

JOHNSTON

JANUARY 2023

# Living

MAGAZINE

## Digging Up ROOTS

Residents share their  
family tree discoveries

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WELCOME

## MY NATIVE American heritage

As a youth, my mother told my siblings and me that our great-great-grandmother was a full-blooded Cherokee Indian from the "Crow's Feet" clan. We believed her, as we didn't have any reason not to — other than the facts that her father's last name was Lane, her mother's was Leonard, and we all looked very much Irish. Even so, I was proud to have some Native American blood in me, even it was just a fraction.



A few decades passed, and I, on occasion, would try to find information on the Crow's Feet clan of Cherokee Indians. I didn't even know the difference in the terms of tribe or clan or any other affiliation, and Mom apparently didn't either. I could find nothing, but record-keeping was not a strength of the Cherokee tribe — or my mother.

I did learn that about 200 years ago, the Cherokee Indians were one tribe, or "Indian Nation," that lived in the southeast part of what is now the United States. During the 1830s and 1840s, many Cherokees were moved west to a territory that is now the State of Oklahoma. A number remained in the southeast and gathered in North Carolina where they purchased land and continued to live. Others went into the Appalachian Mountains to escape being moved west, and many of their descendants may still live there now. Geographically, this could fit with where I was told my ancestors lived. I was fascinated by this and wanted to learn more.

More time passed, and I learned about a free website called findagrave.com. I spent countless hours researching my family history on the site, and I found nothing that tied any of my ancestors to the Cherokee Indians. And, to this day, I can find nothing on Crow's Feet.

Mom may have been a bit confused, and we all know how stories change through generations. Even with the research I have done, I am certainly no expert. It is possible that I may have some Native American blood in me, and I could do a DNA test to find out. Someday, I might. In the meantime, I am exerting more of my energy on finding and celebrating ways we are all alike rather than how we are different.

In this month's feature story, we share how local residents are "digging up their roots" and learning about their ancestry, too. I hope you enjoy their stories. If you are inspired to do some research, I hope you find the tools and advice we offer helpful, too.

Thanks for reading. ■

**SHANE GOODMAN**

Publisher

515-953-4822, ext. 305

shane@dmcityview.com



**Tammy Pearson**

Editor  
515-953-4822 ext. 302  
tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

**Andrea Hodapp**

Advertising Account Executive  
515-883-0523  
andrea@iowalivingmagazines.com



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# Digging Up ROOTS

**Residents share their  
family tree discoveries**

**By Ashley Rullestad**

At some time or another, most of us have looked into our family trees, wondering what might be discovered among its branches. We wonder what stories our ancestors might have to share. Might we find “royal blood”? Might we find a pioneer? An inventor? A famed political leader? Or perhaps that our ancestors arrived at Ellis Island, escaped to the north through the Underground Railroad, or labored on the Panama Canal? We may wonder how our forefathers and mothers experienced history and how that may have changed the course of our own lives. Many have embarked on a genealogical quest for answers, including those who shared their discoveries with Johnston Living magazine.

Michael Blair values family ties, and, when he found his biological father, he discovered he had many more relatives.



## FEATURE

### A roller coaster ride

For some interested in tracing their roots, it's about more than learning about their ancestors; it's about finding out who they are. Such was the case for Michael Blair. Blair was born on Feb. 18, 1972, to 18-year-old Debbie Hohn. She and her parents raised him until he was 4 years old.

"My mother met and married Stephen Blair in 1976, and he adopted me at that time. My mother and father went on to have two girls. My sisters, Sarah Jackson and Sherri Smith, are the sweetest, kindest and most supportive people I know. They will always be my best friends. I was stunned when I was told as a young adult that the man who raised me was not my biological father, and that started my search."

Little information was known about his biological father. Blair was determined to learn his identity and learn more about himself. He and his wife, Amy, searched for 25 years with the help of private investigators, lawyers and genealogy experts but had no luck.

Finally, in December 2016, Blair took a

DNA test.

"I found out that, in the Ancestry database, my DNA had matched with people I never knew existed. I reached out to the relative who was the closest DNA match. Luckily, my message was answered and, with her help, I found my bio-father."

Like Blair, more and more people are finding out they have bonus family after DNA testing. The following is an excerpt from the book "I Had My Underwear On The Entire Time: A Memoir of Discovering Family through Genetic Genealogy," which Blair and his wife wrote during COVID lockdown about his experience:

"The days of anonymity are over. Advances in genetic genealogy can provide anyone the ability to trace their family history in minutes for a mere \$99.95 (plus shipping). Buyer be warned... services such as Ancestry DNA or 23andMe should really add a side-effect disclaimer to their advertising. Warning: Results of your DNA test may cause the following side effects: anxiety, diarrhea, discovering unexpected siblings, dizziness, insomnia, heart palpitations, uncovering secrets

Grandma took to her grave, nausea, thoughts of suicide, discovering your father had an affair, and/or all of the above."

Along the way, in May 2021, Blair's situation was the tipping point for passing the law that grants adult adoptees the right to their original birth certificate. He considers the law a huge win for adoptees, as the bill had been debated for the last 20 years.

Though things did not work out well with his biological father, Blair says he is glad he knows the truth. Blair continued to search for additional family members, stating he never wanted anything more than to know people he was connected to.

"It's super-exciting to connect with anyone that shares a portion of my DNA. Seeing familiar faces and recognizing quirky personality traits never gets old. We share a history... one I want to get to know more about. I do not regret anything. My bio-father is one of 10 children. I have very strong relationships with six of the 10 siblings. The cousins that I've met have all been welcoming and fantastic. I'm so happy I have them in my life."

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## FEATURE

### Genealogy pioneer

Karen Smith, who now lives in the McAuley Terrace community, began tracing her roots many years ago in 1960. She and her first husband were interested in learning more about his family, and Smith was interested in anything she could learn about their families for her children's knowledge.

In the days of searching before the Internet, Smith availed herself of the public library and historical building. She'd scour old newspapers and cemetery records, putting together the beginnings of a family tree. In 1975, when visiting the Iowa State Fair, she learned about the Iowa Genealogy Society and decided to join.

"We had a surprise on the Peterson side of the family," she says. "There were 14 children born to a mother generations back, and three died in childhood from diphtheria, which we didn't know. They were born in 1887 or 1889, and we found a large monument to the three daughters in Dike."

Smith took all her research to family reunions and showed her findings to family members, who were interested to learn more about their shared history. One of her family members had not seen her father since she was 4 years old, and she wanted to use some of Smith's research in her search to find him.

When it comes to doing your own research, Smith says it's important to take advantage of all the information that's out there right now.

"Join a genealogy group," she says. "They share all the county information, and you can talk with others who are looking, too, and share tips. Also, talk to the oldest member of your family. They are a wealth of information."



Karen Smith has framed photos of her ancestors.

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a red long-sleeved top and a red skirt, is laughing joyfully with her arms outstretched. She is surrounded by a shower of colorful confetti (red, yellow, black, and white) against a solid red background.

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## Looking deeper

Kristin Holm has found genealogy fascinating, but she became even more interested after her first child was born.

“Learning about this new life and her connection to generations past, as a blend between the families of my husband and my own, pulled me deeper and deeper into the roots of our family trees.”

When her husband’s grandfather passed away, it seemed there were so many stories of his family yet to be told, and she felt called to discover and record the lives of those before them.

For a person who enjoys a good puzzle, it was only natural that it would soon become close to an obsession for Holm. She has since earned a Certificate in Genealogy Research from Boston University and is working toward certification from the Board for Certification of Genealogists. She helps others find their roots through her website: Five Gifts DNA Genealogy Research, [www.fivegiftsdna.com](http://www.fivegiftsdna.com).

In the early days of her research, Holm was limited to stories passed down by relatives and the CD-ROMs that came with her Family Tree software. Despite the thousands of records on those disks, she failed to find anything remotely close to her ancestors’ names. Occasionally she’d spend some time in the archives at the library searching for information.

Fast-forward to today, when millions, if not billions, of records are digitized and waiting to be discovered. Now, most of Holm’s research is online, though occasionally she still spends time in the old-fashioned books or microfilms found in historical societies and libraries. She also uses organizational methods to update her records; her family trees are on Ancestry.com and Family Tree Maker software, and she uses AirTable, an online database program, to organize her research.

