HUMBOLDT
NOW!
Volume 17 • Issue 1 • January 2026
Aubrey Cordray President of IVMA
Cael Newell mobile welding
Dr. Ryan Lee returns as HCMH therapist

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Starr Banwell, HIS
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Tracey Wellendorf, MD
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NEW

Tierney Kozal, ARNP
Dermatology

Hugo Rivadeneyra, MD
Endocrinology

Amy Faga, MSN, ARNP, FNP-C
Gastroenterology

Kenneth Adams, DO
Gastroenterology

NEW

Carrie Potter, ARNP
Gastroenterology

Darren Croo, MD
General Surgery

Ericha Worple, DO
General Surgery

NEW

Julie Kim, MD
General Surgery

NEW

Hannah Sheridan, PA-C
Hematology & Oncology

Sarah Tofilon, MD
Hematology & Oncology

Michele Koerner, ARNP
Nail Care

Lacy Halsrud, ARNP
OB/GYN

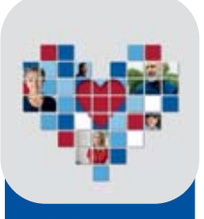
NEW

Alex Conley, PA-C
Orthopedics

Emile Li, MD
Orthopedics

Mark Hartman, DPM, FACFAS
Podiatry

Madison Leyk, DPM
Podiatry



Trinity Heart Center

Dan Olsen, DO
Urology

Humboldt NOW!
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WHAT'S INSIDE!

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On the cover: Outside Humboldt Vet Clinic, Aubrey Cordray talks with us about being President of the IVMA.

See more inside! —Photo by Jim Sayers

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Cheers to a new year!

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What's Happening January NOW!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
EVERY MONDAY Board of Supervisors · *8:30AM*	NO SCHOOL DEC. 22 - JAN. 2 SCHOOL RESUMES JANUARY 5		Hello 2026			
4	5 Adams Post 119 meeting At VFW in Dakota City at 7PM Humboldt City Council · *5:30PM*	6	Early Out 7	8	9	10 See all Humboldt Comm. School District's events for Jan., scan this QR code!
11 **Support Our Veterans Ride** All you can eat Pasta Bar 11 AM - 3 PM St. Joseph Parish Hall, St. Joe	No School 12	13 Wildcat PTO Mease Library · *5:30PM*	14 Dakota City City Council *7PM*	15	16	17 FOUNDATION FOUNDERS EVENT At HC Fairgrounds Social Hour at 6PM
18	19 Humboldt School Board Meeting *5:30PM Admin office* Humboldt City Council · *5:30PM*	20 4th Grade Music Program 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Humboldt High School	Early Out 21 Conservation Board · *5:00PM*	22	23	24
25	26	27	Early Out 28	29	30	31

HUMBOLDT COMMUNITY CHORUS PRESENTS
Fri., Jan. 30 · 7pm
Sat., Jan. 31 · 2pm
Sun., Feb. 1 · 2pm
R. Wesley Carlson Auditorium
Humboldt High School
Our Big Band will be playing 1/2 hour before each show.

To submit items for the Community Calendar please email faith@humboldtnews.com or call 515.332.2514

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THE BOOKWORM!

"Finlay Donovan Digs Her Own Grave"
By Elle Cosmano

By CAITLYNNE HAACK, Assistant Director and Young Adult Librarian

"Finlay Donovan Digs Her Own Grave" is the fifth instalment in the "Finlay Donovan" series. Some series you absolutely don't have to read in order, and/or can be read as a stand-alone and you can cherry-pick which books you want to read. This series is not like that. I advise that you start with the first book and go in order (I see some of you out there that do that anyway).

I would describe the "vibe" of this book as a humorous, cozy mystery, so don't expect thrills and kills in this series!

Finlay Donovan works as a romantic-suspense novelist and is a single mother to two wonderfully wild kiddos, who have a propensity for stirring up trouble everywhere she goes. Her default partner-in-crime is her trusted live-in nanny, Vero.

This time, when murder comes to town, it happens to be in her own neighborhood. Their elderly neighbor, Mrs. Haggerty, who just so happens to be the president of the neighborhood watch and local busybody, becomes the center of suspicion when a body (that of Gilford Dupree, missing for five years) is found buried in her backyard.

While the cops in town have cleared Mrs. Haggerty of any wrongdoing, her house is an active crime scene, so her grandson Brendan drops her off at Finlay's under the justification of keeping an eye on things. However, will they be watching their unwelcome, sneaky and annoyingly observant houseguest… or will their houseguest be watching them—and everyone else in the neighborhood? And more, how will Finlay get up to her usual antics if she doesn't have a "safe house" to return back to?

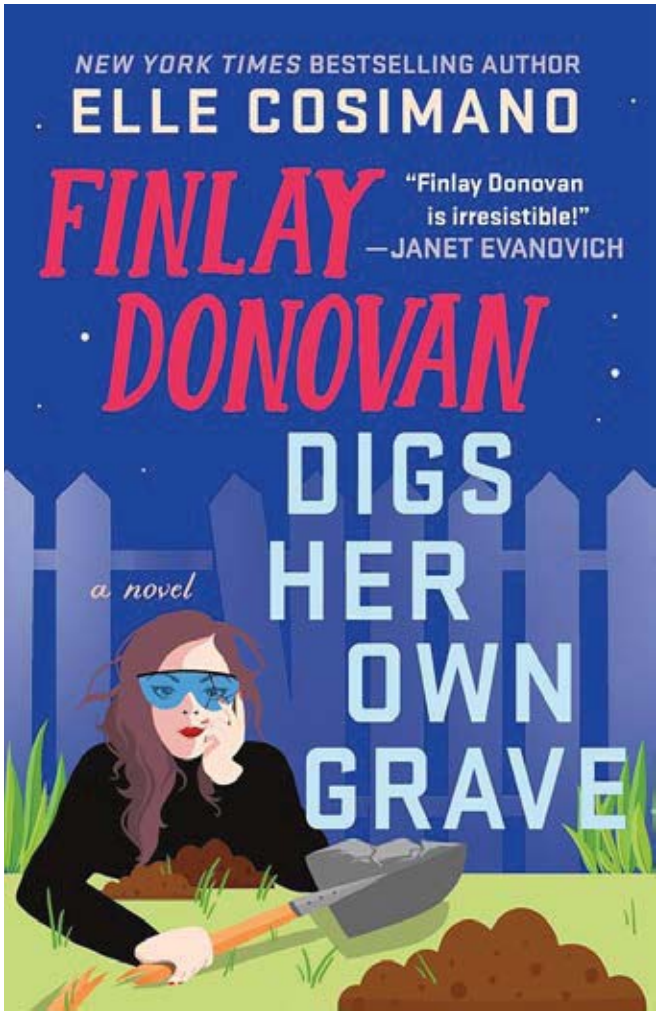
Tensions escalate between Finlay and her boyfriend when her ex-husband, Steven, is arrested for murder and there is nothing her cop boyfriend can or should do about it.

Can Finlay add anymore to her plate while her nanny, and bestie, is cheering in her ear that maybe Steven getting arrested isn't the worst thing to happen? Absolutely!

Finlay is torn between a fix to her money problems, writer's block, and so much more, and a catch that might expose all that they have worked for years to cover up. That might put everything… and everyone that she loves in jeopardy.

In the end, can Finlay wriggle her way out of danger once more and keep her escapades from the police and those she loves a secret, and what if those people are one in the same? What is their duty?

Chase down more leads and solve more puzzles alongside Finlay and the gang. Along the way, you'll see some character growth from the whole cast of characters and some more chaos and hijinks. After all, it wouldn't be a Finlay Donovan book without that!



Pet of the Month!

