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# Living

MAGAZINE

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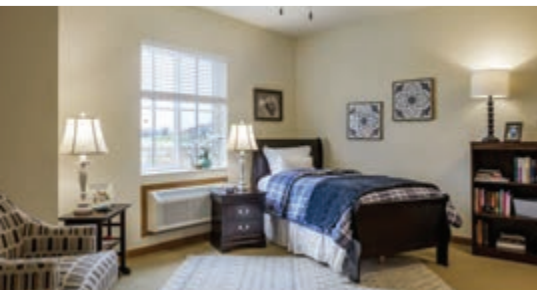
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WELCOME

## THAT'S NOT a rat

I don't like spiders and snakes. That's what Jim Stafford sang in his 1974 hit single, and I am with him on this one. But not everyone agrees. In fact, a surprisingly large number of people choose to have these and other unusual pets.

Throughout my life, we had the typical array of household pets: dogs, cats, fish and a handful of hamsters. Although rodents can be popular as pets, my childhood choice came about by accident.

My family was at a local park when we saw a small animal scampering across the parking lot. "Look at that rat!" my brother yelled. "Wait, that's not a rat," he added. "That's a hamster."

We slowly walked up to the rodent and discovered that it was, in fact, a hamster. What it was doing on the loose in a city park was anyone's guess. We assumed it escaped from a home and was doing its best to avoid becoming a hawk's lunch. So we did what most anyone would do and threw it in the river.

That's a joke. We took it home and made a makeshift home for it from a cardboard box, which, of course, it ate through in a matter of a few hours. We then constructed a metal box from scrap material in the garage, which this hamster was not going to gnaw through. We even built a hinged opening at the top so we could reach in and get it in and out. What we didn't envision was that this opening would eventually become an escape hatch for the little hamster — and escape it did.

Our family spent hours looking for this newfound pet, leaving food out as an attraction in hopes that it would appear. It didn't appear, but we did find it — floating in the water in the sump pump. That's certainly not a pleasant ending to this story, but we did learn a few lessons in the process, which helped immensely with the three hamsters that my daughters had years later. For the most part, we did become responsible hamster owners, except for the dog eating one of them.

On second thought, maybe spiders or snakes would have been a better choice.

Thanks for reading. ■

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# *Pets* OF A *different* KIND

**What City ordinances  
and owners say about  
unusual pets**

**By Ashley Rullestad**

Pet owners often say they can't imagine life without their beloved pet. Dogs, cats, bunnies and other furry friends provide companionship, entertainment and even affection to those willing to give them the time, attention and care they deserve and need to thrive. While the typical pet owner prefers to cuddle with the run-of-a-mill canine or feline, some opt for a more unusual choice. While others may find their pets less than adorable — and perhaps even a tad repulsive — these pet owners are just as attached to their critters of choice as cat and dog owners are to theirs.

Brandt Remaly with his  
Madagascar lesser tenrec, Cookie.



## FEATURE

### A prickly friend

Two years ago, Kate Remaly's son Brandt, 14, started following someone in England on social media who had several exotic pets, including a couple Madagascar lesser tenrecs. They are small, nocturnal animals covered in spines. Though sometimes confused with hedgehogs, lesser tenrecs are actually members of a different order. Blank Park Zoo has three of them used in educational visits, so Kate set up a behind-the-scenes tour for Brandt to learn more.

"Little did I know my husband had found a breeder in Fremont, Nebraska, with babies for sale. A week after our zoo visit, we went to pick up our new tenrec, Cookie. Unfortunately, Brandt is allergic to cats and dogs, so we thought this would be an ideal pet."

Tenrecs are nocturnal, go into a hibernation state called torpor, and, oddly enough, are related to elephants, armadillos and manatees. They are small, weighing only 4 to 7 ounces, and grow to between 5.5 and 7 inches in length. Tenrecs are insectivores so Cookie's main diet is meal worms, although she also likes raw ground chicken and bananas.

"We keep kitten kibble and water in her cage as well. She is nocturnal so very low maintenance. She can be handled with ease and loves to cuddle in sweatshirts. Other than the upfront cost for purchase, there really isn't any additional expense besides mealworms."

Tenrecs live 12-15 years in captivity so Cookie should be with the Remaly family for a long time. To their knowledge, she is the only one in central Iowa besides the ones at the zoo.



Brandt Remaly's pet, Cookie, may be the only Madagascar lesser tenrec in Iowa other than those at the Blank Park Zoo.

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## Here, birdie birdie

Jamie Hansen and her husband, Chris, got Betty, a lilac-crowned Amazon parrot, in 2002 when she was just a year old. She's been with them since, along with other animals like iguanas and cats, as well as two kids, Melody, 11, and Eva, 5.

Hansen didn't set out to be a parrot mom. She had an iguana at the time, and, when she and Chris would go to the pet store to get his special food, Betty was there and would woo them with saying "Hi" and asking for peanuts.

"One day, all the store's parrots and their cages were 50% off, so we pulled the trigger then and there, without really realizing what we were signing ourselves up for. Reading the 'Birds for Dummies' book on the way home was when we realized she could live for, gulp, 75 years. Most people have to put them in their wills because they outlive them."

In the wild, the lilac-crowned Amazon parrot is native to the Pacific coast of

Mexico. Lilac-crowned Amazon parrots are curious and active birds by nature. Like all parrots — and Amazon parrots in particular — these birds need plenty of mental stimulation to keep them healthy and happy.

"They are very social animals and can go insane or have serious mental issues without enough attention. Many pick one family member that is the one they bond with most. She has several words and phrases she learned that communicate a majority of her wants and needs."

These parrots also need a large cage and plenty of room for exercise. The Hansens used to keep her wings trimmed so she wouldn't fly around and get herself into trouble, but, during the pandemic, they have let them grow.

"My advice would be to just realize the commitment. And be prepared for all the messes. We love her, though. She loves pizza and steak and thinks she's just another family member."



The Hansens got Betty, a lilac-crowned Amazon parrot, in 2002.

## Pet rules

Ankeny city ordinances offer some rules for those who wish to own unusual animals as "pets." First, they define pet as "a living dog, cat, or an animal normally maintained in a small tank or cage in or near a residence, including but not limited to a rabbit, gerbil, hamster, mouse, parrot, canary, mynah, finch, tropical fish, goldfish, snake, turtle, gecko or iguana."

"Dangerous" animals are prohibited. Those include "badgers, wolverines, weasels, mink and other Mustelids (except ferrets); black widow spiders and scorpions; and raccoons, opossums, and skunks." The State of Iowa has a more extensive list of prohibited animals that also applies and includes animals ranging from non-domesticated cats to bears, elephants and many more.

Animals categorized as "livestock" are not allowed in city limits and include those "belonging to the bovine, caprine, equine, ovine or porcine species; ostriches, rheas and emus; farm deer as defined in Section 170.1 of the Code of Iowa; or poultry." ■

## Dragon roar

Monika Morales' son Alex decided he wanted a pet he could take care of and have as a friend. He decided what he wanted was a bearded dragon, so they acquired one about nine months ago.

Petco tells prospective "beardie" owners, "The name 'Bearded Dragon' comes from their ability to puff or flare out the skin under their throats, often darkening the skin to a black color, which looks like a beard."

Bearded dragons are an ancient lizard originally found in Australia. They live in a desert climate, and they are considered easy to care for and tolerate human interaction well. They typically live from seven to 12 years in captivity, are 15 to 20 inches long, and eat a variety of foods including crickets, mealworms, vegetables like sweet potato, leafy greens, and even some fruits.

