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DECEMBER 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

The GIFT of TIME

Volunteers spread joy
for the holidays

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IT'S BETTER to give than to receive

Do you remember hearing that phrase as a child and wondering who in the world could possibly agree with that?

I do, and I definitely enjoyed receiving gifts more than giving them. As a youngster, it is a challenge to think of many things in life more enjoyable than opening gifts. Just look at any kid's eyes when he or she has a wrapped present at arm's length.

As an adult, that seems to change — at least it has for me. When my kids or wife ask me what I want as a gift now, I usually come up with something exciting like undershirts, underwear or socks. Those are things I want and could certainly use. My family members don't seem to share my enthusiasm for these items, so I often receive other gifts. I appreciate them, but I really don't need them. In fact, for most of us adults, there are very few things in life that we now truly need.

My mother used to tell me this when I would ask the same thing to her prior to her birthdays and the holidays. What she really wanted was to get together in person, play games and share stories. The most important gift to her, and now to me, is time. It is our most precious commodity, and many of us are learning to treat it like gold. As we age, we learn to say no to the many requests of our time that don't fit with our personal priorities. And, hopefully, we commit more of our time to the things that do.

Meanwhile, few things in life — including opening presents as a child — can bring as much inner joy as volunteering our time to help others. Most all of us think we are too busy to make time for volunteer efforts, and that is understandable. Even so, I am amazed by the many people who do volunteer and make such an impact on the lives of others including the elderly, the lonely and the many who are truly in need.

You may have thought about volunteering your time but were not sure where to start. In this month's cover story, we share the accounts of local residents who felt the same way and then made the important step to actually do it. They don't regret it, and you won't either.

Look inside for examples of volunteer opportunities during this holiday season and throughout the year that will help you learn how good it can feel to give rather than to receive.

Thanks for reading. ■

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The GIFT of TIME

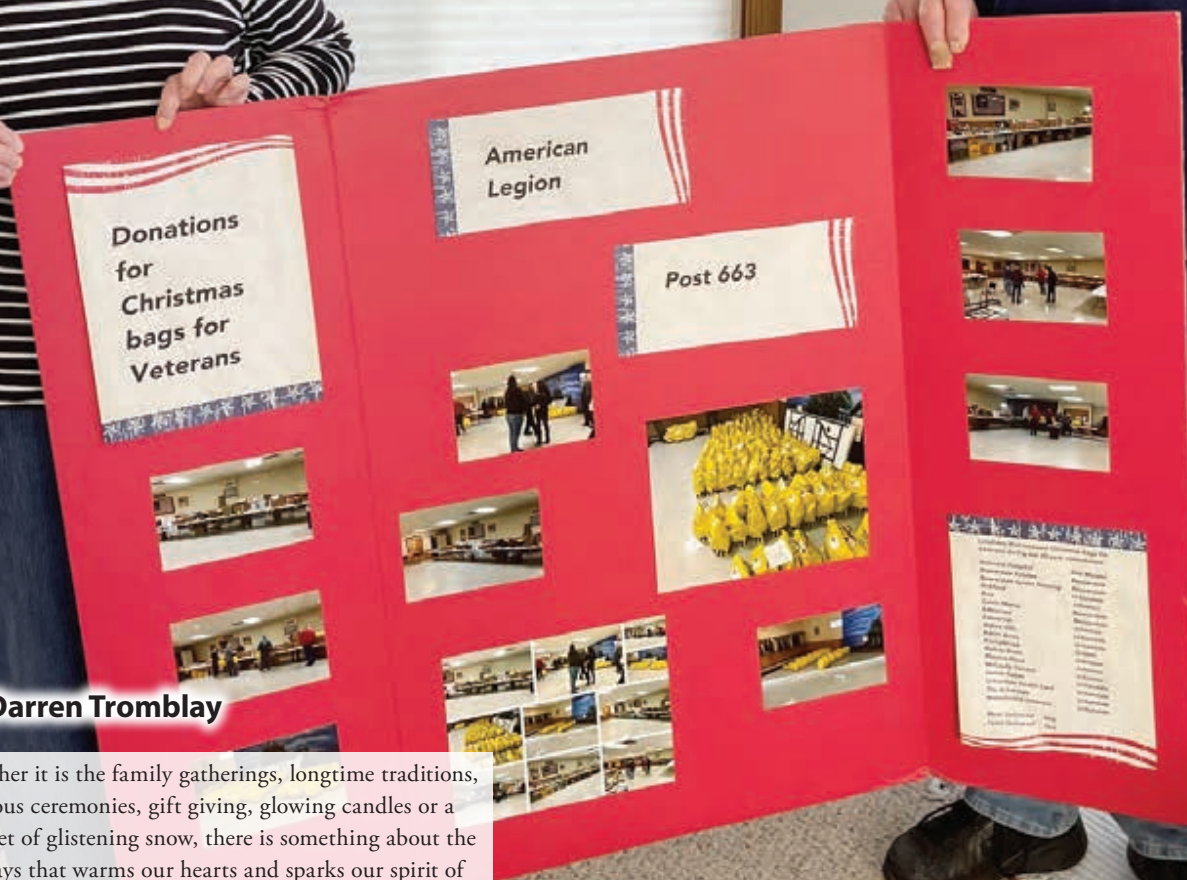
Volunteers spread joy for the holidays



By Darren Tromblay

Whether it is the family gatherings, longtime traditions, religious ceremonies, gift giving, glowing candles or a blanket of glistening snow, there is something about the holidays that warms our hearts and sparks our spirit of generosity. We give goodies, cards, gifts and more to our friends and family. And, donations flow to charities.

For those who want to do more than open their wallets, another precious gift waits to be given: time. Volunteers help to spread holiday cheer, and they find themselves rewarded in return by the joy of giving.



Janet and Donald Cruikshank have been involved in the Urbandale Legion's annual basket-giving effort for many years.

Giving the time to what she can

Colleen Homan has lived in Urbandale for nine years, but her acts of volunteerism extend, literally, decades longer than that.

"I basically volunteer all year round and have been for many years," Homan says.

Take her work in the Missing In America Project, for example, where she is one of a group of people across the nation working to locate, identify and inter unclaimed veterans' remains.

"People would be shocked at the amount of urns with ashes in them that are sitting in vaults in funeral homes," she says. "Sometimes veterans get displaced from their families, then end up going to homes, and, when they pass away, they are sent to a funeral home to be cremated. Unfortunately, sometimes those remains never get picked up. They just don't do it or don't have the means, or whatever."

Homan has had a tough go of it this year, which has put a crimp in her giving style, particularly this holiday season. First it was surgeries on both her neck and her back, then along came COVID. But she's better now, she says. And it's time to help.

Homan helps give out meals to the needy during the holiday season and helps in other causes that she

is able to. Her health as of late may have curtailed some of those efforts, but it will not put an end to them. There's too much joy to be seen in people's faces when they receive a free — and, often times, much needed — meal, or just a friendly "hello."

"Who doesn't want to get a nice meal of turkey and mashed potatoes during Thanksgiving? A lot of them are older people who can't get out," she says. "Some of them just want you to knock on the door and leave it, and I understand that. But most of them don't. They like to see us."

Her holiday giving of her time and efforts doesn't consist of just handing out meals either. One season, she and a friend went to the Animal Rescue League and helped them on Christmas Day. Others can do the same, she says.

"You won't be with the animals, because you won't have the training, but you can help take the load off in other ways by mopping the floors or taking the garbage out so that the other people there can take care of the animals," she says.

She understands those who might not want to get involved on Christmas Day, but, for her, it's a perfect chance to get out and do a good thing at the same time.



Colleen Homan volunteers her services, not only during the holiday season, but year-round for worthy causes.

Make a difference this Holiday Season

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From donating time, services, or goods—there's no shortage of ways to make a difference in your community. But, have you thought about donating blood? Des Moines area hospitals receive all essential blood products from LifeServe Blood Center. Blood cannot be manufactured which means that hospital patients are counting on YOU, their friend, neighbor, or family member to roll up your sleeve and donate blood with LifeServe this holiday season.

