

The Northcrest

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Linda's Lines

by Linda Doyle, CEO/Administrator

So much to celebrate – so little time!!!

In April over 100 volunteers were treated to a buffet of scrumptious appetizers prepared in our very own kitchen by Rashell and her talented dining staff. Ronnie, Jessica and Rashell continue to come up with new ways to celebrate and recognize these remarkable volunteers. Last year Northcrest residents logged over 2,274 hours volunteering at Northcrest and an additional 5,400 hours volunteering their services to numerous non-profit organizations in the Ames Community. These are amazing people with seemingly endless amounts of energy.

May is the month we celebrate **Mother's Day** and at Northcrest many can claim the honor of not only being Mom but also Grandmother, Great-Grandmother and even Great-Great-Grandmother. It is a beautiful time of year to recognize all the love and encouragement that our Mothers have given us throughout life's journey. A Jewish proverb: *"God couldn't be everywhere so He created Mothers."* Moms always seem to be there to inspire and teach us; to dry our tears and help us when we're down; and to share in the joys of our accomplishments.

May is also the month to celebrate the exceptional nurses who have chosen to dedicate their lives to the care of others. At Northcrest we are indeed fortunate to have nurses who care so deeply about the residents they serve. **National Nurses Week** begins each year on May 6th and ends on May 12th, the birthday of Florence Nightingale. Please take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the **Nurses of Northcrest** for all they do to enhance and brighten our lives. Be sure and check out the May issue of Facets to see the Northcrest ad featuring all of our nurses.

It seems that after all the attention Mothers receive in May that **Father's Day** sometimes gets lost in the shuffle when June rolls around. I was born on Father's Day and it was always a special time for the two of us to celebrate, and we were together every Father's Day until he passed away. Even now, it seems strange to celebrate my birthday without him. So don't forget to give a kiss, a hug and a **"Happy Father's Day"** wish to that special Dad, Daddy, Grandpa, Great and Great-Great Grandfather who holds a special place in your heart.

National Nursing Assistants Week is also celebrated in June and gives us the opportunity to recognize the people who have chosen to work as CNA's or CMA's at Northcrest. We are privileged to have more than 45 nursing assistants who work full time, part time or on an "as needed" basis to ensure residents in the Health Care Center and Heartwood House receive the quality care they desire and deserve. This week gives everyone a chance to recognize and thank them for being an integral part of the Northcrest team.

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Peonies

by Lorene Hoover

You transplanted them
to our small garden
spading up dirt
your fingers working the
earth
pushing and patting down new soil.



As red-veined green leaves
fell across your hands
did you think of blooms to come
like those beside the well
where you pumped water
for your mother's kitchen?

Or did you see them, blossoms
too heavy for their narrow stems
when you gathered all you could find,
pink, red, or white, and carried
them to the hillside
where your mother lay?

Following a dark January
peonies in our small garden
bloomed in May.
Heart-red flowers
overflowing my arms,
I carried them to your grave.

In another May
outside my new door
they blossomed again,
their petals, layered
like fingers upon fingers
reaching across the years.



Mamma's Shoes

by Howard Johnson

My mother had two pairs of shoes.
One scarred and rugged, buried
in the stack of overshoes on the back porch.
One black and polished lay
in the closet with her Sunday dress.



In summer she roamed free about the
yard with her brood to gather eggs and oversee
us kids, who wallowed in the tank beside the crib.
Her smudged and printed dress, her wind-blown hair,
emancipation from all social ties,



until the Watkin's man drove
into the yard.

The throttled engine of the
salesman's car sounded the
alarm; kids in birthday suits
scrambled for the crib,
mom ducked behind the crib door,
dare not show her naked feet!

"Dear daughter, Helen,
Slip on your dress and get mom's shoes."
Barefoot, she sprints in her girlish way,
around garage, around the shed,
around the back side of the house,
unseen by Watkin's man, dug out the shabby shoes.

Returning around the house, around the shed,
around garage,
hid the shoes beneath her skirt
and stepped into the crib.

"Is anybody home? Is anybody home?"
Then mom stepped out with covered feet,
recovered pride,
"We've been looking for eggs under the crib!"

We enjoyed having Mel from 1430 KASI Radio at
Northcrest every Friday during the whole month of April!



Rashell's Excellent Adventure

by Mim Patterson

Rashell Fowler, star of kitchen and dining room at Northcrest, is in the midst of an adventure this year, which she sat down to tell me a little bit about. It's plain to see that she is excited about this, and before our conversation was half-way through, so was I!

