

THE DUBUQUE AREA LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE, DECEMBER 2025

FREE



JULIEN'S JOURNAL

**HOW DUBUQUE CELEBRATES
THE HOLIDAYS**

**THE HISTORY OF
WASHINGTON PARK'S
CHRISTMAS NATIVITY**

**THE VAULT: A FOODIE AND
COCKTAIL ENTHUSIAST'S
DREAM**



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★★★★★ (5 out of 5 star review)



Shawn Brandenburg, DO



Kyle Korth, MD

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JULIEN'S JOURNAL

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Photo of the Month



This photo of the Ballroom at the Dubuque County Fairgrounds was submitted by Gary Fagan of Fagan Photography. Visit Garyfaganphoto.smugmug.com or email faganphoto@aol.com. Comments and photos for possible use in a future issue can be sent to Robin@JuliensJournal.com.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back hundreds of years to a monk named St. Nicholas. It is believed that Nicholas was born around A.D. 280 in Patara, near Myra in modern-day Turkey. Even though he was born in Turkey, and he died in Turkey, he was Greek. Among many other things, St. Nicholas is the patron saint of children, sailors, merchants and brewers. I find this group to be a unique combination, but that's why history can be so much fun. The tradition of Christmas presents came from St. Nicholas' habit of secretly giving gifts to people. During his life, St. Nicholas worked numerous miracles, including the rescuing of three maidens from being forced into prostitution, by their own father no less, and saving three men wrongfully condemned to death. Merry Christmas and enjoy the Holidays.

Inside this issue

Dubuque loves its holidays, and none more than Christmas. The city is filled with more happenings than Santa has presents, providing traditional events as well as special programs to mark the season. Learn about them on page 14.

If you've driven or walked past Dubuque's Washington Park in the days leading up to Christmas, you've probably noticed the life-sized nativity scene set up along Locust Street. Learn its history dating back to 1941 on page 17.

With the announcement of the top 10 Envision 2030 ideas to strengthen the region, the people we call neighbors are once again set to make amazing things happen. Learn about big ideas for Dubuque's future on page 20.

The spirit of connection makes the holidays a perfect time for a different kind of sharing—talking about the values and intentions behind your family's finances. Read more on page 23.

The Vault is a unique restaurant offers diverse dishes, especially for those who consider themselves “foodies” or “cocktail enthusiasts.” Read our review on page 27.

If you're looking to cut down on alcohol during the Holidays or if you're the designated driver, non-alcoholic beer is a great choice. Read our review of The Wave non-alcoholic beer on page 29.

TeamWine reviews a very nice white wine and a red wine that are suitable for the Holidays, neither of which will break the bank on page 30.



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Upcoming Events Should be Emailed to Juli@JuliensJournal.com.

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November Events



Reflections in the Park

Through January 1st, 5-10 PM @ Louis Murphy Park

Hillcrest Family Services' annual lights festival. The driveway to the park is covered with over 80 light shapes Christmas lights. You stop at a little entrance booth to pay the \$12 fee per vehicle (\$10 if booked in advance from Fidelity Bank and Trust locations). The volunteers hand you a 'program' booklet and candy canes for each passenger.

You turn your radio station onto a certain channel that plays Christmas music and then you turn your headlights off while you drive through the park. An all round sensory experience! Visit Hillcrest-FS.org.

Events are subject to change. Please visit listing sites for the most up-to-date information. Submissions may also be edited and are printed at the discretion of the publisher.

Early Explorers: U is for Upside-Down Jellyfish

Saturday and Tuesday, December 2 & 6
10-11 AM @ National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

Programs include a variety of hands-on activities, including a craft and a game. Ages 2-5 with a parent/caregiver. Visit RiverMuseum.org.



Tree Ceremony Lighting

Wednesday, December 3

6-7:30 PM @ Hotel Julien Dubuque Lobby

Attend the lobby Christmas tree unveiling. Enjoy Christmas cookies, hot chocolate, music, a visit from Santa Claus, and a live tree-lighting ceremony during this popular family event. Visit HotelJulienDubuque.com.

Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Friday through Sunday, December 5-7
Friday & Saturday, 7:30 PM; Sunday, 2 PM @ The Grand Opera House

Mister Grinch takes center stage in this stage adaptation. Visit TheGrandOperaHouse.com.

Live Music & Events Featuring Various Artists

December 5-26 @ O So Good Winery, 2093 20th Ave., SE (Dyersville, IA)

Come for live music, food, and events throughout the month. Gather with friends and have a fun evening with a favorite glass of wine or try something new. Check out the website for all upcoming events. Visit OSoGoodWinery.com.

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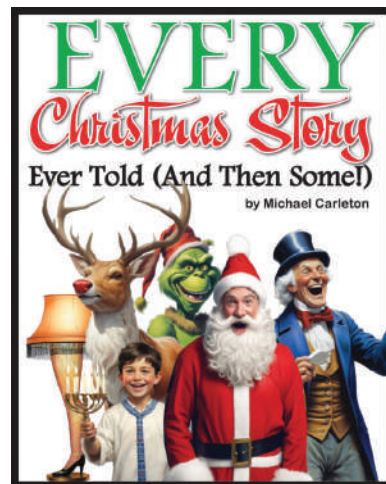
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First Fridays

Friday, December 5

@ Various Locations in Dubuque

First Fridays is a free downtown monthly community arts event with open galleries, artists' studios, and live entertainment. Visit FirstFridaysDubuque.org.



Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some!)

Thursday through Sunday, December 5 through 21 @ Bell Tower Theater

Tired of performing Charles Dickens' beloved holiday classic year after year, three actors decide instead to perform every Christmas story ever told. This madcap romp through the holiday season will have you in stitches. See website for show dates/times. Visit BellTowerTheater.net.

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 6

9-11 AM @ Hotel Julien Grande Ballroom

Bring the little ones to meet the man in red and enjoy a breakfast buffet. Watch their faces light up as they share their Christmas wishes with Santa Claus himself. Children eat free with a donation of a \$15 unwrapped toy donation for Toys For Tots. Visit HotelJulienDubuque.com.

Scuba Santa

Saturday and Sunday, December 6-7

12-1 PM @ National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

Santa is making his annual stop at the River Museum and will be diving in the Gulf of Mexico exhibit. Grab your family and friends for photos. Visit RiverMuseum.org.



DSO: Holiday Concert

Saturday and Sunday, December 6-7

Saturday, 7:30 PM; Sunday, 2 PM @ Five Flags Theater

The Dubuque Symphony Orchestra (DSO) is joined by the Dubuque Chorale, members of the Heartland Ballet, and vocal soloists Chrystina Morteo-Bowman and Leslie Shalabi in an enchanting collection of holiday favorites. Visit DubuqueSymphony.org.

Holiday Luminary & Christmas Lights

Saturday, December 6

5:30-9 PM @ Knob Hill Neighborhood

The Knob Hill neighborhood will decorate their walks and homes with luminaries for Christmas. This is a drive or walk-through event; enter Knob Hill & Fremont Streets and follow the signs. Parking is available at LDS Church, 685 Fremont, for those wanting to walk. For more information, email Angie@TravelHeadquarters.Travel.

Waffles with Santa

Sunday, December 7

7:30 AM @ Camp Albrecht Acres, 14837 Sherrill Rd. (Sherrill, IA)

Camp Albrecht Acres will host its popular Waffles with Santa breakfast again this year. The breakfast will feature all-you-can-eat waffles, meat, juice, milk, and coffee. And, of course, Santa will make an appearance to take photos with the children and families. For more information, email Dustin.Kass@gmail.com.





