

JOHNSTON

NOVEMBER 2023

# Living

MAGAZINE

# EARLY RISERS

Residents share experiences working while most others sleep.

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WELCOME

# BEFORE the sun shines

I don't get on the road in the wee hours of the day too often, except when I have an early flight at the airport or I am driving out of state. On those 4 a.m. or so travels, I often wonder about the other folks I see driving at that time. Why are they up so early? Where do they work? Where are they going? Are they leaving from home or heading home?



I agree that there is something rewarding about getting an early start on the day. It gives me the feeling of having a head start on others. Crossing a few tasks off my list before the sun comes up starts the day off right.

For some folks, though, this isn't a once-in-a-while thing. Their jobs or activities or habits have them rising early every day.

When I was in high school, I worked at a convenience store/gas station. On occasion, I would work the graveyard shift. Even in a small town, this was an exposure to another world. I would see the factory workers heading to their shifts or heading home, filling their tanks with gas and buying a few supplies. I would see the route delivery guys ensuring that milk and bread and soda and beer were in the stores. And I would get to know the late-shift police officers who would stop in. For the most part, it was quiet, which is exactly how most of the folks who choose to work those hours like it.

Getting up early wasn't so easy in my younger years, but it seems to more challenging to sleep in now, even when I can. I used to laugh at all the retired guys who were at the café at before 6 a.m. drinking coffee. It's all starting to make sense now. Even the coffee.

This month's cover story is dedicated to those who truly are early risers. We uncover the when and why and how as we interview these folks who prefer to — or must — get a head start on each day.

See you before the sun shines, and thanks for reading. ■

### SHANE GOODMAN

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# EARLY RISERS

Residents share experiences working while most others sleep.

By Ashley Rullestad

While most of us are catching our last few Zs before dragging ourselves out of bed, others have long been awake and busy, many of them making it possible for us to get our days off to a good start. After all, someone has to make the donuts, brew the coffee and deliver those energy drinks to the shelves. Others rise and shine to care for the early morning needs of patients in hospitals, residents of care centers and women in labor. The list of those working while we sleep goes on, and some of them share their experiences as early risers in this month's cover story.

Allan Curtis works for the National Weather Service in Johnston, and when there's bad weather, staff members have to be there all times of the day and night.

# FEATURE

## Weather is 24-hours

Allan Curtis works for the National Weather Service in Johnston, which is tasked with issuing watches and warnings for the area. Anytime you hear tornado and thunderstorm watches and warnings during the summer and winter storm and blizzard watches and warnings in the winter, they come from the NWS.

Weather has been a long-time interest for Curtis, especially growing up in the Midwest with its fair share of extreme conditions. For a lot of meteorologists, a severe weather event like a tornado tends to be their trigger to pursue forecasting as a career. For Curtis, it was slightly different. It was actually a large winter storm Oct. 25-26, 1997, when he was growing up in Omaha. While the amount of snow itself (about 12 inches) was not record-breaking, the time of year and type of snow was devastating to the area.

“With leaves on trees and the snow being wet and heavy — and sticky like stucco — it caused widespread power outages and tremendous amounts of tree and other damages,” says Curtis. “I’ll always remember



Allan Curtis checks weather-monitoring equipment for the National Weather Service in Johnston.

waking up on the 26th and walking outside with my dad. It was eerily silent. The only sounds were occasional tree branches snapping and then echoing. We lived in a cul-de-sac, and our neighbor’s tree was a big, beautiful oak tree that had seemingly been turned into a willow with branches touching the ground. Power was out in many areas for a couple of days or more as well. For me, I was just trying to wrap my

head around how something as innocuous as snow could cause so much damage.”

Since severe weather can happen at anytime, NWS employees are working around the clock. Weather can also dictate that additional people are needed in the office to accomplish the mission. The prime example would be when there are severe thunderstorms around the area.

“That may require as many as five or



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six additional people to be in the office, if occurring outside normal business hours, and it requires additional sacrifice on the part of employees to come in and be away from family or friends,” Curtis says.

Unfortunately, it’s not easy to adjust to being at work when most of the world is sleeping. When Curtis knows he will have a series of overnight shifts upcoming, the day before, he will start to transition into the overnight shifts by staying up until around 3 or 4 a.m., then sleeping until around noon.

“My first overnight shift would then start later that night, around 11 p.m. or midnight. Typically when working overnight, I would be working during the last half of my day, coming home around 7 a.m. or 8 a.m. and then going to bed and sleeping until mid-afternoon,” he says. “Then, coming out of overnight shifts, I do a rapid transition back to normal. On the morning of my last overnight shift, I would come home and take a three- to four-hour nap, usually waking up around noon. Then go about my normal day and go to sleep that night as one would normally do.”

It can be taxing on the body and quality

sleep can be difficult, he says. Curtis uses non-habit-forming sleep aids to get him through the transition. On top of all of that, it is well researched that regularly working overnight is not ideal for long-term health and life expectancy, let alone rotating through all the shifts. That work schedule also carries implications on personal and social lives. Evening shifts often get in the way of social events, whether they be with family or friends.

“This is something that my household wrestles with all the time,” Curtis says. “I am beyond lucky to have a loving wife and now two young children, and I would be lying if I said my work schedule does not affect them. I have missed, and will continue to miss, family events, holidays, school events, sports, milestones and more. That’s something I have come to terms with, as well as my wife. That makes being there that much more valuable and important when I can.

“I try to do what I can to be there,” he continues. “Communication really becomes important, both ways, otherwise frustration and resentment can settle in. For my family, we are very fortunate that our extended families

focus on finding times to get together versus having to do so on an exact holiday.”

For those working challenging hours, Curtis says it’s critical that you love what you do. If you are not happy at work, that is going to amplify all of the negatives of the schedule even more. He says the reason he and his colleagues are able to accomplish what they do is because the passion of employees in the National Weather Service is second to none.

Also, since rotating shift work is unhealthy, it becomes important to try to be healthy and active to help counter or minimize some of the negative physical and mental effects. For Curtis, that involves going to the gym three to five times a week, taking walks around the neighborhood with the family, and trying to eat healthy.

“Above all, communicate. This work schedule is quite rare within the general populace, and many won’t quite understand it, let alone all of the obvious and not so obvious effects that it carries into other aspects of life. For example, early on, while dating my now wife, I was very forward with her about what my job entailed, and we tackle the downsides together.”



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## Early delivery

Brett Hollingshead works for IBEV, Iowa Beverage, a beverage distributor. His job is to deliver beer and other beverages to bars and restaurants throughout the metro, including those in Johnston. Hollingshead became interested in IBEV when he was working for Casey's and talked to some of the vendors who delivered. He moved to Frito Lay, and has been with IBEV for the last seven years.

Due to his delivery schedule, Hollingshead wakes up at 2:30 a.m. to start his day.

"It was very challenging at first," he says. "When I started doing this type of work 10 years ago, I only had two kiddos that were 5 and 3. They weren't in school yet, nor in any activities, so I would go to bed around the same time they did at 8 p.m. and wake up at 2:30 a.m. to go into work. It took probably six months to get use to it."

Now things are a bit trickier with six kids ages 15, 13, 9, 8, 3 and 2. When the kids don't have activities like baseball or other sports, he tries to go to bed by 7:30 p.m. and wakes up at 2:30 a.m. Since the kids have gotten older, they aren't heading to bed at 7:30 p.m.

"Most of the time, I'll still go to bed at the same time, and my wife and kids will stay up a bit later," Hollingshead says, "Usually they're very good about keeping the noise down and accommodating my sleep schedule. When they're in activities, I just kind of suck it up and not get as much sleep at night. If I get off at a decent time, I can sometimes come home and take a power nap."

