

DECEMBER 2023

CITYVIEW

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THRILL OF THE CHILL

As another winter season establishes itself, with it comes the opportunity to sled, skate, ski and, inevitably, take a tumble. Look inside for some local spots to get your outdoor activity fix.

GIFT GUIDE
Look inside for
MORE THAN
120
local ideas!

FEATURE STORY

Robert Hullihan's Christmas classic, "Twas the night before," returns with illustrations by Brian Duffy.

CENTER STAGE

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FOOD DUDE

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Holiday traditions

Inner tubes made this young boy's eyes as large as snowballs. We didn't have a lot of fancy inflatables when I was a kid, so we simply made do. As such, we went tubing with tubes — inner tubes. Most were a standard size, but when a massive tractor-sized inner tube was available, my friends and I couldn't strap on our snow boots and stocking caps fast enough. The challenge was to see how many of us could stack up on that inner tube while it slid down the hill. And, if you were lucky, you weren't the first one to fall forward and be run over by the oncoming circle of childhood zeal.

As a child, I never experienced ice skating or snow skiing. My mother told me a story of her childhood pal falling backwards on skates and having the back of the blade stabbed into the back of her friend, requiring a trip — with the blade intact — to the doctor. No thanks. I have since tried ice skating a handful of times as an adult, but that image doesn't leave my mind.

Snow skiing certainly looked like a lot of fun, but that required ski equipment and money, neither of which I had. Once out of college with a few bucks in my pocket, I did learn to enjoy skiing. The first effort wasn't so great, though. Lessons were for sissies, I mused. So I strapped on the skis and jumped on the lift with my now-wife, Jolene. I assumed she would tell me how to dismount from the chair lift while we were being transported to the top of the hill. What she gave me instead was complete silence... and I did somersaults back down the hill. Once I gathered all my equipment and swallowed my pride, the next stop was for ski lessons.

So, skating and skiing were OK, but tubing was more my style. Still is. Maybe you can relate. If you can, or even if you can't, you should seek out the central Iowa locations listed in this issue where you can sled, ski and skate — and even tube.

Christmas classics

As part of our holiday tradition, we bring back Robert Hullihan's Christmas classic, "Twas the Night Before..." With illustrations by Brian Duffy, this story comes to life on our pages, sharing the struggle of generational differences and the importance of tradition. I read the story every year, and I am touched each time with a slightly different meaning. I hope you make it part of your Christmas tradition, too.

I am also pleased to publish this year's version of Michael Gartner's "The Twelve Days of Christmas" column, as we have done for many years.

Look for these stories and much more in this issue of your locally owned CITYVIEW magazine. Enjoy the holidays and thanks for reading. ■

Shane Goodman

Editor and Publisher

CITYVIEW

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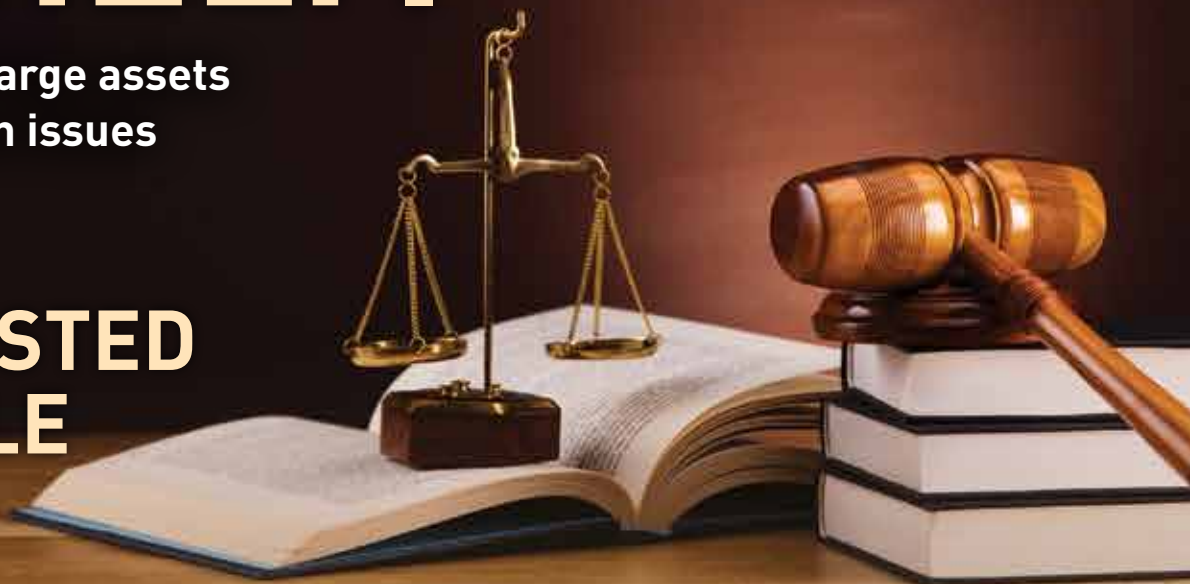
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CONTENTS

CITYVIEW

DECEMBER 2023



FEATURE 72 THRILL OF THE CHILL

As another winter season establishes itself, with it comes the opportunity to sled, skate, ski and, inevitably, take a tumble. Look inside for some local spots to get your outdoor activity fix.

Cover photo courtesy of Seven Oaks Recreation

Start your morning off right with an update from

thedailyumbrella

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SCAN HERE

Brought to you by the publisher of CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines.

FEATURES

- 24 'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE... Our Christmas classic for the holidays
- 28 THE BUSINESS OF PAWN Trends, regulations and stigma of the pawn store industry
- 72 THRILL OF THE CHILL As another winter season establishes itself, with it comes the opportunity to sled, skate, ski and, inevitably, take a tumble. Look inside for some local spots to get your outdoor activity fix.

NEWS & COMMENTARY

- 11 STRAY THOUGHTS Uneasy times as a librarian shut out other ideas
- 12 CIVIC SKINNY DART funding concerns. Campaign donation totals. Business Record subscribers. And lung cancer.
- 14 GUEST COLUMN Merry Christmas...
- 20 POLITICAL MERCURY A pioneering Iowa Democrat

EAT & DRINK

- 62 LUNCH WITH Bill Mulstay and Mike Hughes
- 64 FOOD DUDE Oak Park — an anthology of love stories
- 65 BELLY UP TO: The Walnut

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- 36 MILESTONES
- 43 GIFT GUIDE
- 66 NONPROFIT GIVE GUIDE
- 97 JOB: Want to achieve your goals? Write them down

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- 80 BOOK REVIEWS "The Iliad" and "The Lost Library"
- 85 FILM REVIEWS "The Killer" embodies an amalgamation of missed opportunities
- 86 ART NEWS Moberg at 20
- 87 IOWA ARTIST More than just "throwing the wheel"
- 90 CENTER STAGE Classic, historic, and Charlie Brown for the holidays
- 91 CARS IN THE CITY Best-selling Chrysler Pacifica offers "cool" features

MUSIC

- 84 SOUND CIRCUIT Vibrant Music Hall
- 84 SOUND ADVICE Lorie Line, Shaun Johnson + the Big Band Experience, Michael W. Smith and more

PERSONALITIES

- 82 JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD The cost-of-concert blues
- 92 DES MOINES FORGOTTEN Chatsworth the talking reindeer, Toyland, caroling and luminaries
- 93 YOUR NEIGHBOR Part-time volunteer, full-time matriarch
- 94 PEOPLE & PETS What's all the buzz?
- 95 COLLECTIONS & HOBBIES From music theory to board game design
- 96 WALKS OF LIFE Early risers

2023-2024 IOWA WILD PROMOTIONAL SCHEDULE

DEC **5** **TWOSDAY**
\$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn (End of 1st Period)

DEC **8** **TEDDY BEAR TOSS NIGHT**

DEC **9** **WIZARD NIGHT**
Goalie Glove Oven Mitt Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

DEC **12** **TWOSDAY**
\$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn (End of 1st Period)

DEC **22** **WINTER WONDERLAND WEEKEND**

DEC **23** **ELF NIGHT**
Holiday Scarf Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

DEC **28** **IOWA VS COLORADO**
\$1 Popcorn (End of 1st Period)

DEC **30** **NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH**
Local Concert Series & Postgame Fireworks

JAN **5** **LOCAL HEROES NIGHT**
Hat Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

JAN **6** **BECKMAN BOBBLE NIGHT**
Adam Beckman Bobblehead Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

JAN **22** **IOWA VS TEXAS**
\$1 Hot Dogs (End of 1st Period)

JAN **24** **WINNING WEDNESDAY**
When the Wild Win, You Win!

JAN **26** **MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT**
Food Drive & Packing Cube Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

JAN **27** **COUNTRY NIGHT**
Mitchell Tenpenny Postgame Concert

FEB **9** **WOMEN IN SPORTS NIGHT**

FEB **10** **PINK IN THE RINK**
Specialty Jersey, LED Light Up Giveaway (First 5000 Fans)

FEB **19** **SENSORY AWARENESS NIGHT**
\$1 Hot Dogs (End of 1st Period)

FEB **21** **WINNING WEDNESDAY**
When the Wild Win, You Win!

MAR **9** **KIDS TAKEOVER DAY**
Iowa Wild Book Drive

MAR **10** **CRASH'S BIRTHDAY BASH**
Youth Jersey Giveaway (First 1500 Kids, 12 & Under)

MAR **22** **PRIDE NIGHT**

MAR **23** **BLACK OUT ALS NIGHT**
Specialty Jersey, Velcro Patch Hat Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

MAR **26** **TWOSDAY**
\$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn (End of 1st Period)

APR **5** **HAWKEYE NIGHT**
White Alternate Jersey Game

APR **6** **WALLSTEDT BOBBLE NIGHT**
Jesper Wallstedt Bobblehead Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

APR **9** **TWOSDAY**
\$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn (End of 1st Period)

APR **17** **WINNING WEDNESDAY**
When the Wild Win, You Win!

APR **19** **FAN APPRECIATION NIGHT**
Team Photo & Trading Cards Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)



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ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing editor@dmcityview.com.

Q. "What is happening with the AMC Cobblestone 9 theater?"

A. In 2016, AMC bought Carmike Cinemas for approximately \$1.1 billion. As a result, AMC took over the Southridge 12, AMC Classic Cobblestone 9 and AMC Classic Johnston 16 theaters, the first two of which are now closed.

Southridge 12 remains empty after closing its doors last January. AMC Classic Cobblestone 9, however, was purchased by Cadet 23 LLC on Sept. 19 for \$2,275,000. Cadet 23 LLC is managed by Fitness Ventures. The most likely outcome will be that the crunch fitness system will take over the former movie theater location as they expand into more locations, as is their goal per their website. They currently have 34 locations across several states.

AMC Classic Johnston 16 is currently still operating, but a for sale sign from JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated) recently popped up on the property. When asked about the state of the sale of the theater, Senior Vice President Aaron Hyde responded to CITYVIEW on Nov. 18.

"The AMC continues to operate for now. We just launched the property so there's no current deal in the works."

However, on Nov. 27, the Johnston theater has officially closed its doors.

Q. "Interstate 235 is an 'auxiliary Interstate highway,' so what agency is responsible for clearing out the dangerous debris?"

A. The reader who proposed this question said he saw an automobile tire; a long, twisted metal pipe; bricks; clothing; discarded beer and soda cans and bottles; and two large animal carcasses on the freeway.

The Iowa DOT is responsible for all highway cleanup, from animals to the list of varying debris. In the event of an emergency where the debris is dangerous to yourself and other drivers, call 911. Otherwise you can submit reports of debris to the Iowa DOT's website at www.iowadot.gov/Contact-us and select the "report an issue on the roadway" drop-down tab. If you catch someone in the act of littering on the highway, you can contact the "Keep Iowa Beautiful" no litter hotline. Call 1-888-NOLITTR (1-888-665-4887) and press 1. They request you have the following information available: license plate number, time and specific location the litter was thrown from the vehicle; description of what was thrown from the vehicle; and a vehicle description with the color, make and model.

Q. "Why does Iowa have such high levels of radon?"

A. According to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa has the highest average indoor radon concentration in the nation due to our glacial history. "As the glaciers came over Iowa, they deposited finely ground rocks that contain radium. Because the rocks that make up our soils are so finely ground, they have a large surface area to emit radon gas." ■

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YOUR VIEW

Letters are edited for space, spelling and clarity.

Join the conversation!

Do you have a comment or photo you'd like to share with readers of CITYVIEW through this page? Use the hashtag #dmcityview on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter — or email editor@dmcityview.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The cleanest restroom I have ever seen

Dear editor: The other day, I pulled into a fast-food place. Before ordering, I walked into the restroom to wash my hands. I was shocked! I looked around and could not believe what I saw. That was by far the cleanest restroom I have ever seen. That restroom was Taco John's on Army Post Road across from South Ridge. I looked at the counter, the toilet, the walls, and even in the corners for some kind of dirt or gunk build up. There was none. Afterwards, I complimented the workers for their cleanliness. Even the dining area was clean. Of all the restaurants I have eaten at, and even your fine dining restaurants, I have never seen one like this. I challenge you to find a fast food or fine dining restaurant in Des Moines that is cleaner than the Taco John's on Army Post Road. I bet you won't find one.

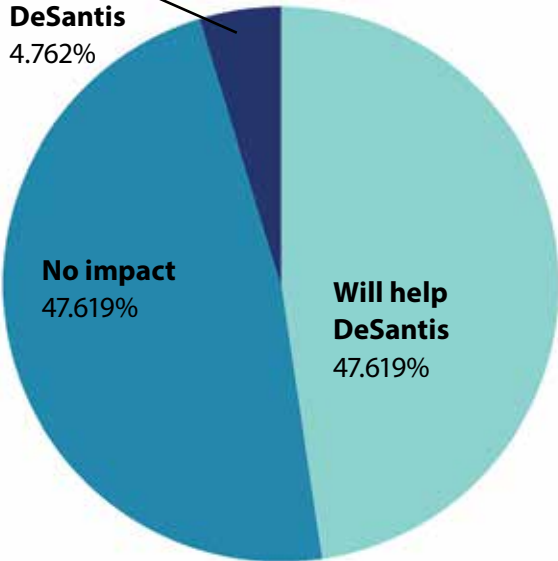
- Linda Munoz

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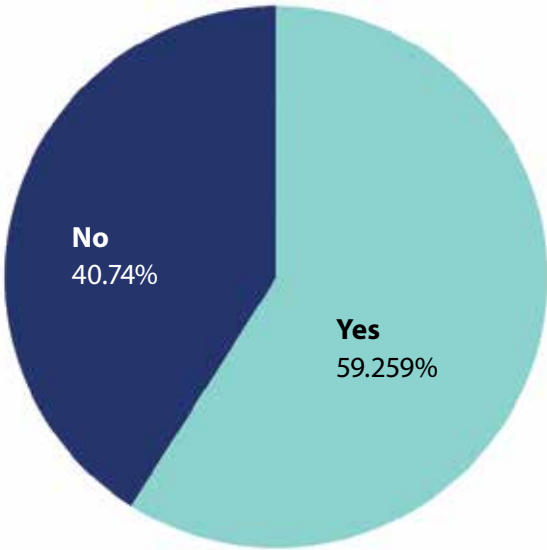
Results from last month's polls at www.dmcityview.com

What impact will Gov. Reynolds' endorsement of Ron DeSantis have?

Will hurt DeSantis
4.762%



Do you drink water from the tap in your home?



FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine (comments unedited)

CITYVIEW magazine: Kellogg's says cereal sales have dropped 1% per year for the last decade. When was the last time you had a bowl of cereal? And what kind was it?

- Stacia Spaur:** Last night. Fruity pebbles.
- Deb Cooper:** This morning & it was Special K with pecans.
- Frank Rhum:** Rarely. I can cram a box of Fruity Pebbles a couple times a year....but cereal is over rated. PROTEIN SHAKE only in the morning!
- Doug Bucklin:** Many years. Fruity Pebbles RULES!
- Blake Jeffrey:** Yesterday. Always been Life or Raisin Bran. But new entry: Cheerios cinnamon oat clusters
- Michael Leland:** This morning. Grape Nuts.
- Julie Luepke:** This morning; Coco Pebbles
- James N Colette Klier:** Almost never.
- Josh Yelland:** Every work day and sometimes weekend. Always honey nut cheerios. I toss a couple to the doggo
- Andy Winegar:** I gave up cereal in August because it's just a bunch of empty calories.
- Charley Wheeling-Ryan:** Cheerios! with Blueberries
- Alicia Summers:** Apple jacks is my go to
- Steve Qui Vive:** Years
- Tony Munoz:** Last week, Grape nuts
- Linda Vanderpool:** This morning was cheerios
- Adam Swihart:** Cinnamon Toast Crunch. I don't eat it anymore because it has got to have heroin in it.

RETWEETS



(comments unedited)

- @SwedishCanary:** Kids these days have no idea how rough we had it at their age... I used to have to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change a 3 channel TV
- @mnolangray:** I've literally never clicked copied and pasted text and thought, "I'm so glad it kept the formatting and font from the other document."
- @mommajessiec:** Moms be like, "Your cousin's neighbor's husband's aunt died. Just thought you should know."
- @MediocreJoker85:** I wonder what the part of my brain that used to store people's phone numbers is doing now.
- @ericamorecambe:** My phone should just know if the passcode is entered incorrectly the first 3 times then it's definitely me.
- @GraniteDhuine:** I had two mice from the local church at my door last night. They wanted to talk to me about cheeses
- @roastmalone_:** don't worry about why I watched your story within 5 seconds of it being up, worry about why you're checking your views within 5 seconds of posting.
- @thedad:** "Kids today are pathetic" is NOT a good take from the generation raising today's kids. It's like giving a bad Yelp review to the restaurant you run.
- @difficultpatty:** Did anyone ask the daylight if it wanted to be saved?
- @TheAndrewNadeau:** Nothing makes me feel as dumb as choking on water. Where is it even going? I have one throat and we do this literally 100 times a day. Just go straight down, bro.
- @joeljeffrey:** Don't donate your plasma. It's a big scam and they're just using it to make TVs. ■

Uneasy times as a librarian shut out other ideas

How can libraries defend the presence of some books and then insist that a gun magazine and a conservative newspaper do not belong?

The word for today is optics — but not the kind where your eye doctor is an expert.

Instead of eyeglasses, I am thinking about the kind of optics that result when the perception of some person's or some institution's values are contradicted by the reality of the actions they take.

Here's an example. This involves poor optics.

Librarians across Iowa have been put on the defensive by parents and grandparents who criticize some of the thousands of books that fill a community library or school library. This criticism has been especially sharp toward books intended for teenage readers that contain content with homosexual or transsexual themes or that include descriptions of sexual encounters that some people believe are too explicit for these readers.

Librarians have stepped forward to explain that it is not proper for people to force the removal of challenged books, thereby taking away other people's ability to choose what they want to read or what they want their children to read. Library administrators have informed parents how they can limit the books their children have access to in the library or in the classroom.

But those reasonable explanations are not the same message the Marshalltown Public Library is giving some patrons about content aimed at adult readers, not at young readers.

John Worden told me in an email last

week he has been called “our problem patron” by library administrators, because he has attended Marshalltown library board meetings for the past 12 months to ask the library to provide subscriptions to a couple of conservative publications, the American Rifleman magazine and the Epoch Times newspaper. The library has refused — even when a couple of library patrons offered to pay for the subscriptions.

Library director Sarah Rosenblum told library trustees earlier this year she had made a “deep dive” into the content of these publications and has serious concerns about the science coverage in Epoch Times and about the gun magazine being published by the National Rifle Association.

That is where the poor optics occur.

No one expects libraries to carry every book, every magazine, and every newspaper. But how can libraries defend the presence of some books whose themes and content have been challenged by parents and then insist, as Marshalltown's library does, that a gun magazine and a conservative newspaper do not belong in that library's collection?

Librarians have long advocated for what is called intellectual freedom. They believe in the principle of making lots of views and perspectives available and leaving it to their patrons to pick and choose what they want to read.

Most libraries operate like a buffet. Some people come for the steamed broccoli. Others

are drawn by the three-bean salad. That is why it is so baffling Marshalltown officials would dig in their heels and ignore reasonable requests from “our problem patron.”

The library dust-up in Marshalltown certainly shows the scope of our current political divide in Iowa. You often hear people talking about how Iowans are more divided now than they have been in the past.

But Michael Giudicessi, a Des Moines attorney, provided important context and insight when he spoke last week at the annual meeting of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council.

Michael reminded us that in 1857, Iowa voters ratified the state's constitution. Legal scholars praise the document for its clear recitation of the meaning behind the motto on Iowa's great seal. We learned it in Iowa history classes: “Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain.”

But in the beginning, the constitution was not resoundingly popular with people living in the state.

The ratification vote was 40,311 in favor and 38,681 against. That was an approval margin of 1,630 votes — meaning that a shift of 816 votes would have torpedoed the constitution Iowans still live under 166 years later.

Talk about optics ... ■

Randy Evans can be reached at DMRevans2810@gmail.com.



CIVIC SKINNY

BY CITYVIEW STAFF

DART funding concerns. Campaign donation totals. Business Record subscribers. And lung cancer.

DART recently released information on how much Des Moines and the surrounding communities contribute to the public transportation service. They say a 40% cut to their services is looming if additional funding is not received. Des Moines has contributed \$9.8 million this year, but under the new funding formula needs to see that number rise to \$17.5 million in 2029.

The two largest contributors to DART's funding through property taxes are Des Moines and West Des Moines with Des Moines planned to contribute \$9,846,235 in the 2024 fiscal year, or \$103.84 per taxpayer of a \$200,000 home, and West Des Moines at \$5,216,974, which would be \$94.19 per taxpayer. Other contribution numbers of note, and the second-highest contribution per taxpayer, belong to Windsor Heights at \$102.62, despite having the lowest total contribution number of \$236,908. Ankeny, Clive, Johnston and Urbandale will all surpass \$1 million in contributions.

DART provided information stating the average number of riders per hour on DART buses is 17, with the number rising to 27 at peak hours on its busiest routes. Sixty one percent of riders do not have a valid driver's license, and 61% also do not have a vehicle. Forty-three percent of DART riders have an annual household income of less than \$20,000 and fewer than 60% have an annual income of less than \$30,000.

DART says some of the service cuts suggested if they aren't able to gather more funding would lead

to longer wait hours and fewer route options. Two solutions were proposed, one would be to continue serving all of their current routes but with less frequency. The other is serving fewer destinations but serving those routes more frequently. DART named its higher ridership routes as 3, 6, 7, 15, 16 and 17, which would continue to run seven days a week but instead of routes running every 20-30 minutes, they would run every 60 minutes. DART says this would also heavily lower the amount of bus service on weekends and almost entirely eliminate it on Sundays.

The Iowa Legislature gave the City of Des Moines the option to increase its franchise fee, a tax on gas and electric bills, up to 2.5% in order to fund DART. This means the city could lower the amount it collects from property taxes for the next few years. If the city decides to continue to fund DART from property taxes only, the cut in services would take place.

On Nov. 28, Grimes City Council voted to withdraw from their DART membership, "The cost-benefit analysis just doesn't make any sense," said Grimes City Administrator **Jake Anderson**. "We maybe have 13 unique riders in the community." Grimes contributes \$645,919 of taxpayer money to DART, or \$60.63 per taxpayer. At that cost, Grimes could buy a vehicle for each DART rider and be money ahead.

In the most recent election, Des Moines voters approved the terminal expansion at the Des Moines International Airport. According to DART's numbers,

DART served 3.2 million passengers, while the airport served slightly less than 3 million. Of course this includes a lot of duplication. ...

Des Moines city council elections are in the books, and so are their campaign contributions. CITYVIEW pulled the available donation numbers for those running for city council positions that had a committee viewable on the IECDB's (Iowa Ethic and Campaign Disclosure Board) searchable database, starting from the beginning of 2023.

Ward 1. Winner of the Ward 1 seat **Chris Coleman** raised \$41,150.17 from 122 donations. His largest donation of \$2,500 was reached four times by **Douglas Mcaninch**, **Rick Tollakson**, **Galinsky Family Real Estate** and **Dawn Thornton**. Coleman also had two \$1,500 donations from **Will Knapp**. Runner-up **Rob Barron** pulled together \$19,656 for his campaign with 148 total donations. His largest was \$1,000, of which he had four, from **Fred Hubbell**, 6236 Laborers' PAC, #6334 Plumbers & Steamfitters Local Union 33, and **Jack Hatch**. **Kathy Hellstern** received a total of \$1,615 from 13 donations, with the largest being \$500 from **Ta-Yu Yang**. **RJ Miller's** campaign donation total came in at \$764 from nine donations, the largest being \$400 from himself.

Ward 2. Incumbent and winner of the Ward 2 seat **Linda Westergaard** received the largest total amount of \$90,829.04 for her campaign from 159 contributions. Westergaard's largest donation came from the Realtors Political Action Committee at

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CIVIC SKINNY CONT...

\$25,000. Runner-up **Chelsea Lepley** gained \$32,623.05 for her campaign from a total of 296 contributions, with the largest donation coming in at \$1,800 from FILDI Game Studio, LLC.

