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MARCH 2026

# CITYVIEW

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# WATER WARS

in the 21st century

“The ungraspable phantom of life”

## BUSINESS FEATURE

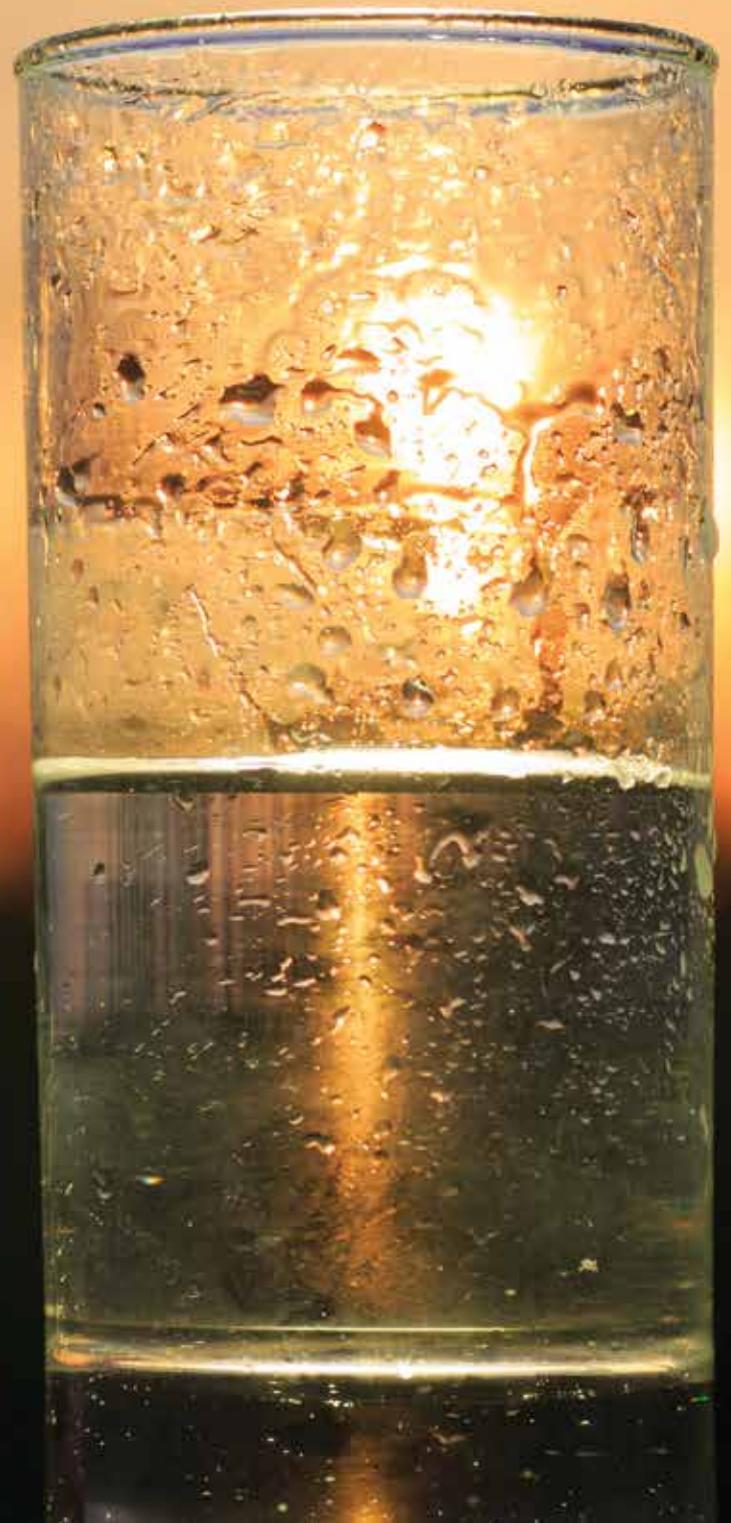
Business and industry trends that meet the moment

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# FROM THE PUBLISHER

## Troubled water

The 1970 song by Simon and Garfunkel, “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” conveys our need for support and comfort during difficult times, using the metaphor of a bridge to symbolize help and solace. The lines “like a bridge over troubled water” and “I will lay me down” mean doing everything we can to help out a friend in need. That’s a great message.

Today, though, those words about troubled water have a more literal meaning.

I have a good friend who studied and worked in city management, and he said he was taught years ago that the single greatest risk for us humans is the contamination of our water supply. That threat continues today, possibly more so from ourselves than from any terrorist activity.

Most all of us know that about two-thirds of the human body is water, and that 71% of the Earth’s surface is water, too. Sure, civil rights, the economy, health care, immigration, guns and abortion are all important issues, but none compares to our need for clean water. Yet, we seemingly ignore it and continue to take what we have for granted.

Look at any world map or globe, and it would appear that we have an abundance of water. So, why the concern? According to seametrics.com, only .014 % of the water on Earth is both fresh and easily accessible in surface and near-surface sources that people can use directly.

Meanwhile, we are told that to be healthy, we need to drink more water. But, we should not drink too much water, as that can be fatal. So, we buy 50 billion single-use plastic water bottles in the United States each year. That translates to 136 million bottles daily. That’s a lot of water — and a lot of plastic.

We Americans also use an incredible amount of water beyond what we drink. In just one year, the average U.S. residence uses more than 100,000 gallons of water indoors and outside. And, we Americans, as a whole, use 5.7 billion gallons per day to simply flush our toilets.

But AI — the answer to seemingly everything today — will fix all this, right? Wrong. All these data centers that keep popping up are using unprecedented amounts of water to cool their servers and prevent their equipment from overheating. A typical data facility uses about 300,000 gallons per day, while larger data centers use up to 5 million gallons daily, equivalent to the water needs of an entire community.

Jim Duncan has been writing about food and water and sustainability issues for decades. I asked him to pen a piece on the subject of water this month, and he happily obliged. Be sure to read it from beginning to end to better understand the history of water and our ever-changing needs for it today.

Thanks for reading. ■

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in the 21st century

"The ungraspable phantom of life"

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"The ungraspable phantom of life"

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# SOCIAL SATURDAY

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MARCH 14, 2026

11 AM – 2 PM

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# ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing [editor@dmcityview.com](mailto:editor@dmcityview.com).

**Q.** What is the construction happening near Johnston Station, where the Panera Bread is?

**A.** We asked the city of Johnston about this construction project. Communications Director Janet Wilwerding responded, saying it will be a Chase Bank. The site is on the corner of Merle Hay Road and Pioneer Parkway, and it will have the address of 5565 Merle Hay Road.

The stretch of road between N.W. 62nd Street and I-35 has a Bank Iowa, Grinnell State Bank, BMO Bank N.A, Wells Fargo, and a Community State Bank. The addition of the Chase Bank will make six banks on the 1.8-mile stretch.

**Q.** What happened to the huge bronze statue of the naked man riding a tricycle that used to be at Merle Hay Mall?

**A.** We asked Merle Hay Mall operator Liz Holland this question and received this response:

"It was in storage for many years at the mall, and when we needed to relocate it, we tried to give it away to a number of public libraries or parks. We finally donated it to a friend of our then general manager, who moved it to her lovely garden on the east side of Des Moines. I am sure it has a good home."

That was more than 20 years ago. In 2021, the statue was then donated to the city of Johnston. It now rests near Johnston City Hall. The statue's true name is "UpDown" and was originally created by artist Mark Jacobsen. It was donated to Johnston by Jerri Scott after being in her garden from 2001 to 2021. ■



# YOUR VIEW

## Join the conversation!

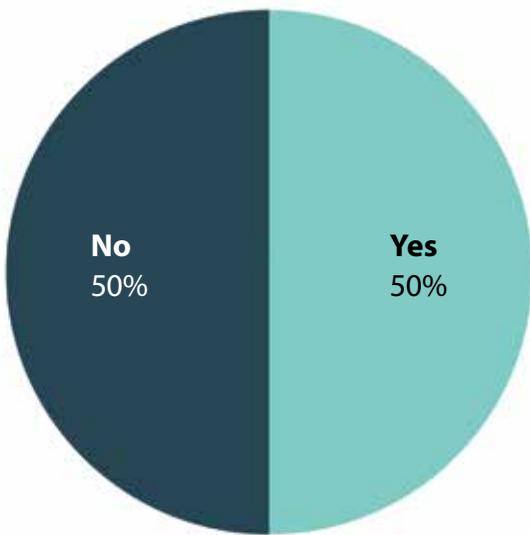
Do you have a comment or photo you'd like to share with readers of CITYVIEW through this page? Use the hashtag #dmcityview on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter — or email editor@dmcityview.com.

## POLL POSITION

Results from last month's poll at [www.dmcityview.com](http://www.dmcityview.com)



### Have you ever participated in a formal protest?



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*Letters are edited for space, spelling and clarity.*

Dear CITYVIEW Team,

While I regret missing the opportunity to celebrate with you and the community, I was truly honored to learn that I was named Best Elected Official this year.

Thank you to CITYVIEW and the readers of central Iowa for this recognition. It's great to know that the work we're doing is making a positive difference for the people of our state. Your acknowledgment means a great deal and continues to inspire me to serve with dedication and integrity.

Please share my thanks with everyone involved in organizing this event. I look forward to participating in future celebrations and continuing to support initiatives that improve life for all Iowans. - Rob Sand

## RETWEETS X

(comments unedited)

**@natecomedy:** Curling is my favorite Winter Olympic sport because it looks like the only one you could do drunk and still medal

**@BigBearF1:** Instead of calling in sick, we should be able to call in healthy. "I'm not coming in today. I feel really good and I don't want to waste it at work."

**@JoeTheCynic:** For those mad that Bad Bunny will be performing mostly Spanish at halftime and won't understand, we've been listening to Pearl Jam for years and still don't know what Eddie Vedder is saying

**@ryuuder:** why is it spelled camouflage and not

**@ajaxintheair:** stop saying the phrase "hurt people hurt people" around me because I just hear a command twice

**@neet\_sol:** "Walk me through your resume" Yeah so basically I did what it says on the paper in front of you

**@ricblurs:** I have no more passwords left in me

**@MetamateDaz:** Gen Z does not understand that the economy used to be so good that if you had a roommate people genuinely thought you might be gay.

**@benedictsred:** Love that cops can either tell your precise blood alcohol level right away or have you attempt a series of parlor tricks

**@ughfinewhatever:** bringing three books to bed so I have options for what to ignore while I look at my phone

## CORRECTION

In our 2026 Best of Des Moines results, we misspelled Best Local Art Gallery, Liz Lidgett Gallery and Design. The error was corrected in the online version. We sincerely apologize for this error.

## FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine  
(comments unedited)

The Super Bowl halftime show has come and gone, but this was by far our most popular social media post of the month, so we felt it necessary to show CITYVIEW readers' responses to the widely viewed halftime show. The following is not all of the comments but some of the most interesting.

### CITYVIEW magazine: Are you excited for Bad Bunny's Super Bowl halftime show?

**Kristi Kolbe:** About as much as a Colonoscopy

**Casey M Davis:** Nope, not watching

**Sarah Miller:** The least excited for a halftime show ever.

**Michael Leland:** Don't usually watch the halftime show.

**Jaime Bernal:** I don't even pay attention to NFL or his music, and I am ready to join the rest of the world that is watching his performance! Also hyped for Green Day .

**S Lynn Felt:** Yes! And Green Day!

**Carly Jones:** Yes!! And Green Day!!! Both will be a vibe!!!!

**Misty Everman:** Can't wait!! And I hope he speaks entirely in Spanish and wears a dress! I'm ready!

**Bri Chny:** I Am! weeeppaaa

**Marte Carlson:** YEEEESSS!!! Can't wait!!!

**Julie Cashatt:** No

**Valerie Dee Krantman:** Nope.

**Eric Fisher:** Not really excited, but I appreciate how

uncomfortable it makes some people.

**Deb Kinney Gibbons Chiafos:** Like a root canal...

**Kathy Simonton:** Nope so lame he's the performer

**Denver Vorwald-Ritz:** I can't wait for all the 'I'm not watching' people to be triggered when they watch.

**David Clippert:** I had never heard of him until certain groups denounced him. I definitely will be watching this American perform.

**Blade Street:** The "catch me outside" girl has really made a name for herself. I'm proud she's singing at the Super Bowl this year

**Kari Ford:** Not at all. Skipping Super Bowl all together this year

**Jerry Bowhay:** Who the f is that???

**Mariza Masters:** YES

**Stephanie Landis:** Nope more excited for the Turning Point USA halftime show!!

**Stacy McKee Bjork:** No, because I don't know any of his music. I may still watch it, I have no idea.

**Chris Larkin:** Nope. Smoke break in the garage

**Keri Johansen Glenn:** It's going to be hot

**Brad Jahlas:** Only if Elmer Fudd plans to show up

for some rabbit hunting!!!

**Jaime Mora:** 100 percent!

**Alicia Scheuermann:** I really didn't know much about him, but I think it will be an awesome performance! I'm mostly excited for Green Day

**Mis D-o:** Hell yes, because the Right hates it!! Bring it on!!

**Hollie Harlea Dee:** Who the heck is Bad Bunny

**Jodee Wedgeworth:** Yes indeed I am!

**Brett Cook:** NFL always picks the worst performers for the half time show. They could have had Metallica but went with a talentless clown

**Todd Hudspeth:** I'm excited about all of the angst it will cause MAGA.

**Charlotte Triplett:** Definitely. It's going to be an amazing show.

**Macie Jo Grear:** I don't know anything about his music, but we will watch.

**Chuck Utech:** Yes, very excited! Dude is awesome

**Clint Morris:** Hell no, I'll be doing something else at that time

**Cheryl Ryan:** If he sang some in English then yes! ■

# STRAY THOUGHTS

BY RANDY EVANS

## Atlantic school board teaches a lesson in accountability

It's funny how a government body can learn and teach an important civics lesson in the time it takes a student to go from kindergarten through 12th grade.

In 2012, the Atlantic Community School District won a lawsuit to keep information secret about disciplinary measures taken against two employees who conducted a strip-search of five girls to try to find \$100 another student reported missing.

Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Cady wrote a dissent in the case, noting that “transparency in government surely will be thwarted” by those who can “quell public discourse and end controversies over employee misconduct with no public scrutiny by simply announcing discipline has been imposed.”

Cady observed that this approach prevents the public from measuring the appropriateness of the government's response to misconduct in matters of legitimate public interest and constituted “a return to the government of the past and a danger to our future.”

In part to address similar concerns about secrecy in government, one of Gov. Terry Branstad's signature contributions to transparency took effect on July 1, 2017. After years of frustration by Branstad, and Iowans generally, over the lack of public information about why governments fire employees, the Legislature amended the public records law to require that government employers release the “documented reasons and rationale” for any termination, demotion, or resignation to avoid termination.

That change worked, at least temporarily. But government officials more interested in expediency than transparency and accountability — assisted by crafty and well-paid lawyers — eventually found a way to circumvent the 2017 disclosure requirements.

Government employers in Iowa now routinely label job departures as voluntary resignations to avoid having to fire workers. By casting an employment termination as a voluntary departure, boards and agencies disclaim any obligation to document or disclose reasons for employee separations, even when settlement payments or salary continuations are involved.

However, the Atlantic school board took a courageous step recently against this tide.

On Feb. 4, the board canceled a special meeting to approve the resignation of high school guidance counselor Jesse McCann, 32. One week later, the board met in open

session and unanimously voted to fire McCann.

The district had placed McCann on paid leave after a parent called a school official on Jan. 18 to express concerns about a staff member. The nature of the allegations against McCann remains undisclosed, but the Iowa Freedom of Information Council formally asked Superintendent Beth Johnsen for the documented reasons and rationale for the board's decision.

Separately, Atlantic police are investigating an incident involving an unnamed school employee and one or more students.

Events across Iowa highlight the importance of how the Atlantic school board handled with openness and accountability an attempted resignation of an employee who is implicated for misconduct.

Public employee transgressions, including some that may be criminal, involve a crucial principle: The community deserves to know the circumstances behind agency demotions, discharges, and even resignations, no matter if they are voluntary, requested or coerced.

Credibility suffers when officials misuse the public access laws to avoid embarrassment caused by government employees acting improperly or illegally.

In Centerville, the school board abused the public trust by accepting the “voluntary” resignation of high school guidance counselor Ryan Hodges following three months of paid leave for undisclosed reasons. Later, it emerged that Hodges sent inappropriate photos of himself to a female student and invited her to his house.

Similarly, the Central DeWitt school board accepted the resignation of science teacher Cody LaKose mid-year but continued paying him through the end of the school year. Only after LaKose found work in another school and criminal charges were filed did the public learn a DeWitt student had accused him of grooming and sexually abusing her in his office.

The Sioux City school board kept the public in the dark when it accepted the resignation of new Superintendent Juan Cordova in January. He had been on paid leave for two months when he resigned for unexplained reasons. The board violated public trust again by refusing to explain why he continues to be paid his \$275,000 annual salary through March 31, despite not working since early November.

That is similar to what occurred in Des Moines. The school board placed chief academic officer Robert Lundin on administrative leave in October for undisclosed reasons. The board accepted his resignation in November and agreed without explanation to continue paying him \$195,600 annually through June 30.

While the Centerville, Central DeWitt, Des Moines, and Sioux City school boards enabled their former employees to move to other employers without consequence, the Atlantic school board took a principled stand. First, no compensation from the government cashbox gets paid once services end, and, second, public accountability is necessary, even if it causes inconvenience or embarrassment.

Liam Spencer, a wise-beyond-his-years freshman at Atlantic High School, spoke to the school board last week and drove home the point why such public accountability is important.

“We don't want this to happen to us again or to another school, obviously,” Spencer said.

A good lesson learned, and taught, in Atlantic. Obviously. ■

Randy Evans can be reached at [DMRevs2810@gmail.com](mailto:DMRevs2810@gmail.com).



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**April 26 |** Corn Hole Tournament Fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association, Grand View University on the Plaza

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BY CITYVIEW STAFF

## Our state's worst winter roads. Iowans love curling. Workforce study identifies skills gap. And water and cancer concerns.

It's a well-known stereotype to those who frequent Iowa's roadways that, even though most every Iowa winter comes with ice, snow, sleet and whatever a snow-squall is, drivers in the area suddenly forget the rules of driving when the conditions take a turn.

A survey by **RVWindshieldReplacement.com** (sounds like they've got a stake in this game) surveyed drivers on the major roads Americans are most likely to avoid during winter weather. The top three in Iowa were I-35 between Des Moines and Minnesota; U.S. Route 20 in northern Iowa; and I-80 between Coralville and the Quad Cities.

Some local roads of concern, whether it be snow season or not, are any stretch of I-235 between 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.; Fleur Drive during flood season; Ingersoll Avenue during construction season; Mills Civic Parkway during the holiday shopping season; and don't even bother trying to get through downtown during the Farmers Market. If Iowa State Sen. Kerry Gruenhagen gets his wish to bring the

Chicago Bears to Iowa, we recommend steering clear of wherever the stadium may end up, too. Not just because of the traffic, but to avoid Bears fans. ...

It has become normal for us Iowans to resist national trends. Apparently, we even do so while watching the Winter Olympics. According to **Reviews.org**, the top five most-watched Winter Olympics sports are snowboarding, ski jumping, figure skating, ice hockey and speed skating — all of which have levels of danger, deft skill and athleticism.

Which of all of these sports dominates the online search habits of Iowans? None. It's curling. Yes, curling. Nine of the other 16 states that had the most-searched sport of curling are in the south, and those residents were probably just trying to figure out what ice looks like. ...

The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce released its 2025 Workforce Survey results with some interesting findings. It showed that more than half of the respondents plan to hire from one to 25 employees in 2026. About 40% plan



(ACTUAL PATIENT PHOTOS)

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# CIVIC SKINNY CONT...

on maintaining their current number of staff members. Despite a strong demand, employers report skills gaps across all experience levels, from interns to executives, with “professionalism, communication, digital literacy, time management and role-specific technical skills cited most often,” according to the results. It also found that high-school-aged workers remain underrepresented in the workforce.

The main takeaways from the survey were related to youth unemployment and the barriers young people are facing in Iowa to find jobs. A lack of suitable roles, a lack of work readiness, scheduling conflicts with school or business needs, and supervision or training needs were listed as the four largest barriers. It says the findings reinforce that employers need help designing and supporting youth roles through training, supervision support, scheduling models and wraparound services rather than simply being asked to hire more youth.

The conclusion of the survey said, “Central Iowa’s middle-skills gap cannot be closed without earlier, more equitable and better coordinated youth engagement.” Some of its recommendations were to launch a middle school career discovery lab that focuses on project-based learning, develop work-based learning ladders to connect career talks, and offer job shadows or high school internships and postsecondary apprenticeships. ...

The Boys and Girls Club of Central Iowa received a grant from Variety - the Children’s Charity of Iowa to fund new furniture for the Bernie and Bernice Baker Club located at Amos Hiatt Middle School on the northeast side of Des Moines. Construction help will come from Baker Group, Graham Construction and HRTLAND — Heartland Companies. ...

Missed your last credit card payment? Not only is that irresponsible, it is apparently not sexy either, at least according to financial media company **MarketBeat**. According to its survey, single Iowans put the credit score cutoff at 541. So, you not only need to pay for dinner, but you should bring your credit score with you, too. ...

Six Iowa teachers were announced as regional 2026 Iowa STEM teacher award recipients. The annual award honors six teachers from one of each of the state’s six STEM regions for their contribution and dedication to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Two central Iowa teachers received the award this year.

One was an agriculture teacher in the Ames Community School District, **Anna Brooks**. One of her colleagues who nominated her said she exemplified excellence in STEM education by blending innovation, collaboration and student-centered learning.

The other resides in the metro within the Waukee Community School District, **Jared Almandinger**, a medical and bioscience research instructor. His goal is to ensure his students recognize STEM’s universal relevance and understand STEM’s presence

across all fields. ...

Several states, including New York, Georgia and Vermont, have introduced pauses on new permits for data centers. Data centers have become a major topic of conversation nationally, specifically the lack of public support for them. According to Data Center Watch, \$98 billion in planned AI data center development was derailed in a single quarter last year by community organizing and pushback.

At least two bills in the Iowa legislative session this year have related to data centers. HF2198 by **Adam Zabner** “requires the economic development authority to aggregate and post all tax incentives provided to a business in a searchable database for public viewing on the authority’s internet site within 30 days of the effective date of this provision.” HF2001, introduced by **Nathan Willems**, is a bill that “relates to the water efficiency of data centers, including requirements to implement water-efficient cooling technologies and encouragement for the use of nonpotable and recycled water sources.”

A statewide poll from Global Strategy Group says the 82% of Iowa voters would be more likely to vote for an elected official who makes protecting clean water in Iowa a priority. More than 72% said rising cancer rates are a “very serious problem,” even more so than the cost of living (61%).

One bill relating to cancer’s increasing rise in Iowa is Senate File 63, proposed by a group of democratic senators of **Weiner, Dotzler, Donahue, Winckler, Celsi, Blake, Trone Garriott, Knox, Bennett, Townsend, Stated, Petersen, Quirmback, Wahls** and **Bisignano**, would appropriate money to be used by the department of health and human services to create an Iowa Cancer Research program within the division of public health department to support cancer research projects at the at the public institutions of higher education in the state. ■

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# POLITICAL MERCURY

BY DOUGLAS BURNS

## Jesse Jackson was a rural Iowan as much as any of us

Speaker of The House Mike Johnson is just wrong on his decision to deny a request from the family of the late civil rights leader and presidential candidate Jesse Jackson to lie in honor in the U.S. Capitol.

Historical precedents swing both ways on this. Dick Cheney and Charlie Kirk didn't lie in honor. Billy Graham and Rosa Parks did.

I'm not going to speculate about the motivation for Johnson's decision. It's defensible, but misguided. Just wrong.

Jackson surely deserves the honor. Speaker Johnson should reconsider.

I say this as a rural Iowan and a former owner of the Adair County Free Press newspaper in Greenfield, the small town that Jesse Jackson, in a remarkable connection, a singular one for a presidential candidate, selected as the Iowa headquarters for his Oval Office bid in 1988.

Think of that — from the perspective of 40 years ago, no less: As a major-party candidate, Jackson tabbed a rural community instead of Des Moines as the central hub of his historic campaign in the first-in-the-nation testing ground.

Iowans — and the nation — quickly learned why as Jackson actualized what Robert F. Kennedy had dreamed of 20 years earlier in Kennedy's own effort to mobilize a rural-urban, multi-racial coalition.

The connections Jackson created between rural and metro Iowans are perhaps only rivaled in the history of the state by the existence of Buxton, a now ghosted city that thrived in the early 20th century with the inclusive spirit that powered Jackson's campaign.

Yes, Jesse Jackson is a South Carolinian. He's a Chicagoan, a former D.C. senator. He's also an Iowan — and a rural Iowan at that. In other words, he's one of us.

Last spring, I sat next to Jesse Jackson's son, Congressman Jonathan Jackson, D-Illinois, at a dinner at St. Anselm in Washington, D.C. for three hours. We talked for much of that time about Iowa — about his father's love of our state, and we brainstormed about how to greater recognize and honor the connection.

Our family, four generations deep in Iowa journalism, didn't own the Adair County Free Press during Jackson's bids for the presidency in 1984 and 1988. The Free Press was in its own historic hands with the Sidey Family at the time. Our family was at the flagship newspaper in Carroll, and I was in high school, during Jackson's campaign visits to Iowa.

**Carroll Daily Times Herald**  
Vol. 118 — No. 146 Carroll, Iowa, Monday, July 27, 1987 — Twelve Pages  
Delivered by Carrier Each Evening for \$3.00 Per Week **25¢** Circulation

### Jackson, Harkin draw large crowd here

**Jackson says coalition key**  
By LARRY DEVINE  
Times Herald News Editor

Building a coalition among the millions of potential voters who currently feel powerless in the election system will be the key for the Democratic chance of winning the White House in 1988, according to the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who brought his presidential campaign to Carroll Saturday night.

Democrats can broaden their coalition by advocating a policy based on faith in economic and social justice, Jackson said.

Jackson addressed a standing-room-only crowd of nearly 500 at the Carrollton Center, in a community designed to accommodate about 150 people. Jackson spoke at a Democratic fund-raising dinner and sermon. Earlier in the day, about 75 Democrats attended workshops at the Carrollton to prepare for the presidential campaign.

Sen. Tom Harkin was the keynote speaker after the dinner, Jeanette Simon, wife of U.S. Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois, and Hester Hubbard, wife of former Arizona Gov. Bruce Hubbard, also spoke. Representatives for other presidential candidates also attended the gathering.

Jackson, 45, got an enthusiastic response throughout his talk and held the Democrats' attention although they were packed tightly in a hot room at the end of a long day of activity.

Jackson has not officially announced his candidacy yet, but he said, "I'm going to be the candidate of our party. I'm going to have us focus on the right issues."

Jackson said his Rainbow Coalition, which was targeted to appeal to minorities and the newly signed up two million new voters who were instrumental in helping Democrats win key U.S. Senate races in 1984 and 1986. The black

**Harkin calls North scoundrel**  
By LARRY DEVINE  
Times Herald News Editor

U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa said at a 5th District Democratic Party fund-raising dinner here Saturday night that in plain and simple terms, Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, who helped engineer the Iran-Contra arms deal, "is a scoundrel."

Harkin was the keynote speaker for the dinner and auction at the Carrollton Center that followed an afternoon of workshops to prepare for the 1988 presidential campaign.

"It's a scoundrel because he's a disgrace to the uniform he wears and he's a disgrace to this country," Harkin said of North, who helped carry out the arms-for-hostages plan while he was a member of the National Security Council staff.

Harkin ripped North's defense that he was following his superior's orders.

"We settled that issue after World War II at the trial at Nuremberg when all these German criminals came up and said, 'I'm sorry, I was just following orders,'" Harkin said.

"There is no excuse of an officer," Harkin said. "Officers must uphold and obey the U.S. Constitution and obey all lawful orders. In order."

Harkin said, "Justice (Pete) Frankfurter said once 'If one man can decide what is law, then every man can decide what is the law. And after that comes chaos and then follows tyranny. The legal process, Frankfurter said, is the process that holds together our democracy.'"

Harkin stressed North's popularity to that enjoyed by U.S. Sen. Joe McCarthy during his Communist hunt in the 1950s.

