

RAGBRAI in ESTHERVILLE

CONTINUED

Sweet sanitation

BY AMY H. PETERSON
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Jessica Garrison Chung of West Hartford, Connecticut is on her ninth RAGBRAI driving the support RV for her dad, Les Garrison, 71, retired U.S. Marine Corps, of Arlington, Virginia. Les is a Sioux City native who enjoys returning

to Iowa each summer. Les rides a Street Strider, which has him standing upright while moving handlebars and elliptical foot pedals to move forward. His team of one is called SemperStride, and he raises awareness and funds for SemperFi & America's Fund, a nonprofit that provides lifetime support for critically wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans and military families. Les said the headwinds from Milford to Estherville were tough as his upright position makes

ABOVE: Les Garrison, right, of Arlington, Virginia, serendipitously bumped into his family member Amy H. Peterson, left, of Estherville, on North 7th Street Monday.

LEFT: Les Garrison, 71, rides a Street Strider on his ninth RAGBRAI

Photos by Jessica Garrison Chung, special to the Estherville News

The limits of current understanding

Against this backdrop of no distinct pattern statewide, Emmet County's specific struggles with colorectal cancer stand out. The county sees approximately 74 new cancer cases annually, with an age-adjusted colorectal cancer rate of 57.2 cases per 100,000 residents – substantially higher than both the state average of 39.9 per 100,000 and the national rate of 36.4 per 100,000.

"This is something that maybe could be an area to dig into," Dr. Sarah Nash, Assistant Professor in the University of Iowa's Dept. of Epidemiology and researcher with the Iowa Cancer Registry, said. "We're happy to collaborate with you on trying to understand why Emmet County has high rates of both colorectal cancer and cancer deaths," Dr. Nash added.

Especially concerning are the county's survival statistics. While 54% of Iowa residents with late-stage colorectal cancer remain alive five years after diagnosis, Emmet County's survival rate falls substantially below that benchmark at 35% – a disparity that has caught researchers' attention across multiple health outcomes.

The environmental question mark

Iowa's agricultural landscape inevitably draws scrutiny as researchers search for explanations. The state leads the nation in corn production, pork, eggs and ethanol, while ranking among the top users of agricultural chemicals. Recent scientific findings have added layers of complexity to these concerns.

A March 2024 study by Dr. Peter S. Thorne of the University of Iowa's Department of Occupational and Environmental Health

had two sites, not just one. It was clearly marked on the town support map we all got in the RAGBRAI app. No tricky driving or backing up needed. Dump and water refill – not just dump, and super friendly guys running the stations. I hopped out with my gloves and boots on, but they had already hooked us up to their hose and we were underway. I didn't touch a thing!" Jessica said.

"It was open on our way into town, not just out – this helps with lines and congestion. You

RIGHT: Les Garrison, right, takes a moment on RAGBRAI with his granddaughter, Charlotte, left, and Camille Chung and his Street Strider on which he rides across Iowa each year.

Photos by Jessica Garrison Chung, special to the Estherville News

struggles with colorectal cancer while neighboring counties face different challenges.

Focus on what we can control

Amid the uncertainty, health officials emphasize actionable prevention strategies for Emmet County residents. Colorectal cancer remains largely preventable through lifestyle changes and frequent screening. Key strategies include avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol, maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, and getting regular screening beginning at age 45.

Only 68% of eligible Emmet County residents have been screened for colorectal cancer. Researchers get it. There's not a pleasant or pretty way to screen for it, though as an alternative to a colonoscopy, it's now possible to send a stool sample in a specific container to a lab and receive the results privately.

The University of Iowa Cancer Center is bringing together an expert panel to further discuss and investigate Iowa's high cancer rates. While the Harkin Institute at Drake, founded by former U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, the Iowa Environmental Council have partnered to conduct listening sessions around cancer environmental risks.

Whitney Zahnd, Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa College of Public Health, emphasized that addressing cancer requires actions at multiple levels.

"We never want to overlook that behind every number and data point are people who experience cancer and their family members," Zahnd said.

Community resources and future research

"There are things we can each do as individuals, but there are also things that can be done in communities and state levels to help reduce risk."

Continuing the search

As agricultural expert Charles

"

I hopped out with my gloves and boots on, but they had already hooked us up – I didn't touch a thing!

-JESSICA GARRISON CHUNG



Estherville Golf Course sold

Minnesota investor, radio personality purchases golf course, bowling alley, home from owner Iverson

BY AMY H. PETERSON
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operations of the golf course on Aug. 31, the bowling alley on Sept. 1. Because when the partners found out Iverson also owned the bowling alley, they, with Iverson and realtor Tammy Fredericksen, purchased the entire package: bowling alley, home, and golf course.

Here's what's happening: a golf tournament on Aug. 29 in honor of Trace Iverson, who with wife Lesli co-owned and operated the business until his death from cancer of the esophagus on Oct. 11, 2024. Lesli said the partners are dedicated to honoring the memory of Trace and keeping the current employees if they still want to work in the business. They plan to bring in a golf pro to give lessons and open a pro shop, operating the clubhouse restaurant and bar year round.

Membership prices will likely stay the same, at least for a while. The Estherville Lincoln Central cross country and golf teams will still have use of the course as they have to this point.

Lesli said, "I think Trace dropped these people in my lap."

Expanding on their plans on their first visit to Woody's Pizza, Creed and Jake said they wanted to invest in children and youth in the community by offering golf lessons from a pro who's committed to education and mentoring of youth as well as having a deep knowledge of and skill at golf. The two also had high compliments on Estherville's bowling leagues and high school program, and seek to expand on it.

Creed is originally from the Pocahontas area. He told Lesli he hopes the community will accept him.

"We're not some big city guys coming in from the Twin Cities to just take over. I'm from a small town. Jake grew up around farming. We want to invest in and grow with Estherville," Creed said.

Vincent Companies has invested in a variety of ventures recently, including a data center in Marshfield, Wisconsin, and in May, 2025 held a grand opening of its indoor shooting range, virtual reality studio, training institute, and store in New Prague.

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Evening Specials

Tuesday, July 29:
Bingo (Earlybird 6:30, Main Event 7:00)
Canteen open for dinner

Wednesday, July 30:
Auxiliary Ladies Serving
2 pc Chicken \$9.25 or \$8.75
Pulled Pork \$8.75
Served with Fresh Baked Bread, Vegetable & Dessert

Thursday, July 31:
6 oz Top Sirloin or 6 Fan Tail Shrimp \$10.95
Served with Potato, Salad and Roll

Friday, August 1:
Fish Dinner (Swai) \$10.95
Served with Potato, Salad and Roll

Saturday, August 2: Off the menu

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