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JANUARY 2024

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Who will CITYVIEW endorse for public office?

The seven words in the above headline make for a good question, and there is a very simple answer. Nobody.

I wonder, like many of you, if political endorsements make a difference in the results of elections. Many newspaper editors seem to think they do, as they proudly continue to put ink to paper each election cycle, touting who they think will be the best people for the job. Maybe not surprisingly, a growing number of folks have grown tired of reading those endorsements, and many quit subscribing to or reading newspapers. Regardless of what type of business you are in, if you anger one-third to one-half of your customers, you won't be around for long.

Professional basketball player Michael Jordan, in his peak of popularity, was approached by U.S. Senate hopeful Harvey Gantt, a Black politician who was running against Jesse Helms in North Carolina, Jordan's home state. Gantt hoped that Jordan's name would help him defeat Helms, who was regarded by many as a racist. Jordan declined. He said he wasn't into politics and didn't know the issues, also stating, "Republicans buy shoes, too." You may agree or disagree with his reply, but one can't argue with Jordan's success on and off the court.

The newspapers and publications I have directly owned or managed through the years have never endorsed political candidates, and we won't be starting now. There are several reasons.

First, our editorial team couldn't collectively agree on many candidates. We have a wide range of political views, and that's the way it should be if you want to have an unbiased and unslanted newsroom. Yes, I could force my personal choices into our picks, but I wouldn't do that, which leads me to my next point.

Second, I know you really don't care who I think should be elected, and that's a good thing, too. What makes me the expert? I haven't walked in your shoes, and you haven't walked in mine. So, how would either one of us know what is better for the other person? Most all of us get one ballot, and we get to decide how we use it.

Third, and back to my point in the first paragraph, why would I want to alienate a large chunk of our readers or advertisers by forcing my choice of a political candidate down their throats? To be honest, I am sometimes not sure who I am going to vote for until the day I go to the polls. Some of you straight-ticket voters may find that reprehensible. Others of you are clearly in the same boat as me, which is apparent by the mass amount of political advertising being marketed to us in the final weeks before most any major election.

Being a politician at any level for any party is not an easy job in today's toxic environment. Simply put, the haters will hate. Social media has been gasoline in this political fire, and it is clearly not making us more understanding of each other. So don't look for political endorsements here or in any of our publications. I have confidence you can make the decision that is best for you on your own. ■

Shane Goodman

Editor and Publisher

CITYVIEW

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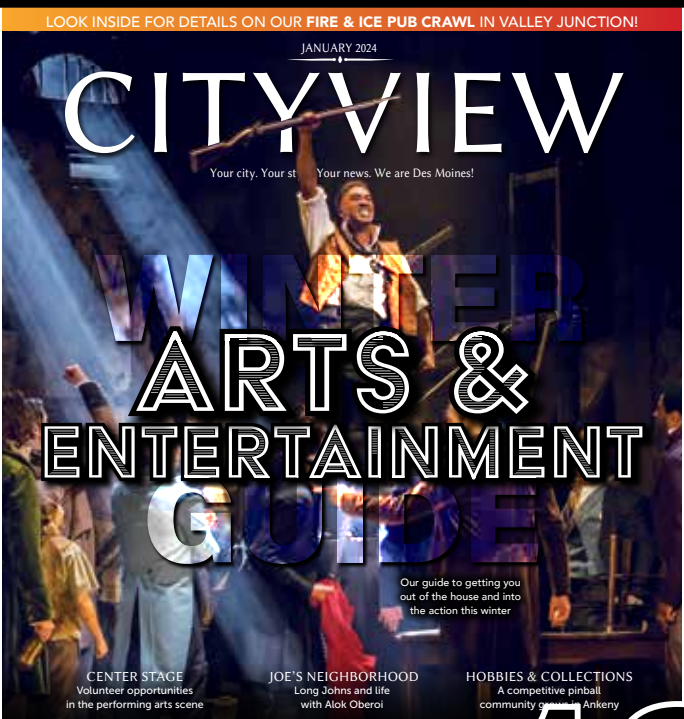
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CITYVIEW

JANUARY 2024



FEATURE 18

WINTER ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Our guide to getting you out of the house and into the action this winter

Cover photo by Johan Persson

Start your morning off right with an update from

the daily umbrella

Brief updates on local news, weather, events, career opportunities and the morning chuckle.



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

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ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing editor@dmcityview.com.

Q. What's the maximum capacity of Wells Fargo Arena?

A. Wells Fargo Arena hosts a number of events from the Iowa Wolves, Wild, Barnstormers, countless musical acts, comedians, motocross and more.

At most, for any of these events, the venue can hold up to 16,980 for concerts, 16,110 for basketball games, and 15,181 people for hockey and arena football games. In 2011, the Iowa Energy (now the Iowa Wolves) set an NBA D-League record (now the G-League) for attendance of a G-League finals game. The second game of the five-game series saw 14,036 fans pack the arena to witness the team's first and only G-League title.

When it comes to concerts, according to the Iowa Events Center's website, the most attended multi-show run was in 2016 when Garth Brooks attracted a total of 94,214 fans over six shows. For a single show, George Strait holds that record. In 2014 the country music star brought in 15,843 fans.

Q. How thick does ice need to be for activities?

There should be a minimum of 4 inches of clear blue ice when you're headed out for ice fishing.

A. "New ice is stronger than old ice. Before venturing out, drill test holes near shore and periodically as you move to gauge the thickness and quality of the ice," according to the Iowa DNR website.

The other recommended guidelines provided by the DNR include, if the ice is 2 inches or less to stay off, 5 inches is safe for ATVs or snowmobiles, 8 to 12 inches for a car or a small pickup, and 12 to 15 inches for a medium-sized truck. They also advise to stay away from "off-colored" snow or ice, but you probably already knew that.

Q. Does Des Moines use salt or brine on the roadways?

A. The Iowa DOT's primary material to handle ice on roadways to combat winter storms is rock salt. According to the Iowa DOT website, the department uses approximately 200,000 tons of rock salt each year in order to clear roadways. The rock salt used is typically from underground mines in Kansas or Louisiana. The price of the salt varies each season, since the salt is purchased through a competitive bidding process in order to receive direct delivery to 113 delivery points that are managed by the Iowa DOT.

The Iowa DOT has also been using brine for several years, for many reasons. Brine is cheaper than using rock salt, using brine as a preventative measure is better for the environment, its application is less labor intensive and makes cleanup quicker, and it returns roads to normal driving conditions more rapidly. ■

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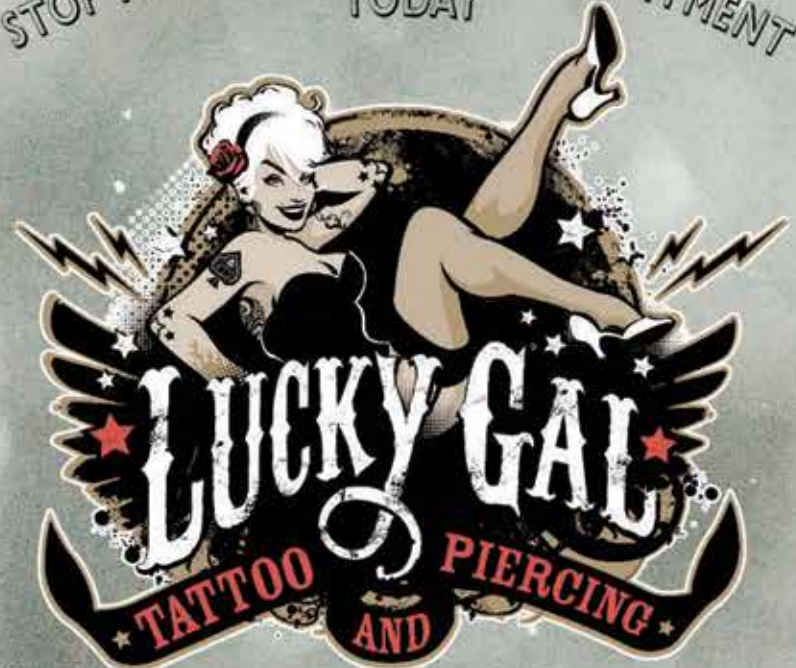
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YOUR VIEW

Letters are edited for space, spelling and clarity.

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FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine (comments unedited)

CITYVIEW magazine: What is your favorite Christmas movie?

- Julie Luepke:** The Man Who Invented Christmas
Pat Checketts: Die Hard
Nikki Chambers: Christmas Vacation and Home Alone as a slight 2nd place.
Chris Johnson: Home alone, die hard and Christmas vacation
Deb Cooper: Home Alone
Adam J. Moraine: "Home Alone" and "A Christmas Carol."
Anthony Garza: Homeboy Alone. Miracle Whip on 34th St.
Kyle Hunt: Mixed Nuts
Carlos Daniel: Next friday lol

CITYVIEW magazine: If a fifth President were to be added to Mount Rushmore, who should it be?

- Dan Bickel:** The other Roosevelt.
Woody Steve Wasson: Reagan
Daryl Cimat Northrop: The winner of the 2000 election, Al Gore.
Troy Vicker: Camacho.
Rustik Rooster Farms: Trump don't you know? The greatest president the us has ever had. Just ask him
Michael Leland: FDR
Bruce-Elizabeth Brown: Alfred E. Neuman, the mascot of Mad Magazine.

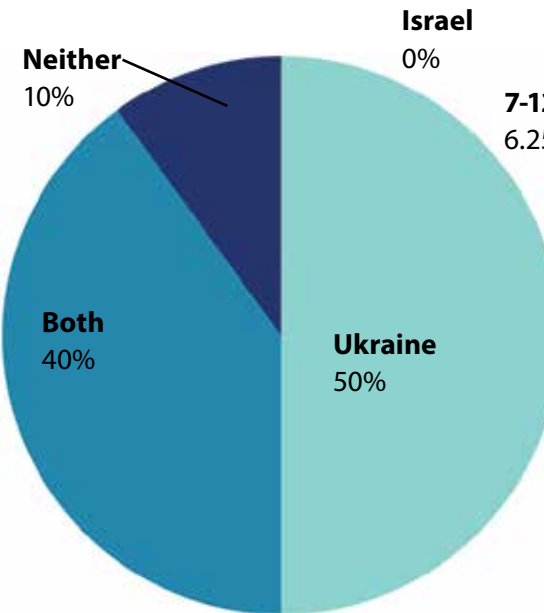
CITYVIEW magazine: What phrase should be on your tombstone?

- Nathan Tricky Allen, Comedian / Magician:** "Was this your card?"
Vivian Masters: She loved to save boxes
Jon Ehrhardt: He finally gets some undisturbed rest
Bob Guthrie: My ashes will be in an old paint bucket. It will read "Primmer Coat!"
Bella Masterson: I have no more F's to give.
Linda Smith: I told u I was sick
Timothy Jay Johnson: Finally a good night's sleep
Rich Smith: All dressed up in no place to go
David Clippert: This man is hilarious.
Troy Vicker: I should have pooped.
Erin Eickman: Whatever
Jim Smith: I'll be right back
Barbara Kay: Ding Dong
Randy Little: Ashes to ashes
Mal the Sports Gal: God is Great, Beer is good and people are crazy
Michael H Hamilton: Here Kitty, kitty....
Julie Brinker Nickell: FFS

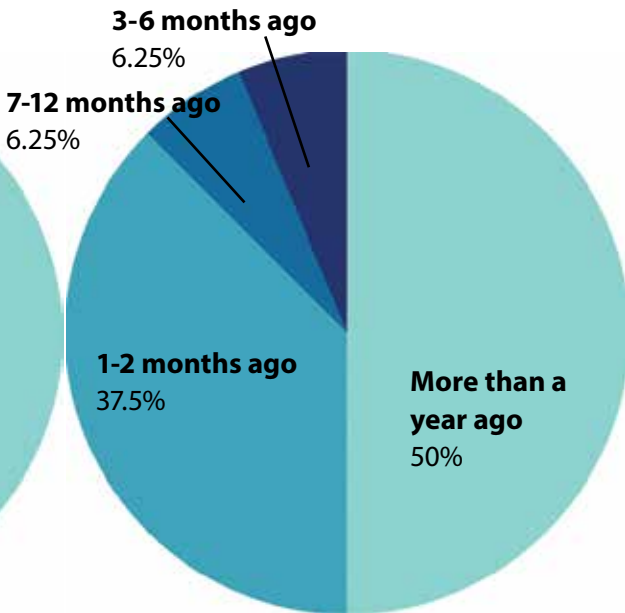
POLL POSITION

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

Where should the United States be sending military aid for war efforts?



When was the last time you saw a movie at a theater?



RETWEETS



(comments unedited)

- @anuatluru:** there should be a "take your friend to work day" so we can actually see what our friends do all day and meet the characters from all their work stories
@MadHatterMommy: The urge to say "yeah you should do that", especially when you have no clue.
@HenpeckedHal: The moderator on this 'brainstorming' conference call emphasized that there were "no dumb ideas," a claim soundly disproven within the first few minutes of the discussion.
@paularambles: the main reason men's shirts have those little breast pockets is just in case their gf becomes a worm
@JustBeingEmma: Nothing kept my grandmother from her health and fitness regimen. Every morning, rain or shine, that woman walked five miles each way to the liquor store.
@samdunsiger: Blackberry just announced a new CEO, but the most newsworthy part of this story is that Blackberry still exists.
@bechillcomedian: Limbo is the only sport where being really bad at it means you're raising the bar.
@BobGolen: Sloth isn't such a bad sin. It keeps me from committing the other six.
@BisHilarious: I'm not a good fit for the traditional job market because my greatest strengths are challenging authority, being self-righteous, and wanting to go home
@SunshineJarboly: *me, at the bank, mouth agape, looking around in child-like wonderment*
so, this is where my twelve dollars lives ■

Banning is not the solution

Sometimes, in a country built on intellectual freedom and freedom of expression, we may be offended by what we hear or what we see.

I really should not be surprised by some comments that represent what passes for civic dialogue in Iowa these days.

The latest example leaves me shaking my head, not just at the events themselves but at the reactions. Mrs. Gentry, my history and government teacher in high school, would be dismayed by intelligent people misunderstanding one of the foundations upon which the United States was established — that foundation being the desire of people for intellectual freedom.

How I wish I could still drop by the Gentry home, park myself on Mrs. G's couch and dive into an in-depth conversation with her and Mr. G about the events that transpired in recent weeks at the Iowa Capitol. Some people's mistaken notion of what religious freedom involves has brought the spotlight to Iowa from as far away as Great Britain's BBC.

The trigger for all of this attention was the decision by the Satanic Temple of Iowa to temporarily erect a small altar with candles and a caped, ram's-head figure representing the pagan idol Baphomet. The display was off the Capitol rotunda next to the grand staircase, not far from where another group placed the traditional Christian nativity scene.

Faster than you could slide down a chimney, controversy boiled up.

Some politicians, including Republican presidential contender Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor, called on state officials to remove the display.

One member of the Iowa Legislature, Rep. Brad Sherman, a Williamsburg pastor, urged adoption of legislation next session that would keep satanic symbols such the Baphomet

display out of the Capitol, the icon of Iowa's democracy. Sherman called the display blasphemous.

"For those who wish to worship Satan, they are free to do so on their private property," he wrote in his newsletter, the Sherman Liberty Letter.

"It is a tortured and twisted interpretation of law that affords Satan, who is universally understood to be the enemy of God, religious expression equal to God in an institution of government that depends upon God for continued blessings," Sherman wrote.

Other politicians weighed in in ways Mrs. G would have found to be more in sync with our First Amendment rights.

Rep. Jon Dunwell, a Republican lawmaker from Newton, also is a minister. He called the Satanic Temple display objectionable, but he added a cautionary note.

Writing on Facebook, Dunwell said: "I don't want the state evaluating and making determinations about religions. I am guided by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. ... I would rather have an evil blasphemous display or no display at all than have the state dictate what they think is appropriate. Shocked so many want to give up their freedom so they don't have to see a display they disagree with."

Gov. Reynolds took a reasonable stand on the display, although she could have been more straightforward in her defense of equal treatment by state government of various forms of religious expression.

Reynolds said in a statement, "Like many Iowans, I find the Satanic Temple's display in the Capitol absolutely objectionable. In a

free society, the best response to objectionable speech is more speech, and I encourage all those of faith to join me today in praying over the Capitol and recognizing the nativity scene that will be on display — the true reason for the season."

The First Amendment rights belong to all people. They are not just available to those who follow a particular religion or believe a certain way or say things the same way we might.

Intellectual freedom does not mean a vocal segment of society should be able to silence a smaller segment for having the temerity to think differently or believe differently or worship differently or want to read books that others dislike.

Sometimes, in a country built on intellectual freedom and freedom of expression, we may be offended by what we hear or what we see. Mrs. G's eyes would twinkle when she reminded me of that fact of life during those comfy couch conversations many years ago.

The controversy over the Satanic Temple vandalism illustrates our divided times in another way, too:

Michael Cassidy, 35, of Lauderdale, Mississippi, was charged Dec. 14 with fourth-degree criminal mischief for demolishing the Baphomet statue and tossing its head in a Capitol trash can. If found guilty, he faces up to one year in prison and a \$2,500 fine.

By week's end, like-minded people around the United States had donated \$40,000 to his legal defense fund. ■

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



CIVIC SKINNY

BY CITYVIEW STAFF

Liquor sales grow. Air quality suffers. Tourism grants announced. Register circulation drops.

The IABD (Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division) released its annual report for the 2023 fiscal year. It reported a total revenue of \$478,259,852, which is a 3.34% increase from 2022. Unsurprisingly, \$445,830,313 of that came from liquor sales.

It appears many Iowans enjoy the Christmas spirits considering December had the highest liquor sales with \$42,863,859. However, the most gallons of liquor were sold in August with 587,359.

Iowans cut back their consumption of wine and beer as the number of gallons sold for both dropped from last year to this year. The amount of native beer sold did increase 5.22%.

The state's top five favorite liquor brands remained unchanged from 2022. Tito's Handmade Vodka took the crown again in 2023, selling a total of 419,572 gallons in fiscal year 2023, up from the 393,280 sold the prior year. Black Velvet remained in second and increased its total gallons sold by more than 1,000, putting its total at 355,016. To round out the top

five, in third, Captain Morgan Original Spiced Rum sold 273,955 gallons; in fourth, Fireball Cinnamon Whiskey sold 254,057 gallons; and, in fifth, Hawkeye Vodka sold 196,869 gallons. Despite their recent visits to local Hy-Vees, neither Mark Wahlberg's nor Jason Mamoa's liquors were able to crack the top 50.

A total of 195,027 gallons were sold from Iowa native distillers and manufacturers. The top three were Blue Ox Spirits, Inc., located in Des Moines, which sold 80,101 gallons in 2023; Dehner Distillery, located in Clive, 29,730 gallons; and Cedar Ridge Vineyards, found in Swisher, with 22,746 gallons.

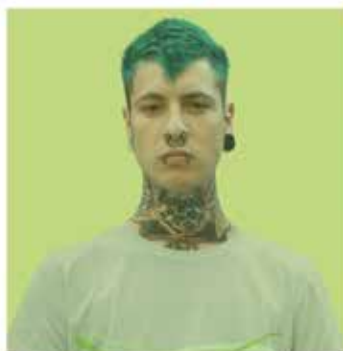
The total in sales for Iowa native distillers and manufacturers was \$11,714,796. Four companies crossed over the seven-figure mark in 2023, those being Cedar Ridge Vineyards, \$3,446,790; Blue Ox Spirits, Inc., with \$2,198,115 in sales; Revelton Distilling Company, located in Osceola, \$1,270,845; and Mississippi River Distilling Company, in Le Claire, with \$1,194,854 in sales.

The top four native Iowa liquor brands also remained unchanged, with three out of the top four being vodka. Blue Ox Vodka by far topped the list with 76,312 gallons sold. Gotcha Vodka came in second with 21,772 gallons sold. Cedar Ridge Bourbon sold 14,001 gallons to capture third. Swell Vodka was fourth with 7,128 gallons sold. The newcomer to the top five, State Vodka, jumped from 20th in 2022. It sold 7,052 gallons in 2023. ...

Much like the rest of the country, Iowa's air quality was greatly affected by the Canadian wildfires that took place in March. According to the Stanford Environmental Change and Human Outcomes Lab, the average American was exposed to 66% more air pollution than the previous record.

According to **John Gering**, a unit leader in Ambient Air Monitoring for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 122 reported ozone exceedances and 45 total PM 2.5 (particle matter) exceedances occurred between January and Dec. 8. These numbers are abnormally

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CIVIC SKINNY CONT...

high, considering only 17 ozone exceedances and 11 PM 2.5 exceedances happened since 2018.

“It would probably be correct to say that almost all, if not all, of the exceedances in 2023 noted were at least influenced by wildfire smoke,” Gering said. ...

Travel Iowa announced its tourism grant recipients for the 2024 fiscal year. All in all, 45 organizations across the state received tourism grants at a total of \$398,800.

“Visitors spent more than \$6.9 billion across Iowa’s economy in 2022, an increase of 13% over 2021 spending. This direct visitor spending sustained over 68,600 jobs and generated \$1.1 billion in state and local tax revenues in 2022,” according to Travel Iowa.

Tourism grants must be applied for and applicants are “scored by a committee of industry peers,” **Jessica O’Riley**, tourism communications manager, told CITYVIEW.

“Funds are allocated from the legislature as part of our overall budget,” said O’Riley. “There is a close-out procedure where recipients must show deliverable results.”

When asked what would be considered “deliverable results,” O’Riley replied, “It depends entirely on the project. Some measure results by media campaign metrics (impressions, clicks, web traffic), some through ticket sales or event attendance, some through growth of visitation from the targeted audience. They are required to outline how they will measure results prior to an award.”

The highest grant amount awarded was \$10,000 to 26 entities. The smallest amount awarded was \$2,500, given to “Summer of the Arts” for 2024 Iowa City Jazz Festival advertising.