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DUBUQUE

12 Days of Christmas

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<p>MONDAY</p> <p>CYBER MONDAY</p> <p>PURCHASE A \$100 GIFT CARD & GET \$25 FREE</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">1</p>	<p>TUESDAY</p> <p>IT'S A TEAL DECEMBER</p> <p>POTOSA SPA ALL MONTH LONG</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">2</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY</p> <p>HOTEL LOBBY 6 PM - 7:30 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">3</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>BREAKFAST WITH SANTA</p> <p>GRANDE BALLROOM 9 AM-11 AM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">6</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p> <p>GRINCH DINNER & MOVIE NIGHT</p> <p>4 PM-6:30 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">14</p>	<p>MONDAY</p> <p>CAROLINE'S ANGEL TREE</p> <p>12/1/25-12/15/25</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">15</p>	<p>TUESDAY</p> <p>A VERY MERRY TRIVIA NIGHT</p> <p>RIVERBOAT LOUNGE 7 PM-8:30 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">16</p>	<p>THURSDAY</p> <p>HOLIDAY BLOOD DRIVE</p> <p>HARBOR GALLERY 12 PM - 4:30 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">18</p>
<p>FRIDAY</p> <p>COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE</p> <p>RIVERBOAT LOUNGE 5 PM-8 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">19</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER</p> <p>CAROLINE'S RESTAURANT 5 PM - 8 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">24</p>	<p>THURSDAY</p> <p>CHRISTMAS DAY BRUNCH</p> <p>CAROLINE'S RESTAURANT 9 AM - 12 PM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">25</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>NEW YEAR'S EVE MASQUERADE BALL</p> <p>GRANDE BALLROOM 8:30 PM-12:30 AM</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">31</p>

For details and reservations visit: hoteljuliendubuque.com/upcoming-event-calendar

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



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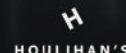
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REFLECTIONS
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Homeschool Days

Thursday, December 11 @ National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium
Homeschool Days are held the second Thursday through February. Visit River-Museum.org.

Birding in Panama

Thursday, December 11
7-8 PM @ EB Lyons Interpretive Center
Mary Leigh will share information and photos from her birding trips to Panama over the past three years. She has been to the Canopy Family locations (Tower, Lodge, and Camp), all of which offer great birding opportunities that include guides, meals, and transportation. Visit Audubon-Dubuque.org.

**Middle School Art Adventures**

Saturday, December 13
10 AM-12 PM
Instructor: Jess Ochoa. Visit BluffStrokes.org.

High School Art Workshops

Saturday, December 13, 10 AM-12 PM
Instructor: Zoë Couvillion. Visit BluffStrokes.org.

Meet the Grinch

Saturday, December 13
10 AM-12 PM @ Home+FloorShow
Snap a photo with the Grinch, enjoy festive treats, and sip on seasonal beverages. It's the perfect way to kick off the holidays with a little fun (and maybe a little mischief). For more information, email EvaSchmid@Lotus-Marketing.net.

Grades 3-5 Art Adventures

Saturday, December 13
1-2:30 PM @ Bluff Strokes Art Center
Instructor: Brie Nadermann. Visit BluffStrokes.org.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



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Texas Tenors "Deep in the Heart of Christmas"

Saturday, December 13 @ 7:30 PM

University of Dubuque, Heritage Center

The Dubuque Arts Council presents The Texas Tenors, the most successful music group and third highest selling artist in the history of America's Got Talent. Since appearing on the series in 2009, These classically trained, versatile tenors have performed over 1,700 concerts around the world.

Visit Facebook.com/DubuqueArtsCouncil, Dbq.Edu/Heritagecenter or call 563.585.7469 to purchase tickets.



The Nutcracker

Friday and Saturday, December 13, 19 & 20, 7:30 PM

**Sunday, December 14 & 21, 2 PM @
The Grand Opera House**

The Dubuque City Youth Ballet presents this annual Dubuque Christmas tradition. Whirling snowflakes and waltzing flowers frame this holiday classic. Clara and her enchanted Nutcracker battle the dreadful Mouse King in a nightmare that becomes a beautiful dream. Visit TheGrandOperaHouse.com.

Merry & Bright: Dinner & A Movie Night

Sunday, December 14

4-6:30 PM @ Hotel Julien Dubuque

Come see Jim Carrey's *The Grinch*! Experience a night where cinema meets cuisine, enjoying a specially crafted multi-course dinner inspired by the iconic moments and mischievous magic of the movie. Plus, a special appearance by the Grinch himself.

Visit HotelJulienDubuque.com.



All events are subject to change. Visit the online calendar at CarnegieStout.org/Events for the most up-to-date information.

StoryWalk®

An outdoor reading experience that displays pages of a book along a path. Location: The 22nd Street Bee Branch Creek.

Grab & Go Activity Bags

Stop in every month for a fun, crafty activity for all ages while supplies last.

Scavenger Hunt: Snowmen

December 1-31

There are lots of famous snowmen from books – can you find them all? All ages.

Toddler Time

Mondays, through December 8 @ 9:30 AM & 10:30 AM

Programs feature short stories, songs, and movement activities. Ages 18-35 mos. Adult participation required.

Baby Rhyme Time

Tuesdays, through December 9 @ 10:30 AM

Hear stories, rhymes, and songs during this interactive program. Ages birth-18 mos. Adult participation required.

Virtual Author Talks

Tuesday December 2 @ 1 PM

“Scheming Wives and High-stakes Hilarity” with author Sue Hincenbergs. Registration required.

Preschool Storytime

Wednesdays, through December 10 @ 10:30 AM

Stories, sing-alongs, and movement activities. Ages 3-6. Adult participation required.

Beginning Chapters Book Club

Wednesday, December 3 @ 4 PM

Do you like Magic Tree House, Junie B. Jones, and Nate the Great books? If so, this book club is for you. Ages 7-9. Registration required.

Pokémon Club

Wednesday, December 3 @ 5:30 PM

Meet other Pokémon trainers. Ages 6-12. Registration required.

Santa's Workshop

Saturday, December 6 @ 1 PM

Make and wrap a few holiday gifts before

the big Christmas tree is lit at the library.

Virtual Author Talks

Tuesday December 9 @ 1 PM

“The Legacy of Julia Child’s Kitchen” with author and Smithsonian curator Paula J. Johnson. Registration required.

No-Sew Sock Penguins

Tuesday, December 9 @ 4 PM

Make a penguin with one fuzzy sock, some fluff, and a little imagination. Ages 10-18. Registration required.

Festive Fun Fingerprints

Wednesday, December 10 @ 4 PM

Use the book Festive Fun Fingerprints, filled with Christmas illustrations and five washable ink pads for printing, stamping, and decorating. Ages 7-11. Registration required.

Beyond the Book Club

Thursday, December 11 @ 4 PM

Read a new title each month and then meet up for a discussion and unique activity related to the book. Ages 9-12. Registration required.

Lollipops & Music

Saturday, December 13 @ 10 AM

This concert series is offered for preschool children and their families. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Reading with Rover

Saturday, December 13 @ 10:30 AM

Read or listen to a story with some furry friends. Do not bring a pet; kid-friendly dogs are provided. Ages 6-9.

Sun SHINE Squad

Tuesday, December 16 @ 4 PM

Work on volunteer projects while providing feedback on making the library a welcoming place for teens. Ages 12-18. Registration required.

American Girl Time Travelers

Wednesday, December 17 @ 4 PM

This monthly event brings history to life through the stories of the American Girl historical characters. Ages 7-12. Registration required.

LEGO® Challenge

Saturday, December 20 @ 10 AM

Build, create, and have fun. The library provides the LEGOs®. Donations welcome. Ages 5-12.

Family Book Bingo

Saturday, December 20 @ 2 PM

Ages 4-12.

Book Vase Craft

Monday, December 22 @ 2 PM

Transform recycled pages into charming book vases. Ages 10-18. Registration required.

Winter Gnomes

Tuesday, December 23 @ 10:30 AM

Learn about the Swedish Tomte and make gnomes. Ages 10-17. Registration required.

