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MARCH 2022

Living

Budding *Romance*

Couples share how their
relationships bloomed

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COURTSHIP communication

I have not been on the dating scene for more than 27 years, and I met my wife at work, so keep those facts in mind as I touch on the subject of how romantic relationships start in today's world.

Like many things in life, courtship processes have changed, but the message is the same. From passing handwritten letters to making phone calls to sending text messages to posting on social media, the way we communicate with those we hope to love has certainly evolved. Some would say for the better. Some would say for the worse. Regardless, the methods are here to stay... at least for a year or two until a new communication method evolves.

Today, many relationships start with online dating sites. That was considered by many to be weird just a decade or so ago. After all, how could someone possibly start dating someone over a computer screen? My single friends tell me it works incredibly well, regardless of age. I have a feeling that a handwritten letter might still work as well — or, heaven forbid, face-to-face communication!

In this month's feature story, we touch on the subject of dating and relationships and how it all began for some local residents. Whether you are single or in a relationship, you will surely be entertained when learning about how some in the community are managing — or have managed — courtship communication.

Thanks for reading. ■

SHANE GOODMAN

Publisher

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



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FEATURE

Steve and Sally Gaer of West Des Moines met in their senior year at Valley High School.
Photo by Jackie Wilson

Budding Romance

Couples share how their relationships bloomed

By Jackie Wilson

Chaperoned dates. Internet introductions. Holding hands in the movie theater. Long walks along the shore. Dinners for two — at a burger joint or by candlelight. Rollercoaster rides. Snowball fights. Card games or video games. While the way couples spend time together has changed over the years, one similarity remains: Whatever the path romance takes, it is the special moments along the way that nurture a budding romance into a blooming relationship.

Valley High School sweethearts

Sally and Steve Gaer of West Des Moines attended Valley High School. It was one of the largest classes at Valley, and the pair didn't meet until their senior year of high school when Steve was showing a friend his straight teeth — he'd just gotten his braces off — and Sally Kickbush just happened to be sitting at the table with her.

Steve admitted it had been difficult to date because he was the principal's kid, and some kids avoided hanging out with him.

Steve and Sally met up at a dance mixer in Valley's small gym. Most girls wanted to dance but lacked male partners.

"I was one of five guys in the place willing to dance," Steve recalls. "I remember dancing with Sally."

Sally agreed. That's what she liked about Steve. She found a guy who liked dancing and who wanted to see her favorite movie.

"Sound of Music" was playing in the theater, and she wanted to see it again.

"It was my favorite movie, and I said to him, 'You'd go to the movie with me?' Most guys wouldn't want to see a musical," she says.

Sally asked Steve to a Sadie Hawkins dance (a dance to which the girl invites the boy), and they attended the rest of the dances for the remainder of the school year together. When they graduated high school in 1979, each went their separate ways. Sally attended Luther College while Steve went to the University of Kentucky with a golf scholarship.

"I wrote a letter to her every night," Steve says. "Long-distance phone calls were expensive, and we only got one phone call a week."

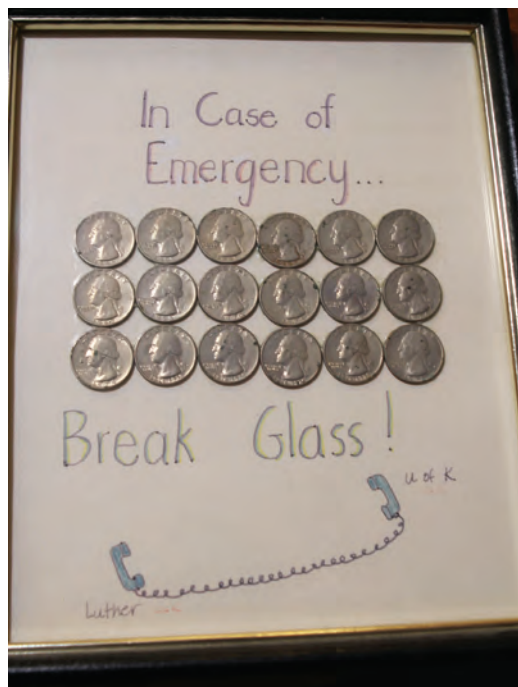
After their first year of college, the couple decided they didn't want to be apart. Sally planned to transfer to Kentucky, but they didn't tell their parents right away, for fear of what their reaction might be. They broke the news to them three weeks before school started.

"I had an advantage. My dad played basketball at Drake, and he and my mom eloped in college. They never told their parents right away," he explains.

The pair married in 1984 after they returned to Des Moines so Steve could attend Drake Law School. They have two children and live in West Des Moines.

Steve and Sally say they are committed to one another.

"We're both very loyal. We have a strong faith, and we stick together," says Sally. "I knew when I met him — he liked the 'Sound of Music' and could dance," she says. "He makes me laugh."



Sally Gaer knew long-distance phone calls were expensive and made this sign for Steve while each were away at separate colleges.

Band members

When Frank and Sally Ledbetter met 40 years ago, they initially agreed not to date each other.

Sandy was in her second year of college and spent the summer living with her two sisters in Joplin, Missouri.

Sandy looked for a job and checked out the want ads in the local newspaper. One ad stood out: a rock cover band was looking for a lead singer.

"I couldn't believe my luck," she recalls. "I always loved singing and thought it would be a really fun job."

She practiced several songs before her audition. Her sisters thought if she dressed the part of a singer, she might have a better chance of getting into the band. Sandy donned a headband as part of her outfit.

"Olivia Newton John was popular back then and had that look, so I wanted to look like her," she says.

Shortly after the audition, she was chosen by the band, who called themselves "The Mix." Since there were four male band members, everyone agreed that Sandy wouldn't date any of them.

"We didn't want anything to happen that might break up the band. It was a joint decision among all of us," she says.

While playing songs at local bars, she and the lead guitarist, Frank, kept flirting with one another.



Steve and Sally Gaer of West Des Moines married in 1984.



Sandy (center) and Frank Ledbetter (far right) met while they played in a band together. Photo submitted

"I'd tease him about him seeing his girlfriend," she says. "We were always flirting."

Sandy's sisters threw her a surprise party for her 21st birthday and invited the band members. Frank attended and confessed his attraction.

"He told me he was crazy about me," says Sandy.

However, the couple still wanted to honor the band's promise so kept the relationship under wraps. However, over the next few months, things heated up, and they began talking about marriage.

