

Windsor Heights Living

december 2014

50324

December TREASURES

WINDSOR HEIGHTS RESIDENTS
SHARE THEIR FAVORITE
HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

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Collecting memories

A few decades ago, I had a business partner in a regional automotive photo magazine that is now known to many of you as the website autotrader.com. The printed publication was packed full of cars and trucks for sale, as well as a few oddball items. In one of our many discussions about the unique things that people would advertise, my partner asked me, "So what do you collect?" I quickly replied, "Nothing," and he looked back at me in utter amazement. "You gotta collect something; everybody collects something," he said. "Nope. Nothing," I firmly replied. That was the truth then, and it continues to be the truth today. Or at least I thought so.



I know there are a handful of you out there who are like me and avoid accumulating things. I also realize that we are the minority, and that my business partner was correct in his statement that most people do collect something, whether they want to or not. Around the holidays, collecting has become a tradition for many.

Our cover story this month shares examples of local family traditions like the search for the perfect Christmas tree on the process of decorating for the holidays. They describe the personal meanings that these traditions have and how they make them — and the people who surround them — appreciate all the good they have in their lives.

With that in mind, most all of us can enjoy the many Christmas-related items that are collected. But more important than any material things are the memories that come with them and are shared each time they are seen.

So when it comes down to it, I guess my old business partner was right. We do all collect something, whether we want to or not. For those who physically acquire things as part of traditions, it is in the actual collections. But also for them, and for all of us who don't compile all the "stuff," the memories still pile up. And at the end of the day, those are the best collections of all.

Merry Christmas, and thanks for reading. ■

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December **TREASURES**

**WINDSOR HEIGHTS RESIDENTS
SHARE THEIR FAVORITE HOLIDAY
TRADITIONS**

Sophia Timm shows off her favorite ornament that says “Colorado,” a memento from a family vacation. The Timm children like to decorate the tree but find themselves sidetracked every now and then to reminisce about the special ornaments they receive yearly. Photo by Courtney Keiser.

By Courtney Keiser

Many of us have childhood memories of the perfect Christmas. Some of us remember the tangible things — our favorite gifts and holiday treats. Almost everyone remembers the intangible. Joy, faith, peace, hope, tradition and togetherness are all things we hope to feel again and again. And, many of us strive to instill those values and memories in our children.

Because with them, we get to experience the miracle of Christmas through new eyes.

We often celebrate Christmas with established family traditions. Parents with small children find themselves revisiting past rituals from their own childhood while also creating new, special customs. Even many empty-nesters end up immersed in the Christmas spirit with their

adult children and grandchildren, as if time has stood still.

And, on the days following Thanksgiving, many of us turn on the Christmas music, enlist our elves and begin to show our excitement and appreciation for the Christmas season through holiday decorating.

This year, two Windsor Heights families

FEATURE |

began their Christmas decorating routines as usual but took the extra time to reflect on some of the personal and precious traditions that make this season so special.

A Charlie Brown Christmas tree

Without fail, Tony and Channon Timm choose a Christmas tree with their children every year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. They start the journey with high expectations, because not just any Christmas tree will do.

"We are picky about our tree," Channon explains. "We like them tall and big."

Ironically, this year the family had to settle for the shorter and skinnier version of their dream tree when they discovered their preferred tree hunting destination was highly picked over.

It gave everyone a good laugh and, most likely, a new family memory.

"I guess now we're still in search of the perfect tree farm," Channon admits. "But, we have been to several in the area."

Tony and Channon's children, Charlie and Sophia, still managed to have a blast decorating this year's Christmas tree with Mom and Dad. They love to help put the lights on and find themselves sidetracked every now and then to reminisce about the special ornaments they receive yearly.

"I purchase an ornament for them each Christmas that represents that particular year for them," Channon says. "When they are older and out of the house, I'll pass those ornaments on to them to have for their own Christmas trees."

Charlie likes his "I'm the big brother" ornament — a gift from his parents the year Sophia was born. Sophia's favorite says "Colorado," a reminder of their family vacation.

When Channon was a child, her mother started a similar tradition with Precious Moments Christmas thimbles. Channon received a new addition to her collection every year until the items were discontinued. She then began collecting



Channon, Tony, Sophia, Charlie and dog Liberty show off this year's Timm family Christmas tree. Initially the tree didn't meet expectations, but today it's dressed up beautifully. Photo by Courtney Keiser.

Precious Moments Christmas figurines.

Charlie and Sophia also helped Mom and Dad with the outdoor lights this year — a new tradition for the family. Because the house is brick, the Timms just recently found clips to help secure the lights and plan to continue adding to their exterior decor.

Tony and Channon now look forward to Dec. 25 because of the excitement it brings their children. The entire family wakes up together on Christmas morning and gathers with local extended family later that day. They celebrate with their out-of-town family on a few occasions throughout the month of December.

Nine-year-old Charlie says time with family is his most-treasured tradition. Naturally, 4-year-old Sophia's favorite thing about Christmas is Santa Claus.

The holiday season can be a particularly emotional and reflective time for the Timms. Channon is the program services coordinator

for Children's Cancer Connection, and Tony is the executive director for Central Iowa Shelter and Services. Seeing pain and suffering firsthand reminds them just how fortunate they are to have their health and a roof over their heads.

"It's hard to see sick children spend the holidays in the hospital," Channon says. "I'm always reminded to appreciate our active and healthy children."

But the triumphs Tony and Channon witness at work are often times nothing short of miraculous. Both are incredibly grateful to have the chance to make a positive difference for others.

The Timms want their children to look back on each holiday season and remember the fun, family memories and their time spent together.

They enjoy telling Charlie and Sophia the story of how their journey as a couple began.

"Tony and I got engaged around the Christmas tree," Channon says. "We were decorating this tiny tree and we decided there were way

too many ornaments on it. We started taking some off and Tony pointed to one I had missed — it was a ring hanging from a hook."