Llama Palette Party

Friday, December 26 @ 1-2:30 PM

Follow a step-by-step video tutorial to create a fun, festive llama on canvas. Ages 10-18. Registration required.





Merry Christmas

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A Very Merry Trivia Night

Tuesday, December 16 @ Hotel Julien Dubuque

Come for a night of festive fun, themed trivia rounds, and cheerful competition. Enjoy holiday cocktails, prizes for top teams and the best ugly sweaters. Check the website for time. Visit HotelJulienDubuque.com.

She Unites

Wednesday, December 17

6:30–7:30 PM @ The Innovation Lab, 210 Jones St.

Come together for an evening of socialization and education. She Unites features rotating speakers talking about anything and everything pertaining to women in a chill environment. Visit SheUnitesIowa.com/events.

Riders in the Sky – Christmas the Cowboy Way

Saturday, December 20

7:30 PM @ Five Flags Theatre

Hear the Christmas Yodel resounding. It's a big western ho-ho-ho from those wacky, four-part harmonizing cowboys that created a holiday musical fantasy for all ages. Visit FiveFlagsCenter.com.

On Fire: The Jerry Lee Lewis Story

Wednesday, December 31

7 PM @ Ohnward Fine Arts Center (Maquoketa, IA)

On Fire: The Jerry Lee Lewis story features David Brooks who will reprise his iconic performance as Jerry Lee Lewis from "The Million Dollar Quartet." Brooks is Branson's favorite piano man performer who captivates audiences with his brash style and bold presence on stage. Visit Ohnward-FineArtsCenter.com.



Sinatra & Friends: The Classic Crooners

Wednesday, December 31

8 PM @ The Grand Opera House

Featuring the Hunter Fuerste's American Vintage Orchestra and the music of Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Nat King Cole, Bobby Darin, and Old Blue Eyes himself. Bryan Anthony keeps the legacy of the Great Gentlemen of Song alive and well in his sweetly nostalgic performances. Visit TheGrandOperaHouse.com.

New Year's Eve Masquerade Ball

Wednesday, December 31

8:30 PM-12:30 AM @ Hotel Julien Dubuque

Ring in 2026 in style at the glamorous Masquerade Ball. Tickets include appetizers, live DJ entertainment by DJ Obie, champagne toast, and photo opportunities. Visit HotelJulienDubuque.com.

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FEATURE

How Dubuque Celebrates the Holidays



Contributed photos

by Beth Triplett

Dubuque loves its holidays, and none more than Christmas. The city is filled with more happenings than Santa has presents, providing traditional events as well as special programs to mark the season.

Here are but a few of the ways to celebrate:



The Nutcracker, December 13-14 and December 19-21, Grand Opera House.

LIVE PERFORMANCES

From ballet to country, Madrigal to Messiah, there is a live show to put everyone in the holiday spirit.

Christmas at Heritage Center “Come, Messiah”, December 5, 7:30 PM, John and Alice Butler Hall. Celebrate the spiritual meaning of the season, featuring the University of Dubuque’s Concert Band, Concert Choir, Chamber Singers, Treble Choir, Handbell Ensemble, String Ensemble, and university organist. Complimentary holiday refreshments follow.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas, December 5-7, Grand Opera House. A musical based on the iconic *Dr. Seuss’ How The Grinch Stole Christmas!* The timeless story adds new songs while the Grinch despises the annual Christmas festivities of Who-ville.

Every Christmas Story Ever Told (and Then Some!), December 5 - 21, Bell Tower Theater. Tired of performing Charles Dickens’ beloved holiday classic year after year, three actors decide instead to perform every Christmas story ever told—plus Christmas traditions from around the world.

Dubuque Symphony Orchestra: Holiday Family Concert, December 6, 1:00 PM, Five Flags Theater. The special one-hour family program of kid-friendly holiday music features the Dubuque Chorale Children’s Choir, members of the Heartland Ballet and other guests. Includes photos with Santa post-concert.

Dubuque Symphony Orchestra: Holiday Concert, December 6, 7:30 PM and December 7, 2:00 PM, Five Flags Theater. The DSO is joined by the Dubuque Chorale, members of the Heartland Ballet,

and vocal soloists in a collection of holiday favorites. Also featuring Viktoriia Slyvka on a traditional Ukrainian harp. Saturday includes complementary entry to an Encore Reception.

Texas Tenors, December 13, 7:30 PM, University of Dubuque Heritage Center. “Deep In The Heart of Christmas” holiday show is presented by the most successful music group and third highest selling artist in the history of America’s Got Talent.

The Nutcracker, December 13-14 and December 19-21, Grand Opera House. Clara and her enchanted Nutcracker battle the dreadful Mouse King in a nightmare that becomes a beautiful dream. Performed annually for over 25 years by the Dubuque City Youth Ballet, it is an annual Christmas tradition.

Madrigal Dinners, December 13 & 14, Senior High School. Return to the Renaissance era as you enjoy both feast and song.

World Ballet Company: Nutcracker, December 14, 6:00 PM, Five Flags Center. Join Marie on Christmas Eve as her beloved Nutcracker springs to life. The show features 40 world-class dancers, over 150 sparkling hand-sewn costumes, and breathtaking hand-crafted sets.

Blue Violin Candlelight Christmas Extravaganza, December 18, 7:00 PM, John and Alice Butler Hall. This one-of-a-kind holiday concert experience blends the beauty of traditional carols with rock anthems and favorites all brought to life in glowing candlelight with a dazzling stage set and immersive light show.

Riders in the Sky: Christmas the Cowboy Way, December 20, 7:30 PM, Five Flags Center. Join those wacky, four-part harmonizing cowboys in a holiday musical fantasy featuring their unique cowboy humor sprinkled with a dash of holiday spice, including original songs and sing alongs.

SEE THE LIGHTS

Nothing says Christmas like holiday lights and there are several ways to see them in

the city.

Reflections in the Park, November 27 – January 1, Louis Murphy Park. Hillcrest Family Services' 31st annual lights festival features many new displays and Santa on Mondays.

Trolley Tours of Christmas Lights, November 28 – January 5, 5:00–6:30 PM and 7:00–8:30 PM. Trolley Tours start at Murphy Park and proceed into Shady Oaks, Plymouth Court, and two or three other residential displays around town.

Hotel Julien Tree Lighting, December 3, 6:00 PM, Hotel Julien Lobby.

Carnegie Stout Library Tree Lighting, December 6, Library Rotunda.

FOR THE KIDS

No one enjoys the holidays more than children, and there are many events especially for them.

Jingle Jammies: A Holiday PJ Play Party, Every Friday in December, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM, Goose & Giggles Play Café. Open play in a Winter Wonderland Play Village, plus hot cocoa and cookie bar, story time, crafts, and more.

Santa's Workshop, December 6, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM, Carnegie-Stout Public Library. A chance to make and wrap a few holiday gifts before the big Christmas tree is lit at the library.

Holiday Movie: A Christmas Story, December 12–18, Phoenix Theaters. See the Christmas classic and watch Ralphie Parker's antics on the big screen.

Grinch Stole Christmas Playtime, December 13, 9:00 AM, Goose & Giggles Play Café. Meet the Grinch and enjoy story time, crafts, play and treats.

Toys for Tots Kids' Christmas Party, December 14, 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM, Five Flags Center. Music, dancing, inflatable rides, treats, photos with Santa, plus gifts and books for kids.

SANTA SIGHTINGS

If you want to see the Big Man himself, there are several opportunities in the area:

Breakfast with Santa, December 6, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM, Hotel Julien

Cookies with Santa, December 6, 9:00 AM, Goose & Giggles

Scuba Santa, December 6 and 7, 12:00 PM–1:00 PM, Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium

Breakfast with Santa, December 21, Dubuque County Fairgrounds

SHOPPING

In addition to the ongoing retail outlets in the area, several holiday-themed events cater to the season.

