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THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE FORT DODGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Turning pages at the library

We live in a time of much change, especially in the realm of technology. Just two or three decades ago, the Internet didn’t exist, at least not to the average person. A “mobile” phone was the size of a shoebox and was something only seen in limousines or spy movies. And the most advanced feature on an automobile was cruise control. Today 85 percent of the American population uses the Internet on a regular basis for work, family and pleasure. Most homes now have multiple computers, and many individuals have several email addresses, in addition to accounts with Facebook, Twitter and an array of other social media.

More than 91 percent of Americans now have cell phones. In fact, worldwide, more people have cell phones than working toilets. What does that say? And Americans are no longer satisfied with using a phone to simply make calls. Today 56 percent own “smart phones” and are accessing news, weather, music, games and more from these devices.

If you haven’t been inside a new car lately, you are in for a few surprises, too. The dashboards now resemble computers with flat screen displays that offer services like global positioning service mapping (GPS), satellite radio (Sirius) and hands-free phone communication (Bluetooth). It’s hard to believe that we used to be impressed with power windows.

With all this change, it’s refreshing to see that some basic activities remain mainstays, like reading a book or magazine. Reading is as popular today as it ever has been, and this is quite visible at any number of local libraries on a daily basis. That’s not to say that libraries haven’t changed with the times, as they most certainly have “turned the page” in many ways. But they are also truly rich in history.

In this month’s cover story, we look at the history of the Fort Dodge Library. This year marks the 160th anniversary of the birth of the earliest efforts to bring a library to what was then a fledgling frontier town. Witter H. Johnston, was crucial to the creation of Fort Dodge’s first library, but he also played a role statewide and was a founder and president of the Iowa Library Association.

There’s certainly a lot we can all learn at the library, and we encourage you to take full advantage of it.

Thanks for reading.

Shane Goodman
Publisher
If one is looking to create a gift that truly keeps on giving, perhaps there is no better place to start than a public library.

Andrew Carnegie must have felt that way.

“A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people,” Carnegie is said to have voiced. “It is a never failing spring in the desert.”

After making his millions in the steel industry, Carnegie set out to give it all away before he died. He nearly succeeded, selling Carnegie Steel to J.P. Morgan for a reported $480 million, and then managing to give away some $350 million before his death in 1919.

“The man who dies rich, dies disgraced,” Carnegie is credited with saying.

His most lasting contribution is not as an industrialist — though he was certainly one of America’s greatest captains of industry — but as a philanthropist who awarded grants to help establish more than 2,500 libraries that still grace America from coast to coast.

In Fort Dodge, the library movement started well before Carnegie’s own efforts, albeit on a more modest basis. In actuality, 2015 marks the 160th anniversary of the birth of the earliest efforts to bring a library to what was then a fledgling frontier town.

In 1855, 35 local residents created the Fort Dodge Literary Society, considered the forerunner of the library in this community. The society made a limited number of books available for members to borrow.

Library staff members, from left, Rachael Lavender, Amy Presley and Rita Schmidt, relax in front of art stack that welcomes visitors to the Fort Dodge Library. Photo by Lori Berglund.
Even so, they were happy to have this small resource at their disposal, although not all could enjoy it, as it was a subscription service, and few could afford such a luxury.

By the 1860s, interest in the Literary Society was declining. Not only could few afford it, but also when people were building a town from scratch on the prairie, they likely had little time for leisure reading. Still, some in the community wanted nothing more than to expand the reading horizons of their fellow citizens.

Perhaps no one had a greater ambition for this goal than Witter H. Johnston, often referred to in historical documents as W.H. Johnston, and sometimes “Captain” Johnston. Not only was Johnston crucial to the creation of Fort Dodge’s first library, but he also played a role statewide and was a founder and president of the Iowa Library Association.

As local support grew again for library services, the Fort Dodge Library Association was created in 1874. Again, it was a subscription service, comprised of 63 men and 27 women.

The list of subscribers reads like a Who’s Who in Fort Dodge history, including such notables as John F. Duncombe, Webb Vincent and Mrs. Webb Vincent, Mrs. Charles Smeltzer and Mrs. G.S. Ringland.

