

JOHNSTON

JULY 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

GETTING together

Residents share how
they build community
through gatherings

Meet Linda Withers

EDUCATION

Tuna romesco salad board

RECIPE

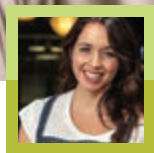
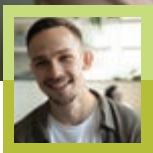
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WELCOME

GATHER around

Getting to know your neighbors isn't always an easy task. Some people simply want privacy and don't care to mingle much. That's certainly fine, as not everyone is a social butterfly. Others aggressively seek out new friends, especially those with whom they have things in common, which often deals with children being the same age.

Each time we moved, Jolene would seek out homes with playsets in the backyards and go up to the door and introduce herself and our toddler kids. A plate of chocolate chip cookies usually helped, too. It worked for her, and that bit of reaching out created lifelong friendships for us.

Admittedly, this is easier to do in the summer months. During the cold Midwest winters, most people tend to stay indoors where it's warm. But when the warm months arrive, residents start to come alive, much like a butterfly in a cocoon.

In generations past, homes had front porches where friends and family would gather. As the years passed, homeowners sought more privacy and preferred gathering on decks in their backyards. In recent years, as you may have noticed, the trend seems to be moving back to the front yards — or at least the driveways.

We found that one of the better ways to get to know our neighbors was circling the bag chairs around a fire pit in our driveway with a cold drink in our hands. And the s'mores helped, too. While the kids played hide and seek, we adults solved the world's problems — or at least the ones in our neighborhood. From there, we found reasons to gather for potluck dinners, football games and, more often than not, just impromptu get-togethers. The fire pit may not be legal in your community, but the conversation certainly is, and that's what's most important.

So if are not already doing so, invite the neighbors over to your driveway and host a little get-together. If you need some ideas on how to do this or get involved in other gatherings, check out our feature story this month.

Thanks for reading. ■

SHANE GOODMAN

Publisher

515-953-4822, ext. 305

shane@dmcityview.com



Read more of Shane Goodman's columns each weekday morning by subscribing to The Daily Umbrella email newsletter for free at www.thedailyumbrella.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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FEATURE

Leann and Joe Culver enjoy neighborhood gatherings and have arranged for food trucks and sometimes even entertainment. Photo by Todd Rullestad

GETTING together

Residents share how
they build community
through gatherings

By Ashley Rullestad

COVID definitely threw a wrench into plans people had for summer gatherings, especially in 2020. Heading to shows, concerts, bars — or even out for dinner — became a challenge. Leann Culver was looking for a way to connect with friends and neighbors, as well as enjoy good food when all the restaurants were closed, so she had an idea to start hosting food trucks at her house each week.



The Crescent Chase group enjoys happy hour. Pictured: Ron Huff, Jack Mendrys, John Wilkinson, Sharon Huff and Robyn Wilkinson. Not pictured: Connie Mendrys and Lisa Cooper.

“515 Pi, a pizza truck, was looking for neighborhoods to host, and I jumped at the opportunity to have them come and serve dinner,” she says. “We had such an amazing turnout at that first food truck that some neighbors messaged me and thanked me. They said how nice it was to get outside and say hi and talk to neighbors from a safe distance, and that sparked the idea to go ahead and cold message other food trucks on Facebook and see if they would be available.”

At that time, with the pandemic and not a lot of restaurants being open, there were a lot of available food trucks, so Culver was able to build a calendar and start a relationship with several local food truck owners.

Restaurants are open now, but Culver and the Green Meadows West food truck crew are now on year three and still going strong. They have neighborhood favorites who are happy and willing to come out and some new ones to try. Some nights Culver even manages to have a dinner truck, dessert truck and live music.

Culver says people like the convenience of

a short walk or drive to visit awhile and grab some dinner to go. Now she even puts out yard games, chalk and bubbles for everyone to enjoy while they wait.

“I love bringing people together, and this brings everyone joy — and that’s what makes me happy — to see my front yard full of people playing games, talking, sometimes eating on my driveway, which is totally fine. It’s truly been a wonderful experience all the way around, and I don’t see us stopping anytime soon.”

For those interested, Culver posts on her personal Facebook wall — as well as the Green Meadows Neighborhood group and Johnston Iowa Parents group — and sets up a sign in the median on Chambery Boulevard the day of the events.

“It’s been so great meeting new neighbors and catching up with my neighbors around me. At the end of the day, we are human, and that human connection of saying hi, chatting and catching up or maybe meeting someone new is important.”

New friends

Although COVID threw a curveball when it came to holding events, the outdoor, socially distanced gatherings many people had already been hosting were able to continue with only modest adjustments. Some simply continued to do what they had been doing, and others — like Lisa Cooper and her neighbors on Crescent Chase — gave it a whirl.

“The neighbors have been socializing for happy hour for years; however, once COVID hit, everyone started gathering on the driveways and coined the phrase ‘Driveway Drinks.’ Most days, there is an impromptu gathering at the home of whoever is outside first.”

The neighbors, which include Cooper along with John and Robyn Wilkinson, Ron and Sharon Huff, and Jack and Connie Mendrys, all have driveways that connect at the back of their homes. The Huffs have been a part of the neighborhood the longest, nearly two decades, and the Medrys and Wilkinsons about 8-9 years. Cooper is the group’s newcomer.



The Catalina Drive kids enjoy a neighborhood gathering.

"I moved here two years ago, and they welcomed me with open arms in the middle of the pandemic when everyone was socially distanced at all times. I didn't know anyone before I moved here, and I think that was the case for all of them as they moved into the neighborhood; they just all became instant friends."

Cooper says Jack Mendrys is the best bartender and makes Maple Smashes with Tennessee whiskey and fresh fruit for them to enjoy outdoors. The group enjoys the relaxed atmosphere and good company you can find when you meet up with friends during lazy Iowa summer evenings.

Now that COVID restrictions aren't putting a damper on indoor activities, the group also spontaneously goes out for dinner. Other activities are holiday gatherings and progressive dinners.

"Everyone needs that sense of connection. We truly enjoy and appreciate each other."

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FEATURE

Party central

The neighbors in the Providence Point neighborhood on Catalina Drive aren't simply neighbors anymore. They're more like a big, happy extended family. Kelsey Hershberger and her family moved to the neighborhood in 2017 and are thrilled to be a part of the group.

"We live in a special neighborhood where we celebrate any occasion. Everyone feels so good when the entire neighborhood shows up to celebrate and support them."

The group gathers and celebrates for all kinds of occasions, big and small, through any season, anytime. They gather for driveway drinks where the adults get together to mingle, have a drink and relax while the kids get to play with each other.

The group celebrates the children's birthdays with driveway parties where everyone can stop by, grab a treat and wish the birthday boy or girl a happy birthday. They have a neighborhood block party where everyone gets together for a meal, games and to get to know the new neighbors. Hershberger says it's a great way to build community and welcome new friends.



The women of Catalina Drive visit at the neighborhood gathering.

"At the end of the school year, we do a special end-of-the-year surprise party for the kids," she says. "The parents hide around the neighborhood with silly string, and, when the bus gets here, we chase the kids and silly string them, then they all get a treat and take a big group photo."

They also have neighborhood tailgates for the Johnston football games since the field is

right in their backyards. These celebrations are typically set up by the moms in the neighborhood. Hershberger is thankful for two women who are truly the fun committee and plan the end-of-the-year party for the kids and the block party for all to enjoy.

