



# The Golden View

The Community Newspaper For Adults 55 Plus

December, 2023

Dedicated To The Young At Heart

Dubuque, Iowa

Visit The Golden View On The Web At: [www.thegoldenviewonline.com](http://www.thegoldenviewonline.com)

## Reflections in the Park

by Greg Birkett, Steering Committee Member and Volunteer, Reflections in the Park



The 29th Annual Reflections in the Park, a Hillcrest lights festival will be held from 5:00 to 10:00pm November 23 through January 1, 2024.

Reflections in the Park features a wide variety of more

than 70 displays, including the ever popular 200' Tunnel of Lights, a 30' Digital Christmas Tree, Memory Lane and many new and favorite customized displays - all with LED lighting.

Reflections in the Park cont. Pg. 21

## DuRide Keeps People Connected and Independent

by Greg Orwoll, Executive Director, DuRide



Debbie and Jean

What happens 10,000 times every day in the United States? Someone turns 65 years old.

DuRide serves members aged 65 and older in Dubuque, East Dubuque, and Asbury. DuRide allows people to stay connected with family and friends, remain independent, provide for their own health care and community engagement, and allow a social network. "I don't know what I would do without DuRide. I would have to sell my house and move to assisted living," said a long-time member.

The first year, DuRide provided 57 rides. Today DuRide provides 800 or more rides a month. There are currently 261 members, and 148 volunteers. Half of all rides are for medical care, and the rest are for social

outings, shopping, church, dining out, art and culture events, volunteer work, and many more all contribute to the health and well-being of our members.

### Volunteers Drive DuRide

Volunteers are always needed. The satisfaction that comes from helping our members is immeasurable. Please contact us today. All rides are provided by volunteers driving their own vehicle. Since 2008 volunteers have driven approximately 1.1 million miles! No special license, insurance, or training is required to be a volunteer. DuRide does a background check on each volunteer and an orientation, but beyond that, it is no different than giving a

DuRide cont. Pg. 3

## BE OUR GUEST! Sunset Park Place welcomes you to put our service to the test!

by Shelly Gessner, Community Relations Coordinator, Sunset Park Place



BE OUR GUEST! Sunset Park Place welcomes you to put our service to the test! We enjoy making the most of every day. Whether dining restaurant style in the dining room, feeding our passions and hobbies through activities, or finding joy in getting help putting on a favorite outfit. We are here for you!

If you are a family member concerned about your loved

one, we are here for you! One of the greatest challenges seniors face, is Social Isolation. Human beings are social creatures. Our connection to others enables us to survive and thrive. Yet as we age, many of us are alone more often than when we were younger, leaving us vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness and

Sunset Park Place cont. Pg. 3

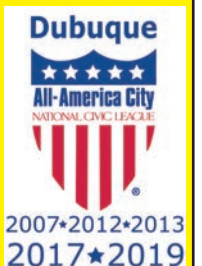


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Renee Snyder,  
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**Sunset Park Place from Pg. 1** related health problems such as cognitive decline, depression, and heart disease. It is important to watch for signs and symptoms that can indicate social isolation is having a negative effect on your loved one. **Physical Symptoms:** Aches & pain, headaches or worsening of medical conditions. **Mental Health Conditions:** Risk of depression, anxiety, paranoia, panic attacks. **Low Energy:** Tiredness or lack of motivation. **Sleep Problems:** Difficulty getting to sleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much. **Diet Problems:** Loss

of appetite, sudden weight loss or gain. **Substance Use:** Increased consumption of alcohol, smoking, medications, or drugs. **Negative Feelings:** Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or thoughts about suicide. **Household Concerns:** Significant disrepair, clutter, hoarding.

Sunset Park Place offers a safe, social environment for your loved one. Residents living in our community gain the independence they crave and the assistance they need. Our comprehensive assessment process and unique Individualized Service Plan approach ensures that each resident receives personalized health care and assistance based on their needs. From our meals and life enrichment activities to our housekeeping services and transportation, residents determine what everyday life looks like.

