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FEBRUARY 2022

Living

Budding Romance

Couples share how their relationships bloomed

Meet Molly Sorenson

EDUCATION

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

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FEATURE

Kimberlee and Mitchell Williams first met by chance, but their second meeting kicked off a romance.
Photo by Todd Rullestad

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.

FEATURE

Young love

Kimberlee and Mitchell Williams recently celebrated one year of marriage and their first year in their home in Grimes.

They met purely by chance, but the meeting was memorable.

"We met on my 24th birthday in Wisconsin when he was my server at dinner, and I made the first move by telling him he had a nice face," says Kimberlee. "He remembered me when he saw me at the bar I worked at three months later. He said, 'You're that girl who told me I have a nice face!' I replied, 'Sounds like something I'd say.'"

A mutual friend gave him Kimberlee's number, and their relationship quickly took off. Both were ready for something serious, and they clicked. They moved in together within a few months of dating. After two years, they moved to Iowa and have been here since 2017.

While Kimberlee says their personalities are quite different, it's a plus for their relationship.

"We balance each other out. I am very outgoing and bubbly, and he is very chill and



Kimberlee and Mitchell Williams were married with cornfields in the background and now live in Grimes.

quiet. We bring out the best in each other," she says.

When they began dating, they found they enjoyed many of the same activities, such as attending sporting events and concerts. Both are big Kansas City Chiefs fans. They also like to work out together and call the gym their

"happy place."

"We also love to travel when we can. Exploring new places together helps keep things fun. We also both love to eat so always cook together. Making time to unplug and do things together keeps our relationship strong," she says.

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Zach and Lynsey Manternach met in high school when they were 15 and 16 years old. No one thought they'd still be together 20 years later, Lynsey says.

"Zach's family moved to my hometown, and, after a few months of being around each other, I asked him out," she says. "We graduated high school in different years, but, even as we navigated the next steps in our lives, we stayed really close and just made each new situation an adventure."

Living in a small town, options for things to do were limited. They both enjoyed walking trails and exploring outside. They also shared an interest in movies, so often saw new releases together. They quickly realized they had a similar sense of humor and held similar views, so it was easy to connect and build their relationship.

The pair ultimately attended the University of Northern Iowa together.

"I think we knew for sure after a couple years it was going to last but wanted to graduate first before we got married," Lynsey says.

Zach proposed on New Year's Eve in 2006. Lynsey graduated in December of 2007 and Zach in May 2008. They exchanged vows the week after his graduation. It was a fun time navigating college, planning a wedding, and preparing for what came next, Lynsey says.

"It's been a fun journey because — especially those early years and still even now — you're at an age where you're still figuring yourself out and finding new things you like. So, while we both were growing individually, we also were growing as a couple — finding new things we love to do together but also accepting that we each have our own interests and being supportive of that."

As happens to many couples, the two faced challenges over the years.

Lynsey was diagnosed with cancer in 2014. Zach was by her side, and she says she couldn't have gotten through it without him, adding that such a stressful and emotional time can be hard on a couple. However, it brought them closer together, she says.

Now, they have two kids, ages 8 and 9, so staying connected as busy parents has become a challenge. Lynsey jokes that their favorite activity is grocery shopping without the kids.

"Just kidding, but really I think most couples our age can relate to that. We still love going to the movies together and attending



Zach and Lynsey Manternach have been together 20 years. Challenges, such as Lynsey having cancer, have brought them closer together, she says.

concerts."

Ultimately, they agree they have a solid foundation of trust and understanding.

"It's never been something we had to work very hard at because we truly just fit so well together. We knew a long time ago that it wasn't always going to be sunshine and rainbows. We've dealt with some tough situations in our 20 years together. It's amazing to think of all the major milestones we've had together and can't imagine life with anyone else."

A lifetime of love

Arden and Freda Rix have been married for 69 years. The pair lived in two small towns on the Iowa/Minnesota border growing up, and, in those days, Saturday night dances were popular for young people. The couple met at one of those dances.

"We were 16 or 17 when we met. We didn't start dating right away after the first dance, but after another Saturday night dance, I took her home. That was the thing then — to meet the



Arden and Freda Rix met at a dance, which was common in the days of their youth. Their different religions almost derailed their relationship, but they came to a creative compromise and have been married for 69 years.

parents. Then we started going together off and on. Sometimes we'd go together for a while and then break up for a while and get back together again."

The time they spent courting involved going to those dances and spending time with each other's families. When it came time to talk marriage though, there was a big problem.

"I'm a Catholic, and she's Lutheran. And when we started talking about getting married, she wasn't going to be Catholic, and I wasn't going to be Lutheran."

"I told her, if we did get married, I'd have the kids go to the Catholic Church, and she said, 'Oh no no no' and we broke up some more. Then we got back together again. Finally I said, 'Here's what we can do: If the Lord wants the kids to be Catholic, He will give us all boys, and if He wants them to be Lutheran, he will give us all girls.'"