"Our neighborhood is special to us because it is truly a family atmosphere," she says. "Everyone looks out for one another." ■

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RECIPE

MEDITERRANEAN-inspired dinner parties made easy

(Family Features) Over the past two years, home chefs have had time to explore new recipes, ingredients and cooking techniques, which is why it is no surprise dinner parties are, at long last, a way to celebrate together in 2022. Now is the perfect time to share your newfound skills with family and friends.

It can be easy to get caught up in hosting duties, but few hosts want to spend all their time in the kitchen when they could be enjoying a great meal. Gail Simmons, food expert and TV personality, has tips and tricks you can bookmark to help turn your dinner party from good to great.

To host a fun and fresh Mediterranean-themed party this summer, decorate your table with blue and white patterned plates, delicate olive oil and vinegar bottles, cutting boards and fresh ingredients such as lemons and greenery instead of traditional centerpieces. When paired with a flavorful seafood recipe, like this tuna romesco salad board, your guests will feel like they're enjoying the Mediterranean all summer long.

For more dinner party inspiration, visit GenovaSeafood.com. ■

Tuna romesco salad board

Recipe courtesy of Gail Simmons on behalf of Genova Tuna
Servings: 4-6

ROMESCO:

- 3 large Roma tomatoes
- 1 roasted red pepper, skin removed and seeded (or from jar), coarsely chopped
- 1/3 cup roasted salted almonds
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

TUNA BOARD:

- 2 cans Genova Yellowfin Tuna in Olive Oil
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 bunch scallions
- kosher salt, divided
- freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 1 zucchini, sliced 1/2-inch thick on bias
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced lengthwise into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup roasted salted almonds
- 1/2 cup marinated artichokes, drained,

patted dry and halved

- 1 bunch radishes, halved
- 1/2 cup green olives
- 1/2 cup black olives
- 4 ounces manchego cheese, sliced into triangles
- 2 tablespoons flat leaf parsley, chopped
- To make romesco: Preheat broiler. Cover sheet pan with parchment paper or foil. Place tomatoes on sheet pan and broil until well charred on both sides, 2-4 minutes per side. Transfer tomatoes to bowl; cool slightly then remove skin, core, seed and coarsely chop.
- In blender, combine tomatoes; roasted red pepper; almonds; garlic; vinegar; paprika; red pepper flakes, if using; salt; and pepper until chunky paste forms. With blender on high speed, slowly drizzle in oil, scraping down sides of blender as needed until mixture creates rustic texture. Transfer romesco to bowl and taste for seasoning. Let romesco sit covered at room temperature 1 hour.
- To prepare board: In bowl, drain tuna; set aside. Set grill on medium-high heat and brush grates with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Grill scallions until charred and tender, about 4 minutes per side. Remove to large plate and



season with salt and pepper. Toss zucchini and red pepper in olive oil then season with salt and pepper. Grill until charred and tender, about 3 minutes per side. Remove to same plate to cool slightly.

- To assemble: With large spoon, scoop generous amount of romesco into center of board. Using back of spoon, spread romesco into circle with well in center. Gently pile tuna into well. Arrange zucchini, pepper, roasted almonds, artichokes, radishes, olives and cheese around romesco and tuna. Sprinkle tuna with chopped parsley before serving.

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TIME to take stock

In July of 1996, I attended a movie in the theater. This would be the only movie that I have ever seen more than once in theater seats. Independence Day. A great flick, culminated by a fantastic and moving speech given by Bill Pullman. "...today we celebrate our Independence Day."

July also brings us to a mid-point in the year. This is a good time to take stock on the first half and do any planning for the second half. Let me get you started. How about start with a list?

A few years ago, I had the crazy and headache-resulting idea that I would like to know where all of our accounts were at. I think back to when I was a teenager and only had a checking and savings account. Initially, I didn't think this process would be too difficult. I made a list that would help me jog my memory. It included checking, savings, old and current 401(k)s, investments, insurance policies and even the places that we have debt or credit accounts. I then compared this list to what is listed on my credit report to find out there were more accounts open than I even realized. By the time the spreadsheet was completed, I had more than 200 accounts listed for my wife and I. A long way from the teenager Dan Rundahl simplicity. I wanted to start a list, not draft my memoirs. This exhausting project morphed into the alternative nature of why I performed this practice. As the primary finance person in our house, I take for granted that what is in my head of knowledge doesn't exist in a simple-to-understand form for those who may need to "take the baton" if I were gone.

There is an old saying: "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." I get the philosophy of the statement, but I never thought that I would personally find a way to create more than 200 Easter baskets to accounts that we have. And, as we work with our clients, we always aim to simplify their retirement plans and end-of-life estate-planning needs. Although this forced headache took us more than 25 years to create and a few weeks to track down, the end result has a purpose. This Fourth of July, as you are meeting with family and friends, catching a BBQ, and relaxing with a cold drink in hand, there are many things you will do ... and not do. Have the end-of-life discussion with your kids and grandkids is likely not one of them. I urge you to take stock in your halfway point of this year and get some of your life's accounts in order. The headache will ultimately be worth it.

As always, don't hesitate to reach out to a financial advisor for assistance with this or any of your other financial needs. Best wishes for a safe and happy Independence Day. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 6165 N.W. 86th St., Johnston, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, 515-727-1701, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.



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INSURANCE

By Janis Van Ahn

THE IMPORTANCE of a skin exam

As we are now in full summer mode, and we all slather on the sunscreen while outside, seeing a dermatologist once a year — or more often if you are at a higher risk of skin cancer — for a full-body, professional skin exam is recommended. To help you prepare and make the most of your appointment, follow these five simple steps:



1. Perform a self-exam and come to your appointment prepared with notes about any new, changing or unusual spots you want to point out to your dermatologist. If you've taken smartphone photos of a spot that has changed over time, be sure to show them to your dermatologist.

2. Remove nail polish from your fingers and toes to enable thorough examination of fingers, nails and nail beds, since skin cancers can form there.

3. Wear your hair loose. Remove pony tails, buns or hair clips so that your doctor can get a good look at your scalp where skin cancers can, and do, develop.

4. Pack makeup remover to bring to your appointment and remove any makeup before your exam so that the skin around your eyes is easy to examine.

5. Ask questions. This is your opportunity to get valuable advice and insight from a professional trained specifically in diseases of the skin. From explanations of unfamiliar terms to pointers on how to do a skin self-exam, your doctor is an excellent source of information.

If you've never had atypical moles or skin cancer, the exam will likely be brief (about 10 minutes). You'll need to remove your clothes and put on a medical exam gown. Your dermatologist will thoroughly check your skin from head to toe, paying close attention to hard-to-see spots like your scalp, back, behind your ears, and even between your toes. Your dermatologist may utilize a small handheld magnifying device called a dermatoscope, that visualizes the outer surface of the skin (the epidermis) and the layers just beneath it.

Your doctor may biopsy one or more suspicious spots. This usually means removing part or all of the lesion and sending it to a lab for analysis. If the report comes back that the spot is skin cancer, your physician will contact you and explain the type of skin cancer and treatment options.

Dermatology review is not considered preventive when it comes to insurance. Often, a specialist copay or even costs applying toward a deductible can happen. Being prepared for the costs is important; however, more important is your health.

Remember that early detection of skin cancer is the key to the most minimal and cost-effective treatment with the highest chance of a cure. Make your appointment soon. ■

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

AIR conditioning: myth versus fact

There are a lot of myths when it comes to your air conditioner, and knowing the truth can help save you money and keep it running at its best. Have you fallen for one of these common costly air conditioning myths?



MYTH: Your home will cool faster by turning the thermostat down.

FACT: Cooling your home will always be a matter of time. Even if you set the thermostat at the lowest setting, your AC unit will continue to run at the same pace.

MYTH: Bigger AC units work better.

