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2. Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags, or give children glow sticks
3. When buying Halloween makeup, make sure it is nontoxic and always test it in a small area first
4. Remove all makeup before children go to bed to prevent skin and eye irritation
5. If your older children are going alone, plan and review a route acceptable to you
6. Agree on a specific time children should return home
7. Teach your children never to enter a stranger's home or car
8. Instruct children to travel only in familiar, well-lit areas and stick with their friends
9. Tell your children not to eat any treats until they return home and an adult has checked for opened packages
10. Children and adults should put electronic devices down, keep heads up and walk, don't run, across the street



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WELCOME

MAKE way for the Super Fans!

Just admit it. We all know some. Or maybe you are one? Either way, these folks are easy to find.

I am talking about Super Fans, and they stick out like a banana in a bowl of blueberries.

Bumper stickers promoting their teams on their cars aren't enough for Super Fans. They have the personalized plates and the clever number and letter schemes that the rest of us need a secret decoder ring to decipher.

Of course, their closets are full of their team-themed shirts, sweatshirts, hats, pajamas, socks, slippers and underwear. You name it, and Super Fans have their team logo on it. And regardless of how worn and tattered those items have become, they never throw them away.

The pre-set stations on the car radios of Super Fans are locked in to sports talk and sports talk only. Don't even think about turning the dial.

They fork out more money on game tickets than they do on groceries, and they are just fine with that.

Super Fans spend countless hours on Twitter or X or whatever you call it just to be the first to know the latest news on trades, injuries or other breaking news about their teams.

And to top it all off, and to show their true commitment, Super Fans spend their hard-earned money having their team mascots or logos permanently tattooed on their skin. And not just one tattoo, either.

I am not a Super Fan. Far from it. I enjoyed participating in sports and coaching, and I do enjoy watching occasional games and sporting activities, but it stops there. Even so, I am greatly entertained by those who are Super Fans. I love their passion, their feistiness, their spirit. And I can look past those fading tattoos.

Does this all sound familiar to you? Well, you don't have to be a Super Fan to enjoy this month's feature story on local residents who are.

Thanks for reading. ■



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Super FANS

Residents share their passion for their favorite teams

By Jackie Wilson

What's your favorite college team? NFL? NHL? Most of us have been asked similar questions at one time or another. Some people, however, don't need to be asked. The team shirt they are wearing, the banner hanging on their garage door, the bumper stickers on their cars, and the photos of them with their faces painted cheering at the stadium all shout out their affiliations. Those are the people who have crossed that fine line between fan and Super Fan.

Holly, Mila and Alec Nielsen of Waukee are avid Iowa Hawkeye fans. Photo by Jackie Wilson



Go Hawkeyes!

For anyone wondering which house in his neighborhood belongs to Alec Nielsen, here's a hint: He's a Hawkeyes Super Fan. The Nielsen home sports Iowa Hawkeye flags and Hawkeye stone decorations, and their vehicles have Hawkeye license plates.

And that's just the tip of the black and gold dedication to the Hawkeyes. He has also devoted his entire basement to his team.

His mancave features football jerseys from nearly every football season. Team pennants of the Big 10 line the top of the wall. Bobbleheads of current and past players nod in agreement that there's a lot of black and gold. Even the bathroom, with its Hawkeye shower curtain, soap dispenser and photos of teams on the walls, declares his affiliation.

Alec's prized autographed footballs are stacked up. His favorite find is a helmet signed by both Hayden Fry and Kirk Ferentz, which he received when he was in high school.

His obsession started early in life. His mom attended Hawkeye games when he was in her womb. When he was young, Alec's dad took him to football games at Kinnick Stadium.



Alec Nielsen's Waukee basement is filled with Iowa Hawkeye memorabilia, including jerseys from each season they've played. Photo by Jackie Wilson

He then attended and graduated from the University of Iowa.

A friend of his worked for the team and would get various Hawkeye sports shirts, team jerseys and more for him.

"I got obsessed with getting Hawk memorabilia," he says.

When Alec and his wife, Holly, started dating, she first saw all the helmets lined up on top of his kitchen cabinets. Then — and still today — she embraces his obsession.

"She puts up with it," he says. "Both her dad and her grandpa are diehards, too. I don't think it would have worked out if she wasn't a Hawkeye," he says.

His two kids, Mila, 5, and Axel, 2, were both serenaded with the Iowa fight song as a part of their bedtime routine. Mila is a new Hawkeye fan because of the women's basketball star, Caitlin Clark. One time when Alec was in Iowa City, he noticed women's basketball posters and encountered Clark.

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"I saw her walk out. I went up to her and said, 'Hey, my 4-year-old would be jealous, but could you take a picture with me?' I normally don't stalk people to take selfies, but she was super nice about it," he says.

Alec has a small tattoo with a tiger hawk and a black ribbon signifying cancer recovery.

"I felt like tattoos might be cheesy, but this one is cool, and it means something to me," he explains.

His friends — often Iowa State Cyclone buddies — walk into his basement and laugh.

"They're used to it. It's funny when someone new comes over. You can tell that I've been collecting for a long time," he says.

He used to have football season tickets. But, when Mila was born, he scaled back. Now he only attends one football game a year. He also attends mens and womens basketball games now, due to Clark's popularity.

One item he would like to acquire is a Nile Kinnick autographed jersey.

"The price is ridiculous. Even I don't think I could ever pay that much for it," he reflects.

When he can't make it to games in person, his mancave is the perfect location for

watching, complete with a popcorn maker, reclining chairs and a drawer full of Hawkeye clothing to choose from.

Meanwhile, Mila shakes her black and gold pom-poms to cheer on Dad's team, yelling, "Go Hawkeyes!"

Cheesehead Packers fan

Since he was 5 years old, Doug Wilson has been a Green Bay Packers fan, as noted in a faded photograph of him next to his own Packers-themed birthday cake.

Doug's dad was a big Packers fan, but Doug didn't really get enthused about the team until 1992 when the quarterback was injured and Brett Favre took over.

"That's the turning point. When it got good, I followed them," he says.

Early on, Packers' games weren't always televised. He lived in Minnesota at the time and often drove three hours just to watch them play on TV.

In 1994, he "borrowed" his parents' credit card to get tickets to see the last game at Milwaukee County Stadium before they played at Lambeau Field.

"I snuck in the stadium and got outside the Packers' locker room," he admits. "I saw Brett Favre and talked to the other players."

When Doug married, his wedding topper featured a groom wearing a Packers cheesehead.

Since then, it's been his mission to see all of the team's away games in new cities. Each away game takes a lot of planning. He still has two NFL cities left: Las Vegas and Los Angeles, since both the Rams and the Raiders have moved.

He attended Super Bowl XLV when the Packers won. He's attended playoff games, NFC championship games, the NFL draft, Hall of Fame inductions and many more football-related events.

Doug was on the wait list for season tickets for years and was finally able to purchase tickets in 2019. He's seen a game every year for 30 years in a row. He thought he would miss during the COVID pandemic but got lucky.

"We went to the game in Houston. I spent hours trying to get a limited number of seats. They only allowed 5,000 fans. It was a unique experience," he recalls.

His family is supportive of his



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FEATURE

preoccupation. He's ramped up when football season starts.

"It's become such a routine. Most of the family thinks I'm nuts," he says.

Doug's three kids are Packers fans. As the Green Bay Packers is a publicly-held company, he's purchased shares for all his kids. His wife fuels his obsession with Packers memorabilia.

"I finally had to tell my wife to stop buying Packers' stuff," he says. "I've got boxes and boxes full of stuff."

His bucket list is to attend the NFC championship game, provided the Packers are playing.

"I appreciate the traditions," he says. "It's the oldest franchise in the smallest market. I've fallen in love with the history and traditions."



Doug Wilson has been to many different NFL cities to watch the Green Bay Packers play. Photo by Jackie Wilson



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Packers or Lions?

The Satturu family of Waukee began watching NFL football when Riddhi moved to Wisconsin in 1999. She was told by her uncle that she only needed to know two things about the state — Packers football and Taco Bell.

Their son, Aarav, also watched football with the family. When watching a Detroit Lions game, he asked about the team.

“My dad told me I was born there, in Detroit, Michigan.”

Now, Aarav is a huge Detroit Lions fan. He admits, for many years, the team has been “awful.”

“I never turned off a game because they were losing,” he says.

However, this year, they got off to a great start with a 4-1 record.

Aarav is the man out while watching the Lions among his family and friends. In fact, “I’ve only met four Lions fans in Iowa,” he says.

Aarav is optimistic, that, with a new coach, Dan Campbell, the team has turned around. “Grit” is their new motto. He says he has a lot in common with his team.

“I’ve grown; they’ve grown,” he reflects.

“Right when I moved here from Connecticut, things changed, just like they did for the Lions.”

His mom agrees that Aarav is a huge sports fan.

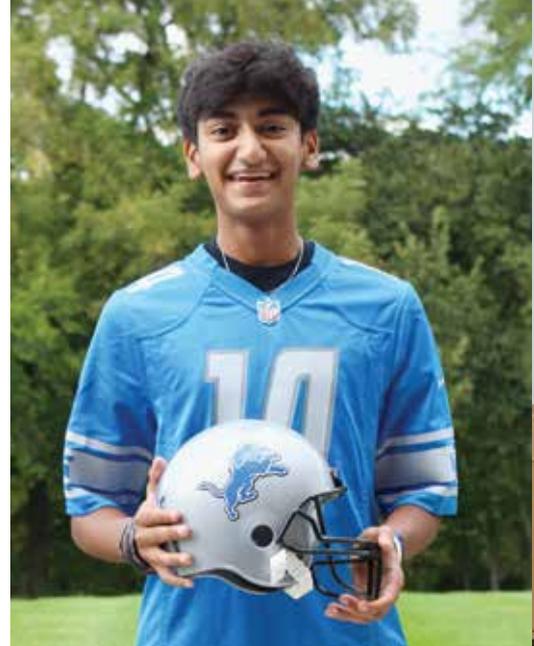
“If anyone asks Aarav anything about sports — Lions, Iowa State, Waukee — he knows everything and watches every game.”

Aarav rattles off facts about the Lions: They used to be called the Portsmouth Spartans. The old stadium was the Silverdome in Pontiac. He also cites the Bobby Layne curse — a former quarterback who was traded and angrily told the team, “You’ll never win a championship in 50 years.”

Aarav and Riddhi, along with their family, set aside Sundays to watch football at their home. Their extended family has a text chain in which they talk about who will win during the week.

“It’s not just the Packers and Lions. The family likes the Chiefs, Bears and Seahawks. It’s been a fun start this year,” says Riddhi.

Aarav adds, “It’s good to talk smack about teams. Most of my family didn’t like football. Now there’s new people to talk and experience the games with.”



Aarav Satturu, 17, of Waukee became a Detroit Lions fan despite the rest of his family being Green Bay Packers fans. Photo by Jackie Wilson

Aarav longs to go to more professional games but for now settles on going to Iowa State Cyclone games and supporting his local team, the Waukee Warriors.