So they got married. And what happened? They had seven kids — some boys and some girls — and they each took them to church. The boys went with Arden and the girls with Freda.

Arden planned to farm, but that plan went awry when he entered military service and fought in the Korean War. When he returned home, the couple moved to Waterloo so he could attend the University of Northern Iowa on the GI bill. They raised their family in Adel before retiring to Grimes. They now have 25 grandkids, too.

Arden says there's a secret to their long and happy marriage.

"I usually do what she tells me," he laughs. "She's a wonderful woman and did a great job raising the kids, and we have one of the nicest families you ever saw. The children may be thousands of miles apart, but they text each other every day. We are all very close." ■

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FEBRUARY

- 2** 9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
7-8:15pm Religious Education Classes (5-8th grade)
7pm Greeter/Sacristan Training (Church)
- 6** 11-12:15pm Religious Education Classes (K-4th grade)
Training for Lector's after 10am Mass
5pm RCIA
6-8pm - 2nd year Confirmation Classes
6pm Pastoral Council Meeting
6pm Food Prep for Connection Cafe (kitchen)
- 8** 9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
12 noon Serve Connection Cafe downtown
7-8:15pm Religious Education Classes (5-8th grade)
7-8:15pm Youth Group
7pm Lector Training (Church)
- 12/13** Food Pantry Weekend drop donations in baskets provided
10am RCIA
11-12:15pm Religious Education Classes (K-4th grade)
6pm Greeter/Sacristan Training (Church)
6pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
7pm Social Justice Meeting
- 15** 9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
7-8:15pm Religious Education Classes (5-8th grade)
- 16** 6pm K of C Rosary, Mass, Dinner & Meeting
- 17** 8:30-10 Assumption Book Club "Peace Like a River"
- 19** 10 RCIA
11-12:15pm Religious Education Classes (K-4th grade)
6-8pm - 1st year Confirmation Classes
5-8pm - AFF Presenter-John Huynh Gender Identity (Church)
- 21** 8:30am AFF Philippians Bible Study
- 22** 6pm Finance Council Meeting
- 23** 9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
7-8:15pm Religious Education Classes (5-8th grade)
7-8:15pm Youth Group
5pm AFF Philippians Bible Study
7pm AFF Philippians Bible Study
11-12:30pm Family Catechesis
NO RCIA
- 27** NO AFF Bible Study this week
- 28**

MARCH

- 1** 6:30pm AFF Meeting
- 2** Ash Wednesday 8am Mass & 7pm Mass
9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
NO Religious Ed classes
5pm Stations of the Cross
5:30pm Mass during Lent on Friday's Fish Fry's start 5:30-7pm Drive-thru and dine-in
- 4** 10 RCIA (Rite of Sending/Rite of Election)
4pm @ St. Francis
11-12:15pm Religious Education Classes (K-4th grade)
6-8pm - 2nd year Confirmation Classes(start w/Mass @ 5pm)
6pm AFF-Happy Hours "The Veil Removed"
- 7** 8:30am AFF Philippians Bible Study
- 8** 6pm Pastoral Council Meeting
6pm Food Prep for Connection Cafe (kitchen)
- 9** 9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
7-8:15pm Religious Education Classes (5-8th grade)
7-8:15pm Youth Group
5pm AFF Philippians Bible Study
7pm AFF Philippians Bible Study
5pm Stations of the Cross
5:30pm Mass during Lent on Friday's 5:30-7pm Fish Fry drive-thru or dine-in
- 11** Daylight Savings Begins!!
Spring Break - NO Religious Education Classes
5pm RCIA
Food Pantry weekend
6pm AFF-Happy Hours "The Veil Removed"
- 13** NO AFF Bible Study
- 14** 6pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Church)
7pm Social Justice Meeting
- 15** 9am-11am PickleBall in the gym (\$2 to play)
NO Religious Education Classes
- 16**

During Lent our Mass times on Friday are 5:30pm there will be NO 8am Mass during Lent



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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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EDUCATION

By Hayden Wagner

MEET Elizabeth Reels

ELA teacher at Oak View

Hayden, daughter of Chris and Darlene Wagner, is an eighth grader at Oak View. She wrote this article as a Talented and Gifted enrichment opportunity. Karene Rosenbury is her teacher.

Elizabeth Reels is a seventh-grade reading and English teacher at Oak View in Dallas Center-Grimes. Her favorite thing about being a teacher is getting to make a difference in students' lives. Mrs. Reels also enjoys teaching new and interesting topics to students.

At the beginning of her career, Mrs. Reels was inspired by her own teachers to dive into the education system. To start, she went to Beloit College in Wisconsin and graduated with a degree in government, a master's degree in teaching, and an endorsement in reading. Soon after, Mrs. Reels started teaching at her first school in fifth grade in Houston, Texas.

