

WAUKEE

SEPTEMBER 2022

Living

A new LOOK

Residents share their home
improvement projects

Farmers Market
OUT AND ABOUT

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WELCOME

SIMPLIFICATION efforts

As summer closes and fall creeps in, you may find yourself looking at your list of home improvement projects that you had great intentions of doing in the warm months but haven't been able to cross off the list quite yet. I can certainly relate.

In a next-stage-of-life simplification effort, my wife and I decided to sell our family home of 17 years and move into a townhome.

Not in a simplification effort, we also bought a lake cabin that needed a number of improvements. Our goal was to have the projects completed before summer began so we could get outside and enjoy the warm weather.

We made great progress on the indoor projects. What we didn't plan on were the outdoor ones. With a new septic system installed last fall, we had serious lawn work to do. Irrigation system installed. Lawn seeded. Bushes planted. The list went on, and so did the weeds. When will all the projects end? The answer, of course, is never. But we've got a few months before the snow falls to tackle the remaining tasks.

If you are like us, you will take on some DIY projects but will reach out to professionals, as well. I have often regretted taking on projects myself, but I have never regretted hiring a pro. Whether you are looking to start a new project and need ideas, or if you are up to your neck in tasks and need help, our feature story this month will surely aid you.

Thanks for reading. ■



SHANE GOODMAN

Publisher

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



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A new **LOOK**

Residents share their home improvement projects

By Jackie Wilson

Homeowners renovate for various reasons. Maybe they want a style that is more comfortable or attractive. Or maybe they want to add value should they decide to sell. For others, after spending many years living in a home, some things are simply broken, out of date or need attention. Whatever the reason, renovating can be a daunting task and requires a good plan — and often professionals who can help along the way. While the renovation process is time-consuming and disrupts everyday living, most say they couldn't be happier with the end result.

Jen and Mike Gohring like how their kitchen is now more open. Jen has more space and new countertops. Photo by Jackie Wilson

FEATURE

Open kitchen

When Jen and Mike Gohring moved from Urbandale to Waukee 16 years ago, they were attracted by the established neighborhood and mature trees. However, the home, built in the 1970s, was dated. Dark wood cabinets and trim were present throughout the home.

The Gohrings began remodeling room by room as their budget allowed. First, they replaced the carpeting and flooring in 2016, followed by installation of new windows.

Next on their to-do list was the kitchen. As the couple spent time at home during the pandemic, they pondered their ideal living space.

"At the beginning of COVID, we looked at our house. We decided, at this point, we're not going anywhere. We liked the neighbors, and we didn't want to leave them," says Jen. "We're not moving — just fixing things up."

So they began the kitchen renovations. First up was taking out the bulkhead and part of the kitchen wall to open up the space. The previous island and counters were small, and their cabinet space was limited.

They doubled the cabinets and put in corner

AFTER



Jen and Mike Gohring are happy with their kitchen remodel. Photo by Jackie Wilson

cabinets to make better use of their space. By installing lazy susans, they increased storage.

The previously painted white cabinets were replaced with new white cabinets. The blue kitchen walls were painted a soft

BEFORE



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**WESTSIDE
OUTDOOR STORAGE**

FEATURE

gray. Due to supply chain issues, items came bit by bit.

"We couldn't pick out the backsplash and countertops, because we weren't sure what was in stock," says Jen.

The couple looked at samples at big box stores to see which items might potentially match. They chose in-stock cabinets from Menards and hired a contractor to put them in.

"We designed the layout from the Menards website. The contractors were pleased with the quality," says Mike.

They found the countertops in Waukee.

"Everyone we talked to said it would take up to 12 weeks for countertops. We found some that were great and came quickly — within 2-3 weeks," says Jen.

The quartz countertop is the most striking redo in their kitchen and one of their 'splurge' investments.

"There's a lot of 'real estate' on these countertops for making cookies with my daughter. It's a favorite spot for cooking," reflects Jen. "We didn't have a lot of room

BEFORE



Jen and Mike Gohring didn't like their limited cupboard space in their Waukee home.

before."

Another item in the kitchen was a built-in desk located in the corner of the kitchen. They took it out and replaced it with a cupboard and wine rack that doubled as a wine and coffee bar.

"We didn't ever use it, and it always

AFTER



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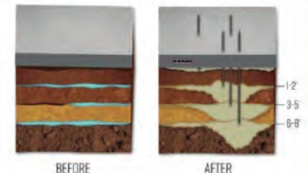
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FEATURE

collected junk. It's a better use of our space," says Jen.

Part of the remodel process took place while they were on a two-week vacation.

"I'd recommend doing that. The contractor could move around appliances as needed. It's good to work without anyone in the way," says Mike.

To complete the look of the kitchen, they replaced the sink and installed new lighting. As they were reconfiguring the kitchen, things went along smoothly until they came across an unplanned expense: the water heater needed replacing. They had difficulty locating a plumber to install one.

"We couldn't find a plumber who would return our calls. We finally found a plumber next door who was working on a neighbor's house," she says.

The couple suggests finding a contractor with good communication skills.

"Find someone who you are comfortable talking with and asking questions. We were really happy with the contractor, and they were great guys to work with. Their advice was great," says Mike.

As the couple enjoys the kitchen, next up on their list is redoing the siding on their home or perhaps a bathroom refresh, as their budget allows.

Whatever remodel they plan, they realize the value of having a great group of neighbors and remaining in their renovated home.

"During the pandemic, we got together with neighbors and called ourselves the Porch Drinkers. We really like the neighborhood and all the families we hang out with. And, now we have a kitchen we always wanted," Jen says as she pats the new granite countertop.

Remodel

When Lynn and Jeff Harder moved into their Waukee home in 2006, it was comforting for the couple. Lynn came from a small town in Iowa, and Waukee also offered that small-town feel.

With two young boys and a third son on the way, the small home was getting cramped. The couple searched for other homes in the area to see what else was available; however, their checklist of needs turned up short.

"We asked ourselves, 'Are we going to stay

in this house?' It was a hard decision, but we decided to stay," says Lynn.

The main reason they remained in the neighborhood was due to the Waukee schools.

"In Waukee, if you move, you have to change schools," she explains.

So instead of moving, the couple decided to remodel and make their current home more usable. They drew up an original sketch for the front room. They called various contractors and obtained several plans and budgets.

The kitchen area was the most complicated project. It was U-shaped, and, when walking in the front door, the refrigerator was right in the path.

"You could hardly move in the kitchen if the fridge door was open. The half bath was right when you came in the front door," she explains.

The Harders hired Remodelworks! to reconfigure the entryway. An unused office with French doors was located right off the kitchen. They took out the doors and moved the coat closet. The new space was configured into a locker and storage system. The much-needed room is where the boys' backpacks, shoes and other catch-all items were better

What's Your Plan?

Planning has been a part of her life, both personally and professionally. Charlotte, a former financial advisor, knew the importance of having a plan for retirement. Having supported her mom, aunt and uncle in selecting retirement communities, she knew what she wanted and needed when the time came to make a move.