“It drives everyone crazy with my talk about football. It’s my dream to go and watch — especially to the Super Bowl,” he says. ■



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A circular portrait of Cliff Cunanan, a man with glasses wearing a dark suit and tie, smiling. In the background, a woman in an orange sweater is moving cardboard boxes.

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LOVES go all out for Halloween

Enjoy the fun of decorating each year



Geoff and Morgan Love like to go all out on their Halloween decorations, inside and outside of their home. Photos by Colson Thayer

The return of crisp autumn air means only one thing for Waukees's Love family: the return of Halloween decorating.

"Anytime in August when (stores) start getting rid of school supplies and start putting in all the fall stuff, we're always like 'Let's go swoop in and see what they got,'" says Geoff Love.

The interior and exterior of their home is transformed into a Halloween lover's paradise. Their front lawn turns into a spooky graveyard adorned with tombstones, ghosts and even a swinging zombie baby. Meanwhile, the inside is kept tame with Halloween-themed blankets, pillows, candles and signs.

"Geoff and I have always loved Halloween. Once we had Fox, we're like 'Let's up our game a little bit with the decorations' because he loved it," said Morgan Love. "Once we had our own house, we're like 'Let's try to...'"

"...Be that house," Geoff finishes.

The Loves' display uses a combination of store-bought and DIY decorations. Slowly but surely, Geoff gets his display up over the course of September. The family gets their ideas from online inspiration, other houses and craft fairs. But Geoff determines that some of the things he sees at craft fairs he can make himself.

He was able to create floating Blair Witch sticks using fishing line. The fence enclosing the graveyard is made of a simple garden fence. And that swinging zombie baby was created using a baby doll and some paint. Some of his creations require a little more effort. For example, during the height of COVID, Geoff sketched out and planned an entire candy chute for passing out treats on Beggar's Night.

The biggest addition for 2023 was a suggestion from their neighbor. As a former California resident, he recounted all the movie production folks' use of projectors.

Geoff asked himself if he could get a cheap projector and figure it out.

And he did. It even terrified his son.

"Everyone knows how much we love Halloween and then Fox can barely go through Target (Halloween section)," adds Morgan.

But after the glory of Halloween and Beggar's Night, the fun has to come to an end. It only takes Geoff about a day to tear down the entire display. As of right now, the decorations fit within four "giant" storage totes, but they are approaching a fifth. Geoff needed to build shelves in his garage to keep the decorations tucked away throughout the year. But still, not



The cemetery decorations in front of the Love home take on a spookier appearance when lit up at night. Photo by Morgan Love

everything can fit.

"All throughout the year, if my garage door is open, there's always a skeleton hanging up," Geoff says.

Besides Christmas, the family feels there is a lull and a lack of holiday decorating. But when Halloween comes around, it lifts the Loves' spirits. Geoff believes it's the same reason that people enjoy going to haunted houses or watching horror movies: returning to the Halloween season allows for the community's creativity and holiday spirit to come alive. ■

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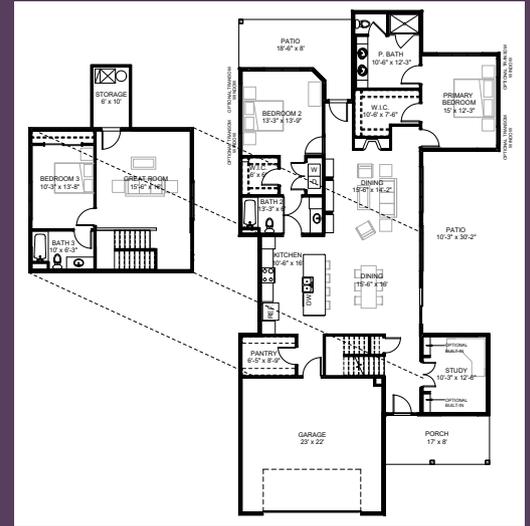
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WITTMER honored with jazz award

Plays saxophone and clarinet at CJC jam sessions

Andrew Wittmer, a senior at Waukee Northwest High School, was recently honored by the Community Jazz Center of Greater Des Moines during its annual Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Awards.

Wittmer, a saxophone and clarinet player, was presented with the Bobby Dawson award, named after a local jazz great. He was recognized as a top student jazz player who attends the monthly CJC jam sessions.

Jam sessions are hosted by working jazz musicians in the community. Wittmer began attending the jam session with his brother.

"I tagged along with my older brother," he says.

His musical journey started when he took piano lessons at age 5. He joined the school band in fifth grade and has played the saxophone since then.

He was often the youngest musician at the jam sessions.

"In the beginning, it was intimidating," he admits. "I recognized their talent, and I learned from them. The younger students come to play, and now it's full circle."

He currently plays with the Des Moines Youth Jazz Orchestra, the Northwest Jazz Orchestra and a big band ensemble. He's participated in All State competitions two years and won a variety of music awards.

He's enjoyed the jazz genre for a long time.

"My parents are both jazz fans. We started listening to jazz at dinner time when I was young," he says.

Wittmer takes private lessons and practices from one to four hours a

day, depending on his other school activities.

He likes how jazz jam sessions vary, as opposed to structured high school band.

"Jazz is improvising a solo and being able to play with a new group of people and mesh with others," he explains. "You can play with anyone."

After graduation, he plans on studying music and hopes to play professionally.

"The best-case scenario is I'll focus on music. But I'm willing to have a backup plan with the nature of the music business," he says.

The most challenging aspect about his career is lack of places to perform in the Des Moines metro area. Yet once he is playing, his mood is lifted.

"It makes me really happy to create with other people. Creating music, sounding good and having others listen is very enjoyable to me."

When Wittmer found out about the award, he was flattered and thanks his mentors, parents and instructors.

"It's an honor. You look at people who have received the award and these people take their music seriously," he says. "It puts some pressure on me, and it's a good reminder to keep on working hard." ■



Andrew Wittmer



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FILL your family's plates with cozy fall meals

(Family Features) Putting away the homework, turning off electronics and spending a little quality time together can help ease everyday stresses. Add a cozy meal packed with tastes you love and you'll have the perfect recipe for an autumn evening with your family.

Cooler days call for comforting flavors the entire family can enjoy at the dinner table like roasted veggies — from sweet potatoes to pumpkin and more — paired with hearty favorites like cheesy pierogies that provide a sense of warmth and coziness. Make this autumn one to remember by creating new meals and memories along the way.

For an extra special celebration with the ones you love in honor of the 15th anniversary of National Pierogy Day, consider a cozy, warming dish like Roasted Sweet Potatoes Brown Butter Pierogies, which is loaded with the flavors of the season. This comforting meal starts with cubed sweet potatoes — a hallmark of fall — along with pierogies tossed in a homemade brown butter sauce. Top with pecans for a nutty crunch and fresh thyme leaves for the final touch on a newfound favorite that'll bring loved ones running to the dinner table.

Find more ways to incorporate fall flavors into your family's everyday menu by visiting MrsTsPierogies.com. ■

Roasted sweet potatoes brown butter pierogies

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 4-5

- 1 bag (1.6 pounds) Mrs. T's Mini Classic Cheddar Pierogies
- 2 cups sweet potato cubes (approximately 1 large or 2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch cubes)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- water
- 1/2 cup pecans
- fresh thyme leaves, for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 F.
- Toss sweet potato cubes in olive oil, salt and pepper, to taste, and spread in even layer on baking sheet. Roast 25-30 minutes, tossing about halfway through, until potatoes are fork tender.



- In medium skillet over medium heat, brown butter 5-10 minutes. Avoid smoking or burning. Remove from heat. Allow to cool about 5 minutes then whisk in balsamic vinegar and lemon juice.
- In large saucepan, bring water to boil. Cook pierogies according to package directions, about 3 minutes. Drain and toss in brown butter sauce.
- Add roasted sweet potatoes and pecans to brown butter pierogies and toss gently to coat.
- Top with fresh thyme leaves.

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“Fiduciary” is a funny but important word to consider when finding the right person to help you plan for retirement. It comes from the Latin “fidere,” meaning “to trust.” The term may not roll right off your tongue, but we all understand and value the concept of trust.

In the financial industry, a fiduciary must, by law, act impartially and provide advice that is in their clients’ best interest. Choosing a fiduciary can help put you at ease when looking for the right retirement planner. This person should be transparent and thoroughly explain investment options and fees. If you are working with someone who doesn’t have a fiduciary duty to you, you have fewer legal options should you discover that your best interests were not served. When interviewing a potential retirement planner, a few questions are, “What’s your legal obligation to my investments?” and “What investment services or advice will you be providing me?” It’s also a good idea to ask for regulatory documentation on how they handle conflicts of interest and what procedures they have to ensure your best interests are placed before theirs.

Check that your retirement planners are all investment advisors registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. They will uphold the regulatory requirements needed to be financial fiduciaries.



Aside from regulatory requirements, being a fiduciary is necessary to protect the families and individuals they work with.

Some retirement planners have also passed a rigorous certification and training process established by the National Association of Certified Financial Fiduciaries to obtain the Certified Financial Fiduciary designation. While the other financial designations you might see cover the legalities of a fiduciary, there is no other designation that focuses solely on understanding and being the best fiduciary one can be. This training not only puts retirement planners in a better position to help families and individuals plan for retirement, it keeps the critical word “trust” at the forefront of the entire retirement planning process. Obtaining the Certified Financial Fiduciary designation allows retirement planners to apply a wide array of knowledge to your retirement and ensure that all facets of your plan are intentional, customized and transparent.

When planning for retirement, the Latin you may want to live by is “carpe diem.” This phrase means to seize the day, enjoy the moment, and worry less about tomorrow. Finding a retirement planner you trust can help you do just that. ■

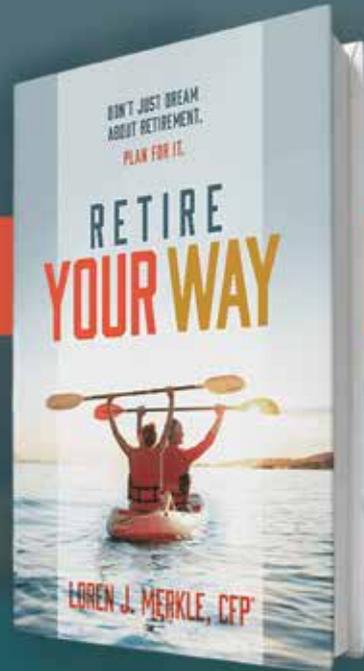
Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006.

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THE IMPORTANCE of having a will

Occasionally, clients believe that they don't need a last will and testament. Reasons for this vary, including the assumption that the person's family knows how assets are to be distributed or the belief that verbal instructions or written lists are sufficient. Without a formal will, however, assets must pass according to Iowa law.



If you die without a will, the probate court appoints an administrator for your estate. The court's choice may not match your choice. The court-appointed administrator will distribute your property according to the state intestacy laws. These laws may differ from your desires.