In 2010, Mrs. Reels moved her teaching career to the Dallas Center-Grimes district by teaching seventh grade reading and English. Then, this school year, she was transferred to the new Oak View building. Throughout this transition, she has been thankful for all the teachers' collaboration and enjoys the extra space along with the change in scenery.

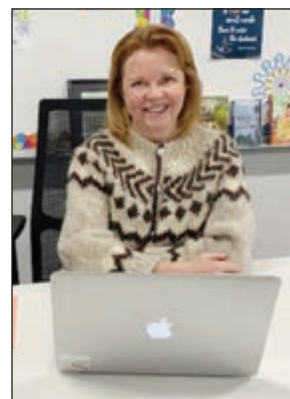
In addition to her current subjects, Reels also taught social studies, which led to one of her most favorite units, the World Peace Day project. The aim of this assignment is to encourage students to inform and desire to change major world issues through research. These research projects can focus on anything from pollution and deforestation to world hunger and human rights violations. Mrs. Reels says she likes these projects because she gets to see her students be inspired and learn more about the positives and negatives of our modern world.

Another major activity she is involved in is the Battle of the Books competition. This is a competition where teams of four or five students read 20 books and then answer questions in a quiz competition against other teams around the region. Mrs. Reels first got involved with Battle of the Books when her niece participated and a relative prompted her to help out with the teams in her district. During her first year of involvement, her experience was very memorable as the students were particularly determined and managed to win the event. Currently, Mrs. Reels is in her fourth year of Battle of the Books, and she is preparing four teams of students for the competition on March 26. It is her job to ensure that the teams are prepared by providing supplies, study times, and information to students.

Mrs. Reels is a devoted teacher in the Dallas Center-Grimes district who is dedicated to her students and their education. She works hard every day to inspire her classes and give them the guidance they need to succeed.

According to Mrs. Reels, "Teachers made a huge difference in my life, and I want to be able to help students find their strengths."

Elizabeth Reels will continue to help her students find their strengths by supporting them through many assignments and preparing them for a variety of competitions. ■



Besides her teaching duties, Elizabeth Reels is also involved in preparing students for Battle of the Books.

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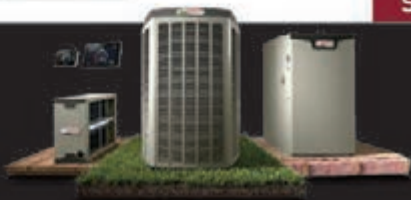
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Are you thinking of replacing your old furnace? There are many options to consider, and searching for the right one can be a tedious and confusing task, especially if you're a first-time buyer. To help you get started, there are a few important factors 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, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.



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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. Sources: Worrachate, Anchalee (2022, January 4) Bitcoin Could Surpass \$100,000 if it Replaces Gold as a Store of Value, Says Goldman Sachs. Fortune.com

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4 BASIC principles of financial literacy

It is widely recognized that financial literacy impacts a person's overall economic success. In fact, studies have shown individuals who are exposed to economic and financial education at an early age are more likely to exhibit positive financial behaviors when they are older (e.g., maintaining high credit scores, accumulating wealth). As a result, many states are requiring high school students to take a course in either economics or personal finance before they graduate.¹



Whether you are just starting out and beginning to manage your own finances or simply want to stay on top of your current financial situation, it's important to keep these basic principles of financial literacy in mind.

1. Create a budget and stick with it.

A budget helps you stay on track with your finances. Start by identifying your income and expenses. Next, compare the two totals to make sure you are spending less than you earn. If you find that your expenses outweigh your income, you'll need to make some adjustments.

2. Set financial goals.

Setting goals is an important part of life, particularly when it comes to your finances. Short-term goals may include saving for a new car or building an emergency fund, while long-term goals may take more time to achieve (e.g., saving for a child's education or retirement). Over time, your personal or financial circumstances will most likely change, so you'll need to be ready to make adjustments and reprioritize your goals as needed.

3. Manage your credit and debt.

Reducing debt is part of any healthy financial plan. Whether you have student loan debt, an auto loan, and/or a credit-card balance, you'll want to pay it down as quickly as possible. Start by tracking your balances while being mindful of interest rates and hidden fees. Try to pay off any high-interest debt first.

4. Protect yourself.

When it comes to insurance coverage, are you adequately protected? Having the appropriate amount of insurance to help protect yourself against possible losses is an important part of any financial strategy. Your insurance needs will depend on your individual circumstances and can change over time. As a result, you'll want to make sure your coverage properly aligns with your income and family/personal circumstances.* ■

1. 2020 Survey of the States, Council for Economic Education. For more information, please contact Wade Lawrence or Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. *Insurance: Not a deposit. Not FDIC insured. Not insured by any federal government agency. Not guaranteed by the bank. May go down in value. Trust & Investments: Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal.

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 Grimes, IA 50111
515.986.4009

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

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

Lunch and Learn

Wednesday, March 9,
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Grimes Community Complex Room
402, 410 S.E. Main St.