These days, the work schedule is also a bit fluid. Hollingshead works four days a week, Tuesday-Friday. On Wednesday and Friday, he starts at



Brett Hollingshead, who delivers for IBEV, Iowa Beverage, has adjusted his schedule for his early-morning job.

midnight, but he doesn't get off until 10:30-11 a.m. His family is good about accommodating his need for sleep at off times.

"As far as advice for people thinking about working a shift where you have to get up really early, I'd recommend some good black-out curtains for the summertime months when it's still light out at 9 p.m. so you can get some sleep."

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# FEATURE

## Breakfast baker

Shane Leaming has been in the restaurant business for more than 30 years. While many of his previous gigs kept him away late at night, his latest one has him getting up early.

“I work at HomeGrown Kitchen Des Moines as the kitchen manager,” he says. “We are a scratch kitchen that has lots of baked breakfast items, including favorite Homemade HG Tarts — like PopTarts, but we don’t use the name since it’s trademarked.”

Someone has to be there early to get prepped for service and to start baking. HomeGrown sources local products to serve on its breakfast/brunch menu, which features other favorites like fresh squeezed juices, homemade biscuits and gravy, seasonal French toast from bread baked in-house, as well as coffeecake with a homemade buttermilk caramel sauce.

Leaming says it took him about two weeks to get used to getting up so early in order to be at the restaurant and ready to roll by 5 a.m. Now it’s just a part of his routine like anything else.

“Really, my wife and daughter are used to it

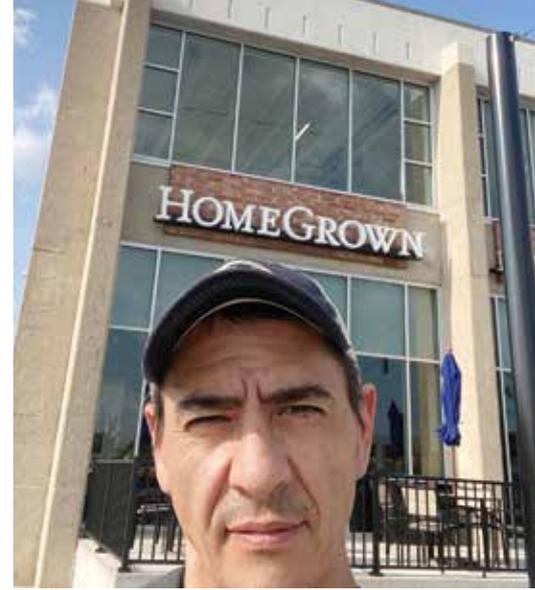


Shane Leaming’s current job as kitchen manager at HomeGrown Kitchen Des Moines gets him up bright and early to prepare for early-morning diners.

and prefer it because I see them more now than I have in the past nine years of my daughter’s life because I worked at restaurants at night,” he says.

His advice is similar to Curtis’: Enjoy what you do and have some passion or drive to be the best you can every single day.

“Doing what we do at HomeGrown Kitchen and what I have chosen to do is not easy,



but nothing in life that is good ever is,” says Leaming. “But we are there for our customers because we get to be someone in the morning that makes people smile. We like to try to inspire our staff every day by saying something that helps them understand we can’t run this business alone. And food brings people together. God gave us two hands — one to help ourselves and one to help someone else.” ■

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# THIS is how retirement taxes work

Many people think that retirement automatically means you pay less in taxes. After all, you're no longer being handed a paycheck from an employer, right? The reality is that you are still taking an income. Now, it's from your retirement savings. The key is understanding which accounts are taxable and what you can do to take more control over what you pay in taxes.



Most retirement accounts — including 401(k)s, 403(b)s, SIMPLE IRAs, SEP IRAs, profit-sharing plans, pension plans, and traditional IRAs — are called qualified accounts. Qualified accounts are designed for retirement income; any money saved into these plans can generally be accessed without penalty after age 59 ½. The IRS has allowed money in these accounts to be saved and grow tax-deferred, meaning that federal taxes have been delayed until some point in the future. You will pay federal taxes on the money when you start taking distributions or when the IRS forces you to do so.

Typically, at age 73, you must start taking an annual required minimum distribution (RMD) from a qualified account. This amount is calculated based on your age, amount of money in the account, and life expectancy factor. If you don't take your RMD, you could receive a tax penalty of up to 25% of the RMD amount for that year.

Will your Social Security benefits be taxable? It depends. To avoid being taxed on your Social Security benefits, any income from other sources — such as a job or qualified retirement accounts — must be below the allowed base amount for your filing status, \$32,000 for a couple and \$25,000 for an individual in 2023.

A nonqualified account is funded with money you've already paid taxes on. This could include savings and checking accounts, nonretirement brokerage and investment funds, money market accounts and CDs. While you have already paid taxes on the money you've put into the account, any growth — including interest earned or dividends paid — will be taxable.

Annuities are another type of account designed to provide income during retirement. Unlike more traditional retirement accounts, not all income from an annuity may be taxable. It depends on various factors, including what type of annuity it is and how it was funded.

Though you will pay taxes in retirement, you have more control than ever before. A retirement planner can help you zoom out and look at the big picture to develop a customized plan to take money from these accounts in a strategic way that could lower your tax bill. ■

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# UNACCOMPANIED Minors shares their music

High school a capella group offers unique experience.



Unaccompanied Minors performs at a variety of community events.

Johnston High School's student-led a capella group, Unaccompanied Minors, has taken part in some exciting performance opportunities around the metro.

The group not only sings at school events, but also performs the National Anthem at a Drake University women's basketball game each year and has monthly performances at the Brio of Johnston Senior Living Community.

Co-leaders Alice Trachta and Eric Franczyk share that the funnest season for the group is around the holidays, during which it performs across the Johnston area. This year, a few holiday season performances will include Holiday Hullabaloo, Bishop Drumm and Martina Place, The Town Center Tree Lighting, and the JHS Annual Madrigal performance.

Every spring, members of Unaccompanied Minors take a trip to Johnston Middle School in pursuit of inspiring talent and new recruits.

Trachta and Franczyk share they were both inspired to join as ninth-graders when the group came to visit the middle school. They say they knew it was something special and are honored to lead it this year.

"Unaccompanied Minors is a student-led organization, so we are responsible for all aspects of operations of this group," Trachta says. "We have learned how to work well as a team to get everything done and have a successful year. This year, we are serving as co-leaders, which means we have the responsibility of ensuring we have great group chemistry, are performing at a high level, and are taking care of all the logistics involved in practices and performances."

"It is important to us that we create a group of friends that can teach one another new things and listen/take in others' input at any time," Trachta says. "We both agree that this experience has grown us, and we are excited to see what the future holds."

Trachta adds that, while they've both been part of some amazing memories with Unaccompanied Minors, one of their favorites was during the group's vocal warm-up before their first performance this year.

"Everyone was ecstatic, and there was joy in every vocal exercise we did," she says. "The performance went great, and it was a fantastic way to kick off our season."

The co-leaders highly encourage interested students to audition for Unaccompanied Minors. Auditions will be held in spring 2024, and the only requirement is students must be an incoming sophomore, junior or senior enrolled in the Johnston Community School District. Trachta and Franczyk can be contacted on the group's Instagram page, @jhs\_unaccompaniedminors. ■

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## THIS MONTH at your library

This month is chock full of great events for kids, teens and adults including the final session of our History of Johnston series, a dance party for school-aged kids, a book club perfect for the whole family, a paint party for teens, and a holiday cooking class for adults. Read on for the details about all of the fabulous Johnston Public Library events happening in November.

### KIDS

Looking for a relaxing way to unwind with the kiddos after a long day? Come to the library on Monday, Nov. 20 at 4:15 p.m. for a picture book club perfect for the whole family. Each monthly session will include a read-aloud book and hands-on activities. No pre-reading is required. **Read Me a Book Club** is recommended for kids in grades K-2 with their grown-up. Please register for this free event.