Some recipients of note receiving the \$10,000 grants were the Science Center of Iowa for podcast targeted marketing, the Iowa Driftless Chapter of Trout Unlimited for the Iowa Driftless Trout fishing tournament, the Le Mars Area Chamber of Commerce for the Le Mars Ice Cream Days, and the Island City Harbor Jackson County Welcome Center for signage and social media. ...

The paid circulation of The Des Moines Register continues the downward trajectory it’s been on for years.

CITYVIEW reported on the Register’s circulation numbers in 2019 when the Monday-to-Friday circulation of the print edition of the daily newspaper averaged 45,633 with the Sunday print circulation averaging 80,713.



According to the 2023 audit filed with the Alliance for Audited Media, a trade group, the average Monday-to-Friday print circulation has fallen to 23,411, a 6% decrease from 2022. The Sunday print circulation dropped to an average of 31,184, a 20% decrease from the year before. This is a far cry from the days when the Register touted reaching three out of five Iowans. The continual decline has those in the know wondering how this Gannett newspaper, and the others it owns, can continue to operate. ...

The Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission held a special meeting on Dec. 19 in order to address the resignation of longtime director, **Brian Ohorilko**, who accepted a position as a senior vice president at Prairie Meadows, overseeing racing, human resources and food and beverage at the Polk County owned casino. This hire leaves some wondering if Ohorilko will be the replacement for the 77-year-old Prairie Meadows CEO **Gary Palmer**.

Ohorilko took over as director for **Jack Ketterer** in 2012. Ketterer had been with the commission for 24 years before passing the torch. This came shortly after Ohorilko authored a massive bill that allowed people to use their phones to bet on horse racing.

As reported by The Gazette, Ohorilko’s salary started at the minimum for the position, \$125,000. In his time as director, his pay increased to \$196,000, according to the State of Iowa Salary Database. Ohorilko will be replaced in the interim by **Tina Eick**, the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission operations director. In the meeting, it was announced that applications will be open for the position as of Dec. 31, and the board expects to have someone hired by the next meeting on Jan. 25. ■

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'A Fever In The Heartland'

A relentlessly riveting, essential read on the courageous woman who brought down the KKK in the Midwest

Twenty one years ago, Chuck Offenburger and I had ringside seats for a rare and fascinating journalistic forum: the now late George "Lefty" Mills, the legendary Des Moines Register reporter; the late Bob Beck, the former publisher of Centerville's Daily Iowegian, a towering figure in journalism and Republican politics for decades; and my uncle, James B. Wilson, the then-publisher of the Carroll Daily Times Herald, sat around a table at Noah's restaurant in Des Moines and talked for nearly two hours about newspapers, politics and Iowa.

Offenburger recorded the notes, and I took the photos. Neither Chuck nor I talked much.

"Mills and Beck both figure they did their newspapering in the industry's glory years," Offenburger wrote in a fantastic piece that ran in February of 2002.

Beck grew up in Centerville where his father, Jesse M. Beck, was at the Iowegian from 1903 until 1965.

Under Jesse Beck, The Iowegian waged a sustained — and ultimately successful — fight against the Ku Klux Klan in southern Iowa, where the KKK had gained a foothold that modern Iowans would find astonishing. The paper editorialized against the KKK on its front page and faced reprisals from Klan supporters, Mills told us.

The accounts of this period, for those who want to learn more, are laid out in great detail in Enfy's McMurry's book, "Centerville: A Mid-American Saga." I had a copy of it in my office here in Carroll and often refer to it for inspiration when I get down on things.

Memories of that lunch came racing back to me as I finished Timothy Egan's remarkable book, "A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them."

The Klan during the 1920s — motivated as much by anti-Catholicism as racism — controlled vast swaths of the Midwest, populating legislatures, a governor's office in Indiana, and courts and other reaches of power.

"When hate was on the ballot, especially in the guise of virtue, a majority of voters knew exactly what to do," Egan writes of the "true mood in the Heartland of the 1920s."

Nowhere was the influence of the Klan more profound than in Indiana, the center of Egan's riveting non-fiction work, a chronicling of the rise of one of the more monstrous, but surprisingly little-known (until now), figures in American history, the Klan leader D.C. Stephenson, who shepherded the organization to rocketing growth and influence — so much so that the Grand Dragon of the Indiana Klan had a not-unthinkable strategy to run for president in 1928.

"What if the leaders of the 1920s Klan didn't drive public sentiment but rode it?" Egan writes. "A vein of hatred was always there for the tapping. It's there still, and explains much of the madness threatening American life."

The Pulitzer-winning Egan covers the history and expansion of the Klan in the early 20th century — in the Midwest — before getting into extensive

writing about one of the more consequential trials in American history, one I learned about reading "Fever In The Heartland."

It's page-turning prose from Egan that brings horrors of American history to modern eyes. The sentences are painful to process, such is the savagery of the Klan. On occasion one has to set the book down, walk away, digest the inhumanity.

A barbaric sociopath, Stephenson preyed on women, assaulting them with such brutality that reading Egan's accounts, again, is challenging.

One of the victims, a young Indiana woman, Madge Oberholtzer, died from an attack. She provided detailed deathbed testimony, and her family advocated for a trial, a brave decision in light of Stephenson's grip on the state's power structure. The result: a trial in the Hamilton Courthouse in Noblesville, Indiana.

Had Madge Oberholtzer not come forward with the full story in her final days, Stephenson would have continued to abuse women and likely remained ascendent as a leader of the Klan. Had the happened, the decision-making on United States involvement in World War II could have been decidedly different.

Stephenson's ultimate conviction and prison sentencing broke the fever-hold of the Klan in Indiana and catalyzed fights against it across the Midwest.

As Egan's title tells us, Madge Oberholtzer is the peerless hero of the fight against the Klan in Indiana.

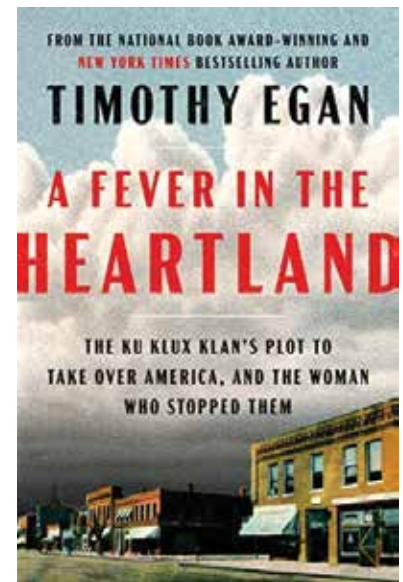
Egan's book also references the fierce resistance from some Midwestern newspapers — notably the editor of a Muncie, Indiana, weekly newspaper, George Dale, who took on Stephenson and the Klan and had his house stoned and shot.

And William Allen White, the famous 20th century rural newspaper owner from Emporia, Kansas, who traveled his state and gave speeches over two months, an effort that led to a ban on the Klan in Kansas.

One Colorado observer had this thought as Klan influence waned in the 1920s: "The air of America is too friendly to permit such a disease to last."

Egan's epilogue questions whether the better angels of our nature are prevailing today. ■

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



2023-2024 IOWA WILD PROMOTIONAL SCHEDULE

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)

DAILY SPECIALS

SUNDAY – Post Game Skate

MONDAY – \$1 Hot Dogs

TUESDAY – \$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn

WEDNESDAY – Winning Wednesday

THURSDAY – \$1 Popcorn

FRIDAY – \$2 Beers, Fireball Drink Special

SATURDAY – Local Concert Series,

2 for 1 Confluence Beers



SCAN TO BUY TICKETS



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

THE WINTER WONDERPALACE

**Raccoon River Nature Lodge,
2202 Park Drive, West Des Moines
Jan. 6**

The ninth installment of The Winter Wonderpalace allows you to take your little ones on a magic winter adventure, where they get the chance to meet four storybook characters inside the Raccoon River Nature Lodge.

IOWA STATE FAIR FLEA MARKET

**3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines
Jan. 6-7**

**[www.iowastatefairgrounds.org/
event-calendar](http://www.iowastatefairgrounds.org/event-calendar)**

Find all sorts of goods from antiques, home decor, jewelry and everything in between. This flea market is held each month from January to June and September to December at the Varied Industries Building.



Photo Courtesy of Des Moines Performing Arts

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

**Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org**

- Jan. 11: Capital City Pride Presents: “Tiq Milan”
- Jan. 12-14: “STOMP”
- Jan. 23-28: “Mamma Mia!”
- Jan. 27: Havana Hop



Photo courtesy of Cinch World’s Toughest Rodeo

WELLS FARGO ARENA

**Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St.,
Des Moines**

iowaeventscenter.com

- Jan. 7: Harlem Globetrotters
- Jan. 12-13: Cinch World’s Toughest Rodeo.
- Jan. 25: Disturbed - Take Back Your Life tour with Falling In Reverse and Plush
- Feb. 2: Winter Jam 2024



Photo Courtesy of Iowa Wild

IOWA WILD

**Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St.,
Des Moines**

lowawild.com

Home games:

- Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. vs. Grand Rapids Griffins (Detroit Red Wings)
- Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. vs. Grand Rapids Griffins
- Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. vs. Texas Stars (Dallas Stars)
- Jan. 24 at 7 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. vs. San Diego Gulls (Anaheim Ducks)
- Jan. 27 at 6 p.m. vs. San Diego Gulls



Photo Courtesy of Drake University

DRAKE BASKETBALL

Knapp Center

2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines

Men’s home games:

- Jan. 10 vs. Indiana State
- Jan. 20 vs. Evansville
- Jan. 27 vs. UNI
- Jan. 31 vs. Valparaíso

Women’s home games:

- Jan. 6 vs. Evansville
- Jan. 19 vs. Belmont
- Jan. 21 vs. Murray State



Photo Courtesy of Iowa Wolves

IOWA WOLVES

**Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St.,
Des Moines**

iowa.gleague.nba.com

Home games:

- Jan. 14 at 3 p.m. vs. Salt Lake City Stars (Utah Jazz)
- Jan. 15 at 12 p.m. vs. Salt Lake City Stars
- Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. vs. Capital City Go-Go (Washington Wizards)
- Jan. 23 at 7 p.m. vs. Rio Grande Valley Vipers (Houston Rockets)

COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM



Photo Courtesy of Captain Roys

WINTER SIP N’ THRIFT

**Captain Roys, 1900 Saylor Road,
Des Moines
Captainroys.com**

Jan. 7

Take on the cold and take out your wallets. Captain Roys hosts this beverage and thrifting experience on the bank of the Des Moines River. Vendors included are Golden Girl Vintage, Nahla Thrift, Into the Mystica, By Fiore, One Man Gathers, Steph Jessen and Kawaii Thrift.



Photo Courtesy of Noce

NOCE

**1326 Walnut St., No. 100, Des Moines
nocedsm.com**

- Jan. 5: A Night of Nat King Cole with vocalist Napoleon Douglas and his band
- Jan. 6: That’ll be the Day: Gina Gedler sings Linda Ronstadt
- Jan. 11: Jazz on the House with saxophonist Marvin Truong and company
- Jan. 12: Eric Thompson’s Soul Sessions Quintet: Black Codes from the Underground
- Jan. 13: Nowhere with Love: The Max Wellman Big Band plays Harry Connick Jr.
- Jan. 18: Jazz on the House with trumpeter Scott Davis and company
- Jan. 19: For Once In My Life: A night of Stevie, Luther and more with Napoleon and The Dirty Lowdown
- Jan. 20: The Paul Lichty Jazz Orchestra
- Jan. 25: Jazz on the House with percussionist Isac Jamba and company
- Jan. 26: Latin Night with Son Peruchos

DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN

**909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines
dmbotanicalgarden.com**

- Through Feb. 18: Dome for the Holidays. A winter wonderland experience inside of the Botanical Garden.
- Fridays through March: Dome after Dark. Enjoy the conservatory and gardeners show house which will be illuminated with unique and colorful lighting.
- Sundays through March: Botanical Blues. It’s in the name, local blues artists perform inside the conservatory.



Courtesy of the City of Waukee

WAUKEE FAMILYFEST

**Lutheran Church of Hope, 305 N.E. Dartmoor
Drive, Waukee
waukee.org/472/FamilyFest**

Jan. 20

FamilyFest is a free, family friendly community event. Inside the church will be inflatable bounce houses for kids to blow off steam and plenty of Waukee area businesses for all to check out.



CITYVIEW’S FIRE AND ICE

**Historic Valley Junction, 137 Fifth St.,
West Des Moines
fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com**

Jan. 20

Fire and Ice is a hockey-themed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues! With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the BEST winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area. ■

WINTER ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Our guide to getting you out of the house and into the action this winter

By Cyote Williams

With the first El Niño event set to hit since 2019, this winter is projected to be unseasonably warm. Above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation on the horizon give everyone a reason to leave the house, and our guide will tell you where to go.

ART

Take in local and international works all over the metro.

DES MOINES ART CENTER

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

desmoinesartcenter.org

- **Through Jan. 14:** "Transform Any Room"
- **Through Feb. 18:** "Double Take"

OLSON-LARSEN GALLERIES

542 Fifth St., West Des Moines

olsonlarsen.com

- **Through Feb. 10:** "Hybrid Practices"

ANDERSON GALLERY

Harmon Fine Arts Center,

1310 25th St., Des Moines

andersongallery.wp.drake.edu

- **Feb. 1 - March 8:** Solving Problems: Drake Art & Design Faculty Exhibition
- **March 24 - April 14:** 53rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition

MOBERG GALLERY

2411 Grand Ave., Des Moines

moberggallery.com

- **Through Jan. 6:** 20th Anniversary Exhibit
- **Jan. 12:** Jeff Fleming "Absurdities"
- **March 8:** Chris Vance

POLK COUNTY HERITAGE GALLERY

Polk County Administration Building,

111 Court Ave., Des Moines

polkcountyheritagegallery.org

- **Through Jan. 4:** 2023 Greater Des Moines Juried Art Exhibition

ANKENY ART CENTER

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

ankenyardcenter.org

- **Jan. 25:** Bondurant-Farrar school district K-12 art reception



Photo Courtesy of Anderson Gallery

- **Feb. 29:** North Polk school district K-12 art reception
- **March 28:** South feeder of Ankeny school district art reception

THEATER & DANCE

Excellent performances from incredible performers

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120 Abraham Drive, Ames • actorsinc.org

- **Jan. 25-27, Feb. 2-4:** "Holmes & Watson"

ANKENY COMMUNITY THEATRE

1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

ankenycommunitytheatre.com

- **Feb. 9-18:** "The Odd Couple, Female Version"

CLASS ACT PRODUCTIONS

201 First Ave. S., Altoona • captheatre.org

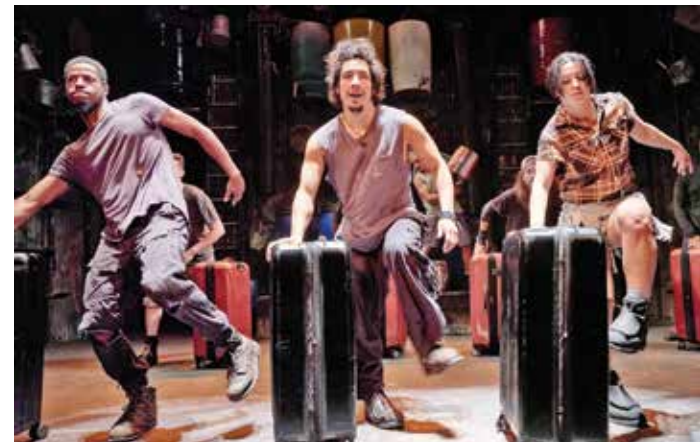
- **Feb. 16-18, 23-25, March 1-3:** "The Music Man Jr."

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

dmpa.org

- **Jan. 11:** Capital City Pride Presents: "Tiq Milan"
- **Jan. 12-14:** "STOMP"
- **Jan. 23-28:** "Mamma Mia!"
- **Jan. 27:** Havana Hop
- **Feb. 6-11:** "Company"
- **Feb. 15:** Capital City Pride Presents: Brea Baker
- **Feb. 17:** The Peking Acrobats
- **Feb. 20:** Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo



"Stomp." Photo courtesy of Des Moines Performing Arts

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- **Feb. 27 through March 3:** “Les Misérables”
- **Feb. 27 through March 17:** Dixie’s “Never Wear a Tube Top While Riding a Mechanical Bull”
- **March 12-17:** “Funny Girl”
- **March 21:** Capital City Pride Presents: Michael Arceneaux
- **March 22-23:** Comedy XPeriment

DES MOINES COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE

831 42nd St., Des Moines
dmplayhouse.com

- **Feb. 2-18:** “Our Town”

DMACC ANKENY CAMPUS THEATRE

2006 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny
dmacc.edu/theatre/ankeny

- **March 25-28, April 3-6:** “Head over Heels”

IOWA STAGE THEATRE COMPANY

Stoner Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines • iowastage.org

- **March 1-10:** “The Glass Menagerie”

SIMPSON COLLEGE

513 North D St., Indianola
simpson.edu/academics/departments/
department-theatre-arts

- **Feb. 16-18:** “The Telephone & The Medium”
- **March 22-24:** “A Beautiful Day in November on the Banks of the Greatest of the Great Lakes”

TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100,
West Des Moines
tallgrasstheatre.org

- **Feb. 2-18:** “Equus”

STEPHENS AUDITORIUM

1900 Center Drive, Ames
center.iastate.edu/events

- **Jan. 30:** “Jesus Christ Superstar”
- **Feb. 2-3:** Barjché
- **Feb. 8:** Langston Hughes Project
- **Feb. 29 through March 3:** “Always Plenty of Light at the Starlight All Night Dinner”
- **March 27:** Swan Lake Ballet

MUSIC

Listen in awe or sing along, your choice

DES MOINES CIVIC CENTER

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

- **Feb. 23-24:** “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix” in concert
- **March 19:** Mostly Kosher

DES MOINES SYMPHONY

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

- **Feb. 3-4:** Discover Groundbreaking Innovation
- **March 9-10:** Discover Gershwin

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines
hoytsherman.org

- **Jan. 6:** Ruben & Clay: Twenty Years - One Night at 7:30 p.m.
- **Jan. 12:** Big Head Todd and the Monsters at 7:30 p.m.
- **Feb. 6:** Hélène Grimaud: Lauridsen Great Pianist Series at 7:30 p.m.
- **Feb. 9:** Nickel Creek at 7:30 p.m.
- **Feb. 23:** Postmodern Jukebox at 8 p.m.
- **Feb. 24:** Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives at 7:30 p.m.

COMING SOON
Our Town
Feb. 2-18, 2024

Dragons Love Tacos
Mar. 1-10, 2024

CLASSES
Spring class registrations
NOW OPEN
Summer class schedule
POSTS JAN. 17, 2024

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AUDITIONS, AND VOLUNTEER
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JANUARY 23 - 28, 2024

DES MOINES CIVIC CENTER

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- **Feb. 29:** Cat Power sings Dylan: The 1966 Royal Albert Hall concert at 7:30 p.m.
- **March 1:** Blind Boys of Alabama at 7:30 p.m.
- **March 12:** Bruce Hornsby and yMusic present Brhym at 8 p.m.
- **March 14:** The High Kings & Gaelic Storm at 7:30 p.m.
- **March 16:** The Black Jacket Symphony presents Journey's "Escape" at 8 p.m.
- **March 24:** Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular at 8 p.m.
- **March 26:** Brian Culbertson - The Trilogy Tour at 7:30 p.m.



Tim McGraw will be performing at Wells Fargo Arena on March 21. Photo Courtesy of Iowa Events Center.

WELLS FARGO ARENA

Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines
iowaeventscenter.com

- **Jan. 25:** Disturbed - Take Back Your Life tour with Falling In Reverse and Plush
- **Feb. 2:** WINTER JAM 2024
- **March 15:** Avenged Sevenfold: Life is but a Dream tour with Poppy and Sullivan King
- **March 21:** Tim McGraw - The Standing Room Only tour

MORE LIVE MUSIC VENUES

- **VIBRANT MUSIC HALL**
2938 Grand Prairie Parkway, Waukee
vibrantmusichall.com
- **NOCE**
1326 Walnut St., No. 100, Des Moines
nocedsm.com
- **LEFTY'S LIVE MUSIC**
2307 University Ave., Des Moines
www.leftyslivemusic.com
- **WOOLY'S**
504 E. Locust St., Des Moines
firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/woolys
- **WATERWORKS PARK**
Lauridsen Amphitheater, Des Moines Water Works Park, 2251 George Flagg Parkway
dsmwaterworkspark.com
- **TEMPLE THEATER**
1011 Locust St., Des Moines
desmoinesperformingarts.org/venues/temple-theater
- **HORIZON EVENTS CENTER**
2100 N.W. 100th St., Clive
horizoneventscenter.com
- **SHELOW AUDITORIUM**
2507 University Ave., Des Moines
calendar.drake.edu/sheslow_auditorium
- **CAPTAIN ROYS**
1900 Saylor Road, Des Moines
captainroys.com
- **GREENWOOD LOUNGE**
3707 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines
(515)-277-1219
- **HULL AVENUE TAVERN**
834 Hull Ave., Des Moines
facebook.com/Boggshullavetavern
- **XBK**
1159 24th St., Des Moines
xbklive.com



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Thursday| January 18, 2024

10:00 - 11:30 AM

West 48 Conference Center

1601 48th Street

West Des Moines, IA

UPCOMING SEMINARS:

February 15

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StraightTalkSeniorLivingSeries.com

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Selling a home today has become more involved than in the past with years of accumulation to deal with and the logistics of moving to a new home. The real estate market has normalized in the last year and how will this affect you in 2024? If you anticipate moving from your longtime home within the next 5 years, it's never too soon to start the process.

- How and where do I even begin to start?
- Are there people that specialize in this type of move that can help me, as an older adult, with this process?
- What about the current real estate market should I know?
- How do I prepare my house for sale?

Get the answers to these questions and more. Start the New Year in the "know". Please join us and bring a friend.

