

WAUKEE

DECEMBER 2021

# Living

MAGAZINE

## Christmas *then and now*

Residents reflect on changing  
holiday observances

**"Douggy Doug's" holiday sparkle**  
NEIGHBOR

**Spragues' yellow shutters worthy of landmark status**  
WHERE WE LIVE

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

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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. ■

**SHANE GOODMAN**

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FEATURE

# Christmas

## *then and now*

Residents reflect on  
changing holiday  
observances

By Jackie Wilson

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.

Nichole McDowell has collected  
special ornaments over the years.  
Photo by Jackie Wilson





## FEATURE

### "The Table"

If the Kloster dining room could talk, it would tell the stories of 40 years of Kloster Christmas celebrations, including sleepovers, present steals and Kringla making.

The celebration recently moved to Waukee as Bridget and Lynn Kloster moved from the Kansas City area to be closer to family. But, no worries — the 30-some family members still make the trek for the gathering, typically held on New Year's Day.

The tradition differs from when Bridget was young. She was one of six kids raised by a single mom. Times were tough, and her family relied on assistance from the public and the church.

"We had Christmas brought to us. Banks sponsored us. I knew we were poor when I was little," she says. "I thought everyone had Christmas brought to them."

As there was no money for extras, she recalls going to St. Vincent — a secondhand store. A book cost 15 cents, and her mom struggled to pay for it.

"I found 'Grimm's Fairy Tales.' I had that book for years. I knew the sacrifices of spending that money. A lot of people were wonderful to us kids, and the church was supportive of a single mom."

Shortly after she and Lynn married, they began a



Lynn and Bridget Kloster have family members sign the Christmas tablecloth. Photo by Jackie Wilson



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## FEATURE



Nichole McDowell purchased an ornament each year for her two kids. Photo by Jackie Wilson



Nichole McDowell's favorite ornament was purchased when she and her husband, Zac, visited Washington, D.C. Photo by Jackie Wilson

family of their own. However, they still wanted to be with their extended family. The Kloster Christmas brings together the couple's siblings, their kids, grandkids and cousins. Most family members stay at their home, sleeping on the floor or couch. Families sign up to prepare a meal and help with the celebration.

One year, their granddaughter knew they

were putting their tree up and wanted to help decorate it. The previous year, the Klosters had put away the tree, leaving all the ornaments and lights on it, to save time.

"Our granddaughter was in tears. She wanted to decorate it all herself," says Bridget.

Other family traditions have made memories through the year. The family makes

Kringla, a Norwegian soft cookie often twisted into pretzel shapes. One year, they never got around to baking it, but the dough was ready.

"The kids and grandkids dropped what they were doing and came running to help make the Kringla," says Lynn. "The kids started making different shapes, such as a dog or their initial."



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## FEATURE

An important element to the festivities is “The Table.” The huge dining room table contains five leaves in it, along with a fifth leg for support. When the Klosters downsized and moved to Waukee, they offered it up for other family members.

“Nobody wanted us to get rid of it. It’s been refinished five times because we all put dents in it from playing the spoons game,” says Lynn.

Gift giving is a fun competition for the family, especially for whoever gets the white elephant gift with cash in it. The gift exchange started with a gag gift, for example a cat with a long neck given to a non-cat lover. One time, an odd pig gift — along with a \$20 bill to sweeten the pot — was offered. Bridget used a Barbie doll as a gift, as she knew her young granddaughter might steal it. It turns out she wanted the gift with the cash in it.

Over the years, they’ve made many wonderful memories. Lynn put old home movies on CDs so they can view past celebrations. A family wall of photos is special, along with a tablecloth with signatures and dates written on it. They hold special memories of the family members who have passed.

“We’ve had a lot of fun, some wonderful memories,” says Bridget.

Lynn adds, “It’s all about making memories with the little ones.”

### Nativity sets

Growing up, Nichole McDowell and her three brothers didn’t have many Christmas gifts. Yet her parents did the best they could.

“They always made it feel magical to us,” she says. “That is something I wanted to try and do for my kids.”

Nichole began memory making when she and her husband, Zac, started their family. Their kids, Maggie, 12, and Wesley, 15, still enjoy traditions.

Their Christmas Eve smorgasbord is a favorite. It consists of everyone’s favorite snacks, including hot crab pinwheels, cheese trays and cayenne pretzels.

“I’m trying to scale back. Every year the counter is filled with 20 different snacks — and that’s just for the four of us. It’s absurd.”

Their first year living in Waukee, Nichole was recovering from hip surgery and couldn’t do everything.

“The kids complained that Dad didn’t do it right,” she jokes.

Decorations are treasured as she unpacks memories from the boxes. Ornaments tell of



Kari Fagen enjoys the memories that are sparked by her family ornaments. Photo by Jackie Wilson

family trips. Each of the kids receives a special ornament, reflecting on what they experienced the past year.

“I’ve drug my husband into shops when we’re on vacation, looking for just the right ornament,” she says.

She reflects on how her kids have grown up over the years.

“I remember when my son liked superheroes,” she says as she holds up a Spider-Man ornament. “You can track it as you go. It’s fun to look back. I hope my kids will go through these ornaments with their kids and laugh about it.”

When Nichole began collecting nativity scenes, another tradition was born. When Zac was in Iraq, one of their neighbors brought over a large nativity set. Shortly after that, she began collecting and displaying all of them.

