

INDIANOLA

NOVEMBER 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

The state of **VETERANS'** ORGANIZATIONS

Veterans share how times are changing

Meet Rob Hawkins
EDUCATION

Honoring those who served
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WELCOME

IN HIS EYES and in his handshake

A few years back, I attended a Memorial Day service at a cemetery in Grimes. I was taking photos when an elderly man walked over to me and asked who I was. I told him my name and what I was doing, and he thanked me immensely for providing coverage of the event and the local veterans. I could see in his eyes and in the firmness of his handshake that he truly meant it.

Our discussion then steered toward the status of veterans' organizations in Iowa communities and the struggle to attract members, especially younger ones.

As most of you who are involved in community groups know, that struggle isn't unique to veterans' organizations. Time is the greatest commodity for most of us, and we guard it closely. In this regard, veterans are no different than the rest of us. What I heard from my conversation was that the desire to have these young veterans be part of the organizations is as much about helping the older folks as it is the younger ones. We all need each other — young and old — to share our stories and better understand our differences. Veterans do, too.

I recall going into the VFW Hall in my hometown as a child and seeing photos of my father and my uncle on the wall as past commanders. I was certainly proud of them both for serving our country, and that respect deepened when I saw how they served their fellow veterans, too.

That day at the cemetery made me think about veterans' organizations and what we could do to help. The first step is to do something we should be doing every day, and that is to simply thank our veterans for their service with the same gratitude that the elderly man gave me. And from where I am sitting, we need to do more to share the stories of our veterans and to help their organizations prosper.

With that in mind, we are saluting our veterans in this issue of your Living magazine, and we are profiling the local veterans' organizations and sharing how you — whether you are a veteran or not — can help, too.

I hope you enjoy these stories as much as I have.

As always, but especially with this issue, I thank you for reading. ■

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A photograph of three veterans sitting on a red parade float. On the left is a man in a white sailor's uniform with a white cap and a black neckerchief. In the middle is a man in a dark green military uniform with a peaked cap and sunglasses. On the right is a man in a camouflage military uniform with a tan cap and sunglasses. They are all smiling. In the background, other people and a building are visible.

FEATURE

The state of **VETERANS'** ORGANIZATIONS

Veterans share how times are changing

By Chantel Boyd

While Veterans Day falls on Friday, Nov. 11, each day of the year can present an opportunity to celebrate our veterans and to recognize the contributions they have made — and continue to make — to their country and community.

Regardless of the military branch of service, peacetime or wartime, those who have served our country have made sacrifices, and, for those, we salute them and the organizations they represent. While World War I and World War II veterans shaped the veterans' organizations we know today, it is the veterans of subsequent generations who will determine the future of those groups.

Veterans of all the military branches are honored with a parade float and welcomed to participate in the American Legion.

The American Legion

The American Legion is the nation's largest wartime service organization, committed to: mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome programs in communities, advocating for patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and continuing a devotion to fellow service members and veterans.

Congress chartered the American Legion in 1919 as a patriotic veterans' organization. In the 103 years the Legion and Auxiliary have existed, these organizations have served as a valuable resource for veterans and their families — to support them while they're alive and honor them when they pass away.

The Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. Today, membership stands at nearly 2 million with more than 13,000 posts worldwide. The leadership and the members of these posts exemplify their national mission statement: "To enhance the well-being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

Bill Hon is the commander of Indianola American Legion Post 165.

The American Legion Auxiliary serves side by side with the veterans who belong to the Legion. The members are direct family members of the Legion members. The organizations honor veterans and their families and support the community, influencing social change by advocating for hundreds of thousands of dollars of benefits for veterans and producing many essential programs for children and youth.

The Auxiliary's national mission is "to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military and their families, both at home and abroad."

Lucy Newcomb serves as the Auxiliary president for the Indianola American Legion Auxiliary Post 165.

The average age of a Legion member is 67 years old, with 20% — 400,000 members — over the age of 80. In response, the American Legion is actively recruiting members who are serving or have been honorably discharged.

"It is no secret that veterans' service organization membership has been consistently declining for many years," acknowledges the American Legion national leadership. "That may be changing. The American Legion is on track to reverse that trend in 2022."



The American Legion provides a color guard for various occasions including to lead parades.



Members of the American Legion Auxiliary honor and support veterans in a number of ways, including with a parade float.

Supporting fellow veterans

Hon says Legion and Auxiliary members have been busy preparing for Veterans Day ceremonies in Indianola "to honor those veterans who have served and survived and fallen and died in all great wars and those currently serving in the armed forces of the United States." In Indianola, Veterans Day is the largest observation of the year, but Memorial Day is a close second.

"We also celebrate with our community Memorial Day — or, as others have called it, Decoration Day — which honors all veterans who have been called forth to heaven's paradise

for a job well done on earth," says Hon.

One of the most prominent ways veterans are honored in Indianola is in local parades. Legion and Auxiliary members are regular participants in these festivities.

Throughout the year, the American Legion also provides military services at veterans' funerals.

"We provide a color guard, rifle detail and bugler for the families of deceased veterans, if requested by the families. We travel all over southern Iowa and especially to the Iowa Veterans Cemetery located in Adel."

Joe Moody heads up cadres that perform

FEATURE

military rites for funerals and arrange ceremonies for the Legion — a unique way that only veterans can be honored.

Another way the Legion members show this care for their fellow veterans is by checking in on them regularly.

“We do welfare checks on members we have not seen or heard from; we pick them up and bring them to meetings if they have no means of getting there,” Hon says.

For the service members who are still actively serving outside the United States, “We collectively create care packages — personal hygiene items, reading materials, food snacks, clothing items like socks, and other requested items not available where they are located,” Hon says. The Legion and Auxiliary members gather the items and send them.

Community contributions

The Legion and the Auxiliary focus on more than just their members. Their efforts expand across the greater Indianola area. The organizations often share funds to help other organizations supporting veterans and their families.

In addition, veterans’ organizations support local programs for youth. The local post has provided funds to help purchase band uniforms, give scholarships, and sponsor youth for Boys State to learn more about the structure of the government.

“We donate to community betterment in the name of all veterans,” says Hon.

Local membership

Since he became a member 12 years ago, Hon says American Legion membership has dropped.

