are a few important factors to consider right now.

First, should you repair or replace your equipment? New furnaces greatly increase energy efficiency, but that's not the only reason why you may consider buying versus repairing. If your furnace is more than 15-20 years old, has a pilot light, lacks vent dampers or a draft fan, or has been converted from coal to gas/oil, it may be time to replace. Some issues may only require simple maintenance, but the best way to determine if you need a replacement is by calling a professional to perform an inspection. Paying for the repair may seem like the cheaper option, but it's important to consider the frequency of repairs needed. Those can add up quickly.

Find the right company. It's important to find a good HVAC professional who is licensed and insured. Call around and ask your local HVAC companies for estimates, and, more than likely, you have friends who can provide great recommendations. Installing a properly sized furnace is key to heating your home correctly. Too small, it won't heat your home. Too big, you'll waste a lot of money with high energy bills. The company you choose should calculate the size of your home and provide options that will help achieve your family's comfort needs.

There are many brands to choose from, so how do you decide? The majority of furnaces available now can save you up to \$500 a year when compared to older models. Each brand has its own trademark of features and advantages, but it's important to also consider variable heat output, variable speed blowers, dual heat exchanger and air filtration. A good company should take the time to explain all of these options to you during your appointment.

It's always recommended to invest in the most efficient unit you can afford; you'll be able to find a range of efficiencies for any budget. A more efficient unit will have a higher upfront cost, but it will pay for itself over the course of its life. Once you factor in the available rebates and tax credits, you may find that you're saving much more than you expected. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager,
72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road,
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AAMS®
Financial Advisor
1200 SW State St.
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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

FINANCE By Allison Ver Steegt

SHOULD inflation affect your investment moves?

As you know, inflation heated up in 2021, following years of pretty stable — and low — numbers. And now, early in 2022, we're still seeing elevated prices. As a consumer, you may need to adjust your activities somewhat, but, as an investor, how should you respond to inflation?



First, it helps to know the causes of this recent inflationary spike. Essentially, it's a case of basic economics — strong demand for goods meeting inadequate supply, caused by material and labor shortages, along with shipping and delivery logjams. In other words, too many dollars chasing too few goods. Once the supply chain issues begin to ease and consumer spending moves from goods to services as the COVID-19 pandemic wanes, it's likely that inflation will moderate, but it may still stay above pre-pandemic levels throughout 2022.

Given this outlook, you may want to review your investment portfolio. First, consider stocks. Generally speaking, stocks can do well in inflationary periods because companies' revenues and earnings may increase along with inflation. But some sectors of the stock market typically do better than others during inflationary times. Companies that can pass along higher costs to consumers due to strong demand for their goods — such as firms that produce building materials or supply steel or other commodities to other businesses — can do well. Conversely, companies that sell nonessential goods and services, such as appliances, athletic apparel and entertainment, may struggle more when prices are rising.

Of course, it's still a good idea to own a variety of stocks from various industries because it can help reduce the impact of market volatility on any one sector. And, to help counteract the effects of rising prices, you might also consider investing in companies that have a long track record of paying and raising stock dividends. (Keep in mind, though, that these companies are not obligated to pay dividends and can reduce or discontinue them at any time.)

Apart from stocks, how can inflation affect other types of investments? Think about bonds. When you invest in a bond, you receive regular interest payments until the bond matures. But these payments stay the same, so, over time, rising inflation can eat into your bond's future income, which may also cause the price of your bond to drop — a concern if you decide to sell the bond before it matures. The impact of inflation is especially sharp on the price of longer-term bonds because of the cumulative loss of purchasing power.

However, Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS) can provide some protection against inflation. The face value, or principal amount, of each TIPS is \$1,000, but this principal is adjusted based on changes in the U.S. Consumer Price Index. So, during periods of inflation, your principal will increase, also increasing your interest payments. When inflation drops, though, your principal and interest payments will decrease, but you'll never receive less than the original principal value when the TIPS mature. Talk to your financial advisor to determine if TIPS may be appropriate for you.

Ultimately, inflation may indeed be something to consider when managing your investments. But other factors — especially your risk tolerance, time horizon and long-term goals — should still be the driving force behind your investment decisions. A solid investment strategy can serve you well, regardless of whether prices move up or down. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information provided by Allison Ver Steegt, 215 NW 18th St., Suite 103, Ankeny, 515-964-2122.

THE ROLES of guardians and conservators

Our firm specializes in issues of alternate decision making and finds that our clients often assist family members. Whether it is an aging parent or a child with a disability, these

informal arrangements are common. However, sometimes a more formal legal solution is necessary. If the person's mental capacity is in question, or if a bank or nursing home requires legal paperwork, the family must seek out an expert in the field.

