REMEMBER WHEN? THESE CLEAR LAKE
TOY COLLECTORS SHARE THEIR MEMORIES

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Let the memories roll

Wrapped in a package underneath our Christmas tree in 1973 was my hero, Evel Knievel, or at least an action figure that kind of looked like him, dressed in his signature American flag-adorned white jumpsuit. A removable plastic helmet covered his flowing vinyl hair, and the look on Evel’s face was as stern as anyone who would try to jump the Snake River Canyon, or in my case, down our basement steps. And, ironically, each Evel Knievel figure was also equipped with a cane.

The bendable Evel Knievel figure was quite slender and only 6” tall. He was a dwarf in comparison to G.I. Joe, Big Jim or Johnny West, but he had something those guys never did — a motorcycle. And not just any motorcycle, mind you, this doll (I use that term lightly) came with a daredevil stunt cycle with rubber tires that could absorb all the shock I could muster up. But what really made the cycle special was the red, wind-up energizer that would shoot it out at a seemingly blazing speed to gear up for the stunts.

The real-life Evel Knievel attempted more than 75 ramp-to-ramp jumps; mine did hundreds in our driveway alone. The real-life Evel suffered more than 433 broken bones, but there wasn’t a single blemish in my guy. The real-life Evel had a fleet of vehicles. I had the Evel Knievel Scramble Van, complete with jump ramp, cycle jack, cycle trailer, workbench and tools. The real-life Evel died in 2007 at age 69. Mine remains in an unknown area, disappearing sometime in the 1980s.

But, for a few hundred bucks and an online order, these memories can all be fully restored, proving that, regardless of age, a boy never really has to stop being a kid.

Thanks for reading.

Shane Goodman
Publisher

Life in the Valley

February seems to be a month for birthdays. I know there are several in my family and we have our share here at Apple Valley. Have you ever wondered why we make such a fuss about birthdays? All we do is live one day at a time and, if we are lucky, we have another birthday to celebrate! Perhaps that is all we need to know it is a chance for a celebration.

February weather is another puzzle – everything from blinding blizzards to days that hint of Spring! Maybe that is what we like about Iowa. Never a dull moment. However, my Florida family might argue that point!

Even though we can’t go for a walk outside these days, there are plenty of hallways and, no, you won’t get lost. They all lead back to the dining room. Everyone knows where that is located.

As I write this we have what could easily become a real blizzard. At least it is giving the weather man something to tell us about.

This afternoon we had what is called a “Resident Meeting”. It is a meeting at which Terri tells us what is going on in our life here in the valley and what events are coming.

Perhaps the best news is that as a group we are staying healthy and well. In the several years I have been here we have never has a need to be quarantined. For that we can be very grateful – and a little proud.

Think Spring – hopefully it is just around the corner.

– Pat J
Pat Jacobson
Apple Valley Resident

405 27th Avenue South
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www.iowalivingmagazines.com/clearlake
It's a little piece of childhood saved in a box.

They are to be found in out-of-the-way places — tucked away in the corner of a cobweb-ridden attic, high on a shelf in a musty basement, nearly forgotten in a box brimming full of lawn ornaments, hedge clippers and garden gloves in a garage.

These pieces of childhood, once discovered, are brought new again into the light of day. They can occupy the imagination of a grown man for hours on end. They are cleaned, polished, repaired and prized for the simpler time they represent.

This is a story of boys and their toys. But it's really so much more.

It must have been Roseanne Barr who said it so well: “Men are boys until you bury them.”

And how many times have we each heard: “The only difference between men and boys is the price of their toys.”

But this isn’t just about any boys and toys. These are toys that memories are made of — a more simple time, so fondly remembered.

When men were boys and played with these toys, they didn’t have the worry of a monthly mortgage, car loans or paying off their student loans just in time to send their kids to college.

Sometimes a toy is much more than a toy.

Sometimes a toy is an echo of childhood that fills the heart with happiness.