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FEATURE

"I mean, my daughter is 27. I don't have little kids, my parents are gone, no grandkids, so we do something volunteer-wise each Christmas," she says. "Because, you know, why not? It's better than sitting around eating cookies all day."

Homan was born and raised in Sioux City. When she and her husband married, she was already involved in the church there with its spring and fall dinners. Her dad called bingo.

"It's just something that we did. You've got to pave that stairway to heaven somehow," she jokes. "I have a roof over my head, food on my plate, and clothes on my back, so, if I can do something for someone else, I will."

For anyone wanting to join in on the volunteer efforts — holiday season or not — Homan recommends reaching out to local churches first, denomination be... danged.

"I'm Catholic, but I've done things for Hope Lutheran," she says. "It doesn't matter whether it's Lutheran, Methodist, or whatever it is. There's always places that are looking for people to help. Just check with your local church, school or even a nursing home."



Donations for holiday bags for veterans are sorted for packaging at the Urbandale Legion.

Decades of giving

Donald and Janet Cruikshank's season of giving is as plentiful as it is continuous.

A member of the Urbandale Legion, Donald has been involved in a basket-giving effort during the holiday season for the past 20 years. Janet has been volunteering for many years as well.

One of the couple's larger efforts comes

during the Christmas season when bags full of useful items are created and then given away to needy veterans.

"We get donations and other help from Hy-Vee, Medica Pharmacy, Davidson Family Dental, Johnston Bait and Tackle, Christian Photo and others," Janet says.

The bags are full of things such as body wash, a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, dental

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FEATURE

floss, lotions, and, for the past two years, a small bottle of hand sanitizer. After that, it's food items such as microwave popcorn, pudding cups, granola bars, cookies, potato chips and other things just to make a nice, rounded bag of items that the people at nursing homes can use.

The bags are then delivered to veterans in nursing homes around the area.

For one week a year, a group of people gathers to pack the bags — a different, but no-less important traditional holiday get-together.

"We have a lineup," Janet says. "We start on a Monday, and we tell the people 8 o'clock. They drift in, maybe have a cup of coffee or a donut, and then the work begins. It's a four-day project."

A table is set out, and items to place in the bags are set in an order so that the heaviest items can be placed in the bottom of each bag.

After the bags have been filled, it's delivery time. A convoy of people set off to various locations, some of which include homebound veterans.



Bags are ready for delivery to needy veterans.

There are, on average, around 30 people who help out each year, Don notes.

This year, bags will be filled on Tuesday, Dec. 20, with deliveries taking place the next day. If there's someone from a nursing home who wants to take the bags prior to delivery time, that's fine, Janet says.

Not only is the giving of the baskets a good gesture, it's also a way of giving the elderly something to look forward to each year.

"We're an older Legion, and we have several members who are homebound, so they know we will be coming and bringing a bag, which I think they look forward to receiving," Janet says.

The group delivers anywhere from 300 to 495 baskets each year, Don says.

No one who would like to help will be turned away, Janet says.

"We'll take as many as we can get," she says.

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FEATURE

You can, too

Throughout its 25-year existence, Urbandale Community Action Network (UCAN) has served thousands of low-income families in Urbandale, including offering programs during the holiday season to help ease the burden of those in need.

One might see Urbandale as an affluent community without many poverty-level families, but Executive Director Laura Holms says the reality is otherwise. So much so that, this holiday season, the number of families applying for assistance outnumbered the available sponsors, and a cap had to be placed on the number of people the organization is able to serve.

"Right now we just don't have enough funding raised, but we're still serving a great number of people," she says.

There's still time to help, though. A Breakfast with Santa fundraiser will be held Dec. 17 from 9 a.m. until noon at Aldersgate Church. The money raised will go directly to the families who don't have a sponsor. Additionally, a surprise party will be held that afternoon as well.

"We know so many families want to give their children a great holiday experience, but going to a mall or somewhere where you have to spend

\$40 to get a picture taken with Santa, for some, that's a lot of money," Holms says. "We want to ease that and give them another option."

Holms says volunteers are needed for each and every one of the UCAN programs, particularly the Mobile Food Pantry at this time. For the past three years, the organization has been going to Urbandale neighborhoods in which the residents do not have viable modes of transportation, bringing them food items they desperately need each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Those who would like to help can go to the group's website at www.urbandalenetwork.org for more information.

These missions of giving are the foundations of the organization, and the efforts will never stop, Holms says.

"People ask if we still do these things when it's freezing cold, and the answer is yes," she says. "People still need to eat, especially when it's cold."

Volunteers are always welcomed here, too.

"It doesn't require a ton of heavy lifting, but if you have muscles, we'd love for you to come along," Holms says. "You could volunteer an hour out of your day and literally help hundreds of people in need." ■

UCAN HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

Adopt a Family: Families in need are matched with individuals or groups. Those who sign up to participate in the Adopt-a-Family program purchase gifts suggested by each member of the family and food for a special holiday meal (or provide a gift card to cover the cost of such a meal). You can choose to deliver the items to the family, or UCAN can coordinate a drop-off.

Holiday Baskets: Families who do not qualify for the Adopt a Family Program are invited to participate in this program, which will provide one toy for each child and a warm winter outfit, hats, gloves and a food box or gift card for the grocery store. Gifts are provided for the children.

At-Risk Teen Outreach: Working with the Metro West Alternative High School, UCAN matches students in need with a sponsor. The sponsor will provide needed items such as socks, shirts, hats, gloves, as well as items that teenagers would enjoy such as beauty products, gift cards, etc.

Santa for Seniors: This program is for seniors who are living in isolation, who have no or few relatives nearby, and who have very limited contact with others. Sponsors create a gift bag or box with cards, warm blankets, large print crossword or puzzle books, poinsettia or amaryllis plants, and provide holiday treats. For low-income seniors, a gift card for a grocery store or a special food box is provided.

Christmas Food Assistance: For adults without children, a gift card to a local grocery store is provided to help supplement holiday food needs. Donations of gift cards in \$25 increments are needed to support this program. ■

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A DOSE of optimism

We all understand the importance of being optimistic, but sometimes it's difficult when the headlines are full of doom and gloom. The stock market slump, persistent inflation and rising interest rates dominate economic news.

In the spirit of the holidays, I want to offer a dose of optimism to help you wash down the eggnog.

Retirement income taxes are going away next year in Iowa. If you are 55 or older, you will not pay state income taxes on pension income and distributions from IRAs, annuities and employer-sponsored plans like 401(k)s. The same goes for distributions from deferred compensation plans and plans maintained or contributed to by a self-employed person. This applies even if you are still working.

Medicare premiums are going down, and Social Security is going up. The standard Part B premium will be \$164.90, \$5.20 lower than in 2022 (I didn't forget about the big jump in 2022; I'm being optimistic here, remember). Social Security is getting its biggest bump in 40 years, an 8.7% cost-of-living adjustment or COLA. The average benefit will increase by \$146 monthly from \$1,681 to \$1,827.

Those are a couple of small wins. The big wins come when you



have a customized, written retirement plan. We've been talking with the individuals and families we work with about taking advantage of the economic conditions. We know that, on average, recessions happen every five to six years, so when we helped them put together their retirement plans, we had that in mind. Then when the recession hits, we look at action steps like Roth conversions or Dollar-Cost-Averaging and decide if it's time to execute.

You may have been watching your 401(k) take a hit and think it's too late to act. Or you've been told to sit back and wait it out. I disagree. Now is the time to take control. You don't have to be a victim of market conditions. There are likely things you can do right now to help you get through this economic storm and put yourself in a better position for the next one. Then you can worry less about the stock market swings and focus more on the joy — something we all want to experience during the holiday season.