"But then we found out what he (McCarthy) was really all about and we'll find out what Oliver North is all about, too," Harkin said. "I hope the special prosecutor carries out his duty."

**Harkin, See Page 9**

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a presidential hopeful, told a crowd at a Democratic fund-raising dinner in Carroll that the Democrats can win the White House in 1988 by building a strong coalition of new voters.

**Jackson, See Page 9**

U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa told 5th District Democrats that Lt. Col. Oliver North is a scoundrel and urged them to contact congressmen to oppose continued aid for the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

**Harkin, See Page 9**

He was the first presidential candidate I spoke with in person, and later, the first I interviewed as a reporter.

Most important, I watched intently, taking in every detail, as our long-time editor at the Carroll Daily Times Herald, Larry Devine, my mentor and dear friend, skillfully interviewed Jackson in July 1987. Larry was exceptionally well prepared for that interview and coverage, and it shows 39 years later in a re-reading of the story.

Watching the interview formed a foundation for me and showcased this truism in journalism, one I would share with later generations of reporters: the way to earn respect from a source, whether a presidential candidate or a small business owner or a teacher, is to show them the respect of being well prepared. Larry was certainly that for the Jackson visit.

From my perspective, imagine this: one of the first presidential stump speeches I heard in person, perched in the front row of a conference room at the Carrollton Inn, was from Jesse Jackson.

Had I entered the Carrollton Inn that night with any conflict or ambiguity about my future, such

feelings quickly coalesced around active ambition for a career in politics and journalism.

Later, in college, as a reporter for The Daily Northwestern, I would interview Jesse Jackson at the Inland Newspaper Convention at the Drake Hotel in downtown Chicago. I know we talked about urgent issues of the day, but all I can remember now is that he spoke with me about rural Iowa, about Greenfield specifically, and people there, many of whom he named.

His love for Iowa came through. I can still feel it all these years later.

Reverend Jackson didn't build a residence in rural Iowa. He built presidential campaigns.

He has what I will call "earned residency." Jesse Jackson is an Iowan. A rural Iowan.

And we should be able to mourn one of our own in the nation's capitol. ■

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



IOWA WILD MARCH

# HOME GAMES

FOR MORE INFO VISIT, [IOWAWILD.COM/GAMES](http://IOWAWILD.COM/GAMES)

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 · 7PM

## LEGACY REDS NIGHT

+ ALS AWARENESS NIGHT

Iowa Wild Bobblehead Giveaway (First 1500 fans)

Specialty Jersey Night + Jersey Auction

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 · 5PM

## SPRING BREAK SATURDAY

Sunglasses Giveaway (First 1500 fans)

Pride Night

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 · 7PM

## WINNING WEDNESDAY

If the Wild win, you win! (All fans in attendance)

SUNDAY, MARCH 29 · 6PM

## CRASH'S BIRTHDAY

Iowa Wild Youth Jersey (First 1500 kids, 12 & under)

Pajama Party (Wear your favorite PJs!)



# COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO [EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM](mailto:EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM)

**NOTE:** The following events and attractions are subject to cancellation or changes. Before attending, be sure to check with each event individually to verify details.



THINGS TO DO

Photo by Jasey Michelle, courtesy of Picture Iowa

## IOWA WOLVES

Casey's Center, 233 Center St.,  
Des Moines

[www.iowa.gleague.nba.com](http://www.iowa.gleague.nba.com)

Home games:

- **March 8** at 1 p.m. vs. Memphis Hustle | Women's Empowerment Game / Lynx-inspired Jersey
- **March 16** at 6:30 p.m. vs. Salt Lake City Stars (Utah Jazz)
- **March 18** at 6:30 p.m. vs. Salt Lake City Stars
- **March 26** at 6:30 p.m. vs. Oklahoma City Blue (Oklahoma City Thunder) | Cars-inspired Jersey Weekend
- **March 28** at 6:30 p.m. vs. Oklahoma City Blue | Cars-inspired Jersey Weekend

## DES MOINES COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE

831 42nd St., Des Moines  
[www.dmplayhouse.com](http://www.dmplayhouse.com)

- March 6-22: "The Lightning Thief"

## IOWA HOME EXPO

Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines  
[www.iowahomeexpo.com](http://www.iowahomeexpo.com)

March 13-15

Attendees of this year's Iowa Home Expo will be able to engage with industry experts, gain valuable insights and compare top brands side by side. Those looking to renovate, decorate or build out their homes are provided with the resources and connections necessary to bring their dreams into reality.



Photo by Tim Garland, courtesy of the Iowa Wild

## IOWA WILD

Casey's Center, 233 Center St., Des Moines

[www.iowawild.com](http://www.iowawild.com)

Home games:

- **March 20** vs. Ontario Reign at 7 p.m. | ALS Awareness Night
- **March 21** vs. Ontario Reign at 5 p.m.
- **March 25** vs. Chicago Wolves at 7 p.m.
- **March 29** vs. Rockford Icehogs at 6 p.m. | Crash's Birthday

## IOWA DEER CLASSIC

Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines  
[www.iowadeerclassic.com](http://www.iowadeerclassic.com)

March 6-8

At this event, there will be the latest in archery equipment, and you can shop for hunting gear, accessories, rifles, camouflage, tree stands, tractors, campers, game calls and plenty more. There will be outfitters from the U.S., Canada and Africa. You can even bring your antlers in for measuring.

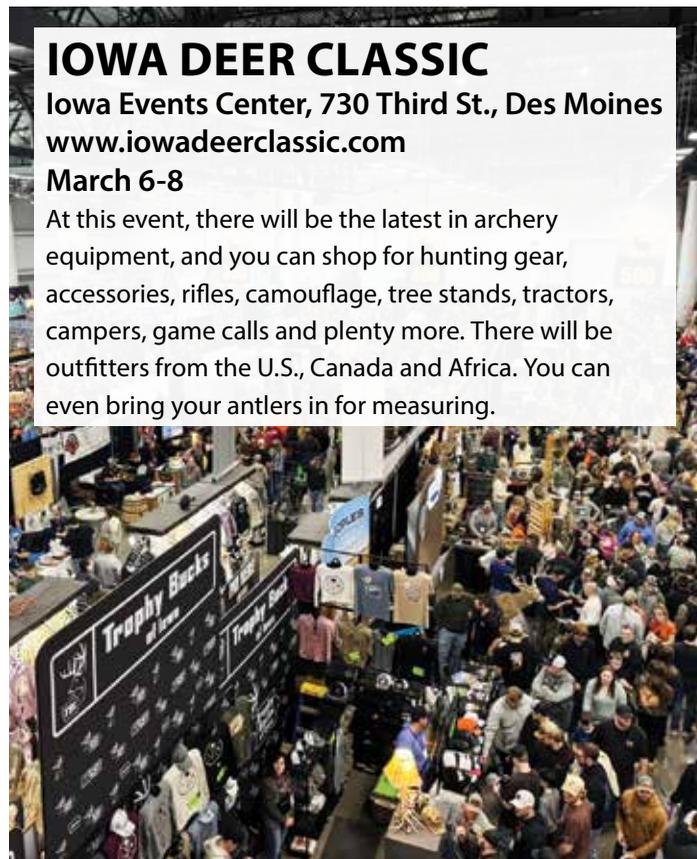


Photo courtesy of the Iowa Deer Classic

## ST. PADDY'S MARATHON, HALF MARATHON, 5K

Iowa State Capitol,  
East Locust Street and  
Pennsylvania Avenue,  
Des Moines

[www.iowaruns.com/  
desmoinesstpaddys5k](http://www.iowaruns.com/desmoinesstpaddys5k)

March 14

This festive set of runs is sure to get you in the St. Paddy's day spirit. The several levels of running make it accessible to those of us in the best of shape, and those of us looking for an excuse to knock back a few cold ones after a solid jog. Either way, all are welcome.

# COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO [EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM](mailto:EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM)



Photo by Bekah Benoit

## DES MOINES BUCCANEERS

MidAmerican Energy RecPlex, 6500 Grand Ave.,  
West Des Moines  
[bucshockey.com](http://bucshockey.com)

Home games:

- **March 6** vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints at 7:05 p.m.
- **March 7** vs. Sioux City Musketeers at 7:05 p.m.
- **March 17** vs. Cedar Rapids RoughRiders at 6:35 p.m.
- **March 21** vs. Fargo Force at 7:05 p.m.



Photo courtesy of Capital City Card Con

## CAPITAL CITY CARD CON

Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines  
[www.sites.google.com/view/capcitycardcon/home](http://www.sites.google.com/view/capcitycardcon/home)  
March 27-29

This event is Iowa's largest card convention, spanning three days where thousands attend to display, purchase and lay eyes on some of the best cards money can buy. At the event will be 224 tables of dealers from across the country offering cards, memorabilia and collectibles. Also on site will be JSA, a card authentication service, available during show hours for authentications.

## BLOOD ON THE CLOCKTOWER

Rook Room Game Lounge and Cafe, 300 S.W. Fifth St.,  
Suite A150, Des Moines  
[www.therookroom.com](http://www.therookroom.com)

March 25

Join the Rook Room Game Lounge and Cafe for a unique, interactive experience. The Blood on the Clocktower is a game of treachery, deduction and dramatic accusations. It is a social deduction game with a beginner-friendly setup. Demons lurk, minions scheme and villages try to stay alive. Spots fill up quickly, so make sure to get your name in there fast.



## FRIENDLY SONS OF ST. PATRICK PRE-PARTY AND PARADE

[www.friendlysonsiowa.com](http://www.friendlysonsiowa.com)  
March 14 and March 17

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is back with its St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Join them on Saturday, March 14, from 2-6 p.m. at The Shop DSM, 901 Cherry St., Des Moines, for a Pre-Paddy Party, featuring live music from Fat Tuesday, a live auction, food trucks and cash bar for an at-will donation. The parade is on Tuesday, March 17 and begins at noon. Participants will proceed from East First Street, west on Grand Avenue to Eighth Street, with the parade officially ending at Eighth and Grand Avenue. The after-party will be in the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel.



Photo courtesy of Des Moines Metro Opera

## WINE, FOOD & BEER SHOWCASE

Des Moines Marriott Downtown, 700 Grand Ave.,  
Des Moines

[www.desmoinesmetroopera.org](http://www.desmoinesmetroopera.org)

March 6

Since 1985, the Wine, Food and Beer showcase has been a yearly favorite for all those named. The event features 30 to 40 of the best restaurants, caterers, wineries, breweries and distilleries in the area. It also serves as the signature fundraiser for the Des Moines Metro Opera, as all proceeds support the education and community engagement programs of the opera. ■

A free resource for the central Iowa business community

CITYVIEW'S

# BUSINESS JOURNAL



## BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY TRENDS

that meet the moment

Shift creates both opportunities and challenges.

By Lindsey Giardino

Across retail, food and service industries, a noticeable shift is happening. Consumers are increasingly drawn to small, specialized businesses — places that offer craftsmanship, sustainability, personalization and a sense of connection that mass-produced options often lack.

Think vintage and resale shops. Artisan bakeries. Custom upholstery studios and eco-friendly refill stores.

For business owners, that shift has created both opportunity and challenge. Success now depends not just on what they sell, but how well they understand their niche, adapt to evolving consumer expectations and communicate their value. The following local businesses offer a snapshot of how these trends are playing out for them.



Myles Barth and his wife, Katie, own Refill and Chill LLC.



Big Sky Bread Iowa, an Urbandale-based company that makes bread from scratch and by hand, is owned by brother and sister, Steve Glas and Amy Reynolds.

## Vintage revival

In Historic Valley Junction, the more antiques and vintage shops the better — and that's according to Stefanie Running Anderson, owner of Good Day Treasures, a shop featuring antiques, vintage and art.

Vintage goods and thrifting are seeing a resurgence. Sustainability is on the minds of many shoppers. Nostalgia and reducing waste are factors as well, and trends like maximalism and moody transitional decor are contributing to renewed popularity. The economy also has many consumers seeking ways to save on gifts and personal spending.

According to a report from CapitalOne Shopping Research, the U.S. secondhand and thrift market is growing rapidly. In 2025, it was estimated at about \$56 billion, up roughly 14% from the previous year and projected to reach \$61 billion in 2026 as resale sales continue to expand. Secondhand apparel alone accounted for 58% of U.S. shoppers buying used clothing in 2024. Resale sales are growing much faster than new retail and are expected to roughly double by 2029.

At Good Day Treasures, Anderson and her team are continually searching for inventory that fits their aesthetic.

"We do have a particular 'vibe,' though, and we have a lot of goods that just wouldn't work here," she says. "I have a 22-year-old son who happens to be on the autism spectrum, and he is going to be heading up our online sales, so we can continue to grow even though our store footprint is small. We have more than one small warehouse of goods right now, and this is the perfect opportunity for him to grow and gain

confidence as our store grows."

For others looking to enter the vintage market, Anderson believes focusing on a niche is key.

"You can't be all things to all people," she says. "The things I rarely sell are the things I spend the most time researching and finding out about its history and understanding the value. From a business perspective, I'd rather focus on the areas I have more knowledge in."

## Bread boom

Bakeries are as old as they come, but in recent years there has been a boom — and breads seem to be top of mind for many consumers.

Big Sky Bread Iowa, an Urbandale-based company that makes bread from scratch and by hand, sees this trend firsthand.

"More people are trying to get away from factory-produced products," Amy Reynolds, co-owner of Big Sky Bread Iowa and Sibling Rivalry Granola Company, says. "For example, sourdough made from natural starter, from scratch, by hand and fewer ingredients versus instant starter made in a factory."

Market Reports World shares the global artisan bakery market is expanding, with consumer demand growing for handcrafted, natural baked goods. In 2024-2025, more than 63% of consumers reported purchasing artisan bakery items at least twice per week, and urban micro-bakeries have grown by about 31% as demand for locally made bread increases.

Reynolds notes that while specialty bakery goods — cakes, pastries and cookies — have surged, especially in the in-home bakery space since COVID-19, brick-and-mortar bread bakeries like Big Sky face



Riana LeJeune, owner of Repinned Luxury Upholstery, says she has seen an exodus in the industry.



different consumer price sensitivities.

"We have noticed that people are willing to pay \$12 to \$15 for a loaf of bread from an in-home bakery but are more cost conscious when buying from a brick-and-mortar bakery," Reynolds says. "That realization has led to the lesson that we just have to go with the flow. We have to be able to adapt and change as our customers' wants change."

Reynolds offers practical advice for would-be bakery owners:

"It's a lot of work, a lot of hours and a lot of sleepless nights," she says. "We would like to encourage people to purchase from licensed, inspected, reputable businesses."

## FEATURE

## Preserving the craft

More and more, people are looking to repurposed furniture for their homes. But, there's a gap to fill.

Riana LeJeune — owner of Repinned Luxury Upholstery and founder of the Renewabl visualization platform — isn't seeing more re-upholstery or custom furniture businesses opening locally. In fact, it's the opposite.

"We're not seeing an influx of upholsterers," she says. "We're seeing an exodus. The majority of professional upholsterers today are men nearing retirement age, and for decades there were almost no formal pathways into the trade. As they retire, the knowledge leaves with them."

This reality inspired LeJeune to create the nation's first Registered Apprenticeship for Professional Custom Upholstery in collaboration with the United States Department of Labor and the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship. In addition to her reupholstery shop, she also developed Renewabl, which earned support from VentureNet Iowa and the Iowa Economic Development Authority, to help clients visualize custom furniture and support skilled trades.

"If shops like ours don't actively train the next generation, these skills could realistically disappear from many communities," LeJeune says. "For us, it isn't about competition — it's about preservation and collaboration. Whether someone uses our shop or another qualified craftsman, what matters is that people begin thinking about the value of skilled labor and paying artisans what their expertise is worth."

Many customers choose restored furniture not because it's cheaper, but because longevity and quality matter.

"Modern furniture is often built for shipping efficiency and price point rather than lifespan," LeJeune says. "We frequently see sofas only a few years old that cannot be repaired because the frames are made from lightweight materials or engineered wood."

In contrast, she says a solid wood frame that has already lasted 50 or 70 years offers lasting value. Proper restoration can extend that life for decades, often saving clients money over time.

LeJeune has also seen shifts in customer expectations.

"In the past, clients chose fabrics from small swatches and had to imagine the finished result," she explains. "That uncertainty often delayed decisions. Today people expect to see the outcome first."

Renewabl's platform allows clients to preview their actual furniture with different fabrics and finishes before work begins, making decisions easier and boosting confidence.

Consumers increasingly want authenticity and individuality in their homes, LeJeune says, and



Eco-friendly refill shops such as Refill and Chill are trending.

small shops deepen the direct maker-to-customer relationship.

For those looking to enter the trade, her advice balances craftsmanship with business acumen:

"Technical skill alone isn't enough to sustain a craft business," she says. "Many talented craftspeople struggle not because of their ability to do the work, but because they were never taught how to lead, manage or operate a business. It's important to have a business plan, a mentor and a long-term strategy."

"I always encourage new craftspeople not to focus solely on becoming better upholsterers but also on becoming better leaders," LeJeune says. "Strong leadership allows you to train others, build a team and create a business that survives beyond one person's hands — and that's ultimately how a craft stays alive."

## Refill and renew

Myles Barth and his wife, Katie, own Refill and Chill LLC, located at the Gray Moon Market in Newton.

Eco-friendly refill shops are trending, with several now operating in the Des Moines metro.

"We believe that whole health and the awareness of saving our health and our planet are more of a priority in the lives of others," Barth says. "We only get one life to live, so changing the way we live will be more sustainable and promote health within the products we are applying to our bodies and lives."

Studies show consumer demand for sustainable products is rising, with a growing share willing to pay more for eco-friendly options. Consumer surveys show most shoppers are increasingly prioritizing sustainability, with more than 70% saying they will pay higher prices for products that reduce environmental impact — a major influence on refill-focused businesses.

Barth says more awareness and education have driven shifts in expectations.

"Most consumers go to big box retails for convenience, so bringing awareness of ingredients and items we are putting on our bodies has become rewarding in educating others about our products we carry," he says.

Barth believes reducing waste is at the heart of the movement.

"Our landfills fill up quickly, and the decomposing rate is slow for all types of plastics, which a majority of plastics can't be recycled, so why are we making more of them? Let's reuse the bottles and containers we have already and not continue to purchase new ones every time we need laundry soap or other products that we can refill."

For other entrepreneurs looking to start a business that taps into eco-conscious consumer trends, Barth advises starting small, reusing what you can and educating consumers. ■

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# *Easter* DINNER



## *Starter*

Traditional Deviled Eggs

## *Entree*

Spring Green Garden Salad

Pretzel Roll

Broccoli Salad

Scalloped Potatoes

Cherrywood Sliced Ham

## *Dessert*

Carrot Cake

Cream Cheese Frosting & Pecans



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**COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM SEPT. 15, 2025, TO OCT. 10, 2025**

**1458 N.E. 70TH AVE., ANKENY**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-15  
 SALE PRICE: \$545,000  
 SELLER: HALBROOK RENTALS LLC  
 BUYER: SEABROOK PROPERTIES LLC  
 ACRES: 0.667  
 SQUARE FEET: 5,140

**1700 S.E. 15TH COURT, DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-15  
 SALE PRICE: \$300,000  
 SELLER: HUDDLESON, MELISA MARIE  
 BUYER: ROCK-IT LLC  
 ACRES: 2.934  
 SQUARE FEET: 0

**807 S.W. 28TH ST., ANKENY**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-18  
 SALE PRICE: \$29,400,000  
 SELLER: TRADITION APARTMENTS LLC  
 BUYER: TRADITION ANKENY ACQUISITION LLC  
 ACRES: 20.050  
 SQUARE FEET: 254,801

**308 FIFTH ST., WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-18  
 SALE PRICE: \$604,095  
 SELLER: CUTLER DEVELOPMENT LLC  
 BUYER: TARIFA APARTMENTS LLC  
 ACRES: 0.166  
 SQUARE FEET: 2,469



**206 FIFTH ST., WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-19  
 SALE PRICE: \$425,000  
 SELLER: GORDON ENTERPRISES LLC  
 BUYER: BLUE WEDNESDAY LLC  
 ACRES: 0.069  
 SQUARE FEET: 3,058

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-22  
 SALE PRICE: \$400,000  
 SELLER: BETTY LYNN WIUFF REVOCABLE TRUST  
 BUYER: SHARP STORAGE LLC  
 ACRES: 1.284  
 SQUARE FEET: 3,885

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-22  
 SALE PRICE: \$174,333  
 SELLER: ALTOONA PROPERTIES LLC  
 BUYER: SCHLENKER, RANDALL T  
 ACRES: 1.000  
 SQUARE FEET: 0



**555 NINTH ST., N.E. ALTOONA**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-23  
 SALE PRICE: \$25,000,000  
 SELLER: ENDEAVOR INVESTMENTS IX LLC  
 BUYER: PW FUND B LP  
 ACRES: 16.460  
 SQUARE FEET: 302,604

**3330 109TH ST., UNIT 203, URBANDALE**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-23  
 SALE PRICE: \$390,000  
 SELLER: GREENSPON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT INC  
 BUYER: BECKER, THOMAS D  
 ACRES: 0.154  
 SQUARE FEET: 32,500

**3419 FIRST ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-24  
 SALE PRICE: \$244,200  
 SELLER: BROAD STREET EQUITY LLC  
 BUYER: SHOB PROPERTIES LLC  
 ACRES: 0.226  
 SQUARE FEET: 3,306

**11842 N.E. 29TH ST., ELKHART**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-24  
 SALE PRICE: \$1,700,000  
 SELLER: HOWARD, JEFFREY  
 BUYER: DLE FOUR WAY LC  
 ACRES: 8.200  
 SQUARE FEET: 1,844



**7600 S.W. 22ND ST., SUITE 107, DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-24  
 SALE PRICE: \$210,000  
 SELLER: CLASSIC ASSETS LLC  
 BUYER: GRIFFIN LAND INVESTMENTS LLC  
 ACRES: 0.110  
 SQUARE FEET: 1,500

**1311 N.W. LAUREL ST., UNIT 113, ELKHART**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-25  
 SALE PRICE: \$265,000  
 SELLER: 1311 INDUSTRIAL LLC  
 BUYER: KARI A HENSEN REVOCABLE TRUST  
 ACRES: 0.127  
 SQUARE FEET: 1,800



**3700 S.W. NINTH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-25  
 SALE PRICE: \$325,000  
 SELLER: NEXT PHASE DEVELOPMENT 3700 SW 9TH ST LLC  
 BUYER: CAMARENA, CESAR  
 ACRES: 0.460  
 SQUARE FEET: 2,580

**1372 72ND ST., WINDSOR HEIGHTS**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-25  
 SALE PRICE: \$500,000  
 SELLER: FRANCO, JESSICA S  
 BUYER: KINGMAN LLC  
 ACRES: 0.409  
 SQUARE FEET: 4,586

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-25  
 SALE PRICE: \$11,700  
 SELLER: LIFE MUSIC PROPERTIES ONE LLC  
 BUYER: CITY OF ANKENY  
 ACRES: 0.018  
 SQUARE FEET: 0

**3311 CRESCENT DRIVE, DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-26  
 SALE PRICE: \$210,000  
 SELLER: CRAN, CHRISTOPHER J  
 BUYER: CACTUS HOUSES LLC  
 ACRES: 0.281  
 SQUARE FEET: 2,532



**104 S.E. THIRD ST., ANKENY**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-26  
 SALE PRICE: \$1,050,000  
 SELLER: M&A CAPITAL PARTNERS LLC  
 BUYER: TIERNAN PROPERTIES LLC  
 ACRES: 0.447  
 SQUARE FEET: 6,900

**5678 N.E. 22ND ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-26  
 SALE PRICE: \$500,000  
 SELLER: WILLIAMS FAMILY TRUST  
 BUYER: LOFT INVESTMENTS LLC  
 ACRES: 1.696  
 SQUARE FEET: 7,000

**3810 66TH ST., URBANDALE**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-28  
 SALE PRICE: \$220,000  
 SELLER: MCDONALD PROPERTY GROUP LLC  
 BUYER: CZECH MATE 2 LLC  
 ACRES: 0.200  
 SQUARE FEET: 1,174

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-29  
 SALE PRICE: \$390  
 SELLER: SEIDL PROPERTIES LLC  
 BUYER: CITY OF ANKENY  
 ACRES: 0.001  
 SQUARE FEET: 0



**1610 S.E. CORTINA DRIVE, ANKENY**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-30  
 SALE PRICE: \$4,000,000  
 SELLER: GRAHAM WAREHOUSE LP  
 BUYER: CORTINA WAREHOUSING LLC  
 ACRES: 9.110  
 SQUARE FEET: 90,540



**7015 DOUGLAS AVE., URBANDALE**

SALE DATE: 2025-09-30  
 SALE PRICE: \$850,000  
 SELLER: FLETCHER, JOHN K  
 BUYER: CITY OF URBANDALE  
 ACRES: 0.587  
 SQUARE FEET: 6,812



**6900 HICKMAN ROAD, WINDSOR HEIGHTS**

SALE DATE: 2025-10-01  
 SALE PRICE: \$900,000  
 SELLER: PHARMCO PROPERTIES LLC  
 BUYER: SOPER INVESTMENT PROPERTIES LLC  
 ACRES: 0.626  
 SQUARE FEET: 8,166

**3115 S.E. 36TH CIRCLE, ANKENY**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-01  
 SALE PRICE: \$583,000  
 SELLER: DRA PROPERTIES LC  
 BUYER: ACG INVESTMENTS LLC  
 ACRES: 2.631  
 SQUARE FEET: 0

**2023 UNIVERSITY AVE., DES MOINES**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-01  
 SALE PRICE: \$305,000  
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC  
 BUYER: DE AVILA ASSET  
 MANAGEMENT LLC  
 ACRES: 0.303  
 SQUARE FEET: 3,892



**1701 E. 17TH ST., DES MOINES**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-02  
 SALE PRICE: \$1,174,500  
 SELLER: SID TOOL COMPANY INC  
 BUYER: HOLT SALES & SERVICE LLC  
 ACRES: 0.964  
 SQUARE FEET: 7,150



**3003 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-02  
 SALE PRICE: \$350,000  
 SELLER: BURNHAM, GREGORY  
 SCOTT  
 BUYER: ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF  
 IOWA INC  
 ACRES: 0.260  
 SQUARE FEET: 2,570



**4227 E. 43RD COURT, DES MOINES**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-03  
 SALE PRICE: \$180,000  
 SELLER: HARDEN, SHANNON  
 BUYER: BRAUNCON LLC  
 ACRES: 0.308  
 SQUARE FEET: 2,000

**4540 LOWER BEAVER ROAD, DES MOINES**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-03  
 SALE PRICE: \$120,000  
 SELLER: ROBINSON, GREG D  
 BUYER: EVERGREEN LLC  
 ACRES: 0.403  
 SQUARE FEET: 1,324

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-07  
 SALE PRICE: \$10,000  
 SELLER: TBJ LLC  
 BUYER: TASTY TACOS INC  
 ACRES: 0.009

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-07  
 SALE PRICE: \$903,000  
 SELLER: REVEIZ LLC  
 BUYER: POLK COUNTY  
 CONSERVATION BOARD  
 ACRES: 75.252  
 SQUARE FEET: 0

**1310 MURPHY ST., DES MOINES**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-08  
 SALE PRICE: \$885,139  
 SELLER: HRC NFS I LLC  
 BUYER: TELUS CONDOS LLC  
 ACRES: 1.052  
 SQUARE FEET: 0



**8600 NORTHPARK DRIVE, URBANDALE**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-09  
 SALE PRICE: \$111,401  
 SELLER: HAND, JOSEPHINE M  
 BUYER: RMKJ 3 LLC  
 ACRES: 4.520  
 SQUARE FEET: 95,039

**765 34TH AVE. S.W., ALTOONA**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-09  
 SALE PRICE: \$3,500  
 SELLER: MIRANDA, ELIZABETH  
 BUYER: HOLMEN OFFICE  
 ASSOCIATES  
 ACRES: 0.072  
 SQUARE FEET: 0

**NO ADDRESS LISTED**  
 SALE DATE: 2025-10-10  
 SALE PRICE: \$1,845,195  
 SELLER: KNAPP-ELWELL LC  
 BUYER: MERCER, DAVID S  
 ACRES: 5.135  
 SQUARE FEET: 0

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Paul Bouwers, Jason Uhlenhake, Ben Buenzow, Tyler Fromm,  
 Chad Lyons, Taylor Carey. Not pictured: Faith Dorn-Spiece, Steve Plym

Send information on new hires, promotions, expansions, openings and other business news to [editor@dmcityview.com](mailto:editor@dmcityview.com).

