

Prime of LIFE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2021

HARLAN NEWSPAPERS SPECIAL SECTION

In The People Business

Al Hazelton has spent his life serving people and his community through ministry, public service, and in communications

By Bob Bjoin, Managing Editor

HARLAN – Al Hazelton likes to say he’s been in the people business most of his life.

Whether it’s through his ministering work as a pastor, his years of public service on various boards, clubs and associations, or his more than 50 years in the communications field including radio and newspapers, it’s the people who he has enjoyed most serving in those various capacities.

“I have always believed we are all in the people business,” Hazelton said. “Helping people at the spiritual level happens naturally in the communications field. Helping businesses develop their marketing plans opened the door to encourage them at deeper levels.”

Hazelton please see next page



Al and Ella Hazelton

Raised on a Family Farm in Northern Minnesota

Hazelton from front page

Serving his congregation and community has been the staple of a career that spans decades, was borne from a small town in northern Minnesota back in the 1950s-60s, and was molded and stretched as he spread his wings and grew which included serving his country in the U.S. Army, taking on the communications industry as an announcer, salesperson and manager, and eventually as a minister once receiving his call to serve God.

In reflection, Hazelton said it's been a blessing. He points to the following quote that expresses his philosophy of how the combination of life events has driven his actions.

*"I slept and dreamed that Life was Joy
I awoke and saw that Life was Service
I acted and behold, Service was Joy"*
-- Rabindranath Tagore (Poet 1861-1941)

Childhood

Hazelton grew up in northern Minnesota. In 1952, his parents purchased a 120-acre dairy farm for \$3,000, and he fondly remembers being surrounded by lots of family and the warmth in the house and barn during bitter cold winters.

"We listened to the radio and read the newspaper, and if the signal was good we watched the channels from Minneapolis and Duluth on black and white TV," Hazelton said. "I was fascinated by the transfer of information through the media.

"I am still amazed at how people are so hungry to know what is going on in the world around them."

The small herd of dairy cows kept the family near home, the garden was large, and there was always food on the table.

Hazelton's father and a partner purchased an outdoor power equipment business in town and by the time he was in high school, the economy of subsistence farming and school activity schedules were such that it was decided that the cows needed to be sold.

"I remember that it seemed like the cows were part of the family, and to this day when I drive by a dairy herd, something in me wants to go visit with those cows," Hazelton said.

"They are non-judgmental and appreciative of the little things like warm bedding and fresh hay to eat."



Hazelton's son Mark, with wife Stephanie and children Victoria and Mark. (Photo contributed)

Early Radio/Ministry

In his junior year of high school in 1967, the local Gambles store let Hazelton's class conduct a fundraiser where they worked for two days at the store and received 10 percent of the sales.

The students recorded commercials for the store to run on the radio station.

"The station manager heard those and asked me if I wanted a part-time job as an announcer," Hazelton recalled. "I traveled to St. Paul, took the test for an FCC 3rd class license with broadcast endorsement, and my media career was launched."

In 1970, Hazelton joined the U.S. Army and was assigned to the Signals Corps, stationed for more than two years at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium.

His fiancée, Ella, grew up in Lakota, IA, attended Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, and was working as a nurse there. She quit her job and flew to Europe, where the two were married in Belgium in November, 1971.

"Our travels through Europe were amazing and relationships with people there remain to this day," Hazelton said.

"My work there was with Fixed

Station Radio transmitters. It was during that time that I found a relationship with God and a call to the ministry."

Upon discharge from the Army, Hazelton attended Evangel College in Springfield, MO, and Ella worked as a nurse to put him through college. Hazelton majored in communications with a minor in business management, which turned out to serve him well as their ministry was bi-vocational.

After graduation, they moved to Atlantic where Hazelton became chief engineer at KJAN Radio. He received his ministry license in 1977 and served as youth pastor at First Assembly of God in Atlantic through 1984.

"We then moved to Harlan to pastor the small First Assembly of God church, and I continued working at KJAN where I was given the opportunity for partial ownership and became the general manager in 1987," Hazelton explained. "That moved me into the sales field."

Ministry/Newspaper

Harlan's First Assembly of God (now Harvest of Hope Church) grew through the nearly 34 years Hazelton was ministering, and his work in the media was ongoing. He retired as a full-time minister in 2018.

"I often joke that I was bi-vocational to support my habit of preaching," he said.

In 1997, Hazelton joined the Harlan Newspapers in advertising sales, and he moved from selling time at a radio station to selling space in the newspaper.

"Both the ministry and the sales positions were full-time and I have always been thankful for the opportunity and the energy level to do both," he said.

