

LAKES NEWS SHOPPER



THIS IS YOUR FREE COP'

TUESDAY DECEMBER 23 2025

VOL/53 NO/12

PO BOX 192 / MII FORD / IOWA 51351 / 712 - 338 - 2232 / LAKESNEWSSHOPPER COM









Weekly Social Gathering

You are invited to a weekly social gathering every Wednesday from 12:30 - 4:30pm at the American Legion in Milford. Come and play a game of cards. Coffee will be provided. They hope to see you there.



712-336-2790 or 712-320-7070

Lucky Winners at Smokin' Jakes

Jakes Key Chain Ca\$h Drawing. Linda Geske, owner, presented the cash to the winners. Congratulations to Eric Kulow (\$125), Kevin Swenson (\$125), Paula Kelloway (\$125), and Sheila Zoll-

Enter by getting your Key Chain at Smokin' Jakes and you're entered for every Thursday's cash drawing. Smokin' Jakes is













Winter Farmers Market

Baked Goods & Garden Art **Local Beef & Pork Pickled Produce Homemade Crafts & Quilts Christmas Cards & Decor Jewelry & Hand Painted Art Health Foods & Wines**

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325 11th Street SW · Spencer

HOLIDAY REBATES!

WINCHESTER

Buy any New SuperX Pump, Super x4, Model 70, XPR, Wildcat or Xpert

Back Valid Dec. 2 - Dec. 31, 2025

NEW & USED Bows Starting at Only \$250

Z)Browning **Shotguns & Centerfire Rifles**

Rimfire Rifles & Handguns

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Bows In-Stock!

Beautiful OVER & UNDER Shotguns 🦠

(NEW in Box, 5 Choke Tubes)

 Hand Guns Bows

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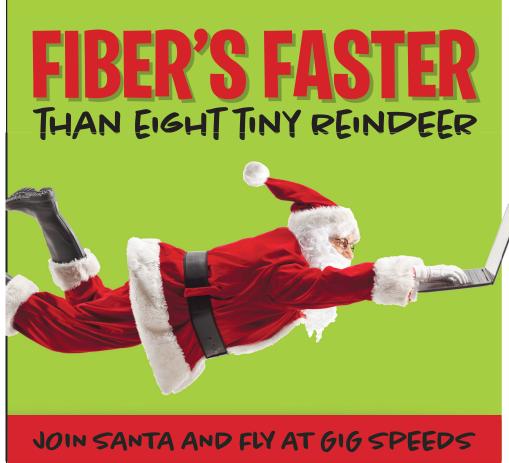
Long Guns

• Browning Gun Sales

 X Bows HOURS: Mon., Tue., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9:00-5:30 · Thursday: 9:00-7:00 · Sunday - Closed







You'd think reindeer with speedy names like Dasher and Comet would be fast. But Santa realized—with a little help from his tech-savvy elves—that nothing's faster than fiber internet.

Want to follow Santa's lead? Our fiber internet plans offer symmetrical speeds (the same for uploads and downloads) up to a Gig. Upgrade now and fly through online activities without any buffering to dampen holiday cheer.

(ALL 712.580.5800 AND SAY SANTA SENT YOU





The Dickinson County Museum, along with the newly opened 'Steve's Depot", will be open

- Tuesday, December 23, from noon 4:00pm
- Saturday, December 27, from 1:00-3:00pm
- Tuesday, December 30, from noon-4:00pm

This is a great opportunity to experience our hands-on, interactive exhibits highlighting the early history of Dickinson County and the area railroads!





- FOOTINGS, WALLS, FLOORS, PAVING
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> 712-336-9062 | 3120 18th St. Spirit Lake, IA 51360 Monday - Friday: 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM | Closed Saturday & Sunday



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Lake Park

Best Choice Canned **Vegetables**

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Cucumbers or Green **Peppers**

2 lb. **\$7**49 Velveeta

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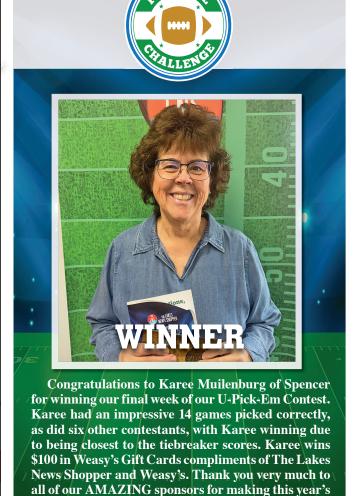
Free Estimates!



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U-Pick-Em contest possible, and thank you to everyone

for playing.

HEAR IT. SEE IT. NOW SIT IN LUXURY.

Brand new at Carey's Electronics! Presenting RowOne Seating!





These deluxe home theater seats offer a variety of storage, reclining, table and even lighting features! Come by and try out one of these beauties today!

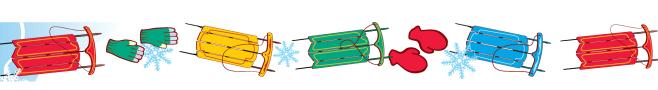
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The Spirit of Giving at OLM Foods

In the true spirit of Christmas, the 98 employees of OLM Foods, in Milford, formerly Landmark Products, collected 94 stocking caps, 127 pairs of mittens, four scarves and four coats for less fortunate persons. These items were given to the St. Joseph Clothing Room, in Milford, this past week for distribution. Shown, left to right, are Day Shift Fork Operator Phillip Scott, 2nd Shift Supervisor Warehouse Brandon Heithus, Day Shift Production Mary Bermea, Mary Lou Schroeder from the St. Joseph Clothing Room, 2nd Shift Supervisor Scott Steinkamp and Safety Supervisor Dana Klontz. (Photo courtesy Susan Reiser).





Over 1 Ton of Food Donated to UDMO

A local motorcycle club gathered a record amount of food for area pantries during its 13th-annual food drive.

The El Forastero Motorcycle Club (EFMC) of Okoboji gathered more than 2,000 pounds of food last month for Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO) in O'Brien and Dickinson counties. According to Kelley Peters, one of the club's members, it was the largest amount of food collected by EFMC in terms of bulk.

"For this food drive and now more than ever, it's greatly needed," Peters said. "We were just tickled pink with the amount we received this year."

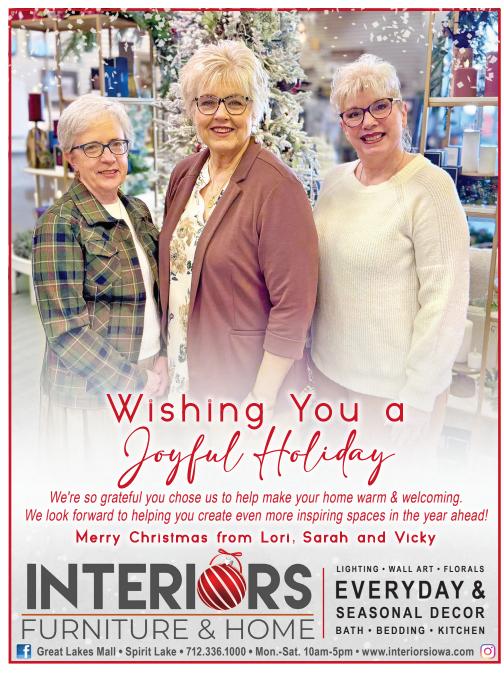
Peters appreciated the help of several local individuals and businesses for supporting this year's fundraiser: Nelson Locker, Iowa State Bank, Deb and Glenda, JR's, CFE Lumber Division, Outback Lounge (Cheri and Norm), EFMC-DMC, UMDO Food Bank, True Value Hardware (Pat), Mill Creek, Three Sons, Sniders Auto Care, and Grounded.

"The list goes on and on," said Peters. "Thanks again and see you all next November."











New! Dinner Date Gift Certificates

You can now purchase gift certificates for your loved ones for Dinner Date Meals at The Lakes Area Activity/Senior Center. Gift certificates are donation based, with a suggested amount of \$7-\$10 for each meal, whichever is fair and affordable. Your loved one then just needs to call for a reservation for the noon meal at least 24 hours in advance and present the gift certificate when they come in to eat.

What better gift than to share a "home cooked" meal with friends? Gift Certificates make great gifts.

Meals are available for those 60 and older (and their spouses regardless of age) with a confidential, voluntary contribution. Meals are catered by Carstensen's Meat & Grocery out of Lake Park.



Coming Soon: The Shores at Spirit Lake

The Shores at Spirit Lake is preparing to welcome its first residents with thoughtfully designed homes!

Opening March 2026, their 3-bedroom townhomes offer spacious layouts and modern comfort, perfect for those ready to settle into a fresh, vibrant



community. Be among the first to call The Shores home.

That's just the beginning. Studio, 1-, and 2-bedroom apartments are coming soon, bringing even more options for effortless living at Spirit Lake.

Interested in learning more? For inquiries, call 712-272-2444.

THE LAKES NEWS SHOPPER Tuesday, December 23, 2025

University of Sioux Falls Dean's List The University of Sioux Falls congratulates 588 students

The University of Sioux Falls congratulates 588 students who made the Fall 2025 Dean's List. To qualify, students must be enrolled in at least 12 semester hours and earn a term GPA of 3.5 or greater on a 4.0 scale.

- The following area students were named to the deans list: Rebecca Salentiny of Lakefield, MN, majoring in Nursing.
- Carter Ahrens of Jackson, MN, majoring in Sports Marketing & Media.
- Peyton Hanson of Jackson, MN, majoring in Educational Leadership, Elementary Education.
 Philos Debokov of Jackson, MN, majoring in Criminal
- Rhilee Daberkow of Jackson, MN, majoring in Criminal Justice, Psychology.
- Erin Gallagher of Jackson, MN, majoring in Elementary Education.













