

NORWALK

DECEMBER 2021

# Living

# Christmas

*then and now*

Residents reflect on  
changing holiday  
observances

**Warrens enjoy King Midget cars**  
GARAGE

**Ribbon cutting held for new florist**  
OUT AND ABOUT

**Apple oat crumble and citrus caramel topping**  
RECIPE

PRSR STD  
ECRWSS EDDM  
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WELCOME

# ANTICIPATION

I can't see the word anticipation without singing along to the 1971 Carly Simon song with the same name and that all-too-familiar drumroll. I was only 3 years old at that time, so I couldn't hardly remember that song's debut. But what I do remember from "Anticipation" is the 1979 Heinz ketchup ad that used the popular song as its jingle. Not knowing the original song or Carly Simon, I improperly thought the words to the jingle were "Heinz is the patience" that played along images of the ketchup slowly oozing out of the glass bottle. My sister, who is 12 years older than me and did know the original song and artist, promptly corrected me while laughing at my confusion.



I may not have had the words to the TV commercial down, but I most certainly knew the definition of anticipation, because I experienced it as a child each Christmas season. My mother was the ultimate planner. She had all our Christmas presents purchased and wrapped and positioned under a fully decorated tree prior to Thanksgiving.

As much as I appreciated Mom's planning ahead, the weeks of anticipation in wondering what was underneath the holiday wrapping paper was more than this kid could handle. So, when nobody was in the room, I would carefully pull back the tape and paper on the presents and get a peek at what was inside my gifts. Of course, I didn't tell anyone about this at the time, and I learned to still act quite surprised when I opened the presents on Christmas day.

Mom's type of planning for Christmas didn't happen as often with Jolene and me when our kids were at home. It's not that we didn't have good intentions; we just couldn't seem to get to the shopping and wrapping until the last minute, and I was the worst offender (and still am). This procrastination may have taken away some of the anticipation for our kids — and maybe the temptation to peel back the paper for a look, too. Maybe. As much as we would like to think that things have changed since we were kids, many things have remained the same, too — including anticipation.

Happy holidays, merry Christmas, and, as always, thanks for reading. ■

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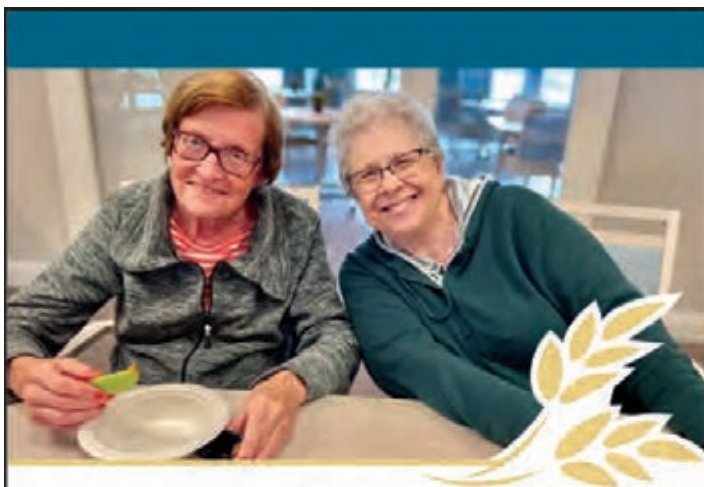
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# Christmas

## *then and now*

Residents reflect on  
changing holiday  
observances

By Rachel Harrington

When reminiscing about the holidays and the accompanying joyful celebrations, the brightest and most vivid memories vary. For some, it's the decorating and ornaments, the tinsel and trees that come to mind first. For others, special moments are centered on baking holiday goodies. Still others recall the fun of surprising family and friends with bits of Christmas cheer. For many, the memories they make today are quite different from those of their childhood. As people start their own families, meld traditions with their spouses', and adapt to the changing times, they find their Christmases "then and now" are quite different.

Karen Kordick and her daughter, Kelsi Messer, along with many family members, annually gather to bake and decorate dozens of cookies and, more importantly, share time.





## Cookie tradition grows with family

Karen Kordick comes from a family of 13 children, and Christmas time was fun with family gathering around. The year Karen's daughter, Kelsi Messer, was born, her sisters, Sue and Diana, began a Christmas baking tradition that would last for years to come.

"In the beginning, it started with baking and decorating just a few different cookies," says Karen. "Every year, it has just grown. Recipes were brought and collected in a family binder. As the years progressed, different people would host the event, and the person who hosted the year before would bring the binder."

Mothers, daughters and nieces all gather for a predetermined weekend, usually the first weekend in December, to visit with each other and enjoy a full day or two of baking. Sometimes they'd invite the younger boys to join them and dub them their apprentices. The group now numbers about 20 people on average each year.

"Nieces keep having babies, and people keep getting married, so it keeps growing," chuckles Karen. "We try to get everything done on Friday so we can hang out together on Saturday, but, for sure, we're done by noon on Saturday."

Each year, the participating family members bring some cookies that have been pre-made.

"There are about 30 batches of things that are pre-made," says Kelsi. "By the end of our baking day, there are about 20-30 additional batches."

Karen adds, "Everything is made small so you can eat several and not feel guilty about it. In the beginning, decorating cookies was the name of the game. Now, there are numerous cookie recipes and other treats that are made."

"Grandpa used to make peanut brittle, and we have continued making that in his memory," shares Kelsi.

Karen adds, "We lost my sister, Diana, in 2014. We called her 'quality control' because she'd do things like throw something back at you if you made it too big. She used to make peppermint cookies — a recipe she got from her husband's grandma, and we continue to make them in her memory."

Kelsi's favorite items are Oreo Balls and Snicker Stuff, and Karen's is the Fandel (her mom's maiden name) lemon cookies. Ginger cookies (Gingies) are another favorite. Kelsi makes Diana's peanut butter cup recipe that she inherited.

The baking day is named the Erpelding (Karen's maiden name) Family Baking Weekend. One year, the recipe binder didn't make it to the gathering, so Karen's niece decided to put everything together in a Shutterfly book with pictures and make a copy for each family. Each edition gets updated pictures, and this year's edition had a tribute to Diana. There's not a new book every year, but there have been a few different editions so far. The last couple of years, they have even made Christmas baking T-shirts — both an adult version and a kid version.

The baking weekend now rotates between several areas where family members live. Three Erpelding sisters live in the Des Moines area, and one lives in Algona with her two daughters. There's even a niece that is starting a Erpelding North Baking Weekend in North Dakota.

## The first Christmas present

On Jordan Hines' youngest sister's first Christmas, Jordan was 7 years old and her middle sister was 4. Their mother began a new tradition for their family of dressing her girls up in matching or coordinating pajamas on Christmas Eve.

"Our mom would have three bright red gift boxes next to the fireplace," she recalls. "We would go to a Christmas Eve service and then to dinner. When we came home, the boxes were waiting for us. It was exciting because seeing those gifts brought with it the idea of the first gift of Christmas, and it felt a bit magical, like it was from Santa's workshop. We always knew what was in those boxes, but we were still excited. It got us in the mindset of 'This is when the fun starts.'"

After Jordan and her sisters opened and put on their new pajamas, if it wasn't too late, they'd watch a movie and enjoy popcorn and hot chocolate.

"We'd wear the pajamas that night and open our Christmas presents from our parents and grandparents in them the next morning," she says. "If we had



Kelsi Messer was not thrilled about having a Christmas photo taken in front of a backdrop of Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Jordan Hines and her two sisters have received new pajamas to open Christmas Eve each year until they were all out of high school.



to go somewhere that day, we had the choice of wearing our pajamas. When we look back at pictures, we can tell which Christmas it was by the pajamas we were wearing.”

Jordan remembers one particular Christmas in the early 2000s when she and her sisters were dressed in what she dubs “terrible” red and green plaid pajamas. Though she still feels like they weren’t very pretty, the memory of those Christmas pajamas is still one of her favorites and sticks out to her.

“I remember that year,” she says. “It looked like Christmas wrapping paper had thrown up on us and was stuck to us. I was 10, and my kid sister was 2. I got a guitar that year, and my little sister had a Walk and Talk Elmo that she loved.”

Jordan’s mom kept up the pajama tradition until last year.

“Last year was the first year that everyone was out of high school,” she says. However, Jordan decided to carry on the tradition with her daughter, 2, and son, 5 months, in 2019. “It was a little different the first Christmas because my daughter’s Santa picture was also her PJ picture,” comments Jordan. “This year, I have found her an obnoxious set of Grinch pajamas that

she’ll love, and my son will have a cute Grinch sweater.”