Are you worried about your loved one? We can help. Be Our Guest! Call today, stop in for a cup of coffee, or join us for a delicious meal. Call Shelly at 563-580-5041. [www.sunsetparkplace.com](http://www.sunsetparkplace.com)



**DuRide from Pg. 1**

neighbor a ride. Volunteering is flexible. There are no firm schedules nor minimum rides required, and the typical volunteer provides about 7 rides a month. A volunteer decides each day if they can provide a ride or two, and most rides are just a drop off. A different volunteer will pick them up when they're done. Each ride is one person at a time, door to door and volunteers can assist with a steadying arm when needed. "I have volunteered for many things, but I have never been thanked so many times as I am with DuRide," said one volunteer. "It is my way of paying my good fortunes forward."

Members pay a \$45 a year membership fee, and \$12 round trip and they pay a monthly invoice. No money changes hands with

the driver. An Income Support Program, for those who qualify for any public assistance provides half price rides for non-medical rides, and free medical rides.

DuRide is a non-profit organization that relies on grants and donations for over half the budget. Contributions are tax deductible. Contact DuRide at [www.duride.org](http://www.duride.org) or at 563-451-4999 for information on donating, volunteering, or becoming a member.



Kate and Bernie



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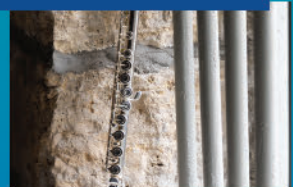
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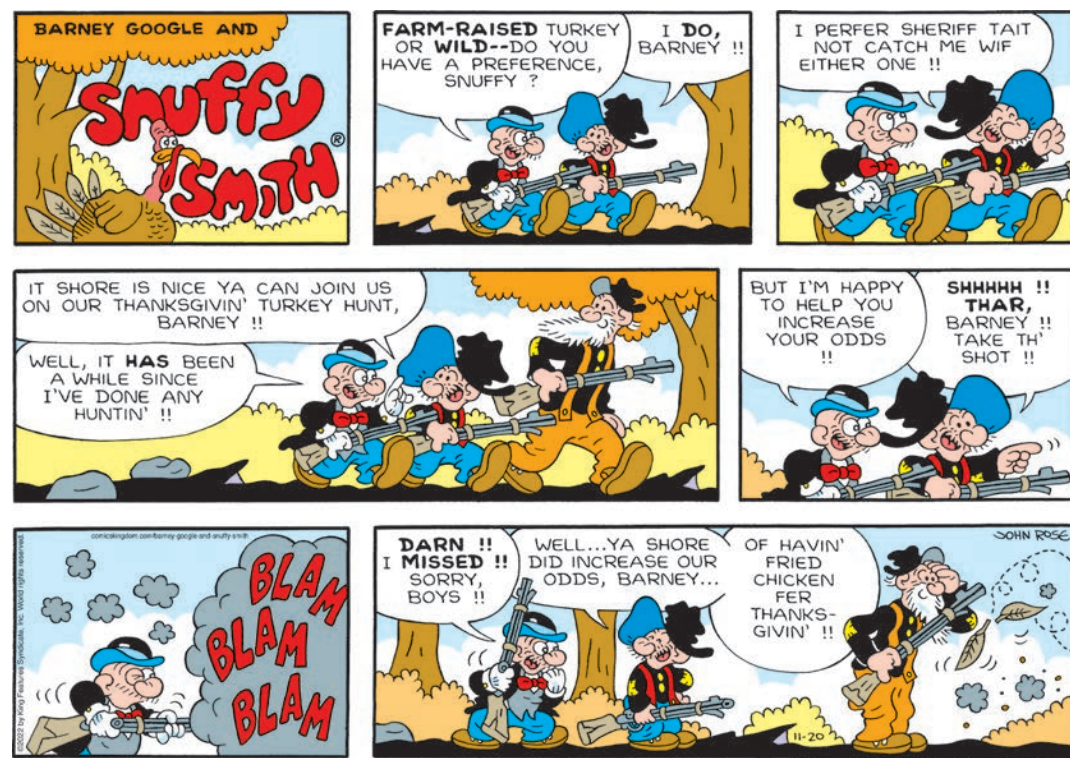
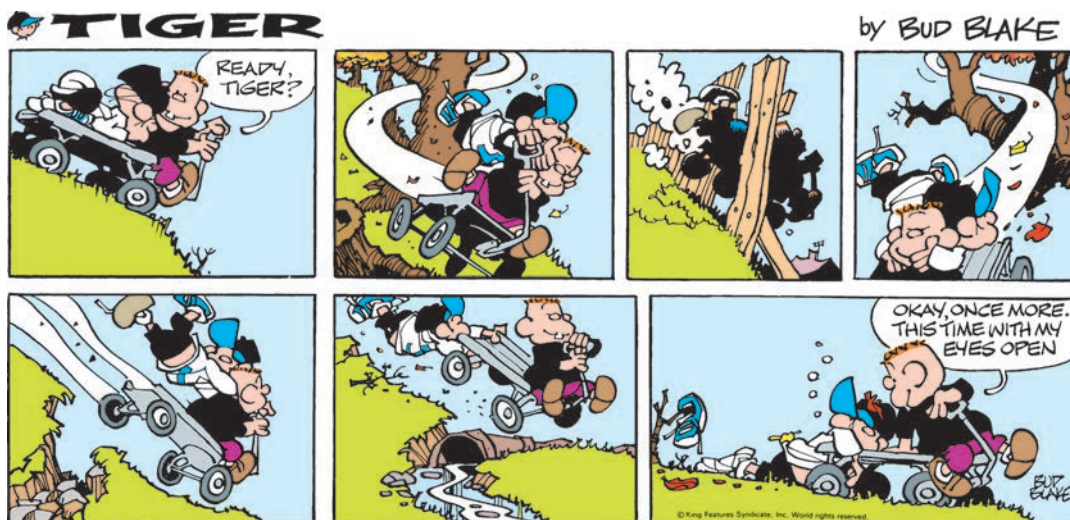