The newspaper position was a good fit, because the dynamics of helping businesses develop their marketing plan fit well with his life work in the ministry.

"In order to be successful, we need to present our story in a compelling fashion," he said. "The use of mass media connected to lifestyle to accomplish that has proven effective.

"I have been blessed with personal growth through some mentoring from amazing leaders, high level thinkers, and faithful friends."

Hazelton retired from the Harlan Newspapers in December after 23 years. It was an emotional departure, he admits, as the organization he has considered to be much like his extended family.

"In my early years there, Leo Mores was still working every day," he said. "He was a walking encyclopedia of the print industry in the 20th century. From my first day there, I felt that this family helped shape how the industry affected the communications culture, and I wanted to learn more about their story. I have appreciated the ongoing friendship with Steve and Alan Mores."

This family dynamic among the staff is continuing under new publisher Josh Byers, Hazelton said.

Public Service

Much of Hazelton's career has not only been marked by ministry and media work, but also by his enthusiastic willingness to serve others through various boards and commissions.

Take note of this impressive resume: President of the Iowa Broadcasters Association, Iowa Radio Network, Atlantic Rotary Club, Harlan Early Risers Kiwanis, Shelby County Ministerial Association, Shelby County Community Outreach, Presbytery

Hazelton please see next page

Harlan Wonderful Place to Live, Raise a Family

Hazelton *from previous page*

Board of the Iowa Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God, Harlan Optimist Club, People Who Care, Shelby County Chamber Ambassadors, Shelby County Community Chest, and as chaplain for Myrtue Hospice and Harlan American Legion Helmer Reyelt Post #150.

He was recently appointed to the Veteran's Commission by Harlan Mayor Mike Kolbe, as approved by the Harlan City Council.

But perhaps one of his most notable and long-term services has been as a member of the Harlan Community Schools Board of Education for 17 years, including being elected to the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) as a representative for 40-area school districts from western Iowa the past six years.

He has had a hand in shaping and molding educational efforts for the Harlan Community Schools and statewide.

"In 2004, then Superintendent Bob Broomfield encouraged me to run for the Harlan Community Schools Board of Education," Hazelton said.

"I believe public education needs to be strong and needs to produce citizens with a desire for lifelong learning. I am still active in advocating for public schools."

Harlan and Retirement

To Hazelton, Harlan is amazing and has been a wonderful setting for he and Ella to raise their children and invest their lives.

The relationships they've made here are deep and they are proud to call Harlan their home. Rural Iowa offers a quality of life that can be found nowhere else he said, and Harlan offers high quality education and an up-to-date hospital and health system.

"Our neighborhoods are safe and friendly," he said. "The many churches and service organizations offer support to everyone."

"The city and county government are headed by people who care about the people they serve. People move here and quickly feel at home."

Al and Ella's two sons, Duane and Mark, graduated from HCHS in 1995 and 1997, respectively.

Duane has a master's degree in elementary education from Northwest Missouri State University, and lives in

Crossville, TN, currently serving as a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) teacher, and is also on the coaching staff.

He and his wife, Sarah, have four daughters – twins Maggie and Emily, 16; Abby, 12; and Callie, 10.

Mark has a degree in Video Communications from Buena Vista University, and lives in Colorado Springs, CO, is employed by Compassion International, and he and his wife, Stephanie, have two children – Victoria, 9, and Zachary, 6.

Ella has retired from nursing at Myrtue Medical Center.

Since his retirement, Hazelton said his hobby of reading continues at an increased pace, and he continues a busy schedule of part-time work at the Harlan Newspapers and at various churches.

"I often find myself behind a pulpit on Sundays either as a fill-in pastor or as a guest speaker," he said. "My passion is to find needs and bring people to solutions."

"I believe that God has provided us with wisdom and opportunity to have a voice and to help other people find their voice. I am thankful for the life I have in Jesus Christ, and good health to enjoy it."



Hazelton's son Duane, with wife Sarah and children twins Emily and Maggie (back), Abby and Callie (front). (Photo contributed)