Yeti
Owner: Sean McMahon, Livermore

Presley June
Owners: Tyler and Michelle Sandven

Hank
Owners: Tyler and Michelle Sandven

Luna Lou
Owners: Tyler and Michelle Sandven

Nylah May
Owners: Tyler and Michelle Sandven

Remington
Owners: Savanna, Lillie, Ryker and JJ, Humboldt.

To submit a photo of your pet, email info@humboldtnews.com

Please include pet's name, owner's name and hometown.

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HUMBOLDT IN THE '50S AND '60S

BY TOM SWEARINGEN

My own Disneyland

We lived an hour and 10 minutes from Disney World for a year and a half in the 80s. It was great fun visiting the land of make-believe, but it took a lot of energy and fortitude. Most families were excited upon entering the Magic Kingdom, but by 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon, fatigue began to set in among most visitors, and by 4 or so, it hit the younger set. The heat of the summer, along with the long lines and endless walking, took a toll, and many people fled the grounds for a cool pool and another day.

My adult Disney happening dawned on Jan. 1, 2025, in the form of the ultimate football experience. I had grown up in the 50s and 60s, watching the Rose Bowl Parade on TV and then the game from Pasadena, CA every Jan. 1.

The weather always seemed delightful compared to the snow-covered fields and freezing cold of Iowa. Midwestern teams from the Big 10 were always pitted against teams from the West Coast. Ohio State and Michigan seemed to go every other year, but there were times when Minnesota and Wisconsin – even Iowa - made it to the granddaddy of all bowl games.

Growing up, I had heard tales of my grandmother, Catherine Mickelson, taking a long-distance trip to the West Coast with friends to partake in the festivities in Pasadena in the 30s.

After our three children's decisions to make California home, I added an item to my bucket list.

On Jan. 1, my wife and daughter joined me in my lifelong dream to attend the Rose Bowl Parade and game. I had no idea who was going to play in the game since this was a quarterfinal game in the new national championship set up. I took the plunge and ordered parade, game and parking tickets in August after confirming that we were visiting California for Christmas.

My daughter's home in Los Angeles is approximately 40 minutes from Pasadena. Needless to say, we didn't ring in the New Year since we knew we had to leave her home around 4:15 a.m. on Jan. 1 to make sure we got to our parking lot in a timely manner. We were surprised how light the traffic was turning into our designated lot around 5 a.m. We dozed in the car until around 6:30 a.m. and then decided to find our bleacher seats in Area 1.

Colorado Boulevard, of course, was our destination, a trek we thought wouldn't take too long by foot. Wrong! We made it to the street in short order, but the boulevard is long and our seats were at the opposite end! We finally found our bleacher seats 15 minutes before the parade began at 8 a.m.

It was a beautiful January California morning and our seats had a perfect view of the San Gabriel Mountains. Float after beautifully-flowered float rolled down the hill to an audience of around 250,000 people sitting and standing along Colorado Boulevard. Lively brass bands marched and played for miles. I was surprised to see my alma mater's band, the University of Wyoming, marching as a first-time participant.

After the two-hour parade, we had to walk back to our parking lot to move our car to another designated lot for the game. After parking in the new lot, we found time to have a quick bite to eat, sitting outside to enjoy the weather. Then it was off several blocks to the shuttle buses that would take us to the Rose Bowl. A forever line of people awaited us!

After finally getting on the bus, we had a 15-minute ride to the stadium, where we were let off, only to be greeted by another endless line to get into the stadium. We walked in just as the Ohio State band was beginning its pregame ritual on the field.

Our seats had a great view of the field and the mountains. Ninety-three thousand fans mostly wore red for Ohio State or green for Oregon. Although the game wasn't close (Ohio State won), we enjoyed the afternoon of pomp and the exciting plays on the field.

Then it was back to the mile-long lines and trip back downtown and a walk back to our car. 17,000 plus steps later, we were headed home, finally arriving around 8 p.m.

All in all, it was a great day, and I highly recommend that every football fan experiences the Rose Parade and Bowl in person sometime in their lives. I'm so happy to have attended this long-dreamed-of event. However, in the future I will gladly enjoy it from my living room easy chair - unless of course North Carolina or Iowa gets there down the road!

Note - Pasadena is a city of around 135,000 people. I was impressed with how well the crowds and events were managed. I guess after 137 years, the town has had a lot of practice!
(Ohio State went on several weeks later to defeat Notre Dame for the National Championship in Atlanta, Georgia.)

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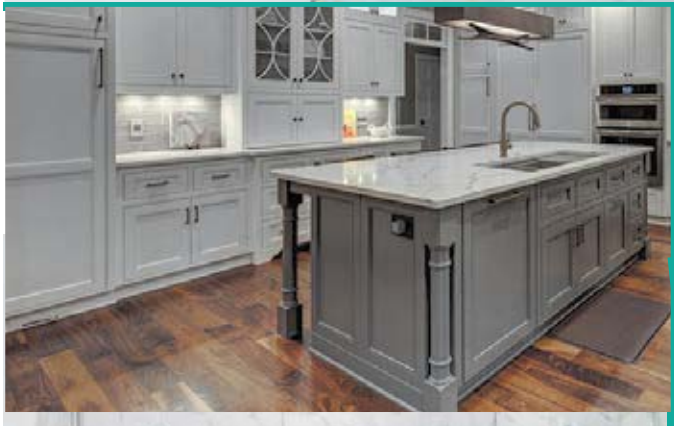

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Aubrey Cordray leads Iowa Veterinary Medical Association

'We can do hard things'

By JIM SAYERS

This past September, Humboldt veterinarian Aubrey Cordray began serving her term as president of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association.

She recently talked about her position, perspectives on the veterinary medical profession and mission for leadership.

"We can do hard things" is Dr. Aubrey Cordray's mission as president of Iowa Veterinary Medical Association.

"Energy is a limited resource. Where we direct it matters. I challenge you to put some of your focus on strengthening our profession, whether it is through making a PAC contribution, encouraging a colleague, or simply showing up. What you focus on grows. Let's keep focusing on the good," Cordray's message to the association.

When Dr. Aubrey Cordray graduated from Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine in May 2014, she didn't imagine that just over 10 years later, she would be leading the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, a statewide organization representing the voices of over 1,800 Iowa veterinarians, serving as its president, championing efforts in communication, policymaking, education and social activities.

Cordray said that when graduating from veterinary school, her biggest challenge was just trying to get on her feet as a new veterinarian working at the Humboldt Veterinary Clinic.

"It was like a firehose of information and I was still learning. I graduated on a Saturday and started work the next Monday," she said.

"While getting on my feet, I had an idea I wanted to eventually own a practice. But that came quicker than I expected. The opportunity arose so (husband) Kevin and I purchased Humboldt Veterinary Clinic from Dr. Jim Illg on Nov. 1, 2017. During that time, we had lots of life changes, including births of our two children (2015 and 2018). And then we added the clinic expansion/remodel in 2020," she said.

Iowa Veterinary Medical Association serves veterinarian needs

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, IVMA, is a statewide trade association that advocates for rural veterinary revitalization and animal-human health.

Started in 1883 with 16 members, IVMA's mission today is "providing a vision and voice through continuing education, publications, legislative and social activities to enhance the veterinary profession, improve animal well-being and defend public health."

Today IVMA has just over 1,800 members: men - 48%; women - 41%; non-reported - 11%. Forty-four percent of the group's members are mixed-size animal veterinarians and 8 percent are large animal-only; so over half serve large animals in some capacity.

There are 11 IVMA standing committees: administration, Bovine Practitioners, budget, financial planning, legislation, meeting planning, membership, public health, public relations, veterinary technicians and wellness.

Leadership opportunities

When Cordray started out as a new veterinarian, she wasn't thinking about seeking a statewide veterinary association office. But she had been eyeing the IVMA "Power of Ten" leadership curriculum—a yearlong program to offer 10 (or so) young veterinarians, typically seven or fewer years out of school, an opportunity to join in a series of leadership

training activities.

