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Siouxland Life

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OVER THE HOLIDAYS

FALL 2023

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Fall is the time of innovation. Bet you haven't heard that before. This month, we look at those entrepreneurs who are creating businesses, expanding product lines and reinventing their approaches. We're also digging into the holidays and how you can best get a jumpstart on making Siouxland your home for the seasons ahead. Grab one of those cool new drinks and join us.



ON THE COVER
Jim Miller, owner of GuitaRx wipes down the frets and fingerboard of a bass he is repairing in his home-based workshop in Sioux City. Miller, a trained luthier, plans to have commercial space where he will refurbish and repair guitars.
Photograph by *Tim Hynds*

4	HOME an elite residence	28	ENTREPRENEUR fixing music
12	HOME finding your style	30	HOLIDAYS standing out
14	LIBATIONS fall tastes	32	ENTREPRENEUR room to change
16	HOLIDAYS how to survive	34	ENTREPRENEUR
18	HOLIDAYS a Le Mars tradition		expanding the scope
22	ENTREPRENEUR barbecuing up	36	ENTREPRENEUR investing in teens
25	HOME yard time	38	PARTING SHOT

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4 AN ELITE RESIDENCE
A Georgian revival home affords you the opportunity to live like a mover and shaker.



22 CUEING UP
A new barbecue business hopes to up Siouxland's smoking game. Meet the Melting Cow.



36 BUSY TEENS
How do you keep teenagers busy? Let them become entrepreneurs, as one family has found.

HOME *room for everyone*

The roughly 6,000-square-foot, eight-bedroom, four-bathroom Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. was built in 1904 (some sources say 1903) for Dr. Van Buren Knott. Knott lived in the mansion until 1918.



A HOME WITH A HISTORY

*Georgian Revival mansion at
24th and Nebraska is rich in
turn-of-the-century glamour*

Text by *Mason Dockter* | Photographs by *Jesse Brothers*

Everything about the eight-bedroom, four-bathroom, roughly 6,000-square-foot brick Georgian Revival mansion at the corner of 24th and Nebraska streets is big and impressive.

The quarter-sawn-oak paneled, oak-beam-ceiling library is just about big enough (figuratively speaking, if not literally) to fit a smaller house inside it. The foyer has room for a grand piano. Each of the landings of the grand staircase could accommodate a couch and chairs, should one desire a rest between flights. ("The landings are huge," said Realtor Barb Maxon.) Adjacent to the grand staircase is a smaller, hidden staircase — about the size of a staircase in an ordinary house — which in the days of maids and



butlers would have been used by maids and butlers.

The house sits on a 22,500-square-foot lot (or, rather, two lots) which gives it a sort of aura of a country estate plunked in the middle of a city.

“It’s just — you can’t miss this house when you drive down Nebraska,” said Maxon, who described it as one of “three signature houses of Sioux City,” along with the so-called “Chocolate Mansion,” 2900 Jackson St., a dark brown, highly elaborate Queen Anne mansion, and the Linda Sue Manor, a similarly ornate Queen Anne, just across the street from the Chocolate Mansion, at 29th and Jackson streets. (All three of these “signature houses” are on the market at the time of this writing.)



Top: The grand staircase winds around the center of the Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. Hidden near the grand staircase is a smaller spiral staircase (about the size of a staircase in an ordinary house) that was intended for servant use. **Below:** The semi-circular main-floor family room. **Bottom:** At the rear of the Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. is a semi-circular family room.



The library of the Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. features built-in bookshelves, a fireplace and quarter-sawn oak paneling.

The mansion, 2323 Nebraska St., is also one of just 11 residences in Sioux City to have its very own Wikipedia page.

The brick (“all brick — it’s not just a brick front, it’s all brick,” Maxon pointed out) mansion would make a fine home for someone who really appreciates the finer things.

“People that like history” would like the mansion, Maxon said. “I mean, people don’t buy eight-bedroom houses because they have eight kids anymore.”

A HOME FOR SOCIETY PEOPLE

The original owner of the mansion, Dr. Van Buren Knott, was a noted surgeon and physician who’d served in the Spanish-American War; he, along with his wife and sons, were frequent personages in the Society pages of The Sioux City Journal before he sold the mansion and moved in 1918, first to California, then to British Columbia, where he died in 1933.

Knott spared no expense when his home was built in 1904 (some sources say 1903). He hired the famed Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw, and hired the Chicago department store Marshall Field & Co. for the interior decorating.



A sunroom outside the library and enclosed balcony on the second floor connected to the master wing is shown.

Shaw was particular about things, as evinced by his brusque letter to a contractor regarding the varnishing of the wood floors throughout the mansion:

“I expect samples of the white wood stained and finished as specified from your painter by the first of the week; it must not be later. If these samples are

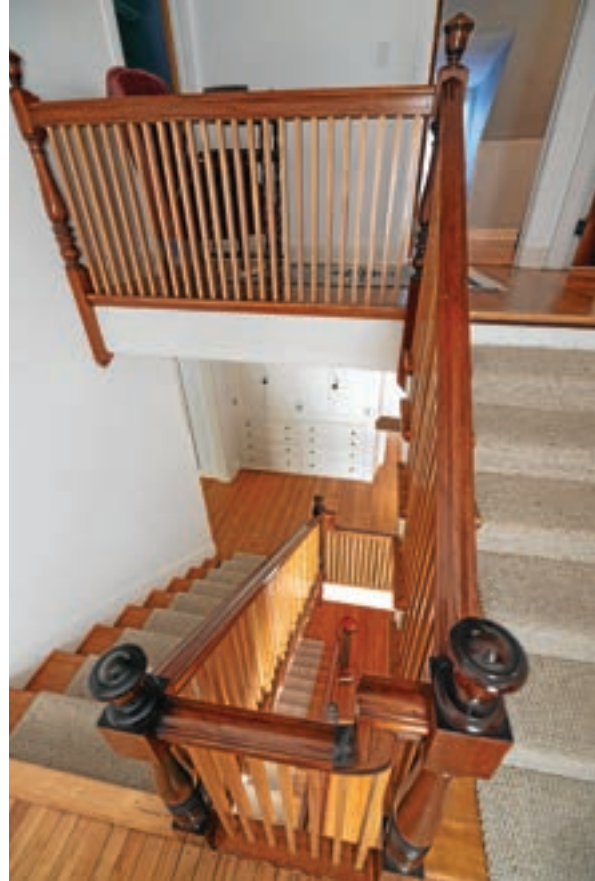


A formal dining room, fit for the family and guests of a wealthy turn-of-the-century doctor, is shown in the Georgian Revival mansion at the corner of 24th and Nebraska streets.

not satisfactory I shall insist that another painter be engaged, if necessary one from Chicago, who understands the proper staining of wood."

At one point Shaw and Knott apparently got into a dispute over the placement of the two-stall brick garage; the visionary Shaw wanted it attached

to the mansion, so as not to interfere with the gardens, according to the mansion's National Register of Historic Places application. The homeowner Knott wanted the garage behind the mansion. In the end, Knott got his way, and the detached garage was built behind the mansion, where it remains.



The foyer of the Georgian Revival mansion at the corner of 24th and Nebraska Street opens up to the grand staircase. On entering the foyer, at right is a formal dining room; at left is the library; and straight ahead, through the leaded glass doors, is the semi-circular family room.

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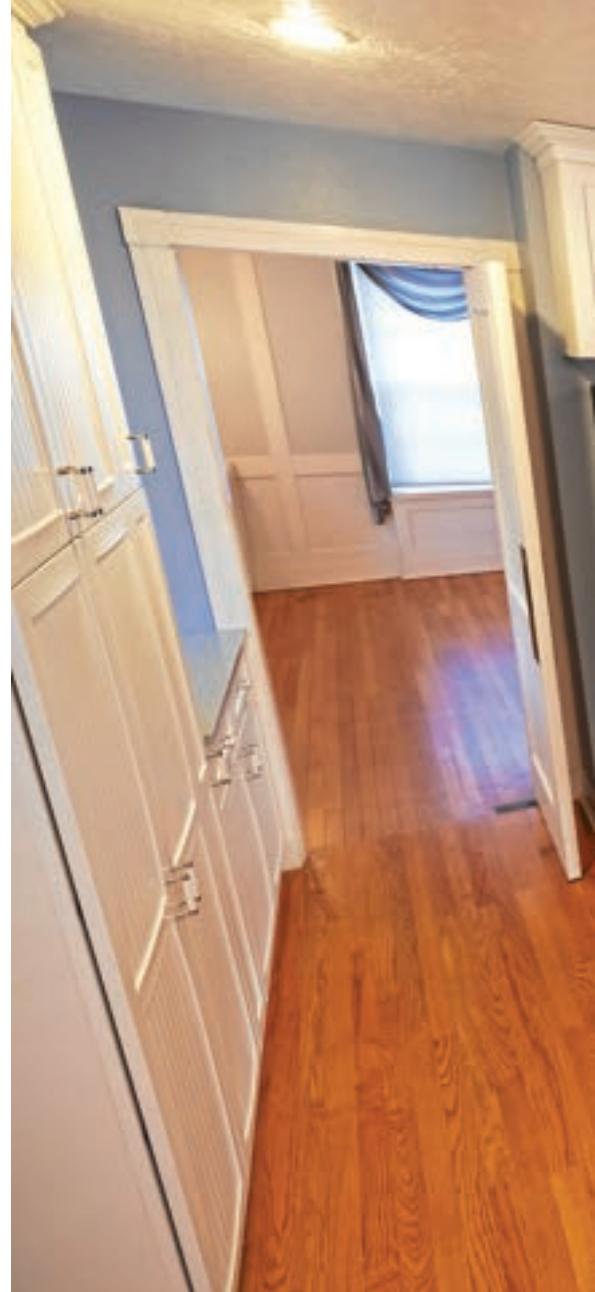


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Above: The third floor of the Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. was originally intended as servants' quarters. A modern family might use them as kids' bedrooms. **Top:** The second floor features built-in linen cabinets and drawers.