## Davis appointed chair of the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

R&R Realty Group announces that Maria Davis, senior vice president of R&R Real Estate Advisors, has been appointed chair of the board of directors for the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce.



Maria Davis

## Zollman appointed as Iowans for Adoption board president

Iowans for Adoption recently named Tony Zollman appointed as its board president. Zollman brings leadership, business and financial expertise to Iowans for Adoption. He is a financial advisor with a financial services company in West Des Moines, where he owns and operates his own practice. Prior to entering the financial services industry, Zollman served as president and CEO of Heartwood Imperial Homes, a custom home builder based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Zollman and his wife, Jenni, live in Adel and share a strong personal connection to adoption. Tony is the father of two older children, Simon and Campbell, and he and Jenni adopted their daughter, Vivian, at birth. Their family's adoption journey has shaped their commitment to ensuring children have access to safe, permanent and loving families.



Tony Zollman

## Jennings elected to board of directors of the Association of Leadership Programs

Lead DSM announced that its executive director, Amy Jennings, has been elected to the board of directors of the Association of Leadership Programs (ALP) — a national organization representing more than 300 community leadership programs across the United States. Jennings' appointment places Greater Des Moines at the center of a national conversation about how communities cultivate leaders, strengthen civic engagement, and build long-term leadership pipelines. Her three-year term began on Jan. 1.



Amy Jennings

## DMU president and CEO named 2026 Trailblazer in Higher Education

Angela L. Walker Franklin, PhD, president and CEO of Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences, has been named a recipient of Insight Into Academia Magazine's 2026 Trailblazer in Higher Education Award. This national honor recognizes higher education leaders whose bold, strategic innovation advances institutional excellence, strengthens community and belonging and delivers measurable impact for students, employees and the broader academic ecosystem. Franklin will be featured alongside 17 other distinguished honorees in the March 2026 issue of Insight Into Academia Magazine.



Angela L. Walker Franklin, PhD

## DMU names new director of external affairs

Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences has named Lucas Casey, MPA, director of external affairs in the Office of the President. He began his role Feb. 16. Casey brings experience in higher education and external and government relations. From 2009 to 2015, he served as executive assistant to the president and director of community relations at Grand View University during a period of record growth and expansion. In that role, he was responsible for board governance, strategic planning and implementation and cross-departmental special projects and initiatives. He also managed external and government affairs for the university's president. ■



Lucas Casey

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555 Designs LLC	SPENCER	CLAY	04	\$40,000	1	1	EXISTING	Drafting Services
PRINTROIDERY LLC	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$36,000	5	5	EXISTING	Commercial Screen Printing
TEQUILA GRILL BLOOMFIELD LLC	BLOOMFIELD	DAVIS	03	\$40,000	0	10	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
DJE LLC	Manchester	DELAWARE	02	\$139,000	0	2	NEW	Beer, Wine and Liquor Retailers
Accura HealthCare Holdings LLC	CASCADE	DUBUQUE	02	\$1,100,000	1	78	EXISTING	Nursing Care Facilities
Echo Investing, Inc	MAQUOKETA	JACKSON	01	\$800,000	2	16	EXISTING	All Other Miscellaneous Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Japenga Furnishings Inc.	CORALVILLE	JOHNSON	01	\$5,000,000	2	14	NEW	Furniture Retailers
CC Steff LLC	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$476,600	5	5	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
Chiropractic Health Care Associates P.C.	Cedar Rapids	LINN	02	\$60,000	0	5	EXISTING	Offices of Chiropractors
WILDER THIRST INFUSIONS LLC	PALO	LINN	02	\$20,000	6	5	EXISTING	Mobile Food Services
Accura Healthcare Holdings LLC	STANTON	MONTGOMERY	03	\$3,450,000	1	78	EXISTING	Nursing Care Facilities
Echo Investing, Inc	ALTOONA	POLK	03	\$3,200,000	2	16	EXISTING	All Other Miscellaneous Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Echo Investing, Inc	ALTOONA	POLK	03	\$1,000,000	2	16	EXISTING	All Other Miscellaneous Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Brocksboxbreaks LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$500,000	0	0	EXISTING	Other Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Merchant Wholesalers
Atomic Roll Off, LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$1,060,000	7	0	NEW	Solid Waste Collection
Pope Tedesco Partners LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$505,000	2	40	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
TECHCONSTRUCTION CORP.	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$350,000	5	0	EXISTING	New Single-Family Housing Construction (except Operative Builders)
Great Day ABA, Inc.	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$314,000	30	1	NEW	Offices of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, and Audiologists
Custom Upholstery LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$150,000	3	3	NEW	Upholstered Household Furniture Manufacturing
ProWise 163 LLC	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$1,100,000	25	0	NEW	Wood Kitchen Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturing
Dark Light Productions LLC	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$993,000	8	1	NEW	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries
Shift Holding Company, LLC	Grimes	POLK	03	\$633,000	2	32	NEW	Web Search Portals and All Other Information Services
Dark Light Productions LLC	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$50,000	8	1	NEW	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries
Integrity Point LLC	Johnston	POLK	03	\$1,359,000	6	0	EXISTING	Insurance Agencies and Brokerages
True Green Saver LLC	PLEASANT HILL	POLK	03	\$300,000	6	1	EXISTING	Power and Communication Line and Related Structures Construction
JD'S FITNESS L L C	PLEASANT HILL	POLK	03	\$15,000	0	0	EXISTING	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
SS Irrigation LLC	Urbandale	POLK	03	\$225,000	2	2	NEW	Landscaping Services
NDP Enterprises LLC	URBANDALE	POLK	03	\$78,300	0	0	EXISTING	General Line Grocery Merchant Wholesalers
AAA Compassionate Care of Iowa LLC	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$350,000	5	5	NEW	Home Health Care Services
Gallery Salon on Madison, Inc.	COUNCIL BLUFFS	POTTAWATTAMIE	04	\$567,800	3	5	EXISTING	Beauty Salons
Smash Pizzeria and Bakery LLC	Bettendorf	SCOTT	01	\$510,000	0	22	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
Accrete Care LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$628,700	1	40	NEW	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
QUINT CITIES RESTORATION, INC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$150,000	0	4	EXISTING	New Single-Family Housing Construction (except Operative Builders)
Kaasa Spine and Wellness LLC	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	01	\$149,200	0	1	NEW	Offices of Chiropractors
Oak Meadow RE LLC	OTTUMWA	WAPELLO	03	\$1,329,300	0	2	NEW	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors
HLG Holdings LLC	OTTUMWA	WAPELLO	03	\$137,500	0	2	NEW	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors
TEAL COACH ENTERPRISES LLC	MILO	WARREN	01	\$25,000	0	0	EXISTING	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors
SIOUX CITY SHADE COMPANY LLC	SIOUX CITY	WOODBURY	04	\$50,000	1	2	EXISTING	Window Treatment Retailers

TRANSACTIONS FROM DECEMBER 2025



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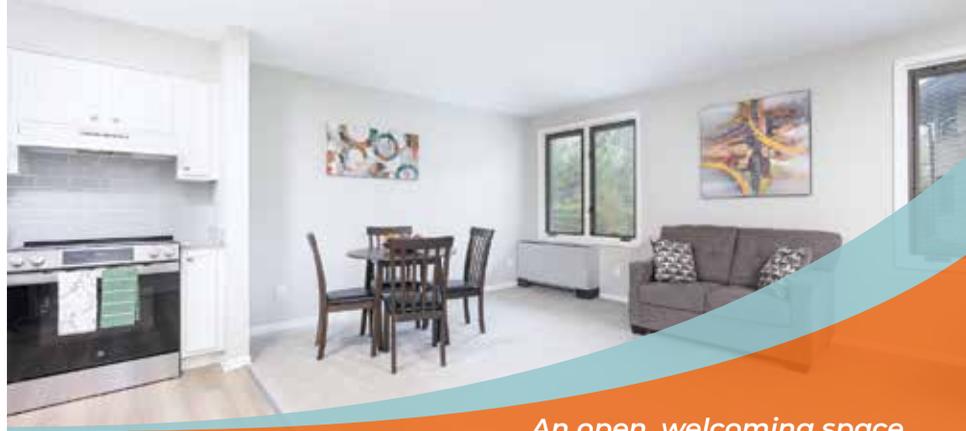
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# WATER WARS

in the 21st century

“The ungraspable phantom of life”

“Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. That same image we see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life.”

- Herman Melville, Moby Dick

By Jim Duncan

Water is the name humans give to the tasteless, odorless chemical bonding of two hydrogen molecules with one of oxygen — H<sub>2</sub>O. Don't let its simplicity fool you. It is the molecule that made all life possible on Earth.

Comprising roughly 60% of the human body, water acts as the primary medium for metabolic reactions, transports nutrients and oxygen to cells, and regulates body temperature. It is the main component of blood and lymph, carrying oxygen and nutrients while removing metabolic waste. And, through sweat and respiration, it acts as a coolant to maintain a stable internal temperature.



The brain and heart are 73% water, and the lungs about 83%. The skin contains 64% water; muscles and kidneys 79%, and even our bones are 31% water. Each day, humans must consume a certain amount of water to survive. Of course, this varies, but an adult male needs about 3.2 quarts per day while an adult female needs about 2.3 quarts.

Beyond human health, water is essential for ecosystems, enabling plant growth, photosynthesis and agriculture. Without water, these essential processes would cease.

“Water, water everywhere;  
nor not a drop to drink.” -  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Without water, there is no living thing, at least nothing known to human ken. The rub is that though approximately 71% of the Earth’s surface is covered by water, the oceans hold about 96.5% of all Earth’s water. While often called the “blue planet,” only 3% of Earth’s total water is freshwater, and of that, only about 0.5% is available for use, with the rest locked in glaciers, ice caps or deep underground.

## WATER WARS

With vital water so scarce, its control has been an ancient, watery bone of contention. The Chinese symbol for “political order” is the same as for water. The unspoken truth behind that coincidence is clear — he who controls the water controls the people.

For as long as humans have lived in packs and tribes, river water has been contested between those upstream and downstream. Throughout ancient history, nations and armies have dammed and diverted rivers to undermine enemy fortifications or to flood areas.

Troy was built as if it was intended to withstand the 10-year siege by the Greeks in the “Iliad.” The Trojans utilized a sophisticated water system, including a subterranean, rock-cut tunnel with a cistern, the “Water Cave of Wilusa,” to collect and store freshwater. The city was built by the Aegean Sea, whose coast was much closer to Troy than it is now, the Scamander River and the numerous hot and cold springs mentioned by Homer. Modern archeological discoveries verify all that Homer wrote about Troy’s water.

All of civilization’s ancient empires were built near sources of water. Ur and Akkadian dynasties that predated the Babylonian Empire sprouted between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of Mesopotamia. One of the earliest recorded hostile diversions of water occurred

when Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylon. To bypass the city’s massive walls, Cyrus’s engineers diverted the Euphrates River into a nearby basin. This lowered the water level enough for his troops to wade into the city through the dry riverbed under the city gates. Even to this day, the systemic hatred of the Kurdish people developed out of the location of the Kurdish homeland – upriver from the Tigris-Euphrates Valley.

The Tigris-Euphrates basin, from Turkey through Kurdistan, Iraq and Syria to the Persian Gulf, is the mother teat of all civilization. The oldest water war 4,500 years ago was fought between Lagash and Umma.

The Arab League in 1964 diverted the headwaters of the Jordan River to prevent them from flowing into the Sea of Galilee, thwarting Israel’s National Water Carrier project. Israel responded with airstrikes to stop the project, a significant contributing factor to the Six-Day War in 1967. ISIS forces captured several dams on the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers during the Syrian Civil War, using them to either flood downstream areas or cut off water supplies to cities as a tool of coercion.

While the Indus Waters Treaty has historically managed water-sharing between India and Pakistan, tensions arise periodically. In a recent instance, India



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stalled a key water-sharing treaty as a response to a terrorist attack, highlighting the potential for water to be used as political leverage in conflicts.

China's upstream dams on the Mekong River during a severe drought led to the lowest river levels ever recorded in Southeast Asia. That has stoked fears that China could manipulate the water supply to millions in downstream nations like Thailand.

During the American Civil War, Union General Ulysses S. Grant attempted several "bayou experiments" to bypass the Confederate stronghold at Vicksburg. Those included the Yazoo Pass Expedition, where Union engineers used explosives to divert Mississippi River into the Yazoo River. They failed as have all subsequent government attempts to "control" the mighty Mississippi.

The lowland Dutch flooded areas and impede German advances in WWII. The Chinese Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek destroyed dikes on the Yellow River to halt the advance of Japanese forces. That caused the largest man-made disaster in history, killing up to 900,000 civilians and displacing millions.



## AG WATER

The ancient empires that survived long enough to become historic were the ones that created agriculture, which was completely dependent upon fresh water, in the valleys of the Indus, the Nile, the Urubamba and the Yellow rivers.

The manipulation of shared water resources remains a source of international conflict and negotiation. Historically, the life-giving waters of the Nile have been shared better than others, upstream and downstream. Recently, however, the Chinese have manipulated Ethiopia to an extent that it is feared they could cut off the headwaters of the Blue Nile. That would reduce its flow into Sudan and Egypt where rainfall is too sparse to support crops. By the time the White Nile flows into Sudan, more than 75% of its water has evaporated in equatorial heat.

More than 120 million people depend upon Nile waters. As noted above, the Chinese, Nationalist and Communist alike, don't share water well with others. Water has been political power to them ever since language was invented.

Such water wars undermined the amazing cooperations that have, for the most

part, exempted water control from the laws of Consequentialism — the philosophy professing that a good result justifies any means to its end. Though usually ascribed to Machiavelli, its tenet was first expressed 2,000 years earlier by Sophocles in "Elektra," a play about the consequences of Agamemnon's return from the events immortalized by Homer.

In post-Colonial America, water wars were won before the losers even realized they were fighting. New York City (NYC) would have been depopulated decades ago were it not for the massive hydroelectric aqueducts that import its water from Catskill, Delaware and Croton watersheds as far as 125 miles away. NYC water is considered one of the best in America. NYC pizza chauvinists believe it makes pies made in NYC superior to those made elsewhere with the same recipe.

Ironically, NYC is surrounded by huge sources of fresh water from the Hudson, East, Harlem and Bronx rivers. But that water has been poisoned for more than 130 years, mostly by industrial dumping upriver.

## DAMS AND DAMNED DAMS

Since air conditioning became common, great percentages of Americans have migrated from the northeast and northcentral U.S. states to the southeast and southwest. That trend is accelerating and shows no sign for reversing. It also requires bringing huge quantities of water to deserts.

That has led to confrontation over how much water to use for agriculture, for lawns and golf courses, and for power generation. There are 85,000 dams in the U.S. Only 600 were built in the West in the 20th century, yet those are the ones that made people angry. Some are ideal dams that allow water to be stored rather than lost to evaporation. Those allowed Los Angeles, San Diego and Las Vegas to grow up from the desert and for food to be raised to support them. Arid California is now the largest producer of dairy and the fifth-largest producer of vegetables, fruits and nuts in the world.

Then there are damned dams. These trap silt and clog turbines, shutting

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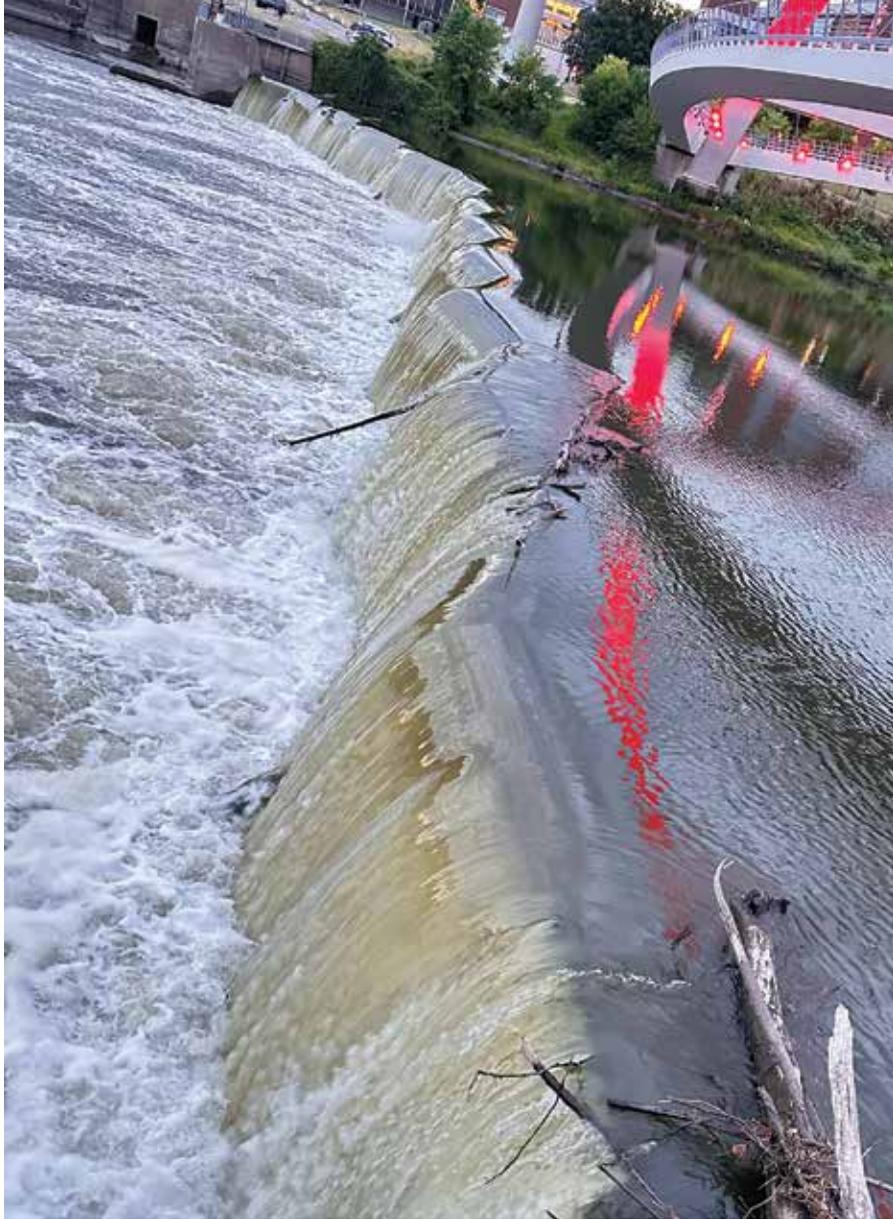




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down power and killing life downstream. They are doomed to short life spans and without constant, expensive maintenance, they become extremely hazardous. The Francis Dam flood of 1927, northeast of L.A., killed 600 and destroyed the career of legendary water commissioner William Mulholland who is credited as “The Builder of Los Angeles.” About 33 dams a year bust, and that number is increasing faster than the number that are being repaired. It costs billions and takes an average of 12 years to repair a major dam.

The difference between good and bad dams is in the eyes of the beholder. One dam is credited with creating environmentalism in America. That was the Hetch Hetchy Dam in a corner of Yosemite Park. It supplies 85% of San Francisco’s world-famous city water with pristine Tuolumne River elixir. It flows from the Sierra Nevada mountains to Modesto, 95 miles from San Francisco at its closest point. It was built in 1912 when San Francisco was desperate to prevent a repeat of the fires resulting from its 1906 earthquake.

Hoover Dam took 112 human lives in its construction. It also turned a Mormon area of desert into “Sin City.” It supplies 4 billion kilowatt hours of electricity, powering 1.2 million homes in three states. Two of those states — Arizona and California — saw it as a water war. Agriculture saw it as a threat. Power companies saw it as unwanted competition. Eastern state politicians saw it a drain of federal money. It took six years to fill Lake Mead while no water reached its natural destination in the mouth of the Colorado River and the Sea of Cortez, and very little water has ever since.

Hoover Dam also created advocates for the Endangered Species Act of 1973, which tied up all dam projects in lawsuits and led to President Carter’s downsizing of the legendary “Water Buffalo” (officially the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation) into insignificance.



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# IOWA'S WATER WAR

“Black-eyed man, he took the blame,  
For the poisoning of the well.  
They found his shoes by the pulley;  
They found his fingerprints all over the pail.”

- Michael Timmons

In Iowa, water war is not about damming and diverting the flow of water but poisoning it. This decade, Des Moines suddenly developed alarmingly high rates of new cancers — the second highest in the entire country. Simultaneously, the nitrate levels in Des Moines’ water supply have risen to the highest levels ever.

At the same time, Iowa counties up the Raccoon River from Des Moines have been harvesting the most corn and soybeans, both overall and per acre planted, in America.

Enquiring minds connect the dots and conclude that agriculture is poisoning the figurative well from which Des Moines drinks. Particularly suspicious is the heavy use of glyphosate in Iowa herbicides. Glyphosate is the chemical that made Roundup the king of herbicides and Ankeny’s Denny Albaugh, who cornered the world market on it, the richest man in Iowa.

Glyphosate is an awesome poison. Before a Monsanto scientist discovered it could be an effective weed killer in the 1970s, it was hardly used for anything other than to kill syphilis in humans. And it has been conclusively proven that it produces excess nitrates.

Thousands of lawsuits claim that glyphosate causes cancer, particularly non-Hodgkins lymphoma. They are so daunting that Bayer, who bought Monsanto in 2018, is seriously thinking about ending the use of glyphosate. Bayer is also touting glyphosate’s wonders in an ad campaign, in Missouri and Iowa, that claims it keeps the cost of food down and feeds the world.

(At our press time, Bayer proposed to resolve all claims that its flagship herbicide causes cancer, setting aside more than \$7 billion to fund payments over 21 years. The Supreme Court will decide if that is acceptable.)

It has been rumored for decades that Des Moines has the world’s biggest water filtration system to cope with the nitrate runoff in the Raccoon. We asked Tami Madsen, executive director of Central Iowa Water Works, about that.

“The nitrate removal system was once described as the largest in the world; however, it is difficult to determine whether that distinction still applies. With so many types of technology available to remove nitrate, and the number of facilities across the world removing nitrate, it would not be easy to accurately say who has the largest facility.”

So, why do we need that?

“When nitrate levels in raw water sources, including the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers, rise above 10 mg/L, which is the federal safe drinking water standard, the nitrate removal facility must be operated to remove excess nitrate. This allows our water treatment plants to continue producing water that meets all safe drinking water standards.”

In an ideal world, what kind of legislation would make it easier to keep Des Moines’ water clean and safe?

“Clean, reliable drinking water is the result of thoughtful investment, strong partnerships and a commitment to drinking water today and for future generations. Central Iowa Water Works and our member agencies have several infrastructural, public-private, and upstream/downstream partners, and scaling and strengthening those partnerships is what brings the most impactful change.

“While today CIWW consistently provides drinking water that meets all safe drinking water standards, continued investment in advanced treatment technology, infrastructure upgrades, and long-term planning will enable us to provide ample drinking water for the communities we serve well into the future.”

Praise the lord and pass the Perrier. ■



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# ELITE DRINKING WATER

High nitrate levels have pushed more central Iowans to buy drinking water. Here are some little-known facts about the elite drinking waters commonly available in Des Moines.

Perrier has been the elite drinking water of the world for more than 50 years. However, Perrier has polluted its brand by introducing the Maison Perrier (MP) line. These products have replaced the real Perrier with a filtered water. The real stuff is sold in distinctive glass bottles. Fittingly, MP is sold in plastic and aluminum.



FEATURE STORY



Topo Chico has been Mexico's elite water since 1895 but is rather new in Iowa. Since being acquired by Coca Cola in 2017, it has also tarnished its brand with a new line called Topol Chico Sparkling Water. It is not made with mineral water from the Topo Chico springs. The real stuff is sold only in glass bottles and is much easier to find in Des Moines than real Perrier.

San Pelligrino has been made with mineral water from the Italian Alps since 1899. Its rather new San Pelligrino Sparkling Drinks are made with real San Pelligrino mineral water. ■

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SPRING 2026

## FIRE and FLESH

The science and lore of steak

### THE DISH

THE SEMESTER NEWS

### WINE 101

TWO LOCAL EXPERTS TAKE RELISH THROUGH THE INS AND OUTS OF WINE IN CENTRAL IOWA

### THE VALUE STALKER

PROTEINS' BANG FOR THE BUCK





# The semester news

By Jim Duncan

Des Moines' food scene got some respect, particularly from **James Beard Awards** where **Ian Robertson** of Oak Park, **Nick Hanke** and **Phil Shires** of Masao were named top 20 chefs in the Midwest and The Contrary was a top 20 new bar. USA Today honored **Alba, Oak Park, Prime & Providence, The Station on Ingersoll, Aposto,** and **Lua** with national "bests." **Egg Roll Ladies** owner Captain **Trang Pham** deployed to Iraq for one year with her Army guard troops. Her restaurant remains open... **The Ingersoll**, a dinner theater, opened on New Year's Eve. Sold-out crowds have been the rule there. The kitchen is manned by **Chase Johanson**, who used to be America's top chef... **Ben Bourland** moved from Harbinger to **The Contrary** where he crafted the menu that James Beard noticed... **Ford's Garage** (Florida), a "full-service, 1920s garage-themed burger and craft beer restaurant inspired by the heritage of The Ford Motor Company" announced intention to build three locations in Iowa and are looking at Davenport, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Des Moines... Rising star **Gabe Stover** moved from Tom Archer's Supper Club to **Masao** where he is sous chef to **Phil Shires** in the city's most creative new restaurant since Harbinger... **Nick Tillinghast** opened **Des Moines Athletic Club** in the Equitable Building... **Mallory Holt** and **Ryan Nicholson** opened **Littleleaf Luncheonette** on the square in Waukee... **Roger Ibarra** moved **Mariscos El Capitan**, with its reputation for really big seafood platters, from Sixth Avenue to much larger spaces in the former S.E. 14th venue of Mariscos El Pirata... **Spectator Sports** closed Nov. 26... **Triple Crown Sports Bar** closed... **Panera** (Missouri) announced it is closing its Jordan Creek Town Center outlet... Wildly successful **Kura Sushi** of Osaka announced plans to bring its popular conveyor belt cafeteria to Jordan Creek... **Chikin Lickin** opened in the Local Bites food court with Korean takes on fried chicken... **Dave's Hot Chicken** opened in Ankeny... **Teriyaki Eats** opened in Windsor Heights... **Bonfire** opened on South Ankeny Boulevard... **Django** announced a March 14 closing

date... **Kwik Star** announced a new store near Westtown Parkway and Valley West Drive... **Tribute** (Coralville) opened its first central Iowa restaurant, in Ankeny... Convenience-store operator **RaceTrac** struck a deal to purchase **Potbelly** for roughly \$566 million, aiming to continue growing the Chicago-based sandwich chain... **Highland Underground** and **Bar Martinez** opened... The versatile **Gloria Henriquez** added a Salvadoran menu to her Peruvian kitchen at **Tulpa** while becoming the head of the Iowa Latino Restaurant Association... **Carly Dascoli** replaced Sam Tuttle as Wine Director at **Oak Park** and its 7,000 bottle wine cellar. Dascoli moved from Harbinger earlier. Tuttle moved to San Francisco... **Amruth** added Saturday and Sunday buffets noon to 4 p.m.... **Saffron Indian Café** moved into the former Mandarin Noodle House with daily buffets... **JBS USA** broke ground on a \$135 million sausage plant in Perry Industrial Park... **T.E. Alderman's** closed its gluten-free café in Nevada after one year... **Barista's Bouquet**, a West Des Moines coffee and flower shop, is expanding into a second location in Urbandale... **Taste of New York**, an "Ultimate Pizza in Des Moines" winner, moved its mother store into a larger bay in the same strip mall. They also expanded to Pleasant Hill... **Bamboo House** opened a second locale on Merle Hat Road... **Birdie's** took over the former JJ's space in Ankeny... **The Empire** returned to its 1906 home on Fourth... **Revelry Room** upgraded the Renaissance Savery's dining options... **Fairway Frank's B&G** opened in Norwalk... **Judges DSM** opened near the Courthouse... **Bubbies BBQ**, a barbecue joint, expanded... **Chowrastha Indian Grill & Eatery** in West Des Moines expanded to Ankeny with **Spice Rasta**... **Zeke's Rooftop & Grill** opened in Johnston... **Exile Brewing Co.** announced a new location inside the Kettlestone Social food hall and entertainment space coming to Waukee... **The Greenwood Lounge** sold to **Connor Delaney**, who actually deep cleaned and upgraded the place to reopen in March... **Mike Wedeking** sold his **Flying Mango**, which remained unchanged. ■



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# FIRE and FLESH

The science and lore of steak



A FILET AT RUTH'S CHRIS.