In Iowa, if you die without a will (intestate), and if you have no children or children only

from your current marriage, your entire estate passes to your surviving spouse. However, if you have children from another marriage, your surviving spouse will receive either one-half of your estate or the first \$50,000, whichever is greater. Your children will share equally in the remaining portion of your estate. That may come as a surprise to a client who assumes a surviving spouse will inherit everything.

If you have no surviving spouse, your estate will be divided equally among all of your surviving children. While this includes children adopted by you, it does not include step-children. If you have no surviving spouse and no children, the rules of inheritance follow a strict pattern to your parents, then to your siblings (the children of your parents), then to your grandparents and the children of your grandparents. In the absence of surviving family members, your entire estate could revert

to the State of Iowa.

These rules assume that you want all of your immediate relatives to share equally in your estate. But, you may not want certain relatives to receive shares of your estate. These rules do not account for the needs of heirs with disabilities.

In a legally-executed and properly drafted written document — your last will and testament — you can nominate the representative of your estate and set out a plan for dividing your assets. The major benefit of a will is that it allows you to direct the distribution of your estate according to your wishes, rather than according to statute.

Consult with an experienced attorney to update your will. ■

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

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancelations.



Beggars' Night

Monday, Oct. 30, 6-8 p.m.

Dress in your favorite costume and head out for trick or treating.

Waukee Family Fest

Saturday, Jan. 20, 9 a.m. to noon
Lutheran Church of Hope - Waukee

This free, family-friendly event will help kids burn off some cabin fever energy. Check out Waukee area businesses, enjoy games and prizes and jump on inflatables. To become a vendor, visit waukee.org/familyfest after Nov. 1.



Waukee WinterFest

Friday, Dec. 1, 6-8 p.m.

Historical Downtown
Triangle Area

Join Santa and Waukee Mayor Courtney Clarke as they light the tree in Triangle Park at 6 p.m. sharp. Visit with Santa in person at the community center afterward while warming up with hot chocolate and cookies. Join the Waukee Downtown Businesses for open houses and activities. Attendees are encouraged to bring a nonperishable food item or a new, unwrapped toy to help support Waukee Area Christian Services.

The Table: free community meal

Oct. 30, Nov. 27 and Dec. 18, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Waukee United Methodist Church, 2075 S.E. LA Grant Parkway

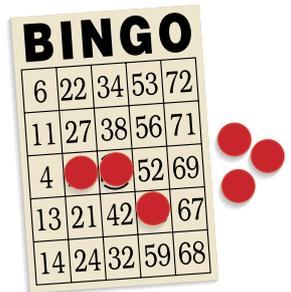
Those in need, financially or just for fellowship, are invited to The Table. Congregation members rotate menus such as lasagna, walking tacos, Maid Rites, and grilled hamburgers/hot dogs.

Bingo

Friday, Nov. 3, 1-2:30 p.m.

Waukee Community Center, 675 Walnut St.

Who doesn't love yelling "Bingo" out as the victor in this classic game of chance? Gather friends or meet some new ones at this monthly bingo event. Improve your odds and play two cards at once if you wish. Cost is Bingo \$1 plus 10 cents per card played per round, with a maximum of two cards at one time.



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Tuesday Night Trivia

Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m.
Central Standard Burgers, 1222 S.E. University Ave., Waukee

Come one come all and test out your thinking skills while having a great time. Trivia night is every Tuesday, with featured themed trivia nights once a month. Hosted by Think and Drink Entertainment.



Family Bowling Fun

Various dates
Warrior Lanes, 190 S.E. Laurel St., Waukee

Family Fun events are planned at Warrior Lanes, with glow-in-the-dark bowling, "Mom-approved" music and black lights. Cost per lane includes 90 minutes of bowling, shoe rental, a large one-topping pizza and pitcher of soda for up to five guests per lane. Sunday, Nov. 19, noon to 1:30 p.m. is Turkey Time Party (registration due Nov. 17; Sunday, Dec. 10, noon to 1:30 p.m., is Ugly Sweater Party (deadline is Dec. 8); and Sunday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. is Countdown to Noon Year's Eve (deadline Dec. 29). Reservations can be made at warriorlanes.com/family-glow-reservations.

Cardboard Caucus

Oct. 27-29
Hilton Garden Inn, 205 S. 64th St., West Des Moines
www.cardboardcaucus.com

Named after the state's first-in-the-nation caucus, this event is all games, no politics. Starting at noon each day, attendees can expect a wide variety of board game tournaments for prizes, games to play with friends or strangers, and unreleased board games for play testing.

Fall Bazaar and Chicken Noodle Dinner

Saturday, Nov. 18 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Waukee United Methodist Church, 2075 S.E. LA Grant Parkway.

Enjoy dinner and craft and sweet shopping. The meal is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 4-11, free for children 3 and younger.

HONOR OUR VETERANS

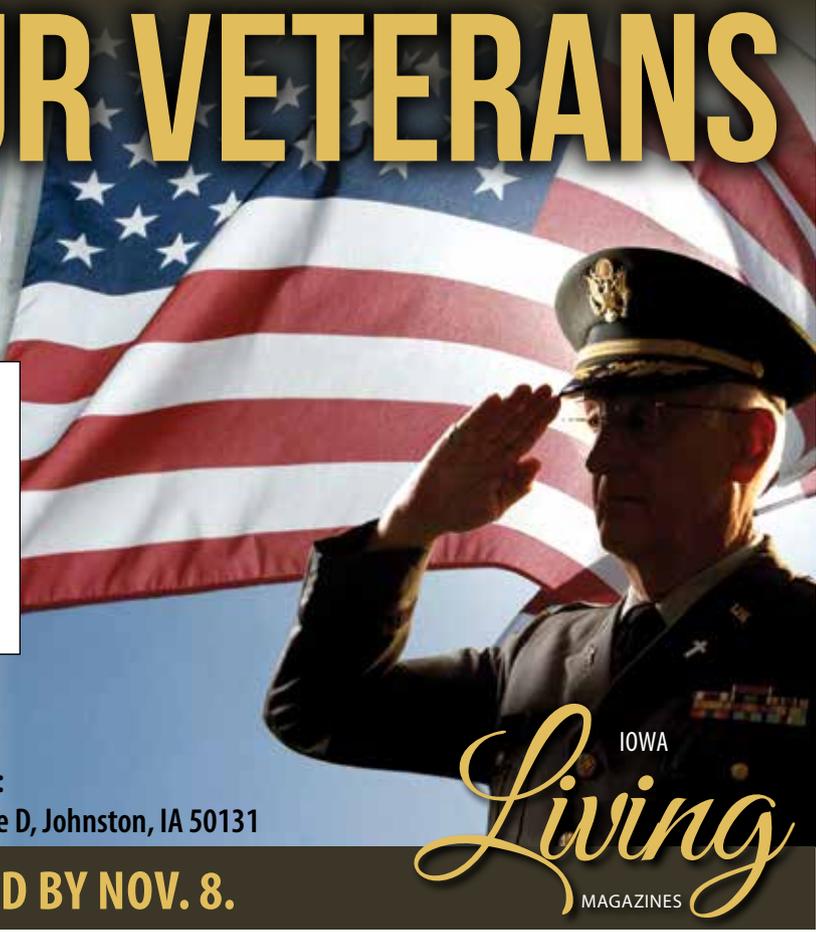
Iowa Living magazines will be saluting veterans in November issues. If you are a veteran who would like to be included, please send a photo (military or current) and the following information:

NAME:
TOWN YOU CURRENTLY LIVE IN:
MILITARY BRANCH:
RANK AT DISCHARGE:
DEPLOYMENTS:
QUOTE: Please answer the question, "How can the public best honor veterans?"

Family members submitting on behalf of veterans should include the veteran's answer to the above question.

Email to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com or mail to:
Big Green Umbrella Media, 8101 Birchwood Court Suite D, Johnston, IA 50131

SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOV. 8.



Be sure to check for cancellations.



Edgewater Holiday Mart

Nov. 4, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Edgewater, 9225 Cascade Ave.,
West Des Moines

Holiday Mart features more than 30 local artists and vendors, all inside. Choose your gifts from: watercolor paintings, fiber arts, jewelry, fused and stained glass, ISU and U of I carved snowmen, carved Santas, wooden toys and pens, pottery, cutting boards, notecards, poetry prints, scarves, pillows, woven baskets, knitted socks, cheese boards, flower centerpieces, lotions, goat milk products, honey, candy wreaths, gourmet nuts and popcorn, fudge and peanut brittle, and baked goods.

LIVE PERFORMANCES

ACTORS, INC. - AMES COMMUNITY THEATER
120 Abraham Drive, Ames • actorsinc.org
• Nov. 9-11, 17-19, 25-26: "Avenue Q"

CLASS ACT PRODUCTIONS
201 First Ave. S., Altoona
captheatre.org
• Nov. 3-5, 10-12, 17-19: "The Wizard of Oz: Youth Edition"

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS
Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons,
Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St.,
Des Moines • dmpa.org
• Nov. 4: "The Adventures of Tortoise and Hare: The Next Gen"
• Nov. 10: "Blippi: The Wonderful World Tour"
• Nov. 14-22: "Yippee Ki Yay"
• Nov. 28 through Dec. 3: "Girl from the North Country"
• Dec. 12-17: "The Wiz"
• Dec. 21: "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical"
• Dec. 22-23: "Cirque Dreams Holidayze"

DES MOINES COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE
831 42nd St., Des Moines • dmpayhouse.com
• Dec. 1-17: "All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914"
• Kate Goldman Children's Theatre, Dec. 2-17: "A Charlie Brown Christmas"

DMACC ANKENY CAMPUS THEATRE
2006 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny
dmacc.edu/theatre/ankeny
• Nov. 11-13, 18-20: "Failure: A Love Story"

IOWA STAGE THEATRE COMPANY
Stoner Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
iowastage.org
• Nov. 10-12, 15-19: "Chipmunk'D"
• Dec. 8-17: "A Christmas Carol"

TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY
2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines
tallgrasstheatre.org
• Nov. 10-19: "Wicked Queen"
• Dec. 15-17: "Home For The Holidays, A Christmas Cabaret" ■

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"I'm looking forward to the next chapter of my life and what a beautiful place to begin!"
-Jeanne

DRIFT into a good book with the library

When the temperatures drop, there are few things better than drifting into a good book and escaping into a great story. It's time for the Waukee Public Library's annual Winter Bingo Challenge. Readers can complete tasks to earn prizes and entries into the grand prize drawing.

This year's challenge for all ages starts on Wednesday, Nov. 15. You can register online or at the library to complete as many activities as you can by Jan. 31.

Complete five activities for a bingo, and your name

will be entered into the grand prize drawing. Keep going and finish all 25 activities to collect a special Winter Bingo Black Out penguin hot/cold pack while supplies last. Your name will also be entered a second time into the grand prize drawing.

All ages are invited to participate in the Winter Challenge. There will be a grand prize for each reading group: kids, teens and adults.