"I participated in the 2021-2022 class. At that time, I was seven years post-graduation, and I thought, 'The time to do it is now,'" Cordray said.

"It was a very good program and in a good way, eye-opening. During my year, there were 11 or 12 participants. Our group met monthly for events, activities and training that would advance our skills and professional careers. Each monthly activity broadened leadership abilities and connections with others," Cordray said.

One professional development activity that she would later use with staff at the Humboldt Veterinary Clinic was the DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness) personality profile identification test.

"Every personality type has natural strengths and weaknesses. Knowing your personality type can help guide you toward personal and professional success and help you find a career you enjoy," Cordray said. "I am a D (direct, assertive and results-oriented)."

Dr. Aubrey Cordray and husband Kevin purchased the Humboldt Veterinary Clinic November 1, 2017. Photo by Jim Sayers.

Other activities during Cordray's Power of Ten year included hearing presentations from veterinarian panels, going to networking events and attending the American Veterinary Association Leadership Conference in Chicago.

The year also introduced participants to the annual IVMA legislative day (typically held in February-March) at the Iowa Capitol to learn how the IVMA advocates for its members with the Iowa legislature. There they attended meetings and spoke directly with specific committees and leaders.

Cordray's path to president is part of a four-year sequence on the administrative committee: vice president, president-elect, president and immediate past president. "I appreciate that it's a step-by-step process to learn from colleagues during my leadership process," she said.

Presidential role and priorities

Cordray's vision as president is to "continue building a strong connected profession, one that feels supported, informed and empowered to lead in our communities."

Her yearlong theme is "We can do hard things"—a reminder that advocacy, leadership and growth all take courage; and although these are hard things, they can be used to strengthen the organization's future.

Her specific goals are to increase IVET-PAC (political action committee) funding and help members "…see that advocacy is not intimidating, it's simply showing up for our profession and understanding that even small contributions or conversations can make a big difference. You must pay for a voice at the (legislative) table. It's important to create relationships with new legislators," she noted.

Presidential duties include writing a monthly newsletter column, leading communication and advocacy efforts on behalf of IVMA, speaking at public events and attending various committee meetings.

Typically, the outgoing IVMA president addresses students and their families at the fall "white coat ceremony" held for those beginning their veterinary college studies at Iowa State University.

This ceremony is so named because all students receive white coats as they enter the field of veterinary medicine. However, this past September, when the outgoing president couldn't attend, Cordray had the chance to speak. "I felt the energy and excitement of all 166 students wanting to be veterinarians," Cordray said.

Next spring, she looks forward to leading the class of 2026 graduating students in reciting their veterinarian oath as they leave school to begin their professional careers.

Legislative advocacy

Legislative and policy advocacy is one of the most important ways IVMA serves its members and the public.

"We want to work closely with legislators to ensure that the laws shaping animal care and veterinary practice are informed by science and the rural experience," Cordray said.

Dr. Aubrey Cordray gives White Coat Ceremony address to new veterinary med students at Iowa State University fall event. Photo by Dave Gieseke.

Key issues this year:

–Permissive reporting and veterinary immunity: to allow veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse or neglect of companion animals and protect them from liability when they do.

"This is important because there is a connection between animal abuse and human violence," Cordray said.

–Rural Iowa veterinarian loan program: support new graduates with financial incentives to help pay back school loans if they stay over four years working for practices located in a specific "veterinarian-shortage areas."

These counties and adjacent counties are identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as low on adequate veterinarian services to serve the animal populations there. (Wright County has been identified as a veterinarian shortage county, so Humboldt County is also considered short by being located next to it.)

–Rural veterinary practice innovation and revitalization grant programs: provide financial incentives for practices in veterinarian-shortage areas helping them to invest in equipment and infrastructure to make it easier to attract and keep veterinarians.

Sometimes veterinarian school graduates enter new jobs in rural practices with a shortage of modern tools and technology they became familiar with at college. This grant program would help update technology in rural veterinarian practices, Cordray noted.

"Our IVET-PAC keeps us connected at the Capitol. Whatever bill comes through that relates to our interests, our legislative committee will review and possibly take a position," Cordray said. "Most important is "showing up, learning and staying involved."

Focus on the rural community and rural veterinarians

Cordray says rural veterinary practices face challenges today because of pay scales, work hours and technology.

"I want rural veterinarians to be successful. Rural veterinarians are declining in number because of the amount of money available for salaries and the need to serve clients after hours—meaning long work hours.

"Urban areas have emergency veterinary services (available evenings and weekends); you can leave at 5 p.m. for the day. But in the rural community, we are the only option. Here, we are the emergency option for our clients and we need to be available at all hours," Cordray said.

"For most vets, one of the biggest challenges is finding balance—balancing the emotional demands of the job, the workload and the desire to be everything for everyone. We care deeply about our patients and clients and that emotional investment can be both our biggest strength and biggest challenge," Cordray said.

The shortage of veterinarians in rural areas adds to the pressure, since many veterinarians wear multiple hats and it can be hard to step away and recharge, she added.

Philosophies of leadership—and life

Cordray defines leadership this way: "I think leadership is about influence, not authority. It is doing the right thing when no one is watching and caring enough to help others become their best selves. It is being approachable, honest and willing to grow right alongside your team."

She has utilized the DISC leadership personality test among Humboldt Veterinary Clinic's 24 employees. "This helps understanding why individuals think and act the way they do. Everyone has their own work style and understanding that helps to develop a better work culture. It helps you see differences as a blessing rather than a detriment," Cordray said.

Dr. Aubrey Cordray explains that an aquarium with colorful fish was added to the reception area of the veterinary office especially to appeal to kids who visit the office. Photo by Jim Sayers.

"I am grateful for all our team. I appreciate how we all contribute and everybody pitches in with their own strengths when needed," Cordray said.

She set up a "grateful board" in her office, where employees list two work-related and one personal gratitude each day.

"When you are intentionally looking for the good, you will find it. The world is trained to look for the negative, but when you train your mind to look for the positive, you will find it," she said.

Connection to and support of the local community

"We are very blessed to live in the Humboldt community and to have had the opportunity to purchase a thriving business in a thriving community," Corday said. "We are very involved in the local community, including being the county fair veterinarians."

"We sponsor different events like the veterinarian camp this past summer. There we had 54 kids, first through sixth grade. We wanted to expose them to animals up close in person, along with the veterinary business. We had hands-on time with farm animals, showed them what to look for (health) in different animals, talked about germs, let them dress up in surgical gowns, showed how to listen to a dog's heartbeat and taught what to know about small animals, including what not to feed dogs," Cordray said.

"Purpose of vet camp was to expose kids to agriculture, animals, vet medicine and maybe get them interested as as a potential path they might follow in the future," she said.

Joys of being a rural veterinarian: connections with clients and patients

At the Humboldt Veterinary Clinic, service production is about 70% small animal and 30% large animal. Large animals include cattle, horses, small ruminants (sheep and goats), chickens and very few pigs. Large animal services take place both on the farm and in the clinic.

"I love the variety, especially about being a mixed variety

veterinarian. I also like the connection with clients. No two days are ever the same," Cordray said.

"One moment you might be delivering a calf, that's my absolute favorite thing—bringing life into the world—whether it be delivering a calf or foal, puppies or kittens on occasion," Cordray said.

"The next moment you might be comforting a family in the loss of an aging pet. Saying goodbye is hard. However, I have shifted to seeing it as a blessing, because the animal no longer suffers. We can spend time with the client and share memories of a loved family pet," Cordray said.

"I am to the place in my career where I am now doing that (saying goodbye) to animals that I first met as puppies when I first graduated—a whole life transition for all life phases," Cordray said.