Merry Millwork Market, December 5, 4:00–8:00 PM and December 6, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM, Millwork District. A unique holiday shopping experience featuring the best of local crafts and beverages. Enjoy horse-drawn carriage rides and support the Millwork nonprofits.

St. John's Episcopal Cookie Walk, Decem-

ber 13, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM, St. John's Parish House. Delicious cookies and baklava by the pound, Christmas décor, and a soup lunch.

Night of the Luminaria & Living Windows, December 13, 4:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Main Street, Galena, IL. More than 5,000 candlelit luminaries line the streets, steps, and sidewalks while store windows come alive with holiday-inspired animation.

GIVING

If the holiday spirit moves you to give to others, there are several options during this season.

Toys for Tots

Stuff the Truck, December 6, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Theisen's. The annual drive to help fill a truck with donations for Toys for Tots. Donation bins are also located throughout the community.

Teddy Bear Toss, December 6, 7:05 PM, Dubuque Fighting Saints Game, ImOn Arena. Hundreds of teddy bears are thrown onto the ice to benefit Toys for Tots.

Holiday Soup Luncheon & Auction, December 12, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM, Prescott Elementary School. The school's annual fundraiser featuring students as both wait staff and performers, plus a silent auction.

Explore some of the opportunities above and create new memories of this holiday season. ♦

Comments on this article can be sent to comments@julienjournal.com.

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The History of Washington Park's Christmas Nativity by Connie Cherba

If you've driven or walked past Dubuque's Washington Park in the days leading up to Christmas, you've probably noticed the life-sized nativity scene set up along Locust Street between 6th and 7th Streets. The nativity has been a treasured Dubuque Christmas tradition since 1941, according to Auleen Eberhardt who was involved with the nativity in its very beginning.

The first "Christmas Crib" was displayed in a store front window of the lower Main St. Frommelt Awning Co. During WWII, the nativity display was erected near a massive Christmas tree that served as a memorial to Dubuque servicemen and women. Edward Graham, then president of Dubuque's Downtown Association, encouraged the Catholic Mothers Study Clubs to purchase life-sized statues to enhance the nativity display.

In 1977, the twenty-two-year-old Dubuque Community Christmas Crib statues were in

bad shape and were replaced with "brand-spanking new plastic figures." A successful fund drive by the Dubuque Community

Christmas Crib Committee and the Catholic Mothers Study Clubs raised more than \$1,500 for the purchase of new nativity



Knights in front of Nativity 2023.

Photo contributed by Jim Sigwarth

figures.

Back in 1988 there were questions about the constitutionality of Dubuque's nativity holiday tradition. Folks were worried that a Supreme Court ruling on the separation of church and state might call for evicting the nativity from Washington Park. Eberhardt said, "That park has always been a haven for protests and rallies. Therefore, this is my rally for the Christ child. I believe this park is open to all...and I can't see why there should be any reason to complain about our crib there." A 1989 Supreme Court decision allowed local city legal experts to determine that the nativity was allowed on public property because

it was not government sponsored and because other religious traditions could be allowed to erect similar displays in the park.

Ron Kann, a Dubuque firefighter, was responsible for setting up the nativity in Washington Park for some twenty-five years until he retired. In 1988, the Dubuque chapter of the Pioneers of the Telephone Company, a service organization of telephone company retirees and present and former employees, agreed to accept the job of erecting the crèche at Washington Park. They cleaned and restained the figures and rebuilt sections of the wooden crèche structure.



Knights of Columbus last year in Washington Park Nativity Set

Fast forward to 2008 and the kings and shepherds along with Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus were falling apart, and the winter weather had taken its toll on the angels, shepherds, and sheep too. The Catholic Mothers Study Clubs and the Dubuque Knights of Columbus Council 510 banded together and raised enough money to buy replicas of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, a hovering angel, a kneeling shepherd, and some manger animals. Maurna Stover, chairwoman of the nonprofit Dubuque Community Christmas Crib Committee said, "This is a sharing of public faith as a Christian community. Washington Square is the most appropriate location for the scene because it is the site of Dubuque's first fledgling Christian church."

For many years, the Dubuque Community Christmas Crib Committee hosted a formal nativity dedication ceremony in Washington Park in mid-December. Ecumenical religious services, soloists including Dubuque's Bob Casper and Kerin Moldenhauer, choirs, singing groups, guitar trios, and a flash-light march through the park added to the festivities.

Today, Council No. 510 of the Dubuque Knights of Columbus sets up, takes down, and then stores the Washington Park nativity display. Council No. 510 is the first Knights of Columbus Council in the State



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Up. (Photo contributed by Connie Cherba).

of Iowa and one of the first councils west of the Mississippi River. Founded in 1900 as a Catholic Fraternal Organization, Council No. 510 celebrated its 125th anniversary on April 29, 2025.

Craig Forbes, a former Grand Knight and current Trustee of Council No. 510, has been involved with the nativity display since the beginning of the partnership with the Catholic Mothers Study Clubs almost twenty years ago and through the transition when the Knights took over full responsibility for the display. Craig still coordinates the set up, take down, and storage of the nativity each year.

Jim Sigwarth became the Grand Knight of Council No. 510 in 2021, but he's been involved with the nativity in the park for the past ten years. "We usually have a crew of 8-15, made up of Knights and family members to help with the set up and take down of the nativity," he said. "We traditionally schedule the set-up early on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and we schedule taking it down on the Saturday of the weekend when the Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated in the churches."

Set up can be difficult and uncomfortable, especially when the winter temperatures drop well below freezing. Jim said while it takes two to three hours to set up the nativity, it takes about half that time to take it down.

"The biggest challenge is just making sure we have enough people there to help," he said. Storage of the life-sized figures and large wooden stable has been another challenge. "When the Knights were approached in 2008 to partner with this project, Jim Theisen offered to store the wooden nativity stable pieces in his store's warehouse and we kept the figures in our hall," Jim said. "After we sold the hall recently, all components of the display are being stored in the Theisen Warehouse."

Dubuque is fortunate that organizations throughout the years have banded together to make sure the nativity display continues to grace Washington Park. Jim said, "The Knights have always promoted family values and Catholic traditions. We think that helping ensure that the nativity display is erected yearly in our city square is a great way to keep Christ in Christmas!" ♦

Comments on this article can be sent to comments@juliensjournal.com.

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10 Big Ideas for Dubuque's Future



The Envision 2030 Steering Committee

The final Envision 2030 ideas reflect a community-wide desire for new amenities, improved social services, and resources that enable everyone to thrive.

When Dubuque residents gather and dream big, amazing things happen. They bring new resources to the community, build new amenities, and improve the quality of life for their neighbors.

With the announcement of the top 10 Envision 2030 ideas to strengthen the region, the people we call neighbors are once again set to make amazing things happen.

During The Big Reveal event at the Dubuque Museum of Art on October 16, Envision

2030 facilitators – the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque and Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce – literally uncovered the top 10 ideas, announcing them to a crowd of 300 eager people.

“We all love this place so much that we have dared to dream up the biggest, most impactful ideas to make it even better than it is today,” Nancy Van Milligen, the Community Foundation’s president and CEO, told the crowd.

“This process has ignited the passion of our fellow community members and empowered them to not just imagine the future of our region but to shape it.”

The top 10 ideas, in no particular order, are:

1. *Heart of Play: All-Ages Sports Hub*
2. *Industry to Innovation: Dubuque South Port Revitalization*
3. *Grow, Cultivate, Eat: Access to Healthy Food*
4. *Great Minds: Collaborative Brain Health Services*
5. *Book and Build: Expanded Library Services*
6. *Captivating Shorelines: Mississippi Riverfront Reimagined*
7. *Ageless Support: Center for Senior Well-Being*

Envision 2030 Top 10 Ideas

Heart of Play: All-Ages Sports Hub. Build a modern, indoor/outdoor sports complex where athletes of all ages come together to compete, learn, and develop, that also serves as a regional gathering place for tournaments and other events.

