

JOHNSTON

MARCH 2023

Living

MAGAZINE

IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

Residents share how they
were inspired to follow a
loved one's path

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WELCOME

DIFFERENT paths but common footsteps

My father and my uncle owned a gravel and excavation company. Dad was quite proficient with heavy equipment and could eyeball projects to near perfection even without today's technology.

Despite my childhood dream of being a helicopter pilot, I learned quickly that operating heavy machinery was not part of my skillset. It wasn't because Dad didn't try to teach me. I simply wasn't a very good student.



I remember the first time Dad had me back the dump trucks into the shop — with a one-inch clearance on either side. He thought I would be so proud of myself for doing this. I thought he was going to murder me if I clipped the mirrors off. After about 10 tries, I gave up. He was more disappointed than I was, but he made me keep trying.

We would also dig basements under existing homes. The process of jacking up a home to do this was fascinating, but it came with obvious risks. Large railroad bridge girders were used to support the home while we worked beneath it. I would chain the girders while Dad would slowly move them in place with an excavator. While once motioning Dad to lower a girder, I forgot to motion my feet to get out of the way. I feared I was in trouble. He feared he crushed my feet. The bruises healed, and I got a new pair of steel-toed work boots out of the deal.

I often wondered why, even to this day, I don't enjoy operating heavy machinery. I have learned that much of it deals with my obsession with perfection and my fear of damaging things, especially on a large scale.

As a result, I never learned to fly a helicopter, and I limit my equipment usage to motorcycles and riding lawn mowers. Even so, I learned much from my dad about how he ran his business, and I use many of those guiding principles to run my business today. We chose different paths, but we had common footsteps — and I still own a pair of steel-toed work boots, just in case.

In this month's magazine, we share examples of local residents who did follow in their parents' footsteps, continuing the family business or furthering the chosen career. I hope you enjoy their stories as much as I do.

Thanks for reading. ■

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FEATURE

Kortni Remer was raised in the family business her parents, Kurt and Mari Stocker, started.
Photo by Todd Rullestad

IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

**Residents share how they
were inspired to follow a
loved one's path**

By Ashley Rullestad

Whether it's watching Dad working on a car engine in the garage, eagerly waiting for a chance to use a wrench; admiring Mom's handiwork as she cleans and bandages that nasty cut on a sibling who fell from a tree; or helping Grandma or Grandpa milk cows, combine beans or stack hay bales, children are often only a step behind that special role model, eagerly wanting to be "just like" him or her. While some find new passions and interests to lure them to new paths to explore, many are inspired to continue in the footsteps they followed in their childhood.

FEATURE

When work and personal intertwine

Kortni Remer was raised in the family business. Her parents, Kurt and Mari Stocker, started Broken Arrow T-Shirt Printing in 1989, just three years after she was born. Now, she is taking it over.

If you're from the metro, you might remember the Broken Arrow bar that opened on the square in Polk City in 1974. When the bar closed down years later, the Stockers decided to purchase the building so they could do something really great with it. That turned out to be imprinting one custom T-shirt at a time. A printing shop had closed down, and the Stockers purchased its equipment and hired its staff. When they started in Polk City, Mari decided to keep the Broken Arrow name because it was such a well-known landmark.

Remer and her three siblings grew up around the business.

"It was our lives basically. We talked about business at the dinner table, and my siblings and I were there all the time. I even used to help my mom stock Hy-Vee in the middle of the night years back when we sold apparel



Kortni and her mom, Mari, with one of the builders who worked on the new Broken Arrow headquarters.

there. There was very little separation between work and personal for our family. It was sort of all the same for us since it was their business."

Her siblings weren't interested in working at the shop past their time in high school,

and they pursued their own careers. It was Remer who had a passion for the business, so she enrolled at the University of Iowa to study entrepreneurship for the purpose of eventually running the store.

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"I really never thought of other career options because it already felt like a career to me, and I mean that in a good way. It was my home, and I wanted to come back from school and work in the business. I learned so much about business from my parents."

Remer started working in customer service after college and kept working her way up until eventually she took over the general manager position in 2013, and she has run it ever since.

Broken Arrow may have begun as that little 3,000-square-foot former bar space, but it has since had two locations on Merle Hay Road. Its current 30,000-square-foot headquarters and showroom opened in 2020.

"The coolest thing that I am most proud of is my mother and I worked together to design and build the new showroom location. We had really outgrown our other location. We had more than 18 employees in that building using one bathroom, and it could really only accommodate about 12. It was a really fun project that she and I put our heart and soul in to create together for our staff."

Now, Remer is working on moving their production facility, too. As



Three generations of Broken Arrow ladies put their hands in the wet cement at their new headquarters location on Merle Hay Road.



The Sheckells family: Libby, John, and sons Marvin, 8, and baby Callum

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FEATURE

the business has grown over the decades, so has the number of services they offer, including 3D puff embroidery, DTG digital printing, rhinestones, all-over printing, fulfillment services, bagging and tagging.

She's glad to continue in her parents' footsteps, putting out excellent products and maintaining a positive culture for her employees.

"Because our roots are in being a family business, we have been able to maintain that culture as we have gotten larger, and we are really proud of that."

Taking after dad

Libby Sheckells was never one who loved math as a kid.

"I was always more of an art kid and did not like math growing up. I actually failed pre-algebra when I was in junior high. I just resigned myself to not being good at it."

Her dad, though, was an officer in the Navy for a few years before returning to college to earn his Ph.D in statistics. He was a professor at the University of Arkansas by the time Sheckells was born, and that's what she

remembers him doing. He passed away from multiple myeloma when she was 9, so she never got to know him from an adult perspective.

"But I've heard a lot about him from my older siblings and mom. He was a very smart guy, and not just with math. He could fix almost anything and was really talented at building things and refinishing furniture as well."

Sheckells never saw herself as following in her father's footsteps at all. She attended the University of Kansas for a psychology degree and planned to be an art therapist. Soon after starting her studies, she realized she wasn't interested in the clinical side of things, but she did enjoy the research.

She took her first research stats class, and it was the first time she had ever been recognized for being good at anything math-related. As soon as the numbers were concrete, instead of abstract concepts like in algebra, it clicked for her. She finished her bachelor's and continued on to earn her master's degree in quantitative psychology. Sheckells has been with Principal since 2018 as a market research manager, where she does research and analysis related to



Libby Sheckells and her late father, Joe Jones.

8 winter skin care rules for young children

1. Turn home temperature down and moisture up. Hot dry air is hard on skin, sinuses and nasal passages. Turn the furnace down a few degrees and use a vaporizer to add moisture to the air.

2. Moisture is not good everywhere. Wet bums and drooly chins can cause irritation. Use barrier cream, such as diaper cream within the diaper but not on the face.

3. Seal the skin following a bath. Pat, not rub, the skin. While still just a bit wet, add lotion to seal in the moisture.

4. Hydrate and eat right. Drink lots of water and eat foods high in fatty acids such as beans, olive oil, walnuts and winter squash, that help their skin to stay naturally moisturized.

5. Teach good habits early. Add moisturizer to their hands after washing with soap or using hand sanitizer. Encourage the use of lip balms. Have these things readily available, including in backpacks at school.

6. Keep baths short. Hot water causes drying so keep the temperature lukewarm. A quick bath 3 times a week for newborns is plenty.

7. Get smart about soap. Children don't need fragrant soaps. Formulations that are fragrant-free and soap-free are best. Body washes should not need to be scrubbed. Wash gently and pat dry.

8. Sunscreen is still needed in winter. The sun can be harmful no matter what the temperature is outside. And, 85 percent of the sun's rays can be reflected by the snow. Protect young skin with a 30 to 50 SPF baby-safe sunscreen 30 minutes before heading outside.



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FEATURE

customer and market behaviors and attitudes.

"Having a career related to statistics definitely makes me feel a connection with my dad, especially when I don't remember too much about him since he died when I was so young. I never actually knew what kind of professor he was until I was already in college myself."

When she was in grad school, Sheckells had access to a database that contained all previously accepted doctoral dissertations, so she went hunting for her father's and found it.