“These are memories,” says Tom Wilson of Clear Lake.

As a collector for more than 25 years and owner of Collectors Wonderland in downtown Clear Lake, Wilson understands well the draw of childhood toys to a man in
“Generally speaking, when you’re a kid that’s the happiest time of your life,” he says. “That’s what people like about it, because it brings back happy times. That’s what it’s all about.”

Growing up in Mason City, Wilson recalls well falling in love with the speed of tiny cars racing around a little orange track made of plastic. And most Baby Boomers know immediately what he’s talking about — Hot Wheels.

“Personally, I was into Hot Wheels,” Wilson says. “I was a city kid, so I had Hot Wheels and Matchbox Cars, whereas the farm kids all had toy farm tractors.”

Hot Wheels, with their lightweight, flexible tracks, transformed the toy industry. They were simple to snap together and less fussy to operate than older racetracks that required wires, hand controls and a narrow gauge to keep the cars on the track.

And they were just plain fun to run.

But whether it’s Hot Wheels or a toy train made of steel, Wilson says the real appeal for any grown-up boy is finding a toy from his own era.

“People are always trying to buy back whatever they had as a kid — always,” he says. “They’re always buying what they had as kids, and that’s what they collect.”

He sees it all the time, grown men searching out memories of their youth in the form of the toys they knew as children.

“The older guys — the ones who grew up in the 1930s and ‘40s — they played with the cast iron toys, toy trains, and that type of stuff,” he explains. “When you get into the 1950s, it was more of the Ertl type toys, Tonka trucks, and the space toys were really big in the 1950s and ‘60s.”

While a lucky few managed to stash away their toys long enough to rediscover them as adults, more often than not it’s a process of searching out the remnants of your childhood after you’re old enough to appreciate that simpler time.

The stories are often the same. Boys eventually grow into young men, go off to college, and the toys of their youth are forgotten at home. Sometimes the parents downsize and simply toss the toys or sell them at garage sales. Other times, the toys are stored away for years — imagine a box of baseball cards shoved clear to the back underneath a bed or a Tonka truck sitting idle in the rafters of a garage.

During the busy decade of their 20s, when young men finish college, get married, and start to settle down, they may rarely have time to think about their childhood toys. Actually, they’re busy putting that part of their life behind them. But give them a few years, and most of them will start to rekindle a few of those boyhood memories.

“Generally speaking, most people start buying their childhood back after about 30 years,” Wilson says. “By the time they’re in their 40s, their own kids are a little older, and then they start looking.”

For toy collectors, the best find is always a toy still in its original box.

“The box on any vintage toy at least doubles the value,” Wilson says. “The box is worth more than the toy.”

The exception to that rule would be those things that everyone bought and never played with because they assumed it was going to be collectible. A lot of the Star Wars collectibles can fall into this category.

“So much of that stuff just sat in the box,” Wilson notes. “It all got hoarded, and it’s not that collectible. But the older space toys, the ones that got played with, there’s a premium on that when you find them in good condition.”

Board games are toys that, in many cases, have stood the test of time for multiple generations. They are also a rare blend of being both affordable and collectible.
“Everybody had them, and the early 1950s and ’60s board games are very collectible because everybody can remember playing with them,” Wilson says.

Even just the game board itself is in demand as aging Baby Boomers seek to reclaim a bit of their youth.

“People will hang the game boards on the wall, and they’re very affordable,” Wilson says. “People are in to not spending a lot of money in this day and age.”

When it comes to recapturing the toys of youth, it’s a phenomenon less common in women, who are more focused on collecting glassware, kitchen items or things of a practical nature, according to Wilson.

But for men, it’s a completely different story.

“It’s definitely more men,” he says. “I don’t know the percentage, but it’s definitely more men… And if they don’t have something, men pay any price for it, even at an auction. That’s when they really pay the price on stuff.”

Women, he says, are more likely to collect something that they can use, whether as a piece of décor or for a practical use, whereas men are looking for that happy memory. Sometimes, it’s not even what they had, but what they always wanted.