Industry to Innovation: Dubuque South Port Revitalization. Transform Dubuque's historical center of timber industry into a thriving, vibrant, connected neighborhood with housing, retail, entertainment, and outdoor recreation attractions.

Grow, Cultivate, Eat: Access to Healthy Food. Create an accessible, sustainable, and resilient local food ecosystem by empowering community members to engage in urban farming, foster ecological health, and connect with the processes that promote well-being.

Great Minds: Collaborative Brain Health Services. Build on the region's brain health progress to bridge gaps in services, with the goals of reaching individuals and families of all ages and providing support

grounded in harm reduction.

Book and Build: Expanded Library Services. Deepen connections between local libraries and communities by establishing neighborhood branches and mobile units, extending operating hours, and enhancing access to everyday necessities, from technology to tools.

Captivating Shorelines: Mississippi Riverfront Reimagined. Enhance river access with new recreational and educational amenities to drive economic activity, foster health and wellness, and build a stronger connection between our community and America's River.

Ageless Support: Center for Senior Well-Being. Create a regional hub to promote the health, independence and wellness of older adults that offers opportunities for socialization, health and fitness offerings, transportation assistance, and meal services.

Water-Powered Fun: Community Aquatic Center. Develop a new, centrally located complex for the region that offers accessible recreational and fitness features, including designated indoor and outdoor areas for lap swimming, water therapy, and children's activities.

Putting Down Roots: Community-Centered Housing. Increase housing options for all by focusing on creating more "missing middle" residences, inter-generational living options, and resident-owned mobile home parks.

Where Curiosity Sprouts: Children's Museum. Establish an interactive children's museum that serves as a vibrant hub for families to explore, learn and play together, with a focus on immersive STEAM programming, hands-on exhibits, and educational workshops. ♦


No idea is too small, too ambitious, or too outrageous!

8. *Water-Powered Fun: Community Aquatic Center*

9. *Putting Down Roots: Community-Centered Housing*

10. *Where Curiosity Sprouts: Children's Museum*

To announce the ideas, the Foundation commissioned pieces from local artists, each of whom was asked to interpret one of the top 10 ideas in their style. The art was displayed at The Big Reveal alongside covered posters that, when uncovered, prominently displayed the big idea along with an artist's statement.

The pieces ranged from vibrant paintings on canvas to sculptures to mixed media creations, while the artists included longtime fixtures of the local art scene to newcomers who just recently started creating. Guests had the opportunity to bid on the art, with proceeds going to the Envision 2030 fund.

When members of the Envision 2030 Steering Committee announced each idea, cheers erupted from the crowd. For many in attendance, the ideas represent important steps toward projects and initiatives that have long been on the community's wish list.

"As a father, I think a children's museum is going to be such a cool amenity for Dubuque,

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When the Community Foundation tackled a similar project 20 years ago with Envision 2010, a combination of civic engagement, nonprofit expertise and donor support helped make the previous top 10 ideas...

not just as an educational resource but also because places like that end up developing core memories for families," said steering committee member Brandon Lynch.

One of the key tenets of the Envision 2030 process was to ensure that voices representing the spectrum of Dubuque's demographics were included. In total, community members submitted more than 3,000 ideas.

"We wanted to make sure something for everyone is reflected in this top 10," said steering committee member Wendy Scardino.

While the past seven months have been filled with imagination and excitement, the next phase of the process is when the tough work begins. Community members and organizations will be responsible for owning the ideas and finding ways to implement them by 2030.

When the Community Foundation tackled a similar project 20 years ago with Envision 2010, a combination of civic engagement, nonprofit expertise and donor support helped make the previous top 10 ideas, including the Millwork District revitalization, Crescent Community Health Center and the riverwalk, reality. Each started as idea, and many became today's beloved assets.

With the Envision 2030 results now set and local leaders already forming plans to implement the ideas, Dubuque has an opportunity to build the future that residents imagine.

"This process highlights something I've found to be true since the Community Foundation opened its doors in 2003," Van Milligen said. "Amazing things happen when people are engaged in their community." ♦

**Community
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OF GREATER DUBUQUE

THE GIFT OF FINANCIAL PEACE: WHAT TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



by Keith Leverentz

Every year, my family hosts a White Elephant gift exchange. The rules are simple: everyone brings something funny or unexpected—maybe a Chia Pet or a Snuggie—and the best part is watching what happens when someone's favorite gift gets “stolen.” There's plenty of laughter, a little strategy, and always a reminder that what really matters is being together.

That same spirit of connection makes the holidays a perfect time for another kind of sharing—talking about the values and intentions behind your family's finances. Not the numbers themselves, but the meaning: what you hope your hard work provides, and how you'd like it to support the people you love for generations.

These conversations don't have to be heavy or formal. They can be as simple as asking, “What does financial security mean to you?” or “What do you want our family to remember about how we handled money?” Small questions like these often open the door to deeper understanding.

SHARE YOUR MONEY STORY

Every family has one. Maybe you learned to save early, or maybe you remember a time when money was tight. Sharing those experiences helps your children and grandchildren see money as a tool, not a mystery. It gives context to your choices and helps them un-

derstand the values behind them—security, generosity, or simply peace of mind.

CLARIFY YOUR WISHES

It's not always an easy topic, but peace of mind may be the greatest gift you can give your family. Talk about where important documents are kept, who should be contacted if something happens, and what matters most when it comes to your legacy. These conversations reduce confusion later and strengthen trust now.

THINK ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE

Many families find it helpful to work with a financial firm that brings together professionals from multiple disciplines—advisors, CPAs, attorneys, and other specialists who see income, tax, and estate planning as parts of one whole. When every element of your financial life works together, you gain more

than organization—you gain peace. A well-aligned plan not only protects what you've built, it helps everyone feel confident about the road ahead.

GIVE THE GIFT OF PEACE FOR THE NEW YEAR

As the season winds down and a new year begins, take a moment to note what you'd like to revisit when life slows down again in January. Whether it's updating documents, reviewing your tax plan, or meeting with a trusted financial advisor to bring it all together, you'll enter the new year with more confidence and peace—and that might be the best gift of all. ♦

Keith Leverentz, NSSA®, is the founder of The Life Group, guiding clients since 2003 with personalized financial planning, investment counsel, and retirement strategies. Learn more at TheLifeGroupllc.com.

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All events are subject to change. Visit the website for the most up-to-date information.

Silent Book Club

Sunday, December 7 @ 2-3:30 PM

Participants gather to share the same space while reading in silence, without the traditional book club's pressure of having to finish a book on time. RSVP.

Advent Dinner, Music, and Prayer

Monday, December 8 @ 6-9 PM (In-person and via Zoom)

Enjoy this annual evening of anticipating Christmas with food, music, and prayer. Registration required.

An Advent Evening for Women

Monday, December 15 @ 6-8:30 PM

Attend for a scrumptious meal, be inspired by the gift of song, and give a gift to other women. Registration required.

Lunch & Renew: Chair Yoga

Wednesday, December 17 @ 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Registration required.

Meditation & Music

Monday, December 18 @ 6:30-7:30 PM

Wear comfortable clothing. Feel free to bring a pillow or blanket. Registration required.

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No Limb-its Amputee Social & Support Gatherings

Monday, December 8 @ 4-5:30 PM

A monthly gathering where individuals living with limb loss can meet others with similar experiences and struggles.

Book Club: *I Want to Trust You, but I Don't*

Thursday, December 18 @ 5-6 PM

In a world where so many things feel alarming, this book will give you peace that isn't dependent on unpredictable people, circumstances, and experiences.

Community Acupuncture

Thursday, December 18 @ 5-6:30 PM

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NEWS

SOUTHWEST HEALTH BREAKS GROUND FOR CHILDCARE CENTER

Southwest Health held a groundbreaking for its childcare center on October 1, 2025; construction began on October 13. Once complete in 2026, the center will accommodate up to 140 children, offering care for both Southwest Health employees and members of the broader community.