By Jim Duncan

Freshly cut meat searing over an open flame wafts a primal scent — the one that encouraged our human progenitors to straighten their spines, walk on two legs, fashion spears, and domesticate fire. Roasting steak is the original form of cooking. In cave paintings that date back 40,000 years, Neanderthal artists depicted the hunting and cooking of aurochs, the progenitors of cattle.

In those paintings, mankind's ancestors were already unique amongst hunting species in that they did NOT stalk old, sick and weak prey. "Steak" author Mark Schatzer, speaking in Des

Moines last August, reasons that is because weak prey may be easier to kill but they are too lean. And even 40,000 years ago, the prehuman body sensed what it needed to eat in order to survive.

Schatzer thinks the calories in diets that matter most all come from fat.

"If more than 40% of one's energy comes from protein, the liver buckles and toxins enter the bloodstream."

Too much protein can kill us — a condition called "rabbit starvation" after Canadian explorers in the 19th century died from eating an all-

rabbit diet. (Rabbit has more protein than any other meat.) Neanderthals were the original diagnosticians, laying down the first nutritional rule of survival — "fat is where it's at."

The Pitjandjara of Australia's Outback will abandon an entire carcass if they find no fat in the tail of a kangaroo. Plains Indians' diets were 85% bison meat. It nourished them so well that in the middle of the 19th century, they were the tallest people on Earth, almost an entire inch taller than white people of the time. Of all bison steaks, they prized hump, which is the fattiest of all.



JAMES BEARD AWARDS' TOP 20 MIDWEST CHEF IAN ROBERTSON WITH A STEAK ON OAK PARK'S JOSPER GRILL. PHOTO BY BILLY DOHRMAN, COURTESY OF OAK PARK

## STICKS AND STONES

We also learn from Neanderthal artists that the first steaks were cooked on sticks over open flames. That is still the preferred method for many steak eaters. In Spanish this method of called “a la parilla,” parilla being the fire. In Argentina, where more steak is eaten per capita than anywhere else on Earth, the word “carne” means only beef. All lesser meats, like pork, lamb, mutton and protein-heavy rabbit, don’t qualify.

Etymologically, “steak” comes from a Viking word meaning stick, or the stick on which meat is impaled and cooked over an open fire. The word “kebab” evolved from Akkadian through Aramaic, Persian and Arabic and means “meat grilled on a stick over fire.” We honor the primeval cooks with words in most all languages.

Flame grilled aurochs was an easily acquired taste. We know now that even monkeys, who don’t even know how to cook, prefer cooked steak to raw. Today in metro Des Moines, Prime & Providence cooks all its steaks, and some seafoods, over glowing embers. Oak Park takes charcoal cooking to its most celebrated level with their Catalunya-built Josper charcoal grill-oven. Hardee’s, Carl’s Jr., Burger King and B Bops all distinguished themselves from other burger chains by searing their beef over flames.

High heat sears better than lesser temperatures. The essential char on a great steak is the result of a Maillard Reaction which is to proteins’ amino acids what caramelization is to carbohydrates’ sugar. It produces much of what we call flavor in a steak.

When cooking with wood, the wood must first be burnt down to glowing coals because the “yellow flame stage” of fire leaves particles on the char that are quite unpleasant and, probably, carcinogenic. Hard woods like oak and ash burn the hottest. Dry and aged woods burn hotter than fresher woods. Lump charcoal burns hotter, but shorter, than briquettes. Argentines prefer quebracho wood from north Argentina so much that it is sold in most all supermarkets in Buenos Aires.

My first trip to Buenos Aires seduced me with its seductive aroma. There are so many Argentines cooking steaks on parillas that the whole city is swamped in its primal scent, at least in warm months. Woods burn at 1,100 to 2,000 degrees F. In the best restaurants, steaks sear quickly and then are finished in ovens. Seryna steakhouse in Tokyo pioneered the cooking of steak on rocks from the sacred Buddhist town of Nikko. Those are heated for 8 hours to reach 200 C (392 F). Cooking time on Nikko stones is just seconds.



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**DOES STEAK HAVE FLAVOR?**

Steak’s flavor profile is complex. There are 340 flavor compounds in steak — compared to 386 in red wine. Yet, steak critics don’t write arrogant reviews about its “notes of raspberry” and “hints of mustard seed.” Steak’s flavors come from its amino acids, and they are not what wine writers like. For instance, butanoic acid lives in steak and also in body odor, vomit and Parmesan cheese.

A well-done steak has 80% less umami, the pseudo flavor that enhances other flavors, than a medium rare one. Three beefy tasting substances, especially thiamenes, are found in steak and roast beef and nowhere else. These are “volatile,” meaning they are created by heat and disappear when heat is removed. Reheated steak creates new, less pleasant molecules. Beef should be room temperature before cooking because colder meat will experience “thermic shock” that blocks key flavor compounds. According to Scotland’s equivalence of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a good steak should last five to six chews before losing juiciness. More than 12 chews makes it a great steak.

Steak makes it to higher chew numbers because of its melting fats and its juiciness. Those are not the same thing, and their balance is essential to the best steaks. Melted fat induces salivation and the illusion of sustained juiciness, but real juice is the bloody stuff that covers the plate when cut. Juice is in muscle fiber. If a steak has too much fat, it has too little juice.



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For a century, the status of Iowa beef extended to New York City steakhouses and beyond. In 1959, Des Moines' Harry Bookey, then 11, told Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev that the U.S.S.R. might have an edge in satellite technology, but our beef was superior. Khrushchev, a staunch Russian chauvinist, conceded the point to the young debater. Coincidentally, Bookey would become both a lawyer and a restaurateur in Des Moines.

When Khrushchev visited Des Moines, Iowa beef represented the culmination of one of the great romances in the histories of both agriculture and human migration. After Europeans got word about the fertility of Iowa's black soil, immigrants flocked across oceans, mountains and hostile forests to realize the American dream of owning land from which they could make a good life.

By the end of the 19th century, they made Iowa a rich state built on fields of grain and pastures of plenty. That wealth was sustainable and a source of pride. Fields produced corn in such abundance that farmers fed it to cattle that grazed their youth away in alfalfa and clover. Those corn-finished cows moved short distances to packers and lockers. Our steaks were lowan from birth to aging lockers and famous for their superior marbling.

Since Khrushchev left, Iowa has gone from the No. 1 cattle state to No. 9. Cattle business moved south and west for cheaper land. This decade, however, Des Moines' steakhouse scene grew like a force-fed duck's liver — even as America's cattle population declined to a level not seen since before Khrushchev visited, when there were only half as many human mouths to feed as today.

The laws of supply and demand skyrocketed beef prices this decade. Yet somehow “all prime and aged” steakhouses popped up in Des Moines' metro like the purple flowers of the spring alfalfa that grassfed cattle love most.



RUTH'S CHRIS IN WEST DES MOINES HAS MULTIPLE CHANDELIERS THAT COST MORE THAN RUTH'S FIRST RESTAURANT.

Ruth's Chris built its largest store ever, at the time, in West Des Moines. Yet, locals Irina's and Prime & Providence moved in near them and Fleming's. Prime & Providence elevated steakhouse culture to Japanese levels with Japanese flights and steaks that go beyond just Kobe.

Steakhouses are now touchstones to the farms and small towns from which many of Des Moines-area families moved. Three-fourths of Iowa counties peaked in population more than 120 years ago while the Des Moines area grew continuously. Steakhouses used to cover the state. In smaller towns, they often became surrogate country clubs and were the nicest places in entire counties for people to celebrate special occasions of life.

Archie's Waeside in Le Mars became a bona fide Iowa legend with its dry aging room, two James Beard Awards, a garden and a nearby landing strip for private planes. 801 Steak and Chop House expanded out of Des Moines to Denver, Kansas City, Omaha, the Twin Cities, St. Louis and metro Washington D.C. A quarter of the way through the 21st century, Des Moines is again the focus of steakhouse culture. ■

## Steak's dirty secrets

(mostly from food journalist Mark Schatzker)



- The last bull aurochs died in Poland in 1620. The last female followed him seven years later.
- Grass is what all ruminants eat in nature. It does not cause their livers to abscess or their rumens to turn acidic like corn does. A green leaf is alive. A seed head is dead — an inert package of starch intended to feed a blade of grass. Corn does not exist in nature. It required humans to coax grasses into developing large, starch seedheads. Rice, wheat, corn and barley are all large seed heads. Humans harvested them and ate them and eons later steamed and flaked them to feed to cattle.
- The first grain-eating cows were in 18th century Appalachia. Before WWII, one in 20 steaks came from grain eaters. Now, nearly all do.
- Feedlot nutritionists actually prefer to see a percentage of cattle get sick and die. It shows the herd is being pushed to the edge ration-wise
- The Chicago Mercantile Exchange sells 45,000 beef contracts a day. Each is for 40,000 pounds of beef. That's 1.8 billion pounds a day.
- The USDA employs 200 meat graders with 140 dedicated to beef. Texas Tech University offers a major in beef grading.
- The longer meat ages, the more time calpain enzymes have to bust up muscle fiber and tenderize beef.
- The French consider beef less than two years old to be insipid. Rather than hanging carcass from the hindleg, as is common, French butchers hang them from the hip bone, believing it stretches muscle in a way that benefits steak flavor.
- Continental breeds (Charolais, Limousin, etc.) that were used for centuries to pull plows and carts are full of fast-twitching muscle fiber, making them tougher and less flavorful than smaller less-bred Highlands.
- There are about 1,000 breeds of cattle today. Angus cattle make up just 14% of the Scottish herd, for which it is associated. Mostly Scottish cows are now Limousin.
- Thousands of people come each year to eat thousands of pounds of Chianina beef, mostly T-bones, in Cortona in Chiana, Tuscany. That is the world's biggest steak festival.

# Wine 101

Two local experts take RELISH through the ins and outs of wine in central Iowa.



BARRELS OF WINE LINE THE WALLS INSIDE JASPER WINERY.

By Cyote Williams

A glass of wine is a symbol of class and elegance. It has its roots — or vines — intertwined with most of history, as the alcohol made from grapes has been around for nearly 10,000 years, an almost inconceivable amount of time. Depending on who you ask, even Jesus Christ made his own wine.

With such a rich history, both in its flavor and its origins, wine has remained a popular beverage. And, we can see how. After all, wine spans from boxed wine, wine coolers and wine in a bag all the way to barrel-aged, specialty-grown grapes and can cost thousands of dollars for just a single glass. There is also plenty in between.

But, entering the world of wine can also be a challenge and intimidating. Different flavors. Different colors. Different regions. The list goes on. We chose to talk to a local grower/maker and a local wine expert to get the long and short of the wine world from how it is

grown to how to taste it and what to buy.

We sat down with Mason Groben, the man responsible for wine production at Jasper Winery, located on Des Moines southside. Groben has a degree in viticulture and enology, which is grape growing and wine science. Jasper Winery was originally started by his parents, Jean and Paul, in Newton. In 2007, Jasper made the move to Iowa's capital and has been producing wine and hosting events at the winery ever since.

“That was nearly 20 years ago now. Things were very different in Des Moines back then. There was a resurgence in downtown Des Moines. There were not even any breweries in Des Moines. It was just a really different time in the Iowa beverage industry. That being said, it was very new, but there was a lot of excitement. People really didn't know that Iowa could have wineries and breweries,” Groben said.

## GROWING GRAPES

Sure, Iowa is known as a farm state. But, that buck tends to stop after corn, soybeans and pigs. As for grapes? Who could know? Perhaps the man with the viticulture degree.

“We’ve really tackled all that stuff over the years, whether that’s sourcing ingredients, marketing and promotional, that kind of stuff. Having the wine industry in the Midwest, there are going to be challenges in that we can’t grow the same grape varieties that you grow in California,” Groben said.

Alas, there are grapes you can grow in the Hawkeye state. The ones that Jasper grow are French American hybrid varieties. Grapes like Baco blanc or Marquette’s.

“They’re varieties that are bred to withstand the cold temperatures of the Midwest. So, one of the biggest challenges is educating people what these different grapes are,” Groben said. “We can make dry wines or sweet wines, red or white. That’s a challenge, educating not only the industry but also consumers of what these different Midwestern grapes are.”

The Iowa wine scene was once a lot sweeter than it is today, according to Groben. Not that there was anything wrong with a sweet wine, but Groben and Jasper wanted to show the market that there is a whole world of wine out there to enjoy.

“We’ve always tried to use local grapes, make a high-quality, dry wine, barrel-aged stuff — trying to push an envelope,” Groben said.

Being limited by the climate, the type of grapes Groben and other wineries are able to grow in the area is limited, and this will also affect the taste.



DESPITE CLIMATE CHALLENGES, JASPER WINERY PRODUCES TASTEFUL REDS AND WHITES.

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JASPER WINERY WELCOMES THOUSANDS TO ITS YARD EVERY YEAR FOR ITS SUMMER CONCERT SERIES.

“You couldn’t grow a Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay here. It’s gonna die off during the winter. Because it doesn’t get so warm, some of the dry reds are a little bit more of a challenge for us, because it’s just really hard to develop the tannin that you would in the climate of California,” Groben said.

If Mother Nature obeyed his demands, what would Groben and Jasper be growing?

“My favorite white grape is Sauvignon Blanc. I like that a lot. For red, I like Zinfandel,” Groben said.

### MAKING WINE

What is the wine-making process like? From start to finish, from the idea room to the vineyard, to the machines and to the bottles? White grapes and red grapes get different treatments, but the processes are mostly the same.

“With the white grapes, we’re going to harvest those, we’re going to bring them in, and we’re going to press those the same day that we bring them in. We press them into juice, pump that juice into the tanks in the back here. Then, add the yeast and start fermentation. It’s going to ferment for about three weeks. It’s going to sit for about a couple of months to stabilize, and then you’re going to filter it, blend it — if you’re going to do any blending — and basically get it ready for bottling,” Groben said.

As for red grapes, the main difference is that you crush and ferment the juice with the seeds and the skins. That will extract the color and the tannins from the red grapes. Then after fermentation is when they get pressed.

Jasper has also dabbled in making cider recently. The winery planted 300 apple trees to help produce the sweet beverage, which is not all that different from wine, according to Groben.

“There’s not a lot of difference, really. People really think that cider is more like beer, but really, cider is basically just an apple wine, the way it’s made. The biggest difference is that it’s going to be a little bit lower alcohol, because

apples start with a lower amount of sugars. Apples have about half as much sugar as grapes. So, it's like a lower alcohol wine, and it's carbonated. That's your other big difference," Groben said.

We also sat down with Jamie Farrington, who is opening up a new wine bar in the former Johnston Winestyles, now dubbed the Rabbit Room. Farrington is a man who has lived many lives. He went into the Navy straight out of high school. While he was working on his culinary degree at DMACC, he worked in a factory. He also worked at Stoney Creek, Gateway Market and Winestyles.

His love for the grape-made alcohol started simply with a bottle of Two-Buck Chuck from Trader Joe's.

"This is when Two-Buck Chuck was still \$2 a bottle. By the time I finished my first case, I was like, I need to move on to something better," Farrington did.

He first upgraded to a 2007 bottle of Chianti Classico Reserva from Banfi.

"That was my graduating year from high school. I fell in love. I was like, OK, yep, now I'm kind of ruined because I've got to buy good wine now. That's really when it started, in terms of my appreciation for good wine," Farrington said.

## WINE BUYING

When looking to buy a wine to drink at home, or at a restaurant, knowing what to choose out of the hundreds of selections can be its own battle. You don't want to buy something that's too cheap and will disappoint, but you also don't want to buy something too expensive and waste your money.

It might not be as difficult as one might think. Even a wine guy like Farrington still gets some of his wine at the grocery store.

"I live literally a block and a half down from Aldi. That's where I do a third of my grocery shopping. And, you know, they've got their little wine section, and half of it, I don't want to touch it, but the other half, I actually am like, I want to take this home. And it's super cheap," Farrington said. "I also understand the Italian ratings, DOC versus DOCG."

Denominazione di Origine Controllata, or DOC, is a system of laws implemented in 1963 that regulates all aspects of winemaking in Italy. Then, a DOCG would indicate another guarantee of quality. Wineries receive this after submitting their samples to a testing facility for minimal alcohol content, aging requirements and grape quality. This is similar to French wine, which uses

## WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL WAY TO ENJOY A GLASS OF WINE?

### GROBEN

"It's going to be having a glass of red wine with steak. You're going out and having a nice dinner with a glass of red wine. The second way, I would say, is having a sangria down here (Jasper Winery) on a Thursday night in a concert-like atmosphere."



### FARRINGTON

"I wanted to cook my dad a three-course dinner and have a wine pairing with every course. My first course was mushroom and scallop risotto, and I paired that with a Riesling cabinet. I bought a duck and I confit the legs on a bed of salad. For the main dish, I did the duck breast with rainbow carrots, and I think I did asparagus. With that, I had a burgundy, so a Pinot Noir from France. That was fun."

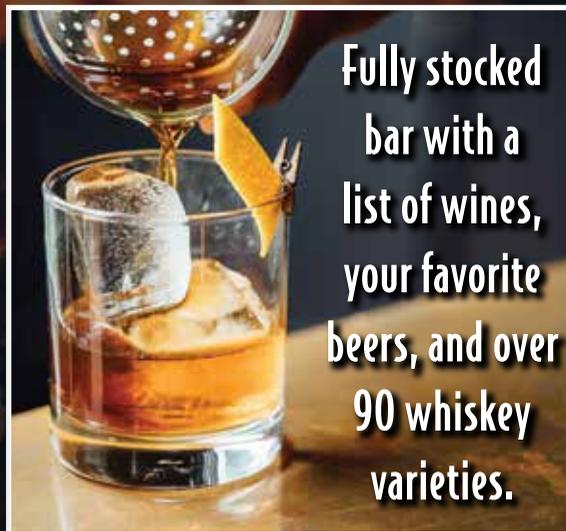
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AOC. Look for those lettering systems next time you are purchasing a bottle. Farrington says he has found DOCG Chiantis at Aldi.

“For people getting into wine, they do tend to prefer the fruitier, almost sweeter wines, which is fine. I mean, that’s where I started, right? I would say, try to stay within a price range. If you want to go with a Moscato, going to that \$20 to \$25 bottle range, it’s a lot for Moscato. But Moscato that is that much is actually quite good. Oftentimes, what you find with Moscato is that it’s almost syrupy, and by the time you’re done drinking it, I feel like there’s a barrel of liquid in me,” Farrington said.

So, in a case like this with Moscato, going to the higher price range is going to equal a better product. If you want to bin the sweet stuff and find something drier, Farrington has a few regions he leans on.

“Spain and Portugal, generally between \$15 to \$20. If you want to skirt the sweet stuff and go into more of the dry components, Spain and Portugal are phenomenal,” Farrington said.

Also, depending on whether you will be having a glass on its own or with a meal can change which type of wine you should buy.

“If you’re going to be drinking it by yourself, sticking with in that \$15-20 price range, sticking with an American

wine, whether it be like Chile or Argentina, or you’re coming up into California, Oregon, or Washington, or even Australian wine, or New Zealand wine. If you’re going to be pairing with food, definitely go old-world. So, you’re either Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, anything in that price range, I would gravitate to that,” Farrington said.

**WINE TASTING**

Ever since Farrington got his taste, he has been honing his palate. He made it clear that he is not a sommelier, but he still knows a thing or two about what to look for when tasting a wine.

“Every time I go to try a wine, especially for the first time, I’ll do a sniff, swirl, sniff. So you sniff, now you’ve got that baseline. Your brain is like, oh, OK. Then you swirl it to oxygenate the water, and you sniff it again, and what ends up happening is your brain is like, Whoa. OK, now that’s nice. I’ll actually do that three times, but I think one is fine,” Farrington said.

He then breaks it into three different drinks. First, he is looking for any notes of fruit.

“Am I tasting blue fruit? Am I tasting red fruit? Am I tasting purple fruit? Am I tasting stone fruit? Am I tasting

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# EAT // DRINK // COOK // SHOP

melons?” Farrington said.

On the second taste, he is looking for signs of what it might have been stored in.

“I’m trying to figure, can I get any oak notes on it, like, tastes more like stainless steel more than oak, or oak more than stainless steel,” Farrington said.

Then, on the third taste, he is looking for spices.

“Am I getting black pepper, or am I getting baking spices, or allspice and nutmeg, Anything like that, right? So that way, by the time I’m done, my brain has already essentially created that circuit of ‘this is what this wine smells like and tastes like,’ ” Farrington said.

Breaking it down into three different steps can help people differentiate what they are tasting instead of trying to find all of those complex notes in one go. That is Farrington’s process and is something that can be replicated at home.

Even the type of glass you are drinking it out of can affect the taste.

“The shapes of the glasses are important. The rim width, a thicker rim, you’re not going to have

as great of an experience with that wine as you would with a thin, Riedel, or even, like a Spiegelau glass. That makes a difference, because it’s how it rolls off into the tongue. It’s that first interaction that your tongue and your brain have with that wine. It all comes from the rim of that glass.”

When deciding what wine to eat with a meal, it can be easily determined by color. Red wine for red meat, like a steak. White wine for white meat, like fish or chicken. A rose can become a nice middle ground.

“Let’s say mashed potatoes and a roast beef. Something that’s really rich, right? Generally, red is what you would pair with that. You could pick a really good Chardonnay to pair with that. Let’s say mashed potatoes, chicken with a bechamel sauce. Super creamy, super rich. Are you looking for your experience to where your mouth is ingesting rich food, or are you looking for your wine to cut through that richness?” Farrington said.

Your choice of wine could be to match the flavor, and help wash it down, or, it could serve as a palate cleanser before the next bite. ■



JAMIE FARRINGTON DOING A SNIFF, SWIRL, SNIFF.



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#### CHAR...

- 1 large ripe heirloom tomato
- 1 medium tomatillo
- ¼ small yellow onion
- Core and slice the vegetables. Char under a broiler or on a hot grill until blistered and lightly blackened on one side, then flip and continue cooking until softened and slightly smoky. If possible, let the vegetables dry slightly in a low oven for deeper concentration of flavor.

#### TOAST...

- 1 dried guajillo chile (stemmed and seeded)
- ¼ cup whole almonds
- Toast the chile briefly in a 350°F oven for 3–5 minutes until fragrant but not burnt. Toast the almonds until medium to dark golden, about 10–12 minutes.

#### BLEND...

- Charred vegetables, toasted chile, and toasted almonds
- 3–4 tablespoons good olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- Salt to taste
- Blend until smooth and silky. Adjust salt and lemon as needed.
- To finish, spoon the romesco alongside the steak and squeeze a fresh lemon slice over the top just before serving.

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## Velveting by Shirley Fond-Torres

The late Shirley Fong-Torres, better known as “Wok Wiz,” wrote six books including “In the Chinese Kitchen.” This is her recipe for velveting — a common practice of Chinese chefs to tenderize cheap cuts of steak usually used in stir fry dishes but famous in Texas for chicken fried steak.

Cut steak (round, chuck, skirt, sirloin are best) into one inch pieces about a quarter to half an inch thick. Place in bowl.

Add a rounded tablespoon of baking soda per pound of steak. Massage it together with your fingers. Stir in two ounces of water or club soda and continue to massage. Allow the steak to sit for half an hour.

Thoroughly rinse the steak of all baking soda. Its job is done. Dry the steak with paper towels. It's ready to use in your wok for stir fry or your frying pan for chicken fried steak.

(Some dishes suggest marinating the baking soda in rice wine vinegar and soy sauce instead of water. That does not help in tenderization but adds new flavor.) ■

# The value stalker

## Proteins' bang for the buck

By Jim Duncan

Texan writer Larry McMurtry (“Lonesome Dove” quartet, plus 34 novels and 30 screenplays) often hits upon something ironic about human limitations. In “Leaving Cheyenne,” an old cowboy warns a young one that “the love of a woman is like the morning dew. It can settle just as easily on a rosebud or a horse turd.” In “Texasville,” a modern cowboy proclaims “Medicine is the softest science and nutrition is its melted butter. Whatever is gospel today will be anathema in ten years.”

McMurtry also wrote that “only a rank degenerate would drive 1500 miles across Texas and not eat chicken fried steak” and “I don’t believe in protein. I think it’s a myth, like vitamins. All nutrition is a myth.” He writes mostly about a distant past and its ethos — the hardcore character required to create Texas.

Today, his mythical cowboy is smiling while he cuts his chicken fried steak. Robert Kennedy and his minions at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have turned old nutritional gospel upside down, again. America’s new food pyramid scorns the carbohydrates that previous DHHS administrators pushed down American throats. Proteins are the new gospel, and fats have gone from all bad to half good.

The nutritional gospel that cholesterol chiefly causes heart attacks was never ancient wisdom. In fact, heart attacks were not even recognized in humans until 1919. The next 30 years, not much of anything happened in medicine that connected diet with heart attacks, which kill a quarter of our population now days.

Then, all hell broke loose. In the mid 1950s, Ancel Keys proposed that dietary saturated fat and cholesterol raised blood cholesterol, leading to heart disease. In 1984, a major National Institute of Health (NIH) trial published findings showing that lowering blood cholesterol reduced the risk of heart attacks. Fats were suddenly anathema. Carbs were the new gospel, and, because the most famous proteins, animal flesh, are also high in previously dreaded fats, they were suspect.

After the American Medical Association

narrowly voted to recommend a diet low in fats and high in carbs in the early 1980s, more hell was unleashed on our diets. The government initiated huge subsidies to increase new, highly processed carbs like high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). They pretty much replaced cane sugar in all soft drinks, ketchups and jams by the early 1980s.

The problem was that HFCS doesn’t possess a satiety factor like real sugar does. People could drink drastically more bottles of Coke a day. Soft drinks went from being sold in six-ounce glass bottles to two-liter plastic bottles. That made America more obese and more diabetic. The rates of both those issues began rising the year after HFCS replaced real sugar in soft drinks. Now that gospels and anathemas have turned upside down, proteins are the craze.

The DHHS now recommends 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal. Yet, 88% of Americans don’t know how or where to get protein nor even how much they consume. Kennedy’s agenda and the effects of popular weight loss drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy have turned Americans into protein junkies. And, the big food companies are giving them what they want. Witness the cereal aisle, home now to Cheerios Protein, Nature Valley Protein Granola and many more protein-infused brands.

### WHERE PROTEIN HIDES

Realistically, no one should eat cereal for protein. Poultry, red meat and seafood are the best sources. Legumes are the best bargains. Among that first category, chicken breasts are the bang-for-the-buck champion. They provide 26 grams of protein per three-ounce serving. Turkey breast also has 26 grams, but it almost always costs more than chicken breasts, which we found recently, skinless and boneless, at Aldi for \$1.99/pound.

Rabbit has more protein at 27 grams, but it is far more expensive and more difficult to find. Ground turkey and thighs are cheaper but not as rich in protein as breasts. Quail at 21 grams and duck at 20 grams are even more expensive. The best place to find them is C Fresh Market. They



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Seafood's protein superstar is octopus. It could well be the next large-scale commercially farmed seafood. Farming in Spain is thriving and well received by the European press. Octopus is almost one-third protein — 25 grams per 3-ounce serving. We have enjoyed fabulous octopus recently at Panka, 801, Prime & Providence, Oak Park, Masao and Waterfront.

They call it “the new salmon” in Europe where it is wildly increasing its farmed production while all kinds of pressures are pushing Norway (where floating cages were invented) and lesser salmon farming powers to cut back. Three ounces of salmon provide 23 grams of protein, a lot but not as much as octopus.