NEWS SHOPPER

- Cali Nails
- Carolyn's Hallmark
- El Mariachi Bar & Grill
- Faust Institute of Cosmetology
 - Fashion
 Formula
- Hy-Vee Wine & Spirits
 - Interiors
 - Lakes Auto Care
 - The Look Fashions
 - MediaCom
 - Spirit Lake
 Silver & Gold
 - Spirit Spa
 - Valvoline
 - Wild Child



The Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association Announces New Officers To The Board of Directors

The Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association has recently voted for new officers to its Board of Directors. They are Ted Poulsen as President and Chairman of the board, Kirk Webb as Vice President and Becky Brockmann as Secretary







Ted Poulsen, the new President of the association stated, "I am honored and humbled to be elected to this position by the Board of Directors. I have been fortunate to personally witness the inspiration that the Association's activities bring to musicians and youth in particular and look forward to doing my best to help promote activities and programming which continue the Association's important mission. Iowa is a place of great and varied musical talent and keen musical appreciation. Our shared musical journey deserves recognition, support and inspiration."

Ralph Kluseman, outgoing President of the Iowa Rock 'n Roll Association will continue to advocate across the State of Iowa as their "Goodwill Ambassador", sharing the mission of the association. Ralph served on the Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association Board of Directors since 2016. Ralph stated: "I am grateful for the time that I was given to be of service to this wonderful association. Now, looking forward to our 29th year as a statewide nonprofit 501 (c)(3), I'm going to continue to help in fulfilling our core mission as a Goodwill Ambassador. I also know the entire board is excited to have these new officers bring their expertise to our decision-making process."





Rob Waterhouse, Knights of Columbus, Jessica Vancura, Spirit Lake Elementary School Principal, and Jed Skogerboe, Knights of Columbus

Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids

The Iowa Great Lakes Knights of Columbus Council 5043 recently completed its Coats for Kids campaign. They distributed new coats and funds for warm weather gear to children in the Spirit Lake and Graettinger/Terril school districts.

Members of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Spirit Lake and the public had helped by donating cash and new winter clothing to help keep these children warm and dry this winter.

Spirit Lake Knights sponsor annual youth events including the Free Throw Competition, coming up Jan. 18, and the Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee. They also run the Tootsie Roll Drive for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Labor Day weekend for Special Olympics and other local organizations like Hope Haven.

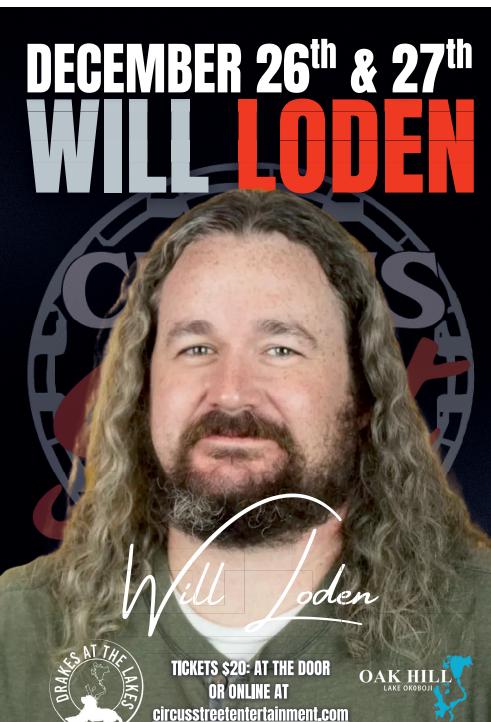
The Knights of Columbus is an international Catholic family fraternal service organization with 2.1 million members in more than 17,000 local councils, with each Knight called to live a life of charity, unity, and fraternity. Last year, Knights donated more than 47 million volunteer hours and nearly \$200 million to charitable and benevolent causes, sponsoring projects to benefit their church, councils, communities, families, and youth. A few examples of their work include distributing 158,000 wheelchairs, supporting more than 1,200 pregnancy resource centers and maternity homes, and giving 1.6 million coats to help warm children in need.



Graettinger/Terril student coat helpers Mattthew Torreson and Henley Hanson, as well as Principal Anita Helmich, along with Knights of Columbus members, Paul Katzfey, Dave Kollasch, Jed Skogerboe, and Brian Nokleby.









New Year's Eve

DINNER SPECIALS

Live Music

DAVE ROWLEY & RYAN SATHER

8 PM

AT SNAPPERS TURTLE BAY CAFÉ





RESERVE AT SNAPPERSBOJI.COM

24457 178TH STREET, OKOBOJI, IA







THURSDAY LAUGH LOAKAL

4 PM · COMICS ARRIVE TO ENJOY DRINKS WITH LOAKALS!

7 PM · BOON & LAMBERT

- COREY KNOX - MIKE YOUNG

- ANNIE LEDERMAN

11:30 PM • BOON & LAMBERT

JAN

FRIDAY LOAKAL MUSIC

5 PM • BRIANNA HELBLING 8 PM · DAMON DOTSON

11 PM · CASEY MUESSIGMANN

●\$50 LAUGH LOAKAL PASS



SATURDAY COMEDY BRUNCH & MUSIC

11 AM • COMEDY BRUNCH - COREY KNOX

- MIKE YOUNG - ERIK GRIFFIN

2-5 PM • BRIANNA HELBLING

6-9 PM · CASEY MUESSIGMANN

ALL-WEEKEND LOAKALS PASS \$75



OAK HILL OUTDOOR - 2188 COMMERCIAL COMPLEX INTERSECTION OF 71 & 86 - NORTH MILFORD www.oakhillmarina.com



local students Emma Hackbarth (BS, Elementary Education, summa cum laude) and Jossi Vander Woude (MS, Advanced Professional Nurse, magna cum laude) of Spirit Lake, at the end of the fall 2025 semester. Congratulations Emma and Jossi.

More information and streaming links for the Minnesota State Mankato fall commencement can be found at https:// mankato.mnsu.edu/commencement-services/commencementinformation/.



Kiwanis Bingo Nights

Milford Kiwanis presents Bingo Nights on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. The next Milford Kiwanis Bingo Night will be Thursday, January 8 and 22. Card sales begin at 5:30 and Bingo is from 6:00-8:00. A meal will be provided by the VFW Auxiliary

for just \$7.00. The Spirit Lake VFW is located at 914 Lake Street. Bingo profits support Milford youth needs, programs, and scholarships.



Lueders Ridiculous Christmas Lights Return to Lake Park

The highly anticipated Lueders Ridiculous Christmas Lights display at 1078 110th St. in Lake Park is officially back for another spectacular season.

The first lighting of the display is scheduled for Thanksgiving night at 5:30 p.m. The lights will then be illuminated nightly from Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve, operating from 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to tune their car radios to 97.5 FM to listen to the synchronized music while enjoying the dazzling show.

Supporting Veterans

A donation box is located at the end of the driveway, and all contributions received are dedicated to supporting Veterans. For the latest news and updates, the public is advised to follow the Lueders Ridiculous X-Mas Lights Facebook page. The Lueders Family extends their heartfelt wishes to everyone for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Lakes Area Activity/Senior Center

CLOSED DEC. 25 & 26 Stop in and see what we have to offer!!! Jan. 1 & 2

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

DO YOU NEED A GIFT IDEA? YOU CAN NOW PURCHASE GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR YOUR LOVED ONES FOR DINNER DATE MEALS AT LAKES AREA ACTIVITY/SENIOR CENTER.

Gift certificates are donation based, with a suggested amount of \$7-10 for each meal, whichever is fair and affordable. Your loved one then just needs to call for a reservation for the noon meal at least 24 hours in advance and present the gift certificate when they come in to eat. What better gift than to share a "home cooked" meal with friends? Gift certificates make great Christmas gifts!

If you don't have a gift certificate, call ahead and let us know you are interested - we will help get you signed up. Meals are available for those 60 and older (and their spouse regardless of age) with a confidential, voluntary, contribution. Meals are catered by Carstensen's Meat & Grocery out of Lake Park.

NOON

SIGN UP FOR DINNER DATE MEALS!

Reserve your meal for next week Low Cost: \$7-\$10 Donation

29 Monday

Cabbage **Beef Bake** Fruit **Bread**

30 Tuesday

Hot Chicken Gravy Mashed Potatoes Vegetable Fruit & Bread

31 Wednesday

Hamburger **Hot Dish Fruit & Bread** 1 Thursday

2 Friday **No Meals** Served Today.

No Meals Served Today.

PLEASE CALL 712-336-5247 BY 1:00 PM FRIDAY TO RESERVE A MEAL FOR NEXT WEEK Dinners are provided by **CARSTENSEN'S** of Lake Park. MEAT & GROCERY

2101 Zenith Ave. • Spirit Lake, IA • 712-336-5247



lakesart.org | 712.332.7029

2201 HWY 71 N | Okoboji, IA 51355

LAKES ART CENTER

Tues-Sat: 10am-4pm Thurs: 10am-9pm

Winter Hours:

Happy Holidays! PLAC will be closed 12/24-1/1

VISUAL ARTS







Register online or call 712-332-7029

JANUARY YOUTH ART CLASSES:

EDUCATION CLASSES

Mini Michelangelo's | K-2nd

Thursdays | 4:00-4:45pm Jan. 8, 15, & 22: Paper Mache Cottages

Art Club | 3rd-6th Thursdays | 5-6pm

Tuesdays | 4-5pm

Jan. 6, 13, 20: Paper Mache Animals

Scan for more info and to register online

by 1/6

Jan. 8, 15, 22: Paper Mache Vases Teen Art | 7-12th

NATURE COMPOSITION: MOSS WALL ART

With Samantha McCandles Thursday, Feb. 12, 6-8pm OR Saturday, Apr. 11, 10am-12pm | \$55/\$65 | All Levels, 21+

Design and assemble a beautiful square wall art piece using a mix of preserved moss, live air plants, and realistic faux succulents. Discussion of layout and composition will help you arrange natural textures and colors to create a low maintenance long-lasting work of art. All materials provided. Must register 1 week prior to class. Complimentary adult beverage supplied with each class.