Owned by Southwest Health and operated by New Horizon Academy—a Minnesota-based childcare provider—this facility will deliver early childhood education and care.



CRESCENT CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF EXPANDED CLINIC

Crescent Community Health Center (Crescent) celebrated the grand opening of its expanded dental clinic on Thursday, October 16, 2025. The event featured a “floss cutting,” guided tour of the new facility, opportunities to meet the team of board-certified specialists, and information about available services.

The expansion adds 35 dental chairs and a state-of-the-art facility designed to meet the needs of patients of all ages. With this investment, Crescent significantly increases its capacity to serve the Dubuque community and surrounding areas.

STONEHILL COMMUNITIES JOB FAIR

Stonehill community will host a job fair on Tuesday, December 9, from 3–6 PM at 3485 Windsor Ave., Dubuque. Stop in to learn about the many career (or 2nd career) opportunities at Stonehill including full-time, part-time, or flexible hours. Positions available may include nursing, dining, therapy, home care, housekeeping, and more.

NURSE PRACTITIONER JOINS MEDICAL ASSOCIATES

Medical Associates Clinic announced the arrival of **Ann Robison, NP**, to their acute care department.

Robison received her Advanced Practice Registered Nurse degree from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX, Master

of Science in Nursing from Oklahoma City University in Oklahoma City, OK, and Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Iowa. Most recently, she worked at Healthcare One as a clinical di-



rector/nurse practitioner in Yukon, OK, and previously as a nurse practitioner in El Reno, OK.

Robison provides a complete range of medical care for all ages and offers urgent care treatment for non-life-threatening emergencies and walk-in medical services.





Celebrating Together



This season, we celebrate the gifts of faith, hope, and love that bring us together. We are blessed to serve and to share in the lives of families in our community.

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THURSDAY-SUNDAY

DOWNTOWN EAST DUBUQUE

ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON JOINS SOUTHWEST HEALTH

Southwest Health announced that **Dr. Matti Asuma, MD, FAAOS**, orthopedic surgeon, has joined the Orthopedic Institute at Southwest Health in Platteville. He is a Board-Certified Orthopedic Surgeon and Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (FAAOS) and specializes in hip and knee replacement.



A native of the Midwest, Asuma completed his medical degree at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in Madison, WI, and his orthopedic surgery residency at the Orthopedic Surgery Residency from Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA. He also spent four years as a staff orthopedic surgeon in the U.S. Army, where he served as chief of orthopedic surgery at Irwin Army Community Hospital in Fort Riley, KS, and deployed with the 67th Forward Surgical Resuscitative Team.

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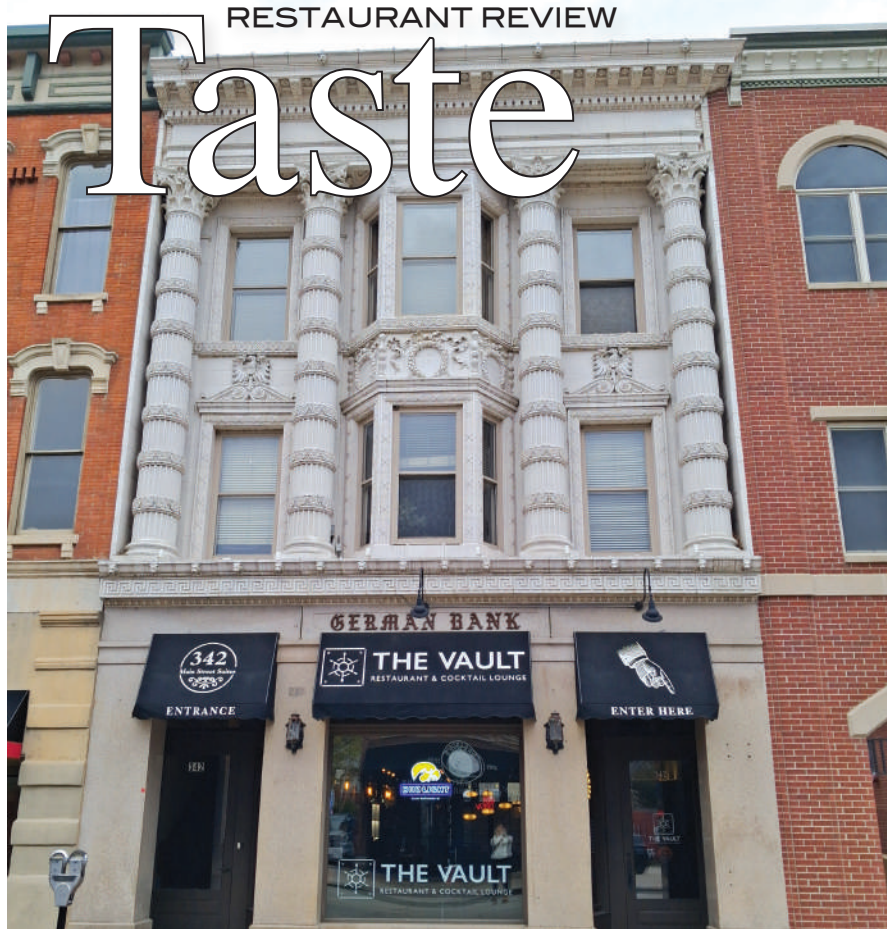
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Qualified transactions must be posted by December 31, 2025 to be eligible for triple rewards. Refer to DuTrac's terms and conditions at DuTrac.org if you have any questions about your Rewards program. Your standard APR for Mastercard Platinum and Business Mastercard Platinum is variable and will vary with the market based on the 13-week U.S. Government Treasury Bill. Foreign transaction fee of 1% of transaction amount will apply. Does not apply to cash advances or balance transfers. Earn 3 points for every \$1 you spend. There are no caps or limits on the number of points Mastercard Platinum and Business Mastercard Platinum card members may earn. Redemption of reward points starts at 2,500 points for a \$25 statement credit.

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Article and photos by Cassie Cate

THE VAULT IS A FOODIE AND COCKTAIL ENTHUSIASTS DREAM

The Vault Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge located in The German Bank, which was built in 1901 by the Schrup family. This building was the most modern and beautiful structure on Main Street at the time of its construction and included a fireproof vault that was three stories tall. The main floor was designated for the German Bank, while the other two were spacious apartments. Because of its success, the German Bank outgrew the facility and became American Trust and Savings Bank after World War I when it relocated to Ninth and Main. Fast Forward over one hundred twenty years...

Since its beginnings as a bank, The Vault's building has served as a home to many different businesses, including many fine dining establishments. The Vault is currently owned by Jesse Elliot and Will Pearce, who have been providing the community with quality ingredients and exceptional service since March of 2020. Although some things may have changed within the building, history lovers can rest assured that the origi-

nal main floor bank vault remains, embracing the building's history for all to enjoy.

This unique restaurant offers diverse dishes, especially for those who consider themselves "foodies" or "cocktail enthusiasts." The menu also expands with the addition of week and weekend features for diners to enjoy. Two best sellers the menu boasts are the Prime Rib French Dip, the Cajun Pasta Bowl, and the French Onion New York Strip Steak.

The cocktail menu takes classic cocktails and gives them a signature Vault twist. The Lavender Bees Knee Martini is nothing short of the Bees Knees, while the Marshmallow Espresso Martini is sure to please. For the customers who don't drink alcohol, The Vault mixes up mocktails and even has their very own mocktail menu!

For those looking to host a business meeting, birthday party, or any other special event, The Vault is happy to host. Managers work to design a menu and atmosphere that works for each individual event. Events are fun and easy to have in this wonderful downtown location.

Customers can dine and then head off to enjoy many other attractions downtown Dubuque has to offer. The business is conveniently located next to a parking ramp that runs at a rate of just a dollar an hour.