“It makes it more fun when someone else has already loved it,” she explains. “The gaudier, the better. I’ve never paid much for them and

get them at secondhand stores.”

The nativity scenes also remind her of her grandma and her nativity set. Her grandma used to live down a long lane, and, when her family drove up the lane at Christmas, Nichole says she would feel the excitement and anticipation build.

“In the picture window, we always saw a white ceramic tree glowing when we arrived,” she says. “The nativity sets are all about the spiritual reason — to remember why we celebrate.”

### Ornament traditions

Kari Fagen’s Christmas tree is full of ornaments that are special to her and her family. The tradition of purchasing an ornament a year began when Kari was 3 years old.

During a visit to the Amana Colonies, she picked out a soft camel ornament.

“It wasn’t that special looking. I don’t know



## FEATURE

why I picked it out when I was 3 years old,” she says.

When she married, her parents boxed up her ornaments to put on her tree. She was excited to start a new tradition with her tree. However, she wasn’t sure how safe her prized ornaments were — thanks to her curious cat.

“We had a Siamese cat that climbed trees and knocked down ornaments. I was hesitant to put up all my special ornaments,” she says. “The cat lived until she was 17. It was always a question — how long will the tree and ornaments stay up?”

When she had children, she began giving her kids an ornament that symbolized the importance or meaning for that year. She estimates she has more than 50 special ornaments.

Other ornaments were acquired when the family traveled and brought back an ornament from their visit.

“It’s fun to get out the box and relive those memories — such as our Disney

cruise,” she recalls.

The family used to go out and pick live trees; however, the falling needles were messy. Today, the small artificial tree is a perfect fit.

“We keep it simple now that the kids are grown. We might do more if we ever get grandkids at some point,” she says.

A family tradition for her kids is opening gifts Christmas morning. They start with the youngest.

“We tried not to do a free-for-all and opened up just one at a time,” she says.

One tradition she enjoyed was making spritz cookies. She used to help her grandma make and decorate the cookies.

“My mom didn’t know how to make the dough,” she explains. “It stopped when Grandma passed.”

Kari says her husband enjoys decorating with old-fashioned bubble lights.

“He has a ridiculous amount of bubble lights,” she says. “The cat loved them, too.” ■



Kari Fagen treasures a snowman decoration that used to belong to her grandma. Photo by Jackie Wilson

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## THE JOY of impact

I have the privilege of working with a particular group: pre-retirees and retirees. They have this amazing perspective on life. They've worked 30 or 40 years, they've raised their kids, and they've persevered through many of life's ups and downs. They're shifting their identity away from their work and into their retirement. They light up when they talk about the opportunity ahead of them — specifically their desire to leave an impact.

That impact looks different for everyone. Some of the families and individuals we work with want to have an impact on their grandkids. That could be providing childcare, simply spending more time with them, or working on a strategy to help them pay for college. Others want to have an impact on their community. They talk about doing more volunteer work, helping with projects at church, or giving to their favorite charities.

I love to start the retirement planning process with these conversations. I know this might sound a bit strange coming from someone who spends a lot of his day researching investments and implementing tax strategies, but research studies back up what I've seen firsthand: The happiest retirees have a lifestyle plan. They have an idea about how they want to spend their days to stay engaged and fulfilled in



retirement. Aside from benefiting their mental health, the lifestyle plan is the perfect way to springboard into the other elements of a retirement plan.

We start the retirement planning process with a lifestyle plan because it's the lifestyle plan that drives many of the other decisions you have to make about retirement. For example, you wouldn't buy a minivan if you are looking for an off-road vehicle to use in the mountains of Colorado. The same is true in retirement; you need your tools and resources to align with your goals. Do you desire to spend every dollar on your dream vacations or have a significant amount left over to pass to future generations? These answers will drive your investments and how you set up your legacy plan. There's even a connection between the lifestyle plan and your long-term tax strategy because how you choose to take income in retirement can impact your tax bracket, both now and in the future.

After developing a lifestyle plan, we work through those other aspects of retirement: income, investment, tax, health care and legacy planning. I love seeing the joy on people's faces when the plan shows them how they can pay for all of those things and leave the type of impact they've been dreaming of in retirement. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle, CFP®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, IA 50111, 515-278-1006.

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## LIBRARY

By Sam Bedford

# WAUKEE Public Library news

Make a positive impact in 2022

Looking for ways to give back to your community, enhance the Library, and make a big impact in just a few hours per month? Consider joining the Waukee Public Library Friends Foundation Board of Directors.

You'll work with other service-oriented members of the community to find ways to fund and enrich the Waukee Public Library and its mission to

provide beneficial resources and services to the Waukee community and surrounding areas. Make a positive impact in 2022 and join the Friends Foundation Board today. Email [waukeepfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:waukeepfoundation@gmail.com) for more information on how to apply. Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

The mission of the Waukee Friends Foundation is to support and enhance the programs and services of the Waukee Public Library through volunteerism and provide for the ongoing and long-term financial needs of the Library.

To find out more about the Waukee Public Library Friends Foundation, go to [waukeepubliclibrary.org](http://waukeepubliclibrary.org)



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## EVENTS

The majority of events will require advanced registration. Visit [waukeepubliclibrary.org/calendar](http://waukeepubliclibrary.org/calendar) for more information and to register.

• **Babytime**, Monday, Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 10 a.m. Join us for 15-20 minutes of songs, rhymes and stories for infants ages 0-17 months and their caregivers. Registration is required for this event.