At the age of 72 she decided it was time. "I'm still very active and regularly entertain. The townhome was perfect because I wasn't ready to completely downsize. I liked the fact that Deerfield provided a full continuum of care so this would be the last major decision I would need to make."

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BEFORE



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Lynn and Jeff Harder of Waukee made a drastic improvement in their kitchen when remodeling. Photo by Jackie Wilson

AFTER



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FEATURE

BEFORE



Lynn Harder reconfigured their family's entire kitchen area to include a locker/storage area and a better flow for traffic. Photo by Jackie Wilson

contained. A desk nook includes a computer area with important papers.

The kitchen was completely remodeled. The half bath was no longer next to the front door. Instead, it was moved near the locker area.

"The half bath used to have a window, which made no sense since it was covered up anyway. Now the window is in the kitchen, overlooking the sink. I can finally look outside from my kitchen sink," she says.

In the dining area, a built-in cabinet offers a place for a wine bar and coffee nook, a mini-fridge, and storage for bar and coffee accessories.

Two tall pantry cabinets were installed. In hindsight, she would have done it differently.

"The only thing I wish is that I would have made the cabinet pantries bigger," she reflects.

They tore out the "cruddy laminate flooring," replacing it with wood floors. They painted and trimmed windows and cabinets, installed new countertops and added a center

AFTER



island with bar-height seating.

"We love the island. This is a great place for our family and friends to gather around."

She says her home is similar to those in the same neighborhood.

"I'm curious as to how my neighbors have dealt with some of the same configurations as our home, which was a Regency starter home. Lots of people might have the same floor plan," she says. "I'd like to show them how great it can be with some of those changes."

During the remodel, they planned to live at home through the construction phase.

"We tried it for a few weeks. It was hectic," she says. "Our in-laws had just moved into a new house in Urbandale, and they had a kitchen in their basement. So we ended up moving in with them temporarily."

The remodel took about seven weeks and was completed mostly on time. Lynn suggests talking to several contractors to get different bids and ideas and asking if they have a designer on staff who can help visualize it.

"Hire someone who knows what they are doing," she says.

She says their contractors worked seamlessly throughout the whole process.

"We had someone who showed up every day to work — whether it was to paint, trim cabinets or work on plumbing."

For the finished piece, she incorporated her favorite colors: teal and sea glass blue. She's happy with the design and better use of space.

"We could have spent money on another home, but I love the location," she reflects. "I wish we would have done it sooner." ■

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HVAC

By Scott Bontrager

REDUCE your utility bills

Staying cool is expensive, and, sadly, the cost increases every year. Let's discuss a few simple actions that can be taken now to help reduce your utility bills.



Repair leaky ductwork

If your home is new (less than 10 years old), you probably have well-sealed ductwork. If you have an older home, an average of 10-40% of your cooling dollars can be leaking through the gaps in your duct joints. That means cool air is being wasted in your attic, crawl space or your basement. A professional can test and fix the leaks, but, if you're up for the challenge, you can seal them on your own. Bottom line, fix the leaks.

Install a programmable thermostat

You can save energy by setting your thermostat 7-8 degrees warmer/cooler (depending on the season) while everyone is away at school and work. A programmable thermostat will automatically return your home to the desired comfort level upon the scheduled time. Besides the convenience, having a programmable thermostat can save you quite a bit of money over time — as much as 10%.

Switch to LED

Energy-efficient lighting allows you to use the same amount of light in your home at a lower cost. According to ENERGY STAR, LED lights use up to 90% less energy than incandescent lighting. They also last a lot longer and produce little to no heat, reducing maintenance and cooling costs. If you are still using incandescent bulbs, this is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bill. Choose bulbs with ENERGY STAR approval for quality products that contribute the highest savings.

Annual maintenance

One of the most significant benefits of annual HVAC maintenance is lower energy bills. This isn't a DIY task per se, but more of an action you need to take. Your heating and cooling system will become less efficient when it's not taken care of properly. This results in higher monthly bills and compromises the comfort of your home. Routine annual maintenance can help reduce future repairs, keep warranties valid, and will help maintain the efficiency of your system.

There are many do-it-yourself hacks to help lower your energy costs. With the cost of living being so high, we are all trying to save money where we can. Take action on just a few of these items today, and you'll reap the savings quickly. ■

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

MEET Jacki Pleggenkuhle

Teaching the importance of communication skills

Jacki Pleggenkuhle teaches speech and serves as the high school speech team director for the Waukee Community School District.

What do you do as a speech teacher?

"My goal as a teacher is to meet each student at the door and push them beyond what they ever thought they could do. I encourage students to find their voice and develop the communication and presentation effectiveness needed to have positive relationships and confident performances. You can't get/hold a job or have healthy relationships if you lack communication skills. I currently teach Speech II and the DMACC speech course, Fundamentals of Oral Communication."

What gives you the greatest joy in your job?

"The greatest joy in my job comes from student growth! I love students nailing a performance, exciting an audience and inducing change, or rising from the depths of stage fright. It's so exciting to see growth as performers and as communicators. Sometimes they surprise themselves."

Name one thing you've learned this week.

"Most of the things learned this week involve technology. When I started teaching, I didn't even have a computer. Now we are teaching with pretty cool tech tools, and I am constantly learning a new fix, tech tip, or teaching trick. It's a love-hate situation. Earlier in the week, I was struggling to sync up some tech systems, and I was losing my patience. I think every day I learn something related to teaching students and sometimes the tech is the hardest."

If you could give a piece of advice to your 10-year-old self, what would it be?

"Be you. I think we are all so wired to blend in and be accepted by the group. I would tell my 10-year-old self to Just. Be. You."

Who gave the single greatest speech in the history of mankind?

"Oh, I have too many favorites to pick the greatest. My brain catalogs them in categories: most influential, most unexpected, most poetic, best crisis management speech, etc. I guess one that checks all of those boxes is Dr. Martin Luther King's 'I Have A Dream.' It's a cliché answer, as the speech sits as the No. 1 speech in American history on many lists. I marvel at the way it addresses different audiences in different sections of the text and draws in everyone as beneficiaries of freedom in the conclusion. The rhetorical devices create such word art so that the speech is gut-wrenching and raw, hopeful and healing — all in the same speech. Other favorites include Reagan's 'Challenger Address,' Ellen Degeneres' Commencement at Tulane, and Chris Rock's 2016 Oscar speech. I find something interesting in all speeches — even bad ones. It's interesting to answer the question, 'Why did the speaker say that to this audience?' Speeches impact. Words matter."

What is one thing you did and promptly thereafter promised yourself you'd never do again?

"I react this way whenever I eat donuts. The gut ache makes me swear I'll never do that again!"



Jacki Pleggenkuhle helps students gain confidence in themselves through speech class and team.

You own a store that sells just one item. What would that be, and what would you call the store?

"I would create a restaurant. It would have an artistic rotating menu with plates creating a balance of decadence and nutrition and be called the Reckless Raccoon (because of location — not because it's trashy)."

Who is your favorite historical figure and why?