Grimes Chamber and Economic Development invites the public to its monthly Lunch and Learn. Cost is \$15 for GCED members, \$20 for non-members and walk-ins, and \$7.50 for attending but no lunch.

The Expo

March 29, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Meadows Gym

The 12th year of the Business Expo takes place on March 29. Come join Grimes Chamber & Economic Development for a walk around the Meadows Gym and check out some local businesses and what they have to offer. The event is free, and kids are welcome.

DMACC West's ciLive!

March 9-10, virtual and open to the public

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

Register for Des Moines Art Center camps

Camps run June 6-Aug. 12
Des Moines Art Center,
5700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Register now for summer camp at the Art Center. The themed classes are anything but ordinary. From Art Around the World to Under the Sea, there is a creative outlet for all interests. Week-long summer art camps run from June 6 through Aug. 12 and are available for youth ages 5-15. Extended care and supervised lunch can be purchased for an additional fee. Some scholarships are available. For more information and to register, visit 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>.

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.



Concerts at Wells Fargo Arena

730 Third St. in Des Moines
www.iowaeventscenter.com

- Saturday, March 26: "Elton John's Farewell Yellow Brick Road" at 8 p.m.
- Monday, March 28: "KORN TOUR" with special guests Chevelle and Code Orange at 6:30 p.m.



Iowa Wild Hockey home games

Various February 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. Home games are:

- Tuesday, Feb. 22 vs. Texas Stars, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 24 vs. Texas Stars, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Feb. 25 vs. Rockford Icehogs, 7 p.m.

Iowa Wolves home games

February
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. For more information, visit iowa.gleague.nba.com.

- Wednesday, Feb. 23 vs. Salt Lake City Stars/Jazz, 7 p.m.



Des Moines Buccaneers

February
Buccaneer Arena in Urbandale,
7201 Hickman Road

For more information, visit www.bucshockey.com. February home events are:

- Friday, Feb. 25 vs. Sioux City Musketeers, 7 p.m.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

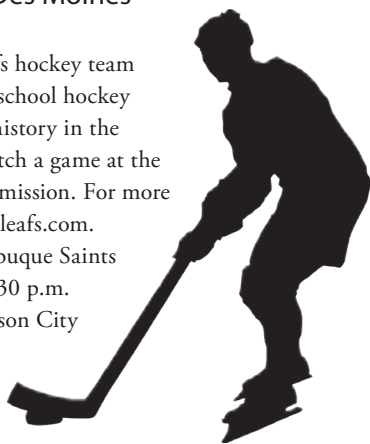
To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

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.hoytsherman.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'

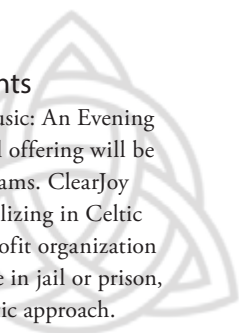
March 5-6
Des Moines Civic Center,
221 Walnut St., Des Moines

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.



THE FAIR Debt Collection Practices Act

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



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

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

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

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GRIMES Public Library news

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 18 at 1 p.m. - Sweet Creatures: Join us at the Library as we make some sweet creatures good enough to eat. This program is geared toward our school-aged patrons (5 and older).

Feb. 19, 9-11 a.m. - Tail Waggin' Readers: Strengthen your reading skills. Fifteen minutes of reading aloud and five minutes of play with our therapy dog, Liesl. This event will take place inside and is limited to one child at a time. Call the library to reserve your spot.

Feb. 21 at 3:45 p.m. - Stories & STEM: Read "Drum City" together as a group then explore the theme more with hands-on STEM activities. This is a 45-minute after-school program geared toward kindergarten to second grade.

Feb. 24 at 4 p.m. - LEGO Club: Come build with our blocks to our monthly theme. This program is geared toward our school-aged patrons (5 and older).

Feb. 25 - Fruit Loop Heart Bird Feeder Kit: Stop by the Library to pick up your bird feeder kit for kids while supplies last.

March 1 at 5:30 p.m. - Adult Book Club: This book club is for ages 18 and older and meets the first Tuesday evening of every month. Multiple copies of the book are available at the Library.

March 2 at 1:30 p.m. - The Doctor is In: Early Out Adventures are for school-aged kids during early dismissals. This week, take a trip to the doctor's office as you learn about your body and how it works. Hands-on learning and play.

March 5 DIY Family Yard Games Kit: Welcome spring by getting outside and playing games with the entire family. Stop by the Library to pick up your kit while supplies last.

March 10 - S.T.E.A.M. through Spring Break Kit. This kit includes an activity (for ages 5 and older) to do Monday through Friday of spring break based on science, technology, engineering, art and math. Stop by the Library to pick up your kit while supplies last.

March 11 All Day - Ramps and Pathways: Drop in to make a marble ramp masterpiece. This activity is geared toward our school-aged patrons (5 and older).