"We knew we had to tell the band members, because we had to get real jobs and quit the band," she says.



Sandy and Frank Ledbetter of West Des Moines celebrate 39 years of marriage this year. The couple met while they were members of a band. Photo submitted



Bailey and Alex Jenson, pictured with their dog, Victor, met on their first day of classes at Wartburg College. Photo submitted.

During a band rehearsal, they revealed their secret.

"We broke the news that we had been secretly dating, were falling in love and leaving the band," she says.

"They all laughed and said they knew the entire time. We must have been terrible about hiding it," she laughs.

The couple married and began a family. They'll celebrate 39 years of marriage this year. They have five kids and 12 grandkids.

Sandy says they committed to staying together all these years.

"We agreed we'd never bring up divorce or have divorce in our back pocket," she says. "Marriage isn't 50-50; it's 100-100. It's a team effort. Someone once told me you'll fall in and out of love with your husband. You'll have ups and downs, but this will pass. We've made it through."

Met first day of college

In 2011, fresh out of high school, Bailey and Alex Jenson met on their first day of classes at

Wartburg College in Waverly.

Bailey, a math major, and Alex, an engineering major, had two classes together, back to back. A group of students from the classes hung out together.

Bailey, a volleyball player and a hardworking math scholar, noticed Alex often fell asleep in their calculus class.

"It was always after lunch," Alex says. "It took me a while to get into the swing of things."

Bailey helped Alex with calculus, and they studied together. As the two were chatting, Alex was trying to get another girl's attention, and Bailey was giving him some pointers.

"I was giving him advice on what to say in a text to a girl. Then I thought, 'Why am I doing this? I want to hang out with him,'" she admits.

Alex felt the same way and changed one habit.

"I stopped falling asleep in class because I knew I had to impress her," he reflects.

The couple planned on meeting with other friends to go bowling, and Alex asked her out to dinner first at Applebee's. Bailey asked him if

it was a date.

"That night he asked me to be his girlfriend," she says. "We made it Facebook official after that."

They both graduated from Wartburg in 2015, became engaged in 2016, and married in 2017. They invited the two Wartburg professors to their wedding, joking that they were the matchmakers for the Jensons.

Bailey says their relationship evolved slowly, first as a friendship.

"You're my best friend," she tells Alex. "I like the fact that we were friends first. It's more than a romance."

Before their wedding, they attended pre-marriage counseling with a pastor.

"It forced us to sit and talk about communication and expectations in the marriage," says Alex.

The couple agree the strength of their relationship is due to the fact they are compatible in their values and expectations.

"We're in the same 'bubble of life' where family and good communication is important," says Alex. ■

SEED starting — just the basics

As March begins here in central Iowa, it is time to start seeds indoors for transplanting into your yard or vegetable garden later in the spring. In last month's article, I provided you with some planning



tips for your vegetable garden. This month, I have some seed starting tips for the benefits of allowing you to get a jump start on the growing season.

Starting seeds on your own allows you to have some variety in your garden as you can order seeds not found at your local retailer. As you begin the seed-starting process, you will find the actual seed package is a valuable tool. The seed package provides you key information such as how many days it takes for the seed to germinate after planting. Germination is the time it takes the seed to come out of dormancy, which is in essence about how many days before you see the seedling emerge from the soil. The seed packet also provides the recommended time frame to start seeds indoors, which is usually listed as

weeks before last frost. In our area, that is usually around May 1. Refer to the seed packet for other important info such as planting depth as well.

Once you have your seeds and are ready to start planting, I recommend a good seed starting soil mixture that contains peat moss or coco coir, part perlite and vermiculite. Good seed-starting mixtures can be found at most local garden supply retailers. Containers in which to start seeds can range from as elaborate as purchased tray systems with plastic lids to as economical as any plastic containers covered with plastic wrap. Remember, once a seed has germinated, a covering is no longer needed. A seed warming pad is also a good investment as it really helps keep the soil warm during the germination stage, which speeds up the germination process. An indoor thermometer set near your seed starts is necessary as well so that you can maintain a constant temperature, which is important when it comes to germination.

Once seeds germinate and start to emerge from the soil, lighting becomes important. The most economical form of lighting is a brightly

lit room near a window; however, this is not the most effective form of lighting. An effective way to manage lighting for your seedlings is by using adjustable artificial grow lights. There are many great choices online that are reasonably priced, lightweight and easy to store when not in use. Some artificial lighting kits are LED, which lowers operational cost. Being able to control light is important to ensure you have strong and healthy plants. A good watering device or refillable spray bottle makes it easy to water when seedlings are small. As you plant your seeds, make sure you label your seed starts noting the date the seeds are planted. This will be handy to reference when you get ready to transfer your seedlings. Lastly, a good tool to have is patience. Gardening is somewhat of a science experiment, but, most of the time a successful and enjoyable experiment. Happy gardening! ■

Information provided by David "Dusty" D. Rauschenberg, Dallas Center resident, Master Gardener, Master Conservationist, #thegoodpimgardener, dustyrauschenberg@gmail.com

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WAUKEE WARRIORS

2022 SPRING SCHEDULE

BOYS TRACK VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 8, 2022	2:30PM	Dickinson Relays	University of Northern Iowa
Mar 11, 2022	3:30PM	IATC Indoor Chmp	Iowa State University
Mar 22, 2022	2:30PM	Wartburg College	Wartburg College
Mar 24, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Mar 28, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School
Mar 31, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee High School
Apr 7, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Indianola Stadium
Apr 11, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Valley High School-Tiger Track
	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Fort Dodge High School
Apr 12, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale HS
Apr 16, 2022	8:30AM	Drake University	Drake Stadium
Apr 19, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Ankeny Middle School Stadium
Apr 21, 2022	4:00PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee High School
	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee High School
Apr 26, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Northview Middle School
May 5, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Valley High School

GIRLS TRACK VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 7, 2022	2:00PM	Dickinson Relays	University of Northern Iowa
Mar 10, 2022	3:30PM	IATC Indoor Chmp	Iowa State University
Mar 15, 2022	2:30PM	Wartburg College	Wartburg College
Mar 29, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Stadium
Apr 5, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Stadium
Apr 9, 2022	11:00AM	Multiple Schools	Valley High School-Tiger Track
Apr 12, 2022	4:30PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
Apr 14, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 19, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Ames High School
Apr 21, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Dodger Stadium - Fort Dodge
	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Iowa City High School
Apr 25, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Marshalltown High School
May 5, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Urbandale High School