Jordan says she isn’t sure if her sisters will one day carry on the tradition with their future families, but they aren’t to that stage in life yet. Jordan cherishes the tradition, though.

“As soon as I see stores shift into Christmas, I start scoping out what’s trendy and common that year,” she shares. “If I don’t find something by Dec. 1, I start panicking. I want to make sure I find pajamas.”

She says, if she can find pajamas to coordinate with her kids, she’s not against doing it with them each year.

“I find those pictures where moms and dads are involved super cute.”

## Childhood Santa leads to vintage theme

Jessica Short’s family loves Christmas.

“My grandma bought a little Santa, which I now have, when my mom was 1 year old,” says Jessica. “My great-grandpa built a fireplace outside to keep Santa in. One year, Santa was stolen out of the fireplace, but the police found him in a ditch and returned him. Ever since

then, Santa has been inside.”

Jessica remembers that same Santa being by their Christmas tree each year when she was little.

“This Santa sparked a love for vintage Christmas decorating for me,” she remarks. Several years ago, her grandma wrote her a letter detailing the story of the family Santa figure.

“She says in the letter that she got the Santa from a catalog,” recalls Jessica. “I thought it was funny that she even remembered where she got it from. It is a blow mold vintage Santa. Blow molds were popular for a long time, and then there was a long season that they weren’t. I think they are becoming a little more popular again.”

As Jessica entered adulthood, her love of all things Christmas grew, too.

“We are early decorators. This year, we were out in the yard on Halloween day taking down decorations so we could decorate for Christmas on Nov. 1,” she laughs. “My friends call me a seasonal maximalist. I don’t necessarily remember my mom decorating this early, but I just love it. I love the nostalgic feel it brings. It takes a full three days to ‘install’ our indoor décor. Outside it takes longer. We have lots of

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## FEATURE

big blow molds in the front yard, which include a big Santa with his sleigh and reindeer that go on the roof. Other outdoor décor includes snowmen and candlesticks.”

Jessica says her daughter is a little “Cindy Lou Who” and has caught the “love of Christmas bug” just like her. She gets excited to begin decorating for Christmas.

“I have a large collection of vintage Christmas decorations,” remarks Jessica. “After Mom gave me the Santa, she started getting me additional small and large vintage décor, including yard decorations. Usually, she gets me a new blow mold each year.”

Jessica finds much of her vintage Christmas décor at flea markets and antique stores.

“We went to the Junk Jubilee at the Iowa State Fairgrounds this year, and I got two candlesticks there,” she shares. “In Nebraska City, Nebraska, I found an antique Mr. and Mrs. Claus. I also have old Christmas records of my mom’s, too.”

Out of all her decorations, though, the



first vintage Santa is her favorite because it is what sparked her love of all things Christmas.

This year, Jessica is setting up an antique workbench she found at an antique store in Walnut. On it, she will have much more room to display her décor, and it will be the new home for her vintage Santa along with several other blow molds and antique figurines. She’d like to give her husband a shout out for supporting her love of all things Christmas.

“It wouldn’t be possible without him,” she says. “He’s my own Clark Griswold.” ■



Jessica Short collects vintage Christmas decorations. A vintage Santa that was part of her childhood memories and gifted to her by her mother sparked her preference for vintage.



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## FRED DUNCAN'S ice mittens

My grandmother always referred to the refrigerator as an icebox. I wish I had talked to her more about what it was like to depend on an "icebox." How quickly did the ice melt? Where did you get the ice? Did you use it in the winter? Did you run out of ice in August and September? Was some ice better than other ice? How big were the ice chunks, or blocks, or whatever they were called? I know I can always "Google" this information, but the stories would have been more meaningful coming from my grandmother.

The newspapers had plenty of advice for owners of iceboxes. In 1888, Scientific American described how to turn a stationary washtub into an icebox.

"The ice does not melt faster than in a \$10 icebox." An article in the Indianola Herald in 1921 advised, "Large pieces of ice do not melt as quickly as small ones, and it costs less to keep the icebox filled rather than half-filled... It is an erroneous belief that ice, when wrapped in paper, will not melt so quickly... The paper stops the proper circulation of cold air."

In 1900, the Ladies Home Journal recommended using 100 pounds of ice once or twice a week to keep the icebox cold. They also told housewives to keep the door closed and to avoid scrubbing or scalding the icebox because it would take at least 24 hours to bring the temperature back down to where it needs to be.

Will Demory delivered ice to the Indianola area in the early 1900s. An advertisement in several newspapers in June and July encouraged

people to "Roll out your icebox and get it ready for use." One of his employees was Fred Duncan. Fred was born near Milo in 1893. He married Will Demory's daughter, Ethel, in 1917 and later took over the ice business, changing the name to Duncan Ice and Fuel.

Fred and Ethel had a son, Dudley, who worked in the business as a teenager. He helped cut the ice into big blocks, bring them back to the storage area, and pack them in sawdust to slow down any melting. Imagine spending the day handling large blocks of ice. They must have had to stop frequently to warm up frozen fingers. Dayton Duncan, Dudley's son, recently donated three pairs of ice mittens that he inherited from his father and grandfather. They obviously weren't the ordinary gloves we use today to get through an Iowa winter. They appear to be made from buffalo hide and perhaps bear hide.

When Dayton sent us the gloves, he made the comment, "It's always been something of a family joke that Grandpa Duncan was in the coal and ice business, just as technological changes brought natural gas and electric refrigerators to Indianola. Not the best timing — kind of like being in the manual typewriter business when computers arrived." ■



Dayton Duncan recently donated three pairs of ice mittens he inherited from his father and grandfather to the historical museum. They appear to be made from buffalo hide and perhaps bear hide.

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## YEAR-END charitable giving

With the holiday season upon us and the end of the year approaching, we pause to give thanks for our blessings and the people in our lives. It is also a time when charitable giving often comes to mind. The tax benefits associated with charitable giving could potentially enhance your ability to give and should be considered as part of your year-end tax planning.



### Tax deduction for charitable gifts

If you itemize deductions on your federal income tax return, you can generally deduct your gifts to qualified charities. This may also help potentially increase your gift. Charitable deductions that exceed the AGI limits may generally be carried over and deducted over the next five years, subject to the income percentage limits in those years.

For 2021 charitable gifts, the normal rules have been enhanced: The limit is increased to 100% of AGI for direct cash gifts to public charities. And even if you don't itemize deductions, you can receive a \$300 charitable deduction (\$600 for joint returns) for direct cash gifts to public charities (in addition to the standard deduction). Make sure to retain proper substantiation of your charitable contribution.

### Year-end tax planning

When making charitable gifts at the end of a year, you should consider them as part of your year-end tax planning. Typically, you have a certain amount of control over the timing of income and expenses. You generally want to time your recognition of income so that it will be taxed at the lowest rate possible and time your deductible expenses so they can be claimed in years when you are in a higher tax bracket.

### A word of caution

Be sure to deal with recognized charities and be wary of charities with similar-sounding names. It is common for scam artists to impersonate charities using bogus websites, email, phone calls, social media, and in-person solicitations. Check out the charity on the IRS website, [irs.gov](https://irs.gov), using the Tax Exempt Organization Search tool. And don't send cash; contribute by check or credit card. ■

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### Synchronized Lights & Live Nativity

Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 11-12, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Fellowship Community Church, 225 North Ave., Norwalk

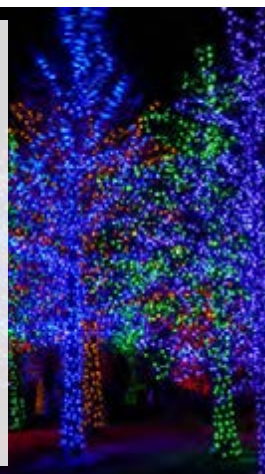
Usher in the Christmas season by attending this free drive-through event. The church property will be covered in more than 80,000 LED lights synchronized to Christmas music. A live nativity with real animals will also be a part of the event. Take in the sights and sounds of this event from the comfort of your vehicle. Free bakery cookies and hot chocolate will be brought to you. Donations will be accepted and will be used to assist local families in need. For more information, and to view a drone preview video, visit Fellowship Community Church's website at [fellowshipnorwalk.org](http://fellowshipnorwalk.org). Call the church office with any questions at 515-981-0699.