"I was surprisingly emotional reading something he had put so much work into. A few years ago, my older sister sent me a half dozen of his old statistics text books. They're some of my favorite items I own and have a prized place in our house. A few of them have his notes in the margins, and I love flipping through them, knowing he read the same pages."

She and her husband now have two boys, and the older one is 8.

"He is already showing a real talent for math and has a very methodical and analytical mind. I'm hoping he pursues whatever career he's good at and makes him happy, but I just feel like it will be something related to numbers. I wouldn't be surprised if he's a future engineer, computer scientist or something similar."

Hardware home

In 2002, Chris Sterk's father, Gordon, had the opportunity to purchase the Ace Hardware store located in Johnston. A good friend of his made him aware that it was up for sale and thought he would be interested because he had wanted to own his own business.

The store had been struggling, and Gordon asked Chris if he'd assist in managing the business and working full time along with him to get the store back on track if he decided to purchase it. Chris was game, and the pursuit of building a successful hardware business was on.

Gordon already had more than 30 years of sales experience, and Chris had worked for a home builder for a few years and was young and ready for the challenge. They made a good team.

"We each had our strengths and weaknesses, opposite of one another, which helped us build the business together. Don't get me wrong, it was tough at times. My Dad was my dad and my boss, and that brought some tense and tough meetings. I would say those tough situations helped me to become better at managing others and even a more successful owner."

Hardware retail is mostly about taking care of the customers, listening to their needs and helping them solve their DIY projects. Over the years, Chris has learned the importance of caring for his customers and giving the community a store they can be proud to call their hometown hardware store.

Chris and his wife purchased the Johnston Ace Hardware store officially in April 2018 before Gordon's retirement the next year, and they began forging ahead with growing the already successful business. After getting their bearings at Johnston Ace Hardware, they purchased the Ankeny Ace Hardware store.

"Little did we know what 2020 would bring. A lot of things changed that first full year of owning two hardware stores and dealing with COVID. It brought new challenges, growth and growing pains, all of which helped forge our resolve to make our Ace stores some of the best in the area."

Chris is proud of the work they've put into the business and all the employees who have been with him and his father along the way.

"We have watched our kids grow up in the Johnston store, apply for a job, and work with our helpful team. We're proud of how far we have come. Maybe someday they will carry on the helpful place." ■

HISTORY of Johnston Scout Troop 44

The Boy Scout movement started in Great Britain when Sir Baden Powell founded the scouting program. Brought over to America in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America rapidly spread to become one of the largest youth organizations in the U.S. Here in Johnston, Troop 44 has operated for around 50 years. The mission of the troop has been to encourage youth to become the best they can be as well as help them develop into better citizens and leaders.

Troop 44 has graduated numerous Eagle Scouts since its inception in 1924. Some documentation on the history of Troop 44 was lost in the floods of 1993; however, it is known that the troop first originated on the east side of Des Moines and moved to Johnston around 1944. The troop met for many years at Johnston schools until they found their permanent home with their current sponsor, St. Paul Presbyterian Church, in 1978.

In recent years, Troop 44 has executed numerous service projects that have benefited the community such as a historic walking path by the Johnston Public Library, a number of landscaping projects for the school district, soccer and baseball field improvements, and several projects for Jester Park. They have also traveled to the World Jamboree in West Virginia (2019); to London, England (2007), where they were able to experience different cultures and converse with scouts from around the globe; Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico (2021), where they hiked for two weeks in the vast landscape of New Mexico; and northern Minnesota (2022) to canoe in the beautiful crystal-clear boundary waters. Troop 44 is also responsible for the flag disposal box located behind Johnston Fire Station No. 39 where community members are invited to drop off old weathered American flags to be properly retired by the troop annually. ■

Matthew Mikles is student advisory board member of Johnston (Station) Historical Society (JSHS), a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to discovering, preserving and presenting the history of the Johnston area. JSHS maintains the 1902 Simpson House Museum at 6161 Northgleann Drive in Johnston. Please consider supporting JSHS by becoming a member, a volunteer, a benefactor, or making a donation of historical items.



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NEW LAWS allow you to save more for retirement

Recently, lawmakers passed a massive bill with more than 90 retirement provisions called SECURE Act 2.0. Some changes, like the RMD age increasing to 73 (from 72), went into effect on Jan. 1, 2023. Other provisions will be phased in over the next few years, including the ability to save more money for retirement in the form of a catch-up contribution.

A catch-up contribution is a type of retirement contribution that allows those 50 and older to put additional money into most employer-sponsored plans and IRAs.

In 2023, anyone can contribute up to \$6,500 to an IRA or \$22,500 to a 401(k). If you are 50 or older, you can put an additional \$1,000 into an IRA and an additional \$7,500 in an employer-sponsored plan like a 401(k) or 403(b). This brings the catch-up contributions to a total of \$7,500 and \$30,000, respectively.

That \$1,000 IRA catch-up limit has been the same for several years. With the passing of SECURE Act 2.0, starting in 2024, that amount will be adjusted for inflation annually in \$100 increments. It's not much, but the inflation adjustment will move that catch-up number above \$1,000 and allow for a slow increase of the limit.



There will be a “special” catch-up contribution starting in 2024. Those age 60-63 can put even more money into their employer-sponsored plans. The formula for determining how much you can contribute is a little convoluted. The “special” catch-up contribution limit is the greater of \$10,000 or 150% of that standard catch-up amount for the previous year. For example, in 2023, the catch-up limit is \$7,500. If you take that times 150%, you get \$11,250. So if there was a “special” catch-up contribution this year, the limit would be \$11,250.

For some, catch-up contributions are a great way to save and invest more money for retirement. These decisions must be made as part of a comprehensive retirement plan that takes into consideration all your other sources of income, your investments, your tax plan and, most importantly, your retirement vision.

The strategy that is right for your neighbor or co-worker may not be right for you. This mantra applies to many retirement decisions, including catch-up contributions, Social Security, Medicare and more. We help families and individuals understand the rules and take advantage of strategies that will help them live out their 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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SPRING has sprung at your library

It's spring break time, and, even if you don't have a sandy beach in your future, the library has got your back. JPL has fun programs planned for the young and the young at heart including baking, crafting, media literacy training, reading meet-ups and so much more. Read on for the details.

Kids and families

Have a person in your life who values adaptive services that are a little quieter and less hectic? **Sensory Spaces** are events at participating metro area libraries offering special hours for members of the public who appreciate a sensory-friendly environment. If that sounds like you or someone you know, come to JPL on Sunday, March 12 from noon to 1 p.m. While individuals and families with special needs are welcome at our library during regular hours, these sensory times will offer quiet browsing, special programming, and other adaptive services especially for our neurodiverse patrons and their families.

Looking for activities to fill the time during spring break? Pack up the whole crew and head to the library March 13-17 for a **QR Code Quest Scavenger Hunt** that everyone will enjoy. Follow the clues hidden throughout the library. Complete the puzzle and win a fun prize. Bring your own device or use one of ours. For all ages.

Teens

Calling crafty teens who are interested in learning to sew. Join instructor Aislyn White at **Sewing 101: Teen Edition** on Tuesday, March 7 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. as she teaches the ins and outs of hand-sewing basics. Participants will leave with a completed fabric bookmark. No sewing experience required; all materials provided. For kids in sixth through 12th grade. Registration required.

If technology and robotics are more your thing, check out the **LEGObot Mechanics Club** for kids ages 11-13. LEGObot Mechanics Club is a fun, laid-back robotics class for kids 11 to 13 years old. Taught by coaches and students from the Johnston Robotics Team, this club is for kids at any level of knowledge in robotics, and we encourage anyone interested to try it out. Participants will learn how to build and program a LEGO robot. Plus, there will be some chill mini-competitions for fun. Kids should try to come to every lesson in this five-week course as we will build upon our knowledge, but drop-ins are also welcome. Snacks and necessary materials will be provided. Dates of the class are March 26, April 23 and 30, and May 14 and 21 from 3-4:30 p.m.