BOYS SOCCER VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Apr 1, 2022	7:30PM	Des Moines Lincoln	Waukee High School
Apr 7, 2022	7:30PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Apr 12, 2022	7:30PM	Marshalltown	Marshalltown High School
Apr 16, 2022	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Cedar Valley Soccer Complex
Apr 19, 2022	7:30PM	Des Moines Hoover	Des Moines Hoover High School
Apr 22, 2022	7:30PM	Des Moines East	Waukee High School
Apr 25, 2022	7:30PM	Waukee Northwest	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 29, 2022	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Waukee High School
May 3, 2022	7:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic High School
May 6, 2022	7:30PM	Fort Dodge	Dodger Stadium - Fort Dodge
May 10, 2022	7:30PM	Johnston	Waukee High School
May 13, 2022	7:30PM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk High School
May 17, 2022	7:30PM	Des Moines North	Waukee High School

GIRLS SOCCER VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 28, 2022	4:45PM	Des Moines Lincoln	James Cownie Soccer Complex
Apr 1, 2022	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Ankeny Centennial High School
Apr 4, 2022	7:30PM	Marshalltown	Waukee Stadium
Apr 5, 2022	4:45PM	Roosevelt	James Cownie Soccer Park
Apr 15, 2022	6:00PM	Muscatine	Waukee Stadium
Apr 22, 2022	7:30PM	Des Moines East	Des Moines East High School
Apr 26, 2022	7:30PM	Urbandale	Waukee Stadium
Apr 29, 2022	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley Stadium
May 3, 2022	7:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Waukee Stadium
May 6, 2022	7:30PM	Fort Dodge	Waukee Stadium
May 10, 2022	7:00PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
May 13, 2022	7:30PM	Southeast Polk	Waukee Stadium

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NORTHWEST WOLVES

2022 SPRING SCHEDULE

BOYS TRACK VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 8, 2022	2:00PM	Dickinson Relays	UNI
Mar 10, 2022	TBD	IATC Indoor Chmp	ISU
Mar 15, 2022	2:30PM	Wartburg College	Wartburg College
Mar 24, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Mar 29, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 1, 2022	TBD	Emporia State Relays	Emporia, KS
Apr 7, 2022	4:00PM	Indianola	Indianola High School
Apr 11, 2022	4:30PM	Fort Dodge	Fort Dodge High School
Apr 16, 2022	8:30AM	Drake University	Drake Stadium
Apr 18, 2022	TBD	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 19, 2022	5:00PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
Apr 21, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee High School
Apr 25, 2022	4:30PM	Valley	Valley Stadium
Apr 28-30, 2022	8:00AM	Drake Relays	Drake Stadium
May 3, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Dodger Stadium

BOYS SOCCER VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Apr 5, 2022	7:30PM	WDM Valley	Valley Stadium
Apr 8, 2022	4:45PM	Roosevelt	James Cownie Soccer Complex
Apr 12, 2022	7:00PM	Southeast Polk	
Apr 15, 2022	7:30PM	Urbandale	Urbandale High School
Apr 16, 2022	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Cedar Valley Soccer Complex
Apr 19, 2022	7:00PM	Fort Dodge	
Apr 22, 2022	7:30PM	Marshalltown	Marshalltown High School
Apr 25, 2022	7:30PM	Waukee	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 28, 2022	7:00PM	Mason City	Mason City High School (MCHS)
Apr 30, 2022	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Iowa City High School
May 3, 2022	7:30PM	Ames	
May 6, 2022	7:00PM	Dowling Catholic	
May 10, 2022	7:00PM	Ankeny High School	Ankeny High School
May 13, 2022	7:00PM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial High School
May 17, 2022	7:00PM	Johnston	

GIRLS TRACK VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 7, 2022	2:00PM	Dickinson Relays	UNI
Mar 10, 2022	3:30PM	IATC Indoor Chmp	ISU
Mar 15, 2022	2:30PM	Multiple Schools	Wartburg College
Mar 19, 2022	11:00AM	Multiple Schools	Central College
Mar 29, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Stadium
Apr 1, 2022	TBD	Emporia State Relays	Emporia, KS
Apr 5, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 9, 2022	11:00AM	Multiple Schools	Valley High School
Apr 12, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Johnston High School
Apr 14, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 16, 2022	TBD	Multiple Schools	Drake Stadium
Apr 19, 2022	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Ames High School
Apr 21, 2022	4:30PM	Indianola	
	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Dodger Stadium
Apr 26, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	A-D-M, Adel
Apr 28-30, 2022	8:00AM	Drake Relays	Drake Stadium
May 5, 2022	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Northwest High School

GIRLS SOCCER VARSITY

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Apr 1, 2022	6:00PM	Multiple Schools	Ankeny Centennial High School
Apr 7, 2022	6:30PM	Muscatine	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 11, 2022	7:30PM	Mason City	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 15, 2022	7:30PM	Urbandale	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 19, 2022	7:00PM	Fort Dodge	Fort Dodge High School
Apr 22, 2022	7:30PM	Marshalltown	Waukee Northwest High School
Apr 28-30, 2022	TBD	Burlington	Burlington Regional Rec Plex
May 3, 2022	7:30PM	Ames	Ames High School
May 6, 2022	7:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Dowling Catholic High School
May 10, 2022	7:00PM	Ankeny High School	
May 13, 2022	7:30PM	Ankeny Centennial	Waukee Northwest High School
May 17, 2022	7:30PM	Johnston	Johnston High School
May 20, 2022	7:30PM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk High School

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Scan for most up-to-date schedules.

Check for cancellations

Jordan House Museum tours

Daily

Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Walk in the footsteps of history at the historic Jordan House Museum, the home of the Jordan family and the only Underground Railroad stop open to the public weekly. Learn about the history of West Des Moines, beginning with rocks and fossils, through the indigenous peoples, early settlers and the development of railroads and Valley Junction. For more information, visit <https://www.wdmhs.org/visit/>.

Iowa Files: Tombstones and Tales of Jordan and Woodland Cemeteries

Sunday, March 20, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
West Des Moines Public Library,
4000 Mills Civic Parkway

Local historian Kate Levasseur has researched the lives of some of the famous and not-so-famous residents of two of Central Iowa's historic cemeteries — Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines and the Jordan Cemetery in West Des Moines. Kate will tell the stories of Civil War soldiers, groundbreaking female activists and those who were part of the fight for freedom as part of the Underground Railroad. All Iowa Files programs will be live streamed on the West Des Moines Historical Society's YouTube channel and all videos will be closed captioned. For more information, visit <https://www.wdmhs.org/events-2-2/the-iowa-files/>.