“DNA testing has brought a new dimension to genealogy research. As a veterinarian, this biological connection to genealogy is my favorite. Far beyond the percentage of ethnicities on an Ancestry DNA or 23andMe report, learning about living relatives that tie us to our ancestors connects the past to the present. I have also been able to help people who were adopted find their biological families. This is an aspect of genealogy that must be approached delicately, transparently



Kristin Holm has created an “ancestor wall” to feature her family tree and photos.

and compassionately, as the findings can be emotional and sometimes full of surprises.”

Holm has found some interesting information along the way. She was able to research her great-great-grandfather to find documents that qualified her children for college scholarships. She also learned that she has an ancestor who was a river pilot during the Revolutionary War and was able to finally figure out the country of origin of her husband’s last name. Wars and political boundaries play a role in blurring the nationalities of ancestors.

“My favorite finds are the photos, newspaper stories, and the handwriting of our ancestors that bring them to life and fill in the dashes between birth and death years. While visiting the region in Italy where my great-great-grandfather originated, I was amazed to see the similarities between the handwriting on a restaurant’s menu and that of my ancestor’s signature on a preserved document discovered during my research.”

Holm encourages others who are searching to document everything. In central Iowa,

## Genealogy Research Sources

### National Archives: Resources for Genealogists

[www.archives.gov/research/genealogy](http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy)

Beside having an extensive collection of records, the National Archives also offers information and tips on genealogical research. Links to various databases are also available, as are tools for educators.

### Find a Grave

[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials or add photos, virtual flowers and a note to a loved one’s memorial. Search or browse cemeteries and grave records for everyday and famous people from around the world.

### Ancestry

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

ancestry.com offers tools for genealogy research, DNA analysis, historical records and the world’s largest collection of online family history records. Family trees can be shared, making it possible to find a wealth of information that others have gathered.

### 23andMe

[www.23andme.com](http://www.23andme.com)

The focus of 23andMe, is “real science, real data and genetic insights that can help make it easier for you to take action on your health.” It offers reports on traits, health predisposition and more as well as tools to build a family tree and find relatives. ■

she says the Iowa Genealogical Society is an excellent resource. In addition, the Association of Professional Genealogists has a directory on its website that can point one to a professional who can help with genealogy puzzles.

Above all, she says, stay focused.

“Digging for answers inevitably stirs up more questions and curiosities. Before long, the rabbit hole has become so deep that the original question is lost in the twists and turns, the sun is close to rising, and a good night of sleep is an impossibility. But it’s so worth it.” ■



## BREAKING down retirement barriers

What's keeping you from retirement? Are you wondering if you have enough money saved? Are you concerned about the cost of health care? Or perhaps inflation, stock market volatility and borrowing costs make you wonder if this is the right time. Coupling these concerns with the lack of a customized, written retirement plan can make these retirement barriers unbreakable.



If you are ready to retire but unsure if you can, you can break down barriers by seeking answers to your questions. Retirement does not have to be a guessing game. A retirement planner can help you decide if you have enough saved for retirement, how you'll pay for health care, build a recession-resistant plan and more.

We do this by helping families and individuals develop a plan that breaks down the barriers, answers their questions and addresses their uncertainties. The plan addresses the six components of retirement: lifestyle, income, investment, tax, health care and legacy.

We start with a conversation about how you want to spend your time in retirement. Do you want to travel, spend the winter in Florida, or be near grandkids? Once you know how you want to spend your time, we can work on developing a plan to fund your retirement vision.

Then we can take inventory of retirement income sources — don't forget about Social Security and pensions — to create a retirement income plan. It's not just the sum of these sources that can help answer your questions; it's developing a plan to spend them and do it in a way that lowers your tax bill.

The cost of health care can feel like a big barrier to retirement, but it can't be ignored. The process includes helping you elect Medicare, make sense of the supplement choices, and develop a plan to pay for long-term care if you need it. Then there is your legacy. If your will, trust or beneficiary designations are not up to date, this can be a barrier to leaving your wealth to loved ones or charities.

When we write this all out for people, we can show them how and why they have enough money to retire, taking the uncertainty out of the next 20 or 30 years of their life. Sometimes they learn that they need to make some changes before they can retire; it's hard to hear, but better to know now than 10 years into retirement.

This could be the year to crush those retirement barriers and start living out your retirement vision. ■

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

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# MEET Rachel Smith

Connecting past to present in social studies project.

After earning a degree in secondary education and history from Grand View University, Rachel Smith went on to earn a master's degree in culturally responsive leadership and instruction from Drake University in 2016. Prior to joining the Johnston Community School District, she taught sixth-grade social studies at Callanan Middle School for 10 years. Today, she teaches seventh-grade social studies at Summit Middle School. As a new addition to the school staff, she not only enjoys collaborating with her colleagues but also appreciates the school's supportive team environment.



Rachel Smith teaches social studies at Summit Middle School.

"I love seeing the impact I have within my own community and being involved in the district I live in. I enjoy seeing students and their families at community events and organizations to connect more to their lives," she says.

As part of the seventh-grade social studies team at Summit, Smith helps emphasize research skills and project-based learning. She enjoys how much freedom and choices these practices provide her students to explore current issues of interest to them. Many of the activities in her classroom are also inquiry-based, providing her students the opportunity to learn about topics in a variety of ways that connect with them.

"These practices enable me to build relationships with students and establish a positive learning environment where students see themselves reflected in the content," Smith says.

Smith's students recently participated in a project that involves making connections between the past and how it impacts the present. After researching a current issue with a partner, students worked to connect their issue to past historical events. The students then made connections with individuals or organizations that represent both the past and the present within their topic.

One student represented an individual affiliated with the past event while the other represented an individual tied to the present-day global issue. In the end, both partners worked together during a wax museum exhibit where they demonstrated their understanding of how both individuals impacted the issues.

"My main goal as an educator is to inspire students to be their best selves and challenge them to achieve great things. I enjoy inspiring and growing students' self-confidence when they experience success. I love sparking interests within students and witnessing lightbulb moments that prove to them they are capable of achieving great things," Smith says.

As the school year progresses, Smith is enjoying building relationships with students, families, community members and colleagues. She is also excited to see her students' skills grow and challenge them. Coming up, Smith's students will participate in a trade policy simulation, and, at the end of the year, students will participate in a capstone project. ■

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## INSURANCE

By Janis Van Ahn

# WHY SIGN UP for a Social Security account?

Often when I meet with individuals before they are Medicare eligible, I ask if they have a Social Security account set up through [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). I am surprised at how many people do not have this account and don't understand or feel a need to have one.



Let's break this down generationally. Often, the older population, those who are already on Medicare, no longer working and therefore do not need to confirm their work history for benefit, don't necessarily need a Social Security account. Why would they have one? Maybe they need a new Social Security card. This is the easiest, most convenient way to get a new card. Maybe there is a new marriage, and a name needs to be updated.

The next generation, of sorts, are those who are getting close to age 65 and need to enroll in Medicare. There are two main reasons to have an SSA.gov account. The first reason is to verify work history, therefore getting the greatest benefit amount when retirement does occur. Keeping this current makes it easier if the need for documentation arises due to errors in the reporting of income. Why not know now, while you are still employed with that employer, that you need to get a change or update made as opposed to having to do so years later and finding that contacting the employer is critical. The second reason is that enrolling in Medicare is an easy online process through SSA.gov. The account holder has been verified and therefore the application is smooth and takes little time to complete.

Finally, let's talk about all of us under age 65, not ready to retire. Why would we have an account? The most important reason is that the government appreciates individuals who opt out of paper notices to review directly through their SSA.gov account. Again, this is extremely valuable to make sure all information is updated.

SSA.gov is a free and secure account providing personalized tools for everyone whether you receive benefits or not. You can use your account to request a replacement Social Security card, check the status of an application, estimate future benefits or manage the benefits you already receive. Take a few moments to check it out and sign up.

If questions about Medicare and supplemental plans, prescription drug plans, health insurance for individuals and families that are not Medicare eligible, or small employer benefits, contact a health insurance professional. ■

Information provided by Janis Van Ahn, Health Insurance Advisor LLC, 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite A, Johnston, 515-225-9994, [jvanahn@health-insadvisor.com](mailto:jvanahn@health-insadvisor.com).