"Hmmm... After some thought I have to say Walt Disney. Not as a favorite historical figure but as someone who is fascinating. He created magic and built an elaborate organization of complex systems that bring the magic to life for people. Disney is intriguing. He must have been playful and methodical, theatrical and audience-centered."

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

"People may be surprised to know that I'm fairly introverted. Although I really enjoy the spotlight of the stage and I love people, I often prefer small groups and peaceful settings. I can play the 'hostess with the most-ess' role, but that comes from a place of my need to make people happy — to serve them. I enjoy putting on a theatrical culinary production, but I really savor one-on-one time with people."

You have a time machine that can go backward or forward, but you have to pick just one. Which do you choose, where do you go, and why?

"I would jump ahead. It's my nature to always look into the future. I want to know what will happen next. How will things turn out? Who will we become? I often consider how the future historical accounts will illustrate a moment in time. What are we doing now that we don't quite understand? It seems like, every 50 years or so, history shows some sort of awakening. It's interesting to look into the future and wonder how our story will be told? Strange perspective, but I often look at things through this lens." ■

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Vintage & Made Fair

Saturday, Sept. 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Dallas County Fairgrounds, Adel

Enjoy live music and local eats while browsing the vendors' handmade and vintages items. Admission is \$10, free for children 12 and younger. For information, visit www.vintagesandmadefair.com.

Waukee Farmers Market

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 4-7 p.m.
Waukee Downtown Triangle

Presented by the Waukee Triangle Businesses, the Farmers Market features local vendors, produce and live entertainment.

Wiffleball Heroes Challenge

Sept. 25
Miracle League field

The Wiffleball Heroes Challenge will be hosted by the Waukee Police Department. Registration is free through the Waukee Parks & Recreation Department. Register online at https://waukee.activityreg.com/ClientPage_t2.wcs. This event provides an opportunity for kids with physical or cognitive barriers to play. All ages welcome. There will be plenty of photo opportunities, fun prizes and refreshments after the game.

WASP (Waukee Area Seniors & Police)

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 9-10:30 a.m.

Waukee Community Center, 675 Walnut St.

Officers encourage seniors to stop by the Community Center for coffee and breakfast. Meetings typically occur on the last Wednesday of every month at 9 a.m. at the Waukee Community Center. This program is designed to help reduce criminal victimization of the elderly. Note that some months are skipped due to holidays. Please check the City calendar at waukee.org to confirm the event is scheduled for that month.

Wauktober Fest

Saturday, Oct. 8, 5-11 p.m.
Waukee Downtown Triangle

Join the fun with the Waukee Area Historical Society at their 2022 fundraising event Wauktoberfest. Tickets will be available online at www.WaukeeHistory.org in advance for \$10 per person with one drink ticket included. Buy tickets at the gate for \$15 per person. The Wauktoberfest Celebration will be held under a big tent and is a nod to past street dances, festivals and celebrations that took place at the Triangle. Enjoy an evening of music, food, dance and community building. The evening will start with the Des Moines Polka Band. Rock the rest of the night with Gimikk performing from 8-11 p.m. Hy-Vee will offer a menu of German food, and there will be a beer garden.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Harlem Wizards in Waukee

Monday, Oct. 17 at 6:30 p.m.
Waukee Northwest High School,
655 N. 10th St.

The Waukee Community Schools Foundation brings the Harlem Wizards back to Waukee this fall. The Wizards will play against Waukee teachers, principals and community members.

The Harlem Wizards, with their hoop artistry, ball-handling, tricks and teamwork are mesmerizing. Get your tickets today — and upgrade with some fun interactive extras including the Wiz Kid experience. Your basketball-loving kid will get a special jersey, take the court with the team, make a grand entrance, and get a special team photo. For tickets, visit <https://harlemwizards.thundertix.com/events/202978>.



Waukee Public Safety Halloween Open House

Sunday, Oct. 23, 4-6 p.m.
Public Safety Building, 1300 S.E.
LA Grant Parkway

Start your Halloween celebrations and meet members of the police department at this spooky, fun open house.



Family Fun Bowling

Various Sundays, noon to 2 p.m.
Warrior Lanes

Special family-friendly glow-in-the-dark bowling with concert lights and black lights are offered at an alcohol-free event with family-friendly music. Deadline for registration for each Sunday event is the Friday prior by 6 p.m. Cost is \$64.95 per lane, up to five bowlers, and includes a large one-topping pizza and pitcher of soda. Dates are Sundays, Oct. 16, Nov. 13, Dec. 11.

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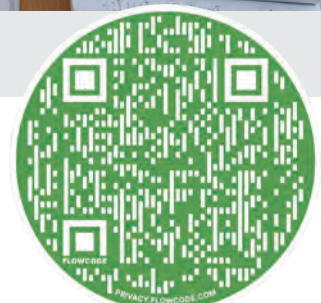
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Election-related dates

Make sure you are registered to vote at www.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/regtovote.

Know these important dates for the upcoming General Election.

- Wednesday, Oct. 19 - First Day of Absentee Voting
- Monday, Oct. 24 - Pre-registration deadline; deadline to request absentee ballot to be mailed
- Saturday, Nov. 5 - County auditor's office will be open for absentee voting
- Monday, Nov. 7 - Absentee ballot in-person deadline. Be sure to verify what time your county auditor's office closes. Dallas County Auditor's Office closes at 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 8 - General Election polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; absentee ballot receipt deadline is 8 p.m. Find your polling location (it may have changed) at www.voterready.iowa.gov/.

What positions will be on the ballot in Dallas County? U.S. Senator, U.S. House, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Secretary of Agriculture, County Treasurer, County Attorney, County Recorder, Iowa Senate District 23 (Dallas County), Iowa House District 46 (Dallas County), Dallas County Supervisors Districts 1 and 3.

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



Meet the Author events

Various dates

Beaverdale Books, 2629 Beaver Ave. No. S1, Des Moines, unless otherwise indicated

Beaverdale Books is hosting several Meet the Author events coming up, including:

- Tuesday, Sept. 27, 6:30 p.m. meet John T. Price, author of "All is Leaf"; Jody Keisner, author of "Curing Season"; and Kristine Langley Mahler, author of "Under My Bed."
- Tuesday, Sept. 27, 7 p.m. at Central Presbyterian Church, 3829 Grand Ave. Meet Beth Hoffman, author of "Bet the Farm: The Dollars and Sense of Growing Food in America." She will be in conversation with former, longtime Des Moines Register columnist Chuck Offenburger. This book is a first-hand account of the perils of farming today and a personal exploration of more just and sustainable ways of producing food.
- Thursday, Sept. 29, 6:30 p.m., meet Catherine Haustien, author of "Wrinkles in Spacetime."

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COMMUNITY

By Jackie Wilson

WAUKTOBERFEST

Music, beer fundraiser for Waukee Historical Society

The Waukee Historical Society (WHS) is hosting a traditional Oktoberfest party on Oct. 8 at the Triangle Park in Waukee from 5-11 p.m. The WHS is offering the event as a fundraiser for the organization.