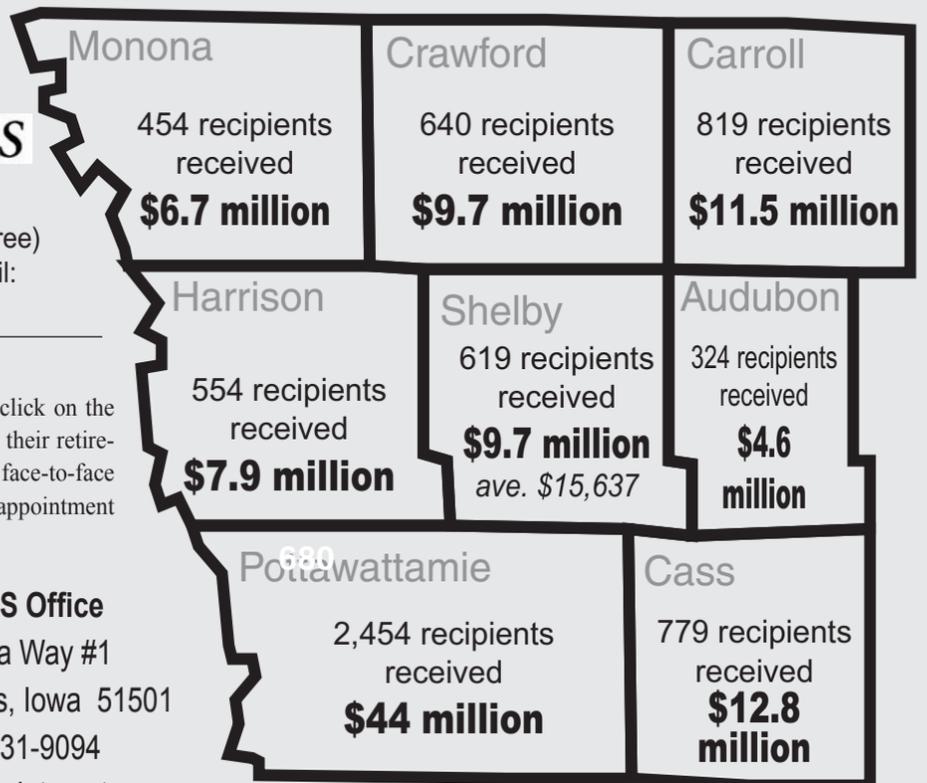
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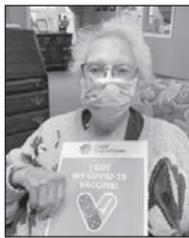
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Residents of the Salem Lutheran Homes in Elk Horn participated in Nerf Wars last week. Activities and games help pass the time and offset any social distancing requirements with those outside the care facility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, activities director Kera Bomer dressed as a deer and hid while residents ready their Nerf guns. (Photo contributed)

Loneliness **The Silent Pandemic**

Finding Creative Ways to keep Engaged during COVID-19 and Social Distancing

By Bob Bjoin,
Managing Editor
COUNTY – It’s been more than a year since the first case of coronavirus was identified in the United States, and the ensuing COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered life for people across the country and world.

For Shelby County residents, there’s hope on the horizon as the first COVID-19 vaccines finally have made their way to the area, and although it will take months to get everyone vaccinated, it’s encouraging that since mid January there have been vaccinations beginning for care facility residents, educators, and those over 75 years old.

Besides treating the virus itself, other challenges have emerged in 2020 and into 2021, none more compelling than the health recommendations regarding physi-

cally distancing, which have led to, in many instances, social isolation.

Shelby County is fortunate to have resources available for residents to treat fears of isolation, and the depression that sometimes accompanies it. For older residents, isolation can be particularly discouraging.

Myrtue Medical Center’s Behavioral Health Department has a full spectrum of services for comprehensive support with mental health services, including helping anyone coping with depression from social isolation.

“If you think you might be struggling, starting with a therapy assessment session is a great place to start,” said Katie Sandquist, licensed mental health counselor with Myrtue Behavioral Health.

“The therapist will spend the first session



One of the most difficult parts of the COVID-19 pandemic for those having to isolate has been lack of companionship. (Metro Photo)

talking with you about current struggles as well as gathering information about your experiences across various areas of life. The therapist will help you determine what your key needs are and how to best move forward to get you moving toward health.”

Sandquist said she believes the trauma from isolation may end up being one of the most dev-

astating impacts of the current pandemic. As a culture, loneliness already is a public health issue, she said.

“Under the pandemic this has grown to a new level,” Sandquist explained. “Many of our go-to means of connection disappeared or drastically changed with little warning.

“We have missed important rituals such as

“ We must start fighting for our connection as though our lives depend on it. They do.



KATIE SANDQUIST
Myrtue Medical Center

weddings and funeral services. Even with the innovation and creativity of technology or mitigation measures to find new ways of gathering, our bodies still carry the accumulated stress of our times of greatest isolation.”

Sandquist said we underestimated the power of being in close proximity faced to face with a safe, trusted person.

“This actually has the power to activate the safety signals of our nervous system,” she said. “So we have been missing those doses of feeling

safe and connected at a time we are collectively facing the global trauma of a pandemic.