There are two major options for a family facing personal care or financial challenges. The first is a durable financial power of attorney, which is a written document that gives an agent broad power to act. The power of attorney must be executed when the person is competent. If the disabled person never planned for incapacity,



or if the incapacity came about very quickly (through a stroke, for example), a court order appointing a guardian or conservator is needed.

A guardianship and a conservatorship are separate legal entities established by court order. They are court-authorized relationships whereby one person assumes responsibility for the care, property, and finances of another. A guardianship or conservatorship is appropriate when a person's decision-making capacity is so impaired that the person is unable to care for their own personal safety or personal needs.

A conservator is responsible for managing the protected person's finances. The conservator takes control of the protected person's assets and uses them on behalf of the protected person. The conservator must pay bills and balance the individual's checkbook. The conservator may have to sell a house or liquidate a major asset to pay for long-term care.

A guardian is responsible for the protected person's needs other than financial matters.

The guardian makes decisions about medical treatment, educational or vocational services, and personal care. The guardian can also determine where the individual will live.

Although the judicial system is involved, the entire proceeding is more collaborative than adversarial. Generally, it is a fairly straightforward process to demonstrate incapacity and appoint a guardian or conservator. However, guardianships and conservatorships completely take away or severely limit the protected person's decision-making authority. They are also more time consuming and costly than alternative methods because the court requires annual reporting and prior approval for expenditures. Because of this, guardianships and conservatorships should be used as a last resort. ■

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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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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HEALTH

By Dr. Katrina Smith, MD FAAD

TREATING dandruff

Dandruff is a common and distressing condition. Those little white flakes that appear on your scalp and clothing are not your best fashion accessory. Fortunately, there are treatment options. Dandruff is also known as seborrheic (seb-o-REE-ik) dermatitis. It typically affects teens and adults. When it occurs in babies, it's called "cradle cap."



Seborrheic dermatitis appears as pink patches with greasy scale in the oily areas of the body (scalp, ears, central face). It may be seasonal and flare during cold weather and improve in the summer. The exact cause of dandruff is unknown, but it has to do with oil (sebum) production, yeast (malassezia) found on the skin and inflammation. Some people are genetically prone to dandruff.

Treatment tips: Shampoo your scalp daily. Use a dandruff shampoo 2-3 times weekly. African Americans may shampoo once weekly with a dandruff shampoo. Choose a dandruff shampoo with zinc pyrithione, selenium sulfide or salicylic acid and sulfur.

If these steps don't improve your condition, see a board-certified dermatologist. Sometimes dandruff can be stubborn or may mimic other conditions like psoriasis or fungal infections. A dermatologist will be able to diagnose and treat your condition. ■

Information provided by Dr. Katrina Smith, MD FAAD, Co-owner, Iowa Dermatology Consultants, 2675 N Ankeny Blvd. Suites 101/103, Ankeny, 515-348-4097.

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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.

SPRING programs for families and adults

Despite the snow that is still on the ground as I type this, spring is rapidly approaching. With the season of renewal comes a fresh batch of library programming for families and adults.



Local influencer Erin Port will give a presentation on Tuesday, March 1, at 6:30

p.m. As a busy mom of four children, Erin founded Simple Purposeful Living with the mission to help simplify your life. You'll find tips and tools to simplify your life on purpose including fun recipes and meal planning suggestions, cleaning and organizing tips, seasonal activities and much more. If you would like to check out her website, head over to www.simplepurposefulliving.com.

We will also be hosting two different virtual programs from Chad Lewis. Lewis is a researcher, author and lecturer on topics of the strange and unusual. His background is in the field of psychology and his bachelor's and master's degree are in that field. For nearly 30 years, he has traveled the globe in search of unique and bizarre stories and history. Some of that research has brought him to Iowa. On Tuesday, March 8, at 6:30 p.m., he will present "Bizarre History of Iowa." This presentation showcases more than 100 bizarre newspaper stories from Iowa that have not been seen in more than 100 years. These unbelievable stories were not lost; they were simply hidden. This program provides a time portal back to the early days of the state when it was filled with strange deaths, ghosts, sea serpents, peculiar people, medical anomalies, oddities, psychic phenomena and UFOs.

On Tuesday, April 5, at 6:30 p.m., he will discuss "Iowa's Most Haunted Locations." This presentation takes the audience on a ghostly journey to some of the most haunted places in the state. It covers the entire state, from wandering ghosts in the North Woods to a haunted B&B in Dubuque. From phantom creatures prowling the woods to graveyard apparitions located in your own backyard, no place in Iowa is without its own hauntings. Registration for these virtual programs will be available soon on the library's online calendar.