Iowa Files: One-Room Schools

Sunday, April 10, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
West Des Moines Public Library,
4000 Mills Civic Parkway

The first Iowa schoolhouse was built in 1830 in Lee County. After that, country schools popped up in the thousands in Iowa. Many young Iowans received an amazing education at one-room schools, going beyond the "Three Rs." Bill Sherman is an expert researcher and author of "Iowa's Country Schools: Landmarks of Learning," a groundbreaking look at the history and impact of country schools on education in Iowa. Bill will present photographs and information about one-room schools and invites attendees to share their stories as well. All Iowa Files programs will be live streamed on the West Des Moines Historical Society's YouTube channel and all videos will be closed captioned. For more information, visit <https://www.wdmhs.org/>.



Wine, Beer and Cheese Fundraiser

Thursday, April 7, 5:30-7 p.m.

Raccoon River Nature Lodge

The Friends of the West Des Moines Library are hosting this event. Experience professionally curated wine, beer and cheese selections from many regions of the country. The goal is to raise \$75,000 to purchase a Pop-Up Library Vehicle for the Children's Department. This unique vehicle will allow the library to reach more residents and is sure to become a West Des Moines Library icon for adults and kids alike. A freewill donation to the West Des Moines Library Friends Foundation will be accepted at the door or online ahead of the event. Learn more at www.wdmlibrary.org/friends.



'Amongst the Stars'

April 2, 5-7 p.m.

Metro Ice Sport Facility,
5100 N.W. 72nd St.,
Urbandale

The Iowa Figure Skating Academy presents its spring show, "Amongst the Stars." Enjoy the talents of local ice skaters.

Register for Des Moines Art Center camps

Camps run June 6-Aug. 12
Des Moines Art Center, 5700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Register now for summer camp at the Art Center. The themed classes are anything but ordinary. From Art Around the World to Under the Sea, there is a creative outlet for all interests. Week-long summer art camps run from June 6 through Aug. 12 and are available for youth ages 5-15. Extended care and supervised lunch can be purchased for an additional fee. Some scholarships are available. For more information and to register, visit <https://desmoinesartcenter.org/classes/find/?class-category=summer-camps&age-group=&class-type=#class-list>



Mandalas & Henna art class

Sunday, March 13, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Principal Studio 5, Des Moines Art Center, 5700 Grand Ave.

Explore traditional mandala and henna patterns while learning about the history of art in India. From medieval times to the present day, students will be exposed to examples of traditional mandala and henna patterns, rangoli, lettering and paintings. Tuition is \$30 (\$24 for members), and the material fee is \$25. To register, visit <https://my.desmoinesartcenter.org/12466/12468>.

EVENTS IN THE AREA



St. Patrick's Day parade

Thursday, March 17, noon
Downtown Des Moines

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are staging their annual parade in downtown Des Moines, beginning at noon, starting at 15th Street and Grand Avenue, heading east to Eighth Street. New this year is a Block Party at 13th and Grand, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Your \$5 admission gets you access to watch the parade, food trucks, live music, a beer tent and more. More information is available at www.friendlysonsiowa.com.

An Evening of Celtic Music

March 12, 7 p.m.

Windsor Presbyterian Church, 6301 University Ave., Windsor Heights

Crossroads of Iowa presents "ClearJoy Music: An Evening of Celtic Music." Admission is free. A freewill offering will be accepted to support Crossroads of Iowa programs. ClearJoy is a musical collaboration of two sisters specializing in Celtic and Scottish music. Crossroads is a not-for-profit organization offering programs for women, including those in jail or prison, with a focus on mental wellness using a holistic approach.

Jurassic Quest

Friday and Saturday, March 11-12, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, March 13, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines

Tickets are available online at <https://www.jurassicquest.com/events/des-moines-ia> and cost \$22 for kids and adults and \$19 for seniors. Ticket for unlimited rides for kids is \$36, which includes entry. General admission includes live shows, arts and crafts activities, dinosaur and marine exhibits. Tickets for individual and premium activities will be available on-site (from \$6). Off peak hours are weekdays (all day) and weekends after 3 p.m. Free entry for children younger than 2.



Hoops and Hops

Thursday through Friday, March 17-19
Cowles Commons

Des Moines Performing Arts (DMPA) announced the return of the immensely popular event, Hoops and Hops, on Cowles Commons. Now in its fifth year, this three-day free event invites basketball fans to enjoy all the NCAA tournament action starting Thursday, March 17. Times are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Thursday, 1-10 p.m. Friday and noon to 10 p.m. Saturday

Admission is free and fans can purchase food from local food trucks including The Big Red Food Truck, Roadside Tacos and Big Mamas Bistro while enjoying a beverage from the Iowa Craft Beer Tent or the Iowa Spirits Bar. Guests will be able to stay warm inside the heated tent with large screen TVs broadcasting the games or enjoy their own game of pickup on one of two half-court basketball courts being assembled on Cowles Commons.

Fans of all ages are welcome and encouraged to wear their favorite team's colors. Guests are asked not to bring coolers or outside food.



'Black Women of Distinction' exhibit

Now through April 30

Reception: Sunday, March 20, 1-3 p.m. with artist talk at 2 p.m.

Artisan Gallery 218, 218 Fifth St., Valley Junction

The images of ten influential women will be part of the Artisan Gallery 218 exhibit "Black Women of Distinction" celebrating Black History Month. "Amanda Gorman" is a new acrylic collage portrait and part of the exhibit. Artist Marybeth Heikes was inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement after the death of George Floyd to create her series. Electing the first black woman, Kamala Harris, as vice president also influenced Marybeth in her endeavor. Her concept was to create a series of portraits from acrylic collage, demonstrating the impact of these women.

Concerts at Wells Fargo Arena

730 Third St. in Des Moines
www.iowaeventscenter.com

- Saturday, March 26: "Elton John's Farewell Yellow Brick Road" at 8 p.m.
- Monday, March 28: "KORN TOUR" with special guests Chevelle and Code Orange at 6:30 p.m.



KHOO passionate about anesthesiology

Inspired by job shadowing to focus her nursing career

As a certified registered nurse anesthetist, Dr. Kristin Khoo, CRNA, DNP is passionate about her career. Her specialty required completing a long road of specialized training.