“Our membership is getting older, and those older members who were here have since perished over time. Our membership currently is 284, and it was over 330 when I joined.”

This steady decrease over time means that the Legion has lost around 15% of its membership in the last decade alone. Yet, Legion leadership is dedicated to continuing to assist its members, their families and the greater community.

With membership declining, Hon worries about the organization’s future.

“Membership is declining faster than we can recruit new members,” he says. “So many young veterans returning and leaving active duty don’t have the time to join due to family obligations, employment priorities, and just trying to distance themselves from any military structure



A Memorial Day service is held to honor those who have died in the line of duty.

until they are re-acclimated back to civilian life.”

The Legion and the Auxiliary are actively recruiting younger veterans and their families. Veterans’ organizations serve as valuable sources of encouragement and camaraderie for veterans who may need that after returning from their service. World War II veterans were the backbone of veterans’ organizations for decades, but few remain. Membership now comprises of veterans from the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq War, Afghanistan War, the Cold War and the War on Terrorism. They are focused on actively recruiting these veterans. Most of the time, new members join as a result of the recruitment efforts of current members. However, at times, Hon says the organization’s community engagement efforts encourage new members and veterans to join “after watching our ceremonies conducted either at local funerals or throughout the year.”

Spotlight on a notable soldier

All veterans are invited and encouraged to join, and the Legion and Auxiliary continue their recruitment efforts, saying all veterans deserve to be honored. One notable soldier from Indianola was honored for going above and beyond for his service. His name was Junior Dean Edwards. He began serving toward the end of World War II.

On Jan. 2, 1951, Edwards’ unit came under fire. He made three separate attempts to save them singlehandedly. He was mortally wounded in combat. His actions went above and beyond the call of duty, and he was posthumously

awarded the nation’s highest award, the Medal of Honor. He would be the only Iowan to receive this medal during the Korean war.

Without a building or park dedicated to him in his hometown of Indianola, the local Legion Post undertook fundraising to commission a bronze statue to honor him. Contributions have come from Indianola and around the nation. Soon, a statue will honor Edwards in the I.O.O.F. Cemetery in Indianola.

Veterans Day

Edwards and all other veterans are honored in Indianola during Memorial Day and Veterans Day with flags, parades and ceremonies. Hon shares that the Legion keeps a beacon of hope in the form of a green light at the Legion to support all veterans past and present and those on active duty every single day.

For more information on Legion and Auxiliary membership or assistance with honoring veterans with military funerals:

- Bill Hon – Indianola American Legion Post Commander, tazndad@yahoo.com
- Lucy Newcomb – Indianola Auxiliary President, cheflucynewcomb@yahoo.com
- Joe Moody – Military Funerals, jmoody1534@aol.com ■

Assistance and support for veterans

Polk County: www.polkcounty.gov; click on Veterans Affairs

Iowa: www.va.iowa.gov

Veterans crisis line: 1-800-273-8255

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E-5 YN2

U.S. NAVY

How can the public best honor veterans?

"More recognition for female veterans. During my time in the Navy, women were not allowed to serve aboard ship or deploy to a war zone. That has changed, and today we have female combat veterans in all branches." — Sherry Gillespie

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How can the public best honor veterans?

"After moving to Indianola a year ago from the south, it became apparent right away that Indianola and Iowans in general have a deep tradition of honoring and supporting veterans, and for that I am grateful." — Roy Kaye



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EVERETT BROWN

Sergeant/Medic Army

1953-1955 Deployed to Korea

How can the public best honor veterans?

"We should continue to make sure that veterans have access to mental health services, medical care and other resources (i.e. housing, employment and general needs)." — Everett Brown



GENE HILGER

Senior Master Sergeant

U.S. AIR FORCE Deployments: Two to Japan, one to Okinawa and one to Libya

How can the public best honor veterans?

"The public can best honor veterans by ensuring that those who were wounded or injured are provided with only the best medical and rehabilitative care and by never forgetting those who made the ultimate sacrifice." — Gene Hilger



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HOLIDAY decorating ideas

With the holidays around the corner, it is time to start thinking about holiday decorating. Most plants go dormant for the winter, so it is especially meaningful to decorate with fresh boughs of evergreen to ring in the season. Gather different varieties of evergreens and tie together and make a cheerful door swag.

Porch pots add a festive touch to greet your holiday guests as they arrive for festivities. If a porch pot is a new idea, simply search out a container from your summer planters, add sand or gravel in the bottom for weight, then let the fun begin. Gather or purchase a variety of different evergreens and arrange them in your container. Add a few red or yellow twig dogwood stems, and birch poles of varying heights. Add some sparkle with glittered festive stars, painted pinecones and finally, a bow. You now have a festive greeter at your door. Consider fresh garlands around your front porch railing and deck railing, and don't forget the bows.

Need more festive drama? Take some additional summer pots and line the walkway, fill with yellow and red dogwood twigs, some greens laid on top of the pot and a string of outdoor lights on top or the greens of each pot, and you will have a line of "burning holiday



containers." Have some unused ice skates (or some from the local thrift store)? Fill with greens, some pinecones, add a bow and hang on the door by the laces — a perfect greeting. Front porch swing? Cover with boughs, some pinecones and ornaments and spray with fake snow. Instant "wow" for winter flair.

Inside you can wow with Amariyls bulbs/flowers. Be sure to purchase jumbo bulbs so you have two to three flower stems and plant now for holiday blooms (and they last for a month of blooming). Poinsettias are a perennial favorite and now come in a myriad of colors and sizes, from 2- to 4-inches tall to more than 2-foot tall. The secret to keeping them nice through the season? Keep them out of drafts in cooler areas when not entertaining and let the soil dry between waterings. They don't like wet feet, so over watering will not be good. And then there is the holiday cactus. These succulents require little care. Less water is better, but they still need some water. Blooms will be encouraged with 8-10 hours of light with temps of 60-65 degrees. Only water when the soil dries out and never let them stand in water.

The holidays are just around the corner, so let's decorate! ■

Information provided by Barry Laws, co-owner, Quilted Gardens Nursery and Landscaping, 19635 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-720-3089, www.quiltedgardens.com.