Ward 4. From 105 donations, incumbent and winner of the Ward 4 seat **Joe Gatto** received \$78,315 for his campaign with the largest donation being \$5,000 from **J. Elder II**. **Jason Benell's** campaign saw him raise \$12,415.50 from 114 contributions. His largest donation was \$1,500, which he received twice, both from **Timothy Urban**.

At-Large. Incumbent and winner of the At-Large seat, **Carl Voss**, raised the second most amount of money between all city council candidates with \$85,654 from the most total donations, 397. Voss' largest donation came in at \$5,000 from **Richard Voss**, and he received 26 donations of \$1,000 or more.

All in all, \$363,021.76 were donated to the Des Moines city council campaigns in the year of 2023 with 1,363 contributions in total. ...

In its Oct. 20 edition, the Business Record published its statement of ownership, management and circulation, as required by Iowa law for paid subscription newspapers that receive discounted postal rates and taxpayer-funded advertising from public entities. According to the numbers in the statement, the weekly newspaper's total number of single copies published nearest to the filing date was 5,400, with the average number of copies during the last 12 months being 5,417. Meanwhile, the total paid distribution on average for each issue in the last 12 months was 2,582. According to the U.S. census, as of 2021, there were approximately 17,000 "employer establishments" in Polk, Warren and Dallas Counties. Using those numbers, approximately 15% of all businesses in the three-county area are paid subscribers to the Business Record. But, of course, they "don't count the number of people they reach" because "they reach the people that count." Seriously. ...

In a recently released national report by Code.org, Iowa ranked as the seventh-best state for providing computer science education in public schools K-12. During the 2022-2023 school year, Iowa schools increased the amount of foundational computer science opportunities they provided from 71% to 83%. In the 2017-2018 school year, that number was 48%. From the report, when it comes to geographical location, 93% of suburban schools offered computer science opportunities, rural schools were at 85% and urban schools at 71%. ...

DMACC broke ground on a new \$9 million transportation institute on Nov. 14. This is a two-phase project that begins with a new, 8,600-square-foot building that will include classrooms, a three-story inspection bay and student study space. The current institute's 12-acre concrete training course where students practice driving techniques will be replaced. The second phase of the project will be to tear down the existing DMACC Transportation Institute that was built in 1988. The building is set to be named after DMACC alum **Dennis Albaugh** who donated \$1 million toward the project. Other funding came from a \$1 million grant from the State of Iowa, a \$500,000 donation from the Kent Corporation and a \$50,000 contribution from **Bob and Jane Sturgeon**. ...

A report from the American Lung Association revealed that Iowa is the 12th-worst state in the nation for lung cancer cases. The report also showed that Iowa is 10th-best in early diagnosis, and 11th-best for lung cancer screenings. Iowa saw 61.14 new cases per 100,000, which is higher than the national average of 54.6 per 100,000. Why so much cancer in Iowa? According to the report, Iowa has some of the highest levels of radon in the country, which is the second-leading cause of lung cancer. ■

NEWS & COMMENTARY

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GUEST COLUMN

BY MICHAEL GARTNER

Merry Christmas...

Twelve drummers drumming...

...for some folks who are stepping down — **Frank Cownie**, who served 20 years as mayor and now can go back to selling fur coats...and proud East-sider **Randy Peterson**, after 50-some years writing about sports...**Jay Byers**, who guided the Partnership and now is the perfect guy to head his alma mater, Simpson College...**Bob Pratt**, the distinguished federal judge who convinced the U.S. Supreme Court that there's more to sentencing than formulas...city spokesman **Al Setka**...and police captain **Dave Seybert**, a tough guy who knows the difference between mischief and crime...**Leisha DeSmet**, who is leaving as head of the Y to join the national Y organization...and city engineer and then assistant city manager **Pam Cooksey**, who was always helpful.

Eleven pipers piping...

...for some who are stepping up: **Kelly Baum**, new head of the Art Center...**Matthew Reed**, who now runs the Harkin Institute at Drake... **Kim Sheets**, winner of a special election to become Warren County auditor (giving the Democrats hope in their otherwise gloomy world)... **Jeremy Parsons**, the new boss at the Iowa State Fair...**Amanda Wanke** at DART...Gen. **Stephen Osborn**, the big boss at the Iowa National Guard... **Ian Roberts**, the school superintendent in Des Moines (but, really, who would want that job?)... and, of course, mayor-elect Connie Boesen.

Ten lords-a-leaping...

...for **Sue Woody** and everyone else at the Des Moines Public Library, especially the helpful men and women at the information desk downtown...for **Jeffrey and Stephanie Bruner**, who are headed to the Netherlands

for the climate, or maybe it's the political climate... for the 200 or so Register alumni who came to a reunion a few weeks ago — especially 85-year-old **Jim Risser**, who won two Pulitzer Prizes and traveled from Ashland, Oregon, and **Geneva Overholser** and **David Westphal**, who once ran the place and now live in New York...for **Tom Cullen** of Storm Lake, a terrific reporter who keeps learning from his father, **Art**, and his Uncle **John**...and, again, **Laura Belin**, the hardest-working (and maybe the best) reporter in Iowa.

Nine ladies dancing...

...while changing diapers for **Eloise Lucile Morse** and **Sam E. Bernabe**, and congratulations to proud grandparents **Mike and Cheryl Giudicessi** and **Sam and Mary Bernabe**. They'll show you pictures... for new neighbors **Ron and Mary Pick**...and old neighbors (and baseball fans) **Mike and Mary Pitcher** and **Megan Zach** and **Mike Regan**...for Iowa State freshman **Henry Allard**...the 2,200 new citizens who have been naturalized at Principal Park over the years...dental hygienist **Hillary Dörner**...and for 1953 state baseball champion **Dave Witke** of Council Bluffs Thomas Jefferson...

Eight maids-a-milking...

...at the Knapp Center for Coach **Darian DeVries** and Drake's men's basketball team, picked to win the Missouri Valley Conference. Especially **Conor Enright**, who is so scrappy and fun to watch, and **Darnell Brodie**, the big guy who now is a graduate student...and Drake's women's team, too, picked to finish second (to UNI) but **Grace Berg** and **Katie Dinnebier** will show how wrong that prediction is... and for **Bill Knapp**, now going strong at age 97, for

giving the money to build the Knapp Center 30 years ago — and it's still the best place to watch basketball in the state...for University of Iowa wrestler **Spencer Lee**, who's the very best...and for West Des Moines' **Caitlin Clark**, the all-everything star at Iowa who is as gracious off the court as she is ferocious on it... and who almost makes you forget about the football team and the Ferentz family dramas...and for Iowa's **Cooper DeJean**, who returned a last-minute punt against Minnesota to — wait, never mind.

Seven swans-a-swimming...

...but don't shoot them, for former anchor **Sonya Heitshusen**...for retired Justice **Dave Wiggins** and **Marcia**, who are fleeing the jurisdiction and moving to Las Vegas...for **Kara Shull**, physical therapist and nice person, and her uncle, **Rob Denson** at DMACC.....for **John Smith** at Drake, who shakes the money tree for his alma mater...and for **Marilee Mitchell**, who likes dogs and, inexplicably, cats, too. And so does **Christy Anderson**.

Six geese-a-laying...

...for former Iowa legislator **David Johnson**, who is headed for Nebraska...and **Steve Davis** at the Iowa Supreme Court...and Judge **Steve Colloton**...for **Ken Quinn**, whose stories could fill an encyclopedia... and for whoever oversees the state law library in the Capitol, maybe the neatest space in the whole state.

Five gold rings...

...for **Tanner Krause**, the Kum and Go boss who stood up for the transgender community and transgender athletes when a lot of other bosses in town were ducking. And for the graceful way he handled his

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father's sale of the company — a fact that he, as chief executive, apparently wasn't clued in on...and for his wife, **Hannah**, owner of Eden in the East Village. Des Moines will be a better place if they stay in town... and it is a better place because **Carl Voss** was re-elected to the city council and because **Susan Voss** is in town and involved in so much.

Four collie birds...

...for **Toby O'Berry**, new head of the Polk County Housing Trust Fund, which does good things...and **Jackson Filer**, nationwide male athlete of the year for junior colleges...and all those golfers who left Wakonda in the flap over building a new course — and all those who stayed, too...but not for the guys who cut down all those trees...for **Dean Anderson** of Wells Fargo, who is becoming a reverse commuter.

Three French hens...

...Cornish hens, maybe, for **Kathy and Bill Fehrman**, whose new Oak Park restaurant on Ingersoll is the talk of the town, or at least the talk of foodies. What's next? A restaurant called Ingersoll in Oak Park? Just a suggestion...and to **Marty Scarpino**, whose Embers just down the street from

Oak Park is always the best. And to **Joe Scarpino**, too. And **Ken Scarpino**...and the people who make those fantastic grilled cheese sandwiches at the Cheese Bar, also on Ingersoll...and, of course, to those guys who make the malts at Classic Custard on East 14th — they're worth standing in those long lines for.

Two turtle doves...

... for Iowa State photographer **Chris Gannon** and his pal, Channel 5's **Samantha Mesa**...and for Chris's dad, former Register editor **Jim Gannon**, too...for oft-injured pickleball player **Scott Sailor**...for everyone at Cityview, especially **Shane and Jolene Goodman**... and **Connie Wimer**, who never slows down...for **Zachary and Theo** and **Chris and Maggie**, great grandchildren (but not great-grandchildren).

And a partridge in a pear tree...

...in remembrance of **Roseanne Mauro McCargar**, loved by a generation of kids and their parents at St. Anthony's school...federal judge **Charles Wolle**...Lincoln High principal **Al Graziano**... former Meredith boss **Jack Rehm**...fireball **Soozie McBroom**...**Emily Weitz**...**Diane Lewis**...**Kathy Peterson Richards** — sportswriter **Randy Peterson's**

mom...Heart doctor **David Gordon**...Banker and sports fan **Dave Milligan**...**Bob Beh**, who had a great smile...old-school newspaperman **Bill Leonard**... **Jay Hubbell**, who died too young...and so did editor **Beth Eslinger**...**John Pappajohn**, who did so much for this town...**Sharon Mahleiro**, champion and fighter for gays...**Lex Hawkins**, who at 97 had outlived his fame as an outstanding lawyer and Democratic strategist of a generation ago, or maybe two...**Maddie Maxwell**, who loved Drake and who always said what she thought...**Phil Dorweiler**... **Janet Betts**...**Jan Gillum**...**Randy Witke**, who wrote great headlines...conservative talk-show guy **Jan Mickelson**...**Jim Marcos** of G&L Clothing...**Marti Sivi**, who brought sunshine to the women prisoners at Mitchellville...Pella's **Ernie Visser**...**Tom Stoner**...

And, always, the first **Christopher**. ■

Michael Gartner was born and raised in Des Moines. He is 85 years old. Along the way, he has been a top editor at The Wall Street Journal, editor and president of The Des Moines Register, president of NBC News, and majority owner of the Iowa Cubs. In 1997 he won a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing while at the Ames Tribune, where he was editor and co-owner.



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GUEST COLUMN

BY MIKE WELLMAN

You've come a long way, buddy

An open letter to Caitlin Clark



Three generations of Wellmans gather to watch Caitlin Clark.



Caitlin Clark's "22" jerseys have found themselves on backs across Iowa and the country.



Fans of all ages witness the record-setting event at Kinnick Stadium.

Dear Caitlin,

Where I was coming from was growing up a sports junkie in the pre-Title IX days. When I graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1972, there was no girls basketball team. And Dowling, your alma mater? Girls didn't even attend classes there, let alone play sports. The women's hoops program at the University of Iowa began while I was a student there, but I never saw the team play. Who cared? Not me, despite that I was doing work study writing mostly intramural sports, men's and women's, for the Daily Iowan as part of my financial aid package. Those were the days when the women's pro tennis tour was sponsored by Virginia Slims, a big tobacco brand whose ad jingle was "You've got your own cigarette now, baby. You've come a long, long way." That was a long, long way ago.

Where I was bound was Iowa City, the elder in a foursome of guys who spanned three generations, ages 5 to 69, off to see the Crossover at Kinnick preseason scrimmage, Hawkeyes hosting DePaul. For the

youngest three, the journey was much shorter, no more than 100 miles and change, an hour and a half by car.

Crossover is a clever play on the term for a deft sleight of hand by a dribbler. But it's also a nod to the change of venue from Carver-Hawkeye Arena, which is sold out for the women's regular season, to the football stadium so the attendance record for a women's basketball game could be shattered. A stroke of marketing genius, like taking a wrecking ball to a glass ceiling. Marketing's your academic All-American major, I saw somewhere. You could just as well be teaching as taking classes in it, given your NIL (the acronym for Name/Image/Likeness endorsements for student athletes, now permitted by the NCAA) resume. The roster of your marketing partners includes Nike, Hy-Vee, Goldman Sachs, the Small Business Administration, Topps, Bose, Buick, H&R Block and, just announced, State Farm. Hardly nil.

Crossover also is an understated way of describing your fan base. Besides the scoring record book you're

rewriting, TV viewership records are also undergoing extreme makeovers, thanks to you. You talk often and proudly about the influence you have on young girls. Rightly so. But your reflections on the overall broadening of the audience for women's hoops are general. Permit me, if I may, to state plainly that you are drawing guys in droves. Old ones like me, most remarkably. Here in Iowa, us boomer boys grew up when the girls' six-on-six game was central to rural popular culture. But it was a curio really, cornpone compared to the game that you and your contemporaries play, what with rules like the one that limited ballhandlers to no more than two dribbles. You could play offense or defense but not both; frontcourt or backcourt. No crossing over, in other words, the center line. Speaking of which, a friend of mine swears it was you who cut him off on the freeway this summer, swerving from your lane across his to make your exit ramp. No offense, but I can see you doing that. You know, going fast, get outta my way. That's how you

GUEST COLUMN CONT...

roll.

When I first hatched the idea to sit down to write you, fanboy to phenom, I thought it would be to plead that you stay at Iowa as long as you can. Exercise your option for an extra year, a privilege granted since you debuted as a collegian when the pandemic limited play to practically empty gyms. Set unbreakable records. You're already earning more as a student than most will in whatever careers they choose. Why hurry?

Maybe I'd tell you how my wife and daughter and I stood in line last year to get into the Knapp Center when you and your terrific teammates were in town to play Drake. First time I ever bought tickets to a women's game. Or how amazed I was by the serpentine queue that started forming at dawn last June at Principal Park. You lured what was then the largest Iowa Cubs crowd in four years that night to a game you don't even play. People waited hours for your autograph, and I was struck by how many were men decked out in No. 22 CLARK gear, just like the man who sat next to us that Sunday afternoon at Kinnick, cradling his baby boy.

But that game — an unofficial one that didn't count on either team's season record — an exhibition,



Iowa Women's Basketball won the "Crossover in Kinnick" game over DePaul, 94-71.

really, may have changed my mind. There was a vibe of too-good-to-last in the crisp, cool air. A total of 55,646 of us, officially (nearly doubling the previous women's attendance record), blissfully immune, for an afternoon, to the contagion of world affairs ranging

from our own democracy's failing health to the acute emergencies in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Never mind that we sat far beyond the ever-widening range of your three-point jump shots. You were still conspicuous, not only by virtue of your play,

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GUEST COLUMN CONT...

but also because of your shoes.

“She’s wearing Grinch Kobies!” shouted 12-year-old Xander in our crew when he spotted your neon green Nike kicks as the team trotted out of the tunnel and jogged the length of the field to the temporary court installed at the north end of the stadium. Dorothy’s famous ruby slippers from “The Wizard of Oz” came to mind. Later, when you jogged back at halftime, he ran down to the railing and begged you for them. “Maybe,” you shouted back at him. “We’ll have to see. These are expensive shoes.”

As per usual, you racked up a triple double, which sounds like a glutton’s regular order at the fast-food drive-thru. Thirty-four points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists. Oh, I thought to myself watching you hit Hannah Stuelke in stride as she streaked downcourt like a gazelle, if only the football team had a passing attack like this.

We’d planned to leave after the third quarter to beat traffic and get home before dark, but the two boys insisted we see the game through. Xander wanted to follow up about the shoes, and Jack, my grandson, just wanted to get as up close to you as possible at game’s end. Besides being a “Swiftie” (he saw Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour concert film over that weekend, too), he’s also a “Clarkie.” All four of us are. So we decided to endure the postgame traffic. And as the game’s last minutes ticked away, a favorite Robert Frost poem came to mind, “Nothing Gold Can Stay.” Including you, Caitlin. I looked up an ESPN mock draft for the WNBA, and it’s got you as the No. 1 pick by the Indiana Fever if you decide to forego that extra year at Iowa. If the romantic rumors about you and Connor McCaffrey are true, that might be a great fit since he’s working for the NBA’s Indiana Pacers now. And you can always come back. When you turn 30, you can even run for governor. The WNBA season doesn’t begin until May, about the same time as the state legislature adjourns. I can even imagine Cyclone fans crossing over and voting for you.

So, I guess instead of a plea that you stay, this turns out to be a lengthy thank you note for the memories — those already banked and those still to come. And the raised consciousness. And the outreach to Jack, that magic touch as you passed on your way to the locker room after the game on Oct. 15, 2023, when most of the record-breaking crowd was gone. So were the shoes. You were in stocking feet by then. Tough luck, Xander, who proceeded to write you privately in the days following the game.

After we got home, I looked up your bio and discovered that your 22nd birthday, your golden one, is next month. Isn’t “22” on Taylor Swift’s hit list as well as your uniform? You two really have a lot in common.

Just sayin’ (my 22 cents worth). ■

— Mike Wellman
University of Iowa, Class of 1976



Caitlin Clark passes the magic, but not shoes, to Jack after the event.

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A pioneering Iowa Democrat

Don't tell Josh Turek what can't be done.

Six-year-old Hayes Hofmeister of rural Cedar Rapids, a Springville, Iowa, farm kid, can't stop talking about Josh Turek — “that guy in the wheelchair” — the one who plays basketball and has Paralympics gold medals. The one who inspired him at Camp Sunnyside.

Born with Spina Bifida, Hayes, a bright-eyed kindergartener, excitedly rolled his own wheelchair toward State Rep. Josh Turek of Council Bluffs at the Easterseals Camp in Des Moines on a recent fall Saturday morning. They started talking, one on one, as Hayes' mom and grandmother beamed.

Turek, too, is in a wheelchair. In fact, he's Iowa's first permanently and visibly disabled legislator. Coming of age in an Iowa basketball family, Turek won three medals in the Paralympics as he represented the United States. He then played basketball professionally in Europe before returning to Iowa and winning one of the closest state legislative races in Hawkeye State history.

“You know, Hayes,” Turek, who also was born with Spina Bifida, told the boy. “You can do anything. Do you like basketball? You can play. Right over there. Head to the gym and get a ball. Just go get a ball and see if you like it. Find something you like to do. You can do anything you want.”

The exchange continues to motivate Hayes, his mother, Hanna Hofmeister, an eastern Iowa livestock farmer, said in a phone interview.

“It was just nice to see Josh in that capacity, and for Hayes to see that,” said Hanna Hofmeister. “He's still taking about ‘that guy in the wheelchair playing basketball.’ We live in a rural community. The only people we see in wheelchairs are the elderly.”

Turek is 44.

Now, Hanna says, her son Hayes is watching Turek's Paralympics basketball games on YouTube.

“I think probably 85% or 90% of the people who are in my sort of condition, or with similar disabilities, this situation breaks them and they don't go on to live meaningful, successful lives,” Turek said in an interview during a drive with a reporter on Interstate 80 from Council Bluffs to Des Moines. “But the ones who do come through are stronger, and those make the most interesting, hard-core people. Some of those that get broken become harder in the broken places. It's totally true. The struggle builds the character.”

The uphill fight, and six-vote win

The streets of Council Bluffs stubbornly turn quickly and jet up hills — and it can be a long walk from the street to a door.

Door-to-door retail politics is more challenging here

than in flatter reaches of the state where the horizon isn't interrupted by hill after hill after hill. Even candidates in the best of shape find the task arduous.

But this is the city from which Iowa's first visibly permanently disabled state legislator emerged.

A Council Bluffs native, Turek, a Democrat in his first term, returned home to build a life and run for office after representing his country in the Paralympics, winning the two gold medals and a bronze in basketball.

In the 2022 race, Turek climbed and “crawled” — the latter his own description — to 14,000 doors in House District 20 — Council Bluffs and Carter Lake. He won the seat by just six votes — 3,403 to 3,397.

“Not every individual with a disability has that ability to do so,” Turek said. “I just crawled stairs, crawled with my wheelchair up there, won by six votes. Now. I'm here.”

Speaking at a Latino event in Bayliss Park in downtown Council Bluffs recently, the Pottawattamie County Democratic Party chair Lisa Lima said Turek's work ethic is among the best she's seen in local politics.

“He really put in the work. He was there every day. He was knocking on doors, having conversations with people,” Lima said. “I think that's what makes the difference. He's a man that doesn't settle for mediocrity. He has great plans.

“I did some door-knocking with him last year, and I am just amazed,” Lima added. “I thought myself, an able-bodied person, should take the harder doors, but, no, he's doing it, overcoming those obstacles, just to talk to those people. He's representing all people. We need that.”

Turek's intense focus is Council Bluffs. In fact, he quickly dismisses media speculation about his potential for statewide office.

He's everywhere in this western-most Iowa city. Sometimes four or five events in a day. At Rotary meetings getting an update on the Army National Guard, then off to a meeting on dock and water issues at Carter Lake.

The next day: working on a bipartisan plan to improve the relative tax situation in Council Bluffs to attract more residential and commercial development. He's competitive and wants his city to develop. And in polarized times, key Republicans like working with Turek, a Democrat they see as moderate, and results-oriented — and a man they like personally.

“Obviously, he works very hard, and he's had a good first session,” said State Rep. Brent Siegrist, a Republican from Council Bluffs. “He's all over



State Rep. Josh Turek talks with 6-year-old Hayes Hofmeister in Des Moines during a recent summit on advocacy for people with disabilities. Photo By Douglas Burns

the community — very thoughtful, very smart. We collaborate well. In terms of Council Bluffs, he's a good representative for Council Bluffs.”

A veteran Republican and party leader, a former speaker of the Iowa House and nearly a congressman (save for a final GOP convention sprint by U.S. Rep. Steve King, R-Kiron, two decades ago) Siegrist, of course, can't actually endorse Turek — a Democrat. But Siegrist, whom Turek considers a mentor, comes close to sounding like Turek's campaign manager.

Siegrist said Turek is a pioneer for the disabled in much the same way Black or Latino legislators were a generation ago, when the Iowa Legislature might only have one elected minority figure.

“It's a lot of pressure on him because he is a permanently disabled person,” Siegrist said. “He is the focal point for anybody in the state of Iowa that may be disabled. They have somebody to call now. So that puts a lot of weight on him.”

About 15% of the American population is disabled, making the community one of the more underrepresented in American government, Turek notes.

One of the leading advocates at the State Capitol for people with disabilities is Carlyn Crowe, the public policy manager for the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. Turek is a leader on policy, to be certain, she says. And his presence is vital for thousands of Iowans whose lives he understands more directly than most

people, Crowe said.

“Most people need to see something visibly,” Crowe said. “His disability is visible. When you have to retrofit an old building (the Iowa Capitol) for however long Iowa has been the capitol, so somebody in a wheelchair can get into the Legislature, and the building wasn’t even equipped to handle a person with a wheelchair, then some other issues that surround the disability community, then all of a sudden it’s like, ‘Hmmm, are we doing enough?’ It opens the discussion for more.”

Council Bluffs focus

The main thing about Josh Turek is he’s Council Bluffs through and through, says long-time Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh, a Republican.

“For the things he did, for a freshman House member, I felt it was unusual. And I only anticipate that as he gets some seniority, he’s going to do even better,” Walsh said. “People in town knew Josh before he got into politics.”

Walsh said Turek is “researched” and “spot on” with how he views Iowa’s current state of affairs and its future.

“Josh came to see me earlier, and it was evident he was a little smarter than the average bear,” Walsh said. “We developed a good friendship, and I think the surprising thing in these days of politics is I can tell when I’m in Des Moines that he’s well respected by members of the Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party. He relates well to our Republican elected officials from southwest Iowa. They respect his opinion.”

Walsh said Republicans gave Turek a second look not afforded other Democrats.

“I don’t know that you get a third look unless you produce, and I think they like his perspective, that he’s a listener, a doer, and has valuable input on stuff,” Walsh said. “He dove in and is learning that job at an accelerated pace of what I think typically would be the case.”

And the local ties can’t be underestimated, Walsh said.

Turek’s father, John Turek, is retired. His mother, Luellen Turek, also retired, was a state social worker for people with mental disabilities.

He has four siblings — three sisters — Ulette, Rachelle and Elisha.

Elisha is a Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln High School alum who went to Oral Roberts University and played professional basketball in Spain.

Turek’s brother, John, went to University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he played basketball. He also played 11 years of professional basketball in Europe.

“He (Josh) has a hell of a story to tell,” Siegrist said. “I think people understand that. The Turek name in Council Bluffs is kind of well-known because his brother and sisters all played basketball.”