Founded and Moderated by:
Mary Eikenberry

Certified Senior Housing Professional
Certified Senior Downsizing Coach

SPORTS

Hoops, hockey, and a whole lot of fun

IOWA WOLVES

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

The Des Moines based affiliate for the Minnesota Timberwolves continues to foster NBA talent right here in Iowa, led by first year Head Coach Ernest Scott.

SCAN FOR
SCHEDULE



IOWA WILD

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

First year Head Coach Brett McLean takes charge of the Iowa Wild, the affiliate of the NHL's Minnesota Wild.

SCAN FOR
SCHEDULE



IOWA STATE BASKETBALL

Hilton Coliseum
1705 Center Drive, Ames
cyclones.com

A major shakeup in the Big 12 conference presents new challenges for the men's and women's basketball teams, both of which made the NCAA championship tournament last year. The men are coached by T.J. Otzelberger and women by Bill Fennelly.

SCAN FOR
MEN'S
SCHEDULE



SCAN FOR
WOMEN'S
SCHEDULE



DES MOINES BUCCANEERS

Buccaneer Arena, 7201 Hickman Road, Urbandale
bucshockey.com

The Tier 1 USHL developmental hockey franchise continues to serve up a chance for amateur hockey players to enhance their ability to succeed at the next level.

SCAN FOR
SCHEDULE



DRAKE BASKETBALL

Knapp Center, 2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines
Drake men's and women's basketball look to replicate their successes of last season. Both squads went marching in the 2023 NCAA championship tournament. The men are coached by Darian DeVries and women by Allison Pohlman.



Photo courtesy of Drake University

SCAN FOR
MEN'S
SCHEDULE



SCAN FOR
WOMEN'S
SCHEDULE



January at xBk

Nabihah Iqbal
Monday, January 22nd

Dom Flemons
Friday, January 26th

Kent Burnside
Wednesday, January 31st

Other Upcoming Shows

- 1/4: 28 Days Later with Dirty Blonde and Kobe Williams and the Fantasy
- 1/5: Bon Voyage Geneviève Gros-Louis
- 1/6: Rhythm & Pep Presents: Chowdown Improv Comedy
- 1/12: Kris Lager
- 1/13: Benefit for Iowa Abortion Access Fund
- 1/19: Pert Near Sandstone with Flash In A Pan
- 1/20: Des Moines Music Coalition Music University
- 1/20: Cactus Blossoms
- 1/25: Nick Maurer Album Release with Jinnouchi Power & Ryan Lombard
- 1/27: Levi Hummon
- 1/28: Jaime Wyatt with Joshua Quimby

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EVENTS

The best of the rest

FEATURE STORY

JANUARY

- **Jan. 5: Dome after dark.** Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines; dmbotanicalgarden.com
- **Jan. 6: The Winter Wonderpalace.** 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines; facebook.com/events/3606197412989952
- **Jan. 6: Live Jazz at The Continental** in the Historic East Village. From 8-11 p.m. at 407 E. Fifth St., Des Moines; ongrand0.wixsite.com/the-continental
- **Jan. 6-7: 12th annual Iowa Diecast Toy Show.** Located at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.agfarmtoys.com
- **Jan. 7: Winter Sip N' Thrift.** Captain Roys, 1900 Saylor Road, Des Moines; captainroys.com
- **Jan. 7: DMPL and Dragons.** Dungeons and Dragons at the Central Library, 1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.dmpl.org/event/dmpl-dragons-sunday-4
- **Jan. 7: Harlem Globetrotters.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines; iowaeventscenter.com
- **Jan. 11: Sip and Stroll.** Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines; dmbotanicalgarden.com
- **Jan. 12-13: Cinch World's Toughest Rodeo.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines;

iowaeventscenter.com

- **Jan. 13: Joe Gatto's Night of Comedy.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events
- **Jan. 14: Local Music Showcase at Teehee's Comedy Club.** 1433 Walnut St., Des Moines; teeheescomedy.com
- **Jan. 18: Candlelight: A Tribute to Taylor Swift.** World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, 100 Locust St., Des Moines; feverup.com/m/138464
- **Jan. 20: Waukee FamilyFest.** Lutheran Church of Hope, 305 N.E. Dartmoor Drive, Waukee; waukee.org/472/FamilyFest
- **Jan. 20: Candlelight: A Tribute to Queen and more.** World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, 100 Locust St., Des Moines; feverup.com/m/138464
- **Jan. 20: CITYVIEW's winter pub crawl, Fire and Ice.** Historic Valley Junction, 137 Fifth St., West Des Moines; fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com
- **Jan. 27: Demetri Martin: The Joke Machine Tour.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events
- **Jan. 30 through Feb 1: Iowa Ag Expo.** Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; iowaeventscenter.com/wells-fargo-arena

FEBRUARY

- **Feb. 1-2: IGHSAU Iowa State Girls Wrestling Tournament.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines; <https://ighsau.org/sports/wrestling>
- **Feb. 2: Kathy Griffin: My Life on the PTSD-list.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events
- **Feb. 3: The Snow Ball.** Science Center of Iowa, 401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway; DSM.city/SnowBall
- **Feb. 10: Winter Blues Fest 2024.** Downtown Des Moines Marriott, 700 Grand Ave., Des Moines; cibs.org
- **Feb. 10: The Fur Ride.** Put on the fake fur and ride around town. Starting at Ricochet and ending at Big Grove Brewery, 400 Locust St., Suite 105, Des Moines; aboveandbeyondcancer.org
- **Feb. 10-18: Iowa Beef Expo.** Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; iowastatefairgrounds.org
- **Feb. 11: Chinese New Year.** Jester Park Nature Center, 12130 N.W. 128th St., Granger; jesterparknaturecenter.com
- **Feb. 14-17: 2024 IHSAA State Wrestling Tournament.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines;

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Moines; iahsaa.org/wrestling

• **Feb. 17: Ari Shaffir: The Wrong Side of History Tour.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events

• **Feb. 17: Prepare to be amazed by the Peking Acrobats.** 11 a.m. at the Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; dmpa.org

• **Feb. 27 through March 4: IGHS AU Iowa State Girls Basketball Tournament.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines; <https://ighsau.org/sports/basketball>

• **Feb. 27 through March 3: “Les Misérables,”** one of the world’s most popular musicals. Starting at various times at the Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; dmpa.org

• **Feb. 28: Coldest Night of the Year Fun Run/Walk.** Held by Central Iowa Shelter and Services at Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines; centraliowashelter.org

• **Feb. 29: Greensky Bluegrass.** Val Air Ballroom, 301 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines; firstfleetconcerts.com/events

MARCH

• **March 1: Iowa Deer Classic.** Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; iowaeventscenter.com

• **March 4-8: IHSA A Iowa State Boys Basketball Tournament.** Wells Fargo Arena, 223 Center St., Des Moines; iahsaa.org/basketball

• **March 8: Iowa Home Expo.** Iowa State



Chinese New Year

Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; iowahomeexpo.com

• **March 15: All Iowa Auto Show.** Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; iowaeventscenter.com

• **March 15: Mateo Lane: The Al Dente Tour.** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events

• **March 16: St. Patrick’s Day Parade,** starting at the corner of Grand Ave. and Robert D. Ray Drive, downtown Des Moines; friendlysonsiowa.com/Parade/

parade.htm

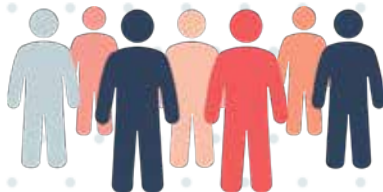
• **March 16: St. Paddy’s Marathon, Half Marathon, 5k.** Iowa State Capitol, E. Locust Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, Des Moines; iowaruns.com/desmoinesstpaddys5k

• **March 17: Dude Dad Live!** Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines; hoytsherman.org/events

• **March 22: Jim Jefferies: Give ’Em What They Want Tour.** Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; desmoinesperformingarts.org/events ■

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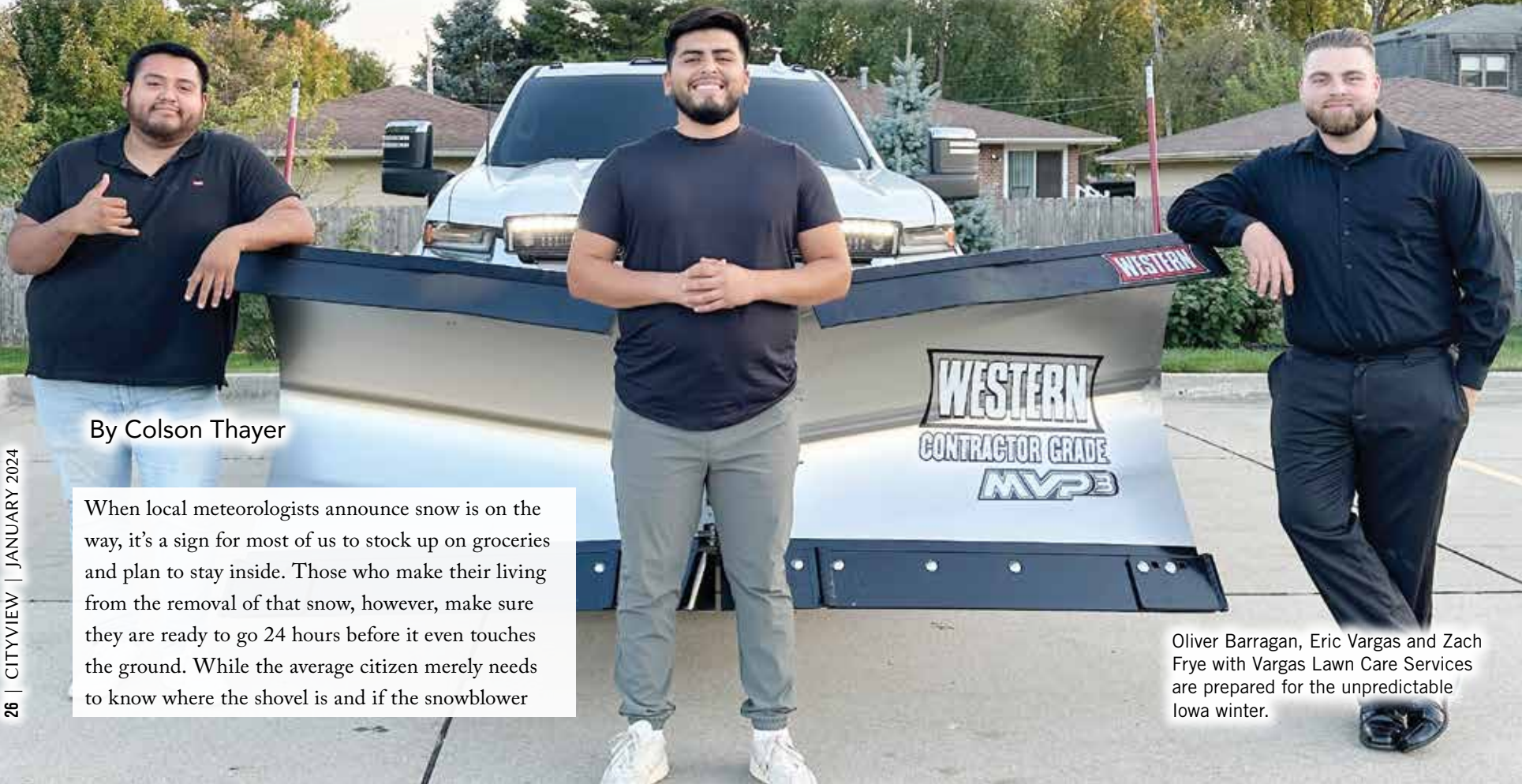
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BUSINESS JOURNAL



The business of SNOW REMOVAL

From the smallest to largest operations, it's all about meeting clients' needs.



By Colson Thayer

When local meteorologists announce snow is on the way, it's a sign for most of us to stock up on groceries and plan to stay inside. Those who make their living from the removal of that snow, however, make sure they are ready to go 24 hours before it even touches the ground. While the average citizen merely needs to know where the shovel is and if the snowblower

Oliver Barragan, Eric Vargas and Zach Frye with Vargas Lawn Care Services are prepared for the unpredictable Iowa winter.

FEATURE

has gas, the business and logistics of snow removal can be quite complex. In addition, unpredictable climate conditions year to year make it difficult to accurately forecast the demand for services each season. But, at the end of the day, residential and commercial property owners alike need the snow gone. To accomplish that, central Iowans have a multitude of options from small teams to large companies, from seasonal contracts to hourly rates, from 2-inch triggers to zero tolerance, and from salt to no salt, among other options.

Small but mighty

Eric Vargas started Vargas Lawn Care Services in September 2021. He had worked in the industry for a few years before launching his own venture. His team is small but mighty, made up of just him and two other guys. He would like to add a couple more people in the future, but he believes the smaller the team, the more of a personal connection he can establish with his clients.

The equipment the team uses is “upgraded to the max,” Vargas said.

“Since I live at home right now, I’m trying to take advantage of that,” he said. “If I’m not paying mortgage or rent, I’m saving thousands of dollars, so I might as well take advantage and put it all into the business.”

For now, Vargas Lawn Care Services primarily provides residential services. He estimated 5% of his total business comes from snow removal.

“Since I’m small, I’m not trying to grow super-fast,” he explained. “Would you rather be big, or would you rather be profitable?”

Keeping the snow removal side of his business manageable is key to success. Vargas is based out of Urbandale and tries to keep his route near his home. He reasoned that he could work in Altoona, but the 25 minutes spent getting out there could be better used on properties close by.

For pricing, Vargas wanted to try a seasonal contract. This would have offered his employees and his business more financial security. Due to unpredictable snowfall, customers were not latching on like he wanted them to. Instead, Vargas charges per service: 0-2 inches is \$65, 2-4 inches is \$70, 4-6 is \$75 and so on.

At the end of the day, Vargas Lawn Care Services does not do snow removal because it is super profitable. Instead, he does it as a service to his customers. He says it is essential to maintain the relationships he has with his mowing customers.

“Usually 75-80% of our mowing clients transition to snow removal,” he said. “For me, snow removal is more of a responsibility. If you wake up in the morning and the snow is not clear out of your driveway, you’re mad. I want to make sure they know that we’ll take care of them.”



Escape Landscaping LLC has equipment ready to deal with snow removal when the need arises.

Responding to customer needs

Moe Ghnem started his lawn care business, now Mo’s Lawn Care & Snow Removal Services LLC, in 2017, without snow removal. He added that service because of the needs of his commercial clients.

“Some of the business contracts, they want someone to do it all,” he said. “They want lawn care and snow removal. To get a good contract, to work with good companies, you have to do both.”

Snow removal makes up 40% of Ghnem’s business on a good year; 25% on a weak year.

Many of Ghnem’s clients who need both services are medium to large companies, senior living facilities, hotels and truck stops with large parking lots. The businesses have a variety of different needs in terms of getting rid of their snow on time. Clients who open late at night do not mind being on the bottom of the list, that way they are only serviced once. Some only want services after the snow has stopped. Others have 1- and 2-inch triggers. This means they are cleared after every 1 or 2 inches of snow. These are typically clients who need 24/7 access to their parking lot, like hotels and senior living facilities.

“Those are better clients for us because they keep us busy all night long,” Ghnem explained. “It’s more pay. But the clients that want you to come when it’s done put you in relax mode.”

Ghnem’s snow removal costs vary per lot. He determines a flat rate to clear a lot per a certain number of inches. For example, he might do a lot for \$400 for up to 5 inches. A couple of additional inches may be an upcharge. During a blizzard, a site that requires multiple services will be charged for each time visited.

For Ghnem, the biggest difference between lawn care and snow removal is the price of equipment. When he entered the industry, he was shocked to find out the thousands of dollars he would have to spend to purchase snow removal equipment.

Zero tolerance: A clear path

Escape Landscaping LLC provides snow removal services for seven commercial accounts. Most of them are zero-tolerance, which includes shoveling and salting sidewalks and removing all the snow from the parking lot and salting the lot throughout snowfall.

Their biggest client, the Lutheran Church of Hope, hires Escape Landscaping to service their campuses in West Des Moines, Waukee, Grimes and downtown. Because the church has people coming and going most of the time, they are a zero-tolerance client. The church is charged hourly for services provided by Escape. The rest of their clients are charged per service or per salt application.

Escape Landscaping's part-owner Carter Bothwell estimated that snow removal makes up 10% of the company's business.

"It's not that big of a number, but we have all the trucks and equipment to do it," Bothwell said. "Depends on how much it snows that year, but it's something to supplement us through the winter."

They also began offering another service to supplement throughout the slow months: holiday light installation. The company began installing lights in October and will take them down once it warms up after the holidays.

Contracting the work

Earth Development offers commercial snow removal and landscaping services across the Midwest, including Des Moines and central Iowa. Contrary to many other snow removal businesses in Des Moines, Earth Development contracts out the work to local service providers. Earth Development handles the logistics and administrative work behind the services provided.

Why use a large company like Earth Development instead of a local guy? It comes down to the resources at hand, according to Jared Demaray, a regional sales executive with Earth Development.

"We have the ability to pivot and work with our network," he said.

Say the service provider who normally clears a lot for a company has a truck break down. Earth Development can move down its list of providers to ensure quality service is still available.

Companies listed as clients on Earth Development's website include The Home Depot, Mills Fleet Farm, Target and Walmart, among others.

Demaray said there is no shortage of providers willing to do the work in Des Moines. Instead, there is a dynamic between what Demaray considers A, B and C tiers. A-tier providers are typically of the highest quality, but also the highest cost. B-tiers are middle-of-the-road and middle-income. And C-tiers can provide the same quality but have a harder time responding promptly.

Getting to work for Earth Development as an A-tier provider requires evidence of industry best practices. Demaray pointed to the Snow & Ice



To supplement their winter business, since snow removal can be hit and miss, Escape Landscaping has begun offering holiday light installation and removal. Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

Management Association as the current industry standard. The group came together to create guidance for snow businesses.

"Just go downtown and just look and watch... there'll be 13 plow trucks in a five-mile box, and the difference of how they remove snow and where they put the snow is wild," said Demaray.

"Companies that like to work with ours, they work in rhythm. They execute work. They do good work. They report," Demaray explained. "We're able to, real-time, see if somebody's there. Or, when they get done with work, we're able to look at pictures and see the completion of the work done."

The other providers often went into the business to be an entrepreneur — to work for themselves, according to Demaray. Those are the ones he said are frustrated with supervision.

As a sales executive, Demaray's work is typically the counter-opposite of the weather. He sees most snow removal agreements made in the summer months. In December, he places a palm tree on his desk to mark the return of lawn care preparation.

Demaray estimated 65% of Earth Development's business comes from snow removal. He said the company started with snow and evolved to meet customer needs in lawn care.

Anyone can pick up a shovel and call themselves a snow removal professional. However, success in the industry depends on organizational and administrative capabilities, the ability to service client needs, and maintaining positive client relationships. Whether or not it becomes a substantial or worthwhile part of a business depends on the equipment available and other income that can sustain the business when, much like this year, there is no snow to remove. ■



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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM OCT. 24, 2023, TO NOV. 17, 2023

**8800 NORTHPARK DRIVE,
URBANDALE**
SALE DATE: 2023-10-25
SALE PRICE: \$8,250,000
SELLER: URBANDALE INVESTORS
LLC
BUYER: RH URBANDALE LLC
ACRES: 3.196
SQUARE FEET: 65,765

1640 HULL AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-10-25
SALE PRICE: \$7,200,000
SELLER: DES MOINES LEASED
HOUSING ASSOCIATES IX LP
BUYER: 1646 HULL LLC
ACRES: 10.100
SQUARE FEET: 115,835

1925 W. FIRST ST., ANKENY
SALE DATE: 2023-10-26
SALE PRICE: \$1,025,000
SELLER: COLONIAL DEVELOPERS
2 LLC
BUYER: PROVISIONS PROPERTIES
II LLC
ACRES: 0.930
SQUARE FEET: 8,704

**2810 BRATTLEBORO AVE.,
DES MOINES**
SALE DATE: 2023-10-26
SALE PRICE: \$290,000
SELLER: SEE, STEVEN
BUYER: TARIMO, GLENS
ACRES: 0.152
SQUARE FEET: 2,484

308 COURT AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-10-27
SALE PRICE: \$3,323,040
SELLER: COURT AVENUE
PARTNERS I LLLP
BUYER: 308 COURT LLC
ACRES: 0.413
SQUARE FEET: 52,869

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2023-10-27
SALE PRICE: \$3,323,040
SELLER: COURT AVENUE
PARTNERS II LLLP
BUYER: 308 COURT LLC
ACRES: 0.772
SQUARE FEET: 50,404

316 COURT AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-10-27
SALE PRICE: \$577,920
SELLER: COURT AVENUE
VENTURES LLP
BUYER: 308 COURT LLC
ACRES: 0.096
SQUARE FEET: 8,465

7975 UNIVERSITY BLVD., CLIVE
SALE DATE: 2023-10-27
SALE PRICE: \$435,000
SELLER: 3SONS ENTERPRISES LLC
BUYER: CITY OF CLIVE
ACRES: 0.456
SQUARE FEET: 3,819



3315 E. 15TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-10-30
SALE PRICE: \$3,065,000
SELLER: GRAND HEIGHTS
APARTMENTS LLC
BUYER: SENGER DES MOINES
INVESTMENTS LLC
ACRES: 2.209
SQUARE FEET: 35,880



3131 EIGHTH ST., S.W. ALTOONA
SALE DATE: 2023-10-30
SALE PRICE: \$1,200,000
SELLER: MCREYNOLDS
ENTERPRISES LTD
BUYER: M.GE CORP
ACRES: 0.862
SQUARE FEET: 4,760

6990 N.E. 14TH ST., ANKENY
SALE DATE: 2023-10-31
SALE PRICE: \$1,525,000
SELLER: K&N HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: CHARLIE TANGO LLC
ACRES: 4.120
SQUARE FEET: 32,056

3432 FOREST AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-10-31
SALE PRICE: \$1,000,000
SELLER: ALLEN, ED
BUYER: TBDN INVESTMENT LLC
ACRES: 0.636
SQUARE FEET: 14,784