STILL LIFE THURSDAYS- FLORALS

Open Studio

Jan. 8, Feb. 5, Mar. 19, Apr. & May 21 10am-9pm, Come and Go | \$10/\$15

Each month, florist, April Junge, of Hometown Florals, will curate a unique arrangement featuring distinctive blooms and unusual vases—perfect for artists of all styles. Bring your own supplies and work in any medium you choose. Drop-ins welcome. This is an open studio, self lead class. All Levels, 16+



Friday, Mar. 13 & Saturday, Mar. 14 7-9pm | \$80/\$90 | All Levels, 21+

Join instructors from Midwest Swing Dance Co. for a 2 night swing dance course in our galleries! This class is open to all ages (21+) and experience levels. We work from the ground up so that anyone at any ability level can learn how to dance. This class is not only for couples, but for singles too! Hors d'oeuvres will be served and cash bar available. Register by Mar. 6.

CULINARY CLASSES

Wine Class With Jennifer Tritle-Oitzman of Okoboji Wines

Thursdays | 6pm | \$45/\$55

Registration required 2 days before each class.

Jan. 15: The History of Prohibition

Feb. 5: Wines of Bordeaux

Mar. 5: Blind Tasting: Cool Climate vs Warm Apr. 2: Varietal Series: Cabernet Franc

Valentine Cupcake Decorating

With Janet Steinbach of Lakes Cakes Boji Custom Cakery Tuesday, Feb. 3 | 4pm-5:15pm

\$40/\$50 per Group, add additional child for \$10

Register by Jan. 29 Designed for kids ages 7-12 years and an adult to work together as a group. Decorate

your own adorable animal inspired Valentine

Cupcakes! Take away your 6 cupcakes in a

bakery box to share with family and friends.

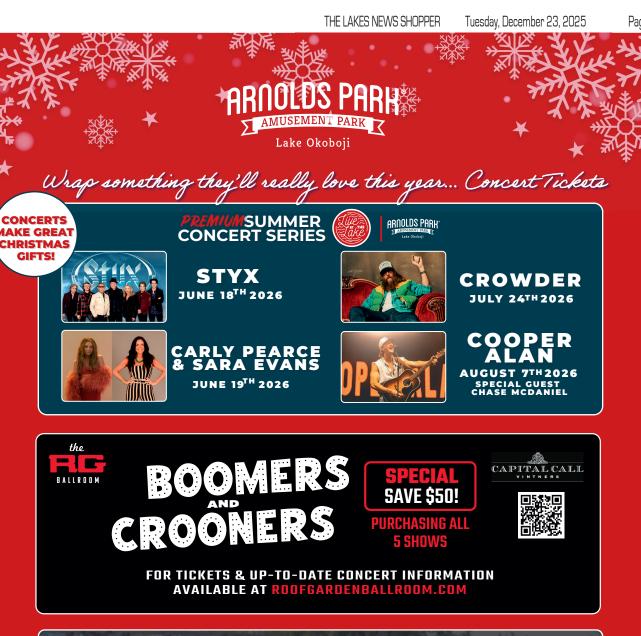
With Helen Alexander Wednesday, Feb. 4 | 11am | \$55/\$65

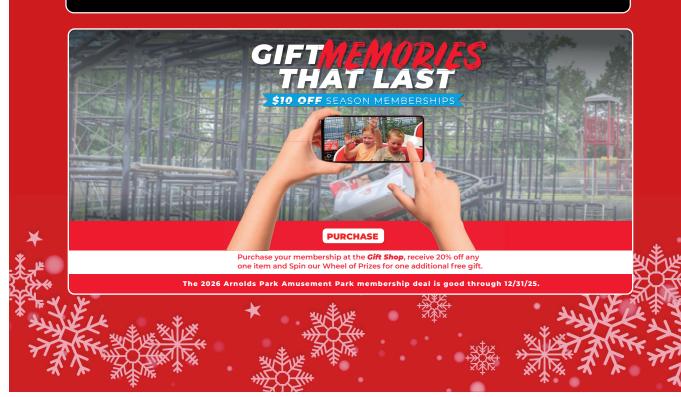
Register by Jan. 29

Helen will explain the tips & techniques in preparing the perfect stir fry meal - keeping it simple, tasty, healthy, and seasonably fresh! This demonstration class will culminate in a lovely lunch of soup, three different stir fry dishes, herbal tea, dessert, and a glass of wine

Register online or call 712-332-7029

Chinese Stir Fry Tasting Luncheon









ONLINE ORDERING NOW AVAILABLE

CLOSING AT 3PM DEC. 24 & CLOSED DEC. 25 SUN-WED 6AM-9PM & FRI-SAT 6AM-10PM

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We want to say Thank You for letting us be your neighborhood kitchen. Clip these coupons and come cozy up at the table with us!



Excludes senior menu items.

Buy one of our delicious Perkins Breakfast Entrees along with 2 beverages and receive one breakfast entree of equal or lesser value at $\frac{1}{2}$ price. Not valid with any other special or discount programs.

Valid only at Perkins® Restaurant & Bakery located at Boj Junction, Milford, IA. One coupon per person p participating Perkins® Restaurant and Bakery locations. Not valid with any other discount or offer. Coup purchased, sold or bartered for cash. Only ongrial coupons accepted. Multilated, tampered, forged, or pho

Customer Loyalty Coupon

20% Off Your Total Bill **UP TO TOTAL OF \$10 OFF**

Present this coupon to the cashier at the time of sale and receive a 20% discount off your total bill (including entrées, drinks, side items, and desserts).* Not valid with any other special or discount programs.



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Celebrate the **NEW YEAR** with Us! December 31 - January 2



Steak & **Shrimp for 2**

USDA Choice 6 oz. grilled sirloin steak topped with garlic butter, served with four butterfly shrimp per dinner, your choice of two sides and cocktail sauce. **Each dinner is served with** a slice of pie*

Offer good December 31st - January 2nd *not valid with any other coupons or discounts

Students Named to President's List

The following Southeast Technical College students were recognized on the President's List for academic achievement during the fall 2025 semester. To be named to the President's List, students must be seeking a degree and have a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Area students include:

- Travis Caskey of Spirit Lake, Automotive Technology
- Erica Hanson of Jackson, Cardiovascular Sonography • Talen Leiss of Spirit Lake, Civil Engineering Technology
- Kennedy Praska of Lakefield, Licensed Practical Nursing • Scott Visscher of Milford, Civil Engineering Technology



ONE WORSHIP SERVICE 9:30 AM

Joy with community.

A place for all people,

[€] including you!





JOY TO THE WORLD THE LORD IS COME

www.downtownchurch.info • facebook/downtownchurchlakes

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." - John 3:13

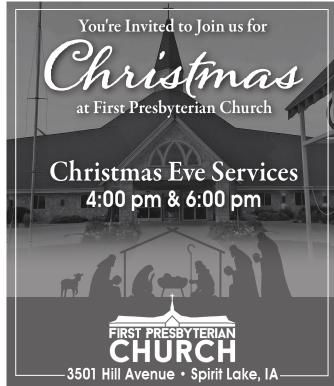
> Christmas Eve Service Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 5:30PM

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY AT 9:30 AM OR ONLINE AT HARBOROFJOY.COM

CUPBOARD LOCATED ON SW CORNER OF BUILDING. ITEMS AVAILABLE 24/7

BLESSING BOX

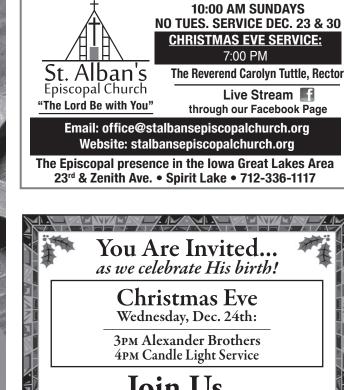
NO JOYKIDS UNTIL JANUARY HARBOR OF IOY **LUTHERAN CHURCH** LCM® 1204 L Ave. Milford • 712-338-2355













Free Christmas Meal with Life360-Okoboji

Anyone looking for a free Christmas meal will have their taste buds pleasantly tickled by sharing a meal with a new church

in town in Arnolds Park. Life360-Okoboji, an Assemblies of God church, is offering a holiday meal and festivities including chili, chicken noodle soup, cinnamon rolls, and a variety of pot-luck items as well. "Church food is the best food" quipped Pastor Brian Kelly. "Mostly because of the variety and especially the desserts!" The new church plant recently expanded their ministry to the Founders Hall on the Okoboji Bible Conference grounds, central to Dickinson County.



Following the free meal, much fun will be had by all featuring Christmas trivia and caroling for all those in attendance. "We packed the house last year with our 'Don't be Home Alone for Christmas' meal and with an even larger capacity this year, we're looking forward to blessing even more of the community with a free meal and great times to be had by all," remarked Rev. Kelly. "We hope to be able to make the free community meal a monthly ministry at least to those looking for food and fellowship. In addition, the church will also be holding a special Christmas Eve service in their sanctuary on Dec. 24th, from 5:00 to 6:00 PM. All are welcome to attend and join in the celebration of Christ's birth and love for all. Life360-Okoboji meets on Sundays at 10:30 AM with children's ministry provided, and Wednesday at 7:00 PM for Bible study and prayer at the Founders Hall building. In the future, look for more community meals, worship events, and holiday celebrations as the church grows. More information about the church and its activities can be accessed at https://life360.org/okoboji-ia/. Prayer requests can be directed to bmkelly@life360.org or by calling 712.339.9201.



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH





CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

4:00PM & 7:00PM

CHRISTMAS DAY **WORSHIP SERVICE** 9:00AM

IN PERSON WORSHIP and LIVESTREAM at www.LCMSLAKES.org



Hwy. 71 and 27th Street South of Lakes Regional Hospital 712-336-1010 • Icmslakes.org • Rev. Paul Dare The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Sharing Christ's Love • Living Our Witness • Inviting Others



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PRIVATE RENTAL

Before/After Hours \$130 + SNACKS

5 12:00, 3:20 & 6:20 2/26-30 12:15, 3:30 & 6:30

WED 12/24 12:00 & 3:15

WED 12/31 2:00 & 6:00

WED 12/24 12:50 & 4:15

THUR 12/25 1:00, 4:00 & 7:20

FRI-TUES 12/26-30 1:00, 4:15 & 7:30 WED 12/31 2:10, 4:30 & 6:50

WED-THUR 12/24-25 10:30am

FREE HOLIDAY MOVIE!