On Wednesday, May 11, at 6:30 p.m., the library will be visited by none other than President Abraham Lincoln as portrayed by Kevin Wood. As Lincoln, Wood has made appearances at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Lincoln Heritage Museum, the Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, and Lincoln's Festival on Route 66, among many other places and events. He will give his presentation titled "Lincoln on Immigration and America's Place in the World." President Lincoln will share his experiences and thoughts on the subjects of immigration, nativism, international relations, and the global significance of the American Civil War. This program is for ages 12 through adults, so bring the whole family.

We hope you will join us for these wonderful library programs. And, hopefully, all of the snow will be gone by then. ■

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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WELLNESS

By Christopher M. Renze, D.C.

IS CHIROPRACTIC covered by insurance?

Medicare covers chiropractic under Part B. If a patient has Medicare and no secondary/supplemental insurance, the patient is initially responsible for paying the annual Part B deductible. (This deductible applies to the combined charges for all Part B medical providers, not solely for chiropractic visits.) After the deductible is met, Medicare pays 80%. The patient pays the remaining 20%.

If a patient has Medicare plus a secondary/supplemental insurance, the secondary/supplemental insurance may pay the annual deductible. Once the deductible is met, Medicare again pays 80%, and the secondary/supplemental insurance pays the remaining 20%.

It is very important to note: Medicare only pays for the actual spinal adjustment. Medicare does not pay for examinations, acupuncture, ultrasound, massage, X-rays, or other common chiropractic services. Medicare does not have a visit limit but does require that treatments be deemed medically necessary. Medicare does not pay for routine maintenance treatments; however, patients can continue care on a self-pay basis.

Iowa Medicaid/Title 19/Amerigroup/Iowa Total Care cover chiropractic adjustments and X-rays. The number of treatments allowed is determined by the diagnosis or condition being treated.

Commercial insurance policies usually cover chiropractic services. Some require patients to pay a co-pay ranging from \$10 to \$75 per visit. Others require patients to pay a co-insurance or percentage of the total cost ranging from 10% to 50%. Some have a combination of the two. On occasion, a commercial insurance requires a patient to pay a deductible prior to paying its portion. Health Savings Accounts can be used to pay for care regardless of whether or not the provider participates in your insurance plan.

In case of a car accident, automobile insurance usually covers chiropractic services under the MedPay portion of your policy. Healthcare-related bills are sent to your own auto insurance company despite which driver was at fault. Your auto insurance company will be reimbursed from the other party's auto insurance company if the accident was not your fault. MedPay is also designed to ensure your healthcare-related treatments are covered, even if the other driver does not have insurance.

Veteran's Administration (V.A.) covers chiropractic services. The V.A. only pays for spinal adjustments. Because the Central Iowa V.A. has a chiropractor on staff, the patient has to ask the V.A. for a referral to a different chiropractic office if the staff chiropractor cannot meet their needs.

Iowa Worker's Compensation, unfortunately for the many patients who could be helped with chiropractic services, does not cover them at this time. On occasion, a patient can receive covered chiropractic care if the worker's compensation case manager approves it.

No insurance: Most chiropractic care is affordable and, in some cases, less costly than the co-pays required by some insurance companies. ■

Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit www.renzechiro.com or call the office at 515-965-3844.

The 'Wild West' of cryptocurrency

I get asked about cryptocurrency a lot. Is it a good investment? Should I get in now? How much should I invest? I've been watching the cryptocurrency



game for a long time and answering the question the same way since investors started playing: "It's like the Wild West of investing." Maybe not the untamed lawlessness of the Western territories in the mid-1800s, but more like the wildness of the DotCom era.

I know you remember it. There was a rapid rise in U.S. technology stock equity fueled by investments in Internet start-up companies. The problem is, there were no actual balance sheets. The bubble

burst in 2000 when the capital began to dry up. There was a lot of money to be made and a lot of money to be lost. A few companies survived, such as Microsoft and Amazon, but it took 10 years and 16 years respectively for investors to break even.

I understand why many want to grab the cowboy boots and join in. Bitcoin has seen a 4,700% surge since 2016 (yes, 4,700%). Last year alone, there was a 60% gain. Goldman Sachs recently predicted a 50% increase over the next five years, for a return of 17% or 18%. It's incredible. But there are a few other numbers to consider before investing in cryptocurrency. There are more than 1,500 cryptocurrencies, and a new one is coming out every week (sound like the DotCom era?). In 2018, the price of Bitcoin fell by about 65%

in just one month, from Jan. 6 to Feb. 6. Cryptocurrency is known for its volatility. Cryptocurrency is still largely untamed in the U.S., though the Federal Reserve has talked about roping it in — even talks of regulation impact price.