“That is a very dangerous combination.”



Shelby County’s care facilities have been doing an amazing job of attending to their residents’ needs during the pandemic. Early on in March-April, 2020, the facilities coordinated Zoom® meetings with family, and in-person

Silent please see next page

Coping with Social Isolation during COVID-19 pandemic

Silent *from previous page*

meetings separated by the window, and those efforts are ongoing.

Salem Lutheran Homes in Elk Horn has been dedicated to providing as many communication avenues as possible to its residents and their families, said director Nicklos Nordby.

“We offer video chats as well as indoor visits in dedicated areas when we are allowed by state restrictions,” he said. “On top of this we’ve also been focused on creating new and entertaining activities for residents while still following all social distancing and masking guidelines.”

An example was last week they had an employee hunt. Residents were given Nerf guns, and staff dressed up as animals and then traversed the facility while using Christmas trees for cover.

“This was a ton of fun for our residents as well as our staff, and we were able to do it while still following all CDC and IDPH precautions.”

Sandquist said it’s exactly these types of out-of-the-box activities that help in a social isolation type situation. Loneliness and mental health issues feed off each other, and as we are more isolated, the more vulnerable we become to compromised mental health.

“As our mental health deteriorates, we tend to isolate ourselves or we might find others pulling back because of stigma,” she said. “This negative feedback loop makes social isolation especially dangerous for our health.”

While social isolation is detrimental for all ages, the impact of the pandemic on social isolation varies by age group. For young children, the family is the primary place connection needs are met, thus increased time at home is less disruptive.

Teenagers rely on their peers for connections, so the pandemic has been a catalyst for mental health challenges in that age group as they were cut off rather abruptly from friends.

Social media and technology platforms are not a substitute for in-person gatherings.

Adults have more flexibility, but the elderly and nursing home residents as well as people with health risk factors face an especially high risk of

social isolation.

“These populations were already more vulnerable to social isolation, but COVID-19 has meant that social gatherings now carry a potentially deadly risk,” Sandquist said. “Thus the barriers to meeting the need for connection are now much greater.”

Many opportunities for gathering such as for coffee or church services have been altered. “This puts out older generations at greater risk for loneliness and the health risks that come with it,” she added.



Loneliness poses a significant risk to health. In the short term, it makes stressful things more difficult to manage, and we become more vulnerable to depression and anxiety.

“Long-term, if we cannot manage stress effectively, that stress becomes toxic,” Sandquist explained. There can be damage across the body from cardiac issues to immune and digestive issues. Finding a way to cope with the stress is important.

Self-assessment is key to treating loneliness, and the body is a wonderful communicator of how we feel, she said. Sleep and appetite disruption, pain or discomfort such as headache or stomach aches, fatigue, or restlessness, are alarms.

Feelings of sadness and hopelessness, irritability and anger, or anxiety and fear are all signs that the stress level is getting beyond what can be managed on its own.

“This typically happens slowly so it can be hard to notice a clear difference right away, but often we have that gut sense that we’re struggling, even if we haven’t admitted it to ourselves yet,” Sandquist said.

Family members and friends also can look for those same signs of struggle in their loved ones. Sandquist recommends assuming loved ones are vulnerable.

“Our biology tells us that social isolation is detrimental, even for those of us who may be more introverted,” she said.

“We can help mitigate the vulnerability by checking in with each other, scheduling phone calls or video chats, or finding socially distant or masked



Salem Lutheran Home Maintenance Director Tyler Daringer shot with Nerf guns by several of the residents during a fun activity at the care center. *(Photo contributed)*

MMC’s Senior Life Solutions Offering Tips to Cope with Anxiety and Isolation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

REGIONAL -- Americans of all ages are experiencing increased social isolation and loneliness in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the National Institute on Aging, nearly 14 million older adults in the U.S. live alone and are especially vulnerable during this time.

Their research has linked social isolation and loneliness

Solutions *please see next page*



Bauman

ways to get together in person.

“The pandemic means we must be much more intentional about this as many of the gatherings we relied upon have gone away.”



Besides Myrtue Behavioral Therapy, there are other support mechanisms during the pandemic. There are support groups online, blog posts, videos, and articles offering tips and ways to engage with the world from home.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (nami.org) and Mental Health America (mhanational.org) each have a wide variety of resources.

Hope 4 Iowa is a regional crisis line available 24/7 at 844-673-4469, and is a great resource for those feeling overwhelmed and in need to connect with a safe, supportive person.

