

GRIMES/DALLAS CENTER

JANUARY 2022

# Living

MAGAZINE

## Pets OF A different KIND

What City ordinances  
and owners say  
about unusual pets

**Meet Amanda Erps**

EDUCATION

**Baked tomato goat cheese dip**

RECIPE

**Forneris hopes for more seat time on his motorcycle**

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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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*Shane*



Read more of Shane Goodman's columns each weekday morning by subscribing to The Daily Umbrella email newsletter for free at [www.thedailyumbrella.com](http://www.thedailyumbrella.com).



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## FEATURE

Carsco the snow leopard gecko is Adler Berry's pet. Carsco enjoys being handled.

# *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.





## FEATURE

### Great gecko

Kristy Berry's son Adler, 8, had a pet salamander that passed away, so the family was looking for another pet that might be suitable. Adler wanted a reptile, and Kristy wanted something easy to care for that wouldn't mind living on its own. They ended up with Carsco the snow leopard gecko.

"Adler had to go online and read books and write down all the information needed before we purchased him. We needed a tank, heater, two caves, and a water container. When a gecko is younger, you can't touch it for a while, but once it gets a little bigger, then it loves to be held."

Now Carsco is just over a year old, and he's settled into the Berry family just fine. He eats superworms or crickets every couple of days, and he laps up water like a dog.

"The neatest thing about it is that it sheds its skin similar to a snake. Its skin turns white in color and translucent every couple of weeks. Then it rubs up against things until it is off, which now takes about a day. Unlike snakes, it eats its shed."



Carsco the snow leopard gecko has specific care needs.

This particular type of gecko doesn't climb walls or jump, which was important to Berry because she didn't want a pet escaping in the house. Geckos need a warm side and a cold side in their habitat. It makes it easier to clean up after it because it only makes messes on the cold side.

Berry recommends anyone getting a new pet do some research to get the best fit for their

family and expect for them to grow. Carsco is on his third and final terrarium. New pet owners must have everything set up and have the right food prior to getting the pet home.

Also, for some pets, it's important to know where to get live food for them. Stores have often been out of certain foods lately. You need to make sure your pet has the right diet to keep it healthy.

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## FEATURE

### Amazing axolotl

Anna Krank's son Weston, 10, was researching unusual animals a couple years ago and stumbled on axolotls. He then did a research paper on them for school. The family went to a reptile show in Des Moines and looked into different breeders, and they brought Sam the axolotl home in August.

Axolotls are unique in that they are amphibians but they reach adulthood without undergoing metamorphosis, so they spend their lives in water and not on land. As pets, they eat pellets and can also eat earthworms and crickets.

In the wild, axolotls live in lakes in Mexico, and they are considered endangered. They have become popular as exotic pets because they are hardy and easy to care for, and a lot of people like their unique looks.

"Axolotls can't really be handled. So, if you are looking for something to touch and cuddle, it wouldn't be the pet for you," says Krank.

Now, Sam lives in a 20-gallon tank filled



Weston Krank's axolotl, Sam, is aquatic and not suitable for being handled.




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West Clark's pet is an axolotl, which lives in the wild in lakes in Mexico.

with water, which has to be changed regularly.

"They don't love to live alone, so we'd love to get a friend for Sam. Either a fish or another axolotl if we get a bigger tank. Sam is male, so it would need to be a female or a male around the same size," says Krank.

The Kranks also have three dogs, two black labs and a bernedoodle and they are considering getting a leopard gecko as well. If you are considering an axolotl as a pet, Anna recommends that you do your research and be prepared to clean their tanks often.

"He just looks so cool, almost alien like, and we actually like that he can't be handled a whole lot and it is fairly easy to take care of. I'm surprised by how fast he grew. He is already too big for his house."

## Dragon roar

Randi Gustason's daughter Allie, 13, is intrigued by reptiles, so she received a bearded dragon in August 2019 for her birthday.

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 they eat a variety of foods including crickets, mealworms, vegetables like sweet potato, leafy greens and even some fruits.

Bokler the beardie requires a heat lamp that must be turned on in the morning and off at night. He also is bathed once a week and requires a diet of mixed veggies and insects. The family also has two dogs, and Allie would like to eventually add a leopard gecko one day.

"You want to make sure to socialize with your dragon so you grow a bond, as they recognize their handlers," Randi says.

Bokler even gets out and about. When he is outside in the sun, he goes on a leash. The family has a carrier for him in the car.

Bokler has become kind of a therapy animal for her as well since Allie has social anxiety issues.

"She doesn't really talk to anyone but chats it up with about everyone when she has her dragon with her," Randi says. ■



Allie Gustason takes her bearded dragon, Bokler, on a walk.