Next, mark your calendars for a high-energy event at **Trolls and Tunes: 90s Dance Party** on Thursday, Nov. 30 at 5 p.m. Grab the kiddies and have them wave their troll hair in the air. Trolls and Tunes will feature an evening of crafts, activities and cool dance moves as we spin

back the clock to the neon-soaked days of the 1990s. This event is recommended for kids ages 5-8, but anyone in grades pre-K through fifth grade can attend. Registration is required.

### TEENS

Teens, get ready to roll back in time to the 1980s for a gnarly teen murder mystery party at the roller rink. Join us at JPL for the **School's Out Teen Special: Murder Mystery Party** on Friday, Nov. 10 at 1 p.m. You can play a character or attend as an investigator. 80s-themed attire is encouraged but not required, and our snack bar will be fully stocked with 80s-inspired treats. This blast from the past is an event kids in grades 6-12 won't want to miss. Registration is required.

Have a teen who can't get enough art in their life? Come to JPL on Tuesday, Nov. 14 at 6:30 p.m. for **Teen Paint Night**. Teens can enjoy a fun evening of art-making, creativity and friends. This monthly chill program features a different guided painting project each session. Teens can follow along with the project or use the paints provided to create their own unique masterpieces. Registration is required for this free event.

### ADULTS

Calling all history buffs. Join speakers from the Johnston Station Historical Society for the **History of Johnston, Iowa: 21st Century event**. This program is the culmination of our three-part series about the history of Johnston and will take place on Sunday, Nov. 12 at 1:30 p.m. Speakers will discuss accomplishments and growth of our city and community as we thrive every day.

Finally, prepare for upcoming holiday gatherings at **Holiday Spice and Everything Nice cooking class** on Saturday, Nov. 18 at 10:30 a.m. Learn how to spice things in delicious ways as our fave food editor, Lois Carpenter, demonstrates both savory and sweet recipes sure to delight. Registration for this free cooking class opens up on Saturday, Nov. 4 at 9 a.m.

More information about all library programs including program registration is available at [johnstonlibrary.com](http://johnstonlibrary.com) or by calling the library at 515-278-5233. ■

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# OVERCOMING seasonal depression

The winter months can bring more than just cold temperatures. It is quite common, especially for seniors, to experience varying degrees of depression due to lack of sunshine and limited activities available in the colder weather. This is often described as the winter blues.



winter blues:

**1. Enjoy the sunlight as much as possible.** Natural light is known to have a positive impact on your overall mood. Weather permitting, spend some time outdoors when possible. Even when the grounds are covered in a foot (or two) of snow, spending a few moments outdoors can give your mental and physical health a great boost.

**2. Watch what you eat.** We know diet plays a large role in our physical and mental health. But did you know sweets and processed food can increase depression symptoms? Making health-conscious decisions about what you eat becomes even more important as we age. This can often be difficult for seniors with limited access to healthy snacks and meal options.

**3. Exercise and move your body during the day.** Getting some form of exercise each day is not only beneficial for your physical health but can also greatly improve your mood. Any amount of exercise is beneficial but aim for at least 30 minutes each day.

**4. Spend more time connecting with others.** One of the easiest ways to relieve symptoms of depression can be to spend quality time with people who make you happy. Spending time with others reduces the potential for social isolation and the resulting symptoms of depression, cognitive decline and disease. Opportunities to socialize can be difficult to find for seniors who live alone with no family close by.

**5. Get involved in your community.** Giving back to your greater community can be exceptionally rewarding. The sense of purpose and self-worth can ward off symptoms of depression and even benefit your physical health. Opportunities range from quilt clubs that produce beautiful creations for Quilts of Valor to baking clubs that host bake sales benefiting local charities or larger organizations like the Alzheimer's Association. ■

Maybe you've noticed that Dad doesn't seem interested in doing much lately other than sleeping. Or possibly your grandmother is isolated due to the fear of getting sick, and you are worried about her mental health.

Perhaps you are a senior and have noticed signs of depression and isolation in yourself.

Overcoming seasonal depression does not have to be difficult. Everyone is affected differently, so what works for one person might not work as well for another. There are a few suggestions to consider when fighting off the

Information provided by Alex McGregor, director, Edencrest at Green Meadows, 6750 Corporate Drive, Johnston, 515-207-1984.

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# ROTARY

By Shayne McGaughy

## RYLA student shares



From left, Steve Grasso, Johnston Rotary president; Shreyas' mother, Rashmi Shrestha; Shreyas Shrestha, 2023 Johnston Rotary RYLA award winner; and Shreyas' father, Sanjay Shrestha.

Each year, Johnston Rotary sponsors a young person for the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). RYLA is an intensive program where young people develop leadership and management skills, while also having fun and making connections. Iowa RYLA, a joint conference of Rotary Districts 5970 and 6000, held a six-day leadership conference at Grinnell College July 16-21. Our nominee for 2023 was Shreyas Shrestha, who is a junior at Johnston High School. Shreyas participates in many activities at JHS, including debate team, FIRST Tech Challenge, Science Olympiad, as well as soccer and cross country to name just a few. He is also a National Honor Society member and is focused on STEM education, with emphasis in computer science and mechanical engineering. Shreyas applied for the program in 2022 while a sophomore at JHS. He and his mother and father, Rashmi and Sanjay Shrestha, visited Johnston Rotary on Oct. 17 to discuss and share Shreyas' RYLA experience with the club.

"I want to thank the Johnston Rotary Club and board for giving me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of attending RYLA. It was truly an unforgettable experience," Shreyas said. He went on to discuss the core teachings of the program and how he would apply them in his life. Shreyas and the club members had a laugh when he noted that all RYLA attendees (roughly 180 young people from all over the state) had to turn in their phones for the entirety of the event... and everyone survived!

Shreyas laid out the following core principles that he will take with him from RYLA:

- **Becoming a better person** requires that we all learn to step into another person's shoes with kindness and respect, while also staying true to yourself.
- **Becoming a better leader** is not just about doing the most work in an organization or on a project. It requires balance and a keen understanding to meet people where they are and to intuitively know when to be involved and when to step aside and let others shine. It is about relationships, but also candor and honesty.
- **Fostering connections.** The connections Shreyas made at RYLA were the most important facet for him. Over the countless activities shared during the event, some of which were incredibly challenging and had many failures, long-lasting bonds were created with fellow teammates. These bonds, and the time spent together, created a powerful sense of teamwork and an understanding of each person's unique strengths and weaknesses. Relationships come first, then success can follow.

Any questions about Iowa RYLA can be directed to registrar@iowaRYLA.org. ■

More information about the Johnston Rotary Club can be found at <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/1649> or contact Neil Hyde, 515-210-2649, [hyde\\_neil@yahoo.com](mailto:hyde_neil@yahoo.com).

# Johnston Rotary Club UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 7: No Meeting

Nov. 8: Trivia Night, Food Depot, Grimes at 6pm

Nov. 14: Carrie Johnson, LifeServe Blood Center

Nov. 21: Donations Presentation and  
Rotary Foundation, Bruce Young

Nov. 28: Jim Blessman, Blessman International

Dec. 5: Don Dockendorff, State of Iowa ATF Bureau

Dec. 5: Christmas Party at Hyperion at 6pm



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# ASSET protection for disabled seniors

Every day in the United States, more than 10,000 people turn 65. More than 7 million people over the age of 64 receive Medicaid services and nearly 2.5 million receive Social Security Income (SSI) benefits. Those are both means-tested programs, which means that the recipient must have less than a certain level of income and assets. When it comes to asset protection, there are options for a disabled individual over the age of 65.



trust and must be drafted carefully to comply with state and federal laws. There is no age restriction on a Miller Trust.