Johnston, a subscriber and deputy clerk of the federal court, offered part of his office for the young library. The Association purchased nothing more than a bookcase and a book in which to record book lendings. The number of volumes available slowly grew and, in the Association’s second year, the entire book budget was spent on the purchase of the then-popular “Appleton’s Cyclopedia.” Perhaps the greatest difference between this early library in Johnston’s office and the library that Fort Dodge now enjoys is not the number of books or even the technology of the day, but how it was used. The library was not so much a place to come and sit and read but a place to borrow a book and take it home. It was a solitary place, whereas today’s library is a social hub. Imagine a library with no place to sit and read for an hour on a rainy afternoon.

Johnston, for one, clearly understood how a library could be so much more. In 1884, a city-wide election authorized the city council to establish a free public library in the community. In 1888, Johnston penned the following in his library report:

“I may be a little partial and overzealous, but I cannot see how anyone who takes any interest in the moral and intellectual improvements of our city can fail to take an interest in or manifest his hearty cooperation with, and sympathy for, an institution so surely calculated to minister to the pleasure, benefit and improvement to all.”

Making it happen would take a few more years. In 1899, Mrs. Martha G. Haskell offered a gift of $10,000 for a library building fund, but that offer was not to be. Instead, community leaders decided to pursue a Carnegie grant that would provide even more funding. Haskell agreed to the idea and instead made her contribution to a scholarship fund at Grinnell College.

The eventual Carnegie grant of $30,000 was combined with local monies to fund
the construction of the Carnegie library that served the community for a nearly century on the corner of Sixth Street and First Avenue North.

Built in the style of so many Carnegie libraries across the country, its front façade paid tribute to both Carnegie and the people of Fort Dodge with its large “C” engraved at the top of the entrance and the words “A Gift from Andrew Carnegie and Citizens of Fort Dodge” below it.

Rita Schmidt, acting director of the Fort Dodge Public Library today, spent many years working in that building.

“I do miss some of the architectural details that are common in a Carnegie building,” she says. “The woodwork, and those kinds of things, were really beautiful. And I do occasionally miss that you could open the windows.”

The building was also known for its art. Two of the most memorable portraits honored people who had great roles in the library’s early years.

Miss Maria Welles was the subject of one of the portraits. Welles is listed as one of the original subscribers to the library in 1874 and served as its first secretary. By 1903, with the opening of the Carnegie building, she had become a member of the Board of Trustees.

Welles and Mrs. C.C. Carpenter were the only women on the board, at a time when women did not yet have the right to vote in national elections. She would continue to serve for many years and was later elected vice president of the board.

Welles passed away in March 1924 but was not to be forgotten. The Wahkonsa Club, a literary organization of the day, purchased the portrait to honor Welles as one of its own founding members and presented it as a gift to the Fort Dodge Public Library. For decades, Welles’ graceful image was displayed in the reading room of the Carnegie building.

The other portrait, as could be expected, featured W.H. Johnston, who many consider to be the father of the library movement in Fort Dodge.

The life-size portrait of Johnston was commissioned by the library board of trustees following Johnston’s death in 1911. Library officials held an official unveiling of the portrait by Wilbur Reaser on Nov. 12, 1912. Along with Welles’ image, it was displayed in the Carnegie reading room.

Schmidt worked in the shadows of these very large portraits for many years and reassures those who remember the paintings well that they are safely stored away.

“We still have the pictures, but they are so large that they require the walls to be reinforced to hang them,” she explains.

While Schmidt has many fond memories of her years working in the Carnegie building, it can hardly compare to the service and improvements made with the opening of the new library on the City Square in 2001.

“We almost tripled our space,” she explains. “Everything is now on one floor,” whereas the old building was a challenge to many in the community, and some areas were completely inaccessible to anyone with a disability.

And while the old building had windows that opened, today’s library benefits from a heating and cooling system that is not only more efficient but also maintains a comfortable temperature year-round. And the vast of expanse windows still manage to bring the outdoors in.

“We have so much natural light coming in to the building,” Schmidt says.

True to its history of community support, the Friends of the Library echoes the work of the early literary societies.

“We are so grateful for the Friends of the Library,” says Schmidt. “They pay for all of our programming. Children’s programming, teen programs, adult programming — those are all paid for by the Friends.”