• **Zoom Storytime**, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Jan. 4-5, 11-12, 18-19, 25-26 at 10 a.m. Register to join us live on Zoom for 25 minutes of short stories, songs and movement for children ages 18 months to 5 years old and their caregivers. Registration is required to receive a link for each event.

• **Teen Advisory Board**, Monday, Jan. 3, 10, 24 and 31 at 3:30 p.m. Students in grades 7-12 are invited to participate on the Library's Teen Advisory Board (TAB). TAB meets weekly to plan teen programs, sign up for Library volunteer opportunities, build leadership skills, and suggest teen books to be purchased by the Library. Email [kweston-stoll@waukee.org](mailto:kweston-stoll@waukee.org) to register or for more info.

• **Stories & Stretches**, Thursday, Jan. 6 and 27 at 6 p.m. Ready, set, stretch! Prepare for bedtime with fun stories and yoga stretches for families. Children and their caregivers should arrive prepared to move in pajamas or other comfortable clothes — just bring your own yoga mats or towels. Registration is required for each event.





• **0-5 Playtime**, Friday, Jan. 7 and 28 at 10 a.m. Children ages 0-5 years old and their caregivers are invited to stop in the front program rooms to play with a variety of the Library's toys. Registration is required for each event.

• **Bricks and Beads**, Wednesday, Jan. 12 at 2 p.m. Calling all crafty engineers. Register to drop in any time during this event to get creative with the Library's Lego collection or to make a Perler bead design.

• **Movie Matinee**, Thursday, Jan. 13 at 10 a.m. Join us the second Thursday of every month to watch a movie on the Library's big screen. We'll be showing everything from major blockbusters to classics. No registration is required.

• **Books on Tap**, Tuesday, Jan. 18 at 6 p.m. Meet at Mickey's Irish Pub to enjoy food, drinks and a discussion of Alice Hoffman's book, "The World That We Knew."

• **Faux Stained Glass**, Monday, Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. Add some color to the gray winter world by creating your own imitation stained glass art using sharpies and black hot glue! This event is great for students in grades 6-12. Registration is required.

• **Elementary Early Out**, Wednesday, Jan. 26 at 2:30 p.m. Youth in grades K-5 are invited to bring their creativity and scientific minds to the Library to explore a variety of dinosaur STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) hands-on activities. Registration is required.

• **Candle Workshop**, Saturday, Jan. 29 at 2 p.m. Chase away the winter blues with a custom candle. During this one-hour session, the experts at Candle Bar DSM will help you create your own custom blended scent and pour your personalized soy wax candle. Registration is required for this event and takes place at Candle Bar DSM in Valley Junction.

• **Teen Pop Trivia**, Sunday, Jan. 30 at 1:30 p.m. Team up with your friends (or make new friends at the event) and prove who has the greatest brain. Categories will include: Marvel, Harry Potter, Hunger Games and Disney films. Registration is required for this 6-12 grade event. ■

# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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# SPRAGUES' yellow shutters worthy of landmark status

"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" inspires decorations

The house's bright yellow shutters are eye-catching enough. But when it really gets interesting is during the Halloween and Christmas months. The Sprague family's Waukee home is truly a sight to be seen. For years, Matt and Meagan, the father-daughter duo, have built fantastic holiday displays, bringing joy to their entire neighborhood.

Matt and Lindsay Sprague live in their Waukee home with their daughters, Meagan and Samantha. They have lived in this home since 2010 and in Waukee since 2005. The house's biggest identifier all year long is, of course, its yellow shutters and door.

"That's my wife's choice, that's all I'm going to say," Matt says with a laugh.

Their house is used as a landmark for members of the neighborhood. People can incorporate directions such as "Turn left down this street by the yellow shutter house."

More notably, the house is all the rage during Halloween. Many people stop by to take pictures, students on the school bus point, and the family hears a positive reaction from the community. The house is quite a hit on beggars night.

It all started when Matt would make various homemade Halloween items. From there, it evolved to reflect the movie "The Nightmare Before Christmas," Meagan's favorite movie. Year to year, they add more to the display. This year, they added more characters including the Doctor and the Mayor, as well as a dog house for Zero.

"He cuts the wood, and I paint," Meagan explains.

All it takes every year is paint, wood and a little bit of PVC.

For Christmas this year, the house has a display including the popular Christmas characters The Grinch with his dog Max and Cindy Lou Who. Additions this year were primarily adding more lights to the actual house. However, their plans for the near future include adding more to the Grinch scene.

The inspiration for these displays: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." Matt's love for the movie pushes him to expand and go bigger each year.

"My goal one year is to do my whole house," Matt assures.

The creativity and holiday spirit is not



Matt Sprague and daughter Meagan are expanding their holiday decorations in front of their home, known in the area for its yellow shutters and door.

limited only to the Spragues' Waukee home. Matt was also the one who started the Christmas displays at the Waukee Fire Station, where he used to work. He reached out to the fire chief and suggested doing some displays. He received approval and got to work. One of the displays included a firefighter that sprayed water made out of lights. Another one he found online was a big fire truck with what looked like a moving wheel animation. Additionally, the department put lights all around the garage doors at the station.

Iowa weather takes a toll on Sprague's displays, but that only gives him more reason to get bigger and better and to use the latest technology. The family has used projections



The Spragues' Halloween decorations are based on "The Nightmare Before Christmas," with new items added each year. Theirs has become a popular stopping place for Halloween.

onto their house and garage with plans to do the same in the future. They also want to take advantage of different kinds of lights like net lighting.