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CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE!

Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

HICKORY SMOKED FRESH DAILY BABY BACK PORK RIBS & BRISKET

TENDER MEATS Homemade soups BOWL OF SOUP! DAILY SPECIALS

WEDNESDAY PASTA NIGHT \$12.99 YOUR CHOICE OF RIBS & SPAGHETTI •RIBS & LASAGNA ROLL UPS •CHICKEN ALFREDO



Thursdays: Meat Raffle! Sponsored by the Twilight Masonic Lodge

Key Chain CA\$H Drawing

HOURS: Mon.-Sat. I lam-10pm Fri. & Sat. 10pm-3am Late Night Breakfast 117 W. Broadway, Arnolds Park 712-332-5152

SOFTAIL SALOON . SUPERIOR, [A] **Superior Deal**





Evening Specials Monthly Feature Menu! 712.858.4500 Hwy. 9 | Superior, IA Open Wed. thru Sun. at 11 a.m.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank You

Okoboji Flooring & Furniture would like to give a huge thank you to all of the wonderful Secret Santas that helped make our 2025 Secret Santa Program a success! Thank you also, to our many behind the scenes volunteers that assisted and helped everything run smoothly. This program is designed to help out local families and children who aren't quite sure if Santa is bringing gifts, and because of everyone who helped, the Christmas Spirit shined bright this year in Milford!

This year many businesses, organizations, and individuals all stepped up and helped spread Christmas joy throughout the hearts of many. Please know that however you may have helped this program work, you touched the lives of 97 children this year! The sparkle in their eyes when Santa delivered the gifts makes all of the work well worth it.

Thank you to all the individuals and community volunteers who helped make this possible! The following are some of the local businesses that participated in this year's Milford Secret Santa: Campus Women's Club, Milford Memorial Library, Simonson Properties, Loring Countertops, Steffes Companies, Clary Lake Service, Milford Kiwanis, Okoboji Realty, Tiled Up, Northwest Iowa Sprinkler, Tri-States Grain Conditioning, Cory Groen Construction, Milford Well Service, Sunshine Foods, Real Estate Unlimited, Leiss Builders, Mr. Appliance, Walker Insurance, Boji Ware, and Miles Inn.

Okoboji Flooring & Furniture

Elwood Named to Mercy College of Health Sciences President's List

Morgan Elwood of Spirit Lake, Iowa, has been named to the President's List for the fall 2025 quarter and semester terms at Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa. To qualify for this academic recognition, students must attain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.75 for a minimum of six semester credit hours or four quarter credit hours in their most recent term.

To learn more about the health science programs offered at Mercy College, visit our website at http://www.mchs.edu. Mercy College is the only Catholic college in Central Iowa and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North

DAILY SPECIALS at 11am DAILY SPECIALS · Wed., Dec. 24: Closed **Christmas Eve** • Thur., Dec. 25: Closed **Christmas Day** BOTTOMLESS • Fri., Dec. 26: **Country Fried Steak**









WILD Roots Teen Program 2026 The Dickinson County Nature Center is excited to continue

WILD Roots in 2026, a new and free nature-based program for

TEEN EVENTS:

Located directly across from Arnolds Park Amusement Park

See our website & menu: thehuttbarandgrill.com

Black & Bleu Burger

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Mon. thru Thurs. at 11:00 AM

Tuesday - CLOSED

SAT. & SUN. at 8am (Breakfast)

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· Mon., Dec. 29: Hot Beef

• Tues., Dec. 30: CLOSED

teens. WILD (Wilderness Inspired Leadership Development) Roots strives to bring teens together to foster new friendships, develop character, learn new outdoor recreation and land stewardship skills, and provide volunteer opportunities.

There will be several meetings throughout the year on the following dates:

- January 12th, 4-6 PM Winter Wander at Kenue Park • March 23rd, 6-8 PM – Spring Soirée at Kenue Park
- June 1st, 6-8 PM Summer Summit at Horseshoe Bend
- July 20th, 6-8 PM Final Celebration at Kenue Park

"WILD Roots provides teens with meaningful experiences for growth, both personally and in conservation," said Amy Heibult, community relations coordinator of the Dickinson County Conservation Board.

On January 12th, the group will head outside to hike throughout Kenue Park looking for signs of animals. Using a key, they will identify the various animals and later mix up molds to imprint tracks into.

Registration is now open for January 12th, and future event registration will open 2 months prior to each date. To register youth ages 13-18 or learn more, visit www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com, under the Program/Events tab, to see our event overview list

THE LAKES NEWS SHOPPER Tuesday, December 23, 2025 Page 9 **JACKPOT JUNCTION OVERNIGHT BUS TRIP** on WEDNESDAY, January 7 Receive \$50 in Free Play \$65 per person- if you share a room \$100- room to yourself



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Sunday, Dec. 28 South 71 Trio

Bison Shepherd's Pie!

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Lakes Area Senior/Activity Center Events

Seniors Movin' On is an exercise group that meets every Monday, Wednesday & Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. The exercise program is based on the Silver Sneakers Program.

Blood Pressure Screening is the last Tuesday of every

Tai Chi at 11:00am and Zumba class at 4:30pm on Thursday.

Mah Jong - 1st and 3rd Mondays at 1:00pm.

Pinochle Club- 2nd and 4th Mondays at 1:00pm.

Chair yoga every Friday at 10:00am.

They also have pool and ping pong available.

The Lakes Area Activity/ Senior Center is located at 2101 Zenith Ave in Spirit Lake.



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earning an AAS, diploma or certificate at the end of the fall 2025 semester. A commencement ceremony was held Dec. 12 at the Sioux Falls Convention Center. View the ceremony recording

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Jimy Mac Lenz

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- Travis Caskey, of Arnolds Park, Associate Degree, Auto-
- Izabella Grein, of Lakefield, Certificate, Phlebotomy
- Kennedy Praska, Magna Cum Laude of Lakefield, Diploma,

Okoboji After Prom Fundraiser

Okoboji After Prom is selling the World's Best Dishcloths as a fundraiser to support a safe and fun After Prom event for Okoboji High School students. Bundles of six dishcloths are available for \$20.

k5mZqDwC) picked up at home basketball games, or by emailing afterpromokoboji@gmail.com for more information.

Clay County Heritage is excited to announce a lecture event from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Friday, January 9th, 2026 at the Clay County Heritage Center, 7 Grand Ave in Spencer. The presentation is titled The Grand Opera House: Stories from Spencer's First Theatre with Evan Hilsabeck.

In the early 20th century, the Grand Opera House dominated downtown and shaped the social life of the city. Touring actors, vaudeville entertainers, preachers, teachers, and circus clowns all took the stage. Beautifully decorated, with seating for nearly 800, the Grand Opera House was the finest theatre in Northwest Iowa until the Spencer fire of 1931. We'll trace the story of the Opera House, meet the interesting characters who worked and performed there, and take a trip or two back in time to visit some of Spencer's most exciting opening nights. This lecture is presented by Evan Hilsabeck, past Managing Director of Spencer Community Theatre.

Admission to the Clay County Heritage Center and Parker Museum is always free thanks to sponsorship from Spencer Hy-Vee. Museum Hours are Tuesday through Friday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Saturday 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Parker Museum Tours can be made by contacting us by phone, email, or stopping

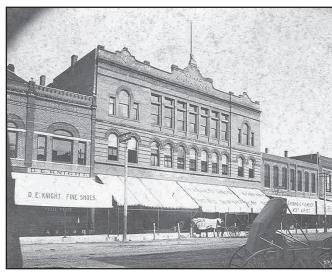
For further questions regarding this event, please call the

www.buyokoboji.com

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at the 7 Grand Ave location.

Clay County Heritage at 712-262-3304

6 – 8 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" is based on the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, with book, music and lyrics by Clark Gesner, additional dialogue by Michael Mayer, and additional music and lyrics by Andrew Lippa. The musical highlights a day in the life of Charlie Happy Holidays Brown with his lovable Peanuts friends (Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, etc.), capturing their everyday adventures, heartfelt frustrations, and simple joys as they navigate friendship, imagination, and Ho! growing up—with humor, warmth, and unforgettable songs like Happiness and Suppertime. "This musical is a wonderful opportunity for our community to bring the beloved Peanuts characters to life while exploring storytelling through humor, heart, and music," said Lincoln Larsen, Director of Music and Performing Arts. "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown celebrates

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Iowa Lakes Community College Announces Musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown"

Happiness is announcing that Iowa Lakes Community College will be presenting "You're

Iowa Lakes Community College is inviting students and community members to audition

a Good Man, Charlie Brown" for our musical this spring! Come view a day in the life of our

average blockhead, Charlie Brown, from April 16-18, 2026, at the Janice K. Lund Performing

for the cast of 4 men and 2 women and additional friends (chorus members) in Charlie Brown's

life to bring this classic comic strip to the stage! These roles are open to college students, high

school students, and adult community members. Auditions will be held Jan. 26, 27 and 28 from

individuality, friendship, and the small moments that make growing up meaningful, and we

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For more information, contact the Iowa Lakes Community College Music Department at

encourage anyone interested to come out and audition."