Khoo grew up in Wisconsin, where her dad was a business owner, and her mom was a teacher. Khoo chose nursing as a career.

"I've always been a helper, and going to nursing school would give me a lot of opportunities," she says.

As she shadowed a nurse anesthetist at Mayo Clinic, she was inspired to pursue the profession.

"She had so much knowledge and had a great career. It's a job where you can work independently," she explains.

After obtaining a bachelor's degree in nursing, Khoo spent two years training in the intensive care unit and another two years at anesthesia school, receiving her doctorate and her national board certification.

She currently works with a care team consisting of nurse and physician anesthetists. The team offers anesthesia in various settings, such as hospitals, outpatient ambulatory surgery centers and clinics.

She develops an anesthesia plan, based on the patient's previous history with anesthesia, as well as their medical history, weight and other factors.

Throughout the medical procedure, she's at the patient's side, monitoring heart rate and other vitals, administering fluids and medications.

"It's my job to keep them comfortable and stay with them the whole time. People are nervous about the unknown," she says. "A lot of times, I don't always get to see them awake, but I've been with them for the whole procedure."

She enjoys communicating and collaborating with a wide variety of professionals. The pandemic is challenging; however, her job hasn't altered because of it.

"We've always treated everyone equally and keep patients safe during the surgery — that hasn't changed," she says.

Khoo's husband is a physician, and, she says, "It's nice us both being in the medical field. We can empathize with one another. If I



Dr. Kristin Khoo has extensive specialized training as a certified registered nurse anesthetist.

have a question, I can run it by him."

Khoo shares some statistics: 50 million anesthetics are given to patients every year in the United States. There are 59,000 practicing nurse anesthetists in the U.S. CRNAs provide 80 percent of the anesthesia to rural

communities. The profession has been around for 150 years, and Khoo finds it rewarding.

"You can make a difference. We always have safety and the patient's best interest in mind. I love being an advocate and helping them through a scary time." ■

COLOR-THEMED approach makes attractive arrangements

Growing dahlias is a must for anyone who loves cutting and arranging flowers. But there are hundreds of beautiful dahlia varieties to choose from, and that can be overwhelming. To make the selection process easier, choose compatible colors that will look good together in the garden and in arrangements.

The combination of peach and burgundy is both striking and sophisticated. Peach-colored flowers add a fresh and soothing feel to the garden. Dahlia American Dawn is a blend of peach, mango and papaya with plum-purple highlights. Good partners include other varieties in the same warm, sunset tones, such as dinnerplate dahlia Belle of Barmera, decorative dahlia Great Silence and ball dahlia Maarn.

Planting dahlias in a perennial garden ensures non-stop color from July into October. The fluttering, melon-colored blooms of HS Date work particularly well, due to this variety's maroon foliage and open growth habit. Complete your peach and burgundy theme with the dark-hued flowers of Rip City. These large, velvety flowers are almost black in the center and soften to wine-red toward the petal edges. Add ball dahlia Jowey Mirella for blooms that are smaller in size yet equally striking.

For another eye-catching color combination, narrow your selection to dahlias with purple and hot-pink flowers. Historically, purple was associated with royalty, spirituality and knowledge. While pastel purple evokes a sense of calm and serenity, deeper tones add drama and excitement. Dinnerplate dahlia

Lilac Time is an heirloom variety with fluffy, lavender blooms that can measure eight to ten inches across. Be sure to also include flowers in juicy grape and violet hues such as dahlias Thomas Edison, Cartouche and Purple Taiheijo.

Complement these moody purples with vivid pink dahlias. Burlesca is a cute little pompon dahlia with tightly rolled petals that reveal hints of peach, burgundy and violet. Fascination's rose-pink, semi-double flowers contrast beautifully with the plant's dark foliage, and the blossoms are irresistible to bees and butterflies. Ball dahlia Rocco is an all-star variety that is long lasting in both garden and vase.

If you prefer pastels to brights, choose dahlias in shades of pale yellow, soft pink and cream. The enormous flowers of dinnerplate dahlia Café au Lait are a must. Complement them with ball dahlias such as peachy Linda's Baby or buttery Boom Boom yellow. Decorative dahlia Fluffles have taffy-pink petals that fade to white, while Milena Fleurs are a mélange of pink, peach and pale butterscotch.

When you start with flowers in compatible colors, designing floral arrangements becomes so much easier. You'll have all you need to quickly create a centerpiece for any gathering, an impressive bouquet for your own home, or an informal handful of blooms to share with friends.

For more tips about cut flowers, read the Longfield Gardens article "How to Design a Cutting Garden" (www.longfield-gardens.com). ■



Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for "Birds & Blooms" magazine and was commissioned by Longfield Gardens for her expertise to write this article. Her web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

NEWS BRIEF

SPIRIT OF CHANDY Scholarship offered

For the ninth year, Bank Iowa is offering graduating high school seniors in the Des Moines area an opportunity to apply for the Spirit of Chandy Scholarship. Bank Iowa annually awards up to 20 \$500 scholarships to commendable high school students across the state.

The scholarship is a tribute to Bank Iowa co-founder Harry Barr's daughter, Chandy Barr

Clanton, who passed away in 2009 at the age of 36 while piloting her aerobatic plane during a training flight. Clanton was a successful businesswoman, competitive athlete, talented pilot and a beloved mother of two sons.

"Chandy's zest for life and her drive to be the very best is a great example for students, especially to high school seniors looking to take the next step in their education," said Bank

Iowa President and CEO Jim Plagge. "Bank Iowa is honored to provide Iowa students with an opportunity to get to learn about Chandy through her work and passions, as well as support to students across the state."

The application deadline is March 25, and recipients will be announced in May. To apply for the scholarship, visit <https://www.bankiowa.bank/about-us/spirit-of-chandy-scholarship>. ■

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HVAC

By Sam Yeager

PREPARE your AC for spring

Spring is almost here, and warmer weather is on the way. But, before we can celebrate, follow our HVAC spring checklist below to ensure your system operates safely and efficiently all season long.

Throughout the fall and winter, leaves, sticks, dirt and other debris inevitably build up around your HVAC unit. Make sure to clean any build-up around your system, leaving 1-2 feet of clearance. Cleaning around your AC unit will maximize airflow and ensure that your system performs at its best.