### Holiday Promenade

Fridays, Dec. 10 and 17  
Historic East Village,  
Des Moines

The annual Holiday Promenade continues on Fridays in the Historic East Village. The event is produced by the Greater Des Moines Partnership and Historic East Village Neighborhood Association. Retailers, restaurants and attractions are encouraged to remain open until 9 p.m. Activities will be scheduled.



### Pet pictures with Santa

Saturday, Dec. 11, noon to 2 p.m.

Family Pet Veterinary Center, 1215  
Prospect Ave., West Des Moines

Stop by for free photos with Santa, door prizes, a free calendar and treats.

### Christmas with the Choral Society

Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m.

St. Ambrose Cathedral,  
downtown Des Moines

Des Moines Choral Society will hold its first in-person concert in two years. It will feature traditional works, seasonal favorites, and

the premiere of composer Elaine Hagenberg's new work, "Illuminare. Illuminare," consisting of five movements for SATB chorus and chamber orchestra. Using lesser-known sacred Latin texts, the piece takes one through a season of beauty and goodness that has been disrupted by darkness and confusion. But as light gradually returns, hope is restored, illuminating our future and guiding us in peace.



### 'The Sound of Music'

Through Dec. 19

The Des Moines Community  
Playhouse, 831 42nd St.,  
Des Moines

Based on the true story of Maria and the von Trapp family, this "happiest musical in the world" is a family holiday classic. For more information, visit [www.dmpplayhouse.com](http://www.dmpplayhouse.com).



### 'The Nutcracker' by Ballet Des Moines

Dec. 10-13

Hoyt Sherman Place,  
1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines  
Dec. 17-18

Staplin Performing Arts Center, 3650  
Woodland Ave., West Des Moines

Enjoy this classic holiday ballet, offered over two weekends at two different venues. For more information, visit [www.balletdesmoines.org](http://www.balletdesmoines.org).

### Des Moines Symphony New Year's Eve Pops: 'The Music of Elton John'

Tuesday, Dec. 31 at 8 p.m.

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

Ring in the New Year with the Des Moines Symphony. The New Year's Eve Pops brings the Symphony together with "The Music of Elton John," starring Michael Cavanaugh and his band. The high-energy celebration will have you singing along to classic hits and rock favorites. For more information, visit [www.dmsymphony.org](http://www.dmsymphony.org).



### Pop-Up Christmas Bar

Through Jan. 2

Exile Brewing Company, 1514 Walnut St., Des Moines

Exile Brewing Company will open Des Moines' first-ever Pop-Up Christmas Bar. The experience, known as SnowGlobe DSM, will feature more than 100,000 Christmas lights and nearly a semi-full of holiday decorations installed at Exile's Bar and Restaurant in downtown Des Moines. For more information, visit [www.snowglobedsm.com](http://www.snowglobedsm.com).



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### Jolly Holiday Lights

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### Santa's Rock N Lights

Through Jan. 2  
Living History Farms

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### Iowa Quilt Museum exhibit

Through Jan. 23  
68 E. Court Ave.,  
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Iowa Quilt Museum welcomes quilters, quilt lovers, history buffs and appreciators of American art and culture. Showing is "Here Comes the Sun," an exhibit honoring the sun with a study of the color orange in both historic and contemporary quilts. For more information, visit [www.iowaquiltmuseum.org](http://www.iowaquiltmuseum.org).

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## HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

# HELP at home after hospitalization



You had surgery and spent a couple of weeks in short-term rehabilitation. Now it's time to return home — but you're nervous. You wonder if you'll be able to remember how to do your strengthening exercises — and what about your medications? There's a lot to keep straight, and you live alone.

These concerns are a great reason for anyone whose doctor prescribes short-term rehabilitation to choose a provider that offers not just rehabilitation, but a network of services. A "network" can be made up of many services offered by the same organization, designed to work in tandem to make life easier for anyone seeking assistance.

Let's use Ted as an example. He's 74 and a widower; he lives alone, and after hospitalization for a cardiac issue, he rehabilitated in a senior living community. Before Ted finished his stay, he learned from a nurse at the community that a number of services would be available to him after he returned home. He learned the community would arrange everything — and there would be no out-of-pocket cost to him for weekly home health care that would help keep him healthy.

Ted appreciated his twice-weekly nurse visits, and two years after his heart procedure, he continues to thrive in his own home with other services from the same organization: cleaning assistance, grocery-shopping help, and meal delivery. Ted continues his exercises on his own, and is actually in better health than he was before his surgery. The nurse who had helped set up his home services had told him that people who receive in-home assistance after rehabilitation are more likely to avoid re-hospitalization, and Ted is grateful that has been his experience.

If your physician has recommended short-term rehabilitation after a hospital stay, do your homework. Ask questions about ongoing care after your time in rehabilitation, and choose an organization that not only will help you get well but will place a priority on keeping you that way with assistance offered in your home. Your ongoing health and well-being are worth it. ■

Ward Phillips is Senior Director of Sales for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of home-based services for older adults in addition to 55-and-older community living in Iowa and Illinois. Call or text Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn about home health care, non-medical in-home services, hospice care, meal delivery, and much more!





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# INSURE your home-based business

A home-based business may not be covered under your home insurance policy. More than half of American businesses are home-based, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. But setting up headquarters in your home doesn't mean your homeowner's insurance will adequately protect your operation.



"A typical homeowner's policy provides about \$2,500 of coverage," says Loretta Worters, vice president of communications for the Insurance Information Institute. That usually will cover equipment — but it won't offer liability protection or cover you for lost data or income.

Do your research to protect yourself and your home business. That includes having the right type and amount of insurance coverage.

## Option 1: Homeowners policy with business property increased limit

Most homeowner's policies will cover some business personal property such as a desk or

merchandise held as samples up to a set limit. This coverage is intended for business use while the property is on the residence premises. You can add an endorsement to your homeowner's policy to increase coverage on business use while a property is on the residence premises. You can add an endorsement to your homeowner's policy to increase coverage on business personal property and liability for protection in the event someone — say a delivery person — is injured on the property.

You might consider this option if you:

- Only plan to have less than your policy's limit worth of business property kept at your home-based business location.
- Don't invite customers to your home-based business location.
- Only have a small amount of personal property intended for business use outside your home.

## Option 2: Business insurance policy

While your homeowner's insurance policy comes with liability protection for incidents that happen inside your home, this coverage does not extend

to home-based business-related activities. For example, if a customer comes to your home to exchange payments for goods or services and suffers an injury, they may not be covered. This coverage gap can easily be fixed with a business insurance policy, which also provides loss of income coverage.

You might consider this option if you:

- Offer services in your home, such as tax preparation or hair services, which may require additional specialized liability coverage.
- Plan to have more business property kept at your home-based business location than your policy limit.
- Rely on the income from your business to support your household. ■

Lane Insurance would be happy to help examine your risks and suggest the best coverages for you and your family. Feel free to request a quote online at [laneinsurance.com](http://laneinsurance.com) or give us a call at 515-981-4614. Information provided by Mike Lane, Lane Insurance Agency Inc., 1225 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, Iowa 50211.

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# ONE a week

Rudisill nears completion of his song-a-week goal.

Jon Rudisill is a guy who “scratches where it itches,” as the legendary former Iowa Hawkeye football coach Hayden Fry once said.

Rudisill’s “itch” is art. And when it calls, he scratches. Lately, that’s been often.

After making a New Year’s resolution to write one song per week, the 41-year-old Norwalk resident has bucked the trend of nearly all resolution makers — he’s actually stuck to it. As of this writing, he’s at 47 weeks straight and counting.

“Basically I wanted to encourage myself to be creative,” he says. “I wanted to get better at recording, better at making videos, and re-accustomed to playing and performing. I wanted a measurable goal I could fulfill.”

Like the rest of the world, Rudisill was hit hard by COVID. His band, Call Me Music, cancelled its recording contract and stopped practicing altogether.

“I struggled with being musical at all for about eight months,” he says. Then came the resolution. It was a whim he’s glad to have acted upon. “Trying to capture a different sound or vibe each week has been fun,” he says. “I try, and people say it’s so me — whatever that means.”

Rudisill plays guitar and sings on every track, and after recording the song and posting it, rides a roller coaster of emotions.

“I go through a day loving it — sometimes two,” he says. “Then I can’t stand it for a few days. But, in retrospect, I’ve been able to discover what I like and what I don’t.”