ELEGANT AND UNCOMMON FEATURES

What Shaw designed and Marshall Field outfitted was one of the finer homes in Sioux City. The more elegant and uncommon features survive largely intact to the present day.

The exterior of the mansion is adorned with large white pilasters at the corners and prominent dentil moldings around the eaves and above the first-floor windows. The recessed grand entrance at the front is refined but a little ostentatious, with Doric pillars supporting a finely detailed entablature. Above the entrance is a Palladian window.

The walls in the foyer, formal dining room and in other places are embellished with plaster moldings in the shape of fruit-garlands and lions with fruit draped from their mouths. The so-called family room on the first floor is encased by a circular wall, in somewhat the style of a small Oval Office.

Storage shouldn't ever be an issue, with built-ins galore. The sprawling basement offers another 2,000-or-so square feet of storage space.

The updated kitchen has stainless steel appliances. All the windows in the mansion have been replaced, which Maxon said was a major investment.

BIG BEDROOMS

Five of the mansion's eight bedrooms and two of its bathrooms — the ones intended for the owner and his family and guests — are on the second floor. Several of these bedrooms are quite large: one is 12-feet-by-17-feet with two closets, and another is 14-feet-by-18-feet. Like the entire mansion, these all have wood floors and special flourishes, including a decorative fireplace and pocket doors that, for their age, work remarkably well.

"I can't get a builder to make a bedroom this big nowadays!" Maxon said.

Attached to two of the larger bedrooms is the second-floor sleeping porch; though these are little-remembered today, sleeping porches were a common escape for rest and fresh air during oppressive summer nights, before air conditioning was invented. The semi-patrician character of George F. Babbitt in Sinclair Lewis's iconic 1922 novel "Babbitt" habitually spent his nights on the sleeping porch of his fictional home: "It is not known whether he enjoyed his sleeping-porch because of the fresh air or because it was the standard thing to have a sleeping-porch."

(The second floor of the mansion now has central air, but even if the original purpose is obsolete, the sleeping porch is still an attractive feature.)

The other three bedrooms, likely intended for servants, are on the third floor; the woodwork in these bedrooms is far plainer than in the rest of the house, and, because they are directly



The recently remodeled kitchen in the Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. features new countertops and a modern layout. Through the doorway at left is the formal dining room.

beneath the roof, they have sloped ceilings and dormers. The Knotts were prolific employers of domestic servants, frequently placing advertisements seeking a “competent cook” or, in the terminology of their era, “a competent girl for general housework.”

The hidden staircase near the grand staircase was for them; in that era, wealthy homeowners frequently built their homes with the assumption that their hired help would remain more-or-less out-of-sight and would use separate, less-glamorous parts of the house.

Though they are spare, the third-floor bedrooms nevertheless have generous floorplans — one is 18-feet-by-11 feet, and another is 16-feet-by-13 feet; due to the sloped ceilings, a modern resident might find the bedrooms on the third floor best suited as kids’ bedrooms. The third-floor bathroom has a clawfoot bathtub, often a treasured fixture in homes where they remain in service.



A bathroom is shown at the Georgian Revival mansion at 2323 Nebraska St.



One of the large second-floor bedrooms (furnished as a sitting room) features a decorative fireplace and a doorway to an enclosed balcony.



Left: A clawfoot bathtub is shown in a bathroom on the third floor of the mansion at 2323 Nebraska St. The third floor rooms would have originally been servants' quarters.

Right: The third floor can be set up for kids' rooms.



'AN UNUSUAL AND BEAUTIFUL OLD HOUSE'

The mansion has long been a subject of fascination. Maxon said she's received inquiries from parties wishing to see the interior (only serious buyers get that privilege).

In 1979, a group of Sioux Cityans spent hundreds of hours constructing a roughly 4-foot-by-5-foot, highly elaborate and precise scale-model dollhouse — complete with more than 3,000 miniature

shingles, real walnut floors, electric wiring and tiny pieces of furniture — representing the mansion. The dollhouse was auctioned to support the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra.

"It just looks like a Holiday House, like there should always be a wreath on the door," Pat Van Bramer, one of the visionaries behind the dollhouse replica, said in 1979; she and Dave Paulsrud had come under the spell of the mansion while driving around taking Polaroids

of Sioux City houses. Van Bramer and Paulsrud, with help from a group of others, studied the blueprints of the mansion and built the dollhouse in its image.

The actual mansion was opened up that year for the Symphony's Holiday House fundraiser.

"This really is an unusual and beautiful old house, and it's been well-preserved," Ann Jordan, the then-owner of the mansion along with husband Alf, said in 1979.



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Lead designer and founder Nila Braun points out some color chips on an idea board at Purpose Interior Design in Dakota Dunes.

LITTLE CHANGES, BIG IMPACT

*Purpose Interior Design founder:
'Find something that really inspires you'*

Text by Dolly A. Butz | Photographs by Tim Hynds

Nila Braun takes pride in what she calls the “Purpose Kitchen” at Purpose Interior Design, a full-service design studio she founded in Dakota Dunes.

Purpose’s designers design homes from concept to completion. They specialize in furniture selections, space planning, window treatments, styling, cabinetry and communication with contractors.

The Purpose Kitchen features Sorento

cabinetry, which Braun, the studio’s lead designer, said is a “full-custom, full-overlay style.” It’s also a frameless line. The look is two-tone with both wood and white cabinetry.

“I like it a lot. But it isn’t timeless. It’s definitely a trend right now. It’s not going to stick around forever,” Braun said of two-tone. “Some clients don’t want white on the base cabinets because they’re

worried it’s going to get nicked up more than a wood. So, we would do, maybe, wood on the base and white on the uppers to brighten things up. But it really is working with the client figuring out their comfort with two-tone.”

The island is Cambria quartz, which Braun said was sourced from Solid Fabrications.

“It’s a great material. It’s very strong. It’s non-porous — nearly indestructible,” she said.

The side of the island features a waterfall and a metal accent piece that Port Neal Welding created.

“It flows into that wood panel, so that’s a nice detail that some homeowners want to think of if they didn’t use a designer,” she said.

Braun said the entire Purpose Kitchen can be supplied and designed to meet clients’ needs. She pointed out that the appliances came from Karl’s TV & Appliance, while the plumbing fixtures came from Briggs, Inc.



Owner and stylist Nicole Layman, left, talks about design trends as lead designer and founder Nila Braun looks on at Purpose Interior Design in Dakota Dunes.

WHITE IS TIMELESS

Braun said white interiors are still a “big deal,” but people are selecting more wood tones and moody interiors, which they’re pairing with white. They’re opting for raw materials, like stone and wood, in an effort to bring the outside in, she said.

Besides white cabinetry, Braun said a white subway tile backsplash, or anything creamy, won’t go out of style.

“A cool gray is on its way out. When gray came in, it was hot. Everybody was doing gray floors, gray walls, gray cabinets. Everything was gray,” she said. “Now, people are accenting with gray or making sure the gray has a little taupe in it.”

Braun said green is a “very hot color” that people are using in place of a neutral. She said green can “soften up the space.” However, you may want to think twice, for example, about going with a green sofa.

White furniture is the bestseller at Purpose, according to Braun. She said customers want white because it brightens up the room and is “very timeless.”

“It gives a very classy look and it doesn’t go out of style,” she said, before mentioning that you could easily change pillows out on a white sofa to coincide with the changing seasons.

But wouldn’t a white couch be hard to keep clean? Braun said the studio has kid and adult-proof fabrics.

“You could spill red wine on this and it’ll puddle and sit on top until you’re able to clean it,” she said as she stood in a staged living room between two white sofas on Purpose’s retail floor, which is open from Monday through Friday. “We plan to test that someday, but we have not yet.”

WHERE TO START?

For a new home, Braun said the floor plan phase is typically when Purpose’s designers like to get involved.

She said they start with finishes — paint color, floor, grout colors, before moving on to furnishings, lighting, cabinetry and countertops.

“We can provide almost everything for the home, except for the labor portions,” she said.

Braun said breaking down an entire floor plan by space can downplay a sense of overwhelming. She recommends beginning with the kitchen.

“If you don’t know what you want, I would start with looking for inspiration somewhere, whether that be Pinterest or walking our studio floor,” she said. “Looking at other friends’ homes, maybe they have a pink color that you really like, or something. Start really small. Find something that really inspires you and, then, we can build from that.”

Braun said Purpose’s designers can even work with a feeling you want to invoke in a space. And you don’t have to stick to current trends. She said Purpose bends toward the client’s style.

“It’s your home. You’re our client. You’re our customer,” she said.

A recent install came to Nicole Layman’s mind. Layman is the owner of Purpose Interior Design and a stylist.

“It’s gorgeous, but it’s not for everybody. This is very specific for the client,” she said of the office space, which incorporates green, monkey wallpaper, a pop of pink and a zebra rug.

Braun added, “That jungle-themed office might not be your style, but say you



Decorative coffee mugs are shown in a model kitchen at Purpose Interior Design in Dakota Dunes.



Swatches and samples are shown in the design center at Purpose Interior Design in Dakota Dunes.

were buying that house. You might think it was done tastefully. You’re like, ‘I could live with this. This is beautiful,’” she said.

STAYING WITHIN BUDGET

Braun said there’s always wiggle room within a budget. She said the key is not sacrificing design.

“We’ll help you save in areas, but we don’t want it to look like it’s standing out like a sore thumb in the space,” said Braun, who acknowledged staying on budget can be difficult. “It has to fit the rest of the home.”

Investment pieces, should be given higher priority in a space. In the kitchen, Braun doesn’t advise skimping on countertops and lighting, which she called “the jewelry of the space.”

“You want that to be bold and of high quality,” she said of lighting. “You don’t want builder-grade.”

When you walk into a home, Layman said you can tell immediately if the lighting was purchased at a big-box store.