The menu at The Vault is one cultivated with care, allowing for the ingredients to really shine and provide an experience for the guest. Starting a meal at The Vault with one of their savory appetizers is a great way to elevate the dining adventure, like enjoying the Tenderloin Bites, which are glazed with balsamic and covered in blue cheese. Speaking of cheese, Wisconsin Cheese Curds adorn the menu, along with Jalapeno Poppers stuffed with a smooth cream cheese filling. Many customers also rave about the Giant Pretzel, served with queso for dipping, and never disappointing in size and salty goodness.

If you are not looking for a full dinner, several sandwich options are available to enjoy, including your choice of French fries, coleslaw, soup, sweet potato fries, a side salad, or Jasmine rice. Gluten free buns, black bean patties, and chicken breast are also available for those with dietary restrictions. The Prime Rib French Dip is covered in provolone, horseradish cream, peppers, onions, and mushrooms. Two burgers, the Vault, loaded with onion straws, cheddar, bacon, and roasted red pepper aioli, and The Arugula Ranch Burger, adorned with provolone, caramelized onions, arugula, tomatoes, and jalapeno ranch, are crowd pleasers for anyone. If chicken is more your speed, they offer a Nashville Chicken Sandwich and a Caprese Chicken, depending on your desire for spice or Mediterranean.

The main courses at the Vault, however, are real showstoppers. Each includes a choice of starch- French fries, mashed potatoes, baby baked potatoes, parmesan asparagus, sweet potato fries, or Jasmine rice and a salad. The Blackberry Bourbon Glazed Pork Ribeyes are a delicious chop duo covered in a house-



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16 oz Ribeye with sautéed mushrooms,

made blackberry bourbon glaze. Another duo serves up chicken breast topped with bruschetta and cheese. If Beef is what you're after, the French Onion New York Strip is grilled to perfection and covered in grilled onions and fontina Gouda cheese blend or try the Filet Mignon topped in a red wine reduction.

If pasta speaks more to your soul, The Vault is certainly willing to answer with their creamy chicken gnocchi, Parmesan Steak Alfredo, Cajun Pasta, or Pesto Tortellini. Each of these comes with soup or salad and the option to substitute gluten free noodles. If sea fare is more your style, the Bourbon Glazed Salmon or the Red Snapper may be for you. Shrimp and Fish and Chips are also a more traditional offering, but the Bang Bang Salmon Bowl is anything but ordinary with Jasmine rice, cucumber, avocado, green onions, and a deliciously spicy bang bang sauce to top it all off.

Kids are not forgotten with a simple, but enjoyable menu including burgers, mac and cheese, chicken strips, and mini corn dogs. Of course, those looking for a lighter option can enjoy a salad that is anything but boring. The Steak Salad has USDA choice steak, avocado, bleu cheese, red onion, and bleu cheese dressing, while Chipotle Chicken Salad includes Pico de Gallo, cheese, avocado, and ranch. For a fruitier find the Apple Feta boasts chicken, apples, grapes, candied pecans, dried cranberries, feta cheese, and a hot bacon vinaigrette, while the Lemon Blueberry Salad is topped with Feta cheese, cucumbers red onion, fresh blueberries, and candied pecans, covered in the signature lemon vinaigrette.

One thing is for sure, if you want to "lock up" good flavor, The Vault is a "safe" bet. Enjoying this historic downtown establishment only makes "cents." ♦

For more information call 563.582.4603 or visit TheVaultDubuque.com.

Comments on this article can be sent to comments@juliensjournal.com.

THE FROSTED GLASS Taste



Article and photo by Joshua Nichols

WHAT WE'RE DRINKING: FREE WAVE

ABV: *N/A* (>0.5%)

Who Brews It:

Athletic Brewing Co.

Where you can find it: *Grocery and liquor stores*

Expected Price: *\$11.99 for a six pack of cans*

It's December, which means that you likely have a slew of holiday parties and New Year celebrations on your calendar. Many of these celebrations involve alcohol. While there's nothing wrong with having a drink - this is a column dedicated to reviewing beer after all - non-alcoholic drinks can be a healthy

and interesting alternative. So, if you're looking to cut down on alcohol for your New Year's resolution, or if you're the designated driver for a holiday function, non-alcoholic beer is a great choice. We'll be reviewing a non-alcoholic beer this time, Free Wave by Athletic Brewing Co.

A non-alcoholic beer must be under 0.5% ABV to be classified as non-alcoholic in America. This means that, technically, non-alcoholic beers do contain alcohol; however, the amount of alcohol is negligible. You consume alcohol any time you eat a fermented food or drink, so if you're a fan of kombucha, kimchi, soy sauce, and even bread, you're consuming the same amount of alcohol that is found in a non-alcoholic beer. It's largely impossible to completely avoid all traces of alcohol, so don't

feel like you're being misled when you read the "contains less than 0.5% alcohol" label on a non-alcoholic beverage.

So, what does a non-alcoholic beer taste like? Truthfully, it's very similar to a standard beer, though there are some noticeable differences. As a general rule, non-alcoholic beer tastes sweeter than alcoholic beer due to differences in yeast fermentation. They also have a much lighter body and a less dense mouthfeel. If you're trying an IPA or a hoppy non-alcoholic beer, you'll find that the lack of alcohol also impacts the hops. During fermentation, the interaction between yeast and hops creates new aromatic compounds, which then results in greater depth of flavor. Generally speaking, there is much more variance in how a non-alcoholic IPA tastes than a non-alcoholic lager.

Non-alcoholic beer is brewed similarly to standard beer. You begin with your malt, hops (if desired), yeast, and water. At this point, there are multiple ways to make sure that your beer qualifies as non-alcoholic. One way to remove alcohol is to brew the beer as normal then remove the alcohol through vacuum distillation. The alcoholic beer is put in a vacuum chamber to achieve a lower atmospheric pressure. The beer is then gently heated until the alcohol boils and evaporates. The alcohol-free beer is then cooled and recarbonated. Alternatively, special types of yeast that do not produce ethanol during fermentation are being tried.

With all of this said, what does Free Wave specifically taste like? If you're a fan of hoppy beers but dislike the idea of ingesting 7.2% ABV to get the taste, Free Wave is a great alternative. The hoppy flavors of Amarillo, Citra and Mosaic are especially pronounced. Without the counterbalancing alcohol, the hops are isolated, hitting fast then fading fast. Overall, the beer has a bright amber color and low carbonation, which means that it is a very smooth drink. There is minimal aftertaste - the sweet, citrus tastes of grapefruit and tangerine quickly vanish from your palate after a swallow.

At your next social gathering this holiday season, consider reaching for a non-alcoholic beer. Most bars and event venues keep non-alcoholic beers around to accommodate designated drivers, individuals with religious exceptions, or those who simply dislike feeling drunk. There's a surprising variety of NA options, so whether it's Free Wave or a different drink, give it a try. You might be surprised by how close non-alcoholic beers are to regular beer nowadays. ♦

SIPS & TIPS Taste

GOOD CHEER & HOLIDAY WINES

"There is nothing like wine for conjuring up feelings of contentment and goodwill. It is less of a drink than an experience, an evocation, a spirit. It produces sensations that defy description."

Thomas Conklin, *Wine: A Primer*

SIPS

TeamWine wishes the best to you and yours this holiday season. And, to get you off on the right foot, or maybe I should say, the proper glass, we've got a very nice white and red for your enjoyment, neither of which will break

the bank. These wines, both from Italy, were selected by Angela and Erin. We felt the white is a nice wine to begin a dinner or party, and would pair with practically anything, while the red would be better with some heartier noshes or even as one to sip after dinner with conversation. See what you think.