**The Golden View**

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**GO FIGURE!** by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

		-		×		18
÷			×		÷	
		+		×		18
×			-		×	
		×		-		28
28		19			21	

2 3 4 5 6 7 7 8 9  
 Go Figure! Answer on Pg. 24  
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**DIFFICULTY: ★★**  
 ★ Moderate ★★ Difficult  
 ★★★ GO FIGURE!

**STICKELERS** [sic].  
 by Terry Stickels

Can you determine which one of the fruits below does not belong with the others?

**CHERRIES**  
**APPLES**  
**APRICOTS**  
**STRAWBERRIES**  
**ORANGES**

Stickelers Answer on Pg. 24  
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# King Crossword

**ACROSS**

- 1 Mausoleum
- 5 "Born Free" lioness
- 9 Branch
- 12 Ornamental jug
- 13 Jupiter counterpart
- 14 Sheepish remark
- 15 Famed diarist
- 17 Squeak stopper
- 18 Historic times
- 19 Grown-up
- 21 Town square
- 24 Tizzy
- 25 Occupy the throne
- 26 Imaginary
- 30 Right angle
- 31 Count with an orchestra
- 32 Simile center
- 33 Bloated, in a way
- 35 Computer brand
- 36 Literary Jane
- 37 Puccini work
- 38 Curry spice
- 40 Roundish do
- 42 Palindromic constellation
- 43 Yearly charge
- 48 Up to
- 49 Oboe insert
- 50 Cupid's realm
- 51 Compass dir.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
			18					19	20			
21	22	23					24					
25					26	27				28	29	
30				31						32		
33			34							35		
		36						37				
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42					43	44				45	46	47
48					49					50		
51					52					53		

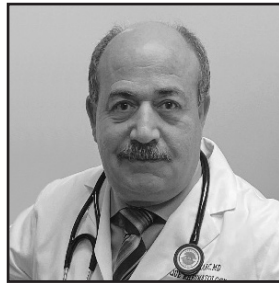
**DOWN**

- 1 Earl Grey, e.g.
- 2 Have
- 3 Gents
- 4 Light wind
- 5 Poet Pound
- 6 Meadows
- 7 Day light
- 8 With suspicion, as a look
- 9 Complete reversal
- 10 Banister
- 11 Beer ingredient
- 16 Monk's title
- 20 Cato's 502
- 21 Get ready, briefly
- 22 Humdinger
- 23 Like the Supremes and the Pointer Sisters
- 24 Use scissors
- 26 Lose color
- 27 Tempe sch.
- 28 Addict
- 29 Zhivago's love
- 31 Novelist Malamud
- 34 Memo letters
- 35 Lunar program
- 37 Mouths (Lat.)
- 38 Felines
- 39 "The Haj" author
- 40 From the start
- 41 Elmer of cartoons
- 44 "The Matrix" role
- 45 Dandy guy
- 46 Actress Mendes
- 47 Moray, for one

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### Shaggy Dogs Aren't Impervious to Cold Weather

**DEAR PAW'S CORNER:** On my morning walks, I've noticed that someone in a house down the street puts their dog outside, tied to the porch railing, with only a pan of water. They stay out there all morning. Now that the weather has turned cold, I still see this dog tied up every morning outside. Even with a shaggy coat, the dog is shivering. What can I do to stop this? — *Francesca W., via email*

**DEAR FRANCESCA:** If this person isn't someone you know, and you're nervous about knocking on their door to talk to them about it, then contact

the animal control department for your town, city or county. If you live in an area where there is no animal control unit, call the nearest shelter or Humane Society to make a report.