## Pet rules

Grimes city ordinances set some restrictions on those wanting to own an unusual pet. 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, as outlined in the Iowa State Code. Those include badgers, wolverines, weasels, mink and other Mustelids (except ferrets); black widow spiders and scorpions; raccoons, opossums, and skunks; any cat except domesticated cats; bears; elephants; crocodiles and alligators; 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." ■



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# LUCY, the Beatles, Spielberg, Spider-Man and more

As I write this, we are digging out of the end of the year and the end of the holiday movie season. Here's a quick (but large) list of what's out there. Some of them are easy to find (i.e.: wide release or streaming) and some not so much (art house). Several of these will be on my top 10 list for 2021 for sure.

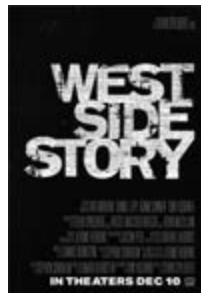
**"C'MON C'MON":** If you have ever doubted Joaquin Phoenix's ability to act (and why should you?), "C'mon C'mon" will definitely show you his range. Phoenix plays a man tasked with keeping track of his very young nephew due to a medical situation. This is a small, quiet film about this charming relationship and the balance it takes (from both of them) for it to work. Also shot in beautiful black and white. Phoenix is brilliant. **Grade: B+**

**"BEING THE RICARDOS":** "I Love Lucy" fans will love writer/director Aaron Sorkin's look at this television legend. I grew up watching Lucy but didn't know much of the backstory. Crazy to think that CBS would balk at showing a pregnant woman on television. Nicole Kidman is near perfect as Lucy, and so is Javier Bardem as her husband Desi Arnaz. Easily one of the year's best.

**Grade: A-**

**"THE BEATLES: GET BACK":** Stay at home for this one and watch it on Disney+. "The Beatles: Get Back" is filmmaker Peter Jackson's ("Lord of the Rings" trilogy) transformation of all the video that was shot around the making of their last album. Allegedly there was backbiting and fighting amongst the Fab Four as they were about to split. To everyone's surprise, the lads were in good spirits and, for the most part, friendly with each other. I found watching their creative process to be fascinating, and the music is outstanding. You will want to break it into pieces, as the total is in the eight-hour range. **Grade: A.**

**"WEST SIDE STORY":** Who am I to question the great Steven Spielberg and his remake of the 1961 classic? The new film is tremendous — the voices, the dancing and everything else. My fear is that no one will see it. (The opening weekend was way soft at only \$10 million). Spielberg has remade the original almost exactly. Same dancing, same songs, storyline and setting. If you've seen the original, why bother? If you are younger than 25 (most movie-goers), do you want to see a movie set in the late 1950s and early 1960s about competing gangs in New York? My guess is no. Why not update it with the same issues and songs to bring more people into the theater? We might never know. A great try but it could have been more. **Grade: A**



**"THE POWER OF THE DOG":** Those of you with Netflix can find this on that streaming service. It is a dirty, dusty looking film with some of the year's best performances. Benedict Cumberbatch and Jesse Plemons play sibling cattle ranchers in 1925 Montana. Cumberbatch plays the mean, obstinate brother who nearly always defers to his brother. That changes when Plemons' character marries and brings his bride back to the ranch to live. She brings her son who is a bit too effeminate for Cumberbatch's character. This very dark and nasty Shakespeare-like tale plays out under stunning Montana vistas and ends with an evil but wonderful finale that I didn't see coming but found very satisfying. On Netflix. **Grade: A**



**"SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME":** I'll admit that it's easy to guess that the current Spider-Man movie has plenty of laughs and action. What you don't expect is strong emotions and a serious need for Kleenex. I've been a Spider-Man fan since 1973, so I've been round the block with this character. In short, this is one of the best movies of the year (easily the biggest audience pleaser) and deserves every bit of praise that it is getting. **Grade: A**

**"SING 2":** The first one was a charming, animated movie about a bunch of animals trying to put on a musical. Wonderful characters and a great soundtrack made this a big hit with the little ones. "Sing 2" picks right up where the last one left off, leading with Prince's "Let's Go Crazy." **Grade: A**



**"AMERICAN UNDERDOG":** If you thought you knew everything about former UNI, former Iowa Barnstormer and former Super Bowl Champion and MVP quarterback, Kurt Warner, I'll bet you are wrong. What a great movie about a man who just would not take no for an answer. Spirituality, football action and strong family ties keep this movie moving forward into a real crowd-pleaser. **Grade: A**



**"THE KING'S MAN":** Tap the brakes on this origin story for the Kingsman franchise. The first movie is really great, the second was a notch or two lower, and this effort is like that open can of pop in the fridge from New Year's...flat and not enjoyable. **Grade: C**





## FILM REVIEWS

**“DON’T LOOK UP”:** If you’ve seen “VICE,” “The Big Short” or “Anchorman,” you know writer/director Adam McKay is a funny guy. Here he turns his attention to world politics. A researcher has discovered a comet racing toward Earth that is certain to wipe out the planet. The President, Meryl Streep, needs to downplay this event as it will interfere with her goals. COVID? Global warming? You figure it out but be prepared to laugh. A lot. On Netflix. **Grade: B+**