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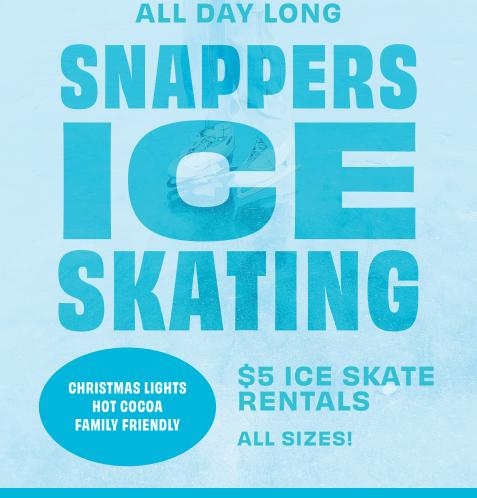
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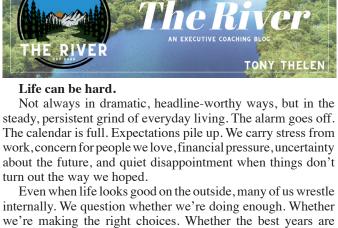


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Not always in dramatic, headline-worthy ways, but in the steady, persistent grind of everyday living. The alarm goes off. The calendar is full. Expectations pile up. We carry stress from work, concern for people we love, financial pressure, uncertainty about the future, and quiet disappointment when things don't turn out the way we hoped.

internally. We question whether we're doing enough. Whether we're making the right choices. Whether the best years are behind us or still ahead. In those moments, it can be difficult, sometimes nearly impossible, to see things clearly. To see what is possible. To see our potential.

But believing in our potential is a powerful thing. It doesn't come naturally to everyone, especially when fatigue, setbacks, or self-doubt cloud our perspective. We are often our own harshest critics. We replay mistakes, magnify shortcomings, and underestimate what we're capable of becoming. Our human nature focuses on our faults.

That's why belief rarely begins with just ourselves.

That's why we have parents who see possibility before we do. Siblings who remind us of who we've always been. Spouses who stand beside us when confidence wavers. Friends who encourage us to keep going. Coaches who push us beyond what feels comfortable. Teammates who count on us. Leaders who entrust us with responsibility before we feel ready.

If you have led a successful life so far, by any measure, there was almost certainly a moment when someone believed in you more than you believed in yourself.

Sometimes that belief was obvious and spoken out loud. A teacher saying, "You should try." A coach saying, "I want you in the game." A boss saying, "I think you can handle this." Other times it was quieter. An opportunity given. A second chance offered. A patient conversation instead of criticism.

Those moments matter more than we often realize.

Belief has a way of expanding what feels possible. When someone we respect sees potential in us, it alters how we see ourselves. It nudges us to try harder, to persist longer, to step forward when we might otherwise retreat. Over time, belief, repeated and reinforced, instills confidence. And confidence, paired with hard work, leads to capability, competence, and

But belief is not just something to receive. It is also something to give.

Each of us has opportunities every day to lift someone up. A child unsure of themselves. A brother or sister struggling quietly. Afriend navigating uncertainty. A player who's lost confidence. A teammate feeling overlooked. An employee wondering whether their work really matters.

It costs nothing to tell someone, sincerely, "I believe in you." Yet what they receive in return can be priceless.

Belief is not blind optimism, nor does it ignore the work required to grow. True belief says, I see what you're capable of, and I know it won't be easy, but I trust you to do the work. It is encouragement grounded in reality, not flattery.

The world does not lack talent. It lacks encouragement. Too many people walk away from their potential not because they couldn't do the work, but because no one ever believed in them. No one told them they could achieve something. And sometimes because they never told themselves.

So perhaps the invitation is simple.

Believe in yourself, even when life feels heavy. Maybe especially when it feels heavy. You are more capable than you think. And just as importantly, believe in others. Speak it. Show it. Act on it.

My Christmas wish for you this year is to take a moment today to lift someone up. Tell them you see them. Tell them you believe in their potential. You may never fully see or understand the impact of that moment, but it may matter more than you know. Give the gift of belief this season.

And maybe, just maybe, because you believed in them, they will learn to believe in themselves.

Tony Thelen is an executive coach and founder of The River Coaching & Consulting, based in West Okoboji, Iowa. He is the author of Things We Desire, available on Amazon and through major book retailers. For signed and personalized copies, contact Tony at tony@ therivercoach.org.





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Winter Games Chili Cook-Off **Entry Forms Available**

Entry forms for the University of Okoboji Winter Games Chili Cook-Off, sponsored by Hinn Realty, are now available online at

uofowintergames. com or at the Iowa Great Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce office in Arnolds Park. This event is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 23, from 5 to 7 p.m. at



the Dickinson County Expo Building in Spirit Lake. Interested teams are asked to furnish at least 20 gallons of their special recipe chili, along with warmers, ladles, and extension cords, and are encouraged to decorate their serving areas. While all members of the community are invited to participate, space constraints limit the competition to 27 teams. Applications must be completed and submitted to the Chamber office no later than Friday, January 9, 2026.

This year's theme is "Lights, Camera, Action, CHILI!" which encourages participants to roll out the red carpet and showcase their favorite movies. Whether teams choose to draw inspiration from Chili Wonka and the Flavor Factory, Spice Wars, or How to Train Your Pepper, the event offers a unique opportunity to engage with the community and promote local businesses or organizations. Prizes will be awarded for Best Overall Chili, Best Nonprofit, and Best Booth. The winners will be announced on Saturday, Jan. 25, during the Burning of the Greens and Fireworks Extravaganza sponsored by Bank Midwest.

Mugs are currently available for purchase for \$10 at the Hinn Realty office, the Spirit Lake Chamber of Commerce, Hy-Vee in Spirit Lake, the Iowa Great Lakes Area Chamber office in Arnolds Park, and The Three Sons in Milford. Purchasing a mug allows event-goers to bypass long lines, and remaining supplies will be sold on the day of the cook-off. For more information on this or other University of Okoboji Winter Games events, interested parties may visit the official website or contact Morgan Strauss at 712-332-2107 or morgan@okobojichamber.com.





Thank you for a wonderful 2025. We wish you a prosperous 2026!





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Stokes Named to President's List

Jordyn Stokes of Estherville, Iowa, has been named to the Chadron State College President's List for the Fall 2025 semester. To qualify, students must complete at least 12 credit hours, be pursuing their first bachelor's degree, earn a cumulative gradepoint average of 4.0, and have no incomplete grades. City and state listings reflect students' home addresses provided by the student.









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Dance 4 Fun

The Everly dance, sponsored by Dance 4 Fun, will be held on Saturday, January 3, at the Hap Ketelsen Community Center in Everly, Iowa. The doors are open at 6:15, the dance is from 7:00pm -10:30 pm. The band is Still Cruizin. Put on your dancing shoes & come join us for a fun evening of dancing! Feel free to bring snacks to share! Singles and married couples are welcome.





Wed., Jan. 21 - 10:00 AM-79.39 acres at auction in Dickinson Co., IA. Auctioneers: Midwest Land Management. 712-262-3110. www.midwestlandmanagement.







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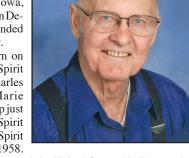


A funeral service for Jerry Miller, 85, of Spirit Lake, was held Monday, December 22, 2025, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Spirit Lake. Interment was at

in Okoboji Jerry Edward Miller, age 85, of Spirit Lake, Iowa, passed away peacefully on December 16, 2025, surrounded by the love of his family.

Lakeview Gardens Cemetery

Jerry Miller was born on December 7, 1940, in Spirit Lake, Iowa, the son of Charles Edward and Anna Marie (Nece) Miller. He grew up just outside the city limits of Spirit Lake and graduated from Spirit Lake High School in 1958.



Upon graduation, Jerry entered the United States Air Force, where he served dutifully for four years. After leaving the Air Force, Jerry married Kay Frances Sander, and together they had three children: Scott, Lori, and Renee. Jerry and Kay made their home in Yreka, California, where he worked for the City of Yreka.

Jerry moved back to Spirit Lake in 1975, where he met the love of his life, Betty Jane (Lange) Petersen. They were married on August 12, 1975, in Spencer, Iowa. After marrying, Jerry and Betty made their home in Spirit Lake, along with Betty's children, Mary, Judy, and Becky Petersen. Jerry built his dream home from the ground up—an A-frame on Highway 9. He dug out the pond to the east of the property himself with his trusty backhoe and lovingly tended to it. Their home was lit up like a Christmas tree each holiday season and became a beloved local landmark in the area.

Jerry worked for Lakes Cable and later Medicom for many years, retiring in 2002. He also owned and operated a backhoe business and could run heavy machinery as if it were an extension of himself. Known by the CB handle "Salvager," Jerry lived up to the name, as evidenced by the many odds and ends in and around his home. He enjoyed the demolition derby and raced a car for several years. One of his favorite pastimes was tinkering in his shop, where he lived by the motto that there wasn't anything he couldn't fix. Before and during his retirement, Jerry was very active in his church community at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Spirit Lake, where he often ran the recording for services and gladly helped with any other tasks where he could be of service.

Jerry was known to be stubborn, loyal, and deeply devoted to those he loved. Perhaps most notably, he spent many years caring for his beloved wife, Betty, with patience, dedication, and unwavering love—always putting her needs above his own. His family and friends often relied on his steady presence, whether it was offering a helping hand or simply being there when needed. Jerry had a hardworking nature and practical wisdom that made him the person everyone trusted to get things done. He found joy in the simple pleasures of life—tinkering in his shop, spending time with family, or simply being present. His compassionate care left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him, and his legacy of selfless love and devotion will continue to inspire those he touched. Those who knew him best will always remember his quiet strength, his gentle humor, and the remarkable love and care he gave to those around him.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 50 years, Betty; his children, Scott (Lisa) Miller, Lori Miller, Renee (Jim Anderson) Miller, Mary Bezdicek, Judy (John) Swiech, and Becky Petersen; his grandchildren, Adam Richardson, Brian Abrams, Kayla (Erick) Marshall, Samantha Anderson, Connor Anderson, Tyler (Tori) Bezdicek, Megan Bezdicek, Katherine (Charlie) Brigham, Joseph Swiech, and Margaret Swiech; his great-grandchildren, Ethan and Amiyah Richardson, Kierra and Zachary Miller, Benjamin, Olivia, and Eli Marshall, Talan and Ellie Holm, Sofia Welp-Bezdicek, and Austin Brigham; his sister, Marion Apple; as well as several nieces, nephews, and other family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Charles and Anna Miller;



Beverly A. Hurley February 12, 1941 - December 4, 2025 Beverly A. Hurley, age 84, passed away peacefully on December

4, 2025, at Praha Village in New Prague, MN, after a long battle with dementia. Beverly was born in DuBois, NE, to John and Alice Jancik. Her family eventually moved to Council Bluffs, IA, where she met her future husband, Gary. The two were married in 1961 and shared a loving marriage and friendship for 64 years.