Morales advises people to consider the time and money it takes having one. You need to invest in a terrarium and have a place to put it. Make sure you create a comfy environment for your dragon. They like a large cage with branches, a heat source, and rocks and spots to hide.

They need to eat greens every day and eat a lot of crickets when young and once





a week when adults. Morales is surprised at how many different things their beardedie can eat. He also likes carrots and tomato hornworms.

“Make sure you have time to put into the pet,” says Morales. “Make sure to keep your bearded dragon social. They like people interaction. The less you handle them, the more aggressive they become, so, make sure you have the time for them.”

The family also has a dog, and Morales says they are “not in the market for any more animals.”

Morales admits she likes their beardedie more than she thought she would, and Alex is thrilled.

“My son loves him. He always has him out and plays with him. Yes, it has been a great fit, and we will have him for a long while.” ■



Alex Morales' bearded dragon is handled regularly and enjoys being held.

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# 125 YEARS in the making

Ankeny continues to grow after more than a century as a community

*This article ran in the Des Moines Register, Dec. 29, 1999:*

Ankeny's growth exploded when an ordnance plant was built southwest of town during World War II. Open from 1942 to 1945, the plant made ammunition cartridges and, at peak production, employed more than 19,000 people. John Deere Co. bought the plant in 1947 and continues to operate it today. Actually, Ankeny had been going strong for nearly three-quarters of a century before the war effort hit town.

"It has just boomed," said JoAnn Adamson, president of the Ankeny Area Historical Society. "People who haven't lived here for even 20 years come back, and they must marvel at the change." A number of things have combined to help Ankeny blossom, said Adamson. Most importantly is its proximity to Interstate 35 to the east and Interstate 80 to the south, both built in the 1960s. Also key is a strong industrial development commission, city officials and community leaders who persuaded the likes of Tone's Spices and Casey's General Stores to locate their headquarters in Ankeny.

The city got its start in 1874 when John Fletcher Ankeny and his wife, Sarah Wolgamot, bought 80 acres. Although John laid out the plan for the city and filed the original plot in 1875, the town wasn't legally incorporated until 1903. John Ankeny built the first commercial building, a combination general store/post office, on the northeast corner of Third and Cherry streets. Henry Hutton was the first storekeeper, and B.A. Lamason was the first postmaster. In 1874, a narrow-gauge railroad was laid from Des Moines



to Ames, passing through Ankeny. In 1879, the tracks were changed to wide gauge. Passenger service was established in 1880. The first newspaper, the Ankeny Times, was published on May 17, 1902. The first banks — Farmer's Savings Bank and the Bank of Ankeny — also were established that year. Telephone service arrived the following year, and electricity and fire service both came in 1907. However, the fire department's hand buckets weren't enough to quench the fires that destroyed several establishments in the 1930s, including the north and south sides of Third Street, Congregational Church, the grain elevator, hotel, and Great Western Fireworks Co. An orphanage called The Children's Home was located in Ankeny for decades. Mining was a major industry in the Ankeny area from the early 1900s to the 1930s in the now-defunct towns of Carney, Oralabor, Saylorville and Enterprise.

Still, the town seemed more like a collection of farms than a municipality in the new century. Each household grew a garden and raised chickens, said native Richard Logli, whose father delivered bread to area coal miners before starting Logli Store in Ankeny. Farmers often drove their cattle down the city streets to stockyards next to the railroad tracks near Third and S.W. Maple streets. Across that intersection today, you will find Bears Restaurant and Lounge, which started out as a general merchandise store, then became a Ford dealership, then Goodner's Café. The Yankee Clipper, a bar on the south side of Bears, was a blacksmith shop at one time.

More recent developments include the establishment of Faith Baptist Bible College in 1967, Des Moines Area Community College in 1970, a YMCA center in 1989, an aquatic center, a new library and Northwest Ankeny Recreation Area. "Ankeny has always been a good place to live, being so close to the capital and its cultural and entertainment opportunities," said lifetime resident Myrtle Sexauer, great-granddaughter of Jacob Sexauer, an early Ankeny livestock and grain producer and broker.

To learn more about Ankeny's past, visit the Ankeny Area Historical Society's website, [www.ankenyhistorical.org](http://www.ankenyhistorical.org), and its museum at 301 S.W. Third St. (once the home of former school superintendent E.W. Neveln). For more information, call 515-965-5795. ■

**Editor's note:** *This is the final article from the Ankeny Area Historical Society as the group moves on to new projects and endeavors. We thank the group for contributing to Ankeny Living. It's been a pleasure!*

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## Is this the year **YOU RETIRE?**

We are experiencing a “Retirement Revolution.” You may have heard it being called “The Great Resignation.” That term refers to all the people leaving the workforce due to the pandemic. According to Goldman Sachs research, about two-thirds of those leaving the workforce are retiring; that’s why I think “Retirement Revolution” is a more accurate description. Whether they are concerned about getting the virus, have found that work is no longer a big part of their identity, or the pandemic has changed their job in ways they don’t like, many are retiring earlier than they expected.



We find that a few things can prevent people from pressing “go” on retirement. One of the significant concerns is income. It

can be challenging to think about no longer receiving a paycheck from your employer and paying yourself from your retirement savings. If you are thinking about retiring before answering the income question, you have to consider this: What do you want to do in retirement? How you spend your time will help determine how you spend your money. It will also help you determine if you have enough money to live out your retirement vision.

Health care is another one of those things that can help you determine if you are retirement-ready. Many people want to wait until they are eligible for Medicare to retire. There’s nothing wrong with that. I just wouldn’t let it be the sole determinant of your retirement date. In the last 20 years, I’ve seen hundreds of people successfully retire before they are Medicare eligible. We’ve just had to get a little creative with their plan. It might be as simple as utilizing their

spouse’s health care plan or taking advantage of COBRA. This law allows employees to continue their health care coverage even after leaving employment.

There are other things besides a pandemic that can determine your retirement date. If your health changes or your employer offers an early retirement package, that could push you into retirement or make it seem much more attractive than before. We also see scenarios where one person retires, loves it, and convinces their spouse to join them.

If you are not ready to retire, maybe this is the year you capitalize on other retirement strategies like a Roth conversion, catch-up contributions, or updating your legacy plan. Whether you join the “Retirement Revolution” or not, heading to and through retirement with a comprehensive, written retirement plan will help make it easier. ■

Source: Casselman, Ben (Nov. 12, 2021) “The Number of U.S. Workers Quitting Their Jobs in September was the Highest on Record” [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

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

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## RECIPE

# WARM UP winter with comforting classics

*(Family Features)* Whipping up family favorites all winter long is a perfect activity to keep loved ones warm in the kitchen while avoiding the bitter chill outdoors. Delicious, heartwarming snacks offer a simple and savory way to bring everyone in from the cold while enjoying comforting flavors together.

Lean on beloved ingredients like go-to RAGÚ sauces when it's time to come together for quick bites. The possibilities are nearly endless with delicious recipes using classics like the RAGÚ Old World Style Traditional or RAGÚ Simply Traditional options.

Hearty flavors can take away the chill of winter in recipes like Baked Tomato Goat Cheese Dip. Easy to make and fun to create, this simple snack is perfect for a cold afternoon spent together in the kitchen or watching a family-movie marathon.