**“MATRIX RESURRECTIONS”:** I’m excited that I could almost follow this third in a trilogy. Almost. The first two movies are a complete mystery to me... mumbo jumbo and video game-like action. The third seemed easier to understand. It is not great but a relief to actually almost know what is going on. Find it streaming on HBO/Max. **Grade: B**

**“LICORICE PIZZA”:** This one is showing up on many Top 10 lists for the best movies of the year. I gotta admit, I’m not sure why. I also can’t figure out why this movie was made. A kinda cute relationship between a young couple in the early 1970s. Waterbeds, Richard Nixon and Bradley Cooper as Barbra Streisand beau Jon Peters had my head spinning. Not in a good way. What’s the point? **Grade: B**

**“THE LOST DAUGHTER”:** New to Netflix, this is an intense drama starring Olivia Colman, Ed Harris and Dakota Johnson and the feature film directing debut of Maggie Gyllenhaal. Colman’s character is on holiday when she finds herself in the middle of a dangerous, group of family members. Very dark, very sexual. **Grade: B**

**“NIGHTMARE ALLEY”:** Director

Guillermo del Toro leans back into his roots as a horror film director in this movie about carnival workers in the Depression era 1930s and 1940s. The movie also probably features the most talented cast I saw all year. Bradley Cooper, Cate Blanchett, Toni Collette, Willem Dafoe to name a few.

Del Toro tries his best to recreate the tough-guy look and feel of movies like “The Big Sleep,” “The Maltese Falcon” and “Double Indemnity.” Unfortunately he falls short. One too many twists at the end was too much for me, though I did love the final scene. **Grade: B ■**

*Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986 and can be heard talking movies every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. on KXn0 106.3 with Keith Murphy and Andy Fales. You can also follow him on Twitter at MrMovieDSM.*



## HEALTH

By Dr. Aaron Martin

## THE PAIN epidemic

Are you in pain? If so, you’re not alone. According to the CDC, more than 50 million adults experience chronic body pain every day or most days, lasting longer than three months.

Lasting pain can make it hard to complete daily activities and alter the quality of life. Most people who struggle with chronic pain turn to long-term pain medications that can lead to higher sensitivity to pain, addiction and sometimes fatality.

What if I told you prescription pain meds aren’t the only way to treat chronic pain? Prescribed medications and over-the-counter medications don’t always provide the best solution. There are complementary approaches that have been shown to be effective and have fewer side effects. Spinal decompression, acupuncture, physiotherapy and trigger point therapy — as well as conventional methods such as exercise and stress and anxiety therapy — are great options when treating chronic pain.

Chronic pain comes in different forms, and not all treatment options are the same, but it’s important to know non-surgical and non-pharmaceutical options are available. If you struggle with chronic pain, a chiropractor will be able to recommend safe and productive ways to treat the form of chronic pain you are experiencing. ■



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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# 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. ■

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

Retiring in today’s world can be complex and complicated. Each week, Certified Financial Planner™ Loren Merkle and co-host Molly Nelson will tackle trending financial topics and apply them to your retirement.

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# RETIRING TODAY

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## YOUR Social Security statement

### What's in it for you?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides personalized Social Security statements to help Americans age 18 and older better understand the benefits that Social Security offers. Your statement contains a detailed record of your earnings and estimates of retirement, disability and survivor benefits — information that can help you plan for your financial future.



You can view your Social Security statement online at any time by creating a My Social Security account at the SSA's website, [ssa.gov/myaccount](https://ssa.gov/myaccount). If you're not registered for an online account and are not yet receiving benefits, you'll receive a statement in the mail every year, starting at age 60.

#### Benefit estimates

Your Social Security statement tells you whether you've earned enough credits by working and paying Social Security taxes to qualify for retirement and disability benefits and, if you qualify, how much you might receive. Generally, retirement benefits are projected for up to nine claiming ages, including full (ages 66 to 67), early (age 62), and late (age 70). If you qualify, you can also see the benefit amount your survivors might receive in the event of your death.

The amounts listed are estimates based on your average earnings in the past and a projection of future earnings. Actual benefits you receive may be different if your earnings increase or decrease in the future.

Amounts may also be affected by other factors, including cost-of-living increases (estimates are in today's dollars) and other income you receive, and are based on current law.

#### Annual earnings

In addition to benefit information, your Social Security statement contains a year-by-year record of your earnings. This record is updated when your employer reports your earnings (or if you're self-employed, when you report your own earnings). Earnings are generally reported annually, so your most recent earnings may not yet be on your statement.

Because Social Security benefits are based on average lifetime earnings, it's important to make sure your earnings have been reported correctly. Compare your earnings record against past tax returns or W-2s. If you find errors, let the Social Security Administration know right away by calling (800) 772-1213. ■

For more information, please contact Wade Lawrence or Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. 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. These materials are provided for general information and educational purposes, we cannot assure the accuracy or completeness. The information in these materials may change at any time and without notice.