“If somebody is looking to just make their kitchen look more high-end, just switching out the light or that faucet at the kitchen sink and the countertops can completely change it, or painting cabinetry that they have. Paint goes a long way to help a budget.”



Above: Stacy Orndorff, CEO of Coffee King Roasting and Supply, holds a latte that has a squirt of pumpkin spice in it. Pumpkin remains a popular flavoring for fall. **Left:** A cold brew coffee with cold foam for fall? Coffee King CEO Stacy Orndorff said younger caffeine fanatics like cold coffee year-round.

FOAMY & FLAVORFUL

*What are the hottest drinks for Autumn?
(Spoiler alert: Think ice cold coffees)*

Text by Earl Horlyk | Photographs by Tim Hynds

Founded nearly 50 years ago, Coffee King Roasting and Supply Co. supplies and equips coffeehouses and business offices across the country with specialty coffees from around the world.

All of the roasting, flavoring and packaging is done out of a not-always-easy-to-find warehouse at 1301 Third St.

“Coffee King may be iconic to people in Sioux City but you either know where we’re located or you don’t,” Stacy Or-

ndorff said inside of a building that is somewhat obscured by a bridge off Floyd Boulevard. “I want to change all that.”

You see, Orndorff is the new owner — or in her words, “the new Coffee Queen” — of the venerable business.

Taking possession of the company in May 2023, Orndorff is no newcomer in business. She was the founder and CEO of Heartland Coffee & Nosh, a popular series of mobile food trucks that became

ubiquitous around Siouxland.

“I sold a lot of coffee inside the food truck, became knowledgeable in what I liked and what my customers liked,” she explained. “I’ve taken that know-how to Coffee King.”

“The big difference is that I don’t have to do it in a food truck in freezing cold weather or on a hot summer day,” Orndorff said with a smile. “That’s a benefit of having a desk job.”

To be fair, Orndorff’s job entails much more than just sitting behind a desk. She also keeps tabs on industry trends when it comes to a variety of beverages.

So, what will people be drinking this fall? Well, you guessed it. Pumpkin, pumpkin and more pumpkin.

“That’s been a trend that has never gotten old,” Orndorff said. “People want to add pumpkin spice, pumpkin sauce and, even, pumpkin pie spice to their hot beverages as soon the days get colder.”

However, a bigger trend is to keep drinks cool.

“Younger people prefer their coffee cold as in cold brews and iced coffees,” Orndorff explained. “It doesn’t matter what time of year it is, but going cold is the rage these days.”

In case you were wondering, a cold brew is often full-bodied, smooth, aromatic and, often served black over ice (though feel free to add a splash of cream or as syrup to sweeten it up).

Iced coffee is lighter, brighter with a

medium body, depending on the type of the bean used.

According to Coffee King sales manager Shawn Donnelly, customers who want cold brews prefer them with plenty of cold foam.

Cold foam is a light and frothy milk-based topping typically served over cold brew, iced coffee or iced tea.

Unlike the hot steamed foam you'd find on a latte or cappuccino, cold foam is made by vigorously aerating milk using a blender, special frothing device, or a French press or by simply shaking milk in a jar.

"If you do it correctly, cold foam over a cold brew can be quite dramatic," Donnelly said.

But it isn't as stunning as a Lotus drink, which Orndorff said is taking the coffee industry by storm.

Already a big deal in metropolitan areas, Lotus is a plant-based energy drink that is naturally caffeinated with powerful plants like the lotus flower.

If you want a buzz but you're leery of some ingredients from more mainstream energy drinks, you might enjoy a Lotus instead.

"Especially a Lotus that is made with a caramel apple syrup," Donnelly said,



Shawn Donnelly, sales manager at Coffee King Roasting and Supply, displays a caramel apple Lotus drink at the Sioux City business. Donnelly said the Lotus, which is made with a plant-based energy drink, is becoming increasingly popular.

showing off one of his creations.

"With greens and browns, that may be the perfect fall drink," Orndorff said, before admitting she only drinks sweet



Shawn Donnelly, sales manager at Coffee King Roasting and Supply, makes an espresso at the Sioux City business. Coffee King CEO Stacy Orndorff says pumpkin spice drinks are popular in the fall as are iced coffees.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Coffee King Roasting & Supply Co.

WHERE: 1301 Third St., Sioux City

ONLINE: coffeekinginc.com

beverages as an afternoon treat.

"I'm afraid that the Coffee Queen usually drinks her coffee black," Orndorff said with a laugh.



**Daniel L. Kaler
D.D.S., P.C.**

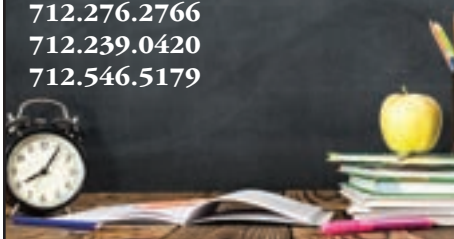
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Sheila Martin, CEO of Siouxland Mental Health, is shown in a sports therapy room at the nonprofit's new child and adolescent center, 4265 Sergeant Road in Sioux City.

TURKEY & TRAUMA?

*How to survive a family Thanksgiving?
Plan early, share duties & take time for ourselves*

Text by Earl Horlyk | Photographs by Tim Hynds

For some families, Thanksgiving is a time for turkey, laughter and good cheer.

Yet for other families, the holiday season may be the source of serious stress and hurt feelings.

"The holidays can bring out the best of people and, sometimes, the not-so-good parts as well," said Siouxland Mental Health Service Inc. counselor Brianna Peterson.

To some extent, that is due to unrealistic expectations a person may have when it comes to entertaining family.

"Everybody wants the picture-perfect holiday gathering where everything goes to plan and everyone gets along," Peterson said. "That places a lot of pressure on the shoulders of a few people."

If you're the person in charge of a family gathering, start planning ahead of time.

"In other words, don't start planning a Thanksgiving feast a day before," Peterson advised.

Also, don't be afraid to ask for help.

"If mom is always responsible for the turkey, the adult kids can bring the side

dishes," Peterson said. "That's only fair and it lessens the burden placed on a single person."

OK, food is just one aspect of Thanksgiving. What about family chit-chats?

"Try as much as possible to keep conversations light," Peterson said. "If politics are a reason for family dissension, avoid those topics."

And if that fails, take a deep breath and meditate.

"After dinner, take a walk, spend time with the kids or grandkids, do what you



“All year long,
we build up our
expectations for
the holidays in
an unrealistic
fashion.”

BRIANNA PETERSON
Siouxland Mental Health
Service Inc. counselor

can to de-stress,” Peterson said.

That is especially important to Peterson, who works mainly with children.

“The holiday season can be stressful for everyone,” she explained. “If mom and dad are stressing out over money matters or family disagreements, the kids can pick up on those bad feelings.”

Similarly, if grandma and grandpa aren’t keen on your uncle’s new girlfriend, that can also prove problematic.

Which gets back to Peterson’s original premise.

“All year long, we build up our expectations for the holidays in an unrealistic fashion,” she said. “We see how people on TV or in the movies celebrate the holidays. If we don’t measure up, we feel bad.”

Years from now, people won’t remember if the turkey was burnt or who got what for a present.

“Instead, what people will take away are the memories of spending time with the people that they love,” Peterson said. “The holidays don’t have to be perfect when you’re able to spend it with family.”



Siouxland Mental Health’s new child and adolescent center, is located at 4265 Sergeant Road.



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HOLIDAYS a Le Mars tradition

The Browns, a nationally known gospel music group based in Le Mars, will perform again during Christmas in Hometown Le Mars on Nov. 25.

BRINGING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

What to expect when you visit Christmas in Hometown Le Mars

Text by Dolly A. Butz | Photographs provided



Mike and Cheryl Wells were inspired to start "Christmas in Hometown Le Mars" after taking in the tree-lighting ceremony at Rockefeller Center in New York City.

Mike and Cheryl Wells were taking in the sights of the large lit Christmas tree and skating rink at Rockefeller Center in New York City when Cheryl got an idea.

She turned to Mike, who was president of Wells Enterprises at that time, and said, "We could do this in Le Mars."

That's how Christmas in Hometown Le Mars, a celebration of the true spirit of Christmas in the Ice Cream Capital of the World, was born.

"In the midst of where everybody was in 2020, we said, 'We need something joyful. We need something to celebrate. And, let's see if we can make this happen this year,'" Cheryl recalled.

As the end of 2020 neared, Cheryl said they were planning to host a public celebration, but, then, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds issued a proclamation limit-



A dance group performs in Le Mars during the annual Christmas in Hometown Le Mars.

ing all outdoor events to 30 people due to COVID-19 concerns. That first year, Christmas in Hometown Le Mars ended up being livestreamed.

“Our intention was to do a really great event; and even the first year, it really was a beautiful event,” Cheryl recalled. “Every year since then, we have looked for ways that we can grow it and add things. We’ve really captured people’s attention through it and, specifically, in our own community, because we have great community partners and community support here.”

The Wellses expect thousands to descend upon Le Mars for the day-long event, which will be held on Nov. 25, this year.

The scheduled is jam-packed with family friendly activities, the majority of which are free.

A character breakfast with Rudolph and the elves runs from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Then, event-goers can head over to Habitué Coffeehouse & Bakery to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus from 8:30 until 11 a.m.

“I own a coffeehouse and bakery here in Le Mars. They come there,” Cheryl said of Santa and Mrs. Claus. “But we also have a spot in the Olson Cultural Center



Live reindeer will be on hand on Central Avenue in Le Mars on Nov. 25. Christmas in Hometown Le Mars will also feature pony rides and a petting zoo.

where kids line up and wait to see Santa through the day.”

Mike said he looks forward to driving Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus down Central

Avenue in the back of his 1950 Christmas truck in the afternoon.