In cold temperatures, even temps above freezing, dogs can suffer a cold injury. Their paws and noses — any exposed skin — are at risk for frostbite. Hypothermia can be deadly, or it can permanently impair their immune system and overall health. A thick coat doesn't provide as much protection from the cold as one might think.

Many cities have laws against leaving pets out in extreme cold or heat. And tying up a dog outside, even for a few hours, is also unacceptable. If no one else is saying anything about it, go ahead and make some noise by calling any organization that can help and finding out where you can go to make it happen even faster. Thank you for paying attention to and helping that dog out.

*Readers, have you dealt with a similar situation? Tell us about it at [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).*

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**COME CHAT**  
 with **ME**  
 by *S. E. Persinger*



The other day while socializing with a friend I mentioned that I was going to do a column on observation. Oops! I don't think she liked that idea because all I got out of her was a "wrinkled-nose" flip! But, I always like to get corrective criticism because it makes me think more about what I am writing and why I am writing. I guess you might say, right now, I am concerned with the pandemic survivors (all of us) and how we are handling our comeback from so many months in confinement. It's been a while now but it takes time to regroup and start life all over again.

The other day while on a coffee run, I stopped at a restaurant and had a cup of coffee and a piece of strawberry-rhubarb pie. The restaurant was alive with laughter and seemingly happy people. There was a din of sounds but not of the disturbance kind. The room was filled with friendly people just talking together and having fun. I was observing pandemic survivors who had captured the strength to once again enjoy life.

After leaving the restaurant I drove downtown where one of our biggest bridges carries endless cars over to the State of Illinois. Davenport is a city of

101,009 people and many of them work in Illinois. And you know what? The pandemic didn't hurt that bridge one bit. But it did cause a lot of people from Davenport to be on lock down. I stood along side the bridge for a while just to observe its power over mankind.

Well, if you have read this far, I guess you are somewhat interested in observation. It's good to look around and see what's going on in the world we live in. I guess if a person really wants to be involved in the world around them they should be monitoring those in command of their Country. I like to think that we the people should be the strength of the Nation. And our faith in ourselves should be what motivates us be attentive observers.

I can't leave this unsaid about observation if I don't mention how the children enter into this written conversation. Have you ever noticed how intently children watch everything we do? They are innocent observers. Watch their eye as they open their birthday presents. They sparkle. Take a good look at them when they see an ice cream cone in your hand. They trust you to give it to them. And I know how many of us treasure the Christmas holidays because our children plant memories for us by their joyful glee of opening their gifts. Our observation of this scene is universal. "Have a good day."

*Happy Holidays!*

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More than 71 million Americans will see a 3.2% increase in their Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments in 2024. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by more than \$50 per month starting in January.

Federal benefit rates increase when the cost-of-living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). The CPI-W rises when inflation increases, leading to a higher cost-of-living. This change means prices for goods and services, on average, are higher. The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) helps to offset these costs.

We will mail COLA notices throughout the month of December to retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees. But if you want to know your new benefit amount sooner, you can securely obtain your Social Security COLA notice online using the Message Center in your personal *my* Social Security account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). You can

access this information in early December, prior to receiving the mailed notice. Benefit amounts will not be available before December. Since you will receive the COLA notice online or in the mail, you don't need to contact us to get your new benefit amount.

If you prefer to access your COLA notice online and not receive the mailed notice, you can log in to your personal *my* Social Security account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) to opt out by changing your preferences in the Message Center. You can update your preferences to opt out of the mailed COLA notice, and any other notices that are available online. Did you know you can receive a text or email alert when there is a new message waiting for you? That way, you always know when we have something important for you - like your COLA notice. If you don't have an account yet, you must create one by November 14, 2023, to receive the 2024 COLA notice online.