Take the first step to building a recession-resistant retirement plan. Check out our online Journey to Retirement workshop. Details are below. ■

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

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22 OF 2022 honors Urbandale business leaders

For the fourth year, CITYVIEW's Business Journal recognized the contributions of outstanding business leaders who have made a difference in their communities with the 22 of 2022 honors, presented at a reception on Thursday, Nov. 3, at Sherwood Forest Events Center. Awards were presented by Shane Goodman, publisher of CITYVIEW and president of Big Green Umbrella Media, Inc., which also publishes the Urbandale Living magazine, and Jolene Goodman, vice president.

Among those honored were John Forbes, pharmacy manager, Medicap Pharmacy in Urbandale, and Claudia Schabel, president and CEO, Schabel Solutions Inc.

John Forbes

"My biggest accomplishment in 2022 would be working with my colleagues in the Iowa House to pass legislation that allows our state insurance commissioner to better regulate the Pharmacy Benefit Managers in our state," said Forbes. "They are the middle men who regulate prescription drug benefits for citizens in our state. Much of the increase in drug costs is associated with this unregulated industry. The legislation starts the process to bring more transparency in how prescription medications are priced in the marketplace." He said his best business decision "was to move my pharmacy business to a new location in 2014. That move allowed me and my staff to expand pharmacy services to citizens in the community of Urbandale."

His advice to others: "The best advice I can give to others is to always be yourself and show respect and compassion to all of those who you encounter in your lifetime."



John Forbes

Claudia Schabel

"We are proud of and grateful for the partnerships and programs we've developed with the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce, Iowa Hospital Association and Iowa SHRM," said Schabel of her biggest accomplishment of 2022. "We are also very proud of all of our 2022 clients who continue to demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) every day to achieve their respective workforce, workplace and marketplace goals."

She added that her best business decision was "investing in the development and rollout of our own DEI training series content in eLearning format. Done well, DEI training, via live in-person/virtual and/or eLearning formats, is a necessary early step in an organization's DEI journey — setting a baseline of understanding for the achievement of long-term organizational workforce, workplace and marketplace goals. Our offerings are designed to be completed as a series or as stand-alone courses. We prompt vibrant discussion in our live in-person/virtual training and present compelling scenarios in eLearning opportunities that can be accessed at scale."

Her advice to others: "DEI is not about 'copying and pasting' DEI practices from other organizations. A thoughtful and cohesive DEI strategy is very different from having a 'collection of tactics' to use on an ad hoc basis. Take stock. Do you have the vision and resources to succeed in our multicultural marketplace? Develop authentic and sustainable DEI practices to compete and win in our multicultural marketplace. ■"



Brad Schabel accepting on behalf of Claudia Schabel

SHADE TREE Auto opens Urbandale location

International award winner, Shade Tree Auto, has expanded services into Urbandale along 70th Street and Douglas Avenue. The new auto repair facility will share a location with Urbandale Auto Body to offer comprehensive auto service to the surrounding community. A ribbon cutting was held Dec. 6.

"We've always had strong support from Urbandale at our Grimes location," says owner Clint Dudley. "We really appreciate how far people will travel just to have us service their vehicles. This will be much more convenient for a large segment of our customers."

Shade Tree Auto Urbandale is managed by Dustin Klein, 11-year advisor and manager of Shade Tree Auto in Grimes, along with technicians Zech Carlson and Keith Ridden.

Since 2001, Shade Tree Auto has been providing full-service auto repair for import and domestic vehicles to Grimes and the surrounding

communities. Through quality, customer service, and community involvement, the locally owned shop has received a number of recognitions. In 2014, the Greater Des Moines Partnership named them Community Champions in Small Business, and in 2015 and 2016, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce listed them as one of the top 100 small businesses at the annual Dream Big Awards in Washington, D.C. In 2017, Shade Tree Auto received Bronze for Small Business of the Year in the International Business Awards in Barcelona, Spain, and came back to win Gold in 2018 and 2019 at the annual awards ceremony in London, England. ■



Clint Dudley

MICHELSON pens story inspired by childhood

Life lessons to share with others

Urbandale resident Alma Michelson's self-published children's story, "Lily and the Golden Frog," was inspired by her childhood in the rolling mountains of Croatia, where she would fetch water from a well.

"This was partly due to the ongoing Balkan war and partly due to the lack of resources in this area," Michelson explains. "But despite living in third-world conditions as a child, this did not phase me. I was mesmerized by the breathtaking countryside with a beautiful and alive nature scene that makes you feel one with the world."

With no electronics or other children to play with, Michelson developed a vibrant imagination.

"I spoke to the red fox by the water well and came home to retell my story to my mom," she remembers. "She never laughed or doubted me, but instead praised my colorful imagination."

"Lily and the Golden Frog" shares Michelson's lifelong creativity with others. It's a tale of a young girl who wishes to see the world. Armed with her shiny pink purse, Lily sets out on the adventure of a lifetime. She meets several interesting characters and discovers the importance of giving back, thanks to the strange power of her purse.

This lesson Lily learns is one that Michelson's own mother taught her. Her mother worked three or four jobs at any given time — jobs that weren't easy or pretty.

"But when we walked the streets of Sandjak, Serbia, and panhandlers asked for money, or a disabled homeless man sat on the side of the street, she always gave something," Michelson says. "Yes, we were refugees, and I wore the same outfit to school for a week, but she would always turn to me and let me know that we can always do something for someone. She urged that helping others doesn't have to be a huge action, but a purposeful act."

Now that Michelson has children of her own, she wants to pass along these life lessons. In fact, she started jotting down ideas for "Lily and the Golden Frog" in her phone's Notes app while she was feeding her second child in the



"Lily and the Golden Frog" is Alma Michelson's first children's book, and it shares a story from her childhood.

wee hours of the night.

"As a new parent, I wanted my daughter to have a book that didn't shy away from all things feminine and had a violence-free plot and taught guilt-free morals," Michelson says.

"Lily and the Golden Frog" is available for purchase on Amazon Books or the book's website, www.lilyandthegoldenfrog.com. Michelson also has three other titles in the works.

Although "Lily and the Golden Frog" was just recently made available for purchase, Michelson says she has already seen support from local residents.

"I'm still in the really early stages of publishing, but, so far, everyone I've contacted in the Urbandale community has been really open and receptive to the message I want to share," she says. "I love this neighborhood, and I love our public library." ■





Merry Christmas!

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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

'THE MOST Wonderful Time of the Year'

As I anticipate Christmas, Andy William's song "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" keeps reverberating through my head.

For many, if not most, that song rings true. We anticipate fun, laughter, time spent with family, rejoicing in the Babe in the manger, etc. throughout this Christmas season.

But for others — especially those who have said "good-bye" to a loved one this past year, this Christmas may seem anything but wonderful. Thoughts of an empty place at the table, one less stocking hanging from the mantle, or one less candle being lit at the Christmas Eve service are overwhelming to them.

For those who are facing their first Christmas without a loved one, remember, each person deals with grief in their own way and whatever manner your grief manifests itself, it is OK. Don't try to hide your feelings from others; they are often hurting, too.

Whether this Christmas brings laughter and fun or tears and bittersweet memories, know that others care about you — including those of us here at Highland Memory Gardens.

Regardless of your circumstances, may this Christmas become "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" for you and your family. ■

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



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HEALTH

By Andrea Gustafson

NAVIGATING family and the holidays

The holidays can bring a lot of joy but can also come with a lot of stress. Schedules get busy, to-do lists get long, and family gatherings are inevitable. Despite, often, loving our families, spending more time with them than normal can be challenging. Rather than suffering through and being stressed, here are some tips on navigating the holidays with family.

- **Communicate** – Talk to the people you are spending time with about your concerns/expectations for the get-together and what you are willing to do and not do. Be direct and clear.

- **Set boundaries** – "No" is a complete sentence. We all have limits to how much we can fit into the schedule, and, when it's full, it's full. Set boundaries around what you are physically and mentally able to commit to and don't go past that.