Brenna Young, committee chair and vice president of the WHS, says the Waukee Historical Society was formed in 2012. Terry Snyder was the co-founder. With lots of rich Waukee history, Young wants to make sure residents are vested in preserving the city's heritage. Currently, historical elements of the WHS are housed inside the Waukee Library.

In the past, the WHS board held fundraisers, including street dances and a popular Alice's Spaghettiland dinner, which served more than 700 people. However, the pandemic halted various fundraisers. This year, board members discussed bringing back a street dance.

The Wauktobberfest features German beer, as well as other beers and beverages. Hy-Vee, the presenting sponsor, will offer a traditional German meal for purchase.

Members from the Des Moines Polka Club will kick things off with polka music, starting at 5:30 p.m. The headlining band, Gimikk, takes the stage at 8 p.m.

During the festival, the WHS will have a brief presentation about the organization and the history of Waukee. "There's a lot of cool, old history about the town," says Young. "We want to keep the history as rich as we can."

The WHS members include a diverse age group, who want to increase participation with many new, young families moving to Waukee. "Our family moved here in 1983," says Young. "Everyone knows everybody, and we still get along really well."

With a band, beer and dancing, they hope to attract all ages to this and other events. "We want to see the younger crowd and show them how special it is to live in Waukee," Young says.

The event serves as a fundraiser to continue museum work. Young is passionate about serving the community and preserving history.

"We want to give back to the community."

Wauktobberfest tickets cost \$10 in advance, which includes a free drink ticket at the door during check in. Tickets at the door cost \$15. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.waukeehistory.org. ■



RECIPE

A PERFECT pasta for school nights

(Family Features) Weeknight meals are all about putting tasty dishes on the table in a short amount of time so you can share precious moments together despite busy schedules.

In a matter of minutes, you can prepare this lentil bolognese with veggie-based penne for a quick yet flavorful recipe that can be enjoyed by little ones and adults alike. Featuring Veggiecraft Farms Cauliflower Penne as its key ingredient, this family meal makes it easy to incorporate vegetables without sacrificing taste. Available in popular shapes like penne, spaghetti and elbow, and made with lentils, peas and cauliflower, zucchini or sweet potato, the veggie-based pastas are gluten-free, non-GMO, vegan, kosher and good sources of protein and fiber.

Visit veggiecraftfarms.com for more information and family-friendly recipes. ■

Lentil Bolognese with veggie-based penne

- 1 cup dry French green lentils or brown lentils
- 1 jar (24 ounces) marinara sauce
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth
- 1 box Veggiecraft Farms Cauliflower Penne

TOPPINGS:

- fresh basil
- Parmesan cheese
- red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

- Cook lentils according to package directions. Drain then return to pot and add marinara and vegetable broth. Stir well and simmer over low heat about 10 minutes.
- Cook penne according to package directions.
- Top cooked pasta with lentil Bolognese, fresh basil, Parmesan cheese and red pepper flakes.





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UPCOMING EVENTS

- **City Council Meetings**

Oct. 3 & 17, 5:30 p.m.

City Hall and Zoom (See info at Waukee.org)

- **Thankfulness Frames**

Oct. 7, 11 a.m.

Waukee Community Center

- **Bingo**

Oct. 7, 1-2:30 p.m.

Waukee Community Center

- **Movie Matinee: Elvis**

Oct. 13, 10-11:30 a.m.

Waukee Public Library

- **Drug Take Back Day**

Oct. 23, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Public Safety Building

- **Waukee Public Safety Halloween Open House**

Oct. 23, 4-6 p.m.

Public Safety Building

- **Beggar's Night**

Oct. 30, 6-8 p.m.

Wrapping Up Summer

Kids are back in school, and temperatures are cooling, which means summer is coming to an end. Here are a few tips as you transition to fall.

Empty your pool or hot tub with care

As temperatures cool, it's time to empty the pool until next year. Chlorine and other chemicals used to keep your pool or spa clean cause BIG problems for fish and other aquatic life. Follow these steps to avoid compromising water downstream.

1. Allow the pool or spa to sit for at least 7 days without adding chlorine or other chemicals; the chlorine content should be 0.1 milligrams per liter.
2. Ensure the pH of the pool / spa water is between 7 and 8.
3. Drain water through at least 15 feet of a grassy landscape first (i.e. not directly onto concrete) to allow remaining chemicals to dissipate before reaching the storm drain.
4. Keep the flow of water low (aim for 700 gallons per hour = 12 gallons per minute or so) in order to prevent erosion and having to fix the landscaped area later.

Adjust or turn off sprinklers

Without the long hours of hot sun and limited rainfall, your lawn won't need as much water to stay healthy. Save water and money by reducing run days and length or turning off your sprinklers for the season.

Store portable irrigation meters

Take your portable meters inside for the winter and report your final meter reading to WaukeeUtilities@Waukee.org

Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape During Fire Prevention Week

The 100th annual Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15, and this year's theme is "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape." With as little as two minutes to safely escape your home in a fire, having a plan could save your life. Follow the Waukee Fire Department on Facebook at [WaukeeFire](https://www.facebook.com/WaukeeFire) and Instagram at [WaukeeFD](https://www.instagram.com/WaukeeFD) for tips on making your escape plan. Learn more about fire prevention week at [NFPA.org](https://www.nfpa.org).



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Get a Library Card + Enter to Win a Prize!

This National Library Card Sign-up Month, you can earn four chances to win a gift card to a local business. Simply take a picture with your WPL library card and tag the library in the photo on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter to be entered! If you don't have a public profile, message the library so they can add your name to the drawing. Check WaukeePublicLibrary.org or swing by 950 S. Warrior Lane to learn more about all the services the library offers.



Review Gas Safety Information

If your home is heated by the City-managed natural gas utility, watch your mailbox for a natural gas safety brochure. Please review the information about safe digging, carbon monoxide, gas meter care, identifying gas leaks and more. If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, leave your property immediately and call the City's emergency gas hotline at 515-249-1212.

In October, American Research Associates will conduct a phone survey as part of a federally mandated program to assess public awareness about gas safety. If you receive a call from a 515 number with a caller ID displaying "research" or something similar, please answer to complete the short survey. The survey company will identify themselves as calling on behalf of the City of Waukee and will only ask questions about natural gas safety.

Safely Dispose of Unneeded Prescription Drugs

Prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding your home of potentially dangerous prescription drugs that you no longer need. For National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, police officers will collect pills and patches on Saturday, October 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Waukee Public Safety Building (1300 SE L.A. Grant Parkway).



Halloween Fun is Coming Up!

The Waukee Police and Fire Departments will open their doors for the Halloween Open House, treating kids to candy and more on Sunday, October 23 from 4-6 p.m. Then choose the perfect costume and head out for Beggars' Night on Sunday, October 30 from 6-8 p.m. Stay safe by traveling in a group and wearing light or reflective clothing, if possible.

Check Out Upcoming Programs from Parks & Recreation and the Public Library

The Parks & Recreation Fall/Winter Program Guide includes a variety of events, classes, leagues and more for kids and adults. It also highlights upcoming special events as well as facilities available to rent for your meetings, family gatherings and other events. Check it out at Waukee.org/ParksandRec and register for your favorite program today!