Visit waukeepubliclibrary.org/winter to learn more, check out the prizes, and register.



Upcoming holiday closures:

- Friday, Nov. 10
- Wednesday, Nov. 22, closing at 3 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 23
- Friday, Nov. 24
- Sunday, Dec. 24
- Monday, Dec. 25
- Tuesday, Dec. 26
- Sunday, Dec. 31

Programs and events

Most events require advance registration and can be viewed at waukeepubliclibrary.org/calendar.

November

Art Gallery Exhibit: "Colors of My World V," Nov. 1-28, Constance Fischer

Kids

Early Out CultureALL Journey, Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2:30 p.m.

Take a family-friendly global journey from the comfort of the library with a CultureALL Ambassador representing India. Kids in grades K-5 will learn about the dances of India, followed by a related activity. Registration required.

Teens

Short Story Writing Competition, Nov. 1-26.

Young writers are invited to submit unique stories up to 1,000 words. Any theme or genre is welcome. Starting Nov. 1, writing may be submitted electronically as PDF or Google doc link via the library's website. Paper copies may also be delivered to the library. All young authors will have the option to have their work made available to the public after the contest. The deadline for submissions is midnight on Sunday, Nov. 26. The winner, chosen by the Teen Advisory Board, will be awarded a \$50 gift card to the Reading In Public Bookstore + Café.

Adults

Snow/Ice Dye Workshop, Tuesday, Nov. 7, 6 p.m.

Winter weather is on its way, which often means plenty of snow. Take advantage of this season's natural resource to make some one-of-a-kind dyed scarves and socks to help keep you cozy all winter. Ice will be substituted if the weather is uncooperative. With this simple technique, the melting snow/ice will create beautiful textures and impressions for an unrepeatable result. Registration required.

Multi-age

Family & Friends Game Night, Tuesday, Nov. 14, 4:45-7:45 p.m.

Join the library the second Tuesday of every month this fall for all-ages games. The Dealt Hand will bring an assortment of 200+ card and board games for all levels of knowledge and experience. Children ages 5 and older are welcome. Drop in for a single game or stay and play for the entire three hours. Refreshments will be provided while they last. Registration requested. ■

"It's been through the addition of MAPLE that we have been able to get the kids to talk."

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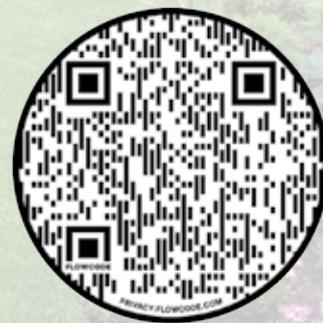
IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Dallas County?

We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition.

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2023 Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish January in Waukee, and February in Adel and West Des Moines - Jordan Creek editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

SCAN HERE TO VOTE TODAY!



HURRY! POLL CLOSES DEC. 8, 2023.

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll. One vote per resident, please.

FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Catering Company
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Liquor Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Bakery
- Florist

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Child's Birthday Party
- Golf Course

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Mental Health Service
- Chiropractic Office
- Audiologist/Hearing Clinic
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- CBD Store
- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics/Tumbling Studio

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Financial Planner
- Law Firm
- Accounting Firm
- Veterinarian
- Dog Groomer
- Pet Care
- Lawn Care Business
- Landscaping Company
- Heating and Cooling Business
- Electrical Business
- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Builder/Remodeling
- Outdoor Lawn Equipment Store
- Pest Control

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MEET LuCinda Beltman

Community, school involvement important

Ever since LuCinda Beltman and her family moved to Waukee in 2006, she has volunteered with the schools and the community, wherever assistance is needed.



She has spent summers organizing the downtown Waukee Farmers Market since 2017. She coordinates vendors and musicians and takes care of administrative duties.

Approximately 30 market and food truck vendors displayed their offerings Wednesday evenings over the summer. LuCinda says residents enjoy the variety of items.

“Our vendors and regular shoppers get to know each other every week. Many keep coming back year after year,” she says.

She has also been involved in the parent teacher organization (PTO) in leadership roles for Waukee schools the past nine years. She began volunteering for PTO when her daughter was in kindergarten.

“I wanted to get to know the school and the staff,” she explains. “The next year, they needed someone to step up and lead the PTO. I jumped in



Travis Gaule, Edward Jones, presents LuCinda Beltman with the Neighbor Spotlight certificate.

with both feet.”

As a PTO member, LuCinda has gotten to know the staff, school board and students. She and other PTO groups serve collaboratively.

“We make sure we’re all on the same page and share successes with other Waukee schools,” she says.

When she volunteers with her own children, she is mindful about her kids seeing mom at school.

“I’ll ask if they want me there for classroom parties. They are so excited — and so are their friends — to see me,” she says.

LuCinda is involved with other events, such as the Waukee Arts Festival. She says it’s important to remain invested in the community.

“If you’re going to live in a community, get involved and get to know your neighbors. Waukee is growing by leaps and bounds. Volunteering is a great way to make connections and build relationships in a growing community,” she says.

She recommends that people start small, especially those who may think they lack time to volunteer.

“A lot of people think, for PTO, you need a big time commitment. You don’t. Come to one meeting or volunteer for just one event,” she suggests.

LuCinda says she is excited for Waukee ramping up its entertainment options with the new Vibrant Music Hall.

“I love that Waukee is growing, but it’s still a small town at heart. There’s a good balance for new experiences and opportunities,” she says. “Getting involved in the community is super rewarding. You take pride in the community any way you can.” ■

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Financial Advisor

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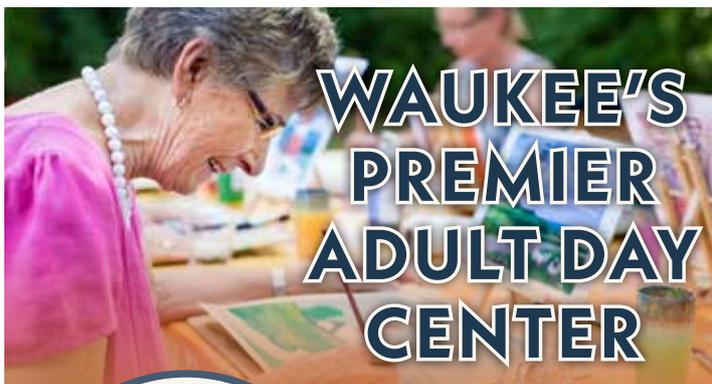
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ENROLL TODAY!

SENIOR By Brooke Baker

COMMUNICATING with a parent with dementia



Communicating with a parent who has dementia can be challenging, but it's important to approach them with patience, understanding and compassion. When communicating with a parent with dementia, it's important to use simple language and short sentences, speak slowly and clearly, avoid distractions and loud noises, use visual cues and gestures to help convey your message, be patient and give them time to process information, ask questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," avoid correcting them if they make a mistake or say something that doesn't make sense, and show them respect and dignity.

As an adult daycare provider, it's important to understand the statistics related to dementia. According to the Alzheimer's Association, one in three seniors dies of Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. Dementia is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. Every 66 seconds, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's. In 2021, the cost of caring for individuals with dementias is estimated to be \$355 billion.

By understanding the statistics, we can better serve those who are affected by the disease and help to improve their quality of life. ■

Information provided by Brooke Baker, Grace Estates, 801 N.E. Venture Drive, Waukee, 516-518-0977, www.graceestatesadc.com.



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HEALTH By Dr. Jason Brown

IMPORTANCE of mouth guards in student sports



It is estimated that 20-25 million boys and girls in the elementary and adolescent years engage in competitive sports (Nationwidechildrens.org). According to the American Dental Association, 10-20% of all sport-related injuries involve the face/mouth region, with the most common orofacial injury being teeth trauma.

The ADA recommends that custom mouth guards be worn for both practices and games for most contact sports including but not limited to: ice hockey, football, lacrosse, basketball, martial arts, rugby, skateboarding, and even sports you may not think about wearing one such as weightlifting, gymnastics, shot putting and skydiving. Mouth guards can be made at the dental office to fit your teeth specifically for ideal comfort and a sleeker design. Other guards out there are stock (ready-made) guards or the "boil-and-bite" guards that still provide good protection.

In any contact sport, a player can potentially be hit in the mouth. With any significant mouth trauma, the player should then be seen by a dentist as soon as possible for necessary care. A player is 60 times more likely to experience tooth injury when not wearing a mouth guard according to the National Youth Sports Foundation for Safety. ■

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

HEALTH

By Dr. Tara Federly

ALLERGIES or asthma flaring up?

As the weather gets colder, we find ourselves spending more time indoors. This can be troublesome for those with indoor allergies or asthma with indoor triggers. Fortunately, there are things you can do to keep your home safe.

Common indoor triggers for nasal symptoms and asthma include dust mites, household pets, mold and secondhand smoke. The first step to staying healthy is tracking your symptoms to identify possible causes of flares.



Once you have identified your triggers, it's time to take action.

- Dust mites can be decreased by washing bedding frequently in hot water, removing extra pillows and blankets from your bed (or wash them often), using hypoallergenic covers on your mattress and pillow, and vacuuming regularly.
- Keeping pets out of your bedroom and off the furniture can be helpful to decrease pet dander exposure.
- Always use fans in humid rooms such as bathrooms and kitchens to decrease mold.
- Make your home a smoke-free area. Family members who smoke should smoke outside and change their clothes when they come inside.

If you are having trouble identifying your triggers, the next step is allergy testing. Find a board-certified allergist who is trained to evaluate and treat people of all ages with allergies and asthma. Stay warm and stay safe. ■

Information provided by Dr. Tara Federly, Cornerstone Pediatrics & Family Allergy, 6800 Lake Drive, Suite 260, West Des Moines, www.cornerstonepfa.com.

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HEALTH

By Elijah Evans

EMOTIONAL validation makes or breaks relationships

Emotional validation is a critical skill for healthy relationships. To validate someone's emotions is to communicate the understandability or reasonableness of their feelings. This is not the same as agreeing with the person's stance, and, in fact, this skill becomes all the more important when the feelings of the person you are acknowledging are different from your own. For example, I find coffee disgusting, but, for all the coffee lovers out there, I respect that, to you, it is an invigorating brew in which you find genuine satisfaction. The alternatives to validation include the assertion of one's own perspective (e.g. coffee is gross) or attempts to change a person's feelings (e.g. arguing tea is the superior hot, bitter beverage). These alternatives become problematic when responding to the emotions of others because they imply there is something wrong with the way they feel, since you are either unwilling to relate to their feelings or suggesting they should be different. Instead, practicing validation communicates empathy and respect for differences, which are crucial for navigating conflict. While the coffee example is a mundane way to demonstrate validation, one can easily imagine an emotionally charged interaction in which one person expresses an important feeling, and validation is the only thing that would make them feel seen and cared for. ■



Information provided by Elijah Evans, TLMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, evans@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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OCTOBER 2023

THINGS TO KNOW

- **Beggars' Night (Trick or Treating)**
Mon., Oct. 30 from 6-8 p.m.
- **General Election**
Tues., Nov. 7, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
See sos.iowa.gov for polling places
- **City Council Meetings**
Nov. 6 & 20 at 5:30 p.m.
City Hall and Zoom (See info at Waukee.org)
- **Bingo**
Fri., Nov. 3 at 1 p.m.
Community Center
- **Veterans Day (Observed) – City Buildings Closed**
Fri., Nov. 10
Does not impact trash collection
- **Thanksgiving – City Buildings Closed**
Nov. 23 & 24
No trash collection on Nov. 23

For more information scan to visit our website.