## NEWS BRIEFS

### LIONS Legacy Project update



Members of the Johnston Lions Club presented their third \$10,000 check to the Johnston City Council for the new shelter at Johnston Commons. The Lions Legacy Project is providing a total of \$50,000 for the shelter, which will be completed in the spring of 2023. ■

### PUBLIC Works distribution analyst honored



Public Works Water/Wastewater Distribution Analyst Shane Kinsey received the 2022 Harris Seidel Meritorious Operator Award during the American Water Works Association-Iowa Section Annual Conference in Coralville on Oct. 26.

The award is given to an Iowa recipient to recognize a special performance in one or more of the following: continuous compliance with public health standards in finished water; continuous and outstanding contribution to plant maintenance; special efforts in the training of treatment plant operators; special acts related to water treatment beyond the normal operating responsibilities; and consistent and outstanding contribution to the operation and/or maintenance of distribution lines, pump stations and reservoirs.

"This award is well-deserved for the great work Shane is doing within our water division and for Johnston residents," said Public Works Director Matt Greiner. "His passion for ensuring Johnston residents have safe drinking water is outstanding. Congratulations to Shane on behalf of Johnston residents and the Public Works Department." ■

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## WINTER safety tips for seniors

As February dawns, we look to our friend — and famous groundhog — Punxsutawney Phil to predict how long our winter will last. Phil has a nearly 40% success rate, and, living in Iowa, we thought it might be a good time to remind our Johnston readers how to stay safe this winter.



### Dress for success

Staying dry and warm is a primary concern when you must go outside during the winter. Make sure that you are dressing in two to three lightweight layers versus one heavy layer. Break out those thermals. Don't forget your hat, gloves and a scarf you can use to cover your mouth and nose.

### Take precautions against falls

It is easy to slip and fall in the winter due to snow and ice. You should stay inside until

walkways are cleared, wear non-skid shoes and, if you walk with a cane, make sure the rubber tip is not worn smooth and gives you some grip. You can also purchase an "ice grip" attachment for your cane to give you more stability.

### Make sure your vehicle is ready for winter driving

If you must drive in poor weather, make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you will be expected back. Have your car winterized. Check your tires, antifreeze and windshield wipers. Repurpose an old spice shaker with rock salt and keep it in your cup holder so that you can sprinkle the rock salt before you exit your vehicle. Stock your car with other winter safety items like blankets, flashlight, jumper cables and an ice scraper.

### Prepare for power outages

Winter storms can cause a loss of power. Make sure to have flashlights, extra batteries, drinking water and plenty of warm blankets until power is restored.

### Hydrate and eat a healthy diet

It is always important to drink enough water, even in the winter. Dehydration and lack of a balanced diet can be dangerous for older adults and could mean falls, depression, cognitive declines and other serious health complications.

### Ask for help

Whether it is clearing snow, getting groceries, or winterizing your car, let your family, friends and neighbors know how to help. There is also the option to hire these services to be done. You can contact us at Edencrest at Green Meadows to recommend people who would be able to fulfill these needs.

Wintertime can pose some challenges to older adults, but, with a little planning and following our tips, you can stay safe. Spring is just around the corner. ■

Information provided by Alex McGregor, director, Edencrest at Green Meadows, 6750 Corporate Drive, Johnston, 515-207-1984. Information from Family Caregiver Alliance.

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## LOOKING for a mission? Join Rotary

Johnston is fortunate to have great civic and social organizations — all of them with members doing good work and making a difference in our community. All of them need the support from citizens and businesses to fulfill their missions. So, what is Rotary's mission?

Started in 1905 by Paul Harris of Chicago, Rotary brought community leaders together in fellowship and service to the community. They would gather around a table and enjoy fellowship, hear speakers, plan social events and, most importantly, look for ways to make a difference in their community and the world. This round table idea is the basis of the Rotary Wheel — our emblem.

Paul Harris' idea took off. Rotary Club No. 1, founded in Chicago, began to grow, and the idea of Rotary grew in the U.S. and throughout the world. Today, more than 34,000 clubs can be found in more than 200 countries, and membership is estimated at 1.2 million.

In 1917, Rotary International President Arch Klumpf had an idea. With an initial investment of \$26.50, the Rotary Foundation was formed with this simple idea: "To do good in the world." Today, the Rotary Foundation has an estimated value \$1 billion. It has received the top rating from Charity Navigator for the last 10 years in a row.

Rotary is on a mission to eradicate polio from the world. In collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, a \$10 donation is matched with \$20 from the Gates Foundation. That \$30 will inoculate 15 children from polio for the rest of their lives. Rotary is so dedicated in their effort to eradicate polio that they have even negotiated a ceasefire in the Sudan so that Rotarians could complete their immunization efforts.

Locally, Johnston Rotarians this past year held a blood drive and organized the first Annual J-Town Golf Championship that raised funds to support local and regional nonprofit organizations develop new programming. Smokin' Heroes, held during Green Days, had historically raised money to assist youth with the cost of attending an International Youth Conference in Kosovo, but with tension high in Eastern Europe this year, the club made a \$5,000 donation to help the Johnston Police Department in their community policing efforts and donated \$2,000 for humanitarian efforts in Eastern Europe. We planted more than 30 swamp milkweed plants in the City of Johnston to help establish habitat for the monarch butterfly, and, just a few weeks ago, joined together with family and friends to participate in a group packing event at Meal From the Heartland. Together we packed more than 86,000 meals, donated more than \$2,400 and followed directly in the footsteps of Arch Klumpf and his simple idea, "To do good in the world."

So, do you have a mission? Not sure where to start? How about joining us at the Rotary Club of Johnston? For more information, go to [www.Johnstonrotary.com](http://www.Johnstonrotary.com). For information on donating to the Rotary Foundation, go to [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org). ■

More information about the Johnston Rotary Club can be found at <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/1649> or contact Neil Hyde, 515-210-2649, [hyde\\_neil@yahoo.com](mailto:hyde_neil@yahoo.com) or Miles Summa, [milessumma@gmail.com](mailto:milessumma@gmail.com), 515-480-3076.

## START THE NEW YEAR OFF **GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR JOHNSTON ROTARY!**

### UPCOMING SPEAKERS

**Tuesday, January 10 at Cozy Café**

Al Lorenzen, Godspeed Equine

**Tuesday, January 17**

Tony Doremus, Recruiting and Retention officer  
& Asst PIO for the Iowa Wing of the Civil Air Patrol

**Tuesday, January 24**

Karen Henderson, JUMP Mentoring Recruitment Coordinator

**Tuesday, January 31**

LTC Jonathan Borg, Iowa Counterdrug Coordinator



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## RECIPE

# ACCOMPLISH health goals with better-for-you family meals

*(Family Features)* Setting out on a mission to eat healthier starts with creating goals and working to achieve them with those you love. To help make nutritious eating more manageable, call together your family and work with one another to create a menu everyone can enjoy while staying on track.

Connecting an array of recipes that all can agree on starts with versatile ingredients like dairy. Gathering at the table with your loved ones while enjoying delicious, nutritious recipes featuring yogurt, cheese and milk can nourish both body and soul.

For example, the key dairy ingredients in this recipe from Milk Means More provide essential nutrients for a healthy diet. The cheese varieties in feta roasted salmon and tomatoes provide vitamin B-12 for healthy brain and nerve cell development and are a good source of calcium and protein, which are important for building and maintaining healthy bones.

To find more nutritious meal ideas to fuel your family's health goals, visit [MilkMeansMore.org](http://MilkMeansMore.org). ■

## Feta roasted salmon and tomatoes

*Recipe courtesy of Marcia Stanley, MS, RDN, culinary dietitian, on behalf of Milk Means More*

**Prep time:** 15 minutes

**Cook time:** 15 minutes

**Servings:** 4

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 cups halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano or dried dill weed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, divided
- 1 1/2 pounds salmon or halibut fillets, cut into four serving-size pieces
- 1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425 F. Line 18-by-13-by-1-inch baking pan with foil. Lightly spray foil with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.



- In medium bowl, toss tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, oregano or dill weed, salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.
- Place fish pieces, skin side down, on one side of prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining pepper. Lightly press feta cheese on top of fish. Pour tomato mixture on other side of prepared pan. Bake, uncovered, 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork.
- Place salmon on serving plates. Spoon tomato mixture over top.

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Andrea Dettmann-Spurgeon, ARNP,  
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## LIBRARY

# NEW YEAR, new programs at your library

We're ringing in the New Year with some new services and events at Johnston Public Library, including tech and job help and JPL's first Read Local Author Fair. Read on for the details.

