

How well did those  
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Zoom, Zoom, Zoom:  
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# Siouxland Life

If you've been stuck inside for the better part of the year, you know it's time to start thinking about exercising, losing weight and working on your attitude. This month, we've got plenty of suggestions to start the year off on the right foot. Dig in and see.



## ON THE COVER

Jay Todd, owner of JT Training works with client Sarah Morgan during a group training class at his Sioux City studio. Learn about his work on page 16.

Photograph by *Tim Hynds*

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## 4 PERSONALITY PLUS

Homeowner brings remembrances from past trips, fun experiences and favorite places into his custom home.

## 28

### STRETCH OUT

Yoga offers plenty of exercise (and conditioning) for fans of all ages. Stretch out and see if it's right for you, too.



## 32 SNACK RIGHT

Sure you like to graze during the day. But are you picking the right things to eat? We've got plenty of suggestions.



HOME *unique style*



# A PLACE WITH



The cement deck and back patio boast barbeques and a fire pit.







**This photo:** A customized ceiling in the dining area beside the front door hold a chandelier under the glow of the accent lighting.

**Left:** The kitchen sits beside the living room in an open floor plan with decorative pillars separating the two spaces.



# PERSONALITY



Mike Christiansen's home overlooks Sioux City.

## *Builder to bid farewell to happy home with one-of-a-kind features*

Text by Dolly A. Butz | Photographs by Jesse Brothers

Mike Christiansen built a home in Cherokee, Iowa, which was decorated all in taupe. But the lover of art and color found it “boring” and “blah.”

“I just wanted something a little louder and funner, so I built this,” Christiansen said as he stood on the first level of his concrete deck, as hues of yellow, orange and pink exploded in front of him over Sioux City’s skyline at sunset.

The 5,700-square-foot brick and stone ranch-style home with copper awnings is one-of-a-kind. It sits on a 3.3 acres in the city’s Morningside neighborhood and features stunning views, which can be seen from custom windows.





Decorative pillars separate two distinct areas in Mike Christiansen's home.



Mike Christiansen raises the motorized vent over the gas stove in his large kitchen.

Christiansen, who recently put his home on the market in an effort to downsize in retirement, said he feels a bit sad to let it go. It took him roughly two years to build, beginning in 2005.

"It's time to let someone else enjoy it," Christiansen said before climbing the stairs to the deck's covered second level, passing the grill and entering glass doors into the home's large eat-in kitchen.

The kitchen features a breakfast area, Roman gold limestone countertops and an oversized cherry island. Although the kitchen, dining room and great room are open to each other, white pillars perched on see-through shelving between the dining and great room provide definition. Barb Maxon, a realtor with Century 21 ProLink, said Christiansen was ahead of his time.

"Mike was doing an open floor plan before an open floor plan was even popular."

BARB MAXON, REALTOR WITH CENTURY 21 PROLINK



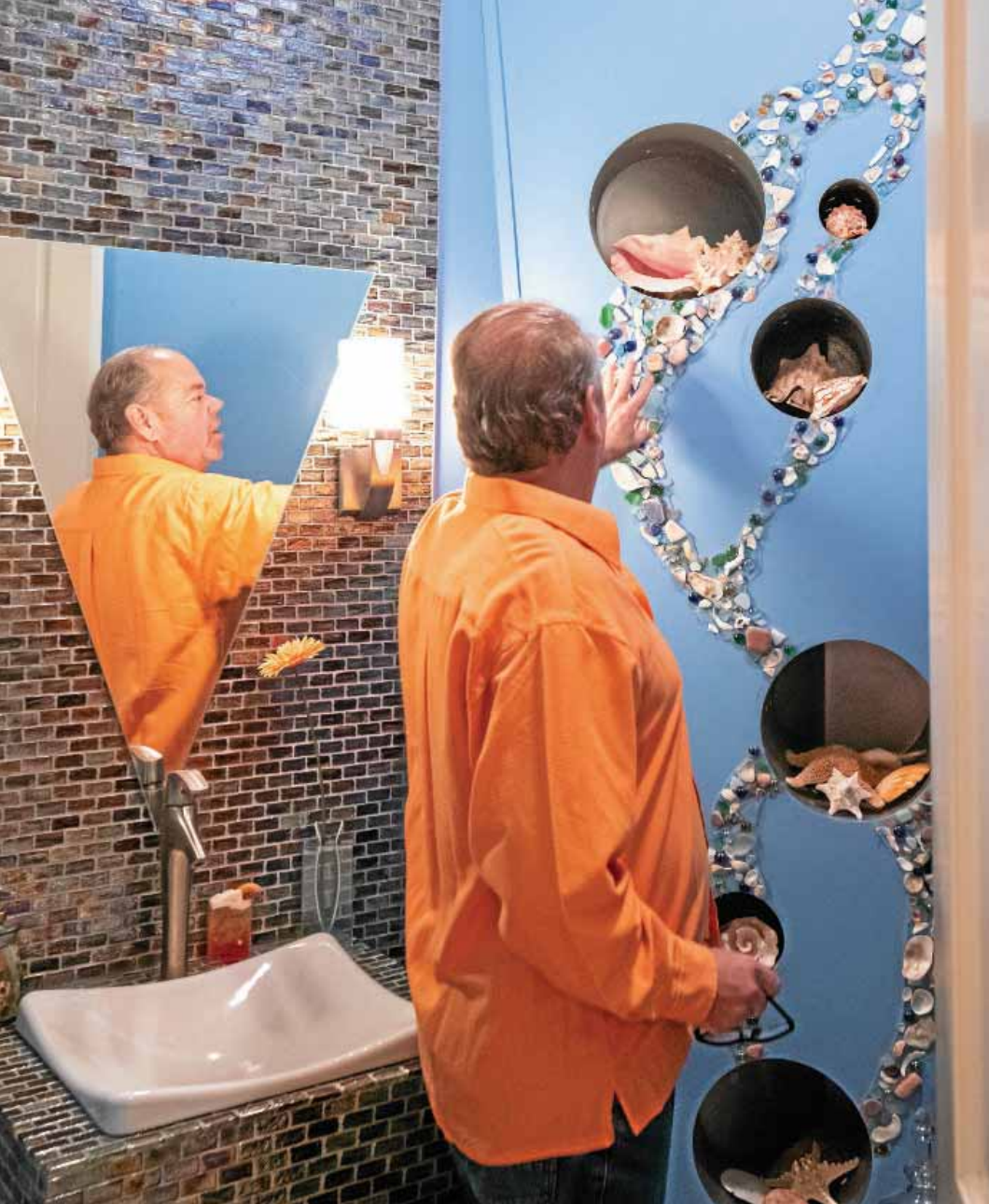


Fall colors of orange, red, and blue decorate the living room.



Above: Mike Christiansen stands on the stairs of his home in Sioux City. Left: A second dining area beside the kitchen includes a television and sitting area under the windows with views overlooking Sioux City.





**Left:** A main floor bathroom is decorated with seashells collected and arranged by Mike Christiansen and his two sons.

**Below:** The front room is set up as a perfect office and includes a beamed ceiling.



"Mike was doing an open floor plan before an open floor plan was even popular. And, this color of light fixtures — that's what we're doing now," she said pointing to the brushed nickel chandelier hanging in the foyer.

The late Patty Thompson, of Thompson Interior Design, decorated the home. The bold colors and swirl design on two upholstered chairs sitting in the great room inspired the home's colors.

"She had all kinds of ideas and introduced a lot of cool things and colors," Christiansen said. "She showed me a whole bunch of fabric and I picked out that fabric and we worked off that."

The walls in the kitchen, dining and living area are painted shades of yellow and green and the flooring is hand scraped walnut. The light-blue ceiling in the great room is 16 feet high and accented with double crown molding. Natural light floods through two sets of transom

windows flanking the gas fireplace.

The double entry glass front doors with a curved design and the formal dining room's curved wall and sheetrock ceiling with crown molding add additional dramatic flair.

"Originally, I designed it as a coffered ceiling that went up and then I didn't like it, so I filled it in and brought it down," Christiansen said of the ceiling in the dining room. "I wanted to separate it somehow. The spaces are so big."

Also on the main level is a laundry room, office, half bathroom and the master suite.

The office exudes warmth and elegance with its cherry-beamed ceilings and wainscoting. On the other side of the office, the half bathroom pays homage to the sea. Iridescent tiles surround a triangular mirror and the sink, while a pebble and seashell mosaic runs up a blue wall with circular lit cubbies holding large seashells.

"At different vacations the boys and I went on, we picked up shells and rocks and stuff like that. I had a couple one-gallon ice cream buckets full of them, and I had that space in the back. I filled it in and took some PVC pipe and drilled holes in it."

**MIKE CHRISTIANSEN, HOME OWNER**



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**Above:** The master bathroom has a Roman theme with pillars and dome ceiling with accent lights to illuminate the sky painting. **Below:** The master bathroom has a rainfall showerhead with jets on both sides of the walls.



"At different vacations the boys and I went on, we picked up shells and rocks and stuff like that. I had a couple one-gallon ice cream buckets full of them, and I had that space in the back. I filled it in and took some PVC pipe and drilled holes in it," Christiansen said. "We wanted it like flowing with all the water and the colors and the blues and the shells."