For his part, Turek maintains a vigorous exercise regimen. Friends and constituents often shout words of encouragement — or questions and comments on politics — as Turek nearly daily wheels or “pushes”

from his home on Parkwild Drive in the Council Bluffs hills with sweeping views of downtown Omaha to the west to the YMCA a mile and half away.

“Josh has an inspiring story,” said State Auditor Rob Sand, a Democrat. “He’s got a really strong work ethic, and a bright future as a leader here in Iowa.”

That future

As of press time for this column, Republicans have not fielded a challenger for Turek’s Statehouse seat in what is a swing district, one in which a strong GOP contender would have a solid chance of snatching the seat, even from a local leader as popular as Turek. The tribalism and national identification with party, Democrat or Republican, is that defining. The election margin in 2022, after all, was six votes.

“I know the party’s working on it, but no names so far,” Siegrist said. “I suspect they will try to find somebody in the end, but, right now, I would say it appears he won’t have a formidable challenger. But that could change.”

Walsh, who has served as mayor for 10 years and in elected office for 28 years, said Turek has an essential attribute in politics at a high a level — empathy. It makes him both an effective policymaker and politician, Walsh said.

“I think the handicap brings benefits as well as detriments, and that is empathy for the struggle of those that maybe haven’t been dealt the full set of cards they need to be successful in life,” Walsh said in an interview after a recent Council Bluffs Rotary Club meeting. “So he’s fought through that and knows what it’s like to break those barriers. I think he’s empathetic to those who need an ear.”

Iowa House Minority Leader Jennifer Konfrst, a Windsor Heights Democrat, said Turek’s victory in 2022 was a huge step for statewide Democrats.

“He’s been up to the task for sure, and we’ve really seen him rise to the occasion,” Konfrst said.

The Iowa House Chamber was not accessible for people with disabilities before Turek’s arrival, Konfrst said.

“It was a really visible change to the chamber in a good way,” she said. “We were able to see through his eyes just how inaccessible the chamber was, and we are glad it is more accessible now.”

Konfrst sees Turek’s background as leading to potential opportunities for higher office.

“Having an athlete in the caucus is always good because you know you are going to have a really competitive candidate and a really competitive legislator, and that’s certainly been true,” Konfrst said. “We know what motivates Josh. When we talk about how he only won by six votes, we remind him that that’s only because he knocked doors that last day.”

Konfrst said Turek is known for wanting to get things done.

“I think, without question, Josh Turek has the ability to win statewide, whether that’s taking back Tom Harkin’s Senate seat, whether that’s running for governor, whether that’s running for a statewide office,” Konfrst said. “He has appeal across the state,

and he has the work ethic to get it done. He has a good mix of confidence and humility, which is always hard to find in politicians.”

Turek recently met in Washington, D.C., with former U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa. Harkin is largely out of the public eye now, save for appearances on non-partisan policy work for the disabled at the Tom and Ruth Harkin Institute on the campus of Drake University. But Harkin will be headlining a fundraising campaign event for Turek’s Iowa House reelection in Council Bluffs on Thursday, Nov. 30.

Fighting for a disabled constituent

In February 2021, then 17-year-old Owen Hansen of Council Bluffs suffered a devastating injury while snowboarding in his hometown. The accident left him largely paralyzed from the shoulders down. It’s a long fight, not just with the medical and physical realities of his new life, but with the state’s Medicaid system and other bureaucratic hurdles.

Hansen, 19, plans to start taking classes at Iowa Western Community College.

“I am interested in being a sports psychologist,” said Hansen, who enjoys watching football, wrestling and golf. He’s also coached cheerleading in Omaha.

Turek is often by Hansen’s side. He was there for a hospital visit in Omaha in September, and, just weeks ago, Turek sat with Hansen during a forum on Medicaid in Council Bluffs.

Turek and Hansen are working toward the latter’s independence, striving to create spaces where Hansen can achieve in his personal and professional life.

Hansen said it’s ironic that he’s represented by a legislator with a disability.

“It’s really, really comforting knowing that I have someone like that on my side,” Hansen said. “It’s not just that he’s my representative. It’s more like a friendship.”

And with Turek’s encouragement, and the advent of artificial intelligence and other technical advances, in medicine and life more broadly, Hansen said he allows himself to think of a more complete recovery.

“It’s kind of cool to think about maybe something like that may come up in my lifetime,” Hansen said. “I don’t want to get my hopes up or anything. It’s definitely in my mind, just more toward the back. I have what I have right now, and I want to exercise that.”

“I think there is a connectedness that is really inside everybody,” Hansen said. “Everybody interprets it differently.”

Turek listened intently as Hansen described his life during a meeting at Children’s Hospital & Medical Center.

“In a lot of ways, I am more fortunate than you because I was born this way,” Turek said to Hansen. “I don’t miss running. I don’t miss walking. I can’t miss what I never had.” ■

Douglas Burns of Carroll is fourth-generation journalist and founder of Mercury Boost, a marketing and public relations company.



COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM

NOTE: The following events and attractions are subject to cancellation or last-minute changes. Before attending, be sure to check with each event individually to verify its status, start times, offerings and other details.

THINGS TO DO



Photo Courtesy of Madison County Tourism

WINTER SOLSTICE MARKET

116 S. First Ave., Winterset
www.madisoncounty.com/special-events

Dec. 8-9

Head over to the Winterset Livery building in the courthouse square for two days of indoor holiday-themed shopping. From 6-9 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, you can enjoy the “Best Indoor Holiday Market” as voted by Travel Iowa.



Courtesy of Fleet Feet

SANTA 5K RUN

521 E. Locust St., Des Moines
www.fleetfeet.com/s/desmoines
Dec. 9

Pay the \$30 registration fee and receive a Santa suit to wear on your 5K journey, with \$15 of your payment going to a charity of your choice including: Girls on the Run, Children & Families of Iowa, Team Run Free, Living History Farms or Boys and Girls Club of Central Iowa.



Courtesy of The Avenues

PEPPERMINT TRAIL

Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines
www.theavenuesdsm.com/peppermint-trail
Dec. 10

The Avenues DSM hosts its winter festival along Ingersoll Avenue downtown. Collect as many holiday-themed drinks as you can find on your way through the Peppermint Trail.



Courtesy of QuadCon

QUADCON

Merle Hay Mall, 3800 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines
www.quadcitycon.com
Dec. 16-17

A family-friendly comic convention featuring cosplay and video game competitions, comic books, vintage magazines and more. Free entry after 2:30 p.m.



Courtesy of Historic Valley Junction Foundation

JINGLE IN THE JUNCTION

Fourth and Seventh blocks of Railroad Ave. and Locust St., West Des Moines
www.valleyjunction.com
Dec. 7 and Dec. 14

Stores located in the Historic Valley Junction extend their hours on these days in order for shoppers to get their last-minute holiday gifts purchased and enjoy several blocks of free entertainment.

HOLIDAY HULLABALOO

Horizon Events Center
10320 Hickman Road, Clive
www.horizoneventscenter.com
Through Dec. 31

For the second year, the family-friendly holiday-themed event returns to the Horizon Events Center. Festivities and entertainment will serve as a fundraiser in support of Dorothy's House.

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

Des Moines Civic Center
221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

- **Dec. 12-17:** “The Wiz”
- **Dec. 21:** “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical”
- **Dec. 22-23:** “Cirque Dreams Holidaze”

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines
www.hoytsherman.org

- **Dec. 7-10:** Ballet Des Moines Presents “The Nutcracker”
- **Dec. 14:** Christmas with Lorie Line
- **Dec. 16:** Shaun Johnson Big Band Experience: Holly Jolly Holiday Tour
- **Dec. 17:** Michael W. Smith Christmas

DRAKE BASKETBALL

Knapp Center
2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines

Both the men's and the women's basketball programs went marching in the NCAA's championship tournament in 2023. The pair of teams look to make it back next season, the men coached by Darian DeVries and women by Allison Pohlman.

Men's home games:

- **Dec. 14** at 7 p.m. vs. Grambling State
- **Dec. 19** at 7 p.m. vs. Alcorn State

Women's home games:

- **Dec. 8** at 11 a.m. vs. North Dakota State
- **Dec. 17** at 2 p.m. vs. Creighton

COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM



Courtesy of the Iowa Wild

IOWA WILD

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
lowawild.com

The Iowa Wild are the affiliate program of a professional team from up north, the Minnesota Wild. The Wild are led by first-year head coach Brett McLean. Home games through December are:

- **Dec. 8** at 7 p.m. vs. Milwaukee (Nashville Predators)
- **Dec. 9** at 6 p.m. vs. Milwaukee
- **Dec. 12** at 7 p.m. vs. Chicago (Independent)
- **Dec. 22** at 7 p.m. vs. Manitoba (Winnipeg Jets)
- **Dec. 23** at 6 p.m. vs. Manitoba
- **Dec. 28** at 6 p.m. vs. Colorado (Colorado Avalanche)
- **Dec. 30** at 6 p.m. vs. Colorado



SANTA SIGHTINGS

• Holiday Hullabaloo

Horizon Events Center, 10320 Hickman Road, Clive
www.horizoneventscenter.com

• Santa's Wonderland

Bass Pro Shop, 1000 Bass Pro Drive N.W., Altoona
www.basspro.com/shop/en/santas-wonderland

• Crossroads of Iowa

Freedom Blend Coffee, 2329 Hickman Road, Des Moines
www.crossroadsofiowa.org

• Brunch with Santa

Center Grove Orchard, 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge
<https://centergroveorchard.com>

• Coca-Cola Holiday Caravan

Outlets of Des Moines, 801 Bass Pro Drive N.W., Altoona
www.outletsofdesmoines.com

• Christmas in the Garden

Ted Lare Design + Build and Garden Center, 2701 Cumming Ave., Cumming
www.tedsgardens.com



Courtesy of Iowa Wolves

IOWA WOLVES

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St., Des Moines
iowa.gleague.nba.com

Formerly known as the Iowa Energy, the Des Moines-based affiliate for the Minnesota Timberwolves continues to foster NBA talent right here in Iowa. Home games in December:

- **Dec. 14** at 7 p.m. vs. Cleveland Charge (Cleveland Cavaliers), Adventureland Night
- **Dec. 15** at 7 p.m. vs. Cleveland Charge, Disability Empowerment Night
- **Dec. 29** at 7 p.m. vs. College Park Skyhawks (Atlanta Hawks), Black Out / Pack Out Night
- **Dec. 31** at 2 p.m. vs. College Park Skyhawks, Sustainability Day



Photo submitted

HOLIDAY LIGHTS

• Jolly Holiday Lights

Adventureland Park, 3300 Adventureland Drive, Altoona
www.jollyholidaylights.org

• Gingerbread Lane

S.E. Richland Court, Ankeny
Facebook: Gingerbread Lane Ankeny, IA

• Prairie Ridge Church

825 N.W. 36th St., Ankeny
www.ridgelife.org

• Winter Wonderlights

Uptown Ankeny, 715 W. First St., Ankeny
www.uptownankeny.org

• Winter Wonderscape

Reiman Gardens, 1407 University Blvd., Ames
www.reimangardens.com

• Beaverdale

Ashby and Wallace Avenues near Beaver Avenue, Des Moines
www.beaverdale.org

• Dogtown Lights

University Avenue between 23rd and 25th streets in Des Moines' Drake neighborhood
Facebook @ Dogtown Business and Entertainment District

• First Church of the Open Bible

2200 Beaver Ave., Des Moines
www.firstchurch.org

• Miracle on 86th Street

3600 86th St., Urbandale
www.urbandale.org

• Santa's Rock N Lights

Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale
www.santasrocknlights.com

• Historic Valley Junction

Fifth Street, West Des Moines
www.valleyjunction.com

• Lights in the Heights

Franklin Avenue, Marylynn Drive, 72nd Street, and other streets in Windsor Heights
www.windsorheightsfoundation.org ■

'Twas the night before...

Our Christmas classic for the holidays



Story by Robert Hullihan
Illustrations by Brian Duffy

Publisher's note: Forty-four years ago, when Michael Gartner was editor of The Des Moines Register, he walked over to the desk of writer Bob Hullihan and said, "How about writing me a Christmas classic for the holidays?" Hullihan said, "Sure." And he did. It ran in the Register and years later in the Ames Tribune. Gartner sent the story to me in 2007 and asked that I consider running it in CITYVIEW. I did, and it has been running each year since as part of our holiday tradition. Merry Christmas. — Shane Goodman, publisher, editor

The waterbug had grown old and weary. And he was alone. He was the only one of his kind left in the house. He knew he would never survive the next spring cleaning. He could not scurry away from the poison sprays anymore. Still, the waterbug had been so clever in his youth, and he had lived so long, that now he was the senior creature in the house. He knew that he had a last duty to perform.

So, as Christmas Eve approached, he called a meeting of all the creatures in the house. They met at a dark joint in the woodwork. It was a place that had happy memories of youth for the old waterbug. Once he had gathered with old friends here. Now all the old friends were gone. The waterbug did not recognize any of the young creatures who began to assemble around him.

There was a pair of silverfish, shameless and brazen because they had grown up in one of the popular novels on the bookshelf. An insolent young spider came. Her web was deep in a stereo set. She greeted the old waterbug with: "Hey, old daddy... what's happenin'?" Three ladybugs arrived, carefully made up and proud of their beauty. A cricket who lived in the television set came in and began acting like a game show host.

The old waterbug looked at the creatures sadly. He knew he was dealing with a new generation. But he cleared his throat and began:

"Now I know you are all new creatures in the house. This will be your first Christmas Eve here. It is my duty to tell you that there must be no stirring on that night. We are under a severe and clear directive. Not a creature in this house may stir on Christmas Eve, especially not the mice. It is a Tradition."

When he said that, the old waterbug stared directly at a wild young mouse who had come late to the meeting. The mouse had been born in the fields of summer and had only come into the house when the nights grew cold. The old waterbug drew himself up in all of his brittle majesty. He sensed that he would have trouble with the mouse. The mouse was wild and resentful and, yes, he was a troublemaker.

"Wait a minute," said the mouse. "Whose tradition? That's a human tradition you're talking about. It has nothing to do with us creatures! We can stir around all we want to, Christmas Eve or not!"

"Right on, man," said the spider.

"Stay tuned, stay tuned," shouted the cricket. The silverfish giggled indecently and the ladybugs batted their long eyelashes.

"And why should we cooperate with the humans, anyway?" the mouse shouted, wild now with rebellion. "They're trying to kill all of us. Why, right now, there's a trap set for me in the basement. And you, you poor doddering old waterbug, you can scarcely get your breath from all the poison they've sprayed at you! Stir? I'll show you stirring! I'm going to race around this house all Christmas Eve, and I just hope the other creatures will join me."

It was a full-scale revolt. The old waterbug could only draw a painful breath and thunder at the creatures: "Stop! This is quite enough. Creatures have always obeyed the Tradition on Christmas Eve. It's been handed down from generation to generation. I don't know why, and I don't know what it means, but there will be no stirring of creatures in this house on Christmas Eve! Is that understood? I am senior creature here, and you will answer to me!"

The old waterbug dismissed the meeting, but he made one more attempt to establish his authority as the creatures left. "And you silverfish," he shouted. "If we ever have another meeting like this, I want you to come fully dressed. I will not tolerate nudity!" But the silverfish just giggled in their naughty way and wiggled off to get back into their popular novel. The old waterbug watched them go; he had never been more discouraged in his life.



“Now I know you are all new creatures in the house. This will be your first Christmas Eve here. It is my duty to tell you that there must be no stirring on that night. We are under a severe and clear directive.”

— The waterbug



He began to think about the wild, young mouse and the fiery way he had spoken out. The old waterbug did not understand the mouse at all, but he rather admired him. He did not want the mouse to come to harm. The old waterbug thought about the trap set in the basement. He thought about the day when the mouse, being young, would foolishly attempt to take the bait. Perhaps, in an act of bravado, he would try to do it that very Christmas Eve. The old waterbug sighed and thought about what he must do.

He crawled painfully through the rooms of the house until he came to the Christmas decorations. For hours he gnawed away at a sprig of holly until he had removed a small piece of it. He carried it into the basement and found the trap set for the mouse. Risking his life, the old waterbug carefully pushed the cheese bait off the trap and replaced it with the bit of holly. He didn't get back to his dark place under the drain until dawn. He was exhausted.

The very next night was Christmas Eve. The little wild mouse came bounding out of his hole determined to stir around the house all night. He saw the trap with its bit of holly and stopped short. He knew at once that this was the work of the old waterbug. "Why, the old fool," thought the mouse, "he knows I don't eat that stuff." And then the mouse realized that was the point. The old waterbug had brought a gift of warning and good will. They might never understand one another, but they could wish one another well.

The little mouse thought about that idea as he went on through the house to the Christmas tree, where he was to meet the other creatures. He had promised to lead them "in a night of stirring around in this house that they won't soon forget." The silverfish, the ladybugs, the spider and the cricket were waiting for him. But they were strangely silent. None of them had ever seen a Christmas tree lighted before. It awed them.

The mouse looked at the tree and knew he had never seen anything so beautiful, not even in the fields of summer. He didn't understand what it

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was. He thought, “This must be the Tradition the old waterbug is so hyper about.” Dimly, the mouse knew that something was on display here that surpassed all the creatures and all humanity. The mouse made a decision and quickly told the other creatures what to do. He knew the old waterbug would be coming out soon to see what was going on.

And, sure enough, the old waterbug came crawling slowly out, but he stopped in confusion when he saw what the creatures were doing. The little mouse stood motionless among the tiny plastic animals around a manger. The spider had spun a brilliant web on the tree, and it shimmered in the lights. The silverfish and the ladybugs hung like glittering ornaments from one limb of the tree, and the cricket quietly sang a simple, peaceful song.

The old waterbug looked carefully at what the

creatures were doing. He wanted to remember this sight for all the rest of his life. Then he turned and crawled back to his place under the drain. He slept deeply and, for the first time in many nights, he did not have a nightmare about the dreaded Orkin man who would surely come for him in the spring. He knew that the Tradition had been passed on.

The little mouse watched from the corner of his eye as the old waterbug left. Then he stepped out from among the tiny plastic animals and called to the rest of the creatures. “All right, fellas. Let’s knock it off for the rest of the night, OK?”

All the creatures went quietly back to their places. Something had happened to them when they made their display for the old waterbug. They did not understand it, but they felt good about it.

Not one of the creatures stirred for the rest of the night. ■

“Wait a minute. Whose tradition? That’s a human tradition you’re talking about. It has nothing to do with us creatures!”
We can stir around all we want to, Christmas Eve or not!

— The mouse



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BUSINESS JOURNAL



The business of PAWN

Trends, regulations and stigma of the pawn store industry

By Colson Thayer

Weekdays are typically quiet at A Quality Pawn and Jewelry at 1135 Army Post Road in Des Moines. The owner, Adrian Welch, says she only sees up to five customers on any day of the week. But she knows all her customers and wants the best for them.

On a Wednesday afternoon in November, one of her pawning customers came in to make her \$40 monthly payment, the same amount she has been making on her \$200 loan for the last two years. Welch welcomed her by name, asked how her family was doing and inquired about her plans for the holidays. As a courtesy, Welch reminded her that she

accepts CashApp or Venmo in case of winter road conditions. If Welch cannot make it in for the same reason, she'll update her customers through text.

"I try to make it a personal (connection)," Welch said. "I want people to come in and not feel bad that they have to borrow money...You're coming in at a low part of your life...I've been there."

This is the case for Des Moines' pawn shops. First and foremost, they are businesses that have to adhere to laws and regulations to turn a profit. But they also serve as financial institutions for members of the community in need.

An eclectic mix of items can be found at Solar Loan and Sales.



A Quality Pawn and Jewelry, 1135 Army Post Road, Des Moines, is owned by Adrian Welch.



A variety of pawned items are displayed at A Quality Pawn and Jewelry.



Solar Loan and Sales, 3311 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, is owned by Steve Kouri.

Industry trends

“Pawn shops, to me, are people getting fast, short-term loans,” said Welch. “That has been on the rise... Volume-wise, I’m doing more this year than I’ve probably done in 20-some years. But I think that has to do with the economy.”

Welch went on to explain that, as prices go up, so does the need for quick cash. Today, many of her customers are coming in after getting laid off to make ends meet. For a pawn shop, that means more loans to hand out and more interest to collect.

However, Steve Kouri, owner of Solar Loan and Sales at 3311 Ingersoll Ave., sees the opposite.

“We do the best when the economy is booming,” said Kouri. “It may seem counterintuitive, but people have excess money to spend and, also, they may pawn based on spending habits versus direct need.”

Kouri explained that, during times of economic strength, somebody might go out and pawn to purchase concert tickets. They do so knowing they can rely on their steady job and income to repay their loan. During the height of the pandemic, customers pawned based on immediate needs and did not have the secure income necessary to pay off those loans.

“The loan value may go up; but, overall, business is better when the economy is better,” Kouri said.

The nationwide pawn industry has two publicly traded companies: EZPawn and FirstCash. Since the pandemic, their stock prices have gone up. However, the number of small pawn shops has gone down. According to market research group IBISWorld, the number of pawn shop businesses in

the U.S. declined 1.7% from 2021 to 2022.

Jeffrey Pocock, owner of The Pawn Store at 3005 Douglas Ave. in Des Moines, can attest to this decline.

“When I came to my current location 26 years ago, there were four other pawn shops within a 1.5-mile radius,” he said. “I’m the only one left.”

Part of the reason has to do with buying.

“Buying has backed off significantly,” Pocock said. “[Pawn shops] are having to be more selective about what they purchase because everybody’s got inventory now.”

Pocock has had to turn away customers, just because he is not able to turn their items into cash. He has noticed that, as time goes by, the quality of inventory declines. The value of all things brought into his store continues to decrease. He says there is no sense in him buying or pawning something that will never leave his store. On his way to retirement, Pocock is in the process of liquidating everything The Pawn Store owns. Some items are easier to sell than others, like unique firearms, higher-end watches and diamond rings.

This is why Welch decided to primarily focus on jewelry. Random items, like tools, depreciate quickly, and she has difficulty selling them. However, she can quickly sell gold, diamonds and jewelry. In fact, A Quality Pawn and Jewelry only pawns and sells jewelry with the occasional coin, silver or newer electronic goods. Welch uses the Rapaport for diamond prices and the daily gold price to determine the value of items.

In recent years, Pocock has seen more and more

items being forfeited due to failures to pay off loans.

“I would say, currently, more people forfeit their goods because I think times are tough,” Pocock said. “It’s always been the case, but more so now... I think it’s easier to acquire the funds when you’re in need without taking into consideration that you have to pay that money back, and then some.”

Laws and regulations

In Des Moines, pawnbrokers have their own section in the city’s municipal code. Like most other businesses, pawnbrokers must also obtain a license, display the license and renew it. But there are plenty of regulations pawn shops must adhere to that other retail outlets do not.

For starters, they are limited to certain hours. Section 30-304 of Des Moines’ municipal code states they are prohibited from purchasing, receiving or surrendering any property between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m., Monday through Saturday. They are completely prohibited from doing so on Sundays.

Another hurdle for business, Section 30-304, prevents the sale of those items within 15 calendar days after the receipt and report of any property. The 15-day hold period is to give the police department time to identify and locate any stolen goods. But, there is another system in place that already prevents that.

After purchasing or receiving any item, Section 30-301 requires pawn shops to immediately enter the following information into Leads Online, an electronic reporting system available to the Des



The Pawn Store has everything from video games to bicycles, sporting goods, musical instruments and more.



The Pawn Store, 3005 Douglas Ave., Des Moines, is owned by Jeffrey Pocock.

Moines Police Department: date and hour of the transaction; the amount paid, advanced or loaned for the item; a detailed and accurate description; model or serial number; a digital photograph of the item; and the name, address, date of birth and Iowa driver's license number (or Iowa identification number) or social security number of the person selling or handing over the item.

To further ensure that pawn shops are not buying stolen goods, each owner usually has a good read on whether the item is truly in the legal possession of the customer.

For example, if a customer brings a camera to Kouri at Solar Loan and Sales, he'll ask them about the technical components, whether it's a Canon or a Nikon and even how to operate it.

"That, of course, is one easy way," Kouri said. "Being polite about that and direct, just asking normal informational questions about the item."

If a pawn shop does purchase stolen goods, or the police suspect there to be stolen goods on the property, DMPD has the right to enter and search the licensed premise, with or without a warrant, according to Section 30-305.

The Pawn Store's relationship with the police department has caused Pocock frustration for quite some time.

"They walk in the door and give us shit rather than really working and going and solving crime," said Pocock. "I heard my safe open one time, and I walked back there, and there's a detective...

rummaging through my safe."

One time, Pocock says he found an officer going through all of his DVDs because they were not individually tagged. Pocock reasoned it's ridiculous to tag and ID each individual DVD after someone brought in hundreds, even though he was supposed to.

His frustration with regulations does not end there. He questioned why anyone with stolen goods would sell to a pawn shop if they are required to give so much information. Pocock reasoned they might as well go to online platforms or antique shops, where they do not require the same information. However, Des Moines' municipal code holds "secondhand goods dealers" to the same standards.

