

# Pub

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Grandparents Richard “Dick” Murphy and Mary Agnes Murphy were born in the Chicago area in the 1920s and are second generation. They moved to Newton in the early 1950s and adopted two children. Dick worked at Vernon Company until the late 1980s and Mary was an English teacher.

While working on the graphic arts team of the Vernon Company, Dick would frequently meet with artists like Bil Keane, who he formed a friendship with. Hence why Fudge will be putting framed “Family Circus” art on the walls of Murph & Mary’s. To this day Fudge still gets compliments about his grandpa.

“A lot of people come up to me and are like, ‘Oh! I miss your grandfather. I remember working with him,’” Fudge said. “And my grandma had her master’s in English and she was always making us recite poetry from memory as young children, which was a bit of a nightmare. But I’m happy about it now!”

The Murphys lived on West Ninth Street South in Newton. The couple led interesting lives. Dick was a World War II veteran who also went on to serve in nearly every branch of the military except for the Air Force. Fudge said his grandfather is the reason he joined the military.

“He was quick-witted and a little

grumpy,” Fudge said with a laugh. “And his favorite term was ‘Humbug!’ Which is on the back of our shirts. Curmudgeon is a good word for my grandfather. He was curmudgeonly lovable. I love him.”

With a family history filling the pub with its own local — and personal — character, Fudge is excited to not only share his family’s story but also share his passions for craft beer and his love for Newton, and to just have a place where people can feel safe and commune.

“I think it’s going to be a really cool atmosphere and a fun time,” Fudge said.

### MAKING A PUB THAT EVERYONE CAN EMBRACE

Murph & Mary’s Pub is setting itself up to be a community gathering place where families can enjoy a beer or a root beer while playing a board game and snacking on popcorn, or, eventually, wood-fired pizzas. Fudge envisions a warm and inviting space with live music, bingo, trivia nights and karaoke on the regular.

“I want to create a warm atmosphere where you can feel comfortable bringing your children in here and it’s not a crazy, rowdy pub,” Fudge said. “It’s a place where you can commune together with other people in this town. Having a beer, eat some good food and just hang out. In the summer we have this entire patio.”

Which he intends to make good use out of for events. Fudge is determined to make Murph & Mary’s accessible to every kind of bar patron. Although Fudge is a big fan of craft beer and will have

unique varieties available for that clientele, he will also have the go-to domestics for the non-craft beer drinkers.

“I just want everyone to feel comfortable here,” Fudge said.

It is an idea that harkens back to the old idea of what a pub truly is: a public house. It is a place for the community to get together. Fudge acknowledged many of the most successful bars adopt a more genial — or, dare say, family-friendly — atmosphere, which seems to lend to a longer lifespan.

“For bars I think they fall into the trap of trying to steer towards a certain clientele, and that obviously steers away another, probably wider, demographic of a town,” Fudge said. “I think it’s important to teach responsible drinking habits and try to welcome everyone. It’s a place to share ideas. It’s not just a place to drink.”

### NEWTON CONNECTIONS TURN INTO A PASSION

Although he has been living in Newton for almost 10 years, Fudge grew up in Urbandale and Iowa City. But his family planted their roots in Newton, and it was a city Fudge found himself frequently visiting during the summers. His father was a cardiologist in town at the Iowa Clinic for a long time.

Of course the Newton connections only grow with his other grandfather, Cliff Fudge, who worked as a mechanical engineer at Maytag.

“Newton is in my roots,” Fudge said. “My wife and I have been planting some roots, and I thought, well, it’s about time

I own my own bar.”

With almost two decades of bar experience under his belt, Fudge certainly knows his way around beer taps. Prior to becoming the owner of his own bar, he was the general manager of The Cellar Peanut Pub in Newton, which has since closed and now serves as the location of Murph & Mary’s Pub.

“It’s been a dream of mine. I’ve been in this business for damn near 20 years. It was time,” Fudge said, acknowledging he has a clear vision for what he wants Murph & Mary’s to be. “Newton needs something that inspires some passion. We need to have passion for this town, because this town has so many cool stories.”

By showcasing his own family’s history in Newton, Fudge hopes it makes people have more local pride. The bar is coming online after the county, the city and a private developer solidified a funding mechanism for a large development at Legacy Plaza. Fudge is confident the campus will make its own ecosystem.

“I think it’s going to promote this town even more,” Fudge said. “I’d love to see downtown start thriving and in the square. Being a kid and going down there was so cool. Every storefront was just full. I want to see this town thrive again because I have so many fond memories of it as a child.”

Murph & Mary’s Pub is located at 403 W. Fourth St. N. Suite 104 at the Legacy Plaza campus in Newton and is due to be open very soon.

# Inspection

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The temporary suspension would not last more than 60 days, Hansen said. Council members were in consensus to let the mayor suspend the program.