**Spend down assets**

If a disabled person has too many assets — through inheritance, a personal injury settlement, or a retroactive Social Security award — managing those resources is crucial. To qualify for Medicaid, an individual must have less than \$2,000 in countable resources. One good option is to spend the cash in the month received on necessary items. There are many permissible spend-down items, so long as the money isn't simply gifted away.

**Special Needs Trust**

Federal law allows for a first-party, self-settled special needs trust. A special needs trust is a discretionary spendthrift trust designed to preserve government benefits for a disabled beneficiary. If properly drafted, assets won't be counted as a resource. Importantly, this trust

has to be established before the person with a disability turns 65.

**ABLE Accounts**

Another potential solution is an ABLE Account. This is a tax-advantaged savings account similar to a 529 College Savings Plan. ABLE accounts are intended to be beneficiary-directed, giving the disabled individual some measure of control over the use of the funds. However, in order to qualify for such an account, the individual's disability must have begun prior to age 26.

There are options which offer distinct advantages in managing the income and resources of an individual with a disability. Contact an attorney who specializes in these areas for information on protecting Medicaid eligibility for people over 65. ■

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

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# RECIPE

## SWEETEN the holiday season with deliciously creamy desserts

*(Family Features)* Once the table is cleared and gifts are put away, it's often time for one of the favorite moments of holiday gatherings. The taste (and smell) of those divine desserts you may only make once a year is enough to keep guests hungry even after the main course.

Put a new staple on holiday menus for years to come with this Cran-Raspberry Quinoa Pudding Trifle that combines fresh raspberries, vibrant cranberry sauce, orange juice and orange zest for a unique dessert. Ready in 30 minutes, it can be an easy way to impress everyone at the table with a creamy pudding base inspired by favorite winter flavors.

As a tasty treat that's ideal for just about any occasion, this take on rice pudding is made using Success Boil-in-Bag Tri-Color Quinoa, which offers a heat-safe, BPA-free and FDA-approved bag and is easily prepared in just 10 minutes. Its light, nutty flavor and versatility creates a pudding that's perfect for a wide range of pairings, from satisfying chocoholics or pumpkin-spice fanatics to whipping up a sweet, simple dessert.

Find more sweet holiday recipe inspiration at [SuccessRice.com](http://SuccessRice.com). ■

### Cran-raspberry quinoa pudding truffle

Prep time: 25 minutes  
Cook time: 5 minutes  
Servings: 6

#### QUINOA PUDDING:

- 2 bags Success Tri-Color Quinoa
- 4 cups almond milk
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

#### CREAMY YOGURT LAYER:

- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

#### CRAN-RASPBERRY LAYER:

- 1/2 cup cranberry sauce
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 2 cups fresh raspberries
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 2 cups gluten-free vanilla cookies, chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries

#### DIRECTIONS

- To make quinoa pudding: Prepare quinoa according to package directions, substituting almond milk for water. Drain, reserving almond milk.
- Remove quinoa from bags and stir into almond milk in saucepan over medium heat. Stir in honey, vanilla and cinnamon. Bring to simmer. Cook, stirring constantly, 5-8 minutes, or until thickened slightly. Refrigerate 45-60 minutes, or until well chilled.
- To make creamy yogurt layer: In large bowl, stir yogurt, honey and vanilla. In separate bowl, beat cream until stiff peaks form. Stir whipped cream into yogurt mixture until blended. Refrigerate until ready to use.
- To make cran-raspberry layer: In medium bowl, stir cranberry sauce, orange juice and orange zest. Gently fold in raspberries.
- To assemble: In 10-cup trifle dish, layer 1/3 quinoa mixture, 2 tablespoons almonds, 1/3 cran-raspberry mixture, 1/3 vanilla cookies and 1/3 yogurt mixture. Repeat layers twice. Garnish with remaining raspberries and almonds.



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# MEDICARE premiums and costs in 2024

Medicare premiums and costs for 2024 are a critical concern for millions of Americans who rely on this government program to access essential healthcare services during their retirement years. Understanding the expected changes in premiums and costs is essential for beneficiaries and those planning their future healthcare needs.



On Oct. 12, the Medicare deductibles and premiums were quantified by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The calculations for costs and premiums are based on Q3 Consumer Price Index (CPI) numbers. Here's a breakdown of what beneficiaries can expect:

**Part A Premiums:** For most beneficiaries, Part A premiums remain free, as long as they or their spouse have paid Medicare taxes while working at least 40 quarters. However, if they do not meet this requirement, the premium for 2024 is either \$278 or \$506 per month depending on how long a person worked and paid taxes. Part A covers hospital services with a \$1,632 per cost stay (if no other coverage) and skilled nursing care has a daily cost of \$204 days 21-100.

**Part B Premiums:** The standard Part B premium for 2024 is \$174.70 per month. This premium covers outpatient services, doctor's visits, durable medical equipment and the emergency room. There is an annual deductible for these services; for 2024 it is \$240. Once this is met, Medicare pays 80% and the consumer pays 20% for the remainder of the calendar year. High-income individuals may pay higher premiums, as Medicare uses an income-related scale.

The costs above for Parts A/B of Medicare can be covered by a Medigap or Medicare Supplement policy or replaced by enrolling in a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C).

**Part D (Prescription Drug Plans):** Part D premiums vary depending on the chosen plan, the medications covered, and the region. On average, beneficiaries can expect to pay around \$33.70 per month for a basic prescription drug plan. However, these costs may differ based on individual needs and the selected plan's coverage. In 2024, the consumer's out-of-pocket expense will end at the end of the coverage gap tier. This means a maximum out of pocket for prescription expense of approximately \$3,000 - \$3,200.

It's crucial for beneficiaries to review their healthcare needs and budget, especially when considering supplemental insurance designed to help cover the gaps in Original Medicare (Parts A and B). An alternative is a Medicare Advantage Plan that replaces the use of Original Medicare with copayments for medical services and bundling prescription drug coverage in the design.

Make sure when reviewing the differences in a Medigap and Medicare Advantage Plan that a quality summary of costs and values has been provided. ■

Information provided by Janis Van Ahn, Health Insurance Advisor LLC, 5870 Merle Hay Road, Suite A, Johnston, 515-225-9994, jvanahn@health-insadvisor.com.

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PSALM 67:6

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Sunday Service: 10 - 11 am  
Watch services live at [fbcdsm.org](http://fbcdsm.org)  
Small Groups available Sunday & Thursday.

**WEDNESDAYS**  
Dinner: 6-6:30 p.m. (Free dinner, reservations required.)  
Children & Adult Programs: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.



## CONTACT US! CITY HALL

**6221 Merle Hay Road**  
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Fax: (515) 278-2033

### MAYOR

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PaulaSDierenfeld@gmail.com

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### JOHNSTON PUBLIC WORKS

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FAX: (515) 727-8092

### JOHNSTON PARKS DEPARTMENT

6300 Pioneer Parkway  
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### CROWN POINT COMMUNITY CENTER AND SENIOR DINING CENTER

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## RECEIVE NOTIFICATIONS THIS WINTER

To ensure the safety and efficiency of our street crews and first responders during snow and ice removal operations, the City of Johnston may declare a snow ordinance. This declaration is based on various weather factors such as snow, sleet, freezing rain, and blowing snow. When a snow ordinance is in effect, please note the following:

- No parking on city streets, alleys, or city-owned off-street parking once the snow emergency is declared.
- The snow emergency parking ban remains in effect from its proclamation through 5:00 p.m. the following day. It may be extended if necessary to clear the snow and ice.
- The declaration of a snow emergency, along with start and end times for parking restrictions, will be communicated through various channels:
  - A red bar at the top of the city website, [www.cityofjohnston.com](http://www.cityofjohnston.com)
  - Notification through text and email alerts (sign up at "Notify Me" on the City's website).
  - Updates on the City of Johnston's Facebook and Twitter pages.
  - Information provided by local news channels and radio stations.