Our white wine is Gavi. Gavi is made with Cortese grapes and is from Gavi, Italy. This bottle was purchased at Aldi's (12.5% abv, \$9.99). The color was very clear with just a hint of straw, yellow and soft green. We picked out light aromas of almond, vanilla spice, apple blossom and honey notes. Peach blossoms were on the palate along with a bit of lemon rind and a sweet licorice. There was pleasing acidity and minerality on the palate, especially

on the edges. The body was fuller than I anticipated, resulting in a velvety mouthfeel. We were mixed on pairings as I liked it with olives, while another didn't. The wine enhanced the salted nuts, and we all thought it went well with the tinned fish and would pair nicely with pasta. We feel this wine would be best served quite cold. We liked that it was priced very reasonably. Enjoy this wine to start an evening, or while leisurely reading a book.

Our Italian red was a Ca'Storica 2021 Amarone della Valpolicella. Purchased at Trader Joe's (14% abv, \$17.99) this wine was made using the "appassimento" method, meaning the grapes were first dried then pressed. The wine was aged in wood then bottle-aged for at least six months before release. It had a bright, dark garnet color. We had wide range of earthy aroma notes of smoke, forest path (think cedar & balsa), woody spices, cigar and mushrooms. The fruit scents included baked cherry, plum pudding and cranberry. The fruits really came through on the palate with dark cherry leading the way, spicy plum, dark chocolate and some tobacco. The finish was pleasing and had a deep sweetness, much like dark toffee. We sort of wanted to hang onto the last sip to prolong the sensations. The wine was full-bodied with soft and balanced tannins. This wine did not so much reach out and grab you, but rather it lured you into its domain. We felt this would pair with risotto, pasta, red meats—especially beef and game, or rich cheeses. Of course, TeamWine found it made a splendid partner with the dark chocolate. This wine would be a lovely after-dinner beverage while having good conversation, doing a jigsaw puzzle or otherwise being with friends around a fire.

TIPS

December is a perfect month to explore new wines. Stop by your favorite retailer and buy a bottle of something you've never tasted. Then, invite a friend, or two, over and open it and see what you think. Be sure to have a couple of cheeses on hand, maybe some humus, and some unseasoned crackers and make notes of what you like or not like.

And, here's a Christmas gift idea for yourself. If you'd like to be part of TeamWine for a tasting, send an email to John@juliensjournal.com, with the subject "Guest Taster". Beginning in January, we are going to invite one person/couple to join us for a tasting and be recognized as a TeamWine member in that month's column. Experience isn't necessary, just a desire to learn a bit more about wine. We look forward to meeting you! ❖

Happy Holidays to you all!

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Business & Community News

UPCOMING HONOR FLIGHTS - DUBUQUE

Honor Flight of Dubuque and the Tri-States announced a schedule of two flights for May 11 and 12, 2026. The trip is open to all veterans who served from 1975 and older with priority given to WWII veterans, followed by those serving in the Korean Conflict, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. Terminally ill veterans from any war are given top priority.

Anyone that wore a uniform and served, whether state-side or overseas and who was not dishonorably discharged, are invited to apply to participate in Honor Flight. It is an exciting day for the veterans, and this no-cost tour is a "thank you" for the service they rendered and the freedoms they secured for Americans as well as people around the globe, when serving in the U.S. military.

The Honor Flight of Dubuque and the Tri-States is a 501C3 non-profit organization accepting donations by check to: Honor Flight of Dubuque and the Tri-States, c/o of DuTrac Community Credit Union, P.O. Box 3250, Dubuque IA 52004-3250. Donations are also accepted in-person at all DuTrac Community Credit Union locations. For additional information or to apply, please visit HonorFlightDbq.org.

KENDALL HUNT RECEIVES AWARD

The Des Moines Register named Kendall Hunt Publishing / Westmark Enterprises / Great River Learning a Top Workplaces 2025 honor by Iowa Top Workplaces 2025. This list is based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner Energage LLC. The confidential survey uniquely measures the employee experience and its component themes, including employees feeling respected and supported, enabled to grow, and empowered to execute, to name a few.

MASTER GARDENERS RECEIVE AWARD

The Dubuque County Master Gardeners in partnership with the Dubuque County Conservation Board have received the 2025 David Gibby International Master Gardener Search for Excellence Award in the category of innovative projects. This international award recognizes the Mowing to Monarchs program for achieving significant program impacts in the Dubuque area with the help of over 28 Dubuque County Master Gardeners in partnership with the Dubuque County Conservation Board.

Mowing to Monarchs is a Dubuque County-wide program helping residents in establishing small plantings of native prairie plants also known as pocket prairies.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL BREAKS GROUND

The Dubuque St. Vincent de Paul organization celebrated the official beginning of an Urban Farm project on Monday, October 27 with groundbreaking; the event was held at the Radford Road location. The project is in partnership with the John Deere Foundation. The farm will allow them to provide fresh produce year-round to its Voucher Center Food Pantry on Iowa Street.

The urban farm will include an area sourced greenhouse of 1,300 square feet that will be located next to the current St. Vincent de Paul warehouse. Back2Work students will be involved in the construction of the greenhouse of the farm as well as maintenance.

MATHIAS HAM HOUSE RECEIVES RESTORATION GRANT

The Dubuque County Historical Society (DCHS) has been awarded \$25,000 in funding support from the DRA Core Grant Program. Funding will support the restoration of the Mathias Ham House, a National Register of Historic Places. The Mathias Ham Historic Site is operated by DCHS as a museum providing visitors with key informal learning through programs, tours, and events.

THEISEN'S ANNOUNCED \$400K IN GRANTS

Theisen's Home • Farm • Auto and the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque announced that 219* nonprofits across 24 Theisen's store communities in Iowa and Wisconsin have received a total of \$400,000 in grants as part of the Theisen's More for Your Community program.

To view a list of the 2025 grantees, visit DbqFoundation.org/Theisens.

CAMP ALBRECHT ACRES NAMES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Camp Albrecht Acres announced **Gracie Green** as its new executive director. She joined Camp Albrecht Acres in March 2025 as the senior camp director and helped oversee a successful summer season. Green's prior experience includes four years as program director at a camp and retreat center in central Iowa, as well as a range of leadership roles at long-term-care facilities.

DUTRAC HOSTS 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

DuTrac Community Credit Union hosted its 78th Annual Meeting of the membership on Monday, October 13, from its headquarters on Asbury Road in Dubuque. **David Eggers**, **Chad Kruse**, and **John Vail**, were each re-elected to serve a one, three-year term on the DuTrac Board of Directors (the Board).

Following the annual meeting, the Board held their annual reorganizational meeting. Table officers elected by the Board are **Daniel Deutmeyer**, chair; **Teri Zuccaro**, vice chair; **Crenna Brumwell**, treasurer; and, **Harlan Pedretti**, secretary.

The Board committee appointments include Credit Committee Chair **Kevin Mueller** with committee members **Scott Neyens**, **John Vail**, **Daniel Deutmeyer**, and **Ron Kinsella**, senior vice president of lending.

Audit Committee Chair **David Eggers**, alongside **Michael Ready** and **Nicholas Specht**.

Nominating Committee Chair **John Vail**, with committee members **Teri Zuccaro** and **Scott Neyens**. Board member **Michael Ready** will serve as associate director liaison.

Business Card Directory

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Welcome!

Matti Asuma, MD
Orthopedic Surgeon

Accepting new patients in Platteville, WI

Dr. Asuma is a board-certified, fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon **specializing in adult hip and knee reconstruction** at Southwest Health's Orthopedic Institute.

After completing his orthopedic surgery residency at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington, he spent four years as a **staff orthopedic surgeon in the U.S. Army**, where he served as Chief of Orthopedic Surgery at Irwin Army Community Hospital in Fort Riley, Kansas, and deployed with the 67th Forward Surgical Resuscitative Team.

Following his tenure in the Army, Dr. Asuma completed a **fellowship in Adult Reconstruction of the Hip & Knee** at Joint Implant Surgeons in New Albany, Ohio. He earned his medical degree from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.