“I kind of always wanted a train and never got one, like a Lionel train,” Wilson says, a slight wistfulness in his voice.

For many men, the toy they didn’t get as a child is the first toy they buy for their own son when that day comes. But in Wilson’s case, his only child is a daughter (now 24 years old), and she was more into the American Girl Dolls, as well as the ever-popular Barbies.

While every child and every generation is different, the fondness of childhood memories remains constant.

“I hear all kinds of stories,” Wilson says. Sometimes, toys even take people back to remembering their grandparents and the toy stories they shared from their own childhood.

“People want to keep things because they do have sentimental value, but they don’t always have room,” he says. “They might keep just one or two things and then sell the rest off.”

If there was a “golden age of toys,” Wilson says, it was probably the 1930s through the 1950s.

For the most part, toys in that era were made of sturdy metal and powered only by the imagination of the child who held it — something that a lot of folks long for again.

“Those toys were probably the best,” Wilson says. “They were the most durable; they were cast iron and tin, wind-up, and no plastic. Once you started getting into the 1950s, they started getting into plastic and it doesn’t hold up as well then.”

But even toy collecting changes with the times. The evidence shows in the growing popularity of collecting Fisher Price toys that were seemingly every place in the 1970s, which matches the fact that children born in the 1970s are now entering their 40s and remembering just how sweet those childhood years were.

So whether it’s a Fisher Price telephone, a Tonka truck, a bright orange Hot Wheels track or even a Lionel train, the memory is just as precious.

Childhood — the one time of life that goes so fast, and means so much — “that’s what it’s all about,” Wilson concludes.

Sometimes you really can hold a memory in your hands.
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Somewhere in my Irish and German heritage, there's a little something that just loves to go "south of the border" whenever I can. Give me something a little hot, a little spicy, and I am one happy camper. That's why almost no week is complete without a trip to Taco John's. Fortunately, my favorite dining companion feels the same way. We enjoy the convenience of fresh food, served hot and fast. And we always know it's going to be good at Taco John's.

Fortunately, my favorite dining companion feels the same way. We enjoy the convenience of fresh food, served hot and fast.

And we always know it's going to be good at Taco John's.

A creature of habit, I nearly always order Super Nachos. I made the mistake once of ordering the smaller size, thinking I would save a few calories, but then I didn't have enough to share with my husband, and so he got a little stingy sharing those incredible potato olés.

I never made the same mistake again. The Super Nachos have a little something of everything for me and a whole lot of delicious for both of us to share.

There's just a lot of flavors happening in this thing. There's the warmth of the melted cheese, the coolness of the sour cream and guacamole. There's the heat of all the Mexican spices and the extra hot sauce I layer on. There's the crisp freshness of the chips and juicy, tender goodness of the beef.

My dining companion, meanwhile, likes to vary his menu, but tends to be a big fan of burritos. These things are surprisingly filling for a working man, such as my husband, and he comes away satisfied every time. Of course, a big serving of potato olés on the side is a must for each of us.

For a quick bite, I favor keeping it simple with just a crunchy taco that I can almost eat on the run. But since I don't like lettuce on the steering wheel, I play it safe and park for a minute to really enjoy this taste sensation that keeps me going all afternoon hunting down stories around town.

It just goes to show that sometimes the best places are the ones we're most familiar with — foods that please and foods that nourish. And if a little spice and zing is thrown in along the way, that's even better.

Taco John’s 2905 Fourth Ave. South (641) 357-0900 Open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily

Read past reviews at www.iowalivingmagazines.com
Treasure in disguise

Mid-century home is filled with historic pieces

By Lori Berglund

There’s a secret hiding inside this seemingly modest home on First Avenue South in Clear Lake.

Homeowners Dennis and Lillie Keith willingly share the secret, considering themselves caretakers of a treasure in disguise.