"We have a really good reaction with it, and we have a fun time with it," Matt and Meagan agree. ■



## 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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  - Muscle assessment using surface electromyography or sEMG, which is like an EKG for the heart. This procedure detects and interprets the electric activity, response and health of the muscles along the spine.
  - Spinal examination is a traditional part of any chiropractic visit. It is important to check for any structural shifts and subluxations or altered structures like vertebra.
  - Digital x-rays, when necessary, help identify structural issues that can't be detected during the other evaluations, such as degeneration or curvature of the spine.
- Look for a healthcare professional that provides these four diagnostic elements coupled with gentle, specific chiropractic adjustments. ■

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



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**VERO**



## 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).

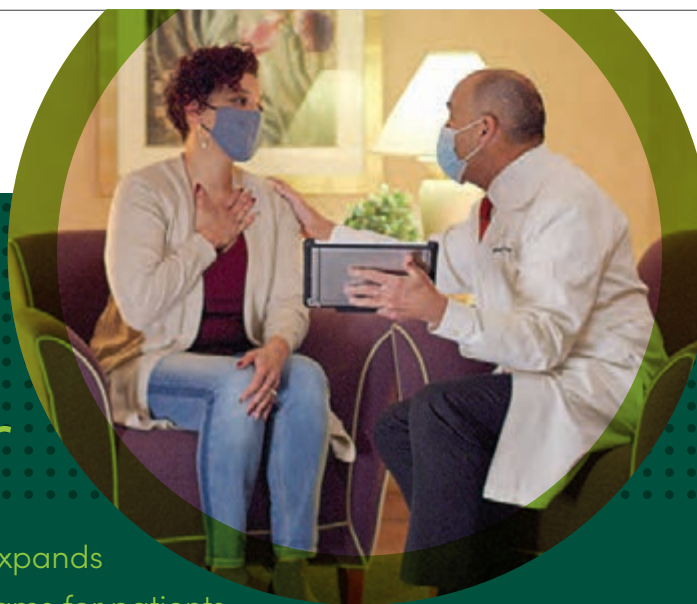
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## A new way to treat cancer

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# MANY factors cause tooth sensitivity

Nothing is more aggravating than a toothache, especially if it wakes you up at night or keeps you from enjoying your food or beverage of choice. Sometimes a zing can occur when brushing your teeth. Healthy teeth with normal development have a nice layer of enamel (the white outer layer of the tooth above the gum line), which allows us to chew our food and protect teeth from sensitivity. There are many factors that can cause tooth sensitivity. The layer underneath the enamel is called dentin, which has tiny tubules which can act as a pathway for air, liquids or acids to reach the nerve and, thus, cause hypersensitivity or pain.



Factors such as cavities, gum recession leaving exposed root surfaces, cracked or fractured teeth, enamel hypoplasia (thin or absent healthy outer enamel), inflamed nerve of a tooth, and worn fillings can cause sensitivity. Most people typically describe a simple, sporadic, "zing" when experiencing hypersensitivity, but others can have drawn out pain or aching in a tooth for hours to days at a time. It's helpful to pay attention to what you're doing or eating when you have an episode of sensitivity. Whether it's when you're brushing your teeth, drinking your morning coffee, or chewing on something hard, the duration and

degree of discomfort can help the dentist determine what is happening with the tooth. Short, sporadic periods of hypersensitivity can be managed by something as simple as switching to "sensitive" toothpaste that can be purchased over the counter. Fluoride gel or varnish are other ingredients used to help combat hypersensitivity.

Lingering pain while chewing or drinking hot/cold liquids can create a slightly different story. Chewing pain can mean a cracked tooth, which may require a crown, and lingering thermal, or warm, discomfort may signify the tooth may need a root canal procedure. For people with receded gums, many teeth can be involved with hypersensitivity. This situation may require a gum grafting surgery to alleviate it.

It is important to keep regular dental checkups. Your dentist can keep a specialized eye out for potential problems in certain teeth, based on older fillings you may have or gum problems which can lead to recession and sensitivity. Something as simple as using a different toothpaste or adding to your home regimen can sometimes be enough to keep your teeth healthy and free of discomfort. Consult your dentist about any sensitivity for the best treatment plan for you. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jason Brown DDS, Timberline Family Dental, 515-644-2264, 2153 S.E. LA Grant Parkway, Waukee, IA 50263.

Wishing you the  
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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com)

Be sure to check for cancellations.

### Life-sized Candyland

Dec. 27, 28 and 29  
Waukee Public Library,  
950 Warrior Lane

Part of the Library will be transformed into a life-sized Candyland for registered participants to enjoy. You can invite friends and family to join you as you work your way through the game and perhaps meet some favorite game characters. Group sizes are limited to 20 people.

### Real Food 4 Kids offered

Jan. 17-Feb. 28

Keep the kids busy in the kitchen this winter with Real Food 4 Kids held Jan. 17 through Feb. 28. Participants ages 6-12 will learn about ingredients, measuring, mixing, chopping and blending. Plus, make recipes from scratch, such as energy bites, veggies and dips, pancakes and homemade syrup, desserts and pasta dishes. Classes take place on Monday nights. The cost of the seven-week session is \$157.50. To register, visit [https://waukee.activityreg.com/ClientPage\\_r2.wcs](https://waukee.activityreg.com/ClientPage_r2.wcs).