The Waukee Public Library hosts an array of programs and events online and in person for all ages. Find The Notice, their programming and event guide, at WaukeePublicLibrary.org/Events-Guide.

Apply to the New Public Art Advisory Commission

Want to help guide public art in Waukee? Apply to be on the newly formed Public Art Advisory Commission. The commission will help define a master plan for public art in Waukee and will serve as an advisory body for City Council.

Mayor Courtney Clarke is currently seeking Waukee residents with interest and passion for public art. Applicants of all backgrounds, expertise and experience are invited to apply. Learn more at Waukee.org.

Improve Drainage or Soil Quality with Help from the Stormwater Grant Program

The City of Waukee Stormwater Grant Program uses a portion of the Stormwater Utility Fees to assist with stormwater management on private property. These funds may be granted to property owners to improve drainage or stormwater quality as well as repair stormwater facilities. Examples of eligible projects include:

1. Installation of a drain tile in a wet yard
2. Measures to prevent erosion, such as bank reinforcement
3. Best management practices, such as soil quality restoration (SQR), rain gardens, bio-retention cells or native landscaping
4. Rain barrels (limited to \$50 or the total amount paid for the rain barrel, whichever is less)

The grant will pay 50% of the qualifying expenses up to a maximum contribution per project. Learn more at Waukee.org/468/Stormwater-Grant-Program.

LEGAL issues when selling a home

To save costs, many homeowners try to sell a house without listing it through a Realtor. This For-Sale-By-Owner ("FSBO") sale can save you thousands in commissions by finding a buyer on your own.

However, important legal issues arise when you sell your home.

In order for an agreement to sell real estate to be binding, it must be in writing. The purchase agreement should contain the specifics of the transaction, such as the sales price, the closing date, the financing terms for the buyer, and any special contingencies, such as seller-paid closing costs or the sale of the buyer's home. The purchase agreement should also spell out the rights and remedies



of the parties and how the transaction can be canceled.

Iowa law requires that the seller provide a written disclosure statement to a purchaser. The disclosure statement is required even if a property is being sold in "as-is" condition. For homes built prior to 1978, a lead-based paint disclosure statement is required by Federal law. New legislation requires that a seller inform a buyer about radon testing.

Once you have a buyer, you should locate your original abstract to your property. This must be done quickly to avoid delays. The abstract of title must be brought up to date and the buyers and sellers searched to identify any adverse liens and judgments. The abstract will then be examined by an attorney on behalf of the buyer. There may be title issues to address, such as the death of a titleholder or judgments against a person of a similar name.

Once the title opinion is complete, you will need to execute a deed and other supporting documents to transfer title to the new buyer. The recording statutes have very specific requirements for the format of the deed, and it is vital to correctly vest title. The deed must be accompanied by a declaration of value, which is delivered to the local assessor's office. A groundwater hazard statement is required on all properties to disclose potential groundwater contamination. If the home has a septic system, a new law requires that the system be inspected prior to sale.

Selling a home involves more than shaking hands on a price. Finding a buyer is only the first step through the legal process. ■

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

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Mike Franken is a western Iowan who helped put himself through school working at meat-packing plants. He refers to his bootstrap childhood as the youngest of a family of nine where everyone worked: his father ran a machine repair shop, his mother was a teacher and the family seamstress. Mike obtained a Navy scholarship in 1978 and graduated in engineering from the University of Nebraska. He rose from ensign to admiral during his navy career, where he solved a wide variety of problems around the globe.

Mike wants all Americans to have the high-quality care that military members have because he knows the system works for the good of the people. He understands the critical difference that social security can make in people's lives. The power of a strong public education made it possible for him to achieve his many goals, and he wants to use his position as a US Senator to ensure that we can increase the quality of education to all our children.

We live in serious times. Mike Franken is the candidate for the US Senate we need now. Check out our website – www.frankenforiowa.com – and join the campaign that brings people together to solve problems.



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PREPARING for the loss of a spouse

Preparing for the loss of a spouse is not the fun part of retirement planning. It's much more exciting to discuss developing an income plan that allows you to take that trip to Europe, spend winters in Arizona or start a new hobby. I get it, but as retirement planners, we feel that it's our responsibility to help you plan for all the aspects of retirement.

You've probably seen first-hand the burden a spouse is left with when spousal succession plans are not in place or how families can be torn apart when someone's wishes are not clear. Having a plan will take one more thing off the remaining spouse's plate as they grieve the loss of their loved one.

We have found that many people don't know how to get started, so we developed a Spousal Succession Plan Checklist. This checklist covers some of the decisions you can make now to help you get organized and some of the things you will have to do when your spouse passes.

Each retirement plan we help families and individuals create follows six guiding components: lifestyle, income, tax, investment, health care and legacy. The checklist includes action steps within each of these components.

For example, the lifestyle portion of the checklist helps you compile



important information that the remaining spouse will need, such as how to contact your CPA, attorney and insurance agent. You also want to help avoid a technology nightmare by ensuring you both know important accounts' passwords.

The investment portion of the checklist includes things you will have to do when your spouse passes, such as change titles on accounts like checking or savings, credit cards and your mortgage. You may also have to call your spouse's insurance company and file a claim.

We are often one of the first phone calls that the families we work with make when a loved one passes. They are tough conversations but necessary ones as we work to help them execute their spousal succession plan. It's a privilege to help ease their burden and know that the wishes of their loved one are being fulfilled because they made some of these decisions together when we first started putting together their comprehensive retirement plan.

You can download the Spousal Succession Plan Checklist by going to SuccessionChecklist.com. By having open and honest conversations with your spouse regarding each of the outlined points, you'll be well on your way to having a purposeful plan that your spouse can turn to in one of life's most stressful and emotional moments. ■

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

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NEWS BRIEF

SCHNELLER honored as Kid Captain, looks to give back with toy drive



Audrey Schneller of Waukee was picked for this year's University of Iowa Kid Captain program and was honored at the Iowa vs. Iowa State game on Sept. 10.

"This experience has given us so much joy, and we're wanting to find a way to share the love, so we're organizing a toy drive for the children who are being cared for at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital," said Audrey's mother, Amanda. "These toys are given to children who are getting procedures done and who have prolonged stays to help brighten their day. Audrey was given a choice of a toy during one of her eye surgeries in the past and was even allowed to take it back into the surgery suite to help ease her nerves. These toys do make such a difference to these kids."

To help Kid Captain Audrey Schneller in her efforts to help fill The University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital with toy donations for the patients, visit the hospital's Amazon Wishlist at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2ZE35YAB14LT3?ref=wl_share. To make monetary donations, visit <https://uihc.org/donations>. Be sure to tag your donation #stockthestead so Audrey can track her reach. For more information about the Kid Captain program and Audrey's story visit <https://uichildrens.org/announcing-our-2022-kid-captains>. ■



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WITH CHANGE comes growth

Summer is winding down, and a new season of life is beginning for everyone in some capacity. Fall time is full of new things — whether that be a new school, new grade, new job, new schedule, new assignments, or simply just a new routine to adjust to. In the midst of the busy, it is important to check in on your mental health as the new season begins. Checking in often allows for feelings of burnout and being overwhelmed to be addressed early.