And the family's quest for the ideal Christmas tree? Well, there's always next year. The search is all in good fun. Initially the 2014 Timm family Christmas tree didn't meet expectations. But today, it's dressed up beautifully.

And, it's still upright, which isn't always a guarantee at their house.

"Last year our tree fell over the day after we decorated it," Tony laughs. "We had a mini waterfall coming out of the tree stand. We managed to get it back up, but it was crooked for the rest of December."

It's a wonderful life

Greg Mauk's favorite film is the 1946 Christmas classic "It's A Wonderful Life." And for he and his wife Karol, what a wonderful life it has been. The couple has celebrated 33 Christmas seasons in Windsor Heights. Within six

FEATURE |

months of being married, they bought their first home in the area and have remained in the community.

“When we expanded our family we moved from Windsor Heights to Windsor Heights,” Greg says. “We really enjoy the area. It’s fun to live in a small community with local activities and services, but also have the vibrant Des Moines metro area.”

Greg and Karol set the scene for the holidays both on the inside and outside of the house. Karol has a passion for decorating, and that, mixed with their love of Christmas, has made this an enjoyable, lifetime routine for the couple.

“Karol is management, and I’m labor,” Greg jokes.

The house is adorned with two large artificial Christmas trees. Karol finds that this helps separate the gifts for each side of their large family.

The Mauks enjoy hosting family for Christmas. And although their two children, Steven and Renae, have grown up and left the nest, Karol still recalls many years of frosting cookies and tree decorating with her children.

“I’ll also never forget seeing them fly downstairs to see what Santa had brought them,” she says.

Renae still returns home every year to help



Karol and Greg Mauk, along with dog, Sophy, enjoy hosting Christmas each year. Photo by Courtney Keiser.

decorate the Mauk family winter wonderland. The indoor displays, keepsakes and greenery are breathtaking. Both trees are decorated to the max with tasteful lighting and, of course, the couple’s many ornaments. The Mauks have

accumulated a massive collection over 33 years. Karol can recall many of the ornaments from memory. She fondly remembers the first ornament Greg gave her in 1979, which proudly hangs on the tree in the couple’s den.

The spirit of Christmas is alive in every room of their home, but last year the Mauks gained the most attention for their outdoor lighting display. The Windsor Heights Foundation deemed Greg and Karol’s home as a district winner of the annual outdoor lighting contest — a nice surprise for the couple.

The Windsor Heights Foundation Annual Lighting contest looks for balanced and uncluttered designs, creativity, minimum use of plastic, hand-crafted elements and a display that looks well both during the day and night.

The front of the Mauks’ home is aglow with white lights, greenery and bows. The second floor windows are illuminated with candles and the living room Christmas tree shines through large picture window on the first floor. The lighting in back creates an illusion — at night, the bushes appear to be floating.

“The outdoor lighting has stayed fairly consistent,” Greg says. “We really just light our home for the enjoyment of family, friends and neighbors. But, it has been fun to be recognized by the Foundation.” ■



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VACATION HOUSE WATCH

Are you leaving town for the holidays or have a vacation coming up? The Windsor Heights Police Department is a full service Police Department that recognizes its most valuable assets are a close relationship with the community and the members of the Department. To provide the best possible service, the Department has made it as convenient as possible to request vacation house checks on your home. Forms are available at www.windsorheights.org or the Police Department located at 1133 66th Street. Please submit the form at least one week before leaving and complete all fields in the form. Remember to include emergency contact information as well.

2015 PET LICENSE REGISTRATION

The time to register your pets for 2015 is coming up. All pet owners must register their animals January 1 through March 31. Even if renewing, please bring a copy of your pet's current rabies certificate or bring a copy of your 2014 pet license. The fee for fixed animals is \$10 and un-fixed is \$20. Pet licenses are available at the Windsor Heights Public Safety Building located at 1133 66th Street. The 2015 Pet License Application is available on the Windsor Heights website at www.windsorheights.org. If you have any questions, please call the Police Department at 277-4453.

Reminder to Pet Owners: Even if registered, pets are never permitted to run at large in the city and must be on a leash or confined at all times. All pet ordinances are in Chapter 55.

CHRISTMAS TREE & WINTER YARD WASTE COLLECTION: DECEMBER 29 – JANUARY 9

The holidays often include bringing in the new and disposing of the old. As you're shuffling things around, make sure to get your Christmas tree to the curb in time for collection.

Christmas trees, just like yard waste, are collected from the curb and recycled into compost. Trees are picked-up on your regular garbage day between December 29 and January 9, and they must have a *Compost It!* sticker attached. Stickers are sold at participating grocery and hardware stores for \$1.20. Please remove all decorations. Wreaths and garland are not accepted.

This is also the last chance to have any remaining yard debris collected before spring. Be sure to use your *Compost It!* yard waste cart, *Compost It!* bags or attach *Compost It!* stickers to generic bags to ensure your yard waste is picked up.

For more information about yard waste collection, visit Metro Waste Authority at www.WherelItShouldGo.com or call 515.244.0021.



UPCOMING COLLECTION DELAYS

Recycling, yard waste and garbage will not be collected on Thursday, December 25, due to the Christmas holiday. Collection is delayed one day for the remainder of the week, with regular Friday collection delayed to Saturday.

Recycling, yard waste and garbage will not be collected on Thursday, January 1, in honor of New Year's Day. Collection is delayed one day for the remainder of the week, with regular Friday collection delayed to Saturday.

WINTER WEATHER REMINDERS

With winter upon us, the City of Windsor Heights would like to remind residents of the ordinances that pertain to snow and ice.

What are the rules regarding parking a vehicle on the street during the winter? City code states that it is unlawful to park on any street during the time of any snowfall and within the 24 hours following the end of the any snow event (60.10.10). Any vehicle parked on the street during a snowfall or within 24 hours after a snowfall faces the possibility of receiving a \$25 parking ticket and/or impoundment. It is important to remember the times when you cannot be parked on the street and that the snow ordinance automatically goes into effect when snow begins to accumulate. This allows for timely removal of snow from the streets and is needed to maintain the safety of our main thoroughfares to get emergency response apparatus to residential areas expeditiously.