“We have adults on street corners that just stop and are like, ‘Oh, Santa!’ You



“We have adults on street corners that just stop and are like, ‘Oh, Santa!’ You think it’s about the kids, but the adults get just as excited. There will be hundreds of people lined up waiting for Santa and Mrs. Claus to show up in the afternoon.”

MIKE WELLS



think it’s about the kids, but the adults get just as excited,” he said. “There will be hundreds of people lined up waiting for Santa and Mrs. Claus to show up in the afternoon.”

From 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., live reindeer will be on hand on Central Avenue across from Northwest Bank. There will also be pony rides and a petting zoo, during Christmas in Hometown Le Mars.

After snapping a photo with the reindeer, head down to the public parking lot next to Bamboo Village for ice skating, which is a new addition to the festival.

“The beauty is it’s actually a synthetic rink, so it’s not about getting wet or cold, or bad ice,” said Mike, who noted the skaters will wear special ice skates, which will be available on site. “There’s actually going to be sign-up slots so that when people come, they can sign up.”

Face painting at Le Mars Senior Center from noon to 4 p.m., cookie decorating at Uptown Event Center and Bingo with Blu at the Wells Visitor Center & Ice Cream Parlor — both events run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., — are not to be missed, the organizers said.

You’ll need to get tickets for The Browns’ “Christmas Wonder Show,” which will be held at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at Browns Century Theater. The Browns are a nationally known gospel music group based in Le Mars.

Christmas in Hometown Le Mars will culminate in a tree-lighting ceremony at 6 p.m. at the Olson Cultural Event Center stage. A 26-foot tree will be lit and The Browns will perform with ballet dancers.



Left: Runners take off from the start line, during Santa's Fun Run! The 5K/10K/Run/Walk, kicks off at 10 a.m. on Nov. 25 at the Olson Cultural Events Center in Le Mars.



"Christmas in Hometown Le Mars" will be held again on Nov. 25.

"The absolutely can't miss, in my opinion, is the tree lighting. It's what brings to life what we envisioned when we were at Rockefeller Center and saw the lighting of the tree," Mike said. "It brings people together."

For more information and a complete schedule of events, visit christmasinlemars.com.



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Melting Cow Pitmaster Nick Carter showing a piece of meat from his smoker. Located in Major's Sports Bar on Fourth Street, Melting Cow BBQ offers a variety of smoked meats and sides.

SMOKING UP A STORM

Melting Cow BBQ hopes to grow barbeque scene in Sioux City

Text & Photographs by Caitlin Yamada

Melting Cow is a new Sioux City barbeque restaurant offering old-school-style smoked meats with a Midwest twist.

Located in Major's Sports Bar on Fourth Street, Melting Cow BBQ offers a variety of smoked meats and sides. Creators Nick Carter and Stacy Johnson have been growing the business over the last year with the hopes of building an authentic barbeque experience in Sioux City.

The pair are foodies at heart and, around three years

ago, they found a passion for smoking foods, Johnson said. That passion has turned into a full-time gig.

As an administrator at Tyson Foods, Carter could get a variety of meats at great prices. The backyard hobby grew and Carter started cooking for people in the community and at Tyson potlucks.

After looking around at the limited sit-down barbeque options in Sioux City, they saw an opportunity. They officially started Melting Cow in January through pop-ups at the Jefferson Beer Supply.

Johnson worked at Rebo's for four years. One day, she brought in some of their smoked meats and after Rebo's owner tried it, he offered to lease his extra kitchen at Major's to them, she said.

In May, Melting Cow placed first in the Siouxland Growth Organization innovation market. The winnings helped them officially start their LLC, buy an official sign and invest in supplies. Their business and customer base has grown since.

There are a variety of different ways and styles of smoking meats. Carter found a love for the old-style way of smoking meats — in a smoker with a live fire. Whether it's hot outside or snowing outside, he wants to maintain a consistent flavor year round. While it is a major time commitment, he said it's what sets them apart.

"We live on a 30-to-45-minute timer," he said. "Going out there and making sure it's consistent. I think that definitely puts a staple kind of flavor to what we're trying to do."

Carter said this style of smoking gives their food a big flavor, something that they both hope customers remember.

Slow-smoked brisket, Mississippi beef, pulled pork sandwiches, raspberry chipotle wings, chili, loaded bowls, baby back ribs, smoked beans, cheesy potatoes, chicken wings and smoked cream cheese are just a few of the different foods Melting Cow has served.

"If it can be baked in an oven, we're going to try it on the smoker," Johnson said.

Both Carter and Johnson quit their jobs to dedicate their time completely to the new business. While Carter's main focus is smoking, Johnson is the expert on customer service.

Melting Cow serves lunch Friday through Saturday and dinner Tuesday through Saturday from 5 p.m. until they sell out. Carter said they post the menu on their Facebook page and let the public know when they sell out. Carter said if more people show up for dinner, the more he will start to make.

"The more people that keep showing up, it's going to let me know that I can just keep making more food, and more of my inventory because we want to give out a fresh product," he said.

Carter and Johnson also offer catering services and have done a few catered meals for local businesses.

While Melting Cow continues to grow their business, the next step for them is investing in dining ware for customers who want more of a sit-down experience. Eventually, Carter and Johnson hope to be able to grow into a high-class barbecue restaurant for the area.



Top: Melting Cow Creators Nick Carter and Stacy Johnson. **Middle:** Melting Cow Pitmaster Nick Carter has located his business in Major's Sports Bar on Fourth Street. Melting Cow BBQ offers a variety of smoked meats and sides. **Left:** Meat being cooked in Melting Cow's wood-fired smoker.



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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 Residential Rehabilitation 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 Community 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 Residential Rehabilitation Services, OU also provides Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to children and adults with special needs. Individuals eligible for 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

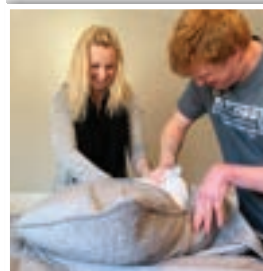
privacy of the person served's home. OU also has two HCBS homes for individuals requiring assistance with skills needed to live in a more independent setting.

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

For more information on programs and services available through Opportunities Unlimited, go to www.opportunitiesunlimited.com

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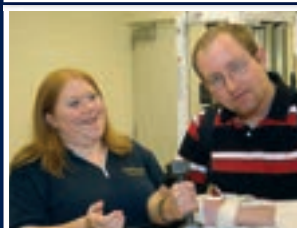
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Robert Sopher, a landscape consultant with Earl May Garden Center, talks about popular trees for homeowners' landscaping projects like this Cleveland Pear tree.

WINTER IS COMING

It's not time yet to put away your garden tools

Text by *Peggy Senzarino* | Photographs by *Jesse Brothers*

As leaves start to fall, there's work to do to prepare your garden landscape for the winter and spring seasons to come.

"Things like aerating your lawn, fertilizing your lawn to get those roots ready for next year and then up against the house you want to go ahead and insulate your perennials. Cover them up with mulch, anything like that, roses especially," said Robert Sopher, landscape consultant at

Earl May Garden Center on Gordon Drive.

"So in the fall you are basically just kind of preparing your landscape to make it through the winter."

Fall is the time to get out those clippers and trim shrubs and bushes into shape.

"Make sure those shrubs are ready to start growing right away next spring. If they are trimmed and ready, you'll get the desired shape and size," Sopher said.



Robert Sopher, a landscape consultant with Earl May Garden Center, puts a bag of grass seed on the shelf at the store in Sioux City, Iowa.

But leave those lilac bushes alone. "Actually you are supposed to trim those in the springtime right when they get done flowering because they do put their buds out in the fall. So if you go in and trim those off you won't get your flowers."

Delicate tubers in your garden like canna lilies need some attention.

"Go ahead and make sure you get those dug up and put them in a warm place."

PERFECT TIME FOR PLANTING

Those early spring flowering bulbs, tulips, crocus, daffodil, should be planted in the fall, Sopher said.

But fall is also a good time to add trees, shrubs and other plantings to your landscape.

"Ground temperatures are perfectly fine. We've still got a couple months for things to get established especially grass," Sopher said. "Right now is the perfect

time to make sure you get grass planted."

Moles savaged many yards around Sioux City this year.

"Moles were a big problem this year. That's all I heard moles, moles, moles," he said.

"So if you have a situation where you had to kill off a different type of grass in your yard or you have mole patches, now is the perfect time to go head."

But don't just start tossing grass seed on that dirt. Preparation is key to getting a beautiful lush green yard.

"There's a few things that really matter when you are laying your new lawn seed.

Go ahead and get that old grass or those old weeds out of there.

Lay a nice layer of top soil.

Make sure you have a good lawn fertilizer to start with. Take straw to go over top to keep it in place. Water two to three times a day," Sopher said.

He recommended keeping the lawn moist but not soaking wet and making sure there is good seed to soil contact.

"That's going to give you the best success. There is preparation to that."

FALL LAWN CARE TO-DO LIST

"This is the most important time to focus on mowing, fertilizing, aerating, weed control and seeding. The work you do on your lawn in the fall helps it recover from the stress of summer and prepares it for winter, allowing it to look its best next spring," said Aaron Steil, Iowa State University Department of Horticulture.

Even though the turf grass stops growing in the late fall, the roots continue to absorb and utilize nutrients.

"An application of fertilizer in late October or early November helps promote root growth and early green-up the following spring. Apply one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet," Steil said.





WINTERIZE YOUR LANDSCAPE

Sopher said to remember to bring in hoses and do any preparation to see that the outdoor plumbing is ready for the winter temperatures.

If you have a new tree, protect it from hungry rabbits by wrapping the bottom of the trunk in a plastic sleeve.

Rabbits will chew around the bottom of a young trunk effectively killing the tree.

You should also be careful not to fertilize plants too late in the season.

"Once your plants start going dormant they aren't soaking up that fertilizer," Sopher said the nitrogen not absorbed will burn the roots of plants.

Fall is a good time to plant that tree or ornamental grass.