The Friends group also provides funding for various software and computer management programs that allow the library to better serve the public.

That small group of community leaders who came together 160 years ago could scarcely imagine that the library of today would connect Fort Dodge to the world as it does with superfast Wi-Fi and data base access unheard of even when the “new building” opened in 2001.

What the future will bring is limited only by imagination and energy of people willing to make it happen.
Imagine all your basic needs being out of reach and having almost nowhere to turn. It can be a reality for the homeless community of Fort Dodge — but one local church is helping out with a hot meal and a little more each week to change men’s lives forever.

Impacting the world
Reaching out, helping others and striving for better — New Covenant Christian Church has a hefty mission. The church’s motto reads like many others: “Love God; Love Others; Impact Our World,” but it’s what they do that sets them apart. New Covenant puts a special focus on touching every continent and every nation with the message of Jesus Christ. This Fort Dodge congregation pools resources, faith and money to many organizations and missionaries across the world. But it’s not all about the international effort — sometimes it’s about helping out right in their hometown.

Beacon of Hope Shelter
It’s located on First Avenue, but isn’t always first on people’s mind. A homeless shelter centered around the teachings and passions of Christ that is giving Iowans a second shot at life. The Beacon of Hope Shelter of Fort Dodge was born of a faith-based ministry in the fight to end homelessness in Webster County. But the shelter can’t go it alone — and that’s where New Covenant comes into play.

Meals for a Mission
It’s a tradition of giving that has happened for years, and while it may not look like much on paper, it’s going leaps and bounds with Beacon residents. On the second and fourth Thursday of each month, New Covenant congregation members go the extra mile by not only donating, but by serving and sharing a meal with the shelter’s residents. The tradition has even evolved into getting the church’s youth groups involved in helping out.

Students in seventh through 12th grade who attend New Covenant partner with the church’s youth group, Moxie, to do their part. For students, however, their part is more than just providing a tasty meal. On the second Sunday of each month, students load up food and head on over to Beacon to partake in fellowship with the men who are staying there. This is also a time where students help out with Second Chance, the shelter’s thrift store that helps fund the Beacon’s efforts.
February is library lover’ month

By Library staff

Celebrate Library Lovers’ Month by dropping in to the library to check out some books to snuggle up with, maybe grab a few DVDs to while away the cold nights, or pick up some audiobooks to listen to while commuting or working out.

Also, you can visit our website to get the latest library news, download an ebook or e-audiobook, download some free music or do a little research. If you need help finding something great to read just ask us — we’ll be happy to help you find the right book to get lost in this month!

There is still time to participate in our All Ages Winter Reading Program. This year’s theme is “A Blizzard of Books,” and it runs through Feb. 21. No registration is required, and patrons of all ages are welcome and encouraged to participate! Children and families may read together or separately. All you need to do is read or listen to any Fort Dodge Public Library item including print or downloadable materials, and then pick up and fill out an entry form. Completed forms can then be dropped off at any service desk. Two winners are drawn each week for a $10 gift certificate to Nettie’s. All entries we receive will be used for our grand prize drawings at the end of the program.

Our Winter Reading Program is funded through the generosity of the Fawkes Family. In 2010, local residents George and Deloris Fawkes celebrated milestone birthdays. Their sons decided to honor them and mark the special occasion by donating to the Fort Dodge Public Library Foundation. In an effort to double their impact, they generously agreed to match every donation, dollar for dollar, up to $100,000. It was a wonderfully successful campaign and we appreciate their commitment to the Library and to literacy.

Fort Dodge Public Library
424 Central Ave.
573-8167
Mon. - Tues.: 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wed. - Fri.: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

It’s not too late for preschoolers to enjoy the last few weeks of Winter Storytime! Children who are 3, 4, 5 or 6 years old and not yet in kindergarten are welcome to attend. Registration by a parent is required. Parents can sign their child up for storytime by calling the Children’s Department at 515-573-8167 ext. 242 or by stopping by the library. Storytimes are held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. with an afternoon session on Thursday afternoons at 2 p.m.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for Anytime Fitness on Dec. 18.