It's still a speculative investment, so enter this "Wild West" with caution. You have to have the stomach for the swings. You want to invest money that you don't need to live out your retirement vision. If it blew away like a tumbleweed, you wouldn't be upset.

We help people build a comprehensive retirement plan that shows them in writing how their resources will get them to and through retirement. The plan also shows them where they can take some risk, if they desire, on something like cryptocurrency, and do it without disrupting their retirement vision.

Information provided by Loren Merkle, CFP®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, IA 50111, 515-278-1006.

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FITNESS

By Mary Hall

FOAM rolling for mobility, recovery and performance

Foam rolling ... it hurts so good! But what does it actually do? Foam rolling is a self-myofascial release technique. It can help relieve muscle tightness, soreness and inflammation, and increase your joint range of motion.

Fascia is a thin layer of tissue that surrounds and encases your muscle fiber, connective tissue, organs, and nerves within the human body. Fascia has many layers and helps your body push, pull and perform every physical movement you decide to make. The fascia that covers your muscles is called myofascia. When the myofascia is stressed from overuse, it can tear and adhere together. These adhesions, or "knots," prevent the muscles from working well and can limit your range of motion and performance. We can keep myofascia mobile with self-myofascial release. Self-myofascial release through foam rolling puts pressure on these adhesions to release them. It also creates compression that, when released, floods the area with blood, carrying much needed oxygen and nutrients. The healthier the fascia, the better you move.

Foam rolling can be performed before or after your workouts to help diminish aches and pains, increase flexibility, increase range of motion, enhance performance, reduce injuries and accelerate recovery. ■

Information provided by Mary Hall, Head Coach, ACSM Certified Personal Trainer, Eat the Frog Fitness, 2785 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 15, Ankeny, 515-505-7130.



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EDUCATION

By Ashley Rullestad

MEET Kristen Recher

Iowa STEM teacher of the year

Northeast Elementary fifth-grade teacher Kristen Recher was recently named the Iowa STEM teacher of the year. She was nominated for the award by her colleague Kelsey Speer and was presented with the award by Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council.

"It was a surprise to my students and me. It was wonderful being able to share that moment with my team, family and students. Every day, I get the opportunity to work with students who will be our future engineers, scientists and mathematicians, so it meant a lot to see my students' work be recognized in such a big way."

Recher says she works with "fantastic" teachers who are constantly helping her grow and who are consistently finding ways to help each student grow not only in the area of STEM but also as learners and leaders.

This is Recher's fourth year in Ankeny, and she enjoys teaching her fifth graders writing, reading, math, science and social studies. In upper elementary school, her students are using the social and leadership skills from prior grades to build a foundation to try new things, accomplish big goals, and help others.

"Every day is a new adventure. They always know how to make me smile, and they inspire me to be better by seeing their hard work and compassion for others."

Recher is known around school as a bit of an animal fanatic, and she particularly likes squirrels. This has led to numerous funny and favorite moments, ranging from thoughtful students gifting her with pictures and paintings of squirrels to the class having Secret Squirrels named Peanut and Butter that visit on special occasions.

"One of my students joined me in wearing matching Flying Squirrel onesies for pajama day. I always appreciate how my students embrace my quirks and share their interests and passions with our class and me."

When she's not at school, you will find Recher with her husband, Joseph, and their two cats, Sparks and Riley. She enjoys making memories with families and friends, spending time outdoors, and finding ways to be creative.

"I am incredibly grateful to be able to be a part of such an excellent district, school and team. Every day I am surrounded by community members and school staff that genuinely care for each student." ■



Kristen Recher is a fifth-grade teacher at Northeast Elementary.

FEBRUARY highlights

Do you know what is so great about February? Black History Month and the Chinese New Year start on the first. A sleepy groundhog crawls out of his den on the second to see if his shadow appears. Then there is a plethora of national food days — tator tots, chili, banana bread, pancakes, pistachios and more. And who can forget about Valentine's Day and the Super Bowl — both of which are so full of emotion.



The Chamber also has a lot going on this month. We kick off the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce's Total Resource Campaign. Michael Hidder with Ankeny Real Estate Group has been a longtime volunteer with TRC. I asked him what this program is all about. He says, "It is an eight-week program driven by our great staff and hardworking volunteers. Our volunteers work with member businesses to match them with sponsorship and marketing opportunities they feel will best serve their businesses. All of the marketing sales for our largest events are done within this time frame to allow the Chamber and our sponsoring members to plan, budget, and maximize their dollars to best support the Ankeny community."