**126 CENTER AVE. N.
MITCHELLVILLE**
SALE DATE: 2023-11-02
SALE PRICE: \$30,000
SELLER: HARDY, BILLIE JO
BUYER: MRJ HOLDINGS LLC
ACRES: 0.020
SQUARE FEET: 792

2000 S.E. 37TH ST., GRIMES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-02
SALE PRICE: \$1,350,000
SELLER: 11151-54 LLC
BUYER: A TO Z ASSETS
COMMERCIAL LLC
ACRES: 0.980
SQUARE FEET: 12,240

6705 HICKMAN ROAD, URBANDALE
SALE DATE: 2023-11-02
SALE PRICE: \$250,000
SELLER: EIGHT WAYS LLC
BUYER: WARREN DEXTER LLC
ACRES: 0.325
SQUARE FEET: 1,444

2724 SECOND AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-03
SALE PRICE: \$675,000
SELLER: THE BEST CONSTRUCTION
LLC
BUYER: 2724 2ND AVE LLC
ACRES: 0.490
SQUARE FEET: 12,220



**1170 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR
PARKWAY, DES MOINES**
SALE DATE: 2023-11-03
SALE PRICE: \$245,000
SELLER: BOARDMAN, JEFFREY T
BUYER: SOBER FOX LLC
ACRES: 0.239
SQUARE FEET: 4,140

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1437 11TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-06
SALE PRICE: \$60,000
SELLER: BIRD, RUTH C ESTATE
BUYER: COMMUNITY
IMPROVEMENT GROUP INC
ACRES: 0.142
SQUARE FEET: 3,748

1437 11TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-06
SALE PRICE: \$79,000
SELLER: COMMUNITY
IMPROVEMENT GROUP INC
BUYER: CWF PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.142
SQUARE FEET: 3,748

630 S.W. NINTH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-06
SALE PRICE: \$2,600,000
SELLER: SK INC
BUYER: BROADWAY PROPERTY LLC
ACRES: 1.113
SQUARE FEET: 4,842



6360 N.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-06
SALE PRICE: \$1,412,500
SELLER: SRM HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: DRH-ARK LLC
ACRES: 2.762
SQUARE FEET: 18,893



1200 12TH ST., WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-08
SALE PRICE: \$2,675,000
SELLER: GUIDEONE MUTUAL
INSURANCE COMPANY
BUYER: UNITED COMMUNITY
SERVICES INC
ACRES: 7.273
SQUARE FEET: 17,345

1707 EUCLID AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-08
SALE PRICE: \$350,000
SELLER: RIVER GRANITE COMPANY
BUYER: LEIVA, BALTAZAR
ACRES: 0.821
SQUARE FEET: 3,416

1020 25TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-13
SALE PRICE: \$290,000
SELLER: TEN 91 LLC
BUYER: TOLAND PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.176
SQUARE FEET: 3,985

1407 S.W. ORDNANCE ROAD, ANKENY
SALE DATE: 2023-11-14
SALE PRICE: \$900,000
SELLER: HAGNER, LISA K
BUYER: GERBER REAL ESTATE INC
ACRES: 1.806
SQUARE FEET: 7,040



4779 N.W. 62ND AVE., JOHNSTON
SALE DATE: 2023-11-14
SALE PRICE: \$1,130,000
SELLER: S&E INVESTMENTS LLC
BUYER: NGUYEN PROPERTY LLC
ACRES: 0.964
SQUARE FEET: 10,560

2413 24TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-14
SALE PRICE: \$560,000
SELLER: JMAE LLC
BUYER: 2413 24TH ST LLC
ACRES: 0.919
SQUARE FEET: 10,560

1414 ARMY POST ROAD, DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2023-11-17
SALE PRICE: \$108,000
SELLER: GIT-N-GO CONVENIENCE
STORES INC
BUYER: BMC5 LLC
ACRES: 0.383
SQUARE FEET: 988 ■

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Paha Cider, LLC	WAVERLY	BREMER	01	\$30,000	0	2	2	NEW	Wineries
TODAY’S DENTAL, P.C.	CLINTON	CLINTON	02	\$256,000	0	9	9	EXISTING	Offices of Dentists
85 West, LLC	Waukee	DALLAS	03	\$994,600	30	5	5	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
K Belken, LLC	Waukee	DALLAS	03	\$810,000	6	4	4	EXISTING	Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners
4Ever Young Anti-Aging Solutions Des Moines	Waukee	DALLAS	03	\$450,000	9	1	1	NEW	Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners
S & B Corporation LLC	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$422,000	18	2	2	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
Golden Outdoors, LLC	Panora	GUTHRIE	03	\$109,700	0	1	1	EXISTING	N/A
Golden Outdoors, LLC	Panora	GUTHRIE	03	\$72,600	6	6	6	EXISTING	N/A
FitTech Solutions, LLC	NEWTON	JASPER	02	\$150,000	3	3	1	NEW	Other Personal and Household Goods Repair and Maintenance
LITTLE VILLAGE, LLC	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	02	\$50,000	0	18	18	EXISTING	Television Broadcasting
Cypress Holdings, LLC	Cedar Rapids	LINN	01	\$630,000	20	8	8	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
Ann Brown Legal, PC	CEDAR RAPIDS	LINN	01	\$150,000	1	1	3	EXISTING	Offices of Lawyers
HiRail Inc.	LISBON	LINN	01	\$3,835,000	5	17	17	NEW	All Other Rubber Product Manufacturing
HiRail Inc.	LISBON	LINN	01	\$525,000	5	17	17	NEW	All Other Rubber Product Manufacturing
KarlAnn, LLC	Waterloo	LINN	01	\$200,000	3	10	10	NEW	N/A
Ruiter Properties, LLC	Pella	MARION	02	\$465,000	5	0	8	EXISTING	N/A
Rockwell Livestock LLC	Mitchell	MITCHELL	01	\$110,000	1	1	1	NEW	Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local
Holmen Group, Inc.	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$474,000	4	0	1	NEW	Painting and Wall Covering Contractors
Lotus Skincare Studio LLC	Ankeny	POLK	03	\$125,000	4	2	2	NEW	Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners
Holmen Group, Inc.	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$50,000	4	0	1	NEW	Painting and Wall Covering Contractors
Xlr8 Performance Lab, LLC	Ankeny	POLK	03	\$43,000	0	1	1	EXISTING	Sports and Recreation Instruction
XLR8 Performance Lab, LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$35,000	0	1	1	EXISTING	Sports and Recreation Instruction
Lift Iowa, LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$173,500	0	2	2	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
Collision Solutions Truck Repair, LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$166,200	0	9	9	EXISTING	Automotive Body, Paint, and Interior Repair and Maintenance
Ladd Concession Group LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$40,000	5	21	21	NEW	Food Service Contractors
Ladd Concession Group LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$15,000	5	0	21	NEW	Food Service Contractors
CMS Marketing LLC dba FuseBox One	Urbandale	POLK	03	\$350,000	2	2	13	EXISTING	Private Mail Centers
LOVELESS CONSTRUCTION LLC	URBANDALE	POLK	03	\$50,000	1	1	2	NEW	Residential Remodelers
Legacy Partners LLC	West Des Moines	POLK	03	\$2,906,000	42	0	3	EXISTING	Child Day Care Services
Harmony Salon, LLC	Windsor Heights	POLK	03	\$195,500	0	1	1	EXISTING	Beauty Salons
AVANZANDO ENTERPRISES LLC	COUNCIL BLUFFS	POTTAWATTAMIE	03	\$40,000	12	12	1	EXISTING	Marketing Consulting Services
NALLY’S KITCHEN, INC.	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	02	\$50,000	0	9	9	EXISTING	Limited-Service Restaurants
PRETTY NAILS	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	02	\$30,000	0	0	3	EXISTING	Nail Salons
LidTka Ventures LLC	Ottumwa	WAPELLO	02	\$173,900	8	2	2	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
Scully Services, LLC	Burnside	WEBSTER	04	\$245,000	3	1	1	NEW	Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment (except Automotive)

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Once you announce your plans to get married, there's a good chance that people close to you will be ready and willing to dispense their share of advice. Some words of wisdom will be priceless, while others you can store away for another day.

When polling married couples, you will likely find they would change "this" or "that" about their weddings if given the chance to do it all over again. Here is some advice that you may help for your wedding day.



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How to make your *proposal perfect*

You've picked the perfect ring. You've practiced the words you'll use when you propose. But you know she would be livid if you asked her on the big screen at a sporting event.

Making an engagement truly memorable will win you points for a lifetime with each retelling of your engagement story. Here are some great ways to make your engagement be one of a kind.

Take it personally.

You are proposing to the woman or man of your dreams — the one person you've chosen to spend the rest of your life with, the person who is the perfectly unique match to yourself. So make the proposal just as personalized and special as that person. Yes, you may have chosen the perfect ring, but presentation is equally important.

Choose something that will not only stun your betrothed, but also be something he or she can keep for years. Ditch the typical velvet box and go for a personalized, engraved keepsake box from Things Remembered. With dozens of box options, you can perfectly match the style of your new fiancée,

from classic and elegant to contemporary chic.

Then take it one step further, and engrave something meaningful to commemorate this day. Your names, the date you were engaged or a personal love saying (that maybe only the two of you understand) are ideal inscriptions.

Make it a party.

Yes, the holiday season is filled with parties, but a personal engagement party is something that you and your families will remember forever. Whether you choose a private, intimate locale to pop the question or a bustling public setting, convene family and friends during or afterward to celebrate together. Plan a special party to commemorate this momentous, life-changing occasion.

Don't forget, a great party doesn't necessarily mean great expense. Gathering at home with champagne, maybe a cheese plate and a homemade music playlist can make for one of the most memorable occasions of your life. Just be sure your future spouse is the center of attention, and you'll be set to make the event unforgettable.

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Capture the moment.

Nearly all couples choose to hire photographers and videographers to capture the memories of their wedding day. But isn't the engagement just as momentous? As your heart begins to race when your knee bends toward the ground, the last thing on your mind will be your camera. But being able to actually look back at this moment will be something you'll treasure for years to come.

The holidays are busy for everyone, so if you plan on hiring a professional photographer, make sure to call at least a few weeks in advance. Luckily, unlike your wedding day, you'll probably only need the photographer for an hour or so. If you're already on a shoestring budget, see if a photography enthusiast friend will take photos for you. They may not end up in The Louvre, but with a decent camera, you'll be sure to have some great snapshots of the big moment.

When it's all said and done, you and your new fiance may not remember every tiny detail. But using these simple tips will ensure your engagement day is a truly unique, memorable experience for you both. ■





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Put more you into your wedding day

(Family Features) A wedding day is filled with symbolic tradition, from varied religious customs to the never-ending circle reflected in the rings and the types of flowers accentuating the celebration. Even with all the traditional rituals to consider, nearly every bride and groom can find ways to give their special day some unique touches that reflect their personality and love.

Music sets the mood for every wedding, and it's an easy place to put your own spin on the celebration. Whether you forgo the traditional bridal march entirely or simply look for an arrangement that gives an updated twist to the classic version, let guests know this isn't your average wedding by setting the festivities against a soundtrack that lets your true character shine.

The wedding party is intended to be a collection of those nearest and dearest to the bride and groom, who help ensure the day goes off without a hitch and who lead fellow revelers in celebrating the start of the new couple's life together. That being said, there's no reason this group must be limited to women on her side and guys on his, or even that it's limited to humans — a beloved pooch can make for an adorable ring-bearer, after all.

Photography is an essential element of your big day, but think beyond the images you'll capture throughout the wedding and reception. Photos lend a personal touch, no matter what your color scheme or theme. Integrate photos of the two of you at various stages of life, together as a couple and

with loved ones (perhaps even some you're honoring in memoriam). You can display these at a table with the guest book, as part of the table centerpieces, or even on the gift table. Or take things digital and load all your images into a slide show set to music.

Make favors meaningful. Forgo more common items like bubbles and chocolate, and instead send a little of yourself home with your guests. Maybe it's a memento from a place with special meaning to you both, or a bottle opener shaped like a bicycle to represent the way you met. Just think about the moments and things that define you as a couple and do some searching online. You'll probably be surprised by how quickly the options pile up.

Serve up a menu that shows guests more about your life together. Your loved ones can order basic beef or chicken anywhere. Instead, give them a glimpse into you. Make your main course the same food you enjoyed on your first date or during another monumental moment in your courtship. Or plan the entire menu around a region that you hold close to your heart.

Weddings are filled with traditions, but that doesn't mean you can't put your own touches on the day for a special event filled with memories that are uniquely your own. Find more advice for life's special moments at elivingtoday.com.

Source: eLivingToday.com ■

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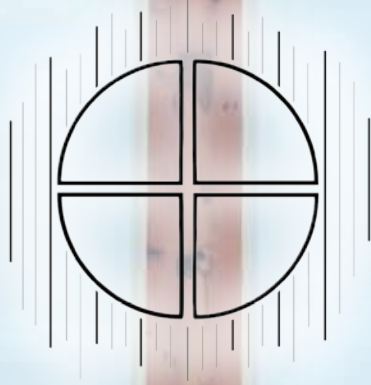
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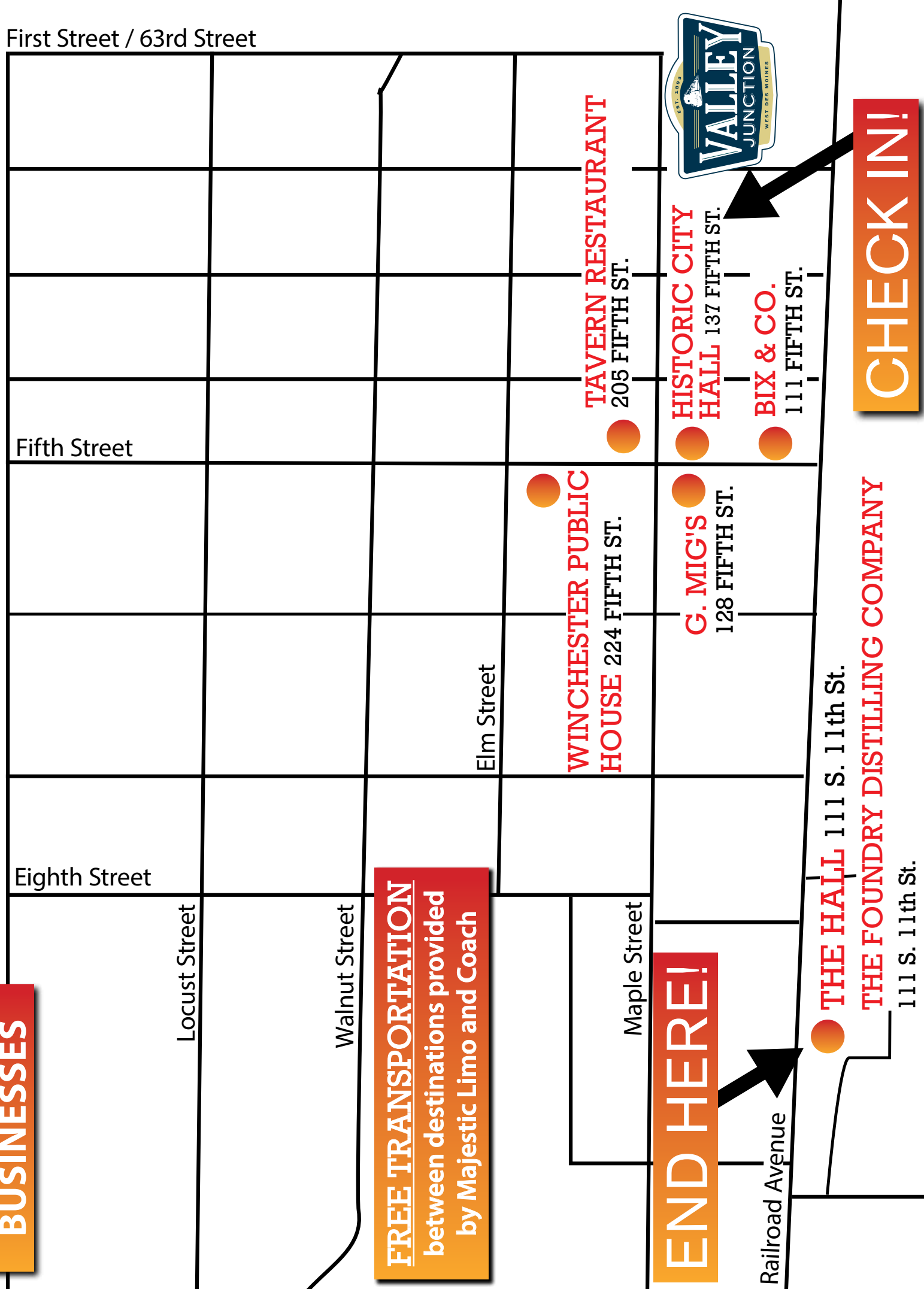


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Kim Perez at Trellis

Over soup and salad, I visited with the first leader of Des Moines Botanical Garden who did not come from a horticultural background.

EAT & DRINK

Kim Perez is the new president and CEO of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. We asked her to lunch, and she chose Trellis, the restaurant under the Garden's dome.

Since we both prefer soups and salads during the winter months, we were in the right place. No one does either specialty better than Lisa LaValle and her kitchen.

Perez is the first leader of the gardens, formerly called the Des Moines Botanical Center (DMBC), who did not come from a horticultural background. What's up with that?

"For the first time, the board looked at candidates from both horticultural and nonprofit backgrounds. The Gardens have become a nonprofit (entity) since the last time they looked for a director. That means that fundraising and making personal connections with the Gardens have taken on new meaning."

Do you actually enjoy fundraising? I know lots of people in nonprofits who call it the worst part of their job.

"I love it, and it's essential."

What is her background?

"I am totally an Iowa girl. I grew up in the Quad Cities and graduated from Bettendorf High School and the University of Iowa. After that, I worked for a foster care program in Chicago and discovered what I didn't want to do with my life. So, I got a master's in social work thinking family therapy would be a good fit for me.

"I was vice president for a child and family services company in Chicago focusing on leadership program development and fundraising strategies. I am a career nonprofit person. I became CEO of The Cradle in Evanston before I applied for this job."

What is at the core of her position?

"Connecting people with the DMBG mission."

What is the mission?

"Explore, Explain and Celebrate the World of Plants. To that end, we really push our winter programs. Winter is our busiest season, in no small part because the dome provides quite a respite from the cold outside. We have a lot of winter learning programs. The idea is to inspire people who plan to plant home gardens come spring."

There are lots of cool programs. Being a food guy,

I am excited about "All About Apples" (Jan. 20) and "Mushroom Foraging" (Jan. 27).

"We also had classes in December on winter floral arrangements, holiday door swag, winter botany for birds, candle making, botanical crafts and cocoa, air plant ornaments, and wreath making. Our botanical trivia nights and Yoga in the Gardens are popular, too. The Dome After Dark is such a contrasting experience. It's like being inside a snow globe."

Why and how did the organization change to nonprofit status?

Originally, the DMBC was limited to what is under the dome. It was managed by Des Moines Parks and Recreation. But keeping the place at 80 degrees in the winter and 70 in the summer, as extremes, meant more technical managers were needed than what Parks and Rec. could handle. So, Des Moines Water Works took over. They had the technical acumen to manage the mechanical systems.

"A group of four extraordinary local leaders — Janice Ruan, Fred Weitz, Tom Urban and Buzz Lynn — had the imagination to envision much more than the domed greenhouse. They personally raised money and went to the city with a plan to close Robert Ray Drive and incorporate that land into a new vision that includes multiple gardens over 16 acres of adjoining space."

Sixteen acres?

"Yes. That surprises a lot of people because it was just a domed greenhouse for so many decades. DMBG opened with 7 acres of gardens including the Robert Ray Asian Garden that we took over and opened in November 2021. There are 12 developed acres now, including nearly four acres of free public access gardens. There are 18 unique garden spaces that make up today's botanical gardens. We have 5 more acres for expansion."

How many different species of plants are here?

"Nearly 3,500 unique plant species and cultivars are grown and nurtured by our team of staff and volunteers. Nearly 6,000 accessions, meaning single plants or groups of plants, make up the inventory of plants that are grown here.

"Today our property line goes all the way to the University Avenue bridge. The Hiller Family Rain Garden is open now. It showcases native Iowa plants

that thrive in soggy conditions. The two acres to the north of the dome compose a native Iowa area inspired by the Loess Hills. We also have a major play area for children with giant logs, stumps and willow tunnels."

Has the DMBG recovered from the pandemic?

"We are the busiest we have ever been. Last year we welcomed 148,852 total guests, including visitors from all 50 states. That is the most in our history. One-hundred-seventy-four weddings were held here last year. Four-hundred-twenty-six volunteers worked 17,653 hours in a vast variety of roles."

The DMBG is installing a geo-thermal heating and cooling system. That seems so germane that I wonder why it wasn't originally done.

"I can only speculate, but geo thermal was not all that tried and true in 1977 when ground was first broken."

My daughter installed geo-thermal when she built a house on Lake Superior. She said it paid for itself, in savings, in 10 years. Is that feasible here?

"We hope so. It costs five and a half million to install."

Do visitors have to be members?

"No, but members get discounts on most programs. We intend to be accessible to all from novice to expert gardeners. The Robert Ray Japanese Garden is free. So is the Wells Fargo Rose Garden."

What stands out about DMBG compared to other botanical centers?

"I don't know of another botanical garden that is downtown. That surprises my family and friends from Chicago. Big cities have them but not downtown. That gives us a special opportunity to be part of an amazing neighborhood. With the John Pat Dorian Trail, the Lauridsen Skate Park, and the tamed river activities, we are connected to a fantastic part of Des Moines." ■



Kathmandu

The food is very different than what I remember in Nepal; it's much better.



A plate of momos

Going to college in Hyderabad in the 1960s, there were many magical names calling my inner traveler — Ceylon, Burma, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Kerala, Puri. The most enticing of all was Nepal. I visited twice and figured I would never again taste some of its marvelous foods again, unless I returned.