"I have had relationships with both the clients and the animals for a long time. We deal with emergencies and sad end of life procedures, but you can always find some good in there," Cordray added.

She can drive around town and spot animals she knows personally as patients. "I see a dog and think, 'Oh, there's Lola,'" she said.

Motivational phrases and quotes appear all over on the walls and desk in Cordray's office. Her favorite question to ask employees: "What day is this?" Answer: "It's a great day to be a great day."

Family

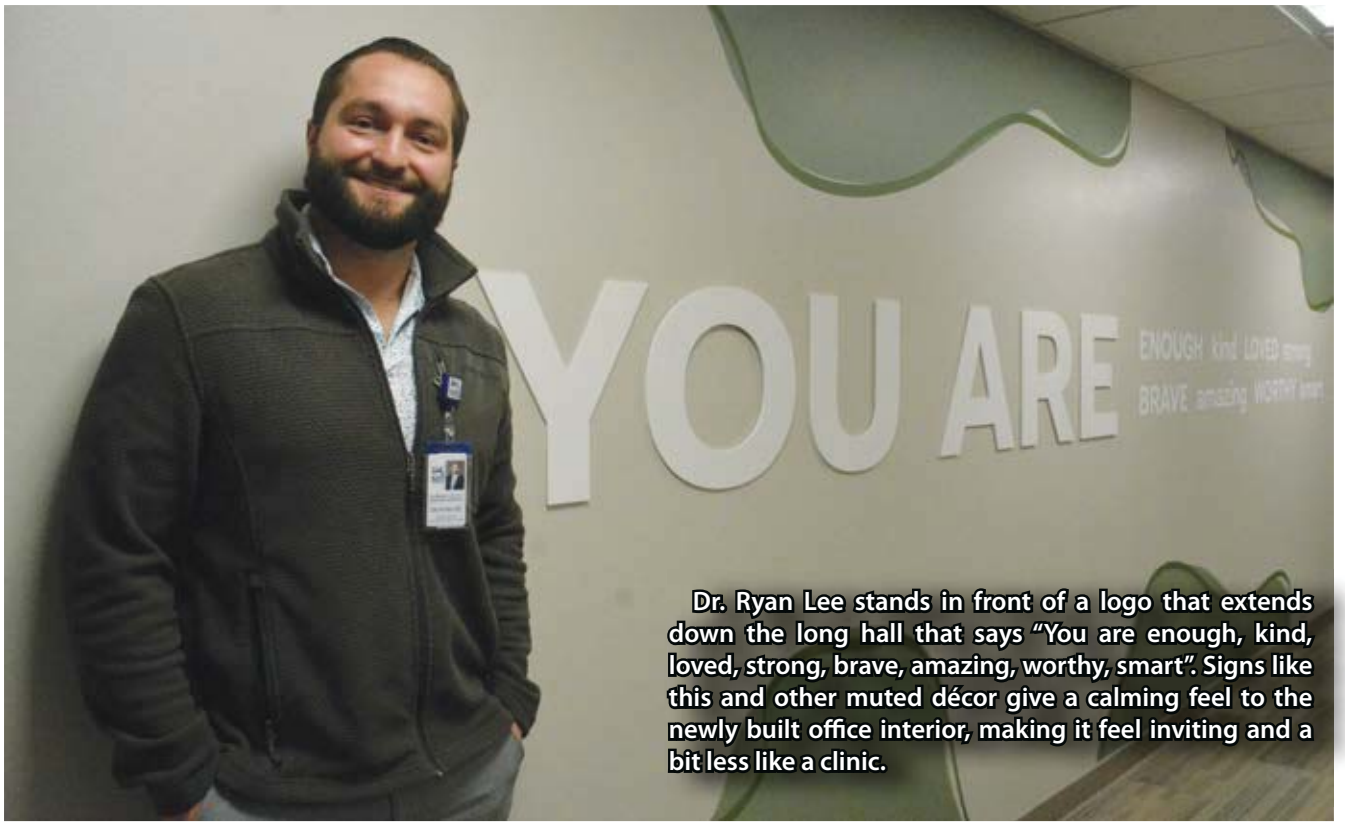
Cordray was raised in rural Havelock, where her father is a farmer and mother is a retired teacher. She went to Buena Vista University as an undergraduate and played college basketball there.

"The farthest I ever got away from home was when I went to Iowa State vet school. Kevin and I have established roots in the supportive local community," she said.

Aubrey and Kevin Cordray live on an acreage in Corinth Township southwest of Humboldt with their children Hayes, 10, and Collins, 7, along with five horses (Gypsy, Ginger, Sugar, Dixon and Spirit); six cats—three indoor (Winnie, Roo and Willa) and three outdoor (Fuzz, Spice and Ribbons); their Goldendoodle, Charley; three 4-H calves (Midnight, Comet and Neptune); and multiple chickens.

Dr. Aubrey knows many patients by name. Here she examines Kira during a regular checkup. Photo by Jim Sayers.

Read Cordray's latest president's message and learn more about the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association: https://www.iowavma.org/



Dr. Ryan Lee stands in front of a logo that extends down the long hall that says "You are enough, kind, loved, strong, brave, amazing, worthy, smart". Signs like this and other muted décor give a calming feel to the newly built office interior, making it feel inviting and a bit less like a clinic.

Dr. Ryan Lee returns to Humboldt

Ryan Lee could have chosen any of a dozen or more places to go into practice when he passed his American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology certification. A greater than ever focus on mental health care in the United States has caused a demand for good, qualified Psychiatrists throughout the United States, but Dr. Lee chose to come home.

Earlier this year, in August, Humboldt County Memorial Hospital announced Dr. Ryan Lee, DO as the newest member of their mental health care team.

Lee is a Humboldt native. His parents, Todd and Nicole Lee continue to live and work in Humboldt. Todd is the Director of the Humboldt County Conservation Department and Nicole, MSN, ARNP, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner with Humboldt County Memorial Hospital Mental Health and Wellness Center.

Lee's brother Christian and sister Reagan also graduated from Humboldt High School.

Lee graduated from Humboldt High School in 2013, attended Iowa Central Community College for a year to receive his associates degree and then attended the University of Iowa for two years, where he earned his undergraduate degree.

Following his graduation from U of I, Lee chose to work in a dermatology lab for a year.

"I had an open mind as far as specialties were concerned and a large piece of getting into medical school is volunteering, (and) doing research as well as having good grades," Lee said. "It was a great opportunity that I was able to capitalize upon."

Lee then attended medical school at A.T. Still University in Kirksville, MO where he was able to complete the didactic or classroom portion of his studies before going on to residency.

He then completed his remaining training in Phoenix, AZ where he began his rotation working within different medical departments in order to decide on what he would like to specialize in.

"It gives you a wide breadth of experience as well as helps you pick out what you are hoping to do moving forward," Lee said.

Lee admitted that before going through his medical school rotation, he wasn't sure what specialty he wanted to focus on.

"I just knew I wanted to be in medicine. my psychiatry rotation proved to me that it was the field I really wanted to pursue," Lee said.

Following his training in Arizona, he participated in a ritual called the match.

"The match is where all fourth-year medical students find out where and what specialty they are doing, all in the same day," Lee said.

The residency match process con-

nects medical school graduates with residency programs through an algorithm that pairs applicants and residency programs based on mutual rankings.

Once the medical student has been interviewed at their preferred residency programs, both the student and the program enter their preferences into a database. The algorithm chooses the best fit based on that data.

"I was lucky enough to match into the psychiatry program in Des Moines at Broadlawns UnityPoint," Lee said. "My psychiatry rotation had demonstrated to me all the positive that I would be able to do in that profession as well as enjoy doing it."