JPL is excited to announce two new services offering one-on-one help with technology and jobs. The **JPL Help Desk** program provides training and support for teens and adults as they face new learning, employment or technology-related challenges. JPL Help Desk staff can provide guidance with tech-related tasks, help with a job search and resume, and connect individuals to resources, but it cannot provide legal, financial or medical information or fill out forms for individuals. Help Desk appointments are educational in nature and individuals should have a clear goal in mind of what they would like to learn during their session. Librarians are instructors and cannot troubleshoot or fix malfunctioning software or hardware. Typical uses for a Help Desk appointment include: resume and cover letter writing assistance, job search assistance, troubleshooting basic computer applications, assistance searching the Internet, help downloading library e-Books and other digital resources, setting up email or other online accounts, Google Drive instruction, social media basics and Tech Lab training. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the Public Services staff at Johnston Public Library at 515-278-5233 extension 3.

We're also excited to offer **Tech Help with Teens** on the first Saturday of every month between 2-4 p.m. Not really sure how to use Microsoft Word? Having trouble finding that app you downloaded on your iPad? Has it just been forever since you have used a computer? Tech Help with Teens is designed just for you. Drop by JPL for free one-on-one help with one of our teen assistants. Our trained teen assistants will provide guidance and support on a specific tech-related topic in a 45-minute session. Patrons should have a clear goal in mind. Please note: Tech Help with Teens is not able to diagnose issues with malfunctioning devices, replace physical parts or remove computer viruses, nor provide legal or financial advice.

Love local lit? You won't want to miss the first **Read Local Author Fair** at Johnston Public Library on Feb. 25 from 2-4 p.m. Local authors will present their latest works, answer questions, and sign books in this open house-style event. Attendees will have a chance to browse a selection of books for purchase and enter to win fun literary prizes including local author book bundles. If you know a local author, send them our way. This free event provides a platform for local writers to showcase their work, connect with readers, talk about their writing process, and network with other authors. We are currently accepting submissions from local authors interested in sharing their work with the community. More information, participation rules, and the author submission form are available at [www.johnstonlibrary.com/local-author-fair](http://www.johnstonlibrary.com/local-author-fair). Author submissions are due by Jan. 21.

More information about all Johnston Public Library events and services is available at [johnstonlibrary.com](http://johnstonlibrary.com) or by calling your local friendly JPL librarian at 515-278-5233. ■

## EXTENDED MORNING & EVENING APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE



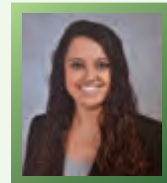
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**Cheers to a New Year!**

As the calendar turns the page, we wish you the very best in the year ahead.



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[drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com](mailto:drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com)

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## FINANCE

By Daniel Rundahl

# DO YOU have a financial New Year's resolution?



The Christmas tree has been put away, the decorations have all been boxed up, and the Pentatonix music has stopped playing in the stores. It is time to bring on the New Year. For many, this is a time to refresh and renew. And, for 41% of Americans, it is a time to set a resolution. These New Year's resolutions often revolve around getting in better shape, abstaining from some sort of habit, or resolving to improve in some way. Let me make a recommendation. Some of the greatest concerns shared by those we meet with between the ages of 55-70 are whether they are financially prepared for the transition we call retirement. Here are a few tips:

- **Put pride aside.** Sometimes people will say, "It's not very much" or "I should have started saving earlier." The fact is it is all relative. Like with birthdays, it is just a number. Don't be ashamed or afraid to sit down with a financial advisor. Many times, you learn that you are in better shape than they thought you were.

- **Educate yourself.** This year's New Year's resolution should include a mindset to educate yourself. The world of taxes and financial positioning is constantly changing. Maybe it is a good time to attend a financial education seminar or schedule a second opinion meeting with a financial advisor.

- **Put together a plan.** Do you remember, as a kid, you would play the pencil and paper game "Connect the dots?" In its simplest state, this is a game of learning to put together a plan. You need to know where to start, you need to know where to move your pencil to next, and you need to know where to finish. Sitting down with an advisor will help you connect those dots and ultimately help to recognize where the finish point is.

- **Don't lose sight of your goals.** Very few things nowadays are "set it and forget it," especially the complexity of financial and retirement planning. Like any goal, whether it be to run a marathon or to purchase your dream home, we often lose sight when life throws us curveballs. Set some check points this year to revisit, reevaluate and refresh your planning for these goals.

The statistics say that fewer than 20% of New Year's resolutions are kept longer than nine months. Life is filled with great choices and bad decisions. As a young child, I can remember a coach of mine telling me that I would learn more from a loss than I would from a win. Here's your opportunity to get things heading in the right direction. As you are evaluating your current and future financial goals this year, let us know if we can be of any assistance. Have a great 2023. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, financial advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 6165 N.W. 86th St., Johnston, [drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com](mailto:drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com), 515-727-1701, [www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com](http://www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com).

# HAVE YOUR basic estate planning in place

You should ensure that you have a full slate of basic estate planning documents in place. These documents exist in the event of your death or incapacitation and provide your family instructions as to how to proceed. Here are the three key documents in constructing an effective estate plan:



## Durable Financial Power of Attorney

In the event you become incapable of making financial decisions, a durable power of attorney allows someone you trust to sign documents and manage your assets. You can give someone a limited power of attorney that limits the authority to specific transactions, but a durable power of attorney that covers all transactions gives you trusted ally available to handle your affairs regardless of what lies ahead.

## Last Will and Testament

Most people know what a Will is, but less than 40% of Americans have one. While it is difficult to contemplate your own mortality, it can be just as painful to think of leaving a mess for your heirs if you are no longer here. A will appoints an executor — the person who will manage

your affairs — and outlines a plan for the distribution of your assets.

A will can provide comfort to the person creating it, especially if you have children who are unable to handle or manage money. Avoiding the creation of a will can cause untold problems; if you don't take the time to create one, the State of Iowa will simply distribute your assets for you — and not necessarily in the same way you want.

## Medical directives

A healthcare POA is in place for a designated representative to be able to communicate your wishes to medical professionals if you are unable. These documents also include instructions as to whether or not you want to have life-saving measures performed. Creation of healthcare directives removes the need for your family members to make heart-wrenching decisions for you, which can be especially concerning if those decisions wouldn't necessarily match your own.

It's not easy to think about death, much less plan for it, but the true focus of estate planning is taking care of yourself today and your loved ones in the future. Schedule an appointment with an experienced estate planning attorney to make sure your plan is in place. ■

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

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### MAYOR

Paula Dierenfeld  
(515) 490-8023  
PaulaSDierenfeld@gmail.com

### CITY COUNCIL

Bryan Burkhardt  
(515) 554-9095  
bburkhardt@cityofjohnston.com

Tom Cope  
(515) 975-4590  
tomwcope@msn.com

Jim Evans  
jaae64a@gmail.com

Rhonda Martin  
(515) 326-2675  
rmartin@cityofjohnston.com

Suresh Reddy  
(515) 650-9619  
sreddy@cityofjohnston.com

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## PROVIDE YOUR INPUT ON THE ZONING AND SUBDIVISION CODE UPDATES

The City of Johnston is updating its Zoning and Subdivision code for the first time in four decades. City leaders and staff want to ensure that the new code recognizes the changes in how we do business and that it's easier for the public to decipher and use.

City officials invite the public to review the draft update and provide comments at **www.cityofjohnston.com/ZoningInput**. The document will be available for review and comment through Sunday, January 29. To review the update process and highlights of the proposed code revisions, visit **www.cityofjohnston.com/ZoningOverview**.

### Opportunities for In-person Input:

- **Schedule an appointment** with staff through January 27 by emailing [thrive2040cityofjohnston.com](mailto:thrive2040cityofjohnston.com).
- **Stop by City Hall**, 6221 Merle Hay Road, January 9 – 13, to meet with city staff. No appointment is needed between 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.
- **Attend a public open house** from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on January 10.

Community Development Director David Wilwerding provides a brief overview of the process and why it is so important for residents to provide input. Watch the video by visiting <https://youtu.be/mub1Ss6lO7Y> or scan the QR code.



## SIGN UP TO RECEIVE MEETING AND EVENT NOTICES AND PRESS RELEASES

As a resident, we want to ensure you are staying informed on the happenings within our community. Learn about upcoming meetings, events or receive press releases right to your phone. Sign up by visiting **www.cityofjohnston.com/notifyme**.