Positive mental health routines can be incorporated into your life in small and easy ways, such as going on a walk and enjoying the beautiful leaves changing colors, spending quality and uninterrupted time with those you love the most, trying out a new hobby or interest you feel you would enjoy, talking to a friend or family member you trust when feeling in a slump, and lastly, seeking help if you feel called to do so. While these tasks may seem small, if practiced daily, they can lead to substantial growth for your mental well-being. The activities listed may not be for everyone, but self care takes many forms. I encourage you to explore different options until you find what works best for you.

Change can be overwhelming and oftentimes scary, but, with change, comes growth. It is important to remember to fill your own cup in the midst of it all and help those around you to do the same. ■

Information provided by Ellie McDonald, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, mcdonald@sstherapyandconsulting.com.



EQUIPPING parents in raising lifelong learners

Learning and growing begins the moment a child is born. By the time children turn 5 years old, 90% of their adult brain is developed. The Waukee Public Library offers many early learning programs and resources to equip parents in raising lifelong learners, starting years before they enter kindergarten.

Here are several early learning literacy resources available for parents and children:

- **Early Literacy Activity Calendar** – Daily literacy-building activities to share with your child.
- **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten** – Reading to children from a birth is shown to help strengthen language skills and build vocabulary. This program encourages all families and caregivers to read 1,000 books with their young children before they enter kindergarten, with fun checkpoints and prizes throughout.
- **Early Learning Group** – A Facebook group dedicated to sharing tips, tricks and fun early learning and literacy ideas. It's a great place to ask questions, too.
- **Youth Programs** – The Library has added several storytime programs throughout the week. Monthly registration is open for Babytime, Pajama Storytime, Toddler Time, and Preschool Storytime. Every Saturday, Storytime at Home Activity Packs are also available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Book Collection** – Save money by checking out the Library's collection of children's books. They have board books and VOX books (physical books with audio components) for the youngest readers.
- **Book Bundles** – Not sure what books to pick out? Fill out the Library's Book Bundle form and a librarian will pull a custom bundle of books picked specially for your kids and place them on hold to be picked up at a later time.
- **Dial-a-Story** – Listen to prerecorded stories anytime with the Dial-a-Story program. Call 515-981-7800 to hear stories during bedtime, commutes, arts and crafts time and more.

Start your children on the path to lifelong learning today. Visit waukeepubliclibrary.org/kids.

To find out more about the Waukee Public Library go to waukeepubliclibrary.org or contact us at askme@waukee.org or 515-978-7944.

Upcoming Events

The majority of events will require advanced registration and can also be viewed at waukeepubliclibrary.org/calendar.

On Exhibit: "Traveling the Backroads," Oct. 1-30. Shauna Humrich's exhibition photos showcase old farmsteads, architecture, and abandoned cities across Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Southeastern Colorado. Visit the Art Gallery during open hours to view.

Beginning Genealogy, Saturday, Oct. 1, 1 p.m. Laurie Kolstead from the Iowa Genealogical Society will give you a road map for researching your family's history, talk about what tools and resources are available (many of which are free through the Library), and discuss what to do if you run into an information brick wall. Registration is required. ■

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WELLNESS

By Lacie Navin

HOW CAN you spot good (or bad) CBD?

We've all run across a CBD ad when scrolling on Facebook, at the grocery store or reading a magazine. How do you know if it's good product, brand, or worth the purchase? This industry has no regulation by the FDA, so the consumer is really left to vet these brands and what they're selling.

Things to look out for:

No third party testing? Steer clear. This industry is built on labs. The scrutiny and sensitivity put into extraction, manufacturing and quality control ensure a good product. Labs prove purity, presence of cannabinoids (CBD, THC, etc.) and multiple sources checking for anything harmful or misrepresented.

Price point. A good rule of thumb is, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is. If your product costs far less than a more reputable brand, odds are, it has zero cannabinoids and very little (or no) type of quality control.

No license to sell. Any person or retailer selling you a CBD product should have a Hemp Retailers license in clear view. This is a green certificate issued by the Department of Inspections & Appeals.

We always recommend a place you can go speak to a person. If shopping online is your only bet, look for labs and read reviews. ■

Information provided by Lacie Navin, Your CBD Store, 264 Hickman Road, Waukeez, 515-669-5438.



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HEALTH

By Dr. Jason Brown

DENTAL care in children

A common question asked by many parents is, "When do I take my child to the dentist for their first checkup?" Most literature recommends children be seen between 6-12 months old, or once their first tooth has erupted. This first visit is beneficial for both parents and child to evaluate teeth and gums for any early concerns and give educational aids to help in the process and success of good oral hygiene.

A lot of parents ask about "training toothpaste" for their children (which typically does not contain fluoride) — if they should be using this, and, if so, for how long? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends fluoride toothpaste be used after the first tooth has erupted with a small smear amount on toothbrush bristles until the age of 3, then a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste from ages 3-6 years. The benefits of brushing twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste to reduce the risk of developing cavities outweigh the risks when used in proper amounts.

Pacifier use or thumb sucking is another topic parents often ask about. Children typically stop sucking their thumbs between the ages of 2-4 years, or by eruption of the first couple of permanent teeth. The duration of time and how hard they suck their thumb or pacifier can create dental problems with tooth positioning or changes to the roof of the mouth. Make sure you have your child's next dental visit scheduled to maintain healthy oral development. ■

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



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Waukee Schools using iJAG program to success.

Laurie Phelan's life mission is to make the world a better place one child at a time.

The Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (iJAG) program president and CEO is in charge of helping make that happen in Iowa, which is one of 37 state affiliates in the national Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program that helps students build the skills they need to be successful in the classroom, on the job and in life.

One of the participating school districts is Waukee, which features iJAG instruction at Timberline, Waukee High School and Waukee Northwest High School, where the program is delivered in partnership with the schools and is offered during the school day for elective credit. iJAG provides trained specialists to implement the model.

The program has been in existence since 1999 and is there to help young people navigate through the times when that extra support is needed, be it academic or otherwise.

"Our job with them is to make them feel good about themselves, regardless of any of their experiences," says Phelan. "We meet them where they currently are in their lives; help them feel like they matter and that there's hope for them; and also help them find their way — through academic support — to get to graduation and then to a job that leads them to sustainable wealth."

"That child has a place on this planet, but sometimes they don't see it. Sometimes their lives get dark and scary, but we help them know their value. That's first and foremost," she says. "When they feel good about who they are, all kinds of (good) things can happen."

Timberline just launched the program at the school in the 2022-23 school year. A year from now, Phelan predicts, there could be anywhere from 50-60 students in the program. There are several program-specific classes throughout the day with an average of 10-15 students in each.

iJAG teachers provide small group instruction to students and help them master 37 core competencies related to school, work and life success. Employers visit the classroom to make presentations, critique student work and resumes, host mock interviews and provide mentoring. They also provide students hands-on learning opportunities including job site visits, job shadowing, internships, pre-apprenticeships,



iJAG teachers provide small group instruction to students and help them master 37 core competencies related to school, work and life success.

summer job training or work for pay.