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RECIPE

A FOIL PACKET meal for sweet fall simplicity

(Family Features) Fall provides almost endless opportunities to gather friends and family around great food. From tailgates and family events to those precious last outdoor meals before winter sets in, the scenery of autumn is a perfect backdrop for sharing meals together.

Those favorite fall foods are often best when they're delicious without complications. Taking the guesswork out of cool-weather classics can be as easy as these sweet potato foil packet tacos, which are loaded with flavor and can be customized to fit everyone's taste buds with personalized toppings.

As the key ingredient, sweet potatoes show off their versatility as an ideal addition to simple or elevated sweet or savory dishes. Because you can cook and prepare them multiple ways — such as baked, microwaved, grilled, slow cooked or on the stove — they're easy to use in a wide array of recipes.

Plus, according to the American Diabetes Association, sweet potatoes are a “diabetes superfood” because they're rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber.

Find more recipes at ncsweetpotatoes.com. ■

Sweet potato foil packet tacos

Recipe courtesy of the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission. Servings: 6

- 1/2 pound ground turkey
- 3 tablespoons taco seasoning
- 1/2 cup tomato sauce
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- nonstick cooking spray
- 2 pounds North Carolina sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups fresh chopped spinach
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- sour cream and guacamole (optional)
- Preheat oven to 425 F.
- In skillet over medium-high heat, brown ground meat. Stir in taco seasoning, tomato sauce and beans; set aside.
- Lay out six 12-inch aluminum foil pieces;



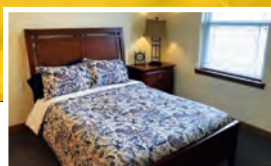
spray each with nonstick cooking spray.

- In center of each foil piece, place 1 cup sweet potatoes, 1 teaspoon butter, 1/8 teaspoon salt, 1/4 cup spinach, 1/3 cup taco meat and 1/4 cup cheese.
- Fold foil sides in over mixture; fold top and bottom foil ends inward and seal.
- Place packets on rimmed cookie sheet; bake until sweet potatoes are tender, about 25 minutes.
- Serve with sour cream or guacamole, if desired.

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What is often not understood is that the insurance that the other driver has is a liability policy (as opposed to health insurance). This means that the company will not pay for any medical treatment until the injured person signs a release ending all future claims from the accident.

We have seen situations where insurance companies try to settle a few days after an accident with a promise to pay existing medical costs plus a few hundred dollars for "inconvenience." One should be wary of such "quick settlements" because many times the extent of an injury may be unknown. For example, a person may think they suffered only a muscle strain only to discover that a more severe injury also occurred.

If you have health insurance or medical payment insurance on your car policy, it may be best to utilize those sources until you ultimately settle with the other driver's company for your total damages.

You should not expect the negligent party's insurance company to pay any bills until you have signed a release prepared by the insurance company. Be aware that, by signing the release, you are giving up any additional claims which result from the accident. ■

Information provided by Ken Winjum, The Winjum Law Firm, P.L.C., 1220 Sunset Drive., Suite 103, Norwalk, 515-981-5220, www.winjumlaw.com.



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YOUR CHOICE for home health is up to you

Has your healthcare provider told you that home health services might benefit you? If you're like most people, you're not quite sure what that kind of care entails, and why you might need it.

Home health care is clinical, medical supervision provided in a person's place of residence. It's usually prescribed by a doctor as part of a care plan following a person's hospitalization for illness or injury. It can also benefit older adults who are prone to falls or who have been diagnosed with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes or heart problems. It can include: medical testing; health monitoring; administration of prescription medication or injections; physical, occupational and/or speech therapy; or wound care.

Many providers, including healthcare systems, hospitals and senior-living organizations, offer home healthcare. Your doctor might make a recommendation, but, ultimately, the provider you choose is your decision. Here are some factors to consider when making that selection.

• **Is the provider Medicare- and Medicaid-certified?** Certification is a sign that the organization meets state and federal requirements and can be expected to provide quality care.

• **What services does the provider offer?** Look for one that specializes in physical, occupational and speech therapy, among other services, so caregivers can address a range of needs.

• **Is the provider established?** Online reviews can be a great resource, but don't stop there; search sites that offer ratings and quality scores, including patient-satisfaction scores, and ask friends and family members for opinions. It's not unusual for providers to enter and exit the market quickly. Consider one with positive outcomes that can be supported.

• **Can the provider break down, quickly and easily, the percentage of services your insurance will pay for, and how much of the cost, if any, will be out of pocket?** Make sure you thoroughly understand this information before services begin.

• **Ask about the qualifications and credentials of the individuals who would be providing your care.** Your team should include people with certifications and licenses that are appropriate for the services they will be administering. If you're promised a nurse, ask and make sure the person who will be caring for you is either a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse.

• **Ask how your care plan will be fulfilled.** A home health care plan should be created for you, in conjunction with your doctor. It should be tailored to your specific needs to help ensure that you receive the right care at the right time.

Those questions should help get you started in choosing a provider that will make a positive difference in your well-being for years to come. ■

Ward Phillips is a senior leader with WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home health care, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.





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– Teresa A., Urbandale

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TAX-EFFICIENT ways to transfer wealth

Gift-giving is a powerful financial tool that can be just as personally rewarding for the donor as it is the receiver. A well-thought-out gifting plan will take advantage of the proper timing, amount and types of gifts made. Below are a few tax-efficient transfers worth considering.



Annual gifting

The annual gift tax exclusion for 2022 is \$16,000 per donor (spouses have a combined \$32,000). This amount can be gifted to any number of people, per year, without having to file a gift tax return. Anything above this limit generally is not taxed to either party, it simply reduces the donor's federal lifetime exemption for gifts and estates. Consider the type of gift given as well as the amounts. Rather than cash, gifts can also be made with appreciated assets to shift gains from higher income taxpayers to those with lower income.

Direct payments

Making direct payments for qualified medical care or educational expenses on behalf of a loved one is a simple and straightforward gifting strategy. For example, many schools will allow you to pay tuition directly and avoid any gift tax consequences. There are no limits on the amount of these gifts, but they must be paid directly to the institution.