Funny how things change. All but the last two of the places mentioned have new names now, and Hyderabad is in a newly created state that has become one of the wealthiest, bustling, high-tech cities in the world. The Hyderabad I recalled was unrecognizable when I visited again 35 years later.

Most happily of all, the best of the South Asian subcontinent has come to Des Moines. Cinemas here show more than one Telugu language movie a week. That's the language of Hyderabad, though some say it's really English now. A friend told me that there are more than 500 Telugu speakers in Polk County now. Several restaurants feature Hyderabad cuisine, the most sophisticated of India's myriad styles.

And we have Nepalese restaurants. Kathmandu now sits in Apple Valley, in front of the two stores where more different languages are spoken than anywhere else in town — Walmart and Sam's Club. The food is very different than what I remember in Nepal; it's much better.

Just as Nepal is a landlocked island buffering India and China, its cuisine incorporates dishes of both. It also has access to the bounty of American farming and ranching, which is why it's so good.

South Asian buffets are becoming harder to find. Amaravati and Namaste are gone, and suburban Indian restaurants don't do buffets. In Des Moines, there is India Star on weekdays and Kathmandu on weekends. (Lzaza has one daily.) These are a fabulous way for initiates to try many things out.

Kathmandu offers eight types of ice cream plus pickles, chutneys, vegetarian and meat dishes plus naan and rice. The restaurant also offers thalis, which are a way to try several dishes when there is no buffet. Thalīs were featured on the History Channel's series about the greatest engineering feats in the world. They somehow serve and deliver millions of customized meals a day and were invented by India



The Kathmandu buffet

Railways.

Best of all, though, is the full menu, which includes Nepal's greatest hits — thukpa (noodle soup), sekuwa (charcoal roasted meats in sauce), momos (dumplings), methi (meats braised with lots of fenugreek leaves), kashi ko mashu (curries), dals (lentils) and pickled things.

There is no water buffalo, which is a good thing in my mind. The two dals are heavenly. If Americans loved South Asian spices as much as Nepalis do, then lentils would be a favorite food here. I love the methi goat, but it's an acquired taste. The momos, probably the one thing that most distinguishes Nepali from India cuisine, differ from Chinese dumplings in condiments and stuffings. Chicken momos have no vegetables — just a paste of minced chicken. They are served with a singular, mildly hot sauce tasting of tomato, chili and garlic.

Pickles of all kinds are the best condiments. Order the mixed pickles dish and the chutneys. They go well with everything. My favorite dish is an Iowa concession — mango corn soup. It's delicious cold or hot.

Indian breads are available except for poori, probably because Nepali food does not fry much. There are seafood dishes, something one hardly ever sees in Nepal. There are also biryanis (Hyderabad's greatest hit), vindaloos associated with South India, rasmalai (a decadent cheesecake and syrup dish with nuts) and full tandoori (clay oven) service.

Kathmandu is not the most accommodating restaurant. I have been refused choices or substitutions on thalis, and a request that an order of momos be half chicken and half vegetarian was refused. ■

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

KATHMANDU

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BELLY UP TO:

TITO'S LOUNGE

Tito's Lounge

Eclectic Mediterranean, American fare

BY JACKIE WILSON

Tito's Vodka was the best selling liquor in Iowa in 2023.

Another Tito's name — Tito's Lounge — might soon be in the “best” category of food and drink in Urbandale.

Tito's Lounge, located at 3916 N.W. Urbandale Drive, opened in November 2021. Owner Haris Zuljevic hails from Bosnia. With service industry experience, he desired a bar-atmosphere establishment, offering restaurant-quality food.

The name Tito's isn't associated with the vodka, nor is it named after a previous Bosnian leader, as some speculate. It's simply a catchy name.

Inside, the L-shaped bar is nearly in the middle of two sections. One area includes the bar and dining room with high top tables and a few regular tables. Unique lighting offers scones with faux-flickering lanterns. A separate section includes video games, more high-tops and an electronic dartboard.

Pictures of a wall-length soccer field and a Hawkeye football field fill two walls. Otherwise, the decor is simple with a few neon bar lights by the entrance. It wasn't noisy, but it was a bustling atmosphere for a Wednesday evening.

Happy hour from 2-6 p.m. is seven days a week. Remember that when you want a weekend happy hour. Take advantage of \$1 off wine, beer and Tito's mules, with select appetizers at half off.

If you've ever searched for a weekend brunch with bottomless mimosas, bloody Marys or screwdrivers, here's your chance to head to Urbandale.

Drinks are plentiful. The full bar serves Tito's vodka, among other spirits. There are about 10

wines and more than three dozen beers, ciders and seltzers. Prices are average for the burbs.

Our server, Sabrina, brought out shots of Rakija — a double-distilled fruit brandy popular in Bosnia. You can also get it in a Balkanita, which is their version of a margarita made with Rakija.

The food menu is eclectic. Owner Zuljevic's goal is to offer a menu with more than typical bar food. Their signature dishes and specials fill the void.

For appetizers, a spread platter consists of grilled flatbread with hummus, Greek izatziki, and ajvar (roasted red pepper and eggplant spread) for \$13. Choose from firecracker shrimp, wings, chili fries and nachos, too.

Flatbread and handhelds are flavorful. But where Tito's shines is their signature Mediterranean dishes. The cevapi offers beef and veal sausages. They might look like Little Sizzlers you buy in the store, but these tasty finds are served with fresh grilled flatbread, onions, sour cream and ajvar for \$14.

The side fries were seasoned and crispy. Tito's signature burger is topped with egg, beef prosciutto, smoked gouda cheese, chipotle mayo on a brioche bun. Or, choose from a gyro, smash burger, black bean chipotle burger, chicken pesto, diablo pasta and a build-your-own pizza starting at \$15. Mmm.

The servers were spot on, quick and friendly, explaining dishes and making suggestions, all while juggling the nearly full bar.

Zuljevic says, “Once people find out about us, they come back. We try to get to know our customers' names. They're more than just a number.” ■



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‘Martyr!’

There’s something special about reading a debut novel. When that author is a beloved poet, however, I get a little worried. Poetry in long form doesn’t always translate well, and sometimes substance gets lost in a whirl of words. I shouldn’t have worried. Akbar has a true gift in whatever form he chooses to display his craft.

Cyrus is an Iranian immigrant to the U.S. who is struggling with that age-old question, how can I make my life matter? Different voices weave through the narrative, some real, some ghostly, some entirely fictional. Themes of the power of being present, of hope, and, of course, love, surround the disparate chapters and tie them together. Often very funny and more profound than it should be, especially when Cyrus is talking to Lisa Simpson.

At first disjointed and seemingly unconnected, this is a rich and sad and powerful story that ties so many threads together with a bow of magical realism and vibrant longing. The poetry Akbar is known for bleeds into the pages. The writing is stellar, but there’s a story here that transcends itself, coalescing around the near universal feeling of being both stuck and untethered at the same. I haven’t been this excited about a new author in a long time. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



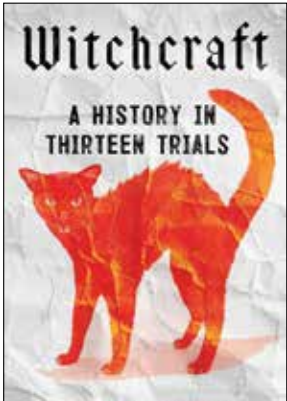
By Kaveh Akbar
1/23/24
352 pages
\$28
Knopf

‘Witchcraft: A History in Thirteen Trials’

I was a little surprised when I picked up this book. I expected a scholarly retelling of the famous witch trials in the U.S. and the U.K. from ages long past. I had no idea there were trials in Norway, specifically to accuse and bully indigenous populations. I had some vague notion of witchcraft in historical African countries, but I had no knowledge of the lengths the colonizing British forces would go to control the populace. I should have known better and am so glad I’ve read this book.

Viewing the history of witchcraft and its political uses through the lens of the legal systems, scholar and expert Marion Gibson tells 13 very different tales of witches all across the globe and what their prosecution, and persecution, says about the times and places they lived. These are engaging, intriguing and often very sad tales that put a misunderstood feature of human history into sharp relief.

The span of time and the implications of “othering” take us right up to modern times and the new ways in which people are ostracized and shunned. This is an important book for scholarship, but equally applicable to our lives now, and the struggles of women and minorities everywhere. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Marion Gibson
1/16/24
320 pages
\$28
Scribner

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Health & Wellness PROFILES

A healthy lifestyles section

Unlocking wellness in 2024

The rise of CBD as a holistic health ally for the New Year

As the new year approaches, many individuals are contemplating resolutions and strategies to enhance their overall well-being. One emerging trend for a healthier 2024 may be the incorporation of CBD, a cannabinoid, into wellness routines. CBD is a compound found in the cannabis plant that has gained popularity for its potential health benefits without the psychoactive effects commonly associated with marijuana.

As we embark on a new year, prioritizing health and well-being is paramount. CBD, with its reported anti-inflammatory and calming properties, can play a pivotal role in achieving these goals. For individuals seeking stress relief or improved sleep, CBD may offer a natural alternative. Research suggests that CBD interacts with the endocannabinoid system, influencing factors such as mood, appetite and sleep.

The start of a new year often brings renewed commitments to physical fitness. Whether you're a seasoned athlete or someone looking to incorporate more movement into your routine, CBD may aid in recovery and muscle relaxation. Its anti-inflammatory properties may help alleviate exercise-induced soreness, allowing for a quicker return to physical activities.

Moreover, the potential benefits of CBD extend beyond physical health. Many individuals are exploring its role in managing stress and anxiety, common challenges that can affect overall well-being. As we navigate the uncertainties of the future, incorporating CBD into self-care routines might provide a natural and holistic approach to mental health.

With products available with or without THC, there are options for everyone. The journey into modern wellness can feel personal. CBD may become a valuable ally in your pursuit of a healthier and more balanced life in the coming year.

Cheers to 2024, and let the healing begin. ■

Information provided by Lacie Navin, Your CBD Store, owner of locations at 125 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-279-0150; 833 E. First St., #101 Ankeny, 515-964-9862; and 264 Hickman Road, Waukee, 515-669-5438.



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Using CBD for New Year's resolutions

Sticking to a New Year's resolution can be difficult. In fact, a recent survey found that while 60% of people make New Year's resolutions, only 8% of them successfully meet their goals. Here's how CBD can help you to keep some of the most common New Year's resolutions.

Resolution: exercise more and lose weight

Burning fat and losing weight are some of the most common resolutions. They can also be some of the most demanding and hardest to keep. CBD can work to fight off inflammation and may even be able to alleviate certain kinds of pain, removing any physical barriers standing between you and your fitness goals. These effects may also make it beneficial for digestive issues, such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and leaky gut. Many athletes rely on CBD to help them recover more quickly and get back to training. Don't let inflammation or pain stand between you and your New Year's fitness and wellness resolutions.

Resolution: quit smoking and drink less

Resisting familiar temptations can take an incredible amount of willpower and motivation, especially if some degree of addiction is involved. Luckily, CBD has shown potential in the treatment of addictions

and the elimination of cravings. It is thought that CBD may work to temporarily rewire the brain's reward circuit to minimize cravings. Additionally, CBD's well-documented anti-anxiety effects can help people relax, giving them fewer reasons to turn to these substances in the first place.

Resolution: read more or learn a new skill

Often, staying focused or concentrated on new things can be difficult, especially if they are mentally demanding. CBD's calming and relaxing effects may help some people achieve greater focus and concentration. If you often find your mind wandering during mental tasks, CBD may be able to calm your racing thoughts and soothe your troubled mind.

Resolution: live life to the fullest

If you're living with anxiety, pain, or other problems, it can be hard to really appreciate life as you should. CBD has been found to work with the body's inner endocannabinoid system (ECS) to try to keep the body in balance (homeostasis). The ECS is believed to influence numerous basic functions including sleep, appetite, mood, pain and more. CBD's interactions with the ECS may explain its therapeutic potential, which so many people swear by.

Resolution: travel more

Looking to travel to more places and experience more things this year? Don't forget your CBD. From topicals and edibles to tinctures and capsules, CBD comes in a variety of convenient forms that are easy to carry and administer. If you're traveling within the U.S., don't hesitate to pack your trusty CBD in your checked luggage. If you're traveling internationally, check ahead to make sure that CBD is legal in the jurisdiction that you are traveling to.

Resolution: get organized

CBD's relaxing and centering effects can help to keep you cool, calm and collected all year long. If you are seeking to get a better handle on your personal and professional life, then CBD may be a good starting point. CBD can keep you on track by helping you to better manage any stress, pain or anxiety that may come your way. ■

Information provided by HW CBD, 1821 22nd St., Suite 102, West Des Moines, 515-223-2370, www.hwcbdiowa.com. These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, mitigate or prevent any disease.

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What is floatation therapy?

Sensory deprivation tanks, also known as isolation tanks or float tanks, are designed to provide an environment of minimal sensory input. Users float in a tank filled with 10 inches of skin-temperature water and 900 pounds of Epsom salt, which makes floating effortless. Earplugs are worn, and the interior light can be turned off, resulting in a space of pure, quiet darkness. In short, the float tank is the most stress-free environment on earth.

Although float tanks are new to the mainstream, they've been around since the 1950s. Originally neuroscientists used the tanks to test the effects of restricted stimulation on things like creativity, brainwave activity and concentration.

Research published in the "Journal of Complementary & Behavioral Medicine" suggests that sensory deprivation works by reducing the body's stress response, inducing deep relaxation, and quieting mental chatter. Additional research shows that floatation therapy is an effective, noninvasive method for treating stress-related illness and pain. There are numerous research-backed benefits, and we have a database

of more than 200 studies on our website.

Potential benefits associated with sensory deprivation tanks include:

- **Relaxation and stress reduction:** The weightlessness and the absence of external stimuli promotes deep relaxation, which reduces stress and anxiety. Users experience an immediate improvement in circulation, in addition to lowered blood pressure.
- **Pain relief:** Floating in the buoyant Epsom salt solution reduces pressure on joints, muscles and internal organs. This leads to reduced tension and alleviation of pain.
- **Improved sleep:** Regular use of sensory deprivation tanks contributes to improved sleep quality. The relaxation experienced during a float session has a positive impact on sleep patterns.
- **Enhanced creativity and problem-solving:** Some users report increased creativity and problem-solving abilities after using sensory deprivation tanks. The meditative state induced by floating helps clear the mind and facilitates creative thinking.

• **Mental clarity and focus:** Floating promotes mental clarity and enhances focus by allowing individuals to disconnect from external distractions and enter a state of deep relaxation.

• **Mindfulness and meditation:** Floating provides a unique environment for mindfulness and meditation. The lack of external stimuli allows individuals to focus inward, facilitating meditative states.

• **Recovery for athletes:** Athletes use sensory deprivation tanks as part of their recovery routine to promote muscle relaxation, reduce inflammation, and accelerate recovery from intense training sessions.

These benefits are possible without any side effects. All you do is enter the tank, float, and rest for 60 to 90 minutes. ■

Information provided by Fadeaway Floatation Center, who has been providing floatation therapy and infrared sauna sessions since 2015. Located in the Jordan Creek area of West Des Moines, 6150 Village View Drive, Suite 104, West Des Moines, 50266.



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Hospitals and meadowlarks

How we define our identity as Iowans,
and how our designs define us.

By Jim Duncan

“Iowa is a special place that has crafted itself to claim a big part of the future but, at the same time, never sacrificed those values of person and community upon which a successful society must rest.” — Hugh Sidey

Our quadrennial chance to shine uniquely

Every four years, the national media come to gaze upon Iowa and Iowans. They never learn much. The coastal elitists still perceive us as hayseeds happily trapped in the flat, boring plains of fly-over country. And we let them.

Bill Bryson, who grew up south of Grand in Des Moines, became rich and famous pandering to that stereotype while developing a heavy English accent. In his early works, he mocked the hayseed, writing that Iowans needed to stick a finger in their ears and twist it while answering a question. And that Iowans flocked to malls on weekends to gleefully ride the escalators up and down. One of his breakout stories was called “Fat Girls in Des Moines.”

When basketball superstar Wanda Ford, who led the nation in scoring and rebounding at Drake, first landed here, we asked the Cleveland native why she chose Drake.

“I wanted to see the buffalo roam,” she answered.

A decade later, I wrote about buffalo ranching in Iowa, which had been reintroduced.

Sadly, most of the buffalo, like most of Iowa’s cattle, have moved west of the Missouri for cheaper grazing land.

It’s a temptation to play oneself off to the stereotypes. After revealing that I came from Iowa while traveling, I would tell people who asked my occupation that I was “a hayseed farmer.” No one ever doubted me. Companies as international and sophisticated as Meredith have hauled in bales of hay for political events, often square dances, in caucus season.

We flock to the state fair and behave like the stereotypes, feasting on corn dogs, pork chops on sticks and funnel cakes, dressed like cowboys and cowgirls while viewing giant pumpkins, fatted cows, nursing sows, and “husband-calling” contests. Overalls are our preferred attire while following our sports teams, even to out-of-state venues.

Even our illegal drug dealers embrace the hayseed, mainly because anhydrous ammonia is essential to manufacturing meth and is easily stolen from farms. Meth’s telltale aromas, and explosions, are best disguised in rural areas.

Iowa’s glorious and renewable productivity was fashioned by the hands of God, but it was discovered by human imagination. The signal moment in the state’s destiny was wrought in courage. Before European settlers, Iowans lived in the forests that protected them from the terror of grasses taller than covered wagons and inflammable as visions of hell.

Livelihoods were meager in the woods, so brave souls ventured into the prairie grasses, cut them, cleared them and plowed them over for planting seeds of more valuable grains. What quickly emerged was a garden of Eden between mighty rivers — the most fertile and valuable farm land in the world.

Iowa’s State Curator Leo Landis sums up the big picture.

“Iowans, or people living in what is now known as Iowa, have been blessed by geography that has made the state an enticing home to humans for more than 10,000 years. Native people established thriving cultures based on native plants, animals, and agriculture. Even before statehood, people with European and African ancestry sought opportunity here.

“Iowa has long promised people a better life through farming, and in towns and cities. Iowa’s relatively cheap and fertile land, with adequate rainfall in the growing season for wheat and maize as well as garden crops, meant access to affordable food.”



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Revenge of the hayseeds

The brighter side of the hayseed image is that Iowa farmers produce the envy of the world. Hugh Sidey, a Greenfield native who penned a column in Time for 40 years, wrote about John F. Kennedy’s 1960 campaign to be president. After being asked if he liked coming home to Iowa, Sidey said, “Sure, it’s home. You have to understand the prairie.”

Kennedy reflected and replied, “My life is beaches and oceans, but I always remember something Robert Frost said: ‘It’s a shame to grow crops and run them through animals for food.’ Because that black soil looks good enough to eat.”

In 1961, after a meeting with Soviet boss Nikita Khrushchev, Sidey wrote about JFK’s evaluation of the Communist chief.

“Your damned Iowans seem to be about the only people he respects. Nothing seems to bother him except the fear he can’t feed his people. If he ever invaded the U.S., I think he would head straight to Iowa.”

Sidey also wrote about Soviet premieres Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev taking sudden interest in him after being told that he was from Iowa.

“I know Iowa. I respect and admire what they do,” said Gorbachev who had been Soviet agriculture director earlier in his career.

We still raise crops mainly to feed animals and eat the resulting food. Iowa has been a top two state in corn, egg and hog production for most of two decades. A hundred years ago, we were a national leader in cattle, grapes, apples, peas and squash — crops we don’t feed to animals, or to cars and tractors. We gave that all up after WWII when it became more profitable to plow orchards and gardens and vineyards over to plant soy and corn.

The cattle moved west for cheaper grazing. The chickens and the pigs were moved indoors to industrial plants of filth and cruelty.

History’s designs on Iowa

Iowa is home to more prime farmland than any place on Earth, one-fourth of all of America’s. The state was carved out twist the nation’s two mightiest rivers and had incredible fertility dumped upon it by glaciers of the last Ice Age. Early farmers marveled that they had found a place where they cleared out more birds’ nests than stones in fields.

The fecundity of that happy accident is not shared statewide. Journalists and politicians who do not perform “the full Grassley” of visiting all 99 counties dismiss us a monotonous stereotype. In reality, the glaciers were kindest to northern Iowa and least kind to southern Iowa.

In the late 1960s, Wiley Maine, who was born in Sanborn and educated at Harvard, proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives that Iowa cede its southern tier of counties to Missouri, “for the purpose of raising the collective IQs of both states.”

The north of Iowa remains more fertile and wealthier than the south, but the whole state has changed utterly since then. In fact, a vast majority of counties peaked in population more than 100 years ago. Modernists argue every year that the 99 counties system is obsolete. It was designed 170 years ago with the purpose of allowing everyone in the state to visit the seat of local government in a one-day ride by horse or buggy. Every year, the modernists are shot down.

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When the late Chick Herbert designed the Des Moines Civic Center, he told us its single bowl was a reflection of “Iowa’s strong sense of democracy. No one wants to feel like they are in ‘the cheap seats.’ And few Iowans want to feel elitist either.” Humility is also a part of the state identity.

Herbert’s marvelous auditorium, which almost always ranks first or second in the world in percentage of capacity bookings for an arena its size, also has no aisles dividing seating sections. Just a huge number of doors for remarkably quick exits.

If we are what we eat, what exactly are we?

Food has been Iowa’s big thing since before statehood. What Iowans eat has changed in the last 50 years. Gov. Robert Ray led a charge to bring Southeast Asian refugees to Iowa after the fall of South Vietnam.

That was the beginning of massive immigration from all over the world. When the great food writer Tony Bourdain came to Des Moines, he marveled out loud about the city’s Vietnamese restaurants. Our Latino food scene is just as exciting, with all regions of Mexico and Central America covered.