"People please plant oak trees. It is the native tree in Iowa, the burr oak. Any oak is a big beautiful shade tree. It's perfect for Iowa's weather, perfect for surrounding nature and it is definitely the best one. It is so hard to get people to plant them because they are planting it for the next generation," Sopher said. "The payoff in the end of it is worth it for everybody."

Ornamental grasses offer so many different colors and textures. "You can have nice little edge pieces walking up your walkway. Fescue grass is great to add a splash of blue.

"Size, shape color you can do anything with them. the best part is they are so incredibly tough and they come back so well, most of them do."



Robert Sopher, a landscape consultant with Earl May Garden Center, urges homeowners to protect their young trees from rabbits during the colder months when the gnawing animals could destroy the bark and kill the trees.

"People please plant oak trees. It is the native tree in Iowa, the burr oak. Any oak is a big beautiful shade tree."

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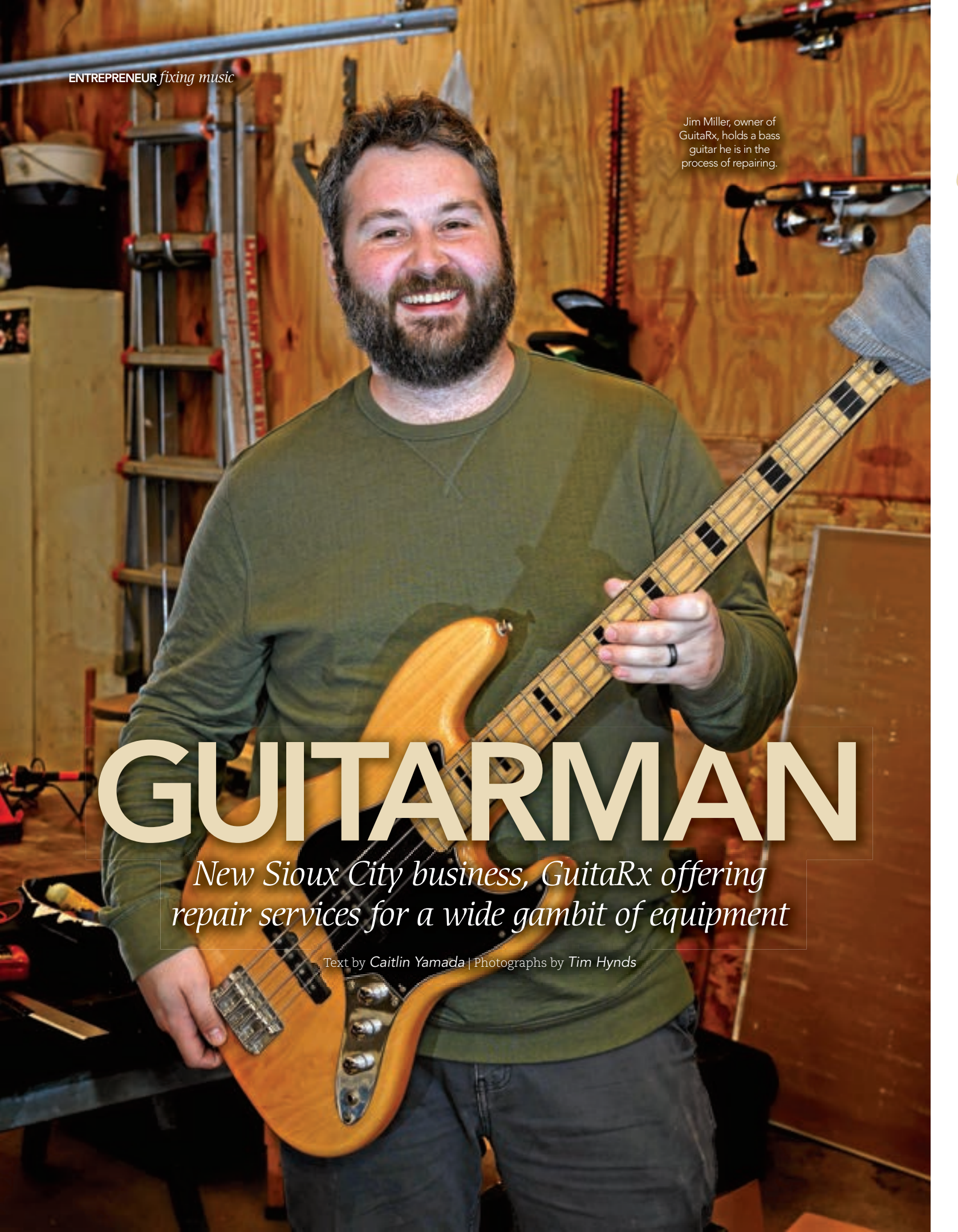
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ENTREPRENEUR *fixing music*

Jim Miller, owner of GuitaRx, holds a bass guitar he is in the process of repairing.

GUITARMAN

New Sioux City business, GuitaRx offering repair services for a wide gambit of equipment

Text by Caitlin Yamada | Photographs by Tim Hynds

Sioux City's newest doctor doesn't specialize in the heart, bones or human health. Instead, he specializes in the health of guitars and related equipment.

GuitaRx is a new Sioux City business that focuses on selling, repairing and restoring used guitars, amplifiers, guitar pedals and more. Owner Jim Miller gained the nickname "guitar doctor" while working at a guitar shop in Omaha, which he felt is a good description of the type of work he hopes to provide to Siouxland.

Miller, a Sioux City native, attended the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery in Phoenix, Arizona. The school is the longest-running guitar-making school in North America, offering courses on making and repairing guitars.

At that time, Miller started developing an idea of starting a business that focused on both repairing guitars and selling used and restored equipment.

"I just noticed there's a lot of guitars out there mistreated and can be treated a lot better," he said.

After working at a guitar shop in Omaha that focused exclusively on used products, he saw the viability of his idea.

He said there are limited options for people who need guitar-related equipment repairs in the Sioux City area. He believes repairing and recycling used guitars is essential, rather than throwing them away for new equipment.

So far, Miller has fixed chiefly the instruments of local musicians, but he also wants to help others.

"I want more people to have instruments available, make them readily available, so that more music is played throughout the whole city and the area in general," he said.

In May, Miller placed second in the Siouxland Growth Organization innovation market. The winnings allowed him to start his LLC and buy some of the specialty equipment needed, allowing him to expand his offerings.

"Anything you're going to play on a rock and roll stage, you can come to me," he said. "I want to be able to repair everything for the community of that nature."

Acoustic guitars, bass guitars, electric guitars, pedals, amplifiers and microphones are all examples of items Miller will be able to fix. He is currently limited on the repairs he can do to pedals and amplifiers due to the danger, but he is planning on taking a course to expand those offerings.

"In the community, when your tube amp goes out, you buy a new one, which is sad because it'd be cheaper to get it fixed," he said.

The process of getting a guitar fixed by Miller is simple. People can contact Miller about a repair they need, drop off

Jim Miller, owner of GuitaRx, cuts a repair piece for a guitar he is working on in his home-based workshop in Sioux City. Miller, a trained luthier, plans to have commercial space where he will refurbish and repair guitars.



Jim Miller, owner of GuitaRx, cuts the strings off of a mandolin he is refurbishing in his home-based workshop in Sioux City.



Jim Miller, owner of GuitaRx, sands old finish off a mandolin he is refurbishing.

the equipment and get an estimated timeline for repairs. Like a car repair, he will call when the equipment is ready to be picked up.

Currently, Miller is looking for a storefront in the downtown area to expand both the repairs he offers and the retail aspect of the business.

Miller compared his retail model to the "American Pickers" or a buy-sell-trade business. He is asking people in the community if they have instruments that they want to donate or that he can purchase.

He will also offer consignment for people with more valuable equipment they would like to sell.

Another unique offering Miller hopes

to have is a wall of guitar pieces for people to pick and choose from to make custom guitars.

"There's going to be some fun stuff coming up," he said.

Miller said music and the arts in Sioux City have been skyrocketing and he wants to be a part of it.

"I think that my hometown's cool and I want other people to think my hometown's cool," he said. "I want to bring in people from areas like Omaha and Sioux Falls to Sioux City to see the things that I'm doing and then after that, they'll be able to see the other things that everyone else is doing."



Northwestern College Theatre Department Chair Bob Hubbard, far right, speaks with students before a rehearsal of "Matilda the Musical," which the school is performing in November. Hubbard said the department tries to craft a schedule that balances lighter productions with more dramatic fare.

THE WHOLE PACKAGE

Northwestern Theatre Department offers a full-service education

Text & Photographs by Jared McNett

Any visitor to the Northwestern College campus in Orange City who decides to take a stroll through the school's DeWitt Theatre Arts Center couldn't miss it.

In one of the main hallways on the ground floor of the theater department's home, there's a wall of awards. Row after row of regional and national honors bestowed on the program from throughout the years. And in all sorts of categories. Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival recognitions for acting, production and writing and numerous other elements that come together for a performance.

Such representation across theatrical disciplines is by design.

"If you come to Northwestern you'll get training not just in acting but you learn how to be a designer, how to write plays, you learn about the history of the theater. We have a balanced, thorough, essentialist theater," Northwestern Theater Department Chair Bob Hubbard said. "Our students may specialize at the end of their career but they're going to be exposed to everything and know how rich and multidimensional this artform is."

The faculty and staff, which runs seven deep on the department website, possess multidimensional abilities as well.

Hubbard noted that Ethan Koerner, a Northwestern theater instructor, not only has an aptitude for costume design and scene design but puppetry, too. For a 2021

production of "Jabberwocky," a retelling of the Lewis Carroll poem from "Through the Looking Glass," Koerner used shadow puppetry, which allowed masked actors to manipulate objects in the form of Carroll's fantastical creatures. Such a production was needed to conform with concerns over COVID-19. It won multiple awards at the 2021 national Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival

STRONG TIES

Hubbard has taught in the department for 21 years and directed students through more than 20 performances. When Hubbard and his family came from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the DeWitt Theatre Arts Center was actually still under construction and shows were being held in a deconsecrated church.