Roth IRA conversions

Depending on your income tax bracket and overall financial situation, it could make sense to convert some or all Traditional IRA assets to Roth IRAs. In the year the conversion takes place, the account owner will pay income taxes on the amount converted. As a result, the assets in the Roth IRA can grow tax-free and eventually be distributed tax-free to beneficiaries.

Irrevocable trusts

For more complicated planning, one might consider putting appreciating assets into various irrevocable trusts held for the benefit of heirs as another potentially attractive strategy.

Irrevocable trusts can remove the transferred assets (plus any future appreciation) out of the grantor's estate while potentially retaining access to a certain level of cash flow.

Charitable giving

There are several ways to effectively transfer appreciated assets or pre-tax assets to charities to avoid gain or income recognition completely. If you are considering charitable giving, it is especially important to consider how those gifts are made rather than simply gifting cash. Qualified Charitable Deductions (QCD) for required minimum distributions are a great way to get tax benefit for charitable gifts. ■

For more information, contact Nathaniel Tagtow with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. 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. City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

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GRANT Writing 101 workshop offered

Representatives of nonprofits, local government, schools and other organizations are encouraged to register for Grant Writing 101, which will be presented at ISU Extension – Warren County in Indianola Dec. 1, from 6-9 p.m.

Grant Writing 101 will provide hands-on training in seeking and writing successful grant applications. The program is being sponsored by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach – Warren County. Participants will need to come to the workshop with a laptop or tablet device.

The fee for the workshop is \$25, with registration required by Monday, Nov. 28. To register, use the registration link at <https://go.iastate.edu/FSQN0S>.

Grant Writing 101 will be presented by Jane Nolan Goeken, community and economic development specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. She has extensive experience writing and reviewing grant applications and working with various federal, state, local and private foundation grant programs. Goeken will assist workshop participants in exploring various public and private funding sources and provide instruction and tips on planning projects and writing successful grant applications.

For more information about the workshop, contact Jane Goeken at jngoeken@iastate.edu or 712-240-2504 or Bethany Cecot at the Warren County Extension and Outreach office at bcecot@iastate.edu or 515-961-6237.

YOUTH Leadership Initiative Class of 2023 announced

The Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute announced participants in the Youth Leadership Initiative Class of 2023. The Youth Leadership Initiative provides high school students with hands-on leadership experiences that build self-confidence and encourage engagement in all levels of community life. At the conclusion of the program, students will: value community involvement, demonstrate professional skills and an understanding of career opportunities, demonstrate the five practices of exemplary leadership, and have developed lifelong relationships with peers, mentors and community members.

The group includes 36 students from 20 public and private schools from across Greater Des Moines. Students will meet twice a month to discuss issues and opportunities in our region and fine-tune their leadership skills. Participation in the YLI program is tuition free for all students, thanks to community sponsors.

The 2023 class includes Nick Michel, a student at Indianola High School. For more information, visit gdmli.com/yli.

BBQ champs named

Hundreds visited downtown Hartford for food, festivities and fun on Saturday, July 16 at the 2022 Hartford BBQ Bash. The Hartford Betterment Committee hosted the Hartford BBQ Bash this summer. The day began with a meat-smoking and grilling competition that featured six teams of cooks preparing brisket, pork butt, ribs and chicken.

Warren County Farm Bureau held a separate Cookout Contest, designed to promote Iowa meat. Contestants competed in the following categories: beef, pork, lamb and poultry. The Cookout Contest Overall Champion was Steve Heaberlin of Indianola. Steve won first place in the lamb, beef and poultry categories. Steve went on to compete at the State Fair in the beef category and ended up being crowned the 2022 Iowa Farm Bureau Cookout Contest Champion.

Scott Chaney of Indianola was the Reserve Champion at the county level. Scott won first place in the pork category and went on to compete at the State Fair with pork. ■

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations



Vivo Chamber Players recital

Sunday, Nov. 13, 3 p.m.
Lekberg Hall, Amy Robertson Music
Center, Simpson College

The Vivo Chamber Players consist of Simpson's instrumental music faculty and additional professional string players. They will present a free hour of music spanning the time period from Vivaldi to John Williams. Audience members will be familiar with the tender "Theme from Schindler's List" by John Williams, the Hollywood composer best known for his "Star Wars" and "Harry Potter" film scores. They may be less familiar with the beautiful "Prayer for Peace," also by Williams, from the movie "Munich."

In addition to the traditional string ensemble, the recital will feature some unusual instrument combinations. A bass and cello ensemble will perform a tango, and a string and oboe ensemble will present a movement from a Vivaldi quartet.

The performance is open to audience members of all ages. Young students who have an interest in string and woodwind instruments will have a chance to observe professional players performing in an up-close setting. For more information, call the Simpson Music Office at 515-961-1637.

Help with Medicare Annual Drug Plan Open Enrollment

By appointment through Dec. 7
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W.
Second Ave.

Every year between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7, persons with Medicare Part D have the opportunity to review their drug plan coverage. SHIIP/SMP volunteer counselors are available for a free, confidential and unbiased review of cost and coverage, with changes taking effect Jan. 1, 2023. Call 515-962-5375 to schedule your appointment. Phone appointments also available.



Tour of Homes and holiday market

Friday and Saturday, Dec. 9-10,
5-9 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 2
p.m. on Saturday.

Tour local homes that are all decked out for the holidays. Tickets (\$20) are on sale at McCoy True Value, Hy-Vee, Lulabelle and Peoples Bank. A bigger and better holiday market will also be held in conjunction with the tour at the Presbyterian Church, same days and hours. Admission to the market is free and several local vendors with a wide variety of products will be in attendance.



Tallgrass Theatre Co. production

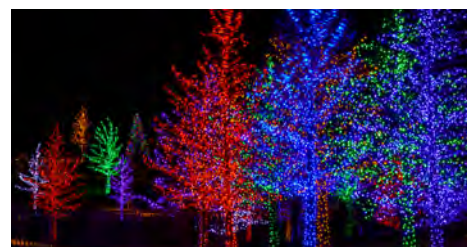
Fridays - Sundays, through Nov. 21
Tallgrass Theatre, 2019 Grand Ave.
Suite 100, West Des Moines

"Miss Bennett: Christmas at Pemberley,"
will be performed. Go to tallgrasstheatre.org
for more information or to buy tickets.