Throughout their life together, Beverly and Gary lived in several states, moving back to Council Bluffs in 1976. Beverly was an active member of

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the world together, journeyed across the United States in their RV, and spent their winters in Arizona. Beverly will be remembered for her kindness, sweetness, and remarkable courage. A loving wife, mother, grandmother, and caregiver, she touched the lives of many with her gentle spirit and steady devotion. She will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Beverly is survived by her husband, Gary; daughter, Lori (Chuck) Birkland of Spirit Lake, IA; daughter, Julie (Kevin) Rens of New Prague, MN; son, Steve (Michelle) Hurley of Waconia, MN; and sister, Marilyn (Carroll) Cohrs of Council Bluffs, IA. She is also survived by eight grandchildren: Ryan (Jill) Birkland of Rochester, MN; Jordan (Amanda) Birkland of Omaha, NE; Zachary (Hannah) Birkland of Omaha, NE; Grace Birkland of Los Angeles, CA; Evan Hurley and Isabelle Hurley of Waconia, MN; and Parker Rens and Braeden Rens of New Prague, MN; five great-grandchildren: Elliot, Lily, and Lynnea Birkland, Oliver Birkland, and Eleanor Birkland; and many other loving family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date at Salem United Methodist Church in Council Bluffs, IA. Interment will take place at Walnut Hill Cemetery, Council Bluffs. Memorials will be used to support Beverly's favorite charities: The Oaxaca Street Children, People for Pets, and the Humane Society. Please send any memorials to The Beverly Hurley Memorial Fund Account at Central Bank, P.O. Box 188, Spirit Lake, IA 51360, or if desired, directly to those organizations in Beverly's name.

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View From The Bench by John Adams, Jr.

Pollard Gambles With Rogers

Those of us old enough to remember Kenny Rogers' hit song, "The Gambler" can relate that to what Iowa State Athletic Director Jamie Pollard did with hiring Washington State head coach Jimmy Rogers (no relation to the star country singer Kenny Rogers) instead of promoting offensive coordinator Taylor Mouser. Pollard took a huge risk on the future of Cyclone football, gambling for something bigger and better with hiring the unknown of Rogers instead of taking the safer route of hiring more of the known with Mouser, who had been with former head coach Matt Campbell during his entire 10-year tenure at Iowa State and was very instrumental in the Cyclones' success. One might say that you would be gambling more with hiring an offensive coordinator in Mouser who has never been a head coach and only an offensive coordinator for two seasons than with Rogers, who has won a FCS National Championship with South Dakota State and then took a totally rebuilt Washington State roster to a 6-6 record and a bowl game this season. Let me explain how Pollard gambled short term success for what he hopes is long-term elevation of the program.

Hiring Mouser probably would have given Iowa State a very good chance of retaining much of the current coaching staff, which has built a very strong culture and recruited the current Cyclone roster. Retaining this staff would then allow you a very good chance of keeping what would have been 19 of 22 starters who could have potentially returned next season off of an 8-4 team with expectations of competing for a Big 12 Championship. As we started to see this past weekend with Rocco Becht, Jontez Williams and Jeremiah Cooper all entering the transfer portal, this roster will now look nothing like what we thought it might just three short weeks ago. I'm guessing as I write this editorial on Monday morning there will be even more Cyclone starters who also enter the portal. Do all of these players stay if Mouser is hired? No one knows the answer to that, but it's fairly certain they probably consider it more as there would be a familiarity with the staff. While fans believe that kids should sign with a school, in the real world, they sign with a staff who has built relationships with that player and his family, and when those relationships that have been built for so many years are all of a sudden uprooted overnight, it can rock the world of these kids. I can't blame these kids for entering the portal, as that is the state of the world of college athletics, and the relationships they built with the coaches they know are now gone. We hope that after playing with each other for several years they would want to stay and play together and be loyal to the university they signed with, but that just doesn't happen much anymore. The one thing that does drive me crazy about their social media announcements is when they say they are "Forever a Cyclone" or "Loyal forever true"; I'm sorry, but when you go play your final year (s) somewhere else, you are not forever a Cyclone.

So why did Pollard take this "gamble" with Rogers? Pollard is a very smart Athletic Director who has guided Iowa State into what I would argue is the best era we have ever seen as Cyclone fans through his hiring of TJ Otzelberger, Kevin Dresser and Campbell while also keeping Bill Fennelley, so he obviously saw something in Rogers to take this huge risk of gutting what could have been a Big 12 Championship team. Pollard clearly sees something in Rogers that he believes is worth the "gamble" of moving completely on from the Matt Campbell era, the most successful ten years ever in Cyclone football history. All successful athletic directors have a short list of coaches they will contact should their head coaches bolt for other jobs, and Rogers has been on the top of Pollard's list for several years, which was obvious with how quickly he was hired. Pollard believes Rogers can take what Campbell and his staff have built and take it to the next level, which would be not only making it to the Big 12 Championship Game, which Campbell did two of the last five seasons, but actually winning it. Those certainly are lofty goals and are definitely a major gamble; I just hope that as Cyclone fans "there'll be time enough for countin' when the dealing's done.



AA Meetings

AA meetings will resume on Tuesdays at 7:00pm, at Jackson Center for the Arts (309 2nd Street, Jackson, Minnesota).

For more information, contact Aili at 507-840-0639.

Al-Anon Meetings

Milford New Hope Al-Anon meetings will take place on Zoom. Meeting ID is 77557290457 and the pass code is JXEU2H.

For more information, go online to *Iowa-Al-Anon.org*, meetings tab, find a group (enter: Milford, IA 51351 USA). Or call 712-580-4406.

Tops Chapter #369, Spirit Lake, meets Friday mornings at 10:00am at the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church, 1812 Gary Avenue, Spirit Lake (use east door). If you are one that needs help with motivation and food planning to lose weight, this may be the support group for you. Visitors are welcome to attend their first TOPS meeting free of charge without obligation. For more information, call Betty Sangel at 712-320-4458.

Family Services Resource Guide

Dickinson County's Family Resource Guide is a comprehensive free resource for local residents to utilize when trying to locate services in and around the county. With a variety of services and help providers listed, the book is a one-stopshop to locate local resources. To access the free guide online, visit https://www.extension. iastate.edu/dickinson/countyresource-guide. If you have services to add to the guide, contact Sue at 712-336-3488 or boettche@iastate.edu.





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Northwest Bank Gives \$1,000 to Area Backpack Programs

Northwest Bank locations in Milford, Arnolds Park, and Spirit Lake organized initiatives to raise funds and collect food donations for the Okoboji and Spirit Lake Schools Backpack Programs again this year. The program provides essential food support to youth and families in need. To further support these efforts, Northwest Bank matched contributions up to \$500 for each program. Thanks to the continued generosity of individuals and businesses throughout the local communities,

this year's fundraising goals were once again surpassed. In addition to monetary donations, a significant number of food items were collected to help stock both programs.

Employees from Northwest Bank in Arnolds Park and Milford presented \$3,741.39 to the Okoboji Backpack Program, while employees from Spirit Lake presented \$3,917.07 to the Spirit Lake Backpack Program. The bank shared that it was honored to host this meaningful fundraiser again and expressed deep gratitude to everyone who contributed to the \$7,658.46 that was collectively raised. Such kindness and support continue to make a lasting difference for

local students and families. Northwest Bank is a \$2.9 billion community-focused financial institution providing a comprehensive range of services, including business, agricultural, mortgage, consumer deposit and lending solutions, as well as wealth management offerings. With locations across Iowa-Afton, Algona, Ames, Ankeny, Arnolds Park, Creston, Estherville, Fort Dodge, Humboldt, Le Mars, Milford, Shenandoah, Sioux Center, Sioux City, Spencer, Spirit Lake, and West Des Moinesand in Nebraska-Omaha and La Vista-Northwest Bank is dedicated to serving its communities. Member FDIC.



Suzette Vander Veen, center, representing the Okoboji Backpack Program, accepts donations by Northwest Bank employees Lana Tungland and Haley Tuttle.



Kim Johnson (Elementary Guidance Counselor) and Jill Dielschneider (Middle School Guidance Counselor) representing the Spirit Lake Backpack Program accept donations presented by Northwest Bank employees Stephanie Marco, Jed Jensen, Jodi Lange and Angie Peterson.

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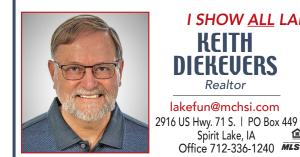


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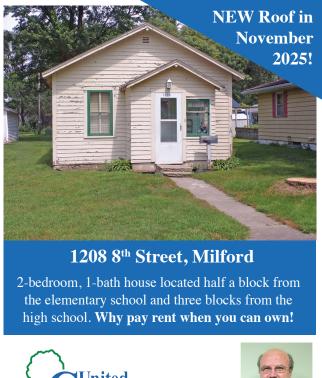
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Lakes Area Activity/Senior Center Schedule

Tuesday, December 23 8:30 - Kiwanis

12:00 - Dinner Date 12.30 - Bridge

Wednesday, December 24 9:00 - Exercise Class 12:00 - Dinner Date Thursday, December 25

Merry Christmas -Center is Closed Friday, December 26

Center Closed Saturday, December 27 9:00 - Toering Coin Auction Sunday, December 28 9:00 - Church/Card Room

Monday, December 29 9:00 - Exercise 12:00 - Dinner Date

1:00 - Mahjong Tuesday, December 30

12.30 - Bridge

8:30 - Kiwanis 12:00 - Dinner Date 12:00 - Blood Pressure

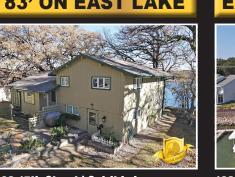
Dinner Date meals are available every weekday. Call 712-336-5247 by 1:00pm on

Friday to reserve a meal for the next week. Come for Dinner Date and hear our wonderful speakers. The pool table and ping pong room is open every weekday. The card room closes from 12-12:30 for cleaning. The facility is available to rent most weekends. Call or visit with someone at the office for more details.