But the department appealed to him just the same.

"We wouldn't have moved if we didn't love Northwestern's facilities and its department," he said.

One of the first productions Hubbard ever got to direct at Northwestern was a William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" which he has fond memories of all these years later. "Even though it was early in my career, it was one of the best shows I've ever directed," he said. Before the school year is up, Hubbard will direct Shakespeare's "Hamlet." As far as Hubbard knows, the Northwestern theater department hasn't tackled the Bard's longest play at least since Hubbard's been there. It's set to run from April 12 through April 20.

As a sort of balance to a tragedy about a prince exacting revenge against his uncle for the murder of his father, the 2023-2024 production schedule also includes "Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical," a dance concert called "Rush" and takes on the 11th chapter of the Book of Hebrews from the Drama Ministries Ensemble.

"We try to balance comedy and serious drama and tragedy. We don't want everything to be dark and brooding. So we have 'Matilda,' to balance 'Hamlet,'" Hubbard said.

READYING 'MATILDA'

During a rehearsal for "Matilda" in early October, Hubbard filled in as director for a night while Molly Wiebe Faber was out. At certain moments, Hubbard made sure to remind the performers to "stay in character, stay in character."

"If it's a massive show, a director has to be hands on balancing the stage and making sure the play is working because there are so many components from

NORTHWESTERN DATES AND TIMES

Matilda the Musical—November 9, 16, 17, 18; 7:30 p.m.; November 11, 2 & 7:30 p.m.; England Theatre; \$10 for adults, \$5 for students

Winter Workshop: Unlabeled Theatre—Feb. 17 & 24, 2024, 7:30 p.m.; England Theatre; \$10 for adults, \$5 for students

Drama Ministries Ensemble Showcase—March 17, 2024, 2 p.m.; Allen Theatre; \$10 for adults, \$5 for students

RUSH—March 21, 2024, 7:30 p.m.; March 22, 2024, 7:30 & 9 p.m.; March 23, 2024, 2 & 7:30 p.m.; England Theatre; \$10 for adults, \$5 for students

Hamlet—April 12, 18, 19 and 20, 2024, 7:30 p.m.; April 13, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Allen Theatre; \$10 for adults, \$5 for students

an acting, design and audience relation standpoint,” Hubbard said about his approach to directing. “If it’s a smaller, more intimate show, I tend to let the actors play more and find the moments.”

Madison DenHerder, a senior theater major who’s been in every single Northwestern production since freshman year, can be more blunt. When she’s following along with the “Matilda” script from behind her laptop, she’ll yell “Get your book” when a performer is running through a rehearsal and can’t remember a line.

“As a freshman, I didn’t think I’d be this involved,” DenHerder said. “I really appreciate our emphasis on ensemble, making sure everyone is included and everyone participates and everyone can do everything,” she added.

Case in point, Northwestern alum Matt Foss (class of 2002) said he started off doing a lot of tech work early on for theater productions but got to a point where he felt comfortable and acting.

“The biggest skill set I had is persistence. And that’s not always true in a lot of arts. But you can earn your talent, in a lot of ways, within the theater,” Foss said.

Now a theater professor at the University of Toledo, Foss has directed at regional Shakespeare theaters across the country, acted in a Tony Award-winning production and even written a short film, called “Sons of Toledo,” which screened at the Sioux City International Film



Northwestern College student James Stoscher and vocal director Cindy Moeller practice a song for “Matilda the Musical” during a rehearsal in the theatre department.



Northwestern College students Ana DeKruyer, from left, Kaylee Bandstra, Noelle Ebert, Lydia Cavanaugh, Princess Bola-Lawal, Anna Frangenberg, Ashley Montes, Garrett Hurt, Hope Wallace and Emily Espinoza practice for the theater department’s production of “Matilda,” which theater chair Robert Hubbard said is a fun musical.

Festival in 2022.

“I think Northwestern trained us to see storytelling as service. Story preserves complexity and outpaces our presumptions and biases. We learn to be curious and empathetic and rigorous in our investigation,” Foss said.

When he’d be in certain conversations with professors at Northwestern, Foss said he came to learn how stories can ask big, thorny questions of people while also providing answers to complex problems of the world.

STORIES CHANGE

The way Hubbard sees it, each of those stories, even ones that feel older than time itself, becomes a new work in

the hands of a new group of performers bringing it to life.

“If we want to move forward as an art form, we have to realize we’re part of an ongoing story,” he said.

Over the course of his tenure at Northwestern, Hubbard said what he’s come to hold quite dearly are the strong bonds forged while working on a production.

“When I was young, I thought the best thing was the acting. But it occurred to me, around my junior year of college, it wasn’t just the acting or directing or designing or the playwriting but what I really loved was how all of the things happened and flourished in community,” he said.



ENTREPRENEUR *room to change*

Kari Winklepleck, president of UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's Foundation, is shown in a pediatric patient room sponsored by Jolly Time Popcorn at UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's. Ten of the pediatric unit's 12 patient rooms have been converted into themed-rooms.

FEEL-BETTER ROOMS

UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's themed rooms a hit with young patients

Text & Photographs by Dolly A. Butz

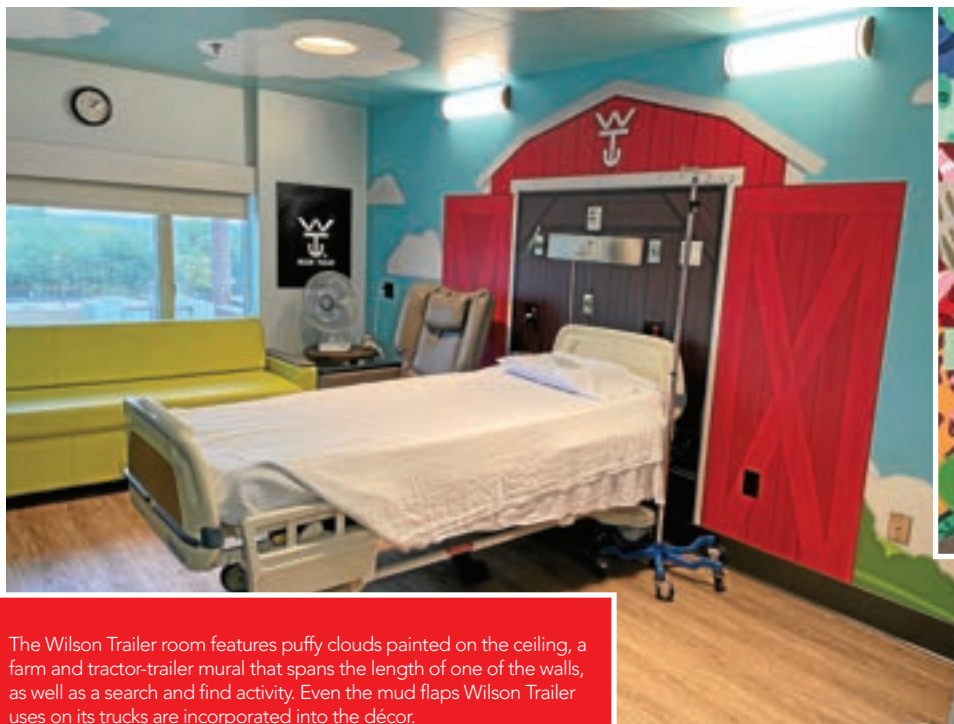
Mirrors that appear to have come from a carnival funhouse flank a hospital bed in the Jolly Time Pop Corn-themed room at UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's.

A circus tent built into a corner of the room in the Sioux City hospital's pediatric unit is sure to bring smiles to the faces of young patients who stay there while recovering from illness and injury.

Since 2015, Siouxland businesses and organizations have been sponsoring themed-rooms designed to lift children's spirits. Sioux City Ford Lincoln kicked off the project in November of that year by donating a car-theme room. Then, Scheels All Sports funded an adventure room that lets young patients escape to the woods.

The following year, a treehouse dreamland created by Wells Enterprises, the makers of Blue Bunny ice cream, yogurt and frozen treats, was unveiled.

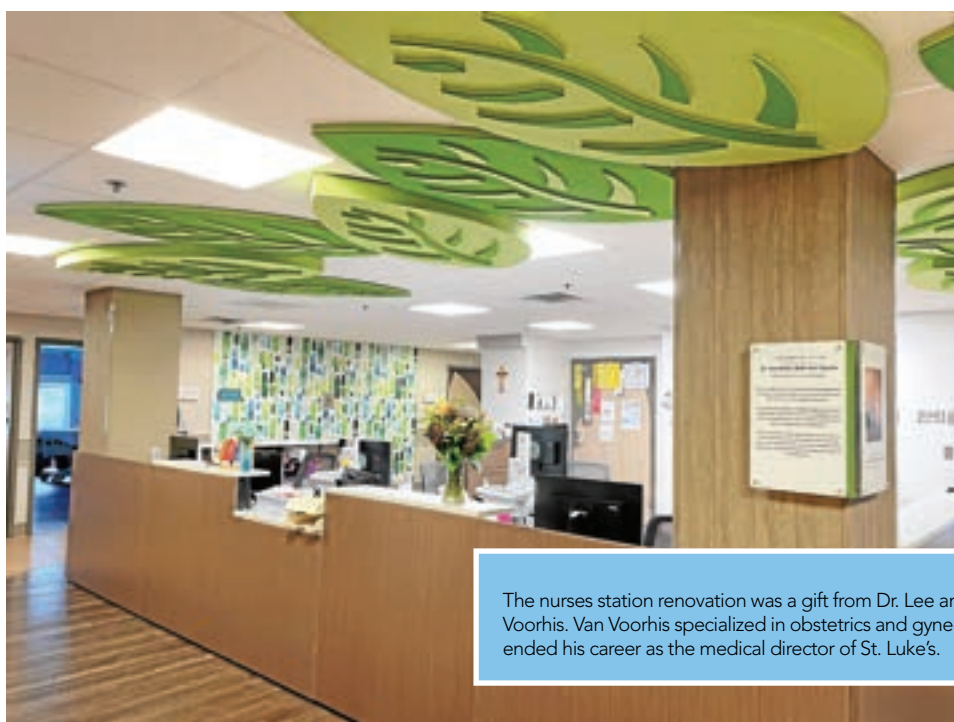
"It's great because each one is a very specialized unique scene," said Stacey Selk, director of Children's Miracle Network. "As we get a wide range of ages, from two or three days, who may



The Wilson Trailer room features puffy clouds painted on the ceiling, a farm and tractor-trailer mural that spans the length of one of the walls, as well as a search and find activity. Even the mud flaps Wilson Trailer uses on its trucks are incorporated into the décor.