March 12 - Storytime at Home: Join us on the second Saturday of each month for a special storytime at home. Storytime Kit available starting at 9 a.m. Kits will include rhymes, props and a craft. Live storytime via Zoom at 10 a.m. The link will be available on the website calendar and Facebook event. The storytime recording is available until the end of day.

March 12 - March Make-up: Growing the Good Life: Did you miss a program that was offered and wish you could have participated? In March, we will have an "open house" to come in and complete a project that was offered in the past. Supplies are limited and available first come, first served (until gone). Registration is not required. Programs include: Zen Gardens, Herbal Vinegars, Mini Terrariums, Herb/Spice Blends, Painted Pavers and Finishing (Herbal Culinary) Salts.

March 15 - Needle Felting for Beginners: Join us at the library as we learn how to needle felt. This fairly simple and easy to learn craft is all about transforming wool into a 3D object of your choosing. This program is geared toward our tween and teen patrons (9-18). ■



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WHERE WE LIVE

By Lindsey Giardino

HOMETOWN girl

Christiansen continues life in Grimes

Jocelann Christiansen has lived in Grimes her entire life. Her parents moved to the community from Des Moines so that she could get her education from Dallas Center-Grimes schools.

Now that she's an adult and graduated from high school, Christiansen chose to continue living in her hometown because, "I just love the community, and there were many apartment options to choose from."

Christiansen ultimately settled on renting an apartment in Summit at Heritage. She was attracted to the modernness of the complex, the location and the young environment.

"I love my home at Summit apartments," Christiansen says. "The staff are so helpful, and there are great amenities provided. I also appreciate how the complex feels like its own little community. The closeness to Highway 141 and places like Kwik Star and Hy-Vee is super convenient. It's crazy to think that where I live and everything around me was just a cornfield when I was growing up."

She adds, not only does she enjoy the atmosphere of her apartment complex and the kind neighbors she's met, but she also takes advantage of the surrounding neighborhoods.

"I love that, no matter where I go in Grimes, I feel safe," she says. "I can go on runs in the evening around my neighborhood and feel comfortable doing so."

Christiansen appreciates that living in Grimes provides her the benefits of being near the busy Des Moines metro while still feeling connected to a small, close-knit town.

"The Grimes community is the absolute best; it's truly the best of both worlds," she says. "The town is definitely growing, but you still get the small-town feel. Everyone is so friendly and welcoming, no matter how long you've been a resident."

The list of reasons why Christiansen loves her hometown goes on — from "the businesses that work together to make the town what it is" to the Dallas Center-Grimes School District that "gave me the best experience I could and brought me my lifelong friends."

"I appreciate the people of this town who truly encompass what 'Iowa nice' really is," Christiansen says. "I appreciate that this town holds so many memories for me and is growing so that other people can experience this remarkable town." ■



Jocelann Christiansen grew up in Grimes and was glad to find an apartment at Summit at Heritage so she could continue living in her hometown.

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WINTER planning for successful vegetable gardening

It's a new year and, with it, new starts come in many different forms. For many of us gardeners, a new year means a new garden to think about, and the planning stage must come first. In my professional career as a project manager, planning is always the key to starting a new project. Whether you are new to vegetable gardening or are a seasoned gardener, I hope to give you some tips and tricks to think about during these cold winter months as you are planning for your vegetable garden and thinking about meals with fresh ingredients from your garden.

As you begin, a key item to consider is the size of your garden. Are you thinking of a small backyard garden that is 4 feet by 8 feet or are you thinking about a larger garden, as in an acre or more? The size of garden you are planning will determine the number of seeds and/or plants you want to grow in your garden. Keep spacing and mature plant size in mind as you plan.

Keep in mind the location of your garden, as



you want to make sure your final garden plans can support each plant type chosen as well as sun and shade needs. If you are planning new garden beds, you will need to consider your water source — the closer to your garden the water source is, the better.

It is a good practice to lay out your garden plan in a picture form. This can be simply done with pencil and paper with some general garden measurements and list of plants you wish to grow in your garden. Today, there are many apps or programs you can use in your planning. A couple of the apps I have found helpful and easy to use are Planter and Veggie Garden Planner and Planter: Garden Planner.

For beginning gardeners, I would suggest a simple plan using guidelines from the book "Square Foot Gardening" by Mel Bartholomew. This book is a great resource for those who have limited space or are just starting to garden. Mel's methods help you think about efficient and productive garden spaces. Once you are a seasoned gardener, you will begin to expand your planning tools based on what you have learned along the way.

After determining the size of garden,

number of plants and location for your garden, you will want to order seeds as some seeding companies run out of some seeds early in the season. When selecting seed and plants, you must know your USDA Zone. Northern Iowa is generally Zone 4 and southern Iowa is Zone 5. This will help with making sure plants for any planting situation are suitable. This is helpful for vegetables as well as flower garden plants.

During the winter months, before planting seeds, it is a good practice to wash your seed starting pots well. This will decrease risk of fungus or mold that thrive in cool, wet conditions. Also, this is a good time to inventory, repair, sharpen, clean and organize your garden tools for the upcoming season.