Farmed salmon overtook wild salmon in the world's diet in 1996 and now accounts for 70%. Coincidentally, salmon went from being one of the most expensive of all fish to one of the cheapest. Not all salmon are equal. Wild King salmon will cost two to three times as much as farmed “Atlantic” salmon at Whole Foods, Fresh Thyme and Waterfront.

All oysters are not equal either. A serving of three ounces, cooked or raw, can provide six to 16 grams of protein depending on the species of oyster and the season it was harvested. In general, Pacific oysters are bigger and have more protein than East Coast oysters. Waterfront has a Saturday special of half-priced oysters on the half-shell. Those are Chesapeake-sourced but are far bigger than all other East Coast oysters.

Other good proteins in the seafood section are tuna, mackerel, sardines, mussels, shrimp and eel. It doesn't matter to protein if sardines and tuna are canned or fresh. Anchovies actually have the most protein when measured in three-ounce servings, but even Joey “Jaws” Chestnut wouldn't eat three ounces. All the above provide more than 20 grams of protein in a three-ounce serving.

Of all grains and “pseudograins,” only teff and farro contain 10 or more grams of protein per cup cooked. Of all vegetables, only green peas, black-eyed peas and spinach have more than five grams per cup cooked. Among dairy products and eggs, Greek yogurt has 80% more protein than other yogurts. Cottage cheese, ricotta cheese and kefir have two to three times more protein

per cup than milk, from which they are all made. That's “value-added.”

In order of most protein per serving, venison, bison, veal, pork and beef all have more than 20 grams per three ounce serving. Pig meat head butts the others when it comes to bargain protein.

### WHY IS BEEF SO MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE?

A pork porterhouse at Fareway sells for as little as \$1.25 per five-ounce cut. A beef porterhouse at the same store sells for between \$17 and \$29 per pound, depending on its USDA grade. Wagyu is far more expensive beef. You can easily pay \$100 a pound, even in Des Moines.

It takes twice as much corn feed to produce a pound of beef than it takes for one of pork and eight times as much compared to chicken. It takes about four times longer, too. U.S. cattle population is at its lowest level since 1952. Beef has twice as many American mouths to feed now, too. Even at super-high prices, it is difficult for a cattleman to make a profit or increase his herd.

### WONDER BARGAINS

In the Tuesday Touts section of our food column in The Daily Umbrella ([www.thedailyumbrella.com](http://www.thedailyumbrella.com)), we have been touting a Wonder Bargain of the week. Here are some from the last six months.

- Pan fried chicken is disappearing from the American restaurant world — in Des Moines, but not in Indianola. At Crouse Cafe “homemade from scratch” cast iron pan-fried chicken is special daily but super special on Sundays. The gravy, the mashed potatoes, the baked beans and the coleslaw are also truly made from scratch. All those come with their Sunday dinner special for \$10.99.
- Bistro at Iowa Culinary Institute is open most Tuesdays through Fridays through May 1. Daily hours are 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., for lunch buffets or fixed price meals.
- Of all foods, dried beans and lentils provide the most protein for the dollar. Homemade split pea soup, made with smoked ham hocks, chicken broth, onion, celery, carrots, tomatoes, jalapenos, ginger, garlic and rice, cost us less than \$1 a serving. ■

# BELLY UP TO:

EAT & DRINK



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400 34th Ave. S.W., Altoona  
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www.brickandivy.com  
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Thursday: 3-10 p.m.; Friday-  
Saturday: 11 a.m. to midnight;  
Sunday: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

## Brick & Ivy Rooftop

Altoona's hot spot for music, views

BY JACKIE WILSON

In the distance, a rollercoaster zips up and down among neon lights. After a long day at the amusement park, a relaxing spot to unwind would be ideal.

Nearby is the Brick & Ivy Rooftop, located at 400 34th Ave. S.W. in Altoona. The vast, modern two-story building opened in 2020 and includes easy parking.

Tall ceilings, cement floors, wood and black high tops, booths and traditional seating complete a modern industrial design. It is a roomy joint without a cramped feel. About 20 televisions air a variety of sports with the sound off. Instead, low background humming-music was pumped in. At some larger bars, the sound often echoes. Fortunately, Brick & Ivy's sound was just right.

The menu includes starters such as spicy pepper jack cheese curds for \$13 and pretzel bites with queso for \$11, among others.

A sampling of sandwiches includes brisket, Graziano grinders, hot honey chicken and a popular parmesan-crusted turkey melt, ranging from \$13 to \$15. Wraps include club, buffalo chicken and Caesar; all are about \$14. Burgers include all sorts of toppings, including a veggie-friendly black bean burger for \$14.

Happy hour from 3-5:30 p.m. includes half-off domestic beer, \$2 off specialty cocktails and \$1 off well drinks, along with other daily specials. One of their latest beers on tap is Yuengling, a beer founded in 1829 that was originally available only in select states. Recently, Iowa can now serve it, much to a beer-lover's delight.

All of the sandwiches and burgers come with a choice of sides — fries, tots or steamed veggies, plus a small upgrade for queso mac and cheese.

A signature item is the Chicago dog for \$12. It is a quarter-pound beef frank with all the fixings on a poppyseed bun. If you are a hotdog or food challenge fan, try the Chicago Dog Challenge. The monstrosity includes eight hotdogs and buns with all the toppings. If you finish in the top time, you will get bragging rights on their board. The most recent record was 14 minutes and 9 seconds. Do the math — it's about three pounds of food.

With rooftop in the name, you have to take a walk to the top level. The upstairs rooftop includes an expansive area for both indoor and outdoor seating and is open



Thursdays through Sundays. The rooftop also rents out party rooms and hosts other events. If you missed their "Cousin Eddie" popup during the holidays, put it on your list for next year. Otherwise, it is a great place to view Adventureland's fireworks displays. If you don't do heights, take it outside to the lower patio.

Lastly, live music is a big draw, typically on Friday nights. A raised indoor stage provides ample room for musicians. Recently, CITYVIEW's Best Local Musician, Jordan Beem, performed to an enthusiastic crowd. There is much more to Altoona than Adventureland, Prairie Meadows and the Outlet Mall. The Brick and Ivy Rooftop, with its patios, food, drink and live music, is worth the drive alone. ■

## Autopsy of a grand food scene

Street festivals and food trucks that took over the Pappajohn Sculpture Park weekend after weekend also helped kill the district for restaurants.

The Pappajohn Sculpture Park (PSP) district was, not too long ago, the best restaurant district in Iowa. It attracted Mike and Lisa Lavallo, Marc Narvailles, David Baruthio, Scott Carlson, George Formaro, Paul Rottenberg, Derek Eidson, Sean Wilson, Carly Groben, Diego Rodriguez and Tony Lemmo, among other restaurateurs. That's a virtual Who's Who of great Iowa chefs and restaurateurs.

Every top restaurant west of 10th Street on Locust is now gone — Nomad, Americana, Proof, Proof 2, Host, Hot Shots, Ritual Cafe, Django, etc. COVID-19 and the work-from-home ethos that followed are usually deemed the reasons why. The workforce in the PSP area has been drastically reduced.

We think, and we are not alone, that the street festivals and food trucks that took over the PSP weekend after weekend May through October each year also helped kill the district for restaurants. They obliterated parking and undercut the restaurants' prices — drastically and unfairly. It's no coincidence that 10th street itself is doing just fine, while everything west of there is dead. Tenth is never closed off for festivals.

Rents in the PSG area are super high. Lunch died first. Weekend business is the "make or break" point in the notoriously low-margin restaurant business. Mike Lavallo told us that "After 50 years in that neighborhood (Embassy Club in 1974, Eat Your Heart Out in 1983), I can verify there was a need to bring festivals to downtown during its ascension in the 1980s and 1990s — but no longer. Our slowest days at Allora Cafe are festival days and days prior. We have needed an ordinance that one can't set up a liquor tent in the street within a certain distance of established licensee... And non-locals should never have been allowed in."

Django's Paul Rottenberg told us that the closing of Americana was a death knell for the district. Django will be the last to leave after March 14. People clamored for reservations after hearing they would close. As with Americana, they increased tenfold.

Yet the city planners remain deaf to the cries for salvation. If Locust's demise boosted any place, it was Ingersoll. That street is in the midst of a restaurant boom with The Palms, Ingersoll Dinner Theater, Oak

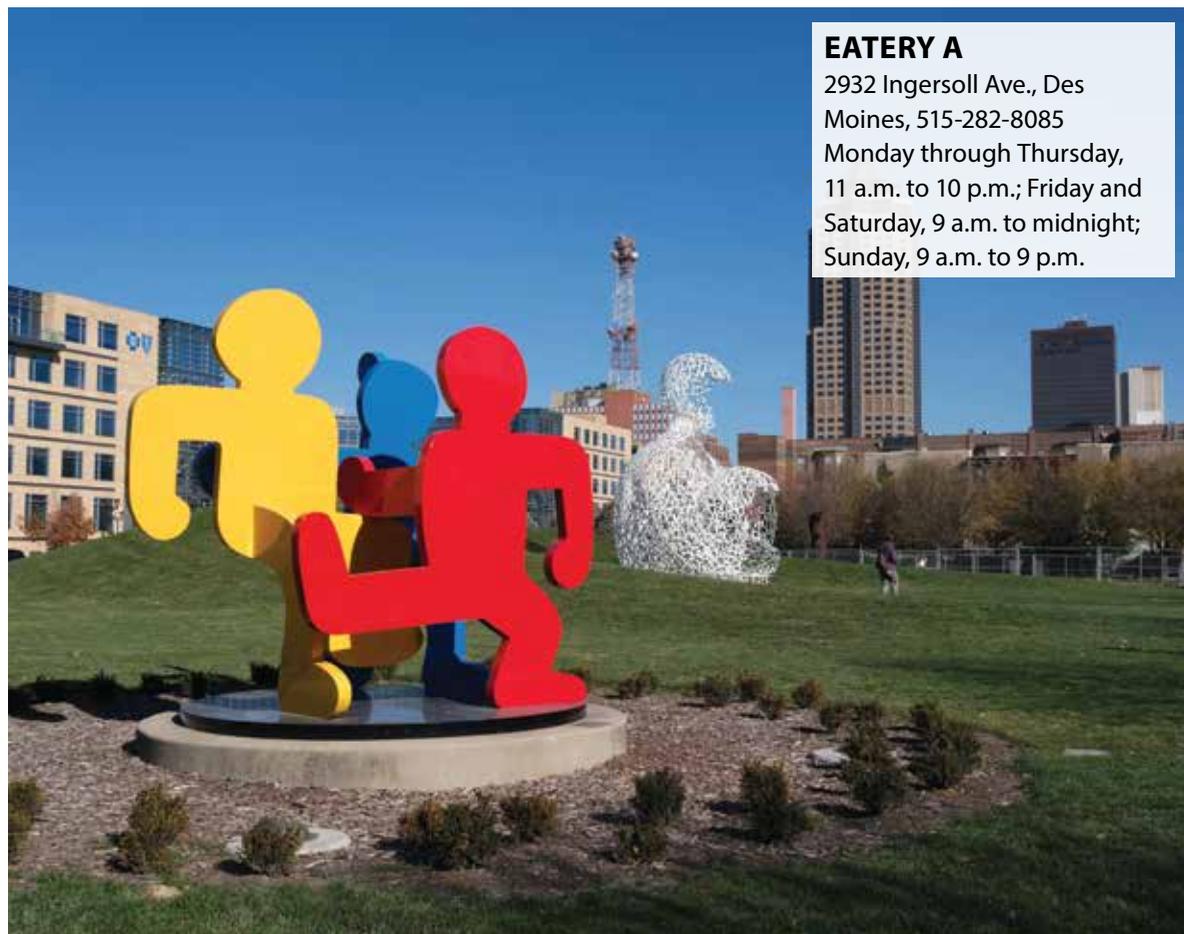


Photo courtesy of Travel Iowa

Park and Heroics Sports Bar joining what was already a great lineup of restaurants and bars in the last two years.

Visionary developers Jake Christiansen and Connor Delaney have big projects on Ingersoll that feature multiple restaurants. But the powers-that-be keep dissing the scene by removing street parking and laying down an endless series of strangely shaped, obtrusive concrete curbs and islands that add little more than hotter temperatures in summer. Their chief benefactors are tire repair stores.

Somehow, Ingersoll keeps on keeping on. Mariela Maya had to close down Panka, a superb Peruvian café stuck between two fast food joints in the same strip mall. But, the avenue, anchored by the venerable Noah's Ark and Jesse's Embers, has supplanted West Locust as the top Iowa food scene.

This year, CITYVIEW's annual Best of Des

Moines Awards deemed Jason Simon's Eatery A the queen of Ingersoll and also awarded Lachele's Fine Food, Crème, Bartender's Handshake, Lucky Lotus, Sakari Sushi, Thai Flavors, Harbinger, Manhattan Deli, Palmer's, Big Grove, The Palms, Oak Park and The Station on Ingersoll with "best of" nods. Noah's, Jesse's Embers, and Ted's Coney Island have won in the past.

Eatery A is not even Simon's signature restaurant. That is Alba. But Eatery A is a place that keeps getting better year after year. It is open seven days a week for lunch, brunch and dinner. It has one of the city's most generous and popular Happy Hours. And no one does Mediterranean fare better. Most importantly, it has its own large parking lot. ■

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



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## Edgard Camacho at Flora

Over soups, sandwiches, tacos and Bloody Mary's adorned with pickled chilies, we talked about Camacho's long, strange trip to Iowa.

Edgard Camacho is a French-born Venezuelan-American artist. We asked him to lunch recently, and he chose Flora, Suman Hoq's café in the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.

Hoq has characterized his lunch and brunch offerings with transcultural touches from his East Bengali heritage. Soups are fantastic with a chickpea soup of Massaman curry, coconut milk and greens sharing the menu with others that change daily. Basmati rice and tandoori tofu can be added to any dish. A goat meat taco was made with a tortilla that resembled a Bengali fried bread. Over soups, sandwiches, tacos and Bloody Mary's adorned with pickled chilies, we talked about Camacho's long, strange trip to Iowa.

### **Edgard was born in France but is he French?**

"My father worked in the petrochemical business in Venezuela. He was sent to France to communicate better with international culture and technology. In France, one must have a French parent or grandparent, or live in France 13 years to become a citizen — even if he is born there. I grew up Venezuelan. Venezuela borders Brazil, so I learned enough Portuguese to empathize with Brazil. Brazilian-Portuguese is different from Portugal's Portuguese; it's more melodic."

### **Who will he cheer for when the World Cup comes to America this summer?**

"Brazil, but also Argentina, Columbia and Spain. Maybe France. Once in Des Moines, I was cheering for Brazil in a game when everyone else was for a Central American team."

### **How did growing up in Venezuela influence his art?**

"In Venezuela, you realize at a young age that things are both beautiful and dangerous. I am fascinated by snakes — so beautiful yet venomous. I walked in ponds with piranhas. I saw caymans in the wild. I swam in the Orinoco with dolphins. Life was so beautiful, but so dangerous."

### **Camacho attended Universidad de Oriente for industrial engineering. How did he become an artist out of that background?**

"I was always interested in art even as a child, but my parents discouraged that. It wasn't part of their culture. After a couple years, though, I transferred to Escuela de Arte Armando Reverón as an independent artist researcher to study stone sculpture with Valentín Malaver."

### **Communist strongman Hugo Chavez took power in Venezuela in 1999. How did that effect Camacho's life?**

"I saw what was going on every day. I was a journalist and was very political then. I had a radio show, comedy and satire about the government. I would get death threats. I saw a government-led mass murder on TV and painted a piece about it. It was noticed and became part of 'La Megaexposición: The Best of Venezuelan Art of the 21st Century.' By the time that touring exhibition happened, I was exiled. I left Venezuela in 2004. I was 25. Exile is very painful. I don't think you can really know that until it happens to you."

### **How did he get out?**

"I had a grandmother who was Cuban-American. She lived in exile in Miami, so our family was able to fly there. The Roman Catholic Church sponsored us."

### **What was Miami like for a refugee?**

"It was weird. I went to school (New World School of the Arts) and worked in Miami but lived in Broward County. All of that area seemed unnatural. It is built on landfill poured into swamps. You can't dig a hole in Miami to plant something without water oozing up. The heat and humidity were intense because everything was built on swamps."

### **How did he get to Iowa?**

"I saw an advertisement on the internet, on Facebook, recruiting for Maharishi International University in Fairfield. I responded, and they sent me an airplane ticket to come study there."

### **At MIU, he studied with James Shrosbee, a Guggenheim Fellow, ceramic artist and painter who caught CITYVIEW's eye in the early 1990s. Did transcendental meditation, and Iowa, effect Camacho and his art?**

"The day I arrived in Iowa, it was snowing. I knew my life was changing, completely. I left politics behind. I don't want that kind of influence in my art. I owe everything, certainly my happiness, to Iowa. I found my wife and family here. I found so many cultures interacting in Iowa. As a substitute teacher in West Des Moines, I noticed that Asian kids would not look at my feet. That was a sign of disrespect, and respect is essential to their culture."

"That is very different from Venezuelan culture. In Latino culture, you want to look your best no matter what. My sister's bridesmaids all dressed very flashy at her wedding. But was that offensive to locals? I especially learned a lot from special education students. They have so much innocence and presence in the moment. We all learn so much in this clash of cultures."

**Edgard has been very well dressed whenever I have**



**seen him, in a manner that is far from traditional Iowa dress codes. At our lunch, he wore a suit coat and vest with a floral print shirt.**

"This is not a statement; it's my uniform. I wear the floral shirt because I am from Venezuela. I worked a lot in retail. I even worked in a swim suit store. The tropics become a part of you. They are mainstream to Latino culture."

### **Steven Vail is an international art dealer who represents world famous artists, some personal friends. He is the only dealer not on the coasts who represents Chuck Close's estate. How did Camacho catch his eye?**

"After a show at Olson-Larsen, and he wanted to talk. After a conversation, he said 'You are an international artist. I want to represent you.' I realized then that I only want to keep working. That's not easy for an artist with kids. Vermeer had eight children and never had a show in his lifetime."

### **Camacho's latest show, at Moberg Gallery, reveals lots of shapes and colors from collected materials, particularly fine clothing. How did that evolve?**

"I love rearrangement. It's about coping and evolving. Many of the fabrics came from Badower's (men's clothing store). He was himself a Holocaust survivor. As an exile, I identify with him. I found these elegant cashmere jackets discarded and consigned to second hand stores. I love to use their swabs. It's about restoring value." ■

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



Thank you!



Part of our mission here at CITYVIEW is honoring and celebrating the best local people, businesses, places and events Des Moines has to offer. This year, we tallied more than 12,000 votes in 268 categories for the 2026 Best of Des Moines awards. This led to the invitation-only announcement ceremony for winners and runners-up at the Val Air Ballroom in West Des Moines on Tuesday, Feb. 3. An excited crowd enjoyed food and drink, as well as a program emceed by Lou Sipolt Jr. and Jackie Schmillen and hosted by Shane Goodman, CITYVIEW publisher and editor. In this edition of CITYVIEW, we share photos of this successful celebration of the best. Join us in congratulating these local standout people, businesses, places and events.



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- Music in the Junction** *May-Sept Thursdays*
- Cinco de Mayo** *Saturday, May 2*
- Yoga in the Park** *Saturday, May 9*
- VJ Art Festival** *Sunday, May 17*

## JUNE

- Farmers Market** *Thursdays*
- Music in the Junction** *Thursdays*
- Yoga in the Park** *Saturday, June 13*
- Valley Junction Pride!** *Sunday, June 28*

## JULY

- Farmers Market** *Thursdays*
- Music in the Junction** *Thursdays*
- Junction Street Party** *Friday, July 3*
- Yoga in the Park** *Saturday, July 11*
- Summer Sale-A-Bration** *Saturday, July 25*

## AUGUST

- Farmers Market** *Thursdays*
- Music in the Junction** *Thursdays*
- Yoga in the Park** *Saturday, August 9*

## SEPTEMBER

- Farmers Market** *Thursdays*
- Music in the Junction** *Thursdays*
- Vintage, Thrifted, & Handmade** *Sunday, September 6*
- Yoga in the Park** *Saturday, September 12*

## OCTOBER

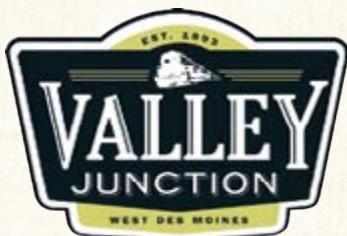
- Fall Gallery Night** *Friday, October 9*
- Yoga in the Park** *Saturday, October 10*
- Sip-n-Shop** *Thursday, October 22*
- Pumpkin Walk** *Sunday, October 25*
- Sip-n-Shop** *Thursday, October 29*

## NOVEMBER

- Sip-n-Shop** *Thursday, November 5*
- Jingle in the Junction** *Thursday, November 19*
- Small Business Saturday** *Saturday, November 28*

## DECEMBER

- Jingle in the Junction** *Thursday, December 3*
- Jingle in the Junction** *Thursday, December 10*
- Jingle in the Junction** *Thursday, December 17*



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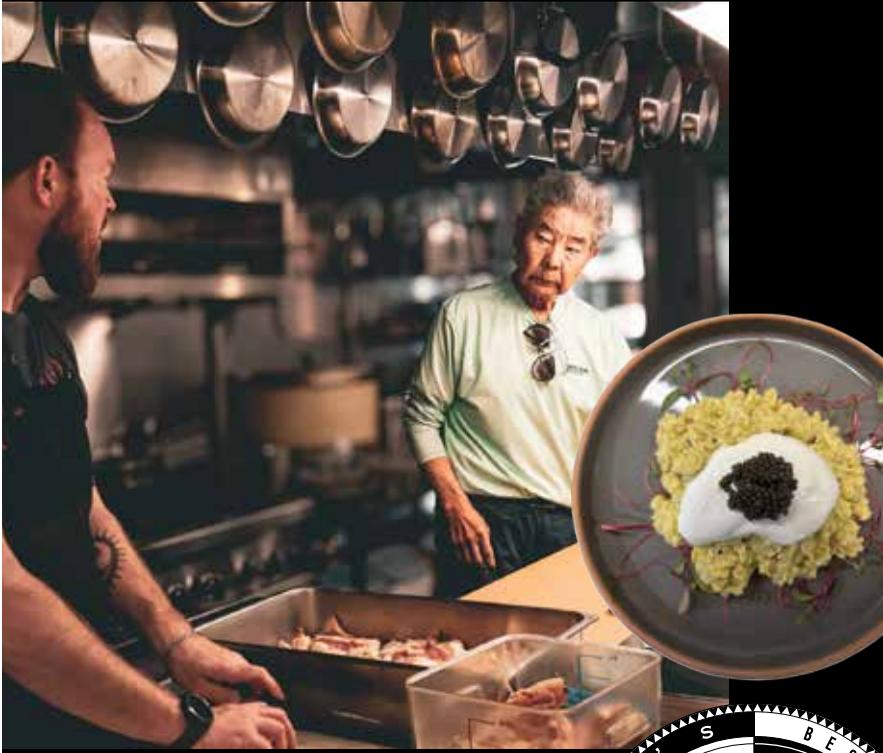
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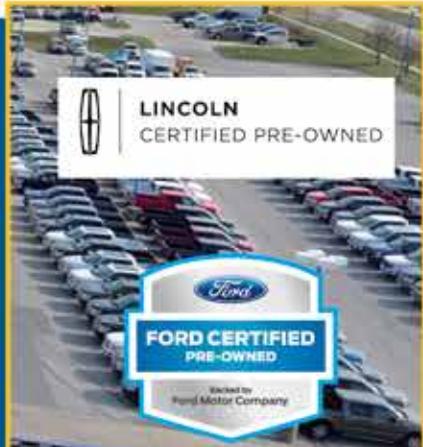