"I tell people it would be an awful shame to go through all that schooling to not enjoy what you do. That was a huge driver for me in choosing psychiatry," Lee said.

Lee enjoys psychiatry because it merges the science of healthcare with the ability to have the social aspect of being able to help people and be a difference in their lives.

The idea of making a difference in people's lives is partially what led him to return to his hometown.

"What made me want to come back was the opportunity to serve the people and the place I grew up. That was a huge draw to me," Lee said.

"In addition, I thought the job opportunity in and of itself was superior to others I had received, even in Des Moines and the surrounding areas. It was congruent to what my goals were career-wise and I felt it was perfect, honestly," Lee said.

A lot of Lee's work will be done virtually as he still has a residence in Des Moines, but he plans to be in the office in Humboldt as often as possible.

"Being able to work virtually has helped with mental health care. Working in Des Moines, I have seen plenty of patients who have driven hours to get to an appointment," Lee said. "Being able to serve our smaller rural communities virtually hopefully means people won't have to do something like that."

Lee's focus will be on adults 18 and older with a special interest in depression and anxiety along with the medication management.

Dr. Ryan Lee is able to see clients both in the Humboldt Office and remotely. He is excited to be able to have the dual role so that he can offer mental health services to a wider range of people including those who cannot drive to Humboldt. Lee recently passed his certification to become a qualified psychiatrist.

As a psychiatrist, Lee spends part of each visit making sure that medications are correct for his clients, but he also provides therapy during the visit.

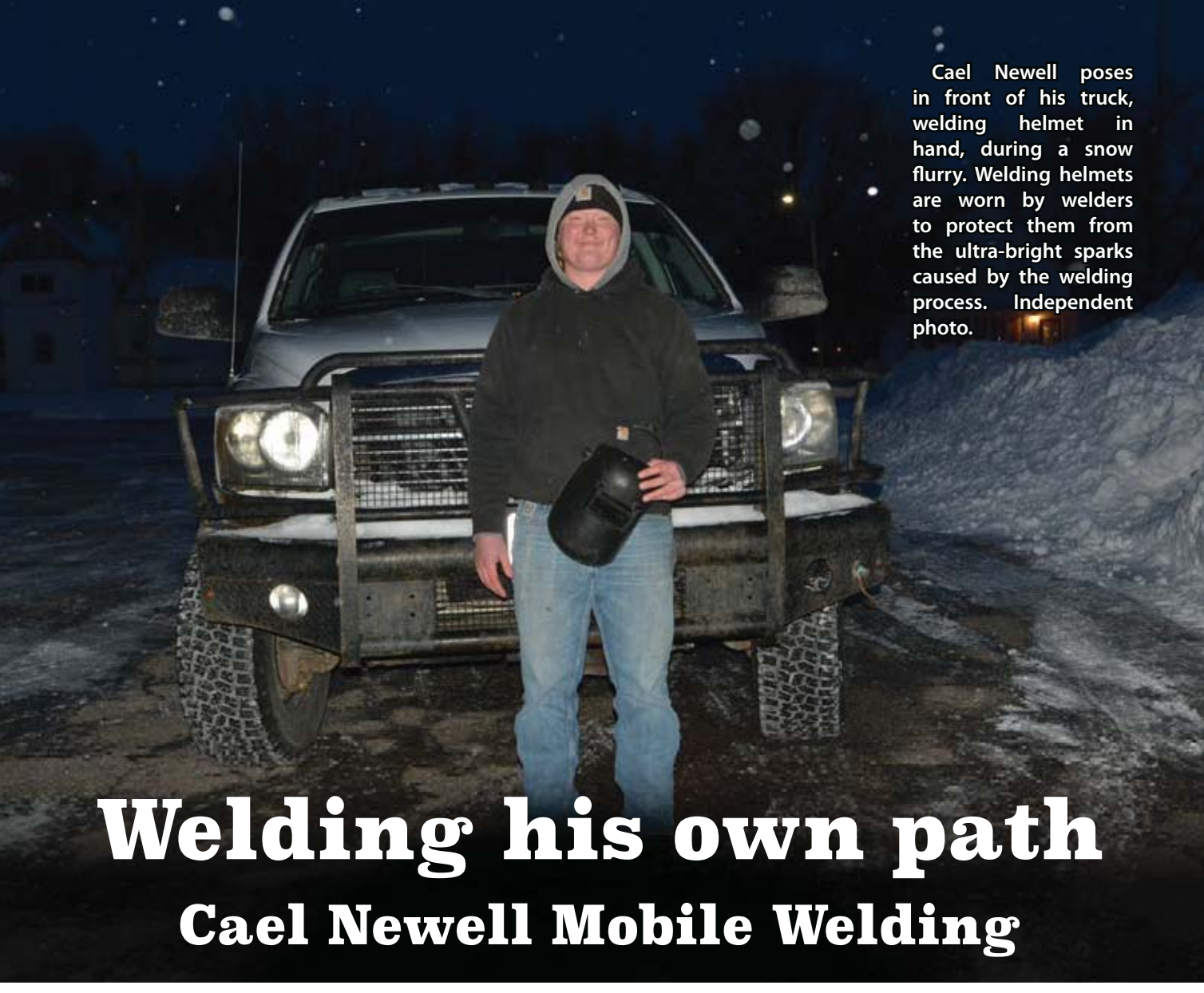
"For most of my visits I do try to implement some form of therapy or therapeutic interventions to the visit. Things like supportive psychotherapy or CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy). It's goal-oriented," Lee said.

Ryan Lee (left) and his family, sister Reagan, parents Todd and Nicole, and brother Christian.

"It excites me to be back and working with the community because it is what made me the person I am today," Lee said. "Having the opportunity to give back to the very place I consider home. Even though I am mostly in Des Moines, I really enjoy coming back and seeing my family and friends who are still here. That is something that is really important to me," Lee said.

"I'm very excited to be able to help break in this new facility. A lot of the work I will be doing will be online or virtual but I know that the clinic will be well utilized and happy that we have such a new facility to take advantage of," Lee said.

Lee began to see clients in September and is still accepting new patients. No referral is needed to receive treatment at the clinic. Appointments can be made by calling (515)332-7672.



Cael Newell poses in front of his truck, welding helmet in hand, during a snow flurry. Welding helmets are worn by welders to protect them from the ultra-bright sparks caused by the welding process. Independent photo.

Welding his own path

Cael Newell Mobile Welding

By Kylie Portz

At just 19 years old, 2024 Humboldt High School graduate Cael Newell is already forging his own path—literally. What started in a high school welding class quickly became a full-fledged venture as Newell launched his own mobile welding business, taking his skills on the go.

In high school, Newell had the opportunity to take a welding class taught by Industrial Tech teacher Joel Hanus, where he said he "learned a lot."

After graduating from HHS, Newell attended Iowa Central Community College where he studied welding.

Newell said of the experience, "It was kind of like school, but it's definitely a lot better. Got to work on what I wanted to do. I mean, I'd say about 80% of the time I was in the shop. The other 20% was doing homework assignments and in-class stuff."

After seeing others' success with mobile-welding, Newell decided to try his hand at the industry, starting his own business, "Newell Mobile Welding" in 2025.

He said, "I watched some people on YouTube have their own mobile welding business, and it just kind of stayed with me. I started to collect all the tools and stuff and then opened my LLC and got insured and everything."

So far, Newell has completed a number of small jobs for family and friends in between his day job working for Sande Construction & Supply Co.

"I'd like to make it (mobile-welding) my full-time job. Just work on my business and make it sufficient enough to live off of."

When he isn't working on his mobile welding business or on one of the job sites working with Sande Construction, Newell enjoys his days off spending time with his girlfriend, playing video games with friends, hunting or fishing.

Newell said, "My buddy knows this (fishing) spot but I guess a lot of people know about it. It's not as big a secret as we thought because we would go down there some days and there would be tons of people there."