In Iowa there is an event for directors in retirement communities called the Emerge Leadership Program, and every year 12 such persons are selected to attend four two day "summits" over an eight month period. These leaders represent all facets of retirement community life and service: CEO's, Nursing Directors, Assisted Living Directors, Human Resource officers, Nursing Assistants, Dining Service Directors and whoever else is responsible for the quality of life in a facility like Northcrest. These 12 spend 48 hours together at a "leading edge" facility during each summit, being shown the inner workings of each facility, having opportunities to observe daily life in each, ask questions of that facility's staff, and connect with each other about any issues they are observing or have experienced in their own community. Rashell says, "Spending 2 days together in a group of 12, actually seeing and questioning...you can't put into words what you can experience, going behind the scenes this way, seeing new concepts put into practice and being able to talk about them both with the facility's own leaders and your peers. It's a team-building experience." But clearly it is also a unique education in your chosen field.



Rashell's first Emerge experience occurred in February at the "Hearthstone Cottages" in Pella. She describes it as "incredible." In April the team visited "Friendship Haven" in Fort Dodge where a different group led formal discussion, but where, again, there was opportunity to observe community life in progress, to interact with Friendship Haven staff, and to work on leadership skills while learning some new ways of approaching senior living.

In June the summit will be held in Perry, and in August, Cedar Falls. A quote from the flyer describing the summits says, "Site visits show-case visionary leadership and innovation both within and outside the aging community."

Rashell did not elaborate on all of the innovations she has observed during these summit meetings, but clearly there are many ideas bouncing around in her head and she is delighted with the whole Emerge Leadership experience. Who knows what good ideas Northcrest may want to adopt as a result of this collaboration.....and what sparks may have been lit by Rashell for others to carry back to their own communities?

It's Just A Nuisance!

by Betty Wright

I'm continuing my boxing lessons through my Parkinson's support group two times a week.

It makes me move my legs and arms, and I can tell that it's been helping with my balance.

I love doing it, and I've met a lot of new friends too!



Now Hear This

by Phyllis Harris

It had been a while since I had taken a class at College for Seniors. In the meantime my hearing problem hadn't improved. But when a writing class was offered winter quarter, I reasoned I could at least get the assignments and do the writing, the purpose of the course. But wait-- OLLI must often deal with hearing problems in this demography. They might have a system like the one which works so well at church on Sunday. I inquired and yes, they do. Eureka!



The instructor wore a mic and I could hear her every word. However, class discussion was lost on me since others were not wearing mics. Still, 50% wasn't bad and besides, that is my lot in life these days. Get used to it.

The next quarter, another writing class was offered! This time I could register knowing the limits I could manage. However, Jerilyn Logue at the Alumni Center had a surprise. On order for weeks, Williams Sound delivered its magic. A transmitter in the middle of the table attached to a small triangular mic picks up sound and delivers to a receiver connected to the headset. I can hear everyone unless their delivery is acute mashed potatoes which will happen with some voices. I thought of three different groups where I cannot hear others around the table. I thought of the sound missing for me on my PC. I thought of the audiologist who said increased amplification is not the answer. I came home from class and ordered a set. The cost is minimal compared to more hearing aids. I received shipment from Minnesota the next day.

In the privacy of my own apartment I tried the sound system on the PC. I wanted to hear the interview with Art Cullen, the Pulitzer winner from the Storm Lake paper on NPR's *Here and Now*. Voila! It worked. His voice was particularly clear while the woman interviewer sounded like mush. Some voices will, no matter what, unfortunately. But hearing Art Cullen was worth it.



I never thought I was vain, but wearing a headset in public gives me pause. But compared with not hearing, it's moot. The salesman says he sells few to individuals. Such equipment usually goes to a school with a hearing disabled student. But neither do they advertise to the public at large.

An article in the April 3, 2017 *New Yorker* by David Owen entitled "Pardon?" canvassed hearing problems and solutions for younger generations encountering hearing loss now earlier than ever. But his big interest is something through his smart phone. For need now, this FM assisted hearing device is the best kept secret (williamsound.com). My class delivered twice as much education this session. I've been hopeful ever since. It isn't perfect. What is? But it helps.

Did you know...
NORTHCREST COMMUNITY AMES
has a FACEBOOK page!!
Check it out—and LIKE us!



Bottomland: All Iowa Reads 2017 by Lorene Hoover



Michelle Hoover, novelist and teacher, recently returned to Iowa, her home state, as the featured speaker for Authors Visiting in Des Moines. Appearing before an overflow crowd at Des Moines Central Library, Michelle read and lead discussion of her second novel, *BOTTOMLAND*, which has been selected as the book All Iowa Reads 2017.