Karl Chevrolet, Murphy Enterprizes, and Prairie Trail-DRA Properties have been Investor Members for many years. We cannot thank them enough for their dedication to our mission. If you have not yet been contacted by a TRC volunteer and would like to learn more, give the Chamber a call at 515-964-0685.

And, to end the month on a great note, Thursday, Feb. 24, is the Annual Dinner Celebration, presented by Murphy Enterprizes, Inc. This is a great time to dress up, enjoy a little entertainment, network, and hear what great things will be coming your way. We will also announce (drum roll please) the Outstanding Citizen, Small Businessperson, Ambassador and Ankeny Young Professional of the Year. Go to Ankeny.org to register.

Speaking of the Outstanding Citizen, Luara Luetje (2021 winner) is still out and about. Her and her family's current endeavor is the Star Award, which will honor a staff member, teacher, or principal who is "selfless, tireless, adaptive and remarkable." This will be given bi-monthly and includes a traveling trophy that will make its way through the Ankeny K-5 schools. If you want to make a nomination for a deserving candidate, go to <https://bit.ly.35tJCTX>.

So, here is my advice for February. Don't be a groundhog. Get out of your den more than once a year. Don't let one cloudy day get you stuck in a rut for six more weeks. And eat a tator tot or two. ■

Information provided by Julie Mangels, 2022 Board Chairwoman, Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.



Presented by MURPHY ENTERPRIZES, INC.

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Events

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 855 W Bridge Rd, Polk City

Ribbon Cutting - Toggle, Inc.
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 Tuesday, February 22, 12p Noon
 319 SW 5th St #303, Des Moines

ANNUAL DINNER
Presented by Murphy Enterprizes, Inc.
 FFA Enrichment Center
 Thursday, February 24, 530p
 1055 SW Prairie Trail Pkwy, Ankeny

Ribbon Cutting - Home Instead
 Home Instead
 Tuesday, March 1, 12p Noon
 301 N Ankeny Blvd #130, Ankeny

Ribbon Cutting - Radiant Skin MedSpa
 Radiant Skin MedSpa
 Thursday, March 3, 430p
 320 SE Delaware Ave, Ankeny

Business After Hours
 Great Southern Bank
 Thursday, March 10, 4p
 210 NE Delaware Ave, Ankeny

The LAST Morning Hustle with BIZLAB
 Ankeny Area Chamber Offices
 Tuesday, March 15, 830a-930a

Details at ankeney.org

OUT & ABOUT



A ribbon cutting was held for Crumbl Cookies at their new location, 802 S.E. Oralabor Road, Suite 108, on Jan. 28. Photo by Brent Roske, Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce



A ribbon cutting was held for Juna Sleep Systems at their new location, 1805 S.E. Delaware Ave., Suite 1200, on Jan. 12. Photo by Brent Roske, Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.



Jared Pearson and Carson Odle at Lattes & Leads at Faith Baptist Bible College on Jan. 25.



Nikki Worthington and Chance Eden at Lattes & Leads at Faith Baptist Bible College on Jan. 25.



Marty Herron and Andrew Gogerty at Lattes & Leads at Faith Baptist Bible College on Jan. 25.



Michael Hidder and Joseph Herst at Lattes & Leads at Faith Baptist Bible College on Jan. 25.



Jen Walter and Jared Baldwin at Lattes & Leads at Faith Baptist Bible College on Jan. 25.



Chase Netusil, Clay Netusil and Jim Tillotson at Lattes & Leads at Faith Baptist Bible College on Jan. 25.

BEST OF Des Moines

CITYVIEW'S Best Of Des Moines event was held at Adventureland's Palace Theater on Feb. 1.



Denis Scott from DJ Das Entertainment



Tim and Rachel Scheib from Scheib Real Estate



Dean and Delia Coleman from Sweet Endeavors Honey



Chris Puisner, Michele Puisner, Maverick Puisner, Macee Puisner and Galen Thornburg from Lucky Gal Tattoo



Bailey Wilson, Cera Holland, Alyssa Christian and Lauren Golay from MetroWaxx



Leah Moravec and Lilly Jacobsen from Pure Salon



Amy and Lydia Kinney from Let's Slumber It



John Smith, Tracy Smith, Melody Hurley and Travis Hurley from Tracy Marie Photography



Rhonda Duren, Nikcole Jones, Antonelly Jones and Brenda Ramirez from La Vida Foundry



Tim Burianek, Camryn Croy, Karen Dissinger, Ryan Kolder and Zach Akin from Skeffington's Formal Wear

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