"Social Security and SSI benefits will increase in 2024, and this will help millions of people keep up with expenses,"

**Social Security cont. Pg. 8**

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**Unstringing a Prelit Christmas Tree**

I thought it was a good idea to buy a prelit Christmas tree a couple of years ago. This Christmas season I came to the conclusion that it wasn't such a bright idea (pun intended).

Some of the lights stopped working. It was going to be difficult to match a new string of lights with the existing lights that came with the tree and still worked. We made the decision to remove all of the lights so they wouldn't clutter up the tree. If the first bad idea was buying the prelit tree in the first place, the second bad idea was trying to remove all the factory installed strings of lights.

I don't much enjoy stringing lights on a tree, but do so out of love for my wife, who puts on the decorations (a division of labor upon which we agree), and grudging compliance to the tradition of decorating a Christmas tree. I enjoy even less the removal of the lights after Christmas. There was no enjoyment at all in trying to remove the factory installed lights!

If the Christmas tree factory worked as hard at making sure the lights last for years as they do in making sure they are firmly affixed to the tree, then we wouldn't have had to deal with this whole issue in the first place. It took over an hour to remove the strings of lights. What a pile of lights and wires we ended up with on the floor! Who would have thought there were THAT many lights!

A frequent lament of mine at Christmas time is that, try as

we do, we never have a perfect Christmas as is portrayed in Christmas programs, TV Christmas commercials and in Currier and Ives Christmas prints. If I start the list of reasons for experiencing an imperfect Christmas with my unstringing of the prelit tree, I'm sure you can quickly add several items to the list, as can I.

I try to follow my laments about Christmas not being perfect with the reminder to myself that Christmas is no different than other times of the year, times which are also filled with imperfections. Why should Christmas be any different? In fact, the origin of Christmas was God's act of countering an imperfect, sinful world by sending His Son into the world to deal with the problem by being the Savior.

The perfect Christmas carol for properly celebrating an imperfect Christmas is "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," particularly verses 3 and 4. "And in despair I bowed my head: 'There is no peace on earth,' I said, 'For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men.' Yet pealed the bells more loud and deep: 'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; the wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to men.'" The words ring true!

The imperfections of our Christmas celebrations can be a sacramental-type experience, frustrating but sacred reminders that Christmas is all about God coming to a broken, far from perfect, sinful world to make things right. When I was gathering up and throwing away the huge pile of prelit lights from our Christmas tree I needed to remember this!

*A prophecy fulfilled of Jesus coming into the world: "The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." (Matthew 4:16)*

men did not cut their hair? *Canaanites, Midianites, Nazarites, Hagarites*  
5. In Genesis 32, who/what was Mahanaim? *Messenger, Mountain, Ford, Place*  
6. Who was the mother of Moses? *Abigail, Jochebed, Elisheba, Athaliah*

**ANSWERS**

(1) Old, (2) En-rogel, (3) Jacob, (4) Nazarites, (5) Place, (6) Jochebed

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, *Test Your Bible Knowledge*, available in bookstores and online.

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PROVERBS 15:3

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**BIBLE TRIVIA**  
by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Ezekiel (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. A woman of this place is the only woman in the Bible (KJV) described as a wench? *En-rogel, Gilead, Damascus, Ziba*
3. Who met a man (or angel) and then wrestled him until the breaking of the day? *Solomon, Goliath, Aaron, Jacob*
4. What group of consecrated





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**YESTERDAY AND TODAY**  
 BY MICHAEL GIBSON



This exquisite Italian Villa style home (1183 Locust) with its octagonal tower was built in 1873 by Dubuque businessman, James A. Beach. Beach came to Dubuque in 1857 from New Hampshire and soon established a lard, soap and candle factory at the corner of Dodge & Bluff. With his two sons, Edward & Charles, they later formed the James A. Beach & Sons soap manufacturing company. By 1880 annual revenue was reported to be \$50,000 with production of over 10,000 boxes of soap including such brand name as "North West" and "White Castile." In 1906 with new equipment they became the first soap powder mill in Iowa. Beach served as city alderman and was instrumental in securing Washington Park. He also served as president of Finley Hospital and the German Bank and at the time of his death in 1918 he was president of the Dubuque Packing Company. (Courtesy of the Loras College, Center for Dubuque History, OHE p71 Neg. 1077).