- **Self care** – There is no getting around this time of year being more stressful than normal. Make sure you are taking time to do the things needed for yourself. This can be as simple as making sure you are eating and getting enough sleep. But it's important keep it up this time of year. ■

Information provided by Andrea Gustafson, LISW, JMG Therapy and Counseling Services, associated with SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, andrea@jmgtherapy.com, 515-777-1209.



HOSPICE care around the holidays may be a gift

Knowing a loved one has a life-limiting illness can make the holidays bittersweet. But as Tim B. of Des Moines learned last year, assistance from an in-home hospice provider can place a little more focus on the “sweet” and allow families to make treasured memories.

“WesleyLife started caring for my wife just before the holidays last year,” Tim says. “They enabled her to have some really good days, and she felt well enough to celebrate with our family on Christmas Eve. It seems strange to say, but she lived really well during those final months.”

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

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

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



Ideally, hospice services should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice services, enabling a patient to live life in comfort for the days, weeks, months or longer that remain in his or her life.

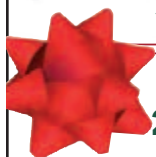
So, as we all prepare for the holidays, give some thought to the ways you and your family want to spend time together. For some families, it’s comforting to have hospice providers care for the person who is ill in their home so family members can gather around and simply enjoy being loved ones.

Making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult — but having care in place for the holidays can actually help make these special occasions more relaxed and meaningful for your loved one as well as the whole family.

“No one wanted to admit we needed to call hospice, but once we met with them and set up a plan, we breathed a sigh of relief knowing my wife would be comfortable at home, and we could focus on making Christmas as special as possible with her favorite traditions,” Tim says. “Now, looking back, we are so grateful for those memories and will treasure them.” ■

Ward Phillips is a senior leader with WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home health care, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.

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SKIN DETECTIVES: The case of contact dermatitis

Have you washed your shirt with a new detergent, and it made you itch? Or used a hand cream, and your skin got red and started to burn? What you may have experienced is contact dermatitis (skin inflammation) caused by an allergic reaction.

Did you know? There are more than 15,000 substances that can touch your skin and cause an allergic reaction. It is also possible that a person may be allergic to more than one substance.¹

• **The symptoms:** Allergic contact dermatitis can develop on any part of your skin, but since we touch most things with our hands, it normally starts there and can affect areas like the face, neck, underarms, scalp and feet. During the allergic reaction, your skin may feel itchy, burning or stinging with a swollen rash, hives or blisters.

• **Common causes:** People often become sensitized to allergens after many contacts over a period of time. Once you develop an allergy to the substance, even a small amount can cause a

reaction. Common allergens include:

- Nickel – jewelry, buckles and clothing
- Topical medications – antibiotic creams
- Balsam of Peru – cosmetics, personal care items and flavorings
- Fragrance – perfume, shampoo and skin care products

• **Urushiol** – poison ivy, oak and sumac

• **Latex** – medical supplies including gloves

• **Diagnosing the problem:** A dermatologist will examine the area, and, in some cases, it may be obvious, like a rash from exposure to poison ivy. After the exam, if the cause is still unknown, they may suggest a patch test. This test checks your skin's reaction to a variety of substances you may find in your home, at work or during recreational activities.

The provider will place small amounts of allergens on your back and cover each with a patch. These patches will remain in place for the next 48 hours. During this time, your skin may feel itchy, but it is important to keep the patches

in place. After the 48 hours, your provider will remove the patches and check for reactions. In most cases, another follow-up will be scheduled 2-5 days after the patches are removed for a final analysis.

• **Treatment options:** If allergic reactions are found, your provider will inform you of the substance(s) so they can be avoided and discuss ways to prevent future contact. To relieve symptoms, the provider may suggest cool compresses, topical medications and antihistamines. In more severe cases, systemics like prednisone or phototherapy may be used.

Talk to a dermatologist about the contact dermatitis treatment plan that is right for you. ■

Information provided by Harlan Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery Center, 8131 University Blvd., Clive, 515-225-8180. www.aad.org/public/diseases/eczema/types/contact-dermatitis/patch-testing-rash. 1. American Academy of Dermatology.

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Steven Harlan, MD • Natalie Steinhoff, DO • Elaine Selden, ARNP-C • Amanda Van Wyk, PA-C

REJOIN the conversation

Treatment for hearing loss keeps people engaged.

The ability to hear and understand is an essential part of our everyday activities and overall quality of life. Many individuals take their hearing for granted until they can no longer communicate with their friends and family. Regardless of age, we all depend upon our hearing and the ability to communicate every day. Hearing is crucial whether you're at home, communicating with your family, watching television, talking on the telephone, listening to music, having a conversation in a busy restaurant, visiting your doctor, or simply hearing the sounds of a coffee maker or birds chirping in the backyard. No matter how mild or significant your hearing loss, it interferes with your ability to fully appreciate sounds and experiences.



seven years to get help for their hearing loss, to their own detriment and the detriment of family and friends. Once you learn more about hearing and take positive action to do something about your hearing loss, you will realize what you have been missing.

When is the right time for an individual to purchase hearing aids? There is no one-size-fits-all answer. Each person must evaluate the importance of better hearing in their lives. When addressing the challenges caused by untreated hearing loss becomes a priority, it is the right time to consider hearing aid technology.

Speech is the most important sound that we hear every day. Speech is made up of vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and consonants (for example, s, t, n, d, f). Vowel sounds are lower in pitch and louder in volume. Consonant sounds are higher in pitch and softer in volume, especially in female and children's voices. All types of hearing loss affect an individual's ability to hear and understand

conversational sounds. Many individuals with hearing loss will report: "I hear people talking but I don't understand what is being said."

Early diagnosis of hearing loss will enable both the patient and hearing healthcare professional to discuss a wider variety of treatment options. They may vary from assistive listening devices for use in the home to hearing aid technology. Understandably, very few people hope for a hearing aid recommendation. But, the use of hearing aid technology is a proactive step towards reconnecting with the conversations and sounds they may be struggling to enjoy.

If you, family members, friends, or loved ones suspect hearing difficulties, please have your hearing tested by a hearing health care professional. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kate Bergin, audiologist, Woodard Hearing Centers, 2328 Rocklyn Drive Building 3, Urbandale, 515-276-6122, www.WoodardHearing.com.

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- Larry B.



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BOOK REVIEWS

Courtesy of Beaverdale Books

'Kaikeyi'

Retellings of epic tales have become a genre of their own, and I am here for it. In this sparkling, sad, brilliant debut novel, Vaishnavi Patel takes on the ancient Hindu story, The Ramayana, and all its magical twists and cosmic turns, and builds a unique, powerful take on the classic that had me absolutely spellbound.

Kaikeyi is often considered the villain in the traditional tale of Rama. Here, she's something much more nuanced — a powerful queen and magically gifted person who just wants to make the world a better place. Telling her story in her own voice, Kaikeyi describes her lonely childhood and the decisions that lead to her using her power to strive for better treatment of women at all levels of society.

This is an immersive and powerful story, and I can't wait for more from this talented author. This would be an excellent gift for anyone with a love of mythology, epic stories and really good writing. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*

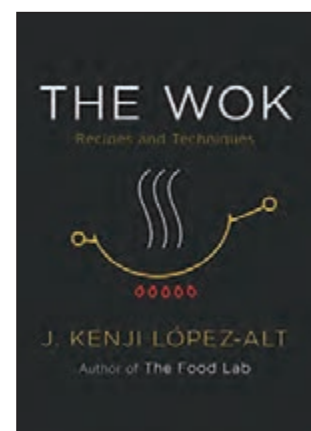


By Vaishnavi Patel
4/26/22
478 pages
\$28
Redhook

'The Wok: Recipes and Techniques'

I should start by noting that I'm a huge J. Kenji Lopez-Alt fan and have been for years. His remarkable, award-winning book, "The Food Lab," changed my life. Much like that earlier book, Lopez-Alt has filled "The Wok" with science, advice and his trademark passion for food. This isn't a traditional, recipe-style cookbook in many ways. It's more of an instructional guide and cooking adventure, focused on the most versatile and useful pan in any kitchen — the wok. It may seem odd to many cooks in the West, but there is surprising value in having wok skills for many types of dishes and cuisines.