The Twin Lakes District of the MidAmerican Council of Boy Scouts had their first ever Merit Badge College at Iowa Central Community College. There were 60+ boys in attendance, and some came from as far away as Omaha. Photo submitted.
OUT AND ABOUT

Tanner Lehman, from Dunham’s Discount Sports located in Crossroads Mall of Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Sonja Rogers from Almost Home Humane Society shown with Sasha on January 22.

Dawn Reyes, sales associate of The Other Store located in Crossroads Mall of Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Gabby Jones from Almost Home Humane Society shown with Dice on January 22.

Frankee Petraline from Almost Home Humane Society shown with Sheldon on January 22.

Chris Ball from Almost Home Humane Society shown with Bridget on January 22.

A ribbon cutting was held Jan. 16 at the US Cellular new location, 2915 Fifth Ave. South in Fort Dodge. Cutting the ribbon is Char D’Antuono.
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Thursday Feb. 12
- Preschool Storytime, 10-10:30 a.m./2-2:30 p.m. FD Public Library
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradehome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- Twilight Sking & Snowshoeing, Valentine’s Ski, 5-7 p.m., Kennedy Park Reception Center
- Stage Door Productions Presents “Caberet - A Night of Musical Theatre,” 6 p.m. Drinks and Appetizers; 7 p.m., Show Vincent House
- STE Wrestling: Varsity, noon
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity Invitational, 12:30 p.m.
- FDHS Basketball: 7/8th vs. Marshalltown, 4:30 p.m.
- FDHS Wrestling: JV Tournament vs. Boone, 5:30 p.m.
- FDHS Mid Winter Concert, 7 p.m., GNT Little Theater
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE 5th Grade Band Informance, 12:15 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Youth Art Class “3D Sculpture” Ages: 5-9, 10 a.m. - noon, ages 10-14, 1-3 p.m., Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- Youth in Harmony. Students from across northern Iowa practice with two quartets and then perform that evening for a free concert for the public at 7 p.m. Quartets are Choir Boys and Sweet Adeline along with Harmony Brigade, 1-8 p.m., Humboldt Community School High School
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity vs. TBA, 11 a.m./1 p.m.
- FDMS Basketball: Boys 7th vs. Johnston, 4:30 p.m.
- Lifetree Cafe at Cana, “Why God?” When personal tragedy doesn’t make sense, noon or 7 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE 5th Grade Band Informance, 12:15 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- MDHS Basketball: Boys 8th vs. Johnston, 4:30 p.m.
- Youth Art Class “3D Sculpture” Ages: 5-9, 10 a.m. - noon, ages 10-14, 1-3 p.m., Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- Youth in Harmony. Students from across northern Iowa practice with two quartets and then perform that evening for a free concert for the public at 7 p.m. Quartets are Choir Boys and Sweet Adeline along with Harmony Brigade, 1-8 p.m., Humboldt Community School High School
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity vs. TBA, 11 a.m./1 p.m.
- FDMS Basketball: Boys 7th vs. Johnston, 4:30 p.m.
- Lifetree Cafe at Cana, “Why God?” When personal tragedy doesn’t make sense, noon or 7 p.m.

Friday Feb. 13
- Preschool Storytime, 10-10:30 a.m., FD Public Library
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 10 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Singing Valentines, FD Harmony Brigade, 1-8 p.m., Humboldt Community School High School
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity vs. TBA, 11 a.m./1 p.m.
- FDMS Basketball: Boys 7th vs. Johnston, 4:30 p.m.
- Lifetree Cafe at Cana, “Why God?” When personal tragedy doesn’t make sense, noon or 7 p.m.

Saturday Feb. 14
- “Blurring Boundaries” Opening Exhibit, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE Wrestling: Varsity, 12 p.m.
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity District, 12 p.m.