“I feel fortunate to live here,” says Lillie. “This is just my home for awhile to take care of.”

By most accounts, homes built in the 1950s were more functional than fashionable. Vast expanses of woodwork, common in homes built in the early 20th century, were often abandoned in favor of a cleaner look known as “mid-century modern.”

Built in 1950, it doesn’t get any more “mid-century” than this, but the secret inside is that this particular home is a shrine to craftsmanship. From the outside, it’s a typically nice home; from the inside, it’s a palace of rich woodwork and leaded and stained glass windows.

“All of this came out of a mansion in Rockford,” explains Lillie, as she delves into the home’s past.

Originally known as the Mitchell Mansion, the home boasted 32 rooms spread over three stories. It was built by Z.T. Mitchell from 1897 to 1898 at a cost of about $16,000. Skilled laborers building the mansion earned $3 a day, while common laborers earned $1 a day.

By 1950 the Mitchell Mansion had fallen in disrepair, but a Clear Lake contractor recognized a beauty in the rough when he saw one. Jim Davis, who had Davis and Keith Contracting, bought the decaying mansion for about $5,000 and created his own one-story “mansion” here in Clear Lake.

Davis saved the best pieces — from a massive oak fireplace and mantel, to mammoth pocket doors, tons of woodwork, even parquet floors — and installed them in the two-bedroom home he was building for his own family.

The detail is everywhere, even seen in a bedroom door that is half maple and half oak, each side matching the woodwork of the room it faces.

Perhaps most glorious is the expanse of windows looking out from the solarium. The Keiths use it as a retreat from today’s busy world.

“This is a quiet room,” Lillie says. “We come back here and read. There’s no TV. There’s no radio.”

Calling this house that hides the relics of a mansion home is nothing less than a delight for the couple.

“I feel blessed to live in this home,” concludes Lillie.
Friday, Feb. 7

- Yoga, all levels, open to the public, free will donation, 8:30 a.m., Integrative Medicine Consultants.
- 7 Boys Basketball vs. Mason City, 4:15 p.m.
- 8 Boys Basketball at Mason City, 4:30 p.m.
- JV/V Girls Basketball vs. Eagle Grove, 4:30/6:15 p.m.
- JV/V Boys Basketball vs. Eagle Grove, 4:30/7:45 p.m.
- Dancin-tism, designed for children with ASD and other special needs, register at 641-355-1216, 5:15-6 p.m., 802B 7th Avenue North.

Monday, Feb. 10

- Marvelous Mondays, grades 4-5, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- Clear Lake Jaycees, 6:15 p.m., District 619, 619 Buddy Holly Place
- Friends of the Library Board Meeting, 4 p.m.
- School Board Work Session, 5:15 p.m.
- 7th/8th and HS Band Concert, 7:30 p.m., EB Stillman Auditorium.
- 9 Girls/Basketball at Clarion-Goldfield, 6:30/8 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 11

- Terrific Tuesdays, grades 1-3, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- Library Board Meeting, 5:15 p.m.
- V Wrestling Regionals
- JV/V Girls Basketball at Algona, 4:30/6:15 p.m.
- JV/V Boys Basketball at Algona, 4:30/7:45 p.m.
- 5th/6th Grade Band and 7th/8th Grade Jazz Band Concert, 7 p.m., EB Stillman Auditorium.

Wednesday, Feb. 12

- Early Dismissal - Clear Lake Schools
- Group Meditation, easy and relaxing 20 minute guided group meditation, free and open to the public, noon, Integrative Medicine Consultants, Clear Lake.
- Storytime, ages 5 and older, 10:30-11 a.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- Ames Public Library Friends Foundation Meeting, 4 p.m., City Hall.
- 9 Girls Basketball vs. Garner-Hayfield, 4:30 p.m.
- JV/V Girls Basketball at Humboldt, 4:30/6:15 p.m.
- JV/V Boys Basketball at Humboldt, 4:30/7:45 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 13