What about my sidewalks during or after it snows? It is the responsibility of the abutting property owners to remove snow and ice accumulations promptly from sidewalks. If the property owner does not remove snow and/or ice accumulations within a reasonable time, the City may do so and ultimately assess the costs against the property owner for collection in the same manner as property tax. For purposes of enforcement, a reasonable time period is generally 48 hours after the snow or ice accumulations end. While the City realizes it can be frustrating to finish clearing your driveway and then have the plow come by, the snow removal policy adopted by the City Council indicates that snow placed in driveways by City plows is the responsibility of the property owner to remove. Snow from a private driveway may not be placed on or pushed across a City street.

DART NEWS FOR DECEMBER

No DART service on Christmas Day. DART will not operate bus service on Thursday, December 25, in observation of Christmas Day. On Wednesday, December 24, 2014, DART service will run modified weekday service, ending two hours early, in observation of Christmas Eve. The last trips will depart DART Central Station at 8:40pm. Additionally, on Friday, December 26, DART will operate on its Saturday schedule. Hours for the customer service window and schedule information phones will be 8am to 4pm and administrative offices are closed. Regular service and office hours will resume on Saturday, December 27. DART reminds riders to plan their trips accordingly.

No DART service on New Year's Day. DART will not operate bus service on Thursday, January 1, 2015, in observation of New Year's Day. DART reminds riders to plan their trips accordingly.

Coming soon: Real-time bus location information available via text and phone

Riders will soon be able to get the real-time arrival/departure information for their buses via MyDART Text and MyDART Phone, both part of the growing suite of MyDART Tools. To get the next expected bus times for a particular stop, simply text your bus stop ID number and quickly receive a response via incoming MyDART text message.

For more information, please visit www.ridedart.com or call DART Customer Service at 515-283-8100.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE CITY OF WH

City offices will be closed December 25–26 and January 1, 2015.

DIANA WILLITS, MAYOR • STEVE PETERSON, COUNCIL MEMBER • CHARLENE BUTZ, COUNCIL MEMBER
BETTY GLOVER, COUNCIL MEMBER • DAVE BURGESS, COUNCIL MEMBER • TONY TIMM, COUNCIL MEMBER

CALENDAR

Friday, Dec. 19

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.
- Fairmeadows winter parties, noon
- Crestview Winter Parties, 2:30 p.m. - 3:10 p.m.
- Clive Elementary Winter Celebrations, 3-3:45 p.m.
- V Wrestling Varsity - Tournament, Waterloo West HS, noon
- V Basketball, Boys 10th vs. Johnston at Johnston High School, 4:45 p.m.
- V Girls JV basketball vs. Johnston at Johnston High School, 4:45 p.m.
- V Girls Varsity basket vs. Johnston at Johnston High School 6:15 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 20

- Brenton Skating Plaza learn to skate class, session 1, 10-10:30 a.m.; session 2, 10:35-11:05 a.m.; session 3, 11:10-11:40 a.m.
- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.
- V Boys Varsity basketball vs. Westside at Mid-America Center, noon
- V Wrestling Varsity - Tournament, Waterloo West HS, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 21

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 6 p.m.
- Broom ball league, Brenton

Skating Plaza, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 22

- Public skate extended hours, Brenton Skating Plaza, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Planning and Zoning meeting, noon, council chambers
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Tuesday, Dec. 23

- Hits 99.9 student skate extended hours, Brenton Skating Plaza, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- City Hall closes 3 op.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Wednesday, Dec. 24

- Christmas Eve
- Brenton Skating Plaza open 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- City offices close at 3 p.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Thursday, Dec. 25

- Christmas Day
- Brenton Skating Plaza open 4-9 p.m.
- City offices closed
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Friday, Dec. 26

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Saturday, Dec. 27

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 29

- Public skate extended hours, Brenton Skating Plaza, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Tuesday, Dec. 30

- Hits 99.9 student skate extended hours, Brenton Skating Plaza, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Wednesday, Dec. 31

- New Year's Eve
- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 9 p.m.
- City Hall closes 3 p.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS



CALENDAR

Thursday, Jan. 1

- Brenton Skating Plaza open 4-9 p.m.
- City Hall closed
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS

Friday, Jan. 2

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.
- No school - DMPS
- No school - WDMPS
- V Boys 10th basketball vs. Fort Dodge, 6:15 p.m.
- V Girls JV basketball vs. Fort Dodge, 6:15 p.m.
- V Girls Varsity basketball vs. Fort Dodge, 6:15 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 3

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.
- Valley JV wrestling @ Des Moines North Invite, 9 a.m., Des Moines North High School.

Sunday, Jan. 4

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 6 p.m.
- Broom ball league, Brenton Skating Plaza, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 5

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 6 p.m.
- Learn to skate session 2, Brenton Skating Plaza, 7:05-7:35 p.m.
- BOGO night, Brenton Skating Plaza, buy one admission, get one free skate rental, 8-10 p.m.
- City Council meeting, 6 p.m.
- Stilwell Mimes Informational Meeting, 3-4:30 p.m.
- VHS Drama Booster Meeting/Potluck, 5-9 p.m., Valley cafeteria
- Valley Varsity/Boys JV/Girls Varsity/Girls JV bowling vs. Fort Dodge, Ridgewood Lanes, 3:45 p.m.
- Valley High School Drama Booster Club meeting/potluck, Valley High

- School cafeteria, 5-9 p.m.
- Valley Boys Varsity/JV vs. Ankeny, Valley High School, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- Valley Varsity/JV wrestling vs. Fort Dodge, Ankeny Centennial @ Fort Dodge High School, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday Jan. 6