Rudisill has also fallen in love with painting thanks to the influence of his wife, who was a painter before him. He’s been through a few “stages” in front of the canvas, too.

“I’ve had my blue blob phase, my red balloon phase, my landscapes, my drip paintings, my tape paintings, and now I’m doing these weird smears and splats,” he says. “I’ve given out quite a bunch to friends and family, and would like to give away more.”

But it’s his songs that are the diary of his life, Rudisill says. During the making of “One Single Thing” (week 33), for instance, the cicadas took over the recording. On week 23, he was traveling for work and recorded “A Small Piece Of Grass and a Pond” in front of the St. Louis Arch. During week 13, he was looking for a new job and wrote a “Pawns Go Forward” about the grind of that process, he says.

Rudisill has all of his works posted on his YouTube page at [www.youtube.com/user/ghitarro](http://www.youtube.com/user/ghitarro) and on Reddit at [r/songaweek](https://www.reddit.com/r/songaweek).

Rudisill says his wife deserves a great amount of thanks for putting up with all of this.

“She has put up with countless hours of me recording background falsettos and bass lines and has heard my songs one too many times,” he says with a laugh.

Rudisill encourages everyone to create more art in their world, no matter what others may think or say.

“Stick to what makes you happy,” he says. “And try hard to make other people happy as well by doing nice things and brightening up their world with music, art, or just a smile. We are all in this together.” ■



Jon Rudisill has been on a mission this year, writing a song a week since making a New Year’s resolution to do so.



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# ADAPTING family tradition for our seniors



Tradition is important as we age, especially around the holidays. Tradition represents the foundation of our family and society. They give us a sense of history that helps define who we are, where we've come from, and where we are going.

Traditions might be big holiday dinners with family and friends, decorating your house or yard for the holidays, baking Christmas cookies and candy with your children and grandchildren, playing your favorite holiday music, or simply drinking hot cocoa by the fireplace. Whatever the tradition, here are a few helpful tips when celebrating the holidays with our aging loved one.

## Honor their roles and traditions

It is important to honor their role. If your loved one is experiencing memory loss, they may not be able to follow a recipe, but you can have them help with measuring or mixing the ingredients.

## Bring the holiday to them

If your loved one is unable to visit during the holidays, bring the holiday to them. As we age, it gets harder on our bodies to travel. Have a potluck and join them.

## Include them

If you know they enjoy having the house and tree decorated, don't just decorate it for them, have them help you. This is a great time to pull out their favorite decorations and ornaments and talk about each one.

So, during the season of giving, let us take a moment to slow down and enjoy the simple things in life. The holidays are a time to share love and joy, a time to recollect on beautiful memories, and a time for family traditions. ■

Information provided by Shannon Giles, manager, Edencrest at The Legacy, 2901 Cedar St., Norwalk, 515-250-2806.

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# SOMETIMES it is best to not follow traditions

There are many traditions based on seasons of the year. Eating turkey on Thanksgiving Day and decorating your house with stringed lighting at Christmas are popular traditions, as well as the annual tradition of putting homes on the market to sell in May.

The reason this tradition is so popular is because that is when buyers are out in full force. Spring is in the air and many families plan their moves to occur during the summer months when school is out. Just like investing, though, it isn't always good to follow the crowd. Inventory levels of homes for sale increase dramatically in April and May, and that means more competition. With all this competition, you need to do something to make your house stand out to attract buyers, and that usually means having a lower price.

It is important to understand that homes are purchased every month of the year. People must move for a variety of reasons, like relocations for example. Many companies are still hiring throughout the holidays, and they need their new employees to start as soon as possible. Inventory levels of homes for sale are at their lowest during the months from November to March, and this can be described as the sweet spot for sellers. Buyers shopping for a home during the holidays are serious and



are ready to "buy now." Add that to the lack of homes to choose from, and your home can become more valuable.

You may think that it will be too inconvenient to have your home on the market during the holidays, and you don't want showings to interfere with holiday events. In most real estate markets, including the Des Moines metro, Realtors have the ability to restrict showings for blocks of times when a seller wouldn't want someone showing their home. The blocked-out periods of time are not available to an agent scheduling a showing for buyers.

Another advantage to have your home on the market during the holidays is that it shows so well. Just think of how much better your home could look to a buyer when it is all decked out for the holidays. Remember the movie "Funny Farm" with Chevy Chase? He and his wife were selling their acreage during the holidays, and they took full advantage of Christmas to create irresistible charm in the home and the community.

If you have a reason to move, go ahead and get your home on the market now. Don't wait until spring. If it just won't work to market your home during the holidays, put it on the market right away in January. That will work great, too. ■

Information provided by Jon Niemeyer, owner, EXIT Realty North Star, 1039 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, 515-981-5131, Jon.Niemeyer@exitrealtynorthstar.com.

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# BE PREPARED FOR SNOW ORDINANCE THIS WINTER

With winter approaching, the City of Norwalk would like to remind residents of some handy information that pertains to snow and ice removal. If you have any questions or concerns about the City's snow ordinance, please refer to the information on our website [http://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/government/departments/public\\_works/snow\\_plowing\\_and\\_parking](http://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/government/departments/public_works/snow_plowing_and_parking) or contact Public Works at [publicworks@norwalk.iowa.gov](mailto:publicworks@norwalk.iowa.gov) or (515) 981-9527.

### How do I know when the Snow Ordinance has been activated and deactivated?

As a general rule to follow when snow is predicted, the snow ordinance will most likely be activated. The Public Works Department activates the snow ordinance when the forecasts are indicating a snow event or they are preparing to dispatch snow plows. In an effort to give property owners the opportunity to get their vehicle(s) removed from the street, Public Works tries to give ample notice. **Residents should check the City's website ([www.norwalk.iowa.gov](http://www.norwalk.iowa.gov)), Facebook page or call City Hall at 981-0228 option 4 to check if the snow ordinance has been activated.** Make sure to check back periodically to see if/when it has been lifted. *Sign up for the City's Alert System and you will always know when the ordinance is activated and deactivated.*

### What are the rules regarding parking a vehicle on the street during the winter?

City code states that it is unlawful to park on any street during the time of any snow emergency (69.10). Any vehicle parked on the street during a snow emergency faces the possibility of receiving a \$35 parking ticket and/or tow. It is important to remember the times when you cannot be parked on the street. By removing vehicles from the street the plows can work more quickly and efficiently and potential damage to personal property is eliminated. This also allows for our main thoroughfares to get emergency response vehicles to residential areas expeditiously. If a vehicle is left parked on the street and moved later there is a possibility we could have to come back to clear that area, which could mean more snow at the end of an already shoveled driveway.

### If the snowplow has already been down our street can we park our cars back out on the street?

During some larger events our snowplows must make multiple swipes down streets in order to get all the snow. If snow continues it may require our drivers to go back out and clear streets again under the same snow emergency. Due to this, it does not matter how many times a snowplow has been down your street, police will continue to ticket and tow while the ordinance is activated.

### Why did the snowplow not clear the snow all the way to the curb on my street?

There are various factors that make it difficult for the snowplow drivers to always clear the snow to the curb. They do try to get as close as they can with the circumstances they are working with. If it is not clear in front of your mailbox, it is the resident's responsibility to clear the snow so the postal service can continue making deliveries.

### Where do I put my trash and recycling containers for pick up when there is a large snow?

Place them in your driveway or back of curb if the snow allows. If they migrate to the street there is a good chance of them being hit or our staff missing a portion of the street to avoid them. We issue snow ordinances to keep the obstacles out of the street, placing receptacles in the street is counterproductive. We understand this can be inconvenient, but this is best for snow removal and safe streets.

### I live on a cul-de-sac and they plow the snow really weird and leave it in a big pile?

When plowing cul-de-sacs we often plow snow to one location of the circle that can handle the accumulation and is free of fire hydrants. It is often in between homes. When the snow accumulates to the point of pushing past the sidewalk, we make plans to remove the pile and haul to a safe area and allow it to melt. On some cul-de-sacs we plow everything to the middle as utility and driveways do now allow us to push into the right of way. These piles will be cleared at our earliest convenience,





as they cause a melt and re-freeze condition that is unsafe. During the worse snows we will put snow in a combination of places to get the street clear and keep residents safe. This means you may end up with snow on your sidewalk or near your driveway. Again, these are instances where we will come back to clean up as needed.