At the end of the hallway is the master suite. The light-blue room has a double tray ceiling, gas fireplace and walk-in closet. The master bathroom has a special Roman-themed dome that is painted like the sky. White pillars stretch from the side of the whirlpool tub to the ceiling. Double vanities with limestone counters,



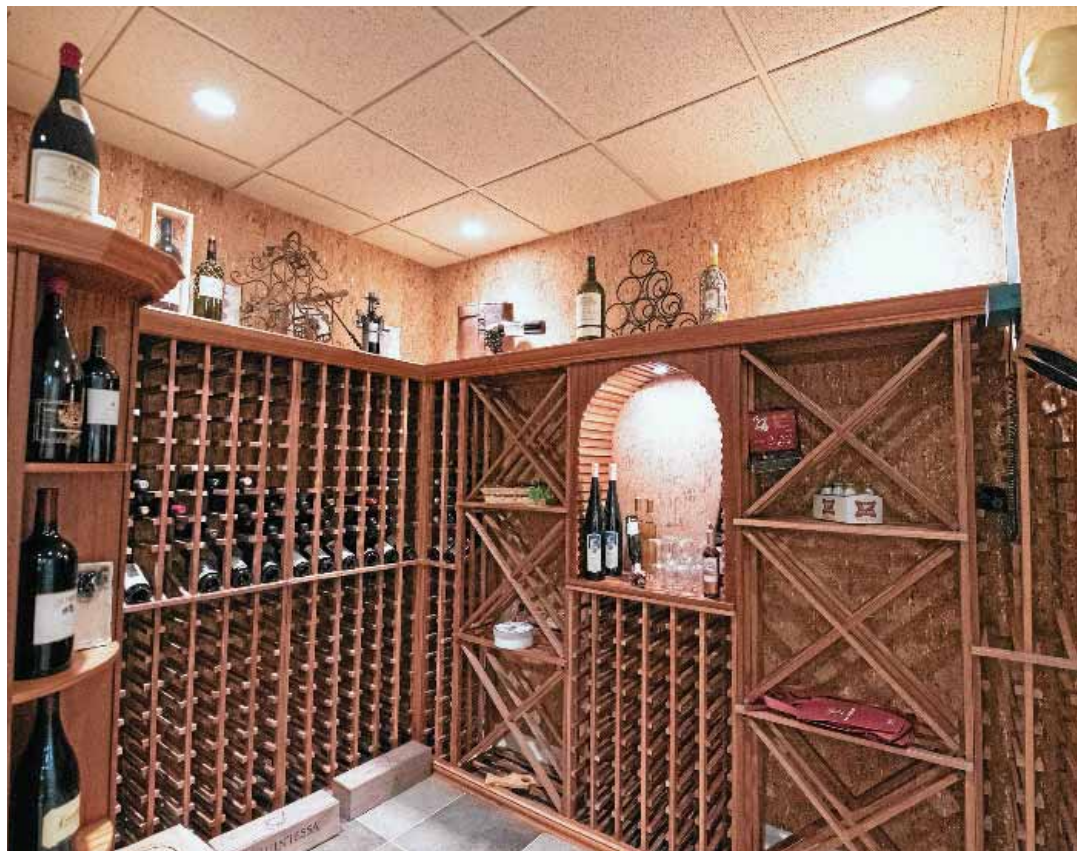


heated floors and a walk-in shower with Italian tile round out the space.

"It's like the Venetian," Maxon said of the ceiling.

Christiansen interjected, "I think I was inspired from a casino. Caesar's Palace, probably."

Walk down the staircase in the great room to the lower level, where you'll find a family room that walks out to a large patio, game room area with space for a pool table, steam room, two more bedrooms with egress windows and double closets, another bathroom, 1,200-bottle thermostatically-controlled wine cellar with cork wallpaper, and, a wet bar with cherry cabinets, enclosed fish tank and eye-catching ceiling.



The large, humidity controlled wine cellar downstairs has cork walls.



The downstairs area can be used as a game room or living room complete with bedrooms, a steam room and a bar.



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The bar downstairs was decorated to follow the theme of the fish tank set into the back wall.



The full bathroom downstairs has dual sinks and a bright color scheme.

"I kind of built the bar around the fish and the theme of fish. This is the waves," Christiansen said, pointing to the plastic and metal wavy ceiling above the bar.

Maxon said the house is the only house that she has come across in her 45 years in real estate that has a wavy ceiling.

"That's why I love this house. It's such a fun house," she said. "Everywhere you go, you just are happy."



A steam room opposite the bar downstairs is equipped with timer controls and a speaker in the ceiling wired to a sound system which plays music throughout Mike Christiansen's home.



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# SHAPING UP

*Personal trainer says variety is key to any fitness routine*

Text by Earl Horlyk  
Photographs by Tim Hynds

SIoux CITY — Whenever he consults with a new client, personal trainer Jay Todd never promises the world.

Instead, the JT Training owner simply says he wants to make their lives “one click better.”

“If I can make them do one more push-up or help them avoid eating something unhealthy, I’ll do it,” Todd said, inside an office at his 2122 Fourth St. fitness studio. “The best things in life are done one click at a time.”

Todd ought to know. A sports medicine professional with more than 25 years of experience, he has taught at colleges while training clients who run the gamut from athletes to beauty queen to people off the street.

But each assessment starts with the same question: what goal are you hoping to achieve regarding your athletic ability or persona fitness?

“I’m working with clients, ranging in age from 8 to 80,” Todd explained. “While I can train an elite athlete, most people don’t want to become elite athletes.”

In fact, they may simply want to lose weight, tone lean muscles and while getting into better shape.

“We personally create every program based upon evaluations using proven scientific principles of exercise physiol-



Jay Todd, owner of JT Training works with clients during a group training class at his Sioux City studio.

ogy,” Todd said.

That may include everything from weight loss and body fat reduction to muscular strength and endurance to reducing pain and improving balance and flexibility.

Plus Todd promises to such activities will be done in a non-intimidating fashion.

“Walking into fitness facilities can be challenging for people,” he said. “It is a misconception that everybody who goes to a gym is in perfect shape.”

## SHAPE UP WITH A PERSONAL TRAINER

**WHAT:** JT Training

**WHERE:** 2122 4th St., Sioux City

**PHONE:** 712-259-0504

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“That simply isn’t true,” Todd said, shaking his head.

A recent noontime class had a mix of fitness buffs as well as people simply

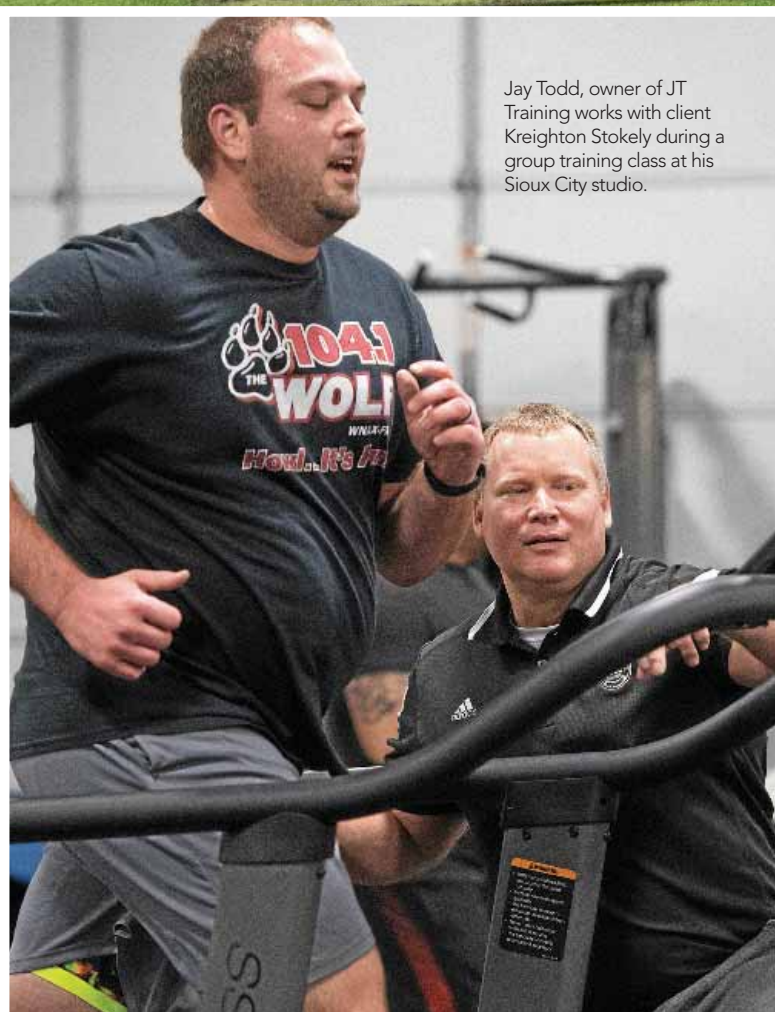


Jay Todd, owner of JT Training works with Nicole Garber during a group training class at his Sioux City studio.





Jay Todd, owner of JT Training works with client Sarah Morgan during a group training class at his Sioux City studio.



Jay Todd, owner of JT Training works with client Kreighton Stokely during a group training class at his Sioux City studio.

wanting to get back into shape after the holidays.

OK, level with us. How much time is this really going to take?

"Most people have neither the desire or the flexibility to spend two hours at a gym," Todd said. "That's why we try to pare everything down as much as much as possible."

For instance, his clients do the work of a typical 60-minute session, only in half that time.

Indeed, Todd and his assistants choreograph sessions into rapid-fire sections, having clients go from station to station with little rest in between.

"You have to keep programs fun, challenging and ever-changing," he explained. "Every time a person comes to work out it will be a different routine."

"Nobody gets into a rut around here," Todd said while putting his noontime crew through the motions.

This can make exercise the ultimate stress reliever.

"My clients come to me in all shapes, ages and abilities," Todd explained. "If they commit to a program, they'll learn proper technique, get into shape while having a blast doing it."

Which is, ultimately, what Todd's clients want.

"They're looking for individual results from programs designed with them in mind," he said. "Nothing is worse than a boring exercise class and we don't do boring here."