Lastly, remember to feed the birds. As February is National Bird Feeding Month, these below freezing temps and snow pack make it a challenge for our garden helpful feathered friends. ■

Information provided by David "Dusty" D. Rauschenberg, Dallas Center resident, Master Gardener, Master Conservationist, #thegoodpimgardener, dustyrauschenberg@gmail.com.

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FITNESS

By Kammi Abrahamzon

Q: Women, are you frustrated with your weight loss?

A: Women, this one is for you. We are strong, we are beautiful, and we are also given a couple extra challenges when it comes to losing weight. We have all given ourselves a hard time when moving the number on the scale, but what exactly are we up against? One of the greatest gifts of being a woman is being able to have a child, but that also makes our bodies prone to storing fat. As much as we fight it, our bodies are just predisposed to store it. Everyone's weight fluctuates from day to day or even hour of the day but, for women, it is a little bit more than that. Around our menstrual cycle, our weight will fluctuate because our body is retaining more fluid, and you could even see up to a 5-pound increase around that time. Even though they might be frustrating and at times discouraging, I want you to change your mindset. Think of them not as challenges but as motivation. We are strong, and we can do anything. Yes, it will take time and perseverance, but when you look into that mirror and see all your hard work paying off, I want you to look at yourself and realize how beautiful you are. You are worth that extra fight and hard work, and the weight loss will come. Just remember, you are strong, you are beautiful, and you are capable. ■



Information provided by Kammi Abrahamzon, Anytime Fitness, 255 S.W. Brookside Drive, 515-300-9262, GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com.

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HEALTH

By Dr. Aaron Martin

WHAT is peripheral neuropathy?

Twenty million-plus Americans suffer from peripheral neuropathy (PN). PN occurs when nerves are damaged or destroyed by disease or injury. Injured nerves either no longer communicate impulses, much like a broken wire, or signal inappropriately, like static on a phone line. Other times, signals become distorted like a wavy television picture. The furthest nerve endings in the feet are often affected first or are the most seriously affected. Symptoms include tingling, numbness and shooting pains in the feet and legs, worsening at night.



Treatment begins with your doctor's proper diagnosis and explanation of how nerve damage is causing specific symptoms. Correcting the underlying causes of PN may result in neuropathy resolving on its own as the nerves recover or regenerate. Patients commit to healthy lifestyle habits, smoking cessation, correcting vitamin deficiencies, exercising, balancing diet, and controlling blood glucose levels.

In addition, the Robotic MLS Laser is the only Class 4 laser in the world that does not produce heat and is entirely painless. The MLS laser is FDA cleared is backed by 30 years of research to improve blood flow to the affected areas, which speeds healing. Studies have shown that MLS laser treatment for PN, a series of 12 treatments, two to three times per week over four to six weeks will cumulatively provide relief. ■

Information provided by Dr. Aaron Martin, Iowa Chiropractic Clinic & Sports Injuries, 1451 S.E. Third St., Suite 100, Grimes, 515-452-0250.

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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. Mallori Phillips

WANT a break from your reading glasses?

"Hey! Give my readers back!" I hear these words exchanged by my parents all too often. Neither one of them experienced vision issues until approximately 50 years old when reading up close became difficult. You might be familiar with this routine... your near vision isn't as clear as it once was, so you stretch your arm out to regain focus. Eventually, your arms run out of length, and you apprehensively turn to the next solution: buying cheater readers. Dun, dun, dunnnn! Even though you notice a huge improvement with readers, you tend to easily lose them and end up buying over-the-counter readers in bulk.

When I offered to teach my parents how to use contact lenses, we quickly learned that they couldn't tolerate having something in their eyes. For many patients, that's the reason the newest eye drop on the market, Vuity, was so highly anticipated. Vuity works by constricting the pupil, which temporarily improves your vision up close. If you're tired of searching in couch cushions and in unknown crevices of your vehicles to find lost readers, visit with your local optometrist to determine if Vuity might be a good solution for you. ■

Information provided by Dr. Mallori Phillips, Total Family Eye Care, 515-986-1234, www.totalfamilyeye.com.



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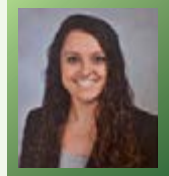
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HEALTH

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.



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TAKE TIME for yourself despite a busy schedule

Does it feel like you are busy every moment of the day? That, as you are nearing the end of your To Do list, ten more items suddenly appear? That you can't find a single moment to even catch your breath?



Taking that moment may be exactly what you need. These past two years of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have no doubt put extra stress on all of us, no matter what your job title. Taking time for yourself, however that may look like for you, is important for your mental health.

What it means to be mindful

Webster's Dictionary defines mindfulness as "the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis." Or, said more

simply, a state of awareness. Taking a few minutes or even seconds in your day can help.