During the football season, Newell and his father man the drone for the team, helping to capture the game for the coaches and team to review later.

Newell said, "My first time flying that specific drone that I flew was about three days before the first game. It's the same

controls as the other ones (drones). But I have a DJI Mavic Mini in my house that I fly sometimes. Take it out hunting."

During High School, Newell donned the number 59 for the Humboldt Wildcat football team as a lineman and was a member of the wrestling team.

As a kid, Newell's favorite sport was baseball.

He said, "My favorite sport was baseball. I played for the Thunder Cats."

Welding

Welding is a process used to permanently join materials, most often metal, by applying high heat to melt the edges and fuse them as they cool.

Unlike soldering or brazing, which heat metals without melting the base material, welding creates a connection that can be as strong as the original metal itself. It's used across construction, manufacturing, automotive repair, agriculture and countless other fields where strong, reliable joints are essential.

Modern welding includes several techniques such as arc welding, MIG (Metal Inert Gas), TIG (Tungsten Inert Gas) and gas welding. Each is suited to different materials and applications.

No matter what the method, the goal is the same: to create a solid, lasting connection that keeps structures, equipment and machinery functioning safely.

Mobile Welding

In recent years, a growing number of welders have taken their skills on the road, offering what's known as mobile welding. Mobile Welding is a service that delivers the full capability of a welding shop directly to the customer's location.

Mobile welding is exactly what the name suggests; instead of requiring clients to haul broken machinery, damaged trailers, or custom fabrication projects to a shop, the welder comes to them.

Equipped with portable machines, protective gear and a truck or trailer outfitted with supplies, mobile welders can perform repairs, fabrication and emergency fixes on-site.

This flexibility makes mobile welding invaluable in communities where equipment is too large, too heavy, or too urgent to transport.

The advantages of mobile welding are clear. For farmers, it means a broken piece of machinery can be repaired in the field, minimizing downtime during planting or harvest.

For construction crews, it allows reinforcements or adjustments to be made on-site, keeping projects on schedule.

For small businesses or individuals, it saves the hassle and expense of transporting heavy or awkward items to a shop.

In rural areas, where specialized services may be miles away, mobile welding fills a critical gap by bringing expertise directly to the community.

Beyond convenience, mobile welding also supports local economies. Many mobile welders are independent entrepreneurs who build their businesses around responsiveness and customer service. Like Newell, they often balance day jobs with their welding work, gradually expanding their services as demand grows.

A project Newell completed for his girlfriend's parents, a gate for their fence. Submitted photo.

This entrepreneurial spirit not only provides practical solutions but also strengthens community ties, as welders become trusted problem-solvers for neighbors and businesses alike.

For many, mobile welding represents the evolution of a timeless trade. Welding itself has been around for centuries, but the ability to bring the craft directly to the customer reflects today's emphasis on flexibility and efficiency.

Whether it's fixing a farm gate, repairing a trailer, or fabricating custom metalwork, mobile welders embody the idea that skilled trades can adapt to meet people where they are.

In short, mobile welding is more than just a service; it's a lifeline for industries and communities that rely on durable, dependable metalwork. By combining technical expertise with mobility, welders ensure that projects keep moving, equipment stays in service and customers receive solutions tailored to their needs. It's welding without walls and for many, it's the difference between costly delays and seamless productivity.

For his business, Newell uses both stick and TIG welding methods.

Stick Welding uses electricity to create a hot electric arc between a metal rod (the stick) and the metal the welder is joining, melting both to fuse them together. While TIG welding uses a precise hot electric pencil called a tungsten electrode to melt two pieces of metal together while a steady stream of inert gas (such as argon) acts as a protective shield

to keep the molten metal clean from air.

Working with molten metal and hot tools can be dangerous, demanding that welders use special safety equipment to keep themselves safe.

One piece of equipment that welders use is a large helmet that shields the welder's face, eyes and neck from intense light, sparks, heat or debris generated from the welding process.

Newell also wears fire-resistant clothes to protect himself from catching fire if a spark lands on his clothes while he works.

The protective equipment Newell uses tends to depend on the welding method he is using and the job at hand. He might choose to wear a lighter pair of gloves when using the TIG method, as that allows for more feel, or a heavier set of gloves for stick welding, which might have more sparks.

One of Newell's pet peeves when welding is when he "flashes" himself.

He explained, "Today, I was welding a brace onto something and I flipped my hood up and I wasn't paying attention to where my hand was, and my stinger was in my hand, tapped a piece of metal by accident and it sparked. I hate that."

The flash caused by sparking metal is much brighter than a camera flash.

Newell explained, "It's way brighter (than a camera flash). So the helmet I have is set to a shade 10. In a shade 10, if you look at the sun, you'll barely be able to see it. "

With over five years of experience between high school and college, Newell is looking to expand into the mobile welding industry and take on more jobs in the future.

He's already completed a few projects for family and friends.

Newell shared, "I made my grandpa an attachment for a bucket for one of the machines he's got at his house. He brought it down from Minnesota and I welded it together for him."

He's also replaced spikes on a skid loader with larger spikes, a bale fork attachment, made a bench as a school assignment and done a few jobs for his girlfriend's family.

"The park bench is sitting outside my house. My dog decides she wants to stay outside forever so I have a place to sit," he said.

He's already built himself a charcoal grill, which he uses quite frequently in the warmer months.

For those wanting to book Cael for their next project, he can be found on his website www.newellmobilewelding.com or through his email newellmobilewelding@gmail.com.

Through his business, Newell offers custom fabrication and mobile welding repairs.

His website reads, "I've had the idea to start my own business when I struck my first arc in my sophomore year of high school. I found not only skill, but also a passion for working with metal, solving problems with my hands and building things that last. My mobile setup allows me to come directly to you, saving time and delivering quality whenever and wherever it is needed."

An example of Newell's welding expertise is seen here on this piece of farming equipment Newell completed for his grandpa. Submitted photo.

Cael Newell (pictured above) opened his own mobile welding business in 2025. Through his business, he provides custom fabrication and mobile welding repair. Submitted photo.

HUMBOLDT
NEWS FROM YOUR CITY

29 5th St. S., Humboldt | 515-332-3435 | www.cityofhumboldt.org

Keep an eye on our Facebook Page for programming information and new programs to come!

The City of Humboldt will be collecting Christmas trees during the month of January. Trees must be placed at the curb and have all wire and wood stands removed prior to collection.

Ice Skating pond is OPEN this winter!

Adult and youth skates available for rent at the Humboldt Rec Center.

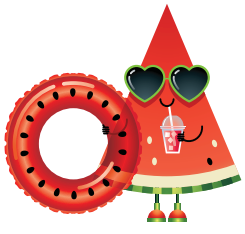
Call the Recreation Department for details at 515-604-6494 or email paxtonp@cityofhumboldt.org

Upcoming recreation programs:

JANUARY
- Mini Cats Sports Clinic
- (Prek-K, Parent/Guardian Participation required)
- 1st-2nd grade basketball
- Mens Adult Basketball

FEBRUARY
- Multisport Mashup Madness (3rd-6th grade boys & girls)
- Youth Track Clinic (3rd-6th boys & girls)

MARCH
- 3v3 Womens Basketball
- Outdoor Soccer



Pool passes are now on sale for the 2026 season!
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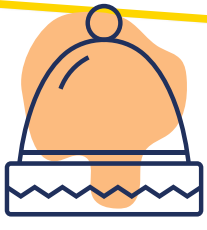

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Karen's Quips!

By Karen May

It's beginning to look like Christmas! This month's weather is what we expect when we look at the calendar and December has arrived.

Many years it is grey and gloomy and no snow, but this year is one I can relate to! December should be snow and colder temperatures, residents putting out decorations and lights and downtown areas aglow with Christmas ideas for gifts and décor. One of my favorite times of the year.