Yesterday & Today cont. Pg. 9

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**Social Security from Pg. 6**  
 said Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Commissioner of Social Security. January 2024 marks when other changes will happen based on the increase in the


national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax in 2024 will be higher. The retirement earnings test exempt amount will also change in 2024. Learn more at [www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2024.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2024.pdf).

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You can find more information about the 2024 COLA at [www.ssa.gov/cola](http://www.ssa.gov/cola).

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*Need a helping hand this holiday season? We are here for you!*

The tradition of using small candles to light a Christmas tree is thought to date back to the mid-17th century.



Yesterday & Today from Pg. 8

Michael Gibson has decided to take a hiatus from the Yesterday and Today feature. He has given permission to recycle previously published photos and captions for your enjoyment.



In the late 1920's the home was demolished and eventually the property was sold to the Freemasons who constructed an elaborate structure to serve as a temple. The Masons first established Dubuque Lodge No. 3 in 1842 and they moved several times to different locations. Just prior to locating at 12th & Locust they occupied a building at 11th & Locust where the new addition to the Carnegie Stout Public Library is currently located. The cornerstone for the current Masonic Temple was laid in 1931 and formal dedication of the temple occurred on March 15, 1932. (Photo by Terry Grant).

**Bell Tower Theater Finishes Their 2023 Season with the Area Premiere of *A Doublewide, Texas Christmas!***



The cast features Bell Tower veterans Dakota Vaassen, Joanne Hillery, Debbie Meyer, Megan Frankovich and Lisa Kempner alongside newcomers to the Bell Tower stage Cheryl Schmieder, Mandy Haggerty, Jeff Jochum and Joe Abdy.

The Bell Tower Theater is conveniently located in Fountain Park at 2728 Asbury Road in the city's vibrant West End just minutes from both Highway 20 and the Northwest Arterial. Performances are every Thursday and Friday evening at 7:30 pm; Saturday, December 2 & 9 at 7:30 pm; Saturday, December 16 at 2 pm and every Sunday afternoon at 2 pm from December 1 to 17. The performances on December 1 & 2 are the Early Bird Special performances when tickets are just \$11.50. Tickets for all other performances are \$23. Thursdays are Girls' Night Out; all audience members (21+) get a free glass of wine. For information and to purchase tickets call 563-588-3377 or visit [tickets.belltowertheater.net](http://tickets.belltowertheater.net).

The Bell Tower Theater, your hometown theater, is pleased to announce the final comedy of their 21st Season, *A Doublewide, Texas Christmas* by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope & Jamie Wooten. The performance will be directed by the Bell Tower Theater's Artistic Director Sue Riedel.

Somewhere in the Texas heartland, lies the brand new town of Doublewide - Population, 10. It's Christmas time, and it's beginning to look a lot like trouble. Doublewide is being double crossed by the county and might lose their status as a town. Maybe if they win the countywide "Battle of The Mangers," their Christmas will be saved.

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—Virgil

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# Holiday Blessings!



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*How small of all that human hearts endure  
that part which laws or kings can cause or cure.*

—Samuel Johnson



**Kelsey Salow, RD**  
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## Holiday Food Safety Hacks

Food is a big part of holiday celebrations. When food sits out at room temperature for long periods of time, the door is open to uninvited guests—bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Every year 48 million people (1 in 6) become ill from foodborne illness! Follow these safe food handling tips to prevent illness from ruining your holidays!

- Keep hot food **HOT** and cold food **COLD**: Hot food needs to be held at 140°F or higher. Use slow cookers and warming trays. Cold food needs to be held at 40°F or lower. Nest dishes in bowls of ice. Otherwise, use small serving trays and replace them as needed along with new utensils.

- Handle food safely: Always wash your hands before handling food and clean all surfaces. Use different utensils for each food item.

- Follow the two-hour rule: Perishable foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours.

handle leftovers safely, use the following guidelines:

1. Store leftovers in small shallow containers for fast cooling.

2. Eat or freeze leftovers within four days.

3. Use labels or masking tape and a black marker to write dates on food for the refrigerator or freezer. If you label leftovers in the refrigerator with the 'four-day throw away' date, you will see right away the last day you can safely eat them.

4. Use Food Safety Charts, [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov), to learn how long food can be safely stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

For more information on food safety and cooking temperatures, visit the FSIS website at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) or call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854. Open Monday - Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET.