Applications Open to Serve on City Boards and Commissions

The City of Waukee utilizes several important boards, commissions and committees made up of Waukee residents. These volunteer groups help to shape public policy and assist in various advisory capacities, allowing the City to benefit from the knowledge of a wide range of community representatives. Some boards and commissions are quasi-judicial, which means the State Code of Iowa has designated some legislative authority to them.

- **Board of Adjustment:** Considers appeals for variances to official zoning ordinances of the City of Waukee and has the authority to grant special exceptions or variances
- **Board of Appeals:** Reviews requests for appeal from the Waukee building code to determine the suitability of alternative building materials and types of construction, and hears appeals of decisions by administrative officials related to residential rental certificates and tenant complaints
- **Park Board:** Advises the City of Waukee on master planning, maintenance and improvements for parks, trails, green spaces and recreation facilities as well as volunteers at City-hosted events
- **Planning & Zoning Commission:** Evaluates rezoning, preliminary and final plats, site plans, comprehensive plans and certain ordinance changes for recommendation of approval or denial to City Council
- **Public Art Advisory Commission:** Develops a unified public art strategy and advises the Mayor, City Council and other community groups and agencies that are initiating public art projects in Waukee through design development review at various project stages

Applications for the Library Board of Trustees will be reviewed next spring. Waukee residents who are interested in serving can learn more and apply at Waukee.org/BoardsAndCommissions by Wednesday, Nov. 22.



Waukee
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Waukee Police Department CIT Training Complete

The Waukee Police Department recently finalized its goal of having every officer complete 40 hours of Crisis Intervention Training. From the Chief to the newest officer, every sworn member is now better equipped to address mental health calls in a more effective manner by providing them with tools to recognize and respond to situations where connecting someone with mental health support can achieve a more positive outcome.

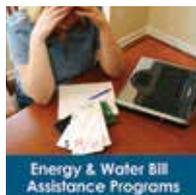
Officer Chris Kickbush is the first dedicated Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer for the Waukee Police Department. He and his clinician partner, who rides along during the shift, respond to mental health calls, such as suicide attempts, overdoses and welfare checks. This frees up patrol officers to respond to other service calls and emergencies and helps people remain in their homes and avoid developing a criminal history because the CIT can devote time to connecting people to resources and following up.



LIHEAP and LIHWAP Assist Low-Income Residents

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter season. The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) assists eligible low-income or disabled individuals or families in paying past-due charges, fees and taxes for drinking and wastewater charges.

Assistance is based on several factors, including total household income, household size and currently experiencing a water crisis. The household's gross income must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to be eligible for these programs. Visit Waukee.org/utilityassist or call New Opportunities at 515-465-5185 to learn more about these programs. Para más información o para aplicar por favor contacto 515-465-5185.



Election Day 2023

The Regular City/School Board Election will be Tuesday, Nov. 7, to fill terms for Waukee Mayor and City Council as well as the Waukee Community School District School Board. Visit sos.iowa.gov to register to vote and to locate your polling place. Polling locations are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. For information on the City candidates, visit waukee.org/elections.



Final Day for Yard Waste Collection is Nov. 27

The last day for curbside yard waste collection will be Monday, Nov. 27. Sticks, brush and branches must be cut into four-foot lengths and bundled (with string or twine) with a 40-pound maximum weight per bundle. If the sticks will fit into a small reusable container, they do not need to be bundled. Please do not use your ASI garbage or recycling containers for yard waste. Materials must be put into biodegradable bags or reusable containers with a 40-pound maximum weight and set at the curb. If placed in a reusable container, it is recommended that the container be clearly marked "YARD WASTE" and used for that purpose only.



Thanksgiving Baskets & Operation Wish List

The Waukee Police Department is gearing up for its holiday giving. In November, the department will stock and deliver Thanksgiving boxes to 20+ Waukee families. In December, their Operation Wish List will supply families in need with gifts and food. Help make the holidays brighter for neighbors in need by donating. Cash or check donations can be mailed or delivered to: Waukee Police Department, 1300 SE L.A. Grant Parkway, Waukee, IA 50263.



New Ways to Pay Utility Bills

There are a couple of new options available to pay your monthly City of Waukee utility bills. Scan the QR code or call 877-847-8583 to access your account 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and hear payment amounts and due dates. It's a convenient way to pay your bills securely through an automated system.



Also, did you know you can get your utility bills by email rather than paper? Sign up through the online account access or contact the Utility Billing Department at WaukeeUtilities@Waukee.org. To set up electronic account access, go to Waukee.org and enter "Utility Payment Options" in the search box.



HOW-TO

GUIDE

HOW TO CHOOSE AN AUTO BODY REPAIR SHOP

From dents and scrapes to fender-benders and more intense damage resulting from an accident or weather-related incidents, you may have a need for an auto body repair shop.

Not surprisingly, shops specializing in this service can vary in quality, reliability and cost. It's not unusual for auto body repair estimates to differ by hundreds if not thousands of dollars. To get the best work at the fairest price requires an investment in time and asking the right questions. Your insurance company more than likely has a list of "preferred shops" that they will encourage or demand that you obtain an estimate from. You are not required by Iowa law to utilize your insurance company's "shop." You choose where the work is done. Whatever shop you choose will need to be able to work off of the preferred shop's estimate. Many times, once a repair is started, there are additional costs. No fear, the body shop will deal with the insurance company to be paid

for those additional charges.

Your insurance company may indicate that, if you have repairs completed at a shop that is not "preferred," then they cannot ensure that a warranty will be given. This is a conversation that you need to have with your shop. Most reputable shops will have a written warranty they can provide.

• **Start your search by asking your friends, family and colleagues.** Most of us have worked with an auto body shop at one time in our lives, and it's easier to ask those close to us for referrals for who they have used before.

• **Check out reviews.** Many auto body shops will promote testimonials from prior customers on their websites. Reading valuable reviews and testimonials from people who've used their service before can help with the process of choosing an auto body shop.

• **Look for local shops.** When you take your vehicle to a local body shop, you're

much more likely to be met by friendly faces, better service, use of top-quality parts, high standards and honest prices. They can maintain low overhead costs and provide friendly customer service.

• **Create a list of shops, contact them on the phone and ask some questions.**

How long have they been in business? Do they provide free estimates? What is their turnaround time? Do they offer warranties? Do they work directly with insurance companies? What are their specialties? How soon can you bring your vehicle in for an inspection?

• **Consider prices.** Are they comparable to other body shops? While you want to find a great deal, cheaper is not always better. Low prices may be tempting, but they could mean sub-par work, used parts and paint that is incorrectly applied.

Finding the right auto body shop will make the experience much more pleasant, and you will be happy with the repairs. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A JEWELER

Jewelry becomes part of everyone's life sooner or later — a wedding band, a watch, earrings or an accent piece — so you'll want to find a skilled artisan who sells or creates beautiful pieces with their own hands. They repair, clean and adjust items with ease.

Whether you're seeking to purchase new jewelry, repair or clean existing pieces, you want to work with a good jeweler. How do you pick the best jeweler in your area?

Finding someone with excellent skills is the first thing to consider. Quality jewelers offer reasonable pricing and fantastic customer service. Do not make the mistake of basing your decision on cost alone. They may also offer other products from off-site manufacturers. In general, they are an excellent resource.

They also attend periodic classes to keep current on regulations within the industry. Jewelers maintain their

knowledge and understanding of the precious metal and gemstone markets.

Technical expertise isn't the only aspect to consider. Customers who receive superior service are likely to return for future purchases. You'll want to work with someone who sees more than dollar signs behind each customer.

People often regard their jewelry as a kind of financial or sentimental investment for family members. A professional understands the emotional bonds symbolized by a piece of jewelry and treats it accordingly. Many jewelers are sensitive to the needs of each customer.

A discount store may offer an unbelievable price on a piece of jewelry; however, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Inexpensive prices are often an indicator of lower quality gemstones and metal components with lower purity. When the item breaks, it might be impossible

to take it back for a repair or replacement because the seller has moved on. Some dealers focus solely on profit.

Doing business with a jeweler you know and trust will make a big difference when it is time to make a significant investment in a ring, necklace or watch. He or she will make every effort to get you the best possible price without sacrificing quality.

Anyone can sell jewelry. Malls across America are filled with jewelry stores. But a dedicated professional jeweler doesn't just sell precious metals or gemstones. He or she brings a keen eye for the beautiful and stunning quality of each piece.

It is true that price is important, but it shouldn't be your top consideration. You will get better value for your money when you do business with a jeweler you can trust — now and 20 years from today. High-quality workmanship starts with the jewelry and ends with your satisfaction. ■



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HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT FIBER INTERNET COMPANY

Choosing the right fiber internet company for your needs can significantly impact your online experience. Making an informed decision with an array of options is essential. Here are some key factors to consider when selecting a local fiber internet provider:

Coverage and availability: To find internet providers, check their websites or contact them to confirm availability in your area, as not all companies offer services in every location.

Speed and bandwidth: Evaluate your usage needs based on the number of devices and online activities you're planning on. Gamers and 4K video streamers require higher speeds and larger bandwidth than occasional web surfers.

Pricing and plans: Compare prices and inquire about promotions or bundles available to save money. Watch out for hidden fees or price increases, and ask about a price-for-life guarantee for consistency in your budget.

Customer reviews and reputation: When researching local internet providers, read online reviews and ask for recommendations

from friends or neighbors, paying attention to feedback on reliability, customer service and overall satisfaction.

Customer service and support: Good customer service is crucial. Inquire about their support options and response times. Check if they offer 24/7 customer service or have local support in case you need assistance.

Contracts and commitments: Before signing up, make sure you understand the contract terms, including any early termination fees. Some providers may require long-term contracts, while others offer more flexible month-to-month options.

Equipment and installation: Inquire about the equipment included, such as modem and router, and if there are additional charges. Additionally, ask about the installation process and whether the cost is included or requires an extra fee.

Speed consistency: For a consistent internet speed, ask your provider about their contention ratio, especially during peak usage times. Dedicated connections from local providers can offer a more reliable internet experience by avoiding shared bandwidth

with neighbors.

Reliability and uptime: When choosing a provider, prioritize reliability by looking for high uptime rates, minimal service disruptions, and service level agreements that guarantee a certain level of reliability.

Additional services and features: Assess whether any additional optional features such as security packages, cloud storage, or Wi-Fi hotspot access meet your needs and are worth the extra cost.