### Registration open for girls spring softball

Online registration ends Feb. 17

Registration for the Waukee Parks & Recreation Department's Girls Softball League is now open. The season will run from mid-April through early June. Register participants for the grade they are in for the 2021-2022 school year. The cost is \$70 for grades K-2, and the cost is \$92 for grades 3-7. Grades K-1 will play with both a tee and coach pitching. Tees will not be used for grades 2-7. Players are required to provide their own helmets and ball gloves. Register at [https://waukee.activityreg.com/ClientPage\\_r2.wcs](https://waukee.activityreg.com/ClientPage_r2.wcs), under the Youth Sports category.



### 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).



### Fire & Ice Winter Pub Crawl

Saturday, Jan. 22, 1-4 p.m.

Valley Junction

CITYVIEW'S winter event returns. Tickets, ordered in advance, are \$20. Cost is \$30 at the door. Ticket covers 10 sample winter specialty drinks at participating establishments in Valley Junction. Tickets are available online at [fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com](http://fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com).

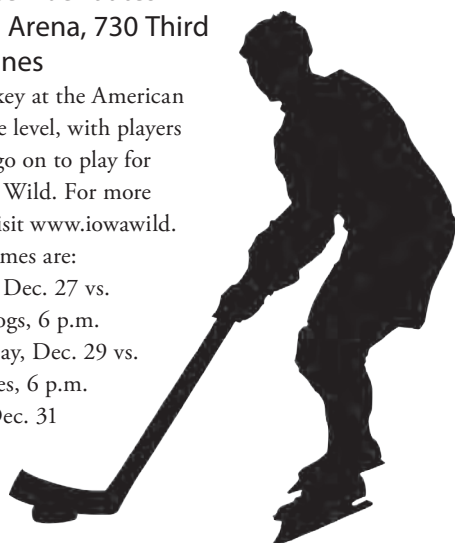


### Iowa Wild Hockey home games

Various December dates  
Wells Fargo Arena, 730 Third  
St., Des Moines

Enjoy hockey at the American Hockey League level, with players that regularly go on to play for the Minnesota Wild. For more information, visit [www.iowawild.com](http://www.iowawild.com). Home games are:

- Monday, Dec. 27 vs. Rockford Icehogs, 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 29 vs. Colorado Eagles, 6 p.m.
- Friday, Dec. 31 vs. Colorado Eagles, 2 p.m.



### Des Moines Buccaneers home game

Wednesday, Dec. 29 vs. Cedar Rapids RoughRiders, 6:30 p.m.  
Buccaneer Arena in Urbandale,  
7201 Hickman Road

The Buccaneers, a Junior A Amateur Ice Hockey team, entertain local audiences with fast-paced action. For more information, visit [www.bucshockey.com](http://www.bucshockey.com).



## EVENTS IN THE AREA



### 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).



### Santa's Rock N Lights

Through Jan. 2

Living History Farms

More than 100,000 attendees are expected at this popular drive-through light show. The over-a-mile-long route will feature hundreds of thousands of lights, miles of cords, and tens of thousands of zip ties — all to spread holiday cheer in a responsible, COVID-safe way. New this year will be larger-than-life polar bears and 3D dinosaurs. Limited time slots must be reserved and will minimize wait times. Paid online reservation required. Visit <https://santasrocknlights.com/>.



### Jolly Holiday Lights

Through Jan. 2

Adventureland Resort, 3200 Adventureland Drive

Make-A-Wish Iowa started Jolly Holiday Lights more than 25 years ago to raise money to grant Iowa children's wishes. Since then, Jolly Holiday Lights has become the organization's largest fundraising event, funding more than 1,000 wishes to date.



### Iowa Quilt Museum exhibit

Through Jan. 23

68 E. Court Ave., Winterset

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).



### An Evening of Celtic Music

March 12, 7 p.m.

Windsor Presbyterian Church, 6301 University Ave., Windsor Heights

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



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# DECEMBER 2021 CITY NEWS

## CITY OF WAUKEE

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Phone: 515-978-7900

## STAY CONNECTED

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-  CityofWaukeelowa
-    CityofWaukee
-  Sign up for the City's enewsletter at [www.Waukee.org/Communications](http://www.Waukee.org/Communications)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Christmas Holidays – City Offices Closed**  
Dec. 23 & 24  
*Trash collection as normal*
- **New Year's Eve – City Offices Closed Dec. 31**  
*Trash collection as normal*
- **Curbside Christmas Tree Collection Days**  
Jan. 3 and 10
- **Regular City Council Meetings**  
Jan. 3 and 17 at 5:30 p.m.  
*Waukee City Hall and Zoom*
- **Dinner Delights Meal Prep Party**  
Sun., Jan. 9 from 2-4 p.m.  
*Registration required:*  
[Waukee.org/registration](http://Waukee.org/registration)
- **FamilyFest**  
Sat., Jan. 15 from 9 a.m. to noon  
*Lutheran Church of Hope – Waukee*

## Snow Removal Reminders

It's winter in Waukee, and the City has several snow-related reminders:

1. When snow accumulation is forecast for Waukee, the Public Works Department will declare a Snow Emergency Parking Ban. Parking is not allowed on public streets when the ban is in effect. Vehicles remaining on City streets are subject to \$25 fines and/or towing.
2. Property owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from all sidewalks adjacent to private property within 24 hours after a snowfall. It is unlawful to place, throw or push snow onto City streets from private property.
3. If snow covers a fire hydrant, please dig out at least one foot around the hydrant down to the ground and out to the street to keep them accessible to emergency vehicles.
4. Please place garbage and recycling bins in driveways, not in streets.