- Hits 99.9 student skate, Brenton Skating Plaza, noon - 9 p.m.
- DMPS School Board meeting, 6 p.m.
- Valley 10th grade boys basketball vs. Waukee, 4:45 p.m.
- Valley girls junior varsity basketball vs. Waukee, 4:45 p.m.
- Valley girls varsity basketball vs. Waukee, 6:15 p.m.
- Valley boys varsity basketball vs. Waukee, 7:45 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 9 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 8

- KISS-FM, Brenton Skating Plaza, 5-9 p.m.
- Stilwell Parent Advisory Council Meeting, noon
- Valley Boys Varsity/Boys JV/Girls Varsity/Girls JV bowling vs. Des Moines North, 3:45 p.m.
- Valley Boys Varsity/JV swimming vs. Marshalltown @ Marshalltown High School, 5:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 9

- Valley Boys 10th grade basketball vs. Indianola, 4:45 p.m.
- Valley Girls Varsity/JV basketball vs. Indianola, 6:15 p.m.
- Valley Boys Varsity basketball vs. Indianola, 7:45 p.m.
- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.
- Stilwell/ Indian Hills Student Scholarship Mixer, 5:30-7 p.m. Stilwell main gym

Saturday, Jan. 10

- Valley Band 9-12 SCIBA District Honor Band, Ankeny, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Valley Varsity wrestling, Ames Invitational, Ames High School, 10 a.m.
- Valley JV wrestling, Ankeny Invitational, Ankeny High School, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Valley Boys Varsity/JV swimming vs. Cedar Rapids Washington, Cedar Rapids Washington High School, 12:30-3:30 p.m.
- Brenton Skating Plaza learn to skate class, session 1, 10-10:30 a.m.; session 2, 10:35-11:05 a.m.
- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 11 p.m.
- Valley Girls Varsity/JV basketball vs. Cedar Rapids Xavier, Valley High School, 1-5 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 12

- Public skate, Brenton Skating Plaza, noon - 6 p.m.

- Learn to skate session 2, Brenton Skating Plaza, 7:05-7:35 p.m.
- BOGO night, Brenton Skating Plaza, buy one admission, get one free skate rental, 8-10 p.m.
- Community meeting with mayor and administrator, Community Events Center, 5:15-6:15 p.m.
- WDMPS school board meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 13

- Hits 99.9 student skate, Brenton Skating Plaza, noon - 9 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 14

- Brenton Skating Plaza public skate, noon - 9 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 15

- KISS-FM, Brenton Skating Plaza, 5-9 p.m.





Susanne Schemmel, Tess Murphy, Rebekah Bourland, Zoe Murphy, Gabby Leonard, Mary Kellis and Bryan Nauman from "The Nutcracker" at the Windsor Wonderland on Dec. 6.

It's Red Kettle Time at The Salvation Army!

All donations to the Red Kettles stay in Central Iowa to help our neighbors. Check us out at www.salvationarmy-desmoines.org



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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Check out this year-end financial checklist

As 2014 draws to a close, you may want to look back on the progress you've made this past year in various areas of your life. You may want to make some end-of-year moves that can close out 2014 on a positive note while paving the way for a productive 2015.

Here are a few such moves to consider:

- **Boost your retirement plan contributions.** This actually isn't an "end-of-year" move because you have until April 15, 2015, to contribute to your Roth or Traditional IRA for the 2014 tax year. Nonetheless, the sooner you get extra dollars working for you in your IRA, the better. You can put in up to \$5,500 to your IRA (or \$6,500 if you're 50 or older) for 2014. If you are self-employed, or run a small business, you also have until April 15 to contribute to a retirement account, such as a SEP IRA or a SIMPLE plan. In addition to helping you build resources for retirement, these types of plans can offer you some tax advantages.

- **Sell your "losers."** If you own investments that have lost value since you purchased them, you can sell them before 2014 ends and use the tax loss to offset some capital gains you may have earned in other investments. If you don't have any capital gains, you can use up to \$3,000 of your tax losses to offset other ordinary income.

- **Evaluate your 401(k) investment mix.** You may be able to adjust the investment mix in your 401(k) as often as you like.



So when evaluating your 401(k), make sure your holdings aren't concentrated in just a few investments.

If your plan offers a "Roth" option, consider taking advantage of it — with a Roth, you won't be able to deduct your 401(k) contributions from your taxes, but once you retire, you won't be taxed on your withdrawals.

- **Review your insurance coverage.** If you've experienced any changes in your life in 2014, new spouse, new child, divorce, new job, etc. — you may need to review your life insurance coverage to make sure that it's still sufficient for your needs and that you have the correct beneficiaries in place.

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation. ■

Information provided by Matt Kneifl, financial advisor, Edward Jones, 1100 73rd, Windsor Heights, 279-2219.

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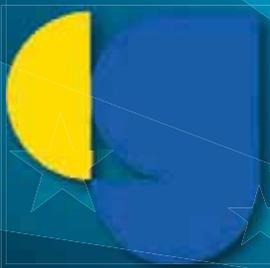
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INSURANCE |

Helpful holiday tips

Avoid hassles of driving and theft

By Matt Cale, State Farm agent

For many of us, the holidays mean more travel, and that means more potential pitfalls in transit. Oftentimes drivers are battling seasonal weather and, what's more, the increased amount of traffic means fewer resources available to help if you break down.

Take extra caution

Here are a few tips to stay safe and keep those holiday plans on track.

- Say no to holiday eggnog. Never drink and drive, but also be on the lookout for haphazard driving and drivers operating their vehicles under the influence. Unfortunately, the number of accidents and fatalities caused by drinking inevitably rises around the holiday season.

- Plan for shorter days. The more light, the safer the roads. During the winter months, an earlier sunset means you've got less daylight to work with. Ideally, plan your trip to avoid driving at night.

- Be ready if your battery dies. Cold weather takes its toll on car batteries. Double-check to make sure you've got jumper cables in your trunk. You never know when an easy jump-start could save you time and hassle — or when you could use them to help someone else.