Gina Gedler & Ben Hagen – All I Want for Christmas

Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 2 p.m.
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W.
Second Ave.

Vocalist Gina Gedler and keyboardist Ben Hagen return to the Indianola Activity Center for a free Christmas show that brings holiday cheer. Enjoy classic holiday songs...some with a twist. Hosted by Indianola Parks & Recreation, with dessert provided by Hy-Vee.



Magical Night of Lights Drive Thru

Fridays and Saturdays, Nov. 25 - Dec.
17, 6-8 p.m.
Pickard Park, 2205 E. Second Ave.,
Indianola

Admission is a freewill donation with all proceeds distributed locally. Follow the Facebook pages for each event to stay up to date.

Afternoon Adventures: Grant Wood – Prairie Rebel

Tuesday, Nov. 29 at 2 p.m.
Indianola Activity Center, 2204 W.
Second Ave.

Performer Tom Milligan brings Iowa native and artist Grant Wood to life in a free 45-minute one-man show, chatting with the audience as if talking to an old friend across the backyard fence. This program is funded by Humanities Iowa and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and is also sponsored by Community 1st Credit Union.

Indoor Play Dates

Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to
noon, through March 8 (No play
dates on Nov. 23, Dec. 21 or Dec.
28), Indianola Activity Center,
2204 W. Second Ave. (Hwy 92 W.),
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are cancelled or delayed due
to weather. Sponsored by
Peoples Bank.



EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

Elks Pancake Breakfast Buffet and Bake Sale

Sunday, Nov. 13, 8-11:30 a.m.
West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

The breakfast buffet includes: biscuits and gravy, french toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and all-you-can-eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee. Enjoy a bloody mary or mimosa for only \$3.50. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and younger. The breakfast is held the second Sunday of the month. All proceeds support the Elks Hoop Shoot Program and other youth activities.



'She Loves Me'

Dec. 2-11
Ankeny Community Theatre, 1932 S.W. Third St.

This charming musical is about Amalia and Georg, competing perfume shop clerks. Both respond to a "lonely hearts advertisement" in the newspaper, exchanging love letters, but the identity of their admirers remains unknown. Tickets and information can be found at ankenycommunitytheatre.com.



Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus

Dec. 11, 8-11:30 a.m.
West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Special guests, Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, will be giving out goody bags, talking with the children and providing photo opportunities. The breakfast buffet includes biscuits and gravy, french toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes and all-you-can-eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk, and coffee. Enjoy a bloody mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and younger. There will also be a Christmas bake sale. Proceeds support the Elks Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities and community charities. ■



LIVE MUSIC

From classical music to classic rock, find a concert to attend this fall. More and more are being scheduled every day, so be sure to check back with venue websites.

DES MOINES CIVIC CENTER

221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

- Nov. 13: Joe Bonamassa at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 23: Mannheim Steamroller Christmas at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

DES MOINES COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

Sheslow Auditorium, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines
desmoinescommunityorchestra.org

DES MOINES SYMPHONY

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

- Nov. 19-20: "The Planets"
- Dec. 31: "New Year's Eve Pops: Frank & The Great Ladies of Song"

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines
hoyshtsherman.org

- Nov. 12: The Black Jacket Symphony performs Led Zeppelin IV at 8 p.m.
- Nov. 14: Indigo Girls with special guests Chapel Hart at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 17: Dropkick Murphys with Jaime Wyatt and Jesse Ahern at 7:15 p.m.
- Nov. 22: Steve Vai performs the "Iniolate Tour" at 8 p.m.

TEMPLE THEATER

1011 Locust St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

- Nov. 13: Amy Helm at 7:30 p.m.

WELLS FARGO ARENA

223 Center St., Des Moines
iowaeventscenter.com

- Nov. 16: Hillsong United and Chris Tomlin at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 17: Eagles in the "Hotel California 2022 Tour" at 8 p.m.

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MILITARY moms unite

Local group supports their soldiers, marines, sailors... and each other.



From left, Audra Zimmerman, Heather Thomas, Tracie Heckinger and Korbi Munoz were friends first, then Marine moms. Now they support other moms in the local military community.

Being a military mom is not for the weak of heart. Four Indianola moms know this firsthand and want to ensure that every military mom in Warren County feels supported and cared for.

Korbi Munoz, Heather Thomas, Tracie Heckinger and Audra Zimmerman have been friends for many years. Their boys have been friends since middle school and are now Marines.

"Every single day I am filled with pride at the bravery and commitment my son, Kade, has shown to his country," says Korbi. "Not knowing when I will get to hug him again is hard, but I know he is deeply cared for by our loving God."

Heather's son was the last of the four to join. When he left for boot camp, the other three moms were able to offer a lot of advice and "what to expect" conversations.

They formed a group called B.A.M.M. (Bad A** Military Moms) and met at a local restaurant.

"We talked about the struggles, rewards,

pride and the 'what's nexts' because, with the military, you just never know," says Heather. "We also knew other moms who had children in the military and decided we would reach out to them, too."

Today B.A.M.M. represents every branch except for Coast Guard and Space Force. The group has about 40 military moms from Warren and Madison counties and is growing.

The group meets once a month. They often have meetings devoted to certain topics/activities (i.e. preparing care packages or taking Christmas gifts to a veterans home), but they typically try to keep things less structured.

"If a mom needs to talk, the group is a safe place," Audra says. "We've found that breaking into smaller groups allows more intimate discussions, support and the opportunity to simply get to know one another better."

Their private Facebook group welcomes any military mom, and this is where they discuss volunteer opportunities, world events that involve the military, as well as homecomings and celebrations. They also have a connection

to the Indianola American Legion and reach out for names of veterans needing help so they can assist in coordinating resources.

"Sometimes, our discussions can become very personal, and that is why our FB group is open only to local military moms," says Tracie. "Our goal is to provide resources and friendships that perhaps our other groups of friends may not relate to."

Any and all outreach/community projects the group does are funded strictly out of their own pockets. While they would love to do some fundraising activities, the moms say it would be more to raise awareness in the community than for monetary gain.

Next year, the women hope to walk in parades, set up booths at fairs and other events to draw more moms in and offer more opportunities to sponsor, encourage and support the local military community.