With over 35 years of operation, the hotline has answered over 2 million calls. Often the first question callers ask is, "Are you a real person?" The hotline is one of the rare services where a live person answers callers specific questions one-on-one!

## Holiday Leftovers

This is a good reminder to either eat or freeze leftovers within three to four days. To



**Derek Paulson, Assistant Fire Marshal**

Each season brings with it a certain set of hazards that we must contend with and winter is no different. Cold temperatures, slippery roads and sidewalks and strenuous activities are all things that we must be mindful of. And as we get older, the cold temperatures increase those hazards. Here are some dangers to be mindful of and tips on how to avoid them.

According to the American Heart Association, the risk of a heart attack during snow shoveling may increase for some due to the colder temperatures and physical exertion increases on the heart. When shoveling take breaks. Pay attention to how your body is feeling. Eating a large meal before or directly after shoveling can also put extra strain on the heart. If you have preexisting medical conditions consult with your doctor to see if shoveling snow is advised. Use a smaller shovel or invest in a snow blower.

While outside also be aware of the potential for hypothermia. As we age, the body's mechanism that regulates temperature

deteriorates. Dress in layers of warm clothing. Wear gloves and a hat. Much of the body's heat can be lost through the head. Wearing a hat will help stop that loss.

Be mindful of ice and snow. The older we get the sensation in our feet decreases as well as the mobility. These factors increase the potential of slipping or tripping on the ice and snow. Allow enough time to get where you are going so you are not rushed or hurrying. Use extra caution when walking or getting in and out of vehicles. And use handrails or handholds as much as possible.

Lastly, do not be afraid to ask for HELP. Hire the neighbor kid to shovel your snow. Have your groceries, medications or meals delivered right to your door. And if you don't need it today, stay in and wait for a day with nicer weather before venturing outside.

If you have any questions or would like further information I can be reached at 563-589-4195 or at [Dpaulson@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:Dpaulson@cityofdubuque.org).



## Have a Grand Holiday Season!



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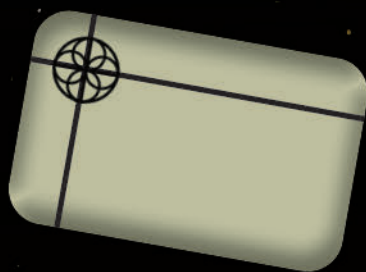
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**How to Distinguish Heart Disease Symptoms From Panic Attacks**

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** How can you tell with at least a moderate degree of certainty that you might really have a heart or blood pressure problem, as opposed to just having an anxiety attack that is less serious? — *D.S.*

**ANSWER:** A panic attack is an abrupt change in mental state. They are usually unexpected, sometimes with or without identifiable triggers. Symptoms of a panic attack vary from person to person, but among the most common are feelings of heart palpitations; sweating; trembling or shaking; shortness of breath; chest pain or discomfort; dizziness; numbness or a “pins and needles” feeling; abdominal pain or nausea; feeling abnormally hot or cold; feeling detached from oneself or from reality; and a fear of dying, losing control or “going crazy.”

Most of us have had some of these feelings from time to time, and some of these symptoms are identical to ones of heart disease, specifically of angina pectoris — the classic symptom of poor blood flow to the heart. There are many conditions, both medical and psychiatric, that can cause these symptoms as well, so acquiring a moderate degree of certainty isn’t always easy.

A very careful history exam helps. With chest pain due to heart disease, for example, symptoms are commonly brought on by exertion; whereas with a panic disorder, there might not be a trigger, or it may be triggered by psychological stress. Some people have highly specific triggers, such as open spaces or needles. Some people can trigger a panic attack just by worrying that they are going to have one.

The time course of the symptoms can be very helpful. With a panic attack, the attack

starts, and chest discomfort (for example) will then occur. In people with heart disease, chest discomfort starts, and then people will get anxious.

I had a wise cardiology professor who told me to always consider heart disease even if a person’s history is suggestive of a panic attack. I generally check their blood pressure and order an electrocardiogram, blood testing (including thyroid tests) and sometimes other tests when considering the diagnosis of a panic attack.

There is very effective treatment available for people with panic disorder (people with recurrent unexpected panic attacks that lead to avoidant behaviors), both through therapy and medication. But your question implies that being pretty sure of the diagnosis is wise before dismissing the possibility of cardiac disease or other medical diseases.