Find more recipes perfect for warming up this winter at [Ragu.com](http://Ragu.com). ■

## Baked tomato goat cheese dip

Recipe courtesy of Marzia Aziz of "Little Spice Jar"

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4-6

### Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cups RAGÚ Simply Traditional Sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, divided
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped, divided
- 1/8-1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 log (10-10 1/2 ounces) goat cheese, softened at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, plus additional for brushing, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh thyme
- kosher salt, divided
- pepper
- 1 large baguette, sliced on bias
- blistered tomatoes, for serving (optional)

### Directions

- Position one rack in upper third of oven and one in lower third. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray small, round baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- Add sauce to small bowl. Grate in two garlic cloves then add 1/8 cup basil and red pepper flakes. Stir to combine then pour sauce into baking dish.
- Smash goat cheese log into ball. Place ball between two sheets plastic wrap. Using hands, flatten cheese into thick, round disc about 1 inch smaller in diameter than baking dish. Remove goat cheese from plastic wrap and place in center of sauce. Drizzle cheese with 2 teaspoons olive oil. Sprinkle with fresh thyme, kosher salt and pepper. Bake on lower rack, uncovered, 20-25 minutes, or until sauce is bubbly and cheese is warmed through.
- Place baguette slices on baking sheet. Drizzle or brush with olive oil and



sprinkle with kosher salt. Bake crostini on upper rack 10-12 minutes, flipping halfway through. When bread is done, remove from oven, cut last garlic clove in half and rub cut side on bread.

- Top dip with remaining basil and blistered tomatoes, if desired, and serve with crostini.
- **Note:** To make blistered tomatoes: Heat skillet over medium-high heat until almost smoking. Add 1 pint cherry tomatoes to dry skillet and let sit 1 minute. Lower heat to low, toss tomatoes with 2 teaspoons olive oil and cook 2-3 minutes, or until tomatoes are about to burst. Remove from heat; sprinkle with pinch of salt and pepper.



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## GARAGE

By Darren Tromblay

### 'MR. Bones'

Fake skeleton hangs around the Ernst garage all year.

The Ankeny garage of Katie and Mark Ernst has the typical things one would find: a mower, some tools, and plenty of storage.

Oh, and body parts. Fake ones, that is. The hanging skeleton in the back? That's just "Mr. Bones."

The couple, along with their children, Elizabeth and Matthew, are lovers of everything scary.

Well, Mark and the kids are.

"They love Halloween; I do not whatsoever," Katie jokes. "So it's three versus one."

Mark is on the other side of the aisle.

"I loved Halloween as a kid because I was the older brother who got to scare the younger brother and sister," he says. "I grew up in Dubuque, so we had haunted houses galore back in the day. We had run-down, old Victorian houses that organizations would rent out and do haunted houses in each year."

Mark had neighbors up the street who refused to have the same display every year on Halloween. One year to the next, one would never know what was going to be there, he says. Not only did the displays change, the neighbors would stand behind the garage or trees and terrify kids who came up to get candy.

"It was just a fun, spooky, fall atmosphere," he says.

That influence has rubbed off. This year, the Ernst family built a clown prison that went through part of the breezeway, with mannequins dressed as clowns behind the bars. A rear-screen projector was also employed to play spooky clown videos.

The lights in the house were fitted with red bulbs for some more "bloody" good fun. Thusly, the house has been dubbed "The Blood House."

Needless to say, Mark enjoys the season.

"I like Halloween and Christmas," he says. "Fall through winter, I love it."

When Halloween is wrapped up, and it's time to move on to the other fall holidays, one thing remains constant in the garage: "Mr. Bones," a skeleton the couple purchased at least 10 years ago. "Mr. Bones" plays a role in everything scary they do, whether it's laying on a table with fake organs being removed or sitting in a chair handing out candy. He's missing an arm, but it's probably just in a tote somewhere, Mark says.

"We had a graveyard thing last year where his hand was sticking out of the ground, so it's around here somewhere," he laughs.

Once the holiday season wrapped up, the brainstorming process began once again for Mark and the kids. With so many years under their belt now, it must be hard to come up with something new to scare the wits out of unsuspecting neighborhood kids, just like he was once.

"I've still got some years," Mark says, "and some tricks left." ■



Katie and Mark Ernst have "Mr. Bones" hanging in their garage year-round.



# SOMETHING new

## Unexpected paths through the wasteland

As our calendar goes from 2021 to 2022, I know some of you sense that this new year brings fresh starts and new opportunities. Some have specific plans and dreams that rely/wait upon the calendar change we've just experienced together.

Can I confess something to you? When the new year began, I was initially discouraged because 2022 felt like more of the same. I dreamt of moving beyond the same old (insert political, social, racial, class-based, national, international, health) problems and crisis. It turns out, just flipping a number on a calendar doesn't make things new. When my calendar flipped from 2021 to 2022, I was home in the midst of a COVID-19 quarantine praying that something new could happen — that life could be different for all of us in the new year.

In my Bible reading, I came across a familiar passage I wanted to share with you. It is from the book of Isaiah, chapter 43 - verse 19. Oversimplifying for some context, the people who would have initially heard these words from God were going through some tough times, much of which they brought upon themselves. (Does this sound familiar?)

19 "Look, I am about to do something new. Now it begins to happen! Do you not recognize it? Yes, I will make a road in the wilderness and paths in the wastelands. "

As I read this passage, a few things came to mind. First, I remember God's love and creative energy birth new moments and opportunities every day. Second, I recognize I often don't see the new things God is doing because I am so preoccupied with what I'm doing or what I've done. Third, I sense there is no trouble or "wasteland" that God can't transform so we can walk through into new blessings.

Take a quick break and imagine with me that God / the Divine (or however you relate to a Higher Power) is whispering to you, "Look, I'm doing something new. Can you see it?" What would God be drawing your attention toward? In what broken or barren place would you imagine God making new paths for you and for others?

As I pray for you, I pray that Divine grace and love would surprise you in unexpected places. I pray God brings newness to our community that we all can see, embrace and share. I pray that you will join me in this same prayer for each other. May 2022 be a year we trust God is doing something new and we follow God into new expressions of love for God and for each other. ■



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



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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

Check for cancellations

### GriefShare

Thursday, Jan. 27, 6:30-8 p.m.  
St. Paul Lutheran Church,  
1100 S.E. Sharon Drive,  
Ankeny

A new session of GriefShare begins this month. This non-denominational grief support group meets in person on Thursday evenings Jan. 27 - April 21. Registration is online at the Griefshare website, [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). Call 515-964-1250 for more information.

### Silent Auction

Thursday, Feb. 10  
WineStyles of Ankeny

The Ankeny Art Center is holding a fundraising auction at WineStyles. Donations are being sought. For information, call 515-965-0940 or email [ankenyardarts@ankenyardartcenter.com](mailto:ankenyardarts@ankenyardartcenter.com).



### Fire & Ice Winter Pub Crawl

Saturday, Jan. 22, 1-4 p.m.  
Valley Junction

CITYVIEW'S winter event returns. Tickets, ordered in advance, are \$20. Cost is \$30 at the door. Ticket covers 10 sample winter specialty drinks at participating establishments in Valley Junction. Tickets are available online at [fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com](http://fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com).

### Live Well Classes: Overcoming Depression or Anxiety

Orientation is Thursday, Jan. 20, 6:30 p.m.  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, 914 N.W. Ash St.,  
Ankeny

The holidays can be stressful for any of us. If you, or anyone you know, has experienced either of these debilitating conditions, consider joining. After completing one of these confidential, supportive, separate eight-week classes, you will actually be able to follow through establishing six healthy lifestyle habits. Classes will complement, not replace, any other mental health treatments. The series kicks off with orientation on Thursday, Jan. 20, then is held weekly on Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m. Jan. 27 - March 4. Cost is \$5 for the notebook. For more information or to reserve your seat, contact facilitator Jim White at 515-313-3701 or [jcjlwhite@live.com](mailto:jcjlwhite@live.com).

### 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://ankenyardartcenter.com/adult> and the list of K-8 classes at <https://ankenyardartcenter.com/k8-school-year>.