Stacey Selk, director of Children's Miracle Network, left, and Kari Winklepleck, president of UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's Foundation, are shown in the Sioux City hospital's renovated pediatric unit. Artwork in the hallways creates a warm and inviting environment for young patients and their family members.



The nurses station renovation was a gift from Dr. Lee and Ruth Van Voorhis. Van Voorhis specialized in obstetrics and gynecology and ended his career as the medical director of St. Luke's.

trucks are incorporated into the décor.

"They really did everything from floor to ceiling. They did a really great job," Winklepleck said. "This a great partnership that we're able to do with local organizations and businesses that really want to give back and believe in helping children in this area."

The unit's nurses station has also been completely redone. Giant green leaves pop from the ceiling and encircle the space. The renovation was a gift from Dr. Lee and Ruth Van Voorhis. Van Voorhis specialized in obstetrics and gynecology and ended his career as the medical director of St. Luke's. He expressed his generosity through his volunteer efforts and charitable giving around Siouxland, according to a plaque affixed to the nurses station. Ruth Van Voorhis was a teacher and mother who volunteered across the community.

"It's kind of like the first thing they see when (kids) come through here," Winklepleck said of the nurses station, which she said honors Van Voorhis' legacy.

Artwork in the pediatric unit's hallways creates a warm and inviting environment for young patients and their family members. The pieces, which were a gift from the Gilchrist Foundation, also encourage patients to get out and explore as they heal.

"We partnered with Art SUX, a local gallery here, and we actually commissioned some great pieces," Winklepleck said.

unfortunately have to come back, up to 17-year-olds, it's great that we have these kind of specialized themed rooms."

Selk said the rooms are tailored to appeal to a variety of young patients. For example, she said an older pediatric patient may really appreciate the modern, neutral, calming environment that the CMBA Architects room provides.

"You kind of get a whole variety up here, from really fun, kid-like rooms all the way up to more sophisticated for our teenagers," said Kari Winklepleck, president of UnityPoint Health —

St. Luke's Foundation.

Winklepleck said hospital staff members really work to assign pediatric patients to a room they think the child would enjoy. She said 10 of the floor's 12 rooms have now been converted. The Jolly Time Pop Corn room and a room sponsored by Wilson Trailer are the latest additions. The Wilson Trailer room features puffy clouds painted on the ceiling, a farm and tractor-trailer mural that spans the length of one of the walls, as well as a search and find activity. Even the mud flaps Wilson Trailer uses on its

General Manager Scott Rhoads displays a pizza and OG Hot Dog at ACX Promenade Cinema in Sioux City. Owner Bill Barstow said theaters are moving past traditional offerings by including different food choices and adding video games.



SHOWMANSHIP IS KEY

*Sioux City's Promenade Cinema
rolls with changes of moviegoing*

Text by Jared McNett | Photographs by Tim Hynds & Jesse Brothers

Bill Barstow, the CEO of Main Street Theatres Inc., which runs the Promenade Cinema in Sioux City, has been in the movie game since 1988.

In the 35 years following, he and his wife Colleen's start in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, the company has expanded to

Chicago, Elkhorn, Nebraska; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Nebraska City, Nebraska; Omaha, and, of course, Sioux City.

They also buy films and do consulting work for another 30 theaters across five states.

Oh, and Colleen serves as the

chairwoman of the Independent Theater Owners Committee, a part of the National Association of Theatre Owners which represents a reported 35,000 screens in 50 states and additional theaters in 101 countries.

Across the decades of growth, promotion and industry lobbying, Barstow said the biggest change for his company has been to realize the industry he's actually in.

"It happened pre-pandemic for us. It was the epiphany that we are an entertainment business that has to stand on our own," Barstow said. "In the old days, we were comfortable selling pop and popcorn and waiting for the next big wave to hit. And you always rode that wave. At some point it became: We've got to do more. We can control our destiny if we do food and beverage more."

To that point, Barstow said admissions for the Promenade, which runs 14 screens, were about 130,000 through mid-September.

"If you're running 100,000 people through, think if you can sell an extra \$5



Video games are shown in the lobby at ACX Promenade Cinema in Sioux City. Owner Bill Barstow said theaters are moving past traditional offerings by including different food choices and adding video games.



An OG Hot Dog with kettle fries.



Heated recliners are a step up in comfort after the renovations at the Promenade Cinema 14 movie theater in Sioux City, Iowa.

of food," Barstow said.

With respect to the Promenade, the menu is expanded to now include items such as pizza, an OG Hot Dog (which is a hot dog sprinkled with pork rinds and scallions) and kettle fries, and even a Jack Daniels whiskey and Coca-Cola frozen drink. Though traditional movie theater options, like soft drinks, popcorn, nachos and candy continue to make up about 75% of concession revenue for the Promenade, Barstow said the higher-end stuff serves a purpose.

"Adult beverages and cafe items really add to (experience). It's not so much selling the glass of wine as it is selling the experience," Barstow said.

And Barstow said he sees the experience extending beyond just the specific movie being screened and what a customer decides to buy at the snack bar. Which is why he said the Promenade's had \$1 million put toward a new lobby, a new box office, new arcade games and new seating (heated, push-button-controlled recliners with cupholders in each armrest).

"If you're coming to a movie now at Promenade Cinema, you're getting the recliner seating," Mike Barstow, the vice president of Main Street Theatres and son of Bill, told *The Journal* in 2022.

What's being shown to moviegoers has changed as well for the Promenade.

Bill Barstow said the multiplex has looked at more options from Fathom Events, which, among things, screens live stage performances, and concert films such as "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour." For its opening day, Oct. 13, the Promenade had eight showings. AMC Southern Hills 12 in Sioux City had five lined up in a two-hour window. In a *Variety* story about the film's debut, Chris Randelman, the CEO of Flix Brewhouse, which runs 10 theaters, said, "It's like Christmas morning."

2023's been kind to the Promenade, Barstow said, as there have been record-breaking films like "The Super Mario Bros. Movies," (\$1.36 billion worldwide gross), "Barbie," (\$1.43 billion worldwide gross) and "Oppenheimer" (\$900 million through September).

"We've always thought 2024 was going to be our big year," Barstow said about when he anticipated theaters would make a full return to levels seen in 2018 and 2019, the year nine films crossed \$1 billion gross.

"There's been a great reset. You can't create excitement without a theatrical release," he said.

Though 78% of U.S. households subscribe to at least one or more streaming services (per a May *Forbes* piece), Barstow doesn't see an inherent threat to theatrical releases.

"The streaming customer and home theater customer is our best customer," he said. "Someone who has an 80-inch television with home seating, do you think he's in line to see the new Avengers movie on opening weekend or is he waiting?"

And when that fan comes out to a theater such as the Promenade, new amenities will be there.

"We're agnostic to the entertainment we're selling," Barstow said. "It's become more and more about amenities to move the market."



Siblings Sophia and Christian Nelson play in their kitchen while dad Charlie Nelson watches. Sophia, who is active in dance, theater and art, and Christian, who is active in sports and marching band, are examples of today's multitasking teens, Charlie Nelson said.

FULL-NELSON

When teenagers lead busy extracurricular lives, so do mom and dad

Text by Earl Horlyk | Photographs by Jesse Brothers

A typical weekday for Sophia Nelson, 13, will begin well before 7 a.m.

In addition to schoolwork, the North Middle School student regularly participates in dance classes at the 5,6,7,8! Dance Studio when she isn't creating one-of-a-kind earrings for her own home-based business.

"Sophia is the youngest member of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce," her mom Mickey Nelson said, beaming with pride. "She's also the only person in her class to have their own sales tax permit."

Sophia's 16-year-old brother Christian Nelson is also very accomplished.

The North High School student is on the Stars golf, bowling and tennis teams.

He is also a member of the school's marching band which, recently, hosted the 25th annual Starfest, a competition that attracts the best high school bands across the area.

Both Mickey Nelson and her husband Charlie Nelson were volunteer coordinators for this year's Starfest. In fact, Charlie, still has the calluses to prove it.

"I was in charge of all of the props the band used during Starfest," Charlie, co-owner of Nelson Industrial Construction & Engineering, said with a sigh.

Well, it only makes sense that two very active teenagers would also have parents who were equally as invested in their children's extracurricular lives.

"Busy kids are also kids who stay out of trouble," Charlie offered.

Yet, Mickey said there are a few fringe benefits as well.

"I feel like I've discovered the fountain of youth when I'm around Christian and Sophia and their friends," she explained with a laugh. "That is, until I run out of energy before they do. Then, I realized I'm not as young as I used to be."

Indeed, the Nelsons always encouraged their kids to try new things.

Whether it was Mickey taking their kids to Kindermusik classes at age 2 or Charlie teaching them how to shoot hoops at age 3, both Christian and Sophia enjoyed an active lifestyle.

This came naturally for Charlie, who enjoyed sports and came from a family of high achievers.

However, it was a bit out of character for Mickey, who came to America from her native Panama when she was 12 years old.