I look forward to the Christmas cards, greetings and letters, although I have to admit, not many of my friends and relatives do much writing anymore. I actually read the greetings often during this season. I love to hear about families, vacations, jobs and news of former neighbors, friends and relatives.

I am probably a bit unusual in that once I have read the card/letter, I set it aside for a short while and sometime during the season, it gets read again - often several times. And, before putting it away in January, I'll read it once more to make sure I didn't miss anything. Last year I received a card and letter from a former neighbor that I hadn't heard from in years. It was full of information on his family (and their families) and included several photos. A favorite for sure!

I dug it out and read it again this month. I'd sort of forgotten what he was doing and where his family was located. I would like to hope that my cards and letters receive the same attention! I hate to receive that formal looking, fancy card where the name has been engraved but no news, not even a "hope you are well" note!

What a waste of money. But I guess I should be thankful I was thought of and remembered. It is the season to think of and remember friends and neighbors of yester year!

This year I am at my winter home in Florida and am missing the snow and cold of Iowa. I watch the news, and talk to family members who tell me about the weather "back home." I will celebrate the holidays with friends and extended family. My granddaughter lives about 30 miles away and her two daughters love my Creamy Caramels and Peanut Butter Balls, so guess what I have been busy making?

My daughter and son-in-law rented a unit a block from us so we see each other often and enjoy sharing news. He is an excellent cook and I often don't have to make dinner. My son lives next door to me on "the farm" so he checks the house and makes sure all is well. All in all, I am enjoying my home away from home. With the recent weather change - snow, cold, etc.- it has been nice to chat with one another and see how the other is doing.

We have all kinds of activities from morning to evening, but it seems each person or family enjoys something different. I have to admit when I first came here over 25 years ago, the saying was "there is something for everyone." I had my doubts. How could that be? But I found there are people who do not like to do anything - they like their home life and don't participate. But the majority, men and women, find something they enjoy.

A new pickleball court was built recently and it is busy most of the time. There are card games of some sort every day/night and of course a swimming pool is a plus. When the heater goes out or a problem arises, residents are quick to complain. We don't have a golf course, but we do have several leagues and courses nearby. My neighbor is 90 years old and does nothing - other than walk the park daily. No wonder she stays healthy.

Being away from Iowa doesn't mean we forget what's going on. I enjoy watching the Iowa sporting events on TV. I get the Humboldt Independent Newspaper and it is read - and shared - with others.

The mailboxes are located near the clubhouse and watched for the red light to go on indicating today's mail has arrived. We may be spending the winter elsewhere, but there is no place like home. Email has made a big difference in the way people communicate. Many of us used to write letters, now we email or text.

Communication continues to make progress in many ways. I subscribe to the Tampa Newspaper. Would you believe that our city of about 50,000 does not have a paper? Tampa is a city so not much "small town" news, but at least we get a newspaper twice a week to help keep up on world events. But what would we do without our cell phones? I don't know of many persons without one. It's the way to keep up with our families and friends. Modern technology, what will be next?

I have to comment on our acreage one mile west of the high school. I have received many notes and calls asking what on earth is going on? The 100 or so trees have provided shade for years. Our son mows it regularly and there is no junk pile or trash in it. It has been a thing of beauty for the family for over 50 years. But as with many things, "all things come to an end." This past spring we noted many of the trees died, did not leaf out or were dying. Found out it was the Emerald Ash Borer bug that got into the trees and killed them. Several lost branches and it was a chore to keep the area looking nice.

Our son spent hours weekly mowing the grass and keeping branches picked up, but soon I had to come to the realization that the Ash Borer (and sometimes called the lilac borer) had made its mark, invading the trees by boring under the bark and killing the trees. One by one they died until this winter, when it was decided they had to be taken down before they fell together and really made a mess. I hired someone to take the trees down, one by one and now the area has just the stumps remaining. What a terrible looking grove! It just shows that Mother Nature is still in control. I am looking forward to springtime when the stumps can be removed and some clearing can be done. Hopefully another "thing of beauty" will take its place. Keep watching.

It is the last month of the year, 2025 is coming to an end. Wishing all of you a Happy Holiday Season and Best Wishes for 2026! I am most grateful for you, the readers of the Humboldt Newspapers, for your support and comments thru the years and am looking forward to another new year!

We made our own fun

By Phyllis Johnson

I was a child in the 1930s and up until the 40s. I had a sister just two years younger, so we played together all the time. Living on a farm, there were no other kids who lived close by. We became friends as well as sisters. What one of us did, the other would join. No matter if it was play or chores assigned to us, we worked together.

That's not to say we always got along. My mother curtailed any arguing by various tactics, and if nothing else seemed to work, she sat us on the basement steps to cool down.

The basement in that old farmhouse had no cement floor, and it was entered by a trapdoor in the pantry. To say it was dark on those cellar steps was an understatement. Added to that, the fact that spiders roamed the corners, the big, black, hairy kind. In the dark, we could imagine them crawling in our clothes and all over us. It didn't take long for us to settle any disagreement, and under circumstances like this, being so glad to be back where it was safe.

But mostly we got along fine. Having a few board games and decks of cards, jigsaw puzzles and even playing school, we were entertained for many a snowy or rainy day.

Games that kids play now were not on the horizon back then. No videos or boxes with animated figures bobbing all over the screen. We had to become creative and make our own fun. And we did.

The grove with its many shaded trees was a welcoming place on a hot summer day. There was a pile of old rusty machinery in one corner, and it was investigated by our imaginative eyes to utilize anything that could be of use to us.

An old buggy sat idle after many years, and it had wheels that had spokes missing. Two wheels had lost their rims, but we found that they would work anyway. We somehow got them detached from the body of the buggy and, using the bar that attached them to each other, we ran behind as we pushed on the bar.

It was easy to make roads in the grove. The shady grove had very little grass, so a rake would make into a road easy enough. Sturdy sticks were plentiful, and made adequate road signs. There were some old shingles lying around, and with some wire and a black crayon, we had all the signs we needed for a highway. We buzzed around, averting crashes at dangerous intersections. Many hot days were spent in that grove.

We liked to play softball. There was a ball diamond in town, but with cousins or neighbors close by, we could make our own ball diamond in the pasture. Bases were made of hardened "cowpies". Sometimes the ball was homemade. Mostly, though, we usually had a ball and bat that were real.

Coaster wagons being pushed by a sibling made the Humboldt County Fair races seem like they were in slow motion! When we were both in the wagon and started a downhill coasting, it was the duty of the driver to maneuver the wagon on its course so as not to turn too short and upset both of us. That could happen if there was a definite stopping point like a wall or dredge ditch.

What fun to swing a big stick, a small branch with the leaves off made a makeshift shot put. Trouble with that was the aim. We had to be careful just when to let go of the stick. One day, I had the misfortune of letting go of my stick too quickly, and it went through the living room window. I think that was the end our shotput contests.

Winter held fun that isn't so much different from today. There were no snowmobiles then, but we had our sleds. The word "flyer" was printed in big red letters on the top of the sled and fly we did. Down the massive snow drifts, coasting as far as possible. We made our slopes with shovels and simply tramped down the snow. Snowbanks came to the roofs of our hog house and it was a thrill to go to the top of the roof and have a long, slippery slope to travel to reach the stopping point.

Then of course, there was the building of snow caves. A shovel and a lot of hard work made a cave house that could be entered if we crawled on hands and knees. Some caves could even have more than one room.

Somehow, it seems as though there were more blizzards back in those days. At least they lasted longer. We must not forget the "Fox and Geese" game, which was a must for outdoor winter fun. We became most creative when it came to the trails that led from the original wheel shape.