"It'd be so much more challenging to be a crook in this business because it's so challenging in general," Pocock said.

Addressing the stigma

"I don't want to say I was ashamed, sometimes embarrassed, that I worked at a pawn shop because I always knew they looked at you a certain way," said Welch.

Working in the pawn industry comes with one big con: the public image.

"I most definitely think there is (a stigma), typically until they go to (a pawn shop)," said Pocock.

And it's true, walking into a pawn shop is like



walking into an antique shop or reseller.

"I mean 40 to 50 people come in a day," said Kouri. "You just always try to treat them with respect and make it a welcome place to come in. And you realize you're always struggling not to fall short of that with people that are in need. It's difficult because their frame of mind is not always the greatest. And maybe the items don't warrant what they're after, so that's kind of one tough part of the business." ■



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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM SEPT. 28, 2023, TO OCT. 24, 2023

**6200 PARK AVE., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-09-28
 SALE PRICE: \$18,000,000
 SELLER: WILLIAM C KNAPP LC
 BUYER: STATE OF IOWA
 ACRES: 15.227
 SQUARE FEET: 138,978

300 WALNUT ST., UNIT 211, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-09-28
 SALE PRICE: \$240,000
 SELLER: SJJR PROPERTIES
 BUYER: A&T VENTURES LLC
 ACRES: 0.012
 SQUARE FEET: 2,693

**2940 INGERSOLL AVE., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-09-28
 SALE PRICE: \$750,000
 SELLER: ALDRICH, JENNIFER L
 BUYER: BIENVILLE LLC
 ACRES: 0.273
 SQUARE FEET: 4,296

3834 DOUGLAS AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-09-29
 SALE PRICE: \$2,000,000
 SELLER: KNAPP INVESTMENTS LLC
 BUYER: DOUGLAS AVENUE PLAZA LLC
 ACRES: 1.235
 SQUARE FEET: 29,488

615 E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-09-29
 SALE PRICE: \$650,000
 SELLER: RUETER, CONSTANCE
 BUYER: APS PROPERTIES LLC
 ACRES: 0.498
 SQUARE FEET: 7,200

**3718 S.W. NINTH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-02
 SALE PRICE: \$550,000
 SELLER: DANLEE CORP
 BUYER: ARSHI LLC
 ACRES: 0.460
 SQUARE FEET: 2,380

603 S.E. 15TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-02
 SALE PRICE: \$46,500
 SELLER: BURKHARDT INVESTMENTS LC
 BUYER: KING OF KINGS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
 ACRES: 0.459
 SQUARE FEET: 0

5145 N.W. BEAVER DRIVE, JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2023-10-03
 SALE PRICE: \$1,190,000
 SELLER: RUETER CORP
 BUYER: 5145 NW BEAVER DRIVE LLC
 ACRES: 2.005
 SQUARE FEET: 8,000

**610 FOREST AVE., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-03
 SALE PRICE: \$35,000
 SELLER: ST VINCENT DEPAUL INC OF DES MOINES IOWA
 BUYER: INDIGO DAWN LLC
 ACRES: 0.073
 SQUARE FEET: 1,440

1405 S.E. ORALABOR ROAD, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-03
 SALE PRICE: \$10,000,000
 SELLER: RGBA LC
 BUYER: MBB HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 9.371
 SQUARE FEET: 53,518

520 40TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-03
 SALE PRICE: \$216,000
 SELLER: 520 40TH STREET LLC
 BUYER: MCDOWELL, ALEXA KAY
 ACRES: 0.247
 SQUARE FEET: 2,815

110 S.E. GRANT ST., UNIT 201, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-03
 SALE PRICE: \$62,000
 SELLER: IOWA DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
 BUYER: BLAST HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 0.047
 SQUARE FEET: 800

600 N. THIRD ST., POLK CITY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-04
 SALE PRICE: \$300,000
 SELLER: TOURNAMENT CLUB OF IOWA LLC
 BUYER: KAHLER GOLF LLC
 ACRES: 2.990
 SQUARE FEET: 7,500

**526 48TH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-04
 SALE PRICE: \$1,110,000
 SELLER: 48TH N INGERSOLL LLC
 BUYER: DOUBLE CW INVESTMENTS LLC
 ACRES: 0.884
 SQUARE FEET: 9,308

3300 VANDALIA ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-05
 SALE PRICE: \$550,000
 SELLER: SAM'S RIVERSIDE INC
 BUYER: GALINSKY FAMILY REAL ESTATE LLC
 ACRES: 32.524
 SQUARE FEET: 9,360

7421 REGISTER DRIVE, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-05
 SALE PRICE: \$387,040
 SELLER: ABC PARTNERS LP
 BUYER: WDW LLC
 ACRES: 3.94
 SQUARE FEET: 0

7600 S.W. 22ND ST., SUITE 102, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-05
 SALE PRICE: \$199,900
 SELLER: 7600 SW 22ND STREET LLC
 BUYER: GRIFFIN LAND INVESTMENTS LLC
 ACRES: 0.110
 SQUARE FEET: 1,500

5795 N.W. SECOND ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-06
 SALE PRICE: \$500,000
 SELLER: 426 PROPERTY LLC
 BUYER: LEA INVESTMENTS LLC
 ACRES: 0.888
 SQUARE FEET: 6,000

5985 N.W. 62ND AVE., JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2023-10-09
 SALE PRICE: \$500,000
 SELLER: IRISH LILY PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: VETLEY JOHNSTON LLC
 ACRES: 0.434
 SQUARE FEET: 1,680

**5245 E. UNIVERSITY AVE., PLEASANT HILL**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-10
 SALE PRICE: \$400,000
 SELLER: WADSWORTH, BRIAN T
 BUYER: GERBER REAL ESTATE INC
 ACRES: 0.827
 SQUARE FEET: 3,200

8950 N.W. 62ND AVE., JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2023-10-11
 SALE PRICE: \$1,370,600
 SELLER: DECOOK, STEPHEN K
 BUYER: THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
 ACRES: 9.791
 SQUARE FEET: 2,966

9050 N.W. 62ND AVE., JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2023-10-11
 SALE PRICE: \$1,370,600
 SELLER: ROTTENBERG, PAUL
 BUYER: THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
 ACRES: 9.791
 SQUARE FEET: 0

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

**3324 UNIVERSITY AVE., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-12
 SALE PRICE: \$214,000
 SELLER: CALIGIURI, MICHAEL D
 BUYER: FREDDY'S HOMES LLC
 ACRES: 0.394
 SQUARE FEET: 3,460

2301 W. FIRST ST., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-12
 SALE PRICE: \$485,000
 SELLER: AMP PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: TIERNAN PROPERTIES LLC
 ACRES: 0.372
 SQUARE FEET: 2,861

929 E. FIRST ST., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-12
 SALE PRICE: \$971,214
 SELLER: CIP FUND II LTD
 BUYER: SARAH C FAYMAN
 REVOCABLE TRUST
 ACRES: 1.020
 SQUARE FEET: 6,144

1032 E. NINTH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-12
 SALE PRICE: \$128,500
 SELLER: HBW LLC
 BUYER: RANGER 51 LLC
 ACRES: 0.084
 SQUARE FEET: 3,450

4415 DOUGLAS AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-13
 SALE PRICE: \$1,725,000
 SELLER: BERNARD J CONNOLLY
 FAMILY LLC
 BUYER: CARDINAL GREEN
 INVESTMENTS LLC
 ACRES: 2.271
 SQUARE FEET: 17,900

3722 SECOND AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-13
 SALE PRICE: \$235,000
 SELLER: KELLY-FORRET, JANE
 BUYER: HTET, MIN
 ACRES: 0.296
 SQUARE FEET: 4,477

4920 PLEASANT ST., WEST DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-16
 SALE PRICE: \$515,000
 SELLER: 4920 PLEASANT LLC
 BUYER: PHILLIPS REAL ESTATE
 HOLDINGS II LLC
 ACRES: 0.686
 SQUARE FEET: 5,760

2720 GARDEN ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-18
 SALE PRICE: \$487,000
 SELLER: RODISH, GARY D
 BUYER: HURD GARDEN LLC
 ACRES: 0.275
 SQUARE FEET: 4,300

**672 19TH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-18
 SALE PRICE: \$180,000
 SELLER: ESSEX HOUSE LLC
 BUYER: HOLLAND HILL INC
 ACRES: 0.172
 SQUARE FEET: 4,737

1329 S.W. ORDNANCE ROAD, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-19
 SALE PRICE: \$810,000
 SELLER: WILLIAMS, CHARMAINE C
 BUYER: SLICE OF SKY LLC
 ACRES: 1.306
 SQUARE FEET: 9,408

1826 SIXTH AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-19
 SALE PRICE: \$231,500
 SELLER: BC PROPERTY
 MANAGEMENT LLC
 BUYER: HERRERA HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 0.147
 SQUARE FEET: 2,256

1519 S. ANKENY BLVD., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-10-19
 SALE PRICE: \$962,500
 SELLER: ANKENY SELF STORAGE
 LLC
 BUYER: STREAMLINED SELF
 STORAGE LLC
 ACRES: 2.050
 SQUARE FEET: 28,950

**696 18TH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-23
 SALE PRICE: \$49,900
 SELLER: KOSHIYO RE LLC
 BUYER: C-BUILD LLC
 ACRES: 0.184
 SQUARE FEET: 3,939

3801 EASTON BLVD., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-10-24
 SALE PRICE: \$150,000
 SELLER: LEPLY, LISA
 BUYER: AMG INVESTMENTS ONE
 INC
 ACRES: 0.424
 SQUARE FEET: 2,168

5400 E. UNIVERSITY AVE., PLEASANT HILL

SALE DATE: 2023-10-24
 SALE PRICE: \$1,854,545
 SELLER: STRIFEX HOLDINGS LLC
 BUYER: GREAT AMERICAN REALTY
 OF GRAND BLVD LLC
 ACRES: 1.121
 SQUARE FEET: 2,470

**5919 N.W. 62ND AVE., JOHNSTON**

SALE DATE: 2023-10-24
 SALE PRICE: \$240,000
 SELLER: GREIMAN, TINA M
 BUYER: VETLEY JOHNSTON LLC
 ACRES: 0.245
 SQUARE FEET: 1,581 ■

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Borrower Name	City	County	Cong. District	\$ Amount	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	Existing Jobs	New Vs. Existing	Business Type
Arasma, LLC	INDEPENDENCE	BUCHANAN	01	\$85,000	1	1	0	NEW	Other Personal Care Services
Collins Collision LLC	CLEAR LAKE	CERRO GORDO	04	\$220,000	1	0	0	NEW	Automotive Body, Paint, and Interior Repair and Maintenance
HotBoyz Hospitality LLC	CLINTON	CLINTON	02	\$1,990,000	0	13	13	NEW	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels
Hermesen Auto Parts, Inc.	MANCHESTER	DELAWARE	01	\$300,000	0	2	2	NEW	N/A
Hermesen Auto Parts, Inc.	MANCHESTER	DELAWARE	01	\$100,000	0	2	2	NEW	N/A
KASSAS, LLC	DUBUQUE	DUBUQUE	01	\$578,500	8	2	2	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
KASSAS, LLC	DUBUQUE	DUBUQUE	01	\$25,000	8	2	2	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
Saltyco LLC	CORALVILLE	JOHNSON	02	\$457,500	20	20	4	NEW	Limited-Service Restaurants
RAPID OWL TOWING LLC	CEDAR RAPIDS	LINN	01	\$18,600	0	0	1	NEW	Motor Vehicle Towing
STRENGTH COACH NETWORK INC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$20,000	0	2	2	NEW	All Other Miscellaneous Schools and Instruction
DSM Property Services, LLC	Urbandale	POLK	03	\$1,766,000	0	100	100	EXISTING	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors
KB Commercial Cleaning, LLC	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$890,000	1	1	14	NEW	All Other Business Support Services
West Des Moines School Inc.	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$300,000	1	0	1	NEW	Child Day Care Services
THE B, L.L.C.	Davenport	SCOTT	02	\$155,000	12	0	12	EXISTING	Lessors of Nonresidential Buildings (except Miniwarehouses)
PC5CB, LLC	Le Claire	SCOTT	02	\$1,348,000	10	0	14	EXISTING	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
VCW Properties, LLC	Hull	SIOUX	04	\$734,000	3	0	11	EXISTING	Wood Kitchen Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturing
MJ 23 Wings LLC	Sioux City	WOODBURY	04	\$550,000	20	2	2	NEW	Limited-Service Restaurants

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Andy Decker, Scott Decker, Rebecca Decker and Kevin Klimowski

A CITYVIEW SPECIAL SECTION THAT HONORS
CENTRAL IOWA'S ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES.

MILESTONES

Where did they start?
How did they grow?
What are they proud of?

75 YEARS

TRAVISS AUDIO VIDEO

4931 Douglas Ave, Des Moines
515-254-1111
travissav.com

In 1949, R.M. Traviss opened Traviss TV & Electronics in downtown Des Moines, primarily servicing the, relatively new, innovation of television. In Des Moines, television viewers were able to pick up over the air signals from WOI (Ames), WHO (Des Moines), IA Public Television (Des Moines), and KRNT (Des Moines).

Our roots as a company are based on service. We did not expand into selling new equipment until the late 60's, early 70's. Slow, steady growth saw Traviss TV become the largest independent Sony and LG dealer in the state.

The success and growth was predicated on offering the best equipment at the best price and backing that up by providing superior service before and after the sale. Our father built a business based on honesty, integrity and treating customers as friends.

We are now a second-generation business. Three of R.M.'s children are carrying on his legacy since his passing in 2011. A lot has changed in consumer electronics over the years, but how people are treated and the values he instilled remain.

Traviss Audio Video – proudly serving Des Moines for 75 great years.



— 1949

R.M. Traviss Founder opens Traviss TV & Electronics at 14th Walnut in Downtown Des Moines. Moved to 1110 Locust shortly after

— 1967

Moved to 440 E Grand Ave

— 1983

Moved to 3621 Beaver Ave

— 1992

Moved to 4931 Douglas Ave and changed name to Traviss Audio Video

— 2023

Celebrating 75 years

36 YEARS

ABENDROTH RUSSELL BARNETT LAW FIRM

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515-278-0623
abendrothandrussell.com

Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm was established in 1987 in Urbandale. Since then, we have been providing valued legal services to meet the needs of our clients. Our practice areas include wills and trusts, probate, estate administration, guardianships and conservatorships, Medicaid and asset protection, real estate transactions, business formation and compliance, and Social Security Disability. We strive to exceed our clients' expectations, and with our staff of skilled professionals, we work to deliver an exceptional customer experience throughout the most difficult legal matters.

Community is important to us — that's why we partner with local police on safe housing issues and work closely with community service providers such as On With Life and Brain Injury Alliance.

We love our clients and look forward to serving them for many years to come.



1987

The law firm was established by Mark Abendroth and David Russell.

1999

Abendroth and Russell moved to their current location in Urbandale.

2000

Ross Barnett joined the firm, specializing in probate, estate planning, and real estate

2012

The firm celebrated 25 years in business.

2014

Charlotte Sucik joined the firm, specializing in landlord/tenant law, real estate, and business formation.

2016

The firm eliminated the Collection Department and developed a more service-oriented approach to our clients.

2017

Gail Barnett joined the firm, specializing in Social Security Disability, probate, and Medicaid planning.

2018

Charlotte Sucik and Gail Barnett were made partners at the firm.

2020

In October, Ross Barnett celebrated 20 years with the firm.

2021

Mark Abendroth retired.

2023

Celebrating 36 years in business. Ross Barnett is managing partner.

49 YEARS

HOMEMAKERS

FURNITURE, MATTRESSES & ACCESSORIES

10215 Douglas Ave., Urbandale
515-276-2772
www.homemakers.com

Carl and Ina Merschman founded Homemakers Furniture in 1974, starting a family tradition of excellence. What began as a 31,000-square-foot store with ten employees has grown to hundreds of employees and a 215,000-square-foot showroom. Throughout Homemakers’ 49-year heritage, the roots, vision, and passion the company was founded on have remained.

As a family-operated and Iowa founded business, Homemakers values community and is dedicated to being a pillar of the Des Moines area. From hosting a variety of free family-friendly events, supporting local organizations in need, and giving our employees meaningful volunteer opportunities, Homemakers is a place where community matters. We want shoppers to feel good about supporting a local, environmentally conscious business that strives to continuously give back.

At Homemakers, we are determined to inspire customers with our service, dedication, legendary low prices, and reliability to ensure a premium shopping experience. As the largest furniture store in Iowa, we offer a huge selection of furniture, mattresses, and accessories to accommodate every budget and lifestyle! When you shop Homemakers, you can rest assured you’ll have a no-pressure shopping experience. The non-commission sales team is complemented by a team of sales managers with over 150 years of combined experience, an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau (BBB), and near perfect ratings on Google and Facebook. At Homemakers, it’s truly about making your house a home.



THE HISTORY OF HOMEMAKERS

As we look forward to celebrating our 50th Anniversary next year, we vow to provide the same level of dedication to our customers and community for the next 50 years and beyond.

1974

Homemakers was founded by Carl and Ina Merschman. They purchased the former Gray’s Furniture Store on Hubbell Avenue, a 31,000-square-foot-store with only ten employees.

2000

Nebraska Furniture Mart, a Berkshire Hathaway company, purchased Homemakers Furniture.

2009

Grand opening of the newly remodeled Urbandale location with special guest speaker Warren Buffett.

2016

A new 120,000-square-foot warehouse is constructed, marking Homemakers’ sixth major renovation.

2018

Celebrating a non-commission sales team and the addition of the Homemakers Outlet stocked with budget-friendly furniture.

2021

2,988 bi-facial solar panels were installed to the store roof, making this one of the largest private solar arrays in Iowa.

2022

Launched new and improved Homemakers.com to give customers a stress-free and user-friendly online experience.

2023

The exterior storefront was refreshed with new paint, in addition to a newly remodeled mattress department and easy to shop home décor area.

For more information on Homemakers’ History, visit [homemakers.com/about-us/our-history.html](https://www.homemakers.com/about-us/our-history.html)

78 YEARS

THE TAVERN™ PIZZA & PASTA GRILL

205 5th Street, West Des Moines 515-255-9827
1755 50th Street, West Des Moines 515-223-6700
tavernpizza.com

Nestled in the heart of Valley Junction is West Des Moines’ oldest restaurant. Surviving the Great Depression, wars, the floods of 1993, and the Covid pandemic, The Tavern™ stands as a testament to resilience and the timeless appeal of good food and camaraderie. For generations, The Tavern™ has not only weathered the storms but has flourished into a local legend.

The journey began in 1937 when The Tavern™ was founded. In 1945 John and Mary Rilei took the reins of The Tavern™, transforming it into a quintessential small-town tavern. However, it was in 1950 that the establishment truly etched its place in local culinary history by introducing the grinder sandwich. This delectable creation quickly became a customer favorite, laying the foundation for The Tavern™’s reputation for excellent food.

Shortly after the success of the grinder, The Tavern™ added another gem to its menu – the now-famous thin-crust pizza. The pizza, with its perfect blend of flavors and textures, became an instant hit, drawing in patrons from near and far. The combination of classic favorites, authentic recipes, and innovative offerings set The Tavern™ apart.

When Mary decided to retire, she sought out a friend to whom she could hand the baton. Someone she knew would love and nurture the restaurant into the future. In 1988, following his passion, Chuck Celsi purchased the business. Recognizing the treasure of recipes left by Mary, Chuck preserved the original flavors while infusing the menu with his own touch. The addition of authentic Italian “Calabrese” flavors paid homage to Chuck’s heritage, enriching the culinary experience at The Tavern™.

In 1990, to meet the growing demand for their memorable menu, Chuck expanded the physical footprint of The Tavern™ in Valley Junction, doubling its size. The year 1995 witnessed the birth of The Tavern II on 50th Street in West Des Moines, a testament to the enduring popularity of the cuisine. In 1997 Chuck further expanded with the Tavern South. The location however was closed in 2000 after a significant fire.

Today, The Tavern™ stands as a cornerstone of West Des Moines’ restaurant scene, serving patrons with dishes crafted from original recipes, made fresh in their own kitchen. From freshly baked bread to award winning pizza, along with The Tavern™’s signature Italian sausage and creamy parm dressing, every item on the menu reflects a commitment to excellence and authenticity.

Following Chuck’s passing in 2015, his six children seamlessly continued the family tradition, ensuring that The Tavern™ remains a welcoming haven for all who seek exceptional food. So, step into The Tavern™ Pizza and Pasta Grill, delight in time-tested recipes, savor the rich history, and be part of the legacy of The Tavern™.



1937

The Tavern™ is founded.

1945

John & Mary Rilei lead the business.

1950

The famous grinder is introduced. Thin crust pizza is now offered.

1988

Chuck Celsi buys The Tavern™.

1990

The Tavern in Valley Junction expands.

1995

The Tavern™ on 50th Street was built.

1997

The Tavern South opens.

2000

The Tavern South closed after fire damages business.

2015

The legacy continues with Chuck’s children.

12 YEARS

HEARTLAND RETIREMENT GROUP

9245 Northpark Drive, Johnston
1-833-968-7474
yourhrg.com

Established in 2011 by founder Tyler Lainson, Heartland Retirement Group (HRG) has become a Midwest powerhouse in the insurance marketing sector. Lainson's vision was to create a workplace where dedication equates to fulfilling career opportunities. Central to HRG's success is its commitment to liberating clients from generic retirement solutions, offering comprehensive, personalized insurance planning.

When clients engage with an HRG agent, the focus is on guiding them towards decisions aligned with their unique circumstances. HRG's emphasis on client satisfaction extends to its partnerships with agents and advisors, providing them with top-tier products and resources. The collaborative approach aims to craft tailored insurance packages addressing individual needs.

HRG's legacy is defined by a dedication to client education and empowerment. Clients choosing HRG embark on a journey with an organization deeply committed to building lasting relationships and navigating the complexities of retirement planning. With a history grounded in principles of dedication, customization, and client-centricity, Heartland Retirement Group continues to shape the landscape of insurance planning in the Midwest. As a leading force since 2011, HRG remains steadfast in its mission to redefine the insurance industry through personalized, client-focused solutions.



- 2011

HRG is founded and begins serving Central Iowa and beyond out of its Clive location.

- 2018

With over 75 partner agents, the first two expansion offices open in Sioux City and Denver, CO.

- 2019

With continued expansion in multiple states, HRG moves its new Regional Headquarters to Johnston. Over 100 partner agents do business with HRG.

- FALL 2019

HRG is acquired by Integrity Marketing Group to allow its agents an even more robust product offering and back end support to help customers plan for their good days ahead.

- 2020

In the midst of a pandemic, the growth continues, and offices are added in Bloomington, MN. and Tarpon Springs, FL. HRG is now partnered with 150+ agents.

- 2023

HRG expands into Wealth Management and adds the HRG Wealth Management Division to provide an even higher level of service and products to its customers.

42 YEARS

WATERFRONT SEAFOOD MARKET

2900 University Ave., West Des Moines • (515) 223-5106
2414 S.E. Tones Drive, Ankeny • (515) 963-1940
www.waterfrontseafoodmarket.com

Established in 1984, Waterfront Seafood Market has blossomed from a humble fresh market selling out of the back of a pickup truck into an award-winning establishment in West Des Moines.

As a family-owned gem, the journey began with a vision to bring quality seafood to Des Moines, evolving into a comprehensive experience that includes a fresh seafood market, sushi bar, oyster bar and fine dining restaurant.

As the Midwest's premier seafood establishment, we distinguish ourselves through a commitment to excellence. Our fish and seafood arrive via air freight and are loaded directly into our specially-built cooler at the airport to keep everything as cold as when it left the docks. Sourcing fresh fish from the same trusted providers for years, we ensure the highest quality from boat to plate.

In 2008, Waterfront opened its second location in Ankeny, expanding its reach while continuing to provide top-notch food and service its known for.

Our highly-trained staff is not just here to serve; they are your culinary companions, ready to answer questions on cooking techniques, seasonings and storage. We also want you to relish the experience of cooking our fresh fish at home.

After more than 40 years of service, Waterfront's commitment is unwavering — if it doesn't meet our standards at the back door, it won't find its way out the front.



- 1983

Began selling seafood out of a pickup truck

- 1984

Opened West Des Moines location in Clocktower Square

- 1996

Introduced sushi bar in West Des Moines

- 2008

Opened second location in Ankeny

- 2023

Celebrating 42 years as the Midwest's premier seafood establishment!

FIDELITY BANK

177 S Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines
515-221-0022
fidelity-bank.com

Fidelity Bank is “Smart Banking Made Simple.” When it comes to choosing a bank that genuinely cares about your financial well-being and is dedicated to helping you achieve your life’s most important milestones, look no further than Fidelity Bank. We take pride in being your local community bank, a trusted partner on your financial journey.

What truly sets Fidelity Bank apart is our unwavering belief in local decision-making. We understand that the success of our clients and communities hinges on this principle. Since our inception in 1927, starting with one branch in Cambridge, Iowa, we’ve remained committed to this mission. Today, we’ve expanded to six branches in Iowa and Illinois, serving the communities of Huxley, Cambridge, West Des Moines in Iowa and Savanna, Thomson, and Mt. Carroll in Illinois.