- Thursday Thrillers, grades 1-3, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- 3rd Grade Music Concert, 6:30 p.m., CC Gym.
- 9 Girls Basketball vs. Garner-Hayfield, 4:30 p.m.
- JV/V Girls Basketball at Humboldt, 4:30/6:15 p.m.
- JV/V Boys Basketball at Humboldt, 4:30/7:45 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 14

- Valentine’s Day
- Yoga, all levels, open to the public, free will donation, 8:30 a.m., Integrative Medicine Consultants.
- Atlanta Rhythm Section, $20 advance and $25 at door, doors open 8 p.m., Surf Ballroom.

Saturday, Feb. 15

- Color the Wind Kite Festival, features inflatable kites of all kinds, free admission, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m.
- 2A Wrestling Sectionals
- JV/V Boys Basketball vs. Charles City, 1/2:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 16

- The Chorale and Concert Choir of the Ames Children’s Choirs (ACC), free, 3 p.m., Elim Lutheran Church, 350 4th St, Randall.

Monday, Feb. 17

- President’s Day
City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., City Hall.
Mid-Winter HS Band Concert, 7:30 p.m., EB Stillman Auditorium.

**Tuesday, Feb. 18**
- Terrific Tuesdays, grades 1-3, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- MS Large Group Music Festival at Forest City
- JV/V Boys Basketball at Mason City, 6:15/7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Feb. 19**
- Early Dismissal - Clear Lake Schools
- Group Meditation, easy and relaxing 20 minute guided group meditation, free and open to the public, noon, Integrative Medicine Consultants., Clear Lake.
- Storytime, ages 5 and older, 10:30-11 a.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- North Iowa Fair Association Board Meeting, 7 p.m., 4-H Learning Center.
- V Girls Basketball Regionals

**Thursday, Feb. 20**
- Thursday Thrillers, grades 1-3, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- Dancing at the Senior Citizens Center, with music by Clark Family Band, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Senior Citizens Center, 105 S 4th St
- Family 2 Family Support Group, an autism support system, 6-7:30 p.m., Kinney Lindstrom Center-Opportunity Village.
- National Dance Team Competition in Minnesota
- State Wrestling Tournament
- GriefShare, $15, for anyone dealing with loss of a loved one to death and needing help through the journey of grief, 7-8:30 p.m., Open Bible Church, 609 S. 8th St
- Dr. Todd D. Hocraffer Chiropractor
  641.357.7189

**Friday, Feb. 21**
- No school
- Yoga, all levels, open to the public, free will donation, 8:30 a.m., Integrative Medicine Consultants.
- National Dance Team Competition in Minnesota
- State Wrestling Tournament
- Dancin-tism, designed for children with ASD and other special needs, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.
- HS Spring Vocal Concert, 7:30 p.m., EB Stillman Auditorium.

Submit event information to lindsey@iowalivingmagazines.com

Submit your calendar items online at www.iowalivingmagazines.com
Friday, Feb. 28

Yoga, all levels, open to the public, free, will donation, 8:30 a.m., Integrative Medicine Consultants.

Dancin-tism, designed for children with ASD and other special needs, register at 641-355-1216, 5:15-6 p.m., 802B 7th Avenue North.

Spring Dance Show, 7 p.m., HS Gym.

Saturday, March 1

River City Rifle and Pistol Club Gun Show, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., North Iowa Events Center- All Seasons Building.

Sunday, March 2

River City Rifle and Pistol Club Gun Show, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., North Iowa Events Center - All Seasons Building.

Mane Event, 2 p.m., EB Stillman Auditorium.

Monday, March 3

City Council, 6:30 p.m., City Hall.

School Board Work Session, 5:15 p.m.

Tuesday, March 4

Mardi Gras

Terrific Tuesdays, grades 1-3, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Wednesday, March 5

Ash Wednesday

Early Dismissal - Clear Lake Schools

Storytime, ages 5 and older, 10:30-11 a.m., Clear Lake Public Library.