There is one iJAG instructor at each of the aforementioned schools, each spending half the day teaching and the other half in community outreach, one-on-one with students, data collection and more.

The guidance doesn't stop with the cap and gown, either. Phelan says the program continues with its outreach toward the students one full year after graduation from high school to make sure the student stays on track toward employment and/or continued education.

"We've had some great successes, especially in the last year," says Program Manager Katie Lockhart. "At the high school, Caitlin Snodgrass won Specialist of the Year this summer, and she also took a group of students to our Career Development Conference in Des Moines. Her group that competed in the Creative Decision Making competition won first place at the state level, and went on to Dallas, Texas, where they took first at the National Career Development Conference as well. We are so proud of them."

Lockhart says it's a joy to be working within the confines of a program that is actually making a difference in the lives of young people.

"It's so fun to see the students with different backgrounds coming together and to be able to have that 'family' culture where it doesn't matter where they've been — it's where they're going,"

Lockhart says. "It's truly amazing."

Leaving no child behind isn't just lip service at iJAG — it's the lifeblood of its existence. No one is turned away.

"There might be students who have 4.0 grade point averages but are struggling at home and don't have a clue about their career,"

Phelan says. "We'll work with those kids as much as we'll work with kids who are two or three levels behind and academically deficient."

Baldock says she especially enjoys being able to serve students in a way that differs from a traditional classroom.

"I enjoy seeing them have that success and grow at a crucial age," she says.

Phelan says that, although the iJAG program is gaining public awareness each year, having more school districts on board can only serve to help the betterment of young people's lives during these formative years. ■



Laurie Phelan is president and CEO of the Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (iJAG) program.

'FREEDOM'

Dan and Amanda Hinch take to the road with friends.

Dan and Amanda Hinch of Waukee are motorcycle enthusiasts who enjoy anything and everything about getting out and "letting their hair fly."

The couple regularly rides with a group of around 30 friends who get together on their Harley-Davidsons. The group has logged thousands of miles, including an annual late summer trek to the epicenter of motorcycle gatherings: Sturgis, South Dakota.

"We're just good friends who love riding together," Amanda says.

Dan grew up around motorcycles, but Amanda did not. That changed 10 years ago when the couple bought their first Harley-Davidson.

"It was a little Sportster, nothing fancy," she says. "Our kids were getting older, and we were just trying to find something as a couple to do together. So, we bought it and would just go on shorter rides, like to Redfield."

Not only does the couple enjoy riding motorcycles, they also dabble in restoration.

Two pieces of their work sit in the couple's front yard, ready for sale. One, a 1974 Honda 360, was spray painted blue and didn't run when they purchased it three months ago. Some TLC and about 30 days later, it was almost as good as new. Dan had purchased a 1972 Honda 100 to keep for himself, but once it was up and running, he was in need of another. So, it was off to Atlantic, Iowa, a couple of months ago to pick up a 1968 Honda 350, followed by a 1968 175, which is in the process of being restored.

"He loves to do projects in general, so he was just looking for things he could tinker with in his down time," Amanda says.

Because the bikes are vintage, finding replacement parts can be difficult at times, Amanda admits.

"You've got to get on eBay and probably 10 different other places to find these things sometimes," Amanda says.

Once they do find the parts, the couple will jump in the pickup and make it a family affair, often times going with their daughter, Kaci, who isn't a rider — yet.

"She wants her dad to teach her, so she'll probably learn on my little bike here soon," Amanda says. "She's a little short, so we have to find a bike that she can reach things."

For now, this mix of riding and restoration is good for everyone. There's a large market out there of people wanting exactly this: rideable, vintage motorcycles.

"There's a group of people who love these," Amanda says. "They grew up riding these bikes."

She enjoys it, too.

"I just love getting out, feeling the wind in your hair, checking out the scenery, especially right before sunset," Amanda says. "Just riding down the road is so great."

"It's freedom." ■



Amanda Hinch shows off two of the motorcycles she and husband, Dan, have recently restored and have for sale at their Waukee home.

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REAL ESTATE By Jamie Thompson

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS boost the resale value?

As a homeowner, there are many ways and reasons to do improvements to your home. A question that we get asked over and over as real estate professionals, is if the improvement you want to do will increase your home's value and will you recoup the cost of the improvement.

From a REALTOR® perspective, when it comes to resale, bathrooms, kitchens, refinishing hardwood floors and new windows would be some of the top items that boost value. Depending on the level of those improvements, you may only recoup 50-60% of the cost.

According to Remodeling Magazine's 2022 Cost vs. Value Report* the top five items in the Des Moines area that have the highest resale value to cost recoup are: garage door replacement (93.1%), exterior stone (87%), minor kitchen remodel (75.7%), entry door replacement (70%), and vinyl window replacement (73.3%).

As real estate professionals, we are always available to consult with you on what improvements would be worth your time and money. ■

Information provided by Jamie Thompson with Jamie Thompson Real Estate at RE/MAX Precision. Call or text: 515-210-1021. *©2022 Zonda Media, a Delaware corporation. Complete data from the 2022 Cost vs. Value Report. (www.costvsvalue.com)



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INSURANCE By Jon Kelderman

'TIS the season...

No, I don't mean Christmas, but it is almost time for Medicare Annual Enrollment, Oct. 15 to Dec. 7. This is the time of year when Medicare lets you change your Medicare Advantage plan/Part C or change your Drug Plan/Part D for the upcoming year. There is a lot of confusion as to what annual enrollment means for the average Medicare recipient. First, there is no requirement to do anything; your current plans will continue on. It's prudent to look at your Drug Plan and/or Medicare Advantage plan to make sure it still fits your needs. Plans are required to send you an Annual Notice of Change for any changes that are happening with your Drug Plan or Advantage plan. I review plans with my clients at this time of year. If you purchased a Medicare Supplement, you can shop supplement plans at any time of year. Remember, Letter Supplement Plans A-N are regulated by Medicare and are required to have the same benefits based on the Letter Plan. Although you may have health questions, you can shop and save money on Medicare supplement plans at any time, and your coverages will be identical. I recommend using a local licensed agent. There is no fee for our service, and we typically know all the local plans/carriers. If you have any questions, be sure to reach out to your local agent. In my experience, you can save as much as 50% by simply purchasing a lower priced Plan F or G with identical benefits. ■

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



DISCOVER You

Holmes Murphy program offers career exploration.



High school students participating in the Holmes Murphy Discover You program receive career education and financial literacy lessons.

When young children are asked about their future careers, they often cite being a firefighter or a ballerina. Yet, once they get into high school, they discover other job opportunities — including the insurance industry.

A program called, Discover You, offered by Holmes Murphy (HM) in Waukee, gives high school students ways to explore insurance and other job opportunities.

At the end of the 2022 school year, representatives from HM went to various Des Moines-area high schools to talk about the program. Participants committed to five weeks of training. Fourteen students attended sessions two afternoons a week. During their time at HM, experts from various departments provided workshops, lectures and hands-on training. Urban Dreams helped with transportation needs for the students.