## WHAT are shin splints, and how do you get rid of them?

**A:** If you have ever had the pleasure of experiencing shin splints, I think you would agree with me when I say that they are the absolute worst. They make walking, running, or any form of cardio really hurt. So what exactly are they? Ultimately, it is an inflammation of the muscles around your shin bone that can cause tenderness, soreness or even pain along your shins. They always seem to hit you at the most random times, or are they random? One of the biggest causes is increased training intensity. Did you add an extra mile to your run or go up more stairs on the stairmill? You may have been able to run that extra mile, but sometimes your body needs to be able to work up to that or allow for a longer warm up. That repetition of your foot striking the ground keeps adding to that irritation over time if your muscles aren't used to it. Luckily, as annoying as they can be, they are pretty preventable in ways such as drinking more water, getting new shoes, or even remembering to take a day off. Rest days are a beautiful thing; they allow your body to recover from the stress after a workout. If you ultimately get shin splints, the best thing you can do is rest and put ice on your shins. Always remember to listen to your body. ■



Information provided by Kammi Abrahamzon, Anytime Fitness, 255 S.W. Brookside Drive, 515-300-9262, [GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com](mailto:GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com).

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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

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

### Lunch and Learn

Wednesday, Feb. 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 speaker will be talking about Farrell's Extreme Bodyshaping.



### 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 Pratt. 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).

### '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).



### '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.

### 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 Paremski playing Rachmaninoff's grand Third Piano Concerto. For more information, visit [www.dmsymphony.org](http://www.dmsymphony.org).



### 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).



### 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).



## EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

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



### 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)



### 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.



### 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)

### 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.

### 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). Offpeak hours are weekdays (all day) and weekends after 3 p.m. Free entry for children younger than 2.



## CREDIT COUNSELING

By Tom Coates

### STAYING out of debt in 2022

If you met your personal financial goal of paying off unsecured debt in 2021, then the last thing you want to do is go back into debt this next year. Spending less than you earn can be challenging for even the best budget-savvy consumers.

Here are some general tips:

- Find additional income. A temporary part time job can help to fund extra savings so that emergencies don't end up on a credit card. If your employer allows, work over-time. Review tax withholding allowances. Find a flexible side hustle.
- Track your expenses. If you are over spending, take a look at your bank statements for a month and find the leak.
- Continue to make savings a priority even if it is a small amount.
- Check your subscriptions. Do you have multiple streaming options, an unused gym membership, or magazines that you can cut back on?
- Grocery prices are rising. Take advantage of meal planning around ads or shopping discount grocers. Stick to the list. When eating out, take advantage of discount nights, happy hours, or sharing meals.
- Brown bag it. Lunches and coffees on the go can be a budget buster. Save by making it at home.

Congratulations on making financial wellness a priority in your life. Cheers to a debt-free New Year. ■

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



## LIBRARY

### GRIMES Public Library news

#### Upcoming events

• **Kid Fridays: Tangrams KIT, Jan. 21.** Stop by the Library to pick up your Tangram Kit while supplies last. Your kit will include the supplies to recreate some images and a reversible tangram that you can use to create any image you'd like.

• **Early Out Adventures: Winston Matching Game, Jan. 26, 1:30 p.m.** Early Out Adventures are for school-aged kids during early dismissals. Join local author Megan Cline as she shares a book from her popular Winston series followed by making your own game of memory.

• **LEGO Club, Jan. 27 at 4 p.m.** Come build with our blocks to our monthly theme. This program is geared toward our school-aged patrons (5 and older).

• **Kid Fridays: Play with Your Food, Jan. 28 at 4 p.m.** Join us at the Library as we make different types of play dough out of food. This program is geared toward our school-aged patrons (5 and older).

• **Stories & STEM, Jan. 31 at 3:45 p.m.** Read "Over and Under in the Pond" 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.

• **Adult Book Club, Feb. 1st 5:30 p.m.** 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.

• **Bread Making KIT, Feb. 5.** Learn how to bake bread as a family. Stop by the Library to pick up your kit while supplies last.

• **Teen Tuesday: DIY Soap Making, Feb. 8 at 4 p.m.** Join us at the library as we learn how to make our very own soap with the melt and pour (lye free) technique. This program is geared toward our tween and teen patrons (9-18).

• **Early Out Adventures: Bingo, Feb. 9 at 1:30 p.m.** Early Out Adventures are for school-aged kids during early dismissals. This week, win fun prizes while competing in a friendly game of Bingo. Everyone goes home with a prize.

• **Family Thursday: Wire Hanger Heart Weaving KIT, Feb. 10.**

• **Storytime at Home, Feb. 12.** Join us on the second Saturday of each month for a special storytime at home. The Storytime Kit is available starting at 9 a.m. Kits will include rhymes, props and a craft. Live storytime via Zoom is 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.

• **Teen Tuesday: Catapult KIT, Feb. 15.** Send love screaming by constructing your very own catapult. Stop by the Library and pick up your catapult kit while supplies last. ■



From July through October 2021, Grimes Public Library hosted 4 free community discussions on emotional well-being and personal development. Look for more great programming like this in 2022!