5 simple things you can do

Practicing mindfulness can have positive health benefits. By focusing your attention on the world around you, mindful exercises can reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Reducing negative thinking can improve your mood while also making you more productive.

1. Breathe. Find a quiet spot to sit comfortably and focus on your breathing. Feel each breath as it passes in and out. If your mind wanders, redirect your thoughts to your breath.

2. Pay attention. Notice items around you, looking at familiar items with fresh eyes. Truly listen to others with an aim to understand, not respond. Allow yourself to experience sights, sounds, and tastes in a new way.

3. Be still. When you feel overwhelmed or out of control, sit or stand as you wish but remain still for a few moments.

4. Take the time. For some, setting aside even 10-15 minutes a day feels like an impossible task. And that's OK. Get in the habit of taking mini breaks throughout your day. When your mind is going a mile a minute, stop and concentrate on inhaling for five seconds and exhaling for five seconds. Repeat five times.

5. Reflect. Some days are better than others, but every day has a moment or two for which we can be grateful. End each day by looking back and focusing on the moments that matter. I was recently given a gratitude journal from a friend as a Christmas gift. Each day, I can write down three things I am grateful for. This practice is so simple, yet so powerful. I cannot recommend doing that enough. You will find a much improved mental state and a more special appreciation for simple things. Try it out and let me know how it goes. ■

Information provided by Jane Clausen, Adel HealthMart, 113 N. Ninth St., 515-993-3644.

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When Diode lasers for hair removal first became widely used, it was a pleasant surprise to dermatologists that active acne quieted down from these laser treatments. There was a strong correlation between acne and the development of unwanted facial hair in women. Advanced dermatology practices with



multiple laser technologies have learned how best to use these lasers in combination to improve red blotchy skin, broken red blood vessels and acne ...and prevent unwanted facial hair.

Helping the public to understand these technologies better is our goal every year. It's also important for parents to know all their options should their teenagers fail to use acne treatment consistently and suddenly develop a batch of early scars and persisting red spots and dark spots. We want the public to understand how a trio of lasers together produce the best results obtainable in the shortest amount of time.

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Information provided by Steven Harlan, MD, Harlan Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery Center, 8131 University Blvd., Clive, 515-225-8180, info@DOCTORHARLAN.com.

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STARTING a new era

Local coach helps start women's wrestling team.

Last year, when Cory Stratton, head wrestling coach for Dallas Center-Grimes Community High School, and his team competed in a tournament in Adel, there was a female division as well. While there, a few of the team's female managers mentioned starting to practice themselves.

"I honestly thought they were joking, but, the following Monday, they showed up with wrestling shoes on," Stratton recalls. "They all practiced for the remainder of the year. We ultimately started the girls program this year because those girls showed an interest."

To kick-start the women's wrestling program at Dallas Center-Grimes, Stratton helped hang flyers around the school promoting girls-only practices. At the subsequent informational meeting, 27 girls showed up.

"As a staff, we were thrilled," Stratton says. "We were also very fortunate to bring on Jason Wegner to our coaching staff, and he headed up the girls' coaching portion of our team with the help of our boys' coaching staff."

Stratton says starting a women's program was an overall easy decision for the coaching staff to make.

"Wrestling has given us coaches so much in our lives and has helped shape us into the men we are today," he says. "There is no sport



like it, and the lessons learned not only help on the mat, but also prepare a person for life. Ultimately, we are excited to share the love of the sport while also helping these girls become better humans for being a part of our program."

Stratton mentions the main goal for the first year of the women's program was to ensure the girls had fun and would see the season through.

"Our staff is thrilled that we still have 22 committed girls who want to continue wrestling," he says. "We were extremely excited that Dallas Center-Grimes was the most represented school across all classes at the state tournament, sending 21 girls."

While the state recently sanctioned high school girls wrestling as a sport, there are still a lot of unknowns as to what next season will bring for the team at Dallas Center-Grimes, yet Stratton knows the program will only continue to expand.

He also appreciates the support he's seen from the community.



Cory Stratton

"We have had multiple people reach out to see how they can help," Stratton says. "People in our community have donated money to help the girls have a positive experience. Also, just about everywhere I go in the community, someone asks me about our girls' program. I definitely feel a ton of support. There is a new buzz around wrestling at Dallas Center-Grimes, and I am thrilled to be a part of it." ■

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THE FIRST 48 hours

Part 1 of a 3-part article

Making post-death arrangements is difficult for anyone, especially those who are in grief. If you are kind to those you would leave behind, you will have your estate plan (a Last Will and Testament or Revocable Living Trust) in place and keep a list with details of all your investments, real estate, and vehicles. Include 1) the numbers (account, policy, certificate); 2) the names of all the owners of the account (some accounts are owned jointly with other people or are owned by your Revocable Living Trust); 3) whether there is a named beneficiary on the account and who it is; and 4) if there is an agent you are working with, the name and contact number. Also include information on where to find real estate abstracts and vehicle titles and whether you have a safety deposit box (including where to find the key).