Adults

Hippity, hoppity, spring is on its way. Join food editor Lois Carpenter as she demonstrates how to create beautifully decorated sugar cookies — from darling bunnies and floppy carrots to amazing eggs and spring flowers at our **Spring Sugar Cookie Baking Class** on Saturday, March 11 at 10:30 a.m. Lois will demonstrate how to pipe and flood icing onto cookies as well as fun ways to embellish with sugars and sprinkles. Cookie and icing recipes included. Class ends on a sweet note because everyone gets to take home a beautifully decorated cookie. Registration is required for this free cooking class.

Next, save the date on Saturday, March 18 for **Media Literacy Training** with News Literacy Project. Today's information landscape is the most complex in human history, and the need for news literacy has never been greater. A 2019 Pew Research Center Study found that only a minority of adults could correctly differentiate between fact and opinion in media sources. Join Jill Hofmockel, News Literacy Project Ambassador, to learn the news literacy skills necessary to be smart, active consumers of news and information and equal and engaged participants in democracy.

Finally, join your fellow Ultimate Reading Challenge Participants on Saturday, March 25 for an afternoon of food, drink and literary fun at the **Ultimate Reading Challenge Meet-Up**. Stop by JPL anytime between 3-5 p.m. to meet other JPL Challenge participants, discover new titles to add to your "to be read" list, and chat with others about that thriller you both just read. Make sure to attend all three Ultimate Reading Challenge Meet-Up Parties in March, June and September to earn additional entries to the grand prize drawing.

More information and registration for library programs are available online at johnstonlibrary.com/events or by calling the library at 515-278-5233. ■

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MASTERING running at any age

Who says you can't run a marathon when you are in your 60s, 70s, or even older? Age is just a number and should not be used as an excuse. The number of individuals this age running in 5Ks and even marathons is growing quickly. In the past, the majority of marathon runners were young competitors, and now the demographics have shifted substantially. Some of these runners have had the love of running throughout their entire lives, and others have taken up running later in life because of the health benefits running offers. These individuals have found that running makes them feel younger, and it not only opens the lungs but also the mind.



Here are some tips for senior marathon runners:

- **Listen to your body.** As we age, the aches and pains will become more noticeable, occur more frequently and last longer. With age, the physical ability of seniors weakens over time. Even those who are older than 60 respond well to exercise training and regain much of what they lost with aging. If an injury is preventing you from running, talk with your doctor and figure out a training schedule to ease back into running.
- **Run with friends.** Running with a partner provides many benefits

for individuals of all ages, but especially for seniors. As we get older, trying new things may become more challenging; therefore, seniors should work with a partner or a coach to assist with developing a training routine. Having someone to run with can have a tremendous impact on one's health by providing socialization, consistency, motivation, and even safety.

- **Try strength training.** Try adding strength training on top of running to your workouts. As we get older, we begin to lose muscle mass. Running doesn't add muscle mass to your body, but adding strength training will. Since you don't have the same body you had 20 years ago, you also shouldn't be training the same way. Changing up your routine will not only show quick results, but it will keep things interesting.

- **Be realistic.** When setting your running goals, remember that your training is going to be a lot different at 60 years old than 30 years old. Older adults should train deliberately, carefully and remember to listen to whatever your body tells you. Remember to train longer, not harder.

Age should not be a determining factor for one to not try new things such as running. Starting something new is always challenging, but sticking with it is the real challenge. ■

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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WHY Rotary?

Several years ago, I was seeking out a way to expand my community awareness, my social network, and contribute to our community. I knew a little about Rotary of Johnston because some of the leaders from my National Guard career were actively involved, and some were even charter members of the club.

I attended a meeting to learn more about the club. I felt welcomed and truly enjoyed the fellowship. It was great to meet so many exceptional people from across the community. I also enjoyed learning more about Youth Homes of Mid-America from then-director, Mike Arndt. I had driven by their campus for several years but had not known much about their mission. Shortly after that first meeting, I joined the club, and I helped install benches and picnic tables at the Youth Homes as my first project as a Rotarian.

Over the past decade, there have been so many more opportunities to hear about the great things going on in our community and in our great state and nation. The program portion has included high profile figures like Jamie Pollard, Ray Cole and Joni Ernst, but also has included a plethora of local non-profit and other organizations — all people in our community who quietly make our world a better place day in and day out.

Johnston Partnership for a Healthy Community is one such organization. We have two of our Rotarians currently serving on its board of directors. Between the Partnership's Youth Mentoring Program (JUMP) and their assistance with food and clothing for those in need, they fulfill their vision of "Improving quality of life in the community one person at a time." Our club has collectively donated thousands of dollars in cash, as well as clothing, food and personal care items over the years.

Another organization that we learned about was Meals From the Heartland. Its goal of "empowering people to save starving children" is accomplished through putting volunteers and staff to work assembling meals for children right here at home or abroad. Our club met at their location one evening to assemble boxes of bulk meals. Over 80,000 meals were assembled that evening, and it was a gratifying and remarkable experience for all of us.

Top quality speakers from many other great organizations have shared their stories as well: ChildServe, Habitat for Humanity and On With Life, just to mention a few. There are so many great ways to give back. At our meeting on Valentine's Day, we presented a \$3,000 check to Ellipsis. The presentation brought me full circle to that first meeting, since Ellipsis is the result of bringing together the Youth Homes of Mid-America and Youth Emergency Services and Shelter (YESS).

If you would like to become part of a service organization and spend an hour each Tuesday morning enjoying fellowship, breakfast, and learning more about the things happening all around you, give Rotary a try. For more information, go to www.Johnstonrotary.com. ■

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 or Miles Summa, milessumma@gmail.com, 515-480-3076.

Johnston Rotary Club UPCOMING SPEAKERS

March 7 - Ken Gregersen
Alzheimer's Association, Iowa Chapter

March 14 - Tyler Kamerman
Chief Development Officer MH4H.org

March 21 - Gail McGaughy & Tammy Miller
On With Life

March 28 - Dennis McDaniel
Johnston Police Chief

NO MEETING APRIL 4

April 3 - Bowling Night - 6 p.m.
Game Day Bowling, 3800 Merle Hay Road



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RECIPE

KICK winter's chill with hearty chowder

(Family Features) Colder, shorter days call for a little comfort. Cozying up with a hearty meal on brisk winter evenings can help fight off the chill while savoring favorite flavors alongside the ones you love.

Avoid venturing into the cold for a trip to the store by turning to a pantry staple like sweet potatoes. As one of the most versatile veggies, they're easy to add to a variety of recipes while enhancing both flavor and nutrition. Perfectly suitable for both simple and elevated dishes, they can be baked, microwaved, grilled, slow cooked or prepared on the stove so their sweet taste never goes out of style.

Their long shelf life — up to four weeks if stored properly in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area away from heat sources — means you can rely on sweet potatoes throughout the winter as an on-hand ingredient. Additionally, as a “diabetes superfood” according to the American Diabetes Association, they're rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber, all of which are good for overall health and may help prevent disease, making them a key source of nutrients during wintertime.

When your family needs a warm-up on those frosty days, put sweet potatoes at the center of mealtime (with an added kick) in this jalapeño sweet potato chowder. Loaded with the flavors of winter comfort, it's a filling meal that makes enough for a crowd so no one goes hungry.

Visit ncsweetpotatoes.com to find more comforting meal ideas. ■

Jalapeño sweet potato chowder

Recipe courtesy of the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission
Servings: 6

- 2 large North Carolina sweet potatoes, baked
- 1 small onion, 1/4-inch diced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 quart chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 cups cooked chicken, cubed
- 1 1/2 cups whole corn kernels
- 2 teaspoons minced jalapeños
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- chopped scallions, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- Peel baked sweet potatoes; discard skin and puree.
- In soup pot, sauté onion in butter until softened. Add



pureed sweet potato and stock, as desired. Bring to boil, reducing liquid slightly.

- Add chicken, corn, jalapeños, heavy cream and salt. Simmer 10 minutes.
- To serve, ladle into bowls and garnish with chopped scallions.



UNLOCK THE POWER TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF DEMENTIA

With Simple Lifestyle Changes — Including Getting Your Flu and COVID-19 Vaccinations.