One of the hallmarks of Fidelity Bank is our commitment to making banking easy and convenient for you. With our user-friendly online account opening process, you can get started with your banking relationship from the comfort of your own home. Say goodbye to long lines and paperwork hassles. Fidelity Bank streamlines your banking experience with online banking, allowing you to manage your accounts, check balances, and transfer funds seamlessly. Sending and receiving money is a breeze with Zelle®, a secure and efficient way to share funds with friends and family. Our account alerts keep you informed, ensuring that you’re always in control of your finances.

Whether you’re dreaming of starting a business or buying a home, we’re here to help. Our mortgage division is renowned for providing a wide range of loan options, including Conventional, FHA, VA, and USDA Loans, Home Equity Loans, New Construction Financing, Rehab or Remodel Loans, Bridge or Temporary Loans, and Lot Loans. We tailor our offerings to fit your unique needs and aspirations.

For local businesses, Fidelity Bank has a long history of helping them flourish. We offer commercial loans to support your expansion, growth, and property acquisition needs. Your business’s success is our success, and we’re committed to fostering economic growth within our communities.

Fidelity Bank is a community-focused financial partner that simplifies banking for you. Choose Fidelity Bank for “Smart Banking Made Simple” and embark on a journey towards financial success with a bank that truly cares.



1927

Chartered as a state commercial bank, Cambridge State Bank, in Cambridge, Iowa

1986

Completed a new branch in Huxley, Iowa. Moved charter to Huxley and became a national chartered bank under the new name of First National Bank.

1989

Cambridge branch is destroyed by a gas leak and re-built.

1991

Charter moved back to state charter under the new name of First State Bank.

2004

Maximum Bancshares acquires First State Bank. Becomes Fidelity Bank

2005

Completed new branch in West Des Moines, Iowa at 177 S. Jordan Creek Parkway. Added a second building for our Fidelity Mortgage division.

2023

Merged with Savanna-Thomson State Bank adding locations in Savanna, Thomson and Mt. Carroll, Illinois

20 YEARS

BIG GREEN UMBRELLA MEDIA

8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston
515-953-4822
biggreenumbrellamedia.com

Big Green Umbrella Media began as Greater Des Moines Publishing Co. (GDMPC), an Iowa corporation formed in February of 2003 with the purchase of Pointblank Media, which included the weekly alternative newspaper Pointblank and the dining guide RELISH. The company operated out of a small office in a shopping center on Fleur Drive on the south side of Des Moines with a staff of eight people. The newspaper's direct competition was CITYVIEW, an established weekly alternative newspaper in Des Moines that first published in July of 1992.

In April of 2004, a new company was formed that merged GDMPC with an acquisition of CITYVIEW from Business Publications Corporation. The company was named Big Green Umbrella Media Inc. (BGUM).

The company grew to include a variety of events and a separate division with Iowa Living lifestyle magazines mailed to residences in a growing number of central Iowa communities while expanding to a staff of 20 employees and more than 50 freelance and contract staff members.

In 2015, BGUM created Big Green Web Design and Big Green Digital Services, a separate division focusing on website development and digital marketing options.

In 2020, BGUM purchased the Lake Panorama Times, a monthly newspaper mailed to all lake property owners, from Herald Publishing Company, marking its first venture into Guthrie County. The company then purchased the Guthrie County Times Vedette, a weekly paid subscription newspaper, and opened an office at 111 E. Main St. in Panorama. In July of 2023, BGUM launched Panorama Times, another free monthly news magazine. In September of 2023, BGUM launched Guthrie Center Times, the third free monthly news magazine.



2003

Greater Des Moines Publishing Co. (GDMPC) forms, publishing Pointblank and RELISH.

2004

Big Green Umbrella Media (BGUM) forms after merging GDMPC with the acquisition of CITYVIEW.

FEB. 2007

The first Living magazine publishes in Johnston.

2014

The BGUM office moves to Johnston, expanding staff to 20 employees and 50+ freelance and contract staff.

2015

BGUM creates Big Green Web Design and Big Green Digital Services.

2020

BGUM moves to a larger office in Johnston.

2020

Lake Panorama Times is purchased in Guthrie County.

JAN. 2021

The Daily Umbrella debuts.

JULY 2022

Guthrie County Times Vedette is purchased.

JULY 2023

The first Panorama Times publishes.

SEPT. 2023

The first Guthrie Center Times publishes.



CITYVIEW's

Gift Guide

The world's best magic, by far, is seeing the gleam in the eyes of special people after you've given them the perfect gift. If you don't yet have a plan for presenting the perfect something that brings joy, peace and happiness to your son, or your daughter, or your spouse, or your significant other or your someone special... CITYVIEW's gift guide has you covered. Happy holidays!

Gift Guide



KitchenAid 5Qt Stand Mixer
SKU#: 18211789



YETI Rambler 14 Oz
SKU#: 64773336



Toro 24" Snow Blower
SKU#: 49771025



GE Nugget Ice Maker
SKU#: 59123885



Dyson V8 Cordless Vacuum
SKU#: 62345129



TCL 50" 4K UHD LED TV
SKU#: 64289333



Arcade1up Pac-Man Game
SKU#: 64935414



Bose QuietComfort Wireless Earbuds
SKU#: 65204331



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Gift Guide



Frazier Fir — a holiday staple for homes all across America! Make the home smell like a fresh cut Christmas tree all season long! From \$7-\$25



This scent is so fresh and clean, and you can get it from lotions to cologne. We know, once you try it, you will be hooked! From \$7-\$55



We love a good layered look and know, giving a set like this for the holidays, someone special will love it, too!
Vests from \$36-\$69, scarves \$24, mittens from \$12-\$24



Beanies always need updated and replaced, and the styles we have this year are not only adorable, but fantastic, with neutral colors and styles!
From \$16.50-\$24



Classic prints and adorable new styles in our everyday clutch! We think giving a clutch with a gift card would make the best gift! From \$35-\$37



Faith leather bracelets are so popular this season, it's like wearing your heart on your sleeve. From \$31



Handbags always make a great gift, and we carry a large variety of sizes and shapes! Stop in often for all the newest products!
From \$49.99-\$72



Locally made lanterns have been the hottest item this season. Magnetic faceplates make it easy to swap out the season, and, since they are made locally, you are shopping small twice! From \$35

Bring this in for

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* Not including sale items. Not good on previous purchases. Expires 12/23/23

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SHOP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Gift Guide



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HoverTech Aero Drone 360 \$24.99

These self-flying drones are super easy to launch! They use advanced infrared sensor hover technology, inductive suspension, and collision protection.



Buildzi By Tenzi \$28.99

A fast-paced stacking challenge that'll keep everyone on their toes! Thrilling to play and incredibly open-ended!



Crayola Color Fashion Boutique by PLAYMOBIL \$34.99

In collaboration with Crayola, five new playsets are being released with ultra washable markers. Children can personalize their favorite figures again and again!



John Deere Deluxe Talking Tool belt by Tomy Corporation \$34.99

With these toy tools at your toddler's side, they'll have hours of DIY fun! They will get all the tough jobs done around the house.



Winter Activity Super Set 5 Snow Games by Snow Sector \$37.99

This 12 piece Winter playset will keep kids active with 5 games in 1! Includes Ice Bubbles, Snowball Maker, Bottle Toss, Ring Toss, Snow Sprinkler, Snow Colors, and Monster Toss.



Bitzee by Spinmaster Toys \$39.99

DIGITAL PET YOU CAN TOUCH: Bitzee goes beyond the 2D screen; it's the virtual pet you can really touch and feel in our 3D world! Each Bitzee toy pet reacts to your swipes, tilts, and touch!



Marvel 3D Lights by 3D FX \$39.99

These 3D Lights are perfect for those Marvel Super Hero enthusiasts! They create a realistic wall feature in any child's bedroom (or adult's den!)



Yoto 3rd Generation by Yoto \$99.99

Yoto Player (3rd Generation) opens up kids' creative play to a whole new world of potential. Build independence, inspire imagination and let kids from 3-12 + lead the way through family life.



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The Perfect Artisan Collection - \$104

A gorgeous gift box filled with the perfect charcuterie collection including: Chateau St. Michelle Sauvignon Blanc, olive oil & sea salt crackers, Camembert Cheese Spread, spa trail mix, rustic vegetable dip mix, ceramic dish, mini knife, mini wooden spoon, garlic mustard and peach bourbon jam.



Whiskey Creek - \$70

Our "Hobble Creek," which is a wine-based whiskey has been paired with whiskey flavored popcorn, olive oil and sea salt crackers, summer sausage and cabernet sauvignon spreadable cheese and mixed nuts.



Italian Dinner Box with Chianti - \$79

Enjoy a Castello Montuato chianti from Tuscany along with organic pasta, Pietromonaco sugo rosso, breadsticks, olive oil, olive tapenade and a dipping dish. A gorgeous collection in a black gift box.



Ciao! Bonjour! Hola! Gift Box - \$64

Say hello or welcome someone to the team with this personal beer gift. Two Coronas, salted pretzels, amber beer mustard, a mini dish and a spreader are all placed in a simple white box.



Wine Happy Hour Gift Basket - \$42

Enjoy two wines-to-go along with these happy hour snacks! Sweetened cranberries, camembert cheese, cheddar cheese, olive oil and sea salt crackers, a ceramic dish, olive tapenade and a wooden spoon.



Love Noir Valentine - \$69

This exquisite bottle of pinot noir is paired with our red velvet cherries and vanilla caramels.



CEO Gift Box - \$124

This CEO (Consume Every Ounce) rocks glass is the perfect gift for an executive! We've included several amazing items: Whiskey Pop Caramel Corn, Hobble Creek Wine Based Whiskey, Beiluner Ballpoint Pens in gift box with refill, Black Journal, and mandarin orange slices.



Executive Wine Box - \$170

Enjoy the Kendall Jackson series of wines including chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. We paired cabernet cheddar cheese spread, garlic mustard fig jam, olive oil and sea salt crackers, a mini dish, spoon and spreader along with sweet dried apricots and pistachios.

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Gift Guide

tandem brick gallery des moines



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"The Original!"



Vintage ornament wreaths

created by artist/designer Darcy Hosier



Just in...Iowa T-shirts!

Art and design by Tandem Brickers! Great Christmas gifts!



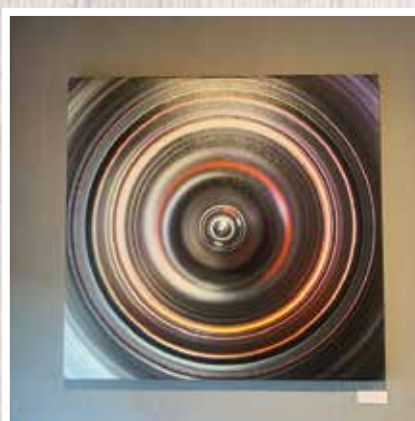
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Gift Guide

Heart of Iowa market place



Holiday Hams

Applewood smoked, honey-glazed bone-in ham — sure to be a hit this holiday season!
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Handmade Wood Creations

Whether it's the family den, bedroom, or the man cave, these homemade wooden bowls are a perfect fit!
\$24.99-\$49.99



New Harmony Pottery

Handmade in Iowa, these pottery pieces are beautiful and functional! Pottery pieces include small jars, spoon rests, small crocks and cream pitchers.
\$7.99-\$31.99



Homemade Fudge

Heart of Iowa fudge is made right here in the store with cream and real butter. Award-winning and delicious!
\$4-\$24



Iowa Favorites Gift Box

The perfect holiday gift box layered with delicious Iowa treats to share amongst friends, family or co-workers.
\$31.99



Large Iowa shaped gift basket.

This basket is filled with your favorite Iowa gourmet foods, plus a fun Iowa-shaped gift basket to keep and use again! \$63.99



Grand Taste of Iowa Basket

A taste of Iowa that is sure to please. This quality basket is overflowing with an assortment of great Iowa foods. \$89.99



Heart of Iowa Gift Box

A great price for a box of holiday favorites for yourself, family or business associates. Starting at \$37.99



Heart of Iowa market place

www.HeartofIowa.com

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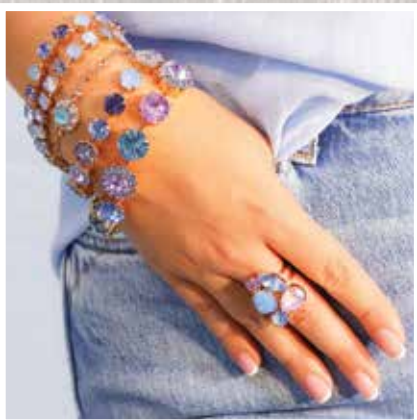


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Gift Guide

HERMANS
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Sapphire and diamond engagement ring



Unique diamond bangle bracelet



Diamond and ruby antique bracelet



Diamond bands bracelet



Taster Set \$18

A carefully curated set of oils and vinegars pairings that are great for gift giving or just a great way to try some pairings.



Host Gift Bag \$22

This set is a great gift for anyone who enjoys a great bread dipping experience. The set includes three of our favorite spice blends for bread dipping, paired with an extra virgin olive oil. All you need is a warm loaf of Italian bread!



Mama's Homestyle \$24

Mama's favorite for chili, meatloaf, spaghetti, burgers, tacos and chicken. While it would be impossible to exactly recreate your mom's recipes, we think our Mama's Homestyle Box comes pretty close. These six special blends will make your weeknight meal prep a breeze.



Moo \$45

Moo consists of four of our favorite beef rubs and spice blends, along with some literal "special sauce" for good measure: Espresso Rub, Prime Rib Blend, Quebec Steak Seasoning, our New York Steak and Burger Blend, and a bottle of amazing Colonel Pabst All-Malt Amber Lager Worcestershire Sauce.



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Topical

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Sleep

Unwind the mind and body. Millions of men and women are deprived of sleep thanks to a multitude of reasons, including physical and mental stress. Some research suggests that CBD may interact with specific receptors in the body, potentially balancing the sleep/wake cycle.



Stress

We may think of stress as something we cope with mentally, and it's just part of life. True, but it doesn't need to control your life. CBD may help manage anxiety, mood conditions and feelings of stress.



Pain

Can CBD really help with my pain? For some, the answer is yes. CBD is an option for many pain sufferers to potentially help relieve their symptoms, due to its antioxidant properties.



General Wellness

Taking CBD every day may help support your cognitive function, provide energy, and support your overall sense of being on a regular basis.



Energy

Low energy? For some, CBD (and other wellness components) can be a game changer. Sustained and enlightened energy can be attained by most users.



Drinks

CBD may help to regulate gut bacteria and reduce intestinal permeability. Intestinal permeability occurs when the gut wall starts to lose its integrity. Additionally, CBD with other wellness components may provide relaxation, reduce inflammation and increase energy levels.



Therapeutic

Hemp Derived D9 may be therapeutic for a number of life's everyday challenges. Benefits may include a sense of deep relaxation, potential pain management and may induce deep sleep. NOTE: Make sure to connect to a HW CBD guru before using.

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A collection of HW CBD products including CBD Turmeric & Ginger Tea, RECOVERY MUSCLE BALM, ENERGY MUSCLE BALM, CBD GUMMIES, HW CBD Long THC + 20mg CBD Fruit Chews, and a jar of CBD cream.A QR code linking to the HW CBD website.

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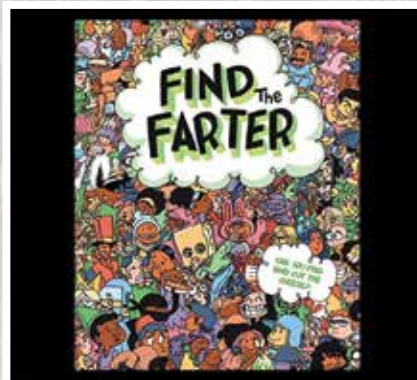
Gift Guide



Voted CITYVIEW's Best Local Gift Shop and Best Valley Junction Store!



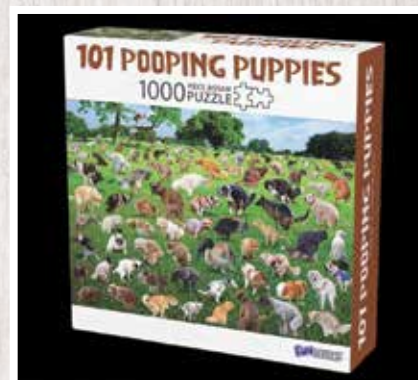
We have more than 200 styles of funny socks for everyone on your list!



Our best-selling book for kids and adults alike "Find the Farther" in hidden scenes.



This screen art door decor is designed by a local artist and available in many styles.



We have more than 50 styles of puzzles including this Pooping Puppies puzzle!



This candle looks like a bowl of cereal and smells EXACTLY like Fruit Loops!



Our pop culture table has everything Taylor Swift, Harry Styles, Prince, Dolly Parton, Golden Girls, and more!



Not your Mother's Holiday Ornaments

These tiny pieces of art will amuse you and your guests!



Our pickleball table is a big dill and has a gift for every pickleball player and pickle lover on your list!



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Ecco Grainer — Cocoa Brown



Gabor Platform High-Top — Black/Caramel



New Balance 237 — Marblehead



ON Cloudmonster — Nimbus/Hay



Pikolinos Aldaya Chelsea Arcilla




Pikolinos Aviles — Aloe



Taos Downtown — Eggshell



Ugg Tasman Dark Grey



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Gift Guide



MAINFRAME STUDIOS



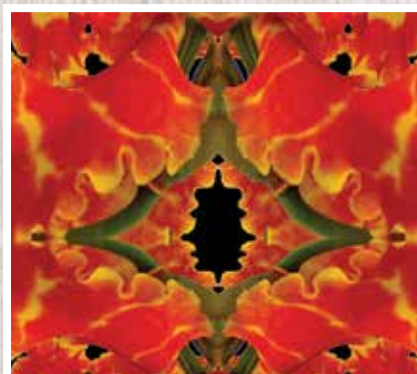
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LUNCH WITH...

BY JIM DUNCAN

Bill Mulstay and Mike Hughes

Three hippies have sandwiches at Manhattan Deli and talk the cost of college, the art scene and what we miss

EAT & DRINK

Bill Mulstay is a former fireman, carney and an artist with more than 60 years of significant work in Des Moines. Mike Hughes is a guitar maker, post beam constructionist and greeting card (“Good for You”) creator. We asked them to lunch at Manhattan Deli. We went after 1 p.m. thinking it might be quiet by then, but we still had to scramble to snare the last open table. Not even seemingly endless street work and a strange decision by the city to reduce handicap accessible parking from seven spaces to two have kept people from their favorite sandwiches.

We are three old, college-educated hippies. Today many kids like us are foregoing college as an unnecessary expense. Would you still go to college today?

“The minute I got out of the University of Iowa, I saw no way my education was going to aid my livelihood, so I got a trade. I walked into NBN Guitars in Longmont, Colorado, and asked for a job. It was

a great place. We made guitars for Stephen Stills. We made him a neck for his National steel guitar and a banjo, too. James Taylor and Leo Kotke were customers. And Paul Simon’s brother, I think his name was Eddie,” said Hughes.

“I was a carney. Mom started the first lemonade stand at the Iowa State Fair, and we took that show on the road. Did most of the state fairs in the Midwest and Texas and nearly every small town in Iowa. I remember when there was only one day at the Texas Fair when Blacks were allowed in. I was also a fireman on the trains. I fed the fire that fueled the steam. All of a sudden, one day every railroad in the U.S. and Canada converted from steam engines, and the job was obsolete. The carny life was aging out, too — no more circuses. So I was 25 before I even thought about college. Then I went to Drake hoping to play basketball.

“I only had room on my schedule for one or two

electives, and art was one of them. I liked it. Drake was a magic place for artists in the 1960s. Jules Kirschenbaum was there. Gary Gildner and Ed Mayo were poets and writers then. I figured I could teach art, so I got a master’s in painting and printmaking,” said Mulstay.

The Des Moines art scene is nothing like it was 60 years ago. How has it changed for you?

“I have works in the art museums of Baylor and Missouri State. In those days, the best way to market your work was to enter competitions. If you won, you won a purchase award. That brought the old carney out in me. I towed a trailer of art to Waco and Springfield and other places. Today, Moberg Gallery represents people worldwide,” said Mulstay.

Do you admire any younger local artists?

“Yeah, Scott Charles Ross. He overlapped with me at Drake. He’s special,” said Mulstay.

Living as long as we have, lots of things have



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LUNCH WITH...

become obsolete, or just vanished. What do you miss?

"There were so many good Italian places around Francis Avenue. One was across the street from Veterans Hospital. Wagon Wheel or something like that. There was a great bar called the Rock Island Gun Club. They created great characters. Johnny Critelli was one. He had a place at Francis and what's now called MLK. He was front-page news. One-armed bandits were the rumor. All his kids became lawyers and judges.

"Dentists (Angelo) Biggie Gillotti and Tony Porto were bigger than life guys. There was a small place by the Onion Ring at Merle Hay and Hickman. It had no name or sign, but it was a legend. I was in the bar one time, and I see (Governor) Harold Hughes, F. Lee Bailey, Floren DiPaglia and Pete DePhillips sitting together. Pete owned the place. I worked there when I was at Drake. Now every place has a name but no mysticism," said Mulstay.

"I missed most of the So's Your Mother era because I was in Colorado, but that was a special place. The Birds played there. So did Mose Allison and Johnny Winter. Winter was just passing through when he jammed there," added Hughes.

"Every time I went to Mother's, I ended up either getting laid or thrown in jail," added Mulstay.

"Even the cops were legendary back then. Tony Mihalovic was the most popular guy in town," said Mulstay.

Sneaking into places was rife in the day. Now kids have thousands of bucks to spend on Taylor Swift concerts. I used to get into KRNT Theater via the basement from KRNT TV. Saw Kingston Trio, Hank Williams, Peter, Paul and Mary that way.

"I saw Verne Gagne there that way and closed-circuit fights. My best sneak-in was Drake Fieldhouse. You could sneak in the stadium just by hopping a fence and then enter the fieldhouse via the tunnel. It wasn't just for basketball then; there were concerts there," said Mulstay.

"I remember a guy from Dowling, Joe Gomez. One day he came to school all dressed up in pointed toe shoes and a suit and tie. I asked him what the occasion was. 'Al Capone's birthday,' he said. A few weeks later, he is all dressed up again. 'My birthday' was his explanation. A while later, I read about his death. He was shot by police while stealing a car," said Hughes.

"I miss the old days at the movies. We would sit in the balcony and make cocktails, and no one bothered us," said Mulstay.

Mulstay still has a beard. Hughes used to. Did the appearance of hippiness cause hassles?



"One time I was boarding a plane at Stapleton (airport). I used to wait till last call so I didn't have to wait in long lines. So, I am boarding and two guys in tear drop sunglasses and blue suits stop me and start asking questions. I didn't even have an ID because you didn't need one then. I finally ask why I am being hassled, and one of them says 'You fit the profile of a hijacker.' That was right after DB Cooper.

"Another time I was thrown in jail in Nogales, on the American side. I wouldn't eat powdered eggs, so this guy asks if he can have mine. I say sure and ask him what he was in for. 'Horse thieving.' I was in jail with the last American horse thief. But you can't hang a man for killing a woman who's trying to steal his horse," said Hughes. ■

EAT & DRINK



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Oak Park — an anthology of love stories

The restaurant is the first hospitality industry venture for Kathy Fehrman, a retired investments manager.



Oak Park opened in October generating more buzz than any restaurant since 801 Steak & Chop House opened in 1991. Much about the recent debut was remarkable. The restaurant was the first hospitality industry venture for Kathy Fehrman, a retired investments manager. It arose quickly amid an Ingersoll Avenue reconstruction project that stalled in its fifth year of annoying business owners. The Prairie architecture, by Brad Hartman, features the best of all trappings. Abundant natural light is the best of all of them.

OAK PARK
3901 Ingersoll Ave.
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Tuesday - Saturday
from 4:30 p.m.

Oak Park went to Barcelona and Virginia to find and to commission their kitchen equipment, including a Jospier grill that sears steaks over charcoal or wood. Fehrman employed a kitchen full of talent for seven months prior to opening. The place built its own garden, to grow the ingredients for a fresh and local menu. The wine cellar has 9,000 bottles and 2,500 labels. Seven staff members are licensed sommeliers.

That talent was recruited from elite sources such as Eataly and Deer Path Inn in Chicago, Falstaff House in Boulder, and 801 Steak & Chop Houses in Des Moines and Omaha. Those recruits also have many Michelin starred restaurants on their resumes, in France, the UK, New York City and Chicago.

Chef Ian Robertson and pastry chef Jess Robertson came as a couple. The two had been taking turns staying rooted with the kids and padding their CVs with European, New York and Chicago stints. Oak Park brought them family stability. Their house is a couple blocks from the restaurant, and Ian's mother lives with the family.