Blood Drive, 8:30 a.m., High School Gym.

Thursday, March 6

Thursday Thrillers, grades 1-3, registration required, 3:15-5 p.m., Clear Lake Public Library.

GriefShare, $15, for anyone dealing with loss of a loved one to death and needing help through the journey of grief, 7-8:30 p.m., Open Bible Church, 609 S. 8th St.

Dancing at the Senior Citizens Center, with music by Dan’s Band, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Senior Citizens Center. 105 S 4th St.

Family 2 Family Autism Educational/Informational Meeting, an autism support system, 6-7:30 p.m., Kinney Lindstrom Center-Opportunity Village.

2nd Grade Music Concert, 6:30 p.m., CC Gym.

Friday, March 7

Dancin-tism, designed for children with ASD and other special needs, register at 641-355-1216, 5:15-6 p.m., 802B 7th Avenue North.

Mardi Gras Party with Hairball, $15 advance and $20 at door, doors open 8 p.m., Surf Ballroom.

Home Show, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., North Iowa Events Center All Seasons and Olson Building.

GriefShare spring session starts Feb. 20

GriefShare, a grief support group, will start its spring session on Thursday, Feb. 20. It will be held at 609 S. Eighth St. in Clear Lake (Open Bible Church). The 13 weeks of classes will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. The cost of the class is $15. This group is for anyone who is dealing with the loss of a loved one to death who would like some practical help and a listening ear to help through the difficult journey of grief. Feel free to contact Will Hunsaker at 641-430-8861. Scholarships are available.

Mission team to build playground equipment

The Nehemiah Mission Team with members from seven different denominations in Forest City, Fertile, Clear Lake and Centerville, Minn., is planning a mission trip to Nueva Guinea, Nicaragua. The group will be building playground equipment for a Christian school of around 150 students from preschool through sixth grade. They have no playground equipment. The group is working with Chris from “Kids Around The World” whose mission is to take playground equipment and refurbish it. The mission team’s plan is to purchase two small playgrounds for the school, ship them to Managua, then take them to Nueva Guinea by truck. The cost is $22,500. Those interested in donating to the playground equipment may contact Josh Schulze, 641-210-9955, or Dan Miller, (641-797-2704). Donations may be sent to Celebration Community Church, 805 10th Ave. North, Clear Lake Iowa, 50428.

Color-the-Wind Kite Festival Feb. 15

There will be lots of music and free winter fun for everyone when the Color-the-Wind Kite Festival returns to Clear Lake on Saturday, Feb. 15. Color-the-Wind is the largest winter kite festival in the Midwest. Kite enthusiasts from eight states will demonstrate their skills maneuvering spectacular kites from, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the frozen waters of the lake at the seawall in downtown Clear Lake. Bring your own kite, or buy an inexpensive one at the festival. Weather permitting, hundreds of colorful kites of all shapes and sizes will fill the skies. Professional kite flying teams will entertain with their two- and four-line stunt kites throughout the day. You are sure to find the choreographed kite balancing acts of “Fire and Ice” and “180-GO” fascinating. Warm up and have a sweet treat in the Lakeview Room across the street from the Lake. Hot food and beverages will be available for purchase at the Whiskey Creek lunch wagon or at downtown eateries just a short walk away. For more information about the festival, visit www.colorthewind.org. Updates on ice and weather conditions that may affect the festival will be posted on the website.