...

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I’m sure you’ve answered this question before, but how important do you think the digital rectal exam is for a 70-year-old man with normal findings in his PSA tests? My previous doctor who retired would routinely do them during my annual physical, but my current doctor said it’s my choice. So, I’ve opted not to have it done. Thoughts? — *Anon.*

**ANSWER:** The PSA test is much better at diagnosing than a finger is. There are cases where a clinician felt a tumor that would have been missed by the PSA test, so there is some small benefit to the digital rectal exam. But the benefit is quite modest.

There are men who have come to expect that part of the exam and feel unsatisfied without it, just as there are some men who absolutely refuse it. So, a wise clinician gives the patient the choice after explaining the small benefit and nonexistent risk.

*Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).*

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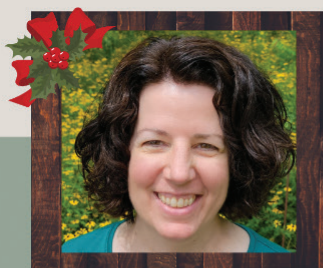
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*Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.*  
—Theodore Roosevelt



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Food Recalls

How does a food product get put on the shelves or in the freezers of our grocery stores without benefit of inspection? Especially when they're imported from another country? Inquiring minds would like to know how that happens.

We're not likely to get answers anytime soon. But we can, at least, get quick alerts when those items are recalled.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service is a good site to watch, or better yet, sign up for alerts. At this writing, there is a product (empanadas) under recall that the USDA is concerned might not be fit for human consumption. At the same time, there are two different dog foods that might be contaminated with salmonella, which can affect not only the dogs but the humans feeding the dogs. Then there are the meatballs with Listeria, the pork products that weren't inspected,

the burritos with Listeria, the soup with undeclared allergens and much more. For more information on these recalls or to sign up for email notices, go to [www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls).

Food Manufacturing is another good site to watch for up-to-the-minute recall and alert information ([www.foodmanufacturing.com/recalls-alerts](https://www.foodmanufacturing.com/recalls-alerts)).

[Recalls.gov](https://www.recalls.gov) is yet another site for recall notices, and not just food. The site also lists motor vehicles, boats, medicine, cosmetics and environmental products. To sign up for any or all of the alert categories, click "Sign Up for E-Mail" on the left side of the screen and choose those of interest. Of all the recall sites, this one is most comprehensive because of the variety of categories of products. For example, if you wonder if your vehicle has ever had a recall, you can enter its VIN. Or go directly to [www.nhtsa.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov).

Signing up for email alerts might be a good idea. If you find that you are getting duplicate information, you can always cancel one. But it's better to be informed and safe.

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## VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

### ALERT: Disability Benefits Questionnaire Scam

The Veterans Administration Office of Inspector General recently issued a fraud alert. They don't do that very often, but this one is important: the Disability Benefits Questionnaire.

The DBQs are those forms you give to your health care provider that, along with information from your provider, lets the VA evaluate your disability claim. The fraud involves trying to get money out of veterans in exchange for getting a provider to fill out the questionnaire and getting the claim filed.

You do not have to pay to have that done. It's free at the VA or through their accredited representatives.

Per the alert, it's the initial filing that's free. Later, if there's an appeal, yes, there might be fees for that appeal. Apparently, the scammers are asking for a percentage of any payments that you get or fees to file your

first claim.

And there's more: The scammers might want to send you to a different health care provider, claiming you'll have a better chance for higher benefits, likely by "finding" a diagnosis to get a better claims decision. For this reason they might even tell you to stay away from the VA exams. Worse, you might be asked to have your benefit payments deposited into the scammer's bank account.

To avoid the scammers, if you want help from a genuine accredited rep, go to the VA's database to see if your proposed rep is listed: [www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp).

If you have an accredited rep and there are fees, discuss them in advance and check to see if those fees are legit: [www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp).

Remember: Even if your rep is on the up and up, you're responsible for the accuracy of the information in your disability claim. Don't take chances. If you submit fraudulent paperwork, it's a federal offense.

Want to know what the VAOIG has been doing in your state and what they uncovered? Go to [www.vaog.gov/reports/data-dashboard](https://www.vaog.gov/reports/data-dashboard) and click on your state. That will give you all the reports they've done near you.

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