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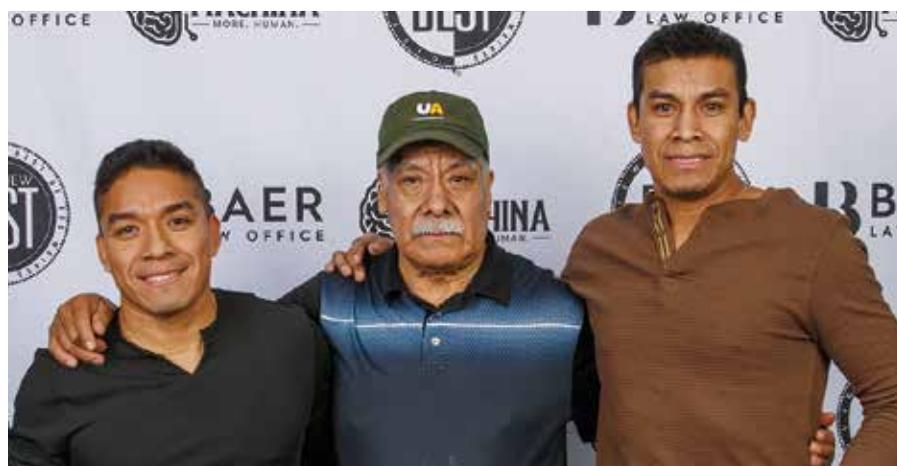
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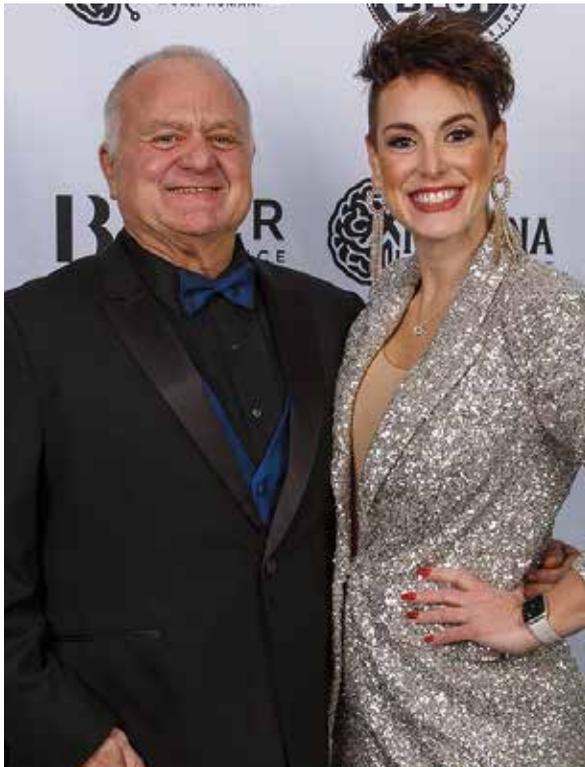
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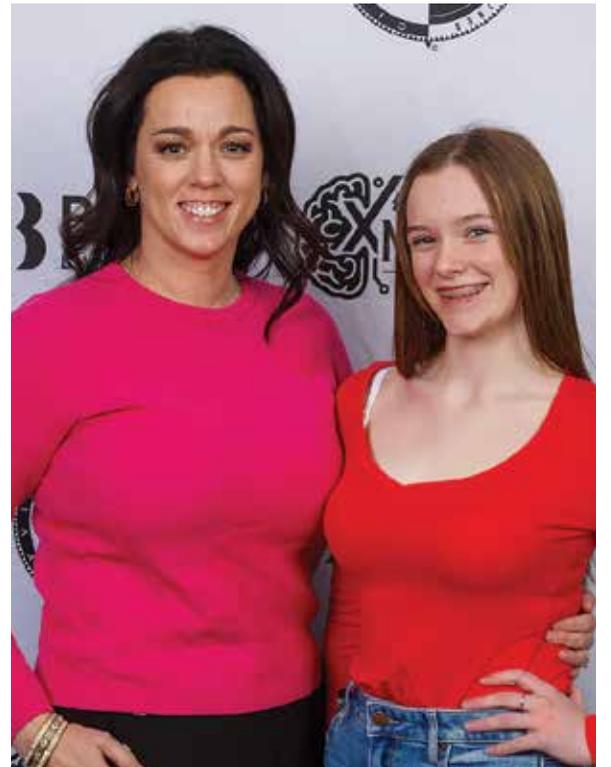
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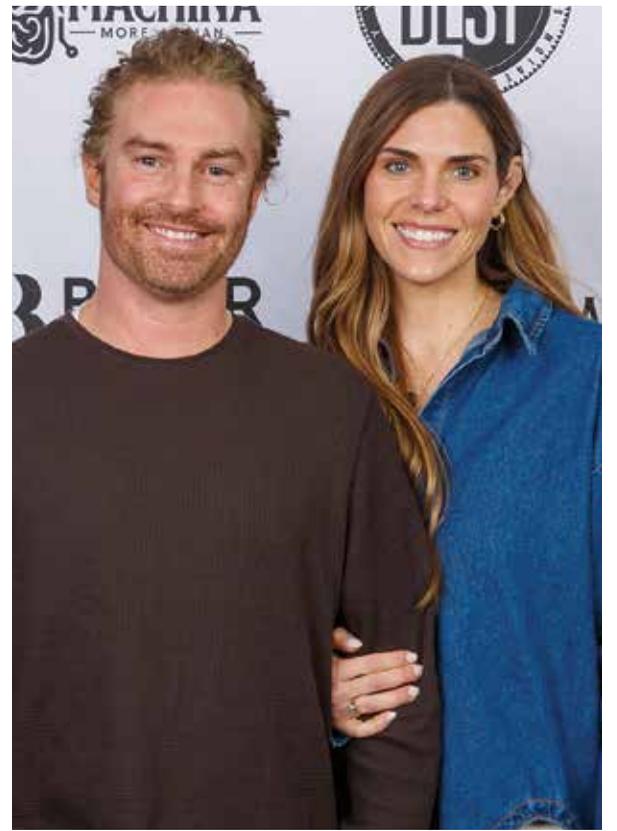
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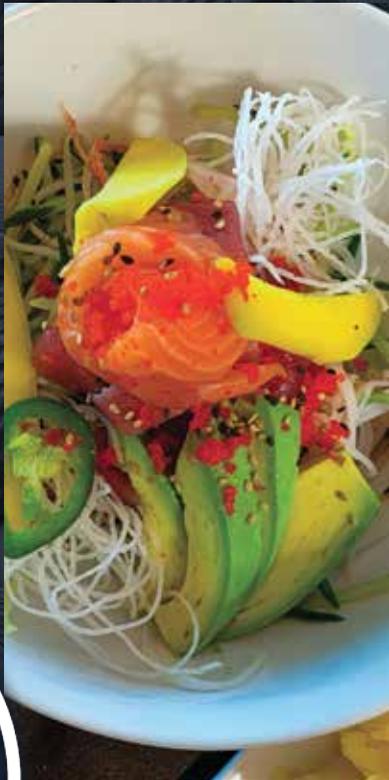
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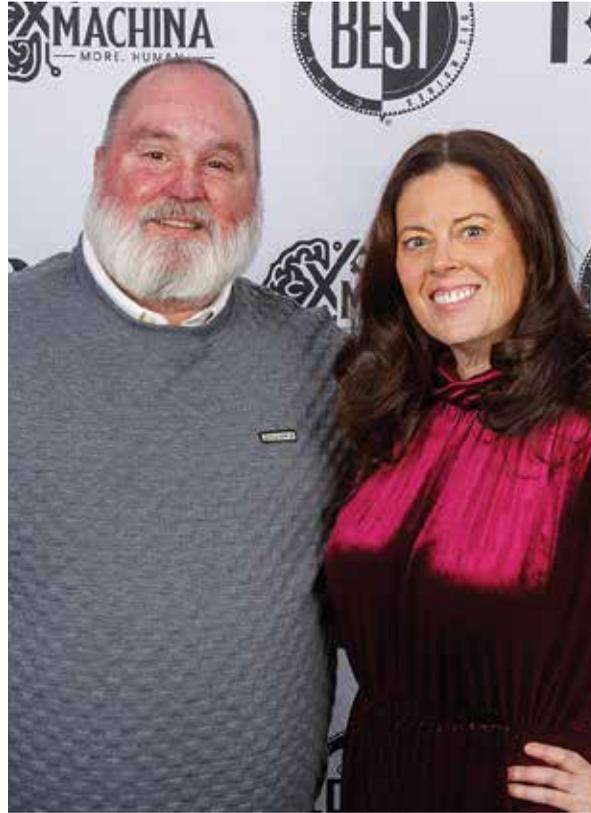
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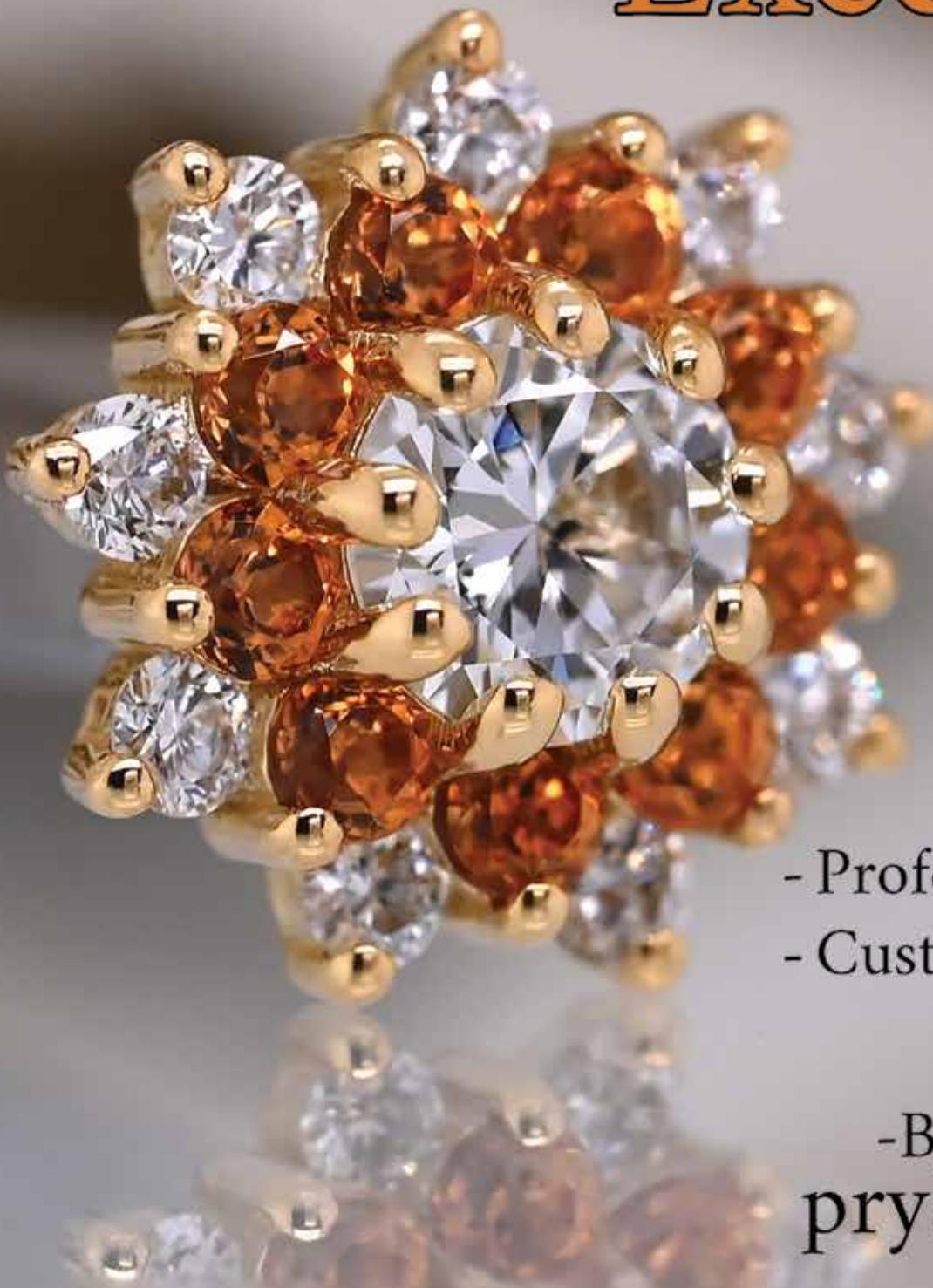
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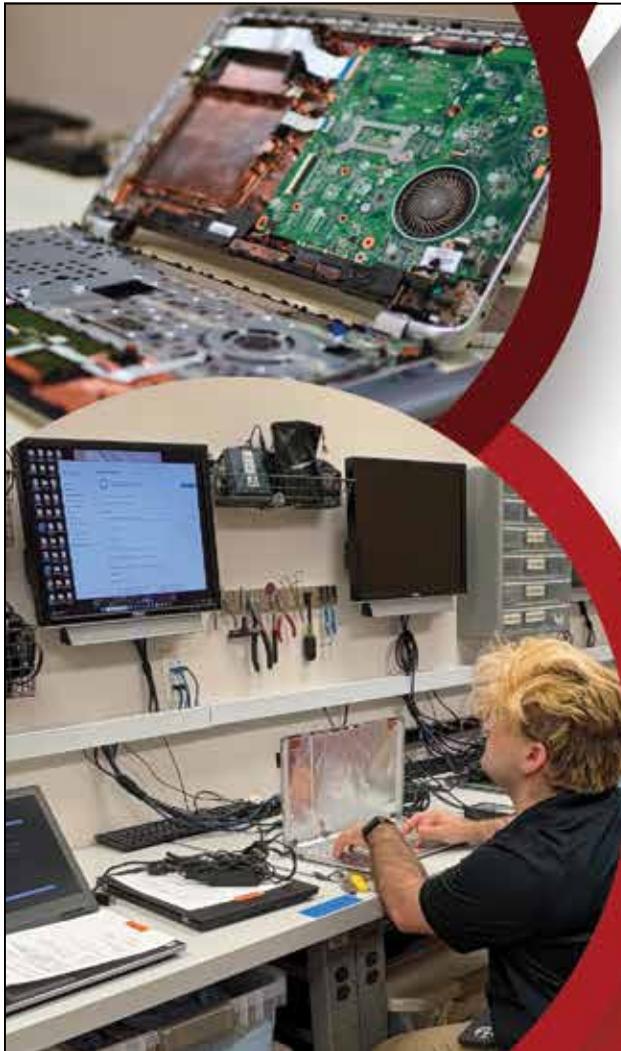
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THE TOP

# 50

## Country Songs

FEATURE STORY

By Jackie Wilson

### No-nonsense, understandable lyrics and simple, relatable melodies

Country music is a genre that music enthusiasts either love, hate or tolerate. Critics cite country as too twangy for their taste. Those who like it, love it and want some more of it. They appreciate the no-nonsense, understandable lyrics and simple, relatable melodies. Songs that leave off the ‘g’, like cheatin’ and drinkin’ make it easy for singin’ along.

Country music is one of the fastest-growing music genres, thanks in part to the “**Taylor Swift**” effect, unlimited music streaming and pop-country crossover artists.

In Nashville alone, fans can choose from more than 100 live music acts on any single day in hundreds of nightclubs, the Grand Ole Opry and Ryman Auditorium. But, country music has flourished here in the Midwest for decades, too. Need proof? Just take a look at the local county fairs and Iowa State Fair Grandstand lineups. Country. Country. And more country — much to a rock-lover’s chagrin.

Some music lovers may prefer other genres, but, if it is music well done, they embrace the country musician’s artistic talents. Even non-country fans might secretly admit to liking some country music,

such as **Willie Nelson**. When **Donny and Marie Osmond** came out with a variety show in the 1970s, Marie declared she was a “little bit country” while Donny was a “little bit rock and roll.” Can you really like both? It is possible, even for a die-hard rock and roller like me.

Growing up, I listened to my father’s country music — not by choice. Dad listened to country in his work shed, which was equivalent to a mancave back then. Among the rusted tools and spare car parts was a transistor radio playing country songs.

The man in black — **Johnny Cash** — was Dad’s tough hero who he aspired to be like, except for the prison stuff. When he lamented about his relationship with Mom, he would sing the **Hank Williams** tune, “I’m so lonesome I could cry.”

When “Hee Haw” aired on TV, **Buck Owens and the Buckaroos**, along with perky women in pigtailed and men in bib overalls, delivered upbeat country songs on fiddles and banjos. It was corny, but with only four channels to choose from, you watched what your parents watched.

The rebel in me begged to listen to “my” rock and

roll and not my dad’s country. Yet, over the years, those tunes stuck with me. My sister and cousin sang songs while walking beans like “Rhinstone Cowboy” by **Glen Campbell**, while my cousin Karen chimed in “Cowgirl.”

The lyrics still permeate my mind as an adult. When I played blackjack in Las Vegas, **Kenny Rogers’** “The Gambler” kept telling me to never count my money when I’m sitting at the table. So, I took his advice — but it didn’t help me win.

At Valley Junction’s Music in the Junction, inevitably a train rolls by during the concert. “I hear a train a coming,” I tell my friends.

And when I quit a job years ago, the first song that came to my mind was “Take This Job and Shove It,” by **Johnny Paycheck**.

You, too, may have listened to country music at your grandparents’ home or your own. Your grandpa or dad may have preferred outlaw country songs about drinking whiskey at the bar while your grandma or mother liked **Patsy Cline’s** “I Fall to Pieces.” And, who hasn’t wanted to go to Luckenbach, Texas, with, **Waylon and Willie** and the boys?



Country singer Jesse Gutierrez knows the lyrics to more than 600 classic country songs. He sings them all without a teleprompter in his band, Jesse and The Medicine Men.

## “Urban Cowboy” effect

Over the years, rock and country were separate genres. But, what really made country cool was the movie “Urban Cowboy.” The movie came out in 1980 and featured John Travolta in a honky-tonk music hall riding a mechanical bull and twirling his lady in a two-step dance move. Before long, you were looking for love in all the wrong places and slapping your leg and kicking off your shoes in a Louisiana Saturday night. A pop crossover created a new country sub-genre, making it more mainstream on Top 40 radio.

Country music still booms today. Local country musician **Jesse Gutierrez** plays original country and classic country cover songs in several Des Moines area bands, including **Jesse and the Medicine Men**. Gutierrez gets many requests to play popular country songs. His favorites are too numerous to list, but he cites **Don Williams, Hank Williams, Jr., Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings** and **Keith Whitley** as his top choices. It’s tough to narrow down as he knows more than 600 country songs by heart and never uses a lyric teleprompter.

“They are all stuck in my memory,” he says. “I just start the first few words, and then I get through it. It’s like preaching and reading the Bible. It’s written on my heart and soul.”

Country is feel-good music that has endured over the years. Gutierrez explains why.

“They remember the older generation listening to it in their formative years. Those songs make you feel nostalgia and bring you back to a place with family and home —

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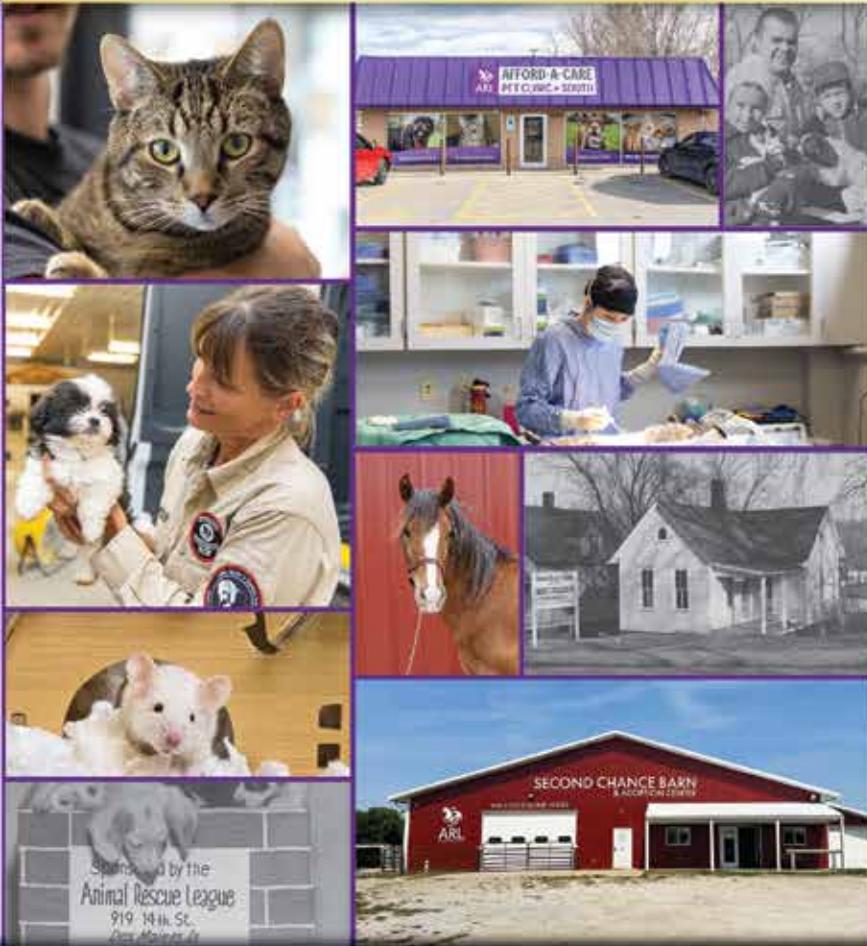


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a comfortable place to be.”

What makes country different than other genres? It offers chords with a definite timing and structure. Instruments, such as a pedal steel guitar, fiddle, banjo and harmonica, add to the sound. It is feel-good, foot-stomping music. The simple lyrics talk about small town rural life, working class and family traditions, and common hardships including cheaters, drinkers and a party way of life.

Gutierrez says real country music is complex.

“Real country music is an art. If people say it’s rock country, it’s not country if you mix it with another name,” he reflects.

In comparing pop and rock music, he says country music tells a story.

“It’s not just repeating phrases over and over. It’s has a moral to it with a passionate feel,” he says.

## Top country songs

Now that we have flooded your mind with country music lyrics, what are the top classic country songs of all time?

The staff at Big Green Umbrella Media (publisher of CITYVIEW, SeniorView and the Iowa Living magazines) gathered in the conference room to curate a list of the greatest country songs.

For reference, the group contributing to the list varied in age, from a few young baby boomers, to Gen X’ers, millennials and a few Gen Z’ers.

Unlike when we created a Top 50 Rock and Roll Songs list, this was admittedly tougher. Only a small percentage of the group professed to listening to country music on a regular basis.

Even so, we all came up with our country favorites, songs that stood the test of time. And, we agreed that these songs never get old. Among the generations, everyone could recall a **Johnny Cash** or **Dolly Parton** tune.

As we brainstormed songs, ideas were over the place. We discussed crossover stars, such as **Taylor Swift**, **Carrie Underwood** and **Jelly Roll**. **The Chicks**, **Chris Stapleton** and **Brad Paisley** came up — even **Beyonce** (and no, she is not on the list). We recalled line dance songs we attempted at wedding receptions. If we couldn’t think of the song, we hummed it or questioned, “Who sings that rowdy friends’ song?”

Here’s where the tricky part came in. What decade of music should we include? To narrow it down, we focused on music before 2000 — the classics of at least 25 years that stood the test of time. What songs are local cover bands playing? Which DJs break out the country list, where every generation comes out hooking their thumbs in their belt loops while dancing?

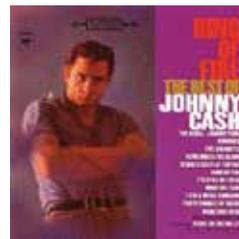
Many of the same artists’ names kept cropping up, such **Kenny Rogers**, who has dozens of country hits. We could have easily listed the top 50 with just a few musicians. However, we limited this list to just one song per band or musician.

The list is in no particular order; however, the top 10 includes songs are cherished by the entire group.

It all boils down to what song gets your foot stomping, head nodding and singing all the words at the top of your lungs.

Read the list. And, after you read it, we want to hear from you. What songs should be on the list that we missed?

### CITYVIEW is pleased to present, the Top 50 Country Songs:



“Ring of Fire”  
Johnny Cash



“Jolene”  
Dolly Parton



**"The Gambler"**  
Kenny Rogers



**"Friends in Low Places"**  
Garth Brooks



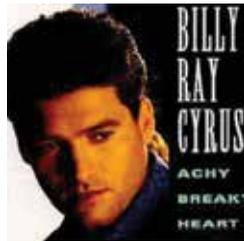
**"On the Road Again"**  
Willie Nelson



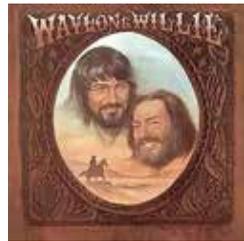
**"Boot Scootin' Boogie"**  
Brooks & Dunn



**"Harper Valley P.T.A."**  
Jeannie C. Riley



**"Achy Breaky Heart"**  
Billy Ray Cyrus



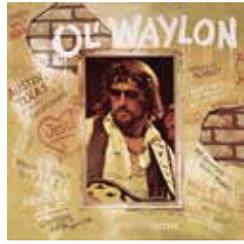
**"Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys"**  
Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings



**"Devil Went Down To Georgia"**  
Charlie Daniels Band



**"Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy)"**  
Big & Rich



**"Luckenbach, Texas"**  
Waylon Jennings



**"Elvira"**  
Oak Ridge Boys



**"Okie from Muskogee"**  
Merle Haggard

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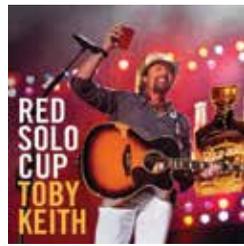
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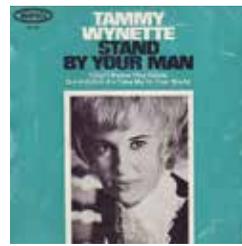
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**"Mountain Music"**  
Alabama



**"Red Solo Cup"**  
Toby Keith



**"Stand by Your Man"**  
Tammy Wynette



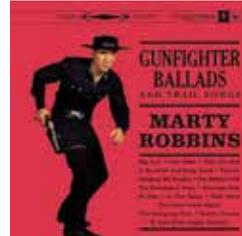
**"Delta Dawn"**  
Tanya Tucker



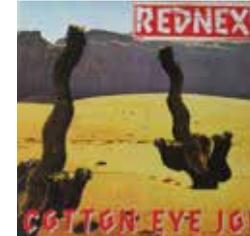
**"Kiss An Angel Good Morning"**  
Charlie Pride



**"Rhinestone Cowboy"**  
Glen Campbell



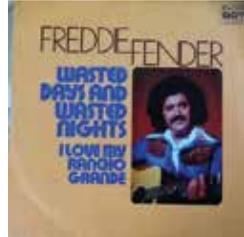
**"El Paso"**  
Marty Robbins



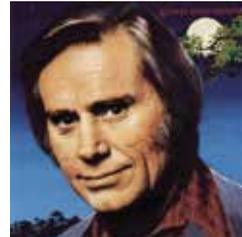
**"Cotton Eye Joe"**  
Rednex



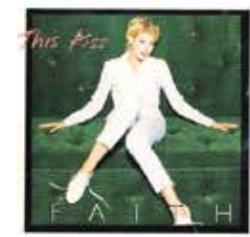
**"Guitars, Cadillacs"**  
Dwight Yoakam



**"Wasted Days and Wasted Nights"**  
Freddy Fender



**"Tennessee Whiskey"**  
George Jones



**"This Kiss"**  
Faith Hill

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- If you're living with HIV, connect to care and services to stay healthy, live well and protect your partners.



Learn more & find free testing near you at [stophiviowa.org](http://stophiviowa.org).



**"Chattahoochee"**  
Alan Jackson



**"Family Tradition"**  
Hank Williams, Jr.



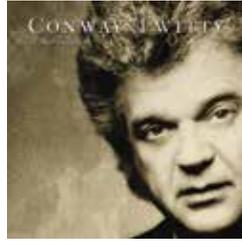
**"There's No Gettin' Over Me"**  
Ronnie Milsap



**"Man! I Feel Like a Woman!"**  
Shania Twain



**"Amarillo by Morning"**  
George Strait



**"Tight Fittin' Jeans"**  
Conway Twitty



**"Fancy"**  
Reba McEntire



**"Coal Miner's Daughter"**  
Loretta Lynn



**"Green Green Grass of Home"**  
Porter Wagoner



**"You Never Even Called Me By My Name"**  
David Allan Coe



**"East Bound and Down"**  
Jerry Reed



**"I've Got a Tiger by the Tail"**  
Buck Owens

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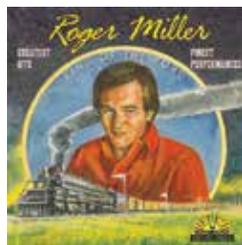
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**"Hey, Good Lookin'"**  
Hank Williams



**"King of the Road"**  
Roger Miller



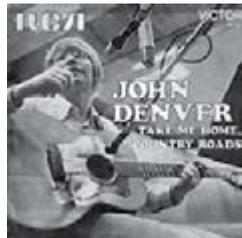
**"Crazy"**  
Patsy Cline



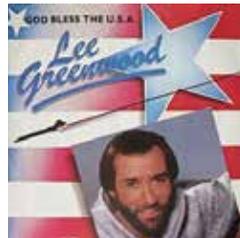
**"Grandpa"**  
The Judds



**"Louisiana Saturday Night"**  
Mel McDaniel



**"Take Me Home Country Roads"**  
John Denver



**"God Bless the U.S.A."**  
Lee Greenwood



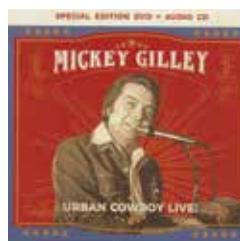
**"The Most Beautiful Girl"**  
Charlie Rich



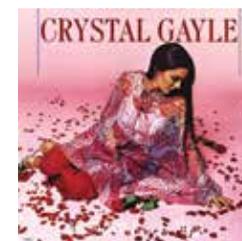
**"Take This Job and Shove it"**  
Johnny Paycheck



**"Country Boy"**  
Ricky Skaggs



**"Don't The Girls Get Prettier at Closing Time"**  
Mickey Gilley



**"Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue"**  
Crystal Gayle

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# BOOK REVIEWS

COURTESY OF BEAVERDALE BOOKS

## 'Queen of Faces'

Books with layers are always going to draw me in. This delightfully dark and gritty fantasy explores identity, power, resilience and the madness of survival all packaged in a riveting, magical story.

Set in a politically charged world where appearance and perception can be as dangerous as any weapon, we follow Ana, a girl on the brink of some terrible choices. She is stuck in a dying body with no real way out. Desperate, she lies her way into an even more perilous situation where she must navigate court intrigue, shifting loyalties and threats from every side.

Ana's journey is as much internal as it is external, grappling with who she is and what authenticity means in a world where people shift bodies as easily as outfits. She has to maneuver through complex political dynamics, learn how to find allies, build relationships and survive the unsurvivable.

This is a gritty, morally gray story with perfect pacing. Lord's prose is accessible and vivid — sometimes so sharp I felt torn to shreds by the end. I can't wait for the next one. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Petra Lord  
2/3/26  
432 pages  
\$22.99  
Henry Holt & Co.

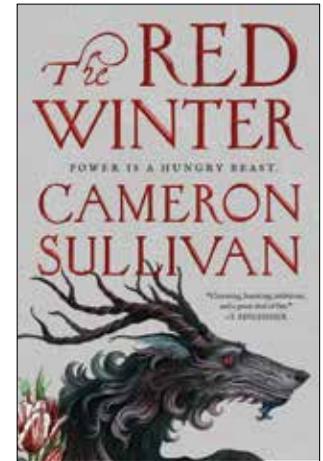
## 'The Red Winter'

Perhaps I am a bit jaded, but I wasn't sure I could take another werewolf story. I am delighted to say that I was very wrong in judging it so harshly. I know it is winter in Iowa, and we are all sick of it, but Sullivan plunges us into a frost-bitten landscape full of mysteries that is far more enchanting than any snow-bound story ought to be. This is a story within a story, within a story. It even has a fourth story in the footnotes, one of my very favorite tropes.

We open in the modern world with the immortal wizard Sebastian being reminded of an adventure from long ago. Aply abetted by his pet succubus, Livia, we learn of his sweet romance with a nobleman, their terrifying adventure in the French countryside, and how Joan of Arc really happened.

Despite the gore and humorous asides peppered throughout, this really is an epic fantasy tale with enough romance to make all the BookTok people swoon.

Fast-paced, well-written and awash with magic, this book absolutely swept me away. If you are the audiobook type, I can't recommend the narrators highly enough. They were perfect. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Cameron Sullivan  
2/24/26  
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Tor Books

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# FILM REVIEW

BY DAVID ROWLEY

## 'Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die'

Gore Verbinski's Deranged Luddite Manifesto throws a middle finger at all technological progress.