The thought of losing our cognitive skills as we age is concerning. But the good news is this: If you're willing to make some simple lifestyle alterations — including getting your yearly flu and Covid vaccinations — you can dramatically reduce your risk of Alzheimer's and other dementias.

The **Unlocking Brain Fitness: Keys to Dementia Prevention (KEYS)** is a 10-week science based, safe and supportive program that aligns with risk-reducing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and National Institutes of Health (NIH). People who embrace the lifestyle changes outlined in KEYS can reduce their risk of dementia by up to 70%.

To learn about classes offered around the state and to register, call **515-471-8524**. To take a quiz about your current risk factors and learn more about preventing dementia, visit UnlockingBrainFitness.org.



MA OPEN enrollment period

If you are enrolled in Medicare or close to turning 65, you have probably been noticing the commercials on TV, had many advertising letters sent during the last few months, or even received phone calls from agents. Most of these are for the Annual Enrollment Period which is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. What many don't tell you is that they will continue into the new year. There is a separate enrollment period for Medicare advantage plans called the MA Open Enrollment Period which is Jan. 1 through March 31. This enrollment period is for Medicare members currently enrolled in a Medicare advantage plan, and, in 2023, companies have increased their service area, prompting agents to make calls. You are not required to make a change during this time, although it is an opportunity to review or change plans if you missed the Annual Enrollment Period or are truly unhappy with the plan you are on.

So, what does this mean? Anyone currently enrolled in a Medicare advantage plan can either enroll in another like plan (advantage to advantage) or disenroll from an advantage plan and go back to Original Medicare.

If you should change, there are a few things to consider:

- **When moving from one advantage plan to another** — Are my doctors in network with the new plan? Do I want a plan with, or without, prescription coverage? Am I comfortable with the out-of-pocket maximum and copayment costs?

- **When going back to Original Medicare** — Do I want a supplement in force, and, if so, can I answer medical questions that are required to go through underwriting? What prescription drug plan would best fit my retail prescription needs?

Only one change is allowed during this enrollment period, and the effective date for the new policy would be the first of the month following the month of enrollment. The policy will be in effect for the remainder of the year. The most important part of this time frame is understanding the plan designs and knowing what you would be enrolling in. Some agents and groups have a more aggressive advertising approach, and some TV commercials sound "too good to be true." Having questions ready when responding to these advertisements or agents is important to keep the conversation on track and help you find the answers relevant to your situation and find a plan that fits your needs. The best advice is to not feel pressured to make a change. You, and only you, use your insurance daily, and having a feeling of comfort in your plan is very important. ■

Information provided by Betheny Wilson, Health Insurance Advisor LLC, 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite A, Johnston, 515-225-9994, www.health-insadvisor.com. Source: www.medicare.gov/blog/medicare-advantage-open-enrollment





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INVESTMENT By Daniel Rundahl

LION or lamb?



When I was a kid, I can remember my teachers talking about the concept of "lion or lamb" in the month of March. The all-familiar phrase heard around many towns at the start of March is "March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb." There is truth and history to this phrase that is often used by meteorologists to introduce the month that is often characterized by harsh winter weather.

Now, why might a financial advisor start his article discussing the nature of weather or meteorology? Simple. There are many cyclical things in our industry that we take for granted (trends of the stock market, life cycle changes demanding different financial needs and advice, etc). However, use this analogy to respond to our 2022 into 2023 life change in the current economy. In the last 12 months, in response to hedging inflation, the chairman of our Federal Reserve System (the FED) raised interest rates eight times in the last 12 months with another two raises anticipated in 2023. In 2019, they reduced it three times and two more times at the start of COVID in 2020. However, from 2015 until December 2018, they raised interest rates nine times. What does all this mean for the average American?

- In the short term, a loan may cost more interest.
- The cost of milk, eggs and day-to-day materials will start to drop.
- The employment seeker may start to see fewer help wanted signs.
- The reinvention of innovation to many of our consumer goods will change.
- You will see more "open house" signs put up by Realtors.
- Demand will start to find the manageable cycle of supply.

Now, I say these things so simply. The fact is, over many cycles of federal policy, the raising and lowering of interest rates has changed the inflation and recession cycles of the U.S. dollar's value. As we move into a different-looking world going from inflation and everything costing an arm and a leg, if you can get it, to our new normal, I am reminded that the cycles of fiscal policy tend to find themselves looking like something that we may have experienced in the past.

There is continuous message I reiterate in our website blog and in this magazine each month. Not to sound as "cyclical" as this March weather/astrology message may come off, but we all need advisors or teachers of sorts in our lives. The overloading world of information surrounding retirement is constantly changing. Maybe March should be the time to schedule a meeting with a financial advisor. Is your plan ready for this next cycle?

By the way, as it turns out, the origins of this phrase relate more to astrology rather than meteorology. The lions and lambs of March come from the constellations, Leo the Lion and Aries the Ram or Lamb. Leo is more pronounced in the night sky at the start of March, while Aries is at the tail end of the month.

When it comes to March predictions, though, you're better off listening to your local meteorologist for the latest forecast. ■

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.

UNDERSTANDING a special needs trust

Social benefit programs designed to help people with disabilities typically have restrictions on how much money the beneficiary can have. Caps on monthly income and total assets owned are a major restriction on parents trying to complete an estate plan.

Leaving money directly to a child with disabilities will jeopardize the ability to receive any help from means-tested government programs like Social Security's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid (Title XIX). A special needs trust can be the answer for parents.

A special needs trust (SNT) can hold money given to or inherited by a disabled individual. Because the SNT owns the assets, the assets are excluded from asset limit tests for SSI or Medicaid. The trust can fund quality-of-life improvements for the beneficiary not covered by Medicaid. The SNT is also a way to ensure that other family members — like the siblings of the individual with a beneficiary — aren't left with the responsibility and cost of lifelong care.

The SNT must be drafted so that a beneficiary cannot direct distributions from the trust; the distributions must be purely discretionary. There are restrictions on how the money in the trust



can be used. There are also reporting requirements to the State. The existence of a trust of any kind must be disclosed for eligibility purposes, but a properly-drafted SNT will keep assets excluded from resource calculations.

Most importantly, the SNT must be drafted so that it avoids any Medicaid payback through Estate Recovery when the beneficiary dies. Standard language that is found in other trusts (like a typical minor child trust or a revocable living trust) risks making the entire balance of the SNT subject to repayment for Medicaid costs.

Choosing a trustee who can not only manage funds but also predict the needs and challenges of the beneficiary can be tricky. The trustee needs to understand the specific guidelines under which the SNT can operate.

Because every state has its own system for administering disability benefits, the SNT must be tailored to match those state-specific rules. The SNT is a highly-specialized legal document that requires knowledge of local Medicaid rules and Federal Social Security law. If you have questions, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning and planning for clients with special needs. ■

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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PROVIDE INPUT ON THE CITYWIDE TRAFFIC STUDY

The City of Johnston is conducting a citywide traffic study that will identify traffic flow congestion points along roadways and those within neighborhoods, business districts and school zones. The results will provide deficiencies related to traffic operations and congestion, signal technology and locations with reoccurring accidents.

As a resident, you can provide input by marking your areas of concern on a map, taking or survey or both. Learn more by visiting www.cityofjohnston.com/trafficstudy or scan the QR code to learn more. Input will be accepted until Friday, March 31.



VOLUNTEER FOR KITES ON THE GREEN ON SATURDAY, MAY 6

The ninth annual Kites on the Green event will be held Saturday, May 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Johnston Commons, the green space near the Johnston Public Library. This annual event allows families to come together while socially distanced to fly kites and enjoy the beautiful weather.

Volunteers are needed for multiple shifts on May 6. Volunteers may be asked to help kids/families build kites, assist with special activities, or help with cleanup. Volunteers will receive a free t-shirt once they check in at the event. Sign up to volunteer by visiting www.cityofjohnston.com/KOTGVolunteer.



VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE A FREE KOTG T-SHIRT



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



CITY NEWSLETTER MARCH 2023

A RESIDENTIAL TREE SALE IS HAPPENING IN APRIL

The City of Johnston is selling trees to residents at the reduced price of \$50 per tree. A pre-sale of trees begins on Tuesday, April 11, at 8 a.m. Trees can be purchased online (www.cityofjohnston.com/treesale). The link will not work until April 11.

Trees will be available for pickup at Crown Point Community Center, located at 6300 Pioneer Parkway, on Saturday, May 6, from 8 to 10 a.m. Four trees for sale include Ginkgo Autumn Gold, Skyline Honeylocust, Pagoda Dogwood and Swiss Stone Pine.

Property owners are allowed to purchase one tree and are encouraged to purchase their tree during the sale, as the supply is limited. Residents who have pre-ordered a tree will be required to show their receipt as proof of payment. Any trees not picked up during the allotted time will be considered a donation to the city's tree-planting program.

This year's sale is made possible thanks to the support of the Johnston Farmers Market and Johnston Lion's Club.

THE STATEWIDE TORNADO DRILL IS ON MARCH 29

Please join us as we participate in the Iowa Statewide Tornado Drill on Wednesday, March 29.

The test will occur at 10 a.m. The Johnston Outdoor Warning Sirens will sound during this drill.

REQUEST A STREETLIGHT REPAIR

Here in Johnston, the neighborhood streetlights are maintained by MidAmerican Energy. We ask that all repair requests be submitted directly to MidAmerican Energy by visiting bit.ly/JohnstonStreetLight.

DOWNLOAD THE CITY OF JOHNSTON APP

Did you know the City of Johnston has its own app? You can download our app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. The app allows you to view the calendar of events, sign up for alerts, see news items and easily find contact information.



SIGN UP AND STAY INFORMED WITH CITY NOTIFICATIONS

Here in Johnston, we wish to keep our residents and businesses informed on the happenings within our community. Below are ways you can sign up to receive email and/or text alerts.

Johnston Alerts – www.cityofjohnston.com/JohnstonAlerts
(Includes missing persons, local threats, utility service disruptions, and when the snow ordinance is in effect.)

Johnston Press Releases – www.cityofjohnston.com/list.aspx

Johnston Notifications – www.cityofjohnston.com/notifications
(Include calendar events, news flash updates, Board, Council and Commission agendas and job postings.)

For more information about the city, please call 515.278.2344

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations

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

Dragon Scholarship Fund Auctions

The 20th annual Dragon Scholarship Fund Live and Online Auction is Saturday, March 4, 6-10 p.m. at Stoney Creek Event Center, 5291 Stoney Creek Court, Johnston. Register in advance at DSFJohnston.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2023DragonScholarshipFundAuction. Cost is \$40 and attendees are encouraged to wear Dragon gear. In addition to the auctions, enjoy food, drinks, live music and games. The schedule for the live auction event is 6 p.m., registration and view auction items; 6:45 p.m., opening remarks, entertainment, games, and viewing auction items. The live auction starts at 8 p.m. and is followed by entertainment and games. The online auction opens Sunday, Feb. 26, and closes Saturday, March 4. Bid online at dragonsf2023.ggo.bid.



Lions Book Sale

The Lions Book Sale will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 2-4 at the Lions Club, 6501 Merle Hay Road. The presale, with \$3 admission, is Thursday, 4-8 p.m. Admission is free on Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday is bag day sale, 8-11 a.m. Proceeds go to Johnston Library and Lions Service Projects.

Military Museum program

Saturday, March 11, 11 a.m.
The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum

Sara Maniscalco Robinson, a Boone native and retired broadcast journalist of the Iowa National Guard, will share her experiences. Sara says her service enabled her to travel the world and learn about story telling in some of the harshest climates, including winters in Germany and Kosovo and summers in El Salvador and Egypt. She will also talk about her mission to tell Iowa veterans' stories from their perspective through the creation of Iowa Veterans' Perspectives.

Johnston Lions Club news

When the guys came back from World War II, they were ready to roll up their sleeves and make things better at home. On Jan. 29, 1945, 39 men came together to receive their Johnston Lions Club charter. This was 24 years before Johnston was incorporated as a city. Over the years, the Johnston Lions Club has been the backbone of the community, making things happen.

On the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Lions Club in 2020, it was decided to create a legacy to commemorate the years of service that have been provided. The park shelter at Johnston Commons was in the planning stage. The Johnston Lions Club pledged \$50,000 over a five-year period to make it special. To date, \$30,000 has been given to the City for this purpose.

Upcoming fundraisers will be dedicated to the goal of completing this pledge.

The annual book sale at the clubhouse (Merle Hay Road and N.W. 64th Place) will be from March 2-4. The Lions Club pancake breakfast will be held at the Middle School on April 22 from 7-11 a.m. There will be a fundraising garage sale at the clubhouse on May 5 and 6. Mark your calendars and support the legacy.



GriefShare session offered

GriefShare Series, for those who have lost a family member or friend, will be held March 2 through May 25 (Thursdays, 1-2:30 p.m.) at St. Paul Presbyterian Church at 6426 Merle Hay Road, Johnston. Free registration includes workbook. To register, go to GriefShare.org or call the church office at 515-276-2828.

CCC dodgeball tournament

The Children's Cancer Connection Dodgeball Tournament will be Saturday, March 25. Teams of friends, family members, co-workers, service clubs and others from all over Iowa are invited to play. The tournament will have pool play in the morning, followed by a single-elimination tournament. Teams of six can sign up for \$150; extra players are an additional \$25 each. Spectators are welcome, with freewill donations optional. Proceeds from CCC's Dodgeball Tournament support free programs for families affected by childhood cancer.

"We held our first CCC Dodgeball Tournament last year, and it was so much fun," said CCC CEO Jennifer Hines. "The teams showed up in matching outfits or wearing bright colors, ready to relive their youth dodgeball days. The fact that you get to be a kid again at this event is representative of what we do as an organization: We create opportunities for kids to be kids, even in the face of dealing with their own or their sibling's childhood cancer diagnosis and treatment."

The tournament will be held at Johnston High School in Johnston. Teams can register online at bit.ly/cccdodgeball23. Sponsorship opportunities are still available by emailing the CCC Development Team at development@childrenscancerconnection.org.

Children's Cancer Connection provides support resources and programs for more than 760 families in Iowa who are affected by childhood cancer, free of charge. Programs range from weeklong summer camps to parent support groups, to the in-hospital Courage Store® and Beads4Bravery®.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations



'Singin' In The Rain JR.'

March 3-5. Friday performance at 7 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday shows at 2 p.m.
CAP Theatre, 201 First Ave. S., Altoona

The "Greatest Movie Musical of All Time" is faithfully and lovingly adapted by Broadway legends Betty Comden and Adolph Green, from their original award-winning screenplay in "Singin' in the Rain JR." Hilarious situations, snappy dialogue and a hit-parade score of Hollywood standards make the production a guaranteed good time for performers and audience members alike. Tickets on sale online at captheatre.simplenetix.com.

Celebrate! Innovation Live at DMACC Speaker Series

Thursday, March 9
DMACC West Campus, 5959 Grand Ave.,
West Des Moines

DMACC announced an inspiring line-up of presenters for this year's Celebrate! Innovation Live (ciLive!) at DMACC Speaker Series, which is marking its 14th anniversary this spring. ciLive! 14 will be held March 9 in-person at the DMACC West Campus in West Des Moines, and, thanks to the generous support of sponsors, all ciLive! 14 speaker presentations will be free and open to the public. Free livestreaming of all speaker presentations will also be available via e360tv. For more information about ciLive! 14, visit ci.live.



Hoops and Hops

March 16-18

Cowles Commons, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

Celebrate the NCAA Tournament at the Sixth Annual Hoops and Hops downtown. Large screens will be set up in a heated tent, with beverages from the Iowa Craft Beer Tent and local eats from multiple food trucks. Want to get in on the action? Two basketball courts will be set up. The event is free and runs 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day. Fans are encouraged to sport team colors and bring chairs (no outside food and drink). Details at dmpa.org.