## CITY HALL AND PUBLIC LIBRARY CLOSED FOR MLK HOLIDAY

Johnston City Hall and the Johnston Public Library will be closed on Monday, January 16, for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Your trash and recycling pickup days are not affected by this holiday. The regularly-scheduled Johnston City Council work session and meeting will now take place on Tuesday, January 17.

For more information about the city, please visit [www.cityofjohnston.com](http://www.cityofjohnston.com)





## CITY NEWSLETTER

### JANUARY 2023

## RECEIVE ALERTS WHEN THE SNOW ORDINANCE GOES INTO EFFECT

The City of Johnston will continue to receive snow and ice, and the Public Works Department would like to ensure you are signed up to receive the alerts when the parking ban goes into effect. The City may declare a snow parking ban based on several factors, including snow, sleet, freezing rain and blowing snow. The parking ban may be extended if conditions require additional time to clear the snow and/or ice.

Sign up by visiting [www.cityofjohnston.com/JohnstonAlerts](http://www.cityofjohnston.com/JohnstonAlerts).



## SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS TO STAY INFORMED

We invite you to subscribe to our electronic newsletter. Every Thursday, we distribute information in our newsletter on the most important things happening in Johnston. It is a quick, informative read. The electronic newsletters are also sent on the first of each month.

Sign up by visiting [www.cityofjohnston.com/notifications](http://www.cityofjohnston.com/notifications).



## SNOW REMOVAL ON YOUR SIDEWALKS AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

After a snowfall event, you have 48-hours to clear the snow from your sidewalks. All sidewalks adjacent to private property are the responsibility of the property owner. If your sidewalks are not clear of snow within 48-hours, you could receive a fine. The City wants to ensure you are clearing the sidewalks for the public's safety! While you may not venture out for a walk or run during the winter months, many other residents and visitors do. If you have a resident who has not cleared their snow, please call the Building Department at 515-727-7778.

The City reminds you that snowplows will not clear private driveways or private property except to allow emergency vehicles access to private property for fire, police, or EMS calls.



## SAVE THE DATE

It is going to be a busy year in the City of Johnston. Save these dates for future events.

- **Annual Tree Sale** on Tuesday, April 11: The online form will open at 8 a.m.
- **Spring Cleanup** on Monday, April 17 and Tuesday, April 18: Please ensure items are at the curb by 6 a.m.
- **Kites on the Green** on Saturday, May 6: Johnston Commons, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Family Fest** on Saturday, June 3: Johnston Town Center, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Johnston Green Days** at Terra Park: Thursday, June 15 – Sunday, June 18

For more information about the city, please call 515.278.2344



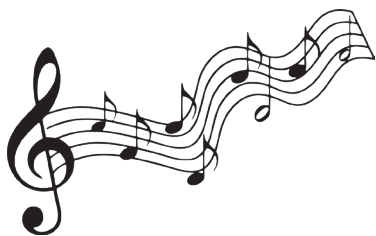
## EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations

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

### Upcoming City and Community Meetings and Events

- Planning and Zoning Meeting: Monday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.
- City Office Buildings closed for MLK Day: Monday, Jan. 16
- City Council Work Session: Tuesday, Jan. 17, 6 p.m.
- City Council Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m.
- Library Board Meeting: Thursday, Jan. 19, 5:30 p.m.
- Board of Adjustment Meeting: Thursday, Jan. 19, 6:30 p.m.



### Taylor Fest

Friday, Jan. 6 at 9 p.m.  
Wooly's, 504 E. Locust St., Des Moines

If you couldn't snag Taylor Swift tickets during that tour pre-sale debacle, never fear, as the popular Taylor Fest returns for the second time. Wooly's will play hits and lesser-known cuts from all eras of the star's career. Doors open at 8 p.m. Ages 21 and older. Find tickets at [firstfleetconcerts.com/woolys](http://firstfleetconcerts.com/woolys).

### CITYVIEW's Fire & Ice Pub Crawl

Saturday, Jan. 21 from 1-4 p.m.  
Historic Valley Junction, West Des Moines

Warm up this winter during CITYVIEW's legendary hockey-themed pub crawl. Receive 10 drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area, including The Hall, Foundry Distilling Co., The Tavern, Fox Brewing Co., G Mig's 5th Street Pub, Champion's Hideaway and more. Tickets \$20 in advance at [fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com](http://fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com) or \$30 at the door.



### Ice Fishing

Saturday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m. to noon  
Crown Point Community Center,  
6300 Pioneer Parkway, Johnston

Arrive and check in by 10 a.m. During the first hour, participants review tackle set-up, basic safety and regulations and ice fishing tactics, followed by an hour of fishing at Terra Lake. Cost is \$10. The event is for ages 10 and older. All participants (registrants and guests) will receive a basic ice fishing rig and tackle. Parks staff will pre-drill holes and provide the bait. If you cannot afford the fee, email [nosmundson@cityofjohnston.com](mailto:nosmundson@cityofjohnston.com) to request a scholarship. If you are age 16 and older, you must have a valid Iowa Fishing License. Register at the calendar link for the event at [www.cityofjohnston.com](http://www.cityofjohnston.com).



### Broadway Karaoke

Saturday, Jan. 7 at 6 p.m.  
2019 Grand Ave., West Des Moines

Join Tallgrass Theatre Company for a unique karaoke experience. Come and simply listen, or enter the spotlight and belt your favorite Broadway tunes. Hosted by Michael Howland, with Francine Griffith on keyboard. A donation of \$10 is suggested. More information is at [tallgrasstheatre.org](http://tallgrasstheatre.org).



### 'Cats'

Through Jan. 8

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St. Des Moines

Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical comes to the Des Moines Civic Center. As the fourth-longest-running show on Broadway, it has won seven Tony Awards, including "Best Musical." Join the tribe of Jellicle cats on a magical and music-filled night as they make their Jellicle choice: which cat will ascend to the Heaviside Layer. Tickets \$40-\$125 at [dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org).

### Cinch World's Toughest Rodeo

Friday - Saturday, Jan. 13-14

Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines

Watch the world's toughest cowboys compete to be crowned ProRodeo's World Champion. The main event starts at 7:30 p.m., but doors open at 6 p.m. for a free pre-show event that includes pony rides, meeting cowboys, photo opportunities and more. Giddy up. More info at [worldstoughestrodeo.com](http://worldstoughestrodeo.com) or [iowaeventscenter.com](http://iowaeventscenter.com).



### More January Fun!

- Sundays, January through March: Botanical Blues winter concert series at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines; [dmbotanicalgarden.com](http://dmbotanicalgarden.com)
- Jan. 6-22: "Go, Dog. Go!" at Des Moines Playhouse, 831 42nd St., Des Moines; [dmplayhouse.com](http://dmplayhouse.com)
- Saturdays, January through March: Learn on Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines; [dmbotanicalgarden.com](http://dmbotanicalgarden.com)
- Jan. 31: Secret Life of Bears at 7:30 p.m. Des Moines Civic Center; 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; [dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org)
- Jan. 31 - Feb. 2: Iowa Ag Expo at Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; [iowaagexpo.com](http://iowaagexpo.com)
- Jan. 31 - Feb. 5: "Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation" at Temple Theater, 1011 Locust St., Des Moines; [dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org) ■

## RECIPE

### 15-MINUTE weeknight pasta

Recipe courtesy of Kirsten Kubert of "Comfortably Domestic" on behalf of Milk Means More

**Prep time:** 5 minutes

**Cook time:** 10 minutes

**Servings:** 6

- 6 quarts water
- 16 ounces linguine or penne pasta
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced onion
- 1 cup thinly sliced carrots
- 1 cup thinly sliced sweet bell pepper
- 1/2 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 cup reserved pasta water
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1/2 cup smoked provolone cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley (optional)
- Parmesan cheese (optional)

#### DIRECTIONS

- Bring water to rolling boil and prepare pasta according to package directions for al dente texture, reserving 1 cup pasta water.
- In large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Stir in onions, carrots and sweet bell peppers. Sauté vegetables about 5 minutes, or until they brighten in color and begin to soften. Add tomatoes, salt, pepper and garlic. Cook and stir 1 minute to allow tomatoes to release juices.
- Pour reserved pasta water into skillet, stirring well. Bring sauce to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 3 minutes. Taste sauce and adjust seasonings, as desired.
- Transfer drained pasta to skillet along with lemon zest and smoked provolone cheese, tossing well to coat. Serve immediately with fresh parsley and Parmesan cheese, if desired.