When was the last time a studio movie made you genuinely uncomfortable? Not in a jump-scare or gore-centric way, but in a "wait, did they just go there?" way that lingers in your brain for days? Gore Verbinski's "Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die" poses that question repeatedly, and the answers are not always comfortable. But they are, without exception, memorable.

The premise is classic high-concept pulp: a scruffy, unhinged man (Sam Rockwell) bursts into Norm's, a late-night Los Angeles diner, claiming to be from the future. He needs to recruit patrons to help him stop a young boy from programming an AI that will eventually trigger the apocalypse. To ensure their cooperation, he has strapped a "reset bomb" to his chest.

The twist on the "Groundhog Day" formula is great: Rockwell's character has lived this night over and over and over again. We are joining him on a run where his empathy for the people he is saving has completely evaporated. He is not a hero; he is a frustrated gamer trying to speedrun a level he has failed more than 100 times before. This roguelike structure gives the film a frantic, propulsive energy. Rockwell carries the movie with a perfect blend of wisecracks and sincerity, shaming and shaming his crew along through a narrative that refuses to slow down.

What follows is less a linear narrative than a satirical meat grinder, with Verbinski feeding contemporary anxieties about technology, grief and human connection into the blades and seeing what emerges. The results are, depending on your tolerance for chaos, either a magnificent mess or messy magnificence.

While the "man from the future" provides the framing, the heart of the film lies in three extended flashbacks that detail how the diner patrons' lives were dismantled by technology. The first, featuring Michael Peña and Zazie Beetz as stressed-out teachers, is the weakest — a bit too much "old man yelling at clouds" as it depicts phone-addicted students.

It is also the only segment that lets older generations off the hook entirely, framing this as a youth problem rather than one we all created. (Because, of course, it is.)

But then comes the second flashback, and suddenly you have an idea why Verbinski needed a decade to get this made. After losing her son, Susan (Juno Temple) is led down a rabbit hole of secret cloning corporations that offer to replace her child with a bizarre clone trained on AI and early-aughts radio ads. The sequence where she customizes her new son like an iPhone — complete with a cheaper "with ads" version — is chilling. It also touches on the frequency of school shootings with a bravery that borders on the reckless. Verbinski posits a world where tragedy is so common that corporations simply offer a hardware replacement rather than addressing the systemic rot. This movie does not shy away emphasizing how technology



### "Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die"

R | 134 minutes

Director: Gore Verbinski

Writer: Matthew Robinson

Stars: Sam Rockwell, Juno Temple, Haley Lu Richardson

serves as both an inadequate salve for tragedy and a distraction from its root causes.

The third flashback, featuring Haley Lu Richardson as Ingrid, a woman "allergic" to Wi-Fi, initially comes off as the most grounded — until you remember she is wearing a princess dress through most of it. Richardson finds genuine pathos in a character forced to watch relationships dissolve because she cannot participate in the artificial reality everyone else occupies. It is here that Verbinski's visual imagination truly ignites, filling frames with surreal images that would not feel out of place in a particularly unhinged fairy tale. It is a powerful look at a world where parents find the "moments of silence" provided by an iPad more desirable than the actual responsibilities of parenthood.

The production values punch far above what must have been a modest budget. James Whitaker's cinematography is slick and inventive, particularly in color grading and lighting. Geoff Zanelli's upbeat score deserves a standalone listen. The action sequences demonstrate Verbinski's mastery of slapstick mayhem. And the creature designs? Let's just say you may never look at a cat the same way again.

Here is where the film will lose some viewers: it is genuinely, unapologetically bitter. Anyone expecting the conciliatory notion that "we just need safety guardrails programmed into AI" will find themselves spat upon. Verbinski explicitly depicts that idea as a phony world where brainrot-parody monsters literally urinate glitter on you.

In an era of sanitized studio filmmaking and content designed to glide past without friction, Verbinski has delivered something difficult to forget. It is a wild, unhinged ride that reminds us that no person can be replaced by a machine, no matter how much glitter that machine can piss on you. It grabs you by the collar and screams directly into your face — and, just maybe, that is exactly what we need. ■

# PREVIEWS

BY DAVID ROWLEY

### "Pillion"

NR | 106 minutes

Director: Harry

Lighton

Writers: Harry

Lighton, Adam Mars-

Jones

Stars: Harry Melling, Alexander Skarsgård, Douglas Hodge

Colin (Harry Melling), a weedy wallflower letting life pass him by, meets Ray (Alexander Skarsgård), the impossibly handsome leader of a motorbike club, who then takes him on as his submissive. Ray uproots Colin from his dreary suburban life, introducing him to a community of kinky, queer bikers and taking all sorts of virginities along the way. But, as Colin steps deeper into Ray's world of rules and mysteries, he begins to question whether the life of a 24/7 submissive is for him. Has he found his calling, or simply swapped one form of suffocation for another?



### "The Bride"

R | 126 minutes

Director/Writer:

Maggie Gyllenhaal

Stars: Jessie Buckley, Christian Bale, Peter Sarsgaard

Dr. Frankenstein and his lonely Creature travel to 1930s Chicago to seek the aid of a Dr. Euphronius (Annette Bening) in creating a companion for the Creature (Christian Bale). The two doctors reinvigorate a murdered young woman, and the Bride (Jessie Buckley) is born. She is beyond what either of them intended, igniting a combustible romance, the attention of the police and a wild and radical social movement.



### "Hoppers"

Director: Daniel Chong

Writers: Daniel Chong, Jesse Andrews

Stars: Piper Curda, Bobby Moynihan, Jon Hamm

What if you could talk to animals and understand what they're saying? In Disney and Pixar's all-new feature film "Hoppers," scientists have discovered how to "hop" human consciousness into lifelike robotic animals, allowing people to communicate with animals as animals! The adventure introduces Mabel (Piper Curda), an animal lover who seizes an opportunity to use the technology, uncovering mysteries within the animal world that are beyond anything she could have imagined. ■



## In like a lion with DMPA programming



National Tour of "The Music Man" transforms Des Moines into River City for a week. Photo credit: "The Music Man" national tour Marketing Department

While climate traditions are being tested, Des Moines Performing Arts assures us that their March theatrical offerings come in roaring like a lion, and continue to roar. Whatever the swings of nature, a marvelous bounty of performing arts awaits cultural consumers.

Also, nothing helps dispel the winter blues like pondering options for youth to explore performing arts during summer camps. This month will begin a two-month exploration of possibilities beginning with Tallgrass Theatre Company's Seedlings program.

### DMPA's bounteous offerings

From national touring productions with Tony Award accolades to family fare to the alluring variety at the Temple Theatre, DMPA is a regional cultural magnet. Its programming often draws patrons from contiguous states.

We central Iowans are fortunate to have such a vibrant, successful organization as DMPA. In addition to its programming, it serves as a partner for several local organizations such as the Des Moines Symphony, Iowa Stage Theatre Company, Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, and other groups.

From the first through the 28th, DMPA presents 10 shows. Add the closing show for Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre's "Winnie the Pooh," Iowa Stage Theatre Company's season-opening "The Seagull" run mid-month, and two Des Moines Symphony concerts — "Reflection" (March 14-15) and the Pops 3 "The Wizard of Oz" in concert (March 28) — and DMPA's performing venues are continually filled with cultural adventures. The Symphony's concerts are especially intriguing. "Reflection" draws from Smetana and Mozart, and a debut performance by celebrated violinist Stella Chen with Beethoven's lyrical "Violin Concerto". The third Pops concert will be an absolute delight, as audiences immerse themselves in the magical journey to Oz as the Des Moines Symphony performs the famous score from MGM's original film projected on a larger-than-life screen.

Adding to the programming is Jerry Seinfeld,

"The Twilight Zone Unscripted, The Music Man," Complexions Contemporary Ballet, "Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales" as part of the Family Series, and several music acts at the Temple.

Shake off the winter doldrums and fill your calendar with local to national shows.

### Tallgrass Theatre Company's evolution to add its youth component

With the popularity of activities programming for young people, it is never too early to think about summer programs. TTC has made impressive development steps in since Jesse Phillips and James Stephenson founded it almost 25 years ago. In 2018, it started offering children's theatre programming through West Des Moines Parks and Recreation.

Now in a campaign to expand classrooms at their facility through "Here We Grow Again," TTC has dedicated itself to anchoring their engagement path with its Seedlings youth classes and productions.

"The expansion will allow Seedlings to grow its workshops and camps, with a special focus on technical theatre training and offering a wider array of options," Maranda Turner, Director of Education and the Seedlings program, said. She continued by explaining this growth will "...introduce students to scenic design, set building, stage management, lighting, and other technical areas. This summer, the Seedlings'

Backstage Ninjas program will offer multiple camps and workshops, including an opportunity for students' work to be showcased in a Seedlings production that is part of TTC's Mainstage season.

"Camp offerings include skills-based camps in storytelling, improv, playwriting, two musical in a week' camps set in Ancient Egypt, a half-day performance camp inspired by pop culture game shows and classic storybook villains, and expanded programming for both preschoolers and our first ever "ONE ACT IN A WEEK" camp focused colder campers (11 and older)."

### BARE BOARDS CHATTER

**Des Moines Playhouse:** March 6-22. "The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical"

**Comedy Xperiment at Tallgrass Theatre Company:** March 6. Des Moines' venerable improv comedy troupe

**Des Moines Performing Arts – Wellmark Family Series:** March 6 (sensor friendly). "Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales"

**Des Moines Performing Arts:** March 7. "Jerry Seinfeld"

**Des Moines Performing Arts – Temple Theatre:** March 7. "Boxing Banjo" (award-winning Irish quartet)

**Howie's Broadway Cabaret – Michael Howland's regional Broadway talent showcase:** March 8. "Rarely performed Broadway songs"

**CAP (Class Act Productions) Theatre:** March 8. "Oliver, Jr."

**Iowa Stage Theatre Company:** March 13-22. "The Seagull"

**Tallgrass Theatre Company – Broadway Karaoke Night:** March 14. Come enjoy or participate.

**Des Moines Playhouse – Adventure Clubhouse:** March 23. "Noises Off!"

**Des Moines Playhouse – AUDITIONS:** March 23. "The Three Little Pigs"

**Des Moines Performing Arts – Live at the Temple Theatre:** March 13. "Delbert Anderson"

**Des Moines Symphony:** March 14-15. "Reflection" – Smetana & Beethoven

**Des Moines Performing Arts – Temple Comedy Series:** March 17-22. "The Twilight Zone Unscripted" (improv comedy)

**Des Moines Performing Arts – Willis Broadway Series:** March 20-22. "The Music Man"

**Runaway Twain – Improv Comedy:** March 22. Presented at the Des Moines Playhouse

**Des Moines Playhouse – AUDITIONS:** March 23. "Noises Off!"

**Des Moines Performing Arts – Dance Series:** March 25. "Complexions Contemporary Ballet"

**Des Moines Symphony:** March 28. "The Wizard of Oz" in concert

Seedlings has been a core part of Tallgrass Theatre's mission for years, providing a safe, creative space where young people can build skills, friendships and connections to the local theatre community. ■

John Busbee produces The Culture Buzz, a weekly arts and culture radio show on [www.kfmg.org](http://www.kfmg.org), covering Iowa's arts scene with an inclusive sweep of the cultural brush. He received the Iowa Governor's Arts Award for Collaboration and Partnership in the Arts. He has performed in more than 100 musicals, including many leading roles.



## Hot Jazz and the Beethoven prodigy

March brings great news for Des Moines' art scene. As part of Civic Music's centennial celebration, Bria Skonberg visits Sheslow Auditorium with her bright vocals and Louis Armstrong School trumpet. She is perhaps the hottest act in jazz, having led the Mighty Aphrodite Jazz Band, the Big Bang Jazz Band and Bria's Hot Five, a direct tribute to Armstrong's Hot Five. She won the Juno Award for best jazz vocal album of the year for "Bria" and co-founded New York's Hot Jazz Festival. Vanity Fair thinks she's the future of jazz.

The Des Moines Symphony is bringing Stella Chen to town for her Des Moines debut. Chen has won just about every award there is for violin prodigies, plus Gramophone's 2023 Young Artist of the Year in all classical music. With the DMSO she will play her signature Beethoven's "Violin Concerto." This is what she said about it a few years ago.

"Even at 18, it was, for me, the ultimate ideal: a marriage of compositional perfection and devastating beauty. Learning it was both a privilege and a daunting responsibility, for I couldn't shake the feeling that its quiet profundity belonged to a future version of myself — one I had not yet become."

Beethoven shares the marquee with Mozart's "Prague" Symphony and Smetana's "The Moldau" from "Má vlast."

### PhArt and the foot

Meanwhile on the east coast, a \$1 million marketing fart and a \$27 million chalk foot lead the month's art news. In Philadelphia, the high arts flailed in efforts to divorce their heritage. The once venerable Philadelphia Museum of Art spent a million bucks to have marketing firm Gretel consult on a rebranding. In October they announced the rebirth of the museum as a "coming down from the stairs" (made famous by "Rocky") and a new era of "merging with the city's neighborhoods" (made infamous by "Long, Bright River"). They got a new logo with a griffin, and a new name — Philadelphia Art Museum — for their money.

No surprise, most museum observers who didn't work for the museum started calling it "The PhArt." Last month, the museum announced it was trashing the new image and name to return to its traditional missions. They also fired director Sasha Suda, who led the new image charge, though she is suing for unlawful removal. The museum says she was fired for cause, having given herself a hefty salary raise without consulting the board or anyone else.

The Old Masters had their best year in more than a decade at last month's auctions. Christie's New York sold a 5-inch, red chalk drawing of a foot, recently ascribed to Michelangelo, for \$27.2 million, beating its estimated price by more



Bria Skonberg



Stella Chen

than \$25 million. A self portrait of Artemisia Gentileschi, painting herself as St. Catherine of Alexandria, fetched \$5.7 million and beat its estimated price of \$3 million. A Rembrandt drawing of a young lion hammered out at Sotheby's New York for \$17.8 million, a record for a Rembrandt drawing.

### Touts

"Honey, You're a Wonderful Model" features the late Austrian feminist filmmaker Maria Lassnig's hand-drawn animated films from the 1970s. They are "populated by a cast of zany characters performing physical comedy and slapstick antics addressing the complexities of relationships, sexuality, grief, and embodiment." Through May 17 at Des Moines Art Center.

Des Moines' most popular artist, Chris Vance, debuts his new exhibition March 6 at Moberg. Our city loves this guy and the development of his own cast of zany characters, some based on his now-grown-up kids. Vance always shows a new facet in his work, and large crowds show up for his openings.

Olson Larsen Galleries feature new-to-the-gallery watercolor artist Ana Žanić through the first week of April. Her work joins OLG's popular "Animal Show," which plays through March 28.

Soprano Joëlle Harvey (last summer's Anne Trulove in "The Rake's Progress") and baritone John Moore (this summer's George Milton in "Of Mice and Men") come to Des Moines for a special performance with a variety of solos and duets sung in German, French, Spanish and English. Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m. at Plymouth Church. \$50 for preferred seating, \$30 general admission and free for students. ■

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



# IOWA ARTIST

BY JACKIE WILSON

## Midnight Oil Studio

Jonathan and Allison Metzger create printmaking and glow art.

Among hundreds of art techniques, a 1,000-year-old art practice of silk screening is still relevant in today's art world as one artist couple shows by embracing the traditional methods.

Local artists Jonathan and Allison Metzger create traditional prints using a variety of methods in their studio, Midnight Oil Studio and Workshop.

Silk screen historically was used as a way to transfer images on stretched pieces of silk. Jonathan fashions a reproducible stencil, made of a wood-cut block print, with copper edging. Multiple layers of wood-cut stencils are put on Indian ink and then applied on a canvas or thick paper. Most people aren't familiar with the history of printmaking.

"When they see our completed work, they think it's digital prints," Allison says. "Even if we have 100 of the same image, it's technically considered originals as it's all done by hand."

For the process, Jonathan sketches and draws, and then Allison makes suggestions. Allison focuses on colors and mixing dyes. She created a custom color palette specific for their studio.

"She has a great understanding of colors," Jonathan explains.

Images of nature find their way into their art pieces. Jonathan says he and Allison gain inspiration anywhere from their travels to their backyard garden. Their latest element is creating glow-in-the-dark prints. Jonathan discovered an ink additive that creates a whimsical glowing artwork.

"It got us to thinking about the joy of imagination," Allison says. "For me, growing up and seeing fireflies for the first time at my grandparents' house was magical. Using that same magic into our own work feels wonderful. It's a big draw for our artwork."

The couple each carved separate artist paths since they were young. Allison says she has always been "extremely creative."

"There's no question I would do a career in art," she says.

Jonathan illustrated cartoons and narrative comics. When his teacher said he had a "handle on his drawing," he was encouraged to try printmaking at a local facility.

"I made my first print, and it was a mind-exploding experience," he says.

The pair met as art students in college and collaborated on fun projects.

"We did it to escape from academia," Allison recalls. "We created local things to sell, and we really enjoyed it."

Each focused on teaching careers yet lacked ideal experiences in art education.



Jonathan and Allison Metzger

The pair then returned to their previous collaborations and set up artist booths at local art shows.

Being a married couple and working together challenges their work-life boundaries.

"We've gotten better at having separate time and studio time," she explains. "We are always up for talking about client work."

If the couple can't agree on certain elements, they set it aside or will ask social media followers to vote on a favorite.

"It works well," she says. "Neither one of us have big egos."

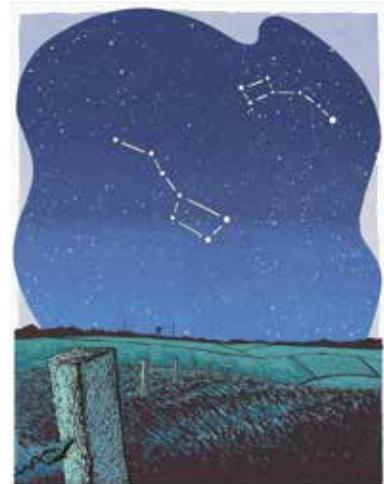
The hours spent tweaking, observing and interpreting art are why Jonathan loves art.

"It's a meditative process and problem-solving nature of art. I can be expressive and persistent," he says.

Allison says travel provides discovery and inspiration in nature, which is an essential element to her designs.

"It's a lovely way to share my experience with the natural world," she says. "Sharing with others is exciting."

Find Midnight Oil Studio at [www.midnightoilstudioworkshop.com](http://www.midnightoilstudioworkshop.com). ■



## 'The connection to a person's soul'

Tommy Castro & The Painkillers to play in Des Moines March 11.

As a blues musician, Tommy Castro first regarded his music career as a business, performing with different bands since the early 1990s.

However, in 2008 and after more than 20 years of performing, he received a blues award for his "Soul Shakers" album. After that, he was nominated on a regular basis, receiving more than a dozen blues awards.

His last honor was receiving the B.B. King Entertainer of the Year award for the fifth time.

"The last time was a big surprise. I didn't release an album or even go to the awards show," he recalls. "It was amazing I wound up winning."

Castro won a Blues Foundation award and Blues Rock award. In 2025, his "Closer to the Bone" album was the number one most played on the Top 100 Blues Album. "Closer" also won "Blues Blast Magazine" Blues album of the year and a Blues Rock Artist award.

Castro is thrilled with the awards.

"As times goes on, it means I'm still relevant among all the talented blues musicians. Other guys deserves it just as well," he says.

Castro was raised in California and picked up a guitar at age 10. His older brother played the guitar and gravitated toward the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. He says he didn't think he would be a career musician.

"After seeing the Beatles on TV, most people thought they'd pursue a career in music. Not me," he reflects. "I thought it was too much fun. Why would anyone pay people to do something fun?"

As Castro trudged through jobs, he played music as a side gig.

"I always looked forward to my times with the band. It finally dawned on me, if I put my effort into playing music, maybe that could be my business," he says.

After releasing a record in the 1990s, his band was



Photo by Dragan Tasic

picked to do a television show. He was leader of the house band for NBC's "Comedy Showcase," which aired after Saturday Night Live.

Proving himself as a band leader and entertainer who mixed the blues with soul, R&B and funk, the TV show opened up opportunities. The B.B. King Festival tour invited him along with Buddy Guy and Susan Tedeschi. He says playing with B.B. King was surreal.

"When I heard the first real blues man, B.B. King, I lost my mind and realized how he influenced other guys. I could understand it and mimic it," he says.

Throughout the years, Castro has a regular entertainer on the Rhythm and Blues Cruises, playing 35 cruises the past two decades. On the Blues Cruise, he met his long-time heroes, Elvin Bishop and Taj Mahal.

"I remember when I was 15 years old and listening to Taj Mahal on my record player. Then, when I met him on the cruise, I never would have dreamed I would be talking to him or playing the same lineup as him. I didn't think I deserved to play with guys like that," he

says. "Those guys can still do it. It never gets old."

Castro embraces his blues musical career.

"Blues isn't pop music, and you won't be a big star, so why chose the blues?" he says. "It chose me. I did it for fun, and the fact that I could make a career happen is surprising to me."

He says performing the blues is soulful rather than a specific technique.

"You can play in different levels — bars, theaters — where some genres are only in a stadium. You can meet the musician after the show. You get a lot for your money when you follow a blues musician," he says.

Castro appears with his band, The Painkillers, at xBk Live in Des Moines on March 11.

He is eager to return to Iowa, where he played at the Blues on Grand. He cherishes reconnecting with friends and fans at the venues.

"If anyone listens to the blues, you feel something. Blues is about the connection to a person's soul. If you play the blues and soul, it always feels good."

For ticket info, visit [www.xbklive.com](http://www.xbklive.com). ■

## SOUND ADVICE

BY JACKIE WILSON

**Coyote Island** is the musical vision of Maine-based producer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist **Mike O'Hehir**. He has assembled a band of brothers who have blended folk roots, reggae rhythms and psychedelic indie music. Catch the band at xBK Live on March 28. [www.xbklive.com](http://www.xbklive.com).

Feeling up for some green beer and live music? Attend a St. Paddy's day celebration at xBK Live on March 17 for the **Crowfoot Rakes**. Tickets \$20.

The Ingersoll is hosting a Prince tribute show, called "**The Purple Piano Show**." Showman Marshall Charloff played keys with the Atlanta

Rhythm Section, wrote for and produced the Commodores and was featured on guitar on albums with Prince. These experiences created his solo tribute to Prince, for his "Piano & A Microphone" tour. Two shows run March 20 and 21. Tickets includes dinner: \$88 [www.theingersoll.com](http://www.theingersoll.com).

**Railroad Earth** is performing a concert at Wooly's on March 11. The popular folk, bluegrass, Americana-jam band has been a staple at summer music festivals, such as the Blue Ox, Telluride and others across the U.S. Tickets \$42 at [www.firstfleetconcerts.com/woolys](http://www.firstfleetconcerts.com/woolys). ■

## Bringing dogs into nature

Kim Smith offers nature “pack” hikes with her dogs as a method to train other dogs.

When Kim Smith took her dogs on hiking trips in nature, she let them run off the leash. After several hikes, she noticed the activity changed their behavior. After a long hike, they seemed more content and better behaved.

“It really opened up my eyes about bringing dogs into nature,” she says.

Smith worked as a vet tech for a holistic veterinarian and started pet sitting. As the vet needed more dog walkers, Smith began taking the dogs on hikes with her own dogs.

Before long, she established her own dog training service, “Chasing the Wild.” She offers nature “pack” hikes with her dogs as a method to train the other dogs.

Smith takes anywhere from 10 to 20 dogs on hikes in a private 15-acre prairie trail. She explains why dogs benefit from off-leash, pack work.

“Dogs in suburban areas aren’t allowed to express themselves, such as rolling around in the dirt or water. When they’re in a neighborhood, dogs are supposed to behave and not react to nature,” she explains.

She says various dog breeds flourish in the outdoors.

“Certain breeds have a purpose. Suburban dogs walking on a leash have no purpose and aren’t getting fulfilled,” she says.

Some dog owners experience problematic behavior, and it is her job to help a dog work through that. The dogs work together as a family unit.

“I’m the leader they gravitate to, but I’m not dominating — I’m guiding,” she says, noting how many of the dogs are helpers.

“Some are assistants, and they communicate to other dogs, ‘You’re not supposed to do that.’ The pack is great at supporting other dogs,” Smith says.

Various breeds hike together, including Shih Tzu, golden doodles, Great Pyrenees and a French bulldog that wears warm clothes on cold hikes.

She says the dog owners are eager for their dogs to go on hikes.

“My clients sing praises of how great it is. The entire dog’s life is spent hiking, exploring and having the best time of their life. Their biggest transformation is how their problem behavior decreases with time spent in nature,” she says.

Smith is “not a fan of doggy daycares” since they focus on the owner’s needs and not the dog’s needs. Instead, a coach is needed.

“It’s not us communicating our language to the dog. Humans should understand their instinctual primal brain,” she says.

Each of her dogs has its own personality, and they are best friends with each other. Meadow, a pitbull, is her soul dog and pack trail guide. Yarrow, a huskie, is a sensitive, intuitive wild child. Persy is the steady, grounded energy dog, while Daisy is the joyful, comedic chaos gremlin.

“At the end of a long hike, they crash and cuddle on the couch. Dogs are in our lives to support us, guide us and be present with them.”



She says the dogs bring her balance.

“It keeps me going every day. I have a purpose, and they keep me active and grounded, living in the present moment. I can’t explain the feeling in nature,” she says. “It brings me a lot of joy.” ■

# JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD

BY JOE WEEG

## Three geese landing on a frozen pond

“The Zen view is something you glimpse in passing and that comes as a surprise — to wake you to the moment and a flash of hidden truth.” Rivvy Neshama, “Recipes for a Sacred Life.”

I started running again. Yup, I stopped about 1990 because of knees and back and other life distractions. But now, with two new knees, a fused neck, and no life, I'm running.

Although running may not be the accurate description of what I do. Since I started running again, I've never actually gone fast enough to pass someone walking. Although there is that one time when a mom stopped to change her kid's diaper in a stroller, and I flew past her like there was no tomorrow. Yup, you can't train that kind of skill. Regardless, I've decided to stop figuring out whether I'm a runner or not. Since I yell to my wife “I'm going on a run” as I head out the door, I must be a runner. Right?

And I run when the rest of you are working or choring or shopping or something. Which is good because you might be mildly appalled by my winter running gear, which consists of knee-length baggy shorts, multi-layered cotton shirts, stocking cap pulled over the top of a baseball cap, and work gloves from the hardware store. I'm thinking this will not be the outfit for the U.S. Winter Olympic team. But wouldn't that be something? “The Winter Olympics — Sponsored by Bob's Hardware.”

I run on dirt or grass when I can, dodging dog poop and goose poop. It's high-level agility work. And I try not to shuffle like an old person, but it's challenging because... I am an old person. I tell my hips to rotate with my arm swings, and sometimes they listen but usually not. I tell my legs to relax and lift off with the ball of the foot, but then I hit a stone and am reminded that staying upright is the real challenge. So... all in all, running is tons of fun.

Ah, but then there was today.

I was running around Utah Park in Aurora, Colorado. A lovely park with tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball diamonds, a large playground, and sacred stones (think Stonehenge). No one is there except a young father carrying his young child. And me.



It's cold. The large pond is frozen-over clear glass. I have to look twice to see the ice because the surface is spotless and smooth. The cattails and pond grass are shades of brown and wave gently as they bend toward the water that reflects back the blue sky and the few clouds. It's a pastoral painting from another time.

Coming out of the north, I see three geese, wings spread, necks stretched and webbed feet preparing to land on the pond. The frozen solid pond.

Listen, I'm prepared to watch a train wreck on the ice — legs collapsing, feathers flying, ungainly bodies smashing uncontrollably into the shoreline. A disaster.

Ah, but life is always surprising.

The three large birds hit the pond, their legs ramrod stiff, and they glide like competitive skaters over the top of the ice and then in perfect unison turn to avoid the looming cattails at the end of the run. It's majestic. It's miraculous. It's magic.

Heck, I don't know whether to cheer at the athleticism or laugh at the comedy? I spot the father carrying the young child.

“Did you see that?” I shout.

He's laughing and shaking his head and wiping his eyes at what he just saw.