"When I was young, my mom wasn't a 'joiner,'" she said. "Mom didn't speak English well and was probably intimidated to be around other people."

Despite that, Mickey excelled in scholastics as well as in music. This exposed her to the moms and dads who were active participants in all of their children's activities.

"As soon as I had kids, I told myself, I wanted to be one of those moms who volunteered for everything," she said. "PTA, afterschool activities, you name it."

Though she enjoyed her career in food sciences, Mickey disliked the travel that came with her work. Once Christian was born, she became a stay-at-home mom.

"That isn't quite true because Mickey isn't home very often," Charlie said with a smile. "She's probably as busy as any of us."

To be fair, Mickey wouldn't have it any other way.

"When the kids were younger, other parents became my support group," she said. "When Christian and Sophia started school, they already had friends due to their outside activities. I had also become friends with those families."

Even though Charlie's engineering and construction firm keeps him busy, he is still just as active in the children's lives as his wife.

According to Mickey, Sophia made have caught the entrepreneurial bug from her dad.

"Sophia started making jewelry when she was 11," Mickey said, "Charlie started his own business when he was roughly the same age."

"I sold sweet corn in front of Taco John's every summer," Charlie said. "I made pretty good money that way."

Sophia's SGN Designs is already a moneymaker. You can purchase her distinctive earrings at Sioux City's Perry Way Bouquet as well as at special events

The Nelson family, Sophia, left, Mickey, Christian, and Charlie are shown at their home in Sioux City. Both Mickey and Charlie say it is important to keep up in the interests of their very active teenagers.



Above: Mickey Nelson, a former food scientist and current stay-at-home mom, takes an active interest in the scholastic and extracurricular activities of her children Sophia and Christian Nelson. **Left:** At age 13, Sophia Nelson is already an entrepreneur. She sells handmade earrings under the name of SGN Designs.



like Le Mars, Iowa's Ice Cream Days.

So far, she's even given presentations for Chamber of Commerce members and other business groups.

Despite that, Sophia knows jewelry making will always be a sideline for her.

"I want to be a physical therapist or a chiropractor when I grow up," she said.

"That may come in handy," Mickey said, teasing her daughter. "As a dancer, Sophia has had her fair share of injuries. She knows a thing or two about physical therapy."

In Christian's case, he wants to go into medical science when he gets older.

"I think what moved me to that direction was a chemistry class I was taking," he said. "I thought it was really interesting."



Christian Nelson swings a golf driver in a simulator at his family's home. An athlete who excels in both golf and tennis, Christian is a multitasking teenager who is involved in many activities, according to mom Mickey Nelson.

"You see, Christian is serious-minded and very analytical while Sophia is very dramatic and artistic," Mickey said with a chuckle. "If we could split them in half, we'd have some superhuman kids."

"Actually, I think they're both super kids the way that they are," she allowed.

On the counter of the Nelson's kitchen is a poster Mickey had made for Christian's homecoming dance that was a few days away.

"Nobody asked mom to make it, she just did it," Christian said. "That's OK, because it looks really good."

Looking out of their living room window, Charlie watched Sophia as she tried some tumbling moves on an outdoor trampoline.

"Sophia is really acrobatic," her dad said. "You have to be when you're a dancer."

Both Charlie and Mickey are proud of their two very busy kids.

"I remember when I was a kid," Charlie said. "I was never as busy as those two are."

Mickey nodded in agreement.

"I know what you mean," she said. "If we weren't as much a part of their extracurricular lives, we probably wouldn't see our own children and that would be a shame."

"It's like I said before, spending time with young people is like discovering the fountain of youth," Mickey added. "You get caught up in all of the excitement. Then you get pooped out and realize it is nice to be an adult again."



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Sophia Nelson and her father Charlie Nelson hold up the ghost earrings she made for Halloween. Sophia, 13, is already an entrepreneur with a home-based jewelry business. She is following in the footsteps of her dad, who started with a sweet corn stand when he was Sophia's age.

WE HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ANSWER

Before I could get a flu shot at my doctor's office, I was sent a form to complete.

It wanted to know if I felt tired or had little energy.

The answer is obviously yes, but I didn't respond that way. Then it wanted to know if I had a poor appetite or had been overeating.

Again, the answer was yes, but I'm not admitting to anybody who might weigh me when I get to the clinic. "Excessive snacking" was not an option.

"Do you have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much?" Again, yes. But there was a car accident in front of my house at 3 a.m. and I don't want to admit how much time I spent gawking out the window.

"Have you been feeling bad about yourself lately?" I wasn't until I received a Facebook message from someone who was upset about her newspaper subscription, and I had no way of helping her solve the problem. Because it wasn't within my authority, the best I could do was forward a message to someone who could. I didn't think I was unhelpful, but the person writing made sure I knew how worthless I truly was. Thus, bad thoughts.

"Do you have trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television?" Again, yes. When your phone is pinging with messages from people who are upset about not getting their newspaper, you really can't enjoy reading yours. Watching television? Isn't that the purpose of commercials – interrupt your concentration and divert?

The questionnaire, I decided, was angling.

"Are you moving so slowly other

people could have noticed?" it continued. Honestly, I never thought anyone was watching.

"Or are you so fidgety or restless that you are moving around a lot more than usual?" Again, who's keeping tabs on these things? Yes, I do run around the house trying to remember what it was I was supposed to do, but that's not the question you're asking.

The survey, you see, was proving difficult.

Instead of asking those questions (and the dreaded, "How much weight do you think you've gained in the last month?"), it should have taken a more positive approach.

"Ready for winter? You might want to consider packing on a few pounds before the weather turns. Then you'll be prepared if there's a storm."

Or "You look like you've worked too hard this week. Take a nap. Let the laundry go. Buy something online. You deserve it."

I'm sure the person who wrote the questionnaire wanted me to own up to my shortcomings before a doctor would see me. Then he wouldn't have to hear my arguments and come to the same conclusion that some of these "lifestyles choices" are entirely out of my control.

The questionnaire also wanted a recent photo but I wasn't falling for that. I've used the same one since 1994 and if you squint, I look pretty much the same. Besides, if I must help you figure out who I am, how good is that flu shot?

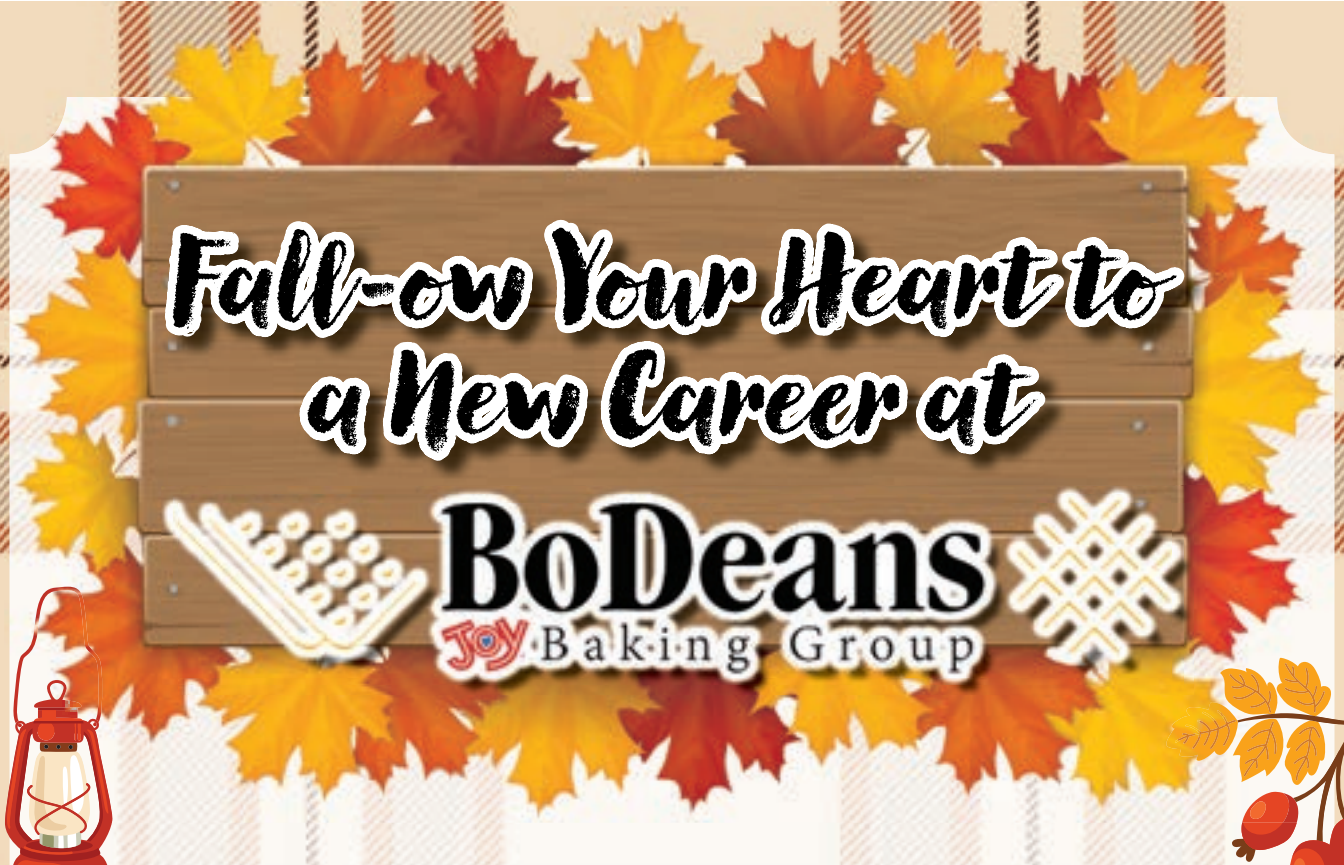
The next thing you know, the doctor is going to ask unnecessary questions about exercise and nutrition.

Didn't I say I was running around the house? That should count for something.

Now give me the flu shot.



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