- Prepare to be stuck. A winter storm can leave you spending your holiday stuck in a drift or stranded in a blizzard, particularly if you're traveling on unfamiliar roads. Stock your vehicle with other items that might be helpful in case of a problem: thick blankets, extra food and water, coats and jackets and a flashlight.

Information provided by Matt Cale, State Farm Insurance, 6733 University Ave., Windsor Heights, 280-9000.



Safeguard your holiday

Whether it's the abundance of shopping or thieves channeling the Grinch, holiday season in the United States brings with it increased vehicle break-ins — especially at shopping malls around the country. To make yours a positive holiday shopping experience, be sure to:

- Keep all receipts in your wallet or purse. Leaving the receipt in the bag makes it difficult for you to prove your purchase and easy for thieves to return the items for cash.

- Move your vehicle to another spot in the lot if you opt to drop off purchases to your vehicle at a midpoint in your shopping trip. Onlookers will think that you have left the mall, and your vehicle will be less of a target.

- Make sure your purchases are out of sight. Keep them in your trunk or covered in the front or back seats.

- Spread your shopping over several days. You are away from your vehicle for a shorter period of time each day, and shopping becomes less stressful. ■

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WHAT'S IN YOUR GARAGE?



Josh Johnson and his brothers with their father, Kevin, center. At left is the motorcycle used for the memorial ride.

A ride to remember

Johnson family honors a treasured memory

By Megan Flynn

Every August, Josh Johnson and his Uncle Brian Johnson hit the blacktop for a ride on their motorcycles on a mission to continue their newfound tradition. For as long as he can remember Josh's father, Kevin, had a passion for motorcycles.

"Josh's father always had a motorcycle project going his whole life," Josh's wife Amanda recalls, but unfortunately an accident sidelined his passion permanently. When Josh was 15, tragedy struck when his father, Kevin, took a fall off their deck, breaking his spine and paralyzing him. It was Kevin's dream to ride a motorcycle again one day.

"He was classified as a paraplegic, but after much therapy and determination could walk assisted by a walker," but sadly was never able to ride again, Amanda says.

When Kevin passed away in 2012, Josh decided to purchase a motorcycle in memory of his father and take Kevin's ashes on a ride with his Uncle Brian, to honor their fallen family member. Because Kevin was never able to ride again, taking the ashes with them on their journey "gave extra meaning to the journey," Amanda explains. It was like his father could

be with them once more riding in the wind as they journeyed across the land.

The remembrance ride has become a tradition for the family Amanda explains.

"The annual ride is always on (Kevin's) birthday," she says. "The first year they took some of his dad's ashes with them and spread them in the wind in remembrance."

While the ride serves as a tribute to Josh's father, the couple has found another way to help Kevin's legacy and memory live on. In the wake of tragedy, the Johnsons received wonderful news that they were expecting a baby boy.

"We found out we were pregnant literally days after (Kevin) passed away. So, our baby boy's middle name is after my husband's father (Kevin)," says Amanda.

With so many life changes in the last two years, this new tradition and their beautiful new addition to the family will no doubt bring light into their journey ahead. As for the motorcycle, while to some it may be just another bike on the road, to the Johnsons it is a symbol of Josh's father; and the ride is a beautiful tradition and tribute to a father, brother and a friend. ■

Contact Darren at 953-4822 ext. 304 or darren@dmcityview.com to recommend someone for an upcoming issue of "What's In Your Garage?"

WHERE WE LIVE



James and Gloria Boyt relaxing in the formal living room that was remodeled in 2000. Photos by Rainey Cook.

The good life

61 years and counting for Windsor Heights couple

By Rainey Cook

It was the last week of November. The year was 1953, and James and Gloria Boyt were temporarily moving into Gloria's brother's home in Windsor Heights as he went off to war. It wasn't long until Gloria felt at home at 6700 Carpenter Ave. She called her brother and informed him they'd like to stay for good.

That was 61 years ago.

The home is a 1949 brick built by Troutman. Carpenter Avenue was a dirt road, and there were ditches on either side. It wasn't until the early '60s that the road would be paved.

Its original three-bedroom, 1.5-bathroom layout is all on one floor — an almost-perfect design for the Boyts and their growing family. Shortly after they moved in, they added a fourth bedroom and made the smaller bathroom a full as Gloria was pregnant with their first child. They also added a family room in the back.

And now this home would be more prepared for the four additional children that would be raised here.

The addition was only part of the long list of good things about this home. The neighbors also had

five children, the pastor and his wife had seven children. Gloria became accustomed to doing morning coffee with the other moms of the neighborhood.

"The neighborhood was a lot different then," Gloria says. "Now there are a few rentals on this block, and we don't know our neighbors like we used to. People move more often."

The family ties inside their home have not changed. A close-knit family, the Boyts and their children see each other often. A few of them have dinner out every Friday night.

"It's nice to be able to go out," James says. "That way no one has to do dishes."

When not dining out, the family still gathers at James and Gloria's home. The front room is large enough to accommodate the sometimes 30 family members. The latest remodel made this possible.

In 2000 they removed the front porch and made it part of the formal living room area. They also added significant ceiling height in this room allowing for natural light to flow downward from the high windows.

"It's been a good life here," James says. "And it still is." ■

Would you like your home featured in this column in an upcoming issue of Windsor Heights Living? If so, email Darren Tromblay at darren@dmcityview.com.

SENIOR LIVING |

Beating the holiday blues

Christmas may be a stressful time for seniors

By Susan Ray, executive director, The Reserve

The sound of bells ringing, caroling, the fresh smell of baked goods, trees and lights all are signs that the holidays are coming. For most of us, the holidays are a wonderful time to celebrate and reflect on the past while planning for the future. This time is filled with joys, family and friends.