Monday Feb. 16
- President’s Day
- FDHS 9/10 vs. Humboldt, 4:45/6:15 p.m.
- FDHS Basketball: Boys 8th vs. Ames, 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday Feb. 17
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradehome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- Youth Art Class “3D Sculpture” Ages: 5-9, 10 a.m. - noon, ages 10-14, 1-3 p.m., Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- Youth in Harmony. Students from across northern Iowa practice with two quartets and then perform that evening for a free concert for the public at 7 p.m. Quartets are Choir Boys and Sweet Adeline along with Harmony Brigade, 1-8 p.m., Humboldt Community School High School
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity vs. TBA, 11 a.m./1 p.m.
- FDMS Basketball: Boys 7th vs. Johnston, 4:30 p.m.
- Lifetree Cafe at Cana, “Why God?” When personal tragedy doesn’t make sense, noon or 7 p.m.
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE 5th Grade Band Informance, 12:15 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena

Wednesday Feb. 18
- Preschool Storytime, 10-10:30 a.m., FD Public Library
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 10 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Singing Valentines, FD Harmony Brigade Chorus Quartets will perform singing valentines for your sweetheart, including a red Rose and a card. Call 515-570-3414 to schedule. Cost is $25, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., Fort Dodge Harmony Brigade Chorus
- FDHS Basketball: 9/10/JV vs. Mason City, 4:45/6:15/7:45 p.m.

Thursday Feb. 19
- Preschool Storytime, 10-10:30 a.m./2-2:30 p.m. FD Public Library
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradehome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- Sunshine Singers Mid-Winter Ministry Vocal Concert, An inspiring program filled with well-loved gospel favorites, 7-8:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church
- STE 5th Grade Band Informance, 12:15 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE 5th Grade Band Informance, 12:15 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE 5th Grade Band Informance, 12:15 p.m.
- STE 7th-8th Concert Band Clinic
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena

Friday Feb. 20
- STE Wrestling: Varsity, 2:30/6 p.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Sunshine Singers Mid-Winter Ministry, An inspiring program filled with well-loved gospel favorites, 7-8:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church
- STE WS Jazz Clinic & Concert, All Day
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE WS Jazz Clinic & Concert, All Day
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena

Saturday Feb. 21
- STE Wrestling: Varsity, 2:30/6 p.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Sunshine Singers Mid-Winter Ministry, An inspiring program filled with well-loved gospel favorites, 7-8:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church
- STE WS Jazz Clinic & Concert, All Day
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena
- Adult Drawing, 10 a.m. Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- STE WS Jazz Clinic & Concert, All Day
- FDHS Wrestling: Varsity State Tournament, 9 a.m., Wells Fargo Arena

Sunday Feb. 22
- Karl King Band Irish Concert This annual concert commemorates music that Karl King wrote and/or performed frequently. 3:30-5 p.m., Iowa Central Decker Auditorium

Monday Feb. 23
- City Council Regular Business Meeting, 6 p.m., City Hall
- FDHS Basketball: Boys Varsity Substate Tournament, 7 p.m.

Tuesday Feb. 24
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradehome Shoes, 11:00 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- Winter Weekend Learning Getaway. Sign up online for one of these boredom blasting classes: welded garden sculpture, quilt making, pine needle basket or woodcarving, 3 p.m., Iowa Central Community College, Stony Creek Landscapes
- FDHS Basketball: Boys 8th vs. Stilwell JH, 4:30 p.m.
- Lifetree Cafe at Cana, “Make a Difference Now!” Choose to be extraordinary today, noon or 7 p.m.
Wednesday Feb. 25
- Preschool Storytime, 10-10:30 a.m., FD Public Library
- Winter Weekend Learning Getaway. Sign up online for one of these boredom blasting classes: welded garden sculpture, quilt making, pine needle basket, or woodcarving, 3 p.m., Iowa Central Community College, Stony Creek Landscapes

Sunday March 1
- Fort Dodge Choral Society “Neon Lights” concert, a celebration of Broadway, 3-5:30 p.m., Webster City Community Theatre
- Dance Rhythms & Beethoven 7, 3 p.m., Fort Dodge Middle School Auditorium
- National Lutheran Schools Week

Thursday Feb. 26
- Preschool Storytime, 10-10:30 a.m./2-2:30 p.m. FD Public Library
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch. Check in at Tradhome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- Speed Networking, 5:30 p.m., The Cellar Restaurant & Lounge
- STE 6th-12th Vocal Sacred Concert, 7 p.m.
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity State Tournament, 11 a.m.

Friday Feb. 27
- ICCC Career Day
- FDHS Bowling: Varsity State Tournament, 11 a.m.