Please adhere to these regulations to help us maintain safety and efficiency during winter weather events.

## CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS, CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES

Daylight Saving Time is on Sunday, November 5th. When you set your clocks back, change your smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries. Replace these batteries every six months and the alarms every 10 years for proper function.

## COMPOST IT! SEASON ENDS THIS MONTH

Metro Waste Authority's Compost It! program in Johnston ends for the season on Monday, November 20th and Tuesday, November 21st, your regular collection days. You can collect small twigs, branches, leaves, lawn clippings, and garden vegetation. Ensure collection by using Compost It! bags or store brand bags with Compost It! stickers, as it's the bag or sticker's label that covers the collection cost. Find retailers selling Compost It! stickers and bags at [www.whereshouldgo.com](http://www.whereshouldgo.com) or call (515) 244-0021.



For more information about the city, please visit [www.cityofjohnston.com](http://www.cityofjohnston.com)

# CITY NEWSLETTER

## NOVEMBER 2023



## RECEIVE IMPORTANT ALERTS AND UPDATES

As a Johnston resident, sign up for emergency alerts on local threats, missing persons, or snow parking bans, as well as general notifications for job postings, agendas, updates, and events. Verify your account and choose to receive emergency alerts via email, voice, or text, and general notifications through text or email. Modify your preferences anytime.

**Sign up for emergency notifications:** [www.cityofjohnston.com/JohnstonAlerts](http://www.cityofjohnston.com/JohnstonAlerts)

**Sign up for general notifications:** [www.cityofjohnston.com/Notifications](http://www.cityofjohnston.com/Notifications)



## CITY HALL, AND LIBRARY CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAYS

City Hall will be closed on Friday, November 10th, Thursday, November 23rd, and Friday, November 24th for Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. The library will be closed on Saturday, November 11th, close early at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 22nd, and remain closed on Thursday, November 23rd, and Friday, November 24th.

## FALL CLEANUP: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

The City of Johnston offers free branch and limb drop-off for residents each fall at the Public Works Facility (6400 NW Beaver Drive) from November 16th to 18th. Please bring proof of residency. Drop-off hours are:

- **Thursday, November 16:** 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- **Friday, November 17:** 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Saturday, November 18:** 7:00 a.m. to noon

Branches should not exceed 18 inches in diameter. Please stack the end-cut branches at the rear of your vehicle for easy removal. Avoid bringing items like ropes, chains, wire, and fence posts to prevent equipment damage and potential injury to City staff when using the chipper.



## ELECTION AND VOTING INFORMATION

The general election will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For more information, visit [sos.iowa.gov/elections](http://sos.iowa.gov/elections).



For more information about the city, please call 515.278.2344

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## INVESTMENT By Daniel Rundahl

# HAVE YOU insured your retirement?



After six years of nursing care at home and in a facility to end with hospice, George had exhausted all of the family retirement savings and had built up a debt that was more than the value of everything George and Nancy had to their names. Following the funeral, Nancy was forced to move into a rent-controlled apartment several miles away from the nearest family member. The question I wish our office would have had the chance to ask them is, "Would you have wished for this to go differently?"

Our office hosts a lot of educational seminars every year, and as we present them, and in our daily meetings with our clients and prospects, I catch myself asking this question of people quite a bit. "Have you insured your retirement?" Also, "If you paid off your home today, would your next phone call be to your insurance agent telling them to cancel the home insurance?" The truth is, you wouldn't. What am I getting at? As life is short, many of us don't spend much time in our busy lives considering our concerns for ourselves and our spouses when it comes to our morbidity or end-of-life care and expenses. I guess another question comes to mind. "Why would you?"

Let's take George and Nancy in the first paragraph. If they had a long-term care plan, then they would be able to promise to each other that each would have the retirement that they planned for when they got married. They would be able to afford to stay in their home until each died, whether together or separately at different times. They would also be able to make sure that they are able to follow through with their legacy wishes to their family and to their church / charities. Instead, a lack of planning changed the plan — and the future for Nancy. So, what I am recommending? Have the conversation.

- Plan to move in with family or have them move in with you.
- Chose no plan, like George and Nancy did.
- Make a choice to pass on that risk to someone or something else.

I will accept all of these options, however, you will need to convince me that it is better. Twenty years ago, my mentor called me selfish and self-serving for not "ensuring my retirement" and leaving my wife with the choices that Nancy is stuck with. My wife and I actually do have long-term care insurance that we purchased, and retain, when I was 28 and she was 25. (I am 45 right now.) If you plan to move in with your kids or have them move in with you, make sure that your children feel the same way. As my father brought to my attention in 2012, he claimed that one of us kids would do just this. We four kids discovered that was not in our plan. If you insure the retirement and legacy plan, you can ensure that your final wishes go as planned.

As always, don't hesitate to have the conversation with your family and your financial advisor about your choices. Hope all have a very blessed Thanksgiving holiday. Enjoy the family and the turkey. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 6165 N.W. 86th St., Johnston, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, 515-727-1701, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

# HOSPICE CARE: A lot of living, at any stage of life

People spend a lot of time talking about the importance of living well. When it comes to conversations about end-of-life care, though, we may pivot a bit. It may seem counterintuitive to think about “living” in conjunction with services offered at the end of a person’s life — but the keyword there is “life.”



Even during hospice care, a person is living. And anytime is the appropriate time to start a conversation about how you or someone you love can live with a life-limiting illness and about the fact that hospice services can help ensure quality of life.

Options for hospice services are nearly as varied as the individuals who seek them. They range from home care to services in a freestanding hospice center to in-between, hybrid models. But no matter the type of services you’re considering, you should always ask any provider on your list: “How can you help me or my loved

one continue to live through this stage of life?” Here are some myths and truths that can help you as you work toward making a decision about helping someone you love live with hospice services.

**Myth No. 1: Hospice is a place.**

Truth: Hospice services take place wherever the need exists, often in the person’s home.

**Myth No. 2: Families are discouraged from involvement in a loved one’s hospice care.**

Truth: On the contrary, as part of a family-centered care concept, hospice focuses almost as much on supporting a patient’s family members as on caring for the individual.

**Myth No. 3: Hospice is only for patients with cancer.**

Truth: More than half of hospice patients nationwide have diagnoses other than cancer. Hospice commonly serves people who are living with chronic diseases such as emphysema, Alzheimer’s disease, or cardiovascular and neuromuscular illnesses.

**Myth No. 4: Hospice care is expensive.**

Truth: Most hospice patients 65 or older

are entitled to the Medicare Hospice Benefit, which covers virtually all hospice services and requires the patient to pay little in out-of-pocket costs. This means there are no financial burdens incurred by the family — a situation that can contrast sharply with major expenses that can be incurred to manage a life-limiting illness when hospice is not used.

As you make a decision about helping someone you love live with hospice services, make sure to ask all your questions; there’s a lot of information out there, and, as we’ve seen, not all of it is accurate. Every individual’s needs are different, and it’s critical to find the services that are right for you and your family. ■

Ward Phillips is an executive leader with WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including hospice care, for older adults. Celebrating its 76th anniversary this year and its 16th as a hospice provider, WesleyLife is a Level 4 partner of We Honor Veterans, a national program that empowers hospice providers to meet the unique needs of military veterans and their families at the end of life. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.



*“We wanted to remain independent while being close to the assistance we may need at some point. We can’t wait to become a part of the neighborhood!”*

- Bob and Judy Ruch, Urbondale



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To learn more, contact Maria at Brio at (515) 252-5380 or [mjordan@wesleylife.org](mailto:mjordan@wesleylife.org). We’d love to welcome you!



# EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations



## 44th Annual JHS Madrigal

Nov. 29-30, 7 p.m.

Johnston High School Auditorium

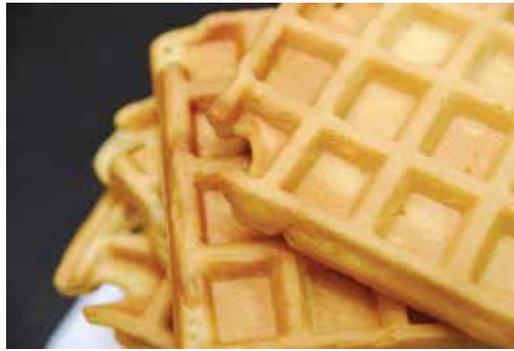
The Johnston High School Madrigal is upcoming. Tickets go on sale to the general public on Nov. 6. For ticket information, go to Johnston High School Vocal Parent website: <https://sites.google.com/view/jhsvocalmusic/vpa/>.

## Holiday Hullabaloo

Nov. 24 through Dec. 31

Horizon Events Center, 10320 Hickman Road, Clive

Now in its second year, experience a family-friendly holiday event with festivities and entertainment every weekend through the dates posted. Visit [horizoneventscenter.com](http://horizoneventscenter.com) for details.



## Belgian Waffles Fundraiser

Saturday, Nov. 4, 8-11 a.m.

Johnston High School Commons

Enjoy an all-you-can-eat Belgian waffles breakfast with sausage links, flavored syrups, butter, non-dairy whipped topping, coffee and juice sponsored by the Johnston Band Parent Association. Cost is \$10 per person in advance and \$12 per person at the door. Kids younger than 5 eat free. Tickets are available online. Scan the QR code for the link.



## History of Johnston programs

Sunday, Nov. 12, 1:30-2:30 p.m.  
Johnston Public Library, 6700 Merle Hay Road

Johnston Station Historical Society and Johnston Public Library have partnered on a History of Johnston program that will include a series of presentations at the Johnston Public Library. The final session invites the public to hear the story of the city, from the start of the city, presented by John Brown, to growing pains by Don Coates, to the growth and accomplishments of the city by Mayor Paula Dierenfeld.

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# EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancelations

- **NOV. 4: Live Jazz** at The Continental in the Historic East Village. From 8-11 p.m. at 407 E. Fifth St., Des Moines; ongrand0.wixsite.com/the-continental.
- **NOV. 4: Nurse Blake** is back on the road for his stand-up comedy tour. From 8-10:30 p.m. at Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoyts Sherman.org.
- **NOV. 4-5: Pumpkin Destruction.** Normally pumpkins are put on a pedestal during the fall months, but not at Center Grove Orchard. From 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge; centergroveorchard.com.
- **NOV. 11: Living History Farms race.** Run for 5 miles and see 300 years of history. Beginning at 9 a.m. at 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; lhf.org.
- **NOV. 12: Jazz at Caspe Terrace by Sparks.** From 2-4:30 p.m. at 33158 Ute Ave., Waukee; jewishdesmoines.org/our-community/caspe-terrace.
- **NOV. 15: Roomful of Teeth.** The Grammy-winning octet performs 7:30- 9:30 p.m. at the Sheslow Auditorium, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines; calendar.drake.edu/sheslow\_auditorium.
- **NOV. 18: Fall into Wine and Art.** Fall-themed arts and crafts show. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Summerset Winery, 15101 Fairfax St., Indianola; summersetwine.com.
- **NOV. 19: Fall Makers Market.** Local vendors, crafters, artisans and more will be available for your shopping needs right before the holidays, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jester Park Nature Center, 12130 N.W. 128th St., Granger; www.jesterparknaturecenter.com/calendar-events/fall-makers-market.
- **NOV. 22: A Night Under the Lights.** Waukee's second annual light parade, with activities all day, local food vendors and entertainment. From 6-9 p.m. at Centennial Park, Waukee; https://fb.me/e/3nnUYFKhy.
- **NOV. 23: Des Moines Turkey Trot.** Voted "Top Trot" in Iowa five years in a row by Runner's World Magazine, the 5K and 5-mile race takes over Des Moines on Thanksgiving. Starting at 9 a.m. on Court Ave.; desmoines turkeytrot.com. ■

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## HEALTH By Paul Guerdet

### TAKING a pause

It feels odd to acknowledge that we're already in the fall, and it feels even odder to admit that the holidays will be here before we know it. For some of us, the holidays involve a lot of planning and social interaction. For others, they can bring feelings of isolation and loss. Either way, the holidays tend to bring a lot of stress and anxiety. The arrival of fall is the perfect time to stop, take a breath, and pause.



We all tend to hit pause in our own way. For some, taking a pause might mean going for a walk and checking out the leaves or their neighbors' decorations. For others, taking a pause might be watching your favorite scary movie. Regardless of how we choose to hit pause, what's important is that we make the conscious effort to actually pause and attempt to slow ourselves down.

We live in an unfortunately high-paced society that puts more emphasis on deadlines and due dates than it does on our wellbeing. If we want to slow down, we must consciously choose to do so. We must choose to make ourselves a priority in our own lives, if only for a moment. ■

Information provided by Paul Guerdet, LISW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, [www.sstherapyandconsulting.com](http://www.sstherapyandconsulting.com), [guerdet@sstherapyandconsulting.com](mailto:guerdet@sstherapyandconsulting.com).

## BEFORE YOU GO By Tosha Edmundson

### IN thanks

In 1954, President Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming Nov. 11 as Veterans Day. Nov. 11 was chosen because there was hope at the end of World War I, which occurred on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, that it would be the "war to end all wars." Although this did not hold true, our government saw to it that there was a day set aside annually to honor all veterans from all wars and chose Nov. 11 in remembrance of that initial hope.



I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the men and women who have been willing to risk their lives so we can enjoy freedom in the United States of America. I encourage you to take the time to thank a veteran as well — pay for their meal, thank them with your words, send a letter, pray for them.

It is our privilege, as a veteran is laid to rest in our cemetery, to honor them for their service to our country. It is with pride that we get to see the deceased veteran receive the honor they deserve by witnessing the folding of the flag by fellow servicemen and hearing the bugler play Taps. It is never without reverence to these fine individuals that we witness these moments.

Thank you, veterans, for your service.

Give your family the gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs in advance. ■

Information provided by Tosha Edmundson, Family Services Representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.

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## TIPS to reduce Thanksgiving dinner stress

Thanksgiving can be a stressful day — or week — especially for the host. Here are a few tips and tricks to make the planning, cooking and cleaning go smoothly:

- **Create a menu and shop early.** Don't wait until the week before Thanksgiving to figure out what you're making. Nov. 10 is usually my deadline. Resist the urge to experiment with new, fancy recipes that you've never tried before and stick to your tried-and-true family favorites.

When you've got your menu, create your shopping list and divide into things that you could buy immediately and perishables to buy later (produce and dairy). Shopping early helps ensure the stores don't run out of what you need, gives you time to scope out all the sales and stock up when applicable.

- **Turkey time.** Plan to serve  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 pound of turkey per person. That sounds like a lot, but that figure includes bones and other non-edible parts. If you look forward to leftovers, like my family, up that ratio to 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds per person.

Make sure to defrost your frozen turkey, in the refrigerator, plenty of time in advance. This is the safest method because the turkey will thaw at a consistent, safe temperature. Allow one day for each 4-5 pounds of weight. If your turkey weighs 16 pounds, it will take about four days to thaw.