For many older adults, the holidays are viewed in a different way than they once were. The older adult may see the holidays as highly stressful, confusing and lonely. For some seniors, the holidays can be a time that reminds them of losses. They think about the loss of loved ones, perhaps the loss of their family home and all the traditions that they carried out throughout the years. They may be saddened by the loss of good health. They reminisce about holidays gone by, and it just isn't the same. Some of the holiday enchantment is simply gone. In fact, what was once filled with wonderment may even feel like a burden. It may be difficult to get dressed up and ready for a big celebration when you do not feel your best.

So, if you're feeling the holiday blues, how do you get into the spirit of the holiday season?

Here are a few tips that you may find helpful:

- First, keep your daily routine as much as possible.
- Get plenty of rest and do not forget to eat sensibly.
- Get as much exercise as you can tolerate.
- If you feel blue, call a friend, family member or neighbor.

Information provided by Susan Ray, The Reserve, 2727 82nd Place, Urbandale, 515-727-5927.



- If you are invited to a gathering, say "yes" even if it would be much easier to stay home. Social connectedness is especially important at holiday times.

- Do something nice for someone — call a friend who has been ill and ask how he or she doing. Ask a neighbor who is all alone to share a cup of tea or cider with you.

- Help shake up traditions and create some new ideas.

- Get involved in events offered by your community. Many of these programs are at no cost.

- Think of the many blessings that you have experienced in your life.

If you experience the holiday blues, although these feelings are difficult, they are temporary. It is important to spend the holiday season with supportive and caring people. As families, traditions and life changes, be open and embrace the fact that each holiday season is different and should be enjoyed in its own unique way. ■

It's that time of year.

As the leaves fall and days get shorter, our thoughts turn to family and dreams of a Snow Bird lifestyle!

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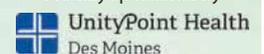
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Walnut Creek Church took part in Operation Christmas Child.

The gift of giving

Churches pack boxes for children far away

By Chris Kelley

What may seem like just a shoebox could make a world of difference for children this Christmas. It was a group effort, but it couldn't be done without the love and support of the large Christian community.

Walnut Creek Church in Windsor Heights took part in a tradition spanning more than 20 years this fall season. It all began with a box. Along with other churches in the area, the Windsor Heights chapter of Walnut Creek banded together to make a difference in the lives of children by participating in Operation Christmas Child.

Operation Christmas Child is an organization based out of Samaritan's Purse. The mission of the program is to join forces with churches worldwide to make a shoebox into something much more. Church members and volunteers fill the boxes with gifts and deliver them to children in need, particularly those living in war-torn and impoverished countries.

Packed boxes, carefully packaged with stuffed animals, dolls, dinosaurs and trinkets will be making their way across the world this year, presents for children in Tanzania, Uganda, India, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago. The gifts were special not just because they are toys, but because of the message behind them. Months of hard work climaxed at the East Village Promenade, the annual holiday shopping season kick-off event for

the Des Moines neighborhood. It was no easy talk putting together the shipment, however.

Showing less fortunate families across the globe the joy of Christ and the Christmas spirit required much more than packing paper and industrial tape. Walnut Creek of Windsor Heights has hosted a community fundraiser for the donation for several years, a fun opportunity to get the community involved in giving called the Fundraiser Vendor Fair. The fair was held in November on church grounds and featured many different local businesses and vendor carts. Attendees even had the chance to pack their own shoebox for a child.

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So what can a small shoebox mean for a child across the globe? Samaritan's Purse stresses that while what goes into the box may be fun, what comes out is eternal. The box represents the love of God and works to plant a seed that will keep on giving and growing in the love and Spirit of Christ. With a combined 250 shoeboxes shipped off, Walnut Creek Church can rest assured that those seeds will soon give way to sprouts. ■



Chocolate orange cake

A hint of orange adds flair to dessert

By Marchelle Walter Brown

On a recent Sunday afternoon, knowing my father-in-law would be visiting, I decided to try Trisha Yearwood's "Chocolate Orange Cake" recipe. My father-in-law is a bit of a choc-aholic and is always appreciative of dessert. Also, I enjoy using my mom's bundt pan and thought that, combined with a hint of orange, would give the dessert a bit of a flare. I was correct, and I think this recipe will be a keeper. ■

Chocolate orange cake

Cake

- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 cups flour
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups orange juice
- 1 tablespoons finely grated orange zest
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Chocolate glaze

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons orange juice

For the cake: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Mix together the softened butter and 1 tablespoon of the cocoa to make a thick paste. Use this

paste to paint the inside of a bundt pan. Set aside.

Combine flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and remaining 1/2 cup cocoa in a large mixing bowl and mix until blended. Add the orange juice, mayonnaise, vinegar and vanilla and mix until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. Fold in the orange zest. Pour the batter into the prepared bundt pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the cake comes out clean, 45 minutes. **DO NOT UNDER BAKE.** Cool in the pan for 10 minutes, and then turn out onto a cooling rack to cool completely.

For the chocolate glaze: Mix the powdered sugar and cocoa together. Whisk in the orange juice, 1 tablespoon at a time, until it reaches a good consistency to drizzle. Drizzle the glaze over the cake.

Serve with whipped topping or ice cream.



New Year's resolutions

It's a good time to update your legal documents

By Ross Barnett, attorney, Abendroth and Russell Law Firm

With the holiday season winding down and 2015 upon us, it's time to make your New Year's resolutions. Our firm can't help you stick to your diet or finally clean out the garage, but we can offer these suggestions:

Update your estate plan

Putting your legal affairs in order is important. It reduces the burdens on family and loved ones in the event of poor health or death. It can save time and expense. And it allows you to have control over how your assets pass. Every person should have three basic estate planning documents: a last will and testament, a durable financial power of attorney, and a living will/health care power of attorney.

A will directs the distribution of your assets upon your death. Through the power of attorney, you give another person the ability to make financial decisions for you should you become incapacitated. If you are too ill to speak for yourself, you can express your wishes and have your voice heard through a living will. This advance directive lets you detail your preferences for your medical care.