Senior Life Solutions at Myrtue Medical Center offers mental health support, and there are local chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, GriefShare, Nami Southwest Iowa, and local churches and civic organizations.

Check out the local community events calendar in the Harlan Newspa-

pers for times and dates.

There are outdoor activities as well, like recent snow shoeing hikes offered by Shelby County Naturalist Christina Roelofs, or sledding at Pioneer Park.

Consider setting up a trivia night over video chat, start a virtual book club, or just call a friend.

“The key is to be intentional about our connections,” Sandquist said, as well as strengthen self-care and coping practices. Exercise, sleep, and use calming practices such as deep breathing or mindfulness.

Even before the pandemic, loneliness was increasingly recognized as a serious public health issue. One national survey from Cigna found 61 percent reported loneliness in 2019, compared to 54 percent in 2018, and that likely increased this past year with the pandemic.

“Research and our personal experience teaches us that social isolation and loneliness are problems that are not going away and are only exacerbated by this pandemic,” Sandquist said.

“We must start fighting for our connection as though our lives depend on it.

“They do.”

MMH's Senior Health Solutions offers Isolation Coping Strategies

Solutions *from previous page*

to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions: high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and even death.

Myrtue Medical Center's Senior Life Solution program is encouraging people to engage in meaningful, productive activities to help boost mood and maintain their overall emotional health and well-being.

Dave Bauman, Director of Senior Life Solutions, said "It is important to find ways to connect and engage in activities to help mitigate symptoms of anxiety and depression during this time.

"We put together these quick tips to share with our communities and hope they will encourage self-care and support."

Quick Tips for Older Adults Experiencing Social Isolation

1. Find or keep a sense of purpose. Take up a hobby such as growing an herb garden, crossword puzzles, knitting, or other activities.

2. Age-appropriate workouts can help you not only stay in physical shape but in mental shape as well. Gentle exercises such as walking are suggested.

It is always recommended to consult a healthcare professional or primary care physician first.

3. Manage medication. Do you have enough to last you for the next 30-60 days? If you need help managing medications, contact your doctor or a loved one who can help you.

4. Keep a routine that includes consistent sleep/wake cycles. Incorporate talking to family or friends in that routine. Whether it be writing them a letter or calling them on the phone.

Quick Tips for Families

1. Stay active, and do it together! Walk the family dog, take a bike ride, or a walk together.

2. If your church has temporarily closed, check-in with them to see if they are offering virtual services that your family can attend together from home.

3. If you have kids home from

Tips for Caregivers

■ Take five to refuel. Make a list of things that help you relax and take 2 to 3 breaks throughout the day.

■ Call or write a friend who can lend a sympathetic ear, make you laugh, and remind you that you are not alone.

■ Pursue other interests. Hobbies, sports, crafts, and other pursuits are not frivolous. They help you clear your mind of worry – if only briefly.

Care for Yourself

■ Nourish your body. Ensure you are eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of water. If produce is hard to come by right now, check to see if local farmer's markets are delivering.

■ Take a break from the news. Although it is important to stay updated, it is recommended to take at least a 15-minute break.

■ Stay connected to your loved ones or a mentor using your phone, or applications like Facetime or Skype to speak to them virtually.

school, make a video (on your smartphone!) and send it to a loved one who lives far away.

A fun interactive way to simply say, hello.

Bauman added, "Think of self-care like putting on an oxygen mask on an airplane.

"The flight attendant always instructs travelers to put on their own mask before securing others. You must take care of yourself right now to continue caring for and supporting those around you."

If you or a loved one is in need, contact the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline (800) 985-5990 that provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

Additionally, older adults and adults living with disabilities can contact the Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line, an accredited crisis line at 800-971-0016.

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, go to your nearest emergency room or dial 911.

Available at your service are L to R - Melanie Boese, Dave Bauman, and Lynne White. (Photo contributed)



Telehealth Therapy Services Offers Seniors At-Home Care

REGIONAL -- Myrtue Medical Center's Senior Life Solutions is an intensive outpatient group therapy program for seniors. Individuals may benefit from the program if they are experiencing symptoms of age-related depression or anxiety, dealing with difficult life transitions, a recent health diagnosis, or the loss of a loved one.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Myrtue Medical Center immediately started to identify ways to continue to meet with seniors in the community. Myrtue's Senior Life Solutions began providing services remotely, often called teletherapy, to its patients in April. This allowed their senior patients to receive the care they needed while remaining safe and secure at home.

Teletherapy services are provided via telephone or computer by Melanie Boese, the licensed therapist for Senior Life Solutions. After an initial assessment, Senior Life Solutions individualizes a care plan for each patient where they meet up to three times per week in an encouraging, supportive setting utilizing face to face and/or teletherapy services.