Celtic Concert

Saturday, March 4, 7 p.m.
Windsor Presbyterian Church, 6301
University Ave., Windsor Heights

Crossroads of Iowa (www.crossroadsofiowa.org) is hosting a fundraising Celtic concert with the popular ClearJoy Music duo performing. There is no admission charge, but donations will be appreciated. Overflow parking is across the street from Windsor Church on University Avenue and a smaller lot is on the corner of 64th and University, east of the church.



Iowa's Largest Arts & Crafts Show

Friday-Sunday, March 10-12
Varied Industries Building,
3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines

More than 250 talented exhibitors from eight different states will congregate at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, selling thousands of unique, handmade products. Admission is \$7 for anyone older than 10. Kids 10 and younger are free. Hours are 5-9 p.m. on Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. For more information, find the event Facebook page by searching "Callahan Promotions, Inc. Iowa's Largest Arts & Crafts shows."

Elks Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Saturday, March 11, at 5:30 p.m.
West Des Moines Elks Lodge No. 2752, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

The celebration will begin with a performance by the Foy School of Irish Dancers beginning at 5:40 p.m. After the performance, the Elks will serve their famous St. Paddy's Day Corn Beef and Cabbage with Irish potatoes. The meal is \$11 per serving. Proceeds support local community charity programs such as food for the food pantry and school supplies for children and teachers.



St. Patrick's Day Parade

Friday, March 17, at noon
Downtown Des Moines

It's that time of year again. Dig out your greenest attire and get ready to feel lucky, thanks to The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Central Iowa's highly anticipated annual event. The parade begins at noon and runs along Grand Avenue and 15th Street in the Western Gateway district. Participant registration and the parade route may be found at www.friendlysonsiowa.com/Parade/parade.htm.

Harlem Globetrotters

Tuesday, March 21 at 7 p.m.
Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St.,
Des Moines

Not your average basketball players, the Globetrotters are bringing their crazy tricks and legendary athleticism to Des Moines during their 2023 World Tour. Bring the whole family for a high-energy experience and a nonstop great time. Tickets at www.iowaeventscenter.com/events. ■

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HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

BEREAVEMENT services enhance hospice care

Hospice services are focused on caring for clients and their families, but many people are not aware that those services don't end when a client dies. In fact, in many cases, when death occurs, care for a family is just beginning.

Typically, a hospice team meets a client's loved ones as the client is near the end of their life. It's an emotional time, and the focus is naturally on the person who is ill. Hospice teams will often offer services to loved ones during that process and let them know about services that are available after the client passes. But, it's common for a person not to realize until their loved one has died that they need some support.

Hospice teams are often made up of many people, each of whom brings a special skill to the clients they serve — from nurses to volunteers, from social workers to chaplains. The team members focus together on helping to find ways to make each day meaningful for the person whose life is nearing its close.

Bereavement services are an important part of the team's focus. They concentrate on the grieving process, as people need a place to talk about a loved one who has died and to reflect and reminisce.



Here is how bereavement services typically work:

- Before a client passes away, a bereavement team member will have been in contact with the family member who has been designated to receive information. Even if they don't desire services at that time, the team member lets the person know that a resource is available.
- Immediately after the death of a client, the bereavement team obtains information about the funeral or memorial service, if there is to be one, and a member of the team usually attends.
- Soon after the funeral, the bereavement team reaches out to the contact person to let them know about the bereavement services that are available — everything from phone calls to visits to support groups.
- The team then works with the family member to create his or her own care plan for the coming year, providing special services during "touchpoint" times, such as birthdays or anniversaries.

If you are seeking hospice services for a loved one, ask questions to make sure bereavement services are offered and what those services include. The death of one person impacts many, and bereavement services are important steps toward healing. ■

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.

THE SIMPSON Barn Quilts

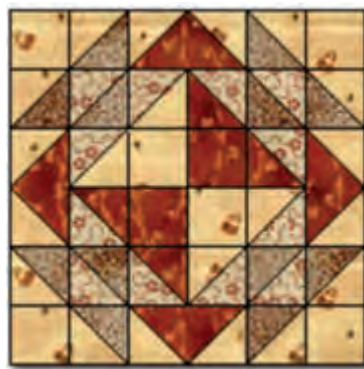
In 2009, Mayor Paula Dierenfeld contacted me to ask if I would write a grant for funds from BRAVO Des Moines to create a barn quilt for the Simpson Barn. Paula had grown up in Sac County where these barn embellishments were popular. A \$2,000 grant was awarded.

My next task was to decide which quilt pattern to use. Barn quilts are beautiful to behold, but I decided that the quilt patch should have a meaning. It should represent the history of the Johnston area. One patch soon became four. There were four that stood out that represented the importance of trees, education, agriculture and development. I took the idea to Bill Kness of Kness Signs in Urbandale. He liked the concept and worked devotedly to create the barn quilts that now are displayed on the Simpson Barn.

When the first settlers arrived in the Johnston area in 1846, they had a choice to turn north to the ridge, forested with trees. They could have turned to the south to the prairie. Lumber was needed to build shelter, fences for livestock and rustic furniture. The Hunt family started the first business — a sawmill. The quilt patch, Maple Leaf, commemorates the value of trees in our history.

As more settlers poured into the new land available in a new state, it should be noted that they did not come as fur trappers, gold prospectors, buffalo hunters or cattle drovers. They came as families, ready to work hard and be successful. Education was very important to them. The School House patch reminds us that one-room schoolhouses dotted the land: Valley, Friar, Ridgedale, Ryers and Seibert. It wasn't until 1914 that the second consolidated school district in Polk County was formed, and a new school building (K-9) was finished in 1915.

Another quilt patch is called Corn and Beans. Since 1926, when Henry A. Wallace first started his corn breeding nursery work on land that his wife, Ilo, owned close to Beaver Creek, hybrid corn changed agriculture completely. The first year (1928) that hybrid corn seed was sold, the Hi-Bred Corn Company made a profit of \$33 for the whole year. Corn and soybeans are the crop rotation that farmers still use.



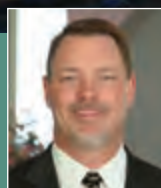
I don't remember the name of the last quilt patch that I chose. It immediately caught my attention, showing the crossroads in Johnston that we have today: N.W. 62nd Avenue, N.W. 70th Avenue, Merle Hay Road and N.W. 86th Street. Development has taken place within and outside of the crossroads. ■



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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

ARE YOU ever really prepared?

No matter how much you anticipate the death of a loved one, especially after a lengthy illness, you are never really prepared for that moment when that person takes their final breath — when they step from this life into eternity.



Twice in the past three months, I have been on the “other side of the table,” as I had to say goodbye to a family member and a friend. Both times, illness had robbed them of their quality of life, and we knew death was rapidly approaching. However, I was totally unprepared when the phone rang and I received the devastating news, “he/she is gone.”

In both cases, the deceased had taken time years before to plan for this day, which made it much easier on the family — giving them time to grieve instead of scrambling to make funeral arrangements and difficult spur-of-the-moment decisions.

How about you? Have you taken time to make arrangements so your family can grieve when your time comes? Or will your family have to put their grief “on hold” while they scramble with the myriad of decisions that must be made within a very short time?

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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HEALTH

By Lance Andersen

MENTAL health issues affect men differently

What kind of prosocial masculinity will develop in a post-feminist world? Are we, as a society, embracing a positive vision of masculinity that is also compatible with gender equality? Yes, the highest rungs of society are occupied by men, but high school-educated men have not seen their wages go up since the 1970s. Modern numbers are revealing. Men account for 75% of “deaths of despair,” either from suicide or overdose. Women report more mental health issues, but men are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide. Women now earn more bachelor's degrees than men. For every 100 women undergrads obtaining diplomas, 74 men obtain the same. Men have the same desires and needs during development as women, but our treatment and expectations can be quite different. While marriage was viewed as “oppressive,” it provided an important place for men to fulfill their role along with connections to social life. We think young boys become tough through adversity, but this could be misguided. What do our boys need to hear and experience to become men who speak about the issues that confront them? We need to reframe how we define masculinity and embrace the notion that men can also HEAL (the counter to STEM) and invite them to grow into the fields of healthcare, education, administration and literacy. ■



Information provided by Lance Andersen, LMSW of SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, andersen@sstherapyandconsulting.com.