During the sessions, employees talked about sales, marketing, technology and human resources careers. Julie McAnally, director of HM growth and development, says the information included a wide range of topics.

“Managers showed students what their day looks like. They had hands-on learning,” says Julie.

Part of the program is to get students interested in the insurance industry.

“We provide a pipeline to discover possibly being an intern at our company. There’s a path for them to follow. It’s not just insurance. There’s so much more than that,” she explains.

In addition to learning about insurance industry careers, students learned about business etiquette and financial literacy, such as opening a bank account and understanding credit scores.

Nola Cartmill, chief diversity officer at HM, says the program came out of working

with the Waukee APEX program.

“We have a desire to grow connections to youth in the Des Moines metro. We want to connect with students who might not have the opportunities or connections to a business setting,” she says.

Nola says the program was a success.

“The kids’ reaction is they felt like they have options. They felt appreciated and energized. One student who was set to enroll in a CNA program decided to switch to marketing, where her skills were better suited,” she says.

It’s important for the community to offer career and employment options.

“We’re doing our part to enlighten them and open their eyes — whether they come to Holmes Murphy or not. It’s invaluable as we are trying to diversify our workforce and help students realize they have a lot to offer,” says Nola. ■

WUERTZERS go solar

Owning their energy

“Stop renting your power and start owning it,” recommends Ben Wuertzer.

Ben and Lety Wuertzer moved into their new Waukee home in October 2020. They were previously renting a home in West Des Moines. But now, like their house and cars, they want to own their power, too. Today, the Wuertzers use solar panels to power their home and drastically cut their electric bills.

Ben had known about solar panels for a while. His dad had known some people who used solar in Dubuque, where Ben is originally from. However, the real catalyst for Wuertzer was their neighbors who had gone solar before them.

Ben remembers, “Every time I would take my dog out, I would see his solar panels.”

Quickly, solar panels became popular in the Stratford Crossing neighborhood. In fact, one of Wuertzer’s neighbors with solar panels came from California. They explained to Ben that solar panels are the norm out there and suggested he invest in them, too.

Wuertzer carried out some of his own research and came across an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was for those who were interested in learning more about solar from companies who would be able to install them at his address.

“Next thing I know, after putting in my address, phone number, email... Purelight Power was actually the first company to call me,” Wuertzer remembers.

He found comfort answering a call from a local 515 number. After speaking with someone from Purelight Power, he set up a time for them to come out, look at the house, and discuss solar options for the couple.

Overall, Wuertzer had a completely satisfactory experience with Purelight Power. He found they were transparent, seamless and timely. He remembers seeing impressive reviews online. He even drove around to find other houses with Purelight Power solar panels.

The whole install process for the Wuertzer’s panels took four months. He originally inquired about installing panels in February 2022. The panels were completely installed by May 2022; after inspections by the city and the utility company, the Wuertzers were producing their own power in four months.

When Wuertzer’s panels produce power, it is used for his own home first. On sunny days, the excess power the panels produce is put back into MidAmerican Energy’s grid. That excess power is built up as credits for the Wuertzers. So, on not as sunny days, or in the winter when the days are shorter, they can use the credits they have built up to still decrease their electric bill.

The up-front cost for the panel installation was \$19,000 for the Wuertzers; however, after federal tax credits and incentives it was lowered to \$14,000. Most months, Wuertzer is only paying for MidAmerican’s connection fee. The \$8.50 fee is the monthly fee each resident must pay to stay on the grid. His monthly bill is only \$8.59 after tax.

“I’m saving anywhere from about \$20 to \$40 a month,” Wuertzer says.



Ben and Lety Wuertzer were able to receive federal tax credits and incentives to make purchasing and installing solar panels more affordable.



Wuertzer is excited to be investing in something he will own. He expects the panels to pay for themselves in about eight years.

Wuertzer recommends, “As long as you’re not planning to move in the next few months, definitely get into solar.” ■

NEWS BRIEFS

YOUTH Leadership Initiative Class of 2023 announced

The Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute announced participants in the Youth Leadership Initiative Class of 2023. The Youth Leadership Initiative provides high school students with hands-on leadership experiences that build self-confidence and encourage engagement in all levels of community life. At the conclusion of the program, students will: value community involvement, demonstrate professional skills and an understanding of career opportunities, demonstrate the five practices of exemplary leadership, and have developed lifelong relationships with peers, mentors and community members.

The group includes 36 students from 20 public and private schools from across Greater Des Moines. Students will meet twice a month to discuss issues and opportunities in our region and fine-tune their leadership skills. Participation in the YLI program is tuition free for all students, thanks to community sponsors.

The 2023 class includes Cade Littlefield and Violet Montgomery, students at Waukee High School; and Saina Narsian, Waukee Northwest High School. For more information, visit gdmli.com/yli. ■

COLORING contest winners named at Iowa State Fair

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig presented awards to the winners of the 2022 Choose Iowa Coloring Calendar contest at a ceremony held in the Agriculture Building during the 2022 Iowa State Fair. Over the past year, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship received submissions from K-12 students across the state and narrowed it down to 15 student artists for the 2022 issue of this annual calendar.

Winners included Peighton Henningsen of Waukee.

“Our Choose Iowa marketing program is about connecting Iowa farmers with consumers, and this contest extends that connection to our youngest Iowans in a fun and engaging way,” said Secretary Naig. “While researching and creating their entries, students were able to learn more about how their everyday lives are connected to farmers and even consider a career in agriculture down the road. Their creativity and involvement energizes and encourages me about the future of Iowa agriculture.” ■

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OUT & ABOUT



Sydney Hinders and Boomer Benning at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon at Attivo Trail on Aug. 18.



Rob Grove and Kevin Troxel at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon at Attivo Trail on Aug. 18.



Amber Soy, Stephanie Gerleman and Margaret Bramble at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon at Attivo Trail on Aug. 18.



Kelly Troxel and Michael Bartos at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon at Attivo Trail on Aug. 18.



Todd McDonald and Pat Pithan at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon at Attivo Trail on Aug. 18.



Owen Craver and Shelly Dixon at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon at Attivo Trail on Aug. 18.



Julie Muselman at the Waukee Farmers Market on Aug. 31.



Tim Hanson at the Waukee Farmers Market on Aug. 31.



Holly Hintz and Melissa Schaefer at the Waukee Farmers Market on Aug. 31.



Minday and Norman Renner at the Waukee Farmers Market on Aug. 31.



Regina Quiambao at the Waukee Farmers Market on Aug. 31.



Perry Ross at the Waukee Farmers Market on Aug. 31.

FARMERS Market

The Waukee Farmers Market was held in the Waukee Triangle District on Aug. 31.



Zahra, Serene and Hanin Younes of Storybook Orchard



Brittney, Olivia and Summer Olson



Scott and Tammy Wolfram



LeAnn Thongvanh



Ronn Newby



Evelyn, Isaiah and Elijah Gomez



Norman Renner and Finley



Ashley, Kylee, Steve and Kennedy Kiburz

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