"We knew that the pandemic had quickly escalated stress in our community, and finding ways to bring and keep people together was vital. By taking advantage of the technologies available, we have been able to encourage unity and social cohesion against all odds," said Melanie Boese.

Senior Life Solutions Director, Dave Bauman, said, "Our teletherapy services allow our patients to continue to reap the benefits of group and individual therapy from the safety of their homes. During a group session, we all dial in on the phone or log in from a computer at the same time, and each patient has the opportunity to form a bond and sometimes even friendship with other members in the group who are experiencing similar life changes."

Bauman added, "Emotional health services are needed more than ever during these difficult times, and it is wonderful being part of a program that improves the quality of life in our community." An anonymous member of the Senior Life Solutions group shared, "It isn't the same as face to face, but I felt very, very supported. I was glad we were able to still be together. For those that aren't tech-savvy, the staff has been very helpful keeping us all connected."

Senior Life Solutions staff includes a board-certified psychiatrist, a licensed social worker, and a registered nurse, who are dedicated to the emotional well-being of the seniors in the community. All Senior Life Solutions services are confidential and HIPAA compliant. Referrals to the program can be made by anyone, including self-referrals, a patient's physician, family members, friends, or any other healthcare professional. For more information, call 712-755-4327.



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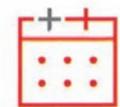


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STAINED GLASS ART

From a Hobby to a Bonafide Business

Konnie Schechinger credits *The Forgotten Artist* group for her stained glass growth and connecting fans to her art

By Josh Byers, *Publisher*

HARLAN -- Konnie Schechinger's love of stained glass was more of a hobby until she entered the prime of her life and as an 'empty nester' expanded her one-time hobby into a respected art business.

"About seven or eight years ago, it really came along and I started making a lot more product," Konnie said, noting that *The Forgotten Artist* group in Harlan was key to her growth with its semi-annual shows that connected her to fans of her art.

But there was also something more.

"They're a great group of artists and there's a nice camaraderie," she said. "We see each other at various art shows and support each other. It's just a great thing for Shelby County."

Stained glass involves cutting small pieces of colored glass and arranging them in different forms or pictures, then holding them together with a lead or copper frame.

It's a thousand-year-old art form, but for Konnie it's only been about 20 years since she took a class at Iowa Western Community College and started dabbling in the art.

To hear Konnie tell it, "I would work at night at the kitchen counter and then clean up but no matter how hard I'd try, it seems like a shard of glass would end up in my youngest son Brian's foot!"

So it wasn't until she and her husband, Ron, became empty nesters that the sometime profitable, some-time hobby took off.

"When I started years ago it was really just a hobby but it's expanded to make money

See more of Konnie's art on page 11!



Konnie Schechinger points to a Nativity scene she says is one of her most popular pieces: "There are 86 cuts on this piece and you have to sodder it all together." (Photo by Josh Byers)

“When I started years ago it was really just a hobby, but it’s expanded to make money and I enjoy doing it.

KONNIE SCHECHINGER *Artist*

and I enjoy doing it," she said. "When somebody places an order, I'm excited to do it, I'm not like, 'oh no, another one!'" Oftentimes, satisfied cus-

tomers will make requests.

"I love creating something that is a vision for somebody, they may not have a picture of what they want, but we work

together," she said. "The enjoyment is when they're so happy with the end result."

Over the years, Schechinger has learned many different techniques that have made it easier. For one, she can't believe she worked so many years without a grinder.

"It is a challenge, some patterns take more time and more figuring out how to get to the end result," she said. "A piece with a lot of glass pieces can take a lot of time, but it's not necessarily hard."

One of the more creative requests she's made was a stained glass version of the Rolling Stones' tongue and lips logo for a customer's husband.

"Since I've gained a lot more exposure, I've started to do a lot more commissioned work," she said, noting she still finds time for family keepsakes. "Every year I make my grandsons a Christmas ornament with the year on it."

Schechinger *please see next page*



Bee Hive letting in the sunlight. (Photos contributed)

Stained glass hobby becomes business

Schechinger from previous page

An educator by day for more than 30 years with the Harlan Community School District and an artist by night, all of Schechinger's work is done in her new basement shop. Recently she started doing garden stands which have been very popular.