FACT: An AC unit whose capacity is too big for the space will force its compressor to turn itself on and off in quick intervals, which wears it out, shortens its life, and uses a lot of electricity.

MYTH: Turning off the AC when you're not home will save energy.

FACT: This is only true for extended periods and mild weather. If you turn off the AC before going to work on a hot summer day and turn it back on when you get home, it has to work harder to cool your home.

MYTH: It's best to let your AC unit "kick the bucket" before replacing.

FACT: Buying a new AC unit can cost you money in the beginning, but its higher efficiency will save you more money than operating an old one.

MYTH: Thermostat location doesn't affect air quality or temperature.

FACT: A thermostat should always be placed away from heating or cooling sources, and in a central location where it can get an average reading of the temperature levels in your home.

MYTH: Fans keep a room cooler.

FACT: Fans move air in a room but do not affect the air temperature. However, it creates a wind-chill effect, so it may make you feel cooler.

MYTH: Close vents in unused rooms to save energy.

FACT: Closing vents in rooms you do not use throws off the air distribution throughout your home. It causes pressure to build up in your ducts, making your AC unit work harder.

MYTH: AC maintenance is a waste of time and money if you have a newer unit.

FACT: If you have a high-efficiency, modern air conditioner, don't you want to keep it performing that way for as long as possible?

These are just a few of the myths out there. If you find yourself questioning how to achieve comfort in your home, call your local HVAC professional. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.

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HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

MYTHS and truths about hospice care

Considering end-of-life care for a family member who is ill can be overwhelming. Assistance from a qualified hospice provider can make the idea less daunting, help you initiate the conversation with other loved ones, and perhaps even reassure you that hospice care can benefit your whole family.

If your loved one's doctor has suggested hospice care and you're hesitating about making the call, the information below, compiled with assistance from the American Hospice Foundation, might help you better understand the benefits of hospice services.



Myth No. 1: Hospice is appropriate only when a person is at death's door.

Truth: The hospice conversation should begin before a person is in his or her last days; ideally, it should take place when individuals are still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice care, enabling a person to live life in comfort for the days, weeks, months, or longer that remain in his or her life. It's not unheard of for an individual's condition to improve and for him or her to "graduate" from hospice care. A philosophy of the hospice model is that life can and should be lived fully, no matter how much time remains.

Myth No. 2: Families are discouraged from involvement in a loved one's hospice care.

Truth: On the contrary, hospice care can benefit family members nearly as much as it can benefit clients. One of the gifts of hospice is its capacity to help families realize how much can be shared at the end of life through personal and spiritual connections. As part of a family-centered concept of care, hospice focuses almost as much on supporting a client's family members as on caring for the client. It's not unusual for family members to look back upon the hospice experience with gratitude.

Myth No. 3: Hospice is a place.

Truth: Some hospice providers care for patients in a dedicated hospice building; others care for clients wherever the need exists, usually in the client's home. You can seek and receive the care that feels right to your loved one and family.

Myth No. 4: Hospice is only for patients with cancer.

Truth: More than half of hospice clients nationwide have diagnoses other than cancer. Hospice commonly serves people who are living with chronic diseases such as emphysema, Alzheimer's disease, or cardiovascular and neuromuscular illnesses.

Myth No. 5: Hospice care is expensive.

Truth: Most hospice clients 65 or older are entitled to the Medicare Hospice Benefit, which covers virtually all hospice services and requires the client to pay little in out-of-pocket costs. This means there are no financial burdens incurred by the family — a situation that can contrast sharply with major expenses that can be incurred to manage a life-limiting illness when hospice is not used. ■

Ward Phillips is Senior Director of Sales for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice care, for older adults. Celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and its 15th as a hospice provider, WesleyLife is a Level 4 partner of We Honor Veterans, a national program that empowers hospice providers to meet the unique needs of military veterans and their families at the end of life. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.

LONG-TIME mail carrier retires

Holliday served Johnston for decades.

For certain folks in the Johnston community, Philip “Art” Holliday was an institution.

The long-time mail carrier recently retired after 44-plus years of faithful government service. Holliday is well known in Johnston for his commitment to customer service and the citizens he helped serve.

Danielle Lloyd, the postmaster at the Johnston Post Office, says Holliday will be missed by many and set an example for others to follow.

“He went above and beyond what was required of his job description to make sure he did everything he could to bring joy to those on his route,” she explains. “A simple ‘Hello, how you doing today,’ to sympathizing with others who had lost a loved one or other emotional event, Art is one in a million and will never ever be replaced.”

While Lloyd didn’t get to work with Holliday long — she started at the Johnston Post Office in February — his work ethic consistently impressed her.

“We just don’t find employees like him anymore,” she says. “He truly was a gem to his Johnston customers, and I am sure he is missed by them.”

One day this past June, shortly after he retired, Holliday called the office of his former employer and asked to speak with the mail carrier who would be doing his old route, which covered the area affected by the community parade and festivities of Johnston Green Days. He wanted to

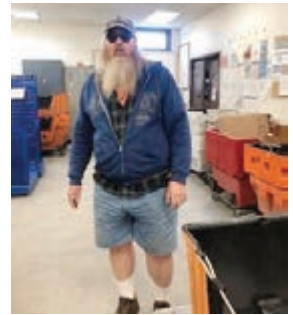
explain to his replacement how to handle mail delivery during the town event.

“Over the years, Art had developed a method of how to maneuver around the street closures and activities to get all his customers’ mail delivered timely,” Lloyd explains. “I thought it was a testament to Art’s commitment to customer service, calling today, more than a month after his retirement, to make sure the replacement knew what to do to make sure mail is delivered.”

One of the customers Holliday used to serve was Johnston resident Connie Trotter and her family.

“When we first moved to Johnston over 30 years ago, Art was our mail carrier and continued giving excellent service until his retirement last month,” she says. “Art always had a quick smile and a friendly wave for the residents.”

Trotter adds, “Children on the block looked forward to greeting him with a wave and a smile either from the window or meeting him at their mailbox for a personal greeting. We wish Art a long and happy retirement.” ■



Art Holliday



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ROTARY

By Mike Schoville

WOMEN of Johnston Rotary

Rotary is not your "Old Men's Club." We are an international community, inclusive of all nationalities, genders and ages. The next couple of articles in Johnston Living will highlight some of the "Women of Johnston Rotary."

Lu Ann White: I joined the Johnston Rotary in 2013. I have lived in Johnston since 1990. I am an attorney, and, like many, left Johnston daily to work downtown. I practiced law in a law firm downtown for about 30 years. Then, in 2013, my husband Barry Russell and I started our own practice in Johnston. I heard about Johnston Rotary and that it was important to join. I wish I had joined much sooner. I found Rotary to be a good place to learn about the community and to meet others in the community.



Rotary's motto is "Service Above Self." I found it to be a great place to give back to the community. We have provided charitable donations for many organizations, including the Johnston Dragon Scholarship, the Johnston Partnership, the Johnston Rotary park downtown along the river, ChildServe, Johnston baseball, and various Rotary projects, to name a few. In the past we put on sports dinners for North High. We provided benches and trees for Ellipsis, formerly Youth Homes, helped raise money for Special Olympics by making root beer floats and seeking donations, for the Salvation Army by ringing the bell, for Camp Dodge Guard families, and for sending Johnston high school kids to an international camp in Kosovo, Iowa's sister state. We built the life jacket station and raised money for a bike repair station at Terra Park. This year, we sponsored a local blood drive, helped the city plant milkweed for butterflies, and put on a successful golf tournament raising money for ChildServe, Ellipsis, and The Brenton Arboretum. Internationally, we support Polio Plus, Rotary's world-wide effort to eliminate polio.