### Winter Jam - All Together Now Tour

Saturday, Jan. 22  
Wells Fargo Arena,  
233 Center St., Des Moines

Winter Jam, Christian music's biggest multi-artist tour, returns this year, and the 2022 lineup is loaded, featuring Skillet, Tauren Wells, KB, Colton Dixon, I Am They, NewSong and pre-jam artists Abby Robertson and Bayside Worship along with speaker Shane Pruitt. General admission is a \$10 donation at the door starting at 4 p.m. The pre-show is at 5 p.m., and the show starts at 6 p.m. For more information, visit [www.jamtour.com](http://www.jamtour.com).

### K-12 Bondurant-Farrar Art Show

Jan. 25-Feb. 16  
Reception: Thursday,  
Jan. 27, 5-7 p.m.  
Ankeny Art Center,  
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

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



### Hamilton

Single tickets go on sale to the public  
Jan. 24 at 10 a.m.  
Performances are May 17-June 5  
Des Moines Civic Center

Producer Jeffrey Seller and Des Moines Performing Arts announce that single tickets for "Hamilton" will go on sale at [DMPA.org](http://DMPA.org), in person at the Civic Center Ticket Office or by calling 515-246-2300. There is a maximum purchase limit of eight tickets per account for the engagement. When tickets go on sale, prices will range from \$59 to \$159 with a select number of premium seats available from \$249 for all performances. There will be a lottery for 40 \$10 seats for all performances. Details will be announced closer to the engagement.

### Transcending Trauma seminar

Friday, Jan. 28, check-in starts at 9 a.m.  
Program 9:15 a.m. to 4:20 p.m.  
Grand View University, The Student Center

Crossroads of Iowa is offering its ninth annual community seminar for "the helping professionals and survivors of trauma." Tuition, which must be prepaid, is \$100 or \$85 if postmarked by Jan. 21. Register online at [www.crossroadsofiowa.org](http://www.crossroadsofiowa.org) or mail checks to 2815 199th St., Suite 111, Urbandale, IA 50322. Walk-ins welcome if space is available with payment of cash only. Topics include Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing; Rounding, Grieving, Growing Steps of Recovery from Trauma; An Extensive History Validated by Research; and Healing Trauma Through Yoga.



# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

Check for cancellations

## 'That Golden Girls Show! A Puppet Parody'

Jan. 25-30

The Temple Theater,  
1011 Locust St., Des Moines

Sophia and her get-rich-quick schemes, Rose and some epic tales from St. Olaf, Blanche and an insatiable hunt for you know what, and Dorothy's daily struggle to figure out life. This new show uses puppets to parody the TV classic "Golden Girls." For more information, visit [www.desmoinesperformingarts.org](http://www.desmoinesperformingarts.org).



## Iowa Wild Hockey home games

Various January dates

Wells Fargo Arena, 730 Third St.,  
Des Moines

Enjoy hockey at the American Hockey League level, with players that regularly go on to play for the Minnesota Wild. For more information, visit [www.iowawild.com](http://www.iowawild.com). Home games are:

Friday, Jan. 28 vs. San Diego Gulls, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 29 vs. San Diego Gulls, 6 p.m.

## Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express

Feb. 4-20

Des Moines Community Playhouse,  
831 42nd St., Des Moines

It's winter 1934, and, when the Orient Express luxury train is stopped in the snow, a passenger is found dead in his locked compartment. Fortunately, the famous detective Hercule Poirot is also aboard to solve the case before the killer strikes again. [www.dmplayhouse.com](http://www.dmplayhouse.com)



## Immortal Beloved by the Des Moines Symphony

Saturday, Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m.

and Sunday, Jan. 30, 2:30 p.m.

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

"Ever thine. Ever mine. Ever ours," wrote Beethoven in a July 1812 letter to his "immortal beloved," a woman whose identity has remained one of the great mysteries of classical music. Now the Des Moines Symphony's Masterworks 4 features the concert "Immortal Beloved" with Natasha Paremiski playing Rachmaninoff's grand Third Piano Concerto. For more information, visit [www.dmsymphony.org](http://www.dmsymphony.org).



## Iowa Wolves home games

Various January dates

Wells Fargo Arena, 730  
Third St., Des Moines

The Iowa Wolves basketball team is affiliated with the Minnesota Timberwolves of the NBA and plays in the NBA Gatorade League, which is the NBA's official minor league. Home games are set for:

Sunday, Jan. 23 vs. Texas Legends/  
Mavericks, 4 p.m.



## 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.hoytsherman.org](http://www.hoytsherman.org).

Feb. 5: "Brooklyn Rider: Healing Modes" at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 11: "Chris Janson: Halfway To Crazy Tour" at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 15: "Des Moines Storytellers Project: Love" at 7 p.m.

Feb. 16: "An Evening With Bruce Dickinson" at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 18: "The Mavericks: 'En Español' World Tour" at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 19: "Yola: Stand For Myself Tour" at 8 p.m.

Feb. 24: "Ashley McBryde - This Town Talks Tour" at 8 p.m.

## Iowa Quilt Museum exhibit

Through Jan. 23

68 E. Court Ave., Winterset

Iowa Quilt Museum welcomes quilters, quilt lovers, history buffs and appreciators of American art and culture. Showing is "Here Comes the Sun," an exhibit honoring the sun with a study of the color orange in both historic and contemporary quilts. For more information, visit [www.iowaquiltmuseum.org](http://www.iowaquiltmuseum.org).



## Exhibit: Double Exposure

Jan. 17 - Feb. 25

Polk County Heritage Gallery,  
111 Court Ave., Des Moines

This year's photo show features still photography shot exclusively with film cameras and with camera phones. [www.polkcountyheritagegallery.org](http://www.polkcountyheritagegallery.org)

## 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.



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## HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

# ADULT day centers

Respite for families caring for loved ones

When her husband was diagnosed with dementia at the age of 53, Sara Harless of West Des Moines began thinking simply in terms of coping — of anticipating bleak days spent watching her healthy, vital spouse decline into someone she would no longer know.



She couldn't have anticipated that she'd spend the next several years watching him not only survive, but thrive in an environment that would make the most of his days.

"I think being in an adult day center actually extended Michael's life," Sara said.

Adult day centers serve older adults who typically live with family members because of health-related needs. Participants visit the centers while their caregivers are at work or are busy with other responsibilities and benefit from involvement with their peers in a safe and enriching setting that focuses on their abilities and preferences.

Many have memory challenges — a situation that is welcomed by many adult day centers, as programming often specializes in memory support.

Becoming aware that adult day centers existed was akin to finding water in the desert for Sara, who had been struggling with her husband's care when she learned one day about a nearby center.

"It was quite literally as if God had set an actual sign down in my path," Sara said. "He knew I was struggling and that Michael was struggling, too."

Sara's experience was typical; families that could likely benefit from adult day services often have never heard of them or have no idea what the services involve. Once someone finds out what an adult day center has to offer, they end up wondering why they hadn't taken advantage of services sooner, as services can provide so much help that improves not only the lives of participants, but of their families.

The knowledge that her husband was enjoying the center's programming while being treated with kindness and respect helped Sara focus on her job — and assisted her in letting go of the guilt she had initially felt about spending time away from him.

"The simple fact that he was safe was such a blessing to me, and it was icing on the cake that he actually enjoyed his time there and participated in so many activities," Sara said. "And I was able to hang on to my work, which was something that I needed for a sense of normalcy as well as income."

Adult day centers are usually private-pay but often have financial aid available through grants or other means. To learn more, search online for adult day centers in your area. ■

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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# HOW TO set a home-buying budget

If you're a first-time homebuyer browsing homes on the market, you might be wondering how to calculate your home-buying budget. Lenders take many factors into consideration when considering the size of mortgage you can afford, including your household income, the amount of your down payment, and your total debt.