Future expansion plans: Inquire about a provider's network expansion and upgrade plans to assess their commitment to improving infrastructure and potentially offering better long-term service.

Local support: Choosing a local internet company often means supporting your community. This can also mean supporting local jobs and economy.

Choosing a local internet company that meets your needs and budget requires careful consideration and research. Don't rush the process; taking the time to research and select the right provider can lead to a more satisfying and reliable internet experience. ■

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HOW TO **SELL YOUR HOME FAST**

Everyone with a home on the market wants their property to sell fast and for the highest price possible. It not only means money in your pocket, but also speeds up the move into your new home — not to mention the relief of not having to keep your place in tip-top shape every day.

However, the quick sale doesn't always happen due to timing, market fluctuations and the condition and attractiveness of your home.

But there are some time-tested steps you can take that will make it much easier to see a "sold" sign in your front yard quickly.

Pricing: The most important step is to price your home correctly at the outset. Price it too low, and you'll leave money on the table. Price it too high, though, and your home will take longer to sell.

To hit the pricing bull's eye, you've got to know what is comparable in your market.

An appraiser can pull data about recent comps, typically from the last six months, for sales of homes that are similar to yours.

The closer your price is to homes that are actually selling, the more likely you are to get a quick sale.

Staging: Staging your home is sometimes thought of as an elaborate process that involves redecorating and renting beautiful furniture to make your interior look its best, but it doesn't always have to be that intense.

Staging is about presenting your home in the most appealing way possible. The goal is to get buyers to imagine putting their own things in your home, so basic steps like clearing out clutter and removing your personal photos can help their imagination go to work.

Photography: For most buyers, the first impression of your house won't be made in person. It will be made through photos of

your home they see online or in print ads.

That's why it's critical to have good, quality photographs of your home.

In some markets, that might mean having a professional photographer shoot images of your home when it's staged at its best.

The more clear, well-lit pictures that show off the beauty and features of your home, the more buyers are likely to take the next step and schedule a showing.

Fix it up: Finally, you have to pay attention to details to make sure your home is in top shape cosmetically.

You'll want to make sure the gardens, flower beds and other landscaping are neat, clean and free of weeds. You should also make a checklist of simple handyman tasks to complete, like replacing burned-out light bulbs, making sure doors and hinges shut properly, and removing stains from your carpet. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors are often an afterthought to homeowners — but they shouldn't be. Garage doors are the first thing most notice about a home, so when it comes to choosing them for a new home or replacing them, significant thought and research should take place. If your garage faces the front of the house, a new door could dramatically improve your curb appeal and change the overall look of your home. If you're selling, worn, dated doors tend to say a lot about the condition of the rest of the home. A garage door is also an excellent security asset for your home, allowing you to secure your vehicle inside. If you're thinking about installing a new garage door, you may be surprised at just how many options are on the market — and how affordably they can be installed.

THE LOOK

Garage doors have seen an explosion in styles, materials and colors that are designed to match the architecture of any home, from rural barns to craftsman bungalows

or sleek urban getaways. So if you thought your choices were limited to simple sheet metal styles, think again. You should also pay close attention to the materials. Today's garage doors can be made from expensive hardwoods, textured vinyl, fiberglass or basic aluminum, all of which will have a big impact on the look and longevity of your doors. Pay close attention to the maintenance needs of whatever material you choose. Some will hold their color longer than others, and real wood doors can require regular staining and sealing every few years to keep them looking spectacular.

INSULATION

Depending on climate, the insulation of your garage door can be an important factor to help reduce your energy bills. This is especially important in heated garages. But even an insulated door on unheated garages can make a positive impact on your energy usage if it can keep the hot and cold weather away from the interior of your house. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE RENTAL EQUIPMENT

Rental equipment plays a key role in construction projects. That's because even the biggest builders don't have the resources to buy, transport and store every piece of equipment they need. Renting tools for the job is the most efficient way to complete most building projects.

Why is that? Because you can quickly access the perfect equipment to do the job while only paying for the time you're actually using it.

THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Always use the right tool for the job. That's one of the first lessons professionals learn in construction, and a good rental company can deliver precisely the right tools to the job site.

A solid rental company will not only have a wide selection of products — from heavy machinery to smaller but important items like traffic cones and barriers — but they also will have expert employees who know the construction industry inside and out.

They also will be able to provide

the accessories that can customize the equipment for your needs. Having the correct blades, bits and add-ons can make a major difference in how the equipment works.

SERVICE AND DELIVERY

Hard-working equipment can break down. It's a fact of life, as even the most well-built mechanical devices will still need maintenance and repairs.

You should know up front how the maintenance needs will be handled, especially for long-term projects where the chances of equipment needing to be fixed or replaced goes up substantially.

The best rental companies want to keep their equipment clean and in top shape for both current and future renters. Keep that in mind as you shop for vendors.

Find out about the company's delivery policy, too. Make sure you ask about delivery fees — including extra charges for nights and weekends.

CLEAR BILLS

Like any good service provider, your bills for renting equipment should be easy to understand. The total cost for the rental period, along with any other fees — including delivery and pickup, if needed — should be clearly spelled out in your agreement.

Before you sign the rental agreement, make sure you understand the details about any costs that could be added for damaged equipment.

REPUTATION

Finally, the rental company should have a strong reputation in your industry. The best rental equipment providers will have a long track record of providing good service in your area. They should have lots of satisfied clients and leave a positive impression with the people who have rented from them in the past.

If you can find a company with all these highlights, you've found a rental company worth sticking with for the long haul. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A CAMPGROUND

There's nothing like camping to truly "get away from it all." Unplugging from a hectic daily life in the city or suburbs and getting back in touch with nature can offer not only the benefits of recharging, but fun and relaxation amid natural beauty.

Picking the right campground isn't always easy, though. Some are designed for a family-style experience, while others cater to more intimate outings. And, of course, location is a huge factor.

Here are some factors to weigh.

LOCATION

The first and most important choice is the campground's location.

If you're going on a faraway trip, then you'll obviously need a campground close to the destination. More often, though, camping is just as fun when you stay reasonably close to home. Look for a site that's convenient for a weekend getaway, yet far enough away that it feels like a real vacation.

AMENITIES

Let's face it: There's one part of camping that people seemingly never agree on — just how much civilization should be involved in the experience.

For some campers, only a primitive campsite that can be reached by remote hiking counts as true camping.

For others, a luxury RV with full hookups and paved walking paths is as primitive as they want to get.

Ask about electrical connections, RV hookups, showers, bathrooms and any other amenities you might want for your camping trip. The best campgrounds will offer a range of services at different price points to meet your needs.

LAYOUT AND RULES

For many people, camping is all about peace, quiet and isolation. For others, it's more about partying with friends.

Whatever your style of camping, you should make sure the campground's layout and rules are a good match for your kind of

fun.

Talk to the campground's manager if you have any questions about what's allowed and what's not. Knowing and following the rules will not only help keep you safe, but also make you a better camping neighbor so everyone has a good experience.

RESERVATIONS

Finally, you should look for a campground that accepts reservations well in advance, especially if you plan to camp on a holiday, a weekend or during a busy time of year.

Every campground has its own procedures for how they handle reservations. The most popular sites can be reserved months or even years in advance for the heavy travel season, so plan far ahead if you want the best selection.

By picking a campground with the right location, amenities and policies, then reserving it well in advance, you'll be setting the stage for a memorable, fun experience enjoying Mother Nature. ■



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HOW TO CHOOSE AND MAINTAIN A TRAILER

Farmers, business owners and hobbyists know well the value of having a sturdy, well-made trailer to haul equipment, supplies and other cumbersome items.

A good trailer can make your life a lot easier. Depending on what you plan to haul, there are a variety of trailers on the market designed for almost every scenario. Some trailer dealers can build trailers to meet your exact needs.

TYPES OF TRAILER

Trailers usually consist of aluminum, steel, fiberglass or hybrids. The kind you purchase will likely depend on the kind of work you do.

Aluminum trailers are 70 percent lighter than the steel variety. But aluminum does not absorb shock as well as steel, and repairing an aluminum trailer can be costly.

Steel is the most common product used to build trailers. Steel trailers are durable, particularly in an accident. If these trailers are damaged, they are usually easy to fix.

TRAILER OPTIONS

Flooring is another option to consider. Generally, you will find either a wood or metal floor. Wood is the most common, as it is long-lasting and easy to fix. Metal is attractive, but it can dent and rust over time.

Next, consider the brake system. You will need brakes that are strong enough to stop the heaviest load you can carry on your trailer.

Inspect the wiring on any prospective trailer. You must have the proper connections in the tow vehicle to hook up the brakes and lights on the trailer. It is required by law.

Keep in mind what you will carry on your trailer. Choose the correct size. It should be big enough for your largest job.

Look at the towing load for each trailer. Depending on the manufacturer and trailer, loads may range from 1-12 tons.

Hitches are either manual or electric. Electric hitches are easier to hook up, but they can wear out over time.

MAINTENANCE

Now that you have purchased a trailer, it is crucial that you maintain your investment. Professionals who are trained to spot not-so-obvious issues should always be used to properly service your trailer. Tires and suspensions should be checked to avoid catastrophic accidents. Bearings should be lubricated with the correct kind and proper amount of lubrication to prevent failure. Brake and light wiring should be inspected, as well as making sure the breakaway battery and switch are functioning properly. Cracked floorboards and broken or rusted hinges and fasteners should be replaced. Trailer professionals can also customize an existing trailer for your current needs.

Before you choose or customize your trailer, speak to a trusted professional who can help you get the right one for your needs. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE IN-HOME CARE

Choosing in-home care for a disabled or aging loved one can allow them to maintain their dignity and remain in familiar, comfortable surroundings. It has also been shown to reduce hospitalizations and develops a personal relationship that can benefit the patient and family.

Depending on the severity of their conditions, seniors and others with incapacitating ailments can live at home with assistance. This kind of care is often the perfect compromise.

Professionals visit the home of the patient to provide services. Not only is it convenient and comfortable, it is typically less expensive than the care offered at a full-time facility.

Many in-home care companies also offer services ranging from housekeeping and errand running to food prep.

Talk to your loved one's primary care physician to help you understand your choices.

After speaking to several in-home care providers, you can compare the range of services they offer. Typically, they will fall into

three categories:

MEDICAL CARE

Always inquire about the medical qualifications of any in-home care providers you are considering. All workers should have the proper training, degrees and certifications.

If you are unclear about the exact level of medical care your loved one will require, ask your physician. The doctor will also be able to tell you what qualifications in-home care providers should have in your situation.

PERSONAL CARE

Caregivers can help with daily grooming, mobility and any special diet requirements. They can help prepare meals or run simple errands.

COMPANIONSHIP

Homebound people often need companionship. An in-home care professional will provide a friendly face and good conversation as well as general care.

It might be a matter of reading aloud to your loved one, discussing the daily news or playing a game of cards. Quality in-home care providers understand that patients also need mental stimulation and human contact in order to stay well.