#### WHAT DID YOU ENJOY ABOUT THIS SERIES?

"Excellent setup for the series."

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## 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.



Jennifer Grove, D.D.S., P.C. • Mark W. Platt, D.D.S., P.C.  
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## RECIPES

### Polenta bites

- 1 tube (18 ounces) polenta
- 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 jar (24 ounces) RAGÚ Chunky Tomato, Garlic and Onion Sauce
- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella
- 2 sprigs, rosemary, destemmed and chopped
- 3 basil leaves, chopped
- 1 block (8 ounces) hard Parmesan cheese



#### Directions

- Cut polenta into slices. In skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat; fry polenta slices 10-12 minutes on each side until crispy and golden brown.
- In saucepan over medium heat, warm sauce.
- Place polenta slices on tray and sprinkle with mozzarella. Place 1/2 teaspoon warm sauce on each slice then sprinkle with chopped rosemary and basil. Grate hard Parmesan onto each slice for topping.

### Snowman pizza bombs

- 1 tube (11.8 ounces) pizza dough
- 1 jar (24 ounces) RAGÚ Old World Style Traditional Sauce
- 1 package (6 ounces) pepperoni slices
- 1 package (6 ounces) Canadian bacon slices
- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1 package (8 ounces) mozzarella cheese slices



#### Decorative vegetables (optional):

- multicolored sweet peppers
  - olives
  - spinach
  - mushrooms
  - cherry tomatoes
- Directions**
- Preheat oven to 400 F.
  - Cut pizza dough into 12 squares. On each square, place 1/2 teaspoon sauce and evenly top with pepperoni, Canadian bacon and cheddar cheese.
  - Pinch corners of dough together to round into balls then place in

muffin tins.

- In small bowl, mix melted butter, garlic powder and Italian seasoning; brush generously over dough balls.
- Bake 15-20 minutes until golden brown.
- Remove from muffin tin and carefully shape dough balls into circles; place on baking sheet. Cover with mozzarella slices and bake until melted.
- Create snowman faces by decorating each with peppers, olives, spinach, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes, if desired. Use remaining sauce for dipping.

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## HVAC

By Kendel Richlen

## 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,  
72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road,  
Ankeny, 515-200-2728.



## FINDING the time

Forneris would like to see more seat time on his Vance and Hines Special.

The dust hanging around on Tony Forneris' 1992 Yamaha Vance and Hines Special isn't something he likes to see. Truth be told, he'd rather be out on the street hugging corners with his wife, Sandra, on back.

But, lately, there just hasn't been time. Too many other projects to take care of, things to build, people to see, and life to live.

On this sunny afternoon, Forneris is taking his bike out of his small shed and moving it to his garage with the help of his son-in-law, Jake.

Maybe now, the bike, one of 660 (his is No. 127)

manufactured in its style, will get its due day in the sun.

"We'll see," Forneris says. "I'd like to, but I've got a lot of other things I've been busy with and haven't had the time."

Forneris bought the motorcycle brand new after driving a 1984 Yamaha 650 Turbo, a bike which he still owns and stores in the same shed.

"We saw this one when we were up in Brainerd, Minnesota, for the World Superbike Championships, and I said, 'I wouldn't mind having that bike.'"

After getting the approval from Sandra, just like that, he was the proud owner.

Forneris has been a bike enthusiast for many a decade now.

"I've had bikes since I was 12 years old," he says.

Sandra enjoys going along for a ride every now and then, too.

Forneris knows Grimes well, having lived on the same piece of land there for 42 years now. The property was expanded when the next-door neighbors moved away a few years ago after having been there for 67 years, giving him plenty of room to tinker with things in the shed and garage, including his bikes.

His newer garage, located further back in the property, doubles as a storage place for his boat and the snow blade he uses for snow removal with his John Deere lawn and garden tractor.

Unfortunately, Forneris hasn't been on one of his bikes in a couple of years, he says. But they won't likely sit unused even if he can't.

"I hope to get out some, but, if not, I've got the grandsons who will," he says. ■



Tony Forneris and his son-in-law, Jake, move Forneris' 1992 Yamaha Vance and Hines Special from the shed to his garage for better storage.

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## DIAPER rashes need to be monitored

Most diaper rashes are primarily an irritation problem, or what we call an irritant dermatitis. How long the baby sits in a dirty diaper is the most important factor. In severe cases, the skin is not just red and stinging, but it blisters and the top layer of skin is lost. This is an erosive dermatitis situation, and baby is very uncomfortable.



When diaper rash is flaring, it's important to change the diaper frequently and apply small amounts of a protective barrier ointment. Avoid thick heavy amounts of ointment that prevent the skin from getting air and "breathing." The technical term is "transepidermal water loss." This means the skin is healthiest and redness clears best when air is allowed to slightly evaporate some of the moisture in the most superficial layer of the skin. As the skin begins to heal, greasy ointments will slow down the resolution of redness and prevent the skin from getting back to normal. Transepidermal water loss is the important science behind promoting healed healthy skin.