Make a list of key contacts

When you update your estate planning documents, you should also make a master list of important information. If you die or become incapacitated, your family will spend a great deal of time figuring out what assets you own and whom they should contact. List your accountant, insurance representative, business manager, bank



or banker, and attorney. Make sure you have the correct contact information for each advisor listed.

Review the title to your home

You should review how you hold title to your home. When you purchased your house, the seller executed a deed. The deed contained important vesting information — the names on the title and the legal relationship between those titleholders.

If you are married, you probably want to ensure that both spouses are on title to the house. This may not be the case if the parties were married after one bought the house, or if it is a second marriage. You also probably want to ensure that, if one titleholder were to die, the house would pass to the survivor. A simple review of who holds title and how title is held can prevent expensive and time-consuming problems later.

These are three quick resolutions that can save time and expense in the future. Happy 2015! ■

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

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from Abendroth
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Top Row:

Joe Wallace, Chris Low, Mark Abendroth, Ross Barnett

Bottom Row:

Laurie Heron, David Russell

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- ▶ Estate Planning
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5 tips to prevent hearing loss

By Clint Rogers, Comfort Keepers

The National Institutes of Health estimate one third of people in the U.S. between the ages of 65 and 75 have some hearing loss, and about half of those older than 75 have some trouble hearing normal sounds. About 40 percent of the 20 million Americans who have hearing loss are 65 or older.

When sound waves reach the structures of the inner ear, they cause vibrations at the eardrum before travelling through the cochlea. Attached to nerve cells within the cochlea are thousands of tiny hairs that help translate these vibrations into electrical signals that are transmitted to the brain.

The medical term for the gradual hearing loss that comes with age is presbycusis. It's caused by a loss of these tiny hair cells that

act as sound receptors, and also from free radical damage that can clog up the ear's tissues that act as sound amplifiers.

Since hearing loss can start at any age, prevention measures should start early, and become a lifelong habit. Here are five of the most important ways to prevent unnecessary hearing loss:

• **Avoid harmful noises.**

People of all ages are now experiencing hearing loss at younger ages and quicker rates. Reduce the noise in your life by turning down the volume on the stereo, TV, car radio — and especially when using personal listening devices with headphones or ear buds. If you use headphones to listen to music, don't turn the volume up past 50 percent, and never exceed 80 percent, even for a short time.

• **Use proper hygiene.**

Never stick a cotton swab or other object in your ear to remove earwax, or scratch your ear. If earwax is causing you problems with hearing, speak to your doctor about the best way to remove it.

• **Keep medical conditions under control.** Conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, atherosclerosis and other circulatory illnesses that are not treated properly can lead to hearing loss. The inner parts of the ear are sensitive and delicate so any circulation problems you have can affect your hearing. Trouble hearing is also likely to occur in people who smoke.

• **Talk to your doctor about your medications.** Some medications, although not many, can affect

your hearing. For example, temporary effects on your hearing can occur if you take large doses of aspirin. Certain kinds of diuretics can also affect hearing. Since hearing loss is partially genetic, let your doctor know if anyone in your family has trouble hearing.

• **Don't wait to see the doctor.** After noise-related damage to the ear happens, it can't be reversed, but further damage is preventable. If you suspect that you or a loved one is experiencing hearing loss, get your hearing checked by a professional. If you are genetically predisposed to hearing loss, take precautions right away. ■

Information provided by Clint Rogers, Comfort Keepers, 1300 Metro East Drive, Suite 128, Pleasant Hill, 515-243-0011.

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Season's greetings!

Chamber looks forward to a new year

By Michael Libbie, Windsor Heights Chamber board member

Our hope is that you and your friends and family have a truly blessed holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy Chanukah to you and yours, and may your New Year be filled with only goodness.

Thank you

As 2015 approaches, the Windsor Heights Chamber will experience some change in leadership. Our president, Betty Ridout of Banker's Trust, will step down following an incredibly successful career of leading the Chamber through some challenging times.

"As Dec. 31 approaches, my service as the Windsor Heights Chamber president will come to an end. I have enjoyed working with the board these last few years and am honored to have served the community in this capacity. The experience I earned as the president is very valuable to me and will serve me well in all areas of life.

"My successor, Michael Libbie, will continue to serve as president with the same level of enthusiasm and passion. Please show him the same generous level of support that you have given me. My hope is that we continue working together to encourage the growth of a strong chamber, leading to a prosperous business community for this great city. Thank you for your support and encouragement these last few years. Wishing you and your families a safe and loving holiday season and a successful and Happy New Year."

The good news is that she will remain on the board in an advisory role, and we welcome her wisdom and experience.

Also leaving us will be Brooke Wade. Brook has been such a



valuable asset; so valuable that you, the people of Windsor Heights, selected her for the Person of the Year. Thank you, Brooke, for your time and talent.

And Leng Vong Reiff will be leaving our board to concentrate on her family and business. Leng's father has some health concerns, and we understand that family comes first. We thank her for her work getting the WHYPro organization started and wish her well.

New board members

Several new people have joined the board of directors for the Windsor Heights Chamber. We make welcome:

- Brett Klein, new Windsor Heights City Administrator.
- Jonathan Koester, the primary for Koester Development of Windsor Heights.
- Matt Heldenbrand, store director for the Windsor Heights Hy-Vee.

Let's connect

Events for the Chamber can be found on our website, www.WindsorHeightsChamber.com. You can connect with us on Twitter @WHChmbr and, of course, we're on Facebook. ■

Meet Shelley Carter

Kindergarten teacher appreciates young students

By Rainey Cook

Shelley Carter has been teaching at Windsor Elementary for 16 years. Through time her love of teaching and seeing children progress has not changed. In those 16 years, however, there have been a few changes she can speak to.

The biggest change in the classroom is the new interactive white boards that each teacher gets. The mega-computer screen replaces yesterday's green chalk board and so, too, goes the chalk. Even kindergartners know how to manipulate the touch screen, and Carter allows the freedom to do so.