While the spring weather has you in deep cleaning mode, don't forget about your air vents. Be sure that each vent is open so air can circulate evenly throughout your home. You should also make sure that furniture, rugs and curtains aren't blocking your vents. To clean your vents, remove the grills and soak them in warm water and soap. While the grills are off, vacuum any particles, dust or pet hair accumulated during the winter. To finish, dry off the grills, replace them, and — ta-da! Your vents are as good as new.

If you have a programmable thermostat, it's a great idea to set up a new schedule as the weather changes. Programmable thermostats provide optimal comfort and save energy and money, so, if you don't have one, don't delay installation any longer.

It's time to change your filters. It's recommended to change your filters every 30-90 days, depending on use or the kind of filter you have. Replacing your filters is the easiest way to prevent damaged equipment and maintain energy efficiency. Make a note to check, clean, or replace your filters at the beginning of each season.

Your AC has been sitting dormant for months; you need to make sure it's ready to take on the warmer weather ahead. If it's warm enough to test your system, it is always a good idea to make sure that it works before you really need it every day. You can test your AC system by turning it on and running it for a few minutes to make sure cool air circulates throughout your home.

If you notice anything unusual about your HVAC system or feel like your AC is not working as well as last year, contact a professional. Hopefully, this spring cleaning checklist prepares you for the warm weather ahead. ■

Information provided by Sam Yeager, Assistant Service Manager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.



WATCH YOUR MOUTH: It's National Nutrition Month

Diet is the centerpiece of personal wellness, even more so as we age. New research bears out the tremendous natural healing power of certain foods common to our diet. The trick in the kitchen each night is to create flavor profiles to delight the eye and palate, but ones that leverage the phenomenal benefits of these aptly named Super Foods:

Beautiful Berries — Blue, black, acai — these tasty treats contain anti-inflammatory properties and mega anti-oxidants, which inhibit the damaging movement of free radicals in our body.

Fabulous Fats — Some fats are essential for keeping our brain and body functioning properly. Monounsaturated fats can maintain or lower cholesterol, decreasing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Even certain saturated fats, like coconut oil and avocado oil, can be an excellent energy source for brain cells, showing promise in staving off Alzheimer's. Seeds and nuts (flax and macadamias), along with many cold water fish, are rich sources of Omega 3. This category of polyunsaturated fatty acids, so vital to the central nervous system, is not produced by our bodies. We must have them in our diet.

Chocolate Medicine — For a heart-healthy, anti-oxidant treat, forget Snickers. Go for bittersweet chocolates with high cocoa mass. Decadent and beneficial.

It's Easy Being Green — Kale, chard, spinach, all packed with Vitamin B, show evidence of slowing dementia. Pureed as a smoothie (with a touch of fruity sweetness) or used as an artful sauce, leafy green vegetables are everything Mom said they were.

Spicy World — Certain spices deserve accolades not just for taste but for health. Turmeric contains curcumin, praised for its prohibition of amyloid plaque (a contributing factor to Alzheimer's). Many spices have been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties, a great advantage in the fight against dementia.

Carbohydrates — The challenge here is to watch our intake, especially of gluten, those rubbery strands of protein found in wheat grains that can cause inflammation. It has been implicated in increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Carbs turn into sugar, spiking our production of insulin, thus opening us up to the onset of diabetes and dementia-related conditions.

Drink Deep — And while you're chewing, be sure to wash it all down with plenty of water. Hydration ensures that the body has adequate water for flushing toxins, transporting vital nutrients for cells and tissues, and keeping the nose, throat, eyes and ears moist. And yet, most people drink below their daily eight glasses a day, causing an alarming rise in the number of dehydrated individuals. Seniors are at even higher risk of dehydration.

So drink deep from the faucet...and from life! ■

This post is intended for informational purposes only. Please contact your health care provider with any questions or concerns you have regarding your health. Information provided by Paula Spidell, executive director, MorningStar at Jordan Creek, 525 S. 60th St., West Des Moines, 515-505-7155.




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WEST DES MOINES Public Library news



WEST DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday: 2-5 p.m.

Support the Library at the Fifth Annual Wine, Beer and Cheese Fundraiser on Thursday, April 7 from 5:30-7 p.m. at Racoon River Nature Lodge.

The Friends of the West Des Moines Library are hosting this event. Experience professionally curated wine, beer and cheese selections from many regions of the country. We are sure you will find some new favorites.

In support of our exciting next Friends-funded project, be sure to visit our Donation Wall at the event and on the WDM Library website, which will highlight our efforts to raise \$75,000 to purchase a Pop-Up Library Vehicle for the Children's Department. This unique vehicle will allow us to reach more residents and is sure to become a West Des Moines Library icon for adults and kids alike.

We are requesting a freewill donation to the West Des Moines Library Friends Foundation at the door or on our website ahead of the event to attend the Wine, Cheese and Beer event. Learn more at www.wdmlibrary.org/friends.

Upcoming event highlights

See the full event calendar at www.wdmlibrary.org/events.

• **How to Interview and Negotiate**, Wednesday, March 16, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Presented by IowaWORKS. Make your interview memorable by avoiding interview pitfalls and answering the tough questions correctly. Join an expert from IowaWORKS and learn how to make the

most of your interview opportunity. IowaWORKS is a partnership with Iowa Workforce Development, a state agency committed to providing employment services for individual job seekers.

• **Tombstones & Tales: Woodland & Jordan Cemeteries**, Sunday, March 20, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Local historian Kate Levasseur has researched the lives of some of the famous and not-so-famous residents of two of Central Iowa's historic cemeteries. Kate will tell the stories of Civil War soldiers, groundbreaking female activists and those who were part of the fight for freedom as part of the Underground Railroad.

• **Job Searching: Tips on What Not to Do**, Wednesday, March 23, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Are you not getting the results you want from your job search? Join us for a presentation on some tips on how to make your resume and cover letter stand out in a positive way, as well as some tips on what not to do when applying for a job.

• **Financial Literacy with the Evelyn K. Davis Financial Empowerment Center**, Monday, April 4, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Do you find yourself wondering where all your money goes by the end of the month? Confused by the differences in credit cards? Do you want to start saving money for the future but don't know where to start? Join us at the Library for a program on Financial Literacy, presented by the Evelyn K. Davis Financial Empowerment Center. In addition to presenting this program, financial counselors from the Evelyn K. Davis Financial Empowerment Center will also be offering one-on-one financial counseling sessions on April 5 and April 6. ■

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Living IOWA MAGAZINES

OWN PROPERTY? Have an estate plan

Anyone who owns property — a home, a car, a retirement account — can benefit from an estate plan. Planning for the future allows you to direct how and to whom your property will be distributed after your death. If you have no estate plan, your property will be distributed according to the laws of intestacy, without regard to your family or wishes.