MEET Jessica Heggen

School nurse, 1. Students, 600.

Jessica Heggen knew she wanted to work in healthcare and started early as a nursing assistant at a local nursing home when she was 16. From there, she continued working as a nursing assistant in the hospital and home care setting while attending the University of Iowa College of Nursing.

After graduation, she accepted a job at UIHC on the internal medicine floor while working to complete her master's degree. She has since relocated to the Johnston community where she has worked in multiple positions, including as a faculty teacher in the RN program at DMACC, before accepting her current position as a school nurse for Lawson Elementary School.

"Early in my career, I never entertained the idea of working in the school setting. I enjoyed my years working with hospitalized adults. I started substituting as a nurse for JCSD because it fit well with my family's needs at the time. As soon as I did, though, I felt like I had found my niche," Heggen says.

Heggen likes working with elementary school students because she gets to see them grow up from kindergarten to fifth grade. She also gets six years to develop a strong relationship with, not only her students, but also their families.

"I love being part of the school that serves my community. I'm also grateful for the amazing staff I work with at Lawson. I was welcomed with open arms and have been so impressed by how often they go above and beyond to meet the needs of our students," she says.

Heggen says school nurses do more than most people realize. Not only does she handle many daily visits for tummy aches and band-aids, but she also manages students with Type 1 diabetes, seizure disorders, g-tube medications, asthma exacerbations, and so much more.

In addition, the overall health of the student body is Heggen's responsibility through identification and resolution of environmental safety concerns, tracking immunization status, vision and hearing screenings, and health evaluations for students who may need special accommodations or intervention. In fact, one of the biggest challenges for Heggen is that there is only one of her and more than 600 students.

"The most rewarding part of my job is the connections I have made with so many students. It's important to me that every kid at Lawson feels cared for, and I hope I can be a safe space for them here at school if they



Jessica Heggen says being a nurse at an elementary school means she can see the students grow and develop relationships over six years.

ever need it," she says.

"The group of school nurses employed by JCSD are wonderful people and amazing nurses; they have done so much to ensure I will be successful, which I am grateful for," Heggen says.

When not working, Heggen likes to spend time with her family and their two dogs. Together, they enjoy spending time outdoors or watching movies. ■

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WELLNESS

By Caitlyn Ferin, LD, RD

BUILD the perfect soup

Soup can be a great, nutritious meal easily made all in one pot. It is also a great way to stretch ingredients and, therefore, stretch your dollar. It's the perfect way to use leftovers, items that need to be used up quickly, and/or your trusty pantry staples. Here are my four — five if you want to be fancy — steps for making a soup using what you have on hand.



Step one: Choose your base liquid. Most often I use chicken stock, but any beef, chicken or veggie broth will work. Stock is more concentrated, leaving more flavor than a broth. If you want to make your own stock, it could not be easier. Simply take your chicken scraps (mine are usually from a rotisserie chicken) and cover with water in a large pot. Let this simmer for at least an hour before you strain. You will be left with a delicious, homemade stock that you can use for your soup, to cook pasta in, or to flavor other dishes that might need a little extra liquid. If you are using store-bought stock, always choose the low sodium or no-sodium options. You can always add salt if needed.

Step two: Pick a protein. Beef, pork, chicken, turkey, beans or lentils all work well in soup. This is a great way to use up any leftover meat. My personal favorite is rotisserie chicken leftovers. If you've already seasoned your meat, no problem, toss it into your pot, and you'll have an extra layer of flavor. I will often add my spaghetti sauce with ground beef or sausage into soups, and it gives delicious depth.

Step three: Add veggies. Again, use any leftovers you have. I almost always have a few carrots and celery in the fridge that I need to use up. Broccoli, peppers, onions, mushrooms all work well. And the veggie items don't have to be just fresh items. Canned or frozen veggies work just as well in soups. Frozen corn and canned beans are items I add often as well.

Step four: Add a whole grain or carbohydrate. You don't need much. One cup is plenty, but by adding a carbohydrate, this is going to round off your soup and make it a complete meal. Leftover potatoes are one of my go-tos. Brown rice, wheat pasta, quinoa, barley, egg noodles, whatever you have in the pantry will work nicely with a soup.

And step five (optional): Add a little extra flavor. Fresh herbs like cilantro or parsley, spices like cumin or chili powder, parmesan cheese, even a squeeze of lemon can be a nice finishing touch that adds another layer of flavor into your soup.

So, use up those leftovers and staple pantry items to create a new soup. And, if you make a big enough batch, soup is one of my favorite things to freeze. ■

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

HVAC spring cleaning

Warmer days are coming soon, yet, sometimes not soon enough. But, it's safe to say that the bitter cold is appearing farther in our rear-view mirrors, and, as we look ahead to warm days, it's important to prepare your system for the warmer months ahead. Here are some things you can do in the spring before switching off the heater and turning on your air conditioner.



Change the air filter

As the seasons change, it's a good time to change your air filter. You should be changing your air filter about every 90 days or as often as the package directs. Some air filters suggest changing the filter in as little as 30 days. Starting your system with a dirty filter can drastically reduce the efficiency of your system, making it harder for your system to operate, increasing your energy bills, and putting unnecessary stress on your system. You will also want to remove loose debris from around your system. The best way to do this is by manually clearing any big objects around your system and using a low-pressure hose to remove any remaining debris. A clean unit is an efficient one and can last for a longer period of time. That's money that you'll save on your monthly energy costs and in the long-term.

Clean the vents

Spring is a great time to clean your air vents and grilles. Air vents can oftentimes be forgotten about, but they are just as important as your system. Make sure that each vent is open so air can move freely throughout your home. Also make sure that furniture, rugs and curtains aren't blocking your vents. Blocking your vents can restrict airflow and lead to your home conditioning at an uneven temperature. To clean your air vents, remove the grilles and soak them in warm water and soap. While they are soaking, vacuum out any particles, dust or pet hair that has accumulated during the winter. Then simply dry off the grilles and replace them.

Adjust the thermostat

If you have a programmable thermostat, it is a great idea to set up a new schedule since the weather is changing. If you don't already have a programmable thermostat, it is highly recommended. It not only provides optimal comfort but saves energy, which saves you money.

Most importantly, schedule your annual maintenance. After your equipment is maintained, you'll have peace of mind realizing your system is well prepared to provide worry-free air — even on the hottest days. ■

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

SPRING

INTO ACTION

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COLLINS joins the Johnston Police Department

On Monday, Feb. 6, Mayor Paula Dierenfeld swore in new Johnston police officer Collins, who joined the department from the Arapahoe County, Colorado, Sheriff's Office, which serves more than 900 square miles and covers a portion of the Denver metropolitan area. He also served in the United States Navy for eight years and honorably served as a Navy Corpsman. Within the first four years of enlistment, he was appointed to the prestigious Naval Special Warfare Development Group to join the East Coast Special Operations community as a combat medic.

Officer Collins holds an associate's degree in science and criminal justice from the Community College of Aurora. He was eager to return to his home state of Iowa and begin making an impact in the department's community policing mission. ■





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DON'T press your luck

The real estate market is already trending towards an active spring market. This may prompt homeowners to consider selling their home FSBO (For Sale by Owner) to avoid paying a Realtor. Another option is to use a company that offers a discounted rate. However, these discounts often come at a cost. If you're considering selling your home, you should know how these other options could actually end up costing you more.



The most common thing that occurs when homeowners choose to sell their home themselves is that they undervalue it and lose out on thousands of dollars. Rather than hiring a professional to help with all the ins and outs of a real estate transaction and make the process easier and less stressful, they go it alone with the hopes of saving money and leave thousands of dollars on the table. According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), "FSBOs typically sell for less than the selling price of other homes; FSBO homes sold at a median of \$225,000 last year, significantly lower than the median of agent-assisted homes at \$345,000." Realtors use Comparative Market Analyses (CMAs) to help you price your home. This is not their only tool. They also receive training so that they know how much value features add to a home. Plus, they have great marketing tools to make sure your home is seen by potential buyers, including the MLS – Multiple Listing Service. They use these marketing tools to help price your home with accuracy so that it hits the market with a solid foundation for success in selling quickly.