Iowa now gives the lie to the coastal illusion of the state being composed of boring, white people who force feed each other corn dogs to bulk up. The state has become a magnet for top chefs and restaurateurs. Jay Wang (Wasabi) and Tony He (W Tao) came from New York City, with a score of workers. Miyabi Yamamoto (Miyabi 9) came from Japan via Boston. Jason Demars (R/I) moved from Massachusetts, Sean Wilson (Proof) from North Carolina, David Baruthio (Baru 66) from Strasbourg via Manchester, Marc Navailles (Purveyor, Nomad) from the Basque country via Argentina. Alex Hall (St. Kilda’s, Franka) found his way here from Melbourne via Brooklyn, Gianluca Baroncini (Baroncini Ristorante) is from Verona via D.C., Andrew Meek (Sage) from Wisconsin, Irina Kharchenko (Irina’s)



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from Sochi via Los Angeles and Montreal, Baba Singh (India Star) from the Punjab.

I could go on, and that doesn't even include all the fabulous folks from Southeast Asia and Latin America. Frijoles were just beans for me, till I tried the ambrosia that La Familia serves. Rice flour crepes were unknown to me before Don Cotran (Pho 515) and Kim Anh (Pho All Seasons) served them.

George Formaro, who owns and runs kitchens at six local restaurants, says, “Tony Bourdain said that there would be no French cafés in New York without Pueblo born chefs. Fine dining in Des Moines would be nowhere without chefs from Michoacan and Jalisco.”

Iowa dining is still also based in tradition. Manning, where street signs are in German, moved an historic hausbarn for its German restaurant and Bavarian culture center. Elk Horn built a Danish Museum to celebrate Scandinavian contributions to American dairy. The creators of Johnny and Kay's, Vic's Tally Ho, Gino's, Wimpy's, La Pizza House, The Latin King, Babe's, Chuck's and Noah's came from Calabria and Emilia Romagna.

There are some 50 organic farms, mostly dairy, within 15 miles of Kalona. Iowa dairy, particularly Radiance, Kalona and Pickett Fences, delivers a taste of the past.

“It drives me crazy when writers and TV hosts rave about Chicago pizza as if it were an island of quality in the Midwest. Des Moines has every bit as much quality and diversity in pizza as Chicago. If there was such a thing as Iowa pizza, it would be tavern style, like Chuck’s, Noah’s and Bordanaro’s,” says Formaro, who imported a Brooklyn coal oven to fire his magnificent pies at Centro.

Most people don't realize that Iowa's signature sandwich, the breaded pork tenderloin, also derived from immigration. Czech and Slovaks flocked to Cedar Rapids for packing house jobs in the late 19th century. They craved wiener schnitzel, but veal was scarce. So, they substituted pork. Now it's celebrated like an

icon. Plus, we bread anything we fry in Iowa.

The original Maid Rite, still evidenced at Taylor's in Marshalltown, was an Iowa invention. The stores all used to incorporate Taylor's horseshoe shaped counters. Those facilitated community, because everyone is situated to converse with everyone else.

Those sandwiches, which Formaro refuses to call “loose meat,” have histories in Iowa that predate the Depression. In Siouxland, they are called “Charlie boys” or “tastees.” In Ottumwa, they are “canteens.” In Bettendorf, they are called “Rossburgers.” All have a century of history.

Iowa's true fruit is the apple. We developed some famous breeds (Red Delicious), and our orchards, such as Seed Savers in Decorah, are among the most diverse anywhere. Apples love the climate. Seed Savers has one orchard with more than 100 unique kinds of apple.

So, of course, our cider houses are special. Two (Wilson's in Iowa City and Fishback and Stephenson in Fairfield) serve some of the best food in the state. Wineries are for weddings in Iowa; cider houses are for anytime.

Sidey, arguably the best writer Iowa ever produced, deserves the last word here. In 1996, he wrote: “No Iowan now lives more than 25 miles from a hospital. There is no high school student who cannot try his hand at basketball or French. No Iowan anywhere is more than 20 miles from the sublime call of the meadowlark.” ■



The breaded pork tenderloin was Iowa's compensation for lack of veal.

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(Family Features) The same risk factors that contribute to making heart disease the leading cause of death worldwide also impact the rising global prevalence of brain disease, including stroke, Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The global death rate from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is increasing even more than the rate of heart disease death, according to the American Heart Association's Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2022 Update.

Globally, more than 54 million people had Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in 2020, a 37% increase since 2010 and 144% increase over the past 30 years (1990-2020). Additionally, more than 1.89 million deaths were attributed to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias worldwide in 2020, compared to nearly 9 million deaths from heart disease.

"The global rate of brain disease is quickly outpacing heart disease," said Mitchell S.V. Elkind, M.D. M.S., FAHA, the past president of the American Heart Association (2020-21), a professor of neurology and epidemiology at Columbia University's Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and attending neurologist at New York-

Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center. "We are learning more about how some types of dementia are related to aging, and how some types are due to poor vascular health. It's becoming more evident that reducing vascular disease risk factors can make a real difference in helping people live longer, healthier lives, free of heart disease and brain disease."

According to the statistics update, people with midlife hypertension were five times more likely to experience impairment on global cognition and about twice as likely to experience reduced executive function, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The risk for dementia associated with heart failure was nearly two-fold.

Experts recommend maintaining a healthy weight, managing your blood pressure and following other heart-healthy lifestyle behaviors that can also support good brain health while studies show maintaining good vascular health is associated with healthy aging and retained cognitive function.

Optimal brain health includes the ability to perform tasks like movement, perception, learning and memory, communication, problem

solving, judgment, decision making and emotion. Cognitive decline and dementia are often seen following stroke or cerebrovascular disease and indicate a decline in brain health.

Consider these steps to live a healthier lifestyle and protect your heart and brain health:

- **Don't smoke;** avoid secondhand smoke.
- **Reach and maintain a healthy weight.** Be mindful of your eating habits; eat foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and added sugars.
- **Be physically active.** Start slowly and build up to at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as brisk walking) each week. As an alternative, you can do 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of the two, to improve overall cardiovascular health.
- **Get your blood pressure checked regularly** and work with your health care team to manage it if it's high.
- **Have regular medical checkups** and take your medicine as directed.
- **Decrease your stress level** and seek emotional support when needed.

Learn more about the relationship between heart health and brain health at heart.org. ■

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Reduce your COPD

(Family Features) COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, is a serious lung condition that affects millions of people. Also known as emphysema or chronic bronchitis, COPD causes breathing problems that can worsen over time.

Anyone can develop COPD, but smokers or ex-smokers and people who live in rural areas of the country tend to be more affected. In fact, rural residents are twice as likely to have COPD as people who live in large cities. They're also more likely to be hospitalized or die from the disease compared to other Americans.

To help lower your risk, wherever you live, consider these steps from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

Avoid air pollution

Air pollution may be a concern for many who live in rural areas. If you work on a farm, in mining or in manufacturing, you may be at risk for COPD from environmental exposure to dust, fumes or smoke, such as from wildfires. Talk to your employer about ways to limit exposure on the job.

Consider air pollution at home, too. Ventilate indoor spaces and clean often to prevent dust buildup. If you are burning wood or agricultural or solid waste, make sure appropriate ventilation is in place and working properly. Avoid using products with strong odors, which may contain chemicals that could irritate the lungs.

Don't smoke or vape

Rural communities have higher rates of cigarette smoking, which could contribute to higher COPD rates. One of the most important things you can do to protect your lungs and those of the people around you is avoiding cigarette smoke. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cigarette smoking is the main cause of COPD. If you smoke, it is never too late to quit.

Steer clear of vaping, too. E-cigarettes don't contain tobacco, but they may contain chemicals that are just as harmful to your lungs.

Talk to a health care provider

If you smoke or used to smoke, work in a job that might put you at higher risk for COPD or you or someone in your family has a genetic condition called alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, it's important to talk to a health care provider about your risk and any symptoms you may have. These include coughing that may bring up lots of mucus, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Early diagnosis and treatment can help you breathe better.

Because people in rural areas may live farther away from their health care providers, more hospitals and clinics now offer telehealth services, which can make it easier to get effective COPD care.

Ask a health care provider about getting vaccines for the flu and COVID-19, RSV if you're over 60 and pneumococcal disease if you're over 65. If you're at risk for COPD, you're more likely to have health problems from these vaccine-preventable illnesses.

Wherever you call home, you can take action to lower your risk for COPD. Find more information about COPD from NHLBI's Learn More Breathe Better® program at copd.nhlbi.nih.gov. ■

Recognizing when more help is needed for dementia care

There often comes a point when additional support, or dementia care assistance, becomes crucial for the well-being of both you and your loved one. Recognizing this need is essential in ensuring that your loved one continues to receive the best possible care. This article will guide you through the signs that indicate it may be time to seek more help.

Understanding the progression of dementia

Dementia is a progressive condition, meaning that the symptoms will worsen over time. This progression varies from person to person but typically involves increasing difficulties with memory, communication, and daily activities.

Key signs indicating the need for more help

- **Escalating care needs:** As dementia progresses, basic activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating become more challenging. When these tasks become too burdensome for a caregiver to manage alone, it's a clear sign that additional help may be needed.
- **Increased safety concerns:** Safety becomes a major concern, especially in advanced stages of dementia. If your loved one is prone to wandering, forgetting to turn off appliances, or is at risk of falls, these are indicators that extra support or supervision is necessary.
- **Behavioral changes:** Significant behavioral changes, such as increased agitation, aggression, or severe mood swings, can be difficult to manage.
- **Caregiver stress and burnout:** Caregiver health is often overlooked. If you, as a caregiver, are experiencing chronic stress, exhaustion, or health issues, it's a strong indication that it's time to seek additional support.

Options for dementia care assistance

- **In-home care services:** In-home care is a flexible option that allows your loved one to remain in a familiar environment. Professional caregivers can provide assistance with daily activities, medication management, and companionship.
- **Adult day care centers:** Adult day care centers offer a safe environment where individuals with dementia can engage in activities and socialize, providing respite for caregivers during the day.
- **Assisted living communities:** For those requiring more comprehensive support, assisted living communities that specialize in dementia care can offer a suitable solution. These communities provide round-the-clock care and specialized programs.
- **Memory care communities:** Memory care communities, often part of assisted living communities, are specifically designed for individuals with dementia. They offer enhanced safety features, specialized team members, and tailored activities to meet the needs of residents with memory impairments.

Making a decision

Opening discussions with family members, health care providers, and potential care services can aid in making an informed decision.

Embracing support for quality care

Recognizing when to seek more dementia care assistance is a crucial step in the dementia care journey. It ensures that your loved one receives the level of care they need and deserve while also preserving your health and well-being as a caregiver. Embracing additional support is not a sign of failure but rather a commitment to providing the best care for your loved one. ■

Information Provided by Addington Place of Des Moines, 5815 S.E. 27th St., Des Moines, www.AddingtonPlaceofDesMoines.com.



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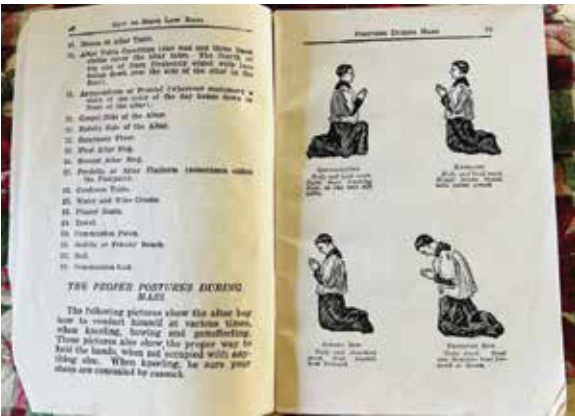
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Long Johns and life

It began innocently enough.

My friend and I kneel clumsily on the side of the altar in the early morning dark before school begins. Our shoes are covered by our black cassocks, which are straitjackets for squirmy 11-year-olds. So we tug and pull at the cassocks until the priest, bending over the chalice, gives us a side-eye that promises everlasting hellfire. Being more comfortable with our long and well-deserved stint in purgatory, we stop squirming. “*Dominus vobiscum*,” says the priest. “*Et cum spiritu tuo*,” we chant quickly and without any inkling as to the meaning.



And so go the instructions in “How to Serve Low Mass,” by Rev. William A. O’Brien (published in 1931), and made available to us boys at St. Mary’s School in Iowa City in 1964.

By the next year, Latin was out the door, the altar was turned around to face the congregation, and the nuns were leading us in Woodie Guthrie songs about equality and revolution. Vatican II was a tsunami for believers at that time, even though it turned into a small ripple in later years.

But it was too late for me. Not only was I taking my first steps down the teenage rebellion path, but, worse, I had my first Long John.

It began innocently enough. The priest gave each of us altar boys a quarter after mass. Clutching it tight, we ran down North Linn Street to Hamburg Inn No. 2. Inside the entrance and at the head of the servers’ island was a glass case full of donuts and other pastries.

“I’ll have one Long John, please.”

Delivered with a pat of butter, I swooned. It was salvation without Latin. I became a believer. Then I became buddies with Mike Panther. Come to find out, his mom and dad OWNED Hamburg Inn No. 2. Free Long Johns, here I come.

So now, nearly 60 years later, I stop in at Alok Oberoi’s place, the Donut Hut on Douglas Avenue in Des Moines, my new place of worship.

“Alok, what do you have for Long Johns today?”

Alok has made Long Johns since he bought the business 13 years ago.

“When people come to buy donuts, they look for the value. The Long John has more for the buck. I have several customers who just buy Long Johns. And they rave about them, too. They are larger, and the dough is special.”



And, Alok, do you have any kids stop by for donuts?

“A lot of students come here to buy donuts, early morning, after school, and during breaks. I have three schools that are near — an elementary school across the street, a middle school and a high school just up the street.”

Do they talk to you?

“I have regular kids come in. Ninety percent of my customers know me. Everybody wants to talk a little bit.”

And what do you say to them?

“My question for a young person is always, ‘How are your grades?’ And if they are doing well in school, I give them a free donut.”

I’m doing well in school, I say.

Alok smiles.

“Also if I see some kids holding the door for other people, I reward them with a donut and make sure to tell them that was really nice that they did that. I want the kids who come in here to be respectful. And my goal with them is to make sure they go to school and complete their education. I tell all the kids to not give up on their education, just keep going as long as they can. Life is not easy.”

So I drive off with a box full of Long Johns and Alok’s warm goodbye, and I think of my buddy Mike Panther and our love of Long Johns. For no good reason, he and I lost touch after high school and went on with our lives. Years later, I find out that in December 1985, three weeks before Mike’s wedding, a drunk driver crossed the center line and killed him in a head-on collision.

As Alok says, life is not easy.

According to my manual, “How to Serve Low Mass,” the altar boys at a Mass for the dead are to respond with “Amen” when the priest says, “Requiescat in pace.”

So, Mike, although it is 38 years late...

“Requiescat in pace,” says the robed priest in my mind.



To which the young altar boy from over half a century ago answers: “Amen.”

And I take a bite of my Long John. ■

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.



The Prince Experience

Gabriel Sanchez channels The Purple One.

As Gabriel Sanchez struts on the stage, dressed in a purple crushed velvet outfit, he confidently picks up his guitar and approaches the microphone.

Glancing at the sold-out crowd, organ music plays in the background while he begins singing, “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to get through this thing called life.” As the crowd intently listens to the lyrics and gets to the chorus “let’s go crazy,” the crowd is simply that. Crazy for Prince music.

That’s just one song performed by Gabriel Sanchez and his band, the Prince Experience. Concertgoers can sing along with all of Prince’s favorites at Wooly’s on Jan. 26.

Sanchez, a long-time musician, began playing the role of Prince 20 years ago. In his hometown of Milwaukee, he was asked to do a Prince play where he’d sing and act. At first Sanchez said no, arguing he’d never acted. Then he was told it wasn’t just acting. He could also sing, play guitar and dance. Once he agreed, he immediately regretted his decision.

“What did I get myself into?” he asked.

He went home and listened to a Prince CD. He played rhythm guitar, but not the lead. He knew his vocals could hit the high notes. However, he returned and told the director, “I’m not sure I can pull it off.” She said, “You can always air guitar.”

Playing air guitar was out of the question. So he went home, “practiced hard” and pulled it off. After a successful run, he put a band together playing Prince music.

As a professional musician in various bands, he wanted to make sure he chose the right band members.

“I’m picky,” he admits. “I don’t drink before or during a show, and I don’t want the other members to

either. Sure, I’ll have a drink, but it’s after the show.”

Prince Experience played locally in Wisconsin and, over the years, performed in larger venues. To look and play the part of Prince, it had to become ingrained into his personality. He saw Prince three times in concert. He watched videos of him and then of himself to tweak certain characteristics. It didn’t come easy at first.

“I’m a shy person. For me to walk on stage a certain way and walk with a sexy walk, it’s not me normally,” he explains. “Then eventually I told myself I’m just playing a part. I pulled it off.”

The band is so successful, their enthusiastic fans often get emotional when they perform certain Prince songs.

“There is so much joy for his music. Some people are crying. I even cry. I’ve asked, ‘Why am I feeling so emotional?’ Sometimes I have to stop looking at the audience or I will cry, too,” he admits.

Sanchez is a full-time musician and is in a few different bands, playing music by Queen, Tom Petty, The Beatles and more. He’s proud of his trained vocal range.

“Singing Prince has made me a better singer. He had so many vocal styles.”

Every element at the concert is performed live.

“There’s no backtracking. We don’t push a button, like so many other bands do. It’s all live.”

His favorite Prince song to perform is “Purple Rain.”

“It sounds cliché, but I still like singing it,” he says. “I’m not sick of it. ‘Beautiful Ones’ is another song I love to do.”

When asked what he would say to Prince if he were alive today, Sanchez says he’d thank him.



“I wish I could thank him for helping me to be a better artist. I could never try to copy him. Nobody will be as good as him,” he says. “You can try. It’s made me a better performer because I tried.” ■

SOUND ADVICE

BY JACKIE WILSON

Platinum-selling blues rockers **Big Head Todd and the Monsters** are playing Hoyt Sherman Place on Jan. 12. The band will be performing selections spanning over three decades. Tickets start at \$46.

Mark your calendars for the **Winter Blues Fest** hosted by the Central Iowa Blues Society. On Feb. 9-10, there are 20 blues acts. Included are the Iowa Blues Challenge winners **Matt Woods** and **Rush**

Cleveland Trio. Also performing are the **Cashbox Kings**, **Josh Hoyer** and **Tony Holiday**. Tickets in advance cost \$25 for Friday, \$35 for Saturday or \$55 for both nights. For a complete lineup and more info, visit www.cibs.org.

The Val-Air Ballroom renovations are nearly complete. Their first concert on Feb. 29 in the revamped venue is **Greensky Bluegrass**, a popular

bluegrass band, which recently sold out three concerts at Red Rocks in Colorado. Opening band is **High Hawks**. All tickets general admission, \$35, plus fees.

Don’t forget the new Vibrant Music Hall in Waukeg. **Flatland Calvary**, a country and Americana band, performs on Feb. 3, with **Zach Top**, opener. Tickets from Live Nation start at \$35 for general admission. ■

FILM REVIEW

BY DAVID ROWLEY

'The Boy and the Heron'

Its rich emotions, magical worlds, and poignant storytelling solidify Hayao Miyazaki's legacy as a visionary filmmaker.

Hayao Miyazaki's return with "The Boy and the Heron" after a decade-long hiatus is akin to a resounding symphony, marking a significant resurgence of his dormant voice. This eagerly awaited tale weaves personal experiences and artistic essence into a mesmerizing fable.

"The Boy and the Heron" is set in 1944, during the time of the Pacific War, when Mahito Maki loses his mother in an air raid in Tokyo. As his family moves to the countryside, Mahito struggles to adjust to his new life with his father, his new stepmother (his mother's younger sister), and several (hilarious) elderly ladies. One of the main themes of this film is dealing with loss. Mahito not only has to deal with the loss of his mother, but also the loss of his home in Tokyo due to the Pacific War.

As he tries to adjust, this strange new world grows even stranger following the appearance of a persistent gray heron that perplexes and bedevils Mahito, dubbing him the "long-awaited one" and beckoning him toward a mysterious tower, promising that he will find his mother inside.

From this point forward, the film takes a fantastical turn, sparking a surreal and enchanting adventure and showing us a timeless world full of evil parakeets and adorable cuddly creatures named Warawara (not-yet-born human souls waiting for life).

"The Boy and the Heron" seamlessly melds reality with fantasy, blurring the lines between imagination and emotional truth. Visually striking and artistically rich, it showcases Miyazaki's unparalleled artistry, capturing both the vibrant landscapes of the fantasy world and the emotional depth of Mahito's struggle against the rural backdrop. Every frame is a testament to Miyazaki's enduring creativity, blending a child's heroism with an elder's wistful farewell.

While the gradual pacing of the narrative might test the patience of some viewers, particularly in its elongated first act, the payoff lies in the emotionally resonant climax. Mahito's poignant decision to embrace the pain of reality over the allure of a fantasy world serves as a profound lesson on the complexities of adulthood and loss. Joe Hisaishi's haunting score deepens the emotional resonance, adding layers to Mahito's tribulations through loss, discovery, and resolution.

Miyazaki's legacy weaves through the film, encapsulating themes of nature, wisdom and the human experience. While reminiscent of his previous works, the film stands as a testament to Miyazaki's enduring creativity. Though it might falter at times in



"The Boy and the Heron"

Director/Writer: Hayao Miyazaki

Stars: Christian Bale, Willem Dafoe, Mark Hamill

maintaining a cohesive narrative and fully engaging the protagonist, it remains a visual and emotional marvel, a testament to Miyazaki's legacy. "The Boy and the Heron" transcends mere fantasy-adventure, inviting viewers to wander through Miyazaki's imagination, intricately weaving themes of grief, creation, and storytelling embodied in a tower of magical stone blocks — a metaphor for Miyazaki's artistic tools. Mahito's journey ventures into a parallel world, showcasing Miyazaki's mastery in mirroring reality within fantasy.