As part of Green Days, we have served beer (a fun duty), and have helped raise money at the Smokin' Heroes barbecue contest sponsored by the Police Department. We also have great speakers on a weekly basis. Our group is informal but can get lots done. It is a fun way to meet others, learn about the community, meet other Rotarians from anywhere, and help our local, national and international communities. I encourage others to network, give back, and learn about our community in the friendly, informal, and well-connected Johnston Rotary.

Laura Kacer: Laura Kacer's role as superintendent of the Johnston Community School District helps her to be a good Rotarian. And her participation in the Johnston Rotary helps her to be a good leader of our schools.



She was first invited to the Johnston Rotary Club while serving as interim superintendent in 2018-2019. She found Rotary meetings to be a great way to start each Tuesday morning, knowing that she is part of an organization that gives back to others.

Laura enjoys the fellowship with Rotary friends, and is always excited to learn new things. Tuesday morning guest speakers bring a wide variety of local and timely information to share.

Each year, Laura gives a "State of the Schools" presentation with an update about the Johnston school district. For Laura, being part of the Johnston Rotary gives her the chance to connect with so many interested community members and tell the JCSD story. ■

More information about the Johnston Rotary Club can be found at www.johnstonrotary.com or contact Mike Schoville, schovillemike@gmail.com.

LIBRARY

NEWS from the stacks at JPL

The thermometer is climbing, but it's plenty cool at Johnston Public Library. Stop by JPL this month and check out some of the fun programs happening for kids, teens and adults.

Kids

Don't miss out on the final events of the summer at JPL. Preschoolers can enjoy Story Time Together on Mondays at 9:30 a.m. or 10 a.m. and Terrific Tuesdays on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. Babies can join in on the fun on Thursdays for Bouncing Babies at 11 a.m. and Baby, Busy, Bags on July 21 and 28. The fun continues with a visit from some animal friends from Blank Park Zoo on July 8 and a Boxcar Drive-In on July 13. Summer programming will wrap up with Critter Camp July 17-21.

Teens

Next, don't miss out on the awesome activities planned for teens in July, including Teen Tuesday fun on July 12 with JPL Escape Room. Teens work as a team to decode clues and escape the room before time runs out. This is an unforgettable live action gaming experience you don't want to miss. Teen Tuesday programs are for kids in grades six through 12 and require registration.

Are you a gamer? JPL has Dungeons and Dragons on July 11 and 18 from 4-5:30 p.m. Love anime and manga? Check out Anime Club on Thursdays from July 7-21 from 2-3 p.m. Then pop in on Fridays for Teen Art Drop-In on July 1-15 from 3-5:30 p.m. More details and event registration for teen programs is available at johnstonlibrary.com/teens.

Adults

Adults, we have a great lineup of ongoing programs that will continue throughout the summer, including our two programs for English Language Learners and four adult book clubs. Additionally, mark your calendar for two tasty cooking programs for adults in July. Globally Good Cooking Class: Kenyan Cuisine takes place on Saturday, July 9. Join your neighbors to experience cultures and foods beyond your front door. Josie Shaw, a CultureAll Ambassador, will be teaching us about the food and culture of Kenya. Then, on Saturday, July 23, bring a little honey-sweetened goodness to your morning at the Hive to Table Cooking Class. "Bee" part of this class where local beekeeper Steve Rimathe from Madrid, who has 14 hives, will share fun and interesting facts about honeybees. He'll talk about the tools he uses for beekeeping, how he tends to the hives, and how he harvests and jars the honey. Food Editor Lois Carpenter will show how to make your own hot honey and share recipes and samples for Hot Honey Chicken over Waffles and Honey-Cashew Cookie Bars. Registration is required for both of these free cooking classes.

More information about events and resources at Johnston Public Library can be found online at www.johnstonlibrary.com or by calling the library at 515-278-5233. ■

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DISABILITY versus early retirement

Clients frequently ask what happens when a disabled person meets retirement age. Simply put, when a disabled person attains full retirement age, disability benefits automatically convert to Retirement

Insurance Benefits. Most disabled beneficiaries will notice no difference when they become retirement beneficiaries.

A more complicated issue is whether to apply for disability or early retirement.

Some people close to, but not at age 62, do not apply for disability thinking that they will just wait until they can apply for early retirement. This results in a reduced monthly benefit.

However, if you are having difficulty maintaining employment because of a severe



medical condition or combination of conditions expected to last at least 12 months, you may want to consider applying for both early retirement and Social Security Disability.

You can apply for both at the same time, or, if you already have a disability claim filed, you can apply for early retirement while the disability claim is processed. This can provide for monthly income while you are waiting for a decision on your disability claim. Should you be found disabled, you may receive compensation for the period of time you received the lower amount. This back-pay amount can be significant.

The amount of monthly benefits you receive depends on when you are found disabled. Regardless of when you apply, if you are found disabled, and your disability began before the age of 62, you will receive your full retirement benefits. If you are found disabled after the age of 62, your monthly payment will

be reduced by the number of months of full retirement benefit, but will still be more than the amount of early retirement. You cannot receive disability and full retirement.

Another factor to consider is Medicare. Individuals are eligible for Medicare at the age of 65. Rather than wait until age 65, disabled persons are eligible for Medicare after they have been entitled to SSDI for 24 months.

If you are close to, or over the age of 62, and unable to work because of a medical condition, you should consider filing for disability, early retirement, or both. Contact an attorney who specializes in Social Security disability claims to find out which options are best for you. ■

Information provided by Gail Barnett, attorney for Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com.

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MEET Linda Withers

Bringing “magic” into the classroom

Linda Withers joined the Johnston Community School District three years ago after her husband accepted a job in the Des Moines area. Living most of her childhood in Winona, Minnesota, Withers graduated from Winona State University with a degree in elementary education and speech communication/theater arts and holds a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Northern Iowa.

Withers has taught various elementary grade levels as well as university students at Wartburg College and the University of Northern Iowa. Today, Withers is a third-grade educator at Wallace Elementary School.

“I teach in a building where I feel valued and supported,” Withers says. “Teachers across grade levels, our related arts teachers, our valuable associates, our amazing office coordinators, our custodians, and our nurse are all a part of a team, and we truly care about each other. Teachers have high expectations for their students, and a heart full of empathy for every one of them. One step inside of our building, and you can honestly feel it.”

For Withers, creativity is her favorite part about being an educator. With a background in the arts, Withers helps her students learn in engaging ways. Because of this, her students spend the school year with three “magic” friends: “Magic Curtain,” “Magic Toolbox” and “Magic Present.”

Each year, Withers also decorates her room in a different theme. Some recent themes have included Toy Story, dogs, Trolls and, this past school year, Monsters at Work.

“Third grade is such an amazing year for kids. They are so full of energy and have a sense of adventure for everything we learn together,” Withers says.

Withers’ students have also participated in some interesting projects this past school year including writing and publishing their own nonfiction “expert” books, forming book clubs, and engaging in a “Mystery Reading” unit where students work to solve mysteries in an entire collection of chapter books full of clues and “red herrings.”

“I have high expectations for my students and am consistently looking for ways to inspire and engage my students in their learning in a way that promotes success for all kids. I call my students, ‘Withers’ Wonder Kids,’ and that frames our year up from the very first day,” Withers says.

When not teaching, Withers likes to take photographs, participate in her church’s worship band, take walks with her husband, and more. ■



Linda Withers says third graders have a sense of adventure, and she enjoys encouraging their imagination.