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## COMMUNITY

By Darren Tromblay

# K9 to be an explosives specialist

Will add a valuable tool to the department's disposal.

The Johnston Police Department has begun raising funds for its first-ever K9 program to help serve the growing community.

Johnston Police Sgt. Anthony Yeager said the K9 will be trained to conduct patrol operations such as tracking, article search and handler protection. The K9 will also be certified to conduct searches of buildings, parking lots, office areas, vehicles, packages, people, schools and large secure areas such as Camp Dodge and Joint Forces Headquarters for a variety of explosive materials.

"By starting a K9 unit, it is an additional tool that the Johnston Police Department will have to keep the community safe," Yeager says. "As Johnston continues to grow rapidly and has become a destination community in the Des Moines metro area, we want to ensure the highest level of safety for our residents, businesses and visitors as we host large-scale community events and outdoor entertainment events."

The K9 can also be used to track missing children or elderly persons who wander from homes, schools or nursing home, Yeager says, as well as track violent offenders who commit felony-level crimes, or search for evidence that could be critical to solving and prosecuting cases.

The K9's handler will be Officer Dylan Petermeier, who has been with Johnston Police Department for three years and is an Air Force veteran with six years of service. He is currently a field training officer assigned to third watch.

The department is pursuing the explosives specialty rather than a more traditional narcotics sniffing dog due to the increasing acts of home-grown terrorism throughout the country, Yeager says.

Johnston Police Department Chief Dennis McDaniel said this is an exciting project for the department and the community as a whole.

"To be able to establish this sort of high-value resource on a day-to-day basis in Johnston, and to be able to do it in a manner that partners with our stakeholders, is a rare opportunity," McDaniel says. "Our new dual-purpose canine program will significantly enhance the community's safety and embraces our department's core values of 'Honor – Protection – Service.'"

The money raised during the campaign will be used to start the K9 program, including the cost of the vehicle and all the K9 equipment along with purchasing the K9 itself and the training for the handler. According to the department, total startup costs are \$84,941 for the K9 vehicle, and \$23,764 for the K9 and its additional expenses.

All donations are payable to the Johnston Police Officers Association, a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Once the funds are raised, the department will begin purchasing the items needed. The plan is to have the K9 in service by the winter of 2023. ■



Officer Dylan Petermeier of the Johnston Police Department will be the K9 handler when the program launches.

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## TAKING care after the holidays

Now that the hustle and bustle of the holidays is over, January often hits people hard as we return to our normal routines. Some people have spent more time with their families since Thanksgiving than they do all year round and miss them. Others have spent equal amounts of time with their families and got caught up in the traditional arguments that happen year after year that make them start to wonder why they are still a part of these holiday traditions. It's also Iowa, and the inclement weather can keep people inside their homes more than they care to be. This can be hard on one's emotional/mental health if a person is used to getting out and being more social. Lastly, the bills start coming in. Gas money for trips, credit cards for gifts, and a stretched everyday budget can create buyer's remorse while creating memories. All these things combined can leave the average person feeling exhausted mentally/physically, so taking time to enjoy life is vital — taking a moment and sitting back with a cup of hot cocoa, watching it peacefully snow, playing a board game with the kids before they return to school, etc. Finding moments to enjoy life ensures that we are filling our own cups before we go back out into the world to fill others'. ■

Information provided by Monica Meier, PhD, MS, TLMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com), [meier@sstherapyandconsulting.com](mailto:meier@sstherapyandconsulting.com)



## HOSPICE services help ensure quality of life

When his wife's doctor suggested it was time for her to receive hospice services, Paul C. of West Des Moines found himself feeling angry.

"I thought it meant she was at death's door," he recalls. "But her doctor encouraged me to do my homework, and, after learning more, I became more open to the concept of home hospice care. My wife was discharged from the hospital and came home, and the nurses came a couple times a week."

The decision ended up being the best one for the family, Paul says. "She was more comfortable and more relaxed, and her pain was controlled. She had some really good days — active ones, even — and we were able to make some memories that are very comforting to me now."

If you're considering hospice services for a family member, it may seem counterintuitive to think about "living" in conjunction with services offered at the end of a person's life. But even during hospice care, a person is living — and it's important to understand that hospice services can actually help ensure quality of life.

Options for hospice services are nearly as varied as the individuals who seek them. They range from home care to services in a freestanding hospice center to in-between, hybrid models, and the type of care you and your loved one select is truly an individual choice.

But no matter the type of services you're considering, you should always ask any provider on your list: "How can you help me or my loved one continue to live through this stage of life?"

Ideally, hospice services should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice services, enabling an individual to live life in comfort for the days, weeks, months or longer that remain in his or her life. And the earlier hospice services are started, the more they can benefit the person who is ill as well as the whole family.

"We didn't know, for example, that once my wife went on hospice, we would get a hospital bed brought to the house, and that she would receive music therapy and pet therapy and all kinds of things she really enjoyed, and that really relaxed her," Paul says. "Before that, we were having a hard time managing the pain from her cancer, and she was really agitated. The pain control was a really big deal."

So, as we all wind down from the holidays, give some thought to what the coming months look like for you and your family. If you decide it might be time for some help, know that making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult — but once you've taken that first step, having care in place can make your loved one's last weeks and months more relaxed and meaningful for all. ■



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Ward Phillips is vice president of market strategy and business development for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice services, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.

## 2023 food trends

With the vast array of food we see in grocery stores, restaurants, and on the Internet, food trends and flavor profiles are constantly changing. In past years, we've seen kombucha, cold brews, pumpkin spice and plant-based foods all grow in popularity. What might we see more of in 2023? Here are some of my predictions:



### Sweet and spicy combos

Korean and Asian flavors often combine sweet and spicy flavors (can we make "swicy" a word?) into a single entrée, and I predict we will be seeing even more of these flavor combinations this coming year. Think hot, spicy honey drizzled over fried chicken or pizza, chili added to chocolate, maybe even some hot sauce added to ice cream. I think we will be seeing many new foods with swicy flavor combinations.

### Mushrooms everywhere

You've likely seen shiitakes, portabellas and cremini mushrooms in your store or on menus, but, in 2023, I predict we will see many more specialty mushrooms being added to our cuisine. Mushrooms are a wonderful addition to meals as they add a great savory depth to dishes, a flavor known as umami, and are incredibly nutritious.

### Alcohol-free cocktails

The desire for mocktails is growing rapidly, partially due to New Year's resolutions and also as we learn more about the long-term health implications of some of our bad habits. Restaurants are starting to cater to this demand with "virgin cocktails." Non-alcoholic beer has been growing in popularity in Europe, and we're seeing more and more breweries pick up on the trend. This trend will likely continue into homes with folks mixing up some fun new flavors with new products.

### Boards for everything

Charcuterie has become a household word over the past few years, and now people are turning up the creativity. I first saw the "butter board" trend on Tik Tok and have since seen it leaching out into various menus ever since. A thick coating of gourmet butter spread on a serving board and then various toppings like sea salt, sun dried tomatoes, and herbs are added along with French bread, crackers, crostini, etc. I predict that we will continue to see serving boards being used for everything from breakfast spreads to dessert. I mean, doesn't a platter of chocolate sauce with strawberries, marshmallows, and cookies for dipping sound amazing?

### Curry

Curry is not new; it is a complex type of cuisine that crosses many countries and cultures. There are Indian curries, Thai curries, Japanese curries, etc. that vary in flavor and preparation. Most curries are a dish with a heavy sauce made with a combination of various herbs and spices. I think we will see more curry options as recipe ideas and more curry ingredients to try in your own home.

No matter which food trends we end up seeing this year, it's always fun to try new and exciting flavors. ■

Information provided by Caitlyn Ferin, LD, RD, corporate dietitian, Fareway, 6005 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, 515-252-9962.

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# 2023

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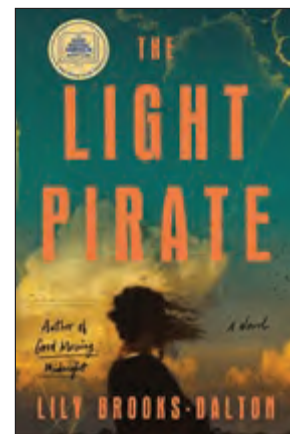
## 'The Light Pirate'

Change is an incredible, inevitable, potent beast, and I don't think I've ever read a piece of fiction that more aptly illustrates that point. This is an incredibly sad story that somehow manages to feel timeless and almost fairy-tale-like in its melancholy.