The restaurant is booked solidly through most of winter. But the bar is not on the reservation service and operates as a first-come, first-served. Among the treats is a caviar service that has three levels of indulgence. A pair of royal ossetra caviar cones with smoked lemon, crème fraîche and pureed cauliflower is only \$25. You can spend six times that for an ounce with potato blinis. The potato gnocchi, Ian's favorite dish, were the most decadent I ever tried, with kale leaves, truffle cream and topped with a lace tuille of potato crisp.

Pork belly is served sweet here as Bourbon candied bacon with parsnip, radish, celery, pickled mustard seed and raw apple. Crab is poached in lemon butter and served with butternut squash bisque. It's so tasty, I have not yet tried the acorn squash.

All three salads are special. The Caesar is classic with really good Parmesano.



The Bel Fiore radicchio was charred and served with smoked pear, pecans, and black truffle triple cream cheese, in a divine sherry maple vinaigrette. The beet salad was served with charred avocado, orange segment and lime vinaigrette.

The last time I discovered a great skate dish in town was at Bistro Montage, when Ian was a chef there. This version is different but just as marvelous. The strangest looking of fish was served in a filo pastry with champagne butter, lemon confit and an endive salad. Duck confit was served with homemade fettucine, Brussels sprouts and Pecorino. Carrots Wellington was the most elegant dish, wrapped in puffed pastry and served with cheese, shaved carrots and mushrooms.

Cattle are stars here. The Jospier brings out the essence of steaks. The dry aged ribeye is covered in bone marrow and oyster butter and served with potatoes mashed in bone marrow. All steaks are served with top-notch sides. The spaghetti Bolognese was made with wagyu beef.

Dessert offerings are plentiful. Excellent hazelnut chocolate bars are a \$4 bargain. Jess' favorite dish is the Oak Park donut finished with crème fraîche cream and creme fraîche ice cream.

Oak Park is a labor of love. The biggest love story, though, is in how the neighborhood has responded to Fehrman's project. "The place is perceived as a gift to the community," said an envious owner of another café. ■

Jim Duncan is a food writer who has been covering the central Iowa scene for more than five decades.

BELLY UP TO:



The Walnut

Former food truck fare in century-old building

BY JACKIE WILSON

Buildings constructed nearly a century ago don't generally survive, unless it was a quality build. For The Walnut, a bar and grill located at 1417 Walnut, it's like time stood still. The tall, unique windows, heavy, wooden doors and solid brick interior and exterior create an architectural treat and an enjoyable place to sip a cocktail or enjoy a meal.

The place, built in 1928, was formerly the Walnut Tire and Battery Co. It's nestled halfway between the Pappajohn Sculpture Park and M.L. King Parkway. You won't find tires or batteries here, but you will find a full cocktail bar with a kitchen.

The food concept comes from one of Des Moines' first food trucks called "The Spot." Owners traded in their wheels for a more permanent location in 2018. The vibe is bustling, yet with a volume low enough to carry on a conversation with friends. There are a few televisions, but they are not the main focus. The brick walls, cement floors and simple décor lend to a classic, old-school ambience.

The Walnut does practically everything right. A solid food menu won't bust the budget, although it's not cheap bar food. The cocktail and beer menu offers something for everyone.

Happy hour includes \$1 off drinks from 3-6 p.m. every day. If you missed the cut-off, stop in for another daily special. On Wednesdays, you can get a \$5 Moscow mule (regular \$8). Or try a few house wines by the glass, starting at \$7. An expansive beer list includes five different beers

from their neighbor, Exile. They also serve Big Grove, Toppling Goliath and other beers. For all you Busch Light fans, it's just \$2.50 for a can.

For the Wednesday night special, a pound and a half of hot chicken wings cost just \$7, regular \$14. The buffalo chicken dip included chunks of chicken with soft pita bread triangles for \$10. Plus they've got tacos, sandwiches and burgers with no entree more than \$16.

There are several vegan options besides a plain salad. They include veggie tacos, veggie Philly and vegan spring rolls. A vegan quesadilla includes vegan cheese, roasted sweet corn, red peppers, onions, black beans and pico de gallo for \$12.

Don't worry, meat eaters, there are a couple dozen options on the menu. A Saturday brunch starting at 11 a.m. gets you breakfast egg rolls, sunrise tacos, vegan blueberry pancakes and more.

The place is closed Sundays and Mondays. It opens at 11 a.m. the rest of the week for lunch or brunch. A patio outside is relatively quiet. You can hop in for a drink or meal just before hitting Teehee's Comedy Club a few doors down.

Curiosity nearly got the best of me when I noticed a trap door in the center of the floor. It practically begged for me to open it up and take a look into the 100-year-old basement.

Instead, I licked the buffalo sauce off my fingers and washed it down with my Moscow mule. I'm putting The Walnut on my list of places to return to. And, maybe next time, I'll see what's under that trap door. ■



EAT & DRINK

DECEMBER 2023 | CITYVIEW | 65

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give guide

Generously growing impact locally and globally

Many Hands is an Iowa-based nonprofit creating local and global life transformation. Established in 2008, we aim to ignite generosity, grow community, and take people on impact journeys to carve a new, better path to live. Each year, the organization reaches at least 30,000 people through its international operations, connects with more than 300,000 customers through the Many Hands Thrift Markets located in Iowa, and takes over 300 people on Impact Trips overseas.

In the Caribbean, we strengthen and develop individuals, families, and communities for long-term sustainability. We believe every child deserves to be fed and every parent deserves the power to care for their family. Through our programs, we walk with over 400 families weekly, providing meals, education, training, and support. By rebuilding these foundations and restoring families, people have the dignity to lift themselves out of poverty, creating a new story for their families and their communities.

In the US, we ignite generosity through meaningful thrift stores. Shopping, donating, and volunteering at the Many Hands Thrift Market helps fund local and global impact. We believe this generosity culture fires up churches, businesses, schools, and communities to give and serve with open hands to be love in action. Through relationships, we take the broken and discarded things of this world and remake them into something new, something better.

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THRILL OF THE CHILL

As another winter season establishes itself, with it comes the opportunity to sled, skate, ski and, inevitably, take a tumble. Look inside for some local spots to get your outdoor activity fix.

By Cyote Williams

Even with record-high temperatures in 2023, a trend that is expected to continue, do not underestimate Iowa's ability to accumulate enough snow to last into the spring season.

The snow will eventually fall, and the lakes will eventually freeze, turning your favorite parks and hills into ice skating, sledding, skiing and snowboarding destinations. Several indoor ice-skating rinks offer public skate times, as well as rentals. A drive up north can take you to massive hills for skiing and snowboarding. Or head to your local park equipped with whatever sledding apparatus you see fit and bomb down those hills.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SEVEN OAKS RECREATION



Courtesy of Des Moines Parks and Recreation

BRENTON SKATING PLAZA

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Courtesy of Sleepy Hollow Sports Park

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4051 Dean Ave., Des Moines
www.polkcounyiowa.gov/conservation/parks-trails/sleepy-hollow

While it's true that Sleepy Hollow is closed for renovations and upgrades this winter season, once the construction is complete, the sports park will be open year-round for tubing and snowboarding. The planned "Snowflex" turf to be installed makes this possible. Included in the upgrades are improvements to the lodge facility, improved parking and expanded camping operations.

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Courtesy of Seven Oaks Recreation

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After opening its doors in 2021 with funds from community partners and, you guessed it, MidAmerican, the facility now has an indoor field, track, basketball courts, esports, batting cages and, most importantly for this story, a hockey rink. Public skating is available to all ages year round in the Patty and Jim Cownie Family Ice Arena with skate rentals available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

JOHNSTON COMMONS ICE RINK

6700 Merle Hay Road, Johnston
www.cityofjohnston.com/1116/Johnston-Commons-Ice-Rink

This outdoor community skating rink was donated to the Johnston Commons by the Iowa Wild and Wells Fargo in 2019. If you've got your own skates, this is one of the many community rinks you can skate at for free that have been popping up from the partnership between the Wild and Wells Fargo. Check the flag to make sure the rink is open. Naturally, green means it's open, and red means it's closed.



Courtesy of MidAmerican Energy Company RecPlex

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Courtesy of Indianola Park Friends

INDIANOLA ICE RINK

2204 W. Second Ave., Indianola

www.indianolaiowa.gov/772/Ice-Rink

Another one of the outdoor skating rinks that was donated from the Wild and Wells Fargo connection, this location debuted in 2018. When the rink is suitable for use, open hockey is allowed from 7 a.m. to noon and public skating from noon until 11 p.m. daily.

SLEDDING HILLS

Here is a list of local parks that host some of the most popular sledding hill spots around the Des Moines metro. Grab whatever sledding device you see fit, find these hills, and enjoy.

- Altoona:** Lions Park, 507 13th Ave., S.W.
- Ankeny:** Northcreek Park, 2301 W. First St.
Summerbrook Park, 1009 S.E. Eighth St.
- Clive:** Campbell Park, 12385 Woodlands Parkway, Clive
Country Club Glen Park, 16335 Sheridan Ave., Clive
Mercy West Clinic, 1601 N.W. 114th St.
- Des Moines:** Blank Golf Course, 808 County Line Road
Grandview Golf Course, 2401 E. 29th St.
Capitol Hill, 1111 E. Court Ave.
Ewing Park, 5300 Indianola Ave.
Greenwood Park, 4500 Grand Ave.
MacRae Park, 1021 Davis Ave.
Union Park, 725 Thompson Ave.
Waveland Golf Course, 4908 University Ave.
Beavercreek Elementary, 8701 Lyndhurst Drive
Pointe Vista Park, 9612 Enfield Drive
- Pleasant Hill:** Doanes Park, 5050 Doanes Park Drive
Oak Hill Park, 2115 Copper Wynd Drive
- Urbandale:** Winter Park, 5110 N.W. 72nd St.
- Waukee:** Warrior Park and Sledding Hill, 1050 Fourth St.
- West Des Moines:** Jordan Creek Elementary, 4501 Fuller Road
Pearson Park, 1256 19th St.
Southwoods Park, 350 S. 35th St.

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MORE ICE RINKS

Plenty of lakes around central Iowa are suitable for ice skating as long as the weather permits. Proceed with caution and check signs when heading to those locations.

- Centennial Park, 605 S.E. Driftwood Lane, Waukee
- Crosshaven Park, 7909 N.W. 95th St., Johnston
- Greenwood Park Pond, 100 45th St., Des Moines
- Johnston Town Center Ice Rink, 6245 Merle Hay Road, Johnston
- MacRae Park Pond, 1021 Davis Ave., Des Moines
- Raccoon River Park Ice Rink, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
- South River Valley Park, 725 E. 13th St., Ames
- Sunrise Park, 506 S.E. Peterson Drive, Ankeny ■



The Johnston Town Center splash pad is converted to an ice rink which is open for most of the winter. Courtesy of City of Johnston

EXERCISE BENEFITS OF SKATING, SKIING AND SLEDDING

While there’s no doubting the amount of fun associated with getting outside during the winter months, there are plenty of health benefits as well. It’s easy to stay inside while the temperature and snow are dropping, accompanied by a good book or movie. Those New Year’s resolutions won’t accomplish themselves with you on the couch (unless that was your resolution).

ICE SKATING

Ice skating can work wonders for improving your balance, as well as improving joint and muscle health. According to playkettering.org, the synchronization works every muscle group in your body in order to get you moving on the ice. Not only that, but the activity is also an underrated cardiovascular workout. According to Harvard Medical School, you can burn up to 200 calories an hour while skating.

SKIING

Skiing is often thought to be a good introduction before transitioning to snowboarding. For those only interested in skiing, the workout involved is still incredibly beneficial.

According to an article by Time Magazine, downhill skiing is similar to cycling or rowing workouts when it comes to cardiovascular workouts. Skiing has been compared to HIIT (high intensity interval training) workouts that have become more popular in recent years. After pushing yourself and working several muscle groups in order to maintain balance and get down the hill, you get to leisurely ride back to the top of the ski lift, allowing you to catch your breath.

SLEDDING

You wouldn’t think of sledding being too heavy of a workout, considering half of the activity is spent sitting down. On your way down the hill, you engage arm muscles in order to keep you on the sled and off of a “funniest fails” compilation, and your core to keep you upright. The other half of sledding is getting back up the hill on your own two feet. Going up a hill can be a tall task in its own right. Toss in the added weight of your winter gear and the snow you’ll be walking through, and estimates show you can burn roughly 400 calories in an hour. ■



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BOOK REVIEWS

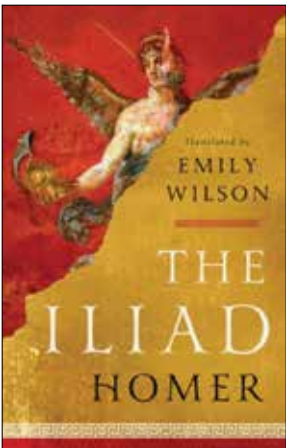
COURTESY OF BEAVERDALE BOOKS

‘The Iliad’

If you are shuddering from echoes of long, boring classes back in school, stick with me for a few minutes. I promise, there is more to the classics than difficult-to-pronounce names and indecipherable writing. In fact, this is a deeply complex, layered tale with themes as fresh today as they were 3,000 years ago. War, sex and grief — all played out on the grandest of scales. It’s a movie franchise just waiting to happen.

I think everyone knows the bones of the story. Paris, prince of Troy, runs off with the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen. She just so happens to be married, and her husband launches a war to get her back. The gods — the true instigators of this mess — are right there with their human toys, back-stabbing and conniving along the way.

Gory, funny, sharp and sad. This is a truly modern interpretation that loses nothing of the beauty of the original text. It’s a masterpiece. “So the immortals spun our lives that we wretched men live on to bear such torments.” If picturing Brad Pitt as the bitter and brilliant Achilles helps, who am I to stop you? ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Homer, Emily Wilson, translator
9/26/23
848 pages
\$39.95
W.W. Norton & Company

‘The Lost Library’

What do a ghost, a cat and a young boy nervous about the future have in common? Books, naturally. There’s something special about a free little library. Maybe that’s why there are so many sprinkled throughout our town. It’s a sense of community and kindness free for the taking. It’s a gift, a wish, a little box of hope.

Evan and Rafe are a pair of soon-to-be middle schoolers concerned they might not be ready for the changes that are coming quickly. In the midst of this personal confusion, they stumble across a new free little library in their town and are soon swept up in a mystery. All of the books seem connected somehow, but no one will help them get to the bottom of it.

With the tumultuous assistance of a vain cat and a ghostly librarian, this story unfolds into a beautiful tale of love, acceptance and growth. It is the perfect gift for children and adults alike — especially bookish sorts who may be going through a life change. This is, to me, the best kind of story — one that entertains, teaches and helps the reader feel a little less alone. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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JOE’S NEIGHBORHOOD

BY JOE WEEG

The cost-of-concert blues

Two high school boys from Iowa City are not buying two tickets for \$10,890 each.

The tightly sealed cardboard box from the attic is an accumulation of orphaned items too dear to trash. There’s a first communion missal, a holy water font to hang on my wall, a kindergarten report card from St. Thomas Aquinas (with nine graded categories, one being the “Ability to talk to God,” for which my heretical soul got an “A,” you doubters), old passports, and . . . what’s this? Concert tickets?

The line stretches long and meandering from the entrance to Hilton Coliseum in Ames through the east parking lot, across the South Skunk River, to eventually come to rest in my memory more than 50 years later. I do remember the smell — the pungency of marijuana as it drifts from the crowd while my buddy and I try unsuccessfully to look cool standing in line with our eyes down and our hands deep in our pockets. Once we are seated, everyone around us is laughing and talking and passing drinks back and forth. College kids, for sure. We sit in our brand-new bellbottom pants, eyes wide, and pass pop back and forth. Yup, high school kids, for sure.

From stage left comes our man. Alone. Shadowed. Quiet. He sits at the piano and pauses. Then he bends over the keys and plays. Gradually, the music loops around and his voice joins in:

“Blue-jean baby
L.A. lady
Seamstress for the band
Pretty-eyed
Pirate smile
You’ll marry a music man”

Elton John’s “Tiny Dancer.” And we forget all our anxieties, worries, cares and desires. We are no longer separate from the crowd. We are floating in the air, driven by this strange man on the big stage wearing cartoonish glasses. We are transported.

And the cost of this ecstasy? Well, back in 1972, it was \$4.



Yes, four big ones. Tax included. That’s not happening today — even accounting for the increase of the minimum wage from \$1.60 an hour in 1972 to \$7.25 an hour in 2023. Three hours of work actually paid for my ticket back in 1972. Three hours of work today would barely pay for a reusable water bottle sold at a Taylor Swift concert.

Taylor Swift brings her “Eras” tour to Kansas City in less than a month, and resale tickets have only shot up in price since they sold out on Ticketmaster in November 2022. According to StubHub, prices range from \$1,047 to \$7,166 for the remaining 473 tickets for July 7 and \$1,100 to \$10,890 for one of 509 tickets available for July 8.

Craziness has happened. Two high school boys from Iowa City are not buying two tickets for \$10,890 each. Please.

Of course, the Taylor Swift ticket sales were outsized. We all know that. But even to see Elton John in Denver last year would have been a hard swallow:

Elton John’s Farewell Yellow Brick Road Tour, which he says will be his last, is coming to Denver’s Ball Arena at 8 p.m. this Friday. Last-minute ticket grabbers will pay about \$300 at the cheapest end, or upward of \$4,800 at the most expensive.

What has happened here? Who can possibly afford this?

So I asked a pro.

“The Ron Sorenson Show — Progressive music from the Dean of progressive music. Nobody has done it longer or better.” KFMG Program Schedule (<https://kfmg.org/program-schedule/>).



JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD

"I've been doing radio since God was just a little girl." Ron Sorenson laughingly explains in his deep, melodious voice with the calming notes of a meditation guru at a day-long retreat.

Ron Sorenson is general manager of KFMG radio and president of the board of directors.

"Essentially, I run the store."
Which means?

"That means I'm general manager, staff announcer, principal underwriting sales person, fundraiser, copywriter, production director, I do promotions, and I take out the trash."

OK, Ron, based on your long years in the music world, what's going on with these music concert ticket prices?

"I did some digging, mainly because I was curious. Today, average concert ticket price is \$252. But in 1970, a big name show, a Beatles show or a Led Zeppelin show, was charging \$10 to \$12. But remember that gasoline in 1970 was 36 cents a gallon. So, one cause for what's happening today is clearly inflation."

And?

"Well, another factor is that 32% of ticket costs are currently fees and services. And don't forget the resellers. They want to sell for more than they paid. It's Stubhub but also individuals just trying to make a buck."

Yikes, that's a chunk.

"Another factor, I believe, especially for Baby Boomers, are that they are doing pretty well and are willing to pay \$1,000 to \$1,500 to see Paul McCartney for the last time. So they get the VIP treatment and don't have to mingle with the hoi polloi."

But what about all the young people attending a concert like Taylor Swift?

"Hah, those concert goers have grandparents who are baby boomers. I wouldn't be surprised if there isn't substantial parental and grandparental support. And don't forget that Taylor Swift is a phenomenon — it's a show, a circus, not just a band up there playing."

I thank Ron for his thoughts, and he returns to his microphone while I return home to my box of memories and old concert tickets.

Wow. Look at this. Don McLean of "American Pie" fame at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium in 1973! Who knew? And the cost? Three bucks.

Shaking my head, and deciding once again not to trash all these treasures, I seal up the box and take it back to the attic. Then I sit on the attic stairs, an old man perch, and consider the wonderfully sweet smell of melancholy.

*"A long, long time ago
I can still remember
how that music
used to make me smile . . ."*
— Don McLean, "American Pie" ■

Joe Weeg spent 31 years bumping around this town as a prosecutor for the Polk County Attorney's Office. Now retired, he writes about the frequently overlooked people, places and events in Des Moines on his blog: www.joesneighborhood.com.



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Vibrant Music Hall

A look at Waukeez's newest music venue

Music lovers, concert goers and live show aficionados can add one more venue to choose from in Des Moines' suburbia — Vibrant Music Hall.

Vibrant Music Hall, located in Waukeez's KeeTown Loop at 2938 Grand Prairie Parkway, hosted its first concert, needtobreathe on Nov. 5.

Vibrant isn't named because of its energetic vibe but rather gets its naming rights from Vibrant Credit Union, based in Moline, Illinois. Live Nation Entertainment manages the venue, adding Iowa's Vibrant Music Hall to its list of 150 venues nationwide, including the House of Blues.

Live Nation chose Waukeez for its new location, as it is close to Interstates 80/35 with ease of access for both artists and guests. It's about a 10-minute drive from Jordan Creek Mall.

For a firsthand look at the venue, I attended the Rock Resurrection Tour with Saint Asonia, Theory of a Deadman and Skillet. Parking cost \$15 — the only Waukeez venue that charges for parking. The will-call ticket booth is located outdoors. Once inside, patrons pass through automatic metal detectors, a change from being hand-wanded at other venues.

A stunning wall mural in the front lobby catches your attention. Painted by local artist James Navarro, it includes a variety of colorful shoes — Converse, Vans, dress shoes, representing different people coming together for the music. The spacious areas near the entrance and by the bar areas offer less crowding and a place to hang if needing a break from the music.

Venue setups vary based on the artist's preference and accommodate up to 3,300 patrons. This concert offered general admission, standing-room-only area on the main floor. About a third of the concert goers sat in the upper deck and box seats. This setup is the best of both worlds, benefitting the concert "standers" and the "sitters" all under one roof. Cup holders in the



Red Room Lounge by Jason Thomas Crocker Photography

seated areas prevent spills, and patrons can bring in empty water bottles to fill at one of four water stations. There's nearly 100 bathroom stalls on two floors — a much-needed perk for ladies and gents.

The acoustics are spot on with state-of-the-art speaker systems. The musicians yelled, 'Hey, Des Moines, are you ready to rock?' I noticed the minor technicality, as we were in Waukeez.

The wide-angle layout of the venue allows for "not a bad seat in the house." Testing this theory, I observed all four corners of the venue, in both standing and seated areas on two levels. The concert experience was truly ideal, regardless of where you might be.

If you get a chance to hang with coveted backstage passes, an upper-level viewing area offers a bird's eye, up-close look at the performers.

With seven bars, drink options were plentiful with short wait times. It's a cash-less system, and prices are on par with other bars. A Foundry Vodka or a Bacardi Spiced Rum run \$10. Make it a double for \$6 more, and it's a no-brainer if you plan on drinking more. Craft beer runs about \$13 for a 19-ounce can or a Busch Light 25-ouncer costs \$11.

Like other businesses, there are upcharges if



Theory of a Deadman by Jackie Wilson

you want to splurge. High-end drinks and food are available in the Red Room but require a VIP club access \$20 ticket just to get in the door. Splurge on mixologist-curated cocktails, such as the Strawberry Vodka Lemonade or a Vibrant Old Fashioned; each are \$19. Wine bottles run from \$36 to \$110.

Celebrating a special occasion? Reserve a box seat area, complete with tables, bottle service and a wait staff who deliver high-end cocktails and food bites.

Vibrant offers premium memberships and other add-ons. Premier parking costs \$25; fast-lane access, \$10; coat check \$5; and VIP Red Room \$20. Do the math — it adds \$60 to your ticket cost.

Haleigh Biancalana, general manager, says they've received a lot of positive feedback for the first few concerts. Her favorite part is the modern look. "The aesthetic touches are unlike anything I've seen. The cool feature is that it's wider than longer, providing a more intimate setting with the musicians."

Live Nation hired all local staff. Biancalana says, "This new space is run by our neighbors and peers. It creates a space for those who love music," she says. For more information on upcoming concerts, visit www.vibrantmusichall.com. ■

SOUND ADVICE

BY JACKIE WILSON

Christmas sounds fill the air with a variety of concerts. Hoyt Sherman Place is offering several holiday music concerts. **Lorie Line** has spent 34 years bringing Christmas classic to the stage, playing the piano. This year, she features a new vocalist for her concert on Dec. 14. On Dec. 16, **Shaun Johnson + the Big**

Band Experience returns to Hoyt Sherman Place for his popular holiday concert tour. Multi-platinum, Grammy award-winning singer **Michael W. Smith** is back on tour with his special guest and friend, **Michael Tait**, of the Newsboys, bringing a night of his biggest Christmas hits and traditional favorites on

Dec. 17. Tickets for all three shows available through Ticketmaster. Fans of disco can dance to songs by ABBA, The Bee Gees and more with the **Gimme Gimme Disco** band at Wooly's on Dec. 29. Concert goers are encouraged to wear their disco outfits to the popular dance party. Tickets in advance, \$15. ■

FILM REVIEW

BY DAVID ROWLEY

'The Killer' embodies an amalgamation of missed opportunities

David Fincher noodles and doodles with ideas but shapes them into nothing very rewarding in his latest flick.

"The Killer" is a cinematic puzzle, a blend of genres that struggles to find its footing, oscillating between the mundane realms of a tepid thriller and the barren landscape of humorless satire. In the hands of a celebrated director like David Fincher, one anticipates an intricate tapestry of storytelling, yet the film falls short of such expectations, squandering its technical finesse and stylistic flourishes in a hollow, meandering narrative.