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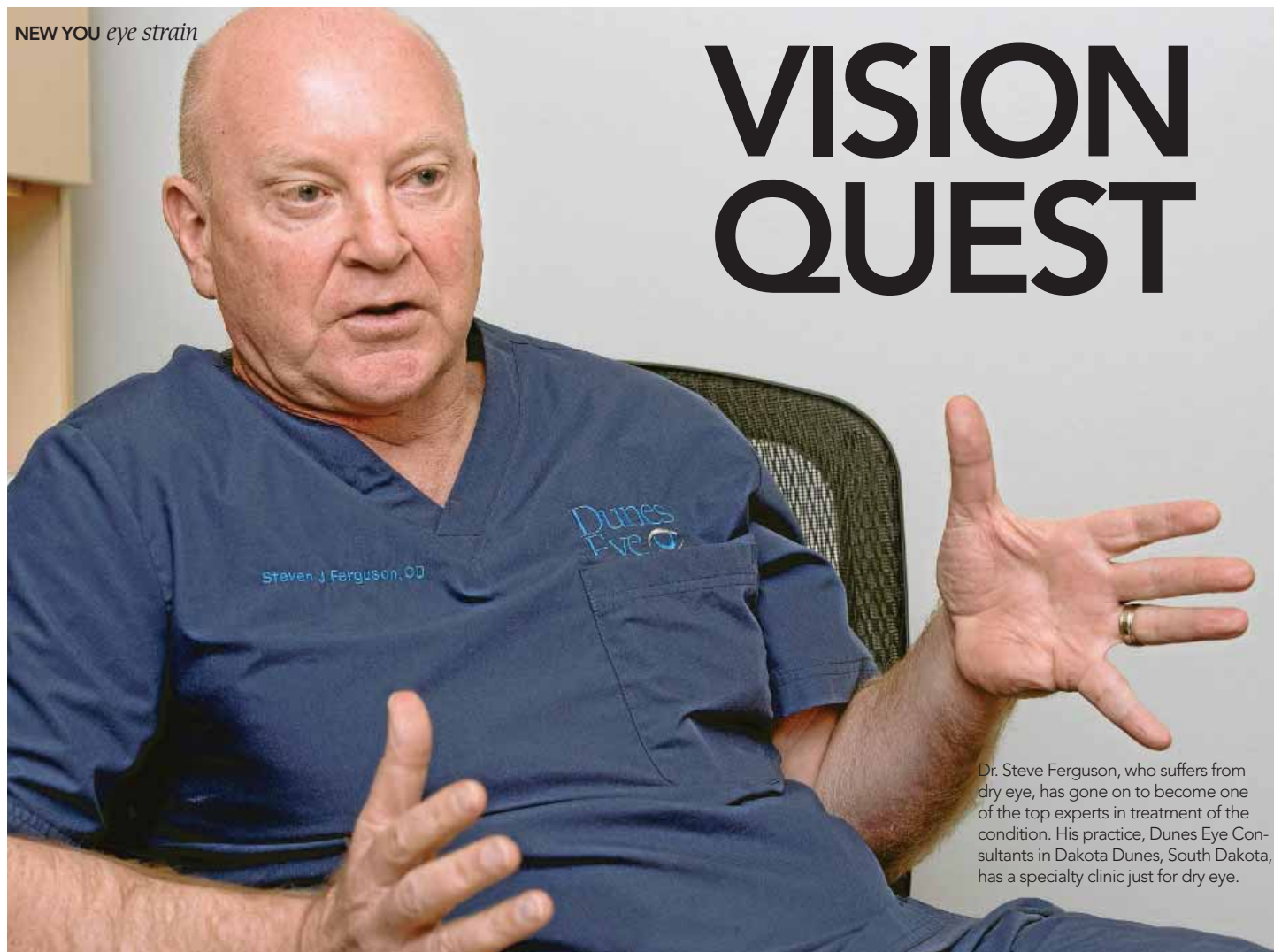
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# VISION QUEST



Dr. Steve Ferguson, who suffers from dry eye, has gone on to become one of the top experts in treatment of the condition. His practice, Dunes Eye Consultants in Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, has a specialty clinic just for dry eye.

*Keeping your peepers on a screen causing eye strain? Well, you're not alone!*

Text by Earl Horlyk | Photograph by Tim Hynds

**D**AKOTA DUNES — Are your eyes always tired, red or itchy? Do you experience blurry vision, headaches as well as pain in your back and shoulders?

You may be suffering from computer eye strain.

According to the Vision Council, a non-profit trade association of optical manufacturers, nearly 60 percent of people who routinely use computer, smartphone and other digital devices experience some form of eye strain.

"Digital eye strain is very common," Dr. Steven Ferguson, of Dunes Eye Consultants, explained. "It is actually becoming much more prevalent."

Indeed, the American Eye Association estimates that U.S. workers spend about seven hours, every day, in front of a screen.

The discomfort a person feels from all of this time comes from the contrast of text against the background, the glare and the flickering screen.

This adds up to plenty of blue light emissions. Whether it is coming from fluorescent lights, a device or, even, the sun, blue light exposure is detrimental to eye health.

"Blue light emission can cause headaches or migraines as well as eye fatigue and pain," Ferguson said. "It can even suppress melatonin production that can lead to the disruption of sleep, while contributing to eye disorders."

Such eye disorders can include myopia or nearsightedness.

At the very least, computer eye strain can appear to be a minor issue. However if serious, the problem can impact a person's work productivity and, even, quality of life.

"It's terrible when you feel aches, pains and have problems seeing," Ferguson said. "Thankfully, there have been advances when it comes to blue light filters as well as protective eyewear."

Other solutions may be easier than that.

The American Eye Association recommends turning your phone or computer off at least two or three hours before you go to bed.

Another solution would be to change light bulbs to warmer tones or colors. Even opting for more natural light if possible while avoiding fluorescent lighting if at all possible.

Perhaps the best advice is to give your eyes a break.

Try looking away from your screen at least every 20 minutes to let your eyes reset.

Ferguson, himself a dry eye sufferer, knows how hard it is to avoid computer eye strain.

"Whether you're a child, doing homework, or if you're an office person, sitting with a spreadsheet, take care of your eyes," he said. "Everybody needs some relief."



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Customized townhome with vaulted ceiling in living room. The eat in kitchen has lots of cabinets. Lower level features unique brick walls.

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**947 Willow Dr, Dakota Dunes, SD**



3  
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Ranch townhome with soaring vaulted ceiling in living room. Kitchen has been updated with new white and gray cabinets and granite countertops. Family room with large wet bar in lower level.

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NEW YOU clean and fit

Instructor Amy Kleinberg leads a Group Power class at Four Seasons Health Club in Sioux City in January.

# A WEIGHTY ISSUE

*Health club classes are designed to put COVID-fearful minds at ease*

Text by Dolly A. Butz | Photographs by Tim Hynds

SIOUX CITY — Although Four Seasons Health Club is operating at 25 percent capacity amid the COVID-19 pandemic, most fitness classes are still being offered in-person.

“We haven’t really taken too many classes off the schedule. We’ve been able to maintain them,” said Tim Clark, Four Seasons’ corporate sales and marketing manager. “Some classes that were predominantly with seniors, those are still on hold. Based on feedback from members in that group and the instructors, we just felt that was the best thing.”

That doesn’t mean members who take fitness classes at the 85,000-square-foot facility haven’t noticed some big changes. The health club uses an app for contactless check-in and class sizes have been scaled back to allow for a distance of more than six feet between participants.

“Another big change is, in between each set, before you’re going to go to the next station in a circuit class, for example, the members have to stop, sanitize the station where they are, and then they can move on to the next station,” Clark said.

Clark, a Johns Hopkins certified COVID-19 contract tracer, said it was “a mistake” for the state to lump health



Instructor Amy Kleinberg leads a Group Power class at Four Seasons Health Club in Sioux City in January.

clubs in with bars and restaurants when it came to COVID-19 mitigation efforts, as health clubs are “safe environments.” He noted that Four Seasons’ HVAC system refreshes the air 12 to 24 times every hour.

“I think you’d be hard-pressed to find any other business in the tri-state

area that has that certification,” he said. “When it comes to contact tracing, fitness centers should be held up as the example. We know exactly when somebody was here and who else was here and around them, potentially.”

For members who don’t feel comfortable attending classes in-person, Clark



said Four Seasons offers Fitness on Demand, a virtual library with roughly 1,000 professional fitness videos, which they can stream on phone, laptop or smart TV.

"There are many who are not going to feel comfortable going anywhere until they have the vaccine. People with chronic illnesses were just basically becoming very sedentary, so now there are health issues worsening that were under control or managed better when they coming in and working out or just moving," he said.

In fact, Clark said Four Seasons even now offers a virtual-only membership. Virtual offerings range from mindfulness to high impact exercise videos, which are led by professional instructors. While Clark said the health club has the ability to livestream classes, he said the demand isn't quite there yet. To take advantage of a virtual members, there is no need for a home gym or a bunch of equipment, according to Clark.

"The videos tell them upfront approximately how many calories you burn, what level — if it's beginning to a seasoned person who has been working out for years, and what equipment, if any, you would need at home," he said.

Clark said maintaining fitness during the pandemic really comes down to moving your own way. He understands that coming into a fitness center is "intimidat-



Instructor Amy Kleinberg leads a Group Power class at Four Seasons Health Club in Sioux City in January. Most of the facility's fitness classes are available to members in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ing" even in normal times, but his advice is to "just show up."

"The people who come here, they're not stick-thin. We're normal and we're all works in progress. We're a community that will help people on whatever goals they want to achieve."

Clark also cautions against comparing the beginning of your fitness journey with someone who is in the middle of

theirs. He encourages newcomers to try out some of the classes, make some friends and stick with it.

"As we say around here, fit is fit and that looks different on everybody," he said. "Just get out and move, whether that be coming to a facility like ours and you use the open air upper deck for brisk walking three times a week at 20 minutes."



**Mike Clausen**  
HBA President  
Contractors Supply

## FIGHT THE WINTER BLUES BY BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN



People are spending significantly more time at home as a result of COVID-19, which has

led to shifts in habits and a renewed focus on how their homes live and breathe. With winter in full swing, healthy habits and homes will become increasingly important: Approximately 20% of the population suffers from seasonal depression. Here are three ways to help fight the winter blues by bringing the outdoors in.

### Use Natural Materials

Wood is a great way to add warmth to any home, whether in flooring, furniture or finishes. Various options and colors are available — from light ash and bamboo to deep mahogany and cherry — to match your décor. Other materials, such as stone and organic fibers, can make an impact as well.

Studies have also shown the benefits of indoor plants, including improved air quality and reduced stress — both of which are highly beneficial to a work-from-home environment.

### Pay Attention to Lighting

A bonus for many who are able to work from home is the decreased exposure to fluorescent lighting, which can increase the risk for migraines and eye strain. Instead, try to allow as much natural light into your home as possible. Daylight provides access to vitamin D, a nutrient linked to fighting illness, heart disease and depression, as well as boosting weight loss. Incorporating circadian lighting — which mimics the range of color temperatures and intensity throughout the day — can also boost your mood, especially where natural light may not be available, and improve your sleep.

### Incorporate Nature-Inspired Finishes and Design

In addition to natural finishes, patterns that reflect natural elements — from leaves to birds to shells — can also infuse the outdoors into your décor. Experts anticipate rich earth tones will also be popular to contribute warmth to homes in 2021, and a number of paint companies have selected calming shades of blue as their 2021 color of the year, reflecting natural elements such as water and the sky. Examples include Benjamin Moore's Aegean Teal, Sherwin Williams' Urbane Bronze and PPG's palette of Transcend, Big Cypress and Misty Aqua.