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CITY COUNCIL

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(515) 554-9095
bburkhardt@cityofjohnston.com

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tomwcope@msn.com

Jim Evans
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(515) 326-2675
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PICKLEBALL COURTS AVAILABLE AT TERRA PARK

Pickleball is a fun sport for people of all ages that combines elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong. All skill levels can enjoy this fun sport. Best of all, it is available at Terra Park behind Crown Point Community Center, 6300 Pioneer Pkwy.

The pickleball courts are reserved during the weekdays from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. but are open for use before or after. They are also open on the weekends. There are a few weekends when Yoga by the Lake will be on the tennis/pickleball courts as something is occurring at the large shelter at Terra Park. For a list of the yoga dates, visit www.cityofjohnston.com/yogabythelake.



RATE ADJUSTMENTS BEGINNING JUL. 1

City of Johnston sewer, garbage and recycling are being adjusted slightly beginning Jul. 1. As a resident, you will not see this increase until your August bill. The rate changes are consistent with neighboring communities. The revenue anticipated from the increases will support the continued operational needs within our city. For more information on the rates, visit www.cityofjohnston.com/utilityrates.

	Old Rate	Rate Beginning Jul. 1
Sewer Rates (Per thousand gallons)	\$5.96	\$6.50
Inside City Sewer Only Rate	\$34.09	\$37.16
Outside City Sewer Only Rate	\$51.14	\$55.74
Stormwater Utility Fee	\$6.55	\$7.05
96-gallon Garbage	\$8.32	\$10.73
48-gallon Garbage	\$7.61	\$10.11
Recycling fee	\$3.89	\$4.32

SUNDAE IN THE PARK IS AUG. 7

Join community members and City Department Directors as they welcome the students back to the upcoming 2022/2023 school year. The department directors will be serving free ice cream for everyone to enjoy.

The event is at Johnston Commons, 6700 Merle Hay Rd., from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!



For more information about the city, please visit www.cityofjohnston.com



CITY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022

SAVE THE DATE

The City of Johnston has upcoming activities this summer and fall that you will want to ensure is on your calendar.

- **Sundae in the Park:** Sunday, Aug. 7, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Johnston Commons
- **Mayor's Run for the Trails:** Saturday, Aug. 13, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m., Terra Park
- **Trunk-or-Treat with First Responders:** Wednesday, Oct. 26, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., Fire Station 38

SIGN UP FOR THE MAYOR'S RUN FOR THE TRAILS BEFORE THE PRICE INCREASES

The Mayor's Run for the Trails 5K + Kids Fun Run will be held on Saturday, Aug. 13 at Terra Park, at 6400 Pioneer Parkway. Register by visiting www.cityofjohnston.com/Mayors5KRun.

Packet pick up and late registration will be held on Friday, Aug. 12, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at Fitness Sports, 5525 Merle Hay Rd., in Johnston, or on race morning from 6:30-7:30 a.m. Race-day registration is available for \$40, but the t-shirt size is not guaranteed.

Kids Fun Runs and 5K start times:

- 100-meter dash will start at 8:00 a.m.
- 0.62 meter fun run (around the lake) will start at 8:00 a.m.
- 5K run/walk will start at 8:15 a.m.

Awards and raffle prizes will follow immediately after the run.



BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Results of the fifth community survey and second business survey were presented at the Jun. 20 City Council meeting by ETC Institute. The first community survey was conducted in 2013, and the first business survey in 2020. The overall results of both surveys were positive and certainly reflect city leaders' important decisions to ensure residents' and businesses' tax dollars are spent wisely.

Over the past few years, many events have occurred, so it was important to understand how residents within the Johnston community felt about their local government. As in previous years, the City of Johnston contracted with ETC Institute to conduct the 2022 surveys. A random sample of residents and businesses were selected. A total of 632 community surveys and 80 business surveys were completed.

View the full results of the surveys by visiting the links below:

- **Business survey:** www.cityofjohnston.com/BusinessSurvey
- **Community survey:** www.cityofjohnston.com/CommunitySurvey

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



Yoga by the Lake

Various dates and locations

Bring your yoga mat and join professional yoga instructors on Saturday mornings for one hour of free yoga from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. at the Terra Lake Amphitheater, 6400 Pioneer Parkway, or Crown Point tennis courts, 6300 Pioneer Parkway behind the building.

- July 9, Crown Point Tennis Courts
- July 16, Crown Point Tennis Courts
- July 23, Crown Point Tennis Courts
- July 30, Terra Lake Amphitheater
- Aug. 6, Terra Lake Amphitheater

Johnston Farmers Market

Tuesdays, through Oct. 11, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Johnston Town Center parking lot, corner of Merle Hay Road and N.W. 62nd Ave.

Fresh produce, live music, baked goods, crafts and food trucks make shopping at the farmers market an entertaining experience. The market is sponsored by the Johnston Lions Club.



Sundae in the Park

Sunday, Aug. 7, 6-8 p.m.
Johnston Commons

Enjoy a free ice cream sundae and meet with city and school officials. Families will have the opportunity to learn more about the City's Public Works and Community Development Departments and other family-fun activities. The Johnston Historical Society will have the 1902 Simpson House Museum open during this event.

Jog for Joppa

July 16, 9 a.m. • Terra Park, Johnston

The high-schoolers of Life Academy co-op, a small, local homeschool group, have been working this school year to put on a 5K to support a charity. Adult entry fee is \$35, which includes snacks, rewards and a T-shirt. For children 6-12, the cost is \$10. A T-shirt is not included in this fee. All proceeds from the race will be used to buy materials and items to donate to Joppa, which helps homeless people access existing resources and mobilizes private donations from families, churches and organizations to meet unmet needs in homeless services, housing and education. For more information, visit jogforjoppa.com or the Facebook page, Jog For Joppa.



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July 14
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July 15
Betfred Koozie Giveaway
Betfred Sports

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Marvel's Defenders of the Diamond Night

July 17
Outdoors Night
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WHERE WE LIVE By Lindsey Giardino

FAMILY active in Greenwood Hills

Lots to enjoy about neighborhood and community

When Kristin Hopper-Losenicky and her husband, Jacob, relocated to the Des Moines metro from Cedar Rapids in 2016, they were looking for a tight-knit community with good schools and parks, as well as access to amenities like concerts, art and kid-friendly attractions.

"In the end, Johnston had all those things and more, including an amazing teaching and administrative staff in the schools, and sizable yards and slightly bigger homes than others we had looked at in the same price range in other areas of the metro," she says.

The family initially lived on Summit Drive but moved last year to a bigger place in Greenwood Hills, which they purchased from the parents of their one of their daughter's friends.

"We heard they were thinking of selling, and we had been looking to get into the Greenwood Hills neighborhood for our kids to be close — even on the same street — as many of their friends," Hopper-Losenicky says. "We love the houses here and that we are near the walking trail and close to both Horizon and Summit."

Some of Hopper-Losenicky's favorite aspects of her home are the large windows, spacious backyard and the outdoor living areas.

"We have both a front porch and a back deck and patio spaces," she says. "I enjoy sitting on the front porch in the spring and summer, especially when our lilac bush is in bloom, and watching the goings-on."

"We love the walkability here," she continues. "So many people and pets are out walking, so it feels very friendly and welcoming. I love to wave and say hi to people who are out and about. When it's nice out, the kids and I love walking to and from school. I very much enjoy the neighborhood feel while still being able to access shopping and run errands within a few minutes of travel."

Perhaps what Hopper-Losenicky appreciates most about the Johnston community in general is the school system.

"I honestly can't say enough good things about our school and teachers," Hopper-Losenicky says. "I know the last few years have been especially rough with all of the unexpected obstacles, but I want them to all know we love and appreciate them."