The film's opening credits herald a return to Fincher's trademark visual flair, reminiscent of the grimy yet captivating montages from "Se7en" or "Mindhunter." However, this fleeting promise swiftly dissolves as the tale unfolds, introducing us to an anonymous assassin (Michael Fassbender) navigating Paris, perched in a seemingly unused WeWork office space, meticulously detailing his *modus operandi* through ritualistic voice-overs à la Patrick Bateman in "American Psycho." Initially poised as a satire on the assassin trope, the film quickly abandons this angle, plunging into a methodical yet directionless plotline.

Fassbender's portrayal of the titular Killer occasionally punctuates the film's otherwise monotonous trajectory, offering glimpses of intrigue amidst the pervasive sense of inertia. There are moments of absurd humor to be found, like whenever the Killer makes a mistake (often) and whenever he finds himself outsmarted (constantly). Fassbender's casting is note-perfect, as a man whose self-professed slick professionalism constantly falls by the wayside along with his bravado. His character's missteps and vulnerabilities aim to infuse levity, yet these instances feel disjointed, failing to reconcile the overarching seriousness of the film.

The film's attempt to paint the Killer as a psychopathic figure devoid of conscience becomes evident in various encounters, notably a scene with Tilda Swinton where Fassbender embodies textbook psychopathic traits in his stare and demeanor. However, while chilling, this portrayal lacks depth, presenting a character more as a caricature of psychopathy than a nuanced exploration.

Tilda Swinton's brief yet captivating appearance adds a spark of vitality to the otherwise lackluster proceedings. Her portrayal of a well-spoken hitwoman who is described several times as looking "like a Q-Tip" momentarily steals the spotlight in her limited screen time. She is a thin, elegant and witty figure whose approach to the art of killing is even more



"The Killer"

R | 119 minutes

Director: David Fincher. **Writers:** Alexis Nolent, Luc Jacamon, Andrew Kevin Walker. **Stars:** Michael Fassbender, Tilda Swinton, Charles Parnel

nihilistic than that of Fassbender. She likes fine food, malt whisky, and ice cream — and never loses her poise even at moments of maximum peril. She gets most of the best lines in the movie although her screen time is fleeting.

Despite the nerve-wracking score by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, the film struggles to transcend the archetype of the brooding hitman pondering existential musings. The incorporation of idiosyncratic preferences and rules fails to imbue the protagonist with the depth or intrigue anticipated from a Fincher creation.

"The Killer" traverses various locations, with the Killer navigating a global cat-and-mouse game after a botched mission in Paris. His retreat to the Dominican Republic, coupled with a quest for revenge against assailants who targeted his girlfriend, attempts to inject urgency into the storyline. However, these developments feel contrived, failing to elevate the film beyond its flat trajectory.

In its pursuit of nihilism and existentialism, the film appears fixated on projecting an enigmatic figure devoid of moral compass. Yet, this pursuit falls short of providing a substantive exploration of its protagonist's psyche, reducing the Killer to a trope-ridden entity rather than a compelling character study.

"The Killer" embodies an amalgamation of missed opportunities. While sporadically punctuated by moments of dark humor and psychological intrigue, these instances fail to salvage the film from its overarching sense of banality and lack of direction.

Frankly, "The Killer" is a perplexing concoction that tantalizes with its initial promise but ultimately succumbs to its own vacuity, leaving viewers grasping for substance within its tangled web of self-indulgence and unfulfilled potential. ■

PREVIEWS

BY DAVID ROWLEY

"Napoleon"

R | 158 minutes

Director: Ridley Scott

Writer: David Scarpa

Stars: Joaquin Phoenix, Vanessa Kirby, Tahar Rahim



"Napoleon" begins in 1789, when Marie Antoinette is guillotined in the French Revolution, while a young gunnery officer, played by Joaquin Phoenix, watches with the heavy-lidded sneer he will adopt for much of the film. The Republic's new leaders are afraid of being ousted by Royalists or invading Brits, so they send this scruffy Corsican soldier to the town of Toulon to liberate a fort occupied by British soldiers. Just as he is about to attack, he adjusts his famous hat from a jaunty off-center angle to a neat symmetrical one — and so it is that he begins his rise to greatness. Against a stunning backdrop of large-scale filmmaking orchestrated by legendary director Ridley Scott, "Napoleon" is an original and personal look at Napoleon's origins and his swift, ruthless climb to emperor, viewed through the prism of his addictive and often volatile relationship with his wife and one true love, Josephine.

"Dream Scenario"

R | 102 minutes

Director/Writer: Kristoffer Borgli

Stars: Lily Bird, Nicolas Cage, Julianne Nicholson



Just when you thought Nicolas Cage's filmography couldn't get any weirder, along comes Kristoffer Borgli's "Dream Scenario." Cage plays a character you probably wouldn't notice in real life: Paul Matthews. Schlubby, balding, in rumpled pants and brown leather loafers, he's a tenured professor at a university you've never heard of, droning on year after year about collective consciousness and the wisdom of the herd. And then something weird happens. Paul starts to appear in people's dreams, either standing around or just strolling through, and, suddenly, this all-but-invisible man has people paying attention to him.

"Poor Things"

R | 141 minutes

Director: Yorgos Lanthimos

Writers: Tony McNamara,

Alasdair Gray

Stars: Emma Stone, Mark Ruffalo,

Willem Dafoe



From filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos and producer Emma Stone comes the incredible tale and fantastical evolution of Bella Baxter (Stone), a young woman brought back to life by the brilliant and unorthodox scientist Dr. Godwin Baxter (Willem Dafoe). Under Baxter's protection, Bella is eager to learn. Hungry for the worldliness she is lacking, Bella runs off with Duncan Wedderburn (Mark Ruffalo), a slick and debauched lawyer on a whirlwind adventure across the continents. ■

Moberg at 20

More than 30 artists in the gallery's anniversary show.

Moberg Gallery's 20th anniversary show is up through Jan. 6. The gallery is a grand expression of Des Moines' elevated role in the arts scene.

When TJ and Jackie Moberg opened two decades ago, the gallery represented five guys from greater Des Moines. The new show's artists come from Barcelona, Frankfurt on Main, Lagos, and both coasts of the U.S.

What happened? Des Moines art collectors grew more sophisticated. They don't just buy art once a year at the movable carnivals of art fests. The gallery itself was savvy marketing through the web, as it was called 20 years ago. TJ and current partner Ryan Mullan are smart, pleasant galleristas who attract worldly artists.

There are more than 30 artists in the show. That is hard to cover and a big reason why the show runs longer than most. There will be a closing party on Jan. 5. But a thorough viewing requires several visits.

Animal art here goes so far beyond the overly sentimental Blue Dog paintings and personal commissions of one's pet. In this exhibition, its stunning, like catching a glimpse of something one does not expect to ever see. Randall Ford is among the best photojournalists in the world. His shots alone sell subscriptions of Texas Monthly, often considered the best regional magazine in the world.

Here Ford contributes two legendary birds. His "Peacock #2" is alluring and not just to female birds. The hundred eyes of this guy are a dazzling demonstration of the feathers' lucky lore. Ford's "Flamingo #2" looks so posed that it appears like sculpture. I read once that a National Geographic photographer shoots several thousand times for each one photo used in the magazine. I bet that Ford had to be patient as a deer stalker to get this guy to flaunt his wings while standing still.

His "Highland Cow" looks almost yak-like. You don't see guys like this in Iowa. German impressionist Daniela Schweinsberg features similar subject matter in her "All I Need Is a Set of Wings."

Larassa Kabel paints like a photographer. She made many of her bones portraying powerful animals in the instance of vulnerability — mustangs borne to flight by 18-wheeled trucks. Here she shows a young doe in the woods with the skull of a buck. This five-panel painting has what gallery archivist Makaela

Mullan calls "mori" harkening to a Latin quote by Horace for honorable death. This doe is running away, for good reasons.

New gallery artist, and former Des Moines Art Center director, Jeff Fleming, brings two drawings — of chickens and rabbits — almost Japanese in sentiment.

Two of Des Moines' most popular painters bring landscapes that make the environment look peaceful. Scott Charles Ross' "First Snow" reveals a highway bordered by wire fencing and leading to what appears to be the end of the road on the shore of a lake, or is it a snow covered field?

Sarah Grant's "Black Hills" is more figurative than her usual work.

It reveals boulders, hills and washes in the artist's usual full palette. As Mullan notices, "Grant's use of red is always both delicate and bold, and this work it is no different. Red marks spots of import while also working to stretch the eye out, beyond."

Beyond animals and landscapes, there is something for every set of eyeballs in this show: nudes in painting by Swoon and in sculpture by Anick Ibsen; Marilyn Monroe by Mr. Brainwash; parody (of art fests and art journalism) by Robert Moore; Nigerian school girls, not kidnapped, by Esther Oyemyemi; a "Siege of Rats" by Alexandre Shiffer; plus balloons, blue jeans from the 1980s, and a take on Matisse's studio. ■



"The Flamingo" by Randal Ford



"From There to Here" a silk screen by Larassa Kabel

More than just ‘throwing the wheel’

Caroline Freese shares her love of animals in her pottery.



As Caroline Freese throws wet clay on her pottery wheel, her hands work quickly, molding a bowl and smoothing out the rough edges. It's the first of many steps before the final piece — a pet food bowl — is ready.

Freese's studio, Caroline Freese Designs, is located outside of Indianola. As a multimedia artist, she also paints and applies digital imagery on her pottery.

"I don't say I'm an artist. It's easier to say I'm a potter," she explains.

She creates functional pottery, which is used in everyday life, such as kitchen bowls, cups, pet food bowls and more.

A unique part of her craft is applying her painted images on the outside of her pottery. She paints nature scenery, but her favorite subject is animals, including dogs and cats.

Freese grew up on a farm with a love of animals. Her two black cats give her inspiration.

"Animals are a big part of what I do," she says. "I always make my pottery about the animals."

In college, Freese liked ceramics and art but felt pressure to pick a major. After taking pottery, painting and drawing classes, she was hooked.

"I didn't throw on a wheel until my junior year in college," she recalls.

As she was unsure of a career, she and her mother visited New York for spring break, and she considered an artist residency. A professor suggested she meet up with an ISU alum, Jonathan Castro, a potter who sells his work in New York.

"After I connected with Jonathan, I knew that I wanted to make and sell stuff. It was fulfilling my passion and making money," she explains.

Caroline graduated from ISU and joined CASA, Creative Artists' Studio of Ames, sharing equipment with other creatives. She initially worked out of her home until 2022.

Her parents owned property, which was a former hog farm. Her dad, who recently retired, wanted to construct a shop where he could build farm and livestock-related items. He suggested that Caroline set up a studio and shop in a portion of the building for her pottery business.

Freese is grateful for her parents' support. The setup includes sunny spots, with climate control, as the kiln temps are extremely hot.



"A lot of potters end up in the basement or garage," she says. "This location is ideal. My parents supported my passion."

Making pottery is labor intensive. There's more steps than just "throwing the wheel." The process includes glazing, imagery application, drying, kiln work and more.

"I'm not doing the same thing every day. It's rewarding to see everything that I've made with the final piece."

The most challenging aspect is maintaining the business portion for her artwork.

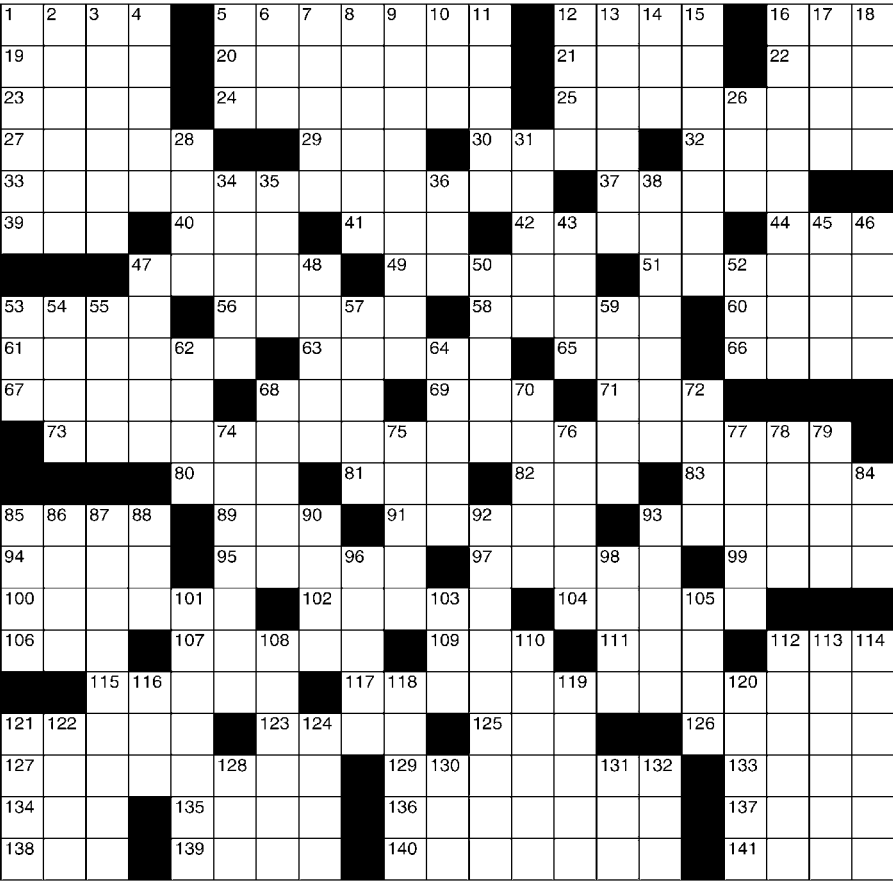
"I have to do everything. I'm my own boss, take care of administrative work, plus have a creative mind. I need to be a handyman to fix equipment," she says. "And then, I go out and try to sell my items."

The flexibility and creativity of making it her own is why she creates the art.

"I like attending shows to get the feedback," she reflects. "That's why I do the shows — to see how others respond to my work."

For more inspiration, visit www.carolinefreesedesigns.com, or Instagram Caroline Freese Designs. ■

A TO Z REPEATEDLY



- ACROSS**

1 Dubya or JFK

5 Horse riders

12 Bandleader Lawrence

16 NBA's Erving, familiarly

19 Totally alter

20 Visibly sulky

21 Pack of yaks

22 Coastal inlet

23 Monumental

24 Of very hilly regions

25 Liveliness

27 Betray by snitching

29 Possible answer to "Who is?"

30 Scottish refusals

32 Lupe of "Mexican Spitfire"

33 With 73- and 117-Across, notable fact about this puzzle's solution

37 Antigen-attacking lymphocyte

39 Abbr. ending a math proof

40 Suffix with form

41 Deer relative

42 Surgical tool

44 Put a levy on

47 Smidge

49 Des Moines native

51 Cry to a lifesaver

53 Move in spasms

56 "American Pie" actor -- William Scott

58 Visibly awed

60 Tailless cat

61 Pop's Grande

63 The Beatles' "Eleanor --"

65 Gibson liquor

66 1847 Herman Melville novel

67 Big name in utility knives

68 Atty.'s title

69 18-wheeler
- 71 Div. of a hoops game

73 See 33-Across

80 Mine, in Italy

81 ROY G. --

82 Albuquerque-to-Denver dir.

83 Chef's hat

85 Travel by foot

89 Cable inits. for old films

91 Reverend Jackson

93 Tweak

94 Ending for buck

95 "El --" (nickname of a drug lord)

97 Drink heartily

99 Acorn trees

100 "Incredible!"

102 D-Max pickup maker

104 Tips, as a hat

106 Wd. often ending in "-ly"

107 Rho-tau link

109 Western treaty inits.

111 U.S. spy gp.

112 Former Pan Am rival

115 Decide you will

117 See 33-Across

121 Part of a ship's hull

123 Cartoon hits

125 Cool, man

126 Some Native Americans

127 Getting a laugh out

129 Cool guy on "Happy Days"

133 Years, in Italy

134 Traffic snarl

135 Lawn digger

136 Popular place for a piercing

137 Give a test to

138 Log splitter

139 "-- Out of My League"

140 Basic nature

141 "That's clear"
- DOWN**

1 Trig, for calc, e.g.

2 Put new concrete on

3 Revised copy

4 Cholesterol-lowering drug

5 Funny Carrey

6 Artist Yoko

7 "Be quiet!"

8 Univ. about 50 miles west of Topeka

9 Coating with glossy varnish

10 Yang partner

11 Office scribe

12 Interlaced

13 Is

14 Third bk. of the Bible

15 Roguish behavior

16 Group of precision marchers

17 Ceremony

18 "Run This Town" rapper

26 Toon frame

28 Laugh syllable from a Stooge

31 Plant -- (claim some territory, maybe)

34 Writer Mario Vargas --

35 Mitigate

36 "King Kong" studio

38 Solidifies

43 "Seminar," for "Marines," e.g.: Abbr.

45 River in Italy

46 "Kisses and hugs" symbol

47 Glide in a rink

48 Glaring

50 "That's the -- goes"

52 Med. insurer

53 NFL's Jaguars, on scoreboards

54 The "E" of 39-Across

55 Well-off
- 57 Muslim face veil

59 Arouse

62 Linguist Chomsky

64 Mark over a short vowel

68 Pliocene, e.g.

70 Big name in infomercial knives

72 Eligible for Soc. Sec.

74 Class for an Eng. major

75 Little jewel

76 Sam of golf

77 Judo halls

78 Blue hue

79 Walrus tooth

84 Aliens, briefly

85 Tot's glassful

86 Yank who wore #13

87 Small amount, as of sales

88 Jazz saxophonist Dave

90 Injure greatly

92 People crushing things

93 Stick on

96 Biblical song

98 Points of convergence

101 Prizes highly

103 Animals: Suffix

105 Kismet

108 Wolf down

110 Suppress

112 Pre-liftoff expression

113 Hot dog

114 Judicial inquest

116 Book divs.

118 Lauder of cosmetics

119 Cereal utensil

120 Basra citizen

121 Mexico's -- California

122 Huge-screen film format

124 In-favor votes

128 "Stupid me!"

130 Partakes of

131 "Grimm" airer

132 Wye follower

SCRAMBLERS
Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Throng
RHODE

Proof
CRATE

Lark
INACT

Vision
GAMIE

TODAY'S WORD

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	5		6	8			4	
1			3			7		
		2			1			5
6			4				8	
	9	8		3				4
	7				8	2	9	
	1			7	6		3	
		7	2			9		
4				5				1

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

DIFFICULTY: ♦♦♦♦

♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦ Difficult

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	-		x		28
-		x		x	
	x		+		30
x		+		-	
	+		+		19
25		15		30	

1 3 4 5 6 7 8 8 9

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

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WHAT THE...

Think you're funny?

Send us your best caption...

Email to celeste@dmcityview.com — **BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME**

Next month's photo:



PHOTO BY TOA HEFTIBA ON UNSPLASH

This month's winner

"Her new TV stand has a sporty flair."

— John Flater



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRATISOGRAPHY

Runners-up

"Too much TV viewing will make you less of a person."

— Dennis Moore

"Barbie's fancy-pants TV." — Darlene LePon

"Your parents told you not to sit so close to the TV, this is what happens." — Teresa Hamilton

"The first walkie talkies were always getting lost and just never panned out." — Gary Eich

"The First Tele-Human Hybrid was successful. But if something goes wrong, do we contact a doctor or internet provider?"

— Mary Wedewer

Send your "What The...?" caption and image entries to celeste@dmcityview.com.

BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME.

A man with short brown hair and a light beard is wearing a blue jacket and a blue scarf. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

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YOUR LIFE IOWA

Iowa HHS

Classic, historic, and Charlie Brown for the holidays

Family-friendly and memory-making offerings provide escapes to delight, engage and thoroughly enjoy.

Like a present-laden tree during the holidays, this December is filled with a bounty of performance arts gifts. When we all likely need an escape from the hustle and bustle of our lives, central Iowa's entertainment producers deliver escapes to delight, engage and thoroughly enjoy. Take advantage of the wealth of talent performing this season, as these are family-friendly and memory-making delights.

One of the iconic figures of the season is the ruby-nosed reindeer, Rudolph. The 1964 stop-motion TV special is a generational holiday anchor. This story with its radiant-schnozzed hero was created by Robert L. May in 1939 in a promotional booklet for Montgomery Ward department store. May's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, wrote the song in 1949, which Gene Autry recorded. That tune became the No. 2 best-selling chart topper, recorded by a range of artists, including Bing Crosby, Spike Jones and his City Slickers, The Cadillacs, Dean Martin, David Seville and the Chipmunks, Burl Ives, and the Temptations.

This famous story will appear through Des Moines Performing Arts. Producing Partner Bob Penola, who also adapted the script, recently shared some insights.

"The stage musical is based on the television special 'Rudolph,' and the song by Johnny Marks. Other Johnny Marks holiday songs are included in the musical. It is a live stage version of the classic special that has been beloved for nearly 60 years.

"We've lengthened the television special with some additional musical numbers, songs which appeared only as transitional instrumental music in the animated television show. Puppetry and some wonderful theatrical effects make for a thrilling live experience, which we believe captures all of the magic of the original right in front of your eyes. The story has always been about a character who doesn't fit in because he's different. Now more than ever, this story resonates — and Rudolph shows us that what makes you different also makes you special."

When asked about the rewards of sharing this show with audiences, Penola added, "It's been a joy to witness audiences across the country having a special holiday experience when attending the show — whether they be grandparents who remember viewing the special for the first time, or little ones barely 3 or 4 years old who are having their first-ever theatre experience."

Des Moines Performing Arts is thrilled to finally have this show on their stage, as last year's planned show was cancelled due to "snowmageddon."

OVERHEARD IN THE LOBBY

Ankeny Community Theatre

Dec. 1-10. "A Gift for Rebecca"

Des Moines Community Playhouse

Dec. 1-17. "All Is Calm"

Dec. 2-17. "Charlie Brown Christmas"

Iowa Stage Theatre Company

Dec. 8-17. "A Christmas Carol"

Des Moines Performing Arts

Dec. 12-17. "The Wiz"

Tallgrass Theatre Company

Dec. 15-17. Home for the Holidays Xmas Cabaret

Des Moines Performing Arts

Dec. 21 (two shows). "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"

Dec. 22 - 23. Cirque Dreams Holidaze

Tallgrass Theatre Company

Dec. 17. Broadway Karaoke

Classics, Cartoons, Cabaret, History, Premiere — stocking stuffing delights

The holiday season would be a mere specter of itself if these two shows weren't available. Iowa Stage Theatre Company will present its holiday signature show, "A Christmas Carol." This excellent adaptation draws returning audiences and new fans, and rightfully so. Jay Michael Jagim's scenic design is magical and, this year, after delivering his Cloris Award-winning performances as Scrooge, Richard Maynard steps aside to let another veteran company member, John Earl Robinson, assume the mantle of everyone's favorite curmudgeon-turned-saint. "The Nutcracker" is a must-experience for every child, and Ballet Des Moines' production is a masterpiece introduction to this gem. Presented in the grandeur of Hoyt Sherman Place Theatre, this is an experience sure to resonate through every first-timer's life — and, for those who have seen the ballet before.

The Des Moines Community Playhouse brings two different and very appealing shows to the stage this December. One of the world's most beloved cartoon characters comes to life in "A Charlie Brown Christmas," as the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre delivers this holiday favorite. In the John Viars Theatre, the Playhouse will present "A Quiet Night: The Christmas Truce of 1914," a story based on one of history's most heart-touching war stories — when two enemies came together on a Christmas night. Out of the violence a silence, then a song. A German soldier



Hermey, Yukon and Rudolph in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," appearing at Des Moines Performing Arts Dec. 21 for two shows. Photo credit: "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" production company

steps into No Man's Land singing "Stille Nacht." Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music and peace. A remarkable true story told in the words and songs of the men who lived it.

The innovative brain trust at Tallgrass Theatre Company created an irresistible musical immersion with their "Home for the Holidays Xmas Cabaret." This instant classic holiday staple marks the return of the A Sisters and Friends, filling the performance hall with resounding sounds of the season. Smiles will abound, toes will be tapping and hearts will be filled with merriment during this short three-show run.

Add Ankeny Community Theatre's world premiere show by John Claes, "A Gift for Rebecca," and a tantalizing array of theatre experiences await patrons.

What price are memories? Priceless. Make them in a theatre near you. ■

John Busbee is a creative project developer, critic, playwright, author, producer and media professional. He has produced his weekly show, The Culture Buzz, on KFMG since 2007.



CARS IN THE CITY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Best-selling Chrysler Pacifica offers 'cool' features

This family-friendly minivan endures.

BY JACKIE WILSON

For those with a large family, the trusty station wagon transported siblings in the way-back seat. Then, the minivan debuted in the 1980s and took over as a top-selling family vehicle. Today, SUVs have surpassed minivans in popularity among most vehicles. However, minivans continue to be great solutions for many.

The popular Dodge Caravan was the first minivan, launched in 1984. Later, the best-selling Town and Country minivan was replaced by the Chrysler Pacifica in 2017. Chrysler borrowed the Pacifica name from its 2004-2008 SUV crossover.

So, why a minivan versus an SUV? Several reasons include ease of driving, which is similar to a car. A minivan holds more passengers and cargo and usually costs less. Minivans offer three passenger rows with seating up to eight.