For more information on ways to boost your home environment, visit with your local contractor. You can find one at [www.sioxlandhba.com/members](http://www.sioxlandhba.com/members).

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NEW YOU *coronavirus trials*

Dr. Lawrence Volz was a volunteer in a COVID-19 vaccine trial.

# TRIAL RUN





Jessica Stultz participated in the COVID-19 vaccine trial at Meridian Clinical Research in Sioux City.

## Siouxland trials provide key information to solving coronavirus problems

Text by *Mason Docktor* | Photographs by *Tim Hynds, Jesse Brothers*

SIOUX CITY — Some COVID-19 vaccine trial participants in the Sioux City metro this past year were party to an unusual distinction.

Enough of them were infected during the course of the trials (those who received placebos were far more likely to contract the virus than those who received a real vaccine) that the Meridian Clinical Research site here was among the top five trial locations in terms of how many subjects were infected during the course of the study. Sioux City became a site of intense interest from vaccine developers.

Perhaps it comes as no surprise. Hundreds of vaccine-trial participants were enrolled here as Woodbury County suffered a tragic outbreak, in which more than 12 percent of the county's residents became infected, a per-capita infection rate roughly double the national average. (These figures do not take into account those whose infections went undiagnosed and unreported.)

"There was a lot of focus from the

sponsors on that site because of how many ill patients unfortunately they had there, but that meant the site had to do a lot of work and the subjects had to do a lot of work, when they did have an illness," said Dr. Brandon Essink, a Meridian vaccine investigator who works in Omaha and oversees several Meridian sites.

Meridian Clinical Research, the drug research firm with an office in Sioux City (formerly Dakota Dunes) sprung into prominence last year when they rolled out trials of coronavirus vaccines. Two of the most prominent vaccines, made by Moderna and Pfizer, were tested in the Sioux City metro. Both those vaccines were found to be highly effective at preventing infection and serious illness.

Jessica "Jessy" Stultz of Sioux City took part in the Moderna vaccine trial at Meridian last summer. She was excited for the opportunity to be vaccinated, to be



Essink

part of the solution.

But, as it turned out, she received a placebo. In November she came down with the coronavirus, one of hundreds who were infected in the Sioux City metro during the frightening surge that month.

"I don't think I did (get the vaccine) because I did end up with COVID right before Thanksgiving," said Stultz.

Dr. Lawrence "Larry" Volz, the chief medical officer at MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center, took part in the Moderna trial this summer, for much the same reasons as Stultz.

"Sioux City, we got hit pretty hard, and in my position it takes up about 80 percent of each day of mine, is dealing with COVID anymore," Volz said. "So, really just trying to be the solution. I knew that we weren't going to get beyond this without a vaccine.

"I think, sort of as a leader in that community, I think I needed to show that I wasn't afraid to get the vaccine. And so I could tell people, 'Hey, I believe in this, I was part of the trial!'" he added.



His syringe was full of placebo and, like Stultz, he got the coronavirus in November.

"I'd gotten antibodies checked after I got the vaccine, and I did not have antibodies, so I pretty much knew I'd gotten a placebo," Volz said. "And then actually got COVID kind of early thereafter."

Being front-line medical worker, Volz was one of the earliest people in Sioux City to receive a COVID-19 vaccine this winter. Stultz, meanwhile, was anticipating getting the vaccine in mid-January through Moderna, as it "unblinded" its trial participants and gave those who'd received placebo the opportunity to receive a vaccine.

Both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines received emergency use authorization from the FDA, even though clinical trials were not yet completed, because of the threat posed by the coronavirus. "The study's not over. And I keep saying that over and over, if these EUAs get approved, the studies aren't over, in fact they're reaching the most critical phases right now, which is making sure that the long-term safety is there," Essink said.

Volz and Stultz have both run into people who express uncertainty about the vaccine. Those fears sometimes include elements of social-media posts (the idea that the vaccine could implant



a microchip or cause infertility) or more generalized anxiety about a vaccine that was developed so quickly.

"I have conversations with people who are reluctant to get the vaccine. And we're not trying to force people to get it, but we just want to make sure they're making informed decisions about the vaccine, and that they're not just following social media stories about the microchip and the infertility stories," Volz said.

"If there's anything we can do, let's do it. Why would you not do it, to make the world, Iowa, the U.S.A., safer for everybody?" Stultz said. "There's always a risk, with everything. Any new medication, any new vaccine, there's going to be people saying this and that. But again, do you

want to walk around in fear constantly? Why would you not try to do something?"

Interest remains strong in the vaccine trials, Essink said, despite the fact that the vaccine rollout has begun, partly because many people won't be eligible for vaccination for an indeterminate amount of time. He predicted that healthcare workers may not be participating much in future vaccine studies, because they're among the few who have early access to the vaccine.

"I do think as we get further along with more people can meet the criteria for the vaccines, it's going to be a little bit tougher (to enlist participants), but there's still a very limited supply that's available for distribution," Essink said.



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Larry Bower stretches during a yoga class at the Siouxland Center for Active Generations in Sioux City.

# THE SENIOR STRETCH

*Yoga proves to be effective exercise  
for an aging population*

Text by Earl Horlyk | Photographs by Tim Hynds

SIOUX CITY — Since he is decked out in a “I Survived the 60s Twice” T-shirt, is Larry Bower ready to turn on, tune in or drop out?

We don’t know, but as the only man in a yoga class at the Siouxland Center for Active Generations, he is surprisingly limber.

“I don’t mind being the token male in class,” the Sioux City man says, mid-

stretch. “Yoga really help me stay in shape.”

Indeed, yoga has been called one of the best forms of exercise for older adults. Over time and with proper training, seniors can improve their flexibility and balance, enhance their strength and boost their mood.

Those are the reasons that drew Bower for yoga more than five years



Lois Albertson works out during a yoga class at the Siouxland Center for Active Generations in Sioux City.



ago. What keeps him coming back is the camaraderie of the people attending the class.

"I wouldn't come if I wasn't having fun and getting positive results," he explains.

Still, Bowers is a relative newbie compared to Lois Albertson, a yoga aficionado for more than 20 years.

"I think of it as a form of preventive medicine," she says. "Yoga can help ease the aches and pains a person feels as they get older. I always feel good after a yoga class."

This is good news for Kaye Plantenberg, who had taught a weekly Chair Yoga class at the 313 Cook St. community center for the past few years.

"Everybody can do some yoga moves," she says. "But everybody may not be comfortable doing it on a mat on the floor."

Which is why Plantenberg's students perform classic moves in a seated position.

"The sad fact is we're not always as flexible as we were when younger," she says. "Chair yoga is a safer approach while maintaining all of the health benefits of regular yoga."

Always interested in physical fitness, Plantenberg began teaching a Silver Sneakers class for senior citizens while living in Grand Island, Nebraska.

"Balance and core training is so important as we get older," she advises. "Perhaps just as important is psychological benefit of yoga."

In fact, Plantenberg always begins her class with a series of breathing exercise.

"Yoga allows you to become aware of how to breathe," she says. "This is how you can improve brain function, lower stress levels and increase lung capacities."

Sadly, this may have been easier said than done during a pandemic.

Even though the Siouxland Center for Active Generations continue to offer yoga several times a week, Plantenberg has yet to resume her every regular class due to concerns over COVID-19.

"I still walk, ride my exercise bike and continue my yoga exercises at home," she says. "I'm planning to start my chair yoga classes back in the future."

While she respects Plantenberg's ability to maintain a fitness program at home, Sue Lundgren needs a bit more peer pressure.

"I like coming to a class," Lundgren, who recently retired after a 35 year career at MercyOne Siouxland Health Care, admits. "At home, I may start doing yoga. Then, I'd lose focus and start doing laundry."

That's unfortunate since she needs more energy.



Alice Reeg, front, Bev Weseman and Sue Lundgren stretch during a yoga class, at the Siouxland Center for Active Generations in Sioux City.



Beverly Hall, front, and Lois Albertson work on a pose.

"Even though I'm no longer working, I still have to babysit my two grandkids on occasion," Lundgren says. "Why did I take up yoga? Because now I have the time. Plus I want to keep up with an active 3-year-old and an active 8-year-old."

For Albertson, coming to class is also a way to catch up with friends.

"I know yoga is beneficial for physical and psychological reasons," she says, smiling. "It's also just fun to come to class and make new acquaintances."





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## Availa Bank: New Name, Same Local Service By Molly Barari

### What's does Availa mean? Everything!

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Availa, which acquired First American Bank in 2017, offers new mortgage and refinance loans, military homeownership assistance, construction loans, business loans, instant issue debit cards, free personal and business checking options, and mobile banking & deposits. Availa customers can also enjoy the convenience of applying for a mortgage online.

Curious about some of the friendly faces you'll find at the Sioux City branch? Get to know some of the bank's leaders below.

### Jason Rasmus, Sioux City Market President

Jason joined the Availa family a few months ago. He brings impressive experience to his new position, with close to 15 years in banking. The last nine years found him in commercial banking, with the previous five years in the Des Moines metro. He found a love for banking while studying business at Iowa State University.

There's one part of this job that stands out to Jason. "Working with business owners and being part of the discussions on how they run their business – and why they operate in certain ways – is fascinating. The highlight of every day for me is being in front of both customers and prospective customers."

Jason lives in Lawton with his wife, Courtney, and their four children: Jacob, Ellie, Brynn, and Caleb. He is involved in various boards of directors, including the United Way And Big Brothers Big Sisters. He is also a volunteer coach for youth sports. He enjoys hunting in the winter months and spends the summer months swimming and traveling with his family.

### Jon Friessen, Vice President Senior Loan Officer

Jon joined Availa Bank at the same time as Jason, and like Jason, he's no stranger to the banking world. He's been involved with loans for the past 14 years, with a specialization in business banking.

With a degree in finance and an acumen for problem-solving, Jon enjoys working with small-business customers. "What I find most fulfilling in my role is solving problems with everyday business," he says.

As a lifelong Sioux City resident, Jon has an important understanding of local business needs and the people he serves at Availa. In his free time, Jon is busy with his family which includes his wife, Niki, and their three children. They live in Hinton and enjoy traveling when they have the chance.