Please call the Lakes Area Activity/Senior Center if anyone is interested in playing Euchre or Dominoes. One person is interested. Need more to start playing.

The Lakes Area Activity/ Senior Center is located at 2101 Zenith Ave in Spirit Lake.





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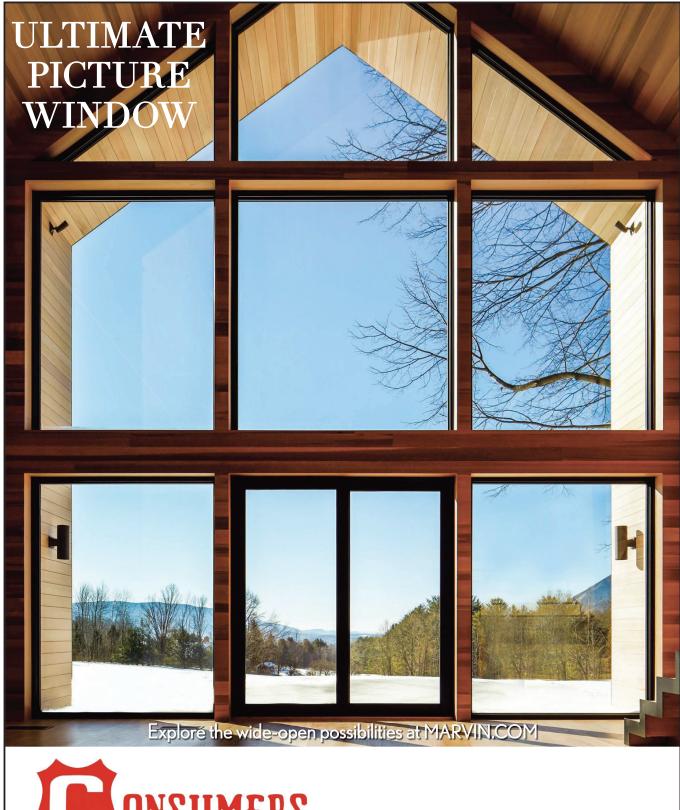
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WILD Roots Teen Program 2026

The Dickinson County Nature Center is excited to continue WILD Roots in 2026, a new and free nature-based program for

TEEN EVENTS:

teens. WILD (Wilderness Inspired Leadership Development) Roots strives to bring teens together to foster new friendships, develop character, learn new outdoor recreation and land stewardship skills, and provide volunteer opportunities.

There will be several meetings throughout the year on the following dates:

- January 12th, 4-6 PM Winter Wander at Kenue Park
- March 23rd, 6-8 PM Spring Soirée at Kenue Park
- June 1st, 6-8 PM Summer Summit at Horseshoe Bend
- July 20th, 6-8 PM Final Celebration at Kenue Park "WILD Roots provides teens with meaningful experiences for growth, both personally and in conservation," said Amy

Heibult, community relations coordinator of the Dickinson County Conservation Board. On January 12th, the group will head outside to hike through-

out Kenue Park looking for signs of animals. Using a key, they will identify the various animals and later mix up molds to imprint tracks into. Registration is now open for January 12th, and future event registration will open 2 months prior to each date. To register

youth ages 13-18 or learn more, visit www.dickinsoncountvconservationboard.com, under the Program/Events tab, to see our event overview list.

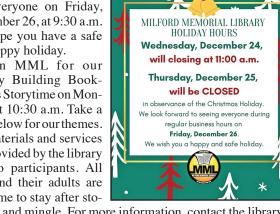


Milford Memorial Library News

Milford Memorial Library will close at 11:00 a.m., on Wednesday, December 24, and will be closed all day on Thursday, De-

cember 25, in observance of the Christmas Holiday. We look forward to seeing everyone on Friday, December 26, at 9:30 a.m. We hope you have a safe and happy holiday.

Join MML for our weekly Building Bookworms Storytime on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Take a look below for our themes. All materials and services are provided by the library free to participants. All kids and their adults are welcome to stay after sto-



rytime and mingle. For more information, contact the library or check out our Facebook page.

- December 29, 10:30 a.m. New
- January 5, 10:30 a.m. Owls
- January 12, 10:30 a.m. Paint • January 19, 10:30 a.m. - Quilt
- January 26, 10:30 a.m. Rhinestones

On Tuesday, December 23, Milford Memorial Library will have a free double feature! Home Alone will begin at 1:00 p.m. and Home Alone 2: Lost in New York will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Popcorn will be provided for this free event. Join MML for Fun Craft Fridays on December 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This is a youth and young adult free come-and-go craft time. This week we will craft a perler bead creation. Due to a limited amount of supplies, this will be first come, first served.

If you have any questions please contact Milford Memorial Library by phone at 712-338-4643 or by email at milfordlibrary51351@gmail.com.

There will be a free showing of Shrek at Milford Memorial Library on Tuesday, December 30, at 2:00 pm. Popcorn will be provided for this free event.

On Wednesday, December 31, Milford Memorial Library will be closing at 11:00 a.m. and will be closed all day on Thursday, January 1, in observance of the New Year's holiday. We look forward to seeing everyone on Friday, January 2, at 9:30 a.m.

We hope you have a safe and happy holiday. Author Nicole Baart will be joining us on January 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the Milford Community Center. If you enjoy reading her books you should mark your calendars for this event! Nicole's novels range from romantic to suspenseful, but she is known for her artistic prose and finely drawn characters. Her stories celebrate the triumph of the human spirit and beauty in the midst of brokenness.



YIP Students Combine Service, Giving, and Community Partnerships During December Meeting

Students in the Okoboji Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) program gathered for their December meeting at West O Brewery in Milford, where they explored how community partnerships, service projects, and philanthropy come together to create meaningful local

impact. The meeting featured West O Brewery's charitable initiative, Tap Roots, which supports local nonprofits through creative collaborations. One Tap Roots partnership, the "On Us" program, highlights a different local organization each month and donates 20% of that day's sales back to the nonprofit. For the past three years, the Okoboji Foundation has partnered with West O Brewery by matching

donations up to \$500 for each "On Us" event, further extending the reach of the program.

In addition to learning about community partnerships, YIP students continued their annual holiday initiative, Project Christmas, now in its eighth year. Through an anonymous donation from a Foundation member, YIP students are provided funds to purchase gifts for families in need and foster families in Dickinson County. This year, the program will help make the season brighter for 36 local children, ensuring they experience the joy and excitement of the holidays. "Project Christmas is one of the most meaningful things

we do," shared Calan Peters, YIP student. "It reminds us that philanthropy is personal and that small acts of kindness can make a big difference."

Students also participated in a December service project by sponsoring a holiday tree at the Great Lakes Mall to support Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO). Each sponsored tree represents a specific food need, and YIP's tree focuses on collecting cereal—an essential staple for local families. Students decorated the tree during the first week of December and will collect cereal donations throughout the month, concluding on December 24.

On December 24, the mall will recognize participating organizations with awards for the best-decorated tree and the most donations collected. Community members are encouraged to participate or help spread the word by contributing cereal donations.

Youth in Philanthropy's monthly meetings are hosted at various nonprofit organizations and community partners throughout the Iowa Great Lakes region, giving students a deeper understanding of local needs, leadership, and the lasting impact of charitable involvement.

'What these students are learning goes far beyond fundraising," said Kent Stensland, Okoboji Foundation board member. "They are building relationships, developing leadership skills, and seeing firsthand how collaboration strengthens our community.'

Please help us celebrate the spirit of giving this season by supporting Youth in Philanthropy and the future leaders of our community. Donations help fund the YIP annual grant program in the spring and can be sent to Okoboji Foundation, PO Box 593, Okoboji, IA 51355.





Previous 9-14-year-old competitors in the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship.

Spirit Lake K of C to Sponsor Youth Free Throw Championship

All boys and girls ages 9 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2026 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship. The local contest will be held Sunday, January 18, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. at the Bedell Family YMCA in Spirit Lake. Registration and practice begin at 12 noon. Age levels now include 9-year-olds.

Registration forms are available at area middle schools and at the Bedell Family YMCA and must be signed by a parent. There is no fee to register, and children of all faiths are welcome to enjoy positive and healthy competition with other youth in the Iowa Great Lakes community. Forms are also available the day of the championship, or by texting to 712-330-6371, or by email to mlkpmk1200@gmail.com.

The Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship has winners progressing through local, district, regional and state competitions. Spirit Lake's own Claire Kruger won the international crystal trophy in the 2024 competition, making 24 of 25 free throws.

All boys and girls 9 to 14 years old are eligible to participate and will compete in their respective age divisions. In past years more than 130,000 sharpshooters participated in more than 3,000 local competitions.

Each competitor receives a participation certificate, with winners taking home a plaque in the local championship, or medal in the district championship. The highest-scoring state winner receives the International Championship Crystal Trophy.

Iowa Great Lakes Council 5043 is one of the most active in Iowa, in the past few years contributing more than \$30,000 to local community needs, including Hope Haven, Iowa Helping Hands Fund, American Wheelchair Mission, the Grotto of the Redemption, Cherish House, Guatemala Mission, Women of the Well Project, Prison Ministries, as well as to local family, community, and parish needs. Local Knights sponsor annual youth events including the Free Throw Competition, Coats for Kids, and the Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest. They also run the Tootsie Roll Drive Labor Day weekend for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities benefiting Special Olympics and local organizations.