Watch the City of Waukee's Facebook page, Twitter feed, Nextdoor and Waukee.org for snow notifications. Receive text alerts by signing up for Nixle at [Nixle.com](http://Nixle.com) or by texting '50263' to 888777.



## Heat Your Home Safely

As a reminder, if you smell gas (rotten egg odor), call the Public Works emergency number at 515-249-1212. If the smell is overpowering, leave the house and call 911. Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are also recommended. Early stages of CO poisoning can include dizziness, flu-like symptoms, fatigue and severe headache. If you suspect CO poisoning or a detector alarm sounds, leave the house immediately. Seek medical attention if ill.



# Waukee





## Christmas and New Year's Closures

All City of Waukee offices will be closed on Dec. 23 and 24 in observance of Christmas. City buildings will also be closed on Dec. 31 in observance of New Year's Day. The Waukee Public Library will be closed Dec. 23-26 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1. Trash collection for City/ASI customers will run on its normal schedule, without any delays.



## Christmas Tree Collection Jan. 3 & 10

The Christmas Tree collection days for City of Waukee/ASI garbage customers are scheduled for Jan. 3 and 10, 2022. Real Christmas trees only should be placed on curbs by 7 a.m. Please have all items cleared off the trees before placing them out on the curbs - this includes tinsel and garland. Trees should not be placed in bags.



## Fun Awaits at Waukee FamilyFest!

Get the kids ready for a fun, free event right after the New Year! Waukee Parks & Recreation will hold the annual FamilyFest celebration on Saturday, Jan. 15, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (noon) at Lutheran Church of Hope - Waukee (305 NE Dartmoor Drive). This FREE, family-friendly event features inflatables, snacks, and games and prizes supplied by local Waukee businesses and organizations.



## Sled and Skate in Waukee

Waukee has two fun outdoor amenities to explore this winter. Waukee's Outdoor Skating Rink will be constructed, filled and frozen at Grant Park (605 SE Driftwood Lane) when temps allow. And, when snow falls, head to the Warrior Park Sledding Hill (1050 4th Street) which was specially engineered just for sledding! Follow Waukee.org and City social media pages for ice rink updates.



## Police Give Back for the Holidays

On Nov. 20, Waukee Police Officers delivered the makings of Thanksgiving dinners to 31 area families in need. The department also fulfilled holiday gift lists through "Operation Wish List". Officers shopped for and delivered wrapped gifts to 29 kids (13 total families) in the Waukee area. The department thanks all of the community members and businesses who supported these efforts!



## 2022 Pet Licenses and Dog Park Passes

It's time to get Waukee pets licensed for 2022! For existing pets, please follow the instructions in the recent PetData mailing to renew. To apply for a new pet license, please visit [petdata.com](http://petdata.com). Dog and cat licenses are required per City ordinance. Trailside Dog Park passes for 2022 are also available at [waukee.mybarkpass.com](http://waukee.mybarkpass.com).



# 'DOUGY DOUG'S' holiday sparkle

More than 42,000 Christmas lights dance to music.

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, a steady line of vehicles drives slowly past Doug Ostrander's home in Waukee. What's the big attraction? It's his Christmas light display, known as Dougy Doug's Christmas Extravaganza.

With 42,380 lights set to music, swirling lights outline his house as if dancing to "Jingle Bells." A 6-foot sphere ball changes color. Two 16-foot posts hold up a 12-foot by 12-foot wide virtual TV matrix. Snowflakes spin while other shapes morph into rainbow colors. A 4,800-light mega tree strums lights as if plucking a guitar string to an AC/DC tune.

Doug first began tinkering with lights in college. With a background in electrical engineering, he made colored LED running



Doug Ostrander's holiday light display at his Waukee home is set to music and changes colors. His display now has more than 42,000 lights.

lights in his car. The LEDs weren't cost efficient, but he liked a challenge.

In 2004, he put up lights outlining his house, but, after he viewed his electric bill, he stopped doing it. About five years ago, he saw a neighbor choreograph lights to music. His engineering brain questioned how he could do it, and he began researching it.

He discovered a computer program, xLights. He purchased LED/RGB lights, with the RGB standing for red, green and blue. With those colors, you can combine them to make hundreds of colors.

"The computer does it all for you," he says.

He inputs the color specifics and sequencing. Doug attended a Halloween convention last year, where he learned more about mega lighting effects.

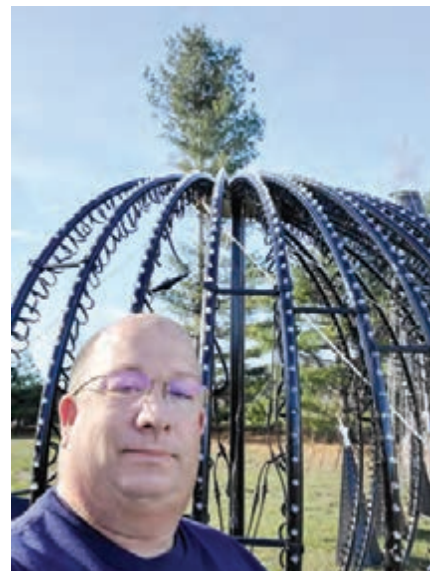
He belongs to a sequencing club, where people share layouts for a house set up. Various group members have been on the ABC television show, "Great Christmas Light Fight."