Jon gives back to his community as a board member for New Perspectives, Inc. and as a United Way volunteer. He is also a volunteer coach for youth sports.

### Monica Fay, Vice President Mortgage Loan Officer

With over 20 years of experience in the banking industry, Monica brings a wealth of knowledge to her Availa clients. Monica's roles over the years have included teller, personal banker, branch manager, mortgage loan processor, and loan originator.

In her current role as VP Mortgage Loan Officer, Monica's job is to educate customers on how to make their homeownership dreams a reality. "I'm a financial dream weaver," she says.

Monica has been with Availa since 2017. She is originally from Grand Island, NE, and has degrees in business management and early childhood education. She has held banking jobs in several states and with multiple banks. Her favorite aspect of her work is building relationships with her clients.

"Buying a home is an important milestone in a person's life," says Monica. "Whether a person is buying a first home or refinancing, the process can be confusing and overwhelming. I enjoy helping clients navigate the process. It often takes creative solutions to achieve their desired result."

Monica is involved in the community as an active member of Big Brothers Big Sisters for over 20 years and as a board member for PowHer Networking Group of Siouxland. When she's not working, Monica can be found camping with her friend, Scott, or browsing flea markets and antique stores. She has a son, Jacob who works at Tyson Foods in Sioux City, and a daughter, Lyndy, who studies at Iowa State.

### Lawrence Jensen, Vice President Loan Officer

As a graduate of Sioux City North High School and the University of Iowa, Lawrence is deeply rooted in Iowa. He personally has 17 years of experience in the banking industry, holding positions ranging from Credit Analyst to Relationship Manager to Regional Business Development Officer to Market President. He now holds the title of Vice President Loan Officer at Availa.

For Lawrence, banking is about chasing the next deal and learning about the amazing companies in the area. He enjoys listening to customers' stories and finding ways to help where he can.

Banking has also provided Lawrence with the opportunity to travel predominantly through the Dakotas and northwest Iowa. "It is always fun to learn of that one large company in remote counties that is the lifeblood of a community – where the ownership family is on all the local boards and city council and provides funds for community improvement."

When Lawrence isn't chasing his next deal, you can find him serving on the boards for the LifeScape Foundation and the Okoboji Yacht Club Sailing School or serving as a volunteer assistant coach for the Morningside Women's Soccer Team. He also enjoys sailing and hanging out with his dog, Freddie.

### Logan Robbins, Retail Banking Officer

Newly hired Logan is excited to join the Availa team. As a Sioux City resident for the past eight years, he has plenty of experience with banking in the region in his previous roles as a Personal Banker and as a Service Manager.

Logan graduated from Colorado State University with a B.S. in MIS & Business Analytics. As a retail banking officer, Logan will be focusing on bringing in new deposit and lending relationships with an emphasis on customer retention and overall staff development.

Banking isn't the only thing that interests Logan. From 2010-2016, he served in the Iowa National Guard. Logan looks forward to broadening his banking knowledge and to being part of the Sioux City Availa Bank team.

### Get in Touch

Want to know more about what the Availa Bank team can do for you? Call them at 712.255.1012 or find out more at <https://www.availa.bank/>.



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## Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living

Opportunities Unlimited (OU) has been serving individuals with special needs in Siouxland since the early 1990's.

Opportunities Unlimited provides Community-Based Neurobehavioral Services and Intermediate Residential Services for individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain injury, a spinal cord injury, or other physical disability. The OU campus, which is located on the north side of Sioux City, consists of nine residential homes and a large Center that serves as the hub for therapies and activities as well as houses the administrative offices.

In addition to providing Community-Based Neurobehavioral Services and Intermediate Residential Services, OU also provides Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to children and adults with special needs. Individuals on the waiver programs can access services for a

predetermined number of hours each month, set by the individual's caseworker. These services are offered at the Opportunities Unlimited Community Center, out in the community, and in the privacy of the person served's home. OU also has two HCBS homes for individuals requiring assistance with skills needed to live in a more independent setting.

The Employment Services Department offers many vocational services to individuals with special needs to access meaningful employment.





NEW YOU *snack right*

Dried tomatoes, fruits and nuts are among the non-refrigerated nutritious snacks that can be good choices in winter months.

# MAKING BITES COUNT

*Don't just eat to pass time, make foods work for you*

Text by Cole Paxton | Photographs by Tim Hynds

How are we supposed to eat healthy snacks in the depths of winter when we're cold, sedentary and want something that will warm us up?

Be creative.

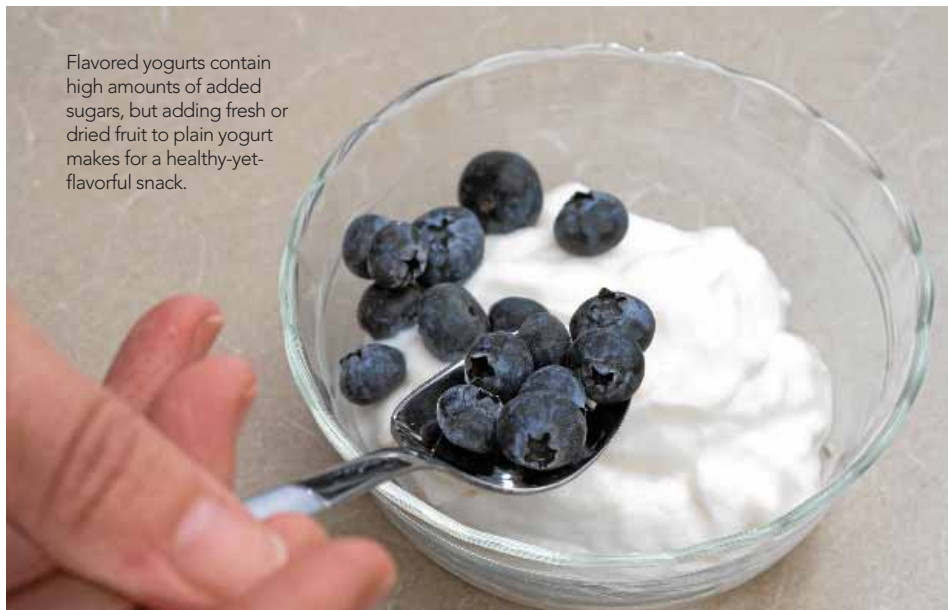
It's easy to jump for buttery popcorn, deep-fried fast food and anything else we can stuff into a microwave. But how about turning last night's steamed broccoli side into today's snack? What about preparing a peanut butter sandwich? Or a small serving of homemade soup?

That's the message from Renee Sweers, a nutrition and wellness specialist at the Iowa State University extension in Sioux City.

"When we're thinking about a hot snack, (we can be) thinking about a different mindset than how we've thought about snacks before — different types of foods," Sweers said.

That fits with the overall nutrition

Flavored yogurts contain high amounts of added sugars, but adding fresh or dried fruit to plain yogurt makes for a healthy-yet-flavorful snack.





strategy Sweers espouses, the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans from federal authorities, that call for a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, dairy and whole grains. In a sentence, Sweers said, the message people should take to heart is “make every bite count.”

Whether to find comfort from the frightful outdoors or to wean off the copious sweets of the holidays, every snack bite needs to count, too. That doesn’t have to mean no more favorite foods; rather, it’s critical to categorize delicacies into regular snacks and occasional treats.

“Occasionally having a treat of a cookie or candy is different than making that your regular everyday snacks,” Sweers said. “That difference can start young, with our children, and really help them be in the habit of eating those foods that are what we call nutrient-dense foods, or snacks, and not have them have the expectation that a snack is a treat.”

If that’s too challenging — or, frankly, doesn’t sound worthwhile — to adults, it might be time to bid adieu to bites between meals. Dietary guidelines show Americans are eating copious amounts of grains but nowhere near enough produce, so a late-morning piece of white bread toast and mid-afternoon handful of crackers could be necessary cuts.

It’s a different story for children, however, who don’t get their full servings of nutrients in meals. Sweers suggested parents prepare a plate of fruit with a few small pieces of a snack cake mixed in, an example of the “make every bite count” mentality where most bites are nutritious and a few are less healthy.

In some cases, though, finding that balance is tricky, and what may seem healthful on first glance doesn’t look so good with a deeper examination. For example: flavored yogurt (make it plain with berries), sugary cereals (more bad stuff and less good stuff than whole-grain varieties), chocolate milk (far higher in added sugar than white milk) and bread at restaurants that is a darker color or has some seeds.

“In the spirit of thinking about the fact that we’re getting plenty of grains and they’re not whole grains, if you can restrain on that bread it’s probably a good idea,” Sweers said. “Because, more than likely, in most restaurants, it’s not going to actually be much whole grain.”

Still, balance is the single most important factor. Eat out once a month? A couple of pieces of bread won’t make much impact. Several times a week? That bread adds up fast.

The same goes for beverages, which, Sweers was quick to point out, are the No. 1 source of added sugars for



Whole grains, peanut butter and bananas are classic nutritious snack foods.

#### HOW WE’RE DOING

If you’re eating a balanced, well-rounded diet, you’re ahead of the curve. Federal data shows that Americans continue to fall well short of the recommended quantities in just about every nutrition category.

Yes, that includes the usual bugaboo, vegetables: Nearly 90 percent of people didn’t eat enough of them, according to figures in the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. But whole grains take the cake. Fully 95 percent of people aren’t getting the amount they should.

To see a summary of nutrition habits data, see this story at [siouxcityjournal.com](http://siouxcityjournal.com).



Renee Sweers, a nutrition and wellness specialist at the ISU Extension Service in Sioux City, holds a plate of cut vegetables at her office. Cooking the vegetables can provide a warm-yet-healthy snack perfect for cold winter months.

Americans. Sodas are the biggest culprit — “there’s no other way to say it than that’s not a good snack” — but another classic wintertime warmup, the fancy espresso drink, can wreak havoc on a well-balanced diet. That’s especially so if it becomes a daily habit.

But Sweers, who drew on a nearly endless supply of nutritious concoctions from the recipe section of ISU’s Spend Smart. Eat Smart. page, had ideas for warm beverages, too. They included classics, like hot tea. They included healthier versions of old-time favorites, like a lower-sugar hot chocolate. And they in-

cluded innovative creations, like a water-fruit juice mix warmed in the microwave or a stovetop hot pumpkin drink.