While the City realizes it can be frustrating to finish clearing your driveway and then have the plow come by, the snow removal policy adopted by the City Council indicates that snow placed in driveways by City plows is the responsibility of the property owner to remove. *Snow from a private driveway may not be placed on or pushed onto or across a City street.*

## 2022 DOG LICENSES AND DOG PARK PASSES NOW AVAILABLE!

- ONLINE REGISTRATION is available for Xpress Bill Pay customers 01/01/2022-03/31/2022! [https://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/i\\_want\\_to/apply\\_for/dog\\_license\\_\\_\\_dog\\_park](https://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/i_want_to/apply_for/dog_license___dog_park)
- The license tags you received last year are permanent tags designed to last multiple years. Annual renewal of the license is still required. If a replacement is needed - please contact City Hall.

### Requirements for Annual Dog Licensing – City Code 57.01

- All applications require proof of rabies vaccination and spay/neuter records.
- Every owner of a dog six months of age or older is required to license their dog with the City of Norwalk. The licensing renewal period begins 12/01/2021 and runs through 03/31/2022.
- Starting on April 1, a late fee will be assessed on each dog license issued after this date.
- New Dogs – A license may be purchased at any time, without late penalty, for a dog which has come into the possession or ownership of the applicant or has reached the age of six months after said date.
- All licenses expire on January 1 of the year following the date of issuance.

### Dog Park Pass

- A pass may be purchased at any time at City Hall. Dogs must be licensed with the City to obtain a Dog Park Pass. Passes are \$25 for the year, per family.
- Non-Residents – must provide proof of rabies vaccination at the time of purchasing an annual dog park pass at City Hall. Passes are \$30 for the year for non-residents.

### Rates and Fees – City Code 177.01

- \$10 per dog if spayed or neutered; \$20 per dog if not spayed or neutered. Rates are discounted to \$5 and \$10, respectively, after June 30.
- Failure to license your dog before March 31 will result in a \$10 penalty.
- Impound Fees: \$75 for the first offense, \$150 for the second offense.
- If a dog is unlicensed at time of impound, there is an additional \$45 penalty for the first offense, \$75 for the second offense.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Nick Frye, Police Department



Officer Nick Frye was raised on an acreage just south of Norwalk and graduated from Norwalk High School in 2005. He started his law enforcement career in 2009 in the City of Carlisle. Nick made the move to the Norwalk Police Department in November 2016. Currently Nick works on patrol as a swing car shift which rotates days and nights.

*When asked what he enjoys most about his job, Nick stated "protecting and serving my hometown, seeing familiar faces that I've known for years and watching the City's progress from where it was when growing up."*

When not on duty, Nick enjoys hanging out with family and friends, golfing and being outside whenever he can.

Fun Fact: Officer Brad Criswell was Nick's School Resource Officer!

## MAYOR'S MOMENT

This is the time of the year when we celebrate the blessings we've received over the past year. With all the development happening in Norwalk, our community certainly has a lot to be thankful for.



Christmas is, in my opinion, a time to give back and share those blessings we've received throughout the year. I would encourage you to find someone in need and try to bless them with the gift of kindness this holiday season.

There are quite a few opportunities within our community. Several of our community churches have giving tress, you can also donate to the Norwalk Food Bank, and you can even put some money in a Salvation Army kettle when you're shopping. You can even help someone out with their water bill. All it takes is a quick call to the Norwalk Water Department or stop by City Hall. It's amazing when we give to others, the joy and blessing we receive is sometimes greater than we can even imagine.

If you find yourself struggling financially this winter and unable to cover your utility bill, rent or mortgage, know that you have a few options to help you make it through this tough time. From United Way's 211 program, to IMPACT Community Action Partnership, to IowaMortgageHelp.com, there are many ways you can get assistance. There are several brochures at Norwalk City Hall to get you the information you need to get through the winter. Please stop by and pick them up. Our staff is happy to help guide you through your options.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. With all of the hustle and bustle of the season, don't forget to take a moment and enjoy your family and friends this holiday season.

*Seasons' Greetings!*  
Mayor Tom Phillips

## STORMWATER WINTER TIPS

As we move from fall rains to winter snow and ice, there are still practices everyone can do to prevent excessive stormwater runoff. Salt and other deicing chemicals are two of the most widely used agents during snow and ice seasons. Sodium Chloride and rock salt are the most common de-icing products, but Calcium Chloride has more benefits. Calcium Chloride does not have the chemical additives that rock salt has; it is less harmful to vegetation, and only one-third as much is needed. It also works well at low temperatures (25 degrees F).

Here are a few tips that everyone should practice.

- Buy the right blend. By having a product that best suits your climate and average low temperatures you will use less of it.
- Keep walkways shoveled in the first place as snow quickly becomes ice when walked on.
- Pre-treat walkways before a storm hits. You will use less deicer in the end.
- Mix salt with sand. You will use less to melt ice and gain traction provided by the sand.
- Store ice-melt in air tight containers to maintain maximum effectiveness.

If you must use de-icing chemicals, follow these suggestions:

- Control application of chemical deicers, a little goes a long way, avoid applying too much.
- Limit chemical applications near environmental sensitive areas, such as drinking water cells.
- Sand can be used as a substitute to salt to assist with traction on driveways.

Consider using salt substitutes that are less harmful to the environment and to concrete walkways, including Calcium Chloride and Calcium Magnesium Acetate

There you have it. Some easy practices everyone can do to help reduce stormwater run-off. Please remember what goes down the storm drain ends up in our drinking glass.

## BESIDES smoking, lung cancer risks include radon and occupational hazards

Lung cancer is projected as the leading cause of cancer deaths in Iowa in 2021, with more than 1,400 lives lost. Smoking is the most common and preventable cause of lung cancer; however, the odorless, colorless, tasteless, radioactive gas radon is second.

“Everyone in Iowa knows smoking cigarettes causes cancer, but many people are not aware that radon exists, let alone in high levels in their homes. They may be inhaling it unknowingly, and that causes cancer,” said Neil Horning, MD, a specialist in pulmonary and critical care medicine with MercyOne Des Moines Pulmonary and Infectious Disease Care.

“We’ll have patients with no other risk factors develop lung cancer from the high radon levels in their house’s basement or



at their jobs, including agriculture, where farmers work with phosphate fertilizers.”

Some careers may have an increased risk of lung cancer due to the high levels of chemicals, pollution and more. These positions include:

- Mechanics and car hobbyists
- Military positions, especially those previously in the Navy
- Painters and construction workers

Minimize your risk of lung cancer through healthy lifestyle choices and by contacting your primary care provider for more information on available lung cancer screening options. ■

Information provided Neil Horning, MD, pulmonary and critical care specialist with MercyOne Des Moines Pulmonary and Infectious Disease Care, 411 Laurel St., Suite A120, Des Moines, 515- 643-7900, [MercyOne.org/desmoines](http://MercyOne.org/desmoines).

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# HEAR for the holidays

The winter holidays provide opportunities for friends and families to gather and celebrate. For loved ones with hearing loss, these special occasions can be overwhelming. Difficulty communicating can cause frustration for individuals with and without hearing loss. Below is a list of simple strategies to improve communication amongst loved ones this holiday season.



## Gain attention

Gain an individual's attention before speaking. For example, say his or her name or tap the listener's shoulder and obtain eye contact. Inform this individual of the topic of conversation.

## Maintain eye contact

Face an individual while speaking. Facial expressions and body language add important

information to a conversation. Maintain a reasonable distance of three to five feet during a conversation.

## Improve visibility

Ensure the area is well lit. While speaking, prevent objects from blocking the view of your face.

## Speak naturally

Speak clearly without shouting or exaggerating facial expressions. Shouting can distort speech, and exaggerating facial expressions can be distracting. Pause briefly between sentences and check for understanding before continuing a conversation.

## Rephrase rather than repeat

When an individual does not initially understand a message, he or she will likely not understand the same message when repeated. Therefore, rephrase the message. For example, "I am going to the grocery store," then, "I am going to the supermarket."

## Decrease background noise

Individuals with hearing loss experience the most difficulty hearing in noisy environments. Converse with these individuals in less crowded areas. Reduce the volume of the television and music.

## Assign seating

Individuals with hearing loss should sit at a location where they face away from sources of noise.