Wanda is named in the midst of a monstrous tragedy, and a fitting name it is — the hurricane that changed everything for her family and the entire state of Florida. Bombarded by storms and an apocalyptic change in landscape, Florida is now nearly empty and almost unlivable. Still, Wanda stays, using her lifelong skills to survive along with a rich and unique community of people determined to find life in a time of extreme chaos.

Filled with unforgettable characters, terrifying nature and a startlingly prescient message, "The Light Pirate" is a phenomenal book for anyone looking for a deep story of resilience and humanity at the extremes. ■

— Review by Julie Goodrich

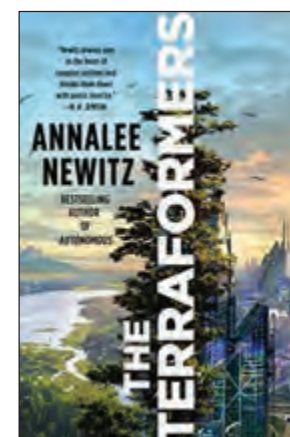


By Lily Brooks-Dalton  
12/6/22  
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## 'The Terraformers'

I love sprawling epics and interconnected stories. I love character-driven sci-fi even more. To top it off, I adore everything Annalee Newitz writes. Lo and behold, I absolutely loved their newest effort, "The Terraformers," a sci-fi epic presented as three interwoven novellas that managed to feel both huge and impactful while still clearly being an intimate character study across generations.

Meet the Rangers, a group that works to protect the environment of a planet set for development by corporations that want to sell that planet as a vacation property for only the wealthiest people. It's a dirty job, literally, and creates a number of scenarios and situations that offer an eerie parallel to our current times, despite being far in the future. The ramifications of the Rangers' actions over time form the plot of the story, but there are enough wild, silly and hilarious situations and characters to carry the heavy plot with a lot of joy. By the end, I had fallen in love with Newitz's inventive, poignant writing all over again. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



By Annalee Newitz  
1/31/23  
352 pages  
\$28.99  
Tor Books

## THE YEAR for savings

Looking for new ways to save this new year? Saving money is usually on most people's resolution list, but sometimes this is a tough goal to achieve. Start simple and make some changes at home by looking at how your HVAC system is affecting your energy bills.

Your HVAC system is the highest energy consumption appliance in your entire home, and because your energy bill is a huge portion of your monthly bills, it's important to know how to save as much as possible.

Know the efficiency of your equipment — air conditioner, furnace, heat pump, etc. The higher the efficiency, the less energy is needed to run the equipment. Older HVAC systems have poor efficiency ratings which is why you should compare that to a newer, more efficient system. New systems can have an AFUE of 95%. The long-term savings can be shocking.

What is out of sight is out of mind, but don't assume that your HVAC system is running at peak performance. As it ages, it naturally becomes less efficient. Ensure that your HVAC system is performing as it should, otherwise, this, too, can affect the amount of energy that is needed and increase your bills. Poor performing equipment can result in continuous on and off cycling and a system that is struggling to maintain your home's temperature. Regular annual maintenance is a must on your car just as much as it is for your HVAC system. Routine maintenance helps ensure that your equipment is running at peak performance and can possibly save you from costly repairs and breakdowns in the future.

Another place to check is your ductwork, doors and windows. All are notorious for leaks and can make it impossible to maintain that desired comfortable temperature in your home. Simple DIY strategies such as caulking and weather strips can fix some leaks, while others require a professional. You can go a step further and have an energy audit performed. The specialized equipment that is used in these tests will be able to pinpoint the leaks in your home.

Gradual increases on your energy bill are to be expected, but big increases are not and are an indication that something is wrong. Go into this new year with savings in mind. Just by implementing one of these energy savings tips on your New Year's resolution list will promote monthly savings. ■

Information provided by Kendel Richlen, owner, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.



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## BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

### RESOLVE to care for future burial needs

"It made it so much easier for us..."

"Our loved one was so organized..."

"I am so glad they had everything taken care of..."

These are some of the comments we hear as we meet with families who have the difficult responsibility of burying a loved one. This daunting task is much easier on the family if that loved one has cared for their final arrangements long before they are needed.

How about you?

Will your family be able to make such comments when faced with making your final arrangements?

Do you want a casket burial or cremation? Public viewing and funeral service, a private graveside service, or no service at all? Military honors? Pastor/priest to officiate or an informal sharing of memories?

By pre-arranging, the choice is yours and takes the emotional and financial burden from your family.

Give your family a gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs now. ■

Information provided by Jan Shawver, family services representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.



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## HOME DECOR

By Wanda Williams

### SOFA shopping tips

January through February is one of the best times to buy furniture. This is the period when stores have clearance sales on the current inventory and are making room for spring and summer furniture releases. So, now is the time to buy that new sofa or couch that you've been dreaming of.

- **Measure twice.** Because you'll find amazing deals right now, you'll have to purchase that sofa as soon as you find it. Otherwise, someone else is going to buy it. Measure the space/room so you're prepared and don't miss out.

- **Add a splash of color.** The Pantone Color Institute names Viva Magenta as the official color for 2023. Even if this color isn't for you, don't be afraid to choose a sofa with a bold color to add sophistication and beauty.

- **Pick a style.** Most sofas and couches fall into three categories: traditional, modern and transitional. But, you can get more specific by choosing mid-century, rustic, coastal, glam. Whew, the choices can be overwhelming. Know which style appeals to you most to help narrow your choices.

Now that you're prepared to shop, go out there and get a great deal before someone else beats you to it. ■

Information provided by Wanda Williams, Design Consign, 2715 86th St., Urbandale, 515-901-9294.



# HOW'S the market?

Changing rates have surely done exactly what they were intended to do... Slow the market. Q4 in 2022 was a slowdown in a major way, as we saw the total number of transactions occurring come to a massive halt or at least a very slow drip. This put real estate companies and lending institutions nationwide in a scramble. We just witnessed support staffing for real estate companies and lending institutions getting let go as the workflow demands dropped.



So what does this mean for real estate. None of that sounds very good, right?

Here are takeaways from the market changes according to Laurence Yun (chief economist, National Association of Realtors).

Looking back at 2022: Even with the slowdown last fall, on average, your home appreciated 10% in 2022. Real estate is one of your best hedges against inflation as it relates to your total wealth.

Looking forward to 2023:

- **ROI:** It is predicted that your investment will remain flat or a slight positive return for the year.

- **Inventory levels:** We are finally returning to better levels of inventory. The last two years have averaged about 1,700-2,000 total homes on the market in our entire metro of more than 600,000 residents. That is very low and is what (in part) caused the massive gains in value. As the inventory levels rise, buyers are going to be under less pressure to make quick decisions. Conversely, we are not entering into a scenario where we have too much inventory. We have about 3,000 homes on the market now. This number is reflective of what inventory levels looked like from 2012-2020. During that time, we had a slightly favored sellers' market in the spring, inventory grew into the fall, and fell back in the spring. These years produced 3-7% appreciation. This year of adjustment will likely not be the same gains, but it is indicative of us moving that direction.

- **Interest rates:** Last January, a buyer could lock in a 30-year fixed rate in the 3's. In the fall of 2022, we saw up to 8% interest rates (wowza). We believe, as inflation seems to be getting under some control, that the worst is behind us for now. It is predicted that we will see around 5.5% mortgage rates this spring, and, locally, we could even be closer to 5%. What a ride!

- **Locally:** The worst affected segment of our market is new construction. We officially have too much supply right now. Builders have not had to offer incentives or price reductions for the last few years, but they are coming back in vogue right now. If you are in that market as a buyer, don't be afraid to ask for a little more than you previously would have asked for.

We still have lower levels of supply for existing homes and need more. With the lower rates that so many have locked in via refinancing or purchasing, I predict we will not get as many of those sellers to list. This in part will again help sustain pricing as we don't predict that we will see an oversupply in our immediate future.

So how's the market, you ask?

My prediction: Not too darn bad. ■

Information provided by Eric Quiner, 515-710-5468, [ericquiner.com](http://ericquiner.com), [eric@precisiondsm.com](mailto:eric@precisiondsm.com), RE/MAX Precision, 8705 Chambery Blvd., Johnston.