In other words, there’s no perfect diet. Just about anything can fit as a snack so long as it offers some nutrient value and isn’t too big.

“We like to say any food fits, but, again, going back to the notion of make every bite count, there are some foods that are not going to pack much of a nutritional punch,” Sweers said. “They fit, but perhaps one of the approaches someone needs to take is not including them quite as often.”





# Unity

Tammie Peterson, UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's behavioral health manager, is shown at the Sioux City hospital. Peterson said she has seen a decrease in the demand for behavioral health services as patients are waiting longer to seek help amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

← Hosp

## DEALING WITH ISOLATION

*Dietary changes could help curb feelings of loneliness*

Text by Dolly A. Butz | Photograph by Tim Hynds

SIOUX CITY — Loss of interest in the things you once enjoyed doing, changes in appetite and sleep, feelings of sadness, as well as a lack of energy, are red flags that it's time to seek out professional mental health care.

Tammie Peterson, behavioral health manager at UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's, said she has seen a decrease in

the demand for services as patients are waiting longer to seek help amid the pandemic because they are fearful of contracting COVID-19 at the Sioux City hospital.

"Our patients are much more ill," said Peterson, who said the individuals are a mix of new and returning patients.

Peterson said essential workers, seniors living in long-term care facilities, the homeless, and individuals who are working from home seem to be among the groups that are struggling the most with mental health issues amid the pandemic.

"A big part of coming to work and socializing with others helps keep our spirits up. If we don't have that socialization, it's harmful," she said.

Mark Westrich, St. Luke's chaplaincy manager, said the isolation that patients feel due to the hospital's COVID-19 visitor restrictions have made the situation "very, very difficult" for them. He also echoed Peterson's comments about individuals who are isolated because of their living arrangements.

"The isolation just heightens the emotional problems of their mental illness, whether it's depression specifically or not," he said. "Everything that has to do with COVID, whether they've



had the disease or not, they're affected by it."

Besides being afraid to leave their homes, Peterson said lack of employment and insurance, as well as embarrassment and denial about their condition are all factors that keep people from accessing the services that they so desperately need.

She said there are some steps people can take, including dietary changes, to curb symptoms of depression and anxiety. She said drinking tea, for example, elicits an alert state of mind.

"Dark chocolate is proven to reduce stress hormones. It takes about two weeks of eating it," she said. "Increasing your carb intake will promote the production of serotonin. Fish is also one of those things that's a mood booster because it has the Omega 3s."

Staying away from alcohol, a depressant, is key, as well as getting adequate amounts of sleep and exercise, according to Peterson. She said even talking to someone and laughing will help the brain.

"Be kind to one another. Find happiness in the small things. Make others laugh," she said.

In terms of hospitalized patients who are feeling alone, Westrich said giving them the ability to express their feelings and their frustrations to a chaplain can be very helpful. He said a typical bedside visit from a chaplain might last anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes.

"When someone is struggling, the visit might suddenly go from 5 minutes to 35 or 45 minutes, and the patient really opens up about what their struggle is, not just the medical issue, but the fact that they're not seeing family," he said. "The elderly that have come in from a nursing home haven't seen a family member face to face in months, other than waving at them through the window. That's very stressful."

Westrich said individuals who are struggling need the permission to call family members, friends or whom-ever they need to and talk about what they're experiencing.

"I can laugh about the things that are going on that are funny to me. I can cry about the things that are sad. Giving them the permission that that's OK is a big support," he said.

If you need help, call 712-279-3940 to speak with a nurse in the hospital's inpatient behavioral health unit. If you feel you might harm yourself, go to the hospital's emergency room immediately for an evaluation.



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NEW YOU *the Zoom way*

Jeana Goosmann, CEO and founder of Goosmann Law Firm, conducts a video conference interview in her Sioux City office.



# THE ZOOM ERA

## *Best practices and funny moments in videoconferencing*

Text by Mason Dockter  
Photographs by Tim Hynds

SIOUX CITY — In April, just after the start of the pandemic, Sioux City attorney Jeana Goosmann was invited to a business leaders' conference, which was originally set to be in-person in Arizona. But because of the virus, it became a virtual conference.

Meetings on Zoom and similar videoconferencing platforms — Microsoft Teams and Skype, among others — were becoming the norm at the time, but the novelty hadn't yet worn off. It was the first time Goosmann had attended an all-virtual conference.

And it ended somewhat disastrously. "It got Zoom bombed," Goosmann said in a Zoom interview in December. "I don't know if you've heard of a Zoom bombing, but it's essentially where hackers can take over the controls of the meeting. So, they were playing hard rock music and putting very inappropriate images up on the screen, for all the people that were in the conference. And the people that were in charge of the conference, they didn't know how to make it stop."

And just like that, the conference was over. But Goosmann, who would go on to host and participate in many Zoom meetings over the coming months, learned something about videoconferencing security from the experience.

The following are excerpts from interviews with several Sioux City-area users of Zoom, featuring the tips and tricks they've developed as they honed their skills.

**JEANA GOOSMANN,  
GOOSMANN LAW FIRM**

Before the pandemic, Goosmann



Jeana Goosmann and her firm are using video conferencing to connect with co-workers and clients in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Jeana Goosmann, CEO and founder of Goosmann Law Firm, conducts a video conference interview in her Sioux City, Iowa, office. Goosmann and her firm are using video conferencing to connect with co-workers and clients in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

used videoconferencing programs occasionally, mainly to overcome “a distance barrier, such as talking to a client or partner out of state who we could not meet with in person.”

Videoconferencing would become a way of life at the firm — Goosmann now does perhaps two or four video conferences a day. Goosmann said she’s more flexible with her meeting times now that commuting is a non-issue. The Goosmann Law Firm has had some fun with Zoom — their “virtual holiday party” featured special celebrity guests Jon Lovett and The Most Interesting Man in the World, the Dos Equis beer spokesman.

She’s also gotten serious about security, and has developed strategies to keep meetings on-topic — she runs her Zoom meetings much as she would an in-person meeting, coming to the meeting with a clear agenda and allowing others to speak without interrupting.

“I learned quickly to never issue a Zoom invitation without a password, and so my account from the get-go has been set up where it requires a password, or it’s only sent to that person that you’re going to be having a Zoom with by email.

“I think where people got into trouble early on is, they would post like,



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'Hey we're having this conference, join us!' on social media, and they'd put all their information there, and the hackers were able to get into it and figure out how to override what they were really trying to accomplish. Nobody wants a Zoom bomb in a business meeting.

"I have a very large ring light (a type of lamp often used for videos and photography). Because I think a lot of looking good on Zoom is lighting. We had a series of interviews for some legal work with some Fortune 500 companies. And before we went and did those interviews our marketing director one-on-one coached people on how to make sure that they improved their appearance on Zoom.

"Some people had a window right behind them. You don't want to be backlit, because then you just look like a shadow. So some people had to reposition themselves for the lighting in their office.

"Looking at the camera is a big deal, right? So treating the camera like you're looking somebody else in the eye is important. And that is still a challenge. I want to look at the person on the screen, and then if you're looking on the screen, you're not looking at the camera."



**MASON DOCKTER, SIOUXLAND LIFE**

Mara Hall, shown here in a Zoom call, helped teach instructors and students in the Lifelong Learning program at Western Iowa Tech Community College how to use Zoom when the pandemic ended in-person classes.

**MARA HALL, COORDINATOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING AT WITCC**

The Lifelong Learning program at Western Iowa Tech Community College offers a wide assortment of courses, and while it is open to anybody, is par-

ticularly popular with retirees.

Because older people are particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus, and because they so enjoy the Lifelong Learning program, the impetus was on the program's leadership to transition

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to a remote system.

Mara Hall, the program's coordinator, took it upon herself to learn the best practices of Zoom and subsequently helped the program's instructors and many of its students learn to use the program.

Some students initially rejected Zoom classes (despite Hall's entreaties to give it a shot), but others found joy in the new format, and in the end their newfound videoconferencing skills were perhaps more useful than the class content. For some, Zoom was the primary window through which they saw their grandchildren this year.

Still, even Hall has had her share of Zoom snafus that were beyond her control — she had to watch helplessly one evening as her 2-year-old daughter unraveled a roll of toilet paper during a cake-decorating class on Zoom. This interview was conducted initially over Zoom, but became a phone interview after the internet connection was disrupted.

"I feel like Zoom gets a bad rap. Because — I certainly get the Zoom fatigue. But I try really hard to make my classes an experience where, you still get to feel like you're in the room with someone even when you're not.

"We did a watercolor class. The key to that is, you have two cameras — I have my laptop that I'm talking to you on, and then I would have a tripod with my phone. And that way people can see your hands while you're working.

"This is something I personally do. When anybody signs on, like so if I was the one leading this Zoom meeting, I would've been on 15 minutes before (the meeting begins), and that's like my tech time. Some people — especially lifelong learners — they're early. Always early, always early. And that's tech time, but it's also, 'let's visit' time.

"I have a class with Russ Gifford that had 55 people in it. So, that's a lot of people and a lot of mics to manage. I would greet you, to make you feel comfortable, and then I'd also make sure that your microphone was working.

"And if it was somebody who was new, I would say, 'Does anybody need help learning how to mute or unmute or turn your camera off?' I just do a little spiel.

"I just always say, 'If you need to leave, that's the beauty of being home. Go ahead. Go to the restroom. Just go ahead and turn your camera off'.

"I always ask people to mute. As soon as I've said hello to you, you can go ahead and mute, unless you have a question. That way the dog barking,



JoAnn Gieselman, shown here in a Zoom call.

MASON DOCKTER, SIOUXLAND LIFE

or the kid running up, doesn't distract from the class.

"For my book club I'd have everybody make sure they're in gallery view, and when somebody wants to talk, I just have them actually, literally raise their hand."

#### JOANN GIESELMAN, GROWING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Growing Community Connections, a Sioux City-area group that seeks to foster collaboration between various organizations and people in the region, has hosted a number of large-scale monthly Zoom meetings.

JoAnn Gieselman, the director of Growing Community Connections, called herself a "poster child for Zoom," because of how swimmingly the transition to online meetings has gone, in spite of her initial wariness toward it.