Sponsored by Iowa Center for the Book, the program's stated purpose is to "foster a sense of unity through reading." Iowans statewide, possibly through public libraries, book clubs, schools or other local organizations, are encouraged to "come together in their communities to read and talk about a single book title in the same year."

BOTTOMLAND is based on the real life story of the author's grandmother whom she never knew. The book begins in Iowa shortly after World War I and dramatizes the active bias against Iowans of German heritage. Set in a time of xenophobia and hatred, *Boston Globe* sees the story as one with contemporary resonance. The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* describes the book as "a mystery wrapped in isolation and ethnic fear."

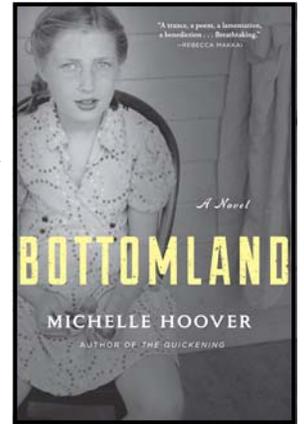
The novel follows the Hess family in the years after World War I as they attempt to live above the Anti-German sentiment inflicted upon them. Then their two youngest daughters vanish in the middle of the night. The family's cries for help only heighten their neighbors' suspicion.

In the weeks after Esther and Myrle's disappearance, their siblings desperately search for their sisters, combing the stark farmlands, their neighbors' houses, and the unfamiliar world of far-off Chicago. Did the sisters have reason to run away? Have they been abducted? Ostracized, misunderstood, and increasingly isolated in a community still feeling the effects of the war, the Hesses fear the worst.

To meet the criteria for the All Iowa Reads selection, the book must raise universal social issues relevant to Iowans, lend itself to sustained, spirited and in-depth discussion, be accessible to adults and high school aged youth, and have an Iowa or Midwest connection. Previous selections have included novels by Marilynne Robinson, Tracy Kidder, Anne Tyler and Louise Erdrich.

A native of Ames, Michelle Hoover now lives in Massachusetts and is "Writer in Residence" at Brandeis University. Her novel *BOTTOMLAND* is currently one of four finalists for the annual Massachusetts Bay OneBook Prize. Sponsored by Wellesley Free Library, the college invites "the greater Wellesley community" to read a common text, engage in discussions, and attend related programs.

This is another example of bringing people together through reading and encouraging readers to tell their own stories.



The Benefits of Writing

From composing thank you notes to keeping a journal, the physical act of writing by hand is a great boost to the brain. Take note of these advantages of putting pen to paper.

- ◆ **Activates the brain**— Visual input, motor skills and memory are all in action when we form letters and words. One of the main reasons handwriting benefits the brain is because we're using so much of it. These linked regions are not activated when typing or texting.
- ◆ **Improves memory**— Studies show that jotting down words, such as taking notes when learning a new skill or listening to instructions, strengthens memory and helps retain information.
- ◆ **Promotes creativity**— Composing sentences on paper is a slower process than typing and tends to inspire more creative thinking. Even in this age of technology, many professional writers still create first drafts in longhand.
- ◆ **Provides a workout**— Just like our bodies need exercise, our brains need regular workouts too. Some physicians believe that the act of writing is good cognitive exercise for people who want to keep their minds sharp as they age.



Dining at McDonalds

by Howard Johnson

Sometimes we dine at McDonalds. Dine? Well maybe "stop" or 'ingest" or 'brunch.'" Whatever! Some folks may be embarrassed to be seen dining at McDonalds, unless traveling. Most fast food places reliably serve the same menus. While we enjoy the lighter food choices, we stop at McDonalds for other reasons than a Big Mac.



With few exceptions, the mix of customers at McDonalds is somewhat different than patrons at Perkins or Aunt Maudes, although I see a Cadillac or Lexus parked outside McDonalds occasionally. I can't vouch for all that drive by to pick up their order. They seem to be in a hurry or don't feel appropriately dressed to lunch inside. And some have a van load of kids that might be hard to manage indoors.

We observe a group of men in camouflage clothes, obviously hunters, enjoying a Big Mac and a hot cup of coffee. Young mothers with preschool children occupy a booth. In a corner, alone, a bedraggled older man with a pack hunches over a malt. He smokes outside and returns to his pack.

We visit with some. A pastor, dressed in jeans and a sport shirt, waits for his wife to return from the dentist. A handicapped student steers his powered chair along the aisle. A handicapped lady, employed by McDonalds, keeps the dining area clean.