The entire family is active in the community, especially the kids. Shaw attends Dojos Family Martial Arts, and Brynn takes jazz dance lessons at Dance Vision and is part of the local Girl Scout troop at Horizon, among other activities. ■



Kristin Hopper-Losenicky, her husband Jacob, and their children, Shaw and Brynn, find much to enjoy about their Greenwood Hills Home, especially the outdoor spaces, which include a large backyard.

NEWS BRIEFS

DES MOINES-AREA students receive Bank Iowa scholarships

Alyssa Miner, a senior at Johnston High School; Caroline Fleming, a senior at Waukee High School; and Elizabeth White, a senior at Valley High School, have all been selected from Bank Iowa's Des Moines region as recipients of the Spirit of Chandy Scholarship. The winners will each receive a \$500 scholarship.

Bank Iowa awards more than 20 \$500 scholarships to commendable high school students across the state annually. The scholarship honors Bank Iowa co-founder Harry Barr's daughter, Chandy Barr Clanton, who passed away in 2009. Students are selected based on academics, character, leadership, honors/awards received and participation in school and community activities, including swimming, biking, running and flying — activities Chandy was passionate about. ■

COMMUNITY and Business Survey Results revealed

Results of the fifth community survey and second business survey were presented at the June 20 City Council meeting by ETC Institute. The first community survey was conducted in 2013, and the first business survey in 2020. The overall results of both surveys were positive and certainly reflect city leaders' important decisions to ensure residents' and businesses' tax dollars are spent wisely.

"City leaders work hard every day to improve the quality of life for our businesses and residents within our community, and these survey results certainly help with input during our strategic planning process," said Mayor Paula Dierenfeld. "The results show an increase in satisfaction with customer service and communications, reflecting the great staff we have in the city and their commitment to delivering quality services. Thanks to the residents and businesses who filled out this year's survey, as it helps identify areas of improvement and focuses on needed resources."

Residents continued to give Johnston high marks for the overall feeling of safety, quality of life and quality of services, as follows:

- 95% said they feel safe in the city (up 1% from 2020)
- 90% are satisfied with their quality of life (up 3% from 2020)
- 90% are satisfied with the quality of city services (up 4% from 2020)
- 95% are satisfied with the quality of fire and EMS (up 1% from 2020)
- 90% are satisfied with the quality and maintenance of city parks (up 4% from 2020)
- 69% are satisfied with the city's website (up 6% from 2020)
- 68% are satisfied with the rate of growth (up 6% from 2020)

Businesses continued to give Johnston high remarks for the overall feeling of safety, image of the city and quality of life, as follows:

- 96% are satisfied with police services (up 6% from 2020)
- 95% are satisfied with fire services (up 7% from 2020)
- 94% rated Johnston as a good place to do business (up 8% from 2020)

Over the past few years, many events have occurred, so it was important to understand how residents within the Johnston community felt about their local government. As in previous years, the City of Johnston contracted with ETC Institute to conduct the 2022 surveys. A random sample of residents and businesses were selected. A total of 632 community surveys and 80 business surveys were completed.

A complete report of the business and community survey is available at www.cityofjohnston.com/1051/Business-Survey-Results and www.cityofjohnston.com/742/Community-Survey-Results ■



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FACE the financial storm head on

The first half of 2022 has been a financial storm. Inflation hit a 40-year high, interest rates are rising, and the S&P 500 declined 20% through mid-June — the steepest start to any year since 1939. There are things you can do right now to help your retirement savings weather the storm.

Take your 401(k), for example. We often talk to the families and individuals we work with about rebalancing their 401(k). When the market is down, stocks are on sale. Depending on your retirement date and your other retirement savings, this may be the time to put more into the stock market and less in bonds. We are also talking about new contributions to 401(k) or other employer-sponsored plans. Now may be a time to dedicate those new contributions to equities, allowing you to take more risk with a smaller part of your portfolio. Also, look at how many shares you own, not the value of those shares. If you can ride out this storm, the more shares you buy on sale, the more you can enjoy the sunny days when the market goes up again. Like any retirement decision, these moves must help you achieve your goals, and you must understand and feel comfortable with the risk you are taking.



You can make other strategic moves that don't have anything to do with the stock market. Developing a long-term tax plan is one of them. Having three buckets of money: taxable, non-taxable and tax-deferred allows you to draw income from these buckets in a way that can decrease your tax burden. A long-term tax plan could also include paying more taxes one year to pay fewer taxes later, as in the case of a Roth conversion. A Roth conversion involves transferring funds from a traditional IRA or 401(k) into a Roth account. The year you make the conversion, you pay income tax on the amount transferred over, but you never pay taxes on that money again if it's a qualified withdrawal. Inside the Roth account, you can buy stocks, and if the market is down, you buy them at a lower rate. Then you can ride the market volatility back up and do so in a tax-free account.

Some may say sit back and wait it out when a storm is brewing, but I disagree. Face the storm head-on by developing a plan for your retirement savings so you can take control of your money and your retirement vision. ■

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

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4 WAYS men can protect their heart

Heart disease impacts men differently than women, with males more likely to develop heart disease earlier, leading to a greater risk of heart attacks earlier in life.



Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men in the United States, causing about one in four male deaths. Here are four ways for men to protect and heal their hearts.

1. Know your risk factors

While there are certain things we can't control about our health, like the genetics we are born with, understanding our risk factors is the key to preventing heart disease. In general, men live not only shorter, but sicker, lives than women. They're more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes, two conditions that are directly linked to cardiovascular disease and increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

Men also do not have the natural estrogen

levels that help protect women in younger years. Other risk factors include: age, family history, smoking, cholesterol, obesity, diabetes and sedentary lifestyle.

2. Make sustainable lifestyle changes

One of the main risk factors for heart disease is smoking. Smoking contributes to plaque formation in the arteries, which may lead to a heart attack or stroke. Men are far more likely than women to be smokers, and this impacts their likelihood for developing heart disease. Small lifestyle changes that can be made today include:

- Cutting down on red and processed meat
- Drinking less alcohol
- Engaging in aerobic/cardio exercises
- Scheduling your annual checkup

3. Reduce and manage stress

Stress sends your body, specifically your autonomic nervous system, into a state of "fight or flight." It is one of the most underrated heart risk factors. Continuous stress releases an excess

of hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, which can damage the body over time and, in extreme cases, cause sudden cardiac death. Set aside small periods of time throughout the day and week for rest and relaxation.

Reducing and managing stress also improves your mental health and sleep.

4. Don't ignore ED

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is a symptom of an underlying disorder and can be a warning sign of current or future heart problems. Inform your health care provider if you have symptoms of erectile dysfunction so you can be screened for the presence of heart disease.

The bottom line: Ignoring ED is dangerous and can put your health and well-being at risk. ■

Information provided by Eric Martin, MD, board-certified cardiologist specializing in prevention and wellness at MercyOne Iowa Heart Center, 5880 University Ave., West Des Moines, 515-633-3600, IowaHeart.com

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HEALTH

By Dr. Amy Petersen

POOL safety tips

With the hot, humid summer days, families are looking to their own backyards for water entertainment. Although fun, having a wading pool, above or underground pool, or hot tub comes with big responsibility. Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death in children ages 1-4. It can happen in seconds to minutes and is often silent without waving, splashing or yelling. Following these safety tips can ensure a more safe and enjoyable summer in the water.