One of their last in-person meetings, in March, was attended by Nebraska First Lady Susanne Shore. Not long after that, it became clear the in-person meetings were over and Gieselman figured, "We're just out."

But at that final in-person meeting, local Zoom maven Shelby Pierce stood up and volunteered her assistance should it become necessary to move the meetings to Zoom. Pierce helped Gieselman and others learn the ropes of Zoom and run the meetings.

Attendance has been great, and the

online meetings have been as productive, if not more so, than the in-person ones.

"Even throughout our (Zoom) meeting, we have the chatbox going on, so people in the chatbox will say, 'Hey, I'm looking for this, or I'm looking for that,' and people will say, 'I've got two of those,' or 'Contact this person, and they'll find it for you.' It's just been amazing.

"There's always a greeter. So when people come on, we always have somebody to greet them by name and tell them that we're glad to see them. The other thing that we really try to do when we open the meetings is make sure people know that they're welcome here and that they're in the right place. There's been a couple of times when I've gotten on a Zoom meeting and I'm like, 'Ooh, I'm not sure this is the one I'm supposed to be.'

"If you are more of one who just wants to come and listen, that's fine, if you want to be more engaged, that's fine. Just trying to make Zoom comfortable.

"I think the other thing that is really great is, we've really tried to key in on the chat. So getting a chance to share with each other behind the scenes — we're not offended if you're talking to each other behind the scenes, in fact that excites us that there's a lot of conversations going on and knowing that people are connecting."





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Dr. Jeremy Poulsen tells patients about the many options they might have to relieve pain at his Dunes Pain Specialists office.

# ALTERNATIVE ALTERNATIVES

*Pain-management specialists look to newer treatments*

Text by *Mason Docktor*  
Photograph by *Jesse Brothers*

For a period of about 20 years, much of the chronic and acute pain suffered by Americans was treated by opioid painkillers. It was during this time that pain became the so-called “fifth vital sign,” alongside pulse, temperature, respiration rate and blood pressure.

But in the last decade, public health officials and lawmakers became aware

of the staggering rise of opioid abuse and overdoses. Family physicians and dentists became ever-more parsimonious with these narcotics, which are in the same drug family as morphine, opium and heroin.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the volume of opioid prescriptions in the



U.S. began to fall, for the first time in years, in 2013. Between 2012 and 2017, opioid prescriptions declined roughly 28 percent. The American Medical Association reported an even steeper drop-off — a 37.1 percent slump in opioid prescriptions between 2014 and 2019.

But physicians still had patients in pain even as the Drug Enforcement Agency began keeping a closer eye on their prescription pads. American medical practice tends to treat pain more vigorously than in other countries, where pain is often viewed in a different light by physicians.

So, more and more, doctors have been referring patients to pain specialists, whose arsenal of pain-management therapies is far more diverse (and often quite a bit more cutting-edge) than the simpler solution of pills.

In the Sioux City metro, physicians often refer patients to the Dunes Pain Specialists, a group of five anesthesiologists who operate out of more than a dozen locations in the tri-state region, plus their main branch in Dakota Dunes.

“We have had a huge influx of referrals from family practice doctors, not only for interventional procedures, but also just to manage patients who are on chronic pain medications who need to be closely monitored,” said Dr. Jeremy Poulsen, an anesthesiologist with Dunes Pain Specialists.

Poulsen described opioid painkillers as “a really big help for a lot of people in their quality of life,” but added that “the actions of a relative few have led us to a point where we’re in the situation where we are with the opioid crisis today.”

“I think (the opioid epidemic) has given us the opportunity to expand our toolbox if you will, and we’ve been able to add some arrows to our quiver,” he added. “It’s forced us to really dive into the literature and find other combinations of medications that have proven noteworthy in the past.”

Poulsen rattled off a list of unfamiliar words when describing the non-pill pain-management options at Dunes Pain Specialists. Other terms he used are more familiar, but generally understood in other contexts.

There’s the epidural flood, lumbar-facet injections, intra-articular injections, KT taping, alpha-stim treatments, cannabis. (They can prescribe opioids, but they’re very rigorous about monitoring for any irregularities or red flags.)

If these or other treatments don’t help, “the next step is a surgeon,



whether that be an orthopedic surgeon, a spine surgeon.”

Much of Poulsen’s and his colleagues’ work is in treating back pain, including neck pains, and nerve pain (known in the field as radiculopathy). These pains are often associated with age and/or injuries at work or other injuries, which can be the root of both chronic and acute pain.

“We live much older now than our ancestors did and previous generations did, and so, as we get older, our bodies — are put through more, that much longer,” Poulsen said. “I’ll have an 80- or 90-year-old come in, and I’ll look at their MRI and wonder how on earth they’re walking, just because of how the MRI looks. And I think it’s a testament to how our bodies adapt as we do degenerate and we do get older.”

Of the treatments mentioned by Poulsen, none raises more eyebrows or piques the curiosity more than cannabis. But as a scientifically recognized treatment for pain, cannabis remains in its infancy — scripts commonly don’t denote what sort of cannabis product to take or how frequently, which is unheard-of with other prescriptions.

The efficacy of cannabis — whether it’s on par with aspirin or a pain sav-

ior nonpareil — is a matter of ongoing research and debate in Poulsen’s field. Partly that’s because cannabis, like pain itself, is a notoriously subjective experience: what may be a panacea for some is a bad trip for others, or somewhat helpful, or hardly noticeable, or none of the above.

“You’ll ask 20 different and get a very wide spectrum of responses,” Poulsen said. “Some people will say it’s amazing, other people will say it’s the worst thing ever. Others will say it helped, but not much. Other people say it causes them to be paranoid. It’s similar to when you ask people if Tylenol helps.”

While Poulsen described cannabis as primarily a supplement to other treatments, it’s reasonable to assume that his office will be fielding a good many inquiries from patients about cannabis now that South Dakota has legalized it completely while neighboring Iowa allows it for medical use.

“When it first came out, I think that people thought it was going to be the Holy Grail. Obviously that hasn’t been the case, and so I think it’s important that people put it within the confines it deserves, and that is as an adjunct to the treatment and not a sole option of pain-management,” Poulsen said.



# 'DOC, I'VE GOT A QUESTION ...'

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## How common is snow blindness? How damaging can it be?

Photokeratitis or UV keratitis is damage to the cornea, the clear part of the eye that covers the iris and pupil, by UV light. The most common causes of this damage are "snow blindness" and "arc eye" in welders but can occur from any source of UV light including sunlamps and UV cleaning lamps. It causes bilateral eye pain, sensitivity to light, and red eyes about six to 12 hours after exposure. Treatment is supportive with lubricating and analgesic eye drops. The cornea heals quickly, and symptoms usually resolve in one or two days. Repeated episodes can lead to corneal degeneration and vision loss. The good news is it is avoidable by wearing protective eyewear, for example UV blocking sunglasses while skiing or a welder's mask when welding.

**Since outdoor gatherings are safer than indoor ones from a COVID-19 perspective, how can we continue to hold them in the cold winter?**

This is a good question as the CDC rates small outdoor events where individuals stay six feet apart and wear masks in the second-lowest "more risk" category, just above "lowest risk". In the winter it is always important to check the weather and plan ahead. Dressing appropriately in layers, including hats and gloves, that can be removed so as not to become too hot is recommended. Keeping an eye on the time is also important, as it's easy to lose track of time when with good company and long exposure to the cold increases the risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Planning ahead with a fire pit or warm drinks can help to ease the cold.

**I like running outside for exercise, but I'm concerned about doing so when roads might be slippery and temperatures cold. How can I stay safe jogging in winter?**

I admire your commitment to fitness. Wearing athletic gear that is intended for cold weather can help you stay warm while wicking away sweat. Using foot-

wear with additional grip, for example, shoes intended for cross-country running, will help maintain better grip in slippery conditions, but there is always a risk when running in icy conditions. If you end up running on the cleared roads, remember to wear high visibility accessories, so that drivers can easily see and take precautions when passing.

**Why are shots given in different parts of the body and why are some oral? What does location have to do with it?**

They are given in areas that will elicit the best immune response. Some do better in muscle tissues; those are usually given in the deltoid or outer thigh. Some do better in fatty tissue just under the skin; those are usually given in the upper outer triceps area. There are a few vaccines that can be given by other routes, such as orally for the Rota virus vaccine and as a nasal spray for some influenza vaccines. The reason you will see additional areas getting injected is that if multiple vaccines are required, each should be given at a separate site, so this can lead to getting shots in additional areas like the gluteal.

**How safe is an indoor exercise class? Do I need to wear a mask? Should I even contemplate going or am I better off exercising at home?**

An indoor exercise class would fall into the CDC's second-highest risk category "higher risk." It would definitely be recommended to stay six feet apart, wear a mask and stay home if you have any contact with sick individuals or developed symptoms. If you are able to work out at home either using an exercise video or Zoom class, that would fall into the CDC's "lowest risk" category.

**What is the difference between ibuprofen, acetaminophen and aspirin? What do you use when?**

Ibuprofen, Aspirin and Naproxen are all non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) that are used for pain, inflam-



### MEET THE DOC

Dr. Robert Andrews is a second-year family medicine resident of the Siouxland Medical Education Foundation. After growing up in Kansas City, he obtained undergraduate degrees in business administration and biology. He then attended medical school at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita, Kansas.

mation and fever reduction. Aspirin should be avoided in children as it can cause a reaction if they have recently had a viral illness. Acetaminophen is used for pain and fever, but does not have the anti-inflammatory effect of NSAIDs.

**Are there non-medicine ways of dealing with depression? I'm weary of quarantining at home but I don't want to start using a drug that I might not get rid of.**

Lots of people are dealing with increased feelings of depression due to the isolation of COVID-19, in addition to the usual winter doldrums. There are several things you can do to help that do not include medications. Setting a schedule for yourself, exercising at home and setting achievable goals have all been found to help with depression. Talking with a therapist is another good way to work through the thoughts that lead to depression. However, good mental well-being is the goal, and starting a medication can be a good addition to your treatment regimen and does not have to be permanent. If you are feeling down or like hurting yourself or others, there are numerous resources to reach out to.

### WHAT KINDS OF HEALTH QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

Submit your questions and they may be used in this quarterly feature. Write to Siouxland Life at 515 Pavonia St., Sioux City, Iowa 51102.