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into one of the world's leading international charitable organizations, with more than 2.1 million members in over 17,000 local councils.

Knights provided 1.6 million children with winter coats, brought 243 U.S. service members to Lourdes on pilgrimage, donated more than 158,000 wheelchairs through its Global Wheelchair Mission, and gave more than \$325,000 to the formation of men and women pursuing a religious vocation. Knights donated \$197 million to people in need and volunteered more than 47 million hours in service.



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All real estate advertised in The Lakes News Shopper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin or any intention to make any such preference limitation or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are violation of the law. All persons hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

FOR RENT: Lots for your mobile home available at A & K Trailer Park in Spirit Lake. Some utilities included. PH: 712-336-8400.

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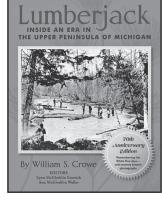
by Michael Tidemann

Lumberjack recalls big timber days Some books are meant for the ages. That's certainly the

case for Lumberjack: Inside an Era in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan by William S. Crowe.

Originally published in 1952 by North Country Publishing, the latest edition by Modern History Press came out in 2024.

Crowe left a ranch wrangler's job in eastern Colorado at the ripe, old age of 17 to take a nine-month business course and shortly later hire on with the Chicago Lumbering Company of Michigan in 1893. It was in the Manistique area of the Michigan Upper Peninsula where Crowe saw true lumberjacks firsthand and



learned everything there was to know about the lumber business. Things were far different then, with white pine so high the first branches started 80 feet off the ground. Crowe quickly learned to respect the men who thought nothing of working in minus-40 weather and walking across logs in icy rivers to break up jams.

"Hardship meant little or nothing. The lumber jacks would have scorned featherbedding. Hard work was the rule for employers and employees alike. Every man in those days was strictly on his own in a really free world. But nobody starved, and when unforeseen calamity fell, the company, fellow employees and the neighbors always helped out. There was no feeling of insecurity, and we faced the future with boundless optimism and faith in ourselves to handle any situation."

Crowe was awed by the age of the timber taken out of the UP. Dwelling on the lifespan of a huge log, Crowe wrote, "It came from a family group which were tiny seedlings when Columbus set out for the Americas. It was about 130 years old when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock."

He also saw the end of the big white pine days.

"The pine has now been gone for many years; and the fleets of steam barges and picturesque schooners with their tall masts in every harbor and white sails dotting the blue waters of the Great Lakes are only a memory."

Crowe saw the height of UP lumbering, something no living person could ever claim. Crowe's narrative cuts like a doublebladed ax, and you can almost smell the sawdust from a crosscut as he transports us to a time no one will ever see again.

(Michael Tidemann writes from Estherville, Iowa. His Facebook page is Author Michael Tidemann.)

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CHRISTMAS BREAK

by Jill Jennings

those kids for more than two weeks?! Bring them to the library,

books, audiobooks, graphic novels, and some Wonderbooks,

too. These are traditional books with text, but they include

built-in audio that can read the story out loud. They are great

for beginning or struggling readers. Keep their minds active

you can play or put together while you are here. A small selection

of games and puzzles are available for checkout, too. Those can

be found in the Learning Resource section. Speaking of Learning

Resources, there are kits which are themed bags that range in

topic from Animals to Wetlands. They include books, puppets,

flash cards, games, and many other activities. Also in that area

are Playaway Views, Playaway Launchpads, book pouches, and

and play stations where the children can use their imaginations.

Call up a friend and meet at the library for a playdate! There's

also a coloring area stocked with coloring pages, crayons, and

colored pencils. We have a coloring contest going on through

Kids search around the library for clues to solve the puzzle, then

are open Monday-Thursday, 9-6, Friday, 9-4, and Saturday, 9-2.

Gentleman by Bill Clinton & James Patterson, The Rule of

Three (The Rule of Three, #1) by Eric Walters, and listening

on Libby to The Final Day (After, #3) by William R. Forstchen.

•Tuesday, December 30, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Movie Matinee (PG)

• Wednesday, December 31,9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Special New

• Friday, January 2, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Movie Matinee (PG)

•Monday, December 29, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Mah-Jongg

• Wednesday. December 31, 12:30-4:00 p.m., Quilters

Another very popular activity is our monthly scavenger hunt.

Bring the kids to the library during this holiday season! We

SLPL staff reading spotlight: Nancy is reading The First

Back in our children's area, there is a wide variety of toys

pouches of ink pads & stamps for the crafty kids!

There are dozens of games and puzzles to choose from that

of course!

with a good book!

the end of the year, too.

they can choose a prize.

Upcoming activities:

Year's Eve Hours

•Thursday, January 1, Closed

Not only is Christmas coming, but so is Christmas BREAK!

The first choice in my book is ... books! We have regular

Library News

Caregivers Support Group

dealing with the stress of being a caregiver to someone with Alzheimers or other dementia disorders.

Wednesday morning at First Presbyterian Church in Spirit Lake. This is an opportunity to discuss with other caregivers stories and concerns in a comfortable and confidential manner.

as handling of legal issues, stress reduction, care facilities, positive coping language, and sharing personal methods of handling challenges faced every day by other caregivers.

NEW Cooperative Donates Hams to Upper

Inc. held its annual Hams for Hunger event, supporting food

pantries across Iowa. Mom, Dad, Grandpa, Grandma: what are you going to do with This year, Upper Des Moines Opportunity in Dickinson County was among the many locations to receive donated hams.

Since 2018, NEW Cooperative has partnered with local food pantries throughout its trade territory to deliver hams to families in need. This ongoing effort helps ease food



continued support. Thanks to their generous matching funds, NEW Cooperative was able to distribute 4,500 hams to local food pantries, the equivalent of 24,630 pounds of Iowa-grown pork.

ees who assisted with distributing and delivering hams to these 43 food pantries. Their commitment made it possible to reach communities from the Highway 9 corridor in northwest Iowa, southwest to Fremont County, into the Cainsville, Missouri area, and north along the Interstate 35 corridor.

"NEW Cooperative's Hams for Hunger event has been a central part of our community-giving program for many years," said Gary Moritz, NEW Cooperative Communications Director. "We hope this gesture helps make the holiday season a little brighter

NEW Cooperative, Inc. is a farmer-owned grain, agronomy, energy, and feed cooperative headquartered in Fort Dodge, Iowa. As a leading agriculture retailer, NEW Cooperative is focused on being an innovative and efficient provider of today's agriculture markets and services to 12,000 members throughout their 83 locations in Iowa.

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attendants at Laser Car Wash in Milford and Spencer. Candidates must be available to work weekends or flexible shifts, depending on scheduling and availability. We encourage active retirees and students to apply! We're looking for friendly, energetic, and responsible

Interested? Pick up an application at either Laser Car Wash location!

ATTENDANTS NEEDED at Laser Car Wash - Milford & Spencer

We are now accepting applications for part-time

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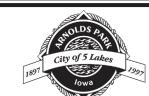


The City of Arnolds Park, Iowa is accepting applications for the position of

POLICE OFFICER

This is a full-time position that includes a competitive wage and benefits package. Certification by the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy or the ability to become certified in minimum hiring standards as set forth by the **lowa Law Enforcement Academy.**

Applications are available at the Arnolds Park City Hall, 54 N. Highway 71, Arnolds Park, Iowa 51331. Applications may be returned to: City of Arnolds Park, Attn: City Clerk, PO Box 437, Arnolds Park, Iowa 51331, or e-mailed to Linda Nase at Inase@arnoldsparkcity.com. The application deadline is Friday, December 26, 2025, at 4 p.m. If you should have questions concerning this position. please call 712-332-2341.



one year is required. Applicants must meet the



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The Dickinson County Secondary Road Department will be accepting applications for a full-time Equipment Operator in the Milford shop. The applicant should have experience in heavyduty equipment operations and possess a valid driver's license and possession of a CDL license (or the ability to retain one by the first date of employment). A pre-employment drug test will be administered prior to full-time employment.

Applications can be obtained at the Engineer's Office at 1802 Hill Avenue, Suite #2101 in Spirit Lake or on the website at https://dickinsoncountyiowa.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2023/01/Application-for-Employment.pdf. Completed applications must be submitted to the Engineer's office at 1802 Hill Avenue, Suite 2101, Spirit Lake, Iowa. The position will remain open until it is filled. CARLES AND THE STATE OF THE STA

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IOWA LAKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE is accepting applications for a full-time

ALLIED HEALTH COORDINATOR

located on the Emmetsburg Campus with travel to other campuses as needed.

Primary responsibilities include assisting the Director of Allied Health Workforce Education with day-to-day processes. Must be highly motivated and work with minimal supervision; be able to work closely with others as needed. May require some evening and weekend hours and occasional overnight travel. Position will include teaching First Aid/CPR classes. High school diploma or equivalency required. Completion of a post-secondary certificate program or degree beneficial. Certified to teach First Aid/CPR or willingness to become certified upon hire required. Background/experience in healthcare field i.e., LPN, Medical Assistant, CNA, Medical Office or other healthcare related fields preferred. Salary \$22.61 per hour. Paid sick leave, vacation, and holidays. Employee health, dental, and vision insurance. Partially funded family insurance available. Employee life and disability insurance. Employee retirement plan. Review of applications will begin January 5, 2026.

View complete job description and application process at www.iowalakes.edu/employment. Contact Lynn Miller at Immiller@iowalakes.edu



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This community caregivers group meets at 10:00 every

A typical meeting might include a presentation on topics such

For more information, call 712-336-1649 or 712-330-1270.

Des Moines Opportunity in Dickinson County During the week of December 8th, NEW Cooperative,

insecurity while bringing a bit of extra joy to households during the holiday season. We extend our sincere appreciation to Land O'Lakes for their

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for every recipient. From all of us at NEW Cooperative, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!'

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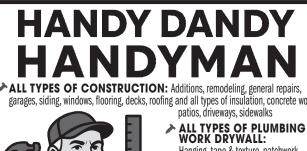
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