Before entering a contract, understand the services that will be provided. You want to make sure you are getting what you need without paying for services that are not required. If personal care is all that is needed, you should not have to pay for medical care as well.

Everyone, including you, should be comfortable with the people who work for the company. In-home caregivers will quickly become part of your life, especially as they enter and exit the house. Get referrals from people who have been in a similar situation.

The best in-home care provider is about finding the right combination of services. Once you have the right company, the patient will receive companionship, comfort and cost savings that make in-home care such a fantastic choice. ■



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HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT INSURANCE AGENT

Finding the right insurance agent isn't as simple as choosing the cheapest policy. A good insurance agency is an advocate for your needs and represents your interests in covering your health, home, auto and other insurable valuables. They'll guide you through the maze of options available to you and help find policies that protect you and your budget. Unfortunately, not every agent is the reliable, reputable agent professional you'd hope.

Here's some guidance on how to find the best agent or broker for your needs.

ASK FOR REFERRALS

Family, friends and colleagues have likely worked with insurance agents in the past. Ask people you trust for referrals. If you receive a recommendation, it is because that person has had a positive experience. There is a strong likelihood you will have similar results.

Good agents understand that offering great service will keep them in business. Their careers depend on word-of-mouth. If you are happy with the service you receive, your insurance agent will appreciate your willingness to send business their way.

RESEARCH

If you do not have recommendations, begin researching your options. Begin by looking at local companies and brokers. As you conduct your research, be thorough and critical. Buying a policy is

similar to purchasing a new car or home. It truly is that important.

Select a company that is highly regarded by consumers. Read reviews of each company to determine which has the most satisfied clients. Are they easy to work with? Have there been any problems with collecting on a policy?

Also, check that any prospective agent has all necessary licenses and training.

INTERVIEWS

After narrowing your list of prospective agents, make an appointment to visit each one. Prepare a list of questions and concerns about your personal situation. Take notes during your meeting. Remember that you must feel comfortable with the answers before purchasing a policy.

If an agent tries to pressure you into making a decision right away, inform him that you need more time and cannot sign anything immediately.

The right agent will let you take as much time as you need to understand the implications of each policy. They will give you useful information and not subject you to high-pressure sales techniques.

The relationship doesn't end once the sale is completed. Your dialogue should be continuous. The best agents are available in the event you have to file a claim.

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HOW TO CHOOSE A CHILDREN'S FITNESS CENTER

Younger children love to be outdoors and physically active. But, as they grow older, other activities replace and sometimes act as deterrents to their physical wellbeing. School, socializing, phones, TV and video games all conspire to eat up a child's day and upset the balance.

Providing that balance is key to kids growing up happy, healthy and well-adjusted. And parents should provide that encouragement, because developing a healthy active lifestyle early on can lead to a lifetime of good health.

Unfortunately, parents are busier than ever before, so they may need a little help encouraging activity. Finding a good fitness center that works with children is a smart option. When the kids attend regular fitness sessions with peers, they'll find opportunities for exercise ranging from tumbling, gymnastics and cheerleading to parkour and pre-school fitness.

A good health center will also help your child explore a variety of equipment and

exercise regimens, learning how to take care of their bodies in safe and comfortable environments and under the watchful eye of trainers experienced in working with children. Support and camaraderie from coaches and peers at the health center can also be a big plus. Learning how important it is to be active, to manage nutrition and the best ways to be physically and mentally fit will help your child grow into a successful adult.

Here are some criteria to consider if you think your child could benefit from attending a fitness center.

Coaches and trainers: Coaches and trainers will be a child's mentors. And fitness center staff will ultimately affect how enthusiastic your child is about working out. Make spontaneous visits to fitness centers you are considering to observe staff and available activities at different times of day. Centers will prefer appointments, but any that do not allow unplanned visits should not be considered.

Family should be allowed to visit, watch sessions and get a general idea of the center's operations.

Environment: Here are some questions you should ask yourself when you visit a center: Is the fitness center's equipment age-appropriate? While there may be private and group training, what is the ratio of staff to child? Is the fitness center generalized or do they lean toward specific categories of training? Does equipment look well cared for? Are areas clean and maintained? Are mats and padding frayed or flat and unsafe? Are bathrooms clean and well lit? Only parental vigilance can ensure a child walks into a safe and healthy fitness environment.

Other factors include variety of classes and programs, class sizes, location, costs, and if the fitness center has associations with local schools. But don't ignore your instincts. You know your child and, whether it's through referral or research, only you can find the best fit. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A TREE SERVICE

Trimming or removing trees from your property is difficult work, not something you'd want to attempt yourself. Making sure your trees are healthy while avoiding property damage requires employing a professional tree service.

Follow these tips to find a qualified, professional tree service in your area:

- Ask friends, family and neighbors. You may know someone who has used a tree service in the past. They can tell you who does the best work.

- Contact at least three tree services. Inform them of the situation and request a site inspection. It gives you the opportunity to ask about issues and get a feel for the experience and expertise of each company. Take notes so you can compare your results afterward.

- Find out how long each company has been in business, their experiences, references and whether they are licensed and insured. Check with the Better Business

Bureau for outstanding complaints. Even reliable companies may have a few problems. It is how they resolve the issue that counts.

- Request estimates. These figures can vary widely. Some companies are better equipped for certain jobs, so they can offer more competitive pricing. Other companies are slow or may be trying to “fill-in” appointment slots with smaller jobs just to keep their crews busy.

- Don't choose a company strictly by cost. Tree work is dangerous. Proper equipment, well-trained employees and insurance create high operating costs. It is worth paying more for peace of mind and excellent service.

- Look at a copy of their insurance policy. Coverage should include personal liability, property damage coverage, workers' compensation and damaged vehicles or home coverage.

- Inspect their previous work by looking at their portfolio. Each tree service company

has a work style. Verify that it suits your needs. Photos of past work might also be on their website.

- Get a detailed written estimate of any work to be performed before signing a contract. Responsible companies will provide detailed descriptions, along with the time and cost for your records. This estimate should also offer information about cleanup expectations. Are logs to be cut up or left for firewood? Will the company haul everything away or leave it for you to manage? Will leaves and twigs be raked up or run through a chipper? If they are removing an entire tree, what will happen to the stump?

- Verify the workers wear proper safety gear. They should be wearing helmets at all times. In addition, they should use face shields or protective glasses and steel-toe boots. The person who climbs the tree should have arborist climbing ropes, specialized safety and climbing gear, the proper saddle, helmet and safety glasses. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A ROOFER

Notice a leak when it rains? Or perhaps you've seen a stray shingle on the ground near your home. Stepping back to inspect your roof, you might notice even more damage or erosion.

If even just one of these issues is true — or maybe you just want to update and improve the look of your home — it's time to hire a professional roofer for your home's first line of defense against the elements.

Putting a new roof on your home can significantly increase its value. So, it is essential that you pick the right contractor to do this job.

Your first step in finding a reliable roofer is to ask your family, friends and neighbors if they have recommendations or referrals from work they have had done.

You can also look on the internet for roofing contractors in your area. Some websites offer lists of professionals, along with reviews of their work.

Personal recommendations will give you the best information. Be sure to focus on

the quality of work as well as the cleanup process. You don't want scraps of shingles and nails left over after the contractors have gone home. Don't hire professionals who leave debris after they are gone.

Pick someone you connect with and trust. Some contractors travel the country looking for work. If you hire one of them, they may not be able to provide realistic guarantees for their work. After all, they may be on the other side of the country if you begin to experience problems with their work.

Once you have contact information for several roofing contractors, call them. Inquire about the company's background and how long they have been in business. Generally, a good roofer should offer a material and workmanship warranty.

Be sure to ask questions about time frames and estimates. You should always get a written estimate before proceeding with any work. Communicating with the contractor will let them know that you will

be taking a hands-on approach to your project.

Find out if the roofer's product recommends what they will do if they find damaged decking and when they might be available to start. You should also ask about the warranty and whether you can have it confirmed in writing.

Every professional who works on your property should be licensed and insured. Insurance is particularly important for roofing contractors. They should be able to cover any damages they might cause to your property. It is also essential that workers are covered under their insurance as well, in the event someone is injured during the job.

Before work commences, you should receive a written contract from the roofer. Read it over carefully. It will state the type of materials to be used, what the work will entail and the final cost.

Following these tips will help you find the best roofing contractor in your community. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE KITCHEN AND BATH DESIGN

Trends in home design come and go, but the basic look of modern kitchens and baths tends to remain consistent, with some variations to complement the style of the home. Granite or quartz countertops, stainless steel and hardwood floors retain their popularity.

Any builder or real estate agent will tell you that upgraded, stylish kitchens and bathrooms are the most in-demand areas of a home to remodel for your own comfort and pleasure or to sell your home.

Kitchen and bath remodeling can improve your home's value and increase its charm. This is especially true if your current kitchen and baths are dated and showing their age. And while remodeling can be costly, these are areas where you don't want to cut corners. After all, you use your kitchen and bath every day you are in your home.

If it's time for some updates in your home, here are some things to consider with regard to kitchen and bath remodeling.

FUNCTION

Functionality is paramount. What exactly will you be doing in this room? Do you eat in your kitchen or in a dining room? Some people get dressed in their bathroom, while others put on clothing in their bedrooms.

DÉCOR

Look for inspiration. Leaf through home design magazines to find appealing designs. Make notes on what you like most about each design scheme.

Neutral paint may open up opportunities for a variety of decorating options. It could make it easier to change the decor in the future. If you sell your home, it allows potential buyers to visualize their own preferences in that space.

Of course, any room you design must be coordinated with the design of other rooms in your home. If your house has a contemporary, modern or traditional design, you will want the kitchen and bath to blend with that decor.

BUDGET

Remodeling can be expensive. Experts recommend you spend up to 20% of your home's value on remodeling the kitchen and less than that on remodeling the bath.

Working with a company that specializes in kitchen and bath remodeling can save money in the long run. They will have designers who can assist with design and product selection. Many times, they will also have carpenters who are employees to handle all the tear out and installation. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A BASEMENT REMODELING CONTRACTOR

A basement renovation can transform an underutilized space into a beautiful and functional part of your home. However, selecting the right basement remodeler is a critical decision that can make or break your project's success. Here's a guide to help you choose the perfect remodeler for your basement transformation.

Research and referrals: Start your search by asking friends, family and neighbors for recommendations. Personal referrals can provide valuable insights into a remodeler's reputation and quality of work.

Check credentials: Ensure that the basement remodeler you're considering is licensed, insured and bonded. These credentials demonstrate their professionalism and commitment to quality work.

Experience matters: Experience matters when it comes to basement remodeling. Look for a remodeler with a track record of successfully completing similar projects. A seasoned remodeler will have the skills and knowledge to handle unexpected challenges

that can arise in a basement renovation.

Portfolio and references: Review the remodeler's portfolio of past projects. Pay attention to the quality of their work and whether their style aligns with your vision. Ask for references and contact previous clients to inquire about their experience working with the remodeler.