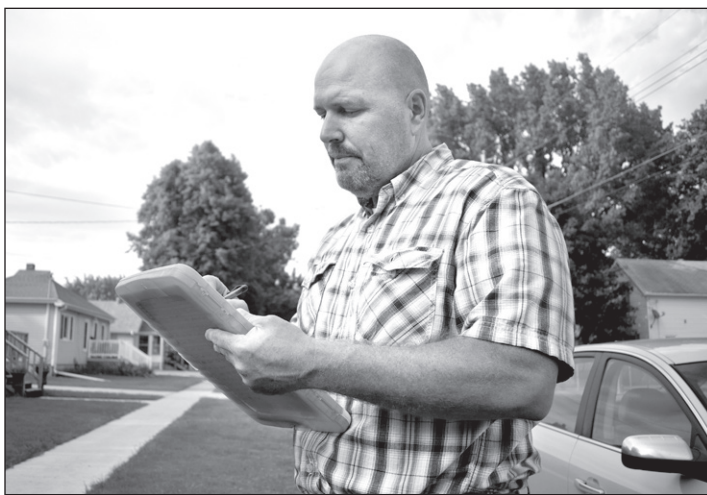
Council member Randy Ervin said some of the confusion he’s heard about from commercial property owners are related to the registration fee. Some people thought they were getting charged inspection fees per business, when it should be per building or per property for inspection fees, Ervin said.

Newton Fire Chief Jarrod Wellik oversees the commercial property inspections. He clarified the city inspects the whole property when there are multiple occupancies. But each business needs to register with the city. Wellik said this is for safety purposes as it provides the city with contact information.

Hansen said the ad hoc committee will meet with commercial property owners and listen to what they have to say, then bring the information back to council.

### UPDATE ON RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM

Erin Chambers, the city’s community development director, reviewed the outcomes of the building trades board meetings about the rental housing inspection program. The building trades board is a five-member



Christopher Braunschweig  
Newton News  
Jason VanAusdall, a contracted rental property inspector for Iowa Inspections, LLC, carries out duties outside a rental property in Newton.

board that makes recommendations on construction regulations, licensing and permitting.

“The building trades board made several recommendations to the city council, which will be forwarded to the council at a future date for your action,” Chambers said. “First off, they recommended no changes to the adopted codes. Landlords can file an appeal to the building trades board on code questions.”

The board also recommended nuisance items that are not in the building — like a yard — will not be noted violations necessitating a residential re-inspection. Those issues will be forwarded to the police department’s community services officers to be dealt with as any other issue on owner-occupied properties.

Other recommendations include making enhancements to the checklist provided to landlords and allowing electronic re-inspections only when there are no major violations and three or fewer minor violations. Like Chambers mentioned before, the council will have to take action on these

recommendations in the near future.

City staff are already implementing administrative changes to its inspection program and processes. ImageTrend software is being used for inspections, which generates an inspection report that Newton City Administrator Matt Muckler said includes code references and pictures.

“I think that’s going to be helpful for people,” Muckler said. “...They can go back to the code and verify if what they’ve been asked to fix is a code violation.”

George later added, “This report that has the photos and the link to the code will be extremely helpful not only to the landlords but I believe also to us as council members and to the staff. To be able to have a record and to be

able to audit the work that is done, we have a very clear record.”

Ervin praised the work of the ad hoc committee and the input the group received. As of March 6, the rental property inspections conducted by the city’s contractor have not reported any violations. Still, Ervin is looking forward to how the presentation and follow-up has changed.

Rental property owners have always had the ability to appeal their inspections, but Chambers said the city may not have done a good job educating people on how the process works. From community development’s standpoint, staff want to make sure the appeal process is known to all property owners.

There is no fee to appeal an inspection.

# Wages

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money isn’t everything. But I think with the current events I would ask the board respectfully consider that option.”

The sheriff made the request during the public comment portion of the board of supervisors meeting, and he did so without asking for an answer.

There are many county employees who are not union members but are affected by the union contracts. The unions signed a five-year contract, and there are about two years left until it expires. Costs for nearly everything have increased substantially, which prompted Halferty to make his request in the first place.

Newton News followed up with Halferty in a phone interview.

“I just simply asked them to consider adding or increasing whatever that annual agreement was, but they would have to open the union contracts and negotiate with the union to do that,” Halferty said. “But it was for all county employees. I was referencing the jail because I had lost a few jailers.”

Three full-time jailers and three part-time jailers have left the sheriff’s office. Halferty said all of them were taking jobs that paid higher wages, but they were not dissatisfied with the job they had in Jasper County. With Jasper’s proximity to the metro in Polk County, Halferty said the county has to stay competitive.

“I think it is important to retain my employees, and we want to be competitive in our wages in order to keep those employees,” Halferty said.

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