Clients have several objectives in estate planning. Obviously, you want to dispose of your assets according to your wishes. You may want to provide for minor children or specific family members. It may be very important to minimize the cost or time associated with probate or to avoid making personal affairs

public. Avoiding paying estate or inheritance taxes is probably always a goal, although most estates are exempt from both Iowa and Federal taxes. You may want to ensure that your favorite charity or institution receives a donation, or you may want to exclude certain persons from receiving anything.

The most basic estate planning tool is the Last Will and Testament. A will gives you the right to determine who receives your assets after your death. By exercising your privilege of making a will, you can select the personal representative of your estate to administer your will and distribute your assets according to your wishes. You can use your will to nominate a guardian for minor children or to direct that beneficiaries who are young will not receive their inheritance until they are financially mature.

Perhaps most importantly, you can use your

will to direct your assets to beneficiaries whom you choose instead of letting the law choose for you. You may have given significant gifts to one child and want to equalize the inheritance of your other children. You may have step-children who you want to share in your estate. Or, you may want to ensure that people outside your immediate family receive a bequest. Many clients are surprised to learn that a surviving spouse doesn't inherit everything if the decedent had children from a prior marriage. A will allows you to remedy this potential problem.

The major benefit of a will is that it gives you control to direct the distribution of your estate according to your wishes. Everyone should have this basic estate planning tool. ■

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

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HEALTH

By Paul Guerdet

THINKING about yourself

At a young age, we are taught that it's good to think about the needs of others. A lot of us are taught that we're "good people" if we think about others, and, as a therapist, I agree. The problem, however, is that we sometimes trick ourselves into thinking, if it's good to think about the needs of others, then it's bad or selfish to think about our own personal wants and needs.

When we choose to think about ourselves, it means we are making a conscious choice to see we are worthy of the same love, patience, kindness, and understanding we so freely give away. It doesn't mean that we are ignorant or callous to the needs of others; it means we recognize we have the same needs as our friends and family.

Self-care is not selfish. Going for a walk in the sun, enjoying ten minutes playing with a pet, or just choosing to wait with the laundry until tomorrow does not make a person selfish. It means we're realizing what we need and we're making a choice to do something kind for ourselves.

You are allowed to be kind to yourself, and you are allowed to give yourself what you need. After all, even a Ferrari occasionally needs a tune up. ■



Information provided by Paul Guerdet, LISW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, IA 50322 and 2675 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 105, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

HEALTH

By Dr. Josiah Fitzsimmons, DC, BCN

REACTIVATE your life

Has neuropathy pain slowed you down? Are you not enjoying life and the activities you used to do because it just hurts to move? Have you given up and resigned yourself to helplessness? Are you worrying yourself sick and always in a bad mood? If any of these scenarios sound familiar, it's time to get your life back.

Neuropathy pain is caused by damage to nerves in the feet, legs and hands. There are many conditions that can cause neuropathy, such as diabetes, chemotherapy and traumatic injury, just to name a few. Many people don't even know they have neuropathy; they just know they experience pain daily.

There is a solution — a neuropathy program that can improve your quality of life. It all starts with several neurological tests to determine the cause and severity of the nerve damage. The treatment program uses state-of-the-art, low-level cell signal technology that produces electric cell signals and sends them throughout the nervous system. These signals accelerate the body's ability to repair the nerve damage. The treatment is painless and FDA cleared. There are no drugs, injections or surgeries. Much of the treatment program can even be conducted in your own home.

Are you ready to reactivate your life? Free lunch and dinner seminars are being conducted in the Des Moines area. Call and get scheduled for an educational seminar near you. ■



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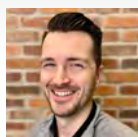


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Information by Dr. Josiah Fitzsimmons, DC, BCN, Vero Chiropractic, 5525 Mills Civic Parkway #120, West Des Moines, IA 50266.

HEALTH

By Dr. Amy Petersen

CAR SEAT SAFETY: best practice recommendations

Car crashes are the leading cause of death for children 4 years and older. We all want to protect our children when riding in the car, but the recommendations by the AAP for car seats can be confusing.

All children should ride in a rear-facing car seat as long as possible until they reach the height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Most convertible car seats allow rear facing until 40 pounds. This provides optimal head and spine support. Once rear facing limits are outgrown, children should use a forward-facing car seat with five-point harness as long as possible. Most models allow until 65 pounds. If forward facing limits are outgrown, booster seats should be used to allow proper fitting of the lap and shoulder portion of the seat belt. Most children taller than 4 feet 9 inches will fit properly in a seat belt without a booster as long as the lap belt crosses the hips and pelvis and shoulder belt crosses the middle of the chest and shoulder. All children younger than 13 years old should ride in the back seat for optimal protection. Specific questions should always be directed to your pediatrician. ■

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 Ashley Powell

CBD has benefits for pets, too

As humans, we tend to strive for healthier ways to live a better life. Cannabinoids have been proven to help us exponentially, whether it's relief from discomfort, sleeplessness or anxiety, it provides us an improved state of being. If you've discovered the wonders of CBD, CBN or CBG for yourself, you may be curious about the benefits for our pets. CBD for animals is in the earlier stages of formal research, but its effectiveness in humans as well as animals can be attributed to the fact that all creatures (excluding insects) have an Endocannabinoid System (ECS), which regulates our body's homeostasis. When something is going wrong inside of us, using cannabinoids will activate the ECS system to get us back to normal. When we notice our pets experiencing discomfort or stress, due to factors like old age, illness or serious anxiety, we strive to find them relief. Aging is a natural part of life, but, in some cases, CBD can lessen the discomfort that comes with it. It can help fight inflammation and joint issues and help improve sensory function. If your pet becomes nervous during bad weather, when guests visit, or seems anxious when left alone, CBD treatments help them relax. Doses are typically given according to their weight. Methods include oil (directly in the mouth or on food), treats and topicals. CBD is a natural way to keep those tails wagging. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman of Greater Des Moines, 800 S. 50th St., Suite 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251. References: Silver, Robert J. "The Endocannabinoid System of Animals." *Animals: an open access journal from MDPI* vol. 9, 9, 686. 16 Sep. 2019, doi:10.3390/ani9090686.