Saturday Feb. 28
- Fort Dodge Choral Society “Neon Lights” concert, a concert celebration of Broadway, 7-10 p.m., Hawkeye Community Theater
- Eggs & Issues, Breakfast: 7:30-8:30 a.m. in Triton Cafe ($7 all you can eat), Forum: 8:30-10 a.m. in Board Room 100 of Triton Cafe, ICC Main Campus

Wednesday March 4
- Human Rights Commission Regular Meeting, 5-6 p.m., City Hall
- Iowa Central Spring Musical - “The Drowsy Chaperone,” free admission, 9 a.m., Decker Auditorium
- National Lutheran Schools Week

Monday March 9
- City Council Regular Business Meeting, 6 p.m., City Hall

Tuesday March 10
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradhome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- FDHS Track: Boys Varsity vs. UNI, 3 p.m.

Thursday March 12
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradhome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall

Friday March 6
- Iowa Central Spring Musical

Saturday March 7
- Iowa Central Spring Musical - “The Drowsy Chaperone,” free admission, 7 p.m., Decker Auditorium
- St. Paul Lutheran School volleyball tournament at Clarinda

Tuesday March 3
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradhome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- National Lutheran Schools Week

Wednesday March 5
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradhome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall
- Iowa Central Spring Musical - “The Drowsy Chaperone,” free admission, 7 p.m., Decker Auditorium
- National Lutheran Schools Week

Thursday March 12
- Get Active With Mall Laps during Lunch, check in at Tradhome Shoes, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Crossroads Mall

Friday March 6
- Iowa Central Spring Musical
Debra Alexander, sales associate at Carolyn’s Hallmark of Crossroads Mall in Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Carissa Brinkman, sales associate at Maurices at Crossroads Mall, on Jan. 22.

Judi Hammer, assistant manager, and Tori Berte, manager in training, from Riddle’s Jewelry at Crossroads Mall on Jan. 22.

Hailey Severson, assistant manager at The Buckle at Crossroads Mall, on Jan. 22.

Courtney Struchen, from Shoe Sensation in Crossroads Mall of Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.
Recipe is easy to pull together

Stir things up

Family favorite stir fry

By Marchelle Walter Brown

Reading is a favorite pastime for a lot of people, including me. However, sometimes what I enjoy reading is a bit non-traditional — I like to read cookbooks. And I read them just like some folks read a compelling novel. Magazines that include cooking experiences and recipes also interest me.

Because my collection started getting large, I haven’t indulged in any new “books” lately and have, instead, started going back through some of my own compilations. I have an assortment of hand-written books which contain only recipes that I’ve actually made over the years so I thought I’d bring it out of retirement. The prep work is a little time consuming but, if you plan ahead and get the vegetables chopped beforehand, pulling the finished product together takes no time at all.

This stir fry is very flavorful, and even people who say that don’t care for Asian cuisine have been known to love it.

**Ingredients**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds round steak (cut in bite-size pieces)
- 2/3 cup water
- 2/3 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 cups celery (diced)
- 1-2 cups green onions with tops (chopped)
- 2 green peppers (cut in thin strips)
- 1 red pepper (cut in thin strips)
- 1 cup carrots (sliced thin)
- 2 cans water chestnuts
- 1 can mushrooms
- 1 package frozen stir-fry vegetables
- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- 3 tablespoons water

**Directions**
Heat oil in a large skillet. Add beef and cook until browned well. Add all the vegetables except the water chestnuts and mushrooms. Cook and stir until they just start to get tender. Mix water, soy sauce and sugar together; pour over the skillet vegetables and add the water chestnuts and mushrooms. Stir altogether and bring to a boil. Stir corn starch into the 3 tablespoons of water, then stir this into the skillet mixture. Continue to stir until thickened.

Serve over rice and top with chow mein noodles.
Megan Silvey never minds a little chaos in her classroom. She figures the students are just discovering their own passion for the subject that stole her own heart years ago.

Actually, it’s “organized chaos” that Silvey keeps a careful eye on in the art classroom at St. Edmond’s School in Fort Dodge. She’s following in the footsteps of a teacher who helped her discover her own love of art.