Dog license reminder

Dog licenses for the calendar year beginning Jan. 1, 2014 are now due. The City Ordinance requires all dogs over six months of age to be licensed with the City of Clear Lake. Licenses may be purchased at City Hall, 15 North 6th Street. For licenses purchased before the March 31 deadline, the fee is $3. The deadline for purchasing your 2014 dog license(s) without penalty is March 31. On and after April 1, a $1 penalty charge per month is added for each license. Proof of current rabies vaccination must be presented at time of licensing. Dogs kept in state or federally licensed kennels, which are kept or raised solely for the bona fide purpose of sale and which are kept under constant restraint, do not need to be licensed. Please call 357-5267 for more information.
Fly a kite

Churches look forward to Color the Wind Festival

By Amber Williams

Every year the local churches — and the Clear Lake community alike — look forward to an annual event, when the lows of winter blues are replaced by highs of colors in the sky. The Color the Wind Festival is a celebrated event that puts Clear Lake on the map across the Midwest, and churches, such as Harvest Bible Chapel, are sure to mark the church calendar and bulletin with anticipation every year.

The public is invited to watch or participate along with kite fliers from an eight-state area in team flying shows, which are choreographed to music. The annual event occurs on the third Saturday of each February, this year on Feb. 15, and draws crowds of bundled-up kite-flyers and fans to the downtown seawall, at the west end of Main Street, from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Over the icy plain, spectators will view hundreds of huge, colorful kites as well as ground displays on the frozen waters of Clear Lake.

Hot food, beverages and sweet treats will be available for purchase on site. The Lakeview Room across the street from the flying field will offer a warm haven and kites for sale. Learn more at www.colorthewind.org, email kiteman@netins.net or call (641)-357-5516.

Chow down at Agape Christian Family Church with a taco lunch at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9. This delicious new fundraiser is intended to help fund the new ministries planned for 2014 at the church. The taco lunch will be followed by a cake and pie auction. Call the church for more details at 641-357-8014, or stop by the church at 2810 Hwy. 18 W. Go online to www.agapepage.com to keep up-to-date on the many things the church has going on.

Kids’ Club began last month at the United Methodist Church, and the after-school program will continue on Wednesdays for kindergartners through fifth-graders. However, the 4 p.m. end time will now be extended. Working parents typically don’t have flexible schedules, so Clear Lake UMC will provide supervised free time from 4 - 5 p.m. for children whose parents cannot pick them up earlier. But this program would not be possible without help from devoted and reliable volunteers. More help is needed to transport kids from school to church, lead Bible story centers, help with crafts or special interest centers, lead active games, accompany/assist children moving from center to center, provide/serve after-school snacks and supervise a small group of children.

Anyone who can help should contact Pastor Rhoda, 357-5247, or email clrhoda@mchsi.com.

Spread the Word

Have an upcoming event or church news you would like to announce? Send information to darren@dmcityview.com.
Meet Michael Barkley
Principal strives to make impression on students

By Lori Berglund

Students at Clear Creek Elementary School in Clear Lake may be confronted with a multitude of assignments throughout the year, but Principal Michael Barkley has one primary assignment for himself each and every school year.

He wants to make an impression a student can never forget.

“I told the kids and the staff when I started here that I couldn’t tell you who my elementary principal was; I don’t remember his name,” Barkley explains. “I don’t want any kid to go through school without knowing who I am and remembering some part of me for having been a part of their life. That’s kind of been my mission since I started here.”

An Iowa native and 1976 graduate of Des Moines Roosevelt High School, Barkley will be starting his 20th year as principal at Clear Creek next fall. In all those years, nothing he has done at the school has been as important to him as cultivating that personal relationship with students.

“I greet every kid at the door every day when they come in from the buses or from parent drop-off,” he says. “I’m standing at that door in the lunchroom every day chatting with them. When school lets out in the afternoon, I’m there at the door again wishing them a good night.”

As a principal, Barkley says, “Parents can always come in and talk to me.”

Barkley’s route to Clear Lake took him first to the Lone Star State. He worked two years as a substitute teacher in Des Moines after earning his undergraduate degree from Wartburg College before heading south.

In Texas, he taught, third, fourth and fifth grades and then served as an assistant principal, principal and finally director of elementary education at the Galena Park School District before he and his wife, Karen, decided to move their young family back to Iowa.

He can’t imagine having found a better place to make his career than here in Clear Lake.