If you are in the unfortunate situation where someone needs to be in charge, and you do not have a tidy list from which to operate, aside from making funeral arrangements, here are the steps you should take in the first 48 hours, in the order of priority.

1. If the house will be empty for a bit, empty the refrigerator, remove potted plants and pets, turn the thermostat to 60, open the cabinet doors under the kitchen and bathroom sinks, and lock it up. Yes, there will be a time soon, when whomever is legally tasked with the responsibility of distributing personal property will need to access the house. However, people tend to want to congregate in the home, which very quickly leads to missing personal property, such as jewelry and collectables.

2. Contact the real estate insurance company to inform them of the vacancy and make arrangements for someone to clear the sidewalk, mow, etc. so that it does not look vacant. Most insurance policies have an exclusion that lets them out of paying for any damage if they are not notified of a vacant house.

3. Do not let anyone who is not specifically listed on the decedent's insurance policy drive any of the decedent's vehicles. I understand that the car is handy and just sitting there. However, if there is an accident, the decedent's estate will be responsible for the damages, which could wipe out the entire estate. ("I have insurance on any car I drive" is not a valid reason. Ultimately, the owner is always responsible.)

4. Call for an appointment with an attorney who handles post death issues. ■

Information provided by Cynthia P. Letsch, J.D., Letsch Law Firm, 112 N.E. Ewing St., Suite D, Grimes, 515-986-2810, www.LetschLawFirm.com.



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EDUCATION

By Ashley Rullestad

MEET Molly Sorenson

Elementary students keep teaching fresh.



Molly Sorenson says teaching is rewarding, even through challenges such as the pandemic.

Molly Sorenson teaches second grade at South Prairie Elementary in the Dallas Center Grimes School District. South Prairie opened in 1988 and is one of four elementary schools in the district. The school serves approximately 430 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Sorenson currently has 21 second graders who she teaches in all subject areas while providing a safe and positive learning environment. Sorenson has been teaching at DCG for nine years now.

She says her favorite part of being an elementary teacher is the joy and excitement her students show her each day. The students want to learn, and they want to be at school, which makes every day fun and exciting. It also makes every day different, and that freshness is what keeps it engaging for everyone.

"The biggest challenges change year to year and class to class, which is what makes teaching such a rewarding experience," Sorenson says. "Despite the challenges, the rewards always outweigh the challenges, even through some tough times such as a pandemic."

Of course, kids also say the darnedest things, which also makes teaching fun.

"One day, one of my students was talking down the drain out on the recess playground and, when asked what they were doing, the response was, 'Talking to the Ninja Turtles.'"

During their time in Sorenson's classroom, she hopes students make positive growth in their academics, and, most importantly, she hopes that students learn what it means to have good character and be a good citizen.

When she's not at school, you will find Sorenson spending time with friends and family. She has a 4-year-old daughter and a dog that keep her on her toes. As a family, they also enjoy gardening in the summer months. ■

CHANGES coming

I am honored and excited to be serving as the Board Chair for Grimes Chamber and Economic Development in 2022. I am lucky to call Grimes home with my husband and two daughters. We moved to the area in 2014 and often reflect on the amazing growth and changes we have seen in the past eight years. In 2017, I was able to serve in this position, and there have been so many positive changes to the organization since that time. I often fall into the category of not fully embracing the changes that happen regularly in our lives. However, as I look back on the almost 10 years I have been a chamber member, I have come to realize change has been good (and needed) to make our chamber and community better.



As we move forward in 2022, there will be plenty of changes coming. Let's start with a big one that we believe will have a huge impact on Grimes. This year, we will be building programming for a Grimes Leadership Academy that will have its inaugural class in 2023. A leadership academy is a great way to continue to grow and develop as a strong community. It will help us shape leaders for the future and create strong foundations within the local business community. We are lucky to have two amazing volunteers spearheading the development of our program: John Palmer with SummitCreek Church and Kathryn Sandie with Raccoon Valley Bank. While we don't have all the details nailed down yet, we are looking forward to having this programming available and excited to see the development it brings.

Another large change this year for our community will be the new location of Governors Days. With the construction of a splash pad at Water Works Park set for this year, we are taking our festival down James Street to the South Sports Complex. While setting things up in a new location will have some learning curves, we are excited to continue this fun community celebration. Governors Days is one of my favorite events the chamber puts on during the year. The live music, parade and carnival all make me feel like it's the official start to the summer. Keep your eyes peeled for more information in the coming months but mark your calendars now for June 9-11.

As we continue to change as a community via growth of residents and new businesses, we should not forget why Grimes is a great place to live, work and play. Don't forget to wave at your neighbor and lend a helping hand when you can. #lovegrimes ■

Information provided by Ryleah Cross, Edward Jones, Board Chair of Grimes Chamber & Economic Development.

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OUT & ABOUT

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OUT & ABOUT



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