- **Run kitchen inventory.** Don't wait until the day before or the morning of to find out you're short three soup spoons or don't have a gravy ladle. Make sure there's plenty of flatware for everyone on your guest list and that you have all the serving utensils you'll need. When in doubt, have a few boxes of disposable cutlery on hand.

Make-ahead dishes are great, but, with only so many burners and so much room in the oven, keeping everything warm until serving time can be a challenge. Enlist your slow cooker or Instant Pot for warming duties. Make use of the microwave, and even fire up the grill to accommodate all those last-minute warmups.

- **Start clean.** Start Thanksgiving Day with a clean slate in the form of an empty dishwasher and kitchen trash can. Line your bins with extra garbage bags so you won't have to hunt down a fresh bag when the garbage starts to pile up, and it makes it easy for guests to help.

- **Take temperature like a pro.** Always use a meat thermometer to test your turkey's doneness. Don't place your thermometer too close to the bone because it will read incorrectly. Instead, slide it into the middle of the breast and look for 165 degrees F. If your meat thermometer touches bone, it reads a higher temperature. If you measure the meat near the bone, it can read as much as 10 degrees lower. ■

Information provided by Caitlyn Ferin, LD, RD, corporate dietitian, Fareway, 6005 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, 515-252-9962.



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MEAT & GROCERY

# MEET Kyla Burns

Building her skillset as she learns from veteran administrators

Originally from a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota, Kyla Burns graduated with a degree in biology and a teaching endorsement from Iowa State University. Her first interview while in college was with the Johnston Community School District, and she was hired while still student teaching. She says she was drawn to the district because of its excellence in education, and now, Johnston is the only district she has worked for since accepting the position in 2005.



Kyla Burns is a new associate principal this year.

“My favorite part of working in this district is my connection with the people. I have been working here long enough to establish great relationships with the staff across multiple buildings, as well as with families who I have taught and now I am teaching the children of,” Burns says.

She initially taught science until 2021 when she switched roles to become an instructional coach. She then transitioned to an interim associate principal in January of the last school year before being hired as an associate principal for the 2023-2024 school year. As the school year began, Burns said she was looking forward to taking in and learning as much as she could from more veteran administrators.

“They have a wealth of experiences that I can learn from, and they help coach me through new situations. I learn new things every day, and it helps me build my skillset for responding to these situations and supporting our staff and students. I really appreciate working with them,” she says.

What keeps her current role interesting is that there is no typical day, she says. Each day changes depending on who needs help or what situations are occurring with students. As an associate principal for the Johnston High School, Burns might trouble shoot scheduling issues, work with struggling students, or support teachers in whatever they may need.

In fact, one of Burns’ biggest challenges is finding the time to accomplish everything she is tasked with. Because working with students can be unpredictable, scheduling around their needs while also working on building-level tasks can be challenging, she says.

“Being an administrator is rewarding because I have the ability to support staff and students and make improvements that increase their chances of success,” she says. “I like looking at the big picture and evaluating systems and processes to improve how we function as a team.”

When not teaching, Burns enjoys spending time with her children and her dogs. She enjoys time outdoors, including hiking, camping and kayaking. She also likes to travel and spend time with her large family in Minnesota. ■

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# IS THIS a good time to buy or sell a home?

I am an optimist — but an optimist who carries a raincoat. If you turn on the TV or scroll through your phone, it makes it a little more difficult to be that way, but let’s give it a whirl.

First, I would like to address the elephant in the room: interest rates. If you speak with a friend who bought their first home in the last 15 years, they will tell you these rates are outrageous. However, if you speak with someone who purchased their first home in the late 1970s or early 1980s, they will tell you today’s rates are a bargain. Which one is correct? Neither, really, because, over the last 50 years, the average rate is 7.49%. Sound familiar? Today’s rates are a factor but shouldn’t be the determining factor on your decision to buy or sell. “Marry the home, date the rate.” You can always refinance if rates drop.

As a seller, sometimes personal circumstances determine when to list your home. External factors may be a new job opportunity, moving closer to family, a growing family, or a desire to live somewhere where the snow doesn’t fly. Whether life dictates when you sell or if you are flexible on when to list your home, I believe the reason to be optimistic is the same: Home prices are up. According to the Federal Reserve of St. Louis (FRED economic data) website, the “all transaction house price index Iowa,” the average home price in the second quarter of 2013 was \$250,610. The second quarter of 2023 is \$410,870. Now, bear in mind, I’m an optimist and not a mathematician, but that’s more than a 60% increase in the value of your home. In layman’s terms, you’re sitting on a pile of money.

Now, if you’re wondering about buying a home right now, I believe there are reasons to be optimistic besides the “Marry the house, date the rate” principle. First, you will start building equity in your home immediately. Secondly, I believe, if rates do come down, homes prices will go up with demand even higher. Or, rates could just keep trending up. All of these are reasons to purchase now.

You may be thinking some of these are reasons not to buy or sell right now, and you’re right. However, I feel a mistake a lot of people make in real estate is waiting for the perfect time. Do I wish I had invested 20k in Bitcoin in 2010 or bought a home in southwest Florida that same year? Yup, but then I would be writing this from my yacht and not my desk after raking leaves. Timing any type of market is extremely difficult and risky. One of my mentors told me a long time ago, “If you want to look like a financial genius, buy a piece of property and hang on to it for 20 years.” He was right.

So, am I optimistic that it is a good time to buy or sell real estate right now? Yes, I am. ■



Information by Michael TenHaken, REALTOR®, RE/MAX Precision, michael-tenhaken.com, cell: 515-208-4980, office: 515-249-9225.

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Johnston

**Military branch:** Iowa Army National Guard

**Rank at discharge:** MSG

**Deployments:** Operation Noble Eagle 2002-2003 and Operation Enduring Freedom Task Force Red Bulls, 2010-2011



## LARRY MOLENBURG

Volunteer at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge, Johnston

**Military branch:** U.S. Air Force

**Rank at discharge:** SMSgt

**Deployments:** Korea. Served a total of 30 years

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## LEE SCHWEER

Johnston

**Military branch:** U.S. Air Force

**Rank at discharge:** Airman First Class

**Served** 1952-1957, Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Mississippi



## RICHARD G. LIEWER

Richard G. Liewer is the namesake of the Richard G. Liewer American Legion Post 728 in Johnston. The bridge near where he grew up, crossing the Interstate on Beaver Drive, is also dedicated to him. Liewer was killed in action July 14, 1968, while serving in the Army in Vietnam.



## MATT WOLF

Johnston

**Military branch:** Army and Army National Guard

**Rank at discharge:** Chief Warrant Officer 2

**Deployments:** Iraq (2004-2005)

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# STATE champions

Johnston middle school boys capture title at Washburn Classic.

The Johnston eighth-grade boys cross country team closed out a strong 2023 season by capturing the Class 4A team title of the Washburn Classic Middle School State Cross Country Meet on Oct. 14 at Ankeny Centennial.

The young Dragons, competing in a 191-runner field with some of the best harriers in the state, edged out the Davenport Flyers, 112-118, to take the crown. Dallas Center-Grimes was third with 126.

Last year, the team took first in the conference meet then finished second at the Washburn Classic. This year, the team won the conference title once again and headed back to Ankeny for another shot. Coach Pat Mattingly said he knew going in that the team had a chance based on the previous season's outcome.

"We talked about that goal (winning state) all year long and had kind of kept it in our back pocket and talked about how to make that happen," he said.

Consistency was the name of the game for the Dragons. Although the team didn't have any Top 10 finishers, it did feature three members in the top 24, led by Blake Williams, who finished 13th in 11 minutes, 37.4



seconds. Tiger Heikes was right behind him in 14th with a time of 11:39.2. Zach Wessling took 24th in 11:55.3 for the Dragons, followed by Andrew Coles in 32nd in 12:03.9. Robert Widtfeldt rounded out the scoring for Johnston with a 39th-place finish in 12:07.1.