The world has been horribly chaotic in recent months. And, as much as I want to bury my head in the sand under the excuse of being old, I believe I need to keep my eyes open — to stand witness to our lives. But, in the midst of all the vitriol and sadness, I tell myself that it's all right to pause now and again. To breathe. And it is all right to keep an eye out for three geese landing on a frozen pond. Or even a single duck ice skating.

Now there's your Zen view. ■

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](http://www.joesneighborhood.com).



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# DES MOINES FORGOTTEN

BY KRISTIAN DAY

## The early years of Des Moines University

The location of the first Dr. S.S. Still College and Infirmary of Osteopathy & Surgery was on West Locust Street, where the Pappajohn Sculpture Park is now.



STILL COLLEGE, MAIN BUILDING

Courtesy of the Des Moines University Library Archives and Special Collections

For years I have lived on west side of Des Moines on Polk Boulevard. I have driven on Grand Avenue going one direction or another more times than could be calculated. But, since I lived in this neighborhood since 2009, I have never met a college student who attended Des Moines University. I see them walking to and from campus but I never greeted one out in the wild.

The first time I ever visited the campus was to have my right foot examined. Over the years, I have destroyed every shoe I have owned. My right foot eventually rips through my shoe and I can see it peeking out through the shredded material. At 38 years old, I finally decided to see a podiatrist. The day I showed up for my appointment at the DMU Clinic, I was examined by a doctor who had a class. I gave him permission to have students participate in the exam. The doctor did his thing and then invited a half dozen students to look at my foot and give their thoughts. I heard about all the ways my foot was imperfect, deformed and injured. However, none of those things were the actual problem. It turns out that the balls of my right foot are uneven. The doctor said he could either break my foot and reconstruct it or write me a prescription for custom insoles. The answer was clear.

Years later, the college moved the majority of its departments to the new facilities at 8025 Grand Ave. in West Des Moines. I toured the empty facility in search for new office space and walked past the archival library — a room with glass doors and what looked like hand-carved shelves filled with books, college catalogs dating back to the late 1800s and manuscripts.

The founders were summer doctor Summerfield Saunders Still and his wife Ella D. Still. They both graduated from the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville, Missouri. That was the very first osteopathic school that was founded by Summerfield's uncle, Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, the early developer of osteopathic medicine in the United States.

Iowa legalized the practice of osteopathic medicine in 1898, opening the



STILL COLLEGE SURGICAL AMPHITHEATRE

Courtesy of the Des Moines University Library Archives and Special Collections

door for S.S. and Ella Still to open their college in Des Moines and carry on the family tradition. The location of the first Dr. S.S. Still College and Infirmary of Osteopathy & Surgery was on West Locust Street, where the Pappajohn Sculpture Park is now. The institution changed its name to Still College (of Osteopathy) in 1905 and again in 1911 to Des Moines Still College of Osteopathy.

Still College was progressive for its time. Doctor Ella Still, along with several other women, were faculty. One-third of the student body was women who studied alongside men. At the time, most colleges separated the sexes. In 1927, the campus moved to 722 Sixth Ave., which is where it is located until it moved to 3200 Grand Ave. in 1972. In the 1930s and 1940s, the school opened enrollment to people of color as well as persons who were disabled.

In the 1960s, after the college's name changed to the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, it became the first institution to study alcoholism and addiction as a disease. I found it interesting that the college was not only socially progressive, but its treatment of addiction as an illness saved many lives, too.

When the college decided to move to 3200 Grand Ave., the institution purchased what was then Saint Joseph's Academy, a Catholic girls school founded in 1884. There was a lot of renovation over the years including the construction of the clinic in the 1980s. The 1970s saw a huge surge in female enrollment. When I discussed this with Allison Guild, the college's archivist, we guessed it could have been part of the Women's Liberation Movement and Vietnam. During World War I and II, the college saw a related drop in male enrollment.

The college changed its name in 1999 to Des Moines University, the name most millennials and younger generations are familiar with. From 2003 to 2009, before he ran for governor again, Terry Brandstad served as its president. ■

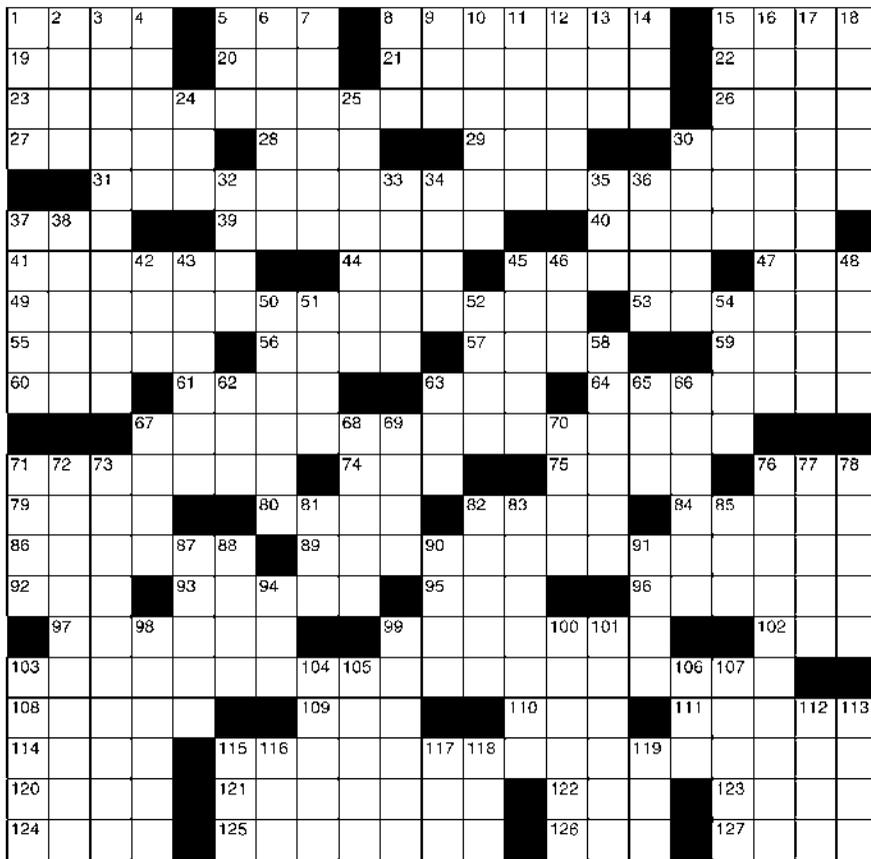
Kristian Day is a filmmaker and writer based in Des Moines. He also hosts the syndicated Iowa Basement Tapes radio program on 98.9 FM KFVG. Instagram: @kristianday | Twitter: @kristianmday



# PUZZLES

Find answers at [www.dmcityview.com/the-games](http://www.dmcityview.com/the-games)

## PEOPLE WITH CONNECTIONS



- ACROSS**
- 1 Stew morsels
  - 5 G-man, e.g.
  - 8 Bun-topping seeds
  - 15 Razor brand
  - 19 "That's --!" ("Untrue!")
  - 20 God, in Turin
  - 21 Perk up
  - 22 Picnic pests
  - 23 "Secret Love" singer having two opposing personalities?
  - 26 Performs like LL Cool J
  - 27 2007 documentary about the U.S. health care system
  - 28 Pick-up-sticks math game
  - 29 Suffix with 110-Across
  - 30 "Aquaman" star Jason
  - 31 "Seven Year Ache" singer buying goods at wholesale?
  - 37 -- kwon do
  - 39 Change habitats
  - 40 Brigitte of "Contempt"
  - 41 Not smart
  - 44 Height: Abbr.
  - 45 Ghana's capital
  - 47 Biol. or geol.
  - 49 Star of many silent Westerns creating an ensemble?
  - 53 Butterfly food
  - 55 Cineplex -- (old theater)
  - 56 Alternatives to coffees
  - 57 Distinctive times
  - 59 Wife of Zeus
  - 60 Stimp's pal
  - 61 Go -- ride
  - 63 Luau gift
  - 64 "ER" co-star Anthony
  - 67 "Sleuth" co-star portraying a policeman?
  - 71 Boot parts
  - 74 Silent "yes"
  - 75 Network on the telly, with "the"
  - 76 Wall Street deg., often
  - 79 Head, in Pau
  - 80 Pare down
  - 82 Speller's clarification
  - 84 Cute, cutesily
  - 86 Scottish language
  - 89 Frequent USO show performer wishing earnestly?
  - 92 Raw rock
  - 93 Interrupt dancers, say
  - 95 Coach Parseghian
  - 96 The way things are now
  - 97 Swings about, as one's arms
  - 99 Exercise goal
  - 102 Has too much, briefly
  - 103 "Mame" star weighing people down?
  - 108 Turin locale
  - 109 Kin of "equi--"
  - 110 Inflated head
  - 111 Beginning
  - 114 Telly
  - 115 "Oliver!" Oscar nominee being zany?
  - 120 Writer -- Stanley Gardner
  - 121 Iron or tin
  - 122 Classic auto
  - 123 Robert of "The Sopranos"
  - 124 In view
  - 125 Got narrower
  - 126 It's opposite NNW
  - 127 Other, in Spain
- DOWN**
- 1 Paw bottoms
  - 2 "The Time Machine" race
  - 3 Guys staffing military flights
  - 4 Watch brand
  - 5 Count up
  - 6 Designer Versace
  - 7 Playing (with)
  - 8 -- Diego
  - 9 Conclusion
  - 10 "Ransom" actor Gary
  - 11 Mennonite sect
  - 12 Soft rock?
  - 13 Archaic verb suffix
  - 14 In position
  - 15 Overseas
  - 16 List of players, in sports
  - 17 It shows a pupil's grades
  - 18 Analyze
  - 24 "Rescue us!"
  - 25 -- Hess (former oil giant)
  - 30 Jazz singer Carmen
  - 32 Visa rival, for short
  - 33 Soothers
  - 34 "-- boy!"
  - 35 "La Brea" network
  - 36 "Nuts!"
  - 37 One-on-one instructor
  - 38 Positive pole
  - 42 "I believe," to texters
  - 43 Iniquitous
  - 45 Pungent
  - 46 "-- ching!"
  - 48 Tax-deferred svgs. plans
  - 50 Motionless
  - 51 "Hud" actress Patricia
  - 52 Huck Finn, for one
  - 54 Burn a bit
  - 58 Williams of tennis
  - 62 Lyric poem
  - 63 Huck Finn, for one
  - 65 Prez called "Ike"
  - 66 Net pop-ups, e.g.
  - 67 "Uptown Girl" singer Billy
  - 68 Oxide, e.g.
  - 69 Fetus' home
  - 70 Play award
  - 71 "Let --" ("Frozen" song)
  - 72 Time soon to come
  - 73 Suspension bridge part
  - 76 Popular food seasoning brand
  - 77 Cornrow, e.g.
  - 78 Vast chasm
  - 81 Slugging stat
  - 82 Crucial artery
  - 83 Went across
  - 85 Print quality stat
  - 87 In a very cold manner
  - 88 Pick out
  - 90 Welcome
  - 91 Poet Ogden
  - 94 China's Mao -- -tung
  - 98 Actress Quinn
  - 99 Blossom
  - 100 Mystery awards
  - 101 English biscuits
  - 103 Some Miller beers
  - 104 Arm muscle, informally
  - 105 Words on a help desk
  - 106 NYC rep starting in '19
  - 107 Rock -- (Brazilian music festival)
  - 112 Weizman of Israel
  - 113 Novice
  - 115 Fast plane
  - 116 In the style of
  - 117 Suffix with alp
  - 118 "Inc." relative
  - 119 Female deer

**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!

Budding:

ENCANTS:

Soar:

LEGID:

String:

NEWIT:

Fastener:

TRIVE:

TODAY'S WORD:

### SUDOKU

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

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!

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.

	+		÷		=	15
-	■	+	■	+	■	
	+		×		=	14
+	■	×	■	×	■	
	-		×		=	15
=	■	=	■	=	■	
12	■	66	■	15	■	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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# WHAT THE...

## Think you're funny?

Send us your best caption...

Email to [celeste@dmcityview.com](mailto:celeste@dmcityview.com) — **BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME**

Next month's photo:



IMAGE BY TETYANA KOVYRINA

## This month's winner

**"Freda smokes a cigarette after the death of her husband."**

- Tim Barry



IMAGE BY RYAN MCGUIRE FROM PIXABAY

## Runners-up

**"Was it good for you?"**

- Sarah Amerson

**"After mating and not getting his head eaten, Gary enjoys a cigarette, counting his blessings."**

- David J.

**"Man this is a smoke break I've been praying for."**

- Leona Renteria

**"The number of joints in this photo is nearly impossible to perceive."**

- Mark Alvord

**"The Praying Mantis enjoys his first cigarette of the day."**

- Debra Lane

Send your "What The...?" caption and image entries to [celeste@dmcityview.com](mailto:celeste@dmcityview.com).

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4/22-4/29	Springtime in Washington D.C.	\$2225
4/26-4/28	Spring Mystery Tour	\$550
4/30-5/1	Fireside Dinner Theatre: Hairspray	\$475
5/3-5/9	Amish Country: Indiana, Ohio & Pennsylvania	\$2650
6/11-6/12	Fireside Dinner Theatre: Million Dollar Quartet	\$475
6/16-6/18	Views & Vibes in Hermann, MO	\$700
6/26-6/27	Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee Brewers	\$525
JUNE TBA	Mackinac Island & The Upper Peninsula	COMING SOON!
7/9-7/17	Boston Tall Ships	\$2900
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8/6-8/7	Fireside Dinner Theatre: Disney's Frozen	\$475
8/15-8/22	The Finger Lakes	\$3200
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9/8-9/15	Veteran's Salute to Washington D.C.	\$2600
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## Hope on the Hoof brings therapy and horses together

Jacqueline Schimel's equine-assisted therapy helps heal the mind with horses.

What does one think of when imagining a therapy session? Could it be Dr. Melfi and Tony Soprano? The stereotypical therapy chair that is often depicted in other media? Most likely, you imagine a person and a room. That was not Jacqueline Schimel's vision.

Schimel, an Iowa State and Capella University graduate, took her passion for horses and helping people and paired them with her knowledge of therapy.

"I am a licensed mental health counselor, and I have been doing counseling work and therapy work for the past five years. I've always been a horse girl, self-proclaimed. I was maybe a little bit weird when I was younger," Schimel said.

She originally wanted to study marine biology, but after some struggles, she pivoted to therapy after enjoying psychology classes. But, her love for animals remained the same.

"It wasn't until my master's program that I really grew into that passion of helping people and getting that sense that this is where I'm supposed to be," Schimel said.

That's when she found out about equine assisted therapy. It was almost like a lightbulb turned on in her head.

"I learned about Equine Assisted Therapy through my program, and I kind of dabbled in it a little bit. I started volunteering here with Jester Park's veterans programs. And I think just through that experience, I really saw that need for equine assisted therapy and decided to go for certification," Schimel said.

She then teamed up with Lyne Neymeyer, who leads the Horses Helping Heroes, a program helping military veterans and active duty service members at the Jester Park Equestrian Center.

The horses the two work with come in all shapes and sizes, but they are careful in deciding which ones will be best for therapy sessions. The two we were able to see the day of the interview were Timone and Pumba. They are favorites for Schimel.

"There's a lot of variety and a lot of different personalities, which really helps in matching horse to human. They don't even necessarily have to be trained to ride, but I'm looking at their demeanor. It's more of their personality. Are they someone who, if we decide to touch really fast, are they going to freak out more or move fast? These guys have been standing here pretty much the whole time. They are steady eddies, our go-to guys over here who are very patient," Schimel said.

The equine-assisted therapy program is called Hope on the Hoof. Schimel says they recently passed one year of operation. She is focused on getting the word out about this program, and getting more people in the door. Sessions are open for children, adults and couples alike.

Schimel says when people tell you that a horse can tell when you are scared or



Jacqueline Schimel

anxious, they aren't joking or telling you that as a means to cool your nerves.

"This sounds made up, but I promise it's real. Horses can detect our heartbeat up to 4 feet away, and they can actually sync their heart rates with ours as well," Schimel said. "They only live in the present moment. They're not worried about the past or the future, and so as we are processing and unloading, and putting it onto them, they can let go of that for us in real time," Schimel said.

Her hope is that this will continue to fuel the conversations surrounding mental health services in the state of Iowa.

"In general, there's a lot of stigma still around mental health. Even though we have come a long way, there's still a lot further to go. And, in Iowa specifically, we have a lot of mental health needs, part of this is to increase the number of options of therapy," Schimel said.

Her goal is to be able to offer this service completely free of charge through Open Gates. This makes it possible for people and businesses to donate to the program.

"I would like to get sponsorship and funding to cover the whole year of 2026. We have a little bit built up where, we've been able to offer brief services to incoming people, but, ultimately, we are too new for a lot of grants, and so we are looking for those sponsorships and partnerships with the community to help provide that," Schimel said.

Schimel says people should get involved for a number of reasons.

"I think that everybody could benefit in some way from these services by being around the horses. There's so much going on in the world, in individual lives, day to day, we don't have a lot of time to connect with the natural world — with animals, with nature. This just gives people a chance to connect to a different aspect of ourselves," Schimel said. ■



Timone and Pumba

# CARS IN THE CITY



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Ford Mustang is a 60-year icon

Iconic sportscar is speedy and affordable.

BY JACKIE WILSON

Car manufacturers offer a massive amount of SUVs and pickup trucks, followed by a handful of sedans. But, what about sports cars? Only a few affordable models remain.

Yet, one vehicle still going strong is the Ford Mustang. According to Ford's website, it is the most popular sportscar ever made, with more than 10 million Mustangs sold throughout the years and around the world.

The staying power since its 1964 debut includes the styling of a pony car created with a long hood and a short deck. The fast and iconic style — along with an affordable price point — boosts its popularity.

I longed to break free from my SUV review rut, so I test drove a 2025 Mustang EcoBoost Coupe (the 2026 model is nearly identical with a couple different tech features). Mustangs today are currently in the seventh generation with no style changes since 2024.

With Mustang's 2.3 liter EcoBoost engine and 10-speed automatic transmission, this car ponied up some power. The two-door is labeled a four-passenger vehicle. I did hop in the backseat and was surprised that it wasn't as cramped as I thought it might be. The seats were narrow, yet comfortable.

Sliding into driver's seat is complicated. You have to sit sideways first, then swing your legs over. The low-to-the-ground seat hugged similar to a racecar. The flat-bottom, D-shaped steering wheel is designed for performance. A flat-bottom steering wheel increases leg

room and makes it easier to slide in and out of the seat. However, getting out proved to be a little more difficult, thanks to a stiff low back.

Driving out of the dealership, I heard a low rumble and looked around. Was that my car making a thunderous sound? Yep. The Mustang has four different modes: normal, sport, quiet and track. Mine was on the track mode with the loudest exhaust settings. This dragster roar boomed against the slow vehicles around me. I hoped there would be another sports car next to me at the traffic light, challenging me to a race. Nope. Just a teen in a late-model Corolla checking her cellphone.

To truly feel the power, I needed to go fast and be away from traffic lights and other cars. So, I traveled a side road near Dallas Center. I could floor it — for research's sake — and it took off quickly. Zero to 60 in under five seconds? Done. After hitting a few bumps on the twisty road, it handled swiftly and confidently. It was a blast. I've always liked speed. Just ask my insurance agent.

Heading back to the dealer, I felt like I had been on a thrilling amusement park ride. That adrenalin rush, coupled with a big grin on my face, spelled excitement. I think I finally figured out the allure of sports cars on that short excursion in Dallas County.

After a memorable drive, I pondered why more sports cars don't exist. There's still a need for speed and a desire for an sporty ride. And, for the price of \$37,105, it just might be in your budget.



With more than 60 years of manufacturing the same sports car, you can bet on 60 more of speed and affordability with the Ford Mustang.

My last words of advice? Try to go the speed limit. I dare you. ■

MARCH 2026 | CITYVIEW | 107

## Into the kitchen of Des Moines pickleball scene

Golda Curry shares her experience with the fastest-growing sport in America.

The pickleball craze is no secret. It has been the fastest-growing sport in the country for the past four years, according to the 2025 Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) Participation Report. It makes sense that the craze has hit the Des Moines metro. After all, gyms and parks alike have built pickleball courts to meet the growing demand. One benefactor of that demand is Golda Curry.

Curry began playing pickleball toward the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic when outdoor restrictions began to loosen up. A friend's daughter needed a teammate, and in stepped Curry, completely unfamiliar to the sport. With an athletic background in martial arts, she jumped in.

"I showed up and had no idea what was going on. I had to be talked through it — it was kind of like trial by fire. We did well, actually. I think we came in second or third place. I would say the league got me hooked. It was fun and incredibly social," Curry said.

That initial experience was at Smash Park. Eight months later, she started playing at the Valley Community Center in the Des Moines Metro Pickleball Club.

"It was just a fun learning environment. I fell in love with pickleball even more. I took a couple of lessons here and there, and then the next thing I knew, I was on the board," Curry said.

Pickleball from the outside looks like the in-between of table tennis and regular tennis. It is a back-and-forth sport, played with a paddle. Curry made sure to walk us through the basics.

"It is played, like on a tennis court, right? That's asphalt, but it's smaller. It measures 40 by 22 if I remember the measurements correctly, and it's often played as doubles," Curry said. "The one big difference is what we call the kitchen, or the non-volley zone. That is an area where points live and die primarily. In tennis, a lot of it is played on the baseline. Pickleball is mainly played within 14 feet."

Seven feet on both sides determine the kitchen and non-volley zone. Curry says tennis is played in transition with constant movement. Pickleball becomes more strategic than trying to overpower or catch your opponent on a bad angle like in tennis.

"That is the beauty and the uniqueness about this sport. It's truly like chess," Curry said. "You have to be incredibly strategic. Because the court is so much smaller, everything is more precise. If you're going



Curry (second from right) and coaches assist with the Club's Skills & Drills that are held several times through the year to help level up members.

to try to out-angle someone, it's really hard to do, especially if they're long and ranging, or they're quick."

Curry made sure to say that it is not necessarily more strategic than tennis, just that it's a different type of strategy that is applied. The result won't always come down to who is the most athletic.

Plenty of places exist around the metro to get started with pickleball. Curry has frequented Smash Park and the Valley Community Center, but there are more facilities like Dink's at Merle Hay, various courts in Ankeny, and others throughout Des Moines.

"In the Des Moines area, we use an app called Playtime Scheduler. The majority of us use Playtime to see where everybody is playing at, which outdoor courts, where people are going to be playing and at what time," Curry said.

Those new to the scene can find places to play, as well as what skill level of people are playing. The community and social aspect is also big for Curry. It has led to hanging out at basketball and hockey games, and the group has done several fundraisers, too.

"Meals for the Heartland. We raise funds for our annual gala, our group. We just did the Heroes Foundation. We raised money for first responders. In the past, we've done diaper drives, we've done food drives, and raised funds for animal shelters," Curry said.

With such a welcoming and volunteer-friendly



Curry (right) at PicklePalooza 2025

community, Curry says the people within the pickleball family in the metro are always welcoming new members, and newcomers should not be shy about giving the game a chance.

"I always say, you've got to try it, right? You're just on this rock once, so you might as well try and see if you like it," Curry said. "My favorite thing is when, whether I'm drilling by myself or I'm with a fairly competitive group, but on the court next to me, I can hear the beginners just giggling and laughing. That is the most joyful noise ever on those pickleball courts. You remember the moments when you first discovered pickleball, and you just see how much joy it brings them."

Those looking to learn more about the club can visit [www.dmmp.club](http://www.dmmp.club). ■

# WALKS OF LIFE

## 'I do'

Couples often celebrate the milestones of their relationships: the day they met, their wedding, anniversaries ... And the date of their engagement is often a highlight: an event often given much thought and planning. An occasion of romance, joy and anticipation of the journey ahead.

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES



### Kyrstan and Caleb Klobberdanz

High school sweethearts

Young love can begin in almost any context. For Kyrstan and Caleb Klobberdanz, the story began at Indianola High School in a German class.

"We went to elementary school at Emerson," Kyrstan says. "We knew each other and were in the same friend groups, but, as we became teenagers, he dated other girls. We didn't start dating until our sophomore year."

Once Caleb found the spot he wanted, Kyrstan's mom asked them to pose for a picture. Kyrstan was unaware that her mom was in on the proposal plan and was trying to mask what was coming by constantly taking photos of them. Once the photo was finished, he stayed where he was.

"I wondered why we weren't moving, thinking it was odd," Kyrstan shares. "That's when he got down on one knee and asked me to marry him. It was surprising because he is nervous about doing anything in public, and he proposed in a public space with my family watching and a lot of other people. Everyone was clapping and saying congratulations."

The couple got married in August 2024 and are expecting their first child in May.

Source: Indianola Living, February 2026; by Rachel Harrington

Read the full story here:



### Josh and Gabrielle Johnson

Love at the campanile

Josh Johnson and his wife, Gabrielle, met over Instagram and were states apart for a while — him in Texas and her in Iowa. But, they eventually ended up together in the Hawkeye state.

"My wife and her family are big Iowa State fans, and they all went to Iowa State," Josh says. "So, at Iowa State, there is this tradition called campaniling. If you kiss at midnight under the campanile, then you will be together forever. So, in my mind, I thought it was the perfect time and place to propose."

The couple walked to the tower close to midnight, talking along the way, while Josh was thinking, "Hurry up midnight, so I can propose." While they were waiting for midnight, they noticed a group of girls near the tower, but they didn't think anything of it.

At 11:59 p.m., Josh got down on one knee and asked Gabrielle if she would marry him. However, there is another tradition at Iowa State called "The Curtiss to Beardshear Streak" where students run naked between Curtiss Hall and Beardshear Hall, often aiming to complete it while the Campanile strikes midnight.

"So, that group of girls we saw earlier? That's exactly what they did," Josh says. "Needless to say, the proposal was heartfelt, but it's also a hilarious memory now."

Source: Grimes Living, February 2026; by Ashley Rullestad

Read the full story here:



### Ethan and Megan Marti

Engagement at one of the world's wonders

One day, two women visited one of the Wonders of the World: The Great Wall of China. They traveled to a secluded area of the landmark, where there was a big surprise — Ethan, who dropped down on one knee.

Marti remembers feeling overwhelmingly shocked at the proposal. Because of it, she doesn't know exactly what he said during his speech — but she knows it was special.

"Reminiscing about the proposal Ethan now says, 'Time stopped, the world stood still, and the stars aligned.' The kids and I now laugh. He is a very thoughtful and devoted husband, yet sometimes a cheesy dad."

The couple will always have the memory, since a friend of Marti's filmed the proposal from around the corner, while the other bought drinks afterward from a lone vendor with a drink cart in the remote part of The Great Wall.

"It was meant to be," she says.

Afterward, they celebrated with a Beijing duck dinner in a hidden restaurant.

"It was such a surreal and exciting experience," Marti says. "It was the best dinner of our two-week trip."

The couple has now been married for more than five years and has welcomed three children — Mia, Easton and Ella — along with two sister kitty cats, Peanut and Jelly.

Source: North Polk Living, February 2026; by Lindsey Giardino

Read the full story here:



### Zach Jakalski and Madi Gremler

Speechless

When it comes to impressing a hopeful fiancée, Zach Jakalski's proposal is hard to beat.

"Yeah, I set the bar very high for all my friends," Zach says proudly. "They're not too happy about it."

Zach proposed to Madi Gremler at the Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy. It was night, so the crowd had died down, and the temperature had cooled. There was even a quartet playing music outside at a nearby cafe.

The only thing that did not go as planned was Zach's proposal speech.

Zach had worked to craft the perfect proposal, one that declared his everlasting love and devotion. It was sure to be a memorable moment. Madi's father tried to advise Zach to keep it simple.

"He said not to come up with a whole elaborate speech 'because you are not going to remember it in the moment.'"

"I was just so nervous. All I could get out was 'Will you marry me?' and I think I even messed that up a little."

"I always have something to say," Madi said with a laugh, "I'm rarely speechless. But, I was so shocked I forgot what to say."

The wedding will be in October, but the honeymoon will have to wait until Christmas. Madi teaches K-8, and Zach is busy starting up a Des Moines-based coffee roasting business called Black Silo Coffee Roasting.

The destination, of course, is Italy. ■

Source: Urbandale Living, February 2026; by Joe Baumgarten

Read the full story here:



# NATIONAL MARKETPLACE

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