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WHAT YOU NEED to know about colorectal cancer

Did you know colon cancer is the third most diagnosed cancer in men and women according to the American Cancer Society? Colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer, is easily treatable and, when found early, the survival rate is high.



Colon screening

Early detection through screening is crucial. Colorectal cancer is found in the large intestine, made up of the colon and rectum. Most colorectal cancers start as growth polyps on the inner lining of the large intestine. Screening helps find precancerous polyps that can be removed before they turn cancerous.

A colonoscopy is the best screening exam

available to detect colorectal cancer. During the screening, a doctor examines the lining of your entire colon to check for polyps or tumors, and, if polyps are found, they can be removed.

Dr. Shankar Raman, director of MercyOne's nationally accredited rectal cancer program, reminds, "Colon cancer is preventable by screening. While there are numerous screening options, the best one is that which gets done. Colonoscopy picks up even the tiniest of lesions and can remove polyps which could grow into cancer. Remember, screening starts at age 45."

If you're 45 and older, maintaining a regular colon screening every ten years is critical. Colon cancer deaths among those 55 and younger are increasing according to the American Cancer Society.

Symptoms

Colorectal cancer develops with few, if any,

symptoms. That's why colon screening is important and should not be pushed off. Always talk with your primary physician if you notice any concerning changes with your body.

Symptoms include:

- Change in bowel consistency
- Constipation and/or diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Persistent abdominal/ pelvic discomfort
- Quick and unexplained weight loss
- Rectal bleeding/blood in stool

Don't delay care. Make an appointment with your primary care provider if you have any symptoms that worry you. ■

Information provided by Shankar Raman, MD, colorectal surgeon, MercyOne Richard Deming Cancer Center, 411 Laurel St., Suite C100, Des Moines, 515-643-8206, MercyOne.org/RDCC

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RECIPE

HAVE A healthier happy hour

(Family Features) Add a healthy twist to happy hour at home with a nutritious snack that goes perfectly with your favorite beverages. When gathering family and friends for a weekend toast or just winding down after work, these Prune, Mozzarella and Basil Skewers make for a nutritious and delicious addition to the party.

Rich and smooth with an ability to enhance various flavors, California Prunes are a versatile ingredient that allows you to expand your menu. In this recipe, prunes help form a palate-pleasing snack that delightfully combines sweet, salty and savory flavors.

In addition to their versatility, prunes provide important nutrients for your bones, including vitamin K and copper. When they are served with mozzarella – a good source of calcium – you get a perfect power pairing that supports your bone health and satisfies your snack cravings.

Visit CaliforniaPrunes.org to find more recipe ideas from morning to night. ■

Prune, Mozzarella and Basil Skewers

Prep time: 5 minutes
Servings: 5

- 5 pieces prosciutto, halved lengthwise (optional)
- 10 California Prunes
- 10 basil leaves
- 10 cherry-size mozzarella balls

Directions

- If using prosciutto, fold each half in half lengthwise so width of prune is wider than width of prosciutto. Starting at one end of prosciutto, wrap one prune; repeat with remaining prosciutto. Set aside.
- Wrap one basil leaf around each mozzarella ball then thread onto skewer. Thread one prune or prosciutto-wrapped prune onto each skewer.



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EDUCATION

By Jackie Wilson

MEET Krystal Kron

Helps students become better readers

Helping kids become better readers is Krystal Kron’s goal as an educator.

Kron is the kindergarten through third grade reading support lab teacher at Waukee’s Brookview Elementary School in West Des Moines. She’s taught for 16 years and the past nine years at Waukee.

Shortly after Kron began her teaching career, she started a family of her own. She sought to specialize in a subject and received her reading endorsement. She earned her master’s degree in elementary education and specialized in dyslexia and phonics training. The additional instruction helped her grow professionally.

“It’s helped me find a balance in my instruction,” she reflects.

She takes small groups of children for a 20-30 minute session consisting of reading skills, phonics and reading comprehension. Reading various levels of guided reading books is part of the education. She’s noticed over the years how reading instruction has changed.

“One of the biggest misconceptions is there’s only one way to do it,” she explains. “There are so many strategies to solve reading problems. When we were kids, we learned to sound it out.”

As a child, Kron was an average reader. As she got older, she loved reading, which became her best subject.

She enjoys teaching, as she is a people person.

“I’m most comfortable with kids,” she says. “I like to spend time with them, building positive relationships.”

Kron says it’s gratifying when parents see a change in their children’s reading abilities.

“I had a parent email me when their child was in third grade, and I had them in first grade. He’s now reading Harry Potter and scored a 99 percent in reading,” she says.

Standardized testing is important to see a student’s growth in a subject; however, the kids’ capabilities in reading varies.

“I want them to be wildly successful. It weighs heavy on me. I try not to take it so personal,” she says. “I work with kids who struggle a lot with their reading.”

She enjoys seeing kids develop throughout the school year.

“They are little sponges, open to grow, learn and change,” she says. “I get to do good and create change. It feels like a big opportunity, and not everyone gets that. I’m lucky to do my job at Brookview.” ■



Krystal Kron uses a variety of strategies to help individual kids improve their reading.

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OUT & ABOUT

RUSH Hour

The West Des Moines Chamber's Rush Hour with Prairie Natural Meats was held Feb. 17.



Marty Baddeloo



Anabel Herrera and Luisa Rincon



Norm Boaz and Mo Sane



Angela Estupinan and Chris Zagers



Sue Sundal, Cammie Lange and Torina Graves



Chef Kellan "G" Gannon



Ale Vidal Soler and Yolanda Chrystal



Janet and Frank Hanson



Austin Boyke, Brandon Gillaspay and Neil Hyde



Tom Florian, Nicole Langmaid, Baillee Furst and Anna Doud

OUT & ABOUT

ANNUAL Dinner

West Des Moines
Chamber held its
Annual Dinner Feb. 10 at
the Sheraton on 50th.



Paige Nissen and Tracy and Eric White



Kara Matheson, Baillee Furst and Tom Florian



Allison Petersen and Bryon Moore



Sarah and Robert Rypma



Kelly Smith and Jenna Schaeffer



Jill and Cam Crosser



Kristen Koenig, Haley Gutschenritter and Anne Marie Morrow



Jamie Letzring and James Moore



Keith and Sandy Sisson and Martha Wagner



Chile Van Engen, Amy and Travis Baker



Michelle Hemping and Amy Baker

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