- Install fencing with a self-closing gate at least 4 to 5 feet high on all sides of the pool.
- Put all pool toys away when finished playing in the pool. If you have an above-ground pool, always lock or remove the ladder when finished.
- Learn CPR.
- Designate an adult “water watcher” in group-swim situations and take turns with this responsibility. Put away cell phones and avoid distractions when it is your turn.
- Enroll your kids in swim lessons.
- Never rely on water wings, floaties, noodles or inner tubes. These are toys, not safety devices.
- Keep safety equipment, such as emergency flotation devices nearby when swimming. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amy Petersen, Cornerstone Pediatrics & Family Allergy, 6800 Lake Drive, Suite 260, West Des Moines, www.cornerstonepfa.com.



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HEALTH

By Dr. Mallori Phillips

WATERY eyes: Could dryness be the reason?

When I ask my patients if their eyes ever feel dry, the typical response I receive is, “No, Doctor; my eyes water all the time!” Experiencing symptoms of watery eyes is somewhat counter-intuitive; often, excessive watering can actually mean that your eyes are dry.

The front surface of the eye, known as the cornea, is lined with nerve endings. When the eyes are dry, these nerves send signals to fluid-secreting glands which are responsible for forming the tear film that coats and protects the cornea. Two main components of the tear film are water and oil. Dry eye conditions occur for two primary reasons: low tear volume or poor tear quality. Many patients treat low tear volume with over-the-counter artificial tears. To enhance tear film quality, oil-secreting glands are the focus; using warm compresses and fish oil supplements will improve the quality and volume of oils that lubricate and moisturize the eyes.

A few common risk factors of developing dry eyes include being female, being a contact lens wearer, and having an autoimmune condition. While older people have an increased risk, several pediatric patients battle dry eyes, which can be linked to increased screen time. If you suffer from dry eye, consult with your trusted optometrist. ■

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



THE IMPORTANCE of family meal time

Family meals matter, to children and adults. Studies show that positive mealtime experiences can lead to better communication, improved performance at school, enhanced reading levels and better nutrition in children. Here are some ways to enhance the quality of your family's time around the table.



Create a relaxed atmosphere for positive

conversations. Quality conversations happen when mealtimes are as calm as possible with minimal distractions. Listen thoughtfully to each opinion and help children learn to appreciate everyone's input.

Focus on laughter and learning. Mealtimes are wonderful times to share funny stories and learn. Make a family commitment to focus only on positive topics before and during meals.

Respect and involve every family member. Even small children want to be a part of family mealtime conversations. Make a conscious effort to engage everyone. Be patient with those who take longer to express themselves and actively seek the opinions of those who are usually quiet. Give each person a chance to talk.

Use conversation starters. Tired of conversations that fall flat after a minute or two? Try some of the questions and conversation starters below. You could even print them out and let family members draw their own card to discuss.

Table conversation starters for tots

- If you could have a superpower, would you rather fly or be invisible? Why?
 - If our family could have any animal in the world as a pet, what would you like to have?
 - If you could be any kind of food, what would you like to be? Why?
 - What is one of your favorite colors? Do you see anything on the table in that color?
 - What made you smile today?

Table conversation starters for school-age children

- What makes someone a good friend?
 - What makes you different from the person sitting next to you? What makes you the same?
 - What is the hardest thing you did today?
 - If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?

Table conversation starters for adolescents

- Describe something funny that happened to you today.
 - Describe something you are planning to do in the future.
 - Share the best new movie or TV show you have seen recently.
 - Describe a compliment you gave or received recently.
 - Describe a family tradition you really like and a new one you would like to add.

Wishing you many happy family meals in your future! ■

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

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ARE HOMES still selling with these higher interest rates?

This is the number one question we get as Realtors right now. The short answer is yes, homes are still selling. It may not be at the same pace as it was earlier this year, but homes are definitely still selling. While it is not common to have multiple offers on a home the day it is listed anymore, homes that are in good shape and priced appropriately are still selling within a week, typically. Depending on the price point, location and condition, it may still sell the same day it is listed.



The good news is there are more homes to choose from today, and you have a little more time to get in and see them. Inventory levels are starting to get closer to a more normal range with approximately 2,200 total listings available. For comparison, early this spring, we had about 1,700 total listings market-wide and in a normal year, it would be just over 3,000 total listings. Another positive market trend is we now have more resale listings than new construction listings, which leads to a healthier market as well.

We compare the real estate market over the past couple of years to driving a car at about 100 miles per hour. Things were moving very quickly, your reaction times needed to be very fast, and you needed to plan ahead or you were likely to miss your turn or even worse. Now, with inflation running at a higher rate than we have seen for the past few decades and mortgage interest rates near 6%, it is like we have taken our foot off the gas pedal. Much like driving a car, that does not mean we have stopped but merely slowed down to a more realistic speed.

Are home values going to fall?

Most economists agree that we are not likely to see large price declines like we did in the 2007-2008 housing bubble. In fact, they are forecasting more moderate single digit price appreciation for 2022 and 2023. The fundamentals of the market are much different now than they were before the crash of 2008. Demand for housing still outpaces supply, mortgage lending requirements are much tighter, and foreclosure rates remain low.

Don't let slightly higher interest rates drive your housing decisions. There are more homes on the market today to choose from, and "the right one" may be out there for you now. "Marry the house, date the rate." What does this mean? It means buy the house you want. But committing to the house doesn't mean you have to commit to the financing available now forever. Smart homeowners always look for a better financing opportunity and make the move when the time is right. You can always change your financing to more favorable terms later, should better rates and products become available. And, if rates only get worse, then you'll be glad you married the house when you did. The interest rate on rent is 100%. Remember that when you think mortgage rates of 6% are high. ■

Information provided by Mike and Holly Taylor, 515-720-7737 or 515-883-0789, RE/MAX Precision, Powered By Relationships.



We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition. **Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2022 Northwest Polk County Residents' Choice Poll.** This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish in the October issue of our Grimes, Urbandale and Johnston editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between. Mail in this paper ballot or vote online at the link below. But do so quickly, as the **poll closes on Sept. 2.** One vote per resident, please.

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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

PLAN ahead, pay ahead

A phrase I often hear is, "It is expensive to die!" Unfortunately, I must agree.

Some of the expenses the family must face at the time of death include: funeral home services; burial plot, mausoleum or niche; vault; casket; opening/closing of burial space; transportation of body; house of worship and clergy; flowers; and memorial/headstone.

Most funeral homes and cemeteries offer pre-planning programs which will allow you to pay for your funeral/burial needs in advance, often locking in current prices for future needs. Specially trained advanced planning specialists will guide you through the process.

It is never fun or easy to think about death; however, it is much more difficult for the family when forced to make these difficult decisions — both emotional and financial — in the midst of grief. It is so much easier to discuss these topics in advance and make sure your wishes are carried out.

People are often skeptical, if not fearful, as they enter my office to make their pre-arrangements, but most leave saying, "That wasn't so bad" or "You made this easy!" Please consider completing your arrangements before they are needed — your family will appreciate it.

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.



HEALTH

By Elijah Evans

PROVIDING support

Many people struggle with how to best provide support for their loved ones dealing with negative emotions. There are two major kinds of interpersonal support: instrumental support and emotional support. Instrumental support is helping people by doing something tangible for them, such as providing information or completing tasks on their behalf. Emotional support, on the other hand, is validating the emotions the person is going through — letting them know their reactions make sense to you given the circumstances — without trying to change the way they feel. It is very common for people to offer instrumental support as soon as they learn the people they care about are unhappy, especially since it feels like they are doing something concrete to be of assistance. This approach often backfires because trying to solve the problems causing negative emotions tends to imply the message that a person's negative emotions are unwelcome. If you find loved ones get upset with you when you're only trying to help, I suggest starting with providing emotional support and proceeding to instrumental support only if it is specifically requested. My guess is you'll find that, most of the time, people just want to feel heard and understood rather than have their problems solved. ■



Information provided by Elijah Evans, T-LMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd., 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, evans@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

MYTHS of senior assisted living

Assisted living communities are designed to empower individuals to maintain their independence, while giving them access to 24/7 assistance with activities of daily living, socialization and activities in a homelike environment. Many seniors thrive in assisted living communities, but people tend to still have reservations on deciding whether to move into one. Although there are many myths out there that make it difficult for seniors and their caregivers to make the big decision on moving, an assisted living community is one of the best living options for seniors. Here are some myths about these communities that may help you understand the benefits of moving into an assisted living community.