The film embodies Miyazaki's final reflections, encapsulating themes of acceptance and impermanence. Every stone block, every creature, every brushstroke represents the delicate interplay between creativity and the human experience. Miyazaki's swansong, if indeed it proves to be so, stands as a testament to his unparalleled artistry and thematic depth. "The Boy and the Heron" doesn't merely echo his previous works; it encapsulates his lifelong concerns as an artist and a profound thinker. It's an exploration of anguish, transformation, and the need to reconcile with the past, encapsulating Miyazaki's thematic core.

While not reaching the dizzying heights of Miyazaki's iconic masterpieces, the film remains a poignant addition to the director's repertoire. Its rich emotions, magical worlds, and poignant storytelling solidify Miyazaki's legacy as a visionary filmmaker. In a cinematic landscape where magic is scarce, "The Boy and the Heron" emerges as a beautiful, magical film that soars above its peers. Miyazaki's bittersweet farewell is a poignant exploration of grief, wrapped in an enchanting tale that reaffirms the enduring legacy of a maestro defying retirement, transcending the ordinary, and inviting audiences into the whimsical intricacies of his artistic cosmos. ■

PREVIEWS

BY DAVID ROWLEY

"Mean Girls"

PG-13

Directors Samantha Jayne, Arturo Perez Jr.

Writer: Tina Fey

Stars: Jon Hamm, Angourie Rice, Jenna Fischer

From the comedic mind of Tina Fey comes a new twist on the modern classic, "Mean Girls." New student Cady Heron (Angourie Rice) is welcomed into the top of the social food chain by the elite group of popular girls called "The Plastics," ruled by the conniving queen bee Regina George (Reneé Rapp) and her minions Gretchen (Bebe Wood) and Karen (Avantika). However, when Cady makes the major misstep of falling for Regina's ex-boyfriend Aaron Samuels (Christopher Briney), she finds herself prey in Regina's crosshairs. As Cady sets to take down the group's apex predator with the help of her outcast friends Janis (Auli'i Cravalho) and Damian (Jaquel Spivey), she must learn how to stay true to herself while navigating the most cutthroat jungle of all: high school.



"Ferrari"

R | 130 minutes

Director: Michael Mann

Writers: Troy Kennedy Martin, Brock Yates

Stars: Adam Driver, Shailene Woodley, Giuseppe Festinese

It is the summer of 1957. Behind the spectacle of Formula 1, ex-racer Enzo Ferrari (Adam Driver) is in crisis. Bankruptcy threatens the factory he and his wife, Laura (Penélope Cruz), built from nothing 10 years earlier. Their volatile marriage has been battered by the loss of their son, Dino, a year earlier. Ferrari struggles to acknowledge his son, Piero, with Lina Lardi (Shailene Woodley). Meanwhile, his drivers' passion to win pushes them to the edge as they launch into the treacherous 1,000-mile race across Italy, the Mille Miglia. The film also shows the intense legal battle that ensued after the horrific accident that caused the race to shut down forever. Ferrari was accused of manslaughter because the car that malfunctioned was of his own production. You'll have to watch the movie to find out the fate of Ferrari. (Don't spoil the story by Googling it.)



"The Book of Clarence"

PG-13 | 136 minutes

Director/Writer: Jeymes Samuel

Stars: LaKeith Stanfield, Omar Sy, Anna Diop

From visionary filmmaker Jeymes Samuel, "The Book of Clarence" is a bold new take on the timeless Hollywood era Biblical epic. Streetwise but struggling, Clarence (LaKeith Stanfield) is trying to find a better life for himself and his family, make himself worthy to the woman he loves, and prove that he's not a nobody. Captivated by the power and glory of the rising Messiah and His apostles, he risks everything to carve his own path to a divine life, a journey through which he finds redemption and faith, power and knowledge. ■



Picasso: He's Pablomatic

Olson Larsen Galleries (542 Fifth, Valley Junction) opens the New Year with "Hybrid Practices."

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



"Winter Reverie" by John Beckelman

It's the 50th anniversary of Pablo Picasso's death. The museums of the world are giddy. The Spanish rascal attracts crowds to this day because post "Me too" people either love him for his genius or hate him for his misogynist behavior. As Mark Antony said, "The evil men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." So let it be with Pablo.

Big shows are coming soon to six museums. New York's Museum of Modern Art focusses on "Picasso in Fontainebleau," where the artists worked in 1921. Manhattan's Guggenheim is all in for "Young Picasso in Paris." The Brooklyn Museum of Art teams with an Aussie stand-up comic for "It's Pablomatic with Hannah Gadsby." The Picasso Museum in Paris has British fashion designer Paul Smith serving as curator for their show. Musee de l'Homme in Paris studies "Picasso and Prehistory" which suggests the haters will love labeling him a culture appropriator. Reina Sophia in Madrid, the permanent home of "Guernica," zeros in on "1906" before the master left Spain for Paris.

Most museums that own Picassos are showing them off in lesser manners. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Art Institute of Chicago have small shows coming.

Olson Larsen Galleries (542 Fifth, Valley Junction) opens the New Year with "Hybrid Practices," an exhibition of Iowa artists with Alyss Vernon and

Kathy Edwards Hayslett serving as co-curators. It mixes Olson-Larsen Galleries artists and invited artists "who employ media and techniques that challenge oversimplified notions of what it is to be an artist."

Fourteen Iowa-based artists here work in multiple media, such as painting and ceramics, or metal and fabric. Others combine techniques in the same work, and still others work in totally different styles all together.

John Beckelman shows clay, wood and mixed media on paper to remember Massai necklaces and to celebrate shards from mistakes or accidents. Steven Erickson sticks with oil on canvass to show off his skills at both portraiture and abstraction. The latter paintings have vibrant colors seemingly in resistance to the spread of black bobs.

Kathy Edwards Hayslett lists at least 11 ingredients in her recipes for playfulness and montage. Laurel Farrin sticks with acrylic on wood or canvass to demonstrate most happy things — "River," Blue L(agoon?), "Rain-bow" and "Toys & Play." Sue Hettmansperger shows archival collages and oil on linen. Anita Jung has 12 pieces in the show, all but one from a six-media series called "Travel Diaries." They are abstractions, but she seems to be a happy traveler.

Satomi Kawai tops that with 17 works of jewelry and paintings of media as odd as plastic teeth,



"Hull" by Molly Spain

horsehair, paper clay and tree branches. Mat Kelly shows handmade books and paintings. Nancy L. Purington has a ceramic piece that looks like a third-world water urn. Lee Emma Running exhibits nine pieces, rust on paper and kiln cast powdered glass starring.

Jim Shrosbree shows 13 pieces as various as mixed media on canvas and paper plus ceramics. Molly Spain has both sculptures and things that hang on walls, tissue paper and tar paper dominating. Trudi Starbeck-Miller uses things like Bavarian china from the 1989 earthquake and vintage sewing needles. Bill Teeple is a realistic painter on both panel and paper. Through Feb. 10.

New stuff at Steven Vail Fine Arts includes Liza Lou's "Lightbulb" of hand-colored beads on resin. Lou is the star of the Des Moines Art Center's (DMAC) headline show. Also the gallery has acquired (yes, we don't recognize the PC word accessioned) Roy Lichtenstein's "Sweet Dreams Baby," and Dennis Oppenheim's "Objectified Counter Forces" are also new to the gallery. Due to construction projects, SVFA is currently open by appointment.

Tout

Former DMAC Director Jeff Fleming will have his first gallery show at Moberg Gallery. ■

Public art

Hilde DeBruyne's metal sculptures dot Des Moines and its suburbs' green spaces.

Metal sculptures crafted by artist Hilde DeBruyne dot Des Moines and its suburbs' green spaces. "Simplicity" is found in Clive. In West Des Moines, find the "Circle of Life." Or head to Johnston's Terra Park for the "Tree of Life."

Outside of Iowa, dozens of the contemporary sculptures created by DeBruyne brighten outdoor spaces.

DeBruyne is a native of Belgium and initially began working with clay. She followed in the footsteps of her father, who was a clay artist. She says her home was like a museum.

"We traded artwork with people and churches from different countries," she recalls.

Her dad was inspired by Henry Moore, so she adopted his love of modern, textural work. She studied art history, moving to the United States for a one-year visa. As her husband attended medical school, their visa was extended over the years. After a snafu, they could no longer receive a visa and moved back to Belgium briefly.

When she first lived here, she couldn't work, so she joined an art community in Des Moines. A former studio, Art 316, is where she began to make clay pieces.

One 3-foot clay piece wouldn't fit into her kiln at home. She asked a welder to make a frame with concrete to mount it on. That was her first metal sculpture, called "Hope."

She began making other metal pieces, which is her signature artwork, in addition to clay. Various artwork rotates among the communities. She loans pieces to a city for a few years, and, at the end of the year, the city purchases one piece. For a piece at Terra Park in Johnston, she brainstormed with city leaders and the parks department to come up with the design, which incorporates their ideas of education, agriculture and nature.

The process is unique. She sketches and then makes a 3-D piece in paper. Then she creates a miniature rendering. She works with a team of welders and machinists who put the 3-D drawing into a plasma or laser cutter.



HOPE. Photo submitted



Circle of Trust. Photo submitted



Tree of Life, Terra Park, Johnston. Photo submitted

"The fabrication (Terra Park) was a challenge. I made it at home and had to disassemble it again and transport it. We welded it back on the spot in Johnston," she recalls.

She enjoys the reactions she sees during the installation.

"People come up to me to talk about it. Public art is a way to allow for social interaction and something that everyone can enjoy," she says.

One woman commented that she sees her "Life" leaf on her daily walks.

"Public art improves the sterile landscapes of garbage and street signs," she reflects. "Cities with art take pride and feel respected. Imagine Des Moines without their murals or sculpture garden."

Creating art doesn't need to be complicated. A butterfly bench and a bookcase she created in "Imagination Alley" in Jefferson tells her story.

"It's organic. It's not art for art's sake. It engages the imagination, and the bookcase shows how books can transform our lives," says DeBruyne.

She once drove her vehicle with a 7-foot-tall sculpture to California. It was tricky making sure not to hit low-hung structures along the way.

"People at gas stations were commenting about it on our way out there."

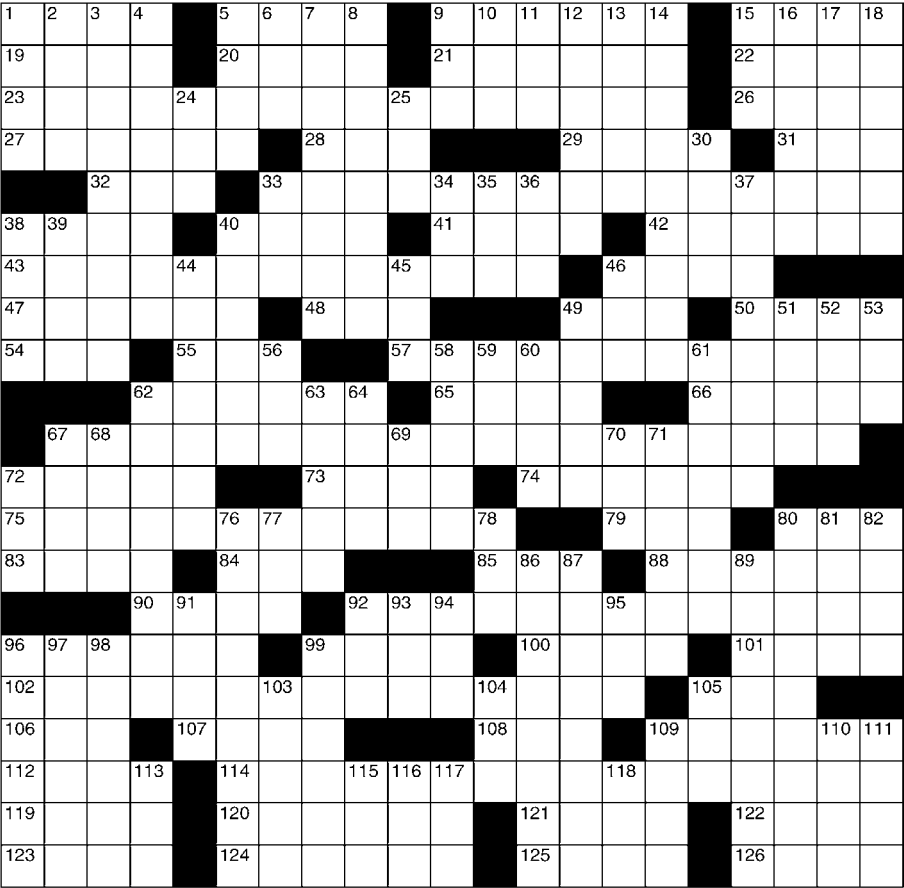
People often ask DeBruyne how long it takes to do one piece.

"I tell them it takes 20-30 years. You don't just wake up as an artist. It takes you time to grow into your work. Every piece evolves and grows into the next piece."

Her favorite styles include birds, trees, female shapes and circles.

"The migration series of birds is based on our migration to the U.S. The trees and leaves show the change of seasons. The circle is a shape I love." ■

FORGET THE WHOLE THING



- ACROSS**

1 Warning about a racy web pic

5 "West Side Story" knife

9 Seasoned vet

15 Bro

19 French for "yours"

20 Treat for feet, for short

21 Pope after Marcellus II

22 Scads

23 RFORM

26 Rapper Snoop --

27 Variety show hosts, e.g.

28 ACLU interests: Abbr.

29 Farming unit

31 Pasty luau food

32 Flight takeoff abbr.

33 NTR

38 "Peek- --!"

40 Classic comic Martha

41 Uplifting poems

42 Place full of video games

43 UBL

46 Chicken cordon --

47 British chums

48 Stars and Stripes' nation

49 --'wester (certain storm)

50 "Oh, God!" actress Garr

54 Cousins of aves.

55 Name of some newspapers

57 GHTE

62 Actors Fiennes and Macchio

65 Very top

66 Flying

67 TRONI

72 Cast out of the country

73 Official helper

74 Pays out
- 75 EAKI

79 Diner check

80 Start for existing

83 Name of some newspapers

84 Vetoer's vote

85 U.S. tax org.

88 Aromatic aftershave

90 QBs' blunders: Abbr.

92 RKE

96 Person doing a crossword puzzle, e.g.

99 Outer limit

100 Chimney grime

101 Great serves

102 HEER

105 2000-15 CBS series

106 Writer Rand

107 Blood type, in brief

108 Total

109 Wakes up

112 Writer Uris

114 NTEN

119 Peel, as fruit

120 Excited response to "Who wants ice cream?"

121 Cozy corner

122 Pierce player Alan

123 Cast off hair

124 Swan constellation

125 Forest sight

126 Saclike growth
- DOWN**
- 1 Neck back
- 2 Mushroom feature
- 3 Some plays on ground balls
- 4 Fiancee
- 5 Colo. -- (city S. of Denver)
- 6 Skirt line
- 7 "Just go ahead and try!"
- 8 Wine merchants
- 9 Unlock, in poems
- 10 Resting place for a napkin
- 11 Drinker's hwy. offense
- 12 Implores
- 13 Christina of "Bel Ami"
- 14 Put too high a price on
- 15 Papa
- 16 Perfect world
- 17 Be charitable
- 18 Gas guzzler
- 24 Multivolume U.K. lexicon
- 25 Chicago winter hrs.
- 30 Blarney Stone's land
- 33 Mushroom feature
- 34 King, in Lyon
- 35 Hubbub
- 36 Novelist Deighton
- 37 Runs furtively with short, quick steps
- 38 Heads of fleets: Abbr.
- 39 Regatta entry
- 40 Upshot
- 44 Evan of figure skating
- 45 Univ. helpers
- 46 Web automaton
- 49 Brother of Moe and Curly
- 51 Deep black, in poems
- 52 Break in friendship
- 53 Hairy TV cousin
- 56 "Science Friday" aier
- 58 Person tying shoes
- 59 Onetime transportation agcy.
- 60 Foods created by biotech
- 61 Flood-prevention sack
- 62 One sharing your blood
- 63 Songwriter Carmichael
- 64 Salon noise
- 67 Large-scale public show
- 68 Untrue tales
- 69 Neighbor of Mont.
- 70 Caress
- 71 How money may be lost
- 72 Sci-fi gift
- 76 Belonging naturally
- 77 "One Mic" rapper
- 78 "-- Tok" (#1 hit for Kesha)
- 80 On the nose
- 81 Viking letter
- 82 Rescue crew VIPs
- 86 Occupant
- 87 Represented
- 89 Peruvian singer with a wide range
- 91 Notorious emperor
- 92 OR workers
- 93 Rust may be a sign of it
- 94 DVR remote abbr.
- 95 Cain, to Eve
- 96 Hair-raising sites?
- 97 "Is that so?"
- 98 Poe's "radiant maiden"
- 99 Yuletide quaff
- 103 Destitute
- 104 Tic --- -toe
- 105 Gear tooth
- 109 Yard tool
- 110 Outer limits
- 111 Sports datum
- 113 TV neighbor of Homer
- 115 Pewter, mostly
- 116 Univ. website suffix
- 117 Vetoers' votes
- 118 Rival of Wade



"I'd hate to see the _____."

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!

- Walk
RATED
- Path
OUTER
- Brand
BELLA
- Figure
PHASE

TODAY'S WORD

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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 : ♦♦

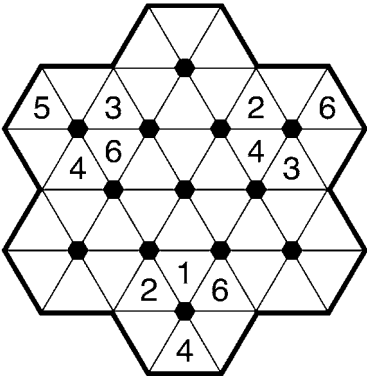
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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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.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	÷		+		4
-		+		×	
	-		×		3
×		÷		+	
	×		-		4
5		5		9	

1 2 3 3 5 6 7 8 9

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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 COURTESY OF GRATISOGRAPHY

This month's winner

"The office Christmas party was heating up when Ellen showed up with her gifts."

— Jim McCool



PHOTO BY TOA HEFTIBA ON UNSPLASH

Runners-up

"The hat and beard are to distract from the ugly Christmas sweater." — John Flater

"Santa, you're not supposed to take the dishes." — Paulette Rogers

"Mrs. Claus (thinly disguised) plans to devour her calorie-laden breakfast." — Linda Wolfe

"Finally Mrs. Claus gets her just dessert for all the work she does behind the big guy!" — Mary Wedoer

"I like Christmas, too, but that's a latte!" — Rex S.

"So the barista at Starbucks went a little overboard when I ordered a peppermint mocha with extra whipped cream." — Sue McLain

Send your "What The...?" caption and image entries to celeste@dmcityview.com.
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Consider your ‘I wonder what it’s like’ question

Seek your volunteer liberation in 2024.

The term “volunteering” does not begin to cover the gamut of opportunities that await the cultural adventurer. Your time and enthusiasm are desired contributions for cultural organizations. Since you are reading this column, you have an interest in the performing arts scene. Perhaps 2024 can bring a new perspective on your interests. Most regional companies are deep in the rehearsal throes for their first 2024 shows. They also offer great ways that you can get special peeks behind the curtain of a production while being part of a production team. The rewards are many, both for the participant and the organization.

In the Greater Des Moines region, in 2020 (the most recent statistics), 47.1% of Iowans volunteered regularly, ranking Iowa as fourth in the nation for volunteerism. Americans for the Arts reported that 7,590 volunteers donated a combined 277,644 hours in the Greater Des Moines region in 2015. This donated time represents the equivalence of \$6.5 million. That has a powerful and positive impact for organizations that need to maximize their resources to continue serving their mission.

Calling all cultural adventurers: What have you wanted to try?

In the world of performing arts, when anyone first volunteers to help, they are introduced to a deeper understanding of what it takes to bring a production to performance readiness. Not only do cultural volunteers bring their experience and energy to a project, they also bring a life-long learning attitude that seeks discovering new realms in which to engage. Whether you want to share a lifetime of learned skills, such as construction or sewing skills, or want to learn something new, the company members welcome new volunteers. Short-term engagement can sometimes lead to long-term benefits. Al Downey understands this better than most.

A Legacy volunteer

Allen W. Downey is a Korean War Army veteran and retired from the USPS. His quest: “I moved to Des Moines from Chicago,” remembers Al, whose local status has gained him single-name fame. “I didn’t like Des Moines, and I didn’t know anybody and nobody knew me.” His brother, Bill, told him that Des Moines had a playhouse, which Al admitted to not knowing about. Bill was going to audition for a show there.

His brother’s rejection of a small role in the Des

Moines Community Playhouse’s 1960 production of “The Madwoman of Chaillot” gave Al his start. He walked into the first rehearsal, the director asked him what he wanted, and he said, “My brother said you needed some idiot to ride across the stage on a bike.” The director responded, “The role is yours.” Al was, in his own words, “hooked.”

This was his entrance into a long-term relationship as a multi-talented volunteer at the Des Moines Playhouse. From that initial small role, Al continued helping, from working lights, to set construction, to sound, many stints as stage manager and, of course, performing.

When asked what made this so appealing, Al stated, “Oh, my,” giving a reflective pause. “I loved the Playhouse since the first time I walked through the door.”

Driven by his curiosity and sense of social engagement, Al continues his rewarding relationship with the Playhouse. A vibrant 95 years old, “One thing about the theatre is that it’s fun. Everybody’s your friend when you do stuff in the theatre.”

Al was recognized in 2011 as a Playhouse Legend and continues his work there. He had a small role in the Cloris Award-winning “Kinky Boots” (2023) and is a company member of Final Act Ensemble, which performs popular live performances of bygone era radio shows, such as Burns and Allen, and Fibber McGee and Molly sketches.

Exploring options

In the world of our community’s performing arts organizations, the range of volunteer opportunities range from short-term commitments to relationships that can be as long-term rewarding as Downey’s. Helping with front-of-house duties (ushering), to pre-production work (set construction, painting, costuming, properties, lighting), to production crew (stage manager, lighting operator, sound board operator, follow spot operator, dresser/wardrobe assistant, hair and makeup), the range of how to contribute to a show’s success is diverse.