This book introduces not only a great set of techniques and recipes, it also deepens and expands how to think about meals and dishes from a new angle. The title may seem one-note, but, I promise, this book has so much to offer both experienced and novice chefs. This fantastic book is an ideal gift for anyone looking to up his or her game in the kitchen. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By J. Kenji Lopez-Alt
3/8/22
336 pages
\$50
W.W. Norton Company

TIMING is everything

In April of 2011, my wife and I drove home through a storm. We later learned that we had crossed the paths of multiple tornadoes. Had we arrived a few minutes sooner or later at some of those locations, we would have been swept away. God's timing saved our physical lives.



As Christmas approaches, we pause to celebrate God's timing in graciously providing for our spiritual salvation. "But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law" (Galatians 4:4). "His Son" declares Jesus' deity. "Born of a woman" reveals Jesus' humanity. "Born under the Law" shows Jesus' responsibility to follow God's moral Law.

God sent His Son to Earth, "In order that He (God) might redeem those who were under the Law..." (Galatians 4:5a). Under the Law's demands, every human being stands condemned (Galatians 3:11). To "redeem" means to pay the price of release. When we take our empty cans to the redemption center, we hand them over in exchange for an agreed upon price.

As fully God and fully man, Jesus was our sinless substitute (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21). His death paid the price that releases (redeems) all who believe in Him from the condemnation we all deserve for violating God's moral Law.

Without the birth of Christ, there is no death of Christ for our sins. Without the death of Christ, there is no redemption of sinful humans or resurrection of Christ ensuring that the redeemed will rise again (1 Corinthians 15:16-17, 20). Without the redemption and resurrection of Christ, there is no escape from God's judgment (Romans 8:1).

Deliverance from God's wrath resulting in our adoption into God's family (Galatians 4:5b) is made possible through Christ's birth and made personal through our faith. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

For God's children, Christmas is a time to celebrate the gift of our redemption and inclusion into God's family and to communicate with others that they, too, can enjoy it.

For all who do not believe, there is still time to receive the gift of forgiveness and new life in Christ. Turn from your sin and trust in Christ's death as the punishment you deserve.

This Christmas, don't let our contemplation of what presents we'll give or the consideration of what gifts we'll receive eclipse our reception and celebration of the "indescribable gift" God gave (2 Corinthians 9:15). Christ came to save everyone who believes from eternal condemnation and to secure eternal life for them. No better gift was ever given.

Have a blessed Christmas! ■

Information provided by Pastor Steve Smith, Creekside Church, 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale, 515-279-3919.

*May your heart be full
with songs of*
joy *this season!*



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HOME DECOR

By Wanda Williams

OVERWHELMED with furniture options?

With furniture design, there truly are no firm rules that you should stick to. Just do what makes you happy. With that said, all the choices out there can make decisions overwhelming and sometimes impossible. Does paralysis by analysis sound familiar? This year has been the year for curves, sustainability and loads of texture, so use these trends to help define your decisions.

Curves – Clean lines are great, but choosing furniture with curves and feminine shapes brings a softness to any room. You can incorporate these shapes very subtly or be bold and choose interesting shapes and colors.

Sustainability – From repurposing and choosing consignment furniture, to selecting new responsibly manufactured furniture, this trend is here to stay. With options like organic fabrics, bamboo and reclaimed wood, sustainability doesn't mean sacrificing beautiful design.

Texture – Adding loads of texture to your home will always be on trend because it's easy to incorporate regardless of the design style. Soft textures like velvet are luxurious, but combining it with woven furniture and a sisal carpet adds warmth and interest to a room. ■

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



NEIGHBOR

By Darren Tromblay

ONE of the best

Ladwig takes third in MLB Pitch, Hit and Run competition.

Thirteen-year-old Piper Ladwig of Urbandale is your typical middle schooler.

She likes cracking jokes, playing volleyball, traveling and animals — especially cows. She's even a bit "goofy," jokes her mother, Candi Ladwig.

But Candi and her husband, Ryan Ladwig, noticed early on that there was one thing their young daughter took especially seriously: softball.

"Piper took softball very seriously from the beginning," Candi says. "She watched her sisters, and the minute she turned 5, she was ready to play

ball. She puts in extra strength and conditioning and pitching lessons. She used to beg her dad to hit 'just one more bucket' of balls. There is a burning desire in her to be better and play harder and do whatever it takes for her team."

That motivation paid off in a big way this fall when Piper won her way to the finals of Major League Baseball's Pitch, Hit and Run youth skills competition, which took place on Sunday, Oct. 30, at Minute Maid Park, home of the Houston Astros, following the completion of games one and two of the 2022 World Series.

Piper competed at the local level in July, garnering a score high enough to qualify her for the regional level at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City on Sept. 10. She kept rolling, winning that competition. After that success, however, the waiting game was on.

"We had to wait for all regions to be done to see how her score compared nationally," Candi says.

As it turned out, Piper's score was in the top four in the nation, and she was awarded an all-expense-paid trip to compete at the World Series.

The family traveled to Houston, Texas, on Oct. 28. Upon arrival, Piper was given a "swag bag" of clothing, uniforms, treats and other goodies. For Game 1 of the World Series, the athletes and families were treated to dinner and games at a local restaurant. The next day, Piper had batting practice, lunch and went bowling. They attended Game 2, where they were recognized during the game. Sunday morning, Piper competed at Pitch, Hit & Run where she finished in third place.

"We are crazy proud of her," Candi says. "She gives up a lot to get where she is. No sleepovers on game days, missed birthday parties, missed social events. She puts so much work into herself and the sport that it is really fun to get to watch her reap the benefits. It's also exciting to see her continue to raise the bar on her goals and achieve them." ■



Piper Ladwig of Urbandale competed in the finals of Major League Baseball's Pitch, Hit and Run youth skills competition during the recent World Series.

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AFUE: Why it should matter to you

The terminology for HVAC (heating, venting and air conditioning) can be confusing, and most people have no desire to understand them. But there are a few that you should learn and pay attention to, such as AFUE.

AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency) is an efficiency rating that's required by the Federal Trade Commission to be labeled on forced air furnaces. Furnaces are used to blow the air throughout our home's duct work regardless of whether the thermostat is set to "Heat" or "Cool" or "Fan," but the AFUE rating only applies to the furnace's heating ability.

So why is this important to you? It's important because the higher the AFUE rating, the lower your fuel costs. For example, if your AFUE rating reads 98%, your system uses 98% of its fuel for heat, while 2% gets lost. An older furnace with an AFUE rating of 80 will turn 80% of its fuel into usable heat, which, in turn, means that 20% of its fuel is lost.

The average life expectancy of a heating and cooling system is about 15-20 years. With so many advancements in efficiency, even a 10-year-old system could be due for an upgrade. Each year, your system's AFUE rating can decline about 5% if it is not properly maintained. With scheduled routine annual maintenance for your system, you will have better chances of extending the life of your HVAC system and protecting your investment.

Do you know what the AFUE for your current furnace is? You can find your furnace's AFUE rating on the bright yellow EnergyGuide label that was placed on your furnace by the manufacturer. If you have an older furnace with an AFUE of 70%, then upgrading to an AFUE of 90% could save you around \$20 for every \$100 that you would normally spend.

High-efficiency furnaces are more of an investment when compared to mid-efficiency systems, but, when we factor in that 15-year life span, the money saved on energy costs will be worth it in the long run — especially because Iowa winters can be brutally cold.