If a loved one experiences difficulty hearing, schedule an appointment for a comprehensive hearing evaluation with an audiologist. Results of this evaluation determine potential solutions for hearing loss and guide plans for treatment. Successful treatment improves communication for both individuals with hearing loss and their loved ones. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kelly Cook, Audiologist, Iowa Hearing Center, 1228 Sunset Drive, Suite B, Norwalk, IA, 515-416-5990, [www.iowahearingcenter.com](http://www.iowahearingcenter.com).

## TOGETHER NEVER Sounded SO GOOD!



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## HEALTH By Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh

### Q: How does stress affect my back condition with chiropractic care?

**A:** During the holidays, we all come under an extra amount of stress. Stress actually affects the cycle of back injury or condition in several ways. Stress involves your body's reaction to change and, although we commonly think of emotional or mental reactions to change, physical force and tension are also included.



Stress, or force, is a key element in the creation of conditions for which people seek relief through chiropractic care. Stresses from high force, such as slips, falls and motor vehicle accidents, may cause injury, as can lower forces of a prolonged or repetitive nature (sitting at a desk).

Once the cause of your condition has been identified, and the method of correction has been selected, your doctor of chiropractic will actually use positive stresses to counteract or overcome the negative stresses that have created your condition. Some of these positive stresses may include chiropractic adjustments, exercise, stretching, diet, relaxation and nutritional recommendation. Your chiropractic doctor is quite capable of converting negative stressors, which are responsible for causing many physical injuries and conditions, into positive wellness. If you're feeling an exceptional amount of stress these days, then call your chiropractor. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jesse Stumbaugh, Norwalk Chiropractic, 1300 Sunset Drive, 981-9208, www.norwalk-chiropractic.com. Norwalk Chiropractic is a provider with most major insurance companies.

All I want for Christmas is *my two front teeth!*

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## HEALTH By Dr. Maureen Winslow

### A HEALTHY smile at the holidays

The holidays are a time to reflect on all that we have to be grateful for. And, of course, indulge in all the delicious foods. Unfortunately, holiday feasts usually involve sugary foods that can be damaging to your teeth. Here are a few tips to keep your smile healthy throughout the entire holiday season.



- Drink water. Not only is it great for overall health, staying hydrated will support healthy saliva flow to wash away food from the teeth, ultimately preventing plaque buildup.
- Avoid grazing. Holiday meals are known for being lengthy. Exposing your teeth to sugar and carbs over a prolonged period of time can be extra damaging. Try to avoid snacking all day and save your appetite (and teeth) for the main meal.
- Teeth are not tools. The last thing you want during the holiday season is a cracked tooth. Avoid crunching on ice, cracking nuts, or opening packages or bottles with your teeth.
- Brush and floss. Sticky, sugary foods are in abundance on holiday tables. After indulging, it is important to make sure you brush and floss all of the sugars and carbs off of your teeth.
- Schedule a cleaning. It is common knowledge that the holiday season can be bad for your weight, but the desserts and long meals are also tough on your teeth. If you're concerned about cavities or gum disease, this time of year is perfect to schedule a cleaning and exam. ■

Information provided by Dr. Maureen Winslow, Norwalk Family Dentistry, 1101 Chatham Ave., Suite A, Norwalk, 515-256-9000, www.norwalkfamilydentistry.com.



## CREDIT COUNSELING By Tom Coates

### FINANCIAL wellness planning 2022

Before we know it, this year will be over, and 2022 will be here. Along with a New Year comes fresh goals, hopes, dreams and resolutions. Budgets and personal financial goals are important to review on an ongoing basis, but it is also good to look at those things as a whole on a yearly basis if you anticipate changes and to check your progress. Do you have a new yearly expense? Are you anticipating a large raise this year? Will you be able to direct more funds to debts? Did you meet a short-term goal so that now you can add a new one or direct those funds to a long-term goal? Did you get married, divorced or have a child? Gas and grocery prices are rising, so do you need to change your budget amounts for these items? Employer benefit changes also occur this time of year, so there could be increases to the deductions from your paycheck to account for.



Here are some other important tasks to review as the year ends: beneficiary designations; flexible spending accounts; credit report ([www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)); subscriptions and memberships; auto, home and life insurance policies; estate plans.

Making an annual financial review part of your year-end traditions will set you up for success in the coming year. ■

Information provided by Tom Coates, Consumer Credit of Des Moines, 6129 S.W. 63rd St., Des Moines, IA 50321, 515-287-6428.

## HEALTH By Sheryl Frye

### REDUCE holiday stress

The holiday season can be both joyful and stressful. Here are some strategies to increase your joy and reduce your stress this holiday season.

Make sure to honor any feelings you may be having this season such as sadness and grief. Don't try to force yourself to be happy because of the holidays. If you have lost a loved one, reach out to a support group online or attend community or religious events. Seek out companionship from others. Volunteering your time to help others can lift your spirits, too.

It is important to be realistic. Families grow and change; therefore, our traditions and rituals can change, too. If adult children and other family are not able to visit, find new ways to connect through photos, videos and video calls. Think about the importance of your attachments. Share with others the things you find meaningful and special about them.

Plan ahead — create your menus and shopping lists. Then set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. The holidays are about the quality of our time together, not the magnificence of the gifts or meals. Make time for yourself. By spending 10 minutes just breathing you can create a sense of peace. ■



Source: The Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>. Information provided by Sheryl Frye, LISW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 2675 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 105, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-528-8135, [frye@sstherapyandconsulting.com](mailto:frye@sstherapyandconsulting.com), [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com).

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## FITNESS

By Dani McManus

### Q: Is it your time?

**A:** Let's talk about you. I want you to think hard when I ask, "What is the biggest goal you want to achieve?" Be as detailed as you can. If you are wanting to gain muscle or lose weight, how much? You need to be honest with yourself when setting goals. You need to face all the facts. Be honest on how long it will realistically take to achieve, or mentally acknowledge what your biggest roadblocks are going to be. Face those roadblocks head on and make a game plan on how you are going to work past them. Make sure you are setting yourself up for success before you even start. Be true with what you want to achieve and go after it. One of the best things about the gym is that it is a place of endless possibilities. You complete one goal, you set another and just keep going. You continually grow and become the best version of yourself you want to be. I meet with multiple people throughout the week, and one of the best things I get to witness is them realizing that it is finally their time. It is finally their time to put themselves first and become the best they can be. They get this fire in their eyes, and, day by day, goal by goal, they grow. So, what about you? Is it finally your time to put yourself first? ■

Information provided by Dani McManus, Certified Personal Trainer/Head Coach at Anytime Fitness in Norwalk. To submit a question for future articles, contact her at [Norwalk@anytimefitness.com](mailto:Norwalk@anytimefitness.com).



## EDUCATION

By TK West

### MAKE a Difference Day

Students find lessons through service projects.



Among the service projects completed by students was raking leaves.

For the past few years, the LINK Crew Leadership group's main goal has been to connect Norwalk Middle School students with their community through service projects. This year, the group, which is sponsored by Lynda Downs and Melissa Stoulil, decided to create a "Make A Difference Day" as a school-wide initiative to increase more ways to reach out to the local community. With the help of LINK Crew kids, their leaders, Charity Campbell, and a sub committee of Leader In Me teachers, the new service day was ultimately planned within a four-week time period.

"I think that the Make a Difference Day allowed students to understand the importance of working with their community. They got to meet different people and see what a small action means to people. It also promotes community service and the need for everyone to participate in a small way," Downs says.

Approximately 800 students in grades 6-8 participated in one of the predetermined activities. These activities included raking leaves for Norwalk families, creating tie blankets for the NICU at Blank Children's Hospital, recording audio books and music for the nursing homes in Norwalk, mentoring students at the elementary school, and more.

In addition, high school seniors spoke at an assembly to kick off the day. These seniors talked about service projects they have completed through their high school years and how the projects have impacted both themselves and the community they have helped.

"I loved Make A Difference Day. I enjoyed getting to meet new people and see how it affected their lives. I raked leaves, and, even though more leaves would fall, they were still grateful. It showed me that even little things made a difference," says student Ellie Stiegelmeier.

"Make A Difference Day helped me in a way because it made me feel happy to know that I was making someone else's day. I hid rocks at our local park, and, after we got back, me and my friends talked about how little kids would find the rocks and rehide them or take them home. That made me feel good about myself and made me want to do more acts of kindness," adds student Alisa Pins.

Activities for the day were guided by students of the LINK Crew who helped teachers with the supplies and planning stage of the day. Downs says that having the students be an intricate part of the day was amazing as they showcased their leadership skills. She also says, after hours of planning and preparing, the day was special and successful.