Transparent communication: Effective communication is crucial for a successful renovation. Choose a remodeler who listens to your ideas, provides clear timelines and estimates, and communicates openly throughout the project.

Quality of materials: Inquire about the materials the remodeler plans to use for your basement renovation. High-quality materials will ensure the longevity and durability of your space. Ask if they have partnerships with reputable suppliers or if they source materials from trusted sources.

Permits and regulations: A reputable remodeler should be well-versed in local building codes and regulations. They should guide you through the permitting process

and ensure that your renovation complies with all necessary codes and standards.

Cost and payment structure: Get detailed estimates from multiple remodelers, including a breakdown of costs. Be cautious of overly low bids, as they may indicate subpar workmanship or the use of inferior materials. Discuss the payment structure and avoid paying the full amount upfront.

Warranty and guarantee: Ask about the remodeler's warranty and guarantee on their work. A reliable remodeler should stand behind their craftsmanship and offer a warranty that covers any issues that may arise after the project is completed.

In conclusion, selecting the right basement remodeler requires careful consideration and research. Take your time to evaluate candidates, check their credentials, and communicate openly about your expectations. By choosing a qualified and trustworthy remodeler, you can turn your basement into a stunning and functional space that enhances the overall value and comfort of your home. ■

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MEET Kathleen Rouse

Full-time building substitute at Sugar Creek Elementary and Radiant Elementary

What's the one thing you would like people to know about being a substitute teacher that they may not realize?

"I have been a substitute teacher for Waukee Community School District for the past decade. Four years ago, I was in the right place at the right time when I heard about the full-time building substitute job posting, and I'm so thankful I jumped at the opportunity. Classroom teachers will tell me they don't know how I can do something different every day, but I love how it is a fresh start with those students to make it amazing. My job never quite looks the same, and that is one thing that I enjoy. What you may not realize is that kids don't always think that a guest teacher is a "real" teacher. This can be a roadblock because students have a hard time performing the same academically for a guest teacher as their classroom teacher. I just try my best to greet students at the door with a smiling face. Earlier this week, I was able to go around our morning meeting circle of 28 students and name each student. The looks on their faces are what it is all about! I feel like I get to be a little bit of a superhero by being there to fill any vacancies for my administration when they can't find another guest teacher."

Do you remember your first day of subbing? If so, what was it like?

"The first time I picked up a job to substitute was at Shuler Elementary. I had just graduated from Drake University and was so excited to be in a classroom that I took any job I saw. It was a little scary not knowing what to expect from the day or how the students or staff would treat you. I remember feeling nervous, but the excitement of meeting new people and using my degree felt good."



Kathleen Rouse

What is one thing you've learned in the past seven days?

"In the past seven days, I learned how to play Monopoly Bid with my family. We weren't sure we would like this game at first, but we caught on quickly, and it is now one of our go-to games."

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If you weren't in the teaching profession, what would you be doing?

"I earned my bachelor's degree in hotel, restaurant, institutional management from Iowa State University, and I have experience in the restaurant industry. I could probably jump back into this profession as an event coordinator or venture into the hotel side of the business."

If you could have a super power, what would it be and why?

"If I had a superpower, I would have a hard time choosing between teleportation or being able to time travel. Teleportation would allow for a quick escape to my favorite places like the beach or mountains. Time travel would help me recapture some of my favorite memories. I would love to go back in time to see things and people from the past. I am so intrigued by everything that happened to get us to where we are today. This would be a great learning tool."

Finish this sentence: "In a perfect world ..."

"In a perfect world, everyone would be treated with respect and dignity. Life is better when it is all sunshine and rainbows. Just let happiness overflow your life with kindness and joy."

One thing about you that might surprise people:

"My senior year I was voted 'Best Hair' in high school."

What is it about teaching that gives you the most joy?

"Funny you should ask about joy when Waukee's theme this school

year is 'Hey Joy.' I get the most joy from the relationships I have built over the years with staff and students. Even though I am a substitute teacher, I have been able to work with many students again and again over the years, whether it's in a different classroom, related arts classroom, or a different building. When students greet me with, 'Hey, Mrs. Rouse,' it warms my heart that they remember me. Sometimes they will even draw me a picture or write a kind note. Also, working with such incredible adults makes going to work just a little bit easier and more fun. Knowing we are there to support each other is a really good feeling. Joy is all around us in all these small moments."

You can have a 2-hour dinner with any person, alive or otherwise. Who would that be and why?

"Two hours is a lot of time, and I would want to learn something from them. I would choose the author Colleen Hoover. I love to read or listen to books. I also enjoy journaling about my day. I've always had this secret dream of someday wanting to write a book, but I wouldn't know where to start. During this time, I could ask Colleen about her writing process, where she gets her inspiration, and what is up next for her."

Hawkeyes or Cyclones, and why?

"Cyclones all the way! My dad graduated from ISU, so we did many legacy visits growing up. I also fell in love with the campus. Choosing to go there for my undergraduate degree was an easy decision." ■

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SENSORY-FRIENDLY library experience

Several Des Moines Metro area libraries are once again teaming up to offer Sensory Spaces — designated hours for individuals and families to enjoy a sensory-free experience in the libraries.

Sensory Spaces will offer quiet browsing, special programming, and other adaptive services that will vary by location. The Waukee Public Library offered a slightly spooky monster-themed party with a simple craft and dancing on Oct. 7 and will offer simple winter crafts on Dec. 9. Both will feature a dimmed calm room, computer availability, and access to library materials.

The Waukee Public Library, much like the Waukee community, is rapidly growing in users and can be overwhelming for those with special sensory needs. While everyone is always welcome during regular hours, Sensory Spaces create opportunities for individuals, families and caregivers to enjoy the library in a new, sensory-friendly way.

More information can be found at waukeepubliclibrary.org/sensoryspaces.

HOLMES Murphy hires

Holmes Murphy announced the addition of insurance industry veteran Tim Anders. Anders will serve as the president of programs where he will be responsible for formalizing existing programs and generating new opportunities for the company's Managing General Agent (MGA) practice. This will allow the Holmes Murphy team to broaden their capabilities, tailor unique insurance solutions for their clients' needs through closer partnerships with their carrier partners, and positively influence their impact on risk.

Anders is a highly respected and successful insurance industry veteran with more than 35 years of experience in underwriting, new program development, program management, and leadership. Prior to joining Holmes Murphy, he worked with companies such as Ryan Specialty, Breckenridge Insurance, Zurich and Atlantic Mutual, and dealt with programs across a variety of industry classes and coverages. ■

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MOVE brings Grove closer to family

Illness forces move, but amenities are benefits

When Norman Grove moved to Waukee two years ago, the circumstances of his relocation weren't ideal. But now that he's settled in, he spends time playing Angry Birds on his iPad and is happy to be close to his family. So close, in fact, he can see his son's yellow house from his balcony.

Grove, originally from Ames, has lived in Indianola and the Des Moines area for 51 years. In 2021, he had colon surgery, and, two days later, "something went wrong." He was unconscious and in the intensive care unit for 42 days.

During his hospitalization, a blessing occurred a few floors above him, unbeknownst to him.

"I was told my great-granddaughter, Nora, was born upstairs right above me," he says.

After his hospitalization, he had a long recovery with physical therapy. It was decided he had to give up his home. His son, Rob, found a place in Attivo Trail in Waukee. As they viewed the prospective unit, Rob pointed out his family's home across the parking lot, on the next street.

First up, was to get a kitten. Norman has had 10 cats in his lifetime. He had three cats that he had to give up during his illness.

"I really miss them. It was hard to give them up. They are in a nice home now," he says.

His new cat is a Burmese named Nora, after his great-granddaughter. She has a small marking on her paw, which resembles a heart shape.

In his spare time, Norman enjoys playing video games. At age 83, he still gets a kick when he is top player, insisting it takes skill and patience to score points. He began playing Angry Birds 10 years ago and competes with other players for top points. A few times, he's come in first place. He thinks that some players could be older than him — judging from their profile photos.

Norman says he caught on quickly to Angry Birds after getting his iPad. It could be in part due to his years as a radio and TV station engineer.

He began his career in radio broadcasting, spinning records at age 17 at Tech High School's radio station, which is now Central Campus. He worked at five different radio stations before landing his favorite job at Iowa Public Television.

He worked for 37 years for IPTV as a station engineer, working mostly behind the scenes and witnessing the network's growth. When he retired in 2005, he says it was the perfect time as digital television was making its way to the airwaves.

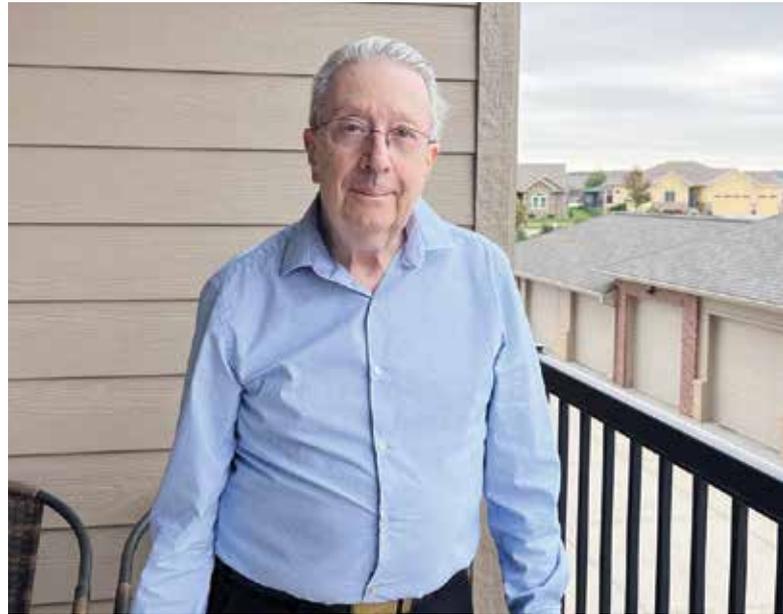
"I knew I wouldn't be relevant," he reflects. "It's all about sitting at a computer. My job is no longer there."

Now, in Waukee, he enjoys the amenities of Attivo.

"The pool, the courtyard — they have live music or you can play games. You can sit outside. It's beautiful here," he says.

But the best part of his move — besides his new cat — is being close to family, he says.

"My sons have been great. My grandsons live close by. Everyone helps out, and, now that I live closer, I get to see family a lot more often," he says. ■



While Norman Grove's move was a choice he didn't want to make, he is enjoying being close to family and now has a new cat for companionship.

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Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Bus Tour was held Sept. 14.



Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Bus Tour was held Sept. 14.



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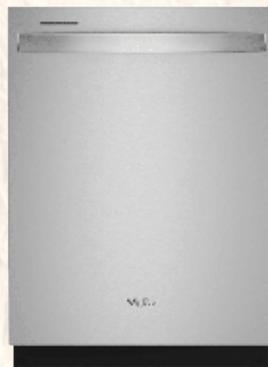
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