Military moms are invited to join them at their next meeting Thursday, Nov. 10, 5:30 p.m. at Brickhouse Tavern, 107 N. Buxton St., Indianola. ■

BLAST from the past

Giese's cars rekindle memories... and create new ones.



Tony Giese's cars represent the past, and he and his wife, Cheryl, are not just owners but caretakers preserving pieces of history.

Tony Giese is a car guy. But not just any cars... old, classic cars. And trucks, too.

"If we're driving down a gravel road and see an old, rusty car in a backyard or on the side of the road, we always circle back around, and Tony gets out to look at it," says wife, Cheryl. "I can show him a photo of any old car, and he can name exactly what model/make it is."

As a young kid, Tony enjoyed reading about cars and trucks in books and magazines. At age 18, he bought his first car — a 1967 Chevy Camaro — from his brother.

"It was red with a black top," he says. "I can still hear that V8 engine. To this day, nothing can compare to the sights and sounds of a good, old muscle car."

When Tony got married and started a family, his interest in cars took a back seat for many years.

"It became more about practicality and affordability... or just getting from point A to point B," he explains.

After retiring and losing his first wife, Tony eventually rekindled his passion for cars. His first find was a 1960 teal and white Ford F100. Next, he purchased a 1949 Ford F1, which is currently in the shop getting its engine rebuilt. A 1927 Ford Model T Coupe rounds out his collection. He also has a storage garage full of various car parts and pieces he's acquired over the years — mostly from junkyards.

Tony and Cheryl married on Sept. 18, 2021, and the cars are something they now both enjoy.

"I grew up in same era as Tony and always liked looking at cars, but since we've been together, it's a lot more fun," says Cheryl, smiling. "We even had the F100 and coupe on display outside our wedding venue."

Don't be surprised if you see Tony and Cheryl out for a drive around Indianola.

"We really enjoy the coupe... it's hot in the summer, and it's loud," says Tony. "The Ford F100 is great for Sunday drives to go get ice cream or take to car shows."

When it comes to a dream car, Tony says he's always wanted a 1955 Chevy — similar to the 1956 his brother had.

"The Chevy grew in value so quickly that I never could afford it," he explains. "Today, we're talking anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000 — and that's not even for one in good shape."

Tony and Cheryl recently celebrated their one-year anniversary and are simply loving life together. When they're not "cruising," they enjoy attending their grandchildren's activities, family get-togethers, camping in their RV and traveling. ■

COUNTING your 'other' blessings

"Then Jesus answered, 'Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?' " — Luke 17:18

As Jesus is traveling toward Jerusalem, He is approached by ten lepers. They cry out to Him: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." And Jesus does. He heals them and sends them to the priests to prove it. That's the first gift.

These "first gifts" are usually the ones that we name quickly when we give thanks or count our blessings. They are the gifts of "clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children..." These things are certainly blessings from God, but they are only half the story.

As the ten lepers head off to the priest, all of them receive healing but only one realizes who gave the healing. This leper returns to give thanks to Jesus, acknowledging the One who gave Him his life back. In returning to Jesus, the leper receives another, deeper gift: faith.

It is faith alone that allows us to give thanks to God for all that He gives. Without faith, we believe that the good things we have in our lives have come from ourselves. Faith informs us that all these things are gifts from God and His gracious work. "All of this He does out of fatherly, divine, goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me."

As you sit around your table giving thanks this year, be sure to thank God for the faith that enables you to count your other blessings. ■

Article provided by Pastor Tom Vanderbilt, Mount Calvary Church, Indianola.



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THINKING about OTC hearing aids?

With over-the-counter (OTC) hearing devices now available in stores and online, you may wonder if this new, do-it-yourself option is the best approach to treating hearing loss.

The truth is that managing your hearing health on your own has its drawbacks. The best first step for any individual with hearing difficulties is to complete a comprehensive hearing evaluation with a licensed audiologist, even if they are already planning to buy an OTC hearing aid.



Why you need an audiologist

• **Rule out medical conditions** — During an evaluation, an audiologist will check for common medical causes of hearing loss, which can range from excessive earwax to a tumor. If a medical condition is causing your hearing loss, buying an OTC device won't help you hear better — and not seeking treatment for an underlying medical issue could harm your overall health.

• **Identify degrees of hearing loss** — An audiologist also determines the severity and type of hearing loss an individual may be experiencing. Knowing this information is important because OTCs are only appropriate for people with mild to moderate hearing loss. If you

have severe hearing loss, OTCs won't provide sufficient amplification.

• **Provide treatment for all ages** — Do you have a child with hearing loss? Since OTCs are for adults 18 years and older, they will require prescription devices from an audiologist.

• **Serve as a long-term hearing health care partner** — An audiologist helps guide you to select the device best suited to your needs. This could be an OTC device today, but a prescription device may be more appropriate in the future. Hearing loss treatment is not a one-time event.

If you require prescription devices, audiologists are skilled in selecting appropriate technology, programming to fit your unique hearing needs and providing follow-up care for optimal hearing. With OTCs, you are on your own to fit these devices.

Seeking treatment for hearing loss is a life-changing decision. You should have a trusted professional guiding your journey to hearing better. Before purchasing any device — OTC or prescription — schedule a comprehensive hearing evaluation with your local audiologist. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, 515-416-5990, www.IowaHearingCenter.com.



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WHAT IS community-style acupuncture?

The Community Acupuncture movement began around 2010. Community-style acupuncture is a style of acupuncture where the patient remains fully clothed and is seated in a recliner or chair within a group. Community-style acupuncture has many benefits, including making treatments more accessible and affordable. If you have received acupuncture in a private setting, this can seem strange to share a treatment room with other people.



There are many current clinical studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of using acupuncture in a group/community setting. Studies show that patients release increased numbers of endorphins (natural pain chemicals produced in the body) into their bloodstream while being treated in a group setting. Patients who have needle phobias or have experienced certain trauma find that being treated in a group feels safer for them. Friends and family can also be

treated in the group supporting each other in their healing process.

The community setting can be used to treat many health conditions, acute, chronic and management of conditions. Most often it is used for pain, anxiety and depression, side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, headaches, arthritis, immune system regulation, insomnia and much more. To those who may have concerns, acupuncture is a wonderful complement to treatments they may already be receiving in Western Medicine.