Greasy ointments are popular because they sting less. But, if used too much and too long, they actually prevent the redness from clearing. As the baby's diaper rash improves, we ask

moms and dads to switch to more of a moisturizing cream or lotion that allows the skin to breathe. Once again, use a thin, disappearing layer, and not too much. If mom and dad know the baby just recently soiled the diaper, try leaving the baby in cotton underpants for 30 minutes or naked to the air for 30 minutes before applying a new diaper.

Strong cortisone creams are never a good idea for diaper rash. Weak, mild hydrocortisone products are helpful if used for three to five days at a time, but they should be used with your provider's supervision.

If the baby's rash is complicated by pimples or pustules, either inside or outside of the red rash areas, have your doctor's office evaluate the rash for opportunistic yeast infection or staph bacterial infection. If you think the baby is getting allergic to ingredients in products, get an opinion from a dermatology practice.

For moisturizing creams that allow the skin to breathe and to fully heal, dermatologists like Aveeno products, CeraVe and Cetaphil products. ■

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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## HEALTH

By Dr. Mallori Phillips

# PRIORITIZE eye health

You've probably heard of glaucoma. Chances are, one of your family members has been diagnosed with glaucoma. Do you know what that means? Prior to attending optometry school, I'd heard of glaucoma, but mostly just noticed the word closely resembled guacamole! January is Glaucoma Awareness month, and here's some information about what a glaucoma diagnosis could mean for you.



Imagine standing at a giant picture window, looking at the sun setting on the horizon. Now, imagine trying to appreciate the same sunset while standing in a tunnel. Glaucoma causes a similar vision effect — it diminishes your side vision. Glaucoma is a disease of the optic nerve, which consists of many fibers that deliver visual information to the brain. As glaucoma develops, optic nerve fibers die, ultimately leading to peripheral vision loss. Vision loss occurs so slowly that most people are unaware they're losing any vision at all. Because symptoms can remain undetected, the most critical preventative measure to protect your vision is attending your annual comprehensive eye exams. Thanks to technology that continues to evolve, optometrists can screen every patient for glaucoma risk using precise micron-level equipment. Combining new data with historical eye pressure measurements, we can more efficiently and proactively manage guacamole. Wait — glaucoma! ■

Information provided by Dr. Mallori Phillips, Total Family Eye Care, 515-986-1234, [www.totalfamilyeye.com](http://www.totalfamilyeye.com).

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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).

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# 12 HEALTHY habits to adopt in 2022

Forget New Year's resolutions. Healthful living is a 365-day process made up of small steps that can add up to a big change. Make 2022 the year you become the best you that you can be.



**1. Eat more fruits and vegetables.** A diet rich in produce can help lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke and protect eye health.

**2. Move more:** Exercise can improve brain health, help you manage your weight, and strengthen your bones and muscles. Regular physical activity can also reduce your chances of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, or stroke.

**3. Eat earlier:** When researchers compared 6 p.m. dinners to 10 p.m. dinners, they found higher blood sugar levels and less fat burned overnight for the late dinners.

**4. Practice gratitude:** Grateful people are more likely to take better care of themselves. But practicing gratitude does more than lessen

your aches and pains; it also reduces toxic emotions and lowers stress.

**5. Eat breakfast:** Recent studies have shown that people who eat a hearty breakfast may burn twice as many calories as those who eat their biggest meal in the evening. Another study showed that adults with type 2 diabetes were better able to control their blood sugar by eating a high-energy meal for breakfast and a low-energy one for dinner.

**6. Drink more water:** You have likely heard that you should drink at least eight 8 oz. glasses of water a day. While that is a reasonable goal, the fact is each of our needs is different, based on our health, activity level and even where we live.

**7. Power down:** One in four Americans brings their cell phone to bed with them. Studies have shown that the blue light from devices can interfere with sleep. Power down at least an hour before bedtime.

**8. Get more sleep:** Not getting enough sleep is linked to increased risk of obesity, stroke, heart attacks, type 2 diabetes, depression, even Alzheimer's disease.

**9. Try new things:** Trying new things keeps your mind and body active. In fact, learning a new skill can lead to changes in adult brains, creating new connections between brain cells.

**10. Quit smoking:** The benefits once you quit smoking can be seen almost immediately. In fact, within 20 minutes of quitting, your heart rate and blood pressure will drop.

**11. Build muscle:** For most adults, adding strength training to your exercise plan two to three times a week can have many health benefits, especially for seniors. In addition to increasing muscle strength, strength training can preserve bone density and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

**12. Get outside:** Nature has been linked to many health benefits, from lowering stress to increasing attention, even improving empathy and cooperation. From a walk in your local park to hiking in the wilderness, there is increasing evidence that nature positively impacts both our physical and mental wellbeing. ■

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

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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](https://www.mercyone.org/desmoines)

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# LENDING a hand

Roberts is happy to help out neighbors and the community.

As one of the partners of Dreamscape Homebuilders, a Des Moines custom home building company, Grimes' Ryan Roberts is a "people pleaser." What a new homeowner wants in a new build, he can get it for them.