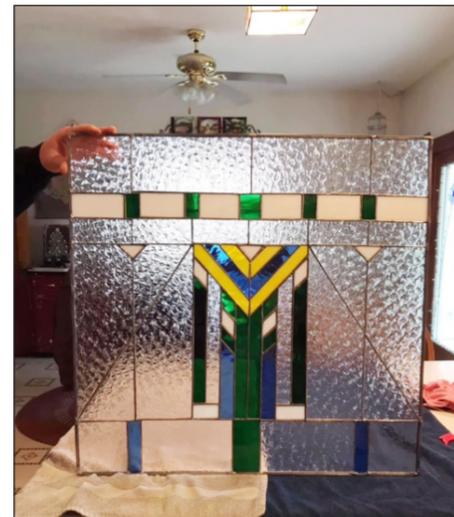
And while many artists never cross the threshold of selling their work, Konnie

only reserves that for her first and her second piece. "I just couldn't sell it, plus my nephew [Shawn Carter] made the frame," she said.

Konnie's oldest son, Brad, is a Harlan contractor and his wife, Kelsey, is a teacher and they have three boys. Her daughter, Mary, an Iowa State Extension Agent, is married to Danny Olson, also a contractor, and they live in Hubbard, IA, with their two boys.

And remember mention of Konnie's youngest son, Brian, the one who used to tip-toe around the kitchen to avoid those invisible shards of glass? Well, he is now married to Tori and they both work for the family seed company in Harlan.

If you're interested in connecting with Konnie for a possible project, she can be reached at koschechinger@yahoo.com.



Some of Schechinger's work includes L to R -- a cardinal stand, a window, and a chicken window.

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How often should I see the Doctor?

REGIONAL -- Routine health checkups are a key part of staying healthy. Older adults may feel like they're always visiting one doctor or another. But what is an acceptable frequency for doctor appointments?

The answer isn't always so cut and dry, and many health professionals have mixed feelings even among themselves over the magic number.

Doctor visit frequency is not a one-size-fits-all answer. A yearly physical or checkup is a given, even for people who are healthy.

People with a family history of certain conditions, like sleep disorders, cancer, high blood pressure, and other conditions, may need to see a doctor more frequently than those with no such histories. In addition, patients may need

A yearly physical or checkup is a given, even for people who are healthy.

referrals to certain specialists who work together to provide an overall health plan.

That can increase the number of appointments and shorten the intervals between them. Johnson Memorial Health offers some statistics.

- People visit the doctor four times a year on average.
- Studies show that poor or uninsured people prolong the time between doctor's visits.
- Individuals with high blood pressure may need to see the doctor four times a year to ensure medications are working properly.
- Patients on dialysis see

the doctor several times a week.

Dr. Jennifer Caudle, a family physician and assistant professor at Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford, NJ, says too often people visit the doctor only when they are really sick. That works to their disadvantage because the appointment will focus only on treating the illness instead of addressing other preventative care and screenings. Balance is necessary in regard to health care.

Patients can work together with their doctors to develop screening schedules that are customized to their particular profiles. These schedules can be modified as health history information changes or as patients age. Doctors can dial back or increase health visits as needed.

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Lola and Bill Royal of Harlan look through a book reminiscing about a trip they made to China. The Royals enjoy traveling in the United States and abroad. They chose to retire in Harlan 28 years ago. (Photo by Kim Wegener)

Royals glad they retired in Harlan 28 years ago

By Kim Wegener, *Family Living Editor*

HARLAN -- Back in 1993, Bill Royal was about to retire after a 28 year career with the Omaha Fire Department. He and his wife, Lola, were ready to leave city life.

"Bill was getting ready to retire from OFD (Omaha Fire Department) and looking for a quiet place. My mother, Florence Ohlinger, was still living (in Harlan) so it made it nice to be close to her home and spend time with her," said Lola about their decision to retire in Shelby County.

Twenty-eight years later, they are still happy with their decision to make the move to Harlan and purchase a home on College Boulevard.

Royals met at a dance club in Omaha

A native of Centralia, IL, Bill's family moved to Omaha when he was eight-years-old. He attended Omaha Public School and following graduation he enlisted in the United States Navy. Bill was stationed on an ammunition ship, The USS Mauna Kea, off the coast of Vietnam. He had a 22 year military career, four years active and the rest in the reserves.

While serving in the reserves, he transferred to the Air Force where he was a firefighter traveling to many places including Japan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, California, Las Vegas and Virginia. Following active duty military, he began his employment with the Omaha Fire Department stationed on an aerial ladder truck working at many fire stations throughout the Omaha area.

Bill first met Shelby County native, Leola "Lola" Ohlinger at a dance club in Benson. Lola grew up on a farm near Panama and attended St. Mary's Catholic School in Panama. She attended college for a short time and moved to Omaha.