Each company offers advance information about how their company operates. All gladly answer questions to help possible volunteers better understand what a given role entails, its expectations, and more. They want your time with them to be as rewarding and positive as do you.

“The Playhouse is my second home,” Downey shares, reflecting on his decades-long love affair with



Al Downey in a Final Act Ensemble show at Des Moines Playhouse (2022 Holiday Show). Steve Gibbons, for the Des Moines Community Playhouse.

the venerable institution. His wife, Ruth, also is a regular volunteer and a staunch ally of her husband, knowing how much he gets from his Playhouse passion.

All should seek such ways to engage in and give to the cultural community. This enhances your community’s cultural quotient, rewards the giver, and benefits the overall wellbeing of where you live. As Maya Angelou said, “I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”

Seek your volunteer liberation in 2024. ■

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.



OVERHEARD IN THE LOBBY

Des Moines Performing Arts
Jan. 12-14. “STOMP!”

Pura Social Club
Jan. 13. “A SMASHing Cabaret”

Tallgrass Theatre Company
Jan. 14. “Broadway Karaoke”

Des Moines Performing Arts
Jan. 23-28. “Mamma Mia!”

CARS IN THE CITY



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Dodge Hornet

Compact SUV buzzes around town.

BY JACKIE WILSON

The Hornet is back. Correction — the Hornet name has returned. This time, it's a Dodge sub-compact crossover SUV. For Hornet fans, the last one manufactured was an AMC Hornet from 1970-1977. Dodge is manufactured in Italy. According to Road and Track, the Hornet is a "lightly rebodied" Alfa Romeo Tonale, Italy's own version of the Hornet.

The Hornet entered the Dodge lineup in 2023, replacing the Journey. The model is smaller than the Dodge Durango. The price tag rings in it \$39,820 and gets an average of 24 miles per gallon — not bad for an SUV.

This 2024 Hornet GT Plus is a feisty compact. It has a 2.0 liter turbocharge with 268 horsepower. With 9-speed automatic, it buzzes around traffic easily.

This model has many of the safety features and luxury items but at a lower price point. Subtle red stitching on the dash, along with eight speakers, resembles a higher-end SUV. Heated and ventilated seats are included on this model. The driver assist modes can be easily modified for each driver.

The lane warning chimes mean you've crossed the center line or to watch for vehicles in your blind spot. If the dinging is annoying, just adjust the sound volume. You can also adjust the strength and how it pulls you back to your lane, resembling a tug of war between you and the steering wheel.

Fold in the mirrors to get in tight garage spots or when parking next to that monster truck at the grocery store. The 10.25-inch touch screen mirrors

your own tablet at home, so it's easy to figure out climate control and other features. Add up to eight different iPhone profiles and music. If you can't figure it out, use a voice command to set up preferences. Now, if only I could use a voice command to empty the dishwasher and take out the trash.

As it is a sub-compact, the back seats are a bit snug for adults. The hatch area behind the rear seat includes 27 cubic feet of space. Fold down the back seats for extra storage space.

The alarm system works, as I witnessed firsthand. As I was viewing the trunk space, I pressed the close button and then hopped in the back seat to check out the passenger's view. Within a few seconds, the loud alarm beeped frantically. What did I do? It felt like a swarm of insects buzzing around, telling me to get out. Is that why they call it a Hornet?

Apparently I'd left the key in the front console and locked the truck. The door locked, and I crawled to the front seat to grab the keys. When I went to start the car, a warning flashed "break in attempt detected." If that really happened, I might want to check to make sure nobody stole any valuables.

I like how the car tells me things. When I shut off the engine, a notice on my screen said, "Remember phone on charging pad."

It's a sporty SUV, perfect for a small family or a solo vehicle to tool around in. And, if you like tech telling you what to do, the Hornet is for you. ■



DES MOINES FORGOTTEN

BY KRISTIAN DAY

The KCCI Weather Beacon

Weather beacon flashing night or day, precipitation is on its way.

When I first moved to Des Moines in 2007, I was rattled with lore and strange facts about the city. I had been gone from the state since June of 2004 and previously haunted only the eastern side. I only made one or two trips to or through Des Moines as a kid. My mom took me to see “The Phantom of the Opera” at the Civic Center sometime in the 1990s and then just simply passed through heading to Omaha to see my uncle and his family. Mom would insist that we stop at Waterfront Deli in West Des Moines every time we would be here. So my synopsis of Des Moines was: The Civic Center, a golden dome, and Waterfront Deli. I didn’t even have Adventureland on my radar because I have been mentally 60 years old since I was 10.

Anyway, I moved in 2007 to Des Moines not knowing a single person who lived here. It was the wild idea that I wanted to be back in Iowa but not anywhere I had family or friends. So getting settled in my first year and into my first winter storm that loomed that December, I began hearing stories of the KCCI Weather Beacon. Keep in mind that smart phones were just coming into fruition. If I wanted to know what the weather was going to be for the day or for the week, I would need to check the internet before I left for the day. This was the same if I needed directions. Remember using Mapquest and printing out the directions or, in my case, writing them down on a napkin to take with me because I didn’t have a printer? This was still the era when someone had to be prepared before they ventured out into the world.

Well, I was preparing to make the trek east back to the Quad Cities to see my family for the holidays, and while making small talk with a stranger about the weather, I learned about the weather beacon over at KCCI.

Weather beacon red, warmer weather is ahead.

Weather beacon white, colder weather is in sight.

Weather beacon green, no change foreseen.

Weather beacon flashing night or day, precipitation is on its way.

Most locals knew this like their favorite childhood nursery rhymes. The tower was erected in 1960 as an aid to inform locals of what the forecast was going to be. It used traffic-style lights that would glow brightly so people could see them from various parts of the city. It stood 500 feet in the air and held 450 bulbs. Towers like this one could be found in many other cities including San Francisco, Cleveland and Chicago.

During the energy crisis of the 1970s, the tower went dark until it was rebuilt in 1988 after KCCI moved to its current location on Ninth Street. In 2012, the decision was made to shut down the weather beacon. The bulbs were no longer being made, and the tower’s structure had become too heavy to meet the current building code. It had simply become too outdated and too heavy to maintain, especially with the high winds

we can get here. Even with changing out to a custom-made LED bulb, the equipment that spread across the tower to power lights was still too heavy.

A Facebook Group was created called “Save the Weather Beacon,” and the backlash was heard across the country that even resulted in a column in the Wall Street Journal on Oct. 23, 2012. I consider this the type of nostalgia that we need to move away from. There is probably a familiarity I am missing because I did not grow up here. A lot of people talk about how it affects our skyline, and I hear you. What if we need it again someday? I am sure there is a nightmare reality where the internet gets turned off and chaos reigns. (I just watched “Leave the World Behind” on Netflix where this scenario is played out.) But these devices could be considered archaic in today’s world. Meanwhile, a few weather beacons still exist in Dubuque and Sioux City.

The weather beacon does live on here locally. Jeremy Schultz released an app the same year the tower was turned off, but I don’t think it evolved into anything past its beta version: <https://www.jeremyschultz.com/weather-beacon/>. Confluence also made its tribute beer, “Weather Beacon Red.” And finally, an unidentified person runs a weather beacon Instagram page that no longer posts but will periodically creep on your stories. ■



Weather Beacon photo from kcci.com

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



No experience necessary

Dan Buscher went from never building a bed to providing hundreds.

West Des Moines resident Dan Buscher, part owner of Integrity Printing, isn't a carpenter or bed builder by trade, but he certainly became one.

His wife and three daughters had been involved with Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP), a charity organization that helps provide those in need with their own beds. Members of the organization build the frames, provide mattresses, mattress cover, pillows and pillowcases, and deliver it all right to the recipients' homes.

Buscher got started with the organization nearly three years ago, thanks to his family's recommendation.

"I thought, OK, I'll do this if it's administrative work or if it's whatever on the side. I never thought I'd get into the actual building, but that kind of changed. They said they were all good (on the administrative end), so I just started working from there, going down there once a month. I started with cutting the wood, sanding it, drilling it and putting it together. It just kind of escalated from there," said Buscher.

Buscher says the Des Moines chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace has delivered more than 500 beds in 2023 and estimates they will get close to 600 by the end of the year, which is a steep increase from his first year when they delivered about 200 beds.

Applications for beds typically come from school counselors or teachers recommending this resource to families.

When asked if any family or individual has stood out to Buscher during his time providing beds, he said all of them are touching, but he highlighted a child.

"There was a 15-year-old boy — and 15-year-old boys don't give a lot of people the time of day — so, we went into their place, we built the bed, put the mattress on, and we're going to put the sheets on and the mattress pad and all that stuff. And he was just like, 'I can do this. I will take care of this.' After sleeping on a loveseat and being a taller kid, he was all for it, just very appreciative manners. It was one of those things where he could have kind of snubbed us and just let us do our stuff, but he took it upon himself to take the initiative to help us and to make sure he was part of it. That's the part where it just gets me," said Buscher.

Buscher described another instance when a week before this interview took place, he helped deliver a bed to a dad and his 4-year-old daughter. The family had no other furniture in their home besides the bed they were providing at that moment. Before they could even put the comforter on, the daughter was already in the bed, as happy as could be.

"There's endless stories like that, and it just makes you feel good," said Buscher.

According to numbers from SHP, between 2-3% of children in the U.S. are



"I think everyone needs to experience it. Just to see the feeling of when you walk out of there after delivering them is priceless," said Dan Buscher.

without a bed. Poor sleep can lead to numerous problems for children, including hyperactivity, anxiety and depression, while children who are experiencing better sleep grow better, are healthier and perform better in school.

"You hear that they don't have food, or they don't have a coat. You don't think about the bed. We're able to give them the beds and give them that comfort. It's like they get a start," said Buscher.

Out of the more than 500 beds that SHP has been able to provide to the community this year, Buscher estimates he's had a hand in more than 100 of them. They have several teams inside the organization that work to get together for deliveries, as well as the building of the beds. And they're ready to welcome more.

"There's no experience necessary. It's pretty much foolproof. It's hard to mess it up. If you mess it up, you're not paying attention at all. Anybody can do it, because a lot of people say, 'I've never used the power tool.' It doesn't matter. We're going to show you," said Buscher. ■

Dogs make her smile, laugh

Fifteen dogs help train other dogs.

As a lifelong animal lover, when Patty Lenz turned 60, she pondered her 44-year career training horses. Realizing it was time for a change, she switched gears and began training dogs.

To say Patty is a dog lover might be an understatement. With 15 dogs at home, they've got room to romp around on her acreage near Prole, just south of Des Moines.

In addition, she provides a dog daycare with boarding and breeds dogs at Patty L Pampered Pets. She's a staunch advocate for well-trained dogs.

"I love training dogs to be good citizens. I see unruly dogs barking and carrying on. I teach mine to be good social citizens. They are parade ready and won't jump on anyone," she says.

All of her dogs "work," and she uses them during training classes.

"Dogs learn by watching others. If they see other dogs, they'll settle down. That's what they should be doing."

Her joy in working with animals is the easiest part; she admits the hardest part is working with people.

"I want to make sure that dogs are having fun and not sitting in a kennel. Some buy dogs because they are cute. Being a pet owner is a big responsibility. Make sure the breed is a good fit."

She treats dogs with respect.

"I love working with dogs. Clients say that if they tell the dog, 'We're going to Patty's,' then they have to spell out my name. Dogs love coming here. When they're having a good time, the dog parents don't have to worry."

All of her dogs get along easily, and she denies any favorites. She'll take up to eight dogs at a time to parks, lakes or other outdoor areas. They also go to hardware stores to learn socialization skills. The dogs do sleep with her in her bed at night.

"I have to rotate them out. They don't all sleep on the bed at once," she laughs.

She also trains dogs for therapy, including two dogs for her parents. Patty trained a dog for her mom, who had dementia. Her dad, who had suffered a stroke, asked if her mom's dog could sit on his lap. So she got another dog for her dad. The dog laid on his lap while he was in the wheelchair.

"A dog can fill a void no human can. My mom said that was the best thing I ever did for them," she reflects.

She says when people are choosing a dog and



Patty Lenz with dogs Boulder, Coco Chanel and Ganache



training them, her best advice isn't to just be a friend.

"They need a leader. They need to be socialized in the community and get out in public," she suggests.

She says when she helps a dog become a therapy dog or assists with calming an energetic pet, it's the best

part of her job.

"Dogs give unconditional love. They are amazing companions and always happy to see you. I don't know what I'd do without dogs. They love you no matter what. They make me smile and laugh." ■

Schacherer works to master the silver ball

A competitive pinball community grows in Ankeny.

Arcades and arcade games have become more of a memory, met with feelings of nostalgia, than an activity nowadays. With video games becoming more accessible than ever, the need to venture out to get your brightly lit, out-of-home gaming fix has dwindled, but not for Brian Schacherer.

Schacherer has lived in Ankeny since 2007. In 2011, he became a father. With his work-from-home job allowing him to become a stay-at-home dad, he needed something that would get him out of the house.

“As a lifelong fan of retro games and pinball, I started spending my Thursday evenings at UpDown in the East Village,” said Schacherer.

The barcade’s large selection of arcade games made it easy for Schacherer to find fellow pinballers and a growing community.

“Over time, I became friends with a group of other pinball players and learned there were actually competitive tournaments. Back then, we would be lucky to get 10 players participating in our tournaments,” said Schacherer.

The group of pinball players has no age limit and no prerequisites. Schacherer says those who participate in the group’s tournaments range from young to old and beginner to expert. Players also have slingshot themselves from all over the Midwest to compete.

“We often have visiting players from other states. Just recently, we had a tournament where people traveled from Wisconsin, South Dakota, Kansas and Nebraska,” said Schacherer.

These tournaments and meet-ups get scheduled through the group’s Facebook page, “Des Moines Pinball Group.”

While there are several formats for tournaments, the most common is match play. Players are randomly assigned into groups of four. In a similar way, a random machine to play is assigned. All of the players are then shuffled around and continue to be mixed and matched until the end of the allotted play time. The group has seen its share of success over the years.

“Over the year, you earn IFPA (International Flipper Pinball Association) points for all the events you participate in. The top 16 players are invited to play in the yearly state tournament. The winner of that moves on to the national tournament to compete against the top players from across the U.S. Every year, we have sent a player to perform at the national tournament,” said Schacherer.

Schacherer tries to personally organize an event each month. The Des Moines Pinball group has hosted events at the West Des Moines and Ankeny Operating Room locations, UpDown in the East Village where Schacherer originally began perfecting his craft, and Time Out, located in Ames. He also noted that tournaments are hosted regularly throughout other cities in Iowa. These events are listed at www.ifpabinball.com.

While he doesn’t own any machines himself, his goal is to change that.

“I do not own any pinball machines. That is a dream to eventually have an arcade in my basement. Pinball seems to be having a resurgence over the last few years with multiple new machines coming out every year,” said Schacherer.

If that dream were to come true, he lists some of his favorite newer machines as “Godzilla,” “Stranger Things” and “Deadpool.”

“As for classic games, you just can’t beat “Attack From Mars,” “Medieval Madness” or “Twilight Zone,” says Schacherer.



“The message I would like to spread is that this is a fun way to get out of the house, have some fun, play games and meet a great group of people,” said Brian Schacherer.

Schacherer considers himself an average player with a major victory just slipping away from him thus far. His best finish was second place in the Iowa State Championship in 2019.

“Unfortunately, the big win has eluded me, but I have been playing in tournaments once per month and know I’ll get there someday. Even without a first-place finish to my name, I still enjoy playing and socializing with the community,” says Schacherer. ■

WALKS OF LIFE

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES

Year-round volunteers

The spirit of giving is strong this time of year. We donate so food baskets can provide holiday meals to families, so those needing homes or fellowship can sit down to a hot meal and companionship, so toys can be found under Christmas trees, so kids and adults alike can don warm boots, coats, gloves and hats on cold winter days. But the giving is easy. It's the hard work of volunteers that make it all happen. And, for many volunteers, giving isn't seasonal. It's part of the way they live their lives, January through December.



Dennis Leininger
Homegrown philanthropist

Dennis Leininger of Adel is a homegrown “philanthropist” who has spearheaded a variety of projects, such as the rejuvenation of Oakdale Cemetery, the lighting of the Christmas tree on the Courthouse lawn and body cameras for the police department.

“While watching the news, I felt the police weren’t recognized for the little things they do to help people,” says Dennis. “I also knew, in talking with officers, that doing things for those they encountered, such as buying coffee or a meal, diapers, or paying for a tow, etc., came out of their own pockets. Some needs are more complex and may mean assisting a family with a life-changing situation. I wanted to help connect the generous people of Adel with the opportunities to help our police officers meet the needs they see in the course of their duties.”

So, the idea for www.bluekindness.org was born — and just in time for holiday giving. “Blue Kindness is a nonprofit group that supports Adel Police officers’ ability to perform scattered acts of kindness in the community they serve,” says the group’s mission statement.

Source: Adel Living, December 2023; by Marsha Fisher



TJ Augustine
Parks and Art

TJ Augustine has served on Clive’s Parks, Recreation and Public Art Board for a handful of years and has served as the chair for more than a year. He says he is especially happy about a recent change to the board’s makeup.

“The Parks Board recently grew,” he says. “It’s an all-volunteer group that advises the city council on all matters regarding Parks and Recreation within the city of Clive, which includes the pool, which, of course, is a big thing. Within the last year or so, we actually combined our board with the Public Art board to capture the synergy of that board with ours, because a lot of what we do works together, which is making Clive as attractive a place to live as possible.”

Augustine says blending the boards made a lot of sense, since Clive displays works of art by local artists within the various city parks.

While talking about some of the things that make Clive special, Augustine noted the city’s Greenbelt Goats program, which uses goats in select areas of Clive’s parks to help control weeds, and especially invasive species.

Source: Clive Living, November 2023; by Rich Wicks



Ryan Roberts
Enjoying the Grimes vibe

Ryan Roberts is the definition of a community-centered individual.

He likes where he lives and enjoys helping others, so he does what he can to give back to the Grimes community.

“I just really love giving back to the community and helping out wherever I can, no matter what it is,” he says.

Roberts — who keeps busy with the numerous businesses he owns, including Dreamscape Homebuilders — is committed to making time in his schedule for volunteer work.

He served on the Grimes Chamber and Economic Development Board of Directors for four years, is active with the Lions Club, is part of the Governors Day Committee and donates to the Grimes Storehouse Food Pantry.

In addition, Roberts is active with the DCG Booster Club and runs the grill at events like high school baseball and football games.

For Roberts, just being a member of the Grimes community is a joy.

“Grimes is a pretty close-knit community, and the vibe around Grimes and the people who live in town, it’s just a growing and fun community to be in,” he says.

Source: Grimes/Dallas Center Living, November 2023; by Lindsey Giardino



Bruce Huckfeldt
620 pairs of shoes

As a long-time runner who has run thousands of miles, Bruce Huckfeldt goes through a lot of tennis shoes. He also knows the importance of having good everyday shoes. Yet many people do not own a decent pair of shoes.

So, Huckfeldt began collecting footwear for homeless shelters and those in need.

This year, he presented 620 pairs of shoes to Central Iowa Shelters & Services, a Des Moines shelter with a food pantry and clothing closet.

Two years ago, Huckfeldt began collecting shoes and donated 300 pairs. Last year, he donated 400 pairs and reached out to Bombas, a sock manufacturer that donates one pair of socks for every pair purchased. Bombas then donated 250 pairs of socks, which arrived after the shoe drive. This year, he requested more socks and Bombas gave him 500 pairs.

In previous years, he donated shoes locally to the Dallas County Clothing Closet. However, they didn’t have enough room for this year’s haul.

“Central Iowa Shelter was over the moon with our shoe donations. They only had about 20 pairs left in their inventory,” he says. ■

Source: Waukeeliving, November 2023; by Jackie Wilson

Read the full story here:



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Make your job work for you

get the **JOB**

Helpful tips for your employment search

(Family Features) For some people, job dissatisfaction is the result of a crummy boss or stifling work environment. For others, the problem lies much deeper; it's a need to reevaluate your career path and find a more suitable fit.

If you're considering a career change but not sure which direction you're headed, consider these words of wisdom:

Do some self-reflecting. Take time to give your current work situation a thorough analysis. Determine which elements you enjoy, what rubs you the wrong way and what you'd change if you could. Think about practical solutions to the problems you identify whether it's changing to a different role in the same field or exploring a new industry entirely. Avoid the temptation to focus on the negative. Rather, take plenty of time to consider the positive aspects of your current job, since that insight can help inform your next step. For example, if you enjoy the limited contact you have with customers, a job with more customer-facing interaction might not be a good fit.

Ask for input. Sometimes loved ones hold the key to a happier career path because they can point out details you don't recognize. They might recall a time when you were most relaxed and happy, or they might point out talents or skills you take for granted. Often, these natural abilities are an excellent foundation for a career because you're well-equipped to be successful.

Consider your personal interests. Keeping your personal life and professional life separate isn't necessarily a bad idea but finding a way to merge the two can be useful. This is especially true if you're able to combine training or skills with something you're passionate about. For example, if you're an avid outdoorsman, you might find great satisfaction in applying your business management background to work for a company that specializes in camping gear.

Understand what motivates you. Landing in the right job isn't just about having the right qualifications for a position that interests you. At the end of the day, you'll feel most content when your job offers meaningful rewards. Motivators can be financial, or they might have more to do with the ability to learn and grow. Some people are willing to sacrifice a bigger paycheck to know they're making a meaningful contribution in a field they care about. Knowing what outcomes resonate best can help you find a more rewarding career.

Do your research. Changing your career path is a big move, and one you shouldn't take lightly. Before diving in, spend time looking into the field you're considering so you have a better sense of factors like growth opportunities, job availability, qualifications, compensation and more. If you find you aren't quite qualified for the job you think you want, explore what it will take to get there whether it's training, education or putting in your time to gain experience and work your way into the role you desire.

A career change may be just what you need to shift your life in the direction you want. Find more career advice at eLivingtoday.com. ■



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