But Roberts' people skills don't stop there. At home, he's a "people person" as well. Just ask his neighbors — and Grimes Chamber & Economic Development President Brian Buethe.

"He and his neighbors are all very 'fun' people and do a lot of neighborhood get-togethers, etc.," says Buethe. "Ryan is the ringleader, and, through his leadership, they even volunteer to help one another out."

Case in point, one time, Buethe says, he stopped at Roberts' home and found him and a neighbor were standing in the driveway having a discussion. Ever the curious one, Buethe inquired as to how things were going with the both of them, engaging in a good, neighborly chat.

"I asked what they were up to, and they were planning the next steps on the neighbor's basement remodel," Buethe says. "Ryan was just helping him out with advice and labor. This wasn't a contract for the business. He was just using his skillset to help his neighbor improve his situation."

Roberts has lived in Grimes for 15 years,



and, along with wife Heather, son Braeden, and daughters Madison and Ashlynn, are one of many younger families in their neighborhood who make it a point to get together whenever they can. For Roberts, that's every weekend.

"About a dozen of us just hang out, watch a game. We call it 'Fry Day,' where one of my neighbors deep fries some food, and we just get out, eat a bunch of food and have some beverages," he says. "It's just about hanging out and enjoying each other's company."

"It's a great, active neighborhood."

Everybody is interacting with each other, out and about, and it's a lot of fun," he adds.

Roberts goes as far as holding a block party every year called "Blocktoberfest," where a hog is cooked, beverages are consumed and fun is had by all.

For years, Roberts has lent a hand and helped organize and gather his neighbors to volunteer at the community's annual Governors Days event as well. Buethe says Roberts is truly a good neighbor in every sense of the word.

"Although he is one of the busiest people I



Ryan Roberts and his wife, Heather, may be transplants to Grimes, but they are as "Grimes as it gets," attests Grimes Chamber & Economic Development President Brian Buethe.

know, he always seems to find time to volunteer or help out a neighbor," he says. "He, his wife, Heather, and their children, are a great asset to the community. He's a transplant from the Boone area, but he's about as Grimes as it gets."

Volunteering isn't just something one does on occasion; it's a part of who Roberts is as much as anything.

"I volunteer for as much as I possibly can," he says. "Anything that I'm called for, I'll go help." ■

**Do you know a Good Neighbor who deserves recognition?**  
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## PROPERTY owner responsible for removing sidewalk snow

The snow has arrived. Under Iowa law, the property owner has a legal responsibility to remove snow and ice from the sidewalk. There is no minimum amount of snowfall or amount of ice that triggers the requirement.

If you do not clear the sidewalk within a "reasonable time," the City can clear it and charge you for doing it. The ordinance does not define "reasonable." Reasonableness will depend on how cold it was, how much snow we got, and what the weather is like when it is done snowing. If it is blowing the snow right back onto the sidewalk, perhaps it is reasonable to wait until it quits blowing. If the sun is shining, perhaps you get out there right away. Also, if you clear the snow and kids or wind spread it back out on the sidewalk, you still have an obligation to clear it again. If it starts to melt and turns into ice overnight, be sure to take care of that as well.

We happen to live in a really great town, and a public works employee informs me that they rarely have to clear residents' snow. Shh... don't spread it around, but they will take your personal medical situation or other personal factors into consideration, as well. Also, they will give you a 24-hour notice that trouble is coming if you do not get it done.

Even if the City lets you off the hook, keep in mind, if you do not clear the sidewalk and someone is hurt, that person can sue you for damages. This could mean a lot of money. Your homeowner's insurance may pay for some or all of these damages. Check your homeowner's policy to see what it would cover and what your policy requires in the way of your obligations to keep your sidewalk clear.

If you're a landlord and you have delegated snow removal to your tenant, be sure that it is included in your lease agreement. Understand that, even if it is, the injured person can still sue you.

Note: If you are willing to assist seniors and people with disabilities with snow removal, or are infirmed in some way and need some help, call Grimes Volunteer Support Services at 515-986-5355. They are happy to help to the extent that they can and are always in need of volunteers. ■

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](http://www.LetschLawFirm.com).



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## EDUCATION

By Ashley Rullestad

## MEET Amanda Erps

Making art accessible for all



Amanda Erps, the art teacher at North Ridge Elementary, says she is glad students have art class — unlike her elementary school experience.

Amanda Erps received her teaching degree from the University of Northern Iowa in December 2020. Last fall, she was a student teacher at North Ridge Elementary and spent time as a substitute teacher for the district, where she taught in general education, special education, and ENCORE classrooms.

“Those experiences were so beneficial because it helped me see what strategies I wanted to implement in my own classroom. This year, I became the North Ridge art teacher, where I teach students in kindergarten through fourth grade.”

When Erps was in elementary school, she didn’t have art class, so she’s excited to be able to give her students the experience she didn’t have growing up. Her favorite thing about teaching elementary school students is their imagination and limitless creativity. Her goal is for the art room to be a safe place where they can go and let their imaginations run wild.