Did you know that, in Iowa, Realtors must be licensed under a brokerage? The brokerage protects the client with whom the Realtor is working. When the Realtor submits closing documents, those documents are looked over closely by a transaction coordinator to make sure they are completed correctly. Even with these systems in place, we're human, and we make mistakes. So, as an additional method of protection, Realtors carry Errors and Omissions Insurance to help protect themselves and their clients from potential big headaches in the future. It's no wonder then that buyers feel safer working with a seller who is using a Realtor.

As independent contractors, most Realtors in Iowa set their own business standards. Setting up a meet and greet with your local Realtor can support you in choosing a good one. Ask them questions about their processes for helping you list your home and how their brokerage provides assistance with resources to help market it. Don't press your luck. When you have a knowledgeable Realtor that works hard to help you navigate the selling process, you will be better equipped to sell your home. ■

Information provided by Rachel Wallace, rachelwallacehome.com, rachel@rachelwallacehome.com, 515-229-1621, RE/MAX Precision, 8705 Chambery Blvd., Johnston.

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JOYFUL living

Shepherd enjoys hearing high school band practice from home.



Missy Shepherd says her family enjoys much about living in Johnston.

Missy Shepherd enjoys the Johnston community so much that she serves as the town's Community Greeter. As part of this role, she shares information about local businesses with new residents and tries to help them find what they're looking for when making Johnston their new home.

"I just can't say enough about how our business owners really want to serve our community and be here for the residents," Shepherd says. "I love that our city continues to grow and add more opportunities for people to do activities right here in Johnston."

Shepherd and her husband, Jeff, have lived in Johnston themselves for more than 20 years. They were previously located in Urbandale but needed a home with more space for the in-home daycare Shepherd provided at the time.

"The front living room of this Johnston

house was going to make a great daycare area close to the kitchen for meals, plus families arriving and leaving," she explains. "We had a 3-year-old at the time and were expecting our second child, so a full basement was super exciting for us since our last home was a split level. Over the years, we have changed paint color so many times and repurposed our space inside and out."

It also made sense to relocate to Johnston back in 2002 because the Shepherd's toddler was signed up to start preschool in town that fall.

"It just all fell into place before the school year started," she says.

Today, the family enjoys using their basement and backyard — where they also have a basketball court — for entertaining. They're located within close proximity to the high school as well.

"We love watching the livestream for Johnston football on our deck and still being able to hear the crowd or announcements," Shepherd says. "It's fun to hear the band out practicing on a weekend morning or if there is a band competition at the high school. It's fun hearing all the songs the kids play while we're out doing yard work."

Simply put, the Shepherd family enjoys living in Johnston and the small-town feel it provides.

"Jeff and I will drive to another neighborhood and walk just to have a different walk with new scenery," Shepherd says. "Every neighborhood has such a welcoming feel to it."

And while they might move in a few years to a place with a smaller yard, the Shepherd's know for sure they'll remain in Johnston. ■

ANNUAL Dinner held, events upcoming

This past month, we hosted our Annual Dinner, with "The Price is Local" theme. We had a great success, and that is in large part due to our donors. Thank you to the following: Bank Iowa, Greenbriar, Tropical Smoothie, Cajun Belle, Clean & Breezy, Amigo Mexican Restaurant, ShortE's BBQ, Christopher's Rare Coins, Cozy Café, WineStyles, Jethro's, Bank of the West, Central States Mobility, Ryan Rohlf with the dsmSOLD team, Scooters, R3 Construction, Johnston Ace Hardware, Hy-Vee, Bishop Drumm, Big Green Umbrella Media, Charter Bank, Edencrest at Green Meadows, Family Heritage – Scott Benter, Herrmann Chiropractic, Hyperion and Fareway. And a huge thank you to DSM Hilton Garden Inn for their space and delicious food.



We also presented our annual awards. Congratulations to the 2022 Business of the Year, Johnston Ace Hardware, a family-owned company that has been in the community for years and is always willing to support our chamber and schools. Our Citizen of the Year, Andrea Hodapp, is a Johnston chamber board member and ambassador, as well as the chair of our Educator Appreciation Committee and a volunteer in the schools and the community. The Ambassador of the Year is Mike Charley with Allegra Marketing. Mike is one of the many faces of the chamber. You will see him stopping in to deliver cookies, and he is always willing to move chairs. Be sure to congratulate these three and, better yet, find a way to support them and their business.

April 5 is our Women's Mentoring Event with the Urbandale and Grimes chambers. A panel of influential women business leaders give insight and advice regarding guidance, careers and personal growth. As an attendee, you will have the opportunity to network and leave inspired. Open to anyone within the Greater DSM Community. Register with the Grimes Chamber. Contact Sam for sponsorship opportunities.

It has been just a year since I started in this role, and there have been many ups and downs as I've learned the traditions of the chamber, the events within the community and have gotten to know many familiar faces. In the past year, we gained more than 30 new members, welcomed new businesses and implemented a new online system. I continue to work through the challenges and celebrate the wins that our local businesses face with the changes and growth of our community. And I look forward to our success and continuing to be an integral part of our city. If you want to know more about what we are up to, please reach out. And, as always, I hope you will join us at an upcoming event.

Upcoming events

- Business After Hours: DLL, March 2 at 5 p.m.
 - Ribbon cutting for The Cork 50131, March 9 at 4 p.m.
 - Breakfast Before Business: CrossRoads Shooting Sports, March 16, at 7:30 a.m.
 - Chamber Luncheon: March 23 at 11:30 a.m. ■

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

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1st Chronicles 16:24



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Children & Adult Programs: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.



ANNUAL Dinner

Johnston Chamber's 39th Annual Dinner was held Feb. 9 at Hilton Garden Inn.



Paula Bierle and Dan Fitzgerald



Rachel Sparks and Derek Sparks



Jenni Buchanan, Andrea Hodapp and Brenda Ballard



Ursula Valmore and Mark Valmore



Liz Butler, Tatum Armstrong, Brian Dresbeck and Craig Scherer



Mark Rheinschmidt and Brooke Ruddy



Marla Bundy and Rachel McCann



Eric Herrmann and Megan Herrmann



Alyssa Tiffany, and Michael Tiffany



Rose Kundel and Scott Kundel



Chris Baker, Ben Hendfelt, Heather Ashton and Tessa Simons

OUT & ABOUT



Johnston High School Basketball Senior Night was Feb. 10. Senior boys: front row, from left, Jesse Valdez, Dom Tornabane and James Anders; and, back row, Dylan Granden, Nathan Ruisch, Sam Tornabane, Logan Kahre and Cameron Henderson.



Johnston High School Basketball Senior Night was Feb. 10. Senior girls and coaches: Jenny Cook, Brad Buchan, Molly Noelck, Cortlynn Jackson, Chad Jilek, Emma Hampton, Jayce Blanchard and Mark Hein.



Samantha Winebrenner and Mike Charley at the Breakfast Before Business at Goodwill of Central Iowa on Jan. 24.



Scott Doup and Mary Hunter at the Breakfast Before Business at Goodwill of Central Iowa on Jan. 24.



Michael Gregan and Thomas Lashier at the Breakfast Before Business at Goodwill of Central Iowa on Jan. 24.



Mallory Manning and Brenda Ballard at the Breakfast Before Business at Goodwill of Central Iowa on Jan. 24.



Alex Overton and Koda, sympathy dog in training, at the Johnston Chamber Business After Hours at Merle Hay Chapel on Feb. 2.



Paula Bierle and Jennifer Sayers at the Johnston Chamber Business After Hours at Merle Hay Chapel on Feb. 2.



Shane Goodman and JP Pearson at the Johnston Chamber Business After Hours at Merle Hay Chapel on Feb. 2.



Scott Kundel and Amanda Demers at the Johnston Chamber Business After Hours at Merle Hay Chapel on Feb. 2.



Sara Bering and Derek Sparks at the Johnston Chamber Business After Hours at Merle Hay Chapel on Feb. 2.

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