A 2024 Pacifica Touring L model I test drove rings in at \$49,290 with other models less expensive. The Pacifica is the best-selling minivan for 2023 of the five minivans on the market.

Getting in this minivan is easy. You don't need to grab the steering wheel to lug your body up on the seat. The model has great features like heated seats and Apple Car Play. The arm rests lift up. The center console has flexible storage. If cupholders are needed in the center, they slide out or back in for more foot room in the second row.

There's a cupholder for everyone. The second-row seat on the right includes two cupholders in the side door. The middle passenger can even have his or her own beverage slot.

The handy part of this minivan is its signature feature

called the Stow and Go seats. Both the second- and third-row seats fold down under the vehicle's floor. It even comes with floor mats to put over the stowed seats, unlike SUVs or other vehicles in which you often fold back or remove the seat completely to allow for storage.

The stowed seats now provide extra room, which extends from the middle to the back. It can easily fit bulky, long items, such as skis or bicycles. You might lose a few seats, but you still have room for a couple passengers and their gear.

Doors on some other vehicles may be difficult to shut, or parents worry that, when the kids climb out, they will ding the cars next to them. With the Pacifica, there's one easy-push button on the inside, which slides the door open and closed.

Kid-friendly pull-down shades are stowed in the door window. Quarter-sized lights above each passenger spot can be turned on without putting on a big dome light.

I always want to test the safety features, but I rarely do. I recently discovered that this is not by choice. Why? Because I'm such a good driver (it's true!), and those features never kick in.

For this test drive, I allowed my steering wheel to coast past the center lane line. Once that happened, the icon started flashing yellow, and the steering wheel gently, but firmly, brought it back to the center. So that's how it works! I did it again a few more times, hoping nobody behind me witnessed my weaving in and out of traffic.

Although minivans may not be as "cool" as SUVs, they are still relevant, solid choices for families of all ages, holding passengers and all their stuff. ■



DES MOINES FORGOTTEN

BY KRISTIAN DAY

Chatsworth the talking reindeer, Toyland, caroling and luminaries

And my youngest niece who no longer eats Play-Doh

In the late 1980s, my parents would take me to the Village of East Davenport to walk around and look at window decorations. The Village of East Davenport had its own version of the East Village Promenade that we know of here in Des Moines. The shops would be open late, and many would have cookies and cider for shoppers to sample as they go. They even had a living Nativity scene with a petting zoo.

Years later, I would get to live the two-family holiday special where I would wake up and spend Christmas with one parent and then run over to the other for a repeat. I honestly didn't mind too much.

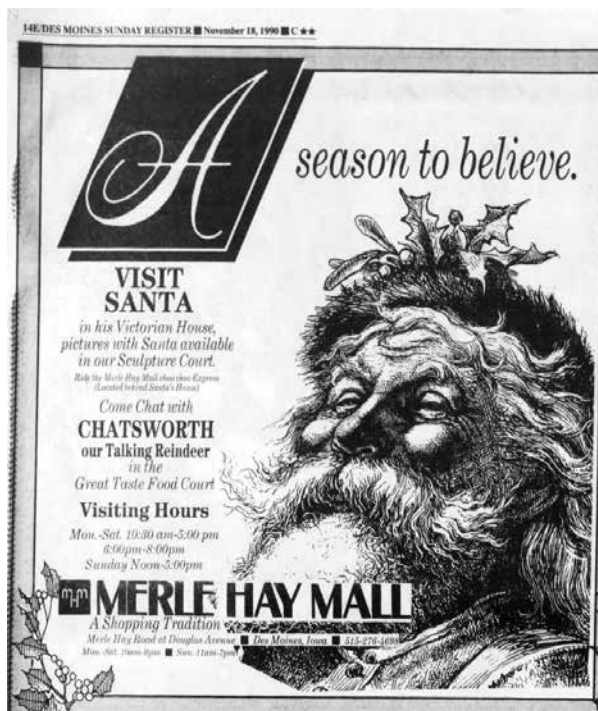
I went to Catholic school in the 1990s and participated in many holiday musical performances. Recently, I found a VHS tape of my fifth-grade performance rescued from mold infestation. That was wild. I also remember in seventh grade when Metal Gear Solid hit the original PlayStation that holiday season. I spent winter break playing it from beginning to end — twice.

Is there a part of me that misses those years? Sure. Mainly because I had no responsibilities and, to be honest, I'd rather kill a week playing videogames than worrying about literally everything. I was never a mallrat and usually stayed clear of them during the holidays (a tradition I still hold up), but some people have fond memories of mall shopping during this magical time.

Sam Pace-Tuomi of Archive Iowa shares a Christmas mall-shopping memory of Chatsworth, the talking reindeer from Merle Hay Mall.

"It had a reindeer head poking out of a little cabin," he said. "The cabin was where the operator was, but they were hidden by the shack. He would talk to you as you walked by or stood around. Because it was a live operator, he could comment on what you were wearing, etc. Always jokes and wisecracks. I have so many fond memories of it as a kid. It was usually in front of B Daltons near where a large fountain used to be and the winged statue on a tricycle."

The Sheldon family has several memories of Christmas in downtown Des Moines, including the competition between Younkers and Davidson's department stores to see which would have the most elaborate Christmas window. The stores were kitty-



cornered across the street from each other. The windows featured seemingly every kind of Christmas theme and included lots of cotton snow and moving pieces: dolls, reindeer, Santas, trains. Younkers would set up Toyland in their basement with a big running train display and toys the kids could play with. Santas were on the corners ringing bells for the Salvation Army. The city's Christmas decorations were not only on the light poles but hung on garlands that went across the street from one light pole to another.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Jim Sheldon would meet at Waukee at his brother's house, and a handful of their crew would walk around the neighborhood singing Christmas carols. Do people still do this in the suburbs? I can say that, in my 15 years of living in Waterbury, I have never seen a single caroler. However, one tradition I have continued to carry on are the luminaries. I enjoy filling the white bags with sand and lighting a candle inside them. We let them burn all night and, sometimes, I'll find bags that have gone completely up in flames.

At times, I can come off as crass when it comes to nostalgia or traditions. That all comes from family obligations that tend to drain my spirit ever so slowly. One thing I notice now is how my nieces have grown up. I never really pay attention until we are all together for the holidays. My oldest niece can now have an adult conversation with me, and my youngest no longer eats Play-Doh. My sister's boyfriend has finally stopped trying to impress me with his knowledge of whiskeys that he memorized off Wikipedia an hour before I arrive for Christmas dinner. He didn't give up; he just realized I had zero knowledge of whiskeys and had no interest in finding space in my brain for the information. My dad still buys presents he wants for himself. Last year, he started a collection of mini-arcade games for my nieces to play. He spent the evening after Christmas playing with them by himself. That's OK, because it makes him happy and that's what this season is all about. ■

Kristian Day is a filmmaker and writer based in Des Moines. He also hosts the syndicated Iowa Basement Tapes radio program on 98.9 FM KFMG. Instagram: @kristianday Twitter: @kristianmday



Part-time volunteer, full-time matriarch

Cynthia Hunafa uses her life experiences to continue to teach.

Cynthia Hunafa, or Miss Cynthia as she was referred to by fellow volunteers inside of the Creative Visions building, has her influence interwoven throughout Des Moines.

Hunafa was born in Queens, New York City, raised in Harlem and spent time in each borough.

From the time she was 2 years old until she aged out, Hunafa was in foster care. She knew she was part of seven siblings but only knew of three — her older sisters. She hadn't even met one of her older brothers until her mother's funeral.

"One of my sisters met me at the airport. I see this gentleman with her. I just thought he was driving, because she didn't drive. So I'm hugging her, and she introduced me to this guy, and I shook his hand. He looked at me and said, 'I'm your brother,' " Hunafa said while chuckling.

While in school, Hunafa gained a wealth of knowledge from one of her friends when it came to history, culture and music from seeing live performances by the likes of jazz legends Nina Simone and Rahsaan Roland Kirk to participating in marches, demonstrations and boycotts.

"I gained a good education that wasn't in brick and mortar but gained by the folks that I hung out with — an immense education that I'm still to this day so appreciative of," said Hunafa.

Hunafa carried on her love for the performing and visual arts by performing in a college circuit with a musical group around up-state New York, as well as New York City. After this, she eventually made her way to Des Moines.

"I came here on the Greyhound bus, for 26 some odd hours, and then six weeks later gave birth. I didn't know anything about Iowa. I packed up a box and left some really valuable things back in New York. I just carried what I could fit under the bus and got here," said Hunafa.

The unfamiliarity and heavy contrast did give Hunafa reason to return to the East Coast, but the Iowa charm worked its magic.

"I did consider going back because I had no family here, but I wound up getting comfortable," said Hunafa.

Within a few short years after moving to Des Moines, Hunafa connected with Gateway Dance Theatre, leading to a 35-year-long relationship between the two. She also received her associate's degree from DMACC, where Professor Lois Edwards inspired her.

"She would say things that really grabbed my attention, one of which was the responsibility that we as a community have for making sure that our children are well educated. It just grabbed my attention and put me on the path of education," said Hunafa.

Hunafa attended Drake University to acquire her teaching degree, which led to 24 years of teaching within DMPS schools. She started at Hubbell Elementary for four years and taught the next 20 at Moulton Elementary.

"It's about educating and empowering communities and families. When I would teach, and we were outside or on the playground or we were on a field trip, you make any place a classroom. Any place," said Hunafa.

When she retired from teaching, Hunafa connected with state representative Ako Abdul-Samad, whom she met on her first day in Iowa while getting off the bus. Abdul-Samad offered her a spot at his non-profit organization, Creative Visions, as part of the "Outside the Box" program, where Hunafa would supervise children doing lessons online.

"He said, 'We need you to just come and watch the kids while they're on the computers; that's easy peasy.' There's nothing easy peasy about doing any of that," said Hunafa.

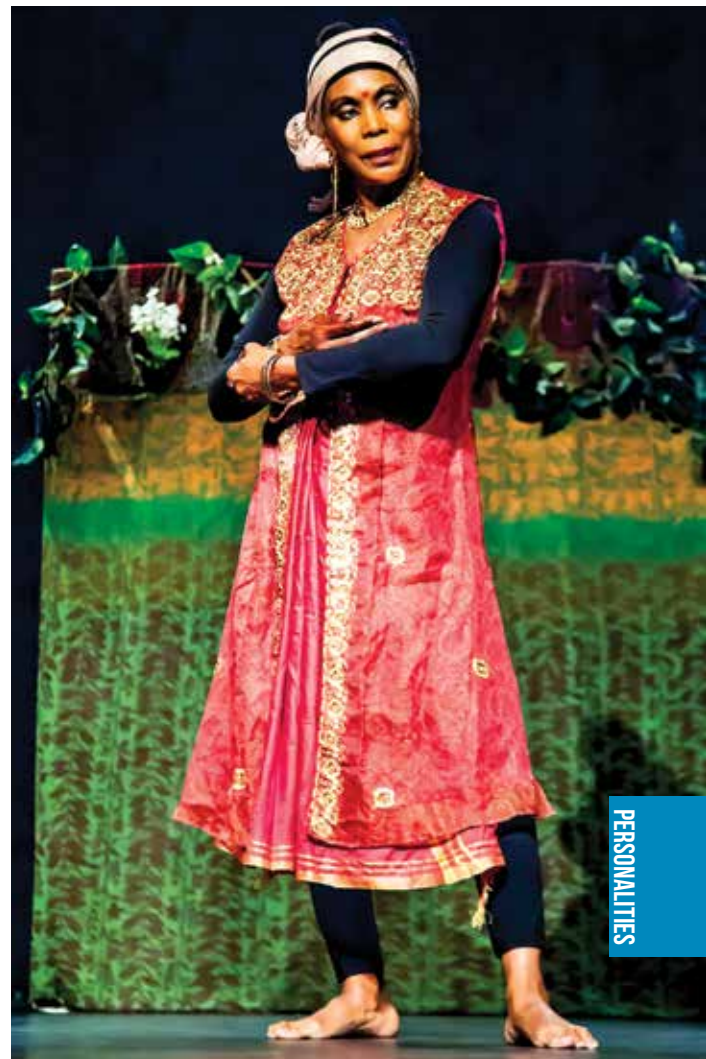
Her teaching background immediately came into play. She worked to attach students' passions to experts in their fields of interest. She connected a student with exceptional artistic abilities to take art lessons at the Des Moines Art Center and another student who had a love for fashion to a local boutique to help develop her craft.

"The beautiful thing was that these folks could be so willing to reach back for somebody. They remember what it was like. Once you've got your thing, go on, reach back, and pull somebody forward," said Hunafa.

Her goal, along with the mission statement at Creative Visions, is to develop and promote community involvement by helping the younger generation gain the tools necessary for success.

"I don't care what you look like. I don't care where you come from. If you got something that my students, my children, can connect with and will help them reach their dreams, we're going in that direction. That's what helps make a difference," said Hunafa.

Hunafa has done an extensive amount of volunteer work since her retirement. She mentioned the



Cynthia Hunafa has performed and worked with the Gateway Dance Theater for 35 years. Photo courtesy of Eric Salmon

"ISU 4U Promise" partnership between Iowa State University and King and Moulton elementary schools where eligible students have the chance to earn full-ride scholarships.

"There were 13 students initially that fit the criteria all the way through high school. Two of them were my former students," she said, while holding back tears.

Through her life experiences, Hunafa realizes her role in her family.

"I'm realizing that I'm the matriarch in my family. My children, my grandchildren, my two great grands. Working to pull that together, because sometimes families can get messy. I use that role in the best possible way for my family, because I look back at all these years, I didn't have that. It was 'foster this, foster that.' My children don't have that. They have me, and they have each other," said Hunafa. ■

What's all the buzz?

Bell's bees are fascinating creatures.

When Ellen Bell started beekeeping with two hives in her backyard, she never imagined she'd have nearly 6 million bees 10 years later.

Bell is a beekeeper at Bell Farm, located in Runnels. She and her family lived in Altoona yet longed for a country home to establish a garden and raise chickens for meat and eggs. She attended a beekeeping class, ordering two hives. As the farm progressed, she kept coming back to the bees.

"It really resonated with me," she said. "The creatures are so fascinating. There's so much to learn."

Today she has about 120 beehives. Each hive has between 30,000 to 50,000 bees. Her task is to take the hives and divide them, selling the splits to beekeepers.

When working with the bees, she says she has to "be on her toes." A productive queen bee lays the eggs, and bee offsprings are all hers. Once the hive gets large enough, the bees begin to reproduce. Reproduction takes place through swarming. The hive splits, thus creating a new queen and a new colony.

"If the swarms aren't caught, they'll find their own home in a hollow tree," she said.

Not all bees are angry, buzzing and stinging.

"Each hive has a temperament. The bees have their own personality," she said. "It's like dogs with their personalities. Some hives are more defensive, and some don't even know you're there. Others — from 5 feet away — come out, buzzing, saying, 'Get away from here!'"

In addition to temperament, Bell says bees are attuned to the beekeeper.

"They sense if you're nervous. I always err on the side of caution."

Bell often dons a beekeeping veil and gets stung occasionally.

"With all the bees and hives, I've been stung maybe five times," she recalls. "It depends on the day. On a nice sunny day, they are in a good mood. When it's cloudy, they aren't in a good mood."

The bees' personalities come from the parents. Bell is focused on raising a queen with good genetics and a gentle hive.

"It's no fun to work with an angry hive," she said. "People want a good hive."

The bees build honeycombs on Langstroth frames. When ready, Bell lifts the frames and extracts the honey from the combs. In Iowa, they collect honey and wax once a year.



Photos submitted

Bell says it's a misconception that bees use only flowers on the ground to collect nectar.

"Nectar comes from the trees in bloom," she said. "One mature tree is good enough for all of the bees."

When the temperature drops below 50 degrees, bees cluster for warmth and generate heat, maintaining a temperature of 85 to 95 degrees. The cluster is the size of a basketball.

"We've put a thermal camera on them to show how nice and cozy it is."

Bell likes the bees, as it's a close connection to nature.

"When I open up the hive, I love the smell, the sound. It's very grounding to me. It's very special caring for these creatures. We have no control over them but work with them to provide our needs," she reflects. "They reward us with honey and wax."

Bell hosts beekeeping classes and provides beekeeping resources. For more information, visit www.iowabees.com. ■



From music theory to board game design

A passion for the creative led Tim Ferry to board game design for himself and future generations.

Born in Cedar Rapids, Tim Ferry grew up looking for, and finding, creative outlets. Beginning with piano lessons at 8 years old and drafting his own music in his spare time, Ferry quickly realized what he wanted to pursue.

“For a long time, I just wanted to make music for video games. So I ended up going to UNI for music composition and theory,” said Ferry.

Ferry ended up changing course on the fly and ended with a bachelor of arts degree. He and his wife, whom he met at UNI, decided to move to Austin, Texas, to pursue their music dreams after he had successfully written music for several indie video game projects. They were performing up to four shows a week while also working full-time.

When the COVID-19 pandemic put a hold on live musical performances across the country, it gave Ferry an opportunity to make waves in another creative direction.

“During that vacancy of no music, I was like, well, I kind of really want to pursue this board game idea that I’ve had for a while. And that was the first time that I was able to really ramp it up,” said Ferry.

A failed Dungeons and Dragons campaign took Ferry toward developing his first board game — Old Salt, a naval strategy game.

“That naval system that I made in that homebrew campaign ended up turning into a prototype, and my friends were like, ‘Hey, let’s play it,’ ” said Ferry.

Never imagining the game would get its sea legs, after years of play testing and tweaking, Old Salt became a reality.

“Since designing the game and kind of trying to figure out how to make it the best, I’ve studied a lot of other games and played a lot of other games. That’s how I got into it,” said Ferry.

The adage of “never judge a book by its cover” expands into most every side of the creative world, which is something Ferry considers during his process.

“If it’s going to be at a store, it’s gotta grab the person’s attention. One of the stats that I learned a couple of years ago is, there’s between 5,000 and 7,000 board games published every year around the world. That’s a lot of games. And if your game is even just suboptimal art, it’s not going to get the attention that it needs,” said Ferry.

The story and overall playability of the game is still vital once the art has captured someone’s attention and they’re enjoying the game with friends and family.

“If you have a game that has sold a lot really quickly, and then you get review bombed because there’s no story or the mechanics are bad, that’s not good. You have to have both, but I would say in order to give your game a chance, visuals are going to be more important,” said Ferry.



A board game from the mind of Tim Ferry.

Being able to see your hard work become a tangible reality for others to experience is something Ferry has been able to enjoy.

“My favorite part is when they (players) all erupt because of a single dice roll or a single outcome. They’re that invested and that excited about the game and that immersed into the game. That’s my favorite because not only did we have a good game going, but I put them through an adventure,” said Ferry.

He also enjoys sending the next generation on their own adventure through the Little Creators Club, a board game design class for kids. The summer program is five days long, and kids go from a blank slate to a completed board game.

“I’ve had kids tell me that it’s their favorite part of the week. A parent had a kid that loves baseball. We get to recital day, where you pitch your game to the parents. The kid had a tournament on recital day. The parents asked him, ‘Hey, do you want to go to your tournament, or do you want to go to the board game camp recital?’ The kid says, ‘Oh my gosh, I wouldn’t miss the board game day for anything,’ ” said Ferry.

Ferry also recounted one of the students, a second grader, who created a sonar mechanic that was wildly impressive.

“That’s brilliant. If I had time and money to explore that idea, I’d make him a business partner,” said Ferry. ■



WALKS OF LIFE

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES

Early risers

While most of us are catching our last few Zs before dragging ourselves out of bed, others have long been awake and busy, many of them making it possible for us to get our days off to a good start. After all, someone has to make the donuts, brew the coffee and deliver those energy drinks to the shelves. Others rise and shine to care for the early morning needs of patients in hospitals, residents of care centers and women in labor. The list of those working while we sleep goes on, and some of them share their experiences as early risers.



Jeremy Kruse

A welder by trade

Jeremy Kruse is a welder by trade, and he must arrive at work before sunrise.

He leaves his home in Adel before 4:30 a.m. every workday to get to work on time.

"I have been getting up early for so long that I have a built-in alarm clock," he says.

Jeremy chooses to get up earlier to allow for any unforeseen traffic or other issues. A flat tire or mechanical breakdown in his vehicle may make him late for his shift, which begins before 6 a.m. He also likes that he can take his time, especially in winter.

"I like the earlier commute because there is less traffic. I can drive slower and take my time getting to work," he says. "My dad engraved that tactic into me — to prepare or plan ahead, just in case, so you would not report late to your job," he says.

"My family and I camp a lot on the weekends. I get up, start a fire, and enjoy a few cups of coffee before sunrise. It's so peaceful in the mornings."

Source: *Adel Living*, November 2023; by Chantel Boyd



Allan Curtis

Weather is 24 hours

Allan Curtis works for the National Weather Service in Johnston, which is tasked with issuing watches and warnings for the area — at all times of the day and night.

When Curtis knows he will have a series of overnight shifts upcoming, the day before, he will start to transition into the overnight shifts by staying up until around 3 or 4 a.m., then sleeping until around noon.

"I am beyond lucky to have a loving wife and now two young children, and I would be lying if I said my work schedule does not affect them," he says. "I have missed, and will continue to miss, family events, holidays, school events, sports, milestones and more. That's something I have come to terms with, as well as my wife. That makes being there that much more valuable and important when I can."

For those working challenging hours, Curtis says it's critical that you love what you do. If you are not happy at work, that is going to amplify all of the negatives of the schedule even more.

Source: *Johnston Living*, November 2023; by Ashley Rullestad



Jana Barnard

A 5 a.m. friendly "hello"

Jana Barnard is a morning person. Throughout her IT career at a major insurance/financial company, she says people who arrived at the office early did it for one of two reasons: They were morning people, or they wanted to finish their day earlier.

"Typically, the morning people were friendly and somewhat chatty," she says, laughing. "I can't say the same for those who were there to get off earlier."

Since retiring in 2015, Barnard has dabbled in different shifts at the Indianola Wellness Campus (formerly the YMCA). When a couple early morning opening shifts came available, Barnard saw it as a good fit. She arrives early enough to have the coffee ready when members start rolling in at 5 a.m.

"I've learned who the 'non-morning' members are and typically greet them with a soft 'Good morning,'" she says, smiling. "However, others sometimes want a little conversation before their workout, so I am happy to oblige. More than anything, I try really hard to always have a smile as they walk in the door."

Source: *Indianola Living*, November 2023; by Becky Kolosik



Joe Peitzman

Fresh-baked goodies

Stopping by to grab treats for an early-morning office donut run wouldn't be possible without Joe Peitzman and other bakers who are up before dawn.

Peitzman has been a baker at Hy-Vee for 33 years. To arrive at the store by 3 or 4 a.m., he's up by either 2:30 or 3:30 a.m. He became a baker initially because he didn't want to work the night shift. He felt his home life suffered because of the hours.

"On the first day of my job, I wasn't sure I could get up that early," he says. "I set the alarm clock across the room so I'd have to get up to turn it off. When it went off, my wife thought it was a fire alarm and started panicking. It was pretty funny."

He likes how his schedule allows him time during the day to run errands.

"I have friends with regular hours, and they have to take time off for appointments," he says. "There's no traffic when I get off. It's usually a relaxing drive home." ■

Source: *West Des Moines/Jordan Creek Living*, November 2023; by Jackie Wilson

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Want to achieve your goals? Write them down

(StatePoint) If you have a big idea, goal or dream about helping others, writing down your vision can help. Studies show you're 42% more likely to achieve your goals if you write them down.

Take it from Marcy Bursac. After reviewing thousands of handwritten entries, Pilot Pen selected her as the newest winner of the G2 Overachievers Grant, which rewards an exceptional individual who goes beyond their everyday job and responsibilities to make a difference in the lives of others.

A technical analyst at a cybersecurity firm by day, Bursac is also an author, podcaster, wife and mother. She has used her technological expertise to develop an app for "The Forgotten Adoption Option," her book and platform that helps facilitate adoptions for children in foster care. As an adoptive parent herself, she made it her mission to make it easier for other families to adopt children from foster care, helping to place as many as possible in loving homes.

"Some types of adoption are cost-prohibitive for many families and can take years," says Bursac. "The reality is that there are thousands of children who need a forever family today, and foster care adoption is an option that can make this dream more financially affordable for more families."

Marcy has already helped more than 12,000 families through the foster care adoption process. She plans to use the grant money to fund her continued efforts to unite children in foster care with their forever families.

Inspired? Write down your own goals and aspirations and include all the little details required to bring them to life. Be sure to reach for a high-quality writing instrument like G2, the longest lasting gel ink pen. To learn more about the G2 Overachievers Grant competition or to enter or nominate someone you know, visit G2Overachievers.com.

"We know firsthand that we are so much more likely to achieve our goals when we put pen to paper," says Ariann Langsam, vice president of marketing for Pilot Pen. "That's why we pride ourselves on both providing the tools that people can use to make a difference in the lives of others, and recognizing and amplifying the work of individuals who are making those efforts." ■

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