“We have great kids, we have a great staff, a great community, and when you put that all together, it’s just a great place to work,” he concludes.
Faux potato soup
Cauliflower makes this winter favorite healthy

By Jan Allen

Here is a warm, creamy, healthy soup recipe for you to try this month.

My husband and I have been changing our way of eating to a much healthier diet. As I mentioned a few months ago, we have stopped eating wheat, potatoes and rice to limit blood sugar spikes as he is diabetic and I have had high cholesterol. A lower glycemic diet has been very helpful in controlling both of these issues, and I love being able to make some of our favorites in a different way that allows us to enjoy yummy, “good-for-us” food.

My mom was a wonderful cook, and her potato soup was something I enjoyed very much. It is one of those comfort foods that just hits the spot on a cold, blustery Iowa winter’s night. I had missed being able to make and enjoy this particular soup — until now. Some of you may remember the recipe for cauliflower crust pizza I submitted a few months ago. You may think I am redundant using cauliflower again, but it is one of those super foods that is very versatile and can be adapted in so many ways. I love this soup. I challenge you to try it once; my guess is you will love it, too, and you won’t have to worry about those blood sugar spikes.

It calls for nutritional yeast, possibly something most of you won’t have on hand, but you can find it in health food stores and some grocery stores. I asked one to order it, and they did. It adds a rich, vibrant flavor to the soup, and you can use it in many other dishes as well. You can use frozen or fresh cauliflower. I generally use fresh, and the last batch I used two heads and doubled the rest of the ingredients. Just adapt the recipe to the likes and needs of your family. It isn’t an exact science. I hope you like it. I know your body will.

Ingredients

1 head of cauliflower, cut into pieces
4 cups fat free chicken broth (I use low sodium.)
2 or 3 light Laughing Cow or Weight Watchers cheese wedges
Sea salt, black pepper and sprinkles of nutritional yeast to taste
Crumbled turkey bacon
(Optional: Garlic or onion powder, cayenne pepper)

Directions

1. Bring cauliflower and broth to a boil, then simmer until tender.
2. Using a slotted spoon, scoop cooked cauliflower into a blender. Blend until smooth and creamy.
3. Add cheese wedges to the blender, blend again until smooth. Return to saucepan and season with sea salt, black pepper, nutritional yeast and any other seasonings you like. Add crumbled turkey bacon. This soup should be a thick, creamy consistency to resemble a potato-based soup. Season to your liking and you can garnish with a bit more crumbled turkey bacon, a little shredded cheese or some green onion. Enjoy!
Submit your photos and captions to darren@dmcityview.com

Rod Martin and Mike Blickenberfer at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Bernabe Colorado and Art Tesar at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Brian Hagenow and Mark Steenhard at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

John Severtson and Vickie Snyder at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Kevin Meyer and Craig Miller at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Jennifer Larsen and Scott Flory at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Dave Betz and Tim Molencamp at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Andy Meyer and Kelly Harbach at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Steve King and Doug Loon at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Mark Ebeling recognized Alice Hanley as a retiring board member at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Brian Hagenow of The Other Place was honored as the Business of the Year by Mark Ebeling at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Nikki Barragy was honored as Education Partner of the Year by Mark Ebeling at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

See more photos online at www.iowalivingmagazines.com
Dave Theiss was honored with the North Iowa Service Award by Mark Ebeling at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Mark Ebeling honored Todd Luker, who accepted the Volunteer of the Year award for Larry Luker at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Mark Ebeling honored Jennifer Larsen as the First Mate of the Year at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Nate Carney, Paul Stevenson and Mark Ebeling at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Chamber President 2013 Nate Carney, Chamber Director Tim Coffey and Chamber President 2014 Mark Ebeling at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Dennis Sue Erickson and Paula Hanus at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Chamber staff Tim Coffey, Trish Pletcher, Libbey Patton and Patsy Barragy at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Casey Callanan, Nelson Crabb and Robert Amosson at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

The First Mates at the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon on Jan. 23.

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