Lola and Bill were married in 1969 at St. Cecelia's Cathedral in Omaha. They lived in California after Bill went to Vietnam and then moved to Omaha. Lola worked for the Omaha Public School and enjoyed volunteering with the

“ We really love having time with family and grandkids, going to activities at school, playing cards and just having time together. -- LOLA ROYAL

school system on committees working as a school liaison for Emmy Gifford Children's Theatre (now the Rose Theatre) and working school fundraising events.

After they got settled in Harlan, Lola started working for the Harlan Community Schools in a behavior disorder classroom and preschool, a job she enjoyed for 14 years. She attends St. Michael's Catholic Church where she has served on committees and belongs to the Rosary Society. Lola is also a member of the VFW Auxiliary and a sewing group.

Their family includes three daughters: Wendy and her husband, Jason Rau, live at Sandy Point Lake, Ashland, NE; Ann Royal, Bellevue, NE; and Abby Royal, Salt Lake City, UT. The Royals have three grandchildren: Carter, Sydney and Emma.

"We really love having time with family and grandkids, going to activities at school, playing cards and just having time together," said Lola.

They love to travel in United States and abroad

"Bill and I have been very fortunate to travel a lot. It is something which we enjoy doing. We have traveled to Europe, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Ireland and China. We loved going to all these great places," said Lola.

Royals *please see next page*

Royals glad to retire to Harlan

Royals from previous page

The Royals also enjoy road trips to see the United States meeting people and visiting family members.

"It is just a lot of fun. We were in Mississippi and people laughed at our accents. I thought they had an accent," said Lola.

Lola is also thankful she was able to go with daughter, Abby, to Budapest, Hungary when Abby, a competitive swimmer, swam in the Master World Competition.

"It was like the going to the Olympics with 12,000 competitive swimmers from all over the world," said Lola.

Bill's hobbies include watching war documentaries, history shows, car shows and auctions as well as swimming and going on walks. He has a large garden each year and he enjoys sharing the fresh produce with family, neighbors and friends.

Lola enjoys sewing, doing counted cross stitch projects and antique samplers on linen, embroidering, reading and watching old movies. She is a breast cancer survivor having been cancer free for more than five years.

"I was diagnosed with breast cancer on my birthday. I feel very lucky, I had great doctors in Harlan and Omaha. I feel very blessed," said Lola.

Saving strategies for retirement

REGIONAL -- Professionals on the cusp of retirement are often excited about what lies ahead. Some prospective retirees may look forward to traveling once they no longer have to go to work each day, while others may plan to return to school.

Regardless of how adults envision spending their retirement, they're going to need money when they're no longer being paid by their employers.

As retirement nears, some professionals may be concerned that they haven't saved enough. People who are worried they haven't saved enough can try various strategies to build up their account balances before they officially call it a career.

- Take advantage of catch-up contributions. Adults who are 50 or older are eligible to take advantage of catch-up contributions. These are designed to help people over 50 contribute more to certain retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or IRA, than statutory limits would otherwise allow.

There are limits that govern the amount of money people can designate as catch-up contributions, but taking advantage of this perk can help people save more as retirement draws closer.

- Consider relocating. A recent study from the Employee Benefit Research Institute found that housing costs accounted for 49 percent of seniors' spending. Professionals nearing retirement who live in areas traditionally associated with a high cost of living can begin to rethink their long-term housing strategy.

Relocating to an area with a lower cost of living is one option, while those



As retirement nears, some may be concerned they haven't saved enough. (Metro Photo)

who prefer to remain in their current town or city can consider downsizing to a smaller home to reduce their property taxes and monthly utility bills.

- Continue investing. Conventional wisdom suggests moving away from investing in stocks the closer you get to retirement.

Though that's a sound strategy, professionals who are trying to build their retirement savings in the final years before retiring could be missing out on significant growth by abandoning stocks entirely. Speak with a financial advisor about stock-based investments and your risk tolerance.

Maintaining a diversified portfolio with a little risk can be a great way to grow your savings as retirement draws near.

Professionals approaching retirement may be dealing with a mix of excitement and anxiety, particularly if they're concerned about their retirement savings. Various strategies can help quell such anxiety and make it easier for professionals over 50 to build their savings as retirement nears.

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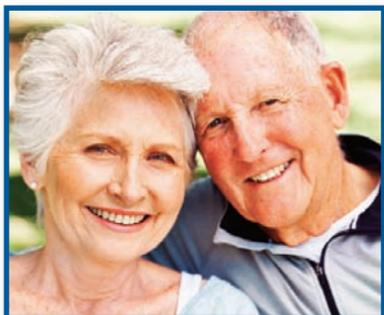


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