“When I was in eighth grade, I had a really good art teacher,” Silvey recalls. “That teacher always called it ‘organized chaos,’ or ‘organized freedom.’ She gave parameters for projects so that we would learn a skill, but then she gave us the freedom to create in whatever direction we wanted to go.”

Instead of giving students an example and telling them to make the best “copy” that they could, in this class, as Silvey recalls, students could learn the basic skills, and then apply them to their own unique design.

Now in her second year teaching kindergarten through sixth grade art at St. Edmond’s, Silvey strives to give her students the same kind of “organized freedom” so they can discover their own hidden talents.

As for the students, Silvey says their favorite day is just about any time they get to put their hands in clay. Seeing them get excited makes it one of her favorite days as well.

“Clay and ceramics is always the kids’ favorite,” she says. “It’s crazy for me trying to organize that big of a mess, but they like it so much that it’s probably my favorite because they’re the most excited when it’s ‘Clay Day.’”

An Ankeny native and 2013 graduate of the University of Iowa, Silvey says that having grandparents, aunts and uncles in the community helps Fort Dodge feel like home.

Silvey is also following in her mother’s footsteps as a teacher. But while her mother teaches middle school math, Silvey chose art as a more interesting subject for herself.

“I remember watching her from the time I was little, and apparently I told my dad that I wanted to do what Mom does, but I wanted to teach art because it’s more fun,” she says with a laugh.

Just don’t tell the math teachers how much fun they’re missing.

What do you like best about Miss Silvey?

Ben Hinners: “She helps us do stuff.”

Katelynn Goebel: “I just love art.”

Jackson Calvert: “We get to make cool stuff.”
Watch out for animals in the road
Tips to help you avoid collisions

Provided by Dan Flattery, State Farm® agent

There’s so much to think about when driving: surrounding cars, your speed, pedestrians, reckless drivers. It hardly seems fair that we have to worry about animals, too. But it’s a danger we can’t ignore. There are about 1.5 million animal-car accidents each year that cause 10,000 injuries, 150 deaths, and an average of $2,500 in property damage.

There’s no silver bullet to keep large animals like deer, elk and moose off highways and roads. Some drivers insist that deer whistles work, though the Information Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) says no scientific evidence supports that claim. Studies and field tests show that roadside reflectors do reduce crash frequency somewhat, but as of now there’s no foolproof method to keep animals off our roads.

What may help
Stay alert. Pay attention to “deer crossing” signs. Scan down the road and off to each side. Be especially watchful in areas near woods and water. If you see one deer, there are probably several others nearby.

Be especially vigilant during peak season. Though collisions can happen any time of year, fall is peak time for deer-car crashes because it’s both hunting and mating season, forcing deer to roam outside their normal territory.

Use headlights smartly.

At night, use high beams when possible to illuminate the road’s edges. If you see a deer far ahead, flick the brights on and off multiple times. Deer tend to fixate on headlights, so flashing them may cause the animal to scurry away.

Watch out at mealtime. Pay particular attention at dusk and dawn, when these animals usually venture out to eat.

Brake as necessary. If you think you have time to avoid hitting the animal, reduce speed, tap the brakes to warn drivers behind you and sound your horn. If there’s no vehicle close behind you, brake hard.

Don’t swerve. If a collision seems inevitable, don’t veer off to avoid the animal. Your risk of injury may be greater if you do. Maintain control of the vehicle. Report the accident to the police and your insurance company.

Always obey speed limits and wear seat belts.

What is enough? If you’re considering retiring in the near future, you’ve probably heard or read that you need about 70 percent of your end salary to live comfortably in retirement. This estimate is frequently repeated, but that doesn’t mean it is true for everyone. It may not be true for you. Consider the following factors:

**Health.** Most of us will face a major health problem at some point in our lives. Think, for a moment, about the costs of prescription medicines and recurring treatment for chronic ailments. These costs can really take a bite out of retirement income, even with a great health care plan.

**Hereditity.** If you come from a family where people frequently live into their 80s and 90s, you may live as long or longer. Imagine retiring at 55 and living to 95 or 100. You would need 40 to 45 years of steady retirement income.