Mindy Selix

## How your debt-to-income ratio determines your home-buying budget

While setting a home-buying budget, it is important to consider your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio: the amount of total debt you owe compared to your income. DTI ratio is one of the main factors mortgage lenders take into consideration. Generally, lenders prefer this total does not exceed 43%.

Calculate DTI by dividing your monthly mortgage payment by your monthly pre-tax gross income. Once you add any other debt you have, such as student loans or auto loans, you want to aim for around 43% or less.

You should look at your personal situation and determine what you feel comfortable paying for your mortgage each month. You could have expenses not considered by a lender or additional income that would enable you to have a higher home payment. Everyone's situation is different, and only you can determine how much you want to spend.



Yvonne Silvers

## How a down payment impacts your home-buying budget

The more money you put down on your new home, the less you need to finance; therefore, the higher your down payment, the more home you will be able to afford. A higher down payment may also mean lower monthly payments or a shorter repayment timeline.

If you want to buy a home but you do not have the funds for a down payment, a down payment is not always required to buy a home. Even if you do not have the funds for a down payment, it may make more financial sense for you to buy a home and begin building equity rather than continue to pay rent.

## Other factors to consider in your home-buying budget

If you're a first-time homebuyer, you should be aware of any fees that come with buying and closing on a home so there are no surprises to your budget. Keep in mind:

- Homeowners Association (HOA) fees, which may be paid monthly or annually, if they apply
- Home repairs upon move-in
- Private mortgage insurance (PMI), which is usually required if your down payment is less than 20%
- Homeowners insurance
- Appraisal, inspection(s), attorney, and other closing fees, all of which are common ■

Visit Education.BankersTrust.com for more information on homeownership, financial calculators and more. Information shared from [www.education.bankerstrust.com](http://www.education.bankerstrust.com). Information provided by Mindy Selix, VP Construction Lender, NMLS ID#: 571223, 515.222.2017 Office / 515.491.1050 Mobile, MSelix@BankersTrust.com and Yvonne Silvers, VP Mortgage Loan Officer, NMLS ID#: 571224, 515.222.2005 Office / 515.490.4221 Mobile, YSilvers@BankersTrust.com. Bankers Trust Company, NMLS ID#:440379, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny IA 50023.

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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/residentpoll](http://www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentpoll).

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
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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                                 | 44. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for Auto Service               |
| 19. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for a Field Trip               | 45. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman |
| 20. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Community Festival                   | 46. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man   |
| 21. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Teacher                              | 47. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Realtor (person)                     |
| 22. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Principal                            | 48. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Bar or Brewery                       |
| 23. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Church                               | 49. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for Guests to Stay             |
| 24. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Dessert               | 50. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Coffee Shop                          |
| 25. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Breakfast             | 51. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Florist                              |
| 26. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Lunch                 | 52. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Garden Center                        |
| 27. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Restaurant for Dinner                | 53. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. CPA (person)                         |
| 28. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Car Dealership                       | 54. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Insurance Agent (person)             |
| 29. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Place for Ice Cream                  | 55. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Pharmacy                             |
| 30. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Event                                | 56. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Grocery Store                        |
| 31. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Daycare                              | 57. Favorite Ankeny/N. Polk Co. Pizza                                |
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# PLANT-FRIENDLY paradise

Klobassas find sunny spot for plants and pets.

While looking for a spacious home closer to their friends, Tyler and Joshua Klobassa, along with dogs River and Ripley, found a place in the Prairie Trail – Heritage neighborhood in Ankeny. They moved from the Beavertdale area four years ago.

“We chose the neighborhood because we were looking for a new construction home that we could grow into — one that was close to schools and a short trip to all the amenities,” Josh says.

With easy access to the main highways, they’re close to their Des Moines commutes and volunteering opportunities in the metro.

They put their finishing touches on their home —inside and out.

“We were pretty lucky because we purchased our home when construction was almost finished. We loved the finishes that had already been chosen, but we’ve also been able to put our stamp on the house. We finished the basement, adding a home theater and dry bar, which is probably our favorite thing about the house and has come in handy this last year plus staying at home.”

The couple also added solar panels in 2019, saving on their monthly energy costs. The array supplies 85% of their energy usage throughout the year.

With the lot sizes, the dogs have room to run around in their fenced yard.

“We get so much natural light in this area, it’s been easy to grow succulents and a vegetable garden,” Josh says. “We gave our wedding guests succulents when we were married earlier this year, which were fun to grow on our own.”

The Prairie Trail – Heritage neighborhood is near Southview Middle School and Ankeny High School near Southwest Magazine Road and Southwest State Street. The neighborhood is active with a mix of families, singles, retirees and couples.

“Our neighborhood is pretty great,” Josh says. “Everyone is friendly and willing to help out any way they can.” ■



Tyler and Joshua Klobassa, pictured on their honeymoon trip to Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, have enjoyed putting the finishing touches on their home in Ankeny.



## RESOLUTIONS? Don't forget to add your HVAC

It's that time again... New Year's resolutions. Before making any big commitments or giving up your favorite guilty pleasure snack, we have four New Year's resolutions that aren't only easy to follow and implement now but will improve your everyday health and comfort.



Need a fresh start to your year? A great resolution is to change the filter on your HVAC on a regular basis. Forgetting to change your HVAC filter results in dust and debris build-up that makes your furnace work harder than it needs to. The same dust and debris are getting into the air you're breathing, too. This results in poor air quality, making it harder to breathe. If you suffer from allergies, asthma, or have pets, this can have a greater effect on you.

If you want to take indoor air quality to the next level, stick to a regular cleaning schedule. Vacuuming and cleaning your vents can go a long way in improving air quality. Taking the proper steps to maintain good air quality in your home will make you feel better and help your HVAC work more efficiently.

Is consistency at the top of your list this year? A smart thermostat is just what you need, and it will save you money, too. Smart thermostats have appealing features that can make quite the difference with just a simple click of a button. Are you a planner? You will fall in love with the scheduling feature that allows you to set the temperature of your house based on the time of day. Smart thermostats also allow you to see how much energy your HVAC system is using, tell you the pollen levels in your area and easily connect to your home's current virtual assistant, allowing you to command with your voice.

Are certain parts of your house cooler or warmer than others? Do you use certain rooms only once or twice a year? Zoning systems can bring that missing balance back into your home. A zoning system allows you to control the temperature of each room in your house. This is another great way to save money on heating and cooling bills.

We all think about being healthier in the new year and forget there's more to it than exercising and saying no to those leftover Christmas cookies. Just following one of the simple resolutions previously mentioned can start your year off on the right track. ■

Information provided by Kendel Richlen, Owner,  
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## FINANCE By Mark Ellison

# KEEP working toward lifetime goals



As the years go by, many of your short-term plans may change. But you'll always need to focus on three lifetime goals: planning for retirement, preparing for the unexpected and creating an estate plan. What steps should you take to meet these goals?

Let's start with retirement. Throughout your career, you'll need to put away money for a retirement that could last two or three decades. So, you'll want to contribute enough to your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan to provide for your income needs in retirement. And you'll want to fund these accounts with a reasonable percentage of growth-oriented investments, based on your comfort with risk and how long you have to invest.

But planning for retirement involves more than just a general commitment to save and invest. You'll also need to envision your retirement lifestyle. Will you travel extensively or stay close to home, pursuing your hobbies? Or are you thinking about relocating or spending part of the year in a vacation home? Your retirement aspirations will help determine how much money you'll ultimately need to live the lifestyle you desire.