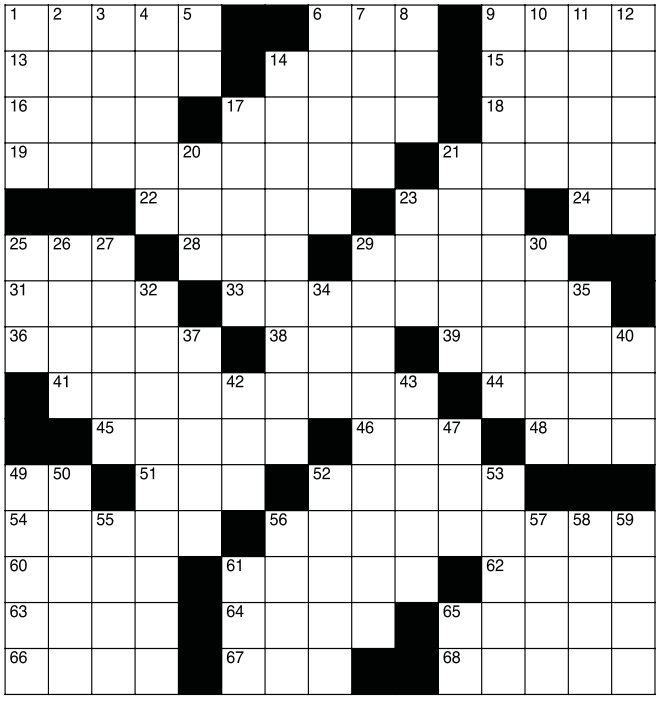
My dad always raised cattle. There was a large stock tank for the cattle to drink from with fresh water piped into it constantly. The tank had a partial wooden roof with large doors that could fold back for the cattle to put their heads in to get a drink. The roof was there mainly to keep the water cooler in the summer, preventing the hot sun from hitting the water entirely.

My dad told us there were fish in the tank. He was joking, of course, but we didn't know that. I remember he thought it was funny when he saw us holding a stick with twine hanging into the tank to try to catch a fish. I think our

hook was a paper clip, and certainly no bait.

Mom and Dad joined in our homemade fun by playing cards with us, as well as games that took place directly after we ate our evening meal. Maybe it was a ploy to postpone washing the dishes which was our job! At any rate, the five of us played word games and I remember especially the game where one would name a state in the U.S and the next in line needed to name its capital. I can still remember the names of the state's capitals as a result of the suppers so many years ago.

The games of today are instructional and surely have their place. However, I wonder if imaginations aren't compromised sometimes, when the games are laid out before a player, with the rules printed and followed. We made our own rules and had fun doing it. Probably not palatable by today's standards, but it worked for us.



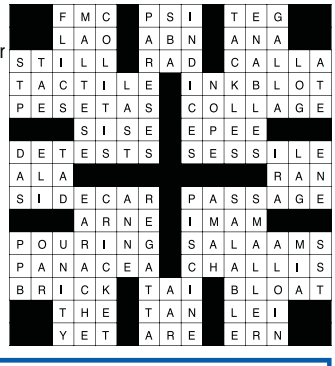
CLUES ACROSS

1. Lakes
6. Electromotive force
9. Invests in little enterprises
13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach
14. Small sailboat
15. Actor Idris
16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
17. System that detects objects under water
18. Harsh, grating noise
19. Steward
21. A fencing sword
22. Infections
23. Actress Ryan
24. Sodium
25. Swedish castle
28. A lump of slime
29. African antelope
31. Insurance providers
33. Choosy
36. Ringworm
38. Unpolished
39. Drenches
41. Pant style
44. Son of Noah
45. Spiritual being
46. Upton Sinclair novel
48. Journalist Tarbell
49. Popular sports highlight show
51. Born of
52. Rich tapestry
54. S. China seaport
56. State of being unclothed
60. Surrounded by
61. Residue
62. Away from wind
63. Dried-up
64. Visionary
65. A very large body of water
66. Garden tools
67. Screen type
68. Ancient Scandinavian poet

CLUES DOWN

1. Millisecond
2. Spanish city
3. A sudden very loud sound
4. "The Indiana Jones of beer"
5. Tin
6. Sea eagles
7. Volcanic crater
8. Type of coat
9. Women's apartments in Ottoman palace
10. Divulge a secret
11. Norwegian playwright
12. "It's a Wonderful Life" director
14. Poisonous perennial plant
17. 18-yr astronomical period
20. Clothes
21. Places to sit
23. Family of regulator genes
25. NY ballplayer
26. Impressive in size or scope
27. Jacques ___, French biologist
29. One from the Big Apple
30. Genus of woolly lemurs
32. Songs to one's beloved
34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand
35. Supplemented with difficulty
37. Farewell
40. Investment account (abbr.)
42. One from Utah
43. Begets
47. A male child
49. Break apart
50. Brief appearance
52. Partner to "oohed"
53. A light informal meal
55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface
56. One billionth of a second
57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
58. Close tightly
59. Mail out
61. Language
65. Computer characteristic

DECEMBER ANSWERS



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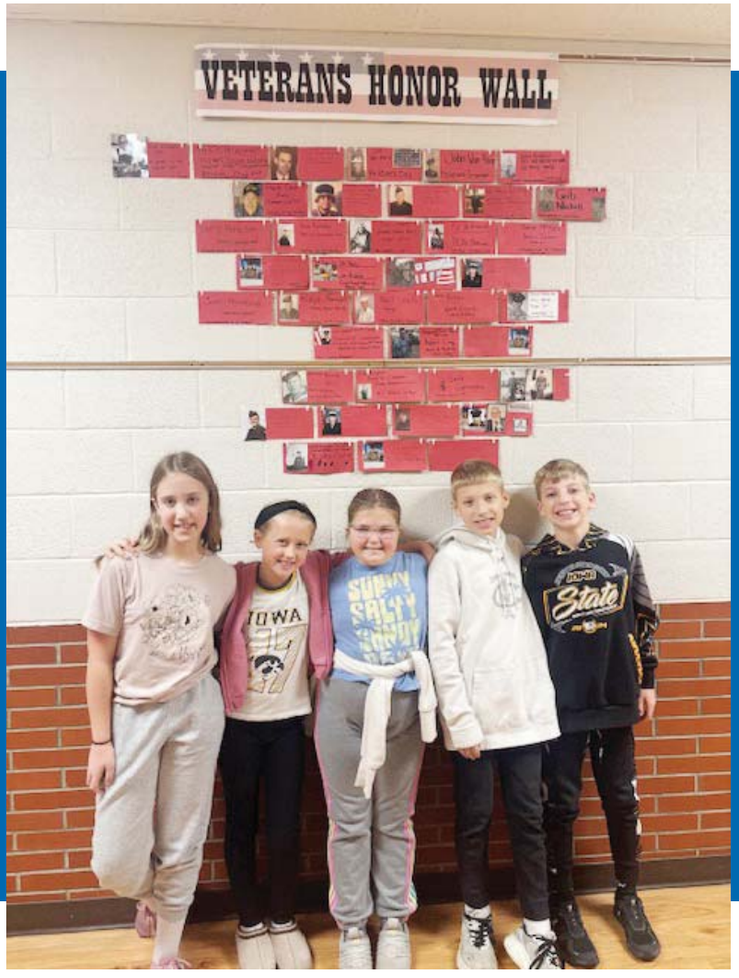

The Fourth Grade Student Leadership Team (left to right: Aria Larson, Lydia Lemmenes, Hattie Spellmeyer, Ty Long and Corbin Day) from Taft School is standing in front of "The Veterans Wall", which is proudly displayed in the Taft main hallway. Students from Taft are encouraged to fill out a "brick" with information about family members that have served or are currently serving our country in the military. What a great way to honor those who have served for their heroic and selfless commitment to our country!

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