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# HISTORY in the making

Franklin leading the first-ever Johnston girls wrestling program

New Johnston girls wrestling coach Timothy Franklin had one goal entering this season: put 20 years of wrestling into his girls' heads in a window that was infinitely shorter. As in, weeks.

So far, so good.

Franklin, who is also the middle school girls' head wrestling coach, says, although he isn't able to fill a lineup just yet, the wrestlers he does have are progressing nicely.

"You can see the wheels turning in their heads now," he says of his team's progress. "It's no longer just trying to go out there and tackle someone. They're picking up the moves, taking the shots and putting in the work. Every single day you can see them getting smarter."

Franklin knows his way around the mat himself, having been wrestling since he was 5 years old in El Paso, Texas, where he grew up. Franklin went to to wrestle collegiately and, over the years, has been in wrestling rooms and grappled with the likes of NCAA and Olympic champion wrestlers such as Chris Perry, David Taylor and Kyle Snyder, to name a few.

"I've been in rooms with very good people and have learned with very good coaches," Franklin says.

The 25-year-old Franklin has been using that knowledge he's gained over the years in a special way this season — coaching the first-ever Johnston all-girls wrestling team after the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union officially sanctioned the sport a year ago.

Franklin got the job as head girls wrestling coach and eagerly jumped in. There was just one thing missing: interest.

"To be completely honest, I didn't know if I was going to have a job," he says. "In the early introductory meetings, we were having three girls show up, then maybe another one the next meeting. Everything was up in the air."

The season began with just two middle school wrestlers and six on varsity. Not exactly what Franklin has planned nor expected. But winning has a way of gaining attention.

"The season started, and we went out there right away and started winning some matches," Franklin says. "After seeing that, girls started reaching out and e-mailing me asking how they could join the team. And it's grown ever since."



Johnston Girls Wrestling team: front row, from left: manager Leah Cozad, Charlotte Spah and Jasmine Calderon; second row: Huda Anglo, Paige Neighbors and manager Megan Cook; third row: Tajanny Grimaldo, Jasmine Newman, Riley Dorau, Sydney Jackson and Head Coach Timothy Franklin. Not pictured: Kandace Anglo and Abby Estrada.

Franklin's 125-pounder, Huda Anglo, brings in a wealth of much-needed experience to the team, having wrestled for the Grand View University Wrestling Club. Anglo was undefeated this season until midway through December.

At 170, Jasmine Newman is showing promise as well, winning all of her matches until suffering a loss in Ames recently. She responded by going to Boone and taking first place in the next tournament.

The girls team practices in the same room, at the same time, as the Johnston boys' team, Franklin says. It's an arrangement that benefits

his team immensely, he adds.

"They see the boys and how they go, and see the level of expectations the boys' coaches have for their team, and they want to be at that same level," he says.

Despite being a number of weeks into the season, girls are continuing to show interest in being part of the wrestling program. Franklin welcomes them all.

"I'm in the coaches office from 3 p.m. to 3:20, and if anyone wants to come watch a practice, or have any questions, they are more than welcome to talk to me," he says. "This is going to be exciting." ■

## LOOKING forward to the new year

We had a great 2022 and are looking forward to the new year of 2023. With a new year often comes new resolutions, challenges and goals. And that is no different for the chamber. We have many things planned to accomplish in 2023 and hope that we can continue to grow and bring great benefits to our members and the community of Johnston.



First, we will be starting our new year by welcoming many new board members. We would like to thank the following outgoing board members for their time and service over the past years. Thank you to Lisa Hanrahan - Iowa Sign Company, Alex Holm - Hy-Vee, Brian Hilgenberg - Bishop Drumm, Todd Richman - LRI Graphics, Sabrina Fest - John Deere Financial, and our past president, Shane Goodman - Big Green Umbrella Media. We appreciate all their time and effort, and we look forward to welcoming our new board members as well as continuing with Allan Graham as our board president for 2023.

Our calendar is filling up fast, and we want to be sure you mark your calendars for some of our special annual events. First, you won't want to miss our Annual Dinner on Feb. 9 at the Hilton Garden Inn. We will host a cocktail hour, dinner and then present our awards for Ambassador, Business and Citizen of the Year. Nominations are being accepted now until Jan. 20. You can fill out the form on our website at [www.johnstonchamber.com](http://www.johnstonchamber.com).

On March 21, we will be hosting the Regional Mentoring Event for Women along with Grimes and the Urbandale chambers of commerce. The event will take place from 8-11 a.m. at Blue Compass West 48. Registration is \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. If you are interested in sponsoring the event, please contact Sam at [Samantha@johnstonchamber.com](mailto:Samantha@johnstonchamber.com).

Be sure to check our calendar and newsletter emails to stay on top of hosts and locations for our monthly events. If you are interested in hosting a Business Before Breakfast or Business After Hours, please contact Sam for available dates. We encourage new or pending members to attend an event to meet members and get to know more about what the chamber has to offer.

Along with events throughout the year, we hope to bring you new committees and groups to join. The Johnston Chamber will work closely with volunteers and members for marketing and sponsorship committees. We'll also continue our ambassador program made up of volunteer members. If you would like to join a committee or become an ambassador, reach out to Sam via email or at 515-276-9064.

On behalf of the Chamber, we look forward to a prosperous 2023 and helping continue to make Johnston a great place to live, work and do business. ■

Information provided by Samantha Winebrenner, Johnston Chamber executive director, [samantha@johnstonchamber.com](mailto:samantha@johnstonchamber.com), 515-276-9064. For more information, visit [www.johnstonchamber.com](http://www.johnstonchamber.com).

## We Need Your Nominations!

### Business Person of the Year Citizen of the Year

Winners will be recognized at the Annual Dinner on February 9, 2023 at Hilton Garden Inn.

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## OUT & ABOUT



A ribbon cutting was held for DART at Johnston City Hall on Dec. 1.



Johnston Chamber President Allan Graham presents a plaque to DART CEO Elizabeth Presutti with Mayor Paul Dierenfeld.



Heather Roosa and Kelli Vorrath at the ribbon cutting for DART at Johnston City Hall on Dec. 1.



Matt Greiner and Mike Pogge-Weaver at the ribbon cutting for DART at Johnston City Hall on Dec. 1.



Brenda Ballard and Samantha Winebrenner at the ribbon cutting for DART at Johnston City Hall on Dec. 1.



Mike Charlie and Mark Rheinschmidt at the ribbon cutting for DART at Johnston City Hall on Dec. 1.



Allan Graham and Paula Bierle at the ribbon cutting for DART at Johnston City Hall on Dec. 1.



Brenda Ballard, Christine Osborne and Andrea Hodapp at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce's After Hours Dec. 1 at Christopher's Rare Coins, Johnston.



Liz Butler and Brian Dresback at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce's After Hours Dec. 1 at Christopher's Rare Coins, Johnston.



Kristi Kenyon and Sharm Sisler at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce's After Hours Dec. 1 at Christopher's Rare Coins, Johnston.



Dan Fitzgerald and Scott Kundel at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce's After Hours Dec. 1 at Christopher's Rare Coins, Johnston.



## OUT & ABOUT



Sharon Vickery and Jared Harrison at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Before Business at Allegra Marketing, Urbandale, on Dec. 13.



Kevin McGuire and Mason Powers at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Before Business at Allegra Marketing, Urbandale, on Dec. 13.



Sharm Sisler and Brenda Ballard at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Before Business at Allegra Marketing, Urbandale, on Dec. 13.



Kathy Smith and Craig Johansen at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Before Business at Allegra Marketing, Urbandale, on Dec. 13.



Scott Wendl and Mike Charley at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Before Business at Allegra Marketing, Urbandale, on Dec. 13.



Samantha and Paul Vogtlin with children Mila and Wesley Vogtlin at The Yard at Johnston Town Center on Dec. 3.



Ashley VanHeukelom and Addi VanHeukelom at The Yard at Johnston Town Center on Dec. 3.



Betsy Holub and Tonya Amos at The Yard at Johnston Town Center on Dec. 3.



Pippa Grider and Rowan Carr at The Yard at Johnston Town Center on Dec. 3.



Santa and Mayor Paula Dierenfeld at The Yard at Johnston Town Center on Dec. 3.



Caroling by Johnston High School Unaccompanied Miners at The Yard at Johnston Town Center on Dec. 3.



# CLASSIFIEDS

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