Hopefully, you now have a good understanding of what AFUE is and why it's important, especially when considering upgrading your HVAC system. If you still have questions or are ready to learn more about which high-efficiency furnaces are available for your home, contact your local trusted heating and cooling company. ■

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



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

Urbandale Historical Society happenings

Urbandale Historical Society,
4010 70th St.

• Jan. 8, 2-4 p.m. Program: Park and Rec in Urbandale presented by Jan Herke.

HOLIDAY FAVORITES & FUN

• 'A Christmas Carol'

Dec. 9-18

Stoner Theater, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
This classic is presented by Iowa Stage Theatre Company. dmpa.org

• 'A Very Merry Tallgrass Holiday'

Dec. 16-18

Tallgrass Theatre Company, 2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines

This collaboration with Seedlings Children's Theatre features scripts from Drama Notebook's collection of scripts for kids and teens. tallgrasstheatre.org

• 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical'

Thursday, Dec. 22, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
Come see all of your favorite characters including Santa and Mrs. Claus, Hermey the Elf, the Abominable Snow Monster, Clarice, Yukon Cornelius and, of course, Rudolph. dmpa.org

• Mannheim Steamroller Christmas

Dec. 23, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
A holiday favorite returns. dmpa.org

• New Year's Eve Pops: Frank & The Great Ladies of Song

Saturday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m.

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
The Des Moines Symphony performs. dmsymphony.org

• Holiday Hullabaloo

Through Dec. 31, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. general admission and 7-11 p.m. adults only

Horizon Events Center, 2100 N.W. 100th St., Clive
The 2022 Holiday Hullabaloo, a benefit for Dorothy's House, is an immersive, family-friendly holiday experience that will surprise and delight guests this holiday season. Enjoy a variety of activities, entertainment and festivities that will allow you to create some fun holiday hullabaloo and memories. Evenings are adults only and will feature live music in the Ice Bar. Dec. 31 will be the Silver Bell Soiree New Years Eve Party with live music by the Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. Ticket are available at <https://holidayhullabaloo.eventbrite.com>.

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



Miracle on 86th Street

Through Jan. 9

Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park, 400 86th St.

Urbandale has transformed Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park into a Winter Wonderland for the holiday season. Mayor Bob Andeweg turned on the holiday lights and opened the park for the season Nov. 15. The park has been decorated with 50,000 lights, and many events are scheduled in the park for the next several weeks.

Dubbed "Miracle on 86th Street," the holiday scene at the park features a large custom-built train, larger-than-life ornamental displays, an ice-skating rink and holiday-themed events through Jan. 9 during normal park hours. The ice-skating rink will be open as weather permits (refer to signage near the rink and notices on the City website for open/closed status).

For more information and a listing of all the events and planned activities, visit: www.Urbandale.org/holiday.



HOLIDAY LIGHTS

• JOLLY HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Adventureland Park, 3300 Adventureland Drive, Altoona • jollyholidaylights.org

• FIRST CHURCH OF THE OPEN BIBLE

2200 Beaver Ave., Des Moines • firstchurchdsm.org

• SANTA'S ROCK N LIGHTS

Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale • LHF.org

• HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION

Fifth Street, West Des Moines • valleyjunction.com

• LIGHTS IN THE HEIGHTS

Franklin Avenue, Marylynn Drive, 72nd Street and other Windsor Heights streets
windsorheightsfoundation.org

• WINTER WONDERLIGHTS

Uptown Ankeny, 715 W. First St., Ankeny • uptownankeny.org

• BEAVERDALE

Ashby and Wallace Avenues near Beaver Avenue • beaverdale.org

• PRAIRIE RIDGE CHURCH

825 N.W. 36th St., Ankeny • ridgelifelife.org

• GINGERBREAD LANE

S.E. Richland Court, Ankeny • Facebook @ Gingerbread Lane Ankeny IA

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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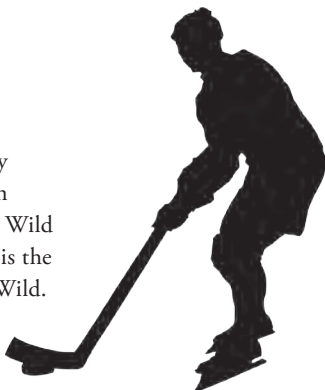
Iowa Wild

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
iowawild.com

Just one step below the National Hockey League (NHL), you'll find the American Hockey League (AHL) — and the Iowa Wild professional ice hockey team. The team is the AHL affiliate of the NHL's Minnesota Wild.

Home games:

- Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. vs. Manitoba Moose
- Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. vs. Manitoba Moose
- Dec. 28 at 6 p.m. vs. Colorado Eagles
- Dec. 30 at 6 p.m. vs. Colorado Eagles



Des Moines Buccaneers

Buccaneer Arena
7201 Hickman Road, Urbandale
bucshockey.com

The Bucs are a member of the United States Hockey League (USHL), the only Tier 1 Junior Hockey League in the country. Home games:

- Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. vs. Waterloo Black Hawks
- Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. vs. Sioux City Musketeers



Iowa Wolves

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
iowa.gleague.nba.com

Des Moines' pro basketball team plays in the Western Conference of the NBA G League. They were known as the Iowa Energy until their purchase by the Minnesota Timberwolves in 2017.

Home games:

- Dec. 29 at 7 p.m. vs. Raptors 905
- Dec. 31 at 2 p.m. vs. Raptors 905
- Jan. 1 at 2 p.m. vs. Texas Legends

Drake basketball

Knapp Center, 2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines
godrakebulldogs.com

The Drake University Bulldogs compete in NCAA Division-1 basketball in the Missouri Valley Conference.

Women's home games:

- Dec. 18 vs. Southwest Baptist

Men's home games:

- Dec. 22 vs. St. Ambrose



January

- **Weekends through March 31:** Dome After Dark on Friday evenings, educational lectures during Learn on Saturdays and, on Sunday afternoons, the Botanical Blues concert series at the Des Moines Botanical Garden; dmbotanicalgarden.com
- **Jan. 6: Taylor (Swift) Fest** at Wooly's at 9 p.m.; firstfleetconcerts.com/woolys
- **Jan. 6-8: Iowa Home Expo** at the Jacobson Exhibition Center, Iowa State Fairgrounds; iowahomeexpo.com
- **Jan. 8: Game Day** from 1:30-4:30 p.m. at Central Library; dmpl.org/events
- **Jan. 13-14: Cinch World's Toughest Rodeo** at Wells Fargo Arena; worldstoughestrodeo.com
- **Jan. 20: Kids Night Out**, 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Blank Park Zoo; blankparkzoo.com
- **Jan. 21: Collision of Rhythm**, a tap dancing and beatboxing duo at 11 a.m. at Des Moines Civic Center; dmpa.org
- **Jan. 21: Fire & Ice**, CITYVIEW's legendary interactive winter pub crawl in Historic Valley Junction. 1-4 p.m. Tickets at fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com
- **Jan. 22: Nate Bargatze in the "Be Funny" tour** at 7 p.m. at Des Moines Civic Center; dmpa.org
- **Jan. 25: Make Your Own Herbal Tea Blend** from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Forest Avenue Library; dmpl.org/events
- **Jan. 27-28: Indulge - A Wine, Cheese and Chocolate Affair**, 6-9 p.m. at West End Architectural Salvage; facebook.com/IndulgeDSM
- **Jan. 31: Secret Life of Bears** at 7:30 p.m. Des Moines Civic Center; dmpa.org
- **Jan. 31 - Feb. 2: Iowa Ag Expo** at Iowa Events Center; iowaagexpo.com
- **Jan. 31 - Feb. 5: "Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation"** at Temple Theater; dmpa.org ■

FINDING post-retirement purpose in the new year

Having a purpose is what gets us up in the morning. It's what makes life worth living. And every purpose, big or small, can bring us joy. Living with purpose adds depth and excitement to each and every phase of our lives. So, what are the best ways to fully enjoy life once you've retired? And how can you find a post-retirement purpose specific to you?