With all the lights going on, one would think his power bill would be through the roof. It's not — and it's a testament to LED lighting benefits.

"The second year we did it, it only cost \$20 more. You can turn down LED lights, and we only use power from 6-10 p.m.," he explains.

The response from their admirers of all ages has been overwhelming. "People were screaming 'thank you.' I didn't think they'd go so nuts about it," he says.

Ready for some musical lights? Take a drive to 3394 Ashworth Road and turn on the FM station to 99.5. ■




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## INSURANCE By Jon Kelderman

# ABOUT Medicare Advantage plans

"So, what's with JJ and Joe telling me I can get more money with my Social Security?"

This is the question I get most often from clients, especially this year with the Part B premiums rising significantly. It refers to a Medicare Advantage feature called a Part B giveback. With all the Medicare commercials on television, it is no wonder that the confusion grows with how Medicare works. This one had me stumped at first because, like they say in the commercial, "it depends on your zip code" and our zip codes in Iowa do not have Medicare Advantage plans with a part B Give Back. Iowa has a few exceptions. There are plans offered in central Iowa that work for people who are using the VA for healthcare or Tricare that offers a partial Part B giveback. There is also a federal program, Extra Help, for those with lower incomes. Extra Help pays all or part of the Part B premium.

Interestingly, I read an article saying, Joe and JJ, "should be ashamed of themselves" and "they are promoting a scam." Medicare Advantage is not a scam. Most agents, including me, write Medicare Advantage plans. One-third of Medicare recipients in the U.S. are on Medicare Advantage plans. Certainly, they are not for everyone, and agents should speak openly and honestly when comparing Medicare Supplements versus Medicare Advantage. The commercials are completely accurate as to the benefits they offer, but benefits vary widely by plan.

Do I think you should call the helpline advertised? I adamantly say, "No!" Why? Most likely, the phone number you call is going to a lead vendor who will sell your information. I have had clients who got signed up for a Medicare plan without their consent. Why not deal with someone who is in your community? There are many good local agents who can help. The good news is that we should see far fewer Medicare advertisements as AEP ended Dec. 7. ■

Information provided by Jon Kelderman, Kelderman Insurance, American Republic, 665 S.E. Madrone Lane, Waukee, Iowa 50263, 515-554-7087.



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# MAKE safety a priority for holiday travel

*(Family Features)* As more and more Americans hit the road and return to traveling for the holidays, concerns around road safety are top of mind.

Nearly half of Americans (47%) plan to travel in the next six months, including 51% with plans to travel for Christmas, according to a survey by 3M. A majority (76%) plan to travel by car, but more than a third of travelers are as concerned about road safety as they are about contracting COVID-19.

“Especially after spending an extended period closer to home, many people are likely to have some trepidation about getting back out on the road,” said automotive expert Lauren Fix, “The Car Coach” and 3M spokesperson. “Being conscious of issues like visibility and distracted driving are important ways to protect yourself and your passengers.”

Consider these tips to enhance the safety of your holiday travel.

## Before You Go

Check your tire pressure and the condition of your tread. Properly inflated and adequate tires can keep you safe on the road, especially in slick conditions.

Visibility is important so you can see the road and other drivers. Make sure you have properly functioning wiper blades and carry extra washer fluid. Check your headlights to ensure they both work and your lenses aren't hazy.

Use your GPS to help you plan the best time to leave for your road trip, avoiding the major rush hours.

Make sure your car has an emergency kit and replenish any items you have used in the past. Include a first aid kit, blanket, drinking



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

water, flashlight, reflective triangles and a reflective vest to keep you visible to other vehicles if you are working on your car on the side of the road or need to walk to get help.

## While on the road

Keep your focus on the road and stay off your phone. Also be aware of the other vehicles and drivers around you.

Use GPS to re-route around construction or congestion. If you do come across construction, be sure to keep a close eye on the roadway signage and markings as they can help you navigate the complex roadways safely.

If you find yourself driving in bad weather and visibility is an issue, pay attention to road markings to keep yourself oriented to the roadway. If you have no visibility, pull over.

Find more road safety information at [3M.com/news](https://www.3m.com/news).

## Recognize Road Safety Markings

Reflective signage and high-visibility pavement markings, along with innovative systems and services, help make roadways and other vehicles more visible to drivers. You can count on safer travel this holiday season with road safety solutions such as:

**Traffic signs:** Studies have found that where highly visible signs are installed, crash numbers have fallen up to 46% within 3-6 years. Reflective sign sheeting, ink and overlays

increase visibility and driver recognition of these signals. In foggy and wintery weather, fluorescent yellow street signs have also been found to be more easily visible.

**Pavement markings:** Pavement markings help guide drivers and keep roads safe. In dark and wet conditions, standard reflective pavement markings can disappear. Reflective technology like the options from 3M make road markings visible from longer distances and in wet conditions.

**Traffic delineators:** Navigating complex or changing roadways can be confusing and dangerous for drivers. Specialized delineation systems are used for construction projects, median barriers and guardrails, putting roadway information directly in sight of drivers and making it easier to navigate roadway complexities.