One of the biggest myths regarding assisted living communities is that the term “assisted living” is just a new way of saying nursing



homes. Nursing homes and assisted livings do share some things in common, such as 24/7 access to health care services. However, assisted livings are designed to empower independence and autonomy, whereas nursing homes have more of a restrictive setting. Some other differences in assisted livings are that they offer private apartments with your own furniture, tend to cost less, and offer more independence, privacy and activity programs tailored to specific needs.

A second myth in assisted living communities is that you will lose your independence. In assisted livings, you are encouraged to entertain guests, cook your own meals and do other things you used to do at home. Assisted livings follow the “if you don’t use it, you’ll lose it” motto. They offer assistance with certain tasks, not complete, round-the-clock care like nursing homes do. Seniors in assisted livings can come and go as they please, but they still have the reassurance that if they need help, staff is able to respond within minutes.

A third myth is that residents give up the things they used to love. Living in an assisted living provides more socialization and companionship than living alone. The community’s activities are centered around the individuals’ likes and interests while enhancing their quality of life. Many assisted living communities have gardening clubs, bridge groups, cooking classes, church services and music groups.

These are just a few myths out there about assisted living. There are many benefits about making the big decision to move into an assisted living community that can improve a senior’s quality of life, wellness and their social life. When looking for an assisted living community, do your research and ask appropriate questions that are centered around your loved one. ■

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

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CHAMBER

By Samantha Winebrenner

GREEN DAYS success thanks to many

Summer is finally here. And we kicked it off with a fun and successful Green Days Festival. The weather was great, and we are so thankful to those who could join us and celebrate all the different things our community has to offer. Of course, that wouldn't have been possible without all of our volunteers, committee members and sponsors.



A big thank you to our Green Days chairperson, Pam Kucera; nothing would have been possible without her hard work and dedication. Also, a special thanks to the City of Johnston's Parks and Recreation and Public Works for all their help.

We would also like to thank the following sponsors:

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Our Jammin in Johnston vendor fair was held on June 16 at Green Days. Thank you to all our sponsors and business vendors. We had over 30 businesses kick off the weekend and connecting with the community on Thursday night.

Premier Sponsor: Humana

Featured Sponsor: Allegra, Corteva, Pat Ward Photography, Westfield Veterinary Hospital and MetroNet

Supporting Vendors: Edencrest, Edward Jones-Sharon Vickery and Meadowview of Johnston

Also, a huge thank you to our entertainment: Mike Aceto, Jake Schrod, The Sons of Gladys Kravitz, School of Rock, Shockwaves and Gimikk.

Don't miss out on any opportunity to join us for our monthly events by checking our event calendar at johnstonchamber.com.

July events

- July 12, Breakfast Before Business hosted by Merkle Retirement Planning at 7:30 a.m.
- July 14, Business After Hours hosted by Compass Mortgage at 5 p.m.
- July 28, Chamber Monthly Luncheon hosted at Trostel's Greenbriar with special guest Mindy Williamson from the Iowa State Fair. ■

Information provided by Samantha Winebrenner, Johnston Chamber Executive Director, samantha@johnstonchamber.com, 515-276-9064. For more information, visit www.johnstonchamber.com.

OUT & ABOUT



Lisa Cooper and Jim Sanders were selected the Queen and King of Green at the Green Days Festival.



Johnston Living Magazine and Weekly participated in the Johnston Green Days parade June 18 with Jolene Goodman, Mia Peterson, Nora Peterson, Shane Goodman, Max Hodapp and Andrea Hodapp.



Charter Bank participated in the Johnston Green Days parade June 18 with Matt Morris, Sophie Ruddy, Brooke Ruddy, ReDawn Sisler, Mark Rheinschmidt and Sharm Sisler.



Emsley Scott and Merryn Scott enjoying Johnston Green Days after the parade.



Johnston Green Days activities included Smokin' Heroes. One team was made up of Jared Gledhill, Justin Koons and Ben Garza.



Johnston Green Days activities included Smokin' Heroes. One team was made up of Tyler Moffatt and Heath Barkley.



Clean & Breezy, Darren Bjurstrom and Haleigh Wiebers at the 2022 Jammin' in Johnston Vendor Fair held June 16.



Westfield Veterinary Hospital staff and furry friends at the 2022 Jammin' in Johnston Vendor Fair held June 16.



Edward Jones, Stephen Vickery and Sharon Vickery at the 2022 Jammin' in Johnston Vendor Fair held June 16.



Pat Ward Photography, Pat Ward at the 2022 Jammin' in Johnston Vendor Fair held June 16.



Grimes Chiropractic, Taylor Ellis at the 2022 Jammin' in Johnston Vendor Fair held June 16.



Purple Poppy Boutique, Paula Bierle and Kyra Theisen at the 2022 Jammin' in Johnston Vendor Fair held June 16.

OUT & ABOUT



John Waldron, Jim Maxwell, Sharm Sisler and Shane Goodman at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Luncheon held May 26 at Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston.



The Johnston Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for the re-opening of Foth, 8191 Birchwood Court, on June 1.



Allan Graham and Jamie Lewton at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Luncheon held May 26 at Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston.



Jim Sanders and Scott Kruthoff at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Luncheon held May 26 at Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston.



Kelli Vorrath and Pam Kucera at the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Luncheon held May 26 at Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston.



Kathie Page at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.



Gail Warren at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.



Harper and Rachael Black with Bandit at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.



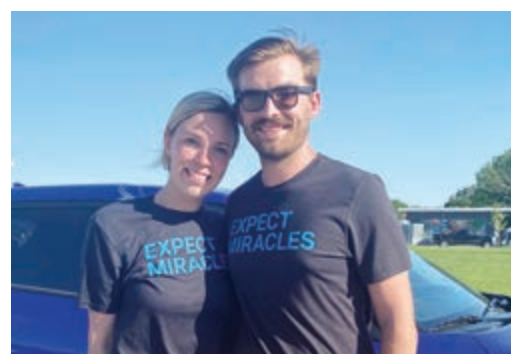
Theresa Hotchkiss at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.



Diane Schreck, Kaye Price and Dennis Price at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.



Jen Hanks and Josh Hanks at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.



Allison Porterfield and Walker Porterfield at the Johnston Farmers Market at The Yard on May 31.

Play for the Kids!

Children's Cancer Connection has two exciting outdoor play days for kids at heart to enjoy while supporting Iowa families affected by pediatric cancer.



Saturday, Aug. 27

Play starts at 9 a.m.

**Xtreme Beach Volleyball Courts,
Waukee**



\$240 per team of six entry includes:
round robin play followed by single
elimination tournament, lunch and drinks.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for both events!

GO GOLD & GOLF



\$400 per team of four entry includes:
lunch, 18 holes with two carts, two drink
tickets and a cocktail hour. Plus, great
raffles, contests and pin prizes!

Friday, Sept. 16

Shotgun Start at 12 p.m.

**Toad Valley Golf Course,
Pleasant Hill**



**SCAN
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EITHER
EVENT!**

childrenscancerconnection.org

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