# Wagner, Kuntz, and Grabouski Orthodontics Welcomes New Orthodontist

Drs. Wagner, Kuntz, and Grabouski's are proud to announce the addition of Dr. Molly Kopf to their orthodontic practice. Dr. Molly Kopf and her husband Dr. Blake Kopf grew up in rural Nebraska and have fallen in love with Siouxland.

Dr. Kopf decided on her future career at the age of 12. "I had some goofy-looking teeth and was made fun of for my smile," she said. Braces straightened her teeth and gave her a beautiful smile with greater self-confidence. She knew then that she wanted to give the same results to others that have difficulty smiling because of their crooked teeth.

Molly went to Wayne State College, where she met her husband Blake. After graduating, Dr. Kopf went to dental school with her husband at UNMC, then proceeded to the University of Minnesota for two years of orthodontic training. She opened a solo orthodontic practice in Norfolk in 2019 before joining the Wagner, Kuntz, and Grabouski practice in 2020.

At the time Molly decided to join the group practice, she had no idea that COVID-19

would lead to a 2-month shutdown of all dental related services. "It was fortunate to have new partners to bounce around ideas and lend moral support. I feel that the synergy of the partnership enhances the practice as well as shapes each orthodontist into a better clinician," she said.

She emphasizes that the staff has been incredible with creating and implementing innovative ideas to keep our patients and themselves safe during the pandemic. The precautions at their offices exceed all COVID-19 guidelines set by the Tri-State Dental Boards, American Dental Association, American Association of Orthodontists, OSHA, and the CDC.

Dr. Kopf is trained in all the latest techniques in orthodontics including Invisalign®, clear braces, jaw surgery, temporary anchorage devices (TADs), and intraoral lasers. In her free time, she enjoys travelling, camping, hiking, and spending time on the lake with her family.

"I look forward to meeting new families and working with the dentists of Siouxland,"



she said. Patients can contact the following offices to schedule a complementary new patient exam.

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## Drs. Wagner, Kuntz and Grabouski are proud to welcome **Dr. Molly Kopf** as our new orthodontist.



Dr. Molly grew up in Lexington, Nebraska. She attended undergrad at Wayne State College and received her dental degree from the University of Nebraska. Dr Molly pursued her orthodontic specialty degree at the University of Minnesota and has been practicing in Norfolk for the past year.

Dr. Molly and her husband Blake live in Yankton South Dakota, where they enjoy lake sports, hiking, camping, traveling and her family's competitive fantasy football league!

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# How To Know When To Pick Up A Hammer Or Pick Up The Phone.

We all watch the home improvement shows, fascinated by the before-and-after transformation. It looks so easy. After all, the work is planned, completed, cleaned up, and decorated within an hour, right? Surely, we can do it ourselves. What do they have that we don't?

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Well, for starters, a behind-the-scenes staff, some serious insurance coverage, an extensive background of professional success and failures, workshop space, and tools far beyond what you may have in your catch-all drawer, toolbox, or on your toolbelt. (We all have toolbelts, right?) Don't be discouraged, though! There are [tons of projects that are perfect for DIY](#). That said, there are certain kinds of projects you shouldn't try to tackle on your own. To learn which is which, let's start with a few basic questions.

## Ask yourself:

- Do I have the necessary skills to complete the project?
- Could I learn the skills I need by watching tutorials online?
- Is the project dangerous?
- Does the job require special permits or licenses?
- Is it cost-effective to try and do it myself?
- How long will it take a beginner to finish the job?
- If I fail, do I risk lowering my home's property value?

Depending on how you answered, you might already know which route to take. If not, we've made it easy to choose between DIY and hiring a contractor by giving you a few things to keep in mind below.

## Cost vs. time

First thing's first. There's no doubt you can likely save money by doing a project yourself, and if you don't mind living with a project while it's completed in your spare time, it could be worth it. But remember, your time is valuable, too.

You should consider the time required to learn what's involved in taking on a task, the cost of acquiring tools and materials, and the time to do the project, assuming you get it right the first time. Paying a professional may be cheaper in the long run for a shorter completion time.

## Risk vs. reward

The perfect DIY project strikes a delicate balance between time, cost, and risk. Some jobs could be faster and more affordable to do yourself, but the consequences for failing could have major impacts on your home's value. In the same way, some jobs are safe and affordable, but they might take months to do alone.

Before you begin a project, consider making a pros and cons list between DIY and hiring a professional. If the project is affordable, reasonably quick, and low-risk, it might be better to do it on your own.

## DIY these projects:

If you've made it this far and you haven't thrown up any red flags, the project you have in mind might be perfect for DIY. Here are five home renovation projects to take on yourself.

### 1. Interior paint

Time consuming? Somewhat. Messy? It can be. Absolutely doable? You know it. Painting the inside of your home is one of the easiest and most affordable ways to customize a space to your taste. It can even help increase your property value.

### 2. Simple upgrades

Believe it or not, it's [the simple things](#) that can quickly turn a house into a dream home. With a little know-how, replacing items like light fixtures, doorknobs, drawer hardware, and even faucets can be super simple. There are plenty of online tutorials that can help walk you through the process, and the potential risks are minimal.

### 3. Vinyl or linoleum flooring

While most flooring types are better left to the pros (especially hardwood), vinyl and linoleum are actually quite cost-effective and easy to work with.!

## Hire a pro for these projects:

In some cases, your safety, financial well-being, and the value of your home are worth calling in an expert. Here are five projects that you should hire a contractor to handle.

### 1. Electrical work

If you're not a professional electrician, don't even think about rewiring your house. Not only can electrical work be fatal, but it can also lead to



major issues that cost more to repair than simply hiring a pro in the first place. Between building codes, regulations, and dangerous situations, you should always rely on a contractor or professional electrician for these projects.

### 2. Plumbing and gas

Much like electrical work, plumbing

and gas are no joke. One poor decision could lead to a flooded basement or a burst pipe, and once again, those situations can be significantly more expensive than the original project. While some projects are simple enough (like repairing a toilet), anything involving pipes is best left to the pros.

### 3. Siding and doors

If your siding is in desperate need of some TLC and a simple pressure-washing treatment won't cut it, it's time to hire a professional. While it's certainly *possible* to replace it yourself, doing so will likely take a toll on your free time, budget, and sanity.

We suggest finding a local siding expert that can deliver a fast, affordable, and top-notch solution. They'll have [plenty of options](#) to choose from in terms of aesthetics, and they'll also be able to complete the job significantly faster than you could on your own. Plus, you'll be able to rest easy knowing that the job was done flawlessly. The same is true for [doors](#)! If you're considering changing the style of your door, contact an expert that can walk you through the process and let you know if there will be any challenges with the project.

### 4. Structural changes

Before you go knocking down any walls to create the open floor plan you've always dreamed of — don't. As simple as they make it look on TV, these projects can end in disaster for non-experts. Consult a professional contractor before making any structural changes to your home to ensure the direction you're going is even possible. The last thing you want is to sacrifice the structural integrity of your home.

### 5. Replacing windows

This seems like a simple project, right? You're just removing one window and replacing it with another, after all. Unfortunately, it's rarely that easy. Often, older windows aren't of a standard size, which means they'll require new framing, insulation, and a significant amount of work. Here, the time, cost, and headaches simply aren't worth it. Hire [a professional that specializes in window replacement](#). A contractor will be able to find the perfect solution for your home and your unique needs, and their craftsmanship will ensure your [new windows](#) will perform for years to come.

## Final thoughts

So, should you hire a contractor or attempt to do it yourself? Well, that's a question that only you can answer. If you have the skills, time, and courage to take on a new project — give it a shot! But remember, the ideal DIY project should be safe, it should save you money, and it shouldn't take years to complete. If it's out of your league or too big to tackle, hiring a contractor is always the way to go.

*If you need the help of a pro to take on an exterior remodeling project, get in touch with the experts at [Window World](#). Whether you need new windows, updated siding, or a stunning new front door, our team is always ready to learn about your vision and help you bring it to life. [For more remodeling inspiration, check out our blog.](#) [www.windowworldnen.com](#)*





# THE 'PERFECT' HOME OFFICE

As a child, I dreamed of having a home office.

My mom's boss – an implement dealer – had a roll-top desk in his and more farm toys than you could imagine. Occasionally, he'd let me snoop around and the visits sparked visions of my own home office.

I was convinced I'd have an electric pencil sharpener, reams of construction paper, scissors, glue and an electric stapler. The desk would have cubbyholes, too (like a post office) and plenty of envelopes for mailing all sorts of things. My walls would be filled with photographs detailing key moments in my career. And, of course, I'd have all those toys.

In my pre-teen years, I'd spend hours at office supply stores drooling over the possibilities. I even bought sleeves like you'd find in library books and date due slips, so I could turn all my books into a Dewey Decimal dream.

Life, however, has a way of changing those childhood plans.

I now have a home office, but I can't tell you the last time I sat in there – if I could. The room has become a repository for everything that doesn't have a home. Sure, there are toys, but they don't add up to anything (except a lot of trips to theme parks) and the photos I have hanging aren't of me.

This is really the land of sweatpants, unused exercise equipment, seasonal decorations and receipts. Occasionally, the vacuum cleaner takes up residence.

The closet I was going to turn into my own little office supply store is so stuffed with crap I wouldn't know what to save if a fire broke out.

There is an electric pencil sharpener in there (a gift I got in 1983), but no pencils. I have a printer, too, but the darned thing is such an ink hog I barely install a new cartridge and it's thirsting for more.

And the toys? They run the gamut. Some are Happy Meal surprises; others are stuffed animals I couldn't abandon.

Walking space is limited. I have cleaned it (usually around tax time,

when I'm furiously searching for receipts) but, for the most part, I leave the door shut.

Now, because we're working from home, I've thought of clearing the veldt.

My "real" office either resides on my dining room table or a chair where I can perch my laptop and still watch TV. There are papers arranged in a system only I know and enough pens and markers to make my 8-year-old self very happy.

A fancy home office? That plan will have to wait until retirement. Then, I'll have the time to sort, arrange, catalog and file and I won't have the need to find something at midnight because I've got to have it the next day.

The shelves will be artfully arranged, too, (John Deere next to Massey Ferguson next to International Harvester) and I'll prop up a photo of me from my "working" years.

What it'll say, I have no idea. I've been pondering my options but until I find my "good" camera, it'll just have to wait.



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