Another difference is that all classrooms have snacks — not just kindergarten. Students are tasting grapes, jicama and cauliflower, even if it's just one bite. And every year there seem to be a different population of children coming in, which bring languages challenges and ultimate successes by year's end.

Two years ago Carter had a classroom of 28 students, eight of whom couldn't speak English at the beginning of the year. With Carter's handy photo necklace, by the end of the first day they could all say bathroom.

"It was amazing to watch," Carter says. "Children are so smart. This year I have 19 students, and they all came in with at least some English."

Another recent change to teaching is the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support set of strategies for achieving social and learning outcomes. Students strive



Shelley Carter teaches kindergarten at Windsor Elementary. Photos by Rainey Cook.

daily for several options including having a good day, making a smart choice or setting a great example.

Although much has changed in 16 years of teaching at Windsor Elementary, Carter has also enjoyed many things that stayed the same.

"It's like a family at Windsor," Carter says. "The teachers here are fun to work with, and the students and their families are really like our own extended families. You really get attached."

The kindergarten classroom may have changed a bit over the years as well. Whether it is from chalk board to white board or from cookies to jicama, it's certainly reassuring to still see basic numbers, shapes and patterns strewn about the room.

Another constant is the energy, the questions and the pure innocence of a kindergartner. ■

What do you like best about your teacher?



Autriana Huffaker:
"Coloring and giving her hugs."



Sydney Bement:
"When she let us play games."



Sanders Mullins:
"I like to play and learn."

OUT AND ABOUT |

Windsor Wonderland

Windsor Heights put on its Windsor Wonderland Sunday, Dec. 6, at the Windsor Heights Community and Events Center in Colby Park. The event included activities, hot dogs, hot chocolate and showings of Christmas movies.



Lauren and Isaac Gasior



Brett Klein and Steve Peterson



Andy and Addy King



Tammi and Emily Rothamel



Diana Willits and Jason VanAusdall



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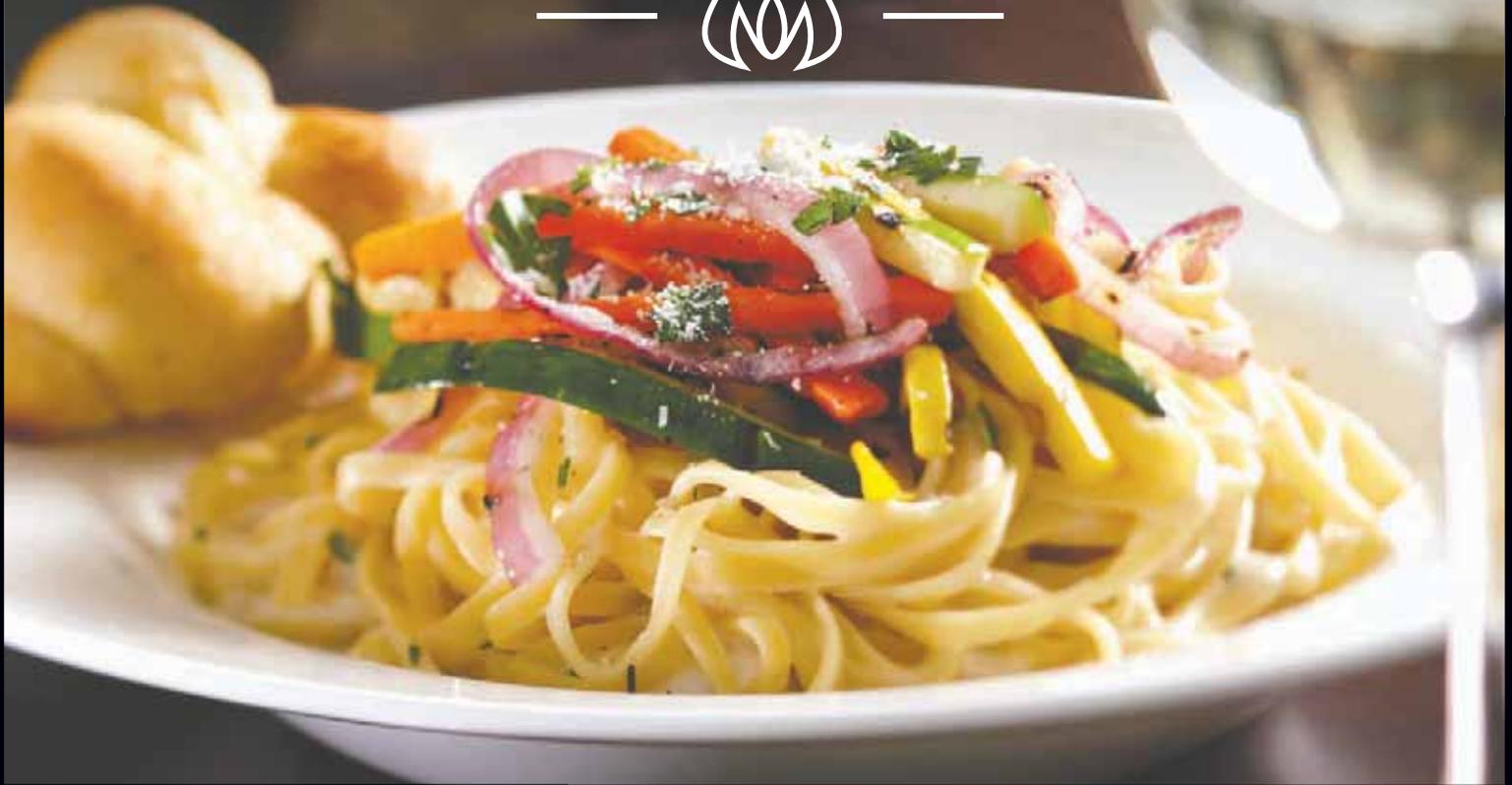
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72 month

PLUS

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