Her greatest reward is hearing feedback from students and other staff members. She enjoys hearing them say how much they enjoy art class and the things they are learning. She says she wants students to learn art doesn’t have to be perfect because it isn’t only about the end result. Art is about the process of doing something new and learning along the way.

“I think my favorite moment so far has been when a student came into school and said to me, ‘Look, Ms. Erps, I’m just like you’ because she had on a pair of cloud earrings. I typically try to wear fun earrings that range from rainbows to little paint palettes. It made me realize how observant students are.”

When she’s not in the classroom, Erps might be cozied up on the couch watching a movie, biking along Iowa’s trails, or spending time with family and friends. Family is important to her, which is one of the reasons that she chose to work at DCG.

“The ‘Mustang Family’ has been so welcoming to me, and I am happy to be a part of it.” ■



# EVERY drop of water shapes the stone

There is something wonderful about this time of year. No, I'm not talking about the weather (as I write this, it is -2 degrees F outside, with a mild breeze). Rather, I'm referring to the promise that a New Year brings. While many people try, no one can predict the future. We can employ deduction, reasoning, common sense, try to assess cycles, rely on "experts," etc. However, as often as people get it right, more often they get it wrong.



And while knowing the future would certainly come in handy in many instances, sometimes it is just enough to know we have a future and that, in many ways, we can have an influence on what it looks like. How many of you have created a New Year's resolution? That is the essence of trying to influence the future. Dropping a few pounds is simply influencing your future weight.

While the Chamber has several members who can help you with your fitness journey (just check out our membership listings at [www.GrimesIowa.com](http://www.GrimesIowa.com)), our message today is different. We want you to realize, if you are a part of this community, you have the opportunity to help shape the future of Grimes. Business owners, managers, employees and customers alike — we all have the ability to positively impact one another and the community as a whole.

We can start by being good neighbors. Understand life will always present obstacles. Even with the best of intentions, there will be moments we feel overwhelmed. It is in these moments when it is easy to not be kind. Try to be kind anyway. And when those around us are not at their best, do your best to be empathetic, knowing they, too, might be struggling emotionally or otherwise.

If you are in business, strive to provide great customer service at every opportunity, even when that customer is being unreasonable. If you're a customer of a business, try to understand businesses are comprised of people who are dealing with any number of challenges just to keep things rolling. Like people, businesses sometimes have off days. Sometimes a little forgiveness is in order, but at least communicate with the management so they are aware if you are dissatisfied in some way. That will likely yield more fruit than a vindictive negative social media post (for example). After all, good communication is a key component in any healthy relationship.

As citizens, take the time and make the effort to be informed about what is happening in your community. So much good is happening in Grimes. While there will always be room for improvement, being educated on local issues is a great first step to take prior to forming an opinion. Then, after learning about issues, if you see something that may be improved, share your thoughts with the appropriate persons or entities.

Every drop of water shapes the stone. Every encounter, every engagement, every person, every business... together we will shape this community. #LoveGrimes ■

By Brian Buethe, President | CEO, [brianb@grimesiowa.com](mailto:brianb@grimesiowa.com).

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## OUT & ABOUT



Madison Taiber and Amanda Butler at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



Brian Buethe and Chawn Honkomp at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



Greg Means and Cyle Taylor at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



Annamarie Morrow, Richelle Smith and Haley Gutschenritter at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



Shane Goodman and JP Pearson at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



Jolene Goodman and Loren Merkle at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



Cynthia Letsch, John Palmer and Cyle Taylor at the Grimes Chamber's Lunch and Learn at the DCG High School on Dec. 8.



Kayla Bruns and LuAnne Gafford at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



John Palmer and Jennifer Boes at the Grimes Chamber's Off the Clock event at Merkle Retirement Planning on Dec. 2.



The DCG High School Jazz Band performed for the Grimes Chamber's Lunch and Learn on Dec. 8.



Members of the DCG High School Choir performed for the Grimes Chamber's Lunch and Learn on Dec. 8.



## OUT & ABOUT



Cyle Taylor and Mia Eskra at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Shane Larson and Janelle Menz at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Chad Sorensen and Kent Bily at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



LuAnne Gafford and BobbiJo Wolfe at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Susan Bily and Erin Lego at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Amanda Butler and Deb Crookshank at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Scott Grimes, Jason Kerndt and John Palmer at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Mario Fenu and Ryan Glick at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Tim Short and Jessica Kramer at the Grimes Chamber Lunch held at the Grimes Community Complex on Jan. 12.



Steve Rogers, Ben Butzke and Tim Short at the Grimes Chamber's Lunch and Learn at the DCG High School on Dec. 8.



Mike and Anne Wemhoff at the Grimes Chamber's Lunch and Learn at the DCG High School on Dec. 8.



Brian Buethe and Jason Kerndt at the Grimes Chamber's Lunch and Learn at the DCG High School on Dec. 8.

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