"We had some kids who really stepped up," Mattingly said. "They were a team. Our spread was 59 seconds from first to fifth, which is the reason we won. We were a team. We knew all along that we could win it, it was just a matter of us putting things together and doing it."

Not counting toward the team score were Patrick Hoss (46th, 12:16.6), Evan Grodahl (53rd, 12:24.7), Drake May (55th, 12:25.1), Ethan Pete (63rd, 12:30.3), Michael Israel (115th, 13:22.6), Aiden Clark (130th, 13:47.9), Kaden Wilson (131st, 13:48.2), Ian Hays (180th, 15:47.2) and Trenton Brewer (181st, 15:52.9).

The eighth graders got some unexpected support from Johnston varsity cross country members, who showed up to root the young Dragons on. That didn't go unnoticed by Mattingly.

"It's great to see them supporting the team," Mattingly said of the varsity members. "I actually found out through them that we had won the state title. They were watching the scoring on their phones. It was very special. Cross country is always a family atmosphere." ■

### FINAL TEAM SCORING

1. Johnston Middle School .... 112
2. Davenport Flyers..... 118
3. Dallas Center-Grimes..... 126
4. Iowa City SE..... 163
5. Ankeny Southview..... 168
6. Pleasant Valley ..... 180
7. Iowa City Northwest..... 190
8. Bettendorf..... 191
9. Linn-Mar..... 214
10. Des Moines Roosevelt..... 246
11. Dowling..... 264
12. Ames..... 272
13. Cedar Rapids Prairie..... 304
14. Cedar Falls..... 346
15. West Des Moines Valley... 372
16. Mason City-Adams..... 387
17. Norwalk..... 397
18. Ankeny Centennial..... 512

### JOHNSTON INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

11. Blake Williams, 8..... 11:37.4
12. Tiger Heikes, 8 ..... 11:39.2
22. Zach Wessling, 8 ..... 11:55.3
30. Andrew Coles, 8 ..... 12:03.9
37. Robert Widtfeldt, 8 ..... 12:07.1
44. Patrick Hoss, 8 ..... 12:16.6
50. Evan Grodahl, 8 ..... 12:24.7

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# THAT TIME of the year

It is almost the end of the year, and, like many, we are prepping for a great 2024. We are looking forward to new events and opportunities for our members as well as our community and a great way to celebrate all the new business in Johnston. Keep an eye on our website, [www.johnstonchamber.com](http://www.johnstonchamber.com), and Facebook page, Johnston Chamber of Commerce, for updates. And, of course, as you are preparing for your holidays, don't forget to support our own community and shop local for all your needs. From restaurants, to boutiques, services and groceries, there is plenty to complete your list right here in our own city.



If you have been thinking about joining the chamber, now is a great time. As we continue to review our membership benefits, we are excited to be implementing quarterly chamber meet and greets, a YP Program including a networking group, and boosting the annual events our community has grown to love such as Green Days and our Annual Dinner. As a member of the chamber, you can have a voice and be a part of our ambassador program or a committee. Feel free to reach out to Sam at [Samantha@Johnstonchamber.com](mailto:Samantha@Johnstonchamber.com) to set up a meeting.

This time of year is a time when many reflect on their gratitude and share their thanks. As the executive director of the Johnston Chamber, I am thankful to so many who help me keep this organization going and offer their assistance. A special thanks for the support of our ambassadors and volunteers, the board of directors, and our executive committee. And, of course, a huge thank you to all our members for their dedication, ideas and commitment to their community. Be sure to take time to be thankful to those in your lives that support you along your journey.

I also want to give special thanks and welcome the newest members who have joined the chamber. Please help welcome Debbie Moon-Davis — Real Advantage Partners and Wasabi Johnston LLC to the Johnston Chamber of Commerce. Keep an eye out for their ribbon cuttings and the grand opening at Wasabi's new location.

Don't miss out on any of our upcoming events. Stay up to date on our events and mark your calendar for our Annual Dinner, Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024.

Have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

**Don't miss out on the rest of this year's events**

**Business After Hours** – Lashier Graphics & Signs, Thursday, Nov. 2 at 4:30 p.m.

**Breakfast Before Business** – VERO Health Center, Thursday, Nov. 16 at 7:30 a.m.

**Joint Legislative Luncheon**, Friday, Nov. 17, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Holidays at the Town Center**, Saturday, Dec. 2, 4-6 p.m.

**Business After Hours** – Christopher's Rare Coins and Jewelry, Thursday, Dec. 7, 5-6 p.m. ■

Information provided by Samantha Winebrenner, Johnston Chamber executive director, [samantha@johnstonchamber.com](mailto:samantha@johnstonchamber.com), 515-276-9064. For more information, visit [www.johnstonchamber.com](http://www.johnstonchamber.com).

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# Thankful

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# RESIDENTS' Choice

Johnston/Grimes/Dallas Center Residents' Choice awards were presented.



Haleigh Wiebers, owner of Clean & Breezy



Andrea Cook, program director for Johnston Partnership



Joleen Roskamp with RE/MAX - Precision, Johnston



Ashley Sample and Steve Lesch, with Minor Wreck Express



Tyson Handsaker and Destiny Brown with Athletico - Johnston



Chey Anne Sorum and Marly Harlan with Central Iowa Dermatology



Front row, Tonya Amos, Betsy Holub, Erin Grider, and back row: Jeremy Carr, Joe Clement, Brad Smith and CJ Johnson with North Point Church



Drs. Derek and Emily Furrow with Furrow Family Dentistry



Brittany Kinney-Dickey, Ashlyn Onley, Alex McGregor, Rebecca Ziller and Shyann Lowrey with Edencrest at Green Meadows



Paul Vogtlin and Matt Hickey with Fareway



Paula Bierle, owner, and Carrie Summerton with Purple Poppy



Michael Tiffany, Megan Herrmann and Eric Herrmann with Herrmann Family Chiropractic

# OUT & ABOUT



Paula Bierle and Carolyn Bradley at the reception held at The Cork 50131 following the Oct. 11 Johnston Chamber/JEDCO Bus Tour.



Jennifer Sayers and Ginger Minear at the reception held at The Cork 50131 following the Oct. 11 Johnston Chamber/JEDCO Bus Tour.



Miki Weber, Kelli Vorrath and Marla Bundy at the reception held at The Cork 50131 following the Oct. 11 Johnston Chamber/JEDCO Bus Tour.



Mayor Paula Dierenfeld and Allen Stoye at the reception held at The Cork 50131 following the Oct. 11 Johnston Chamber/JEDCO Bus Tour.



Brandis Baldwin and Darrell Huffman at the reception held at The Cork 50131 following the Oct. 11 Johnston Chamber/JEDCO Bus Tour.



Crystal Wright, Kaitlin Miller and Courtney Nyberg at the reception held at The Cork 50131 following the Oct. 11 Johnston Chamber/JEDCO Bus Tour.



Johnston Chamber held a ribbon cutting at Adventures in Social Development, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite B, Johnston, on Oct. 19.



Benda Ballard and Marla Bundy at the Johnston Chamber ribbon cutting held at Adventures in Social Development, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite B, Johnston, on Oct. 19.



Jenni Buchanan and Joy Mielke at the Johnston Chamber ribbon cutting held at Adventures in Social Development, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite B, Johnston, on Oct. 19.



Andrea Hodapp presents a plaque to Joe Parrish and Annie Mielke at the Johnston Chamber ribbon cutting held at Adventures in Social Development, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite B, Johnston, on Oct. 19.



Tyler Stough and Danny Pietig at the Johnston Chamber ribbon cutting held at Adventures in Social Development, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite B, Johnston, on Oct. 19.

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