A middle aged lady engages us as we leave our booth. She asks about a church she might attend. We sit down across from her expecting to be asked for money. Her life story unravels. Now living in a shelter, she expects to have dinner at the First Christian Church. She describes a tragic life in Iowa. Her father died when young, mother had been ill for years. She had not finished high school and had arrant associates. Dressed cleanly in a sweatshirt, she converses carefully and correctly. Counselors in Ames have advised her that the job market is thin for a person with an eighth grade education. Ames is a relatively charitable small city, she's found. We advised her to attend the First Christian Church where she would have dinner.

Foreign and US students often have dinner at McDonalds. Scholars use Wi Fi and have access power for tablets. Diners wear casual clothes. Men in dress suits seldom appear. Few elderly needing canes or walkers are present. While observed locally, the middle aged and elderly who are obese seldom stop at McDonalds. I judge that most customers are middle class and students. Some may be poor. The Cadillac and Lexus owners must be in disguise.

Fast food places have their operating styles. The menus are displayed on rotating display boards and billboards, inside and out. If you drive through, you order by speaker system, wait in line, pay, and receive your order in a paper sack. Inside you wait in line, order, pay, and wait until your order number comes up. "Three forty eight" is served on a tray.

In some fast food places, like McDonalds, the food is prepared up front. You can order breakfast all day. Large salads are available. The customer can observe fries being cooked in boiling oil and sandwiches being wrapped. Employees prepare coffee and lattes. Cream, sugar, milk and other ingredients are stored behind the counter. Computer printouts of orders rotate on the wall above workers. Employees who take orders, punch in orders on a computer, receive payment with cards or cash are more skilled workers. And they usually have a positive and friendly personality. In west Ames, college students often have the order clerk's jobs. A manager roams the work area, helping when needed and keeping operations in order during rush hour. The rest rooms are clean. Waste disposal bins are maintained.

Another day when we are not in a mood to cook, we may have brunch at McDonalds again.

A Little More Light on Low Vision by John Stanford

One day I was riding the bus to the university, talking with a former colleague of mine who has low vision. When he learned that I was also experiencing low vision issues, he urged me to contact the Iowa Department for the Blind in Des Moines. He said they were very friendly people and had helped him a great deal.

IDB is tax supported and there is no cost to individuals with low vision. After initial screening, IDB arranged for a staff person to visit me at Northcrest on a regular schedule. The IDB personnel are friendly and skilled to help. I have learned many aspects of coping with low vision, including how to effectively use low vision aids on my iPhone and computer.

One example is an app for the iPhone called "KNFB reader." This app allows me to take a quick snapshot of a page of a book at the library or a letter or page of printed information. With its high-speed processor, within a few seconds the KNFB reader produces a digital version of the page, and reads it audibly for me. The app is contained on my iPhone, so I have access to it anywhere.



There are also devices called low vision readers which resemble a desktop computer screen and can scan and read a letter or page of a book placed under the device camera. Various color fonts and backgrounds can be selected to reduce glare. I find that a dark background with light colored characters is often easier for my eyes. The device also has variable magnification and is very useful for small handiwork or crafts. My device has a very useful movable "X-Y" reading table that allows me to position a book or letter and move it along as I read. My "hard book" library collection is now again accessible to my detailed-challenged eyes!

The people of the Iowa Department for the Blind also helped me learn about a wonderful program of the US Library of Congress which arranges for readers to read aloud and record books. These audio books are available to be downloaded free to my Kindle reader or iPhone with an app called BARD. The IDB people helped me download the free BARD app and set it up. There are many thousands of books available and I regularly download selected books that I want to listen to. This is a wonderful resource available for people with low vision.



Anyone can contact the helpful people at Iowa Department for the Blind
524 Fourth Street, Des Moines, IA 50309-2364 - (515) 281-1333 - <https://blind.iowa.gov>

NORTHCREST
community
A True Life-Care Retirement Community

*May is the month we celebrate the exceptional nurses who have chosen to dedicate their lives to the care of others. At Northcrest we are fortunate to have nurses who care so deeply about the residents they serve.
Congratulations!*



Nurses' Week, May 6-12

***The Mission of the Northcrest Foundation
is to assist Northcrest, Inc. by encouraging charitable
giving from individuals and organizations.***



Consider including in your will or living trust a gift to the Northcrest Foundation. Long-range estate and financial planning provides a thoughtful way to make memorial gifts in honor of family and friends.

**Find more information on our webpage:
www.northcrestcommunity.org/Foundation**

Check out the following articles on our website:



**Giving your IRA to Loved Ones? Think Carefully
Estate Planning for Kids
3 Big Reasons Why You Need a Will**

**www.northcrestcommunity.org/Foundation
"What's New" section**

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The Northcrester

Northcrest Community
"Uniquely Yours, Uniquely Home."
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