"It made me feel good because I know I was doing something good for people — helping them, making their day better. It helped me realize that doing little things like these make people's lives easier and better, and that these things should be done more often," says student Aidan Smith.

"Doing anything as in reading to younger kids, monitoring recess, raking leaves, etc. It was great to hang out and know that someone's day will be a lot better than they anticipated," says student Jace Downing. ■

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You can optimize the function of your home furnace by installing a whole home humidifier. It will foster proper distribution of moisture throughout your home, protecting you or your family from dry air during winter. Dry air can cause skin irritations and allergies.

Whole home humidifiers are all about balancing the humidity levels in your home. Having too much moisture in the air can cause mold and mildew to grow in wet areas and attract unwanted insects and other creatures into your home. Not enough moisture in the air can



cause health issues, damage your home and cost you more money, especially in the wintertime. So how do you keep the humidity levels just right?

Below are some key benefits of installing a whole home humidifier.

- **Good health:** You can improve your family's wellbeing by treating dry air throughout your home. Whole home humidifiers have been shown to improve lung health, alleviate allergy and asthma symptoms and reduce instances of illness. Studies show that whole home humidifiers prevent respiratory problems, decrease your likelihood of catching the flu or a cold, and reduce your chances of getting an infection.

- **Winter comfort:** Properly humidifying your home during winter can make the space feel warmer. The efficient use of energy by a whole home humidifier can lead to energy savings since your home will feel warmer at lower temperatures. They can even eliminate symptoms, such as dry skin and noses, scratchy throats, asthma, and allergies — not to mention those surprising shocks you sometimes get from static electricity.

- **Protection of furnishings:** Stabilizing the humidity levels in your home with a whole home humidifier can help preserve wood. Maintaining proper humidity can protect wood flooring, cabinets and furniture from cracking and drying out. Did you know that whole home humidifiers can even save your dry hardwood floors from cracking, walls from warping, paint from chipping and electronics from getting damaged from too much moisture in the air?

- **Save energy and money:** According to the Department of Energy, you save up to 4% on your heating bill for every degree you lower your thermostat. Lucky for you, a home with higher humidity levels will feel warmer, allowing you to keep your thermostat at lower temperatures and saving you money. ■

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**FAITH** By Rob Jones

# THIS is what Christmas is all about

We started out on the wrong road — again. In my mind, I began to doubt that we would remember the right way. Would we recognize their little shop? Would we find them? As the three of us from our church made our way down the narrow, blacktopped road, these were my thoughts. Each of us was riding a 125cc motorbike heading south out of a small town in central Laos. We had been here before. Two years ago, we had traveled the same pot-holed road — one of the main highways in Laos, believe it or not. We had stopped at a small store along the road. In a previous trip, our team leader had met a family with two young children and, in spite of the major language barrier, had managed to communicate with them with just a few words, hand motions, and smiles — and those two children had stolen his heart. Now we were visiting for the third time, only this time we had something more than our cameras and some candy. One of our team members had written and published a children's book about the love of God in their language. We came loaded with these books to share with them. We were desperate to remember the way and see their smiling faces again.



As we drove on, we were constantly being forced to slow down, pull around or dodge something along the way. We never rode faster than 40 miles per hour for fear of crashing. All along the road, cows grazed, sometimes straying onto the road. In addition, chickens, dogs, cats, other motorbikes, walkers, farm implements, semi-trucks and everything in-between jostled for positions on the narrow road. I vowed, if I lived through this, I would never do it again. Of course, I had already broken that vow. Finally, there it was — abandoned. Our hearts sank. Where did they go? Were they gone for good? Then the neighbors pointed down the road about a hundred yards. We drove a little further, and, to our great pleasure, we were reunited with the whole family. The two children had grown a lot, but they still remembered us — they all did. In spite of the language barrier, they opened themselves up to us with hospitality rarely seen even here at home. We passed out the books, and, as they read them aloud in their language, it could not have been any more rewarding. We had come halfway round the world and spent thousands of dollars, and it was worth it all. Then I remembered again why we were here: God sent His Son a long way, too. Jesus came to earth, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, then died on the cross for the sins of the world. His death and resurrection made salvation possible for everyone in the world — Americans, Laotians, everyone! This “good news” is worth sharing — with people across the street and people around the world. Now that I think about it, isn't that what Christmas is all about? ■

Pastor Rob Jones is the senior pastor of Fellowship Community Church in Norwalk. The church was founded under his leadership in 1995.



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## RECIPE

# DELIGHTFUL dishes to dazzle holiday guests

*(Family Features)* Entertaining guests during the holidays isn't just about a main course that calls all to the table. What often makes a festive gathering more fruitful is a spread of delicious appetizers, delightful drinks and divine desserts that keep loved ones coming back to the kitchen for more.

For appetizing dishes from the first guest at the house to the last out the door, you can heighten the flavor and appearance of favorite recipes with one simple ingredient: apples. Ranging from tart to sugary sweet, finding the right balance for your palate is key. Scent can also influence taste, especially when you have a balanced sweetness with an uplifting, fresh aroma.

Turn to an option like Envy Apples this holiday season for satisfying texture and taste with a consistently balanced, refreshing sweetness coupled with a crisp, elegant crunch. They make for an easy snack when eaten fresh out of hand but are also perfect for appetizers, cider and tasty treats. Find more sweet holiday recipes at [EnvyApple.com](http://EnvyApple.com). ■

## Apple oat crumble and citrus caramel topping

- 3 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 Envy Apples, diced into large cubes
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup old-fashioned oats
- ½ cup cold butter, diced small
- ½ cup caramel
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ orange, zest only
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- vanilla ice cream

### Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 F.
- In bowl, stir together sugar and ground cinnamon.
- Toss apples in lemon juice then in cinnamon sugar mixture. Spread in 9-inch pie dish.
- In another bowl, stir together brown sugar, flour and oats. Using hands or fork, cut in butter until pea size crumbs form. Sprinkle evenly over apples.
- Bake 40-45 minutes until mixture is bubbling and golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool 15 minutes.
- In small pot, whisk caramel, salt, orange zest and orange juice until warm.
- Spoon apple oat crumble over large scoop vanilla ice cream and top with salted citrus caramel.



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# WHAT should I say when someone dies?

Reaching out to someone who has lost a loved one is difficult. Finding the right words is hard. What if you say the wrong thing and make them cry?

Chances are, it won't matter what you say. It will only matter that you are there. I had a friend who was worried about going to the funeral home when his best friend's wife died. He practiced saying, "You have my sympathy. I'm so sorry." What did he say as he approached his friend? "Congratulations!" He said his words did not register with his friend; he simply said "Thank you so much for being here," shook his hand and moved on to the next person.

A grieving family is overwhelmed, so be polite and tell them who you are. Don't make them guess. When grieving, the mind gets confused easily, so simply saying, "Hi Mary, I'm Jane Doe from Bob's office" keeps it from being

an awkward situation.

Maya Angelou is quoted as saying "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will not forget how you made them feel." Sometimes a hug or a handshake is all that is needed. When a man died during the pandemic in 2020, the family said the hardest thing was not getting hugs from people. Social distancing while greeting a grieving family is difficult.

Sharing a memory, a sad, funny or poignant moment is important. Laughter heals the heart just as much as tears. Knowing that the deceased will be remembered is important. If you see the family in public after the funeral, don't be afraid to mention their loved one's name. "I was thinking about Bob the other day and the time he..." is a good way to start. If they have a few tears, that's OK. Trust me, they are thinking about their loved one anyway, so

saying something will help.

When all else fails, a handshake or hug and "I simply don't know what to say" can work. Saying "I'll call you next week and we can go have coffee" is better than "Let me know if there is anything I can do." Grieving family members don't know what they need and can't sort out what you can do. If your friend's husband died, just show up and mow the lawn. If your friend's wife died, take over a home-cooked meal. The most important thing to remember is to just be there — whether it is to offer a shoulder to cry on, to sit next to them quietly, or listen as they try to process what has happened.

Just be there. ■

Written by Eric O'Leary, Owner, and Jeanne Yordi, Family Services Advisor, O'Leary Funeral & Cremation Services, 1020 Main St., Norwalk, IA 50211, 515-981-0700.