And, finally, once you are retired, you'll have to ensure you don't outlive your resources. Consequently, as you begin taking money from your retirement accounts and investment portfolio, you'll want to establish a sustainable withdrawal rate — one that lets you enjoy your retirement while accommodating the inevitable ups and downs of the financial markets.

Now, let's move to the second lifetime goal: planning for the unexpected. Even if you budget carefully, you may not always be prepared for unplanned costs, such as a needed home improvement. If your cash flow can't meet these expenses, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments, possibly leading to taxes, penalties and fewer funds left for retirement. That's why it's a good idea to maintain an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money held in a liquid, low-risk account.

Of course, more serious unexpected events can also occur. If something were to happen to you, could your family members maintain their lifestyles? Could the mortgage still be paid? Could your children continue with their higher education plans? It's essential that you maintain sufficient life insurance to meet these needs.

The last lifetime goal — creating an estate plan — is meant to achieve multiple aims. For example, you may want to name someone to make financial and medical decisions on your behalf should you become incapacitated. If you have children, it is important to name a guardian should something happen to you. It's also necessary to keep your beneficiary designations up to date. And you may want to leave something to charitable groups.

To meet all these objectives, and possibly even more, you'll need to work with a legal professional to create the necessary documents and arrangements, such as a durable power of attorney, a will, a living trust and so on. You may also need the help of your financial advisor to review your beneficiaries and to balance your estate and legacy goals with your other financial objectives.

Life is full of twists and turns, and you may change your own course along the way. But no matter which roads you follow, you'll still need to achieve the three lifetime goals we've discussed — so keep working toward them. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information provided by Mark Ellison, 2505 SW White Birch Dr., Suite I, Ankeny, 515-965-2473.



# ASSETS and applying for Medicaid

The expense of nursing home care can rapidly deplete the lifetime savings of couples. There is a common misconception that a couple must use up all of their available assets for care before one spouse becomes eligible for Medicaid. The Department of Human Services has a five-year look-back period for transfers, so you can't just give away your money. It is important to know what assets are exempt, what assets you can retain, and how to avoid spending more than you have to.



To qualify for Medicaid, the applicant must have less than \$2,000 in countable resources. Certain assets are exempt. This includes the home, one vehicle, and pre-paid funeral or burial plans for both spouses. Exempt items

also include personal possessions, such as clothing, furniture, and other household items.

For married couples, Medicaid also has safeguards in place to ensure that the spouse of a Medicaid-eligible person can retain assets. When a couple applies for Medicaid, an assessment of the couple's non-exempt resources, regardless of ownership, is made. The spouse of the Medicaid applicant can retain an amount between \$25,728 to \$128,640. This is called the "Protected Resource Amount." The non-Medicaid spouse gets to keep these assets.

The remaining assets are attributed to the Medicaid applicant and must be spent down to \$2,000. One option for spending the money is to pay off debt, including a home mortgage. Not only is this an appropriate way to spend the applicant's resource, it is a benefit to the spouse remaining at home, as there is no longer a monthly mortgage payment. Under certain circumstances, the applicant's share can be

placed in a specially drafted trust prepared by an attorney and approved by the Department of Human Services.

Once an individual is approved for Medicaid, the remaining spouse's funds are not subject to any Medicaid payback. The money can be spent, saved or invested. This is why it is critical to do a complete financial analysis before applying for Medicaid.

Applying for Medicaid involves gathering and submitting complete and current financial information. Once the application is filed, navigating the rules and regulations on spending down assets can be overwhelming. An experienced attorney can help you determine what assets you can keep. ■

Information provided by Gail Barnett, attorney for Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, [www.ARPCLaw.com](http://www.ARPCLaw.com).

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## IMPORTANCE of cervical health

In 2021, about 14,000 women in the United States were diagnosed with cervical cancer, and about 4,000 women died of the disease. Cervical cancer is almost always caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), and this cancer can be largely prevented with screening and vaccination.



**Q: What is cervical cancer?**

**A:** Cervical cancer is a malignant tumor of the cervix, which is the lowest part of the uterus. Sometimes, precancerous changes to the cervix (dysplasia) are diagnosed and steps can be taken to prevent cancer from developing.

**Q: Can cervical cancer be prevented?**

**A:** Screening is a key component in the effort to eliminate cervical cancer. Pap testing involves collecting cells from the cervix for examination under a microscope to look for abnormal cells. Since most of these abnormal changes are caused by HPV, screening also includes testing for the presence of the virus. Regular Pap and HPV testing improves detection of precancerous changes to the cervix.

HPV vaccination is recommended for everyone around age 11 or 12. It can be given later if necessary, up to the age of 45. Since most cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV, vaccines that protect against this virus can dramatically reduce the number of cases per year.

**Q: What are the signs or symptoms of cervical cancer?**

**A:** Cervical cancer in its early stages generally produces no signs or symptoms. However, with more advanced cervical cancer, a woman may experience:

- Bleeding during intercourse
- Vaginal bleeding between periods or after menopause
- Watery, bloody vaginal discharge that may be heavy and have a foul odor

Make an appointment with your health care provider if you have any signs or symptoms that worry you. If you're thought to have cervical cancer, you may be referred to a gynecologic oncologist, a doctor who specializes in treating cancers that affect the female reproductive system. ■

Information provided by Dr. Abby Gonik, gynecologic oncologist with MercyOne Des Moines Surgical Group, 411 Laurel St., Suite 2100, Des Moines, 515-247-3266, [MercyOne.org/desmoines](http://MercyOne.org/desmoines)

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# WELCOMING new team members

Please help us welcome some new faces to the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library. Each of these team members will be working at one of the three service desks (circulation, children or reference).

## Robyn Copeland

"I have 20 years of librarianship collectively: 11 years as a circulation supervisor at Simpson College, Dunn Library; five years as a circulation coordinator/librarian at University of Colorado's Law Library in Boulder; three years as circulation manager/librarian at Colorado School of Mines in Golden. Fast forward to today. I am coming upon my one-year anniversary with the Des Moines Public Library system as a professional substitute librarian working at all six branches. Library service is the best vocation."



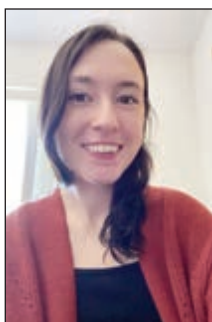
## Cassie Frericks

"My name is Cassie Frericks. I am so excited to begin working with you at the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library. I am 32 years old, wife to Jacob, and a mother of a 3-year-old named Judah and 6-month-old named Nora. I was born and raised in Galesburg, Illinois, and graduated with an elementary education degree at Knox College. I have many years of experience as a teacher, but also working in libraries, including the Heartland AEA library. In my free time, I like to spend time with my family, watch movies, read books, dance with my toddler, snuggle with my baby, and go for walks."



## Hannah Jensen

"I have a bachelor's degree in English from Iowa State University and am currently in the library and information science master's program through the University of Iowa. In my free time, you can find me reading or doing various puzzle books. I live in Ankeny with my boyfriend, Jesse, and our two cats, Luna and Nala. One of the best books I read during 2021 was "Six of Crows" by Leigh Bardugo, and I highly recommend this duology."



## Erik Kruse

"Hello. My name is Erik. I worked as a student library assistant while attending Cornell, which I enjoyed a lot. I look forward to working in a library again, this time at Kirkendall. During the more hospitable months, I enjoy biking and spending time outside with my dog."



## Alyssa Winchell

"My name is Alyssa. I recently moved to Ankeny to finish my degree in secondary education at DMACC. I enjoy vintage fashion/cosmetics, music, video games, and cuddling with my cats. I also love to read adult fantasy, sci-fi, and children's literature. I'm delighted to be a part of the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library and can't wait to interact with everyone."



The Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library and its team members continue to be excited to be here and to serve our community. You can check out our many programs, resources and services using our website ([www.ankenyiowa.gov/library](http://www.ankenyiowa.gov/library)) or by following us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/ankenylibrary](http://www.facebook.com/ankenylibrary)). Please help us welcome our new team members. ■



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## HEALTH

By Dr. Laura Myers

### PRP offers option to treat hair loss

Hair loss is a common concern addressed in my dermatology office. While there are many causes, the most frequent diagnosis is androgenic (hormonal) hair loss, typically referred to as "male" or "female" pattern baldness. For many who suffer with it, the topic is emotional and has a significant impact on self-esteem.



Fortunately, there is treatment. Most people will benefit from use of topical therapy such as over-the-counter minoxidil used alone or in combination with prescription oral medications. In the past, when these methods didn't work or couldn't be used safely, dermatologists were out of options. No longer is that the case.

Recently, there has been exciting momentum for a new therapy using platelet-rich plasma (PRP). Your PRP contains natural growth factors that stimulate blood supply to the follicle, increases hair-shaft size, triggers and maintains the growth phase of the hair, and decreases hair loss. PRP delivered through small injections into the scalp is an effective and natural way to stimulate hair growth.

If you are affected by hair loss and want to explore options, see a board-certified dermatologist to ensure a proper diagnosis and to discuss a treatment plan that is right for you. ■

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

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## HEALTH

By Janet Rieckhoff

### NEW YEAR, new affirmations

With the new year come resolutions — quickly followed by guilt for breaking the resolution. Guilt and negative self-talk can go together in a vicious cycle. Maybe the best New Year's resolution is not to make one, but if you are going to, make two instead. The second being not to allow feelings of guilt or negative self-talk sneak into your mind. If it does get in your brain, then challenge those thoughts and feelings.



To challenge negative thoughts and guilty feelings, think back into your life and ask, "Have I experienced guilt or negative thoughts before about a similar experience?" For instance, when former resolutions were broken, did guilt or negative talk help or come true? Chances are the answer is no, so challenge the negative guilty thoughts with the fact they are unhelpful. Think of yourself as a prosecutor collecting all the facts and arguments against the negative guilty thought to prosecute it.

Another way to challenge negative guilty thoughts is listening to or reading affirmations. Affirmations are often the opposite of negative thoughts. Create affirmations using the opposite. Such as, "I can't do it" becomes "I might be able to do it because I have not tried." Look for affirmation apps and books. Write favorites on sticky notes to put around the house where you will see them. ■

Information provided by Janet Rieckhoff, LMHC of SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd., 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, IA 50322, 515-528-8135, [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com), [rieckhoff@sstherapyandconsulting.com](mailto:rieckhoff@sstherapyandconsulting.com).



## CHAMBER welcomes new president/CEO

After a thorough and extensive nationwide search, the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce has hired Melisa Cox as its new president/ CEO.

"I am looking forward to joining the talented team, meeting the members of the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce and finding out what they are most passionate about and how the Chamber can help achieve their goals," said Cox. "I am most excited about working to develop a strategy to assist in the workforce development crisis that our Chamber members are living in right now."

Cox lives in Johnston with her husband, Erick, two daughters, Sophia and Gabby, and puppy, Tyson Gary. She is originally from Decorah and attended Iowa State University. (She still has an extreme passion for the Cyclones even though she married a Hawkeye).

She is familiar with the non-profit and association world. Her most recent position was with the Home Builders Association of Greater Des Moines where she excelled in raising money, coordinating events and building lasting relationships with their members. She says she "truly loves" the non-profit sector and found a passion for workforce development when she and two colleagues founded Iowa Skilled Trades, which brings different industries together while working to achieve the same goal of filling the gap in the current workforce crisis.

In her free time, she enjoys watching her girls play basketball, cheering on her Cyclones and spending time with her nieces, nephew and friends.

Her hiring follows the retirement of Julie Todtz who served as the president/CEO for the last 19 years, bringing the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce from 300 members to now boasting more than 900 Ankeny area member businesses.

"I've enjoyed my almost two decades at the Ankeny Chamber and couldn't be more proud of the work our team did for our members and the community. I'm confident the Chamber is in good hands with Ms. Cox and am excited to see the new initiatives she and the team put forth," said Todtz.

"This is a time of celebrating the two decades of success under Julie Todtz's leadership and rallying around Melisa Cox as the next president/ CEO," said Heather Lilienthal, 2021 chamber chairwoman. "Melisa knows the region and has been a solid leader with a well-respected membership association. She's ready to take our Chamber, staff and membership to the next level. With so much new leadership in Ankeny at this time, it's exciting to consider the possibilities and opportunities. Our membership is in good hands."

"Melisa understands membership, the hard work and dedication it takes to succeed, and the value of a talented team," said Julie Mangels, Chair 2022. "She will bring a new perspective and limitless possibilities to the Chamber. We are lucky to secure such a passionate individual." ■



Melisa Cox

## NEW YEAR'S resolutions

How many of us "resolve" to make changes in our lives on Jan. 1, only to have them go by the wayside within days or weeks? Carrying out those resolutions is not always easy. In fact, in many cases, it is just plain hard. You have the best of intentions, but then life happens and those intentions are put aside.

One resolution which can easily be kept is making pre-arrangements for your future funeral/burial needs.

The loss of a loved one is devastating for the family — even if the passing is expected. Then, there are so many details to care for. I know of at least 67 things that must be done within hours/days of a death.

My resolution this year, through this monthly article, is to help you navigate through some of those 67 things. Many of them may be done in advance, giving family members time to grieve their loved one's passing instead of scrambling to care for a myriad of details.

The first and most basic thing to determine is whether you want a casket burial or cremation. That decision will be the foundation for the other decisions.

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.

## AUTO accidents and whiplash injury

Early treatment prevents long-term damage.

The term “whiplash” was created in 1928 to define a neck injury caused by the sudden movement of the head backward, forward or sideways, resulting in damage to the muscles, joints, ligaments and other connective tissues in the neck and upper back. Whiplash injuries can manifest in a wide variety of ways, including neck pain, headaches, fatigue, upper back and shoulder pain, cognitive changes and low-back pain.

If you have been involved in a car accident, whiplash injuries need to be taken very seriously. Because symptoms of a whiplash injury can take weeks or months to manifest, it is easy to be fooled into thinking that you are not as injured as you really are. Too often, people don't seek treatment following a car accident because they don't feel hurt. In fact, research shows that the severity of injuries sustained in a car accident is not directly proportional to the speed of impact. In other words, people can sustain serious injuries even in low-speed collisions.

Numerous factors contribute to the overall whiplash trauma, such as the direction of the impact and the speed of the vehicles, as well as the gender, age and physical condition of the person involved. It is impossible to predict the pattern of symptoms each individual will suffer. Unfortunately, by the time more serious complications develop, some of the damage from the injury may have become permanent. Numerous studies have shown that, years after whiplash victims settle their insurance claims, roughly half of them state they still suffer with injury-related symptoms.

### Chiropractic care aids in recovery from whiplash

Whiplash is a unique condition that requires the expertise of a skilled health professional, specially trained to treat this type of injury. With proper care, many mild whiplash injuries heal within six to nine months. The single most effective treatment for minimizing the long-term impact of whiplash injuries is a combination of chiropractic care, rehabilitation of the soft tissues, and stretching at home. Chiropractic care utilizes manual manipulation of the spine to restore the normal movement and function of the spinal joints.