There are so many opportunities available to us, so self-reflection is a good place to start. What are your passions and talents? What things spark your curiosity? Ask yourself these three questions: What motivates me? What gives me energy? What am I willing to sacrifice for? Reflecting on your answers will reveal a lot about what matters most to you. Many seniors have found purpose in helping others, creating a bucket list, or by simply finding joy in the little things. You can find your purpose anywhere. Just take the time to reflect then find a

little courage to make it happen.

In addition to helping improve your overall wellbeing, there are some deeper benefits to living with purpose. Studies show that people who live with purpose enjoy longer, happier lives than those who do not. Purposeful living also promotes healthy habits which can lead to improved health, stronger relationships, better sleep, and sometimes even increased wealth. If you live purposefully, you'll spend more time focused on the things that matter to you and make your life richer and more meaningful. ■

Information provided by Susie Ray, marketing director of The Arbordale, a 55+ independent living community in Urbandale. Learn more about having a comfortable and convenient season at TheArbordale.com. As leaders in senior living, The Arbordale believes living with purpose is a key component to finding joy at any stage of life, but particularly in retirement. That's why we focus on creating an environment that can foster purpose-driven living through community, creativity, and convenience.



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2022-23**

THE Arbordale
INDEPENDENT SENIOR LIVING
Urbandale

5 TIPS to help families manage holiday stress



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

(Family Features) 'Tis the season for holiday parties, travel, hosting and more. While it is a joyous time of year, the never-ending to-do lists and school being out of session can make everyone feel a little overwhelmed, children included.

Consider these five practical tips from the experts at KinderCare to help families proactively manage holiday stressors.

1. Manage expectations. The commotion that often comes with the holiday season can be stressful for young children, but you can help alleviate worries by familiarizing them with what's to come. Talk to them about upcoming travel arrangements, who they'll see at events and what to expect throughout the season. If they are cautious in their current developmental stage, let loved ones know beforehand to give them a little extra space at festivities. Parents can also begin familiarizing little ones with relatives through photos and phone calls.

2. Empower children. It's important for

children to understand they have a choice — and family members are willing to respect that choice. Parents should acknowledge their children's body language and empower them to say "no" in uncomfortable situations. Parents can help by proactively asking questions such as, "Do you want a hug?" and if they say "no," support them in their decision. This also helps establish healthy long-term social skills.

3. Maintain your schedule. Children thrive on consistency, and during the holidays it's important to at least try maintaining as much of what they're used to as possible, such as naps, meals and playtime. Changes in schedule can result in more tantrums, so be sure to allow space for them to safely work through their emotions.

It's also important to note that children feed off their parents' energy, so make sure you're in tune with your own emotions. When overwhelmed, openly discuss how you're feeling and involve your children when taking breaks. For example, "It's loud in here, would you like

to go sit outside with me?"

4. Have fun. Make time to spread joy and integrate activities to bond as a family, such as reading holiday-themed books, crafting, playing games, singing or baking. Whether old traditions or new, these are moments your child can cherish for years to come.

5. Keep others in mind. While it's important to set children up for success ahead of the holidays, parents should also teach children the holiday season can look different for others. Putting a focus on experiences rather than the gifts can help them have more to discuss with their peers when returning to school. It's also a good time to consider donating toys to make room for new ones or volunteering at a local charity to show children joy can be experienced through more than just gifts.

To find more tips to help manage holiday stress, or to access additional resources around social development, setting boundaries and routines, visit KinderCare.com. ■

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LIBRARY

By Staci Stanton
Programming & Outreach Manager

URBANDALE Public Library news



The year is coming to an end, and we invite you to check out our latest episode of UPL Recommends with Assistant Director Leslie Noble, where we discuss our favorite picks of 2022. You can also check out what others are reading and recommending at one of our Patron Picks displays in the children, teen and adult sections the next time you visit the library.



Our two newest online resources, **Comics Plus** and **Des Moines Register ProQuest**, are available to anyone with a library card. Comics Plus provides unlimited access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels and manga with no holds or wait lists. Every title is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on your computer or by downloading the Library Pass app on your mobile device. Anyone interested in historical research, genealogy, or satisfying their curiosity can now access Des Moines Register ProQuest. With just your library card and computer or mobile device, explore articles from 1871 to the present of the complete paper, cover-to-cover with full-page images in easily downloadable PDF format. Click on the "Resources" tab on our website to get started.

Check out our upcoming events, from crafts to comics, during winter break. We've invited author, illustrator and cartoonist **Eric Gapstur** to answer your questions about drawing and writing. Gapstur is the author of a graphic novel series, "Sort of Super," about dynamic crime-fighting duo Wyatt and little sister Adeline. Join us on Thursday, Dec. 20 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Our **Noon Year's Eve** dance party will return on Saturday, Dec. 31 from 11 a.m. to noon. Count down to the "noon" year with dancing, balloons, bubbles and more for a rockin' good time for the whole family. Both programs will be located in Meetings Room A/B, and anyone under the age of 10 must be supervised by an adult. Registration is not required but appreciated.

The start of the new year means the return of our **Winter Reading Challenge**. Everyone, birth through adult, can log 15 days of reading from Jan. 16 to Feb. 28 to complete the challenge using a paper log or through the Beanstack app. Participants ages 0-17 will win a classic book of their choice to keep, while adults 18-plus will be entered into a prize drawing. Visit our website for more details and to sign up on the Beanstack app: www.urbandale.org. ■

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MEET Leslie Dunbar

English teacher and yearbook advisor



Leslie Dunbar has been teaching English at Urbandale High School for four years.

Before becoming an educator, Leslie Dunbar worked as a marketing copywriter for seven years. She then graduated from Drake University in 2011 with a master's degree in teaching. Today, Dunbar is in her fourth year with the Urbandale Community School District where she teaches English at the Urbandale High School.

"What I like best about working for the Urbandale school district is that it feels like a small district that is actually a large district. It feels like a family within our building and district. I know a lot of people, and they know who I am. It really makes me feel at home and part of something bigger than just my classroom," Dunbar says.

One ongoing project Dunbar's students participate in is called "Book Love." It's a project originally started by one of her colleagues. Each Monday, Dunbar's class is dedicated to providing students with the opportunity to free read a book of their choice. Her students then set a goal of how many pages to read each week and keep track of the books that they've read.

"What I like best about teaching high school students is preparing them for whatever comes next. They may not remember the book we read or the grammar skills I taught them, but they will be ready to communicate with others, think critically, and be responsible members of our community," Dunbar says.

As the yearbook teacher, Dunbar is also looking forward to seeing the yearbook staff document this school year at the Urbandale High School. As the advisor, she enjoys seeing her students work hard all year and then seeing their finished product at the end. It is rewarding not only for herself but also for her students, she says.

"The biggest reward as a teacher is to see your former students grow up and become wonderful humans. I love to keep in touch with my former students and see them grow and take on the world," she says.

When not teaching, Dunbar enjoys spending time with her two children, who both attend Olmsted Elementary School. She is also an avid reader. Dunbar enjoys cheering on the Iowa Hawkeyes, working out, traveling, drinking coffee and spending time with family and friends. ■

RECIPE

BEEF up the holiday menu

(Family Features) At this year's holiday gatherings, you can put together a show-stopping menu from the beginning of the party to the final bite with mouthwatering recipes that bring guests back for more. Incorporate beef, a versatile, beloved ingredient that can be used in appetizers, sides and main courses alike.