**Portfolio.** Many people retire with investment portfolios they haven’t reviewed in years, with asset allocations that may no longer be appropriate. New retirees sometimes carry too much risk in their portfolios, with the result being that the retirement income from their investments fluctuates wildly with the vagaries of the market. Other retirees are super-conservative investors: their portfolios are so risk-averse that they can’t earn enough to keep up with even moderate inflation, and over time, they find they have less and less purchasing power.

**Spending habits.** Do you only spend 70 percent of your salary? Probably not. If you’re like many Americans, you probably spend 90 or 95 percent of it. Will your spending habits change drastically once you retire? Again, probably not.

Will you have enough? When it comes to retirement income, a casual assumption may prove to be woefully inaccurate. You won’t learn how much retirement income you’ll need by reading this article. Consider meeting with a qualified financial professional who can help estimate your lifestyle needs and short-term and long-term expenses.

Provided by Andy Hejlik, KHI Financial Solutions

Investment Advisor Representative with and Securities and Investment Advisory Services Offered Through Transamerica Financial Advisors Inc. (TFA) Member FINRA/SIPC and Registered Investment Advisor. Non-securities products and services are not offered through TFA. TFA and KHI Financial Solutions are not affiliated.

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I can still remember the first time I came here for any event. It was a bitterly cold, late December, night in the mid- to late 1970s. I must have been in junior high, and this was the swankiest place I had ever seen on the face of the earth.

The occasion was a family member’s wedding reception — a marriage that has happily endured all these years hence.

Fast forward a few decades, and the Fort Dodge Country Club is still one of the most beautiful venues around. I love coming here whenever I can, especially since the “marriage” of the club to one of Fort Dodge’s favorite restaurants — The Cellar.

With a long tradition of fabulous dining, The Cellar has found an ideal home at the Country Club. My own sweetheart and I trekked to the Club on a recent Saturday night to enjoy a well-deserved early Valentine’s dinner.

While my husband was tempted by the lobster special, I knew immediately that I would be savoring The Cellar’s famous prime rib. Real prime rib is a feast I can seldom resist.

The Cellar’s cut is one of the thickest slabs of beef around, I felt like I had a whole roast to myself, and this was only the “queen” cut. It was as tender as they come and delightful to savor dipped in the accompanying juices.

The dinners come with a choice of two sides, and there were almost too many to choose from — far more than the average supper club, ranging from soup to mac and cheese, deviled eggs to french fries, hash browns to salads, and more — lots more. While we each chose a baked potato, my husband ordered a salad and I chose the steamed broccoli. That way we could share and a savor a few more flavors.

Now since it was a special occasion, we topped off the evening with a rare treat: tiramisu. Aptly named, this Italian dessert translates roughly to “lift me up.” It is a rich cake — ladyfingers, actually — nearly dripping in coffee, cocoa and mascarpone cheese. It’s a great way to end the evening with this decadent dessert.

I’ve never had a bad time at this beautiful venue, and I’ve never had anything but a wonderful dinner from The Cellar. Another marriage made in heaven.
OUT AND ABOUT

La Donna High, owner of Bridal Visions by LD in Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Josh Peart, from Don Peart Custom Homes, at their Crossroads Mall office location on Jan. 22.

Marissa Geopfert, from Long Lines Wireless at Crossroads Mall in Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Judy VanAlstine, from Zales at Crossroads Mall, on Jan. 22.

Staff Sergeant Cullie S Torsell, U.S. Army Recruiter, at the U.S. Army Recruiting Center and Army Reserves at Crossroads Mall, Jan. 22.

Ted Crimmins, from The Buckle at Crossroads Mall, on Jan. 22.
OUT AND ABOUT

Alyce Lizer, assistant manager, and Janet Kinseth from Schweser’s at Crossroads Mall in Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Deb Schmidt, manager of Carolyn’s Hallmark of Crossroads Mall in Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Lisa Lawrence, sales associate at Carolyn’s Hallmark of Crossroads Mall in Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.

Macy Zelinski, assistant manager at Maurices at Crossroads Mall, on Jan. 22.

KayLynn Jennings, manager, and Korina Murray, lead manager, from Vanity at Crossroads Mall on Jan. 22.

Rich Riley, from Sports Cards & Collectibles located in Crossroads Mall of Fort Dodge, on Jan. 22.
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