**License plates:** License plates need to remain visible on any roadway and in all conditions, ensuring law enforcement can quickly and effectively identify vehicles. By providing vehicle registration solutions and advanced license plate manufacturing equipment, 3M partners with motor vehicle agencies and manufacturers around the world.

**Vehicle markings:** Government regulations call for conspicuity tape on certain types of large vehicles and trailers in the United States to increase visibility and help prevent traffic collisions, injuries and deaths. ■



Photo courtesy of Getty Images





# CHOOSE aventura

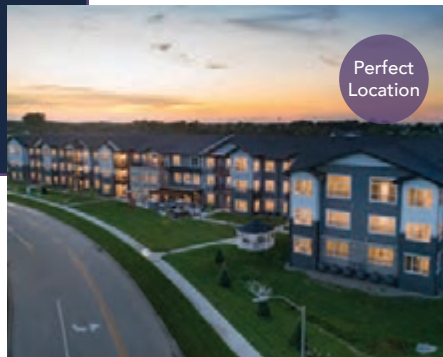
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## RECIPES

# 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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## RECIPES

### Apple stuffing bites with rosemary gravy

- 1 box stovetop stuffing
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups diced Envy Apples
- ½ onion, diced small

#### Gravy

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups beef broth
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 20 turns fresh cracked pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped rosemary

#### Directions

- Preheat broiler.
- Cook stuffing according to package directions; set aside and allow to cool slightly.
- In large saute pan, melt butter and saute apples and onion until tender. Set aside to cool slightly.
- Stir together stuffing and apple mixture. Spread stuffing on sheet tray and allow to cool in refrigerator.
- After cooling, form stuffing into medium bites and place on sheet tray lined with parchment paper.
- Broil bites until golden brown and slightly crispy.



#### To make gravy

- In small pot, melt butter and whisk in flour. Cook flour 1 minute, whisking frequently.
- Whisk in beef broth, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce; bring to boil, whisking frequently. Remove from heat and stir in rosemary. If desired, continue gently simmering gravy to thicken.
- Arrange stuffing bites in serving dish and drizzle with gravy. Serve hot.

### Pumpkin spice apple cider



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

- 1 Envy Apple, diced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin spice
- 2 ounces bourbon (optional)
- 4 ounces pumpkin spice apple cider
- demerara sugar
- Envy Apple slices, for garnish
- rosemary, for garnish
- cinnamon stick, for garnish

#### Directions

- In pan over medium heat, saute diced apples in butter and pumpkin spice 5-10 minutes.
- In glass, combine bourbon (optional) and pumpkin spice apple cider; top with sauteed apples.
- Add demerara sugar then garnish with apple slices, rosemary and cinnamon stick.

### Bell-issimo brie melt



- 1 round brie (6-8 ounces)
- 2 Envy Apples
- ¼ cup walnuts
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- firm crackers

#### Directions

- Unwrap brie and place on microwave-safe dish. Cut off top of brie round and microwave 60 seconds until middle is soft.
- Slice apples into thick wedges.
- Top brie with half the apples, crushed walnuts and dried cranberries.
- Serve with firm crackers and remaining apple wedges.

# END of the year is a time to take stock

2021 has been a challenging year for all of us. The uncertainty and anxiety will continue into 2022. Still, the end of the year is a good time to take stock of your personal situation.

## Update your estate plan

Putting your legal affairs in order is important. It reduces the burdens on loved ones in the event of 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 advisor 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 effective steps that can save time and expense in the future. Contact an experienced attorney to help you. ■

Information provided by Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, [www.ARPCLaw.com](http://www.ARPCLaw.com).





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## HVAC

By Sam Yeager

# TIPS for a safe and comfortable holiday

Christmas is right around the corner, which means family gatherings and holiday celebrations are on their way. During this busy time of year, don't forget to check your HVAC system. After all, it does keep your home at the right temperature so that you can enjoy the holidays comfortably. Let's start preparing your system for the upcoming season.



Do you have closed air vents? Closing off your vents can result in poor air circulation and build up unnecessary pressure that can make your system work harder than necessary. Put your safety first by keeping decorations clear of your air vents. Covering your air vents with a tree, tree skirt, or gifts can cause your furnace to overheat. It's inevitable for an ornament to break, especially if you have excited pets and kids. If an ornament breaks, check to make sure that pieces didn't fall into the vents.

Dirty air filter? Replacing the air filter in your HVAC will go a long way to keeping your system running smoothly during the holidays. Build-up can cause your system to work harder than it needs to, resulting in airflow issues. Changing out your filter will help prevent complications and even comes with perks that you can enjoy. Not only will it improve your air quality, but it will save you money because your system is running more efficiently.

While you're outside hanging up lights and holiday decorations, take a minute to clean your outdoor unit. Your furnace will thank you for it. The obstructions can compromise the performance and result in costly problems in the future. Look for leaves, trash and twigs that can be easily removed, and keep all holiday decorations away from your equipment.

If you're planning on leaving town to visit friends and family, don't forget to set your thermostat. Wi-fi thermostats are an easy upgrade if you don't have one already. If you do have one, use the settings to keep the temperature cooler while you're away, but nice and warm when you arrive back home. This will help avoid wearing a jacket while you unpack from your trip.

Schedule a maintenance appointment, which can easily be overlooked during the busy holiday season. An annual maintenance visit will help keep the problems away — not only during the holidays, but all year long.

Have a safe and Merry Christmas! ■

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



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