Consider a holiday favorite from Beef Loving Texans such as a must-have main course like classic beef Wellington. Perfect for a family get-together, this traditional dish combines tender chateaubriand roast with a homemade glaze of earthy mushrooms, red wine and Dijon mustard wrapped in a golden-brown puff pastry. Find more beef-inspired holiday dishes at BeefLovingTexans.com. ■

Classic beef Wellington

Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans
Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes
Servings: 4

- 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper, divided
- 1 chateaubriand tenderloin roast
- 8 ounces mushrooms
- 1 large shallot
- 2 tablespoons dry red wine
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- flour
- 1 sheet puff pastry

DIRECTIONS

- In large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1/2 teaspoon oil until hot. Combine salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Press evenly onto all surfaces of roast. Place roast in skillet; brown evenly. Remove roast from skillet.
- Heat oven to 425 F.

- In food processor, pulse mushrooms and shallot about 10 times until finely chopped. Do not overprocess.
- Place same skillet used for roast over medium-high heat and heat remaining oil until hot. Add mushrooms and shallot; cook 4-6 minutes until tender and all liquid is evaporated, stirring often. Add wine; cook 2-3 minutes until all liquid is evaporated. Stir in mustard, thyme and remaining pepper. Cook 2-3 minutes. Remove from skillet to medium bowl; cool.
- Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and place in oven. On lightly floured cutting board, unfold pastry dough. Roll pastry out to 12-by-9-inch rectangle; lay dough with shortest edge toward you. Spread mushroom mixture onto pastry dough, leaving 1/2-inch border around edges. Place roast in center of mushrooms. Fold



pastry dough neatly around roast, stretching dough if necessary. Cut off excess pastry dough; press to seal overlapping edges.

- Remove baking sheet from oven and dust lightly with flour. Place pastry-wrapped roast, seam-side down, on baking sheet. Cut four 2-inch vents in top of pastry.
- Bake 35-50 minutes, or until golden brown and instant-read thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 135 F for medium-rare or 150 F for medium. Transfer roast to carving board. Let stand 10 minutes. Temperature will rise about 10 F to reach 145 F for medium-rare or 160 F for medium.
- Carve into slices and serve.

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TIME to take stock and plan for the future

2022 has been a year of change for many of us. The end of the year is a good time to take stock of your personal situation and proactively plan for the future.

Update your estate plan

Putting your legal affairs in order is important. It reduces the burdens on loved ones in the event of your poor health or death. It can save time and expense. And it allows you to have control over how your assets pass. Every person should have three basic estate planning documents: a Last Will and Testament, a Durable Financial Power of Attorney, and a Living Will / Health Care Power of Attorney.

A will directs the distribution of your assets upon your death. Through the power of attorney, you give another person the ability to make financial decisions for you should you become incapacitated. If you're too ill to speak

for yourself, you can express your wishes and have your voice heard through a living will. This advance directive lets you detail your preferences for your medical care.

Make a list of key contacts

When you update your estate planning documents, you should also make a master list of important information. If you die or become incapacitated, your family will spend time figuring out what you own and whom they should contact. List your investment advisor, insurance agent, tax professional, banker and attorney. Make sure you have the correct contact information for each professional listed.

Review the title to your home

You should review how you hold title to your home. When you purchased your house, the seller executed a deed. The deed contained

important vesting information — the names on the title and the legal relationship between those titleholders.

If you are married, you probably want to ensure that both spouses are on title to the house. This may not be the case if the parties were married after one bought the house, or if it is a second marriage. You also probably want to ensure that, if one titleholder were to die, the house would pass to the survivor. A simple review of who holds title and how title is held can prevent expensive problems later.

These are three simple yet very effective steps that can save time and expense in the future. Contact an experienced attorney to help you get 2023 off to a good start. ■

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

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RIBBON Cutting

The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce celebrated a ribbon cutting for the new location of Shade Tree Auto at 3831 70th St. on Dec. 6.



The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce celebrated a ribbon cutting for the new location of Shade Tree Auto at 3831 70th St. on Dec. 6.



JP Pearson and Tim Gootee



Aaron DeJong and David Russell



Curvin Larson and Daycen Douglass



Bobbi Jo Wolfe and Gloria Perry



Kyle Younker and Jared Green



Brian Buethe and Shane Goodman



McGuire Beirman and Erica Beirman



Tiffany Menke and Keith Riden



John Johnson and Dan Hetzel

OUT & ABOUT



The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh at 2805 100th St. on Dec. 5.



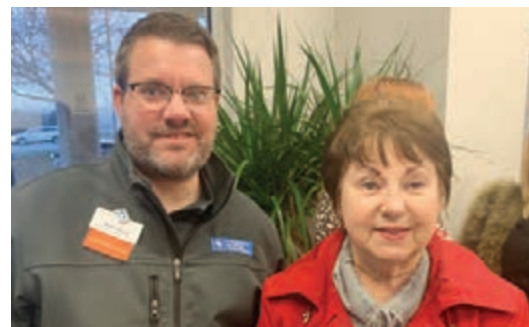
Nick Washburn, Chris Gesink and Nate Loren at the Chamber's ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh on Dec. 5.



Roger Wever and Judi Wever at the Chamber's ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh on Dec. 5.



Jay Mathes and Jackie Haley at the Chamber's ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh on Dec. 5.



Matt Shaw and Sandee Cook at the Chamber's ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh on Dec. 5.



Norm and Janet Trentmann at the Chamber's ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh on Dec. 5.



Chris Friest and Jason Liechti at the Chamber's ribbon cutting for Kitchen Refresh on Dec. 5.



Matthew Johnson at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.



Correction: Sarah Mau, Mandi Edwards, Alisha Hanze, Scottie Baer, Carla Edwards, Dennis Edwards and Simon Grubb of Sapphire Gymnastics Academy with their N.W. Polk County Residents' Choice certificate for runner up favorite gymnastics studio. We apologize for the errors in the caption of this photo in last month's Urbandale Living.

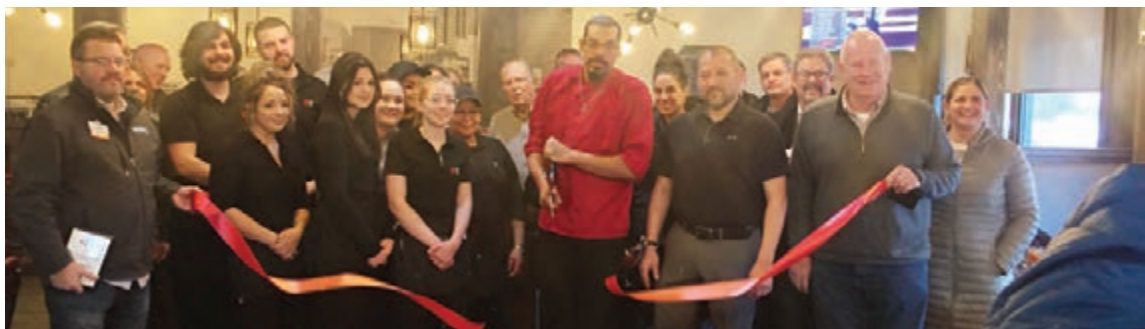


Ben Buenzow and Meagan Cowden at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.

OUT & ABOUT



Cecelia and Kris Spoonhaltz at the ribbon cutting held at Ruby Tuesday on Nov. 18.



A ribbon cutting was held at Ruby Tuesday, 4900 86th St., on Nov. 18 for its remodeling.



Trey and Rick Andrew at the ribbon cutting held at Ruby Tuesday on Nov. 18.



Wendy, Alexis, Lydia and Kyle Tillgren at the ribbon cutting held at Ruby Tuesday on Nov. 18.



Christy Jones and Gina Wright at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.



Mark Courter and Michael Annarelli at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.



Tiffany Menke and Sidney Jacobson at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.



Jolene Goodman, Eric Smith and Jen Paulsen at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.



Heidi Knoll, Terry Snyder and Karen Seidl at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.



Jeremiah Terhark, Kelsey Prescott, Nick Asjes, Tate Fulton, Courtney Buhrow, Kim Johnston and Kathi Andrew at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange presented by Allegra Marketing Print Mail and hosted by Bank Iowa on Nov. 29.

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