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## THE ROLE of a power of attorney

A critical part of lifetime planning is the power of attorney. A power of attorney is a legal document you execute to appoint a person, called your agent, to manage legal, tax and other financial matters on your behalf if you cannot do so. A power of attorney is legal in all states, but the rules and requirements may differ from state to state. The power may be limited to a single activity, such as executing documents for the purchase or sale of your home, or may be general in its authority. It may be effective for a limited amount of time or may be permanent. The document will also indicate whether it takes effect immediately or only upon the occurrence of a future event, usually a determination that you are unable to act for yourself due to mental or physical disability. A power of attorney may also be revoked or amended.

The person named in a power of attorney to act on your behalf is commonly referred to as your "agent" or "attorney-in-fact." Your agent can take any action permitted in the document. Your agent will have to present the actual document to invoke the power. For example, if your agent is selling your vehicle, the purchaser and the Department of Motor Vehicles will require that the power of attorney document be presented before your agent's authority to sign the certificate of title will be honored. Similarly, an agent who signs documents to buy or sell real property on your behalf must present the power of attorney to the attorneys closing the transaction.

Why would you give such authority to another person? One reason is convenience. If you are involved in a transaction or activity and do not wish to appear in person, you may use a power of attorney. Another important reason to have a power of attorney is to prepare for situations when you may not be able to act on your own behalf due to absence or incapacity. Such a disability may be temporary, for example, due to travel, accident or illness, or it may be permanent.

If you become unable to manage your personal or business affairs and do not have a power of attorney, it may become necessary for a court to appoint one or more people to act for you. People appointed in this manner are referred to as guardians and/or conservators. If this occurs, you may not have the ability to choose the person who will act for you. A power of attorney allows you to choose who will act for you and defines his or her authority and its limits, if any. In some instances, greater security against having a guardianship imposed on you may be achieved by you also creating a revocable living trust.

One of the most important decisions you will make in this process is who you name for your agent. You want to name someone you can trust and who won't take advantage of the position. Though it may be helpful, you do not need someone who is a financial or legal expert; they can hire experts. Your agent just needs to be smart enough to seek help when they need it. Many people name their spouses or one or more children. You should also name one or more successor agents to address the possibility that the person you name as agent may be unavailable or unable to act when the time comes. Do not name someone out of a sense of obligation (naming your eldest child over your most trusted simply because she/he is the oldest).

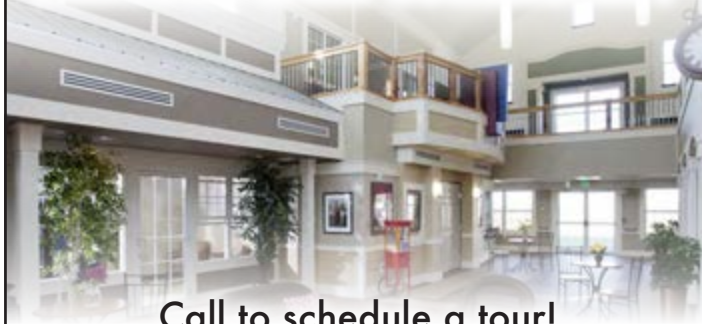
A power of attorney, along with a will, trust, medical power of attorney and living will are all lifetime and estate planning documents everyone should consider having. ■

Information provided by James S. Dougherty, owner, Dougherty Law Firm, 801 North Ave., Norwalk, 515-981-5401.



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# LIGHTS of Love shine bright

Hometown Pride fundraiser provides holiday display to enjoy.

Christie Petersen is a volunteer member of Norwalk's Hometown Pride Committee. The group works hard throughout the year to promote Norwalk as a great place to live through various community projects.

"We've done events like Music Fest and Front Porch Norwalk and were responsible for murals throughout town and streetscape improvements," she states. Lights of Love is one of Hometown Pride's newest endeavors to fundraise for various projects they hope to do for the community.

Lights of Love was born out of a similar event in Christie's hometown.

The premise of Lights of Love is that individuals or businesses can sponsor a Christmas tree to honor or remember someone or a group of people they care about.

"As we were discussing possibilities of new fundraisers, I pitched the idea to the group in October. The committee liked the idea. They felt it was unique and would allow individuals to honor others through the holiday season."

"Initially, we decided to make 20 trees available for sponsorship. Each lit tree would be \$100 to sponsor," she shares. "We weren't sure if we'd even be able to find trees for



Deanna Gingrich, Christie Petersen, Kylee Schroeder and Jordyn Hill gather at the Lights of Love display.

the project this late in the year, but Howell's Tree Farm provided the trees for us, and City State Bank let us use their land for the display. We put a link on Hometown Pride's website with details, and, within two days, we had 14 trees reserved! We then decided to expand the number of trees available to 30."

At this time, all the trees have been reserved and are set up and lit.

"It was a big undertaking to get 30 7-foot-tall Scotch Pine trees staked in the ground and strung with lights," comments Christie. "It required a lot of volunteers to make it happen. We were fortunate that we had great weather when we set them up. We had about a dozen committee members helping get the trees up and strung with Christmas lights. We got most of the work done that day."

Christie says that the trees are great because each sponsor can personalize the tree they reserved. Each tree is set up with a sign designating the sponsor and who is being honored or remembered.

"There are some that are in honor of veterans, some that are in honor of essential workers, and some in honor or memory of family members."

The Hometown Pride Committee is pleased with the participation level in the fundraiser and plan to do it again next year.

"We look forward to annually staging a holiday event the community can enjoy year after year," states Christie.

Hometown Pride members invite and encourage the community to come out and see the lighted tree display that they hope helps make Norwalk just a little bit brighter during the holiday season. The trees will be on display until after the New Year. ■

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## ACCEPT this challenge: Shop local this holiday season

Forget the Internet and the mall. Show support for innovative, independent local business owners instead. It's a win-win situation for all.



If you have not yet finished your holiday shopping — or, like me, haven't even started it — then I would like to suggest a challenge. This is what I'm planning to do, and it would be lovely if more people joined in.

Forget about Internet shopping. Put down your credit card and smart phone. Close the browser window. Put on your coat and grab your wallet. Don't go to the mall. Go, instead, to a local business, where shop owners have decorated and stocked up for the season.

Step into a store. Exchange greetings with the store owner. Maybe you already know

them. Is it a neighbor or a parent from your kids' school? Take a look around. Tell the staff person what you're looking for. They can point out great ideas you might never notice.

Find a unique, lovely, and affordable gift for a family member — something that you can examine up close, touch and feel, knowing exactly what you're getting. All your questions will be answered on the spot.

Hand over your money. Place it in the hands of the individual at the cash register. Remember, this person lives within your own community. He or she has worked tirelessly to open this business and to keep it afloat in an unpredictable economy. This person dedicates long hours to sourcing products, stocking shelves, changing window displays, and fending off competition from the big box stores down the road.

This person is grateful to you for your business because it makes a difference. This

person relies on your purchase to pay staff, to cover rent, to put food on the table, to pay off a house, to buy a new snowsuit for a child.

Wrap the gifts with care. Tell people where you shopped. Promote the stores, encourage others to go there, spread the word. Feel satisfied about the fact that you've redirected your own hard-earned money into the hands of other hard-working local business owners. Your town may do better as a result, perhaps drawing yet more shoppers as its reputation for interesting shops spreads. Maybe your own financial position will improve over the long-term.

I intend to do all of my holiday shopping in the Norwalk area, and I hope you'll join me, too. ■

Information provided by Lucinda Sperry, executive director, Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce.



## OUT & ABOUT

# RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held at Bellflower Florist & Gifts, 2251 Sunset Drive, Suite C, on Oct. 18.



Nick Grimoskas



Luke Parris



Nikki Huetter and Lucinda Sperry



Katie Naert



Beth Younadam



Gail Pecht and Diane Kuhl



Mary Romanelli



Steph Bintner



Benjamin Pearson



Sam Sorenson and Scott Gray



Whitney Sadler and Ronika Htu



# RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held at Bellflower Florist & Gifts, 2251 Sunset Drive, Suite C, on Oct. 18.



Jared Carlson and Angie Cooper



Ellie and Ashley Muller



Carol and Newton Standridge, Luke Nelson and Amanda Reid-Raper



Benjamin Pearson and Nikki Huetter



Allison Harrington and Deanna Gingrich



Ainesley Trost and Nancy Schrader



Sandy Taylor and Brooke McNabb



Danene and Bill VanZuuk



Shelby Hisel and Hollie Zajicek



Lucinda Sperry, Lindsey Aaron and Luke Nelson



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