Community-style acupuncture clinics are contributing to a societal need for affordable health care in America. Acupuncture has shown in multiple research studies to treat a broad spectrum of disease in both the short and long term. ■

Information provided by Dr. Renee Dalrymple, LAc, SEED Meditation Instructor, Soaring Crane Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, 14849 130th Ave., Indianola, 515-729-2705, call or text.

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INSURANCE By Mike Richey

IS EVERYONE living in your home covered?

In general, a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy will cover named insureds, as well as additional household members who are related to a named insured by blood, marriage or adoption. A named insured is someone who is specifically named on an insurance policy. The named insured is sometimes referred to as the policy owner or policyholder.



A typical homeowner's or renter's insurance policy does not cover a household member who is not a named insured or related to a named insured. For example, if Tom and Julie are an unmarried couple who live together, but Tom is the only named insured, then Julie is probably not covered under the insurance policy. In this scenario, Tom and Julie should consult with their insurance agent right away for guidance on the best way to get her covered. Julie wouldn't want to find herself without coverage if her belongings were to be lost in a fire or tornado, or if someone were to sue her for damages.

If you suspect that someone living in your household may not be covered under your homeowner's or renter's policy, talk to your insurance agent today. ■

Information provided by Mike Richey Agency Inc., American Family Insurance, 204 E. Detroit Ave., Indianola, 515-961-8889, mrichy@amfam.com.

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HEALTH By Andrea Gustafson

THE CHANGE of seasons

A change in mood?

Fall is a time of transition. The weather is changing; it's getting darker and cooler. Some find this time of year exciting and full of joy. Others find it challenging and notice a change in their mood and motivation. Some experience symptoms similar to depression. This may be due to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). So, what can you do if you struggle this time of year?



- **Get more vitamin D.** Whether it is taking a supplement or being intentional about getting outside, vitamin D can help your mood.

- **Use a light therapy lamp.** To make up for the lack of daylight in the fall and winter, you can use a light therapy lamp to supplement.

- **Be intentional about doing things you enjoy.** It's easy when it is dark and cold to just stay home and be in your pajamas by 6 p.m. Make sure you are participating in hobbies and are making time to be social and/or active.

If this time of year is consistently a struggle for you, develop a plan now. You may not be able to completely stop the winter blues or SAD, but planning now can help lessen the impact. And don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether it is a trusted friend or it's time to talk to a professional, ask for help. ■

Information provided by Andrea Gustafson, LISW, JMG Therapy and Counseling Services, associated with SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, andrea@jmgtherapy.com, 515-777-1209.

MEET Rob Hawkins

Military/law enforcement experience provides perspective in the classroom.

For Rob Hawkins, serving his country was a calling. Not only did his dad and brother serve, but so did several other family members.

"I got much more out of my military experience than I put in," he says. "It exposed me to diversity as well as many leadership opportunities that, before I joined, were unimaginable."

Hawkins attended Buena Vista after graduating high school, but, after one semester, he joined the National Guard. During his 22 years of service, he deployed five times overseas, including four combat tours and Operation Joint Endeavor, a Bosnian peacekeeping mission where he served as a backfill for troops in Germany.

Because of his work as a military police officer while in Germany, he took an interest in law enforcement. He returned home in 1996 and, in 1997, was hired as a police officer with the Pella Police Department. He joined the Indianola Police Department in 2000.

Hawkins eventually took advantage of his GI Bill benefits and, in 2012, graduated with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from American Military University. In 2019, he earned his master's degree in criminal justice/public administration from Liberty University.

However, Hawkins felt another calling — substitute teaching.

"After being an instructor in the Army and then spending so much time around our schools as a police officer, I felt I could make a difference in the classroom, too," he explains. "Being an officer gives me a different perspective in that I understand the issues and pitfalls many students face outside the school setting."

In the classroom, Hawkins allows students to be themselves, while maintaining the order needed to achieve the desired classroom task.

He took the Substitute Authorization Course through Heartland AEA, where he learned about classroom management, lesson planning, and other skills related to handling a classroom in the K-12 environment.

Hawkins has subbed K-12 and at all six buildings in the Indianola school district.

"The only sub opportunities I typically turn down are in math classes because I'm just not good at math," he says, laughing. "I don't want to be the sub that doesn't know how to answer a student's question."

Hawkins loves working with students of all ages and says he learns more from them than he could ever teach.

"Subbing is a way to invest in our youth as well as gain a new perspective," he says. "Being in the classroom is not only rewarding, but it keeps me on my toes. It's also a great way to supplement your income, while providing support for the teachers in our district." ■



Rob Hawkins wears many hats, including National Guard veteran, Indianola police officer and substitute teacher. This year marks his 11th year subbing for the Indianola Community School District.

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CHAMBER By Brenda Easter

PAUSE, reflect and celebrate

What are you grateful for? Now is the perfect time to reflect on the wonderful, positive things in your life. With the holidays approaching, I think everyone should press the pause button, give thanks, and remember why these things are important to you.

I am grateful that, for the first time in several years, construction on the Indianola Downtown Square is complete. The Justice Center is open and so are all of the sidewalks and roads. This is a monumental moment for Indianola.

I am grateful for our local businesses who support our community in so many ways. Now, it's our turn to thank them. What if we all focus on buying every gift this year from an Indianola business, no matter what? Here's a few ideas on how to do just that:

1. Make your list of who you need to shop for, including something for our local charities.
2. Intentionally think of gifts you can give to those people from a local business. If you aren't certain, take a stroll around town and visit some of our local businesses for creative ideas. Gift cards coupled with a favorite food or beverage wrapped in a lovely gift box or bag is a great gift. What about a basket full of gift cards from your favorite businesses?
3. Still not certain? Ask one of our local merchants for ideas. Utilize your personal shoppers who are more than happy and willing to give you ideas on finding that perfect gift.

We have a big shop local weekend Friday, Nov. 25 and Small Business Saturday, Nov. 26. As you celebrate the holidays with family and friends, be sure to celebrate and thank our local businesses who support our community in so many ways. When we support our local businesses, 68 cents of every dollar stays in Indianola to support our schools, roads and other infrastructure projects. It definitely matters.