In some severe cases of whiplash, it may be necessary to have some medical care as part of the overall treatment plan. The most common medical treatments include anti-inflammatory medications, muscle relaxants, trigger-point injections, and, in some cases, epidural spinal injections. These therapies should only be used when necessary for short-term pain relief and should not be the treatment focus. After all, a drug cannot restore normal joint movement and stimulate healthy muscle repair.

If you or someone you know is suffering from a whiplash injury and have not found the relief for which you are looking, call your chiropractor. ■

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](http://www.renzechiro.com) or call the office at 515-965-3844.





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## BOOST the immune system with exercise

Exercise is known to provide numerous health benefits, but did you know this includes supporting and even strengthening your immune system? People who are physically active at a moderate intensity, for approximately 150 minutes per week, have a 33% lower risk of all-cause mortality than those who are physically inactive. Very few lifestyle choices have this large of an impact on your health.



Health benefits of regular exercise include: reduces risk of heart attack; manages weight; lowers blood cholesterol; lowers risk of Type 2 Diabetes and some cancers; lowers risks of falling, promotes better sleep and moods, and strengthens the immune system.

How does exercise help our immune system? The immune system is a collection of millions of white blood cells made within the bone marrow that protect us from environmental threats like bacteria, viruses and fungi. Exercise can increase the production of different types of white blood cells, one of which is known as macrophages. Macrophages engulf and help destroy harmful bacteria and viruses. They also secrete signals that help activate other cell types to fight against infections. Physical activity can impact both the quality and quantity of your life. Find what you love to do to stay active and reap the benefits. ■

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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## MEET Jacob Thiele

Teacher and coach wants students to enjoy learning.

Jacob Thiele, who began his teaching career as a student teacher on Ankeny's north side, now serves as one of Southview Middle School's eighth-grade social studies teachers.

"Middle school students have so much energy, and that makes the job so fun. Eighth graders are making a big jump every year from the 6/7 building to Southview, and it's a lot of fun to see them grow as students and people from August to May."

Thiele makes it his mission to build positive relationships in the classroom with students and says he enjoys seeing another side of them when they start participating in something they are passionate about, whether that be music, athletics or other extracurricular activities.

Challenges arise, but Thiele says that is why he and his colleagues do what they do. You can be the most prepared for each day, but every day something will surprise you in a middle school. It's all about being flexible and making the most out of every situation. Learning from mistakes is how you grow.

"There are so many rewards from this job. I have some of the best coworkers anyone could ask for. It is very rewarding to see what my former students are now doing at the high school and seeing them out in the community working in so many different types of jobs. To know that I played a very small part in where they are today is extremely rewarding."

Thiele says he hopes students leaving his class have learned a bit about U.S. history, but what he really wants is for kids to have an overall love for learning.

"I know social studies won't be for every kid, and that's perfectly fine. I want kids to enjoy coming to school and feel safe and supported while they are at school."

Thiele spends his time outside the classroom coaching eighth grade boys basketball for Northview. That makes for a friendly rivalry every year when he coaches against some of his Southview students. He also likes to travel, spend time with his siblings and niece and nephew, and cheer on the Cyclones.

"I've been extremely fortunate and grateful to be in Ankeny. My entire experience from student teaching to now, six years later, has been full of amazing coworkers, bosses and students, and I really do feel lucky to be in such a great district." ■



Jacob Thiele completed his student teaching in Ankeny and has been working for the district the last six years.



# IT'S A new year

Who doesn't love new? There is just something about it that puts a smile on your face. Think about it... a new baby, that new-car smell, a new opportunity or new technology that makes your life a little easier. We get excited about the smiles, the miles and the journey.



Melisa Cox (CEO), and Allison Bollinger (director of events) are new to the Chamber. They will bring new ideas, new visions and new opportunities for the business community. I feel like I just opened that huge present from under the tree that was filled with renewed energy, new inspiration and a box of chocolates.


As I walk through the new year trying to lose the weight from all the sweets I just ate, I invite you to join me on a magical tour of networking, education and outdoor fun. If you love coffee, or just some good morning vibes, check out Latte and Leads. Or, if after-work camaraderie suits you better, the Business After Hours is where you will want to be. Stay up to date and learn great ways to increase sales, manage your business, become a better leader or hear what other companies are doing with the Morning Hustle and Business Illumination Series. And, if being outside is your thing, we welcome back the Spring Fling and Fall Ball golf outings. And (drumroll please), Summerfest (sponsored by Chamber member Karl Chevrolet) will return in July. Check out our website — [ankeney.org](http://ankeney.org) — for dates, times and more details on these, and all the other great events, happening in this new year.

New adventures are on the horizon. Embrace change and create new opportunities for your business. The Chamber can help take your business to new heights and is here to support and provide the resources needed to make it all happen. To quote Henry Ford, "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." I say, let's get moving.

For 2022, let's all embrace our new. Open your present and discover what is inside. What new opportunities are just waiting to jump out? What new roads can be walked? Take a bite out of the chocolate and enjoy a sweet new adventure. There has never been a better time to join the Chamber or renew your membership.

Happy new year. Come discover what the Chamber can do for you. ■

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




## ANNUAL DINNER

**2/24/2022**

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**ANKENY BUSINESS JOURNAL**  
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### ANKENY BUSINESS JOURNAL

The Voice of the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce

**Meet The New Chamber Team**  
New Chair, President/ CEO & Dir. of Events

**Chamber Spotlight:**  
Trent Murphy

**New Ankeny HQ for Kreg Tool**

**January Member Deals**

January 2022  
VOL. 41 ISSUE 1



## OUT & ABOUT



Jan and Bill Waggoner at the grand opening celebration of the Albaugh Family Senior Community Center on Dec. 20.



Joe Ruddy and Gary Schmidt at the grand opening celebration of the Albaugh Family Senior Community Center on Dec. 20.



Angie LaCroix and Christine Gray at the grand opening celebration of the Albaugh Family Senior Community Center on Dec. 20.



Jill Downes and Max Chedester at Lattes & Leads at Purple Poppy Boutique on Dec. 21.



Curtis Sears and William Navarro at Lattes & Leads at Purple Poppy Boutique on Dec. 21.



Tike Ballard and Judy Hilt at the grand opening celebration of the Albaugh Family Senior Community Center on Dec. 20.



Alyssa Doolittle and Nikki Worthington at Lattes & Leads at Purple Poppy Boutique on Dec. 21.



Sam Cook and Josh Klyn at Lattes & Leads at Purple Poppy Boutique on Dec. 21.



Lea Fagervik and Paula Bierle at Lattes & Leads at Purple Poppy Boutique on Dec. 21.



Julie Mangels and Dini Anderlik at the retirement celebration for Ankeny Area Chamber President Julie Todtz on Dec. 16.



Tim and Antoinette Prohaska at the retirement celebration for Ankeny Area Chamber President Julie Todtz on Dec. 16.



Randy Pelham and Allison Bollinger at the retirement celebration for Ankeny Area Chamber President Julie Todtz on Dec. 16.



# RETIREMENT celebration

A retirement celebration for  
Ankeny Area Chamber President  
Julie Todtz was held on Dec. 16.



Shannon Cooper and Ryan Cooper



Jim Gocke and Rick Herman



Drew Denning, Jane Denning and Julie Todtz



Chris Wehrman, Trent Murphy and Eric Mangels



Don Zuck and Kris Oakie



Ann Wright and Brent Roske



Terry Peter and Kim Schaaf



Jamie Anderson, Michelle Starkenburg and Patti Hood



Wayne Christ, Marvis Landon and Connie Blodgett

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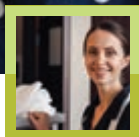
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