Now we celebrate. Look local for your family entertainment and fun holiday activities. Be sure to check the Chamber community calendar at www.indianolachamber.com or Facebook page for all of the upcoming holiday activities. You can also scan the QR code from our ad in this edition of the Indianola Living magazine.

Our retail stores are stocked with merchandise, our restaurants and bars are ready to serve you, and business owners of all professions are glad to see you. Take a moment to pause, reflect, celebrate and #ThinkIndianolaFirst this holiday season. ■

Information provided by Brenda Easter, president/CEO of the Indianola Chamber of Commerce, 111 N. Buxton St., No. 117, 515-961-6269, www.indianolachamber.com.



OUT & ABOUT



Brian Vos and Kelly Nunez at the first annual GEF Food Drive in honor of Alice Brito on Aug. 27 at Grace Evangelical Free Church.



Jacki Stewart and Scott Duncan at the first annual GEF Food Drive in honor of Alice Brito on Aug. 27 at Grace Evangelical Free Church.



Becky Clausen, Jacki Stewart and Pam Bachof at the first annual GEF Food Drive in honor of Alice Brito on Aug. 27 at Grace Evangelical Free Church.



Mike Coppess and Larry Lepper at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



Bruce McClafin and Frank and Barb Rasko at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



Deb Elgin and Sue Coppess at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



Larry McConnell and Peggy and Dick Stoffer at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



KD, Elliott, Oliver, Luana, Dennis and Jan Shull and Quinn and Sophie Stafford at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



Jodee and Charles Sapper at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



Gary and Janet Lehmann and guest of honor Dennis Shull at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.



Arlen Schrum and Jim Weinman at a retirement party held for Dennis Shull on Oct. 20 at Indianola Country Club.

VOLLEY- BALL Meet

Scouting the Winterset volleyball team in action at home on Oct. 18.



Colby Kobeski and Chelsey Clark



Jacy Downey and Abbie Blake



Brynn Bishop and Dana Blake



Macy Wentz and Sully Downey



Zoey Belt, Mackenzie Sloan and Tori Runyan



Kailey Peters and Carmen Christensen



Maci Lerseth and Camryn Overton



Lauren Olson and Aspen Nelsen

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MUSIC Under The Stars

Benoit enjoys being a part of music history.

Indianola's John Benoit is equal part music historian and musician, as he is a trombone player in Music Under The Stars, a free outdoor band concert series that takes place on the steps of the State Capitol in Des Moines each summer.

For Benoit, the opportunity to be a part of music history is the straw that stirs his drink.

"The biggest highlight for me is knowing that I am getting to take part in an American musical tradition that stretches back 150 years," Benoit says.

"In addition, I like the relaxed atmosphere of the concerts. The band sits facing the Capitol building while the audience sits facing the city. Thus, the band gets to watch the effect of the setting sun on the magnificent Capitol building while the audience gets to take in the Des Moines skyline. I also like the sound. The acoustics in front of the State Capitol are surprisingly good for an outdoor setting."

The Music Under the Stars series began 75 years ago, but the tradition of public concert band performances goes back to the 19th century when many Civil War military ensembles morphed into town bands in the years after the war, Benoit says. The peak of the town band movement was in the early 20th century, from 1900-1930.

"Back then, any town with more than a few hundred people probably had its own town band, complete with instruments, uniforms and a paid director," he says. "Indianola had a town band during those years. The town band movement started losing steam after 1930 when public schools started supporting bands. Nonetheless, town bands persist to this day with active bands in Des Moines, Burlington, Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls, Fort Dodge, Mason City and other towns.

Benoit has a website with many old photos of town bands he's collected at <http://iowastownbands.com>.

Music has been a part of Benoit's life since elementary school. He eventually earned a bachelor's degree in trombone performance from Louisiana State University and a master's degree and Ph.D. in music theory from the University of Texas at Austin. He has taught in the Music Department at Simpson College since 1994.

"After all of these years, I have never gotten tired of making music," he says. "I play every opportunity that I get, and, whenever I hear a good band, I wish I was playing in it."

Music Under The Stars is one of the ways he fills his soul. And he wants to share that with others, too.

"I encourage folks to give the concert a shot if they haven't already," he says. "Bring a lawn chair or blanket. The programs — which are different each week — feature a lot of variety. The music is mostly acoustic, so it is never too loud. It is a very relaxing evening overall." ■



John Benoit is equal part music historian and musician.

GRATITUDE day

I'm not really suggesting any kind of official or permanent name change but am instead putting it out there for each of us to consider thinking about a certain upcoming holiday maybe a little differently than we have in the past. Or maybe it's more accurate to say, "more mindfully" than we have in the past.

Not long after this issue of Indianola Living arrives at your homes, many of us will be observing Thanksgiving Day in one way or another. And, let's be honest, that usually means eating lots and lots of food. You'll find no criticism from me in all of that. Me and food go way back. And, what's more, the smells and tastes of the "just so" meals bring back many fond memories linking us with loved ones who may no longer be among us. It's a wonderful day.

But here's my suggestion. In your own mind — doesn't even have to be out loud in front of anyone else — call the day Gratitude Day. Uh, means pretty much the same thing, doesn't it? Yes, essentially it does. But I think that the mental change of a single word can cause us to reflect a bit, and that's really the point of the idea. In the midst of food preparations, travel, family gatherings — to reflect a bit.

To whom are we grateful? (Or, to whom are we thankful, if you want to keep the name.) But now we're a step away from just the "what" of being thankful. Thankful for my family, my stuff, my opportunities... of course. Yet, to whom is the question.

An interesting little phrase is inserted into a discussion of Christ in Colossians 3:15-16. For the sake of space, I'm only listing a portion, but it runs basically like this — "Let the peace of the Messiah...control your hearts. Be thankful. Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you." Christ, the Messiah, brings a benefit to those who trust Him: the benefit of peace with God. And we're encouraged to be thinking continually on that wonderful message. And, in the middle of this we're told, be thankful — to God. To turn our minds and hearts towards the giver of all things.

James 1:17 — Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. ■

Information provided by Kevin Mayer, New Heights Church, 200 E. First Ave., Indianola, 515-442-5111.



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